

Lerwick Community Council

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 1st December 2025
AT TOWN HALL/MS TEAMS AT 6.00PM

1. Chair's Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Elect Chair

The Clerk invited nominations for Chairperson.

Jim Anderson was elected as Chairperson.

Proposed By: AC

Seconded By: AH

3. Elect Vice Chair

Shayne McLeod was elected as Vice Chair.

Proposed by: KF

Seconded by: BH

4. Acknowledge and note the identity of ex-officio members (Shetland Islands Councillors, MP, MSP and MSYPs whose wards or constituencies fall wholly or partly within the geographical area of the Community Council)

Shetland Islands Councillors

- Arwed Wenger – Lerwick North and Bressay
- Gary Robinson – Lerwick North and Bressay
- Stephen Leask – Lerwick North and Bressay
- Cecil Smith – Lerwick South
- Dennis Leask – Lerwick South
- John Fraser – Lerwick South
- Neil Pearson – Lerwick South

The MP for Orkney & Shetland

- Alistair Carmichael MP

The MSP for the Shetland Constituency

- Beatrice Wishart MSP

MSYPs (Scottish Youth Parliament Representatives for Shetland)

- Beenie-Ann Wood MSYP
- Ava Williamson MSYP

5. Note that LCC has no existing Associate Members

Lerwick Community Council currently have no Associate Members.

6. Note the number of vacant seats that exist

There are currently six vacant seats on the Lerwick Community Council. Six individuals have expressed interest in joining, of whom four are eligible with two expected to be on the electoral roll this week. If co-opted, these individuals would become full members. It was agreed that names should not be shared publicly at this stage.

7. Decision required on going to by-election or co-option to vacant seats

BH proposed adopting the principle of co-option rather than holding a by-election, noting that a by-election does not guarantee new members. The Returning Officer indicated that a by-election is unlikely to be held before June 2026, and there is no certainty that those who have submitted their names will complete necessary paperwork.

JA emphasised that it is preferable to have representation rather than leave seats vacant. Members agreed to co-opt the four eligible candidates and seek clarification that the other two candidates are now on the electoral roll. Members agreed that if the two candidates have been added to the electoral roll, they will be co-opted.

The clerk will confirm with the interested parties that they are happy to be co-opted and have their names shared then collate and circulate this information with the January meeting papers and invite them to attend.

→ ACTION: Clerk to contact interested candidates.

8. Apologies for Absence

Present

Jim Anderson (Chair)
Shayne McLeod (Vice Chair)
Brian Harris
Scott Nicolson
Andy Carter
Karen Fraser
Amanda Hawick
Cheryl Palmer-Johnson

In attendance

Dawn Ratter (Clerk)
Shetland Times
*Shetland News
*Emma Miller

Apologies

Robert Leask
Diana Winfield
Michael Duncan
Steve Mathieson
Cllr Gary Robinson
Cllr Cecil Smith

Ex-Officio

Cllr Stephen Leask
Cllr Arwed Wenger

* On-line Via MS Teams

9. Declarations of Interest

10 – Cllr A Wenger

10. Minutes from meeting held for approval

10.1 Monday 3rd November 2025

Approved by: AC

Seconded by: KF

11. Actions from last meeting

11.1 Action tracker spreadsheet

Noted.

11.2 Staney Hill Development

AH noted that the lack of dust suppression is wider spread through Lerwick. This action is to be kept open for any future concerns during the development.

11.3 Request for Reinstatement of a Traffic Warden in Lerwick

Members discussed ongoing parking issues in Lerwick, noting that the Hillhead car park remains consistently full, largely occupied by SIC vehicles and care workers, which reduces availability for the public. Concerns were raised about illegal and inconsiderate parking, and members agreed that enforcement is essential if any regime is to be effective.

The Chief Executive's reply was considered, confirming that the Council is exploring Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE), which would transfer responsibility for parking enforcement from Police Scotland to the local authority. Members discussed the implications of DPE, including the likelihood of introducing parking charges and residential permits to make the system financially sustainable. While some members supported the principle of enforcement, concerns were raised about the potential impact of charges on residents and those travelling from rural areas. It was agreed that LCC should remain engaged as a key stakeholder in the consultation process and seek clarity on what enforcement measures would look like in practice.

BH highlighted that concerns extend beyond the town centre and asked if EM could share results from a previous parking survey carried out by Living Lerwick. EM agreed to circulate the survey findings. KF stressed that Lerwick is unusual in having no parking charges and that enforcement is essential to address congestion and safety concerns, including emergency vehicle access. AH raised issues of vehicles occupying disabled bays without permits, urging courtesy and compliance. SN suggested trialling the 45-minute system initially.

JA noted that employing a traffic warden would need to be self-funded, and fines alone may not cover costs. Alternative options, such as training community safety staff, were discussed. CPJ asked if SIC carers would be exempt and suggested vehicles return to depots rather than occupy public spaces. Members also considered the impact of future commercial developments and cruise ship traffic. AH suggested asking LPA if they could contribute to alleviating parking issues during pier closures in summer.

It was agreed to respond to SIC thanking them for their letter and requesting further details on enforcement proposals.

→ ACTION: Clerk to write to SIC acknowledging the letter and requesting clarification on enforcement plans.

12. Correspondence/ Discussion Points

12.1 Northern Isles Ferry Services – Community Needs Assessments – User Survey

JA invited members to raise any specific points regarding the Transport Scotland survey on Northern Isles ferry services. The main concern discussed was the lack of capacity on the Lerwick – Aberdeen route and possible solutions.

