



Appendix C

Offer Survey Report

On behalf of



**Shetland
Islands
Council**

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Front Cover Photograph provided by Brian Gray

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An Otter survey at Grutness, Shetland

**A report to Matt Macdonald from Shetland Biological Records
Centre, November 2021**

Paul Harvey, Shetland Amenity Trust

Background

Shetland Biological Records Centre was contracted to undertake a survey of Otter activity in the vicinity of Grutness Pier to inform a potential development at the site.

Methodology

The area surveyed was that requested in a pdf received from Mott Macdonald. In essence it covered the whole of the Laaward storm beach west to Grutness beach, and an area of 10-30 metres wide inland from the coast.

This area was surveyed by Paul Harvey on 28th November 2021. The whole area was covered and any signs of Otter activity were recorded on a GPS app loaded on an Iphone. A number of photographs were taken to inform this brief report. These are included in an Appendix.

Results

[redacted]

Discussion

Most of the survey area is unsuitable for Otter holts. The laaward itself (photo 4) comprises a storm beach – the lack of sizeable spaces among the boulders, the mobility of the beach in big storms and the inundation of much of the coastal area in winter storms render it unsuitable for holts.

The Grutness beach itself (photo 5) is also unsuitable for holts. The sand dunes are too mobile and any hole excavated would soon infill. The sea regularly reaches the foredunes during the winter months.

The area between the Laaward and the Grutness beach comprises fixed dune grassland, a tarmac road and some houses and buildings. There were no signs of any Otter runs or holts in any of the dune grassland. Some of the outbuildings (photo 6) have been used by Otters for resting-up in the past but as far as I am aware none are at present.

Summary

The south mainland has a lower density of Otters than much of the Shetland coastline.
[redacted]

This survey should be repeated 2-4 weeks prior to construction commencing as Otter activity and holt occupancy can be quite dynamic, sometimes changing markedly over a few weeks/months. In the meantime, I would suggest that the developer contacts NatureScot to seek advice on whether a licence to disturb Otters would be required

A camera trap could be set up at this location to try and establish whether there is a pattern of use.

Appendix – Photographs

[redacted]
[redacted]

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[redacted]

[redacted]

Photo 4 – showing the Laaward (looking east), illustrating the unsuitability of the habitat for Otter holts



Photo 5 – showing Grutness beach (looking north), illustrating its unsuitability for Otter holts



Photo 6 – showing the road down to Grutness Pier. [redacted]
Note the unsuitability of the habitat for holts on the seaward side of the road.



[redacted]

[redacted]