

Minute of the Meeting of Firth and Stenness Community Council held in Firth Community Centre on Thursday, 30 January 2025 at 19:30

Present:

Ms B Scollay, Mr R Crichton, Ms W Dunnet, Mr M Harcus, Mr R Hourston, Mrs R Lyon, Miss S Spence and Mrs A Stevenson.

In Attendance:

- Councillor R King.
- Councillor J Stevenson.
- Councillor O Tierney.
- Councillor D Tullock.
- Mrs J McGrath, Community Council Liaison Officer/Interim Clerk.

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1. Apologies

Miss S Spence advised that she would be stepping down from the community council in the near future as she planned to leave Orkney, and it was:

Resolved to note the information, and that no apologies had been intimated.

2. Election of Office Bearers

A. Chair

Following a secret ballot, it was:

Resolved that Ms B Scollay be elected Chair of Firth and Stenness Community Council.

B. Vice Chair

Following a secret ballot, it was:

Resolved that Mr R Crichton be elected Vice Chair of Firth and Stenness Community Council.

C. Planning Representative

Resolved that a representative would not be elected, but that the weekly list would be sent to all members by the Clerk.

D. Health and Care Representative

Resolved that the Chair would take on the role of Health and Care Representative, but that she could delegate to other community council members if necessary.

Councillors R King and J Stevenson stepped out of the meeting following this item.

3. Adoption of Minutes

The minute of the meeting held on 26 November 2024 was adopted, being proposed by Mr R Crichton and seconded by Mrs R Lyon.

4. Matters Arising

A. Garden Waste

The Interim Clerk advised that OIC would add a second garden waste container on to the site at Cursiter Quarry as they had a skip that could be re-deployed, and it was:

Resolved to note the update and that members were very pleased with the result.

B. Finstown Cleanliness

Mr M Marcus advised that this project was ongoing as time allowed, and that he had areas on his list to tackle once the weather improved. He also advised that the

wooden boards on the walkway across the brig, close to Firth Primary School, were very slippery and required treatment again, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the update.
2. That Mr M Marcus would report the slippery walkway via the MyOrkney portal, and the Interim Clerk would also add it to the business letter to Democratic Services.

C. Finstown Shore

Resolved to note that no update had been received but that this would be chased up ahead of the next meeting.

D. Speeding Concerns

Members had previously been forwarded a response from the Chief Inspector, Scott Robertson, in relation to speeding through Finstown and Stenness, which advised that the local police had been in touch with the Council's Roads Team who were assisting them with speed monitoring equipment and to look at possible solutions to the issue. He also asked for information on specific areas of the road where speeding occurs so that they could monitor the situation. Mrs R Lyon advised that she had received a similar response via Stenness Community Association and, following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the information.

E. Quarry Group

Resolved to note that Mr R Hourston would pursue the formation of a Quarry Consultative Group.

F. Festive Lighting

The Interim Clerk advised that the lights had now been taken down and an invoice was awaited from the contractor. A member advised that one of the lights at Flett Corner was only half lit. Another member suggested purchasing more lights ahead of next year, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To await the invoice, which should be paid from CCGS once received.
2. That the faulty light would be investigated and repaired if possible.
3. That further consideration would be given to the purchase of any additional lights.

G. Winter Service Plan

Members had previously been provided with a response from Roads Support in relation to their queries regarding the surface temperature forecasts for actioning winter treatments. It was noted that improved weather forecasting techniques had led to increased accuracy of surface temperature forecasts and greater confidence in

when and when not to treat roads, meaning it was possible to reduce the action threshold for morning treatments down from 2 degrees Celsius to 1. Members discussed the locations of the weather stations, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

H. Speed Limits in Stenness

Resolved to note that a request had gone to Roads Support for the road through Stenness Village to be reduced to 30mph, and that a response would be requested ahead of the next meeting.

I. Planning – Timeframe for Consultees

Members had previously been sent a response regarding the time frame for community councils to request being formally consulted on a planning application and had further queried the wording “five working days” instead of “seven days”. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided and that community councils had five working days to make a request to planning.

