

# Minute of the Meeting of North Ronaldsay Community Council held in North Ronaldsay Community Centre and via Teams on Monday, 16 March 2026 at 19:30

## Present:

Mr P Donnelly, Mr I Deyell, Ms A Duncan, Mr C Dun and Mr I Scott.

## In Attendance:

- Councillor M Thomson (via Teams).
  - Councillor H Woodbridge (via Teams).
  - Mrs J McGrath, Community Council Liaison Officer (via Teams).
  - Ms H Galland, Clerk.
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- 8 members of the public.

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## **1. Apologies**

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Mrs H Scott.

## **2. Adoption of Minute**

The minute of the meeting of North Ronaldsay Community Council held on 18 January 2026 was adopted, being proposed by Mr I Deyell and seconded by Mr C Dun.

## **3. Matters Arising**

### **A. Undersea Cable Damage - Implications for Island**

#### **1. Ongoing Energy Issues**

The Chair had received a call from SSEN that morning about the ongoing issue since the undersea supply cable between Sanday and North Ronaldsay had been severed. A lot of secondhand information had been flowing round the island. A question was raised if the islands generator would cope with the increased energy use during the tourist season, and it was

Resolved

A. That SSEN would update the island on a regular basis with official information on the dynamic situation which will be shared by the Clerk via the residents Whatsapp group

B. The Clerk to contact SSEN and request these updates be weekly and ongoing

C. The SSEN Island Representative said there was no problem regarding energy supply via the generator as it was currently using 55KWhr and could go up to 360KWhr

#### **2. Fibre Optic Potential**

It is understood the replacement cable will contain fibre optics for the surveying and servicing of the cable by SSEN. With seemingly no future plans for any Company to install a cable for internet connectivity the options that this new cable might be able to provide such a service have been the subject of discussion, since the current standpoint from SSEN is that OFGEN prevents the cable being used for public services.

Additionally, to future proof the island, a larger capacity cable albeit more expensive would enable the island to produce renewable energy via a larger wind turbine taking advantage of the UKs highest sea level wind speeds, as a community. It was

Resolved:

A. That the Clerk to contact the OIC Resilience Manager to set up a meeting between Members. An opportunity was available prior to the Transport Meeting that Members were already attending on the 19 March

B. The issue moving forward to be discussed at the next NRCC meeting, dependent on what can be resolved during the above meeting

## **B. Grass Cutting Contract**

Resolved to defer this item to the end of the meeting.

## **C. Meeting with PWCC - Ferry Replacement Project**

The Chair advised that he had previously shared a 400+ page online document from HITRANS outlining the solutions and recommendations offered during consultation with the island in 2021. There was now some debate on the best way to progress with the current offering now being a smaller dedicated boat for North Ronaldsay and Papa Westray, while the other islands would have larger vessels which, without infrastructural changes, would not be able to attend the smaller isles. A meeting had been arranged for Thursday, 19 March 2026 with both PWCC and NRCC and the Head of Transport, which would be an opportunity for the two communities to state their case, but it was agreed that the requests must be consistent and definitive. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the following was necessary to address:

- Protection of the current air service.
- Engineers need to survey the pier to know what infrastructure was possible.
- Whatever is offered needs to provide a more reliable service than currently experienced (e.g. not tidal).

2. That the issue would continue to be on the agenda going forward.

## **D. Bag the Bruck - Crew Visiting Island**

With April being Bag the Bruck season, members were asked if the offer of volunteer help to do beach cleans by a visiting crew would be accepted, and it was:

Resolved that this would be beneficial and the Clerk would liaise with the group to find out dates to be shared so that residents could get involved should they wish.

## **E. Care in the Community Training**

An update had been received that the Care in the Community co-ordinator had been on leave but there was a plan to come to North Ronaldsay in the Spring or early Summer. Members agreed this was an important issue, as there were a number of residents who could benefit from the reintroduction of a home care or home visiting service, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would ask for a follow up in order for residents to be advised of any future visit.

