

Skerries Community Council (SCC)

Minute of meeting held at 2.00 pm on Friday, 22nd September 2023

In Skerries Community Hall

Present:

Paul James - Chair
Bertha Anderson - Vice Chair
Frances Anderson
Marina Anderson
Jilly Ash
Janice Hughson
Kia James
Marina Tait
Paul Radcliffe
Bert Vanstone

In attendance:

Violet McQuade, Clerk (notes)
Lynsey Hall - Community Involvement and Development Officer

1) Apologies

Michael Duncan, Robert Thomson.

Paul welcomed everyone to the meeting. Lynsey Hall introduced herself, as the new Community Involvement and Development Officer for Skerries.

2) Declaration of Interest to any agenda item

Chairperson asked for declaration of interests – there were no declarations of interest.

3) Minutes of last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 11th of August 2023, were approved.
Proposed by Marina Anderson, seconded by Bertha Anderson.

4) Matters Arising/Actions from last meeting

4.1 Send another email re user-friendly bins

The Clerk sent another email to the Executive Manager, Estate Operations, and copied in Beatrice Wishart, MSP - again asking for more user-friendly bins. Beatrice also sent a follow-up email; we seem to be getting nowhere at the moment. All correspondence has been circulated.

Paul J as carried out a test to find the weight of the current skip lids and find out how much effort it takes to raise them, he found that they were over 25kg. Paul has been in touch with the Team Leader at Waste Management – he has agreed to investigate the matter and will get back to us.

4.2 Contact SCBF re membership of the Board

This was done. Ryan Arthur agreed to attend the meeting on behalf of Skerries. The meeting was on Wednesday, 13th September. This item is now closed.

4.3 Ask for power point at Bruray Pier

Clerk emailed the Executive Manager – Ferry and Air Operations and was told that the matter is not straightforward. There is a problem with management of the supply - if power is provided to the public, we have a duty to ensure that it is used properly, and that safety is maintained. The HSE have been quite clear that if we provide the power, we are responsible for its use. In areas where we do not have a regular presence, this management becomes difficult. In the

past there have been instances where inappropriate cables have been used. After more information has been gathered, they will get back to us.

4.4 Contact Pest Control re rabbit problem

The Clerk emailed the Environmental Health Officer and was told that '*rabbits are not considered a public health concern so are not something that we treat*'. It was suggested that emailing the person in charge of Burial Grounds might help with the problem in the graveyard, as perhaps rabbit-proofing could be done to keep the rabbits out.

4.4.1 Emailed Burial Services

Email was sent to the Burial Grounds Supervisor and was told that they are scheduled to visit the burial ground in Skerries shortly and will assess the situation and get back to us in due course.

4.5 Ask for suggestions re weed problem

Emailed Environmental Health and was told that the responsibility for dealing with this would lie with the landowners where it's growing, although it is possible that the Council might deal with anything growing on the roadside verge, but we would need to ask the Roads Department.

4.6 Ask for more tourist leaflets

Clerk contacted Tourist Officer, we got leaflets the following day, and delivered them to Skerries. This item is now closed.

5 Kirkyard - grass cutting

It was suggested that, if anyone in Skerries was willing, the grass in the kirkyard could be cut by someone living in Skerries. This could save the council money and provide some income for an island resident. It was agreed that enquiries would be made to find someone local to cut the grass – they would likely have to provide their own lawnmower. The council will then be approached with the relevant information. There was a query about liability insurance, Lynsey Hall agreed to find out what was required.

**Actions: Kia to find out if anyone is interested
Lynsey to find out about insurance**

6 BT Building

It was noted that the state of the BT Telephone Exchange building in Bruray is a disgrace, badly needing maintenance. It was agreed to contact BT regarding this, Paul J will write to BT.

Action: Chair – write to BT

The BT landlines will be cut off in 2025, so the building may be decommissioned. It was also noted that this will have a devastating impact on rural areas where the mobile signal is poor, or non-existent. Places could be left with no telephone cover, and if there were to be a power cut no way to alert emergency services. This could have serious implications for outlying islands, such as Skerries.

7 Out Skerries – Where do we go from here? A Discussion Document

A discussion was held on the paper 'Where do we go from here?', which Paul J had created. The paper has been circulated to all Skerries residents, and so far, the feedback has been positive. The paper included potential risks, including implications if there were to be a fire on the islands.

