

Sandness & Walls Community Council

Chairman:

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Minutes of hybrid meeting of the Sandness and Walls Community Council held on Tuesday 7th November 2023 at 7 pm based at the Walls Hall

Present:

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

1. Chairman's Welcome

I Walterson (Chair) chaired the meeting and welcomed all those present. In his opening address, the Chair expressed his sadness at the loss of Mr Marcus Georgeson as a result of a tragic accident

Apologies

J Haswell, R Fraser, M Forrest and S Johnston

In attendance: D Forrest (Clerk)

2. Declarations of Interest

None were made at this time.

3. Police Report

The contents of the Community Council Report August/September 2023 sent by Sgt Barry Alexander and dated 29.10.23 were noted.

(Cllr L Peterson entered the meeting.)

4. Minutes from 3.10.23

The adoption of the Minutes of 3rd October 2023 was proposed by J Puckey and seconded by F MacBeath.

5. Matters Arising

Re: 9 of 9/23 Gigabit Project for NW Walls and Dale

(To be referred to as the West Mainland Digital Community Project in future)

M Macgregor provided a verbal update a recent public meeting on the above and stated it had been a quiet event. She expressed the view that the meeting had been preceded by misinformation spread throughout the community. She has organised a further meeting in the Walls Regatta Club for Thursday 16th November which will be attended by Duncan Nisbet, R100 Stakeholder Director at The Scottish Government who will be able to update attendees on how the proposed digital project can operate. M Macgregor intimated that a revised flyer will be distributed to households West of the Bridge-of-Walls prior to the meeting. The flyer will provide more detailed information than that previously distributed. She advised Members that no one was being asked to make a firm commitment to what is being discussed and that only a Government approved agent will be involved in the supply network. She stated that provided there was sufficient interest, the voucher scheme should cover the costs involved. M Macgregor concluded by asking if people wished to have a high-speed connection within two years or if they were willing to wait for up to fifteen years.

Re: 18.1 of 8/23 Feeder Bus Service to Sandness

It was noted that an automated email from the Transport and Operations Officer had been received on the 9th September indicating the officer was on leave and would address the matter on her return to work. As yet, no response has been received. The Clerk was asked to contact the Transport Department again reiterating the original request.

Action: The Clerk to email the Transport and Operations Officer to request that the evening feeder bus to Sandness runs daily and should no longer operate on a system that requires a booking to be made on the day prior to it being required.

Re: 9.2 Lack of Signage for Passing Places on Road from Dale of Walls to the Sandness Junction.

M Macgregor requested an update on the erection of passing place signs on the road from the Dale of Walls to the Sandness Junction. The Clerk indicated he had been advised by the Director of the Roads Department that this work was on the Department's schedule.

Re: 8.3 of 4/23 Child Safety in Mid Walls

M Macgregor stated that the signs have been erected but was not sure if the No Parking sign at the Dale of Walls was located in a position that would restrict agricultural and delivery vehicle movements.

(M Macgregor left the meeting)

Re:14.1 of 8/22 Defibrillator for West Burrafirth Pier

The Clerk referred to an email from Cooke Community Benefit Fund regarding the installation of the defibrillator for the West Burrafirth Pier. After a brief discussion, the Clerk was asked to request that the Ports and Harbours Department install it. He was asked to copy the Members and Councillors into the email.

Action: The Clerk to email Mr Andrew Inkster to request that Ports and Harbours engineers instal the defibrillator in the ferry waiting room on the West Burrafirth Pier.

16.3 Proposed Communications Mast at the Black Wart in Walls

It was noted that work on the communications Mast at the Black Wart in Walls is progressing well. There was a brief discussion regarding the possibility of mobile phone companies, other than O2, making use of the mast.

Re: 9 of 10/23 Financial Harm – Scams

The Clerk stated that he had communicated with Tea, Coffee and Company Group and the Walls Branch of the RVS, both of which are keen to have a visit from anti-scam advisors. He went on to say that the email he had received in response to a request for a visit by the advisors had indicated that no one will be able to come out to Walls before Christmas. Visits will be scheduled for the new year.

Re: 18.1 of 10/23 Email from Hazel Sutherland re: Voe House, Walls.

The Clerk indicated that he had advised the Amenity Trust that there were no local groups interested in taking over the running of Voe House.

6. Housing

Re: 8.1 of 5/23 Proposed Social Housing Development at Central Walls

Members were pleased to learn that work on this site has commenced.

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

Cllr Peterson stated that she has spoken to several officers in an attempt to progress the sale of this land to a developer in the hope that new houses can be built on it. Members were unanimous in their approval of this possibility.

7. Roads

The contents of an email that has been received from Neil Hutcheson providing a list of amenities, organisations and commercial enterprises in the Sandness and Walls area was discussed and updated. The purpose of the list is to inform the business plan in support of the upgrade to the A971 from the Murrister Quarry to Da Punds in Walls.

Action: The Clerk to forward a copy of the updated list to Mr N Hutcheson.

Re: 8.2 of 10/23 Misinformation on Brown Road Sign in Sandness

The Clerk informed Members he had received a response from Mr Neil Hutcheson to say that the sign will be amended in the near future.

Re: 8.3 of 10/23 Soft Verges on Newly Surfaced stretch of A971

The Clerk indicated that he had received a response from Mr Hutcheson on this matter stating that it will take some time for the verges to settle in and that it is the Council's policy to provide soft verges in rural areas.

8. Planning Consultation Ref 2023/258/PPF (2 x Vehicle Charging Points for Wastview Care Centre)

Members unanimously recommended approval for the above planning consultation.

Action: The Clerk to email the Planning Department to indicate the Members' approval of the planning consultation.

9. Future of Health Service Provision at Walls Health Centre

10.1 Proposal to Meet with Shetland Health Board Personnel

Members discussed the current situation regarding the provision of GP cover for the Walls Practice and their concerns regarding the lack of continuity caused by the continued presence of locums. The need for dialogue with the Shetland Health Board was highlighted and it was agreed to push for a meeting with Ms Jo Robinson and her team early in the new year given that a public meeting that had been promised for the Autumn did not take place. It was agreed to provide Ms Robinson with the notes from the May 2023 meeting.

Action: 1. The Clerk to email Jo Robinson to propose a meeting with her team and S&WCC Members to take place early in the new year.

2. The Clerk to send Ms Robinson the notes taken at the May '23 meeting.

10.2 The Provision of a Nurse on Foula

Members were briefed regarding the status of a nurse for Foula. It was pointed out that the current post holder has been on long term sick leave and that a stand-in nurse has not been appointed. Further to this, the nurse's accommodation on the island is in very poor condition and the islanders feel that it is not fit to be lived in and should be replaced. They have been led to understand that Shetland Health Board do not have a budget for such work. The fact that Foula has an emergency medical chest was discussed. It was also pointed out that there is no statutory requirement on the part of the Health Board to provide a permanent nurse for small and remote islands. It was agreed that the Clerk should write to the Health Board requesting an update on the situation regarding a nurse for Foula.

Action: The Clerk to request an update on the situation regarding a nurse for Foula.

10. Shetland Community Benefit Fund

A brief discussion took place concerning the future plans for the distribution of grants when the wind farm goes live.

11. Review of Community Councils

The Chair presented a brief verbal report on Phase One of the Review of the Community Council Scheme of Establishment which looks at the various Community Council ward boundary options and is currently out for public consultation. The consensus view expressed by the Members who were present is to retain the status quo. J Puckey highlighted the importance of the Sandness and Walls Community Council to the residents of Papa Stour. Members were reminded that all responses to this phase of the review must be submitted by the 12th of January 2024 and the Clerk was asked to email a link to the public consultation to a Foula resident.

Action: The Clerk to email a link to the current consultation to a resident of Foula.

12. Facebook Page for S&WCC

E Johnston provided a verbal update on how well the Facebook page is being received by the public and described some of the items available on the page including the Review of Community Councils Phase 1 consultation link. Members expressed their gratitude to E Johnston for all his work to date.

13. Financial Update (See Spreadsheet)

The Clerk stated that the spreadsheet he had submitted along with the meeting's papers was up to date. No comments were made regarding the Community Council's finances.

14. Correspondence (Including Emails)

The Clerk read a letter he had received requesting financial support for the forthcoming visit by the Lerwick Brass Band to the Walls Hall for a Christmas Carol Concert. The funding requested is for the cost of the hire of a bus to transport the band to Walls. This request was unanimously approved.

Action: The Clerk to liaise with the bus hire company that the invoice for the coach hire be sent to him.

15. AOCB

16.1 Request for a Crane to be installed on the Walls Pier to be used by the Foula Ferry operators

The Clerk stated he had received a request from Foula resident for a crane to be erected on the Walls pier to enable heavy goods to be lifted onto and out of the Foula Ferry. Currently, a mobile crane has to be present when the ferry visits Walls. Members felt that, given the presence of the necessary infrastructure on the pier it was not unreasonable to provide a suitable crane which might also be of benefit to other pier users.

Action: The Clerk to write to Mr Andrew Inkster and copy Cllr Robert Thompson (Chair of Ports and Harbours) to request a crane for the Walls Pier.

Re: 16.2 of 9/23 SSEN Funding

The Clerk stated that the application for funding in support of the village halls in Sandness and Walls to provide them with change over switches to expedite the attachment of external electricity generators in the event of a prolonged power cut had been granted.

16.2 Proposal to Change the name of the West Burrafirth Pier

The chair shared the contents of a letter he had received from a West Burrafirth resident proposing that the West Burrafirth Pier be renamed the Captain Gordon Walteson Pier in memory of the late Councillor who was instrumental in having a pier constructed at West Burrafirth. After some discussion it was agreed that the Clerk write in support of this proposal.

Action: The Clerk to draft a letter in support of the proposal to rename the West Burrafirth Pier and circulate it amongst the Members for approval before sending it to the Chair of Ports and Harbours.

Re: 13 of 6/23 Update on Papa Stour Church Renovations

The Members congratulated J Puckey on her work in overturning the Planning Department's decision regarding solar panels for the Papa Stour Kirk roof.

16.3 Inter-island Transport Connectivity - Community Stakeholder/User Group

The Chair thanked J Puckey for agreeing to join this group. After a brief discussion she expressed her willingness to speak on behalf of both Papa Stour and Foula.

16. Date of Next Meeting

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance.

The date of the next meeting was set for Tuesday 5th December at 7 pm.

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm.