

Minute of the Meeting of Kirkwall and St Ola Community Council held in the Friends Room, St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall, on Monday, 3 July 2023 at 19:00

Present:

Tom Rendall, Robert F Leslie, Barbara J M Graham, Cathleen A Hourie, David W Hughes, Chris J F Matthews and John R Mowat.

In Attendance:

- Councillor Sandy G Cowie.
- Councillor W Leslie Manson.
- Councillor John A R Scott.
- Councillor Ivan A Taylor.
- Hayley Green, Corporate Director for Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure, Orkney Islands Council (via Microsoft Teams).
- Garry Burton, Service Manager, Sport and Leisure, Orkney Islands Council.
- Hazel Flett, Clerk.
- 1 member of the local press.
- Jenny McGrath, Community Council Liaison Officer (via Microsoft Teams).

Chair:

- Tom Rendall.

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1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Moyra Gordon and Lynne Spence and Councillors Steven B Heddle and Gwenda M Shearer.

2. Benches and Playparks

The Service Manager (Sport and Leisure), Orkney Islands Council, answered members' queries in respect of benches and play parks, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that responsibility for public benches in Kirkwall depended on who had supplied the bench, that Orkney Islands Council did not have a dedicated budget in respect of the provision or maintenance of benches and any maintenance or provision of new benches was normally funded through external funding received by the Council.
2. To note that an audit of benches had been undertaken in 2011, which indicated a total of 43 benches across Orkney, however there was limited resource to undertake a further audit, noting that there would be a significant increase in the number of benches in the intervening period.
3. To note that the benches at the Willows had been removed by Mr Burton's service, once the condition of the benches had been identified through routine maintenance checks, and subsequently replaced utilising external funding.
4. To note that Mr Burton was unaware of who had installed the benches in the Bignold Park and suggested that the Community Justice service may be responsible.
5. To note that the Play Area Renewal Fund, the aim of which was not for minor maintenance or repairs to existing playpark equipment, could be accessed to assist in reinstating various playparks around Kirkwall, and not having title to the playpark would not be a disadvantage to applying.
6. To note that, although the first round of applications to the Play Area Renewal Fund had now closed, with six applications received, a second round of applications would be sought later in the year.
7. To note that Orkney Islands Council had received specific funding from the Scottish Government for playparks and had subsequently purchased a number of pieces of equipment, including a basket swing and swing seats which would be installed at the playpark off Glaitness Road, and a climbing frame to be installed at Brandyquoy.
8. That David Hughes would undertake to provide a list of all benches around Kirkwall and submit to the next meeting.

Garry Burton left the meeting at this point.

3. Adoption of Minute

The Minute of the Meeting held on 15 May 2023, was approved, being proposed by Cathleen Hourie and seconded by Barbara Graham, subject to the following addition:

White Ribbon Orkney Steering Group

Resolved that representatives from ORSAS be invited to the meeting at which the White Ribbon Orkney Steering Group gave their presentation.

4. Matters Arising

A. Appointment of Vice Chair

As Robert Leslie had been nominated as Vice Chair at the previous meeting in his absence, it was:

Resolved to note that Robert Leslie had subsequently accepted the position of Vice Chair.

B. Seatter Bridleway

Robert Leslie had not yet had an opportunity to remove the broken fencing along the Seatter bridleway, and it was:

Resolved to note the position.

C. Door in St Olaf's Wynd

As Rikki Lidderdale was not present, no further update was provided in respect of the door at St Olaf's Wynd, and it was:

Resolved to note the position.

D. The Big Tree – QR Code

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding the proposals for a QR code on the support within the Big Tree, together with suggestions for long term improvements, including reinstating the railings around the main trunk of the tree, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the proposed sign fell under the definition of an “advertisement” as something designed for information and therefore could be displayed under the deemed consent provisions and not requiring a specific application.

2. To proceed with the smaller QR code sign, with consideration of the larger project being deferred to a future date.

E. Road to Scapa Pier – Landslip

The Clerk advised that no response had yet been received to the Community Council's concerns regarding a landslip on the road to Scapa Pier, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should again write to Orkney Islands Council, highlighting the urgency and, if someone had inspected the site and assessed that there was no danger to the public, then this should be confirmed to the Community Council.

