

Skerries Community Council (SCC)

Minute of meeting held at 2.00 pm on Friday, 17th January 2025

In Skerries Community Hall

Present:

Paul James (Chair)
Bertha Anderson
Frances Anderson
Marina Anderson
Janice Hughson
Jilly Ash
Marina Tait– joined through Teams link

In attendance:

Robert Thomson – SIC Councillor – joined through Teams link
Lynsey Hall – Community Support Worker for Skerries – joined through Teams link
Madison Walsh
Mellany Arthur
Violet McQuade - Clerk (notes)

1) Apologies

Michael Duncan and Kia James.

Paul welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2) Declaration of Interest to any agenda Item

Chairperson asked for declaration of interests.

As a Director of Shetland Community Benefit Fund Paul declared an interest for any discussions that are held under Item 5.

3) Minutes of last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 22nd November 2024, were approved.
Proposed by Bertha Anderson, seconded by Janice Hughson.

4) Matters Arising/Actions from last meeting

4.1 Get in touch with Housing Services, re work needed on council houses.

Councillor Thomson has been informed that work was done on the roofs – he will get in touch with Housing Services again to find out if any more progress has been made on getting more of the work done.

Action: Councillor Thomson - Get in touch with Housing Services

4.2 Liaise with parents and arrange a letter to be sent to Education Services.

Currently in progress.

4.3 Write to Scottish Water, regarding possible ladder for inside the dam.

A letter has been sent to Scottish Water – currently waiting for a reply.

5) Viking Community Fund (SCBF)

SCBF are asking why Skerries has not applied for any more funding.

Currently there are two applications in progress, it is hoped that these will be completed soon.

A discussion was held on the possibility of purchasing equipment that could be used in the case of fire, such as a power-washer/bowser – something on wheels that could be dragged anywhere, in case of fire - not everyone has a hosepipe installed at their house.

Skerries is in an extremely vulnerable situation if a fire were to break out – it will take at

least 3.5 hours before any help can arrive. Also discussed was whether it would be worth contacting Shetland Islands Council and/or Scottish Fire and Rescue Services to seek advice/help with getting something that could be used in the case of a fire breaking out – ask them to discharge what is probably their statutory responsibility.

6) SalMarAkerOcean - Meeting | Potential exposed aquaculture east of Shetland

Representatives from SalMarAkerOcean will be visiting Shetland between the 20th and 23rd January. Currently the only meeting that members are aware of is one that will be held in Yell, the evening of the 20th January. A discussion was held on whether to request a meeting with representatives from SalMarAkerOcean, that Skerries residents could join remotely. Paul is hoping to be able to attend the meeting in Yell in person. In the meantime members will find out if anyone else would like to join a meeting (remotely).

7) Oyster Plant

A discussion was held regarding a request that has come through to move some of the oyster plant that is situated in the West Isle. The plant is near the sea, and on common grazing land. None of the crofters have any objections to the plant being moved. The people asking if they can carry out the work could also contact the landowner, if they wish.

8) Risks

8.1 Petrol Pumps

A discussion was held about the situation with the petrol pumps. It was agreed that the possibility of losing the use of the petrol pumps should be added to the Risks Log – as a **High Impact Risk**. Now that there are so few people in Skerries there is a serious risk of losing the pumps, it is felt that Skerries cannot lose the pumps, but funding is needed to keep the pumps going. If the islands lose the pumps, then people will have to take fuel into Skerries in their cars. It was also pointed out that the fuel is not only needed for cars, fuel is needed for the generators. Generators are essential whenever there is a power cut. This needs to be treated as a priority.

9) Issues

The Issues Log, as well as the Risks Log, were checked in detail during the SCC meeting that was held on 22nd November 2024.

10) Chairman's Report

In progress. To be carried forward to the next meeting.

11) Correspondence Received

All correspondence has been circulated.

12) AOCB

12.1 Members/New members

Mellany Arthur and Madison Walsh requested to join as Associate Members, this was agreed. An Associate Member form has to be completed, the Clerk will send out a blank form - for completion.

Paul requested that succession planning be set in place. The next Community Council elections are due to take place in November. Paul will check out the rules regarding membership and Chair position with the Head of Committee Services.

12.2 Emergency Medication

It was highlighted that Skerries is vulnerable if someone turns seriously ill while the Health Care Support Worker is away from the islands, This happens on a weekly basis, during which time there is no access to emergency medication. There has been a trial system in place in other small islands, but nothing has been done for Skerries. It was suggested that even something like a locked box with a code could be useful in an emergency. Paul will speak to a representative from the NHS, to discuss the implications, and possible solutions. Paul asked if anyone has any additional information to let him know.

Action: Paul - speak to a representative from NHS

12.3 Skip

It was agreed to order a skip. To be booked for a month, starting from the first Tuesday, if possible.

12.4 Equipment in school

There was a query, asking if any useful equipment was left in the school when it was mothballed, and if there is anything useful, could a request be submitted to retain the equipment in Skerries for educational purposes. Paul will be shortly be organising a meeting with a representative from Education Services, and will bring this up at the meeting.

Action: Paul to ask about retaining useful equipment

12.5 Generator for Nurses House

After discussion it was agreed to carry this forward to be discussed with the Chief Nurse, the next time she visits the islands for a meeting.

12.6 Electric Car Chargers

After discussion it was agreed to park this for the meantime.

12.7 Kirkyard gates

The Clerk received an email about the hinges on the old kirkyard gate, the hinges have come adrift again, the gate can't close and there's nothing to stop the rabbits getting in (and they are). The old wooden gate is too heavy for the hinges. It was suggested that it could be replaced with one similar to the galvanised gate on the kirkyard extension. Also suggested was if the east dyke on the extension could be increased in height to stop rabbits getting in there as well. After discussion it was agreed for the Clerk to write to Burial Services with these requests.

Action: Clerk – Contact Burial Services

12.8 Clerk Pay

An email that was received in December 2024, that came from the SIC Community Council Liaison Officer was recently circulated regarding an increase in the Clerk's pay, which was backdated to 1st April 2024. This needs to be agreed by members of the Community Council before the increase can be implemented. The increase in Clerk pay, as discussed, was agreed by members of the Community Council.

12.9 Dog mess

The Clerk has received a complaint about dog mess, particularly around Bruray. The dog owners will be dealing with the problem.

12.10 Meeting with the Chief Nurse

A discussion was held regarding the number of days that there is no medical support in Skerries. The Health Care Support Worker is currently only working three days per week in Skerries - it was noted that recently there had been requests for the HCSW to stay in the islands when a member of the community was poorly, so far these requests have always been granted.

It was noted that a recent request for a visit from an ANP had been declined.

The Chief Nurse is due to come for a meeting in the near future. As requested, the Clerk will send an email to find out when a meeting can be held.

Action: Clerk to contact the Chief Nurse

12.11 Temporary changes to ferry timetable

A recent request from Marine Operations to change the ferry timetable – temporarily for three weeks, while one of the other ferries undergoes essential maintenance, was discussed. It has been provisionally agreed, provided that the times are suitable for the islanders. If this goes ahead, for the three weeks, the Filla will be running to Laxo on

Thursdays instead of Lerwick. After discussion with the community, Paul has sent a reply to Marine Operations.

12.13 Pest control

Recently a letter went out to all islanders stating that if householders requested Environmental Health to deal with the rats, they would have to each pay £150 towards it, unless they were included in the list of exemptions. It was pointed out that the current problem with the rats should be treated as an infestation. The rats are everywhere, and is outwith the property owners/householders control. It was also pointed out that if one householder go their property cleared of pest, the rats would still be in the vicinity – all the main islands need to be dealt with.

This problem needs to be dealt with on at least an annual basis. It was agreed for Paul to contact Environmental Health.

Paul – Contact Environmental Health

12.14 Shops

Before Christmas a meeting was held to discuss the situation with the shop/s. As a result, a survey has been drafted up to find out what people would like to be done. Things can't move forward until it is agreed what direction the islanders would like to go in – in the event of one, or both, of the shops closing. There needs to be somewhere for residents to be able to get supplies.

A sample of the draft survey was passed round – it was agreed that the content was appropriate. It was agreed to provide the surveys on paper to be handed out, or distributed door to door. The data would be handled anonymously, but the survey would not be anonymous, to be able to find out what people expect/want, and to make sure that everyone has had the chance to voice their opinion. Surveys can also be placed on the ferry, to give visitors a chance to voice their opinion.

Paul thanked Madison, Mellany and Kia for drawing up the survey.

Councillor Thomson reminded those present that there could be funding available through the Rural Shops Scheme. It was noted that the Rural Grants Scheme cannot be used for running costs, but is available for purchasing equipment.

Also, Business Gateway could help with advice, etc, and SIC Development Services are there to help with advice.

13) Date of the next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled to be held at 2.00 pm on Friday, 28th February 2025.

The meeting concluded at 3.20 pm

Actions:

- Councillor Thomson to get in touch with Housing Services again
- Paul - speak to a representative from NHS, regarding emergency medication
- Paul to write to Environmental Health, re pest infestation
- Paul to ask Education Services about retaining any useful equipment
- Clerk – send a request to Burial Services re gates, hinges, wall.
- Clerk – order a skip

Chair Signature

Signed.....