

Minute of the Meeting of St Andrews and Deerness Community Council held in St Andrews Community Centre on Wednesday, 26 February 2025 at 19:30

Present:

Mrs L McAdie, Mr L Flett, Miss J Gowland, Mrs N Linklater, Mr D Paterson and Miss R Russell.

In Attendance:

- Councillor J Moar.
- Councillor R Peace.
- Councillor G Skuse.
- Mrs J Montgomery, Empowering Communities Liaison Officer.
- Mrs J Lennie, Clerk.

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1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Mr T Craigie.

2. Presentation - Orkney Native Wildlife Project

The Chair advised that Mr T Hadley, ONWP had sent an apology advising that he could not attend this meeting however he would be willing to attend the next meeting, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would invite Mr T Hadley, ONWP to the next meeting to provide members with an update on the project.

3. Adoption of Minutes

A. Public Meeting held on 3 October 2024

The minute of the public meeting held on 3 October 2024 was considered and the Chair and Empowering Communities Liaison Officer advised that, prior to circulation to the public, that they wished one clause be removed from page five, bullet point nine - "initially, not one Deerness person lived in any of the houses." Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that subject to the removal of this clause, Miss R Russell proposed that the minute of the public meeting 3 October 2024 be approved, and this was seconded by Mr D Paterson.

Councillor J Moar joined the meeting at this point.

B. General Meeting held on 25 November 2024

The minute of the general meeting held on 25 November 2024 was approved, being proposed by Mrs N Linklater and seconded by Mr L Flett.

C. Special Meeting held on 22 January 2024

The minute of the special meeting held on 22 January 2024 was approved, being proposed by Mr L Flett, and seconded by Mrs N Linklater.

4. Matters Arising

A. Lithium-ion Batteries and E-Bike and E-Scooter Concerns

1. L MacArthur MSP

Members considered a response from L McArthur MSP to an e-mail sent on behalf of Community Council members raising their concerns with lithium-ion batteries and e-bikes and e-scooters. L McArthur MSP advised that an amendment to the Product Regulation and Metrology Bill had been made in Westminster to, hopefully, ensure higher safety regulation at the manufacturing of e-bikes and e-scooters, as well as placing a duty on the online seller and marketplace and requesting certification of the products for sale and he hoped this campaign would receive the support of MP's at

Westminster. He also suggested that the Community Council writes to A Carmichael MP also, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the Clerk, had sent an e-mail to both L McArthur MSP and A Carmichael MP raising members concerns with lithium-ion batteries and e-bike and e-scooter concerns.
2. To note the information provided.

2. R Bailey, Parliamentary Researcher

Members considered correspondence received from R Bailey, Parliamentary Researcher, in response to the Community Council's e-mail support of his campaign to raise awareness of lithium-ion batteries and e-bike and e-scooter concerns. He invited members to attend a webinar regarding this issue on 11 December 2024 and he shared an update and a poster to circulate to the community, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that members were invited to join a webinar raising awareness of lithium-ion batteries and e-bike and e-scooter concerns on 11 December 2024.
2. To note the update provided.

3. A Carmichael MP

Following consideration of correspondence received from A Carmichael MP advising that he had written to the Minister for Business and Trade to ask what he intends to do to address the issue with lithium-ion batteries and e-bike and e-scooter concerns, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

B. Deerness Community Bairns Christmas Party Group

Following consideration of correspondence, previously sent to members, regarding the Deerness Community Bairns Christmas Party funding, which had been granted £300 from the Community Council Grant Scheme (CCGS) however as this group had no funds to purchase the Xmas gifts and towards the running costs of the party and with CCGS funding being paid out following purchase and based on evidence of expenditure, it was:

Resolved to cancel the CCGS grant totalling £300 for the Deerness Community Bairns Christmas Party Group and instead provide a general fund donation of £300.

