

Minute of the Meeting of Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council held in Rousay Community School and via Teams on Wednesday, 4 February 2026 at 19:30

Present:

Mr A Firth, Mrs D Compton, Mrs Z Flaws (via Teams), Mrs C Mainland and Mr R Tipper.

In Attendance:

- Councillor M Thomson (via Teams).
- Ms C Kriisa, Clerk.

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1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Councillor H Woodbridge, Miss A Mainland, and Mrs C Maguire.

2. Adoption of Minute

The minute of the meeting of Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council held on Wednesday, 26 November 2025 was adopted, being proposed by Mrs C Mainland and seconded by Mrs D Compton.

3. Matters Arising

A. Memorial at Rousay Kirkyard

A short update was received from Mrs Z Flaws, who advised that the concrete base was ready to be poured once weather conditions improve, with stonework to commence shortly thereafter, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

B. Historic Scotland Car Parks

No update was received on this item, and it was:

Resolved to remove the item from the agenda.

C. Laybys

The Chair expressed concern that the Roads Support team had still not made a visit to Rousay, and it was:

Resolved that Councillor M Thomson would follow up internally to seek a date for the visit.

D. Rousay School Issues

It was reported that many of the works required had now been undertaken, while exterior repairs remained outstanding due to weather conditions. It was noted that the two public gym showers were emitting an odour due to not being used, and the janitor had made a request for these to be removed. A shower would still be accessible within the school, and it was:

Resolved to note the information and to remove the item from the agenda.

E. Parking at Rousay School

Members discussed ongoing issues with parking at the school, noting that capacity remains significantly oversubscribed at times when the public is accessing the building while the school is in session. Potential parking solutions were previously submitted to Orkney Islands Council for comment, however a response had not yet been received, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

F. Pedestrians at Piers and Piers Update

Members noted that the speed limit on the pier road had now been reduced to 20mph, and signage had been updated to reflect this. It was requested that Harbours communicate with the Community Council regarding plans for re-painting the pier waiting areas before any improvements were actioned, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

G. Parking at Brinian Kirkyard

A brief discussion was held, noting that any further action was unable to be decided until the Roads Support team visit, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

H. Orkney Ferries Booking System

An update was received confirming that a letter had been received from the Service Manager of Orkney Ferries, which was previously circulated been to members for information.

Members discussed the current ticketing arrangements for travel to Egilsay and Wyre, highlighting that residents travelling on these routes cannot access cheaper fares using their travel cards. It was highlighted that the book of 50 tickets was not currently recommended for inter-island journeys, but that it is possible for reduced fare options to be added to the ticketing system.

Household journeys were also discussed, where concerns were raised regarding limitations in the current system, including the inability to use a single ticket book to book combinations such as three passengers and one vehicle under one transaction.

The position regarding tickets stored on cards was queried, including whether Orkney Ferries intends to discontinue the ticket books in the future. Members were advised that the 50-ticket system was currently used only by the inner isles, and that Orkney Ferries' preference was for all travel to be pre-booked and pre-paid.

Members were also advised that at a recent Transport Forum meeting, the issue of inconsistent pricing for tractor and trailer travel was raised. Orkney Ferries had confirmed that steps were being taken to ensure office staff were aware of the correct charging system. It was further confirmed that farmers may choose to unhook trailers if they wish to be charged the lower fare. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided and keep the item on the agenda.

I. Rousay Road Conditions

Orkney Islands Council had confirmed that Roads Support would not consider any adoption of the track leading to the Post Office unless it was brought up to current road standards.

Members queried whether ditch clearance and unblocking culverts forms part of the Roads Operative's duties and were advised that the Operative has regularly

undertaken offlet digging and manual ditch clearance under the direction of the foreman.

Standing water and drainage issues were discussed, with the Council advising that Rousay is not scheduled for tractor ditch work until 2026/2027. Members raised several road maintenance concerns, including new potholes at the top of Pier Road and at Banks, and rubble on the road at Tou and near Wasbister Loch. Councillor M Thomson advised that responsibility for clearing rubble would be expected to lie with the relevant landowner.

