

Unst Community Council

Vice Chair

Caroline Hunter
Shirva
Uyeasound
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 27th January 2025 at 6.30 pm in the Baltasound School Music Huts and by MsTeams

Present

Caroline Hunter, Vice Chair
David Cooper
John Peterson
Janice Priest
Ingram Thomson
Robert Thomson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio)(MsTeams)
Ryan Thomson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio)(MsTeams)

Attending

Kirsty Brightwell, NHS Shetland Medical Director
Donald Macaulay, Head of Ambulance Service for the Islands
Antony McDavitt, Director of Pharmacy
Jo Robinson, Director of Health and Social Care
Frances Browne, Community Involvement and Development Officer
Gordon Thomson, Unst Partnership Ltd
Josie McMillan, Clerk

01/01/25 Apologies

Gary Betney
Adam Doull
Duncan Anderson, SIC Councillor (ex-officio)
Michael Duncan, Community Council Liaison Officer

Caroline welcomed the NHS representatives to the meeting. She thanked them for attending the meeting.

04/01/25 NHS Shetland - Thrombolytic Drug Request - Kirsty Brightwell, NHS Shetland Medical Director, Jo Robinson, Director of Health and Social Care, Donald Macaulay, Head of Ambulance Service for the Islands and Antony McDavitt, Director of Pharmacy.

Caroline explained that there were a lot of questions from the community about thrombolysis and whether the drug could be available in Unst. She asked them first what was the procedure if someone from Unst is having symptoms of a heart attack and calls 999. Mr Macaulay said that you are put through to a clinical advisor at the Scottish Ambulance Service, who will assess the information and decide whether the patient needs to be transported to the Gilbert Bain Hospital or further on, by ferries or helicopter. The clinical advisor will make the decision whether a paramedic with medication will join the helicopter or whether the patient gets the medication at the hospital. They stay on the phone to the patient until the medical team arrives. The local health care professionals will be notified to attend to give additional support. They are always kept in the loop, except in cases where they aren't needed, i.e. accidents on the coast/sea. It is the 999 special services staff that mobilise the helicopter.

The NHS representatives were asked if the SAS staff understood the challenges of getting patients from Unst. Mr Macaulay said that once Unst or the postcode is mentioned, staff will have all the information about the location that they need. SAS know where all the resources are at the time of the call, and which ones are available. They provide ongoing clinical advice. Their decisions takes into account staff and patient safety. And works towards getting the patient into definitive care.

The NHS representatives were asked what happens if the helicopter is already on another job or unable to fly because of weather conditions. Mr Macaulay said that there are three helicopters that can be used. One based at Sumburgh, the others at Aberdeen and Inverness. There was a discussion about response times. In a medical emergency last year there were no helicopters available, the patient had to be transferred by ambulance, they were met in Yell by the mainland ambulance team. This led to a delay in administering the thrombolysis drug. There was a lot of concern expressed by Community Councillors about the length of time it can take to get a patient to the hospital to receive this treatment, especially if the helicopters are not available.

The NHS representatives were asked if the thrombolysis drug is available in Shetland and could doctors in rural practices be trained to administer the drug locally. The medical team in Unst are keen to have this medication available and are willing to undertake additional training. Mr McDavitt said that per cutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) is available in Shetland, but that the thrombolysis drug is in short supply in the UK. Mr Macaulay said that there are two types of heart attack, the drug can not be used in one of these attacks as it can cause bleeding. If the drug is administered, this is done as two injections, the patient has to be continually monitored, with the information being linked to Cardiac Care Unit at the hospital receiving the patient. It is a difficult decision to make administering the drug. It is not being administered very often even in large Scottish mainland communities. Ms Robinson said that the drug is not available in any of the rural surgeries. It is not a priority at present. The equipment needed to monitor patients is being continually updated. The Unst Surgery has an ECG machine and also a monitor, but this is not suitable to be used in an ambulance.

The NHS Representatives were asked what was the timescale for administering the drug after a heart attack, Ms Brightwell said that the drug needs to be given as soon as possible, but can be used for up to 6 hours after the attack.

They were asked if all the helicopters had the thrombolysis drug on board in emergencies, and were told it depended on the helicopter and if SAS had mobilised a paramedic equipped with the drug. GPs can stand down the helicopter if it is no longer required.

Mr Macaulay said there was a good health service team on Unst who promote health awareness and carry out patient reviews. He emphasised how important it is to maintain a healthy lifestyle, get blood pressure checked and try and be more active.

The importance of phoning 999 was discussed, with members of the Community Council saying that Unst has an ageing community and that many of these people will not want to phone as they will think that is just for serious emergencies. It is important to get the message across that this is now the protocol in life threatening emergencies. The Scottish Ambulance Service is working with out of doctor's hours emergencies. The new protocol has to be robust.

Ms Brightwell emphasised the importance of delivering training in resuscitation and the use of defibrillators. Mr Macaulay said that there are plans for an Open Day on Unst, with the Scottish Ambulance Service leading on it. Members thought that would be a really worthwhile event, when members of the community could see the new protocol.

