

GULBERWICK, QUARFF & CUNNINGSBURGH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 3rd OCTOBER 2023 AT CUNNINGSBURGH SCHOOL AT 7.30PM

A. THE CIRCULAR CALLING THE MEETING HELD WAS READ.

B. PRESENT	Mrs M Davis	Miss E Copland (online via Zoom)	Mr C Clark
EX OFFICIO	Cllr R McGregor	Cllr B Peterson	
IN ATTENDANCE	Mrs K Geddes	Mrs A Arnett	PC John Williamson PC Janae Wait
CHAIRPERSON	Mr G Murray		
APOLOGIES	Mr E MacPherson	Mrs P Christie	
NOT PRESENT	Cllr A Armitage Mr M Duncan	Cllr A Duncan	Mr P Coleman

C. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Mrs M Davis declared an interest in the several of the grants in Agenda Item 4 – she has grandchildren who attend the Gulberwick and Cunningsburgh toddler groups and who may attend the Gulberwick Christmas Party.

Mrs K Geddes declared an interest in Agenda Item 4 – Grant Applications. Her children are likely to attend the Gulberwick Christmas Party.

Mr G Murray declared an interest in one of the planning applications in Agenda Item 11 – Planning. His neighbours are the applicants for 2023/251/PPF.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 3RD OCTOBER 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 3rd October were approved on the motion of Mr G Murray and seconded by Mr C Clark.

2. POLICE REPORT*

This item was moved up the agenda to allow the police officers to leave and return to their other duties as soon as possible.

PC Williamson confirmed with everyone attending that they had already seen the Police Report for August and September. He briefly recapped it, confirming that there have been three incidents in the Community Council area over the period of the report:

Road Safety and Road Crime

- Careless Driving
- Road Traffic Collision with Minor or No Injury

Acquisitive Crime

- Fraud

The officers just had enough time to ask if there were any questions or concerns that they could help with before they were called away to an incident. Those present had nothing they wanted to ask and were reminded they could contact officers in the usual way if anything came up in the future.

----- PC Williamson and PC Wait left 19.35 -----

1. **MATTERS ARISING**

1. Active Travel Update

Members had asked for an update on Active Travel and on whether there had been any missed funding opportunities due to the perceived lack of progress being made. An email from SIC/ZetTrans Transport Policy and Projects Officer Robina Barton was received on 25th September. Mr Clark was tasked with sharing this with members which he has done.

Cllr McGregor had passed members' concerns on to Michael Craigie SIC Executive Manager, Transport Planning, and Moraig Lyall SIC Environment and Transport Chair. He is continuing to liaise between officials and though there is no update at present, he will report back when there is anything new.

ACTION: Cllr McGregor to report back at the next meeting with an update.

2. Broadband Switchover and Emergency Planning Update

Shetland Telecom (SIC) Project Manager Marvin Smith, visited the August meeting to speak about the plan to switchover from landline telephones to fibre broadband by the end of 2025, but earlier for some. There are a lot of technologies and systems which rely on the landline telephone network to operate and there does not seem to be a plan in place to ensure these systems are still in place. There are also worries about what could happen in the event of prolonged power cuts as broadband is reliant on power and this could leave Shetlanders completely cut off. Government info here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-transition-from-analogue-to-digital-landlines>

A letter has been sent to all involved parties by the ASCC expressing concern and asking what plans were being put in place. The last time the clerk had checked there had not been a reply so she will check again with an update for the January meeting.

There is funding being put together to support connections in places such as Shetland, perhaps allowing some houses to club their vouchers together for a community solution, but Mr Smith advised earlier this week that the details have still not been announced. The clerk is to check again before the January meeting.

Some members attended the recent Shetland Digital Forum, organised by Alistair Carmichael and Beatrice Wishart where the issue made up the bulk of the agenda. The Openreach representative was quite candid and he admitted that there was no published timetable and that it could happen at any point. You may get a letter or text and the switchover will happen in your home and some of your electronic devices will work and some won't.

Openreach had said that for emergencies they were looking at providing back up phones for an hour or perhaps others for 4-5 hours, but everyone present at the forum expressed concern that this wasn't adequate – especially after some homes have been without power for almost a week in previous emergency situations. Even using mobile phones as a back-up was problematic as the masts also need to have generators to back-up power loss and it is unclear which masts have generators and how long they can last for.

It was decided to write a letter to SIC Chief Executive Maggie Sandison expressing the Community Council's concerns. It will emphasise that they believe the switchover should not happen until measures are in place to mitigate against any negative consequences. Members

will also monitor the situation and provide support where they can. It is hoped individual Community Councils may be in a position to help their own communities through the switchover process and any resulting issues from it.

