

**Minutes (draft) of Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council (TKCC)
Meeting held by Zoom
Wednesday 6th April 2022 at 7.00pm**

Present: Alpin Stewart (Acting Chair), Sue Whiting (Secretary), Steve Schnabel (Treasurer), Tom Forrest, Colin Stevenson, Mat Webster
11 members of the public

1. Apologies

Caroline Hamilton, Sally Cook, Cllr Alex MacInnes.

2. Minutes of meeting on 2nd March 2022

Approved.

3. Matters arising from Minutes of 2nd March

Core paths maintenance funding – TF has contacted Phil Waite several times for an update but still waiting for a response.

Mowi fish farm noise – Despite a letter to Mowi from TKCC regarding constant noise, there have been further reports from local residents that noise continues. SS is collating information from residents to build a diary of what the problems are, duration and how often and will then send a letter with local signatories to push Mowi further for a solution.

Action: SS

TKCC email costs - to be discussed off meeting by members.

Roads

Draft letters to MSPs, Minister of Transport and First Minister have been circulated and posted on TKCC's Facebook page for the public to copy and send. Anyone who uses them, please let TKCC know so we have an idea of the response rate.

AS suggested that anyone should be encouraged to claim for damages caused by the potholes.

Regarding the library of pothole pictures that SS is collating, SW reported on discussions she had with Chris Davies (manager of the TKCC website) and it was agreed the best place to put these would be on social media. This would enable anyone – including non-local road users - to share, contribute and comment.

So far one local resident has volunteered to help set up and run a social media roads campaign. More volunteers are required.

SW reported that the Caithness area has a Facebook campaign running called Caithness Roads Recovery. This seems to have generated a good response and achieved results from contact with government.

TF is still waiting for the bridge reports from HC and a date when the proposed top-dressing in Glen Torridon will commence. Work on clearing culverts has started.

SW has spoken with Mike Bauermeister, General Manager at Kishorn Port regarding an invitation he has extended to TKCC members to visit the port. Mike is keen to encourage liaison with TKCC to inform us of their proposed use of the roads and future developments at KPL. SW will update when visit dates have been offered.

Action: SW

SW had a helpful discussion with Dot Ferguson, HC manager of Ward 5, regarding the lack of response from Ward Councillors on various matters including our question about whether the required licences were issued for the 200 ton vehicles using the A869 in December. Dot obtained a reply from Iain Moncrieff that no licenses/permission for vehicles this size were granted last year and the heaviest load to/from Kishorn Port that there was a licence for was 81 tons.

4. **Guest Speaker, Doug Bartholomew, Nature Reserve Manager Loch Maree**

Doug gave a very interesting presentation regarding Loch Maree reserve and its sensitivities.

With 5 large, wooded islands, and 60 small islands, some with the oldest trees at 400 years old, the reserve is a rare example of pristine Caledonian forest. The water quality of the loch is very high with specific and essential nutrients for fish. In the past it had the best examples of wild salmon and trout, and 2 species of arctic char, but in the 80's & 90's fish stocks crashed due to sea lice from fish farms infecting returning fish. Netting permissions at sea also caused problems with fish stock.

Loch Maree is the largest breeding area for the now extremely rare, and protected, black throated diver, of which there are now only 250 breeding pairs remaining in the UK. The birds are unable to walk very well so the shallow sandy beaches of the islands are perfect breeding/nesting sites for them. The nest sites are highly vulnerable to disturbance by paddlers, canoes, campers and dogs, and now to climate change with flooding from sudden high water levels. Floating islands have been installed to help nesting birds due to changes in water levels and flooding. The decline in fish stock as a food source has also had a negative impact on the birds. The birds are on their nests in May and June and are very prone to disturbance from visitors near the nest sites.

Nature Scot has published a code of conduct information sheet highlighting the major concerns and behaviour code for visitors to Loch Maree. Camping on the islands is discouraged and to be avoided during the nesting season, or visits limited to 30 minutes maximum, which is the time it takes for the birds to return to their nests if they are disturbed. There should be no fires lit on the islands – recently the

fire brigade was called to attend a fire started by a campfire on one of the islands – severe and lasting damage was caused.

Copies of the code are available, and Louise Pearson from Wester Ross Biosphere offered to distribute copies locally with their own information leaflet drop being made shortly.

Doug emphasised that the reserve is keen to educate people rather than stop visitors or to prosecute them, and there will be a seasonal ranger available on the reserve this year to speak to visitors and raise awareness of the highly sensitive issues.

5. Treasurer's Report

SS reported that funds at end of the financial year this April stand at £2,466.00, of this £1,522 is TKCC's own funds. The remainder comprises a £100 surplus and a £700 refund for the Covid gardening fund from the company that was paid over a year ago to provide deer fencing in Inveralligin but now cannot provide this due to a shortage of timber. The Inveralligin gardening group waited so long it has now disbanded, so the project will not go ahead.

6. Community Survey Update

MW reported that SCDC have had staffing problems which has resulted in a delay in issuing the report. The 45 page report with a 2 page summary highlights has now been produced and is expected to be available to the community in May. Next steps will include the action group meeting to consider how best to start developing a community development plan.

7. Roads – dealt with in matters arising.

8. Correspondence Received

Notification from Graham Gristwood, Events Manager, Cape Wrath Ultra 2022 that the event will be passing through Kinlochewe on Wednesday 25th And Thursday 26th May along the same route as last year. They will be using Cromasaig croft for their overnight camp and have also booked the hall and football pitch to ensure they have enough space.

Email received from Torridon resident asking if the large industrial green bin situated opposite Torridon Stores could be moved. MW stated the bin provided for the community by TKCC is situated close to where most cars park and is there for public use. It was suggested that if the bin cannot be moved somewhere more discreet it could be painted or enclosed with a fence to make it less unsightly. MW and AS to arrange and MW to speak to the resident.

Action: MW, AS

9. Planning Applications

Erection of fence, polytunnel and shed on Land 50M West of Schiehallion, Torridon, Ref. No: 22/01170/FUL

AS recused himself for this item. No comments.

Erection of House (renewal of planning application 19/01024/FUL), Birch Grove 10 Wester Alligin IV22 2HD Ref. No: 22/01030/FUL

No comments.

10. Any Other Competent Business

AS noted that in the forthcoming Council elections on the 5th May, Councillor Biz Campbell is standing for re-election and the remaining 3 Councillors for Ward 5 - Alex MacInnes, Ian Cockburn and Derek Macleod will not be standing for re-election. AS took the opportunity to thank Alex MacInnes for attending our meetings.

Louse Pearson mentioned an online event on 28th April regarding Wester Ross Biosphere Climate Action. Details are on Eventbrite website.