

Minute of the Meeting of Birsay Community Council held in Birsay Community Centre and via Teams on Thursday, 29 February 2024 at 19:30

Present:

Mr R Delday, Miss K Coghill (via Teams), Ms D Clouston, Mr E Harvey, Mr S Spence and Mrs V Sinclair.

In Attendance:

- Councillor R King.
- Councillor J Stevenson.
- Ms L Richardson, Head of Neighbourhood Services (via Teams).
- Mr K MacPherson, Head of Property, Asset Management and Facilities.
- Mr M Harvey, Senior Project Officer, SUSTRANS.
- Mrs J Montgomery, Empowering Communities Liaison Officer.
- Mr P Tinkler, Community Council Liaison Assistant.
- Mr T Hadley, Community Engagement Officer, Orkney Native Wildlife Project.
- Ms J Smith-Saville, West Mainland Link Officer (WMLO)/Clerk.

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1. OWNP Update

The Community Engagement Manager, Orkney Native Wildlife Project, gave an update on the stoat eradication program in the Birsay parish, and throughout Orkney. He explained that the program was now in the “knock down” phase, where responses were made to individual sightings, as the population of stoats was now at such low levels to enable this.

- Stoats caught in Birsay area – 572 with 1119 traps deployed. 1,200 Rats removed.
- Total stoats caught 6,022 in the county.
- Total traps deployed 7,932.
- 105 volunteers currently active.
- So far, volunteers have given 16,415 hours.
- 65 talks with local groups and councils. 12 Tourist provider training events. 43 biosecurity events. 4 volunteer trapper training events. 58 monitoring volunteer training events, and 10 agricultural shows.

The Community Engagement Manager completed his talk, and answered a number of questions, and it was:

Resolved to note the update.

2. Quiet Routes

The Senior Project Officer, Sustrans introduced the Quiet Routes pilot project, which would identify stretches of roads which would fit the funding criteria. Data had been collected to identify the safest and quietest routes, which would be highlighted to drivers by means of signage. After discussion, a number of routes were proposed around the Birsay area. Members were encouraged to have a look at the map provided and forward any suggestions on before the end of March. Examples of signage would also be circulated, and it was:

Resolved that members were to forward on any suggestions for a quiet route before the end of March, and examples of signage would be circulated to members.

3. Apologies

Resolved to note apologies received from Councillors D Tullock and O Tierney.

4. Adoption of Minutes

The minute of the meeting held on 30 November 2023 was approved, being proposed by Miss K Coghill and seconded by Mr S Spence, subject to the following amendment;

Section 1 – RSPB – Marwick Bay Access Concerns, paragraph 2, to alter “waste” to “organic”.

Miss K Coghill also wished to point out that no contact had been made by the Council's Access Officer as minuted in the meeting from 14 September 2023, and asked if a reason could be given as to why this was the case, and it was:

Resolved that Miss K Coghill's question to Democratic Services would be forwarded by the Clerk.

5. Birsay Kirkyard Grass Cutting Tender 2024

The Clerk provided information on the tender received for the grass cutting at Birsay Kirkyard, from one contractor. Following discussion, it was agreed that tender applications would be advertised again, with a deadline of two weeks, and it was:

Resolved to advertise the tender again, with a deadline of two weeks.

6. Matters Arising

A. Marwick Bay Access

RSPB had reported that stone had been dumped at the site. This has since been removed, and it was:

Resolved to note the information of above.

B. Area of Speeding Concern

The Head of Neighbourhood Services provided an update, via email, that counters had been laid out at the location from 5 January to 6 February and provided data on traffic volume and speeds. The Clerk agreed to forward this information onto the member of public who raised the concern, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would write to the member of public with the information provided by the Head of Neighbourhood Services.

C. Treatment of Causeway

The Chair stated no update had been received, but hopefully this will still be considered, as it is a core path, and it was:

Resolved to note the information above, and the Clerk, via business letter, would ask for an update.

D. A Poke – Whitemire Farm Track

The Chair stated that he was contacted by A Poke, concerning the condition of the track, as it was used regularly by bird watchers at Swannay Loch. The Empowering Communities Liaison Officer offered to check if the track lies within the Birsay Parish, and report back to members so a decision could be made, and it was:

Resolved that the Empowering Communities Liaison Officer would check if the track lies within the Birsay Parish and report back to members.

