

FREE!

# Rousay, Egilsay & Wyre Community Newsletter

The Review

December 2016

Produced by: Rousay Community Association

Subscriber: Electronic



## Local Christmas Card Delivery Service

We will be delivering Christmas cards again on Rousay from the 1st of December with the last collection on the 18th.

Collection boxes will be at: Marion's Shop, The Pier Restaurant, and The Taversoe.

Any donations to support this service would be appreciated by the Triangle Club Committee.

The next meeting of the SWI will be at 8pm on Tuesday 13th December at the School, when we will be having a Christmas Party.

The competitions will be The Best Wrapped Present (value £5 - to be included as a Secret Santa present) and A Christmas Table Decoration.

We look forward to seeing you there!



## CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Tuesday 20th December,  
2.15pm

At the Rousay School

ALL WELCOME



## Christmas Eve Service 7.30pm

Church Centre  
Everyone welcome



## CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Roald Dahl's

The Three Little Pigs

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December

2.15pm

ALL WELCOME

## Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup>

→ Peedies Club, The Crafhub, 2pm - 3.15pm

## Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup>

→ Mince Pies & Mulled Wine, The Crafhub, 2pm - 4pm

## Monday 5<sup>th</sup>

→ Coffee Morning, The Crafhub, 11am - 1pm

## Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup>

→ Tai Chi, Rousay School, 3.15pm - 5.15pm

→ Taversoe InnQUIZition, 8pm

## Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup>

→ Spinning Circle, The Crafhub, 11am - 1pm

→ Art Club, The Crafhub, 3.15pm - 4.30pm

## Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup>

→ Peedies Club, The Crafhub, 2pm - 3.15pm

## Friday, 9<sup>th</sup>

→ VAO, Rousay School, 2pm-4pm & 5pm-7.15pm

## Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup>

→ Service, Church Centre, 11.30am

## Monday 12<sup>th</sup>

→ Coffee Morning, The Crafhub, 11am - 1pm

## Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup>

→ Secret Santa, The Taversoe, 8pm

→ SWI Christmas Party, Rousay School, 8pm

## Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup>

→ Spinning Circle, The Crafhub, 11am - 1pm

→ Christmas Concert, Rousay School, 2.15pm

→ Rousay Heritage Trust ATM, Church Centre, 7.30pm

## Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup>

→ Peedies Club, The Crafhub, 2pm - 3.15pm

## Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup>

→ Christmas Service, Rousay School, 2.15pm

## Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup>

→ Christmas Eve Service, Church Centre, 7.30pm

## Every Wednesday

→ Triangle Club, Church Centre, 10am - 2pm

## What's On

To subscribe, or to send in articles for the next edition of the newsletter, please use the following contact details:

**Editor:** Kayleigh Tipper

**E-mail:** kayleigh@aroundrousay.co.uk

**Telephone:** 01856 821360

**Write:** Howdis Meadow, Rousay, KW17 2PR

**Deadline:** 27 December 2016 (5pm) - late articles are not guaranteed to be included

Funder logo



From the community  
For the community



## Rousay Tai Chi Chuan

Last Class will be Tuesday  
06 December at the School.

Classes re-start on 10 January 2017

1<sup>st</sup> hour Energy Exercises at 3:15  
2<sup>nd</sup> hour Tai Chi Form at 4:15

£2.50 per hour,  
come for one or both sessions.

All ages and abilities welcome.



Thanks to REWDT for part funding this.



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

## Rousay Heritage Trust Annual Trustee's Meeting 2016

### NOTE CHANGE OF DATE

Our ATM will be held on 14 December 2016 at 19:30 at the Church Centre. All trustees are welcome and we look forward to seeing as many of you as can make it.

The Heritage Trust is keen to hear from residents who would like to become trustees and if you are interested in becoming involved with the Heritage Trust, please come along to the meeting or contact Helen at the Development Trust offices (821229 or email [helen@rewdt.org](mailto:helen@rewdt.org)) for more information.

We look forward to seeing you.

## Service

Saturday 10th December  
11.30am, Church Centre  
Roy Cordukes

Everyone welcome



## Wanted: Exercise Bike

Does anyone have a reasonably robust example that they are willing to part with? Please ring with details of price/condition/etc. 07729 616 530 Mike Topham, Ivy Cottage



## Taversoe InnQUIZition

Tuesday December 6th @ 8pm

Free Entry

Snowball Jackpot

Light Snack Supper



## Remembrance Sunday



A huge thank you to everyone that came to The Taversoe following the memorial service on Remembrance Sunday. We raised £85 for the Poppy Appeal.

