Minute of the Meeting of Graemsay, Hoy and Walls Community Council held in the North Walls Centre and via Teams on Friday, 5 June 2026 at 19:00

Present:

Mr A Clark, Mrs G Robertson, Mrs T Avis, Ms L Crowson, Mrs I Mathieson (via Teams) and Mr A Sinclair.

In Attendance:

- Councillor G Bevan.
- Councillor L Hall.
- Councillor J Park (via Teams).
- Mrs J McGrath, Community Council Liaison Officer (via Teams).
- Ms S Smith, Island Link Officer (ILO)/Clerk.

Order of Business

1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Mr A Trafford.

2. Adoption of Minute

The minute of the meeting of Graemsay, Hoy and Walls Community Council held on 27 March 2026 was adopted, being proposed by Mrs T Avis and seconded by Mr A Sinclair.

3. Matters Arising

A. Bus Shelters

A member raised concerns regarding the absence of bus service information within the new shelter at French Road. A discussion followed in which the limited timetable for the Community Bus Service was noted. Members raised the question as to whether other transport options and contact details could be displayed alongside the timetable such as the Shuttle and private taxi and tour businesses. Additional information such as the location of defibrillators was also proposed, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would send a copy of the Community Bus Timetable to the Community Council Liaison Officer for display.

2. That the Clerk would seek advice as to whether additional information could be displayed and who would be responsible for placing and maintaining the information.

3. That Councillor Hall would clarify terms of use of the Shuttle service by visitors to the island with the Island of Hoy Development Trust.

B. Adoption of Payphones

Responses from the community to the request for ideas for uses of the phone boxes were sent to members before the meeting. The clerk also informed members that they had been approached by a member of the public with an offer to clean and paint the phone box at Longhope if the community council provided the materials.

A discussion followed acknowledging the wealth of ideas and identifying the maintenance and basic fit out with shelving that may be required. No change of colour was proposed. Specific discussion was given to using the boxes for the provision of defibrillators. Members noted that there was already access to a defibrillator at Longhope in the RNLI Station and at the Scapa Flow Museum although this wasn’t outside the building. The option to fit a defibrillator at Lyness was discussed but not included at this stage due to a lack of power at the box to maintain the equipment ready for use. The potential to improve access to the defibrillators already available through increased public advertisement was noted and added to item 3B above. Establishment of a working group or volunteer group to maintain and manage the boxes was discussed, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That GHWCC would purchase the materials required to paint the phone boxes from the General Fund.

2. That the Clerk would seek guidance on the amount and colour of paint required, plus additional tools such as templates.

3. That the Clerk would seek quotes for installing generic shelving into both boxes.

4. That the Clerk would advertise for persons interested in forming a volunteer group to maintain and manage the telephone boxes.

C. Core Paths

The Clerk and Community Council Liaison Officer informed members that there was not update on this item. Following a short discussion, it was agreed that an update on the progress of the planned repairs was required, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would walk the South Walls coast path to review the boardwalk sections that had been identified as requiring repair.

2. Mrs I Mathieson would arrange for a review of the planned repairs to the steps on Graemsay.

D. North Walls Swimming Pool

Confirmation had been received from the Head of Active Communities at Orkney Island Council that pending ratification, works to repair the North Walls Swimming Pool had been included within the Capital Corporate Improvement Plan for 2026/2027.

Councillor L Hall updated members that the works were to go ahead and reminded members that once the works to protect the asset were complete the community would be responsible for the utilisation of the facility. Representatives from the North Walls Community Centre amongst the members confirmed that they would take the lead with this aspect of the project, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

E. Aggregate for Hoy

Members had previously been advised by email of a delay in applicants being able to collect their aggregate, due to an incident in which another party had mistakenly collected the wrong stone. The Clerk advised that this had now been resolved, all applicants had been informed and that an apology had been received from the company involved. A suggestion was made that alternative arrangements be considered to simplify distribution if the aggregate scheme was to be offered again in the future, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

F. Graemsay Scrap Cars

The Clerk updated members that Democratic services were in regular contact with Orkney Aggregates and awaiting confirmation of a date the company could transport the vehicles. She advised Mrs I Mathieson that the commitment from Orkney Ferries to provide the MV Toplander still stood. The Community Council Liaison Officer acknowledged the huge amount of work already undertaken by the Graemsay community to prepare the vehicles and hoped to be able to provide confirmation of a date soon. She explained that Orkney Aggregates had reported to be very busy and some members were aware of difficulty exporting scrap out of Orkney. She also confirmed that provision of a skip was part of the request already made to Orkney Aggregates.

Councillor Hall advised members of scheduled repairs for the MV Hoy Head beginning on the 23 October and lasting approximately three weeks and of discussions in progress within Orkney Ferries with regards to the possibility of MV Toplander providing additional freight support during that time as previously requested. He advised members that capacity for the MV Toplander was rated at 60 tonnes which is approximately 6 vehicles and that it can access the linkspan. Members asked if this was to be advertised so that services could be booked and were advised that this was still at a planning stage with no decision yet as to whether this would be a scheduled or ad hoc provision and where it would operate between. It was suggested that freight demands to and from Flotta was key to the provision put in place, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Community Council Liaison Officer would continue to pursue a date for and coordinate haulage with assistance from the Clerk if delegated.

2. To await confirmation from Orkney Ferries of the repair schedule for MV Hoy Head and the cover arrangements.

G. Supply of Grit Bins to the Rackwick Road

The Clerk advised that there was no update for this item and asked if members wished to keep the item on the agenda. A discussion followed as to whether confirmation had been received that grit bins would be installed. Councillor L Hall advised that there was a commitment to provide grit bins within the Winter Plan as long as information on locations had been provided. The Chair confirmed that this was the case.

Mr A Clark also requested an update on plans to remove the road salt discarded during the recovery of the gritter, when it came off the road earlier in the year, as it is seeping down the hill and killing vegetation in the area. The Community Council Liaison Officer advised members that she would raise it with the appropriate officers and requested it be added to the business letter, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the information provided with regards to the grit bins and remove the item from the agenda.

2. That the Community Council Liaison Officer would raise the request for an update on the removal of discarded road salt from the gritter with the appropriate officers.

3. That the Clerk would add the request to the business letter.

H. Dog Waste – Longhope

Members gave consideration to advice received from the Waste and Recycling Officer, proposing relocation of the litter bin currently situated on Historic Scotland land at the Martello Tower to a site at the east end of Longhope village, on land adjacent to Longhope Surgery, as an alternative to installing an additional waste bin for which they have no budget, which was circulated before the meeting. Two anti-fouling signs were provided by Environmental Health as requested and made available at the meeting.

A discussion followed during which an additional bin in the vicinity of the Longhope Pier, placed behind the phone box, which appears to be used less than the one placed at the Martello Tower was identified along with the additional problem of dog fouling along the coast path at The Ayre carpark. Mrs T Avis reminded members that a previous request to move the bin from the pillbox location at The Ayre to the carpark had not been possible due to access for the cart. Locations for the anti-fouling signage provided were identified along with a need for additional signage for the carpark and the waste bins themselves. Mrs G Robertson advised that she would be able to put the signs already provided in place, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would reply to Orkney Islands Council, via the business letter, and request relocation of the second waste bin behind the telephone box at Longhope Pier to the proposed location adjacent to the GP surgery in Longhope maintaining the waste bin at the Martello Tower.

2. That Mrs G Robertson would place anti-fouling signs at either end of the main road through Longhope village.

3. That the Clerk would request, via the business letter, additional anti-fouling signs and waste bin signage from Orkney Islands Council.

I. Housing Concerns

Members resumed discussion of the advice presented by representatives from Orkney Island’s Council on 27 March 2026. Members felt that there were significant limitations to them being able to influence the provision of private accommodation on the islands however provision to prioritise essential workers within allocation of local authority accommodation was noted. A member highlighted the availability of housing as one of the recruitment barriers for ferry crew and asked the councillors present if Orkney Ferries could explore partnership working with the Orkney Islands Council’s Housing Department to present a combined job and accommodation package that might facilitate recruitment. An alternative proposal for staff employed to stay on board the vessel was also identified, and it was:

Resolved that Councillor L Hall would explore the proposed suggestions with Orkney Ferries and Orkney Islands Council.

J. Kirkyard Grass Cutting

Printed tender information for the Osmundwall Cemetery was sent to members ahead of the meeting and an update of the current grass cutting tender was provided by the Clerk. Members also raised recent clearance of the pathway to the Moodie Mausoleum and the poor condition of the now redundant tool storage shed.

A discussion followed with regards to the different areas within the cemetery grounds generated by the presence of war graves, and active and inactive areas and their current treatment. The Community Council Liaison Officer confirmed that the area above the active cemetery was owned by Orkney Islands Council and advised that members can state how they would want each area maintained. Members acknowledged community council responsibility for the wooden shed and one similar but in better condition at St John’s Kirk.

Mr A Sinclair advised members that he had been approached by members of the public with a request for concrete plinths to be installed within the active cemetery area to allow timely placement of memorial stones. A historical proposal for the adoption of a double-depth lair for family burial if requested and the suggestion that this proposal was revisited was also discussed, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To monitor the current tender.

2. That the Clerk would retrieve contractual detail of grass management costings per metre.

3. That the Clerk would contact St Johns Kirk SCIO to enquire if they would wish to adopt the redundant tool shed within the kirkyard curtilage.

4. That the Clerk would request, via the business letter, the removal of the redundant tool shed within the curtilage of Osmundwall Cemetery.

5. That the Clerk would request, via the business letter, consideration of installation of concrete plinths to the areas marked out for burial within Osmundwall Cemetery that are not already served by this facility and a review of the request for double-depth lairs to be made available.

K. Allocation of Funding

Members felt that Mr A Trafford should be present for discussion of this item, and it was:

Resolved to resume consideration at the next meeting.

L. SSPCA Restructure

Following consideration of correspondence from the Scottish Society for Protection of Cruelty to Animals, which was circulated to members before the meeting along with their response, it was:

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

4. Correspondence

A. Orkney Springboard Local Assembly – 24 August 2026

In invite to join a local “Springboard” event designed to bring artists, cultural and sustainability organisations, climate workers, activists, local businesses, third sector organisations and interested parties together to discuss climate change, share local projects and form local networks for creative climate action, which had been previously circulated to members, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

B. Annual Grants Letter 2026/27

Following consideration of correspondence advising that the Community Council Annual Grants (CCGS) had been approved and a list of allocations for the financial year 2026/2027 detailing an uplift of 2% had been circulated to members before the meeting.

Community Council Grant Scheme capping limits were set at £3992 for the main capping limit and £796 for the additional capping limit in respect of costs associated with halls or community centres which are not in Council membership and transport costs between the islands and Mainland Orkney. The additional allocation of £770 was again set for costs associated with transporting aggregate to the islands. Any balances on CCGS approvals outstanding will be carried forward, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

C. Orkney Music and Culture - ‘Try an Instrument Session’

Members considered a request for venue suggestions for a ‘Try an Instrument Session’ on Hoy and Walls, which had been previously circulated to members and responded to by the Clerk with the suggestions received, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

D. Battery Recycling at Lyness Waiting Room

After receiving a verbal notification that battery recycling at Lyness Waiting Room was full and required attention, members identified that this was usually maintained by the visiting library service, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

E. Orkney Local Development Plan Update - May 2026

An update on the review of the Orkney Local Development Plan (OLDP) and how communities can have a say in its preparation through direct participation with advertised engagement events or by creating and submitting a Local Place Plan (LPP), was circulated to members before the meeting. The communication advised that developing a Local Place Plan was completely optional however for it to feed into the drafting of the proposed OLDP the submission deadline was 31 October 2026 but that an LPP can still be registered after this date. It also advised that existing community-led plans could also be considered.

Members requested advice from Orkney Island Council representatives in the meeting as to what a Local Place Plan (LPP) was, how it was developed, and how it could benefit the community. Councillors G Bevan and J Park advised that an LPP is a way to gather and present community priorities - such as specific buildings or areas, economic development opportunities, community needs such as housing, or smaller local projects to support informed decision-making and provide evidence of community consultation when seeking funding or other assistance. Local examples were supplied along with reassurance that projects could still be developed if not on an LPP. They also advised that support in the form of consultancy and grant funding may be available to communities that wished to look at this process and support was offered for application. A short discussion followed exploring next steps, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To invite the Service Manager, Development and Marine Planning, via the business letter, to a meeting to discuss the LPP further and how to proceed if pursued.

2. That the Clerk would invite the Island of Hoy Development Trust to the meeting.

5. Consultations

A. Shaping the Future of Scotland’s Forests

Members considered an invite from the Forest Policy Group to feedback on several aspects of how forestry is experienced and valued across the country, which was circulated to members, with a closing date for the survey of 19 June 2026, and it was:

Resolved that members may complete the survey as an individual if they wished.

B. Representative for Equality Delivery Group Meeting

A request was received from the Chair of the Community Planning Partnership’s Equality Diversity Group for GHWCC to nominate a representative to attend a workshop on 5 June 2026 to shape the next 12 months of work for the group and make sure that the focus was aligned with the needs of people in the isles, which was circulated to members.

The Clerk had attended the meeting and provided a short summary of the remit for the group and topics identified for further discussion, advising members that representation from the island was still sought. Members also briefly discussed the Island Resilience Plan which the Community Council Liaison Officer had previously advised would be reviewed in the near future, and it was:

Resolved that the minute from the meeting would be circulated to members once received.

6. Financial Statements

A. North Walls Centre - Funding

The Clerk advised members that monies allocated to the North Walls Centre MUGA project (Item 8A) would be claimed as the project progressed. A representative of the North Walls Centre acknowledged that the full amount had been awarded and advised that the project was progressing with an estimated start date of the summer 2026, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided when reviewing the financial statements in items 6B and 6C.

B. General Fund

Following consideration of the General Fund statement as at 12 May 2026, it was:

Resolved to note the estimated value of £20,959.39.

C. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the CCGS statement as at 12 May 2026, it was:

Resolved to note that the main capping limit had been exceeded by £439.36, the Island Capping Limit was fully allocated, and there remained £1.04 in the additional capping limit.

D. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the CDF as per the statement as at 12 May 2026 and the information noted earlier in the meeting, it was:

Resolved to note the balance of £6480.68 was now fully allocated.

E. Graemsay - Aggregates

At this point the Chair suggested that an additional item of Graemsay Aggregate, omitted from Matters Arising, be discussed.

An email had been circulated advising members that Graemsay residents had requested a total of 80 tonnes of aggregate for the 2026 Graemsay Aggregate Scheme, being an additional 40 tonnes to that already supplied.

Members discussed allocation procedures for each island and additional commitments for the financial year, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To maintain the Graemsay allocation at 40 tonnes for the current year, with a commitment to consult residents ahead of the next allocation to determine whether funds were available to provide additional tonnage.

2. To consider developing a standardised operating procedure (SOP) for the aggregate schemes.

7. Financial Requests

Members acknowledged the outstanding plan for the review of allocation procedures for the financial year 2026-2027 (Item 3K) when considering the following financial applications:

A. North Walls Centre – MUGA Project

The Clerk advised members that a quorum decision had been reached to award the North Walls Centre the full amount requested for the project, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that £6,480.68 had been awarded from Community Development Fund.

2. To note that £2,314.22 would be awarded from General Funds.

B. Orkney Folk Festival

Consideration was given to an application from Orkney Folk Festival for a donation towards staging a concert at the Hoy Kirk as part of the 2026 festival programme. Members noted that the event had already taken place but were advised by the Clerk that as the request was received before the event a donation could still be awarded and it was:

Resolved to agree a donation in principle and to continue discussion at the next meeting.

C. Longhope Lifeboat Museum

Consideration was given to an application from Longhope Lifeboat Museum for financial assistance towards annual boat and public and employers liability insurance, and it was:

Resolved to agree a donation in principle and to continue discussion at the next meeting.

8. Reports from Representatives

A. Transport Representative

Mrs G Robertson advised members that Orkney Ferries draft summer timetables for 2027 had been issued for consultation, copies of which had been emailed to members ahead of the meeting. She highlighted the proposed changes to the Friday Stromness to Graemsay and Moaness service, with the introduction of a scheduled 18:00 sailing in place of the current requested service, as previously requested by the community, while advanced booking for the 21:00 sailing had been maintained. Members discussed the proposed timetable, taking into consideration the known constraints within the service such as crew hours, training and condition of the fleet. The consultation process was also discussed.

Councillor L Hall also updated members of continued issues with the scheduling of the No 5 Stromness to Houton bus and it not arriving in time to meet the 13:15 ferry, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the proposed schedule changes made to the Stromness to Graemsay and Moaness service.

2. That the Clerk would prepare a summary of the suggestions raised by members during the discussion and email it to the Transport Representative in readiness for public consultation.

3. That the Clerk would write a letter on behalf of the community council to Orkney Islands Council highlighting the issue.

B. Planning Representative

The ILO advised members of correspondence received from Mr B Geddes requesting members support for an appeal against planning consent reference 25/02743/SCOP for four 200m wind turbines and a battery energy storages system at Olrig Hill, Caithness.

After careful consideration, members did not feel that the development affected the residents they represented, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the information provided.

2. That the Clerk would respond to Mr Geddes.

C. Health and Care Representative

Ms L Crowson advised members that she had attended the Integrated Joint Isles Health and Care meeting and fed back the main topics discussed.

Members were advised of ongoing work relating to carer recruitment and retention, including strategies to attract and maintain carers and to address barriers to this. One suggestion had been to personalise advertising to suit the circumstances of each island community. Ms L Crowson also advised that a new lead role had been appointed, with Mr D Miller taking up the position, and that he planned to visit and work directly with island communities.

Members were also advised of work in progress to address recruitment and deployment challenges within nurse services throughout the county, with a move to remove contractual barriers and development of a local training course at UHI. Following a short discussion on the requirement for a joined-up approach utilising opportunities, such as essential worker housing allocation and Golden Hello's, and the challenges of delivering emergency cover and a 24/7 staffing model, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

Councillor J Park left the meeting during this item.

9. Publications

The following publications had previously been emailed to members. The Clerk informed members of possible shared priorities between the updated National Islands Plan and matters recently discussed and flagged the SIF online feedback events. She also invited members to request specific information from the Orkney Ferries special breakdown of statistics if required.

- VAO – Newsletter – March and May 2026.
- Scottish Islands Federation – March 2026 News.
- OIC Marine Planning - Current marine project funding schemes.
- Orkney Ferries - March and April 2026 Statistics.
- New powers for Scotland's Community Councils – Newsletters 6, 7 and 8.
- Scotland's Regeneration Forum - SURF Awards Shared Learning Workshops.
- VAO – Training and Funding Update – April and May 2026.
- Scottish Islands Federation News – April 2026.
- ORSAS Quarterly Newsletter - May 2026.
- Accounts Commission Report - May 2026.
- Overview of Community Wealth Building plus a community-led approach to care at home in rural Scotland - Free Webinar for CCs.
- Public Sector Network Newsletter – May 2026.
- SIF - National Islands Plan Online Events Coming up.

10. Any Other Competent Business

A. Road Condition

A member raised concerns with regards to the condition of the island's roads following installation of ducting for fibre broadband. Members present were able to provide reassurance that the current road treatment was temporary and that a repatriation team would be completing the final repair, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

B. Parking at Houton

A member raised a concern received from a member of the public with regards to increased parking and access difficulties at Houton. Members discussed the issue identifying the use of unmarked bays, poor parking and the parking of oversized vehicles in marked bays and waiting lanes contributing to poor access at boarding and disembarking times along with the volume of trades and tourist traffic overwhelming the parking capacity for island residents. A seemingly abandoned vehicle was also identified. Councillor L Hall advised that additional land had been purchased adjacent to the current parking area however there were no plans at this stage for this to be developed and a suggestion of adoption of the smaller Flotta carpark for trades and visitors was discussed, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That Councillor L Hall would enquire about the possibility of the Flotta overspill carpark being used for non-resident ferry parking.

2. That the Clerk would ask Orkney Islands Council to review parking facilities and access at Houton Ferry Terminal with a view to identify improvements for island residents including the possibility of taking over the Flotta overspill carpark.

3. To note that a copy of the request will be circulated to members before submission.

C. Pier Users Group

The ILO advised members of the development and proposed formation of a Pier Users Group with a remit of collating and representing the views of people who use the pier for the purpose of engagement with any consultation processes or community development of pier facilities and enquired as to whether the members felt that this could sit as a working group under the community council. In addition, she asked if members felt that supporting this group would sit within the remit of the Island Link Officer, and it was:

Resolved to note the information provided and add an item to the agenda to allow further discussion.

11. Date of Next Meeting

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

Resolved that the next meeting of Graemsay, Hoy and Walls Community Council would be held on Friday, 28 August 2026 at 19:00 in the Graemsay Community Centre.

12. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 22:10.