

## **Skerries Community Council (SCC)**

### **Minute of meeting held at 2.00 pm on Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024**

### **In Skerries Community Hall**

**Present:**

Paul James – Chair  
Frances Anderson  
Marina Anderson  
Janice Hughson

**In attendance:**

Lynsey Hall – Community Support Worker for Skerries  
Robert Thomson – SIC Councillor – joined through Teams link  
John William Anderson  
Violet McQuade - Clerk (notes)

**1) Apologies**

Bertha Anderson, Jilly Ash, 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 26<sup>th</sup> April, were approved.  
Proposed by Janice Hughson, seconded by Frances Anderson.

**4) Matters Arising/Actions from last meeting**

**4.1 Follow up on broken toilet lights**

Workmen were in Skerries, it was thought they were fixing the lights at the toilet. Violet will find out if the lights are working, and report back.

**4.2 Follow up on bins/skips**

The video is still to be sent; Violet sent photos of the skips to Councillor Thomson. The Chair will send over the video once it has been done. Councillor Thomson has been in touch with the relevant department – they are looking for a solution. Councillor Thomson will keep the SCC updated on any progress.

**4.3 Contact the Booking Office re voicemail message**

The Chair has been in contact with the Booking Office; there is still some confusion as to what the SCC is asking for. The Booking Office will be contacted again to try to get this resolved.

**4.4 Speak to the Hall Committee re the Scottish Islands Passport plaques**

The Hall Committee have agreed to positioning the plaques at the hall. This item is now closed.

**4.5 Organize Tabletop exercise**

The Chair has begun work on a table-top exercise; this will be a long-term piece of work. He has been emailing people from various organisations, including Shetland Islands Council (SIC) and the NHS - awaiting replies/feedback. All the emergency services would need to be involved. This is ongoing.

**4.6 Inform SCBF on Skerries representation**

This has been done. This item is now closed.

4.7 Inform on where Remembering Together plaque to be displayed

This has been done. This item is now closed.

Additional item for discussion – Disposal of oil

JWA, fisherman present at the meeting, asked about the possibility of getting a skip placed in Skerries for the purpose of fishermen putting in drums of used oil that need to be disposed of. These skips are available in other parts of Shetland, and would be a benefit for the safe, disposal and management of marine waste and spent oils. Councillor Thomson agreed to raise the matter with the appropriate department in the council.

**Action: Councillor Thomson, follow up re disposal of oil**

**5) Community Council Scheme Review**

Lynsey provided information on Phase 2 of the Community Council Scheme Review

A survey has just gone live, and the council would like the community council to complete the survey, they are looking for responses from individuals as well as a response from SCC as a group.

Overview of proposals:

- I. Merge core funding and the Community Development Fund into one new grant scheme, combining funding to make one pot of money. The funding would be based on the funding formula of a fixed allocation for admin costs along with funding linked to population levels, cutting down on funding applications. A query was raised, if it is linked to population levels, if this would have an adverse impact on funding for Skerries. Figures have not yet been released. All members present agreed to this proposal; the agreement was made on the condition that this does not mean there would be less funding for Skerries Community Council.
- II. Nonattendance of members at meetings, keeping seats kept for individual members who do not attend meetings. This proposal was for members who do not attend meetings for a period of time, for example, six months, that their membership could be terminated – this would be at the discretion of the community council. All members present agreed to this proposal, particularly as any decisions would be for the SCC to make; any decisions would be based on individual circumstances.
- III. Membership numbers in line with population. Creating a new simplified formula, based on fixed allocation for core costs and the remainder linked to population levels. With new proposals Skerries could be allowed to have six full members. This was agreed to, providing the quorum remains the same.
- IV. Introducing Community Council Standing Orders. This is a set of rules and requirements on conducting meetings, the document would help the Chair to conduct meetings, and ensure that the SCC has access to the rule book. This was agreed to in principle, but members would need to see the Standing Orders in more detail.
- V. Updating the Community Council Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct lacks detail and is in need of updating, a draft for a revised Code of Conduct has been prepared. This was agreed to, but members would need to see the information in detail – and the new updated document.
- VI. Elected Members – conflict of interest. Currently SIC Councillors can be on community councils, which can sometimes lead to a conflict of interest. Under the new proposals a SIC councilor would not be able to be elected to be a voting member of a community council. All members present agreed to this proposal.
- VII. Introducing a new Youth Membership category for 12–16-year-olds. The proposal was that two youth members could be included; they would not have voting rights but could take part in discussions. It was thought that this is a good idea. All members present agreed to this proposal.

