

Unst Community Council

Chair

Caroline Hunter
Shirva
Uyeasound
Unst
Shetland

Clerk

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Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 29th September 2025 at 6.30 pm in the Baltasound School Music Huts and by MsTeams

Present

Caroline Hunter, Chair
David Cooper, Vice Chair
Alec Priest
Janice Priest
Ingram Thomson
Robert Thomson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio) Ms Teams

Attending

Frances Browne
Gordon Thomson
Lynette Spence, Clerk

1. Apologies

Adam Doull
John Peterson
Gary Betney
Ryan Thomson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio)
Anthony McLaughlin (Fire Scotland)

2. Declaration of Interest

Janice and Ingram declared an interest in item 7 (Spaceport)
Robert Thomson declared an interest in item 14 (Planning Applications)

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Approved – Ingram Thomson
Seconded – Caroline Hunter

4. Matters Arising from last minutes

- Reply from Andrew Inkster regarding ferries being falsely booked: “I’m afraid that the problem is due to people and companies booking multiple runs. We’ve seen this on Whalsay too, and persons will book consecutive runs in and out (or vice-versa) in mornings and afternoons. They then use one run but do not cancel others, which presents the problems you describe. Unfortunately, our booking system does not preclude the booking of multiple runs by the same person/vehicle, and because there is no payment up-front, there is no deterrent to people doing this. My hope is that a new booking system will be more powerful, and able to stop persons doing this, and that the Council will agree to demanding payment at time of booking. In terms of timing, we’re looking to procure a new system as quickly as possible, but I don’t see anything being installed before summer next year.”

5. Ferries/Fixed Links

There seems to be some confusion as the MCA have stated they did not say vehicles had to be lashed. Andrew Inkster has replied and, whereas he originally said it was an MCA decision, he now says it wasn't. He also stated that he cannot review the decision because the MCA has taken away that ability. It seems the 'Master's Discretion' has been removed due to a change in classification of the Bluemull Sound. Clarification is required about whether it is now classed as 'sheltered Waters' or 'Coastal Waters'. There was nothing in the section of the report about what changes were being made after the incident, but if there was a reclassification this should've been mentioned. It was also pointed out that if the waters have been reclassified then any replacement vessels should be suitable for Coastal Waters.

There was some further discussion about where to go from here, such as writing to MCA to ask for clarification, contacting skippers for their opinions/advice.

Fixed Links

Alec informed the councillor that the SIC as been moving forward, and Yell is to be used as a test case.

6. Lund Road/Carpark – site visit

Following the site visit to the Lund Burial Ground on 23rd September 2025, attended by SIC Burial Services and the Roads Section, Unst Community Council representatives Ingram and John, and the current tenant, several priorities were identified to improve access.

Due to current budget constraints a phased programme of works will be adopted, beginning with the hilltop corner and progressing to the road and car park.

Main points in order of urgency and approximate scheduling:

1. Hilltop bend (High priority, 2025-26): Widening and surface dressing required.
2. Single-track access road (High priority, 2025-26): Pothole repairs with tar are required.
3. Surface dress access road (Medium priority, 2027): Surface dressing required
4. Car park (Medium priority, 2027): Needs cleared, treated and fenced, with gate and cattle grid installation.

As the burial ground access road is not only used for funerals and visitors but also lies within a working croft and close to a beach, there is considerable pressure on both the road and car park. These improvements will help maintain safe and reliable access to the burial ground for the future.

7. Spaceport report response

Spacewatch UK report was noted.

8. UCC achievements – David Cooper

David has gone through previous minutes to compile a list of achievements and the types of things the Community Council does, this will hopefully give more information to anyone thinking to put in a nomination form. **Action point:** Lynette to put up in local shops etc.

9. Community Council Elections – Nomination forms

Action point: Lynette to post the completed nomination forms.

10. SIC North Isles Councillors Update

Robert informed the group about a Housing Workshop that is to be arranged and could be very worthwhile. Luke Fraser and Davy Campbell helped get 60 houses built in rural Orkney over 5-6 years. They have been employed for 25 days to do a consultation in Shetland, and there may be a Housing Development Officer post created for Shetland.

11. Unst Partnership Ltd (UP) Update.

The next community *Skip Scheme* day is on Saturday 4th October, 11-1pm at Baltasound pierhead.

Low energy heating and LED lighting has now been installed in the **UP shop**, fully covered through a grant and loan from the Energy Saving Trust scheme run by Business Energy Scotland. This is a good scheme for any businesses seeking to save on energy costs and is to be recommended.

Action point: create FB post to promote Energy Scotland Scheme.

Two Unst councillors met with two UP directors recently to look at the remaining priority ideas in the **Unst Community Action Plan**. The main conclusion was that that the Community Council would back the creation of a Development Worker post to take these ideas forward. High priorities in Themes 3-5 were seen to be the provision of more housing; the future development of a hotel that was open to visitors and resident alike; continued lobbying from UCC & UP to improve health provision, particularly dentistry; the development of trades apprenticeships in partnership with local businesses; and the improvement of tourist/visitor facilities generally.

Funding for such a post may be available from SCBF and the Coastal Communities Fund.

UCC would be happy to give support towards applying for a Development Officer.

Viking longhouse site. UP is still waiting to receive a quote for Public Liability Insurance at the Viking site but if it comes in at a reasonable price, it could make it feasible for a local group to take on to run the site in 2026. Donations through the summer months have been good and they have continued to be good through this month despite the downturn in visitor numbers.

The Shetland Tour Guides Association and other tour providers have been contacted to factor in a donation at the site for 2026 and one major tour operator has already said they will factor this into their budget for next year.

12. Community Involvement Update

- Digital Support will be available at the community Library once a month until Christmas.
- Winter pop-ins to be arranged.
- Representatives from HIE have visited some of the projects they have helped fund such as the Unstfest shed and Boating Club. There was also discussion about Space Tourism.
- Community Resilience meeting is at 7pm, not 6.30pm as previously stated.

13. Shetland Community Benefit Fund (SCBF)

2025/26 Allocation £6,757

David informed the group about the report that recently came out.

Action point: SCBF poster to be put up in local shops etc (Lynette)

14. Applications for Planning

Snarravoe, Uyeasound - application was noted and discussed.

15. Application for Donations

None

16. Unadopted Roads

None

17. Correspondence

- Request from member of community to look into baby changing facilities in ferry waiting rooms/toilets, as well as heating. **Action point:** Lynette to look into this.
- Ferry complaints – noted and discussed
- Request for Green bins for houses in Nikkavordlea. **Action point:** – Lynette to look into this.

18. Community Council Finances

Print out of accounts shared

19. A.O.C.B.

- RS Henderson Invoice – should've been sent to Unst Partnership. Gordon will sort out.
- Community concerns about recent incidents – **Action point:** Lynette to write letter
- Abandoned car – SIC is aware
- Colvister cattle grid issues – **Action point:** Lynette to contact John Duncan
- Might need a UCC meeting after elections. **Action point:** Lynette to contact Michael Duncan
- Request for a police representative to attend next meeting to discuss local issues. **Action point:** Lynette to contact Alexander Barry.

20. Date of next meeting – 17th November 2025

Chair: _____ Date: _____

Clerk: _____