

Skerries Community Council

Minute of meeting held at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 30th September 2021.

Meeting held through Web-ex

Members present:

Douglas Anderson (Chair)
Bertha Anderson
Frances Anderson
Marina Anderson
Janice Hughson
Marina Tait

In attendance:

Violet McQuade, Clerk (notes).
Pat Christie, SIC Community & Development Officer (from 3.00 pm)
Michael Duncan, External Funding/Community Council Liaison
Ryan Thomson, North Isles Councillor

1) **Apologies**

None noted.

2) **Declaration of Interest to any Agenda Item**

Chairman asked for declaration of interests - none received.

3) **Minutes of last Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on the 19th August 2021, were approved. Proposed by Marina Anderson, seconded by Janice Hughson.

4) **Matters Arising**

All matters arising to be dealt with on the agenda.

5) **Shetland Community Benefit Fund**

Deferred until later in the meeting

6) **Update from Skerries Development Group**

6.1 Watch Hut – No update. Ownership of land still to be established.

6.2 Fire Station (possible development of site) - Deferred until later in the meeting

7) **Ferry**

7.1 Adhering to timetables – discussion

It was agreed to communicate with the community to determine the preferred option.

7.2 Proposed amendments to timetable – discussion

During discussions with Andrew Inkster and Michael Craigie it was suggested that the community should decide what timetable would suit Skerries best. The community is to make up a draft timetable which the majority agrees with, and then submit this to Transport Services/Andrew Inkster for consideration. A draft timetable has been created and circulated to the community. The comments received from members of the community were:

- Not sure if we need twice-weekly runs to Lerwick?
- The days we feel need improved are Monday and Sunday.

This minute is UNAPPROVED until adopted at the next meeting.

- Our thoughts were, change Mondays 1pm run from Vidlin to 4.30pm from Vidlin to Skerries.
- Change the Sunday afternoon run to 4.30pm from Skerries in winter and 5.30pm from Skerries in summer. Mainly because of young children going out on Sunday night for school.
- Happy to keep Wednesday as it is and happy with the Saturday runs on your proposed timetable
- Leave Vidlin at 9.30 on Sunday, instead of 10.00 – bringing forward all runs by ½ and hour, would not cost any more.

During discussion, it was noted that when cuts were made in ferry services, the Skerries service was cut by 40 percent – the biggest cut in the whole fleet. When the flights to Skerries were stopped the community were told that there would be an improvement to the ferry service in lieu of flights – that has not happened, and seems unlikely to happen. Councillor Thomson said that the community has a right to demand a fit-for-purpose service.

Concerns were raised regarding increases in the Whalsay/Hendra service, which could potentially have an impact on the crew of the Filla. Councillor Thomson was not in a position to confirm what would be happening; when he has more information he will keep the SCC updated. It was thought that in the Inter-Island Transport Strategy, published in 2019, there was a clause that states that the realise that all the different communities want changes made, but no changes will be made to any individual communities before they make changes for everyone; what was on Facebook yesterday flies in the face of that. Councillor Thomson said he was not aware of any plans for blanket changes to the service, if one island community is desperately needing changes, they should be considered. If Skerries needs a fit-for-purpose timetable you shouldn't need to wait for another community to come with their preferred options. If the Skerries community has a timetable ready, Councillor Thomson said they should get it submitted it, to try and get the proposed changes implemented.

It was pointed out that it appears that Skerries is being left behind again – the community were promised extra runs, which has not happened. Councillor Thomson said there is a piece of work going on for Skerries, but no there is reason why the proposed timetable cannot be submitted with a view to getting it implemented on next summer's timetable.

The summer timetable is starting later in 2022 to give the council time to have discussions. The changes in time when timetables are published were due to requests from some communities to take into account sheep sales, tourism and general movement of people.

The increases to the Whalsay timetable is something that has been worked on for three years, but the council has not been able to implement this due to the fair funding scenario. Now that has been resolved the council can look at better timetables for all the isles, including Skerries. Although discussions have not been held at political level, when the timetable is submitted it will be discussed at officer level.

