

# Minute of the Meeting of Stromness Community Council held via Teams on Monday, 30 January 2023 at 19:00

## Present:

P McLaughlin, K Bevan, D Fischler, W Mackay, J Park and C Sinclair.

## In Attendance:

- Councillor G Bevan.
- Councillor L Hall.
- J Wylie, Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.
- R Mackay, Head of Planning and Community Protection.
- F Troup, Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing.
- R Flett, Development and Property Manager, Orkney Housing Association Limited (for Items 1 and 2).
- S Shearer, Service Manager (Development and Marine Planning).
- R Batty, Development and Empty Homes Officer.
- J McGrath, Community Council Liaison Officer.
- S Craigie, Clerk.
- 1 member of the Press.

## Chair:

- P McLaughlin.

## Order of Business

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## 1. Apologies

Resolved to note that an apology for absence had been received from V Anderson.

## 2. Discussions regarding Housing and Stromness Development Plan

Following a welcome by the Chair, the Head of Planning and Community Protection opened the discussion by saying that when he had attended the Community Council meeting in August 2022, Community Council members had been keen for a round the table meeting with planning and housing sector colleagues to discuss the housing situation in Stromness, as well as the Stromness Development Plan.

He introduced the Service Manager (Development and Marine Planning) who, along with himself, would be able to give an overview of the local development plan, the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, the Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing and the Development and Empty Homes Officer who would give their perspective of future housing strategies and the Development and Property Manager, Orkney Housing Association Limited, who would outline OHAL's plans for future house builds.

Regarding local and marine plans, the Service Manager (Development and Marine Planning) said that she had been feeding in and working with the Scottish Government's review. This process was now coming to an end, and it was hoped that the National Plan framework would be adopted by the government shortly and be available in a matter of weeks. The Local Development Plan had taken 3-4 years to complete and by Spring/Summer of this year would be going out for local consultation.

The Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing referred to specific pieces of work done every five years which looked at the housing needs across Orkney. Areas such as age population, people's inability to take up offers of employment etc were all looked at. The data collected then fed into the Local Development Plan as well as the Strategic Housing Plan. Regarding house builds in Stromness, she highlighted that these were funded by a grant from the Scottish Government which covered roughly half the cost of the build. In the last year, 8 houses had been built in Stromness.

The Development and Property Manager, Orkney Housing Association Limited, referred to 6 properties that had been built in the last year at Cairston Road, 3 of which had been sold. There were still three 3-bed houses on the market at Cairston Road. He explained the government scheme whereby a proposed buyer can purchase 60-80% of the property. If the buyer were to purchase one of those houses at 60% rather than paying the market value of £190,000, they would pay £114,000. He also referred to the work that had been started at Upper Sunnybank, which, for various reasons, had stopped. At the moment, there were no plans to continue with this development nor the sites at Midgarth or Brownstown.

The Development and Empty Homes Officer explained her role which was to help get empty properties back into use – either by means of selling, renting or renovating. She highlighted that if anyone knew of empty homes then to contact her.

K Bevan thanked all for their updates and while he understood the issues regarding public spending, made a plea that if there were any funding available to put Stromness to the top of the list.

Following a query regarding the Masterplan, the Service Manager (Development and Marine Planning) stated that although the initial concepts had been brilliant, the concepts lacked detail such as planning, roads, surface water drainage etc. She apologised for the delay but confirmed that the Masterplan was now being worked on in-house, with the next version being ready by approximately April.

Following a query from Councillor L Hall, the Development and Property Manager, Orkney Housing Association Limited, confirmed that it had been the smaller houses at Cairston Road that had been purchased.

W Mackay was very encouraged by the Development and Property Manager's comment that there was assistance available towards purchasing OHAL housing. He queried whether there were still serviced Council sites available at Coplands Road. The Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing advised that she would contact the relevant section to see if that was the case and report back.

Councillor G Bevan was heartened by the Service Manager (Development and Marine Planning) optimism but stated that Stromness was in dire straits with the school rolls dropping, shops and pubs closing. Stromness was stifled housing wise and while he welcomed more consultation, there had been a lot of information given already. He continued that more housing was urgently needed in Stromness to attract young people.

