

# Association of Shetland Community Councils (ASCC)

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**Minute of the ASCC meeting held on  
Wednesday 8 October 2025, 6.00 pm,  
Town Hall Chamber, Lerwick and online using Microsoft Teams**

**Present**

Ian Walterson	Association of Shetland Community Councils (Chair)
Shayne MacLeod	Association of Shetland Community Councils (Vice Chair)
Lindsay Tulloch	Bressay Community Council
Alastair Cooper	Delting Community Council
Agnes Tallack	Dunrossness Community Council
Lucy Cummings	Fetlar Community Council
Pat Christie	Gulberwick, Quarff & Cunningsburgh Community Council
Willie Simpson	Nesting and Lunnasting Community Council
Bob McGeady	Northmaven Community Council
Joanne Jamieson	Sandwick Community Council
Mark Burgess	Scalloway Community Council
Linda Tulloch	Tingwall, Whiteness & Weisdale Community Council
Annette Jamieson	Yell Community Council

**Officers in Attendance**

Michael Duncan	Community Council Liaison Officer – Community Planning & Development, SIC
Peter Mogridge	Planning Officer, Planning Department, SIC
Cian Desmond	Stoura Offshore Wind Farm, ESB
Barry Faulkner	Stoura Offshore Wind Farm, ESB

**Officers Observing**

Nicole Sim (note taker)	Resources Officer, Community Planning & Development, SIC
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**1. Introductions**

Chair welcomed all present and acknowledged that a few Community Councils were absent.

**2. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Laurence Odie – Yell Community Council, Burra & Trondra Community Council, Sandness & Walls Community Council, Sandsting & Aithsting Community Council and Unst Community Council.

Apologies also received from Vaila Simpson, Ana Arnett, Frances Browne, Roselyn Fraser and Lynsey Hall from Shetland Islands Council.

### **3. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **4. Local Place Plans**

Peter Mogridge delivered an update on Local Place Plans (LPP). Mr Mogridge explained that they allow communities to identify priorities relating to land and buildings through local engagement and consultation. The focus is on following the correct process rather than the plan's content, with registration by the local authority dependent on compliance with regulations.

Mr Mogridge outlined the typical stages of developing an LPP - initiating a group, stakeholder engagement (including residents, landowners, crofters, businesses, and young people), evidence gathering, consultation, and a 28-day formal notification period. The aim is to ensure inclusive and well-informed participation across communities.

Mr Mogridge provided an update on the current progress of LPPs in Shetland. Seven Shetland communities are currently progressing LPPs, four more are likely to start soon, six are undecided, and a few prefer to stay informed without direct involvement at the moment. Support continues through Planning Aid Scotland, providing training, mapping software, and one-to-one guidance. Mr Mogridge explained that these communities were not restricted to Community Council areas, and that there are communities within these that can progress with an LPP. A Shetland-specific example and a simplified template of an LPP are being created to make the process more accessible and suitable for rural, costal communities.

The registration deadline for LPPs has been extended to Autumn 2026 to align with the revised Local Development Plan timeline, now due next year.

Mr Mogridge also highlighted the potential of artificial intelligence as a practical tool for small community groups, helping summarise information and draft plans efficiently. While AI requires review, it can save time and assist in turning existing community action plans into formal LPPs. Support and advice will continue to be available for communities interested in progressing their plans.

Ian Walterson, Chair, asked if previous Place Plans could act as a default if a community chose not to progress with an LPP. Mr Mogridge explained this was not possible; older plans would need to be revisited to confirm their relevance. Ian also asked what would happen if a community did not produce an LPP. Peter advised that planning applications and community council input would continue as usual, but there would be no formally registered evidence of the community's views.

Joanne Jamieson asked if the LPP would apply from the end of 2026 to 2028, or do they only apply in 2028 when the LDP is published. Mr Mogridge advised he was not sure how it would fit in with the ongoing timescale, but that the LPP would be there to advise the development of the LDP. However, there is no confirmation of how this process is going to go on as it is entirely new.

Mark Burgess raised a question about which policies community groups should align their LPPs with, given that the current LDP is out of date and the new LDP will not be available for some time. He asked whether plans should therefore align with National Planning Framework policies, the current LDP, or future LDP policies. Mr Mogridge explained that the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) now takes precedent in planning decisions. They don't need to mirror national policy exactly, just show alignment. Practical details like flood risk and infrastructure are considered later, but clear alignment helps gain support in principle.

