

MINUTES of the STATUTORY GENERAL
MEETING of ORKNEY ISLANDS COUNCIL
held in the COUNTY OFFICES,
KIRKWALL, on 20th May 1975 at 11 a.m.

Present: G R Marwick, G Stevenson, 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 W Laughton, Col R A A S Macrae,
Mrs C M Muir, Mrs S Roebuck, John Scott (St Ola), John Scott
(Westray) J A Tait, Rev E G Traill, O L Work and T Zawadski

In Attendance: H A Graeme Lapsley, Chief Executive
R M Ross, Director of Administration
R H Gilbert, Director of Finance
M Sargent, Director of Physical Planning
A Bain, Director of Education
A R MacKinnon, Director of Social Work
L D MacGregor, Director of Environmental Health
D J MacGruer, Director of Trading Standards and Consumer
Protection
J C McIntosh, Director of Engineering & Technical Services

Mr G R Marwick, Convener, in the Chair

APOLOGIES

1 An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mrs B M Robertson.

PRAYERS

2 Before the meeting commenced, the Rev H L Mooney led the Council in prayers.

FIRST STATUTORY MEETING

3 The Chairman welcomed members to the first Statutory Meeting of the Council since it took office on 16th May, and extended a special welcome to those who had been new to local government at the time of their election a year ago. He reminded members of Orkney's good fortune in having an all purpose authority and he was sure that success during the first term of office of the Council would consolidate their autonomy. The Council was small enough for members to know one another and to understand the needs and problems and to hear the views of the people. It was inevitably difficult for elected members to please everyone but it was their duty to take an Orkney-wide view in their deliberations and care must be taken to maximise the resources available and to use them efficiently to provide the best possible service through a highly competent and qualified administration and to create a good moral and sense of purpose of all staff.

The Convener went on to say that he would endeavour to the best of his ability to serve the Council well, and through it Orkney, and he hoped with members to succeed in being a credit to the electorate.

LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

4 The Chief Executive then read to the Council the following letter dated 12th May 1975 which had been received from Mr William Ross, the Secretary of

State:

"In a few days time, the new Scottish local authorities will take over their new responsibilities in the most far reaching reorganisation ever undertaken in the history of local government in Great Britain.

This transition will mark the culmination of months of preparation which have required the most concentrated efforts of both members and officers. Further months of hard work lie ahead, too, while the new arrangements settle down in the atmosphere of economic difficulty which affects the whole country.

I would like, on behalf of all those concerned with central government in Scotland, to welcome the new authorities and wish them success in the years to come".

SMOKING

5 By a majority decision it was agreed that smoking would not be permitted at statutory meetings of the Council.

ST MAGNUS CATHEDRAL

6 The Rev Traill drew attention to the omission of the Rev Cant's name in the composition of the committee to administer the affairs of St Magnus Cathedral, under Item 16 of the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 13th May.

It was agreed that the Rev Cant should be included in the list of members of the Committee.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

7 The Rev Traill referred to Item 20 of the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 13th May regarding the appointment to the Education Committee of two persons interested in religious instruction. The minute referred to a three year term of office which was incorrect as the appointments were for two years.

It was agreed that the minutes should be amended to read -

"The Rev J W Roebuck had been appointed as substitute member in place of Father Bamber and Mr E Headley as substitute member in place of Mr F Kent should their appointments fall vacant during their term of office".

SOUTH ISLES SHIPPING SERVICE

8 The Rev Traill referred to Item 14 of the Minute of the Meeting of the Council held on 13th May and pointed out that no reference had been made to his motion that when the Convener discussed the proposals for the South Isles shipping service with St Andrew's House, stress should be laid on the fact that the service would operate in an area of oil related developments.

The Convener assured the Rev Traill that he would be vigorously pursuing this aspect in his forthcoming discussions.

Mr Zawadski expressed his concern at the difficulties being encountered in obtaining a replacement vessel for MV Watchful. As the Watchful was the

substitute vessel for the MV Clytus which operated to Shapinsay, a situation could arise where the Clytus might require to be temporarily withdrawn for refit or repair and a substitute vessel might not be available, thus depriving Shapinsay of its shipping link.

The Convener told Mr Zawadski that he was very aware of this possible difficulty and he would be raising this matter during his forthcoming discussions at St Andrew's House.

COMMUNITY COUNCILS

9 Mrs Muir said that she had understood that a scheme for community councils would be discussed at the present meeting but this item had not been placed on the agenda. The early establishment of community councils was a matter of considerable concern to the people of Orkney and she was anxious that the Council should take urgent steps in this connection.

Mr Work also spoke on the urgent need for community councils to be set up. He said that at a public meeting held the previous day in Kirkwall it was evident that there was a genuine and strong interest in the need for the establishment of community councils and some concern that no action appeared to have been taken.