It was decided to get an updated proposed timetable that has been agreed by the community submitted as soon as possible; get the draft ready before the next SCC meeting.

7.3 Winter Timetable

A discussion was held on the new winter timetable, and about the time of the Sunday night ferry; no decision was made.

It was pointed out that for Skerries the timetable doesn't change between summer and winter. Councillor Thomson said that if the community wanted they could put in a request to have

more runs during the summer and less during the winter. This would suit with increase in traffic during the summer. This suggestion will be considered by the SCC. Councillor Thomson suggested inviting Andrew Inkster and/or Michael Craigie to a meeting where the community could put forward their proposals, and they may be able to explain if this would work, and if not they could explain why it may not work. This doesn't have to be a SCC meeting, it could be a community meeting, and Councillor Thomson offered to arrange this.

7.4 Filla breakdown/Reduced Service

Due to the Filla being out of service the current service to Skerries has been drastically reduced; the service is down to six runs a week. Councillor Thomson agreed that when a ferry breaks down for an island such as Unst or Yell, it is a nuisance, but for an island like Skerries it is a catastrophe, as there are no spare ferries. It was noted that some medical appointments have had to be cancelled. The Skerries community understand that this is unavoidable.

Parcels/goods getting wet - While the Filla is out of service goods and parcels are left at Hays, awaiting being picked up to be transported to Vidlin in the evening, to catch the ferry to Skerries – when it rains the items are getting wet. A request is to be submitted to Ferry Services, asking for a cover or waterproof container to hold the items until they are picked up.

Request extra runs - It was decided to request for the Friday timetable to be temporarily transferred to Saturday, while keeping the 7.00 pm Friday run. Also, to request a run on Monday at 7.00 pm.

Action: Violet to send an email to Ferry Services with these three requests

8) **Update on Community Nurse**

As far as the SCC is aware, there have been no further applications for the post.

8.1 Information received

Email from Edna Mary Watson arrived during the meeting, Violet read out the main points:

Michael Dickson, CE had a discussion with the community re looking at a different model, 'caretaker' / multiskilled person to support needs on island. It was understood that there was some interest from the community in looking at this approach.

In the meantime, the NHS has been trying to recruit to the other NDI positions, and had interviews for Fetlar yesterday and Fair Isle due on Monday. If we have additional candidates we could try and fill the Skerries position from these rounds of recruitment. It is hoped that following the interviews on Monday there will be two appointable candidates, and hence could offer either of them a trip to Skerries to visit, meet community etc.

If this does not get us a resident nurse for Skerries then we should get back to doing group work to look at what we need the 'caretaker' role to encompass and try to progress with that as quickly as possible. It is hoped that Jenny would continue to offer her part residential / part visiting service whilst we undertake this - we are heading into winter now when it makes it more challenging to get to and from the outer isles.

After the meeting has concluded, Violet will forward the email to all members.

8.2 Vaccinations

Covid booster and flu jabs are due soon. The current situation with the ferry makes it impossible for medical personnel to come in for a day trip to administer the vaccinations. When the time comes for people to be vaccinated, a request will be submitted to arrange a ferry service so that medical personnel can come to Skerries for the day to give the vaccinations.

8.3 – Nurse Rota

No rota has come since August – request an up-to-date rota.

9) Smoke Alarms

New Legislation - There was a discussion regarding the new interlinked fire/smoke/heat sensors legislation. Consider whether to arrange a contractor to come to Skerries to install the alarms to several, or all, houses at one time, or find out if anyone wishes to make their own arrangements. Getting a contractor to do several houses at one time is likely to be cheaper. It was decided to circulate an email to all householders asking which arrangements they would prefer, then take it from there.

Action: Violet to circulate email

10) Update on Salmon Cages

During the last gale, another cage has broken free and appears to be only attached to one chain. Frances sent a photo of the cage to Simon Pallant. A discussion was held on who owns the cages.

Michael gave an update – Simon has already been in contact with the Crown Estate and Mr Briggs; he is waiting for an update from the Crown Estate on their legal position, when he hears back from them he will update the SCC.

Michael received an email with two questions for the Skerries Community Council. The questions are:

- Skerries CC confirm in writing to S Pallant their understanding (to the best of their knowledge) on the ownership of the equipment/gear in Stringavoe and West Voe. Also, confirm if anybody in the community have any ownership or investment in it.
- Skerries CC confirm in writing to S Pallant and copy in A Adrian at Crown Estate Scotland (CES) their views of the ongoing situation re the salmon cages and how they would like the matter to be remedied. CES need to be sure that the local community are supportive of the salmon equipment being removed/solution found.

Michael will send the questions to Violet to pass to SCC. The SCC are to put answers in writing, then submit as appropriate. The details will be in the email.

Pat Christie joined the meeting

Item 5) – *Deferred from earlier* – Pat reminded the SCC that the Shetland Community Benefit Fund money is available for community projects. Up to September 2021 there was £10K available, with another £10K being made available shortly. The year runs from September to September, money is carried forward to the next year if it is not used, also money can be borrowed from next year's funds if required.

Some suggestions for spending the money included:

- Furniture for the waiting room.
- Funding for the 'Fire House' project – caravan parking space.

It was decided that the community and Pat will get a meeting organised to discuss ideas for spending the money. Pat will be in touch regarding possible dates for the meeting.

Item 6.2 *Deferred from earlier* - Fire Station (possible development of site). Pat has spoken to Ken Allen, he is still finding out the legal position. Once that has been completed he will get in touch with the SDG to arrange a meeting.

11) Update on Waiting Room

Contractors have been engaged to install the plumbing, and DITT is to erect the handrail at the side of the ramp. The plumbers were to be coming in on Friday 1st October to do their work, but with the situation with the ferry, this is not possible. If it is agreed for Friday's timetable to be moved to Saturday, the workmen will be informed of this as they may agree to come on a Saturday instead.

12) **Kirk**

A letter that came from the Church of Scotland was circulated. It was noted that they Church cannot seem to differentiate between Skerries and Whalsay.

The Church of Scotland believe they own the kirk; it was decided to try to find proof of ownership. It was felt that if the Church of Scotland owns the kirk, they should prove that that is the case.

There could be a search done to find title deeds (SDG). It was pointed out that kirks on islands such as Skerries should not be sold, because you cannot take your car and go to another kirk.

The Skerries people have done everything in the kirk, apart from the porch. All work inside of the kirk, including making all the furniture, was done and paid for by the people of Skerries.

Pat suggested discussing the kirk during the meeting that will be arranged (under item 5), or at the next SDG meeting, due to be held on the 21st October. Something could then be put in writing to the Church of Scotland.

13) **Correspondence Received**

All correspondence has been circulated electronically, which included:

- ZetTrans Survey
- R100 Update
- Defibrillator Offer
- VAS - Eligibility for becoming a VAS Director/Trustee.

14) **AOCB**

14.1 Extra charges for courier deliveries

Islanders are being charged freight for courier parcels that are sent to Skerries, even though it states on the slip of paper that comes with the parcel that the courier is to be charged, not the customer. Normally couriers are paid to deliver parcels to your doorstep, but this is not the case for Skerries.

It was decided to bring this to the attention of Shetland Islands Council, and point out that instead of the council charging Skerries residents for the freight, it should be the courier that is charged.

14.2 Skerries Family Tree

The Skerries Family Tree is now held on computer at Maskot, Gremista Industrial Estate, Lerwick, for anyone who would like to purchase a printout.

14.3 Extra costs incurred for catching the Wednesday ferry

There was a query about the extra costs of getting to Vidlin on Wednesdays, while the Filla is out of service, one Skerries person had to get a taxi to Vidlin on Wednesday – they would normally have caught the ferry from Lerwick, at no extra cost. It was suggested that they approach Transport Services.

15) **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 18th November 2021

The meeting will be held through Webex.

Further meetings will commence in January 2022, dates will be circulated.