

**GULBERWICK, QUARFF & CUNNINGSBURGH
COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 29TH APRIL 2025
AT CUNNINGSBURGH SCHOOL AT 7.00PM**

A. THE CIRCULAR CALLING THE MEETING HELD WAS READ.

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

C. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr McGregor declared an interest in Planning, Item 12, as he is the chair of SIC Planning Board.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 18TH MARCH 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 18th March were approved on the motion of Mr C Clark and seconded by Mrs M Davis.

7. CUNNINGSBURGH SCHOOL TRANSPORT AND ROAD SAFETY CONCERNS

This item was moved up the agenda to allow Mr Craigie to leave at the earliest opportunity.

Michael Craigie, SIC Executive Manager – Transport Planning attended the meeting and acknowledged that for a number of reasons, progress hadn't been made on the issue. However he has now booked the Cunningsburgh Hall on Monday 12th May 7-9pm for a Community Meeting to allow everyone interested to come along and chat.

He explained some details in an email prior to this evening's meeting:

"We'd issue a discussion paper on Tuesday 6 May ahead of the meeting setting out our current understanding of the issues, any solutions we feel may be available and, just as importantly, any constraints that may exist (e.g. policy limitations or limits of officer delegated authority that would need changes requiring Council decisions). The key point is it would be a discussion paper rather than a statement of hard positions."

He said that as it is not just school transport but road safety which needs to be looked at, and that there are several SIC departments involved, then it needs to be looked at holistically while keeping the safety of the children uppermost in everyone's minds.

Parents had emailed what they felt had to be on the agenda and this was passed on. Mrs Philips – a parent – also spoke and gave some more background which Mr Craigie + also noted down.

Mr Craigie said he would make sure that the meeting would be available to join remotely, confirmed that the meeting invite and discussion paper could be shared widely.

Everyone present thanked Mr Craigie for attending and for progressing the issue.

ACTION: Clerk to share the meeting detail and discussion paper and everyone to distribute it as they see fit. Those who are able to, to attend the meeting on May 12th.

----- Mr Craigie left – 7.30pm -----

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

This item was moved up the agenda to allow Ms Graham to leave at the earliest opportunity.

Ms Graham introduced herself and explained she had started at the Shetland campus of the University of the Highlands and Islands as the Community Engagement Officer in October.

She has been visiting all the Community Councils to hear what residents think about the current offering of UHI Shetland, what could be done to better engage with local communities, what the current training needs are and what expectations people may have for potential future delivery.

She will be using the information gathered to write a report to go to Shetland UHI management to inform their development plans going forward.

Members brought up a number of issues and points:

- It seems like courses are being cut and budgets are cut despite the promise of the opposite through the amalgamation of the NAFC and UHI Shetland.
- The fishing courses seem to be attracting less students – everyone from the mainland used to come up here but now even some Shetland students are going south to study.
- Online or blended courses are not appealing to a lot of people. One of UHI Shetland's unique selling point was the fact that you could attend university level courses in person in Shetland and this is being lost. Not everyone has access to the technology needed to attend virtually.
- A course in renewables would make sense for Shetland and should have been offered long ago if some forward-planning had been done. Members were pleased to hear that a renewables course was in the pipeline.
- Courses are not well advertised or known – especially short courses or one-day training.
- The website is poor and difficult to navigate.
- The social media and work of the student association seem to be aimed at young students without an understanding of the needs and perspective of mature students.
- The administration side of UHI experienced by some had been frustratingly slow with details of funding and timetables received very close to starting courses.
- There is no support for young students in Port Arthur and little accommodation overall.
- There does not seem to be a clear link with businesses and schools – to attract students in and also to ensure UHI is delivering courses which fill gaps in the labour market.
- Access courses are being cut – this is not just a mistake for the community and Shetland but for UHI Shetland as they are reducing the number of potential students for their higher level courses.
- There is frustration that the looms for some of the textile courses are sitting unused and that the courses available for textiles and for knitting in particular are limited. UHI should be aiming to support the knitting industry in Shetland and could be capitalising on it to increase student numbers.

- There are no agriculture courses – which seems amazing for Shetland.

Ms Graham thanked members for their comments and said she would keep in touch with any progress.

----- Ms Graham left 8.10pm -----

1. MATTERS ARISING

1. Community Council Scheme of Establishment - Update

The email and accompanying documents were read and noted.

2. Community Resilience Plan/s

Mr Murray reported that he had made a start to this and will keep us updated on progress.