Mr Burgess highlighted potential conflicts between community aspirations and planning policy - for example, where a community wants to protect land marked for development or create facilities outside settlement boundaries. He stressed that Local Place Plans should still be able to reflect these local priorities, even when they differ from existing planning policies. Mr Mogridge explained that while community aspirations may not always align with planning policy, if proposals are well-reasoned and supported by engagement evidence, they will carry weight in future planning decisions. However, final outcomes depend on balancing various factors at the application stage, so community proposals cannot be guaranteed but will be given due consideration.

Mr Burgess then asked if communities are expected to engage with SIPA and other statutory bodies or will they be engaged with when the plans have been registered. Mr Mogridge advised that a community can engage with them beforehand but emphasised that groups are not expected to do a complete planning application when registering for the LPP.

Bob McGeady asked where LPPs sit within the policy hierarchy. Mr Mogridge said the intention is that LPPs will feed into the LDP, though this has not yet been finalised.

Alastair Cooper asked about the role of LPPs in relation to large-scale developments. Mr Mogridge confirmed that National Infrastructure projects will generally bypass LPPs.

Mr Walterson raised concerns about uncertainty surrounding the process and requested further clarity as guidance develops. Mr Mogridge hoped to have clearer direction on how LPPs will transition into LDPs before registration opens.

Mr Cooper asked if the old Place Plans that were in place were the same as the current LPPs. Mr Mogridge advised that the difference is that today's LPPs are entirely community-led. Mr Mogridge advised that the old Place Plans would be a good place to start for communities who want to progress with an LPP.

Mr Walterson asked, if all communities progress with an LPP, the reality of the 'wish list' of projects being achievable will be quite low considering financial constraints. Mr Mogridge emphasised that the engagement part of an LPP is essential in showing evidence from the community for funding applications. Mr Burgess noted that Scalloway Community Council adequately spent an increase in funding directly due to the LPP which was already in place, because the consultation and engagement had already been completed. Mr Burgess said that an LPP is really an enabler for fast tracking any funding opportunities that come through.

Peter Mogridge – Planning Department, SIC, left the meeting at 6:56pm

Lindsay Tulloch – Bressay Community Council, entered the meeting at 7.00pm

## **5. Stoura Offshore Wind Farm**

Cian Desmond and Barry Faulkner gave an overview of ESB and the Stoura Offshore Wind Project, outlining the company's background as Ireland's state-owned energy provider and its commitment to achieving net zero by 2040. Mr Desmond highlighted ESB's experience with offshore wind projects in Scotland and its long-term approach to developing and operating assets. Updates included public exhibitions, engagement with local stakeholders, and memorandums of understanding with Lerwick Port Authority and UHI Shetland to support supply chain development and environmental monitoring. Mr Desmond also outlined potential turbine options (between 15–25 MW), the likely connection point in north Shetland, and ongoing scoping works to determine onshore infrastructure locations. He discussed the use of floating semi-submersible platforms to maximise local port and supply chain use, and described the project timeline, with environmental assessments and planning applications expected by 2028 and windfarm operation targeted for 2036.

Ian Walterson, Chair, asked about progress in discussions with the Scottish Fishermen’s Federation and Shetland Fishermen’s Association regarding industry concerns over the Stoura Wind Farm, including whether fishermen would need to relocate and if the project’s location could be adjusted to support coexistence. Mr Desmond explained that ESB has ongoing engagement with the fishing industry through the Fisheries Forum, as well as regular meetings with the Shetland Fishermen’s Association and Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation. Mr Faulkner noted that ESB understands industry concerns and is committed to open communication. He said that ESB has no intention of displacing fishermen and will work to mitigate impacts through project design, though specific adjustments cannot yet be confirmed at this early stage. Mr Desmond acknowledged that the structure undoubtedly would change the dynamics for the fishing industry but at the same time will create a whole new industry.

Mr Walterson asked whether the Stoura Wind Farm project aligns with ESB’s stated values, particularly “caring,” and if ESB cares about the fishing industry and the potential impacts the project may have on it. Mr Desmond responded that ESB does care about the fishing industry and has engaged directly with fishermen and their families. He noted that while concerns have been raised, some are based on misinformation, and ESB aims to take an evidence-based approach by studying fishing activity in and around the Stoura site to better understand any potential impacts.

Mark Burgess asked about whether there is scope for community benefit or ownership from the Stoura Wind Farm, given its offshore location. Mr Desmond responded that ESB believes coastal communities like Shetland should still receive benefits, even for offshore projects. While current UK guidance only sets £5,000 per MW for onshore developments, ESB has applied this rate to another offshore project in Lewis. He noted that Ireland requires €2 per MWh to be paid into local community funds, and similar statutory guidance is being considered in Scotland and the UK. Mr Desmond said ESB is currently in the process of offering a community buy in on the Isle of Lewis, saying it was the first time they were doing that, and they would have to wait to see how this process goes.

