

# **Minute of the Meeting of Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council held in the Rousay Community School and via Teams on Wednesday, 11 June 2025 at 19:30**

## **Present:**

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

## **In Attendance:**

- Councillor M Thomson (via Teams).
- Councillor H Woodbridge (via Teams).
- Mrs L Richardson, Head of Neighbourhood Services (via Teams).
- Mrs J Montgomery, Empowering Communities Liaison Officer (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 and Councillor S Clackson.

## **2. Adoption of Minute**

The minute of the meeting of Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council held on 23 April 2025 was adopted, being proposed by Mrs C Maguire and seconded by Miss A Mainland.

## **3. Matters Arising**

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

An update was received from Mrs Z Flaws regarding the process of obtaining quotes for the planned works. Quotes for the bench had now been submitted to Orkney Islands Council. Additionally, a quote had been received from Mr R Mainland for the provision of concrete foundations. The Empowering Communities Liaison Officer advised that she was currently awaiting confirmation on whether CDF funds or other funding sources could be used, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Empowering Communities Liaison Officer would update the Community Council once responses regarding funding options had been received.
2. That Mrs Z Flaws would update the Burial Grounds Officer of the proposed plans.

### **B. Historic Environment Scotland Car Parks**

The Chair reported that a meeting had taken place with representatives from Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council, Democratic Services, Roads Support and Historic Environment Scotland to explore options for improving parking at Midhowe. A summary of the ongoing issues was given, including the frequent road blockages caused by large coaches due to the absence of a designated drop-off area. The Chair also outlined the challenges experienced in determining ownership of the land on which the car park is situated.

The Chair further advised that the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund had been identified as a potential source of funding for the development of improved parking facilities, and that a follow-up meeting was scheduled for 9 July 2025. It was also noted that people and vehicle counters could be installed to gather data on current car park usage, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Chair would approach the landowner to enquire whether they would consider donating land to the project.
2. That the Chair will consult with Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre Development Trust regarding the possibility of match funding.

3. That Democratic Services would be asked to ask Orkney Ferries to provide data on ferry usage to inform this project.

### **C. Laybys**

Resolved to note that no update was received for this item but to keep the item on the agenda.

### **D. Rousay School Issues**

A brief update was provided to confirm that the crack in the building was still present, and that any remedial works were yet to be identified. The lighting works in the car park had also now been completed, and it was:

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

### **E. Post Boxes and Postal Service**

It was noted that the post box at Brendale Road End was currently out of order due to rust damage. The Post Office had also not been opening at the expected times because of staff shortages. The possibility of installing a secure drop box was discussed, and it was noted that the postal worker was able to collect parcels directly from residents' homes when required. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

### **F. Parking at Rousay School**

It was noted that demolishing the block would be too complicated due to the turbine electrical connections housed within it. However, the section at the opposite end was standalone.

The most recent suggestion was to remove this section, which would allow for an extension of the parking bays located outside of the Healthy Living Centre. The phone and post box may be relocated if this plan was approved, and that this option would provide four additional parking spaces.

The possibility of reducing the size of the nursery playground to accommodate the changes was raised as an alternative, which could avoid demolishing the building and offer a more cost-effective solution. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would submit a formal request to Orkney Islands Council to consider parking options.
2. That Mrs Z Flaws to forward images of congestion to the Clerk.

### **G. Pedestrians at Piers**

It was reported that lines and directional arrows were still to be painted at Rousay Pier, with additional signage and bollards now having been installed. It was noted that no pedestrian safety painting has taken place at Tingwall yet, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

## **H. Parking at Brinian Kirkyard**

The Roads Support team at Orkney Islands Council had confirmed that there was currently no budget available to create formal parking spaces at Brinian kirkyard. It was suggested that the Community Council may wish to explore external funding sources for the proposed works. The Chair noted that a site visit could be arranged when the Roads Support team next visited Rousay, and it was:

Resolved that a representative of the Community Council would offer to carry out a site visit with the Roads Support team if Democratic Services can advise of a date for the next scheduled visit.

