

Item: 12

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee: 2 April 2025.

Leisure and Culture Annual Impact Reports.

Report by Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.

1. Overview

- 1.1. The Leisure and Culture Service is required to report against a number of service areas and indicators across a range of local and national bodies including, sportscotland, National Accreditations, Scottish Library and Information Council, Adventure Activities Licencing Authority, Royal Lifesaving Society and Visit Scotland.
- 1.2. The statistical and performance information in relation to the Leisure and Culture service for 2023/24, attached as Appendices 1 to 5 to this report, highlight the significant impact of the Leisure and Culture service including:
 - Increased visitor and participation numbers.
 - Increased external funding sourced across the Leisure and Culture Service.
 - Increased cash and contactless donations at the Orkney Museum, St Magnus Cathedral and Scapa Flow Museum.
 - 120,295 followers of the Orkney Library and Archives social media sites.
 - Ongoing upgrades and development of Play Areas through Scottish Government and Council funding.
 - 32% increase in usage at the Point of Ness Campsite.
 - Increased participation across Active Schools, Community Sport and Outdoor Education.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that members of the Committee:
 - i. Note the performance and impact information in relation to the Council's Leisure and Culture Service, as detailed in Appendices 1 to 5 to this report.

For Further Information please contact:

Garry Burton, Service Manager (Leisure and Culture), extension 2440, Email garry.burton@orkney.gov.uk

Implications of Report

1. **Financial:** None directly relating to the recommendations in this report.
2. **Legal:** None directly relating to the recommendations in this report.
3. **Corporate Governance:** N/A.
4. **Human Resources:** None directly relating to the recommendations in this report.
5. **Equalities:** None directly relating to the recommendations in this report.
6. **Island Communities Impact:** None directly relating to the recommendations in this report.
7. **Links to Council Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Council Plan strategic priorities:
 - ☒ Growing our economy.
 - ☒ Strengthening our Communities.
 - ☐ Developing our Infrastructure.
 - ☐ Transforming our Council.
8. **Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priorities:
 - ☒ Cost of Living.
 - ☐ Sustainable Development.
 - ☒ Local Equality.
 - ☐ Improving Population Health.
9. **Environmental and Climate Risk:** None directly relating to the recommendations in this report.
10. **Risk:** None directly relating to the recommendations in this report.
11. **Procurement:** None directly relating to the recommendations in this report.
12. **Health and Safety:** None directly relating to the recommendations in this report.
13. **Property and Assets:** None directly relating to the recommendations in this report.
14. **Information Technology:** None directly relating to the recommendations in this report.
15. **Cost of Living:** None directly relating to the recommendations in this report.

List of Background Papers

None.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Arts, Museums and Heritage Annual Impact Report.

Appendix 2 - Libraries and Archive Annual Impact Report.

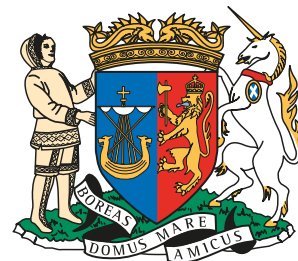
Appendix 3 - Outdoor Education Annual Impact Report.

Appendix 4 - Active Schools and Community Sports Annual Impact Report.

Appendix 5 - Sport and Leisure Facilities Annual Impact Report.

Appendix 1

2024



ORKNEY
ISLANDS COUNCIL

Leisure and Culture Service Arts, Museums and Heritage Annual Impact Report





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Manager's Statement

Nick Hewitt, Team Manager (Culture)

2024 has been another challenging but incredibly successful year to celebrate, with new exhibitions and objects at all sites, record visitor numbers, new team members, and old team members moving into new roles. However, there's never been a more important time to get better at generating our own income and this year I really want to specially thank the front of house teams for absolutely smashing their income and donation targets. All the sites have at least doubled their targets, and as a consequence they are all either on or ahead of the budget for the time of year, an amazing achievement.



Arts, Museums & Heritage Snapshot



2

Tripadvisor top 10% attractions in the world



343,895

Visitors to OIC Visitor operated Attractions and Museum Sites



250+

Research enquiries



£139,839

Donated to the museums and Cathedral



2000+

Objects digitised



60+

Collection acquisitions*



30+

Events, Exhibitions, Talks, held on visitor sites



£242,898

External Funding Sourced



50,000+

Website views



£160,675

Funding provided to external organisations/groups



1

Archaeological Assemblages allocated**



3,500+

Signups For Museum Blog

*A donation can be a single object or group of objects. E.g. one donation this year contained over twenty-plus unique objects, this is not including paper records that were passed to archives.

**An archaeological assemblage can contain anything between ten to several thousand artefacts known as small finds. Assemblages are allocated by the Treasure Trove process. More information is available on request.

Key service points

SERVICE REVIEW

Professor Mary Beard, renowned classicist and author, visited Orkney as a legacy from Museum of the Year 2023 when she visited as a judge and an open invitation was extended. She kindly agreed to open the summer exhibition at the Orkney Museum, The Ness of Brodgar: Past, Present & Future during her visit which celebrated two decades of excavation at this Neolithic site. The exhibition showcased hundreds of finds from the Ness, highlighting key discoveries and the site's significance in changing our understanding of Neolithic Orkney. Professor Beard also engaged with fans through book signings at Stromness Museum and Orkney Museum. Her visit underscored the global importance of the Ness of Brodgar project and its impact on archaeological scholarship.



Service Review Survey Poster



Glasgow Life's purpose built store.

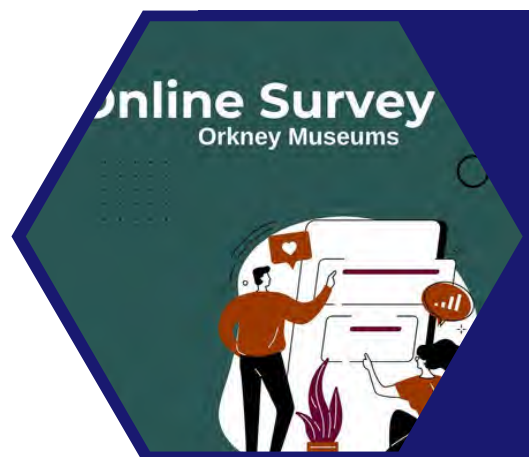
COLLECTIONS CENTRE

Work to take the proposed Collections Centre (Unit 1 replacement) has picked up pace, with the council's retained architects in the middle of preparing concept drawings to support our application to progress past the Councils' Capital projects Authorization (CPA) Stage 1. In September we hosted a visit from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, who seem very keen to build a strong partnership with Orkney and were very interested in the Collections Centre proposal, which is very encouraging.

Key service points

SERVICE REVIEW

There is no doubt that the next few years will remain very challenging for non-statutory services like Culture, with local authority budgets under extraordinary pressure across Scotland and the UK. To help us withstand this turbulence, the Council has commissioned a consultant-led review of the Service, focussing on opportunities for fund-raising, income generation and building a sustainable future. This process will be ongoing throughout the first quarters of 2025.



Service Review Survey Poster



Tripadvisor's Travellers Choice Award

MOST SUCCESSFUL YEAR YET

Despite the small size of the museums team, they have managed to achieve their most successful year yet. One internationally recognised achievement, two Trip Advisor Traveller's Choice awards, 40,000 website visits, and approximately 343,000 visits to OIC visitor attractions have shown the importance of the service to the people of Orkney and those who visit us.

ESMÉE FAIRBAIRN FUNDING

The Museums team, sourced £99,928 from the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund, this will assist Orkney communities' heritage projects over 18 months. The funding allows for extra staff hours to collaborate with groups on digitizing collections, improving displays, public arts projects, and more. Ellen Pesci leads the outreach, focusing on heritage at risk in remote areas. Community groups may receive up to £1,000 for project costs. The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation funds various UK projects supporting social and environmental impact.



Museums and Arts Collections Team

Key service points

WIRELESS MUSEUM MOVE

The service has been in discussion with Orkney Wireless Museum when they asked for advice with storing their reserve collection. The service arranged a visit to their store at the old school on Scorrodale where it became immediately clear that the building was not fit for purpose. This started a series of works that ultimately led to the service transferring wartime objects from Unit 1 (Museum Store) to store in Lyness to make space for the OWM.. A loan agreement was agreed and appropriate racking was purchased by OWM in line with recommendations from the service, constructed with support from the team, the collection was then transferred into Unit 1 in July.



OWM Collection in Unit 1



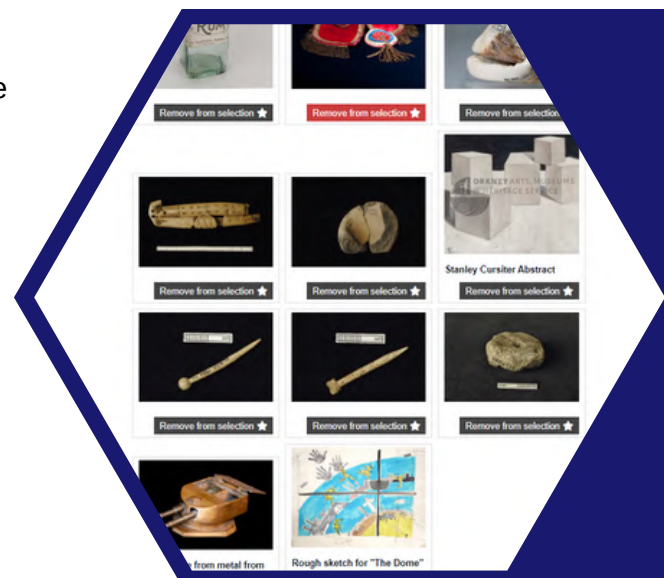
Sanday Shipwreck

SANDAY SHIPWRECK

The Museum Service played a crucial role in preserving the Sanday Shipwreck timbers. After a winter storm revealed the shipwreck in February 2024, the Council secured funding from the National Heritage Memorial Fund to construct a custom freshwater tank. The museums team sourced, and in partnership with Wessex Archaeology, specified the tank, which was installed at Sanday Heritage Centre. This collaboration ensures the timbers' preservation for future research, safeguarding this significant maritime heritage discovery.

ONLINE CATALOGUE

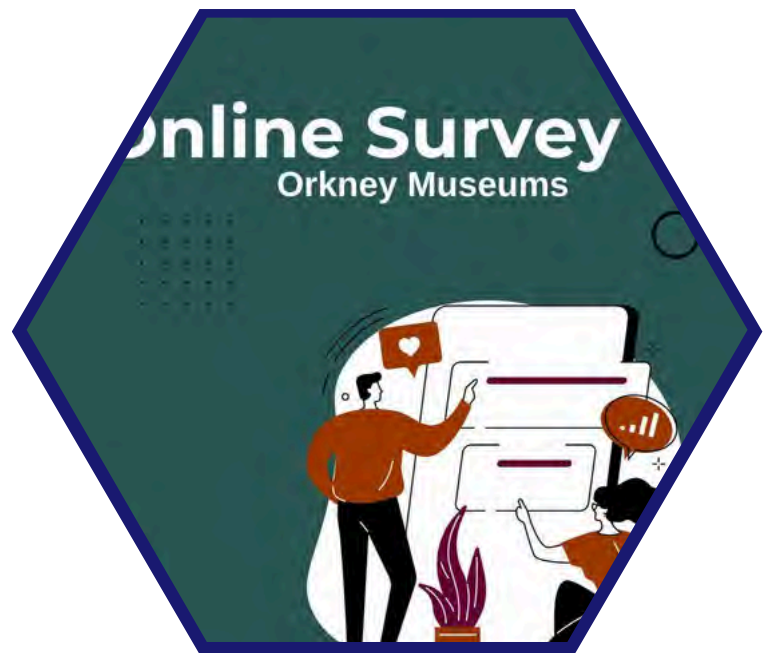
At the beginning of 2024, work was ongoing with the goal of making the shared joint catalogue of the museum and archive service online. This has been achieved, which means that as a service, it went from zero online records to over 100,000. This has greatly achieved the reach of Orkney's history and made it accessible to anyone in the world



Online catalogue screenshot

Service Review

In 2022 funds were made available to carry out a full consultant-led review of the Culture Service, to help the Council identify the most economically advantageous delivery model for Cultural Services for the next ten years and beyond. Bryn Jones Associates (BJA) carried out the review throughout 2023, submitting their final report in December. In February 2024, a short-life member/officer working group (MOWG) was established to consider the findings and met in the spring of and early summer of 2023 to begin the process. The MOWG concluded that further information was required before any recommendation could be made regarding the future operating model for the Culture Service, then paused for summer recess and the Council's annual budget setting process.



Work has now resumed. Six themed position papers have been prepared analysing in detail the following elements of Culture offer: St Magnus Cathedral; Museums; Collections; Arts Development; Digital; and Heritage Structures in Council care, like the military infrastructure in Hoy. Each position paper will be considered at a half-day meeting of the MOWG, at the end of which the group will agree a recommendation for “the most economically advantageous delivery model or models for Cultural Services.” The model will be presented to a full Members’ Seminar, and then presented to the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee for approval.



Orkney Museum

MAINTENANCE PERIOD

Orkney Museum closed to the public for the entirety of January 2024 for an extremely successful maintenance period. Floors were painted and polished, shop stock ordered, processed deliveries, exhibitions taken down, metal polished, light shades emptied, deep clean of galleries, exhibitions set up, re-organisation of shop displays, movement of cases not needed for the next exhibitions to Unit 1. The service's technician built a new shop for Kirbuster Museum, saving the service thousands of pounds, using lots of recycled materials as well as new.



Freshly polished floors



Local visitors to Orkney Museum

ANOTHER BUSY YEAR

it has been one of Orkney Museum's busiest years with 71,865 visitors with 18 individual days seeing over 1,000 visitors.

Not to mention the extremely successful exhibition schedule this year, among them was a hugely successful Ness of Brodgar Finds, spanning three display spaces.

ORKNEY MUSEUM FACTS

Most popular shop item:

- Book: Ness of Brodgar Book, 'Past Present and Future'
- Westray wife figurine
- Puffin Bookmarks

Currencies found in donation boxes:

Euros inc Monaco, Spain, Eire, France

Dollars, US, Canadian, Singapore

Thailand, Denmark, Sweden Norway, India, Isle of Man



Westray Wife figures



Kirbuster Farm Museum

NEW SHOP

The Service's part-time Technician fabricated and installed a new shop for Kirbuster over the January maintenance period, which has completely transformed the space retail space and offering. This is undoubtedly has played a part in Kirbuster's income and donation numbers reaching record levels for the site.



Kirbuster's New Shop built by Technician Mark Scadding

EVENTS

Kirbuster once again has proved its allure as a destination for local events, hosting several events including 'Taakin in the Hairst', a service organised event for the celebration of the harvest. This involved storytelling by the Exhibitions Officer and Cathedral Curator as well as practical straw rope making and corn dolly activities run by our Visitor Services Officer for Kirbuster. I was hugely successful with over 200 visitors visiting within a 2 hours period.



Tom Muir at "Taakin in the Hairst" event



Top: Firehoose and peat fuelled fire
Middle: Ariel view of Kirbuster Farm Museum and grounds
Bottom: Hybrid North Ronaldsay sheep at Kirbuster

Growing numbers

Continuing the trend of growing visitor numbers, Kirbuster had a total of 7,728 in 2024. The service hopes this number will continue to rise with increased visibility via its new website, social media presence and discussion with tour operators.



Scapa Flow Museum

CONTINUED GALLERY DEVELOPMENT

Donations continue to come in of items relating to Scapa Flow Museum. Objects of significance have been added on permanent display at the museum whilst other objects are constantly being rotated in the 'New acquisitions' case.



Re-clad Romney Hut and collection being moved into it.

COLLECTIONS REORGANISED

The service continue to make improvements to the Romney Hut as part of the collections reorganisation with the last of the stored items now on show. The museum has had its first volunteer since it's re-opening working in the Romney Hut and Air Raid Shelter to assist our visitors' experience.

ANOTHER BUSY YEAR

When Scapa Flow Museum was conceived as a project it had reduced visitor numbers to the museum before it was closed for the re-development. As part of the reporting process for the project, a target was set of 17,000 visitors per year by the 5th year after re-opening but in 2024 the service achieved that target for a second year running with a grand total of 17,400 visitors. Given its location this is a huge number that will only grow with time, bringing thousands of people to Hoy who may not have made the journey otherwise.



Orkney Tour Guides Visit Scapa Flow Museum for guided tour by Nick Hewitt



ST MAGNUS CATHEDRAL

St Magnus Cathedral

A BUMPER YEAR

St Magnus Cathedral welcomed nearly **250,000** visitors this year, a record for the building. It's been so popular that Trip Advisor has marked it as a top 10% attraction in the world, alongside Scapa Flow Museum. The cathedral's busiest day this year saw over 3,000 people.

There has also been a large uptake on paid upper-level tours, with 1,121 partaking. With an increase in cost per tour, this has increased income significantly.

The Cathedral also saw continued success with contactless donation stations, details of which can be read on p.29.



Upper level Tour Guide Ross Flett with group



Flower Festival 50th anniversary

PREMIER EVENT LOCATION

St Magnus Cathedral continues to be at the heart of the community, hosting many events throughout the year. In 2024 it hosted twenty-three events plus fifteen St Magnus International Festival concerts, a Flower Festival that had its 50th anniversary and Kirkwall BID's festival of light.

It is important to remember the cathedral also hosts private wedding ceremonies and funerals placing it at the heart of Orkney community life,

NEW GRAVEYARD TOURS

2024 saw the introduction of weekly graveyard tours by the recently appointed Cathedral Curator Fran Hollinrake. These tours have been successful and the service hopes to promote these more during the coming year's tourist season to boost income and share the fascinating history of those who lay at rest in the graveyard, one notable being John Rae.



Fran Hollinrake, Cathedral Curator



St Magnus Cathedral

A YEAR OF CHANGE

It's been all a-change at the cathedral this year: Former Visitor Services Officer Fran Hollinrake has moved into the new position of Cathedral Curator, Visitor Services Assistant Annie Theusen moved to VSO, and David Mager was recruited as the new VSA. At the same time, several of the service's longstanding collaborators have stepped down this year, including former cathedral minister Fraser Macnaughton and the St Magnus International Festival stage crew, so it has been a challenging year, but also one that has shown new ways of doing things and working together.

A WELL EARNED RETIREMENT

The upper-level tours deserve a special mention. Ross Flett retired as an Upper Levels Tour Guide this year, after more than 20 years in that position. He is much loved by both colleagues and visitors, so it is a consolation that he will still be with the service as a relief custodian. Ross stepped down in July, and for the rest of the year, his shifts were covered by his colleague, Marita Lück, and the two reliefs Melba Leonard and Sue Knowles. With 1,121 upper-level tour attendants, this was the busiest year on record, so they deserve lots of praise for all their hard work.

THINGS TO LOOK FORWARD TO IN 2025

There will be lots of exciting things happening in 2025. The VSO is looking forward to developing more children's interpretation for the cathedral together with Fran Hollinrake, Cathedral Curator, and Emma Gee, Arts Officer - and hopefully a great bunch of Junior Curators. Furthermore, the team provide visitors with a spectacular combination of the old and the new during the Island Games, as the 14 Sails of St Magnus will be hung between the nave pillars and accompanied by an interactive soundscape that references both the Games and the history of the cathedral.



Corrigall Farm Museum

CLOSED

Due to continued resource constraints, Corrigall Farm Museum will remain closed for the foreseeable future.

Maintenance of the site and collections care for objects held on-site will continue.



Corrigall Farm Museum Stable, Barn and Kiln



Ness Battery

PROMOTING NESS BATTERY

OIC owns Ness Gun battery but it is operated under a service level agreement by an independent contractor, Stromness Tours Ltd, which conducts paid guided tours.

To our mutual benefit, the service has added Ness Battery as a visitor attraction on its website so that more traffic is generated which will translate into more visits.



Battery Observation Post

Temporary Exhibitions

The service has had a busy year of successful exhibitions at Orkney Museum. Work on the 2025 schedule is well underway.

- 2nd March – 6th April saw the exhibition 'Look Again: Artist's Response to Orkney's Wartime Remains', featuring the work of twelve artists. This began with a talk to the public by some of the artists, about their inspiration derived from Orkney's wartime heritage.
- 4th May – 28th September, the summer exhibition, 'Ness of Brodgar: Past, Present and Future'. This was the largest exhibition ever staged at the Orkney Museum, spread over four display areas. It saw the museum working closely with the Ness of Brodgar Trust and included regular public talks by specialists on different aspects of their research.
- Also running from May-December, was an exhibition of Italian POW crafts in the Baikie Library. This was a community project, bringing together local people, the Friends of the Italian Chapel and featuring artwork by Kirkwall Grammar School S2 students, based on the Italian Chapel. This work was curated by Social History Curator Ellen Pesci and Museum Technician Mark Scadding.
- 5th – 26th October saw the exhibition 'New Works: 50 Years Union' by local artist Graham Moffat and Borders artist Peter Tait. The exhibition opened with a talk to the public by both artists on their work.
- October – December, another small exhibition downstairs in Rooms 1 and small display area, to celebrate the Orkney WI's centenary. Formerly the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes (SWRI), the first branches were formed in Orkney in 1924. Another community exhibition, which has helped them attract new members.
- 9th November – 23rd December, the centenary exhibition '100 Years of KAOS: Kirkwall Amateur Operatic Society 1924-2024'. A colourful end to the year, with costumes and props.
- The end of the year also saw a bustle of activity, as text was written for the new Iron Age & Picts Gallery and images selected for it before the Christmas holiday. This, along with two new Viking Galleries, which is being worked on by Siobhan Cooke-Miller, will be our focus for the beginning of 2025, as well as running a full exhibitions programme.



Exhibition and engagement officer, Tom Muir



Museums Technician, Mark Scadding



Italian P.O.W Exhibition



Ness of Brodgar Exhibition

Overview

It's not just been the visitor services staff who have had a busy year. The collections team consisting of Ellen Pesci, Siobhan Cooke-Miller, Tom Muir, and Chris Andrews along with assistance from Team Manager, Nick Hewitt has been hard at work. From dealing with donations, research inquiries, community engagement, organizing collection moves, documentation and the planning of an exciting multi gallery re-development in Orkney Museum. All this has significantly improved the reach of the service, and the quality of offerings at the museums and boosted their reputations locally and nationally.

It's important to remember that the collections team is responsible for the care of over 130,000 objects which includes the museum sites in which they're displayed and stored. They ensure, if time allows, that people can access the collection and help share the stories that the objects and artefacts tell.

The team have been supported by regular volunteers Alison Turner-Rugg and Lindsay Bailey.

Key points

- Work started in 2023 to transition from CALM, a collection management system (CMS) to Axiell Collections. This was completed in 2024 successfully transferring over 100,000 records to Axiell and combining the museum and archive service's catalogue into one cohesive and accessible platform for staff. This is an incredible resource as often paper records relate to objects in the museum and have a shared heritage which can now be linked within the software.
- This transition to Axiell allowed both museums and archives to make their catalogue fully accessible to anyone in the world online for the first time ever, allowing the services to take Orkney's unique and varied heritage globally.
- Over 250 research inquiries for archaeology and Social history combined.
- Exciting new permanent exhibitions are being worked on for 2025
- Digitisation of the collection is progressing at a steady pace.



Top: Online Collections offering currently on OIC museums website
Middle: Stock photo of dig at Cairns excavation
Bottom: Screenshot of online catalogue

Collections - Archaeology

Overview

This year has seen the collection continue to grow, with some notable acquisitions. The collection continues to be an important resource for archaeological research, as shown by the numerous and high-profile research projects being undertaken. The museum has been working closely with our partners in cultural heritage and archaeology including the Archaeology Institute UHI, The Ness of Brodgar Trust, Treasure Trove Unit and National Museums Scotland to name just a few. The Museum is working closely and building strong relationships with community heritage groups and stakeholders to care for and interpret our past.

Key points

- **Redevelopment of Iron Age, Viking and Late Norse Galleries.**
Thanks to a generous bequest, the museum is currently undertaking a complete redevelopment of three galleries in the museum covering the Iron Age, Viking and Late Norse periods. The galleries are due to reopen mid-April.
- **New Acquisitions - Archaeology can only be collected by museums in Scotland through the legal process – Treasure Trove.** Last year saw several significant acquisitions to the collection. Highlights include an Early Medieval cross slab from Sanday; and a Late Bronze Age gold-foil penannular ring which was allocated in December
- The year has seen a number of significant acquisitions into the archaeology collection. Orkney Museum was also recently allocated the excavation assemblage from the Viking Age settlements at Bay of Skaill, including Snusgar. Last year Orkney Museum was allocated the assemblage from the Isbister tomb following the closure of the Tomb of the Eagles Visitor Centre. A new purpose-built case was installed in Room 3 in December, showcasing some of the artefacts from this huge assemblage. Display cases and plinths were expertly designed and built by Technician Mark Scadding.
- **Research - The Archaeology Collection at Orkney Museum continues to be a significant research resource,** shedding new light on Orkney's past and our place in wider Europe. Current projects include trace-wear analysis of Neolithic axes; analysis of Bronze Age textiles; Viking Age spindle whorls; aDNA and isotopic analysis of Neolithic communities; as well as the development of new non-destructive techniques looking at teeth.
- **Loans - This year the museum was delighted to work with the Shapinsay Arts and Crafts and loan material from Burroughston Broch for display in the Heritage Centre.**
- **Other - Dr Siobhan Cooke-Miller has been invited as Advisor to the Scottish Archaeological Human Remains Centre project led by National Museums Scotland and Historic Environment Scotland.** Siobhan continues to represent Scotland on the committee of the Society for Museum Archaeology (the Subject Specialist Network for museum archaeology in the UK). Siobhan is a member of the Scottish Archaeology in Museums Working Group and has participated in the Treasure Trove Scotland Review
- **Outreach - As well as hosting school and university groups in the museum, Siobhan has also delivered a number of talks to community and interest groups.** In September Siobhan was invited to talk to the University of the Third Age delivering a talk on highlights from the Archaeology Collection in the museum. There was a great turnout to the talk which was positively reviewed in their report segment in The Orcadian



Dr. Siobhan Cooke-Miller, Archaeology Curator

Collections - Archaeology

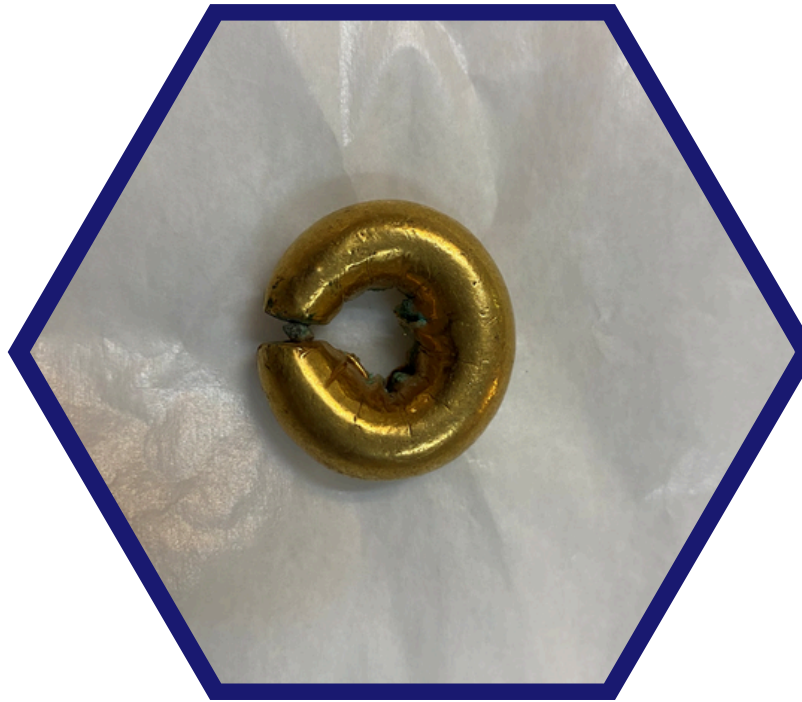
Notable Acquisitions

Late Bronze Age gold-foil penannular ring

A Late Bronze Age gold-foil penannular ring was allocated to Orkney Museum by the Scottish Archaeological Finds Allocation Panel in December 2024. This is a rare and exciting addition to the collection. It was discovered by a metal detectorist in 2022.

