

Minute of the Meeting of South Ronaldsay and Burray Community Council held in Hope School on Wednesday, 5 March 2025 at 19:30

Present:

Mr D Ward, Mr R Bland, Ms F Lawtie, Mr R Jackson, Mr A Konstam, Mr I Laird and Ms K Sinclair.

In Attendance:

- Councillor J Moar.
- Councillor R Peace.
- Mr S Sankey, Tomb of the Eagles Development Group.
- Ms H Green, Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure (via Teams).
- Mrs J McGrath, Community Council Liaison Officer/Interim Clerk.
- Miss C Kelday, Community Council Liaison Assistant (via Teams).

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1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Councillor G Skuse.

2. Presentation – Tomb of the Eagles

Mr S Sankey of Tomb of the Eagles Development Project provided information on the project, and what had been done to date. He explained that community purchase of the site had been the recommended option and that the group had become a sub-group of South Ronaldsay and Burray Development Trust, who had recently reformed. Initially the group had been made up of 13 members, but they now had 150.

Mr Sankey explained that the group had appointed consultants, who had concluded that the takeover was possible and that they should proceed, and that since then they had been putting together various funding applications, the main one being to the Scottish Land Fund. They required financial backing to purchase the Tomb of the Eagles site and to set it up for reopening, with a target date for the reopening of later this year. They were now waiting for the decisions from the funders, and were starting to do fundraising as all the signals so far had been positive. They had recently started approaching local businesses and had set up a Crowdfunding page, for which the target amount was £45-50,000 which would set the group up for the first season of opening. They would hope to stabilise the site and provide training to volunteers who would provide the tours in the opening months. In future years they would then hope to employ staff.

Mr Sankey provided some information on the longer-term plans for the site but emphasised that the focus was currently on securing the funding to purchase the site and to get it open in time to catch most of this year's tourist season.

He also explained that they had the full support of the family. The group would not be able to run the site the same way that they had done but they were hoping to recruit plenty of volunteers to keep the staffing costs down, especially in the first season of opening.

Mr Sankey advised that the Chair of the Development Trust was keen to meet with the community council and work closely with them. He reported that the group were keen for folk to get involved and for volunteers to come forward. He also appealed to the community council for any funding that they may be able to provide.

Following questions from those in attendance, it was:

Resolved to note the update and that members would consider providing financial support to the project.

The representative of the Tomb of the Eagles Development Project left the meeting at this point.

3. Adoption of Minute

The minute of the meeting of South Ronaldsay and Burray Community Council held on 22 January 2025 was adopted, being proposed by Mr I Laird and seconded by Mr R Bland, subject to the following amendment:

At Item 5A, the wording be changed to “Councillor J Moar advised that he had asked for the first cut to be done earlier in the year. Members agreed and advised that they would also prefer two cuts rather than the one proposed...”.

4. Matters Arising

A. Bus Shelter in St Margaret’s Hope

Resolved to note that no update was available at this time.

B. Smiddy Museum

Ms K Sinclair and Ms F Lawtie advised that they had met with a representative of the Museums Service who had given them some advice on possible funding avenues for any project to refurbish the museum. They suggested a 3–5-year plan, with there being a grant of £1,800 available for the first stage. A donation station/QR code had been suggested, and they had also discussed the opening hours and staffing. It had been agreed that the property was unsafe at present and required to be tidied up and certain items removed. Members discussed having a curator again this season and what the opening hours and job description should be. A target date for reopening was discussed, and it was also suggested that a call should go out for volunteers to help paint the ploughs. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the Museums Service would assist with the idea of installing a QR code donation station within the museum.
2. That the Interim Clerk would put out a call for assistance with painting the ploughs.
3. That members would arrange for items to be moved and tidied up within the museum ahead of the summer season.
4. That the Interim Clerk would put together a job description to be agreed by members ahead of advertising the tender for curator/cleaner for the summer season.
5. That the target date for reopening the Smiddy Museum was 1 May 2025.

C. Hanging Baskets

The Interim Clerk advised that she had contacted the contractor for a price to supply and maintain 20 baskets and that she was awaiting a response, and it was:

Resolved to await a quote for planting up the hanging baskets and maintaining them for the 2025 season in St Margarets Hope.

5. Correspondence

A. OIC Our Budget Challenge Survey Results

Following consideration of correspondence from OIC, copies of which had previously been circulated, advising of the results of the recent budget survey, and the recent Council decision to raise Council Tax by 15%. Members asked the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure, about the possibility of there being budget to provide an improved waste facility in South Ronaldsay, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That members wished to note their support for Councillor Steven Heddle's statement regarding the Council Tax raise and that this rise would negatively affect many local residents, which was disappointing.
2. To ask, via the business letter, if budget would allow for the local amenity site to open as it had been before, or at least for a household waste skip to be provided once a month.

B. Local Place Plan

Members discussed correspondence from Orkney Islands Council, copies of which had previously been circulated, advising that the deadline for submitting place plans for their areas had been extended to September 2025. Following discussion, it was agreed that it would be worthwhile trying to put something together, in consultation with the Trust and both Community Associations in the area, and it was:

Resolved that the Interim Clerk would try and arrange a meeting between the Community Council, Development Trust and the Community Associations in South Ronaldsay and Burray within the next few weeks to discuss the possibility of putting together a place plan or plans.

6. Consultations

A. Trees and Woodland Strategy

Members had previously been forwarded information from the Council's Development and Marine Planning team, who had recently launched a consultation on the Trees and Woodland Strategy and accompanying Environmental Reports, and it was:

Resolved to note the consultation and the closing date for comments of 24 March 2025.

B. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Strategic Plan 2025-2028

Members had previously been sent the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service draft SFRS Strategy 2025-28 for review and comment. Input would help SFRS to critically assess if the Strategy they were proposing was right and would help to continuously develop and improve the services provided. Following consideration, it was:

Resolved to note that the deadline for comments was 2 April 2025.

C. SCDC – Community Benefits Renewable Energy

Members had previously been sent information from the Scottish Community Development Centre, who were hosting several community conversations across Scotland to gather opinions on community benefits generated through offshore and onshore renewable energy developments, and it was:

Resolved to note the information and that the event had since taken place.

D. Highland Council Visitor Levy

Members had previously been sent information on the Highland Council Visitor Levy consultation and had been asked to consider responding to the consultation highlighting the impact this would have for island residents when travelling to mainland Scotland for work or appointments. Councillor R Peace advised that Orkney Islands Council would be running their own consultations on this shortly, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

7. Financial Statements

A. General Fund

Following consideration of the General Finance statement as at 18 February 2025, it was:

Resolved to note the estimated balance of £9,853.98.

B. Smiddy Account

Following consideration of the Smiddy Account statement as at 18 February 2025, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the estimated balance of £99.22, and that funds would need to be transferred from the General Fund to cover future expenses.
2. That the Interim Clerk would investigate the hydro figures and confirm that the toilets were not included in the bills.

C. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the CCGS statement as at 18 February 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that £44.70 and £765 remained available for allocation from the main and additional capping limits respectively.

D. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the CDF statement as at 18 February 2025, it was:

Resolved to note the balance of £10,000 which remained available to allocate to appropriate projects.

The Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure, left the meeting at this point.

8. Requests for Financial Assistance

A. Orkney Folk Festival

Members had previously been forwarded a request from Orkney Folk Festival for financial assistance towards concerts that were planned in St Margarets Hope as part of the 2025 festival. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to make a general fund donation of £100.

B. C Rafferty – A Kerr, Gymnastics

Following consideration of a request for financial assistance towards A Kerr's travel to attend a gymnastics competition in Inverurie, copies of which had previously been circulate, it was:

Resolved that A Kerr had already received the maximum financial assistance available in this financial year and that a response would be provided to this effect by the Interim Clerk.

C. C Rafferty – L Kerr, Karate

Following consideration of a request for financial assistance towards L Kerr's travel to attend a karate competition in Dunfermline, copies of which had previously been circulate, it was:

Resolved to award a general fund donation of £30.

D. Hope School P7 Hoy Trip

Members had previously been sent a request from Hope Community School for assistance with the cost of the primary 7 residential trip to Hoy in April 2025 for 12 pupils. Following consideration, it was:

Resolved to award £20 per pupil, totalling £240.

E. Hope School P6 Outdoor Learning

Following consideration of a request from Hope Community School for assistance with the cost of seven primary 6 pupils taking part in outdoor learning activities, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved not to support the request on this occasion.

F. Burray School P7 Hoy Trip

Members had previously been sent a request from Burray Primary School for assistance with the cost of the primary 7 residential trip to Hoy in April 2025 for 8 pupils. Following consideration, it was:

Resolved to award £20 per pupil, totalling £160.

G. Burray School P6 Outdoor Learning

Following consideration of a request from Burray Primary School for assistance with the cost of seven primary 6 pupils taking part in outdoor learning activities, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved not to support the request on this occasion.

H. M Lindsay – L Lindsay, Netball

Following consideration of a request from M Lindsay, a copy of which was read out by the Interim Clerk, for assistance with the cost of her daughter, L Lindsay, attending the Scottish Schools Netball Semi Final in Inverness on 7 March 2025, it was:

Resolved to make a general fund donation of £30.

I. M Lindsay – C Lindsay, Netball

Following consideration of a request from M Lindsay, a copy of which was read out by the Interim Clerk, for assistance with the cost of her daughter, C Lindsay, attending the Scottish Schools Netball Semi Final in Inverness on 7 March 2025, it was:

Resolved to make a general fund donation of £30.

9. Publications

The following publications had previously been circulated to members and were noted:

- VAO – Training and Funding Update – January and February 2024.
- Hope Cohousing Update.

10. Any Other Competent Business

A. Grass Cutting Tenders

The Interim Clerk advised that the contract for grass cutting at St Mary's, Flaws, St Peter's and St Lawrence kirkyards had expired and that arrangements were needed for the 2025 season. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. To ask the contractor if they would be willing to extend the contract for a further year to cover 2025 grass cutting operations at the kirkyards in South Ronaldsay and Burray.

2. That the Interim Clerk would report the broken gate at St Peter's, as reported by Ms F Lawtie.

B. Windwick Parking

The Interim Clerk reported that she had received late correspondence from the Rural Planner, OIC, with regards to the car park at Windwick and irresponsible campervan parking. The content of the correspondence was shared, which advised that various measures had been discussed and agreed with the landowner to improve this area, including erection of a higher "no parking" sign opposite the field gate, and a sign requesting "no overnight camping/no parking outside the parking zone" etc. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that the community council was supportive of these proposed measures to improve the situation at the Windwick car park.

C. Crash Barrier

A member reported that several posts had been broken, and other damage done to the crash barrier at the south end of the third barrier following a collision recently, and asked when this would be repaired, and it was:

Resolved to raise the matter via the Business Letter and ask that a repair be undertaken.

11. Dates of Next Meetings

Resolved to note that the next meetings of South Ronaldsay and Burray Community Council were scheduled for Wednesday, 18 June, Thursday, 28 August and Wednesday, 5 November 2025.

12. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 21:35.