

Lerwick Community Council

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 3rd November 2025
AT TOWN HALL/MS TEAMS AT 6.00PM

1. Chair's Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Present

Jim Anderson (Chair)
Andy Carter
Karen Fraser
Brian Harris
Amanda Hawick
Stewart Hay
Averil Simpson
Diana Winfield

In attendance

Dawn Ratter (Clerk)
Steve Mathison
Police Scotland
Shetland Times
*Shetland News
Elaine Johnson

Apologies

Shayne McLeod
Stewart Hay
Jonathan Williamson
Emma Williamson
Cllr Gary Robinson

Ex-Officio

Cllr Stephen Leask
Cllr Neil Pearson
Cllr Arwed Wenger
*Cllr Cecil Smith

* On-line Via MS Teams

3. Declarations of Interest

10 – Cllr C Smith & Cllr A Wenger

4. Minutes from meeting held for approval

4.1 Monday 6th October 2025

Approved by: KF

Seconded by: BH

5. Police Report

5.1 August/September

Sergeant Alan Patrick attended the meeting.

During the reporting period, a total of 63 crimes were recorded in the Lerwick area, with 15 currently detected. There continue to be incidents involving attempts to obtain drugs through the postal system. Police are actively addressing these issues, including the use of sniffer dogs to detect illegal substances. Several drug-related detections have been made, particularly in areas near the town centre and the Esplanade.

A number of crimes involving disorder were also reported, including incidents of vandalism and breaches of the peace. There have been several detections in relation to these offences. Additionally, five police assaults were recorded; however, all occurred during a single incident on the same night.

The remaining matters primarily relate to traffic offences. Officers have recently undergone training in drug-driving detection and are now equipped to conduct roadside tests for cannabis and cocaine. These tests involve a small device that collects a sample from the tongue. If the presence of drugs is detected, a blood test is then required to determine the exact levels. There has been a noticeable rise in drug-driving reports, although results must be confirmed by a laboratory before charges can be brought. As winter approaches there have also been a number of vehicles stopped due to defective tyres.

AH asked whether the recent speeding offences were related to the implementation of the new 20mph speed limit. It was clarified that the offences in question occurred prior to the introduction of the new limit.

Finally, it was noted that there were 23 incidents related to mental health and 19 concern for a person calls. While these figures may appear high for an area like Shetland, the attending officer noted that the volume of such calls has increased over time and is consistent with trends observed in other areas. Cllr N Pearson commented that it is preferable for such incidents to be reported, as this ensures appropriate responses and support can be provided.

6. Actions from last meeting

- 6.1 Action tracker spreadsheet
Noted.

7. Correspondence/ Discussion Points

- 7.1 SCOP-0071 – Shetland Offshore Wind Limited – Stoura Offshore Wind Farm – Scoping Issued
Noted.

- 7.2 SIC Economic Development Support – Autumn Drop in Events (28 Oct – 20 Nov)
Tuesday 11 November and Thursday 20th November

→ ACTION: Clerk to share dates with members by email.

- 7.3 Statkraft – Tagdale Green Ammonia

AC expressed concern regarding the proposed Tagdale Green Ammonia project, noting that ammonia is a hazardous substance with serious health implications if inhaled. Although the development lies outside the Lerwick Community Council boundary, AC felt it was important for the Council to remain informed and engaged due to potential regional impacts.

Statkraft have offered a meeting with Lerwick Community Council members ahead of the public events. RL, DW and KF agreed to attend the meeting.

JD raised broader concerns about the ongoing industrialisation of Shetland, stating that it appears the islands are increasingly open to developments that compromise the natural heritage, often without clear benefits to local communities. AC echoed this, highlighting the health and safety implications of yet another industrial plant. JD also referenced the frequent mention of fuel poverty in Shetland, questioning the value of such schemes if they do not directly support local people.