The Convener assured both Mrs Muir and Mr Work that there was no question of delaying action in the setting up of community councils. A draft scheme was in course of preparation and the matter was being dealt with as one of high priority. As had been agreed at the previous meeting of the Council, the draft scheme would in the first instance be submitted to the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee and it would then come before the full Council at the earliest opportunity.

HOUSING NEEDS OF PROBLEM FAMILIES

10 Mr Annal referred to Item 3 of the Minute of the Meeting of the Council held on 13th May when a joint sub committee of members of the Housing and Social Work and Environmental Health Committees had been appointed. The minute stated that the members for the area concerned would be consulted in specific cases only where this was deemed appropriate but he considered that the local member's views should always be sought on cases affecting his own area.

The Council agreed that the minute should be amended to read -

".... and that the member for the area concerned should be consulted."

MINUTES

11 On the motion of the Convener the Minutes of the General Meeting of the Council held on 13th May 1975 were approved and adopted.

CONVENTION OF SCOTTISH LOCAL AUTHORITIES

12 There had been previously circulated to members a memorandum by the Chief Executive on the constitution and membership of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities which the Council had been invited to join.

The Convention would be financed by allocating three quarters of the total estimated expenditure against the Regional Authorities and one quarter against

the District and Island Authorities and subscriptions by individual member authorities would be calculated by reference to population.

With regard to membership the Convention would consist of representatives of the nine Regions, the three Island Authorities and the 53 District Councils. Representation would be on a population basis and the Council would have one representative on the Convention. The constitution provided that the business of the Convention would be under the management of committees with executive powers and the memorandum detailed the committees to which the Council could appoint a representative.

The Convener then explained that the Convention had been set up following the disbandment of the previous local authority associations. It would now represent the new Scottish local authorities and would thus have a strong and united voice in discussions with and representations to Government on various matters and although attendance at meetings would place an additional burden on members it would clearly be of benefit for Orkney to be properly represented. It was not yet known how frequently the Convention or the various committees would meet but the first meeting of the Convention would be held on 26th June 1975 in Dundee and it was hoped that nominations would have been received to enable all the committees to meet prior to that date.

The Council unanimously agreed to become a member of the Convention and further agreed that the Convener should be their representative thereon.

The Chief Executive's Memorandum had detailed the committees on which the Council would have a representative and the Council resolved to make the following nominations for membership.

Regional Policy	- The Convener (Substitute) The Vice Convener
Education	- The Vice Convener
Social Work	- Col R A A S Macrae
Police, Fire and Emergency Planning	- Mr E R Eunson
Consumer Protection	- Mrs C M Muir
Miscellaneous Services	- Rev E G S Traill
Engineering Services	- Mr W E Knight
District Committee - Environmental Health	- Mrs B M Robertson
Islands Policy	- Mr G R Marwick - Mr G Stevenson - Mrs C M Muir - Rev E G S Traill - Mr W E Knight - Mr E R Eunson

The Chief Executive then explained that the constitution of the Convention also provided for the appointment of officer advisers on the various committees and copies of the officer adviser structure had been circulated to members prior to the meeting.

Subject to ratification by the Convention, all Chief Executives would serve on the Regional Policy Committee, the District Policy Committee and the Islands Policy Committee and on certain other committees one islands Chief Executive would be appointed. The Chief Executive said that he had no personal preference on which of these he served and he would advise the Secretary of the Convention accordingly.

The Director of Education was automatically appointed to serve on the Regional Education Committee and the Director of Social Work on the Regional Social Work Committee and a restricted number of Directors would be appointed to other committees.

The Council noted that the Regional Engineering Services Committee provided for the appointment of six Directors of Water/Sewerage and decided to nominate Mr J C McIntosh, the Director of Engineering and Technical Services, to serve on that Committee.

PROGRAMME OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

13 As had been agreed at the last meeting of the Council, the Chief Executive has prepared a suggested programme for meetings of the six Standing Committees. He suggested that a degree of flexibility should be applied to any programme until the extent of members' commitments to the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and to other outside bodies had been ascertained. After consideration, the following programme of meetings was agreed -

First Monday in each month

a.m.	for meetings of sub committees as necessary
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2.30 p.m.	Housing Committee
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First Tuesday in each month

10.30 a.m.	Services Committee
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2.30 p.m.	Social Work and Environmental Health Committee
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Second Monday in each month

a.m.	for meeting of sub committees as necessary
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2.30 p.m.	Education Committee
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Second Tuesday in each month

10.30 a.m.	Development, Planning and Control Committee
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2.30 p.m.	Policy and Resources Committee
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COUNCIL MEETINGS

14 The Convener suggested that at this stage dates for full Council meetings should not be too definitive pending clarification of dates of meeting of the Convention and other bodies. He also emphasised that a sufficient interval must always be allowed between Committee Meetings and Council Meetings to enable the essential administrative work required in preparation of agenda and relevant papers, together with minutes of previous meetings to be carried out and circulated timeously.

