

# Association of Shetland Community Councils (ASCC)

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## Paper 1

### Minute of the ASCC meeting held on Tuesday 14 September 2021, 6.00 pm, online Teams

#### Present

Alistair Christie-Henry	Bressay Community Council
Niall O'Rourke	Burra & Trondra Community Council
Rosalind Griffiths	Delting Community Council
Helen Moncrieff	Dunrossness Community Council
Colin Clark	Gulberwick, Quarff and Cunningsburgh Community Council
Gary Robinson	Lerwick Community Council
Iain Malcolmson	Nesting and Lunnasting Community Council
David Brown	Northmavine Community Council
Ian Walterson	Sandness and Walls Community Council (Vice Chair)
Iris Sandison	Sandness and Walls Community Council
Debra Nicolson	Sandsting & Aithsting Community Council
John N Hunter	Scalloway Community Council
Violet McQuade (clerk)	Skerries Community Council
Dilys Evans	Tingwall, Whiteness and Weisdale Community Council
Patrick Fordyce	Unst Community Council
Annette Jamieson	Yell Community Council

#### Officers in Attendance

Michael Duncan	Community Council Liaison Officer – Community Planning & Development, SIC
Vaila Simpson	Executive Manager – Community Planning & Development, SIC
Claire Ferguson	Team Leader – Climate Change Strategy, Environment & Estate Operations, SIC
John Simpson	Team Leader – Energy Efficiency Team, Environment & Estate Operations, SIC
Harry Thomson	Project Manager – Future Energy Team, Environment & Estate Operations, SIC
Craig McGarrie (presenting)	'Activate Shetland' Intelligent Health
David Thomson (presenting)	'Activate Shetland' Bells Brae Parent Council

#### Officers Observing

Frances Browne	Community Involvement & Development Officer - Community Planning & Development, SIC
Ana Arnett (note taker)	Community Involvement & Development Officer - Community Planning & Development, SIC

#### Local Press

Stuart Prestidge	Reporter, Shetland Times
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## **1. Introductions**

Chair, Mr Ian Walterson welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was agreed that the meeting would be recorded for minute purposes.

## **2. Apologies**

Apologies were received from: Fetlar Community Council, Sandwick Community Council, Whalsay Community Council, Lerwick Community Council / ASCC Chair Jim Anderson.

## **3. Declarations of Interest**

None

## **4. Climate Conversation – Fuel Poverty (presentation)**

Claire Ferguson; Climate Change Strategy Team, John Simpson; Energy Efficiency Team, and Harry Thomson; Future Energy Team delivered an overview presentation of each service, describing the Fuel Poverty Advisory Project and set out SIC Net-zero route map, including information about how the SIC is exploring routes to clean affordable energy.

Colin Clark raised the information presented shows long term goals, however data presented highlights 1 in 3 Shetland households in fuel poverty alongside 30/40% rise in electricity prices, what short term support is available to alleviate this?

Claire Ferguson explained that the information showed long term projections and goals which are in line with Scottish Government requirements.

John Simpson confirmed domestic grant and loan schemes are available for energy improvements, however local issues are limited by the number of contractors who do the installation works.

Ian Malcolmson described an observation regarding fuel poverty in social housing in Shetland, to reduce energy loss in homes installing heat pumps to improve efficiency etc is costly, rent increases will rise to pay for these improvements. The danger we will then face is transferring those in 'fuel poverty' into 'rent poverty'. Calls for SIC to lobby Scottish Government and UK Government for financial assistance to tackle problem.

Debra Nicolson wished it noted that the SIC 'recognised' Climate Emergency, rather than 'declared' a Climate Emergency, then queried if the SIC has considered forming a Community Citizens Assembly or Citizens Panel to get more meaningful engagement with the community?

Claire Ferguson supports the concepts of Citizens Jury, Citizens Panel and Citizens Sounding Boards, all of which are good ways of getting a representative demographic views, rather than inviting participants where there may be a danger of just involving individuals with polarised views.

Gary Robinson noted EV charging points in Lerwick have been installed and enquired when are they going to be switch on for public use? He agreed seeing the benefit of network hubs in use throughout Shetland, any plans for a centralised Lerwick Hub. Regarding 'domestic insulation grants' Mr Robinson asked for confirmation of whether there was a lengthy wait on insulation to be installed?

