

Minute of the Meeting of Kirkwall and St Ola Community Council held in the Friends Room, St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall, on Monday, 6 October 2025 at 19:30

Present:

Lynne Spence, Chris J F Matthews, Steven Brodie, Moyra Gordon, Cathleen A Hourie, Robert F Leslie, John R Mowat and Neil P Tait.

In Attendance:

- Councillor Sandy G Cowie.
- Councillor Steven B Heddle (via Teams).
- Councillor W Leslie Manson.
- Hayley Green, Director of Infrastructure and Organisational Development, Orkney Islands Council (via Teams) (for Items 1 to 5).
- 1 member of the local press.
- Hazel Flett, Clerk.

Chair:

- Lynne Spence.

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1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Tom Rendall, Rosemary Rhodes and Elspeth Seatter and Councillors Kristopher D Leask, John A R Scott, Gwenda M Shearer and Ivan A Taylor.

2. Adoption of Minute

The Minute of the Meeting held on 25 August 2025 was approved, being proposed by John Mowat and seconded by Chris Matthews.

3. Matters Arising

A. Carness Road Sea Wall

The Clerk had received an update from Orkney islands Council advising that design options were still being discussed to ensure that all concerns had been mitigated, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should write to Orkney Islands Council requesting that the Community Council be kept advised on what action was to be taken.

B. Visitor Levy

Following consideration of correspondence from the Scottish Government and Orkney Islands Council regarding the proposed implementation of an overnight stay visitor levy and associated Island Communities Impact Assessment, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence, including that the Policy and Resources Committee of Orkney Islands Council had recommended that implementation of an overnight visitor levy should not be progressed at this time, and that engagement with the Scottish Government and other relevant stakeholders should continue on alternative tourism levy models that were more appropriate to an island context.

C. Town Noticeboard

Elspeth Seatter advised that she had contacted Orkney Library who had indicated they were happy to display posters, in Kirkwall as well as Stromness, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should contact the member of the public who originally requested consideration of a town noticeboard and advise them of the Orkney Library noticeboard.

D. Ferry Replacement Programme and Harbours Masterplan Phase 2

Neither representative was available to do the presentation at this meeting, and it was:

Resolved to note that the presentation on the ferry replacement programme and the Harbours Masterplan Phase 2 would take place at the next meeting.

E. Kirkwall Post Office

Following consideration of various correspondence from The Post Office regarding changes to the Kirkwall Post Office, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the current position, in that the changeover would take place on 13 and 14 November 2025 and that further community engagement would occur should any further changes be proposed, such as moving location.

F. Financial Requests

Following consideration of notes of thanks received from various individuals and groups regarding financial assistance received from the Community Council, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

G. Scottish Rural Action

Robert Leslie confirmed that the Community Council was a member of Scottish Rural Action, which also had potential for assisting with the Local Place Plan, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should contact Scottish Rural Action to confirm contact details for the Community Council.

H. Agenda Management

Following further discussion on the action log and calls for items, it was:

Resolved to continue with the call for items approximately two weeks before the date of the next meeting, and that Any Other Competent Business should remain on the agenda but be focused on short and non-controversial items and raised with the Clerk and the Chair prior to the meeting, if possible.

I. Miscarriage Memorial Corner, Tankerness House Gardens

It was reported that a very moving event took place at the Miscarriage Memorial corner in Tankerness House Gardens on 18 September 2025, and it was:

Resolved to note that members of the Community Council had attended.

J. Bonfire and Fireworks

Robert Leslie referred to road closures during the Islands Games and requested that the Community Council write to Orkney Islands Council asking why it was not possible to manage road closures for alternative sites identified for the Kirkwall bonfire and fireworks event, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that, following clarification from the Clerk and the Director of Infrastructure and Operational Development, road closures during the Island Games had been managed by an external company, with volunteers from the Island Games, and the only involvement by Orkney Islands Council was ensuring the appropriate traffic regulation orders were in place.
2. That the Winter Fest group should consider management of any road closures during any events which might be arranged.

4. Standing Items

A. Former Street Names

Tom Rendall had submitted his apologies as he was attending a meeting of the Orkney Heritage Society at which this matter would be discussed, and it was:

Resolved to defer consideration to the next meeting.

B. Local Place Plan

After hearing an update from the Chair, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that Councillors Leask and Scott had been nominated to sit on the Steering Group.
2. To note that the Service Manager, Development and Marine Planning, had agreed to attend the first meeting of the Steering Group to provide advice on how to progress.
3. That a meeting of the Steering Group be arranged for after the October school holidays to progress, including a brief for consultancy services.

C. Island Games Legacy (Benches at Peedie Sea)/Benches

After hearing an update from the Chair and after further discussion on benches, in general, it was:

Resolved

1. To note that the Clerk was arranging a meeting with Council officers to agree a process for bench maintenance, including a bench as a legacy for the Island Games to be sited near the Peedie Sea.
2. To note that the Criminal Justice Service would shortly be recommencing maintenance of benches, starting with two at Scapa.
3. To note that the Chair was continuing to maintain and update the spreadsheet of benches across Kirkwall.

D. Sand at Scapa

The Clerk had received an update from Orkney Islands Council regarding clearing sand off the road at Scapa, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the situation continued to be monitored and the road swept as required.
2. That the Clerk should forward the photos taken by Elspeth Seatter to Orkney Islands Council showing the narrowing of the road at the Orphir end.

3. That the Director of Infrastructure and Organisational Development should liaise with the Marine Planning team to see what could be done regarding the sand dunes and marram grass.

4. That Christine Hourie should attempt to locate photos of the road in the past to show the difference and how the road had narrowed significantly, due to the build-up of sand from the beach side.

E. Winter Fest

Following consideration of correspondence from a member of the public suggesting an event for during the winter season, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. That all members should submit ideas for a winter fest to the Chair, who would collate for discussion at an early meeting of the subgroup.

2. That the Clerk should write to the member of the public thanking them for the idea which would be considered by the subgroup.

Councillor Steven Heddle left the meeting at this point.

F. Policy on Financial Assistance

The Clerk had received examples of other community councils' policies from the Community Council Liaison Officer, and it was:

Resolved that a meeting of the Finance Sub-committee be arranged as soon as possible.

5. Correspondence

A. Postal Services in Kirkwall – Workshop Invitation

Following consideration of correspondence from Thinks Insight and Strategy an independent research agency, regarding a workshop on postal services in Kirkwall, it was:

Resolved that Steven Brodie and John Mowat should attend the workshop to be held at the Pickaquoy Centre on 7 October 2025.

B. Lithium-ion Batteries – Webinar and Grant Scheme

Following consideration of correspondence from Ron Bailey regarding a webinar regarding the safety of lithium-ion batteries, as well as details of an electrical safety-first grant scheme, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should pass the information to the Director of Infrastructure and Operational Development and Age Scotland Orkney, highlighting the grant scheme.

6. Financial Statements

A. General Finance

Following consideration of the General Finance statement as at 26 September 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the estimated balance as at 26 September 2025 of £11,081.34.

B. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the 2025/2026 Community Council Grant Scheme statement as at 26 September 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that projects to the value of £3,835.89 had been approved, of which £2,895.80 had been claimed.
2. To note the balance remaining for approval within the main capping limit of £1,552.47.

C. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund Statement as at 26 September 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the balance remaining for approval of £1,163.46.
2. That the Clerk should investigate the possibility of a green plaque for the former library in Laing Street and the links to Andrew Carnegie.

7. Financial Requests

A. Orkney District Netball and OYDG Under 11 Football

Following consideration of an application from C Tait requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in the Under 15 Netball Orkney squad, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. That a donation of £30 be given towards each competition attended, up to the maximum sum of £375 for 2025/2026, in respect of the Under 15 Netball Orkney squad, subject to confirmation of attendance.
2. To note that, as the OYDG season had finished, no assistance was requested in respect of football trips.

