

Minute of the Meeting of North Ronaldsay Community Council held in North Ronaldsay Community Centre and via Teams on Monday, 6 October 2025 at 19:30

Present:

Mr P Donnelly, Mr I Deyell, Ms A Duncan, Mrs H Scott (via Teams) and Mr I Scott.

In Attendance:

- Mrs A Byers, Arch Henderson Consultants (via Teams).
- Councillor H Woodbridge (via Teams).
- Councillor M Thomson (via Teams).
- Ms H Galland, Clerk.
- 2 members of the public.

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1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Mrs L Paterson.

2. Adoption of Minute

The minutes of the meeting of North Ronaldsay Community Council held on 18 August 2025 were adopted, being proposed by Mr I Deyell and seconded by Mrs H Scott.

3. Matters Arising

A. Ferry Replacement Programme Public Meeting

Mrs A Byers from Arch Henderson was in attendance at the meeting. She advised that a total of 20 residents had turned out earlier in the day for a presentation hosted by herself, along with Laura Cromarty, Transportation Service Manager, and David Hibbert, the Technical Superintendent, on the Ferry Replacement Programme and the Orkney Harbours Masterplan.

It was reported that, despite public concerns that the island would be provided with a vessel that would not work here, it was confirmed that whatever gets provided will be fit for purpose and the island would not be left with a non-functional service. Residents had not given an indication of the type of service they wished to have.

The Transportation Service Manager had been asked to take away the island's demand for a backup freight plane as soon as a ferry is cancelled as an immediate solution in the interim.

It had also been advised that the area around the pier would be included in any plans, and the public would be able to comment on how they would like this space to be used.

Attendees were invited to ask questions or make comments in person or via email after the meeting, and it was advised that another public meeting would be held in the new year, with the above points raised to ensure clarity and public engagement

Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided and to await further information.

The Arch Henderson representative left the meeting at this point.

B. Update - Connectivity/Resilience public meeting

Late correspondence was read out that the Head of Property and Asset Management was aware of the need for a face-to-face meeting with the residents of North Ronaldsay, and it was:

Resolved to note that meetings would be arranged soon, but that an immediate resilience issue affecting Eday warranted that island to be prioritised for a meeting.

C. Grass Cutting Contract

After issues with the selected contractor quitting and OIC instating another contractor out with the knowledge of the NRCC members, it was:

Resolved that an additional £500 be set aside to supplement the designated OIC budget for grass cutting in North Ronaldsay kirkyards, should it be required.

D. Burials - Grave Digging Training

It was advised that only one of the two candidates turned up for the training, meaning that the island was one person short to be self-sufficient in grave digging duties. A late correspondence from the Burial Grounds Officer explained that the wooden shoring requested was not available to the island, and the trainee recommended the purpose built aluminium hydraulic shoring be bought by NRCC as this was the safest option, however it cost in the region of £12,000. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would enquire, via the business letter to Democratic Services, to see if any funding could be made available to assist with the purchase of shoring, given this was an item that would improve island resilience and was mandatory for the safe digging of graves.

E. Gate at West Hill

It was advised that the West Hill slap had failed and was no longer functional. A discussion raised that OIC historically used the land beyond this area for storing road maintenance materials and for disposing of material, and it was:

Resolved the Clerk would enquire, via the business letter to Democratic Services, if the road to this access point was an adopted road and, if so, are OIC responsible for the maintenance of the access gate.

F. Missing CC Lawnmower

After being reported missing, the Clerk confirmed the mower was now in the shed at the Old Kirk, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would ensure it was stipulated in the next Grass Cutting Tender guidelines that all Community Council owned machinery be left in the appropriate storage after use and only be used for the purpose of the contract, unless prior consent from the CC was sought.

