

Minute of the Meeting of St Andrews and Deerness Community Council held in St Andrews Community Centre on Wednesday, 25 February 2026 at 19.30

Present:

Mr T Craigie, Mr L Flett, Miss J Gowland, Mrs L McAdie, Mr D Paterson, Mr R Reid and Miss R Russell

In Attendance:

- Councillor J Moar.
- Councillor R Peace.
- Councillor G Skuse.
- Mrs J Montgomery, Empowering Communities Liaison Officer.
- Mrs J Lennie, Clerk.
- Mr J Wells, RSPB Representative.

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1. Presentation - RSPB

The RSPB representative gave a presentation to members regarding the RSPB's work and the reserves in Deerness including Copinsay Nature Reserve.

Miss R Russell joined the meeting during the presentation.

Mr J Wells advised that the RSPB was rewriting their 5-year plan for Copinsay and every five years, continue to work to monitor seabirds. Copinsay is a site of national importance for seabirds, cliffs, wildflower areas, storm petrels and nesting gulls and other species including the Great Bumble Bee. The Great Bumble Bee is very rare and is present on Copinsay, in Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles. Copinsay is rat free and continues to be monitored and every two years, rat sniffer dogs check the island. RSPB continues to maintain the house and buildings with the grass maintained, on behalf of the RSPB, by Mr Sidney Foubister.

With regard to greylag geese, the RSPB has joined the plan to control the goose population on their reserves; with 300-350 eggs oiled annually. He advised that the goose population recorded had dropped in 2024 and he hoped that this would continue however 2025 records were awaited. In answer to a question from Councillor J Moar, requesting how many geese were resident on Copinsay he advised that he did not know however there were a significant number on the three Holms; Corn Holm, Flat Holm and Black Holm, especially around the South Loch. He advised that Copinsay and the Holms were all SSSI and goose eggs cannot be oiled on Copinsay. Mr D Paterson asked if shooters could work on Copinsay or crawl them and Mr J Wells advised that the answer was probably not as Nature Scot would not find this permissible. Mr D Paterson advised that perhaps at certain times of year Nature Scot could give this consideration and it may be possible for all to work together to achieve this. Miss R Russell asked where bees lived and was advised underground or in the grassland. Councillor J Moar asked if sheep grazing was a potential management option for the ground nesting birds. Mr J Wells advised that grass cutting maintenance was deemed more appropriate, however the grass cuttings piled up at the side of sites to rot down was not ideal. Mr D Paterson asked if fenced areas for different species and their habitats would be more appropriate and that this may be conducive to Agri Environment funding/grants and perhaps the introduction of cattle and sheep to the island would benefit the natural environment and create a new home for more species/birdlife. Mr J Wells advised that any such scheme would be complicated for the RSPB as this would have to be a five –year commitment and if anything breached the scheme then this would affect all of the RSPB national funding and their work and not just the Copinsay Nature Reserve. He went on to advise that there were options under consideration whereby sheep could graze on the island or specific area and be removed from 15 May to 16 July. He advised that consideration required to be given to whether gulls can be disturbed by sheep and whether there are habitats to preserve, and whether maritime grassland cutting is beneficial to enhance areas for specific species of birds. This could involve trial areas to determine which species would return. Councillor J Moar thought grass cutting may be too late for the ground nesting birds. Mr D Paterson thought the land was dead, with no livestock and no natural fertiliser and that natural fertilisation attracts insects and swallows, larks etc.

With regard to further consultation with the public, Councillor G Skuse and some members thought that RSPB should be present at the East Mainland, County and Dounby shows. Miss R Russell invited the RSPB to be present at an open event being held in the Deerness Community Centre shortly, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided and to note Mr J Wells e-mail address for further updates on the work of the RSPB.

Mr J Wells, RSPB, left the meeting at this point.

2. Apologies

Resolved to note that there were no apologies for absence.

3. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

A. Chairperson

Following the resignation of Mrs N Linklater, the former Chair, the ECLO asked members to consider the appointment of a new Chair and advised that members could vote for themselves.

Votes were cast and counted and Mr L Flett received five votes, Miss J Gowland and Mr T Craigie received one vote each, and it was:

Resolved that Mr L Flett be appointed as Chair of St Andrews and Deerness Community Council.

B. Vice- Chair

The ECLO advised that as Mr Flett had been Vice Chair, an election to this role was now required, and asked members to cast their vote. Votes were counted and Mr T Craigie received five votes, Mr D Paterson and Miss J Gowland received one vote each, and it was:

Resolved that Mr T Craigie be appointed Vice Chair of St Andrews and Deerness Community Council.