There are less than 20 finds of Bronze age metalwork from Orkney. Until the discovery of the gold penannular ring, only four finds of Bronze Age gold were known from Orkney – these are the four Early Bronze Age gold foil discs from the Knowes of Trotty, discovered in 1858 and now in the collection of the National Museum of Scotland.

It has been argued that most metal goods were probably imported into Orkney at this time – it is only later in prehistory that we find evidence for local metalworking. If metalwork had to be imported, this might explain why finds are so rare.



Early Medieval cross slab dated c. 800-1000 AD. Chance find at Sanday, Orkney.

The stone exhibits a quadrilobate cross on a pedestal carved in low relief, measuring 1.27m long, on one side and a comparable but smaller unfinished cross on the reverse defined only by a subtle groove. (weighs approx. 3000kg)

The cross slab from Sanday adds significantly to the evidence for early Christianity in Orkney and the wider practice of stone carving that took place in Orkney during the early medieval period.

Collections - Social History

Overview

Between January and December 2024, Curator Ellen Pesci received donations from 60 donors, some of which were multiple items from one donor. Although down on 2023's total of 89, amongst this year's donations were some items of high prestige that the museum was incredibly grateful to receive, and which have augmented Orkney Museums' collection enormously.



Ellen Pesci, Social History Curator

Key points

- Ellen has handled in excess of 150 social history enquiries, not including those offering donations. Many are enquiring about places in Orkney or about items in the museums collection often involving requests to access the collection for research, and many are people writing about a topic who need permission to use or photograph items from the museum.
- In the new year, plans are developing for new items to be added to the permanently displayed collections in Scapa Flow Museum and Orkney Museum, thanks to an abundance of high-quality donations dating from the 17th century onwards.
- Ellen cannot stress enough the importance of research enquiries for the social history collection, because so much of our information relies on the stories passed down which are sometimes not complete or non-existent. Two such items received incredible input from researchers. One discovered that an 18th century wedding over-dress we had in our store was not only much older than believed, but that it had been altered around 5 times over the almost 300 years it had been in the family, which she knew from turning the item inside out and inspecting the stitchwork. The second discovery was in relation to a basket picked up at auction over 20 years ago and subsequently kept uncatalogued and in storage due to a lack of provenance or information about its construction. It turns out to be one of only 3 known examples of basketry using Neolithic braiding, which is a technique that uses a continuous woven braid to form the basket. Suffice to say, Ellen got it catalogued right away!
- For Ellen professionally, the real boost was the team's successful application to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation for funding to help establish better relationships with partner heritage organisations in rural areas of Orkney, and looking to assist with and create community projects embedded in sharing collections, knowledge, experience and expertise with groups around the islands.
- 2025 is shaping up to be a very promising year, with the new year bringing in a much-sought after historically high-profile collection, as well as transformational changes to the stored collections enabling important collection management development. Watch this space!

Collections - Social History

Notable Acquisitions



Orkney Museum itself was a very grateful recipient of three important pieces for the Baikie Drawing room. An extremely fine Stanley Cursiter seascape was gifted by the family of the poet Robert Rendall, who had acquired it from the painter directly, as the two were good friends. The painting now hangs alongside a further two fabulous paintings by the artist, the impressive "Rest after Toil" by Robert Stewart Clouston, RSA and portraits of notable Orcadians including James Baikie, 8th Laird of Tankerness and Bishop Murdoch Mackenzie, the last bishop of Orkney.

Notable upgrades to Scapa Flow Museum displays include the fantastic silver punchbowl from SMS Agir, found lodged in the sand between two scuttled German High Seas Fleet wrecks in the 1920s, along with the portrait of the founder of Metal Industries, Robert McCrone. Both items were donated by members of the McCrone family.



Two of Bishop Mackenzie's dressers, very finely crafted and beautiful pieces, which left Orkney 200 years after his death were donated earlier in the year by his descendants and are now displayed beside his portrait.

Collections - Social History

The Moodie Treasures

The process of trying to acquire the collection for a museum in Orkney has been ongoing for nearly 20 years but always ultimately stalled due to being unable to raise funds to acquire the items. But, at the end of 2024, in an unexpected turn of events, the family offered the collection to Orkney – as a donation. All that was requested was that the costs of transporting the collection to Orkney be covered.

These centuries-old exquisitely crafted weapons owned by Captain James Moodie – known locally for his dramatic murder in Broad Street, Kirkwall - have been gifted to the people of Orkney by his modern-day family and have arrived in the county and into the care of Orkney Islands Council's Museums service.

The voyage home of the Moodie Treasures has been made possible with financial support from the Robertson Ness Trust (£2,000), the Museums Association Beecroft Bequest (£9,500), the National Fund for Acquisitions (£2,164) and the Orkney Heritage Society (£500), along with support in kind from Northlink and the Council's Marine Services.

The intention is for the collection to be on display to the people of Orkney from May 2025 - following the necessary conservation assessments, careful mounting of the artefacts, and the production of a display worthy of this spectacular acquisition



Collections - Social History



The Moodie Treasures



Collections - Digital

Overview

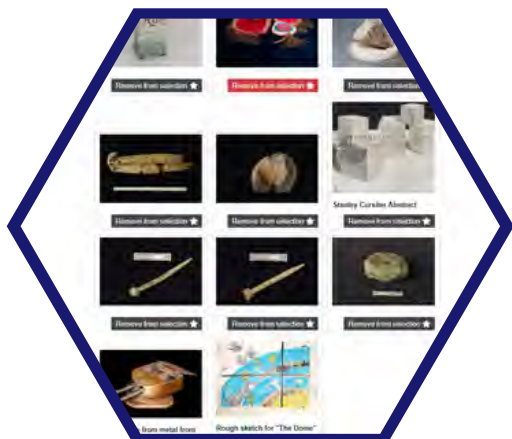
It has been another exciting year in the museums digital front. Digital Collections and Heritage Officer Chris Andrews has helped develop the services digital offering and made the collection more accessible. Chris been working closely with colleagues and contractors on the digital offering in the gallery re-development and look forward to the publics reaction to them.



Chris Andrews, Islands Digital Collections and Heritage Officer

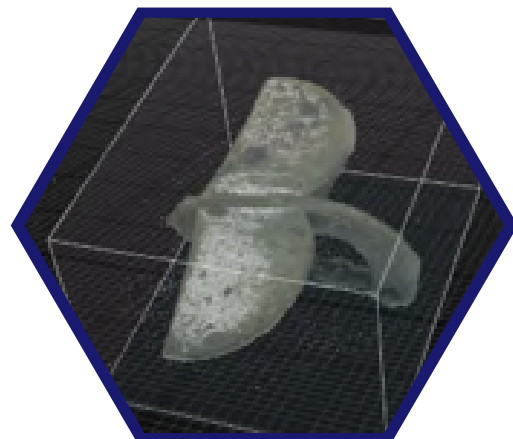
Key points

- Helped maintain website for Orkney Museums (<https://www.orkneymuseums.co.uk/>) which has had 45,000 unique visitors this year, after a successful launch in May 2023 which has led to increased engagement, enquiries, and site visits.
- Have successfully organised the integration of the museums and archive shared catalogue online.
- Consolidated current digital asset holdings as well as digitising approx 2,000 objects in the collection. This work will be constantly ongoing throughout the term of the post which is funded until January 2026.
- Continued producing 3D models of some objects in the collection, making them available online as well as 3D printing scale reproductions of these objects.
- Sourced grant funding for £1,000 of specialist equipment for creating short videos about the museums sector.
- Work with the OIC Communications Team to get images for promotion and creating videos about the museums
- Led on transitioning the collections management system from Axiell CALM to Axiell Collections, this involved data mapping, migration, and final approval. This went live in 2024 and has been a huge boost to capabilities for the service and for users interested in Orkney's history.
- Chris has started a social media campaign to raise the museum service's profile to increase engagement. this will be taking the form of regular posts and a video series with colleagues and guests talking about objects and their roles.



Left: Screenshot of online catalogue

Right: 3D render of 1800 year old insect shaped brooch from archaeological dig at Howe.



Arts Development

Overview

2024 has been a further year of recovery and consolidation for the Creative Industries across Great Britain, Scotland and so too for Orkney with grant-in-aid funding falling by 18% between 2010 and 2023. This is a sector that is often required to do a lot with a little. Yet, despite the continuing impact of Covid and the cost-of-living crisis our creatives consistently produce delight and challenges for audiences and participants across the County. From small scale touring to community halls and bespoke storytelling in a graveyard to large scale orchestral work in St Magnus Cathedral and from the minute detailed of work by our, often world renowned, craftspeople to performances inside the belly of a huge inflatable whale and the delivery of our myriad festivals we have seen a practice that operates at the highest levels of skill and creativity in 2024. We have the forthcoming Island Games to welcome in 2025 and much else besides, no doubt. Bring it on! Emma Gee, Arts Officer

Keypoints

- **Creative Learning Network** - North Walls for My School, My Heritage portrait photography project. Artist Martin Laird worked with pupils to train them in portrait photography skills and the group produced a series of portraits of members of the Hoy Community that had been to the school and currently work in the local community.
- **Community Touring** - This November consolidated the pilot touring of last year with a second visit by a national touring show. This time it was Men Don't Talk by Clare Prenton which explored issues around men's mental and physical health with a script setting the story in a Men's Shed. The dialogue was funny and touching and very much more than that as men palpably demonstrated their need and ability to talk and support one another. This was toured to three of the venues that hosted last year: Stenness, Burray, and Flotta. This experience continues to result in great feedback from audiences and the promoters and all the halls want more touring into the County. Emma will look to see if the scheme funds further suitable productions for our community spaces in 2025. Note there is no cost for the shows and halls are able to keep 80% of the box office takings
- **Schools Touring** - 2024 was a bumper year for schools touring with not one but two shows coming to our Junior High Schools in Sanday, Stronsay and Westray. The service works closely with promoters Activate! to identify high quality productions that work for upper Primary and lower Secondary level to make the most of this opportunity. This last year saw tours in February with Going For Gold: Me and Lynford Christie by Victoria Beesley. The play focussed on one girl's dreams of becoming an Olympian, which don't come to pass but drive her to new ways to understand herself and the world around her (spoiler alert: she gets to carry the Olympic torch in 2012 and that's a true story!). This also went to Dounby School and played to P2 and above, so lots of peedie folk got to see it too. November saw a tour by 'One of Two' written and performed by Jack Hunter who has lived experience of cerebral palsy. The play focusses on his growing up with twin sister, Jac, who uses a wheelchair. This show didn't pull its punches about how tough it was at school, but was packed with humour and hope. In addition to touring to the Outer Isles this also performed at Papdale School. These opportunities to see professional theatre are precious and deeply impactful. Let's see what comes in 2025!



Emma Gee, Arts Officer



Touring Gallery Bus

Arts Development

Key Points

- **Junior Curators at Kirbuster Museum** – this year a new cohort of Junior Curators were formed by the P3 Class at Dounby School. Over the summer term they worked with staff at Kirbuster and the Arts Officer to produce six short story/plays based in six locations at the farm museum: the pig sty, the byre, the garden, the front door, the main room and the bedroom (that last one was a scary ghost story!). Each of these were filmed by the pupils and performed live to pupils from Evie School at the Museum. Each of the films will be produced as a QR Code and be sited at the Museum for future visitors to watch in situ. The Junior Curators all hope they will make you laugh (or perhaps make you scream!).
- **Remembering Together** - The national programme designed to memorialise the nation's experiences of COVID-19 entered its third year this year. Community liaison artists Emma Ainsley and John Phillips worked with five local communities in Phase I this included North Ronaldsay, Flotta, Shapinsay, Sanday and Mainland. In Phase II Artists Megumi Barrington-Uenoyama and Louise Barington worked with the Men's Group in Shapinsay and the Kirk and produced a viewing platform at the Kirk that overlooks the bay. This is a contemplative space that will be planted up with native plants and allow for quiet reflection.
- **Island Games** – in 2024 the team appointed a freelance Sound Artist, Brian Cromarty, and a freelance Scrivener/Story Gatherer, Gabrielle Barnby. Brian has begun collecting field sounds of Orkney and its sporting life in order to produce a sound scape for the Cathedral that will run throughout the Games in July. Gaby launched the call-out for writing at the point of a year-to-go in July 2024. This will result in a printed publication and there is an online platform supported by the Museums Service where received works are published as they come in. They will work together to produce sound works from some of the writing that emerges. here will also be an exhibition influenced by the theme of 'Games' at Northlight Gallery, Stromness and potentially in the main street. Finally, work is going on with UHI to produce installation artworks for The Orkney Museum courtyard and the Tankerness Gardens. The forthcoming year should bring some treats including the re-hanging of the St Magnus Sails in the Cathedral during the Summer and across the Games.
- **Social Value Engine** – this year Emma piloted the use of the Social Value Engine evaluation tool with to produce data on behalf of The Culture Fund in order to map the monetary value of the social value this work brings to Orkney. As a result, we now know that in 2022/2023 the fund had a value of £6.56 per £1 investment and in 2023/2024 that value was £5.87. It is often very difficult to assess value in terms of culture and therefore argue a case for its continued investment. The service hopes the deployment of this data analysis tool will actively support the case for cultural funding in the years to come.
- **Mailing Lists** – in 2024 we had the administrative support allowed Emma to reinstate the Mailing Lists for both Artists and Arts Organisation. Administrator Sharon Klipova circulated over 100 notifications on funding and training opportunities and events both local and national.

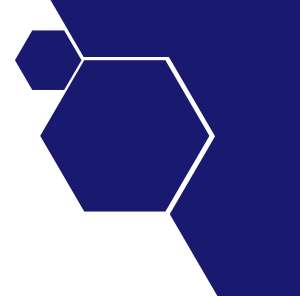


Orkney Island Games Logo



Emma Ainsley and John Phillips,
'Remembering together'

Funding Awarded



Culture Fund

£176,175 was awarded to local Arts, Culture and Heritage organisations through the OIC Culture Fund in 2023-24 and the same amount in 2024-25. Of this, £153,175 was distributed amongst the Key Clients: St Magnus International Festival; the Pier Arts Centre, Orkney Folk Festival, Stromness Museum and Birsay Heritage Trust. The remaining £23,000 was distributed through the Open Pot, which is decided each year by a competitive process and a review panel consisting of OIC Officers, Elected Members and representatives from stakeholder organisations including Creative Scotland, Museums Galleries Scotland and Voluntary Action Orkney. In 2024-25 the Open Pot awards went to the following:

North Isles Dance Academy	Summer Production	£500
Orkney Camerata	Camerata the Next Generation: concert series for young people and players	£3,250
Ness of Brodgar Trust	Ness of Brodgar: Past, Present and Future exhibition	£1,500
Orkney Historic Boat Society	Equipping the Old Herring Factory for boat restoration and preservation	£550
Hoy Heritage/Friends of Hoy Kirk	Buying Hoy and Walls Parish Map as part of creating a community art collection	£2,157
Orcadian Story Trust	Orkney Storytelling Festival 2024	£3,887
Orkney Music and Culture	Singer/songwriter composition weekend	£1,211
Orkney Arts Society	24-25 Events Season Programme including new commissioned work	£3,000
Soulisquoy Printmakers	Soulisquoy Young Associates Peer Network and development programme	£3,000
Another Orkney Production (AOP)	2024 Events: Celebrating Scapa Flow, Orkney Aviation Festival, Billy's Night Out Film showings	£2,196
Kirkwall Arts Club	Pantomime 2024	£1,750
Friends of Sanday Kirk	Cross Kirk Celebrations	£868

Funding Awarded

Visual Artists and Craft Makers Award (VACMA)

VACMA is a Creative Scotland funding initiative that works in partnership with Local Authorities. Orkney has run a VACMA scheme from 2014, and since Covid this funding has taken the form of bursaries for the creative development of practitioners in the visual arts and crafts. Emerging and developing creatives in 2024 could apply for £500 and creatives with five or more years of practice could apply for £750.

In 2023-2024 there was a pot of £7,500 for dispersal made up of contributions from Creative Scotland, HIE and OIC. The deadline for applications was early February 2024 and 12 applications were received of which 10 were successful. The following individuals were funded:

Shona Turnbull	For the development of 3D resin casting	£500
Katherine Diaper	Research and development for a new body of work	£750
Matt Haselden	Development of a new series of 3D works using felt and other materials	£500
Molly Shearer	Materials to create an explorative body of woven artworks	£500
Trish Berry	Purchase of tools, materials and equipment for crushing stone	£750
Adam Clarke	The Circle Remains – a meditation of narratives of loss	£750
Donna Eunson	Training courses in glass lampwork, materials and equipment	£750
Emma Ainsley	Studio based work with John Phillips	£750
Kate Elliot	Installation of pin hole cameras	£500
Britt Harcus	Research and development for a new book	£750

Funding Sourced



External Funding

2024 has been another successful year of sourcing external funding totalling £242,926, the uses of which range from increasing staff capacity to deliver project-driven work to creating short film series for funder and finally for acquisitions

Total sourced (£)	Funder and use of funding
99,928	Esmee Fairburn Collections Fund: £99,928 over eighteen months from 31 July 2024 to boost core hours, re-engage with Orkney's harder-to-reach communities and facilitate community led outputs.
79,658	National Heritage Memorial Fund: £79,658 from 23 May 2024 for the design, fabrication and delivery of a steel tank to suitably house the timbers of the Sand O'Erraby shipwreck found on Sanday at the start of the year, and the professional supervision of its installation.
20,000	Orkney Harbour Authority Environmental Levy: £20,000 over two years from 13 September to support work connected to the wreck of HMS Vanguard, should approval be granted by the Ministry of Defence.
20,000	Orkney Harbour Authority: Up to £20,000 in annual provision to support cost of additional staff in St Magnus Cathedral and The Orkney Museum on cruise ship visit days in high season.
8,148	<p>National Fund for Acquisitions: £5,239 to support the acquisition of a brass tompion from HMS Royal Oak; a brass metal maker's plate, Elswick Works, Portsmouth; a lantern from SMS Bremse; and two brass signs from SMS Konig, disposed through auction from the closed Charlestown Shipwreck Museum, Cornwall</p> <p>£2,400 to support the transport costs incurred in bringing the Sanday cross slab (TT.100/23) from Sanday into the museum store in Kirkwall.</p> <p>£509 towards the transport costs of acquiring a 17th-century press and cabinet of drawers.</p>
14,164	Moodie Treasures package: £14,164 in a complex funding package to support the acquisition and transport of the Moodie Treasures, including the Robertson Ness Trust (£2,000), the Beecroft Bequest (£9,500), the National Fund for Acquisitions (£2,164) and the Orkney Heritage Society (£500).
1,000	Museums Galleries Scotland: £1,000 to procure equipment to create and produce five short videos about different careers in the heritage industry.



External Funding

This year the service saw the full roll-out of contactless donation points, which have proved to be hugely successful. They have improved upon their total from 2023 and continue to provide another valuable income stream. Anecdotally it hasn't reduced cash donations which shows that they have tapped into previously untouched funding.

The 'Donation Stations' were procured from a company named 'Good With Devices' who provides ongoing software and hardware support. They also, as part of the contract take a small percentage of each donation, even with this, the total has been significant.

Figures relating to donations via contactless donation stations in 2024.

Visitor site	Number of donations	Total Donated (£)*	Average donation (£)
St Magnus Cathedral	4,905	33,136	6.75
Scapa Flow Museum	1,339	12,085	9.03
Orkney Museum	2,594	17,491	6.74
Overall Total	8,838	62,713	7.10

*Total donations once the transaction fee has been deducted

**Average of overall totals from 'Number of Donations' and 'Total Donated' columns. Not Average of 'Average Donation' column figures

Partnerships

Partnership working is at the core of museums and arts services throughout the world. The museums service work hard to maintain and develop current and future relationships so that we can share knowledge and resources. In Orkney, that means continuing to work with other heritage attractions and artists, supporting them, and providing advice where possible.

At the end of 2024, Ellen was lucky enough to be awarded a fully funded place at the Museums Association conference in Leeds. The experience was a triumph of sharing, networking and learning about how fellow museum professionals are tackling the challenges we all share in the sector, celebrating the wealth of our individual heritage identities, and how doing so inspires progress, all of which resulted in a lot of note-taking and development ideas for the future of Orkney Museum!



Ellen Pesci with other museum professionals



Sanday Shipwreck

The Service is working with Sanday Heritage to envisage the future of some shipwreck timbers. Together, they're looking into ways to preserve and showcase these historical pieces. They're also brainstorming how to get the community involved and share the maritime history with everyone. The goal is to create engaging exhibits and maybe secure extra funding to develop the heritage centre concentrating on the timbers as a focal point

The Museums Service, with support from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, is helping heritage organisations across Orkney to develop small projects, or start off larger projects with their expert advice and small pots of money. Once the project is complete, the service hopes that the working relationships forged will continue and it can be a centre for collaboration across all of Orkney's organisations that share the goal of telling Orkney's story. Also, that these organisations and the service can share knowledge, expertise and costs for specialist works.

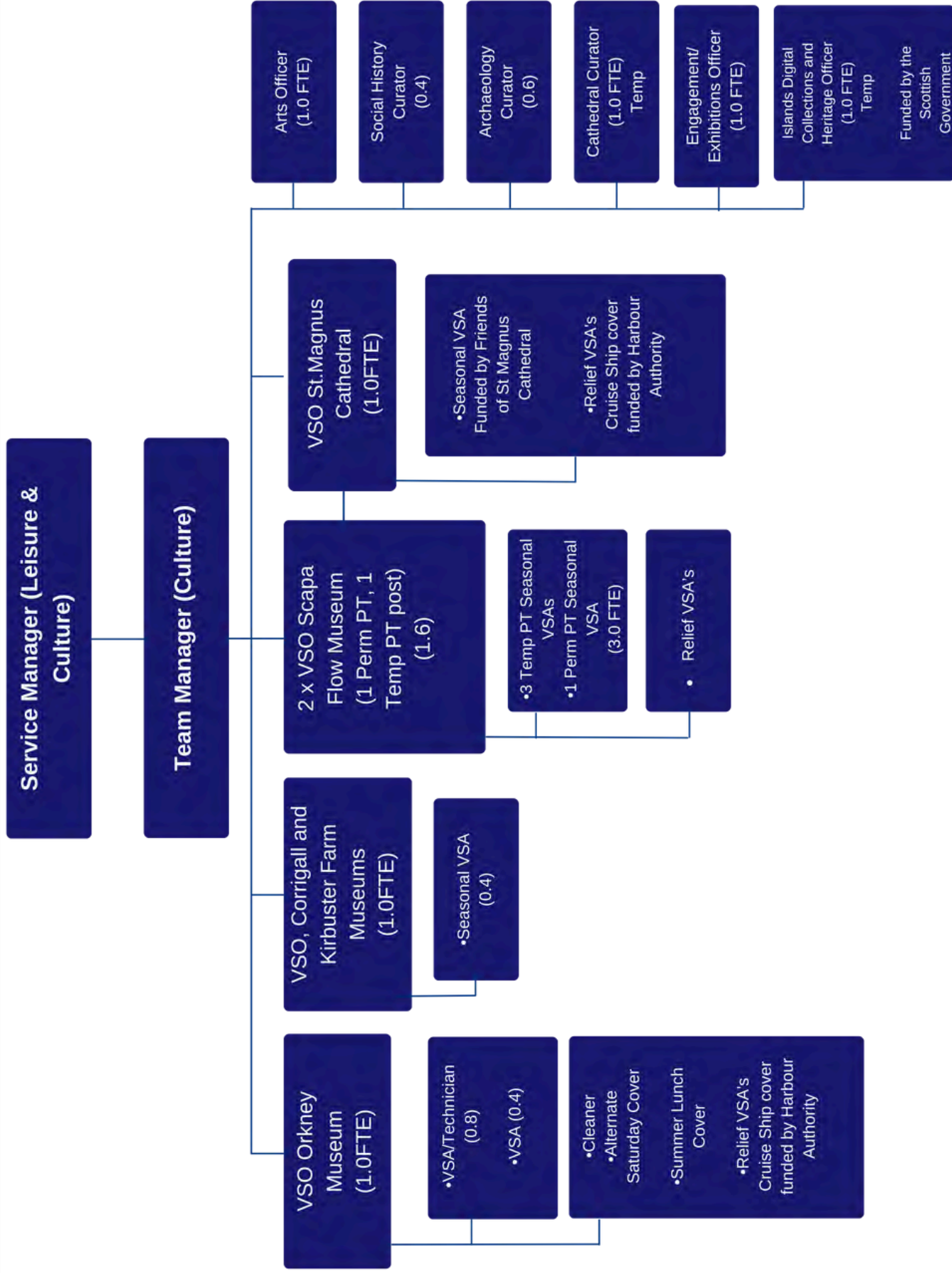


Esmee Fairburn Logo

Orkney Arts, Museums and Heritage Staffing Structure 2023

Key:

VSO=Visitor Services Officer
VSA= Visitor Services Assistant





Contact Us



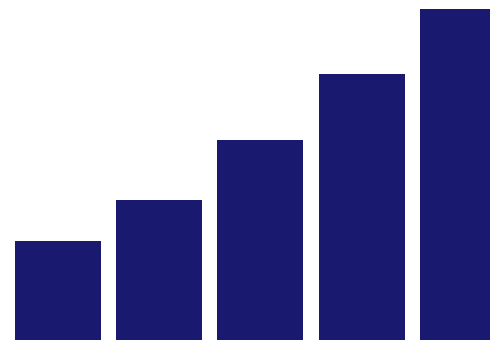
museum@orkney.gov.uk



<https://www.orkneymuseums.co.uk>



OrkneyArtsMuseumsandHeritage



2024

Leisure and Culture Service Orkney Libraries & Archive Annual Impact Report





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Manager's Statement

Vikki Kerr, Team Manager (Libraries& Archive)

2024 has been another busy year for all the staff at the libraries and in the archive, with access to more services for our community members and excellent partnership working to deliver the very best in customer care and in providing a safe and welcoming environment for all visitors.