JA inquired about the scale of the proposed plant, with an estimated capacity of 60-80MW noted, not even a wind turbine nowadays. JD emphasised his concerns and said he doesn't feel this warrants the destruction of Shetland's countryside for something of that scale. AH, as Chair of the Shetland Tourism Association, expressed alarm at the potential impact industrialisation on tourism, citing the existing challenges of attracting visitors to the Shetland and the risk of deterring them further.

Cllr S Leask supports AH's concerns, expressing a sense of powerlessness in the face of large-scale infrastructure projects. He referenced the recent SSEN development and the potential erection of pylons, which he described as "horrific", noting that the visual impact of these structures makes wind turbines appear more acceptable by comparison. Cllr S Leask stressed the need for stronger environmental protections and a more strategic, Shetland-wide approach to managing industrial development, particularly in relation to the protection of Shetland's wildlife and heritage.

Cllr S Leask also noted that when Shetland Islands Council previously attempted to reject a development, the decision was overturned by the Scottish Government, raising concern about local autonomy. Questions were raised about the financial implications of infrastructure failures, such as the cost of repairing underground cables or replaced damaged pylons.

DW emphasised the importance of preserving Shetland's natural heritage, not only for environmental reasons but also for the mental wellbeing of islands residents and the sustainability of family life. JD added that each time he drives over the hills and see the altered landscape caused by the Viking Windfarm, he is reminded of the environmental cost. JA commented that the new pylons are even more visually intrusive than wind turbines.

Members discussed whether LCC could take any formal action to raise concerns with SIC, the Scottish Government, or other relevant bodies. Members noted the lack of visibility around the full impact of such developments, particularly in terms of landscape and community effects.

Cllr S Leask suggested that the upcoming elections in May present an opportunity to begin lobbying candidates on these issues and to seek commitments to protect Shetland's environment and heritage.

AH referred to statistics shared at a recent education meeting, highlighting that in ten years' time, Shetland is projected to have half the current number of school-age children, with declining birth rates and an ageing population. JA confirmed that school rolls are already dropping. AC added that the challenges extend beyond tourism, noting that even basic services such as cafes are struggling to stay open due to staffing shortages. The lack of people on the islands is a growing concern.

A question was raised about the source of water required for the ammonia production, and it was agreed that this should be addressed at the upcoming meeting with Statkraft.

RL also shared concerns about the environmental impact of offshore wind farms, citing examples from Norway where fishing grounds have been devastated, with no marine life found even several metres below the surface. It was suggested that this should be discussed under a separate item at the next meeting.

→ ACTION: Clerk to contact Statkraft to confirm a meeting and add an item to the next agenda re Industrialisation of Shetland.

7.4 Parking Concerns

Elaine Johnson attending the meeting to raise concerns about illegal and inconsiderate parking in Lerwick, which she described as the worst she has seen in her lifetime. She highlighted Commercial Street as a particularly problem area, where vehicles are frequently left unattended for extended periods. She also noted persistent issues in the Fogralea area, where cars are often parked on junctions, and at times, blocking driveways.

The attending police officer acknowledged the concerns and explained while parking in certain areas of the town centre is prohibited, enforcement is challenging unless officers witness the offence directly. Some instances of illegal parking could potentially obstruct emergency service access. Although Lerwick has a 24/7 police station, officers are often engaged with other incidents. Therefore, members of the public were encouraged to report illegal parking by emailing contactus@scotland.police.uk.

DW raised concerns about the safety of individuals reporting such incidents, noting that some residents are reluctant to come forward due to fear of repercussions. The police officer in attendance assured members that, in line with data protection regulations, the identities of those reporting offences would not be disclosed. However, it was acknowledged that for wheelchair users and others with mobility issues, anonymity can be more difficult to maintain.

AH expressed sympathy with Elaine's situation and noted that Shetland currently has no traffic warden. She proposed that the Community Council write to Shetland Islands Council (SIC) to stress the importance of reinstating this role, as illegal parking is a widespread issue across the isles. Examples were given, including vehicles parking in disabled bays, on double yellow lines, and inappropriately parked caravans and buses.

