

Sandness & Walls Community Council

Chair:

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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 Walls Hall on Tuesday 5th May 2026 at 7 pm

Present: Members - Jane Haswell, Haydn Robertson, Andy Holt (online), Jane Puckey (online)
Clerk - Gill Nadin
Cllr Liz Peterson

Apologies: Sorley Johnston, Angie Nichols, David Sinclair, Jonathan Laing, Leah Colyer, 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. Police report

The bi-monthly report for February and March had been sent to members. No queries were raised.

4. Previous minutes and actions

Adoption of minutes from 7th April 2026 was proposed by J Haswell and seconded by A Holt.

The Clerk and Chair confirmed that all actions had been completed, except:
Re. 12 of 04/26 ASCC update.

Chair was to circulate some suggested ASCC agenda items for discussion, but following communication with Michael Duncan it was agreed that there are enough agenda items for the June ASCC meeting.

The *Democracy Matters* route map, published in March 2026 by the Scottish Government which outlines a plan for decentralizing power to local communities, is an item that the J Haswell is keen to see discussed at the ASCC. However, the new government following the elections on Thursday 7th May could affect whether or not this is progressed, so this item is better discussed at a later date.

5. Matters arising not on agenda

5.1 *Re 6.1 of 4/26 First responder request for financial assistance.*

J Haswell has emailed and left messages with Duncan McNeill, Community Training & Support Officer (North Region) at the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS). She also spoke with the SAS National First Responders team who confirmed the funding model remains as previously described. Thanks to donations from local residents and businesses, Samantha is now understood to

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have all the equipment she needs as the Westside's only First Responder. The Sandsting and Aithsting Community Council is also understood to have contributed. Samantha is still fundraising to equip any future Westside responders and to replace consumables. Recruitment continues, but no volunteers have yet been secured in Sandness.

Members discussed making a donation and agreed that First Responders are a vital resource in life-or-death emergencies. They wished to offer support without taking on an unsustainable long-term commitment. It was agreed to donate £250 now, with the option to review this later in the year once other funding commitments are decided.

Action: Clerk to write to Samantha to advise of the donation, and the possibility of further funding if required in the future. Donation to be made

5.2 Re. 15.1 of 04/26 - SWCC grants, including defibrillator maintenance grants

Members confirmed plans to hold a special summer meeting on funding priorities. Dates in July will be circulated for availability. The agenda will cover longer-term First Responder funding, SWCC and SCBF grants, and other funding commitments in general terms and bring back a proposal to the full CC meeting for discussion and any decisions needed.

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

There has been no progress on this issue. Neil Hutcheson was emailed after the last meeting and said work would begin during the week commencing 13 April. J Haswell has made several calls but has not yet been able to reach him. To move matters forward, it was agreed that J Haswell will attempt to meet Neil in person first. Members also suggested writing to the SIC Chief Executive to raise the safety concerns and the ongoing risk to the public. It was agreed to invite Neil to the October meeting; this could be brought forward if required.

Action: Chair to arrange to meet Neil Hutcheson to discuss the concerns. Write to SIC Chief Executive if no progress is made.

5.4 Re. 6.4 of 4/26 Communal bins at Kirkdale (bin lid broken).

Infrastructure Services have been contacted. They have ordered a lid and its replacement is scheduled. They advised there are no plans at present to introduce wheelie bins here.

5.5 Re. 8.1 of 4/26 Horse signs

It was unclear if these have already been placed, but Cllr Peterson reported that several signs have recently been installed in the Westside, as part of the planned programme of road sign upgrades, including passing places.

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

A Holt reported that the broken side wall of the grid has been replaced with a wood and rail fence. The grid rails have not been repaired. The Clerk had asked Mervyn Smith at SIC for an update on the potential timescale for this work, but nothing received since he advised in February that Garriocks are working

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through a backlog of urgent grid repairs. It was agreed that J Haswell will raise this issue with Neil Hutcheson.

Action: Chair to discuss with Neil Hutcheson.

5.7 *Re. 6.5 of 4/26 Light at bus stop* – see Active Travel update below

6 Correspondence not on agenda

6.1 Walls Regatta Club have applied for a SWCC grant for £2200 for sails, booms, masts, etc. Following an initial assessment by the Chair and Vice-Chair, they were advised to apply for SCBF Tier 2. The funding decision will still be made by the SWCC, but funds would come from the SCBF pot of money, rather than the limited SWCC grant funds. It was agreed that any publicity material developed after the July special meeting should direct applicants towards the most appropriate funding streams and reduce confusion about what is available.

6.2 Communication received from SCBF re. Viking Community Fund Apprenticeship Support Fund for Small Businesses which will close on the 31st of May 2026. Information has been posted on the SWCC Facebook page. Minuted for information only - <https://www.scbf.org.uk/funding/vcf/apprenticeships-bursary-fund>

7 Finance report

The finance report was circulated before the meeting. A Holt stated it was a good format and provided clear information. No queries were raised, and members approved the report. Accounts will be submitted for audit in the next few weeks and when approved, SWCC can apply to retain the 2025-26 underspend of about £1100. The old account (Bank of Scotland) should be closed soon with full transfer of funds.

