

Note of a Discussion during the meeting of Torridon and Kinlochewe CC at 7pm on 12 June 2019, to discuss the Future of Torridon Primary School

Norma Young, Area Care and Learning Manager (West), and Ian Jackson (Education Officer – Resources) attended the above meeting of the Community Council. An earlier meeting had been held with parents (see separate note).

The Chairperson, Terry Doe, expressed anger and dismay at how CC representatives had been denied entry to what he termed the “secret” meeting with parents at 5pm. He suggested that NY had described the meeting as “secret” and asked what it was that was discussed, that could not be shared with the Community Council.

NY advised that, when conducting informal consultation, it was standard practice for THC to meet separately with parents and with the CC, often on the same evening. She dismissed as false the allegation that she had described the meeting as “secret” and challenged Mr Doe over this claim. She made it clear that it had been the parents’ own decision to initially meet with Highland Council officials without the CC being present. The CC representatives had been invited to the parents meeting at 5.30pm.

NY said she wished to have the above paragraph recorded. She was content that the CC record their own interpretation, as long as the HC’s reply was also recorded.

Anne Macrae asked whether they could see minutes from the meeting with parents, and this was agreed.

A member of the public asked whether the school was to be re-opened, adding that people needed to know why it had closed in the first place. NY responded that HC was not in attendance at the meeting to discuss the historical issues around the mothballing of the school.

NY advised that parents had asked that the school continue to be mothballed, and that HC had agreed to this. NY and IJ would return for a meeting in the summer term of 2020.

A member of the public commented that HC should have consulted with the community before now. The school has been mothballed for 7 years.

The CC asked about the nature of the lease for the school site and whether “reversionary rights” would apply if the building were no longer used for educational purposes. IJ undertook to enquire about this with HC legal staff, and to liaise with the National Trust for Scotland.

Concerns were expressed about the condition of the Torridon PS building, and the CC asked for assurances that the building would be maintained.

The CC asked whether the school building could be used for a Parent and Toddler Group. NY advised the village already had a community centre that could be used for this purpose, and THC would not wish to undercut the Community Centre.

Several persons commented that the Community Centre was not a good location for the group, as the Centre would not allow the parents to place displays of artwork, or to store equipment.

NY commented that the school building was not presently available for hire or rent.

A question was raised about the future of the play area adjacent to the school. NY advised this should be taken up with Robert Campbell, Head of School Estates.