## **F. Mobility Access**

### **1. Handrail between Airfield Car Park and Airfield Building**

The issue of danger to less mobile residents walking between car park and airfield in windy weather was raised, and it was:

Resolved:

- A. To note that this matter had already been raised by a North Isles Councillor and was being looked into by OIC.
- B. That the Clerk should request that, in addition, a vestibule or porch be considered to be added to the front entrance of the Airfield Building in order to mitigate the wind tunnel effect currently experienced during high winds on attempting to enter the building.
- C. To suggest that there be a stipulation, somehow, that the nearest parking areas be for “disability access” and that people who were leaving cars for extended periods should be encouraged to leave them in the further away “long stay” car park.

### **2. Potholes on Road to Surgery**

The state of the lane to the surgery was discussed, and members advised that it was in disrepair again and there was a need for materials to infill potholes. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

- A. To approve the purchase of road scalplings from any end of year CCGS underspend to help ensure the job would be done.
- B. That the Clerk would contact NHS Orkney in the first instance to request permission to deliver this project, or else ask NHS Orkney to get the matter resolved.
- C. That the Clerk would also contact the Interim Head Teacher to request the school road be repaired again, and to suggest that cold tar be used as a longer term repair solution.

### **3. Accessibility on Plane**

It was reported that MSPs had already agreed to the islander planes having mobility access solutions considered. The North Isles Councillors present were asked for any update, and it was:

Resolved to note that HITRANS, as the regional transport partner, were doing research/development into a hoist or other landside supportive mechanism which would not need any adaptation to the plane itself, that this project had been fully funded and once testing had been undertaken an update would be forthcoming

## **G. Potential for extra Ferries each week over Summer**

Members were advised that a conversation between the Transportation Service Manager and the Chair had resulted in the approval of extra boats to be trialled this summer. The Nordic Sea would visit on Sundays (except on excursion days when an Earl would be in attendance) with the potential to carry passengers and small cargo. Members enquired if a more prudent time for a passenger priority boat was between the Tuesday and Saturday boats when air passengers may be affected by flight cancellations due to fog. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the trial would be judged on its success and that the number of successful arrivals on a Sunday would be monitored.
2. That the Clerk request that the proposal be put in writing to the community council so that a record of what is proposed can be kept for reference.

## **H. Mower Shed Lock**

There was no update, therefore it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would order direct from a local supplier and ask Democratic Services to raise a purchase order for the lock and hasp.

## **4. Correspondence**

### **A. OIC 20mph Part Time Speed Limit Update**

Correspondence had been circulated previously to members, advising that the digital 20mph signs on all islands had been temporarily taken down due to structural failure of signposts due to weather conditions. The members discussed the validity of them, given there had been no approval of them in the first place in North Ronaldsay, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should write to OIC stating that members of NRCC were opposed to these signs, believing them to have no purpose and that they were a waste of money.

### **B. OIC - Marine Planning Stakeholder Update**

An update from the Orkney Islands Council Marine Planning team had previously been sent to members, advising that the team had recently received news that the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan had been formally adopted by Scottish Government Ministers, establishing a new statutory framework for managing marine activities out to 12 nautical miles from the coast, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

### **C. SSEN - Works between Sanday and North Ronaldsay**

Correspondence from SSEN had been circulated to members at the time of the incident of the inter-island cable being damaged, and it was:

Resolved to note that this matter had already been addressed in Matters Arising above.

#### **D. SSEN Stakeholder Webinar - 26 March 2026**

Correspondence had been circulated to members advising of a webinar on business, and it was:

Resolved to note that the island was due to have a scheduled power cut on that date.

