

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
Ms K Fraser
Cllr J Henry
Cllr J Irvine

Mr A Johnston
Cllr E Knight
Mr T Nicolson
Mrs A Simpson
Cllr W Stove

Additional Co-Opted Members

Mr D Ristori
Mr W Spence

Mr M Shearer

In Attendance

Mr J Riise, SIC Legal & Administration (left 8.15pm)
Miss C Duncan, Clerk to the Council

Chairman

Mr T Nicolson, Chairman of the Council, presided

06/01/01 **Circular**

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

06/01/02 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr L Angus, Cllr A Cluness, Cllr G Feather, Mr J MacLeod, Mr M Peterson and Mr P Scarsbrook.

06/01/03 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 19 December 2005 were approved by Mr R Anderson and seconded by Ms K Fraser.

The Chairman thanked Mr P Scarsbrook for chairing the December meeting at such short notice, and said it was very much appreciated.

The Chairman noted that the Clerk would contact Faber Maunsell for copies of the minutes of the public meeting held prior to the December Community Council meeting, and distribute to all members.

06/01/04 **Business Arising**

05/12/04 Coastal Erosion

Mr R Anderson asked if any correspondence had been received yet and the Clerk confirmed there had been none. It was agreed to write again.

06/01/05

Police Report

No representative of the Northern Constabulary was present so no report was given.

06/01/06

Boundaries - Mr J Riise, SIC Legal & Administration Department

Mr Riise confirmed that he had attended December's meeting to discuss

1. Gulberwick and whether or not they joined up with Lerwick Community Council, and
2. Ward Boundaries within Lerwick and their sub-division

He had attended the recent meeting of Gulberwick, Cunningsburgh and Quarff Community Council and could confirm that they had unanimously agreed to retain the status quo. They had no enthusiasm for Gulberwick either going on their own or joining up with Lerwick.

He stated he would report back this information unless Lerwick Community Council felt strongly otherwise.

The Chairman agreed that the status quo should remain and noted that these areas had been established over many years, and he felt planning issues would come to the forefront in the future, so the areas should remain as they are. He thought that having 4 members for Lerwick South who were also eligible to attend the Gulberwick, Cunningsburgh and Quarff Community Council meetings would be beneficial, and felt it was a better arrangement than at present.

Cllr J Irvine noted that after the elections and when the dust settled, there would significant changes from what Shetland is used to at the moment. He felt some of the areas were currently hybrid areas invented by the Boundary Commission and he thought this was quite ludicrous. He looked forward to restoring the communities to the way they were in the past and fully supported proportional representation.

The Chairman noted there were issues of major importance that would arise in the future and the changes would be beneficial, especially to councillors when debating planning issues.

Cllr W Stove asked for clarification that after the elections, the members of Lerwick South would be eligible to attend the Gulberwick meetings.

Mr Riise confirmed that this would be the case, but it did not mean that the members of South Mainland would be entitled to attend Lerwick meetings.

The Chairman expressed his concern at the route the Boundaries Commission appeared to be taking, and felt that there was a possibility of Shetland being "lumped in" with Highland region for proportional

representation. He thought they may be trying to equalise the numbers in each constituency.

Cllr W Stove agreed that this caused him concern too. He thought this would cause unrest within Members of Parliament on the mainland and this would be a matter to watch carefully in the future.

The Chairman noted that, for the next elections, Lerwick would be split into two wards - Lerwick North with 3 members and Lerwick South with 4 members. Lerwick Community Council had historically had 8 councillors serving Lerwick, with 2 Community Councillors serving each ward. Prior to the last elections this was 9 councillors and 18 members, and then the wards were re-adjusted to 8 councillors and 16 members. At the last election Lerwick was classed as a whole and not individual wards, and it was agreed at that time to review it in 3 years time, a year before the next elections.

Mr Riise noted that this was the third time the Boundary Commission had reviewed the wards and each time they had carved a piece of Lerwick. Bressay had been added to the Lerwick Harbour ward but had retained its own Community Council.

