

Minute of the Meeting of North Ronaldsay Community Council held in North Ronaldsay Community Centre and via Teams on Monday, 7 April 2025 at 19:30

Present:

Mr P Donnelly, Mr I Deyell, Ms A Duncan, Mr C Kerlake, Mrs H Scott and Mr I Scott.

In Attendance:

- Mr K MacPherson, Head of Property, Asset Management and Facilities (via Teams).
- Ms D-C Hunter, Service Manager, Safety and Resilience (via Teams).
- Mrs J McGrath, Community Council Liaison Officer (via Teams).
- Ms H Galland, Clerk.

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1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Mrs L Paterson and Councillor Thomson.

2. Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of North Ronaldsay Community Council held on 17 February 2025 were adopted, being proposed by Mr C Kerslake and seconded by Mr I Deyell.

3. Matters Arising

A. Resilience and Communications - Discussion with OIC Safety and Resilience Service Manager

The Service Manager, Safety and Resilience, explained that all islands would be visited in due course and that up-to-date resilience plans would be drawn up, as a lot of data held was now out of date. The issue of BT's alternative to the landline system upon its imminent decommission was discussed, and members also spoke about the options of satellite but noted that, currently, a local service which would provide fibre were in communication with the Scottish Government, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To request that North Ronaldsay's resilience plan be prioritised due to the island's remoteness.
2. That the Safety and Resilience Service Manager would make contact with the Clerk to discuss a date for an island resilience meeting.
3. To note that there was no formal date that the BT landline service would be turned off (an email post meeting gave the date as being in 2028).
4. To note that BT would be responsible for finding a solution in areas where there was currently no reliable service other than the landline service, before they removed said service.

B. Ad Hoc Flights

It was noted that ad hoc flights had been requested for 9, 10 and 11 April and that it had been queried as to whether these flights could be taken from the 2024/2025 financial year allocation. Unfortunately, these would need to be taken from the 2025/2026 allocation, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the flights had been agreed, and that they could not be taken from the previous financial year's allocation.
2. To note that there were now 8 ad hoc flights available for the remainder of the 2025/2026 period.

C. Grass Contract Update

The Clerk advised that the approved applicant had been asked to consider new costings for the tender for grass cutting the Old Kirkyard and War Memorial. Members were informed the new terms were agreeable to the contractor and the contract was to go ahead, and it was

Resolved:

1. To apply for CCGS to cover the extra payment above what was available from OIC budgets towards the kirkyard grass cutting.
2. That the contractor would be informed that they could start as soon as practicable but that the CC-owned equipment needed to be looked after to a particular standard, being:
 - The diesel fuel used in the mower should be clean (filtered and ideally passed through a chamois).
 - Equipment is not to be loaned out for any other purpose unless permission is sought from members for approval.

D. Scrap Skip Update

The Clerk advised that the scrap skips had now been delivered and the signage explaining their intended use was to be put on them imminently. It was also reported that Mr I Deyell had gone to the trouble of drilling water exit holes as the ones made by the blacksmith had not been fit for purpose. He had not requested any remuneration for this service. The Clerk requested money for purchase of the extra information signs, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would chase the Blacksmith for their invoice for the welding work so that this could be paid from CCGS.
2. That the Clerk would find out if the Blacksmith would be willing to transport skips to the painters in the future.
3. That one skip was to be placed out of uses way, in the compound, which would force residents to fill one skip at a time.
4. That a CCGS application for future painting be submitted to Democratic Services.

E. E-car Scrappage

After an e-car had been refused by the local car scrappage company, the question of what to do with expired e-vehicles was raised. It was noted that e-cars needed to be sent to Aberdeen for recycling, but the details were not known, and it was:

Resolved that the Head of Property, Asset Management and Facilities would ask what mainland e-vehicle owners did with their end of life vehicles and report back to the community council via Democratic Services.

F. Car Battery Disposal - Potential Island Scheme

During the e-car discussion, members had asked about conventional car battery disposal. Farmers had previously sent pallet loads of batteries off island but it was noted that OIC were not keen on taking responsibility for the storage and handling of dangerous goods so it would have to remain a private issue. It was suggested that it may be possible to arrange with builders on the island who had a collection to go, to add to their pallet and avoid paperwork. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would make the public aware that they could independently dispose of car batteries through Orkney Aggregates, for which they would be paid, but that that freight cost on batteries was high and dangerous goods forms would be required by Orkney Ferries.

G. Turbine Fund

Members had previously discussed what details would be required by OIC to set up household fuel scheme. After discussing further correspondence that had been received from various parties regarding the Turbine Fund, it was:

Resolved that a special meeting would be arranged to discuss the implications of the loan and ongoing interest payments.

H. Island Maps

After discussion with the member responsible for the original map, regarding the the template and how it had previously been funded, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would contact local suppliers to get quotes for the reprint of the maps.
2. That the Clerk would proceed to order 500 copies based on the lowest quote.

4. Correspondence

A. W T Muir – Turbine Purchase

Correspondence from W T Muir had previously been circulated to members, regarding the original purchase of turbines, along with a letter sent to OIC in 2012, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence which would be discussed in a special meeting in the future.

B. Orkney Ferries Smart Cards

Correspondence sent on behalf of Orkney Islands Council Transportation Section had previously been circulated to members, regarding the reissue of Orkney Ferries SmartCards, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents, and that the information had been shared publicly.

C. Lucas Princ - Windracers

Members had previously been sent information regarding a public consultation, and requesting assistance to set up an island meeting, and it was:

Resolved to note that members had heard this project had been cancelled and the Clerk was to contact the correspondent to get confirmation of this.

D. John Scott – Chair, North Ronaldsay Trust

Correspondence from NRT had previously been circulated, regarding the successful application for dyke repair fencing. Provisional agreement to match fund was being called in from NRT, Sheep Court, OSF and NRCC, and it was:

Resolved to award £3,000 in principle, subject to CCGS approval.

E. Katharyn Johnson - Visitor Levy

Members had previously been sent correspondence from K Johnson asking them to consider signing an open letter rejecting the Visitor Levy, and it was:

Resolved that members could sign the letter personally if they wished.

F. New Bus Timetable

Following consideration of correspondence, copies of which had previously been shared with members, regarding enhanced bus services to meet missing buses in term time to airport, it was:

Resolved to note the contents and that the information had been shared publicly.

5. Consultations

A. SEPA - Proposed Changes to the Environmental Regulation (Scotland) Guidance on Public Participation and Fit and Proper Person Test

Members had previously been sent the consultation on proposed changes to guidance, which had a deadline of 30 March 2025, and it was:

Resolved to note that the deadline had now passed.

B. OIC Visitor Levy Consultation

Members had been emailed previously with details of a survey being carried out by Orkney Islands Council, in conjunction with Shetland Islands Council and the Outer

Hebrides Local Authority. Information on online and in-person public engagement sessions had also been passed on, and it was:

Resolved to note that the events had taken place on 25 and 26 March and that the survey was now closed.

C. Public Engagement for North Isles Ferry Replacement Service

The date for the public engagement regarding the North Isles Ferry Replacement Service was circulated to members and advertised publicly, and it was:

Resolved to note that the event had now passed.

D. Winter Service Plan 2025

The consultation for winter roads service plan by OIC had previously been circulated to members, and it was:

Resolved to note that members had time to make individual comments should they wish, as the deadline was 30 June 2025.

6. Financial Statements

A. General Finance

Following consideration of the general fund statement as at 20 March 2025, copies of which were previously circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £19,828.93.

B. Turbine Fund

Members considered the turbine statement as at 20 March 2025, copies of which were previously circulated, and it was:

Resolved to note the estimated balance was £22,724.80.

C. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the Community Council Grant Scheme as at 20 March 2025, copies of which were previously circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the total approved but not yet allocated was -£159.39.
2. That the following CCGS projects be set up on the new financial year statement, for which CCGS applications would be completed by the Clerk:
 - Grass cutting Contract (old kirk and war memorial) for £500 and £250.
 - Blacksmith work to new skips, and future painting for £1,000.
 - North Ronaldsay Trust Dyke Repair Fund - £3,000.
 - Island maps reprint for £500.

