

Association of Shetland Community Councils (ASCC)

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Paper 1

Minute of the ASCC meeting held on Tuesday 08 March 2022, 6.00 pm, held online using Microsoft Teams

Present

Jim Anderson (Chair)	Association of Shetland Community Council
Ian Walterson (Vice Chair)	Association of Shetland Community Council
Niall O'Rourke	Burra & Trondra Community Council
Alison Foyle (clerk)	Delting Community Council
Stewart Douglas	Gulberwick, Quarff & Cunningsburgh Community Council
Gary Robinson	Lerwick Community Council
Willie Simpson	Nesting and Lunnasting Community Council
David Brown	Northmaven Community Council
Iris Sandison	Sandness and Walls Community Council
Bryan Peterson	Sandwick Community Council
Mark Burgess	Scalloway Community Council
John N Hunter	Scalloway Community Council
Violet McQuade (clerk)	Skerries Community Council
Andrew Archer	Tingwall, Whiteness & Weisdale Community Council
Patrick Fordyce	Unst Community Council
William Polson	Whalsay Community Council
Annette Jamieson	Yell Community Council
Laurence Odie	Yell Community Council

Officers in Attendance

Michael Duncan	Community Council Liaison Officer – Community Planning & Development, SIC
Vaila Simpson	Executive Manager – Community Planning & Development, SIC
Neil Hutcheson	Team Leader – Roads Network and Assets – Roads Service, SIC
Carl Symons	Executive Manager - Environment & Estate Operations
Brydon Gray	Team Leader - Waste Management
Marvin Smith	Commercial Development Officer - Shetland Telecom
Aisha Rehman	Community Engagement Officer – Scotland Census

Officers Observing

Ana Arnett (note taker)	Community Involvement & Development Officer - Community Planning & Development, SIC
Roselyn Fraser	Community Involvement & Development Officer - Community Planning & Development, SIC

1. Introductions

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

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from, Bressay Community Council, Dunrossness Community Council, Fetlar Community Council, Neil Grant, Frances Browne, Pat Christie.

3. Declarations of Interest

None

4. (Presentation) Scotland's Census 2022

Ayesha Rehman, Scotland's Census 2022 Engagement Officer, North and North East Scotland delivered an overview presentation of March 20th 2022 census. Describing key dates, digital toolkit, GDPR, support routes available, sharable promotion materials, example case studies and the importance of gathering census statistics. Ms Rehman highlighted local field staff will be recruited (vacancies available) in Shetland to assist with signposting households to local support available. The Contact Centre is offering telephone support including, braille service, and a live language interpretation service. 'Help the Helper' online awareness events are being delivered in March. Ms Rehman is seeking the support of trusted partners such as community councils to spread the message of the importance of the census. Previous census engagement in Shetland stood at 94.6% response rate and the aim is to improve on this in 2022.

6.10pm Niall O Rourke joined meeting

Vaila Simpson highlighted local completion surgeries are being held in Shetland Library and Adult Learning will be offering support, details to be circulated by email, along with press release. Dates planned for Tuesday 15th & Thursday 24th March.

Ms Rehman thanked Vaila and noted that census communication team can also share local support events on Social Media platforms.

Mr Walterson asked if figures were available of people fined for non-compliance of submitted the last census both nationally and locally?

Ms Rehman replied that support would be offered several times before that stage, a summons to court would be the step before a fine. The potential is there, to be fined however figures are low, and she did not have specific stats for Shetland.

John Hunter asked if any negative feedback had been received with regards to the questions Scots language. He noted social media comments.

6.15pm Andrew Archer joined meeting

Ms Rehman Replied the census asks the individual "*what language do you speak?*" Feedback around those who speak Gaelic, in particular, asking what support is available. She highlighted the stakeholder toolkit. Whatever has been written in English it is translatable to 31 other languages. If another language is spoken and not available please call the Contact Centre and it can be looked at to see what support is available.

