

Minute of the Meeting of Kirkwall and St Ola Community Council held in the Friends Room, St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall, on Monday, 7 July 2025 at 19:00

Present:

Steven Brodie, Moyra Gordon, Cathleen A Hourie, Chris J F Matthews, John R Mowat, Tom Rendall, Elspeth Seatter, Lynne Spence and Neil P Tait.

In Attendance:

- Councillor Kristopher D Leask.
- Jenny McGrath, Community Council Liaison Officer (for Items 1 to 12(n)).
- 1 member of the local press.
- Hazel Flett, Clerk.

Chair:

- Hazel Flett, Clerk (for Items 1 and 2).
- Lynne Spence (for Items 3 to 18).

Order of Business

1. Apologies	2
2. Appointment of Chair.....	2
3. Appointment of Vice Chair.....	2
4. Appointment of Planning Representative	2
5. Appointments to Finance Sub-committee.....	2
6. Appointment of Health and Social Care Representative	2
7. Adoption of Minute	2
8. Matters Arising	2
9. Correspondence.....	5
10. Financial Statements 2024/2025	7
11. Financial Statements 2025/2026	8
12. Financial Requests.....	8
13. Consultations	11
14. Meetings Attended by Members.....	13
15. Publications	13
16. Any Other Competent Business	14
17. Date of Next Meeting.....	14
18. Conclusion of Meeting.....	14

1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Robert F Leslie and Rosemary Rhodes, and Councillors Sandy G Cowie, Steven B Heddle, Leslie Manson, John A R Scott, Gwenda M Shearer and Ivan A Taylor.

2. Appointment of Chair

The Clerk advised of the options available for the appointment of Chair, and it was:

Resolved that Lynne Spence be appointed Chair of Kirkwall and St Ola Community Council.

Lynne Spence took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

3. Appointment of Vice Chair

Resolved that Chris Matthews be appointed Vice Chair of Kirkwall and St Ola Community Council.

4. Appointment of Planning Representative

Resolved that the Clerk should be reappointed as the Planning Representative for Kirkwall and St Ola Community Council.

5. Appointments to Finance Sub-committee

Resolved that the following members be appointed to the Finance Sub-committee:

- Chair – Lynne Spence.
- Vice Chair – Chris Matthews.
- Moyra Gordon.
- Cathleen Hourie.

6. Appointment of Health and Social Care Representative

Resolved that the Chair be appointed as the Health and Social Care representative, with Elspeth Seatter appointed as a substitute.

7. Adoption of Minute

The Minute of the Meeting held on 24 March 2025 was approved, being proposed by Chris Matthews and seconded by Tom Rendall.

8. Matters Arising

A. Bonfire and Fireworks at Pickaquoy

The Chair thanked all partners who had assisted with the event over the years, and, with regret, that due to a lack of location and partner organisation it was recommended that no community bonfire and fireworks event would be organised by the Community Council in 2025.

After discussion on alternative events and the possibility of increased admissions to A&E, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Community Council should not organise a community bonfire and fireworks display in Kirkwall in November 2025.
2. That the Clerk should request statistics on A&E admissions in the weeks around 5 November 2025 from NHS Orkney.
3. That the Vice Chair should investigate the cost of drone displays as an alternative to a fireworks display.
4. That a sub-group, comprising the undernoted members, should look at alternative events:
 - Chair.
 - Vice Chair.
 - Cathleen Hourie.
 - Neil Tait.

B. Former Street Names

As Robert Leslie had intimated his apologies, it was:

Resolved to defer consideration of this item to the next meeting, where a decision would be taken on whether to progress with this item, noting that it could feature in an updated Local Place Plan.

C. Local Place Plan

The Clerk advised that the Expression of Interest submitted to The Orkney Fund had been submitted, with a request to submit a full application by 9 July 2025. However, after discussion with officers from Orkney Islands Council, it was recommended by them to defer applying to The Orkney Fund until next financial year, to give sufficient time to set up a steering group and undertake the work required to commission or produce a place plan.

Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. To proceed with a Local Place Plan for the Kirkwall and St Ola area.
2. To defer submission of an application for assistance from The Orkney Fund at this time.
3. That the following matters be considered at the next meeting:
 - Establishment of a steering group.
 - Agree a brief for consultancy services.
 - Agree to cost for consultancy services and funding package.

D. Island Games Legacy (Benches at Peedie Sea)

The Chair advised that no further progress had been made on benches at the Peedie Sea to mark the Islands Games, and it was:

Resolved that the current position be noted.

E. Carness Road Sea Wall

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council responding to the Community Council's earlier concerns regarding blocking up the sea wall on Carness Road, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the contents of the correspondence advising that blocking up the part of the wall would stop the sea coming onto the road at that point, whereas currently the operations team were instructed to attend on site and set up temporary flood barriers, which had a financial cost and took staff away from other roads projects.
2. To note the reason for proposing to block up the gap in the wall was to reduce the maintenance burden in times of adverse weather.
3. To note that elected members were consulted on the original proposal.
4. To note that access to the shore would still be possible further along Carness Road, near the Scottish Water station, including for pest control and Roads Operatives to keep the outflows clear.
5. That the Clerk should write to Orkney Islands Council reiterating the concerns that, should the wall be blocked up, there was nowhere for sea water to drain away, once the water and/or debris came over the sea wall at high tide or in adverse weather conditions, and seeking information on the cost of operatives required to clear that, as opposed to leaving the gap in the sea wall.

F. Visitor Levy

Following consideration of correspondence from K Johnson and Kate Forbes MSP acknowledging correspondence from the Community Council supporting an immediate pause in the roll out of the proposed visitor levy until the full impact on island communities was known, together with correspondence from the Scottish Government encouraging the Community Council to engage with the local authority and feed in any concerns on the proposed visitor levy, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk should respond to the Scottish Government advising that the response did not address the question posed, namely to pause the roll out of the proposed visitor levy until the full impact on island communities was known.
2. That the Clerk should write to Orkney Islands Council seeking an update on proposals to implement a local visitor levy.

G. Financial Requests – Notes of Thanks

Following consideration of notes of thanks received from various individuals and groups regarding financial assistance received from the Community Council, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

9. Correspondence

A. Kirkwall Airport Community Engagement Forum

Following consideration of correspondence from Jamie Conley, Airport Manager, Kirkwall Airport, regarding his recent appointment and plans to schedule meetings of the community engagement forum, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the Kirkwall Airport Community Engagement Forum had met on 14 May 2025.
2. That Tom Rendall be appointed as the Community Council's representative on the Kirkwall Airport Community Engagement Forum.

B. Verge Maintenance Plan – Community Council Comments

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council responding to comments received from community councils in respect of the verge maintenance plan, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that Orkney Islands Council had already taken the decision to reduce verge maintenance to one cut per year.
2. To note that Orkney Islands Council would appreciate reports of injurious weeds and any safety cuts required, which should be reported through MyOrkney on Orkney Islands Council's website, a process encouraged by the Community Council.

C. Orkney 2025 – Council Service Changes

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council advising of service changes during the Island Games 2025 (12 to 18 July 2025 inclusive), copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the following arrangements:

- Domestic recycling collections in Stromness and the West Mainland were cancelled for the week of the Games
- Refuse collections in Kirkwall and the East Mainland would go ahead as usual although timings might be impacted by road closures.
- Commercial collections would go ahead as usual, although timings might be impacted by road closures.
- The Garson Household Waste and Recycling Centre (HWRC) would be closed on Sunday, 13 July 2025, due to the triathlon event taken place in and around Stromness, although all other HWRCs would be operating to their usual times.
- Additional public bins would be placed in Kirkwall and Stromness town centres to provide extra waste/recycling provision.
- Street cleaning would be carried out as normal, although some timings might be altered to avoid clashing with scheduled Island Games events.

