

Unst Community Council

Chair

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Baltasound
Unst
Shetland

Clerk

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Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 19th June 2023 at 6.30 pm in the Baltasound School Music Huts and by MsTeams

Present

Claire Priest, Chair
Caroline Hunter, Vice Chair
Gary Betney
David Cooper
Patrick Fordyce
Janice Priest

Attending:

Frank Strang, SaxaVord Space Port
Gordon Thomson, Unst Partnership Ltd
Frances Browne, Community Involvement and Development Officer (MsTeams)
Josie McMillan, Clerk

01/06/23 Apologies

John Peterson
Hazel Spence
Julie Thomson
Duncan Anderson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio)
Robert Thomson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio)
Ryan Thomson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio)
Michael Duncan, Community Council Liaison Officer
PC Dana Jamieson

02/06/23 Declaration of Interest

Janice declared an interest in 05/06/23 SaxaVord Space Port (SAXA) and 12/06/23 Community Ferry Hire – Unst Show.

03/06/23 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes from the meeting held on Monday 8th May 2023 were proposed by Caroline and seconded by David.

04/06/23 Matters Arising from last minutes

There were no matters arising. Several outstanding items are on the agenda again.

05/06/23 SaxaVord Space Port (SAXA)

Frank Strang, CEO, gave an update on their progress. He said work had begun 14 months ago and, in that time, they had spent 30 Million pounds, none of which has come from the public purse. The Civil Aviation Authority has completed an audit for the Space Port Licence and have said that SaxaVord is

leading the way, by about two years. Mr Strang believes they should get the Space Port licence in about 8 weeks time. Once this happens, he said that the eyes of the world will be on Unst. They are still planning to have 30 launches a year. Each actual launch lasts about 40 seconds. The Space Port needs to be a sustainable business. Mr Strang was asked how often they needed to apply for licences. He explained that licences carry on perpetually, but that the Space Port is constantly audited and monitored. Licences can be taken away if they don't pass arduous, rigorous assessments. Mr Strang said that the Range licence should be awarded 6 to 8 weeks after the Space Port one. The first Sub-orbital launch is planned for the beginning of October, this will be done by HyImpulse. This will be an historic moment. The next launch will be an Orbital one in the spring next year. This will be the first launch in UK/Europe. The next launch will be by Lockheed Martin. Mr Strang explained that the SaxaVord STEM programme had reached 250,000 children online. He hoped the programme might reach 1 million by Christmas. The Secretary of State for Transport and his team will be visiting the Space Port in August. There have also been inquiries from the 1st Minister's Office as well. Mr Strang said that there will be a lot of media representatives in Unst this week. He explained that the architect's design for the new accommodation will be going out to community engagement shortly. He is happy with the design and believes there is nothing controversial in it. They are spending 80 – 100 million pounds developing the site. Mr Strang said they had secured £139 million debt facility to drive the project forward. This will include spending money on the airport, runway and hangar. The three main streams for the Space Port are 1) Launches, 2) Tourism/Accommodation and 3) Data. The Space Port have applied to the European Space Agency for £10 million pounds. Mr Strang explained that they are working with Faroese Telecom. He believes it is essential to get good connectivity and hope this might get Government funding into Shetland. Mr Strang was asked if all their funding so far was from ethical sources. Mr Strang said that it was important that the funding came from ethical sources, and subsequently Mr Strang commented that as a part of the Licencing process the UK Government carries out due diligence on the source of the Spaceport funding and if there were doubts as to the efficacy of the funding a licence would not be awarded. He was asked about the exclusion zones for launches. He said that it was 2.4 kilometres from the launch site and that the conditions need to be 30 knots or less of wind. All launch dates and times will be well publicised. Each of the launch pads are for different companies. If a rocket doesn't work the launch pad will be out of commission for 6 to 7 months. If it went on fire, it would be left to burn out. Mr Strang explained that they need multiple clients to make SVSP viable. There is an emergency response team and there has already been exercises with the various different agencies. He said that if the airport becomes active again there might need to be a small fire brigade crew employed. Mr Strang was asked how the tarring was going. He said that it was almost complete. They will be tarring all the way down the Holsens Brae. They need to get the legalities sorted before they can start on the North Dale stretch of road. The Hangar is being constructed just now. They are three quarters of the way through the building work. SVSP is working with Chris Dyer, archaeologist, on the interpretation facility. Mr Strang said that SVSP now has 80 employees. He explained that one of the things that will be launched in the satellites will be experiments from Life Sciences/Medical Companies. SVSP might look at building a small lab so that this information can be analysed here. There was a lot of discussion about accommodation and housing issues. Mr Strang said that their staff accommodation would be at Saxavord and would not impact on Unst: they will not be looking for accommodation away from Saxavord. There is a shortage of affordable housing on Unst. There was also a discussion about the lack of childcare. Families with children under 3 and no family to help out are struggling to stay here. Mr Strang said that they were all for helping where they could with childcare and would be happy to speak to anyone interest in setting up a childcare facility. He said that SVSP is hosting an Open Day during UnstFest, they will put on food, entertainment and a minibus for people who want to see the site. Claire asked if there were any more questions for Mr Strang. There weren't. She thanked him for the update, before he left the meeting.

06/06/23 Unst Partnership (UP) Update.

Gordon explained that the UP shop is holding a Summer Challenge in June & July, asking customers to send in photos of a Re-used, Re-purposed or Up-Cycled item, with a small prize for each of the three categories. The next Skip Day is on Saturday 19th August 2023 from 11-1pm. He said that new members can still join the scheme, at the unchanged rate of £60 for this season. The "Ootnaboot Club" for the over 60's is starting its summer programme, with a visit to Fetlar on Wednesday 21st June. Further trips are planned to Belmont House (12th July), the Tall Ships event in Lerwick (26th July) and a tour of Yell (22nd August). UP Directors and UCC Councillors met with Stewart Douglas, NTS Development Manager to ask about his remit. He explained that NTS will be putting properties on the market in due course, starting with Roselea. Houlland had artefacts inside which had to be moved. The 2023 Unst Tourism map has now been printed and is available in various outlets throughout Shetland.

07/06/23 Community Involvement Update

Frances has been working with the Unst Heritage Trust, helping with recruitment of an administration post. She is organising the screening of a film about Lighthouses which will be shown on Monday 26th June in the Haroldswick Hall. She is working with the Unst Boating Club on its stage two funding application to Coastal Communities. Frances has been involved with the Scottish Government plan to make period products widely available in public venues. She was asked about the funding which was awarded for a path at the back of the multicourt, if this was the same funding that the Community Council had been in discussions with Robina Barton, Zetrans, about. Frances is going to get more details about this from Neil Hutcheson, Roads. She was asked if there had been any progress with the Emergency Timetable. She said that she had emailed SIC Ferries, Lee Jamieson and the Community Council. There had been no further progress. She will follow this up.

08/06/23 Shetland Community Benefit Fund (SCBF)

David explained that he had put in the letter to SCBF that was discussed at the last Community Council meeting. In it he explained that most groups met all the funding application criteria so applying for funds is fairly straight forward. But for several small groups accessing funds can be difficult. For that reason, an umbrella group like Unst Partnership exists, with the formal structure to be of help to such smaller organisations. However, an umbrella group is bound by the same rules as an interest specific group - one application only per year to SCBF. He asked if there could be greater flexibility by SCBF when dealing with applications from conglomerates representing smaller groups? David explains that with smaller grants of under £500 the situation is very different. Many such applications relate to travel for sports training, competitions and events. This largely affects a small number of children and young people from the same sporting families. Their difficulty lies in being unable to make more than one application per year when events and progress in competitions often require last minute arrangements. Younger people in the island are at risk of missing out because of our remoteness. Again, flexibility in the application of rules could help. So, on both fronts the issue is of community access to funding and ensuring that there is no built in (though unintentional) disadvantage to communities which are small and remote. This becomes increasingly important with greater funds becoming available through SCBF. Eleanor Gear had replied to David stating that "in response to the query regarding applications from conglomerates representing smaller groups, there are ways to overcome this. If the application itself was to come from a small group who didn't have their own bank account, either a volunteer within the group or the Unst Partnership could be paid the awarded funds. This would not affect the Unst Partnership making an application, as they wouldn't be the applying organisation named on the application. The fund management group will be recommending for the main fund, that more than one Tier 1 application can be made per year up to an overall value of £2,000 in a 12-month period. Hopefully, this will assist many groups throughout Shetland and those mentioned who have difficulty planning for a full year. Eleanor Gear said that she is happy to discuss any application query, big or small. The AGS is very much in place to benefit communities and SCBF wouldn't want any eligible group to feel that there are barriers in accessing the funds."

09/06/23 Ferries/ Fixed Links

Patrick, Janice and Frances all attended the last Tunnels meeting. Frances said that Unst and Yell Tunnel Action Groups had met with Maggie Sandison and Neil Grant, SIC, and said that this had been a positive meeting. The Tunnel Groups can now move forward with fundraising for the initial geologist investigations and depth surveys which will cost £200,000. There has already been money pledged by local businesses. Both groups are building up a list of businesses to approach. The money raised needs to be kept in a separate account. The two tunnel groups met with Faroese civil engineers Articon who helped provide information on costings of the surveys. There might be a trip organised to Faroe to visit a community who pushed for a tunnel themselves, similar to what is happening here. The UTAG AGM is on 28th August 2023. Beatrice Wishart, MSP, and Alistair Carmichael, MP, are planning to hold more Tunnel Vision events in the autumn.

10/06/23 Applications for Planning

There were no applications for planning.

11/06/23 Application for Donations

There were no applications for donations.

12/06/23 Community Ferry Hires

13/05/23.1 Unst Festival Committee

This ferry has been booked but it has not yet been confirmed by SIC Ferries.

13/05/23.2 Unst Show

This ferry has been booked but it has not yet been confirmed by SIC Ferries.

13/05/23.3 Sail Yell

Sail Yell have got funding for the ferries, so they no longer need a Community Ferry.

13/06/23 Unadopted Roads

There were no applications for donations.

14/06/23 Correspondence

14/06/23.1 Association of Shetland Community Council Meeting – 13th June 2023

Claire had attended this online meeting. She said there had been a lot of discussion about Openreach switching off analogue phones by 2025. There were a lot of concerns raised about this. If the power goes off, there will be no phones access. Carer's alarm buttons will no longer work and during power cuts vulnerable people will be cut off. The Openreach representative said that the batteries could last for two hours. Most power cuts last for considerably longer than two hours. Openreach said their future plans are for a fibre connection to houses, and if not to houses, to green boxes and then copper connections to houses. The ASCC are going to follow this up and discuss it at the next meeting. Claire said there had been a discussion about the new "Shetland Way" hiking path. The issues were concerns about the number of people walking this path; disturbing wildlife and birds. Steve Mathieson, Visit Scotland, explained that they are not expecting big numbers to walk the Shetland Way and many of the walkers will be people who live here already.

14/06/23.2 SIC Emergency Plan

Frances explained that SSEN has Resilience Funding which could be applied for to help make the community more resilient. There was a lot of discussion about this and how different areas coped in the two bad spells of weather this past winter. It was agreed to look at this again and put it on the agenda for the next Community Council meeting and discuss whether to develop a local plan for Unst and what resources would be required.

14/06/23.3 Cross Party Group Poverty inquiry

Michael Duncan forwarded an email from Beatrice Wishart, MSP, asking for individuals and groups to put in their views about this. There is also webinar to explore what all this means for Scotland's children and what community councils can do to ensure they are reflecting the changing needs of the areas and the people they represent.

