

# **Minute of the Meeting of Harray and Sandwich Community Council held in the Milestone Community Church and via Teams on Wednesday, 12 March 2025 at 19:30**

## **Present:**

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

## **In Attendance:**

- Councillor R King.
- Councillor O Tierney.
- Councillor D Tullock.
- Mrs N Tait, Orkney Goose Group.
- Mr S Hay, Orkney Goose Group.
- Mr G Barr, Interim Head, Planning and Community Protection.
- Mrs J Montgomery, Empowering Communities Liaison Officer.
- Mrs H Keveren, West Mainland Link Officer/Clerk.
- Ms C Kelday, Community Council Liaison Assistant.

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## **1. Apologies**

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Mr C Kirkness and Councillor J Stevenson.

## **2. Presentation – Orkney Goose Group**

Mrs N Tait and Mr S Hay representing the Orkney Goose Group presented members with an interesting insight into the work which the Orkney Goose Group in partnership with various local and National groups were undertaking to tackle the issue of Grey Lag Geese in Orkney. They explained that Orkney had both migratory geese, which can see numbers of 40,000 – 60,000 over the winter months, along with resident geese which has been as high as 30,000. These numbers caused a real issue to agriculture with estimates predicting each goose will eat up to 1kg of fresh grass a day, costing Orkney farmers one million pound each year. Many no longer grow crops and were importing instead.

The Group had various methods available to them which were undertaken at opportune times of the year to tackle the problem, and figures showed a decline in the resident geese with figures in 2025 estimated at 17,000, compared to 27,000 the previous year.

Funding was a major issue with small amounts awarded each year from the Scottish Government which was managed on behalf of the group by the National Farmers Union. A great deal of the work was being carried out by volunteers locally to assist with the project. They mentioned that Orkney was ahead of other areas in Scotland also facing the issue with geese and successful methods were being passed on from the Orkney group. Following the report, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

The representatives from the Orkney Goose Group left the meeting at this point.

## **3. Adoption of Minutes**

The minute of the meeting held on 29 January 2025 was approved, being proposed by Mr K Groundwater and seconded by Mr G Brown.

## **4. Matters Arising**

### **A. Dounby School Play Park Fund**

Mrs E Grant reported that since the last meeting there had been no in person meetings with the group but a few telephone calls, and it was hoped to arrange a meeting soon to move things forward with the plans for the play park, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the above information.

### **B. Speed Check Lights – Dounby**

It was advised that Harray and Sandwick Community Council had requested via the business letter the purchase and installation of a minimum of two 'Smiley Faces' for the village of Dounby. A response was received that this request had been noted,

and it was hoped that external funding would become available to allow the provision of speed indication devices in Dounby. The results of the recent trackers which had been positioned at the four entries to the village had been circulated to members and, after discussion, members felt that the information was not in an easy-to-understand format, and it was:

Resolved to request via the business letter that some guidance be offered on reading the various statistics given on the report.

### **C. Benches**

Members were advised that three benches had been ordered for the parish, two to be situated at Skail Beach and one at Strathborg. A funding application had been submitted to Voluntary Action Orkney to assist with the purchase but at the time of the meeting no decision had been received. The remaining cost or entire cost would be funded from the Community Council Grant Scheme. Discussion followed regarding the installation of the benches, and Mr S Tait agreed to liaise with Mr K Groundwater about suitable brackets for securing the benches, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the above information.

### **D. SUSTRANS – Friends of Dounby**

Members were advised that both the Community School and the local Care Home had been approached to join 'Friends of Dounby' and submit their appropriate Travel Plans to SUSTRANS. Members had been advised of an online event and an open survey to capture broader information around the journeys people make within Dounby on a regular basis, and the West Mainland Link Officer had attended the meeting and stressed the importance to members to complete the survey and encourage as many people as possible to also do so. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the above information and that the survey had been shared on the Facebook page along with posters distributed throughout the village.

### **E. Market Green Update**

An update had been received and circulated ahead of the meeting to members advising that work was progressing, and the contractor was attempting to find more resources. The Scottish Water approval was still required for waste and water, oil tanks had been filled, and the general site work was moving ahead, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

### **F. St Peters Carpark**

Members were advised that the Contractor was hoping to complete the work at St Peters Carpark as soon as the weather allowed, and it was:

Resolved to note the above information.

## **G. Request for additional Bus Shelters**

Discussion resumed regarding the request for additional bus shelters within the parish. The member of the public who had raised the initial query had been contacted to supply information on suggested locations and potential usage, and they had since come back suggesting that an online survey could be used to determine the need for additional shelters. Discussion followed, and members felt that to capture reliable data, Stagecoach should be contacted to request passenger data from the routes around the parishes, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would contact Stagecoach for this information.

