

# **Minute of the Meeting of Birsay Community Council held in the Birsay Community Centre and via Teams on Thursday, 11 September 2025 at 19:30**

## **Present:**

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

## **In Attendance:**

- Councillor R King.
- Councillor D Tullock.
- Councillor O Tierney.
- Mrs H Keveren, West Mainland Link Officer/Clerk.

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## **1. Apologies**

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Mrs V Sinclair and Councillor J Stevenson.

## **2. Election of Office Bearers**

### **A. Appointment of Chair**

Following a secret ballot, it was:

Resolved that Mr R Delday was duly appointed as Chair of Birsay Community Council.

### **B. Appointment of Vice Chair**

Following a secret ballot, it was:

Resolved that Ms K Coghill was duly appointed as Vice Chair of Birsay Community Council.

### **C. Appointment of Planning Representative**

Following a secret ballot, it was:

Resolved that Mr E Harvey was duly appointed as Planning Representative of Birsay Community Council.

### **D. Appointment of Health and Care Representative**

Following a secret ballot, it was:

Resolved that Ms D Clouston was duly appointment as Health and Care Representative of Birsay Community Council.

## **3. Adoption of Minutes**

The minute of the meeting held on 22 May 2025 was approved, being proposed by Mr E Harvey and seconded by Ms D Clouston.

## **4. Matters Arising**

### **A. Friends of Dounby – Sustrans**

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. It advised that they planned 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 of Harray and Sandwick Community Council on Wednesday, 29 October. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence and await further information.

## **B. Speeding in Dounby**

Members had previously been advised that Police Scotland had responded to the concerns of the Community Council and could confirm that officers had been deployed on a few occasions at varying times, several drivers had been stopped, with corrective advice and fixed penalties given out. The traffic police had also been in attendance, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the report.

## **C. Birsay Whale Bone**

Councillor D Tullock advised that no updates were available at present however the Birsay Heritage Trust would be meeting very soon, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

## **D. Dounby School Play Park**

An update had been received from Harray and Sandwick Community Council on the progress with the Dounby School Play Park. 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, and it was:

Resolved to note the update.

## **E. Market Green Update**

Several updates had been received over the summer months; the completion date was now anticipated mid-October. The Community Council had been asked to arrange the official opening of the new facilities which would be organised once completion was finalised, and it was:

Resolved to note the update on the Market Green project.

## **F. Steering Group – Local Place Plan Birsay**

Members were advised that the Birsay Place Plan had been circulated to Elected members and the neighbouring parishes for the 28-day consultation which would end on 15 September. If there was no feedback at that stage it would then be lodged with the Council as the Birsay Place Plan.

It was also noted that at the recent meeting of the Steering Group, the future of the group had been discussed. Members spoke about this and felt it would be invaluable to continue with the Steering Group with the involvement of both Elected members and other members of the community when appropriate. Members also felt informal discussions could be held to prioritise the projects, and it was:

Resolved to note the content of the discussion.

## **G. Birsay Heritage Trust – Fisherman's Huts**

The Chairman updated members that he had contacted the Birsay Heritage Trust and between them they had come up with a plan to safely recover the turf on the Fisherman's Huts. A request had been made to Scottish and Southern Electricity Network for assistance with volunteers but, despite chasing up, no response had been received, and it was:

Resolved to request via the business letter to Democratic Services if Scottish and Southern Electricity Network would have availability to help Birsay with this project.

## **H. St Magnus Kirk - Gates**

Members were advised that the gates had been restored and rehung at St Magnus Kirk and the work completed, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the cost of the works (£599.24) had been funded from the Community Council Grant Scheme.
2. To note that an invoice was still to be submitted for the hinges which would also be paid from Community Council Grant Scheme once received.

## **I. Relocation of Listening Wall Bench**

The Chairman confirmed that the bench at the Listening Wall had been relocated to the Birsay Church Yard, as requested at the previous meeting. The Chair also, updated that the works required on the base of the benches at the Whale Bone had been carried out, and it was:

Resolved to note the content of the report.

## **J. Visibility Concerns**

Visibility concerns had been raised at the previous meeting and had been reported via business letter. The Roads Support Team Manager had advised that they had attended both sites and could not see any visibility concerns. They had asked for pinned locations on a map so that they could locate the areas raised, and it was:

Resolved to supply via business letter pinned locations to the Roads Support Team so that this could be further investigated.

## **K. Water Refill Station – Kitchener's, Marwick**

The Clerk had circulated ahead of the meeting an update on the feasibility of sighting a water refill station at the Kitchener's Memorial car park. Within the report was the benefits of reducing plastic usage, the suggested location of the water station, costings, funding and other things to consider. After lengthy discussion, members felt that the risk involved with an outdoor water dispenser were too high for the Community Council, and it was:

Resolved to not proceed as a Community Council with the installation of a water refill station but still express an interest with Scottish Water for one of their Top up Taps at the same location.

### **L. Marwick Brae – Extension to Pavement**

The request to consider extending the pavement from the Quilco houses in Dounby past the Marwick Brae housing had been raised via business letter, and the Roads Support Team Manager had subsequently advised that there was no available budget for additional footpaths at present. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note that this would be covered in the Sustrans presentation.

### **M. Passing Place – Wilderness, Hillside Road**

The condition of the road surface in the passing place at Wilderness had been raised via business letter, and the Roads Support Team Manager had subsequently advised that this item still required to be investigated therefore no update was available at present, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

## **5. Correspondence**

### **A. National Islands Plan – Orkney Meeting**

Invites had previously been circulated to members 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 that the event had now passed.

### **B. 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:

1. To donate £2,000 from the Wind Energy Fund to SCAA.
2. To note that a presentation had been arranged for Sunday, 14 September along with Harray and Sandwick Community Council.

### **C. 2025 SURF Awards**

Members considered correspondence which had previously been emailed, 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, and it was:

Resolved to note that the closing date for applications had now passed.

#### **D. Orkney Fund Board – Local Place Plans**

Correspondence had previously been circulated from The Orkney Fund, advising members that Expressions of Interest were being welcomed for funding opportunities for local Place Plans, and it was:

Resolved to note the closing date had now passed.

#### **E. 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 their community about the Radio Teleswitch Service switch off scheduled for 30 June 2025, and it was:

Resolved to note that this date had now passed.

#### **F. ICNZ Programme – Dounby Community Woodland Proposal**

Members considered correspondence which had previously been circulated from Heriot Watt University, relating to the Island Centre for Net Zero programme, which proposed to develop some woodland areas in and around Dounby. Birsay Community Council had been invited along to the Harray and Sandwick Community Council meeting where they had given a short presentation, and members who had been present gave a brief update on the proposal.

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

They plan to engage with the Community to create linked areas of woodland to increase biodiversity and have 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, discussion followed and it was:

Resolved:

1. Discuss this item at the Birsay Place Plan meeting.
2. To put a post on Facebook to see if anyone within the community could identify areas for trees.

#### **G. Orkney Islands Council – Annual Grants**

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

Resolved to note the contents of the above.

## **H. 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.

## **I. 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.

## **J. 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. Discussion followed, and it was:

Resolved to advise Councillor R King of any issues experienced by Telecare users.

## **K. Fencing at Quilco and Village Tidy up**

Correspondence had previously been circulated to members from a member of the parish suggesting that the fencing along the pavement at the Quilco housing needed replacing and also the weeds were returning after the recent village tidy up. It was suggested that they could be sprayed with pet friendly weed killer in future.

Discussion followed, and it was:

Resolved to request via the business letter to Democratic Services that the fence either be tightened or replaced, and the weeds be sprayed ahead of the village tidy-up next year.

## **L. Birsay Community Council – Balance Sheet**

Copies of the Birsay 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.

## **M. Thank You Letters**

Members were advised that letters of thanks had been received from Dounby Senior Citizens, Birsay, Harray and Sandwick Church, Dounby Community School P7's Hoy trip, Dounby Athletic Club and Dounby Rainbows for financial assistance provided, and it was:

Resolved to note the above.

## **N. Electrical Safety Fund**

Correspondence had been circulated ahead of the meeting to members advising them that the Electrical Safety Fund is now open for applications. The grant was aimed at supporting projects dedicated to keeping vulnerable people in the community safe from electrical hazards, and it was:

Resolved to note the deadline for applications was 12 October 2025.

