

# **Minute of the Meeting of Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council held in Rousay Community School and via Teams on Wednesday, 22 April 2026 at 19:30**

## **Present:**

Mr A Firth, Mrs Z Flaws, Miss A Mainland, Mrs C Maguire, Mrs C Mainland and Mr R Tipper.

## **In Attendance:**

- Mrs J Montgomery, Empowering Communities Liaison Officer (via Teams).
- Councillor S Clackson.
- Councillor M Thomson (via Teams).
- Councillor H Woodbridge (via Teams).
- Ms C Kriisa, Clerk.

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## **1. Apologies**

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Mrs D Compton.

## **2. Adoption of Minute**

The minute of the meeting of Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council held on Wednesday, 2 February 2026 was adopted, being proposed by Mr A Firth and seconded by Mrs Z Flaws.

## **3. Matters Arising**

### **A. Memorial at Rousay Kirkyard**

A brief update was received from Mrs Z Flaws, who confirmed that the groundworks would be carried out once weather conditions improved, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

### **B. Laybys**

Councillor M Thomson confirmed that Roads Support were expected to carry out a visit this summer, most likely in June or July. Members would be notified in advance so that a representative from the Community Council could attend. Following the update, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided and keep the item on the agenda.

### **C. Parking at Rousay School**

Members discussed parking at Rousay School, noting that while parking has improved during community events and functions, difficulties still arose during school hours, particularly at pick-up and drop-off times.

It was confirmed that the matter did not fall within the remit of the Roads department. Members therefore noted that further discussion with Education would be required to consider whether any of the suggested locations for additional parking would merit further investigation.

It was further noted that funding for any future works remained an issue, as did the potential relocation of the community turbine controls. Further discussion with Education would also be required to determine whether Rousay School or Rousay Community Association would be best placed to progress the matter, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

### **D. Pedestrians at Piers and Piers Update**

A brief update was received regarding the parking bay layout at Rousay Pier. It was confirmed that the lines had been repainted last year, with no changes made to the existing layout. It was noted that it was now too late to amend the lining at this stage, although the community council's request would be kept on record.

Members remained concerned that the bays reserved for ferry traffic were too similar in appearance to standard parking spaces, which may cause confusion for users. Concern was also raised that the longer bays for larger vehicles were not suitably positioned in relation to the slipway, making it difficult for vehicles to enter the spaces and align correctly with the ferry ramp when boarding. After discussion, it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda and continue to monitor the situation.

### **E. Parking at Brinian Kirkyard**

A brief discussion was held, during which it was noted that no further action could be determined until the Roads Support team visit in early summer 2026. Members recognised that parking had caused difficulties during recent well-attended funerals, and it was:

Resolved to note the discussion and keep the item on the agenda.

### **F. Orkney Ferries Booking System**

The Transport Representative provided an update on amendments and cancellations, advising that amendments could not currently be made online and that passengers must contact Orkney Ferries by phone or email in such instances. It was noted that cancellations could still be made online.

Councillor M Thomson offered support in passing on any information regarding issues with the online system, and it was:

Resolved to note the discussion and keep the item on the agenda.

### **G. Rousay Road Conditions**

Members were advised that the next annual inspection was due to take place in Summer 2026, and inspectors would notify the Community Council Liaison team in advance of the visit allowing a representative from the community council to meet with the inspectors to discuss any issues. The public were additionally encouraged to report any road issues through Customer Services or their MyOrkney account, and it was:

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

### **H. Grass Cutting Tender**

Members discussed the possibility of introducing wildflowers to kirkyards, with reference made to a briefing note which set out budget information for each kirkyard, including costs and projected. The briefing note included a number of options, including reduced cutting arrangements for inactive kirkyards. It was noted that Orkney Islands Council would fund up to eight cuts for active kirkyards, although Rousay currently carried out six cuts, with two cuts undertaken for kirkyards no longer in use.

Members additionally considered whether any quotes previously received could be accepted, with others requiring to be retendered. Discussion took place regarding whether there is an upper limit on the amount Orkney Islands Council would be

willing to pay. It was noted that this required clarification before the matter could be finalised, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk will request that outstanding tenders are advertised in The Orcadian.

