



Minutes of AGM: 7th November 2024.

Present: (8) Chris Davies, Robert Forshaw (by zoom), Zoe Hudson (secretary), Karen Starr, Mat Webster (Chair). Co-opted members: Stewart Macpherson, Rory Shannon, Chris Johnson

Members of the Public: (10) Phil Reid, Sheila Bates, Les Bates, Alpin Stewart, Ruth Davies, Sue Whiting, Jane Dick, Katie Anderson, Lynn Henni, Jess Carnegie

1. Apologies

Laura Reid, Wilma Beaton

2. Approval of minutes of last meeting (7.11.23)

Proposed: CD Seconded: ZH

3. Matters arising

None

4. TDCA Annual chairs report - review of the year

This is my second AGM as chair, and wow its been a, shall we say an 'interesting' year. More about that shortly. There is much more to running TDCA than some people might think, but it is important to stress that it is a team effort. I would like to thank the other directors and all staff (Wilma, Karen, Katie, Hannah, Em, Bori, Ruth & Sheila) for their hard work and commitment during the past year. Even those who only work occasionally or for a few hours really do help contribute to the smooth running of the centre. I would particularly like to thank Bori and Ruth who have covered the cleaning when needed, and often at short notice. We have had some changes to the team of Directors, earlier in the year we said goodbye to Gail Lowe, and both Bobby Forshaw and Laura Reid are standing down at this AGM. Thanks to all three of them for all they have done over the last few years. We recently co-opted Rory Shannon, Chris Johnson and Stewart MacPherson as Directors, thanks to them for getting involved.

I would also like to thank everyone in the community who has volunteered their time to make events like celtman, weddings and the cinema a success. So far in 2024 we have recorded 91 hours of volunteer time plus 155 hours were paid to those helping out at Celtman events. Supporting the centre by giving your time and helping to spread the load is really important, its not something you need to do every week, but we do need people to join in. Making the centre a success requires a real team effort. Although we tend to refer to helping out as volunteering, at commercial events, if you wish, you can get paid for your time.

The previous 12 months have been challenging on many fronts. Costs such as fuel bills, wages, contractor rates and prices from suppliers continue to increase but we have had major challenges to deal with too.

After much delay our electric supply was upgraded in June 2023. This was necessary so that we could install EV chargers. Unfortunately, they have been regularly out of order due to them tripping, it turned out that the electric supply to the building was not calibrated correctly by SSEN. To find this out cost us around £1000 in unnecessary repairs and a lot of lost income, but even more annoying took up a lot of valuable time which could have been better spent. Fingers crossed the issue is now resolved and we are currently waiting for a response to our claim for compensation from SSEN.

The replacement of the failed ground source heat pump which heats the centre has been ongoing throughout the summer. Accessing grant funding has proved challenging, the first fund we applied to was oversubscribed and we missed out, and we are expecting to hear the decision on our second-choice funding application any day now. If that doesn't come good then we will need to call in the back up pledges which were made by members of the community. All this has been a major project for us and we are very appreciative of the patience shown by our tenants, staff, hall users and customers who have had to put up with cooler temperatures. The current situation is that the new heat pump is ordered and due to be shipped from Austria shortly. Hopefully the works will be completed by the end of November.

The heat pump issues have also helped to highlight that areas of the centre are starting to show their age due to general wear and tear and need a refresh. The building suffered storm damage last winter and we had to replace guttering and fencing. We have also been looking at refurbishing the hall side kitchen, toilets and entrance. The heating failure was not something we anticipated but with hindsight it is not totally unexpected that parts of the building are coming to the end of their lifespan, as most are original, from when the old wooden hall was replaced with the new modern facility in 1995/6

On a more positive note I am pleased to say that we have kept up with the increases in the living wage, paying more than the recommended amount and have ensured our team are fairly paid. We have also been grateful to receive a number of small grants which have helped us to keep on top of repairs, although it would be desirable to have more of a push on the refurbishments so the to do list doesn't become unmanageable. And just to clarify, we have sufficient income to operate the centre, it is the refurbishment projects which are a little out of reach, as we don't have much of a surplus at the end of each year. And we need to keep enough money in the bank to keep us liquid. As with many seasonal businesses, it is often the case that the bills come in before the income to pay them arrives.

Received from/ Spent on	Amount in (*provisional figure)	Amount out (*provisional figure)	Total
General Repairs & Improvements			
R House	£1500		
Torrison Hotel	£250		
North Highland Initiative	£2000		
Albyn Homes	£500		
Bakkafrost	£2000		
Celtman	£500		
			£6750 Received
Gutters & Coping stones New Fence & Porch repairs		£3625	
Fire Door		£550*	
Signage		£1000	
Toilet flooring		£4000*	£9175 Spent (£2425 from reserves)
Heating			
SSEN	£18108.06*		
North Highland Initiative	£2500		
From reserves	£12072.04*		£32680.10* received
Heat Pump		£30180.10*	
Replace radiators		£2500*	£32680.10* spent
			£0.00

We also received grant funding from Highland Council, National Lottery and MOWI to fully fund the Development Officer position. And from Highland Council to fully fund a new Recycling Hub project. Work on the School feasibility study has been fully funded by Scottish Land fund and lottery money.

