

Minute of the Meeting of Firth and Stenness Community Council held in Stenness Community Centre and via Teams on Thursday, 2 May 2024 at 19:30

Present:

Mrs W Dunnet, Mrs A Stevenson, Mr R Hourston and Ms B Scollay.

In Attendance:

- Councillor R King.
- Councillor J Stevenson.
- Councillor O Tierney.
- Ms J Herbert, SSEN Community Liaison Manager (via Teams).
- Mr M Dunlop, SSEN System Project Manager (via Teams).
- Mr S Bruce, SSEN Assistant Project Manager (via Teams).
- Mr R Cunningham, Service Manager, Democratic Services and Communications.
- Mrs J McGrath, Community Council Liaison Officer/Interim Clerk.

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1. Apologies

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

2. Adoption of Minute

The minute of the meeting of Firth and Stenness Community Council held on 22 February 2024 was adopted, being proposed by Mr R Hourston and seconded by Mrs A Stevenson.

3. SSEN Update – Transmission Projects

Representatives of SSEN were in attendance to provide an update on the substation project, advising that they had recently held a public information event and that the main concern was around the accommodation block. They had considered the queries and had since updated the FAQs on their website. There had also been conversations around sharing of infrastructure, and access to ferries, and members were advised that the plan was that the principal contractors would try and fly their workforce in via charter. There had also been questions asked around site safety and SSEN confirmed that once people and accommodation were on site, there would be 24-hour security and a point of contact. They assured that anti-social behaviour would be condemned and that this would be a professional workforce with a code of conduct to adhere to. Workforce numbers were also discussed, with SSEN advising that the numbers would vary depending on what stage the project was at, but the peak figure would be from summer 2025 to summer 2026.

Members also heard that archaeological works would take place ahead of starting the main construction works, which would take around 3 weeks, and that there was a planning condition in place to reinstate the land after the accommodation block was removed. Various environmental assessments had been done which would be updated again before the project started so that SSEN had baseline information on species living in the area. Members also asked about sewerage and heard that it was unlikely that a septic tank would be installed. Following further discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the content of the update.

The SSEN representatives left the meeting at this point.

4. Matters Arising

A. Foreshore at Finstown Slip

Members received an update from the Head of Neighbourhood Services, advising that an Engineer from Orkney Islands Council carried out an inspection of areas of coastal erosion at Maitland Place on 22 February 2024. The view formed was that whilst coastal erosion of the grass bank or foreshore margin area was an ongoing process, recent works undertaken by contractors had exacerbated the situation with part of the grass bank having recently collapsed onto the foreshore. It had been agreed that a contractor would develop a design for potential additional works around the area of recent collapse and where Scottish Water's assets are potentially

vulnerable to coastal erosion, and discussions were ongoing with regards to these works. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

B. Quarry Group

Members were given the details of what was required of a Quarry Public Liaison Group, as per conditions given by the Planning Authority, and it was:

Resolved that Mr R Hourston would try and get a group together to form a Quarry Public Liaison Group.

C. Garden Waste at Cursiter Quarry

There had been no response to further requests for two smaller skips, or for the larger skip to be reinstated, and it was:

Resolved to ask again if skips of any size for garden waste could be considered.

D. Festive Lighting

Members had been sent a brochure for festive lighting and agreed that another 9 decorations would be required, and it was:

Resolved to consider which decorations would be suitable ahead of making a final decision at the next meeting.

5. Correspondence

A. Scottish Empty Homes Partnership Webinar – 20 March

Members had previously been emailed a free webinar from Scottish Empty Homes Partnership which works to identify empty homes across Scotland with the aim of bringing them back into use, and it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence.

B. Volunteering for Island Games 2025

Following consideration of correspondence regarding volunteering for the Island Games 2025, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

C. Local Place Plan

Following consideration of correspondence from Orkney Islands Council regarding giving communities the opportunity to prepare a Local Place Plan for their area, it was:

Resolved to note the correspondence from Development and Marine Planning.

D. Thank you Notes

Resolved to note that thank you letters had been received from Stenness Community School, K McIntosh and Firth Parish Cup Darts Team for financial assistance provided.

6. Consultations

A. OIC Housing Survey

Following consideration of the OIC Housing Survey, seeking local views on a strategy for housing, it was:

Resolved to note the consultation.

B. Transport Scotland – Islands Connectivity Plan

Members considered correspondence from Transport Scotland, advising that they were to host an in-person engagement session on 2 May on improvements to Community voice, Accessibility and Integration of transport services, and it was:

Resolved to note that the session was taking place at the same time as this meeting.

7. Financial Statements

A. General Fund

Following consideration of the general finance statement as at 17 April 2024, it was:

Resolved to note that the estimated balance was £2,258.18, which included funds of £5,000 from the Rennibister Wind Turbine Community Fund.

B. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the CCGS statement as at 17 April 2024, it was:

Resolved to note that £485 remained available for allocation in the additional capping limit and that the main capping limit was fully allocated.

C. Community Development Fund

Members considered the CDF statement as at 17 April 2024, and it was:

Resolved to note the total remaining available for allocation of £8,615.63.

8. Financial Requests

A. Orkney Folk Festival 2024

Following consideration of a request for financial assistance towards the running costs of this year's festival, it was:

Resolved to make a general fund donation of £300 towards the festival.

B. Friends of Firth School – Hoy Trip

Following consideration of correspondence from Friends of Firth School, asking for financial assistance towards the annual outdoor education trip to Hoy for 6 primary 7 pupils, it was:

Resolved:

1. To award £25 per pupil to 5 pupils from the general fund, totalling £125.
2. That one pupil was deemed not eligible for funding as they had received funding for this trip from another community council.

C. Stenness Community Association – Over 60's Meal

Following consideration of correspondence from Stenness Community Association requesting financial assistance towards running the annual over 60's meal and entertainment evening, it was:

Resolved to award £200 towards the event, subject to CCGS approval.

D. Firth Community Association – Tree Lighting Ceremony 2023

Members had previously agreed to fund the cost of the refreshments for the tree lighting ceremony, and considered correspondence from Firth Community Association advising that the cost had been £161.01, and it was:

Resolved to make a general fund donation to Firth Community Association of £161.01.

9. Publications

The following publications had previously been circulated to members and were noted;

- VAO – Newsletter February and March 2024.
- VAO – Training and funding update March and April 2024.
- Scottish Water Spring Newsletter 2024.
- Scottish Rural Action Newsletter – March 2024.
- Farm Diversification Drop-In Event – 2 May 2024.

10. AOCB

A. Firth Park Grass Cutting Tender

The Community Council Liaison Officer advised that since the last meeting, the tender for the grass cutting at Firth Park had been advertised, and had been awarded to Isbisters on a 3-year contract, and it was:

Resolved to note that the grass cutting tender had been awarded to Isbisters for the period 2024 to 2026 inclusive.

B. Benches

A member advised that, as a result of vandalism at Firth Park, one of the benches had been damaged, and that a local resident had arranged for it to be replaced with a new one. The plaque on the old bench had been placed on the new bench.

It was also advised that paint was required for some of the benches, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To send a letter of thanks to the local resident who had arranged for the bench to be replaced.
2. That the Interim Clerk would arrange for a purchase order to be raised for paint.

C. Planting near Heddle Quarry

A member raised concerns about the planting of gorse and rosa rugosa close to the road on the way to Heddle Quarry, which may create problems for walkers using this route, and it was:

Resolved that Councillor J Stevenson would visit the site and investigate the issue.

D. 20mph Signage near Finstown Cemetery

Members reported that overgrown bushes at Finstown Cemetery were obstructing view of the 20mph signage for vehicles coming from the Kirkwall direction, and it was:

Resolved that the Interim Clerk would raise this with the relevant department and ask that the bushes be cut back to make the sign more visible.

E. Speeding

Councillor R King raised the issue of speeding on the main road late at night, in particular through the villages, and asked if members had received any feedback or complaints about this, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that members had not been approached but were aware of the issue.
2. That Councillor R King would raise this in a separate forum.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Following discussion of a date for the next meeting, which would possibly be preceded by a public meeting to elect to vacancies on the community council, it was:

Resolved that the next meeting of Firth and Stenness Community Council would be held at Firth Community Centre and via Teams on Tuesday, 2 July 2024.

12. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair thanked all for their attendance and declared the meeting closed at 21:10.