

Minutes (draft) of Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council (TKCC)

Meeting held by Zoom at 7.00pm

Wednesday 1st February 2023

Present: Caroline Hamilton Chair), Steve Schnabel (Treasurer) Sue Whiting (Secretary), Tom Forrest, Maud McIntyre, Colin Stevenson, Alpin Stewart.

13 members of public.

1. Apologies – Mat Webster, Councillor Chris Birt.

2. Minutes of the meeting on 7th December 2022

Approved.

3. Matters arising from minutes of 7th December 2022

Blether Bench Diabaig - SW has emailed and phoned Manager of Harbours Highland who deals with pier related matters regarding any permissions required to site the bench on Diabiag pier. SW waiting for reply and will chase. *Action: SW*

Electricity Balgy Gap - SSEN are still giving the Wilkens the same response that they have no plans to upgrade the network. CH feels the right person to contact has not yet been identified.

Speeding in Fasaig: TF has tried to follow up with Andrew Bone (HC roads), however there seems to be some confusion about the type of signage that is required, therefore whether this is HC's responsibility. Agreed this needs to be clarified with MW.

Action: MW/TF

Kinlochewe Toilet Signage - MM to follow up on previous contact with Eric Morrison at HC.

Action: MM

Hydro scheme contributions - MM will continue to research and present information later this year.

Torridon School – Highland Council statutory consultation - CH has responded to Ian Jackson at HC as agreed.

Community Development Plan – CH wrote to GALE as agreed to express TKCC's concern about the proposed vote at their AGM on extending GALE's area of benefit to the whole of IV22 without any consultation with the people who live here. Many other local community organisations, GALE members and residents, including those in their existing area, expressed similar concerns.

In the event, GALE decided not to proceed with the vote. GALE has written to TKCC to say there was a misunderstanding and they will come up with a different form of wording.

4. Treasurer's Report

The only expenditure since the last meeting was £35.00 for the subscription renewal to the Information Commissioners Office.

Balance of the account stands at £2,139, £700 of which is allocated to the Covid fund. TKCC's own funds stand at £1,439.

5. Community Development Plan Update

CH reported that good progress is being made. A lot of work has been done by the Development Plan Action Group pulling a draft plan together and producing a list of achievable actions. Considerations include what needs to change, why, what action needs to be taken, by whom, when and what are the challenges. There are 4 themes within the plan: People, Place, Travel and Tourism Management.

It is clear that in order to deliver on the actions a dedicated development officer will be required. This person will be responsible for putting together feasibility studies, researching funding opportunities, completing funding applications etc. The Action Group has contacted HIE with a view to obtaining funding for the post.

SCDC has helped to produce a first draft of the plan. The plan will be circulated soon to the various stakeholders and partners who have agreed to help with some of the actions. A final draft is expected to be available for the community to comment on by early March. A community feedback event will also be organised.

6. Kishorn Port & Dry Dock Community Liaison Group

Update from SW who represents TKCC on the group on the meeting held on 20th December 2022.

The port is very busy with ongoing work to the OGW and Intrepid drilling rig. Intrepid is there until April and then Northern Producer will go in for recycling. Bakkafrøst hatchery is developing well, also concrete manufacturing for Intrepid. Currently 250-300 people are working on site of whom 15-20% are locally employed.

Due to workforce numbers and demand for accommodation, KPL now have a matrix of available B&B's and holiday lets that they can use in the future. The workforce is likely to increase again in 2023.

SW has asked KPL if they would be interested in holiday lets, B&B's etc within the TKCC area, for example in the winter months out of tourist season. KPL has confirmed this would be helpful. SW will therefore arrange for a notice to be put on Visit Torridon and social media so that anyone who would like to offer accommodation can contact KPL. *Action: SW*

KPL have been working closely with fishermen to ensure dialogue is maintained, and routes have been created for rigs to come in with the least impact on fishermen and trawlermen.

There have been some issues locally with noise disturbance from Bakkafrøst generators and it has been agreed they should be turned off at night. The lighting from the hatchery at night is also a local issue but unfortunately KPL have no control over the hatchery lights.

The rigs require lighting for anti-collision, and security to prevent illegal operations. KPL are doing their best to minimise the impact locally – reducing the light level where possible however they need minimum brightness for safety reasons.

KPL continue to monitor road traffic levels and encourage transport via coaches, not cars, and they would welcome improvements to the road infrastructure from HC.

Next liaison group meeting is on site at the port on 22nd March. If anyone has any questions or comments they would like raised at the meeting, please contact SW by email secretary@tkcc.scot.

7. SWRCCS Community Minibus Consultation

Mary Peart of South West Ross Community Car Scheme (SWRCCS) was present and reported on the work they have been doing over the last year regarding a possible community minibus.

SWRCCS are researching this in response to a request from Shieldaig School because the local bus service is insufficient to accommodate after school activities. From comments in the community survey as well, SWRCCS have established there is a general demand for a minibus. Looking at other schemes, their view is its viability will depend on sufficient funding from HC.

SWRCCS have discussed the project with HC who are supportive but the process is not simple. In areas where HC themselves have provided a minibus, it has been at the cost of cutting other public transport to enable money saving. SWRCCS do not wish to provide HC with a money saving scheme, nor do they wish to co-ordinate a minibus under the already very successful car scheme – there has to be a genuine interest from local groups/organisations to use and support a minibus (or people carrier) for community use. A discussion paper was therefore sent at the end of last year to various groups/organisations for feedback.

Logistics of storage, use, insurance, type of vehicle etc are in the early days of discussion but to get funding it would need to be an electric vehicle. Therefore storage would likely be at Torridon Community Centre where there are electric charging points.

Points raised in the discussion following included:

- it is difficult to establish a need until the facility is there
- there is a lot of bureaucracy surrounding the licensing/servicing and operation of a minibus service, and compliance regulations for transporting members of the public and sub-contracting to other users are very challenging
- SWRCCS does not wish the project to compete with established private transport providers in the area
- Shieldaig School do not have enough personnel to manage the mini bus project themselves
- The discussion paper will be sent out again to groups/potential users in the area and SWRCCS are open for discussion and debate from as many groups and people in the community as possible

MP concluded that SWRCCS was happy to research the project but they need specific feedback from the community in order to progress.

8. Correspondence Received

- **ASC – Mowi and Bakkafrost.** Following TKCC's submissions relating to Bakkafrost's and Mowi's applications for ASC certification, ASC has confirmed that previous lack of engagement with the community is considered and going forward the companies will require to engage as part of the certification should their applications be successful.

Regarding the black piping that we reported on the shores of Loch Torridon, ASC stated that they had carried out an examination but not seen any. One 'grey area' is to the actual origin of debris of this kind. ASC suggests emailing both companies should it appear in the future and copy the ASC into the communication with reference 'ASC Stakeholder Communication'.

TKCC members were pleased to note that Mowi's communication had improved, in that they were now posting updates and information regarding their activities on Visit Torridon.

- **GALE – mini Community Action Plan (CAP).** Fiona McKenzie of GALE sent a first draft CAP for Kinlochewe following their Planning for Real exercise last year. TKCC has responded that TKCC members are currently working with other local organisations on our own community development plan and we do not have time or resources to be involved in anything else. It was agreed it would be more appropriate for GALE to discuss the CAP with people who had been involved with Planning for Real, eg. COW and Kinlochewe Hall.
- **Diabaig resident – gritting.** Letter was received in mid-December at the time of the first heavy snow fall about lack of gritting in Diabaig. HC roads has told TF there were four gritters out of action and a shortage of equipment.
- **Wester Alligin resident – bridge over the river at Braigh Beag.** Resident asked why the damage has not been repaired. The damage was caused 3 years ago, and Highland Councillors were asked to pursue this with Andrew Bone (HC roads) last year. TF has spoken with AB who says the matter is in hand. TF will chase.
Action TF

TF also informed the meeting that there is work scheduled to repair the culvert in Torridon Glen. CH asked TF to circulate any information to members so any road closure can be publicised for the community.
Action TF

- **Glenelg & Arnisdale CC- closure of Kyle dental practice.** Concern from GACC regarding the lack of provision of NHS dental care and request for other Community Councils to petition HC, MPs and MSPs to support providing NHS dental care in the area. Kyle CC suggested that other CCs could join forces to act together. MM commented that Kinlochewe residents use the Kyle dental practice due to lack of provision of NHS dental treatment elsewhere. SS said the dentist in Lochcarron passed his business to the Kyle practice so the proposed closure will result in a greater shortage. SS agreed to attend a meeting on 7th February that GACC are holding to discuss how to proceed.
Action: SS
- **AbilityNet.** Email received from this volunteer service which provides free technical support for disabled and elderly people and to charities, helping people access Zoom, online services and shopping etc. They have volunteers in the TKCC area and would welcome any financial support. It was agreed TKCC are unable to offer financial support but would forward their details to TDCA in case the service can be used in Torridon Community Centre.
Action: CH
- **Maree Todd MSP.** Notification that Maree Todd MSP will be holding surgeries in the area. Surgery at Achnasheen is on 15th Feb, surgeries at Gairloch and Lochcarron on 4th April. Posters circulated on TKCC website, and SW and MM are putting posters up on local noticeboards. Appointments are 20 minutes and must be pre-arranged by contacting maree.todd.msp@parliament.scot. SW has an appointment and will raise the issue of funding for roads.
- **Cllr Liz Craft.** Ward 5 Councillor Liz Craft has circulated a useful breakdown of subject areas covered by local Councillors, Ward 5 representatives, and Westminster. It was decided to post this list on the TKCC website. Included are contact email addresses for all Ward Councillors, MSPs and MP.
Action: SW

9. Planning Applications

22/05835/PNO | Erection of polytunnel | Clearing Immediately South of Shed On Croft 1 Diabaig Torridon

This application for prior notification was on the same site as a previous application 22/03188/FUL that was subsequently withdrawn (see minutes of 1 September 2022).

22/05835/PNO contained similar features to 22/03188/FUL, for example a large area of hardstanding in an almost identical location. TKCC therefore wrote to the planning department in similar terms as before, asking HC to ensure the relevant bodies addressed flood risk and other concerns before it made a decision. In the event, HC decided that prior approval is required before it received TKCC's submission.

TKCC has since received emails from the person behind the applications, Mr Bartholomew. In these he says his company purchased the croft recently and that 22/05835/PNO was a false flag operation to see what the reaction would be. He says the proposal that he actually wants to put forward is for a small number of serviced motor home pitches on the croft, including a chemical toilet disposal point. He is doing a feasibility study and would like TKCC's input into this.

Mr Bartholomew would like to meet with TKCC to discuss. He is working abroad for most of this year and was unable to attend this meeting, as he is in Baghdad. He has suggested a separate Zoom meeting with TKCC from his normal place of work in Kurdistan.

It was agreed it is not TKCC's role to help with feasibility studies for any plans that croft owners may have, and we should suggest to the applicant that he asks for a pre-application discussion with the planning service. CH will therefore respond accordingly. *Action: CH*

10. Any Other Business

- Community Housing Trust has received funding to do a feasibility study for putting up housing in Darroch Park, Fasaig. Site visit will be on 9th February.
- MM will attend webinar on 15th February for CC members regarding Community Mapping. CH to inform the Development Plan Action Group.
- TF reported that footpath construction is ongoing, and they have received an increase in funding from £3,000 to £5,000. Total allocated so far is £11,000. The Rechullin path has been completed. The Kinlochewe to Coulin path should be finished by Easter. Path from Falls at Balgy to Loch Damph next on the schedule.
- TF asked if the proposed trunking of the Achnascheen to Kyle route could be raised in a meeting with Maree Todd and whether there was any likelihood of it happening in Glen Torridon.
- MM mentioned ponding in the road at Kinlochewe near the post office – TF said it had been happening for a long time and was something to do with sewage pipes – ongoing and never resolved.
- MM asked if there was any feedback on uptake in Kinlochewe on the e-bike trial last year. CH to check. *Action: CH/MM*

Meeting concluded. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 1st March at 7.00pm on Zoom