

Minute of the Meeting of South Ronaldsay and Burray Community Council held in the Burray Hall and via Teams on Wednesday, 18 June 2025 at 19:30

Present:

Mr Derek Ward, Mr Richard Bland, Mr Roger Jackson, Mr Angus Konstam, Mr Iain Laird and Ms Karen Sinclair.

In Attendance:

- Councillor James Moar.
- Councillor Raymie Peace.
- Councillor Gillian Skuse.
- Mr Hamish Rutherford, Submarine Cables Designer, SSEN (via Teams).
- Mr Mark Steward, Marine Consents Manager, SSEN (via Teams).
- Dr Katy Urquhart, Environmental Manager, SSEN (via Teams).
- Ms Geraldine Higgins, Strategic Project Liaison Lead (North), SSEN (via Teams).
- Ms Ruth Owen, South Ronaldsay and Burray Development Trust.
- Mrs Jenny McGrath, Community Council Liaison Officer/Interim Clerk.
- One member of the public.

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1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Fiona Lawtie and Robert Smith.

2. Presentation – SSEN – Submarine Electrical Cable Replacement

Members were provided with a presentation from representatives of SSEN regarding proposed routes from Holm to Burray for two new, higher-rated, electricity cables which could cope with much higher loads. They advised that this would involve around 10-15km of cable and that a Marine Route Survey was planned for late Summer/early Autumn. The main consent required would be a Marine Construction License. Members had various questions, including what the need for a new cable was, what capacity would it have, and whether it would be seen from shore. A member of the public also asked what stakeholders would be involved due to the nature of the environment in this area.

Following the presentation, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided and that any further queries could be passed to SSEN via the Interim Clerk.

The SSEN representatives left the meeting at this point.

3. Adoption of Minute

The minutes of the meeting of South Ronaldsay and Burray Community Council held on 5 March 2025 was adopted, being proposed by Mr Iain Laird and seconded by Mr Richard Bland.

4. Matters Arising

A. Local Place Plan(s)

Members resumed consideration of whether they wished to pursue the idea of putting together a place plan or plans. The Chair of South Ronaldsay and Burray Development Trust was in attendance to join the discussion and advised that due to other ongoing projects, the Trust were not in the position at present to lead on any work, but that members would be happy to assist and take part in any discussions as appropriate. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That South Ronaldsay and Burray Community Council would be interested in pursuing the idea of putting together a place plan on plans.
2. That the Interim Clerk would submit an expression of interest form to the Orkney Fund and for CLLD funding on behalf of South Ronaldsay and Burray Community Council for assistance with the cost of writing a plan.

3. To invite the Chair of South Ronaldsay and Burray Development Trust to future meetings of South Ronaldsay and Burray Community Council.

B. Southbreck Road

An item of correspondence from Mrs B Balcombe, a resident of Southbreck Road, had previously been circulated to members and Mrs Balcombe attended the meeting to speak to this item. It was agreed to take this item during Matters Arising.

Safety on the Southbreck Road, Burray, was raised, with vehicles travelling at high speeds on a single-track road being the issue, especially between the two 60mph signs. It was advised that since the speed limit had been reduced in Burray village, there had been an increase in traffic and near misses, with vehicles cutting through using this road. This was a particular problem during the hours of 16:00 and 18:00 and at ferry times, and recent road works had meant that drivers had used a short cut through Southbreck Road to avoid having to wait in traffic. The resident pointed out that there were often farm vehicles using this road and farmers moving livestock, and that it was surprising that there had not been an accident. Various measures for slowing traffic were discussed, including advisory signs and speed strips. Mrs Balcombe explained that she had previously raised concerns with the local constabulary, MSP and OIC Elected Members. She was advised that she should keep reporting incidents, as she had been doing. She also advised that speed strips had been placed on the road in the past, but they hadn't been at the worst affected part of the road and needed to be on the straight.

A change in speed limit was discussed, and OIC Elected Members advised that this was a long process, but that the community council could add their support for this to happen, if they wished to.

Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That members would be in support of a change of speed limit on the Southbreck Road.
2. That the Interim Clerk would write a letter to OIC Roads and the local Police in support of changing the speed limit on the Southbreck Road and detailing the concerns of the resident.
3. That the Interim Clerk would include on the business letter a request to OIC Roads Support that the speed strips be deployed again on the Southbreck Road between the two 60mph signs.

The member of the public left the meeting at this point.

