

Minute of the Meeting of St Andrews and Deerness Community Council held in Deerness Community Centre on Tuesday, 17 June 2025 at 19.30

Present:

Mr T Craigie, Mr L Flett, Miss J Gowland, Mrs L McAdie, Mr D Paterson and Miss R Russell

In Attendance:

- Councillor J Moar.
- Councillor R Peace.
- Councillor G Skuse.
- Mrs J Montgomery, Empowering Communities Liaison Officer (ECLO).
- Miss C Kelday, Community Council Liaison Assistant (CCLA).
- Mrs J Lennie, Clerk.
- Mr T Hadley, Orkney Native Wildlife Project.

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1. Orkney Native Wildlife Project (ONWP)

Mr T Hadley, ONWP, gave a presentation on the project for stoat eradication in Orkney. He advised that ONWP worked in partnership with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Nature Scot and Orkney Islands Council (OIC) to remove stoats from Orkney.

Stoats are prolific breeders and within their habitat, ONWP has established many hot spots for example the Mull Head, Deerness and Hoxa Head, South Ronaldsay and they like stone walls and dykes and thrive and breed in these areas. ONWP, as well as using traps, use various other technologies including artificial intelligence to trace, trap and remove stoats and information gained from data collection aids research. They use dogs to detect and trace stoats. As well as paid employees, they have many local volunteers assisting them in the project and with education in schools. This work has resulted in a reduced stoat and rat population, better biosecurity and increases in, for example, vole, hen harrier and curlew populations and better nests. Mr T Hadley recognised that stoats had probably been resident in Orkney much earlier than ONWP first recognised.

Mr D Paterson asked how ONWP was funded and why their accounts could not be accessed as they were a regulated charity and use RSPB's charity number on their paperwork. Mr T Hadley advised that ONWP funding source was a ring-fenced fund from the RSPB and would be shown in the RSPB accounts as restricted money.

Mr D Paterson asked how much it cost to eradicate one stoat. Mr T Hadley advised that with the initial large outlay and set-up costs, the cost of the eradication of one stoat would only be known at the end of the project.

Mr D Paterson asked why ONWP had "wildlife" in its name as they do not attempt to control other invasive species for example geese and Mr T Hadley advised that this project was only set-up to eradicate stoats from Orkney and there was no availability to transfer funds to tackle problems with any other invasive species in Orkney. He further advised that independent studies would suggest that the goose population in Orkney was on the decline. Mr D Paterson advised that he was disappointed with the response regarding not tackling other invasive species as it was believed that this was one of the reasons that many farmers in Orkney did not allow ONWP access to their land to set traps.

Mr D Paterson asked if, in the future, could it be suggested and progressed for other species for eradication by ONWP if funding could be sourced. Mr T Hadley advised that, presently, the remit of ONWP was only to eradicate stoats from Orkney. Miss J Gowland advised that there requires to be reality and recognition from RSPB and Nature Scot that there are problems with other invasive species that require addressing. Mrs L McAdie advised that other Community Councils and L McArthur MSP could be involved in assisting with this.

The Empowering Communities Liaison Officer (ECLO) advised that the Orkney Goose Management Group had attended other Community Council meetings to advise on their project. The Clerk was requested to invite them to the next meeting on 27 August 2025 to give a presentation to members.

Miss J Gowland asked if following the completion of the project if traps would be left behind on farms in Orkney and Mr T Hadley advised that this was ONWP's intention, and it was: -

Resolved that the Clerk invite the Orkney Greylag Goose Adaptive Management Project to give a presentation at the next meeting on 27 August 2025.

Mrs L McAdie thanked Mr T Hadley for his presentation, and he left the meeting.

2. Apologies

Resolved to note that Mrs N Linklater had intimated her apologies.

3. Election of Office Bearers

A. Chairperson

The ECLO took the Chair and advised all present of the voting procedure. Miss R Russell asked if members could vote for a member absent from this meeting and was advised that members can vote for an absent member of this community council and following a secret ballot Mrs N Linklater received five votes and Mrs L McAdie one vote, and it was:

Resolved that Mrs N Linklater be appointed Chairperson of St Andrews and Deerness Community Council, subject to her agreement.

B. Vice Chairperson

Following a secret ballot whereby Mr L Flett received three votes and Mr T Craigie, Miss J Gowland, and Mrs L McAdie one vote each and with no clear majority, as per the voting procedure, the ECLO advised that a second vote would be required. Mr T Craigie and Miss J Gowland wished to withdraw their names and a second vote proceeded whereby Mr L Flett received five votes and Mrs L McAdie one vote, it was:

Resolved that Mr L Flett be appointed Vice Chairperson of St Andrews and Deerness Community Council.

