

Minute of the Meeting of Harray and Sandwick Community Council held in the Milestone Community Church and via Teams on Wednesday, 21 January 2026 at 19:30

Present:

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

In Attendance:

- Councillor O Tierney.
- Councillor J Stevenson.
- Councillor R King.
- Councillor D Tullock.
- Mrs H Keveren, West Mainland Link Officer/Clerk.

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1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies had been received from Mr K Groundwater.

2. Presentation – Roads Support

Mr M Wylie, Team Manager, Roads Support, had unfortunately been unable to attend, and it was agreed to invite him along to the next meeting to be held on 11 March 2026, and it was:

Resolved to request via business letter that the attendance of the Team Manager, Roads Support, was requested at the next meeting.

3. Adoption of Minutes

The minute of the meeting held on 29 October 2025 was approved, being proposed by Mrs E Grant and seconded by Mr E Grieve.

4. Matters Arising

A. Dounby School Play Park Fund

Mr E Grieve updated members that the funding had yet to be finalised on the purchase of the initial equipment, therefore the group had not decided on future items at this stage, 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, Roads Support, was unable to attend the meeting to give a presentation on the information collated, it was:

Resolved to request the presentation at the next meeting, as per Item 2 above.

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

It was reported that representatives from the Walk, Wheel, Cycle Trust had met with Friends of Dounby when in Orkney in November and explained that the next stage of the proposals were to implement traffic calming measures to the village along with an accessible bus shelter. They had also met with local businesses and held a successful drop-in session for the wider community.

Since their visit, an update had been received and circulated to members, advising that thirty-six responses had been received from the survey and the Trust were moving forward with the topography survey of the area along with analysing the responses to the online survey and adjusting the proposals accordingly. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the report.

D. Market Green Update

It was advised that the facilities at the Market Green were now open and being used on a regular basis by the community. The official opening was yet to be arranged, and Orkney Islands Council were keen that the Community Council take the lead to organise the event. Previous suggestions had been for the event to be scheduled for a weekend in the Spring which had been agreed with Orkney Islands Council, and a date was set for 3 May 2026.

In response to the items raised at the previous meeting, the pavement and kerbs on the Hillside Road entry to the Dounby School had been completed. Roads had approved a design solution for the standing water issue and the builders had been instructed to arrange the necessary road closure order, with works anticipated to be completed by the first week of February.

The works required on the telephone box should also be completed in February when the engineers from British Telecom would be on the island carrying out maintenance.

Since the previous meeting, further items had been brought to the attention of the Community Council and raised with Orkney Islands Council.

A key had been requested to allow the Community Council access to the toilet block to operate the power for the Tree Lights; this had been denied as it was a master key that gained access to toilet blocks throughout the island.

Signage had been erected on the toilet block suggesting a fifty pence donation towards the facilities. After discussion by email, members had asked for clarification on the signage. A response was received advising it was an initiative to recover some of the costs of maintaining the new infrastructure and had been proposed in 2023. Members recalled a meeting held with a Council representative early in the project where it had been discussed to have a QR code for the Waste Disposal Charges which costs £5 at other Council properties in the islands.

It was further reported that, during the Festive break, the toilet blocks had been locked for a period at both Christmas and New Year. This had been raised both on social media and also directly to the Community Council, and this matter had been raised with Orkney Islands Council as, originally, the Community Council had been advised that the block would only be locked at Halloween. The closures had been advised in The Orcadian and on social media.

A member of the public had also brought to the attention of the Community Council issues with the dispensing of toilet roll and the lack of cleaning facilities for a period of at least 4 days.