Lynsey asked what other things could be done to improve how things are currently done, and what more powers the SCC would like, and if there anything the SIC could do to support community councils better. One item that was brought up was that the Clerk does a lot more hours than she is paid for – members felt that the pay should better reflect the work that is carried out. Also, it was felt that community councils have been underfunded for years. This is an opportunity for members to put their own views forward. Proposals can be included in the survey.

A discussion was held on the role of the community council. Items discussed included:

- Participatory budgeting – this has been done before, and if it were possible to hold another this may help with funding specific projects.
- It was felt that there is more chance of getting something done if a request is submitted by the community council, rather than by individuals.
- Also discussed were opportunities for funding, such as the Coastal Community Fund, and Viking Energy funding – this could be discussed at the IWSP forum.
- If the community council had more money, they could be more involved in getting things done to suit local needs. This could also be discussed at the IWSP forum.

*Any suggestions should be added to the survey, which is currently in circulation.*

## **6) Ferry Re-fit**

The Filla should be back in service in the second week of June.

A discussion was held regarding the time of year that the Filla is booked in for re-fit. The Chair has been informed that re-fit bookings are made years in advance. Members felt that it should not be too difficult to swop the booking for the Filla with the booking for another ferry.

It would be better having the Filla doing the Skerries service in April, instead of getting the re-fit at that time of year. It was pointed out that the replacement ferries (the Fivla and the Hendra) are not suitable for the open sea. It would be more sense to have the Filla getting her re-fit during July or August, instead of April when the weather is more likely to be bad - if the stand-in ferry was more suitable for the conditions, there would not be so many cancellations.

The re-fit schedule has had to be changed this year in any case, due to the breakdown of the Filla. She could not go for her planned re-fit in April, so it had to be done later this year. There was a discussion that there could be a problem with meeting MCA regulations, but it was felt that this could be overcome. From a safety perspective the Filla is built for the open sea; many more trips have had to be cancelled recently because the Fivla cannot make the journey in bad weather.

It was noted that cancelled trips to the lifeline ferry service can have a severe impact on the people of Skerries, including missed medica/dental appointments, shop goods not being received, mail not being delivered. Also, on a number of occasions the cancelled ferry has had an impact on the fishermen, who deliver their catch to the pier, to be picked up by the ferry and taken to Vidlin; on several occasions fishermen have been told that the ferry has been cancelled, the fishing boat then has to come back to Skerries, pick up their catch and take to Lerwick themselves – losing a day's fishing in the process. This has a serious financial impact on their business.

After discussion it was agreed that the Chair would draft a letter to the relevant people in the SIC, and copy in Councillor Thomson and the fishing boat Skipper. This will be kept as a standing item on the agenda for the foreseeable future. It was pointed out that the re-fit for the Filla used to be done in June; this was changed to April at some point.

**Action: Chair to send a letter to the appropriate departments**

*JWA left the meeting*

## 7) Risks

The Chair has produced a Risk Log. The log was passed round and discussed. These are things that can have an adverse effect on the island. Items on the log included:

- 1) Insufficient resources for implementation of one or more work packages.
- 2) Insufficient budget for projects.
- 3) Succession planning for island infrastructure.
- 4) Inadequate emergency services provision.
- 5) Degradation of relationships with external stakeholders.
- 6) Across the board risks to basic infrastructure services linked with Risk 1.
- 7) SCC organizational infrastructure, capability and capacity.

The Chair will circulate the Risk Register again. The log will be kept up to date and circulated as appropriate.

## 8) Issues

The Chair has also produced an Issues Log. The log was passed round and discussed; items included:

- 1) Waiting room in Whalsay for the Skerries community.
- 2) Marine debris.
- 3) Resilience in emergencies, unsure who is responsible, and lines of communication. *This is now on the Risk Register.*
- 4) Improved communication around Health and Care Services, such as vaccinations. *Currently sitting with the Director of Health and Care.*
- 5) Poor internet at the nurse's house.
- 6) No generator back up at nurse's house. The Chair agreed to speak to the Chief Executive of NHS Shetland regarding Items 5 and 6.
- 7) School maintenance. – A member of staff from the Education Department will be attending a SCC meeting later this year. Concerns were raised regarding maintenance and occasions when the alarm goes off. Lynsey agreed to ask about the possibility of getting a key so that someone in Skerries would be able to access the building in an emergency.
- 8) A major issue is the berthing of the ferry when she is in Lerwick – a permanent berth is still to be found. A discussion was held on the drawbacks when businesses and residents don't know where the ferry will be berthed at. Suppliers need to know where to find the ferry when dropping off goods to the shops or items for residents. The MSP has tried to help but has not managed to get the matter resolved. This has not been resolved – still needs to be dealt with. Councillor Thomson agreed to contact Ferry Services.

It is hoped that these logs could eventually be put online, so that everyone will be able to access them.

**Actions: Lynsey to approach the Education Department re school key  
Councillor Thomson to follow up on Filla berthing  
Chair to contact CE of NHS Shetland re nurse's house**

## 9) Financial update

The Clerk gave an update on the funding for SCC. The core funding, to cover the running costs is now in the bank account. The applications for £1,000 skip money, and £3,000 for the Distribution Fund have been approved. The payment slip has come through; the money was not in the SCC bank account on the 30<sup>th</sup> May but should be coming into the account any day.

## 10) Correspondence Received

All correspondence has been circulated electronically.

### 10.1 Scottish Islands Passport

A discussion was held on the information recently circulated about the information that is on/or going on, the Scottish Islands Passport website. The information that was circulated needs to be amended. The Clerk will collate the information that needs to be updated, then send it to Scottish Islands Passport (SIP) administration, so that they can update the information on their website.

**Action: Clerk to send update to Scottish Islands Passport**

**11) AOCB**

**11.1 Presentation at IWSP**

Lynsey will be doing a presentation at the Shetland Partnership/IWSP meeting, which takes place next month. She asked for input from members on what matters most to Skerries, so she can include these in her presentation. The ferry/berthing of the ferry is the main issues at the moment. Another issue is the fire resilience. Also there is an appetite for finding ways to generate electricity, to cut down on the need for reliance on power being fed in from elsewhere.

**11.2 Net Zero**

There was a discussion on the Scottish Government's aims for meeting net zero, and how it could work for Skerries. It was suggested that this could be investigated, with the aim of getting Skerries more sustainable energy source. This could not happen quickly, but worth looking into. The Chair agreed to find out more about this.

**11.3 Charging point for Electric cars**

There was a brief discussion on whether there would be a need for a charging point for electric cars. No decision was made.

**11.4 Beacon in the South Mouth**

The beacon in the South Mouth still needs to be replaced, and another needs painted. Councillor Thomson has been following this up, and will again contact the relevant people with the aim of getting the work done during the summer.

**Action: Councillor Thomson to follow up re beacon**

**12) Date of the next meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled to be held on Friday, 12th July 2024.  
The meeting concluded at 3.20 pm

**Actions:**

Councillor Thomson:

Follow up re disposal of oil  
Follow up re beacons in the South Mouth  
Follow up on Filla berthing problems

Chair:

Contact CE of NHS Shetland re nurse's house  
Send a letter to the appropriate departments, re Filla re-fit timetable

Lynsey:

Approach the Education Department re school key

Clerk:

Send update to Scottish Islands Passports regarding their website

**Chair Signature**

**Signed**.....