The Chair then took the meeting.

4. Adoption of Minutes

The minute of the general meeting held on 12 November 2025 was approved, being proposed by Mr D Paterson and seconded by Mr L Flett.

5. Matters Arising

A. Request to Extend the Stagecoach Service 3 Bus Route

1. Mr A Thorne Request

The Clerk advised that this item should have been discussed at the last meeting however due to her error it had been omitted from the agenda and she had issued

an apology to Mr A Thorne accordingly and he was happy for his correspondence to receive consideration tonight.

Members considered an e-mail from Mr A Thorne thanking the community council for supporting his proposal of an extension to the Stagecoach Service 3 bus route into the back of Tankerness. He suggested that this would improve the public service for residents of Tankerness and he would like to request a trial of this service however was aware that OIC had no budget for this amendment to the service. He wished to inform the community council that he would like to prepare a petition accordingly, and it was:

Resolved to note this information.

2. Orkney Islands Council Response

Members correspondence received via Democratic Services regarding OIC Transport's response to a letter received from Mr A Thorne on his proposal for an extension to the Stagecoach Service 3 bus route into the back of Tankerness, which had raised a number of issues for further consideration by OIC, and it was:

Resolved to note this information.

B. Ayre Offshore Wind Farm Potential Community Benefit

1. Thistle Wind Partners (TWP)

Members considered correspondence from Thistle Wind Partners in response to this community council's request to ascertain and confirm any pledge of community benefit that may be payable to this community council from the Ayre Offshore Wind Farm. TWP's Community Engagement Manager, Mr A Tait, had advised that the project was still in the development stage and its anticipated generation of electricity was 2033. With the Westminster Government reviewing community benefits and shared ownership of large renewable projects, a consultation ending in July 2025, any outcome anticipated would only be progressed in 2026, and it was:

Resolved to note this information.

2. Orkney Islands Council

Following consideration of correspondence from OIC in response to this community council's request to ascertain and confirm any pledge of community benefit that may be payable to this community council from the Ayre Offshore Wind Farm, whereby they advised they were unable to provide a response and any queries in this regard should be directed to TWP, and it was:

Resolved to note this information.

C. OIC 20 MPH Speed Limit Consultation

1. Notice to Objector

Following consideration of correspondence from OIC, in response to this community council, an objector to the proposal to introduce 20 MPH speed limits in Orkney, they

advise that on 17 November 2025 they adopted the 20 MPH speed limit order as the reduced lower speed limit will improve road safety for pedestrians, cyclists, walkers and all other road users for all of the roads specified in the order. The order will come into effect on 8 December 2025, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

2. Freedom of Information Request Response

Following consideration of correspondence from OIC, in response to this community council's freedom of information request, members advised that they were disappointed that an elected Councillor representing this dual parish had not listened to public consultation or the members of this community council and they question their role in any consultation response to OIC. Councillor G Skuse advised that she had voted for 20MPH speed limit implementation, Councillor R Peace had voted against it and Councillor J Moar was not a member of the Development & Infrastructure committee so had no vote. Councillor G Skuse advised that many members of the public and she herself was in favour of the 20MPH speed limit implementation. Mr T Craigie advised that he knew many members of the public not in favour of this implementation and some members who were in in favour and had not weighed up the repercussions well and now realised that this would impact every delivery and haulage item bought locally. Miss J Gowland advised that the consultation was flawed. Mr D Paterson advised that in the school vicinity was sensible however; out with the immediate area of the school, with no known accidents was ridiculous. Councillor J Moar advised that with additional housing under development in Toab, this had been a factor in a greater area of Toab being implemented in the speed restriction zone, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk write to OIC to ask for more transparency and clarity in how the decision to implement 20mph speed limits in Orkney was carried out and if feedback from Community Councils is given adequate consideration by OIC.

D. Bus Shelter at Lighthouse Corner, Deerness

Following consideration of correspondence from OIC advising that following various requests from the community and community council work is due to start to install a bus shelter at Lighthouse Corner, Deerness. Councillor J Moar advised that the shelter would be a bolt on shelter in order that if a wide-load was being hauled to the Thorkell wind turbine that the bus shelter could be removed accordingly and that the found had been laid, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

E. Grass Cutting in Burial Grounds

Members considered a response received from OIC to the consultation on grass cutting in burial grounds, whereby there would be a reduction in the current service provision due to budget constraints. Proposed alterations to seasonal cuts paid for by OIC were:

- Hall of Tankerness – Reduced from six cuts to two cuts;
- St Andrews – Reduced from twelve cuts to eight cuts; and

- Deerness – Reduced from twelve cuts to eight cuts.