5. Correspondence

A. MyOrkney

Members had previously been forwarded information from Orkney Islands Council in relation to the use of the MyOrkney portal to report and track issues, apply for services, make payments, contact or compliment Council teams or lodge a formal complaint. Members pointed out that while the system was good, it did not always tell you if the issue had been dealt with, and it was:

Resolved to feed this information back to the Council via the business letter to Democratic Services.

B. Lochside Viewpoint

Following consideration of correspondence from Harray and Sandwick Community Council regarding the benches at the Lochside Viewpoint on the Stoneyhill Road, which needed repair or replacement, members discussed replacement, and also the frequency of bin collection in this area, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Interim Clerk would source prices for 2 picnic benches and one normal bench for this location and circulate to members for consideration.
2. That the Interim Clerk would ask, via the Business Letter, how often the bins were emptied at this location.

Councillors R King and J Stevenson returned to the meeting at this point.

C. AbilityNet Event – Digital Voice Roadshow

Members had previously been forwarded information from Orkney Islands Council regarding a digital voice roadshow which had taken place that day in Kirkwall, and it was:

Resolved to note the information.

D. Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund Open

Following consideration of correspondence from VAO on the opening of the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund, copies of which had previously been circulated to members, it was:

Resolved:

1. That an application would be submitted by the deadline of 3 February for funding towards the cost of purchasing benches as discussed at item 5B above.
2. That the Interim Clerk would forward the information on to the schools in Firth and Stenness should they be interested in applying for funding towards any inter-generational projects.

E. Use of Finstown Community Gardens

Members had previously been forwarded correspondence from Ms H Woodsford-Dean, who was enquiring about permission to use Finstown Community Gardens for a ceremony. Ms W Dunnet advised that she had spoken to Mr J Wood about the proposal, and he had no concerns.

Members also raised the possibility of having some sort of donations box, either in the park or in another local outlet, to gather donations towards the upkeep of the gardens. The Interim Clerk advised that another community council was looking into the possibility of having a QR code on display so that people could make donations electronically, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To approve the use of the gardens, as long as it was left tidy, and to suggest that the group may wish to make a small donation towards the upkeep of the gardens in return for use.
2. That the Interim Clerk would gather information on whether a QR code could be used to gather donations so that this could be discussed further at the next meeting.

F. Thank You Note

Resolved to note that a thank you letter had been received from Stenness Community Association for financial assistance awarded.

6. Consultations

A. 20mph Proposals

Members had been emailed a further consultation on 3 December 2024 regarding proposals to reduce some areas to 20mph from 30mph, and the Interim Clerk advised that there had been no change to the previous response submitted by Firth and Stenness Community Council.

Mrs R Lyon voiced her disappointment with the consultation process, advising that the event in Stenness had not been well publicised.

Another member also made reference to a consultation on the proposal to lower all 60mph to 50mph, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that a response had been submitted to the consultation prior to the deadline, providing the same response as previously submitted, which was that the community council had mixed opinions but generally were in favour of the proposals, especially through the village in Finstown around Gillocks to past Baikies, and also around the school and housing in Stenness village.
2. To note that the request for a 30mph limit on the main road through Stenness would need to be dealt with separately, but that a request had been made for this to be considered.
3. That Mrs R Lyon would forward details in relation to the poor local engagement around the 20mph consultation to Councillor R King to investigate further.
4. To note that the consultation on 60mph zones was currently a Scottish Government national consultation and that members could feed into this separately if they wished to do so.

B. Verge Maintenance Plan

Members had previously been forwarded a consultation on the verge maintenance plan for 2025, and it was:

Resolved to note that members had no comments.

C. R100 Broadband Evaluation

Mr M Harcus left the meeting during discussion of this item.

Members discussed correspondence, copies of which had previously been emailed, regarding the rollout of fibre broadband the deadline for which comments were requested by being 3 March 2025. Councillor R King suggested inviting the Council's officer for Digital Engagement and Enterprise to the next meeting to answer queries and address concerns, and it was:

Resolved to note the consultation and invite the Graduate Trainee, Digital Engagement and Enterprise to the next meeting.

