

Minute of the Meeting of Holm Community Council held in the Graeme Room, Holm Community Centre, Holm, and via Teams on Wednesday, 1 April 2026 at 19:30

Present:

Alan Scott, Martin Lee, Erland Drever, Christine Muir and Bill Robertson.

In Attendance:

- Councillor James R Moar.
- Councillor Gillian Skuse (via Teams).
- SSEN Representatives (via Teams):
 - Hamish Rutherford, Subsea Cables Designer.
 - Mark Steward, Marine Consents Manager.
 - Katy Urquhart, Subsea Cables Environmentalist.
- Hazel Flett, Clerk.

Chair:

- Alan Scott in the Chair.

Order of Business

1. Apologies	2
2. Holm-Burray Subsea Cable Project.....	2
3. Adoption of Minute	2
4. Matters Arising	2
5. Correspondence.....	3
6. Financial Statements.....	5
7. Financial Requests.....	5
8. Consultations	6
9. Publications.....	7
10. Any Other Competent Business	7
11. Date of Next Meeting.....	8
12. Conclusion of Meeting.....	8

1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Karen Spence and Robbie Thomson and Councillor Raymie S Peace.

2. Holm-Burray Subsea Cable Project

After hearing a presentation from representatives of SSEN providing an update on the Holm-Burray subsea cable project, it was:

Resolved to note that arrangements would be made for the landside team to make a presentation to the Community Council.

3. Adoption of Minute

The Minute of the Meeting held on 28 January 2026 was approved, being proposed by Christine Muir and seconded by Erland Drever.

4. Matters Arising

A. Local Place Plan

After hearing an update from the Clerk on progress with the Local Place Plan, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the community survey was live and would close on Friday, 10 April 2026.
2. To note that the Steering Group had met on 31 March 2026, with each community group invited to have two to four representatives present to further discuss a more ambitious, but collaborative approach to the future of Holm.
3. To note that the next meeting of the Steering Group was scheduled for 21 April 2026, at which a first draft of the Local Place Plan would be available for review.

B. St Mary's Christmas Decorations

Following consideration of a proposal from Martin Lee regarding extending the Christmas decorations to both ends of the main road throughout St Mary's, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk should purchase eight motifs in 2026 and four motifs in 2027 and arrange for these to alternate and/or replace the braids, including fitting sockets on the lighting columns, where required.
2. That the Clerk should apply for assistance from Cooke Aquaculture and Scottish Sea Farms Limited, towards the cost of the additional Christmas lights.

C. Maintenance of Kirkyard Gate

The Clerk advised that, once work had commenced on the kirkyard gate, it was obvious that further works were required, which was subsequently authorised via email to all members, and it was:

Resolved to note that the cost of the works had increased by £400 plus VAT, which would be met from the Community Council Grant Scheme, subject to assistance being approved.

D. War Memorial

The Clerk advised that she was still awaiting a response from Ewan Mackenzie regarding works to the area surrounding the war memorial, and it was:

Resolved that the Chair should speak to Ewan Mackenzie and report back.

E. Holm Community Heritage

The Clerk advised that Holm Community Heritage had provided evidence of expenditure in relation to the provision of solar panels and a battery pack, which was eligible for assistance from the Community Council Grant Scheme, and it was:

Resolved to note that the assistance previously approved, amounting to £500, to be met from the Community Council Grant Scheme, would be paid in 2026/2027.

F. Financial Assistance – Notes of Thanks

The Clerk advised that she had received notes of thanks from individuals regarding financial assistance received from the Community Council, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

5. Correspondence

A. Burial Grounds Grass Cutting

Following consideration of a briefing note from Orkney Islands Council setting out the results of feedback requested on the maintenance costs associated with grass cutting in active and inactive graveyards, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the contents of the correspondence, including that, for 2026/2027, Orkney Islands Council would only be funding eight cuts of the burial grounds at St Nicholas, Holm.
2. To note that a tender had been accepted in 2025, for kirkyard grass cutting for three years, for 10 cuts per annum, resulting in the Community Council being required to meet the cost of two cuts per annum for 2026 and 2027.
3. That the Community Council should meet the cost of the two additional cuts in 2026 and 2027, subject to assistance from the Community Council Grant Scheme being approved.

B. Electrical Safety Campaign

Following consideration of correspondence from Ron Bailey regarding the ongoing electrical safety campaign associated with lithium-ion batteries, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

C. Sailing Development Officer – Letter of Support

The Clerk had received correspondence from Holm Sailing Club requesting a letter of support for funding applications in relation to an Orkney Sailing Development Officer, with a short timescale for response and, after receiving support from a majority of Community Councillors via email, it was:

Resolved to note that a letter of support had been provided to Holm Sailing Club.

