

Minutes (draft) of Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council (TKCC)
Meeting held by Zoom at 7pm
Wednesday 13th July 2022

Present: Caroline Hamilton (Chair), Sue Whiting (Secretary), Tom Forrest, Mat Webster, Colin Stevenson, Alpin Stewart

5 members of public.

1. **Apologies** - Steve Schnabel (Treasurer), Councillor Chris Birt

2. **Minutes of the meeting on 15th June 2022**

Approved subject to small amendment required for matter arising re bin opposite Torridon Stores (deletion of word "glass"). And small change of wording in Roads section. Minutes have already been circulated, but amendment to be posted on website.

Action SW

3. **Matters arising from minutes of 15th June**

Mowifish farm noise - SS reported that the repair to the exhaust on the feed barge seems to have improved noise levels. Will wait and see if that is the solution.

Bin opposite Torridon Stores - plan for timber screen. MW to call contact at Highland Council to ask about recycling bin. AS & MW to liaise regarding replacement of bin surround when availability of recycling bin confirmed.

Action AS/MW

Kishorn Port /Community Liaison Group - SW now on Liaison Group. The next meeting is due to be held in September or October. SW will attend and report back.

Action SW

Roads - possible social media campaign - Report has been sent to Cllr Birt. E-mail received 13th July 2022 with note of Ward 5 Business Meeting shows that Cllr Birt had raised a couple of the points highlighted in the report. In particular, repair work has been carried out to the Coire Mhic Nobuil Bridge and quite a number of potholes have been filled. Cllr Birt has also followed up by sending on a copy of the schedule of work proposed by HC's roads department.

4. **Planning Applications**

In light of the level of interest expressed, this item was considered ahead of the order indicated in the agenda.

22/02482/FUL Marine Fish Farm- Atlantic Salmon: alteration to install two additional 120m circumference cages

CH advised that TKCC had been advised by MOWI that they were going to make a planning application for this development. In the event they appear to have gone ahead with the work and then submitted the retrospective application. In that sense, the application was retrospective. CH commented that noise had been the main issue historically. She invited three members of the public to address the meeting on this matter: Donald MacGregor (Rechullin), Claire Munday (Shieldaig) and Jane Dick (Diabaig).

DMacG reported that MOWI had fixed a faulty exhaust and that the problem of noise at Rechullin had improved to the extent he did not feel the need to complain about this. He had reported MOWI for not applying for consent before installing the new cages and had objected to this application on the grounds that it was retrospective and because of the environmental impact. He would like to know more concerning the environmental impact.

JD advised the meeting that part of MOWI's obligations to SEPA are that they should test frequently, including on the seabed and in relation to water quality. She had not been able to find any details of the tests carried out by MOWI or the test results.

DMacG reported that black pipe apparently from the fish farm had washed up on the shore. JD advised the meeting that sea farms are supposed to be getting together to remove waste. DMacG advised that his experience was that if waste on the shore is reported to MOWI it is removed fairly quickly.

CM advised the meeting that she had formerly been on Shieldaig Community Council and had environmental concerns regarding the fish farm. She had been surprised to see an application for an extension to the fish farm, but MOWI had said that the additional cages would not see an increase in the number of stock. She suggested that the two communities (Shieldaig and Torridon) should come together on fish farms.

CM advised the meeting that HC has said that its consent for fish farms in Loch Torridon is dependent on an Environmental Management Plan. A plan had been submitted to HC, but currently no plan has been agreed. She was of the opinion that HC were dragging their feet on this and had had submissions on the submitted plan at the end of 2021. She advised that the aquaculture department at HC was much reduced in numbers.

JD advised the meeting that the last plan she knew of was a lice management plan and not a proper environmental management plan. TKCC had objected to the extension of MOWI's licence on this basis.

DMacG commented that two more cages would mean more net washing and increased damage to the seabed below the nets. Rather than reduce stock numbers to improve conditions, MOWI have increased the number of cages.

JD commented that a lack of data hinders HC from rejecting the environmental management plan submitted to them.

CM advised the meeting that MOWI had originally been required to move the cages after a time, but were later able to have that condition removed.

DMacG commented that the number of objections received by HC may have had a bearing on the success of objections to other applications elsewhere in the Highlands.

CH commented that TKCC carries some weight, but more objections to a planning application will carry more weight. Comments in relation to this application have to be submitted by Friday, 22 August.

JD advised the meeting that MOWI were going for Aquaculture Stewardship Certification (ASC) certification. This should involve them holding at least two meetings with the community and being required to show that they are handling complaints properly. Anyone who has complained in the past and had no, or an unsatisfactory, conclusion should consider writing to MOWI's communications director (Scott Nolan) in Fort William to raise a formal complaint. If this is done it will be seen by the auditors when assessing MOWI's application for ASC certification. She was of the view that MOWI is not consulting with the community or handling complaints and problems correctly. CH advised the meeting that a copy of the results of the community survey had been sent to them, but no response had been received.

CS asked about the nature of TKCC's objection. CH suggested that this would be on the grounds that two additional cages would cause environmental damage and noise. She would draft an objection and circulate this to TKCC members.

DMacG asked if TKCC would engage with Ward 5 Councillors about the lack of action by HC. CH advised that TKCC would copy Councillor Birt in on this and raise it with him at the next meeting.

Action CH

22/02535/FUL Construction of 2 weirs and burn intake: extension to Gleann na Muice hydro scheme.

SW advised that a further application had been received relating to the Gleann na Muice hydro scheme which referenced reports on the effect of the proposed development on fish and other wildlife. It was agreed TKCC members would communicate any comments on this by e-mail.

5. Treasurer's report

SS was not able to attend, but sent his report by e-mail. He advised there was no expenditure to report other than the cost of hall hire and teas for the AGM. Dot Ferguson has confirmed that she has received all the information she requires for release of HC's grant for 2022/23.

6. Community E-bike Trial

CH reported that we were contacted by Home Energy Scotland regarding a trial of two e-bikes in the area. The bikes had arrived and were now working. They were collected by Torridon Hotel. South West Ross Community Car Scheme will administer the trial for us and applications should be submitted to them. Applicants can have the e-bike for a period from three days to a week.

7. Correspondence received

HC Ranger Gregor Watson SW had contacted GW with a view to his attending a future TKCC meeting. GW indicated that he wanted to meet people in person and not by zoom meeting. Agreed that he should be invited to address TKCC at the next in person meeting, to be held at Kinlochewe Community Hall in December.

Action SW

Woodland Trust had contacted TKCC regarding a survey they are conducting about the future use of Couldoran House. We will be talking to them about the results of the Community Survey.

Action MW

Planning Democracy are conducting a survey of Community Councils to investigate how informed we feel about planning matters. Agreed that it would be good to complete this.

Action CH

8. Any other competent business

MW - Bench at Diabaig. There has been discussion about where it should go, but no agreement. CH to canvas opinion locally.

Action CH

TF - He is meeting with the Access Officer at HC about an upgrade to the Kinlochewe to Coulin footpath and will advise TKCC of the outcome.

Action TF

MW - Finger Post Signs in Torridon. The issue of the lack of Gaelic and failure to install all signs is still outstanding. DMacG queried the wording of some. MW will try to resolve the issues.

Action MW

CH raised the dates of the next meetings. TKCC does not usually meet in August and the next meetings had been set down for 7 September and 5 October. CH is away on both those dates. Agreed to change the date of the first meeting to 31 August (subsequently revised to 1 September). The date of the following meeting will remain as 5 October.

Date of next meeting Thursday, 1 September at 7.00pm on Zoom