

# Unst Community Council

## Chair

Caroline Hunter  
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## Clerk

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## Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> November 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  
John Peterson  
Ingram Thomson  
Gary Betney  
Robert Thomson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio) Ms Teams

### Attending

Frances Browne  
Gordon Thomson  
Lynette Spence, Clerk

#### 1. Apologies

Adam Doull  
Ryan Thomson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio) MsTeams

#### 2. Declaration of Interest

Caroline, Janice, Frances and Alec all declared an interest in Item 14 – applications for funding.

#### 3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Proposed – Janice Priest  
Seconded – Alec Priest

#### 4. Matters Arising from last minutes

- Baby changing facilities at ferry terminal waiting rooms is being looked into.
- Colvister Cattle Grid – no reply to email but Ingram Thomson can confirm that some work has been done but yet to be finished.
- Wheelie bins at Nikkavord Lea – Householders must pay a £48 charge for a black bag bin.
- Police involvement in local issues – the reply to the query stated that incidents should be reported to the authorities. **Action point:** Lynette will reply to request a social media post that UCC can share.

#### 5. Ferries/Fixed Links

Due to Adam not being able to attend this meeting it was decided to leave discussing ferries until the next meeting as he has been contacting people about the issues with ferries.

[Fixed Links](#)

Alec informed the group that the AGM of the Tunnel Action Group has been held, and fundraising continues.

#### 6. **SIC North Isles Councillors Update**

There were no new updates from Councillors. Robert is waiting for new information concerning the bus timetable.

There was discussion about the ongoing housing situation. Housing has a huge impact on the community, the school roll and employment in Unst.

Although David and Gary are leaving the UCC, they feel strongly about this and intend to continue chasing this up. Ryan Thomson may also have more information.

The UCC asked for information about vacant houses in Unst e.g. how many are empty, why are they still empty, when will work be completed?

**Action point:** Lynette to contact Hjaltland Housing Association, Robert will also look for more information from SIC.

#### 7. **Unst Partnership Ltd (UP) Update.**

The next community **Skip Scheme** day is in January, date to be confirmed by SIC. It is likely to be towards the end of the month.

**Unst Community Action Plan & Housing Needs Assessment** UP Directors are meeting next week to discuss the response so far. Based on recent community and UCC consultation, the main priorities are: the provision of more housing; better transport facilities; 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 community hall and tourist facilities.

Funding is now being sought from SCBF, the Coastal Communities Fund and the National Lottery Fund for a 3 year Development Officer post of 20 hours per week. If funding is forthcoming, it is hoped to start this post from April 2026.

**Viking longhouse site.** UP has now received a good quote for public liability and is now waiting for a quote for repairs to the “knees” on the boat deck. A meeting of “Friends of Skidbladnir” has been arranged for Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> November at 7pm in Haroldswick hall. Anyone interested is welcome to attend. The group has to decide whether to take over the site from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026; continue the lease from SAT for another year, with a view to takeover in 2027; or return the property to the care of SAT after 1<sup>st</sup> April. UP needs to notify SAT of the decision by 31st December.

*The UCC discussed other possible sponsors, liability insurance for events, and risk assessments.*

**UP secondhand shop** The UP Shop has a new manager, Jo Aallun and the shop continues to trade on Thursday and Saturday afternoons 2-4pm. Donations to the shop are always welcome, as is anyone wanting to volunteer to help out on shop days.

**Halligarth** A grass-cutting/ ground maintenance contract for the house and grounds has been agreed with NTS. The other NTS properties in Unst now appear to have been sold so no maintenance checks are required on them. NTS have commissioned a survey of the house but no details have been released yet.

*The UCC discussed difficulty in getting responses from NTS, as well as community buy out options.*

#### 8. **Community Involvement Update**

- There will be Adult Learning/Tech Support at pop-in events at BJHS on 18<sup>th</sup> November, before the school open night, there will also be a pop-in event at Nordalea on 22<sup>nd</sup> January (there is a hearing aid drop-in at the same time). There will be a further drop-in in February.