Libraries are very much at the heart of communities, and between Kirkwall and Stromness branches, as well as the mobile library van and home delivery service, Orkney residents and visitors alike can enjoy access to lots of different resources, usually at no cost to themselves.

2024 saw some key members of the staffing team retire, and so there have been challenges to keep delivering all the services while vacancies are being recruited. Staff have risen to these challenges exceptionally well, and all go above and beyond to make sure customers receive the best experience they can.

The libraries offer people a warm and welcoming space, with no pressure to have to spend money, and are actively reducing the carbon footprint of the planet by reducing waste, encouraging recycling and promoting responsible consumption. People can not only borrow books, DVDs or jigsaws for example, they can sit and play board games, create masterpieces at the Lego table, use the Lend & Mend Hub, or visit the sensory room. 2024 also saw the expansion of the popular kids' fancy dress swap rails as well as the introduction of the welly swap in both Kirkwall and Stromness.

The library service also became a help point for Orkney residents to get assistance with the new digital ferry voucher scheme launched in 2024. Library staff in both Kirkwall and Stromness have helped hundreds of Orkney residents digitally upload their ferry vouchers onto their Saltire/National Entitlement Cards.

In the archive, staff have brought in new historic collections, launched an online catalogue, moved forward with digital preservation and carried out lots of outreach work. The staff in the archive work incredibly hard to make sure that the historical collections are well looked after and are accessible to all those who want to look at the archive records for their research.

The library and archive services have been successful in bringing in external funding and donations over the course of the year, as well as generating income from meeting room hires, selling merchandise, book sales, printing/photocopying, digital imaging and photographic prints. Over the course of the year, the total income generated between the library and the archive in Kirkwall was just over £41,000.

Libraries and archives continue to play an essential role within communities, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff for their superb hard work, and I look forward to seeing what is achieved over the course of 2025.

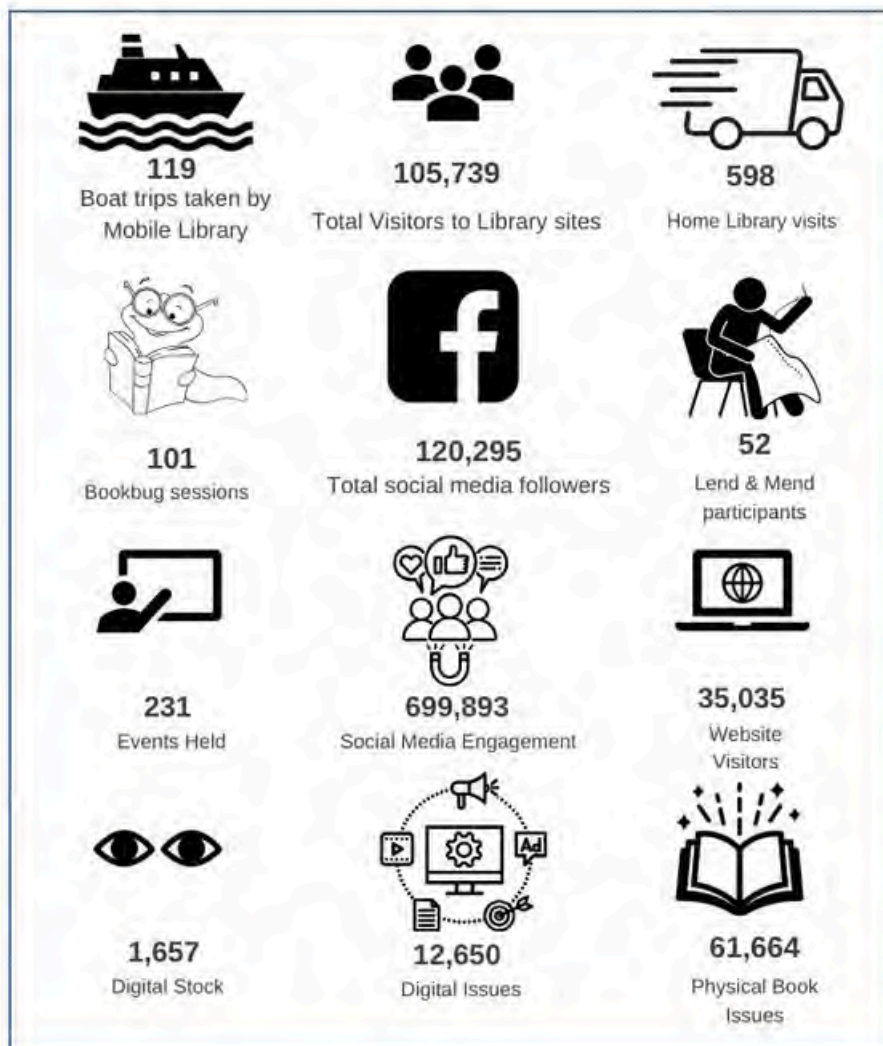


Library Facts and Figures



Statistics are gathered from Orkney Library in Kirkwall, Stromness Library in the Warehouse Buildings and from the Mobile and Home Library services.

The library service offers a huge range of resources for customers to borrow, including books (including audio and large print options), digital e-resources, CDs, DVDs, puzzles, games, project and activity kits. Stock is constantly being updated and appraised to ensure the library has something that is accessible to everyone.



Breakdown of totals

	Kirkwall	Stromness	Mobile/Home Library
Members	10,570	1,333	1,130
Issues	49,614	4,812	7,238
Visitors	72,816	29,361	3,562

Library Events 2024

A total of 231 events were held in Orkney Library over the course of 2024. These ranged from gaming sessions with Dungeon & Dragons through to Lego challenges, virtual reality and sensory room experiences, as well as author visits, crafting and sewing clubs and various learning events. There was something for everyone and these events benefit the whole community. Highlights from the year include:



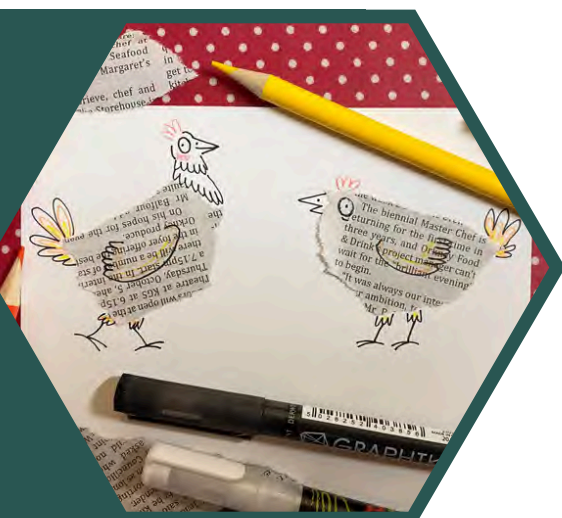
Bookbug on the beach

BOOKBUG

The Bookbug programme continues to grow in Orkney, with 2,514 children with accompanying adults attending sessions over the course of the year. Sessions are held every Wednesday in Kirkwall, and every Friday in Stromness. There are also Saturday sessions in Kirkwall once a month as well as newly started sessions for expectant parents in both Kirkwall and Stromness. Intergenerational sessions took place at Sunnybrae and Smiddybrae with the older and younger participants having a great time. There were also several chances to don the Bookbug costume, with schools and nurseries encouraged to borrow the costume for their own Bookbug events.

COSTUME AND WELLY SWAP RAILS

Libraries up and down the country are trying to be more sustainable, helping to promote the circular economy and recycling, so the libraries in Kirkwall and Stromness once again promoted the costume swap rails which hold fancy dress outfits for children, and are free to take/swap with something that no longer fits. The costume swap rails are very popular, especially around World Book Day and Halloween. Both libraries also started a welly boot swap in Autumn, and this has proved to be very welcome by lots of families in the community.



Shoogly pencil

SHOONGLY PENCIL CLUB AND FELTING CLUB

Local artist Ellen Forkin hosted three extremely popular Shoogly Pencil Art Club sessions in Orkney Library, introducing primary aged children to creative art focussing on upcycling newspapers, magazines, maps and even barcodes! Wonderful works of art were created and displayed in the library.

There were also needle felting craft workshops run by Stephanie Cullen, one of which celebrated Book Week Scotland and its theme of 'Hope'. At this workshop 9 children created colourful felted rainbows.



Kimono event

ORKNEY JAPAN ASSOCIATION

The library service is very lucky to have a great working relationship with the Orkney Japan Association, and one very popular event in 2024 was a day dedicated to celebrating the kimono. Kirkwall library hosted the Orkney Japan Association and Dr Saeko Yazaki, who gave a sold out illustrated talk about kimono, explaining the different accessories and demonstrating how kimono is worn, followed by a panel discussion and Q&A. There was also an opportunity to try on kimono and a vintage kimono pop-up. These events echoed the 'Kyoto to Catwalk' exhibition at the V&A Dundee, with visitors to Kirkwall library being able to see the beautifully illustrated V&A exhibition catalogue. There were 254 people who visited the library this day.

A kimono designed and made by former Kirkwall Grammar School student, Rachel Alexander, was on display for a fortnight in the library alongside her research work which included some amazing sketches and handmade fabric samples. There were also other kimono displayed in the library foyer, and there are dress up kimono still available in the junior library for children to try on.

NICK HAND AND HIS LETTERPRESS BIKE

Bristol-based printmaker Nick Hand visited Orkney Library as part of his 'Press On' bicycle letterpress tour in October. Nick wanted to celebrate the connections people have with public libraries, books and printing, so he cycled all the way north to Orkney and Shetland from his home town of Bristol on his specially made bike with an Adana printing press attached to the back. Here in Orkney, he printed beautiful bookmarks from a design by Morph creator, Peter Lord, who is himself, a regular visitor to Orkney. Nick had a great day, with plenty of people stopping to chat to him and picking up a free bookmark.



Nick Hand Printing Bike



LEND & MEND HUB

The Lend & Mend Hub continues to contribute to skills development in Orkney with 52 people learning basic sewing machine skills in introductory classes with a tutor. The groups made pencil cases, tote bags and cushion covers over the course of three workshops. There were also 12 people trained to use the overlocker machine and 3 others who were trained to use the embroidery machine. Patchwork and quilting groups have been held to make quilts for Project Linus Orkney. 2025 will see the launch of a winter sewing circle and a regular patchworking group in the Hub.

The impact of being able to access this Hub and all its equipment free of charge is hugely significant to Orkney residents. Feedback from those using the Hub has shown there is a community need and desire to learn new skills to enable the repair and re-use of items. One participant said "I've used the Lend and Mend Hub quite a few times since being trained on the sewing machine. It is incredibly helpful to have a space with so much equipment and resources as a beginner as it eliminates the financial hurdle to get started and I can learn what I like to use."



Lend & mend patchwork table

AUTHOR VISITS

Orkney Library in Kirkwall has had several authors come to visit throughout the year and they hosted talks and writing workshops. Authors included Marsali Taylor, Dr Gavin Francis, Lydia Harris, Linda Gask, Gill Tennant and Mim Landor.

In June the library also hosted Daniel Aubrey who came to do a reading for the Saturday Slaughters book club. Daniel spoke about his new Orkney based book 'Dark Island' which features a neurodivergent main character. The book has proved to be very popular with library customers, with lots of reservations in physical and digital formats.



Dan Aubrey's book cover

Library Projects 2024

There are always lots of projects on the go across the library service, ranging from updating displays, managing the home library service and book boxes, to event planning and taking part in national library campaigns etc.

However, there are some projects which take considerable effort by library staff to get off the ground, as well as working with internal and external partners to ensure Orkney community members receive the best services possible.

NEW LIBRARY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

A massive project for 2024 was the migration of all library data over into a new Library Management System (LMS). Considerable amounts of work were required by several members of staff to set up and design the new system and to ensure the data was transferred over seamlessly. There were training sessions for all library staff across the Kirkwall, Stromness and the mobile library sites, new processes and procedures had to be written, and fresh connections made between the new LMS and the libraries public PCs, printers, self-issue machine and the mobile library's roaming connectivity.

The new system went live in May, with the successful transfer of all the data, and staff are well into the swing of using the new system. By changing to the new LMS, Orkney libraries join an ever-growing consortium of Scotland wide public libraries using the same system, and being able to offer our customers a refreshed online library catalogue to browse and reserve titles.



New library catalogue screenshot

Digital Inclusion

The library team in Kirkwall partnered with colleagues from the Learning Link to host speakers from BT over two days in July, which saw people being able to drop into Kirkwall and Stromness libraries to find out more about the switchover from analogue to digital landlines. Over 200 people had the opportunity to ask lots of questions, as well as find out about the help they can get from the Learning Link and the library service with regards to digital inclusion. Lots of equipment and resources were on display to help show people what they can access, and how to enjoy reading in a digital environment.

After these two events, it was clear there was a need for classes on basic digital skills, so colleagues from the Learning Link and the library partnered up to offer a block of introductory classes on the very basics of getting online and how to work digital equipment to allow people to get online safely and to use it to communicate and access vital services. In total, there have been 24 sessions with 117 people participating. These classes are continuing in 2025.



BT Inclusion session

Library Projects 2024

MAKE A NOISE IN THE NORTH; FAIR ACCESS TO READING FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Make a Noise in the North was a joint project between Orkney Library and Shetland Library to improve and promote library services for visually impaired people in our communities, as well as to those who are dyslexic. The project was funded by the Public Library Improvement Fund via the Scottish Library and Information Council, and an award of £5,500 was granted in the Autumn of 2023.

The money was used to purchase lighted magnifiers, text to voice pen readers and large font games and jigsaws. New sets of coloured overlays were also purchased to help improve the readability of text for those with dyslexia. Improvements were made to library signs and guidance for accessible PC equipment. Resources have been relocated into one area within the library to provide a better focused space to promote reading accessibility.

The project was formally launched during 'HiVis' fortnight in June, with staffed displays and drop in events held in Kirkwall and Stromness to allow people the opportunity to talk to a library staff member to highlight all the resources that are available to them. Information was also shared about the Orkney Talking Newspaper, the Sensory Impairment Service (OHAC) and the RNIB. Library staff talked to members of the visually impaired group that meet in the library in Kirkwall once a month to show them the resources available in the library, as well as how to get the most out of reading material on the digital platform BorrowBox.

A staff exchange between Orkney and Shetland libraries took place in October and November which was a great opportunity to learn from each service and share best practice on how both services support their community members.



large print board games

Archive Facts and Figures



Statistics are regularly gathered in the archive to reflect the number of researchers visiting the public searchroom, what collections have been accessed, and digitisation services utilised. Staff will also collate figures from remote enquiries the service receives, as well as recording new collections deposited and finding aid entries.

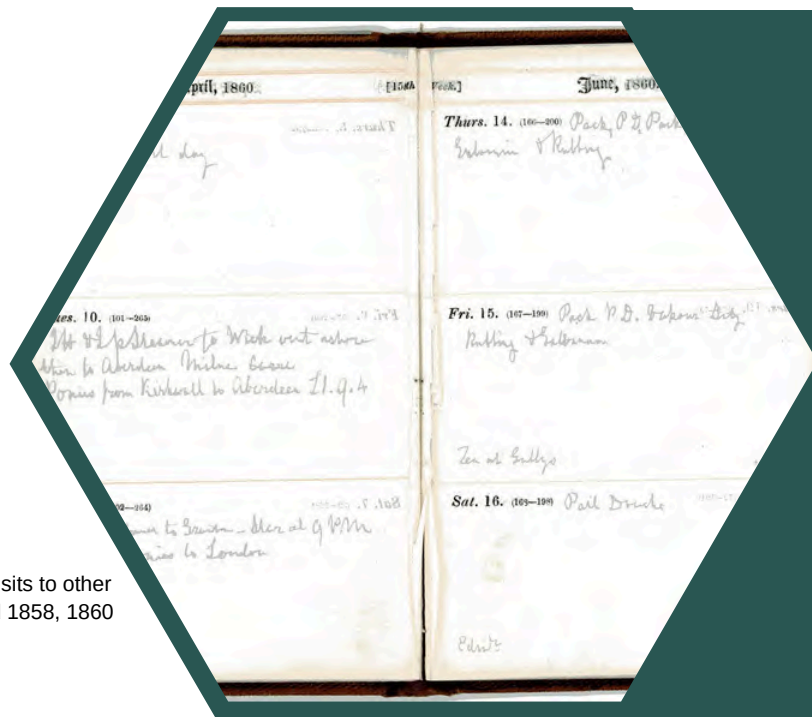


Accession Highlights

Physical accessions



Copy of the Memoir of Mrs Traill, written by Thomas Stewart Traill, dated mid-1800s (our ref. A3284)



Three small notebooks/diaries belonging to David Balfour, containing notes on visits to other places and people in Orkney as well as visitors received at Balfour Castle. Dated 1858, 1860 and 1970 (our ref. A3304)



29 postcards and 16 small black and white family photographs taken of the Witheridge family. Edmund Witheridge worked for Customs and Excise in Kirkwall from c.1911-1921 (our ref. A3257)

Accession Highlights

Digital Accessions



Digital copy of 'Countries Round the North Pole' map annotated by John Rae to reflect his expeditions between 1834 and 1854, dated 1878 (our ref. A3273)

Digital images of Hellyar Holm Lighthouse Book, off the Southern coast of Shapinsay, 1893-1997 (our ref. A3221)

VISITORS visiting <u>Hellyar Holm Lighthouse</u> to insert their Names in the Album.	
DATE.	NAME AND ADDRESS.
1893.	
October	
20.	Ernest Graham. Dist. Superintendent.
1	John Macleod Principal Keeper
	James Mc Culloch Assist. Keeper
	John Reid Fish curer Shapinsay
13	May Manson Deepdale Stromness
26	William Linch
26	David Craigie
	Bryan W.C. Bell L.R.C.M.R.
	William Coull Kirkwall
	Andrew Smith Kirkwall
	Robert R. Rannie
	Agnes Rannie
	Robert Rannie
	Arthur J Rannie

Archive Events 2024

The archive is involved in a range of events over the course of the year, with many hosted within the archive, however there are also opportunities to go out into the community and attend events to help raise awareness of the archive and its historical collections.

In 2024 there were a total of 37 outreach events, ranging from class visits, palaeography sessions, talks, tours, workshops and exhibitions. Some are highlighted below:

SCHOOL VISITS

The archive enjoyed two visits from a Gairness school class during 2024. In February, the then primary 6s visited to research their tour guiding project on the Bishop's and Earl's Palaces. Photographs, maps, plans, sound archives and videos showing the centre of Kirkwall were laid out for the children to view and read. 20 children were split into 2 groups of 10 and enjoyed getting to know the archive and learning about what records were available.

The same class returned in November, now in primary 7, and built upon their research skills by taking notes on archives relating to four archaeological sites: Knap o Howar, Broch of Gurness, Midhowe and Pictish ruins on the Brough of Birsay. The visits were so successful that this year's P6 are booked in for the end of January 2025!



School visit to archive search room

HERITAGE CAREER DAY

In October, the Archivists joined museum staff, local tour guides, archaeologists and rangers at Kirkwall Grammar School for the school's first heritage-themed careers fair. Each group set up exhibits and activities for third year students and answered any questions they had about working in the sector. The archive provided folders of photographs, sound archives, copies of maps and documents and a PowerPoint presentation. This event was coordinated with Developing the Young Workforce Orkney and was a great success.



Archivist Lucy Gibbon, at Heritage Careers Day at KGS

TOYS AND GAMES EXHIBITION

An exhibition about toys and games was displayed at the Orkney Classic Motor Show and then in the archive searchroom in August and September. The archive database was used to find relevant photos and archive items that showed the types of items the children of Orkney have played with over the years and activities they took part in. The exhibition included photographs of dolls and a dollhouse in Trumland House in the early 1900s; boys with model boats at the Duckie Pond in Kirkwall from the David Horne collection; kids sledging down Tankerness Lane; girls playing football at Binscarth in 1927; a Stromness School hobble skirt race from the early 1900s; and some descriptions of home-made toys from the Ernest Marwick Collection, such as items made of wood, bone, turnips and balloons made of pigs bladders.



Archive Events 2024



AGE SCOTLAND RESEARCH GROUP

The archive supported a new group formed by Age Scotland in November 2024, to research history in the Orkney Archive. The aim was to introduce the archive to a new group and show them how easy it is to research different subjects. The group was hosted by Rebecca Marr, and it was held in the Orkney Room once a week for 4 weeks. The first theme was shops, and the group (6 people, plus 2 Age Scotland staff) enjoyed seeing and discussing the photos and books which the archive staff found for them. The last meeting included a tour of the archive strongrooms and participation in the 'Archive Discovery Trail' following clues which led to information in different media sources around the searchroom and the Orkney Room. This new group are hoping to come back in 2025 to do some research of their own.

NILPS HERITAGE DAY

In February the archive played host to a NILPS Heritage Day arranged by Alex Wright. It brought together 26 members of North Isles Heritage Groups so that they could meet and exchange knowledge, ideas and learn about the archive and what it can offer them. The group split into three groups and took turns to go on a tour of the archive strongroom with the Archivist, do some of their own research assisted by archive staff or take part in the 'Archive Discovery Trail' following clues around the archive and learning about the history of Melsetter in Walls. In the afternoon they were given a talk by members of the Women's Doctor's Project research group. Feedback from the event included "It was useful to learn about the full range of material that we can access at the archive - far more than I thought! Also, some of it you don't have to request and can just view it in the searchroom (e.g. valuation rolls, census, maps)".



NILPS Heritage day



BALFOUR VOLUNTEERS DAY

In April, six volunteers who work with the Balfour Estate Papers in the archive met with one of the Archivists to discuss the work they all carry out on the collection. Normally the volunteers come into the archive on different days and do not meet, so it was very useful and enjoyable to bring them altogether to discuss the project and make sure everyone was submitting information in the same way. A rather large family tree recording the Balfour lineage is now on the go and being added to by all the volunteers, and this will be a fantastic resource for people to look at when the project is complete.

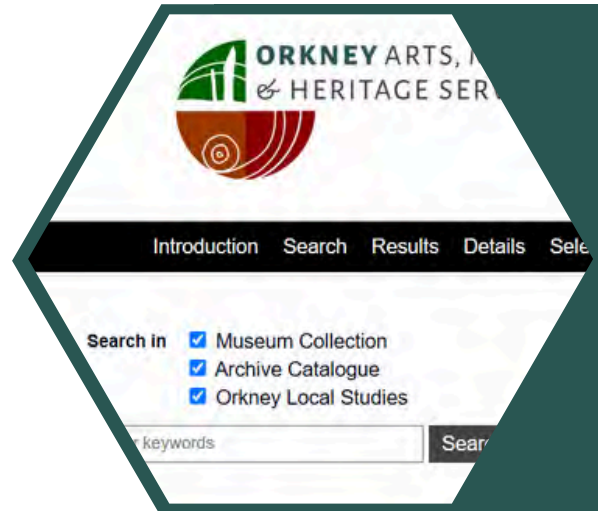
The volunteers have to read through every document in each bundle in the collection and list the information they find. It is a very long process, but ultimately rewarding and full of fascinating stories. This information is then added to the archive catalogue by the Archivist.

Archive Projects 2024

ONLINE CATALOGUE

This year, the Orkney Archive and Orkney Museum launched a new online catalogue. Upgrading the collection management system was a complex and time-consuming process, but the staff were pleased with the result. The catalogue is updated weekly with new images and record descriptions.

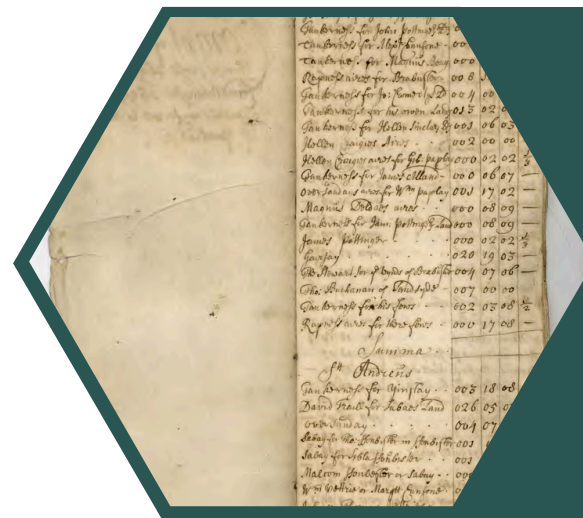
The catalogue includes records from the 15th century to the present day, covering local authority, estate, church, legal, business, and personal papers of Orkney residents. Users can search for local study resources and museum collections. Currently, the archive catalogue has 66,652 entries, 402 images, and 7,109 local studies entries. It is a valuable tool for promoting Orkney's historical collections to a global audience.



