

Minutes of Westray Development Trust Board Meeting
Tuesday 25th November 2025 in the Community Classroom 7pm

Present: Geordie Thomson (GT) (Chair). Gill McEwen (GM), Douglas Leslie (DL), Louis Pottinger (LP), Anne Burgher (AB) and via Teams Margaret Rendall (MR),

Attending: Gina Rendall (GR)

1. **Apologies:** Kirsty Sinclair (KS), David Seatter (DRS) and Coilla Drake (CD)

2. **Minutes of previous board meetings:**

Minutes of Board Meeting on 9th October 2025

Proposed by DL, Seconded GM

3. **Matters Arising**

- i. **Companies House:** A reminder to directors to come and see Sarah Cowe in the office if they need help to provide ID.

4. **Matters Agreed by email since last meeting.**

- ii. Screen Machine financial support – it was agreed to pay half the travel cost which was £438

5. **OPS Manager Report – Including Finance Reports**

i. **Finance sub Group Budgets**

With the now certain change income for WDT from the turbine the Finance Sub Group had reviewed the budgets again and recommended the following changes to the 25-26 budget to the board:

- Essential Expenditure Budget reduced by £5k
- Fuel Grants reduced from £250 to £200
- Community Grants pot reduced from £83k to £60K
- Education and Training pot reduced from £6k to £5k
- Entertainment pot reduced from £6k to £5k

Project budgets were also less across the board, but the amounts are set on actual spend in 24/25, and also consider income to each project.

The board agreed the recommendations.

Grants proposal

The office staff have reviewed procedures and recommend the following changes:

- Insist on the match funding being in place.
- No more than 80% offered; less can be offered.
- No more rolling grants after this batch, the last rolling grants will end in June 2028
- Reduce Fuel Grants by £50 each year, tapering the reduction in preparation for potentially no fuel grants.
- Grants have to be claimed within 12 months of the offer letter date.

In the policy, it says ***“We (the group) agree to make satisfactory progress with the project and complete it within 12 months of receiving the grant award, or to notify you if we need an extension”***

A proposal was made that we remind folk to pay particular attention to this part of the grant information and change the wording to *“an extension may be considered by the board under exceptional circumstances”*? Exceptional circumstances would be for example a delay in equipment arriving, contractor delays.

The board agreed to approve the recommendations and inform the Project Evaluation Group.

Fuel Grants -Same as last year, a month to apply from 4th December to 9th January. **The board agreed** the amount of £200 and the timescale.

Year End: Audit is almost complete and the annual report can now be completed. A January AGM has been confirmed with Ivan Houston, Scholes. Members packs will be sent out the week before we shut for the Christmas holidays. **The board agreed** to a date of 20th January 2026 for the AGM.

Names were drawn to see who would retire and stand for re-election at the next AGM. Coilla Drake and Margaret Rendall join Gill McEwen.

Strengthening Communities Programme: An application has been submitted for 80% each year, for three years of Operations Manager salary.

Orkney Community Housing Fund: Information had been included in the board papers on this investment opportunity. The date for expressions of interest is by 15th December, return would be 50% after 10 years. The board felt that it was unclear where the income is going to come from it was decided that, as we are Westray Development Trust and to meet our charitable objectives, our money should be going to improve the lives of Westray residents. **The Board Agreed** to not invest meantime.

ii. **Housing**

Bayview

Flat 2: Painting and deep cleaning of the flat were completed and our new tenant has move in.

Issue with broadband installation, as BT was the preferred choice, when they came to install at the property they discovered that the cable had not been re-joined from the pole to the house. BT have said they will be able to come and join it up but will need specialist equipment. Danny Harucs has confirmed there is ducting in place which would save wires going across the front of the house.

Flat 4: Washing Machine replaced and installed. Andrew Seatter has hardwired the appliances. Christopher Rendall to sort the drafty cooker hoods in all flats. James Robinson to do a flat clean, GR to do the inventory for the flat.

