

Minute of the Meeting of Graemsay, Hoy and Walls Community Council held in Graemsay Community Centre on Friday, 19 September 2025 at 19:00

Present:

Mrs T Avis, Mr A Clark, Ms L Crowson, Mrs I Mathieson, Mrs G Robertson, Mr A Sinclair and Mr A Trafford.

In Attendance:

- Councillor L Hall.
- Councillor J Park.
- Mrs J McGrath, Community Council Liaison Officer/Interim Clerk.
- 7 members of the public.

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1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Councillor G Bevan.

2. Election of Office Bearers

A. Chair

Following a secret ballot, it was:

Resolved that Mr A Clark be elected Chair of Graemsay, Hoy and Walls Community Council.

B. Vice Chair

Following a secret ballot, it was:

Resolved that Mrs G Robertson be elected Vice Chair of Graemsay, Hoy and Walls Community Council.

C. Transport Representative

As this position had only recently been filled, it was:

Resolved that Mrs G Robertson would remain as the Transport Representative for Graemsay, Hoy and Walls Community Council.

D. Planning Representative

Resolved that the Planning Representative role would be carried out by the ILO/Clerk.

E. Health and Care Representative

As this position had only recently been filled, it was:

Resolved that Ms L Crowson would remain as the Health and Care Representative for Graemsay, Hoy and Walls Community Council.

3. Adoption of Minutes

The minute of the meeting of Graemsay, Hoy and Walls Community Council held on 4 July 2025 was adopted, being proposed by Mrs I Mathieson and seconded by Mrs G Robertson.

4. Matters Arising

A. Lyness Pier – Bus Shelter

The Interim Clerk advised that OIC had a tender out at present for bus shelters and that one for Lyness was being included. It was proposed that this would be a dual-purpose shelter which could also serve as a bike shelter. A member queried why a shelter was needed in this location when the waiting room was open in line with the

ferry timetable for people to shelter if required. Another member reported that there was already a bike shelter in the vicinity of the museum. It was then suggested that a shelter would be better utilised at the top of French Road where there was currently nowhere for bus passengers to wait in shelter, and school pupils waited at this location on weekday mornings. Following further discussion, it was:

Resolved that the Interim Clerk would ask, via the business letter to Democratic Services, if a shelter could be provided at the top of French Road in Lyness, rather than at the pier waiting room.

B. Osmandwall Cemetery Signage

Resolved to note that the signage had been erected and that things had improved with regards to dogs being exercised in this area.

C. Adoption of Payphones

The Interim Clerk advised that Ms L Crowson had made contact with BT and that there was no objection to the community council adopting the two boxes. The mechanisms would be removed, and there would be further discussion regarding whether to refurbish the boxes and what use they could be put to. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Interim Clerk would complete the paperwork which Ms L Crowson had received from BT in relation to adopting the boxes.
2. That further consideration would be given to what to do with the boxes once adopted.

D. Core Paths

A member asked if there was any update on whether the Council had arranged works on the South Walls core paths. It was enquired as to whether any of the Graemsay core paths required repairs. A member of the public offered to walk the routes to see if there was any work required, and also to see if any of the stiles had been replaced, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Interim Clerk, via the business letter to Democratic Services, would ask for an update from the relevant section regarding South Walls core path repairs.
2. That the member of the public would report any findings to Mrs I Mathieson following his walk along the core paths in Graemsay, including any stiles that required repair, so that the information could be passed on to the Interim Clerk.

E. Graemsay Car Parking

A member asked the Graemsay residents present how things had worked out for parking at Stromness during the Island Games, and it was:

Resolved to note that it had worked out okay.

5. Correspondence

A. North Walls Swimming Pool

Members had previously been sent correspondence requesting their support in relation to the ongoing issue of the island's swimming pool being closed, and also an invite to a community meeting which had taken place to discuss the issue on 11 September. Councillor L Hall advised that the ball was now rolling on this issue and that he and fellow Stromness and South Isles Councillors would be meeting with Council Officials the following week to discuss what was required and what the possible costs would be to allow the pool to reopen, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence and the update from Councillor L Hall, and to keep this item on the agenda.

B. Roads Responses to WSP Comments

Members had previously been emailed a document detailing the responses from OIC Roads Support to the comments made by community councils during the Winter Service Plan consultation. It was noted that the response provided was that Rackwick Road is classified as a residential side road which is Priority 3 in the policy, so OIC were unable to increase the level of treatment. Councillor L Hall provided information on how the roads were classified, and reassured members that Elected Members would keep trying to get the priority of this road upgraded. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence and the content of the discussion.

C. Letter of Support

A request had been received from the Project Manager, Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust, for a letter of support for their redevelopment project to assist with further funding applications. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that members were happy to provide a letter of support.

D. Thank You Letters

Resolved to note that thank you notes for financial assistance provided had been received from Graemsay Community Association, Longhope Lifeboat Guild and the Haey Hope Club.

6. Consultations

A. Survey – Coastal Change

Members considered correspondence, copies of which had previously been circulated, from a PhD researcher based at Heriot-Watt University in Stromness. He was running a survey to gather local perspectives on coastal change and the decision-making processes around it and asked members to complete the survey as well as help share it in the community, and it was:

Resolved to note the survey and that it had been well publicised.

B. Marine and Coastal Restoration Plan - Stromness Consultation Event

Members had previously been forwarded correspondence advising that a consultation on the draft version of the plan was open until 19 October 2025. Additionally, an in-person consultation in Orkney had been held on 11 September in Stromness, and it was:

Resolved that community council members could complete the consultation should they wish to do so.

C. Transport Scotland Drop-Ins – Northern Isles Ferry Services Contract

Information regarding the ongoing public consultation on the future of the Northern Isles Ferry Services contract, along with details of drop-in sessions in September 2025 had previously been circulated to members, and it was:

Resolved to note the information and that the consultation was open until 13 October 2025.

D. Draft Summer 2026 Ferry Timetables

The draft ferry timetables relating to Hoy and Graemsay had previously been sent to members for their information, ahead of them being presented to committee for approval. The timetables were discussed, with some small changes being requested, being:

- To amend the sailing time of the second sailing of the MV Graemsay on a Saturday to match the Sunday (09:30).
- An extra sailing of the MV Graemsay in the middle of the day on weekends.
- That instead of sitting at Flotta for 50 minutes on a Saturday afternoon, the ferry returns to Houton and then to Lyness.

Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that the Interim Clerk would advise, via the business letter to Democratic Services, that the changes were requested by Graemsay, Hoy and Walls Community Council to the summer 2026 ferry timetables.

E. A Safer Route to School - Community Advisory Group Invitation

Following consideration of correspondence from Sustrans, copies of which had previously been circulated, advising that the project was now entering the collaborative design phase, and extending an invite to Graemsay, Hoy and Walls Community Council to join their Community Advisory Group, it was:

Resolved that the Interim Clerk would ask to be kept informed of progress and of any meeting dates so that members could be offered the chance to attend should they wish to.

F. Our Orkney, Our Future

Information on a project launched by OIC to gather tourism views had previously been circulated to members, and it was:

Resolved to note that the deadline for comments was 19 September 2025.

G. Orkney Coastal Change Adaptation Workshop

Members considered correspondence from Mott McDonald Ltd and Orkney Islands Council, inviting community council members to attend a workshop to discuss the development of the Orkney Coastal Change Adaptation Plan (CCAP) on 9 October, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

H. Tourism in Orkney

Members had previously been forwarded an invitation from OIC to nominate one community council member to attend a stakeholder interview as part of the Our Orkney, Our Story project, supporting the formulation of OIC's new Visitor Management Plan. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that the Chair could attend the 8 October session and the Vice Chair could attend the 16 October session and that the Interim Clerk would pass on this information to Democratic Services.

7. Financial Statements

A. Annual Accounts

The annual accounts for Graemsay, Hoy and Walls Community Council as at 31 March 2025 had been circulated to members with the agenda papers and, following consideration, it was:

Resolved to note the end of year balance of £21,276.80.

B. General Finance

Following consideration of the community council's general finance statement, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £24,551.51 as at 8 September 2025.

C. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the 2025/2026 Community Council Grant Scheme statement, it was:

Resolved to note the balances remaining for approval of £2,618.28 in the main capping limit, £780 in the additional capping limit and £755 in the island capping limit as at 8 September 2025.

D. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund statement as at 8 September 2025, it was:

Resolved to note the balance remaining for allocation of £7,876.10.

8. Financial Requests

A. YM Empower – Insurance

A request from YM Empower for assistance with the cost of insurance cover for the community hall had previously been circulated to members and, following discussion, it was:

Resolved to award 80% of the funding requested, being £340, subject to CCGS approval.

B. Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust – Insurance

Members had previously been forwarded a request from Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust for assistance with the cost of insurance cover for the boat and public and employers liability insurance and, following discussion, it was:

Resolved to award 80% of the funding requested, being £362.43, subject to CCGS approval.

C. Friends of Hoy Kirk – Insurance

Following consideration of an application from Friends of Hoy Kirk, copies of which had previously been circulated, for assistance with the cost of insurance cover for the Hoy Kirk, it was:

Resolved to award 80% of the funding requested, being £744, subject to CCGS approval.

D. North Walls Centre SCIO – Insurance

A request from North Walls Centre SCIO for assistance with the cost of their insurance cover had previously been circulated to members and, following discussion, it was:

Resolved to award 80% of the funding requested, being £706.40, subject to CCGS approval.

9. Reports from Representatives

A. Transport

Resolved to note that the Transport Representative had already provided a report earlier in the meeting.

B. Planning

Resolved to note that there was nothing to report.

C. Health and Care

The Health and Care Representative advised that she would be attending the next Joint Isles Health and Care meeting on 30 September and would report back to the next meeting.

10. Publications

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

- VAO - Newsletter – July 2025.
- VAO – Training and Funding – August and September 2025.
- Scottish Islands Federation – August Bulletin.
- Isles Special Collection Rota to March 2026.
- ORSAS Quarterly Newsletter – September 2025.

11. Any Other Competent Business

A. Bus Shelter – Hoy

Members resumed consideration of where a bus shelter could be sited on the bus route, and it was:

Resolved that the Interim Clerk would advise Transportation, via the business letter to Democratic Services, that the community council suggested the area around Brims, perhaps in the vicinity of the boat shed at the end of the Ayre, as a suitable location for a shelter.

B. Grit for Graemsay Roads

A letter had been received and circulated to members in relation to the grit that was delivered to Graemsay in tonne bags, which caused difficulty when having to distribute it to the grit bins in various locations on the island. It was suggested that it could be delivered in smaller bags, and someone could be paid to distribute it, and it was:

Resolved that the Interim Clerk would raise this through the business letter to Democratic Services and ask if the grit could be delivered in smaller bags and distributed by a paid person.

C. Reinstatement of Stiles – Graemsay Core Paths

Resolved to note that this issue had already been discussed at item 4D above and that a resident would advise of relevant landowners and report any findings to Mrs I Mathieson to pass on to the Interim Clerk for addressing.

D. Remembrance Day Wreaths

It had been queried if the community council wished to purchase remembrance wreaths for the islands, and it was:

Resolved to order six wreaths and that these would be funded via CCGS.

E. Hoy GP Interviews

An invite for a community council representative to take part in interviews for a GP had been circulated to all members and it had been agreed that Mr A Trafford would attend. Members discussed a question to ask the candidates, and it was:

Resolved to note that Mr A Trafford would represent Graemsay, Hoy and Walls Community Council at the forthcoming GP interviews and would liaise with members over a question to pose to the candidates.

F. Ditch Cleaning in Graemsay

A member reported that the ditches had been dug out recently but that the spoil taken out of the ditches had then been dumped in the verge, making the verge higher and therefore difficult for walkers to step up from the road and out of the way of oncoming vehicles. Members suggested that the spoil should be getting taken away completely, or deposited somewhere more suitable, and it was:

Resolved to report this issue via the business letter to Democratic Services.

G. Graemsay Defibrillator

It was queried how the community defibrillator was managed in Graemsay, and those present advised that they took care of it and residents contributed to the cost of keeping it maintained and available for use. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to make a general fund donation of £250 towards the cost of maintaining the community defibrillator on Graemsay, and that the Interim Clerk would arrange a payment to Graemsay Community Association.

H. Outdoor Education

Mr A Trafford advised that he had received correspondence from the Outdoor Education Adviser, asking for advice on setting up an outdoor activity programme over winter for families, and it was:

Resolved that the information would be sent to Ms L Crowson to raise this with the Development Trust.

I. Community Consultations – Ferry Replacement Programme and Harbours Masterplan

The Interim Clerk advised that consultants wished to carry out on-island consultation meetings in Graemsay and Hoy, preferably prior to Christmas, in relation to the ongoing Ferry Replacement Programme (second phase) and the Orkney Harbours Masterplan (phase 2) and had made enquiries regarding when would be the best times for this. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that a meeting over a weekend would be best for the Graemsay meeting as that was when most of the residents would be on-island.
2. To note that more than one meeting may be required for Hoy due to there being more than one centre of population, and that evening meetings through the week would be recommended.
3. That the Interim Clerk would feed this information on preferred times for on-island engagement to the officer leading the consultations.

J. Aggregate for Graemsay

A member enquired as to whether a community council aggregate scheme would be operated this year and, following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note that it was Graemsay's turn to be allocated aggregate, and that the Interim Clerk would get a price so that this could be discussed at the next meeting.

12. Dates of Next Meetings

Following consideration of dates for the next meetings, it was:

Resolved that the next meetings of Graemsay, Hoy and Walls Community Council would be held on Tuesdays 18 November and 27 January in the North Walls Centre and via Teams at 19:30.

13. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 21:00.