

TORCH REPORT – TCC AGM 1 June 2023

A busy year with lots of work behind the scenes by the TORCH committee in preparation for the coming winter.

We secured funding of just over £25K from various sources, including SSEN and the Marr Area Committee Small Grants Scheme. This has helped finance these activities including the purchase of a brand new large generator to help power a community refuge during a major emergency.

We also reached a formal agreement with Mid Deeside Church to use their building as an emergency community refuge on a temporary basis until the proposed refurbishment of the Learney Hall is completed. A joint working group between TORCH and the church was formed as a result.

Planning permission was obtained for a small shipping container behind the church on a temporary basis for two-years and that was recently installed. The generator has been stored in the container and made secure. Hook-up works have been underway and will be completed next week.

The generator will then be commissioned by the supplier and the TORCH team trained in its operation. All the TORCH equipment which was held at the Learney Hall is now stored at the church.

The small generator which was in place at the Learney Hall has been relocated to Tornaveen Hall for use there in an emergency. New equipment has also been purchased for Tornaveen Hall.

Alongside that, we also put together a community emergency help and advice guide which has been distributed to all households in the TCC area and is also available in village shops and businesses. This guide gives practical advice on how to prepare for an emergency and what to do when something happens.

In addition, TORCH has also been giving advice to other community groups wanting to set up their own resilience response. The most recent was Banchory Community Council, where I met with the vice-chair to talk through the process.

Looking ahead, we are planning to hold a pre-winter training session for the pool of 30- volunteers we have to help out during a response. This will be held at the church where we can familiarise them with the building and walk them through the protocols and procedures.

We will also be taking part in a community resilience conference in October for groups located in Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City.

All of that means that Torphins and Tornaveen will be well prepared and resilient when it comes to a community emergency, particularly in the aftermath of a major winter storm.

We would not have been able to reach this position without the help and kindness of the people in our community and I want to finish by thanking the following:

- Kenny Cruickshank and the team at the Station Garage who very generously securely stored our new generator until the planning process for the container was completed.
- Andy Fowler at Waulkmill Farm who unloaded the generator when it was delivered to the Station Garage.
- The planning team at Aberdeenshire Council for their excellent support and advice during the planning process.
- Nick Edgar and his team for the absolutely brilliant job they did in unloading the container when it was delivered, installing it behind the church and placing the generator in it. This was a complex and delicate job which the four of them made look easy and refused to take any payment for it as their contribution to the community.
- Stuart Steel for all the electrical works and advice on the generator installation.
- Colin Guy and the facilities team at Mid Deeside Church for all their support in making the whole process of relocating the emergency refuge so smooth and trouble-free.
- TORCH committee member Joan Donald who recently stood down after sterling service since the aftermath of Storms Corrie and Malik.
- And last but not least, a big thank you to colleagues at TCC for their support and guidance, particularly treasurer Eric Day who has patiently dealt with a blizzard of TORCH payments, invoices and receipts.

That concludes the TORCH report and I will do my best to answer any questions anyone may have.

Thank you.