3. Enviroglass Recycling

A suggestion that the leftover crushed recycled glass could be used in concrete or as fill around pipes in building projects was initially agreed by Garriock Brothers and they were put in contact with Brydon Gray at SIC Waste Management to progress the plan. However Mr Gray has not heard from them since and an email asking for an update has remained unanswered.

ACTION: Clerk to follow email up to ask for update and to keep in contact with Mr Gray on any progress being made by the SIC.

4. Community Benches

Mr Murray brought the offer of benches up at the Quarff Hall committee meeting and a location – possibly two – has been selected. Mrs Christie has discovered the land in Cunningsburgh is owed by the SIC so she is to contact them about siting a bench there. The possibility of a bench at Gulberwick can be explored at a later date.

ACTION: Mr Murray to organise the bench being picked up for Quarff, Mrs Christie to contact SIC about siting the Cunningsburgh bench and report back at June meeting.

5. 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. The potholes in front of the bins have also been fixed and any water lying there is just because it is flat concrete. Members were thankful of the work of both Roads and Waste Services to sort the issue.

2. POLICE REPORT

No report available.

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

This item was moved up the agenda to allow Ms Graham to leave at her earliest convenience.

4. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

The bank statement on April 22nd read £3,384.78.

There are no transactions outwith the usual monthly ones.

The clerk has submitted the 2024/35 accounts to VAS for independent examination.

She has also submitted the core grant application to the SIC using the updated format introduced under the revised Community Council Scheme of Establishment. While the process has been online for some years, this year's form was different, and the budget changes agreed by the Council allowed us to apply for a slightly higher amount—£13,108.47, a small increase on last year. The submission has been shared with members, and she will provide an update once a response is received.

In addition, work has been carried out to organise and prepare the Community Council's historical documents—minutes and accounts—for archiving at the Shetland Museum and Archives. With records dating back to 1977, it took some time to ensure everything was in good order and that the necessary documentation was complete. All materials have now been submitted, and they should now be more accessible to members of the public.

5. GRANT APPLICATIONS

There were no Shetland Community Benefit Fund applications to consider.

An update on the Ocrquoy road grant awarded in 2020/21 has been received and members were happy to note that the work is hoped to start this summer. The clerk is keeping in touch with the householders concerned and has asked for receipts/invoices to prove the grant is spent.

An application form which formally backs up the letter from the Cunningsburgh School Primary 7 pupils was received and the clerk will release the £200 already agreed by members when the rest of the documents arrive. The money is to go towards their residential trip in June.

ACTION: Clerk to pay the grant out when the rest of the required documents are received.

6. ROADS AND PATHS

1. Core Plan Path Review

An email from the Outdoor Access Officer Liam Drosso was forwarded on to us by Michael Duncan on April 14th.

It explained that the deadline for submitting any feedback and comments for the core path plan review is 11th May 2025.

They are seeking comments on the following areas:

- Any errors in mapping on the current core path plan you are aware of.
- Any new routes in your area that could be given core path status or would improve connectivity.
- Any routes that are being used differently or that could be amended to improve them.
- Any other thoughts or suggestions that may be relevant to the core path plan review.

They do not expect significant changes to the plan. However, any feedback provided will be greatly appreciated and carefully considered during the review.

Members thought that the path spoken about by Mrs Philips down the side of the Cunningsburgh Showground should be added as it may help with the safety of bairns walking to school.

ACTION: Clerk to email details of the path to Mr Drosso, contacting Mrs Philips for guidance if required.

2. Fladdabister Loop Road Resurfacing

The clerk had been in touch with Roads about whether the Fladdabister Loop Road would be resurfaced this year as there are several patches where the road condition is poor. SIC Roads Engineer Barrie Scobie replied to say that the resurfacing budget has already been allocated but that he may be able to do something and would keep in touch. Members were grateful to hear the news.

3. Pothole and Puddle at East Voxter Junction

Mr Scobie also replied with photos and an update to the attempts to sort the pothole and puddle at the East Voxter junction. He said: "The property owner exposed the chamber and as you can see it is all running clear. We intend to install a gully at the low point and connect it either into the pipe or to the chamber which should solve the problem."

He said he would keep in touch and let us know when the work had been done and members were again grateful to hear about the progress.

7. CUNNINGSBURGH SCHOOL TRANSPORT AND ROAD SAFETY CONCERNS

This issue was discussed earlier in the meeting.

8. GULBERWICK, QUARFF & CUNNINGSBURGH DEVELOPMENT GROUP UPDATE

The first draft of a constitution has been created so members and was shared with member tonight. Comments and suggested edits are to be back in a week.

ACTION: Members to send comments and suggestions for the draft constitution by Tuesday May 6th.