B. Orkney Amateur Swimming Club

Following consideration of applications from A Bruce requesting financial assistance towards her daughters participating in the Thurso Open Swim Meet on 13 and 14 September 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given in respect of each swimmer, subject to confirmation of attendance.

C. Orkney Athletic and Running Club

Following consideration of an application from S Webb requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in the North Area Trophy held in Inverness on 20 September 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given, subject to confirmation of attendance.

D. Badminton Coaching and Competitions

Following consideration of applications from L Leask requesting financial assistance towards her son and daughter participating in various badminton coaching sessions and competitions between August 2025 and March 2026, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given in respect of each coaching session and competition attended after the date of the application form, in respect of each participant, subject to confirmation of attendance.

E. Glaitness School

Following consideration of an application from Glaitness School requesting financial assistance towards the P7 multi-activity trip to Nethybridge Centre in June 2026, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that consideration be deferred, to the next meeting, to enable the Clerk to seek confirmation on the details of the application.

8. Meetings/Events Attended by Members

A. Transport Scotland

Following consideration of correspondence from Transport Scotland regarding Community Drop-in Sessions in relation to the Northern Isles Ferry Services 4 Contract Development Work, with one held on 10 September 2025 in St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that Steven Brodie had attended a drop-in session.

B. Kirkwall Airport User and Community Engagement Forum

The Kirkwall Airport User and Community Engagement Forum had met on 22 September 2025, and it was:

Resolved to note that Tom Rendall had been unable to attend.

C. Orkney Coastal Change Adaptation Workshop

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council advising of workshops run by Mott MacDonald in respect of the Orkney Coastal Change Adaptation Plan, with the Kirkwall and Central Mainland, North Ronaldsay and Auskerry workshop held in the Kirkwall Town Hall on 24 September 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that Chris Matthews had attended.

D. Community Right to Buy, Just Transition and Land Use

Following consideration of correspondence from the Scottish Islands Federation regarding an Island Meeting with the Scottish Government held on 2 October 2025 to discuss Scotland's Land Use Strategy, the Land Use and Agriculture Just Transition Plan and the Community Right to Buy, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that Cathleen Hourie had attempted to join the online meeting.

E. Community Council Chairs Meeting

The Chair had attended the Community Council Chairs meeting online on 3 September 2025, with the main agenda item being how to collect view and issues from the community, and it was:

Resolved to note that some community councils had an active social media presence for getting information to the public, either with dedicated social media pages or linking with established community pages.

9. Publications

The following publications had been sent to the Clerk and were forwarded to members via email:

- Walking Scotland – eNews – August 2025.
- VAO Newsletters – August and September 2025.
- SEPA Updates – September 2024 and Climate Week Special.
- Scotland's Towns Partnership – September and October Newsletters.
- SSEN DSO – Whole System Newsletter, September 2025.
- ORSAS – Quarterly Email Newsletter – September 2025.
- VAO – Training and Funding Update – August 2025.
- Orkney Citizens Advice Bureau – Patient Advice and Support Service.

10. Any Other Competent Business

A. Weeds

Following a discussion on weeds in pavements and other community and communal spaces, it was:

Resolved that Cathleen Hourie should get further information on a community initiative in Aviemore.

B. Community Council Pin

Following a discussion on identification for Community Council members, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should arrange for lanyards with the Community Council crest and some basic information, including term of appointment, for members.

C. Former Balfour Hospital

Following a discussion on the proposed demolition of the former Balfour Hospital, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should write to NHS Orkney asking for any plans with regard to the original building, which would celebrate 100 years since its inception on 6 April 2027.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Following consideration of future meeting dates, it was:

Resolved that the next meeting of Kirkwall and St Ola Community Council should be held on Monday, 1 December 2025, commencing at 19:30.

12. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 21:40.