

Minute of the Meeting of Stromness Community Council held via Teams, on Tuesday, 26 August 2025 at 19:00

Present:

Phyllis McLaughlin, Kris Bevan, David Harrold, William Mackay and Corrine Sinclair.

In Attendance:

- Councillor Graham Bevan.
- Councillor Lindsay Hall.
- Councillor Janette Park.
- John McGlynn, Executive Manager, Orkney Research and Innovation Campus.
- Harvey Stevenson, Head of Strategic Projects, Highlands and Islands Enterprise.
- Andrew Bruce, Director, HRI Munro Architect.
- Gavin Fraser, Architect, HRI Munro Architect.
- Graeme Horne, Business Manager, Stromness Academy.
- Sandra Craigie, Clerk.
- 1 member of the Press.

Chair:

- Phyllis McLaughlin.

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1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been intimated on behalf of Marion Sutherland.

2. Orkney Research and Innovation Campus

Due to the sensitive nature of this item, it was taken in private.

As Councillors L Hall and J Park were both members of the Planning Committee, both declared an interest and left the meeting for this item.

The Chair welcomed J McGlynn, H Stevenson, G Fraser and A Bruce to the meeting who had requested to attend a meeting with Stromness Community Council, to address points which had been raised previously, prior to the resubmission of their planning proposal.

The Director of HRI Munro Architect thanked Stromness Community Council for making space on the agenda for them to attend the meeting and informed members that following the refusal of their recent planning application, the decision had been taken that, rather than appeal the decision, they would address the stated planning reasons it was refused and would work to address the concerns raised.

Following a presentation and discussion, the Director thanked members for their initial comments and indicated that should the members have any further comments either positive or negative to fully reflect the view of the community council they should let him know via the ORIC Executive Manager.

The Chair commented that the community council would wait until the designs had been submitted to Planning before any letter was submitted, as by that stage the community council would be able to have a more open discussion.

The Chair thanked the ORIC, HIE and Architect representatives for their attendance at the meeting, who all left the meeting at this point.

The Business Manager, Stromness Academy, joined the meeting at this point.

3. Gym Opening Times at Stromness Academy

Due to the sensitive nature of this item, it was taken in private.

K Bevan thanked the Business Manager for attending the meeting to discuss the issues of the gym opening times at Stromness Academy, which he had raised at previous meetings. Referring to the successful trial that had taken place approximately two years ago which had been well received by Active Life members, he thought there was a feeling in the community that if the gym were open, it would supplement the gym at Stromness Swimming Pool rather than be in competition with it.

Following a discussion around opening times of the Stromness Academy gym, the Chair thanked the Business Manager for his attendance in what had been a very positive meeting.

The Business Manager left the meeting at this point.

The remainder of the meeting was held in public.

4. Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2025 were approved, being proposed by P McLaughlin and seconded by D Harrold.

5. Matters Arising

A. PA System

K Bevan provided an update, advising that they had missed the initial proposed dates to get the new system in place. However, this had given Stromness Development Trust the time to pause, reflect and seek additional funding. He advised that it was now hoped that the system would be in place in 2026. The Chair informed K Bevan that the Clerk was waiting for confirmation of bank details to enable Stromness Community Council's donation of £2,000, which had been agreed at the previous meeting, to be transferred, which he confirmed he would chase up, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

B. Orkney 2025 – Feedback

The Chair advised that finance associated with Orkney 2025 had been for flags, flowers for the display at Stromness Academy, hanging baskets, "Welcome to Stromness" banner, and the cost associated with the hanging of the bunting. She confirmed that there had been a donation received from SSEN towards the costs associated with the bunting. Regarding the bunting, she understood that K Casely would be taking it down when he was doing checks associated with the Christmas lights. She confirmed D Flett had received a payment for the erection of the bunting and wondered whether D Jessiman, who had not charged for his time, should be given a small gift as a thanks, which was agreed by members.

The Chair further informed members that she had received a note of thanks from the Flower Club who had thanked her for the privilege of doing the flowers. She had also had a note of thanks from Clan, thanking Stromness Community Council for the hamper which had been donated to be used as a raffle.

K Bevan congratulated all the Island Games volunteers and commented that Orkney 2025 had been an amazing event, particularly the Triathlon which had been held in Stromness, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the information provided.
2. That a suitable gift, in the region of £30, would be purchased as a thanks to D Jessiman for all his assistance.

C. Abandoned Car near GMB Garden

Resolved to note that both cars had now been removed.

D. Signs – Motorhomes

The Chair informed members that, as yet, no information had been received from the relevant section regarding the erection of signs to stop motorhomes going through the street to the camp site, which the Clerk would chase up.