Kris Bevan raised the issue of properties in Stromness being purchased either as second homes or used for tourist accommodation and highlighted the short-term lets legislation where Councils would have powers to introduce short-term let control areas where planning permission would normally be required before an existing dwelling could be used as a short-term let. The Head of Planning and Community Protection advised that this legislation was now in place and if an area was designated a controlled short-term lets area, if a dwelling wanted to change to an Air B&B, for example, the owner would have to apply for planning permission. He continued that if designating an area to a controlled short-term lets area was something that there was a desire to do, it could be investigated how to go about doing it. He was aware of other parts of the country having already used that particular legislation.

The Chair thanked the officers from the Council and Orkney Housing Association Limited for attending the meeting and for clearing up some of the issues. She stated that she was looking forward to the public consultations that had been highlighted and confirmed that to get things done the Community Council needed to be actively pushing forward.

The Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing, the Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing, the Development and Property Manager (OHAL), the Service Manager (Development and Marine Planning) and the Development and Empty Homes Officer all left the meeting at this point.

### **3. Adoption of Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2022 were approved, being proposed by J Park and seconded by K Bevan.

### **4. Matters Arising**

#### **A. Welcome to Stromness Sign**

Resolved to note that there was no update at this stage.

#### **B. ATM in Stromness**

Following an update from the Head of Planning and Community Protection, it was:

Resolved to note that the planning application for the ATM was now available on the Council's website with the planning reference number 22/336/PP.

#### **C. Old Stromness Primary School Playground**

Following consideration of various emails regarding the Old Stromness Primary School Playground, copies of which had been circulated, and following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note that C Sinclair was liaising with Karen Bevan to try to bring this project forward and were looking at the possibility of a Sub-committee being established.

#### **D. Bunting**

Following consideration of correspondence received from the Operational Support Manager, copies of which had been circulated, regarding charging for erecting bunting, and following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that any bunting erected by the Council on behalf of an organisation would have to be requested to the relevant section and would be invoiced for.
2. That the Clerk would contact the relevant section to ask for the cost to do such work.

#### **E. Garage at Town House**

Following an update regarding replacing the garage door, as well as the lease for the garage at Town House, Stromness, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that one quote had been received for replacing and fitting the replacement garage door, and that a final decision would be made at the March meeting, which would give time for a second quote to be received.
2. To note that Stromness Development Trust were in contact with the Estates section of the Council regarding leasing the Garage at the Town House, Stromness.

## **F. Public Benches**

Following consideration of a list of public benches in Council ownership as at 2017, copies of which had previously been circulated, and after discussion, it was:

Resolved to note that the Chair would liaise with W Mackay to update the list of benches in Community Council ownership in Stromness and identify the ones in need of repair.

## **G. RNLI Benches – Proposed Plastic Replacement Benches**

As W Mackay had temporarily left the meeting at this point, this item was discussed under Any Other Business.

## **H. Land at South End near GMB Garden**

Following consideration of correspondence received from the Civil Engineering Technician, Orkney Islands Council, regarding why an area of land at South End had not been cut last year, and following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that it had been confirmed that the area in question was still in the grounds maintenance contract and should have been cut last year.
2. To note that the contractor had flagged up the issue of the area being used as a dumping ground and storage area for trailers/boats, thereby making cutting the grass impossible.
3. To note that until the area was cleared it was unlikely that the area of ground concerned would get cut.
4. To note that, in the first instance, a plea had been made to the press present at the meeting to highlight the problem and requesting that the area be cleared in order for the grass to be cut.

## **I. Dog Waste Bins, Wardhill Road, Stromness**

Following consideration of correspondence received from the Waste Disposal Operative, copies of which had previously been circulated, regarding the removal of a dog waste bin at Wardhill Road, Stromness, it was:

Resolved to note that following a site visit to the area a position had been found close to the original site for a red dog waste bin and would be erected in due course.

## **J. Pier Head Toilets**

Following consideration of correspondence received from the Service Manager, Building Cleaning, copies of which had been previously circulated, in relation to concerns regarding the Pier Head toilets, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the toilets were cleaned twice a day, but no guarantee could be given to the toilets in between cleans.
2. To note that faults should be repaired within 20 working days of reporting.
3. That Stromness Community Council would monitor the situation meantime.

