

GULBERWICK, QUARFF & CUNNINGSBURGH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 18TH MARCH 2025 AT CUNNINGSBURGH SCHOOL AT 7.00PM

A. THE CIRCULAR CALLING THE MEETING HELD WAS READ.

B. PRESENT	Mrs M Davis	Mr E MacPherson	Mr C Clark
EX OFFICIO	Cllr B Peterson	Cllr R McGregor	
IN ATTENDANCE	Mrs K Geddes		
CHAIRPERSON	Mr G Murray		
APOLOGIES	Miss E Copland	Mrs P Christie	Mrs A Arnett
NOT PRESENT	Cllr A Armitage	Cllr A Duncan	Mr M Duncan

C. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr McGregor declared an interest in Planning, Item 11, as he is the chair of SIC Planning Board.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 11TH FEBRUARY 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 11th February were approved on the motion of Mr C Clark and seconded by Mrs M Davis.

1. MATTERS ARISING

1. Shurton Brae Bins

The large bins at Shurton Brae have been secured again with some wood to ensure the lids do not blow too far open. There are still potholes in front of the bins which are making it difficult for residents to use them but Roads have informed us they have them on their list and will get to them as soon as they can. The spell of snow earlier in the year has meant that there are more potholes for them to deal with than usual.

2. Benches

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

ACTION: Mrs Christie was to speak to Cunningburgh landowners and other members to try to progress Quarff and/or Gulberwick locations.

3. Enviroglass Recycling – Suggestion from Member of the Public

Cllr McGregor has had a suggestion from a constituent that the leftover crushed glass material could perhaps be used by a company such as Garriock Bros in their concrete. The clerk has had initial contact with the company but has not heard back yet.

ACTION: Clerk to follow up initial phone call with Garriock's and share any information received.

2. POLICE REPORT

There were no police officers in attendance but the Shetland Policing Report December 2024/January 2025 had been previously circulated.

There were eight incidents reported for the Community Council area during the time period.

3. UHI SHETLAND ENGAGEMENT OFFICER JULIE GRAHAM – VISIT FOR INFO SHARING AND GATHERING

The UHI officer was unable to attend but has indicated she will be here for the April meeting.

ACTION: Clerk to send invite and agenda papers and advise her that the meeting is a week later than originally planned.

4. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

The bank statement on March 12th read £4,688.78.

The clerk's backpay of £6.80 was paid out, as was £723.17 for the laptop and data retrieval.

All of our grant money allocated from this year's budget has now been awarded.

The clerk is preparing the accounts to go for independent examination at financial year end.

5. GRANT APPLICATIONS

There were no Shetland Community Benefit Fund applications to consider.

A letter from the Cunningsburgh School Primary 7 pupils was received today and read out. They have asked for monetary support for their residential trip to Unst in June. They have done fundraising but have asked for £200 to pay for the food for the pupils for the three-day trip.

Although all money allocated for grants in the GQC CC 24/25 budget has been awarded, members were keen to support the pupils and there are sufficient funds in the bank account to do so.

The clerk is to speak to SIC Grants Officer/Community Council Liaison Officer Michael Duncan to see if the money can be awarded as a one-off without the need for a grant application. Even without an application, documents such as receipts and invoices and perhaps some other documents will be required to ensure we keep an account of how grant money has been allocated. She has already informed headteacher Melvyn Clark that she will need to check on procedures.

ACTION: Clerk to contact Michael Duncan for advice, keep the school informed, and award the money using the procedure and paperwork advised.

6. ROADS AND PATHS

1. Pothole at East Voxter Road Junction

Mrs Christie reported at the November meeting 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. The latest from SIC Roads is that they are sending another gentle reminder to the landowner to get the plans of the drainage – they have had a camera in the culvert but could see nothing as it was submerged with water, so require plans to be able to progress.

2. Cunningsburgh Road Safety Concerns

A parent has copied the Community Council into correspondence asking for an update to a letter issued on October 2024 regarding vacant seat applications submitted for her two children. Brenda Leask – SIC Executive Manager Schools said discussions were happening between various departments and it would 'require a few weeks to explore in more detail.'

The parent added extra detail to her letter regarding the current situation and pointed out that access to the school bus for a number of children will come to an end in the summer term – less than a month away.

It was Michael Craigie, SIC Executive Manager – Transport Planning who had been driving discussions and as he has been off work then it may explain why things have come to a standstill. Members biggest concern is that of road safety for the children who may have to walk to school.

ACTION: Clerk to email asking for update and expressing members concerns at the fact the summer term is fast approaching and parents still don't have an answer.

3. Fladdabister Loop Road Resurfacing

The Fladdabister Loop Road is in need of resurfacing. There is currently ducting work being done by a contractor for Open Reach and once this is done members are hopeful that the road can be resurfaced.

ACTION: Clerk to contact Roads to request that the road is added to their list.

7. GULBERWICK, QUARFF & CUNNINGSBURGH DEVELOPMENT GROUP UPDATE

The first draft of a constitution has been created so members are to try to come up with a final document by the next CC meeting. They will also meet to discuss an event to attract new members, share the constitution, and consult the public.