E. Quilco Path

The Clerk reported that contact had been made with Sustrans and that there was a possibility of funding from the Ian Findlay Path Fund. This was being discussed at the Harray and Sandwick Community Council meeting on 13 March, and Birsay Community Council members were invited to attend, and it was:

Resolved to note the information of above.

F. Pot Holes – Linda Brown

Members considered a financial request from Linda Brown to help with pot holes on the road to her house. Members declined the request, as there was no longer a fund for such requests, and this is a private road, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk will contact Linda Brown with the member's decision to decline the request.

G. St Magnus Kirk Gate

A request had been received from a member of the public concerning the state of disrepair of the St Magnus Kirk gate. The Chair agreed to arrange for repairs to be made, and it was:

Resolved that the Chair will organise repairs to be made to the gate at St Magnus Kirk.

7. Correspondence

A. CYCJ's annual stakeholder survey

Following consideration of correspondence from the Children and Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ) who had just launched their 2023 Stakeholder Survey, and were keen to hear from community councils on what they think in relation to children, young people and crime in their local area, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

B. R100 Scottish Broadband Voucher Scheme

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council, inviting the community council members to promote The Scottish Government's Reaching 100% (R100) programme which ensures that all premises in Scotland can access superfast broadband – speeds of at least 30 Megabits per second. It was advised that the £600m broadband infrastructure programme included the R100 contracts, which would see over 3,318 homes and business in Orkney benefit from full fibre, which was over 30 times faster than the original commitment. The Head of Property, Asset Management and Facilities stated that this scheme is designed to cover where Openreach were not providing a service, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

C. Celebrating placemaking efforts in Scotland

Following consideration of correspondence from the Scottish Civic Trust, outlining the My Place Awards, which celebrate projects and people that work to improve places and communities in Scotland. The Awards are funded by the Scottish Government, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

D. Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund – Round 3

Following consideration of correspondence from VAO to make members aware that a grant fund aimed at supporting community-based initiatives that promote and develop good mental health and wellbeing within the adult population was open for applications, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

E. New Scottish Islands Passport Feature

Following consideration of correspondence from The Scottish Islands Passport Team wanting to hear from members about the new app feature and any upcoming projects members may have, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

F. Season's Greetings from the Convener, Orkney Islands Council

Following consideration of correspondence from Graham Bevan, Convener, Orkney Islands Council sending season's greetings, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

G. Season's Greetings from Democratic Services

Following consideration of correspondence from Democratic Services sending season's greetings, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

H. Dounby Market Green Development

Following consideration of correspondence from the Team Manager, Sustainable Tourism, regarding the Market Green project, offering to discuss the project at the next Community Council meeting, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

I. Community Councils webinar with Open University Scotland

Correspondence from the Scottish Community Councils, advertising a webinar, which will provide an overview of the portal and how it can be used to support skills development within CCs, had previously been circulated, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

J. Additional Tranche of CDF Funding

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council informing members of a top up to each community council's CDF funding, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

K. Birsay CC Briefing - R100 and SBVS

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council informing members of the current broadband investment programme in Orkney including maps detailing premises that have fibre connections available, premises due to be upgraded and properties eligible for a voucher under the Scottish Broadband Voucher Scheme, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

L. BBC Children in Need's new Big Sky Fund

Following consideration of correspondence from VAO concerning the BBC Children in Need fund. The first phase of their Big Sky Grant Fund is for organisations based in Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles.

Their new initiative will offer grants of up to £5,000 to support the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children aged 8-13 living in island and remote rural communities, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

M. Scottish Water – Leaks and Bursts

Following consideration of correspondence from Scottish Water with a media message asking customers to help them over the days ahead – both by reporting any suspected leaks on the public water network, but also by checking any empty properties, business premises, holiday homes, basements, out houses, field troughs or garden taps, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

N. Accounts Commission report on Orkney Islands Council

Following consideration of correspondence from the Accounts Commission including an audit report of Orkney Islands Council, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

O. BSc Honours Project - Scottish Rainforest

Following consideration of correspondence from Douglas Gunn a BSc (Hons) student of Environmental Management from SRUC and The University of Edinburgh, who was investigating whether the Scottish population's understanding and perception of the Scottish rainforest impacts the conservation of this special habitat, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

P. National improvement framework for Adult Social Care Support and Community Health

Following consideration of correspondence from SIF who are supporting an online meeting with the Scottish Government to learn more about and feed into the National Improvement Framework for Adult Social Care and Community Health, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

Q. Briefing Note - Orkney Quiet Routes

Correspondence from Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure with proposals to pilot Quiet Routes in Orkney had previously been circulated. It provided a background to Quiet Routes and information about other projects, including a pilot currently running in Highland, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

R. VAO: Small Grants Scheme 2024/25

Following consideration of correspondence from the VAO Small Grants Scheme 2024/25, supported by Repsol Sinopec and Liam McArthur MSP, advising that it was now open for applications, it was

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

S. King's Portrait Scheme

Following consideration of correspondence concerning the King Portrait Scheme, asking if Community Councils wished to order a free portrait of the King, copies of which had previously been circulated, members agreed that they did not wish to order a print, and it was:

Resolved to note that members did not wish to order a print.

T. Cross Party Group on Islands

Following consideration of correspondence from the Scottish Islands Federation which provides a forum for the discussion of issues relevant to Scotland's islands and the residents of island communities, and aims to improve links between the

Scottish Parliament and island communities, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence and that the meeting had been held on 28 February.

8. Consultations

A. Local Transport Strategy Consultation

Following consideration of correspondence from the Transportation Service inviting members to respond to the Draft Local Transport Strategy for comments, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

B. West of Orkney Windfarm – Section 36 and Marine Licences Applications

Following consideration of correspondence from the Marine Directorate, Scottish Government, inviting members to respond to the application to construct and operate the West of Orkney Windfarm, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

C. Local Development Plan Scheme

Following consideration of correspondence from Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure, Orkney Islands Council, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

D. Verge Maintenance Plan 2024

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council of the verge maintenance plan, allowing members to comment before 29.3.24. Members wished to highlight a concern on Hillside Road, at Vasquoy Corner (Birsay direction), and also at the junction on Kirbister Road from Howalay Farm as the verges are not cut often enough, and it is a road safety concern. It was:

Resolved that the Clerk, via business letter, will forward the concerns on Hillside Road and Kirbister Road to the relevant department.

E. PhD Research – Scottish National Islands Plan

Following consideration of a survey from PhD research project around Our Islands, Our future (OIOF) towards the development and implementation of the National Islands Plan (the Plan) through the Institute for northern studies, UHI Orkney, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

F. Winter Service Plan 2024

Following consideration of the Winter Service Plan 2024, copies of which had previously been circulated, and the proposal to continue with the same routes next winter (2024/25) members have until 29 March 2024 to send in feedback, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

G. NHS Orkney Listening Event

Members had been forwarded information from NHS Orkney who wanted to hear about what mattered most to their patients and community. They were holding two public drop in events (19 and 24 February) and an online virtual session (14 February) to hear feedback from patients, families and communities. This is to provide opportunities to share feedback, views, experiences and ideas to help shape future plans. There is currently an online survey, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

9. Financial Statements

A. 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 £8,082.92 as at 15 February 2024.

B. Birsay Energy Fund

Following consideration of the Birsay Energy Fund, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £22,475.09 as at 15 February 2024.

C. Community Council Grant Scheme

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

Resolved to note the balance remaining available for approval in the main capping limit was £295.68 and the balance in the additional capping limit was £743.00 as at 15 February 2024.

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 £9,831.09 as at 15 February 2024.

E. Seed Corn Fund

Following consideration of the financial statement for the Seed Corn Fund, it was:

Resolved to note the balance remaining available for approval was £0.00 as at 15 February 2024.

10. Applications for Financial Assistance - Primary 7 Hoy Trip Grant Assistance

Following consideration of correspondence from Dounby Primary school requesting financial assistance for 7 Birsay pupils for an educational trip to Hoy, it was:

Resolved that an updated pupil list be obtained, as some pupils may not be attending the trip.

11. Publications

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

- VAO – Newsletter – November, December 2023. January 2024.
- VAO - Training and Funding Update – November and December 2023 and January 2024.
- Orkney Ferry Statistics – January 2024.

12. Any Other Competent Business

Resolved to note that no further business was brought to the meeting.

13. Dates of Future Meetings

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

Resolved that the next two meetings of Birsay Community Council would be held on Thursdays 30 May and 12 September 2024 at 19:30 in Birsay Community Centre and via Microsoft Teams.

14. Conclusion of Meeting

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