- Insurance for the same amount as last year for £97.20.
- Grass cutting of the memorial hall for £240.
- White Goods disposal scheme for £400.
- Scrap Car Scheme for £200.
- Scrap Metal Skip for £200.
- Servicing of Grass cutting machinery for £300.

D. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund as at 20 March 2025, copies of which were previously circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the total available for allocation was £8,656.00.

7. Financial Requests

A. North Ronaldsay Parent Council – Play Equipment

Mr C Kerslake declared an interest in this item and took no part in discussion thereof.

It was noted that members had already provisionally approved this project on the basis other funding was secured, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that match funding had been secured from OIC, the Crown Estate and Cooke Aquaculture.
2. That a CCGS project be set up for £1,000.

B. Orkney Science Festival - Costs of Flights for Speakers

Alex Wright, the North Ronaldsay coordinator for Orkney Science Festival events, had applied for funding towards flights for speakers. Members agreed that a new CCGS category needed to be set up for the year to cover costs for speakers and musicians attending island events, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To set up a CCGS category for £200 for flights for guest attendees to island events.
2. To note that the request to cover the costs for the speakers was approved.

8. Reports from Representatives

A. Transport Representative

It was reported that there had been no meetings since the last CC meeting. The representative highlighted issues with the Loganair website, where islander rates were not being shown as available, and charter flights were being displayed, when

they should only be bookable by phone. There had been an ongoing issue that seats appear not to be available, yet flights were departing partially empty, although members commented that this may partly be due to customers failing to cancel bookings. It was questioned whether this situation was affecting other islands also. Loganair had stated they would attempt to manage a “waiting list” much like the ferry service operates, but how this would work in reality was not apparent, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would write to Head of Transport and include Loganair in the correspondence to request the issues with the online booking service are mended.

B. Planning Representative

Resolved to note that the representative was not present.

C. North Ronaldsay Development Trust Representative

Resolved to note that building work was well under way and continues apace.

D. Health and Care Representative

It was reported that a Joint Isles Health and Care Meeting had taken place a month prior where communication issues had been mentioned, given the BT landline for the NHS, as elsewhere, was being removed but the reliance on mobile and internet services required power and was not reliable. Alternatives would need to be found for the telecare system also. The issues with unpaid crew attending non-emergency ambulance flights for residents with mobility issues was still to be resolved and the North Ronaldsay SFRS Station Manager was going to put an invoice to SAS and see if it was processed, and it was:

Resolved to note the update.

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 – January, February and March 2025.
- Orkney Ferries - Statistics – January and February 2025.
- Letter from School Place – February and March 2025.
- VAO – Training and Funding Update – February and March 2025.
- Loganair - Statistics - Year to 31 March 2025.
- SEPA Newsletter - March 2025.
- NHSO – Improving the Cancer Journey.

10. Any Other Competent Business

A. Skips for Beach Waste

It was advised that, further to the visit by Westray Marine Waste Group, residents had enquired about locations that collected beach waste could be deposited, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that there was concern that placement of a container for such waste would result in it being neglected and the stormy weather would cause a bigger contamination problem, as had been witnessed in the recent past.
2. To note that the island's Waste Manager had agreed verbally to pick up beach waste if in bin bags and left in locations where bin bags were usually left for collection.
3. That the Clerk would inform residents that the best way to dispose of collected beach waste was to use bin bags and add it to their household waste collection.
4. That the Clerk would invite the Westray Marine Waste Group to include North Ronaldsay in their beach clean events this year.

B. Island Games Sports Schedule

Late correspondence had received and circulated, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

C. Election of Office Bearers

Members queried when the election of office bearers was due to be carried out, and it was:

Resolved that the election of office bearers would take place at the next meeting.

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, 2 June 2025 at 19:30.

12. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 21:35.