D. Island Games Road Closures

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding a letter and maps sent out to residents who would be affected by road closures during the Island Games, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that Orkney Islands Council was distributing the correspondence on behalf of Orkney 2025 and any follow up questions or comments should be referred to them and not Orkney Islands Council.
2. To note follow-up communications would be available nearer the Games as it was still likely that the timings of some closures would alter.

E. Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance

Following consideration of correspondence from Michael Hanratty, Community Fundraising Office, Highlands and Islands, raising awareness of the essential work which Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance (SCAA) did throughout the region, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that SCAA would be visiting Orkney in August and attending the Dounby and County Shows and would be available to meet with individual community councils.

F. Ayre Offshore Windfarm

Following consideration of correspondence from Allan Tait, Community Engagement Manager, Thistle Wind Partners, advising that marine licence applications to construct an offshore windfarm and associated transmission infrastructure would be submitted later in 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that progress would be shared by a series of formal Pre-Application Consultation Events on 27 and 28 August 2025 to be held in Deerness and Kirkwall.

G. RTS Switch-off

Following consideration of correspondence from Neighbourhood Watch Scotland advising of its collaboration with E-On Next to promulgate critical information in respect of the Radio Teleswitch Service (RTS) switch-off scheduled for 30 June 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

H. Annual Grants

Following consideration of correspondence from the Community Council Liaison Officer advising of the annual grants to community councils for 2025/26, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the annual grant to Kirkwall and St Ola Community Council for financial year 2025/26 was £7,088.29.
2. To note that the capping limit for the Community Council Grant Scheme for financial year 2025/26 was £3,914.

I. East Mainland Agricultural Society – Pavilion and Public Amenity Area Project

Following consideration of correspondence from the East Mainland Agricultural Society advising that the full funding package for the pavilion and public amenity area at the show park had now been secured, and thanking the Community Council for its financial contribution, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

John Mowat left the meeting at this point.

10. Financial Statements 2024/2025

A. General Finance

Following consideration of the General Finance statement as at 1 May 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the estimated balance as at 1 May 2025 of £15,113.42.

B. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the 2024/2025 Community Council Grant Scheme statement as at 1 May 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that projects to the value of £6,010.82 had been approved, of which £5,010.82 had been claimed.
2. To note the balance remaining for approval within the main capping limit of £170.51.

C. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund Statement as at 1 May 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the balance remaining for approval of £1,163.46.

11. Financial Statements 2025/2026

A. General Finance

Following consideration of the General Finance statement as at 6 June 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the estimated balance as at 6 June 2025 of £15,089.63.

B. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the 2025/26 Community Council Grant Scheme statement as at 1 May 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that projects to the value of £1,300 had been approved, of which nil had been claimed.
2. To note the balance remaining for approval within the main capping limit of £2,886.

C. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund Statement as at 1 May 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the balance remaining for approval of £1,163.46.

12. Financial Requests

A. Orkney Amateur Swimming Club

Following consideration of an application from A Bruce requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in the IASC Graded Swim Meet, held in Inverness on 29 March 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given, subject to confirmation of participation.

B. Orkney Athletics and Running Club

Following consideration of an application from C Gilmour requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in athletics competitions in Inverness on 9 and 10 May 2025 and in the Central Belt from 12 to 15 June 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given, subject to confirmation of participation.

C. University of Aberdeen Long Course Meet

Following consideration of an application from T Blowfield requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in the University of Aberdeen Long Course swimming meet held in Aberdeen on 26 and 27 April 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given, subject to confirmation of participation.

D. Scottish National Age Group Swimming Championships

Following consideration of an application from T Blowfield requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in the Scottish National Age Group Swimming Championships held in Aberdeen in April 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given, subject to confirmation of participation.

E. Just Dance – Destinations 2025

Following consideration of an application from T Blowfield requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in YDance's annual celebration of youth dance, Destinations 2025, held in Stirling on 6 April 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given, subject to confirmation of participation.

F. Kirkjuvagr Dancers

Following consideration of an application from D Ritchie requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in the Easter Festival Highland Dancing Competition held in Wick on 12 April 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given, subject to confirmation of participation.