#### **E. Digital Resilience Drop-In Workshop - 23 February 2026**

Correspondence had been circulated from Luke Fraser, Chair of the Scottish Islands Federation, who was to deliver an on-island workshop in conjunction with OIC, and members noted that the event had since taken place, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that there had not been a big attendance by residents.
2. To note that a member who did attend said the visiting OIC Officer was very helpful and informative regarding the digital switchover and people had missed an opportunity.
3. To note that the attending officer had indicated that residents considered to have "higher needs" would be able to apply for a back-up battery, and there was a good argument to state that, given the location of North Ronaldsay, all islanders would be eligible.
4. That the Clerk should ask the Service Manager, Safety and Resilience, for a Special Meeting to discuss what the residents may be able to get, including the above batteries and for a response to be forthcoming so that such solutions can be procured before the winter, when power cuts are more likely.

#### **F. OIC – ‘Meet the Buyer’ Event**

Members had previously been circulated information regarding a ‘Meet the Buyer’ event which had been held at Orkney Auction Mart on 9 March to discuss tendering work for winter maintenance, and it was:

Resolved to note the event had passed.

#### **G. Orkney Ferries – Pre-paid Paper Tickets and Booking on Ferry**

Correspondence had been circulated on the phasing out of pre-paid paper tickets and also in relation to compulsory booking, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

## **H. A Trafford – Graemsay, Hoy and Walls CC - Financial Support**

Correspondence from a member of Graemsay, Hoy and Walls Community Council had previously been circulated, asking for information on the policies across other community councils for dealing with financial requests, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents and that the members had no comment to offer.

## **I. Jim Wallace**

Correspondence had been circulated by the Chair, advising of the passing of former MP and MSP Jim Wallace, who had been a big supporter of the island, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

## **J. EMEC – Fall of Warness Tidal Test Site, Orkney**

Correspondence from the Marine Directorate regarding and EIA Section 36 consent Application had been circulated, advising that as no information had been provided by the deadline, they would record a nil response from NRCC, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

## **K. Briefing Note - Grass Cutting of Burial Grounds**

Correspondence had been circulated previously to members, advising of the outcome of a recent consultation with community councils in relation to the proposal to reduce the number of cuts that OIC would provide budget for, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents, and that it would be discussed during the approval of tenders later in the meeting.

## **L. Scottish Islands Federation - Survey - Digital Connectivity**

Correspondence had been circulated, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents, and that the Clerk encouraged members to participate given the issue being of high importance as discussed earlier in the meeting.

## **M. OIC - Weather Disruption/Action Plan**

Members had previously been sent information on an action plan to provide a ferry service to North Ronaldsay and Papa Westray on the weekend of 30 January 2026 following a prolonged period of bad weather and cancelled sailings, and it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

# **5. Consultation Documents**

## **A. SEPA - Flood Management Plan**

A reminder to participate prior to the deadline had previously been circulated, and it was:

Resolved to note the information and that the Chair encouraged people to participate.

## **B. OIC - Winter Service Policy 2026-2031**

Correspondence had been circulated previously, requesting comments on the Winter Service Policy by the deadline of 9 April 2026, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that members were concerned about the lack of ongoing road repairs leaving roads in a dangerous state.

2. To respond advising that there was a mention of Hogweed being able to be dispersed along the roads, given the limited number of verge cuttings being undertaken (one by OIC) and that Ragwort is also present but mainly on land rather than verges.

## **6. Financial Statements**

The members of the public in attendance left the meeting at this point until Item 9.

### **A. General Finance**

Following consideration of the general fund statement as at 25 February 2026, copies of which were previously circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £21,363.86.

### **B. Turbine Fund**

Members considered the turbine statement as at 25 February 2026, copies of which had been previously circulated, and it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £23,856.80.

### **C. Community Council Grant Scheme**

Members noted the CCGS statement as at 25 February 2026. The Clerk advised that the following invoices had been submitted but had yet to show on the financial statement:

- Grass cutting - Memorial Hall - £240.
- Playpark - £1,000.
- NRCA flights for guest speakers - Science Festival (approved by email between meetings) x3 = £63.
- Deepdale Hire - painting of Scrap Metal skip and delivery - £1,164.

Following consideration of the statement, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the total approved but not yet allocated was - £158.17.

