

Minute of the Meeting of Kirkwall and St Ola Community Council held in the Friends Room, St Magnus Centre, Kirkwall, on Monday, 2 December 2024 at 19:00

Present:

Tom Rendall, Lynne Spence, Steven Brodie, Moyra Gordon, Cathleen A Hourie, Robert F Leslie, Chris J F Matthews, John R Mowat and Rosemary Rhodes.

In Attendance:

- Councillor Sandy G Cowie.
- Councillor Steven B Heddle.
- Councillor W Leslie Manson.
- Councillor John A R Scott.
- Councillor Ivan A Taylor.
- David Sawkins, Depute Harbour Master (Strategy and Support), Orkney Islands Council.
- Kyrylo Kazakov, Assistant Harbour Master (Strategy and Support), Orkney Islands Council.
- Ross Cunningham, Service Manager (Democratic Services and Communications), Orkney Islands Council.
- Hazel Flett, Clerk.
- 4 members of the public.
- 1 member of the local press.

Chair:

- Tom Rendall in the Chair.

Order of Business

1. Apologies	2
2. Bonfire and Fireworks at Pickaquooy	2
3. HMS Royal Oak and Scapa Flow Memorial	3
4. Adoption of Minute	3
5. Matters Arising	3
6. Correspondence	4
7. Financial Statements	5
8. Financial Requests	6
9. Consultation – Review of Polling Districts and Polling Stations	7
10. Publications	7
11. Any Other Competent Business	7
12. Date of Next Meetings	9

13. Arcadia Park.....9
 14. Hanging Baskets9
 15. Conclusion of Meeting.....9

1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Kristopher D Leask.

2. Bonfire and Fireworks at Pickaquoy

The Chair read the following statement in relation to the bonfire and fireworks display held at Pickaquoy on Saturday, 2 November 2024:

“Following The Bonfire and Firework Display and the subsequent reports in the media and comments on social media, the Community Council, has been reviewing the event prior to this meeting.

First of all, I would like to thank the Rotary Club, members of this community council, volunteers, emergency services, William Shearer’s and OIC staff involved in running this year’s Bonfire and Fireworks Display. A tremendous amount of voluntary time was spent in organising and running the event for the local community and families to enjoy together. We thank everyone for their efforts, it is greatly appreciated.

Our Clerk and myself met with the Rotary Club as part of the “wash up” after the event. Although the organisation and running of the event went well and the team of volunteers along with the emergency services all played their part, issues related to the fireworks and swans were recognised.

Significant measures had been taken to reduce the size of the bonfire, the use of quieter fireworks, a shorter display and other actions including asking all drivers parked at the Peedie Sea to turn off their headlights – which they kindly did. However, we appreciate that issues still remain.

Taking this all into consideration, the community council, which like the community has a number of views on the Bonfire event, has decided to extensively evaluate all possible alternative locations for next year’s event before a considered decision can be made.

We wish to continue with an annual Kirkwall bonfire – it is an event loved by many in our community who enjoy it. It also encourages people to come to the public display rather than holding numerous private displays around the town, which could disturb people, pets, wildlife, and livestock.

Following tonight’s meeting we will extend an invitation to animal welfare organisations and representatives of Team Swan, to meet with us soon to discuss these next steps.

We will be engaging closely with the Rotary Club throughout this process. Their support in organising this event on behalf of the community council and the Kirkwall community is greatly appreciated and should be commended.

I would like to ask all the organisations and groups to please bear with us while we try to resolve the situation and would kindly request that comments including on social media are handled sensitively in the appropriate manner.

This is all I wish to state at this time and there will be an opportunity for further discussions with stakeholders in the coming weeks. Thank you.”

Councillor Leslie Manson joined the meeting during this item.

3. HMS Royal Oak and Scapa Flow Memorial

Following a presentation from representatives of Marine Services, Orkney Islands Council, regarding a proposal for an upgraded HMS Royal Oak and Scapa Flow Memorial, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the presentation.

Councillor John Ross Scott joined the meeting during consideration of this item.

The Deputy Harbour Master (Strategy and Support) and the Assistant Harbour Master (Strategy and Support), Orkney Islands Council, and the four members of the public left the meeting at this point.

4. Adoption of Minute

The Minute of the Meeting held on 7 October 2024 was approved, being proposed by Rosemary Rhodes and seconded by John Mowat.

5. Matters Arising

A. Benches

The Vice Chair advised that the Community Justice Service had agreed to commence a maintenance programme for benches and that options for payment were being discussed and agreed with Orkney Islands Council, and it was:

Resolved to note the current position.

