

Unst Community Council

Chair

Claire Priest
Engistou
Baltasound
Unst
Shetland

Clerk

Josie McMillan
Rockfield
Haroldswick
Unst, Shetland
Tel: 01957 711554
Email: clerk@unstcc.shetland.co.uk

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 19th February 2024
at 6.30 pm in the Baltasound School Music Huts and by MsTeams**

Present

Claire Priest, Chair
Gary Betney
John Peterson
Janice Priest
Hazel Spence
Julie Thomson
Robert Thomson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio) MSTEams

Attending:

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

01/02/24 Apologies

Caroline Hunter, Vice Chair
David Cooper
Patrick Fordyce
Duncan Anderson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio)
Ryan Thomson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio)
Michael Duncan, Community Council Liaison Officer
PC Dana Jamieson

02/02/24 Declaration of Interest

Janice, Julie and Frances declared an interest in 05/02/24 SaxaVord Space Port (SAXA).
Janice declared an interest in 13/02/24.2 Energy Isles – Representation from the Community Council.

03/02/24 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes from the meeting held on Monday 22nd January 2024 were proposed by Hazel and seconded by Janice.

04/02/24 Matters Arising from last minutes**13/01/24.1 Housing Questions – SIC/Hjaltland Housing Association**

Gary and David drafted a letter with several follow up questions to SIC/HHA which was sent last week, there has been no response so far. These supplementary questions, arising in part from consideration of two documents, The Fairer Scotland Duty, guidance for public bodies, October 2021 and the Island Communities Impact Assessment, Shetland Local Housing Strategy 2022 - 27. The questions asked were:-

1. What is your estimate of the number of additional houses needed over the next 10 years both social and private? Is there discussion of shared equity schemes or of Council encouragement through serviced sites?
2. What is the number of homes already being built or going through development/planning?
3. Do similar properties (of an equal number of bedrooms) which have an EPC rating of B or C pay a higher rent than properties with an EPC rating of D?
4. For properties with an EPC rating of D, what measures and timescale are in place to bring them up to an EPC rating of C and above?
5. For properties that became vacant over the last 3 years with an EPC rating of D, what number have had work done to bring them up to an EPC rating of C and above, i.e. how many have been upgraded and what is the policy to bring them up to standard?

13/01/23.4 Bench Donation – SSE

This item was postponed until the next meeting when a decision will be made.

15/01/24.3 Roads and Baltasound School Sign

The Clerk has emailed Neil Hutcheson, SIC Roads, again about these matters. The road in Norwick, from Roadside to the Brig at the bottom of the Strodie; the left hand side of the Setters Road and the Baltasound School Sign has never been put up at the crossroads at Nordalea.

05/02/24 SaxaVord Space Port (SAXA)

Elizabeth Johnson, External Affairs Manager, emailed the following report on behalf of SaxaVord Space Port. She said that Jacob Young, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities visited the Spaceport in late January. Work is continuing at Lambaness in preparation for Rocket Factory Ausburg's launch campaign. An Internal Environmental Working Group has been set up to look at the Spaceport's overarching aims for sustainability, with input from a range of consultants who have provided the expert guidance to date. Space sustainability is in everyone's minds and Scotland is leading the way to a certain extent with its Space Sustainability Roadmap which was developed by the Environmental Task Force (which the Spaceport are part of). The Contingency Planning Working Group meets later this month and is planning the next desk-based exercise for early March. This will be the third exercise since the Group's inception in April 2021. The Chair of the Group is Matt Mason, Chief Fire Officer, who has been in place since the start. The sub-group Unst First Responders are a key part of the planning process. Debbie Strang and Bryden Priest were invited to the largest education event in the UK, BETTs, held in London and were part of a panel speaking about the spaceport on a stand sponsored by ViewSonic. The partnership with RM Technology which is an education platform servicing all schools in Scotland will provide a means by which the Spaceport can reach all Scottish school children to engage in the development of the spaceport and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics) more generally. Bryden is undertaking a series of visits to several schools in the North Isles to do some face to face sessions. Elizabeth answered the question asked after last meeting, she said that there is no change in the plans for the hotel and accommodation as previously advised.

06/02/24 Unst Partnership (UP) Update.

Gordon gave the following update, he said that the next Skip Day is on Saturday 9th March 2024, 11-1pm, the last one for the present scheme. He said that the UP Shop saw a downturn in trade during December and January, which was not a surprise considering it was the Christmas period and the poor weather. Hopefully trade improves as they move from February into March. Gordon said that 3 members of National Trust for Scotland are visiting Unst on Tuesday 5th March, meeting in the library from 11am - 12.30pm. The Community Council have also been contacted about this visit. Gordon said that there have been very few updates from NTS about the work being done last year and this one. The Housing survey results are now in. UP received 40 replies, half of whom mentioned a need to move or relocate in the next five years. There is a definite need for more local housing, for down- or up- sizing, and for incoming

workers. UP had two enquiries last week from people looking for property on Unst, either long term let or permanent stay. There are two or three council houses available at present. UP have also sent a short survey out to businesses/service providers, such as the school, asking about their requirements but are still waiting for a few to send in their returns. Gordon said that UP are asking owner occupiers whether they are interested in taking part in an Air to Air heating pilot project. John Clarkson from Home Energy Scotland has suggested a project involving about 10 households in Unst and Yell having an ASHP and fan heaters connected up, to gauge whether this could save energy over the course of a year. Funding could come from Community Energy Scotland. Anyone interested should email UP with their contact details. UP have received money from the Sandison Trust to demolish the existing "Welcome to Unst" sign at Belmont and replace it with a smaller version mounted on the wall of the Waiting Room. This version will cost about £1300.

07/02/24 Community Involvement Update

Frances met with Andrew Inkster, SIC Ferries to discuss the Emergency timetable. She has been told there is very little leeway with implementing the changes which were suggested by Fetlar and Unst Community Councils. It was agreed that Fetlar and Unst Community Councils would meet individually with SIC Ferries Department, as they each have different issues they would like to discuss. Frances will organise this. There was a discussion about why all bookings had to be suspended when it went down to a single ferry. Robert explained that the booking system was inflexible. If the bookings are suspended that gives the ferry crews flexibility to put in extra runs if they are needed. If they had to stick to the timetable, they would not be able to do that. Robert was asked if the booking system could be set up so that it would send out emails to people to say that bookings were suspended. If you are not signed up to text/email alerts you do not know until you get to the ferry that it isn't running. Tourists will not be signed up to these alerts. Robert will seek clarification as to what the system can do. He said that the text/email notifications are linked to the voicebank. Frances is organising "Winter Pop-ins" in Baltasound and Uyeasound halls for people to meet and have soup and sandwiches and a social get together.

08/02/24 Shetland Community Benefit Fund (SCBF)

David emailed to say that there was nothing to report. He is hopeful there will be an update before the next Community Council meeting.

09/02/24 Ferries

09/01/24.1 Ferry Questions

Andrew Inkster, SIC Ferries, replied to the list of questions sent after the meeting in December. He was asked what would happen if there was no overnight ferry cover for emergencies. He said that "procedures are established, and emergency services would contact HM Coastguard for assistance. All endeavours would be made to provide a crew, but in the case of adverse weather conditions, the Masters decision to sail or not would be final." Mr Inkster explained that the SIC are investigating upgrades to Scrim Signage and had also employed a car park attendant during busy summers months to ease this situation. The Community Council asked if it was possible to add maps of ferry terminals to email confirmations. He said that the car park attendant has been employed to try and ease the difficulties expressed. If further work is required, SIC would be happy to discuss, but any attachment to e-mail would only reach online bookings and may be difficult to view on hand-held devices. Mr Inkster was asked about Relief Crew Usage & Training. He said that their ability to recruit and retain staff for certain positions on Bluemull Sound remains difficult. The use of Agency staff is now essential to keep services running. Efforts have been made to improve matters with crew and unions, but to date, no obvious opportunities have been identified. Mr Inkster also confirmed that recently they had offered 9 positions throughout the fleet. Subject to acceptance of offers, they hope to have four new deckhands on the Bluemull Service. For long term planning Mr Inkster was asked if there had been any progress on finding fit for purposes vessels. He said that the SIC is currently working on an inter-island connectivity strategy, and this will consider a timeline which includes vessels and fixed links as options. In the meantime, there are no plans for vessel

replacement. Mr Inkster said that they will look at implementing the change from the online booking system, changing the wording from saying Bluemull Sound to Unst and Fetlar. He said that engineers on the Geira can't upgrade their certification so they can work on the Bigga as it is not viable with existing crew, new certification would be required to allow this, which would have an impact on service delivery. He also said that when vessels revert to normal single vessel timetables, booking are re-implemented.

09/01/24.2 Ferry Docking Schedule

Fiona Farquar, Resources Manager, Marine and Air Operations, replied to the request to have extra ferries for the Unst Show. She said that she would discuss this with the wider Management Team at Sella Ness and get back to us. There was a discussion about the dry docking schedule. Robert said that the SIC had to book dry docking spaces 2 years in advance. Members said that the Bigga is off at one of the busiest times of the year for crofters, when they are shipping animals. They wondered if the docking of different vessels could be swapped around. Robert said he would follow this up and get back to us.

10/02/24 Community Council Review Scheme

There has been no further update on this.

11/02/24 Applications for Planning

There were no applications for funding.

12/02/24 Application for Donations

There were no applications for donations.

13/02/24 Correspondence

13/02/24.1 ASCC Meeting – 12th March 2024

Claire and Frances will attend this meeting.

13/02/24.2 Energy Isles – Representation from the Community Council

This will be discussed at the next meeting.

13/02/24.3 D-Day 80 – 6th June 2024

Haroldswick Hall has been booked for Saturday 8th June. There was a discussion about whether to have a bonfire or use the beacon. The last beacon event was held at the Leisure Centre which was accessible to all. Gary will give an update at the next meeting.

14/02/24 Community Council Finances

The budget for 2023-2024 has been spent.

15/02/24 A.O.C.B.

15/02/24.1 Arven Offshore Wind Farm – Early Consultation Event

There is a Public Engagement Event to find out about the floating offshore wind project off the east coast of Shetland. This meeting is on the 21st February, in Lerwick.

15/02/24.2 Bus Contracts

Gary said that Bus Contracts were due to be tendered again in 2025, last tenders were 2020. He asked if it was possible to see the tender documents for 2015/2020. He will word the letter about this, which will be sent to Michael Craigie, ZetTrans.

15/02/24.3 Roads

There has been flooding at the south side of Uyeasound at the bottom of the Gardie toun, where the old road used to be, past Rocklea to Rockfield. There is a worry from residents that it will burst out the beach.

The brig on the South a Voe road has a missing parapet. The brig at Brondhus, Uyeasound, is also broken. The brig at Alma, Baliasta, is really old. The car park at Lund would need to be enclosed to keep out the sheep as it is in a mess. The Clerk will email Neil Hutcheson, Roads, about these issues.

15/02/24.4 Consultation on engagement methods for Shetland's Next Local Development Plan

Claire has completed this online survey.

15/02/24.5 SIC Budgets

Gary asked Robert about the SIC Budgets meeting which will be held this week behind closed doors. He asked if there would be any cuts in the Social Care budget in the North Isles. Robert said that these budgets were protected, they couldn't be cut but could be frozen. Robert said that there is an ongoing piece of work, shifting the balance of care. Brucehall in Uyeasound is looked on as the model for good practice. Isleshaven has lower capacity because of lack of staff. Robert said that there are 90 vacancies for staff across Shetland.

16/01/24 Date of next meeting

The next meeting is set for Monday 13th May 2024.

Chair: _____ Date: _____

Clerk: _____