

Skerries Community Council (SCC)

Minute of meeting held at 2.00 pm on Friday, 8th March 2024

In Skerries Community Hall

Present:

Paul James – Chair
Bertha Anderson
Frances Anderson
Marina Anderson
Jilly Ash
Janice Hughson

In attendance:

Violet McQuade - Clerk (notes)
Robert Thomson – SIC Councillor – joined through Teams link
Lynsey Hall – Community Support Worker for Skerries – joined through Teams link
Dana Jamieson – Police Scotland – joined through Teams link
Louise Robertson

There were problems with the acoustics during this meeting, particularly for those attending remotely.

1) Apologies

Michael Duncan, Kia James and Marina Tait.

Paul welcomed everyone to the meeting.

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 26th January, were approved.
Proposed by Janice Hughson, seconded by Marina Anderson.

4) Matters Arising/Actions from last meeting

4.1 Follow up regarding the ferry berthing problem

The Chair has been in contact with Dunrossness Community Council, who are having similar problems with finding a berth for the Fair Isle Ferry. After discussion it was suggested that the next step would be, along with Dunrossness Community Council, to write to the MSP for Shetland.

Action: PJ – write to MSP

Currently the shops are managing adequately with getting supplies transported, but there is an issue with the restriction of the ferry only being able to take 12 passengers – with the commencement of the summer timetable, this number will increase after the 1st April.

4.2 Follow up with the SIC regarding the empty council houses

Councillor Thomson has been in touch with Housing Services, his request is being processed, but this may take some time. Councillor Thomson will keep the SCC up to date with any information on any developments as they progress, and Housing Services may liaise with the Community Council as well. The Chair asked if he should take over, and contact Councillor Thomson if necessary.

Communication through Teams was poor; it was decided that the Chair and Councillor Thomson would communicate through email about any queries and updates.

4.3 Communicate with the Hall Committee

This is still to be progressed.

4.4 Contact the relevant department about the lights outside public toilet

This was followed up after the last meeting. The broken lights have still not been replaced. Councillor Thomson followed this up after the previous meeting, but as the work has not been carried out, he agreed to follow this up again. Also, the lock on the male toilet door is broken – this was reported on Monday. When the broken lock was reported it was suggested to the council that, if a new lock was sent to Skerries one of the local men would fit the lock. So far a lock has not been sent to Skerries.

Action: RT to follow this up

4.5 Contact Waste Management about more user friendly bins/skips

Councillor Thomson has been in touch with Waste Management, but no consent has been given for changing the type of skips used. Waste Management have not come forward with any solutions. Councillor Thomson agreed to approach Waste Management again.

It was noted that one resident had attempted to put four rubbish bags in a skip, but after holding up the lid only managed to get two in before their hand slipped and they hurt their back. There was a discussion on finding a solution to this safety issue – one suggestion was to cut the lids in half and put a flange in the middle. This would mean people would only have to lift half the weight. This suggestion will be put forward to Waste Management.

Action: RT to follow this up

It was suggested that the next step could be inviting a manager from Waste Management to a meeting of SCC.

4.6 Contact Environmental Health regarding pest control materials

The Clerk contacted Environmental Health to ask if the products to be used would be safe for livestock and pets – the reply was that the product used for this particular pest control is licenced for outdoor use and will be placed in such a way that it will be unable to be accessed by non-target species. This reply was circulated.

4.7 Circulate email to Skerries people asking for replacement IWSP representative

The Clerk asked for a volunteer to attend the IWSP meetings. Only person to come forward to volunteer, so they are now the representative for Skerries. Violet has passed over all the relevant information, and has contacted the relevant people in the IWSP group to inform them of the changes.

4.8 Write to Ferry Services regarding online booking

This was done. There is still the problem with online booking for the longer journeys to Lerwick, which require some personal information that cannot be held due to GDPR legislation. It is not only passengers and cars that need to be booked, it is also scallops, goods, parcels, etc, that have to be booked. It was decided to park this for a couple of years, to wait to see if there are any changes to the system. Bookings can still be made by email.

5) **Funding**

The Clerk gave an update on the current funding of the Community Council.

5.1 Shortage of available funding

Information on an increase in pay for Clerks came through recently, back-dated to the 1st April 2023. The Clerk informed members that, so far, she had not taken a pay rise. Funding for the Community Council is very tight, with an estimated surplus of only £17, and expenditure (including hiring the Hall, paying accountants, membership of VAS and Information Commissioner's Officers, as well as postage, printing, etc) have to be covered. This has been brought to the attention of the Community Council Liaison Officer (CCLO), who is taking this forward, and hopefully will be able to resolve the matter. Members agreed that the Clerk should

be getting the correct rate of pay for Clerks – as circulated by the CCLO. SCC members felt that not receiving enough funding to cover running costs makes budgeting impossible. Other community councils will have the same salary and running costs, but Skerries gets the lowest grant. The Clerk will keep members up-to-date with the situation regarding the funding.