## **5. Correspondence**

### **A. HITRANS: Scottish Islands – Windracers**

Following consideration of correspondence received from Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS) on behalf of Windracers, copies of which had been circulated, regarding the gathering of data on how to best support those living in the Scottish islands with drone technology, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided and that any comments or ideas should be made through the survey on the website provided.

### **B. Support for an Orkney Boat Haven**

P McLaughlin declared an interest in this part of this item and although she did not leave the meeting, took no part in discussions thereof.

Following consideration of correspondence received from Orkney Historic Boat Society regarding support for OHBS's aspirations for a proposed Orkney Boat Haven to be sited at the former NLB Buoy Store, Stromness, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that the Vice Chair, on behalf of Stromness Community Council, would write a letter of support for a proposed Orkney Boat Haven to be sited at the former NLB Buoy Store, Stromness.

### **C. SCOTO Community Tourism Roadshow**

Following consideration of correspondence received from the Team Manager for Sustainable Tourism, Orkney Islands Council, copies of which had been circulated, regarding a SCOTO Community Tourism Roadshow to be held on Friday, 10 March, it was:

Resolved to note that J Park would attend the roadshow and report back to the next meeting.

### **D. Stromness Community Centre Project**

Following consideration of correspondence received from Stromness Community Development Trust, copies of which had been circulated, regarding the Stromness Community Centre Project, and after discussion, it was:

Resolved that the Chair would write a letter of support to Stromness Community Development Trust for the community led local development funding application which, if successful, would enable a feasibility study and business plan to be completed on the viability of bringing the Stromness Community Centre into Trust ownership.

## **E. Ness Campsite**

Following consideration of correspondence received from the Team Manager (Sport and Leisure), Orkney Islands Council, copies of which had been circulated, regarding pedestrian and campsite resident safety at Point of Ness Campsite, Stromness, and after discussion, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would respond asking what type of traffic management tools were available, as closing off the route for public access should be a last resort.

## **6. Consultations**

### **A. Pentland Floating Offshore Wind Farm – Additional Information Application Consultation**

Following consideration of correspondence received from Marine Scotland, copies of which had been circulated, regarding Pentland Floating Offshore Wind Farm - Additional Information Application Consultation, it was

Resolved to note that responses to the consultation were required by 5 February 2023.

### **B. Orkney Islands Area Licensing Board – Licensing (Scotland) Act 2025 – Overprovision Assessment**

Following consideration of correspondence received from the Legal Clerk, Orkney Islands Council, copies of which had been circulated, regarding a consulting on whether there was an overprovision of licensed premises, it was:

Resolved to note that responses to the consultation were required by 17 March 2023.

## **7. Publication**

Resolved to note that the Orkney Harbours Offshore Wind Newsletter for December 2022 had previously been circulated to members.

## **8. Reports from Community Council Representatives**

### **A. MARS Updates**

Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note:

1. That a rodent problem had been reported near Stromness Primary School.
2. That W Mackay would report the issue of the steps down the pathway to Stromness Academy which were covered in mud and treacherous.
3. That the Clerk would highlight the issue of a lack of passing places on the road from the Community Gardens to the reservoir.

4. That Councillor G Bevan had reported the issues with rainwater at the steps at the Community Centre, as well as tree pollution, with the Corporate Director for Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure.

## **B. Stromness Community Business Forum**

Following an update from the Stromness Community Business Forum, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the Bonanza had been successful.
2. To note that the Business Forum had had a meeting with M Morrison regarding the Tall Ships event.

## **C. Stromness Development Trust**

Following an update from the Stromness Development Trust representative, it was:

Resolved to note:

1. That M Morrison had been appointed the Event Co-ordinator for the Tall Ships 2023 event.
2. That budgets were being pulled together to enable young adults to take part as sail trainees as part of the Tall Ships 2023 event.
3. That the Yule Log Pull had been really successful with a fantastic turnout.

# **9. Financial Statements**

## **A. Community Council General Fund**

Following consideration of the General Finance statement as at 6 January 2023, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £8,641.04.

## **B. Donations Account**

Following consideration of the Donations Account statement as at 6 January 2023, copies of which had been circulated, and after discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the balance was £1,562.72 of which:
  - £100 had been donated from Stromness Drama Club towards purchasing a new flag but as the money was not ring-fenced, it would be put towards another worthwhile community project if replacing the flag did not go ahead.
  - £1,050.72 was to be solely used for the upkeep and maintenance of the stage area.

