

Sandness & Walls Community Council

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Minutes of a hybrid meeting of Sandness & Walls Community Council held at the Walls Public Hall on Tuesday 1st August 2023 at 7.00pm

Present:

F MacBeath (Vice Chair)
M Forrest
J Puckey
C Venus
E Johnston
M Macgregor
Cllr L Peterson

1. Chairman's Welcome

F MacBeath (Vice Chair) chaired the meeting and welcomed all those present.

2. Apologies

I Walterson (Chair), J Haswell, S Johnston, R Fraser and M Duncan

In attendance: Andrew Inkster (Executive Manager Marine & Air Operations SIC), D Forrest (Clerk)

3. Declarations of Interest

None were made at this time.

4. Visit by Andrew Inkster (Executive Manager Marine & Air Operations SIC)

4.1 Electric Vessel Trials

The Vice Chair welcomed Mr Inkster and invited him to address the meeting. Mr Inkster began by informing the meeting that he was in attendance primarily to allay any concerns the members have regarding press reports about a proposed trial of an electric vessel on the West Burrafirth to Papa Stour ferry run. He made the following points:

- To date, the SIC has made no moves to design a replacement craft for the MV Snolda as the West Burrafirth to Papa Stour ferry.
- The SIC has been asked by a company called Coastal Workboats Ltd for permission to conduct trials in 2025 of an electric powered vessel on the crossing between West Burrafirth and Papa Stour.

(M Macgregor entered the meeting)

- The purpose of the trial is to support Coastal Workboats Ltd's application for a Government Grant.
- Coastal Workboats Ltd have no intentions of designing a replacement craft for the M V Snolda.
- Data, including the link spans, carrying capacity and passenger requirements has been supplied to Coastal Workboats Ltd at their request. This information is not confidential and would be made available to any similar applicant. He went on to say that since providing the information, he has had no response from Coastal Workboats Ltd.
- The SIC is not currently engaged in discussions with any third party to transfer the operation of the ferry service to Papa Stour.

J Puckey expressed the feelings of the ferry users that the trial was not welcome and could disrupt what is unanimously felt to be an excellent service.

Andrew Inkster described how the trial would be run in tandem with the existing service. He stated it was too early to consider such issues as timetabling or other operational matters. He pointed out that timetabling was a matter for Zettrans.

It was noted that the electric craft would be manned by a different crew to that operating the Snolda who would be required to satisfy MCA standards.

Concerns relating to press reports that a current private ferry operator had stated he would be taking over the Papa Stour service were totally unfounded. Any alterations to the current operation would require full council discussions in tandem with consultations with the ferry users.

Mr Inkster concluded the electric vessel trials item by stating he would be willing to attend future meetings at which ferry matters were to be discussed. He went on to invite members to raise any other issues within his remit.

4.2 Speed Limit on Walls Harbour

M Macgregor raised the point that a speed limit of 5 mph on all vehicles using the Walls Harbour had been requested following a recent unfortunate incident. The necessary signage has yet to be erected. Andrew made a note of this and stated he would look into the matter. He went on to say that it is Ports and Harbours intention to have white lines painted on the pier to direct Foula Ferry users to the waiting room and to mark off parking bays there. It is also the intention to provide yellow markings for commercial vehicles.

4.3 Papa Stour Harbour Facilities

In response to points raised by J Puckey regarding the Papa Stour Harbour, Mr Inkster gave the following responses:

- A water tap is to be provided on the Papa Stour pier.
- Following an inspection of the Papa Stour waiting room by Arch Henderson, several faults were identified. The Ports and Harbours department had sought tenders from companies to carry out the repair work. Only one provided an estimate which was higher than anticipated. The most likely solution will be to provide a prefabricated replacement waiting room next year.

4.4 Defibrillator for Walls Harbour

Mr Inkster stated that he had passed this request on to another member of his staff and that he would check on the progress of this matter.

4.5 Light for Post in Walls Voe

Mr Inkster stated that he was going to investigate the possible need for a light on a post on an islet in Walls Voe.

(Draft minutes of August 2023 S&WCC meeting subject to approval at next meeting.)

(There being no other Ports and Harbours related matters, the Vice Chair thanked Mr Inkster for all his input. Mr Inkster left the meeting.)

5. Police Report

No comments were made on the police report of 19th June 2023.

6. Minutes from 6.6.23

The adoption of the minutes of 6th June 2023 was proposed by J Puckey and seconded by C Venus.

7. Matters Arising

Re: 9.3 of 5/23 Fly-tipping of Soil at Quarry at Entrance to Dale of Walls Beach Track

The Clerk stated that he had received a phone call from Tracey Ann Anderson on this matter and that the Roads Department would not be dealing with the spoil heap in the near future. She suggested that a local tractor owner be prevailed upon to carry out the work. She did not offer to meet the cost of such work.

Re:17.1 of 6/23 Track to Littla Bousta in Sandness

Cllr Peterson provided a verbal report on a meeting she had attended with Cllr Smith, Neil Grant, John Tait and Neil Hutcheson that had taken place in relation to coastal erosion in the Littla Bousta area of Sandness. She indicated that whilst there was considerable sympathy for the residents, it had not proved possible to source funding for adequate sea defences. The matter is still being investigated and three of those who attended the meeting are looking into land ownership via title deeds. The possibility for improvements to the vehicle turning area is also being considered.

Re: 7.2 of 6/23 Council Owned Land Adjacent to Kirkidale, Walls

The Clerk indicated he had not received a response from the Environmental Health Department regarding the dumping of items from the Mussel Factory. He was advised to inform Ms Maggie Sandison that an official had failed to respond to his email and to copy in Cllrs Peterson and Robinson.

(Draft minutes of August 2023 S&WCC meeting subject to approval at next meeting.)

Action: The Clerk to email Ms Sandison regarding the lack of a response from a Council Officer and to copy in Cllrs Robinson and Peterson.

Re: 16.2 of 6/23 Email concerning the replacement of Defibrillator components.

The Clerk stated that he had not received a response from Defib World on this matter.

(Cllr Peterson left the meeting.)

8. Housing

7.1 Social Housing Units in Central Walls

No update regarding progress on this project was available.

7.2 Social Housing Stock in Walls

It was noted that the vacant property at Stove has been cleared and that the exterior of the vacant property at Kirkidale has been cleared of rubbish and the grass strimmed.

9. Roads

Re: 8.2 of 6/23 Papa Stour Roads

J Puckey informed the meeting that resurfacing work on the Papa Stour Road is now complete and that the quality of the work is of an excellent standard. She requested that a message of appreciation be sent to Mr B Scobie of the Roads Department.

The Clerk to email Mr B Scobie to express the members' appreciation of the work carried out on the Papa Stour Road.

9.1 Cattles Grids in Sandness

Members were informed of issues concerning two cattle grids in Sandness. One is the gate at the Bousta grid which is badly rusted which makes it difficult for a local woman in a wheelchair to get access to the beach. The other is the grid at the entrance to Sandness which is so full of soil that it seems sheep have been getting across.

Action: The Clerk to inform the Roads Department of problems listed above concerning Sandness Cattle Grids.

10. Future of Health Service Provision at Walls Health Centre

The date for a community meeting with Health Board Personnel has yet to be proposed.

11. Shetland Community Benefit Fund

The Admin Officer for the SCBF has been informed of all approved grants to date.

12. Community Emergency Plan

In response to a question regarding an application to Scottish and Southern Electricity Network's Resilient Communities Fund 2023, the Clerk stated that he had submitted an application within the time limit and had received an acknowledgement of receipt of the application. As yet no timescale for decisions regarding grant distribution has been provided.

13. Review of Community Councils

No updates are available on this matter.

14. Facebook Page for S&WCC

E Johnston stated that several likes had been posted on the page as well as some comments. He requested that information pertaining to the forthcoming Walls Skip be provided by the Clerk and also a copy of the June S&WCC minutes with the header removed. The Clerk requested the URL for the page so it could be included in the Community Directory.

Actions: 1. The Clerk to forward to E Johnston information regarding the refuse skip scheduled to be available on Saturday 5th August.
2. The Clerk to forward a copy of the June minutes with the header removed.
3. The Clerk to update the Community Directory with the URL for the Facebook Page.

15. Financial Update

Members made no comments on the latest spreadsheet other than it had proved difficult to download for some.

16. Annual Accounts

F MacBeath and M Macgregor declared an interest in this matter because they were both recipients of unadopted roads grants.

No questions were raised regarding the S&WCC Annual Accounts.

Their adoption was proposed by C Venus and seconded by E Johnston.

Action: The Clerk to submit approved Annual Accounts to Mr M Duncan.

17. Correspondence (Including Emails)

The Clerk stated he had received a paper copy of Hjalmland's Annual Statement and this was available to members on request.

18. AOCB

18.1 Feeder Bus Service to Sandness

Members were informed that those wishing to use the feeder bus service to Sandness to connect with the 5pm service bus from Lerwick have to phone and request this on the day before they intend to travel. However, the feeder service meets the lunchtime bus without any prearrangements being made. The point was made that this was not very convenient for those working a full day in Lerwick.

Action: The Clerk to request that the feeder bus to Sandness automatically meets the 5 pm service bus.

18.2 Rubbish Bin at the Houlmalees Viewing Point

Following an email from E Johnston in June, the Refuse Collection Department had been informed by the Clerk that the bin at the Houlmalees Viewing Point was overflowing. To date no response from the officer concerned had been received.

M Macgregor stated she had seen the bin being emptied and was of the opinion it had been replaced by a new and larger bin.

(Draft minutes of August 2023 S&WCC meeting subject to approval at next meeting.)

19. Date of Next Meeting

The Vice Chair thanked everyone for their attendance.

The date of the next meeting was set for Tuesday 5th September.

The meeting closed a 8.45pm.