# Minute of the Meeting of North Ronaldsay Community Council held in North Ronaldsay Community Centre and via Teams on Monday, 17 February 2025 at 19:30

Present:

Mr P Donnelly, Mr I Deyell, Mr C Kerslake, Ms L Paterson, Mrs H Scott and Mr I Scott.

In Attendance:

* Councillor M Thomson (via Teams).
* Mr J Scott, Chair, North Ronaldsay Trust (via Teams).
* Ms H Galland, Clerk.
* 6 members of the public.

Order of Business**.**

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1. Apologies

Resolved to note that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Woodbridge and Ms A Duncan

## 2. Adoption of Minute

The minute of the meeting of North Ronaldsay Community Council held on 16 December 2024 was adopted, being proposed by Mr I Deyell and seconded by Mr C Kerslake.

## 3. Matters Arising

### A. North Ronaldsay Trust - Turbine Income

Mr J Scott, Chair of North Ronaldsay Trust, was in attendance to provide information regarding the involvement of other island organisations in the project, and to enable the members to ask questions. There was unanimous agreement that the Trust should be paid a management fee for the on-going management of the project, this being preferable to the alternative of deciding on a different organisation, such as the CC to take on a management role instead. While some costs had been shared, there were still some costs which needed to be considered, such as the legal expenses incurred in the setting up of the project. It was acknowledged that the land on which the turbine stands is provided by the Laird at no cost. It was evident the issue was complex and so, following discussion, it was:

Resolved

1. That the NRT Chair would discuss the issue with the Trust to agree on what would constitute an appropriate annual management fee.

2. That, given the complexity of the subject, a Special Meeting would be set up with NRT, NRCC and the Community Association to agree on how to move forward.

3. That as many of the members would not have been present at the time the project was set up, the background history needed to be made available.

4. That, during the Special Meeting, there should be a decision made on what costs are to be expected to be paid by each organisation.

5. That the Clerk would ask Democratic Services if they were able to find out if any of the money in the CC Turbine Fund had been spent in the past.

6. That the Clerk would ask Democratic Services for the exact amount NRT has already paid NRCC, in addition to the previously requested agreement terms as per the last meeting.

Mr J Scott left the meeting at this point.

### B. Ad Hoc Flights – Island Wedding

A request had been submitted for additional flights to accommodate visitors attending an island wedding in April 2025. A majority of members had approved this request via email. A question was raised on the use of ad hoc flights for “personal use”, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that weddings were an approved use of ad hoc flights, as listed on the request form, and that all residents were welcome to these events without invite, as was common practice on all the outer isles.

2. To note that there had not been much usage of ad hocs in the 2024/2025 financial year and there was a fear that the allowance might be reduced in future years if not utilised.

3. That the Clerk would ask Democratic Services if, on this occasion, given the nature of the event and the lack of usage over 2024, and given the request was made in the current financial year, whether the 3 flights could be deducted from the 2024/2025 allowance, leaving the 2025/2026 allowance unaffected.

4. To request that Democratic Services put the number of ad hoc flights remaining on the front page of the minutes when they are sent out.

### C. Grass Cutting Contract Update

There being no Democratic Services representative in attendance at the meeting, the issue regarding whether the Burial Grounds Officer could increase the allowance for grass cutting could not be discussed, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would request an update from Democratic Services as members were waiting for an update, and the work involved was known to be difficult due to ongoing rabbit damage in the kirkyard.

### D. Scrap Metal Skip

The Clerk reported that the two new skips were at the blacksmiths having forklift lugs welded on and they would then be taken to the Pier for the last week of February for Orkney Ferries to get them lift tested. They would then need to be painted before onward delivery to the island, and it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would make public information signs to be attached to the skips so residents were aware what can and cannot be put in them.

### E. Midday Thursday plane to provide a second Monday morning plane

The Transport Representative stated that the Head Pilot had suggested at the Transport Forum that the midday Thursday flight may be removed in future to accommodate a second Monday morning plane, given the low usage of the midday plane on a Thursday and given the possible increase in the number of middle school age children needing to be carried to Kirkwall in the near future. Councillor M Thomson suggested there may be funding available for a third aircraft and that might provide a solution without any island losing flights. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note the information provided.

2. To note that members wanted to remind providers that flights were a “lifeline service” and North Ronaldsay already had to share flights with other islands so, on that basis, they were not in support of this request.

3. To note that any changes to the timetable would have to be discussed at the Transport Forum and would be based on pupil numbers at that time.

