

# **Minute of the Meeting of Harray and Sandwick Community Council held in the Milestone Community Church and via Teams on Wednesday, 11 March 2026 at 19:30**

## **Present:**

Mr D Hamilton, Mr G Brown, Mrs E Grant, Mr E Grieve, Mr K Groundwater, Mr C Kirkness, Mrs K Ritch and Mr S Tait.

## **In Attendance:**

- Councillor O Tierney.
- Councillor J Stevenson.
- Councillor R King.
- Mr R Delday, Birsay Community Council.
- Mr S Spence, Birsay Community Council.
- Mrs J McGrath, Community Council Liaison Officer.
- Mrs H Keveren, West Mainland Link Officer/Clerk.

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## **1. Apologies**

Resolved to note that apologies had been received from Councillor D Tullock

## **2. Presentation – Roads Support**

Members were advised that the Team Manager, Roads Support, had unfortunately cancelled for the second time at short notice. They felt that this was unfortunate, as the data from the trackers in December 2024 would now be out of date. The Community Council Liaison Officer advised that more accurate information would be available after the implementation of the smiley faces, and asked members if they could put their outstanding queries in writing so that these could be passed to Roads Support and addressed, and it was:

Resolved:

A. To request that the community council's dissatisfaction be conveyed to Roads Support regarding the short notice given on two occasions.

B. To request Roads Support attendance at the meeting to be held on 2 September 2026.

C. That members would provide the Clerk with their outstanding queries in relation to speed data so that these could be passed on as appropriate.

## **3. Adoption of Minutes**

The minute of the meeting held on 21 January 2026 was approved, being proposed by Mr C Kirkness and seconded by Mr G Brown.

## **4. Matters Arising**

### **A. Dounby School Play Park Fund**

Mr E Grieve advised members that the majority of invoices for equipment had now been settled and the group would soon be a position to liaise with Community Council on assistance required for either settling the remainder or an additional piece of equipment, and it was:

Resolved to note that Mr E Grieve would provide regular updates to the Community Council on the play park project.

### **B. Dounby Speed Tracker Information**

As the Team Manager, Road Support, was unable to attend the meeting to give a presentation on the information collated, it was:

Resolved to request attendance at a future meeting, as per item 2 above.

### **C. Walk, Wheel, Cycle Trust – Friends of Dounby**

The Clerk advised that an update had been requested ahead of the meeting from Walk, Wheel, Cycle Trust but no response had been received, and it was:

Resolved to note the above.

## **D. Market Green Update**

It was noted that the works had been carried out on the standing water issue at the Market Green.

Relevant departments within Orkney Islands Council had been advised of the opening date which had been set for 3 May 2026. A response had been received that this date would make it challenging for funders off island to attend and would fall during the election period. A proposal to delay by one week until 10 May 2026 had been suggested for the official opening when funders could attend. Members were advised that the community could continue with the opening on 3 May 2026 however it could not be classed as the 'official' opening. Members felt that despite plans already in place they should re-schedule to avoid duplicating the event.

There had been no response yet to the request for the community council to hold a key for the Market Green to enable them to operate the power. The suggestion of a QR code for payment for the waste disposal charges had been forwarded to the relevant department.

Members had been notified that the cleaning schedule for the facilities was 5 times a week, and that spot checks were carried out with full cleans done when required. Plans were in place to replace the toilet roll dispensers as an issue had been identified with them. As there were no cleaning facilities during the festive break the facilities are closed to prevent them becoming unsanitary. Members felt that users would rather have the facilities open over the 2 days.

A response had been received that permission would be required to site a container for storage at the Market Green. Other Council areas around Dounby were discussed and it was felt that the container should be sited at the Civic Amenity site in the land adjacent, with the opening facing onto the site. Quotes had also been received from Orkney Containers and it was noted that Birsay Community Council had agreed to part fund.

The Community Council Liaison Officer advised that they did not have a firm date for when any future tranche of funds to the Community Development Fund, but that it certainly would not be ahead of this financial year, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the Opening Event for the Market Green would be held on 10 May 2026, time TBC, and that this information should be relayed to officials and funders.
2. To request either a key for the toilet block or that the power supply be switched off throughout the year.
3. To enquire about the possibility of a QR code through which the Waste Disposal Charges could be paid.
4. To request that the toilet blocks be open throughout the Festive break.

5. To ask if planning permission was required for the siting of the container at the Civic Amenity site.

6. To note the below details of the Opening Event:

- The official speeches at the opening ceremony would be as follows: Welcome – Mr D Hamilton, Community Council Involvement – Councillor R King, Opening Speech – Mrs K Norquoy, Vote of Thanks – Mr R Delday.
- The Islander Boys would be asked to entertain and West Bites and Tullock Ice-cream to attend with their food vans.
- Mrs H Morrell would be asked to cut the ribbon.
- Posters would be distributed around the village and on social media.
- Ken Amer, Radio Orkney and The Orcadian would be invited to provide publicity for the event.
- All costs would be split 50/50 with Birsay Community Council.

### **E. Dounby Village – Smiley Faces**

Members had been advised that the four Smiley Face speed indication devices for Dounby were yet to be installed however the schedule was to have them operational by the end of the March. The locations were confirmed as both ends of the A986, Hillside and Vetquoy Road, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

### **F. Harray and Sandwick Place Plan**

Members heard that the draft Place Plan had been circulated to members ahead of the last meeting of the Harray and Sandwick Steering Group meeting and several additional points had been identified to be included in the final version, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the information provided.
2. To note that the next meeting was scheduled for 18 March 2026.

### **G. Manholes – Dounby Village**

The ongoing issue relating to the raised manholes in the Dounby village had still not been resolved and was the responsibility of Scottish Water who had previously been advised of the issues, and it was:

Resolved to request via the business letter the contact details for Scottish Water so that the community council could contact them directly.

### **H. Burial Grounds Grass Cutting**

Responses had been received relating to the queries which members had raised previously after circulation of the proposed cuts to the Burial Grounds Grass Cutting. A contract could be terminated by either party with one months' notice and the tender prices per sq/m varied considerably between cemeteries as historically some

were cut more frequently or were larger/more difficult to cut. The community council's dissatisfaction about the proposed six cuts and advice that less cuts would take longer had been forwarded to the Service Manager, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the above.

### **I. 20mph – Dounby Village**

Members had previously raised via business letter that the proposed areas for 20mph in Dounby did not extend past the Milestone Community Church or past the Dounby Community School on the A986. A response had been received from the Team Manager, Roads Support, that the original proposals had been to include those areas however engagement with both community councils and the wider public had resulted in the reduced areas. They would continue to monitor, and those areas had been noted to extend in the future, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the report.

### **J. Snow Clearing of Roads**

The incident involving a school bus becoming stuck on the Vetquoy Road during the snow early in 2026 had caused some concern, and queries regarding the safety of the pupils had been raised via business letter. Orkney Islands Council had responded, confirming that policy had been followed and that no subsequent action was required with regards to the safety of the pupils. The suggestion to simplify the application process for both contractors and farmers to apply to assist with road clearing had been noted with Roads Support and work was ongoing to address this, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the report.

### **K. Swartland and Vetquoy Roads – 7.5 tonne restriction**

The suggestion to limit both the Swartland and Vetquoy Roads from additional surface damage by restricting use to only allow vehicles under 7.5 tonne had been raised to Orkney Islands Council via business letter. A response had been received that this would work in theory, but that further investigation would need to be carried out before consideration be given.

Members noted that both roads were used as short-cuts to the Dounby village, heavier traffic could continue on the A967 to Twatt and then the A986 to Dounby adding just over two miles to the journey but more importantly protecting the narrower roads, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the discussion and await further updates.

## **5. Correspondence**

### **A. Burial Grounds Grass Cutting**

A briefing note had been received and circulated to members advising the outcome of the responses received from all community councils in relation to the proposed reduction in Burial Ground Grass Cutting. The outcome for the Harray and Sandwick

burial grounds would be a reduction from twelve cuts per year to eight cuts per year, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That Harray and Sandwick Community Council would pay for the additional four cuts from CCGS for the 2026 season and then review when the contracts were up for tender again in 2027.

2. To suggest, via the business letter, that the price variation per sq./m between burial grounds requires to be addressed when tenders are renewed.

## **B. OIC 'Meet the Buyer' Event**

Correspondence had previously been circulated and highlighted to the wider community via Facebook about an event being hosted by Orkney Islands Council inviting locals to a 'Meet the Buyer' event to discuss the quotation opportunity to supply services to assist with planned and reactive roads maintenance during the period of 2026/2027, and it was:

Resolved to note that this event had now passed.

## **C. Scottish Islands Federation – Events and Consultations**

Information had previously been circulated to members from Scottish Islands Federation advising of events and consultations being hosted which could be joined via Eventbrite, and it was:

Resolved to note the information.

## **D. Orkney Marine Planning – Stakeholder Update**

Correspondence had been forwarded to members from the OIC Marine Planning team advising of the news that Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan had formally been adopted by Scottish Government, establishing a new statutory framework for managing marine activities out to twelve nautical miles from the coast, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

## **E. Royal British Legion – Best Kept War Memorial**

Correspondence had been received from the Royal British Legion advising members that the competition to find the Best Kept Memorial was now open and entries were welcome from the parishes, and it was:

Resolved to note that the deadline for entries was 31 March 2026.

## **F. Orkney World Heritage Site Programme – Engagement Event**

Members had previously been circulated correspondence from Orkney World Heritage Site Programme requesting attendance at workshops which were being hosted focusing on movement, transport, active travel and connectivity around the World Heritage Site, and it was:

Resolved to note that the event would be held on 18 March 2026.

## **G. Thank You Letters**

Resolved to note that letters of thanks had been received from Birsay Drama Group, Mrs A Sinclair and Mrs K Ritch for financial assistance provided.

## **6. Consultations**

### **A. Scottish Islands Federation – Digital Connectivity Resilience**

Following consideration of correspondence previously circulated from Scottish Islands Federation advising members of an evidence session on digital resilience which was being held to improve broadband and mobile connectivity across Scotland, it was:

Resolved to note that the deadline had now passed.

### **B. SEPA – Flood Risk Management**

Correspondence had been circulated from Scottish Environment Protection Agency asking members to share their experiences of local flooding issues to help inform how flood risk was managed in their communities, and it was:

Resolved to note the deadline for completion was 22 April 2026.

### **C. OIC Winter Service Policy**

Members had been circulated from Orkney Islands Council the Winter Service Policy for 2026-2031. The plan detailed the schedule of treated roads and the route priority along with salt spreading ratios. Consultation comments had been requested ahead of the deadline, and it was:

Resolved to supply feedback as follows:

- Priority 2S roads are not cleared early enough in the morning.
- Some roads were still single track over a week after the snow in early 2026.

### **D. OIC Verge Maintenance Plan 2026**

Correspondence had been circulated to members requesting feedback on Orkney Islands Council's Verge Maintenance Plan for 2025-2030. The first year of the 5-year plan had now been completed and the Council requested that areas of injurious/noxious weeds or problem areas be highlighted for the safety cut list in 2026, and it was:

Resolved to feedback that the one cut should be done earlier than September on the majority of roads as it becomes unsightly and causes safety issues.

## **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 £12,802.52 as at 16 February 2026.

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

Following consideration of the financial statement for the Community Council Grant Scheme, it was:

Resolved to note that the main capping limit was fully allocated and the balance in the additional capping limit was £780 as at 16 February 2026.

### **C. 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 £5,000 as at 16 February 2026.

## **8. Applications for Financial Assistance**

### **A. Birsay Drama Group**

Following consideration of correspondence previously circulated to members via email from Birsay Drama Group, requesting assistance for the two members of the parish to attend the regional finals of the Drama Festival, it was:

Resolved to note that members had agreed by email to award £120, as per policy, from the General Fund.

### **B. Sandwich SWI**

A request had been received from Sandwich SWI requesting financial assistance towards celebrations to mark their 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and it was:

Resolved to note that members agreed to award £250 from the General Fund.

### **C. Mrs A Sinclair – U15's Netball Trip**

Following consideration of correspondence received from Mrs A Sinclair on behalf of her daughter to attend an U15's Netball trip, it was:

Resolved to note that members had agreed by email to award £40, as per policy, from the General Fund.

## **D. Mrs K Ritch – U17/18’s Netball Trip**

Following consideration of correspondence received from Mrs K Ritch on behalf of her daughter attending an U17/18’s Netball match in Aberdeen, it was:

Resolved to note that members had agreed by email to award £40, as per policy, from the General Fund.

## **E. Milestone Community Church – Bag the Bruck**

A request had been received from Milestone Community Church advising that they would be carrying out a beach clean at Skail and ditches around the parishes. £300 was available from Community Council Grant Scheme for this project, and it was:

Resolved to award the £300 available through CCGS to the Milestone Community Church, however if other applications were received ahead of the deadline the £300 would be split accordingly.

## **9. Publications**

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

- VAO – Newsletter – January, February and March 2026.
- VAO - Training and Funding Update – February 2026.
- ORSAS Quarterly Newsletter – February 2026.
- SCDA Orkney District.
- Community Payback Unpaid Work Scheme.

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

### **A. Village Tidy Up**

The Chair raised that it had been agreed after the success of the village tidy up in 2025 that it should become a yearly event. It was agreed that posters would be circulated, groups invited and to enquire if members could attend from the Community Payback scheme.

It was also felt that a tidy up at the Market Green ahead of the Official opening should be carried out, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the following dates had been set:

- Tidy up at Market Green – 6 May 2026 at 18:00.
- Village Tidy up – 15 July 2026 at 18:30.

2. To request via business letter that a pet friendly weed killer be sprayed early July ahead of the village tidy-up.

## **B. Strathborg Trees**

It was advised that the trees which were planted at Strathborg would require their yearly maintenance by volunteers from the community council, and it was:

Resolved to note that a date of 3 June 2026 at 18:30 had been scheduled for this to be carried out.

## **C. Orkney Dance and Fitness**

The Chair advised members that Orkney Dance and Fitness had purchased the United Free Kirk in Dounby and had requested to come along to a meeting to give a short presentation, and it was:

Resolved to invite representatives of Orkney Dance and Fitness to the next meeting which was scheduled for 13 May 2026.

## **D. Council Response Time**

The Chair advised members that often the responses to queries raised from the previous meeting were only being received on the day of the meeting which did not allow him time for consideration. Councillor R King agreed to address this matter as she felt strongly that Orkney Islands Council rely heavily on the Community Council members who volunteer their time and therefore responses should be received in a timely manner with a timescale of two weeks in place for responses where possible, and it was:

Resolved to await feedback from Councillor R King on this matter.

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

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

Resolved that the next meetings of Harray and Sandwick Community Council would be held on Wednesdays 13 May and 2 September 2026 in the Milestone Community Church and via Teams at 19:30.

## **12. Conclusion of Meeting**

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 21:28.