

Minute of the Meeting of Kirkwall and St Ola Community Council held in the Friends Room, St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall, on Monday, 29 June 2026 at 19:30

Present:

Lynne Spence, Chris Matthews, Steven Brodie, Robert Leslie, John Mowat, Tom Rendall, Rosemary Rhodes and Neil Tait.

In Attendance:

- Councillor Sandy Cowie.
- Barbara Balcombe, Community Engagement Officer – Land Access, Orkney Native Wildlife Project (for Item 2).
- Stephen Hagan, Chair, The Orkney Fund (for Item 3).
- 1 member of the public.
- 1 member of the local press.
- Hazel Flett, Clerk.

Chair:

- Lynne Spence.

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1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Cathleen Hourie and Elspeth Seatter, and Councillors Steven Heddle, Leslie Manson, John Ross Scott, Gwenda Shearer and Ivan Taylor.

2. Orkney Native Wildlife Project

Following a presentation from the Community Engagement Officer – Land Access on progress with the Orkney Native Wildlife Project, including technological developments such as thermal cameras, new designs for traps, detection dogs, and the continued importance of reporting sightings of stoats, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the presentation.

The Community Engagement Officer left the meeting, and Stephen Hagan joined the meeting at this point.

3. The Orkney Fund

Following a presentation from Stephen Hagan, Chair, The Orkney Fund, on progress with the Pride in Place programme, since his appointment in March 2024, including delays as a result of changes at the UK Government, recent announcements of funding offers associated with the six themes in the Board's approved Regeneration Plan and collaboration with the Community Council on development of the Local Place Plan, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the presentation.

The Chair of the Orkney Fund left the meeting at this point.

4. Police Scotland

As there was no representative from Police Scotland present, no presentation was provided, and it was:

Resolved to note the position.

5. Adoption of Minute

The Minute of the Meeting held on 11 May 2026 was approved, being proposed by Rosemary Rhodes and seconded by Tom Rendall.

6. Matters Arising

A. Litter at Kirkwall Marina

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council advising that, as the road alongside the marina was unadopted, any additional bin installation would fall on Harbours to maintain and service, which might require an employee or extra staff, and that extra signage could be installed on site asking the public to collect after their dogs, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk should write to Orkney Marinas to ascertain whether they would be able to provide any assistance towards litter collection.
2. That the Clerk should write to Orkney Islands Council asking whether the signs could advise about general litter collection, as well as tidying up after dogs, and whether a larger bin could be provided.

B. Requests for Financial Assistance

Following consideration of notes of thanks received from various individuals and groups regarding financial assistance received from the Community Council, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

C. Seatter Path

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council advising of recent works at the Seatter path, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the contractor was nearly finished installing the boardwalk when Orkney Islands Council received a complaint from a property adjacent to the path, claiming vehicular access rights over the path, following which the Council had requested evidence to back the claim before works could be completed.
2. To note that the Council was not aware who had removed the black grids which UHI Orkney students had put down on the wettest areas at the start of the year, however students had also planted a number of native trees in gaps in the hedge along the Council-owned side of the path.

D. Rainwater Goods and Gullies

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council in response to queries regarding responsibility for maintenance of rainwater goods and gullies, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that, depending on the risk posed to road users, Orkney Islands Council could instruct private residents/businesses to take action to prevent water from encroaching on public roads which was more often with regard to freezing in winter.
2. To note that, although drain covers at ground level remained the responsibility of the property owner, the Council could inspect those as part of routine safety inspections and pass on any concerns accordingly. Should any immediate hazards be present, the Council would make those safe and seek recompense from the property owner, but this would only apply to drains situated within the adopted roads boundary.
3. To note that no Environmental Health or Planning powers were available, although, if the property was located within the conservation area and/or was listed, advice should always be sought prior to any works being undertaken.

4. That Chris Matthews should further investigate responsibilities and report back in due course.

E. Development Session

The Clerk had been advised that Community Council Liaison staff would be available to provide a development session on all aspects of community council funding and in relation to the planning role, on various dates in July and August, and it was:

Resolved that a development session be arranged for Monday, 10 August 2026.

7. Standing Items

A. Ferry Replacement Programme and Harbours Masterplan Phase 2

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council advising that the consultant, Arch Henderson, had been requested to supply an updated plan, outlining key dates, which would help inform the consultation phase, following which plans would be made to engage with the Community Council, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the current position.

B. Carness Sea Wall

Resolved to note that there was no further update at this time.

C. Former Street Names

Resolved to note that there was no further update at this time.

D. Local Place Plan

The Chair advised that feedback on the draft consultancy brief had been received from Orkney Islands Council, including potential consultants to be approached, and that funding opportunities continued to be looked at, and it was:

Resolved to note the current position.

E. Benches

Although a meeting had been scheduled with representatives from Orkney Islands Council for 29 June 2026, to discuss a co-ordinated approach to bench maintenance, the meeting had been cancelled at short notice, and it was:

Resolved to note that the meeting would be rearranged.

F. Sand at Scapa

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council, copies of which had been circulated, advising that the Roads service had undertaken a short trial hole into the embankment which confirmed that the road surface did not extent to the wall, therefore, even if all the sand was taken away, the road would require to be widened at great expense. That aside, road safety remained the primary reason for keeping the embankment in place, which slowed traffic down and, in Roads' professional opinion, removal would lead to dramatic increases in speed. The embankments had been widened to allow a minimum road width of 3.5 metres, which would be maintained going forward,

which was adequate for a pedestrian and vehicle to pass. On the rare occasion where larger vehicles met pedestrians, there were passing places and other frequent wider areas where either the driver or pedestrian could wait. The Roads Service therefore considered the matter closed and would not be able to provide any further comment, and it was:

Resolved that Chris Matthews should draft a response to Orkney Islands Council, reiterating the Community Council's concerns, and, following approval, the Clerk should submit the approved response to Orkney Islands Council.

G. Winter Fest

Resolved to note that there was no further update at this time.

H. Policy on Financial Assistance

Following consideration of a proposed new policy on financial assistance, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that, as the draft policy circulated was incorrect, the matter be deferred to the next meeting, to allow a revised draft to be submitted for members' consideration.

I. Green Plaque for Carnegie Library

Resolved to note that there was no further update at this time.

J. Former Balfour Hospital – Garden Memorial Building

Resolved to note that there was no further update at this time.

K. Laing Street, Kirkwall

Resolved to note that there was no further update at this time.

L. Phone Box at Pierhead

Following consideration of correspondence from Kirkwall BID to BT supporting the Community Council's request to retain and maintain/improve the public phone box at Kirkwall pierhead, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the contents of the correspondence.
2. To note that no response had yet been received from BT to the Community Council's latest correspondence.

M. Festive Lighting in Kirkwall

Resolved to note that there was no further update at this time.

N. Urban Weeds

The Clerk had received an update from Councillor John Ross Scott advising that, following a weeding session within Papdale East on 13 June 2026, 32 bags were collected, with the bags donated by the Council and taken to the Hatston civic amenity site by Councillor Scott. Unfortunately, there had been a slight misunderstanding in the role of Greener Orkney, in that they only undertook litter picks, and not weeding, and it was:

Resolved to note the position.

O. Street lighting in Papdale East

Resolved to note that there was no further update at this time.

P. Street lighting in Meadowbank

The Clerk had received an update from Councillor John Ross Scott advising that responsibility for investigating any dark spots on public roads within Meadowbank would rest with the Roads service, while any dark spots within housing area footpaths would be the responsibility of the Housing service, and it was:

Resolved to note the position.

Q. Bus Shelter at Old Finstown Road/Liberator Housing Development

The Clerk had received correspondence from Orkney Islands Council stating that, following a request from the Community Council to be kept updated on the possibility of having a bike shelter installed in the vicinity of Liberator Drive, the Transportation service had advised that they were in receipt of a number of requests for shelters, including the one at Liberator Drive, and, once they had prioritised the list, the Community Council would be advised, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should write to Orkney Islands Council advising that the initial request related to a new bus shelter in the vicinity of Liberator Drive, and not a bike shelter, and seeking clarification on what type of shelter would be provided.

8. Community Wealth Building

Following representations from Chris Matthews regarding the Community Wealth Building legislation, it was:

Resolved to note the position.

Robert Leslie left the meeting at this point.

9. Correspondence

A. Orkney Local Development Plan Update – May 2026

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council providing an update on the review of the Orkney Local Development Plan, including the Development Plan Scheme Newsletter 2026-2027 and Local Place Plans, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

B. Island Conversations – New National Islands Plan

Following consideration of correspondence from the Scottish Islands Federation advising of the next round of Island Conversations, organised by the Scottish Government's Islands Team, in relation to the new National Islands Plan, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that a number of online sessions had taken place during June 2026.

C. Scottish Islands Federation – Accessible Travel Framework – Island Events

Following consideration of correspondence from the Scottish Islands Federation advising of a series of online events taking place in June, July and September 2026, to be delivered by Transport Scotland working with Disability Equality Scotland, to help shape the Accessible Travel Framework successor, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

D. Scottish Islands Federation – Island Digital Connectivity Resilience

Following consideration of correspondence from the Scottish Islands Federation advising of an online meeting regarding digital connectivity resilience held on 25 June 2026, following on from evidence provided to the Scottish Affairs Committee Digital Connectivity Inquiry Call for Evidence in light of extended loss of connectivity in Orkney and Islay as a result of sub-sea cable damage, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

E. Species on the Edge – Wildflower Planting

Following consideration of correspondence from the RSPB regarding the Species at the Edge project in Orkney, which included planting wildflower plug plants at Inganess Road and Pickaquoy Loan, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

F. Orkney Harbours Land at Hatston

Following consideration of correspondence from HRI Munro Architecture advising of a Proposal of Application Notice by Orkney Islands Council for the proposed change of use of land at Crowness, Hatston, from agriculture to a harbour operational area, including details of public drop-in sessions in the St Magnus Centre on 8 and 22 July 2026, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

10. Financial Statements 2025/2026

A. Community Council Accounts

Following consideration of the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026.

B. General Finance

Following consideration of the General Finance statement as at 17 June 2026, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the estimated balance as at 17 June 2026 of £16,328.60.

C. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the 2025/26 Community Council Grant Scheme statement as at 17 June 2026, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that projects to the value of £4,427.49 had been approved, of which £3,611.27 had been claimed.
2. To note the balance remaining for approval within the main capping limit of £1,197.81.

11. Financial Statements 2026/2027

A. General Finance

Following consideration of the General Finance statement as at 17 June 2026, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the estimated balance as at 17 June 2026 of £21,944.16.

B. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the 2026/27 Community Council Grant Scheme statement as at 17 June 2026, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that projects to the value of £3,451.27 had been approved, of which £455.05 had been claimed.
2. To note the balance remaining for approval within the main capping limit of £1,861.24.

C. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund statement as at 17 June 2026, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the balance remaining for approval of £1,163.46.

12. Financial Requests

A. Athletics

Following consideration of an application from L Kemp requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in the Scottish Schools' Athletic Association Track and Field Championships held in Grangemouth on 12 and 13 June 2026, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given, subject to confirmation of participation.

B. Highland Dancing

Following consideration of an application from D Wood requesting financial assistance towards her daughters participating in the Tanya Horne Festival of Highland Dancing held in Wick on 31 May 2026, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given in respect of each dancer, subject to confirmation of participation.

C. Athletics

Following consideration of an application from S Webb requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in the Scottish Schools' Athletic Association Track and Field Championships held in Grangemouth on 12 and 13 June 2026, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given, subject to confirmation of participation.

D. Badminton Strength Summer Camp

Following consideration of an application from L Leask requesting financial assistance towards her son participating in a badminton strength summer camp to be held in Wick on 21 and 22 July 2026, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given, subject to confirmation of participation.

Robert Leslie rejoined the meeting at this point.

E. High-Performance Rugby Pathway

Following consideration of an application from S Tualasea requesting financial assistance towards her son participating in a high-performance rugby pathway, resulting in selection for the summer Caledonian squad, involving travel to various locations over July and August 2026, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £20 be given in respect of each event attended, subject to confirmation of participation.

F. Kirkwall Riding of the Marches

Following consideration of correspondence from the Kirkwall Riding of the Marches requesting financial assistance towards continuation of the historic, annual event, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. That a donation of £500 be given.
2. That the Clerk should write to Orkney Islands Council requesting that the cost of road closures be waived, given the historic significance of this civic event.

The member of the public left the meeting at this point.

G. East Mainland Agricultural Society – Disabled Parking Area

Following consideration of an application from East Mainland Agricultural Society requesting financial assistance towards the cost of the disabled parking area outside the new pavilion being tarmacked or concreted, in order to meet current building regulations, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a grant of £500 be awarded, subject to assistance from the Community Development Fund being approved.

H. North District Development Swim Meet

Following consideration of an application from A Bruce requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in the North District Development Swim meet held in Inverness on 20 and 21 June 2026, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be given, subject to confirmation of participation.

I. Caley Rugby

Following consideration of an application from D Stevenson requesting financial assistance towards her son participating in a high-performance rugby pathway, resulting in selection for the summer Caledonian squad, involving travel to various locations over July and August 2026, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £20 be given in respect of each event attended, subject to confirmation of participation.

13. Publications

The following publications had been sent to the Clerk and were forwarded to members via email:

- Scottish Forum of Community Councils – Newsletter Issue 3 (May 2026).
- Scottish Water – Engage: Spring/Summer 2026 Digital Stakeholder Newsletter.
- VAO Training and Funding Updates – May and June 2026.
- Accounts Commission – Best Value Thematic Report: Transformation and The Impact of Public Audit Today and the Shape of the Future.
- Improvement Service – Overview of Community Wealth Building plus Community-Led Approach to Care at Home in Rural Scotland.
- Scottish Rural Action – May 2026 Newsletter.
- SEPA Updates – Getting Out of the Boardroom and Shining a Spotlight on Air Quality.
- Walking Scotland eNews – National Walking Month 2026 and June 2026.
- Scotland's Towns Partnership – May 2026 Newsletter.
- VAO Newsletters – Volunteering Special Edition.
- SSEN – Whole System Newsletter – June 2026.
- Orkney Islands Council – Armed Forces Day – 27 June 2026.

14. Any Other Competent Business – New Tesco Grant

Following consideration of correspondence from Green Space Scotland advising of a new grant available from Tesco for groups supporting children and young people, particularly activities that helped improve children's physical and mental health, and also with an element of health eating, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the Clerk and the Chair had circulated the correspondence to the three schools within the Community Council area and to the Orkney Foodbank.

15. Date of Next Meeting

Following consideration of future meeting dates, it was:

Resolved that the next meeting of Kirkwall and St Ola Community Council should be held on Monday, 24 August 2026, commencing at 19:30.

16. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 21:40.