

Minute of the Meeting of Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council held in Rousay Community School and via Teams on Wednesday, 22 April 2026 at 19:30

Present:

Mr A Firth, Mrs Z Flaws, Miss A Mainland, Mrs C Maguire, Mrs C Mainland and Mr R Tipper.

In Attendance:

- Mr K MacPherson, Head of Property and Asset Management (via Teams).
- Councillor M Thomson (via Teams).
- Ms C Kriisa, Clerk.

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1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Mrs D Compton, and Councillors H Woodbridge and S Clackson.

2. Adoption of Minute

The minute of the meeting of Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council held on Wednesday, 22 April 2026 was adopted, being proposed by Miss A Mainland and Mrs Z Flaws.

3. Matters Arising

A. Memorial at Rousay Kirkyard

An update was received from Mrs Z Flaws that the concrete was due to be poured once the shuttering had been installed, with the stonework scheduled to be completed in August. Following the update, it was:

Resolved to note the information and keep the item on the agenda.

B. Laybys

Members were advised that Roads Support were expected to visit Rousay in July. Members would be notified in advance so that a representative from the Community Council might attend. Following the update, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided and keep the item on the agenda.

C. Parking at Rousay School

Members discussed parking at Rousay School, noting that although the position had improved out with core school hours, difficulties continued to arise where the school and community facilities were in use during the day.

It was noted that any requirement for additional parking would first need to be clearly identified and that funding for any future works remained unresolved. Members also noted that the community turbine controls would require to remain separate from the school property. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

D. Pedestrians at Piers and Piers Update

Members reiterated their concerns that the bays reserved for ferry traffic remained too similar in appearance to standard parking spaces. They also noted that the longer reversing bay for larger vehicles appeared to be incorrectly positioned and not properly aligned with the slipway.

An update was received from Marine Services, confirming that traffic management plans were currently being developed for the piers. Plans for most mainland piers had been completed, with work on the island piers being progressed. Members were advised that the Community Council's comments would be taken into account during

preparation of the relevant plan, to ensure that the layout and associated arrangements were considered together, and it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

E. Parking at Brinian Kirkyard

A brief discussion was held, during which it was noted that no further action could be determined until the Roads Support team visit in July, and it was:

Resolved to note the discussion and keep the item on the agenda.

F. Orkney Ferries Booking System

Members noted that no changes had been made to the online booking system and that bookings could still only be amended online if they had originally been made through the online system. Following the update, it was:

Resolved that the Transport Representative would compile the Community Council's feedback and submit it by email.

G. Rousay Road Conditions

Members noted that the potholes have been filled, although sections of the road edge had subsequently deteriorated. Following the update, it was:

Resolved to keep the item on the agenda.

H. Grass Cutting Tender

Members discussed whether the grass verges outside the kirkyards could be cut to improve their appearance. It was unclear whether this could be included within the existing contractor's duties, or whether the matter would require to be referred to the Roads team for consideration.

Members also requested that the grass around the James Leonard memorial stone be cut twice each year. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved for the Clerk to submit a request via the business letter.

I. Late Night Ferries and Bus Connectivity

Members noted that the late-night ferry services had been successful and that the associated bus connections were operating effectively. Following the update, it was:

Resolved to remove the item from the agenda.

J. Grass Verges - Safety Cuts and Ditches

Members raised concerns that overgrown grass verges were restricting visibility and creating a potential safety risk for road users. It was noted that work to clear roadside ditches remained ongoing, although issues relating to drainage cut-outs had not yet been fully addressed. Members also sought clarification regarding responsibility for cutting the grass outside the Pier Houses, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk compile a list of locations requiring safety cuts and drainage cuts for referral to the Roads department;
2. That the Clerk seek clarification on responsibility for maintaining the grass outside the Pier Houses.

K. Gates at Brinian Kirkyard

Repairs were still to be completed, and it was:

Resolved to note the update and to keep the item on the agenda.

L. Wyre School

Members noted that work had been undertaken to repair the doors and tiles and to secure the windows. Feedback from the community consultation being carried out by the Development Trust remained outstanding, and it was:

Resolved to note the update and to keep the item on the agenda.

M. Draft Winter Ferry Timetables

Members noted that no changes were proposed to the summer ferry schedules. Mr R Tipper agreed to prepare a draft timetable incorporating changes to the lunchtime arrangements for submission to Orkney Ferries and the Egilsay Community Association, subject to the proposals being operationally feasible. Further clarification was required regarding any implications for crew working hours and lunch breaks, and it was:

Resolved for Mr R Tipper to prepare a draft ferry timetable for consideration and further discussion.

N. Subsidence at Brinian Kirkyard

The Service Manager, Roads and Grounds, had advised that he has noted the issue and that his team will assess and attend to the issue, as necessary. Following the update, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided and to keep the item on the agenda.

O. Airlifting from Rousay Surgery

Following discussion with the Advanced Nurse Practitioner, it was noted that steps beside the garage provided access around the building, although these were not located near the air ambulance landing area. Mrs Z Flaws subsequently agreed to circulate photographs of the location to members to show this.

Members discussed whether a concrete slope and path could be provided between the surgery and the hardstanding used for air ambulance transfers. The required specification remained unclear, and funding would need to be identified.

Members agreed that advice should be sought from NHS Orkney and the Scottish Ambulance Service on any improvements that are required for safe patient transfers, including whether the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service could attend when an air ambulance was called.

The Head of Property and Asset Management also noted that creating a formal landing area may require Civil Aviation Authority approval and compliance with aviation regulations. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That Z Flaws raise the matter at the next Joint Isles Health and Care meeting and circulate photographs.
2. That relevant advice be sought from NHS Orkney and the Scottish Ambulance Service.
3. That coordination through local resilience planning be explored, with Councillor M Thomson kept informed.

4. Correspondence

A. Orkney Islands Council - Equality Delivery Group Meeting

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council inviting the Community Council to nominate a representative to attend the Equality Delivery Group meeting on 5 June 2026. It was noted that the Orkney Community Planning Partnership was seeking to re-establish its taskforce focused on reducing inequalities between different areas of Orkney, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

B. Scottish Community Councils - Overview of Community Wealth Building Webinar

Members considered correspondence from Scottish Community Councils regarding a free webinar to be held on 10 June 2026. The session would focus on community wealth building and a community-led approach to care at home in rural Scotland, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

C. Orkney Native Wildlife Project - Confirmation of Stoat Incursion on Rousay

Members received a brief update regarding the latest stoat sighting on Rousay. There were reported sightings near Muckle Water and Westness in early April 2026, and in response, enhanced surveillance and control measures had been deployed, including additional traps beyond those already in place, remote and AI-enabled cameras, and specialist dog searches for signs of stoat activity. Following consideration, it was:

Resolved to note the update.

D. Orkney Native Wildlife Project - Invite to Briefing on Stoat Incursion

Orkney Native Wildlife Project invited members to an in-person briefing, with Mrs Z Flaws and Miss A Mainland acknowledging that they may attend, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

E. Orkney Health and Care - Rousay Healthcare Provision

Members considered correspondence from NHS Orkney detailing the limited clinician cover on Rousay between Friday, 29 May and Thursday, 4 June 2026. Support was to remain available via Dounby Surgery, as well as NHS24 and 999 for emergencies. Following the update, it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

F. Orkney Islands Council - Annual Grants 2026/2027

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding the Community Council Annual Grants. Annual Grant awards had been approved and a list of allocations for all Community Councils for the financial year 2026/2027 was provided, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

G. Orkney Islands Council - Orkney Local Development Plan

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council providing an update on the Orkney Local Development Plan Scheme Newsletter and Local Place Plans.

The Newsletter outlined the work and engagement undertaken over the previous year in support of the preparation of the new Local Development Plan. It was noted that the deadline for communities to submit Local Place Plans had been extended to 31 October 2026. Following the update, it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

5. Consultations

A. Orbital Marine Power - Westray Tidal Array Pre-Application Consultation Notice

Members considered correspondence from Orbital Marine Power regarding a public consultation on the proposed Westray Tidal Array in the Westray Firth. The proposal comprises approximately 70 tidal energy devices, with a combined generating capacity of around 170 MW, together with associated cabling and supporting infrastructure. It was noted that a public drop-in event was scheduled to take place on 11 June 2026 at the St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall, and that the deadline for comments on the proposal would be 13 July 2026. Following the update, it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

B. Forest Policy Group - Shaping the Future of Scotland's Forests

Members considered correspondence from the Forestry policy Group, inviting members to take part in an online survey to gather views on how forestry is experienced and valued across the country. The survey closing date was listed as 5 June 2026. It was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