7. Financial Statements

A. General Fund

Following consideration of the general finance statement as at 16 January 2025, it was:

Resolved to note the actual balance of £9,394.04, which included funds of £5,000 from the Rennibister Wind Turbine Community Fund.

B. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the CCGS statement as at 16 January 2025, it was:

Resolved to note that the main capping limit was fully allocated and that there was £765 left in the additional capping limit.

C. Community Development Fund

Members considered the CDF statement as at 16 January 2025, and it was:

Resolved to note that the total remaining available for allocation was £6,615.63.

Mr M Harcus returned to the meeting during discussion on the financial statements.

8. Financial Requests

A. Friends of Happy Valley – Heritage Film

Members had previously been forwarded a request from Friends of Happy Valley for financial assistance towards the commission of a heritage film about the legacy of Professor Isbister and Edwin Harrold, which would be placed in the archive, online and would be freely available to the public. Following consideration, it was:

Resolved to award £500 to the group, subject to CDF approval.

B. N Kenyon – U17 Netball, Shetland

Following consideration of a request from N Kenyon, copies of which had previously been circulated, for assistance towards the cost of attending to Shetland on 11 February for a national league netball match, it was:

Resolved to make a general fund donation of £30.

C. Stenness Community School – P7 Residential Trip

Following consideration of a request from Stenness Community School, copies of which had previously been circulated, for assistance towards the cost of two pupils from the Stenness area taking part in a residential trip to Hoy in June 2025, it was:

Resolved to make a general fund donation of £30 to each pupil, totalling £60.

D. Orkney Island Games Committee – School Banners

Members had previously been sent correspondence from the Orkney 2025 Ceremonies Lead, explaining that the Orkney Island Games Committee were hoping that each primary school would be twinned with one of the visiting teams and that to mark the relationship, each school would be making a banner. £200 was requested for each school to make a banner, which they would keep following the event. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that £200 each for both schools in the community council area would be made available for this project, subject to CCGS approval.

9. Publications

The following publications had all previously been sent to members and were noted:

- VAO – Newsletter – December 2024 and January 2025.
- VAO – Training and Funding Update – December 2024 and January 2025.
- Scottish Rural Action Newsletter November and December 2024.
- OIC Transportation Infographic.

10. Any Other Competent Business

A. Assistance – Shared Access

Members had previously been forwarded correspondence from a local resident, enquiring about assistance with the cost of purchasing aggregate for a shared access. Members noted that this was something that they had assisted with in the past, however they acknowledged that there was more pressure on their budgets at the present time, and it:

Resolved:

1. That Firth and Stenness Community Council would not be offering an aggregate scheme.
2. That the Interim Clerk would respond to the correspondent to advise of the position.

B. Place Plan for Finstown

Councillor R King advised that various areas were taking forward place plans, including Stenness, and that these formed an important part in local development plans. Mr M Harcus stated that he was happy to explore this from a Finstown point of view, and that he would be interested in looking at what this would entail, and it was:

Resolved that Mrs R Lyon would send Mr M Harcus the terms of reference for the Stenness Place Plan, along with some further information.

C. Stoneyhill Road

A member advised that she had been approached by a number of residents about the state of the Stoneyhill Road that had recently been resurfaced and suggested that it was worse than it was before it had been worked on. Other members agreed with this statement, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Interim Clerk would raise this via the business letter to Democratic Services.
2. That individual members would also raise the issue via MyOrkney.

11. Dates of Future Meetings

Future meeting dates for 2025 had already been set, however members agreed that it would be beneficial to hold an additional meeting between now and the next one in May, and it was:

Resolved:

- A. That an additional meeting would be held in Stenness Community Centre on Thursday, 13 March 2025 at 19:30.
- B. That the remaining meetings in 2025 would be held on 1 May, 3 July, 18 September and 27 November.

12. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone and closed the meeting at 21:10.