Paul asked for comments and said that he will be updating the document – he asked if there was anything that he had missed. It was agreed that the next step would be to get as many people together as possible – to discuss the Risk Register, and make sure that it is accurate. After that Paul will start prioritising and contacting the council and Fire Services.

Action: Chair to follow this up

Locality Plan

Lynsey introduced a document, the Skerries part of the Locality Plan, which ties into this subject - it was passed around to everyone present. The aim is to write a list of priorities, and the community to get-together to help with setting up a 10-year plan - getting goals set up for where you expect to see yourselves in 5-10 years' time. Lynsey was given permission to share the Where do we go from here? document with her colleagues at the council.

It was agreed to set a date the planned get-together – the date agreed is Friday, the 27th of October 2023. Meetings/get-togethers could start in the morning.

8 Recreational facilities

There was a discussion regarding the possibility of getting some gym equipment. It was pointed out that if the community were to acquire equipment, there would be insurance implications. It was agreed that Paul R would explore the possibilities/problems that could arise. It was agreed that Paul R would do some research, and find out what may be workable, and get back to the next meeting with an update.

Action: Paul R to carry out research on this

9 Community get-togethers

There was a discussion on making better use of the hall facilities. Suggestions included:

- Reinstating evening bar openings – Bert is happy to help with this.
- Getting games, such as badminton, snooker, and bowls started up again.
- Reinstating the winter events timetable.
- Doing an audit of what is currently in the hall – Paul J and Bert volunteered to carry this out.

Frances agreed to communicate with the Hall Committee.

10 Skip – White goods, gas cylinders

A number of white goods and gas cylinders have been dumped near the Bruray Pier. The Clerk contacted the Team Leader at Waste Management about this. Paul J has also been in correspondence with Waste Management to try to arrange to get the white goods/gas cylinders taken away from Skerries – the Team Leader has agreed to look at options and will get back to us.

Action: Chair following this up

11 ATM

There was a query regarding paying for items using cards. It was noted that banks have an obligation to provide bank facilities in rural areas within a 10-mile radius. Janice is currently in the process of getting facilities in the shop/post office so that people will be able to pay by card.

It was pointed out that facilities are already provided in Skerries for obtaining cash.

12 Accommodation on Mainland

There have been problems with some people getting stuck on the Shetland Mainland, left high and dry with no easy means of finding accommodation. Also, for remote islands, when a family member is in hospital there are problems finding suitable accommodation. A discussion was held on how the problem might be resolved, perhaps having an islanders specific agreement for emergencies. It was agreed to bring this up at the next IWSP meeting.

Paul J will put together a proposal document, which can be shared with the other remote islands, with the aim of bringing it to the IWSP meeting.

Action: Chair put together a proposal document – re accommodation

13 Review of Community Councils

The Clerk reminded members that Shetland Islands Council (SIC) is currently carrying out a review of Community Councils. All information has already been circulated to members; any further information will be circulated as soon as it comes in. Paul J has been told that the consultation is not going to happen now until 2025. This item can be removed from the next agenda/s.

14 Correspondence Received

All correspondence has been circulated electronically.

15 AOCB

15.1 New Associate Member

The Clerk asked if there was anyone else who would like to join Skerries Community Council as an Associate Member. Kia James put her name forward to become an Associate Member – this was proposed by Paul James and seconded by Marina Anderson.

15.2 Railing at the Dam.

It was noted that the railing at the dam is in a poor state and needs to be replaced. Also, the dyke needs to be built up again, and the gate at the airstrip needs to be replaced.

Paul J agreed to write to Scottish Water to ask for the work to be carried out.

Action: Chair - write to Scottish Water

15.3 Tree Planting

Paul J provided an update on the tree planting project. Currently waiting for confirmation of land availability. Paul J is following this up.

16 Proposed date of the next meeting

The next meeting was scheduled to be held on the 3rd of November 2023, but as the Clerk will be unavailable that day it was agreed to hold the meeting on the 10th of November 2023 instead.

The meeting concluded at 3.15 pm

Actions:

- Chair – write to BT regarding state of building
- Chair to follow up on 'Where do we go from here?' document
- Paul R to carry out research on gym equipment
- Chair to follow up on skip for white goods, gas cylinders
- Chair put together a proposal document – re accommodation
- Chair - write to Scottish Water regarding fence at dam

Proposed dates for future 2023 meetings:

December 15th 2023

Chair Signature

Signed.....