

Minute of the Meeting of Birsay Community Council held in Birsay Community Centre and via Teams on Thursday, 30 November 2023 at 19:30

Present:

Mr R Delday, Miss K Coghill, Ms D Clouston, Mr S Davidson (via Teams), Mr E Harvey, Mrs V Sinclair and Mr S Spence.

In Attendance:

- Councillor R King.
 - Councillor J Stevenson
 - Councillor O Tierney
 - Councillor D Tullock.
 - Ms L Richardson, Head of Neighbourhood Services (via Teams).
 - Mr A Leitch, Site Manager, RSPB Orkney.
 - Mrs J Montgomery, Empowering Communities Liaison Officer (via Teams).
 - Ms J Smith-Saville, West Mainland Link Officer/Clerk.
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- 4 members of the public.

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1. RSPB - Marwick Bay Access Concerns

The RSPB Orkney Site Manager was in attendance at the meeting to discuss member and public concerns about restricted access to Marwick Bay. He advised that RSPB had had two incidents of asbestos tiles dumped on their land, the last incident being 2016. RSPB had paid for the removal of this, and there were still small fragments appearing on the foreshore. To prevent further dumping of hazardous materials, RSPB wanted to erect a gate to the entrance of the site to prevent vehicle access.

Members of the public stated that, historically, this area had been used to dump waste material, as it served a dual purpose of depositing waste material and preventing that area from coastal erosion, as due to its location and certain tidal and wind direction, it was more prone. The proposed action of the RSPB to block the entrance now prevented this from happening, along with access to the public who frequent this area often. It was also pointed out that this would also prevent emergency services accessing this area, as members of the public use this entrance and site for such outdoor activities as paddle boarding, swimming and horse riding.

The RSPB Orkney Site Manager mentioned that whilst he was ideally not wanting to prevent access, there was no control of what waste was being dumped. A member asked if a sign could be put up as a reminder not to dump hazardous material, and it was stated that this was a possibility. It was explained that other alternatives were being looked into, such as a height restrictive barrier. The RSPB Orkney Site Manager advised that he would also research the right of way access, as well as the issue of land ownership between mean high water and mean low water.

A member of the public asked if RSPB would be happy for earth and natural material to be dumped on the site, and the Site Manager thought this may be an OIC or SEPA issue. Councillor O Tierney stated that he thought a licence from Marine Scotland would be required and recounted a similar incident where a licence was required.

Members of the public also raised the issue of lack of waste bins on the site and asked if they could be reinstated, as periodically, waste is collected from the foreshore in an effort to clean up the beach area. Due to the size and amount of some of the items found, there was no alternative but to create a pile for collection by the waste team. The Head of Neighbourhood Services stated that waste collection was discontinued due to the waste lorries not being able to turn at this location. She further stated that if members of the public wished to carry out ad hoc "Bag the Bruck", they should contact the OIC's Waste Team to arrange collection of the waste.

To bring the subject matter to conclusion, Councillor D Tullock suggested that the Site Manager take away the suggestions offered and update the Community Council at a future meeting, and it was:

Resolved:

A. That the RSPB Orkney Site Manager would investigate:

- Right of way to RSPB owned land, as well as the issue of land ownership between mean high water and mean low water.
- Alternative methods of restrictive access.
- Having a sign erected to remind the public not to dump hazardous waste material.

B. That the RSPB Orkney Site Manager would report back to the Community Council via an additional arranged meeting.

The RSPB Orkney Site Manager and members of the public left the meeting at this point.

2. Apologies

Resolved to note that no apologies for absence had been received.

3. Adoption of Minutes

The minute of the meeting held on 14 September 2023 was approved, being proposed by Mr R Delday and seconded by Mr S Spence.

Miss K Coghill wished to point out that no contact had been made by the Council's Access Officer as minuted in the meeting from 14 September, and could a reason be given as to why this was the case, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk, via business letter, would put forward this question to Democratic Services.

4. Matters Arising

A. Foreshore from Ministry Huts to Zanzibar – Signage

The Chair advised that the signage had now been fitted and invoice put forward for payment, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

B. Public Roads

The Head of Neighbourhood Services advised that she was not aware of any issues, but would look into the issue, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the discussion.

