

Unst Community Council

Chair

Caroline Hunter
Shirva
Uyeasound
Unst
Shetland

Clerk

Lynette Spence
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Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 13th July 2026 at 6.30 pm in Room 2, Baltasound School and by MsTeams

Present

Caroline Hunter, Chair
Adam Doull, Vice Chair
Alec Priest
Janice Priest
John Peterson
Brydon Johnson
Robert Thomson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio)

Attending

Gordon Thomson (Unst Partnership)
Elizabeth Johnson (Spacecentre)
Scott Hammond (Spacecentre)
PC Scott Raeside (Police)
Lynette Spence, Clerk

1. Apologies

Ingram Thomson
Frances Browne
Ryan Thomson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio) MsTeams

2. Declaration of Interest

Janice Priest - Spacecentre and Statkraft
Robert Thomson – Planning

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Janice Priest – proposed
Alec Priest – seconded

4. Matters Arising from last minutes

- Hermaness bins were put in place but caused more problems than they solved so they have been removed.
- Letters sent after the last meeting concerning sheep on the road and moving planters/signs in Uyeasound have resolved those issues.
- The late ferry for the event in Yell was denied so the event was decreased in size.
- Housing availability – There are currently 6 void properties in Unst.
3 properties are recorded Policy Void meaning they require major works to bring them back to lettable standard: 16 Springpark Road, 6 Daisy Park and 4 Brakefield Crescent.
3 properties are currently undergoing void repairs: 3 Nikkavord Lea, 1 Millburn Park and 14 Brakefield Crescent.

Robert will ask for further updates and will speak to George Martin about timescales for repairs, and the possibility of other contractors being hired to carry out the work.

5. Welcome to New Policeman

Caroline welcomed the new policeman to the North Isles, PC Scott Raeside. He has 16 years of service but it has been 8 years since he's been on the street. He will be based in Yell but will cover the whole of Shetland. Scott is looking forward to the new experience and living in such a beautiful area

UCC councillors requested talks at the school concerning driving. It is felt that it would be beneficial to deter dangerous driving. There have been no talks in school for a number of years and it was felt that the difference can be seen in young drivers. Showing children real life incidents may be shocking but it would help change attitudes about driving.

6. Spaceport

Elizabeth and Scott gave an update on the current situation at the Spaceport. There has been a lot of misinformation but the Spaceport is doing their best to cover all bases, and to ensure life for Unst residents is disrupted as little possible.

There is a launch window from 10th August for 5 weeks. Launch days will only be on either, Mondays, Wednesdays or Fridays; between 4-8pm, which means only 60 hours of putting the exclusion zone in place. Also, the launch windows will reduce when satellites are being launched due to the timing requirements. During launch windows the site will be cleared of unnecessary people. There will be traffic restrictions in place, which have been agreed with SIC. Unst residents will not be denied access to the north of the island, the restrictions are about discouraging visitors causing traffic problems, and ensuring emergency services have unrestricted access to North Unst. During launch windows there will be maritime boundary boats sent out. The Visitor Management Plan will be revised after the first launch to improve any unforeseen issues.

There will be a viewing area, which will be available to Unst residents first, and buses will be available to transport people to it from noon, but it would be preferable if people watched online. A list of FAQs will go online soon and will be shared with UCC fb page.

There have been some concerns about the debris in the sea, which will come down around Greenland. Future clients will recover some debris but not all debris will be recovered.

It was felt that some Unst roads need to be upgraded due to the increased traffic.

7. Coastguard Changes

There has recently been an announcement about plans to stop payments to Coastguard volunteers or call outs or training. There are major concerns that this will have an impact on recruitment. The Coastguard is a very important service, and although nobody does it for the money, it is important that their hard work is acknowledged. PC Raeside pointed out that the Coastguard is also crucial for the police force to carry out their duties.

Lynette will write a letter to MCA, Hannah Goodlad and Alistair Carmichael to show support for the Coastguard and ask the MCA to reconsider and possibly change legislation to find a different way to pay remuneration.

8. Statkraft

Between 9-12 September 2026, representatives from Foundation Scotland and Local Energy Scotland will be in the North Isles to deliver a series of workshops at the request of all 3 community councils. There will be a community benefit fund associated with the planned Energy Isles and BEAW Field windfarm developments and Statkraft has indicated it will be a fund for all 3 North Isles.

In Unst the event will be held in Baltasound Hall on 10th September.

9. Local Place Plan

Frances has been working with UP and UCC on the local place plan and the placecheck map is now live. The next stage is to analyse data. Work on the report will need to be done after that which is about bringing the analysis together with the skeleton report to form proposals. The plan has to be consulted on for 28 days, so it

would be preferable to have it ready by the start of September to give time for it to be consulted on and tweaked.

The Local Place Plan Map is being shared on social media, it will also be available at the Unst Show and Unstfest events to make it more accessible.

10. Signpost for HMS E49

There is a memorial near Bobby's Bus Shelter for submarine HMS E49 and there has been a request for a signpost in the area. **Lynette will contact Roads Department to find out how to go about this.**

There was also a question about signposting for Baltasound School and whether there should be more. **Lynette will ask Roads Department about this.**

11. BJHS Inspection

The councillors asked for a letter to be sent to Baltasound School to congratulate them on receiving such a good report during the recent inspection. **Lynette will write letter and Adam will sign it.**

12. Ferries/Fixed Links and Feedback from Maggie Sandison meeting

Caroline and Adam recently had a meeting with Maggie Sandison to discuss issues with the ferries. Caroline had researched back several years in order to show the recurring problems that the UCC have been told will be fixed but have continued to be issues. They made it very clear what the issues are for Unst residents, and by the end Maggie had to admit there is no excuse for all the issues.

Maggie was unaware of some of the issues such as the lashing vehicles decisions. Unfortunately, there are no immediate fixes but she is now more aware of the ongoing issues. There has been an agreement to try to improve communication between ferry crews, Sellaness, the booking office and the public.

Ferry users need to be told as soon as possible that there might be an issue, rather than first thing the following morning.

Yell Community Council has also been very forthright into problems with communications. It was felt that social media messages should show more empathy and be more apologetic because it comes across like the SIC does not care about the island communities.

There are several ongoing issues such as ferries being in drydock at bad times such as Unst Show, which has gone on for years. There are also concerns that when there are roadworks in Unst and tar lorries need to get into Unst there will be even more limited ferry bookings. All these issues are creating a lot of stress on ferry crews and SIC employees.

There are some timetabling issues the UCC would like to look into. The bus timetables also have to be taken into account. There are some changes where the whole crew are being paid for Unst to only receive one extra run. UCC asked if extra runs could be made on Unst Show day – **Lynette will contact Yell CC to ask if they use community runs for Yell Show Day, or does the SIC put on extra runs.**

Maggie said in the meeting that the relief vessel would be provided first, and then a replacement ferry for Unst. There was also discussion about a contingency plan if the ferry is to breakdown and there is no replacement.

13. SIC North Isles Councillors Update

Robert informed everyone that there are meetings coming up concerning fixed links so there will be more news at a later date.

Michael Craigie has left SIC and Elaine Park has taken over.

The integrated bus service from Unst to Lerwick on Sunday has to be booked in advance. There is a difference in prices for the Unst service because it is considered to be a feeder service.

14. Unst Partnership Ltd (UP) Update.

- The 2026-27 scheme Skip Scheme The next Bulky Waste disposal day will be Saturday 22nd August. UP has received £1500 sponsorship from the Sandison Trust but is still keen to sign up a few new members in order to cover costs.
- The Community Development Worker post has been filled by Fiona Hadden who started work on 1st July. Fiona comes from Richmond, Yorkshire with a background as a teacher, councillor and hotel

owner. She is in the process of sorting out accommodation here for herself and her family and is starting to contact community members and community groups.

- Viking longhouse site. Repairs to the decking have been completed, while two of the five “knees” have been put in place. Once this is completed, painting of the deck and new knees will take place.
- Halligarth A grass cutting contract has been secured from NTS for 2026. There is still no further word from NTS about potential work on Halligarth, although their Project officer Angus Murray says he is speaking to building advisers this week.
- The Seniors Citizens event/trip on 6th June, to Hoswick Visitor Centre and the Shetland Classic Car Club show in Lerwick went very well. Thanks to Rachel Robinson for sponsorship.
- The Baltasound Hotel Survey results came back two to one in favour of applying for a feasibility study on the property. The application for funding will be considered after 24th July and so UP is waiting for the verdict on that. One tender for the work was received from the four consultants circulated.
- “Visit Unst” website The site was down recently and we have therefore decided to take it over and run it from Unst. One of the UP directors is keen to update it and it should be quicker and easier to do this in future.
- Parking at Boat haven/Otters Neuk. Discussion took place about acquiring more parking space for this area as it gets very busy in summer months. Directors are going to speak to the Boat Haven about a possible site to the rear of their property, which is owned by the Amenity Trust.

15. Community Involvement Update

No update available at this time.

16. Shetland Community Benefit Fund (SCBF)

David Cooper sent an email as a reminder of three major areas of support: Community Grants Scheme, Strategic Fund and Apprenticeship, Bursary and Training Funds.

17. Applications for Planning

Removal of payphones – there is the possibility of removing the phone but ‘adopting’ the phone box. This would be considered by the Post Office. **Brydon to look into this.**

18. Application for Donations - N/A

19. Unadopted Roads - N/A

20. Correspondence

- Late Ferry Request 27th November for the Youth Services Winter Ball. It was felt that this would be a good opportunity for young people in Unst. **Lynette will send in request to SIC.**
- Measures will be introduced following the completion of a recent structural survey at Baliasta (Old) Burial Ground. The survey identified that the wall heads of the kirk ruins and certain associated structures may present a risk to public safety due to their deteriorating condition.

To protect visitors, a temporary exclusion zone will be established around the affected area while further structural assessments are carried out and options for repair, conservation, or other remedial works are considered. Only the area immediately surrounding the affected structures will be closed. The remainder of the burial ground will remain accessible to visitors. The condition of the site will continue to be monitored to develop appropriate long-term solutions.

As the burial authority, Shetland Islands Council has a legal duty under the Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016 and the Burial (Management) (Scotland) Regulations 2025 to manage burial grounds safely. The Council also has responsibilities under health and safety and occupiers' liability legislation to take reasonable steps to protect visitors from foreseeable risks.

21. Community Council Finances

2025-26 Accounts have been audited. Print out of current accounts handed out.

22. A.O.C.B.

- Due to several people being on holiday the meeting date in October has been changed from 12th October to 26th October. The meeting in November has been moved from 16th November to 30th November and the December meeting has been cancelled.
- Lund Road – **Adam will get photos of the area and discuss what is required with Dennis Johnson to send to the Burials Department.** It was agreed that at least two cattle grids would be required.
- There have been complaints about human waste being found at Norwick Beach and the north end of Loch of Cliff. It is unsure whether it is caravan waste or not. **Lynette will contact Environmental Health to ask for suggestions about what can be done about this problem.**

23. Date of next meeting – 31st August 2026

Chair: _____ Date: _____

Clerk: _____