

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 12TH August 2024 at 6.30 pm in the Baltasound School Music Huts and by MsTeams

Present:

Caroline Hunter, Vice Chair, chaired meeting
Gary Betney
David Cooper
John Peterson
Janice Priest
Robert Thomson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio) (MsTeams)

Attending:

Elaine Park, SIC Transport Contracts and Operations Officer (MsTeams)
Sergeant Alexander Barry, Police Scotland (MsTeams)
Frances Browne, Community Involvement and Development Officer
Gordon Thomson, Unst Partnership Ltd
Josie McMillan, Clerk

01/08/24 Apologies

Claire Priest, Chair
Hazel Spence
Julie Thomson
Duncan Anderson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio)
Ryan Thomson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio)
Michael Duncan, Community Council Liaison Officer
PC Dana Jamieson

02/08/24 Declaration of Interest

Janice declared an interest in 15/08/24.4 Energy Isles and 15/08/24.5 Saxavord Space Port Notifications.

Caroline invited Elaine Park to go first on the agenda so that she didn't have to attend the full meeting.

05/08/24 Elaine Park, SIC, Transport Contracts and Operations Officer - Stakeholder and community engagement exercise to inform the business case being developed for the next generation of public bus contracts

Ms Park introduced herself and explained her role as Transport Contracts and Operations Officer. She had prepared a presentation explaining the Project Details; Purpose of the Consultation; Overview of the existing bus operations; North Isles and Unst. Ms Park explained that "ZetTrans had commissioned Stantec to support them in the development of a Business Case for the future delivery of passenger transport services in the Shetland Islands. This will determine, and set out how to deliver, the next phase of contracts for the bus network starting in August 2025, ensuring the network best meets the needs of the island communities, taking account of feasibility and deliverability constraints." Feedback received during this consultation will help determine the needs for, and expectations of the public bus network in a post-COVID Shetland. ZetTrans are looking to identify the current problems with bus services in Shetland and highlight opportunities to improve the network. Ms Park explained that Public Engagement plays an important role in improving the public bus

service. ZetTrans can tailor services to better meet specific needs and identify why people use or do not use buses. Ms Park outlined the existing bus services = 28 timetabled bus services; 30 Dial-a-Ride services; 15 different operators across Shetland. Fetlar and Bressay have a dial-a-ride service, but Foula, Fair Isles, Whalsay and Skerries have none. Ms Park gave some statistics about the existing bus services. There were 399,119 passengers in 2023/24, a 12.5% increase since 2019/20. The biggest users are young people and adults. The busiest route is Sumburgh to Lerwick. 61% of journeys in 2023/24 were made using concessionary bus passes. Ms Park said that in the North Isles, 7 of the 8 bus routes offer Dial-a-Ride services. There are currently no Sunday services in the North Isles. The 24Y and 30 serves Mid Yell Junior High School, 28 serves Baltasound Junior High School. Unst is covered by three bus services, two of these are dial-a-ride shopper services. Ms Park said that there are Drop in sessions where the public can come along and have their say. The session in Unst is on Thursday 12th September 2024 in the Leisure Centre from 6.00 to 8.30pm. There will be an advertising campaign to reach as many people as possible. The survey will be available online, also in paper copy and can be completed by phone. Caroline asked for details of links to the survey so that it can be shared on the Community Council Facebook page. Ms Park asked if there were any questions. She was asked for copies of the policies which should have been updated since 2007. Ms Park said that these had been overlooked and not updated at the point of review. The 2019 review had looked at protecting the service, reducing costs, to run as economically as possible. There were additional services introduced by making use of an existing vehicle at no extra cost. Ms Park was asked about equality of service, if there was a 7 day a week service on the mainland but not on Unst. She said that the vast majority of Shetland had no Sunday service. She was asked whether an Island Community Impact Assessment had been carried out. She said that this would be done further through the process. Ms Parks was asked if the Community Council would have any further input into the options after the initial survey and who decides which option will be taken up. She said that ZetTrans must follow the Business Case Model as laid out by the UK Treasury Green Book. She said that the options will be made public. Ms Parks was told that having no buses on a Sunday was impacting on tourists as well as the local community. She said Visit Scotland and the Shetland Tourism Association are stakeholders and are consulted about these contracts and they put in their feedback. Tourists can put in their views as well. The Community Council is keen to encourage people to complete the survey: it is important to get as much feedback as possible. Ms Park was asked what percentage of demand was needed before there could be a Sunday bus, she said there wasn't a magic number that had to be reached, a lot of factors had to be taken into consideration. In previous surveys 40% of people, North of Lerwick, who completed the survey wanted bus services on a Sunday. She was asked how many people had asked for a Sunday bus service during the last two engagement exercises, she said she will find this out and get back to the Community Council. Ms Park emphasised how important it is to hear from as many people as possible. She said that if there were any further questions to let her know.

