

Unst Community Council

Chair

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Baltasound
Unst
Shetland

Clerk

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Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 30th October 2023 at 6.30 pm in the Baltasound School Music Huts and by MsTeams

Present

Claire Priest, Chair
Caroline Hunter, Vice Chair
David Cooper
Patrick Fordyce
Janice Priest
Hazel Spence
Robert Thomson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio) MsTeams

Attending:

Gordon Thomson, Unst Partnership Ltd
Frances Browne, Community Involvement and Development Officer
Josie McMillan, Clerk

01/10/23 Apologies

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

02/10/23 Declaration of Interest

Janice declared an interest in 05/10/23 SaxaVord Space Port (SAXA) and 15/10/23.4 Energy Isles Windfarm update.
Claire, Hazel and Frances declared an interest in 12/10/23.2 Unst Working Mens Society Bairns Christmas Party.
Caroline declared an interest in 12/10.23.3 Uyeasound Hall Bairns Christmas Party.
Robert is on the SIC Planning Committee, he needs to leave while 11/10/23 Application for Planning is discussed.

03/10/23 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes from the meeting held on Monday 11th September 2023 were proposed by Caroline and seconded by Janice.

04/10/23 Matters Arising from last minutes

All outstanding matters arising are on the agenda.

05/10/23 SaxaVord Space Port (SAXA)

Elizabeth Johnson, Project Manager, sent in a report for the meeting. She said that “after a challenging few months whereby they slowed down on some, but not all, of the activity due to the unforeseen default of SDGIF and EIX their chosen funding partners, significant progress is now being made with regards to replacing them. SaxaVord Spaceport is now being seen as a National Asset by both Governments and the Public Sector is carrying out Due Diligence with the intent of investing a range of significant packages to support the Development. This will have the added bonus of adding weight to the Fixed Links initiative. This includes SIC, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), Scottish and UK Governments. Existing shareholders are also stepping up to invest further to ensure work progresses at speed. Because the Spaceport is several years ahead of any competitor other than Norway there is no danger that any momentum will be lost with regards to its positioning in the Industry and the Team continue to lead the way in the UK with regards to STEM and Sustainability. The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) have advised them that the Licence application is in its final stages of review and there are no red flags with the award of this historic achievement and the OPs Team are working on post licence activity with regards to next year’s launch schedule. Work on the hangar has come to its first scheduled break pending design changes and will resume once the internal fit out and design has been reassessed. Rocket Factory Augsburg (RFA) are recruiting for permanent positions on Island and will be ramping up activity over the next month or so. Lockheed are in dialogue with the Spaceport over a multi launch contract.” On Friday 27th October the Minister of State for Science Innovation and Technology visited the Spaceport to make some announcements about Government support for RFA on SaxaVord. This shows the seriousness of Government support for SaxaVord and Unst. Members discussed this report and asked if there had been any news about hotel and whether it had got to SIC Planning yet. There was also a query about what progress has been made with the new road at North Dale. The Clerk will email Elizabeth.

06/10/23 Unst Partnership (UP) Update.

Gordon said that the next Skip Day will be on Saturday 18th November 2023. He said that the UP shop is trading as normal. There are still some funds available in the Oot n Aboot budget, this needs to be spent before March next year. The funds will probably be used for a one of event at the beginning of the year. UP Directors are still looking at the housing situation on Unst. There are not many houses available locally to buy or rent. There has been no further word from the National Trust for Scotland about the properties they plan to sell, despite requests for information. Chris Gadsby, Shetland Amenity Trust (SAT) Maintenance and Facilities Manager, has completed the first phase of the planned works on the Skidbladner. Gordon emailed to ask about future work, this has been passed on to Jacqui Birnie, SAT. Mr Gadsby had said before that SAT hope that volunteers in the community will look after the Skidbladner and Longhouse. Members discussed this and felt that there would need to be funds available to carry out any work and volunteers would need to be trained on how to do this specialised work. UP is running a Participatory Budgeting event on the 29th November 2023. Groups can apply for up to £500, from a total of £3000. Applications have to be in by the 15th November 2023.

07/10/23 Community Involvement Update

Frances has been working with the Unst Boating Club, which has now got the funding for their upgrade project. This work is now underway. Frances has spoken to Gordon about the Housing situation on Unst. There are a lot of vacant houses all over the island which are not rented out. Frances circulated a PowerPoint on Housing which had been compiled for another project. It showed the steps that need to be followed for community development of housing. Robert was asked if the SIC built any new houses or did it all go through Hjaltland Housing Association (HHA). He said that in the past it had been HHA, but funding conditions were changing so there was a possibility that the SIC could build houses. Robert has been raising the Housing issue in the North Isles with the Council. Frances suggested setting up a sub committee and having a separate meeting to discuss Housing and prepare questions for the meeting with HHA and SIC Housing Department in the New Year. She will circulate a date for the meeting and

whoever is available will attend. David and Gordon are both happy to attend. Frances said that there are some funds available for “Pop In” sessions. These are sessions where people can get together in a warm space with tea and coffee and socialise. Members felt it would be good to target the older generation for these sessions as well. Frances said that there is a bit of money for transport as well.