The Rev Traill reminded members that it had already been agreed that the Council should meet at least ten times in each year.

The Convener suggested that the question of dates for Council meetings should be deferred for the time being and the Council agreed accordingly.

SCOTTISH INSTITUTE OF ADULT EDUCATION

15 It was remitted to the Education Committee to consider the appointment of representatives to the Scottish Institute of Adult Education.

BANKING

16 It was unanimously resolved that in order to provide for the current expenditure of the Orkney Islands Council for the period to 15th May 1976, pending receipt of assessments, grants and sums requisitioned, to authorise temporary borrowing from the Royal Bank of Scotland, Victoria Street, Kirkwall, as from this date, to an extent not exceeding £1,000,000 (one million pounds sterling) and that the Council hereby authorise Ronald Henry Gilbert, Director of Finance, or James Gibson, Deputy Director of Finance, or John Garrioch Sinclair Seatter, Section Head, to operate on and overdraw the said account to the above extent, and that the Council declare that all sums so overdrawn, together with the interest to accrue thereon, shall be a debt of the Orkney Islands Council and shall be secured against the whole funds, rates and revenues which they hereby impledge to the said Bank; and that the Council also undertake to use all powers vested in them by statute or otherwise, to effectuate repayment of the said accommodation with interest as aforesaid; and that the Council further instruct that a certified excerpt of this Minute be sent to the said Bank.

INSURANCES

17 The Director of Finance reported that a review had now been carried out of all the Council's insurances but in view of the difficulty or immediately co-ordinating the existing policies of the previous three local authorities he suggested that these separate policies should continue in force until 31st March 1966. Prior to that date he proposed to seek competitive tenders for all the Council's insurance business.

the Council agreed to these proposals.

PENTLAND FIRTH FREIGHT TRAFFIC

18 There had been circulated to members copy of a letter from Stromness Town Council advising of the following motion which had been submitted to their last meeting and which had been duly passed -

been received it was intended to call a General Meeting of the Association to determine its future position.

The Council decided to nominate Mr G R Marwick, Mr T Zawadski and Mr J D McIntosh (Director of Engineering and Technical Services) to represent them on the Association.

SCOTTISH COUNCIL FOR HEALTH EDUCATION

22 The Chief Executive reported for information that following the reconstitution of the Scottish Council for Health Education, membership of the Council would consist, inter alia, of nine representatives from the Regional and Islands Council, such representatives to be appointed by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities.

The position was noted.

PRAYERS AT ANNUAL STATUTORY MEETING

23 The Rev Traill said that he wished to express his appreciation to the Rev Mooney for opening the present meeting with prayers. He considered however that in future it would be more appropriate for such prayers to be said in St Magnus Cathedral rather than in the Council Chamber.

The Convener said that there were two points of view on this matter as many members felt that prayers should be said in the Council Chamber where Council meetings were actually held.

On a shown of hands it was decided by a large majority that prayers should be held in the Council Chamber and not in the Cathedral.

NORTHERN FIRE BOARD

24 It was agreed that the following should be appointed as substitute members on the Northern Fire Board:

Mr W E Knight
Mr J A Tait

VISIT OF UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

25 Mr Work referred to the recent brief visit by Mr Neil Carmichael, Under Secretary of State for the Department of the Environment following which the Minister had been quoted as saying that he was satisfied that within the area from Dundee to Sullom Voe there were sufficient harbours to cope with foreseeable gas and oil developments. He protested that the statement inferred that there was no need for improved harbour facilities whereas Orkney was badly in need of improvements at Kirkwall and Stromness and the South Isles shipping service was at present entirely inadequate. He considered that the Minister's statements should be challenged as they increasing oil developments.

In reply to a question regarding the Minister's contacts during his visit to Orkney, the Chief Executive explained that he had had a brief meeting with him but the visit had been arranged by the Department of the Environment and he had only assisted in making arrangements for the Minister to visit Flotta. He said that the Minister, representing the Department of the Environment, had come purely to see oil installations in the county, port facilities in Orkney being

After discussion, the Council agreed that Mr Carmichael's remarks should be challenged and the Chief Executive was instructed to make appropriate representations to clarify the position.

26 Mr Annal said that the tenants who had been allocated houses in Burray
had been unable to obtain the keys although the houses were virtually completed
apart from certain minor details.

The position was noted.

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