# Minute of the Meeting of Kirkwall and St Ola Community Council held in the Friends Room, St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall, on Monday, 24 March 2025 at 19:00

## Present:

Tom Rendall, Lynne Spence, Steven Brodie, Cathleen A Hourie, Robert F Leslie, Chris J F Matthews, John R Mowat and Rosemary Rhodes.

## In Attendance:

* Councillor Sandy G Cowie.
* Councillor Steven B Heddle.
* Councillor W Leslie Manson.
* Councillor John A R Scott.
* Councillor Ivan A Taylor.
* Erica Niven, Rural Planner, Orkney Islands Council.
* Ian Wilkins, Roads Services Technician (Asset Management and Countryside Access), Orkney Islands Council.
* Cheryl Kelday, Community Council Liaison Assistant.
* 1 member of the local press.
* Hazel Flett, Clerk.

Order of Business**.**

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## 1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Moyra Gordon and Councillor Gwenda M Shearer.

## 2. Orkney Native Wildlife Project

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Tom Hadley, Community Engagement Manager, was unable to attend to give an update on the work of the Orkney Native Wildlife Project.

## 3. Core Paths

The Rural Planner and the Roads Services Technician (Asset Management and Countryside Access), Orkney Islands Council, answered members’ queries on the Seatter bridleway, as well as outlining the Council’s statutory duties regarding core paths and access in general, and budgetary constraints resulting in maintaining core paths to their existing conditions only, rather than improving, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the presentation from Orkney Islands Council.

The Rural Planner and the Roads Services Technician (Asset Management and Countryside Access) left the meeting at this point.

## 4. Benches

The Vice Chair gave a brief update on the maintenance programme for benches, which was working well with the Community Justice team, with benches from Brandyquoy now removed for maintenance, and it was:

Resolved to note the current position.

Lynne Spence left the meeting at this point.

## 5. Adoption of Minute

The Minute of the Meeting held on 27 January 2025 was approved, being proposed by Rosemary Rhodes and seconded by Cathleen Hourie.

## 6. Matters Arising

### A. Bonfire and Fireworks at Pickaquoy

Following consideration of correspondence from the Rotary Club advising of their decision to discontinue their involvement in the Bonfire Night activities, copies of which had been circulated, the Chair read the following statement:

“At the last meeting of the Kirkwall and St Ola Community Council we agreed for a subgroup to take forward work on identifying an alternative venue to host this year’s Bonfire and Fireworks display. That work is continuing, and we will provide an update in due course.

However, since that meeting, the Rotary Club of Orkney have informed us that after much consideration, they have decided to discontinue their involvement in Bonfire Night activities. They believe by making this decision now it will allow us to identify a new partner for the bonfire night, which we will seek to do.

They have said that it is beyond doubt that a public fireworks display is significantly safer than leaving people to do their own thing and so hope we are able to identify a viable site and new partners.

On behalf of the community council and the residents of Kirkwall and St Ola, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Rotary Club for all their support in putting on the Kirkwall Bonfire Night event over several years. These events have not only brought the community together, but they have raised a significant amount of money for local charities.

With around seven months until Bonfire Night, I do believe the community council can still put on a fireworks event this year BUT we must accelerate work to identify a suitable site to host it.

We would ask members of the public to come forward with their suggestions for where the Bonfire event could take place, and this will be considered by the subgroup.

So, the proposal is to identify a site and an organisation to assist with the event (the Community Council cannot do it on its own.)

A decision needs to be made at the next meeting on 12 May.”.

Resolved:

1. To note that the subgroup had met and would meet again shortly to discuss options for the 2025 event, with the remaining members kept informed.

2. To note that the statement above would be released to the press after the meeting, and it was hoped that the public might contact the Community Council suggesting alternative sites.

### B. Benches

Resolved to note that the Vice Chair had provided an update at paragraph 4 above.

### C. Former Street Names

There was no further update from R Leslie on the proposal to mark former street names.

### D. Local Place Plan

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council advising of flexibility in submitting Local Place Plans to inform the next Local Development Plan, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to defer consideration to the next meeting in order that the Vice Chair could provide an update on any further work related to updating Your Kirkwall.

### E. Island Games Legacy (Benches at Peedie Sea)

Following correspondence from the Vice Chair, members had agreed that the initial design was too ornate and large, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that benches would not be ready prior to the Island Games in July 2025, although it was hoped to progress with an alternative design.

2. To note that some costs had been incurred in relation to the initial design.

### F. Streets for Everyone Project

Following consideration of correspondence from Sustrans advising that they had handed over a report on the engagement findings to Orkney Islands Council, which were presented to the Development and infrastructure Committee on 4 February 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that Sustrans’ involvement in the Streets for Everyone project had now concluded.