Members discussed the reporting of hazards and agreed that residents should be encouraged to report issues via the online portal to ensure evidence is recorded. It was agreed that a reminder should be placed on notice boards and shared via the Rousay Review and the Community Council Facebook page.

Members also noted that a 20mph speed limit had now been introduced from the War Memorial to the Pier, and that the speed limit at Rousay Community School remained in place under a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order. The absence of the flashing lights was reported to be due to an issue with the manufacturer. Members queried whether the 20mph school speed limit must be applied 24 hours per day and sought clarification on whether drivers on provisional licences may drive agricultural vehicles within a 20mph zone. Councillor M Thomson advised that clarification had been requested from the Head of Neighbourhood Services, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk will distribute information on reporting road issues via the online portal.
2. That Councillor M Thomson will follow up internally regarding 20mph queries.

J. Grass Cutting Tender

Members discussed the voluntary grass-cutting carried out by residents and queried whether those who have contributed wish to receive any recompense. The Chair had discussed this matter directly with the involved parties for resolution. It was noted that three or four expressions of interest have been received for the new tender, and that applications should be submitted by the end of February.

Members also discussed the trimming of kirkyard dykes, following a local report that a dyke was leaning over a resident's grave. Members were advised that there was currently a contract in place for trimming kirkyard dykes and for associated rebuilding work. It was agreed that this may be an option to pursue in future, and members discussed whether the Community Council should utilise this service. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved for the Clerk to request that an advert is placed in the Orcadian and Radio Orkney for the new grass cutting tender.

K. Egilsay Kirkyard

Members noted concerns regarding items that had been dumped outside of the kirkyard and agreed that this should also be reported to Historic Environment Scotland.

The location of graves was discussed. A resident previously provided a plan showing recorded grave locations up until approximately the 1980s, and members believe that updating the record should allow future burials to take place. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would check that burial plot records had been updated.
2. That the Clerk will report the discarded items to Historic Environment Scotland.

L. War Memorial Lettering

Members heard that the War Memorial lettering had been completed and invoiced, and it was:

Resolved to remove the item from the agenda.

M. Late Night Ferries and Bus Connectivity

A brief update was received from the Transport Representative to confirm that five dates would be put forward to Orkney Ferries for late night ferry sailings during 2026. The proposed dates would be the second Saturday of the month from May through until September. Stagecoach would be contacted ahead of time to arrange for connectivity at Tingwall Pier, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Transport Representative would formally request dates for 2026 with Orkney Ferries.
2. That the Clerk would communicate the dates with Stagecoach once they had been formally accepted by Orkney Ferries.

N. Bin Emptying

The Clerk advised that prices for a new public waste bin at Saviskaill Beach were yet to be received, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

O. Grass Verges – Safety Cuts and Ditches

Members received an update regarding verge cutting and requested that consideration be given to verge cuttings being undertaken ahead of wet and freezing weather conditions.

Roads Support had previously advised that verge cutting was carried out in accordance with the Verge Maintenance Plan. Members were further advised that verge cutting would continue to be scheduled for September/October, as all plant machinery requires to be returned to the garage and preparations made for gritting duties by the end of October.

The Clerk confirmed that no further complaints have been received on this matter and invited any additional comments from members.

Members agreed that the issue should be raised again with Orkney Islands Council, noting concerns that verge cutting was not completed as expected and that culverts had not been cleared, with potential implications for road safety. Members queried whether the Roads Operative would wait until hazards were formally reported, or whether verge maintenance should be undertaken proactively in line with the maintenance plan.

Councillor M Thomson highlighted that when it was queried why much of the verge cutting did not take place last year on the isles, the response received was that no requests had been made. They further advised that if requests are submitted at the appropriate time, it would be possible to monitor whether the work is carried out, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

P. Gates at Brinian Kirkyard

Mrs Z Flaws advised that she would follow up with the condition of the gates, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

Q. Wyre School

Following the previous Community Council meeting, the Clerk contacted Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre Development Trust regarding the building's future use, including possible mothballing.

The Trust had received completed questionnaires from residents and would review the data. Initial feedback suggested community support for retaining a facility, however long-term management arrangements had not yet been developed.

