

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

Meeting held by Zoom at 7.30pm

Wednesday 9th November 2022

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

7 members of the public.

Before the meeting started, CH welcomed members of the public and drew everyone's attention to TKCC's constitution concerning protocol at TKCC meetings. It was agreed that we should remind people of this at the start of every meeting in the future.

1. Apologies – Councillor Chris Birt.

2. Minutes of the meeting on 5th October 2022

Approved, subject to correcting those present to exclude Steve Schnabel.

3. Matters arising from minutes of 5th October

Bin opposite Torridon Stores- timber screen. Complaint from Torridon resident is in the hands of the Refuse Team at Highland Council. MW has informed the resident that a surround for the bin is planned and the matter will be dealt with when HC have responded to the complaint.

Finger Posts Torridon – TDCA are currently obtaining quotes to replace the signs as necessary.

Blether Bench Diabaig – A questionnaire has been circulated to villagers asking for votes/ideas on where the bench should be placed.

Electricity Balgy Gap – SSEN have provided a quote of £720,000 to the Wilkens for providing electricity to their house. This is clearly unaffordable.

CH reported that at a meeting with Mowi of the community development plan action group, Mowi agreed to lend their weight to trying to get the network upgraded. The aim being to enable mains electricity to be installed (at no cost) for everyone between Annat and Shieldaig, including Mowi who currently also rely on a generator. CH has put Stephen Macintyre of Mowi in touch with the Wilkens. The Wilkens have also contacted Ian Blackford MP to ask for his support.

At the Wilkens' request, it was agreed that TKCC would show our support for an upgrade by writing to SSEN on behalf of everyone affected.

Action: CH/AS

Speeding in Fasaig - MW will continue to chase HC to get the 30mph signs put up.

Action: MW

Parking at Fuaran – The no parking sign will be installed soon.

Action: MW

Slatterdale SCIO – After the 5th October meeting, TKCC received an email from Huw Bannister at Slatterdale expressing concerns about the proposal. Fiona Mackenzie, Trustee Slatterdale SCIO, was informed and email addresses were exchanged so they can discuss directly.

GALE - Planning 4 Real - Coastal Communities Fund – Maria Leslie has confirmed that GALE has applied for funding to conduct a housing needs analysis in an area that includes Kinlochewe. If successful, they intend to engage CHT to do this.

ASC audit for Sgeir Dughall Fish Farm – The ASC standard (ASC Salmon v1.3) by which Bakkafrøst is being assessed includes a requirement for them to demonstrate that they are a good neighbour and conscientious citizen. For example, they need to show they have consulted frequently with the community and held meetings with the community every 6 months.

On behalf of TKCC, CH has submitted a response to ASC stating that to her knowledge, Bakkafrøst has never sought to consult with the community. She also informed the ASC about the large quantity of black fish feeding pipe that litters the shores of Loch Torridon, including on the beach at Red Point and on the shore close to Diabaig.

Scottish Government Cost of Living Support – The link is now on the TKCC website.

Kinlochewe toilet signage – MM had spoken to Mary Peart. There is currently no roadside signage for the COW Trust public toilets on the village approach from the Gairloch side and visitors tend to stop at the garage to use the toilets there instead. COW Trust wish to find out how to get a sign but are not sure who to approach. It was agreed MM should ask Dot Ferguson, HC Ward 5 Manager.

Action: MM

4. Treasurer's report

SS had circulated the Treasurers Report by email. Only changes from the last report were the purchase of the parking sign for Fuaran for £7.99, also £245.00 from the Toilets fund as a contribution towards a new notice board. This closes the Toilets fund. HC annual grant covers Zoom & mailbox subscriptions. Current balance £2,174.07

5. Community Development Plan update

Work continues by the development plan action group to set priorities and needs identified in the survey results. Guidance and advice are being given by Laura of SCDC. The action group is also very grateful to Louse Pearson (WesterRoss Biosphere) who has helped to develop a scoring system to aid decision making and priority setting. This can be used as a reference for reviewing and re-appraisal as implementation proceeds. A first draft of the action plan is hoped to be available towards the end of this year.

HIE have development grants and there is the possibility of funding for a full time development officer to take the plan forward and undertake feasibility studies for projects. CH wished to make it clear that it is not the role of TKCC to be accountable for and take forward community development projects – a separate existing or new community organisation will need to do that.

