

# **Sandness & Walls Community Council**

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Minutes of a hybrid meeting of Sandness & Walls Community Council held at the Walls Public Hall on Tuesday 3rd October 2023 at 7.00pm

Present:

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

## **1. Chairman's Welcome**

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

## **2. Apologies**

J Haswell, C Venus, R Fraser and M Macgregor

In attendance: D Forrest (Clerk), J MacBeath (Director, Shetland Community Benefit Fund)

## **3. Declarations of Interest**

M Forrest re: Item 16 Community Council Grant Application from RVS.

## **4. Police Report**

No report was available for this meeting.

## 5. Minutes from 5.9.23

The following amendments were proposed:

*Re: 9.4 – The Papa Stour Internet Connection, the final sentence should read, 'She went on to say that the SIC guest facility **at the school** has been disconnected and needs to be connected again.'*

*Re: 12 – Review of Community Councils, the sixth sentence should read, 'Cllr Peterson emphasised the point that **the majority of elected Council members** wish to see more powers and funding be devolved to Community Councils in the future and that things should be better for Community Councils.'*

*Re: 2 Apologies, omit S Johnston from list and leave **S Johnston for part of the meeting.***

The adoption of the minutes of 5<sup>th</sup> September 2023 with the above amendments was proposed by M Forrest and seconded by E Johnston.

## 6. Matters Arising

### ***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. The Clerk informed the members that there had been a delay in the production of the signs by Art Machine and that now H Wishart has received them. He hopes to have them erected in the next week or so. The Clerk also stated that H Wishart has been in contact with a householder at the Dale of Walls who will advise him as to the most suitable location for the No Parking sign.

### ***Re: 14.3 of 9/23 Wreaths for War Memorials***

The Clerk stated that he had ordered the poppy wreaths as requested by community representatives and that they have been dispatched. The Chair indicated that when the West Burrafirth Chapel was being painted the poppy wreath was removed and has not been replaced. He requested a replacement.

**Action: The Clerk to order a small size poppy wreath for the West Burrafirth Chapel.**

***Re: 7.2 of 6/23 Council Owned Land Adjacent to Kirkidale, Walls***

The Clerk informed the Members that the large metal objects and the derelict sailing boat have been removed from the Council owned land adjacent to the Kirkidale housing estate. However, a small agricultural Polaris vehicle appears to have been abandoned because its cab is full of fleeces.

**Action: The Clerk to inform the Environmental Health Department about this vehicle.**

***Re: 9 of 9/23 Gigabit Project for NW Walls and Dale***

The Clerk informed the Members that he had received an invoice for the cost of printing posters and flyers advertising a public meeting in relation to a Westside Digital Connectivity Project. Whilst there was consensus regarding the desirability of improved connectivity, Members were of the opinion that they should be better informed by experts in the field of fibre optic cables and the future plans of Openreach, for example, before reaching any conclusions regarding the feasibility of the kind of project being proposed. The point was made that the way in which the invoice had been generated was not in line with Community Council regulations and could not be paid by the Community Council.

**Action: The Clerk to inform the party responsible for creating the posters and flyers of this decision.**

## **7. Housing**

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

Cllr Peterson stated that the land settlement is still scheduled for completion later this month and that it is hoped work on site should commence shortly thereafter although a definite start date has yet to be provided. A contractor is ready to carry out the work.

## **8. Roads**

***Re: 8.2 of 5/22 Parking at Stove Cottages, Walls***

The offer of additional parking spaces for the residents of Stove Cottages by Mr R Pegg was discussed. Given that the previous Head of the Roads Department had been in post when negotiations took place, it was decided to bring the matter up with the current

post holder. It was noted that in the past few months engineers had been seen making measurements in the drying green at Stove Cottages and there was some speculation as to whether or not this may be in connection with possible additional parking or work by telecom engineers.

**Action: The Clerk to raise the matter of additional parking at Stove Cottages with Mr N Hutcheson.**

### **8.1 Disabled Parking at Stove Cottages, Walls**

M Forrest delivered a brief verbal report on the subject of disabled parking at Stove Cottages. She indicated that the proposal by the SIC Roads Department to remove one of the two disabled parking bays had been revoked given that there are currently two blue badge holders in residence.

### **8.2 Misinformation on Brown Road Sign in Sandness**

S Johnston described how the brown sign at the Norby Beach in Sandness says Melby Beach. Discussion followed as to which body is responsible for brown signs. It was also noted that a brown sign close to the Bridge-of-Walls contains out of date information.

**Action: The Clerk to find out who is responsible for brown signs and to request they be amended where necessary.**

### **8.3 Soft Verges on Newly Surfaced stretch of A971**

Members were informed that an email had been received from a member of the public expressing their concern regarding how soft the newly laid verges are along the recently resurfaced stretch of the A 971. They pointed out that when attempting to walk along the verge they sank into it. They expressed their concern that a vehicle going onto the verge might be caused to turn over. The Members recognised the problem and described the consequences of having such verges in other areas, but soft verging was SIC Roads policy in most rural areas. The Clerk was asked to express the Members views on these verges and request that appropriate warning signs be erected. Members were notified that some additional resurfacing work still needs to be carried out near the entrance to the Pinhoulland road where a cattle grid used to be located.

**Action: The Clerk to email the Roads Department to express the Members concerns about the soft verges and to request appropriate warning signs.**

## **9. Financial Harm – Scams**

Cllr Peterson provided a verbal report regarding the rise in telephone and internet scams throughout Shetland. She informed Members that it was possible for trained professionals to visit appropriate groups in the community to offer advice on how to avoid being harmed by scammers. It was suggested that the Clerk contact the leaders involved in Tea Coffee and Company and the RVS to see if they would welcome a visit from one of these professionals.

**Action: The Clerk to contact the leaders of Tea, Coffee and Company and the local branch of the RVS to find out if they would like advice from a professional about how to avoid scams.**

## **10. Employability Pathways Roadshow**

Emails from Kerry Geddes re. the Employability Pathways Roadshow were read to the Members. It is intend to hold a roadshow at the Sandness Hall in the near future. After some discussion as to the nature of the proposed roadshow it was agreed that the Clerk will forward the emails to S Johnston for him to advertise and respond as appropriate It was also agreed to advertise the roadshow on the Community Council's Facebook page.

**Action: The Clerk to forward the emails pertaining to the roadshow to S Johnston.**

## **11. Future of Health Service Provision at Walls Health Centre**

Members acknowledged receipt of an email from Mr B Chittick regarding a public meeting to be addressed by healthcare professionals. However, Mr Chittick was unable to suggest a date for such a meeting. After a brief discussion it was decided that the Clerk email Ms Jo Robinson in an attempt to arrange a meeting.

**Action: The Clerk to email Ms Jo Robinson to find out if a date can be set for a public meeting to discuss the future of health service provision at the Walls Health Centre.**

## **12. Shetland Community Benefit Fund**

### ***Re: 11.3 of 9/23 Grant Application – 180449***

Members discussed in detail the response they had received from E Gear regarding the grant application from SNAP. Given the

information about the numbers of participants, it was felt that given only approximately 10% of the beneficiaries of the grant were, or had previously been, resident in the Sandness and Walls area, only 10% of the total sum requested should be offered. This would amount to £370.

**Action: The Clerk to email E Gear stating the Members' decision.**

### **12.1 SCBF Local Director's Report**

At the invitation of the Chair, J MacBeath, Director of Shetland Community Benefit Fund representing Sandness and Walls Community Council, provided a verbal report on the current situation and what is planned following Viking Energy going live. He made the following points: -

- The Advanced Grant Scheme (AGS) will cease to operate in September 2023 provided that the system is up and running by then. If it does not meet this target, the AGS will continue to operate until such time that it does.
- If the windfarm is generating electricity by September 2024, £2.5 million will be provided to Shetland to be shared between the voluntary and commercial sectors.
- Of this, between £7k and £8k will represent one share of the Community Council grant.
- A sum will be allocated to Shetland wide applications thus removing the pressures on Community Council Members to decide how to address such bids.
- Reference was made to the public consultation exercise carried out by SCBF which generated 1342 responses.
- If changes are made to Community Council boundaries this will impact on how SCBF funding is allocated.

### **12.2 Decision Making**

The Chair stated that he had been informed by the SIC Legal Department that it was no longer possible for decisions such as the approval of an AGS application to be made via email and that all such decisions have to be made by Members at scheduled meetings. He indicated that he felt this could delay decisions by as much as two months, depending when an application arrived. After some discussion, it was suggested that this matter could be raised during the current Review of Community Councils.

### **13. Review of Community Councils**

#### **13.1 Phase 1 – Possible Community Council Boundary Changes**

The Chair stated that Phase 1 of the review was underway and that this concerned possible boundary changes to Community Council Wards. Several options had been submitted including bringing the Community Council Wards into line with Council Wards whilst others included a proposal to link all the small remote islands into one ward. J Puckey spoke strongly against such a proposal basing her argument on her experiences on Papa Stour. She listed several ways in which historic links existed between Papa Stour and Sandness, West Burrafirth, Walls and Bixter and the huge amount of support that the Island had received from S&WCC over many years.

#### **13.2 Public Consultation**

Members were advised that the public consultation on Phase 1 would commence shortly and would be well publicised. Concerns were expressed that this consultation may not receive many responses given that some Community Councils have had difficulty recruiting members. It was noted that the final question in the survey asks respondents to say how things could be done better. Members were asked to try to elicit as much interest as possible in the consultation exercise. It was suggested to put a link to the survey on the Community Council's fb page.

**Action: E Johnston to place a link to the survey on the Community Council fb page.**

### **14. Facebook Page for S&WCC**

E Johnston gave a brief verbal report on the level of public interest being shown in the Facebook page. Members expressed their gratitude for the work being done to inform the public about the work of the Community Council.

### **15. Financial Update**

The Clerk indicated that there had been no income or expenditure since the last meeting.

## **16. Community Council Grant Application from RVS**

(M Forrest declared an interest in this item because she is a regular attendee at RVS meetings)

After a brief discussion about the application for £320 for a Shetland wide Christmas Lunch and activities in Lerwick for RVS attendees, the application was approved.

**Action: The Clerk to make a payment of £320 to the RVS.**

## **17. Correspondence (Including Emails)**

No correspondence has been received in addition to that which had been circulated via email.

## **18. AOCB**

### ***Re: 16.3 of 9/23 Proposed O2 Communications Mast at the Black Wart in Walls***

The Chair acknowledged receipt of an email from Cameron Poole indicating that the project had planning approval and that after agreement has been reached with the landowner, it is hoped to commence work on site before the onset of winter.

#### **18.1 Email from Hazel Sutherland re: Voe House, Walls.**

Receipt of an email from the Hazel Sutherland stating that private interest has been shown in the Amenity Trust's Voe House in Walls. The Members have been asked for comments on any possible Community group's interest in the building. With no comments or Community interest known to Members being proposed, the Clerk was asked to email Ms Sutherland to that effect.

**Action: The Clerk to email Hazel Sutherland to indicate that no comments have been made by the Members regarding the proposed sale of Voe House to a private party.**

### ***Re:14.1 of 8/22 Defibrillator for West Burrafirth Pier***

Cllr Peterson informed Members that the defibrillator that is being provided by Cooke Aquaculture for the West Burrafirth Pier is now in Shetland. Members expressed the hope that it will soon be installed in the ferry waiting room on the pier.



**19. Date of Next Meeting**

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance.

The date of the next meeting was set for Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November at 7 pm.

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm.