

Minute of the Meeting of Papa Westray Community Council held in St Ann's and via Teams on Wednesday, 22 November 2023 at 19:30

Present:

Mr N Rendall, Mr I Cursiter, Mrs I Hourston, Mrs F McNab and Mrs L Sharp.

In Attendance:

- Councillor H Woodbridge (via Teams).
- Councillor M Thomson (via Teams).
- Mr E Barclay, Orkney Ferries Manager (via Teams).
- Ms L Richardson, Head of Neighbourhood Services.
- Ms J Foley, Community Development Officer, Papay Development Trust.
- Mrs J Montgomery, Empowering Communities Liaison Officer.
- Mrs J McGrath, Community Council Liaison Officer/Interim Clerk (via Teams).

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1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Mr B Hourston and Mr A Hourston, and Councillor S Clackson.

2. Adoption of Minutes

The minute of the meeting of Papa Westray Community Council held on 24 August 2023 was adopted, being proposed by Mrs F McNab and seconded by Mr I Cursiter.

3. Matters Arising

A. Ferry and Pier Matters

The Orkney Ferries Manager advised that he had joined the meeting to provide an update on ferry matters, and to find out how the Northerly Explorer was performing for the island. Mrs I Hourston advised that the school children were doing ok on it, although it was a different motion and although it was a shorter trip, one pupil was not a good sailor. She added that it could be difficult to figure out who the skipper was if the weather was inclement, and that when it was one skipper you could just phone and ask if it was school or no school so that has fallen down since the new boat had come in on the route. The Orkney Ferries Manager advised that the skipper was usually onboard and would be carrying the boat phone so there shouldn't be a problem. It was agreed to pass on numbers so that contact could be made.

The Orkney Ferries Manager reported that they were thinking to run the current service until early into the new year. The Northerly Explorer would continue on the route until tenders were evaluated and, depending on what came in, Orkney Ferries would consult with the community council to see what they thought. He also advised that they were looking for another boat, and that there would be a tender going out for a second-hand vessel, something similar to the Explorer, to run the route in the medium term. He added that he appreciated that this is not ideal, but that, longer term, the work would run into the Ferry Replacement Programme in line with the communities wants and needs, and that Orkney Ferries were trying to keep the resilience going for the island meantime,

A member asked about the Kirkwall Bay and why she couldn't be used. The Orkney Ferries Manager advised that she was a backup pilot boat, did not have a good turn of speed and could only take 8 passengers. The access was not good either. MCA approval would be needed to amend passenger facilities, so it wouldn't be feasible or meet the specification that they would want. The Chair then asked they had a specification for how many a boat would take, passenger wise, long term? The Orkney Ferries Manager suggested that this would need to be discussed with the community council, and that when data had been collected, there were only 6 occasions in the year when the passenger numbers were over 12, which could be overcome by doing a double run if this was needed.

The Chair advised that they were happy to go on the basis that the islanders were happy enough and glad to have a service, but that they needed to do something about making sure folk book - if there were only 12 available spots then passengers need to say that they are going rather than just turning up.

The Orkney Ferries Manager added that there was going to be money for seabed surveys next financial year, and that they had also upgraded Wi-Fi at Papay pier so that will help with ticketing machine issues etc.

The Chair pointed out that, the previous week, they had three trailers to go but no tractor to move them around on deck, if someone hadn't been putting a tractor on then they would have been stuck. The Orkney Ferries Manager explained that a tractor was due to be delivered to Kirkwall Pier on 10 December which was to be used for gritting pier, and he had also organised with pier staff for someone to do training in Kirkwall so that they could use it. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

The Ferry Service Manager and Councillor M Thomson left the meeting at this point.

B. Papay Water Scheme

Mr I Cursiter advised that a lot had happened since the last meeting. Some pipes had had leaks and replacements had been done in the older section, with new clamps put on and new plastic pipes the whole way along, so that should improve the situation.

The Chair asked if there was any possibility of finding somewhere for the storage of the remaining bottled water, as there were 4 or 5 pallets left, and the space was required for equipment storage in the shed.

The Interim Clerk advised that she had received an invoice from Burray Boatyard for repairs to the turbine, which members agreed to pay. The Empowering Communities Liaison Officer advised that a FIT payment had been received in January, and that recent readings had been sent on. Environmental Health were going to come on Monday for water tests but would need to arrange transport as the van was no longer on the island for use by Council employees. The Head of Neighbourhood Services offered to contact Environmental Health and see what arrangements they had in place for transport on the island, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the information provided.
2. That arrangements would be made to move the remaining bottled water to preserve it for future use if required.
3. That the payment for the turbine repair should be paid from the Water Scheme Account.
4. That members would be happy to arrange transport for Environmental Health officers if required.

