

Minute of the Meeting of Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council held in the Rousay Community School on Wednesday, 23 April 2025 at 19:30

Present:

Mr A Firth (Chair), Mrs D Compton, Mrs Z Flaws, Miss A Mainland, Mrs C Mainland, Mrs C Maguire, Mr R Tipper.

In Attendance:

- Councillor M Thomson (via Teams).
- Mrs J McGrath, Community Council Liaison Officer (via Teams).
- Miss C Kelday, Community Council Liaison Assistant (via Teams).
- Ms C Kriisa, Clerk.
- Mrs E Soames and Dr J Cussans, Rousay Play Park Project.

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1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Councillor S Clackson and Councillor H Woodbridge.

2. Adoption of Minute

The minute of the meeting of Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council held on 22 February 2025 was adopted, being proposed by Mrs C Mainland and seconded by Mrs Z Flaws.

3. Matters Arising

A. Memorial at Rousay Kirkyard

It was reported that the bench memorial at Brinian Kirkyard was still in the planning stage. Mrs Z Flaws was currently awaiting quotes being returned for the works, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

B. Historic Environment Scotland Car Parks

It was advised that the parking spaces at Midhowe were likely to have been historically created by OIC's Roads team, as laybys were not part of Historic Environment Scotland (HES) properties. A call was to take place with HES, with a representative from the Community Council to be asked to attend once the Community Council Liaison Officer was able to offer dates of availability.

Queries were raised that if Orkney Islands Council had no responsibility, why did they undertake caretaking responsibilities through acts such as line painting, and whether additional capacity could be created with a named body taking responsibility for it, but it was agreed that conversations would need to be had with the landowner to forward such a proposal. The Chair further advised that he had been in touch with windfarm funders regarding car parks, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda and await a date for a meeting with HES.

C. Laybys

Resolved to note that no update was received for this item but to keep the item on the agenda.

D. Rousay School Issues

It was advised that the larger light was now functioning, but the smaller lights were inoperative and in need of new bulbs, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

E. Post Boxes and Postal Service

No update had been received regarding the relocation of the Post Office, and no new feedback received regarding delivery issues. The condition of the post boxes was believed to be good, in lieu of any further complaints, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

F. Parking at Rousay School

Communication had recently been received from the Empowering Communities Liaison Officer requesting details on where new demarcation lines should be placed at Rousay Community School. Mr R Tipper confirmed the most appropriate location for the school bus, and it was:

Resolved for the Clerk to communicate the details with the Empowering Communities Liaison Officer.

G. Playpark Renewal Fund

An update was received from Mrs E Soames and Dr J Cussans regarding the proposed new playpark at Rousay Community School. The Rousay Parent Council had been revisiting the playpark layout and equipment, with revisions and consultations ongoing. Two layouts that were identical – except for the large structure - had been identified, and options were now being discussed with parents. A digital interactive walkthrough had also been sent to them. There would be equipment suitable for ages ranging from 3 -14 years old, and feedback from parents was due to be received in the coming week.

A query was raised as to the issues with the existing play park, and it was noted that any repairs were classed as temporary and the equipment was reaching the end of its natural lifespan, whereas the proposed play park will have a 20-year guarantee. The new equipment will be built using pressure-treated wood, resulting in no painting being needed which will help to reduce maintenance. The company will be installing the equipment, and if this could be coordinated to take place at the same time as another installation within Orkney, the overall costs would be reduced by up to £3,000. It was also recognised that all possible sources of match funding were being utilised by the Rousay Parent Council for the project to provide value for money.

The Community Council asked for assurances that the new play area would be properly maintained, and Rousay Parent Council advised that they would fund minor repairs. They also advised that, before work begins, the community would be consulted with on whether the existing play equipment has any residual value and how best to dispose of it. The equipment provider could remove the items but would not handle disposal. Because of cost constraints, installation was pencilled in for late summer, with suppliers needing a firm commitment within the next week, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To come to a funding decision later in the meeting.
2. To remove the item from the agenda.

The representatives from the Parent Council left the meeting at this point.

H. Cruise Ship Revenue

Resolved to note that no update had been received for this item, and to keep it on the agenda.

I. Pedestrians at Piers

The Assistant Harbour Master had advised that to free up room on the pier, Harbours were currently collaborating closely with the Tingwall pier fishermen to clean their fishing gear pens and remove old, unused gear that had accumulated. The goal was to provide room for the implementation of foot passenger safety measures. Once this had been accomplished, a combined visit will be planned with members of the community council to talk more about their requirements. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the update and to keep the item on the agenda.

J. Parking at Brinian Kirkyard

Members heard that there was currently no budget to progress improved parking at Brinian Kirkyard. A member of the Community Council offered to accompany the Roads team on a site visit during their next call to Rousay, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

K. Orkney Ferries Booking System

It was advised that the Team Manager and Service Manager for Ferry Operations both attended the recent Isles CC Chairs' meeting to discuss updates to the online booking system. There was now a button at the bottom of the booking form to say that you had a concessionary card, but not a standard card or account held on file. There were still issues with booking certain journeys, and it was also raised that car details could not be saved into online accounts, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That Councillor M Thomson would speak with the Team Manager and Service Manager for Ferry Operations in the coming week to relay current issues with the booking system.

2. That Orkney Ferries should be informed when issues arise, so that they can be resolved in good time.

L. Business Plan for New Ferries

Councillor M Thomson confirmed that the process was still ongoing to procure new ferries for the north isles' routes. The plans for new larger outer isles ferries had been seen and a design consultant had now been appointed, and it was:

Resolved that Councillor M Thomson will pass on details of the new appointee to the Community Council.

M. Rousay Road Conditions

Following reports of issues regarding roads in Rousay, it was advised that the Team Manager for Roads Support would let the Community Council know when the inspectors are next due out in Rousay, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That The Chair or Mr R Tipper would accompany the inspectors during their visit.
2. That a note of the Community Councils' requests will be made so that it can formally stay on file.

N. Grass Cutting Tender

Members heard that the previous grass cutting contractor was approached regarding an extended tender until the end of 2025. Quotes were received, but at a price currently out with the consideration of the Community Council. It was noted that the grass cutting of Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre kirkyards were not as straightforward as other islands due to the location of all of the kirkyards, but that Orkney Islands Council have a limited budget for kirkyard grass cutting.

Options were explored, including restarting the tendering process for a short period of time to show that the tender has been advertised and opened up to anyone else who wished to enquire.

Councillor M Thomson gave some insight into costs of cutting other isles kirkyards. It was suggested that additional leeway could include having the option to tender for one part of the contract such as only for Brinian, or Egilsay. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Community Council Liaison Officer would ask Roads Support if it would be possible for them to arrange to cut the grass at Brinian and Wester in May on the Community Council's behalf due to the tender process going beyond the start of the cutting season.
2. That the Clerk would be sent the tender information from the Community Council Liaison Officer for advertising once more.

O. Egilsay Kirkyard

Due to the sensitive nature of this item, it was taken in private.

Members discussed Egilsay Kirkyard, and whether a survey had been carried out in recent years. They also asked if an extension was possible and, following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. To ask Orkney Islands Council for plotting of Egilsay and Wyre kirkyards to take place.

2. That Councillor M Thomson would ask whether land can be leased, purchased or donated to extend these kirkyards.

4. Correspondence

A. Scottish Sea Farms - Shape the Future of Sustainability

Members considered correspondence from Scottish Sea Farms, offering an invitation to complete a short survey to share views on the impacts their operations may have on society and the environment, associated business risks and opportunities, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

B. Scottish Community Development Centre - Community Benefits from Renewable Energy Developments Webinar

Members considered correspondence from the Scottish Community Development Centre, inviting members to a local community conversation to share views in an islands-focussed conversation as the Scottish Government consults on the Community Benefit Good Practice Guidance, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

C. ORSAS – Women’s History Month: Free Films

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Rape and Sexual Assault Service sharing news that in collaboration with The Phoenix Cinema, ORSAS has sponsored four free film showings to celebrate Women’s History Month, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

D. Isles Special Collection Rota April to September 2025

Members considered correspondence received from Orkney Islands Council sharing dates for the next set of special collections up until 30 September 2025, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

E. NHS Orkney - Improving the Cancer Journey Service

Members considered correspondence from NHS Orkney sharing news of their new Improving the Cancer Journey (ICJ) service, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

