



**The Orkney Partnership**

*Working together for a better Orkney*

Locality Plan 2018-2021 Appendix 1

# Non-linked Isles

Community Development  
Activities and Information

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## Community development activities and information

There are many valuable activities taking place in the non-linked isles. We can't attempt to draw all of the existing activities, initiatives and projects together, but have included some of them in this document.

### Community Associations

Island halls and community centres provide vital services for our local communities. Community associations, run by dedicated volunteers, manage these fantastic local facilities which provide recreation, educational and leisure facilities and activities, for both island residents and visitors, to improve their quality of life. Community associations around Orkney have various facilities and community spaces along with their hall or centre, from camping facilities, to picnic areas, playparks to wind turbines.

Community halls are an important resource for communities, providing a place for people to meet and socialise, to learn and exchange ideas and somewhere for the whole community to come together for important events. They help to establish a strong sense of community, and provide a variety of opportunities for young and old to come together.

Currently there are 15 community run halls / community centres in the non-linked isles. There are six independent halls and nine community schools, which are Orkney Islands Council (OIC) owned buildings with shared community spaces run by community associations. Thirteen of the 23 schools in Orkney operate as Community Schools.

The relationships which are built up through a community school help the school to engage the local community more effectively in the life of the school. Activities provided by the community association for young people help to broaden their experience and provide them with opportunities for wider achievement.

Each year OIC's Community, Learning and Development team, in partnership with Voluntary Action Orkney (VAO), organise an annual meeting for community associations when they get together for training, information sharing and workshop opportunities. This helps them develop these valuable resources in each community, as the training, workshops and topics delivered are chosen by the community associations themselves, ensuring the event is always useful and relevant to the needs of our community halls and the people that run them.

### Community Councils

Community councils are democratically elected voluntary bodies. They are not part of local government but they can complement the role of the council. Community councils have been granted statutory rights of consultation and play an important role in local democracy by representing local views which can influence decisions in planning and local service provision. They provide an effective, strong voice within each community area offering sound, local advice on a range of community issues.

There are 20 community councils in Orkney with elections being held by postal ballot, every four or five years, closely following the local council elections. Each community council consists of between seven and 12 members depending on the size of population being represented.

There are 10 community councils on the non-linked isles, with seven members elected to each:

- Eday
- Flotta
- Graemsay, Hoy and Walls
- North Ronaldsay
- Papa Westray
- Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre
- Sanday
- Shapinsay
- Stronsay
- Westray

Each community council holds around seven meetings per year, plus additional special meetings if necessary to facilitate the discussion of urgent items that can't wait until the next scheduled meeting. Members of the public are entitled to attend and observe proceedings at any community council meeting.

The Democratic Services team within Orkney Islands Council (OIC) acts as a two-way communication link between the community councils and OIC. Democratic Services retain clerks to provide administrative services to each community council in all 20 areas. Assistance and support is also provided with projects organised by community councils, and with any issues which arise at a local level.

Community councils throughout Orkney undertake maintenance of the kirkyards in their locality, including grass-cutting and minor repairs. They also maintain all the war memorials and monitor road condition and ditching issues across Orkney on behalf of OIC.

OIC provides each community council with an annual grant, in the region of £3,500 per annum, to be spent at their sole discretion. In addition, financial assistance is provided through the Community Council Grant Scheme and Seedcorn funding. This allows community councils to be active co-ordinators and benefactors to their local communities.

### **Community Development Fund**

OIC's Community Development Fund was established in 1999 to support a wide range of local projects. Any formally-constituted community group can apply. In the past community councils, development trusts, community associations, heritage societies and many other local community groups have successfully bid for funding. Grant assistance at a rate of 50%, up to a maximum Community Development Fund grant of £100,000, will normally be available. More information is available on OIC's [website](#).

### **Community Learning and Development**

Community Learning and Development (CLD) is about empowering people, individually and collectively, to make positive changes in their lives and their communities through learning. The CLD team delivers opportunities throughout Orkney and their aim is to help people, whatever their age, get involved in learning opportunities and play as full a part as possible in the life of their communities.

The CLD team run youth clubs and provide support for voluntary youth organisations and throughout the islands. They run accreditation opportunities for young people through Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme, Youth Achievement Awards and Dynamic Youth awards. CLD supports and promotes a youth voice for Orkney through supporting the elected Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament, the Youth Forum and the biennial Chamber Debates and Youth Conferences.

