Sandness & Walls Community Council

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Draft minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Sandness and Walls Community Council (SWCC) held at Sandness Hall on Wednesday 4th November 2026 at 7:00pm

Present: Members - Jane Haswell, Sorley Johnston, Angie Nichols, Haydn Robertson, Andy Holt (online),
Cllr Liz Peterson
Clerk - Gill Nadin
Jamie MacBeath – Director of Shetland Community Benefit Fund (SCBF) for SWCC
Wayne Leask – OPEN Training Development Worker (online)
Sonny Thomason – Community Involvement & Development Officer – Lerwick & Bressay (online)

Apologies: Jane Puckey, David Sinclair, Jonathan Laing, Michael Duncan

1. **Chair's welcome**
   Jane Haswell chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone present.

2. **Declaration of interest** – to be declared at individual items.

3. **Police report –** no report received this month.

4. **Involving Young People in Leadership Positions**
   Wayne Leask attended the meeting to share information on an OPEN project to promote youth leadership & governance, with the aim of supporting community organisations to involve young people in their meetings. OPEN is governed by young people aged between 16 and 29 and offers bespoke training for any young people interested in taking on leadership positions in organisations. They also work with groups such as Community Councils (CCs) to look at what could be done to make it more inclusive for young people. Wayne offered to share a document - The Good Practice Guide to Involving Young People in Organisational Governance – which he will forward to the Clerk.

   Wayne explained that young people are engaged and interested in both local and national issues. Youth Voice is an excellent example of that. Young people want to feed into discussions and there are issues they want to tackle. The OPEN board of young people are enthusiastic about trying to lead things forward.

   Potential recruitment methods to CCs and other ways to make young people's voices heard were then discussed. Youth Services can support young people within meetings up to the age of 25 if required. The minimum age for Community Councillors is 16 years, although associate members can be 14 years. There are 2 young people as CC members in Lerwick, and Scalloway are trying to recruit.

If under 16s were attending meetings, PVG checks for other CC members as the meetings are public. (CC is not a Disclosure Scotland's definition of a regulated role.) Any under 16s would almost certainly be accompanied by a parent/guardian or member of Youth Services who would be PVG checked.

OPEN are currently making a series of short videos promoted on TikTok about opportunities for young people to get their voice heard within communities. J Haswell offered to join a meeting with OPEN to talk about the work of CCs and how they might potentially get involved.

J Haswell thanked Wayne Leask for his attendance, and he left the meeting at 7:17pm

5. Previous minutes and actions

Adoption of minutes from 7th October 2026 was proposed by A Holt and seconded by S Johnston.

The Clerk confirmed that all actions had been completed except:
Re. 9.1 of 10/26 - Chair will write to Paul Fraser at SIC re. road upgrade pause
Re. 9.2 of 10/26 - Clerk awaiting information from Neil Hutcheson before poster can be developed to promote contractor use for snow clearing
Re. 10 of 10/26 - Education department lead still to be invited to meeting in the New Year
Re. 14.3 of 10/26 – Despite follow-up of previous email, no response yet from Andrew Mayhew at Scottish Ambulance Service regarding defibrillators

6. Matters arising not on agenda

6.1 *Re. 5.5 of 10/26* – War Memorials
The Unpaid Work offenders from the Community Payback team have now completed the painting of the Walls War Memorial. They also repaired and painted the gate.

S Johnston plans to lay the Sandness wreath at the memorial next week along with the school and any other members of the community who wish to join. All other wreaths were distributed as requested

6.2 *Re. 13 of 10/26* - Resilience Planning update
J Haswell attended another SIC session on 31st October, to discuss Resilience Plan development. She reiterated that SWCC does not have the resources and was told this is also the case with Delting CC. J Haswell called Ian Taylor (SIC Emergency Planning & Resilience Advisor) today who assured her that SWCC would not be disadvantaged & he has agreed to attend the next SWCC meeting in December advising that SWCC is in a similar position to many other CCs timewise for plans.

6.3 Re. 11.3 of 10/26 - Tesco grant bid
All information requested from the schools has been received, so the application will be submitted in the next few days

Action: Chair to submit the bid.

7. Correspondence

7.1 Thank yous have been received from Sandness Community Development (SCD) for the Huxter Mills grant and from Walls Development Group for the grant towards the public toilet costs.

7.2 The Community Involvement & Development Officer for Scalloway, Burra, Trondra, Foula and Lerwick has now moved on and recruitment is underway. The vacancy for the West Mainland, Central Mainland, Whalsay and Papa Stour officer post is also currently vacant. Sonny Thomason attended the meeting to offer Community Development support and advised that he is happy to attend future meetings until the posts are filled.

7.3 Local Government Reform Dialogue – Community Councillor events 4th and 5th November. J Haswell attended the session earlier in the day and reported over 130 attendees were there from across Scotland. As it has already been decided that the reforms will be different in the Island groups compared to the Mainland, much of the discussion was not particularly relevant. J Haswell thought it was vital that similar discussions should be held by the SIC to determine how the reforms will develop locally and there is now a 3-month consultation phase.

Cllr Peterson explained there had been an SIC meeting earlier in the day on the public service reform where many principles were agreed, including collaboration with other public sector bodies, COSLA and the Scottish Government in the formulation of proposals specifically for Shetland. They approved the council taking the lead in setting up a Shetland partnership working group to include representation from affected public bodies. It is anticipated that CCs will be included in this. The meeting is available to watch online, and Cllr Peterson will forward the meeting report to the Clerk so that it can be passed to members.

7.4 Digital Switchover – correspondence with MSP.
The Chair has written to HM Goodlad expressing very real concern about the planned switch off of landlines in January 2027. The potential problem for lack of connectivity during power outages is a major issue. It will also potentially disrupt routine communication for many local people, where mobile signal and broadband speeds are inadequate. The MSP has since written to BT's digital switchover team and awaits a response. Cllr Peterson explained that the issue has been raised by the SIC Safety and Resilience Board several times and so far, no assurances have been received from the service providers. Ian Taylor might have more information at the next SWCC meeting.

7.5 2025/26 Viking Community Fund Annual Report – this is available online and was forwarded to members in October.

7.6 2026/27 Viking Community Fund - Community Halls Grant scheme – closing date 15/01/27. J MacBeath explained that this fund distributes the bank interest received by SCBF and decisions are made by SCBF rather than CCs. Last year was the first year these grants were offered and decisions favoured projects

looking to improve energy efficiency. The information was circulated to the local Halls.

8. Finance report

The format had been changed slightly to include allocated expenditure until the end of the financial year (31/3/27). Members agreed that the changed format was helpful. It showed that the allocation for administration expenses will be inadequate. It was agreed to reallocate part of the unadopted roads budget (which will be underspent this year) to cover the difference. £400 will be reallocated initially and this can be reviewed as required.

Action: Clerk to update spreadsheet to reflect reallocation.

The underspend from 2025-26 is just over £3000. Confirmation is awaited from Michael Duncan whether this money can be retained and therefore added to this year's budget. A decision is imminent.

9. Funding applications and grants

9.1 Redd Up Grants 2026

H Robertson and S Johnston left the room due to conflicts of interest.

Six local groups had completed a Redd UP and also completed the post-Redd Up Shetland Amenity Trust survey. Of these, 5 groups indicated they wished to apply for CC funding if it was available.

Application forms were received from 2 groups – SCD and Sandness School – requesting funds for their organisation. One group indicated they wished to nominate a local church to receive the funds, and when advised this was not possible, they nominated Happyhansel School instead. Another group initially nominated another local church but did not offer an alternative nomination. The final group - Happyhansel School - did not complete the application form, but as they had requested funding, it was agreed to include them. As this is the first year of this new grant, groups did not know the process in advance, but next year it will be promoted before the Redd Up.

The July funding meeting had agreed to use part of the environmental budget (£800 total) for the Redd Up grants. The members agreed to offer £75 to each of the four groups above, ensuring money is available for other environmental projects this year.

Action: Clerk to distribute grants - £150 to Happyhansel School, £75 each to SCD and Sandness school

9.2 SCBF - CGS0100 - Tier 2 Application – Gruting Hall plumbing

Gruting and District Community Association (GDCA) have applied for £4100 funding to cover the cost of replacing old leaking copper pipework and subsequent decoration repairs. Fixed tenders were submitted by local contractors for the work - £3880 for the plumbing and £220 for the decorating. The GDCA Chair had confirmed that the water system is currently turned off and only turned on for short periods to fill cisterns ahead of events due to leaks. They had considered applying for the SCBF Community Halls Grant scheme, but the

decision on these grants will not be made until March 2027. The work needed is more urgent and delay would potentially cause further issues.

SWCC members heard from Sonny Thomason that GDCA have received some support from Ana Horne (Community Development Worker for the South Mainland) to establish a new committee. They held a well-supported EGM in June to investigate options for community ownership and acquiring the Hall asset from the SIC. This process is in the early stages and ongoing.

The members discussed the SCBF application in detail. They agreed that the building was an important facility for the community that they wished to support. It also appeared to be critical to get the work completed as soon as possible. However, they were concerned that it was a large amount of money and no other funding option had been sought or identified. Sonny Thomason advised that other potential funding sources for the plumbing work had either recently closed for applications or were not currently available.

