



# Guide To Courses New Year 2026



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# Sign Up Now!

**Enrolment opens Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

Welcome to the Community Learning Guide for New Year 2026.

This guide contains our programme of courses, drawn together by the Community Learning Development and Employability Service. Further copies of the Guide to Courses may be obtained from Orkney Islands Council Customer Services in Kirkwall and Stromness, as well as in local libraries and leisure facilities. A large print version is also available on request.

There are significant positive benefits associated with community learning including:

- It brings people together.
- It builds cohesive and supportive communities.
- It increases confidence and can lead to improvements in physical and mental health.

## How to Enrol

**If you have any health issues, please consult your doctor or health professional prior to enrolling on any of the courses.**

**Classes are filled on a first come first served basis.**

To enrol on a course **online** you will need to login or register at [www.orkney.gov.uk/welearn](http://www.orkney.gov.uk/welearn).

To enrol **by phone** contact Customer Services at Orkney Islands Council, on **01856 873535**.

To enrol **by post** please complete our postal application form.

To enrol in a class being held at **The Learning Link** please call **01856 879200** or email: [thelearninglinkenquiries@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:thelearninglinkenquiries@orkney.gov.uk).

Our aim is to make learning accessible to all. Please advise Customer Services or The Learning Link staff if you have any special requirements to enable you to attend your chosen course.

## Course Fees / Payment / Instalments

Course fees can be paid in full at the time of enrolment, through the online booking system or over the phone. You will be required to give details of your debit or credit card to enrol by phone. If booking by post, cheques should be made payable to Orkney Islands Council.

Fees can be paid in full or by instalments (50% initially and two further 25% payments). If you wish to pay in instalments, please request this option at the time of enrolment. This option also applies to concessionary students.

## Concessions

Concessions are available on all non ActiveLife courses for participants who are eligible. You are entitled to apply for a 50% concessionary rate if you are an Orkney resident and are receiving any of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Job Seeker's Allowance
- Any income related element of Employment and Support Allowance (contributions-based is not accepted)
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Universal Credit and your monthly earned income is under £850
- Attendance Allowance or Pension Age Disability Payment
- Personal Independence Payment or Adult Disability Payment
- Disability Living Allowance or Child Disability Payment
- Aged over 60 and receiving Pension Credit

## ActiveLife

We are working in partnership with ActiveLife which allows anyone with individual or family membership to enrol for our health and wellbeing classes as part of their membership at no extra cost. We operate a **6-hour cancellation policy** in line with membership terms.

If you are a current **ActiveLife budget holder** you are eligible for a concessionary rate of **£1.00 per session**. All ActiveLife courses are clearly marked.

## Refunds

All course fees are **NON-REFUNDABLE** except in the event of a course having to be cancelled due to not reaching the minimum number of students or if cancelled by the tutor. However, if you feel you are on the wrong course, please let us know as soon as possible and we shall try and arrange a transfer to another course.

## Who can apply

The minimum age for enrolment on non-certified courses is 14, unless specified.

## Closing date for enrolments

A closing date of **one week before the start date of the course** is applied to all courses. If your chosen course has been cancelled, we will let you know. Please contact us directly to see what other courses may be available.

# Indoor Courses

## Dounby

### DB001 - Yoga & Relaxation - Milestone Kirk, Dounby



Classes include movement, breathing and relaxation with the emphasis on awareness and moving according to your own limits. Yoga has the benefit of safely stretching and strengthening the body and improving joint mobility, in addition we develop our awareness of moving in a way that releases excess tension so there is an overall experience of softness and relaxation. As this becomes more familiar to us, we can then bring this relaxed way of being into our daily lives thus improving our overall feeling of wellbeing.

Students must provide their own mats.

Optional items you can bring are blocks, blanket, small cushion.

