

Skerries Community Council (SCC)
Minute of meeting held at 1.30 pm on Friday, 27th June 2025
In Skerries Community Hall

Present:

Paul James (Chair)
Frances Anderson
Marina Anderson
Janice Hughson
Marina Tait
Dianne Hughson

In attendance:

Kim Anderson – Chief Nurse, (Community & Mental Health) NHS Shetland
Lynsey Hall – Community Support Worker – joined through Teams link
Councillor Robert Thomson – joined through Teams link
Alice Arthur
Nikki Durkey
Alastair Inkster
Violet McQuade - Clerk (notes)

1) Apologies

Jilly Ash and Kia James.

Paul welcomed everyone to the meeting; after a round of introductions the meeting commenced.

2) Declaration of Interest to any agenda item

Chairperson asked for declaration of interests – there were no declarations of interest to any item on the agenda.

3) Minutes of last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 23rd May 2025, were approved.
Proposed by Marina Anderson, seconded by Janice Hughson.

4) Matters Arising/Actions from last meeting

4.1 Send Neil all the relevant information re shops, etc. This is still ongoing.

4.2 Contact Mr Mycock/put message on board – re dog fouling. This is still ongoing.

4.3 Contact Shetland Visitor publishers, re wrong information on ferry timetable
Paul has been in touch with the Shetland Times regarding this issue. Completed.

5) Healthcare issues

Kim Anderson - Chief Nurse, Community & Mental Health, in attendance to discuss healthcare issues.

After discussion the following points were noted:

- The community were not happy that the Healthcare Support Worker (HSW) works only three days per week in Skerries, they had been led to believe that she would be working five days a week in Skerries.
- Skerries people feel like second class citizens as far as healthcare is concerned.
- It is difficult to recruit and retain nurses/health workers in the remote island communities. When trying to recruit a nurse for Skerries the post was advertised nationwide, at least three times.
- The HSW needs to go to Mainland Shetland to keep her skills up, and take part in any necessary training, such as blood tests, injections and dressings. When the need arises she can then use these skills in Skerries.
- Kim agreed that the HSW could, from now on, work a full week every alternate week, which means she will only go out for two days once a fortnight, instead of once a week. After the meeting Kim will speak to the HSW about this.
- If there is a spate of severe weather the workplan will be adapted to suit.

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- It was noted that the ferry crew are not allowed to transport the medication to Skerries. Kim will look into this and feedback to the SCC.
- Kim urged people to use the 999 service in emergencies; not to put off phoning until after speaking to the HSW.
- Even if the HSW is not in Skerries, people in the community can phone 999 – and if necessary the ambulance flight will still come. The fact that there is no nurse present would make no difference to an ambulance flight being sent.
- Use the NHS24 service where possible.
- Doctors' visits to Skerries are scheduled for around every six weeks.
- If someone thinks they need a GP appointment they should phone the Whalsay Health Centre, staff will be able to advise, and if necessary, arrange a telephone appointment with the doctor.
- Kim will investigate the possibility of video calls with the Whalsay doctor. Previously there was a 'Near Me' service, which was operated by video call. There is a possibility that this could be reinstated. Marina T agreed to act as a trial patient. It was noted that for video calls there needs to be a certain level of connectivity; this may mean that patients go to the surgery to take use the facility.
- NHS are currently looking into the possibility of using the postal service for transporting repeat prescription drugs, this would not include acute medication - currently looking at setting up a Service Level Agreement.
- In emergencies ambulance flights are happening quicker now than they were before.
- Research has been done and it was found that the HSW could cover about 90% of the duties that a qualified nurse would be doing in the islands.
- Blood test results - as normal practice, anyone getting blood tests should phone Whalsay Health Centre get the results.
- Issues regarding communication on when the HSW is on leave are being addressed.
- Reach out to Kim if there are any problems or queries.

The HSW is given regular one-to-one sessions, this is the same in other non-doctor islands, this is led by the Clinical Team Leader, they also have peer support on a regular basis. Kim said that if there is a deficit in any particular area she would want to know.

Paul stated that it is important that there is a presence, the HSW actually being in the islands, the other important points are competency and professionalism, monitoring cleanliness, looking after stores and medication. Kim asked if anyone has any concerns they should contact her.

One member pointed out that, although over the years there have been some very professional nurses working in Skerries, not all have acted professionally. Although she has not had many dealings with the HSW, she always finds her very approachable and pleasant.

Kim was asked how many days per year would be needed for maintenance training - she pointed out that it is difficult to quantify; it is different from working on the Mainland where they will have exposure to various scenarios all the time. In the small islands it would vary from person to person, so difficult to give a definite answer. The professional isolation working in remote islands needs to be taken into consideration as well.

*Those in attendance thanked Kim for taking the time to attend the meeting.
Kim left the meeting at 2.15 pm.*

2.20 pm – The internet connection was lost. Despite efforts to reconnect this was not possible –as a result Councillor Thomson and Lynsey Hall left the meeting.

6) Vice Chair position

After discussion it was agreed that Janice Hughson would take on the role of Vice Chair for Skerries Community Council. This was proposed by Marina Anderson, Seconded by Frances Anderson.

7) Associate Member application

An application form for joining the Community Council has been received from Ethan Arthur. The appointment was agreed to, proposed by Marina Anderson, seconded by Janice Hughson.

