

Minute of the Meeting of Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council held in Rousay Community School and via Teams on Wednesday, 26 November 2025 at 19:30

Present:

Mr A Firth, Mrs D Compton (via Teams), Mrs C Maguire, Mrs C Mainland and Mr R Tipper.

In Attendance:

- Councillor H Woodbridge (via Teams).
- Mrs J McGrath, Community Council 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 Councillor S Clackson, Councillor M Thomson, Miss A Mainland, and Mrs Z Flaws.

2. Adoption of Minute

The minute of the meeting of Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council held on Wednesday, 11 June 2025 was adopted, being proposed by Mrs C Mainland and seconded by Mrs C Maguire.

3. Matters Arising

A. Memorial at Rousay Kirkyard

No update was received on this item, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

B. Historic Scotland Car Parks

No update was received on this item, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

C. Laybys

The Roads Support Team Manager had advised that the Roads Inspector would meet with a community council representative during their next visit to Rousay. The date of this visit was yet to be confirmed, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

D. Rousay School Issues

It was reported that repairs to the building had been started, with the interior wall now pinned with steel. Exterior repairs would be weather dependent. Additionally, repairs had been made to the kitchen, and the hall was back open for public use. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

E. Post Boxes and Postal Service

It was reported that no new complaints or comments had been received regarding the quality of delivery or service provided by Royal Mail staff. A replacement post box for the Wasdale road end was yet to be installed. Following the report, it was:

Resolved:

1. For the Clerk to contact Royal Mail to request an update on post box replacement.
2. That this item would be removed from the agenda.

F. Parking at Rousay School

It was advised that no money had been identified to support any improvements to parking at Rousay School. It was also noted that recent community events held outside of school hours - such as the Harvest Home - had a noticeable decrease in congestion outside of private properties. This reduction had been due to efforts by keyholders directing attendees to park in the playground. It was noted that parking congestion was still an issue during school hours when community groups cannot access the playground, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would contact Orkney Islands Council for a response to suggested parking solutions.

G. Pedestrians at Piers and Piers Update

Members discussed the new line painting that had been completed at Rousay pier over the summer. It was agreed that further improvement work was required, as confusion remained over which areas were designated as parking spaces and those that were reserved for vehicles waiting to board the ferry.

The Roads Support Team Manager had advised that the section of road between the Brinian War Memorial and Rousay Pier would be converted to a 20mph speed limit in the near future, which should help address concerns about vehicle speeds to and from the pier. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk will contact Orkney Islands Council regarding line painting improvements.

H. Parking at Brinian Kirkyard

It was noted that the feasibility of creating additional parking would depend on the proposed layout. Given the limited space on the verge, it was unlikely that vehicles could park perpendicular to the wall without obstructing road access. There appeared to be no scope to extend the current space westwards due to the presence of existing vegetation.

Council officers had indicated a willingness to work with the community council on reviewing potential options, however they had advised that a definitive position could not be given until details were provided to them for review, and it was:

Resolved for Mrs C Mainland to draft potential designs for the area, to then be submitted to Orkney Islands Council for review.

I. Orkney Ferries Booking System

The Transport Representative advised that she continues to liaise with the Shapinsay representative. Several issues with the current booking and fare-charging arrangements were highlighted, including the inability to book multiple travellers under one journey when using a pre-paid ticket book, and a risk of duplicate charges that are difficult to evidence in the absence of receipts.

Additional concerns were raised that reduced costs for inter-island travel are not applied when ticket books are used as payment, and that pricing for tractors and

trailers can be inconsistent, sometimes costing more when coupled than when transported separately. Members requested that the pricing list and booking process be reviewed, clarified, and amended as necessary.

Councillor H Woodbridge informed members that a board meeting was due to take place on 4 December, and for details of these concerns to be passed on in advance of this, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk will forward the issues in a letter to Councillors H Woodbridge and M Thomson.

J. Rousay Road Conditions

It was reported that Rousay's road worker had been hand-digging ditches around the island, but road conditions were still poor, with flooding and surface water persisting during heavier rainfall. Issues were to be discussed with the Roads Inspector during their next visit.

Members also noted deterioration on the track at Rousay Post Office, where a significant rut was forming and access becoming more difficult for residents who had vehicles with low clearance. Members discussed whether the track could be considered for adoption by Orkney Islands Council given the number of properties it serves, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would contact Orkney Islands Council regarding the road conditions and any potential solutions at Rousay Post Office.

K. Grass Cutting Tender

Members expressed concern that the projected 2025/2026 grass-cutting budget appears unrealistic, with limited savings, no clarity on cost capping, and uncertainty over whether previous quotations could be reconsidered. They noted that, if current graveyard standards are to be maintained, any funding shortfall may fall on the community council, which is unlikely to be sustainable or fair.

