Minute of the Meeting of Kirkwall and St Ola Community Council held in the Friends Room, St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall, on Monday, 25 August 2025 at 19:00.

Present:

Lynne Spence, Chris Matthews, Steven Brodie, Moyra Gordon, Robert Leslie, John Mowat, Tom Rendall, Rosemary Rhodes, Elspeth Seatter and Neil Tait.

In Attendance:

- Councillor Sandy G Cowie.
- Councillor Kristopher Leask.
- Councillor Leslie Manson.
- Jenny McGrath, Community Council Liaison Officer (for Items 1 to 4(a)).
- 1 member of the local press.
- Hazel Flett, Clerk.

Chair:

- Lynne Spence.

Order of Business

1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Cathleen A Hourie, and Councillors John Ross Scott, Gwenda M Shearer and Ivan Taylor.

2. Adoption of Minute

The Minute of the Meeting held on 7 July 2025 was approved, being proposed by Tom Rendall and seconded by Chris Matthews.

3. Matters Arising

A. Former Street Names

Following consideration of whether to progress with a project to include former street names on signs within Kirkwall, it was:

Resolved that Robert Leslie and Tom Rendall should liaise with Spencer Rosie and the Orkney Heritage Society to determine the number of street names that had changed and whether it would be acceptable to consider including the former names on street signs.

B. Local Place Plan

Following consideration of next steps in the process of developing a local place plan, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that The Orkney Board had allocated a sum of money towards the development of a local place plan for Kirkwall, which the Community Council could apply for and access in due course.

2. That a Steering Group, comprising the undernoted members, be established to progress the local place plan, including a specification for consultancy:

- Chair – Lynne Spence.
- Vice Chair – Chris Matthews.
- Steven Brodie.
- Tom Rendall.

3. That Councillor Kristopher Leask would seek an elected representative from each of the two electoral wards to serve on the Steering Group, and advise the Clerk accordingly.

C. Island Games Legacy (Benches at Peedie Sea)

The Chair advised that she had not been able to progress this further and, after further discussion, it was:

Resolved that the Community Council should still seek to commission a small bench commemorating the Island Games, to be sited at the Peedie Sea, with the design and placement to be approved by Orkney Islands Council.

D. Carness Road Sea Wall

The Clerk had not yet received a response from Orkney Islands Council to the Community Council's further concerns regarding blocking off the gap in the sea wall opposite the Weyland housing, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should again write to Orkney Islands Council seeking a response.

E. Visitor Levy

The Community Council Liaison Officer advised that Orkney Islands Council's Policy and Resources Committee would be considering whether or not to proceed with an overnight levy at a meeting on 23 September 2025, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the position.

2. That the Clerk should write to Orkney Islands Council seeking an update on the status of the Island Communities Impact Assessment undertaken by the Scottish Government in relation to the visitor levy legislation.

F. Financial Requests – Notes of Thanks

Following consideration of notes of thanks received from various individuals and groups regarding financial assistance received from the Community Council, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

G. Orkney Islands Payphone Removal Proposals

Following consideration of correspondence from BT Networks responding to the Community Council's comments on proposals to remove payphones, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the Community Council's comments were noted for consideration when BT made their decision, once the consultation had concluded on 14 September 2025.

2. To note that Orkney Heart Support Group would not be pursuing the possibility of using redundant payphones to house community defibrillators.

H. KAOS – Funding Enquiry

Chris Matthews declared an interest in this item, being a Committee member of KAOS, and took no part in the discussion.

Following consideration of correspondence from KAOS seeking a letter of support for funding applications to assist with the proposed refurbishment of The Store, Bridge Street Wynd, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should write a letter of support on behalf of the Community Council.

I. Sand at Scapa

The Clerk had received correspondence from Orkney Islands Council in response to concerns raised regarding sand on the road at Scapa, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that inspectors would be investigating to see what work, if any, was needed:

2. To note that sand would be cleared back, as necessary, to ensure adequate space for pedestrians to step clear of traffic and any loose sand on the surface would also be swept.

3. To note that the Clerk should advise the member of the public who initially raised the matter of the update from Council provided above.

4. That the Clerk should write to Orkney Islands Council requesting that the Community Council be kept informed of any works which took place.

J. Bonfire and Fireworks

The Chair referred to the establishment of a sub-group to look at alternative events, and, after further discussion, it was:

Resolved that the sub-group should meet to consider alternative events and potential partners in such an event, with the matter to be renamed WinterFest, as it would not necessarily focus on an event around 5 November.

K. 20mph Speed Limit Proposals

The Clerk advised that, as she had not received any representations by 23 July 2025, no submission had been made on behalf of the Community Council to Orkney Islands Council in relation to the statutory consultation in respect of proposals for 20mph speed limits on various streets in Kirkwall, and it was:

Resolved to note that, as members of the public, members could, if they so wished, submit representations to the public consultation, which closed on 12 September 2025.

4. Correspondence

A. Provision of Town Noticeboard

Following consideration of correspondence from a member of the public requesting that a community noticeboard be installed, for the community to use for events happening in Kirkwall, including displaying notices, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk should advise the member of the public that, although it was regrettable that a number of business premises along the main street who accepted community posters had ceased trading, a community noticeboard would require someone to be responsible for removing posters, and was not something which the Community Council felt they could support and/or manage.

2. To note that a number of existing businesses still allowed posters of community events to be displayed.

3. That Elspeth Seatter should check whether the Orkney Library and Archive still had a public notice board where such posters could be displayed.

