

MINUTES of The First STATUTORY
MEETING of the ORKNEY ISLANDS
COUNCIL held in the COUNTY OFFICES,
KIRKWALL, on 28th May 1974 at
2.30 p.m.

Present: A T Annal, J Chalmers, E R Eunson, N L Firth, W D Firth,
Mrs L Grimond, J Groat, W Groundwater, R Hancock, W E Knight,
J Laughton, Col R A A S Macrae, G R Marwick, Mrs C M Muir,
Mrs B M Robertson, Mrs S Roebuck, John Scott (St Ola),
John Scott (Westray), G Stevenson, J A Tait, Rev E G S Traill,
O L Work, and T Zawadski

In Attendance: H A Graeme Lapsley

CHAIRMAN

1 Mr H A Graeme Lapsley advised the meeting that as Returning Officer for the first election of councillors to the Orkney Islands Council it fell to him to exercise the functions of Chairman until the completion of the election of the Convener. He welcomed members to the first meeting of the new Council and reminded them that the Standing Orders of Orkney County Council had been designated to apply to the meeting.

APPOINTMENT OF CONVENER

2 Mr Lapsley then called for nominations for the appointment of Convener. Provost Knight asked if he could move the suspension of Standing Orders in order that voting could be carried out by ballot. Mr Lapsley requested however that he withhold his motion until nominations had been made.

Mr John Scott (Westray) then proposed that Mr George R Marwick be appointed Convener and the motion was seconded by Mrs C M Muir. No further nominations were received and Mr Lapsley accordingly declared Mr Marwick appointed as Convener of the Orkney Islands Council.

Mr Lapsley suggested that when the Council formulated their Standing Orders the provision for a ballot could be borne in mind and members agreed that they should give this suggestion their consideration.

Mr Marwick then took the chair and made a brief address to the meeting. He said that he felt sure that members would agree that they should take an "Orkney-wide" view of their responsibilities and expressed the hope that the Council would work as a team and move positively and progressively in the early days. He welcomed all members of the Council and especially those who were inexperienced in local government administration but who were undoubtedly filled with a great enthusiasm for the work which lay ahead.

Mr Marwick continued by saying that it had taken eleven years of work in the reorganisation of local government to arrive at the point they had reached that day and he wished to pay a special tribute to Councillors and staff for all they had done in those intervening years. It was a privilege for Orkney to have its own Orkney Islands Council and members faced a great challenge as they now took office. He was sure that challenge would be met and that the Council would thus ensure that it was in the forefront of local government in Scotland.

In thanking members for the confidence they had shown in electing him Convener,

Mr Marwick assured them that he would do his utmost with their co-operation to work in the very best interests of Orkney in the future.

APPOINTMENT OF VICE CONVENER

3 Mr Marwick then said that as Convener it was his privilege to make nomination for the appointment of Vice Convener and he accordingly nominated Mr George Stevenson. The motion was seconded by Col R A A S Macrae.

Mr Marwick then called for further nominations. Mrs B M Robertson proposed the appointment of Provost W E Knight and this was seconded by Mr E R Eunson.

On a show of hands, 13 votes were cast for Mr George Stevenson and 4 votes for Provost W E Knight and Mr George Stevenson was therefore appointed to be Vice Convener of the Orkney Islands Council.

In thanking members for his appointment, Mr Stevenson said that he was deeply conscious of the honour conferred upon him that day and he would at all times use his best endeavours for the interests of Orkney. He was also deeply aware of the responsibilities placed on him and he assured members that he would do his utmost to merit the trust that had been placed in him. He assured the Convener that his help would at all times be readily available to him in the difficult days that undoubtedly lay ahead.

APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM CLERK

4 On the motion of Mr G R Marwick, seconded by the Rev E G S Traill, Mr H A Graeme Lapsley was appointed Interim Clerk to the Council.

