

# Minute of the Special Meeting of North Ronaldsay Community Council held via Microsoft Teams on Thursday, 16 December 2021 at 18:00

## Present:

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

## In Attendance:

- Councillor S Clackson.
- Councillor H Woodbridge.
- Mr L McArthur, MSP for Orkney.
- Mr M Dickson, Interim Chief Executive, NHS Orkney.
- Mr M Henry, Medical Director, NHS Orkney.
- Mrs M Firth, Head of Primary Care Services, NHS Orkney.
- Mrs M Spence, Democratic Services Manager, Orkney Islands Council.
- Mrs A Byers, Chair, Eday Community Council.
- Mr T McCabe, First Responder, Eday/Eday Community Councillor.
- Mrs C McCabe, First Responder, Eday.
- Ms H Galland, Clerk.

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## 1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Mr I Scott.

## 2. Matters Arising

A question-and-answer session formed the remainder of the meeting. This is a breakdown of questions and responses.

**Question 1** - Mrs M Firth gave an overview of the current level of cover on both North Ronaldsay and Eday, and it was:

Resolved:

A. To note that there are first responders trained and available on Eday.

B. To note that there are no first responders on North Ronaldsay, and the most trained individuals are the SFRS crew.

**Question 2** - Members asked what had been done to address the staffing shortfall, and it was:

Resolved:

A. To note that Mr D Scott had assured prescriptions would be carried and delivered via the plane service.

B. To note that Mr D Scott assured the ambulance was available via the SFRS service.

C. To note that all nursing agencies, SAS and paramedic crews had been approached to source staff.

**Question 3** - Members queried, as out of hours demands are highest priority, what is the cover, and it was:

Resolved:

A. To note that North Ronaldsay should contact mainland Balfour Hospital.

B. That Eday should contact the Stronsay Surgery.

C. That the Air Ambulance had been told to prioritise calls from North Ronaldsay.

**Question 4** - Members asked, how long had this crisis been known about, and it was:

Resolved:

A. To note that they had been aware of the Eday situation for a few weeks as this was affected by staff sickness.

B. To note that they had been aware of the North Ronaldsay situation for at least 6 weeks, but that it was a dynamic situation.

C. To note that this was an unprecedented event, and the issue could not be divulged sooner as there had been an ongoing belief the issue would be resolved, with work still ongoing.

**Question 5** - Members asked what the legal standpoint was regarding leaving a community without trained healthcare cover, and it was:

Resolved to note that there was no legal obligation to provide cover. NHS cover is offered free at source but that is the endpoint.

**Question 6** - Members asked what level of qualification was asked for to meet the island's needs, and it was:

Resolved:

A. To note that they had asked for primary care providers, and personnel who must have an Emergency Care Skill set.

B. To note that the assumption "somebody is better than nobody" was ill informed leading to a staffer as a fish out of water.

C. To note that this level of expertise was in short supply nationwide.

**Question 7** - It was suggested that the isle communities are the experts in knowing what the needs of their isle are, and it was:

Resolved:

A. To note that islanders requested staff competent in delivering injections.

B. To note that on-island staff needed to be trained to bolster the remote care service.

C. To note that, as previously recorded, having somebody feels better than having nobody but does not address the issue of competency.

D. To note that injectable medicines should only be administered in a hospital situation.

E. To note that adequate emergency response was the primary requirement of the island.

**Question 8** - Members advised that the contingency plan of non-face-to-face medical cover depended on a decent internet and phone service, which is not assured on a remote island, also time dependent responses needed addressing, and it was:

Resolved:

A. To note that NHS staff had been working out-of-hours to address this situation.

B. To note that the issue was not unique, and a lot of NHS areas were suffering from a lack of cover.

C. To note the walk away information, which was that NHS care was most viable, regardless of island cover, in hospital and so the emphasis should be on getting patients to hospital, not on-island care.

**Question 9** - A SFRS representative had indicated that their role would be prioritised without NHS cover, and it was:

Resolved:

A. To note that there was a request that the surgery area was made available (not including the drugs cabinet area) for triage.

B. To note that the ambulance and charging point (accessible from the surgery) be available to SFRS.

C. To note that the Chief Pilot at Loganair had agreed with SFRS that ad hoc flights be made available during daylight hours of operation.

D. To note that a mobile phone with all emergency numbers installed made available to SFRS.

E. In the 4 days prior to no NHS cover the NHS deliver appropriate training to SFRS to address any shortfall.

F. NHS to give all properties an easy-to-use emergency call list for them to follow for the period 20-27 December.

**Question 10** - Should no issues occur during this time, members wanted assurances that this would not be seen as a green light for neglect of cover in future years, and it was:

Resolved:

A. That this year would not be used as a parameter for future years' demand.

B. That no false lessons be learned.

**Question 11** - Members asked, given the use of PCR tests, what would occur if there were positive covid tests, and it was:

Resolved that the pandemic was ongoing, and all reasonable measures would be effected in such a situation.

**Question 12** - It was queried whether there was a need for a public appeal for staff to meet the shortfall, and it was:

Resolved:

A. To note that competent staff would still need assessing or else there was the risk of fish out of water syndrome.

B. To note that NHS Orkney insisted that they had scraped the bottom of the barrel already.

C. That it was reiterated the need for competent staff as opposed to any staff for all legal and health and safety reasons.

### **3. Conclusion of Meeting**

There being no further business, the Chair reiterated that an island appreciation to the NHS be conveyed, and declared the meeting closed at 19:31.