Maintenance: Door to do, Danny Harcus is having an issue sourcing the materials from the suppliers.

Insurance: To be renewed now with a change made when it will soon be fully occupied.

ACTON GR to ask Billy Groundwater when he is coming out to get Bayview revalued.

Sailing Club Shed Lease: Minute of Variation completed, signed and returned. Final cost was £450.

Jerusalem

Renovation: Minutes from the progress meeting were circulated to the housing sub-group. Things to note from this were

- The hydro cable needs to be moved
- The possibility of solar panels on the shed. It was agreed to future-proof things now. Have the option to put in another meter in the sheds by having ducting in place and ready to go. The electrics need to be upgraded anyway. We have asked for a quote for a new roof with the potential of adding solar panels to make an income for the trust.
- Instead of a bath, there will be a shower installed

Progress: New door into the extension has been cut out, drains are going in, and the foundations and underbuilds for the extension are now in.

Funding: We are still waiting for our official letter offering £50,000 from OIC. The second valuation will be coming soon which means our first claim to the Rural Housing Fund will be arriving soon.

Slate and Flagstones – These are all reserved now by Mark Fresson.

ACTION GR to explore pricing from the Quarry at Quoyloo

ii. Community Spaces

Community Hall

Feasibility: The last of the funding can be claimed for this over the next few months.

Clearing Out: No progress on the van being moved.

New Build: With planning permission through, we have applied for a building warrant to demolish. Billy Groundwater is working on a bill of quantities which will go out to tender. The demolition needs to be completed by March.

Funding for Renovation: Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) application is being worked on now. This is due on the 28th of November 2025. An Expression of interest was submitted to Crown Estate Community Led Development Fund (CECLDF)

Soakaway – Mike Cooper reported that the site is so compact that we need to extend our soakaway into the field, 15 metres is needed, as he had to work with the maximum capacity of the hall.

ACTION GR to contact the owner of the field to discuss options and costs

ii. Gallow Hill

Nothing more from Eoin Muir.

ACTION GR to ask Raymond Rendall about the stone crusher they used in Westray.

iii. Golf Course/Men's Shed

The Orkney Fund application was successful, and an offer letter received to get this project to the planning stage. This was being worked on but the Golf Club feel that the project is too big. It was, once again, suggested that this is the moment to scale it back.

iv. Westray Conference 2023/Community Plan

Synopsis of conference to be added, and how it links in and add to report.

ACTION GR to add in synopsis and run this past Derek Manson with a view to how it looks as a place plan.

v. Hofn

Land: Email from HIE offering the land at £2500 and just our own legal fees. The Board agreed not to go ahead with the purchase

Turbine: Burray Boatyard were in Westray and took a look at the both small turbines. Quote of £1600 for the Hofn Turbine and £8000 over the Kalisgarth turbine. The Board decided not fix the Kalisgarth Turbine but make sure Friends of Kalisgarth are offered it before it's decommissioned.

ACTION GR to enquire if Burry Boatyard can fix the Hofn Turbine before the end of January, if they can't can they suggest someone else who can.

ACTION GR to send a letter to Friends of Kalisgarth to see if they want to fix the turbine themselves.

vi. Cleaner

PVG checks are all through.

vii. CARES Funding

This doesn't look too hopeful at the moment, too many applications in. This might come up again if unsuccessful.

viii. CDO – Meetings

Nothing to report

ix. Climate Action Plan

As above re CARES for solar at the Hofn and office. This has been a lot of hard work with many follow up questions and technical stuff that Giles Favierour Carbon Neutral Islands Support Worker has helped with.

x. Slipway

No progress

xi. Christmas Holidays

The Board agreed to the office being closed from 4 pm on the 19th and open again at 9 am on 5th January.

6. Wellbeing

i. **Community Fridge**

In October, 513.1 kg of food was saved from landfill, with 173 people accessing the fridge over the month. We have been receiving quite a lot of “fresh” fruit and vegetables from Fareshare. We have one again requested that we don’t received fresh produce. Fridge results have been typed up, but not ready to share with the public yet.