## Friday December 2nd

The Taversoe will be closed for a Private Function on the evening of Friday December 2nd.

## Secret Santa

Tuesday December 13th

Present Swop by the Tree at 8pm

Eggnog, Mulled Wine, & Nibbles



## Advance Notices for January:

## Taversoe InnQUIZition

Tuesday January 10th 2017 @ 8pm

(Second Tuesday in January)

Free Entry

Snowball Jackpot

Light Snack Supper



**BIG LOVE** to you all this festive season and into 2017  
from James and Natasha Roebuck..., Peter and Frances too!

Max o' Deithe will not be sending Christmas cards this year. Instead he'll be making a suitable donation to the RNLI - and would like to take this opportunity to wish all Rousay friends and fellow residents compliments of the season.



John, Kirsty, Andrew and Isla Garson are not sending Christmas cards this year and we would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. All the best for 2017.

Dear friends,

I do wish you all a very happy Christmas and a good 2017. I have decided not to send Christmas cards this year, preferring instead to send a donation to JDRC, as my two young grandsons have Type 1 Diabetes.

Love to you all, Janet X  
From Daisy Cottage

**ROUSAY  
FATBURN  
EXTREME**

Keep an eye on the Facebook  
"Rousay Fatburn Extreme"  
group for our schedule over  
Christmas & the New Year

### REW Development Trust

Closed from Wednesday  
21 December, re-opening  
on Thursday 5 January.



### Islands View Surgery

Closed on 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> December,  
and 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> January.



### The Craithub C.I.C.

The Craithub closes for Christmas on Friday 16th December, but if anyone needs anything the following week please contact Wendy on 821 489 and she will let you in.



The Taversoe

#### Christmas Opening Times

- Sat 24th - Christmas Eve - Open till 5pm
- Sun 25th - Christmas Day - CLOSED
- Mon 26th - Boxing Day - CLOSED
- Tues 27th - CLOSED
- Wed 28th - Open as Usual
- Thu 29th - Open as Usual
- Fri 30th - Open as Usual
- Sat 31st - New Year's Eve - Open till 5pm
- Sun 1st - New Year's Day - CLOSED
- Mon 2nd - CLOSED

### Tingwall Office

- Fri 23 Dec: 0830-1300; 1400-1730
- Sat 24 Dec: Closed
- Sun 25 Dec: Closed
- Mon 26 Dec: Closed
- Tues 27 Dec: 0900-1300; 1400-1700
- Wed 28 Dec: 0900-1300; 1400-1700
- Thurs 29 Dec: 0900-1300; 1400-1700
- Fri 30 Dec: 0900-1300; 1400-1700
- Sat 31 Dec: Closed
- Sun 1 Jan: Closed
- Mon 2 Jan: Closed
- Tues 3 Jan: 0900-1300; 1400-1700
- Wed 4 Jan: 0830-1300; 1400-1730

### M.V.

#### Eynhallow

There will be  
**no sailings** on  
the following  
dates:  
Monday 26  
December  
&  
Monday 2  
January  
All other  
sailings as  
normal.



## Poppy Appeal



A total of **£259.30** has been sent from the school to the Poppy Appeal this year.

The money raised was from:

- \* Collection tins at various outlets on Rousay, Egilsay & Wyre. **£174.30**
- \* Taversoe Curry Buffet **£85.00**

*Thanks to all who contributed*



## Fundraising Report

Rousay Primary School pupils raised

**£70** on Bonfire Night and **£134.83** for Children in Need - thanks to everyone who donated raffle prizes and contributed!



## Winter Opening Hours

Monday & Tuesday - CLOSED\*  
 Wednesday to Friday - 12pm to 2pm & 5pm to 11pm\*\*  
 Saturday - 12pm to 11pm\*\*  
 Sunday - 12pm to 10.30pm\*\*

Food served Daily from 12pm to 2pm & 5pm till 9pm (Wed-Sat), and 7.30pm (Sun)

\* The bar will be open on the first Tuesday of the month for the Taversoe InnQUIZition.

\*\* If the bar is empty at 9pm we reserve the right to close early.



Rousay Primary School is looking for people to help with crafting on Friday afternoons 1.30-2.30pm



Please come past if you are able to help!

