



## Chairperson's report to 2025 AGM

As acting chair for Orkneycommunities I am pleased to be once again writing this report for the AGM members.

22 years have passed since Orkneycommunities was launched on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1993, and while the appearance of the main homepage and the system for managing the member sites has changed dramatically at least twice since then, the principles are still the same- low cost, easy to manage websites, linked to a homepage that aggregates news and events, made more attractive by an Image Library of submitted pictures and comments.

Facebook has changed the landscape too, as has been noted here before. Its glamour is starting to pall as it is evident that it not there for its users, but as a medium to foist advertising and dubious content whilst harvesting data for training AI algorithms and other unspecified purposes- making finding what you actually would like a dispiriting journey into confusion. IMHO!

What is not debatable is that for storing and archiving documents, including policies and procedures demanded by insurers, a website is much better. True also for the great pictures on Orkney Past and Present on Facebook which scroll off into history, as opposed to our own Image Library which records the details of the pictures and the stories with them and can be easily searched. We need some kind of symbiosis between the two to document the history being recorded on Orkney Past and Present, and safeguard it from Facebook changing its terms and deleting content, as now routinely happens for Facebook Live videos.

We remain committed to keeping Orkneycommunities current and welcome comments and suggestions. There is a lot of life in it yet! And we hope that by keeping the annual fee to a paltry £20 whilst maintaining the same service we make the decision to keep a website pretty easy. Our number of members is now pretty stable at 50 members, and though the committee has determined that our focus should be on serving the existing members and their requirements, we remain open for new business and continuing development of the whole Orkneycommunities system.

Our Treasurer's Report shows that we remain in excellent financial health. So much so that after reducing the annual fee to £20 per annum, our balance actually still increased slightly! This however is a function both of the efficiency of running the current system and times of invoices, so is unlikely to happen again.

Technical support and training is still included in the membership fee, so if you have a question, or wish training for yourself as a refresher or for new committee members, please get in touch by contacting me at [steven@kw15.co.uk](mailto:steven@kw15.co.uk)

We remain here to provide low-cost easy-to-maintain websites for community groups in Orkney, i.e. yourselves. Many of our members have joined as a recommendation from existing members, so if you are enjoying your site and finding it useful, spread the word. And if you are not, get in touch!

I'd like to thank the current committee for helping keep the show on the road. We could do with more committee members, and I encourage you to join us. The work is not onerous, about 5 meetings per year, which generally last less than an hour.

My thanks also to the staff from VAO who provide the important keystones of invoicing and finance support which helps to keep us on track.

**Steven Heddle, acting chairperson**

2<sup>nd</sup> November 2025