Lerwick, last time around, had reduced one member and it would be the same this time. Due to personal circumstances prior to the last election there had been no time to amend the constitution so he had to move one ward of 16 members to allow the election to go ahead on schedule. This time they had the luxury of having 8 or 9 months to plan for the next election and had the option to make changes.

He stressed that members would need to consider the options carefully, and he reminded everyone that he would be unable to help with electoral roles if the choice is too much. He can help if they choose the 2 member ward - any other permeation won't match so would cause difficulties.

If they chose wards it would be easier for him, as individual ward elections could be held, although open candidature could make it easier to recruit people from any area.

Cllr J Irvine noted that they could have re-arranged and had wards after the last election but they didn't. He felt LCC should stick to 14 members, which was the equivalent of the 2 wards with a total of 7 councillors. He moved to recommend 14 councillors for all of Lerwick.

The Chairman said he tended to agree although he was not sure about 14 councillors. As the members were all volunteers, they did not cost anything to anyone and so he felt they should remain at 16. He felt it was important to keep as many people interested in the community as possible. There had only been once occasion in the past when the meeting had not been quorate. He would be in favour of 16 councillors.

Cllr J Irvine amended to 16 members with one ward and the Chairman seconded this.

Mr R Anderson noted his support of this too. He would like to see 16 members for all of Lerwick and not 14. He would be disappointed if the numbers were reduced to 14. He felt Lerwick had a decreasing influence in votes by Shetland Islands Council, as only 1/3 of councillors were Lerwick-based.

Cllr W Stove noted that he would not be standing at the next Shetland Island Council election, but he was in favour of one ward. He wondered if this worked better than individual wards or not.

The Chairman stated this was difficult to ascertain but he certainly had correspondence with people from all over Lerwick, not just his neighbourhood. He felt it generally worked well.

Cllr J Henry felt that, in practice, certain members had knowledge of certain subjects and so the public approached members of the Community Council accordingly.

The Chairman asked about the voting system, and if it would be a list of names that people marked.

Mr Riise confirmed that this would be the case, and that people had the right to chose as many (up to 16) or as few as they wanted. Any vote for more than 16 would be classed as a spoilt vote. It would be a postal vote, which would allow people more time to think about who they wanted to elect. He anticipated a big response this way and felt it would take about half a day to count all the votes.

He added that, once the dust settled after the election, it would be up to each Community Council to organise their business for members on a functional basis or a geographical basis. His department had a list of all the members and so could filter queries to the appropriate member. This would take pressure off the Clerk.

The result of the election would be available before the December 2006 meeting.

06/01/07

Future Use of St Clement's Hall, St Olaf Street - Informal Consultation

Mr Riise requested to stay to hear the outcome of the debate so he could report back to author of the report, who is in his department.

Mr R Anderson though that, as the hall is situated next to an old folks' home and in the middle of a residential area, it was quite a crowded area already and did not want to see an increase in noise levels. He suggested passing it over to Islesburgh Community Centre, to use as a "high energy space" as they had lost their badminton area during the refurbishment a few years ago. He did not think the hall should be converted to accommodation.

Mr Riise noted that the building had to be retained but they were open to any suggestions for its use.

The Chairman thought that there were adequate leisure facilities in Lerwick but there was a lack of housing. He agreed it was not an ideal building to renovate but felt that this was a much greater need than leisure facilities.

Mrs A Simpson agreed, noting that Hjalmland Housing Association had already expressed an interest in renovating the building. She supported their application to convert into accommodation.

Cllr J Irvine agreed with Mrs Simpson and thought that Hjalmland Housing Association had access to fund options not available to Shetland Islands Council so would be more likely to be successful in attracting funding.

Cllr E Knight also agreed with the suggestion, stating that there was a crying need for accommodation in Lerwick. He noted that Hjalmland had successfully converted Chapel House into accommodation and felt they could do a similar job at St Clement's Hall.