F. SEPA - New Surface Water Flood Maps

Members considered correspondence from the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency stating that they had published new surface water flood maps, which for the first time include small watercourses. This new level of detail provides Scotland with the most detailed and accurate picture of where flooding could occur from heavy rainfall, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

G. Scottish Water - Tell Us What You Think

Members considered correspondence from Scottish Water inviting members to provide feedback on their services, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

H. Orkney Islands Council - Island Games Schedule

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council who shared the draft schedule for the Island Games, due to take place in July, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

I. Rousay Parent Council - Play Park Responses

Members considered correspondence from Rousay Parent Council, who shared the latest results regarding the new playpark designs, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

J. Rise Adapt – Changing Places Funding Update

Members considered correspondence from Rise Adapt, sharing the news that an announcement had made on the £10m Scottish Government funding for Changing Places Toilet facilities, and encouraged anyone wishing to express interest in applying for the funding to complete a short survey, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

K. Orkney Islands Council – Verge Management Plan 2025 Consultation Comments

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council, advising that decisions had already been made regarding verge management, leaving no opportunity for feedback, and that the number of bends and pedestrians on Rousay should warrant an all-round cutting of the island. Members mentioned that some ditch digging has been taking place on the Surgery road and the Brinian road, and it was:

Resolved to add verge management to the list for any members who make site visits with the Roads team during their next visit to Rousay.

L. NHS Orkney – Daytime Clinician Cover

Members considered correspondence from NHS Orkney, advising members that there would be no clinician cover during the day on 16 and 17 April, but out-of-hours care would be provided, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

M. Orkney Islands Council – ZEVI Vessel Update

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council confirming that following training, certification and sea trials in Belfast, the ZEVI vessel would be arriving in Orkney in May. Local sea trials would commence over the coming weeks, and the community would be informed when a scheduled trial service was to be introduced, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

5. Consultations

A. SEPA - Proposed Changes to the Environmental Regulation (Scotland) Guidance on Public Participation and Fit and Proper Person Test

Members considered correspondence that was previously circulated from the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, regarding their consultation on proposed changes to the Environmental Regulation (Scotland) guidance on public participation and Fit and Proper Person test. This is the next step in implementing the Integrated Authorisation Framework (IAF) and a simpler, integrated system for environmental regulation across Scotland, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

B. Orkney Islands Council - Visitor Levy Survey and Public Engagement Sessions

Members considered correspondence that was previously circulated from Orkney Islands Council, advising that two public sessions will be held in March to gauge opinion on a proposed visitor levy for overnight stays in Orkney, Shetland and the Outer Hebrides. Anyone likely to be affected, such as local residents, tourism businesses, organisations and visitors are invited to contribute.

Mrs D Compton advised that she attended the online session and found it beneficial to gain insight into the proposed levy, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

C. Orkney Islands Council - Winter Service Plan 2025

Members considered correspondence that was previously circulated from Orkney Islands Council regarding the Winter Service Plan for 2024-25, requesting that any comments be fed back by 30th June 2025. It was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

D. Sustainable Aviation Test Environment (SATE) – Community Survey

Members considered correspondence from the Sustainable Aviation Test Environment. The SATE team was keen to work with community councils across the country to understand what communities would like to see from Scotland's

sustainable aviation sector as it continues to grow and would be grateful for input via an online survey. Following consideration, it was:

Resolved to note that the closing date for comments was 30 April 2025.

E. SEPA - Proposed Environmental Performance Assessment Scheme

Members considered correspondence from the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency regarding a proposed Environmental Performance Assessment Scheme (EPAS), a fairer way of reporting on how businesses are meeting their responsibilities, and it was:

Resolved to note that the consultation would run until 30 June 2025, with a series of engagement activities being planned to run from late April until early June to give interested participants an opportunity to find out more.

6. Financial Statements

A. General Fund

Following consideration of the general fund statement for Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council as at 8 April 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £31,671.17.

B. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the CCGS statement for Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council as at 8 April 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that the main capping limit was fully allocated, and that the balances remaining in the additional and island capping limits were £165.00 and £740.00 respectively.

C. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund statement for Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council as at 8 April 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that there was £9,427.80 remaining available to allocate to projects.

D. Seed Corn Fund

Following consideration of the Seed Corn Fund statement for Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council as at 8 April 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that there was £7,535.00 remaining available to allocate to projects.