B. Former Street Names

R Leslie advised that he had only recently contacted Orkney Heritage Society to ascertain whether they would be interested in a project regarding former street names in Kirkwall and undertook to provide a further update to the next meeting.

C. Local Place Plans – Your Kirkwall

The Vice Chair advised that she had contacted the Chair of the Orkney Towns Board to ascertain whether an update of the Your Kirkwall place plan would feature in the work of the Towns Board and was awaiting a response.

D. Financial Requests

Following consideration of notes of thanks received from various individuals and groups regarding financial assistance received from the Community Council, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

E. Island Games Legacy

The Vice Chair gave a detailed update on discussions with a local artist regarding the provision of three benches to provide a legacy in Kirkwall for the Island Games, and it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Community Council should commission three benches, to be located around the Peedie Sea, to commemorate the Island Games.
2. That the first bench, at a cost not exceeding £5,000, to be met from the Community Development Fund allocation, as well as any external funding which could be sought, should be commissioned and installed prior to the Island Games in July 2025, to be sited in place of an existing bench, subject to agreement by Orkney Islands Council.

F. Contacting Police Scotland

Following consideration of correspondence from Chief Inspector Scott Robertson responding to the Community Council's concerns regarding contacting Police Scotland, both through the 101 phone number and at the local police station in Kirkwall, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

6. Correspondence

A. Proposal of Application Notice – Orkney Bike Park

Following consideration of correspondence from Bracewell Stirling including a Proposal of Application Notice in respect of the Orkney Bike Park at the Pickaquoy Centre, Kirkwall, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should submit a response advising that the Community Council was generally supportive of the proposed development and seeking assurance that it would not be accessible by motorised bikes and would be completely fenced off.

B. Streets for Everyone Project

Following consideration of correspondence from the Engagement Coordinator – Capacity Building, Sustrans Scotland, regarding the Streets for Everyone project, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should write to Sustrans advising that the Community Council was unaware of the initial public event and that the matter would be further discussed at the next meeting once further information had been provided.

C. Orkney Islands Council – Logistics Base Development – Hatston

Following consideration of correspondence from Marine Scotland regarding additional information submitted by Orkney Islands Council in respect of the application for marine licences relating to the proposed logistics base development at Hatston, for which representations were required by 14 December 2024, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that Chris Matthews should draft a response to include whether the proposed development would have any effect on flooding at the Kirkwall seafront and protection measures for birds, particularly swans, from pile driving operations.

D. Scottish Water – Protect Property and Pipes from Water Damage this Winter

Following consideration of correspondence from Scottish Water regarding protecting property and pipes from water damage this winter, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

E. Orkney Community Wind Farms Project

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council providing an update on the Orkney Community Wind Farms project, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

7. Financial Statements

A. General Finance

Following consideration of the General Finance statement as at 22 November 2024, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the estimated balance as at 22 November 2024 of £11,905.76.

B. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the 2024/2025 Community Council Grant Scheme statement as at 22 November 2024, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that projects to the value of £5,892.02 had been approved, of which £2,592.02 had been claimed.
2. To note the balance remaining for approval within the main capping limit of £241.79.

C. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund Statement as at 22 November 2024, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the balance remaining for approval of £6,163.46.

Councillors Sandy Cowie, Steven Heddle and Ivan Taylor left the meeting at this point.

8. Financial Requests

A. Glaitness Primary School

Following consideration of an application from Glaitness Primary School requesting financial assistance towards the P7 Nethybridge Trip from 23 to 27 June 2025, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £375 be made, subject to at least 16 pupils taking part, with the donation to be paid out in financial year 2025/2026.

B. Links Golf Academy, Royal Dornoch Golf Club

Following consideration of an application from S McAlister requesting financial assistance towards her son participating in the Links Golf Academy at the Royal Dornoch Golf Club, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £15 per trip be made.

C. Harray Young Farmers Club

Following consideration of an application from Harray Young Farmers Club requesting financial assistance towards a member taking part in the North Area Junior Speechmaking Final, held in Inverness on 9 November 2024, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be made.

D. Orkney Rugby Football Club – U14 Squad

Following consideration of an application from L Miller requesting financial assistance towards her son participating in Orkney Rugby Football Club's Under 14 squad away games in November and December 2024, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be made in respect of each game attended.

E. Orkney Gymnastics Club

Following consideration of an application from L Miller requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in gymnastics competitions in Inverness and Edinburgh on 10 and 17 November 2024 respectively, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be made in respect of each competition attended.

F. Orkney Gymnastics Club

Following consideration of an application from S Webb requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in a Floor and Vault gymnastics competition held in Inverness on 10 November 2024, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be made.

G. Orkney Gymnastics Club

Following consideration of an application from S Webb requesting financial assistance towards her daughter participating in the Scottish Floor and Vault gymnastics competition held in Edinburgh on 17 November 2024, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be made.

H. Kirkjuvagr Dancers

Following consideration of an application from T Paterson requesting financial assistance towards her daughters participating in the Tanya Horne Winter Festival of Highland Dancing held in Wick on 17 November 2024, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that a donation of £30 be made in respect of each dancer.

9. Consultation – Review of Polling Districts and Polling Stations

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding a review of polling districts and polling stations, for which responses were due by 16 December 2024, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should respond advising that the Community Council had no concerns regarding the proposal to permanently relocate polling stations in Kirkwall from the St Magnus Centre to the Pickaquoy Centre.

10. Publications

The following publications had been sent to the Clerk and were forwarded to members via email:

- SEPA Updates – 17 October and 13 November 2024.
- VAO – Training and Funding Updates – October and November 2024.
- Paths for All – eNews – October 2024.
- Scotland’s Towns Partnership – October and November 2024 Newsletters.
- VAO Newsletter – October 2024.
- Scottish Rural Action – November 2024 Newsletter.
- SSEN – DSO November 2024 Newsletter.
- Scottish Water – Winter Digital Newsletter.

11. Any Other Competent Business

A. Cross-Party Group on Islands

Following consideration of correspondence from the Scottish Islands Federation advising of the second meeting of the Cross-Party Group on Islands, a forum for the discussion of issues relevant to Scotland’s islands and the residents of island communities, to be held online on 11 December 2024, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that Robert Leslie and Chris Matthews would register to attend the event.

B. Scottish Water – Ongoing Water Demand Issues on Orkney

Following consideration of correspondence from Scottish Water providing an update on ongoing demand issues on Orkney, including 10 tankers helping to maintain a supply to customers, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

C. Orkney 2025 – LED Display Board

Following consideration of correspondence from the Swimming Co-ordinator for Orkney 2025 thanking the Community Council for financial assistance provided towards the LED display board for the swimming pool at the Pickaquoy Centre, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence.

D. Seatter Path

J Mowat again raised the condition of the Berstane Road to Seatter path, which he considered barely accessible during the six months of winter, particularly at the Berstane Road end, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that Core Path K10 was regularly discussed by relevant officers at Orkney Islands Council who considered that works required to alleviate the surface water would require more planning and budget than currently available.
2. To note that the Rural Planner, Orkney Islands Council, had been invited to attend the next meeting of the Community Council to discuss the core path network surrounding Kirkwall.

E. Papdale East Play Park

Following a query from J Mowat regarding a timescale for the play equipment to be installed at the Papdale East play park, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that development of the site was always to be across two phases, with the first phase nearly complete, and the second phase being development of the play area element, led by the PEPA community group.
2. That the Clerk should contact PEPA for an update on development of the play area element.

F. General State of the Peedie Sea

Following representations from R Leslie regarding the state of the Peedie Sea and possible causes of death of some cygnets, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should write to Orkney Islands Council to ascertain whether any maintenance was carried out on the Peedie Sea such as clearing weeds.

G. Winter Lighting in Kirkwall

Following representations from C Matthews regarding the condition of the winter lights, particularly at the end of Laing Street, and whether the Community Council could assist, Councillor Scott advised that Kirkwall BID was currently looking to renew all the winter lighting, as well as extending Christmas lighting, and it was:

Resolved to note the position.

12. Date of Next Meetings

Following consideration of future meeting dates, it was:

Resolved:

A. That the next meeting of Kirkwall and St Ola Community Council should be held on Monday, 27 January 2025, commencing at 19:00.

B. That meetings with interested parties and other stakeholders to discuss the bonfire and fireworks display would be arranged for early 2025, on dates to be agreed.

C. To note the following dates for Community Council meetings during 2025:

- 24 March 2025.
- 12 May 2025.
- 30 June 2025.
- 25 August 2025.
- 6 October 2025.
- 1 December 2025.

13. Arcadia Park

Due to the sensitive nature of this item, it was discussed in private.

Following consideration of correspondence providing an update in respect of Arcadia Park, copies of which had been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

A. To note the contents of the correspondence.

B. That the Clerk should respond thanking the representative for the detailed response and that the Community Council welcomed development of the park which was enjoyed by a wide range of the community.

14. Hanging Baskets

Due to the sensitive nature of this item, it was discussed in private.

The Clerk updated members regarding load bearing testing of the hanging basket brackets, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk should write to Kirkwall BID and that this matter would be discussed further ahead of the next meeting.

15. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 21:26.