The CLD team deliver extensive training opportunities for staff, volunteers and partners including partnership activities with a range of national youth and community agencies. Creating opportunities for peer-led training such as Money for Life or First Aid Ready is an important element of their work.

CLD support groups and organisations are involved in a wealth of activities to benefit their local communities including the delivery of three community learning programmes each year offering an array of different daytime and evening class opportunities all around Orkney.

### Development Trusts

In 1998 Westray became the first of Orkney's island communities to form a development trust. The others formed soon after. Each of the Island Development Trusts (IDTs) has a local development plan which is produced following extensive community consultation. The duration of the plans can vary but they are updated regularly. These plans articulate the priorities for the community and projects which will be undertaken or supported.

Along with obvious topics such as transport and broadband, common themes include housing, care of older people, retention of young people, fuel poverty and tourism.

The IDTs are charities and have their own independent boards. Directors are elected by the membership which is drawn from the local community. The IDTs use a range of methods to communicate including websites, social media and newsletters. Most have offices which make their staff accessible to the community.

Westray, Stronsay, Shapinsay, Rousay, Eday and Hoy have community owned 900kW wind turbines. Sanday has a community share in a small wind farm. North Ronaldsay has six small 50kW turbines. Curtailment of the turbines has been an issue for many of the island communities. Eday, Rousay and Shapinsay are all involved in highly innovative projects to look at how they can maximise the use of electricity generated.

Figure 1 highlights some of the achievements of the individual IDTs.

**Figure 1: Island Development Trusts' Achievements**

**Eday Partnership**

- Gateway house.
- Acquisition of land and building for housing.
- Upgrade and development of Eday Co-op.
- Ranger.

**Papay Development Trust**

- Gateway house.
- Market garden.
- Kelp Store Arts, Crafts and Heritage Centre.
- Ranger service including tours (boat and bus).
- Development support for Papay Community Cooperative in their upgrade of Beltane House and the Shop.

**Sanday Development Trust**

- Acquisition of the Harbourmaster House.
- Heilsa Fjold Centre.
- SLF funding to acquire properties in Kettletoft.
- Heritage Centre.
- Community bus.
- Skills 4 Sanday.

**North Ronaldsay Trust**

- The Old Beacon Project.
- Lighthousekeeper's cottages.
- The Kirk's project.
- Six small turbines.
- Sheepdyke.
- Yarn.
- Cycle hire.

**Shapinsay Development Trust**

- Boathouse Community Hub.
- Out of Hours Ferry Service.
- Community bus and electric vehicle.
- Shapinsay Way Ahead Programme (SWAP).

**Stronsay Development Trust**

- Enterprise zone.
- Community greenhouse.
- Educational bursaries.
- Fuel poverty.
- Exercise referral scheme.
- The Limpet newsletter.

**Westray Development Trust**

- Growing project (fruit and vegetables).
- Charity/Fundraising shop.
- Hofn Youth Centre and subsequent development.
- Quarry.
- Learning centre.

**Island of Hoy Development Trust**

- Community bus.
- Upgrade of the YM Hall.
- Hoy Hoolie.
- Heritage projects.

**Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre**

- Rousay Lap.
- Electric car.
- Rousay Craffhub.
- HeatSmart Orkney.
- Free swimming at Pickaquoy pool.
- Playpark.

In addition, most of the IDTs offer grants/bursaries to residents for education and training.

## Empowering Communities Initiative

The Empowering Communities initiative arose in response to a feasibility study undertaken to identify the resources required to establish two pilot projects within island communities to deliver a range of OIC services. The objective of the pilot was to develop and assess options which would:

- Increase employment opportunities in island communities.
- Up-skill the island based workforce.
- Increase sustainability through building capacity to manage and deliver local services and improve access to services.
- Enable locally based community groups to work together to maximise the potential benefits to island residents.
- Create efficiencies in terms of resource and/or cost.

Papa Westray and Stronsay were selected as the two pilot areas, as recommended by the feasibility study. A scheme co-ordinator was appointed. In addition, part-time Link Officers were appointed to both islands in 2015. The Link Officers then developed action plans for their islands. Achievements so far are shown in Figure 2.

### Figure 2: Empowering Communities achievements to date

#### Stronsay

- Link Officer established in Stronsay.
- Funding package secured to refurbish Stronsay Fish Mart – hostel, café and community office.
- Mini-customer services base established in Fish Mart.
- Public toilets established within Fish Mart and maintained by the community council.
- Core paths and Bird Hide maintained and repaired via the community council.
- Marketing Group established between the community council and development trust to jointly fund / market Stronsay as a tourist destination.
- Introduce Sunday flights – staff costs sponsored by the community council.

