

Minute of the Meeting of Firth and Stenness Community Council held in the Firth Community Centre on Thursday, 26 March 2026 at 19:00

Present:

Mr R Crichton, Ms W Dunnet, Mr M Harcus and Mrs A Stevenson.

In Attendance:

- Councillor R King.
- Councillor J Stevenson.
- Councillor O Tierney.
- Mrs J Montgomery, Empowering Communities Liaison Assistant/Interim Clerk.

Order of Business

1. Apologies	2
2. Election of Chair	2
3. Election of Vice Chair	2
4. Adoption of Minutes	2
5. Matters Arising.....	2
6. Correspondence	3
7. Consultations	4
8. Finance Statements.....	5
9. Financial Requests	5
10. Publications	6
11. AOCB	6
12. Date of Next Meeting	7
13. Conclusion of Meeting	7

1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Mrs R Lyon and Councillor D Tullock.

2. Election of Chair

Resolved to note that Mr R Crichton was elected as Chair of Firth and Stenness Community Council.

3. Election of Vice Chair

Resolved to note that Mrs A Stevenson was elected as Vice Chair of Firth and Stenness Community Council.

4. Adoption of Minutes

The minute of meeting of Firth and Stenness Community Council held on 29 January 2026 was adopted, being proposed by Mr M Harcus and seconded by Mrs A Stevenson.

5. Matters Arising

A. Festive Lighting

Members discussed the provision of additional braids and two motifs and that the tree lights had been repaired but they may need to be replaced. The Interim Clerk advised member on the costs incurred in putting up and taking down the lights, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Interim Clerk would obtain prices for motifs and braids, which would be forwarded to members.
2. That Mr M Harcus would ask E Fraser Ltd if the tree lights required to be replaced and if so, could they provide a new set of lights.

B. Quarry Group

Mr M Harcus advised members that he had been in touch with Mr G Brown who was positive about the group and subsequently provided him with the background information regarding the quarry group. Mr Brown had contacted other neighbouring property owners and a response was awaited, and it was:

Resolved to note the content of the report and include in the next agenda.

C. Firth Place Plan

Mr M Harcus advised members that the survey went live at the beginning of March and responses had been received. The consultants had been in touch with various community groups and that a meeting of the Steering Group was due to be held on Monday, 30 March, and it was:

Resolved to note the content of the report.

D. Community Council Clerk and Vacancies

The Interim Clerk advised that a public meeting had been arranged prior to this meeting but unfortunately there had been no candidates and it would be six months before another public meeting to elect could be held. She also advised that at present the Clerk post had not been advertised, and it was:

Resolved to note the content of the report.

E. Burial Grounds Update

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council, which had previously been sent round members, advising of the update to the burial grounds grass cutting maintenance contracts for 2026-2027 which will be reviewed in 2027, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

F. Stoneyhill Road

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council advising members that continued monitoring of the road was in place and although material failures had left a less desirable surface than hoped, Orkney Islands Council was content that there were no defects requiring repair and that it was in a safe condition, therefore no further works were planned, it was:

Resolved to note the content of the correspondence and that members were disappointed with the response received.

G. Bay of Firth Oyster Restoration Project

The Chair advised members that he had written to Mr Gowland advising that the planned location of the container was inappropriate and that it would not align with the Local Place Plan to which he had subsequently responded advising that he would take the positive points onboard, and it was:

Resolved to note the content of the report.

6. Correspondence

A. Orkney Marine Planning Stakeholder Update

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council, which had previously been sent round members, advising of an update to the framework for the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

B. RBL Best Kept War Memorial

Following consideration of correspondence, which had previously been sent to members, providing information regarding the Royal British Legion Best Kept War Memorial competition, it was:

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

C. Thank You Notes

Resolved to note that no letters of thanks had been received.

7. Consultations

A. Variation of Premises Licence – Standing Stones Hotel

Members had been sent the correspondence relating to the Variation of Premises Licence for the Standing Stones Hotel by email, and it was:

Resolved to note that members had no comments to make on the correspondence.

B. Winter Service Policy 2026-2031

Following consideration of the Winter Service Policy and hearing a report from the Chair that Orkney Islands Council staff had been present at the Mart with a stand for Meet the Buyer, it was:

Resolved:

1. To advise the relevant department that the Mart had received enquiries about the Meet the Buyer after the staff had left.
2. To ask Orkney Islands Council what the situation is if a member of the public clears parts of the road and causes damage either to the road or their machinery.

