



Guide To Courses Spring 2026



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Sign Up Now!

Enrolment opens Thursday 23rd April 2026

Welcome to the Community Learning Guide for Spring 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. Please complete/update the Medical Questions section when signing up online.

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**.

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 any of the **FREE** courses held at **The Learning Link** call: **01856 879200**.

Our aim is to make learning accessible to all. Please advise Customer Services or The Learning Link staff if you have any specific 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

KIRKWALL

KW001 - Meditation for Compassion - Kirkwall Community Centre (Supper Room)

This course is aimed at people who have some experience of meditation practice either with myself or another teacher. We will be using moving meditation, seated meditations and contemplations.

- *Tutor: Meg Webster-Gaertner (6 sessions in total)*
- *Thursdays*
- *18th & 25th June 2026*
- *2nd, 9th, 16th & 23rd July 2026*
- *11:00 - 13:00*
- *£90*

KW002 – How to read a Sewing Pattern – The Learning Link

You will learn how to understand the back of the pattern and use all the information it gives you. You will be able to read and understand the instructions and follow the different steps. We will go over how to lay out the pattern pieces on the material and look at different materials for different garments. We will look at what all the symbols on the pattern pieces mean, and more.

Sewing machines, patterns, thread and materials will be provided by the tutor.

- *Tutor: Briony Avery (4 sessions in total)*
- *Wednesdays*
- *6th, 13th 20th & 27th May 2026*
- *18:00 - 20:00*
- *£60*

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 (6 sessions in total)*
- *Tuesdays*
- *5th, 12th, 19th & 26th May 2026*
- *2nd & 9th June 2026*
- *15:00 - 16:15*
- *£56*

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 be able to get back up again.

- *Tutor: Mary Scott (6 sessions in total)*
- *Wednesdays*
- *6th, 13th, 20th & 27th May 2026 (6th & 27th May – sessions will be in the Corrigall Room)*
- *3rd & 10th June 2026*
- *18:30 - 20:00*
- *£68*

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: Venues will be decided closer to the scheduled dates and will take into account weather, tides and whether certain plants are flowering or birds have arrived. The tutor will contact you either by phone, email or text the evening before the scheduled meeting. Venues may be changed at short notice due to very inclement weather or the appearance of strange and interesting plants! Your tutor will inform you promptly.

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 two - three miles will be involved possibly over rough ground. Orkney's weather adds to the experience, but occasionally it can be testing.

Equipment: Binoculars are essential for birdwatching; and very useful for plants. 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 – Appreciating Orkney's Plants and Habitats – Various Locations



This series of plant forays includes visits to some of Orkney's best botanical locations and will focus on a variety of habitats and the plants that are likely to be found there. We shall look specifically at the shore, saltmarsh, links, grasslands, wetlands, sea cliffs, and the hill. The forays will be undertaken on the Mainland of Orkney, Burray and South Ronaldsay.

- *Tutor: Tim Dean (7 sessions in total)*
- *Thursday*
- *4th, 11th, 18th & 25th June 2026*
- *16th, 23rd & 30th July 2026*
- *10:00 - 14:00*
- *£212*

OD002 – Appreciating Orkney’s Birds – Various Locations

This series of walks includes visits to some of Orkney’s best bird watching locations and will focus on a variety of habitats and the birds that are likely to be found there. We shall look specifically at the shore, cliffs, wetlands, grasslands and the hill - our aim is to see or hear at least 100 species.

- *Tutor: Tim Dean (7 sessions in total)*
- *Tuesdays*
- *28th April 2026*
- *5th, 12th & 19th May*
- *2nd, 9th & 16th June*
- *10:00 - 14:00*
- *£212*



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:-

Numeracy - National 3 & 4

ESOL – National 3 & 4

Communication – National 3 & 4

Internet & Email

Absolute Beginners Course (ABC)

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

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)?

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Course Details

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

Charges

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

Full fee. Activelife/Budget Holder. Instalments. 50% Concession

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.

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.

Privacy Statement

We require the information obtained at the time of booking 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.

Community Learning, Development & Employment Service

Education, Communities and Housing

Council Offices

Kirkwall, KW15 1NY

Telephone 01856 873535

or email cld@orkney.gov.uk