

**Minutes (draft) of Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council (TKCC)**  
**Meeting held in Kinlochewe Hall at 7.30pm**  
**Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

Present: Caroline Hamilton (Chair), Steve Schnabel (Treasurer), Mat Webster, Maud McIntyre, Colin Stevenson, Tom Forrest, Councillor Chris Birt, Gregor Watson (HC Ranger).

3 members of the public.

**1. Apologies** – Sue Whiting (Secretary), Alpin Stewart.

**2. Minutes of the meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

Approved, subject to correcting the spelling of Slattadale in item 3.

**3. Matters arising from minutes of 9<sup>th</sup> November**

*Bin opposite Torridon Stores - timber screen.* HC have confirmed they are still considering the complaint.

*Blether Bench Diabaig* – The results of the questionnaire are now in, with most people voting for the end of the pier. This will need HC approval and Gregor Watson offered to send us the name of the person to contact. *Action: SW*

*Electricity Balgy Gap* – CH wrote to SSEN on behalf of TKCC (copied to Mowi and Balgy residents) setting out reasons why they should upgrade the network between Annat and Shieldaig, and has received an unsatisfactory response. SSEN claim they have dealt with the matter, essentially treating it as a complaint about a connection enquiry. CH and CS believe a different person in SSEN needs to be contacted – someone who will understand this is an upgrade request. CH will ask the Wilkens to find the appropriate person and offer to write again.

It was agreed that once we have written to the appropriate person, we should copy other community councils and organisations whose areas would benefit from an upgrade.

*Action: CH*

*Speeding in Fasaig* – Andrew Bone at HC says he has the 30mph signs in hand. TF will chase.

*Action: TF*

*Parking at Fuaran* – MW will ensure the no parking sign is installed before our next meeting.

*Action: MW*

*Kinlochewe toilet signage* – After MM contacted Dot Ferguson, Eric Morrison at HC has been in touch with MM about getting a sign installed on the village approach from Gairloch. This would also give notice of the proposed chemical waste facilities at the toilet site. MM feels the prospects are positive. *Action: MM*

*Community Regeneration Fund* – Having been informed that it could go forward and submit a formal application for funds, it became clear to the community development plan action group

that the process was extremely detailed and would require quotes. The action group felt it was too soon for it to be able to do this. The funder has agreed they can defer the application until the next funding round, probably in April or May.

*Salt store between Annat and Shildaig* – HC has confirmed that the salt store is temporary and does not require planning permission. It will be removed once the legal documentation between NTS and HC has been completed to enable HC to continue to use the store on the glen road.

*Mowi ASC certification* – On behalf of TKCC, CH submitted a response to ASC stating that in the past we felt Mowi's consultation with the community was poor, however we are hopeful this will improve in the future.

*New National Park Commission* – MM attended the consultation webinar. She reported that it was quite informative and interesting, and was part of the initial process to decide on a new National Park (the Scottish government has undertaken to achieve this by the end of the Scottish Parliamentary term in 2026). Apparently, there are no pre-conceived ideas about where in Scotland the new park should be, nor to its size/area. Next year will see an invitation to organisations to submit their nominations.

The deadline to complete the online consultation/survey was very tight, so MM completed this in a personal capacity. It contained a lot about the management and organisation of national parks, so unfortunately she felt unable to give a particularly informed response.

*Hydro scheme contributions* – HC has informed MM that it used to try and push hydro developers to make contributions to communities, however now that communities are better informed, it usually now suggests that communities ask developers themselves. It was agreed it may be too late to do this in our area, however we should perhaps investigate.

MM will do more research, with a view to presenting the issues and any opportunities for members to consider at a future TKCC meeting. *Action: MM*

#### **4. Treasurer's report**

No change since the last meeting.

#### **5. Guest speaker – Gregor Watson, HC Ranger**

Gregor explained that he is one of 15 rangers engaged by HC whose remit is to uphold the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. He covers the Applecross peninsula and the area bounded by the roads from Shildaig through Annat to Diabaig, Kinlochewe and Achnasheen and back through Strathcarron, Kishorn and Tornapress.

His role is full time from 1 April to 31 October. Outside these months, he is employed to maintain footpaths etc. This includes his current work on the core path in Glen Torridon.

The attached report from Gregor highlights some of the issues facing the TKCC area, and some of the challenges in 2021 and 2022 from his point of view.