2. That the Clerk would address the underspend in the NRCA fund and Repairs to Skip project, then any funding not allocated should be spent on road scalplings from Orkney Aggregates for distribution to the community.

## **D. Community Development Fund**

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund as at 25 February 2026, copies of which were previously circulated, and it was:

Resolved to note that the total available for allocation was £8768.00

## **7. Financial Requests**

Resolved:

A. To note that the request from NRCA for flights for 2 speakers during the NR Science Festival had been approved by email between meetings (£63 from CCGS).

B. To apply for CCGS funding to cover school trip fees for 2 North Ronaldsay school pupils to attend a residential in Hoy (£379 x 2), to be taken from the 2026/2027 allocation.

## **8. Grass Cutting Tenders**

Members were advised that there was one tender each for the 2 contracts, and it was:

Resolved:

A. To approve that Southness Trust will maintain the new and old kirkyards and that any money above the OIC cap will be paid via a CCGS fund for that amount

B. That the Clerk would forward the tender information to OIC.

C. To approve that Diane Gay will maintain the War Memorial on the proviso:

- They have access to their own tools.
- The total available for this project is £250 based on, now, 6 cuts.

D. That a CCGS be set up, as previous years to cover the cost of war memorial grass cutting.

## **9. Reports from Representatives**

### **A. Transport Representative**

It was reported that the issues encountered with the online Loganair booking system had been put down to the coding for the system. Given the issue of lack of drop ins to Eday and associated lack of seat availability to North Ronaldsay it was agreed that the pilot scheme did not favour the lifeline island and is evidently not meeting Eday's needs either.

It was also reported that the back-up freight plane, on the cancellation of a boat in winter was not resolved, though it was agreed the 3rd aircraft might make it more possible.

A new stipulation on the check in times before flights had raised concerns - being raised by 5 minutes for the outer isles to 15 minutes. It was advised that this was a health and safety matter but there was a general view it would not make any difference to late passengers and ultimately it was the responsibility of the pilot, not the airfield crew, to deny or accept late passengers.

The amount of “no shows” for North Ronaldsay was exceedingly high (although it has the highest number of flights too) and this should be looked into to avoid being seen as hypocritical.

Nobody could see how a stand-by system could work. Following the report and discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the report.
2. To request a Teams meeting with the Eday Community Council Transport Representative, Councillors and Transportation Service Manager to discuss a way to move forward in relation to shared flights.

## **B. Planning Representative**

Resolved to note that there was a live planning application for Turbine and Solar Panels at the Trebb development since November 2025, and that it was still being considered.

## **C. North Ronaldsay Development Trust Representative**

Members were advised that the Trebb project continues to make progress, deadlines had been extended, but it was hoped to be in the final stages by the end of March 2026, and it was:

Resolved to note the update.

## **D. Health and Care Representative**

Resolved to note that a Joint Isles Health and Care meeting was coming up, and that the issue of home carers had already been discussed.

## **E. A Yarn Company Representative**

Resolved to note there was nothing to report.

## **10. Publications**

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

- VAO Newsletter – January and February 2026.

- Orkney Ferries - Statistics – January and February 2026.
- Letter from School Place – January and February 2026.
- VAO – Training and Funding Update – January 2026.
- SEPA Update – January and February 2026.
- Scottish Community Drama Association (Orkney) - January 2026.
- ORSAS Newsletter - February 2026.
- Community Payback Brochure - February 2026.
- Scottish Islands Federation – Upcoming Events.

## **11. Any Other Competent Business - Rabbits**

The Chair requested an update on the contracting of work to make the old and new kirks rabbit proof, as they were in a embarrassing state which did not show the island up in a good light. It was

Resolved the Clerk would write to the Burials Department asking for an update and enquiring what solutions have been found elsewhere which may work here.

## **12. Date of Next Meeting**

Following consideration of future meeting dates, it was:

Resolved that the next meeting of North Ronaldsay Community Council would be held on Monday, 11 May 2026 at 19:30.

## **13. Conclusion of Meeting**

There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 22:00.