- Tutor: Carolyn Stewart (7 sessions in total)
- Mondays
- 2<sup>nd</sup> 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026
- 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, & 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026
- 10:00 – 11:30
- £76

## Kirkwall



### KW001 - Yoga - Kirkwall Community Centre (Supper Room)

In this class you will be working mainly down on the floor, lying, sitting, kneeling and sometimes standing. You will be exploring ways of arriving at yoga postures more by chance rather than having a fixed goal in mind. Repeating sometimes unusual patterns of movement helps to keep bodies and minds adaptable and open to change.

Students are advised to bring the following: yoga mat, long strap, belt or tie (not stretchy)

Optional items you can bring are blocks, blanket, small cushion.

We would suggest you wear comfortable layers of clothing. Students must be happy to work on the floor, lying, sitting and kneeling and also be able to get back up again.

- Tutor: Mary Scott (8 sessions in total)
- Wednesdays
- 28<sup>th</sup> January 2026
- 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> 18<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> February 2026
- 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> March 2026
- 11:45 – 13:15
- £88

### **KW002 - Meditation Beginners Mind - Kirkwall Community Centre (Supper Room)**



An opportunity for students to revisit their meditation practice with Beginners Mind. Looking with fresh eyes at what we have learnt. There will be bodywork, moving and seated meditations. A zen practice.

To attend this class previous experience of attending meditation classes/courses is required.

- Tutor: Meg Webster-Gaertner (6 sessions in total)
- Thursdays
- 29<sup>th</sup> January 2026
- 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> February 2026
- 5<sup>th</sup> March 2026
- 11:00 - 13:00
- £88

### **KW003 - Mindfulness for Stress - St Magnus Centre (The Friends Room)**



Breathworks: Mindfulness for Stress is an 8-week course in which participants will learn life-long skills to reduce stress and anxiety. During the course the foundation skills of mindfulness, compassion and meditation are explored, along with ways of applying these to everyday life. These skills can enhance well-being, enabling participants to find new sources of resilience, joy and calm in life and to develop resources to help cope with stress, fear and anxiety.

The sessions will include various meditation practices incorporating mindful body awareness and mindful movement, an inquiry process into personal experiences of the practices, and teaching and discussion around some of the key ideas. The sessions will be around 2 hours long.

Participants will learn:

- The skill of meditation
- Living in the present moment
- Greater concentration and focus
- Breath and body awareness to transform stress
- Supportive mindful movement
- Finding joy in simple pleasures
- Understanding and reducing the impact of the negativity bias
- Health benefits of mindfulness for body and mind

Home practice is very much encouraged, and participants will be given links to audio guidance to support them in this. Participants will also have access to the Breathworks online Community of Practice.

- Tutor: Barbara Reynolds (8 sessions in total)
- Wednesdays
- 28<sup>th</sup> January 2026
- 4<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> February 2026
- 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026
- 18:00 - 20:00
- £116

# Stromness

## ST001 - Yoga with a Chair - Warehouse Buildings, Stromness (John Rae Room)



This class will suit people who would like to use a chair as their starting point for a yoga practice rather than lying or sitting on the floor.

Through repetitive and perhaps unusual patterns of movement your body can learn to adapt, which can help you to move around and through the various physical and mental restrictions that we all have.

You should be able to walk, stand, sit in a chair and be able to get out of it.

Students might want to bring along a blanket and small cushion for comfort.

- Tutor: Mary Scott (8 sessions in total)
- Tuesdays
- 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026
- 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026
- 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> March 2026
- 15:00 - 16:15
- £74

## ST002 - Yoga - Warehouse Buildings, Stromness (John Rae Room)



In this class you will be working mainly down on the floor, lying, sitting, kneeling and sometimes standing. You will be exploring ways of arriving at yoga postures more by chance rather than having a fixed goal in mind. Repeating sometimes unusual patterns of movement helps to keep bodies and minds adaptable and open to change.

Students are advised to bring the following: yoga mat, long strap, belt or tie (not stretchy)

Optional items you can bring are blocks, blanket, small cushion.

