

Minute of the Meeting of North Ronaldsay Community Council held in North Ronaldsay Community Centre and via Teams on Monday, 18 August 2025 at 19:30

Present:

Mr P Donnelly, Mr I Deyell, Ms A Duncan (via Teams), Ms L Paterson and Mrs H Scott.

In Attendance:

- Councillor H Woodbridge (via Teams).
- Ms L Richardson, Head of Infrastructure Services (via Teams).
- Mrs J Montgomery, Empowering Communities Liaison Officer (via Teams).
- Mrs A Byers, Arch Henderson Consultants (via Teams).
- Mrs N Bremner, Arch Henderson Consultants (via Teams).
- Ms H Galland, Clerk.

- 3 members of the public.

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1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Mr C Kerslake and Mr I Scott, and Councillor S Clackson.

2. Election of Transport Representative

Members were asked if anyone would stand for the vacant position of Transport Representative, and it was:

Resolved:

A. That Mrs H Scott and Ms L Paterson would share the role to ease management of their other commitments.

B. That Ms A Duncan would virtually attend the next Transport Forum, being held the following day on Tuesday, 19 August, on behalf of the community council.

3. Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of North Ronaldsay Community Council held on Monday, 6 June 2025 were adopted, being proposed by Mrs H Scott and seconded by Mr I Deyell.

4. Matters Arising

A. Phase 2 – Ferry Replacement Programme and Orkney Harbours Masterplan

Representatives of Arch Henderson Consultants were in attendance at the meeting to discuss projects they were working on. Members heard that phase two of both the Ferry Replacement Programme and the Orkney Harbours Masterplan was underway and would be completed by September 2026. They advised that naval architects had yet to visit North Ronaldsay and were due to come during the winter timetable to witness the issues that the pier here endures, as well as analyse port data and make a harbour infrastructure assessment. Once things like vessel options, costs and infrastructure requirements were known then consultation would take place with the community – so as not to be working from a blank canvas but with the options that were possible and available

It was agreed the last on island meeting had not been as well prepared for, for various reasons, and it was advised that the Transport Manager would like to set up a meeting with the Community Council sometime in November, and most definitely before the new year, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the information provided

2. That the Transport Manager would be asked to look at available dates for a meeting with the community council and would relay these to the Clerk so an agreed date could be arranged.

3. To request that the public consultation meeting should be a face to face and not a not digital meeting to allow as many residents as possible to engage.
4. That the Clerk would be sent any information regarding the consultation to post locally and put on island social media pages.
5. To keep the item on the CC agenda so that updates could be provided.

B. Payment of April Launch

Following correspondence from Orkney Islands Council advising that the recent “extenuating circumstances” launch would not be honoured financially, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that Councillor H Woodbridge had confirmed that this had now been resolved and the costs covered.
2. That the issue of “extenuating circumstances” needed to be specifically added to the terms of use of the launch, so that, given a quorum agreement of members the launch can be used out with the weather permitted reasons already stated.

C. Cost of Skip Emptying

The Clerk stated the recent accounts from Orkney Aggregates highlighted that the cost to empty the new skips was more than the value of the scrap metal. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note that the value of scrap metal fluctuates and the Clerk would observe this over a period of months to see if the matter balances over time.

D. Island Burials

The Head of Infrastructure Services provided information in response to the members letter regarding training of burial staff and access to equipment, advising that two of the applicants had commenced training and were at different stages of burial, excavation and shoring training. She advised that the “old way” of doing things was not appropriate to relate to as Health and Safety measures and requirements had changed over time. It was reported that shoring equipment would cost £3,000 and that the community council could apply to purchase some for island use if they wished to. There was also heavy plywood shoring (made during Covid) which was readily available. It was further advised that if mainland contractors could not get to North Ronaldsay, the community council would have to contact the funeral director directly to book the private contractors on Papa Westray should they wish to employ them. The Head of Infrastructure Services suggested that a mechanical digger should be used, and any machine could be used as long as it was fit for purpose. She also suggested that the community might wish to consider having a Chapel of Rest facility on the island. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the information provided.

2. That members would like to have the plywood shoring for use on the island and that the Clerk would contact the Burial Grounds Officer requesting to have it..

3. To note the recommendation to consider making a Chapel of Rest facility available on island, but that this was not considered the priority by members, if burials could be more timeous when needed.

E. Grass Cutting Tender

Democratic Services had previously advised that an alternative tender had been approved for the Kirkyard Grass Cutting without community council consultation, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the information and that members agreed that this was reasonable.

2. To note that members agree to the use of an extra £550 CCGS to supplement the costs of the contractor, if required.

F. Removal of BT Phone Boxes

Members were advised that BT had contacted various community councils stating their intention to remove old red phone boxes, including the one at the Memorial Hall, and it was:

Resolved the members had no alternative use for it and were happy for this to be removed.

5. Correspondence

A. Windracers - Thank You

Correspondence had been received and previously circulated to members from Windracers, thanking the community council for their assistance in setting up a public consultation, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

B. Orkney Digital Voice Event

Correspondence had been received regarding an event to educate around the removal of landlines and its implications to the public, and this had been shared to residents via social media, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

C. Annual Grants 2025/2026

Correspondence had been received from Democratic Services and circulated to members, advising of the annual grant amounts provided to Orkney Community Councils for financial year 2025/2026, and it was:

Resolved to note that North Ronaldsay Community Council had received an annual grant of £3,775.42.

D. Briefing Note - Use of Airfields

Correspondence had been received regarding the Civil Aviation Authorities instructions for appropriate use of airfields, in relation to the SATE project, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

E. Electrical Safety First

Members had previously been forwarded information regarding funding available for safe use of electricals projects, which had a deadline of 7 July, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence and that the deadline had passed.

F. Ferry Replacement Programme Meeting

OIC's response to NRCC's letter regarding a Ferry Replacement Programme public meeting had been received and circulated to members previously, and it was:

Resolved to note the members had discussed this at the beginning of this meeting.

G. Ad Hoc and Charter Flights

Correspondence had been received from OIC in relation to the booking and conditions of use for Ad Hoc and Charter flights and launches, in response to an appeal from NRCC, and it was:

Resolved to note the members had discussed this in Matters Arising.

H. Awareness of Free Under 22's Travel Cards

Correspondence regarding Under 22's travel cards had been received and shared through resident's social media sites and posters, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

I. Roads Support Visit

Correspondence had been received in relation to an island visit by members of the Roads Support team, asking if any members wished to accompany them on their visit, and it was:

Resolved

1. To note that members had not responded to the request.
2. That members were not aware of anyone from OIC visiting the island during the time indicated.

J. Skip Purchase

Correspondence had been received in relation to an enquiry on which funds could be used to fund the purchase of the skips, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the Community Development Fund could have been used to pay for such items.
2. To note that retrospective applications were not allowed.
3. That the information was useful to know for future community-based purchases.

K. Draft Timetables – Air and Ferry Services – Winter 2026/2027

Draft timetables had been received and circulated to members for consideration, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

6. Consultation Documents

A. Ayre Offshore Turbines Consultation

Members had previously been sent information on pre-consultation meetings in person and online during August 2025 in relation to the Ayre Offshore Windfarm, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

B. Scottish Islands Federation - National Islands Plan

Members had been sent correspondence in relation to the final consultation on 24 June, and it was:

Resolved to note that the deadline had now passed.

7. Financial Statements

A. General Finance

Following consideration of the general fund statement as at 1 August 2025, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £20,768.46.

B. Turbine Fund

Members considered the Turbine statement as at 1 August 2025 copies of which had been previously circulated, and it was:

Resolved to note the estimated balance was £23,856.80.

C. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the Community Council Grant Scheme statement as at 1 August 2025, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the total approved figure was -£527.71.

D. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund statement as at 1 August 2025, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the total available for allocation was £8,768.00.

8. Financial Request - North Ronaldsay School - Residential Trip

Members discussed an application for financial support to allow children to attend a residential for older children to get used to secondary school on mainland. Following consideration, it was:

Resolved

A. To approve a maximum of £175 per child to be allocated in the next financial year.

B. That a CCGS be set up for this project in the 2026/2027 financial year for a total of 3 x £175.

C. That the Clerk would contact the school, indicating approval and that funds would be made available in the next financial year.

9. Reports from Representatives

A. Transport Representative

Discussion on transport issues had taken place during the conversation to elect a new representative. It had been noted that Transport forums could be attended remotely, should the representative have difficulty in attending in-person. It was suggested that there was an ongoing issue in that the island feels it is not being listened to at forum meetings and bigger islands are always able to veto any of North Ronaldsay's requests. Councillor H Woodbridge offered to provide assistance and guidance to new Transport Representatives, so that they could feel confident going into Transport Forum meetings.

It was agreed that it was hoped the introduction of a third aircraft would resolve many of the availability issues. It was reported that the Loganair online booking service was not working, leaving residents unable to book seats for planes that arrive/depart with empty seats.

It was agreed that residents should be asked what their wish list would be for the ideal timetable offered when the third aircraft comes into operation, as all islands would be competing to get better capacity. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the discussion.
2. That the Clerk would place these issues on the next agenda so a concise wish list for the third aircraft timetable could be drawn up to take forward.

B. Planning Representative

Resolved to note that there were no updates.

C. North Ronaldsay Development Trust Representative

Resolved to note that the Sheep Festival had been a success and a total of 120 paces of dyke had been addressed during the event.

D. Health and Care Representative

Resolved to note that there was nothing to report.

E. Yarn Company Representative

Resolved to note that there was nothing to report.

10. Publications

The following publications had been received and made available, and were noted:

- Letter from School Place June July 2025.
- VAO Training and Funding Update June July 2025.
- VAO Newsletter June July 2025.
- Loganair Statistics.
- SEPA Update July 2025.
- Orkney Ferries Statistics.
- Childminding Support June 2025.

11. Any Other Competent Business

A. Ad Hoc Flights

A point was raised that the annual allocation for North Ronaldsay had been reduced to allow an allocation to be provided for the use of Eday. It was suggested that the North Ronaldsay allocation had not been used during covid, and this had been used as evidence of reduced need. It was recommended that the island should endeavour to use all of its allocation in future, and request use of Papa Westray's, to evidence the increased demand. It was agreed that that the reduction directly affected islanders by preventing population growth and increasing island isolation, and members felt that the island had not been appropriately consulted when the decision to reduce flights for the benefit of another island was made. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that this issue be added for discussion when considering the wish list for the impending third aircraft timetable.

B. Community Council Membership

The Clerk advised that Mr C Kerslake had sent in a letter of resignation with immediate effect, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the resignation.
2. That the Clerk would request that Democratic Services make the necessary arrangements to advertise for more members and hold a public meeting to elect to the vacancy in order to prevent meetings not being quorate in near future.

C. Resilience Meeting

Members asked what updates were available on this issue, given its high priority for islanders, and given a number of circumstances that had tested the islands resilience in recent months, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the Clerk had not received any further correspondence on the issue since April 2025.
2. That the Clerk would contact relevant officers, via Democratic Services, to state the importance of this issue and to seek an immediate resolution with the organisation of a resilience meeting on island as previously agreed.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Following consideration of future meeting dates, it was:

Resolved that the next meeting of North Ronaldsay Community Council would be held on Monday, 6 October 2025 at 19:30.

13. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 21:25.