A question was raised by Lucy Cummings about the visual and tourism impacts of the Stoura Wind Farm on nearby islands such as Fetlar and Skerries, and concerns about disruption from onshore infrastructure works. Mr Desmond responded that visual impact from these locations is expected to be low and photo montages have been prepared to show likely views. He said there is no clear evidence that visibility of offshore turbines affect tourism but confirmed this will be assessed as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment, through the economic section about tourism. He added that details of onshore works will be set out in the forthcoming scoping report and noted that ESB is coordinating with other developers and the Council to manage cumulative impacts in north Shetland through joint planning groups. Mr Desmond also expressed interest in attending a future Fetlar Community Council meeting to continue engagement with the community.

Lindsay Tulloch asked for what feedback ESB has received from Nature Scot and RSPB. Mr Desmond explained that ESB has submitted its offshore scoping report. The report is currently with Marine Scotland and NatureScot for review, and their responses are expected within weeks. He noted that the report and feedback will be publicly available once received.

Mr Desmond advised that further information will be released in early 2026 of a list of options where ESB is considering their onshore areas.

Cian Desmon and Barry Faulkner – ESB, left the meeting at 7:40pm

**6. Note of the previous meeting held on 10 June 2025 for approval.**

Proposed by Lindsay Tulloch  
Seconded by Willie Simpson

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

Alastair Cooper requested further information about archiving receipts for community councils. Michael Duncan advised he would follow up on this.

**Action:** Michael Duncan to follow up on this.

## **8. Hybrid meetings – kit requirements**

Michael Duncan shared a request from Yell Community Council who were keen to see what equipment or methods for hybrid meetings other community council were currently using, particularly for rural communities who may not benefit from the use of equipped facilities.

Annette Jamieson noted that Yell Community Council uses the local school for meetings but cannot access it during school holidays. Ms Jamieson asked how other councils manage meeting venues and whether the SIC could consider financial support for purchasing equipment.

Joanne Jamieson explained that Sandwick Community Council meets at the Hoswick Visitor Centre, which has some technology available. However, Ms Jamieson is unable to access online resources such as live planning applications when using her work laptop in that building. They also cannot use Microsoft Teams due to a lack of suitable equipment. She suggested that providing dedicated technology or a budget to purchase it would resolve these issues.

Lucy Cummings advised that their Clerk (Fetlar Community Council) uses their work laptop for meetings. Ms Cummings also stated that anyone joining remotely can only see the Clerk and Chair rather than the full room, as they do not have a moveable camera. While they have occasionally managed to connect to the hall's screen, this has not been reliable.

Lindsay Tulloch shared that Bressay Community Council provided funding to the hall committee to purchase equipment for community use. Mr Tulloch highlighted the importance of providing training to ensure it is used effectively.

Bob McGeady reported that Northmaven Community Council has both a laptop and a camera that captures the entire room and experiences no issues hosting hybrid meetings.

Pat Christie asked whether equipment had previously been purchased for Community Councils. Mr Duncan confirmed that a kit had been borrowed internally and tested in the past but had not been taken further. Ms Christie reiterated the need for training for all Community Council members.

**Action:** Michael Duncan to explore types of equipment Community Councils currently use and identify suitable options or methods for future use.

## **9. Community Council Elections 2025 – Awareness Raising Project**

Chair thanked members who took part in the Community Council election adverts.

Michael Duncan provided an update on Community Council election numbers. Mr Duncan advised the importance of current members to encourage those in the community and within the current councils to complete nomination forms. An overview of current numbers for the election was shared with the group.

Joanne Jamieson asked for confirmation of the nomination timeline. Mr Duncan confirmed the deadline as 4:00 PM on Thursday 16th October, with results to be published on Friday 17th indicating whether seats are contested. If contested, the election process will run through from 31<sup>st</sup> October to November, with results announced on the 21st. If uncontested, new appointments take effect from 20th November, and the first meeting of the new Community Councils must be held by 21st December. The current Community Council remains in place until 20th November. Regular updates will be issued, and members were asked to share information and promote nomination forms.

#### **10. Items for future meetings**

No future agenda items were raised during the meeting. Michael Duncan advised that an invitation for agenda items will be issued early in the New Year to Community Councils. Any suggested agenda topics should be sent to him using the Agenda Item Request form as normal.

Ian Walterson, Chair, thanked all members for attending.

#### **11. Date of Next Meeting**

10 March 2026

9 June 2026

8 September 2026

Meeting closed at 8.00pm.