

Minute of the Meeting of Holm Community Council held in the Graeme Room, Holm Community Centre, Holm, on Wednesday, 2 April 2025 at 19:30

Present:

Alan Scott, Martin Lee, Erland Drever, Christine Muir, Bill Robertson and Robbie Thomson.

In Attendance:

- Councillor James R Moar.
- Councillor Raymie S Peace.
- Councillor Gillian Skuse.
- Tom Hadley, Community Engagement Manager, Orkney Native Wildlife Project (for Item 2).
- Hazel Flett, Clerk.

Chair:

- Alan Scott in the Chair.

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1. Apologies

Resolved to note that no apologies for absence had been received.

2. Orkney Native Wildlife Project

After hearing a presentation from Tom Hadley, Community Engagement Manager, providing an update on the work of the Orkney Native Wildlife Project, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the presentation.

Councillor James Moar joined the meeting during discussion of this item.

Tom Hadley, Community Engagement Manager, Orkney Native Wildlife Project, left the meeting at this point.

3. Adoption of Minute

The draft Minute of the Meeting held on 29 January 2025 was approved, being proposed by Bill Robertson and seconded by Martin Lee.

4. Matters Arising

A. Local Place Plan

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council advising of flexibility in submitting Local Place Plans to inform the next Local Development Plan, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to defer consideration to the next meeting on whether or not to proceed with a Local Place Plan, when an update from the public engagement session at the car boot sale would be known.

B. St Mary's Christmas Decorations

M Lee circulated plans for eight new festive lights, on columns with existing sockets, noting that wraps would need to be removed or relocated, and it was:

Resolved that M Lee should cost up the proposal to provide eight new festive lights for consideration at the next meeting.

C. Kirkyard Maintenance

Following consideration of tenders received in respect of kirkyard maintenance for 2025, 2026 and 2027, it was:

Resolved:

1. To award the tender to Chris Shearer.
2. That the Clerk should send the relevant paperwork to Chris Shearer.

D. Request for Financial Assistance – St Andrews Primary School

The Clerk had received correspondence from St Andrews Primary School advising that one more P7 pupil would be participating in the Outdoor Activities Trip to Lagganlia in May, and it was:

Resolved that an additional donation of £40 be provided.

5. Correspondence

A. St Mary's Sea Wall

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding a proposal to extend the existing sea wall in St Mary's to remove the gap opposite the entrance to Station Square, together with correspondence from M Lee in response to the proposals, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should write to Orkney Islands Council outlining the Community Council's concerns and suggesting that the works be put on hold until a wider scheme for the area had been considered, potentially as part of the Local Place Plan.

B. Community Conversation – Community Benefits from Renewable Energy Developments

Following consideration of correspondence from Scottish Community Development Centre advising of an online community conversation held on 26 March 2025 regarding the Scottish Government's consultation on Community Benefit Good Practice Guidance, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence, although M Lee suggested that the event had been postponed until 6 April 2025.

C. Visitor Levy

Following consideration of open correspondence from K Johnson distributed to all community councils and councillors throughout the Western Isles area, and all islands of Scotland, regarding Highland Council's consultation on the proposed visitor levy, encouraging support for an immediate pause in the Visitor Levy rollout until the full impact on island communities could be properly understood and addressed, as well as signing an open letter from Tim Eagle MSP to Kate Forbes MSP opposing the visitor levy, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk should write to Kate Forbes MSP advising that Holm Community Council would be supporting the open letter from Tim Eagle MSP.
2. That the Clerk should write to Orkney Islands Council advising of the decision to support opposition to the visitor levy by supporting the open letter from Tim Eagle MSP.

D. Our Budget Challenge – Survey Results

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council setting out the results of the budget challenge survey launched at the end of 2024, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

E. Holm Play Park

Following consideration of correspondence from L Thomson regarding the Holm play park, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that, as the play park was owned by Holm Community Association, the Clerk should forward the correspondence to the Association, advising that any refurbishment could be included in the proposed Local Place Plan, which might assist with any funding applications.

F. Road Works Update

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council providing an update of road works, including in the Holm area, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the surfacing works near Graemeshall were complete and were considered to be a huge improvement.

G. Improving the Cancer Journey Service

Following consideration of correspondence from NHS Orkney introducing the Improving the Cancer Journey service, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

H. New Surface Water Flood Maps

Following consideration of correspondence from SEPA advising of the publication of new surface water flood maps, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

6. Financial Statements

A. General Finance

After consideration of the General Finance statement as at 20 March 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the estimated balance as at 20 March 2025 of £12,302.50.

B. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the 2024/2025 Community Council Grant Scheme statement as at 20 March 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that, as at 20 March 2025, projects to the value of £6,034.04 had been approved, of which £1,319.24 had been claimed.
2. To note the balance remaining for approval within the main capping limit of £156.32.
3. To note the balance remaining for approval within the additional capping limit of £765.
4. That R Thomson should provide an estimate of works required to the remaining gates in the older section of the kirkyard at St Nicholas Kirk.

C. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund Statement as at 20 March 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the balance remaining for approval of £2,000.

D. Seedcorn Fund

Following consideration of the Seedcorn Fund Statement as at 20 March 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the balance remaining for approval of £3,093.33.

7. Financial Requests

A. E Thomson – Athletics Competition

Following consideration of an application from E Thomson requesting financial assistance towards participating in an athletics competition at the Emirates Arena, Glasgow, on 2 March 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £40 be made.

B. G Ewing – Football Games for KGS and Wick Academy

Following consideration of an application from M Ewing requesting financial assistance towards her son participating in the North of Scotland Schools football competition, as part of the KGS team, together with participating in Wick Academy's senior and junior teams, from August 2024 to March 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. That, on this occasion, donations of £40, up to a maximum of £240 for 2024/2025, be provided.
2. That the Clerk should write to M Ewing stating that applications should be submitted prior to the date of any events.

C. A Ewing – KGS Netball and S3 Trip to Berlin

Following consideration of an application from M Ewing requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in the Scottish Schools Cup for netball, and taking part in the S3 KGS trip to Berlin in April 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. That donations of £40 be provided in respect of participation in netball matches.
2. That a donation of £70 be provided in respect of the KGS trip to Berlin.

D. O Dingwall – KGS Football

Following consideration of correspondence from C Taylforth requesting financial assistance towards her son participating in matches in Aberdeen in May 2025 as part of the KGS football team, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £40 be made.

E. M Robertson – Caledonia Rugby

The Clerk had received applications from B Robertson requesting financial assistance towards his son taking part in training sessions and games for the Under 17 Caledonia team, on 31 March and 5 April 2025 respectively, and it was:

Resolved that donations of £40 be made in respect of each trip.

8. Consultations

A. Trees and Woodlands Strategy

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding a consultation on a proposed trees and woodland strategy, for which responses were required by 24 March 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should write to Orkney Islands Council stating that Eynhallow should not be included as part of the Orkney mainland.

B. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service – Strategic Plan 2025-2028

Following consideration of correspondence from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service regarding a consultation on its Strategic Plan 2025-2028, for which responses were required by 2 April 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to make no comment on the Strategic Plan 2025-2028.

C. SEPA – Proposed Changes to Environmental Regulation (Scotland) Guidance on Publication Participation and Fit and Proper Person Test

Following consideration of correspondence from SEPA regarding proposed changes to the Environmental Regulation (Scotland) Guidance on Public Participation and the Fit and Proper Person Test, for which responses were required by 30 March 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to make no comment.

D. Visitor Levy Survey and Public Engagement Sessions

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding public engagement sessions looking at the feasibility of a proposed visitor levy on overnight stays in certain accommodation in Orkney, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that an online event had been held on 25 March 2025, with an in-person event at the Pickaquooy Centre on 26 March 2025.
2. To note that an online survey was available until 11 April 2025.

9. Meetings Attended by Members - Northern Isles Freight Vessels Replacement Project

CMAL had organised a public engagement session in the Kirkwall and St Ola Community Centre on 20 March 2025 regarding the replacement freight vessels for the Northern Isles, and it was:

Resolved to note that Holm Community Council had not been represented.

10. Publications

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

- ORSAS – Quarterly Newsletter – January 2025.
- NHS Orkney – Stop Smoking Resources.
- VAO – Training and Funding Updates – February and March 2025.
- VAO – Newsletter and Training and Funding Updates changing.
- VAO Newsletter – February 2025.

11. Any Other Competent Business

A. Layby opposite Rowan Cottage

C Muir had been approached by the owner of Rowan Cottage advising that coastal erosion was now starting to undermine the layby on the shore side of the road, and it was:

Resolved that the owner be advised to contact Orkney Islands Council direct.

B. Bag the Bruck

The Clerk advised that, although no official correspondence had been received regarding Bag the Bruck, which was due to take place over the month of April 2025, organisations had contacted her requesting assistance, and it was:

Resolved that a grant of £300 be made available, to be split between all organisations which contacted the Clerk prior to undertaking an event associated with Bag the Bruck, subject to assistance from the Community Council Grant Scheme being approved.

C. Planters/Flower Tubs

Following discussion regarding the flower tubs and planters in the village, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should arrange for summer bedding plants to be planted in the six tubs throughout the village, subject to assistance from the Community Council Grant Scheme being approved.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Following consideration of future meeting dates, it was:

Resolved that the next meeting of Holm Community Council should be held on Wednesday, 11 June 2025 in the Holm Community Centre, commencing at 19:30.

13. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 20:48.