

Unst Community Council

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Baltasound
Unst
Shetland

Clerk
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**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 5th December 2022
at 6.30 pm in the Baltasound School Music Huts and by WebEx**

Present

Claire Priest, Chair
Gary Betney
David Cooper
Patrick Fordyce
John Peterson
Janice Priest
Hazel Spence
Julie Thomson (after 8pm)

Attending:

Michael Duncan, Community Council Liaison Officer (WebEx)
Josie McMillan, Clerk

01/12/22 Welcome Councillors

The Clerk welcomed everyone to the meeting, the returning Councillors and Gary Betney the new Community Councillor. Unst Community Council has its full complement of Councillors.

02/12/22 Apologies

Caroline Hunter, Vice Chair
Robert Thomson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio)
Ryan Thomson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio)
Frances Browne, Community Involvement and Development Officer
Gordon Thomson, Unst Partnership Ltd (arrived 7.45pm)

03/12/22 Elect Chair

Councillors were asked for nominations for the position of Chair. After a discussion, Michael explained the different options that could be considered, if no one volunteered, e.g. taking on the Chair position for six months at a time. This Community Council term is for slightly under two years. Claire agreed to be Chair for the next 6 months. She was proposed by Janice and seconded by David.

04/12/22 Elect Vice Chair

There was a discussion about the position of Vice Chair. It was agreed to ask Caroline, who had sent her apologies to the meeting, if she would do this. A message was sent to Caroline and she agreed to be Vice Chair. She was proposed by Claire and seconded by Janice.

05/12/22 Declaration of Interest

Janice declared an interest in 08/12/22 SaxaVord Space Port (SVSP). Michael Duncan also declared an interest in 08/12/22 SaxaVord Space Port (SVSP).

06/12/22 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes from the meeting held on Monday 24th October 2022 were proposed by Janice and seconded by Claire

07/12/22 Matters Arising from last minutes

14/09/22.1 Shetland Active Travel Audits

Caroline and Frances attended this meeting. Both have sent apologies, so this will be deferred until the next meeting.

09/09/22.1 Festive Timetable 2022

The Festive Timetable has now been published and there are now later linking runs. Members wanted to thank Ryan for all his help with this.

15/10/22.2 Roads

It was agreed to email the SIC Roads Department, Area Maintenance Engineer, to follow up on some of the issues raised at the last meeting:- the moss on the pavements around Daisy Park and around Skibhoul. After the last meeting the Clerk contacted Neil Hutcheson, SIC Roads and he said that it had been passed on to the Area Maintenance Engineer. The pavements at the Brucehall Independent Living houses at Uyeasound are overgrown as well.

15/10/22.2 Damaged Sign at Belmont

It was agreed to contact the Unst Youth Group for an update on the damaged tourist sign at Belmont.

08/12/22 SaxaVord Space Port (SVSP)

Frank Strang replied to the list of questions which were compiled and sent after the last Community Council meeting. These questions and answers are attached as an appendix to the minutes. The Community Council expressed their thanks to Mr Strang for answering all the questions as this helped to clarify many of the questions which are being asked by the community. There was a discussion about the Space Port and its progress. A letter from a member of the community was received and circulated before this meeting. The letter outlined a range of concerns which are being “echoed by many, many local people.” The concerns highlighted are the “lack of communication – on progress, on setbacks, on investment, on key players, on new infrastructure.” They believe there seems “to be a news blackout on everything except for what they read in the paper, or online news. That is what the Spaceport wants us to know.” Concerns were also outlined about the state of the roads which they say, “are disintegrating, mud makes the Setters hazardous, many windscreens have been chipped by rock-loaded heavy trucks travelling too fast and ferries are difficult to book because of massive freight trucks.” The correspondent believes there should be a public meeting so that the community has an opportunity to get the latest position on the project, which is massive especially in a small place like Unst. Councillors discussed this and several of them are being told by the community that they feel there is definitely a lack of communication about what is happening. And in a small place like Unst there are always various rumours about what is and isn’t happening. Michael declared an interest in this item as a family member works for the Space Centre, so he could take no part in any discussion about it. He did advise the Community Council to contact members of the Council if there were any queries about the work done so far; planning; roads; infrastructure etc. Members were told that there is a newsletter being compiled just now which will be available in the next week or so. There was a debate as to whether this would be an online newsletter or a mail shot. Members believe that if it is only available online many residents will not have access to it. Patrick is happy to carry on as the UCC liaison with the Space Centre and contact Frank Strang to ask for a progress report before the next Community Council Meeting. If he gets nowhere with this, he will take it back to the next meeting in January.