Caroline thanked Ms Park for attending the meeting. She left the meeting.

Caroline invited Sergeant Barry to speak next.

15/08/24 Correspondence

15/08/24.8 Police Report – Sergeant Alexander Barry

Sergeant Alexander Barry said that there were only two incidents to report for Ust, one in June and one in July. He was asked if Police Scotland had heard any further updates from SaxaVord Spaceport about traffic management during the first launch. He said that they hadn't heard but it will be difficult to predict as the vertical launch is the first of its kind in Europe so really an unprecedented event. There are so many unknowns. Sergeant Barry was asked who pays the policing costs for big events like these. He said that he wasn't sure who would pay these costs. Sergeant Barry said that he would update the Community Council about traffic management as and when the information became available.

Caroline thanked Sergeant Barry for attending the meeting. He left the meeting.

Tribute to Patrick Fordyce

Caroline said that it had been sad news to hear that Patrick Fordyce had passed away last month. He had served on the Community Council since 2018, being elected as Chair in early 2019. Patrick was Chair for four years. He chaired the meetings during the challenging Lockdown restrictions, uncharted territory for

everyone, when all meetings had to be held online. Patrick will be a big miss to the Community Council. Condolences were sent to his wife, Barbara.

03/08/24 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes from the meeting held on Monday 24th June were proposed by David and seconded by Janice. The minutes from the meeting held on Monday 1st July were proposed by David and seconded by Gary.

04/08/24 Matters Arising from last minutes

01/07/24.1 Housing Meeting

There were several questions which could not be answered by Anita Jamieson, SIC Housing, at the meeting held on Monday 1st July 2024. David and Gary will compose a further letter, which the clerk will send to senior SIC management, along with the written report of the survey of housing needs, and the minutes of the Housing Meeting. Frances said it was good to get an initial understanding about how to go about getting Community led funding to build houses. This is the route that North Yell Development Group are exploring. Frances said that Robert had expertise in housing matters as he had done a lot of work on this when he was employed by the Fetlar Development Group. Robert said that Housing Revenue is ring-fenced, it can't be used for anything else. Funding for the Knab Development in Lerwick was received from the Islands Deal fund. Frances said that there needs to be a comprehensive survey done of housing. Funding to pay for this needs to be sourced. David said that SCBF funding could be used to pay for this type of work. There was a feasibility study done in the Gulberwick area, and as a result of this a building contractor built four houses which were then sold privately. A building contractor has expressed an interest in doing this on Unst. Community Led funding has been applied for and used successfully in Orkney. Robert said that both SIC Housing and Hjaltland Housing have to fund refurbishment of existing stock. He said that this has to come from ring fenced funding. He said that the Scottish Government had cut funding this year. Robert went on to explain that his responsibilities as an SIC Councillors is to all the people of Shetland, he has to maintain a Shetland wide prospective.

15/01/24.3 Roads and Baltasound School Sign

It was agreed to email Neil Hutcheson, SIC Roads again to ask when the white line painting will be done. And also, ask if it is possible to get a copy of the surveys that are conducted by the Road Engineer which identifies problems.

15/06/24.1 Unst R100 Deployment

The Clerk has emailed Mike Curran, Senior Contract Manager from Circet UK (Scotland) several times and has also tried phoning without any success. Mr Curran said he would email the rest of the maps, but as yet he hasn't. There have been complaints from the Community in some areas where they have dug up the roads but haven't patched them very well. Robert said that their tarring plant has broken down, this has been causing these problems.

06/08/24 Ferries/Fixed Links

06/08/24.1 SIC Ferries – Ferries Resilience Review

A leaflet about Ferry Resilience was circulated to Community Councillors before the meeting. It was also put on the Community Council Facebook page. The Resilience Review report "will provide information on the current ferry situation, what has and is being done and also intends to recommend further early actions. Further updates and reports will be provided as part of Quarterly Departmental and Service Performance Reporting or through other arrangements if required. The Resilience Review process will include considerable input from Ferry Operations management, engineering and sea staff, and support from colleagues in a number of other Council services. It will also include engagement with staff representatives, direct communication with all Ferry staff, cross service meetings and member seminars to help ensure all parties are as fully informed as possible. SIC Ferries Department want to make sure that the review describes where they are at, and what they are doing thoroughly, and that it gathers views around what could and should be done and allows them to be discussed. In any difficult situation, it is important and useful that a wide range of views and options are taken into account to help in framing further recommendations, actions and any decisions which may be required." Robert said that it is sounding a bit more positive on the ferries with the crews and he believed

that the crewing plan is coming together. He said the level of complaints had helped the Ferries Department focus on what was happening with the service. The report will go to the Environment and Transport Committee meeting on the 9th September 2024. The Clerk is to email Andrew Inkster, Ferries, to ask again for a breakdown of who all works in the Ferries Department at Sellaness. It was noted that the Community Council is grateful for the crew who are working extra to keep the service operating.