#### Papa Westray

- Link Officer established in Papa Westray.
- Monthly Island Newsletter “Papay Matters” produced by Link Officer.
- Introduction of a Lunch Club to provide healthy meals and stimulating activities for older people.
- Resurfaced St Anne’s car park – joint project between the community council and OIC.
- Renovation of stiles and maintenance of core paths via the community council.
- Local individuals trained in safe use of pesticides.
- Community Asset Transfer in progress – a joint project between the community council and development trust to establish a community shed on OIC land.

The Empowering Communities initiative was discussed at the annual community councils' conference on 2 November 2016, when delegates agreed that it would be worthwhile looking into investing in island link officers for each area.

In June 2017, OIC evaluated the pilot. Representatives from both the Papay and Stronsay communities reported that the pilot projects had been very successful and had facilitated better working with OIC, improved access to council services, created new opportunities for partnership working, reduced the need for some officers to attend the islands in person, and facilitated some community council projects which otherwise would not have been able to go ahead. Significantly, the two islands had adopted different models of working to suit their individual circumstances, with Stronsay focusing on local delivery of a wider range of council services while Papa Westray had focused on direct local provision of services. It was agreed to extend the project to two additional islands, Hoy and Sanday.

### Highlands and Islands Enterprise

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) works with and supports the ambitions of the IDTs to deliver their local development plans.

HIE will continue to invest in building community capacity, support communities to acquire and manage assets, and enable sustainable growth in the social economy. This will include supporting the IDTs to prepare applications to the Scottish Land Fund (which supports communities to become more sustainable and resilient through the ownership and management of land and land assets). HIE ensures any applications to the Scottish Land Fund dovetail with applications being prepared for the Islands Housing Fund.

HIE will also assist the IDTs to take advantage of the measures within the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act. The Act helps to empower community bodies through the ownership or control of land and buildings and by strengthening their voices in decisions about public services.

As account managed clients, IDTs have access to the full range of HIE's products and services.

HIE supports private enterprise initiatives in the isles and works closely with community planning partners and officers from OIC who are involved in development projects and planning.

### Islands Deal

In Orkney as a whole, and the isles in particular, the most difficult problems arise in areas where challenges exist for all partner agencies, both individually and collectively. The biggest cross-cutting challenges locally are digital connectivity, transport, housing and fuel poverty, which impact on everything we do. Currently one of the main initiatives in addressing these challenges is the Islands Deal, a joint proposal from the three islands councils (Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles) to the Scottish and UK Governments. The Islands Deal is modelled on the lines of a City or Regional Deal, but with elements unique to the islands. It is focused on improving socio-economic outcomes for people who live and work on the three island groups.

The Islands Deal comprises two strands of activity:

**Strand 1, *Enhancing Local Democracy*** is unique to the Islands Deal, and proposes a number of measures designed to increase the local autonomy of the islands, with the potential to achieve a higher degree of self-determination in future; and also to secure the political will from government to address the aforementioned cross-cutting challenges. Some elements of Strand 1 are already coming to fruition via the Islands Bill.

**Strand 2, *Achieving our Economic Potential***, proposes a programme of strategically significant development projects in each island area, based around key themes of **connectivity and innovation**; with a 10-year horizon to achieve the Deal's population and employment targets and a 20-year horizon to embed sustainability. Strand 2 targets the major challenges common to all the islands, including digital connectivity, transport, housing and fuel poverty, along with opportunities in energy development, tourism, enterprise and workforce development.

If successful, the hope is that during the 10 years to 2028 the overall Islands Deal will achieve a number of outcomes around transport, digital connectivity, housing, fuel poverty, skills development and job creation which are transformational for the island economies, and deliver real long-term economic and social benefits for our island communities. Innovation is likely to be a key focus, including a range of programmes to support and promote new research and development activity and collaboration in Orkney.

So far the Islands Deal has been led by the three island authorities, and developed in partnership with key community planning partners. It is anticipated that all partners will be involved to a greater or lesser degree if the Deal is agreed and implemented, and Orkney Partnership Board is fully committed to the Islands Deal and its target outcomes, along with partner Boards in Shetland and the Western Isles. All partners are supportive of the Deal, and will participate in its implementation wherever they can be instrumental in helping to achieve its aims.

## LEADER

Funding is available from the Orkney LEADER Programme for small scale, pilot projects led by the local community, or that are in the local community's interest, with the aim to promote economic and community development within Orkney. More information is available on the [LEADER](#) section of the Orkney Communities website.