09/12/22 Unst Partnership (UP) Update.

Gordon sent in the Update. He said that the UP shop traded well through November and had 140 folk through the door for the Christmas trail day. A couple of clearances have meant a steady supply of goods. The next Skip Day is on Saturday 28th January 2023. Directors decided not to apply for a Winter food/fuel fund as there had been very few referrals. Gordon said that It appears that CAB, SIC agencies and Energy company winter schemes are providing enough support at present. The Senior Citizens Activity programme is going ahead with £1400 funding from AGE Scotland and £2100 from the SIC's Winter activity fund, in addition to UP funds. The "Ootnaboot" project has already seen over 40 people at Victoria's Tearooms for a Soup and Sandwich lunch and 50 have signed up for a Christmas meal at the Balta Light on 7th December. Information about CAB and SIC schemes will also be available at these events. Further trips/events will take place in the New Year. NTS have now advertised the Development Officer post for Halligarth in the Shetland Times two weeks running. There is still no word on the other properties at Houlland and Roselea. NTS Staff member Sheona Leonard said, "I can confirm a paper has been prepared regarding the NTS properties on Unst and shall be presented to the Trust's Executive Committee on 23/24th November before final presentation to the Board on 15th December. NTS have a strict governance framework to be followed and hopefully a decision will be made prior to the festive break."

10/12/22 Community Involvement Update

Frances sent her apologies as she is attending the Yell Community Council meeting.

11/12/22 Shetland Community Benefit Fund (SCBF)

David said that the next two SCBF meetings will take place by Zoom. He said there was nothing to report as there was not a lot of business with the review still going on. Michael said that there was an email circulated about two SCBF consultation events – one face-to-face and one online. He forwarded the email to the Clerk to circulate. David said that one of the problems is how to deal with the Shetland Wide applications. Groups have to apply for specific amounts from each Community Council. Problems arise when Community Councils do not support the application, which means the group then fall short in the funding.

Cemetery Benches David applied on behalf of the Community Council for an SCBF grant and received £4,389.23 towards the costs of installing benches in all the kirkyards and extensions. Payments have been sent to KBS Depot and Northern Isles Freightways for the benches and the freight costs. The benches are now in Aberdeen. Once they are collected, they are to be stored in the Cooke Aquaculture yard in Uyeasound, until they are taken to the kirkyards.

12/12/22 Ferries/ Fixed Links

Janice had attended the Unst Tunnel Action Group (U-TAG) meeting. She said that the U-TAG representatives meeting with John Lamont, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland, had not happened. He had left early because of the weather. Ross Gazey had managed to speak to him and he said Mr Lamont was in favour of fixed links. Alec Priest has spoken to Angus MacNeil from the Western Isles Action Group: he has found him to be a useful contact. Members of the Unst and Yell groups had met with members of the SIC Development Department and Environment and Transport Departments. There was a discussion about who would pay for the fixed links if they went ahead. The SIC are constrained by its funding. The other options would be the Scottish or UK Government. There was a discussion about the ferry replacement for Bluemull Sound and how long it takes from being able to place an order to actually getting a ferry. Michael Craigie, ZetTrans, said at the Ferry meeting in June that the process to look at the future for Bluemull Sound, is a 'Business Case' process. Janice said that there had been a discussion about preparing and circulating a survey in the future. Also raising money, through pledges, towards the costs of this. The next U-TAG meeting is scheduled for January.

13/12/22 Applications for Planning

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| Planning Ref: | 2022/287/PPP |
| Proposal: | 3 No. proposed house plots (Planning Permission in Principle) |
| Address: | Plot A-C, Hillsgarth, Baltasound, Unst Shetland |
| Applicant: | Mrs Ishbel Karam |
| Date of Consultation | 10 November 2022 |

There were no objections in principle to this planning application. Members were concerned about access to the Unst Health Centre.

13/12/22.2 Balta Light Ltd: Variation of Premises Licence

There were no objections to these changes.

14/12/22 Application for Donations

There were no applications for donation.

