

Minute of the Meeting of Firth and Stenness Community Council held in the Stenness Community School on Thursday, 2 October 2025 at 19:30

Present:

Ms B Scollay, Mr R Crichton, Ms W Dunnet, Mr M Marcus, Mrs R Lyon and Mrs A Stevenson.

In Attendance:

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

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1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Councillor D Tullock.

2. Adoption of Minute

The minute of the meeting of Firth and Stenness Community Council held on 31 July 2025, was approved, being proposed by Mr R Crichton and seconded by Mrs A Stevenson.

3. Matters Arising

A. Festive Lighting

The Interim Clerk advised that they had not yet received a quote for the additional lights but that it would be circulated once received to aid discussion at the next meeting, and it was:

Resolved to note the update.

B. Quarry Group

The Interim Clerk had previously circulated Firth and Stenness Community Council minute excerpts from previous years which provided background information on the formation of a Cursiter Quarry Public Liaison Group and what it was meant to do. Members were reminded that the purpose of the group was to undertake a scrutiny role, and the formation of a group had been part of the planning conditions around the quarry extension a few years ago. Members considered their role in the formation of a group, and whether the group was still necessary, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Interim Clerk would ask, via the business letter, to see what the Planning Authority was expecting at this stage and if it was still necessary to form a liaison group given that the extension had now been completed.

2. That if it was found to be necessary to have a group set up, Mr M Marcus would arrange to put some information out on the Finstown social media pages to ask if anyone was interested in being part of a liaison group so that this matter could be progressed.

C. Firth Place Plan

Members who had been working on a place plan for Firth provided an update, advising that they had had a kick-off meeting with the consultants and had formed a steering group, which would be meeting next week. Councillor R King asked if it would be appropriate and helpful for Elected Members to be invited to the meeting given their involvement with place plans in other areas, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the update.

2. That Mr M Marcus would extend an invite to West Mainland Elected Members for their meeting on 8 October 2025.

4. Correspondence

A. Application for Premises Licence - HESE Ltd - Maeshowe Visitor Centre

Correspondence in relation to a Premises Licence for the Maeshowe Visitor Centre had previously been sent to members. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note that no objections had been received to this application and that the deadline had passed.

B. Orkney Islands Community Councils – Cascading information

Members had previously been sent correspondence on the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme regarding cascading information to members of the community regarding the digital landline switchover, and it was:

Resolved to note the content of the correspondence.

C. Opportunity for tree/vegetation planting to reduce eutrophication in Finstown Bay

A copy of correspondence from Joanne Porter, a researcher at Heriot Watt University Campus in Stromness, had previously been sent to members regarding planting in the Finstown area, and it was:

Resolved to note that the deadline for responding had passed.

D. Engagement Advisor for Communities - Healthcare Improvement Scotland

Members had previously been sent information from the Engagement Advisor for Communities for the North Region, working for Healthcare Improvement Scotland, offering an opportunity to meet at the end of October to learn more about the role and also to advise that the NHS Orkney Annual Review would be held on 27 October. Following consideration, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

E. Eday Connection Project - Public Event

Information from SSEN Transmissions Community Liaison Manager had previously been sent to members, advising of two public events to inform and consult with communities about their Eday Grid Supply Point Project. Some in the room had attended the meeting in Rendall and advised that various landfall options were being considered. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the information provided.

2. That the Interim Clerk would contact the Community Liaison Manager to ask when the next meeting of the Community Liaison Group (for the Finstown Substation Project) was scheduled for.

F. Christmas Tree Lighting 2025

The Event Management Plan had been circulated to members, and discussion took place on arrangements for this year, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the Finstown Tree Lighting would take place on Friday, 28 November at 18:30.
2. That two trees would be ordered by the Interim Clerk, one for Finstown and one for Stenness, to be funded through CCGS (pending approval).
3. That Mr M Harcus would liaise with local contractors regarding the erection of the tree and lights.

G. Letter of Thanks – K Chalmers

Resolved to note that a thank you message for financial assistance provided had been received from K Chalmers.

5. Consultations

A. Our Orkney, Our Future

Members had previously been forwarded information regarding a project to gather the views of local people and industry on tourism in Orkney, and it was:

Resolved to note that the survey had closed on 19 September.