### **I. Egilsay Kirkyard**

It was confirmed that Historic Environment Scotland had been made aware of the debris surrounding St Magnus Kirk, and that burial plot records had been passed to the Burial Grounds Officer. Following the update, it was:

Resolved to note the update and remove the item from the agenda.

### **J. Late Night Ferries and Bus Connectivity**

The Transport Representative provided an update on the previously proposed dates for late night ferry sailings in 2026. Sailings were due to be confirmed and would take place on the second Saturday of the month from May until September, inclusive.

Members were advised that Stagecoach were aware of the proposed sailing dates, with the 7E bus scheduled to make a detour to Tingwall Pier to allow passengers to connect safely with the ferry.

It was further noted that two private hires had also been booked, one for Orkney Folk Festival and one for the annual trip to Eynhallow organised by Orkney Heritage Society. Following the update, it was:

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

### **K. Bin Emptying**

A brief update was provided, confirming that the bins at Saviskaill and the Boardwalk were being emptied and that no further issues had been noted, and it was:

Resolved to note the update and remove the item from the agenda.

### **L. Grass Verges – Safety Cuts and Ditches**

It was noted that the overhanging vegetation on the Surgery Road had now been cut back. Members raised concerns regarding the lack of verge and safety cuts, noting that Shapinsay was the only North Isle currently included on the safety cut list.

Concern was also expressed that increasing visitor numbers may add to safety risks, particularly where visitors are unfamiliar with local road conditions, including ditches, water channels and other hazards which may be encountered when stepping onto verges to allow vehicles to pass. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would compile a list of safety cut locations to be considered by the Roads department.

## **M. Gates at Brinian Kirkyard**

Mrs Z Flaws updated members that the bolthole on the gates should be able to be realigned and that arrangements would be made for the repair to be carried out, and it was:

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

## **N. Wyre School**

Members were advised that this matter was due to be discussed by Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre Development Trust, and an update would be received in due course. Members were also advised that Wyre residents are continuing to provide feedback to the Development Trust, and it was:

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

## **O. Draft Winter Ferry Timetables**

It was agreed that feedback would be required from Orkney Ferries to determine whether any changes to lunchtime sailings would be operationally feasible. Mrs Z Flaws also raised the need to consider the existing 13:15 booking-only sailing, including how any changes could affect lunch arrangements and whether the ferry would be required to travel via Egilsay and Wyre or remain as an on-request sailing.

Members discussed potential benefits of the proposed change, including improved access for Egilsay residents attending appointments, reduced time off-island, and potential savings where small trade jobs would not be burdened by full-day rates. It was also noted that changes could help stagger tourist vehicles, although bus connections would need to be adjusted to align with any revised sailing times. Following discussion it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Chair and Vice Chair would speak informally with the crew regarding the proposal.
2. That the Vice Chair would mock up a draft timetable, if required, as an example.

## **P. Royal Mail**

It was reported that new post boxes had been installed in Wester and Hillside Road, with all six on Rousay now being in use. It was also noted that the collection plates on some boxes were not legible, and replacements had been ordered. Following the update, it was:

Resolved to note the information and to remove the item from the agenda.

## **Q. 20mph Zones – Impact on Ferry Timetables**

Members received an update on the potential impact of 20mph zones on bus and ferry timetables. It was advised that the speed limits were expected to have minimal impact on journey times, with other factors such as weather, roadworks, ferry timings and traffic volumes more likely to cause delays. Stagecoach timing checks on the

Route No. 6 Tingwall bus confirmed that the service was generally running to time, with only minor delays reported on the morning service.

It was additionally confirmed that there was no operational intention to amend bus or ferry timetables as a result of the 20mph zones. Any proposed ferry timetable amendments should be submitted via the Transport Representative ahead of the next ferry forum in August 2026. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the report and remove the item from the agenda.

## **4. Correspondence**

### **A. Orkney Islands Council - Prepaid Paper Tickets and Bookings**

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council, providing a general update from Orkney Ferries regarding paper tickets and booking arrangements.

It was advised that paper tickets issued under the previous booking system were valid for 12 months from the date of purchase. As the last paper tickets were sold on 31 December 2024, these had now expired and would no longer be accepted as payment on board vessels.

Members were also advised that payment was now required at the time of booking. This was to help ensure that limited deck space is reserved only by those intending to travel. Cancellations could still be made up to one hour before sailing, and passengers may continue to travel on a “show and go” basis where space was available, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

### **B. Orkney Islands Council - Planned and Reactive Roads Maintenance Activities**

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council, advising that a ‘Meet the Buyer’ event would be held at the Orkney Auction Mart on 9 March 2026, where internal officers from Infrastructure and Procurement services would be present. The event intended to encourage those interested in doing business with the Council for the supply of services to assist with planned and reactive road maintenance for 2026-2027, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

### **C. Orkney Islands Council - Orkney Marine Planning Stakeholder Update**

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council advising that the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan had been formally adopted by the Scottish Government in February 2026. It was noted that the plan established a new statutory framework for managing marine activities up to 12 nautical miles from the coast. Following the update, it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

#### **D. Orkney Islands Council - Isles Part-time 20mph Update**

Members considered a briefing note from Roads Support regarding part-time 20mph speed limits at island schools. It was noted that issues had arisen with the supply and installation of the variable signs and associated equipment. Defective signage had now been removed, where applicable, and would be replaced with permanent speed limit signs, with a temporary traffic regulation order currently in place.

Members raised concerns regarding the additional costs involved, and the limitations of flashing signs where school-related activity takes place out with normal school hours. Following the update, it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

#### **E. Orkney Islands Council - New Isles Special Collection Rota**

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council detailing the upcoming Isles Special Collection dates up until 30 September 2026. The Clerk confirmed that details had been submitted for inclusion in the Rousay Review and following the update, it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

#### **F. Scottish Government Marine Directorate - Scottish Ministers' Decision on Fall of Warness Consent Variation**

Members considered correspondence from the Scottish Government Marine Directorate, confirming that consent has been granted by Scottish Ministers to vary the section 36 consent to construct and operate the EMEC Fall of Warness tidal test site. The application was to increase the duration of the consent from 10 to 12 years and would now expire on 22 March 2028, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

#### **G. Egilsay Community Association - Island Contingency Planning**

Members considered correspondence from Egilsay Community Association regarding winter contingency planning, following issues experienced during the snow in January 2026.

Concerns were raised regarding empty grit bins, limited grit bin coverage, and the ability to respond to emergencies if roads become inaccessible. It was also noted that particular difficulties had been experienced near the pier, and that vehicles had become stuck due to repeated freezing and thawing.

Members discussed whether an Egilsay resident could be added to the winter treatment contractors list, if required, and whether suitable snow-clearing equipment could be kept on the island. Applications were currently closed but may still be considered based on the island's needs. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would respond to Egilsay Community Association, directing them to the winter treatment contracts application process and online reporting portal.
2. That the matter be raised with the relevant Roads Support officer via the business letter.

## **5. Consultations**

### **A. Orkney Islands Council - Winter Service Policy 2026 – 2031**

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council, copies of which had previously been circulated, regarding the five-year Winter Service Policy, with comments invited by 9 April 2026.

Members discussed whether road treatment priorities on Rousay should be reviewed, noting that non-priority roads may need to be travelled in order to reach priority routes. It was suggested that the ring road should be treated as Priority 1, with remaining roads treated as Priority 2. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would submit a request outlining the Community Council's preferred road priorities, and reasons for the request.
2. To note the correspondence.

### **B. Scottish Islands Federation - Upcoming Events and Consultations**

Correspondence was considered from the Scottish Islands Federation regarding upcoming events and consultations, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

### **C. Orkney Islands Council - Verge Maintenance Plan 2026 Update**

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding the Verge Maintenance Plan 2025–2030, copies of which had previously been circulated. It was noted that, under the approved plan, a single cut of all verges would continue to be carried out in September/October.

Members discussed the need for an additional verge cut in June, particularly given the number of walkers and visitors using the roads. Concerns were raised that the narrow roads on Rousay mean pedestrians are often unable to step safely onto verges, and that the island's circumstances are not directly comparable with mainland verge maintenance arrangements. It was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would ask for an additional cut to be carried out in June.
2. To note the correspondence.