The Local Place Plans and the Community Resilience Plans fit well into what the Development Group could be doing so it is hoped that working on one will help drive the others forward too.

It was agreed that Mr Murray would lead on taking the Community Resilience Plans forward, Mr Clark would lead on the Local Place Plans, and it was hoped that Mrs Christie would be agreeable to take the development group forward. Mrs Geddes is happy to support where required.

ACTION: Development Group meeting to be organised before next Community Council meeting to progress things further.

8. LOCAL PLACE PLANS

Several members have attended recent online training to help them start to think about how they can create Local Place Plans. There is a day-long workshop on Friday April 4th which everyone interested is encouraged to sign up for. Mr Clark has agreed to progress the LPPs for our CC.

All the groups in the South End of Shetland seem to be happy to keep in touch to support each other and it was agreed that this would be sufficient – the idea to get a shared development worker seems more complicated than originally thought and has been shelved for now.

ACTION: Members to attend Spring Workshop training and take next steps from there. A support meeting with Planning Aid Scotland also to be organised.

9. UPDATES FROM ELECTED MEMBERS

Cllr Peterson spoke briefly about the Community Council Scheme Review and that any changes agreed would come into effect as soon as they had been agreed by the SIC.

He also mentioned the Scottish Government plans for an increase in councillors' remuneration and expenses. If the legislation gets passed, then the SIC will have no choice but to put up the salaries of its elected members. The councillors are likely to discuss it but have no say in the decision and none of them have requested an increase in salary – in fact several have discussed the merits of handing it back or giving it to charity. The increases are designed to show the value of elected members and to attract more people to the roles, but it is proving controversial and has seen a lot of press attention.

Cllr McGregor shared that he is away at the Road Safety Conference on the mainland next week and although he will be having his usual conversations to encourage more road policing officers up here and to see what can be done to encourage older unfit drivers off the road, he is happy to have any other suggestions emailed to him.

ACTION: Members to email Cllr McGregor if they have anything they would like him to bring up at the Road Safety Conference.

10. CORRESPONDENCE

1. Community Conversations – Community Benefit Good Practice Guidance

An email was received from The Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) on March 11th detailing the 'community conversations' they are holding across Scotland to gather local peoples' opinions on community benefits generated through offshore and onshore renewable energy developments.

It said: This [local community conversation](#) is a chance to share your views in an islands focussed conversation as the Scottish Government [consults on the Community Benefit Good Practice Guidance](#).

Wednesday 26th March, 6pm – 9pm, online via Zoom. [Click here to express an interest in attending.](#)

ACTION: Members to sign up if they are interested.

2. Da Voar Redd Up

The 2025 Voar Redd Up will take place between April 19th and 25th. If anyone has a suggestion for an area which could get cleaned up, then we can let the Amenity Trust know and they will pass it on to groups needing locations.

Members agreed that we would continue to support groups who did Redd Ups in our area, offering £50 to those groups the Amenity Trust lets us know about.

3. VoiceAbility Shetland

An advocate with VoiceAbility Shetland has got in touch to say she would like to speak to the Community Council to explain more about the service the charity provides.

DRAFT MINUTES – Subject to approval at the April 2025 meeting

Vikki Parry said VoiceAbility are an independent charity and one of the UK's largest providers of advocacy and involvement services. They support people to be heard in decisions about their health, care, and wellbeing. A link to access the website for more information is here: [VoiceAbility](#)

It was agreed to invite her to the June meeting.

ACTION: Clerk to invite advocate Vikki Parry to June meeting.

4. Complementary Conference Places for Community Councillors

Michael Duncan emailed passing on an offer from Mackay Hannah for free places at various conferences. The only one left after this date is: [Scotland, climate change and new weather extremes: From flooding to families, what's the plan?, Tuesday 29th April 2025](#) It is a half-day conference, taking place online in the morning.

Community Councillors can either book directly on Mackay Hannah's website by clicking the link and using discount code CC100 where prompted, or they can email Gail Hannah ghannah@mackayhannah.com directly who can arrange the place for them.

ACTION: Members to sign up if they are interested.

5. Association of Shetland Community Councils – Meeting Update

The ASCC met on 11th March and Michael Duncan has since sent out an email detailing what happened at the meeting which was read and noted.

Members realised that the GQC CC June meeting clashed with the next ASCC meeting so it was agreed to investigate moving it a week later. There are several members away in April too so the April meeting will also be moved.

ACTION: Clerk to contact the school to see if the new meeting dates are agreeable before informing the SIC and any attendees.

6. Insurance

The clerk has received the public liability insurance certificate from Michael Duncan. The SIC takes out a policy which covers all Shetland Community Councils.

She asked him whether any individual Community Councils take out individual policies to cover things like when tea was spilled on the CC laptop, but he did not know of any which have their own cover.

7. Public and School Bus Business Case Update

An email was received on March 3rd with an update on the Public and School Bus Consultation that has taken place recently. A redacted copy of the report on the Strategic Business Case stage was attached to the email.

Almost 1000 responses were received during the first stage and due to the high number of responses the timeline for the business case work has been amended and service contracts have been extended for 12 months in order to enable this to happen.

The information will be used to help develop the options for the future public bus network and the Outline Business Case is now being worked through. This will culminate in a recommendation for the preferred future network and will report to ZetTrans and the Council in September.

The email said that further engagement is required throughout this stage in order to provide information on the benefits and impacts of each proposal in order to produce a recommendation for a preferred future bus network. This part of the engagement will be online and it will be shared as soon as it goes live to enable the Community Council to respond as an organisation. The link will be active from Monday 24th March to Friday 18th April.

The report was almost 200 pages long so Mr Clark used AI to summarise the document and pull out important points for Gulberwick, Quarff and Cunningsburgh. Members found this helpful although acknowledged that it was not a substitute for the full report and that the details in it will need to be checked.

There was a lot of discussion about the figures for how many housing units are projected to be built in our communities over the next five and ten years – some of the figures seemed very high and were in areas where members did not realise such development was planned.

As the discussed figures were from the AI summary, the clerk said she would check the figures against the full report and if they are correct, she will get in contact with SIC Transport Planning for more detail on where the figures have come from.

Members were also keen to ensure that their concerns about road safety in Cunningsburgh – partly due to the lack of bus places for some children during the summer terms – is still highlighted and should not just get swallowed up as part of this bigger consultation.

ACTION: Clerk to check house unit development figures in full report and ask for more detail from SIC Transport Planning if necessary.

11. PLANNING

----- Cllr McGregor left the room 20.45 -----

There were only two planning applications on the planning portal for the CC area since the last meeting and neither of them required comment:

[2025/030/PPF](#) – Sunroom extension and parking, Brake, Wester Quarff

[2025/029/PN](#) – Demolish farm building and erect new one, Brindister Farm, Brindister

A member of the public had been in contact about drainage issues they and their neighbours are having following recent development in the Aithsetter, Cunningsburgh area. Some of the drainage works done as part of the new developments may not have met the full specifications detailed in the approved planning applications but it is hoped that it will be an easy fix when it is decided who should undertake the work.

Cllr Peterson attended a site meeting recently and was able to report that Cllr Duncan has been supporting the parties involved and that both SIC Planning and Roads are looking into it.

----- Cllr McGregor came back into the room at 20.50 -----

12. AOCB

1. Meeting and Info Session on Wind Turbine Noise and Public Health

An email was received today from Dr Sally Huband sharing details of an invitation to attend a public meeting and information session on turbine noise and health. She said it is relevant to the consented Mossy Hill Wind Farm which will impact households in Gulberwick.

The meeting will be at Tingwall Hall on Thursday 3rd April from 7.30-9pm.

ACTION: Anyone interested to attend the meeting.

2. Radio Teleswitch Service Switch Off

The radio signal that controls RTS electricity meters is being switched off and may mean that heating and hot water supplies in people's homes stop working as normal. It is due to happen on June 30th and people need to get new meters in before that date to ensure they are not affected. Unfortunately many people are struggling to get new meters, and there is worry that the new meters will not be suitable for many Shetland residents as they rely on mobile signals to be able to work.

Community information and advice events have been organised by Shetland Citizen's Advice and had attendees from energy giant OVO there too, but members are still concerned that people in our community will be adversely affected. If residents are unsure that they will be affected they should contact their electricity supplier for clarification.

ACTION: Clerk to put info posters up in community noticeboards and share information on CC Facebook page.

3. Research Workshop on Energy Developments in Shetland

Bath University are exploring public perceptions of current and future energy developments in Shetland, including the role of hydrogen and ammonia as fuels and storage solutions. There are two workshops available – either April 3rd or 4th between 2pm and 6pm both days at Islesburgh Community Centre. Anyone is welcome to express interest but spaces are limited.

To express interest, there is a form to complete: <https://forms.office.com/e/CdSVtY5beL>.

For any questions, contact Usman Siddiqi (muas21@bath.ac.uk)

ACTION: Anyone interested to sign up.

4. Tanker and Container Ship Accident

The recent collision between a tanker and a container ship in the North Sea off the east coast of Yorkshire has given members cause to think again of the dangers of tankers lying off the coast of Shetland. Mr MacPherson said he has considered the dangers of bad weather or mechanism failure but hadn't considered accidents like this.

Cllr MacGregor said he had the same thought, and when he had an informal conversation raising his concerns he was told that the density of traffic around Shetland was of such a low level it shouldn't really be an issue.

5. Tourist Tax

Members enquired whether any decision had been made about implementing a tourist tax in Shetland and Cllr Peterson explained that discussions were continuing. The SIC and the Port Authority have met to speak about it and the SIC are monitoring other local authorities who have introduced it but no decision has yet been made. He said that the cost of administering it compared to the revenue it is likely to generate may mean it doesn't happen as the pay off will be so low.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 22nd April 2025 but has been moved to **TUESDAY 29th APRIL – A WEEK LATER.**

Meeting Ends – 9.00 pm.

CHAIR

13. OUTSTANDING ITEMS

August 2024 – bench locations to be decided and planning permission sought.
February 2025 – Community CPR sessions – no answer from emergency services re date.