

Minute of the Meeting of North Ronaldsay Community Council held in North Ronaldsay Community Centre and via Teams on Monday, 19 February 2024 at 19:30

Present:

Mr P Donnelly, Mr I Deyell, Mrs L Paterson, Mrs H Scott and Mr I Scott.

In Attendance:

- Ms H Galland, Clerk.

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1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Mr C Kerlake and Councillors H Woodbridge and S Clackson. There was no internet connection at the Community Centre, therefore Ms A Duncan, Ms H Green (Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure) and Mr A Rodwell (Head of Improvement and Performance) were unable to join the meeting remotely and this was noted.

2. Adoption of Minutes

The minute of meeting held on 11 December 2023 was adopted, being proposed by Mr I Deyell and seconded by Mr I Scott.

3. Matters Arising

A. Grass Cutting Tender

One application had been received and was approved being proposed by Mr I Deyell and seconded by Mrs H Scott, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the tender for grass cutting at the new and old kirks and the war memorial had been awarded to Diane Gay.
2. To note that there was already a CCGS set up to make extra payments to the previous contractor and this would be used to pay for the extra costs above that which the OIC pay.
3. That the Clerk would arrange for the Mower and Strimmer to be taken to the pier and book servicing for both.
4. That the Clerk would request MLM Engineering to change the fuel and carburettor on the mower.

B. Cattle Float Meeting Update

Present at the meeting on 12 February 2024 were Mr I Deyell, Mr P Donnelly, Mr C Kerlake, Mr A Rodwell (Head of Improvement and Performance) and Mr R Cunningham (Service Manager, Democratic Services and Communications). Members had rejected the idea that NRCC should be responsible for the management of the trailers in any way, stating they were provided to replace an Orkney Ferries managed service and so they should manage this alternative service. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the Head of Improvement and Performance would put together a proposal on how NRCC could feasibly manage the service and present to the members.

2. That the Head of Improvement and Performance would arrange for the second meeting to include stakeholders, as requested at the previous CC meeting once this initial meeting had been undertaken

C. Septic Tank Fund

After there had been some enquiries into this fund it had been suggested more money needed to be added, however it was:

Resolved that sufficient funds are currently available at this time.

D. Moss Clearing Public Response

There had been no response from the public on the issue of moss clearing activities potentially making the area at the kirkyard look unsightly for a period of time, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that if the grass is cut shorter this year, it may help eliminate moss and prevent it coming back
2. To request the new grass cutting contractor do 2 cuts in quick succession early on in the season - one to be before the grass starts growing.
3. That this will be considered to constitute 1 extra cut.

E. End of Financial Year - Road Scalpings Procurement

The Clerk advised that there was £1,193.64 of Community Council Grant approved but not yet claimed, though some of this may still be spent before the end of the financial year, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk advertise the scalpings to the residents, with conditions, as per previous years with deadline 1 March 2024.
2. That a list of applicants be drawn up for members to approve.
3. That a Special Meeting is held after 1 March for members to discuss the applications.
4. That £800 be allocated as the total spend for 1 tonne bags of road scalpings, with the Clerk to get quotes from Orkney Aggregates and Orkney Islands Council, along with freight costs from Orkney Ferries.
5. That the Clerk write to NHSO and CC in the new ANP, on behalf of NRCC, detailing the residents' concerns about the pothole ridden state of the driveway to the surgery, and inform them of their duty of care.

5. That the Clerk write to the Head Teacher of the local school about the pothole ridden state of the driveway to the school and explain this matter is a health and safety concern.

F. Plane Mobility Access Issues

MSP L McArthur had been consulted on the scheme that previously enabled Islander planes to be used as air ambulances, but a meeting with Loganair to discuss this has been postponed indefinitely due to there currently not being a Head of the organisation. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would write to MSP L McArthur to get an update on what information he had uncovered about the past scheme.
2. To further ask if the Scottish Government Funded Scheme was still live, i.e. still had funding available for its use.
3. To further enquire about the possibility of island residents with mobility issues being able to access this service if there was no other way of getting home (as not a priority for summoning the air ambulance helicopter) from hospital appointments (albeit that may necessitate them travelling on a stretcher)
4. To make it clear that NRCC are keen to keep the dialogue open with Loganair on the issue of mobility and access to travel by residents.
5. That the Clerk to share letter with the Members for editing/ amendments prior to sending and additionally send to Democratic Services

G. Cloudnet Solutions Update

The Meeting with Mr L Fraser, CDO, North Ronaldsay Trust. and the Head of Digital, OIC was due earlier in the month, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would contact Cloudnet and invite them to come and talk to the island's residents.
2. That the Clerk would ask what the outcome of the earlier meetings was.

H. Core Path Stiles Update

Members requested an update on the project to restore and repair the stiles on the Core Path, given the funding was provided by NILPS and the entire scheme was being wound up this year, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the North Ronaldsay representative for Northern Isles Landscape Partnership (who accepted full responsibility for the project's delivery after NRCC

were unable to secure an island contractor to undertake the work) provided a brief report supplying a map detailing the stiles that are to be addressed.

2. To note that the NILPS representative required details of who owned the land that 3 stiles were on in order to seek permission to work on them and the Members confirmed they were Estate land and the Laird had already given permission for work to be done on their land.

3. That the NILPS representative requested permission to take down parts of the dyke to install more accessible gates and the members indicated that any work on or to the dyke needed permission from the Sheep Court.

4. That the Clerk should relay the above information to the NILPS Representative.

4. Correspondence

A. Island Enterprise Roadshow

Members noted that a Business Gateway roadshow to provide information to potential new businesses was scheduled for 22 February, at the Community Centre between 10:00 and 14:00, and it was:

Resolved to note the information and that the event had been well advertised.

B. Webinar with Open University for Community Councils

Correspondence had been emailed on 11 January 2024 regarding community councils meeting online on 18 January, and it was:

Resolved to note that the event had passed.

C. Additional Tranche of Community Development Funding

Correspondence had been emailed on 12 January 2024 regarding more community council funding, and it was:

Resolved the Clerk would advertise the fund to residents who may have a funding need.

D. BBC Children in Need Big Skies Fund

Correspondence had been emailed on 17 January 2024 regarding applying for this fund, and it was:

Resolved to note the deadline had since passed.

E. Scottish Water - Check your Pipes

Correspondence had been emailed on 19 January 2024 regarding leaks and bursts in the Scottish Water network, and it was:

Resolved to note the clerk had shared this on the resident's social media.

F. Accounts Commission - Information about Orkney Islands Council

Correspondence had been emailed on 2 February 2024 regarding a report by the Accounts Commission, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

G. MSc Student - Scottish Rainforests

Correspondence had been emailed on 1 February 2024 inviting members to fill in the survey, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

H. Scottish Islands Federation - Online Meeting Adult Social Care and Community Health

Correspondence had been emailed on 3 February 2024 regarding joining, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

I. King's Portrait Scheme

Correspondence had been emailed on 13 February 2024 regarding ordering a free portrait of King Charles, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence and that the Clerk had ordered one for the community.

5. Consultation Documents

A. OIC Local Development Plan Newsletter

Correspondence had been emailed on 8 January 2024 regarding a consultation on the local development plan, and it was:

Resolved that members could read the extensive documents online and offer any comments before 8 March 2024.

B. OIC Verge Maintenance Plan

Correspondence had been emailed on 11 January 2024 regarding the plans, and it was:

Resolved that members would like to request the Council owned verge mower be made available to North Ronaldsay earlier in the season as the verges were not cut until the end of the Summer in 2023.

C. OIC Winter Service Plan 2024-2025

Correspondence had been emailed on 17 January 2024 regarding this consultation with a deadline of 29 March 2024, and it was:

Resolved that no comments were made at this time.

D. OIC Air Winter Timetables

Correspondence had been emailed on 20 December 2023, and resent on 20 January 2024, requesting comments to be discussed at Transport Forum Meeting on 31 January 2024, and it was:

Resolved to note the deadline had passed.

E. NHS Orkney - Listening Event

Correspondence had been emailed on 6 February 2024 regarding an event to gather views from the community, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence and the Clerk had shared the information on the resident's social media.

6. Financial Statements

A. General Finance

Members considered the General Finance statement as at 8 February 2024, copies of which had been previously circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £19,861.05.

B. Turbine Fund

Members considered the Turbine statement as at 8 February 2024, copies of which had been previously circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £21,644.80.

C. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the Community Council Grant Scheme statement as at 8 February 2024, copies of which had been previously circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the main capping limit had £1,388.84 remaining for approval, £743 remaining in the additional capping limit and the island capping limit had £719 remaining.

2. That, prior to the end of the financial year, members would like the following amendments to the Scheme:

- To add a further £500 to the Scrap Metal Scheme (102205).
- To add a further £300 to the Servicing of Strimmer and Lawnmower (102203).
- To add a further £200 to the Grass cutting of Memorial and Kirkyard (102303).

- To set up a CCGS for Road Scalpings of £800.
- Ms L Paterson to chase Community Association for receipts to present to Clerk for Bagging the Bruck 2023 (102301)
- Clerk to ask Mr C Kerlake about the Playpark Equipment Fund, given the deadline for Main Funding source is imminent.

D. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund statement as at 8 February 2024, copies of which had been previously circulated, it was:

Resolved

1. To note that, with the addition of the £5,000 allocation, the total available for allocation was £8,656.
2. That the Clerk would advertise the fund locally, making it clear the decision whether funding will be awarded to any applicant lies with Democratic Services

E. Seed corn Fund

Members considered the Seed Corn statement as at 8 February 2024, copies of which had been previously circulated, and it was:

Resolved this Fund has been closed and the outstanding funds of £232 added to the General Fund Balance.

7. Financial Requests

Resolved to note that there were no financial requests to consider.

8. Reports from Representatives

A. Transport Representative

The Transport Representative had given their apologies and left correspondence from the Transport Meeting to be read at this meeting, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That members would like to review how changing the time of the flight on a Sunday (Winter timetable) to later would impact them - it may result in flights being more likely to be cancelled or brought forward to its current time during bad weather (although the fact it would no longer be shared with other islands was considered a plus point).
2. To note appreciation that Orkney Ferries had made significant attempts to ensure the ferry service was delivered during a very bad winter.

3. To note appreciation that Orkney Ferries had done well at providing freight on the plane when boats were cancelled, early on in the year but note that this had regressed again.

4. To note that it was again highlighted that a Charter Plane should be automatically booked upon the cancellation of a boat to avoid residents going without fresh food for extended period.

B. Planning Representative

It was announced that the Council do not send out Planning Lists anymore so making relevant planning applications more difficult to locate. The following were recorded as being listed - a satellite dish was to be replaced at the towers near the Lighthouse, and the application to install a mobile home at Barranha had officially been withdrawn, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

C. North Ronaldsay Development Trust Representative

The Representative had made their apologies, and the Clerk announced the Trust had their AGM coming up during the Easter Holidays with the date to be announced, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

D. Health and Care Representative

Members heard that there was a meeting coming up that would enable the representatives to highlight the islanders' specific concerns and the subject of accessibility of transport options, and the problem of getting home from hospital for residents with mobility issues was raised again, and it was:

Resolved to note the discussion.

E. Yarn Company Representative

Resolved to note that there was nothing to report.

9. Publications

The following publications had been made available to members and were noted:

- VAO Newsletter – December 2023 January 2024.
- Letter from School Place – December 2023 January 2024.
- VAO – Training and Funding Update – December 2023 January 2024.
- Orkney Ferries Statistics November 2023.
- SEPA Update January 2024.

10. Any Other Competent Business

A. 20mph Speed Limits around Isles Schools

After a discussion about the impending installation of a speed restriction zone, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would ask Democratic Services who a letter of objection should be addressed to.
2. That the Clerk would share the letter of objections with North Isles Councillors, MSP Liam McArthur, and Education and Roads departments.
3. The letter to contain the following objections to the scheme:
 - The distance of zone (from Harries Slap to Post Office) is less than 500m rendering the zone useless as a traffic calming measure.
 - The area within this zone is completely flat and devoid of buildings or tall vegetation that would restrict visibility from the road for drivers.
 - It is understood 20mph zones necessitate the installation of street lighting and this would have a significant negative impact on the islands recently acquired dark skies status.
 - Parents and children at the school have been canvassed and they do not want the measures put in place.
 - The community council therefore unanimously object to these measures in the strongest sense.

B. Retirement of Diesel provider on the island

After it became common knowledge that the main islands diesel supplier was quitting, the issue of resilience and fuel availability was raised, and it was:

Resolved that the Community Council cannot assist with this issue and it was suggested the issue be raised with the Trust instead.

C. Bag the Bruck

After missing the deadline for equipment last year due to the dates of the meetings, it was:

Resolved the Clerk would ask Greener Orkney for the gloves and bags in good time, and as soon as they become available.

D. Island Sailings

After a discussion about the day of sailings to the island during the summer and winter, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would write to the Head of Transport, Head of Services and Head of Marine Services, copying in the Councillors about the issues; the issues being:

- That Saturday sailings are not universally liked as they do not align with the mainland supermarkets “picking times” meaning stock is picked and stored days before it is delivered- whereas with a Friday sailing the stock is picked the day before.
- That if residents are missing items from a Saturday boat delivery they must wait until Monday before being able to contact the retailers to find their missing goods.
- A Friday boat allows for the organisation of a freight plane on the same day to compensate.
- Some suppliers and contractors charge time and ½ if required to pick up items from Kirkwall Pier on a Saturday, so Friday would be more acceptable economically.
- Therefore, members would like to request that sailings are on a Friday (not Saturday) all year round.
- Members wish to reiterate that they should not have to wait until there have been 3 weeks of boat cancellations before an alternative is chartered and request a space be made in the schedule so that within days of the cancelled service this alternative sailing will be able to replace it.
- That this alternative should be a proper back up service with a formal agreement. It could comprise a partial service - i.e. it could be a boat shared with another island (e.g. Papa Westray)
- Members would like it to be noted that the other islands have seen a marked improvement in their service via the Nordic Sea and Northern Explorer, but these improvements have not been extended to North Ronaldsay.
- The reason why a specific slot in the schedule should be made available for North Ronaldsay during the week is because of the cyclical nature of our weather patterns: if a boat is cancelled one Saturday the weather tends to improve for a few days, only to return to unfavourable conditions on the following Saturday. It should be noted that North Ronaldsay would only make use of these reserved midweek slots in the event of a cancelled scheduled boat, and not use it as an additional service.
- Should it prove impossible for extra boat provision to be offered to the island then it is requested that a charter plane should be automatically made available to compensate for the cancelled sailing.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Following consideration of future meeting dates, it was:

Resolved that the next meeting of North Ronaldsay Community Council would be held on Monday, 8 April at 19.30.

12. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 22.38.