The Chairman brought up storage, as he currently kindly stores all the Christmas lights in his garage, and suggested that the Community Council purchase a container to be sited at the Market Green which could be funded from the Community Development Fund, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the opening date for the Market Green would be 3 May 2026 at 14:00, and that this information would be relayed to officials and funders.
2. To request for either a key for the toilet block or the power supply to be switched off throughout the year.
3. To ask about the possibility of a QR code for the Waste Disposal Charges to be paid through.
4. To request that the toilet blocks be open throughout the Festive break.
5. To ask for a copy of the cleaning schedule for the toilet blocks.
6. To request that the toilet roll dispensers were inspected to check the issue.
7. To enquire if planning permission was required to site a container at the Market Green.
8. To enquire if and when a future tranche would be added to the Community Development Fund.
9. That the Clerk would source a quote for a small fully lined container to be situated at the Market Green.

E. Flags for Special Occasions

It was advised that a new Orkney Flag and a Scottish Saltire had been purchased by the Community Council and a list of events drawn up when the flags should be flown, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the report.

F. Dounby Woodland Project

The ICNZ project had been advised of the suitable areas at Vias Moss and the Old Playpark in the village for the planting of trees. It was also suggested they liaise with the Service Manager, Development and Marine Planning, Orkney Islands Council, as both areas had been identified in the Dounby Place Plan, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the report.

G. Dounby Village – Smiley Faces

Correspondence had been received and circulated to members advising that the Roads Support team had been successful with funding to purchase Speed Indication Devices (Smiley Faces) and Dounby was one of the areas where devices would be installed by the end of March 2026, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the information provided.

2. To request via business letter the proposed location of the Smiley Faces.

H. Harray and Sandwick Place Plan

Further meetings had been held to discuss the Place Plan for the parishes of Harray and Sandwick. The survey had closed with 138 responses received providing the consultants with a rich source of information. They had a few community meetings to conclude before working on the draft version of the Place Plan which would be circulated members ahead of their next meeting, and it was:

Resolved to note that the next meeting was scheduled for 24 February 2026.

I. Manholes – Dounby Village

The issue relating to the raised manholes in the Dounby village which had been discussed at the previous meeting had been raised via business letter to Orkney Islands Council. The Team Manager, Roads Support, had advised that the manhole covers were the responsibility of Scottish Water. This had been passed to them previously, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

J. Burial Grounds Grass Cutting

Feedback from Harray and Sandwick Community Council had been forwarded to Orkney Islands Council relating to the proposed cuts to the Burial Grounds Grass Cutting budget. All comments from Community Councils would be incorporated into a report and Democratic Services were awaiting information on how this matter would be progressed, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

5. Correspondence

A. Powers for Community Councils

Information had previously been circulated to members from Michael Gallagher, ex community council member, advising of a petition launched to encourage new powers for Community Councils, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the document.

B. Scottish Islands Federation – Island Digital Connectivity Resilience

Following consideration of correspondence previously circulated from Scottish Islands Federation advising members of an online meeting covering the topic of island connectivity resilience and how the weather and storms can negatively impact the connectivity on the islands, it was:

Resolved to note that this event had now passed.

C. Scottish and Southern Electricity Network Distribution

Correspondence had previously been circulated to members from Scottish and Southern Electricity Network Distribution about a Community Drop-in Session to provide residents with an opportunity to learn more about the proposed works to improve network capacity, security and resilience, and it was:

Resolved to note that the event had since passed.

D. 20mph Speed Limit

A letter had been received and circulated from Chief Executive's Services, Orkney Islands Council, giving written notice of the 20mph Speed Limit to come into operation on 8 December 2025. It was advised that the introduction of the lower speed limits would improve road safety for pedestrians, cyclists, walkers and all other road users for all of the roads specified within the orders, and it was:

Resolved to suggest via business letter that the proposed areas in Dounby do not extend past the Milestone Community Church and should be extended to the existing 30mph past the Dounby Community School on the A965.

E. Community Transport Small Grant Scheme

Correspondence had previously been circulated from Marine Services and Transportation inviting applications for the Community Transport Small Grant Scheme. The purpose of the scheme was to assist groups and Trusts with the objective of delivering community transport services, for social and leisure purposes, to improve connectivity and reduce isolation, where or when there are no conventional public transport services available or accessible, and it was:

Resolved to note that the deadline for applications was 25 January 2026.

F. Service Users Representative

A request had been received from Orkney Integration Joint Board who were responsible for planning and delivering community health and social care services in Orkney. They were requesting individuals to join them on the Board to represent the view of service users, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

G. Scottish and Southern Electricity Network – Storm Warning

Correspondence had been received from Scottish and Southern Electricity Network ahead of Storm Bram advising members of potential outage and how they had activated their contingency plans to deal and minimise disruption to the community, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

H. Orkney World Heritage Site Programme – Stenness Movement Study

Correspondence had been received from Orkney World Heritage Site Programme advising members that the Stenness Movement study would be carried out in the next few months. Connected Transport and Orkney Islands Council would be completing site work throughout areas of Stenness and Sandwick, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

I. SEPA – National Flood Risk Assessment – 2025 Report

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency had released their National Flood Risk Assessment for 2025 which had been circulated to members. The latest assessment of flood risks showed a sharp rise in properties at risk across the country, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the report.

J. Thank You Letter

Resolved to note that letters of thanks had been received from 1st Dounby Guides, Sandwick Community Association, Ms L Greenwell, Ms E West, Mrs A Sinclair, Harry Young Farmers and Mrs E Wood for financial assistance provided.

6. Consultations

A. Orkney Coastal Change Adaption Plan

Correspondence had been circulated to members advising of an online workshop being offered by the Council and Mott MacDonald to discuss the development of the Orkney Coastal Change Adaptation Plan, and it was:

Resolved to note that this event had now passed.

B. Northern Isles Ferry Services User Surveys – Transport

Following consideration of correspondence previously circulated from Northern Isles Ferry Services requesting members complete a survey relating to their usage of the Northlink routes between Aberdeen and Orkney to allow a better understanding of the needs of islands residents, it was:

Resolved to note that the event had now passed.

C. Trust in Government Consultation

Following consideration of correspondence previously circulated to members from Scottish Community Development Centre advising members about a series of sessions being offered on the topic trust and what it means to them and how that relates to positive and negative experiences with government, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

D. HES – Properties and Collections Strategy

Correspondence had been received and circulated from Historic Environment Scotland asking for members to share their views on the Properties and Collections Strategy. They were keen to collate the opinions of how individuals feel about the approach Historic Environment Scotland take in protecting the historic sites and collections, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

E. SEPA – Safeguarding Scotland’s Water Environment

Members considered correspondence from Scottish Environment Protection Agency launching a public consultation on Safeguarding Scotland’s Water Environment. The purpose of the consultation was to address issues that were having a significant adverse impact on the condition of the water environment, and it was:

Resolved to note that the consultation was open until 3 March 2026.

F. Ayre Offshore Wind Farm – Marine Directorate’s Consultation

Correspondence had previously been circulated from Ayre Offshore Wind Farm advising members of the proposed locating to the east of Orkney one of Scotland’s flagship offshore wind projects, and it was:

Resolved to note that the deadline for comments was 8 February 2026.

G. European Marine Energy Centre Limited – Fall of Warness Tidal Test Site

Correspondence had previously been circulated to members from European Marine Energy Centre Ltd advising of an application which had been submitted to the Scottish Minister to construct and operate the Fall of Warness Tidal Test site adjacent to the island of Eday, and it was:

Resolved to note that the deadline for comments was 31 January 2026.

H. Burgar Hill Wind Farm – Replacement Turbines

Following consideration of correspondence previously circulated to members from Burgar Hill Wind Farm advising of the proposal to replace five of the wind turbines at Burgar Hill, and also advising that the applicant would be hosting consultation events, it was:

Resolved to note the schedule dates.

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 £13,793.60 as at 17 December 2025.

B. Community Council Grant Scheme

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

Resolved to note the balance remaining available for approval in the main capping limit was £357.93 and the balance in the additional capping limit was £780 as at 17 December 2025.