## Rousay Community Association

Community Rooms must be booked, in advance, for use through the booking clerk on 821 383 / 07522647794.

Failure to book may lead to the room you wish to book being unavailable.

## Merry Christmas to everyone

Please note that the office will be closed from Wednesday 21 December and re-open on Thursday 05 January 2017.

## REWDT Year of Learning

Safe use of pesticides (PA1) - please see overleaf. There are still places available; if anyone is interested, please let Helen know.

## Annual General Meeting

Thank you to all who came to our AGM. It was lovely to see so many faces and to hear the comments and questions that people raised. If you have any further questions regarding the work of the Development Trust, REWIRED Ltd or HSO Ltd, please let us know.

We welcome a new member to our board, Eric Shortland. The remaining board directors are: Danny Daintith (Vice-Chair); Bryan Milner; Clare Daintith; Hilary Byland; John Garson; Kayleigh Tipper; Carole Maguire; Diana Compton & Mark Hull.

We extend our warmest thanks to Richard Tipper and Alison Mainland, who stepped down at this AGM, for their dedication and hard work over recent years.



## Rousay, Egilsay & Wyre Development Trust & Heat Smart Orkney Ltd. (HSO Ltd.) Have Vacancies on their Board of Directors.

Do you want to make a difference to your community?

REW DT, following our AGM last month, has three vacancies on our Board. If you would like to be involved and join our board of directors to help us decide which projects and ideas we should be working on to improve life on our islands for our residents, please let us know.

HSO Ltd currently has one director vacancy on our new Board. If you would like to be involved in this new, exciting and high profile project to use the curtailed power from the Community 900kW turbine to reduce fuel poverty on our isles, we would be happy to hear from you.

If you want more information, please feel free to contact the staff by either coming into the office, phoning or emailing and we will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

We look forward to hearing from you soon. **Closing date is 5 p.m. 06 December 2016.**

Registered Office: The Manse, Rousay, Orkney, KW17 2PR.  
Telephone: 01856 821229.  
E-mail: [info@rewdt.org](mailto:info@rewdt.org)

## FREE Safe Use of Pesticides (PA1)

Date : 08 December 2016

Time : 09:30 to 17:00

Venue: Church Centre

### Aims:

This one day course is a must for anyone involved in the storage, handling and application of pesticides.

### Qualification:

Level 2 Award in Safe use of Pesticides

Lunch (soup and a sandwich)  
can be provided for £5.00  
(payable on the day).

### Course content:

- Current legislation
- Interpreting labels and literature
- Preparing pesticides for use
- Selecting and using protective clothing
- Transport and temporary storage of pesticides
- Dealing with accidental contamination of people
- Disposing of empty containers, surplus unused pesticides and washings
- Personal hygiene
- Storing pesticides
- Keeping records
- Environmental factors

For further information and to book a place, please contact the REW DT Office on 821 229 or e-mail [info@rewdt.org](mailto:info@rewdt.org)



In partnership with  
University of the  
Highlands and Islands  
Orkney College

Ask us for more information on the following things the Trust offers:

#### Free swim sessions



#### Free lanterns



#### Subsidised rate

AGE Orkney  
Concern  
Here2Help

#### Grant Schemes

General Grants, Driving Lessons,  
Educational Bursaries, and Wellbeing  
(including 80% grant support towards  
10-session Gym & Fat Burn tickets).

#### Car Club

Contact  
us to  
join!



### Grant Applications and Education Bursaries

For a grant application form, please go to our website or contact the Office.

All applications must be received a minimum of **two weeks** before the planned Board meeting date or training event. This is to allow sufficient time for applications to be processed.

The last meeting of 2016 will be on Wednesday 7 December. At the December meeting the board will agree in principle the meeting dates for 2017 and these will be published on our website in December.

### Contact Us

Telephone: 01856 821 229

E-mail: [info@rewdt.org](mailto:info@rewdt.org)

Website: [www.rewdt.org](http://www.rewdt.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/rewdt](http://www.facebook.com/rewdt)



Office Drop-In Times: 10am to 12 noon (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday) - contact to arrange an appointment outwith these times



Free Wi-Fi access is available to use at the Trust Office

**Directors:** Hilary Byland; Diana Compton; Clare Daintith; Danny Daintith; John Garson; Mark Hull; Carole Maguire; Bryan Milner; Eric Shortland; Kayleigh Tipper

Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre Development Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee.