The Access Code is not legally enforceable, however Gregor finds that most people are willing to comply once it is explained to them. Having said that, the code was written a long time ago, and he believes it urgently needs to be brought up-to-date. For example, the code does not currently apply to motorhomes or campervans and the section on open fires does not appear to apply to fire pits or portable BBQs etc. This creates loopholes which some people take advantage of.

Overnight parking (ie informal camping as opposed to so-called “wild camping”) is governed by the Road Traffic Act 1988. In Gregor’s view, this does not really cater for the exponential growth of motorhomes and car camping. The Access Code can also apply through its section on Responsible Behaviour by the Public – see his report attached.

MW said he thought the HC ranger system works well in the TKCC area. This is partly due to there also being rangers from NTS, Ben Eighe and the Woodland Trust.

Cllr Birt expressed his support for the HC ranger service, saying he was determined that HC should continue with it, despite the Scottish government having decided not to provide funding next year.

#### **6. Torridon School – Highland Council statutory consultation**

Ian Jackson has been in touch to say HC feels they should now move to a statutory consultation on the permanent closure of Torridon School. If a statutory consultation does proceed, he says a public meeting will be held in the community, and there will be multiple opportunities for parents and local residents to express their views. TKCC would be a statutory consultee.

HC asked for TKCC’s views on the opening of a statutory consultation and whether would like to meet with HC in advance. It was agreed a meeting was unnecessary and we would welcome the statutory consultation taking place as soon as possible. It was noted that HC first talked about doing this two years ago. CH will respond accordingly. *Action: CH*

#### **7. Community Development Plan**

Work continues by the Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Development Plan Action Group (T&K Action Group), and it is hoped a draft development plan will be available soon.

An issue had arisen whereby GALE (Gairloch and Loch Ewe Action Forum) had their AGM coming up and on the agenda was a proposed change to their constitution whereby they would extend their area of operations to include the whole of IV22, ie. virtually all the TKCC area. This was without any consultation whatsoever with anyone living in the extended area, or with the T&K Action Group, TKCC, TDCA, COW Trust, Kinlochewe Hall etc.

The T&K Action Group is very worried this would lead to massive confusion with no-one knowing who is responsible for what. They have written to GALE setting out their concerns.

Leaving aside whether people would like GALE to move into our area or not, it was unanimously agreed it was totally inappropriate for them to do so without any consultation. Cllr Birt

described it as ridiculous. It was therefore agreed that TKCC should endorse the views of the T&K Action Group and write our own letter to GALE. *Action: CH*

## **8. Correspondence Received**

*NHS Highland* – The re-design of healthcare services, including Out of Hours services, for Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross has been ongoing for a number of years. NHS Highland has offered to attend community council meetings in the area to give an update on this. It was agreed we should invite them to a future TKCC meeting. *Action: SW*

*Environmental Rights Centre Scotland (ERCS)* - The ERCS was established in January 2020, its aim being to assist people to understand and exercise their rights in environmental law and to protect the environment.

It provides free legal advice to individuals, community groups and organisations on environmental and related planning law, including in relation to contested planning applications and fish farms. This includes law relating to land-use planning, climate change, pollution control, environmental health and nuisance, the conservation of biodiversity, and any other field (e.g. cultural heritage, transport and energy) to the extent that it impacts on the natural environment in Scotland. Call 0800 861 1738 or visit [www.ercs.scot](http://www.ercs.scot).

*NHS Scotland - SHARE*, The Scottish Health Research Register and Biobank, is a register of people who are happy to be sent information about health research projects/studies. These may involve taking part in surveys online, sharing your views on your healthcare or taking part in a study researching a new medication for an illness you may have.

The SHARE team need healthy people and people with health conditions to join, and you need to be aged 11 or over. Email [enquiries@registerforshare.org](mailto:enquiries@registerforshare.org), call 01382 383 471, or visit [www.registerforshare.org](http://www.registerforshare.org)

## **9. Planning applications**

None.

## **10. Any Other Competent Business**

TKCC would like to thank those who laid wreaths at the Torridon and Kinlochewe War Memorials on Armistice Day.

Dates of next meetings, all on Wednesdays at 7pm:

1 February, 1 March, 29 March, 26 April, 24 May, 21 June 2023