Caroline said that Alistair Carmichael had explained in parliament about how important the Coastguard helicopters are to the community of Shetland for medical evacuations.

Caroline thanked the NHS Representatives for attending the meeting. Ms Brightwell said that they would be happy to attend again. They left the meeting at 7.30pm.

There was a discussion about having a dedicated helipad away from the airstrip. The helicopter has landed in Haroldswick, Baltasound and Uyeasound to pick up patients. Helicopter crews liaise with the local Coastguard and ambulance drivers. There has been a big increase in medical evacuations in the last three years, with 56 this past year. There was a discussion about the cost of calling out the Coastguard helicopter.

02/01/25 Elect Chair

There were no nominations for the position of Chair. It was decided to defer this to the March meeting, it will be discussed in details then. Caroline is happy to carry on being Vice Chair.

03/01/25 Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

05/01/25 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes from the meeting held on Monday 9th December 2024 were proposed by Janice and seconded by David.

06/01/25 Matters Arising from last minutes

16/12/24.9 NHS Dental Services

Antony M. Visocchi, Director of Dentistry, NHS Shetland replied to the letter about NHS Shetland Dental Services at Mid Yell. He explained that “the dentist who normally works in Mid Yell is taking an extended period of paternity leave until late February 2025. As predicted, the service from the Mid Yell clinic has been detrimentally affected during this period.” Mr Visocchi stated that the challenges that face the NHS relating to the provision of NHS dental services across Shetland as well as those affecting the dental professional as a whole have been well documented. Additionally, the decisions of independent dental contractors are out with the control of NHS Shetland. Whilst they always try to work with them, ultimately the judgement on how they wish to provide their services is theirs. Unfortunately, NHS Shetland is not able to provide anything more than emergency care for the patients affected by the decision of Lerwick Dental Practice to deregister a group of patients. Mr Visocchi explained that he is happy to re-state his personal commitment to the maintenance and expansion of the dental service in Mid Yell. He said that he can advise now that they have a locum dentist attending Mid Yell in January 2025. Further, the plans to increase the numbers of dentists working with NHS Shetland in 2025 are well advanced, with the first additional permanent dentist starting at the beginning of January.

16/12/24.11 Roads

Neil Hutcheson, SIC Roads replied to the email to say that they were unable to book ferries to Unst when the contractor was up last year without a lengthy wait at Belmont. He explained that the difficulty is that “the spray applied marking process requires two large flat-bed trucks”. Mr Hutcheson said that they have asked the contractor to return in March and are awaiting their response.

16/12/24.12 Transport

Members asked Robert and Ryan what is happening with the public transport review which has been pushed back for a year. Robert said that he will look into this. He said that there had been additional ideas put forward which need to be explored further: this is taking up staff time. The Ferries review is being worked on by the same staff.

07/01/25 Ferries/Fixed Links

Frances said that Andrew Inkster, SIC Ferries; Michael Craigie, ZetTrans and Moraig Lyall, Chair of ZetTrans and Shetland Islands Council's Environment and Transport Committee, attended the last Fetlar Community Council (FCC) meeting. They had discussed the Summer timetable and also the Emergency timetable. The Summer timetable for Bluemull Sound will have to be adapted because of lashing down vehicles, 3.5 tonnes and over. Mr Inkster had told FCC that they would get the draft timetable so that it can be discussed before it is published. Mr Inkster had said that they would look again at the Emergency timetable and get back to FCC. The Clerk is going to write to Mr Inkster and ask for a copy of the draft Summer and Emergency timetable so that UCC can discuss it as well. Community Councillors had received a lot of complaints about ferries and the booking system. Several people have tried to book ferries and have been unable to do so because the runs were showing that they were fully booked. An example of one of these runs which could not be booked had only 4 booked vehicles and another example only two booked vehicles so all the unbooked vehicles got on. Most people will not travel if they can't get a booking, especially if they have to get somewhere for a set time. When Ferry Representatives attended a UCC meeting last year they said they were planning to introduce a different, better booking system. Members asked if there had been any progress on this. It was agreed to write to John Smith, director of Infrastructure Services; Emma Macdonald, SIC Leader; Maggie Sandison, SIC Chief Executive; Moraig Lyall, Chair of ZetTrans and Shetland Islands Council's Environment and Transport Committee; Sellaness and copy in Robert and Ryan to ask about all these issues. Robert said that there had been over a 1000 completed surveys received in the Ferry Survey. This is more than is required to make it a credible number. He explained that there would be another round of surveys in March but these would be face to face events. Robert said that the Bus survey had also had a good response. He also said that Andrew Inkster is going to be unavailable for the next two months, so he will find out who UCC are to send correspondence to.

08/01/25 SIC North Isles Councillors Update

Robert said that there had been discussions around the £10 million pounds awarded by the Scottish Government, if their budget is approved in early February. There are plans to spend this on an additional ferry. Robert said there are a lot of issues to be considered, the regulations on new boats are complicated. The money from the Scottish Government would not cover all the costs of another ferry. Discussion about this will be coming to the committee meeting in the next two months. Ryan said that he hadn't attended any meetings since the last Community Council meeting, he had been away and also poorly. He had answered a lot of community questions on various issues. Ryan said there are a lot of meeting coming up now.

09/01/25 Unst Partnership Ltd (UP) Update.

Gordon said that the next UP skip day is on the 1st February. The UP shop continues to trade well, with some recent house clearances. Douglas Westwater, the Consultant from "Community Enterprise Ltd" will be holding a Community Drop-In session from 2-4pm on Saturday 8th February, where residents can view and comment on the ideas that were most popular in the recent Community Action Plan (CAP) survey. After this event, Mr Westwater will then put together the final version of the Plan. Gordon said that Luke Fraser will be coming to Unst in March to carry out the Housing Needs Assessment funded through Cooke Scotland, the Sandison Trust and UP. He will use the results of the CAP in compiling a more targeted study of housing needs and availability. Based on the results of these two studies, UP will then look at how best to carry out the suggestions/conclusions in the reports. It could be that appointing a Community Development or Housing Development officer is the way to go. Again, this will depend on available funding. Gordon had been told that the two National Trust for Scotland (NTS) properties at Houlland are now under offer. Angus Murray, NTS, is intending to have an online meeting sometime in February and then to be here in March with further trips in April/May. There is still no word on plans for the house and grounds at Halligarth, although Mr Murray said they were looking at ideas from a group called "Lateral North". He said that NTS is also looking at "a fairly large archaeology project" supported by Daniel Rhodes,

NTS Archaeologist. A report is also imminent on previous work at Collaster. Gordon also said that Ellie Owen, NTS Senior Seabird Officer, is also keen to engage in work on Unst in 2025. UP hosted a meeting with Hazel Sutherland and Mhari McLeman, Shetland Amenity Trust, about the future of the Viking longhouse site. SAT is less able to maintain the longhouse and galley now, although they did arrange a grass-cutting contract last year. They explained that donations taken in were about £800 per year, with Public Liability insurance £900. Grass-cutting and maintenance cost would be on top of that, so any community body taking it on would lose money on it at present. Gordon explained that discussions had taken place on raising more revenue, painting and sealing the boat, putting a shelter roof over it, or even putting a complete building around the boat with information boards inside. UP Directors are to discuss this further but there is little doubt that if the boat is not maintained or protected, it will only last another five or six years. SAT would be willing to hand it over to a community group (and might even cover some of the costs before a full handover) but all this is still to be decided.

10/01/25 Community Involvement Update

Frances has been working with the emergency timetable again. She said there are two community pop ins shortly, one on the 4th February in the Community Library at Baltasound Junior High School and the next one on the 28th February at Nordalea Care Centre.

11/01/25 Shetland Community Benefit Fund (SCBF)

David said that there were no updates from SCBF.

12/01/25 Community Council Scheme Review Update

13/12/24.1 Phase Three Consultation

The final stage of the Community Council Scheme Review Consultation finishes on the 31st January 2025.

13/01/25 Applications for Planning

There were no applications for planning.

14/01/25 Application for Donations

There were no applications for donations.

15/01/25 Correspondence

15/01/25.1 Community Resilience Plan

It was agreed to carry this item forward to the next Community Council meeting on the 10th March 2025.

15/01/25.2 UHI - Next Steps in the Marine Restoration and Enhancement Action Plan

This was noted.

16/01/25 Community Council Finances

There has been no expenditure since the last meeting.

17/01/25 A.O.C.B.

17/01/25.1 Taxi Cost

There was a discussion about the cost of taxis for elderly people needing to attend appointments at the Health Centre, if they don't drive and have no family to take them. One person had paid £35 and another £60 for taxi hires. It was agreed to write to Elaine Park, SIC Transport Contracts and Operations Officer, and ask if a Dial-a-Ride system for Unst could be added as a suggestion to the transport review similar to the one in North Yell, which will take people to the Health Centre. Frances will also look into this.

17/01/25.2 Elma Ritch

Members were told that Elma Ritch is retiring from her job after working with caring for people in the Community for over 50 years. It was agreed to write and thank her for her many years of service.

17/01/25.3 Community Ferry Runs

As part of the Ferry Review Robert is hoping to ask for an increase the number of Community Ferry Hires available to the Unst Community. At present there are 4 runs. Although the Community Council have been unable to book the last two requested runs. SIC Ferries were unable to get crews to man the runs.

17/01/25.4 Clerk resigning

Josie is standing down as Clerk. She is planning to finish on the 31st March 2025. She has been clerk for 27 years. The Clerk's job will be advertised shortly. Interviews and selection for the post will be done at a local level.

18/01/25 Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is Monday 10th March 2025. There was an error in the proposed dates that were circulated. The meeting in May is on the 12th, not on the 13th. The Clerk will email out the new dates list.

Chair: _____ Date: _____

Clerk: _____