

Minute of the Meeting of Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council held in the Rousay Community School and via Teams on Saturday, 22 February 2025 at 09:15

Present:

Mr A Firth, Mrs D Compton, Mrs Z Flaws, Mrs C Mainland, Mr R Tipper.

In Attendance:

- Mrs J McGrath, Community Council Liaison Officer (via Teams).
- Ms C Kriisa, Clerk.

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1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Miss A Mainland and Mrs C Maguire, and Councillors M Thomson.

2. Adoption of Minute

The minute of the meeting of Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council held on Saturday, 30 November 2024 was adopted, being proposed by Mrs Z Flaws and seconded by Mr R Tipper.

3. Matters Arising

A. Memorial at Rousay Kirkyard

Mrs Z Flaws advised that she had contacted the Community Development Fund but had not received a response regarding funding for the memorial bench. Contractors had been approached for quotes, with one not currently able to allocate a team to the work. Another had quoted £12,000 for the bench but that figure was exclusive of the concrete base and other groundworks. The overall cost was expected to be circa £15,000.

It was noted that although the labour costs were high, the social value of the bench was still appropriate. Members felt that two written quotations are required to progress this project, and two other locals were being invited to submit their quotes. The Community Development Fund could cover up to £5,000 of the costs but smaller funding sources were accessible. It was also recommended that the Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre Development Trust be approached regarding match funding.

Mrs Z Flaws shared photographs of the memorial bench in Sandwick, and provided feedback from a local funeral director who was in agreement that it would be a fitting memorial to loved ones, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Community Council Liaison Officer would assist the project by looking at different funding sources such as the CDF and REWDT.
2. That Mrs Z Flaws will look at the suitability of West of Orkney Windfarms community grant funding.

B. Historic Environment Scotland Car Parks

No update had been received on this item, and it was:

Resolved that the Community Council Liaison Officer would enquire if Orkney Islands Council would take responsibility for the car park.

C. Laybys

No update had been received on this item. It was noted that there had been a positive site visit after a plan of suggested suitable places for new passing places was drawn up by Miss A Mainland, and it was:

Resolved that the Community Council Liaison Officer would make further enquiries with Roads Support as to the status of this request.

D. Rousay School Issues

It was reported that the contractor had visited recently to start the outstanding works. There was now a floodlight over the school's playpark, with the switch located at the main entrance, however the carpark lights were still not working. The lights were manual and would need to be switched on by a keyholder in advance of visitors and building users arriving. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that members would enquire to understand how the new lighting system works for future reference.

E. Post Boxes and Postal Service

Members advised that postal services do not seem to be experiencing any notable difficulties or delays. As yet, there had been no update on the future location or running of the local Post Office, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

F. Parking at Rousay School

Members were advised that it would not be possible to demolish the old outbuildings to create additional parking spaces at the school. A shed would need to be erected for storing janitorial equipment, and these costs would not be covered by the school. A container was a possible alternative solution to this. The Headteacher wished for the pupils to still retain access to bike storage if any alterations are agreed upon.

It was noted that there are issues on wet days, as cars were unable to park in the playground due to the grass being too wet for the pupils to use, which was forcing other building users back to the side parking areas. It was also noted that there were issues with visitors parking over the borehole, leaving it inaccessible to Scottish Water, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That Mrs C Mainland would enquire with a local contractor regarding a container for storing janitorial supplies.
2. That the school janitor would be asked what storage space they need.
3. That the Clerk would contact the Council's HiTRANS embedded officer, via Democratic Services, regarding bike storage for school pupils.
4. That the Community Council Liaison Officer would enquire internally regarding crosshatching on the borehole, and bus parking demarcation.
5. That there would be a call to keyholders to encourage parking in the playground and to open the gates in advance of arrivals.

G. Play Area Renewal Fund

It was advised that Rousay Parent Council had held a meeting with parents on 4 February 2025. A good turnout was noted, with ten children represented by parents, along with the Headteacher. The Parent Council had agreed for the designer to create mock-ups of two designs featuring two different large items. The designs were sent to parents on 12 February for comment. They hope to receive feedback by 19 February and would be collating the replies for the other parents to review and respond to, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

H. Cruise Ship Revenue

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

I. Pedestrians at Piers

It was noted that improvements had begun, and a galvanised barrier had now been erected. Signage was yet to be installed, and road markings were also still outstanding. No works had been undertaken at Tingwall, and it was noted that the lack of a dedicated pathway around the parking area and creel storage created a hazard for both pedestrians and drivers, and it was:

Resolved that the Community Council Liaison Officer will follow up internally, highlighting particular urgency for improvements at Tingwall to proceed.

J. Parking at Brinian Kirkyard

Members heard that, upon closure of the meeting held on 30 November 2024, the Clerk invited the Service Manager, Democratic Services and Communications, and the Empowering Communities Liaison Officer to visit the site in question, and it was:

Resolved that the Service Manager, Democratic Services and Communications, and the Empowering Communities Liaison Officer would follow up this matter with the relevant officers within Orkney Islands Council.

K. Orkney Ferries Booking System

It was advised that a Community Council Chairs' meeting will take place via Teams on 25 February, with the Service Manager of Orkney Ferries in attendance. A member of the Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council will be in attendance, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

L. Business Plan for New Ferries

No update was received for this item, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

4. Correspondence

A. Orkney Islands Council - AbilityNet Digital Voice Roadshow

Members considered correspondence from AbilityNet informing of a digital voice roadshow planned for 30 January 2025 at the Pickaquoy Centre, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

B. Scottish Community Councils – Rural and Islands Poverty Webinar

Members considered correspondence from Scottish Community Councils regarding an upcoming Community Councils webinar on rural and islands poverty.

Representatives of the Poverty Alliance would be in attendance to share key issues in relation to rural and island poverty, highlighted through their 'Taking Action on Rural Poverty' projects, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

C. VAO - Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund

Members considered correspondence from Voluntary Action Orkney, advising that the Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund for Adults was now open for a second tranche of applications, and that applications close on 3 February, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the correspondence.
2. That Mrs Z Flaws would enquire about funding for the memorial bench.

D. Neven Point Wind Farm Landing Point - Proposal of Application Notice

Members considered correspondence received from Green Power International, providing a copy of the Proposal of Application Notice for a proposed new landing point on Eday for the Point of Neven Wind Farm, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

E. NHS Orkney - Quit Your Way: Stop Smoking Resources

Members considered correspondence from NHS Orkney promoting resources and services available to help those wishing to stop smoking as part of 'Quit Your Way Orkney', and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

F. VAO – Small Grants Scheme Funding Update

Members considered correspondence from Voluntary Action Orkney, stating that their Small Grants Scheme had opened for applications. Grants of up to £500 were

available to charities, community groups, and voluntary organisation in Orkney. The closing date was 3 March 2025, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the correspondence.
2. That Mrs Z Flaws would enquire about funding for the memorial bench at Brinian kirkyard.

G. Scottish Community Development Centre - Community Benefits from Offshore and Onshore Renewable Energy Developments

Members considered correspondence from the Scottish Community Development Centre, who would be hosting a number of community conversations across Scotland to gather local peoples' opinions on community benefits from offshore and onshore renewable energy developments. They planned to host two online webinars, with individuals and community groups welcome, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

H. Keep Britain Tidy - Great British Spring Clean

Members considered correspondence from Keep Britain Tidy, noting that the 10th Great British Spring Clean would take place from 21 March – 6 April 2025, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

I. Orkney Islands Council - ZEVl Questionnaire Results

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council relating to the latest ZEVl questionnaire results from residents of Shapinsay, Rousay, Egilsay, and Wyre. Members noted that there was no separation between the isles in terms of responses, and so it was unclear which island may utilise services, such as an early sailing. Members discussed the feedback, and it was noted that Wyre and Egilsay residents are negatively affected when accessing medical services on Rousay and that this is a longstanding issue that ZEVl could contribute towards the relief of. Members also noted that ZEVl trials were now not expected to take place until March 2025, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

J. Orkney Islands Council – Local Place Plan Submissions

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council advising that an element of flexibility has been introduced to those wishing to produce a Local Place Plan, which will then be fed into a Local Development Plan. A deadline of September has been advised for submission.

The Clerk notified members that Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre Development Trust were looking to undertake the creation of a Local Place Plan this summer, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

5. Consultations

A. Orkney Islands Council - 20mph Speed Limit

Members considered correspondence that had previously been circulated from Orkney Islands Council encouraging a response from Community Councils on the Scottish Government's proposed implementation of 20mph speed limits on appropriate roads by the end of 2025. This survey would also welcome comments members may have on other areas now that the engagement process is underway, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

B. Orkney Islands Council - Verge Maintenance Plan 2025

Members considered correspondence that was previously circulated from Orkney Islands Council regarding the Verge Maintenance Plan for 2025, and confirmation that the 2025-2030 Verge Maintenance Plan had now been approved at the last General Meeting of the Council.

It was noted that only safety cuts on corners had been undertaken, along with one full cut per annum in September or October. No cutting took place before the Rousay Lap, and the comment was raised that priority should be given for the verges extending on the route between the pier and Midhowe, where the majority of summer traffic will be travelling, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the correspondence.
2. That the Community Council Liaison Officer would request that the verges be cut in June, and before the Rousay Lap on grounds of health and safety.

C. R100 Broadband Scheme – Evaluation Survey

Members considered correspondence that had previously been circulated regarding the ongoing R100 broadband improvements currently taking place across Orkney. The survey link provided intended to feed into the Scottish Government's evaluation of whether, and how, households and organisations have benefitted from the R100 rollout, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

D. Orkney Islands Council - Trees and Woodland Strategy

Members considered correspondence that had previously been circulated from Orkney Islands Council, noting that the Development and Marine Planning Team had launched a consultation on the Trees and Woodland Strategy and accompanying Environmental Reports. The deadline for consultation responses was 24 March 2025, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

E. Kathryn Johnson – Highlands Visitor Levy: Requirement for Full Islands Act ICIA

Members considered correspondence that was previously circulated regarding how the future implementation of a Visitor Levy will affect islands residents, who are not automatically exempt from the proposed charges. The correspondence requested support for halting the progress of the Visitor Levy until a full Islands Community Impact Assessment be carried out. The Clerk gave an overview of the variety of options available to Local Authorities whilst they are undergoing feasibility studies into the introduction of a Visitor Levy, and the autonomy and discretion that is possible, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

F. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service - Strategic Plan 2025-2028

Members considered correspondence from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service which had been previously circulated inviting Members to review the draft SFRS Strategy for 2025-28, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

6. Financial Statements

A. General Fund

Following consideration of the general fund statement for Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council as at 27 January 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £33,130.27.

B. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the CCGS statement for Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council as at 27 January 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that the main capping limit was over 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 27 January 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that there was £10,427.80 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 27 January 2025, it was:

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

7. Financial Requests

A. Island Games - School Legacy Banner Project

Following consideration of correspondence received from the Island Games 2025 Ceremonies Lead requesting financial assistance towards the costs of school children from Rousay Community School participating in the creation of a banner commemorating the event, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £200 would be made towards the costs of creating a legacy banner for the Island Games 2025.

B. Rousay Parent Council – Christmas Tree Funding Support

Following consideration of correspondence received from Rousay Parent Council, copies of which had previously been circulated, requesting financial assistance towards the purchase of the annual Christmas tree, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £100 would be made towards the costs of the Christmas tree.

C. Rousay Triangle Club – Coordinator Costs

Following consideration of correspondence received from Rousay Triangle Club, copies of which had previously been circulated, requesting a financial contribution towards employing a coordinator for financial year 2025/2026, it was:

Resolved:

1. That funding of £2,000 would be awarded for costs incurred in employing a coordinator.
2. That this award would be split evenly between the Community Development Fund, and Community Council Grant Scheme funding streams, subject to approval.
3. That the Clerk would speak with the Triangle Club regarding additional funding that may be available to them.

8. Reports from Representatives

A. Planning

Resolved to note that there was no update.

B. Transport

The Transport Representative advised that, at present, the M.V. Shapinsay was covering the Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre route, and that a Contingency Plan was put in place at Christmas in response to M.V. Eynhallow experiencing technical issues. The Transport Representative had only recently seen a copy of the plan, which had

to be re-implemented upon further breakdowns. Some issues had been experienced with the swapping of foot and vehicle services, but the plan had been reformed and now needed the approval of the Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council. The Plan would only need to be put in place when one ferry is required to serve multiple routes, such as when a relief vessel is already on placement in another location, or on refit.

Members agreed that during times where the Contingency Plan is in place, that the scheduled 12:40 sailing on Wednesdays should not change. This is the day that M.V. Eynhallow, if on duty, departs from Tingwall 50 minutes later due to being refuelled. It was noted that there had been issues with residents arriving for the 12:40 sailing as is normal for Wednesdays, not realising that it is scheduled to depart at 11:50 whilst the contingency timetable is active.

It was also advised that concerns were present within the crew of M.V. Shapinsay regarding their working hours due to moving between the isles. A suggestion was brought forth of whether weekend foot passenger slots could be altered in case of prolonged periods of contingency. This would allow the Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre route to transport vehicles on a weekend. M.V. Eynhallow had not been factored into the Contingency Plan for covering the Shapinsay to Kirkwall route, but it has been raised as an option.

Accessibility issues on stand-in vessels was noted, with a significant proportion of residents being disadvantaged by being unable to use pier-side ladders, or in situations when a ramp cannot be deployed on a relief vessel. Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre Development Trust had an emergency fund available to residents who may get stuck on the mainland for the evening, with up to £100 available to cover accommodation costs if the resident is unable to return to their island.

It was also mentioned that the format of the Orkney Ferry statistics had now changed, and that Shapinsay Community Council were also experiencing confusion with the figures and so were asking for the new breakdowns to be explained, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Transport Representative should feedback to Orkney Ferries that, whilst the Contingency Plan is in action, the timetable for Wednesdays should depart at its regular scheduled time of 12:40.
2. To note that any other feedback on the contingency timetable should be sent to the Transport Representative by 24 February.

C. Health and Care

Members heard that there had been no Health and Care meetings since the previous Community Council meeting in November 2024. The main Advanced Nurse Practitioner who serves the three isles was due to retire this April, but has assured the Health and Care Representative that the isles will not be left without care in place. Currently, Advanced Nurse Practitioner support is being provided from a GP based on Westray.

Interviews were recently held to fill the departing Advanced Nurse Practitioner's position, which the Health and Care Representative attended, but the position was not filled and is due to be readvertised. The Health and Care Representative was still to receive a response to their emails and had been given contact details of an additional source of information regarding the Advanced Nurse Practitioner services available to residents of Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre. It was also advised that the next Health and Care meeting would be taking place on 4 March 2025, and North Isles Councillors will be in attendance. Following the update, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

9. Publications

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

- Scottish Water Newsletter – Winter 2024.
- Orkney Islands Council – End of Year Transportation Infographic.
- Letter from School Place – December 2024 and January 2025.
- VAO Training and Funding Update – December 2024 and January 2025.
- Orkney Ferries Statistics – October, November and December 2024.
- ORSAS Quarterly Newsletter – January 2025.

10. Any Other Competent Business

A. Condition of Rousay Roads

It was raised that local roads were currently in poor condition with a lot of potholes having formed. Repairs were being made to these, but their condition deteriorates again quickly. It was noted that the pothole located at Cubbie Roo has been repaired several times, but the others not so much. During the R100 cable installations, some roadsides had sunk in areas. It was reported that a member of the Roads team will be out to clean out ditches and other related works once the crash barrier work had been completed, and it was:

Resolved that the Community Council Liaison Officer would request that Roads Support officers carry out a site visit, accompanied by a Community Council representative.

B. Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council Meeting Arrangements

It was advised that, due to members' schedules, a new day and time must be sought for future Community Council meetings, and it was:

Resolved that future meetings would take place on a Wednesday evening.

C. Grass Cutting Tender

It was advised that there were no contractors in place for grass cutting of the cemeteries this year. Members agreed to ask the previous contract holder if they

wished to extend to include this year. An invite for tenders would then be raised in November 2025 for subsequent years, and it was:

Resolved to ask the previous contractor if they wished an extension to include this year.

D. Egilsay Kirkyard

It was reported that residents were experiencing issues with burials taking place within Egilsay kirkyard, as there was no map available showing occupied plots, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Community Council Liaison Officer would enquire internally as to burial plot locations within the kirkyard.
2. That the Clerk would make contact with North Isles Councillors to make them aware of the situation and to ask for their assistance with this matter.

E. Community Council Facebook Profiles

Mrs C Mainland requested that members provide some information for the Community Council Facebook page and will let members know what details to include. The Chair had already done so, the Vice Chair will be next, and then other members will be approached, and it was:

Resolved for Mrs C Mainland to collate and add members' information to the Community Council Facebook page.

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 Wednesday, 23 April at 19:30.

12. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business to discuss, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 11:00.