2. That as there was money available for the upkeep and maintenance of the stage area, the Chair would investigate whether it may be possible to engage someone with a view to looking after the borders, tidying up the plants etc at the stage area.

3. That the Clerk would clarify exactly what the Council were responsible for as there had been little maintenance/cutting back of bushes done on the North side of the gardens last year.

### **C. Community Council Grant Scheme 2022/2023**

Following consideration of the 2022/2023 Community Council Grant Scheme statement as at 6 January 2023, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the balance remaining for approval was £845.45, giving a total cost of £1,409 for a project.

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

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund Statement as at 6 January 2023, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the balance remaining for approval was £1,524.04.

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

Following consideration of the Seed Corn Fund Statement as at 6 January 2023, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the balance remaining for approval was £340.03.

## **10. Travel Grant/Financial Policies of Other Community Councils**

Following consideration of travel grant/financial policies in place at other Community Councils, and following discussion, it was:

Resolved, on the motion of P McLaughlin, seconded by K Bevan, that from 1 April 2023, Travel Grants be set as follows:

- Travel Grants at £20 per individual per journey.
- Travel Grants be applied for by any organisation with participants aged 18 years or under.
- The participants must reside in the Stromness area.
- Travel must involve going off the mainland of Orkney (i.e. no internal travel).
- For any other grant, each request is taken on a case-by-case basis.

## **11. Financial Requests**

### **A. R McNeish – Netball Orkney – Glasgow – 25-27 November 2022**

Following consideration of correspondence received from R McNeish, copies of which had been circulated, requesting financial assistance towards the cost of attending a netball event in Glasgow on 25-27 November 2022, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £13 be given.

## **B. R McNeish – Netball Orkney – Aberdeen – 9-10 December 2022**

Following consideration of correspondence received from R McNeish, copies of which had been circulated, requesting financial assistance towards the cost of attending a netball event in Aberdeen on 9-10 December 2022, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £13 be given.

## **12. Any Other Competent Business**

### **A. Purchase of Hi Vis Vests for Community Council Use**

Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that the Chair would source quotes locally for 12 x Hi Vis Vests for Community Council use, following which, if members were agreeable, would be funded from the remaining Community Council Grant Scheme.

### **B. RNLI Benches – Proposed Plastic Replacement Benches**

Following discussion of the proposal to replace benches, it was:

Resolved that W Mackay would source quotes for replacement plastic benches, following which, if members were agreeable, would be partially funded from the remaining Community Council Grant Scheme with the rest being funded from the General Fund.

### **C. Stromness Community Centre Issues**

Following discussion regarding the Community Centre, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the rainwater running down the steps off Franklin Road and the permanent puddle outside the main door had been discussed at paragraph 8(d) above.
2. To note that the security lights had been fixed.

### **D. Defibrillators**

Following discussion regarding someone to take over from G Deans to do annual physical checks for the defibrillators to sure they were in working order, the battery and pads were in date and the information updated on the relevant website, it was:

Resolved that D Fischler would take on this role.

### **E. Gym at Stromness Academy**

Following a query from a member, it was:

Resolved to note that the gym at Stromness Academy was not currently available to members of the public to use.

## **F. Community Council Vacancies**

The Community Council Liaison Officer reminded members that as it would soon be six months from the last election, if there was anyone interested in joining the community council to let Democratic Services know as soon as possible, so a public meeting could be advertised, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

## **G. Stromness Academy – Fumes**

A member raised an issue with the smell of fumes coming from Stromness Academy, and following discussion, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would raise this matter with the relevant section via the business letter to Democratic Services.

## **H. Information for Members**

A member queried what should be done with information such as the email regarding memorial stones. K Bevan advised that for some of the information, he was happy for this to be shared on the Stromness Orkney Facebook page, however there may be issues with data protection for some of the information. J Park said that her impression was that any information that was forwarded via the Clerk was for Community Council members information only and if it was public information would be given as a press release, thereby there would be no risk of the Community Council releasing information that should not be in the public domain, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

## **13. Date of Next Meeting**

Resolved that the next meeting of the Stromness Community Council would be held in the John Rae Room, Warehouse Buildings, on Monday, 13 March 2023 at 19:00.

## **14. Conclusion of Meeting**

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 21:30.