## North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme

The North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme (NILPS) is a practical example of partners already working together. NILPS is a large scale multi-year multi-million pound investment programme that will be delivered by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)/OIC/HIE, and others, in partnership with communities. The programme is focussed on improving outcomes for people in the North Isles. OIC led on the development phase of the NILPS.

Approved by the Heritage Lottery Fund board in March 2018, the NILPS will be a £4.5 Million programme which will focus on the following key themes:

- Celebration of island life and culture (To celebrate what the North Isles offer through promotion and recognition of what makes them special including their

intimate landscapes enlivened by the dedicated and welcoming communities that reside on them).

- Conserving islander knowledge (To conserve and raise awareness of the unique cultural identity and history of the North Isles including dialect, field names, genealogy and oral history).
- Exploring island landscapes (To conserve and raise awareness of the distinctive built and natural landscapes of the North Isles).
- Equipping island communities (To provide resources to help communities pro-actively manage their natural and cultural heritage, to help improve the North Isles as a place to live, work and visit).

The NILPS will include funding from Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic Environment Scotland, OIC, HIE, SNH and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. All of these organisations are represented on the Steering Group for the Scheme.

Figure 3 shows a selection of the main comments provided by the North Isles communities during the initial community consultation, as well as ways in which the communities believe these threats could be addressed by the scheme.

<b>Figure 3: North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme</b>		
<b>What makes the North Isles special?</b>	<b>Threats to these?</b>	<b>How the LP Scheme can address them</b>
Strong community spirit	Fewer younger people on the isles and “volunteer overload”	More training opportunities and encourage more volunteers
Unique local dialects and traditions	Dilution of local dialect and knowledge of traditions	Preservation of oral history and teaching of traditions to younger generations
Excellent coastal scenery and bird life	Coastal erosion and loss of habitat	Better monitoring and recording by the local community
Variety of landscape and heritage to enjoy	Poorly maintained paths	Improvements and enhancements to paths
Cultural tie-in between the communities	Loss of cultural and trading links between communities	Promoting new opportunities for inter-island working
Strong link to the sea and the soil	Fewer alternatives for employment	Increasing of skills and promotion of new techniques
Local facilities and events	Often run by volunteers with little financial support	Promoting existing facilities and events locally to encourage more participation
Lots for visitors to see and enjoy	Distance to markets and associated travel times/costs	More marketing of the North isles locally (i.e. Orkney Mainland and inter-island)

## Orkney Local Development Plan

Orkney Local Development Plan 2017-22, adopted by OIC in April 2017, takes an 'isles approach' in its spatial strategy. This means that any development in the islands that support permanent resident populations and are served by public transport services will be supported - provided it accords with relevant Plan policies and where it doesn't place any unacceptable burden on existing infrastructure and services. More information is available on OIC's [website](#).

## Partnership Properties

Partners want to work together and take a more innovative and creative approach to use, disposal and development of our properties. The target outcome is the improved use of properties and, to help us get there, we've established a Joint Property Asset Management Working Group. The group has started its work and we want to have a process in place by the end of the year to make sure this is built into all relevant partnership asset management activity.

## Voluntary Action Orkney

Voluntary Action Orkney (VAO) is Orkney's Third Sector Interface and offers a broad range of support services to new, developing and established voluntary and community organisations and social enterprises. From advising on legal structures, business planning, charity law and how to source and apply for funding, VAO will respond to the needs of people and organisations in the islands to ensure that they have the information and support they need to deliver and develop their services and activities. VAO will also facilitate communication, learning and collaboration between third sector and public sector primarily through the recently restructured Third Sector Forum to ensure that organisations are kept up to date and engaged with legislative and policy issues that might affect them.

Currently VAO is working with HIE to deliver a programme of governance workshops.

A collaborative project is taking place to research models of community led care. As it progresses the project will consider appropriate structures, employment opportunities and the delivery of training. The work is being led by VAO, and supported by HIE and Robert Gordon University, and will be steered by representatives from the islands involved.

## Working with communities

Community planning partners continue to take forward community empowerment developments. For example, the way health and social care services were delivered on Hoy was discussed with the community council and the development trust members and there was a desire to make changes. As part of these discussions it was suggested that changes to the traditional registered day care model could lead to more preventative approaches and benefit more people on the island. The new provision was set up jointly with an existing community group using local authority grant funding supported by outreach workers from OIC. The numbers attending have grown from one per week to an average of 20 per week.