

Minute of the Meeting of Harray and Sandwich Community Council held in the Milestone Community Church and via Teams on Wednesday, 27 August 2025 at 19:30

Present:

Mr D Hamilton, Mr G Brown, Mrs E Grant, Mr E Grieve, Mr K Groundwater, Mr C Kirkness and Mrs K Ritch (via Teams).

In Attendance:

- Mr R Delday, Birsay Community Council.
- Mr S Spence, Birsay Community Council.
- Councillor R King.
- Councillor O Tierney.
- Councillor D Tullock.
- Mr S Gunn, Heriot Watt University - Dounby Community Woodland Project.
- Ms E Niven, Rural Planner, Development and Marine Planning.
- Mrs H Keveren, West Mainland Link Officer/Clerk.

Order of Business

1. Apologies	2
2. Presentation – Dounby Community Woodland Project	2
3. Adoption of Minutes	2
4. Matters Arising	2
5. Correspondence	5
6. Consultations	7
7. Financial Statements	9
8. Applications for Financial Assistance	9
9. Publications	10
10. Any Other Competent Business	10
11. Dates of Future Meetings	11
12. Conclusion of Meeting	11

1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Mr S Tait and Councillor J Stevenson, and that Birsay Community Council members Ms D Clouston, Ms K Coghill, Mr E Harvey and Mr F Tulloch had also tendered apologies for the meeting.

2. Presentation – Dounby Community Woodland Project

Mr S Gunn Research Coordinator – ICNZ (Islands Centre for Net Zero) Programme and Ms E Niven, Rural Planner, Development and Marine Planning presented members with an insight on the proposed Dounby Community Woodland Project.

Members heard that ICNZ was looking to reduce the carbon footprint throughout the island and already had some other projects underway. They had identified Dounby as an area that would benefit from increased woodland cover.

They advised that they planned to engage with the community to create linked areas of woodland to increase biodiversity and had already secured funding for the purchase of the trees but not the planting and ongoing maintenance. Areas would be identified for the planting of the trees, and the project would be community led by a group of volunteers.

Members were then given the opportunity to raise questions and concerns relating to the project, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the presentation and discussion.

The representatives from the Woodland Project left the meeting at this point.

3. Adoption of Minutes

The minute of the meeting held on 14 May 2025 was approved, being proposed by Mr C Kirkness and seconded by Mrs E Grant.

4. Matters Arising

A. Dounby School Play Park Fund

Mr E Grieve presented members present with an update on the progress, advising that the group had been successful with their application for CLLD funding allowing them to proceed with ordering the equipment. Installation had been arranged for September with an anticipated October opening of the facilities. Following the update, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the report.

B. Dounby Speed Tracker Information

Following the last meeting, a request had been submitted to the Council requesting the tracker information be supplied in an easier to read format. Prior to the meeting, information had been received and circulated to members from the Team Manager, Roads Support, with a breakdown on the readings. After discussion, members felt,

whilst it had simplified the information, it would be beneficial to request the officer's attendance at a future meeting to give a presentation on the findings of the Dounby trackers, and it was:

Resolved to request via business letter a representative from the Roads Support team attend a future meeting.

C. Benches

Members were advised that Mr D Hamilton and Mr C Kirkness had installed the benches; two at the Bay of Skail and one at Strathborg. Pictures were posted on Facebook to show the wider community projects which are led by the Community Council, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

D. Sustrans – Friends of Dounby

An update had been received and circulated to members ahead of the meeting from Sustrans detailing the aim of the 2024/2025 Mobility Audit which had been carried out and proposals to create a masterplan for Dounby in 2025/2026. They plan to engage further with the community to refine and validate the ideas already gathered. They had offered to do a short presentation via Teams at the start of the next meeting, and it was:

Resolved to invite Sustrans to join via Teams at the start of the meeting on 29 October 2025.

E. Market Green Update

Several updates had been received over the summer months; the completion date was now anticipated to be late September.

A request from the previous meeting had been submitted to both Royal Mail and British Telecom to replace the existing post box with a pillar box and the telephone box with an old fashioned red one. Both had acknowledged the requests but were unable to assist. Instead, Royal Mail had arranged for a repaint of the existing post box and British Telecom advised that they would be replacing the panels and cleaning up the facilities.