7. Financial Requests

A. Rousay Parent Council – Play Equipment

Following consideration of the update received from Rousay Parent Council earlier in the meeting, and the request from the group for financial assistance towards the equipment, it was:

Resolved that £8,250 would be awarded to Rousay Parent Council from CDF and CCGS, subject to approval and agreement of amounts.

B. Rousay Sailing Club – Annual Insurance

Following consideration of correspondence received from Rousay Sailing Club requesting match funding to the sum of £400 towards its annual insurance costs, it was:

Resolved that £400 would be awarded to Rousay Sailing Club, subject to approval, through Community Council Grant Scheme funding.

8. Reports from Representatives

A. Planning

The Planning representative advised that there were currently no planning applications in for their area, and any recent submissions had now been withdrawn, and it was:

Resolved to note the update.

B. Transport

Members heard that the ZEVI vessel was due to arrive in Orkney in May for sea trials. The MV Eynhallow's return to service after refit would be delayed and was expected to return circa 1 May. The MV Shapinsay would then go for refit and afterwards return to serve the Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre routes from 1 June until August. It was also reported that there were three additional late-night sailings planned, and it was:

Resolved for the Clerk to submit the details of the late-night sailings to be included in the Rousay Review, once known.

C. Health and Care

The Health and Care representative advised that the new Nurse Practitioner was no longer covering Rousay, Egilsay or Wyre and the role remained unfilled. No more information had been received, and the position itself had possibly changed. The previous Nurse Practitioner John Macdonald will be covering on a locum basis until end of the year, in a two-weeks on, two-weeks off shift pattern. It was noted that there is also the potential of additional pressure being put upon First Responders, and concerns over the consistency and continuity of patient care. It was:

Resolved:

1. That Mrs Z Flaws will follow up with NHS Orkney for an update.
2. That a request would be forwarded to NHS Orkney/OIC asking that information be given to any covering locum to make sure that they are aware of local practices in emergencies.

9. Publications

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

- Letter from School Place – March 2025.
- VAO Training and Funding Update – February and March 2025.
- VAO Newsletter – March 2025.
- Orkney Ferry Statistics – January, February, March 2025.

10. Any Other Competent Business

A. War Memorial Lettering

Members heard that a quote from the contractor for renewing the lettering on the war memorial was yet to be received, and it was:

Resolved that Miss A Mainland would follow this up directly with the contractor.

B. Late Night Ferries – Bus Connectivity

Correspondence had been received from a resident regarding the lack of connectivity between Stagecoach and Orkney Ferries to cover the additional three late sailings scheduled for this summer. It was accepted that it would be very difficult for any resident to make their way to Tingwall pier from the top of the main road in time, and that it was exclusionary to those with mobility or health needs.

It was noted that Orkney Islands Council could not change the timetable as it had now been published. An alternative option would be to request that Stagecoach drivers diverted to Tingwall pier on those three occasions if any passengers needed to alight at the pier, and it was:

Resolved for the Clerk to request a diversion on the three occasions directly with Stagecoach.

C. Bin Emptying

Members commented that the bin located at the boardwalk did not seem to be emptied, and the Community Council were unsure if there was an agreement in place with the current refuse contractor. It was noted that the public waste bin at Saviskaill would need to be emptied more frequently throughout the summer months, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That Mrs C Maguire would check what agreement was in place with the Development Trust for bin emptying.

2. That Democratic Services would be asked to check what the frequency of emptying is of the public bins.

D. Extra Parking at Rousay School

It was advised that, due to the turbine electrical unit being housed in an outbuilding on Rousay Community School land, the community council would need to know where it would be relocated to before any investigations could be taken further. A quote from SSEN for moving the electrics could be discussed with the Development Trust. It was advised that electrics of this nature were not suitable to be housed within the school building itself, and they would not be able to move to the water tower due to it not being watertight. Additional options would have to be sought if it could not go in the tower. It was advised that Scottish Water could be approached to put the electrics for the turbine into the shed, and it was:

Resolved that Mrs C Mainland would complete the required forms and speak with SSEN regarding this matter.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Following consideration of a date for the next meeting, it was resolved:

That the next meeting of Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council would be held in Rousay Community School on 11 June at 19:30.

12. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business to discuss, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 21:00.