## **O. RSPB Orkney – Presentation at Meeting**

Following consideration of correspondence previously circulated to members enquiring if they would like a presentation from the Orkney branch of RSPB to advise them on the work which they had been carrying out at Marwick Head, Loons and Loch of Banks and Birsay Moors reserves over the last year, it was:

Resolved to invite RSPB Orkney along to the meeting on Thursday, 20 November 2025.

# **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. 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.

## **C. 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 Birsay parish to be removed was the one at Twatt. No concerns had been raised about its removal, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided and the discussion.

## **D. Orkney Islands Council – 20mph Speed Limit**

Correspondence had previously been circulated to members from Orkney Islands Council asking for feedback on the proposed 20mph speed limit to be introduced on various roads around Orkney. A few members had submitted comments which had



been passed on to the Council. Responses included that the centre of Dounby where there were higher volumes of walkers should be 20mph, however the outer areas should remain at 30mph. Birsay members present at the Harray and Sandwick Community Council meeting on 27 August joined in a joint discussion where they felt that 'Smiley Faces' would be a much better traffic controlling measure. Discussion followed, and it was:

Resolved to query via the business letter when funding would be available for Dounby to get five Smiley Faces.

### **E. Orkney Islands Council – 'Our Orkney, Our Future'**

Members considered correspondence which had previously been received and circulated to members from Orkney Islands Council, who were looking 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, and it was:

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

### **F. 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 information provided and that the survey had been shared on the Birsay Community Council Facebook page.

### **G. Transport Scotland Community – Drop-in Sessions**

Following consideration of correspondence circulated from Transport Scotland advising members of drop-in sessions being held in Orkney advising communities about the next Northern Isles Ferry Services contract development work, it was:

Resolved to note that the drop-in session was scheduled for 12 September.

## **7. 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 £9,988.22 as at 26 August 2025.

### **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 £22,849.09 as at 26 August 2025.

## **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 £1,680.60 and the balance in the additional capping limit was £780 as at 26 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 £9,831.09 as at 26 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 £500 from the General Fund.

### **B. Dounby Rainbows – Trip to Caithness**

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

Resolved to note that members had agreed to award the total sum of £45.04 from the General Fund.

## **9. Publications**

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

- VAO – Newsletter – June, July and August 2025.
- VAO - Training and Funding Update – June and July 2025.
- Free Family Fun Day – June 2025.
- Orkney Islands Council – Childminding Training – June 2025.

## **10. Any Other Competent Business**

### **A. Remembrance Day Wreaths**

Members agreed to purchase a Remembrance Wreath once again for the Birsay War Memorial, and it was:

Resolved to purchase a wreath and that payment would be taken from the Community Council Grant Scheme, subject to approval.

## **B. Dounby Village 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 both community councils and the public, resulting in the village looking much tidier. It was suggested to make this an annual event, and it was:

Resolved to note the discussion.

## **C. Birsay War Memorial – Chains and Posts**

The Chairman advised members that he had been contacted regarding the Commonwealth War Memorial in the Birsay Kirkyard. The chains and posts around the memorial required maintenance. Discussion followed, and it was:

Resolved to request, via the business letter, guidance in relation to suitable funding for carrying out the works.

## **D. St Magnus Kirkyard – Rabbits**

Councillor D Tullock brought to the members attention an issue with excessive numbers of rabbits and burrows in the St Magnus Kirkyard. Discussion followed, and it was:

Resolved to note that Mr E Harvey would enquire about the possibility of ferreting to tackle the issue.

## **E. Yesnaby Road Junction**

Ms D Clouston raised her concerns about the corner at the bottom of the Voy Brae which meets with the Yesnaby junction, advising that, on a couple of occasions, cars had failed to stop at the junction and she felt that the road markings would benefit from being re-painted to emphasise the junction. Discussion followed, and it was:

Resolved to request via business letter for the road markings to be re-painted at the bottom of the Voy Brae.

## **F. Teams Access**

Members questioned why the Clerk did not have access to allow members to remotely join via Teams. Discussion followed, and it was:

Resolved to query via the business letter if access could be given to the Clerk to allow access to others joining a Teams meeting.

## **11. Dates of Future Meetings**

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

Resolved that the next meetings of Birsay Community Council would be held on Thursdays 20 November 2025 and 19 February 2026 at 19:30 in Birsay Community Centre and via Teams.

## **12. Conclusion of Meeting**

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 21:15.