

Sandness & Walls Community Council

Chairman:

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Minutes of a hybrid meeting of Sandness & Walls Community Council held at the Walls Public Hall on Wednesday 30th November 2022 at 7.00pm

Present:

I Walterson (Chair)
F MacBeath (Vice Chair)
M MacGregor
C Venus
E Johnston
M Forrest
J Puckey
J Gear
J Laing
Cllr M Robinson

1. Sederunt/Apologies

The Clerk recorded the names of those present in person and via Zoom. The following apologies had been received: J Haswell, Cllr L Peterson, R Fraser

In attendance: D Forrest (Clerk) Neil Hutcheson (Team Leader – Road Network and Assets)

2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The Clerk invited nominations for the post of Chair of the Sandness and Walls Community Council. I Walterson was nominated by J Puckey and seconded by J Gear. There being no other nominations, I Walterson accepted the nomination and was elected to the office of Chair. F MacBeath was nominated for the post of Vice Chair by M Forrest and seconded by J Puckey. There being no other nominations, F MacBeath accepted the nomination and was elected

to the post of Vice Chair. I Walterson chaired the remainder of the meeting. He began by welcoming the newly elected members, those who had been in office previously and newly elected Councillor Mark Robinson. The Chair then gave a brief synopsis of the work of a community councillor for the benefit of the newly elected members. He highlighted such issues as the disbursement of Community Council funds, the Community Council's role in the Shetland Community Benefit Fund before explaining the purpose of the visit by Mr N Hutcheson (Team Leader – Road Network and Assets). This generated a discussion about the A971 between the West Burrafirth Junction and Walls. Concerns were expressed regarding the condition of the parapet on the Bridge-of-Walls. It was pointed out that it had been constructed by a detachment of Royal Engineers in the mid eighteenth century for much lighter traffic. There was uncertainty as to when a structural inspection had last been conducted. Concerns were raised regarding the cattle grid on the Sandness Road close to the Scord of Brouster. Members felt that it could be hazardous in wet conditions.

3. Declarations of Interest

None were made at this time.

(The Chair continued with the agenda whilst awaiting the arrival of Mr Hutcheson.)

4. Police Report

The Chair explained that police reports were bi-monthly and that one had been received in October.

5. Minutes from 1.11.22

The adoption of the minutes of the meeting of 1st November 2022 was proposed by J Gear and seconded by J Puckey.

6. Visit by Mr N Hutcheson (Team Leader – Road Network and Assets)

The Chair welcomed Mr Hutcheson and invited him to provide an update regarding progress and on the proposed improvements to the A971 between the West Burrafirth Junction and Walls.

6.1 The Strategic Outline Programme

Mr Hutcheson described how the above stretch of road was currently ranked third on a list of six road improvement schemes.

He went on to state that the Strategic Outline Case (SOC) was within days of completion. The SOC will contain various options all of which will be costed. The SOC will be presented to the Asset Investment Group which includes the SIC Manager of Assets, Commissioning & Procurement and the Director of Finance for consideration before being presented to the Policy and Resources Committee next year. A more detailed document will inform the next stage, and this will consider such issues as the number of accidents that have occurred on the current road, reductions in journey times generated by the proposed improvements and the financial case based on the current value of commercial activity. A final business case will follow which will include design and construction costs. This will then go before the Policy and Resources Committee and the last stage in the process is that it is presented to Full Council for approval.

6.2 Q&A

In response to a question about how far along the process the previous road improvement plans had proceeded, Mr Hutcheson stated that whilst a considerable amount of work had been carried out including an archaeological survey, the **purchase and** demolition of the old nurse's house and design work for a new Bridge of Walls, the project had not been on the Capital Programme.

On a question regarding the Bridge-of-Walls, Mr Hutcheson confirmed that the construction of a new bridge was included in the plans. He was unsure as to when the existing bridge had last undergone a structural survey. He stated he would investigate this matter.

Mr Hutcheson was asked if the proposed movement of rock to help construct the new bridge would incur quarry tax. He stated that this would not be the case as plans would include the sourcing of material from on-site excavations which would avoid the requirement to pay quarry tax.

The economic value of produce from the Sandness and Walls area was discussed and members indicated a willingness to assist with ensuring that all aspects of commercial activity were recorded so they could be taken into account. Mr Hutcheson felt this would benefit the case.

By way of a conclusion to his responses on this matter, Mr Hutcheson indicated that the total cost of the road improvement scheme would be in the order of £6.5 -£7.5 million.

6.3 The Current Condition of the A971 between the West Burrafirth Junction and Walls.

It was acknowledged that it would be several years before any substantial improvements will be made to the above stretch of road during which time it will continue to deteriorate. It was acknowledged that to fully resurface the current road would be both expensive and elevate the road surface above the verges to a dangerous extent. However, at a cost of approximately £100k, potholes could be patched and limited resurfacing done to some sections of the road as a short term improvement to the surface.

6.4 Cattle Grid close to the Scord of Brouster on the Sandness Road

Members raised their concerns regarding the above cattle grid pointing out that it is on a curve in the road making it impossible to approach head on. In wet weather it is slippery making for hazardous driving conditions. Mr Hutcheson stated he would consider putting anti-skid material on it.

6.5 Papa Stour Roads

In response to a question from J Puckey regarding the work on the Papa Stour Road, Mr Hutcheson stated roads engineers will be in Papa Stour between May and the end of August to carry out surface dressing work. J Puckey pointed out that some heavy machinery would be on the island next summer to carry out work on the Kirk. It is also the case that contractors will be harvesting silage in August. She requested that the Roads Department liaise with her regarding to best time to do the work so as not to clash with a time when the road is being heavily used.

6.6 Railings on Bridge at Fogrigarth Junction, West Burrafirth

J Puckey stated that these railings were no longer clearly visible at night due to the fact they had become rusty. She requested they be painted. Mr Hutcheson indicated he would arrange for this to be done with the addition of reflectors.

There being no further issues for Mr Hutcheson, the Chair thanked him for his attendance.

(Mr Hutcheson and Cllr Robinson left the meeting.)

7. Matters Arising

Re: 8.2 of 5/22 Parking at Stove Cottages, Walls

The Clerk read an email he had received from Mr Grant Gilfillan. In it he outlined the difficulties in introducing passive traffic restrictions and also stated the view that additional parking bays would provide minimal benefits. Members expressed the view that the parking spaces being offered should be accepted and that additional parking be considered in part of what is currently the drying green for several of the cottages.

Action: The Clerk to email Mr Gilfillan to request that they accept the spaces being offered and that they investigate the possibility of using part of the drying green in front of some of the cottages for parking.

Re:14.1 of 8/22 Defibrillator for West Burrafirth Pier

The Clerk stated that he was still awaiting a decision from Cooke Aquaculture on this matter. M MacGregor requested defibrillator training.

Action: The Clerk to request defibrillator training for the Walls area.

Re: 14 of 10/22 AOCB (Track to Littla Boust, Sandness)

In an email to the Chair, Cllr Peterson informed the members that she is still working on this matter and the possibility of acquiring some funding was being considered.

Re: 14 of 11/22 Pre Planning Consultation S4GI008

The question as to who was paying for the Foula mast was asked but there was uncertainty as to the answer. A brief discussion followed regarding the mast about to be constructed at the Water Pumping Station in Walls and members expressed their hope that several mobile network suppliers would make use of it.

8. Housing

The Chair presented a brief summary of the efforts that had been made to have social housing built in the Sandness and Walls area, pointing out that the last such housing development suitable for families to be constructed in Walls was in the 1970's at Kirkidale. He went on to describe the damaging effects that a shortage of such housing was having on the communities concerned. He concluded by informing members of the hold ups to the proposed development in Walls. J Gear indicated that there is also a demand for social housing on Foula.

9. Future of Health Service Provision at Walls Health Centre

The Chair informed the new members of the background to this item and expressed his sadness that the current GP was having to retire on health grounds. He pointed out that the Community Council is due to meet with Health and Social Work officials when they have drawn up their strategy for the future of health provision in the area.

10. Request by Billy Mycock (Environmental Health re: ASB Strategy) to attend a Community Council meeting

After a brief discussion on the matter, it was agreed to invite Mr Mycock to the January meeting of the Sandness and Walls Community Council.

Action: The Clerk to invite Mr Mycock to attend the January meeting of the Community Council.

11. Shetland Community Benefit Fund

11.1 IBP Strategy and Research Consultation

The Chair referred members to a consultation exercise being carried out by IBP Strategy and Research on the future of the Viking Energy Fund. He went on to say that further involvement with Community Councils in this discussion would continue next year.

11.2 Sandness and Walls Representative on the Shetland Community Benefit Fund Board

(F MacBeath declared an interest because his son is the current rep.)

After a brief discussion it was agreed that Jamie MacBeath be asked to continue as this Community Council's representative.

Action: The Clerk to ask Jamie if he is willing to continue.

11.3 Request for an additional aero generator for Foula

J Gear made a request for an additional aero generator for Foula.

12. Financial Update

The Clerk provided an update as to the Community Council's current financial position. He stated that until all the receipted invoices for unadopted roads have been received, the Community Council is unable to offer any new grants in the current financial year. He also stated that an updated pay scale for Clerks has been received but that he was not seeking an increase in pay in the current financial year because the Community Council's budget has already been allocated.

13. Correspondence (Including Emails)

A thank you card with a picture of the Sandness School Children wearing their new rucksacks was circulated amongst members. All other correspondence was circulated via email.

14. AOCB

J Puckey stated she had received an email from a Sandness resident expressing concern at the lack of a representative from Sandness on the Community Council. Members agreed in principle to co-opt someone from the area provided they were willing to be co-opted and they met with the approval of the members.

Action: J Puckey to liaise with the person from whom she received the email to seek a suitable representative from Sandness.

15. Dates of Next Meetings

It was agreed to continue with the pattern of holding meetings on the first Tuesday of each month with the exception of the

(Draft minutes of 30th November 2022 S&WCC meeting subject to approval at next meeting)

July when there would be no meeting. It was also agreed to hold the next meeting on Tuesday 10th January because people were likely to be on holiday on the 3rd January.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting closed at 9.10 pm