

# Unst Community Council

## Chair

Caroline Hunter  
Shirva  
Uyeasound  
Unst  
Shetland

## Clerk

Lynette Spence  
36 Settershill Estate  
Baltasound  
Unst, Shetland  
Tel: 07908 872 562  
Email: [clerk@unstcc.shetland.co.uk](mailto:clerk@unstcc.shetland.co.uk)

## Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 6.30 pm in Room 2, Baltasound School and by MsTeams

### Present

Caroline Hunter, Chair  
Adam Doull  
John Peterson  
Ingram Thomson  
Brydon Johnson  
Robert Thomson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio) Ms Teams

### Attending

Frances Browne  
Gordon Thomson  
Lynette Spence, Clerk  
Elizabeth Johnson – Spaceport  
Scott Hammond – Spaceport  
Pete Mogridge – Local Place Plans

#### 1. Apologies

Alec Priest  
Janice Priest  
Ryan Thomson, SIC Councillor

#### 2. Declaration of Interest

Ingram Thomson – Spaceport  
Robert Thomson – Planning Applications

#### 3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Proposed – Ingram Thomson  
Seconded – Caroline Hunter

#### 4. Spaceport Update

An alteration to the agenda as Scott Hammond (CEO) is in Unst and asked to attend the meeting to give an update on the Spaceport, along with Elizabeth Johnson.  
Scott has been involved with the Spaceport since the start and is now the CEO. The Spaceport is at the stage to be launching rockets. They are working at building a sustainable business with the aim for profitability and creating jobs, as well as caring for the environment and keeping the area safe and secure. Spaceports are like magnets to economic growth and will bring in other businesses such as life sciences. The marketing audit looks positive. The Spaceport are also in full support of the tunnels.

There is not a confirmed launch date yet. Testing and improvements are always being carried out. There will be more exercises around the launch exclusion zones and for blue light exercises. There will be a 5 week launch window, and there will be set days per week set aside for launch which will last for 4 hours each. When the days are nominated this information will go out to interested parties such as mariners, and there are discussions with fishing associations. Weather will have to be assessed, which may mean the launch has to be cancelled, but even if the weather is good there may still be delays so it will be hard to give precise times, which is why they would encourage people from outside Unst to watch online. Local people will be informed first about any launch and will be given priority at launch viewing areas.

As part of the Visitor Management Plan all residences north of the Haroldswick hall will be contacted to receive Resident Passes, and there will also be some widening out to families of residents. School buses, care workers, taxis etc will all also have access to the area. It is thought that 600 is the maximum number of visitors due to transport issues.

Extra water tanks are in place for fire services, and a walkaround for emergency services can be arranged.

There are no plans for military based launches, and any thing of that nature would be for observation purposes.

## 5. Matters Arising from previous minutes

### Reply about Ferry queries:

- There is no contingency plan, mainly due to lack of resources available, but there has been progress with the Ferries Resilience Review.
- Whenever possible the SIC have said they will try their best to keep us updated on any scenarios which have the potential to impact services to the community.
- Progress is being made with a new booking system and hope to see it rolled out by the end of this year.
- Discussions are on-going regarding the lashing of vehicles on the Bluemull Sound Ferry, and they intend to submit a formal proposal for consideration to the MCA after these meetings have taken place.

The UCC discussed this response and felt that there is very little consultation regarding avoiding Unst events, it is basically an 'early warning' to say when it will happen. Single vessel timetables can be confusing due to single and double crew situations. It will be a significantly long time waiting for a new ferry, which is concerning.

It was agreed that **Adam would contact the Route Master** to hear proposals and discuss options before any proposal goes to the MCA regarding the lashing of vehicles.

The UCC members felt that the people who have worked overtime and have been calling ferry users about timetable changes should be thanked for all their hard work. **Lynette will do this.**

### Reply about Roads queries:

*The 20 mph speed limit at Uyeasound was revoked shortly after the school was closed. However, we are in the process of implementing the Scottish Government's aim that 20 mph speed limits be introduced on "all appropriate roads." The next stage of introducing 20 mph limits on "appropriate roads," is to consider rural areas. This will mainly be roads in housing estates but road lengths such as these and those in the area of the Haroldswick Hall, Heritage Centre and playpark will also be considered. It may be that it is more appropriate to introduce 30 mph speed limits in these areas which could be applied over a greater road length than a 20 mph would be applied to. For example, at Uyeasound a 30 mph limit could take in Vatnagarth, the shed to the east of the Galley Shed, the head of the pier and the East Road.*

*The widening of the A968 road at Sandison's quarry has been an aim for a number of years. It was part of the A968 Setter's Hill Quarry to Brookpoint Road Improvement project which was previously a named scheme on the Council's capital programme. The widening of the A968 remains an aim for the Roads*

*Service and a topographical survey is to be undertaken this summer followed by the design of the widening of the west side of the road.*

Reply about Housing queries:

George Martin is the new Head of Housing.