5. Note of the previous meeting held on 14 September 2021 for approval.

Proposed by John Hunter

Seconded by Annette Jamieson

6. Matters arising from previous minute not on the agenda

None

7. Visitor attraction and litter collection

Chair introduced Carl Symons from SIC Environmental and Estate Operations and Brydon Gray from SIC Waste Management, who both presented a broad update of the steps being taken to alleviate waste issues raised by ASCC. Mr Symons explained work that has started and will be continuing over next few months. Specifically the service has introduced increased bin collections during the summer months in certain areas, from fortnightly to weekly. Larger ‘high capacity’ bins have been installed in particular areas, including at the request of Community Councils i.e. Mavis Grind and in the North isles.

Mr Symons pointed out that whilst tourism is a positive thing for Shetland, it also increases pressure on local services. Schemes such as the example in Fetlar of the Community Based Handy Person role, has saved the SIC money whilst providing an improved local service.

Mr Symons then went on to explain high capacity bins cost £450. The issue of increasing service provision is not always possible due to budget restraints. His service has requested an increase in budget for the past 3/4 years, which may not always be granted. Mr Symons suggested a community based approach to tackle some of the issues raised, for example an ASCC grant application to Coastal Communities Fund could possibly support this.

6.40pm Stewart Douglas joined meeting

Ian Walterson queried whether there had been a change in the SIC installing specific dog waste bins, had this been due to a change in a policy?

Carl Symons confirmed there had been no change in policy. SIC Environmental Health had previously been involved in dog waste bins, but to his knowledge this was no longer the case. Mr Symons explained the cost of collection was the main issue. High capacity bins simplify the collection process alongside saving on cost, and would be preferable wherever possible. The Council’s Environment & Estate Operations alongside Waste Management service are always keen to hear what we do to help and what can we do more efficiently.

Bryan Peterson asked whether communities can request an additional bin in the case where high capacity bins are overflowing. Mr Peterson cited a residential area in Sandwick which is experiencing this problem.

Mr Symons replied that communities can do so with Community based bins, and in the case of residential household bins, issues can be directed to himself to sort out.

Mark Burgess queried the Tourist Tax subject / theme. Expressing an interest in who would be taxed and how would that be influenced?

Mr Symons suggested where provision for additional services relates to tourism, it stands to reason there would be an increase in costs. A Tourist Tax is used in other international tourist destinations, and Mr Symons rhetorically asked the meeting if such a tax would be appropriate in Shetland, noting it would be a subject for elected members to discuss if raised.

Annette Jamieson enquired if either of the services held information on the location of larger bins? Mr Jamieson asked if a map existed which could be shared with ASCC members with the option of Community Councils, where necessary, being able to suggest bin relocations to better suited sites using local knowledge. Mrs Jamieson noted ferry terminals as an example.

Mrs Jamieson also referred to dog waste situation. Previously the Community Council had been provided with signage about dog waste for displaying on general litter bins, which indicated that the bin could also be used for dog waste.

Brydon Gray informed participants that a list of bin locations is currently available. Work on a map had been started previously, and this could be looked at again to ensure it was up to date.

Mr Symons agreed with Mrs Jamieson's suggestion. A bin location map could be created and published. Local services would also find this useful, so Mr Symons pledged that the Council's Environmental & Estate Operations team will endeavour to undertake this work at some future point.

The Chair pointed out the fact that refuse lorries have trackers, and questioned whether these would be useful in creating the map. The Chair also questioned what other advantages do the trackers have?

Mr Symons explained that there are many advantages to having the trackers on vehicles such as to protect staff whilst undertaking lone working; in terms of data provided; it has been used to build business cases; driver style and performance data is collected; provision of footage can be reviewed if necessary for liability protection. Mr Symons confirmed that data can help maintain reputation of SIC service, track fleet locations, track staff regarding safety.

8. White Lines, Cats Eyes, Gritting Policy

Chair introduced Neil Hutcheson, Roads Service.

Mr Hutcheson advised that the Council's White Lines budget has been increased by £50,000.00 in financial year 2022/2023. This has happened due to a reallocation of resources from capital road reconstruction budgets in the recognition that road markings are a priority. Mr Hutcheson advised that the original road markings budget would increase from £125,000.00 to £175,000.00, also stating that the annual budget would be nearer to £300,000.00 in an ideal world.