The Trust advised that any project would require design, planning, funding and a viable business plan, and could take four to five years. The matter would be discussed further at the Trust's March meeting, with outcomes to be shared with members in due course, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

R. Arrears to OIC

A Freedom of Information request was submitted to Orkney Islands Council seeking figures on current arrears owed to the Council, including rent arrears from both

former and current tenants, and the outstanding sum owed in respect of council tax. The figures provided were noted and accepted by members, and it was:

Resolved to remove the item from the agenda.

4. Correspondence

A. Orkney Islands Council – Transport Forum Meeting Reminder

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council reminding them that the Transport Consultative Forum meeting was due to take place on Wed 21 Jan 2026 at the Council Chamber, Kirkwall, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

B. Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks - SSEN's Stakeholder Workshops Invitation

Members considered correspondence from SSEN sharing that there are stakeholder workshops taking place, with an online workshop opportunity on 26 March 2026. Details for registering were included within the email, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

C. Rousay Community School – Thank You Letter

Members considered correspondence from Rousay Community School, thanking the CC for their recent donation of £500 towards the costs of gifts from Santa. It was advised that each child was able to receive a present and was much appreciated by all, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

D. Egilsay Community Association – Thank You Letter

Members considered correspondence from Egilsay Community Association thanking the CC for their support with the costs of hosting their annual bonfire and fireworks display. It was noted that the evening was well attended, and greatly enjoyed by all who came, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

5. Consultations

A. OIC - Draft Winter 2026/2027 Ferry Timetables

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding the Winter 2026–2027 ferry timetables, noting that the deadline for feedback was 14 January 2026.

The Clerk advised that timetable posters provided by Democratic Services had been displayed around the island, on board MV Eynhallow, and shared on the community

Facebook page. The Transport Representative confirmed they were content with the current proposals.

A query regarding the lunchtime sailing was raised, and members discussed whether an adjusted timetable could benefit all three isles by improving turnaround for tradespeople. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the correspondence.
2. That further consideration would be given to whether an adjusted timetable would benefit the isles, and that this would be discussed again at the next meeting.

B. Thistle Wind Partners - Ayre Offshore Windfarm

Members considered correspondence from Thistle Wind Partners, stating that the Marine Directorate's online consultation on the application was running from 11 December 2025 until 8 February 2026, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

C. EMEC – Fall of Warness EIA Application

Members considered correspondence from EMEC, who had submitted an application to Scottish Ministers to construct and operate the Fall of Warness Tidal Test Site at Falls of Warness, Eday. Comments were being accepted until 31 January 2026, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

D. Green Cat Renewables Ltd - Proposal of Application Notice for the Repower of Burgar Hill Wind Farm

Members considered correspondence from Green Cat Renewables Ltd sharing that they were holding additional consultation events at the wind farm visitor centre on 3 and 26 February 2026. Information would also be made available via their website as an alternative option, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

E. Orkney Islands Council – Cycle Shelter

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding the siting of a bicycle shelter at Rousay Pier. Space had now been made available within the Development Trust's land at the pier, and the shelter would be installed in the coming weeks, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

F. Scottish Islands Federation - Digital Connectivity Resilience Survey

Members considered correspondence from the Scottish Islands Federation, requesting that Community Councils complete the call for evidence on Scottish Islands Digital Resilience Survey. The survey would remain open until Friday, 13 February 2026. Further information may also be obtained via email and telephone, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

6. Financial Statements

A. General Fund

Following consideration of the general fund statement for Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council as at 21 January 2026, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £32,485.66.

B. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the CCGS statement for Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council as at 21 January 2026, it was:

Resolved to note that the main capping limit was fully allocated, and that the balances remaining in the additional and island capping limits were £540 and £755 respectively.

C. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund statement for Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council as at 21 January 2026, it was:

Resolved to note that there was £6,677.80 remaining available to allocate to projects.

D. Seed Corn Fund

Following consideration of the Seed Corn Fund statement for Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council as at 21 January 2026, it was:

Resolved to note that there was £7,535 remaining available to allocate to projects.

7. Financial Requests

A. Rousay 1st Rainbows, Brownies and Guides

Following consideration of a request from Rousay 1st Rainbows, Brownies and Guides for funding towards new resources including books and uniforms, it was:

Resolved that £85 be awarded from the General Fund as a donation.

