

Unst Community Council

Chair

Caroline Hunter
Shirva
Uyeasound
Unst
Shetland

Clerk

Lynette Spence
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Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 1st June 2026 at 6.30 pm in Room 2, Baltasound School and by MsTeams

Present

Caroline Hunter, Chair
Adam Doull
Alec Priest
Janice Priest
John Peterson
Ingram Thomson
Brydon Johnson
Robert Thomson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio) Ms Teams
David Cooper, SCBF
Michael Duncan, SIC
Nicole Simm, SIC

Attending

Frances Browne
Gordon Thomson
David Cooper, SCBF
Michael Duncan, SIC
Nicole Simm, SIC
Lynette Spence, Clerk

1. Apologies

Ryan Thomson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio) MsTeams

2. Declaration of Interest

Late Ferry Request – Alec Priest, Janice Priest, Ingram Thomson
Statkraft – Janice Priest
Unstfest Application – Frances Browne

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Proposed – Adam Doull
Seconded – Janice Priest

4. Matters Arising from last minutes

- There has been confirmation the works on the Lund Road will be going ahead. This is very good news as it has been an issue for a number of years.
- Hermaness toilets are now open.

5. Local Place Plans

There was a meeting with Diane Cassidy which Adam and Gordon attended along with other members of Unst Partnership to discuss a Local Place Plan for Unst.

The Local Place Plan is an opportunity for the community to highlight what is wanted, and not wanted in certain areas. This requires community engagement.

Frances showed the UCC the Place Check Tool, which is a map you can log on to and mark what you like/dislike/needs work, and give suggestions. There is also some broad questions to help.

UCC members agreed for Frances will take this forward and begin community engagement.

It was also suggested that joining in with a public event, such as Sunday Teas, would be beneficial and encourage more participation. Michael also suggested borrowing tablets to be used at an event for people to use.

The deadline for the Local Place Plan is October, and 28 days of public consultation is required before finalising the plan.

6. Statkraft

Alec and Adam attended the Statkraft meeting via Teams. Further work is going on to get groups up to speak to communities in September. This will show communities the options and will show previous examples.

More information to come once meetings are organised.

A better deal for the isles has to be negotiated as current figures suggested are based on 2014.

7. Ferries/Fixed Links

- There has been good news with regard to the regulations of lashing vehicles on the Bluemull Sound. The MCA and SIC have revised the rules and seem to be agreeing with the suggestions the UCC put in 16 months ago. Some members stated that the changes in the 'lashings regulations' won't actually free up any spaces for bookings due to weather considerations. More dialogue between ferries and the booking office was suggested but it is thought the current booking system does not allow for that level of flexibility. **Robert will contact ferries to ask if there is anything they can do to get around the booking of large vehicles issue.** There were also concerns that are Tar Trucks considered 'dangerous goods' as this could have a major effect on road works in Unst. Depending on the size of the road works in can require multiple tar lorries coming in to Unst in a timely manner. **Caroline is going to investigate this further to ensure all parties agree on what has been stated.**
- The UCC contacted SIC to request the Fivla to be put on the Yell Sound while it is on single vessel timetable but unfortunately this couldn't happen due to the Fivla being on standby for the Geira, which still has gearbox issues, and the Fivla is behind on maintenance.
- **Caroline is looking into changes that could be made to the current timetable** to reduce the need for cars to speed through Yell. Robert pointed out that Transport Planning are responsible for the timetables so Caroline should contact them and copy in the Ferries department. He also pointed out that ferry timetables are also affected by bus timetables.
- **Caroline has been trying to arrange a meeting with Maggie Sandison** to discuss the ongoing issue of ferry provision to the isles. She has gone through minutes from previous years to prove these issues have never been resolved, and are getting worse. The Bluemull Sound seems to be put on single ferry service more than any other area and this is unfair to the Unst community, businesses and the school.
- Other issues about ferries that Caroline will be enquiring about are the new booking system that is still not in place; docking timetables which affect local events such as Unstfest and the Unst Show, which has been complained about for a number of years; reduction of community hires available; and the impact all these issues have on all aspects of the community in Unst. There was also the suggestion that at certain times the ferry from Fetlar could come via Belmont to offer more ferry spaces for Unst residents.
- The UCC has been contacted by a member of the Unst Community regarding the report about electric cars going on fire and how to deal with it.
- There was also concerns about if there is an issue on the Yell ferry that if cars are parked next to the handrail, car users might not be able to get out of their cars.
- **Robert stated that he will contact the ferries department about a number of issues raised and will copy in the UCC. Lynette will also contact the SIC about queries.**

Fixed Links

There was a presentation in the Baltasound Hall recently regarding fixed links. There are concerns about the price stated for a tunnel on Yell Sound being £400 million, as this seems excessively expensive and 5 times more than in other places.

Robert pointed out that there had been incorrect figures included in the presentation, which he has complained about, as well as some other issues. It was felt that these mistakes create mistrust within the community. There was a feedback sheet to answer questions that was not considered to be very useful.

The UCC felt that this has been a disappointing outcome after the SIC spending £2 million. There is a UTAG meeting coming up where they will discuss concerns raised.

8. SIC North Isles Councillors Update

Robert informed the UCC members that his updates are included in other points of the meeting.

