

WHALSAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes subject to approval at next Community Council meeting

Minute of the Whalsay Community Council (CC) meeting. Held on WEDNESDAY 26th August 2026 at 7.00 pm
at Whalsay Heritage Centre

PRESENT:	APOLOGIES
CCLlr Jackie Leslie (JL) – Chair	CCLlr Richard Hutchinson (RH)
CCLlr – Martin Shear (MS)	CCLlr Caroline Watt (CW) – Vice Chair
CCLlr Helen Thomson (HT)	Duncan Anderson - North Isles Cllr (DA)
CCLlr Alison Hutchinson (AH)	Scott Rae - Police Scotland
	Andrew Inkster - Executive Manager Marine & Air Operations
David Wood (DW) – Planning Aid Scotland - PAS	Neil Hutchinson – SIC Roads
Michael Duncan – C. Council Liaison Officer (MD)	Ryan Thomson – North Isles Cllr (RT)
Russell Minty – Police Scotland	Robert Thomson – North Isles Cllr (RTH)

MINUTE TAKER: Gina Irvine – WCC Clerk (GI)

WELCOME: JL welcomed all.

Introduced David Wood from Planning Aid Scotland who joined via teams and Micheal Duncan in person. Welcomed Alison and Martin to council.

APOLOGIES: Apologies noted

DECLARATION OF INTEREST: RH declared conflict of interests with regarding the ferry time table scheduling.

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

1. Local Planning – Planning Aid Scotland (PAS)

David Wood gave members a talk from Planning Aid Scotland (PAS) on the planning system and how communities can have more input into future development.

Local Place Plans were discussed and how these can be used to identify what is important to the community, including housing, transport, infrastructure, energy developments and protecting local areas.

Members discussed the deadlines and timescales involved and felt that preparing a Local Place Plan within the current timeframe would not be feasible. However, members agreed that the information provided was useful and could help with future local planning discussions.

ACTION: Keep under review and consider opportunities for greater community involvement in future planning.

2. POLICE SCOTLAND

JL welcomed Russell from Police Scotland to the meeting. Russell introduced new recruit Scott, who is currently undertaking training in Yell. Members noted that Scott had previously attended a Community Council meeting.

Russell provided members with an overview of recent Police Scotland activity across the wider Shetland area, as well as matters relating specifically to Whalsay.

Discussion took place regarding recent vandalism to the public toilets, the use of CCTV and concerns surrounding e-scooters on the island. The use of social media and awareness posters to highlight these issues was also discussed.

Members raised the importance of a Police presence during the festive period around Fourth Night .It was proposed that Police Scotland make direct contact with the school to help raise awareness among young people and reinforce appropriate messages regarding vandalism, e-scooter use and responsible behaviour.

ACTION: Police Scotland to liaise with the school. WCC to continue to support awareness through social media and posters where appropriate.

3. RUNIC STONES

JL shared the design and work completed by Magnus. Members discussed possible locations and agreed that a site visit would be needed to identify the most suitable place for the artwork.

ACTIONS: Clerk to organise visit follow up

4. FINANCE REPORT

Clerk shared latest financials with members

5. DOG FOULING – HOULL

Members discussed the ongoing problem of dog fouling around the island and the need to raise awareness. It was agreed to involve the school in helping promote responsible dog ownership within the wider community.

ACTIONS: Clerk to action

6. SYMBISTER PIER

Members noted that there were no further updates regarding the planned works, disabled toilets or the condition and safety of the pier. CCTV system now active at Pier

ACTION: Ongoing – Clerk to continue to follow up.

7. FIRE HYDRANTS

JL asked to follow up as no updates.

ACTIONS: Ongoing.

8. FERRIES

Members reviewed the latest festive ferry timetables and discussed the proposed service arrangements for changes. No further updates were available regarding the new proposed booking system, parking arrangements during dry dock periods or Wi-Fi connectivity at the terminals. Members noted that the wider concerns previously raised regarding ferry reliability, ageing vessels, cancellations, lack of back-up provision and communication remain ongoing.

