

Association of Shetland Community Councils (ASCC)

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Paper 2

**Minute of the ASCC meeting held on
Tuesday 14 June 2022, 6.00 pm,
Town Hall Chamber, Lerwick and online using Microsoft Teams**

Present

Jim Anderson (Chair)	Association of Shetland Community Council
Ian Walterson (Vice Chair)	Association of Shetland Community Council
Alistair Christie-Henry	Bressay Community Council
Stewart Douglas	Gulberwick, Quarff & Cunningsburgh Community Council
Gary Robinson	Lerwick Community Council
Willie Simpson	Nesting and Lunnasting Community Council
Iris Sandison	Sandness and Walls Community Council
Debra Nicolson	Sandsting & Aithsting Community Council
Bryan Peterson	Sandwick Community Council
Mark Burgess	Scalloway Community Council
John N Hunter	Scalloway Community Council
Dilys Evans	Tingwall, Whiteness & Weisdale Community Council
Claire Priest	Unst Community Council
Annette Jamieson	Yell Community Council

Officers in Attendance

Chris Bunyan	Chair – Shetland Community Benefit Fund
Jan Riise	Executive Manager – Governance & Law, SIC
Michael Duncan	Community Council Liaison Officer – Community Planning & Development, SIC

Officers Observing

Frances Browne (note taker)	Community Involvement & Development Officer - Community Planning & Development, SIC
Lynsey Davies	Senior Auditor, Audit Scotland

Local press

Adrian Derbyshire	Reporter, Shetland Times
Chris Cope	Reporter, Shetland News

1. Introductions

Chair, Mr Jim Anderson welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was agreed that the meeting would be recorded for minute taking purposes. Mr Anderson also let attendees know that Lynsey Davies, Senior Auditor from Audit Scotland was in attendance to observe the meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Dunrossness Community Council, Fetlar Community Council, Skerries Community Council, Laurence Odie (Yell Community Council), Vaila Simpson, Pat Christie & Roselyn Fraser (all Shetland Islands Council).

3. Declarations of Interest

None

4. Shetland Community Benefit Fund – Strategic funding plans

Mr Anderson introduced Chris Bunyan from the Shetland Community Benefit Fund (SCBF). Mr Bunyan invited everyone to ask any questions.

Mr Anderson asked if Mr Bunyan could provide an insight into the pending consultation.

Mr Bunyan replied that they have engaged a firm to develop a strategy and research to undertake the consultation. Their contract started in April 2022 and anticipate will continue towards the end of 2023. The work is split into 4 phases:

Phase 1: preparation of scene setting document comprising of challenges, issues and strengths. Draft is due next week.

Phase 2: undertake consultation, virtual and telephone interviews, surveys online and by telephone

Phase 3: examine and test outcomes to check they match with community expectations gathered through consultation

Dilys Evans joined the meeting at 18:07.

Phase 4: translating aspirations of community into a full business plan which will identify funding streams to meet objectives. It will also cover governance and administration.

The Business Plan must be approved by SSE. Directors are engaging with consultants on progress but not getting involved in consultation directly. They hope the initial document will be available in the next couple of weeks. There will be a website launched, where documents will be released (as part of IBP's website.)

Community Councils have been invited to a couple of zoom meetings to discuss strengths and weaknesses and will also be involved in the main consultation.

Mark Burgess thanked Mr Bunyan for the update and explanation. Mr Burgess asked if the consultants have "carte blanche" with regards to their work or if there are any conditions of the future funding which the consultation have to take into account.

Mr Bunyan responded that SCBF would work closely with the consultants to approve their approach to the consultation but would not be involved in determining the issues that are discussed. Mr Burgess responded that he was alluding to the memorandum of understanding with Scottish & Southern Electric (SSE), and whether or not this would be reflected in the consultation.

Mr Bunyan responded that SCBF have 'Heads of Terms' document agreed with SSE which sets out certain stipulations. Any restrictions in this document is likely to be the same in the new documentation produced from the consultation.

