

Sandness & Walls Community Council

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Minutes of a hybrid meeting of Sandness & Walls Community Council held on Tuesday 2nd May 2023 at 7.00pm

Present:

I Walterson (Chair)
F MacBeath (Vice Chair)
E Johnston
M Forrest
J Laing
J Puckey
C Venus
J Haswell
J Gear
M Macgregor
S Johnston
Cllr M Robinson
Cllr L Peterson

1. Chairman's Welcome

I Walterson (Chair) chaired the meeting and welcomed all those present.

2. Apologies

R Fraser, M Duncan

In attendance: D Forrest (Clerk), Hazel Sutherland (Chief Executive (interim,)) Shetland Amenity Trust) and Alison Moncrieff (Chair, Shetland Amenity Trust)

3. Declarations of Interest

None were made at this time.

5. Visit by Hazel Sutherland CE (interim) of Shetland

Amenity Trust and Alison Moncrieff, Chair of Shetland Amenity Trust

(This item was brought forward to enable the representatives from the Shetland Amenity Trust to leave after their presentation.)

5.1 Presentation

Hazel began by explaining the purpose of their visit. She pointed out that the Amenity Trust has experienced financial constraints and went on to say with that in mind, she has come to meet the Community Council members to discuss the future of the Camping Bod in Walls. She explained that the Amenity Trust is not equipped to run tourist accommodation and posed the question, is there a better model for running the Camping Bod. She also pointed out that the Bod has not been in use since before the pandemic. Whilst it is currently in good order, it will require some work to make it ready for use. One of the current issues is that it does not have a custodian. In the short term they would hope to employ a custodian. However, looking further ahead, the Amenity Trust intends to sell the Camping Bod to a local group. If such a group cannot be found it may be necessary to place the property on the market to be sold to a private concern. She asked members to consider how best to approach this matter.

5.2 Q&A

The chair invited questions and comments from the members.

The suggestion was made to place a poster in the shop window inviting applications for the job of custodian. This was agreed and may provide an opportunity to open the Bode for the 2023 visitor season.

Q. Do heritage properties have a ring-fenced budget within the amenity trust's finances?

A. No, the Amenity Trust is funded by the Charitable Trust but none of its funds are ring-fenced.

Q. How can the issues raised in the presentation be best publicised?

A. An open day could be held, or information could be provided on the Community Council Facebook page for example.

Q. How can a community group access sufficient funds for the purchase of the Bod?

A. Any group wishing to take over the running of the Bode will need to seek external funding.

The comment was made that Walls has several community-run buildings and may not be able to find volunteers to take on yet another one.

5.3 Conclusion

Hazel pointed out that her presentation had been all about setting the scene and it would be for the Community Council to consider how best to move forward on this matter.

The Chair thanked Hazel and Alison and for their visit.

(Hazel and Alison left the meeting.)

4. Police Report

4.1 February/March Report

Members acknowledged receipt of the February March Police Report.

4.2 Speeding Lorry

A member provided a verbal account of a speeding lorry that was passing through Bixter. This incident was reported to the police.

6. Minutes from 2.4.23

Second sentence of Item 16.1 of 4/23 Da Voar Redd-up to be amended to read, *They are the road between the Watsness Junction and the Sandness Road and the Beach Track **and Beach** at the Dale of Walls.*

The adoption of the amended minutes was proposed by M Macgregor and seconded by J Laing.

7. Matters Arising

Re: 11.2 of 1/23 Petrol supply issues

The Chair informed the members that he had discussed the matter with the landlord of the property and the tenants. The tenants do not wish to pursue this matter any further owing to the fact they do not feel the cost of repairs to the storage tank and pump could ever make it commercially viable. The Chair declared that, as far as the Community Council was concerned, the matter was now closed.

8. Housing

8.1 Proposed Social Housing Development at Central Walls

Cllr Peterson informed the meeting that progress is being made towards the purchase of the land for the Walls scheme. She went on to describe a recent meeting she'd had with Anita Jamison, Head of Shetland Islands Council's Housing Department. Cllr Peterson stated she had tried to impress upon Ms Jamison the need for housing suitable for families on the Westside. She described how housing applications do not make clear the desired geographical location within Shetland that the applicant is seeking.

8.2 Council Owned land at rear of Kirkidale Housing Scheme

The question was asked as to why the land at the rear of the Kirkidale Housing Scheme had not been used for the four proposed houses. In response, Cllr Peterson stated that Hjaltland did not feel that that site was as good as the site currently designated for these homes. Members expressed their views the Kirkidale site should be made available for private house building to accommodate local families.

8.3 Possible Abandoned Tenancy

Concerns were expressed that a Council owned house in Walls is not being occupied and has not been occupied for a number of years. The clerk was asked to pass this information onto the housing department.

Action: The Clerk to inform the SIC Housing Department about this property. .

9. Roads

9.1 Surface Dressing on part of the New Road in Walls

Members noted that part of the New Road in Walls was scheduled to receive surface dressing this summer.

