

# Unst Community Council

## Chair

Patrick Fordyce  
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Unst, Shetland

## Clerk

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## Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021 at 6.30 pm using WebEx Phone Conferencing

### Present:

Patrick Fordyce, Chair  
Claire Priest, Vice Chair  
David Cooper  
Caroline Hunter  
John Peterson  
Janice Priest  
Hazel Spence  
Julie Thomson  
Ryan Thomson, North Isles Councillor (ex-officio)

### Attending:

Frances Browne, Community Involvement and Development Officer  
Gordon Thomson, Unst Partnership  
Josie McMillan, Clerk

### 01/09/21 Apologies

Duncan Anderson, North Isles Councillor (ex-officio)  
Alec Priest, North Isles Councillor (ex-officio)  
Michael Duncan, Community Council Liaison Officer  
PC Angela Manson

### 02/09/21 Declaration of Interest

Janice and Julie both declared an interest in agenda item 05/09/21 Saxavord Space Port (SVSP)

### 03/09/21 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes from the meeting held on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2021 were proposed by Janice and seconded by Claire.

### 04/09/21 Matters Arising from last minutes

#### 14/08/21.1 Ferry issues on Bluemull Sound and timetables

Bluemull Sound has been running to a Saturday timetable for several days this past week, due to a staffing issue, the same situation happened a few weeks ago. The Geira had to tie up because they couldn't get a replacement crew member. There have been a lot of complaints received from the community about delays and having to wait for several crossings before they could get on the ferry. The Bigga is away at Drydock, so the Fivla was the ferry covering the runs. This happened at a time when the sheep sales were on that Friday. On Thursday a lorry loaded with sheep was left for several hours at Belmont while the ferry went to Fetlar and then Gutcher before loading it at Belmont. The lorry didn't arrive in Lerwick until after 8 pm at night, members raised concerns about animal welfare. The crofter had been told there was no guarantee of being able to get the lorry out on the Friday, so would miss the sales. Ryan was asked why the Bigga had to go into Drydock at a time when the sheep sales are on as the ferries are exceptionally

busy, and that was before it went down to one vessel. He was also asked why they went to the Saturday timetable, with no bookings, when in the past it used to change to the day vessel scheduled times. The Saturday timetable is very poor, with many of the sailings from Belmont, not linking up with ferries at Ulsta. Some of the linking ferries, from Toft, leave late which means to catch the ferry at Gutcher you need to drive through Yell very fast. In winter this is difficult especially if the roads have been gritted and sheep are on the roads. The example given was the 8.15pm from Toft, linking to the 9pm from Gutcher. Ryan said that this issue had been dealt with, so the ferries will now leave on time. On Monday there is a run from Toft at 1.55pm, the run from Gutcher is 2.30pm, so doesn't link. Members had been told by the ferry crews that traffic into Unst this year had been phenomenal, and it was difficult to handle the volume of traffic, with the normal timetable operating. This was shown by number of visitors that have been here throughout the year. Ryan spoke before about trying to get a 6 day service for Yell and Whalsay, members queried why Unst is really on a 4 day service, with Monday, Saturday and Sunday all so poor. The winter timetable, which comes into effect on the 4<sup>th</sup> October, has been agreed and released, without consultation with any of the Community Councils. Years ago, there was a ferry users' group who looked over the timetable but since that group was disbanded, the Community Council doesn't have any say in the timetable and making changes. Members asked why there had been no consultation, which had been promised for the last few years. Ryan said that the reason given for not making changes to the timetable is that the SIC isn't increasing the budgets, so no extra runs etc. Another issue is that the email/text message always says "Call the Voicebank" is there any way it could display what the problem is. It was agreed to gather all these points and write to John Smith, SIC Director of Infrastructure, Andrew Inskter, Executive Manager, Marine Infrastructure & Airports and Michael Craigie, ZetTrans. It was also agreed to invite them all to a meeting to discuss all the community's concerns. Frances suggested inviting representatives of Fetlar Community Council to the meeting, as any changes on Bluemull Sound affects them as well.

#### **05/09/21 SaxaVord Space Port (SVSP)**

Patrick had attended a meeting with SVSP and Lockheed Martin representatives. This has been covered widely in the local media. He said that Frank Strang is hoping to have a decision from SIC Planning this month, if not he had been told that the SIC would hold a special meeting to discuss this. The next meeting of the Visitor Management Group is 8<sup>th</sup> October, which Patrick will attend. Patrick said that he had been contacted after the publicity about the Lockheed Martin visit by members of the community who were having doubts about the project and whether it was proceeding as planned.

#### **06/09/21 Shetland Community Benefit Fund (SCBF) – UCC Director**

Patrick said that David has agreed to be the UCC Director on the SCBF Committee. David does have reservations about attending these meetings online because he has to use phone conferencing. Patrick contacted Eleanor Gear about the format of future meetings. She said that meetings are likely to be online for the rest of this year, but will be reviewed at their October meeting. The Clerk will email SCBF to say that David will be Unst Community Council's director.