- There have been two meetings concerning the Community Resilience Plan. The first section is broadly finished and a draft Resilience Leaflet has been drawn up. The Ferry information number and What3words is still to be added. The aim is to support households to be resilient during events such as power cuts and heavy snow. Many items may seem like common sense to most local people but it will hopefully be useful to new members of the community. A hall meeting is to be held to discuss items such as generators. Funding could come from SCBF or Coastal Communities. However, there are issues concerning fuel for generators, which as an end date, and concerns that it is too much for a voluntary group to take on. **Action Point:** Frances will contact Ian Taylor to ask about the possibility of obtaining fuel from the school. There will be a public launch of the Resilience Leaflet, but there has to be consideration given that any such leaflet won't cause concern for vulnerable members of the community.

## 9. Shetland Community Benefit Fund (SCBF)

There is nothing new to report at the moment but despite David leaving the UCC he intends to still be involved with SCBF, and he will send reports to the UCC for future meetings.

## 10. What3words

The Unst Surgery is trying to map all the Properties in Unst using //what3words.

Every 3 metre square of the world has been given a unique combination of three words, a lot of the property addresses in Unst are house names and not numbers on streets. This can make it extremely difficult to find a property, especially in the middle of the night, in an emergency. All the regular doctors, including new district nurses, Ambulance staff and locum GPs will not know where ALL the Unst properties are.

Postcodes can narrow it down to a few houses but not to individual houses. People will need to download the ///what3words app. Tap on the current location icon. This will give you your ///what3words location. Then send the Surgery your house name, post code and ///what3words. You can share via the app too. Your house will have several ///what3words (unless it's only 3m sq). So choose the one you like best or an appropriate location like the front door. At the moment the Unst Surgery is ONLY saving addresses, not names of people, in a dedicated password protected app, on the password protected GP and nurse phones. Anyone can find your house on a map and find the ///what3words for it, so this is already in the public domain.

Please email the Unst Surgery with your 3 words to the following email address: shet.unsthealthcentre@nhs.scot

**Action point:** Caroline to make a social media post

David and Gary have had a meeting with Kirsty Brightwell (NHS) regarding emergency care. This was a very positive meeting, and despite leaving the UCC, David and Gary both intend to continue to look into issues such as pre-hospital treatment, helicopter call outs, call out times, transmitting ECG information, as well as drugs and equipment required in rural areas. Some comparisons were made with the Western Isles.

## 11. Tarring of Westing Road

The tarring of the Westing Road was to be done in 3 phases. The 1<sup>st</sup> phase has been done but, possibly due to Covid, it has not been completed. **Action Point:** Lynette to contact Neil Hutcheson for the revised programme for surfacing and ask for a timescale to finish the work.

## 12. Complaints to NHS

There was recently an incident at the Unst Leisure Centre where a 17 year old dislocated his shoulder. The staff called 999 (as per the SRT protocol), unfortunately no medical help arrived. Eventually the local doctor was called, who turned up immediately. The local doctor had not been informed of the

incident, and advised the leisure staff that in future they should call 999 and also call Gilbert Bain Hospital.

**Action point:** Lynette to write a letter to NHS to complain about the incident.

There have been some concerns that Yell does not have ambulance cover, and Unst Ambulance crews have had to attend incidents in Yell. Action point: Lynette to contact NHS to ask if Yell ambulance crews are now fully staffed. There are concerns that this may not have been a one off incident and it may be ongoing, which will put too much strain on Unst staff.

**Action Point:** Lynette to contact NHS about the situation. Robert asked to be included in all communications on this matter.

### 13. Applications for Planning

N/A

### 14. Application for Donations

Baltasound Hall – Christmas Tree Party £350

Uyeasound Hall – Christmas Tree Party £133

Both applications were approved. £7 per child is given from UCC towards these community events.

### 15. Unadopted Roads

N/A

### 16. Correspondence

N/A

### 17. Community Council Finances

Accounts are up-to-date

### 18. 2026 Meeting Dates

**Action point:** Lynette to set dates and co-ordinate with Yell Community Council

### 19. A.O.C.B.

- Caroline thanked David and Gary for all their hard work during their time on the UCC, and any updates on issues they choose to keep working on will be very much appreciated. They have been very active during their time on the UCC and they are commended for their hard work.
- Gutter Street lights – will they be re-instated? **Action point:** Lynette to contact Ryan Thomson and Neil Hutcheson.
- Verges have not been cut properly, this will cause issues during times of heavy snow. **Action point:** Lynette to contact Neil Hutcheson.

### 20. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is on Monday the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2025. This will be a meeting to welcome new members and to update them on ongoing issues.

It was also agreed that meeting will now be held in Room2 in the Baltasound School.

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Clerk: \_\_\_\_\_