9. Unst Partnership Ltd (UP) Update.

- The 2026-27 scheme Skip Scheme has now started, but using a Bucket and Lorry method instead. This worked quite successfully and it is likely that we will continue using this method. The next Bulky waste disposal day will be Saturday 22nd August. UP still needs to find a sponsor for the scheme but hope to have one in place for next skip day.
- The Community Development Worker post, funded for three years by HIE, will hopefully be filled later this week with Interviews on Thursday. It is hoped that the CDO will be able to start work in the near future.
- Viking longhouse site. Lawyers have now been engaged for Shetland Amenity Trust and UP and the purchase should be completed by the end of the year. Repairs to the decking and “knees” or brackets on the deck have still to be completed and re-painting of the deck still needs to be done.
- Halligarth. There has been no further word from NTS about potential work on Halligarth. UP is still waiting to receive a grass-cutting/maintenance contract for the Halligarth house and grounds.
- UP has organized a Seniors Citizens event/trip next Saturday, 6th June, to the Hoswick Visitor Centre and Shetland Car Club event in Lerwick, with the bus now fully booked.
- Baltasound hotel. It was agreed that more evidence from community groups, businesses and individuals was required before putting in a Stage One application. If the majority of comments are favourable, the Stage One application will go in by the end of June. The first question that has to be answered is whether the Unst community are willing for UP to explore buying the hotel. There are concerns of negative comments on FB if it is put on social media, so it was suggested that comments be turned off but people would be encouraged to reply by private message or email. UCC members suggested asking for community input at a community event. It was also suggested that Survey Monkey could be used. Robert also suggested speaking to people in Gigha (West Scotland) who have experience in community buy out of a hotel.
- Unst Map 2026. 4,000 copies of the map have now been printed and have begun to be distributed. Anyone requiring copies should contact the UP shop.

10. Community Involvement Update

- Frances informed UCC that there will be summer activity days in Unst and Yell for the young people in the isles.
- Frances has been discussing the Community Resilience Plan with the local halls, and they asked for more information about the costs of running generators. Frances has given them more details. Frances pointed out that Unst already has processes in place and the Resilience Plan will be altered to suit what Unst does.

11. Shetland Community Benefit Fund (SCBF)

David Cooper attended the meeting to give an update on SCBF activities. The AGM is coming up and this will be the first complete year of distributing funding. An internal audit will be taking place due to increased public scrutiny. The group will be writing up all the procedures that are followed. New Directors will be due to be appointed next year. David will be stepping down in Spring 2027.

12. Applications for Planning

N/A

13. Application for Donations

Unstfest application to cover printing and insurance costs £1572.97 was agreed. The UCC felt that Unstfest is an important community event that benefits the whole of Unst.

14. Unadopted Roads

N/A

15. Correspondence

- Training for UCC members – UCC members are to contact Michael Duncan if they want to attend training. Lynette cannot attend the training on 27th June, but Michael stated another date can be arranged for clerks who cannot attend that date.
- Late ferry request – there was a late ferry request for an event in Yell in July. The SIC have been contacted but no response as yet. **Lynette will chase up.**
- Email about information board at Skaw – The UCC has been contacted about compiling information and creating an information board in Skaw for a building that has an upturned boat as a roof. **Lynette will contact the individual to inform them that unfortunately the UCC cannot give money to an individual but will suggest they contact the Amenity Trust for support and the Unst Heritage Trust/Unst Boat Haven. They will also be informed that planning permission would be required, as well as permission from the landowner.**
- School Play Day – the UCC has been invited to a Play Day at Baltasound School on 11th June 1-2pm.
- Hydraulic oil spill – There was a breakdown of the Essy Kert recently which also caused a spillage of hydraulic oil on the road. UCC members have been asked if anything can be done. It was felt that although it was dealt with at the time, and does not cause a safety concern, **Ingram would investigate to find out if any more can be done.**

16. Community Council Finances

The accounts for 2025-26 are away for auditing. A print out was given out to show last years accounts. The one point highlighted is that the bank now applies charges, which for the past year came to £71.50.

17. A.O.C.B.

- Loose sheep on the road - Members of the community have spoken to UCC members about sheep on 'the Stroadie'. It is felt that it could cause an accident. **Lynette will write a letter to the crofter who owns the sheep to ask if they can do something to resolve the issue.**
- Planters in Uyeasound – some drivers have spoken to UCC members about the positioning of planters and a sign at the old Uyeasound pier. **Lynette will write a letter to request the items are relocated to make it safer for drivers.** There is no issue with them being there, just the location.
- Surgery/Gilbert Bain Hospital/999 issues – There has been an incident recently where someone was injured and there were some issues with calling for help. The injured person was seen by the doctor in 30-45 minutes so it was felt there was no need to put in a complaint.
- Access to Norwick and Haroldswick during Spaceport activities – Residents in Norwick and Haroldswick have been asked to provide car registration numbers for family members, to be used during launch windows. The UCC have concerns about a private company blocking off

public roads and would like to know if this has been agreed by the SIC. There are holiday lets in the area who are concerned about guests to their accommodation and the impact this will have on the whole area. **Lynette will contact the Roads Department for more information, and to confirm this is legal. Also, to ask about what holiday lets can do about this situation. Robert asked to be copied in to communication about this.**

- Thank you letter to Gary Betney – UCC members asked for a letter of thanks to be sent to Gary Betney for his efforts whilst part of the UCC, and his continued efforts after leaving. There is now a Sunday bus service, and his continued efforts, along with David Cooper, their discussions with the NHS also look to be a success. **Lynette will write a letter of thanks to Gary.**

18. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is on Monday the 13th July 2026

Chair: _____ Date: _____

Clerk: _____