

## **GULBERWICK, QUARFF & CUNNINGSBURGH COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2024 AT CUNNINGSBURGH SCHOOL AT 7.00PM**

**A. THE CIRCULAR CALLING THE MEETING HELD WAS READ.**

**B. PRESENT**                      Mrs M Davis                                      Mr E MacPherson                                      Mrs P Christie

**EX OFFICIO**

**IN ATTENDANCE**   Mrs K Geddes

**CHAIRPERSON**        Mr P Coleman

**APOLOGIES**                Mrs A Arnett                                      Mr M Duncan                                      Mr G Murray  
                                         Cllr R McGregor                                      Cllr B Peterson                                      Mr C Clark

**NOT PRESENT**        Cllr A Armitage                                      Cllr A Duncan                                      Miss E Copland

**C. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Mr Coleman, Mrs Geddes and Mrs Davis declared an interest in Item 4 – grant applications, as they all have family who may attend the Gulberwick Christmas Party.

Mrs Geddes declared an interest in the clerk’s wages item in AOCB.

**D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2024**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> October were approved on the motion of Mr E MacPherson and seconded by Mrs P Christie.

**1. MATTERS ARISING**

1. Shurton Brae Bins

The large bins at Shurton Brae have been secured with some wood to ensure the lids do not blow too far open. Members were very appreciative of the work done but unfortunately the wood has broken and needs fixed. There are also potholes in front of the bins which are making it difficult for residents to put their bruck in the bins.

**ACTION:** Clerk to email thanks but ask for the wood to be fixed and to see if there is any way the potholes can be filled too.

2. Mossy Hill Windfarm

The clerk had been instructed to contact the company building the windfarm to ask for more information on the latest changes to the plans but despite emailing twice, she has had no response.

**ACTION:** Clerk to email again, but copy the SIC Planning Department into the email to see if that elicits a response.

3. Benches

The location to site the community benches has still not been decided.

**ACTION:** Mrs Christie to speak to Cunningsburgh residents and Mrs Geddes to find out who owns the land in Gulberwick.

**2. POLICE REPORT**

No report available.

**3. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT**

The bank statement on November 12th reads £11,975.47 The grants from last month - £100 to the Cunningsburgh Under 5s and £100 to the Gulberwick Toddlers were paid out, as was £88 to VAS for the Independent Examination of Accounts, £40 for the purchase of poppy wreaths and £35 for the Information Commission annual fee.

We have had confirmation from the SIC that everything is in order with the 2023/34 accounts and that the 23/24 CDF and Core Grants have been fully accounted for.

**4. GRANT APPLICATIONS**

There were no Shetland Community Benefit Fund applications this month.

There were four GQC CC grant applications to be considered:

Cunningsburgh Football Club - £736.36 for exercise bikes for the community gym  
Royal Voluntary Service - £925 for a Christmas dinner for over-60s in the community  
Quarff Public Hall - £2,000 for new windows  
Gulberwick Hall Community Party - £150 for Christmas Party

Members decided to award full grants to all. It takes the total for grants awarded marginally over what was budgeted (£61.96) but even if the pay rise to the clerk is agreed later in the meeting, there is sufficient funds both in this year's grants from the SIC to the CC as well as in the bank account to be able to pay the full grants.

**ACTION:** Clerk to inform the applicants of the news and the need to send back receipts. Clerk to transfer grants to bank accounts and share the news that the grant budget for 2024/25 has been spent.

**5. CUNNINGSBURGH ROAD SAFETY CONCERNS**

Members expressed satisfaction with the email from Michael Craigie, SIC Executive Manager – Transport Planning, dated 8 November 2024. Mr Craigie had offered to hold a meeting dedicated to discussing the various concerns in Cunningsburgh as well as potential solutions.

The main issues raised by the community include the speed limit, road safety for pedestrians, the need for traffic calming measures, and the request from parents for year-round access to school transport (currently provided only during the winter months).