C. Orkney Islands Council - Capital Dredge - Rousay Harbour

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council advising that an application had been submitted for a marine licence to undertake capital dredging at Rousay harbour below the level of Mean High-Water Springs. It was noted that any comments on the proposal were required within 28 days of the notification being received, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

D. Orkney Islands Council - Draft Summer Ferry Timetables 2027

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council advising that the draft summer ferry timetables for 2027 were available for consultation. It was noted that feedback should be submitted in advance of the Transport Forum meeting, due to take place on 19 August 2026. All comments had to be received by Orkney Islands Council before the deadline of 4 August 2026, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

E. Orkney Islands Council - Capital Dredge - Egilsay Harbour

Members considered correspondence from Orkney Islands Council advising that an application had been submitted for a marine licence to undertake capital dredging at Egilsay harbour below the level of Mean High-Water Springs. Comments on the proposal were required within 28 days of the notification being received.

Members noted that no corresponding application had been submitted for Wyre harbour and raised concerns regarding the existing effects of tidal and weather conditions on ferry operations. Clarification was sought on whether dredging works were planned for Wyre harbour, and it was:

Resolved for Councillor M Thomson to follow up on any future dredging activity at Wyre harbour.

F. Scottish Islands Federation - Island Conversations: Exploring the New National Islands Plan

Members considered correspondence from the Scottish Islands Federation inviting islanders, community groups and other stakeholders to participate in the next series of online Island Conversations on Scotland's new National Islands Plan. The

sessions would provide an overview of the Plan, including projects and investment confirmed for 2026/2027, its key priorities and longer-term vision, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

G. Scottish Islands Federation - Accessible Travel Framework Events

Members considered correspondence from the Scottish Islands Federation regarding a series of free engagement events to inform the development of a successor to the Accessible Travel Framework. The events would be delivered by Transport Scotland in partnership with Disability Equality Scotland, with participation encouraged from disabled people living in island, rural and remote communities.

It was noted that the events would take place between June and September 2026 and could be booked through the Scottish Islands Federation website, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

H. Scottish Islands Federation - Island Digital Connectivity Resilience Meeting

Members considered correspondence from the Scottish Islands Federation inviting attendance at an online meeting on digital connectivity resilience, to be held via Zoom on 25 June 2026. It was noted that registration was available free of charge through Eventbrite, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

6. Financial Statements

A. General Fund

Following consideration of the general fund statement for Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council as at 9 June 2026, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £33,235.66.

B. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the 2026/2027 CCGS statement for Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council as at 9 June 2026, it was:

Resolved to note that the main capping limit was £3,119.66, and that the balances remaining in the additional and island capping limits were £556 and £770 respectively.

C. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund statement for Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council as at 9 June 2026, it was:

Resolved to note that there was £6,677.80 remaining available to allocate to projects.

D. Seed Corn Fund

Following consideration of the Seed Corn Fund statement for Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council as at 8 April 2026, it was:

Resolved to note that there was £7,535 remaining available to allocate to projects.

7. Financial Requests

A. Rousay Sailing Club - Insurance Costs 2026/2027

Members considered a request from Rousay Sailing Club for financial assistance towards its insurance costs for 2026/2027, to support the continued delivery of community events. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that £500 would be awarded via the Community Council Grant Scheme, subject to approval.

B. 1st Rousay Rainbows, Brownies and Guides - Bag the Bruck

Members considered a request from 1st Rousay Brownies, Rainbows and Guides, following their participation in Bag the Bruck. It was:

Resolved that £150 would be awarded via the Community Council Grant Scheme, subject to approval.

C. 1st Rousay Rainbows, Brownies and Guides - Resources

Members considered a request from 1st Rousay Rainbows, Brownies and Guides for financial assistance towards the purchase of uniforms and additional resources, and it was:

Resolved that a donation of £96.75 would be awarded from the General Fund.

D. Rousay Cinema Club - Projector Upgrades

Members considered a request from Rousay Cinema Club, requesting financial support with the purchase of a new projector. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that £1,000 would be awarded from the Community Development Fund, subject to approval.

E. Egilsay Summer Events - Late Night Boat Hire

Members considered a request from Egilsay Summer Events, requesting support with late night ferry hire, to allow residents to attend a summer event. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that £500 would be awarded via the Community Council Grant Scheme, subject to approval.

F. REWG Community Council - War Memorial Lettering

Members revisited a previous agreement for financial support towards the re-lettering of Rousay War Memorial, and it was:

Resolved that £1,032 would be awarded from the Community Development Fund, subject to approval.

8. Reports from Representatives

A. Planning

Members noted that no new applications had been added to the Planning Portal. Building warrants had been granted for the outstanding projects, and it was:

Resolved to note the update.

B. Transport

Members noted that the summer ferry timetables had been published. An extension to the wheelhouse of the M.V. Eynhallow was scheduled for summer 2027 to improve visibility and crew conditions. The work was expected to take place while the M.V. Shapinsay was in service, providing cover should any operational issues arise.

An update was also received on the ZEVI vessel, which was due to travel to Belfast for further improvements before returning to Orkney. Councillor M Thomson would continue to provide updates. Members reiterated that a six-passenger capacity would not be sufficient and that the vessel should accommodate 12 passengers. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the update.

C. Health and Care

Members received an update on the appointment of a new Advanced Nurse Practitioner with substantial experience of emergency care and healthcare delivery within island communities, including Orkney. Owing to the notice period of their current post, they are expected to take up the position in August.

Members discussed the need for a more sustainable model of island healthcare, including greater continuity of care. Concern was also expressed regarding the out-of-hours telephone arrangements at the Balfour Hospital, as the option to contact the Advanced Nurse Practitioner is positioned too far into the automated menu for callers who may be seeking urgent assistance.

Correspondence had also been received from the new Community Planning Manager, who was seeking to meet island residents as part of work to map health provision, first responder arrangements and emergency response across the isles. It was noted that concerns relating to the out-of-hours service should also be reflected in community resilience planning, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That Mrs Z Flaws would contact relevant isles residents regarding engagement with the Community Planning Manager.
2. That Mrs Z Flaws would discuss the out-of-hours automated service at the next Joint Isles Health and Care meeting.
3. To note the information.

9. Publications

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

- VAO Training and Funding Update - May 2026.
- VAO Newsletter - May 2026.
- Orkney Ferries Statistics - April and May 2026.
- Letter from School Place - April and May 2026.
- ORSAS Quarterly Newsletter - May 2026.
- Scottish Water Stakeholder Newsletter - Spring/Summer 2026.

10. Any Other Competent Business

A. Community Council Member Withdrawal

Members were advised that Mrs D Compton had decided to withdraw from the Community Council. Members expressed their sympathy and appreciation for Mrs Compton's contribution and agreed that her efforts should be suitably recognised. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the resignation of Mrs D Compton.
2. That the Clerk would organise a suitable contribution via Democratic Services.

B. Triangle Club

Members were advised that the chairs currently used by the Rousay Triangle Club did not adequately meet the accessibility and safety needs of some members. A letter requesting financial assistance towards the purchase of more suitable seating will be submitted to the Community Council before the next meeting. Following discussion it was:

Resolved to note the update.

C. Screen Machine

Members noted that the Screen Machine had visited Shapinsay the previous year, although the vehicle's size had been close to the operating limits of the vessel. Further consideration would require confirmation of the vehicle's weight and dimensions, together with an assessment of tidal and operational requirements.

It was noted that the proposed extension to the M.V. Eynhallow's wheelhouse may provide an opportunity to reconsider the feasibility of accommodating the Screen Machine on Rousay in future. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the update.

D. Blossom Quarry Car Park

Members discussed whether the Community Council could progress additional parking on the stone side of the Blossom quarry. It was noted that research has previously been undertaken by Mr B Milner on behalf of the Rousay Heritage Society.

Councillor M Thomson also agreed to seek clarification on the separate Orkney Fund allocation available to communities. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Chair would contact Mr B Milner regarding the potential parking proposal.
2. That Councillor M Thomson would seek further information on the relevant Orkney Fund allocation.

E. Litter Bin Request

Members raised concerns regarding an increase in dog fouling on roads, paths and verges, together with the irresponsible disposal of used dog waste bags. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would request the installation of an additional bin beside the Recycling Centre.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Following consideration of a date for the next meeting, it was:

Resolved that the next meeting of Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay Community Council would be held in Rousay Community School on Tuesday, 1 September 2026 at 19:30.

12. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business to discuss, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 20:55.