### G. Peedie Sea Project

Following consideration of correspondence from Sustrans regarding the Peedie Sea project, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the Peedie Sea project was part of a programme called Capacity Building, in which Sustrans supported various local authorities across Scotland, with this particular engagement not commissioned directly by Orkney Islands Council.

2. To note that the project focussed specifically on engagement activities, including gathering feedback from park users and nearby organisations or businesses, such as Glaitness School and the Pickaquoy Centre, to understand their perspectives and priorities for potential improvements.

3. To note that the engagement aimed to confirm whether the feedback gathered aligned with the priorities set out in Your Kirkwall (2018) but not to start any infrastructure work yet.

### H. Financial Requests

Following consideration of notes of thanks received from various individuals and groups regarding financial assistance received from the Community Council, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

## 7. Correspondence

### A. Carness Road Sea Wall

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding a proposal to extend the existing sea wall in Carness Road to remove a gap near Weyland Bay, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should write to Orkney Islands Council outlining the Community Council’s concerns that blocking up that part of the sea wall may cause more issues, if the culvert became blocked with seaweed and other debris and asking whether residents had also been consulted given previous flooding events in the immediate area.

### B. Best Kept War Memorial Competition

The Clerk had received correspondence from the Kirkwall branch of the Royal British Legion enquiring whether the Community Council wished to enter the Best Kept War Memorial competition in 2025, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should arrange for the Kirkwall and St Ola War Memorial to be entered in the Best Kept War Memorial competition for 2025.

### C. Quiet Routes

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council updating information provided in January 2024 which outlined proposals for quiet routes in Orkney, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that officers from Orkney Islands Council had attended a number of meetings with Community Councils during February and March 2024 advising of the initial work to collect data, seeking feedback on proposals and setting out the committee process and timescales required to take the work forward.

2. To note that posts were erected to collect pedestrian and cycle data, and rubber bands were installed across roads to collect traffic speed and volume data over a number of months in 2024.

3. To note that, due to issues around data gathering and a process of ongoing change to funding from Transport Scotland, it was not possible to delivery any quiet route projects in 2024/2025.

4. To note that data continued to be collected, which would be reviewed by officers from Orkney Islands Council before further engagement with Community Councils on potential quiet routes to progress in 2025/2026.

### D. Visitor Levy

Following consideration of open correspondence from K Johnson distributed to all community councils and councillors through the Western Isles area, and all islands of Scotland, regarding Highland Council’s consultation on the proposed visitor levy, encouraging support for an immediate pause in the Visitor Levy rollout until the full impact on island communities could be properly understood and addressed, as well as signing an open letter from Tim Eagle MSP to Kate Forbes MSP opposing the visitor levy, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should write to Kate Forbes MSP supporting an immediate pause in the Visitor Levy rollout until the full impact on island communities could be properly understood and addressed.

### E. Our Budget Challenge – Survey Results

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council setting out the results of the budget challenge survey launched at the end of 2024, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

### F. OIC Wind Farm Projects

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council advising of the decision to proceed with the wind farm project at Quanterness, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

### G. Community Conversation – Community Benefits from Renewable Energy Developments

Following consideration of correspondence from Scottish Community Development Centre advising of an online community conversation held on 26 March 2025 regarding the Scottish Government’s consultation on Community Benefit Good Practice Guidance, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

Councillor Steven B Heddle left the meeting at this point.

## 8. Financial Statements

### A. General Finance

Following consideration of the General Finance statement as at 14 March 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the estimated balance as at 14 March 2025 of £15,966.74.

### B. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the 2024/2025 Community Council Grant Scheme statement as at 14 March 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that projects to the value of £6,010.82 had been approved, of which £5,010.82 had been claimed.

2. To note the balance remaining for approval within the main capping limit of £170.51.

### C. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund Statement as at 14 March 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the balance remaining for approval of £1,163.46.

## 9. Financial Requests

### A. Highland Dancing

Following consideration of an application from T Paterson requesting financial assistance towards her three daughters participating in the Mina Mackay Festival of Highland Dancing held in Keiss on 1 March 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given in respect of each dancer who took part in the competition.

### B. Orkney Folk Festival – 42nd Folk Festival

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Folk Festival requesting financial assistance towards the 42nd Folk Festival, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £500 be given.

### C. U15 Intercounty Badminton

Following consideration of an application from L Kinghorn requesting financial assistance towards her son participating in the under 15 intercounty badminton competition held in Shetland on 22 February 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given.