In response to a query, an explanation was given on who can vote at Community Council meetings – only full members can vote. Associate members can take part in discussions but cannot vote. Full

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members must be on the electoral roll for Skerries. The most full members that Skerries Community Council can have is five. Currently there are four full members, so until the elections in November the SCC can ask for someone to stand in as a co-opted member if necessary. Community Council meetings are public meetings, so anyone can attend.

8) Risks

No changes to the register.

9) Issues

The Issues Register has changed after the meeting with the Chief Executive of Shetland Islands Council, and the Director of Health and Social Care – the meeting took place on the 3rd June. Lynsey has updated the register, and Paul has circulated it to everyone. Paul said the meeting had been positive and had received an apology for putting Skerries to the back of the queue.

10) Correspondence Received

All correspondence has been circulated, electronically.

11) AOCB

10.1 Aquaculture

The company that was looking at the possibility of putting two salmon cages in the Būd Voe has pulled out. There had been objections, so they have decided not to go ahead.

10.2 Salmon Farm proposal

Scottish Seafarms proposed salmon farm to the north of Skerries. Information and a map was circulated prior to the meeting.

It was felt that if the venture were to go ahead, Skerries should be given compensation every year. The money could be used for the benefit of the isle. The salmon farm is to go in a place where there are shellfish and white fish. A local fishing boat fishes in the area at least 30 days per year. The area that was discussed at the last meeting for the salmon farm is nowhere near where it is located on the map that was issued recently. Elsewhere, some salmon farms have not been placed in the correct area; they have been made to move them. Also, the company would need to be extremely specific about what chemicals are going to be used.

The Community Council should consider a response to this proposal. If the company are true to their word, and they take into account the feelings of the Skerries community, if we were to say no, we do not want this here, will they go elsewhere? We need to come to an agreement as a community what we want to do. They mentioned providing jobs, housing, and infrastructure – if they are true to their word, it could benefit the islands, but this would need to be logged, conditions set in place, and make sure that they stick to them. For example, if they say they are going to provide jobs, will they be based in Skerries, or will they be coming from Lerwick every day? Guarantees and assurances need to be in place. An environmental impact assessment will be needed first.

One fisherman has already put in a complaint. It was suggested that all fishermen who will be affected may be considering putting in complaints. It is illegal, under international law, to displace fishermen from their fishing grounds. Details of this proposal should be circulated to fishermen from other islands who could also be affected by the possibility of the salmon farm.

The proposed area is very exposed; there is a possibility that the whole lot could come ashore in a storm. They are putting in place weight leaders from July to October – it was felt that this is the wrong time of year and will give a false reading.

There was a discussion on whether the proposed location of the salmon farm could affect the ferry route.

Current businesses/fishermen should either not be affected, or they should be compensated. The islands should not be negatively affected, it would be good if they are going to invest in the island to improve infrastructure, but if it all washes ashore they will need to clean it up.

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Scottish Seafarms have offered to come in for another meeting. It would be better if they could come before the next meeting is due – (22nd August). Paul will contact various agencies, and proposed to invite interested parties to the next meeting. This was agreed to.

Action: Paul to organise meeting with Scottish Seafarms

10.3 Hall events

One attendee asked about having more events in the hall. Perhaps an Events Committee should be set up. It was proposed adding Events in the Hall to the next SCC agenda.

10.4 Bottle bank

There have recently been problems with getting the bottle banks transported to Lerwick – they have twice been taken to Lerwick on the morning ferry, only to be returned the same day – still full.

Paul agreed to speak to the Head of Waste Management Services.

Action: Paul speak to the Head of Waste Management

10.5 Development Programme

Alastair spoke about the development programme that fishermen are currently working on. Fishermen are trying to encourage young people into the industry. Local boats are heavily monitored, while foreign boats are not. Fishermen are trying to get the Government to take those who are breaking the law to task, some are landing in the EU completely unmonitored.

2.50 pm – Marina Tait left the meeting

10.6 Fishing - update

Currently there are 54 flagships in this country, one of these alone made 55 landings in the EU in 2024 out of UK waters, totally unmonitored. It is a condition of the licence that they comply with the economic link with the country, in England 75% of the fish has to benefit the country, in Scotland it is 55%. If they cannot meet the requirements they should be forfeiting a large amount of fish back to the UK. It would be a huge amount of fish that would come back to the UK if boats were properly monitored. Authorities/Government have been asked about the monitoring of foreign fishing vessels. Vessels are transshipping fish to the continent on a regular basis, but the authorities cannot see that this is happening.

There is no point in having rules if only some people are abiding by them.

A new system has been developed that will cut out emissions from the fishing vessels. Alastair suggested fishermen could look into the possibility of using the new equipment.

2.55 pm – Alice and Nikki left the meeting

12) **Date of the next meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled to be held at 2.00 pm on Friday, 22nd August 2025.

The meeting concluded at 3.00 pm

Actions:

Paul:

- Organise meeting with Scottish Seafarms
- Speak to the Head of Waste Management

Items carried forward from previous meeting:

- Send Neil all the relevant information re shops, etc.
- Contact Mr Mycock/put message on board – re dog fouling.

Chair Signature

Signed.....