



# Minute of the Meeting of Birsay Community Council held in the Birsay Community Hall and via Teams on Thursday, 4 May 2023 at 19:30

## Present:

Mr Richard Delday, Miss Kelly Coghill, Ms Diane Clouston, Mr Michael Leitch and Mr Steven Spence.

## In Attendance:

- Councillor Duncan Tullock.
- Councillor Rachael King.
- Councillor Owen Tierney.
- Councillor Jean Stevenson (via Teams).
- Ms Hayley Green, Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure.
- Mrs Jenny McGrath, Community Council Liaison Officer/Interim Clerk.
- Miss Inga Gaudie, Community Council Liaison Assistant/Interim Clerk.

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## **1. Apologies**

Resolved to note that apologies had been received from Mrs V Sinclair.

## **2. Adoption of Minute**

The minute of the meeting held on 2 February 2023 was approved, being proposed by Mr M Leitch and seconded by Mr S Spence.

## **3. Birsay Kirkyards Grass Cutting Tenders**

The members heard that two tenders had been received for the Birsay Kirkyards Grass Cutting and, after consideration, it was:

Resolved to award the tender to Mr Michael Brass.

## **4. Matters Arising**

### **A. Foreshore from Ministry Huts to Zanzibar**

The Interim Clerk informed members that Orkney Islands Council did not have capacity to install the signage but were willing to make the signs. Roads Support officers had suggested the community council puts the installation of the signage out to tender locally and once they had received suitable quotes, Roads Support would fund the project from its budget, and it was:

Resolved that the community council will put the installation of the signage out to tender and advertise as appropriate.

### **B. Public Roads**

The Interim Clerk informed members that Orkney Islands Council did not have extra budget for introducing further passing places or widening of roads. Mr Leitch raised his concerns regarding a large hole beside the tarmac where the tour buses park and felt this was a significant health and safety concern. Mr Leitch suggested it be filled with stones as a temporary measure, during the summer months. Other areas of concern to members were the Sandwick peat hill Road and the Wilderness.

Mr Leitch raised his concerns that the ditching had not yet been carried out but had been informed that it would be completed by June. The Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure, informed members that the work will take longer due to years of neglect but that the ditching works have now been written into the annual programme of works to be undertaken.

Mr Leitch also enquired as to when the plates would be removed, and the road repaired in Harray. The Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure, informed members that they were working in conjunction with the landowner beside the road and would have to wait for the water level to drop before works could be carried out effectively. The plates would continue to be monitored and readjusted, as required, in the interim. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the update from the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure.
2. To arrange for Gary Sinclair do temporary repair works to the pothole.

### **C. Dog Waste Bins**

The members heard that the RSBP would put up signage asking visitors to 'Take it Home'. A local resident had advised Mr Leitch that a dog waste bin has not been returned since the end of the pandemic. Councillor Tullock advised members that due to a fault on the dog waste bin, visitors did not use it and left dog waste on the ground beside it and therefore it was removed to stop this practice happening.

Members asked how often the bins are emptied and the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure, stated she would check on this and update accordingly, and it was:

Resolved to note the update.

### **D. Festive lighting**

Members heard that a suitable store had not yet been located. Harray and Sandwich Community Council had investigated the possibility of using the local amenity site in Dounby, and it was:

Resolved to note the update.

### **E. Area of speeding concern**

The Interim Clerk informed members that further information was required, as to the locations where speeding is a problem. Members stated that the road that passes the house of Starra is particularly hazardous, and it was:

Resolved that the Chair would provide the Clerk with a list of locations.

### **F. Overhanging Trees**

It was reported that the trees that had been overhanging at the Quilco area had been cut back, and it was:

Resolved that this item can be removed from further agendas.

### **G. Dounby Plan**

The Chair stated his disappointment that the plan was 'steamrolled out' and that the members did not have adequate time to consider the proposals and give their feedback. Councillor King stated that due to funding and planning constraints, the proposals needed to be submitted promptly.

Members heard that there were issues regarding the toilet block. Mr Leitch suggested there should be a place where coaches can dispose of the waste from their chemical toilets. Councillor King stated a facility in Hatston was being investigated for this purpose.

Mr Spence felt that there was a lack of consideration in the plans for access to the bowling club from the Market Green and that a larger section of tarmacked road should have been included, and it was:

Resolved to note the comments and information provided.

