

WHALSAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Draft Minute of the Whalsay Community Council (CC) meeting. Held on Tuesday 6th April 2021 at 7pm via WebEx. This minute is a draft until approved at the next meeting.

PRESENT:

Cllr Jackie Leslie (JL) – Chair
Cllr William Polson (WP)
Cllr Anne Huntley (AH)
Cllr Margaret Hughson (MH)

Duncan Anderson – North Isles Cllr (DA)
Ryan Thomson – North Isles Cllr (RT)
Alec Priest - North Isles Cllr (AP)

APOLOGIES RECEIVED:

Cllr John Dally (JD) – Vice Chair
Cllr Pete Gaines (PG)
Michael Duncan – External Funding Officer
& Community Council Liaison Officer (MD)
Roselyn Fraser – Community Involvement & Development Officer (RF)

MINUTE TAKER:

Rhea Kay – Clerk

WELCOME:

JL welcomed all to meeting.

APOLOGIES:

Apologies noted.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST:

On discussions regarding Symbister Harbour WP noted he had two boats there.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

JL asked if all are happy with previous minute. AH approved, MH seconded.

FINANCE REPORT:

CC happy with latest monthly finance report received. JL pointed out the CRF funding that had been received.

MATTERS ARISING:

SYMBISTER HARBOUR - CRANE, OLD DOCK, DREDGING, REPLACING OF MARINA PONTOONS, NETTY PIER

CC discussed DA's email regarding Crane updates. Engineers are to return to finish work.

Clerk will keep CC updated with further information from Amenity Trust regarding Old Dock.

WP updated CC on progress with Old Dock document. WP highlighted its long history, and how it is unacceptable to see it in its current state as it is crumbling into the sea. AP mentioned that sharing the information in the document could also be useful from a transport perspective. WP agreed as the docks in Symbister Harbour were part of Whalsay's original transport service.

CC further discussed WP's document and agreed they were happy, all information included was informative. WP would like to get permission to use Thomas Woore paintings of Symbister Harbour in document, both the paintings and the

dock are of historical and cultural importance. **CC to enquire about getting permission.** MH thanked WP the hard work. **WP to note information that has come from Heritage Centre. Clerk to send on to Amenity Trust/SIC when ready**

Clerk to discuss with CC the information to share with Ports and Harbours regarding improvements around the Symbister Harbour. **Clerk to send email when finalised**

CDF PROJECT

CC discussed new ideas received from Clerk and Art Teacher and CC agreed they would like to see sign say 'Welcome to Whalsay', and feature a collage of the Whalsay bairns' artwork that showed as wide a range of art work and elements of Whalsay as possible. **Clerk to email Art Teacher to get pen drive with the scanned artwork to show CC**

CC discussed costings, quotations for installation, and the planning consents required to construct the sign. **Clerk to chase up new quote and complete planning application**

FENCE AT DUMP

No update. **Clerk to enquire**

ROADS AND STREETLIGHTS

JL pointed out slippery area on Saltness/Symbister road is still an issue. CC also discussed hole at Symbister junction and agreed to get more clarification on the work. **Clerk to enquire with Roads or Local Contractor.**

CC discussed safety issues with roads around school area. Clerk has been working on email draft and is to circulate to get CC's input. **Clerk to circulate draft to CC before sending to SIC**

WP and DA discussed document that showed linking path at North Beach could not be made due to a potential ferry terminal being built there. DA could not find that specific point in a version he obtained. Discussion noted if that information is in the latest document it should be removed now as it is no longer relevant. **DA and WP to look into**

JL asked if the Active Travel Strategy could be best solution for North Beach path, or if there were other solutions. The need to join path to make area safer could fit in with strategy criteria perfectly. **CC to monitor strategy progress**

WHALSAY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

Clerk updated CC and informed that there currently a total of eight local people interested in getting involved in some way. CC noted the number is close to being able to make further progress. JL encouraged continual advertising and CC can discuss further in next meeting.

JL mentioned CRF funding received for two newsletters and how CC could advertise the group there as well. Could be beneficial to make every household in isle aware. **Clerk to get a newsletter out in April/May time to community.**

DA mentioned local media could be an option and CC agreed although it is difficult to share too much information via public media in meantime, it could help gain more interest once set up and projects start.

JIMMY ARTHUR ESTATE

JL shared updates received from JD who has been making progress and contacting local crofters. **CC to keep updated**

BROADBAND

JL shared updates from JD - no update had been received from questions posted o R100 round table meeting. JL asked if anyone had any more information on progress. DA mentioned that a cable is potentially arriving next year which should make a big improvement to quality of internet.

