

# Minute of the Meeting of Firth and Stenness Community Council held in Firth Community Centre and via Teams on Thursday, 22 February 2024 at 19:30

## Present:

Mrs W Dunnet, Mrs A Stevenson, Mr R Hourston and Ms B Scollay.

## In Attendance:

- Councillor R King.
- Councillor J Stevenson.
- Councillor O Tierney.
- Ms J Herbert, SSEN Community Liaison Manager (via Teams).
- Mr M Dunlop, SSEN System Project Manager (via Teams).
- Mr K MacPherson, Head of Property, Asset Management and Facilities.
- Mr R Cunningham, Service Manager, Democratic Services and Communications.
- Mrs J McGrath, Community Council Liaison Officer/Interim Clerk.

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## **1. Apologies**

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Councillor D Tullock.

## **2. Adoption of Minute**

The minute of the meeting of Firth and Stenness Community Council held on 6 November 2023 was adopted, being proposed by Mr R Hourston and seconded by Ms B Scollay.

## **3. SSEN Presentation – Transmission Projects**

Representatives from SSEN were in attendance at the meeting to provide information on the transmission projects that were underway and explained that they would like to engage with communities that will be impacted by the projects. They hoped to build a good two-way communication and have a community liaison group. A project scope was provided, advising that it would comprise the Finstown substation, 13Km of underground cable and 53Km of submarine cable which would connect to the existing national grid. It was hoped that work would start in July/August 2024, with the site setup and the access off the main road installed. It was advised that there would be a single lane closure on the main Kirkwall to Stromness Road while this was installed. Members asked if SSEN would rectify any damage done to the road while works were ongoing, and it was advised that they would enter into an agreement with the Roads Authority.

Members were then invited to ask questions, and issues around site lights and out of hours point of contact were raised, as well as whether liaison would happen regarding traffic management when large deliveries were expected on site.

Members also asked how many workers would be expected to be on the project and the accommodation arrangements. They were advised that there could be up to 150 workers on the project, to a maximum of 200, and that an accommodation unit was going to be put on site, however it was hoped that the local supply chain would be utilised.

Pressure on local provisions was discussed, as well as medical provision, and SSEN representatives assured members that safety would be paramount – for themselves and the communities. It was further advised that the project would be completed around April/May 2027, and that the project team would be in Orkney on 7 March for an engagement event. Following further discussion, it was:

Resolved:

A. To note the information provided.

B. That SSEN Representatives would be invited to future meetings of Firth and Stenness Community Council to provide updates as and when appropriate.

The Community Liaison Manager and the System Project Manager, SSEN, left the meeting at this point.

## **4. Matters Arising**

### **A. Orkney's Tourism Infrastructure Design Phase**

The Community Council Liaison Officer had previously circulated plans of the proposals for the area around the slip at Finstown, as had previously been requested.

Discussion then moved to the issue of erosion along the foreshore to the north of the slip, with pipes now exposes and the land undermined. Members shared concerns of the public over the safety of people walking around this area. The Head of Property, Asset Management and Facilities advised that the Council's Roads team had been on site and assessed and deemed that there was no risk to the road. There were land ownership issues, and the Council were looking into ways to address the problem, along with Scottish Water, who had infrastructure in this area. Members asked if signs could go up meantime, advising not to go too close to the edge, and the Head of Property, Asset Management and Facilities agreed to take this back to colleagues.

Members also queried the issue of commercial vehicles taking up spaces and whether permits were required, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the plans for the area at the Finstown Slip Car Park.
2. That the Head of Head of Property, Asset Management and Facilities would ask about signs to be placed near the shore to warn of erosion.
3. That Democratic Services would be asked about the use of the car park by commercial vehicles.

### **B. Kirkyard**

The Community Council Liaison Officer advised that a "No dogs" sign had been ordered. The Chair commented that the wall wouldn't be getting repaired and that a large dog had been in the kirkyard recently, and it was:

Resolved to note the update.

### **C. Quarry Group**

It was advised that a quarry group had not yet been set up and members asked for information on what was required, and it was:

Resolved that information would be sent again regarding what the requirements were for a quarry group.

## **D. Green Bin at Cursiter Quarry**

The Community Council Liaison Officer advised that the Waste team had looked at what would be required in order to provide a larger skip for garden waste at Cursiter. Unfortunately, they did not have any spare skips of this size and all of the existing ones were required for other uses. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to ask the relevant service if it would be possible to have two small skips instead.

## **5. Correspondence**

### **A. Support for Ness of Brodgar Grant Application**

Councillor R King declared an interest in this item and left the room during discussion.

The Interim Clerk advised that a letter of support had been sent following a request from the Director of the Ness of Brodgar, to assist in getting funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

### **B. Friends of Firth School – Meeting Dates**

Meetings dates for the next meetings of the Friends of Firth School had previously been circulated to members, and it was:

Resolved to note the meeting dates.

### **C. Community Councils Webinar - Open University Scotland**

Information on a free webinar for community council members on 18 January regarding what training opportunities were available had been previously emailed to members, and it was:

Resolved to note that Mrs A Stevenson and Ms B Scollay had attended the seminar.

### **D. Firth and Stenness CC Briefing - R100 and SBVS**

Members had previously been forwarded a briefing note from Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration providing a summary of the current broadband investment programme in Orkney, and it was:

Resolved to feed back to the relevant officer that the maps do not reflect what is installed currently.