Mr Hutcheson explained the methodology applied behind the reallocation of budget is able to capitalise 'extruded markings' thereby providing an increase in longevity. This is deemed to be improving the asset, and therefore is contained within 'capital' rather than 'revenue' budgeting. The machine technique used enables more lines to be applied during the budget period.

Mr Duncan enquired on behalf of Delting Community Council with regards the timescale on works at the Graven Junction, whether it would be carried out in early summer 2022? Delting Community Council also asked for confirmation of which roads meet the criteria for road markings.

Mark Burgess queried which road markings are done by mainland contractors, and which can be done locally? Mr Burgess was aware of previous poor weather related issues when using visiting contractors and the limitation of available contractors.

Mr Hutcheson clarified that hand marked symbols and short lengths of lines can be done locally, longer lines must be machine based using the specialist contractors. This had been done twice a year in early & late summer in past year, however due to current budget restraints this was now done once a year. The benefit of Capital allocation of a project means that unspent budget can be rolled over to another year.

Mr Hutcheson confirmed the machine applied markings require contractors from south, which would be late summer 2022. Markings should last 5 to 7 years, with exception to higher traffic roads, or where roads are surface dressed.

Mr Hutcheson confirmed that all 2 lane roads have centre lines and edge lines, and all “A and B” class single track roads edge lines are applied. Anything deemed as hazardous and which can be done locally can be re-marked, e.g. black gate junction which had been recently re-lined.

Niall O’Rourke asked for an update on the car park located opposite Minn Beach, whether it was planned for this summer? Mr Hutcheson replied that to the best of his knowledge it was programmed to be carried out during the summer of 2022.

Mr Hutcheson then provided a demonstration using actual examples of Cat Eyes, explaining that the SIC have been exploring new methods of replacing them. “Long Shoe” Cats Eye are on 90% of our roads and where the rubber inserts are replaceable, it is less costly to replace the insert only. It costs £30.00 to take up and replace each Long Shoe Cats Eye, which is only done when resurfacing roads.

The new “Short Shoe” costs to replace. The design difference is the insert which is produced in a hard scratch resistant plastic. During the past winter the Council has undertaken a trial in Voe replacing the actual Cats Eye insert itself with a new model which can be installed at the cost of £7.00 each. The trial has been successful and with the potential cost savings that can be achieved, then going forwards it is anticipated that more Cats Eyes can be installed/replaced with budget available using this new version.

Mr Hutcheson provided an overview of Gritting Policy: Priority 3 Routes were introduced in 2012 after a review of winter maintenance, and following community consultation at events in community halls. Ferry and street lighting review was undertaken at same time. Another interim review took place in 2019 and a full review 2020, which then became the current policy.

To make any changes to gritting arrangements now would take a formal policy review. There lies challenge for the Roads service in finding experienced drivers for gritters and snowploughs. SIC has used contractors in the past, however due to hours required for driving and on call availability, businesses find it disruptive to release their drivers and are therefore not that keen. With regards to gritting a specific Route 3, it could be brought forward, at the back end of a priority 2, but this is not always possible. It depends on whether the gritter route could be looked at.

Laurence Odie raised a query regarding priority route 3’s and a ‘three day rule’ and gave an example whereby he had received a complaint from Yell constituent this year, due to the road being left untreated during poor weather. The Chair agreed it was 2012 when different priority routes were introduced, with an aim to making savings. He was also aware of a rule that for 3 consecutive days, priority 3 route roads may not be treated. The Chair enquired if the Roads Service had an emergency phone number that could be used should a member of the public wish to highlight concerns.

Mr Hutcheson explained that the practise on the ground is that when conditions are severe, early morning inspections will highlight concerns. A joint decision is then taken between with driver and foreman, and reviewed again late morning. Conditions where there is white frost, then route 2's are treated, and where there are signs of ice, generally gritters will treat route 3's. If it snows all roads should get treated.

Mr Hutcheson clarified that the three day rule was never put into practise. However he would look into wording on the SIC website to ensure this is clear. Members of the public can telephone Roads Service Reception (tel. 01595 744866) with concerns.

Action: Mr Hutcheson to share leaflet on Winter Roads Treatment and update Council web page

Mr Burgess raised the earlier point regarding trackers on refuse lorries available to public. Mr Burgess asked if there would be any merit in giving public access to gritter locations, allowing people to make informed decisions on what roads to travel on and when. Mr Burgess also noted that on the SIC website, priority route 3 roads where weather condition were severe and persist for 'several days'.

Mr Hutcheson agreed to look into the possibility of sharing the location of gritters. It was noted this could be a joint project with the Council's refuse vehicles.

9. R100

Marvin Smith provided an update regarding the R100 program explaining areas designated for an upgrade should be addressed within the next 5 years. However Mr Smith did add that it appears that there will be areas and households across Shetland who are unlikely to get an upgrade from R100. Potential options and solutions were set out:

- Apply for £5,000 vouchers – neighbours could work together to pool resources/seek providers
- Seeking alternative suppliers
- Explore 4G for broadband
- Shetland Telecom – if backhaul connections can be addressed
- Possible satellite options
- Community led solutions

Mr Smith highlighted that mobile phone coverage is steadily improving locally across Shetland, particularly for Vodafone, O2 and EE customers.

Mr Duncan questioned the timeline for R100?

Mr Smith showed an online map with proposed upgrades to take place over the next 3 / 4 years but was not able to share the website address. Mr Smith noted that Central & South mainland of Scotland have experienced some slippages, so one would expect complications and further slips may be inevitable as program goes on.

Mrs Sandison noted that there appeared to be a complete lack of any intended roll out in the Sandness and Walls areas.

Mr O'Rourke asked what the situation was with properties under construction.

Mr Smith explained there was no advantage for R100 to miss out one single property. The £5,000 voucher scheme available to those out with the designated areas. However the issue in Shetland is there are no alternative suppliers currently available. This is being investigated by Shetland Broadband and Shetland Telecom. Discussion then took place around the use of satellite suppliers.

Mr Smith pointed out that generally speaking this was an unproven technology locally. It was further noted it could be costly and dishes were generally unsuited to the more challenging Shetland climate. Mr Smith did note that 4G Broadband becoming increasingly more popular, and a survey can be undertaken to explore if 4G is a good solution.

William Polson highlighted the 2 Masts located in Whalsay. The local community was not entirely sure if they are even turned on. Mr Smith agreed it was difficult to know which masts located in Shetland have or have not been turned on yet, and advised that communication channels with certain companies remains a challenge even just to find out information regarding when the masts are on or off, broken or fixed.

Action: Mr Smith offered to investigate if they're turned on, and will report back. He is happy to be contacted by email if Community Councils have further questions.

10. Planning Update

Mr Duncan read a report provided by SIC Planning Department.

Caseload update from Executive Manager – Planning Service, Iain McDiarmid:

We recently took on two external contractors who will be working remotely. They have now taken on a case load. Whilst we are still devoting significant time to major development like the space centre and energy Isles proposal, 20 applications were allocated to officers in the last week. The oldest one waiting allocation to a planning officer is from mid-December.

We have 4.4 vacant posts in the Development management team, but we are hopeful of a positive outcome to our recent recruitment campaign.

Local Development Plan 2: Call for Sites and Main Issues Report Consultation

The consultation periods for the Call for Sites and Main Issues Report concluded on Friday 4th March 2022.

Both consultations, which were well publicised via local press and social media, ran for 6 weeks with materials being displayed via a Virtual Town Hall facility and accessible directly from the Council's website. This is the first time that Shetland Islands Council has opted for online Local Development Plan consultation, in the hope that this would lead to increased engagement and accessibility especially in 'COVID times'

- In addition to the information being available online the Development Plans team offered the following:

Duty officer hours were held every weekday morning between 10:00 and 12:00. This allowed people direct response to their queries within this time daily.

- 6 consultation events were also held online, one for each locality, over Microsoft Teams.

