



Dunrossness Parent Council Meeting  
Approved Minutes  
Wednesday 1st October 2025 at 1800  
Online via Teams



## 1. Introduction

Sarah Green (Chair)  
Louise Leslie (Head Teacher)  
Brenda (Teacher Rep)  
Katrina Jamieson (Treasurer)

Leigh Smith  
Alastair Leslie  
Ewan Adamson  
Leona Leask

## 2. Approve Previous Minutes

Insufficient parent council members in attendance to approve - require 4 members to be quorate. **SG to obtain approval offline for the previous minutes from 23-06-2025.**

## 3. Estates Issues

Outline of actions from June, and update on progress and next steps.

Meeting with SIC reps at the June meeting. After the meeting, there were a number of actions that the SIC took away to progress. SG had an e-mail shortly after the meeting to say that there was a complaint going on and they would have to put pause on any investigations until it was resolved. The complaint has now been resolved and we've had an e-mail from Neil Beattie, who's taken over from Shona Thompson as the head of Education estates, to say that they are not going to be investigating anything further about repairing the temporary buildings. They are still going to be demolishing, and they've put it out to tender. They have said that they're keen to keep communications open with parents and the parent council.

We feel that there are still a lot of unresolved issues about the estate and particularly the kind of spaces within the school, but also trying to think about the future of the school and it being sustainable and working for all the bairns.

Key to ensure there are sufficient and appropriate ASN spaces. There has been a Freedom of Information Act request around ASN stats at the school. There's a high percentage of children with ASN requirements in the school and a lot of those are complex. Stats suggest 64% of bairns have some level of additional support need and 11% of bairns have complex needs. Very high, especially



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when you compare to other schools in Shetland. 11% equates to around 10 bairns which is really significant, not just for thinking about the space in the school and appropriate ASN breakout areas and space that they can go and feel safe and learn, but also try and think about resourcing. Staff have raised that they are feeling under resourced and when you look at the statistics, it really shows that there is a need for more support in the school

Other unresolved issues include the use of the huts as a classroom. It is working for the P2/3 class, and the test of emergency protocol was successful. But there are still safety concerns about having the huts used as a classroom as it's off site with a road in between. If the Council are going down the demolishing route for the temporary buildings, then presumably there's going to be construction traffic which needs to be managed and those risks need mitigating.

Toilets are still a big concern. There's not enough of them for the bairns and it's not appropriate for all the bairns in the school to be using the same toilet blocks when you've got peerie ones and big ones together. There should be more toilets available.

Need to think about outdoor space as well. This is one of the things that the Council want to resolve with demolishing the temporary buildings - having space to install outdoor play equipment. But as was raised at the June meeting, this is something the Council should be looking at anyway.

So a lot of things still unresolved. The Council seem to be progressing down the demolition route regardless of anybody else's concerns. Next step is to call a meeting with key people at Hayfield: Sam Flaws, Neil Beattie as the estates manager, the new QIO, Leanne Moss and then Sandra Petrie who is a QIO with a focus on inclusion, and has been doing a review at the school. Aim of the meeting will be to go through everything holistically, as the Council seemed to be coming at it from a firefighting perspective - fixing the immediate burning issues but not looking at the long term big picture and what will be best for the bairns. Also need to review plans for the pool room renovation, which again they seem to be progressing with and they've set a timetable for, but they're still not looking at key issues like the floor and filling in that space so that it's actually usable.

We have some suggestions about the outdoor space and the car parking that we think would help so are keen to put this across. The land directly opposite the school is owned by Winnie Kay (Sarah's Aunt), and if that could be donated to the school, it would offer alternative car parking space, which could be helpful and would alleviate a lot of the pressure on drop off/pick up and resolve some issues with buses dropping off on the wrong side of the road so the bairns have to cross the road. It's something that we need to investigate, and we need to speak to the Council about process because we don't know if they can accept like gifts in kind or offers from parents to deliver engineering/construction services at a cheaper rate than market value.



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Ideas around the huts and nursery and switching them back. Brings all the classrooms back into the school grounds and would resolve quite a lot of issues around gate security amongst other operational challenges. Also need to raise with the Council to understand how this would work.