### **E. BBC Children in Need's new Big Sky Fund**

Information from VAO on the Big Sky Fund had previously been emailed to members, advising of funding available for supporting the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children living in island and remote rural communities, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

## **F. Scottish Water - Leaks and Bursts in Orkney**

Members had previously been sent information from Scottish Water on locating and dealing with leaks and bursts, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

## **G. Additional Tranche of CDF Funding**

Following consideration of correspondence from Democratic Services, copies of which had previously been circulated, advising of the award of an additional tranche of funding for all community councils in Orkney, it was:

Resolved to note that £5,000 had been added to the CDF balance for Firth and Stenness Community Council.

## **H. King's Portrait Scheme**

Members had previously been forwarded information on a government funded voluntary scheme to provide a free framed portrait of His Majesty the King, and it was:

Resolved not to request a portrait.

## **I. D Gunn – Scottish Rainforest**

A request from D Gunn had been previously forwarded to members, asking for assistance in completing a survey on Scottish Rainforest as part of his BSc Honours Project, and it was:

Resolved to note that members could fill in the survey if they wished to do so.

## **J. Scottish Islands Passport – What's New for 2024**

Members had previously been sent information on new features to the SIP app, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

## **K. Thank you Letter**

Resolved to note that a thank you letter had been received from Stenness Community Association for financial assistance provided.

# **6. Financial Statements**

## **A. General Fund**

Following consideration of the general finance statement as at 25 January 2024, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £9,838.59, which included funds of £5,000 from the Rennibister Wind Turbine Community Fund.

## **B. Community Council Grant Scheme**

Following consideration of the CCGS statement as at 25 January 2024, it was:

Resolved to note that £637.83 and £743 remained available for allocation in the main and additional capping limits respectively.

## **C. Community Development Fund**

Members considered the CDF statement as at 25 January 2024, and it was:

Resolved to note the total remaining available for allocation of £8,615.63.

## **7. Financial Requests**

### **A. Kim McIntosh – Under 15's Netball - Various**

Following consideration of a request for financial assistance towards four trips to Inverness/Aberdeen for netball to play as part of the Orkney U15 District squad, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to make a general fund donation of £25 towards each trip, totalling £100.

### **B. Stenness Community School – Outdoor Education – Hoy**

Following consideration of correspondence from Stenness Community School, copies of which had previously been circulated, asking for financial assistance towards the annual outdoor education trip to Hoy for 5 pupils, it was:

Resolved to make a general fund donation of £25 per pupil, totalling £125.

### **C. Firth Parish Darts Club**

Members discussed correspondence from S Craigie on behalf of Firth Parish Cup Darts Team, copies of which had previously been circulated, asking for financial assistance towards the cost of a trip to Westray to play a semi-final tie in the Parish Cup. Following consideration, it was:

Resolved to award £430, subject to CCGS approval.

## **8. Consultations**

### **A. CYCJ's Annual Stakeholder Survey**

Members had previously been sent information on the Children and Young People's Centre for Justice Stakeholder Survey 2024, and it was:

Resolved to note that the deadline had passed on 21 December 2023.

### **B. Local Transport Strategy**

Following consideration of the Local Transport Strategy consultation, copies of which had previously been circulated to members, it was:

Resolved to note that the deadline for comments had been 12 January 2024.

### **C. Local Development Plan Scheme**

Members had previously been forwarded correspondence concerning a consultation which was the start of the review of Orkney's Local Development Plan, and it was:

Resolved to note that comments could be submitted up until 7 March 2024.

### **D. Verge Maintenance Plan 2024**

Following consideration of the Verge Maintenance Plan consultation, members commented that ragwort was a problem in many areas, all over Orkney, and that it had become worse, and it was:

Resolved that the Head of Property, Asset Management and Facilities, along with the Interim Clerk, would feed this back to the relevant officer.

### **E. Winter Service Plan 2024**

Members had previously been sent the consultation on the winter service plan ahead of the 2024 season, and it was:

Resolved to note that comments were required no later than 29 March 2024.

## **9. Publications**

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

- VAO – Newsletter November and December 2023 and January 2024.
- VAO – Training and funding update November, December 2023, and January and February 2024.
- VAO – Small Grants 2024/25.
- Scottish Rural Action Newsletter – November and December 2023.

## **10. AOCB**

### **A. Clerk and Member Vacancies**

Members queried whether the clerk role would be recruited to, and also what the process was for electing new members, as there were currently four vacancies. The Community Council Liaison Officer advised that a public meeting could be advertised to elect to the vacancies on the committee providing there were individuals willing to put themselves forward. Members were also advised that recruitment to the clerk role had been unsuccessful but that the role would be re-advertised again shortly, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

## **B. Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony**

Members asked if it would be possible for thank you letters to be written on behalf of the community council to those that had been instrumental in coordinating the Tree Lighting Ceremony in December, and it was:

Resolved that the Interim Clerk would arrange for letters to be sent to those that had organised the event.

## **C. MyPlace Awards**

Members discussed the Civic Trust MyPlace awards, which had been an agenda item at the previous meeting, however it was agreed not to pursue this, and it was:

Resolved not to take the nomination any further.

## **D. Festive Lighting**

The Chair advised that some of the festive lighting had been damaged, and asked if they could have 6 or 8 more for the end of the year, and it was:

Resolved that the festive lighting brochure would be circulated to members prior to the next meeting so that members could choose suitable decorations.

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

Following discussion of a date for the next meeting, it was:

Resolved that the next meeting of Firth and Stenness Community Council would be held at Stenness School and via Teams on Thursday, 2 May 2024 at 19:30.

## **12. Conclusion of Meeting**

There being no further business, the Chair thanked all for their attendance and declared the meeting closed at 21:40.