John Simpson confirmed the installation of the public EV charging hubs in Lerwick is near completion unfortunately the delay being due to the meter company's availability, expected to be soon. No plans at present for a central Hub. Business and domestic EV charging point installation grants are available, which is hoped will help the demand on public EV hub network.

Mr Simpson explained that with the Domestic Insulation grant assistance carrying out the survey is not an issue, the back log is due to local installers requiring accreditation which is becoming increasingly onerous. They are looking into ways of tackling this problem which would be to increase capacity with local installers.

Dilys Evans Enquired about residential EV charging points, who is responsible for costs if problems occur? Ms Evans also interested to know how many households apply for fuel poverty grants and what funding is available?

John Simpson advised the SIC had no major issues to date with public EV charge points and confirmed that with domestic charge points, the individual householder would be responsible. In relation to fuel poverty grants, there is an online application for waiting list for assessment, level of fuel poverty taken into consideration, SIC received annual allocation through Scottish Government. Different avenues for support are available such as Warmer Homes Grants and various loan scheme providers.

## **5. Activate Shetland project (presentation)**

David Thomson and Craig McGarrie presented the Beat the Street project, 'Intelligent Health' organisation in collaboration with Bells Brae Parent Council and partners steering group. The project aspires to involve Shetland wide communities to become more active, including inclusive family approaches to Active Travel.

Dilys Evans raised that both Tingwall, Whiteness and Weisdale Primary Schools walk and cycle to school is dangerous, communities have concerns with road safety. Many other communities say the same thing, and wonders whether this has been considered? Also raises that access to Leisure Centres for those living in poverty needs to be considered.

David Thomson in agreement and expressed awareness of these challenges, the project aims to seek Community engagement in the 'Game' development stage. Further explaining the 'Game' can be adapted to be virtual, or to use existing natural community 'Hubs' such as Public Halls, Leisure Centres, or sports fields, where because of road safety issues there needs to be alternatives to walking or cycling to schools. Mr Thomson described the many values of such a project, which have been highlighted by the steering group. Such as understanding local infrastructure challenges in relation to active travel to school, alongside obvious public health benefits. Another area to be further explored is public transport and how this service can be linked to the 'game' which in turn will encourage active travel, highlighting the project is keen to hold these conversations to ensure maximum benefit to the wider community.

Colin Clark questioned how the project plans to make this inclusive, where poor connectivity is an issue.

Craig McGarrie recognises there will be barriers faced by a percentage of the Shetland community. This project could be an opportunity to assist communities in highlighting such barriers. Active Travel budgets are expected to increase, communities may have a stronger case to access funding, as a result of data gathered during the 'Game'. In relation to poor connectivity in areas, the solution would be to install hard ware technology called 'Beat Boxes' allowing participants to scan codes creating a timestamp, which then downloads data when connected to the internet. They are looking further into how this could fit the Shetland project.

## **6. Note of the previous meeting held on 8 June 2021**

Proposed by Gary Robinson

Seconded by Colin Clark

## **7. Matters arising from previous minute not on the agenda**

None

Mr Duncan gave an update on Actions from 8 June 2021 Minute:

**Action 1 - Mr Hutcheson to check the status of survey and share information with Whalsay Community Council.**

Action complete

**Action 2 - Mr Hutcheson to send survey data out to all Community Councils.**

Mr Duncan queried whether all CC's have received this info? Mr Duncan will follow up with Mr Hutcheson, to confirm whether all CC's have to been sent information.

**Action 3 - Mr Priest – pull together issues with new grant form for next meeting**

Action complete. Alternative form received from Sandsting & Aithsting Community Council and on agenda

**Action 4 - ASCC invite Mr Bryan Leask to the next ASCC meeting to discuss fuel poverty**

Action Complete. Mr Leask contacted. Claire Ferguson and colleagues to attend instead.

**Action 5 - ASCC engage with Shetland Charitable Trust and Shetland Community Benefit Fund to seek information and explore the establishment of an energy trust.**

Action Complete. Both SCT and SCBF contacted. SCT have no plans to take on such a role. SCBF planning consultation exercise with a view to prioritising use of its funds once Viking Energy Windfarm is operational.