Next step will probably be to **prepare a business justification case** - parent council are happy to take a lead with inputs from staff and parents. We need to put our alternative proposals down on paper and demonstrate that there is an alternative case that is cost effective.

Discussion around a principal teacher post - this was previously in place when there were 5 classes but the council have suggested this is not a legal obligation. The SNCT handbook, i.e. the teacher's handbook, has numbers for deputy heads but not for principal teachers. Louise was previously the principal teacher when there were 5 classes, but the role was removed when the school roll went back down to 4 classes. The council have said they can't find anything written down so there is no guideline to work from. The fact that they previously took it away when it went down to 4 classes suggests there must be some kind of provision for 5 classes. Tricky as there is no other school in Shetland a similar size to Dunrossness. Something to be progressed with Hayfield - from a resourcing perspective, the staff are doing an amazing job and the quality of the teaching is amazing, but there's just not enough support.

**The next steps if it doesn't go any further with the council is to meet with the south end councillors and get them up to speed with the issues. If we still fail to make any progress, then we need to escalate and look at en masse complaints from parents to the Council to show the volume of support across the parent body to try and force the Council to review.**

Hayfield are adamant that they've followed correct processes, but the business justification case ignores the outcomes of the engineering reports that they commissioned, and they've just picked out the option that they want to do and ignored the other options, so they haven't followed their process.

The council voted based on the business justification case which didn't show the whole picture. We've been advised that the Council can actually review votes and re-vote on matters after six months. Hayfield would need to be able to demonstrate that they have explored all of the feasible options that were put forwards in the engineering report, not just the one that's easiest to do.

Discussion on timelines. Proposing demolition in Easter 2026, refurbishment in the summer holidays 2026, and then improvements to the outdoor space October 2026. Louise raised concerns around car parking and access for demolition, and requested works are undertaken during holidays.



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We need to try and come up with a solution with the council to try and progress. Not sure we're not going to save the temporary buildings, but we need make sure that the council are doing everything else to make sure that there is sufficient space elsewhere in the school.

After the meeting in June, SIC reps verbally agreed to go back and review the repair of the temporary buildings and obtain costs to enable a proper cost comparison of repair vs. demolishing. Shona Thompson agreed to review, and Davie Sandison also agreed after the meeting to review if the temporary buildings could still be used in some capacity in the interim.

We had an e-mail shortly after the meeting to say that they wouldn't progress anything because there was the complaint they needed to resolve first, but the complaint has now been resolved and we've had an e-mail from Neil Beattie, who is the new estates manager (taken over from Shona Thompson who retired at the end of June), basically saying Hayfield are not going to do any of the actions from the June meeting, they are just going to continue to demolish.

Small update from Louise after speaking to Tom Charleston, DPS buildings officer - there may be limitations on switching the nursery and huts as there was a timescale set on the nursery staying as a nursery when investments were made to do up the space. One to investigate, but presumably there is a need to prioritise and review under the current situation.

Discussion about wider parent support given the low attendance for the meeting. Noted that not much notice was given for the meeting. Generally parents and carers are very supportive of pushing the council to review.

#### 4. Headteacher report

Amalgamated last term and this term's head teacher reports covering different areas of quality improvement, leadership and management.

Alison Jackson currently away and Katherine Sandison covering. Alison hopefully back after October holidays.

Miss Laura Newbold was successful in getting the four day a week temporary teacher post, alongside Mrs Kirsten Smith in P5/6 and probationer Emily Garrick in P3/4. Miss Emma Stove has joined us as a modern apprentice in the ELC as our modern apprentice from last year, Laughton Bailey, has moved on to Cunningsborough for her second year. We have a number of temporary learning support workers in place with the hope of some advertisements soon. Have received the go ahead to extend temporary contracts and managed to get an additional 12 hours for support workers in school. Been given permission to advertise for a 30hrs/week full time learning support worker ELC post.



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This year the school roll is at 101, with 25 bairns in ELC.

The school improvement plans for this year involve working on the school environment. Challenging given how unsettled things have been. Also looking at building a shared understanding of learning, teaching and assessment, especially with some of the “old guard” leaving and new teachers coming in.

Successful transition visits to both schools, and feedback is they are settling in well. Nursery transition has been very successful - really positive their teacher moved with them. Attendance stats are good.