## **I. Orkney Ferries Booking System**

The Transport Representative shared recent feedback from residents, highlighting ongoing issues with the current Orkney Ferries booking system. These included phone bookings not appearing on online accounts and the continued inability for passengers to book online using their multi-journey travel cards.

It was also noted that the new system did not issue printed receipts for users with travel or concession cards when used onboard, making it difficult for passengers to know how many journeys remain unless they contacted the office directly. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Transport Representative would provide the Clerk with copies of feedback received which could be forwarded to Democratic Services and North Isles Councillors.
2. That Councillor M Thomson would explore the possibility of having receipts showing remaining journey balances being made available to passengers.

## **J. Business Plan for New Ferries**

Councillor H Woodbridge provided an update, reporting that recent Ferry Taskforce meetings had been positive. If approval was granted to purchase new ferries, the procurement process could begin in late 2025 or early 2026. Community consultations would vary depending on the specific isles and routes involved, and an update on this would be shared once available. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that further information relating to the community consultation process would be circulated to community councils once this was available.

## **K. Rousay Road Conditions**

A brief update was received indicating that the Roads Support team had not yet visited Rousay, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

## **L. Grass Cutting Tender**

Members were advised that a new contract was required for graveyard grass cutting, as the work was not put out to tender at the appropriate time. The previous contractor was approached to continue but his quote was deemed too high to accept.

A temporary contractor had begun work, successfully cutting Brinian kirkyard. An attempt was made to cut Wasbister as well, but this could not be completed due to a broken mower belt. The contractor had since explored hiring a walk-behind strimmer locally. Democratic Services had confirmed the cost of a temporary weekly hire of the equipment.

It was further advised that, in the interim, grass cutting at Wasbister had been carried out by Mr R and Mrs F Tipper, with the Chair giving thanks for their support. The Chair advised that he had contacted the member of the public who brought the issue to their attention to confirm that the issue was now being resolved.

It was reported that the temporary contractor had expressed willingness to carry out further cuts at a provisional rate but had not yet provided a formal quote. Mrs Z Flaws offered to follow up with the contractor regarding grass cutting on Egilsay.

It was suggested that kirkyards at Scockness, the Glebe, and Westside may be suitable for grazing, as is the practise on other islands, with a local resident expressing interest in grazing sheep on the land, providing that secure fencing could be fitted.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services highlighted the importance of ensuring that any new contract for grass cutting remains practical and manageable. It was also noted that some historic kirkyards receive little to no maintenance, and are largely dependent on community involvement. It was acknowledged that other community councils were experiencing similar difficulties in securing affordable contracts, and that Orkney Islands Council was currently exploring alternative, community-led approaches to grass cutting.

Members discussed potential strategies for maintaining graveyards that are no longer in active use, and additionally noted that Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council currently holds the only multi-island contract. It was suggested that dividing the contract by individual islands would offer a more efficient solution.

It was proposed that, if the temporary contractor remained interested, they could be invited to undertake maintenance of the smaller kirkyards. The contractor was aware of these sites but was uncertain about the number of cuts required. It was agreed that even a single cut would substantially improve the condition and appearance of the kirkyards. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That Democratic Services would arrange for the temporarily hire of a strimmer.
2. That the Clerk would contact the island haulier to collect and return the strimmer.

3. That Mrs Z Flaws would speak with temporary contractor and ask him to carry out the cuts.
4. That the Clerk would respond to email correspondence once a date is set to visit Egilsay.
5. That details on advertising the tenders would be provided by Democratic Services in due course.

### **M. Egilsay Kirkyard**

It was advised that the map of Egilsay kirkyard had not yet been located. There was a map of the headstones on Egilsay, but the County Archaeologist had determined that due to the age of the site, that there would be burials throughout the kirkyard that were not mapped, and that a full survey would be necessary to determine these locations.

Members queried whether the UHI could be approached to support a survey. The Head of Neighbourhood Services confirmed that no budget was available to instruct a survey, but that OIC would help explore alternative options including the archaeology students and archaeology team at Orkney College.

It was advised that, currently, the only options available to residents were to be buried in an alternative kirkyard or on private land. It was noted that any private burials would need to be marked on the title deeds if the property was subsequently offered for sale. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that Democratic Services would be asked to contact the UHI, asking if they can support a mapping exercise or survey of the Egilsay kirkyard.

### **N. War Memorial Lettering**

It was advised that John G Corse had provided a quote for cleaning the monument and renewing the lettering, excluding any associated ferry costs. The possibility of securing war memorial funding was discussed, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would speak to Mr B Friel regarding possible funding.
2. To keep the item on the agenda.

### **O. Late Night Ferries – Bus Connectivity**

The Clerk advised that she had spoken with the management team at Stagecoach Orkney, and senior staff had approved the request for improved bus connectivity on the dates of the three late-night ferry sailings.

The published bus timetables could not be altered as these were released earlier in the year, but the dates of the amended route had now been confirmed. The late-night driver would have their work card updated to include a detour to Tingwall Pier in time to meet the late-night sailings.

Pre-booking was only required for passengers travelling via Egilsay or Wyre, so final passenger numbers for the late-night sailings would not be known in advance. Following the update, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Transport Representative would request figures for the late-night sailings at the Transport Forum in August
2. That the Transport Representative and Clerk would collate any feedback.

## **P. Bin Emptying**

The Waste and Recycling Officer at Orkney Islands Council had advised that the public rubbish bin at Saviskaill was collected at the same time as the weekly domestic uplift. The Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre Development Trust had responsibility for the bins located on the Heart of Rousay Boardwalk and would endeavour to ensure that it was emptied at appropriate intervals. Following the update, it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

## **4. Correspondence**

### **A. OIC – Briefing Note - Ferry Replacement Programme**

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding an update on the Ferry Replacement Programme, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

### **B. Orkney 2025 - Island Games Road Closures**

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council, on behalf of the Island Games team, sharing a letter and maps for residents who would be affected by road closures during the Island Games. On Monday, 14 July, the ferry timetable would be altered due to road closures through Rendall and would affect sailings from 09:10, returning to the regular schedule from 17:30.

It was noted that mainland residents had received letters regarding road closures, but Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre residents had not been notified directly, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That information on the timetable adjustments would be provided by Councillor M Thomson.
2. That the timetable adjustments would be advertised via social media, and local outlets including the Rousay Review.
3. To note the correspondence.

## **C. OIC – ZEVl Ferry Update**

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council confirming the arrival of the first zero-emission hydrofoil vessel in Orkney. It was noted that the operational team would undertake locally based training and trials prior to the vessel entering service. The setting of timetables will be determined following the trial period to ensure an accurate assessment of inter-island travel times.

It was confirmed that representatives from the Harbours team had visited and spoken with the skipper of MV Eynhallow. There was a possibility of installing a pontoon at Rousay Pier, however challenges may arise at Egilsay. It was noted that the ZEVl vessel was being trialled in rough sea conditions, and although final confirmation was still pending, it is expected that passenger sailings would commence later this year. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

## **D. Scottish Islands Federation - National Islands Plan Orkney Meetings**

Members considered correspondence from the Scottish Islands Federation, inviting islanders, community groups and stakeholders to join the conversation on Scotland's new National Islands Plan. This was due to be published later this year. Mrs C Mainland and Mrs C Maguire advised that they had attended this meeting and reported a positive session, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

## **E. OIC - Free Family Fun Day**

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council, sharing details of a Family Fun Day due to be hosted at the Pickaquoy Centre on 15 June 2025, which aimed to provide informal learning activities and opportunities to increase skills, knowledge, confidence and health and wellbeing through learning. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

## **5. Consultation - SEPA – EPAS Consultation and Online Information Session**

Members considered correspondence from SEPA regarding their consultation on a proposed Environmental Performance Assessment Scheme. The consultation was open for responses until the deadline of 30 June 2025, 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 29 May 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £34,338.23.

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

Following consideration of the CCGS statement for Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council as at 29 May 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that the main capping limit was £2,483.66, and that the balances remaining in the additional and island capping limits were £503.00 and £719.00 respectively.

## **C. Community Development Fund**

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund statement for Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council as at 29 May 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that there was £9,427.80 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 29 May 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that there was £7,535.00 remaining available to allocate to projects.

## **7. Financial Request - Rousay Parent Council – School Playpark**

Following consideration of the update received from Rousay Parent Council requesting match funding, it was:

Resolved to award £8,250 to Rousay Parent Council using an equal proportion of CCGS, CDF and REWGCCs own funds, equating to £2,750 from each funding source.

## **8. Reports from Representatives**

### **A. Planning**

Several planning applications with an 'undecided' status were noted. These included a request for the duration of the turbine's life be extended from 20 to 25 years, and an application from Cooke Aquaculture requesting a Scoping Opinion in relation to proposed modification to their existing Kirk Noust marine farm. An additional application was noted to build a new residential property, public house, and additional self-catering, pods, and camping accommodation, and associated infrastructure, and it was:

Resolved to note the update.

## **B. Transport**

The Transport Representative confirmed that some initial numbers had been received for the late-night sailings, with 9 foot passengers currently booked from Rousay and one from Egilsay, plus one vehicle from both Rousay and Egilsay. Pre-booking was only required for passengers travelling via Egilsay or Wyre, and so final numbers will be confirmed retrospectively. Feedback was sought to ensure that the right dates were selected for travel if the additional sailings were to continue next year.

It was also noted that statistics for April 2025 sailings had now been released, and the next Transport Forum meeting was due to be held in August, and it was:

Resolved to note the update.

## **C. Health and Care**

Members were advised that a Health and Care meeting had taken place the previous week. NHS Orkney recently held an interview for a replacement Advanced Nurse Practitioner, but the Health and Care Representative was not invited as was the original agreement. An appointment was subsequently made, but upon a position becoming available on another island, this had now fallen through. The job role would be advertised again.

The Health and Care representative also noted that residents were experiencing issues with physically accessing ferries, with details of this to be provided to the Clerk, and it was:

Resolved:

1. For the Health and Care Representative to provide ferry access details to the Clerk.
2. To note the update.

## **9. Publications**

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

- Letter from School Place – May 2025.
- VAO Newsletter – April 2025, Volunteering Special Edition.
- VAO Training and Funding Update – May 2025.
- Orkney Ferries Statistics – April 2025.
- Scottish Water Digital Newsletter – Spring/Summer 2025.
- ORSAS Quarterly Newsletter – May 2025.

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

### **A. Grass Verges - Safety Cuts and Ditches**

It was advised that safety cuts would begin next week once the programme of works was ready. Equipment to dig and clear ditches was making its way around the islands, but limited resources meant that this work would take time to complete.

Members raised that the grass verge in front of the Pier Houses was looking unkempt and required cutting. Previously, this work was undertaken by the local Roads Operative, but it had not been cut this year. The Housing team at Orkney Islands Council were identified as being responsible for the maintenance of this area.

It was also reported that overgrown bushes on the Surgery Road were needing cut back, with the local Roads Operative able to provide images of this issue, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Head of Neighbourhood Services would enquire as to whether the Housing team had issued an instruction for the grass verge at the Pier Houses to be cut.
2. That the Clerk would provide Democratic Services with details of the grass cutting required along the Surgery Road.
3. That the Clerk would ask Democratic Services to report the matter to Roads Support.

### **B. Local Place Plans**

The Empowering Communities Liaison Officer asked if Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre Development Trust were planning to submit a Local Place Plan before the deadline. The Clerk advised that conversations with the Trust Manager earlier in the year suggested that a Local Place Plan would be developed, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would contact the Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre Development Trust Manager for an update.

## **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 24 September 2025 at 19:30.

## **12. Conclusion of Meeting**

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