AC noted that current proposals appear more focused on Orkney and Caithness, while most Shetland residents require travel to Aberdeen. Cllr A Wenger referred to media suggestions about day trips to Orkney, highlighting shorter distances and potential benefits. AH in her role as Chair of Shetland Tourism Association stated that introducing a daytime sailing could relieve pressure on the Aberdeen – Lerwick route and provide an additional option when ferries are at capacity. She stressed that this idea was worth exploring.

JA recalled that when NorthLink replaced P&O, capacity was offset by seven-day sailings. Currently, midweek and weekend sailings to Orkney operate year-round, with an extra sailing during peak season, reducing capacity for Shetland residents. AH noted that Scrabster sailings already have capacity, but increasing daytime sailings from Lerwick to Orkney could help alleviate pressure.

Members discussed the lack of integrated transport links between ferries and onward travel. CPJ proposed that Northlink prioritise local residents for bookings. SN suggested adding an extra vessel during summer months as the simplest solution, through funding remains a challenge. Members agreed that any measure reducing pressure on the Lerwick – Aberdeen route should be supported, while maintaining lifeline services as a priority.

JA strongly encouraged all members to complete the survey. The closing date is 9th January 2026.

→ ACTION: Clerk to write to Transport Scotland to highlight concerns re capacity, fairness and lack of integrated services.

12.2 Historic Marine Protected Area Queen of Sweden Notifications Noted.

12.3 Proposal to Place a Runestone in Lerwick

Members are in support of placing a Runestone in Lerwick and suggesting inviting the creator to the next meeting to provide more information on the suggestion.

→ ACTION: Clerk to invite to January meeting.

12.4 LCC – February 2026 Meeting

The Clerk will confirm the provisional booking of Islesburgh Room 11 for the February meeting.

→ ACTION: Clerk to contact Islesburgh Community Centre.

12.5 Industrialisation of Shetland

Cllr S Leask asked for feedback from Lerwick Community Council's recent meeting with Statkraft regarding the proposed Tagdale green ammonia development. KF, RL and DW attended the meeting. KF reported that the proposed ammonia plant would access water from the Lerwick wastewater treatment works and potentially feed head back into the district heating scheme. The development would not require overhead cables, as existing routes would be utilised. The plant needs to be located near the sea for Statkraft to construct its own pier for ships collecting ammonia.

Cllr S Leask raised concerns about potential spillages, stating that while assurances were given that any spillages would enter the water and not affect nearby housing, he believes airborne pollution remains a risk. Ammonia is highly toxic to marine life and aquaculture. Financial implications were also discussed, including the need for a constant electricity supply. While energy could come from wind farms, a back up from the grid would be required in case of power cuts.

AH expressed concern about water usage, noting that these plants require significant energy and infrastructure, including generators and subsea cables linking to the mainland. She questioned the cultural and environmental impact of further industrialisation in Shetland. Cllr S Leask added that water purification would be necessary. Cllr A Wenger reported that Tagdale would use fresh water and electricity from Mossy Hill wind farm initially, selling surplus to SHEAP. Scatsta would rely on seawater, requiring desalination, which could harm marine life if discharged untreated.

AH emphasised the need for legislation to protect marine environments, like measures introduced during the construction of Sullom Voe in 1977. The proposed development includes a 35m flare stack, a 30,000-tonne storage tank, and its own pier. Members noted Shetland is already industrialised through fishing and oil and expressed concern about further development in unspoiled areas.

AH suggested raising these concerns at the next ASCC meeting and putting the matter on the agenda. It was noted that the risk of a leak was estimated at one in 100 million. BH questioned why the plant must be built by the sea and whether a pipeline could allow construction elsewhere.

→ ACTION: Clerk to request item to be added to ASCC agenda.

13. Finance

13.1 Financial Statement

Noted.

13.2 LCC – Bell’s Brae Parent Council – Grant Application

BH noted this would be excellent use of LCC funding and strongly supports the application.

£1,000

Proposed by: BH

Seconded by: AC

13.3 Use of LCC Funding/Loot for Lerwick

Members discussed the possibility of holding a Loot for Lerwick event, with a proposed date of Saturday, 21st March 2026. The Clerk will contact the Community Benefit Fund to confirm whether funds would be available for the event.

→ ACTION: Clerk to contact the Community Benefit Fund.

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

14.1 Local Place Plans

No update.

15. AOB

Cruise Ship for UHA

Members discussed concerns regarding the planned visit of the cruise ship *Balmoral* during Up Helly Aa, noting its passenger capacity of approximately 1,300. Issues raised included crowding, public safety, and whether sufficient space exists for visitors to view the procession.

Questions were asked about planning assurances from the Lerwick Port Authority (LPA), the provision of additional marshals, and whether extra police presence will be funded. JA expressed concern that visitors unfamiliar with the event may not understand safety considerations. It was agreed to add this item to the January agenda.

→ ACTION: Clerk to add to the Agenda for January.

Community Garden Competition

Members agreed to bring forward proposals for promoting the Community Garden Competition at the next meeting.

→ ACTION: Clerk to add to the Agenda for January.

Clickimin Sign

Members agreed to add an item to the January agenda to discuss funding for a more robust platform for the Clickimin sign, with work proposed for Spring.

→ ACTION: Clerk to add to the Agenda for January.

16. Date of Next Meeting

16.1 The next meeting will be held on Monday 12th January 2026.