ACTION: Clerk to continue to follow up on outstanding ferry matters.

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

Members received the following updates:

- **Kirk Ayre Armoury:** The area has been inspected and it is hoped the necessary works will be undertaken shortly, with the required materials available.
- **Pier Road Resurfacing:** Works have now been completed.
- **Clate Road:** Preparatory works have been completed, with surface dressing expected to commence shortly.
- **New Sign:** The sign is currently on order, with an installation date to be confirmed.
- **Road Outside JWJ:** Members raised concerns regarding the deteriorating condition of the road outside JWJ. It was noted that the condition has noticeably worsened since it was first reported several months ago. Given its location on one of the main routes through the island, members agreed that the necessary repairs should now be treated as a priority.

ACTION: Clerk to follow up regarding the road outside JWJ and seek a timescale for repairs.

10. WHALSAY TUNNEL ACTION GROUP

No further updates were available at this time. Members discussed the ongoing work of the Whalsay Tunnel Action Group and the importance of maintaining support for the group as discussions around Shetland's future transport links continue.

WHALSAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Members agreed that the case for improved long-term transport links for Whalsay should continue to be highlighted and that WCC should remain engaged with any future discussions, consultations and events relating to fixed links and transport infrastructure.

ACTION: Ongoing – WCC to continue to support the Whalsay Tunnel Action Group and follow future developments.

11. DENTAL

No further updates were available. Members reiterated the need for dental services to be restored in Whalsay and agreed that the matter should continue to be raised. The additional travel and difficulties faced by island residents in accessing dental appointments elsewhere were again noted.

ACTION: Ongoing – WCC to continue to pursue the return of dental services to Whalsay.

12. MAP/NEWSLETTER

No updates available. JL informed members of deadline and need to have separate meeting for project.

ACTION Ongoing

13. SKIPS

Members noted that the recent skip was well used by the community. It was agreed that clearer information on what items can and cannot be disposed of should be provided in advance of future skips. Members agreed to look at arranging the next skip during October/November.

ACTION: Clerk to look at suitable dates and provide clearer disposal information in advance.

14. PHONE/INTERNET OUTAGES

No further changes or improvements were reported. Members noted that concerns regarding the reliability of phone and internet services remain ongoing, particularly in relation to the local nursing home.

Recent fibre works taking place on the island were also noted; however, no further information or update was available on the works or any expected improvements to local services. Members agreed that the matter should continue to be raised.

ACTION: Ongoing – Clerk to continue to report issues and seek further information on the fibre works.

15. ASCC MEETINGS

JL shared the recent letter regarding the Energy Convention, which was discussed by members. Members agreed on the importance of Community Councils working together and presenting a joined-up approach on the wider energy issues affecting Shetland. Forthcoming ASCC meetings were noted, and members were encouraged to attend where possible, with a Teams option available.

ACTION: WCC to remain involved in the Energy Convention and wider ASCC discussions.

16. VIKING GENE

Members discussed a request from Viking Gene for support and advice regarding a proposed event in Whalsay. Members were fully supportive and suggested that the event be held in the early evening to make it more accessible and encourage wider attendance from the community.

ACTION: Clerk to respond confirming WCC's support and suggested timing.

WHALSAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

17.BUS TIMETABLE CHANGES

Members discussed recent changes to the bus timetable and noted concerns raised by residents, with a number unhappy with the revised service and timings.

Members agreed that WCC should raise these concerns and put forward suggested changes to better meet the needs of island residents. It was agreed to continue pressing for amendments to the timetable.

ACTION: WCC to propose suitable timetable changes and raise these with the relevant service. Clerk to action

JL Thanked all for attending

Meeting closed at 21.13 pm Date of Next Meeting: The next meeting scheduled for WEDNESDAY 30th Sept 2026, at Heritage Centre for locals and Teams for others considering joining.