Co. Reg. No: SC318527 Charity Reg. No: SC040407

Registered Office: The Manse, Rousay, Orkney, KW17 2PR



Heat Smart Orkney Ltd

## **DIVERTING UNUSED RENEWABLE ENERGY INTO AFFORDABLE HEATING**

*Heat Smart Orkney Ltd is a new organisation created specifically to administer and manage the Heat Smart Orkney project.*

The Heat Smart Orkney project creatively addresses the issue of fuel poverty - an issue which affects 63% of the population in Orkney - and plans to launch the project with our own community on Rousay, Egilsay & Wyre.

The aim of this exciting new venture is to show that, instead of curtailing community wind turbines when the grid reaches capacity, turbines can continue working, and the electrical energy generated can be diverted to secondary heating systems in our homes, causing our primary heating systems to work and cost less!

## **PROJECT SIGN UP AND COMPLETION INCENTIVE ANNOUNCED!**

Heat Smart Orkney is now offering a **Sign Up and Completion of Project Incentive for the first 100 households to join the project** - in addition to receiving your rebate on electricity used during your participation in the project, upon signing our agreement you will receive £50, and if you remain until the end of the project, we will issue you another payment of £100 as a loyalty bonus, **saving you even more money on your heating bills!**

We will begin recruiting households outside of Rousay, Egilsay & Wyre at the end of January 2017, so please get in touch with us to take advantage of this incentive.

**Thanks to everyone who came to our presentation at the REWDT AGM and received our information packs - if you were unable to attend, please contact us for a pack:**

- Phone us on: **01856 821 277**
- You can contact us via email at: **info@heatsmartorkney.co.uk**
- Feel free to drop by the Manse during our **drop-in times of 10am-12pm Monday-Friday**
- Our website is: **www.rewdt.org/HSO**
- Find us on Facebook: search **Heat Smart Orkney**

We have officially started contacting households who have expressed an interest in participating in the **Heat Smart Orkney** project, so if you are interested in learning more about the project, please feel free to contact us by **phone, email, Facebook, or in person** and we will post you out our information pack.

**We look forward to speaking to you about this exciting new project!**

The **Heat Smart Orkney** Team: Kira Hoffmann and Julie Morgan, Project Assistants, and Diana Compton, Project Officer

*Heat Smart Orkney is a subsidiary of the REW Development Trust and is partnered with*



*and funded by the Scottish Government through Local Energy Scotland and its Local Energy Challenge Fund*





## The Crafthub C.I.C. DECEMBER 2016 - CRAFTHUB NEWS

The Directors of The Crafthub would like to wish all our crafters and customers a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

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### MINCE PIES AND MULLED WINE

Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2pm – 4pm

Pop along for a glass of Christmas Cheer

A great opportunity to browse for Christmas presents, in a relaxed atmosphere, supporting local crafters. A wide selection of local gifts for family and friends, tea-towels, calendars, Crafthub Christmas Hampers and meats from the Orkney Fine Meat Company.

**RAFFLE** (lots of prizes donated by crafters and a Crafthub Hamper).

Festive drinks and nibbles – **don't forget to bring your 10% discount voucher**

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### GREAT IDEAS FOR LOCAL CHRISTMAS GIFTS

**CALENDARS** – Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre 2017 Calendar, featuring sketches, paintings and photographs from The Rousay Drawing Group and some of our photographers. The calendar comes with an envelope, ideal for posting to friends and family – **ONLY £7.50 each or 3 calendars for £20**

**TEATOWELS** – Rousay Egilsay and Wyre teatowel – another ideal gift for posting – **ONLY £5.50 each or 3 for £15**

**CANDLES** – New range of candles from Orkney Candles, 5 different varieties, Earth, Air, Fire, Sea and Home. These come in two formats, in a tin with a lid – 25 hours burning – **only £7.00 each**, or Whiskey glass tumbler in a gift bag – 50 hours burning – **only £14.00 each**.

**CRAFTHUB CHRISTMAS HAMPERS** - Packed in boxes ready for posting south the Crafthub Christmas Hampers are in stock, with lots of Orkney goodies, including a selection of meats from the Orkney Fine Meat Company, Christmas preserves and chutneys, oakcakes and fudge. A perfect gift for family and friends. **Please note - LAST ORDERING DATE – MONDAY 12<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER**

There are also a wide variety of hand made local crafts at **The Crafthub**, for all ages ideal for Christmas gifts and stocking fillers.

