

Minutes (draft) of Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council (TKCC)
Meeting held by Zoom at 7pm
Thursday 1st September 2022

Present: Caroline Hamilton (Chair), Sue Whiting (Secretary), Steve Schnabel (Treasurer), Tom Forrest, Maud McIntyre, Colin Stevenson, Alpin Stewart, Councillor Chris Birt, Louise Pearson (Biosphere)

8 members of public.

Before the meeting started, CH welcomed MM from Incheril who has been co-opted as a new member of TKCC.

1. Apologies - Mat Webster

2. Minutes of the meeting on 13th July 2022

Approved subject to recording that the decision to object to planning application 22/02482/FUL was by a majority, with 2 members not in favour.

Action SW

3. Matters arising from minutes of 13th July

Bin opposite Torridon Stores - plan for timber screen. MW has been trying to get a response from HC. If no response is received by 15 September, we will assume they approve and go ahead with the work.

Action AS/MW

Planning application 22/02482/FUL Marine Fish Farm - After a majority agreement at the meeting on 13th July, TKCC submitted a letter of objection. Several residents told TKCC they also sent objections.

Since then, CH reported that a lengthy response was received from Mowi that seeks to address our concerns as well as those raised by the community. Mowi also suggested discussing the issues at a meeting with the community development plan action group (see below). This meeting was cancelled due to Covid. Another meeting is planned in October, date to be confirmed.

It was agreed to forward Mowi's response to people who we know are concerned about the fish farm, however we will make it clear to Mowi it is not our responsibility to forward their views. MM pointed out their response should be on the HC planning website for all to see anyway.

Action: CH

CS said he did not support TKCC's objection because he felt it had certain details wrong. CS and CH agreed to discuss this separately and report back.

Action: CH/CS

Regarding asking Cllr Birt about the lack of action by HC, since he was not at the meeting at the time this item was discussed, this matter was deferred.

Planning application 22/02535/FUL Construction of 2 weirs and burn intake: extension to Gleann na Muice hydro scheme - TKCC members made no comments.

Community e-bike trial – 2 e-bikes have been available for use by the community since July and a good number of people have used them. CH thanked South West Ross Community Car Scheme very much indeed for their help with co-ordinating, and Torridon Hotel for bike transport.

HC Ranger Gregor Watson – SW has not contacted him yet regarding the meeting in December, she will do so nearer the time.

Action: SW

Woodland Trust – a meeting with the community development plan action group has taken place (see below).

Planning Democracy – CH has completed the survey designed to assess whether CC have the requisite skills or if there is a training need.

Bench at Diabaig – CH has received some suggestions about where it should go, however a full canvassing of opinion has not yet taken place.

Action: CH

Kinlochewe to Coulin path – TF has met with HC and together they have marked out the path. He expects the upgrade, which will include signage and waymarking, to take place soon.

Finger post signs in Torridon – update deferred until the next meeting.

4. Treasurer's report

TKCC has received the HC grant of £447.27 for 2022/23 (amount unchanged on previous years). Expenses to date this year total £410.39, including website/email hosting, insurance, Zoom subscription. TKCC's own funds now stand at £1,558.86. In addition, we still hold £245 in the toilets fund which will be spent on maintenance of the toilet block in Fasaig, and £700 in the Covid-19 "garden fund". We need to decide what to do with this money.

6. Update from Community Development Plan action group

CH reported the action group is refining the results from the community survey, with a view to coming up with a draft list of priorities that can be put back to the community for their thoughts. She encouraged as many people as possible to join the action group.

Ideas from the survey have been grouped into 4 themes: People, Place, Travel and Tourism. Analysing and interpreting these ideas is a big job, and the action group is extremely grateful to LP from the Biosphere who is working with the group on this.

Members of the action group have met with other community stakeholders - including the Community Car Scheme, NHI, GALE, NatureScot, NTS, Woodland Trust and the Biosphere –and

there are plans to meet with more. This is to obtain their views on the survey results, understand their priorities and see how their plans can dovetail in.

A sub-group is looking at community asset transfer schemes. This is particularly with regard to Torridon School which, as it has recently been emptied, may be back on HC radar and available to take over. Previous consultation plans were delayed by Covid.

Laura Macdonald from SCDC continues to provide valuable support. She has joined some of the meetings with stakeholders and will help to write the plan. SCDC will also provide support to enable a community event to be held at which the draft development plan can be presented to the community. Nothing will be decided without further consultation, and it is hoped the event will take place before Christmas.

Once the development plan is agreed, a community organisation will need to be responsible for implementing it. It is not yet clear whether this will be an existing organisation or whether a new one will need to be formed.

AS noted it is likely that the final plan will be split into two sections: shorter term things which can be achieved, getting funding and cracking on ourselves, then also identifying things that we need others to do for us, e.g., roads, finding pressure groups and others with the same aims and having a longer term plan. LP said she hopes to have summaries of these completed within the next couple of weeks. Many thanks to Laura Reid, Sally Cook and Chris Johnson who are supporting her.

7. Mains electricity – Torridon to Shieldaig

Sean and Julia Wilken and Nigel Thomas presented this item.

Currently there is an 8km gap in mains electricity supply between Annat and Shieldaig, and they would like TKCC's help in getting this installed. Approx. 7 out of 10 properties along that road rely on generators which create noise and pollution.