Screenshot of online catalogue menu

PALAEOGRAPHY GROUP

25 sessions of the Palaeography Group took place in 2024, with an average of 8 people attending each session. There are 26 people on the group mailing list, including people tuning in regularly from Papay and Sanday and also London, Glasgow and even New York. The longest document transcribed during the year was an Accompt of Cess dated 1698-1699 which was 13 pages long and lists the value of all properties in Orkney at that time. The group found this document very interesting, and the transcription will be useful to future researchers as it records names and places. There will be a future archive blog post going into more detail in the near future.



Paleography project image

PHOTO INFORMATION AND DIGITISATION

The Photographic Information Project aims to transfer the information on the back of the printed photos in the Orkney Photographic Archive to a database and eventually onto the new online catalogue. Archive volunteers have so far put 35,372 entries into the database which will also be transferred to the online catalogue.

The Archive's Photo Technician has also begun the task of digitising all the photographic prints held in the archive, so that they too can then be upload onto the online catalogue to pair with the entries from the database. Currently, there are nearly 2000 images ready to be uploaded. This ongoing project will benefit all researchers, but particularly book authors and documentary film makers, who will be able to browse the images online before ordering prints or high resolution digital images.



Image Technician Colin Rendall, digitising images

Library and Archive Partnerships and Volunteers



Partnership working is a key objective for the library and archive, and during 2024 there has been lots of joint working with internal and external partners.

The library and archive enjoy a successful partnership with colleagues in The Learning Link, hosting joint events, and ensuring that customers are receiving free help to learn key digital skills, allowing them to stay in touch with friends and family, as well as how to be safe online, and how to use digital equipment.

The Family History Society and the Talking Newspaper also provide a fantastic service within the library and archive, with volunteers coming in each and every week to provide family history advice and research, as well as ensuring that Orkney residents with visual impairments can access the weekly Orcadian news.

Partnership working with the likes of Voluntary Action Orkney, the Blide Trust, Age Scotland Orkney, The Islands Centre for Net Zero, Relationship Scotland Orkney and the Orkney Japan Association also means that projects and community groups benefit from resources in the library and archive as well as providing opportunities for people to learn new skills and become involved in community life which brings huge benefits to their health and wellbeing.

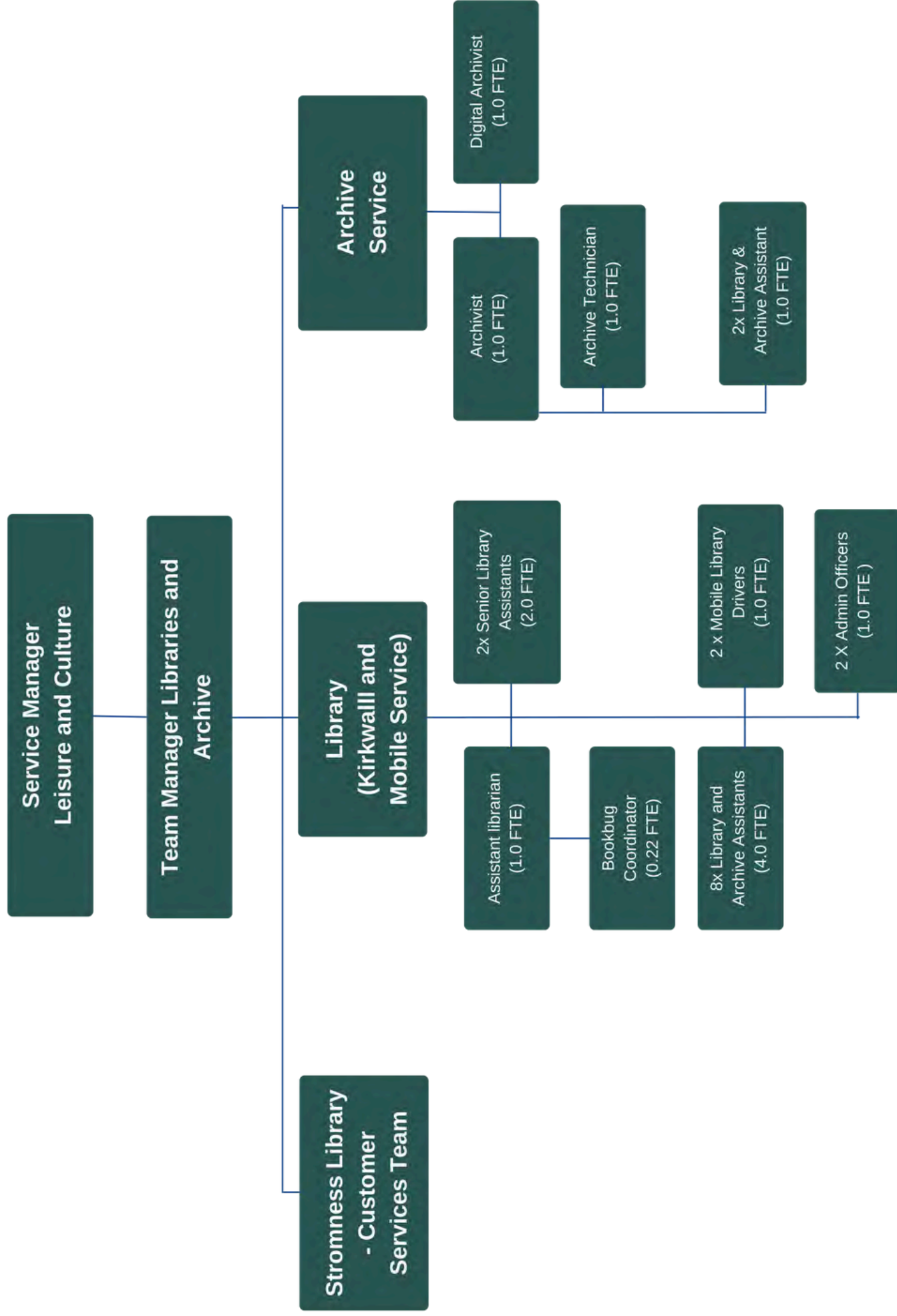
The library and archive are very lucky to host a large group of volunteers who work on projects in both the library and the archives on a weekly basis.

The volunteers help keep the library looking tidy, create displays, help run events like the Yap & Yarn sessions, carry out indexing work and helping to create archival finding aids. Some volunteers are gaining credits towards achieving a Saltire Award or as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme, while others are doing it due to their interest in local history and their love of archives.

A huge thank you goes out to all partners and volunteers who help towards making the library and archive an accessible community space with lots to offer all who visit.



Libraries and Archive Staffing Structure 2023





Contact Us



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Archives@orkney.gov.uk



<https://orkneylibrary.org.uk/>



01856 873166

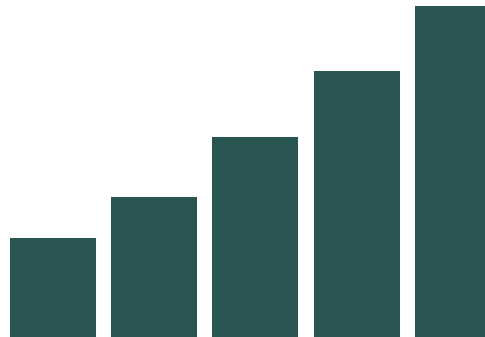


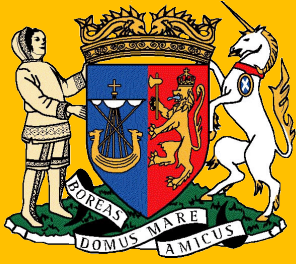
<https://www.facebook.com/orkneylibraryandarchive>



[@orkneylibrary.bsky.social](https://orkneylibrary.bsky.social)

Orkney Library and Archive , 44 Junction Road ,Kirkwall ,KW15 1AG





ORKNEY ISLANDS COUNCIL

LEISURE & CULTURE SERVICE



OUTDOOR EDUCATION

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

2024

'Learning Through Adventure'



OUTDOOR EDUCATION REPORT 2024



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OVERVIEW

Outdoor Education Advisor Planning Checklist

- Update new programme information for schools, leaders and parents.
- Finalise costs and dates for 2024.
- Book and chair 31 pre-programme TEAMS meetings.
- Update Risk Assessments, Safety Guidelines and Staff Handbook.
- Complete a full inventory of outdoor equipment. Order replacement items and integrate into stores.
- Test and log all safety equipment checks.
- Manage minibus and trailer servicing.
- Book instructor allocation, accommodation and Hoy Centre use.
- Oversee Visit Policy staff training and update EVOLVE software.
- Ensure minibuses and trailers are fully safety checked, roadworthy, clean and serviced.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROGRAMME 2024

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Planning for the Outdoor Education Programme started in mid-October 2023 to coincide with the time when schools request information and dates for 2024 programmes.

The short but focussed period of time (between the end of the primary 6 Outdoor Education Programme and the start of the Autumn half term), offered limited time for the Outdoor Education Advisor to plan, update, and produce the 2024 programme information including a calendar of proposed dates, programme costs and updated information sheets. This information was sent out to all schools by the end of October.

By December 2023 schools were sent leader information packs and confirmed booking dates. In total 31 pre-programme planning meetings were booked at the end of 2023, and completed during February to March 2024.

It is planned that next year there will be fewer individual TEAMS meetings. Individual programme meetings will be replaced with a number of open TEAM meetings for leaders to attend regarding either P7 or P6 programmes.

Additional activity programme planning was also completed with a representative of the Northern Isles Landscape Project who funded an additional 3 days of activity at the end of the summer school holiday period.

It was important to ensure all programme planning was completed by the end of March 2024, as after this time, the Outdoor Education Advisor was fully focused and involved in the Hoy Centre set up, instructor inductions and the day-to-day safety management of the Hoy residential programmes from mid-April onwards.

WINTER MAINTENANCE & CHECKLISTS

Between October 2023 and April 2024 the Outdoor Education Advisor continued to work in the Education offices, at Unit 4, Hatston Industrial Estate, Kirkwall and at the Hoy Centre. Work included a variety of office and outdoor based tasks including managing minibus and trailer maintenance; updating a full inventory of outdoor equipment; servicing all bikes; testing safety equipment; collating pupil and staff feedback; producing an annual report; overseeing the Visit Policy and EVOLVE software updates, and preparing pupil activity information sheets

OVERVIEW

Equipment Management, Minibuses and Trailers

- All equipment stored in Hoy Centre Containers.
- Equipment cleaned and safety checked annually.
- 3 minibuses serviced.
- 7 equipment trailers serviced.



Visit Policy and EVOLVE

- Currently undergoing a full review and due to be updated in 2025.
- Training and bespoke learning has been offered to new school teachers.



Senior Instructor Post 2025

- Funding secured in early 2024.
- Postholder due to start in April 2025.
- Work throughout the year with schools, charities and isles community groups.

MINIBUSES AND TRAILERS

The 2024 programmes made regular use of all 3 minibuses and the 7 equipment trailers available. All vehicles had a 3 monthly safety check and were annually serviced. All 7 trailers were inspected and serviced by Orkney Motors.

It is anticipated that in November 2024 there will be a new minibus and we have been granted permission to keep an additional vehicle from the existing fleet to ensure we have a provision of 3 vehicles available for use in 2025.

It is to be noted (as in previous annual reports) that Outdoor Education still only has allocation for 2 passenger carrying vehicles and yet (when at full centre and programme capacity, 82 % of time) require the use of 3 vehicles to transport passengers, outdoor equipment and to tow a range of trailers to various outdoor venues and schools visited throughout Orkney during the April to October period.

VISIT POLICY

The Visit Policy continued to be updated and managed by the Outdoor Education Advisor, the Team Leader (Resources) throughout 2024.

The Visit Policy is currently undergoing a full review, refresh and update which will be available for use in 2025.

Training for practitioners, leaders, teachers, and headteachers has been ongoing throughout the year on a request basis only and via the You-Tube training video embedded within EVOLVE. The 1 hour training video was produced in 2021 by the Outdoor Education Advisor for new users.

NEW SENIOR INSTRUCTOR POST

After securing match funding in early 2024 from the OIC Crown Estate Led Development Fund (OIC CECLDF), it is anticipated there will be a new temporary 12 month Senior Instructor Post starting in April 2025.

The Senior Instructor will work alongside 2 contract instructors between April to October. From November to April 2026 the Senior Instructor will create a new outdoor learning programme in conjunction with schools, charities and isles community groups to offer outdoor learning opportunities during the winter months. The post will aim to highlight the benefit and need to engage young people and adults in outdoor learning throughout the year. It is envisaged there will be up to 3 days outdoor activity each week during the winter period with the other time spent working alongside the Outdoor Education Advisor.

OVERVIEW

Programmes Offered in 2024

Primary 6 In-School Activities

3 day activity programme, up to 6 half day activities, opportunity to join smaller schools in one location.



Primary 7 Hoy Residential

4-5 day activity programme, up to 9 half day activities.



Secondary 2 Hoy Residential

- 3 day activity programme, 2 half day activities, Single or return journey by foot or bike to an evening and overnight camp.



OUTDOOR PROGRAMMES OFFERED

In 2024 we offered two core outdoor education programmes for primary 6 and secondary 2 pupils, plus an optional 4 to 5 day residential programme for primary 7 pupils.

• **Primary 6 In-School Outdoor Education Programme**

The 3 day programme based at school sites was offered to all primary 6 aged pupils in the 2024/5 academic year during the autumn term.

The activity programme consisted of up to six age appropriate half day activities on land and water. The programme aimed to offer new experiences; develop and nurture physical and emotional skills; promote personal wellbeing, and encourage a healthy lifestyle. A wide range of transferable skills were incorporated into each activity. The programme was offered within the normal school day.

For smaller schools there was the added opportunity to learn in conjunction and alongside other schools by taking part in a joint programme. The addition of Problem Solving and Orienteering activity was included this year, replacing kayaking and paddleboarding.

• **Primary 7 Outdoor Education Hoy Residential Programme**

The 4 or 5 day residential programme for primary 7 aged pupils is based at the Hoy Centre. Due to the high up-take and in order to include all interested schools, many smaller schools were required to mix and share the Hoy Centre and activities offered. The programme included a wide range of up to 9 adventurous half and full day activities on both land and water within the Hoy environment. Pupils were given the unique opportunity to live and work together in a residential setting and work together as a social group. The residential programme enabled pupils to settle into a busy but positive routine, enabling focussed time for activity, learning and review including (for smaller group) making friends with peers from other schools.

All pupils had the opportunity to complete a daily diary, activity review sheets and were involved in group feedback and reflection sessions led by instructors. All pupils were awarded a certificate on programme completion.

OVERVIEW

'Northern Isles Landscape Project'

Activities

■ Islands Visited included:

- Sanday
- Westray

■ Activities Offered:

- ♦ Canoeing
- ♦ Raft Building
- ♦ Bushcraft
- ♦ Archery



'Duke of Edinburgh Award'

Expedition Leader Training

- Leader skills training
- New Personal Skills and Navigation Day
- New Supervisor Training and Assessment Programme



OUTDOOR PROGRAMMES OFFERED Cont'd.

• **Secondary 2 Hoy Residential Outdoor Education Programme**

The 3 day residential programme based at the Hoy Centre offers the opportunity for secondary 2 aged pupils to take part in a focused and challenging adventure activity programme which gives pupils a choice of two half day activities, plus an extended out and return journey by foot or bike, leading to an evening and overnight camp.

This experience gives pupils the opportunity to complete chosen adventure activities, learn and practise new journey and campcraft skills. These new skills give pupils an insight into the requirements of the Expedition section of the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award which is offered to pupils at secondary 3 age.

OTHER ACTIVITY OFFERED

Funding offered by the Northern Isles Landscape Project (N.I.L.P.) enabled instructors to deliver 3 days of activity to the community youth groups in Westray and Sanday.

The offer of 2 activities per day on each island involved instructors working alongside a local learning tutor. The aim was to offer exciting outdoor based activity which also encouraged local island children to see, understand and interpret the island landscape around them.

DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD EXPEDITIONS

Support for the Duke of Edinburgh Award Expeditions within Orkney in 2024 included the Outdoor Education Advisor offering ongoing leader skills training.

An ongoing dialogue between the Outdoor Education Advisor and the Orkney Duke of Edinburgh Award Manager has led to the Outdoor Education Advisor updating and refreshing the training offered to Leaders and Supervisors which is being offered to all D of E group leaders within Orkney from Late 2024 onwards. This will include embedding basic skills for new leaders and offering update training for current supervisors.

OVERVIEW

Activities Offered

- 16 different activities available during the Outdoor Education Programmes on Hoy in 2023.



- Up to 6 activities were offered to Primary Schools during the Primary 6 in-school Programme.



ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

A wide range of outdoor adventure activities on land and water were offered throughout the April to October period.

With all outdoor equipment being based at the Hoy Centre during the residential programmes, Instructors could be flexible in their choice of activities to suit the group's learning aims and outcomes and also match the environmental conditions encountered each day.

Activities offered during the primary 6 in-school Activity Programmes were chosen on the basis of them being age appropriate, easily set up, stored, managed and efficiently transported between schools using the trailers and minibuses available.

The following activities were available during residential programmes based from the Hoy Centre from April to July:

Abseiling	Tyrolean Traverse
Hill / Coastal Walking	Orienteering
Bushcraft	Problem Solving / Team Games
Archery	Overnight Camping (S2)
Gorge Walking	Cycling
Canoeing	Kayaking (sit on / In)
Raft Building	Coasteering
Snorkelling	Paddleboarding

The following activities were available to the Primary 6 in-school Activity Programmes from August to October (including visits to outer isles schools):

Archery	Climbing Tower
Bushcraft	Problem Solving / Team Games
Canoeing	Orienteering
Raft Building	

OVERVIEW

Instructors and Staffing

- In year 2 of a 3 year Instructor Contract awarded to Adelong Training.



- 93.5 Days of Activity Instruction with 267 instructor work days.



- Maximum of 3 Contract Instructors plus the Out Ed Advisor on each Programme.



- 8 Contract Instructors worked on programmes in 2024.
- 15 Instructor Induction Days were offered by Outdoor Education Advisor in 2024.

INSTRUCTORS AND STAFFING

Having high quality instructors who possess the relevant qualifications and experience, are a major key to the success of the pupil's outdoor learning and a positive outcome for each programme offered to schools.

This is the 10th year of utilising contract instructors for all the outdoor instruction offered each year. Closely working with, and in partnership with Adelong Training, has been key to ensuring we have access to appropriately skilled, reliable, quality instructors who are current, professional, highly experienced and qualified across the broad range of activities offered on our programmes.

The contract in 2024 included up to 3 instructors working throughout all programmes offered. Each contract instructor was required to work a minimum of 15 days and possess suitable experience and qualifications to deliver activities, including a suitable driving licence. Each instructor received up to 2 days of staff training and induction at the start of their contract period.

The staffing contract included accommodation in either the Rackwick Outdoor Centre (April to July), or at Birsay Outdoor Centre (August to October). Self-catering accommodation was used whilst visiting Outer Isles schools.

In 2024 there were 3 male and 5 female contract instructors employed for 93.5 activity days. Of these, there were 6 returning instructors from past years work. Staff worked 5 days per week, up to 8.5 hours per day, plus any additional overnight camps during the secondary 2 programmes. There was a total of 267 instructor work days completed.

On a day to day basis, the Outdoor Education Advisor managed, trained and actively supported the contract instructor team. This included leading staff meetings, managing equipment overseeing transport logistics and producing activity programmes. Additional requirements (to comply with licensing requirements) included completing observation reports, In-house training / assessments and ensuring all operating procedures / risk assessments were up-to-date.

Other important staff involved in the efficient running of the Outdoor Education Programmes in 2024 who deserve mention and thanks include the field tutors and coordinator connected with the Northern Isles Landscape Project activity programme, The Wardens based at the Hoy Centre and Birsay Hostel, office administration team and finance staff based in council offices in Kirkwall, and the catering team at Stromness Academy.

OVERVIEW

AALA Licensing and 'Orkney Outdoor Education' Facebook Page

- 12 month Licence Awarded to OIC in May 2024.



- Next Licence Inspector Visit in April 2025.



- The 'Orkney Outdoor Education' Facebook Page included a daily diary of activities offered and pictures.
- There are currently 1361 Facebook Page followers.
- Highest number of individuals who viewed or engaged with a single post was 1933 people.
- From April to October there are between 170 and 315 engagements with followers each day.

ADVENTURE ACTIVITY LICENCE AUTHORITY

A 12 month Adventure Activity Licence was awarded to the Council in May 2024 covering all outdoor adventure activity offered by Outdoor Education through until April 2025.

It is anticipated that the formal licence renewal application will begin again in January 2025 and an inspection will take place in April 2025.

It is also anticipated that the style of licence inspection from 2026 onwards for current activity licence holders may change. This will be in the form of completing a self assessment and submitting required evidence to an inspector without them visiting the activity centre or needing to see activities offered.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION FACEBOOK PAGE

Relevant activity pictures, news and information was added to the 'Orkney Outdoor Education' Facebook page on a daily basis by the Outdoor Education Advisor throughout the activity period.

Each daily post showed a summary of the activities offered, the school attending and activity photographs of participants taking part.

To keep track of the activities days offered, each daily post was numbered numerically for each day that information was added.

In 2024 there were 86 daily activity posts added. To date there are 67 organisations and 1361 individuals following the Orkney Outdoor Education page.

There was a highest daily single peak of 1933 people who interacted, looked at, or clicked on at least one or more of the day's posts.

70% of the people engaged and following the page were Scottish or Orkney based and linked to pupils or staff who have previously or currently attended a Programme. Followers are 79% female and 21% male.

In 2025 we continue to look to use other web-based platforms for sharing pictures and a daily diary of events which can be easily and safely accessed by participants, parents, the public and group leaders.

OVERVIEW

Participating Schools & Groups

- ♦ Primary 6 In-School Activity Programme: 19 Schools



- ♦ Secondary 2 Hoy Residential Programme: 4 Schools
- ♦ Primary 7 Residential Programme: 17 Schools
- ♦ Northern Isles Landscape Project Activity Days: 2 Islands, 3 Days
- ♦
- ♦ Charity Groups (Blide Trust): 2 days (Hoy)

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS AND GROUPS

The following schools and groups participated in a variety of Outdoor Education and Activity programmes during 2024:

Primary 6 In-School Activity Programme, 38 days (August-October)

Hope Primary School
St Andrews Primary
Papdale Primary School
Firth Primary School
Stromness Primary School
Dounby Primary School

Burray Primary School
Evie Primary School
Glaitness Primary School
Orphir Primary School
Stenness Primary School

Shapinsay Primary School
Rousay Primary School
N. Ronaldsay Primary School

Eday Primary School
North Walls Primary School

Sanday Junior High School
Stronsay Junior High School

Westray Junior High School

Secondary 2 Hoy Residential Programme, 19days (May, June)

Stromness Academy
Kirkwall Grammar School

Westray Junior High School
Sanday Junior High School

Primary 7 Hoy Residential Programme, 25 days (April-June)

Dounby Primary School
Orphir Primary School
Papdale Primary School
Firth Primary School
Burray Primary School

Evie Primary School
Stenness Primary School
Hope Primary School
Stromness Primary School
Glaitness Primary School

Shapinsay Primary School
North Walls Primary School

Rousay Primary School
Eday Primary School

Sanday Junior High School
Stronsay Junior High School

Westray Junior High School

Northern Isles Landscape Project, 3 days (August)

Westray Community Youth Group
Sanday Community Youth Group

Other Groups / Charities, 2 Days (April to May)

Blide Trust Adult Group
Blide Trust Young People Group



STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF 2024

Total activity days completed:	93.5 Days
Total activity day places used:	1528 Day Places
Participant day places unused / not filled :	241 Day Places
Total individual participants offered activity:	493 Participants

Comprising:

Primary 7 aged participants engaged: 106 Participants

Secondary 2 aged participants engaged: 117 Participants

Primary 6 aged participants engaged: 233 Participants

Total visiting staff, residential programme: 55 Visiting Staff

Total visiting staff on in-school programme: 14 School Staff

Total islands visited (in-school programme): 3 Outer Islands

Total number of overnight camping nights: 7 Nights

Total Hoy Residential nights completed: 27 Nights

Maximum staff / instructors on programme: 4 Staff

Total instructor induction / training days: 15 Days

Total number of Instructor work days: 267 Days

Maximum number of groups per day: 3 groups

% of programme requiring 3 instructors: 69 %

Total vehicles / minibuses on programme: 3 Vehicles

Total number of trailers used on programme: 7 Trailers

APPENDIX 1.1

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

P7 AND S2 HOY RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMME

There was a total of **205 responses** to the Questionnaire offered to **primary 7 and secondary 2 aged participants** at the end of their Hoy residential programme.

The first 7 questions required them to circle the most appropriate answer.

1) Never 2) Some of The Time 3) Most of The Time 4) A Lot of The Time 5) All The Time

The participant responses are given in percentages (Highest score in red):

Q1. I enjoyed taking part in the activities and being outdoors

1	2	3	4	5
0%	0%	3%	13.5%	83.5%

Q2. I feel more confident about myself and my abilities

1	2	3	4	5
0%	1%	4.5%	32%	62.5%

Q3. The instructors were friendly and helpful and encouraged me

1	2	3	4	5
0%	0%	3%	15.5%	81.5%

Q4. I worked with others and solved simple problems

1	2	3	4	5
0%	0.5%	4%	28.5%	67%

Q5. I listened to, and followed, the safety instructions

1	2	3	4	5
0%	0%	0%	21.5%	78.5%

Q6. I had the opportunity to offer ideas and share my opinion

1	2	3	4	5
0%	0.5%	10%	31.5%	58%

Q7. I would happily take part in outdoor activities in future

1	2	3	4	5
0%	1%	5.5%	12%	81.5%

APPENDIX 1.2

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

P7 AND S2 HOY RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMME

Question 8 asked primary 7 and secondary 2 aged participants which was their favourite, or most enjoyable activity.

The **top 3 activities are highlighted in red** with the number relating to % of Participants.

Primary 7 and Secondary 2 Favourite / Most Enjoyable Activity

	%
Coasteering	43
Kayaking	17
Tyrolean Traverse	9
Gorge Walking	8
Stand Up Paddleboarding	6
Bushcraft	5
Raft Building	5
Cycling	3
Canoeing	2.5
Overnight Camp	1
Abseiling	0.5



APPENDIX 1.3

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

P7 AND S2 HOY RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMME

Question 9 required **primary 7 and secondary 2 aged participants** to describe their outdoor experience in 3 words.

The following is a selection of their responses:



APPENDIX 2.1

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK **PRIMARY 6 IN-SCHOOL ACTIVITY PROGRAMME**

There were over **1800 individual activity sheets** completed during the Primary 6 In-School Activity Programme by participants that took part.

At the end of each activity programme, up to 7 different activity sheets were collated by the instructor for each participant.

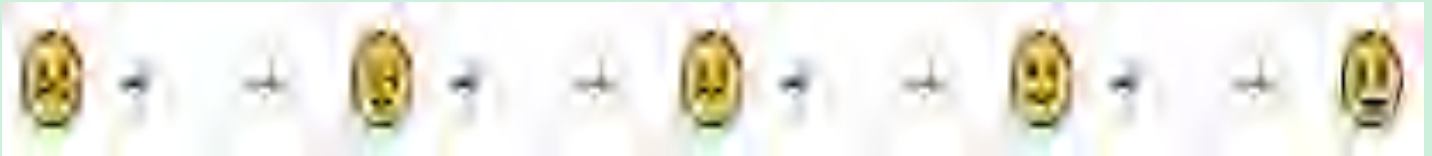
The sheets were handed to the school for potential follow up activities in the classroom with the teacher, or for participants to take home along with their National Outdoor Learning Award Certificate.

At the bottom of each activity sheet completed, there was a review section to complete.

The activity review statements included the following statements:

- I enjoyed taking part in the activity
- I feel more confident about myself
- I solved problems and worked well with others in the group
- I listened to all safety instructions given by the instructor
- I would happily do the activity again

The statements were answered by circling the appropriate face, as shown below:



Information completed by the participant was peer reviewed and formed part of a short instructor led review each day.

The activity review data completed by participants for each individual activity was not collated, as it was personal to each individual, and not intended to be used for public feedback.

A final Activity Programme Review Sheet was completed by each participant at the end of the programme. The Results of this are shown within Appendix 2.2 to 2.4.



APPENDIX 2.2

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

PRIMARY 6 IN-SCHOOL ACTIVITY PROGRAMME

There was a total of **212 responses** to the Questionnaire offered to **primary 6 aged participants** at the end of their activity programme.

The first 7 questions required them to circle the most appropriate answer.

1) Never 2) Some of The Time 3) Most of The Time 4) A Lot of The Time 5) All The Time

The participant responses are given in percentages (highest score in red):

Q1. I enjoyed taking part in the activities and being outdoors

1	2	3	4	5
0%	0.5%	3%	7%	89.5%

Q2. I feel more confident about myself and my abilities

1	2	3	4	5
0%	0.5%	3%	16.5%	80%

Q3. The instructors were friendly, helpful and encouraged me

1	2	3	4	5
0%	0.5%	3%	10%	87%

Q4. I worked well with others and solved simple problems

1	2	3	4	5
0.5%	1%	4.5%	21%	73%

Q5. I listened to, and followed, the safety instructions

1	2	3	4	5
0%	0.5%	3.5%	13%	83%

Q6. I had the opportunity to offer my ideas and share my opinion

1	2	3	4	5
0%	2.5%	8.5%	20%	69%

Q7. I would happily take part in outdoor activities in future

1	2	3	4	5
0%	1.5%	1%	4%	93.5%

APPENDIX 2.3

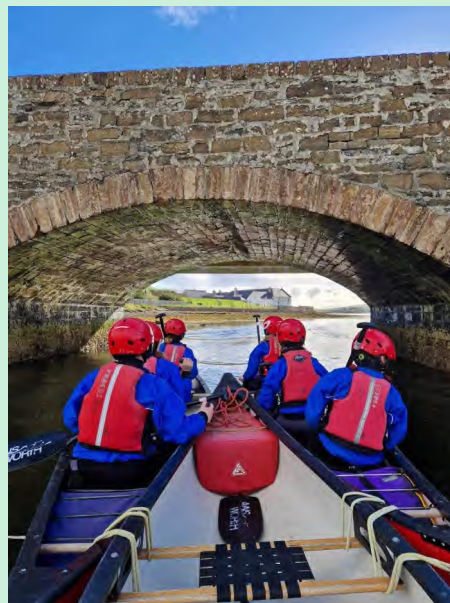
PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK PRIMARY 6 IN-SCHOOL ACTIVITY PROGRAMME

Question 8 asked primary 6 aged participants which was their favourite, or most enjoyable activity.

The top 3 activities are highlighted in red with the number relating to % of Participants

Primary 6 Favourite / Most Enjoyable Activity

	%
Canoeing	37
Archery	22
Climbing Wall	17
Bushcraft	13
Raft Building	7
Problem Solving / Orienteering	4



APPENDIX 2.4

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

PRIMARY 6 IN-SCHOOL ACTIVITY PROGRAMME

Question 9 required the primary 6 aged participants to describe their outdoor experience in 3 words.

The following is a selection of their responses:



APPENDIX 3.1

VISITING TEACHER AND LEADER FEEDBACK

There were a total of 8 feedback forms completed by teachers and leaders representing primary 7 and secondary 2 schools.

The following 4 questions were asked:

Please rate the following 15 areas which relate to the Outdoor Education Programme offered to your school?

	TOPIC AREAS	% RANGE	AVERAGE SCORE
1	Booking Information and Ongoing Communication	65-100	90
2	Dates Offered to School	55-100	89
3	Pre-Activity Meeting with Outdoor Ed. Advisor	50-100	87
4	General Activity Length and Duration	65-100	93
5	Selection of Activities Offered	75-100	95
6	Activity Safety Equipment and Suitability	95-100	99
7	Pupil Engagement in Activities	80-100	93
8	Pupil Skill Development	70-100	93
9	Instructor Safety and Professionalism	95-100	99
10	Management of Activity Logistics and Transport	55-100	91
11	Activity Relevance and Links To The Curriculum / Learning	55-100	92
12	Activity Follow-Up Sheets and Feedback	0-100	82
13	Activity Outcomes and Benefit to Pupils	65-100	94
14	Documented Evidence of Attendance, Learning and Success	80-100	91
15	Over-all Cost Effectiveness	80-100	91

Numbers highlighted in RED indicate 90-100% Score

APPENDIX 3.2

VISITING TEACHER AND LEADER FEEDBACK

What were the most POSITIVE elements of the Outdoor Education Programme offered to you?

- ◆ Fantastic team of instructors
- ◆ Well organised logistics throughout
- ◆ The professional approach by instructors to children who were unsure or had additional support needs
- ◆ The range of activities offered
- ◆ The opportunity for pupils to mix with other schools
- ◆ The facilities were warm, comfortable and relaxing
- ◆ The instructors were encouraging, kind and gentle and safety was of prime importance
- ◆ The children had lots of fun and spoke positively about what they enjoyed
- ◆ The level of challenge offered to children was perfect
- ◆ Instructors were fantastic, professional, friendly, motivated and engaged well with staff and pupils
- ◆ Activities were well run and organised
- ◆ The offer of activities which were different and non-academic
- ◆ The opportunity to learn new skills in a non-threatening way
- ◆ The young people arrived tentative and reluctant but left saying they had a great day
- ◆ Pupils pushed themselves beyond their comfort zone with help from instructors
- ◆ Pupils departed asking about more and different activities next time
- ◆ Pupils going somewhere completely different without the need for overnight travel
- ◆ Pupils getting to stay away from home
- ◆ Pupils taking responsibility for themselves and others in a non-familiar environment
- ◆ Pupils getting to make choices about activities they would like to try
- ◆ Lots of decent food!
- ◆ The high standard of centre accommodation
- ◆ The centre is clean, warm, comfortable, well appointed and in the 21st Century
- ◆ Superb instructors and knowing pupils were safe and totally engaged in activities
- ◆ Getting to see pupils doing things out of school and in a different context
- ◆ Pupils and staff mixing with other schools
- ◆ The programme included teaching pupils the importance of responsibility, respect and independence
- ◆ The children had a great time, gained confidence, and made new friendships

APPENDIX 3.3

VISITING TEACHER AND LEADER FEEDBACK

If an Outdoor Education Activity Programme was offered to the school again, what would you like to see INCLUDED, CHANGED or IMPROVED in future years?

- ♦ Early communication with schools who were grouped together.
- ♦ To rotate which schools get an earlier or later date within the summer term.
- ♦ Consider using the wetsuit gloves and hoods for early date kayaking activity as the water is still very cold.
- ♦ I would not choose to cook our own food at the Hoy Centre and then take it to the campsite for consumption as this was not the most effective way to feed the pupils.
- ♦ The pupils travelling by bike and walking to and from the campsite at Rackwick was a great new addition to the programme instead of a day expedition but there could be better use of the afternoon time when packing and travelling to the camp.
- ♦ The S2 programme is not long enough. It would be great to have at least 2 days staying at the Hoy Centre and 1 night camping.
- ♦ The range of activities was just right and should be included again next time.
- ♦ A lot more of the same please :)
- ♦ Keeping the 3 Isles Junior High schools together in the same programme in future is important (especially with a reducing role call of pupils within these schools).
- ♦ More demanding and adventurous activity on the first afternoon, as the pupils were really keen to get going.
- ♦ Rock climbing and abseiling, including a sailing based activity.
- ♦ Having additional blankets or duvets for pupils and staff needing more insulation at night.
- ♦ Giving pupils the option to go to bed between a range of times by themselves.
- ♦ More communications with parents before, during and after the programme.
- ♦ Heightened awareness of the OIC 'Orkney Outdoor Education' Facebook page and its daily use for pictures.
- ♦ The instructors were respectful to the additional information given to them regarding individual pupils during our programme, but were also open minded to letting the pupils express themselves in a different environment and taking them at face-value without prejudice.
- ♦ The use of the Stromness Academy catering facility was an excellent resource we could not do without.
- ♦ Offering a longer full day activity to the schools, rather than shorter half day activities, as I felt the pupils would benefit being away from the centre at lunchtime.
- ♦ Retaining instructors from previous years helped improve the quality of their understanding of Orkney, the pupils and staff and it was great to see a familiar faces again this year.

APPENDIX 3.4

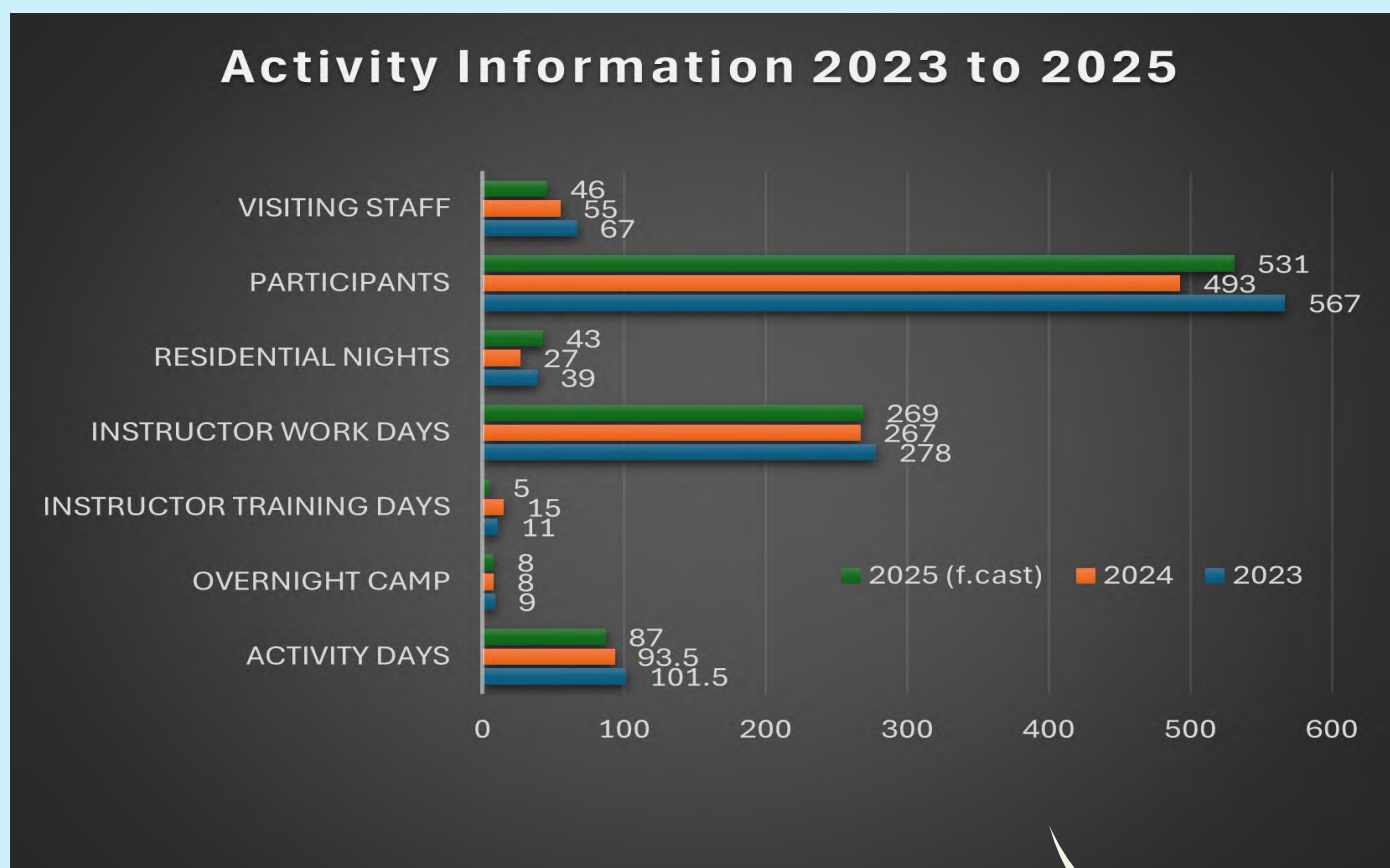
VISITING TEACHER AND LEADER FEEDBACK

4) Please feel free to add any other COMMENTS FEEDBACK or suggestions to help us provide an Improved Service in future years?

- ◆ We had a fantastic 5 days that seemed to feel easier and more straightforward than previous years.
- ◆ The additional support and strategies used by instructors really made all the difference.
- ◆ Having a well behaved dog on the walking activity really made a difference and a highlight for many children which enabled them to relax, have fun and get the most out of the activity.
- ◆ Our instructor had excellent skills in being able to support and understand the children and myself. She was able to use the right strategies to both assist and distract when necessary and won over the pupils attention really easily, no matter how stubborn pupils were!
- ◆ The instructor was an absolute asset to the Service, a great team player and a great role model to the pupils.
- ◆ Thank you for another great 5 days of outdoor learning. We will be back!
- ◆ The food was of excellent standard, plenty of it, and super yummy.
- ◆ It would be great to have access to some small bedside lamps or night lights for those pupils who were needing additional comfort and support whilst sleeping overnight away from home.
- ◆ We all had an amazing time and are hugely grateful for the resource which is right on our doorstep in Orkney.
- ◆ Hoy has a feeling of going somewhere new and different. It felt like going off-Orkney, but without having to spend additional time, money and travelling longer distances.
- ◆ The opportunity available to young people is amazing and the benefit to their mental health, wellbeing and having a positive effect on their lives, cannot be underestimated.
- ◆ It was great to see pupils working in teams, having the freedom to learn in an outdoor environment and practice problem solving in real time.
- ◆ The instructor's patience, clear explanations and ability to bring the pupils attention to wellbeing and happiness in life was really appreciated. Smiles all round from pupils and myself
- ◆ The children were literally bouncing during their return on the ferry. Parents and even grandparents have come up to me and told me wherever I was on the island, how much fun the children had.
- ◆ Instructors were very approachable, knowledgeable and inclusive of all pupils.
- ◆ It would be great to have adequate travel time to get to and from the Hoy Centre, when travelling from outer isles schools.
- ◆ (Parent feedback) - The week our son had in Hoy was utterly transformative. He has really grown from the experience and has been much more open, relaxed and generally happier since returning home. He seems to have so much more purpose when going outside to play.
- ◆ Big thankyou all of the Outdoor Education team, we LOVED IT ALL!

APPENDIX 4.1

ACTIVITY DATA COMPARISON 2023 TO 2025 (Forecast)



OVERVIEW

Future Plans

- 4 different Outdoor Education Programmes Offered.
- 1 Senior Instructor, 2 contract Instructors and the Outdoor Education Advisor.
- Use of Hoy Centre for all Residential Outdoor Education Programmes.
- Use of Rackwick and Birsay Centres for contracted Instructor Accommodation.
- We aim to extend our activity programme next year from November 2025 onwards to include offering indoor and outdoor activity, education and learning to assist schools, local charities and isles community groups.
- In 2025/26 we will aim to offer over 130 activity days to approximately 650 participants.
- We will aim to offer over 2000 participant activity day places, over the 12 months.



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025

The 2025 Outdoor Education programme aims to provide quality educational and holistic learning support to all Orkney schools and build upon the success of 2024. We will continue to offer two Core, and one optional, Outdoor Education Programmes:

(Core) Primary 6 3 Day In-School Activity Programme.

(Core) Secondary 2 3 Day Hoy Residential Programme.

(Option) Primary 7 4-5 Day Hoy Residential Programme.

It is envisaged that programmes will be staffed by up to 2 contract instructors alongside a newly appointed 12 month Senior Instructor post (thanks to match funding from the OIC Crown Estate Community Led Development Fund. Management of the programmes and staffing will continue to be provided by the Outdoor Education Advisor.

The use of the Hoy Centre for all residential programmes will be used to continue to offer highly rated and excellent facilities for programmes which include residential accommodation. Using the facility also makes the most out of Hoy's unique location in conjunction with a wide variety of adventure based activities on offer.

The primary 6 in-school activity programmes offered on the Orkney Mainland and Outer Isles will make best and most suitable use of selected primary and secondary school locations and the local outdoor surroundings for pupil activity and learning.

The use of both Rackwick Hostel and Birsay Hostel for contracted instructor accommodation will continue to enhance and compliment the Outdoor Education programmes during 2025.

We plan to offer a dedicated full day activity to the primary 7 residential programmes, in addition to the half day activities also offered.

In November 2025 onwards we aim to offer an additional winter programme of activities aimed at supporting education outside the classroom, local charities and isles community groups.

'All participants will be given the opportunity to learn new skills, discover new friendships and find a sense of belonging and place, whilst learning in the unique Orkney outdoor environment.'

OUTDOOR EDUCATION SUMMARY 2024

2024 was the 26th year of successfully and safely offering outdoor education programmes to Orkney schools. We hoped we have consolidated, listened, made positive adjustments, taken on feedback and improved the programmes which were offered.

It has been a year of ever changing weather and differing environmental conditions. Participants have learnt to be more aware of their surroundings, be more resilient, manage change and been resourceful in finding shelter from the elements during activities. The effects of an unpredictable and ever-changing environment has been a regular topic in group discussions and has focussed our attention to the ever changing world we all live, learn, play and work in.

The instructors were highly motivated, professional and of high quality, with the majority returning from last year. Over 68% of activity days required all 3 instructors working with maximum group sizes of 24 participants.

Thank you to all who contributed to the success of the 2024 Outdoor Education Programme. In 2025 we aim to offer the highest quality and inclusive Outdoor Education and learning available in Orkney.



Orkney Outdoor Education - 'Learning Through Adventure'

For Further Information please Contact:

Chris Jex, Outdoor Education Advisor

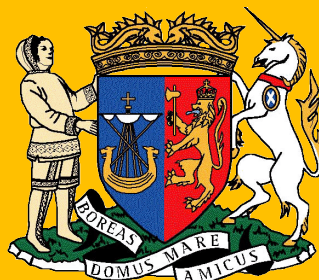
Orkney Islands Council, School Place, Kirkwall,
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chris.jex@orkney.gov.uk,

Office: 01856 873535 ext. 2434,

Mobile: 07710469693,

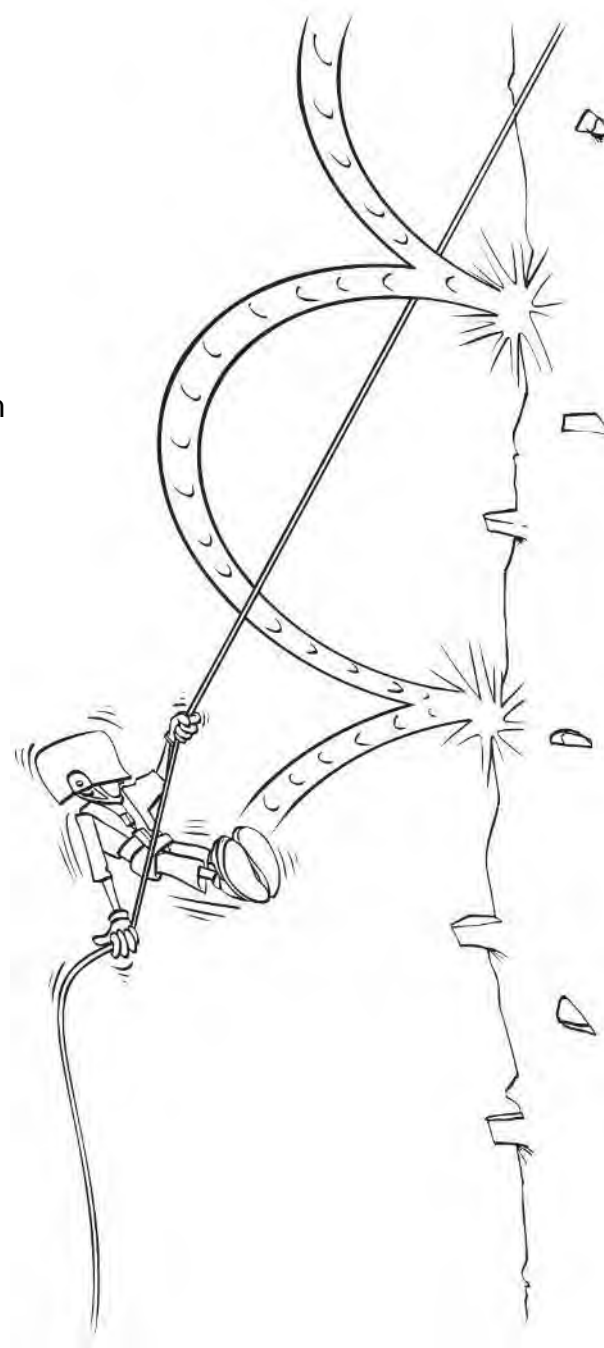
[http://www.facebook.com/
learningthroughadventure/](http://www.facebook.com/learningthroughadventure/)



A collage of circular images showing various physical education activities: basketball, soccer, climbing, cycling, and group photos, interspersed with line drawings of sports equipment like a soccer ball, a running shoe, and a target.

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- 3. Managers' Report
- 4. The Team - Active Schools and Community Sports Team
- 5. **sportscotland** Corporate Strategy – Sport for Life
- 6. Active Schools Monitoring Data (ASMO)
- 7. Afterschool Sessions
- 10. Curricular Sessions
- 12. Interschool Competitions
- 13. Leadership
- 22. Parasport Festival
- 24. Orkney Sports Awards
- 28. **sportscotland** School Sports Awards
- 29. Bikeability
- 32. Holiday Programmes
- 34. North Isles Sports
- 35. Athlete Travel Award Scheme
- 36. Performance Development Programme
- 37. Community Sports Hub
- 40. Partnership Working
- 40. Continuing Lifelong Professional Learning
- 41. Contact Information



Managers' Report

2024 sees another tremendous year of hard work and dedication by our Active Schools and Community Sports Team supporting, delivering and providing initiatives to increase sport and physical activity in our schools and communities.

This Annual Impact Report demonstrates the vast number of opportunities the team brings to Orkney. A key focus has been strengthening our leaders, volunteers and club resources to enable growth but ensure resilience and sustainability in our sporting systems. This will inevitably increase opportunities in sport and physical activity, benefiting the general health and wellbeing of our community.

The countdown is now on to Orkney 2025 and with lots of planning, engagement and support with stakeholders, I am excited to see what the next year will bring and the outcome of our incredible plans to engage our community while creating a lasting legacy for Orkney.

I must express my thanks and appreciation to all our partners and sponsors, in particular sportscotland and Stagecoach who continue to invest in our service and programmes for the benefit of our community. Also, to the Active Schools Co-Ordinators and Community Sports Officer for the dedicated commitment in their work to deliver and achieve the successful programmes and projects highlighted in this Annual Impact Report.

Katell Roche

Katell Roche

Sport and Leisure Team Manager



The Team

Orkney Active Schools and Community Sports Team consists of a Service Manager, a Team Manager, one full-time and three part-time Co-ordinators as well as one Community Sports Officer.

Service Manager Garry Burton	
Team Manager Katell Roche	
Active Schools Co-ordinators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catherine Johnson • Carolynn Leslie • Kirsty Spence • Michael Swanney 	Community Sports Officer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaine Harcus

Each Co-ordinator is allocated a cluster of schools which they work in partnership with to increase physical activity amongst the pupils.

Listed below are the clusters for each Co-ordinator:

Michael Swanney	Catherine Johnson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dounby Primary • Evie Primary • Firth Primary • Stenness Primary • Stromness Academy • Stromness Primary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burray Primary • Hope Primary • Sanday Junior High • St Andrews Primary • Stronsay Junior High • Westray Junior High
Kirsty Spence	Carolynn Leslie
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eday Primary • North Walls Community School • Orphir Primary • Papa Westray Primary • Shapinsay Primary • Rousay Primary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glaitness Primary • Kirkwall Grammar • Papdale Primary
Community Sports Officer Elaine Harcus	
All Orkney Sports Clubs	



sportscotland Corporate Strategy

Sport For Life, is sportscotland's corporate strategy, it outlines their vision, mission and assets and the approach they will take. Below is an extract from their Sport for Life.



Our vision

An active Scotland where everyone benefits from sport.

Our mission

To help the people of Scotland get the most from the sporting system.

- Making an impact together
- Making sport more accessible
- Progressing to your level
- Contributing to an active Scotland
- Celebrating the benefits of sport

Our assets

From talented people to fantastic facilities and an exceptional natural environment, Scotland's assets enable people to get active and involved in sport.

Our approach

To help us deliver the many benefits of sport to everyone in Scotland, we're guided by six key principles.