G. Orkney Gymnastics Club

Following consideration of an application from A Gunn requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in gymnastics competitions and training in Motherwell and Auchterarder on 11 and 12 April 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given, subject to confirmation of participation.

H. Kirkjuvagr Dancers

Following consideration of an application from D Johnston requesting financial assistance towards her daughters participating in the Vikki Mackay Festival of Highland Dance held in Caithness on 12 April 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given in respect of each dancer, subject to confirmation of participation.

I. Papdale Primary School

Following consideration of an application from Papdale Primary School requesting financial assistance towards the P7 trip to the Lagganlia Outdoor Education Centre, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £375 be given, subject to confirmation of at least 16 pupils participating.

J. Orkney Athletics and Running Club

Following consideration of an application from A Bruce requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in the North District Athletics Competition held in Inverness on 9 and 10 May 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given, subject to confirmation of participation.

K. North District Athletics Competition

Following consideration of an application from S Webb requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in the North District Athletics Competition held in Inverness on 9 and 10 May 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given, subject to confirmation of participation.

L. Highland Badminton Group

Following consideration of an application from L Leask requesting financial assistance towards her son participating in coaching sessions with the Highland Badminton Group in Alness on 24 May and 21 June 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given in respect of each coaching session, subject to confirmation of participation.

M. Highland Badminton Group

Following consideration of an application from L Leask requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in coaching sessions with the Highland Badminton Group in Alness on 24 May and 21 June 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given in respect of each coaching session, subject to confirmation of participation.

N. Highland Dancing and Gymnastics

Following consideration of an application from T Russell requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in various highland dancing and gymnastics competitions between May and December 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given in respect of each competition, subject to confirmation of participation.

John Mowat rejoined the meeting at this point.

O. 1st Kirkwall Company Boys' Brigade

Following consideration of an application from the 1st Kirkwall Company Boys' Brigade requesting financial assistance towards their Annual Camp to be held in Hoy between 14 and 16 August 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that, as Under 22s now received free travel and given the change in policy that internal events were no longer eligible, no assistance be given.

P. Highland Dancing Competition

Following consideration of an application from C Ward requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in a highland dancing competition in Thurso on 8 June 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given, subject to confirmation of participation.

Q. Athletics

Following consideration of an application from S Webb requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in athletics competitions in Shetland between 7 and 8 June 2025 and in Grangemouth between 12 and 15 June 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given in respect of each competition, subject to confirmation of participation.

13. Consultations

A. Winter Service Plan

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council requesting comments on the Winter Service Plan, for which response were due by 30 June 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

B. SEPA – Proposed Environmental Performance Assessment Scheme

Following consideration of correspondence from SEPA regarding a proposed Environmental Performance Assessment Scheme, designed to provide a common standard to rate an operator's environmental performance and to secure improvements in compliance, for which response were due by 30 June 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

C. Application for Premises Licence – Old Library Coworking Ltd

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding an application for a premises licence by Old Library Coworking Ltd in respect of The Old Library, 8 Laing Street, Kirkwall, for which responses were due by 15 May 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

D. Various Streets in Kirkwall – Prohibition of Driving

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding proposals to prohibit driving on various streets in Kirkwall between 11am and 3pm and 11pm and 3am daily, for which responses were due by 7 July 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should submit the following response to Orkney Islands Council:

Kirkwall and St Ola Community Council strongly object to this order and the specific proposals contained within it.

The closure of Bridge Street, Albert Street and Laing Street for 8 hours per day, 365 days per year is completely unacceptable considering the potential serious consequences for businesses and residents who live and work in this main artery of our town.

The Community Council can see no justifiable reason for the full and permanent closure of St Olaf's Wynd.

The Community Council was unsure these road closures would address the reasons for the closures and potentially have additional unintended consequences. Exploring traffic calming measures and encouraging enforcement of the current restrictions would be more favourable.

E. Scottish Government – Draft Updated Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy

Following consideration of correspondence from the Scottish Islands Federation advising of the Scottish Government's consultation on the draft updated Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy, for which comments were due by 22 August 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that a number of in-person events would be taking place, including one in Kirkwall on 11 June 2025, as well as online events on 11 June, 16 July and 11 August 2025, which would focus primarily on assessment findings and would be attended by the consultancy responsible for the assessment.
2. That members should submit any comments to the Clerk by the deadline of 22 August 2025, which would be passed to the Scottish Government.

Councillor Kristopher Leask left the meeting at this point.

F. Orkney Islands Payphone Removal Proposals

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council advising of proposals by BT to remove payphones from various sites across Orkney, including several in Kirkwall, for which responses were required by 14 September 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk should contact BT advising that the payphone at Queen Sonja Kloss should be retained, given the number of calls recorded, and that there were no concerns regarding the removal of the payphone at Islands View Road, as no calls had been made from that payphone.
2. That Tom Rendall should advise the Orkney Heart Support Group of the details of potentially redundant payphones, as there was potentially to local community defibrillators.

G. 20mph Speed Limits on Various Roads in Kirkwall

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding proposals to reduce speed limits on various streets in Kirkwall to 20mph, for which responses were due by 23 July 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that members should submit any comments to the Clerk by the deadline of 23 July 2025, which would be passed to Orkney Islands Council.

14. Meetings Attended by Members

A. Free Online Local Place Plan Workshop

Orkney Islands Council had provided details of an online workshop relating to developing local place plans, held on 21 May 2025, and it was:

Resolved to note that Kirkwall and St Ola Community Council had not been represented.

B. Scottish Islands Federation – National Islands Plan

Following consideration of correspondence from the Scottish Islands Federation regarding sessions organised by the Scottish Government's Islands Team to discuss the new National Islands Plan, including a meeting in the St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall on 2 June 2025 and online meetings on 29 May and 24 June 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that Steven Brodie had attended.

C. Community Wealth Building Action Plan Online Meeting

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council advising of an online feedback session on 24 June 2025 in respect of the Orkney Community Planning Partnership's Community Wealth Building Action Plan, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should write to Orkney Islands Council advising that, while supportive of the actions, an online feedback session between 7 and 8pm was perhaps not the best approach for a public engagement event.

15. Publications

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

- Paths for All – eNews – March, April and May 2025.
- Scotland's Towns Partnership – April, May, June and July 2025 Newsletters.
- SSEN – Customer Experience and Service Design Newsletter – Spring 2025.
- VAO Newsletters – March, April and June 2025.
- SEPA Updates – April, May and June 2024.
- VAO – Training and Funding Update – March, May and June 2025.
- Scottish Rural Action Newsletter.
- SSEN – Whole System May 2025 Newsletter.
- Scottish Water – Spring/Summer 2025 Digital Newsletter.
- ORSAS – Quarterly Newsletter, May 2025.
- Scotland's Towns Partnership – Events Bulletin.
- CLDE Service, Orkney Islands Council – Free Family Fun Day, 15 June 2025.
- VAO – Volunteering Special Newsletter.
- Walking Scotland (formerly Paths for All) – eNews – Introduction and June 2025.
- Orkney Digital Voice Event, 24 June 2025.
- CLDE Service, Orkney Islands Council – Childminding Training.

16. Any Other Competent Business

A. KAOS – Funding Enquiry

Chris Matthews declared an interest in this item, being a member of the KAOS committee.

The Clerk had received correspondence from KAOS enquiry about funding or grant opportunities to enable refurbishment of a storage facility, and it was:

Resolved that the Community Council should support KAOS in any funding application, and that the Clerk should make them aware of the VAO funding newsletter.

B. Sand at Scapa

The Clerk had received correspondence from residents along Scapa beach regarding sand narrowing the public road as well as drifting onto private property, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should submit the concerns to Orkney Islands Council, particularly the narrowing of the road, creating road safety issues for both pedestrians and vehicles particularly at the Orphir end.

17. 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, 25 August 2025, commencing at 19:00.

18. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 21:37.