

Sandness & Walls Community Council

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Minutes of Hybrid meeting of the Sandness and Walls Community Council
held on Tuesday 5th March 2024 at 7 pm

Present:

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

In attendance: D Forrest (Clerk), Sgt Alexander Barry, PC Carole Smith

1. Chairman's Welcome

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

2. Apologies

M Duncan, F MacBeath (Vice Chair), R Fraser, S Johnston, J Haswell

3. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interests were made at this time.

4. Police Report

4.1 Sandness Incident

The Chair welcomed the two police officers. He began by expressing the sadness felt by the Members regarding the recent tragic incident in Sandness. PC Smith expressed her gratitude to the Sandness Community for their support during what has been a difficult time. She went on to speak about how a subsequent training exercise by the search and rescue helicopter had caused concern in Sandness and stated that she has asked the flight operators to avoid flying over Sandness unless absolutely necessary for some time to come. The consensus view is that life in Sandness is returning to normal. Constable Smith concluded by stating that it is their intention to carry out school visits in an attempt to normalise their presence in the area.

(J Puckey joined the meeting)

4.2 Ordinance Disposal in Walls

Brief mention was made of the recent disposal of an ordinance device in Walls. The police expressed their gratitude to the Walls Hall Committee for allowing them to make use of the Hall during this event.

4.3 Speeding Trucks

Concerns were raised regarding heavy goods vehicles travelling at excessive speeds along single-track roads especially in West Burrafirth. PC Smith indicated that she would take this matter up with the haulage company concerned. She went on to say that it is possible to leave messages relating to issues of concern on the Police Scotland webpage.

The Chair thanked the Police Officers for their attendance and input.

(Sgt Barry and PC Smith left the meeting.)

5. Minutes from 6.2.24

The adoption of the minutes of 6th February 2024 was proposed by C Venus and seconded by M Forrest.

6. Matters Arising

Re: 12.1 of 11/22 CDF Grant application from the Walls Swimming Pool Association

Members were informed that the Walls Swimming Pool Association is carrying out a survey of users to ascertain the potential level of usage that would be made of the pool were it to reopen in order to support a grant application. It was noted that the online survey had reached capacity but that paper copies are available at the Walls Shop. There was a general consensus that the reopening of the pool would be welcomed by those living in the area and beyond.

(M Macgregor left the meeting.)

Re: 21.1 of 2/24 Current Process whereby a Community Council Vacancy can be filled

The Chair indicated that following a telephone conversation with a Foula resident, the Clerk had established that Jim's grandson, Robert Smith is willing to be co-opted onto the Community Council. There being unanimous approval of this proposal, the Clerk was asked to invite Mr Smith to the April meeting in order to formalise his co-option.

Action: The Clerk to contact Mr Robert Smith and invite him to attend the April meeting of the Sandness and Walls Community Council.

Re: 21.2 of 2/24 21.2 SSE Grant Update

The Clerk stated that he had received emails to the effect that the work of installing the changeover switch at Sandness Hall should have been carried out during the weekend of 24th/25th February. No date has been set for the work at the Walls Hall.

7. Housing

Reference was made to an email that has been received from Connor Regan, (Development Officer, Hjaltland Housing Association) regarding a name for the housing development in Central Walls. Two possible names were discussed, Foratoon and Foralea. Members expressed no clear preference and the Clerk was asked to indicate this to Mr Regan.

Action: The Clerk to email Mr Regan stating that the Members would accept either Foratoon or Foralea.

8. Roads

Cllr Peterson stated that the business case for the improvements to the A971 from the Murrister Quarry to Da Punds is scheduled to go before the Shetland Islands Council Policy and Resources Committee on 21st March. She hopes to be able to promote the case and has asked Members to provide Mr Neil Hutcheson (Roads Department Director) with any appropriate information relating to that stretch of road prior to the meeting. Reference was made to the current Bridge of Walls regarding volume of traffic and the weights of vehicles crossing it.

9. West Mainland Digital Community Project

M Macgregor had stated that no updates were available on this matter at present.

10. Future of Health Service Provision at the Walls Health Centre.

Issues that had been raised during a recent meeting between NHS Shetland personnel and Members of the Sandness and Walls Community Council were discussed. It was acknowledged that the detailed plans for the future of Health Provision on the Westside of Shetland have not yet been finalised but that this work is very close to completion. It is intended that these plans will be published within the next few months.

11. Shetland Community Benefit Fund

Whilst no new applications have been received, it was proposed that a funding request from the Shetland Gymnastics Club for a Community Council Grant towards the purchase of new equipment be referred to the SCBF.

Action: The Clerk to suggest to The Shetland Gymnastics Club that they apply to the SCBF for funding.

12. Review of Community Councils

The Chair indicated that the public consultation on the second phase of the Review of Community Councils is due to commence in the near future.

13. ASCC Meeting 12th March 2024

F MacBeath agreed to attend the March meeting of the Association of Shetland Community Councils.

14. Facebook Page for S&WCC

E Johnston stated that he now has 112 followers and additional regular likes. A brief discussion took place regarding how to respond to journalists.

15. Financial Update

The Chair referred to the most recent spreadsheet and invited comments.

16. Correspondence (including emails)

No correspondence has been received other than by email.

17. AOCB

17.1 Graveyard Benches

The Chair referred to a recent email from Yvonne Scott (Burial Services Officer) which indicated that two wooden benches in the Walls graveyard have deteriorated to a stage that they are unsafe for further use and will be removed by graveyard personnel. She recommended they be replaced by recycled plastic benches. After some discussion it was agreed that the Clerk apply for a special project grant to cover the purchase and delivery costs of two benches for the Walls graveyard. It was noted that only graveyard personnel are permitted to take the benches onto the site and that a Burial Ground Bench Permit has to be completed.

**Action: 1. The Clerk to apply for a special project grant to purchase and transport two benches for the Walls graveyard.
2. If successful, the Clerk to complete a burial ground bench permit form.**

17.2 Electricity Supply for Papa Stour

J Puckey informed the members that the cable carrying electricity to Papa Stour has been broken. This appears to be due to the shallowness of the channel between Sandness and Papa Stour and the strength of the current. The cable has broken on several occasions since it was first installed in 1985. It is anticipated that a replacement cable will be installed by late summer. An alternative proposal has been made to lay a new cable in a deeper channel between West Burrafirth and Papa Stour. J Puckey requested the Community Council's support if there are any difficulties in acquiring a new cable.

17.3 Request for a Defibrillator for Dale of Walls

Members considered a request to install a defibrillator at the Dale of Walls. The Members recognised the advantages of having this equipment at various locations throughout Shetland and agreed in principle to the request. However, concerns were raised regarding the costs of future maintenance of such devices. Members were informed that currently, the cost of a replacement battery and a set of pads was in the order of £600 and that these items need to be replaced every five years. Members were concerned that such costs would not be sustainable by the Community Council at a time when their income had not changed in over 10 years. As a possible solution to this issue, it was suggested that the Shetland Community Benefit Fund be approached to see if they could meet these costs.

Action: The Clerk to email Jamie MacBeath copied to Chris Bunyan to request that the SCBF provide grant aid for a maintenance campaign for defibrillators in the area.

18. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was set for Tuesday 2nd April and will be a hybrid meeting.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm.

(Draft Minutes of the S&WCC March 2024 meeting subject to approval at next meeting)