DESIGNATION OF STANDING ORDERS FOR NEXT MEETING

5 Members then gave consideration to the designation of Standing Orders for their next meeting.

Rev Traill moved that the Standing Orders of Orkney County Council should apply and the motion was seconded by Mrs Muir with the provision that voting should be by ballot.

In general discussion, members were in agreement that Standing Orders for the Council would require to be studied in depth and reviewed in great detail before they were finally adopted.

After mature deliberation, it was resolved to adopt the Standing Orders of the County Council for the next meeting with the proviso that where elections of individuals to appointments was concerned, such elections should be by ballot.

APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

6 The Chairman told members that their first function would be the early appointment of a Chief Executive and he moved that the Council should go into committee in order to discuss the position. This was unanimously agreed and members of the public who were present then left the meeting.

Mr Lapsley then handed the Chairman sealed envelopes which had been forwarded by the Staff Commission containing applications for the post of Chief Executive. As Mr Lapsley was one of the applicants for the post, he withdrew from the meeting.

The Chairman explained that the Staff Commission had advertised the posts of Chief Executive for all the Regions, Districts and Island Areas and applications had been sent direct to the Commission. Twelve applications had been received and he then read out to the meeting the list of applicants and the positions they presently held. After members had given careful consideration to the matter, Mrs Muir moved that the appointment should be offered to the present County Clerk and General Manager of Orkney County Council, Mr H A Graeme Lapsley and the motion was seconded by Col Macrae. Members then unanimously agreed to offer the appointment to Mr Lapsley who was then recalled to the meeting.

The chairman then informed Mr Lapsley of the unanimous decision of the Council that he be formally offered the appointment of Chief Executive to the Orkney Islands Council and on behalf of members congratulated Mr Lapsley on his appointment to the post.

Mr Lapsley thanked members and said that he had much pleasure in accepting the offer of appointment. He felt that Orkney was a county well worth working for and he looked forward to the challenge of his new office.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

7 Members gave preliminary consideration to a memorandum which had been prepared by Mr Lapsley and had been previously circulated on suggestions for the committee structure for the Council. The memorandum set out the existing committee structure of Orkney County Council and contained suggestions regarding the type of committee structure which might be most suited to the new Council.

During a general discussion on the broad outline of the future committee structure, members made various suggestions which it was agreed would be borne in mind during more detailed consideration which would be given to the matter at a later meeting. Amongst these was the suggestion that housing might come under a separate committee and that the Policy and Resources Committee should be as widely representative as possible and not merely confined to a membership of Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of committees. It was also considered essential that a very close liaison should be maintained with community councils in order to ensure that members were kept fully aware of local opinion on matters affecting their areas.

It was also generally agreed that efforts should be made to programme committee meetings in such a way that members would not be placed in a position of having to choose which committee they should attend.

The financial affairs of the Council would require a great deal of detailed consideration and members considered that it would be of great help to them if the County Treasurer were to address them at a later meeting to explain the financial provisions which would apply under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. Many members felt that although it was obviously necessary for decisions affecting routine matters to be taken at committees, the Council as a whole should participate in taking decisions of a more important nature and should become more generally involved in the affairs of the Council.

After further discussion Council agreed that their future committee structure would require a great deal of detailed study and Mr Lapsley confirmed that this matter would be placed on the agenda for further discussion at their next

meeting.

ISLAND COUNCILLORS

8 Mr Groat raised the question of travelling expenses for those councillors representing more than one island and it was confirmed that expenses of councillors visiting an island in their constituency in which they did not reside would be met by the Council.

NEXT MEETING

9 It was agreed that the next meeting of the Council would be held on Tuesday, 18th June 1974, at 10.30 a.m. and that the following items would be included on the agenda:

Committee Structure
Standing Orders
Finance
Community Councils
Staff Structure.

COUNTY COUNCIL MINUTES

10 In answer to a question from Mr Hancock, the Clerk confirmed that the Minutes of Orkney County Council from their statutory meeting on 28th May 1974 would be circulated to members of the Orkney Islands Council.

(Signed) G R Marwick
Convener

[illegible]