

## **Briefing Note Template**

**Elected Member Briefing – Project update: Fair Isle Ferry and Infrastructure Replacement Project**

**Elected Member Briefing Note Ref. No. 2026-10**

### **About this Briefing Note**

Briefing by: *Lee Coutts, Project Manager: Fair Isle Ferry and Infrastructure Replacement Project*

Date: *12/02/2026*

Subject: *Project update: Fair Isle Ferry and Infrastructure Replacement Project*

**Public / ~~Exempt~~ / Confidential**

*if exempt or confidential explain risks and consequences.*

### **Purpose**

This briefing note provides an update on the Fair Isle Ferry and Infrastructure Replacement Project, covering:

1. Impact on Grutness Terminal works schedule.
2. Commencement of Season 2 works at North Haven, Fair Isle
3. Progress on MV Good Shepherd V - vessel build

### **Background**

The Fair Isle Ferry and Infrastructure Replacement Project entered the delivery phase after the Council approved its Full Business Case in December 2024. This was followed by approval from the Department for Transport and confirmation of funding: £26.7 million from the UK Government, in addition to £18.3 million from the Council.

### **Key points**

1. Works at Grutness Ferry Terminal, which were scheduled to be completed by the end of January 2026, are now expected to be completed by April 2026.

2. Main Contractor BAM Nuttal Ltd is currently preparing to mobilise next week (week commencing 16<sup>th</sup> February 2026, weather dependent) to Fair Isle and commence the Season 2 works.
3. The build of MV Good Shepherd V is currently on schedule, with steel work completed from the keel up to main/vehicle deck level except for the bulbous bow, to maintain access to the area for pipework.

## **Overview**

1. November 2025 – February 2026

Work at Grutness has continued to make steady progress over the winter, despite difficult weather conditions.

Most of the major construction activities are now complete. This includes all piling, dredging, and the concrete works for the new pier. The installation of new quay furniture has also started, such as the cope rails and bollards etc. along the pier edge. Services and blacktop works will follow.

The main significant task still outstanding is the final placement of the rock armour around the new breakwater. This work has been repeatedly delayed by rough sea conditions, which have prevented the contractor's barge from reaching the site. A final delivery of rock is still required, and the project team is closely watching for a suitable weather window.

There has been no damage reported, to the incomplete rock armour breakwater, over the period and following recent bad weather and storms.

In addition to the delay to placement of the rock armour, fenders have also been delayed getting through customs and then further delayed due to ferry cancellations caused by recent weather conditions

The impact of the weather causing delays, is that the completion date for work at Grutness Ferry Terminal is now the beginning of April, rather than the end of January as previously reported. If this inclement weather continues to be sustained going forward there is potential for further delays, however the Council's project team, consulting engineers and main contractor are working to mitigate any delays as far as is possible.

Despite the weather challenges, ferry services successfully returned to Grutness in December thanks to cooperation between the Council, our consulting engineers and the main contractor.

2. Preparations are under way for the start of Season 2 works on Fair Isle, with the contractor planning to begin mobilising to the island from mid-February. This will include transporting personnel, plant and materials by barge, subject to a suitable weather window.

The first tasks in the new season include removing the existing winch and equipment from the winch house so that the building can be demolished and replaced. Work will also begin on the remaining excavation at the Noust, the slipway foundations and the installation of rock netting.

A planning application has been submitted for a larger winch house. The winch is larger than was anticipated (this was a contractor design element) therefore requiring a larger building to accommodate the winch and its ancillary equipment.

At this time the project team are aware of a potential delay to the completion and commissioning of the new slipway. This is due to the indicated timescales for fabrication and delivery of the ferry cradle, currently expected on site in October 2026. The Project team and our consulting engineers are working closely with the main contractor to mitigate this potential delay.

3. Construction of MV Good Shepherd V is progressing well and on schedule. Work on the hull is continuing as planned, with steel work completed from the keel up to main/vehicle deck level except for the bulbous bow, to maintain access to the area for pipework.

Through February, the shipyard plans to continue welding in the engine room and ballast tanks and to start constructing the top deck.

The shipyard publishes photographic updates weekly on their website and on social media. The project team have received positive feedback from the Fair Isle community regarding this as they can follow build progress in 'real time'.

<https://parkol.co.uk/vessels/new-build-yard-no-6/>

The build remains on schedule, with steel fabrication due to finish in May, outfitting running through to October and sea trials and handover scheduled for late October 2026.



---

Last modified on: 12/02/2026

**Contact Details:**

*Lee Coutts, Project Manager: Fair Isle Ferry and Infrastructure Replacement Project*

*01595 744 929 or 07825 089 129*

[lee.coutts@shetland.gov.uk](mailto:lee.coutts@shetland.gov.uk)

**Please return this form to [memberssupport@shetland.gov.uk](mailto:memberssupport@shetland.gov.uk) to be logged and circulated to all Councillors.**

END