

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 Tuesday 5th September 2023 at 7.00pm

Present:

I Walterson (Chair)
M Forrest
J Puckey
C Venus
E Johnston
M Macgregor
J Gear
S Johnston
Cllr L Peterson

1. Chairman's Welcome

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

2. Apologies

J Haswell, S Johnston, R Fraser and M Duncan, F MacBeath (Vice Chair), J Laing and S Johnston for part of the meeting

In attendance: D Forrest (Clerk)

3. Declarations of Interest

None were made at this time.

4. Police Report

4.1 Briefing Paper (Email of 11/8/23)

Reference was made of the Briefing Paper received by email on 11th August. No concerns were raised relating to this.

4.2 Road Vehicle Lights

The concern was raised that some drivers are failing to use their lights at times when there is reduced daylight and visibility.

Action: The Clerk was asked to contact the Shetland office of Police Scotland to request that they initiate an awareness campaign.

5. Minutes from 1.8.23

The adoption of the minutes of 1st August 2023 was proposed by C Venus and seconded by M Forrest.

6. Matters Arising

Re: 4.2 of 8/23 Speed Limit on Walls Harbour

The Clerk stated that, to date, the speed limit sign for the Walls Harbour has not yet been erected. It was also noted that traffic and pedestrian markings in this area have yet to be painted.

Action: The Clerk to Email A. Inkster and copy N Hutcheson

Re: 18.1 of 8/23 Feeder Bus Service to Sandness

The Clerk stated that he had not yet received a response from Zettrans following his email of 3rd August 2023 to request a change in the way in which the feeder bus to Sandness is run.

Action: The Clerk was asked to email Mr M Craigie and copy in Cllrs M Lyall, M Robinson and L Peterson.

Re: 18.2 of 8/23 Rubbish Bin at the Houlmalees Viewing Point and Layby

It was noted that Ms Bessie Barron has received a key for the rubbish bins in the Walls area. She was also provided with some black bags. The key will be held at the Walls Shop.

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

Members were informed that, to date, the missing passing place signs on the above stretch of road have not been replaced.

Action: The Clerk to email N Hutcheson to request they be replaced.

Re: 8.3 of 4/23 Child Safety in Mid Walls

It was noted that the Children at Play signs and No Parking sign have yet to be installed.

Action: The Clerk to contact Mr H Wishart to request the signs be installed.

7. Housing

Re: 8.2 of 8/23 Social Housing Stock in Walls

It was noted that, to date, no work has been carried out at a vacant social housing unit at Kirkdale in Walls to enable it to be re-let.

Re: 8.1 of 5/23 Proposed Social Housing Development at Central Walls

Cllr Peterson provided a verbal progress report on this development stating that the land settlement should be completed by October this year when an update on the timescale for the work should be available. It is anticipated that building work should require 9-12 months.

Re: 8.2 of 5/23 Council Owned land at rear of Kirkdale Housing Scheme

Cllr Peterson is in the process of requesting that this land, which has been earmarked for housing, be sold to a private developer given that the Local Authority has no plans to construct social housing on this site for the foreseeable future.

8. Roads

8.1 Resurfacing work on the A 971 between the Gallow Hill and Da Punds in Walls

Members expressed their appreciation for the quality of the work that has been carried out in both improving the road surface and widening the road in places. It was noted that work on improving the verges is ongoing.

Action: The Clerk to email N Hutcheson to express the Members' thanks for this work.

8.2 White Lining on the newly resurfaced stretch of the A 971.

The issue of painting white lines along the edges of the newly resurfaced stretch of road was discussed.

Action: The Clerk was asked to email N Hutcheson to enquire when white lining is due to be carried out.

Re: 9.1 of 8/23 Cattles Grids in Sandness

It was noted that the reflector posts on the cattle grid on the Sandness Road closest to the Bridge-of-Walls have yet to be replaced.

Action: The Clerk to notify N Hutcheson regarding this matter.

8.3 Resurfacing on the New Road, Walls

It was noted that resurfacing work scheduled for 2023 on the New Road in Walls has yet to take place.

Action: The Clerk to email N Hutcheson to enquire when this work will be carried out.

8.4 Sunken Tracks near North Newton at Unifirth

Members were informed that the road surface near the Newton junction has suffered damage and has sunk causing it to flood when heavy rain occurs. This in turn presents a risk to motorists of aquaplaning.

Action: The Clerk to email N Hutcheson to request remedial action.

8.5 Road surface cracking at the foot of the Fly Hill in West Burrafirth

Members were informed of the condition of the road surface at the foot of the Fly Hill in West Burrafirth where the condition of the side of the carriageway is deteriorating and cracking. Concern was expressed that when heavy vehicles pass along this stretch of road further damage will occur. This had been reported last year and the damaged area surveyed and marked with paint for repairs to be carried out but this has not been done.

Action: The Clerk to email N Hutcheson to request that remedial work be carried out.

9. Gigabit Project for NW Walls and Dale

9.1 The Background

M Macgregor explained to the Members that, as a direct outcome of her frustration from being unable to access acceptable 'modern' internet speeds at her business premises in Dale of Walls, she is currently working with the SBVS (Scottish Broadband Voucher Scheme) office of the Scottish Government on the development of a brand new community project which would bring fibre to the premises and enable customers to have a full-fibre broadband connection with speeds of up to 1 Gigabit. She stressed the importance of the fibre reaching the premises for future resilience. She maintained that the cost of the new build should be covered by the Voucher schemes, which were introduced when R100 was stopped.

9.2 A Possible Solution

The supplier in question is currently working on similar projects on the mainland for the Government and is apparently interested in coming to Shetland. He is totally independent of Openreach. She told the meeting that such a community project could only proceed if there were at least 100 premises interested. Most premises that have not benefitted from improved speeds from past Government investment and which cannot access 30MB are eligible for vouchers.

9.3 Next Steps

She hopes to hold public meetings before the end of October, where she would explain exactly what the project is about and would seek to gauge potential interest. Also, she stressed that this

would be a community project, and that nothing would happen if there was not sufficient demand.

9.4 The Papa Stour Internet Connection

At the invitation of the Chair, J Puckey provided a verbal report on the effectiveness of the recently installed satellite connection for the people of Papa Stour. She stated that for the most part it was satisfactory. However, it trips out if there is a power cut and a resident has to reset it. She went on to say that the SIC guest facility has been disconnected and needs to be connected again.

9.5 Mobile Phone Coverage

A brief discussion took place regarding mobile phone coverage in rural Shetland and the consensus view was that is, at best, patchy.

10. Future of Health Service Provision at Walls Health Centre

The Clerk indicated he has not yet been informed of a possible date for a public meeting involving users of the Walls Health Centre and members of the Shetland Health Service regarding the future of the Walls Health Centre. Following a discussion regarding GP coverage for the Westside of Shetland, the Clerk was asked to email Mr Chittick to find out when the proposed public meeting can take place.

Action: The Clerk to email Mr Chittick to find out when the proposed public meeting can take place.

11. Shetland Community Benefit Fund

11.1 Annual Statement

The Annual Statement was discussed, and it was noted that over £5k was being carried forward and that the sum of £10k was being added for the year ending September 2024. It is uncertain how much will be provided in future years when the turbines go live. It was proposed that Mr J MacBeath be invited to attend a future meeting to update the members. S Johnston indicated that he was about to make an application on behalf of Sandness Primary School.

Action: The Clerk to email Mr MacBeath to find out when he is next available to attend a Community Council meeting.

11.2 Grant Application – 180444

After a brief discussion the application for £200 for the Shetland Ladies Netball Association was approved.

Action: The Clerk to complete the response form in relation to this grant application.

11.3 Grant Application – 180449

A decision on a grant application from SNAP for £1700 from the Sandness and Walls Community Council was deferred pending more information especially in relation to reasons why only two Community Councils are being asked to contribute. Members wished to know how many intended beneficiaries of the grant live in the Sandness and Walls area.

Action: The Clerk to request further clarification as to why only two Community Councils are being asked to contribute to the grant application and how many beneficiaries reside in the Sandness and Walls area.

12. Review of Community Councils

The Chair provided a brief verbal report on the progress of the review to date. He began by stating that the timescale for the review is too short and it has been decided to extend it by a further year. Consequently, the life of current Community Council's is to be extended by a year meaning that elections will not now take place until November 2025. Members may stand down at the end of their two years in office as was originally planned if they so wish. Should any elected members wish to do this, associate members may be co-opted. Cllr Peterson emphasised the point that the Council wishes to see more powers and funding be devolved to Community Councils in the future and that things should be better for Community Councils. In response to a question regarding when the review will be open to public consultation, Cllr Peterson stated she was uncertain, but it would be happening sometime soon.

13. Facebook Page for S&WCC

E Johnston gave a brief verbal report on the level of public interest being shown in the Facebook page. Suggestions were made as to what additional information could be included and it was agreed that it will be possible to include draft Community Council minutes after they have been checked by the Chair and Vice Chair.

14. Financial Update

14.1 Spreadsheet

Members acknowledged receipt of the most recent spreadsheet.

14.2 Enquiry about a Community Council Grant by the RVS

(M Forrest declared an interest.)

The Clerk stated that he had received an email from a potential grant applicant. He explained that he had sent out a grant application form but it has yet to be completed and returned.

14.3 Wreaths for War Memorials

The Clerk stated that in recent years the Community Council had paid for poppy wreaths for War Memorials at Foula, Sandness, Walls, West Burrafirth and Gruting. After a brief discussion it was agreed that the Clerk should contact people in those communities and purchase the requisite wreaths.

Action: The Clerk to email/phone people in the above communities and order the required poppy wreaths.

15. Correspondence (Including Emails)

The Clerk referred to a letter he had received from the Planning Department regarding a review meeting relating to the planning application regarding to the Papa Stour Church. J Puckey stated that one of the objections to the original plans has been addressed in that darked harling has been applied to the building. After some discussion concerning the review meeting, J Puckey was asked to attend this meeting which is scheduled for Wednesday 25th October.

Action: J Puckey to attend the planning review meeting on Wednesday 25th October.

16. AOCB

16.1 Request for Lifebuoy for Bousta Beach at Sandness

A request was made for a lifebuoy to be located at the Bousta Beach in Sandness in view of the fact that it is a popular venue for wild swimming. Members felt that this was not viable given that a large number of other places also host wild swimmers.

16.2 SSEN Funding

Members were alerted to a recent email regarding funding from the Scottish and Southern Electricity Network

16.3 Proposed Communications Mast at the Black Wart in Walls

Given that there has been no recent communications regarding this proposal, the Clerk was asked to contact the company concerned to enquire as to its progress.

Action: The Clerk to email the company concerned with the above project to request a progress report.

16.4 Street Lighting at Bus Stop in Walls

Members were informed that concerns have been expressed regarding the lack of lighting for passengers using the Walls bus service in hours of darkness. It was pointed out that someone had suffered an accident there in recent years. It was also noted that a solar powered light unit had been installed at the site, but it was not working.

Action: The Clerk to email Zettrans to request that the light be repaired/replaced.

17. Date of Next Meeting

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance.

The date of the next meeting was set for Tuesday 3rd October at 7 pm.

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm.

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