9. LOCAL PLACE PLANS

Several members attended a recent workshop to help them start to think about how they can create Local Place Plans. A template plan was shared which should help.

It was decided to start looking at the template before setting a date for a meeting with Planning Aid Scotland as having the beginnings of our own plan to discuss would be more useful.

ACTION: Members interested in progressing the Local Place Plan to meet to have a look through the template. A support meeting with Planning Aid Scotland also to be organised. Clerk to contact Planning Aid Scotland about meeting in June rather than May.

10. UPDATES FROM ELECTED MEMBERS

Cllr McGregor said he was delighted that the new Fair Isle ferry infrastructure has now started and gave brief details on the project.

11. CORRESPONDENCE

1. Viking Genes Launch Invite

The invite to the Viking Genes Launch was distributed and Mr Murray indicated he would attend. If anyone else would like to go the RSVP deadline has passed but they can email to see if they can squeeze them in. The event is at Mareel, at 10.30 am on Wednesday 21st May and the email address is Viking@ed.ac.uk

2. Burial Services Update

Michael Duncan passed on an email from Burial Services on April 1st.

It explained that in certain burial grounds where the remaining capacity is estimated to be less than 10 years, pre-purchasing of Exclusive Right of Burial is no longer permitted. This has been the case for some years in several burial grounds and is a standard practice to ensure space remains available for immediate burial needs.

It went on to say that they understand that this may be difficult for families who wish to plan ahead. However, there are still options available, and they are available to discuss alternative arrangements that may suit individual circumstances.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.shetland.gov.uk/births-marriages-deaths/burial-services/2>

Anyone with questions can email: burials@shetland.gov.uk

3. CC Election Campaign – Awareness Raising

An email from Community Council Liaison Officer Michael Duncan sent on 11th April was discussed. He is looking for 3 or 4 volunteers to join me on a short life working group to develop a publicity plan for the Community Council elections.

It can be community councillors and/or clerks, and from any part of Shetland. Anyone interested should contact him direct by no later than Monday 12th May.

The short life working group would aim to meet during w/c 19th & 26th May and from these meetings he would provide an update to the ASCC meeting in June to get agreement to proceed.

ACTION: Anyone interested to contact Michael Duncan.

12. PLANNING

----- Cllr McGregor left the room 20.55 -----

There were only two planning applications on the planning portal for the CC area since the last meeting and only the first of them required comment:

[2025/077/PPF](#) – Erect single story house, 4A Aisterlea, Cunningsburgh, Shetland

Members noted a letter of objection from a neighbour regarding ongoing flooding issues, attributed to the failure to implement adequate drainage for previously constructed houses on the site, contrary to the drainage provisions specified in their respective planning approvals.

Members expressed strong support for the concerns raised in the objection. They considered it reasonable to expect that, in light of such circumstances, the planning department should suspend any further development on the site until the drainage issues are resolved in accordance with the original conditions of the outline planning permission.

Furthermore, members wished to record their concern that the matter has progressed to this stage, and that it should not have been necessary for local residents or the Community Council to raise objections in order for such fundamental infrastructure concerns to be addressed through the planning process.

DRAFT MINUTES – Subject to approval at the June 2025 meeting

The following planning application did not require comment, though members wanted it noted that they were supportive of the plans –

[2025/102/PPF](#) – Change of use from farm shop and café to gymnastics facility, Mackenzies Farm Shop and Cafe, Cunningsburgh, Shetland, ZE2 9HA

----- Cllr McGregor came back into the room at 21.00 -----

13. AOCB

1. 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.

The clerk put up posters in all of the community noticeboards after the March meeting but has not heard anything from any members of the public.

3. Oil and Gas Political Advert in Scotsman

Mr MacPherson brought in an advert paid for by Unite Union which was a full wraparound of The Scotsman newspaper from Friday 28th March. The headline was 'Ask your Liberal Democrat politicians to back Shetland's OIL AND GAS'. Then went on to explain that the future of oil and gas is at stake – NO BAN WITHOUT A PLAN. The No Ban Without a Plan comes as part of the move towards renewables and is a pledge which politicians have been asked to sign to call on Westminster government to put in place a funded transition plan for oil and gas workers before banning further North Sea exploration.

Members agreed that a transition plan of some sort was needed.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is on Tuesday 3rd June 2025 – a week earlier than originally planned.

Meeting Ends – 9.10 pm.

CHAIR

13. OUTSTANDING ITEMS

August 2024 – bench locations to be decided.

February 2025 – Community CPR sessions – no answer from emergency services re date.