

# Association of Shetland Community Councils (ASCC)

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CCLO Telephone: 01595 743828 CCLO email: michael.duncan@shetland.gov.uk

**Minute of the ASCC meeting held on  
Tuesday 11 June 2024, 6.00 pm,  
Town Hall Chamber, Lerwick and online using Microsoft Teams**

**Present**

Ian Walterson	Association of Shetland Community Councils (Chair)
Shayne McLeod	Association of Shetland Community Councils (Vice Chair)
Lindsay Tulloch	Bressay Community Council
Robin Black	Burra & Trondra Community Council
Alastair Cooper	Delting Community Council
Irvine Burgess	Dunrossness Community Council
Lucy Cummings	Fetlar Community Council
Ewen McPherson	Gulberwick, Quarff & Cunningsburgh Community Council
Jim Anderson	Lerwick Community Council
Willie Simpson	Nesting and Lunnasting Community Council
David Brown	Northmaven Community Council
Findlay MacBeath	Sandness & Walls Community Council
Osla Jamwal-Fraser	Sandsting & Aithsting Community Council
Bryan Peterson	Sandwick Community Council
Mark Burgess	Scalloway Community Council
Paul James	Skerries Community Council
Violet McQuade	Skerries Community Council
Linda Tulloch	Tingwall, Whiteness & Weisdale Community Council
Claire Priest	Unst Community Council
Annette Jamieson	Yell Community Council

**Officers in Attendance**

Vaila Simpson	Executive Manager – Community Planning & Development, SIC
Michael Duncan	Community Council Liaison Officer – Community Planning & Development, SIC
Cathrine Coutts	NHS Shetland
Rod Keay	Occupational Therapy - SIC
Joanne Fraser	Community involvement and Development officer for Lerwick & Bressay
Frances Browne	Community involvement and Development officer for the North Isles
Ian Taylor	Emergency Planning Officer – SIC
Matt Mason	Scottish Fire & Rescue Service

**Officers Observing**

Evie Tait (note taker)	Projects Officer - Community Planning & Development, SIC
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**1. Introductions**

Chair welcomed all present and acknowledged that the Council is in pre-election period.

## **2. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Whalsay Community Council. Apologies also received from Jan Riise, Lorna Willis, Ana Arnett, Roselyn Fraser and Lynsey Hall, all from Shetland Islands Council.

## **3. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest.

## **4. Digital Switchover**

Rod Keay and Catherine Coutts gave a short talk on the plans for the digital switchover in relation to alarms that can be put into people's homes in the case of emergencies. This equipment connects to a receiving centre where a call handler will answer and assist. A business justification case is going up to Integrated Joint Board (IJB) in July and the alarms are currently being field tested in Shetland. As for issues raised about power cuts, there are two roaming Sims in each device and an Ethernet connection. The Sim connection is being tested around Shetland and so far has worked in all tried areas. There is also a 24hr battery back up in the device, in case of a power cut and other options are available with longer battery lives that they will look at.

British Telecom (BT) are about to start a regional engagement across Scotland and will be coming to Shetland on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> July for a public drop in at the library. There is a data sharing agreement being set up with the BT group to allow device users phone numbers to be shared so they can be flagged on BT's systems as homes that should not be disconnected. The switchover is now planned for 2027 instead of the previously planned 2025 switchover. This gives more time but they will work to the original deadline. People with alarms will be given the necessary information and will have the opportunity to feedback on the service.

Chair, Ian Walterson, asked if this set up will be fit for purpose during a power cut, especially areas with no phone signal, when the switchover happens. Catherine Coutts explained that alongside the 24hr battery backup, there would be response plans for emergencies like a care for people plan to check on individuals and Rod Keay explained that BT have recently announced a dedicated landline service for those without signal, available until 2030. Irvine Burgess asked if those who are without signal and use the alarms had been identified. Rod explained they are still in the testing phase.

Mark Burgess asked if they could be liaising with BT to flag issues about the management of the switchover and figure out who is being switched off so they can be aligned with the service or mobile signal that will work for them. He explained that he knows of people who have had the switchover enforced on them with notification by email. He also questioned who would bear the cost of the equipment and Findlay MacBeath asked how much the cost was. Rod explained that the user would pay and it would be £3.15 a week, which was increased because Shetland was lower than what many other local authority areas charge. This cost still needs to be decided fully as part of the business case and procurement.

Findlay MacBeath and Lyndsay Tulloch commented on a lack of focus on the West mainland and Bressay for connectivity improvements like the fibre-optic cables that are being put into the outer islands.

Jim Anderson asked how many clients were known to be using the alarms. Rod provided statistics in relation to service users and connections.

Alastair Cooper asked if there was any issues around vulnerable people and contacting their designated persons with the switch over. Catherine Coutts explained that there will be conversations held around what to do if the power went out or the alarm didn't work. Responders will already go and check on certain people and this works. Paul James expressed concerns about the transfer of risk onto the client in the case of a power cut. Catherine explained that she had information that she would circulate after the meeting on this.

David Brown asked if those without signal would be considered vulnerable because they have no signal in a power cut. Matt Mason explained he could not give information on the ability to make a 999 call with no signal but he could pick it up with the emergency planning forum. He will feed this concern back.

Bryan Peterson explained that the Council keeps information on who has specialist care equipment in their houses and know exactly how much battery this will have and when it would run out so they can get in touch and help these people in emergencies.

Ian Taylor explained that the raised issues are also standard points on the Community Safety and Resilience Board and they are trying to build resilience around this problem. Vailla Simpson explained that this issue is a cross over between the Emergency Planning Board and the Resilience board so covers a lot of areas. Ian Taylor said he would come and pass on information on significant updates.

Ewan McPherson pointed to Vodaphone having a map that shows signal strength and 'not spots' which would enable them to look at the weakest spots. Mark Burgess explained that when you call 999, if your service provider has no signal in that area, other service signals will be used to connect.

Jim Anderson made the point that phone masts back up battery life only lasts a set amount of time.

## **5. Scottish Fire & Rescue Service – consultation**

Matt Mason gave an explanation on the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service consultation. The consultation, (Shaping Our Future) is in its first pre consultation phase. This consultation is designed to modernise the fire service and adapt to some changing challenges that Scotland faces. They are looking for people to complete the survey because there is a need for a diverse range of responses. The options will then be put forward for people to consult on and no change is not an option for this consultation.

Fires still make up most of the incidents but the number has reduced significantly over time. Outdoor fires are up by 5% in the last 10 years and non-fire related incidents are up by nearly 17,000 across the country. There are also new emerging risks, so the status quo is no longer an option. They are now attending water rescues, road traffic collisions and weather related incidents. Wildfires could also become more of an emerging risk. It has been outlined in the long term vision that they also want to do more for communities, not just responding to emergencies but preventing them from happening in first place.

A Strategic Service Review Programme (SSRP) is being developed to look at the service delivery and modernising. They are engaging with communities, staff, representative bodies and elective members to consider what changes might need to be made. The consultation will include information on how the fire stations operate and other possible models to explore. The locations of stations, appliances and resources will be laid out to make sure they are best placed. The state of the estate is a factor. The service buildings are no longer fit for purpose and require urgent action. This can't be done without investment or changing how they work. Additional capital funding would be required to bring equipment up to standard. Contamination is an issue.

Fire fighter cancer rates are 1.6 times higher than the standard rate, and developing in younger staff, heart attacks are 5 times the standard rate, strokes are 3 times the standard rate and fire fighters are three times more likely to suffer from depression and two times more likely to suffer from anxiety. At the moment there are no decontamination stations or toilets in the station.

Chair, Ian Walterson, expressed concerns about a lack of funding for the service and the poor condition of fire stations. Matt Mason explained that by becoming more efficient and changing customs and practices, they might be able to free up some capital funds to invest in other areas. There are other funding streams and money has been made available for multi-agency style modular buildings. Matt will explore sharing buildings with other services and drive for improvements for Shetland. There will also be a risk based approach to any changes.

Chair, Ian Walterson, commented on it being difficult to bring people in to the fire service and Matt Mason explained commuting is a challenge for people being able to work for the service. Prep is something they offer which allows people to try it and decide if they would like to do the job. He pointed to there currently being no crew on Fetlar. Osla Jamwal-Fraser explained that people had applied to the Fire Service in the Aith & Bixter area but couldn't join because the time distance between the station and their home was greater than 10 minutes. This has meant that people living 15 minutes away had not been allowed to join but she'd rather someone took 15 minutes to get to an incident than there being no one at all. Paul James asked if this could be done on an individual risk assessment basis for areas like Fetlar and Skerries but Matt Mason explained that the standards are set by the national Fire Chief's Council. Osla Jamwal-Fraser's point will be fed back as a suggestion for the on call improvement programme and other solutions will be investigated.