C. Fibre Broadband Proposal

The Empowering Communities Liaison Officer advised that CloudNet were planning to be in Papa Westray the week after next to install the remaining routers and complete works, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

D. Storage of Gritter and Salt

The Head of Neighbourhood Services advised that the works order had been issued, some of the material had been put out to the island and the base was done, so it was progressing. She offered to chase this up.

Members discussed whether the area of land at the side of the existing airfield building, which is currently parking, could be used, but it was agreed that where it was currently was fine.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services asked if much gritting had been done on the island so far this winter, and members reported that some of the grit was unusable, so the Head of Neighbourhood Services asked them to request fresh supplies to be put out to the island, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided and to ask for an update for the next meeting.

E. Cattle Trailers

The Chair advise that all three trailers were there and in use and working well. It was agreed that it would be even better once the tractor was available on the ferry to make it easier for loading and unloading on the ferry, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

F. Community Council-owned Field

Resolved to put up a poster/advertise, as had been agreed at the previous meeting.

G. Rabbit Survey

The results from the rabbit control survey had been circulated to members and were discussed. One of the problems was that for roughly 15% of the land, ownership was not known, so there needed to be a more involved process of figuring out who owns what. The feedback was mixed. It was pointed out that there were small areas here and there, and that 70-acre belonged to the Trust, but they had not responded to the survey. From the responses, if it was marked on a map, there are swathes with fewer rabbits, but the bottleneck would be where folk don't want anything done so a blanket approach was needed. It was agreed that nothing could be done without permission. The person who had done work in Canna to eradicate rabbits had offered to come up for just the cost of his transport, to do a survey and assess what kind of cost would be involved, and possible methods. It was agreed to look into the cost of bringing up the specialist and that they would not be looking at a complete cull but to take some quite serious action. It was also agreed to look into a scheme to

pay someone to keep on top of it each year so that they can't get numbers up again. Following further discussion, it was:

Resolved that Mrs L Sharp would get a map and liaise with the specialist.

4. Correspondence

A. Winter Service Plan 2023/2024

Members had previously been sent a copy of the Winter Service plan which was currently in use for the winter period, and it was:

Resolved to note the plan.

B. Draft ONI Summer 2024 Timetable

There had been some proposed amendments to the 2024 summer ferry timetables, namely on a Friday morning, and the affected islands had been consulted on these changes. The Transportation Service Manager had since circulated the timetable that would be put forward, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

C. National Islands Plan Review – Workshops

Members had previously been forwarded information on workshops which had taken place on 6 and 7 November in Stromness and Westray, relating to the National Islands Plan Review, and it was:

Resolved to note that the workshops had since taken place.

D. Orkney Digital Forum – Outcomes and Presentation Slides

Resolved to note the correspondence and information provided by Liam McArthur MSP, in relation to the Digital Forum.

E. My Place Awards 2024

Following consideration of correspondence from the Scottish Civic Trust, copies of which had previously been circulated, regarding the My Place Awards for projects and people that work to improve places and communities in Scotland, it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

F. Kirkwall and St Ola Community Council – Benches

Correspondence from Kirkwall and St Ola Community Council had previously been sent to members, asking for information on what their involvement was in providing and maintaining benches in their area, and it was:

Resolved to note the questionnaire.

5. Consultation – Scottish National Islands Plan – PhD Research

Members had previously been sent information on a survey that was being done on Our Islands, Our Future in relation to the Scottish National Islands Plan, and it was:

Resolved that members could complete the survey as individuals if they wished to do so.

6. Financial Statements

A. General Finance

After consideration of the General Finance statement as at 13 November 2023 and discussion thereof, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance remaining was £16,780.56.

B. Papa Westray Community Council Water Scheme

After consideration of the Papa Westray Water Scheme statement as at 13 November 2023, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £24,895.41.

C. Community Council Grant Scheme 2023/2024

Following consideration of the Community Council Grant Scheme statement as at 13 November 2023, it was:

Resolved to note the balance remaining for approval in the main capping limit was £2,145.67 that £743 remained available for allocation in the additional capping limit and £719 was left in the island capping limit.