A decision on the organisation will need to be taken soon, and discussions have already taken place with the TDCA and COW Trust.

MW noted that the action group is doing a lot of work in the background and that more helping hands locally would be welcome. Also, that once the development plan gets going, it should lead to jobs and other opportunities for more people to get involved.

Consultations have been had with businesses, organisations, and other community groups including NTS, Nature Scot, Car Scheme, Gale, WesterRoss Biosphere, COW Trust, TDCA, NHI, Woodland Trust, Mowi and local estates to establish common aims and issues, common funding needs and projects already in place. One example is NTS/Woodland Trust and local estates who are promoting tree planting projects – an area of high interest identified on the survey.

CH reported that she attended an action group meeting with Mowi – attended by Stephen Macintyre and Ken McDonald. As well as the Balgy Gap electricity supply (see above), the group said the community would value better communications with Mowi to understand what is happening in Loch Torridon and when. It is recognised that Mowi are required to adhere to strict fish farming regulations/procedures, however if the community see things happening without understanding what or why, it has the potential to lead to mistrust.

CH noted that Mowi are communicating better with TKCC, but she told Mowi it is not TKCC's role to do their communication for them. Mowi need to use social media/local information portals such as Facebook/Visit Torridon to communicate regularly and directly to the community. CH felt Mowi had begun to take this on board at the meeting.

Mowi said they have funding available to community organisations and initiatives – see mowiscotland.co.uk for details. They also mentioned a Wild Salmonid Support Fund that has been established by the salmon farming sector and have sent us a Wild Fish Monitoring Report which is available from TKCC for anyone interested.

CH concluded it was a valuable meeting as previously most communication with Mowi has been about planning and this meeting was a good way to develop better and positive communications.

6. Community Regeneration Fund application:

MW reported that an unexpected opportunity arose for potential funding from the Community Regeneration Fund. With the encouragement of SCDC, TKCC submitted an expression of interest on behalf of the community for £30,000 to pay for a development officer and conduct a feasibility study into two potential development plan projects, being Torridon school and the campsite.

We have recently been informed that we can go to the next stage. In order to do this, a formal and detailed application needs to be made by 25 November and money spent by March 2024. MW has contacted DTAS (Development Trust Association Scotland) for advice on this.

Any formal application will need to be made by a legal entity (not TKCC) which can engage the development officer and take the studies forward.

7. Correspondence Received

Generator noise from Loch Damph – Donald Rechullin had been in touch concerning generator noise emanating from the fish farm on Loch Damph. CH was pleased to say this problem had now been resolved.

Salt store between Annat and Shieldaig – Sally Cook has asked if the new concrete construction for storing salt needed planning permission. There have been many comments regarding its highly visible and unsightly nature.

MW said he understood from NTS that they were soon to sign a new lease with HC for the existing salt store on the Torridon Glen road, and there was no indication why this should not go ahead. MM said some local authorities have permitted development rights up to certain limit but was unsure about this construction. It was agreed that SW will contact Councillor Chris Birt to clarify the situation.

Action SW

Mowi ASC certification – Following the meeting with the community development plan action group, Stephen Macintyre notified CH that Mowi are applying for ASC certification in relation to their fish farm opposite Wester Alligin. As with Bakkafrost, comments from the public and community organisations are welcomed by the ASC.

It was agreed that TKCC should make comments, and CH will draft a submission.

Action: CH

Boundary Commission – The Boundary Commission is running a public consultation from 8 November until 5 December 2022 concerning proposed changes to constituency boundaries for the UK Parliament. Members of the public and interested parties can view the proposals and submit comments on the Commission's consultation site at www.bcs2023review.com.

New National Park Commission – The Scottish government intends to establish at least one new National Park by early 2026. NatureScot has been commissioned to provide advice and is currently consulting on the issues. MM plans to attend a consultation event on 11th November and will report back.

Action: MM

8. Planning applications

None.

9. Any Other Competent Business

MM reported that Kinlochewe residents have enquired if there has been any financial contribution offered to the community by hydro scheme companies, and if not whether

Kinlochewe residents would be eligible. MM to ask Councillor Birt for information on who could help on this.

Action: MM

Future dates for TKCC meetings – possible change from Wednesday to another day to be discussed by members and advised in due course.

Date of next meeting – Wednesday 7th December at 7.30pm in person at Kinlochewe Hall.