*Housing are at an advanced stage in pulling together a revised 3 year Property Planned Maintenance Investment Plan and we aim to have this published on our website soon.*

*If there are rotten timber fences, tenants can report to Housing and we will inspect and if necessary look to replace with post and wire fences.*

*When we carry out our annual Estate Inspections in June/July the area Inspection Officer will look to identify additional external works required which have not been included in our 3 year plan.*

*When our staff become aware of abandoned cars, we would pass this information on to Environmental Health which is what we'd suggest members of the public do also. Further advice however on how to report abandoned cars is available on the Environmental Health web site.*

*In terms of empty properties, we currently have 3 x 3 bed properties available in Unst, which are ready to let or under offer.*

Late ferry request 18<sup>th</sup> July 2026:

Request has been acknowledged but awaiting an answer. **Lynette to chase up.**

## **6. Pete Mogridge – Local Place Plans**

Pete Mogridge discussed Local Place Plans, which is a community led 'community mini plan' that shows the aspirations of the community. It uses maps to show what the community would like to do with the use and development of land, such as development areas, green areas, protecting the environment and views. There must be community engagement to put a Local Place Plan together, and the SIC would also incorporate it into their plans. It is a registered, legal document.

The deadline for communities to decide if they want to move forward with a plan is the end of April 2026. Several areas in Shetland are already looking into plans, and Pete has offered to help if Unst would like to put one together. Some work has already been carried out for the Community Action Plan by children at school, and the Unst Partnership also has work that would contribute towards it. Pete can pull it all together to give a starting point. Once there is a starting point, there will be a community event to look at the skeletal document, and give everyone a chance to put forward their views. Frances offered to help organise the community event. Landowners would also have to be engaged to avoid confrontation, but plots don't have to be identified, suggestions can be made for a general area. It is beneficial for Unst to have this on paper to protect areas

## **7. Ferries/Fixed Links**

There is no other news to report at the moment. The question about which tunnel to do first was brought up but everyone agreed it is more important to stand together and have a united front.

## **8. SIC North Isles Councillors Update**

Nothing to add from what has previously been discussed.

## **9. Unst Partnership Ltd (UP) Update.**

- The next community Skip Scheme day is now on from 11-1pm Saturday 4th April, at the Baltasound Pierhead, with the SIC Bulk Uplift the following Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> April.
- Development Worker post: UP Directors are meeting on Wednesday night with Fiona Stirling from HIE to discuss possible funding for a DW post. HIE normally just fund for one year but it may be that UP can find funding for years 2 and 3 through the SCBF (Viking Fund). The job remit would come from the priorities in the recent Community Action Plan and Housing Needs Assessment studies.

- Viking longhouse site: SAT have accepted a price for the site at Haroldswick to be run by a local group from April 2027. The exact terms of how this will work have still to be discussed. At present SAT still own the site and fund main costs, with a local group, “Friends of Skidbladnir” providing some labour for maintenance on the site and UP collecting the donations. Several Tour groups have already booked slots to visit over the summer months and there is one concert event booked too. The work to repair the “knees” has still to be completed by Angus McNeill but the wood has been purchased and is being transported here from Norfolk. A small area of the deck also needs to be repaired.
- Shop Storage Unit: UP is still having issues about siting a Storage unit /portacabin but hope to resolve this in the next few weeks. Shop sales have picked up after a very quiet January due to weather conditions.
- Halligarth: A report on the state of Halligarth house by Structural Engineer Karl Bolt was received recently. Two representatives from NTS, Angus Murray and Clea Warner, are coming here on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March to discuss the site with UP directors, and Unst CC members if they wish to attend. Basically, the Pre 1832 section of the house to the north is in the most reasonable shape, although not great; but the southern section and extension to the west are in very poor condition. The building is B listed which makes demolition difficult, but it really has to be questioned whether the whole building needs to be demolished on safety grounds. There is a lot of published information and archives about the family history and perhaps some of that could go online.
- At the recent UP AGM, Director Di Hervey retired and 3 new directors were appointed: Victoria Mouat, Fiona Soutar and Louise Ward.
- UP still has funding from a local benefactor for a Seniors Citizens event/trip and any suggestions from the over 60’s are welcome.

#### **10. Community Involvement Update**

- There was a pop-in at Nordalea on 26<sup>th</sup> February.
- There will be a Community Resilience meeting with the local halls to discuss generators and the running costs.
- Heritage Trust AGM is on 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

#### **11. Shetland Community Benefit Fund (SCBF)**

One Step Beyond Application for £1500 was unanimously agreed upon.

David Cooper has been in touch to say that Unst is under-represented so the UCC should be encouraging people to apply.

#### **12. Applications for Planning**

Sandalbrae – no objections

Hillsgarth – no objections

#### **13. Application for Donations**

N/A

#### **14. Unadopted Roads**

N/A

#### **15. Correspondence**

The NHS have responded to concerns about calling 999 but no-one attends the scene. They have reviewed the recent case that the UCC informed them about, and they are working on improvements. They are aiming to have a bespoke set up for the isles in Shetland, Orkney and the Western Isles. The UCC is happy that concerns have been taken seriously and improvements will be made.

#### **16. Community Council Finances**

Printout given out

**Lynette to apply for Core Funding 2026/27, allocation £12,050.15**

**17. A.O.C.B.**

Statkraft

There were discussions around the Community Benefit Fund for the North Isles. A community liaison group has been set up by developers, and the Yell Community Council want a meeting with all three islands to discuss this. Alec, who couldn't attend the meeting, knows more about this, as does Alice Mathieson.

The purpose of a meeting would be to set up a group to manage the funds and decide what the funds should be spent on.

There will be discussion about how disruptions, whilst building, will affect ferries and housing. There should be a significant benefit to all the communities in the North Isles and it's important that Unst has representatives at the meeting. It was suggested that Caroline and Alec should attend from the UCC, as there will be a lot of negotiations.

**Lynette to contact Alec for availability.**

**18. Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting is on Monday the 20<sup>th</sup> April 2026

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Clerk: \_\_\_\_\_