

WHALSAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes subject to approval at next Community Council meeting

Minute of the Whalsay Community Council (CC) meeting. Held on WEDNESDAY 15TH APRIL 2026 at 7.00 pm
at Whalsay Heritage Centre

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

MINUTE TAKER: Gina Irvine – WCC Clerk (GI)

WELCOME: JL welcomed all.

Introduced Leah Coyler and Robert Thomson who joined by TEAMS

APOLOGIES: Apologies noted

DECLARATION OF INTEREST: CW declared an interest in relation to the new member application from Alison Hutchinson. JL declared an interest in relation to Whalsay Riding Club. This was noted by members.

It was agreed that, where required, she would step back from any discussions or decisions relating to the appointment.

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

RUNIC STONES

JL summarized design options and positioning of place markers, and locally appropriate designs that reflect Whalsay's heritage and points of interest.

ACTION: Clerk to follow up with Magnus regarding sourcing possible locations and designs for the place markers.

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING EVENT

JL provided an update on the Participatory Budgeting Event, advising that the event had taken place and was well attended, with 99 people present. All applicants received grant payment, with awards allocated based on the votes received.

LC noted that the event was very positive overall, with good feedback received. Members discussed how engaging the event had been for both the public and the participating groups, and recognised the value of the event in encouraging community involvement.

FINANCE REPORT:

The Clerk presented the finance report, which was reviewed and discussed by all members. All members discussed use of funds and need to finalise map project by September.

1. DOG FOULING – HOULL

JL asked clerk to follow up with the school's Art Teacher regarding the proposed collaboration on designing signage to raise awareness of dog fouling. LC shared latest guidance available for this and briefly discussed opportunities done by other groups.

ACTIONS: Ongoing

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2. SYMBISTER PIER

JL advised that, the new 24/7 PTZ CCTV cameras have now been installed. However, a date for the system becoming fully operational has yet to be confirmed.

Members discussed safety concerns relating to the waiting rooms and noted that, to date, no formal complaints had been received from members of the public. It was agreed that, once Shetland Islands Council confirms that the CCTV system is operational, the Community Council will use social media to inform residents that 24/7 CCTV monitoring is in place.

Members also discussed the condition of the Old Pier and expressed concerns regarding its safety, particularly following recent storm damage. The Clerk was asked to raise these concerns with Shetland Amenity Trust, highlighting the need for improved safeguarding measures. Members felt that existing barriers should be reviewed to ensure they are secure, fit for purpose and provide adequate protection for the public.

ACTIONS: Ongoing and Clerk to follow up

3. Waiting Room and Toilets

JL shared update from RTH no progress however consideration was being made for portakabin style units.

Actions: Ongoing

4. Fire Hydrant at New Park

JL provided members with an update regarding the lack of fire hydrants in a number of areas across the island. Members discussed concerns that the current provision may not be adequate in some locations.

Members agreed that further support may be required to improve the existing provision. It was agreed that the Clerk should follow up the matter with the relevant authorities to seek an update on current arrangements, identify any planned improvements, and highlight the concerns raised by the Community Council. Members agreed that the issue should continue to be monitored.

Actions: Ongoing.

5. FERRIES

Members discussed the continuing challenges facing ferry services and the ongoing issues associated with the ageing fleet. RTH provided an update on recent vessel repairs, dry docking arrangements and the procurement of a new vessel. Whilst members welcomed the investment, concerns were expressed that local operators and those with detailed knowledge of inter-island services had not been sufficiently involved in the procurement process. Members also questioned whether the proposed vessel would be fit for future requirements and noted that additional vessels would still be required to support the ageing fleet and provide resilience, even if proposed tunnel projects proceed.

RTH further advised that the new ferry booking system is expected to be completed by the end of the summer and that assurances had been given that many of the issues currently experienced by users would be addressed through the new system.

JL reiterated recent complaints received from residents and enquired whether any progress had been made in reviewing future dry docking schedules, noting concerns that disruption appears to be increasing each year. Members discussed the ongoing issues and agreed that the matter should remain under review, with concerns continuing to be raised through the appropriate channels and closely monitored. Members will identify and share possible measures that may assist future service planning and resilience.

RTH also raised concerns regarding the reliability of Wi-Fi provision at ferry terminals and advised that further work is required to identify and implement a workable long-term solution. He undertook to keep members updated as further information becomes available.

ACTIONS: Ongoing and clerk to follow up

6. POLICE MATTERS

JL shared latest Police Reports with members.

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

JL provided members with an update on the ongoing road tarring and resurfacing programme across the island, and works still to be completed. Members welcomed the improvements and noted that a new road sign is proposed to be installed by the end of the summer.

During discussion, members raised a number of additional concerns relating to road conditions and other infrastructure issues in various parts of the island. It was agreed that these matters should be brought to the attention of the relevant service for investigation and consideration. The Clerk was asked to compile the concerns raised and forward them on behalf of the Community Council, requesting updates where appropriate. Members agreed to continue monitoring the situation and to raise any further issues as they arise.

ACTION: Clerk to follow up and ongoing.

8. DENTIST

JL welcomed the update and members discussed the continuing lack of healthcare facilities both on and off the island. Members noted that access to a full range of services on the island remains limited and that this continues to impact residents, particularly those who are unable to travel to attend appointments off-island. Members agreed that there remains a need for improved local provision.

ACTIONS: Ongoing

9. MAP/NEWSLETTER

JL suggested that an informal meeting be arranged between Community Council meetings to allow members additional time to progress and finalise the map project. Members agreed that, due to the limited time available during regular meetings and the range of other business being considered, an informal session would be beneficial in helping move the project forward. It was noted that the project has a deadline of September, making it important that work continues to ensure the project is completed on schedule.

ACTION Ongoing

10. SKIPS

No dates put forward

ACTIONS: Ongoing

11. CHIMNEY REPLACEMENT

JL asked for an update regarding the previously raised concerns relating to the chimney replacement. RTH advised that action had now been taken and that all affected residents had been contacted with the proposed plans.

Members welcomed the update and noted that no further information was available at this stage. The Clerk will continue to monitor the matter and provide further updates as they become available.

ACTIONS: Ongoing

12. PHONE/INTERNET OUTAGES

Members discussed the ongoing issues with telecommunications services and noted that, despite concerns being raised previously, many problems remain unresolved. Particular concern was expressed regarding the local nursing home, which continues to experience difficulties in accessing an adequate and reliable service.

CW provided an update on the forthcoming network rollout expected to take place during the summer. Members welcomed the update and expressed hope that the planned improvements would lead to a more reliable and resilient service for residents and local businesses. Members agreed to continue monitoring the situation and review progress following the completion of the rollout.

ACTIONS: Clerk to continue to report

14. Whalsay Riding Club

A grant request was received from Whalsay Riding Club for the Voar Redd Up 2026. Members considered the grant application and unanimously agreed to award the grant.

Members also considered the planning application received since the previous meeting. Following discussion, no objections were raised.

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15. EV Charger Faulty

HT reported that the island's EV charging point is currently faulty. Members expressed concern, noting that this is the only public EV charging unit on the island and that its continued unavailability is causing inconvenience for electric vehicle users. Members asked the Clerk to report the fault and seek an update on the status of repairs and the expected timescale for the charger being returned to service.

16. New Member

JL shared an application from Alison to join the Community Council as a councillor. Members considered the application and all those present unanimously agreed to appoint Alison as a member of the Community Council.

JL Thanked all for attending

Meeting closed at 8.45 pm Date of Next Meeting: The next meeting scheduled for WEDNESDAY 27TH MAY 2026, at Heritage Centre for locals and Teams for others considering joining.