C. Dog Waste Bins

The Head of Neighbourhood Services stated that there were no plans to put in additional bins, but bins could be relocated, if necessary, but members had to bear in mind lorry access, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

D. Area of Speeding Concern

The Head of Neighbourhood Services stated that it would be possible to get speed devices placed at the area and that this will be done when they are available, and it was:

Resolved to note the information above.

E. Monuments in Birsay Kirkyard

The Head of Neighbourhood Services stated that a rolling inspection programme had identified all high hazards and that these had been addressed and made safe. She additionally advised that memorials are the responsibility of family members.

The Chair mentioned that the coping stone at Boardhouse had been knocked off and was lying in the field. The Head of Neighbourhood Services said this would be looked at, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of above.

F. Repairs at Skiba Geo

The Chair stated that material had now been delivered and repairs made, and it was:

Resolved to note the information above.

G. Brough of Birsay Tidal Clock and Lockbox

An update had been received and previously circulated, via email, stating the difficulty in managing this and that Marine Planning and HES were not in favour of a lockbox, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

H. Treatment of Causeway

The Chair stated no update had been received, but hopefully this will still be considered, as it is a core path, and it was:

Resolved to note the information above, and the Clerk, via business letter, will ask for an update.

I. Christmas Lights

Members had been forwarded a copy of the Christmas Light funding allocation expenditure for information. All agreed that the lights look great and that it was a wonderful improvement, and it was:

Resolved to note the information.

J. Footpath to Quilco

The Head of Neighbourhood Services stated that there was no budget to instate a footpath in this area, but it may be worth enquiring with funding from the Scottish

Government regarding cycle lanes and paths. A letter to Sustrans, and copying in the Service Manager, Development and Marine Planning, could be a possibility.

Councillor R King suggested that, due to the vast amount of work the Community Council had put in already regarding the Dounby Plan, this could possibly be linked to the wider issues surrounding Dounby, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would send a letter to Sustrans and copy in the Service Manager, Development and Marine Planning, enquiring about possible funding for a path to Quilco.

K. Benches Questionnaire

The Chair stated that he had already submitted the questionnaire online, and it was:

Resolved to note the information above.

L. Grass Cutting Tenders 2024

Members discussed the briefing that had previously been circulated to members with the proposed reduction in OIC paid cuts to kirkyards. Members agreed that 10 cuts were not sufficient and were all in agreement to continue with last year's number of cuts and to pay for additional cuts from Community Council funding. Members agreed to advertise tenders for a one-year contract, and to be advertised in the Orcadian, with posters to be displayed around the area and a notification put on the Birsay Community Council Facebook page, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the tender would remain as it had been the previous year with number of cuts to be the same and community council to fund the difference.
2. That the tender be advertised on a one-year contract, via the Orcadian, posters, and Facebook.

5. Correspondence

A. SIF Online Sessions – National Islands Plan Review

Following consideration of correspondence from Scottish Islands Federation, inviting the community council members to online meetings to discuss the National Islands Plan on 28 September, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

B. Winter Service Plan

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council, outlining the Winter Service Plan for 2023/2024, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

C. My Place Awards 2024

Following consideration of correspondence from the Scottish Civic Trust to raise awareness of national My Place Awards, which celebrate projects and people that work to improve places and communities in Scotland, deadline 14 January 2024, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

D. Business Gateway Orkney – Event in your area

Following consideration of correspondence from Business Gateway hoping to offer a workshop event in the local community hall for people who are thinking about starting a new business, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

E. 2nd Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries

Following consideration of correspondence of a news release from Boundaries Scotland announcing the dates and locations of its Local Inquiries, following the consultation on its provisional proposals for Scottish Parliament constituency boundaries, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

6. Consultations

A. National Islands Plan Review – Workshops

Following consideration of correspondence from Scottish Islands Federation, inviting the community council members to online meetings to discuss the National Islands Plan, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

B. West of Orkney Windfarm – Section 36 and Marine Licences Applications

Following consideration of correspondence from the Marine Directorate, Scottish Government, inviting members to respond to the application to construct and operate the West of Orkney Windfarm, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

C. National Islands Plan Consultation Events – Stromness/Westray

Following consideration of correspondence from National Islands Plan, inviting the community council members to attend consultation workshops to discuss the National Islands Plan, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

D. PhD Research – Scottish National Islands Plan

Following consideration of a survey from PhD research project around Our Islands, Our future (OIOF) towards the development and implementation of the National Islands Plan (the Plan) through the Institute for northern studies, UHI Orkney, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

7. Financial Statements

A. General Fund

Following consideration of the General Fund statement, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £8,800.99 as at 13 November 2023.