F. Benches

Resolved to note that previous queries in relation to the provision of benches had been covered in presentation at Item 2 above.

G. Playpark Equipment

Resolved to note that previous queries in relation to playpark equipment had been covered in presentation at Item 2 above.

H. New Kirkwall Care Home – Proposed Names

The Clerk had received correspondence from both Papdale Primary School and Glaitness School advising that, due to other pressures during the term before the holidays, neither school had been able to provide proposed names for the new Kirkwall Care Home. Orkney Islands Council had subsequently advised that this matter could be postponed until after the school summer holidays but would require to be submitted no later than the proposed October meeting of the Community Council, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should contact the schools again advising that names should be submitted in time for consideration by the Community Council at its meeting to be held in October.

5. Correspondence

A. Kirkwall BID – New Chair

Following consideration of a press release issued by Kirkwall BID regarding the appointment of a new Chair, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that, following Duncan McLean leaving his role with the BID after more than four years to allow another director to head up the Board, Cheryl Chapman, Destination Development Manager for VisitScotland, had been appointed Chair.

B. SSEN Resilient Communities Fund

Following consideration of correspondence regarding SSEN's Resilient Communities Fund 2023, for which applications required to be submitted by 31 July 2023, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

6. Financial Statements

A. General Finance

Following consideration of the General Finance statement as at 13 June 2023, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the estimated balance as at 13 June 2023 of £16,142.44.

B. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the 2022/23 Community Council Grant Scheme statement as at 13 June 2023, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that projects to the value of £6,246.72 had been approved, of which £4,096.72 had been claimed.
2. To note the balance remaining for approval within the main capping limit was zero.

C. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund Statement as at 13 June 2023, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the balance remaining for approval of £2,163.46.

D. Seedcorn Fund

Following consideration of the Seedcorn Fund Statement as at 13 June 2023, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the balance remaining for approval was zero.

7. Financial Requests

A. Mina Mackay Festival of Highland Dance

Following consideration of two applications requesting financial assistance towards participation in the Mina Mackay Festival of Highland Dance held in Keiss on 4 June 2023, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a grant of £30 be awarded in respect of each participant, subject to confirmation of participation.

B. Orkney Gymnastics

Following consideration of two applications from members of Orkney Gymnastics Club requesting financial assistance towards participation in a Floor and Vault competition held in Perth between 9 and 11 June 2023, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a grant of £30 be awarded in respect of each participant, subject to confirmation of participation.

C. Highland Dancing – Exams and Competition

Following consideration of correspondence from T Russell requesting assistance towards her daughter's participation in various highland dancing competitions, together with exams, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a grant of £30 be awarded in respect of each of the undernoted events, subject to confirmation of attendance:

- 2 June 2023 – Highland Dancing exams in Halkirk.
- 4 June 2023 – Thurso Festival of Dancing in Keiss.
- 16 July 2023 – BATD Championship.
- 5 August 2023 – Mey Highland Games.

D. Island Games, Guernsey, July 2023

The Clerk had received correspondence from D Allan requesting financial assistance towards attending the Island Games in Guernsey in July 2023 as a swimming official in preparation for the Games coming to Orkney in 2025, and it was:

Resolved that no assistance be provided.

Councillor John Ross Scott left the meeting at this point.

8. Consultations

A. Second Review of Scottish Parliamentary Boundaries

Following consideration of correspondence from Boundaries Scotland regarding the second review of Scottish parliamentary boundaries, for which responses were required by 17 June 2023, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the content of the correspondence, particularly that the Orkney constituency was protected in legislation.

B. Speed Limit Extensions in Finstown

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding the proposed extension of speed limits in Finstown, including the variable 20 mph speed limit and the existing 30 mph limits, for which responses were required by 7 July 2023, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to make no comment.

C. Permitted Development Rights Review – Phase 3

Following consideration of correspondence from the Scottish Government regarding phase 3 of the planning review relating to permitted development rights, for which responses were due by 23 August 2023, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that the Community Council should submit a response to the consultation, based on matters raised, including the proposals going some way to resolving the mismatch between Government policies in respect of retaining the look of conservation areas and meeting climate targets, the potential use of “plastic” windows rather than direct replacement of wooden sash and case windows and the siting of air source heat pumps.