C. Planning Representative

The ECLO provided information on the role of the Planning Representative. Following a secret ballot whereby Mr T Craigie received five votes and Miss R Russell one vote, it was:

Resolved:

1. That Mr T Craigie be appointed Planning Representative for St Andrews and Deerness Community Council.
2. That the ECLO would provide Mr T Craigie with information and guidance on the role and duties of the planning representative.

D. Kirkyard Representatives

Following a secret ballot, it was resolved:

Resolved that Mr D Paterson was appointed for St Andrews and Miss R Russell was appointed for Deerness parish,

In the absence of Mrs N Linklater, Mr L Flett Vice-Chair took the chair.

4. Minute of Meeting

The minute of the general meeting held on 26 February 2025 was approved, being proposed by Mr D Paterson, and seconded by Miss J Gowland.

5. Matters Arising

A. 2025 Education Grant and Criteria

Following consideration of the previous Education Grant and policy, and following discussion, it was resolved that:

1. Members approved a 2025 Education Grant, as per previous policy.
2. The education grant would be advertised on the Community Council's website, local outlets, and at Orkney College and Kirkwall Grammar School.
3. The education grant would have a set fund limit of £5,000 and that, following consideration of the annual education grant applications, any funding not disbursed would remain in the Ayreenergy Ltd fund.
4. The closing date for Education Grant applications for 2025 would be 26 August 2025.
5. The Clerk would correct the e-mail address on the education grant application form and within the criteria.

B. Consideration of the Travel Grant Policy

Following consideration of the 2024/2025 travel grant rates, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that the policy and conditions for travel grants in 2025/2026 be as follows:

- £15.00 for travel within Orkney.
- £40.00 for travel within the UK and out with Orkney.
- £70.00 for travel out with the UK.
- Any individual can claim travel grants up to a maximum of £240 in any given financial year, which could be any combination of the three travel grant rates as detailed above.

C. Ms A Woodfield

Following consideration of correspondence from Ms A Woodfield thanking the Community Council for the update of information on proposed progress for a bike/bus shelter and advising that general purpose bin had been located at Lighthouse Corner, next to the post box, and appeared to be very well used, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

D. Rt Hon A Carmichael MP

Following consideration of a response received from the Rt Hon A Carmichael MP, to an e-mail sent on behalf of Community Council members raising their concerns with lithium-ion batteries and e-bikes and e-scooters, he advised that his office, the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS), was the UK's national product regulator and was leading a programme of work into the safety of e-bikes, e-scooters and the lithium-ion batteries that power them, aimed at tackling the risks from unsafe products and raising public awareness of safe buying and use. The Product Regulation and Metrology Bill had completed Committee stage and was progressing through the House of Lords. Once enacted the Bill would enable regulations to be made to capture new and innovative products, and to ensure that online platforms have clear responsibilities for supplying safe products and, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

E. R Bailey, Parliamentary Researcher

Following consideration of correspondence received from R Bailey, Parliamentary Researcher, regarding the latest news on the lithium-ion battery safety campaign, he thanked all for their support of this campaign and provided information on current progress of this campaign and requested that letters to MP's be sent in support of this campaign and highlighting concerns, and it was;

Resolved that the Community Council had previously written to their MP, the Rt Hon A Carmichael raising their concern with the safety of Lithium-ion batteries and the regulation required of products, which use these batteries.

F. Verge Maintenance Plan 2025 Consultation

Following consideration of correspondence received from Roads Services, OIC, providing responses to the comments provided by Community Council's to the Verge Maintenance Plan 2025 consultation and to note that a one verge cut per season had already been implemented as part of the 2025-2030 plan which had been approved by Council. Roads Services also advised that visibility concerns or injurious weeds could be reported to OIC via Democratic Services or directly through MyOrkney/OIC Customer Services. Councillor J Moar advised that this consultation would be considered by OIC again on 1 July 2025 and, it was:

Resolved to note that the Verge Maintenance Consultation would be reconsidered by OIC on 1 July 2025.