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### WORKSHOPS IN DECEMBER

**Monday Coffee Morning** – Monday 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> from 11am – 1pm. £2 a session – All welcome, informal chat or bring along a craft.

**SPINNING CIRCLE** – Drop in Spinning Workshops on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> from 11am – 1pm - £3 a session. Visitors welcome.

**Art Club** – Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> 3.15pm – 4.30pm - All welcome age 5 – 11yrs £3.00 a session including materials and refreshments.

**PEEDIES CLUB** - Thursday 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> from 2pm – 3.15pm – Parents, Carers and Under 5's - £2 a session. Visiting families welcome. Please phone in advance if possible.

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### DECEMBER OPENING TIMES

During December **The Crafthub** will be open Monday – Friday - 11am – 3.30pm

We will close for Christmas on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December but if anyone needs anything the following week please contact Wendy on 821 489 and she will let you in.

PLEASE NOTE : We are now able to take most debit and credit card payments for over £15 at The Crafthub  
email : [crafthub@btconnect.com](mailto:crafthub@btconnect.com) website : [www.crafthuborkney.co.uk](http://www.crafthuborkney.co.uk)

Go on facebook today to keep in touch with Crafthub news and updates



# Your Island Your Choice

Community issues, community projects,  
community decisions



Come up with ideas

Have the conversation

**APPLY NOW**

Submit an application



Vote to decide who gets the funding

## Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre Rousay School

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2016, 2.00-4.00 and 5.00-7.15

*Survey responses, community discussions and information about the  
application process*

*Discuss project ideas, seek support for your application  
and find out more about OHAC locality planning*

**Funding of £2,300 available from Community Choices and The Orkney Partnership  
to offer small grants to your islands – YOU DECIDE**





**Thank you to everyone who applied for the advertised positions of part-time Husbandry Staff at the Wyre site; the application period is now closed and we will be scheduling interviews soon.**

**Please direct any further questions or updates to Angela Hand of the Scottish Sea Farms Human Resources Department at [Angela.Hand@scottishseafarms.com](mailto:Angela.Hand@scottishseafarms.com)**

### **Islands View Surgery**

Following discussions with the Community Council and to provide more even GP coverage throughout the week, we have made some changes to the days and times that GPs are available. WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT, a GP will now be on Rousay on **Monday mornings**, all day **Wednesdays** and on **Friday mornings**.

Dr Mimi Thomas, our female GP, will be here every Friday morning, once she is back from leave in early December. Dr Jonathan Kirk will be covering Mondays and Wednesdays for the next few months, after which time, Dr Huw Thomas will start coming again.

Please note that although Dr Kirk will be here all day on Wednesdays, much of that time is set aside for administrative duties, staff development, training, etc. It will still be necessary to book appointments as usual. The office opening hours will remain the same, with the exception of Friday morning, which will go back to 09:00-11:00.

	Opening Hours:	
<b>Monday</b>	<b>09:00-13:00</b>	
<b>Tuesday</b>		<b>14:00-18:00</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>09:00-11:00</b>	<b>16:00-18:00</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>11:00-15:00</b>	
<b>Friday</b>	<b>09:00-11:00</b>	<b>16:00-18:00</b>

The above hours are the times when Administrative staff are available to make appointments, take prescription requests, dispense previously requested prescriptions, and so on. The Nurse Practitioners are able to see people outside these hours, by appointment. If you need to make an appointment with the NP, but the main office is closed, please phone the Nurses' direct line on 01856 821406.

**THE SURGERY WILL BE CLOSED ON  
26<sup>th</sup> AND 27<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER AND 2<sup>nd</sup> AND 3<sup>rd</sup> JANUARY.**

#### **A few reminders:**

To prevent delays in getting any medication, please order AT LEAST five days before you will run out. Over the festive period, deliveries can take considerably longer, so please allow extra time for your medication to arrive.

If you think your appointment is likely to take longer than the standard 15 minutes, please let us know when you book it. We can book longer appointments and are happy to do so.

Please arrive on time for your appointment. All our GPs have boats to catch, and one person arriving late can have a knock-on effect for the rest of the clinic.

Whenever possible, please request repeat medication using your re-order form, ticking the items you need.