14/06/23.4 Shetland Strategic Tourism Development

This document was discussed. One issue which was raised and discussed was the lack of bus services on Sundays. And how the afternoon bus service to Lerwick does not get in time for NorthLink sailings on Mondays, Wednesdays or Fridays. ZetTrans next transport review is planned for 2025.

14/06/23.5 Community Council Scheme Review

There was no update about this at the ASCC meeting. There is a lot of consultation going on. Michael Duncan, Community Council Liaison Officer, asked that it is put on Community Council agendas as a standing item.

14/06/23.6 Shetland Amenity Trust (SAT) – Skidbladner and Longhouse update

Hazel Sutherland, Shetland Amenity Trust, replied to our email saying that SAT hope to recruit a facilities manager soon. “Meanwhile Jacqui Birnie, SAT, has been making some progress in commissioning someone with expertise in this area to help assess the best way to approach the work needed. Dr March Chivers is going to undertake an initial survey and identify resource requirements with recommendations for the longer-term maintenance plan for the Skidbladner. He is also going to make recommendations for urgent remedial works that can be undertaken this summer. That includes identifying stains/preservatives that can be applied to prevent any further rot or deterioration in the wood. This work will be undertaken by SAT’s maintenance crew.” Ms Sutherland stated that they will confirm when that work is scheduled to commence. Some broken oars were removed from the site and SAT would hope in time all can be replaced with new ones. She said that they are exploring options for the fire pit in the Longhouse with consideration of safety but otherwise feel the space is in good condition. It was agreed to contact Ms Sutherland to ask if there is any update on this.

14/06/23.7 Dog Fouling – Norwick Beach

There was yet another discussion about the problems of dog fouling in many areas of Unst, including Norwick Beach. The Community Council has contacted SIC Environmental Health about putting up notices etc. It was agreed to put another message on Facebook as well.

15/06/23 Community Council Finances

15/06/23 Core Funding Application and Community Development Funding

These applications have both been approved and funds will be received shortly.

16/06/23 A.O.C.B.

16/06/23.1 SIC Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy

Billy Mycock, SIC Environmental Health, has offered to come to a Community Council meeting to discuss this strategy. It was agreed to invite him to a future meeting.

16/06/23.1 Unst D Day 80 – 6th June 2024

This was discussed and it was agreed to take part in the D Day 80 event next year, which will involve organising a Beacon lighting event. The clerk will email Bruno Peake, Pageant Master to the King to confirm Unst will take part in this event.

16/06/23.3 Shetland's Women GatHER

There is a special event to be held on Saturday 24th June aimed at celebrating women in political power and supporting women in Shetland to get involved in political life at all levels. 'Scotland's Women GatHER' is being run by the Scottish Parliament, in partnership with the organisation Elect Her.

16/06/23.4 Housing

There was a discussion about the lack of available housing in Unst, and how this is becoming a major problem. Gordon said that UP is often asked about the availability of housing for incoming workers/families. It is really difficult for young people to get on the property ladder as there are very few houses that come up for sale. The cost of building new houses is very prohibitive as well. Gordon said that there are 30 self-catering houses on Unst. Members agreed there is no easy solution to the housing situation. This issue affects all areas in Shetland. Frances said that there is an SIC Local Housing Strategy. She will forward the link to this to the Clerk, who will circulate it. It was agreed to invite Anita Jamieson, SIC and Bryan Leask, Hjaltland Housing Association to a future meeting.

16/06/23.5 Bins

The bin at the Haroldswick Playpark is overflowing again. Many household bins which sit at the side of roads are being used by visitors. There are a lot of caravans/camper vans parking in Uyeasound, but not on the Gardiesfauld caravan site. This is happening all over Unst.

16/06/23.6 Turning Point at the North Booth, Westing

It was agreed to email Neil Hutcheson, SIC Roads, again about the Turning Point at the North Booth in the Westing. There needs to be signs to say no overnight parking. If there are caravans/caravanettes parked there vehicles can not get turned and often have to reverse all the way out the road.

17/06/23 Date of next meeting

The next meeting is set for Monday 31st July 2023.

Chair: _____ Date: _____

Clerk: _____