



# Planning Matters

May 2005

Number 1

## Welcome

## Planning Control

### **From Iris Hawkins, Planning Spokesperson**

I'm very pleased to welcome you to the first edition of the Planning Newsletter, 'Planning Matters'. There has been so much happening in Planning recently that the department has decided to try to keep everybody up to date with a brief summary of the latest news. We hope that you will find this newsletter informative. Please feel free to circulate this e-mail newsletter to as many people in your organisation as might be interested in it.

### **Planning Service Commended for Website**

As you will have seen in the press, we received a Commendation for Outstanding Performance and Quality for Development Control. The Planning Service website, developed in-house with ICT services, allows anyone with access to the internet to examine and comment on planning applications as well as read the Council's planning policies on-line.

The award was presented by Malcolm Chisholm, Minister for Communities, at a ceremony in Edinburgh. In introducing the nomination, Jim Mackinnon, Chief Planner for Scotland, commended the Council's Planning and Information Technology Services for producing an effective system on a small budget.

The judging panel, which consisted of Joan Burnie, Paul Gregory and Fiona Moriarty commented :

"We were given a very clear and focused presentation. We were extremely impressed that such an efficient system could be set up with a small budget and considered it to be an example for other authorities. The value of the website to remote and island communities is particularly commendable. Overall, we considered the website to provide an excellent service and value for money".

The website is still being developed, and we have recently started undertaking most of our consultations by e-mail, saving paper and staff time and speeding up the processing of applications. The Planning Service website can be viewed at :

<http://www.shetland.gov.uk/planning/>

## Application Numbers Up Again

## Building Standards

In the year up to April 2005, we dealt with over 500 planning applications, up ten percent, which continues the upward trend. The majority of applications were assessed, consulted on and negotiated at officer level, and approved as complying with planning policy under delegated powers.

In the last year there have been :-

123 applications for one or more houses;  
121 approvals; and  
104 decisions delegated to officers.

### **New Building Standards System 2005**

The Building (Scotland) Act 2003 came into force on 1 May 2005 and introduced a new system of building standards in Scotland. The changes are mainly to do with the structure and format of the regulations rather than technical content.

As well as allowing more flexibility, there are procedural changes with the introduction of the role of Verifiers, Certifiers of Design and Certifiers of Construction who will be able to certify their work. The Council will accept their certification and that will attract a reduction or refund on the warrant fee. The schemes in place are for structural design and electrical installations to BS 7671.

The building regulations include exempt classes of buildings and fixtures not requiring a warrant. However, some fixtures need to comply with the regulations. These classes and fixtures, including work to dwellings, will change under the new system. Building Standards can give further advice and where work is exempt, you are advised to obtain confirmation in writing.

The system also includes new procedures for works undertaken or completed without a warrant. In these instances, work will probably require exposing to ensure compliance with the current requirements. The result is that letters of comfort will only be issued in particular circumstances.

**Building Standards**

There are new forms and procedures and the Building Standards service has produced the following guidance documents to assist when determining whether works are exempt, whether a warrant is required, how to apply for a warrant and the warrant fee structure. These will be available on the website in due course, but in the meantime please contact 01595 744800 if you require copies.

- Exempted buildings and services, fittings and equipment.
- Building and work not requiring a building warrant.
- How to make a building warrant application.
- Building warrant fee structure.

**Building Standards Structure**

**Building Standards Manager**

Jonathan Astwood (01595 744820)

**Building Standards Surveyors**

**Area 1**

Scott McLeod

**Area 2**

Greg Burgess

**Building Standards Surveyors**

**Area 3**

Sarah Kerr (p/t 20 hours)

**Area 4**

John Inkster

**Building Standards**

**Areas – Building Standards Surveyor**

<b>Community Council</b>	<b>Surveyor</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Bressay	Scott McLeod	744822
Burra and Trondra	Greg Burgess	744821
Delting	John Inkster	744823
Dunrossness and Fair Isle	Sarah Kerr	744824
Feltar	John Inkster	744823
Gulberwick, Quarff and Cunningsburgh	Sarah Kerr	744824
Lerwick	Scott McLeod	744822
Nesting and Lunnasting	Greg Burgess	744821
Northmavine	John Inkster	744823
Sandsting and Aithsting	Scott McLeod	744822
Sandwick	Sarah Kerr	744824
Scalloway	Greg Burgess	744821
Tingwall, Whiteness and Weisdale	Greg Burgess	744821
Unst	John Inkster	744823
Walls, Sandness and Foula	Scott McLeod	744822
Whalsay and Skerries	Greg Burgess	744821
Yell	John Inkster	744823

<b>Surveyor</b>	<b>Community Council</b>
Greg Burgess (01595) 744821	Burra and Trondra, Nesting and Lunnasting, Scalloway, Tingwall, Whiteness and Weisdale, Whalsay and Skerries
John Inkster (01595) 744823	Delting, Feltar, Northmavine, Unst, Yell
Sarah Kerr (01595) 744824	Dunrossness and Fair Isle, Gulberwick, Quarff and Cunningsburgh, Sandwick
Scott McLeod (01595) 744822	Bressay, Lerwick, Sandsting and Aithsting, Walls, Sandness and Foula

### Structure Plan Review

The Structure Plan was adopted five years ago and is now under review. We have started the preliminary stages of this process and will be reporting on the matter to the Infrastructure Committee shortly. The monitoring of the Structure Plan is important to ensure that the policies are achieving what they were intended to achieve. It may well be that as a result of this review, there are changes to some of the policies.

In recent weeks, several Scottish Planning Policy Guidelines have been published by the Scottish Executive. Our team have to ensure that the policies of the Local Plan and the Structure Plan accord with these policy guidelines and the Planning Advice Notes that accompany them. We will be reporting some of the more significant developments in national advice, and their impacts locally, to Committee.

Stage 2 of the Review of Housing Zones will commence shortly. We shall be undertaking the next round of consultation with the 4 priority areas which are : Burra and Trondra; Gulberwick, Quarff and Cunninsburgh; Tingwall, Whiteness and Weisdale; and Scalloway. After this we will be undertaking wider consultation throughout Shetland. Stage 1 of the process demonstrated that Community Councils support the concept of the Housing Zones.

We organised 3 speakers to address the Transport and Environment Forum in February regarding the impacts of Climate Change on Shetland coasts and the effects of sea level rise. We are preparing a summary report of the presentations which is available on the Planning Service website at : <<http://www.shetland.gov.uk/developmentplans/>>. As a result of the success of the Forum in February, there have been offers from other people to give presentations regarding the effects of Climate Change on Shetland.

We have begun compiling the information required for the 5<sup>th</sup> Biennial Flood Report. We are attempting to submit a portion of this information digitally.

Since 09 February 2004, Part 1 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 has come fully into effect. This legislation places a great many new duties on the Council regarding freedom of responsible access to the countryside. In recent years, we have been undertaking a number of improvements to facilitate better access to the countryside and we will continue to do so.

Planning  
Training

We shall also continue to work in various ways to increase understanding of planning for all those with whom we deal both inside and outside the Council. We firmly believe that the more people know and understand about planning and the planning process, the less conflict there will be and that applications and developments will proceed with greater ease and speed through the planning process.

Final Note

We would be pleased to receive any comments on the newsletter, particularly if any different formats or languages would be useful.

Contact Us

Please contact Iain McDiarmid on 01595 or via e-mail at : [iain.mcdiarmid@sic.shetland.gov.uk](mailto:iain.mcdiarmid@sic.shetland.gov.uk) if you have any comments.