G. Public Bus Route, Tankerness

Following consideration of a response from Democratic Services regarding the request for an extension of the public Stagecoach bus service into the back of Tankerness, the Transportation Service Manager had advised that, presently, there was no budget for an extension to this route and that it would have a number of timing implications. This would be explored further and subject to budget availability, it was resolved:

1. To note this information.
2. That the Clerk update Mr A Thorne, who originally suggested this extension to the route.

6. Consultation Documents

A. Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)

1. New Surface Water Flood Maps

Following consideration of correspondence from SEPA regarding new surface water flood maps which, for the first time, include small watercourses and were available to view online, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

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

Following consideration of the SEPA consultation regarding proposed changes to the Environmental Regulation (Scotland) Guidance on Public Participation and Fit and Proper Person Test, with the deadline for response 30 March 2025, the Clerk advised that she had received no response from members to this consultation, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

3. Proposed Environmental Performance Assessment Scheme (EPAS)

Following consideration of the SEPA consultation regarding the proposed Environmental Performance Assessment Scheme (EPAS), which would run until 30 June 2025. The Clerk advised that a reminder had been received and that no response had been received to this consultation and, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

4. EPAS - Online Session

Following consideration of the SEPA consultation regarding the “communities” online information session, which would be held on 4 June 2025 at 7 pm, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

B. Visitor Levy Scheme

1. Visitor Levy Survey and Public Engagement Sessions

Following consideration of the consultation regarding the Visitor Levy Survey and Public Engagement Sessions to investigate the feasibility of a visitor levy on overnight stays in certain accommodation in Orkney, with an on-line session on 25 March 2025 and a public engagement session on 26 March 2025 and a request to participate in an online survey until 11 April 2025, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

2. Invitation to Support Open Letter from Tim Eagle MSP to Kate Forbes MSP

Following consideration of correspondence from Ms K Johnson, Western Isles, regarding the consultation on the Visitor Levy (Scotland) Act 2024 and how local authorities in the Highlands and Islands Region plan to implement this, she requests that members consider signing the enclosed open letter from Tim Eagle MSP to Kate Forbes MSP, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

C. Sustainable Aviation Test Environment (SATE) Survey

Following consideration of a survey regarding SATE, the UK's first operationally based low carbon aviation test centre based at Kirkwall Airport, Orkney, members were invited to complete the survey, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

D. Winter Service Plan 2025

Following consideration of the consultation regarding the Winter Service Plan 2025, which required a response by 30 June 2025.

Miss R Russell advised that with healthcare for elderly residents and key worker safe travel in mind, she would like to suggest that more side roads are gritted and more often and especially the Halley and Greentoft Roads, Deerness. Miss J Gowland suggested that a survey could be carried out by OIC to determine where elderly residents, healthcare and key workers reside, in order that they could be provided with safe access/travel in bad weather. It was noted that, presently, bus routes only have priority for snow clearance and gritting. Mr D Paterson advised that the blades on some snow clearing machines require to be lowered in order that road surface was better cleared and salt works more effectively on the road surface. Miss J Gowland advised that the setting on some machines require adjustment to avoid the waste of materials for example sand and grit spread into the verge and ditches with poorly treated roads remaining causing health and safety issues. She also advised that the vehicles that are deployed into service do require to be effective, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would submit all comments made by members to the Winter Service Plan 2025 as their corporate response to this consultation and prior to 30 June 2025.

E. Draft Updated Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy

Following consideration of the draft consultation regarding the Updated Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy, advising of an in-person event on 11 June 2025 at Kirkwall and St Ola Community Centre from 12:00 to 21:00 and online sessions arranged for 11 June from 14:00 to 16:00, 16 July from 18:00 to 20:00 and 11 August from 14:00 to 16:00, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the event and online session information.
2. That, prior to 22 August 2025, Miss J Gowland would draft a response to the Draft Updated Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy for consideration and approval by members.

F. Community Wealth Building Action Plan (CWBAP)

Following consideration of the consultation CWBAP, which was open for participation until Monday, 16 June 2025 and also an invitation from the Community Planning Business Manager inviting members to attend an online session, specifically for community councillors to provide their feedback directly. This would be held via Teams on Tuesday 24 June at 19:00 with a link provided to connect to this meeting, and it was:

Resolved to note this information.

G. Orkney Islands Payphone Removal Proposals

Following consideration of the consultation for the removal of payphones in Orkney, Mr D Paterson asked if a defibrillator could be sited in any of the former payphones rather than removal. The Clerk advised that there was one payphone in Deerness, Tankerness and Toab and that the Tankerness payphone has been held closed by rope for years and its removal had been requested by the Community Council on many occasions. Mr T Craigie advised that the Toab payphone was on private property, and its removal has also been requested, and it was suspected the Deerness payphone did not work. Mr T Craigie advised that whilst Mr D Paterson's suggestion was good the condition and location of the payphone made prohibited the idea, and it was:

Resolved to request the removal of all three payphones located in St Andrews and Deerness parishes.