C. Senior Citizen Christmas Lunch

Following consideration of an e-mail from Democratic Services explaining how the Senior Citizen Christmas lunch grants are paid and asking if members wish to supplement these grants from the General Fund, the Empowering Communities Liaison Officer explained that you could not suggest to either of the senior citizens

clubs that they had to provide evidence of attendees and evidence of expenditure as the CCGS criteria only allowed the lesser valued option to be paid from this fund. She explained to members how these grants worked and how this community council were required to minute the grant they provide to senior citizens accurately to avoid confusion to the applicant, with the cost of the lunch being worded as per the following options chosen:

- A cost per head to be paid from the CCGS with an additional clause added that if numbers in attendance at the lunch were not known at the time of submission of the application form, only estimated at time of application, then a maximum ceiling limit should be set to avoid any unknown expenditure.
- CCGS funding could be payable on receipted invoices only and a ceiling limit could also be set to again avoid any unknown expenditure.
- A donation from the general fund could be considered, which would require no information from the group applying for funding.
- To note that no alcoholic beverages could be funded by OIC and therefore were not CCGS eligible.

Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That no further funding would be granted to either Deerness Community Centre Association or St Andrews Senior Citizens for the 2024 Senior Citizen Christmas lunches.
2. That, in future, members would consider the information provided by the ECLO, when funding was requested for Senior Citizen Xmas lunches, in order to provide clarification to DCCA and SASC.

D. Meeting Dates and Venues

1. St Andrews Primary School – Cost of Janitor Fees

Members considered correspondence from St Andrews Primary School, advising that the school was no longer able to pay for the janitor's time in opening and closing the school for Community Council meetings. They school was happy for the meetings to continue at the school if the janitor's time was reimbursed, and the venue would be the school hall rather than the staff room, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

2. Change of Meeting Venue

Following previous consideration of meeting venues, it was:

Resolved that, as of the 26 February 2025 meeting, the meeting venue would alternate, starting in St Andrews Community Centre and every alternate meeting would be held in Deerness Community Centre and to follow this pattern throughout year 2025.

3. June Meeting Date and Venue

The Chair advised that the Deerness Community Centre caretaker had advised that DCC was unavailable for a booking on 12 June 2025 and following e-mail consultation, and further discussion, it was.

Resolved that the next meeting would be held in DCC on 17 June 2025 at 19:30 and that the Clerk should proceed to make this reservation.

E. Orkney Quiet Route – Briefing Note

Following consideration of the Briefing Note from Democratic Services regarding Orkney Quiet Routes and an update on the process due to the complexities of changing external grant funding processes and with data collection, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

F. Local Place Plan – Update

Following consideration of an update on the Local Place Plan from Democratic Services regarding the flexibility remaining to submit a Local Place Plan for your area if members wished to pursue this option, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

G. Road Improvements

Following consideration of an update from Democratic Services regarding the request members had progressed with OIC for road improvements, it was:

Resolved to that the Teams Manager, Roads Support, advised that road improvement items had been reported, and inspectors would investigate these areas.

5. Consultation Documents

A. 20 MPH Proposals for Orkney Roads

Following consideration of the consultation regarding 20mph proposals for Orkney roads, members noted that they had approved a corporate response, and it was:

Resolved to note that the Chair had sent a corporate response to Democratic Services, whereby members did not wish a reduction in speed in the Toab area from 30mph to 20mph, with 20 mph only implemented during school hours.

B. Proposed 2025 Verge Maintenance Plan

Following consideration of the consultation regarding the proposed 2025 Verge Maintenance Plan, which required a response by 28 February 2025, and following some discussion, members expressed concern with one verge cut in September, which they considered too late in the season to be effective. Visibility and road safety at junctions was a major concern for members and they highlighted the following junctions with visibility and road safety concerns:

- The junction into Tankerness, above Kirkwall Airport.
- Groatsetter Junction, Tankerness.
- St Andrews Community Centre, Tankerness.
- Halley Junction, Deerness.

The Chair advised that safety cuts could be requested to OIC. Miss J Gowland asked who would determine if a safety cut was required and the Chair advised that the public would determine this, and they could request a safety cut using the MyOrkney portal.

Members also raised concern with deciduous weeds and their control and thought a mid-July verge cut more appropriate as the weeds could die naturally in the verge and this would aid road visibility with the verges being cut during the peak growing season. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk, prior to the 28 February 2025 deadline for response, should send all members highlighted concerns to Democratic Services and request that consideration be given to one verge cut in mid-July.
2. To note that safety cuts could be requested by members of the public and could be reported by using the MyOrkney portal.

C. Trees and Woodland Strategy and the Sea and Environmental Report

Members considered the consultation regarding the OIC Trees and Woodland Strategy and the Sea and Environmental Report, which required a response by 24 March 2025. There followed a discussion regarding the depth of soil available in most areas of Orkney for growing trees, farmland versus trees, carbon sequestration, shortage of food, hedgerows and their ongoing management and maintenance. Mr D Paterson advised that if a corporate response was not formed and feedback to this consultation sent then, in twenty years' time, production of food could be impacted in Orkney if farmland was acquired for the planting of trees and woodland and Miss J Gowland advised that this consultation required an island strategy, and it was:

Resolved that Miss J Gowland would draft a corporate response to the Tree and Woodland Strategy and the Sea and Environmental Report for consideration and approval by members.

D. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Strategic Plan 2025-2028

Following consideration of the consultation regarding the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Strategic Plan 2025-2028, which required a response by 2 April 2025, it was:

Resolved that any comments to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Strategic Plan 2025-2028 should be submitted to the Clerk and members before 2 April 2025.

E. Ms K Johnson – Scottish Government Visitor Levy

Correspondence had been received from Ms K Johnson, Western Isles, regarding the Scottish Government Visitor Levy consultation. She invited members to participate in the Highland Council Visitor Levy consultation especially with regard to the impact on island communities whereby travel from islands to accommodation and even in regard to healthcare will be impacted by the tax from the visitor levy. She also requested that an immediate pause be implemented regarding the rollout of the visitor levy until the full impact on island communities can be properly understood and addressed.

Miss J Gowland's response to the Highland Council consultation was read out by the Clerk and all members agreed with her comments that this visitor levy had not been considered in very much depth and the impact on UK citizens travelling in their own country was very detrimental and even more so with island resident's travel. Members considered cruise liner and international tourist levy to be an essential levy, throughout the UK. Members highlighted their concerns regarding the impact this would have on UK citizens travelling in the UK, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk write a corporate response to Highland Council and Ms K Johnson advising that:

1. Any UK citizen travelling within the UK should not have to pay a visitor levy. This impacts on island communities more than most.
2. An international tourist and cruise liner levy should be implemented in the UK; as International travellers, within five and half months of returning to their country of origin, benefit from being able to apply to be refunded by the UK Government their twenty percent VAT paid on purchases made in the UK, which would appear to be an injustice to UK citizens who have to pay a visitor levy for travel within the UK as well as VAT; therefore a double tax. A visitor levy on international travellers could be used to sustain, support and develop facilities and services mainly used by leisure or business in the UK.

6. Correspondence

A. Scottish Island Federation – Island Homes: Design, Planning and Costs

Following consideration of correspondence from SIF regarding a Cross-Party Group meeting to be held online on 11 December 2024 focusing on Island Homes: Design, Planning and Costs, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

B. MyOrkney Portal

Following consideration of correspondence from the Press Officer, OIC inviting members and the community to use the MyOrkney portal to report any issue in the community, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

C. Ability Net Digital Voice Roadshow

Following consideration of correspondence from the Ability Net Digital Voice Roadshow inviting members to participate in this roadshow on 30 January 2025, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

D. Improvement Service and Representative of Poverty Alliance

Following consideration of correspondence from Democratic Services inviting members to participate in a webinar on 15 January 2025 regarding rural and islands poverty, it was:

Resolved to note the information.

E. R100 Broadband Evaluation

Following consideration of correspondence from R100 Evaluation Team inviting households and organisations to participate in a survey regarding the rollout of the R100 programme, members recognised that following the investment in broadband infrastructure in this area, some members of the community had experienced faster broadband and some slower, and it was:

Resolved that it was important that those who had received the infrastructure in the roll-out of R100 completed this survey and that members should complete the survey individually.

