

Sandness & Walls Community Council

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Draft minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Sandness and Walls
Community Council held on Tuesday 3rd June 2025 at 7 pm at the Walls
Hall

Present: I Walterson (Chair)
F Macbeath (Vice Chair)
M Forrest
C Venus
M Macgregor
J Haswell
E Johnston
J Laing
S Johnston
R Smith
Cllr L Peterson

In attendance: D Forrest (Clerk)

1. Chair's Welcome

I Walterson (Chair) chaired the meeting and welcomed all those present.

2. Apologies:

M Duncan, J Puckey

3. Declarations of Interest

M Forrest declared an interest in item 9, Funding request to the Shetland Community Benefit Fund by the Walls Regatta Club.

4. Police Report

Members noted receipt of the Shetland Policing Report for February/March 2025.

5. Minutes from 6.5.25

The adoption of the minutes from 1st April 2025 was proposed by M Forrest and seconded by J Laing.

6. Matters Arising

Re: 17.1 of 5/25 Delivery of Parcels to Papa Stour

The Clerk referred to a telephone call he had received from J Puckey regarding the cost of delivery of parcels to Papa Stour. She stated that courier companies will be invoiced by the SIC for packages transported on the Papa Stour Ferry.

Re: 17.3 of 5/25 Clerk's Retirement

The Clerk was asked to seek advice from Mr M Duncan on how to proceed regarding advertising the soon to be vacant post.

Action: The Clerk to speak to M Duncan regarding how to advertise the post of Clerk to the S&WCC.

(R Smith entered the meeting.)

7. Housing

M Forrest informed the Members that there is a vacant council house at Kirkidale in Walls. A brief discussion regarding the status of the vacancy followed with concern being expressed that it may be regarded as a low demand property and, as a result, may not be let to a family.

8. Roads

8.1 Surface Dressing

It was noted that some stretches of road in this area are scheduled for surface dressing this summer.

8.2 Passing Place Signs

Members were advised that the necessary resources are not currently available to restore missing/damaged passing place signs in this area.

8.3 Widening of the A 971 from the Murrister Quarry to Da Punds in Walls.

Cllr Peterson indicated that it will be later this summer before the business case for making the above stretch of road into a two-lane highway will go before Committee. Cllr Peterson praised Mr N Hutcheson for the work he had done in creating the business case. However, Members acknowledged that funding for such a project remained a major stumbling block, although it was noted that another area in Shetland with a single track road and similar transport volume to Walls would shortly be welcoming the start of a major road improvement scheme.

Action: Cllr Peterson will inform the S&WCC in advance of the business case going before Committee.

8.4 Electric Vehicle Charging Points

M Macgregor cited a recent email from Scottish and Southern Electricity regarding powering communities to net zero. Members were in agreement that it would be beneficial to the community to have EV charging points in the area, but not supportive of the suggestion that the Community Council should be responsible for their management. The Clerk was asked to look into this matter.

Action: The Clerk to find out the costs of installing EV charging points.

8.5 Resurfacing the Runway at Tingwall Airport

R Smith expressed the frustration of the Foula population at the on-going delays to the completion of the resurfacing of the runway at Tingwall Airport. He described how island life had been disrupted because all inter-island flights are being diverted to Sumburgh Airport. Members were informed that a news report on Radio Shetland had stated that the delay in completing the work was due to bad weather preventing the necessary surface markings being applied.

Action: The Clerk was asked to email Mr N Hutcheson expressing the concerns of the Foula people.

9. Shetland Community Benefit Fund (CGS0040 -01-CGST2 – Walls Regatta Club)

(M Forrest declared an interest and left the meeting.)

Members were supportive of the Walls Regatta Club's ambitions to obtain a new rescue boat. However, during a discussion on their funding application, it was noted that the Sandness and Walls Community Council did not have sufficient funds currently available to meet the application. The Clerk indicated that following a telephone conversation with one of the SCBF admin staff, it was pointed out that the S&WCC could draw down funding from future years if required. Members felt that this would prevent other organisations making bids for the next three years and it was decided not to take this action. Given that the Walls Regatta Club appears to be pursuing other funding sources, it was decided to write a letter of support to the Walls Regatta Club's Commodore, but not to commit any funding at this time.

Actions: 1. Clerk to draft and circulate a letter to Mrs A Leask, Walls Regatta Club Commodore in support of their intention to acquire a new safety boat and explain why the Community Council is not able to provide financial support at this time.
2. Clerk to complete and return the SCBF application form.

(M Forrest returned to the meeting.)

10. Defibrillators

In response to a question raised by M Macgregor regarding the outcome of discussions held at an Association of Shetland Community Councils meeting, I Walterson explained that none of the Community Councils surveyed had a solution to the vexed issue of covering the costs of replacement parts for defibrillators. He went on to state that several different models of defibrillator were in use throughout Shetland making it very difficult to hold a bank of replacement parts. The conclusion reached was that it was inadvisable for Community Councils to take responsibility for any additional defibrillators.

11. Facebook Page for S&WCC

E Johnston stated that the Facebook page is as popular as ever and is being accessed frequently.

12. S&WCC funding request from the Tingwall Agricultural Museum and Heritage Centre + Letter of Support

After a brief discussion on this request, Members felt that whilst the work being done to build better accommodation for the artifacts was a worthy project, it was not something to which the S&WCC should commit their limited resources. The submission of a letter of support for the project was approved.

Action: The Clerk to draft and circulate a letter of support for the Tingwall Agricultural Museum and Heritage Centre's project to build a new shed in which to house their artifacts.

13. Financial Update

Receipt of the most recent financial spreadsheet providing information on the S&WCC's current funding was noted.

14. Correspondence

No Correspondence other than that circulated by email has been received.

15. AOCB

15.1 Update on the Sandness Community Development's intended purchase of the Melby Pier

In response to a question relating to the progress being made by Sandness Community Development's intention to purchase the Melby Pier, S Johnston stated that work towards this goal was progressing, but the purchase had not yet been finalised.

15.2 Community Skips for Large Items of Waste/Unadopted Roads

Members discussed how to fund both unadopted road grants and community skips in the future, given their limited funds. It was proposed that the hire of skips and unadopted road grants should be offered in alternate years. The Clerk was asked to get costings for skip hire.

Action: The Clerk to obtain costings for skip hire.

15.3 Attendance at the June meeting of the Association of Shetland Community Councils

F Macbeath will be attending the June ASCC meeting.

Action: The Clerk to inform M Duncan that F Macbeath will be attending the June ASCC meeting on behalf of the S&WCC.

15.4 The Future of the Bod in Walls

In response to a question relating to the future of the Bod in Walls, Members were informed that the Walls Community Development Group is in the process of acquiring the building with a view to maintaining it as a camping facility.

15.5 The Walls Swimming Pool

Members welcomed the news that the Walls Swimming Pool will be reopening soon.

16. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was set for Tuesday 5th August 2025 and will be a hybrid meeting which is scheduled to commence at 7.00pm and will take place at the Sandness Hall subject to its availability.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.