### F. Resilience

It was raised that, in recent months, the island had experienced a few power cuts, and the question of improved resilience was raised. NHSO had already changed their phones to non-land-line services leaving local NHSO staff with only a mobile service which was reliant on the networks battery backup which had a short life. It was mentioned that soon all land lines would be redundant and the dependency on the mobile back up would be increased. Members agreed that if a dedicated “special landline” for the North Isles was not possible then other suppliers needed to be investigated. One solution would be to request Wireless Infrastructure Group increase the lifespan of the batteries at the mast or provide a generator. They felt that satellite phones would be a solution as they do not depend on a land-based service so would be power cut proof. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. That the Clerk would ask Democratic Services to extend an invite to the next meeting to the Safety and Resilience Manager, OIC.

2. That the Chair would speak to the CDM of the Trust who had been involved in obtaining funding for resilience in the Trebb Project.

3. That the Health and Care Representative would raise the issue at the next Health and Care meeting on 4 March.

### G. Charter Boat Fee

No-one from Democratic Services was available to address the issue regarding whether the skipper could take payments, and it was:

Resolved to discuss at the next meeting.

### H. Ad Hoc Flights - North Ronaldsay Trust

Members heard that North Ronaldsay Trust had requested two ad hoc flights for an event during the Science Festival in September, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To provisionally approve the use of ad hocs for this purpose.

2. That the Clerk would get clarification from Democratic Services on how many ad hoc flights the NRCC have annually.

3. That the Clerk would find out if flights from another island’s allowance could be applied for in extreme circumstances.

4. That the Clerk would ask Democratic Services if the flights in April will or will not be allowed to come from the 2024/2025 allowance, given there were still 8 flights remaining to the end of the financial year.

## 4. Correspondence

### A. Digital Voices Roadshow

Members had previously been sent information on a BT Digital Voices Roadshow which had taken place on 30 January, and it was:

Resolved to note the event had passed.

### B. Webinar for CCs in Rural and Island Areas

Members had previously been forwarded information on a webinar which had taken place on 15 January in relation to Rural and Islands Poverty, and it was:

Resolved to note that the event had passed.

### C. Island Games Banners

Members had previously been forwarded correspondence from the Ceremonies Lead, Orkney2025, asking if the community council would support their school children to partake in a games project of producing banners for the visiting teams, and it was:

Resolved to note that, given the deadline was prior to the meeting, members had unanimously agreed via email to provide the £200 requested from the general fund.

### D. SCDC – Renewable Energies Webinar

Following consideration of correspondence from the Scottish Community Development Centre, copies of which had previously been forward, inviting members to participate in webinars in relation to renewable energies, it was:

Resolved to note the contents of the correspondence

### E. Stantec - R100 Survey

Information regarding a survey on the success of the R100 project had been received and circulated to members, and it was:

Resolved to note the survey and that it did not include North Ronaldsay.

### F. Highlands Visitor Levy Consultation

Members had previously been sent information from Kathryn Johnson, a Uist resident, regarding the Highlands Visitor Levy Consultation. Ms Johnson wrote to explain that, as it currently stood, the Levy would affect residents who need to travel to mainland for work or hospital appointments as well as tourists. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note that members were in agreement that this unfairness should be addressed, or the levy banned/ not effected locally.

## 5. Consultation Documents

### A. Verge Maintenance Plan 2025

Members had been previously sent the Verge Maintenance Plan for 2025 for comments, which had a deadline of 28 February 2025, and it was:

Resolved to note that the consultation did not apply to North Ronaldsay.

### B. Trees and Woodland Strategy

The Trees and Woodland Strategy documents had previously been emailed to members for consideration, with the deadline for comments being 24 March 2025, and it was:

Resolved to note the consultation did not apply to North Ronaldsay.

## 6. Financial Statements

### A. General Finance

Following consideration of the general fund statement as at 4 February 2025, copies of which had previously been circulated, it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the estimated balance was £18,035.41.

2. That the ongoing lift testing costs to meet Orkney Ferries' requirements would come from the general fund.

### B. Turbine Fund

Members considered the turbine statement as at 4 February 2025, copies of which had previously been circulated, and it was:

Resolved:

1. To note that the estimated balance was £22,724.80.

2. To investigate the possibility of setting up a scheme to pay council tax paying residents £50 per year for their primary property, towards their fuel bills, as the winter fuel allowance no longer existed and that the Clerk would seek advice from Democratic Services on what would be the most appropriate and easily managed way to set up such a scheme.

### C. Community Council Grant Scheme

Following consideration of the Community Council Grant Scheme statement as at 4 February 2025, copies of which were previously circulated, it was:

Resolved to note that the main capping limit was overallocated, however there had been requests to move unclaimed money from other CCGS projects at the previous meeting and these were yet to be actioned on the statement.

### D. Community Development Fund

Following consideration of the Community Development Fund as at 4 February 2025, copies of which had previously been circulated and it was

Resolved to note that the total available for allocation was £8,656.

## 7. Financial Requests

### A. North Ronaldsay Parent Council - Playground Regeneration Project

Members discussed correspondence from North Ronaldsay Parent Council who were asking for financial support towards the restoration of play facilities at the islands school. Following consideration, it was:

Resolved:

1. To approve an amount of up to £1,000 for the project, subject to CCGS approval, as it already had match funding, on the basis that the NRCC accepts no liability for the work done.

2. That, owing to the imbalances in the CCGS statement and the proximity to the next financial year, members request the application be made for approval in the next financial year.

### B. North Ronaldsay Trust – Coastal Fencing and Dyke Repair

Correspondence had been received on behalf of Orkney Sheep Foundation, seeking match funding for the grant to replace coastal fencing with upgraded smaller mesh fencing and further repair of the dyke. Members considered the project and the importance of the sheep and the dyke to the island’s way of life. Members believed sheep keepers should partly be responsible for the costs of the upkeep of the shore boundary. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved:

1. To match the contribution to be made by the Sheep Court, up to the value of £3,000.

2. That the Clerk write a letter of confirmation to the Trust with the conditions as stipulated, and to also remind the Trust that the NRCC had offered to put in this application at the previous meeting.

## 8. Reports from Representatives

### A. Transport Representative

It was advised that the likelihood of a third plane was high, and a new pilot was being trained. Members also heard that the inner isles were undertaking Phase 1 of the ferry replacement process; the outer isles were to be phase 2. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to note the information provided.

### B. Planning Representative

It was resolved to note there was nothing to report

### C. North Ronaldsay Development Trust Representative

It was resolved to note the Representative was not present and had left no report to be read in their absence

### D. Health and Care Representative

It was resolved the next Health and Welfare meeting was at the beginning of March and the issue of resilience would be added to the agenda

### E. Yarn Company Representative

Resolved to note that there was nothing to report.

## 9. Publications

The following publications had been made available to members and were noted:

* VAO Newsletter – January 2025.
* Orkney Ferries - Statistics – December 2024.
* Letter from School Place – January 2025.
* VAO – Training and Funding – January 2025.
* ORSAS – Quarterly Newsletter – January 2025.
* SEPA Update- January 2025.

## 10. Any Other Competent Business

### A. North Ronaldsay Trust - Letter of Support

Correspondence had been received seeking a letter of support from NRCC for a grant application to RCF for promotional content, website and professional photos for the Meat Larder Project. Following consideration, it was

Resolved to support the project and that the Clerk would send a letter of support on behalf of NRCC to the Trust.

### B. Ian Scott - Tourist Maps

Mr I Scott, who was responsible for the artwork and production of the popular island tourist maps, made members aware that the last stock had been used up and more would be required for the new tourist season. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would contact Mr Scott to find out how to order more, along with costs so that this could be considered further.

### C. Seat availability on Islander Plane

The issue was raised again that only 7 seats are shown as available when booking online but that the 8th seat can be available if the office is phoned. It was noted that it is dependent on the male/female ratio of other passengers and also the luggage allowance (day trippers carrying significantly less than overnight staying visitors). The contract stipulates the availability of 8 seats. Following discussion, it was:

Resolved to see how the application for the third aircraft progresses before taking this issue further.

### D. Potholes on School Lane

While it was acknowledged the Headteacher had enlisted the team who were out installing the 20mph signs to do some repair work, it was noted that most of the holes had only been filled with loose stone which had already eroded away. The holes that were treated with cold tar had remained intact. After discussion, it was:

Resolved that the Clerk would write to the Headteacher, providing photos of the potholes, to highlight the ongoing issue and suggest that cold tar is the best solution to fixing the potholes and to seek funding for this to take place.

## 11. Date of Next Meeting

Following consideration of future meeting dates, it was:

Resolved that the next meeting of North Ronaldsay Community Council would be held on Monday, 7 April 2025 at 19:30.

## 12. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 22:00.