**8. Islands Act**

Vaila Simpson presented a brief overview the Island Community Impact Assessment part of the Islands Act, 2018, which covers a number of different areas including the preparation of a National Islands Plan.

Relevant Authorities must place due regard to island communities in carrying out their functions. The Act places new duties on Local Authorities to consider their effects of new and existing policy, strategies and services on an island community. The legislation is also designed to improve outcomes for island communities in meaningful ways which through assessments and review processes will see if proposals could affect an island community in a more significant way than it would in another community. Requirements for the annual publication of assessments are in place.

Scottish Government Islands Team is currently developing training which should be available later this year. The ASCC or individual Community Councils can build this opportunity into their training plans.

**9. ASCC Attendance at external meetings**

Michael Duncan introduced the topic and advised that historically the ASCC sat on a number of local partnerships and forums which no longer exist. Mr Duncan confirmed the ASCC have a presence on the following bodies:

- Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation (2 reps)
- Shetland Outdoor Access Forum
- Shetland External Transport Forum

It was noted that the ASCC used to be invited to the Drug and Alcohol Forum. Discussion followed about whether or not the ASCC to participate in other local partnerships and forums. Colin Clark expressed an interest in participating in the Climate Change / Fuel Poverty group.

**Action:**

Community Councils to consider if ASCC should be involved in any other local partnerships and forum and provide feedback to Michael Duncan.

## **10. Community Council template grant application form**

Michael Duncan referred to appendices 2A & 2B from the agenda pack received from Sandsting & Aithsting Community Council.

Mr Duncan provided background to the template grant form. A new community council grant form template had originally been proposed at a clerks training workshop to enable consistent approach to grant administration. More recently there has been a need to update the existing community council application form to ensure community councils were complying with GDPR and Following the Public Pound. It has become an audit requirement that Council grant awards be annually reported to the relevant Council committee.

A new template grant application form was considered and approved at the ASCC meeting in March. Due to time constraints, Mr Duncan had not had time to consult community councils on the new form in advance of the ASCC meeting. At the June ASCC meeting Sandsting and Aithsting Community Council raised concerns about the grant form, believing it to be too difficult for community groups to complete. It was agreed at the June meeting of the ASCC that Sandsting and Aithsting Community Council bring forward an alternative grant form and reasons why the new form was unsuitable. The alternative grant form proposed by Sandsting and Aithsting Community Council was circulated to ASCC members for consideration.

Mr Duncan made the following comments re the new approved template grant form:

- The new grant form was already being used by community councils;
- No issues with the new form had been reported or experienced by any community councils;
- The new grant form met with GDPR and Following the Public Pound requirements;
- The new grant form had been designed to minimise work for clerks;
- Council is preparing a set of help notes designed to assist applicants when completing the grant form – these help notes will be shared when ready;
- Mr Duncan and the Community Work team were available to assist any applicants that needed help to complete the form;

Mr Duncan advised that the alternative form provided by Sandsting & Aithsting Community Council did not appear to gather all the necessary information required in terms of Following the Public Pound, so if community councils decided to use this form it would create additional work for the clerks.

Annette Jamieson felt the new template grant form referred to the Shetland Partnership Plan which was a good thing and thinks the application form should retain that.

Debra Nicolson, in referring to Shetland Partnership Plan, feels it is useful to have this included but also noted it's a lot of information to complete and highlighted the need to use plain English. Ms Nicolson welcomed simplifying the application process for community groups and agreed to take back feedback to Sandsting & Aithsting Community Council members.

Mr Duncan advised the new template form sets out Data Protection requirements. Alongside the grant form a flow chart with guidance had been issued to clerks, and this helps community councils meet GDPR requirements. The new template form complies with the audit and reporting requirements that the SIC is required to meet. Mr Duncan also noted that simplifying the form any further may be problematic for Community Councils as some information required may not be collected. This may result in community councils having to go back to groups at the end of the year and ask for more information.

The Chair proposed that the new template form approved in the ASCC March meeting remain in use until the end of 2021/22 financial year. The Chair advised community councils are to note any problems with the new form and report these issues directly to Michael Duncan. If required, the template application form can be further updated before the start of new financial year 2022/23. This proposal was unanimously agreed.