COMMUNITY RECOVERY FUND (CRF)

Clerk and JL updated CC on progress with CRF funding. Administration work to finalise the details for each group are in progress. Paperwork will then be drafted to detail the amounts and the conditions that the groups will need to agree to before signing. Clerk to share more information with groups on where to source items so that it is helpful.

JL asked MH about the stock of PPE left over and asked if there were any use by dates that should be noted. JL explained that WCC has funding available to purchase more PPE for community.

SHETLAND COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND

JL asked if CC have seen latest information received and the email received from SCBF in response to CC queries. JL noted that correspondence confirmed Whalsay community groups and individuals could still access and benefit from the funding available to the community.

JL summarised view on matter as Chair and explained that a final decision needed to be made. JL put the decision to a vote amongst CCLrs. All CCLrs voted not to sign the papers as local groups and individuals are still eligible to apply to and benefit from the fund for up to £10,000 with SCBF.

Discussion noted if process had been different where CC were allocated with the £10,000 to then share amongst the community while also covering administration then decision could have been different. It is now not in CC's best interests to get involved when community can benefit directly from SCBF.

COUNCILLORS' ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

JL noted for tonight's Agenda discussion Transport it was beneficial to have all SIC Cllrs in attendance, however if there is nothing urgent on agenda it would be good to rotate CC meetings amongst Cllrs as they see fit. JL shared she was pleased RT could attend meeting and both agreed.

PARTICIPATORY BUDGET EVENT

JL shared all 6 grants had been allocated last month and groups were happy with grants. JL noted RF was not in meeting but would be beneficial to get updates from other CC's Online PB Events.

FERRIES

CC discussed Vidlin links span works update and agreed they were happy with SIC contingency plans.

BUS SHELTERS FOR SCHOOL BAIRNS

CC discussed most recent updates. CC agreed looking into the Huxter bus shelter being moved further in the road, and MH highlighted a future need for a bus shelter at Powster, particularly since the main road is dangerous for bairns if they were to walk to the Tripwell bus shelter. **CC to decide final locations and Clerk to get back to SIC.**

POLICE MATTERS

Clerk shared previous update from community police officer and shared that there was 1 reported crime in the past 4 weeks for an attempted fraud over the phone. **CC to ensure Scambusters information is shared on Facebook page**

Damage to the school grounds were also noted, community is to be vigilant and keep note of any new information.

LOCAL ENQUIRY

WP shared updates on discussion had in relation to issue. If the issue affects public use of area then CC would need to keep an eye on the developments and assist where appropriate.

CHARLESTOWN PLAYPARK AND WILD GARDEN

Playpark wall now fixed. CC to consider sharing warning on Facebook page for bairns to be careful when climbing walls at playpark as stones could become loose.

Clerk and CC to get together information regarding getting a path around Wild Garden and surrounding area to make it safer to bairns and pedestrians. **Email to then be sent out to appropriate contact.**

AH discussed how the Active Travel Strategy looked like a solution, JL agreed and noted it would be quick fixes that fit within criteria. RT shared further information had been received on progress with strategy and there would be a further meeting. Since CC submitted response it should be in consideration, RT is happy to discuss in next meeting held. **RT to check how CC will be kept informed with decisions**

SWAN TRUST

JL shared updates and confirmed the Swan Trust is changing to a SCIO. **Clerk to keep CC updated with progress on finding local representative.**

MAIN AGENDA:

CONSTITUTION CHANGES

JL asked if CC saw latest emails and Clerk read out information received. JL asked if CC are happy with proposed changes, CC unanimously agreed. **Clerk to share CC response to ASCC**

TRANSPORT

JL asked WP for updates. WP discussed previous transport document discussion in *Matter Arising – Roads and Streetlights*. CC agreed if point is still included in most up to date document it should be removed to stop hindering improvements to path and other areas, such as waiting room and toilets.

RT shared thoughts on improvements to Whalsay transport links and encourages a real focus now on fixed links. Uncertainty around replacement terminals and replacement vessels are affecting progress and hindering local developments. RT explained need to make progress on fixed links and gain more support from both council and government.

JL asked how SIC plan to look after ferry service in meantime. JL explained Whalsay's fleet is aged and breakdowns are common, so plans to preserve ferries are still needed. RT agreed but assured CC they are not near retirement rights yet. It is expected SIC would keep maintaining vessels and worst-case scenario consider second-hand vessels while fixed links progress.

Discussion moved to financial aspects of new infrastructure. AP pointed out SIC do not have fixed funds for either new ferry infrastructure or fixed links, which therefore opens up opportunities. SIC are not trying to delay improvements to infrastructure but instead shift focus into right place. AP noted there may not be as big of a delay with fixed links as what is perceived. RT pointed out potential funding opportunities from public bodies and government. If SIC put forward a strong case there is opportunity to speed process.

WP shared previous offers of funding to create fixed links that were dismissed by SIC. WP then asked if SIC are aware Westminster government put down guarantees for large scale projects. RT agreed it would be beneficial to look for UK government support as well as Scottish support - every avenue to be researched to reach best outcome. RT, AP and DA could email government secretary to meet and discuss further. AP pointed out growing interest in fixed links from wide range of bodies.

AP highlighted vast amounts of taxpayer money could be saved by fixed links. WP described document regarding Yell Tunnel that showed figures on how much money could be saved. WP noted figures in similar Whalsay document were inaccurate therefore and data was flawed. WP reviewed increasing running costs of current Whalsay ferry service, and pointed out costs were £17 million around 5 or 6 years ago and are now £23 million. Discussion noted culmination of fuel, maintenance to vessels, linkspans etc. **RT to find latest document on running figures for WP.**

DA mentioned the Scottish Government must realise the capital funding is not enough to cover renewal of an outdated transport system. The current infrastructure cannot carry on in current state - needs to be reviewed and given more financial assistance. DA noted the green agenda in relation to the ferry service as another reason for fixed links. DA agreed with previous points, now is time to increase contact with the government bodies to make them aware of current issues and the benefits of fixed links.

Discussion moved on to getting the Hendra to resume weekend runs during summer months. RT to keep CC updated on progress.

JL agreed fixed links would be a great benefit to isle, so it is important to keep it at the forefront. JL asked if anyone would like to add anything else to discussion.

WP requested SIC ensure accurate figures are included in the report that notes it would be cheaper to run ferries than a tunnel for Whalsay. WP explained that point was false, and accurate figures should be included to show fixed links would be more economical. RT agreed and would look into.

Discussion on key operational differences between ferries and tunnels highlighted that previous questions need to be challenged. AP mentioned case between ferries and tunnels near Bergen, Norway, and how progress was hindered because of financial benefit as opposed to improving life of population. AP concluded to connect a population then tunnels are way forward. Cllrs agreed that a case to show the wide range of benefits to a tunnel should be made. Financial, socio-economic and environmental aspects should be emphasised. Cllrs noted environment is a particular focus from government, so in order to strive to cut the high emissions of the ferries they should support fixed links. RT emphasised now is time for SIC Cllrs to get fixed links high on the agenda and to put in real effort in next 12 months.

WP mentioned STPR2 and submitted personal response. WP noted every point they were trying to achieve could be met by creating fixed links.

RT explained previous committees in SIC and shared it could be beneficial to look into setting up an inter-island fixed links committee so would look into. It would also be important for councillors and officials to push it to get fixed links as a set agenda item on every committee and transport meeting.

JL agreed anything to keep fixed links on the forefront of discussion would be beneficial to Whalsay. JL shared that the discussion covered many important aspects and has been very helpful to CC. JL thanked all for contribution.

AOCB:

FERRY FLEET

WP added to previous points in *Transport* and asked if SIC are aware of the benefits of keeping the fleet new. WP noted excessive maintenance costs when boats age and explained the Whalsay fishing fleet find it more economical to sell and renew boats. Doing this to the ferry fleet could have been a more efficient way of operating. DA agreed that the current ferry fleet seems to have continual problems which is obvious because of age. DA said conversation regarding maintenance needs to be pushed within government and council.

SPEEDING AT BROUGH

JL asked Clerk for updates from community. Clerk informed CC of concern about speeding at Brough. CC discussed previous enquiry and highlighted that SIC could not install 'Go Slow' sign in area. Clerk to get back to community member and inform them that they can put up own 'Go Slow' signs to encourage slower speeds.

FERRY HIRES

CC received two enquiries about ferry hires for weddings next year. RT mentioned AP and Yell CC were pushing for weddings being included as a community event in SIC criteria rather than additional runs. **RT to look into and get back to CC with information**

JL thanked everyone for contribution to meeting and thanked all Cllrs for attendance.

Meeting closed at 21.40pm

Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday 4th May 7pm.