C. Bus Shelter in St Margaret's Hope

The Interim Clerk advised that funding had still not been secured but that Roads Support would be willing to allow a shelter to be sited in this location without the need for a layby. Members provided advice on ownership of the land, and it was:

Resolved that the Interim Clerk would contact the landowner to provide details of the proposal and ascertain whether they would be willing to allow a shelter to be erected in this location.

D. Smiddy Museum

It was advised that Ms S Dennison had been appointed the caretaker for the Smiddy for the summer season and that she would be assisted by Mr J Tomoszek as had been the arrangement in previous years. Ms S Dennison had been provided with the job specification, which included some light cleaning, and it had been agreed that the opening hours should be between 14:00 and 16:00 daily with some additional openings to be arranged around liner visits. They would submit time sheets to the Interim Clerk for payment, which would be in line with the national minimum wage and paid via CCGS.

The Interim Clerk had circulated a draft landing page for electronic donations and members agreed that this was suitable, and that QR codes should be developed so that visitors could donate electronically. A traditional donations box would also be arranged for the centre to gather donations.

The subcommittee confirmed that some cleaning had been done, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that Ms S Dennison and Mr J Tomoszek would be the caretakers for the Smiddy Museum until the end of the 2025 summer season.
2. That a fee would be provided to the caretakers in line with national minimum wage and that this would be paid via timesheet and funded through CCGS.
3. That the Interim Clerk would progress the QR code for the Smiddy Museum so that online donations could be promoted.
4. That a donations box would be sourced by the Interim Clerk.

E. Hanging Baskets

Members had previously agreed to arrange for the hanging baskets to be arranged for St Margarets Hope, at a cost of £585 excluding VAT, which would be funded through CCGS. Watering had also been arranged at a cost of £120 excluding VAT per visit, capped at 20 visits.

It had previously been agreed to approach business owners within South Ronaldsay for sponsorship towards the upkeep of the baskets, and it was reported that eight local businesses had agreed to provide sponsorship following approaches by Robert Smith.

Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the information.

2. That the hanging basket costs would be funded through CCGS and local sponsorship.

F. Hope Civic Amenity Site

Members had previously been forwarded an update from the Head of Neighbourhood Services which advised that a Council decision was made in 2021 that the site in St Margarets Hope should operate as a recycling point only. If household waste was to be accepted at these sites, then they would need to be staffed in order to comply with SEPA license conditions, and welfare facilities provided, and there was no budget available for this.

Members commented that the skip for dumping mattresses and other household items was not available anymore and suggested to pursue the idea that the site could be open for one morning a month to accept household waste, if the Fire Brigade/Coastguards beside the site could give the operative access to the toilets in their premises. They pointed out that the current provision was leading to fly tipping.

Members also suggested that, due to the need to comply with SEPA licensing conditions, a representative from SEPA should be invited to the next meeting, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To put forward the suggestion that a household waste service could be provided one morning a month at the St Margarets Hope Civic Amenity Site, subject to toilet facilities being made available nearby.
2. That the Interim Clerk would invite a representative from SEPA to the next community council meeting.

G. Grass Cutting Tenders

Following the last meeting, the contractor who had previously held the contract for cutting at St Mary's, St Peter's, Flaws and St Lawrence kirkyards had been approached to continue for a further year at the same price. Members were advised that the contractor had agreed, which would mean that the contract would run for one extra year and be readvertised ahead of the 2026 season, and it was:

Resolved to note that K Foulis would carry out grass cutting in the South Ronaldsay and Burray kirkyards for the 2025 season, as per contract details.

H. Crash Barrier at Barrier 3

Members were advised that the damage to the crash barrier had been reported following the last meeting but that repairs had already been carried out, and it was:

Resolved to note that the repair had been completed.

5. Correspondence

A. Bus Shelter at Quoyangry Road

Members had previously been sent correspondence from Joanna Sinclair, asking on the status of a repair to the bus shelter at Quoyangry Road, St Margarets Hope. Members agreed that there was no glass in the shelter and that the Council should be asked to repair it, and it was:

Resolved to ask, via the business letter to Democratic Services, if Orkney Islands Council would repair the bus shelter at Quoyangry Road.

B. Orkney Community Connect

Following consideration of correspondence sent on behalf of OIC's Transportation Service, in relation to new trial bus services in South Ronaldsay, members discussed issues with the service, and it was:

Resolved to invite the Transportation Service Manager and the Chair of Hope Community Association along to the next meeting to discuss the service.