ACTION: Clerk to contact Mr Smith for an update on funding. Clerk to contact Community Council Liaison Officer Michael Duncan to ask whether a reply to the letter had come in yet and to check whether it would be on a future ASCC agenda. Clerk to draft a letter to Maggie Sandison for the chair and vice chair to check over prior to sending.

3. Enviroglass Update

Complaints have been received about the poor state of the grounds around the former Enviroglass building in Cunningsburgh, specifically about the broken glass being dangerous and the mess that it look to be in. People have reported punctured bike tyres and injuries to dog paws. Cllr McGregor has passed it on to SIC Environmental Health who have confirmed they are investigating.

ACTION: Cllr McGregor to report back from Environmental Health when he finds out anything.

3. FINANCE

The bank statement on November 15th reads £12,897.30

The only transaction outwith the usual in the account since the last meeting is the £35 payment to the Information Commission. From next month the Microsoft Monthly Subscription goes up by £1.08.

Out of the original budget of £12,923 (£3,000 of which is Community Development Fund and the remaining £9,923 is Core Budget) £4,313.23 has been spent and £8,609.77 remains.

Of this, a projected spend of £3,097.04 has been budgeted for administration, leaving approximately £5,000 for grants to groups. In addition, approximately £500 is being kept in surplus but can be used at members' discretion.

4. GRANT APPLICATIONS

GOC CC Applications

There were four grant applications for members to consider. Members decided to award full amounts requested to all:

Cunningsburgh Under 5s Christmas Party - £100
Gulberwick Toddlers Christmas Party - £100
Royal Voluntary Service Cunningsburgh Club Trip - £460
Gulberwick Community Christmas Party - £150

This totals £810 and leaves approximately £4,190 to spend on grants.

Members are encouraged to spread the word that more grant applications are welcomed at the February meeting and that grant forms can be downloaded from here:

<https://www.shetland.gov.uk/downloads/download/174/community-council-documents>

Remembrance Day Wreaths

Members also discussed how they could support the church with the purchase of Remembrance Day Wreaths. This year they missed the grant and declined to provide all the necessary documents to allow the clerk to present the grant retrospectively to members. There was discussion about how the grant application can seem to be cumbersome to groups who are only applying for small sums of money.

Members were keen to support as they have previous years. As the wreaths have already been purchased it was proposed that the Community Council will award the funds to the group without the need to apply for a grant. When the clerk receives the receipts or invoices she will transfer the money. The clerk will double check with SIC Grants Officer Michael Duncan whether this can happen as a one off. Next year we will look at the possibility of purchasing the wreaths ourselves, as at least one other Community Council does, then handing them over to the church. Mr Clark proposed, and Mrs Davis seconded.

Miss Copland suggested that it would be good to purchase the wreaths from local suppliers to try to support Shetland businesses.

SCBF Applications

A grant for £400 was agreed to the Shetland Ladies Netball Association to go towards costs for a trip. It was agreed by members via email as the trip was to be before this meeting and grants can not be awarded retrospectively. The clerk has filled out the appropriate paperwork and passed it back to the SCBF already.

ACTION: Everyone to continue to share the word that grant applications will be accepted for the February meeting. Clerk to inform successful applicants and transfer money. Clerk to contact Mr Duncan to find out if a one-off payment for wreaths can be made and if the proposed plans for next year can also happen. If given the go-ahead and on receipt of invoices, she will transfer the money.

5. ROADS

1. Complaints of Speeding and Poor Driving in Gulberwick

A Gulberwick resident had approached the clerk with concerns about speeding through the lower road in Gulberwick. He was also concerned that drivers seem to be unaware of the need to give way to traffic coming up the hill, especially on Stunken Brae. A lorry driver had not stopped to allow his car up the hill and had ended up ripping the side of his car off as he attempted to squeeze past the car.

Councillor McGregor passed the information on to SIC Team Leader - Road Asset and Network Management, Neil Hutcheson. He responded quickly, saying that they would inspect the Gulberwick loop road to check the speed limit signage:

“There may be missing or faded signs that need to be replaced or perhaps there are additional road markings or signage that would reinforce the message to drivers that they should reduce their speed. We will also raise this concern at the next meeting of the Road Safety Advisory Panel.

“The Stunken Brae would benefit from an additional passing place on the outside of the bend at the midpoint of the brae, opposite Cairns dwellinghouse. However, this does not fit with the works that could be done with our capital “Accident Prevention” budget. That would leave the business case process and the Asset Investment Plan as the only funding source. Unfortunately, as you are aware, this is already oversubscribed and it is difficult to see how a passing place would displace projects already on the unfunded list.

“The lack of visibility down the Stunken Brae is an issue but this incident does sound like driver error. The two existing passing places have signs and the two-lane section at the top of the brae has a centre line. However, we will put a “keep left” lane arrow at the top of the brae, just before the centreline, which may help to keep drivers on the inside of the bend as they approach the top of the hill.”

