

Sandness & Walls Community Council

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Draft minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Sandness and Walls Community Council held on Tuesday 5th August 2025 at 7 pm at the Sandness Hall

Present: I Walterson (Chair)
F Macbeath (Vice Chair)
M Forrest
J Puckey
Cllr L Peterson

In attendance: Mr A Street, (Shetland Fire and Rescue Station Commander) D Forrest (Clerk)

1. Chair's Welcome

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

2. Apologies:

M Duncan, J Haswell, M Macgregor, C Venus, E Johnston, S Johnston

3. Declarations of Interest

M Forrest re: Item 5.

4. Visit by Station Commander Alan Street (Fire and Rescue Service)

The Chair welcomed Alan Street, Station Commander for the Fire and Rescue Service. He invited Mr Street to give his presentation.

4.1 Structural Changes to the Fire and Rescue Service

Alan outlined the current structure of the Shetland Fire and Rescue Service. The Group Commander is Matt Mason. There are two Station Commanders, Tony McLaughlin and Alan Street. There are currently 8 fire and rescue stations in various locations around Shetland.

4.2 Recruitment

Mr Street described how recruitment is an ongoing problem. He would encourage anyone who can meet the fitness standards to join the service. He described it as providing excellent opportunities. Alan stated that the level of recruitment in Shetland is fairly good at present. On being asked about the proximity of a firefighter's residence to his or her fire and rescue station, Mr Street stated that a ten minute travelling time was the preferred limit, but it was not a hard and fast rule.

4.3 Papa Stour and Foula

Mr Street was unable to provide an answer to a question from J Puckey concerning a response time for an emergency on Papa Stour. He explained that there were too many variables, such as the location of the Papa Stour Ferry at the time of the callout. J Puckey then asked if a Fire and Rescue exercise could be carried out to give an indication of the timescale for such an emergency. Mr Street said he would take this suggestion back to the management team. J Puckey went on to describe how the linkspans, both at West Burrafirth and at Papa Stour are due for renewal this summer/autumn and whilst this work is being carried out, the ferry will only be able to carry foot passengers. She asked if there were any contingency plans in place to ensure firefighting equipment was available on the island during this critical time. Alan stated that some vital resources would be taken to Papa Stour prior to the linkspan work being carried out. He also stated that a Fire and Rescue exercise is being planned for Foula.

4.4 Incident Activity

Mr Street described incident activity in the area as being low, but that one house fire in an area was one too many. He stated that from the Fire and Rescue perspective, most of their callouts related to flooding and wildfires. He then spoke about the exercises that had taken place at such sites as the new space port in Unst and said that this was the first ever such exercise in the United Kingdom.

4.5 Community Safety

Alan pointed out that the priority of the Fire and Rescue Service was the safety of people over concerns for property. He highlighted how home safety visits could be arranged and that Peter Stevenson has been tasked with carrying out these visits

with a special concern for vulnerable people. F Macbeath asked if the Fire and Rescue Service had a list of all properties where oxygen was in use. Mr Street responded by saying that the NHS would not provide such a list but that care sector had provided a number of such addresses.

(Cllr L Peterson entered the meeting.)

4.6 The Bridge of Walls

F Macbeath pointed out that the Bridge-of-Walls is an ageing structure and was not designed for heavy vehicles. Should it fail or become weight restricted, it will leave the residents of Walls and Sandness very vulnerable given that there is no alternative route into the area. It was proposed that Matt Mason be asked to raise this concern at a future Safety and Resilience Board Meeting.

4.7 Scottish Fire and Rescue Public Consultation

Alan invited members of the public to participate in the current Scottish Fire and Rescue public consultation which can be accessed through the Scottish Fire and Rescue Website.

4.8 The Status of the Walls Fire and Rescue Station

In response to a question from the Chair regarding the current status of the Walls Fire and Rescue Station, Mr Street described it as a garage and storage facility. He explained that the Bixter Fire and Rescue Station met the necessary criteria for such a base and also had computer equipment which was used in training.

Mr Street stated that he hoped it would be possible to update the Community Council regarding any future changes to the local service in the future and thanked the Members for their interest in what he had to say. The Chair thanked Mr Street for his visit.

(Alan Street left the meeting,)

(Mr Michael Peterson entered the meeting)

5. Re: Shetland Community Benefit Fund (CGS0040-01-CGST2 Walls Regatta Club) – Michael Peterson

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

The Chair welcomed Michael Peterson to the meeting and invited him to outline how he hoped the Community Council could help support the Walls Regatta Club.

Michael explained that the Regatta Club has decided to seek funding from the Coastal Communities Fund for the cost of a new safety boat and that they would like help from the

Community Council to purchase a new engine which he estimated to cost between £5k and £6K. A discussion took place regarding which tier of the Shetland Community Benefit Fund the Regatta Club should apply to. Members were of the opinion that guard boats were frequently transported to sailing events around Shetland and should be regarded as a Shetland wide resource. They should be eligible for tier 2 funding. Michael also asked if the Community Council would consider providing a grant for a relatively small amount in order to enable the Regatta Club to state that they have sought funding from elsewhere. The Chair pointed out that with the absence of M Forrest, the meeting was no longer quorate but that he felt it probable that such an application would be considered favourably. It was also suggested that the Regatta Club should consider making an application to the Charitable Trust.

(Mr Peterson thanked the Members for their helpful advice and left the meeting)

Action: The Clerk to email Michael Peterson a Community Council Grant Application form.

(M Forrest returned to the meeting)

(Penny Armstrong entered the meeting)

6. Explanation of request by Sandness Community Development with regards Parish Online Community Mapping – Penny Armstrong

On being invited to speak by the Chair, Penny explained that Sandness Community Development is drafting a Local Place Plan. They require to make use of Parish Online Community Mapping. This, in turn, is run by X Mapping. In order for Sandness Community Development to log on to X Mapping, permission is required from this Community Council. Penny then explained that this service is free for the first year and after that its use incurs fees. Penny stated that Sandness Community Development would use their banking details to register with X Mapping. She went on to say that if the Community Council decide to draw up a place plan using X Mapping and if their use of the site extended a year after Sandness Community Development had registered, fees would have to be paid. Whilst she was unsure as to how much the fees would be, she thought it might be in the order of £50. After a brief discussion, it was agreed unanimously to grant Sandness Community Development permission to register with X Mapping.

Action: Clerk to email Penny Armstrong confirming that permission has been given for Sandness Community Development to register with X Mapping.

(Penny Armstrong left the meeting.)

7. Police Report (See email from Barry Alexander of 9/6/25)

Members acknowledged receipt of the April/May police report.

8. Minutes from 3.6.25

The adoption of the minutes from 3rd June 2025 was proposed by M Forrest and seconded by F Macbeath.

9. Matters Arising

Re: 15.2 of 6/25 Community Skips for Large Items of Waste/Unadopted Roads

The Clerk informed the Members that the skip had been well used and, as far as he was aware, had been used by Walls residents only.

10. Housing

M Forrest informed the Members that there had been workmen visiting the vacant council house in Kirkidale. Members expressed their hope that it would soon be occupied.

11. Roads (Including beach tracks)

11.1 The Business Case for Improvements to the A971

Cllr Peterson stated that she hoped this would be presented to Committee in September after the summer recess.

11.2 Repairs to the Trinkie in Walls

The Clerk stated that he had been approached by a member of the public asking if it would be possible for the Restorative Justice team to carry out repairs to the track that runs from JG Repairs to the Stove Cottages. Members approved this request, and the Clerk was asked to contact the Restorative Justice Officer to ask for this work to be carried out.

Action: The Clerk to email the Restorative Justice Department to request that they send a team of workers to carry out the necessary repairs.

11.3 Sandness Active Travel Audit

It was acknowledged that there had been insufficient time to consider this matter. The Clerk was asked to recirculate the

email from Robina Barton and seek responses from the Members.

Action: The Clerk to recirculate the email from Robina Barton and seek the Members' responses.

11.4 Beach Tracks

Members were given a brief summary of how 15 tonnes of aggregate had come to be delivered to the Dale of Walls Beach track without the approval of the Members. This is contrary to how, in previous years, Members had decided on the quantities of aggregate that should be allocated to each of the two tracks. Given that a large quantity of aggregate had been deposited on a site that was not part of the Dale of Walls Beach track, the Clerk was instructed to request that the contractor remove 10 tonnes from the track. The view was expressed that, in future, proper procedures should be followed regarding ordering materials for tracks.

Action: The Clerk to request that the contractor remove 10 tonnes of aggregate from the Dale of Walls Beach track.

12. Planning Consultation Ref: 2025/173/PPF (Repurposing Walls Bakery)

Discussion relating to this planning consultation centred on car parking. It was acknowledged that objections had been filed concerning the lack of dedicated car parking at the site. However, Members felt that any housing in the area should be welcomed. The Clerk was asked to respond to the planning consultation recommending that the application be approved provided that the parking issues can be resolved.

Action: The Clerk to inform the Planning Department that the Members welcome any housing provision in the area and would recommend approval of the application provided that the parking issue can be resolved.

13. Planning Consultation Ref: 2025/158/CONSUL (Proposed removal of Public Payphones)

After a brief discussion on the Planning Consultation, it was felt that the Community Council Members did not feel inclined to respond.

14. Facebook Page for S&WCC

Members feel that the Facebook page is working well.

15. End of Year S&WCC Accounts

The year end accounts for the year ending 31st March 2025 were approved by the Members.

16. Financial Update (See Spreadsheet)

The Clerk stated that he had made two additional payments since updating the spreadsheets. One was to Voluntary Action Shetland for the independent examination of the year end accounts and the other was to Shetland Islands Council for the hire of the skip for Walls.

17. Correspondence (Including emails)

The Clerk stated that an email had been received at the start of the meeting from a Mr Thomas Malcolm regarding defibrillators. The Clerk stated he would circulate it later. All other correspondence had been sent and forwarded via email.

18. AOCB

18.1 Linkspans for the Papa Stour Ferry

J Puckey stated that work to replace the linkspan at the West Burrafirth ferry terminal is due to commence on 8th September but that work on the Papa Stour terminal will not take place until late autumn/early winter to enable lambs to be taken to market. The delay to work on the Papa Stour linkspan is due to problems with the vessel that had been hired to take in a crane.

18.2 The Walls Toilets

The Clerk was asked if he had received a grant application form from the Walls Community Development Group. He stated that. To date, he had not.

19. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was set for Tuesday 2nd September.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 10.00 pm.

Draft minutes of the August 2025 S&WCC Meeting subject to approval at the next meeting)

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