## **H. Monuments in Birsay Kirkyard**

The Interim Clerk advised members that there is one memorial in both the new cemetery, and St Magnus cemetery, which required maintenance and asked if members knew of any living relatives linked to these. It was reported that the memorial in the St Magnus cemetery dates from 1891 but the memorial in the new cemetery dates from 1951 and would likely be an easy and inexpensive repair, and it was:

Resolved that the Interim Clerk would pass the information on to the members, to see if they could locate the individuals' families.

## **I. Marwick Road**

Resolved to note that this item had been dealt with.

## **J. George Watson's College – Island Visit**

The Chair stated that they have had no further feedback on this item. Ms Clouston suggested the group could carry out Bag the Bruck. The Chair suggested painting the picnic benches at the Point of Buckquoy, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would make contact with George Watson's College for an update.

# **5. Correspondence**

## **A. VAO - Small Grants Scheme 2023/24**

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

## **B. Covid Recovery in Local Communities**

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

## **C. Cost of Living Poster**

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

## **D. Sustainable Tourism – Land Ownership Birsay Area**

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

## **E. Event - Creating a Home Emergency Plan with SSEN**

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

## **F. SIF Member Evening and AGM - Thursday 2nd March**

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

## **G. West of Orkney Windfarm- Orkney Community Panel final meeting minutes**

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

## **H. Community Council Vacancies**

The Chair had approached one individual, but the person had other commitments and was not prepared to stand on the community council. Mr Spence and Miss Coghill put forward suggestions, and it was:

Resolved to advertise the vacancy on FaceBook.

## **I. SEPA 2023 Opinion Survey**

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

## **J. Crofting Commission Area Representatives Recruitment 2023**

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

## **K. West of Orkney Windfarm - Erronous leaflet drop**

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

## **L. Funding for Coronation Events**

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

## **M. EMEC - Fall of Warness tidal test site - variation of consent under section 36c of the Electricity Act 1989**

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

## **N. Bag the Bruck 2023**

The Chair advised members that Harray and Sandwick Community Council plan to hold a monthly tidy up of the Market Green and surrounding areas. If anyone would like to assist, the group would be meeting on the first Wednesday of each month at 19:00 at the Market Green, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

## **O. Seabed Leasing Update**

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

## **P. Retirement of Democratic and Communications Service Manager**

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

## **Q. Coronation Events**

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

## **R. Orkney Islands Marine Region: Finfish Farming Spatial Guidance**

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

## **S. VAO: Third Sector Cost of Living Crisis Fund open for applications**

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

## **T. VAO: How well do you know VAO?**

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

## **U. Annual Grants 2023-2024 Letter**

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

## **V. Thank You Letters**

Members were advised that thank you letters had been received from Pam Farmer on behalf of Dounby Centre Bowling, Gavin Cullen on behalf of Orkney Folk Festival and Diane Clouston on behalf of the Straw Class, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

## **W. Community Council Health and Care Representatives**

The Interim Clerk advised members that a Health and Care Representative was still being sought. Councillor King listed the benefits of becoming a representative and the importance of the meetings being held regarding health and social care in each local community, and it was:

Resolved that the Chair would attend when possible and Ms Clouston would also be willing to attend in the Chair's absence.

## **6. Consultations**

### **A. Deposit Return Scheme**

Members heard that the scheme has been rescinded by the Scottish Government. The Chair felt that the scheme would need to be nationwide for it to work, and it was:

Resolved to note the consultation and the information provided.

### **B. Village and Brough of Birsay - Community Consultation**

Members discussed the plans for the village and Brough of Birsay. Members, and local residents alike, were displeased there was no consultation with the local community before the plans were released. One resident of the village stated the plans had failed to consider the boundary of their house and this would need to be rectified. Councillor Tullock encouraged members and locals to give their feedback on the proposals.

The Interim Clerk advised that the group responsible for the plans have suggested that an evening meeting could be held with the community council to discuss their concerns. Both the Chair and Miss Coghill asked if the public could be invited as well, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would arrange a meeting to be held on the evening of 18 May.
2. That the Clerk would ask if the meeting could also be open to the public.

### **C. The West of Orkney Windfarm - Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Notice**

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

### **D. Winter Service Plan 2023/2024**

Resolved to note the consultation and that no comments were to be forwarded.

## **7. Financial Statements**

### **A. General Fund**

Following consideration of the General Fund statement, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £7,344.34 as at 25 April 2023.

### **B. Birsay Energy Fund**

Following consideration of the Birsay Energy Fund, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £19,276.09 as at 25 April 2023.