G. Third Plane - Public Meeting - Letter to Loganair

It was reported that, after the public meeting held in September, many points were raised by residents in response to Loganair's first draft of the timetable for when the third aircraft is commissioned, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would draft a first letter indicating all the requirements expressed by the residents and pass it round the CC members and local Councillor for editing and amending.
2. To note that it was recommended the letter be made succinct and clearly state what and, as importantly, why these points were necessary for the island.
3. To note that, while it was acknowledged it was highly important to get this letter right, there would be a second opportunity to address the proposals at the second round of talks with other community councils.
4. To note the deadline for this current round of consultation was 1 December 2025.

H. Rabbits - Financial Assistance

After requests had been made to source assistance with the issue of overpopulation of rabbits in the island, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that a rabbit “management” team were coming to the island for a period of 2 weeks.
2. To note that the team would be working for private farmers as well as businesses and would be paid by the appropriate private or business clients.
3. To note that it was assumed that the kirkyard work would be funded by OIC, which had been stated as trapping, and erecting netting to prevent digging.
4. To note that the Trust, as owners of the Kirk, had been asked for permission to remove scaffolding next to the Kirk that was acting as a shelter for the rabbits.

4. Correspondence

A. Draft Summer 2026 Transport Timetables

The draft summer timetables for 2026 for transport had been previously circulated to members for information only, as they had been adopted at committee and would be entered onto the relevant booking systems, and it was:

Resolved the note the contents of the correspondence.

B. SSEN - Customer Vulnerability Strategy Webinar

An invitation to register to join a webinar on Thursday, 25 September had been previously circulated to members, and it was:

Resolved the note the deadline has now passed.

C. Grave Works Training

An invitation had been shared to members, and locally, for anyone on North Ronaldsay interested in taking part in free training on 24 and 25 September 2025, for grave digging, and it was:

Resolved the note the date had passed and only one individual had undertaken the training.

D. Crofting Commission - Annual Notice

Correspondence from the Crofting Commission had previously been circulated, asking shareholders to check and update their information, and it was:

Resolved to note the information and that this had been shared locally.

5. Consultations

A. NIFS

Information on consultation events in Orkney on 10 and 12 September to give feedback on the next northern isles ferry service contract had previously been emailed to members, and it was:

Resolved to note the information and that it had been shared on the island social media channels to encourage participation in this consultation.

B. Enhanced Air Service Timetables

The draft timetables from Loganair/OIC Transportation had been circulated to members for their consideration, taking into consideration a new third aircraft which would be in operation in 2026, and it was:

Resolved to note that this had been discussed earlier in the meeting and that the deadline for feedback was 1 December 2025.

C. Scottish Islands Federation - Community Right to Buy Review

Correspondence on the Community Right to Buy Review had been circulated to members, and shared locally, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

D. Orkney Coastal Change Adaptation Plan Workshop

Following consideration of correspondence from OIC Flooding regarding a workshop for Kirkwall and Central Mainland, North Ronaldsay and Auskerry on 24 September, and also regarding an online survey, it was:

Resolved to note that the workshop had been held but that the deadline for the survey was 27 October, and that it had been shared locally to encourage participation.

E. Share Your Views on Tourism in Orkney

Members had previously been sent an invite for one member per community council to attend an online workshop to discuss how tourism affects Orkney, and it was:

Resolved that Ms A Duncan would attend on the 8 October session to represent North Ronaldsay.

F. Our Orkney, Our Story

Information on an online survey for anyone to fill in regarding tourism in Orkney had been previously sent to members and shared local, and it was:

Resolved the note the contents of the correspondence

6. Financial Statements

A. General Finance

Following consideration of the general fund statement as at 26 September 2025, copies of which were previously circulated, and it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £20,739.06.

B. Turbine Fund

Members considered the turbine statement as at 26 September 2025 copies of which were previously circulated, and it was:

Resolved to note the estimated balance was £23,856.80.

C. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the Community Council Grant Scheme as at 26 September 2025, copies of which were previously circulated, and it was:

Resolved to note that the main capping limit was fully allocated, the additional capping limit had £673.20 remaining, and there was £755 remaining in the island capping limit.

D. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund as at 26 September 2025, copies of which were previously circulated, and it was:

Resolved to note that the total available for allocation was £8,768.