B. Birsay Energy Fund

Following consideration of the Birsay Energy Fund, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £22,475.09 as at 13 November 2023.

C. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the financial statement for the Community Council Grant Scheme, it was:

Resolved to note the balance remaining available for approval in the main capping limit was £316.08 and the balance in the additional capping limit was £743.00 as at 13 November 2023.

D. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the financial statement for the Community Development Fund, it was:

Resolved to note the balance remaining available for allocation was £4,831.09 as at 13 November 2023.

E. Seed Corn Fund

Following consideration of the financial statement for the Seed Corn Fund, it was:

Resolved to note the balance remaining available for approval was £0.00 as at 11 November 2023.

8. Applications for Financial Assistance

A. Stromness Academy Swiss Trip

Following consideration of correspondence from the Stromness Academy, copies of which had previously been circulated, requesting financial assistance towards their educational trip to Switzerland and Belgium, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £100 each be provided to Isla Carberry, Anna Hay, Isla Moar, Leah Robertson and Jasmin Schofield and should be made from the general fund, totalling £500.

B. Birsay Lunch Club – Christmas Outing

Members had previously considered correspondence from the Birsay Community Association, requesting financial assistance towards the Birsay Lunch Club Christmas Outing, and it was:

Resolved to note that a donation of £500 had been agreed and would be made from CCGS upon evidence of receipts.

C. Birsay Community Association – Birsay Kids Christmas Party

Members had previously considered correspondence from the Birsay Community Association, requesting financial assistance towards the Birsay Kids Christmas Party, and it was:

Resolved that a donation of £300 had been agreed and would be made from CCGS upon evidence of receipts.

D. HYFC National Junior Speechmaking Finals – Edinburgh

Following consideration of correspondence from the Harray Young Farmers Club, copies of which had previously been circulated, requesting financial assistance towards their trip to the National Junior Speechmaking Finals in Edinburgh on 9 December, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £50 each be donated to Katie Tullock and Lily Hay and should be made from the general fund.

9. Publications

Resolved that the following publications had been forwarded to members and were noted:

- VAO – Newsletter – September, October 2023.
- VAO - Training and Funding Update – September, October 2023.
- ORSAS Quarterly Newsletter – November 2023.
- Police Scotland – Orkney Area Command – Newsletter 4.

10. Any Other Competent Business

A. Mr W Hay – Roads Issues

Correspondence had been received from Mr W Hay raising concern about the road condition from Castlehill to the Antique Shop. It was reported that there were potholes on both sides of the road. Also, previous road drainage work at Stanger needed to be looked at again, as the road was continuing to flood. The Head of Neighbourhood Services stated that Roads Support had already sighted the condition, and this was to be addressed, and that the flooding at Stanger would be reported, and it was:

Resolved that Head of Neighbourhood Services would report the flooding issue at Stanger.

B. A Poke – Whitemire Farm Track

Correspondence from A Poke had been received, asking for assistance to obtain stone for the peat road to Whitemire. It was advised that the Road Scheme, which was previously available for such incidents, was no longer in existence, and it was:

Resolved that the application be declined.

C. Flooding – Click Mill to Wilderness (Hillside Road)

Mr S Spence stated that this area was prone to flooding and areas needed digging out towards the Birsay end. The Head of Neighbourhood Services stated that the ditching programme was still ongoing, but she would pass this information on to the relevant team. She offered to come back to members if clarification was needed of the stretch of road, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the discussion.

D. Resignation of Member

The Chair announced, that due to Mr S Davidson moving to a different parish, he would no longer be eligible to be a Birsay Community Council member, and it was:

Resolved to note the information and that a public meeting would be held in the new year to elect to the vacancy.

11. Dates of Future Meetings

Following consideration of dates for the next meeting, it was:

Resolved that the next two meetings of Birsay Community Council would be held on Thursdays 7 March and 30 May 2024 at 19:30 in Birsay Community Centre and via Teams.

12. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 21:30.