A member advised that that the reduction of OIC funded grass cuts from twelve cuts to eight cuts was not a money saving exercise and disrespectful to the public. He also advised that the Hall of Tankerness kirkyard was an inactive kirkyard and two OIC funded cuts would be okay however would create much additional work with overgrowth for the grass contractor, which he assumed would be reflected in the price per cut. He further advised that less than twelve cuts to the active main kirkyards - St Andrews Kirkyard and Deerness Kirkyard - were unrealistic.

Another member advised that he felt that this community council had a duty of care to the kirkyards and that the community's expectation was also this and therefore he proposed that the cuts to the main kirkyards remain at twelve cuts; eight funded by OIC and four funded by this community council and with the ECLO agreeing that this would qualify for Community Council Grant Scheme assistance, this was seconded.

With regard to the length of contract, it was suggested that a three-year contract allowed the grass contractor to plan and purchase equipment accordingly.

With regard to advertising the grass cutting contract, unanimously, members approved that the contract should be advertised in The Orcadian newspaper for one week in the 5 March 2026 edition with a closing date for receipt of tenders set for 19 March 2026. The contract should also be advertised in local outlets, the community council website, on the Deerness Community Centre Facebook page and the St Andrews Community Centre webpage and on the Tankerness Facebook page.

Delegated Powers were granted for the opening of the tenders to Mr L Flett, Mr D Paterson, Miss R Russell and the Clerk. Any tender would be opened and awarded by delegated powers at the Clerk's home on 20 March 2026, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the active main kirkyards in St Andrews and Deerness should be cut twelve times annually; eight cuts would be funded by OIC and four cuts funded by this community council, subject to approval from the CCGS.
2. That the inactive kirkyard at the Hall of Tankerness be reduced to two grass cuts annually and funded by OIC.
3. That the grass cutting and maintenance contract for each area would be a three-year contract.
4. That a one-week advert would be placed in the 5 March 2026 edition of The Orcadian newspaper and advertised in local outlets, the community council website, the Deerness Community Centre Facebook page, the St Andrews Community Centre webpage and on the Tankerness Facebook page.
5. That the closing date for receipt of tenders would be 19 March 2026.
6. That delegated powers be granted to Mr L Flett, Mr D Paterson, Miss R

Russell and the Clerk to open and award the tenders and this would be completed on 20 March 2026 at the Clerk's home.

F. Electrical Safety Campaign

Following consideration of correspondence from Ron Bailey, Parliamentary Researcher regarding Electrical Safety First (ESF) discovery of a gap in safety regulations, whereby promoters of consumer products play a material role in driving sales and shaping consumer perceptions of safety these "influencers" fall between existing regulations and enforcement bodies. This can be remedy be adding an addition to the regulations in the Product Regulation and Metrology Act he invited the Community Council to again assist by writing to Alistair Carmichael, MP requesting that he requests the minster to use section2(3) of the PRAM Act to regulate these "influencers", and it was:

Resolved to note this information.

6. Consultation Documents

A. Northern Isles Ferry Service User Survey

Following consideration of the consultation, Northern Isles Ferry Service User Survey, which required a response by 9 January 2026, it was:

Resolved to note that members had no response to this consultation.

B. Trust in Government Consultation and Online Survey

Following consideration of the consultation, Trust in Government, and online survey, it was:

Resolved to note that members had no response to this consultation.

C. Historic Environment Scotland Survey

Following consideration of the Historic Environment Scotland consultation in regard to new properties and collections strategy, which required a response by 23 January 2026, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

D. European Marine Energy Centre Consultations

1. EIA Section 36 Variation Application

Following consideration of the consultation regarding EMEC's Environmental Impact Assessment Section 36 Variation application, which required a response by 22 March 2026, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

2. EIA Section 36 Consent Application Nil Return

Following consideration of the consultation regarding EMEC's Environmental Impact Assessment Section 36 Consent application, which required a response by 31 January 2026, it was:

Resolved to note that a nil response had been returned to this consultation by this community council.

E. Ayre Offshore Wind Farm Ltd

1. The Marine Directive Scottish Government

Following consideration of a consultation from the Marine Directive, Marine Renewables, regarding an application for section 36 consent marine licence applications, Environmental Impact Assessments Report and supporting documentation for the Ayre Offshore Wind Farm, which required a response by 8 February 2026, it was:

Resolved to note that this consultation had received a nil response from this community council.

