

# TORRIDON AND KINLOCHEWE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

**Wednesday 23 September at 8pm via Microsoft Teams**

## Minutes

*Chaired by Highland Councillor Alex MacInnes until such time as a Chair for the Community Council was appointed*

**Attendees:** Chris Davies; Tom Forrest; Caroline Hamilton; Stephen Schnabel; Alpin Stewart; Mat Webster; Dot Ferguson, HC Ward Manager; Mack Sutherland, HC Roads Officer, Ian Moncrieff, HC Roads Operations Manager, Alex MacInnes, Highland Councillor; Derek MacLeod, Highland Councillor

Six members of the public

**Apologies:** Helen Callow; Colin Stevenson, Emily John

### 1) Appointment of Office Bearers

#### a) Chairman

Caroline Hamilton      Proposed by Tom Forrest  
Seconded by Chris Davies

#### b) Secretary

Chris Davies      Proposed by Caroline Hamilton  
Seconded by Tom Forrest

#### c) Treasurer

Tom Forrest      Proposed by Steve Schnabel  
Seconded by Mat Webster

### 2) Scheme of Establishment – ‘headlines’

Dot Ferguson presented the headlines from the Scheme of Establishment. Community Councils are the only voluntary organisations statutorily constituted under the Local Government Act. They are highly regarded by the Highland Council and she thanked everyone for volunteering.

The Scheme of Establishment sets out the CC’s duties, including the Code of Conduct and declarations of interests for planning applications. Planning training is planned for a future date for all CCs.

The TKCC now has its full complement of 8 councillors. If any of these resign they can be replaced by co-opted members, however if the number of elected members drops below 4 there would need to be an interim election.

There is no limit to the number of Associate members who may also be appointed by a majority vote of a CC where there is considered to be a need for individuals with particular skills or knowledge. Associate members have no voting rights on the CC.

Two youth members between the ages of 16-18 can also be appointed provided they live in the area. They would not count towards the maximum of 8 CC members for TKCC.

Data protection – members must confirm that they are happy for the sharing of personal email addresses between each other (this was confirmed later in the meeting). TKCC must also register with the Information Commissioner.

**Action: AS**

### **3) Future Meeting Dates**

Agreed future dates are as follows:

21<sup>st</sup> October 2020  
2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020  
13<sup>th</sup> January 2021  
17<sup>th</sup> February 2021  
17<sup>th</sup> March 2021  
14<sup>th</sup> April 2021  
12<sup>th</sup> May 2021

### **4) Roads**

Iain Moncrieff and Mack Sutherland from HC gave a detailed exposition of the challenges facing the Roads Department, including an overview of the current funding situation and manpower issues in relation to the roads in the Ward 5 area. The Highlands is the largest road network in Scotland. But it has dropped from 15<sup>th</sup> in 2011 to 27<sup>th</sup> in 2018 on the amount of budget it has been allocated by the Scottish Government for road maintenance. The area is totally underfunded.

It is estimated that £180m is needed to cover the backlog of maintenance required on Ward 5 roads £22M just to maintain the road network in its current state. Yet the HC Roads Department receives only £6m per year. And with Covid putting further pressure on funding, the situation appears to be getting worse.

There is a desperate need for more manpower, as the Department is currently down to approximately 35% of the required workforce – staff are off sick and vacancies remain unfilled.

The problems in Ward 5 are exacerbated by the fact that many of the roads are very old and were not built to deal with current traffic volumes. As roads age, they require surfacing, and yet at current investment levels the Department is only able to resurface 2% of HC roads per year.

CC members expressed considerable frustration with the situation, highlighting some of the particularly bad sections of road in the area and pointing out that some communities will become unsustainable if roads are allowed to continue to decay at their current rate.

Ian Moncrieff and Mack Sutherland said they understood. Ian is hoping to prepare a draft programme to present to Ward 5 Councillors, for example he feels a long term plan for the A896 is essential.

The section of A896 at Coulin is currently listed as a priority due to its dangerous condition, and work is due to be carried out to repair this next week.

Cllr Derek Macleod advised that councillors had twice made a plea to the HC for funding for Wester Ross Roads, but they had been ignored and priority placed elsewhere. Cllr Alex MacInnes advised that no major investment in our roads has been made for 10 years.

Everyone agreed that the situation is dire and that a long term plan is required. Alongside Ward 5 Councillors we need to lobby HC for funding. Therefore it was agreed that the TKCC will write directly to the CEO and the Head of the Roads Department and we would encourage anyone to write to the Council.

**Action: TF/CH**

Ian Moncrieff agreed to attend a TKCC meeting in 6 months time to provide an update.

Everyone is encouraged to continue to submit any issues with the road conditions which need addressing to the TKCC for inclusion on the Roads spreadsheet which we submit regularly to the Department.

**5) Emergency Services Report**

Deferred to next meeting.

**6) Matters arising from Minutes of Meeting on 26 August 2020**

Email mailboxes will now be setup for CC members who require a generic email address.

**Action: CD**

CD confirmed the dropbox has been setup and will forward details to everyone.

**Action: CD**

**7) Update on Covid-19 Initiatives**

a) Food/Fuel vouchers

The voucher scheme has now come to an end as the funding has been spent.

b) PPE

Nothing further to report.

c) Website

Old TKCC website – CD confirmed that she has placed a redirect on the old website and that the site will be taken down at a future date.

d) Driver screens

Nothing further to report.

**8) Planning Applications**

a) Telecoms mast - Diabaig to Craig path

CH advised that she and the landowner had had a teleconference with the applicant and they are now awaiting details for a potential site visit by the applicant.

CH also advised that we are still waiting for a response from HC in respect of the clarification from the applicant they said they would seek about the apparent significant change to the original planning application (ie the addition of overhead or underground powerlines). She will chase HC.

**Action: CH**

- b) 20/03424/FUL | Change of use and erection of extension to former forestry building to form studio and garage | Site 100M SW Of Slattadale House Slattadale Loch Maree Achnasheen  
No comments.

**9) Any Other Competent Business**

**Poppy wreaths**

Agreed that Remembrance Day poppy wreaths will be ordered for both Torridon and Kinlochewe, for which a grant of £40 may be available from the ward discretionary budget.

**Action: TF**

Dot Ferguson will arrange for the poppies to be retrieved from within Torridon school.

**Action: DF**

CH advised that she would like to organise an informal get together of the new TKCC team to enable us to get to know each other and have a brainstorming session on priorities for the next 6 – 12 months. CH will suggest dates.

**Action: CH**

Lilah Ford requested a copy of the Scheme of Establishment.

**Action: CD**