

Sandsting & Aithsting Community Council

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Minutes of a meeting of Sandsting & Aithsting Community Council held in the Rankin Lounge, Aith on Monday 14 April 2025 at 7.30pm.

Present: J Priest Mrs J Fraser
Mrs S Deyell Mrs O Jamwal-Fraser
Ex Officio: Cllr L Peterson
By invitation: Ms Robina Barton SIC/ZetTrans
In attendance: Mrs L Fraser, Clerk

Mr J Priest presiding

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were received from Mrs L Johnson, Mr G Morrison, Mrs R Fraser, Community Involvement & Development Worker and Mr M Duncan, Community Council Liaison Officer.

MINUTES & REPORT: The minutes and report of the meeting held on 10 March 2025, having been circulated, were taken as read and were approved. Moved by Mrs S Deyell, seconded by the Chairman.

SHETLAND ACTIVE TRAVEL AUDIT – SKELD: The Chairman welcomed Ms R Barton to the meeting.

Ms R Barton shared the slidebank developed by SYSTRA (consultants) who had visited the area in February 2024 when there was snow on the ground. Various discussions took place and the following comments were made:-

There are no footways and verges are very narrow with deep ditches and it was suggested that stone filling be used in some of them to address this. Motorists realise that pedestrians have nowhere to get off the road.

Where junctions have large radii this is probably required to allow for turning of large vehicles which are necessary for deliveries/commercial activities at the marina. There can be an issue with car drivers cutting across the wide junctions,

The school is currently mothballed but may be used as a community venue if not used as a school in future so needs to be considered.

Access to the bus stop at the Grindibreck junction needs improving – it is a necessary stop, but unsafe, due to being on a blind corner. The bus has to stop in the road. There is also a longstanding request for an additional bus stop by the graveyard in Reawick. Several elderly people living close by would use it.

The pier serves commercial boats so trucks need access. The lighting is good in the pier and marina area and there is a tarmaced area where children cycle. More indication of the one-way system could be helpful and all should be made aware of the variety of activities going on in the space. It would also be helpful to alert people to the presence of a private driveway in front of the camping bod, since there are often cars or children coming out of it.

Perhaps some signage/mirrors or traffic calming intervention on the road to the marina would be of help.

There is a rough lane behind Grindibreck that provides a short cut off the main road from the school to Grindibreck which might benefit from some improvement, but nothing as drastic as making it a formal path. Generally gravel paths are safer than more formal footpaths in areas where they are not regularly cleared in winter. Someone generally cuts the grass on the track annually on a voluntary basis.

Parking at the Hall is haphazard and not the best use of space so some demarcation would be helpful. Children can't easily get to the playpark from the hall when the parking area is full of cars. There is also a lot of broken glass in the hall car park because the glass bank is there. Urban street lighting is generally not desirable in a rural area – pedestrians should be encouraged to take a torch - but the road from the hall to the marina junction could benefit from improved lighting.

There can be an issue with visiting cyclists blocking roads for extended periods. It would be helpful to raise awareness of single road etiquette – perhaps leaflets on North ferries and in bus stops, etc. LPA may have developed something for cruise ship cyclists that could be used/adapted.

The Priorities are:-

Additional bus shelter at the Graveyard

Improvements around the hall

Address narrow verges with deep ditches.

Ms R Barton said that she will pass her comments on to SYSTRA and also send us a copy. The Chairman thanked Ms Barton for attending our meeting. She then left.

BUSINESS ARISING: Community Council Scheme of Establishment: Mr M Duncan sent on new Scheme of Establishment documents for circulation to all the members. The new scheme came into effect from 25 March 2025. He informed the members that there is a temporary relaxation of the co-option rules which was approved by the Special Council which will remain in place until the 2025 Community Council Elections. The maximum co-options have been removed so Community Councils with vacant seats may co-opt to fill these spaces. Furthermore in the event that any young person under 16 years of age is appointed as an Associate Member, we should get in touch with him as soon as possible. It is a requirement that the Council's Youth Services team are made as and when a young person under 16 is appointed to ensure appropriate support is available. Guidance on this topic will be developed and circulated in due course.

Road Matters: Skeld Brig: No further information received.

Extra bus shelter near Chapelside, Reawick: Still no reply.

Children at Play sign at Skeld: Not yet provided.

Old Overhead Power Lines near Skeetlie Road, East Burrafirth: No reply.

Funding: Funding details have been received from Mr M Duncan and circulated to the members.

R100 Broadband Evaluation: This scheme appears to have fallen short of what was hoped and work is presently being carried out in Unst.

Community Councils – Archiving documents: The Clerk had received a reply from Mr M Duncan saying she can have additional time for this task. She had asked if he had more recent minutes but he replied that they are all stored electronically and that he does not hold paper files any more.

Viking Genes Shetland Launch invitation: A message was received from Prof Jim Wilson saying that the launch of Viking Genes Shetland with a newly established committee aiming to raise awareness of the work of Viking Genes and support fundraising to allow genetic screening of the Shetland population for health risks that are important locally will be held at 10.30am on Wednesday 21 May 2025 in Mareel. The committee is made up of Sandra Laurenson OBE Chair, joined by Peter Malcolmson OBE, Lord Lieutenant Lindsay Lulloch QPM, Elaine Jameison and Valerie Nicolson.

The members were pleased to receive the invitation and Mrs J Fraser or the Chairman will represent this Community Council.

PLANNING APPLICATION: The following planning application was considered and approved:-

2025/066/PPP To erect dwellinghouse; create parking area turning area; install new septic tank and surface water soakaway; demolish ruins of existing building (Planning Permission in Principle) at East Hall, Sandsound, Bixter by George Morrison.

FINANCIAL APPLICATION: A request for financial assistance was received from Mrs B Ferrie on behalf of the Aithsting Sandsting Group. She explained that the Group hope to erect a memorial for John J Robertson of Nesthouse, Aith who had led a very interesting life. The members present agreed to the merits of a memorial in his name but unfortunately we do not have any funds remaining. However, we will suggest that they try the Shetland Community Benefit Fund – Community Grant Scheme who may be able to help them.

UPDATE FROM BURIAL SERVICES: A message was received from the SIC Burial Ground Officer informing the Community Council 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 information is available on their website: <https://www.shetland.gov.uk/births-marriages-deaths/burial-services/2>.

VE & VJ DAY: The VE & VJ Days were discussed and some of the area is marking the occasions in September.

CC ELECTION AWARENESS: A message was received from Mr M Duncan saying that a small short life working group is to be set up to agree a range of publicity methods about the Community Council elections later this year. He is asking Community Councils to input into this process and take ownership of the publicity arrangements. As well as publicity being generated by SIC, it is imperative that Community Councils also carry out their own local awareness raising and spread the word over the coming months. He is seeking 3-4 either Community Councillors or Clerks and needs a reply by 1 May. None of those present volunteered.

INFORMATION: Several emails sharing reminders and information with the Community Council were received and noted.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be held in Skeld Hall, Skeld on Monday 19 May 2025 at 7.30pm.