The Chairman confirmed that the majority were in favour of converting into residential use and that this should be suggested to Mr Drummond-Hunt as the Community Council's first choice, with leisure facilities the second choice.

06/01/08

Oil Depot, North Ness, Lerwick

Mr A Hamilton has written to BP to request that they move the oil depot out of the North Ness area. The Chairman noted that this had been discussed many times in the past but the owners had wanted Shetland Islands Council to pay for them to move. He felt it was now time to look seriously at relocating the site. At present it is situated in a residential area with a number of new office blocks recently been constructed in the area. This meant there were a significant amount of people in the area at all times of the day.

He thought a more suitable site was Dales Voe. The owners should now be told to move their highly inflammable fuels from the site as soon as possible, and at the very least within the next 2 years. The heating oil was not as volatile so could be moved on a different timescale.

Cllr J Irvine agreed and noted this had been discussed informally within the Shetland Islands Council for many years. He said he would make it his business to ensure that the Infrastructure Committee took it up. He supported everything the Chairman had said and would undertake to get discussions underway within Shetland Islands Council in the coming months. He felt a need to look at the Esplanade depot too as they couldn't be seen to attack one site and not the other.

The Chairman stated that the Esplanade site did not store oil but was offices and parking for empty vehicles. He did not think that vehicles were laden with fuel when they parked there overnight.

Cllr E Knight noted that this was in his ward and people had been asking him for years when it would be moved. He would like to see the results of the public enquiry into the explosion at Bruntsfield Depot and pointed out that BP would not move out just because they were being asked to.

Cllr J Irvine felt it was now time to take a stand and it shouldn't take a near disaster, such as the recent incident at Bruntsfield, to make that decision.

The Chairman agreed and noted that this had been debated over the last 8 or 9 years. He felt that Shetland Islands Council should prohibit the owners from adding any further infrastructure there in the future to make them look at a new site. He thought restrictions on siting the tanks would have made them look elsewhere sooner. He awaited with interest the outcome of the Bruntsfield enquiry and also the response from BP on the request to move the site. He gave full backing to Mr Hamilton's letter.

The Chairman thanked Mr Riise for attending and he left at 8.15pm.

06/01/09

Historic Scotland - Clickimin Broch

The Chairman stated he had not been impressed by the lack of enthusiasm shown by Historic Scotland in their recent letter so had contacted them himself that day to discuss further. He had also been down to look at the site and the fencing around the Broch.

He had suggested to Historic Scotland that the existing 5ft high chain link fence could be increased to 10ft high and the gates kept locked. He would like a sign on the gate stating that no one under the age of 15 years was allowed to the Broch unless accompanied by an adult. The key could be kept at Sound Service Station, as was the situation some years ago, as it was convenient and open from 8am to 8pm. He felt these measures would go a long way towards protecting both the lights and the broch itself.

Mrs A Simpson asked if Historic Scotland were willing to pay for improvements to fencing.

The Chairman replied that he had been told they had plenty of money and it was not a problem. They would pay a fee to the key keeper. He had suggested a cheaper option would be to run barbed wire along the top of the existing fence and gates, but had been told Historic Scotland had plenty of money and could afford to do better than that.

Mr R Anderson thought that a 10ft fence may cause a planning problem, and Cllr W Stove noted that the Sound Service Station already kept a spare key for the Sandveien Neighbourhood Centre, free of charge.

The Chairman said he would await the outcome with interest. The member of the public who had offered to make guards for the lights was still keen to do so but they would concentrate on the fencing at the moment and go for the guards if nothing was forthcoming from Historic Scotland.

He added that a number of members of the public had commented on the lights being repaired and working again, and they were all very appreciative.

06/01/10

Correspondence

10.1 ASCC - Free Travel for Pensioners' Scheme

Noted. The Chairman added that he had impressed on Tavish Scott the importance of this and that the general view of Shetland residents was the same as Lerwick Community Council. Mr Scott has agreed that it needs to be looked at.

10.2 CLAN Cancer Support Centre

The Chairman stated he had met a representative of CLAN House recently and he felt that there were very few families in Shetland who had not had the benefit of the services offered by CLAN House. It had been in threat of being pulled down to make way for the building of a new road but was not now under such a threat. He had asked CLAN to keep the Community Council informed what was happening and he hoped they would be able to give as much support as possible to retaining CLAN House where it was.

Cllr J Henry noted that this was an extremely busy traffic area but CLAN House must be supported as much as possible. It was situated pretty much on an island and so could be under pressure from planners in the future.

The Chairman added that there was a need to retain such standards and noted the ideal location of the House. The site was very important to the future of the organisation. It was agreed to write to them offering the support of Lerwick Community Council and thanks for all they have done for our community.

06/01/11

Financial Report

The Chairman noted he was disappointed to see that there had been no applications for grant assistance since September 2005, although he was not sure of the reason why. There were only two meetings left to pay grants or the remainder of the budget would be deducted from future awards. If that situation continued, there could be no budget awarded in the future.

Mrs A Simpson asked if there was any way of informing the public that there was money available. The Chairman replied that an advert could be placed in the local press but it would have to be worded very carefully, otherwise there could be a lot of applications which did not qualify for consideration.

Mr R Anderson noted that the money could be spent on projects, not just grant applications.

The Chairman said he had been disappointed at the standard of the Christmas lights this year, despite a grant of £500 awarded earlier in the year. He had spoken to Mr L Smith of the Lerwick Town Centre Association who had explained that they stored the lights in a shed at the back of the fort which had an electricity supply so that they could test and repair lights.

However, during development of the Hillhead, some of these buildings had been taken away, including their shed. They had managed to move them to another building but this had no electricity supply so they were unable to do their maintenance checks.

The Chairman suggested that the Community Council could perhaps fund to get electricity connected to the shed and to improve the standard of the Christmas lights. Mr Smith was already in contact with a company who supplied them following a recent trip to Glasgow.

Cllr E Knight noted that the Community Council had agreed about 3 years ago to erect a commemorative plaque on Ganson's Buildings at the Market Green.

The Chairman agreed and asked the Clerk to contact the Planning Department to find out if planning permission was required.

He also noted that historically a number of grant applications had been received in the last few months of each financial year and expected there to be a few coming in.

06/01/12 **Planning Application - Create Car Park, Chris Hodge Direct**

Mr J Anderson asked if any comments had been received from the Roads Department as the car park exited from an already busy junction.

Cllr J Irvine noted that he had asked in the past for more information to be presented along with the application so that members could discuss each one fully, not just from the relevant council department but from other interested organisations, e.g. Scottish Natural Heritage, Historic Scotland, etc.

Mr R Anderson moved no objection and was seconded by Mrs A Simpson.

The Chairman agreed, adding that he would like to include his concern at the busy road junction.

06/01/13 **Any Other Business**

13.1 Pavement at Clydesdale Bank, Lerwick

Mrs A Simpson had been approached by a member of the public who had fallen on the steep pavement at the side of the Clydesdale Bank. It was agreed to write to Shetland Islands Council requesting a hand-rail be erected to assist pedestrians.

13.2 Waterfront Development

The Chairman gave an update on the planned waterfront development. A public meeting held last year had been very well attended and lots of good ideas had come from it. A working group has been formed and have been meeting to try to bring the plans forward. The Chairman has requested that he be included in this working group.

Mr D Ristori confirmed that he was also a member of the working group and that they had had some good ideas and suggestions.

The Chairman felt that it was very important to appoint a co-ordinator to action the points raised by the working group and to source funding for the project from various organisations. At the moment he felt the group were like "a ship without a crew" and that the sooner someone was appointed to oversee the operation the better. He looked forward to seeing the group successfully achieve their aims.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

MR T R NICOLSON
CHAIRMAN
LERWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL