

GULBERWICK, QUARFF & CUNNINGSBURGH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 23rd NOVEMBER 2021 VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING AT 7.30PM

A. THE CIRCULAR CALLING THE MEETING WAS HELD AND READ BY THE CLERK.

Nominations for chair were called for but none were forthcoming. Mr B Skinley agreed to stand in as interim chairperson for the meeting.

B. PRESENT	Mrs L Johnston Mr C Clark	Ms A Garrick-Wright Mr S Douglas	Mrs M Davis
EX OFFICIO	Mr R McGregor Mr P Campbell	Mr G Smith	Mr C Smith
IN ATTENDANCE	Mrs K Geddes	Mrs A Arnett	Sgt Alan Patrick
CHAIRPERSON	Mr B Skinley (interim)		
APOLOGIES	Mrs S Wishart Mr M Duncan	PC Gordon Mackay	Mr E MacPherson
NOT PRESENT	Ms A Hawick	Mr S Flaws	Mr A Duncan

Information – due to the Covid-19 Virus pandemic meetings are being held online.

C. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

As members of the SIC Planning Board, Cllr R McGregor and Cllr C Smith declared an interest in agenda item 9 – Planning Applications.

Ms Garrick-Wright declared an interest in the discussion around the grant application from the Cunningsburgh Christmas Party and Mrs K Geddes did the same for the Gulberwick Christmas Party.

Cllr R McGregor also declared an interest in the Quarff War Memorial Group request for further funds. He is the chair of the group.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 28 September were approved on the motion of Mrs L Johnston and seconded by Mrs M Davis.

1. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

1. Torches for School Children

SIC Roads Safety Officer Elaine Skinley offered the Community Council a number of torches which we could help distribute to school bairns in the district for safety during the dark nights. This could not be done during lockdown and it did not make sense to hand them out during the spring or summer terms but the torches are still available and the clerk and Mrs Skinley are liaising about getting them handed out.

ACTION: Clerk to contact Mrs Skinley when the last school has got in contact about the number of children requiring torches. They will organise some way to distribute the torches to Gulberwick bairns at Sound Primary and to pupils at Cunningsburgh Primary.

2. Fuel Poverty Letter

Mr C Clark drafted a letter expressing his and the Community Councils concerns about the action – or perceived lack thereof – being taken by the SIC to tackle fuel poverty for those who are suffering from it now. Most of the plans seem to be long term ones. SIC Chief Executive Maggie Sandison sent a letter back via email on November 23rd detailing the approach the SIC is taking:

Thank you for your letter of the 20th November regarding fuel poverty.

You correctly observe that a number of the issues and options around the problem of fuel will need sustained long term action to make a full impact. I do believe that the Council is taking the issue seriously, has consolidated its ongoing activity and is developing a range of further actions.

Fuel poverty is a complicated issue and no one intervention is going to create a solution on its own. The diagram I have also attached tries to help set describe how three areas overlap and interlink.

I will also try to say a bit more about what the Council is doing, and plans, in each of those areas:-

- Increase Incomes
- Reduce Energy Use
- More Affordable Energy Prices

Each of these areas will also need joined up action from a number of partners to be effective, the Council cannot resolve any of them on its own.

Increase Incomes

The Council works with Shetland Charitable Trust and local third sector partners to deliver Financial Health and Fuel Poverty Advice Services. It resolved at its meeting yesterday to approve funding to re-commission those services for four more years, until 31st March 2026. Those services are delivered by Shetland Citizens Advice Service and target individuals most in need for advice and assistance. The Council has also sought to identify families in need of support, including with Fuel Poverty issues through its support for the cross-agency “Anchor” project.

Assistance is given in maximising benefits, obtaining any energy discounts available and support in accessing improved insulation and energy efficiency in homes.

Reduce Energy Use

The Council continues to support national and local energy efficiency and insulation improvement schemes to help improve homes. Referrals from the Fuel Poverty Advice Service are prioritised and attempts are made to reach out to all households who feel they could benefit from energy efficiency improvements. Delivery of those energy efficiency schemes were affected by COVID and while they are getting back up to speed the Council is also embarking on a review of how they could be further improved in pace, targeting and impact. This will remain a key priority as it has benefits in household comfort, reduces energy use and promotes long term sustainability. However there are a lot of homes in Shetland that need improvements and the works are often complicated, costly and disruptive, so these programmes will unavoidably need to run over many years.

More Affordable Energy Prices

The issue of energy affordability was highlighted as a priority for action earlier this year

when the Council set out the “Our Ambition – 2021 -26” plan. This is probably the most complicated intervention to deliver, but because so much is changing in through energy transition from oil and Gas to renewables there is a real opportunity to achieve significant changes over the next few years.

This will depend on the case for reduced prices for energy in Shetland to be made, and agreed to, by UK and Scottish Governments and mechanisms for those reduction to be developed and implemented. That objective has been set out by the Council to Government, agency and industry partners and stakeholders during this year, but a lot of work will still have to be done to design the solutions and agree and make changes. Due to the time available until your meeting this has unavoidably been a short overview, but I hope it helps to inform you about some of the activity the Council is undertaking.

