

# **Minute of the Meeting of Firth and Stenness Community Council held in Firth Community Centre on Thursday, 4 December 2025 at 19:30**

## **Present:**

Ms B Scollay, Mr R Crichton, Ms W Dunnet, Mr M Harcus and Mrs A Stevenson.

## **In Attendance:**

- Councillor R King
- Mrs J McGrath, Community Council Liaison Officer/Interim Clerk.

## **Order of Business**

1. Apologies .....	2
2. Adoption of Minutes .....	2
3. Matters Arising .....	2
4. Correspondence .....	3
5. Consultations .....	4
6. Finance Statements .....	5
7. Financial Requests .....	6
8. Publications .....	7
9. Any Other Competent Business.....	8
10. Date of Future Meetings .....	8
11. Conclusion of Meeting .....	8

## **1. Apologies**

Resolved to note that apologies had been received from Mrs R Lyon, and Councillors J Stevenson, O Tierney and D Tullock.

## **2. Adoption of Minutes**

The minute of the meeting of Firth and Stenness Community Council held on 2 October 2025 was adopted, being proposed by Mr M Harcus and seconded by Mrs A Stevenson.

## **3. Matters Arising**

### **A. Festive Lighting**

The Interim Clerk advised that a quote had been obtained for new festive lighting, however it was agreed that a final decision on what to purchase would be made in the new year. It was also reported that one of the braids on the road out to Firth School was not working, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That this item would remain on the agenda for future meetings so that a decision could be made on what additional festive decorations were required for Finstown and Stenness.
2. That the Interim Clerk would investigate the faulty braid light.

### **B. Quarry Group**

Members had previously been sent an update, informing them that the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services had advised that the community council could make a formal request to discharge the condition regarding a public liaison group being formed, on the basis of there being no local interest in establishing a group. It was agreed that the community council should put out the information locally to ensure that anyone who was interested in forming a group would have the opportunity to come forward before any further consideration was given to this matter, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That Mr M Harcus would put information on the formation of a Cursiter Quarry Public Liaison Group on the community social media pages and inform local residents of this opportunity, inviting any interested residents to come forward.
2. That this item would be discussed again at the next meeting.

### **C. Firth Place Plan**

Mr M Harcus advised that there was not much more to update at this point, and that the group were waiting for the consultants to return to them with their collated information, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the update.
2. To note that Councillor R King expressed an interest in attending future meetings of the Firth Place Plan group.

#### **D. Stenness Place Plan**

Mrs R Lyon was not in attendance at the meeting however she had circulated the action plan so that members could consider the actions that had been marked as under the ownership of the community council. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the actions in the Stenness Place Plan that had been allocated to Firth and Stenness Community Council.
2. To note the suggestion that a Development Officer for the West Mainland would be extremely helpful when progressing some of the actions to come out of Place Plans.

#### **E. Signage**

The Interim Clerk advised that she had reported the damaged signs, and Mr M Marcus confirmed that the repairs had been carried out, and it was:

Resolved to note that the damaged signs had been repaired.

#### **F. Community Council Clerk and Vacancies**

The Interim Clerk advised that she had contacted Orkney College regarding the Clerk vacancy, should any of the current students be interested in the opportunity, and that they would continue to advertise the vacancy. She also advised that a public meeting to elect to the two vacancies on the committee could be organised in the new year, on the advice of members, and it was:

Resolved to note the update and to keep this item on the agenda.

### **4. Correspondence**

#### **A. Scapa Deep Water Quay Update**

Correspondence in relation to the Scapa Deep Water Quay had previously been sent to members, advising that further information had recently been submitted to OIC's Planning and Marine Directorate – Licensing Operations Team, and that a further planning consultation period was now underway, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

## **B. OWHS Programme Update**

A copy of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council had previously been sent round members, requesting a letter of support for the Orkney World Heritage Site Programme Outline Business Case, and it was:

Resolved to note that the community council had missed the deadline for providing a letter of support but that they supported the project.

## **C. Community Event – 1 December**

Members had previously been sent information on a public event for the Orkney and Caithness Link Project held on 1 December 2025, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence and that Mrs A Stevenson had attended the event.

## **D. Letters of Thanks**

Resolved to note that letters of thanks for financial support provided had been received from Firth Primary and Stenness Primary Schools.

## **E. Community Transport Small Grant Scheme**

Members had previously been sent information from OIC Transport in relation to the Community Transport Small Grant Scheme for financial year 2026/2027, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence and that the closing date for applications was 25 January 2026.

## **F. Integration Joint Board – Service User Representative**

Information had previously been circulated to members, advising of the opportunity for a service user to become a member of the Orkney Integration Joint Board, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

# **5. Consultations**

## **A. EMEC – Section 36 Variation – Fall of Warness**

A consultation sent on behalf of the European Marine Energy Centre, advising that an application had been made to extend the expiry date of the section 36 consent by an additional 2 years, and it was:

Resolved to note that the deadline to respond had passed.

## **B. Community Workshops – Have Your Say on Tourism**

Correspondence had been emailed on 20 October 2025, advising that community workshops would be taking place on 5, 6 and 11 November, to inform the Our Orkney, Our Story project and the future OIC Visitor Management Plan, and it was:

Resolved to note that the events had since passed.

### **C. Briefing Note - Burial Grounds Grass Cutting**

Copies of a briefing note on grass cutting in burial grounds had previously been circulated to members, advising of the need to review existing contracts in place for this work across Orkney and reduce costs. A robust discussion took place, with members in agreement that this was an emotive subject, and that people in their communities would not like to see their burial grounds overgrown. It was suggested that it would be difficult to agree to fund the cost of any cuts without knowing what the contract price would be. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Interim Clerk would submit a response on behalf of Firth and Stenness Community Council that advised that their preferred option was 2 for inactive burial grounds, providing the periphery and walking routes across and around were cut (and one cut per year done of everything), and option 3 for active burial grounds, with the cuts done earlier in the season.

2. That it would be advised that the community council would not be able to fund more cuts without knowing the actual price for the contract for their cemeteries.

3. To ask why the actual cost for grass cutting was so far in excess of the budgeted cost.

### **D. NIFS User Surveys – Transport Scotland**

Correspondence from Transport Scotland had previously been circulated to members, asking for support in promoting route specific Northern Isles Ferry Services user surveys that will inform the future services provided to Orkney and Shetland, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence and that individuals could fill in the surveys up until 9 January 2026.

### **E. HES – Properties and Collections Strategy**

Following consideration of correspondence sent on behalf of Historic Environment Scotland, copies of which had previously been circulated, advising of a consultation on the new Properties and Collections Strategy, it was:

Resolved to note that the consultation was open for responses until 23 January 2026.

## **6. Finance Statements**

### **A. General Fund**

Following consideration of the Community Council General Fund statement as at 24 November 2025, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the balance was £7,272.47, which included funds of £4,000 from the Rennibister Wind Turbine Community Fund.

2. That the Interim Clerk would make further enquiries with the developer regarding payments to the Rennibister Wind Turbine Community Fund.

## **B. Community Council Grant Scheme**

After consideration of the Community Council Grant Scheme statement as at 24 November 2025, it was:

Resolved to note the balance remaining for approval was £848.38 in the main capping limit and £405.00 in the additional category.

## **C. Community Development Fund**

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund statement as at 24 November 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that £6,115.63 remained for allocation.

# **7. Financial Requests**

## **A. Friends of Firth School – Play Park Upgrade**

Members resumed consideration of a request from Friends of Firth School Playground Committee for funding towards an upgrade of the play park. An update on funding secured so far as well as funding applied for had been provided, however members were still unsure as to how much they would be willing to provide, and it was:

Resolved to ask for a further update to the next meeting so that further consideration could be given to this request.

## **B. Firth/Evie Schools – Primary Football Training**

Members resumed consideration of the request from the coach of the Firth and Evie Schools football teams for financial assistance towards the cost of hall hire for training sessions, and it was:

Resolved to provide funding of £300, subject to CCGS approval, towards hall hire.

## **C. Stenness Community Association – Christmas Party**

Ms B Scollay declared an interest in this item and left the room during discussion.

Following consideration of a request from the Stenness Community Association for their Christmas Party, it was:

Resolved to award £350 towards the party, subject to CCGS approval.

### **D. K McIntosh – Netball – Aberdeen**

Following consideration of a request from K McIntosh on behalf of her daughter to attend the U17s Scottish Cup netball trip, it was:

Resolved to award £30 from the general fund.

### **E. Stenness Community School – Christmas Crafternoon**

Following consideration of a request from the Stenness Community School for their Christmas Crafternoon, it was:

Resolved to award £100 to the Christmas Crafternoon, subject to CCGS approval.

### **F. K Chalmers – Highland Dancing – Caithness**

Mrs A Stevenson declared an interest in this item and left the room during discussion.

Following consideration of a request from K Chalmers on behalf of her daughter to attend Violet Leitch Highland Dancing Competition on 23 November 2025, it was:

Resolved to award £30 from the general fund.

### **G. 1st Dounby Guides – Glasgow Trip**

Following consideration of a request from the 1<sup>st</sup> Dounby Guides for a resident to attend to attend a Girl Guiding trip on 21 November 2025, it was:

Resolved to award £30 from the general fund.

### **H. Harray Young Farmers – Speechmaking - Edinburgh**

Following consideration of a request from the Harray Young Farmers for a resident to attend a Speechmaking trip to Edinburgh on 6 December 2025, it was:

Resolved to award £30 from the general fund.

### **I. FCA – Senior Citizens Christmas Lunch**

Mr M Marcus declared an interest in this item and left the room during discussion.

Following consideration of a request from the Firth Community Association for their Senior Citizens Christmas Lunch, it was:

Resolved to award £150 towards the lunches, subject to CCGS approval.

## **8. Publications**

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

- VAO - Training and Funding Update – October and November 2025.
- VAO – Newsletter – November and December 2025.
- ORSAS Newsletter – November 2025.

- Improvement Service - Free Training Sessions.

## **9. Any Other Competent Business**

### **A. Road Drains**

A members advised that the road drains needed to be cleared in Finstown, and in other areas across the two parishes, and it was:

Resolved that the Interim Clerk would report the need for road drains to be cleared via the business letter to Democratic Services.

### **B. Stoneyhill Road**

Members asked if there had been any update regarding the road surface on the Stoneyhill Road, following the tarring material/emulsion that had been applied earlier in the year, as the Roads Support Team had offered to look at it again, and it was:

Resolved to ask, via the business letter to Democratic Services, for an update on this item, as members felt that the surface was less than satisfactory.

### **C. Funding from Donations Box**

Mrs A Stevenson advised that she had emptied the donations tub that was currently in place at Baikies Stores, and that the money would be passed to the Interim Clerk to be deposited in Firth and Stenness Community Council's funds, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the donations tub had been emptied and that the funding of £99.82 would be deposited in the community council's funds.
2. To note the request that any funding for Firth Park be shown separately within the financial statements in future.
3. To note that an updated poster had been provided with a QR code, which would be displayed in the park in the new year.

## **10. Date of Future Meetings**

Resolved to note that the next two meetings of Firth and Stenness Community Council had been set for 29 January and 26 March 2026.

## **11. Conclusion of Meeting**

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 20:42.