- Inclusive
- Accountable
- Collaborative
- Responsive
- Person-centred
- World Class

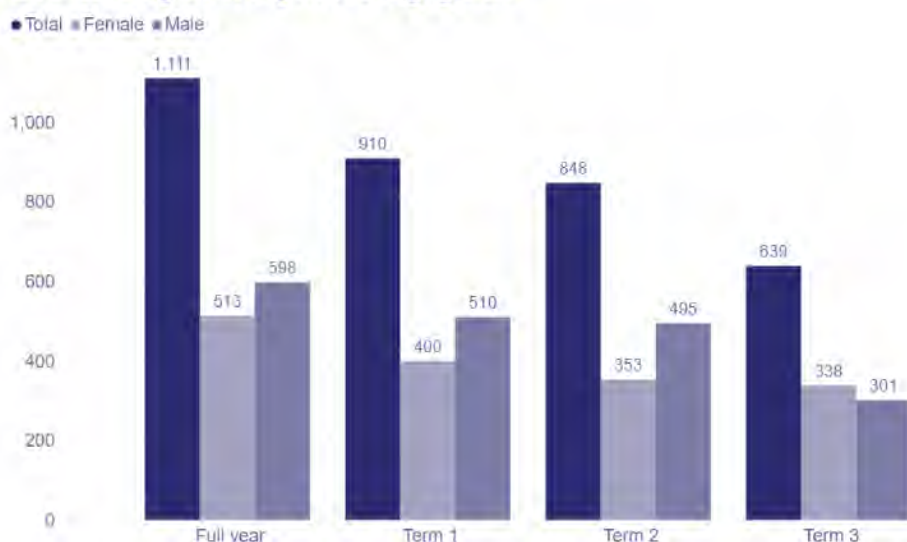
sportscotland
the national agency for sport



Active Schools Monitoring Data (ASMO)

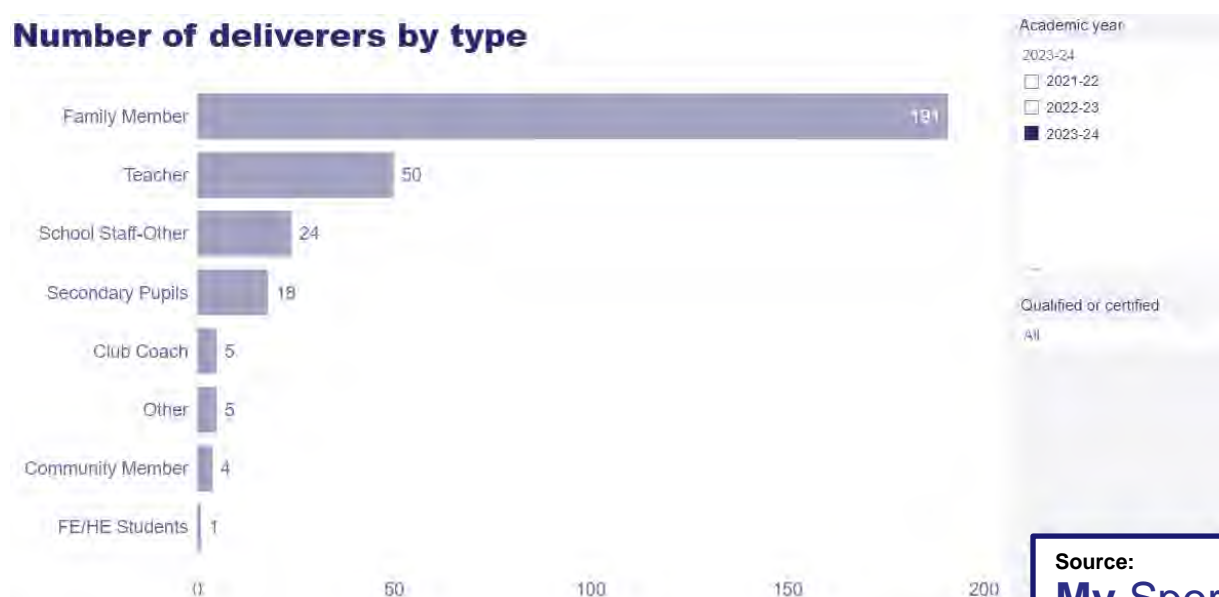
During the academic year 2023-24 the Active Schools Team monitored extra-curricular activities in schools. Active Schools Monitoring Online (ASMO) is a robust monitoring system which gathers, analyses, and presents data that looks at pupils' participation in extracurricular activities. The number of activities in schools continues to grow. The graph below shows the percentage of Orkney's school roll that participated in extra-curricular activity during the school year.

Distinct participants by year



Whilst completing **sportscotland** ASMO the Co-ordinators also record the number of volunteers helping in schools. The graph below shows the number and types of volunteers delivering this year's activities. Volunteers are the backbone of afterschool clubs and during 2023-24 the number of volunteers delivering in schools has increased to the highest number in ten years, with family members volunteering the highest type as shown below.

Number of deliverers by type



Source:
My Sport

sportscotland's online
data service

After-School Sessions

The Active Schools team support school afterschool clubs in various ways, information and advice is offered along with support, mentoring and workshops for volunteers. Many after-school clubs participate in local school leagues which are run through local organisations and many of the clubs have direct links to clubs in the community.

Stenness After-School Club

Stenness Primary School approached Active Schools for support with a new club for pupils in the school. The school was keen to run sessions for pupils that were organised and run by the primary 7 pupils in the school as part of their leadership experience.

Parents were recruited as volunteers to help with this club and the Active Schools Co-ordinator supported both parents and the pupils with the delivery of the sessions. The club was held during May and was open to all pupils from the school.

The club was well received in the school and an average of 12 pupils attended each session. The weather was good on the days of the club and the pupils took part in team games and challenges outside on the grass.



Cyclo-Cross After-School

Active Schools and Community Sports Team have worked in partnership with Orkney Cycling Club for several years to assist in the development of junior sessions; Cyclo-Cross.





A new and exciting sport, teaching new skills. A mixture of disciplines and obstacle type rides on the bike, proved popular with Papdale participants when offered extracurricular taster sessions.

Following on from sessions, the club strengthened their school to club link by providing opportunities for pupils to attend Orkney Cycling Club, winter weekend series.

Club links

School to club links are important for the transition of pupils from school to club sport. There are several clubs that advertise and deliver sessions in schools to recruit new members from the activity that takes place within the schools.

Orkney Youth Development Group and Netball Orkney both run school leagues with 12 of the primary schools taking part in either one or both leagues. Orkney Badminton run primary school competitions which they advertise in the schools and Orkney Rugby Club and Stromness Golf Club run taster sessions in curriculum time.



Clubgolf

Each year Active Schools work closely with Stromness Golf Club to provide a variety of golf taster sessions and opportunities to encourage pupils to get active. The school to club link has helped grow the number of pupils attending the Golf Club. These sessions are delivered in the community and school.

Community Taster Sessions

Active Schools work with Stromness Golf Club to promote taster sessions to the whole family. Sessions were planned for one Saturday in February and one in March at Stromness Academy Games Hall. An average of 15 parents and children attended each of the sessions. All participants were given contact details and information relating to the club's open days which took place in April.



Clubgolf sessions in the schools

Active Schools also worked with Stromness Golf Club to provide taster sessions in schools. Six west cluster schools received sessions, aimed at primary 5 plus which linked to the Golf Club's open day in April. These sessions were delivered by volunteers and encouraged pupils to come along to the golf course.



Sessions with the Golf Professional Coach from Inverness Golf Club

In May, an Inverness Golf Professional visited Orkney to deliver coaching to local clubs. These sessions are aimed at encouraging everyone to give "golf a try". West Cluster Schools were given the opportunity to book sessions for their Primary 5-7 pupils on a first come, first book basis. A total of 64 girls and boys enjoyed fun packed sessions which covered aspects of golf including the full launch, chipping and putting.

This is a good example of a school to club pathway that has been created over the last few years. This is driven by the vision of Stromness Junior Convenor, Dougie Slater and club volunteers.



Curricular Sessions

Playground Games

Primary 2 to primary 4 pupils enjoyed a 6 week block of Playground Games during curriculum, to teach them new games, and help understand the rules and behaviour expected when taking part in sport and physical activity.

Soft elements of Positive Coaching Scotland were used throughout the term, encouraging positive play and sportsmanship.

Participants showed excitement and enthusiasm throughout the block, some receiving up to twenty-one new games that can be replicated during playtime and lunchtime, with friends.



Target Groups

Inclusion is an integral part of the Active Schools programme therefore, working with target groups allows those who are otherwise inactive to try physical activity and sport. At times, those who face barriers to participation benefit from trying activity during curriculum, in an environment where they feel safe, before being encouraged to try extra-curricular activity. Therefore, Co-ordinators have been working in partnership with schools and organisations to deliver to small groups: boosting confidence, enhancing skills, and promoting fun.

'The Engagement Team' at Papdale Primary School identified a small group of participants who would potentially benefit from trying new sports, to help them be more active and have better engagement at school. The pupils enjoyed taster sessions of Boccia, Athletics and Orienteering. While pupils had stated that they 'didn't like taking part in sport,' they looked forward to sessions and requested activities that they had previously tried with Active Schools. Some of these pupils went on to take part in Sport Leadership and showed enthusiasm and profound knowledge of leading and adapting sessions to promote inclusion.

Pupils at Glaitness received inclusive cycling sessions in the playground, as their peers were being offered Bikeability Level 2 sessions. While the on-road training was not suitable for these participants, pupils enjoyed getting on their bike, engaging with requests to enhance their skills and promote safe cycling.

Peedie Schools Picky Visit

Active Schools organised five of the smaller island schools in Orkney (Eday, North Walls, Papay, Rousay and Shapinsay) a day of activities at the Pickaquoy Centre. The pupils were put into year groups to allow them the opportunity to participate with others of the same age in various activities. These activities included swimming, inflatables and a "Run, Jump and Throw", session delivered by the Pickaquoy Staff.

All the children really enjoyed the opportunity to be part of a larger group, something they do not have the opportunity to do often. The pupils do not get many opportunities to participate in these types of activities therefore Active Schools and the teaching staff all agreed that this is something we would like to organise again!



Orienteering

Glaitness participants enjoyed a six-week block of Orienteering, to strengthen their learning and understanding during their John Ray course. Twenty-nine primary 5 pupils, joined pupils with additional support needs on Orienteering quests, progressing from map reading and orientation to completing courses of varying levels of difficulty. Pupils used local areas such as The Peedie Sea and Muddisdale, which offered participants freedom to explore while showing maturity in public areas.





Inter-School Competition

Inter-school Competition has become an important part of the school sport calendar. During this academic year Stromness Academy and Kirkwall Grammar School took part in local and national competitions in Basketball, Netball, Volleyball and Football. Active Schools in partnership with Stagecoach, organise and supply transport for these events. Nine trips in total were organised for various games and competitions. Pupils from both schools in secondary 3 - 6 were involved.

Both schools hosted and visited other schools from the Scottish Mainland as well as Shetland. Kirkwall Grammar School went on to win Netball Scotland's Scottish School's Cup, for the second year in a row.



Name of sport	Date – 23/24
Higher basketball	6 October
Inter-school Netball - SA vs KGS	11 October
Scottish Schools Netball Cup games	20 November
Higher Volleyball	4 December
Scottish Schools Netball Cup games	29 February
Inter-school Netball - SA vs KGS	9 May
Inter-school Netball - SA vs KGS	28 May
Inter-school Volleyball – SA vs KGS	29 May
Inter-school Football - SA vs KGS	5 June



Leadership

The Active Schools team are dedicated to developing young people as leaders in sport therefore we promote and deliver leadership opportunities in both the Primary and Secondary schools.

In Primary Schools the Co-ordinators offer a locally developed leadership award using the principle of STEP which the Co-ordinators deliver.

Secondary schools can opt for their pupils to have the opportunity of gaining a Sports Leaders accredited leadership award through the Leadership Skills Foundation, organisation. Active Schools supports and delivers the Level 5 and 6 awards.

There is also the opportunity for secondary schools to receive **sportscotland's** Competition Organiser Training (COT) This is part of **sportscotland's** contribution to help develop young people as leaders in sport. This training aims to enable young people to take the lead in planning, organising and delivering events and competitions.

Young Ambassadors Programme is a National Lottery funded programme that runs in partnership with **sportscotland**. The Young Ambassadors' programme was created by Youth Sport Trust to build the leadership skills of young people to encourage their peers to become more engaged in sport. At the heart of this programme is the principle that young people's views are heard, valued and influence decision making; and that they are engaged in driving change.

Primary Young Leaders		
School	Course	Attendance
Glaitness Primary School	Young Leaders	29 Pupils / P7
Papdale Primary School	Young Leaders	81 Pupils / P7 & P6/7 Composite
Orphir Primary School	Young Leaders	9 pupils P6/7
Eday Primary School	Young Leaders	2 pupils P6
Papay Primary School	Young Leaders	2 pupils P6/7
Rousay Primary School	Young Leaders	4 pupils P6
North Walls Primary School	Young Leaders	8 pupils P6/7
Stenness Primary School	Young Leaders	7 pupils P7
Stromness Primary School	Young Leaders	24 pupils P7
Dounby Primary School	Young Leaders	14 pupils P7
Sanday Junior High School	Young Leaders	6 pupils P7
Westray Junior High School	Young Leaders	10 pupils P6/7
Total Number of Pupils		196

Primary Leadership

During the academic year 2023/24 Active Schools Co-ordinators delivered leadership to twelve Primary Schools, with a total of 196 pupils completing the award. Training was delivered through the medium of games, using the STEP principle, giving the pupils an opportunity to experience organising and delivering activities to their peers. As part of the award the pupils plan, organise, and deliver sessions to their younger peers. Pupils may go on to deliver sessions at break times and/or run extra-curricular clubs.

STEP principles

- S is for space
- T is for task
- E is for equipment
- P is for people



Secondary Leadership

SCQF Level 6 Qualification in Sports Leadership

Stromness Academy, in partnership with Active Schools, delivered SCQF Level 6 Qualification in Sports Leadership to pupils in Secondary 5 and 6. The course was delivered between August 2023 and April 2024.

The qualification aims to improve students' confidence, resilience, and improve both physical and mental health.

Sport and physical activity are used to support learners' development of the essential skills they need to plan, develop and deliver activities that benefit the school and local community.

The Sports Leadership qualification is delivered through theory and practical experience, giving students opportunities to put into practice the leadership skills they develop as part of the course.

To achieve the qualification students must plan and lead an event in their school or local community. They also must complete a 10-hour community placement. This year Sport Leaders helped at community clubs with football, netball, and rugby.

They also ran lunchtime clubs in school delivering dance and basketball to younger year groups. Some of the leaders also attended the Parasport festival which was run by the Community Sports Officer with support from Scottish Disability Sport. They supported participants during rugby, athletics, climbing, swimming and kayaking sessions.

This gives the Leaders the opportunity to hone the skills that they learn during the qualification giving them an opportunity to use the transferable skills that they learn during the course.

Our Programmes | Leadership Skills Foundation ...find out more

Sports Leaders enjoy volunteering at the Parasport Festival



Stromness Sports Leaders and pictures of the activities they organised



sportscotland's Competition Organiser Training

Active Schools delivered Competition Organiser Training (COT) to secondary 3 pupils in Sanday Junior High School and Secondary 5 pupils in the Kirkwall Grammar School. Competition is integral to sport and using inclusive competition pupils can be encouraged to be active.

To promote activity one of the key roles a young person can undertake is as an event/competition organiser. In this role they will have a responsibility to plan, organise and deliver events and competitions.

During the COT award the pupils learn and explore how to organise various competition structures to make events fun, fair and inclusive. They looked at 'what makes a successful competition' for various participants as well as working through various scenarios that they may find themselves faced with.

The aim of training is to enable young people to experience and identify the essential aspects of well-organised, competition. To support doing these 2 acronyms used are SMILES and STEP.

☺ SMILES	✋ STEP
☺ Safe – participants feel physically and emotionally safe	✋ Space - where it is taking place, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Size and shape of playing area ○ Height of targets or nets ○ Location
☺ Maximum Participation – participants are fully involved all the time	✋ Task - what is happening or how it is happening, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Choice of activity ○ Competition format ○ Rules and techniques
☺ Inclusive – activities are designed to suit all participants' needs and abilities	✋ Equipment - which equipment you are using, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Type of equipment used by participants ○ Signs and signals used by officials ○ Publicity materials
☺ Learning – participants develop new skills or knowledge	✋ People - who is participating with whom, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Individual, pair or team activities ○ Home or away teams ○ Seeded or grouped by ability/needs
☺ Enjoyment – participants' interests and motivations are catered for	
☺ Success – all participants feel a sense of achievement	

Sanday secondary 3 Pupils organising and taking part in a Badminton Competition



Wider Achievement – Competition Organiser Training

Secondary 5 pupils from Kirkwall Grammar School take part in wider achievement opportunities throughout the year, including physical education and leadership. During term one and two, fifty-seven pupils attended curricular courses with PE and Active Schools, which included learning, practical participation, and delivery using the COT award.

Senior pupils were invited to put their skills into practice and coach 'Playground Games,' for primary pupils at Papdale Primary. Primary participants learned new games and enjoyed being active outside, while the leader's demonstrated confidence and the knowledge to adapt sessions, using their new tools, SMILES and STEP.

Additionally, pupils and staff at KGS benefited from inter-house activities, delivered by the leaders in term two on the run up to Christmas. The festive lunchtime activities proved extremely popular and was a great way for pupils to spend lunchtimes on the run up to the holidays.

Competition organiser training - sportscotland the national agency for sport in Scotland
...find out more

Secondary Sports Leadership		
School	Course	Attendance
Stromness Academy	SCQF Level 6 Qualification in Sports Leadership	Secondary 5 & 6 / 7 pupils
Sanday Junior High School	Competition Organiser Training	Secondary 3 / 5 pupils
Kirkwall Grammar School	Competition Organiser Training	Secondary 5 / 57 Pupils
Total Number of Pupils		69

sportscotland Young Ambassadors

Annually, Orkney schools opt into the **sportscotland** Young Ambassador programme, which is dedicated to developing young people as leaders in sport. The programme started in 2012 and has since supported and mentored secondary pupils locally.

During the 2023/24 academic year, ten **sportscotland** Young Ambassadors were recruited from four secondary schools across Orkney. Kirkwall Grammar School and Stromness Academy represented the Orkney mainland, while Westray and Sanday Junior High Schools represented the Northern Isles.

Unfortunately, due to opposing circumstances, the Orkney Young Ambassadors were unable to travel to the national conference in Inverness. However, to prevent disappointment, Active Schools Co-ordinators attended training with **sportscotland** and the Youth Sport Trust, to host a local conference on island, while ensuring content was of national standard.



“Young Ambassadors battled the elements to attend the local conference and arrived with vast amounts of enthusiasm. They had an enjoyable day and presented loads of fantastic ideas to take back to their schools.”

Carolynn Leslie, Active Schools Co-ordinator.

The local conference detailed the roles and responsibilities of a Young Ambassador, before hosting interactive sessions on communication, relationship building and planning for action. In addition, guest host Megan Clouston, a former young ambassador and current member of **sportscotland**’s Young Peoples Sports Panel, gave accounts of previous projects and initiatives that she has been involved in to enthuse and inspire the new cohort.

Young Ambassadors are now in schools motivating and inspiring other young people to take part in Physical Education, extracurricular activities and encouraging links with community clubs. Some have been attending sports committee meetings, helping at events, and running lunchtime clubs.

“Active Schools asked if I would be interested in coming along to the Young Ambassador conference to help deliver and share my experiences as I started my journey with sportscotland a long time ago when I became a Young Ambassador.”

Megan Clouston, Young Peoples Sports Panel.

Young Ambassadors - sportscotland the national agency for sport in Scotland ...find out more

Young Ambassadors from, Sanday, Westray, Kirkwall and Stromness Secondary Schools



Young Peoples Sports Panel

The Young Peoples Sports Panel creates a national platform for young voices to be heard across Scotland, to shape, influence and raise the profile of the future of sport. Megan Clouston an ex-pupil and Young Ambassador from Kirkwall Grammar School became the first Orcadian to represent the isles on this panel.

Megan Clouston was first recognised at Kirkwall Grammar School while taking part in a Sports Leaders UK course, during her third year. She was recognised for her notable leadership skills and ability to lead and motivate others. She progressed in Secondary 4 to becoming a **sportscotland** Young Ambassador, planning, promoting, and delivering activities to her peers and became a voice for young people in her school.



Megan went from strength to strength, developing her skills, taking part in national qualifications to aid her coaching, and has since qualified as a fitness coach, for Orkney Dance and Fitness.

Always driven to succeed, Megan applied to become part of the **sportscotland** Young Peoples Sports Panel in 2022 and underwent a vigorous selection process, to join the cohort of twenty candidates.

Megan has regularly attended meetings online and travelled for development days and residentials, Megan has become embedded in the programme and has worked to create more affordable travel for athletes, clubs and coaches from Orkney, Shetland, and Arran.

Growing in confidence and raising her profile, Megan has been awarded some fantastic opportunities, such as speaking at the Orkney Sports Awards and the national Coaching, Officiating and Volunteering Awards. Megan also travelled to Glasgow at the end of February to host the Scottish Sports Futures awards. The evening is an emotional and inspiring event celebrating the work being done with young people and communities that are vulnerable or at risk.

Active Girl's Day

As part of Scottish Women in Sport Week Sanday's Young Ambassador, Steffi Dybiz led the way at Sanday Junior High School with an 'Active Girls' presentation. The school celebrated the importance of physical activity at the assembly by handing out walk, run, cycle and

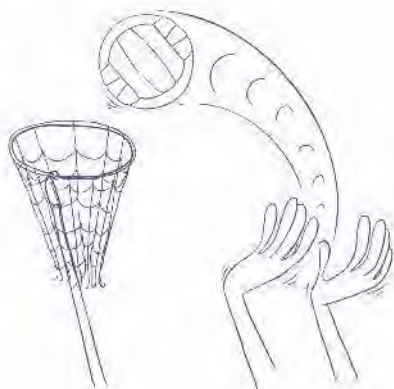
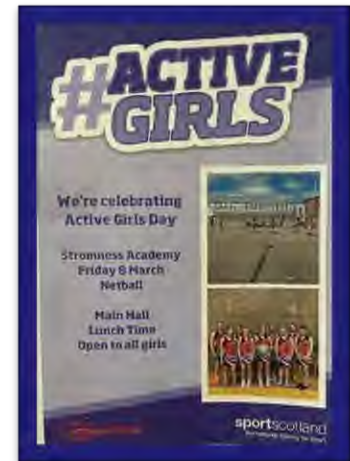


duathlon certificates and Primary 6's received their outdoor education participation certificates.

Stromness Academy also celebrated Scottish Women in Sport Week and Active Girl's Day with the Sports Leaders organising Girl's Only activities.

Active Girls Day - sportscotland the national agency for sport in Scotland ...find out more

Stromness Academy Active Girl's Activity and Sanday's Ambassador with her presentation



Parasport Festival



Orkney's third Parasport Festival took place on Friday 23 February 2024 at the Pickaquoy Centre. The festival aimed to provide opportunities for school-aged children and young people with physical or visual impairment, hearing loss or Down Syndrome to take part in a range of sports and learn more about the pathways available to them in the local community.

The festival was planned and coordinated by the Council's Community Sports Officer, with support from Scottish Disability Sport, the Pickaquoy Centre, Active Schools Coordinators and Coaches and Volunteers from several local sports clubs. This year, we also had support on the day from the 7 Sports Leaders from Stromness Academy, and the participants were treated to a visit from Ola the Orca, the Orkney 2025 Island Games mascot.

Thirteen children and young people took part on the day, in Rugby, Athletics, Climbing, Swimming and Kayaking. Many participants tried a new sport for the first time, and everyone enjoyed the range of activities on offer. At the end of the festival, all the children and their families were given a flyer with details on how to join the sports they'd taken part in on the day, in the wider community.

Highly positive feedback was received from the participants, their parents, teachers and support staff, including:

'It was a lovely, inclusive day; organisers and volunteers should be highly commended!'

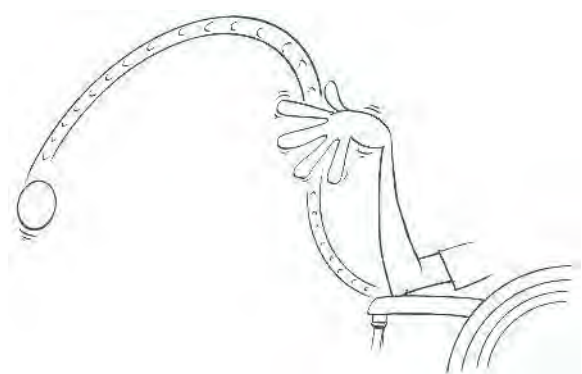
'The happy voices and the smiles on their faces were just the best.'

'Great from start to finish, love seeing the pupils so engaged, mixing with other pupils and trying new activities that were so well supported by local sports clubs.'

Parasport participant enjoy a kayaking session



Parasport participant enjoying the rugby session with coach Sean Corrigan



Orkney Sports Awards

On Friday 26 January, the Orkney Sports Awards took place at the Orkney Theatre to celebrate the achievements of the local sporting community. A year of phenomenally exciting performances, national call ups and Island Games success, made for an inspiring line up of finalists. The Active Schools and Community Sports Team coordinate the event, and it is supported by Orkney Islands Council.

The event was opened by Forbes Dunlop, **sportscotland** CEO, and closely followed by Megan Clouston, who highlighted her achievements through the Young Peoples Sports Panel. Before the awards kicked off, a Q&A session was held with medallists from past and present Island Games competitors, to enthuse the audience ahead of the Orkney 2025 Island Games competition.

Hosts Liam McArthur and Robbie Fraser directed the evening, highlighting sponsors, detailing finalists' achievements, and congratulating winners.

One hundred and ten distinct nominations were submitted, highlighting fifteen different sports, drawing in a crowd of over two hundred and fifty attending to witness the results.

Athletics, and Swimming, were highly represented at the awards, due to the successes at the Guernsey Island Games. Netball was also highly represented due to various success in several local and national competitions. Orkney Rugby won the team category, and Orkney Hockey proudly promoted their volunteer.



The full list of winners can be seen in the table below:

Category	Winners	Sport
Sportsperson of the Year	Aly Kemp	Athletics
Young Sportsperson of the Year	Eve Wood	Swimming
Team of the Year	Orkney Rugby Firsts	Rugby
Young Team of the Year	KGS Senior Netball Team	Netball
Volunteer of the Year	Inga Kemp	Hockey
Young Volunteer of the Year	Jenna Clapham	Swimming
Coach of the Year	Inga Burton	Swimming
Official of the Year	Aly MacPhail	Athletics
School Sport Volunteer of the Year	Katrina Garson & Tanya Leslie	Netball
Performance of the Year	Junior Intercounty Netball Team	Netball



Sportsperson of the Year pictured with representative from main sponsor Stagecoach



Service to Sport

It is with thanks to one individual, that the veterans Badminton group in Orkney, has flourished for the past thirty years. Organising training, events, and socials, has been a regular part of life for Bashir Hasham, who has generously dedicated his time to ensure a thriving and inclusive place for Over 50's to come together weekly.

Bashir was praised for creating an informal and non-competitive environment, for veterans to stay active, while promoting physical and mental health. During the awards, it was highlighted that members with Parkinsons Disease were able to take part and feel the benefits derived from sport.

Not content at weekly badminton meets, Bashir went above and beyond organising regular socials, dinners and get togethers for the group.

Bashir honourably accepted a Service to Sport award, which is presented under prestigious circumstances, to emphasize a long running service to sport.

Now approaching ninety, Bashir has retired from his role but is still a regular face on the Badminton court.

Bashir Hasham with his Service to Sport



Hall of Fame

The Hall of Fame was introduced to celebrate and pay tribute to Orkney's most iconic sportspeople, with the aim of inspiring future generations. Since its production in 2020, eleven people have been inducted.

The 2023 Orkney Sports Awards saw another two candidates highlighted for their careers in sport. First up, Graham Johnston, a remarkable footballer who was known locally as one of Orkney's top players. A fierce competitor that rivalled any player, was placed top of the podium at the awards evening. In addition, Graham's successes and dedication to Hockey coaching was celebrated, recognising him as the twelfth inductee into the Hall of Fame.

Linda Low was also recognised as Orkney's most decorated Island Games athlete, in both swimming and athletics. Her participation and performance roots that were imbedded in Orkney, flourished, posing an incredible professional career in sport.

Linda previously worked for **sportsScotland** before crossing the pond, working in America, with various sports teams. Working as a sports educator, she has progressed to become an



ambassador for women in sport, inspiring, influencing and promoting equality and diversity in sport.

While Linda was unable to make the event in person, she gave an inspirational online interview with BBC's Radio Orkney presenter, David Delday and then her award was presented to her in May on a trip home to see family. Linda is also working with the team in the next year to develop local coaches and engaging with Orkney 2025 in the lead up to the International Islands Games in July 2025.

Sponsorship

The Orkney Sports awards are sponsored by local and national companies and businesses. Our main sponsor Stagecoach also sponsors other programmes run through Sport and Leisure which are detailed in this report. This event could not take place without the support of these sponsors.



Sportscotland CEO – Forbes Dunlop with some of Orkney's Young Ambassadors



sportscotland School Sports Award

Shapinsay Primary School achieved 'Gold' status in **sportscotland's** School Sport Awards for the second time. The coveted award was the result of a huge effort across the whole school community last year. Guided by a committee of teachers, pupils and parents with support from Active Schools, Shapinsay Primary School are the first school in Orkney to reach Gold since the scheme started up again in September 2022.

Steps on their journey to Gold included: Setting up a community sports box, creating a multi games lunch club, putting on an 'Active Shapinsay Week' the whole community enjoyed activities such as health walks, cycling, dancing, football, athletics, racket skills, basketball and netball. The idea of hosting an activity week and of providing a community sport box came from the children, they chose the activities and created a timetable. They also chose and costed the equipment for the box and helped complete the funding applications.

Funded by the National Lottery, the School Sport Award is presented for innovation and achievement in delivering school sport and physical activity.

Head Teacher Emma Clements added: "I can't begin to describe how proud I am of our whole school community - thanks to Leanne, Kirsty and parent volunteer CJ for their hard work guiding us to success!"

Shapinsay School strikes gold - again! - with sportscotland school sport awards ...find out more



Bikeability



Bikeability Scotland Instructor Training



Neil Daly, from Cycling Scotland, visited Orkney in March to assist Active Schools Co-ordinators to deliver 'Bikeability Scotland Instructor Training.' The course allows school volunteers to deliver Bikeability Level 1 (playground) and Bikeability Level 2 (on road) training in schools.

Five staff members from Papdale, Stenness, Stromness and North Ronaldsay completed the course, which will enhance the number of pupils that Active Schools will be able to reach during the Orkney Bikeability programme, which takes place annually during term 4.

In addition, Cycling Scotland visitor, Neil, assessed members of the Active Schools team, who delivered on the day. Two Co-ordinators were signed off to deliver the course locally, which will increase the sustainability of the programme in Orkney.

Bikeability in Schools

Bikeability Scotland is the national cycle training programme for school children.

Bikeability Scotland is completely free and delivered by trained instructors, which helps children build the skills and confidence they need to cycle on today's roads.

- **Level 1** – Usually delivered in Primary 5. Riders learn how to prepare for a journey, check their bike and equipment are safe and develop good; control of their bikes, making observations and decision making. They also learn the importance of sharing space responsibly with other people. Level 1 training is completed in the playground.
- **Level 2** - Usually delivered to Primary 6 / 7 pupils. Level 2 takes place on class A roads, with simple junctions and moderate traffic, after a rider has successfully demonstrated level 1 skills. Riders learn to make good and frequent observations, communicate their intentions clearly to other road users, decide on and use the most suitable riding position, and they gain an understanding of priorities on a road and good decision making.

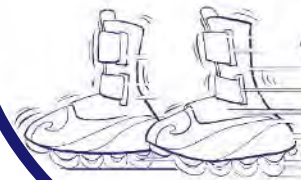
During the academic year 2023-24, there were 14 Primary Schools that received Bikeability training in Orkney Schools. Active School Co-ordinators, with some support from local volunteers delivered sessions to 238 participants.



School	Level 2	Level 1
St Andrews	53	
Papdale	49	5
Hope	9	
Burray	9	
Stromness	14	
Evie	5	10
Orphir	6	3
Rousay	3	3
Glaitness	21	
Firth	14	8
North Walls	6	
Dounby	20	
Sanday Junior High	6	
Westray Junior High	6	8
Total	221	37

- www.bikeability.org.uk/get-cycling/cycle-training-for-children/bikeability-level-1/
- www.bikeability.org.uk/get-cycling/cycle-training-for-children/bikeability-level-2/





Holiday Programmes

Orkney Islands Council Sport and Leisure Team, work in partnership with the Pickaquoy Centre to deliver Holiday Programme leaflets for the October, Summer and Easter holidays. Between the two organisations there was a huge variety of activities on offer for Orkney's schoolchildren.

The Active Schools and Community Sports Team collaborate with other council facilities and local clubs to coordinate and plan a range of sports and activities.

October Holiday Programme 2023

Co-ordinators pulled together a collated programme, which promoted activities run by The Pickaquoy Centre, Orkney Islands Council Sport and Leisure Service, Community Learning Development, and local community clubs. Pupils enjoyed 'Learn to Swim,' inflatables, sport specific taster sessions as well as, climbing, crafts and 'Run, Jump, Throw.'

For the October programme the team worked alongside Orkney Rugby Football Club, Netball Orkney, Orkney Fencing Club, Inclusive Orkney, and Orkney Roller Derby to plan a programme of camps and taster sessions. The Sport and Leisure service received funding from the Scottish Government to provided activities during 2023 School Holidays which allowed all sessions, excluding the Ross County Football Camp to be offered to participants for free. Sessions that took place for children were:

- ASN (Additional Support Needs) Activities, delivered by Inclusive Orkney
- Rugby Camp, delivered by Orkney Rugby Football Club and Active Schools
- Netball sessions, delivered by Netball Orkney
- Fencing Tasters, delivered by Orkney Fencing Club
- Multi Activities and Fun Games, delivered by Active Schools
- Football Camp, delivered by Ross County Foundation

Sessions were well attended and enjoyed by children for primary 1 through to secondary 4.

Rugby rookies with coaches during one of the rugby sessions



Easter Holiday Programme

The two-week Easter break saw 'April showers' and cold, windy conditions. Active Schools were delighted to host indoor 'playground games' and 'multi-sport' activities to primary pupils. The inclusive sessions allowed pupils to try new and familiar games, aimed at promoting fun and enjoyment over the holidays.

- Rugby Camp, delivered by Orkney Rugby Football Club
- Fencing Tasters, delivered by Orkney Fencing Club
- Netball sessions, delivered by Netball Orkney

Summer Holiday Programme

During the summer holidays there was a larger programme of activities on offer. Activities in the Northern Isles were added to the programme

- Rugby Camp, delivered by Orkney Rugby Football Club
- Fencing Tasters, delivered by Orkney Fencing Club
- Netball sessions, delivered by Netball Orkney
- Bikeability Level 1, delivered by Active Schools
- Active Schools Day - Sanday, Stronsay & Westray, delivered by Active Schools
- Generation Pound
- Stromness Learn to Swim Week delivered by Stromness Swimming Pool and Fitness Centre
- Sensory Friendly Family Pool Session, delivered by Stromness Swimming Pool and Fitness Centre
- Drop In: Inflatable Sessions, Fun Sessions, Snorkel and Flipper sessions and Parents & Toddlers sessions
- Generation Pound
- Shopping Week Crafts & Bouncy Castle Sessions delivered by Stromness Community Centre

Participants from Westray and Sanday during the Summer Holiday Programme





North Isles Sports

This annual event takes place each year in June. North Isles Sports is an annual competition between Junior High Schools and Senior North Isles Teams. It is hosted each year by a different island on rotation. The 2024 event took place on the island of Westray and was well attended by competitors and spectators from all the islands.

The Active Schools and Community Sports team supports and helps coordinate the event alongside the hosting island.

The Co-ordinators recruit volunteer officials who travel with the team to the hosting island to officiate the events. The school competition consists of participants from Westray, Sanday & Stronsay Junior High Schools, pupils competed in Athletics, Netball and Football. Senior participants from Papa Westray, Westray, Stronsay, Sanday & North Ronaldsay took part in a very competitive senior competition. Results for the school's competition are below:



Cup	Winner	2nd	3rd
Junior Relay Quaich	Westray	Stronsay	Sanday
Junior Football	Westray	Sanday	Stronsay
Junior Netball	Stronsay	Westray	Sanday
Schools Cup – Athletics	Stronsay (51)	Westray (45)	Sanday (18)

Athlete Travel Award Scheme



ORKNEY
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The Athlete Travel Award Scheme (ATAS) is aimed at improving opportunities for Highland and Island athletes to participate, progress and achieve in their sport by supporting the travel costs associated with accessing competitive and developmental opportunities on the Scottish mainland. The ATAS is administered by the Community Sports Officer at the Council, and is funded by **sportscotland**, Stagecoach and Orkney Islands Council.

For the October 2023 to March 2024 period, 12 local athletes from Athletics, Badminton, Climbing, Netball, Squash, Swimming and Weightlifting received up to £750 each for travel costs. Stand-out performances from ATAS recipients during this period include:

- Netballer, Zara Flett, signed for Strathclyde Sirens, Scotland's only professional netball team, and was selected for the Scotland U21 team.
- Eve Wood, Swimmer, won two gold medals and one bronze in the Scottish National Age Group Championships.
- Climber, Hope Henderson, finished 1st in Scotland (in Youth A) and 8th in Britain in the Youth Climbing Series Final in Southampton.
- Ross Sinclair, Olympic Weightlifter, secured silver in the Senior Scottish Championships.
- Olympic Weightlifter, Angus Robertson, competed in his first Scottish Senior Championship and finished 3rd in the men's 96kg class (aged 16), and set a new Scottish and British records at U17 in snatch, clean and jerk, and total.

The next round of ATAS covers the April 2024 to March 2025 period. Highlights for recipients of this round so far include:

- Swimmer, Eve Wood, won two golds and two bronze medals in the Scottish National Age Group Championships.
- Sprinter, Taylah Paterson, won two golds in the Glasgow Sprint Gala, and breaking the Orkney 150m record.
- Climber, Hope Henderson, won bronze in the junior female category at the Scottish Youth Bouldering Championships in Edinburgh.
- Finlay Scott winning the plate in Apeldoorn, Netherlands, and in Curragh, Ireland, playing in a PSA Satellite Events.

ATAS recipients with representatives from Stagecoach and Orkney Islands Council staff



Performance Development Programme

The Performance Development Programme (PDP) aims to develop performance pathway athletes in the Highlands and Islands. The programme is coordinated by the Council's Community Sports Officer and is supported by **sportscotland** and the Pickaquoy Centre.

Athletes are provided with a programme of support which includes physical preparation, performance lifestyle support, athlete testing and physio. They are also offered a range of educational workshops, on topics such as Nutrition, Performance Profiling, Managing Minor Aches and Pains and Growth mindset.

During the 2023-24 academic year, the programme was developed to support 16 local athletes, from Athletics, Badminton, Netball, Rugby, Squash and Swimming. A key focus in PDP has been creating and improving links with the local sports coaches, **sportscotland** and Performance staff at Scottish Governing Bodies to ensure training programmes are tailored to each individual athlete.

The PDP athletes had a hugely successful year, with highlights including:

- Erin Scott being selected to play for the Scotland U19 Netball team in Cardiff.
- Cailynn Williamson, Rugby, playing for the Scotland U16 team in the International Rugby Festival in May.
- Swimmers, Eve Wood and Alfie Price, smashed two 43-year-old swimming records at the Orkney Age Group Championships at Picky in March. Eve and Alfie also attended the Scottish National Age Group Championships, where Eve won two golds and two bronze medals, and Alfie won gold for his 50m freestyle.

sportscotland
the national agency for sport

PDP Athletes: Caitlyn Williamson and Erin Scott representing Scotland at Rugby and Netball



Community Sports Hub

In 2023-24, the quarterly Community Sports Hub meetings were replaced with meetings with individual clubs. With the Island Games approaching and local clubs having specific requirements in terms of people development, funding and facility preparation, this was found to be more beneficial to the clubs. As well as Island Games sports, the other Hub sports continued to be supported. Examples include working with Netball Orkney and Netball Scotland ahead of an education weekend which was delivered in Orkney in September and supporting the Orkney Fencing Club in preparations for setting up Seated/Wheelchair Fencing sessions.



Community Sports ...find out more

Courses

A range of generic training opportunities were offered to local sports club volunteers from August 2023 to July 2024, coordinated by the Council's Community Sports Officer. Courses covered are detailed below:

Course	Date	Participants
Emergency First Aid at Work	30/09/23	6
Child Wellbeing & Protection in Sport	05/10/23	12
Sports First Aid	18-19/11/23	5
Child Wellbeing & Protection in Sport	16/02/24	10
Sports First Aid	08/03/24	3
Child Wellbeing & Protection in Sport	10/06/24	6
Sports First Aid	15-16/06/24	7
Emergency First Aid at Work	13/07/24	9

Winter Bookings

The Community Sports Officer worked with OIC facility management and the team at the Pickaquoy Centre to allocate winter bookings. With demand being so high, a large amount of time was spent liaising with clubs and ensuring alternative times/facilities were offered where required to accommodate clubs.

Coach and Official Development Programme

A key project the Community Sports Officer worked on during 2023-24 was the Coach and Official Development Programme. First, a questionnaire was sent to the Island Games sports, with a series of questions relating to their current coaching and official situation, their aims for the next 2 years and their requirements for hosting the Island Games. They

were also asked for details on their needs and aspirations in terms of increasing participation, increasing active membership, and improving performance.

The key finding was that many clubs were at full capacity and unable to grow or develop with the main limiting factor being the lack of coaches. The clubs had aims of increasing capacity and improving the quality of coaching sessions, offering inclusive sessions, offering adult beginner/social sessions and extending their clubs out to the island communities, but were unable to do so with their current workforce. This showed that increasing the number of coaches and developing existing coaches is key to increasing opportunities for the local community to participate in sport and physical activity.

The other key finding was that most clubs needed more officials, for the continuation and development of local sports competition, and for the successful delivery of the Island Games.

Based on the needs of the clubs, and through working with **sportscotland** and Scottish Governing Bodies, a 2-year development programme was produced, and funding was obtained through Orkney's Crown Estate Community Led Development Fund, **sportscotland** and Orkney 2025. The project primarily aimed to bring tutors and coaches to Orkney to deliver, as local volunteers regularly face the disadvantage of having to travel to the Scottish mainland to complete coach education courses or attend CPD opportunities, which can often make it unfeasible.

Since the beginning of the project in January 2024, the development activities which have taken place so far has made a huge difference to local clubs, and a range of coaching courses are currently being planned to take place before the end of the year.



Orkney 2025 – Island Games

Ahead of the International Island Games, the Council's Sport and Leisure Team have been working closely with Orkney 2025 and local sports, practitioners and schools on a range of areas. The Team have started to work on the Orkney 2025 Active Schools and Community Sports programme, which will include a Roadshow, Assemblies, Walk the Isles, Holiday Programmes and Classroom Workouts.



The Community Sports Officer has identified two local Physios to receive support and mentorship from David Brandie, Head of Physiotherapy at the Institute of Sport. The physios will be part of the team offering the service in the run up and during Island Games week and will also have a key role in supporting local performance athletes beyond the Games.

In terms of facility planning, the Community Sports Officer has supported both Orkney Gymnastics Club and Orkney Football. The Island Games Gymnastics will take place at Stromness Academy, and a huge amount of work has taken place behind the scenes, such as working with Gymnova who will be supplying the equipment, linking with the school regarding access and availability, having discussions with the Council's Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure team and bringing in a Structural Engineer to ensure equipment fixtures and fittings are suitable and load tested before use.

The Community Sports Officer has also been involved in development work for football, which has involved liaising with the Scottish FA, Orkney Football, Kirkwall Grammar School, Galliford Try, the Council's Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure team and potential funders.

The Gymnastics equipment that has been supplied from Gymnova in Stromness Academy.



Partnership Working

Throughout 2023-24, the Active Schools and Community Sports Team worked closely with the local sports clubs and many other partners as listed below:

- Community Learning and Development
- Cycling Scotland
- Inclusive Orkney
- Netball Orkney
- NHS Orkney
- Orkney 2025
- Orkney Island Games Association
- Orkney Rugby Club
- Outdoor Education
- SAMH – Scottish Action for Mental Health
- Scottish Disability Sport
- Scottish Governing Bodies
- Sporting Memories
- **sportscotland**
- Stagecoach
- The Pickaquoy Centre

Continuous Lifelong Professional Learning

The Active Schools and Community Sports Team continually aim to improve the standard of service they provide. It is therefore important to attend training to both refresh and increase their skill base. Training that the team have attended this year has included:

- **Sportscotland**, Hot Topics workshops:
 - Understanding Care Experienced Young People
 - Trauma
- Bikeability Instructor updates.
- **Sportscotland** School Sports Awards update training
- Scottish Action for Mental Health Route Map training
- ENABLE - Unconscious Bias
- Community Sports Hub Residential
- Protein for Performance Webinar
- Managing Emotions in Sport Webinar



Contact Details:

Active Schools and Community Sports Team,
Education, Leisure and Housing,
Orkney Islands Council,
School Place
Kirkwall, KW15 1NY
Telephone: **01856 873535**
Email: leisure.culture@orkney.gov.uk
Website: www.orkney.gov.uk





**ORKNEY ISLANDS COUNCIL
LEISURE & CULTURE SERVICE**

SPORT & LEISURE FACILITIES ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2023-24



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FOREWARD

Our Sport and Leisure facilities are at the very heart of our communities. They play a vital role in enhancing the quality of life and well-being of individuals, fostering social cohesion, and contributing to the overall development of communities in multifaceted ways. We see this across Orkney with thousands of people across the County playing, watching and enjoy sport & physical activity and enjoying our facilities, they're central to Orkneys identity as well as being key attractions of visitors to Orkney.

The variety of services provided by and offered in the Councils sport and leisure facilities cannot be under estimated, and It is for that reason that I'm delighted to be introducing the first sport and leisure facilities annual impact report.

Sport, physical activity and leisure can build strong and cohesive communities and partnerships, encouraging connections across place and people. Partnership working is the foundation on which a lot of the services provided by the sport and leisure service are built on, and without the support of local communities, clubs and partners, including sportscotland, Stagecoach and the Scottish Football Association to name but a few, we would be unable to offer what we do.

I know that staff right across the Sport and Leisure service are, and will continue to be unapologetically ambitious in trying to make Orkney a more active and attractive place for residents and visitors, not only by continuing to operate the wonderful services provided, but also by taking every opportunity there is to enhance and develop them.

The staff who work across the sport and leisure facilities really are the lifeblood of the service, and I don't take for granted the truly significant contribution they make to the quality/ safe facilities and activities provided, and I thank them for that.



**Garry Burton -
Service Manager, Leisure & Culture**

Orkney Islands Council Plan 2023-2028

Strategic Priorities:

The three priority themes are built upon core principles, which will guide future decision-making relating to all our aims. Our core principles are as follows.

- Protecting our environment and combating climate change.
- Equality, fairness and inclusion, particularly for vulnerable and remote communities like the ferry-linked isles.
- Sustainable and accessible services for all.
- Community wellbeing and mental health.
- Community wealth building for future generations.



OUR TEAM



James Wylie
Corporate Director
Education, Leisure & Housing

Frances Troup
Head of Service
Community Learning, Leisure & Housing

Garry Burton
Service Manager - Leisure & Culture

Katell Roché
Team Manager - Sport & Leisure

Sarah Johnston
Senior Duty Officer

Lisa Kirby
Senior Duty Officer – Swimming Pools

John Russell
Maintenance Worker

Anita Park
Centre Supervisor - Stromness Community Centre & Town Hall

Samantha Tomalin
Centre Supervisor - Kirkwall Community Centre & Town Hall

Inga Craigie
Centre Coordinator - The Dounby Centre

Gary Ward
Centre Coordinator - KGS Sports Centre

Contracted Front Line Staff
Campsite & Hostel Wardens
Fitness Advisors
Leisure Assistants
Lifeguards
Leisure Attendants
Swimming Instructors
Group Exercise Instructors (self-employed)



ACTIVELIFE More People, More Active, More Often

ActiveLife

Launched in January 2017 in partnership with The Pickaquoy Centre, ActiveLife membership offers unlimited access to a huge number of activities at: The Pickaquoy Centre; KGS Sports Centre; The Dounby Centre; St Margaret's Hope HLC; Westray HLC; Sanday HLC; Stronsay HLC; North Walls HLC; Rousay HLC; Rousay HLC; Shapinsay HLC.

ActiveIslands

ActiveIslands was launched in October 2017 to give ferry-linked islanders access to gym facilities and group exercise classes exclusively on their own island. Access to Isles swimming pools is not included due to them being run by the local community associations.

ACTIVELIFE PRICES 2023-24

ActiveLife Individual £25.00 per month
ActiveLife Family £35.00 per month
ActiveIslands Individual £15.00 per month
ActiveIslands Family £20.00 per month
ActiveLife Budget £0.50 per person per activity

ACTIVELIFE MEMBERSHIP

31/03/24 - 2520 members
31/03/23 - 2380 members
31/03/22 - 1989 members



Orkney Islands Council and The Pickaquoy Centre are LeisureLink partners, which allows ActiveLife members access to LeisureLink partnership leisure facilities across Scotland





GROUP EXERCISE CLASSES

441 Classes
3179 Participants
in 2023-24



20 classes timetabled per week

Venues included KGS Sports Centre, Stromness, Dounby, Hope and Rousay

1 Instructor supported in training to deliver Generation Pound classes to children aged 6-12 yrs



Group exercise continues to be a popular choice of physical activity, with all classes included in ActiveLife membership. We work in partnership with self-employed instructors, by providing financial and practical support to deliver group exercise programmes.





KGS SPORTS CENTRE



Core Opening Hours

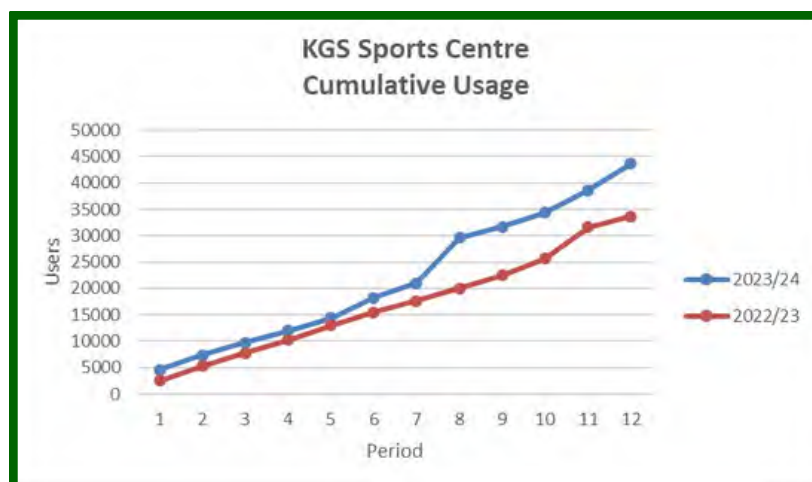
Monday - Friday	1730-2100
Saturday	0930-1300
Sunday	1000-1300

KGS Sports Centre offers the use of the school building and it's sports facilities to the public in the evenings and weekends. Facilities include a 4-court games hall, gym hall, studio, fitness suite, 3G pitch, 2 grass pitches, classroom hire and the large dining area space and foyer which can be transformed into a event space.

A new Centre Coordinator post for KGS Sports Centre was established and the vacancy filled in November 2023, bringing administrative and day to day operational support for the centre and team.

In financial year 2023/24 KGS Sports Centre seen an increase of 10,014 users within the facility shown in the graph with a particular increase in usage in events and weddings.

Demand continues to outstrip supply for 3G pitch and Games Hall space in the winter months, and the Senior Duty Officer works closely with clubs and the Community Sport Hub Officer to accommodate booking requests as far as possible, but some compromises have to be made. The task of fitting in all the clubs was no easier in 2023/24, and we work closely with The Pickaquoy Centre to ensure fair allocation of hall space between the venues.





KGS SPORTS CENTRE

3G Pitch Resurfacing



The resurfacing of the 3G pitch at KGS, along with synthetic pitches at Stromness Academy and The Pickaquoy Centre, was delivered on schedule during July and August.