These events allowed people to have direct dialogue with Officers about their queries and any observations on the consultation materials during these sessions have been noted. Unfortunately turnout at these events was much lower than we had hoped and we intend to review how we can encourage engagement for the next consultation period.

The Call for Sites Consultation sought views on sites that may be appropriate as allocated sites in the next Plan. These sites were taken from sites promoted to Shetland Islands Council by landowners as part of a Call for Sites in 2018-2019.

The Main Issues Report seeks to establish the themes and priorities which will effect policy and delivery in relation to development over the next Local Development Plan period (approximately 5 years) and set out the Planning Authority's Preferred options for each Issue identified with, and where appropriate alternatives.

Next steps:

The output from this consultation period will now be reviewed and used in the formation of a Proposed Local Development Plan (LDP2). We aim to publish a proposed plan in Summer 2022 at which point there will be a further statutory consultation period.

We are completing LDP2 under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 and not the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 as we are still awaiting the publication of secondary legislation. The Scottish Government has put in place Transitional Arrangements which allow us to proceed to plan adoption at this time. The relevant National Planning policy documents are National Planning Framework 3 (NPF3) and Scottish Planning Policy.

The Scottish Government is now working on National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and we will be taking into account the content of that document in our plan making processes. The consultation closes on draft NPF4 on the 31st March 2022 and I would encourage Community Council's to submit their comments via the online consultation form:

<https://consult.gov.scot/local-government-and-communities/draft-national-planning-framework-4/>

The website <https://www.transformingplanning.scot/> provides some very useful information on the reform of the Scottish planning system, what it means for our communities and how to engage in the process. While the Main Issues Report and Call for Sites consultations are now closed the MIR information is still available to view via this link : <https://www.shetland.gov.uk/planshetland> but please note The virtual hall will cease to be accessible after 5pm on the 18th March.

We'd like to thank the CC's for their input into the process and as always if they have any questions on the LDP process please get in touch.

Mr Odie raised the point, that noise from private wind turbines impact further new builds, not only a Planning issue, also an Environmental Health issue. The Chair suggested this subject could be an area of discussion for another future meeting.

11. Elections Update

Mr Duncan provided an update.

The 2022 Community Council elections are due to take place between September and November 2022. The ASCC had carried out publicity campaign in the 2018 Elections and 2019 By-elections and listed the previous methods used. This included:

- Social media short films
- Flyers in Shetland Times
- Radio advert on Shetland Islands Broadcasting Company
- Feature in the New Shetlander magazine
- Publicity by SIC Communications Team

Mr Duncan advised there was an opportunity for the ASCC to do a publicity campaign again in the lead-up to the nomination period opening on 16 September. It would help with recruitment and hopefully minimise vacancies for the new Community Councils.

Mr Duncan cited an idea gleaned from the Moray Council area who used roadside signage to publicise Community Council elections. This idea could be replicated here, with signs located at various busy roads across Shetland. Mr Duncan had already sought prices so signage could be produced quickly and cheaply.

Mr Duncan suggested a small working group be formed to take forward publicity ideas and asked for volunteers interested in helping to put their names forward to him before the end of April.

12. Items for future meetings

Mark Burgess raised Shetland Community Benefit Fund (SCBF) Advanced Grant Scheme (ADG) consultation. Should the ASCC consider whether it has a role to play in a strategic plan, for example, on tackling fuel poverty?

Some discussion was had around ASCC and SCBF AGS with points being raised by Andrew Archer and Bryan Peterson, in particular around multiple community council applications for the same project.

Action: The Chair put forward the proposal to write to SCBF Directors to invite along to ASCC meeting.

Mr Duncan advised members that the call for agenda items would be emailed out in due course.

13. Date of Next Meeting

14 June 2022, 6pm

13 September 2022, 6pm

Meeting closed 8.10pm

Chairperson

Date

ACTION TRACKER

Action 1

Mr Hutcheson to share leaflet on Winter Road Treatment and update Council web page

Action 2

Mr Smith to investigate status of communication masts in Whalsay and report back

Action 3

ASCC to write to Shetland Community Benefit Fund and invite them to attend next ASCC meeting