

Draft Minutes of the January 2026 Meeting of the Sandness & Walls Community Council
subject to approval at the next meeting

Sandness & Walls Community Council

Chairperson:
J Haswell

Acting Clerk:
Mr M Duncan
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Draft minutes of the remote meeting of the Sandness and Walls
Community Council held on Tuesday 6th January 2026 at 7 pm

Present: J Haswell
S Johnston
H Robertson
J Laing
A Holt
A Nichols
J Puckey
D Sinclair

Cllr L Peterson

In attendance: Sgt B Mulholland, M Duncan (Community Council Liaison
Officer)

1. Chair's Welcome

J Haswell (Chair) chaired the meeting and welcomed all those present.

2. Update Elected Members & Co-opted Members

The Chair provided a special welcome to the new Community Council
members Andy Holt, David Sinclair and Angie Nichols.

3. Apologies

None

4. Declarations of interest

None – it was agreed that Declarations of Interest would be made by
members as and when relevant during the meeting.

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5. Previous Minutes and actions

Adoption of minutes from 2nd December 2025 was proposed by Sorley Johnston and seconded by Haydn Robertson.

The Chair confirmed that all actions from the meeting had been carried out by outgoing clerk Doug Forrest.

The Chair advised that invoices had been received from Brass Band and Sandness Hall which would be paid in due course.

6. Matters arising not on agenda

J Puckey noted the change in timetable for Papa Stour ferry on Sunday 14 December. This change was welcomed and had enabled a family to attend the Whiteness Primary School Party. J Puckey further advised that the Community Hire ferry that was scheduled on Thursday 11 December did not take place. Therefore, Sandness & Walls Community Council have 2 Community Hire ferries still available in the current financial year.

J Puckey advised that the cattle grid in Papa Stour was in urgent need of replacing. The clerk had previously Contacted SIC Roads.

The Chair agreed to locate the email response from SIC Roads and share with Members. Cattlegrid issue will be raised again under the Roads agenda item.

Action: Chair to find response from SIC Roads and share with members

7. Police Report

7.1 Community Council Police Report

Sgt Bryan Mulholland summarised the latest Community Council Police Report. There had been minimal incidents in the Sandness & Walls area, and nothing reported of a sensitive nature. It was very much business as usual.

Clarification was sought on the definition of sensitive. Sensitive matters were clarified as issues such as Child Protection, sexual crime, historic sexual abuse. Sgt Mulholland pointed out that sometimes anonymous reports can be identified in small communities, so Police Scotland try to take a balanced approach to reporting.

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The Chair queried if it was ok to ask general questions. Sgt Mulholland confirmed that his attendance included being able to respond to questions raised by the Community Council. The Chair invited questions from members.

A Holt queried how many constables are currently operating in Shetland. Sgt Mulholland advised that there were currently five teams that operated, typically consisting of a Sergeant and four officers per shift. The shift will routinely cover the whole of Shetland at any given time. In addition to this, there is a CID Unit.

Sgt Mulholland advised that there was approximately a total of 24 officers in Shetland, and the post in Yell is currently vacant.

The Chair asked if the Police had any plans to monitor traffic speed levels on the westside.

Sgt Mulholland advised that SIC Roads set the speed limits, not Police Scotland. It was noted that any specific area that the Community Council felt needs to be monitored, then Police Scotland can add the location to its Patrols Matrix and visit with speed guns when in the vicinity on patrol.

Police Scotland would rather prioritise areas where there are distinct changes in speed i.e. Tresta, Bixter. The Police aim to be a deterrent to speeding, rather than seeking to hide and hand out speeding tickets. Sgt Mulholland added that if proposing an area for monitoring, please also suggest the time of day when to attend.

(Sgt Mulholland left 7.20pm)

8. Housing

Discussion took place with regards to the planning consent for former Walls Bakery. Cllr Peterson advised that the planning consent was being dealt with by planning officers under delegated authority.

Cllr Peterson suggested that the Community Council could contact Cllr Robinson for an update as he is part of the Planning Committee. Alternatively Cllr Peterson added that it may also be possible to contact Planning Service directly and ask officers to share the decision and/or timeline for a decision.

Action: contact Cllr Robinson/Planning Service for decision on Walls Bakery and request any other updates in the area.

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A Holt asked for an update from Cllr Peterson regarding the Council being encouraged to sell pockets of land in the area for mid-market rent.

Cllr Peterson stated that the Council is looking at rationalising its estate as part of its commitment to identify savings. Cllr Peterson added that there are no firm plans to sell any sites at this stage but Executive Manager for Asset & Property Services, Robert Sinclair, would consider any approaches to purchase sites.

It was commented that there is a demand for more housing to be provided in the Walls area.

Action: Chair to ask Planning Service for survey data and updates on Housing developments in the Westside.

9. Roads

The Chair apologised for late circulation of the report. It was noted that maintenance works were scheduled to be carried out in the Bixter/Tresta area, and that other winter maintenance may delay journey times due to requirement to have traffic lights in operation. The weekly report also listed activities being carried out across Shetland such as by Openreach, Scottish & Southern Electricity.

J Puckey raised that the cattle grid adjacent to the Papa Stour School is in urgent need of replacement. This matter was reported to the Council previously, but there has been no action to date. The stone wall at the side of the cattle grid has been damaged. J Puckey stated that the cattle grid is used daily and provides access to the island's water works.

A Holt confirmed that the works were urgent and noted that it had been over 30 years since the cattle grid had been installed. It was noted that vehicles are at risk of being damaged if no action is taken.

Discussion also took place regarding the sterling work carried out by Roads staff during the snowy period.

Action: Chair to write to SIC Roads to request works are carried out as soon as possible. Request to include a photograph of current condition

Action: Chair to write to SIC Roads and thank them for the gritting service it provided in recent week

10. Funding applications

Sandness Community Development (SCD) applied to Shetland Community Benefit Fund to assist with the cost of funding a bird & otter survey at Melby Pier. Grant request of £1,800.00 which would be used for the bird & otter survey. Overall project cost for the design phase is noted as £47,273.00 for this project.

S Johnston and H Robertson declared an interest as member of SCD.

Discussion took place and members unanimously agreed to award the grant in full.

Action: Chair to circulate grant application to members after meeting

Action: Chair to notify Shetland Community Benefit Fund that grant has been awarded. Shetland Community Benefit Fund to agree timeline with applicant for grant to be spent.

11. Clerk vacancy

The Chair stated that the clerk's post still vacant. It was noted that without a dedicated clerk it is difficult for the Community Council to function. The Chair & Vice Chair are currently monitoring the Community Council's inbox, but there is a need to recruit a new clerk as soon as possible. Discussion took place on publicity methods and it was agreed that all members are to be proactive and seek out individuals who have skill set and time required.

12. Insurance renewal confirmed

The Chair confirmed that Insurance cover was in place for the next year.

13. Admin changes: - Facebook, proposed new email & TEAMS

The Chair advised that the Community Council email account is in the process of being changed.

The Chair stated that S Johnston is managing the Community Council Facebook page. Members encouraged to pass on ideas for content, and anyone interested in helping to contact the Chair. It was agreed that Sandness & Walls Community Council maintain an online presence and currently arrangements are working well.

14. Bank – proposed change of bank

The Chair advised that the signatories on the Community Council bank account require to be updated. Work is underway, but there have been some issues with the bank.

Discussion took place about the pros and cons of online banking. Online bank is more efficient, but security arrangements need to be secure. It was agreed to gather information to identify the best solution.

Action: Chair & Vice Chair to look into online banking and report back to Community Council with options.

15. A.O.B.C.

Discussion took place how best to engage with the community and gather in local views. It was noted that Facebook is one method, as well as members being active and visible in the community. The Chair agreed to speak to each member and determine what their preferred method of communication is.

It was also noted that there was a need to have a discussion in a future meeting about budget setting going forward.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and participation at the meeting.

16. Date/Venue of next meeting

The date of next meeting was set for Tuesday 3 February 2026. Venue to be confirmed.