### **11. Community Council training opportunities**

Mr Duncan advised that a training needs survey had been issued earlier in the year with responses due back by the end of July. The survey included list of possible training opportunities including training for clerks, new and refresher training in October 2021. During November 2021, a series of training sessions will be held including 'Carbon Literacy' which will be delivered by Claire Ferguson, Climate Change Team. Training details and format will be decided and issued to community councils in due course.

Mr Duncan advised that other training opportunities will be flagged up as and when they come available. Guidance on resuming face to face meetings should be made available later in the year.

### **12. Items for future meetings**

Annette Jamieson advised that Yell Community Council wishes to raise the issue of abandoned vehicles. Yell Community Council have noticed a significant increase in the number of abandoned vehicles located at various public places across the isle. Yell Community Council has already contacted Shetland Amenity Trust and Shetland Island Council, and were keen to find out if other community council areas were experiencing the same problem. Mrs Jamieson also asked if the ASCC could seek further advice and assistance to address the matter, and proposed that a Shetland wide campaign to raise awareness of the issue could help.

Discussion took place about previous work that the ASCC had done in relation to abandoned vehicles. It was noted that tracking down individual owners was often problematic and ultimately it was 'fly-tipping' issue.

The Chair agreed that the ASCC should assist where possible and agreed an information sharing campaign would be of benefit.

Mr Duncan advised the community councils are to pass on information about abandoned vehicles to Mr David Robertson, Team Leader in the Council's Environmental Health Service.

#### **Action:**

Mr Duncan to share Mr Robertson's contact details and Shetland Amenity Trust car uplift service to ASCC members.

On behalf of Unst Community Council, Mr Duncan advised that the Unst community were seeing a high number of visitors to the isle. Whilst this is positive for local businesses and others, it also brought about challenges such as increased traffic on the roads, issues with campervans and caravans parking at inappropriate locations and litter bins frequently overflowing. Unst Community Council were keen to establish if these problems were being experienced elsewhere in Shetland and proposed that the issues and concerns be reported to the Council to help prepare for next year's visitor season.

Annette Jamieson described that Yell had encountered the same issues. Increased visitor numbers had brought huge benefits to the Burravoe campsite for example, but mobile homes using narrow side roads with limited turning points available was causing issues for some road users. The other problem was the public bins were quickly filling up and over flowing, in particular at the Ferry Terminals.

David Brown agreed and advised that Northmavine had experienced the same issues. The community council had contacted the Council about repositioning certain bins, and had suggested in the summer that uplifting litter from bins could be more frequent. Mr Brown also reported problems with campervans parking in passing places on single lane roads.

Frances Browne described other areas in North Isles had raised concerns of over flowing bins, especially near beaches. Unst representatives had met with Promote Shetland so may have more to feedback on matter.

The Chair noted that bin collection frequency was an issue as was parked cars blocking viewing points and turning points. The ASCC could request an increase rubbish collection throughout the summer which would be an improvement.

Helen Moncrieff suggested that communication with North 500 Route could be an idea to establish how they deal with the increase in visitors. Perhaps some information regarding bin collections on the North Link ferry would also be useful.

Helen Moncrieff advised there are still issues with the Council’s Planning service, with significant delays for domestic planning applications. Dunrossness Community Council felt it was an issue that affected the whole of Shetland.

**Action:**

ASCC write to the Council’s Infrastructure Dept and request increased bin collection during the summer months

ASCC invite SIC Planning Service to the next meeting to provide an update on Planning Service, and addressing the delays with processing applications

**13. Date of Next Meeting**

- 8 March 2022, 6pm
- 14 June 2022, 6pm
- 13 September 2022, 6pm

**Chairperson** .....

**Date** .....

**ACTION TRACKER**

**Action 1**

ASCC to contact Neil Hutcheson, Roads Service and request survey data circulated to all community councils

**Action 2**

Community Councils to notify Michael Duncan if ASCC to participant in any other local strategic groups, partnerships and forums

**Action 3**

ASCC to share contact details for David Robertson, SIC Environmental Health and Shetland Amenity Trust car uplift scheme

**Action 4**

ASCC write to the Council's Infrastructure Dept and request increased bin collection during the summer months

**Action 5**

ASCC invite SIC Planning Service to the next meeting to provide an update on Planning Service, and addressing the delays with processing applications