B. Orkney Folk Festival 2026

Following consideration of a request from Orkney Folk Festival 2026 for funding towards the cost of late-night ferry transport, it was:

Resolved that £762.06 should be awarded via CCGS funding, pending approval, with any outstanding funds being provided via the General Fund.

C. School Hall Painting

Members reviewed a funding request from Rousay Community School for improvements to the school halls and agreed that two additional quotations should be obtained before the request is progressed further.

It was further noted that funding school maintenance may not be fully appropriate, and members agreed that the Rousay Community Association should be involved in supporting the project or alternatively take the lead in submitting the grant request as the relevant community-focused group, and it was:

Resolved for the Clerk to communicate this request to Rousay Community School.

8. Reports from Representatives

A. Planning

Resolved to note that no update was received on this item.

B. Transport

The Transport Representative provided an update on the triggering of ferry and mail contingency plans during adverse weather conditions. During recent poor weather, MV Eynhallow successfully sailed directly to Kirkwall, with Royal Mail services meeting the ferry upon arrival, as had been previously agreed by management of both services. Slight ferry timetable adjustments had been proposed by the crew to allow a faster turnaround, which had been accepted by Orkney Ferries, and it was:

Resolved to note the report.

C. Health and Care

Members received an update from the Health and Care Representative, following a recent Health and Care meeting, including discussion of a potential “fly-on-the-wall” documentary being filmed in Orkney. An update was also provided regarding the Advanced Nurse Practitioner’s role.

It was noted that Papa Westray currently had a single resident nurse, supported by medical cover by Westray doctors. The feasibility of implementing a similar model elsewhere was discussed, however it was highlighted that the Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre model would be difficult to implement without full-time GP support and could place additional pressure on existing services.

Members were advised that resident Advanced Nurse Practitioners are unable to undertake 24-hour shifts for a two-week period. Current staffing on Westray consists

of nurse cover Monday to Friday, with additional cover being provided from elsewhere. Concerns were raised that this was eroding the service, and members noted that efforts are ongoing to challenge this.

In response to a query regarding the second Advanced Nurse Practitioner position, it was indicated that only one post was currently available, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

9. Publications

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

- VAO Training and Funding Update – October and November 2025.
- VAO Newsletter – October and November 2025.
- Letter from School Place – October 2025.
- Scottish Water Stakeholder Newsletter – Autumn/Winter 2025.
- PSTN Switch-Off – October 2025.
- ORSAS Quarterly Newsletter – November 2025.
- Community Councils Scotland Training Opportunities – November 2025.

10. Any Other Competent Business

A. Royal Mail Issues

Members noted that the post boxes at Wester and Hillside Road both require replacement.

A member raised the issue that some mail was arriving damaged. Mrs C Mainland advised that where mail is significantly affected, brown tape and poly bags can be used to seal items and deliver them with an explanatory sticker. However, it is understood that the stickers do not always adhere effectively, and that this approach was not being applied consistently, and it was:

Resolved for the Clerk to contact Royal Mail regarding replacement of the post boxes.

B. 20mph Zones

Members queried whether the new 20mph areas will have any effect on future ferry timetables, and it was:

Resolved for the Clerk to communicate this question to Orkney Islands Council and Orkney Ferries.

C. Papdale Halls of Residence

Members discussed accommodation arrangements at the Papdale Halls of Residence, noting that pupils from Rousay were not currently a priority for room allocation within the halls. It was reported that a recent request from a Rousay pupil

had been declined. Members recalled that, in previous years, accommodation could be provided where spare beds were available, however this did not appear to be the current position.

Members further discussed that there appears to be a higher intake of pupils from the North Isles, and that rooms also require to be kept available to accommodate travel disruption where necessary. It was also noted that North Isles college students may also be allocated rooms at the end of the week, and it was:

Resolved to note the information and discussion.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Following consideration of a date for the next meeting, it was:

Resolved that the next meeting of Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council would be held in Rousay Community School on Wednesday, 22 April 2026 at 19:30.

12. Conclusion of Meeting

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