C. Verge Maintenance Plan Comments

Members had previously been emailed the responses from Roads to community council comments on the Verge Maintenance Plan, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

D. Orkney2025 – Council Service Changes

Following consideration of information which had previously been circulated on behalf of Orkney Islands Council, advising of changes to waste and recycling collection arrangements during the week of the Island Games, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

E. Orkney 2025 – Island Games Road Closures

Members had previously been forwarded correspondence from the Chair of the Orkney 2025 Organising Committee, advising of road events and associated closures which would be happening as part of the Island Games in July 2025, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided

F. Southbreck Road

Resolved to note that this correspondence had already been discussed at Item 4B above.

G. Community Bus Service

Members considered correspondence from Morven Brooks, copies of which were circulated at the meeting, in relation to the community bus service trial. The correspondence raised some concerns and observations in the spirit of helping ensure the service's success and longevity. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to invite Morven Brooks to the next meeting to discuss the issues around the trial bus service.

H. Thank You Letters

Resolved to note that letters of thanks had been received from South Ronaldsay Golf Club, C Rafferty and Hope Primary School for financial assistance provided.

6. Consultations

A. Community Benefits from Renewable Energy Developments

Members had previously been sent information from the Scottish Community Development Centre in relation to an online event on 26 March 2025 to share views on local community benefits from renewable energy developments, and it was:

Resolved to note that the event had since passed.

B. Visitor Levy Survey and Public Engagement Sessions

Following consideration of correspondence from Democratic Services advising of a series of public engagement sessions in March 2025 to discuss the feasibility of a visitor levy on overnight stays in certain accommodation, it was:

Resolved to note that the events had since passed.

C. Northern Isles Freight Vessels Replacement Project

Members had previously been sent details of an event on 20 March to consult on the replacement of the Northern Isles Freight Vessels, and it was:

Resolved to note that the event had since passed.

D. Winter Service Plan

A consultation on the proposed 2025 Winter Service Plan had previously been emailed to members, and it was:

Resolved to note that the deadline for comments was 30 June 2025.

7. Financial Statements

A. General Fund

Following consideration of the General Finance statement as at 5 June 2025, it was:

Resolved to note the estimated balance of £12,349.90.

B. Smiddy Account

Following consideration of the Smiddy Account statement as at 5 June 2025, it was:

Resolved to note the estimated balance of £86.53.

C. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the 2025/2026 CCGS statement as at 5 June 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that £3,498 and £743 remained available for allocation from the main and additional capping limits respectively, but that these figures were subject to change due to the allowances not yet being confirmed.

D. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the CDF statement as at 5 June 2025, it was:

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

8. Requests for Financial Assistance

A. K and F Garson – Netball and Gymnastics

Following consideration of correspondence from K Garson, copies of which had previously been circulated, requesting financial assistance for two trips to Aberdeen in March for netball and one trip to Inverness in November for a gymnastics competition, it was:

Resolved to award £30 for one of K Garson's trips, as she had already received for one trip in the 2024/2025 financial year, and £30 towards F Garson's trip, totalling £60.

B. Cromarty Hall Trust – Upgrades

A financial request from the Cromarty Hall Trust had previously been circulated to members, for assistance with the cost of replacing wall lights and a loft ladder within the premises, and it was:

Resolved to award £200, subject to CCGS approval.

C. Bag the Bruck

The Interim Clerk advised that correspondence had been received on behalf of St Margarets Hope Brownies, who had taken part in Bag the Bruck, and it was:

Resolved to award the £300 sponsorship available through CCGS to the Brownies, pending receipt of the appropriate forms.

D. L and C Lindsay – Junior Inter County

Members had previously been sent copies of a financial request received on behalf of L and C Lindsay, for assistance with the cost of taking part in the Junior Inter County competition in Shetland in June, and also the cost of pitch fees and kit. Following consideration, it was:

Resolved to award £30 per child towards the trip to Shetland.

9. Publications

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

- VAO – Training and Funding Update – January and February 2024.
- Improving the Cancer Journey Service – Introduction and Information.
- Hope Cohousing – Newsletter – March and June 2025.
- Orkney 2025 - Island Games Sports Schedule.

10. Any Other Competent Business – Barriers

Members thanked OIC Elected Members for raising this issue again with officers, and it was:

Resolved to invite the Corporate Director, Infrastructure and Organisational Development, to the next meeting to provide an update.

11. Dates of Next Meetings

Resolved to note that the next meeting of South Ronaldsay and Burray Community Council would be held in Hope Community Centre on 28 August 2025 at 19:30.

12. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 21:55.