## **H. Dounby Community School**

Members were advised that the Head Teacher from Dounby Community School had agreed to be part of the Sustrans 'Friends of Dounby' group, which would work together with the Community to promote safer areas for 'Walking, Wheeling and Cycling' in the village. A letter had been received from school advising that they had set up a 'Safer Routes to School' group who had commenced working on a Travel Plan and requested involvement from the Community Council. Discussion followed, and members felt that the Education Department would be better suited to assist them with the Travel Plan, and it was:

Resolved to respond accordingly and encourage the school to make parents aware of the open Sustrans survey to record concerns.

## **I. Dounby Amenity Site Proposed Closure**

Members were reminded that, after first hearing about the proposed closure of the Dounby Amenity site in the public consultation, a request had been submitted to the Council that any major items relating to areas covered by the Community Council be relayed to them ahead of public consultation. A response had been received from relevant officers that they may review the procedures for any surveys being undertaken in the future. Members were also advised that the Elected Members had, as a result of the survey, voted to keep the amenity site open, although this would be reviewed on a yearly basis, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the above information.

## **J. Christmas Tree Lights**

Members were advised that the replacement Christmas Tree Lights had been ordered, and the cost would be split with Birsay Community Council paying a 1/3 share. The lights would only be despatched in July so the cost would be taken from the next financial years' allocation of CC Grant Scheme funding. Discussion followed regarding the storage of the lights once received which the Chairman agreed to arrange, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the above information.

## **K. Drainage Sandwich Cemetery**

Members were informed that a request had been made by business letter to the Council to review the issue with flooding which had been experienced during the heavy spells of rain in the new Cemetery in Sandwich. This matter had been reported to the relevant officers for their attention, but no response had been received ahead of the meeting. Discussion followed that members of the committee were aware of letters having been sent out from the Council advising those who had already purchased plots that some areas of the kirkyard were no longer suitable for double layers, and it was:

Resolved to await a response to the initial request.

## **L. Dyke behind Smithfield Hotel**

Members resumed discussion regarding the dyke behind the Smithfield Hotel in Dounby which had been knocked down by a member of the Community Council for safety reasons. The question had been raised with the Council regarding the ownership and responsibility for the dyke, and the matter had been reported to the relevant officers for their attention, however no response had been received ahead of the meeting, and it was:

Resolve to await a response to the initial request.

## **M. Strathborg Trees**

Mr G Brown informed members that he had received advice from the Orkney Woodland Project regarding the maintenance required for the trees which were planted at Strathborg last year. Members discussed and suggested that a date be set for the maintenance at the next meeting on 14 May 2025 when the weather would be more favourable, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the above information.

# **5. Correspondence**

## **A. NHS Orkney – Quit your Orkney Way**

Correspondence had previously been circulated to members advising them of the services available from NHS Orkney to support those wishing to stop smoking and how the resources can be made available, and it was:

Resolved to note the above information.

## **B. Voluntary Action Orkney – Small Grants Scheme**

Members considered correspondence previously circulated from VAO advising that the Small Grants Scheme had opened for applications. Groups could apply for grants of up to £500 to assist with a project or activity to help the community, and it was:

Resolved to note Harray and Sandwich Community Council had submitted an application for assistance towards the funding of the benches.

### **C. Orkney Quiet Routes**

Correspondence had previously been circulated to members from Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure providing an update on the Orkney Quiet Routes project. The brief explained that, following in person community consultations, posts had been erected to collect data from identified 'Quiet Routes'. Although there was no further progress with the project, the Council would continue to collect data and it was hoped to re-engage with the Community Councils in the near future, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the above information.

### **D. Kathryn Johnson – Visitor Levy**

Following consideration of correspondence received from a resident of the Western Isles asking that members respond to the Highland Council Visitor Levy consultation and requesting an immediate pause on the rollout until the full impact on island communities can be properly understood and addressed, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the above.

### **E. Local Place Plans**

Following consideration of correspondence previously circulated from Development and Marine Planning, members were advised that there was some more flexibility in the submission date for Local Place Plans. Councillor R King gave members an insight to the importance of Place Plans and commended the Community Council on the work with the Dounby Place Plan. Members were reminded that you could still feed into Development Plans without having a Place Plan. After lengthy discussion it was agreed to see if some match funding would be available as, without that, Harray and Sandwick Community Council would not be able to fund, and it was:

Resolved to enquire via business letter if funding was available before moving forward with a Place Plan.

### **F. Our Budget Challenge – Survey Results**

Members considered correspondence, copies of which had previously been circulated, advising members of the outcome of the Our Budget Challenge survey, and that the open consultation had seen responses from 1,077 members of the community which was an increase on responses from similar previous requests which the Council felt was an understanding from the public of the financial challenges faced. It was advised that the results would be available online for all to view. A discussion followed, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the above.

### **G. Stenness Community Association – Shape the future of Stenness**

Following consideration of correspondence previously circulated from Stenness Community Association, inviting members to a Community Conversations event bringing together various groups and organisations to discuss key projects involved in shaping the community, it was:

Resolved to note that the event had now passed.

## **H. Thank you Letters**

Members were advised that letters of thanks had been received from Stenness Community School, Jenna Miller and Dounby Community School, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the letters.

## **6. Consultations**

### **A. Development and Marine Planning – Trees and Woodland Strategy**

Following consideration of correspondence circulated from Development and Marine Planning asking for feedback on the Trees and Woodland Strategy, advising that despite there being no forests in Orkney it was a requirement of the local authority to submit, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the above information.

### **B. Scottish Community Development Centre**

Following consideration of correspondence circulated to members from Scottish Community Development Centre advising that they would be hosting a number of community conversations across Scotland to gather opinions on community benefits from offshore and onshore renewable energy developments, it was:

Resolved to note that members could register their interest to find out more.

### **C. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service – Strategic Plan 2025-2028**

Correspondence had previously been circulated to members from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service asking members to review the draft Strategy for 2025-2028. This critical document ensures that the Fire and Rescue Service remained fully committed to improving the safety and wellbeing of the communities both now and in the future, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the above information.

### **D. National Speed Management Review – Online Engagement**

Following consideration of correspondence previously circulated from the Scottish Government about online engagement sessions relating to the National Speed Management review whereby they were considering reducing the national speed limit on single carriageways from 60mph to 50mph, discussion followed, and it was:

Resolved to note that the sessions had now passed.

### **E. SEPA – Proposed changes to Environmental Regulation**

Following consideration of correspondence previously circulated from Scottish Environmental Protection Agency advising members and requesting they participate

in the consultation of proposed changes to how they authorise and regulate waste management, water and industrial activities, it was:

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

## **F. 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 benefit from renewable energy developments, it was:

Resolved to note that the event would be held on 26 March 2025.

## **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 £12,119.65 as at 24 February 2025.

### **B. Community Council Grant Scheme**

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

Resolved to note there was no balance remaining for approval in the main capping limit and the balance in the additional capping limit was £765 as at 24 February 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 24 February 2025.

## **8. Applications for Financial Assistance**

### **A. Dounby Community School – P7 Hoy Trip**

Members considered correspondence received from Dounby Community School requesting assistance towards the Primary 7 planned trip to Hoy in June 2025. Eleven of the pupils attending the trip resided in the parishes of Harray and Sandwick so members agreed via email to award as per policy, and it was:

Resolved to note that £640 be awarded from the Community Council Grant Scheme on evidence of receipts.



## **B. K Ritch – U17 Netball Trip**

Following consideration of correspondence previously circulated to members via email from Mrs K Ritch on behalf of her daughter who had been selected to attend an U17's netball trip off island, it was:

Resolved to note that members had agreed to award as per policy £40 from the General Fund.

## **C. Orkney Folk Festival – Harray Concert**

Following consideration of correspondence received from Orkney Folk Festival requesting assistance towards hosting a concert in Harray as part of the 2025 Festival, it was:

Resolved to award £200 from the General Fund.

## **9. Publications**

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

- VAO – Newsletter – January, February 2025.
- VAO - Training and Funding Update – February 2025.
- ORSAS – Newsletter – January, February 2025.

## **10. Any Other Competent Business**

### **A. Interpretation Board – Market Green**

Members were advised that a request had been submitted to the Council for an interpretation board to be included in the finished project at the Market Green to acknowledge the involvement of the Community Council along with the funders of the project, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the above.

### **B. Bag the Bruck**

Members were advised that it would be later in March before it would be announced if the Bag the Bruck campaign was happening this year. There was £300 available in Community Council Grant Scheme for such events, and it was agreed to split this accordingly between any groups who applied. One application had been received from Milestone Community Church who planned to do a beach tidy at Skail in April, and it was:

Resolved to split the money between any groups who apply.

### **C. Verge Cutting**

Councillor O Tierney raised the Council policy to only cut the verges around the countryside once a year as part of the cost cutting, and it had been agreed to do this in September. This item had previously been discussed at the meeting on 29 January 2025 and members had not requested any feedback be supplied to the

Council. Discussion followed and it was agreed that September was too late in the season, and it would be more beneficial to cut earlier, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the above information.

## **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 14 May and 27 August 2025 in the Milestone Community Church and via Teams at 19:30.

## **12. Conclusion of Meeting**

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 21:23.