

At a meeting of **LERWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL** held in the Town Hall Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick, at 7.00pm

Present

Mr J Anderson
Mr R Anderson
Cllr G Feather
Ms K Fraser

Mr A Johnston
Cllr E Knight (left at 7.50pm)
Mr P Scarsbrook

Additional Co-opted Members

Mr J Ogg
Mrs A Simpson

Ms B Wishart (left at 8.15pm)

In Attendance

PS G McCarthy, Lerwick Police Station
Mr M Miller, Shetland Amenity Trust
Mr S Cooper, Shetland Amenity Trust
Ms Joanne Jamieson, Radio Shetland
Mr Mark Latham, Shetland Times
Miss C Duncan, Clerk

Chairman

Mr P Scarsbrook, Vice Chairman of the Council, presided.

05/01/01

Circular

The Circular calling the meeting was held as read.

05/01/02

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr L Angus, Mr I Bruce, Cllr J Henry, Cllr J Irvine, Mr J MacLeod, Mr M Peterson and Mr T Nicolson.

05/01//03

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2004 were approved on the motion of Mr J Anderson and seconded by Ms K Fraser.

04/11/12.3 SIC - Roads Maintenance, Lerwick

Mr R Anderson pointed out that he was not present at that meeting and so did not make the statement credited to him. This should have read "Ms K Fraser asked...."

05/01/04

Business Arising

4.1 Shetland Taxi Owners' Association

Cllr G Feather stated that the decision to continue the provision of a taxi rank at Victoria Pier had not actually been made at the time of the last meeting.

Mr P Scarsbrook agreed, noting that the Chairman had said he understood this was the case. He confirmed that the matter had been resolved and the taxi owners will continue at the rank on Victoria Pier until March 2006, by when it is hoped another site will have been identified.

4.2 Commercial Street Parking

Cllr E Knight stated that the area in question was actually to the rear of the Thulecraft premises on the Esplanade. He had previously investigated this as a councillor over a year ago following complaints to him by members of the public. The area is owned by Thulecraft and is private property, therefore the police have no powers to do anything.

PS G McCarthy confirmed that this was the case. They are currently in discussion with the SIC Roads Department with a view to creating designated parking bays in a controlled zone and possibly marking out a footpath. In the meantime it will be patrolled by the Traffic Warden.

4.3 Financial Statement

Mr R Anderson asked if there had been any response from the Liaison group yet. Miss C Duncan confirmed that she had written to them but no response had been received to date.

4.4 Pedestrianisation of Commercial Street

Mr J Anderson noted that it stated in the minutes that this would be an agenda item for this meeting. Miss C Duncan apologised for omitting it from the agenda and agreed to include it at the next meeting.

4.5 Community Council Elections

Ms K Fraser asked if there had been any nominations for the vacant post. Miss C Duncan confirmed that there had been none and that the Lerwick Community Council were now able to start the co-option process.

4.6 Sound Primary School

Cllr G Feather had been in contact with the secretary of Sound School, who wished her thanks for the recent grant assistance to be passed on to the Community Council.

05/01/05

Police Report

PS G McCarthy stated he had not been able to attend a meeting since 18 October 2004 so all figures were for the period from then to 16 January 2005. The figures were as follows:

1518 incidents logged in the Lerwick area

22 thefts	6 detected
33 vandalisms	5 detected
20 assaults	11 detected
36 drug searches	13 positive
9 drink drivers	
200 hours of foot patrol	

Following a recent spate of thefts from the changing rooms at Clickimin Centre, PS McCarthy confirmed that a number of juveniles had been reported to the Reporter of the Children's Panel in connection with the thefts. Enquiries were also ongoing with relation to the assaults.

The new Special Constables are now active and are out on patrol with regular officers. He hoped people were aware of an increased police presence on Commercial Street now that the extra staff were available.

Mr R Anderson asked if the parking problem on the Esplanade discussed earlier was perceived a problem by the public and if access was restricted to pedestrians.

PS McCarthy said the problem was with inconsiderate drivers who parked in the area, forcing pedestrians and those with pushchairs out onto the road into oncoming traffic in order to get past them.

Mr P Scarsbrook noted that the pelican crossing at the Esplanade had recently been out of action and that some people presumed it reverted to a zebra crossing when this occurred.

PS McCarthy stated that this was incorrect procedure. It was up to Shetland Islands Council to put up signage in this case, and that people should use proper procedures to cross the road in accordance with the Highway Code. Courteous drivers may allow pedestrians to cross as if it was a zebra crossing but they were not obliged to do so.

Mr R Anderson asked if there was any progression on the proposed CCTV system.

PS McCarthy replied that a feasibility study was about to get underway. He was not directly involved with the study but thought it was a joint operation between the police and the Shetland Islands Council. He was not sure which department of the Council were dealing with the study or when the results were expected to be reported back. One problem was areas for housing the monitors required as part of the system. A refurbishment was underway at the Police Station and they were working to incorporate the monitors. These works should be completed in February.

Mr R Anderson suggested that the Lerwick Community Council write to the SIC Chief Executive to find out which department, if any, were involved in the study.

Mr J Anderson asked how many incidents in the police report had occurred within the proposed CCTV area.

PS McCarthy confirmed that between 18 October 2004 and 16 January 2005, there were 400 incidents in the town centre area. This area covered the town centre from Church Road to the roundabout at Grantfield, and included King Harald Street.

Mr J Anderson replied that these 400 incidents amounted for only a quarter of the total reported.

Cllr G Feather asked if the Community Support Workers had started their duties yet.

PS McCarthy replied that they had. They were in constant touch with the Police Station and had contacted them with regard to a number of incidents. The initiative was working well. He confirmed that they had no powers of arrest but could restrain a person until police arrived. They were not in a uniform so perhaps not easily recognised, and this was something the SIC were looking into.

Mr P Scarsbrook thanked PS McCarthy for attending; he left the meeting at 7.20pm.

05/01/06

Shetland Public Open Spaces Strategy

Mr Malcolm Miller was present as a representative of the Shetland Amenity Trust. He has been employed to do a study into Shetland's public open spaces. The Shetland Islands Council are in the process of reviewing their contracts for grass cutting and maintenance in parks, housing estates and other public areas. At present there was the possibility for up to 3 different contractors to be hired by 3 different departments to maintain the same area. The Shetland Islands Council recognised there had to be a better way of doing things and so the strategy was launched.

Mr Miller plans to speak to community councils and other groups to obtain feedback. He wanted to establish the feelings of the public with regard to grass cutting, hard landscaping of areas, the approaches to Lerwick, tree or shrub planting, etc. It was hoped that any community groups would want to get more involved in the maintenance of the grassy areas, or that residents would want to form a group to help maintain their neighbourhood.

Mr Steven Cooper explained that the reason for the study was to find out if there were any strong views held on doing other things than cutting grass, for example, planting of wild flowers, etc.

Ms K Fraser said she couldn't volunteer any groups and felt this initiative would have to be advertised. She was concerned that groups may take it on in the first place but be unable to continue once they had started.

Mr Miller stated that this was just a spin off. They would have to invest capital to improve planting, and they may be able to reduce the need for maintenance in the future.

Mr R Anderson said he had listened with interest but didn't approve of hard landscaping.

Mr P Scarsbrook said that tenants wanted to preserve any grassy areas for children to play on, and bushes and planting stopped this. In larger estates such as Haldane Burgess Crescent area or Sandveien, they didn't want to see grassy areas wasted. He felt the residents should be consulted.

Mr Cooper replied that they were in discussion with residents, in particular those in the area of the Fish Box at Sound, where they proposed to create a nicer area with the waste land at the side of the shop.

Mrs A Simpson proposed planting be done on the grass opposite the Brevik Hospital on South Road, as it was a space where children couldn't play because of the slope. She felt it would be more eye catching and nicer to look at if it had a bit of colour.

Mr Cooper replied it was exactly the type of area they were looking at.

Mr Miller said he would like to defend hard landscaping. It didn't always mean covering an area with large stones. He took the North Ness Business Park as an example, where planting had been mixed effectively with paving.

Mr R Anderson pointed out that the weather and wind direction would have to be taken into consideration when planting anything. The trees planted at Westerloch were exposed and didn't appear to have grown in the last 5-6 years. He felt the slope at the Brevik had no shelter from the wind.

Mr Miller said they were also looking at any areas where it would be better to leave the grass uncut and allow to develop with natural wild flowers.

Mr Cooper said they planned to present the findings of the study to the Shetland Islands Council as soon as possible. It would require funding to allow planting and if no funding was available they would have to continue with grass cutting only.

Mr R Anderson asked if the intention of the strategy was to reduce costs, or to increase the cost of maintaining open spaces.

Mr Cooper replied that cutting grass would cost no more than maintenance. At the moment it was still an idea to see in there was any possible outcome. He agreed there would be an initial cost to pay for bulbs and seeds for any wild flower areas, but they wouldn't be funding proper flower beds as they were high cost and high maintenance.

Mr R Anderson said he felt the public would prefer what was cut before to continue being cut. He asked for reassurance that any areas currently being cut would continue to be so.

Mr Cooper confirmed that all areas would continue to be maintained. If the public preferred landscaping they would look at doing this, but if they wanted to continue having grass cut they would do so. He noted that a lot of people were happy to continue with things the way they were at the moment but the consultation should identify any areas for improvement.

Mr J Ogg asked if it would be possible to involve schools in perhaps producing a sculpture for any area as an art project.

Mr Miller replied that his brief included public art to create focal points, and involving schools would help attract more funding. He had already identified art in public spaces as a good lever for possible grant sources.

Mr P Scarsbrook said he found it to be an interesting project and hoped they got all the feedback they required from the public and residents of the areas. Anything to enhance the environment was a good thing. He noted that getting groups to continue to maintain sites may be a problem but they should be encouraged to get involved and he hoped the initiative progressed.