Members reaffirmed the need to maintain war commission graves and provide at least periodic maintenance for inactive graveyards, subject to realistic tenders, and raised questions around liability if reduced maintenance leads to accidents. They also highlighted that local arrangements have historically provided better value than centralised provision, but that the community council's circumstances differ significantly from other isles, and further clarification is needed on how costs can be managed and resilience built in the longer term.

Members agreed that the grass-cutting tender may be divided into smaller lots, with a view to encouraging more bids and increasing local participation. It is hoped that this approach will also help to reduce overall costs, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk and Chair would create new grass cutting tender documents for approval by Orkney Islands Council.

2. That the tender be publicised in January 2026.

L. Egilsay Kirkyard

No update was received on this item, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

M. War Memorial Lettering

No update was received on this item, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

N. Late Night Ferries – Bus Connectivity

Members noted the success of the late-night ferry sailings and agreed that a request should be made for similar provision in 2026. It was suggested that late sailings run from May to September, ideally on the second Saturday of each month, and that event dates, including the regatta if scheduled at a similar time to other regattas, be planned around these services. Members also queried whether a winter late sailing, for example around Burns Night, might be feasible. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved for the Transport Representative to propose that late sailings be scheduled for the second Saturday of each month at the next transport meeting and will follow up with a letter of request.

O. Bin Emptying

Members advised that the bins at Rousay Boardwalk were being emptied frequently, and no further public complaints or comments had been received. It was noted that the bin at Saviskaill was inadequate for the volume of waste that is discarded at the location, and an additional bin was needed at this location, and it was:

Resolved for the Clerk to request a new bin from Orkney Islands Council, with costs to be provided to members in advance of any purchase.

P. Grass Verges – Safety Cuts and Ditches

Further concerns had been received by email regarding the risks to pedestrians and drivers accessing the road between Brinian war memorial and Rousay Surgery. The Roads Support Team Manager had advised that their team would investigate the ongoing issues with overgrown vegetation, and it was:

Resolved for the Clerk to contact Orkney Island Council with any additional complaints.

Q. Local Place Plans

It was advised that Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre Development Trust aim to apply for funding towards a Local Place Plan once The Orkney Fund reopens their applications, and it was:

Resolved to remove the item from the agenda.

R. Gates at Brinian Kirkyard

No update was received on this item, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

4. Correspondence

A. Rousay Parent Council – Playpark Opening Ceremony

Members considered correspondence from Rousay Parent Council, inviting members to join the playpark opening ceremony on 10 October 2025. Mrs C Maguire had attended on behalf of the community council. Feedback to date had been positive, with children enjoying their new equipment, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

B. Orkney Islands Council - Scapa Deep Water Quay Update

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council, on behalf of Arch Henderson, advising that, following a request for further information, the Scapa Deep Water Quay project team had submitted additional documentation to Orkney Islands Council. With the submission of this new information, a further planning consultation period was now underway, with a marine licensing consultation to follow. All information was available on the Council Planning Portal under reference number 23/289/NATEIA, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

C. Briefing Note - Ferry Replacement Programme Update

Members considered correspondence from OIC Transport regarding the FRP. Councillor Woodbridge advised that the invitation to tender for building the larger vessels was now live and that a further update is expected in the New Year. Any vessel purchase would be progressed following confirmation of the Scottish Government budget, and engagement with Arch Henderson would continue. In relation to the Inner Isles timetable, funding for Stage 2 investigative work was now being progressed, however no date had been set for vessel procurement, as this would depend on the outcome of the investigative work. Following the report, it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

D. Mr T Wood MBE – Rousay War Memorial

Members considered correspondence from Mr T Wood MBE regarding the lack of upkeep of Brinian war memorial in advance of Remembrance Sunday. The issue had been logged via Orkney Islands Council customer services team to be remedied within a 20-day timeframe, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would write to Mr Wood with an apology on behalf of members, and an update on progress.

2. That the Clerk's contact information be included in the Rousay Review as an extra layer of visibility for any future concerns.

3. To note the correspondence.

E. Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre Development Trust – Access to New Noticeboards

Members considered correspondence from Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre Development Trust regarding access to the new noticeboards that had been installed at various locations around Rousay. The Development Trust now holds a set of keys, and additional copies can be provided if required.

Given the distance between the noticeboards, members suggested that a named individual be appointed to oversee each location, with their contact details displayed on each board to enable public access to the keys, and it was:

Resolved:

1. For a named person to be nominated for each board and their details made available.

2. To note the correspondence.

5. Consultations

A. Orkney Islands Council - Survey on Impact of Coastal Change

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council requesting that a survey on the Impact of Coastal Change be circulated to members and the wider public. The survey closed on 17 October 2025, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

B. Have Your Say on Tourism at Community Workshops

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Island Council inviting residents to join workshops to help shape the future of tourism across Orkney. Workshops were scheduled to take place on 5, 6 and 11 November 2025, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

C. Orkney Islands Council - Orkney Coastal Change Adaptation Plan: Online Introduction Event

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council, inviting members to attend a workshop to discuss the development of the Orkney Coastal Change Adaptation Plan (CCAP). The workshop was held on 11 November 2025, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

D. Orkney Islands Council – Briefing Note - Grass Cutting in Burial Grounds

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding the management responsibilities of council owned burial grounds. Responses from members were to be submitted by 28 November 2025, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would submit a letter detailing members' comments and concerns before the deadline.
2. To note the correspondence.

E. Orkney Islands Council - Orkney Coastal Change Adaptation Plan: Post-Meeting Information

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council thanking those who attended their recent workshops and discussions. It advised that there would be an opportunity to comment on draft plans in spring/summer 2026 in a further round of wider public consultation, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

F. Transport Scotland – Northern Isles Ferry Services User Surveys

Members considered correspondence from Transport Scotland requesting support in promoting the North Isles Ferry Services (NIFS) user surveys. These surveys intend to inform the future services provided to Orkney and Shetland communities. The survey was open until 9 January 2026, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

G. Orkney Islands Council – Rousay Transport

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding connectivity between ferry services and the start of the school day for secondary pupils. While recognising the importance of reliable transport for pupils, members expressed concern that adjusting the timetable primarily around school times would have a detrimental impact on the wider community, particularly other commuters, business users and those attending appointments. It was noted that such changes could place additional pressure on crew duty hours and risk non-compliance with the relevant working time directive. Members therefore agreed that they do not support any changes to the current timetable, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would pass this feedback to Orkney Islands Council.
2. 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 13 November 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £33,703.92.

B. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the CCGS statement for Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council as at 13 November 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that the amount left within the main capping limit was £3.34, and that the balances remaining in the additional and island capping limits were £540 and £755 respectively.

C. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund statement for Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council as at 13 November 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that there was £6,677.80 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 13 November 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that there was £7,535 remaining available to allocate to projects.

7. Financial Request - Rousay Parent Council – Christmas Tree Donation

Following consideration of a request from Rousay Parent Council for funding towards the annual Christmas tree and new, more robust lights, and it was:

Resolved that £125 would be awarded via the General Fund.

8. Reports from Representatives

A. Planning

The Planning Representative advised that no new planning applications relevant to the area had been recorded on the Planning Portal since the last meeting, and no updates had been published in relation to pending applications, and it was:

Resolved to note the update.

B. Transport

The Transport Representative summarised updates that were discussed earlier in the meeting, including changes to the ferry timetable to suit the secondary school timetable, Orkney Ferries booking system issues, and the opportunity for late night ferry sailings in 2026, and it was:

Resolved to note the update.

C. Health and Care

A brief update was provided confirming that a new Advanced Nurse Practitioner will be appointed to serve Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre. The successful candidate currently worked in a similar role on another isle, and the appointment was being progressed through HR. A start date had not yet been confirmed, and it was:

Resolved to note the update.

9. Publications

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

- VAO Training and Funding Update – October 2025, November 2025.
- VAO Newsletter – October 2025, November 2025.
- Letter from School Place – October 2025.
- Scottish Water Stakeholder Newsletter – Autumn/Winter 2025.
- PSTN Switch-Off – October 2025.
- ORSAS Quarterly Newsletter – November 2025.
- Community Councils Scotland Training Opportunities – November 2025.

10. Any Other Competent Business

A. Wyre School

Members noted correspondence from Orkney Islands Council advising that electrical improvements were required to the distribution board and sockets at the property, and that the building appeared to have been unused for some time. The sender requested that engagement take place with the Wyre community to confirm whether the property was still in use, in order to inform consideration of mothballing it in the short to medium term and identifying an alternative location for the island emergency helicopter lights.

It was noted that the switch for the Development Trust's turbine is located within the building, and queried whether smaller housing could be created to allow the building to be emptied, and it was:

Resolved for the Clerk to pass the information to Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre Development Trust to engage with the Wyre community.

B. Arrears to OIC

A member requested clarification on the total amount currently owed to Orkney Islands Council in respect of rent arrears and outstanding council tax across Orkney as a whole and asked that this information be provided to a future meeting, and it was:

Resolved for the Clerk to request this information from Orkney Islands Council.

C. Road at Houses

A member requested clarification on whether new fencing will be added to the small housing development on Johnston's Road. It was confirmed that fencing was included in the planning application, and it was:

Resolved to note the information.

D. Sourin Mill

Information had been received from the public that debris and other materials had been dislodged from the Sourin Mill, causing a health and safety risk, and it was:

Resolved for the Clerk to contact the owner to request that the area is kept clear, and loose fixtures are secured.

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 Wednesday, 4 February at 19:30.

12. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business to discuss, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 21:30.