### D. Highland Badminton Group Junior Restricted 2025

Following consideration of an application from L Leask requesting financial assistance towards her son participating in the Highland Badminton Group’s under 19s competition held on 15 March 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given.

### E. Highland Dancing

Following consideration of an application from C Ward requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in the Mina Mackay Festival of Highland Dancing held in Keiss on 1 March 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given.

### F. Highland Dancing

Following consideration of an application from V Sinclair requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in a highland dancing competition to be held in Wick on 12 April 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given.

### G. Netball Orkney – Senior Section

Following consideration of an application from Netball Orkney requesting financial assistance towards the senior section attending practice matches in Aberdeen and Alness during March 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given to each participant under 18 years of age in respect of each match attended.

### H. Road Repairs

Following consideration of correspondence from G Low requesting financial assistance towards repairs to a private road in St Ola, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that no assistance be provided.

### I. Highland Badminton Group Trials

Following consideration of an application from L Leask requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in Highland Badminton Group trials to be held in Alness on 5 April 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given.

### J. Highland Badminton Group Trials

Following consideration of an application from L Leask requesting financial assistance towards her son participating in Highland Badminton Group trials to be held in Alness on 5 April 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given.

### K. Orkney Gymnastics Club

Following consideration of an application from S Webb requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in the North District Floor and Vault Gymnastics competition held in Garioch on 23 March 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given.

## 10 Consultations

### A. Trees and Woodland Strategy

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding a consultation on a proposed trees and woodland strategy, for which responses were required by 24 March 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should write to Orkney Islands Council seeking clarity on how the proposed strategy might impact shrubs in private gardens within the Kirkwall conservation area.

### B. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service – Strategic Plan 2025-2028

Following consideration of correspondence from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service regarding a consultation on its Strategic Plan 2025-2028, for which responses were required by 2 April 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To make no comment on the Strategic Plan 2025-2028.

2. That local representatives of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service be invited to attend a future meeting.

Councillor Leslie Manson left the meeting at this point,

### C. SEPA – Proposed Changes to Environmental Regulation (Scotland) Guidance on Publication Participation and Fit and Proper Person Test

Following consideration of correspondence from SEPA regarding proposed changes to the Environmental Regulation (Scotland) Guidance on Public Participation and the Fit and Proper Person Test, for which responses were required by 30 March 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should respond to the consultation welcoming the cost efficiency and streamlining, whereby a number of licences were being incorporated into one, as long as the cost was no greater than the sum of the individual licences.

### D. Visitor Levy Survey and Public Engagement Sessions

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding public engagement sessions looking at the feasibility of a proposed visitor levy on overnight stays in certain accommodation in Orkney, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that an online event would be held on 25 March 2025, with an in-person event at the Pickaquoy Centre on 26 March 2025.

2. To note that an online survey was available until 11 April 2025.

## 11. Meetings attended by Members

### Northern Isles Freight Vessels Replacement Project

CMAL had organised a public engagement session in the Kirkwall and St Ola Community Centre on 20 March 2025 regarding the replacement freight vessels for the Northern Isles, and it was:

Resolved to note that S Brodie and J Mowat had attended the event.

## 12. Publications

The following publications had been sent to the Clerk and were forwarded to members via email:

* NHS Orkney – Stop Smoking Resources.
* VAO Newsletters – January and February 2025.
* ORSAS Quarterly Newsletter – January 2025.
* Scotland’s Towns Partnership – January and February 2025 Newsletters.
* Paths for All – eNews – January and February 2025.
* SEPA Updates – February and March 2024.
* VAO – Training and Funding Updates – January and February 2025.
* VAO – Newsletter and Training and Funding Update are changing.
* SSEN – DSO March 2025 Newsletter.
* Scottish Rural Action – Newsletter – March 2025.

## 13. Any Other Competent Business

### A. Improving the Cancer Journey

Following consideration of correspondence from NHS Orkney introducing the Improving the Cancer Journey service, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

### B. SEPA – Surface Water Flood Maps

Following consideration of correspondence from SEPA advising of the publication of new surface water flood maps, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence

### C. Safety of Lithium-Ion Batteries

The Clerk had received correspondence from Ron Bailey regarding the continuing campaign regarding the safety of lithium-ion batteries, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should write to Electrical Safety First supporting the campaign.

## 14. Date of Next Meeting

Following consideration of future meeting dates, it was:

Resolved that the next meeting of Kirkwall and St Ola Community Council should be held on Monday, 12 May 2025, commencing at 19:00.

## 15. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 21:10*.*