ACTION: Cllr McGregor to report back at the next meeting is there is any update.

2. Relocation of 50mph Speed Limit in Cunningsburgh

Mr Hutcheson also replied to Cllr McGregor's email about extending the 50mph limit in Cunningsburgh, following requests from both members of the public as well as Community Council members. His email stated:

"The extension of the 50 mph speed limit beyond its current extents would not meet the current guidance. The Cunningsburgh Hall, being a busy public building, was included within the reduced limit but there is a gap in the density of development to the north of North Bridge. Therefore, if it weren't for the hall the 50 mph limit would have been approximately 100 metres north of the junction of the Gord road with the A970.

"For you information two "slight" injury accidents have been recorded at the north Cunningsburgh junction in the past 20 years. The first involved three vehicles and appears to be due to a vehicle turning into or emerging from the junction. The second was a single vehicle accident so most likely due to loss of control on the bend.

"Perhaps a better solution to a reduced speed limit would be more specific information for drivers. The farm shop premises did not have signage to alert drivers on the A970 of its location. A tourist type sign with distance plate would have informed customers visiting the shop as to when they should reduce their speed before making their turn. It would also alert other drivers to the possibility of slowing and turning vehicles in the road ahead. These signs would be paired with a direction sign directly opposite the shop's junction so that the exact tuning point was made clear. It would normally be the responsibility of the developer to provide this type of signage. However, I see no mention of it in the planning conditions so will make enquiries as to why that is the case.

"I will also arrange for "pedestrians in road ahead" warning signs to be placed on either side of the north Cunningsburgh junction. This will alert drivers to the bus stop and the possibility that pedestrians will be crossing the A970 at the junction."

ACTION: Cllr McGregor to keep members updated with progress by the Roads department.

3. Shurton Brae Footpath

A Gulberwick resident has been in contact asking for handrails and upgrading of the Shurton Brae path down to the main road bus stops. Cllr McGregor was again able to follow this up with Mr Hutcheson at Roads who replied promptly as follows:

"This path is not on the list of public roads but we have done work to it in the past to improve access to the bus stops. Given the steep gradient we wouldn't consider bitmac surfacing for this path due to the potential consequences in the winter months. We would consider the installation of a handrail but this year's budget for this type of work is fully allocated. There may be a possibility of active travel funding through the Cycling, Walking and Safer Routes grant but I will need to discuss this with Transport Scotland."

Cllr McGregor praised Mr Hutcheson for his first-class service and prompt replies and everyone present agreed that they were grateful and appreciated his willingness to help in such a timely manner.

ACTION: Cllr McGregor to keep everyone updated on any progress made by Roads. Clerk to email Mr Hutcheson thanks for his continued support of the Community Council and elected SIC members.

6. **GULBERWICK, QUARFF & CUNNINGSBURGH DEVELOPMENT GROUP UPDATE**

The group has met recently and taken the decision to hold off formalising the group further, instead choosing to focus on moving forward with some projects to try to get some good done for the community and build up some momentum which could lead towards the formation of a group.

Some of the projects considered are:

- Support local halls with solar power or the purchase of generators
- Purchase LED bulbs for households in the community
- Benches
- Orca shaped bins to be located at beaches
- Support local builders/tradespeople to achieve accreditation for carrying out work locally to make houses more energy efficient
- Support the roll-out of parenting programmes such as Incredible Years and Triple P Teens within the community
- Car sharing projects
- Electric vehicle charging stations at local halls or similar locations

Various group members have been tasked to investigate different projects and how to progress them so will share updates as and when appropriate.

The Development Group in Yell have responded positively to a visit to share good practice. Mr Clark is communicating with them and will keep everyone up to date.

ACTION: Mr Clark keep everyone updated about a visit to Yell. Group members to look at progressing projects and keep everyone updated.

8. SHETLAND COMMUNITY COUNCIL SCHEME REVIEW

Members discussed the review documents and answered the questions posed. This phase of the consultation is focusing on the composition of the Community Councils and what communities sit within each ward. The main points agreed were:

- They felt it was inappropriate to comment on options relating to other communities or to communities we did not border ie. the outer isles.
- The current composition was the one most favoured.
- Any option which increased the size of the wards were the least favoured options. Local knowledge was felt to be key to the strength of the Community Councils.

The clerk is to fill out the online survey, including the views of Mr MacPherson who submitted his thoughts previously due to not being able to attend tonight.

Members were reminded about the Drop-In Meeting on Tuesday 28th November, 5.00pm to 8.00pm at Cunningsburgh Hall. Mrs Arnett explained that the event is a drop-in one with the opportunity to browse the documents and ask questions or give comment in an informal manner, but also that there is a presentation and meeting between 6.30 and 7.30pm to share information and discuss the locality profiles. This is data and evidence pulled together about the demographics of each area – unemployment figures, house prices etc.

ACTION: Clerk to fill out online survey. Any member who wishes to fill out the survey as an individual is encouraged to do so. The documents can be found at: <https://www.shetland.gov.uk/ccschemereview> Members to attend the Drop-In meeting if they can do so.

9. UPDATES FROM SIC COUNCILLORS

Cllr Peterson gave an update on the bigger issues affecting the SIC, explaining that they are about to go into the budget setting for the next financial year and it has become increasingly obvious that if things do not change then the local authority face bankruptcy. There will need to be some service redesign, mainly because of the 'vacancy factor'.

He explained that there are simply not enough people for the number of jobs in Shetland. We have been trying to run the same service but with much less people and it just can't be

done, we will need to look at actual service redesign not just cuts to budget which is what service redesign has meant in the past. There are 1.2 jobs for every person in Shetland.

Other challenges include the aging population, lots of people due to retire at the same time without an equal number of younger people coming up the ranks, (this trend is seen nationwide but seems to be worse in rural areas) and the lack of housing which is down to a variety of reasons. The cost-of-living crisis and the climate emergency are also part of the mix. There is a genuine concern from officers about how we are going to be able to carry on.

Cllr McGregor has given updates on several issues in other agenda items and supported what Cllr Peterson had reported. He also explained that the National Planning Framework 4 is being implemented at the moment. He was at a meeting with the minister in Edinburgh last week and said that the new framework is very heavily oriented towards the environment so he hopes that it will lead to improvements for all in the future. He also explained that there will be more emphasis on local people and local authorities generating the local plans.

There were no updates available from other SIC Councillors.

10. CORRESPONDENCE

1. Invite to Women's Aid Event

Members have been invited by Shetland Women's Aid to an information and networking event on Wednesday 29th November between 2 and 4pm in Room 16 of Islesburgh Community Centre. It is to mark 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence and is suitable for anyone with an interest in the work they do, and anyone responsible for supporting people in our community.

Following a presentation there will be a chance to chat with the staff and volunteer team and other organisations present and informally explore new ways of working together to prevent gender-based violence. There will be an opportunity to ask any questions, including how to refer someone you are working with to our service. Refreshments will be provided.

The event is free to attend. To book a place, or for more information, please email ashlea@shetlandwa.org.

ACTION: Anyone interested in attending to email the contact details provided.

2. Digital Forum Invite

This event has already taken place and was discussed in Agenda Item 1.2

11. ASSOCIATION OF SHETLAND COMMUNITY COUNCILS MEETING

The next meeting of the ASCC is due to take place on Thursday 7th December, 6-8pm in the Town Hall. Both Mr Murray and Mr MacPherson have indicated they would like to attend. The issue of the Lerwick Lanes Masterplan has been accepted on to the agenda so a GQC Community Council member may be asked to introduce it.

ACTION: Clerk to let Michael Duncan know who is attending and to email the papers to Mr Murray and Mr MacPherson.

12. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Cllr McGregor left the room during the discussion on this agenda item.

DRAFT MINUTES – Subject to approval at the November 2023 meeting

There were no planning applications to consider, but several on the planning website in the Community Council area which members were not required to comment on:

[2023/251/PPF](#) New deck area and walled enclosure, Langspiel, Quarff, ZE2 9EY

[2023/316/DCON3](#) & [DCON1](#) Applications re Surface Water Drainage & Biodiversity Enhancement, Plot 6, Cunningsburgh

[2023/232/PPF](#) Erect General Purpose Building, Mail, Ayre, South Voxter, Cunningsburgh, ZE2 9HF

[2023/266/S37SIM](#) Retrospective consent for 11kV overhead supported by wooden poles, Greenmow, Cunningsburgh

[2023/224/DCON1](#) Application for consent, agreement or approval by planning Condition 11 (Biodiversity scheme), Plot 8, Aisterlea, Cunningsburgh, Shetland

13. AOCB

1. Dental Services in Shetland

Mrs Davis asked if we could draft a letter to NHS Shetland to complain about how appalling the dental services in Shetland are. Members agreed.

ACTION: Clerk to draft a letter, sending it to Mrs Davis to agree and edit.

2. Dog Poo Bins

The dog poo bins bought by the Community Council have now been in place for several months and members discussed whether they had made any difference. Those who walked their own dogs felt that the situation had not really improved, explaining that they very often had to pick up other people's dog poo.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is on Tuesday 9th January 2024.

Meeting Ends – 9.15 pm.

CHAIR

14. OUTSTANDING ITEMS

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