The police representative agreed that a dedicated traffic warden would be beneficial, and Elaine supported this suggestion.

AC noted that while the issue may be considered low-level, the Council could take steps such as ensuring that double yellow lines are clearly visible. He also suggested that a public education campaign could help raise awareness. JA proposed that SIC could lead by example by encouraging its own staff not to park illegally while using council vehicles.

JD fully supported AH's proposal to write to SIC, describing the parking situation in Lerwick as "horrendous". JA added that the issues has been raised multiple times at previous meetings. Members agreed that the problem is ultimately a safety concern, with illegally park vehicles causing obstructions and posing risks. Given the police's limited capacity, a traffic warden focused solely on parking enforcement would be a valuable resource.

AH raised a broader concern about the centralisation of emergency services, noting that it can take up to 45 minutes to get through to the appropriate contact. She questioned whether this was indicative of a wider issues that should be raised with the local MSP.

KF observed that the growing number of vehicles per household is contributing to the problem, and that parking pressures are likely to worsen over time. She also noted the impact of the Lerwick Port Authority's closure of Victoria Pier during the summer cruise season, which further limits available parking.

Cllr S Leask recalled that traffic wardens were previously under the remit of the police until around 2004, after which responsibility transferred to SIC. He agreed with AH and JD that LCC should write to SIC to advocate for the reinstatement of a traffic warden. Cllr S Leask also noted that when a warden was in place, parking was limited to 45 minutes in some areas of the town centre, whereas now vehicles are often left all day. He supported a formal letter to SIC requesting a review of the volume of incidents and the need for enforcement.

AC reiterated the value of an educational campaign and suggested that issuing a small number of fines could help shift public attitudes toward parking. KF asked whether such fines would be fixed penalties and whether they would be publicly reported. It was confirmed that all such incidents would be included in the monthly police report.

BH raised concerns about the speed of vehicles travelling along the south side of Commercial Street. The police representative acknowledged the issue and agreed to look into deploying officers to monitor the area. JD queried who would be responsible for initiating speed camera installations.

AS noted that vehicles should not be on Commercial Street during designated hours on weekdays. It was confirmed that the SIC owns the "smiley face" speed awareness

signs, and members agreed that such visual aids can be effective in encouraging safer driving.

RL highlighted congestion issues near the NorthLink ferry terminal, particularly during peak sailing times when traffic is often backed up past JB's Autostore and the Station Garage. He questioned how emergency services would access the area in the event of an incident. JD responded that emergency services could use the Old North Road as an alternative route.

AH expressed concern that the situation is likely to deteriorate further with the development of 350 new homes at Stoney Hill. A further 200 homes planned within the Knab redevelopment without any corresponding road infrastructure improvements in the area. JA noted the welcome introduction of the new one-way system at AHS. He also supported RL's view that a roundabout should have been implemented at the NorthLink terminal junction to ease congestion.

→ ACTION: Clerk to draft letter to SIC to express concerns regarding illegal parking and to request the reinstatement of a traffic warden.

8. Community Council Elections 2025

Uncontested members are elected from 11am on 20 November 2025. All existing CC members will continue until midnight on Wednesday 19 November 2025.

→ ACTION: Clerk to add a CC vacancies to the December Agenda.

9. Finance

9.1 Financial Statement Noted.

→ ACTION: Clerk to add a commitment for the Dog Fouling Campaign.

9.2 VCF – Dog Fouling – Winning Competition Entries

Members noted with appreciation the excellent response from pupils at Sound Primary School to the recent dog fouling awareness competition, supported through the VCF. A note of thanks was extended to the school for the effort and creativity shown by the pupils.

JA shared the winning entries on screen, which were well received.

10. Planning (all plans can be viewed at: <https://pa.shetland.gov.uk/online-applications/>)

10.1 Local Place Plans No comments.

10.2 Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of two buildings comprising eight flatted dwellings.