## **D. SEPA – Flood Risk Management Plans**

Members considered correspondence from Scottish Environment and Protection Agency regarding Flood Risk Management Plans, with comments to be submitted no later than 22 April 2026, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

## **6. Financial Statements**

### **A. General Fund**

Following consideration of the general fund statement for Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council as at 8 April 2026, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £32,275.66.

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

Following consideration of the CCGS statement for Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council as at 8 April 2026, it was:

Resolved to note that the main capping limit was fully allocated, and that the balances remaining in the additional and island capping limits were £540 and £755 respectively.

### **C. Community Development Fund**

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund statement for Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council as at 8 April 2026, it was:

Resolved to note that there was £6,677.80 remaining available to allocate to projects.

### **D. Seed Corn Fund**

Following consideration of the Seed Corn Fund statement for Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council as at 8 April 2026, it was:

Resolved to note that there was £7,535 remaining available to allocate to projects.

## **7. Financial Request - Egilsay Summer Events**

A financial request from Egilsay Community Association was considered. The request was for late night ferry travel between Rousay and Egilsay to allow for a summer community event. Following consideration, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would request an additional quote be provided from another hire company in advance of a decision.

## **8. Reports from Representatives**

### **A. Planning**

The Planning Representative provided a brief update, advising that no new planning applications had been lodged with Orkney Islands Council, and that three applications were currently awaiting decisions, and it was:

Resolved to note the update.

### **B. Transport**

The Transport Representative confirmed that all new updates had been discussed in previous agenda items, and it was:

Resolved to note the update.

### **C. Health and Care**

The Health and Care Representative advised members that an interview for an Advanced Nurse Practitioner post had been due to take place in March, however the applicant withdrew their application at short notice. It is not currently known when any further applications will be considered. Following the update, it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

## **9. Publications**

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

- VAO Training and Funding Update - February 2026, March 2026.
- VAO Newsletter - February 2026, March 2026.
- Orkney Ferries Statistics - January 2026, February 2026, March 2026.
- Letter from School Place - February 2026, March 2026.
- ORSAS Quarterly Newsletter - February 2026.
- Community Payback Unpaid Work Scheme - March 2026.

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

### **A. Curtains at the School**

It was confirmed that the new curtains at Rousay School had been installed, and a letter of thanks had been received by the Community Council, and it was:

Resolved to note the update.

### **B. Subsidence at Brinian Kirkyard**

Members discussed sinkage at Brinian Graveyard and queried whether the affected area could be topped up with earth. Concerns were also raised regarding weeds growing on the path. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That Mrs Z Flaws would arrange for weeds to be removed.
2. That the Clerk should inform the Burial Grounds Officer of the subsidence, via the business letter.

### **C. Wednesday Public Bus Service**

A query was raised by members regarding public bus arrangements on Wednesdays, where the MV Eynhallow leaves late due to refuelling. It was confirmed that the bus did not alter its schedule on this day, and it was:

Resolved to note the information.

### **D. Airlifting from Rousay Surgery**

Members discussed access to the grassed area at Rousay Surgery, following a recent emergency airlift. Concerns were raised that there was currently no suitable path or access route for a stretcher, and that wet ground conditions had caused difficulties during the incident.

Members considered whether steps, a path, or a shallower slope could improve access, while noting that any works would need to take account of requirements relating to emergency airlifts. It was also noted that the grass in the area was not currently being cut. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that photographs would be taken of the site, and the matter reviewed further by the Community Council.

### **E. Rousay Playpark**

Members discussed the condition of the playpark and noted that the area becomes waterlogged during periods of rain, with drainage issues evident. It was also noted that the playpark can be difficult to use when the ground is muddy, and it was:

Resolved to note the information.

### **F. Community Council Meetings – Change of Preferred Day**

Members reviewed the day on which future meetings should be held and agreed that Tuesday would be the most suitable option. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that future meetings would be held on Tuesdays, rather than Wednesdays.

## **11. Date of Next Meeting**

Following consideration of a date for the next meeting, it was:

Resolved that the next meeting of Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council would be held in Rousay Community School on Tuesday, 23 June 2026 at 19:30.

## **12. Conclusion of Meeting**

There being no further business to discuss, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 21:00.