Ewan McPherson asked what the impact of the space port would be, Matt Mason explained that the spaceport needs to manage the risks around their work. They have engaged with the emergency services and wider emergency planning partners and he doesn't see any significant impact to service delivery. They will also have their own emergency plans in place.

Alastair Cooper pointed out that the plans need to be island proofed because Shetland functions differently to the Scottish mainland and Mark pointed to it needing to be linked to the Islands Act. Matt Mason explained that the Shetland Partnership Plan will be taken into consideration. Mark Burgess also brought up the newer risks around electric vehicles. Matt Mason reiterated the need to figure out how to put resources where the new risk is.

Lindsay Tulloch commented on the possibility of training people on Police practice, Fire Service and 1<sup>st</sup> Responders. The NHS is also looking at a new hospital for Shetland and Lindsay suggested the Police and Fire service should be looking at this as a collaboration opportunity. Matt Mason said this would be written up and taken on board.

**6. Note of the previous meeting held on 12 March 2024 for approval.**

Proposed by Bryan Peterson  
Seconded by Osla Jamwal-Fraser

## **7. Matters arising from previous minute not on the agenda**

Local Place Plan:

Seventeen community Councils have expressed an interest in Local Place Plans. Michael Duncan explained there was a few areas where people hadn't applied to do Place Plans and although the deadline has passed for this, they would still be allowed to sign up. Bryan Peterson also pointed to it not being the only opportunity to carry one out.

## **8. Community Council Scheme Review – update**

Michael Duncan briefly went over updates on the Community Council Review.

Phase Two consultation phase is open for survey responses until 28<sup>th</sup> June 5pm. This will then be analysed and collated. This feedback then needs to be reported back to the Council before a final draft scheme is proposed for consultation, which will come back out for consultation around the autumn time.

Phase Three consultation phase has to be open for a minimum of four weeks but it will probably be open for a longer period. Actual dates of the consultation phase will be communicated as soon as they are ready.

The Project Board will be looking at funding options and phase three consultation feedback before they can take a report to Council early in the New Year to consider approval of a new Community Council Scheme of Establishment. It is expected that the new scheme will be put in place from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025.

The two year term that was originally going to be in place will be extended by a year. Those members currently on Community Councils will be allowed to either continue for a further one, or can choose to end their term in office at the end of two year period. Letters have been sent out to each Community Councillor by Corporate Services. The co-option process will be used to fill spaces.

Osla Jamwal-Fraser asked if the United Kingdom General Election would affect the review and Michael explained that the different phases miss the Election window.

Lindsay Tulloch expressed concerns about people stepping down and creating vacancies and asked if there was anything that could be done to support Community Councils when looking for new members, such as putting out adverts. Michael said he would think about this and look at what he could do.

## **9. Items for future meetings**

Michael explained that they don't usually do Any Other Business and instead invite agenda request items proposals after the ASCC meeting. Each Community Council was asked to go back to its meetings and put forward any Agenda Item ideas as soon as you can. Michael will issue an invite for agenda items in the next few days. Jim Anderson suggested a deadline or timing in the email for this and Michael said he would look at doing this.

Chair, Ian Walterson, explained that the ASCC had received correspondence from Scottish Marine Planning about the Arven Offshore Wind Farm and its environmental impact, asking if Community Councils would like to comment. He suggested that rather than not responding, the ASCC should ask that the developers make all efforts for a full consultation with the Scottish Fishing Federation and the Shetland Fishing Association. There are known issues with spawning grounds so they are probably trying to find solutions to address this.

Alastair Cooper made the point that if the Shetland Fishing Association object to anything, the Council do not pay any attention to it whereas, they have to listen to the Community Councils so the ASCC should decide on whether they should consider marine environment issues more in the future.

Osla Jamwal-Fraser asked if there already provision for this development to have a group similar to the wind farm environmental advisory group because this is part of the planning obligation for Viking Wind Farm to have that as part of their development - an independent advisory board that reports back to the Council. It was noted that it might be appropriate to have a similar multipurpose group of stakeholders that look at such questions rather, than asking Community Councils to consider things that are often very technical. This could be returned as a comment – Community Councils would like an independent panel of experts to comment on developments as required.

Jim Anderson proposed that the correspondence is circulated to the Community Councils asking for their responses by a certain date then pool the responses and send back to Marine Scotland. Paul James commented that based on the comments, the ASCC should definitely respond.

**10. Date of Next Meeting**

10 September 2024, 6pm

Meeting closed at 20:10