Re: 8.1 of 4/23 Pedestrian Safety on the New Road in Walls

It was noted that Robina Barton, Active Travel Officer, had been informed about the concerns regarding the safety of pedestrians on the New Road in Walls. Cllr Peterson informed the meeting that it is the Roads Department's intention to repair the damage to the soft verges along this road on the understanding similar work will probably have to be carried out in future years. She suggested that Robina Barton be asked to carry out a place based audit prior to the next round of bids for Sustrans funding which takes place in December.

Action: The Clerk to ask Ms Barton to conduct a place based audit of the New Road in Walls.

9.2 Lack of Signage for Passing Places on Road from Dale of Walls to the Sandness Junction.

Members were informed that there is a lack of passing place signage on the road between the Dale of Walls and the Sandness Junction. It was also pointed out that some of the passing places in Mid Walls also lack signage. The Clerk was asked to inform the Roads Department of this issue and to request appropriate signs be erected where necessary.

Action: The Clerk to request Passing Place signs where required on the Dale of Walls to the Sandness Junction and also in Mid Walls.

9.3 Fly-tipping of Soil at Quarry at Entrance to Dale of Walls Beach Track

Members were informed that several truckloads of soil have been dumped at the quarry at the entrance to the Dale of Walls Beach Track. This site is regularly used for parking. The request was made that the soil be levelled out to facilitate continued parking. The Clerk was asked to inform the Roads Department of this issue and request that the soil be levelled out.

Action: The Clerk to inform the Roads Department of the fact that soil has been fly-tipped at the quarry at the entrance to the Dale of Walls Beach Track and request it be levelled out to make it suitable for parking.

10. Electric Ferry Trial for Papa Stour

Cllr Peterson spoke on this matter and expressed her disappointment that Mr Robert Smith had not yet responded to repeated emails from the Community Council. However, she went on to state the recent promotional video by the company hoping to carry out the trial was at best misleading. The vessel in question has not yet been built and the company concerned has not been in negotiations with Shetland Islands Council regarding the Papa Stour service. Cllr Peterson declared that she will not allow any changes to the Papa Stour Ferry Service that the service users do not approve.

11. Community Consultation – Reimagining Burials in Shetland

F MacBeath expressed his concerns at the possibility of there being only one burial ground on the whole of the Westside. He stated that this was a very emotive subject and that many people were concerned that they may not be interred in their traditional family plots. The Chair provided a potted history of recent works that have been carried out throughout Shetland to extend burial grounds. He pointed out that austerity measures introduced 10 years ago by the Council had brought this work to halt. The discussion moved on to consider the Council's need to make financial savings which includes reducing the level of burial ground maintenance. The possibility of rewilding some old burial grounds may be a future option. It was decided to revisit this matter at a time when consultation takes place with Community Councils.

12. Future of Health Service Provision at Walls Health Centre

It was recognised that Mr Chittick is currently engaged in fiscal matters. It is expected that, in the near future, the proposed meeting with Community Council members and Mr Chittick's team can be organised.

13. Shetland Community Benefit Fund

No recent funding requests have been made for a Shetland Community Benefit Fund grant.

14. Review of Community Councils

The Chair thanked members for their responses to the Review of Community Councils. He made particular mention of the issues of boundaries and funding. He went on to outline the calendar of consultations and meetings leading up to the implementation and

launch of the new Community Council Scheme of Establishment scheduled for December 2024.

15. Facebook Page for S&WCC

E Johnston was thanked for his work in creating the Facebook page. Several suggestions were made as how best to promote and advertise the page. They included a poster in the Shop window and placing an advertisement in the what's on diary of events.

16. Financial Update

In addition to the monthly financial update as per a spreadsheet, the Clerk also provided a financial forecast based on outstanding funding requests and probable future grant applications. The Chair pointed out that it will not be possible to meet all the potential demands on the Community Council's budget given that Community Council funding has been at a standstill for over ten years. After some discussion the following grants were approved:

Sandness Primary School's request for £299.96 for outdoor water play/ experimental equipment. (S Johnston declared an interest.)

Foula Heritage's application for £390 for work on the Foula Kirk.

The Clerk's pay to keep the it in line with level H2 on the SIC pay scale. (The Clerk and M Forrest declared interests.)

Actions: The Clerk to make payments to the Sandness School and Foula Heritage when the 2023/24 funding is provided.

17. Correspondence (Including Emails)

All correspondence has been circulated via email.

18. AOCB

18.1 The Walls Swimming Pool

Cllr Peterson requested an update regarding the Walls Swimming Pool. Members acknowledged that planning consent has been granted for an aerogenerator for the facility. No further information is currently available.

18.2 Dale of Walls Beach Track

M Macgregor stated that all the aggregate for filling potholes on the track has been used up. She requested that more be provided. She went on to suggest that a long-term solution be investigated. This was deferred to the next meeting. The Chair asked the Clerk

(Draft minutes of the May 2023 S&WCC meeting subject to approval at next meeting)

to seek an estimate for 10 tonnes of aggregate each for the Norby and Dale of Walls Beach Tracks and to circulate members with a view to having the material delivered to the respective tracks.

Action: The Clerk to seek an estimate for the purchase and delivery of 20 tonnes of aggregate, 10 tonnes each for the Dale of Walls Beach Track and the Norby Beach Track and to circulate members with this information.

19. Date of Next Meeting

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance.

The date of the next meeting was set for Tuesday 6th June.

The meeting closed a 9.45pm.