

Unst Community Council

Chair

Caroline Hunter
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Unst
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Clerk

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Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 25th August 2025 at 6.30 pm in the Baltasound School Music Huts and by MsTeams

Present

Caroline Hunter, Chair
David Cooper, Vice Chair
Adam Doull
John Peterson
Ingram Thomson
Gary Betney
Robert Thomson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio) Ms Teams

Attending

Frances Browne
Lynette Spence, Clerk

1. Apologies

Alec Priest
Janice Priest
Ryan Thomson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio) MsTeams
Gordon Thomson (Unst Partnership)
Anthony McLaughlin (Fire Service)

2. Declaration of Interest

Robert declared an interest for item 15 regarding a planning application.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Proposed – Adam Doull
Seconded – Caroline Hunter

4. Matters Arising from last minutes

- White lines have been painted – **Action point:** Lynette to send Thank You letter to Roads Dept.
- Due to family bereavement there is a pause on the Bus consultation. Robert Thomson: “In relation to the bus service consultation I contacted the head of Transport planning and he has confirmed that there will be some additional community consultation. The exact form and timing of that has still to be finalised due to the temporary absence of key staff. I will pass on any updates as they become available.”
- Magnus Malcolmson reply about playparks: “We will be carrying out works during the summer months at Haroldswick and Baltasound play areas as follows.
Haroldswick – Install replacement slide/climbing frame. Replace aerial see-saw with new ability roundabout. New gate and path.
Baltasound – Install new birds nest swing.
- National Trust letter has been sent regarding Halligarth and Lund Road

This item is to be chased up through SIC, as well as the Head of the National Trust. Maggie Sandison is also to be contacted as she was involved with this situation previously. Sheep owner, Dennis Johnson is also to be copied in so he is aware of any discussions.

UCC would like to know what agreement was made between SIC and National Trust, and they would like a site visit to discuss the issues.

The road has seen an increase in traffic from both tourists, funerals and visitors to the graveyard, but the road is in a poor state and four gates to be opened and closed on the way makes access difficult. The car park is also in a mess due to sheep droppings. There were various suggestions such as fencing off the car park, cattle grids instead of gates, and widening the road at the top for buses.

Action point: Lynette to contact Maggie Sandison, SIC Roads Department, Graveyards Dept, National Trust, and Dennis Johnson regarding Lund Road and Graveyard.

- Brondhus Cattlegrid – Neil Hutcheson checking with Engineer to see if it's already on the list.
Action point: Lynette to chase up Brondhus Cattlegrid.
- Gary asked for information regarding the SIC Reserves and how this money is spent. Robert informed the UCC that there is £371 million in the Reserves, and approximately £20 million more has been spent in the last year than is sustainable. **Action point:** Robert will continue to contact Head of Finance for more detailed information about the Reserves.

5. Ferries/Fixed Links

- Discussion about the response from MCA regarding lashing down vehicles on the Bluemull Sound. It is felt that there is some information missing, particularly regarding the lack of mention about 3.5 tonne vehicles requiring to be tied down – this does not appear in the paperwork. The Corrective Action page and the Root Cause sections are blank. There is also a Deviation from Requirement, whereby it is no longer under the Masters Discretion, regarding the unpredictability of the crossing – why is this not in the Corrective Actions section? Adam has done some investigating and it appears it has not been decided what is in the public interest.

It was agreed to request an Internal Review. Alastair Carmichael, Beatrice Wishart and John Smith are all to be copied into discussions. Robert informed UCC to contact the Information Commissioners Office at ico.org.uk

Action point: Request Internal Review, copy in Alastair Carmichael, Beatrice Wishart and John Smith. Also contact ICO.

- Recruitment to the Geira is going well, and new timetables will be drawn up.
- The issue of ferries being continually booked up, despite being very little vehicles in booked queues is ongoing. It was suggested that if emergency vehicles have an automatic booked space, and needs to be lashed down (such as the fire engine), this could be a cause of the problem. It was suggested to tell people to check in the morning for available bookings as some bookings may have been cancelled. It was pointed out that there are time restrictions on both cancelling and booking some ferries – can this be changed? **Action point:** contact Ferries Dept about booking issue and whether emergency vehicles are automatically booked
- A new booking system, with floor plans, is underway, but this won't take effect for at least another year.
- New ferry is still in the design phase.
- There is nothing new regarding Fixed Links. SIC is taking on board information from the Tunnel Action Groups (TAGs), which helps SIC move forward. TAGs are invited to meetings to share information and resolve challenges. There are some political issues to be addressed. It was felt that it's important to hold Public Officers to account.

6. Unst Community Action Plan

- In Gordon's absence, Frances informed UCC that the Community Action Plan was commissioned by the Unst Partnership. Gordon would like the UCC to analyse it and see what UCC thinks the Unst Partnership should take forward. The aim is for it to be included within SIC plans for the future.

- There was discussion about the shortage of housing, which has a knock on effect to the local economy and infrastructure.
- Discussion about Community Buy outs, and being in a position to do this if the opportunity arises. Frances informed UCC that Community Right to Buy is a lengthy process but it is possible. The discussion continued about lack of workers, and again the effect lack of housing has on any developments. Asking people, who already do a lot of volunteering, to do more is difficult.
- It was suggested, to get through the document faster, members from UCC should meet with Gordon to discuss. **Action point:** David and Gary to meet with Gordon to discuss Community Action Plan.

7. NHS response to letter

- Dr Kirsty Brightwell replied to the letter composed by David and Gary regarding equipment and medications available in Unst. David and Gary expressed that they would like to meet her in Lerwick if she is not available to come to Unst. After further discussion it was agreed that more information gathering from the Unst Health Centre would be beneficial, regarding thrombolytic drugs, their side effects and training. Preferably the Unst doctor could join them for a meeting with Dr Brightwell. **Action point:** Gary to contact Unst Health Centre for more information.

8. Community Council Scheme of Arrangements

- The document was adopted and signed. **Action point:** Lynette to return signed form

9. Community Council Elections

- Community Council Elections will be held on 20th November. Councillors were reminded that they must fill in the nomination form to continue.
- **Action points:** Lynette to give everyone nomination forms. Lynette to discuss any requirements with Michael Duncan and Josie MacMillan to ensure procedures are carried out correctly.
- A suggestion was made to write a history of what the UCC has done during the past 3 years in order to both encourage people to join show what the UCC does and supports.
- **Action point:** David volunteered to look at the Minutes and produce a brief summary (one side of A4) of the work of the present Unst Community Council, from Dec 2018.

10. What3words

- The Unst community is to be encouraged to download the app in case of emergency situations.
- **Action point** – Caroline to ask the Health Centre for a poster about What3words for distribution.

11. SIC North Isles Councillors Update

No further updates from Councillors.

12. Unst Partnership Ltd (UP) Update.

- The new *Skip Scheme* is now underway; the next date is Saturday 4th October.
- A new *UP shop* manager has been appointed from 1st September, Jo Aallun. Jo replaces Kathleen Johnson who has been manager for seven years and has done a great job in setting up the shop from scratch to where it is today. The Shop will continue to trade as usual on Thursday and Saturday afternoons but will be closed for Show Day. New low energy heating and LED lighting is being installed with help from a grant from the Energy Saving Trust.
- With the new *Community Action Plan and Housing Needs Assessment*, UP are going to seek funding for a Development Officer to take forward the ideas in these documents.
- *Viking longhouse site*. Painting the longship has now been completed and a start has been made on clearing some of the weeds near the longhouse. Donations to the site, both in cash and online, have been very good and it looks as if it would be feasible for a local group to take the site over on a permanent basis in the future. Some costs have still to be clarified such as Insurance and repairs to the galley, as well as the exact area of land owned by the Shetland Amenity Trust. The Longhouse group has until the end of the year to decide on whether to take the site on or not.

13. Community Involvement Update

- Summer activities went well and it's hoped to do it again, possibly in the Easter holidays.
- Resilience Plan meeting has been delayed but will either be held on 2nd or 4th September. **Action point:** David, Adam, Caroline and Ingram agreed to attend Resilience Plan meeting.

14. Shetland Community Benefit Fund (SCBF)

- David informed UCC that the group had looked back over the past years funding. Groups had found the process fairly straight forward but some minor adjustments were being made.
- There will be a report coming from SCBF soon.
- Gary thanked Frances for her help with paperwork for the VJ event, which was successful, and has donated proceeds to both young and old groups in Unst.

15. Applications for Planning

- Planning consultation – Uyeasound Kirk, Uyeasound

Robert declared an interest and left the meeting.

The UCC felt it is positive that the building will be used, and no-one had any concerns.

Some discussion about proximity to wind turbine, and the rules/regulations of the Planning Department that don't seem to be consistent.

16. Application for Donations

None

17. Unadopted Roads

None

18. Correspondence

None

19. Community Council Finances

- Print out of accounts was given to all in attendance.

20. A.O.C.B.

- Anthony McLaughlin to be invited to next meeting. **Action point:** Lynette to send invitation.
- Emergency Services Exercise at the Spaceport was held a month ago and was good for emergency services to become accustomed to the layout of the area.
- The amended dates for UCC meetings to be sent to all who attend UCC meetings.
Action point: Lynette to send out the revised dates.

21. Date of next meeting

- The date of the next meeting is on Monday the 29th September 2025.

Chair: ___ Caroline Hunter _____ Date: 29/09/25

Clerk: ___ Lynette Spence _____