06/08/24.2 Proposed Winter and Festive Timetable 2024/2025

The versions of these timetables weren't significantly different to the last Winter and Festive Timetable. They had consulted with the Care Services. There had been a suggestion that the ferry run taking the School bairns from Fetlar for the Anderson High School on a Sunday be altered. This hasn't been changed. The Clerk will email and ask about this.

06/08/24.3 Tunnel Vision Meeting – Baltasound Hall, Monday 19th August 2024 at 6pm

Alistair Carmichael, MP, and Beatrice Wishart, MSP, will be attending this meeting.

06/08/24 Emergency Timetable

Frances said that is important to carry on working on this timetable as well.

07/08/24 SIC North Isles Councillor's Update

Robert said that there have been very few SIC meetings, with the Council having been off for the summer. He said that there is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes. He feels that the summer break is too long. Robert said that there is a Government review ongoing. They have governance over what they do. It was brought up that it had been months since Ryan or Duncan attended a Community Council meeting last. Robert said he would follow this up with them. He said that Councillors work is part time.

08/08/24 Unst Partnership (UP) Update.

Gordon said that the next Skip Day is Saturday 24th August. UP will still be taking white goods but these will not be removed until the following Thursday via the SIC Bulky Uplift scheme. R. S. Henderson is now the agent for removing "CarTakeBack" makes, about one third of the total, which used to be taken by Shetland Amenity Trust. The other two thirds of makes are part of the "Autogreen" scheme, taken by Jim's Garage. The ongoing issue is that sometimes these companies turn down cars if they are in very poor condition or have a lot of rubbish dumped inside them. The owners have usually left the island and can't be traced to pay for removal, so fines and threats of imprisonment don't work. Occasionally the SIC will pay for bulk removal if the problem persists and there are a few cars to go. Other companies are now advertising to take scrap cars - but are reluctant to come to Unst due to fuel and ferry costs. John Clarkson, Home Energy Scotland has now begun visiting households in Unst interested in an Air to Air heat pump project. Once completed UP will then see if there are enough properties to justify applying for an Air to Air project. UP is applying to the Coastal Communities Fund to cover the costs of preparing a Community Development Plan (CDP) for Unst 2025-28. Due to time constraints, this will probably be done via outside consultants as the work needs to be completed by March 2025. Residents, community groups and businesses will be invited to contribute to this. Shetland Amenity Trust have now agreed a grass-cutting contract with a local firm to keep the Skidbladner site tidy but there is no word on who will look after the longship itself. The Hagdale Horse Mill has now been cleaned by a local volunteer and a bill has gone to SAT. The Swedish Stone site has also been cleared and a bill will go to SAT for this too. Gordon said that the National Trust for Scotland have now put the properties of Houlland and Da Laggans on the market. The properties were listed on the internet as being in Haroldswick instead of Baliasta. There was a discussion about the prices being asked for the properties, the consensus of opinion was that the prices would put people off buying the houses, which have been empty for many years.

09/08/24 Community Involvement Update

Frances said that there had been a Pop in session last week at Nordalea Care Centre, it had gone well. She will be organising further Pop in sessions over the winter. Frances has organised a meeting between David, Gary and Emma Perring, SIC, to discuss Island Impact Assessments.

10/08/24 Shetland Community Benefit Fund (SCBF)

David said that there were two things to report from SCBF. First thing is that there a leaflet has been delivered to every household in Shetland explaining about SCBF priorities. The second thing is that there will be further information at agricultural shows including Unst and Yell. Robert asked about the list of priorities which SCBF have adopted. He thought the priorities listed came under statutory provision which Charities are not allowed to get involved in. David explained that SCBF will not be paying for anything that is classed as statutory and has to be funded by the SIC but could fund projects to determine demand.

11/08/24 Community Council Scheme Review

11/06/24.1 UCC – Terms of Office

There was a discussion about attracting new people to be on the Community Council. Anyone standing down will finish at the end of November. The Clerk will check with Michael Duncan, SIC, about advertising vacancies.

12/08/24 Applications for Planning

There were no applications for planning.

13/08/24 Application for Donations

There were no applications for donations.

14/08/24 Application for Unadopted Road

There were no applications for unadopted roads.

15/08/24 Correspondence

15/08/24.1 SIC – Local Place Plans

Peter Mogridge, SIC Planning Officer, emailed to say that the 3 inaugural meetings with the Planning Aid Scotland team, who will be running training and support sessions over the coming months, have been set for:-
Tuesday 3rd September 2024 – Scalloway Youth Club – 7:00pm-9:00pm
Wednesday 4th September 2024 – Sellafirth Public Hall, Yell – 4:30pm-6:30pm
Thursday 5th September 2024 – Carnegie Hall, Sandwick – 2:30pm-4:30pm

15/08/24.2 Shetland Amenity Trust – Redundant Vehicles in Shetland

See agenda item 08/08/24.

15/08/24.3 National Trust for Scotland – Houlland and Da Laggans sale

See agenda item 08/08/24.

15/08/24.4 Energy Isles

The last meeting of Energy Isles was in the middle of the UnstFest week of activities so Gary was unable to attend on behalf of the Community Council. Gordon said that their Community Benefit Fund might be in the region of £800,000 a year. It was decided to put this on the agenda for the next meeting to discuss this in more detail.

15/08/24.7 Energy Isles - Yell Community Council statement on Community Benefit Fund

Yell Community Council (YCC) emailed the following statement about the Statkraft Community Benefit Fund. They said that “YCC will be most directly impacted by the Statkraft developments so has requested time for Yell wide consultation and discussion about the setting up of a community benefit fund, the priorities for such a fund and the practicalities of delivery. YCC’s role is to represent Yell’s best interests and YCC believe this approach will enable that. Consideration of the involvement of other affected areas such as Unst and Fetlar will be part of this consultation process. YCC has requested a return to consideration of the shared ownership option and that the group originally involved in these discussions (which included Unst and Fetlar reps) is resurrected. YCC have discussed support from Local Energy Scotland to assist with this. YCC values the role of the liaison group to receive updates on the Statkraft projects and this group will become increasingly important as developer activity ramps up.” Gordon explained that the group which was originally set up

included two Unst Community Councillors representatives. Members thought that if a survey needs to be done for Unst, they could follow a similar model to the one being used by YCC. This Community Benefit Fund could provide funding for Community projects when it becomes available, in 2030.

15/08/24.5 Saxavord Spaceport Notifications

There have been notifications of exclusion zones while testing is going on at Lambaness. These notifications are sent to all stakeholders.

15/08/24.6 Draft Winter Maintenance Review 2024

This was discussed. There is no gritting/snow clearing on Christmas Day or Boxing Day. Care workers and other workers still need to go to work on these days. It was agreed to write about this.

16/08/24 Community Council Finances

The 2023/2024 Accounts are being audited by Voluntary Action Shetland. Core funding and Community Development Funding have both been received.

17/08/24 A.O.C.B.

17/08/24.1 Tree of Life

A plaque was received for display in the local community. It is call "Tree of Life, Interrupted." It commemorates the anniversary of the partial lifting of the 1st Lockdown in 2020. The plaque is made up of the design and knitting by Helen Robertson of Helen Robertson Design, Glass by Cheryl Jamieson of Glansin Glass and the plinth is by Cecil Tait of Paperwark Furniture. After a discussion it was agreed to ask Unst Heritage Centre if the plaque could be displayed there, alongside their Lace Knitting display.

17/08/24.2 Freedom of Information enquiry - Ferries

The following ferry information was received from a member of the community. They had sent in a Freedom of Information request to SIC Ferries. Their questions are in italics.

In 2024, when there has been a "no bookings" arrangement on Bluemull Sound, how many "extra (unscheduled) runs" have been provided, and when?

Friday 24th May – Friday 31st May – no extra runs

Monday 3rd June 0610-0850 – no extra runs

In 2024, when there has been a "no bookings" arrangement on Yell Sound, how many "extra (unscheduled) runs" have been provided, and when?

Monday 3rd June 0615-0945 – no extra runs – but there were extra runs afterwards 0948 Toft to Ulsta;
1010 Ulsta to Toft; 1300 Toft to Ulsta; 1330 Ulsta to Toft; 1440 Toft to Ulsta; 1510 Ulsta to Toft

Friday 14th June – 1005 Ulsta to Toft; 1032 Toft to Ulsta; 1312 Toft to Ulsta; 1337 Ulsta to Toft

Caroline will compile a list of dates from the information she has gathered about ferry disruptions and get back to the person who submitted the Freedom of Information request.

18/08/24 Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is Monday 30th September 2024

Chair: _____ Date: _____

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Clerk: _____