Members agreed to support the application for the urgent plumbing work (£3880), but considered that the decoration repair, although desirable, was not urgent and the GDCA should be encouraged to look elsewhere for this small amount of additional funding. It was suggested that the Criminal Justice team could be approached for the work to be undertaken by those on Community Payback Orders. Sonny Thomason agreed to liaise with Ana Horne to investigate this option.

Action: Clerk to liaise with SCBF regarding funding decision and S Thomason to liaise with A Horne as per discussion above

9.3 Funding for bus hire - Lerwick Brass Band to Walls for a Christmas Carol Concert
The Chair explained that in previous years the SWCC had met the cost of the bus hire for this event. A request for similar assistance this year was received by letter on 3rd November, and it should cost approximately £300. Members unanimously approved this request. It was noted there will be a change in administration of this group and reply will go to them. The applicants will be advised to use the normal grant application process for future requests.

Action: The Clerk to arrange for the invoice to be sent to the Community Council and inform applicant of future application process

9.4 Painting of the fence alongside the Walls War Memorial
J Haswell has received quotes for the paint costs. There are 2 options; for all required coats and primer, Ronseal would cost about £200 and Jotun would be about £400. Frank Williamson's have suggested opening an account with them, as this may attract a small discount. The Criminal Justice team have indicated the work could be undertaken by those on Community Payback Orders. The members agreed to fund the paint costs for the Jotun product and primer which will last longer as advised by Frank Williamsons.

Action: Chair to arrange for paint purchase and liaise with Criminal Justice team

9.5 J Haswell had received a request from a community member to reinstate the local skips. It was agreed to defer this discussion to a future meeting in the New Year so discussion can be made using accurate costings for Spring.

Action: Skips to be considered at future meeting

10. Roads

Roads reports continue to be distributed every week and there were no queries.

10.1 West Burrafirth Junction to Walls Road improvements

Following the pausing of the full business case for improvements to this road, J Haswell has been in communication with Neil Hutcheson. He confirmed that the potential plan would be to use the existing capital budget for road reconstruction to make mitigations and improvements as possible in the next few years. Within current capacity and anticipated budgets, the capacity for programming the Murrister Bend works would be 2030-31, followed by the Murrister Straight works in 2031-32, approximately the same time frame as proposed in the paused business case.

Following Cllr Peterson's enquiries regarding the reasons for pausing the road improvements as detailed in the previous minutes, the Chair of the Asset Investment Group had responded that a pause was part of the process, even though it wasn't specified. He advised that the process documentation would be updated to reflect this interpretation. Clarification on the mechanism to 'unpause' the road was also received. To revisit the decision, either a notice of motion would have to be taken to the Council, or an officer would present a further report on the topic. This cannot happen within 6 months of the initial decision to pause. Cllr Peterson could take a motion to the SIC, if necessary, but an officer may present a report once the next budget is set in March.

J Haswell will write to Paul Fraser raising the points as per *8.1 of 10/26* and asking for further clarification on how this vital infrastructure for the area might now move forward. Members agreed it was important that the SIC understood the strength of local opinion on this. On behalf of the SWCC, The Chair thanked Cllr Peterson for all her hard work on this issue.

Action: Chair to write to SIC

11. Planning and licencing

11.1 Walls Bakery - Planning Application Ref. 2025/173/PPF. This application was approved on appeal earlier today.

12. Councillor's report

Cllr Peterson advised that the main discussions at present relate to the public service reform, although it is mainly committee Chairs involved.

13. Defibrillators update

Members voiced disappointment that there has been no response from the Scottish Ambulance Service following requests for information on any Shetland-wide plans for increased numbers, central co-ordination or more support for

defibrillators. They are seen as important equipment within communities, but their support is ad hoc, and no agency appears to have a strategic overview of them.

14. Association of Shetland Community Councils (ASCC) meeting (on 23rd November 2026)

J Haswell plans to attend the meeting. Any other SWCC member can also attend. Several papers were discussed, as they will be voted upon at the ASCC and an agreed position for SWCC was required to take to the ASCC meeting.

- Paper 2 - To raise awareness of the Scottish Government Public Service reforms and the potential opportunities that it offers to present ideas and help to shape Shetland's future – members all agreed with this.

- Paper 3 – To discuss the funding principles of the SCBF across CCs. As new infrastructure is developed, does the ASCC think the founding principle of a portion of community benefit being available for Shetland-wide distribution be maintained? Additionally, should SCBF be involved, as it already has all the experience, infrastructure and know how to distribute funds?

  Responding to a request for background information, J MacBeath explained that there is no requirement for any new project to join the SCBF and that although current projects (Viking and Burradale) have a small element of benefit available across the whole of Shetland, this would not necessarily be the case with new projects. SCBF are looking for clarification and an update on the ASCC's policy regarding community benefits from commercial renewable energy developments. He did not take part in the discussion with members on the paper.