C. Orkney World Heritage Site Programme – Engagement Event

Members had been emailed correspondence regarding the Orkney World Heritage Site programme engagement event on 18 March and following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the content of the correspondence.

D. Verge Maintenance Plan 2026 Updates

Following consideration of the verge maintenance plan update, members believed the verges should be cut earlier in the year. Members also queried if the safety cut at the end of the Holland Road included the opposite side of the junction at the Burness Road end, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To request that the verge cut was done earlier in June/July.

2. To ask if the safety cut at the end of the Holland Road included the end of the Burness Road as well due to it being crossroads.

8. Finance Statements

A. General Finance

Following consideration of the General Fund statement as at 13 March 2026, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the estimated balance of £8,842.86, which included funds of £6,942.47 from the Rennibister Community Wind Fund and £314.04 from the Firth Park Donations Fund.

B. Community Council Grant Scheme

After consideration of the Grant Scheme statement as at 13 March 2026, it was:

Resolved to note the main capping limit was fully allocated, and £405 remained in the additional category.

C. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund statement as at 13 March 2026, it was:

Resolved to note that £5,565.63 remained for allocation.

9. Financial Requests

A. Stenness Community School – P7 Hoy Trip

Following consideration of a request from Stenness Community School, copies of which had previously been circulated, for financial assistance on behalf of the P7 outdoor education trip to Hoy, it was:

Resolved to award £30 for the one pupil from Stenness from General Funds towards the trip.

B. Stenness Community School - Bag the Bruck

Following consideration of a request from Stenness Primary School, copies of which had previously been circulated, for financial assistance for participating in the Bag the Bruck, it was:

Resolved:

1. To submit an application for £300 to the Community Council Grant Scheme.
2. That applications for funding could be submitted up to 30 April 2026.
3. That the funds should be divided equally between applicants applying for assistance from Bag the Bruck.

C. M Clark, Badminton

Following consideration of a request from M Clark, copies of which had previously been circulated, for financial assistance on behalf of her son, to attend various badminton competitions from January to March, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the application for the trip on 24 January, which had been submitted after the event, was retrospective therefore funding would not be awarded.
2. That £30 would be awarded towards the four trips on 7 February, 21 February, 6 and 8 March and 28 March would be awarded £30 per trip, totalling £120 from General Funds.

D. N Kenyon, Swimming

Following consideration of a request from N Kenyon for financial assistance on behalf of her daughter to attend the Inverness Open on 28 March, it was:

Resolved to award £30 from the General Fund towards the trip.

10. Publications

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

- VAO - Training and Funding Update – February and March 2026.
- VAO - Newsletter – March 2026.
- SRA News and Updates – February 2026.
- SRA News – March 2026 Events.
- Meet the Buyer Event – 9 March 2026.
- Community Payback Unpaid Work Scheme.
- Police Scotland Recruitment Event.

11. AOCB

A. Orkney Native Wildlife Project Update

The Interim Clerk advised that a representative of ONWP had been in touch offering to provide an update to a future community council meeting, and it was:

Resolved to ask for a written update for Firth and Stenness on this occasion.

B. Road Signs

A member advised that some time ago Orkney Islands Council had advised that there was a rolling programme for repairs to signposts in Orkney. She advised that there were many signs in the county that required attention for various reasons as some were broken, faded or unreadable. She also advised that many of the white lines on the roads could no longer be seen, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that any issues such as these could be reported directly through MyOrkney on the Orkney Islands Council website, or via OIC Customer Services.
2. That the Interim Clerk should report that a sign at Tormiston was the wrong way around.
3. To ask Orkney Islands Council if there were any reported sign issues in the Firth and Stenness area that remained outstanding.
4. To note that it was disappointing that the representatives from Orkney Islands Council appeared to no longer be attending the meetings.

C. Rennibister Wind Turbine

Members discussed the community benefit received from the Rennibister Wind Turbine and discussed their disappointment with the previous response, however noted that a response was awaited following the meeting in January, and it was:

Resolved to await a response from the developers on the annual payment.

D. Finstown Car Park

Members noted that there were two parking bays fenced off with Heras fencing in the Finstown Car Park, and it was:

Resolved to ask Orkney Islands Council why the parking bays were fenced off.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Resolved to note that the next meeting of Firth and Stenness Community Council had been set for 11 June 2026 at 19:30 in Stenness Community Centre.

13. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 20:16.