

Sandness & Walls Community Council

Chair:

Jane Haswell
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Clerk:

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Draft minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Sandness and Walls Community Council (SWCC) held at Sandness Hall on Tuesday 7th April 2026 at 7 pm

Present: Members - Jane Haswell, Angie Nichols, David Sinclair, Jonathan Laing, Andy Holt (online), Robert Smith (online)
Clerk - Gill Nadin
Cllr Liz Peterson (online)
Leah Colyer (online) - Community Involvement & Development Officer
Russell Minty (online) – Police Scotland – for discussion of Police Report only

Apologies: Sorley Johnston, Haydn Robertson, Jane Puckey, Jamie MacBeath
Michael Duncan

1. Chair's welcome

Jane Haswell chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone present

2. Declaration of interest – to be declared in relation to each item

3. Previous minutes and actions

Adoption of minutes from 3rd March 2026 was proposed by J Laing and seconded by A Holt. The Clerk and Chair confirmed that all actions had been completed, except:

Re 5.1 of 03/26 Defibrillators - Registration and Maintenance Grants
Defibrillator form / procedure still to be developed – see 15.1 below.

Re. 7 of 03/26 Finance

Core funding application form drafted, but to be approved – see 11.1 below.

4. Police report

The bi-monthly report for December and January was sent to members. R Minty confirmed only one police incident in Sandness and Walls, relating to livestock worrying.

Members discussed using speed-indicating 'smiley faces' in the area. R Minty clarified these belong to the local authority, not the police. Cllr Peterson said only two are available, usually deployed by SIC following community requests. SWCC should contact Neil Hutcheson at SIC if specific sites are identified.

Questions were also raised about 'cut-out' police seen elsewhere. R Minty explained they serve to highlight road safety concerns and deter speeding but must be carefully placed. The local authority Roads Department can provide guidance on their use.

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5. Matters arising not on agenda

5.1 Re. 8.1 of 03/26 Papa Stour cattle grid

There has been no progress so far, apart from the delivery of some construction materials to the site.

5.2 Re. 8.2 of 03/26 Deep Ditch Safety Concerns

This issue was raised with J Smith and Neil Hutcheson at the SIC, who stated the ditch would be piped and filled by March 13, 2026, but no progress has been made. The Clerk requested an update before this meeting, but no response has been received.

Action – Clerk will continue to chase this issue via email and phone.

6. Correspondence not on agenda

6.1 A financial assistance request has been received from a recently trained Community First Responder (Samantha Belokon-Dennis) based near Bixter, to help purchase essential equipment. J Haswell is gathering details from Samantha and awaiting more information from Duncan McNeill, Community Training & Support Officer (North Region) at the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS). Samantha is the first such responder in the Westside, with plans to train more. Although managed and trained by the SAS, these volunteers must fund-raise for equipment as they receive no SAS or other external funding. Equipment includes defibrillator, first aid supplies, oxygen cylinder and medical monitors. Samantha has already received numerous donations, but more is and will be needed.

Members agreed that Westside-based Community First Responders are a valuable asset, and they were keen to support efforts to ensure they are fully-equipped, both now and going forward. Concerns about the funding model were raised, and members were keen to understand what the other Westside Community Councils were proposing, as collaboration could be beneficial. It was agreed to send out information to members once it is received and defer any decisions to a future meeting.

Action – Clerk to forward any information received to members. To email Samantha, confirming support, but explaining more information needed before any decisions

6.2 CLAN emailed to highlight their support services for anyone in Shetland affected by cancer, including families and friends. They were especially focused on reaching small island communities. Two self-referral posters were attached, but SWCC members had not previously seen them in print or online. It was agreed SWCC should ask CLAN to continue promoting these services widely to the whole community. The Clerk had emailed the posters to A Holt and was requested to send hard copies to R Smith for display in Foula.

Action – Clerk to reply to CLAN as above.
Hard copy posters to be sent to R Smith

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- 6.3 Walls Marina Users Association requested a letter of support for their SCBF Community Grant Scheme application. Their plan includes two phases: dredging and deepening the channel, followed by installing additional pontoons with 11 more berths. Members agreed the marina is a valuable amenity and supported the idea in principle, though costs are currently unknown. SWCC will provide a letter of support once the Association is ready to submit its application.

Action – Clerk to reply to Marina Association as above

- 6.4 One of the Kirkidale communal bin lids is broken; it was agreed the Clerk will ask Paula Nicolson at Infrastructure Services for repairs. They will also ask if there are any plans to replace communal bins with wheelie bins at Kirkidale.

Action – Clerk to email Infrastructure Services as above

- 6.5 A light has been requested for the bus stop in Walls. Cllr Peterson explained it should be part of the Active Travel project, a Scotland-wide initiative to promote walking and cycling. She understood that the first two phases - audit and planning - are complete, and implementation is pending. It was agreed to contact Robina Barton (SIC Officer for Active Travel) for an update on the Active Travel audit and any relevant documents, as new members have not seen them.

Action – Clerk to email Robina Barton as above

- 6.6 Email from Cllr Peterson, update *re. 13.2 of 02/26 - nurse on Foula*. This had been forwarded to all members and there were no questions. R Smith reported that everyone he had spoken to in Foula thought it was a good idea for the Nurse's accommodation to be handed over to the local community as previously discussed. The Chair offered to send a letter of support for this plan to NHS Shetland from the SWCC, and R Smith thought this would be helpful.

Action – Clerk to write to NHS Shetland as above

7. Finance report

The new SWCC bank account (Virgin Bank) is now operational with online access, and the old account (Bank of Scotland) should be closed with full transfer of funds soon.

The finance report circulated before the meeting showed an underspend of £2587.84 for the year 2025-26. There will be an automatic carry forward of £1440.77, but the remainder must be requested after the accounts are audited. No queries were raised, and members approved the report.

8. Roads

8.1 Horse signs

A Nichols reported that a Sandness resident had asked the Roads Department in October to put up signs warning of loose horses on the Sandness road near the Dale junction. The SIC advised they were waiting for more signs, then

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promised installation "shortly" in January, but nothing has happened yet. As members agreed this was a reasonable request, especially before the tourist season, they decided to contact the Roads Department for an update.

It was also agreed that 'ridden' horse signs would be appropriate through Sandness and along the road from Dale to Walls, given the number of horse riders in those areas. These are to be requested.

Action – Clerk to write to Neil Hutcheson at Roads Department as above

8.2 *Walls Road potential upgrade*

Cllr Peterson informed the members that the outline business case for the Walls Road should go to the Council meeting on 24th June. Elected members are likely to be given several options, ranging from doing nothing to a premium solution. Consultation was at a previous stage, and SWCC provided extensive representation then.

8.3 *Passing Place Signs*

Cllr Peterson reported that Neil Hutcheson had recently attended the Sandsting and Aithsting Community Council meeting. He confirmed that the Roads Department plan to inspect, and replace where needed, all passing place signs around the Westside over the summer. Members agreed that they would invite Neil Hutcheson to a future SWCC meeting.

Action – Clerk to invite Neil Hutcheson to a future meeting.

Post-meeting note – September / October meeting suggested – i.e before the winter.

9. **Planning** – nothing to discuss this month

10. **Councillor's reports**

Cllr Peterson explained that the SIC is facing major funding challenges and relies on reserves to cover annual gaps. Maintaining current service levels is increasingly difficult. All departments are reviewing operations to find savings and increase efficiency, although timescales for each department will vary. Projects like the Walls road proposal may not proceed due to high costs and no external funding. Budget cuts may affect different areas unevenly, but Cllr Peterson was keen to ensure there is a fair distribution of any savings or efficiencies across Shetland.

Public input is vital to shaping SIC decisions. An anonymous questionnaire was suggested to gather diverse opinions and ensure democratic feedback. Cllr Peterson explained that a budgeting survey last year had low participation, but communities and individuals are encouraged to make suggestions for any savings or efficiencies identified. Residents and groups can submit views via email, letter, or in person at 9 North Ness. The Council continues to encourage feedback about which services matter most to residents.

11. **Funding applications**

11.1 *26/27 SWCC core funding application*

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The initial draft had been sent to members for comment, and the final draft was presented for approval. The SWCC has been allocated £14407.69 for 2026-27 (the same as last year) but must propose how those funds will be used. The finances will be reviewed at each SWCC meeting, and some in-year changes are possible to each budget area but must be justified. The members approved the final draft, and this will now be sent to the SIC.

Action – 26/27 SWCC core funding application will be sent to the SIC

12. Report from Association of Shetland Community Councils (ASCC)

A Holt had attended the meeting on 10th March. Shayne McLeod and Andrew Archer were appointed as the new ASCC Chair & Vice Chair respectively. Notes from the meeting from Michael Duncan had been forwarded to SWCC members.

The ASCC are looking at how to develop the meetings and make them more meaningful. Community Councils can put forward a potential agenda item for each ASCC meeting. It was agreed that SWCC will select an appropriate agenda item at a future meeting.

Action – Chair to circulate some suggested ASCC agenda items for discussion.

13. Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation (SSMO)

A letter had been received via the ASCC, requesting nominations from the ASCC for 2 volunteer directors of the SSMO. The directors oversee the licensing and regulation of commercial shellfish fishing within 6 nautical miles of Shetland. R Smith indicated that he would be interested to see what was involved.

Action – Clerk to forward the letter to R Smith

14. Development of the next Shetland Partnership Plan (SPP)

SWCC is required to nominate a representative to participate in this process. There are seven 2-hour sessions planned between May 2026 and March 2027, where different topics will be discussed.

J Haswell declared her interest in attending these sessions, as she has previous experience of the process and implementation of the Plan, from her work at the NHS and in the Third Sector. She explained there would be time between the SPP sessions to discuss any issues with SWCC members. D Sinclair nominated J Haswell to represent SWCC. This was seconded by A Holt and approved.

15. AOB

15.1 SWCC grants, including defibrillator maintenance grants

Further to item 5.1 of 03/26, J Haswell proposed that SWCC should review all its funding priorities, along with clarifying which funding requests should be directed to the SCBF, rather than an SWCC grant. This could be completed by either a sub-group or all available members, possibly at a specific meeting over the summer. Members agreed that funding of defibrillator consumables was

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desirable but stressed the importance of making commitments only within the funding limits available to the SWCC.

Applicants are currently unclear about the different funding options for projects. J Haswell proposed creating guidelines for applicants to clarify when SCBF CGS applications may be more appropriate than SWCC grants. These guidelines, along with a review of the SWCC grant application form and a more specific Defibrillator Maintenance grant application form could be discussed as part of the proposed summer meeting. It was agreed to go ahead with this plan.

16. Date/Venue of Next Meeting

The date of next meeting was set for Tuesday 5th May 2026 at 7pm.

Venue – Walls Hall and TEAMS.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and participation

Meeting closed at 8:20pm

We welcome your contact

- Do you have any community issues or concerns you would like us to discuss?
- A safety issue or an idea for improving the area?
- Do you wish to discuss or apply for funding?

Please get in touch by email - sandnesswallsc@gmail.com



or speak directly to any member via <https://tinyurl.com/yhwa3wus>