ACTION SC to make the results into a leaflet.

- ii. We received an email outlining concerns about Fare Share goods in the community fridge from a local business.

ACTION GR to email with short reply and survey results

iii. **Here 2 Help**

All three PVGs through and workers started which is a relief as the service continues to be in demand.

iv. **Yoga**

A weekly class has now been set up for 6 weeks. There are 6 people signed up for the 6 weeks. We will see how it goes after the 6 weeks and see if the participants want it to continue or not.

v. **Digital skills**

Erika and Liz have decided to keep going with their digital skill drop-in sessions. These are free to everyone. Held on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month. This will be in the Hofn from 1-3. Erika and Liz have recently completed the digital championships training by Chrissie from the CLD. They are the first 2 people to complete this training in Orkney, so that’s good. They hope to start up IT-specific courses next year.

vi. **Mary Nuro Physio**

Mary Cowieson managed out to Westray on 15th October. She saw 4 people and helped them all a great deal. She has now expanded her business and can see a variety of folk now so she might come out again if the demand was there.

vii. **Eyes**

Erika spoke to Clark Optometrists in Kirkwall. They said they had been thinking about extending their service to the Isles. Erika agreed to publicise it in Westray and see if they had any demand, there looks like there will be lots of interest so will progress.

viii. **CLD weekend**

The CLD team from Kirkwall came out on Friday morning till Saturday night, 24th – 25th October. The offered free courses, events for families and crafting. Over the weekend, 60 residents from Westray took part in some way. Including 12 people at a sewing class, 10 Dj Workshop attendees, 9 people gained a first aid at work qualification, 14 people completed a food hygiene course, and 15 kids enjoyed a pirate-themed morning where they played games, made scones, drank bubble tea and got a party bag.

- ix. **Wellbeing post** – Erika has resigned and will be working with us until December. A draft job description was circulated and **The Board agreed** to approve it and that the Post to be advertised as a fixed-term post for one year, with applications to be in by the 12th of December.

ACTION GR to advertise a post with a closing date of the 12th December

7. WRE

i. Turbine

A new repair schedule has still not been finalised following the cancellation of the repair in August due to issues with the loads being too heavy for the linkspan.

Our last correspondence from Enercon included a suggestion that the scheduling of the repair be postponed until the first quarter of 2026. The WRE Board have asked Enercon for some further justification for this suggestion, given the likelihood of poorer weather during that time and the added pressure of the ferries being on a refit timetable.

A revised quote for crane hire and logistics has also come in significantly higher than the original at £400k. This obviously represents a serious outlay of funds for WRE, and as a result, the Board feel they need to ensure that a due diligence process is followed and is seeking at least one additional quote from an alternative logistics company.

ii. Insurance Claim

Nothing further from the loss adjuster and will chase.

iii. 2024-2025 Audit

The audit is almost complete, and final drafts are ready for circulation to the WRE Board. There have been no problems flagged in the financial handling of the accounts, but some provisions have had to be made due to the uncertainty created by the turbine breakdown.

8. Forward Planning

- i. No updates**

9. Correspondence

- i. Anderson and Strathern** – An email was received asking if we want to extend our 12-month retainer. **The Board Agreed** to renew.

ACTION GR to confirm

- ii. Auk Club-** An email asking if we could seek advice from our accountant on an investment they had made in a fixed-rate account. **The Board suggested** that they could get in touch with VAO or if we go through our accountant, they will have to cover costs incurred.

ACTION GR to respond via email

- iii. Bargain Box-** We had a request from Papay parent Council asking if they could come over to do a weeks fundraising in the Bargain Box. **The board agreed** that this would not fit the policy of Westray groups.

ACTION GR to respond with the board's decision

10. AOCB

Set up meeting for presentation of accounts with Ivan Houston. Let Clare know as WRE have to have theirs first.

11. Date of next meeting 15th January 2026

12. Meeting finished 9.10pm

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George Brown". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G' and 'B'.