While Mr Craigie had initially offered to attend the next Community Council meeting on 7 January 2025, members felt a dedicated meeting focused on the issue would be more appropriate. It was agreed to inform Mr Craigie of this decision and request that he select a date and venue that best accommodates the attending officials.

A letter providing extra information from a parent was read, discussed and noted.

A recent email from a member of the public was discussed, expressing concerns about the pace of progress on the road safety issues in Cunningsburgh and the perceived lack of proactive engagement from the Community Council. The individual also raised issues

regarding the format of Community Council meetings, feeling that they are not sufficiently open or accessible.

The clerk replied to explain that the Community Council continues to act as a liaison between the public and the relevant officials, but there are limitations to what can be achieved at this stage. It was emphasized that progress is being made, with the meeting with SIC officials being an important step forward. The clerk will continue to engage with members of the public, keep them informed, and ensure their concerns are heard.

Members agreed the Community Council remains committed to maintaining an open dialogue with the public and will explore ways to make future meetings more accessible, such as considering alternative formats or larger venues as appropriate. This may also be discussed Shetland-wide as part of the SIC consultation currently being done into Community Councils. It was also noted that the ultimate decision-making responsibility lies with SIC Councillors and officials, and the Community Council's role is to facilitate discussion and support the community. The concerned individual was also encouraged to consider joining the Community Council as a co-opted member to have a more direct role in addressing these issues.

The following actions were agreed:

- The clerk will contact all concerned parties, reaffirming that the Community Council strongly supports the Cunningsburgh residents' concerns about road safety. She will also clarify that the details of the meeting (venue, date, time, format, etc.) will be determined by Mr. Craigie and other officials. If any Community Council members are able to attend, they will do so.
- The clerk will contact the SIC Councillors, asking them to take responsibility for moving the issue forward. It was emphasised that the Community Council has facilitated the process to this stage and, other than continuing to offer support, it is now up to the SIC Councillors and officials to determine the next steps.
- Should the meeting not achieve the desired outcomes, the Community Council will re-engage with the issue to provide continued support to the public and explore further solutions.
- It was also suggested that an email be sent to the Director of Education to ensure her awareness of the issue and to seek her involvement if necessary.
- The clerk will also reach out to the Headteacher of the school to discuss the matter, and will provide feedback to the public who raised the initial concerns.

**ACTION:** Clerk to contact everyone concerned to let them know what had been decided.

## **6. ROADS**

Mrs Christie reported that there is a puddle-filled pothole on the corner of the east Voxter road junction which is growing larger and which could end up causing damage to cars if the drivers are unaware of how deep it is. The problem has been made worse as it looks like there is a blocked drain there.

**ACTION:** Clerk to contact roads to ask them to have a look at it.

## **7. GULBERWICK, QUARFF & CUNNINGSBURGH DEVELOPMENT GROUP UPDATE**

Mrs Christie, Mrs Geddes and Mr Clark met to figure progress the plans and will update at the next meeting.

## **8. UPDATE FROM LATEST MEETING OF ASSOCIATION OF SHETLAND COMMUNITY COUNCILS**

Michael Duncan sent an email dated 8.11.24 which set out details of what was discussed for each of the agenda items. This was read and discussed.

Mrs Christie and Mr MacPherson attended the meetings and gave extra detail. The discussion around consultations for mothballing schools was added to the agenda because the Skeld community felt that more than just the school community should have been consulted in the mothballing of their school. It is an issue which affects the whole community and the Community Council at the very least should have been included in the consultation process.

The discussion surrounding the Shetland Community Benefit Fund was of a more general nature, and looked at how the figures are changing now the next phase has started. It was noted that the minutes of the SCBF meetings are public so it might be something that the CC could view periodically to allow members to keep a good track of what is going on.

Mr MacPherson also shared some points he had made about the planned increase in council tax for second or empty homes. While it is designed to crack down on issues such as the ownership of second homes by people who rent them out to places like Air BnB, the council are aware of the fact it may have unintended consequences for some. Mr MacPherson said that people who are required to have a second property on land they croft in other areas of Shetland will be harmed – there are 'distance from the croft' legal requirements for running the croft so many people have additional properties or lambie houses. He also spoke about how there is a six-month period where the council tax will not be put up, to allow people who have inherited properties to sell or fix up and move in. This is usually enough for someone to sell a normal house, but the processes required to decroft a property can take up to three years and this should be taken into consideration.

The plan was to have Community Councils help with the consultation process, but the members who attended agreed that it sounded like CCs could end up having to act as the buffer between public complaints and the policy implementers. A 'blended' form of consultation was instead agreed and member will await to see what this looks like.

Michael Duncan's clarifying point sent in a later email reads: "A point of clarification on the Council tax consultation update below. Individuals may submit their survey responses **directly** to the Council **and/or** they may share comments with their local Community Council. In the event Community Councils receive comments about the Council tax consultation from local residents then they shall collate the comments and submit a shared response to the Council as soon as possible."

Mr MacPherson said the approach Orkney Island Council was taking, offering loans to people to do up empty properties to get them back into housing stock was an example of a carrot approach when SIC seemed to favour the stick approach. He suggested the SIC could be in a position to buy homes itself to do up which may be a better way to solve the problem.

There was some discussion about what the criteria was for when a property no longer met the requirements needing to pay council tax. Members also wanted to know how many empty or second properties were in each of the communities the CC represents. How do these figures compare to the rest of Shetland and Scotland? The clerk is to pass comments and questions back to the relevant officials.

**ACTION:** Clerk to pass comments and questions back to relevant SIC officials for clarification.

## **9. UPDATES FROM ELECTED MEMBERS**

None available.

## **10. CORRESPONDENCE**

### 1. Local Place Plan Workshops

Various online workshops were on offer to help guide groups through the process of creating a Local Place Plan. Unfortunately they have been on nights that the CC itself were meeting or planning to meet so none of the members present had been able to attend. It is hoped that future dates will be more suitable.

## 2. Events for Business Support

SIC Economic Development has been running events to raise awareness of the support available to island businesses, community and voluntary organisations. They are finishing this week but further events are being planned in the future.

## 3. Online Networking Event for Community Councils in Island Areas – Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December, 6.30-7.30pm.

An informal online event hosted by the Improvement Service, as part of the Community Councils Scotland project and supported by Scottish Rural Network, to hear the views of Community Councils in Islands areas and provide opportunities for Islands community councillors to get together and share best practice and ideas.

The event will also feature:

- Ready Scotland talking about their resources and how they can help Community Councils prepare for emergencies
- how Islands Community Councils can help to develop an Open University e-learning module on the Islands Act

If anyone is interested in attending the link is in the email previously shared.

## 4. Community Council Scheme of Establishment

The latest report and documents have come up at the SIC and have been accepted. GQC CC is to get marginally more money, the two SIC funds are to be amalgamated, and all the other recommendations spoken about have also gone through. Members felt they all made sense and the majority of them were things which GQC CC had been following anyway.

## 5. Free CPR Skill Sessions

Both the fire service and the ambulance service are teaming up with the British Heart Foundation to offer free CPR and defibrillation skills to communities. They would like CC help to promote these sessions and are also offering them to CC themselves. Members were interested in a session and agreed it could be open to others in the community at the same time.

**ACTION:** Clerk to contact the organisers to arrange a session.

## **11. PLANNING**

There was only one planning applications to consider:

- [2024/285/PPF](#) – Erect single story house, Plot 3A, Aisterlea, Cunningsburgh, ZE2 9FN

Members had no comments or objections to return.

**ACTION:** Clerk to send comments to the SIC planning department in response to the planning application considered.

## **11. AOCB**

1. Scottish Government Consultation on National Marine Plan 2 – Planning Position Statement

The [Planning Position Statement \(PPS\)](#) summarises the work completed to date from when the NMP2 process started in 2022 and provides an early opportunity for comments on the proposed objectives and policy ideas to be included in NMP2. The response deadline is January 28<sup>th</sup>.

The consultation can be accessed here: [National Marine Plan 2 Planning Position Statement - Scottish Government consultations - Citizen Space](#)

**ACTION:** Anyone who wants to comment can go online and do so.

2. SSEN North Shetland Reinforcement Project Webinar – Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December

SSEN say they're on a mission to inform local communities and interested parties about their work on Shetland as part of [SSEN Distribution's North Shetland Reinforcement Project](#).

They have organised what they say will be an informative panel discussion on Thursday 5 December from 3.00 pm – 4.00 pm with speakers from: SSEN Distribution Engineering Design and Consents, SSEN Distribution Investment Planning, Shetland Island Council Roads Service. The 60-minute webinar is an opportunity to share views and hear from the experts planning and delivering the network upgrade on North Shetland.

**ACTION:** The link to sign up is in the email previously distributed so members can join the webinar if they would like to.

3. SSEN Stakeholder Engagement Strategy Consultation – deadline for responses 9am Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December.

SSEN have shared their draft Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and are now welcoming stakeholders to provide their feedback to help shape the final strategy. Link to consultation in email.

**ACTION:** Members who wish to provide feedback can do so via the previously distributed email.

4. Stoura Public Exhibition

The team behind the Stoura Offshore Windfarm sent an email thanking everyone who attended their recent public exhibition. They were delighted with the level of attendance and have received some very valuable comments.

They explained that all comments received during the public exhibition will now be used to shape the approach that they will use over the coming years to better understand the potential impact of Stoura on the local environment. Next year, they will describe their approach to the Environmental Impact Assessment in the Scoping Report. This document will be available on the MD-LOT website.

Those who did not have the opportunity to attend in person, all materials presented on the day will be made available on their website shortly, [www.stouraoffshorewind.com](http://www.stouraoffshorewind.com). They welcome further comments or questions and intend to hold further public exhibitions.

**ACTION:** Members to look at website for more info if they would like to.

5. National Planning Improvement Team National Customer and Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey – closes 7<sup>th</sup> Dec.

SIC Planning got in touch to encourage people to respond to an annual survey intended to be filled out by all users of the Planning Authorities in Scotland to collect views on the service the public has received. They intend to use the results to identify areas for improvement. The survey should only take a few moments, and all responses will help the planning authority improve their offer.

**ACTION:** Members to fill out survey if they wish to give any feedback or suggestions.

7. Clerk's Wages

Mrs Davis proposed that the clerk's wages be raised in line with the SJC Salary Agreement for Government Employees and that backpay from April be awarded. Mr Coleman seconded the motion.

Members also asked if there was some way to minute that they would like to not have to have this discussion every time a pay change was recommended as they agree they will always follow the recommendation to ensure the clerk is paid fairly.

**ACTION:** Clerk to transfer the backpay and alter the monthly wage payments. She is also to ask Michael Duncan for information on whether the issue needs to be discussed every time a new pay grade comes up or if it can simply be noted at the next meeting as part of normal finance updates.

8. New Laws on Inheritance Tax on Farms and Crofts

Mrs Davis expressed concern at the effect that the proposed new law could have on crofters in our community, especially as they are often asset high but low income. It was agreed to note members worry on the issue, but as there had been no representation from any members of the public, they would not take any action just now.

9. Thanks to Community Councillor Peter Coleman

Tonight will be Mr Coleman's last meeting and members expressed thanks for his work and input to the Community Council, wishing him all the best for the future.

10. Thank You for the School

After discussion about what present would best suit the school to say thank you for allowing the meetings to be held in the premises, it was decided to present a supermarket gift token for £20 so that the staff could chose something themselves.

**ACTION:** Clerk to purchase and deliver a gift token to the school staff.

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

Meeting Ends – 8.35 pm.

**CHAIR**

**13. OUTSTANDING ITEMS**

August 2024 – bench locations to be decided and planning permission sought.