08/10/23 Shetland Community Benefit Fund (SCBF)

David said that there was nothing to report.

09/10/23 Ferries/ Fixed Links

09/10/23.1 Festive Timetable

There was an enquiry about making changes to the Festive Timetable. This timetable was finalised in September. The Clerk will forward the request to SIC Ferries, Elaine Park, SIC Transport Planning, Robert and Ryan.

09/10/23.2 Ferry Issues

There was a discussion about ferries and all the problems which have been recently. There have been a lot of comments on the Community Council Facebook page and also people contacting Community Councillors directly. Comments were :- why were the ferries not bookable; why ferries didn't arrive for scheduled runs with no messages/no information on the boards/no cones blocking the booked lane; why were staff taken from Bluemull Sound ferry to staff Yell Sound ones; if someone is booked on a ferry but doesn't subscribe to text updates they can arrive at the ferry and not know what is happening, especially if the information boards aren't working. There was a request to remove message on information board which says Cash/Cheques only. Members also asked why it says Bluemull Sound and not Unst and Fetlar. Robert explained that one of the problems on Bluemull Sound was with engineers. Engineering certificates for the Geira do not cover the Bigga. He said that these certificates go up in kilowatts. Some of the ferry problems were when the engineer didn't have the correct certificate. There was a discussion as to whether these engineers could upgrade their certificates. Robert said that this could probably be done but it would mean more time spent away from the ferry. He also said that it is really important to get the booking system sorted out, there are real issues with it at present. Another question was why bookings aren't being reinstated at times when it is normally a single vessel. This had always been the case in the past. Members of the community who have appointments are travelling to the mainland really early or the day before, so that they don't miss them. Tunnels are a bit away as yet, so the ferries situation needs to be sorted out. Frances said that Andrew Inkster hasn't got back yet about the Emergency Timetable. It was agreed to write a list of these issues to Andrew Inkster, SIC Ferries and copy to Robert.

09/10/23.3 Fixed Links

Representatives from the Unst and Yell Tunnels Action Groups went on a self-funded information gathering tour to Faroes. They met with officials and members of the communities. It was agreed to invite Alice Mathewson and Duncan Gray to the next Community Council meeting. Robert said that Maggie Sandison, SIC, Chief Executive, and Moraig Lyall, SIC, Chair Environment and Transport Committee, have met with the Secretary of State for Scotland and also the Shadow Secretary of State and tunnels had been discussed.

10/10/23 Community Council Review Scheme

This term for Community Councillors is to be extended from 2 to 3 years to November 2025. More information needs to be sent out about this. There was a lot of discussion about the survey which forms the first part of the public consultation on the Community Council Scheme of Establishment. Full details about the consultation process can be viewed on the Council's website at www.shetland.gov.uk/ccschemereview. The survey has five options which asks for opinions on each and also to rank the options in order of preference.

- Option 1 - no change (18 Community Councils)

- Option 2 - create a single new Community Council for Fair Isle, Fetlar, Foula, Papa Stour and Skerries. No change to remaining 16 Community Councils, other than adjustments made to boundaries of Dunrossness and Sandness & Walls Community Councils (17 Community Councils)
- Option 3 – create a single new Community Council for Fair Isle, Fetlar, Foula, Papa Stour and Skerries; create five new Community Councils matching the Shetland mainland multi-member wards; retain Community Councils in Bressay, Whalsay, Unst and Yell (10 Community Councils)
- Option 4 - create new Community Councils that match multi-member wards (7 Community Councils)
- Option 5 - create new Fair Isle and Foula Community Councils, no change to existing 18 Community Councils, other than adjustments made to boundaries of Dunrossness and Sandness & Walls Community Councils (20 Community Councils)

After a discussion it was agreed to stick with the status quo which works for Unst and to rank the options in order of Option 1, 5, 2, 3 and 4. Members believe that each area has issues which are specific to that area. Claire will submit the Community Council's survey form.

There were two items discussed before Robert had to leave the meeting.

15/10/23 Correspondence

15/10/23.6 SIC Street Lighting Gutter Street

Gordon was contacted about street lights along Gutter Street and followed it up. Ryan had contacted the Roads Department about this in October 2020, when he was told "Unfortunately the reinstatement of the streetlighting has been pushed back to the end of the LED lantern replacement programme due to staffing issues. The full completion of this project is expected to now be October 2021. This was largely due to the Covid-19 lockdown and the Scottish Government's phased return for the construction sector which resulted in the sector being fully operational at a significantly later date than other industries." Tulloch Developments have recently been up and replaced old streetlights with LED ones, which is when the Gutter Street lights came up again as they weren't replaced. SIC Roads believe the cabling in Gutter Street will probably need replacing as it has been buried for 10+ years. They state that "It would cost in excess of £20K just to install new columns and lanterns, if they had to re-cable this would increase to over £60K at current rates. Funding for the worst case scenario would need to be in place to ensure completion when started." Robert is going to discuss this with Ryan and get back to the Community Council.

17/10/23 A.O.C.B.

17/10/23.1 Roads

There was a discussion about road issues in Unst, Yell and North Shetland. There are missing road markings in Yell and the North Mainland. Many of the Cat's Eyes from Voe to Toft are no longer reflective, this is the same in Yell and parts of Unst. Some of the reflector posts no longer reflect and in one area on Unst, coming into Baltasound from the south, they reflect white as the red markings have worn off. The paths around Skibhoul are grown up with weeds and it is the same on the pavements from Setters Hill to Nikkavord Lea. Members thought that they need scrapping as weed killer would not work. Robert said that there is a lack of staff working for the Roads Department, which is why they can't provide the same level of service.

Robert left the meeting.

11/10/23 Applications for Planning

Planning Ref:	2023/214/PNT
Proposal:	Prior Notification for Electronic Communication Code Operators – Installation of a total of 3 No. slimline (Foldscan) masts at a height of 10m AGL (11.6m to top of antenna)
Address:	Chambered Cairn, Holsens Road, Skaw, Unst, Shetland
Applicant:	Ministry Of Defence
Date of Consultation:	29 th September 2023

There were no objections.

12/10/23 Application for Donations

12/10/23.1 Uyeasound Hall Bairns Christmas Party

It was agreed to give a donation of £112 towards the Bairns Christmas Party.

12/10/23.2 Unst Working Mens Society Bairns Christmas Party

It was agreed to give a donation of £420 towards the Bairns Christmas Party.

12/10/23.3 Unst Under 5s

It was agreed to give a donation of £91 towards the Bairns Christmas Party.

13/10/23 Community Ferry Hires

There were no applications for Community Ferry Hires.

14/10/23 Unadopted Roads

There were no applications for Unadopted Roads.

15/10/23 Correspondence

15/10/23.1 Dental Services – Mid Yell

Antony Visocchi, NHS Shetland Dental Director, said they are implementing a three phase plan which aims to bring in more full time dentists as soon as possible. Phase one would be to recruit an additional 3.3 full time equivalent dentists. The aim of Phase Two is to increase the level of dental services available and recruit another 6.8 full time equivalent dentists. Phase Three is for a permanent dental working out of the New Gilbert Bain, if and when it is approved. The Yell Dental practice has been contacting parents to take their children in for Child Smile treatment.

15/10/23.2 Housing Questions for SIC Housing and Hjaltdland Housing Association Meeting

This was discussed in agenda item 07/10/23.

15/10/23.3 SIC Childcare – project for North Isles and West Mainland

Mairi Keith, Graduate Project Officer – ELC, SIC emailed to say that they had submitted a bid to the Government to become one of the early adopter communities for “Best Start, Bright Futures: tackling child poverty funding.” Their first bid wasn’t successful but a subsequent bid has been. The SIC propose developing community-based school aged childcare in the North Isles and West Mainland. It is anticipated that the funding will begin from January 2024 and that learning from this project will inform the government’s plans for future out-of-school care provision in Scotland, particularly in other remote and rural areas. Members said that the Childcare priority in Unst is children from 0-3 years of age, not school aged children. Frances will email to find out if there have been any updates.

15/10/23.4 Energy Isles Windfarm update

Doug Wilson, Energy Isles, emailed to say that the Scottish Government has approved Energy Isles Wind Farm.

15/10/23.5 SIC Employability Roadshow – 13th November 2023

There will be an Employability Roadshow at Victoria’s Vintage Tea Rooms on Monday 13th November 2023 from 1 – 3pm. This has been advertised on the Community Council Facebook page and also there are posters in shops and Post Office.

15/10/23.7 SIC Community Planning and Development – We Shine Brighter Together Campaign

Leanne Gear, Partnership Officer – Community Planning and Development emailed to say about the “We Shine Brighter together campaign.” This campaign information was shared on the Face book page. They can provide help and advice about:- Warm homes discount; Free school meals; Fuel/energy bills support; Attendance allowance and Scottish Child Payment.

15/10/23.8 Shetland Amenity Trust Annual Review 2022/23

This was noted.

16/10/23 Community Council Finances

The budget spreadsheet was circulated and discussed. The budget will be spent before the end of the financial year.

18/10/23 Date of next meeting

The next meeting is set for Monday 4th December 2023. A list of proposed dates for 2024 was looked at and amended. This will be circulated for comments before the next meeting.

Chair: _____ Date: _____

Clerk: _____