

Sandness & Walls Community Council

Chair:

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Draft minutes of the remote meeting of the Sandness and Walls Community Council (SWCC) held on Tuesday 3rd February 2026 at 7 pm

Present: Members - Jane Haswell, Haydn Robertson, Jonathan Laing, Andy Holt, Angie Nichols, David Sinclair, Jane Puckey

Then joined at 7:10: Member – Robert Smith, Ex Officio member - Cllr Liz Peterson, Clerk - Gill Nadin

1. Clerk's appointment

Members unanimously agreed to appoint Gill Nadin to the position of Clerk at the advertised rate plus mileage. Nominated by Andy Holt and seconded by Jonathan Laing.

Robert Smith, Cllr Liz Peterson and Gill Nadin then joined the meeting

2. Chair's welcome and apologies

- Jane Haswell chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone present.
- Gill Nadin was introduced as the new clerk.
- Apologies were received from Sorley Johnston.

3. Declaration of interest – none declared

4. Police report – none received. These appear to be bi-monthly

5. Previous minutes and actions

Adoption of minutes from 6th January 2026 was proposed by J Laing and seconded by J Haswell, with one minor spelling correction (Sgt Mulholland's surname).

The Chair and clerk confirmed that all actions from the meeting had been carried out.

6. Matters arising not on agenda

6.1 Time scale of the SCBF funding approved at the December meeting

Sandness Community Development Group hope to have completed this phase of the Melby Pier project (design & development) by 25 September 2026, subject to securing the remainder of the funding for this phase.

7. Correspondence not on agenda

- Acknowledgement received from the John Johnston (SIC Roads team) for the thanks we sent to them for their hard work during the January snow and ice.
- Thanks were received from Alma Duncan on behalf of group who arranged brass band concert at Walls Hall in December, for paying for transport. They raised £420 for Viking Genes.
- Burial ground information - From 1st February each year, burial grounds staff begin to prepare for the grass cutting season – collect and dispose of any non-funeral related wreaths and flowers lying directly on the grass or not within suitable receptacles.
- Community Council training & support needs for members and clerks – forwarded to all members on 23rd Jan. Members to complete and submit the questionnaire by 18th February if they require any training/support
- Digital Connectivity Resilience Enquiry. Forwarded to all members on 24th Jan as need feedback to J Haswell for her to complete survey by 13th February
- Notice of Da Voar Redd Up – this year's date 18th-24th April 2026 - Sorley has added to Facebook.
- Next meeting of the Association of Shetland Community Councils (ASCC) - Tuesday 10th March 2026, 6pm – 8pm, Town Hall (chamber) or remote. J Haswell had hoped to attend but is unavailable. A Holt volunteered to represent SWCC.

Actions: 1. All members and clerk to complete and submit training/support questionnaire by 18th February.
2. All members to provide any feedback to J Haswell for Digital Connectivity Resilience Enquiry

8. Housing

8.1 Walls Bakery planning application 2025/173/PPF re-consultation

The previous SWCC submission will be included in the consultation and may be referenced in future submissions. The Chair will draft a response to the re-consultation for members' review before submitting. Although the deadline is Friday, 6th February, the Planning Department has indicated an extension is possible.

There was a detailed discussion, particularly relating to the parking. The general themes of the discussion were:

- Overall support for new housing in the area
- It was suggested that if all flats have dual occupancy, up to 6 extra vehicles plus visitor parking may be required.
- At busy times, the visibility for drivers is already reduced, increasing risks for pedestrians and vulnerable road users.
- The parking survey, conducted in November, may not reflect the year-round situation.
- Parking is often already tight eg. post vans, disabled access, school and service bus times, fuel deliveries, and busy shop hours, affecting both the car park and verge.
- Increased parking demand could deter potential shop customers and harm the long-term viability of the community's post office/shop.

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- New residents will want nearby parking, especially in poor weather; unclear allocation could lead to problematic parking and safety issues.
- Legal aspects will be handled by the SIC Legal Department, as they're beyond the SWCC's scope.

The consensus was that while new housing is needed and to be encouraged, the meeting felt that in this particular location, it could only be recommended for approval if the parking situation can be resolved to avoid any negative impact on the activities of the shop/post office, other amenities and residents in the area.

Actions: 1. Chair will draft a reply to the re-consultation on behalf of the SWCC and circulate to members for comment before submission.
2. Clerk to email Planning Dept. to request extension until next week for submission.

8.2 Community-Led Housing briefing notes.

On 29th Jan, Cllr Peterson's email detailing a new Community-Led Housing scheme was shared with all members. This initiative enables local groups to take the lead in housing projects, with support and funding available for feasibility studies and construction.

Action: The email from Cllr Peterson will be forwarded to Walls and Sandness Development Groups for their information.

8.3 Local Place Plans (LPPs)

Cllr Peterson explained that Local Place Plans (LPPs) let local groups influence area development; any group can create one. There are no LPPs yet in Shetland, but Sandness Community Development Group plans to start. Once registered with SIC, an LPP must be considered in planning applications. The process is new, so some details remain unclear.

A Local Place Plan training session will be held on Feb 4 at 17:30 for one hour. Members were notified by email on Jan 23, and Cllr Peterson encouraged members to attend.

J Haswell has spoken with Peter Mogridge, SIC's lead LPP officer, who welcomes discussions with area groups. He works remotely but will be in Shetland March 9–20 and can meet locally. He will present at the ASCC meeting on March 10.

9. Roads

9.1 Papa Stour cattle grid

The Chair wrote to the Roads Department on 15th Jan as agreed, with photos submitted by A Holt and got a response that it has been forwarded to John Duncan within their team to action. No further correspondence received to date. It was agreed that this would be followed up with a further email attaching the photos from J Puckey that were originally submitted in November.

Action: Clerk to email Roads Department again

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10. Funding

10.1 Funding request received – forwarded to all members 3rd Feb.

Request for £160 for transport for Happyhansel P6/7 to go to the Drama Festival.

Decision: Members agreed to fund this.

10.2 Da Voar Redd Up

Previously, the SWCC funded local groups that completed the Redd Up, benefiting both the groups and the community. Groups may be invited to apply for funding again this year when participation numbers are confirmed.

10.3 Shetland Community Benefit Fund (SCBF)

The Chair stated that £7,720 of SCBF funding is currently available and these funds can be carried forward without a cap. Project proposals are encouraged to use these funds. Last year's funding allocation was £6,700. It was agreed to develop a promotional poster and Facebook to encourage applications. The SWCC can assist, but groups must submit the SCBF online form themselves.

Action: Develop local promotional poster for SCBF funds.

10.4 SWCC funds/grants

We can only carry forward £1000, so it would be good to identify potential use.

Action: Financial report for members to be available for next meeting.

Post meeting note: Date of SIC CC grant funding year end to be clarified.

11. Proposed new email

A new email address has been created to replace the old one due to spam issues. It will be activated soon, and everyone will be notified.

12. Defibrillators

(Jonathan Laing left the meeting part way through this discussion)

Concerns were expressed that some local defibrillators may not be maintained as required and members asked whether a central/local database of defibs exists listing locations and those responsible for maintenance. In some cases, their signage can be insufficient, and the devices are sometimes relocated. While Shetnews maintains a webpage attempting to catalogue every defib in Shetland, it may not reflect current information. J Laing mentioned the Coastguards hold a list of Westside defibs, but it too needs updating.

Cllr Peterson noted that although the topic has been raised in numerous meetings and forums, arrangements for defibs remain ad hoc and often reflect their original funding sources. Donations from individuals or companies, as well as locally raised funds, have supported some devices, leaving maintenance responsibilities with those respective groups. The Scottish Ambulance Service

(SAS) lacks records of all units, as registration is required but often overlooked. Ideally, a local database would track this information and the SIC had considered it as a graduate project, though it's unlikely to happen soon. Consumables (pads and batteries) must be replaced regularly and can be expensive. The ASCC plans to discuss the whole subject of defibrillators, as it is a Shetland-wide issue.

Members considered how local groups could be supported in maintaining defibrillators. Cllr Peterson suggested encouraging registration of all defibs with SAS is an important first step, along with reminding those responsible to keep devices maintained. Funding for consumables could also be offered, potentially conditional on registration with SAS.

There was brief discussion about possible liability issues for groups tasked with maintenance if a defibrillator fails during an emergency due to neglect. This was not thought to be an issue, although is not clear.

Actions: 1. Facebook post to be developed to encourage defibrillator registration and maintenance, with potential funding support.
2. Representative attending ASCC meeting 10th March to raise the issue there

13. AOCB

13.1 Skips in Papa Stour and Foula

A Holt raised concerns about the old rusting, heavy lids on three out of four skips in Papa Stour; only one has a new light aluminium lid. The old lids are difficult to use and may cause injury. R Smith noted Foula's skips also have old lids. It was suggested to contact the Refuse Dept for lid upgrades. A Holt and R Smith will approach them in the first instance. The SWCC can get involved if required.

Action: A Holt and R Smith to contact Refuse Department on behalf of the island communities.

13.2 Nurse on Foula

R Smith explained they have been without a nurse for months and this is related to the poor state of the nurse's accommodation. There is a limited medicine box in the island. Cllr Peterson explained she had been in contact with NHS Shetland Estates Department, and their reply was that they are looking at the possibility of transfer of the accommodation asset to the local community. R Smith thought a Foula Community Development Group may get off the ground soon and transfer of the asset to this group may be seen as the best option, to get it fit for habitation.

Action: Cllr Peterson will follow-up with NHS Shetland and forward any response to the community.

13.3 Snow and Ice Road Clearance

D Sinclair and A Nichols questioned how road clearing priorities are set, noting that in the January snow and ice, some roads in the Sandness and Dale of Walls areas remained blocked for nearly a week except for 4x4 vehicles. Clearing often

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missed passing places, limiting access for standard vehicles. Community members had expressed concerns and frustration.

Members commended the Roads teams for their efforts during the very challenging conditions (as per our thanks to them after the last meeting) but questioned whether there is flexibility for resource deployment based on local need, and how area-specific information is collected during severe weather.

Cllr Peterson explained that operational decisions are taken by officials rather than elected members, so she could not say how the process worked in practice. It was acknowledged that budgets would affect services, but members would like to seek clarity on the planning and deployment process, and potential for improvements for future winter planning.

Action: 1. Members to send examples of issues to the Chair, for communication to SIC.
2. Chair to write to Neil Hutchison (SIC Head of Service) to ask above questions and express concerns raised, including the desire to be involved in future winter planning where possible.

13.4 Funding and training emails/Facebook

The SWCC receives many emails about training or funding from various organisations, which may interest some local groups but are not directly relevant to members. These emails are not forwarded to avoid cluttering members' inboxes. Posting them on Facebook was proposed, but managing the page would currently require additional help.

Action: anyone interested in assisting with the Facebook page, to contact the Chair.

14. Date and time of next meeting

The date of next meeting was set for Tuesday 3 March 2026 at 7pm.
Venue – Walls Hall and TEAMS.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and participation

Meeting closed at 8:47pm