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 17 December 2025.

8. Applications for Financial Assistance

A. SCA – Bairns Christmas Party and Seniors Christmas Lunch

Following consideration of correspondence previously circulated to members via email from Sandwick Community Association, requesting assistance to hold a Christmas party for the children in the community and a Christmas Lunch for the Seniors, it was:

Resolved to note that members had agreed by email to award up to £550 from Community Council Grant Scheme towards both events, and that CCGS had been approved.

B. Ms L Greenwell – Highland Swim Team

Correspondence received from Ms L Greenwell had previously been circulated to members via email, for assistance towards her son attending a swimming event in Inverness, and it was:

Resolved to note that members had agreed by email to award £60, as per policy, from the General Fund, towards the trip.

C. Ms E West – Interview Travel Expenses

Following consideration of correspondence received from Ms E West and previously circulated to members via email for assistance to enable her daughter to attend an interview at a University in Aberdeen, it was:

Resolved to note that members had agreed by email to award £60 as per policy from the General Fund.

D. Mrs A Sinclair – U15's Netball

Following consideration of correspondence received from Mrs A Sinclair on behalf of her daughter who had been invited to play for the U15's Orkney Netball in Glasgow, it was:

Resolved to note that members had agreed by email to award £60 as per policy from the General Fund.

E. Harray Young Farmers – National Junior Speechmaking

Following consideration of an application received from Harray Young Farmers requesting assistance for one member living in the parish to compete at the National Finals of the Junior Speechmaking competition, it was:

Resolved to note that members had agreed by email to award £60 as per policy from the General Fund.

F. Mrs E Wood – Swimming Competitions

Following consideration of an application from Mrs E Wood on behalf of her daughter to attend two different swimming events off island, it was:

Resolved to note that members had agreed by email to award £100 as per policy from the General Fund.

G. Dounby Community School – Primary 7 Trip to Hoy

Following consideration of an application from Dounby Community School towards the cost of eleven pupils from Harray and Sandwick parishes attending a 4-day trip to Hoy, it was:

Resolved to award, as per policy, £640 from Community Council Grant Scheme, subject to approval.

9. Publications

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

- VAO – Newsletter – November and December 2025.
- VAO - Training and Funding Update – November and December 2025 and January 2026.
- ORSAS Quarterly Newsletter – November 2025.
- PTSN Switch Off Info – October 2025.
- Scottish Water – Stakeholder Edition – Autumn/Winter 2025.
- Free Training Sessions for Rural and Islands Community Councils.
- NHS Orkney – Near Me Appointments.

10. Any Other Competent Business

A. Snow Clearing of Roads

Mrs K Ritch had been advised that, during the recent period of snow, a school bus had come into difficulty on the Vetquoy Road, resulting in the children having to get off the bus and walk back to the Sandwick Hall. Various queries were raised in relation to the incident, and it was:

Resolved to request via business letter:

1. Who was responsible for the Children when they had to walk.
2. To request that the application for contractors and farmers to assist in Winter conditions needed to be simplified to encourage applications.
3. That the schedule for clearing/treating routes was too late, resulting in school transport not running due to safety reasons.

B. Swartland and Vetquoy Roads

Mr C Kirkness suggested to protect the roads from additional potholes and pushing out the verges that both the Swartland Road and Vetquoy Road – B9057 be restricted to vehicles under 7.5 tonnes unless for access. Both roads are 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 enquire via business letter if the Swartland Road and Vetquoy Road could have a 7.5 tonne weight restriction.

C. Appreciation to Sporting Heroes

Mrs E Grant suggested that the Community Council should send letters of congratulations to those who had excelled in their sports, however, it was felt that at the risk of missing anyone and causing offence that this should not be done, and it was:

Resolved to note the discussion.

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 11 March and 13 May 2026 in the Milestone Community Church and via Microsoft Teams at 19:30.

12. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 20:55.