7, 7a, 9, 9a, 22, 22a, 24, 24a Pitt Lane, Lerwick, Shetland ZE1 0YP Ref. No: 2025/269/CAC | Received: Thu 16 Oct 2025 | Validated: Thu 16 Oct 2025 | Status: Pending Consideration

No comments.

10.3 External alterations including replacement of 2 no. External doors and installation of 2 no. extract vents.

38 St Olaf Street Lerwick Shetland ZE1 0DA Ref. No: 2025/268/PPF | Received: Thu 16 Oct 2025 | Validated: Thu 23 Oct 2025 | Status: Pending Consideration

No comments.

10.4 To create new bus parking area with adjacent fuelling and washing bays; install fuel tank and other facilities; erect new staff welfare building.

South-West Of Nordavatn Lerwick Shetland ZE1 0JF Ref. No: 2025/258/PPF | Received: Mon 06 Oct 2025 | Validated: Mon 06 Oct 2025 | Status: Pending Consideration

JD raised concerns regarding the proximity of the proposed development to the public water supply for Lerwick. Having reviewed the plans online, JD expressed unease about the apparent lack of detail concerning the separation between the proposed facilities and the water treatment infrastructure. He noted that none of the consultees who had responded to date appeared to have addressed the potential pollution risks.

JA advised that, while limited in what he could comment on, the application appears to consolidate existing infrastructure on the site.

The proposed staff welfare building was noted to be a portacabin, providing kitchen and toilet facilities for staff.

Following discussion, it was agreed that LCC would write to planning to express concern and request clarification on the environmental safeguards in place, particularly the risk of fuel or chemical spills entering the soil and potentially affecting the Sandy Loch Drive water supply.

→ ACTION: Clerk to write to Planning.

11. AOB

4G and Broadband Connections

JA raised the issue of the recent broadband and mobile network outage in Shetland, which lasted for 26 days due to damage to an undersea cable. He proposed that LCC consider writing to Ofcom to raise concerns about the service obligations of broadband and mobile providers. With increasing reliance on digital connectivity for both personal and professional needs, the outage highlighted the vulnerability of Shetland's communications infrastructure.

Members noted that the disruption affected a wide range of services, including post officers, business, card payment systems, and access to healthcare for individuals being cared for at home. It was also noted that during the outage customers attempting to switch service providers were unable to do so, and support levels varied significantly between providers. While some companies, such as Vodafone, offered unlimited mobile data, this was of limited use in areas without reliable mobile signal – an issue that remains prevalent even in Lerwick.

AH, who operates a local business, shared concerns about the financial impact of the outage and the lack of accountability from service providers. She suggested that affected individuals should consider raising complaints with the Communications Ombudsman, particularly in cases of lost income or perceived discrimination due to geographic location.

Cllr S Leask noted that the upcoming Telecommunications Resilience Summit, scheduled for 21st November presents an opportunity to voice these concerns.

Following discussion, it was agreed that LCC would write to Ofcom to express concern over the resilience of telecommunications infrastructure in Shetland and to seek clarification on the obligations of service providers in ensuring continuity of service in remote and islands communities.

→ ACTION: Clerk to draft letter to Ofcom.

Conservation Areas

Concerns were raised regarding recent works carried out within the conservation area around St Olaf Street. It was noted that conservation-stander materials were used to replace paving outside 49 St Olaf Street. However, the next phase of work – extending along the back of the Flower Park – has been replaced with tarred ruckle, which contrasts sharply with the existing conservation paving and may not be in keeping with the character of the area.

AH also highlighted issues with the quality of recent roadworks, including significant dips in the road surface following completion. Additionally, the white lines at the garages on Union Street have not been reinstated after previous works.

→ ACTION: JD to follow up on these concerns.

Last Term of the Community Council

A note of thanks was formally expressed to the outgoing members of LCC in recognition of their commitment, time and valuable contributions over the years. Their service to the community was greatly appreciated.

12. Date of Next Meeting

12.1 The next meeting will be held on Monday 1st December 2025.