F. Quit Your Way Orkney

Following consideration of correspondence from Quit Your Way Orkney inviting this community council to order posters to display in the community, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

G. Voluntary Action Orkney (VAO)

1. Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund

Following consideration of correspondence from VAO inviting local groups and organisations to apply for funding from the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund. Applications close on 3 February 2025, it was:

Resolved to note this information and that the Clerk had sent this information to local outlets.

2. Small Grants Scheme

Following consideration of correspondence from VAO inviting constituted groups and organisations with charitable objectives to apply for a grant up to £500 to assist with projects and activities, it was:

Resolved to note this information and that the Clerk had sent this information to local outlets.

3. National Lottery Community Fund Information Event

Following consideration of correspondence from VAO inviting members to participate in an in-person National Lottery Community Fund information event on 26 February 2025, it was:

Resolved to note this information and that the Clerk had sent this information to local outlets.

H. Scottish Community Development Centre

Following consideration of correspondence from The Scottish Community Development Centre inviting the community to participate in a community conversation regarding community benefits from offshore and onshore renewable energy developments on 19 and 20 February 2025, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

I. Our Budget Challenge – Survey Results

Following consideration of correspondence from Democratic Services regarding OIC's Our Budget Challenge survey results and the announcement that the full results were available to view on OIC's website, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

J. Mr A Thorne – Extension to Tankerness Stagecoach Bus Route and Request for a Bus Shelter

Members considered correspondence from Mr A Thorne, a Tankerness resident requesting that the Stagecoach service bus route is extended into the back of Tankerness; in the Yinstay Road to the Rerwick Junction and along the Brae of Fea back to the Shore Road. Mrs N Linklater agreed that this extension to the route would be worth trialling. Mr D Paterson questioned whether the road width and condition of the road was fit for larger buses however, some members thought if the school bus could manage to travel on this route, then so should Stagecoach buses. Councillor G Skuse advised that this would disadvantage those residents in the route via Bossack Quarry onto Mill Cottage, Tankerness and this would require consultation with these residents. The Chair suggested that any consultation would be conducted by others not this community council. Members advised that they could see no reason Stagecoach could not create a circular route or double-back to service this route also. The Chair stated that she was not supportive of a bus shelter at the Tankerness Mill, Tankerness, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk writes to Democratic Services highlighting members support and request for an extended Stagecoach bus route into the back of Tankerness and requesting that Stagecoach consider a circular route or to double-back to service the Bossack Quarry to Mill Cottage, Tankerness route also.

2. That the Clerk respond to Mr A Thorne advising him that members support his proposal for an extended bus route into the back of Tankerness however, not his request for a bus shelter.

K. Bus/Bike Shelters

1. Lighthouse Corner, Deerness

Correspondence from Democratic Services advising that there was the potential to progress a bus/bike shelter at Lighthouse Corner, Deerness, had previously been circulated to members. OIC had recently taken ownership of the land around the parking bays at the end of the Stove Road. Transportation and Development and Marine planning would jointly progress this as it was anticipated that they may get funding from HITRANS/Transport Scotland. Budget permitting, it was hoped that the road verge where the bus turns could be tidied. It was also advised that the Community Council may be requested to assist with funding resources in terms of the construction/procurement and project management of this project, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that, pending funding and management, a bus/bike shelter at Lighthouse Corner, Deerness could be progressed.
2. That the Clerk should write to Ms A Woodfield sharing the information provided by Democratic Services regarding the bus/bike shelter proposed for Lighthouse Corner, Deerness.

2. Rerwick Junction, Tankerness

Following consideration of correspondence from Democratic Services regarding members request for a bus/bike shelter to be located at the Rerwick Junction, Tankerness, it was noted that this required further investigative work to check verge widths, visibility etc. It was requested that members consider the location of the bus/bike shelter at Rerwick Junction, Tankerness and a map was issued so that the location could be marked. It was noted that funding for this was not available, presently, as there was no bus service covering the route other than the school bus and Transportation did not provide funding for school bus shelters, and it was:

Resolved to note this information.

L. Thank You Letters

Following consideration of thank you letters from Mrs S Nicolson, Miss M Tait, Deerness Bairns Christmas Party Group and St Andrews Senior Citizens, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

7. Financial Statements

A. 2024/2025 General Finance

After consideration of the 2024/2025 General Finance statement as of 11 February 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that the balance was £17,103.90.

B. 2024/2025 Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the 2024/2025 Community Council Grant Scheme statement as of 11 February 2025, it was:

Resolved to note, that in the 2024/2025 financial year, that there was £2,319.21 available in the main capping limit only from the CCGS.

C. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund Statement as of 11 February 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £5,000.00.

D. 2024/2025 Ayrenergy Ltd Fund

Following consideration of the 2024/2025 Ayrenergy Ltd Fund Statement as of 11 February 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £23,609.83.

8. Financial Requests

A. Education Grant – Miss O Brown

Following consideration of a new education grant application received from Miss O Brown towards the purchase of a new laptop, and following some discussion, Mr L Flett proposed £499.99 full cost. This was seconded by Miss J Gowland, and it was:

Resolved to grant an education grant totalling £499.99 to Miss O Brown.

B. St Andrews Primary School Parent Council

Following consideration of correspondence received from St Andrews Primary School Parent Council requesting financial assistance towards the purchase and installation of a trim track at the school, and following some discussion regarding the quality of the wood/equipment and a maintenance plan for the equipment, the ECLO advised members that OIC's Playpark Renewal Plan, one of the funders of this project, addresses all these issues with the applicant/client and that all members were required to consider was funding, and therefore the questions that required answering were:

- Do you wish to fund this project?
- If so by how much?
- What funding sources would be utilised?

Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to grant financial assistance to St Andrews Primary School Parent Council totalling £2,200 with £1,000 from from CCGS, subject to approval, and £1,200 from Ayrenergy Ltd.

C. St Andrews Primary School

Following consideration of correspondence received from St Andrews Primary School requesting financial assistance for seventeen local Primary seven class members trip to the outdoor centre at Lagganlia, Kinncraig, it was:

Resolved to grant St Andrews Primary School £40 travel assistance per each local pupil participating in the Lagganlia trip, totalling £680.

D. Orkney Folk Festival

Following consideration of correspondence received from Orkney Folk Festival requesting financial assistance for two local events; one in St Andrews Community Centre and one in Deerness Community Centre, it was:

Resolved to grant Orkney Folk Festival £300, subject to CCGS approval.

E. East Mainland Agricultural Society

Mr L Flett declared an interest in this item and took no part in discussion thereof.

Following consideration of correspondence received from EMAS requesting financial assistance towards the construction of their pavilion in East Mainland show park, Toab, it was:

Resolved to grant East Mainland Agricultural Society £2,000 towards the construction of the pavilion; £1,000 subject to approval from the CCGS and £1,000 from the Ayrenergy Ltd fund.

9. Minute of Public Meeting 3 October 2024

The Chair advised that she had forgot to address one issue with regard to the public meeting 3 October 2024 and she asked members if they would wish Democratic Services to circulate the minute to relevant officers in OIC as some items, raised by the public at this meeting, could be progressed by OIC, and it was:

Resolved that unanimously members approved that the information from the public, recorded in the minute of meeting 3 October 2024 be shared to relevant officers in OIC for potential investigation and progression.

10. Publications

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

- Scottish Rural Action - Newsletter – November 2024 and Christmas Edition.
- VAO – Newsletter –December 2024.
- VAO - Training and Funding Update –December 2024, January and February 2025.

- Scottish Water – Newsletter – Winter Edition and Updates.
- St Andrews Senior Citizen's Xmas Card and Thank You.
- OIC Transportation Team – Infographic.

11. Any Other Competent Business – Deerness Property

Due to the sensitive nature of the following item, it was discussed in private.

The ownership of a property in Deerness was raised and discussed. The condition of the building and other issues were not known, and it was:

Resolved to take no further action.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Following previous discussion on the date of the next meeting, it was:

Resolved that the next meeting of St Andrews and Deerness Community Council would be held on 17 June 2025 at 19:30 in Deerness Community Centre.

13. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 21:08.