7. Correspondence

A. Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC)

Following consideration of correspondence from SCDC regarding a local community conversation to share your views on community benefits from Renewable Energy Developments, which would be held online on 26 March 2025, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

B. Northern Isles Freight Vessel Replacement Project

Following consideration of correspondence from Democratic Services inviting members to participate in a public drop-in session event on 20 March 2025 regarding the Northern Isles freight vessel replacement project, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided and that public notices had been placed in local outlets.

C. Improving the Cancer Journey Service

Following consideration of correspondence from NHS Orkney spreading the word regarding their new improving the cancer journey service (ICJ) offering a Holistic Needs Assessment, which was a simple check-list style questionnaire that helps to determine what means most to the person in key areas including financial, practical, physical, emotional and spiritual, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided and that the Clerk had circulated this information to local outlets.

D. Scottish Civic Trust (SCT)

Following consideration of correspondence from the SCT inviting members to enter community-led projects or community champions into the My Place awards and that entries required to be submitted by 30 April 2025, it was:

Resolved to note the information.

E. Orkney Islands Council – Islands Games

1. Service Changes

Following consideration of correspondence from OIC regarding waste and recycling collection during the week of the Island Games from 12-18 July 2025, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

2. Road Closures

Following consideration of correspondence from OIC regarding road closures during the Island Games in July 2025, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

3. Draft Island Games Competition Schedule

Following consideration of correspondence from OIC regarding the draft competition schedule for the Island Games in July 2025, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

F. Scottish Island Federation (SIF) - National Islands Plan

Following consideration of correspondence from SIF inviting members to attend one of the meetings scheduled in Orkney, on 2 and 3 June 2025, to join the conversation on the new National Islands Plan, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

G. Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance (SCAA)

Following consideration of correspondence from SCAA requesting to arrange a special meeting with the Community Council to raise awareness of SCAA and their operations within our communities, it was:

Resolved to note that the Community Council Liaison Officer would meet with SCAA and forward any information to this community council.

H. 2025 SURF Awards

Following consideration of correspondence from SURF regarding the 2025 awards and inviting applications for five categories; Community Led Regeneration, Creative Regeneration, Improving Scotland's Places, Removing Barriers to Employability, and Housing and Regeneration, with a deadline for applications being 1 September 2025, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

I. The Orkney Fund

Following consideration of correspondence from The Orkney Fund Board inviting community anchored organisations across Orkney to complete an expression of interest (EoI) form to explore funding opportunities for Local Place Plans, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

J. Ayre Offshore Windfarm

Following consideration of correspondence from Ayre Offshore Windfarm announcing that, later this year, they would be submitting marine license applications to construct an offshore windfarm and associated transmission infrastructure for their windfarm located twenty-two kilometres off the east coast of Orkney. The licensable activity consists of:

- Up to sixty-seven wind turbines (floating or fixed foundations).
- Up to two offshore substations, connected to the turbines via inter-array cables.
- Up to three inter-connector cables.
- Up to twenty subsea collectors.
- Up to four export cables to the landfall location of Sinclair's Bay, Caithness.

And inviting members to attend the pre-application consultation (PAC) events to gather feedback prior to finalising their proposals or to attend a virtual consultation room, it was:

Resolved to note that the meeting events would be held on:

- 27 August 2025 in Deerness Community Centre from 10:00 to 13:00.
- 27 August 2025 in St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall from 15:00 to 19:00.
- 28 August 2025 in St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall from 09:30 to 12:30.

K. Radio Teleswitch Service – Switch Off

Following consideration of correspondence from Neighbourhood Watch Scotland (NWS) regarding assistance in circulating the message that the Radio Teleswitch Service was scheduled to be switched off on 30 June 2025, which, if meters were not replaced could mean that the heating and hot water systems would fail, it was:

Resolved to note this information and that the Clerk had sent the attached flyer to local outlets for public information.

L. Thank You Letters

Following consideration of thank you letters from Mrs A Brown, St Andrews Primary School Parent Council, Orkney Folk Festival, East Mainland Agricultural Society and Deerness Community Centre Association, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

8. Financial Statements

A. 2025/2026 General Finance

After consideration of the 2025/2026 General Finance statement as of 4 June 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that the balance was £17,576.76.

