



Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 17th July 2024

1.0 Present:	Andrew Archer (Chair)	Catherine Hughson
	Linda Tulloch (Vice Chair)	Moraig Lyall
	Charlie Hodge	
	John Clarkson	
	Birgit Wagner	
	Neil Leask	
	Margaret Cooper	

2.0 Apologies:	Martin Randall, Paul Stevens (Clerk), Davie Sandison, Michael Duncan
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3.0 Declarations of Interest:	Andrew Archer declared an interest in grant decisions for the SCBF, Linda Tulloch in matters relating to Tulloch Developments, John Clarkson in matters relating to Viking, and Catherine Hughson in matters relating to planning.
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4.0 Approval of Minutes

On a motion proposed by Margaret Cooper and seconded by Neil Leask, the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 19th June 2024 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

5.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes

- Upgrade to the Wormadale viewpoint: deferred to next month.
- Copper-line cutoff: a response had been received from both Ofcom and the SIC Resilience Advisor, both of which indicated acceptance that the cutoff would occur regardless of concerns.

[Moraig Lyall arrived at this point]

The Ofcom reply referred to several guidance documents, one of which was [Protecting access to emergency organisations when there is a power cut at the customer’s premises \(2018\)](#). This document covers the supply of one hour backup power but notes that this will only be free for customers classed as ‘vulnerable’, where a mobile phone would not be a practical substitute. It notes that “some individual customers may require protection beyond one hour, for example if they live in households that have a history of long-duration power outages” and considers that “providers should take appropriate steps to identify and address the needs of customers who would benefit from additional protection”, although it does not define what would constitute a ‘history’ of outages nor specify what ‘additional protection’ might entail, and does state that there is an acceptance that exceptional circumstances will occur that cannot be provided for. However, another document — [The future of fixed telephone services \(2019\)](#) — describes how “a number of organisations, including Ofcom, have a role to play in making sure customers experience minimal disruption and are protected from harm” as a result of the cutoff.

The recent BT event at Lerwick Library showcased some of the suggested backup solutions, which were variants of time-limited uninterruptable power supply (UPS) devices. Many concerns were expressed about the ease of use of such devices by older residents, and whether the duration would be sufficient for Shetland circumstances, for which there did not appear to be any ready answers. While members noted that SIC and local MSPs/MP were aware of and actively working on the issue, they felt that it should be made clear to Ofcom that suppliers need to ensure people in Shetland, and others in similar circumstances, are provided with adequate solutions as standard. Vulnerability status in such circumstances can change rapidly for anyone, and the current focus on improving mast resilience is less of an issue than mobile phone/UPS battery life.

→ ACTION: Andrew Archer to write to Ofcom to emphasise that backup provisions need to be much improved for Shetland and similar areas, if the avoidance of harm to customers is to be adequately addressed.

- Road repairs (section 96): a reply had been received from Neil Hutcheson, which indicated that road damage would be assessed over the winter and the costs charged to SSE. The earliest date for any repairs would then be starting May 2025, with the likelihood of any substantive repair work being added to the existing works programme over the next few years.
- Letter to SCBF regarding the Memorandum of Understanding: a reply had been received restating that the SCBF consider their current position of being the final arbiter of decisions to be reasonable. While members did not agree with this position, they could see no further avenue to challenge it.
 - ACTION: Andrew Archer to sign the agreement and return it to SCBF.
- SCBF Director nominee: no update as yet.

6.0 Decisions since last meeting

None.

7.0 Police Report

The police report for April/May 2024 was circulated to members. There were no issues that members wished to raise.

8.0 Finance

- The Financial Report, updated to 10th July 2024, was distributed to members.
- There was one grant application to be considered, from the Whiteness & Weisdale Welfare Committee (WWWC) for £637. This would be used, in conjunction with SCBF funding (#180523), to repair and restore the War Memorial. Members were in favour of granting both applications to the full amount.
 - ACTION: The Clerk to inform the WWWC that their application was successful.

9.0 Correspondence

- The SIC are reviewing their winter roads maintenance policy in light of the increasing number of drivers travelling outwith the hours that the Council's winter service currently operates, the current lack of footpath gritting on Sundays, and difficulties with the treatment of footpaths in rural areas. They had requested a response from the CC. Members were in favour of the proposed improvements.
 - ACTION: The Clerk to respond on behalf of the CC, indicating support for the proposals.
 - A Covid memorial plaque — part of the Scottish *Remembering Together* project — had been sent to the CC for display. Local halls do not have suitable display cabinets but the Bonhoga Gallery has offered to host it, which members felt would be a suitable location.
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- Bonhoga Gallery is seeking funding from the Coastal Communities Fund to complete the renovation work, and asked that the CC provide a letter of support. Members were in favour of this.
 - ACTION: The Clerk to provide a letter of support for the Bonhoga Gallery on behalf of the CC, to be sent to Shetland Arts.
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10.0 Planning

- 2023/252/PPP Proposed 3 No. House Sites, turning head, access road. A query to SIC Planning revealed this had been sent in error and has now been withdrawn.
 - 2019/079/DCON12 Discharge of condition 18 — Permanent parking provision. No response needed.
 - SCOP-0048 Arven offshore wind farm scoping consultation.
 - ACTION: The Clerk to submit a response stating that members feel they should be asked to comment on the whole project and not just the offshore part i.e., taking the cumulative impact into account. They are wary that any unqualified approval of the first part could be used as a rationale for approving subsequent stages (e.g., onshore infrastructure).
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11.0 Viking / Statkraft

- A question at the last VCLG about the reinstatement of verges got a reply from the Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution (SHEPD), who are responsible for the burying of the 33kV cables. This simply restated that discussions with partners are ongoing, with more information to follow at some unspecified future date. Further enquiries received no response.
 - ACTION: Andrew Archer to write to Christopher Burchell (SHEPD Managing Director) expressing the CC's dissatisfaction with the lack of information.
 - Concerns had been expressed to the CC about ongoing speeding of SSE vehicles. John Holden (SIC Planning) informed members that he has written to SSE to remind them of their responsibilities regarding the control of both speed and dust on their site.
 - During discussion of ongoing issues, members asked whether water testing had started yet, as had originally been planned.
 - ACTION: Andrew Archer to write to John Thouless to ask about the current schedule for water testing.
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12.0 Win Furt

The remainder of the funding from the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund has been used to purchase more flower bulbs, which will be planted later this year.

13.0 SCBF

- AGS 180523 Whiteness & Weisdale Welfare Committee for £500 (covered under item 8).
 - ACTION: The Clerk to inform Eleanor Gear that the full amount was awarded.
 - AGS 180524 Whiteness & Weisdale History Group for £330 [*Andrew Archer recused himself from the discussion*]
 - ACTION: The Clerk to inform Eleanor Gear that the full amount was awarded.
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14.0 Roads

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- Approaching Girlsta via the Stromfirth road, there are roadworks at the junction. There have been reports of vehicles (e.g., lorries) parked in the left-hand lane which obscure the traffic lights for drivers turning right onto the A970.
 - ACTION: The Clerk to write to Roads to ask them to emphasise to the relevant contractors that visibility needs to be ensured for all road users.
 - Gullies on road down to the voe at Wормadale (next to the ex-Council houses, adjacent to path) are not draining sufficiently, causing water to overflow.
 - ACTION: The Clerk to write to Roads asking that the gullies be cleaned to allow proper water drainage.
 - Members noted that, despite previous patching attempts, potholes were again becoming a problem on the Nesbister road (on the section past the cattle grid, next to the water pumping station).
 - ACTION: The Clerk to write to Roads asking that the potholes on the Nesbister road be repaired.
 - Members noted that the planned extension of the crash barriers at the head of Whiteness voe had not yet happened.
 - ACTION: The Clerk to write to Neil Hutcheson to ask about the schedule for the crash barrier extension.

15.0 Councillors' Reports

- Catherine Hughson has been on annual leave.
- Moraig Lyall has been busy with various meetings about ongoing transport issues.

16.0 AOCB

None.

17.0 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be on the 21st August, in the Whiteness and Weisdale Public Hall.
