

Minutes (draft) of Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council (TKCC) Meeting held by Zoom on Wednesday, 17 March 2021 at 7pm

Present: Caroline Hamilton (Chair), Tom Forrest (Treasurer), Colin Stevenson, Steve Schnabel, Alpin Stewart, Sally Cook, Mat Webster, Chris Davies (Secretary), Councillor Alex MacInnes

7 members of the public

1. Apologies

None

2. Minutes of meeting on 17th February 2021

Approved

3. Matters arising

Community Gardening

Following canvassing of the community the following ideas will be progressed:

- Diabaig – bench to be installed on the seafront
- Wester Alligin – Christmas tree to be planted to enable the village to decorate it each year
- Inveralligin – small area of land to be fenced off to create an orchard
- Torridon – installation of a bench in front of Fuaran
- Annat – bench to be installed in the churchyard
- Kinlochewe - planters

The benches and fencing will be purchased first, and the remaining funds will be used to purchase vouchers from the Farm shop in Gairloch and these will be distributed to the communities for the purchase of planters and plants.

HC waste management and toilet facilities webinar

CH and MW attended the meeting at which HC outlined their strategy for handling waste this year. This does not extend to providing new bins for the anticipated influx of visitors, therefore MW is investigating grant funding for the purchase of a new bin for Torridon. HC acknowledged that this year is going to be difficult and say they will try to lay on extra waste emptying services as much as possible. They recommended a 'lid in lid' style bin to help reduce flytipping.

HC might provide money under the comfort scheme to help make toilets available to the public. This will be investigated with regards to HLH toilets.

4. Emergency services report

First responders

No callouts but 6 community members waiting for training to join the team once the suspension of training due to COVID is lifted

Fire Service

Since the last meeting, Kinlochewe have received no callouts, but Torridon attended 3 callouts:

- a chimney fire at Kenmore
- the wildfire at Laide
- provided cover at Kyle station while the engines were fighting a large wildfire on Skye

Jo Mitchell has temporarily taken over the role of Watch Commander following the retirement of Seamus.

Home fire safety visits continue to be restricted to “high risk “ categories only due to COVID restrictions.

With the expected influx of visitors in the coming months the focus going forward will be on the prevention of wildfires and refuse fires from camping and motorhomes etc., as well as water safety.

A social media campaign will be started. Working with the SNH rangers and potentially undertaking some evening patrolling, the fire service will engage with visitors to educate and raise awareness with regards to the risk of fires. They will also ensure High Fire Risk signs are installed.

5. Community Development plan

Since the last TKCC meeting, CH and MW advised they had consulted further with HIE, DTAS and SCDC (Scottish Communities Development Centre) about how to identify a consultant to help develop the plan.

SCDC advised that they could provide us with one of their own Development Managers to help us develop the plan, and that this would be funded by their Supporting Communities programme (funded by the Scottish government). CH and MW have therefore had a preliminary discussion with Robin Jamieson, SCDC Development Manager. He describes himself as SCDC’s “rural expert” and has relevant experience of working with other rural communities (e.g. Applecross, Colmonell) on development plans. He would be available to start working with us immediately. The total value of this support would be in the region of £15-20,000.

Following circulation of the minutes of the TKCC meeting on 17th February 2021, we received information that a community development plan was produced in conjunction with the TDCA around 10 years ago. SS has checked and has been unable to find any information/ documentation about this. HIE have also been unable to find any documentation but noted that someone had been seconded to work with the TDCA in 2006. TF advised that a small amount of LEADER funding had been provided at the time, so will investigate to see if he has any further information.

Action: TF

Following discussion it was agreed that we should proceed with SCDC developing the plan.

A group will be set up to work alongside SCDC comprising all members of the TKCC, with representatives from the TCDA, COW, Kinlochewe Hall and the Hickman Trust invited to join.

Action: CH

The next stage will be for the group to meet with SCDC to start the process.

6. Communities Housing Trust (CHT)

Several members of the TKCC attended a meeting with CHT who presented ideas for some new affordable housing – namely a re-development of a property in Alligin; and a development site behind Darroch Park in Torrison offering a mix of social, self-build and rent to buy housing. Their allocation policy for the housing would be based upon our community needs and taking into consideration the HC points system.

CHT are currently in a very early planning/discussion phase, but are extremely keen to work with both the TKCC and the local community in taking their ideas forward. Their ideas are based on a housing needs survey for the area which they advised was undertaken in 2018.

CHT said they would forward documentation about their ideas, including their allocation policy and the 2018 survey, to TKCC members for further information and discussion with the community in due course. It was suggested that an updated housing survey questionnaire could form part of the survey for Community Development Plan. AS to follow up and chase the documentation.

Action: AS

7. Waste and toilets

MW advised that he had this week had positive discussions with HLH about the potential re-opening of the campsite toilets (after 26th April). HLH are happy to work with the community to find a solution, but they will be unable to provide funding to help with the costs of increased cleaning requirements etc. MW advised that he had received pledges of approx £4K towards covering these costs. It is clear that the campsite will not be reopening this year.

TKCC should know within the next few weeks whether it will be possible to open the toilets. If it is, the grant funding will need to be secured and we will need to advertise for help with the cleaning which would be on a paid basis.

AM advised that he will contact MW re the possibility of HC providing a contribution towards the costs.

Action: MW/AM

8. Seamus MacNally Collection/local hero awards

TKCC are organising a collection for Seamus MacNally on his retirement. Details of how the community can contribute will be circulated shortly.

After receiving some donations from residents for PPE provided, we have decided to use these donations to reinstate the Local Hero awards and an invitation for nominations will be circulated shortly.

9. Treasurer's report

Current funds: TKCC - £1,059.49, HIE Covid/Communities Recovery - £2,696.98.

10. 2021 National Census

TF advised that the National Census, which is due to take place on 21 March 2021, has been cancelled in Scotland for the first time since the 2nd World War, with COVID given as the reason, even though it is completed at home/online. It will now take place in 2022. The census provides important statistical information which many councils use for the allocation of resources and budget going forward.

It was agreed that a representation should be made to the Scottish Parliament as the statistical information can make a big difference to small communities. TF agreed to prepare a draft letter on behalf of the TKCC and will circulate for comment.

Action: TF

11. Any Other Competent Business

Thomas O'Halloran, the new Head Teacher for Kinlochewe and Shieldaig primary schools joined the meeting to introduce himself. He expressed the importance of involving local children in community projects and development plans, and of developing links between schools and the local community.

Torridon School

No update has been received from HC on the ownership of the school house/play park etc., so we will continue to chase for a response.

Action: CH

Scottish elections

The TKCC had been contacted by Molly Nolan, MSP candidate for the Liberal Democrats to attend a future meeting. We responded saying we were happy for her to attend as a member of the public but that the TKCC cannot give a platform to any political party.

Bealach Mhor Cycle race

TF advised that he is dealing with an insurance claim in relation to an accident involving the Bealach Mhor race several years ago, and that the organisers were not insured. AM advised he will investigate re the insurance requirements and contact TF accordingly.

Action: AM

Celtman

The organisers of the Celtman have this evening advised that the Celtman will be going ahead in a reduced capacity, so we should pick back up the conversation re the amended routing.

Action: SS

TF advised that the Cape Wrath Ultra has been moved from May to the 3rd/4th August.