Bairns helping with school environment - lower level lighting, anti-glare film on windows. Bairns feeling listened to. Focus Friday session to look at school environment. Feedback suggests bairns want chairs pushed in (on the bairns!) and less noise (also on the bairns!). Good data for baseline to review alongside teacher evaluation.

Sports day successful - weather was good - Mrs Ritchie enabled positive experience. Learner led event was successful. P7 activities vast! Voxter, Burradale, Nordi, Scottish Opera. Positive additions in playground with football goal, climbing wall and swing due October holidays. This term P6/7 have had a super link with Logan Air.

Generous donation from a parent at the end of the school year to spend on the bairns. Pupil Council asked for football goals, things for the playground and board games for wet play times. Have also asked for hot chocolate Friday - chance for all the bairns to speak to Louise over the year.

Looking to do Christmas differently this year to avoid needing to retain old chairs in the hall. Aiming to have something at the Hymhus this year - get out into the community. Acoustic and tech support! And will use the newly formed drama club so only bairns who want to be on the stage will be there. First half performance, second half carol concert. Pressure for Christmas is often a lot for the, so avoiding any keeping more low key will be beneficial. Positive feedback from those on the call for this new approach.

Parent lunches - term 3 last year. Unsure if it's the best way to get parents in. Discussion. If we were to do something slightly different and get parents in at a slightly different time to do something else, that might be a better way of engaging with the parents. Ambition to get parents in once a term. Could bring parents in to Focus Friday in term 3 as an alternative. **Louise to progress.**



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Internet safety planned for early 2026. Previous issues with some online bullying - need to engage with parent body and help educate the bairns. Earmarked that that safer Internet Day is February next year. Bairns are meant to have phones switched off in bags if they need to bring them in. Challenge with smart watches. Updated the handbook, but could review further.

Planning to update the snow closure/emergency closure plan with changes to internet provision etc. Parent council comments to be included. **Action for Sarah to share with Louise.**

## 5. Priorities for 2025-26

Planning to do the Christmas grotto again this year for the bairns to come in, pick a present to wrap up and take home for their parents/carers. No date yet.

Sat on quite a lot of funds because we've been holding it back with the uncertainty around the estate. We would like to buy a polycrystalline, amongst other outdoor equipment. We'll do something before Christmas in terms a Hall Teas kind of thing. We'll do something in the spring, but the big thing is we're planning to try and do the gala again. Planning in the new year for the Gala.

Offer for further parent support to go into school if helpful. **Louise to take back to teachers.** We can then look at PVG checks and rotas. Help with reading, art, library, etc.

## 6. List of Ongoing Agenda Items and Priorities

Lots already discussed re: estates.

School environment - plans for the foyer - quiet area with storage for art and music. Parent council happy to fund. Sam taking forwards with Helen Ball, with advice from Gary Docherty from NHS.

**Sarah has an action to look at wrap around care and how Sandwick system works. Very dependent on resource.**

School lunches, continual issues. **Need to work with Hayfield to keep pushing.**

The P 6/7 trip has been raised by a couple of parents - can we do something different? Can we do something on the mainland for them? Possible barriers to that in terms of guidance from the Council. **Keeping on the agenda - challenges with costs and logistics.**

Potential external fundraising to buy a stock of iPads that that could be roving around the school. **Sarah to review external funding opportunities.**

Discussion about other agenda items for the long list.



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Stronger relationship with Sandwick for secondary. Louise has cluster meetings with Sandwick and Cunningsburgh. Challenges with Sandwick head currently vacant - Melvin Clark acting head. Aiming to encourage from P5 and focus on topics which primary can't cover - home economics etc. Will need to work with new head. Challenges with funding buses to take bairns to Sandwick. Challenges around transition from S4 to S5 for some bairns, so can be beneficial to make the jump at S1. Resourcing and subject selection is a big part of the problem.

#### 7. Date of Next Meeting

We have failed to do an AGM this term, which we are meant to do in term 1. So will probably be booking in a meeting quite soon into term 2. Two weeks notice will be given.

#### 8. AOB

Thank you everybody for coming - we'll keep everybody up to date on the estates front and where we get to with Hayfield and councillors.