

GULBERWICK, QUARFF & CUNNINGSBURGH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 30th AUGUST 2023 AT CUNNINGSBURGH SCHOOL AT 7.30PM

A. THE CIRCULAR CALLING THE MEETING HELD WAS READ.

B. PRESENT	Mrs M Davis Mr G Murray	Mr E MacPherson Mrs P Christie	Mr C Clark
EX OFFICIO	Cllr R McGregor		
IN ATTENDANCE	Mrs K Geddes Mrs A Arnett	Mr Marvin Smith, Shetland Telecom Project Manager (via Zoom)	Mrs Claire Hurst & Mr Peter Hurst, Shetland Age Related Macular Degeneration Group
CHAIRPERSON	Mr P Coleman		
APOLOGIES	Mr M Duncan PS David Carmichael	Cllr B Peterson	Ms E Copland
NOT PRESENT	Cllr A Armitage	Cllr A Duncan	

C. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr R McGregor declared an interest in Agenda Item 11 – Planning, as he is Chair of the SIC Planning Committee.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 3rd JULY 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 3rd July were approved on the motion of Mr C Clark and seconded by Mrs M Davis.

3. VISIT FROM SHETLAND TELECOM PROJECT MANAGER RE THE ROLL OUT OF FIBRE BROADBAND AND EMERGENCY PLANNING

This agenda item was moved up to make the best use of Mr Smith's time.

Mr Marvin Smith from Shetland Telecom (SIC) attended the meeting via Zoom. He gave some background on the current situation, explaining that the plans are to switch off the current traditional landline telephone network at the end of the 2025, meaning people will have to use broadband connections to make calls. People will have to get a router installed in order to keep making landline calls as the new system – VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) requires an internet connection.

He explained that BT have said that it is an advantage as the line will be clearer but that from a community point of view there are concerns regarding how phones work in power cuts. The extended power cuts experienced across Shetland in December 2022 have added to the worry that this will leave people cut off from any help.

It will have a negative effect on emergency services too – if the broadband network goes down or it loses power then you won't get 999 calls. Lots of mobile systems don't have back up power either. In December when the power cuts happened EE stayed on for four days but many Vodafone sites had complete network loss very quickly.

A further concern is for people who use certain devices such as 'panic buttons' or home link/care at home devices which alert others if you have had a fall as many of these rely on

traditional phone lines. Mr Smith said a solution to allow these to continue to work has not yet been figured out and that there were no contingencies yet in place. Openreach say that they will not switch over until alternatives are figured out but there is not much work being done to figure out how vulnerable people will be supported using the new system if things go wrong. Everyone involved – Ofcom, the Government, the Scottish Government, the SIC, Openreach – everyone is looking to everyone else to sort it.

There may be issues in places such as Sandwick where the broadband connects through a cabinet as these will lose power in a power cut. There are a large number of batteries in an exchange which means that the connection will probably last a bit longer here if there is a power cut, but even if you have power at a house using a generator, they will not provide generators for the cabinet. If there is no power to the cabinet you won't get a signal – the bit in the middle for people who connect through a cabinet is missing.

Power may be back fed from an exchange but if the exchange doesn't have battery power any more, because you have lost the analogue system then what is happening?

Mr Smith advised that Scalloway Community Council drafted and sent a good letter which asked for technical details.

The SIC has not given any official advice or given any recommendation on community resilience as yet. One option for communities may be connections or solutions within halls using satellite. This would work if there is another emergency loss of power so there is some solution in place to keep people connected.

Starlink is currently the only satellite provider available but it is expensive – approximately £90 a month for the service. There could be options for Community Councils to help community halls to fund the installation of the service and to look to the SIC and others to help fund the monthly service fees as part of the solution going forward for emergency planning.

Mr Smith was asked whether it is expected that all the providers are to get all households ready for the switchover before December 2025 and he answered yes. "That's probably the easiest part of it all. Phone sockets are on the back of most modems. Your internal phone extensions will no longer work and you will only be able to have a phone working if you plug it directly into the phone socket on the back of the modem and the master socket. There may be some way of adding extensions on but it will need to be wiring."