D. Scottish Islands Federation – Events and Consultations

Following consideration of correspondence from the Scottish Islands Federation providing details of various events and consultations happening during March 2026, including a public invitation for groups and communities to register an interest in hosting a baton visit ahead of the Commonwealth Games, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

E. Orkney Marine Planning Stakeholder Update

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council advising that the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan had been formally adopted by Scottish Ministers, establishing a new statutory framework for managing marine activities out to 12 nautical miles from the coast, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

F. Royal British Legion Best Kept War Memorial Competition

Following consideration of correspondence from the Kirkwall branch of the Royal British Legion regarding the best kept war memorial competition, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that Holm War Memorial should not be entered in the 2026 competition.

G. Bag the Bruck

Following consideration of correspondence from Greener Orkney regarding arrangements for Bag the Bruck, which was taking place during April 2026, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the Clerk had received one expression of interest for grant assistance in respect of Bag the Bruck activities.

2. That a donation of £300, to be split equally between any organisation who applied prior to undertaking any Bag the Bruck activities during April 2026, be provided, subject to assistance from the Community Council Grant Scheme being approved.

6. Financial Statements

A. General Finance

After consideration of the General Finance statement as at 16 March 2026, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the estimated balance as at 16 March 2026 of £8,541.86.

B. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the 2025/26 Community Council Grant Scheme statement as at 16 March 2026, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that, as at 16 March 2026, projects to the value of £8,287.12 had been approved, of which £6,889.52 had been claimed.
2. To note the balance remaining for approval within the main capping limit of -£78.94.
3. To note the balance remaining for approval within the additional capping limit of £257.02.

C. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund statement as at 16 March 2026, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the balance remaining for approval of £1,000.

D. Seed Corn Fund

Following consideration of the Seed Corn Fund statement as at 16 March 2026, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the balance remaining for approval of £0.

7. Financial Requests

A. St Andrews Primary School

Following consideration of an application from St Andrews Primary School requesting financial assistance towards the P7 Outdoor Activities Trip to Lagganlia between 25 and 29 May 2026, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £40 be given towards each pupil resident in Holm.

B. Holm Community Association

Following consideration of correspondence from Holm Community Association requesting financial assistance towards the purchase of kitchen equipment, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that, at the previous meeting, members had agreed to provide assistance of £2,300 towards the purchase of a dishwasher, subject to assistance from the Community Council Grant Scheme being approved.
2. To note that Holm Community Association had subsequently requested assistance towards the purchase of a gas cooker and an extractor fan, in addition to the dishwasher, at an overall total cost of £5,300.
3. That assistance totalling £5,300 be awarded towards the purchase of kitchen equipment, subject to assistance from the Community Council Grant Scheme being approved.

C. Loch of Ayre Walkway Association

Following consideration of correspondence from the Loch of Ayre Walkway Association requesting financial assistance towards the purchase of Easter eggs as small prizes for taking part in an Easter Egg hunt as part of the Spring Fair, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £75 be made.

D. Holm Parish Football Club

The Clerk had received correspondence from Holm Parish Football Club requesting financial assistance towards offsetting the cost of the Holm Parish team travelling to Shetland to take part in the Inter County Parish Cup, to be held on 16 May 2026, and it was:

Resolved that no assistance be provided.

8. Consultations

A. SEPA – Flood Risk Management Plans

Following consideration of correspondence from SEPA seeking views, by 22 April 2026, on local flooding concerns in areas identified as having the highest flooding risk, to help inform the Flood Risk Management Plans covering the period 2028 to 2034, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that individual responses should be encouraged.

B. Winter Service Policy

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council requesting feedback on the Winter Service Policy, the operational document which specified how the Council would treat the road network, including salt spread rates, temperatures initiating salt treatments and depth of snow required before ploughing, for which responses were required by 9 April 2026, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should write to Orkney Islands Council advising that the Community Council had no comment to make on the existing policy.

C. Verge Maintenance Plan 2026 Update

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council seeking reports of injurious or noxious weeds or problem areas to be considered for the safety cut list for 2026, for which responses were required by 30 April 2026, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

9. Publications

The following publications had been sent to the Clerk and were forwarded to members via email:

- VAO Newsletters – January, February and March 2026.
- ORSAS Quarterly Newsletter – February 2026.
- VAO Orkney – Training and Funding Updates – February and March 2026.
- Orkney Islands Council – Community Payback Unpaid Work Scheme.
- Police Scotland – Recruitment Event.

10. Any Other Competent Business

A. Roads Matters

After hearing representations from various members regarding roads issues, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should write to Orkney Islands Council highlighting the following issues and asking that remedial works be undertaken:

- The brig at the entrance to Hestwall Farm was showing signs of collapse.
- An area of the main road at the bottom of the hill below Kirkbreck had an uneven surface which was causing issues for vehicles.

B. Flower Tubs in the Village

After hearing representations from the Clerk regarding the flower tubs in the village, it was:

Resolved that flowers be provided in the six tubs in the village and the two tubs at the war memorial, subject to assistance from the Community Council Grant Scheme being approved.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Following consideration of future meeting dates, it was:

Resolved that the next meeting of Holm Community Council should be held on 10 June 2026 in the Holm Community Centre, commencing at 19:30.

12. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 21:08.