Mr Bunyan went on to explain that SCBF have the ability to offer loans as well as investments and grants. They are still working on how that will be organised. They are working closely with SSE renewables on this. They have a seat on the SSE board, which enables them to make representation to SSE directly.

Mr Burgess asked if the scope of the consultation allows the benefit fund to incorporate benefit funds from other renewable developers, for instance the Peel Energy project which has planning consent at this time?

Mr Bunyan responded that the consultation process is entirely to do with SSE and the Viking Energy windfarm, as are the legal agreements they are working on.

SCBF has been in contact with other developers such as Peel Energy and are still in contact with these developers. SCBF have a second community benefit fund signed up with Shetland Aerogenerators for £10,000 per year. In the first year the funds for this have been allocated to a scheme encouraging walking and cycling for parents and school children. In future years it is intended that it should go towards Stems proposed by schools.

SCBF are also in touch with Energy Isles. SCBF have also met with Cerulean Winds for the offshore wind project to the west of Shetland. Mr Bunyan added that he is shortly due to meet with a company looking at offshore wind turbines to the east of Shetland. SCBF have also met with Shetland Fishermen's Association and made it clear that any community benefit fund would be in addition to compensation that the Fishermen's Association might seek for their industry.

Discussions have also covered that there could be an argument made for community benefit fund scheme for offshore wind, that could be suitable for the fishing industry to apply to. Mr Bunyan noted that Community Benefit Fund schemes for Offshore Wind projects are still in their infancy, so different parameters may apply (for example less money per megawatt produced). Mr Bunyan added that SCBF have also spoken to Nova regarding when their tidal array becomes commercial but as it is still in the research phase it has been left alone for the time being. SCBF also in touch with the smaller schemes such as the Windfarm project being considered in Cunningsburgh.

Mr Bunyan advised that the Viking Windfarm agreement is unusual in terms of sharing the money from Unst to Fair Isle, with a priority for the communities hosting the wind farm. The SCBF would encourage developers and communities in other projects to keep an element of their benefit fund to be available throughout Shetland.

Mr Bunyan briefly lost internet signal at this point. When he rejoined the meeting, a new question was taken.

Bryan Peterson asked if it is feasible for the community benefit fund to mitigate against the cost of living crisis.

Mr Bunyan responded that under the current SCBF Advance Grant scheme individuals cannot apply for projects which result in personal gain. However food and/or energy poverty are specifically included in the purposes of the scheme. An application to help mitigate against the cost of living crisis could be accepted from a community group, a Community Council or even a group of Community Councils. The scheme is reactive and can only respond to what applications are put forward.

Annette Jamieson extended an invite to Chris to attend a Yell Community Council meeting regarding the potential community benefit fund schemes for the projects located on Yell. Mr Bunyan accepted the invitation.

Mr Peterson asked if it would be possible for SCBF to share decisions made on applications made to multiple Community Councils. Sandwick Community Council would find it helpful to be aware of what other community councils had decided in considering these applications.

Mr Bunyan asked if Mr Peterson had included this request in his response to the recent consultation. Mr Bunyan noted that Community Councils take different lengths of time to consider applications so it may be difficult to do. Following discussion it was concluded the request was not possible at this time.

With no more questions forthcoming, Mr Anderson thanked Mr Bunyan for his time.

Chris Bunyan left meeting 18:38.

Action: Annette Jamieson to invite Chris Bunyan to a future Yell Community Council meeting

5. Note of the previous meeting held on 8 March 2022 for approval.

Proposed by John Hunter

Seconded by Mark Burgess

6. Matters arising from previous minute not on the agenda

None

7. Issues with vehicles parking and blocking roads and laybys

Deltong Community Council submitted an agenda request around issues with vehicles parking and blocking roads and laybys. They felt that this is a Shetland wide issue. Specific issues around whale or bird watching and fishing were mentioned.

Michael Duncan made contact with SIC Roads Service and Police Scotland and read their responses as noted below:

Police Scotland Response from Stuart Cleminson:

“If the action requires a prompt response, then the community is asked to make contact with Police Scotland on 101 or alternatively via our ‘Contact Us’ email address and provided as much detail as possible, with photographic evidence if this is safe to obtain and available.

This information will allow us to deem the appropriate response in respect of Threat, Risk and Harm.

Officers will where available attend and make a proportionate and balanced assessment of the incident on a case by case basis, and if required will invoke the legislation available to have the vehicle removed by contacting the owner in the first occasion or by means of support from a vehicle contractor.”

SIC Roads Department Response from Dave Coupe:

“I think Stuart’s response clearly sums up the position regarding enforcement. Although the allegation is that it is “A Shetland wide problem” it would not be appropriate or possible to address the issue until the scale and nature of it is known. This will probably best come from the course of action Stuart is proposing which over a period of time should provide the answer to this.

In the interest of road safety we will of course support the Police where we can within our remit as Roads Authority. This could include measures such as the introduction of Traffic Regulation Orders should they become necessary over time.”

Broad discussion followed with Bressay, Unst and Yell Community Councils all providing specific examples of issues encountered with other Community Councils expressing agreement over the problems. Gary Robinson referenced rules in the Highway Code about this. It was also noted that there have been similar issues raised elsewhere in Scotland such as the Highland’s North Coast 500 route and on the Western Isles.

It was pointed out that Promote Shetland already have a page called ‘Driving in Shetland’ on their website. Different ideas were proposed including signage for tourists to remind them not to park in laybys, producing leaflets and promotional videos to remind people to behave considerately. Annette Jamieson suggested information be made available at Northlink. The issue could also be raised at the External Transport Forum and with ZetTrans.

Action: Community Councils to gather evidence and report issues to the relevant authorities as and when they arise

Michael Duncan to contact Promote Shetland, Visit Scotland and Northlink to ask if they are considering any promotional campaigns on this or have any views they would like to share

8. Community Council core funding

Dunrossness Community Council submitted an Agenda request about this item. They stated that the level of core funding has remained static since 2013, although costs have continued to rise since then. They would like to ask the Council for core funding to be increased and are asking the ASCC for a view on this.

Mr Anderson explained the recent increase in core funding to Fetlar and Skerries Community Councils was to enable them to pay Clerks.

Mrs Jamieson asked why the Lerwick Community Council funding had decreased.

Mr Anderson explained that the Lerwick Community Council used to rent an office and received funding towards that. When they stopped renting it the funding was removed and redirected to the Community Development fund.

Two other main points for discussion were raised alongside the proposal to increase core funding in line with inflation.

Mrs Jamieson asked if there could be a minimum level of funding to ensure the smallest Community Councils such as Fetlar and Skerries would receive enough to pay their clerks and have some funding left.

Mr Burgess asked if the Distribution Fund element of the Community Development Fund could be moved into Community Council core budgets. Mr Burgess noted that most if not all Community Councils applied for a £3,000 Distribution Fund from the Community Development Fund each year so if these monies were added to core funds it would provide more flexibility for Community Councils to manage its funds.

A lengthy discussion took place on these points including a summary of the history of core funding which had led to the creation of the Council's Community Development Fund. There was general agreement for a rise in budgets in line with inflation. There was also discussion as to whether this was possible and how to raise this matter to fit in with SIC budget making timescales.

With regards to minimum funding for Fetlar and Skerries Community Councils Mr Duncan read out points made in an email from Fetlar Community Council, stating that they would welcome an increase to budget and also extra hours for their clerk. Fetlar Community Council stated that the due to the fragile nature of their community, rather than population size, issues requiring work recently included nursing provision, a new community broadband scheme and ferry issues. The level of work involved requires more hours for their clerk.

Jan Riise noted that there was two points of discussion taking place.

Primary discussion - whether the Council could apply an inflation increase. Mr Riise pointed out that it may be difficult for the Council to single out an inflationary rise for Community Council. The Council would need to be asked if it agrees to an "in principle" inflationary increase in core budgets.

Secondary discussion – look at the current distribution of grant budgets. Mr Riise noted that along with Community Councils, Community Development organisations may also apply to the Community Development Fund if there was to be any change to this budget they should be asked for comment. Community Councils are there to represent the community as well as provide access to funding.

After further deliberation it was decided that the ASCC write to Council and ask if they agree "in principle" for an increase in the core funding budget index linked against inflation.

Mr Burgess added that work should be done to explore if the Distribution Fund element of the Community Development Fund should be added to core funding budgets. It would be an opportunity to provide more flexibility to core funding budgets and also reduce bureaucracy for Community Councils and the Council too.

Action: ASCC write to Council and ask if they agree "in principle" for an increase in the core funding budgets in line with inflation

Mr Duncan to produce a document setting out how Community Councils have used the Distribution Fund element of the Community Development Fund

9. 2022 Community Council elections – publicity project update

At the March ASCC meeting it was agreed to set up an election publicity project sub group who would look at ideas for creating publicity about the up and coming Community Council elections. Three volunteers came forward who are Annette Jamieson (Yell Community Council), Mark Burgess (Scalloway Community Council), Sharon Deyell (Sandsting & Aithsting Community Council) and Michael Duncan (SIC Community Council Liaison Officer). The sub group met and pulled together a draft publicity plan.

It was noted that key lessons from the 2018 Community Council Elections is to start publicity work early and that Community Councils need to be proactive and generate interest from prospective local candidates.

Mr Duncan talked through the 2022 draft publicity plan with ideas proposed. Ideas include:

- a drop in session hosted by each community council
- utilise roadside signs
- refresh online short videos
- use social media platforms that young people use
- advertise through Mareel and use local media.

Mr Duncan noted that the Community Council Election period opens for nominations on 16th September and closes on 13th October so whilst there is a reasonable lead in time there will be summer holidays to consider. General discussion then followed including the use of the promotional videos, and asking Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament to promote to young people.

It was highlighted that the ASCC publicity sub group would like to apply to the Council's Community Development Fund for £3,000 to help meet the costs involved. Dilys Evans proposed that the ASCC make the application for £3,000. John Hunter seconded it. No one else was otherwise minded.

Action: ASCC Sub Group to submit application to Community Development Fund and if successful progress with its publicity ideas.

10. Items for future discussion

Mr Duncan will circulate a request for ASCC agenda items at the end of June as he is on annual leave during the start of the 8 week period for agenda items.

Mr Duncan advised of a couple of meetings that are scheduled to take place that the ASCC has been invited to attend. Scottish Land Commission are hosting an online meeting on 16th June. The External Transport Forum is due to meet at 2pm on 21st June. Anyone interested is to contact Mr Duncan for details.

Mark Burgess Left the meeting at 19:49.

Alistair Christie Henry volunteered to attend the External Transport Forum on behalf of the ASCC.

Mr Duncan advised that Delting Community Council would like to add a future agenda item about the shortage of space on Northlink.

Action: Michael to see if a representative from Northlink can attend the September meeting.

11. Date of Next Meeting

- 13 September 2022, 6pm
- 14 March 2023, 6pm
- 13 June 2023, 6pm
- 12 September 2023, 6pm

Meeting closed a 19:55

Chairperson

Date

ACTION TRACKER

Action 1 Annette Jamieson to invite Chris Bunyan to a future Yell Community Council meeting

Action 2 Community Councils to gather evidence and report issues to the relevant authorities as and when they arise

Michael Duncan to contact Promote Shetland, Visit Scotland and Northlink to ask if they are considering any promotional campaigns on this or have any views they would like to share

Action 3 ASCC write to Council and ask if they agree “in principle” for an increase in the core funding budgets in line with inflation

Michael Duncan to produce a document setting out how Community Councils have used the Distribution Fund element of the Community Development Fund

Action 4 Sub Group to submit application to Community Development Fund and if successful progress publicity ideas.

Action 5 Michael Duncan to ask if a representative from Northlink can attend the September meeting.