7. Financial Requests

A. Papay Community Association - Papay Fun Weekend 2023

Members resumed consideration of a request for financial assistance from Papay Community Association and were provided with information on costs for this summer's event, and it was:

Resolved to note that the Association had made a profit on the event therefore no donation would be made on this occasion.

B. Papay Community Association – Fireworks and Christmas Presents

A financial request from Papay Community Association had previously been circulated to members, asking for assistance with the costs of purchasing fireworks for the annual display, and to provide presents for the children this Christmas, and it was:

Resolved to provide £300 towards the fireworks, subject to CCGS approval, and to award a general fund donation of £125 towards Christmas presents.

C. St Ann's Kirk – Salvation Army Visit

Members had been forwarded a request from St Ann's Kirk, asking if members would consider covering the cost of transport for Salvation Army members to travel from Pierowall to Papa Westray for the tree lighting event, and it was:

Resolved to award £66 towards travel, subject to CCGS approval.

8. Reports from Representatives

A. Transport

It was agreed that most items had already been covered earlier in the meeting, but the Chair queried why they had not been receiving Loganair statistics for inter-island flights, and it was:

Resolved to note that these figures would be circulated again shortly.

B. Planning Representative

Resolved to note that there were no items of interest on recent planning lists.

C. Water Scheme Admin

Resolved to note that there was nothing to add to previous reports.

D. Health and Care

Resolved to note that the next Joint Isles Health and Care meeting was due to be held on 4 December 2023.

E. Development Trust Representative

The Community Development Officer advised that folk were using winter boat service and making the most of it. With regards to the boat store, they had eventually got a contractor secured just do basic work this winter in conjunction with NILPS. She also advised of a tenancy transfer to Bewan, and that Fairview had been bought. The Trust had done a housing needs survey, and long stay rents were needed. Regarding the Market Garden, they had secured funding from OIC's Community Led Local Development Fund for £7,000 towards running costs so they would get staff time for 4 months plus some additional costs out of that and will ensure they get a lot of winter maintenance done. She also advised that they would be asking for another letter of support from the community council as the CDO post was due to come to an end at the end of March 2024, and the Trust were applying to various funding pots including Crown Estate's one to keep this post and associated projects going. The CDO also reported that she attended the Westray conference, which was really useful, especially being part of the discussion on community housing and Papay using a local lettings policy. Following the report, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

9. Publications

The following publications had previously been emailed to members and were noted:

- Police Scotland – Orkney Area Command Newsletter – August 2023.
- Letter from School Place – August, September and October 2023.
- Orkney Ferries Statistics – August, September and October 2023.
- VAO Newsletter – August, September and October 2023.
- VAO Training and Funding Update – August, September, October and November 2023.
- Holyrood Highlights – 8 September to 28 October 2023.
- Week in Parliament – 23 October to 19 November 2023.

10. Any Other Competent Business

A. Grass Cutting Tenders

Members were in agreement to advertise the tenders for grass cutting. The Head of Neighbourhood Services advised that the Burial Grounds Officer had been looking at the contracts and costs and that to bring costs more in line with available budgets, the number of cuts would need to be reduced, with the community councils covering the cost of any additional cuts they wanted done above that. Members understood this, and it was:

Resolved to advertise the grass cutting tenders with a closing date falling before the next meeting.

B. Post Office

Members had a lengthy discussion regarding the Post Office's decision not to continue a post office service for Papay, following the closure of the previous facility. A letter had been sent to Post Office, but no direct reply had been received. The Chair had spoken to a representative and commented that he did not have an appreciation of the need for the isle to have an operating post office, for more than just posting letters. Councillor H Woodbridge offered her help, along with that of the other north isles ward members, in addressing this issue, and stated that she would take it up at the next Planning Partnership meeting as this was about resilience and long-term sustainability, and it was:

Resolved that Councillor H Woodbridge would make enquiries into this issue and report back to the next meeting.

C. Thank You to Island Link Officer

The Chair advised that the Island Link Officer had resigned from the role and that the post would be advertised shortly. He suggested that the community council should write a letter of thanks for all the support provided, and it was:

Resolved to note the information and that a letter would be sent on behalf of Papa Westray Community Council.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Following consideration of a date for the next meeting, it was:

Resolved that the next meeting of Papa Westray Community Council would be held on Thursday, 22 February 2023 at St Ann's and via Teams, at 19:30.

12. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 21:38.