### **C. Community Council Grant Scheme**

Following consideration of the financial statement for the Community Council Grant Scheme, it was:

Resolved to note the balance remaining available for approval in the main capping limit was £1,987.78 and the balance in the additional capping limit has been fully allocated as at 25 April 2023.

### **D. Community Development Fund**

Following consideration of the financial statement for the Community Development Fund, it was:

Resolved to note the balance remaining available for allocation was £8,183.37 as at 25 April 2023.

### **E. Seed Corn Fund**

Following consideration of the financial statement for the Seed Corn Fund, it was:

Resolved to note the balance remaining available for approval was £21.64 as at 25 April 2023.

## **8. Financial Requests**

### **A. Mark Thomson – Ross County U12s**

Following consideration of correspondence from Sarah Thomson, copies of which had previously been circulated, requesting financial assistance towards her son Mark competing in the Ross County Under 12s Trials, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £50 should be made from the general fund.

### **B. Lily Sinclair – Dounby Girl Guides**

Following consideration of correspondence from Dounby Girl Guides, copies of which had previously been circulated, requesting financial assistance towards the cost of travelling to see a musical performance in Aberdeen, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £50 should be made from the general fund.

## **9. Publications**

- VAO – Newsletter – February and March 2023.
- VAO - Training and Funding Update – March and April 2023.
- ORSAS Quarterly Newsletter – February 2023.
- VAO: National Lottery Community Fund - Funding Information Event.
- Orkney Harbours – Offshore Wind Newsletter – October and December 2022.
- Scottish Government and CoSLA – National discussion for Education in Scotland “Let’s Talk Scottish Education”.

## **10. Any Other Competent Business**

### **A. Repairs at Skiba Geo**

The members heard that an order of Type 1 stone was required to repair the holes at Skiba Geo. These works were carried out by R Kemp previously. The members agreed that Richard Taylor would carry out the repairs on this occasion, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To contact Richard Taylor and make arrangements for the repairs.
2. For the Clerk to apply for Community Council Grant Scheme to cover the costs.

### **B. Grass Cutting**

Miss Coghill asked the Chair if the grass cutting tender included the areas besides the Kirkyards, and it was:

Resolved that all areas that require grass cutting are included within the tender.

### **C. Brough of Birsay Tidal Clock and Lockbox**

Following discussion with regards to an emergency rescue by HM Coastguard, which required the use of the SAR Helicopter, earlier in the year, Mr Leitch proposed that a tidal clock be placed at the Point of Buckquoy to alert visitors of when it is safe to cross the causeway to the Brough of Birsay.

Ms Clouston suggested that a lockbox with a key could be installed on the Brough of Birsay and if visitors become stranded, could call a number to gain access to the building on the site and have a suitable place to wait until it is again safe to cross the causeway. Following further discussion, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would contact Historic Environment Scotland and enquire if the installation of a lockbox would be permissible.

### **D. Cemetery Gates at Bishop's Palace**

Councillor Tullock asked members if something could be done with the cemetery gates at Bishop's Palace. Ms Clouston suggested this may be something the Group from George Watson's College could undertake. Councillor Tullock stated the gates were under the remit of Orkney Islands Council, and it was:

Resolved that the community council would seek quotes for the repairs to the gates.

### **E. Concerns of Orkney Islands Council Spending**

Mr Leitch asked why OIC had applied for planning permission for a road that may not even eventually be required, in relation to Scapa Deep Water Quay. The Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure, stated that due to planning constraints, the application needed to be submitted as part of the preparation of works. Mr Leitch also queried staff expenses and travel arrangements in relation to a recent event run by OIC and received an explanation from the Community Council Liaison Officer. Following further discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

### **F. Treatment of Causeway**

Members heard that following cleaning of the causeway, the Chair's wife had suffered a fall. This was due to the chemical that is used to treat any growth on the causeway but is not visible to the naked eye. Members agreed that it would be prudent for a sign to be posted after cleaning has taken place, to warn visitors of the hazard, and it was:

Resolved to investigate if a sign can be posted after future cleaning of the causeway.

## **11. Date of Next Meeting**

Following consideration of dates for the next meeting, it was:

Resolved that the next meeting of Birsay Community Council would be held on Thursday, 14 September 2023 at 19:30 in Birsay Community Centre and via Microsoft Teams.

## **12. Conclusion of Meeting**

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting close

