Board Meeting Minutes – September 7th 2026, 7:30pm Woods Yard

Present: Louise McQuaid (LM), Molly May Allan (MA), Mick McQuaid (MMQ), Elsie Dennison (ED), Viv Erdman (VE), Jim Seaton (JS)
Vicki Holland (VH), Aimee Stout (AS)

Apologies: Marion Miller, Ian Pollard, Kevin Kent, Andrew Fraser, Craig Stout, Mike Holland.

Articles checked and meeting quorate.

Declarations of Interest
- Youth Scotland: LM
- Stronsay Hotel: VE

Approval of Previous Minutes
Proposed MA / Seconded ED

Action Points from Previous Meeting
- The Finance Manager Role has been confirmed and accepted.
- The Mill purchase has been completed.
- The Place Plan, Draft driver policy and Village phone box are still to be actioned

Budget 26-27

MMQ Presented the 26-31 draft budget to the board with the main aim of being financially secure when the funding from the turbine ends.

Of the current balance, around £350,000 is already ring fenced from the previous year, including the investment reserve, charity reserve and awarded grants, both internally from the SDT and external grants already paid.

The Trustees agreed to set £200,000 as a base line of which the overall balance should not fall under during the year. With this in mind, a discussion was held on how to allocate the remaining funds.

All Trustees voted to ring-fence £300,000 towards the Heritage project. This will be held in a high interest, fixed term account until the SDT are in a position to proceed with the Heritage centre.

£61,000 was suggested to secure the Meikle Meal Mill roof and £150,000 ring-fenced towards Housing. Both these decisions will be deferred to the next board meeting.

Heritage

The Heritage Committee reported good progress following a productive meeting with Nick Hewitt and surveyor Gareth Chalmers, with feasibility work for the proposed Heritage Centre now underway, including consideration of the future of the Athenia lifeboat and the potential heritage role of the Mill.

The Heritage Committee wished to record their thanks to Louise for the comprehensive and positive Chair's Report prepared in support of the project, and for her work in helping to progress matters.

The Committee also congratulated Liz McQuaid on her nomination for Scottish Community Project of the Year at the 2026 Scots Language Awards, celebrating her work to promote and preserve Orcadian language, heritage and culture.

ED requested this be publicised. LM to action

LM Informed the board there had been an initial query about planning: LM to arrange a meeting with Nick Hewitt to discuss.

Hotel

MA read an email from the Hotel leaseholders requesting a meeting about their current contract. The Hotel committee had asked that the meeting took place after the board meeting of the 7th September where the current terms would be discussed.

LM updated the board on the situation regarding the current tenancy agreement and explained the details of that agreement and also the voluntary financial assistance the Trust had been providing over the first year of the lease.

Options were then presented to the Trustees on how to proceed

- Continue with the current lease agreement but the Trust withdraw its voluntary financial support.
- Continue with the current lease agreement with limited financial support from the Trust agreed by both parties.
- Replace the lease agreement with a management agreement so SDT would have full control over the running of the Hotel and the income but would be also responsible for all costs.

Due to conflicts of interest, the board were not quorate to vote on a decision on how to proceed on the night and voting will be requested by Email from absent Trustees.
Once the board have made a decision, a meeting will be set up between the leaseholders, the Hotel committee and the SDT Chair.

LM to facilitate the vote.
MA to set up the meeting with the Hotel

MA and LM also discussed a recent letter from the lease holders regarding behaviour in the Hotel bar in which SDT had been asked to become involved. It was agreed that management of the Hotel is the responsibility of the Lease holders and, as such, it would not be appropriate for the SDT to intervene in this matter.

Development Officer Update

A report was sent to the board from Theresa on project updates and questions raised by the community. Of note was a discussion on the possibility of the SDT paying for an escort to go in the town along with people needing assistance at health appointments. The board agreed that this did not align with its strategic aims and that the issue would be flagged to the correct authorities. LM/Theresa to action.

HR

Jennifer and Aimee have now started with the SDT, with Matthew Palmer due to start the following week. A full staff meeting will be held on Monday the 28th September.

AOB

Youth club: LM sessions are due to start again this autumn, Ian Pollard has been appointed senior youth worker. Richard Smith who oversees the island youth clubs wanted clarification of budget. SDT had previously awarded £2000 towards the running of these clubs.
VH to liaise with Richard on the budget.

Travel budget: LM asked about travel costs for the CDO. A small pot has been set aside within the 26-31 budget for the CDO to attend meetings in town where needed. If Jennifer wishes to attend the upcoming Heritage award presentations the suggestion was to apply for a SDT community travel grant towards 50% of the costs with the community council grant scheme awarding the other 50%.

Community Grants: MA asked about the grant scheme pot and if this had now been set back to zero for the new budget year. VH confirmed this was the case and the award pot per group starts again from £2000. MA also asked about the status of the School Polycrub request via community grants in 25-26. This was put on hold while the SDT awaited news from CLLD on the School ground funding applications. This project has now been pulled. VH to fill in a new grant request on behalf of the school and put this through the community grants voting system.

MA had previously spoken to current leaseholders about using the Mill ground. A decision was made to allow the use of this ground until the end of December, at which point a further discussion will be held. MA to inform.

Office hours: Staff (and Trustees) have noted issues with being approached by the community about SDT business outside of their working hours. AS to post a reminder that staff can be approached during office hours or by previously arranged appointments, Trustees are voluntary and should be treated the same as staff.

Crown Estate Fund: LM informed the board that this fund was now open but had a tight deadline of 25th September. The pots included sustainable rural housing, promoting sustainable food practices and sustainable tourism/heritage. LM wished to apply for funding towards feasibility studies in to Housing, camping and the potential of growing space on the Mill ground. The funding was for revenue only and could then be used to give staff additional hours. The board were in agreement with going forward on this one. LM to work with Jennifer on an application.

The next Board meeting will be held on 5th October 2026.

Meeting closed at 21:31