B. Transport Scotland Community Drop-in Sessions - Northern Isles Ferry Services contract

Information on community drop-in sessions about the next Northern Isles Ferry Services contract had previously been circulated to members, and it was:

Resolved to note that the Orkney sessions had been held on 10 and 12 September.

C. Survey on Coastal Change

A copy of correspondence from Chris Reilly, a researcher at Heriot Watt University Campus in Stromness, had previously been sent to members regarding a survey on Coastal Change, and was considered by members, and it was:

Resolved to note the information.

D. Orkney Coastal Change Adaptation Workshop

Details of a workshop run by OIC and Mott MacDonald to discuss the development of the Orkney Coastal Change Adaptation Plan had previously been circulated to members, and it was:

Resolved to note that the workshop had taken place on 24 September.

E. Share Your Views on Tourism in Orkney

Members had previously been sent an email inviting a member of each community council in Orkney to attend an online stakeholder interview as part of the Our Orkney, Our Future project, and it was:

Resolved that Mrs A Stevenson would represent Firth and Stenness Community Council at the meeting on 16 October 2025.

F. Planning Service Meeting

An invite had previously been extended to all members to attend a meeting with representatives of OIC's Planning Service on 24 September, to discuss planning and development matters and to help plan towards a wider community conversation in the future, and it was:

Resolved to note that Mrs R Lyon had attended the meeting and had provided a report on the issues discussed, and that a further consultation event would be taking place on 21 October.

6. Finance Statements

A. General Finance

Following consideration of the general finance statement as at 4 September 2025, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the balance was £8,960.59, which included funds of £4,000 from the Rennibister Wind Turbine Community Fund.
2. That the Interim Clerk would make further enquiries with the developer regarding payments to the Rennibister Wind Turbine Community Fund.

B. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the CCGS statement as at 4 September 2025, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the main capping limit had £3,235.66 remaining for allocation and that £405 remained available for allocation in the additional capping limit.
2. That the Interim Clerk would get in touch with any groups that had a balance yet to claim so that the fund could be fully utilised in this financial year.

C. Community Development Fund

Members considered the CDF statement as at 4 September 2025, and it was:

Resolved to note the total remaining available for allocation of £6,115.63.

7. Financial Requests

A. L Kenyon, Javelin Scottish National U20 Championships, Aberdeen, 15-17 August

Following consideration of a request from N Kenyon on behalf of her daughter, copies of which had previously been circulated, for financial assistance to attend the Javelin Scottish National U20 Championships, Aberdeen on 15 August 2025, it was:

Resolved to award £30 from the General Fund towards the trip.

B. L Kenyon, Javelin Scotland coaching event Aberdeen, 20 September

Following consideration of a request from N Kenyon on behalf of her daughter, copies of which had previously been circulated, for financial assistance to attend a Javelin Scotland coaching event Aberdeen on 20 September 2025, it was:

Resolved to award £30 from the General Fund towards the trip.

C. E Chalmers, Highland Dancing, Caithness, 6 September

Mrs A Stevenson declared an interest in this item and the following item and left the meeting during discussion.

Following consideration of a request from K Chalmers on behalf of her daughter, copies of which had previously been circulated, for financial assistance to attend the Lorraine Bremner Festival on 6 September 2025, it was:

Resolved to award £30 from the General Fund towards the trip.

D. E Chalmers, Highland Dancing, Caithness 7 December

Following consideration of a request from K Chalmers on behalf of her daughter, copies of which had previously been circulated, for financial assistance to attend the Tanya Horne Winter Festival on 7 December 2025, it was:

Resolved to award £30 from the General Fund towards the trip.

Mrs A Stevenson returned to the meeting at this point.

E. Stenness Community School - Outdoor Education Experience

Following consideration of a request from Stenness Primary School on behalf of two children from the area, copies of which had previously been circulated, for financial assistance to attend P6 Outdoor Education 3-day activities between 23 and 25 September, it was:

Resolved to award £30 per child totalling £60 from the General Fund towards the trip.

F. Firth Primary School - Outdoor Education Experience

Members considered a request from Firth Primary School on behalf of 11 children from the area, copies of which had previously been circulated, for financial assistance to attend P6 Outdoor Education 3-day activities between 23 and 25 September, and it was:

Resolved to award £30 per child totalling £330 from the General Fund towards the trip.

G. 1st Dounby Rainbows – Educational Trip, Thurso – 14 September 2025

Resolved to note that this request was no longer required.

