# Minute of the Meeting of Birsay Community Council held in the Birsay Community Centre and via Teams on Thursday, 22 May 2025 at 19:30

Present:

Mr R Delday, Miss K Coghill, Ms D Clouston, Mr E Harvey, Mr S Spence and Mr F Tulloch.

In Attendance:

* Councillor R King.
* Councillor J Stevenson.
* Councillor D Tullock.
* Mrs J Montgomery, Empowering Communities Liaison Officer.
* Mrs H Keveren, West Mainland Link Officer/Clerk.

Order of Business**.**

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## **1. Apologies**

After successfully being elected on to the community council, Mr Findlay Tulloch was welcomed by the Chair and the meeting commenced, and it was:

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Mrs V Sinclair.

## 2. Adoption of Minutes

The minute of the meeting held on 6 March 2025 was approved, being proposed by Miss K Coghill and seconded by Mr S Spence.

## 3. Matters Arising

### A. Local Place Plan – Friends of Dounby

The Clerk had requested an update from SUSTRANS ahead of the meeting on the findings from the recent online survey which members had been encouraged to complete. A comprehensive update had been received and forwarded to members, and members were advised that SUSTRANS had submitted their findings to the Council for review.

Some of the key findings and impacts are summarised below:

* Pavements – cracked, uneven, missing, narrow, missing/unsuitable dropped kerbs, obstructions, slippy areas, and vegetation issues. Often results in unnecessary road crossings, creates unease and issues of safety and prevents use.
* Crossing points – lack of formalised crossing and missing/unsuitable dropped kerbs. Creates safety concerns, particularly amongst the young and older generations and prevents independent travel.
* Vehicle speeds – high volume, speeding an issue.
* Street lighting – inappropriate placement and timings issues. Safety concern, particularly noted around school children in winter.
* Benches/shelter – limited in number and poorly maintained and/or located. Lack of placemaking not supporting the attractiveness of Dounby.
* Parking – undefined and informal leading to obstructions and preventing walking/wheeling.

Most survey respondents had stated that improvements to the infrastructure would influence how they travel, and it was:

Resolved to await further updates from SUSTRANS.

### B. RSPB – Marwick Bay Access

The Clerk advised that, ahead of the meeting, she had contacted the Rural Planner responsible for Core Paths at Marwick Bay, and she had confirmed that, since her initial correspondence requesting the space be kept open, no further correspondence had been received from RSPB, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

### C. Speeding in Dounby

Members were advised that local Police had acknowledged receipt of the tracking information which was sent and were working alongside the Dounby School Liaison Officer to address the school specific issues highlighted in the data. They had received some updated detection equipment and were working on tasking out high-profile static presence, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

### D. Birsay Whale Bone

Councillor D Tullock updated members that it was a lengthy process however progress was being made into the production of a replacement Whale Bone. A half-sized model was being made using a 3D printer and, if successful, would be replicated into a full scale one, and it was:

Resolved to note the report.

### E. Dounby School Play Park

Members were advised that the Harray and Sandwick Community Council delegate had agreed to supply updates on behalf of both community councils. An application for funding had been submitted to the Community Led Local Development Fund, but an outcome as to the success was yet to be received, and it was:

Resolved to note the report.

### F. Birsay Kirkyard Repairs

It was advised that the loose stone in the shed and the coping stone off the wall at the Birsay Kirkyard had both been reported and the Burial Grounds Officer had advised that the repairs had been added to a list of wall works for numerous burial grounds and should be completed throughout the summer and autumn. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

### G. Market Green Update

An update had previously been circulated to members advising them that the Market Green project was progressing, albeit slowly, the amenities had been erected, plumbing commenced but as yet no electrical work had begun. The timescale had now been extended into June for completion, and a date would be set for an official opening when representatives from the community councils would be invited, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the report.

### H. Birsay Community Council Vacancy

It was noted that sufficient interest was expressed to enable Birsay Community Council to advertise the vacancy and that ahead of this general meeting, one new member had been elected to the Community Council, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

### I. Steering Group – Local Place Plan

The Chairman supplied an update on the progress of the Birsay Place Plan, advising that regular meetings were being held. He advised that the consultants had finished their engagement with the community and were now in the process of collating the results and compiling the draft Place Plan which would be ready for the next meeting in June, and it was:

Resolved to note the report.

### J. Birsay Heritage Trust – Fisherman’s Huts

Members had been in contact with Birsay Heritage Trust to understand the work required on the Fisherman’s Huts. The trusses in the roof were all in a good state however the roof required re-turfing. It was agreed that the work should be arranged for September. The Clerk reported that she had emailed Scottish and Southern Electricity Network to enquire about volunteer days however no response had been received, and it was:

Resolved to forward the correspondence sent to Scottish and Southern Electricity Network to Councillor R King.

### K. St Magnus Kirk Gates

The Chairman provided an update that the gates were ready, and he would liaise with Mr A Norquoy to refit them, and it was:

Resolved to note the update provided.

### L. Ditch Blockages

A response had been received from the Council after the concerns had been raised about the ditch blockages during the recent ditching work in the area. The Council had thanked the community council for bringing this to their attention and advised that they would investigate and rectify where required, and it was:

Resolved to note the report.

### M. Benches

It was advised that the three benches which had been purchased by Birsay Community Council were now available. Discussion followed as to where to site the benches, and members felt that there was no requirement at the original suggestion of the Listening Wall. Ms D Clouston advised that members of the community had suggested a bench within the grounds of the Kirkyard. It was also discussed that the existing benches at the Whale Bone needed some work to fill in the holes at the bottom, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To arrange payment for the brackets from the Community Council Grant Scheme.

2. That the bench at the Listening Wall would be relocated to the Birsay Kirkyard.

3. That the Chairman would arrange for the necessary works at the Whale Bone to be completed.

## 4. Correspondence

### **A**. SEPA – Surface Water Flood Maps

Correspondence had previously been circulated from Scottish Environmental Protection Agency advising members about the new surface water flood maps which for the first time included small watercourses. The new level of detail provides Scotland with the most detailed and accurate picture of where flooding, Scotland’s biggest climate adaption challenge can occur from heavy rainfall, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

### B. Island Games – Sports Schedule

The draft schedule of sports at the Islands Games had previously been circulated to members for their information and also to allow them to raise any concerns which they may have, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence and that there were no concerns raised.

### C. Changing Places – 10 million Scottish Government Funding Update

Correspondence had previously been circulated to members advising of the 10 million Scottish Government funding for Changing place facilities. Groups could apply to install a Changing Places toilet in or adjacent to an existing building, or to develop a new standalone facility, and it was:  
  
Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence and that the response date had now passed.

### D. Verge Maintenance Plan Comments

Correspondence had previously been circulated to members advising of Roads Support responses to comments which had been submitted from Community Councils. The main objection had been the change to a single annual cut however this had been implemented as part of the 2025-2030 plan which had already been approved. The correspondence advised that Road Services would welcome reports of visibility concerns or injurious weeds at any point, and it was:

Resolved to request via the business letter that suggested areas be addressed.

### E. Scottish Civic Trust – My Place Awards

Following consideration of correspondence previously circulated to members from the Scottish Civic Trust asking for applications for the My Place Awards, which celebrated placemaking efforts in Scotland, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the above.

### F. Local Place Plan – Online Workshop

Following consideration of correspondence previously circulated to members advising them about an online workshop relating to Local Place Plans, it was:

Resolved to note that the event had now passed.

### G. Orkney 2025 – Council Service Changes

Correspondence had previously been circulated to members advising of the changes to the waste and recycling collections during the week of the Orkney 2025 Island Games. Careful consideration had been given on how to make the best use of resources and cause the least impact on the community, and it was:

Resolved to note the content of the correspondence.

### H. Thank you letters

Members were advised that letters of thanks had been received from Birsay Heritage Trust, Orkney Folk Festival, Orkney Natural History Society Museum, Dounby Community School (P7’s Hoy trip) and Orkney Goose Group for financial assistance provided, and it was:

Resolved to note the report.

### I. Island Games Road Closures

Correspondence had previously been circulated to members advising that all residents who would be affected by the road closures connected to the Island Games would be receiving a letter and maps indicating the closures, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the circular.

## 5. Consultations

### A. Scottish Community Development Centre – Community Benefits from Renewable Energy Developments

Following consideration of correspondence circulated advising of a zoom event whereby members could share their views on how local communities benefits from renewable energy developments, it was:

Resolved to note that the event had now passed.

### B. Visitor Levy Survey and Public Engagement Sessions

Following consideration of correspondence circulated advising members of both online and in-person engagement sessions looking at the feasibility of a visitor levy on overnight stays in certain accommodation in Orkney, it was:

Resolved to note that all events had now passed.