B. TRANSitions in Energy for Coastal Communities Over Time and Space (TRANSECTS)

Following consideration of correspondence from Heriot Watt University advising of a new research initiative aimed at working directly with coastal communities to develop strategies to enable a just and fair shift from non-renewables to marine renewable energies, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should respond to Heriot Watt University advising that the Community Council wished to be kept advised of progress with the initiative.

C. Seagrass Survey Work around Tankerness

Following consideration of correspondence from Project Seagrass, a UK based charity working with communities to map, conserve and restore seagrass meadows, regarding survey work across the Mainland, Wyre, Westray and Stronsay, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

D. Ayre Offshore Windfarm

Following consideration of correspondence from Thistle Wind Partners advising of Pre-Application Consultation events in respect of the Ayre Offshore Windfarm, to be held in Deerness and Kirkwall on 27 and 28 August 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

E. Ferry Replacement Programme and Harbours Masterplan Phase 2

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding stakeholder engagement regarding the ferry replacement programme and the Harbours Masterplan Phase 2, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should write to Arch Henderson requesting a presentation at the next meeting.

F. Kirkwall Post Office

Following consideration of correspondence from the Post Office regarding changes at the Kirkwall Post Office, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should draft a response to the Post Office outlining the Community Council’s concerns regarding the future of Kirkwall Post Office, stating that the facility should remain in the same building, as it was a well-used facility and was easily accessible, and circulate via email to all members for any further comment or amendment prior to submission to the Post Office Ltd.

Councillors Sandy Cowie, Kristopher Leask and Leslie Manson left the meeting at this point.

5. Community Council Accounts

Following consideration of the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025.

6. Financial Statements

A. General Finance

Following consideration of the General Finance statement as at 12 August 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the estimated balance as at 12 August 2025 of £11,319.20.

2. That the Finance Sub-group should meet to consider whether the existing policy on financial assistance remained fit for purpose and report back to the next meeting.

B. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the 2025/26 Community Council Grant Scheme statement as at 12 August 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that projects to the value of £3,892.02 had been approved, of which £2,712.02 had been claimed.

2. To note the balance remaining for approval within the main capping limit of £1,518.79.

C. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund Statement as at 12 August 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the balance remaining for approval of £1,163.46.

7. Financial Requests

A. Highland Dancing

Following consideration of an application from D Wood requesting financial assistance towards her daughters participating in highland dancing competitions at the Mey Games and the Turriff Show in August 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given in respect of each dancer, subject to confirmation of participation.

B. YCS Climbing Competitions

Following consideration of an application from R McCaw requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in training sessions and climbing competitions from August to November 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given in respect of each training session and competition attended, up to a maximum of £375.

C. Highland Dancing

Following consideration of an application from T Paterson requesting financial assistance towards her daughters participating in highland dancing competition at the Mey Games held on 2 August 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given in respect of each dancer, subject to confirmation of participation.

D. Athletics

Following consideration of an application from S Webb requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in the Scottish Nationals U15 athletics competition held in Aberdeen on 16 August 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given, subject to confirmation of participation.

E. Swimming

Following consideration of an application from N Cooper requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in swimming sprint championships to be held in Aberdeen in September 2025, copes of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given, subject to confirmation of participation.

8. Consultations

A. Our Orkney, Our Future

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding a project launched to gather the views of local people and industry on tourism in Orkney, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that individuals could enter submissions on the online platform up to 19 September 2025.

B. Application for Variation of Premises Licence

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding an application for a variation of the premises licence held in respect of the Albert Hotel, Junction Road, Kirkwall, for which responses were required by 29 August 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to make no comment.

9. Publications

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

- SEPA Updates – July and August 2024.
- SSEN DSO – Whole System July 2025 Newsletter.

- VAO – Training and Funding Updates – July and August 2025.
- SSEN – Connections Monthly Newsletter – July 2025.
- VAO Newsletter – July 2025.
- Scotland's Towns Partnership – August Newsletter.
- Walking Scotland (formerly Paths for All) – eNews – July 2025.
- Scottish Rural Action Newsletter – August 2025.

10. Any Other Competent Business

A. Neighbourhood Watch Scotland

Following consideration of correspondence from Neighbourhood Watch Scotland advising of the UK telephone network changing from analogue to digital, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

B. Survey on Coastal Change

Following consideration of correspondence from a PhD researcher at Heriot-Watt University regarding a short survey to gather local perspectives on coastal change and related decision-making processes, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

C. Scottish Rural Action

Robert Leslie agreed to contact Scottish Rural Action to ascertain what membership of Scottish Rural Action would be bring to the Community Council and report back to a future meeting.

D. Agenda Management

Following discussion on how to raise an item for consideration at a meeting and tracking actions, it was:

Resolved that the following actions should be trialled:

- The Clerk should issue a call for items approximately two weeks prior to the date of the next meeting.
- The Clerk should issue a list of action points following this meeting, to enable members to action matters more timeously.

E. Miscarriage Association

Chris Matthews advised that the Miscarriage Association, in partnership with the Yard Nursery, were recovering the memorial corner in the Tankerness House Gardens, and had indicated that members of the Community Council would be welcome a small ceremony, and it was:

Resolved that the date of the event would be circulated when known.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Following consideration of future meeting dates, it was:

Resolved that the next meeting of Kirkwall and St Ola Community Council should be held on Monday, 6 October 2025, commencing at 19:00.

12. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 20:40.