The new facilities already had incorporated into the plans a water refilling station.

The Chairman had requested that pictures showing the state of the grass full of weeds at the Market Green be sent to the Council. They had responded that the mix that had been sown was Wild Meadow and would always have weeds, but that they would be asking the contractor to remove some of the larger weeds at this point.

It was also advised that the Community Council had been asked to arrange the official opening of the new facilities which would be done once completion was finalised.

Discussion then followed on the grass situation and members were unaware of discussions being held on the type of grass. The original plans stated 'utility grass'

and whilst they agreed that they would accept the Meadow mix in the landscaped area at the back of the Market Green, they felt the area at the front where the Christmas Tree would be situated was unsightly and members were unanimous that they would like this changed to Lawn grass, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the information provided.
2. To request via the business letter that the circle at the front of the Market Green be changed to lawn grass.

F. Dyke behind Smithfield Hotel

An update had been received that the wall behind the Smithfield had been removed and had since been rebuilt, and it was:

Resolved to note the update provided.

G. Strathborg Trees

It was reported that members had carried out some yearly maintenance on the trees at Strathborg on Tuesday, 20 May, and it was agreed that this should be a yearly event, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the discussion.

H. Interpretation Board – Market Green

Members were advised that in addition to a new Interpretation Board, the Council had been advised that the existing one was out-of-date and required updating. The new designs were not available to view as yet, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided and await an updated design.

I. Verge Maintenance Plan

The points which had been raised by members regarding the decision to only cut verges in September had been relayed to the Council, but members were advised that it was too late to be actioned this year. However, the comments had been noted for future, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

J. Flags for Special Occasions

Following the receipt of a list of flags used for special occasions, a list had been drawn up of special occasions to mark locally. However, quite a few events were marked by flying the saltire, which the community council did not have. After discussion, it was:

Resolved to obtain quotes for a saltire along with a new Orkney flag to replace the one which had been damaged in the storm.

5. Correspondence

A. Orkney World Heritage Site Stakeholder Workshop

Correspondence had previously been circulated inviting members along to the Orkney World Heritage Site Stakeholder Workshop. The workshop would focus on insights and updates, collaborative workshops and action planning, and it was:

Resolved to note that the event had now passed.

B. National Islands Plan – Orkney Meetings

Invites had previously been circulated to member advising of local sessions being held with the Scottish Government Islands Team to discuss the new National Islands Plan. The sessions had offered a chance to explore the results of the public consultation and proposals to improve outcomes for Scotland's permanently inhabited islands, and it was:

Resolved to note the event had now passed.

C. Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance

Correspondence had previously been circulated to members from the Highland and Islands Community Fundraising Officer for Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance to try and facilitate a meeting with them to raise awareness of the charity and the importance to island communities. Discussion followed, and it was:

Resolved to donate £150 from the General Fund to Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance.

D. 2025 SURF Awards

Members considered correspondence previously emailed to members advising that Scotland's Regeneration Forum had opened for applications for Best Practice in Community Regeneration for 2025. The purpose was to highlight, celebrate and share achievements of initiatives that address physical, social and economic challenges in communities. Following consideration, it was:

Resolved to note that the closing date for applications was 1 September 2025.

E. Orkney Fund Board

Correspondence had been circulated from The Orkney Fund, advising members that Expressions of Interests were being welcomed for funding opportunities for local Place Plans. Members had responded suggesting that Harray and Sandwick submit an Expression of Interest which had then progressed to a full application for 100% funding towards the consultancy work involved. This had been successful, and the process had commenced to produce a joint Place Plan for the parishes, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

F. Neighbourhood Watch Scotland – RTS Switch off Information

Correspondence had been circulated from Neighbourhood Watch Scotland asking members to cascade the information as appropriate to advise the community about the Radio Teleswitch Service switch off which was scheduled for 30 June 2025, and it was:

Resolved to note that this date had now passed.

G. ICNZ Programme – Dounby Community Woodland Proposal

Following consideration of correspondence which had previously been circulated from Herriot Watt University relating to the Island Centre for Net Zero programme proposing to develop some woodland areas in and around Dounby, it was noted that a presentation had been given to members at the start of the meeting. Discussion followed, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To request, via business letter, a list of all Council-owned land within the parishes of Harray and Sandwick inclusive of Dounby.
2. To circulate to the wider community via Facebook to gauge interest ahead of the next meeting.

H. Orkney Islands Council – Annual Grants

A notification had been circulated to members advising that the Annual Grant to community councils for 2025/2026 had been approved with an uplift of 2%, and it was:

Resolved to note the content of the correspondence and that Harray and Sandwick Community Council had received an annual grant of £

I. Office for Product Safety and Standards

A request had been received and circulated to members advising that the Office for Product Safety and Standards were inviting organisations to bid for grants to deliver community-based or consumer-focused product safety awareness and education projects, and it was:

Resolved to note the closing date had passed.

J. Voluntary Action Orkney – Annual Subscription

Members were advised that the annual subscription to Voluntary Action Orkney had been received, and it was:

Resolved to pay the fee of £15 from the Community Council Grant Scheme.

K. Rise – £10 Million Changing Places Funding

Correspondence had previously been circulated to members from the Scottish Government advising that there was £10 million funding available for Changing Places toilet facilities in Scotland to develop facilities for disabled users, and it was:

Resolved to note the closing date for applications was 20 October 2025.

L. Birsay Community Council – Local Place Plan

Members gave consideration to the Birsay Place Plan, an extensive document covering various topics within the Birsay parish. As neighbouring community councils, it had been received and circulated to members to raise any comments during the 28-day consultation process, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

M. Neighbourhood Watch Scotland – National ‘Telecare’ Campaign

Correspondence had previously been circulated from Neighbourhood Watch Scotland asking for assistance to cascade to the community, especially those using personal alarms and lifeline devices, that by January 2027 the analogue telephone network would no longer work, and provisions should be made to change over to digital landlines, and it was:

Resolved to note the content of the correspondence.

N. Thank you Letters

Resolved to note that letters of thanks had been received from Birsay, Harray and Sandwick Church, Dounby Senior Citizens, Dounby P7’s Hoy Trip and Dounby Athletic Club for financial assistance provided.

6. Consultations

A. Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy

Correspondence had previously been circulated to members advising that the consultation on the draft updated Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy was live and those interested in the development of offshore wind in Scotland should use this opportunity to make their voice heard, and it was:

Resolved to note that all events had now passed.

B. Ayre Offshore Windfarm

Following consideration of correspondence received from Thistle Wind Partners advising of some formal Pre-Application Consultations being held locally to advise the community about the proposed windfarm to be situated 22km off the east coast of Orkney, it was:

Resolved to note that the last event was to be held on 28 August 2025.

C. Community Wealth Building Action Plan

Correspondence had been circulated to members from Orkney Community Planning Partnership advising of an on-line meeting to allow individuals to have their say on how Orkney's economy can develop to meet the needs of our people, and it was:

Resolved to note that the event had now passed.

D. BT Group – Orkney Islands Payphone Removal Project

Members considered correspondence previously circulated to members from British Telecom Group advising that 24 public payphones in Orkney were no longer required. The only one in the Harray and Sandwick parishes to be removed was in Quoyloo. This had been highlighted to the local shop, and they had expressed no concerns about its removal. Members had requested that the community council try for an upgrade to the telephone box in the Dounby village, and British Telecom had responded they would replace the glass and give a general tidy up, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence and subsequent update.

E. Orkney Islands Council – 20mph Speed Limit

Correspondence had previously been circulated to members from the Council asking for their thoughts on the proposed 20mph speed limit to be introduced on various roads around Orkney. The Chair had raised concerns which had been relayed prior to the deadline, stating that there was no point reducing the current 30mph limit unless they were going to monitor it. The Chair had further advised that he felt that the 'Smiley Faces' would be more beneficial. It was noted that the public consultation was now open. Discussion followed, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To request via business letter when funding would be available for Dounby to get five Smiley Faces.
2. To look at possible funding options.

F. Orkney Islands Council – 'Our Orkney, Our Future'

Members considered correspondence previously received and circulated from the Council to gather the views of local people and industry on tourism in the county. 'Our Orkney, Our Future' had been launched for individuals to submit their experiences whether positive, negative or neutral on the impact tourism had in their lives. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note that the deadline for submissions was 19 September 2025.