  Following discussion, members agreed that the current arrangements appear fair, with localities hosting the infrastructure receiving most of the funding available, but all other areas able to benefit too. The involvement of SCBF was seen as important, as the most appropriate mechanism for distribution of the funds, and in the ongoing struggle to ensure any potential benefits are retained in Shetland and not distributed more widely across Scotland.

- Paper 5- Proposal for four local Trusts to be more transparent. Currently the Trusts manage substantial community funds and run services that many islanders regard as part of the fabric of public life: leisure facilities, cultural venues, museums and heritage facilities, but Freedom of Information legislation does not apply to them. Trust boards have no legal obligation to meet in public, publish the reasoning behind decisions, or answer information requests. The paper proposes several changes to address this, including writing to the Scottish Government requesting a Freedom of Information designation for those public service functions. It also seeks to work collaboratively with the Trusts to effect change. The members agreed that Trust decisions should be open to the same public scrutiny on service delivery as comparable services elsewhere. - members agreed to support the paper

- Paper 6 - Retrospective Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA). The paper proposes the ASSC formally requests the SIC to call on Scottish Ministers to conduct a retrospective ICIA on the effect of renewable energy policy as applied to Shetland, by invoking Section 14 of the Islands (Scotland)

Act 2018. Under the Act, if the appropriate statutory body (SIC) make an ICIA request, Ministers must respond within three months, either agreeing to carry out the assessment or publishing reasons for declining to do so. It would therefore compel a published, evidenced government response to the impacts. Members agreed to support the paper requesting the review.

J Haswell thanked Sonny Thomason for his attendance. He left the meeting at 8:32pm

15. 2027 SWCC meeting dates

Meeting dates proposed for next year are:

Jan	Wed	6th	19:00	Sandness
Feb	Wed	3rd	19:00	Walls
Mar	Wed	3rd	19:00	Sandness
Apr	Wed	7th	19:00	Walls
May	Tues	4th	19:00	Sandness
Jun	Tues	1st	19:00	Walls
Jul	-			
Aug	Tues	3rd	19:00	Sandness
Sep	Tues	7th	19:00	Walls
Oct	Tues	5th	19:00	Sandness
Nov	Tues	3rd	19:00	Walls
Dec	Tues	7th	19:00	Sandness

Sandness Hall has confirmed the dates, and we are awaiting confirmation from Walls Hall. Members approved the plan.

16. 'Take Some Breathing Space' bench initiative

J Haswell had prepared a summary paper explaining that funding was potentially available for this project from the Community Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund for Suicide Prevention (Operated by VAS). Working with NHS Shetland Health Improvement and the National Breathing Space team, SWCC could apply for funding.

The bench would have a small plaque and QR code linking to 'National Breathing Space' who are a suicide prevention charity. The bench has a robust finish and a 25-year guarantee. Current delivery is 6-8 weeks. No funding would be required from SWCC funds. If funding is secured, the decision of where to site it would come back to a SWCC meeting for discussion. NHS Shetland would offer support on sensitive and appropriate placement, with the CC making the final decision.

It was agreed that SWCC apply for funding of £2100 for the bench, its delivery from Northlink and site preparation – this would give some contingency for installing the bench cost alone is £1500.

Action: Chair will liaise with NHS Shetland regarding the funding application

17. HM Lord Lieutenant of Shetland Christmas Carol Concert

The Lord Lieutenant of Shetland has asked each CC to nominate four people who are of note for supporting others in their district during the last year. They will be

invited, along with their partners, to a Christmas Concert in Lerwick in early December. The community was asked for nominations via Facebook and local posters. Four nominations were received. They will not be named here as they have not yet been informed.

Action: Clerk to forward names to the Lord Lieutenant's office.

18. SWCC safeguarding policy and procedure

The draft policy and procedure had been distributed prior to the meeting and were unanimously approved.

Action: Documents to be signed prior to adoption.

19. SWCC engagement meeting - planned for 17th Feb 2026

Discussion deferred due to lack of time

20. AOCB

Members were very appreciative of Cllr Peterson for attending all SWCC meetings where possible. However, they were keen to engage with both Westside Councillors, both of whom are invited to all meetings, and it was agreed that the Chair will write to Mark Robinson seeking attendance at future SWCC meetings.

Date/Venue of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was set for **Wednesday** 2nd December at 7pm. Venue – Walls Hall and TEAMS.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and participation

Meeting closed at 8:55pm

We welcome your contact

- Do you have any community issues or concerns you would like us to discuss?
- A safety issue or an idea for improving the area?
- Do you wish to discuss or apply for funding?

Please get in touch by email - sandnesswallscc@gmail.com

or speak directly to any member via or https://tinyurl.com/yhwa3wus