

WHALSAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes subject to approval at next Community Council meeting

Minute of the Whalsay Community Council (CC) meeting. Held on THURSDAY 26TH FEBRUARY 2026 at 7.00 pm
at Whalsay Heritage Centre

PRESENT:	APOLOGIES
CCLlr Jackie Leslie (JL) – Chair	CCLlr Richard Hutchinson (RH)
CCLlr Caroline Watt (CW) – Vice Chair	Michael Duncan – C. Council Liaison Officer (MD)
CCLlr Helen Thomson (HT)	Duncan Anderson - North Isles Cllr (DA)
	Dana Jamieson - Police Scotland
Magnus Hutchinson	Andrew Inkster - Executive Manager Marine & Air Operations
Paul Moar	Neil Hutchinson – SIC Roads
Leah Coyler – C. Council Liaison Officer (LC) -TEAMS	Ryan Thomson – North Isles Cllr (RT)
	Robert Thomson – North Isles Cllr (RTH)

MINUTE TAKER: Gina Irvine – WCC Clerk (GI)

WELCOME: JL welcomed all.

Introduced Leah Coyler the new community officer who joined via teams and Paul Moar and Magnus Hutchinson in person.

APOLOGIES: Apologies noted

DECLARATION OF INTEREST: JL and the Clerk both declared an interest in relation to the Participatory Budgeting Event. This was noted by members.

It was agreed that, where required, they would step back from any discussions or decisions relating to the allocation of funding to ensure the process remains fair and transparent.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES: JL asked if all were happy with minutes. JL approved; HT seconded.

RUNIC STONES

JL introduced Paul and Magnus, who gave an overview of the project, including the work completed to date and their experience working with other Community Councils. They explained how similar projects have been delivered elsewhere and outlined the type of support required to move the project forward in Whalsay.

Members expressed their support for the work already undertaken, noting the positive impact it could have in helping to promote Whalsay and highlight local points of interest. The value of building on this work to encourage both community use and visitor engagement was recognised.

A further discussion took place on potential next steps, including the use of placemarkers to support and enhance walking routes around the island. Members agreed this could provide a simple and effective way to improve accessibility, share local information. JL also provided an update that a new tourist sign has been approved and is hoped to be installed by summer, and thanked Paul and Magnus for their help and support

NEW COMMUNITY COUNCIL LIASON OFFICER

JL introduced Leah as the new Community Council Liaison Officer, replacing Roselyn and undertaking the same role. Leah introduced herself to members and expressed that she looks forward to working with the Council.

Discussion took place regarding the recruitment of new Community Councillors. Leah agreed to provide support in this area and will revert with guidance on how to help increase recruitment.

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NEW MEETING DATES:

All present agreed the schedule of forthcoming meetings as follows: 15th April, 27th May, 1st July, 26th August, 30th September, 18th November, 13th January 2026, 24th February 2026, and 24th March 2026. All meetings will be held at 7.00pm at the Heritage Centre.

The Participatory Budgeting Event was confirmed for 26th March, from 6.30pm to 8.00pm, for voting. JL advised that this event could also be used as an opportunity to support Community Councillor recruitment and encouraged members to attend and assist.

FINANCE REPORT:

The Clerk presented the finance report, which was reviewed and discussed by all members. JL discussed the funding cycle to new members. Members considered how available funds could best be used and discussed allocating funding towards the development of placemarkers to support walking routes around the island. It was agreed this would be a positive use of funds, helping to improve local amenities and promote the area.

Further discussion took place regarding the forthcoming Participatory Budgeting (PB) Event, with members expressing a desire to ensure that all participating groups receive some level of funding where possible.

1. DOG FOULING – HOULL

The Clerk confirmed that there is no update at this time. JL shared details of the project with members. It was noted that the Clerk will follow up with the school's Art Teacher regarding the proposed collaboration on designing signage to raise awareness of dog fouling.

ACTIONS: Ongoing

2. SYMBISTER PIER

The Clerk advised that the date for the planned works at Pier Road is still to be confirmed. It was noted that 24/7 PTZ CCTV cameras have now been installed, with the previous SIM issue resolved, and a confirmed date for the system to be fully operational is pending.

The installation of the CCTV was welcomed as a positive step towards improving safety and monitoring the area. CCTV system. It was also agreed that the situation should be reviewed again at future meetings. In addition, members discussed the possibility of re-opening the disabled toilets in the future, noting this as something to explore further at a later stage.

JL shared a request received from Ports regarding proposed works scheduled for March, which require vessel owners to be contacted. Members discussed the request and noted that the Community Council does not hold contact details for vessel owners. It was therefore agreed that this would need to be progressed by Shetland Islands Council (SIC), who are better placed to make contact directly. Members agreed that this should be referred back to SIC/Ports for action and that any updates should be shared with the Community Council in due course.

ACTIONS: Clerk to follow up

Proposed Works for Pier and Condition:

The Clerk confirmed that there is no update at this time. Members noted that their concerns regarding safety remain ongoing. It was agreed that the situation should continue to be monitored and that any updates should be shared to ensure members remain informed of progress.

JL raised concerns that the area has been neglected. Members agreed that, while some actions have been taken, these have been inadequate, and that more substantial structural improvements are required. It was agreed that Shetland Amenity should take further action to address the issues.

Action: Ongoing

3. Waiting Room and Toilets

JL asked the clerk to check in with RTH for any news and let everyone know if there's an update.

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Actions: Ongoing

4. Fire Hydrant at New Park

JL asked clerk to follow up with local services for update.

Actions: Ongoing.

5. FERRIES

The Clerk advised that there are no updates at this time, with continued delays noted. Members expressed strong concerns about the ongoing uncertainty and the potential long-term impact on the reliability and future of ferry services. Particular concern was raised about the lack of communication, especially where bookings have been cancelled at short notice due to the late return of a re-serviced ferry. It was noted that the ageing fleet continues to present ongoing challenges in terms of maintenance and reliability, leading to repeated disruption for islanders.

JL shared correspondence received from residents, which clearly set out the impact these disruptions are having on daily life, including travel, work, and access to essential services. Members agreed that the current situation is not acceptable and that improvements are urgently needed. The communication from the relevant services has been inadequate, with insufficient notice and updates being provided. Members agreed that stronger action is required, including clearer planning, better communication, and more reliable contingency arrangements. It was agreed that this issue should continue to be raised and closely monitored.

- New Proposed Booking System

- Parking Issues During Dry Dock Period and Wi-Fi Connectivity at Terminals

No updates or changes.

ACTIONS: Clerk to follow up

6. POLICE MATTERS

No updates

7. ROADS, FENCE AT DUMP, STREETLIGHTS CYCLE & WALKING PATHS

The Clerk shared details of the extent of works programmed in Whalsay for the current financial year, including resurfacing, patching, and verge trimming. Members noted the planned improvements and welcomed the ongoing maintenance works across the island.

The Clerk also confirmed that a new tourist sign is planned for installation in time for the summer.

It was noted that the slab for the bus shelter has been completed; however, the bus stop itself has not yet been installed. Members requested an update and a confirmed date for installation.

ACTION: Ongoing

8. Whalsay Tunnel Action Group

Clerk reported back no update

ACTIONS: Ongoing

9. DENTIST

No updates.

ACTIONS: ongoing

10. MAP/NEWSLETTER

JL reminded members extension for map project until 30th Sept 2026 and asked for more input.

ACTION Ongoing

11. SKIPS

Skip to be organised for March and clerk to action

ACTIONS: Ongoing

12. HARSDALE RENOVATION

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JL discussed project and nothing to report back.

ACTIONS: Ongoing

13. CHIMNEY REPLACEMENT

JL asked about the previously raised concerns regarding the chimney replacement. It was noted that there are no updates at this time. The Clerk has been asked to follow up with DA and RTH and will update members once further information is received.

ACTIONS: Ongoing

14 PHONE/INTERNET OUTAGES

Members discussed the ongoing lack of improvement in services and noted that the issue remains unresolved. Particular concern was raised regarding the local nursing home, which continues to experience difficulties in accessing an adequate and reliable service.

It was agreed that the current situation is not acceptable and that alternative approaches or solutions should be explored to address the repeated issues.

ACTIONS: Clerk to continue to report

15. TRIPWELL PARKING

JL shared a complaint regarding the misuse of emergency bays, noting that they are not consistently being kept clear for emergency services as intended. Members agreed that this is a matter of concern and requires follow-up.

ACTIONS: Clerk will report the issue to the relevant authority and provide an update to members once further information is received.

16. PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING EVENT APPLICATIONS

Declarations of Interest were noted from JL and the Clerk, which were acknowledged by all members.

Members then reviewed the applications received and discussed them. It was agreed that all groups who submitted applications should be invited to attend the event, to give them the opportunity to take part, share their proposals, and engage with the community. Leah agreed to join us for event.

ACTIONS: Clerk to arrange invitations and provide further details to all groups.

JL Thanked all for attending

Meeting closed at 8.17 pm Date of Next Meeting: The next meeting scheduled for WEDNESDAY 15TH APRIL 2026, at Heritage Centre for locals and Teams for others considering joining.