D. Review of Statement of Alcohol Licensing Policy

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding a review of the Orkney Islands Area Licensing Board's Statement of Alcohol Licensing Policy, for which responses were due by 25 August 2023, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to make no comment.

E. Draft Procurement Strategy

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding its proposed procurement strategy for 2023 to 2028, for which responses were required by 31 July 2023, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that the Community Council should submit a response encouraging Orkney Islands Council to procure as much as possible locally, noting legislative requirements and statutory limitations.

9. Meetings Attended by Members

A. Scottish Online Conference for Community Councillors

Following consideration of feedback and notes on the Scottish Online Conference for Community Councillors held on 10 June 2023, which Cathleen Hourie had attended, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the content of the correspondence.

B. West of Orkney Windfarm – Pre-Application Consultation Events

West of Orkney Windfarm had held a series of pre-application consultation events in May 2023, and it was:

Resolved to note that Chris Matthews had attended one of the events, advising that there was little change from previous consultation events, including three unresolved matters, namely distribution of community benefit, the visual impact of lighting from the proposed Scapa Deep Water Quay and the route of the future cable to Flotta.

C. Scotland's Towns Partnership

Scotland's Towns Partnership had arranged an online meeting of the Cross Party Group on Towns and Town Centres on 7 June 2023, which Lynne Spence had attended, and it was:

Resolved to note that presentations included the Love Local campaign, supporting local initiatives of investment and commitment and the importance of town centre seating to keep folk shopping and spending for longer.

10. Publications

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

- SEPA Updates – 16 and 26 May, 1, 9 and 30 June 2023.
- VAO – Training and Funding Updates – May and June 2023.
- Liam McArthur MSP – Holyrood Highlights – 20 and 26 May, 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30 June 2023.
- Alistair Carmichael MP – The Week in Parliament – 20 and 26 May, 10 and 23 June 2023.
- Scottish Rural Action – May and June 2023 Newsletters.
- ORSAS Quarterly Newsletter – June 2023.
- Paths for All – eNews – May and June 2023.
- VAO – Newsletters – May 2023.
- Police Scotland – Orkney area Command Newsletter – Issue 2 2023.
- NHS Healthcare Improvement Scotland – “Good to Share” Information Bulletin (21 June 2023).
- SEPA – Launch of Transgender Equality Policy.

11. Any Other Competent Business

A. Palace Road and Palace Gardens

The Clerk had received correspondence from a member of the public regarding the state of the public areas around the Palace Road council properties, particularly the poor provision of storage facilities for the numerous wheelie bins, as well as the paved areas which were not being maintained, and it was:

Resolved to note the content of the correspondence and to await further information from Orkney Islands Council.

B. Virgin Bank Door

The Clerk had requested that the Community Council be included as a consultee in respect of application from Virgin Money to install a replacement door and repair masonry at 3 Broad Street, Kirkwall, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should submit representations advising that the Community Council was delighted to see the project going ahead.

C. Cleaning Regime for Pavements

Chris Matthews advised that he had reported the unsafe condition of the Strynd and queried the cleaning regime, particularly during the breeding season of birds, and it was:

Resolved to note that Hayley Green undertook to confirm the cleaning regime, including provision for additional cleans, should the condition of pavements warrant it or in response to representations received from the public.

D. Proposed Visitor Levy Bill

Barbara Graham referred to the ongoing consultation by the Scottish Government in respect of the proposed visitor levy bill, which would allow local authorities to

introduce an additional charge when someone paid for overnight accommodation, for which responses were due by 15 September 2023, and it was:

Resolved that the Community Council should respond to the consultation based on the matters raised, including the disproportionate burden on one sector of the economy, namely those also affected by the short-term lets licensing scheme, and that day visitors did not appear to be included which, locally, was considered a bigger issue than overnight stays.

Hayley Green left the meeting during discussion of this item.

E. Broadband Infrastructure

Cathleen Hourie advised that she had been informed that the depth of trenches for installing broadband infrastructure (fibre cables) was deeper than any other area, causing the contractor difficulties in completing works, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should write to Orkney Islands Council seeking clarification.

12. 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, 21 August 2023, commencing at 19:00.

13. Conclusion of Meeting

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