WHALSAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes subject to approval at next Community Council meeting

Minute of the Whalsay Community Council (CC) meeting. Held on WEDNESDAY 30th September 2026 at 7.00 pm

at Whalsay Heritage Centre

PRESENT:	**APOLOGIES**
CCllr Jackie Leslie (JL) – Chair	CCllr – Martin Shear (MS)
CCllr Alison Hutchinson (AH)	CCllr Helen Thomson (HT)
CCllr Caroline Watt (CW) – Vice Chair	Duncan Anderson - North Isles Cllr (DA)
Robert Thomson – North Isles Cllr (RTH) – Teams	Scott Rae - Police Scotland
Edwin Irvine – WTAG – Teams	Andrew Inkster - Executive Manager Marine & Air Operations
Matt Mason – Fire and Rescue – Teams	Neil Hutchinson – SIC Roads
Michael Duncan – C. Council Liaison Officer (MD)	Ryan Thomson – North Isles Cllr (RT)

MINUTE TAKER: Gina Irvine – WCC Clerk (GI)

WELCOME: JL welcomed all.

Introduced Robert Thomson, Matt Mason and Edwin Irvine who joined via teams. JL confirmed resignation by Richard Hutchinson as community councillor.

APOLOGIES: Apologies noted

DECLARATION OF INTEREST: None declared

FINANCE REPORT: Updated and shared with members

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

1. **SCOTLAND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE AND FIRE HYDRANTS**

JL introduced Matt, who gave an overview of the Shetland Local Fire and Rescue Plan, explaining its main priorities and the importance of ensuring local communities are prepared for emergencies. Members were encouraged to share their views, raise any concerns and suggest improvements by 15th October.

The need for additional fire hydrants on Whalsay was also discussed, particularly in areas where access to a reliable water supply could be difficult in the event of a fire. Members felt this was an important safety issue and was suggested that rather than focusing on Whalsay alone, a business case covering the whole of Shetland would be more beneficial. This would help identify areas where additional hydrants are needed and provide a stronger case for funding and improvements to fire safety across the islands.

2. **WHALSAY TUNNEL GROUP**

Edwin from WTAG (Whalsay Tunnel Action Group) attended the meeting and gave an update on the work being undertaken to progress a tunnel between Whalsay and the Mainland. He outlined the group's efforts to raise awareness, gather support and engage with Shetland Islands Council to ensure Whalsay remains part of future tunnel plans.

Discussion included the ongoing problems with the ageing ferry fleet, increasing maintenance requirements and the disruption caused to islanders, businesses and essential services. Edwin also referred to the Council's 30-year transport plan and was discussed briefly.

Members thanked Edwin for his update and expressed their full support for WTAG and the work being carried out. The Community Council agreed that it was important to continue working together and pressing for Whalsay to be included in the Council's long-term tunnel/transport plans.

POLICE SCOTLAND

Clerk shared report from June and July with members

ACTION: Ongoing

3. RUNIC STONES

JL shared the artwork design and progress made by Magnus, with members welcoming the work completed so far. Members agreed that a site visit would be helpful to view the piece and consider the most suitable location before making a final decision. The Clerk has since contacted members with proposed dates to arrange a visit, allowing further discussion with Magnus on the artwork and its placement.
ACTIONS: Clerk to organise visit follow up

4. FINANCE REPORT

Clerk shared latest financials with members

5. DOG FOULING – HOULL

No further progress was reported due to the school holidays. Members agreed to follow up with the school on raising awareness of dog fouling and encouraging responsible dog ownership across the island.

ACTIONS: Clerk to action

6. SYMBISTER PIER

JL shared last update from Hazel Sutherland

- **Grieves House**

Grieves House remains closed to the public. A decision is still awaited on funding from Shetland Charitable Trust for repairs. An application to the National Archives was unsuccessful, and other funding options are being explored. Discussions with neighbouring property owners regarding access are ongoing.

- **Peerie Dock**

A decision is also awaited on funding from Shetland Charitable Trust for repairs and consultancy work. Discussions have taken place with regular dock users regarding safety concerns, and risk assessments will be reviewed. New marine safety guidance is also being considered, which may require changes to how the dock is currently used. Further discussions with users will take place.
ACTION: Ongoing

7. FERRIES

Members discussed the latest festive ferry timetables and bus service arrangements. There had been no further progress on the proposed booking system, parking during dry dock periods or Wi-Fi at the terminals. Concerns continued over the reliability of the ageing ferry fleet, frequent cancellations, limited back-up vessels and poor communication. Members highlighted the importance of resolving these ongoing issues to provide a more dependable service for islanders. The concerns were shared with RTH, who was asked to follow up and press for updates and action

ACTION: Clerk to continue to follow up.

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

Members received the following updates and discussed a site visit with SIC, to review progress at following:

- **Kirk Ayre Armoury**
- **Pier Road Resurfacing**
- **Clate Road**
- **New Sign**
- **Road Outside JWJ**

ACTION: Clerk to organise visit to Isle with SIC Road team

9. DENTAL

No further updates were available.

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

10. MAP/NEWSLETTER

Clerk confirmed extension to project to January
ACTION Ongoing

11. SKIPS

Ongoing no dates agreed.

ACTION: Clerk to look at suitable dates.

12. PHONE/INTERNET OUTAGES

Again, members noted that concerns regarding the reliability of phone and internet services remain ongoing, and discussed the lack of progress or updates. Members agreed that the matter should continue to be raised.

ACTION: Ongoing – Clerk to seek further information on the fibre works.

16. VIKING GENE

Members discussed event and would continue support for project.

17.**BUS TIMETABLE CHANGES**

Members discussed ongoing concerns about the revised bus timetable, with residents continuing to raise issues over the service and timings. Despite previous complaints, no progress had been made. Members agreed to continue raising these concerns and asked RTH to intervene and press for action to improve the service for islanders.

ACTION: Clerk to action

18. **ANNUAL ACCOUNTS**
This was approved and signed for submission

19. **ROYAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE**
Grant request towards Xmas event, members approved funding.
ACTION: Clerk to follow up

JL Thanked all for attending

Meeting closed at 20.39 pm Date of Next Meeting: The next meeting scheduled for WEDNESDAY 18th Nov 2026, at SYMBISTER HALL for locals and Teams for others considering joining.