There will be further reporting including this area at the January cycle of Council meetings and I will ensure a copy of that report is specifically sent to your Community Council and see if I can arrange for an officer to attend to discuss that also.

Kind regards,

Maggie Sandison
Chief Executive

ACTION: Clerk to thank Ms Sandison for her reply and for the offer of both the next report and the visit from an officer. Members would like to say yes to both offers and the clerk is to reply accordingly.

3. Orca Beach Sculpture/Bin

Plans to build and install an orca-shaped beach sculpture/bin for beach bruck at the Gulberwick beach are ongoing. Mr Clark is meeting the landowner for a site visit on Thursday and will report back at the next meeting.

ACTION: Mr Clark to report back in January how the meeting with the landowner goes.

4. Anti-Dog-Fouling Project

The plan to get bins to help tackle the issue of dog fouling in Gulberwick, Quarff, Fladdabister and Cunningsburgh are continuing but are more complicated than first thought. It was thought that installing a new bin in each of the four communities would be a positive action but each bin is £400 each and we only applied for £400. Mr Clark has found similar bins elsewhere for approximately £120 each which may be worth exploring if members are willing to agree to pay the extra £100 needed for the project.

Some members expressed concerns that if the bins were not installed by the SIC they would not empty them, meaning volunteers would have to be found.

ACTION: Mr Clark to speak to SIC Waste Management to see if they will empty the bins. A decision on next steps can be taken once that information is back.

2. POLICE REPORT

The police report for August/September was shared with members prior to the meeting.

Sgt Alan Patrick talked through some of the details, explaining that there were a couple of child protection incidents which he could not speak about as they were ongoing and in hand, but that the lion’s share of incidents related to road safety.

One incident in particular was the crash at Fladdabister at the weekend which Sgt Patrick said was 'pretty horrendous'. It could have had very serious implications for the passenger but luckily the individual now has a better prognosis than first feared. Sgt Patrick said a car aquaplaned on a large quantity of water in a dip in the road just before you come down the road to Cunningsburgh from the north. The car left the road and came down an embankment. The ditches were all full of water at the time and three or four people approached officers at the scene to say that they had had issues with water on the road in the same stretch.

Sgt Patrick said the driver of the vehicle behind the car said they did not think it was speeding, and the driver of a vehicle coming towards the car said it was going in a straight line until it suddenly fishtailed. Sgt Patrick believes it was the surface water which caused the incident. SIC Roads staff were along to clear mud and debris off the road following the crash and have since put up signs which state 'caution surface water'. Most members said that they had not had issues at this stretch of road but agreed that it was important to write to the SIC Roads Department to ask them to address their concerns that another accident could happen if the drainage problem isn't investigated.

The junction at the Black Gaet was also discussed. Sgt Patrick said that most of the problems he sees there are a result of poor driving and confusion at the junction – what they write on their forms as 'injudicious action' meaning a poor manner of driving. His colleagues from Road Policing think that the junction isn't too bad and he said that in his experience, sometimes putting up more signage can cause more of a problem.

Cllr McGregor said he believed that there was an issue with the junction and that his constituents had passed lots of concerns on to him. He asked whether there were any accident statistics which were available from the police about the junction but Sgt Patrick said that while there were statistics, they were not ones that could be easily compared with any other junction as the Black Gaet one has features which make it unique.

A letter received from Dave Coupe, SIC Executive Manager – Roads in reply to one sent about the concerns surrounding the Black Gaet junction said:

Whilst I don't have much to pass on by way of an update at the moment, please be assured that we are looking into it.

We are currently analysing the accident data over the last 7 years since this was investigated and reported to the Environment and Transport Committee in 2014. This is being done to see if we can identify a main cause of accidents at the Black Gaet junction, something that was not evident in previous data.

When this has been completed, we will hopefully be in a position to report it to Committee along with any proposed remedial action.

Members were pleased that some action was being taken and looked forward to the results.

ACTION: Clerk to write to SIC Roads regarding concerns about the surface water at Fladdabister which caused the accident. Clerk also to put a post on social media to gather information from the public as to whether the issue is a long term one. She will write a further letter to SIC Roads if the public have stories of similar incidents and believe that there is an issue which needs addressing.

--- Sgt Patrick left 8pm ---

3. FINANCE

The bank statement on November 23rd reads £14,843.68

We have paid the £250 grant to Cunningsburgh Under 5s for their Christmas Party and paid £740 to Mackenzie's for four weeks of meals. We are awaiting further invoices from Mackenzie's to pay the next lot of meals - likely to be around £970.

DRAFT MINUTES – Subject to approval at the January 2022 meeting

The Information Commission direct debit of £35 was the only other spend outwith normal expenses since the last meeting.

Grants Spend

We have only spent £682.50 of our grant funds this year so far. Our grants total is usually in the region of £5,000-£6,000 per year.

2019-20 Accounts

Our accounts have been independently evaluated by VAS and found to be in good order. Mr Clark passed on a well done from members and said that it was good that they had also been rubber stamped by VAS.

Covid Relief Fund

We have spent £4430 of the £8,000 worth of grants we got and up to sixteen people a week are currently receiving meals. We still have a few grocery vouchers left for Mackenzie's and Sound.

4. GRANT APPLICATIONS & SHETLAND COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND UPDATE

--- Cllr R McGregor, Cllr G Smith, Cllr P Campbell and Cllr C Tait left at 8.05pm ---

Six new applications had been shared with members prior to the meeting start and all applications were granted the full funding they requested:

- Shetland Parish Church of Scotland was granted £74.40 to pay for Remembrance Wreaths to be laid at the war memorials in Cunningsburgh and Quarff.
- Cunningsburgh Football Club was granted £617.25 towards gym equipment for Moors Gym.
- Gulberwick Toddlers was granted £100 towards their Christmas Party.
- The Royal Voluntary Service was granted £400 towards a social outing for the Cunningsburgh Lunch Club.
- The Gulberwick Christmas Party was granted up to £300 towards their Christmas Party. £100 is to go towards food and sundries but up to £200 may go towards vouchers for low-income families to purchase presents to allow their bairns to attend. When the number of vouchers needed is known, the clerk will release the specific amount needed. Members have agreed to fund up to twenty vouchers for £10 each. The Gulberwick Hall Committee agreed to support the organisers to put the party on by applying on behalf of the group and allowing the use of their bank account.
- The Cunningsburgh Christmas Party Committee were granted £195 towards their event. Members asked the clerk to make the group aware that the grant is to go towards costs other than the insurance – which was one of the project costs detailed. Grants can not be used for running costs such as insurance.

The Quarff War Memorial Group sent a letter requesting extra grant funds on the back of their successful Sunday Teas. Members agreed to award a further £1,000 towards the £2,397 still required in the hope that further fundraising can be done by the group. If there are grant funds still available at the end of the financial year more money may be awarded if it is required.

There were three applications from the Shetland Community Benefit Fund and members agreed to award the full amount to each one:

- SMUHA will receive £3,250 towards alterations to be made to the galley shed.
- The Shetland Cattle Herd Book Society will receive £900 towards the cost of a website

revamp and a secretary.

- The Lerwick Amateur Swimming Club will receive £1,525 towards the cost of training and travel for competitions.

ACTION: Clerk to inform the grant applicants of the decision and transfer the money agreed by members. Clerk to fill out the required paperwork to communicate the grant decisions made to the SCBF.

5. ROAD ISSUES/CAMPAIGN FOR REDUCED SPEED LIMITS

This issue was covered as part of Item 2 – Police Report.

6. 2022 MEETING DATES

The meeting dates for 2022 were discussed and options had been shared with members prior to the meeting to allow for even those who couldn't attend to feedback their preferred option. The dates were agreed and set as:

2022

Tuesday 11 January

Tuesday 15 February

Tuesday 22 March

Tuesday 3 May

Tuesday 14 June

Tuesday 23 August

Tuesday 4 October

Tuesday 22 November

ACTION: Clerk to share the meeting dates with CCLO Michael Duncan and with any other people or organisations who it may be of interest to.

7. PLANNING

There were no planning applications to discuss or comment on.

8. AOCB

1. Defibrillator Repairs

A member asked for information on how groups paid for repairs to defibrillators, especially if they were fundraised by the community and placed at a local hall or building but no money for repairs was included in the fundraising. Can Community Councils accept applications to help with repairs if necessary?

Mrs A Arnett said that Dunrossness Community Council has recently granted money towards repairs for one at a local shop. She will find out more information on this application and other similar situations and report back.

ACTION: Mrs A Arnett to find out about how repairs to community funded defibrillators have and can be paid for and to report back at the next meeting.

2. Cost of Fitting Smoke Detectors

Mrs M Davis expressed concern about the cost of fitting smoke detectors soon to be required by law. They can be quite expensive to buy and fit and if you do not have them your home insurance may be valid – she was not sure this was widely known.

ACTION: Clerk to seek advice from Citizen’s Advice and report back at the next meeting. Any useful information can be shared in the meantime on the Facebook page.

3. Community Council Training

Mr Clark attended recent training on projects and community engagement and shared with members that it was very useful and worthwhile attending.

ACTION: Clerk to share any future training dates and members to sign up if they feel it is of interest and value to them.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 11th January 2022.

Meeting Ends – 8.38 pm.

CHAIR

12. OUTSTANDING ITEMS

January 2021 - Torches for school children from Elaine Skinley, SIC Road Safety Officer. To be distributed when the schools open again.

February 2021 – Radicle Road – an SIC Roads engineer is to look at the road to see if any maintenance work can be done to the verges to improve the road for all users.

September 2021 – Heathery Park Path Clearing – a third meet-up to clear the last weeds off the path was unable to be organised. Members to look again in the spring.