The members of the public left the meeting at this point, and the rest of the meeting was held in committee.

7. Financial Requests

A. Iona McFarlane

Members had been sent a request from Iona McFarlane for a contribution towards her child taking part in a Highland swimming meeting. Members considered the request for support, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That members agreed that financial assistance would only be offered to residents of North Ronaldsay.
2. That the Clerk would let the correspondent know the CC policy.

B. NRCA - Orkney Science Festival Flights

Resolved to note that a request for £69 towards 3 flights to enable musicians to attend the dance during the Orkney Science festival/sheep and sustainability event was approved by members, to be taken from the open CCGS category for flights.

8. Reports from Representatives

A. Transport Representative

It was advised that the Transportation Service Manager had stood up for the rights of North Ronaldsay at the recent forum by reiterating that the flights were the islands' lifeline service. It was queried why the larger islands were getting the new ferries before the smaller islands who have a lesser service. No-one from Loganair had been able to attend the forum meeting so the issue of problems with the online bookings could not be addressed, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would add in the issues with the online booking system and the ability of accessing the 8th plane seat but only at 24hrs notice to the letter regarding the third aircraft proposals, but as a separate point.

B. Planning Representative

Resolved that there was nothing to report.

C. North Ronaldsay Development Trust Representative

Resolved to note that the Community Development Manager had been out, and work was progressing on the Trebb project now that the builders no longer had other commitments.

D. Health and Care Representative

In the recent meeting there has been positive talks about carers and unpaid carers. John Daniels, the new Head of Primary Care was open to conversation with the isles. There was an acknowledgement that resident nurse practitioners (ANP) within the isles made for better resilience. A trial in Papa Westray was looking at working with only 1 ANP living on island and 1 locum, using the GP on call service from Westray. There was also a claim that the current 2 week on 2 week off work rota did

not allow for enough rest time under the EU “Working Hours Directive” and so changes were afoot, in addition to seeking ways to make savings on a stretched budget. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that members would keep their eye on the situation and how it might impact the island, given a reduction in service was never a positive thing.

E. Yarn Company Representative

It was reported that the new Mill was still being built and the situation was ongoing. The recent Sheep and Sustainability Event, coordinated by Mrs H Scott was widely applauded and links with other islands were sought to be constructive and supportive, and it was:

Resolved to note the report.

9. Publications

The following publications had been made available to members and were noted:

- VAO Newsletter – August 2025.
- Letter from School Place – August September 2025.
- VAO – Training and Funding – August September 2025.
- SEPA Update - September 2025.
- OIC Isles Special Collection dates to August 2026.
- Scottish Islands Federation. Creative Entrepreneurship Programme.

10. Any Other Competent Business

A. Litter

A resident had requested that the issue of litter being strewn across the island, including into livestock pasture, especially during stormy weather, and as a result of feral cat activity, be escalated to OIC, and it was:

Resolved

1. To note that it was advised that residents were encouraged to use the “Report It” portal on OIC website to make complaints of this manner as the community council did not have to power to enforce anything.
2. That the Clerk would remind the public of the day that domestic waste is collected and to request that bags were not left out for protracted periods of time.
3. That the Clerk would find out from OIC if there were still wheelie bins available which could be located in strategic places for householders to put their waste, or store at home if they were away on bin day.

B. Use of Community Council Owned Trailers

It had come to the Clerk’s attention that someone was seeking to use one of the trailers, and it was:

Resolved:

1. Members stated only island registered residents (evidenced by council tax bill or being on the electoral role) can book the trailers.
2. To note that it had been additionally remarked that anyone booking had to provide evidence of having insurance to pull the trailer (personally or the haulier doing it on their behalf).
3. That the clerk would ensure the Conditions of Use were updated to ensure the above are adhered to.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Following consideration of future meeting dates, it was:

Resolved that the next meeting of North Ronaldsay Community Council would be held on Monday, 24 November 2025 at 19:30.

12. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 21:30.