TDCA Newsletter: 14th October 2025

As I previously mentioned, historically we have always waited until our AGM in November to update members on what we have been working on during the year. It has been suggested that a year is a long time without hearing very much so these newsletters are intended to come out roughly bi-monthly to keep everyone updated about what is going on. This newsletter is the second and follows up on our August general update. This time we will focus on details of our plans for refurbishments and upgrades and how the works will be funded.

Investment Plan

The Director's plan is to invest almost £200k in the centre by the end of 2026 to ensure that the centre continues to offer top class facilities. Although ongoing maintenance will always be needed, we are confident that with this investment we will be well set for the next decade.

It is important to note that other than ringfenced funds, TDCA does not have any money in reserve, and this is not a healthy situation to be in. However, we are working towards having enough funds in the bank to be able to continue to pay our wages/ bills for at least 3 (probably 6) months if something happened and all income ceased. Like it did during COVID. Neither do we make much profit each year. The Centre just about breaks even. But we are working on it. The investment should reduce our energy costs, allowing us to make a small surplus, which we can then either reinvest or use to start to build up a reserve. The improved facilities, along with better marketing, should bring us extra income (eg more weddings), again adding to our surplus.

We hope you will come on this journey with us and help where you can. Thank you to everyone who has already donated. If you feel able to offer support now, the Go fund Me online appeal is still live (https://www.gofundme.com/f/loch-torridon-community-centre-repairs-and-refurbishments)

I will aim to send out the next newsletter in time for Christmas, by when we will hopefully have good news on phase 1 of the refurbishment plans outlined below. The information we are providing below gives you quite a lot of detail about what we plan to do, by when and how it will be funded. I hope you find it informative, and approve of our plans. If anyone thinks it is worthwhile having a Q&A session – either in person or via Zoom – we could arrange that, or if only a few people have questions, we could just have a one-to-one chat.

And don't forget, we have our AGM meeting on 6th November so you are all welcome to come along.

Mat Webster
Chair
On behalf of TDCA Board of Directors

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Go Fund Me Campaign

When the heat pump failed, after receiving many generous offers of support we started this fundraiser. To date we have raised £4850 of our £25k target via this platform. We set ourselves the £25k target but at that stage we only had guestimates for most of the projects. Obtaining quotes from contractors is very difficult, and when funders want us to get three quotes to ensure they are getting best value for money, it is even more of a challenge.

Repairs and Refurbishments Fund

Early in 2025 we established this internal fund to bring together some smaller pots of money which we already held and the money which had recently been raised as part of our Go Fund Me campaign.

Repairs and Refurbishments Fund Analysis		
Income		**Source of funds**
Go fund me	£4,679	Online fundraiser
Direct donations	£13,000	Received in response to online fundraiser but paid direct to us
Lunch club	£2,501	Funds held when lunch club ceased. Club agreed to allocate to larger fund
Legacy	£8,632	Historic legacy from Greig Hall. Allocated to larger fund by directors
Chemistry of Death Film	£1,800	Received from film company in 2023. Allocated to larger fund by directors
Total	**£30,612**	

£15K has been allocated as match funding for grant funding applications for Phase 1 of the refurbishment plans, and £10k for phase 2 (see below). This leaves us with only £5,612, which we really need to keep as a contingency for smaller repairs which naturally need doing from time to time. This is not a huge contingency, as who knows what is around the corner (thankfully Storm Amy left the building alone) so our aim is to try to increase this fund.

Refurbishments – phase 1

We have identified our most urgent projects. The solar PV and battery storage are important because they will significantly reduce our reliance on electricity from the grid, and therefore reducing our energy bills and making the centre more sustainable. It will of course also reduce our carbon footprint. We must urgently replace broken and drafty fire doors for safety and energy efficiency reasons. A move to LED lighting with motion sensors should further reduce our electricity usage. The hall kitchen is no longer fit for purpose, especially for large events (including Celtman) so needs upgrading. As does our IT equipment and infrastructure to ensure it meets current user expectations. We have multiple quotes for most of these projects.

Projects - phase 1	Estimated Cost
Lighting upgrades to LED/PIR	£16,000
Solar PV and Battery storage	£51,614
Solar PV and Battery storage contingency	£6,386
Replacement Windows and Doors	£27,000
Kitchen and entrance hall upgrade	£43,000
IT Cabling/PC/Printer	£6,000
Total	£150,000

To pay for this investment we have applied for several grants. We have a strong relationship with HIE and Highland Councils CRF team. CARES is a government fund aimed at helping community buildings switch to renewables. Unfortunately, we were not successful in our application to SSE.

All the grants listed below have been applied for and we expecting to find out if we have been successful in early-mid November. Subject to funding we are hoping to have these projects completed by late Spring 2026.

Funding Source - phase 1	Estimated Amount
SSE PCNZ	£0
CARES (80% of solar)	£41,291
TDCA own funds (10%)	£15,000
HIE Green Grant Fund	£40,000
HIE LSWR area team	£18,709
CRF Coastal Communities	£35,000
	£150,000

As part of the funding applications, we must provide match funding, so £15k of our own funds is to come from the Repairs and Refurbishments Fund.

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Refurbishments – phase 2

As you might expect the planning of this phase is not as far advanced as phase 1, but we were somewhat caught out when the ground source heat pump failed in 2024 and are trying to plan ahead as best we can. The projects in phase 2 are not as attractive to external funders, as for example, solar panels are, so we would almost certainly need to have more match funding and raise more money locally. We are however already having conversations with some potential funders, who are anonymous at this stage. There could well be changes to the projects which we take forward for phase 2 and some of the costs are still guestimates, but we do have quotes for 3 of the projects. It is possible we could start some of phase 2 in Spring 2026, with completion by the end of the year or in early 2027.

Projects - phase 2	Estimated Cost
Exterior painting	£4,000
Harling repairs	£4,000
Internal decorating	£8,000
Upgrade internal fire doors in hall	£5,000
Replace toilet floor coverings - gallery	£8,000
Replace stairlift	£8,000
Grounds improvements	£3,000
Total	£40,000

Funding Source - phase 2	Estimated Amount
TDCA existing funds (25%)	£10,000
Funder A	£8,000
Funder B	£8,000
Funder C	£4,000
Local fundraising	£10,000
Total	£40,000

Phase 2 also requires £10000 of local fundraising, so shortly we will be thinking about how we might do that. It is likely we will focus on fundraising in the next newsletter.

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