8 **Roads** – weekly reports are being circulated. No issues raised, other than those in matters arising above.

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

10 Councillor's reports

Cllr Peterson explained there is little to report at present. With the Scottish election just 2 days away, there is little activity at the moment.

11 Funding applications

11.1 26/27 SWCC core funding application

This year's core funding of £14407.69 has been approved and is due in the bank account imminently.

11.2 Unadopted roads grants

The previous process was confirmed with Doug Forrest. Based on the budget agreed by members, he approved all applications that satisfied the eligibility criteria, calculating the payment due from the length of road to be repaired and type of repair planned, as per the criteria. Members agreed to continue the

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same process as the previous CC. Closing date for this year's applications has passed and two have been received. The amounts are well within the budget set.

Action: The Clerk will advise the applicants of the amount they are to receive and ensure payments made as appropriate.

11.3 Da Voar Redd Funding

A request for funding has been received from a local group, following completion of the Redd Up. The Chair has clarified the process of funding with the Shetland Amenity Trust (SAT). Each group should complete a survey detailing what Redd Up they have done. The SAT then advise Community Councils of the groups in their area that have completed Redd Ups. The CCs decide if they wish to give funds to the groups. 12 groups in the Westside were registered for the Redd Up, but it is not clear how many are in the SWCC area.

J Puckey recalled that the SWCC decided more than a year ago not to fund groups for Redd Up, although they had previously done so. It was agreed that this should be part of the funding and grants discussions in July.

Action: Clerk to reply to enquiring group to say decision deferred to July

12 Defibrillators update

J Haswell is collecting information about defibrillators and their maintenance. There is a company offering to undertake regular checks and maintenance for an annual fee. There is also a considerable amount of discussion about defibs Shetland-wide. It was agreed that defibs and the potential for SWCC funding should be part of the discussions in July's meeting.

13 Active Travel update

An update for Community Councils from Michael Duncan was forwarded to members, but this was a general Shetland overview and did not include any specifics for the SWCC area. Robina Barton had advised by email that the final reports for the Active Travel audits undertaken in Walls and Sandness should be available imminently. The members were concerned that Walls and Sandness should not be left behind as other areas are prioritised for works.

Cllr Peterson explained that following the audits, not all work would come via the Active Travel funding stream and generally these external funds are being directed towards larger projects. Some of the larger projects will be very long-term as they wait for funding to become available. Smaller projects may be completed from local funding and potentially sooner. Robina had indicated that the bus stop light may be addressed in the short term by the Roads Department.

The members were keen to see any documents relating to the SWCC area audit that have previously been discussed – J Puckey recalled a meeting at which some drawings and documents were presented to the SWCC by Robina during the audit process. There are several issues that members would like to see addressed, eg. better overall lighting, bike rack, safety on the bridge, etc.

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but they may already have been covered in the audit.

Action: Clerk to request the previous documentation from Robina Barton, prior to the final audit report being available. Also to query expected timeline for next steps. To copy Cllr Peterson into email.
Chair to speak to Neil Hutcheson about the light at the bus stop.

14 Scottish Hydro-Electric Community Trust

Providing grants to offset high connection costs in some individual domestic cases and for special community projects. Minuted for information only - <https://www.shect.org/index.php>

15 Local Plan Plan (LPP) update

J Haswell had continued to investigate LPPs and the potential to develop them across the SWCC area. Essentially, an LPP records the needs and wants of a community in a formalised way (eg. regarding housing, land use, etc) that should then be considered by any future planning process. It can be at a very small settlement scale, or larger. J Haswell has an update that she will share.

Sandness is in the process of developing an LPP but has a paid Project Officer to take this forward. An LPP is potentially a lot of work and difficult to do without funding and staffing to take it forward. I was agreed to support Sandness in their project, and learn from the process but not to progress any other LPP in the area at this stage as a CC. Other groups in the area may choose to undertake this work independently.

Action: Chair to share update

16 AOCB

16.1 A Holt reported that there are a series of blind crests on the West Burrafirth road that need signage. They are in one particular stretch of road and could potentially lead to head-on incidents.

Action: A Holt to send details of the locations to J Haswell.
J Haswell will raise the matter with Neil Hutcheson.

16.2 H Roberston explained that the Seafarer's Research Group based in Sandness will be looking for funding in the next few months to assist in their research project. This is likely to be for hire of Halls and other small amounts of money.

17 Date/Venue of Next Meeting

The date of next meeting was set for Tuesday 2nd June at 7pm.
Venue – Sandness Hall and TEAMS.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and participation

Meeting closed at 8:17pm

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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 - sandnesswallscc@gmail.com



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