### C. Northern Isles Freight Vessels Replacement Project

Correspondence had been circulated to members advising them of public engagement sessions being held in relation to the replacement of the Northern Isles Freight Vessels, and it was:

Resolved to note that event had now passed.

### D. Kathryn Johnson – Visitor Levy Legislation

Following consideration of correspondence which had been circulated to members asking for their support in signing a letter which was being submitted to Kate Forbes MSP addressing the serious concerns relating to the Visitor Levy, and it was:

Resolved to note the content of the correspondence.

### E. Winter Service Plan 2025

Following consideration of the OIC Winter Service Plan 2025 which had previously been circulated to members asking for consideration and comments on the annual document which had been compiled considering input from various bodies throughout the islands, it was:

Resolved to note that the deadline for the consultation was 30 June 2025.

### F. Sustainable Aviation Test Environment

Correspondence had previously been circulated to members from the SATE team (Sustainable Aviation Test Environment) who were keen to work with communities across the country to understand what they would like to see from Scotland’s sustainable aviation sector by completing an online survey, and it was:

Resolved to note that the deadline had now passed.

### G. SEPA – Proposed Environmental Performance Assessment Scheme

Members considered correspondence previously circulated from the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency advising members of a proposed Environmental Performance Assessment Scheme designed to quickly resolve issues that could cause harm to communities and nature. The Scheme would consider more than just compliance but also take into account the severity of any environmental harm caused, and it was:

Resolved to note that the consultation would run until 30 June 2025.

## 6. 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 £7,569.91 as at 8 May 2025.

### B. Birsay Energy Fund

Following consideration of the Birsay Energy Fund, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £21,598.09 as at 12 May 2025.

### C. 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 fully allocated and the balance in the additional capping limit was £765 as at 8 May 2025.

### D. 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 £9,831.09 as at 8 May 2025.

## 7. Applications for Financial Assistance

### A. Milestone Community Church – Bag the Bruck

Following consideration of correspondence received from the Milestone Community Church, advising members that they would be conducting an organised beach clean at Skaill along with ditches around the parishes in April and asking if the Community Council would offer their continued support, it was:

Resolved to award the Milestone Community Church £300 from the Community Council Grant Scheme, subject to approval.

### B. Dounby Senior Citizens – Christmas Lunch

Following consideration of correspondence received from Dounby Seniors Citizens asking the community council to assist with their Christmas lunch, and further discussion, it was:

Resolved to award them £400 from the Community Council Grant Scheme, subject to approval.

## 8. Publications

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

* VAO – Newsletter – February, March and April 2025.
* VAO - Training and Funding Update – March and May 2025.
* ORSAS - Quarterly Newsletter. ORSAS - Quarterly Newsletter – May 2025.
* Scottish Water – Spring / Summer 25 Edition.

## 9. Any Other Competent Business

### A. Water Refill Station – Marwick Bay

Members had previously discussed the installation of a Water Refill Station near the start of the walk to Kitchener’s Memorial. Discussion resumed and members requested the Link Officer research into the possibility of this, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To request via the business letter if the car park was property of the Council.

2. That the Link Officer would conduct full research into the feasibility of a Water Refill Station.

### B. St Magnus Car Park – Damaged Pillar

A member of the public had brought to the community council’s attention that one of the pillars at the St Magnus Car Park had been damaged and, on this occasion, had not been reported. A quote had been given by Kyle Doran Stonemasonry and the work completed to restore, and it was:

Resolved to note that the cost of the repair had been agreed and paid from the General Fund.

### C. Marwick Brae – Extension to Pavement

Mr S Spence requested an extension to the existing pavement which stops before the Marwick Brae housing development. Discussion followed and members felt that this may have been covered in the SUSTRANS walk around Dounby, and it was:

Resolved to request via the business letter if the pavement could be extended.

### D. Wilderness, Hillside Road - Passing Place

Mr S Spence raised the issue that there was a requirement for hardcore in the passing place at the residence known as Wilderness on the Hillside Road, and it was:

Resolved to request via the business letter if this could be arranged.

## 10. Dates of Future Meetings

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

Resolved that the next meetings of Birsay Community Council would be held on Thursdays 11 September and 20 November 2025 at 19:30 in Birsay Community Centre and via Teams.

## 11. Conclusion of Meeting

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