B. 2025/2026 Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the 2025/2026 Community Council Grant Scheme statement as of 4 June 2025, it was:

Resolved to note, that in the 2025/2026 financial year, there remained £2346.00 available in the main CCGS capping limit and £743 in the additional CCGS capping limit.

C. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund Statement as of 4 June 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that the balance was £5,000.00.

D. 2025/2026 Ayrenergy Ltd Fund

Following consideration of the 2025/2026 Ayrenergy Ltd Fund Statement as of 4 June 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £22,114.19.

9. Financial Requests

A. Travel Assistance

1. Miss A and Mr C Nicolson

Following consideration of two travel grant assistance requests from Miss A and Mr C Nicolson for two dance trips to Caithness participating with the Kirkjuvagr Dancers Highland Dance School, it was:

Resolved to grant two travel grants each totalling £160 to Miss A and Mr C Nicolson.

2. Miss E Cooper

Following consideration of a travel grant assistance request from Mrs M Cooper on behalf of Miss E Cooper for two netball trips, it was:

Resolved to grant travel grant assistance totalling £80 to Mrs M Cooper.

B. St Andrews Drama Club (SADC)

Following consideration of correspondence received from SADC requesting financial assistance towards the travel costs for their participation at the SCDA Divisional final in Perthshire, it was:

Resolved to grant travel assistance totalling £200 to SADC.

C. Deerness Community Centre Association (DCCA)

Following consideration of correspondence received from DCCA requesting financial assistance towards the costs of cutting the grass around the Community Centre and playpark, it was:

Resolved to grant financial assistance to DCCA totalling £1760, subject to approval from the CCGS.

D. St Andrews Community Association (SACA)

Following consideration of correspondence received from SACA requesting financial assistance towards the 2025 season grass cutting around St Andrews Community Centre, it was:

Resolved to grant financial assistance to SACA totalling £250, subject to approval from the CCGS.

E. East United Football Club (EUFC)

Following consideration of correspondence received from EUFC requesting financial assistance for the running and maintenance costs for the 2025 season at St Andrews Community Centre football pitch, it was:

Resolved to grant financial assistance to EUFC totalling £2200, subject to approval from the CCGS.

F. Orkneycommunities.co.uk

Following consideration of an invoice for the 2025/2026 membership of the Orkneycommunities.co.uk portal, it was:

Resolved that the 2025/2026 membership fee of £20 for the Orkneycommunities.co.uk portal be paid, subject to approval from the CCGS.

10. Publications

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

- VAO - Training and Funding Update – February, March and May 2025.
- VAO – Newsletter –February, March and April 2025 and Volunteer’s Week.
- Scottish Rural Action - Newsletter – March and April 2025.
- Glasdon – Leaflet.
- Elancity – Leaflet.
- Scottish Water – Summer 2025 Newsletter.
- Free Family Fun Day - Sunday, 15 June 2025.
- Orkneycommunities.co.uk – Newsletter – May 2025.

11. Any Other Competent Business

A. Boat, St Peter’s Pool Bay, Toab

Mr D Paterson advised that the boat aground in St Peter’s Pool Bay, Toab, was unsightly and with the deterioration of the ship debris was appearing on the surrounding shoreline. Concerns were raised that the deterioration may create environmental contamination of the shoreline and long-term ecological damage. He asked if Marine Directorate Scotland could be contacted requesting the wrecks removal therefore addressing concerns on the possible environmental pollution and ecological damage. He also advised that the community was increasingly frustrated by the apparent lack of progress regarding the removal of the wreck and whilst the earlier removal of the oil was a welcome action, it does not resolve the ongoing threat of environmental pollution and ecological damage from the remaining structure.

Councillor G Skuse advised that she had contacted the Maritime and Coastguard Agency regarding this issue and she would suggest that the community council do the same raising their concerns regarding the environmental pollution and requesting

a progress update on the removal of this boat from St Peter's Pool Bay, Toab, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk write to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency raising members concerns regarding the deterioration of the wreck, the environmental pollution already impacting the shoreline, the ecological damage and requesting a progress update from stakeholders along with a timeline for the removal of the wreck from St Peter's Pool Bay, Toab, Orkney.

B. "Welcome to Deerness" Sign

Miss R Russell asked for a progress update on the cost of a "Welcome to Deerness" sign, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would request, from Democratic Services, a progress update regarding the cost of a "Welcome to Deerness" sign.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Resolved that the next meeting would be held on 27 August 2025 at 19:30 in St Andrews Community Centre.

13. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 21:33.