

Minute of the Meeting of North Ronaldsay Community Council held in North Ronaldsay Community Centre and via Teams on Monday, 2 June 2025 at 19:30

Present:

Mr P Donnelly, Mr I Deyell, Mr C Kerslake, Mrs L Paterson (via Teams), Mrs H Scott and Mr I Scott.

In Attendance:

- Councillor H Woodbridge.
- Ms C MacKenzie, Head Teacher, North Ronaldsay School.
- Mrs J McGrath, Community Council Liaison Officer (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 A Duncan and Councillor M Thomson.

2. Election of Office Bearers

A. Chair

The Clerk asked members to decide on a new Chair and Mr I Scott proposed, seconded by Mr I Deyell, to maintain the status quo, and it was:

Resolved that the Chair of North Ronaldsay Community Council remain as Mr P Donnelly.

B. Vice Chair and other Representatives

The Chair took the meeting and asked the members to vote on the other North Ronaldsay Community Council office bearers. The previous proposal of maintaining the status quo was upheld, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Vice Chair would remain to be Mrs H Scott.
2. That the North Ronaldsay Trust Representative would remain to be Ms A Duncan.
3. That the Health and Care Representatives would remain to be Mr P Donnelly and Mrs H Scott.
4. That the Planning Representative would remain to be Mrs L Paterson.
5. That the Transport Representative would remain to be Mr C Kerslake until the next meeting, when he requested to stand down.

3. Adoption of Minutes

The minute of the meeting of North Ronaldsay Community Council held on Monday, 7 April 2025 was adopted, being proposed by Mr I Deyell and seconded by Mrs H Scott.

4. Matters Arising

A. Grass Cutting

The Clerk advised that the newly appointed grass cutting contractor had handed in their notice and the two contracts were now vacant - for the kirkyards and the war memorial. The Burial Grounds Officer had contacted the previously unsuccessful applicant to request the kirkyard be cut in preparation for a funeral, but this had not been relayed to the members. Following further discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That Democratic Services would request that the Burial Grounds Officer make a formal agreement with the contractor to cut the kirkyards only.
2. That the Clerk would contact a newly interested party and enquire as to whether they would take on the War Memorial contract at the cost previously agreed by the successful contractor.

B. Kirkyard Issues

It was reported that there continued to be a need for island-based trained grave diggers, and the issue was yet again a source of concern for a recently bereaved family. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would write to the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure, to invite her to a special meeting, or alternatively to provide the community council with information on this issue, regarding the options for training islanders, whether the contractors from Papa Westray could be brought in by plane should the boat be cancelled, necessitating structural materials (shuttering) and hand digging tools being permanently available on the island.
2. That the MSP and the local Councillors be copied into the correspondence.

C. Bag the Bruck

It was reported that a Norwegian-crewed boat had been asked by Westray Marine Waste Group to come to North Ronaldsay to undertake some beach cleans in the absence of a formal Bag the Bruck event. Collected litter had been stored in an old barn accessible from the beach based on its superior weather protection but the tenant of the land had made a complaint about the unsolicited use of their barn. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would ensure any group that undertakes voluntary cleaning work in the future is made aware that the waste is to be appropriately stored at the pier for onward disposal and not left at a half-way point to be cleaned up at a later date.

D. Request for a Sunday Excursion Boat - Orkney Science Festival

After considering the situation for the current year regarding a Sunday Excursion to tie in with the Science Festival and North Ronaldsay events, the Clerk confirmed that the requestee had been made aware that the schedule for Sunday sailings had already been approved many months before, and it was:

Resolved the Transport Representative would raise the matter at the next Transport Forum and request a Sunday Boat on the first Sunday in September each year to coincide with the Science Festival to assist with the departure of participants from North Ronaldsay.

E. Windracers - Public Consultation

Members were advised that the officers behind the Windracers project had contacted the island to set up a meeting where residents could come and learn about the project and what it could do for them, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the meeting was scheduled for 19:30 on Monday, 9 June at the Community Centre.
2. That the Clerk would share the information publicly, in advance, to give residents the opportunity to attend.

F. Skips Signage

The Clerk advised that OIC had requested that the new skips are labelled with their safe working limit, which she had obtained from the manufacturer as 11T. However, for the purposes of the forklift truck the maximum load would be 2.5T, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would order further vinyl signs from Artmachine to meet the Council's requirements.
2. That the signage would be paid for from General Funds.

5. Correspondence

A. Connectivity Update - Safety and Resilience Island Meeting

Correspondence from the Head of Property and Asset Management had been circulated to members previously. It reported that BT had advised an updated target date of January 2027 for the end of traditional analogue voice and data services. There was not yet any timeframe for the roll out of fibre to North Ronaldsay. The Council's telephone services in North Ronaldsay were also due to transfer and as there was no alternative fibre connectivity, OIC were awaiting BT to identify a solution. It also advised that, in terms of data connectivity, the Orkney Islands Council locations are connected via the public sector Scottish Wide Area Network (SWAN), which had reached the end of the contract, having been delivered by Capita using point to point mast connections via the Orkney mainland. As the contract was near the end, there is an active transition project to SWAN2, which will be delivered by BT. As Openreach did not yet have fibre connectivity to North Ronaldsay, BT will be working with a local ISP, CloudNet, to deliver the SWAN2 services here. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

B. Alistair Carmichael MSP - Lithium-Ion Battery Bill

Correspondence had been circulated regarding the above bill, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

C. Ferry Replacement Programme Update

Correspondence had been circulated regarding the progress of the Ferry Replacement Programme. Members stated that they were unhappy with the rushed manner and poorly organised consultation meeting regarding ferry replacement and were encouraged to state their concerns about the project now, when issues could be addressed, before it was too late to action, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would write to the Service Manager, Transportation, informing them that NRCC members felt they had not had the opportunity to get the full picture at the previous island meeting, and some members had been unable to attend through no fault of their own.
2. That a second meeting would be requested, giving everyone on the island the opportunity to attend in order to enable better engagement of residents with the replacement process.
3. To note that the Transport Representative had placed a copy of the Project Update at the airfield for residents to access and read.

D. Loganair - Website Booking Issues

Members had previously been sent correspondence from Loganair in response to the community council's concerns around booking flights online, and members felt the correspondence did not address any of the issues raised by the community council. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the current Loganair booking system was not fit for purpose.
2. That the issue of flights leaving with empty seats when people were struggling to book seats online, along with other aberrances, needed addressing.
3. To note that the potential of a third plane could address a lot of capacity issues and the members supported its introduction as soon as possible.
4. That the Clerk would send a letter to the Service Manager, Transportation, outlining the current and ongoing issues relating to residents being unable to book seats on the plane despite this being the island's lifeline service.

E. Head Teacher - School Access Road

Correspondence had been circulated to members from the School Head Teacher, and she explained that the repair of the school access road now had a works number and the island's contractor had been recruited to undertake the work. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Head Teacher would find out when the works were due to take place.

2. That the Head Teacher would enquire of the Clerk of Works that cold tar is used as requested by CC members for a long-term repair solution, as stone chips were not proven to being an adequate repair material.

F. Island Games Road Closures

Members had previously been sent information on road closures on mainland Orkney in relation to the Island Games events, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence

G. SEPA - EPA Scheme

Members had previously been sent an invite to an online engagement/public consultation regarding introduction of a Environmental Performance Assessment Scheme on 7 June. The Chair suggested this was a worthwhile meeting to participate in given the increasing importance SEPA has to matters environmental, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

H. The Orcadian - First Responders

Correspondence had been sent to the Health and Care Representatives by The Orcadian, asking for information regarding the availability of First Responders on the isles. The Health and Care meeting was scheduled for the following night, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would contact The Orcadian the following morning, to confirm that members were willing to be interviewed on this matter.

6. Consultation Documents

Resolved to note that no consultation documents had been received since the last meeting.

7. Financial Statements

A. General Finance

Following consideration of the general fund statement as at 20 May 2025, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £16,569.40.

B. Turbine Fund

Members considered the turbine statement as at 20 May 2025, copies of which had previously been circulated, and it was:

Resolved to note the estimated balance of £21,303.84.

C. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the Community Council Grant Scheme as at 20 May 2025, copies of which were previously circulated, members enquired whether, given the limited nature of the CCGS funding pot, it would have been possible to use the Community Development Fund to pay for the new scrap metal skips for the island, as the CDF had been used to purchase the fuel cubes prior, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would ask Democratic Services if this would be an appropriate project for the CDF and, given the purchase was in the last financial year, if it was still possible to make this amendment, if it would benefit the North Ronaldsay Community to do so.
2. To note that the total approved but not yet allocated was -£926.32.

D. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund as at 20 May 2025, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the total remaining available for allocation was £8,656.00.

8. Financial Request - E-Strimmer Battery

Members discussed an issue regarding the second replacement battery for the e-strimmer which had gone missing, and it was advised that the previous replacement had been purchased by the Clerk when the original “second battery” had gone missing after arriving on the island. Members agreed that it was not the Clerk's duty to have to replace lost property, and it was:

Resolved:

- A. That the Clerk should be compensated for the purchase if proof of purchase was forwarded to Democratic Services, despite this now being considered a historical purchase.
- B. That there was not currently a need to purchase another second battery as the strimmer would only be used for the War Memorial this year.

9. Reports from Representatives

A. Transport Representative

Further to the earlier discussion about plane seat bookings and the response from Loganair it was clear the “global system outage” was not responsible for the ongoing problems. The representative advised that the “waiting list” system alluded to should be in operation in due course and it remained to be seen how that would function, and it was:

Resolved to note the report and that all matters had already been covered earlier in the meeting.

B. Planning Representative

Resolved to note that there was nothing new to report.

C. North Ronaldsay Development Trust Representative

Following a report, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the New Kirk was now complete.
2. To note that new utility supplies were being installed at Trebb, including EV chargers.

D. Health and Care Representative

Resolved to note that the next Health and Care Meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, 3 June 2025.

E. Yarn Company Representative

Resolved to note that there was nothing new to report.

10. Publications

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

- VAO Newsletter – April and May 2025.
- Orkney Ferries - Statistics – March and April 2025.
- Letter from School Place – April 2025.
- VAO – Training and Funding Update – April 2025.
- Loganair Statistics – April 2025.
- SEPA Updates – April and May 2025.

11. Any Other Competent Business

A. Use of Emergency Launch

It had come to the Chair's attention that approval had been denied for the use of the emergency launch recently to convey family/carers of a terminally ill resident who had been airlifted to palliative care, to mainland to join their relative. Owing to the dynamic situation and number of people to be transferred neither an immediate ad hoc flight had been possible (a 6-hour delay) nor seats on any earlier planes.

Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that members believe they should be allowed to access the emergency launch, when it is unanimously approved, for extenuating circumstances especially as the members have never called on the use of a launch for approved or non-

approved use until this time, and it is believed the launch might be less costly to the Council than the provision of an ad hoc plane.

2. That the Clerk would email all correspondence made between Clerk and Democratic Services on the day that the launch was requested to Councillors H Woodbridge and M Thomson to be reviewed.

B. Pets on Planes

Information had been circulated to members and airfield staff from Loganair on the terms of carriage of pet animals after a number of incidents not meeting these terms had occurred resulting in "Safety Reports" to be issued. Given the belief continued misuse may result in Loganair withdrawing the service entirely a member suggested would it be prudent for the community council to purchase a number of dog muzzles (in various sizes) and pet carriers (also in various sizes) for general use. After deliberating on the issue, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that members felt that this issue was not their responsibility to sort.
2. To note that it had been confirmed that the pilot had the final say on whether an animal was allowed to be transported within the guidelines or otherwise, and it was not for airfield staff to make that decision.
3. To note that the airfield coordinator could ask the community if they wished to donate such items to be kept at the airfield for shared use.

C. Ad-hoc Flight Request

A late correspondence had been circulated to members requesting an ad hoc plane to transport five residents to Sanday (and back) to take part in the North Isles Sports in Sanday on Saturday, 21 June 2025. After deliberating on the timings of the event, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would ask Democratic Services in the first instance to ask Loganair if they were able to provide a drop-in service to the already scheduled flights i.e. outward-bound KW-NR-SDY-KW and inward bound KW-SDY-NR-KW.
2. That if the above was not possible, then a request for an ad hoc prior to the first scheduled North Ronaldsay flight; and another as close to the last flight as practical (given the shortened flying day on a Saturday) would be requested.
3. That a request for the use of a launch to return residents at the end of the event could be a potential, if required.

12. 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, 18 August 2025 at 19:30.

13. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 21:33.