H. A Kenyon – Swimming, Thurso Open, 14 September

Following consideration of a request from N Kenyon on behalf of her daughter for financial assistance to attend the Thurso Open Swimming Competition on 14 September 2025, it was:

Resolved to award £30 from the General Fund towards the trip.

I. E Kenyon – Swimming, Thurso Open, 14 September

Following consideration of a request from N Kenyon on behalf of her daughter for financial assistance to attend the Thurso Open Swimming Competition on 14 September 2025, it was:

Resolved to award £30 from the General Fund towards the trip.

J. Friends of Firth School – Play Park Upgrade

The Interim Clerk advised that late correspondence had been received from Friends of Firth School, asking if the community council would consider providing funding towards providing new equipment for the park at Firth School. Information was provided on funding already secured, and other financial applications which were pending decision. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That members were in agreement, in principle, to grant funding towards new play park equipment, providing updated figures were provided.
2. That the Interim Clerk would respond to Friends of Firth School, asking them to submit a further request once they had the results of other funding applications and knew what their shortfall was.
3. That this item would be added to the next agenda so that members could resume consideration.

K. Firth/Evie Schools – Primary Football Training

The Interim Clerk advised that late correspondence had been received from one of the coaches of the Evie and Firth Primary Football teams, asking if the community council would consider providing financial assistance towards the cost of hall hire for training sessions of a Friday evening. Members discussed the request and queried the hire costs, and it was:

Resolved that the Interim Clerk would respond to the applicant asking for further information so that this item could be reconsidered at the next meeting.

8. Publications

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

- VAO - Training and Funding Update – August and September 2025.
- VAO – Newsletter – August and September 2025.
- Scottish Rural Action Newsletter - August 2025.

9. AOCB

A. Remembrance Day Wreaths

Members considered correspondence regarding purchase of the wreaths for the Remembrance Sunday event, and it was:

Resolved to note the Interim Clerk would arrange for two wreaths to be purchased at £36.20 each, and that a CCGS application would be submitted on the cost.

B. Signage

A member advised that a number of road signs required to be repaired or replaced in the parishes, including the Kirkwall and Stromness sign at the junction of the Evie Road and Kirkwall to Stromness Road. Another member advised that she believed that Roads Support had carried out a piece of work to look at signs which needed to be replaced and would potentially have funding to do this towards the end of the financial year. The 20mph flashing signs were also discussed, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Interim Clerk would advise Roads Support, via the business letter, that some road signs required to be replaced in the parishes of Firth and Stenness.
2. That the Interim Clerk would report that the post was rotten on the Kirkwall and Stromness signage at the junction of the A966 and A965.

C. QR Code

The Interim Clerk circulated posters with a QR code that could be used to make online donations towards the upkeep of Firth Park. She also advised that the donations tub currently hosted by Baikies had recently been emptied with the

donations paid into the Firth and Stenness Community Council General Fund, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that some small changes were requested to the signage to make it clear that donations were invited towards the park and not the community council and that it should then be circulated for use within the gardens.
2. To note that £134.94 had been deposited into the general fund from the donations tub in Baikies Stores.

D. Community Council Clerk

Members queried whether there had been any progress with recruitment of a Clerk to Firth and Stenness Community Council. The Community Council Liaison Officer advised that they had recruited to a few other areas and would try again for this area. A member suggested approaching Orkney College to see if any Admin students would be interested in the role, and it was:

Resolved to note the discussion and that a further update would be provided at the next meeting.

E. Community Council Vacancies

Following discussion around the vacant seats on the community council, it was:

Resolved that the next meeting should be preceded by a public meeting to elect to the two vacancies on Firth and Stenness Community Council, and that the Interim Clerk would arrange for this meeting to be publicised.

F. Stenness Local Place Plan

Mrs R Lyon presented the action plan relating to the Stenness Local Place Plan and advised that it was proposed that some actions would sit with Firth and Stenness Community Council to track/progress, providing members were accepting of this. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that Mrs R Lyon would update the document and send to the Interim Clerk to circulate to the other members for review prior to the next meeting.

10. Date of Future Meetings

Resolved to note that the next meetings of Firth and Stenness Community Council would be held on Thursdays 4 December 2025, 29 January 2026 and 26 March 2026.

11. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 20:58.