#### **07/09/21 Unst Partnership (UP) Update.**

Gordon said that the next skip day is 25<sup>th</sup> September. He said the shop is continuing to trade well with a steady stream of goods in and out. UP expect numbers to reduce slightly because tourist visits will start to drop. Fair Food Fund - there have been a few adverse comments from some people not wishing to use the Shop as they think profits are going to the Fair Food fund. Gordon said that this is not really the case. UP has received £22,200 in external funding since April 2020 for the fund. The last grant, of £3750 from Shetland Charitable Trust, asked that UP contribute 25% or £1250. Previous to that UP had not needed to put in any funding and had taken 5-10% of the funding for administration in running the funds, approximately £1500. So, Gordon said it could be argued that very little of UP's own funding has been used. UP will put this information out in the next Newsletter, due later this month. Participatory Budget Scheme - UP intends to run another PB scheme later this year, similar to their last one in 2019, with £3000 to be available to voluntary groups. More details will come out as the Covid situation develops. Ideally it would be a Hall event but could be virtual/online if necessary. Recycling Centre - Draft plans for the

proposed recycling centre at Hagdale have been produced by Malcolmson Architects. They show a Phase 1 building with Shop and small Office area, a Laundry, a Drop-Off and store area and a Changing Places 24 hour Toilet facility. Phase 2 shows a second building containing further workshop space, social area, meeting room and Polycrubs outside. Further consultation now has to be made with other agencies: SIC Planning and Roads, Nature Scot, SEPA etc.

### **08/09/21 Community Involvement Update**

Frances has been in contact with Andrew Inkster, SIC, again about the Baltasound Marina Pontoon, and she is trying to organise a meeting to discuss replacing the pontoon which was removed several years ago. This issue was originally being discussed at a time when the restrictions were first imposed, so had to be put on hold. Now with cruise ships starting to visit Unst again the need for a pontoon has been raised again. Frances has been working with other groups, one project is a six month one recording stories from the Cold War. She has been trying to set up a meeting about the Lund Road with SIC Roads, National Trust for Scotland and the Community Council. Frances said the further lifting of restrictions would be good for the halls and other groups.

### **09/08/21 Applications for Planning**

<b>Planning Ref:</b>	2021/266/ADV
<b>Proposal:</b>	Two adjacent wooden monoliths with orientation signage.
<b>Address:</b>	Entrance To Hermaness National Nature Reserve, Unst, Shetland.
<b>Applicant:</b>	Mr Juan Brown
<b>Date of Consultation:</b>	2 September 2021

<b>Planning Ref:</b>	2021/267/ADV
<b>Proposal:</b>	Erect vertical wooden 'monolith'.
<b>Address:</b>	Hermaness NNR / Shore Station Road Junction, Unst , Shetland.
<b>Applicant:</b>	Mr Juan Brown
<b>Date of Consultation:</b>	2 September 2021

There applications were discussed, there were no objections.

The Community Council wrote to Mr Schlomka, after the last Community Council meeting, raising concerns about the parking plans he had submitted with his application. They did not object to the application. He emailed Patrick with the amended parking drawing which he has submitted to SIC Planning.

### **10/09/21 Application for Donations**

There were no applications for donation.

### **11/09/21 Application for Community Ferry Hire**

The application for a community ferry hire requested by Marie Robertson and Peter Leask for 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2021 was discussed and approved. The Clerk will book this with SIC Ferries.

### **12/09/21 Correspondence**

#### 12/09/21.1 Change to Ferry Service re transportation of oil tankers

Patrick was contacted by a member of the community asking if there had been changes to the rules for ferries carrying dangerous goods, e.g. oil tankers. Ryan was contacted and he confirmed that this was indeed the case. The changes to procedures have occurred following an Audit on the MV Leirna in June, where, despite having established procedures in place for the carriage of dangerous goods, the MCA were not happy and insisted on modifications being made to the vessel. These new rules came into force in 2018/19 and before this were only applied to ships on international voyages. Ryan explained that these

modifications are significant and will in all probability need to be scheduled into next year's docking at the earliest. In advance of implementing these modifications, SIC Ferries are obliged to seek an exemption to continue in the meantime. At that time, it became apparent that the same situation existed on the MV Bigga, MV Geira and MV Fivla, so they applied for exemptions on all four vessels. The types of modifications required are things like fire retardant linings under the deck around engine room etc. These exemptions have now been gained from the MCA, but the requirements are much more onerous than their previous operating procedures, and if they have to continue, it will have a detrimental effect on the ferry's passenger carrying capabilities. The biggest change is that in previous years, MCA treated petrol differently to other hazardous goods, given its volatile nature. The exemptions do not now differentiate between any classes of dangerous goods, irrespective of what the product is. Hay, for example has to be treated in exactly the same way as petrol! SIC Ferries have already contacted its local MCA Surveyor, and Ryan says he is coming to Shetland in the near future. Ryan explained that this is unfortunately yet another risk around operating older vessels.

#### 12/09/21.2 Baltasound Marina Pontoon

This was covered in agenda item 08/09/21 Community Involvement Update.

#### 12/09/21.3 Belmont Trust

There was a lot of discussion about Belmont Trust selling Belmont House. Members felt that the decision to sell the House had come out of the blue. It was agreed that Patrick would write to the Trust.

#### 12/09/21.4 ASCC Meeting – 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Patrick is going to attend this meeting.

#### 12/09/21.5 Community Council Elections

There were no applicants for the vacancy for Unst Community Council. There was a brief discussion about the option to co-opt someone.

#### 12/09/21.6 Community Council Face to Face meetings

Frances emailed Michael Duncan to ask for clarification on whether Community Council meetings can return to being face to face. Michael said that the SIC expects real changes to take place in terms of COVID legislation and how that is applied to conducting meetings at the end of September. Therefore, in the short term, the recommended course of action for community councils is to continue with remote meetings. He explained that if community councils do wish to resume face to face meetings, then that is their choice. However, if meeting indoors, face to face, they must ensure all appropriate safety measures are in place including:

- Community Councils make adequate provision for any members, Council officials, Elected Members and/or other visitors to be able to attend meetings remotely if they so wish – this could be online or by telephone
- Community Councils must follow the relevant guidance or requirements as set down by the meeting venue
- Community Councils ensure robust measures are in place such as 1m social distancing, good ventilation in place, face masks worn, hand sanitiser available, track & trace procedures etc.
- If the Community Council Chair is attending remotely, then the entire meeting should be held remotely. Ryan said that some meetings are now “hybrid” – a mix of online and face to face attendance. The Clerk will check with the Baltasound School to ask if they are accepting bookings for meetings. Patrick said he had heard some Community Councils have decided to resume face to face meetings but has no further information at present.

#### 12/09/21.7 Light Pollution on Unst

A member of the community had put in a request to have light pollution discussed at the Community Council meeting. They felt that it would be easier see the aurora and night sky if the streetlights were switched off overnight. Ryan explained what had happened when the SIC had tried to cut the number of

streetlights several years ago. He said that this was when the SIC were looking at cutting streetlights as a cost cutting exercise. Ryan said that local democracy wanted the streetlights reintroduced. The lights which were taken away have still to be replaced. Ryan is going to follow this up. Members felt that there was very little light pollution in Unst.

#### 12/09/21.9 Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind for Innovation and Targeted Oil and Gas Decarbonisation (INTOG)

This was noted.

#### 12/09/21.10 Shetland Seafarers Memorial

This event was held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2021 in the Town Hall, Lerwick. John had attended, he said there was a good turnout. There was a reception and an unveiling of the Memorial to Shetland Seafarers.

#### **13/09/21 Community Council Finances**

There had been no expenditure since the last meeting. The Clerk explained that there had been an underspend in last year's accounts. This monies might need to be paid back to the Council. There were a lot of groups and voluntary organisations which weren't meeting because of the restrictions, and all big community events were postponed.

#### **14/09/21 A.O.C.B.**

##### 14/09/21.1 Visitors to Unst Meeting

There was to be a meeting on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> September to discuss this. Steve Mathieson, Visit Scotland; David Nicol, Promote Shetland and Tommy Coutts, SIC had all planned to attend. The meeting had to be postponed, but it is hoped to reschedule for the not too distant future.

##### 14/09/21.2 Michael Dickson, NHS Shetland

There was an informal meeting with Michael Dickson, NHS Shetland on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2021 in the Uyeasound Hall. There were discussions about various covid restrictions and the proposed new Gilbert Bain Hospital. Unst Health Centre have 4 GPs covering the practice. Mr Dickson was visiting all the inhabited islands.

##### 14/09/21.3 Lund Road

Frances had had correspondence with Clea Warner, National Trust for Scotland (NTS). They are willing to enter into discussions with SIC Roads Department about the Lund Road. There is to be a provisional meeting to investigate possibilities. Frances said that they need to have direct correspondence between each other. The quotes that SIC Roads had produced were thought to be very high.

##### 14/09/21.4 Burning wood etc. at beaches

Claire said that the beach at Woodwick had been left in a terrible mess after someone/some group had had a bonfire on the beach. Burning material at beaches had come up at a UCC meeting a year ago, when the same had happened at several other beaches. At that time, Gordon put an article in "Isles View" asking people not to have bonfires on the beach and to take their litter away with them. Members suggested getting signage on gates/access points warning against having bonfires. Frances said that if the Community Council decided to put up signs, they could apply for special project funding of up to £1000 for this.

Patrick thanked Ryan and everyone for attending the meeting.

#### **15/09/21 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting is set for Monday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Clerk: \_\_\_\_\_