The works took place during the quiet period in the season for minimal impact on clubs, and will secure the provision of high quality football, rugby and hockey training and match facilities for the community. In addition, replacement football and hockey goals were provided after 10 years of heavy usage by KGS school and community sports clubs.

The pitch and lighting life cycle works successfully achieved through Scottish Football Association DCMS funding and managed by Schools Investment Programme and Galliford Try Facilities Management.



KGS SPORTS CENTRE

Events

KGS offers a space suitable for the largest of celebrations, with the drapes and decorative lights hung from the first floor above the dining area to create a beautiful area for an evening meal and dance.

9 non-sporting events took place in 2023-24, compared to 13 in 2022/23, which was exceptionally high due to a number of weddings that had been rescheduled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Orkney Arts & Crafts
Spectacular Spring Fair
1 & 2 April 2023

Scottish Youth Parliament
Youth Sitting
1 - 3 July 2023

Wedding
8 July 2023

Orkney International Science
Festival
Family Day
9 September 2023

Creative Orkney & Orkney Food
& Drink
Winter Fayre
11 & 12 November 2023

Orkney Arts & Crafts
Christmas Fair
18 & 19 November 2023

Kerry's Dining Experience
Dinner Dance
30 December 2023

Wedding Exhibition
18 February 2024

Orkney Arts & Crafts
Spring Fair
23 & 24 March 2024





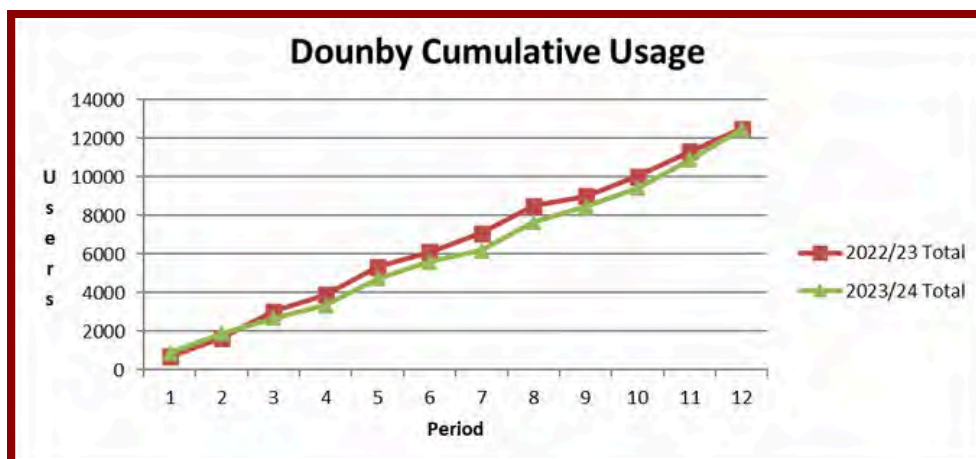
Core Opening Hours
Monday - Friday 1730-2000

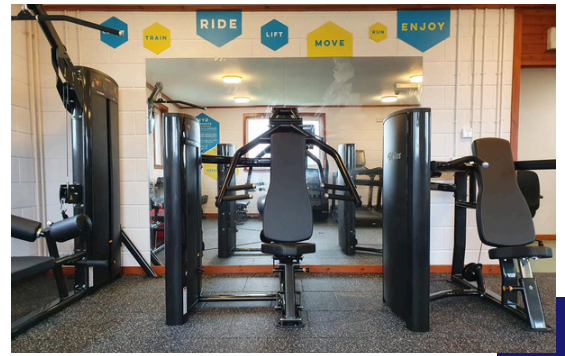
THE DOUNBY CENTRE

The Dounby Centre offers two pitches (one sand soil), a fitness suite, three court sports hall, small hall and community rooms for hire. Throughout the year the sports hall and pitches are used regularly by senior and junior clubs, and the centre is a venue for our group exercise programme.

The fitness suite has a variety of Technogym equipment for use by the public, in March 2023 a new Hammer Strength HD SPARC machine with funding obtained through the Islands Infrastructure Fund. The fitness suite was refreshed with a repaint and ActiveLife branded images to link in with our other mainland fitness suites.

The Dounby Centre saw a similar number of users in 2023/24 (12,469) compared to 2022/23 (12,503).



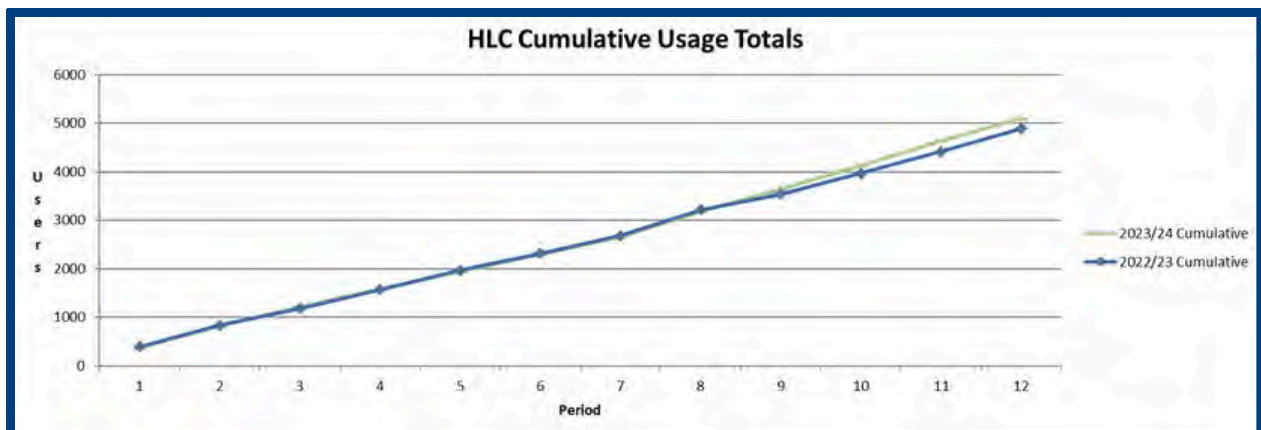


HEALTHY LIVING CENTRES

Seven Healthy Living centres (HLCs) are located throughout Orkney to provide access to small community gyms to those living in our rural areas. Located in Westray, Sanday, Stronsay, North Walls in Hoy, Rousay, Shapinsay and St Margaret's Hope.

Each HLC has eight hours of supervised sessions with a Fitness Advisor or Leisure Assistant each week. In addition, the Buddy System operates during school hours and additional gym opening times are available when a key holder is present in the building and is advertised locally.

The usage figures show a very steady incremental increase in users since reopening after the COVID-19 pandemic, with 5100 users recorded in 2023-24 compared with 4889 users in 2022-23. The HLCs are highly valued by the small island communities and are an invaluable resource for the residents health and wellbeing.





SWIMMING POOLS

Stromness Swimming Pool and Fitness Centre

Stromness Swimming Pool and Fitness Centre has a 4-lane 25m swimming pool, health suite with spa, sauna and steam room, and a fitness suite with 8 cardiovascular, strength and conditioning equipment.



45 hours per week of public sessions, club sessions, school swimming, private bookings and training



12.5 hours per week of Swim Club training



12 Sea Survival Courses



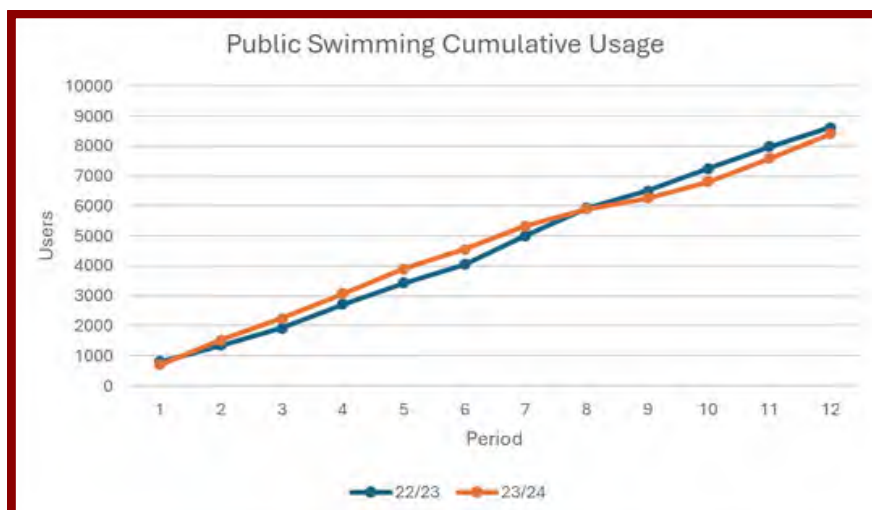
120 children attending Learn to Swim programme each week



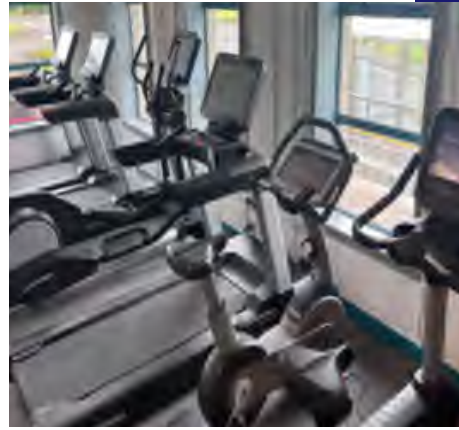
8406 admissions to public sessions



7 Private Hires & Events

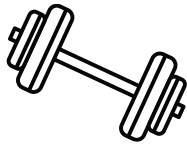


Public Swimming usage for 2023-24 was recorded as 8406 compared to 8615 in 2022-23. Staffing shortages at the end of 2023 resulted in a decrease in pool opening hours and consequently usage. An issue with internet supply to the facility in December and January resulted in manual recording of usage figures has resulted in a likely under-recording.

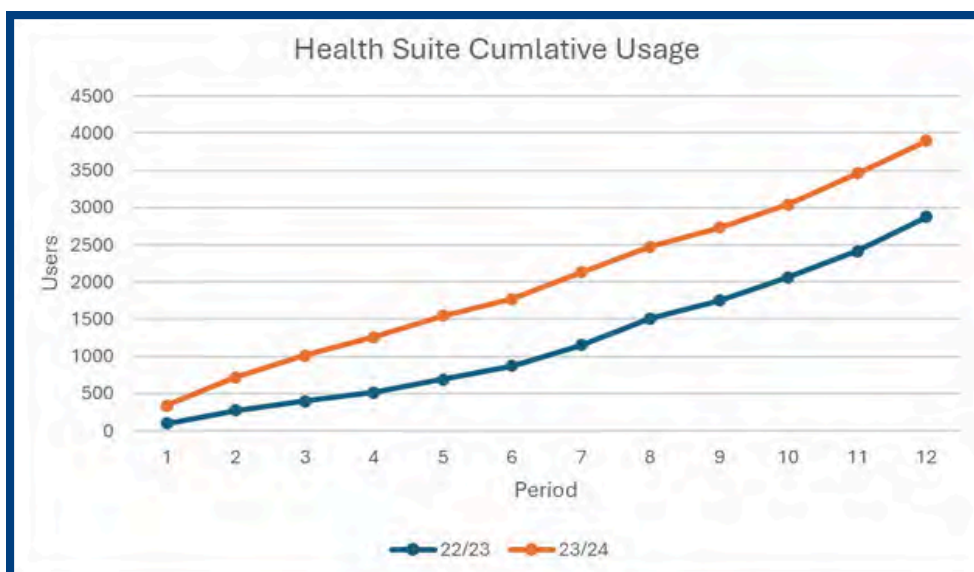
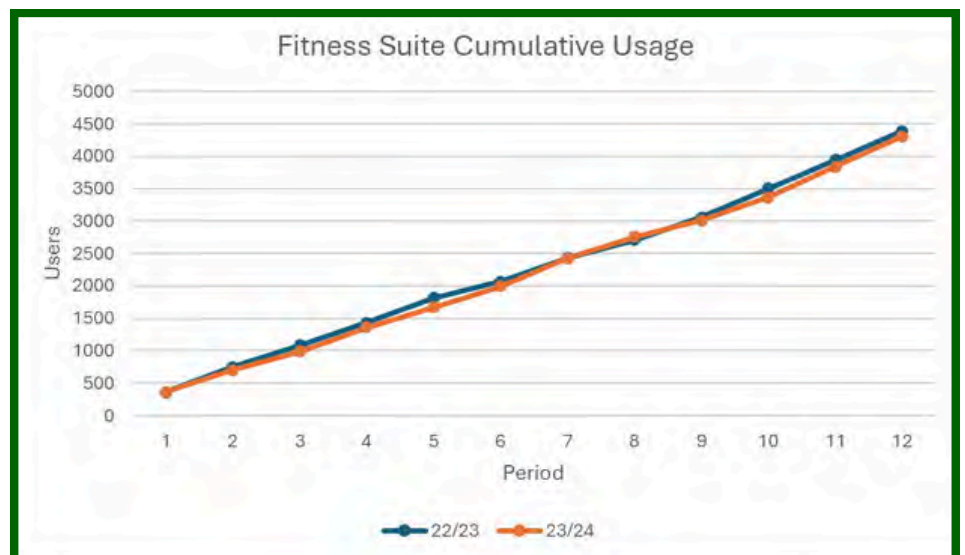


SWIMMING POOLS

Stromness Swimming Pool and Fitness Centre



Fitness Suite usage for 2023-24 was recorded as 4310 compared to 4391 in 2022-23.



Health Suite usage for 2023-24 was 3901, an increase compared to 2875 in 2022-23.



**Scottish
Water**
Trusted to serve Scotland

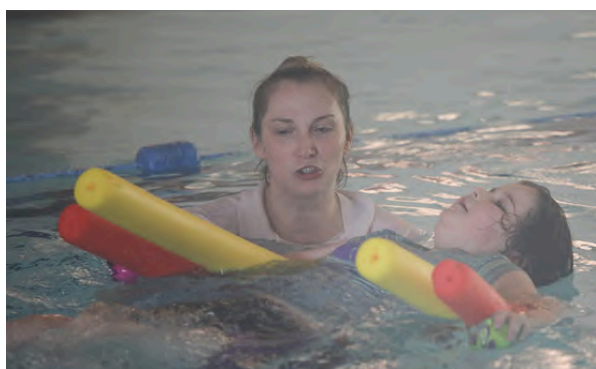
Proud to Support



SWIMMING POOLS

Scottish Swimming Learn to Swim Programme and Club Links

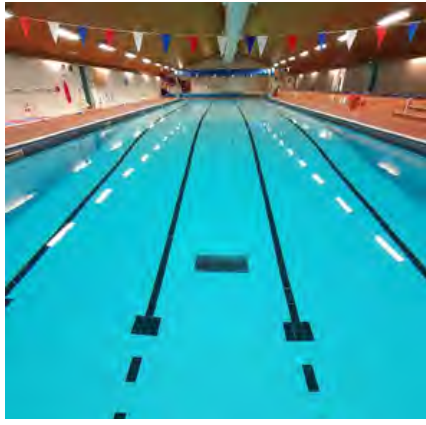
Stromness Swimming Pool facilitated 120 children in the Scottish Swimming Learn to Swim programme during 2023-24



The 2nd Orkney Learn to Swim Gala was held at Stromness Pool in November, where 22 young potential club swimmers had their first taste of a gala!

In November 2023, during the National Learn to Swim Conference, Regional Development Manager Colleen Blair presented to delegates the successful links in the pathway from Learn to Swim to club swimming here in Orkney.





SWIMMING POOLS - ISLES POOLS

Orkney Islands Council is responsible for the maintenance of four pools on the ferry-linked isles on Westray, Sanday, Stronsay and Hoy, all based within the school estate. The Council employs Leisure Attendants to carry out the cleaning duties in pool and changing rooms and to maintain the pool plant and monitor water quality.

The island's Community Associations operate the day to day usage and the activities of the pools within their community. The isles residents are passionate about the resource and the benefits it has on their community's health and wellbeing.

Qualifications - National Pool Plant Operators Certificate



Five members of Council swimming pools staff undertook the National Pool Plant Operator Certificate.

Candidates from Westray, Stronsay and Stromness all passed the course in October and December 2023.

Sanday Pool Refurbishment

In March 2023, Sanday pool was closed for extensive maintenance to be carried out. The works, carried out by Aqua Leisure, involved the imperative pool plant upgrade and a pool shell regROUT.



New Senior Duty Officer

In December 2023, Lisa Kirby was newly appointed as Senior Duty Officer for swimming pools. Lisa brings a wealth of experience and knowledge, working with Royal Lifesaving Society as a Trainer Assessor in NPLQ & First Aid and is the only Scottish Swimming tutor in Orkney and one of only between 30-40 in Scotland tutoring in Teaching Aquatics. Lisa's experience and knowledge will ensure the pools and staff are compliant in their operation and to the highest standard.



CAMPSITES AND HOSTELS

Orkney Islands Council operates 3 hostels and 2 campsites within Sport & Leisure. The 3-star Point of Ness campsite in Stromness, Birsay Hostel and Campsite, the 4-star Hoy Centre and the Rackwick Hostel. The Hoy Hostel is used as the base for the schools residential Outdoor Education programme for much of Term 4 (April – July) and Term 1 (August – October) with public access out with these times and at weekends.

Point of Ness Development

2023 was the first full season of operations at Point of Ness since the site was upgraded with increased number of hardstanding pitches, electrical hook-up points, solar panels and a new toilet and shower block. A bike shelter was erected to house a fleet of electric bikes purchased after a successful application to the Islands Infrastructure Fund.

A new commercial washing machine and tumble dryer was fitted to the laundry room and several hook up points were repaired or replaced in March 2024. Overall, the site saw a 32% increase in income compared to 2022-23.

Further replacement hook-up points are scheduled to be installed during the winter period in 2024-25, along with completion of the new sewerage connection and installation of an improved chemical waste facility.

It is hoped that a four-star grading can be achieved on Visit Scotland's next grading visit.

Birsay Hostel and Campsite Development

Planning permission was granted in December 2023 for a new utility block and for an increased number of pitches with hardstanding and electric hook up points. This is an important step forward to replace the temporary portacabins currently in situ to seek external funding opportunities.

Point of Ness Campsite

No of nights booked 2023: 4423

No of nights booked 2022: 3328

Birsay Campsite

No of nights booked 2023: 1792

No of nights booked 2022: 1665

Birsay Hostel

No of nights booked 2023: 476

No of nights booked 2022: 425

Hoy Centre

No of nights booked 2023: 588

No of nights booked 2022: 472

Rackwick Hostel

No of nights booked 2023: 184

No of nights booked 2022: 139





CAMPSITES AND HOSTELS

Customer Reviews

"Pleasant comfortable en-suite room with access to communal kitchen, dining room and TV lounge facilities. Modern building in impressive setting at northern end of the Island with impressive views across to Orkney mainland. Loads of parking. Clean and properly serviced. Friendly and welcoming staff. Spent a couple of nights here, and wouldn't hesitate to go back."

Hoy Hostel & Outdoor Centre

"It is an amazing location and the staff were brilliant - they couldn't have done any more to make us welcome. It was an extremely busy weekend and yet the showers and toilets were clean at all times. We had a fabulous stay and we will be back!"

Point of Ness Campsite

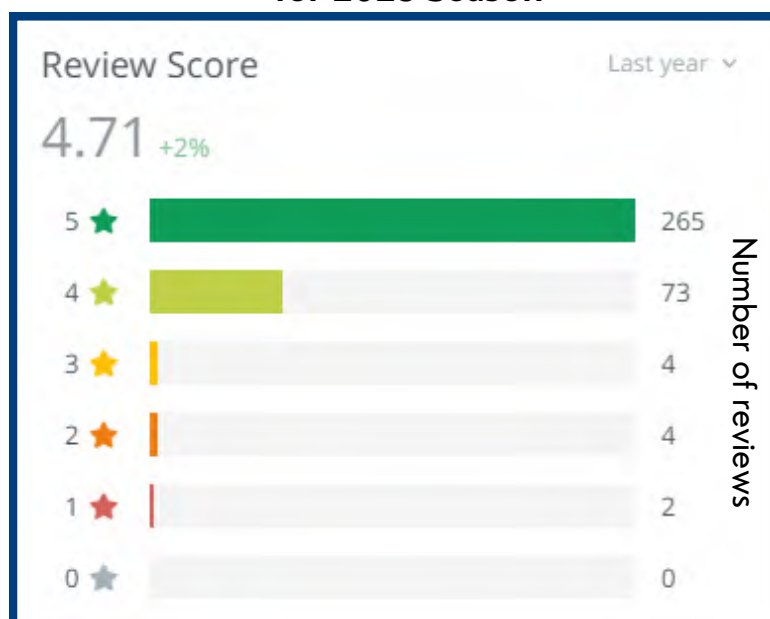
"Really lovely campsite. Wardens were great and so were the facilities, always spotlessly clean. Good showers and toilets, washing machine and drying facilities. The pitches were well spaced and level."

Birsay Campsite

"Great Value place to stay for the night in beautiful surroundings of Rackwick Bay. Clean and tidy with pretty much everything you need."

Rackwick Hostel

OIC Campsites and Hostels Review Scores for 2023 Season





STROMNESS COMMUNITY CENTRE AND TOWN HALL

Situated in the heart of Stromness, the Town Hall is a converted church just off the main through fare. It is an excellent concert venue, seating up to 300. The nearby Stromness Community Centre caters for a broad range of activities. Facilities include a games hall, two multi-purpose rooms and a coffee bar area.

Development Works

Extensive refurbishment of the Town Hall's windows and external doors was completed in December 2022, greatly enhancing the appearance. The building then opened for bookings so that the annual Orkney Folk Festival, St Magnus International Festival and Orkney Blues Festival concerts could take place. The second phase of the Town Hall development - the much-needed installation of a new heating system begun in October 2023. Although this meant the Town Hall was out of action for the remainder of 2023, the new boiler and heating system, along with the resurfaced oak flooring and replacement carpet, has resulted in a much warmer and more desirable space for hire.

Stromness Community Centre also had improvement works carried out with a ramp installed at the rear of the building to allow full accessibility to the games hall - a huge benefit to the Folk Festival and St Magnus Festival to allow all patrons easier access to their concerts.

Events

The Orkney Folk Festival in May, is the largest annual event with over 3000 people attending the concerts over the two buildings. The community centre is also the venue for group exercise classes, holiday activities and local community groups.



Youth Achievement and
Youth Club Activities

Orkney Folk Festival
Concerts and Sessions



St Magnus International
Festival Concerts

Stromness Shopping Week
Activities and Events

Orkney Blues Festival

Santa's Grotto in
collaboration with Youth
Achievement Group

Action for Children & CLDE
drop-in sessions



KIRKWALL & ST OLA COMMUNITY CENTRE AND TOWN HALL

The main Town Hall room with its large stained glass window and ornate mouldings is ideal for special events. As well as the Town Hall and Supper Room there are three meeting rooms on the ground floor all of which can be configured for a variety of uses. The adjoining Youth Cafe and small hall is also available to hire as a social space.

The ground floor St Magnus café is operated by Corporate Catering, and can provide catering options for room hires.

Events

With its town centre location, Kirkwall and St Ola Town Hall and Community Centre is a popular location for weddings, local community groups, workshops and exhibitions.



Facility Development

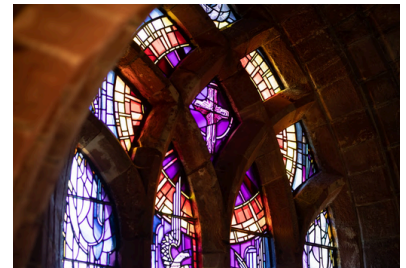
A new Centre Supervisor post was created and recruited to in the latter part of 2023 with the aim of developing both the café and room hire offering to increase income.



Civil Marriages and
Wedding Receptions

Orkney Arts and Crafts Fairs

Science Festival Exhibition



Local community group
gatherings

Dance & Exercise classes

Business meetings,
workshops & training

Reception venue for local
community celebrations



GRASS PITCHES

Orkney Islands Council provides grass pitches with changing facilities for hire across Orkney at Market Green in Stromness, Firth, St Margaret's Hope, Bignold Park in Kirkwall, KGS (x2), Dounby (x2), Westray, Sanday and Shapinsay.

Total pitch hires for 2023/24 was 273, an increase compared to 250 in 2022/23.

Pitches Maintenance

The normal football season runs from 1 May to 31 August each year. The Sport and Leisure service oversees the ground maintenance contracts, orders fertiliser and line marking paint, coordinates the bookings for football fixtures, and ensures the changing rooms are cleaned after each use.

For 2023/24 those contractors were:

Ewan Mackenzie Gardening Services - Market Green, Firth, Bignold & KGS

Carl Wood - Dounby

Hope School Janitor - Hope

Westray Golf Club - Westray

Robert Steer - Sanday

David Swannie - Shapinsay



Pitch Hires
2023/24 - 273
2022/23 - 250



PLAY AREAS

During 2023/24 Orkney Islands Council maintained 46 play areas across Orkney, 32 of which are on the mainland.

Scottish Government Play Park Renewal Funding

Orkney Islands Council was allocated Scottish Government capital funding of £26,000 in 2022/23 as part of a multi-year settlement for the renewal of play parks. This was spent primarily on a new inclusive multi play unit for the Brandyquoy Play Park with the remaining funds used to purchase smaller items such as swing seats and chains, springer bases and replacement panels for climbing towers.

In 2023/24 £51,000 was received in year 2 which was used to install the multi frame into Brandyquoy purchased the previous year which was opened in June 2024. £42,000 of the funding purchased further play equipment to be located in Brandyquoy Play Park in Kirkwall, Marwick in Stromness and in Eday at the school play area to be installed in 2024/25.

Play Area Renewal Fund

The fund established from Covid-19 Recovery funding in 2022 open for its first round of applications in April 2023. The fund is open to formally constituted groups to apply for 50% funding up to £25,000 to support the renewal of play area equipment in Orkney.

Two rounds of applications were assessed in 2023 and three formal grant offers made.

Playpark Inspections

The annual independent play area inspection was carried out in November 2023 by the Play Inspection Company on our mainland playparks. They provide a detailed independent report on the condition of the Council's play areas which is used to prioritise maintenance works and support renewal projects.





CONTACT DETAILS

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[Find us on Facebook](#)

www.orkney.gov.uk/sportandleisure