He thanked Mr Cooper and Mr Miller for their time, and they left at 8.00pm.

05/01/07

SIC (Parking Place for Disabled Persons' Vehicle) Order 2004

7.1 St Olaf Street Noted

7.2 Norstane Noted

05/01/08

Correspondence

8.1 Bells Brae Primary School - Thanks Noted

8.2 Scottish Ambulance Service

Noted.

8.3 Scottish Water - Sletts Footpath

Mr R Anderson noted that Scottish Water said they had no sewers in the area so they did not have responsibility for this. He suggested writing to SEPA, enclosing a copy of Scottish Water's letter, and also to SIC Environmental Health and find out what they proposed to do about the matter, as the sewer discharges onto dry land.

8.4 Shetland Enterprise - CED Area

Mr R Anderson asked what CED stood for. As Miss Duncan was unable to respond, he suggested that in future copies of correspondence be included in the minutes as a reminder of the context.

8.5 Shetland Islands Council - Pavements - Disabled Access

Mr R Anderson suggested the Community Council write to Mr Neil Robertson asking for the source of the "normally accepted maximum slope" referred to in his letter, and to clarify if it is a statutory rule or a guideline used by the Shetland Islands Council. He agreed a dropped kerb was necessary but queried whether it had to continue along the width of the pavement.

Mr J Anderson said that the problem was that the pavement was sloped right across it and not just at the edge where access was required. This meant they dropped and rose again at each access point, which caused more problems for pedestrians.

8.6 Shetland Islands Council - Pelican Crossings

Mr P Scarsbrook noted this had already been discussed with PS G McCarthy during his Police Report.

Mr R Anderson expressed concern that Shetland Islands Council were aware of a number of problems nationwide with respect to manufacturing faults. He asked if, in view of the recent difficulties caused by the breakdown of the lights, could they not keep some spare parts in stock to replace breakages.

Mr P Scarsbrook agreed to write to the Shetland Islands Council noting the disruption caused by the breakdown.

8.7 Shetland Islands Council - Roads Maintenance

Mr R Anderson said that in previous years, the Lerwick Community Council had received a annual list of proposed road improvements in the town from the Shetland Islands Council. He suggested writing to them to ask if this practice could recommence.

8.8 Shetland Islands Council - Planning Applications

Noted

05/01/09

Financial Report

Noted. Mr R Anderson expressed concern that no response had yet been received from the Liaison Group with regard to the amount of funding that could be carried over by each Community Council. He noted that there had not been a meeting of the Group for a considerable time. He suggested writing to the Chief Executive of the Shetland Islands Council, with a copy to Miss Wendy Fraser of the Association of Shetland Community Councils, urgently requesting a much needed meeting of the Liaison Group.

He also asked that Members be aware of any projects which the Community Council could assist or help with and to bring their views forward.

05/01/10

Any Other Business

10.1 West Baila/Punds Road

Cllr G Feather stated that it had been brought to his attention by a resident in the area that the contractor had never finished work to the roads so they were still unadopted by the Shetland Islands Council. The resident has been trying to sort the situation since he bought his property four years ago. The Roads Department had promised the work would be done but it was still outstanding. Some houses in the area had been there for up to 15 years. The Shetland Islands Council at present grit the road and remove snow but they don't own the road. It is still owned by the contractor as the work is not finished.

Mr R Anderson noted that other roads in the area were adopted.

Cllr G Feather confirmed that this road had never been taken over by the Council. The Roads Department had given deadlines but had not kept to them. The road had been surfaced but parts of it were breaking up. There were problems with street lighting, and drainage systems had not been completed. The residents were fed up with the situation and wanted it resolved.

Mr J Anderson said this was a private scheme and queried whether the Shetland Islands Council should make good.

Mr R Anderson noted that if there were problems with the road surface, lighting and drainage, the Council would not want to take it over in that condition. He was not sure if they could force the contractor to complete. He suggested writing to the Shetland Islands Council, noting that Cllr G Feather had been involved on behalf of the residents for the last 6 months and had not been successful in obtaining answers. He suggested asking them if they were responsible for dealing with the contractors or if it was the responsibility of the residents. He felt the length of time involved in trying to resolve this situation was appalling.

Mr P Scarsbrook agreed, noting that they needed to be aware of the legalities of the situation.

10.2 Quoys Development

Cllr G Feather stated that he had spoken to Hjalmland Housing Association and they had confirmed that the first tenants of the Quoys estate would be in their homes by June and all heavy machinery would be off site by then. Landscaping was due to begin in the lower area by the end of April, weather permitting. Work would begin soon on the 15 private sites, with blasting of all sites being done in one go.

10.3 Quorum

Ms K Fraser asked if the meeting was still quorate, as two members had left early, leaving only 6 members in attendance.

Mr P Scarsbrook thought it had to be at least one third of elected members, therefore it could still go on, but he wasn't sure.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.

MR P SCARBROOK
VICE CHAIRMAN
LERWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL