

# Sandsting & Aithsting Community Council

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Minutes of a meeting of Sandsting & Aithsting Community Council held in Bixter Community Hall on Monday 10 March 2025 at 7.30pm.

Present: J Priest J Abernethy  
Mrs S Deyell Mrs L Johnson  
Ex Officio: Cllr L Peterson  
By invitation: Ms Julie Graham, Engagement Officer, UHI  
In attendance: Mrs L Fraser, Clerk

Mr J Priest presiding

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Chairman paid tribute to the late Florence Grains who passed away recently. She had served as SIC Councillor for this area from 1986 to 2012 and was a regular attendant at Community Council meetings throughout that time. She was an outstanding Councillor with a huge amount of both knowledge and dedication to Shetland and in particular to the Westside. Her approachable style and genuine interest in folk helped her to act out her role as Councillor in an exemplary manner. We, as a Community Council and the wider Westside community, have a huge amount to thank her for. We extend our condolences to all her family.

**APOLOGIES:** Apologies for absence were received from Mr J D Garrick, Mrs J Fraser, Mrs O Jamwal-Fraser, 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 February 2025, having been circulated, were taken as read and were approved. Moved by Mrs S Deyell, seconded by Mrs L Johnson.

**UNIVERSITY OF THE HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS (UHI) SHETLAND:** The Chairman welcomed Ms Julie Graham, Engagement Officer for UHI Shetland, to the meeting.

Ms Graham explained that she had been appointed to her post in October and they want her to engage more with the communities to find out how people find accessing courses and to hear feedback about UHI Shetland.

The Chairman asked about the recent cuts in what UHI Shetland do in Shetland.

Ms Graham said that in other areas she had been asked about the lack of agriculture courses but the members had not been aware of that in this area.

Ms Graham said that previously in some areas the short courses had been hit and miss, due to difficulty in getting instructors and that there are now instructors. There are now other training organisations working in Shetland supplying short courses.

Mrs S Deyell asked about the textile dept and Ms Graham explained that they are not currently using the big machines and that the textile course is now part of creative arts.

However, many people would only like to do the textile unit. People are disappointed with this.

The Chairman suggested that the courses have become more academic instead of vocational and academic.

The Chairman asked about what is available for Construction. Ms Graham stated there is Skills4Work and construction courses available.

Ms Graham said that there is really good support available while doing HE & FE courses for people with disabilities – neurodivergent, dyslexia, etc - and money may be available for those on HE courses with disabilities.

Mr J Abernethy said that the courses give the young ones an idea of what they want to do and felt that Skills4Work was a great option. He enquired if there could be more options for girls.

The Chairman enquired about transferable skills.

Ms Graham agreed that the skills are transferable between oil, gas and renewables as part of Just Transition.

The male/female split was discussed and Ms Graham confirmed that there are fewer males on care courses and that creative arts attracts more female applicants. However, either sex can do anything. Hospitality is short of applicants. It was agreed that it would be beneficial if courses can be available online or blended.

It was also agreed that the younger generation are quite happy to use online learning but Ms Graham felt that they should also be building resilience to be better prepared for the work place. Work has changed since Covid and it has caused a certain level of anxiety which puts them outside of their comfort zone.

Ms Graham said that she has an online questionnaire which she will forward to the Clerk to be circulated to the Community Council members and placed on the CC Facebook page. She added that she hopes to find another way of advertising their short courses.

The Chairman thanked Ms Graham for attending our meeting. She then left.

**BUSINESS ARISING: Police Report:** The Police Report for December and January was received and circulated to the members.

**Community Council Scheme Review:** This review is ongoing.

**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.

**Shetland Community Benefit Scheme (SCBF) Community Grant Scheme (CGS):** Some promotional correspondence was received.

**Local Place Plans (LPP):** On going.

**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 contacted Mr M Duncan to discuss this and he had agreed to check to see how much of the material he has already received in recent years.

**Financial applications: CDF grants:** Some of the groups have already forwarded the documents in order to claim their grants.

**Maintenance grants:** Application forms have been sent to the committees of the halls, piers and toilets and the grants will be paid by the end of March.

**Visitor Levy:** FORGOT TAE DISCUSS DIS

**Defibrillator Training:** This training has not yet been organised.

**DA VOAR REDD UP:** A message was received from the Amenity Trust saying that this year's Voar Redd up will take place between 19-25 April.

**BUILDING WARRANT TABLE OF FEES:** A copy of the Building Warrant Tables of Fees which take effect from 1 April 2025 was received and noted.

**PUBLIC & SCHOOL BUS BUSINESS CASE:** A message was received from Ms E Park, Transport Contracts and Operations Officer, Transport Planning Service, updating the Community Council on the continued development of the Public and School Bus Business case. She says that, due to the volume of responses, it has been necessary to amend the timeline for the business case work and service contracts have been extended for 12 months in order to enable this to happen.

**FUNDING REQUEST:** A request was received from the Open Door Drama Group for assistance towards their trip to Pitlochry Festival Theatre. Unfortunately our financial applications were considered at our February meeting and our funds for this year have been disbursed.

**VOICEABILITY:** An email was received from Ms Vikki Parry, Advocate for VoiceAbility, introducing herself and saying they support people to be heard in decisions about their health, care and wellbeing. A reply will be sent asking if she can send us some advice for distribution.

**AITH HALL ACCOUNT:** An account was received for the use of the Rankin Lounge for our meeting on 8 July 2024. This will be settled.

**INSURANCE DOCUMENTS:** The renewal certificate and policy schedule for 2024/2025 was received and noted.

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

**NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting will be held in the Rankin Lounge, Aith on Monday 14 April 2025 at 7.30pm.