2. Thistle Wind Partners

Following consideration of correspondence from Thistle Wind Partners regarding their submission of an offshore consent application to the Marine Directive and following submission of their onshore planning application to the Highland Council and inviting questions:

Resolved to note that the consultation had received a nil response from this Community council.

F. SEPA

1. Safeguarding Scotland's Water Environment

Following consideration of correspondence from SEPA regarding their consultation on Safeguarding Scotland's Water Environment, which requires a response by 3 March 2026, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

2. National Flood Risk Assessment Report 2025

Following consideration of correspondence from SEPA regarding their consultation National Flood Risk Assessment Report 2025, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

3. Flood Risk Management Phase 1

Following consideration of correspondence from SEPA regarding their consultation on Flood Risk Management Phase 1, which required a response by 22 April 2026, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

G. OIC Winter Service Policy 2026-2031

Following consideration of OIC's Winter Service Policy 2026-2031 and also the Winter Service Plan, it was noted that only the policy required this community council's consultation and a response was required by 9 April 2026, it was:

Resolved that members should give consideration to this consultation and that any response should be sent to the Clerk prior to 9 April 2026.

7. Correspondence

A. Scottish Island Federation (SIF)

1. Island Digital Connectivity Resilience

Following consideration of correspondence from SIF regarding Island Digital Connectivity Resilience inviting members to attend an online meeting on 24 November 2025 with regard to storms and weather affecting connectivity on islands, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

2. The Island Business Resilience Fund

Following consideration of correspondence from SIF regarding the Island Business Resilience Fund and inviting members to attend three online engagement sessions in November 2025, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

3. The Digital Connectivity Resilience Enquiry

Following consideration of correspondence from SIF regarding the Digital Connectivity Resilience Enquiry and inviting members to complete the Call for Evidence on Scottish Islands Digital Resilience Survey by 13 February 2026, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

4. Cross-Party Group on Islands Meeting

Following consideration of information from the SIF regarding the final meeting on 4 March 2026 of the Cross-Party Group on Islands for this parliamentary session, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

5. Lost Potential or Unrealised Assets Talk

Following consideration of information from the SIF regarding the Lost Potential or Unrealised Assets talk on 5 March 2026, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

6. Planning Aid Scotland Online Survey and Workshop

Following consideration of information from the SIF regarding a Planning Aid Scotland online survey and workshop on 12 March 2026, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

7. Refreshing the Good Practice Principles for Community Benefits from Onshore Renewable Energy Consultation

Following consideration of information from the SIF regarding the Refreshing the Good Practice Principles for Community Benefits from Onshore Renewable Energy on 23 March 2026, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

8. Commonwealth Games

Following consideration of information from SIF regarding the opportunity/invitation to groups and communities to register an interest in holding a baton visit ahead of the Commonwealth Games later this year, and it was:

Resolved to note this information.

B. Scottish and Southern Energy Network (SSEN)

1. EqualLCT

Following consideration of correspondence from SSEN inviting members to attend a webinar on 9 December 2025 regarding the EqualLCT project and to explore innovative ways to reduce the impact of heat pumps on local networks, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

2. Drop-in Session

Following consideration of correspondence from SSEN in conjunction with Freedom, who were inviting members to attend a drop-in session on 24 November 2025 in Firth Community Hall regarding their upgrades to the programme of essential works in the areas of Finstown, Hatston, St Mary's and Quanterness, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

3. Think Tank Session

Following consideration of correspondence from SSEN inviting members to participate in a Think Tank session on 22 January 2026 focusing on how we can evolve the Priority Service Register to better support customers, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

4. Stakeholder Engagement Workshops

Following consideration of correspondence from SSEN inviting members to attend stakeholder engagement workshops on 18 and 23 March 2026 and an online session on 26 March 2026 to share their emerging plans and to hear what matters to you most, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

C. Community Transport Small Grant Scheme

Following consideration of correspondence from Democratic Services inviting applications to the Community Transport Small Grant Scheme, which had a closing date for applications of 25 January 2026, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

D. Orkney Integrated Joint Board (OIJB)

Following consideration of correspondence from Democratic Services inviting members to stand for election on the OIJB as a service user representative, it was:

Resolved to note the information.

E. Scottish Union of Supported Employment

Following consideration of correspondence from the Scottish Union of Supported Employment advising that they were developing an app for those in work, who have a disability or long-term health condition and inviting any party interested to test the App, prior to it going live, it was:

Resolved to note this information.

F. Digital DSO Spring Series

Members considered correspondence from Digital DSO Spring Series inviting members to participate in a digital and data webinar on 5 March 2026 to influence how they prioritise digital and data initiatives across Smarter Networks. They also invited views on Ofgems proposals for a single digital view, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

G. Thank you Letters

Resolved to note that thank you letters had been received from Mrs S Pirie, St Andrews Senior Citizens and Deerness Community Centre Association for financial assistance provided.

8. Financial Statements

A. 2025/2026 General Finance

After consideration of the 2025/2026 General Finance statement as at 9 February 2026, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £17,101.93.

B. 2025/2026 Community Council Grant Scheme (CCGS)

Following consideration of the 2025/2026 Community Council Grant Scheme statement as at 9 February 2026, it was:

Resolved to note that there was £233.75 available in the main capping limit only, as the additional capping limit had been fully allocated.

C. Community Development Fund (CDF)

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund Statement as at 9 February 2026, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £5,000.00.

D. 2025/2026 Ayrenergy Ltd Fund

Following consideration of the 2025/2026 Ayrenergy Ltd Fund Statement as at 9 February 2026, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £27,570.91.

9. Financial Requests

A. Travel Grants

1. A and C Nicolson

Following consideration of two travel grant applications received on behalf of A and C Nicolson towards the cost of their participation in two dance festivals in Caithness, it was:

Resolved to award two travel grants totalling £40 each to A and C Nicolson totalling £160.00.

2. Miss A Scott

Following consideration of a travel grant application received on behalf of Miss A Scott towards the cost of her participation in under-15 Scotland netball trials in Edinburgh, it was:

Resolved to award a travel grant to Miss A Scott totalling £40.00.

B. Deerness Community Centre Association

Miss R Russell declared an interest in this item and did not take part in discussion thereof.

Following consideration of correspondence received from DCCA requesting financial assistance towards the 2026 season grass cutting around Deerness Community Centre and playpark, it was:

Resolved to grant financial assistance to DCCA totalling £1,000, subject to CCGS approval.

C. St Andrews Primary School

Following consideration of correspondence received from St Andrews Primary School requesting financial assistance for ten local pupils' participation in the primary seven Lagganlia trip in May 2026, it was:

Resolved to grant travel assistance to SAPS totalling £400, being £40 per participating pupil.

D. East United Football Club

Following consideration of correspondence received from EUFC requesting financial assistance towards the 2026 season grass cutting and associated costs at St Andrews football pitch, and following much discussion regarding the maintenance of St Andrews football pitch, it was:

Resolved, unanimously, to grant financial assistance to EUFC totalling £1,140, subject to CCGS approval.

10. Publications

The following publications had been made available for members to view and were noted:

- VAO – Newsletter – December 2025 (2) and January 2026.
- VAO - Training and Funding Update –November and December 2025 and January and February 2026.
- Orkneycommunities.co.uk – Online AGM.
- New Powers for Scotland's Community Councils? – Newsletters Nos 2 and 3.
- Free Training Sessions for Rural and Island Community Councils.
- Scottish Rural Action - Newsletter – December 2025 & January 2026.
- Scottish Rural Action – Diary of Events.

- Orkney Health and Care – Near Me Appointment Service.
- Highlands and Islands Airports – Newsletter.
- Scottish and Southern Energy Network – Storm Bram Update.
- Orkney Branch of the Scottish Community Drama Association – Information and Festival Programme.
- Intermedical – Defibrillator Environmental and Location Changes.
- OIC – Meet the Buyer Event - 9 March 2026.

11. Any Other Competent Business

A. Roads Issues

Councillor J Moar advised that the remedial work required to repair the sunken and uneven main Kirkwall/Deerness road in the vicinity of Veltigar, Tankerness, would be carried out in April 2026. Mr D Paterson advised that there was also an area of sunken road, by the trees in past the St Andrews Community Centre, and it was:

Resolved to note this information.

B. Commonwealth Games

Councillor G Skuse referred members back to the discussion on the Commonwealth Games whereby community groups and local organisations could register an interest in hosting a baton visit ahead of the Commonwealth Games later this year, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would send this information to St Andrews Primary School.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Resolved that the next meeting of St Andrews and Deerness Community Council would be held on 3 June 2026 at 19:30 in Deerness Community Centre.

13. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 21:05.