Councillor G Bevan referred to motorhomes camping wild camping in areas such as the west shore and at the Gun Beacon, and wondered whether there was any way, particularly at the Gun Beacon, that would stop motorhomes blocking the bench that was there, and following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would contact the relevant section regarding the signs to stop motorhomes going through the street to the camp site.
2. That Councillor G Bevan would contact the relevant section to discuss potential ways to stop motorhomes parking so close to the bench at the Gun Beacon.

E. Quanterness Community Benefit

Councillor G Bevan updated members that the policy had previously been agreed by the Council that any benefit from the Orkney Community Wind Farm project would see 60% of the money go to the community council where the project was built, with the remaining 40% being split between the remaining community councils. However, this decision had been made when there were other windfarms in the pipeline, which he felt was a good argument for having the policy, and fairness of the amount of benefit community councils would receive, revisited.

Councillor L Hall agreed that with it only being Quanterness Windfarm that had received the green light to go ahead, the policy should be revisited.

A member commented that he had raised the matter at the previous meeting and for him it was about fairness. It was the whole of Orkney that would bear the inconvenience of the project, therefore the funds should be fairly split across community councils and urged Councillors investigate ways in which the decision could be revisited.

A member commented that she had various examples of other areas that were in receipt of community benefit from windfarms, such as Elgin, where every community hall that could see a windfarm receives a payout, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

F. Warebeth Coastal Path

Councillor L Hall informed members that due to staffing issues, as well as limited clients in the Criminal Justice system, Criminal Justice were unable to assist with the maintenance of the coastal path at Warebeth meantime. He confirmed that he would

keep in contact with Criminal Justice regarding this matter and would update the community council if there were further updates, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

6. Correspondence

A. Pier Arts Centre – Update – Former Stromness Post Office

K Bevan declared an interest in this part of this item, in that he was the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Following consideration of correspondence received from N Firth, Director, The Pier Arts Centre, copies of which had been circulated, regarding their progress in the redevelopment of the former Stromness Post Office, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

B. Safety Issues with Tractors on Loons Road

Following consideration of correspondence received from M Scott, copies of which had been circulated, regarding safety concerns regarding tractors and slurry tanks going up and down the road from the SSEN site to Stromness Reservoir, and following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the Head of Infrastructure Services had contacted Stromness Community Council and confirmed:

- That they were aware of potential damage to the Loons Road and would be visiting to record the condition of the road and identify any repairs which would then be passed on to the relevant contractor to repair.
- That regarding the size and speed of the vehicles was a matter for Police Scotland.

2. To note that Councillor G Bevan had contacted the SSEN Community Liaison Officer directly to raise the concerns, which had been taken on board, and a response had been sent to M Scott.

C. VAO – Membership Renewal

Following consideration of correspondence received from VAO, copies of which had been circulated, regarding renewing membership for 2025/2026, and after discussion, it was:

Resolved to renew the membership subscription of VAO for 2025/2026 at a cost of £15.

D. Incredible Edible

Following consideration of correspondence received from Incredible Edible Stromness, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that Incredible Edible Stromness were now going to focus on maintaining and caring for the plants that were already in place.
2. To note that rather than trying to establish any more at this stage they were notifying that they did not need the remainder of their grant money from Stromness Community Council.
3. That the remaining funds which had been allocated to Incredible Edible Stromness would now be available for other projects that met the criteria of the Seedcorn Fund.

E. Ayre Offshore Windfarm

Following consideration of correspondence received from Thistle Wind Partners, copies of which had been previously circulated, regarding a Supply Chain event that had been arranged for Wednesday, 27 August 2025, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

7. Consultation - OIC (20mph Speed Limit) (Various Roads in Stromness) Order 2025

Following consideration of correspondence received from Democratic Services, copies of which had been previously circulated, regarding the proposed 20mph Speed Limit in Various Roads in Stromness Order 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that Stromness Community Council had responded to the consultation prior to the deadline of 21 July 2025.

8. Publications

Resolved to note that no publications had been received.

9. Reports from Community Council Representatives

A. MARS Updates

Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note that D Harrold had reported the damaged safety cover panel on the streetlight near Stromness Co-op.

B. Stromness Development Trust

Following an update from the Stromness Development Trust representative, it was:

Resolved to note that work was still progressing in the background regarding Stromness Community Centre.

C. Stromness Local Place Plan Working Group

Following an update from K Bevan, it was:

Resolved to note that Stromness Development Trust had taken the lead regarding the funding to update the place plan, with a meeting planned to meet with the consultants and review of the place plan early 2026.

10. Financial Statements

A. Community Council General Fund

Following consideration of the General Finance statement as at 15 August 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £14,303.85.

B. Donations Account

Following consideration of the Donations Account statement as at 15 August 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the balance was £1,756.72 of which £1,050.72 was to be solely used for the upkeep and maintenance of the stage area.

C. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the 2025/2026 Community Council Grant Scheme statement as at 18 August 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the balance remaining for the Community Council Grant Scheme 2025/26 was £1,883.49.

D. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund Statement as at 15 August 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that the balance remaining for approval was £6,524.04.

E. Seed Corn Fund

Following consideration of the Seed Corn Fund Statement as at 15 August 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the Seed Corn Fund had been fully allocated.
2. That although all the funding had been fully allocated, there were still monies that had not yet been claimed.

11. Requests for Financial Assistance

A. C Bevan – Orkney Gymnastics – Aberdeen – 22 June 2025

K Bevan declared an interest in this part of this item and, although did not leave the meeting, took no part in discussions thereof.

Following consideration of correspondence received from C Bevan, copies of which had been circulated, requesting financial assistance towards attending a gymnastics competition in Aberdeen on 22 June 2025, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £25 be given.

B. 1st Dounby Rainbows – Thurso Day Trip – 14 September 2025

Following consideration of correspondence received from 1st Dounby Rainbows, copies of which had been circulated, requesting financial assistance towards three Stromness residents attending a day trip to Thurso with 1st Dounby Rainbows on 14 September 2025, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £25 each resident, totalling £75, be given.

12. Any Other Competent Business

A. Male Public Toilets – Ferry Road, Stromness

A member had raised in July that the male public toilets on Ferry Road were closed. He confirmed that this was still the case and was still unaware of why they were closed, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk contact the relevant section for an update.

B. Cameras – Ferry Road

A member had previously raised that the cameras had been erected again in July 2025 which he had ascertained were for part of the Safe Routes to School survey, and following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

C. Stromness Town House

A member informed that he had been approached by a member of the public regarding the need for maintenance to be carried out on Stromness Town House. He had inspected the property and had previously circulated photos to members of the areas, such as doors and window frames, that were in need of maintenance.

He further commented that he had been approached by a former Chair of Stromness Community Council regarding the Lord Lyon Coat of Arms which was framed and in the Town House chamber. It had been suggested that this should be moved to the Warehouse Building and, following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would contact the relevant section regarding the need for maintenance of the Town House.
2. That the Clerk would investigate the possibility of moving the framed Lord Lyon Coat of Arms to an area in the Warehouse Building.

D. Building Works in Conservation Area

A member raised concern regarding the restrictions in place regarding building works in conservation areas, giving the example that there were a number of old properties in Stromness that were no longer in use which people should be encouraged to restore rather than having to jump through all the restrictions and associated costs that were in place, and following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

E. Ferry Terminal and Other Harbour Buildings

A member raised that the Ferry Terminal building, along with other harbour-owned properties in Stromness, such as the Eventide Club and the RNLI building, needed maintenance work carried out on them, and following discussion, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would contact the relevant section highlighting the need for maintenance at the Ferry Terminal, Eventide and RNLI buildings.

F. Benches at Graham Place

The Chair raised that she had been contacted by a member of the public regarding the recently painted public benches in Graham Place, which had been painted the same colour as the residents window boxes. There was concern from the member of the public that there would be the perception that these benches were for private use, rather than public use. The Chair had informed the member of the public that the resident had asked permission to paint the benches. However, the community council had not stipulated what colour the benches should be, and following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

G. Bins at Manse Lane

The Chair raised that she had been approached by a member of the public regarding the bin, which was now situated at the bottom of Manse Lane, and following discussion, it was:

Resolved that the Chair would contact the individual concerned regarding the bin.

H. Trees at Hillside Road

The Chair raised that there was a lot of debris on the pavement and road coming from the trees at Hillside Road, which also had overhanging branches some of which obscured the streetlights, and following discussion, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would raise the issue of the trees with the relevant section of the Council.

I. Weeds

A member raised the issue of the weeds in lanes, paths and walkways throughout Stromness, and following discussion, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would raise the issue with the relevant section of the Council.

J. Additional Costs Associated with Installing the Chevrons at Bridges

A member raised that at the meeting held on 17 June 2025, a query had been raised regarding how much time had been spent to erect the chevrons at bridges and would like a response to that question, and following discussion, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would contact the relevant section requesting a response.

K. Car Parking in Stromness

A member raised the issue of cars parking in the short-term spaces, and following discussion, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would contact Police Scotland to raise the issue again.

L. Gravediggers Shed, Stromness Kirkyard

A member raised that the issue with slates coming off the Gravediggers Shed at Stromness Kirkyard had still not been resolved despite having been highlighted by Stromness Community Council on a number of occasions, and following discussion, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would raise the issue with the relevant section again, as this was now a serious safety issue.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Resolved that the next meeting of the Stromness Community Council would be held in the John Rae Room, Warehouse Buildings, on Tuesday, 30 September 2025 at 19:30.

14. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 21:15.