It is clear that we need to continue and even expand our commercial activities, to help keep the centre running and delivering more of a surplus. It is important that we don't have all our eggs in one or two baskets. As directors we are ever mindful that we are not a simple village hall. We have a large building to maintain, staff to pay and leases to negotiate. But we must not forget that our reason for existing is to provide affordable high-quality facilities for local residents and a place to gather - either at formal events and experiences or a space to drop in for a chinwag. We are regularly reviewing how we operate in order to achieve these goals and recently the directors met for an evaluation and brainstorming day as part of forming our strategic plan

for the next few years. Prior to this we carried out a staff survey and received lots of thoughts, comments and ideas from the team which will be included in the strategy.

At the end of April we welcomed Katie to the team as our development officer. It has been fantastic to see Katie get to know our community and for her to get our community more closely involved with the third sector across the North West Highlands. It takes time to develop these relationships and we hope to find funding to employ Katie for a further year. Katie is moving forward with projects as part of the community development plan, so that's things like the school and playpark, recycling hub and campsite feasibility study. Katie has supported the grant applications for the heating and helped TKCC with the area place plan. It has also been very helpful to have an extra pair of hands around the centre, thanks to Katie for being so flexible on many occasions. Katie is backed up by the volunteers on the development plan sub-committee, which is led by Chris Johnson and the subcommittee reports to the board of Directors.

Our revised articles of association are on the agenda for this meeting. Our existing articles are not up to modern day standard, as they are around 15 years old and legislation has moved on. As we launch the new articles we will tie into this revised membership benefits, and how members can support us. Special thanks to Alpin Stewart for his help and expertise with revising the articles.

We are delighted that Lis continues to run the popular WWS café. The café brings so much to the atmosphere and feel of the centre, and fits well with us offering the art and craft gallery.

To ensure the Centre continues to thrive we do need people to come forward to support the Centre and the single best way of doing that is by using the centre on a regular basis. But we also need to hear what you want to be able to see and do at the centre. What we are doing right and positive feedback about what we can improve on. And from the directors and staff side we will continue to work hard to make the centre the best we can with the resources we have available. And it is worth noting that many people comment how lucky we are to have such a fantastic centre in such a small community, we must not forget all the hard work which went into building it and further developing it.

I couldn't finish this report without mentioning the amazing support which all sections of the community showed towards supporting the centre when we launched the heating fundraiser. When asked for £10k, people pledged an incredible £17k. This really shows how much people value the centre and its place in the community. So in closing please can you give our community a round of applause.

Thank you.

5. Treasurer's report

Year ended 30 April 2024

The statutory accounts have been independently examined and will be offered for approval, copies will be available on our website or at Companies House in due course.

Income for the year totalled £114,962 (2023 - £108,784), this included restricted funds relating to Torridon Primary School feasibility study, which was carried out as part of the Community Development plan.

Income from trading activities for the year fell considerably compared with the previous year, which had seen post-covid weddings, and also concerts and related bar sales.

It was pleasing to see that the clubs, workshops, markets, and letting of spaces all held up well compared with 2023. Commission on Arts and Crafts showed a slight decrease compared with 2023, reflecting the continuing cost of living pressures people in general are feeling.

The Wee Whistle Stop Café remains a significant and important contributor to our funds and to footfall within the Centre.

Two EV charging points have been repaired and re-commissioned, and now we hope will offer reliable charging for electric vehicles coming into the area.

Expenses for the year totalled £122,766 but after taking out the expenditure covered by grants, the operating expenses were £97,232 compared to £85,260 the previous year.

Wages and Salaries rose by 9% partly due to paying our invaluable helpers for their time in ensuring the celtman events went ahead successfully and in staffing the bars. Our commitment to pay all staff the real living wage or above also impacted staff costs.

Electricity costs have continued to rise, and we have done well to keep this rise to a minimum while the hall heating has been out of action.

Repairs are and will continue to be a significant expenditure as areas of the fabric of the hall begin to show their age. The directors have a repairs/maintenance and upgrading schedule which they plan to work through as funds allow.

Cash in the bank on 30 April 2024 was £38,181 (2023: £38,820).

6. Special Resolution: Adoption of revised Articles of Association

MW spoke to the amendments to the meeting. Alpin spoke to the changes and one of the main changes is that members liability is £1 if for any reason the company fails. The main reason for changes of the articles is that they are

very out of date and grant funders are expecting to see these changes, for example that land transfers stays as a public asset. Also the changes demonstrate good practice and gives better protection for the community.

There will be a realignment and all memberships will start from May, again this is good practice.

The Special Resolution was put to a vote. All current members present (13) voted in favour and 9 proxy votes were received which also voted in favour. Therefore the motion was passed.

6. Elections for the Torridon District Community Association directors

There were no applications for new directors this year.

Directors are appointed for a 3 year term, and can serve a maximum of 2 terms before needing to take a 1 year break. Directors stand down in rotation.

Current Directors: Mat Webster, Zoe Hudson, Chris Davies, Robert Forshaw, Laura Reid.

Co-opted members: Stewart Macpherson, Rory Shannon, Chris Johnson

All director and co-opted members stand down at the meeting.

Chris is in her second term; Zoe and Mat are in her third term

Bobby and Laura are stepping down this year. All other directors agreed to continue for next year and co-opted members agreed to become directors.

Zoe Hudson agreed to continue as Secretary

Mat Webster agreed to continue as Chair

There are a maximum of 8 directors. We would welcome new directors and they can be co-opted if they wish to join.

7. AOB

None

8. Date of next meeting: Provisional date 6th November 2025