G. Heriot-Watt University – Survey on Coastal Change

Following consideration of correspondence previously circulated from Heriot-Watt University inviting people living in Orkney to take part in a short survey about coastal change, and how our communities can be involved and better represented in future decisions, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

7. Financial Statements

A. End of Year Accounts 2024/2025

Copies of the Harray and Sandwich Community Council Balance Sheet and Income and Expenditure for year ending 31 March 2025 had been circulated to members, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents.

B. General Fund

Following consideration of the General Fund statement, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £14,684.27 as at 5 August 2025.

C. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the financial statement for the Community Council Grant Scheme, it was:

Resolved to note there was £2,213.36 remaining for approval in the main capping limit and the balance in the additional capping limit was £780 as at 5 August 2025.

D. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the financial statement for the Community Development Fund, it was:

Resolved to note the balance remaining available for allocation was £5,000 as at 5 August 2025.

8. Applications for Financial Assistance

A. Dounby Athletic Club – Highland Amateur Cup

Following consideration of correspondence previously circulated to members via email from Dounby Athletic Club who had qualified for the next round of the Highland Amateur Cup off island, it was:

Resolved to note that members had agreed to award £300 from the General Fund.

B. Dounby Rainbows – Trip to Caithness

Following consideration of correspondence from Dounby Rainbows requesting funding for five members from Harray and Sandwich who would be participating in a trip to Caithness, it was:

Resolved to note that members had agreed to award the total sum of £75.40 from the General Fund.

C. Stenness Community School – Hoy Trip

Following consideration of correspondence from Stenness Community School requesting funding towards one pupil from the parish who would be attending a three-day outdoor activity course, it was:

Resolved to note that members agreed to award £60 from the General Fund.

9. Publications

Resolved to note that the following publications had been received previously and forwarded to members:

- VAO – Newsletter – Special Newsletter June, July, August 2025.
- VAO - Training and Funding Update – May, June, July 2025.
- ORSAS – Quarterly Newsletter – May 2025.
- Scottish Water – Spring/Summer 2025 Edition.
- Family Fun Day – June 2025.
- Orkney Digital Voice Event.
- Orkney Islands Council – Childminding Training June 2025.

10. Any Other Competent Business

A. Dounby Tidy Up

Members were advised that a very successful village tidy up had been arranged and carried out on 2 July 2025. The event was supported well by representatives from the community councils and the public resulting in the village looking much tidier. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the suggestion to make the Dounby tidy up an annual event.
2. To request via the business letter whether a contractor could be hired prior to the event next year to spray the area with a pet friendly weed killer.

B. Harray and Sandwick Place Plan

It was advised that full funding had been secured from The Orkney Fund for the consultancy fees to proceed with a Harray and Sandwick Place Plan. The initial meeting was held on 20 August with a good turnout present. The next meeting had been arranged for 17 September, and it was hoped to get some additional members to join the Steering Group and move things forward. Following the update, it was:

Resolved to note that regular meetings would be held to ensure the Place Plan could be submitted to the Council in March 2026.

C. Remembrance Day Wreaths

Members agreed to purchase a Remembrance Wreath once again for both the Harray and Sandwick War Memorials, and it was:

Resolved to note that the payment would be taken from the Community Council Grant Scheme.

D. Manholes – Dounby Village

A member raised concerns that the manhole covers on the main road coming out of Dounby just past the Dounby Community School were considerably lowered from the road and members felt they were causing a danger, and it was:

Resolved to request via the business letter that the Council address this matter.

E. Community Council Meetings – Presentations

A member enquired as to whether the projector facilities could be utilised for future presentations to allow all members to see clearly, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would liaise with the Milestone Community Church to enable this to happen.

F. Encourage Engagement

A member opened discussion on how the community council can engage more with the community to encourage them along to both Place Plan and community council meetings, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To request 'The Orcadian' write an article on the Place Plan.
2. That the Clerk would find out if community councils can form a mailing list of individuals who freely supply their email addresses.

11. Dates of Future Meetings

Following consideration of dates for the next meetings, it was:

Resolved that the next meetings of Harray and Sandwick Community Council would be held on Wednesdays 12 November 2025 and 21 January 2026 in the Milestone Community Church and via Teams at 19:30.

12. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 21:45.