Residents have been asking for this to be done for some time. So far SSE's position is that residents must pay for it themselves. The price they have quoted is £250,000.

This is despite the fact that installing mains electricity would appear to be of great benefit to a wide area. It would complete a loop from Achnasheen that currently runs through Lochcarron and around Applecross, but which ends in Shieldaig. Completing the loop would provide security for everyone on it since if the power goes down in a storm in Lochcarron say, it could be provided to Shieldaig and Applecross from a different direction. It should also increase stability and help meet increased demand.

CH spoke for most present by noting it was astonishing that SSE should ask private individuals to pay for infrastructure upgrades. Cllr Birt said he was unaware of the situation; it was beyond the scope of Ward Councillors but he was in full support.

SW asked if there were any technical issues. NT's view was that no physical or technical challenges existed, and the work could be done quickly. The Shieldaig end has pole and interconnector switches ready.

TKCC members agreed that we would do our best to help get the situation resolved. AS to be added as a contact to keep abreast of correspondence.

Action: CS/AS

8. Correspondence

Winter salt pit - HC Roads Dept had contacted TKCC to say they were looking for a new site for their winter salt pit. This problem has now gone away since NTS has told us they are in the process of agreeing a lease to HC of the current site in Glen Torridon.

NHI Energy Support - This is a new support programme aimed at helping community and voluntary groups implement energy saving projects. Grants of up to £1,000 are available. See [Infrastructure Support Programme \(CISP\) — North Highland Initiative](#)

Dornie and District CC – are working with Community Energy Scotland (CES) to develop a climate action plan. CES assist community groups in energy efficiency. It was agreed this could be a useful contact for the community development plan action group.

Hybrid working – HC had asked us to complete a survey stating whether TKCC was still using Zoom for our meetings, and if so, was there anything we needed to assist us. CH completed the survey asking for equipment to enable proper hybrid (ie, part Zoom, part in person) meetings to take place in Torridon Community Centre and/or Kinlochewe Hall.

Celtman – had asked for the community's views on their Solo Point 5 event. It was agreed we would thank them for involving us, but this would be more appropriately answered by others such as TDCA who were directly involved. TF reported that next year's event would use Cromasaig for the cycling finish and that runners would not be using the Glen road.

Action: SW

8. Planning applications

22/03188/FUL | Change of use of outbuilding to bothy and erection of extensions, installation of private drainage system and formation of new accesses including an area of hardstanding | Croft 1 Diabaig Torridon

Diabiag residents Jane Carpenter and Chris Davies were present and expressed serious concerns about this application.

These include that the site is at the bottom of the burn that runs down from the loch at Upper Diabaig. This a known flood area, the burn frequently bursts its banks there and even washed the bridge away a few years ago. The proposal includes a large area of hardstanding that may greatly affect run off from the hill and lead to the house and garden at number 1, Diabaig (which is directly below it) being flooded.

The proposed drainage arrangements appear to involve discharging foul water into the burn just a few metres away. The burn is home to a large amount of wildlife, including otters, and any foul water will run directly into a part of the sea which is a popular bathing spot for locals and visitors. In addition, if the drainage system is flooded, sewage could end up on the road or in next door neighbours' gardens.

CD raised the issue of the applicant being a non-resident crofter and was also concerned about the village's electricity supply. She said that part of the village was already operating at full capacity and a new bothy/house could lead to a loss of power for local businesses and residents.

It was agreed TKCC should lend its voice on behalf of the community to share concerns about flooding, drainage and electricity. We will therefore ask HC to ensure it consults fully with the relevant authorities, including SEPA and SSE, before making a decision.

Action: CH/MM

CS felt a site visit for TKCC members who are not familiar with the site would be beneficial.

22/02722/FUL | Erection of replacement house | Avenue Cottage Kinlochewe Achnasheen IV22 2PE. No comments.

22/03488/FUL | Erect house. Installation of foul drainage system | Land At 8 Wester Alligin.

As details were only circulated shortly before the meeting, it was agreed any comments would be discussed by email.

9. Any other competent business

Roads meeting - HC had convened a meeting of all community councils in Ward 5, together with HC Councillors, to discuss roads. This meeting was postponed until 15 September as a result of the shootings on Skye. SW and TF will attend.

Action: SW/TF

Torridon School - Following a water leak, HC has recently cleared everything out of the school. Sally Cook co-ordinated various groups to be present and pick up anything they could make use of. These included TDCA, car scheme, NTS, crofters, Kinlochewe School, Torridon craft club.

Road verges – following a request from a resident, we will ask HC to cut the verges as visibility is very difficult in places.

Action: TF

Speeding in Fasaig – residents have complained this is getting worse. TF to contact HC to see what can be done.

Action: TF

Parking at Fuaran – reports of increasing numbers of campervans using the parking spaces. To consider putting up a residents only sign.

Action: MW

Slattadale SCIO – A new community organisation is currently undertaking a community asset transfer of a small part of Slattadale Forest. This is to be used for an outdoor education facility for Gairloch High School. Fiona Mackenzie has offered to attend a TKCC meeting and explain their plans. It was agreed to accept this offer and also suggest the action plan group talk to her as well.

Action: SW

Date of next meeting - Wednesday, 5 October at 7.30pm on Zoom