5.2 Request for funding

A letter came through from Shetland Gymnastics requesting funding for their club. The letter was acknowledged, and apologies given that there is no funding available.

5.3 Distribution Fund

As agreed at the meeting that was held on the 26th January, Skerries Community Hall was granted £2,450 from the Distribution Fund, to buy essential equipment. The Clerk has checked that all the paperwork is in place. As everything was in order the money has now been transferred to the Hall bank account. There is now £50 left in the Distribution Fund, this will show up in the year-end accounts and may have to be paid back to Shetland Islands Council.

6) **Correspondence Received**

All correspondence has been circulated electronically.

7) **AOCB**

7.1 Skip

As there is still money in the skip fund, it was agreed to order another skip.

7.2 Ferry breakdown/Ferry capacity

A discussion was held on the situation with the ferry, with the breakdown of the Filla. The current ferry can only carry 12 passengers. There will be a fish supper night on the 30th March – it had been hoped that the ferry capacity would be increased by then. It has been announced that, due to regulations, the passenger capacity will not change until April, when the Hendra will be replaced by the Fivla, and the summer timetable starting, which will be on the 1st April.

The lack of a deep freeze on the replacement ferry was also discussed. There is currently no solution to this problem. It is hoped that the Filla will be back in service at the end of May. Councillor Thomson agreed to discuss the situation with the deep freeze with Ferry Services.

Action: RT to follow this up

7.3 Ferry voicemail service

A discussion was held on the ferry voicemail service. It was suggested that a request could be sent asking for voicemails to include information on which runs are booked/or not booked. That would give potential travellers information on whether the ferry will be running, or not, as the case may be. This information would be extremely useful for last minute, unexpected journeys. The Chair agreed to put this idea forward to booking services.

Action: PJ to contact booking services

7.4 Scottish Islands Passport (SIP)

The Clerk reminded the SCC about the proposal to install Scottish Islands Passport (brass) stamps. There is one for Bruray and one for the West Isle. SIP want to know if places have been identified for both plaques. Violet passed round sheets which showed the designs. After discussion it was agreed that the most appropriate places would be the waiting room in Bruray, and the Hall in the West Isle. Violet agreed to contact the Hall committee for permission to place one of the stamps there.

Action: VM to contact the Hall committee

7.5 Geocache

There was a query about geocaches, and if they were being maintained. It was confirmed that one of the residents checks them regularly.

7.6 Water treatment

The recent problem with the water system was dealt with quickly, and really well. Removing the three remaining pallets of water is being dealt with.

7.7 Resilience

Louise Robertson (SIC Community Safety Officer) passed round a draft Resilience Document, this document is specific for Skerries. It provides a brief summary of where to get help or advice in different situations, ranging from self-care/minor problems to emergency. The document has already been to the Islands With Small Populations (IWSP) Group. The SCC agreed that this would be a very useful document. The document will be circulated once it has been finalised. No decision has yet been made on what will happen once the document is ready for publication, whether the leaflets will be printed for distribution and/or put on a website is still to be decided.

A discussion followed on what would happen if there were an emergency while the Health Care Support Worker is away from Skerries. Currently there is no cover for part of the week. It was agreed that the Chair would email the Chief Nurse for the community, to ask what the procedure is if an emergency were to happen while there is no medical cover on the islands.

Action: PJ to contact the Chief Nurse

7.8 Issues Log

An Issues log was circulated prior to the meeting. As most of the items have been addressed during the meeting it was decided to cover the remaining items at the next meeting.

7.9 Invite to next meeting

The Clerk informed SCC that the Executive Manager of Schools is hoping to attend the next meeting, on the 19th April. This will be to discuss the school premises. This was agreed - the Clerk will send an invite to the next meeting.

8) **Date of the next meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled to be held at 2.00 pm on Friday, 19th April 2024.

The meeting concluded at 3.00 pm

Actions:

Councillor Thomson:

- Follow up on broken toilet lights (4.4)
- Follow up on bins/skips (4.5)
- Follow up with Ferry Services re deep freeze (7.2)

Paul James:

- Write to MSP re ferry berthing problems (4.1)
- Contact booking services regarding voicemail message (7.3)
- Contact Chief Nurse regarding emergency procedures (7.7)

Violet McQuade:

- Contact Hall Committee regarding Scottish Island Passport plaques (7.4)

Chair Signature

Signed.....