We would suggest you wear comfortable layers of clothing. Students must be happy to work on the floor, lying, sitting and kneeling and also be able to get back up again.

- Tutor: Mary Scott (8 sessions in total)
- Wednesdays
- 28<sup>th</sup> January 2026
- 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> February 2026
- 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> March 2026
- 18:30 - 20:00
- £88

### **ST003 - Slow Flow Hatha Yoga - Warehouse Buildings, Stromness (John Rae Room)**

This yoga class will have elements of both Hatha and Flow yoga, exploring traditional postures (asanas), working with alignment, building strength and flexibility, and also combining poses in simple fluid movement sequences. There will be a focus on present-moment awareness and moving with the breath.

A typical session will include Breath Work (Pranayama), Postures (Asana), Meditation and a period of Relaxation.

This term we will be embracing the Winter season, with class themes including 'Cultivating Inner Warmth', 'Building Resilience and Strength', 'Releasing and Letting Go'. As Spring approaches, we will explore topics including 'Awakening Energy' and 'Growth and Expansion'.

Props including bricks, blocks and straps will be incorporated into the sessions, and these will be available in class. Yoga mats are also available, but students may prefer to bring their own. Additional items that may be helpful to bring include: a blanket, a small cushion and knee pads.

This course is suitable for participants with some previous experience of yoga and an ability to explore seated, kneeling, lying and standing poses.

- Tutor: Barbara Reynolds (8 sessions in total)
- Tuesdays
- 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026
- 3<sup>rd</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026
- 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026
- 19:00 - 20:15
- £74

### **ST004 - Yoga & Relaxation - Warehouse Buildings, Stromness (John Rae Room)**

Classes include movement, breathing and relaxation with the emphasis on awareness and moving according to your own limits. Yoga has the benefit of safely stretching and strengthening the body and improving joint mobility, in addition we develop our awareness of moving in a way that releases excess tension so there is an overall experience of softness and relaxation. As this becomes more familiar to us, we can then bring this relaxed way of being into our daily lives thus improving our overall feeling of wellbeing.

Students must provide their own mats.

Optional items you can bring are blocks, blanket, small cushion.

- Tutor: Carolyn Stewart (7 sessions in total)
- Thursdays
- 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> February 2026
- 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> March 2026
- 10:00 - 11:30
- £76



## **ST005 - Furniture Restoration & Upholstery, Stromness Academy (Technical Room)**

This course concentrates on the re-upholstery of furniture although some restoration work may be undertaken. Work on bulky items should be avoided as we have no space to store items.

Upholstery repair materials and fabrics are available to purchase from the tutor under a separate arrangement. Projects and tools that may be required should be discussed ahead of the class by contacting the tutor prior to the class commencing. For tutor contact details please email: [cld@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:cld@orkney.gov.uk)

- Tutor: Paul Steadman (10 sessions in total)
- Tuesdays
- 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026
- 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026
- 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> 17<sup>th</sup> 24<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026
- 19:00 - 21:00
- £146

# Outdoor Courses

**The following information applies to all our Bird Watching & Wildflower classes.**

**All walks will be undertaken on the Mainland of Orkney, Burray and South Ronaldsay.**

**Venues:** The tutor shall inform you of the venue in the days leading up to each class – usually the evening before.

**Postponements:** Should any class be postponed (usually weather related), we shall endeavour to meet on the same day either the following week or the next. Postponements are quite rare.

**Walks:** Walks of up to 3 miles will be involved, mostly on good surfaces but perhaps in poor weather.

**Equipment:** Binoculars are essential. Appropriate optical equipment can be supplied.

**Footwear:** Strong footwear (walking boots or wellingtons) is essential.

**Clothing:** Waterproofs and clothing that can withstand Orkney weather is essential. Please wear subdued colours.

**Refreshments:** A picnic break will be included – please bring a packed lunch & flask.

**Safety:** First aider, first aid kit and mobile phone will be carried.

Please leave dogs at home in front of the fire.