There was some discussion about what a community could do to band together to get funding but the funding available has been held up as the UK Government is going through the procurement process just now. Another issue is that the majority of houses in Shetland will cost more than £7,500 to connect which puts them into a different voucher scheme. The details of this new fund have not yet been released. He said it was currently a very mixed-up situation but that hopefully over the next 4-6 weeks things should become clearer.

Questions were also asked about how simple it was to install fibre broadband. Mr Smith said that as long as it complies with legislation then you don't need wayleaves unless it goes onto private property, and even if it does, it usually just takes a document that takes up one side of A4 paper. In addition, most installations do not need deep trenches. They usually use a mole plough with a 25ml duct buried at about 300ml depth. It is not complicated.

Members commented that they had seen very little information generally about the issue and Mr Smith explained that people will probably start to see more and more adverts or communication about the switchover date. He said that though people are not hearing much about it, as far as Openreach and Ofcom are concerned, they are informing the public to a sufficient level.

When discussing what to do members agreed on several actions:

- Ask Scalloway Community Council for a copy of their letter.
- Copy the letter to all relevant parties to try to get someone to take ownership of the problem.
- Approach the SIC for answers but ensure that Beatrice Wishart and Alistair Carmichael are also copied in – issues in Shetland will apply to all areas they cover as bad weather could also cut other areas of their constituencies off.
- From a Community Council point of view start to think about community resilience – just complaining is unlikely to make a difference.
- Ask the SIC for advice and action – can they put pressure on Openreach or the Government to pay for the satellite service or look elsewhere for funding to do this?

ACTION: Clerk to ask Scalloway Community Council for a copy of the letter and draft a similar one for GQC CC for the chair and vice chair to add to and edit.

----Mr Smith left 8.15pm----

4. SHETLAND AGE-RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION GROUP PRESENTATION

This agenda item was moved up to make the best use of Mrs and Mr Hurst's time.

Members of the local Age-Related Macular Degeneration Group visited the Community Council to give information about the disease. Group Leader Claire Hurst and Treasurer Peter Hurst described the disease as one of Shetland's best kept secrets as so many people on the island are affected by it. They shared information and facts about the disease, early warning signs of it, as well as giving members a tool to check their vision.

- AMD leads to the loss of the centre of your vision, meaning you don't go completely blind

- It can mean gaps, blurs or a black blob in the centre of your vision, letters or numbers can move around or seem like they're missing, colours can fade, bright lights can hurt and lines can seem to wobble

- It can lead to an increased number of trips and falls and to increased isolation due to fear of going out and falling and because those with the condition struggle to see faces and find not being able to recognise people very difficult

- It is more prevalent the older you get but young people can get it too - 1 in every 200 people are affected by age 60 which increases to 1 in 5 by the age of 90

- There are 600,000 known patients in the UK and over 600 in Shetland

- There are two types - dry and wet AMD and while dry AMD develops slowly, wet does not and early diagnosis and treatment is crucial

- Treatment for wet AMD is now available in Shetland, there is support from the Orkney vision services and there are new drugs close to being prescribed

Mrs Hurst explained the support group meets at Market House on the first Wednesday of the month between 2 and 4pm and is open to anyone affected by the condition.

The group has a newsletter, a closed Facebook page, outings, telephone links ups, information on new advances in treatment, general advice and support, and plenty of opportunities for socialising with people who understand what living with AMD is like. More information can be found at the national website: [Beating Macular Disease - Macular Society](#)

ACTION: Clerk to share information on the Facebook page and put info leaflets up in the noticeboards.

----Mrs and Mr Hurst left 8.50pm----

1. MATTERS ARISING

1. Active Travel Update

An email from Transport Planning/ZetTrans Transport Policy and Projects Assistant Alistair Hunter dated August 24th 2023 was read and noted.

He apologised for the delay in replying to a request for an update and stated there had not been much progress due to staff absences. Two reports have been drafted – one for the settlement audits including Gulberwick and Cunningsburgh, and one for the Lerwick to Scalloway cycle route that could potentially go along the main road and up to the Black Gaet junction. Management absences mean he was unsure at what stage the reports could be shared with Community Councillors. He confirmed there would be another meeting regarding the report recommendations and ensuring there is landowner support for anything which takes place.

Members expressed frustration and worry that the process seemed to still be dragging on and wanted to know whether the delays could mean that Shetland – and the projects based in Gulberwick and Cunningsburgh in particular – have missed more funding deadlines and have therefore lost out on money and opportunities to progress projects.

Members felt that there didn't seem to be many staff in the department for the amount of work required to be completed and for the deadlines which need to be met and remarked that it was a lot of pressure and work for so few individuals.

It was decided to write back to the department and ask for further clarification on timescales and on whether deadlines and money have been missed. Mr C Clark is to draft some text for Cllr R McGregor for information purposes when speaking about the matter to council officials.

ACTION: Clerk to contact ZetTrans and Transport Planning for a more substantial update and Mr C Clark to draft information on the current frustrations for Cllr R McGregor.

2. Member Update

Our newest member who currently lives on the mainland has only been able to join as an associate member for now as her name is not on the electoral register for Gulberwick. It is hoped that this will be sorted before our next meeting and that she will be able to be a full co-opted member with voting rights by the October meeting.

ACTION: Clerk to continue to liaise with new member and Community Council Liaison Officer Michael Duncan.

2. POLICE REPORT

No police report available.

Following the meeting, PS David Carmichael sent his apologies. He said he was unfortunately otherwise delayed or would have attended.

5. FINANCE

The bank statement on August 30th reads £14,175.00

There only transactions out with the usual in the account are: the payment of the £1,2004 grant to Gulberwick and Quarff Yoal Club, and the payment into the account of the grant money from the Shetland Islands Council of £12,923.

The accounts have been prepared and have been independently examined by VAS. Members approved the accounts and the chair signed them.

ACTION: Clerk to send signed accounts to SIC Grants Officer Michael Duncan.

6. GRANT APPLICATIONS

GQC CC Applications

There were no new grant applications for the Community Council.

SCBF Applications

There were no new Shetland Community Benefit Fund Applications to consider.

An email from SCBF updating members on what the Community Council had granted and supported through the Advance Grant Scheme (AGS) since it was started in February 2021 was read and noted. Members expressed pleasure at the quantity of money awarded and the positive effect the applicants have reported back.

Since the Advance Grant Scheme began GQC CC have supported 3- projects and awarded a total of £23,444.14 in funding.

The final year of the Viking Community Fund AGS begins on the 1st of September 2023 and Gulberwick, Quarff and Cunningsburgh will be allocated £10,000 as usual. Gulberwick, Quarff and Cunningsburgh Community Council have £6,555.86 of unspent funds from previous years which will be added to the 2023/24 allocation giving a new balance of £16,555.86.

Larger sums of money will become available in September 2024 though the details of how these will be granted and administered has not yet been decided. It is also not yet known what will happen if the Community Council does not spend all the funds allocated for them to distribute through the AGS, though it is unlikely the CC will not have access to them in future.

ACTION: Members to consider how they may like the remaining funds in the AGS to be allocated. If a change in approach to considering applications happens it would be beneficial to share this with the SCBF so the administrating officer can communicate this with applicants.

7. ROAD ISSUES/CAMPAIGN FOR REDUCED SPEED LIMITS

There are no updates though Cllr McGregor assured members he is continuing to make representations on their behalf. He will report back any progress.

Members discussed the closure of Mackenzie's shop and café and it was thought that this is likely to lower even further the chances of an extension north of the 50mph limit for Cunningsburgh.

It was decided to keep the item on the agenda but to perhaps change the wording of the heading.

ACTION: Clerk to look at other Community Council minutes for ideas as to what others use as long-standing agenda titles for road issues.

8. GULBERWICK, QUARFF & CUNNINGSBURGH DEVELOPMENT GROUP UPDATE

There have been no recent meetings of the group that aims to try to push forward development ideas for the Community Council area. It was agreed that an event to try to attract new members, to share the general aims of the group and to start community

consultation was required. Making sure that the projects already identified are agreed by the community and gathering new ideas for projects was a secondary aim for the event.

It was agreed that refreshments were required to draw people in and having a Sunday Teas type event would be a good start – with information boards and the opportunity for members to speak to the public too. Quarff Hall was identified as it is geographically central and it is hoped that the hall committee may be willing to help organise the teas for a donation to hall funds.

Steps are also required to make the group more official and to look at things like constitutions and bank accounts.

ACTION: Mr Murray to approach Quarff Hall about the event. Mr Clark to email current Development Group members to organise a meeting to plan the event and Mrs Arnett to find examples of development group constitutions which may be used as examples.

9. ASSOCIATION OF SHETLAND COMMUNITY COUNCILS MEETING

The next ASCC meeting is due to happen on Tuesday 12th September 2023 in the Town Hall at 6pm. Representatives from each Community Council are requested and Mr Coleman and Mr Murray both indicated they would like to attend.

Mr MacPherson asked if he could have the minutes of the June ASCC meeting forwarded on when they arrive.

Cllr McGregor and Mr Coleman were both able to report that they had attended meetings to inform them that an extended timetable for the Community Council Scheme Review was needed and that both SIC Councillors and CC Chairs agreed to it at their respective meetings.

ACTION: Clerk to send June ASCC minutes when they arrive and to send the agenda papers out for the next one when they are available. Clerk to communicate to Michael Duncan that Mr Murray and Mr Coleman are planning to attend the September meeting.

10. DISCUSSION ABOUT ROLE OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

The June/July meeting was to be the meeting where the Chair and Vice Chair would be able to discuss whether they felt they wanted to carry on in the roles after they had both had a period of settling into them.

As not all Community Councillors were present it was agreed to postpone this discussion until the August meeting.

After a discussion it agreed that Mr Clark would continue in the role of vice-chair while Mr Murray would take on the role of chair for approximately six months, until the discussion would open up again. Mr Coleman proposed Mr Murray as chair and Mr Clark seconded

ACTION: Clerk to communicate the change in roles to CCLO Michael Duncan and change it on the Your Representatives Poster. She will also add the issue to the outstanding items to be reviewed in March 2024.

11. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

There were no planning applications to consider but one which came up in the search for the community council area – comments are not required for applications not sent directly to the clerk so the application was read and noted:

[2023/181/PN](#) Erect general purpose agricultural shed, Mail, Ayre, South Voxter, Cunningsburgh, Shetland, ZE2 9HF.

12. AOCB

1. Meetings Dates

It was agreed to move the remainder of the 2023 meetings from a Wednesday back to a Tuesday. As well as the clerk and the newest associate member having new commitments on Wednesdays which make it difficult for them to attend, the meetings were originally moved in response to Sandwick CC changing their days to Tuesdays, resulting in possible clashes for South Mainland SIC Councillors. Members noted that attendance from SIC Councillors has not been what they had hoped, even with this allowance being made, so it was decided to choose an evening which would instead most benefit CC members.

October's meeting will now be on Tuesday 3rd October instead of Wednesday 4th and November's meeting will now be on Tuesday 21st November, not Wednesday 23rd.

ACTION: Clerk change the dates on the posters, advise attendees and make sure CCLO Michael Duncan is aware so the date can be changed on COINS.

2. Your Representatives Poster

The clerk asked those present to have a final look at the Your Representatives Poster which is shared in community noticeboards to ensure that their contact details are correct.

ACTION: Clerk to make any necessary edits and to print and display the finished poster.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is on Tuesday 3rd October 2023. (Please note change from previously advertised date).

Meeting Ends – 9.50 pm.

CHAIR

14. OUTSTANDING ITEMS

August 2023 – Review of roles of vice-chair and chair to be discussed at March 2024 meeting.