

# **Fetlar Community Council**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD AT FETLAR HALL**  
(subject to the approval of the next Fetlar Community Council Meeting)  
**ON TUESDAY, 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025 AT 6.15 pm**  
**(WITH A TEAM'S OPTION TO JOIN REMOTELY)**

## **PRESENT**

James Rendall, Chair  
Lucy Cummings  
Mike Fogarty  
Peter Braithwaite

## **IN ATTENDANCE**

Frances Browne SIC  
Robert Thompson  
Andrew Inskster SIC  
Moraig Lyall SIC  
Michael Craigie SIC  
Alexander Barry Shetland Police

Chris Bolton Clerk Fetlar Community Council

## **1. Apologies**

Juliet Bellis  
Michael Duncan SIC  
James Smyth

## **2. Minutes of the previous meetings**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2024 were circulated.  
Lucy proposed James R seconded, the minutes were approved.

## **3. Declarations of interest**

None

## **4. Police Update**

A Police officer briefly joined the meeting online and provided an update.

- There was one item in the last report related to Fetlar and that was the removal of a firearm.
- And the Council was informed that the North Isles Police Office Dana Jamieson had left and that the post had been advertised.

## **5. Meeting with SIC Ferries Management**

James R welcomed the visitors to the meeting. He explained that one of the original reasons for holding the meeting (to discuss the single vessel timetable in January) had passed.

Lucy outlined that there is a major issue that the Saturday timetable is always used as an emergency timetable whenever there is a problem with the ferries on the Bluemull Sound and it is reduced to a single vessel.

This creates a problem with visitors and contractors coming to the island as in effect they must spend nearly all day because of the absence of a mid-day crossing.

The situation in the summer of 2024 resulted in a 20% drop in visitors' numbers to Fetlar.

Lucy also described a situation where there was a problem with providing home based palliative care in Fetlar because of the ferry booking system.

The situation was made worse in January as people were block booking consecutive journeys in advance and then the actual ferries have been virtually empty.

Mike F expressed concern for people who work with the Saturday timetable can't leave as normal at 6.55 and then can't return until 18.55.

James R noted that in the past if there was a lot of traffic the ferry would go to Unst and then return for the Fetlar journey.

Andrew outlined that there is an ageing fleet with no real spare vessel. The option of a mid-day crossing was not viable.

Lucy interjected that an option for a revised timetable was prepared by Fetlar and Unst Community Councils

James R reiterated that the only thing that Fetlar wanted was a mid-day journey. The Fetlar crew could have provided this during the timetabled lunch break.

Michael C responded that the timetable would now be affected by the lashing requirement for the Bigga.

Andrew stated that the Bigga crew believes that it will add ten minutes to each run.

James R commented that if we think it is bad now wait until summer.

Moraig asked about the possibility of having a variable timetable for different days.

Michael C felt that wasn't helpful what was needed was a consistent achievable timetable.

Moraig asked could there be a timetable where some sailings exclude commercial vehicles.

Michael C said no it would make things too complicated.

After much discussion it was agreed that SIC will have to prepare a new summer timetable as soon as possible. This would include a revised Saturday timetable which could become the emergency timetable. It was noted that this would need to blend as seamlessly as possible with the: Yell Crossing, bus timetables and other issues.

A draft would be presented to the Northern Isles for comment.

Andrew commented that SIC was exploring options for using the Geira more with an additional crew.

Andrew also informed that SIC was exploring a new booking system that would include payment and reduce consecutive block bookings.

Andrew commented that the palliative care situation was resolved.

James asked when the Fetlar linkspan was going to be replaced.

Andrew informed that SIC is aiming for March/April and is negotiating with contractors. The intention is to undertake the work at night, but it may be necessary to provide a foot passenger service only if there are problems.

## **6. Ongoing Business**

### **6.3 Local Development Plan**

Lucy is still waiting for a template to work from.

### **6.4 Healthcare Support Worker**

There has been no progress with requested changes.

Lucy described two unfortunate situations when the helicopter was called out and qualified staff were not available to provide a service in Fetlar.

Frances will add this to the Islands with Small Populations log.

Linked to this it was noted that the Fetlar Hospital Bed needed to be serviced.

### **6.5 Maintenance Post**

There has been no progress.

### **6.6 Roads Speeds**

There has been no news.

Chris was advised to contact Neil Hutchinson directly and copy in Robert Thompson,

### **6.7 Inter islands Connectivity**

SIC have booked the Community Hall for a consultation event on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March between 15.00 and 17.30.

## **7. Finance and Administration**

### **7.1 Finance Report**

Chris provided a finance statement, and projections for the rest of the financial year. It was noted that the Community Council will spend more than its income. It was agreed that this should be shared with Michael Duncan

### **7.2 Invoice**

The Clerks Salary of £313.40 was approved.

## **8. AOCB**

### **8.1 Oyster Plant**

The Community Council has received a request to provide permission to collect Oyster Plant Seeds from Aith beach. It was agreed to support this Species on the Edge Project.

### **8.2 Clerk Resignation**

Chris has notified the Council of his intention to retire from the role in June 2025.

## **8. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on Tuesday the 18<sup>th</sup> of February time to be agreed.