## OD001 - Finding & Identifying Plants in the Spring



Following on from the autumn (2025) Finding and Identifying Plants class, these three weekly forays will be looking at plant characteristics and various habitats around Orkney Mainland and the connected South Isles in the spring.

- Tutor: Tim Dean (3 sessions in total)
- Thursdays
- 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2026
- 10:00 - 14:00
- £88



## Free Courses

The Learning Link is a **free** service which is dedicated to helping adults gain new skills and increase their self-confidence. The benefits of developing your skills and having the confidence to use them can be far reaching and life changing. It can also improve your health and well-being. If you want to just brush up on your reading or writing, improve your numeracy skills, increase your digital skills, learn how to sew, or how to use the internet safely, improve your speaking and understanding of the English language, then get in touch.

### We have the following courses available:-

Microsoft Word

Microsoft Excel

Numeracy - National 3 & 4

ESOL - National 2, 3 & 4

Communication – National 3 & 4

Expressive Writing

Internet & Email

Absolute Beginners Course (ABC) - Introducing a Digital World

### Drop in Sessions

Digital Support Hub - Kirkwall Library Every Friday 2.00pm – 3.30pm in the MacGillivray Room – ( last session will be 27<sup>th</sup> March 2026)

For further information on what we offer or to register your interest in any of our classes

Call: 01856 879200

email: [thelearninglinkenquiries@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:thelearninglinkenquiries@orkney.gov.uk)

or Scan the QR code to register with us online



All classes will be held at The Learning Link, 1 St Rognvald Street, Kirkwall, KW15 1PR unless stated otherwise.

Courses can only run if we have sufficient numbers. We will contact participants that have registered an interest with us and confirm dates, times and venue prior to the course commencing.

## Orkney Islands Council

### Postal Application Form

Name:	
Address and Postcode:	
Telephone:	
Mobile:	
Email Address:	

Do you have any special needs related to your chosen course(s)?

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#### Course Details

Ref. No:	Course Details:	Course Fee:	Amount Due:
		Total Due:	£

#### Charges

Tick the box(es) that apply and give details below:

<input type="checkbox"/> Full fee.	<input type="checkbox"/> Activelife/Budget Holder.	<input type="checkbox"/> Instalments.	<input type="checkbox"/> 50% Concession
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If you have ActiveLife membership, please provide your card number (this can be found on the back of your card) .....

If paying by cheque, please make it payable to Orkney Islands Council.

You may be asked to provide proof of being eligible to claim concessions.

**Additional costs:** Participants may be required to pay for additional materials at the start of the course as detailed in the programme. Concessions do not apply to additional costs.

#### Office Use Only

Reason for concession claim:	
Signature:	Date:

#### Privacy Statement

We need the information on this form to process your enrolment. Providing this public service is the legal basis for the Council's lawful processing of this form. Only members of staff with a need to know will access this information. More information about how the council will process your personal data and about your rights is available here: [www.orkney.gov.uk/privacy](http://www.orkney.gov.uk/privacy).

### **Community Learning, Development & Employability Service**

This programme of courses was drawn together by the Council's Community Learning, Development and Employability Service.

If you have ideas for courses you would like to see available or if you have a skill or interest, you would be willing to share, please get in touch with the Community Learning, Development & Employability Team (CLDE) on 01856 873535 ext. 2408 or email: [cld@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:cld@orkney.gov.uk).

### **Privacy Statement**

We require the information obtained at the time of booking in order to process your booking request. Providing this public service is the legal basis for the Council's lawful processing of these details. Only members of staff with a need to know will access this information. More information about how the Council will process personal data and about your rights is available online [www.orkney.gov.uk/privacy](http://www.orkney.gov.uk/privacy).

Community Learning, Development & Employment Service  
Education, Communities and Housing  
Council Offices  
Kirkwall, KW15 1NY  
Telephone 01856 873535  
or email [cld@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:cld@orkney.gov.uk)