15/12/22 Correspondence

15/12/22.1 Baltasound Pier Pontoon

Frances is dealing with this, so the item is deferred to the next meeting.

16/12/22 Community Council Finances

The finances were discussed and are on target to be spent within the financial year. The cheques for the benches and freight have been sent. Funding for these were applied for and awarded from SCBF.

17/12/22 A.O.C.B.

17/12/22.1 Dental Service, Yell

It was agreed to write Antony Visocchi, Dental Director NHS Shetland, to ask for an update on the dental service based in Yell. Members were told that the dentist was on parental leave. There has been no cover in his absence, with some patients in the middle of treatment having to wait until he starts work again.

18/12/22 Date of next meeting

The next meeting is set for Monday 16th January 2023

Chair: _____ Date: _____

Clerk: _____

APPENDIX 1

Frank Strang, SaxaVord Space Centre – Answers to the Community Council Questions

Are all administration jobs going to be based in Grantown-on-Spey? Could some of these be based on Unst?

· Answer: No. We are already employing 2 ladies from Yell who are working as Administrator's. We had offered to at least one lady from Unst who decided to take a Public Sector role. There will be more jobs on Island but it takes time to build up to that point. We are not operational yet. We are employing local contractors and the considerable benefits therein are being felt locally. We have 2 employees in Lerwick as well.

When will the Benefit Fund be set up and how will it work?

· Answer: As explained to the Lambaness Grazing Committee. The Fund will be set up once we get our Licences to launch. We will pump prime it with cash and feed it annually but it will need to be run by a local committee so some organisation will have to be responsible.

· I would point out that we have sponsored all the Sport on Island for at least the next 12 months, part funded the solar panels on the Methodist Church, I have committed to supporting the new Building at Hagdale for UnstFest, we are just waiting on the legal paperwork for our gifted stars charity and supported Shetland Rugby 7s, a young man who has been picked up by Ross County and several other requests. We will most likely support the Rainbows too. I have also offered to support the UTAG feasibility study. Given we are not revenue generating yet there is only so much I can do and thus far this amounts to a lot of outlay.

Would it be possible to get a list of the people employed and what they do. So that we know who to contact about an issue or query.

· Answer: Any queries should go to Elizabeth Johnson

What work is being done at the airport?

· We have a 50 year lease in place with SIC and are master planning the airport with a view to extending the runway which will allow for both Clients, Tourists and Local Lifeline Services. The Planning application to extend the runway will be in before Xmas. We are hosting a French Company who are conducting Research and Development Activity for their ignition systems and intend to base themselves here for several years hopefully. We are also putting in place more small Ground Station Antennae as well as prototyping a new Green off grid power package for the antennae. We are using local contractors continuously. In the New Year work will start on refurbishing the hangar

Could there be more feedback to the community, i.e., an overall update on progress and what stage the project is at?

· Answer . Yes. We have appointed Bryden Priest as our full time Community Engagement Officer and there will be a newsletter coming out before Xmas.

An update of proposed timescales – roads, launch sites, accommodation etc.

· Despite having our hands tied behind our backs by some of the conditions on our Planning Approvals and the huge cost of living rises we have made good progress to date. We are waiting to get started on Holsens and Northdale. However, we have with SICs permission started pouring concrete on Launch pad 1 for Rocket Factory Augsburg who are bringing in a lot of infrastructure over the next month. This is in order to start stage testing. We will be starting on the integration Hangar early in the New Year and should be capping the roads prior to Xmas. First Sub Orbital Launch will be in Q2 next year. ABL are waiting for the Federal Aviation Agency to approve their Launch Licence and they will be carrying out

two Orbital Launches this year before getting ready to come to us to Launch in August. There is a lot more but these are highlights.

Are there any plans for the provision of childcare for workers with children, especially if they are under 3? There is no provision locally for this age range.

- Answer: not at the moment but if there is a need we will look at it.

Has there been any meetings of the sub groups?

- Answer: not sure which sub groups? If its the ones set up in conjunction with SIC Mason, Bryden and Debbie are the leads. Yes there have been some . We have launched our Education Strategy which is being well received.

- We had to cancel a visit to the site by the Project Boards due to the recent Comms outage.

- It takes time to deliver a project of this size and we are not being supported financially by the Public Sector in any way shape or form so I am very proud of all the initiatives that we have got underway. There seems to be a lot of support from the Community and we are really grateful for this.