## From the Manse: an alternative Christmas story



I'm thinking about a story, set in the violent world of a brutal empire that had extended its borders beyond Europe into the Middle East and North Africa. It involves a religious people, nicknamed atheists because they believed in only one God. They were conquered, and now find themselves under martial law. Attempts at uprisings are quashed with great loss of life. Now the local ruler is threatened by the possibility of a rival even though that rival is just an infant. So all the male infants of the small town where that child was born are to be killed. A family are forced to flee for their lives and become refugees in another country. The boy grows up to become a carpenter, not a King. He associates with all the wrong kinds of people, the fraudsters, the prostitutes, those with incurable diseases as well as those plotting revolution. Then the authorities kill him like so many others that threatened to de-stabilise the regime.

This is a part of the Christmas Story that's rarely spoken about.

By turning it into a children's story, we've edited out all the adult bits and turned it into something that sounds more like a fairy tale. The real Christmas story is about God entering human history as one of us. Of God who chooses to be powerless, poor, and as vulnerable as a new born baby. So who is this Jesus? What did he have to say? Why should we care?

Some people reject Jesus as make believe, and yet there is plenty of evidence for his existence in the historical record. Some people reject Jesus because they reject religion, and yet the religious leaders of his time were upset by his teaching and thought that by getting rid of him on a cross, that would be the end of his radical ideas.

Unlike any other historical character, 2,000 years later people all over the world are still discovering that Jesus is alive and is a life changing gift, worth receiving and investigating for themselves. Are all these people deluded, people from all walks of life, all professions, including scientists?

This year why not begin your own quest to discover the true Christmas story and join in the birthday celebrations at your local church, or a church near wherever you are spending this Christmas. A birthday party that once had angels, shepherds, wise men and of course a star!

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ child.

May God bless you, your families and friends this Christmas.

*Roy*

Rev. Roy Cordukes, Church of Scotland minister for Evie, Firth, Rendall and Rousay  
Telephone 01856 761328. Email: [RCordukes@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:RCordukes@churchofscotland.org.uk)



## Stephen Clackson's Letter from School Place

Congratulations to Billy Muir on winning the "Hardest working man in the UK" award. It even seems to have started a new saying: "As busy as Billy". Of course, Billy is not the only Orcadian with lots of jobs. Take, for example, Mike Twankers of Mama Westray—fisherman, janitor and lingerie model (something I believe Billy has never turned his hand to). (Incidentally, I have yet to be invited to a meeting of the Mama Westray Community Council.) Joking aside, Billy's award has once again put the plight of North Ronaldsay in the national public eye, and as he rightly said: "the important thing in all this is that the community survives and is an enjoyable place to live in the future." I hope the publicity will provide a boost for the island and encourage some new young families to move there before the last pupil leaves the island school this coming summer.

Nearly all the North Isles sent representatives to the Community Council Conference. Petra Biberbach of Planning Aid for Scotland gave a presentation on the Community Empowerment Act, with examples of community empowerment in other areas. With the term "community" being liberally sprinkled throughout her presentation, I asked for a definition. I also asked what protection there is against a "community" riding roughshod over the interests of individuals and local businesses. I did not receive to my mind a satisfactory answer to either question. We need to be very careful to define exactly what and who we mean by the "community", and extremely cautious about whom we entrust to represent the members of that community and make decisions on their behalf. If it is to be our community councils that are given this role, then a good representative diversity of candidates needs to stand for election to them, and as many electors as possible need to take an interest and vote. Next on the agenda were case studies of our own *empowering communities* pilot areas, Papay and Stronsay, presented by their respective community councils and link officers. I am keen that this project, which brings OIC service provision closer to the people, be extended and link officers be appointed on every island that wants them. This was followed by Gavin Barr, Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure, giving an OIC officer's perspective. After lunch (enjoyed by all delegates), there was a question and answer session. The conference provided a rare opportunity for community councillors to meet their counterparts from other areas of Orkney and compare experiences.



Community camaraderie at the Sanday Harvest Home

At the Education, Leisure & Housing meeting the decision was made to continue with the two-month frequency of mobile library visits—it being the least of the alternative evils available under the current budgetary constraints. OIC will be releasing information on how the public may obtain library books between visits of the van via our over-60-year-old Book Box Service.

Other meetings I have attended this month include: Orkney College Management Council and part 2 of the strategic planning workshop, an update on the North Isles Landscape Partnership, St. Magnus Cathedral Sub-Committee (the first time I've taken the chair at a Council meeting), a seminar on property asset management, UHI Foundation, the AGMs of the Westray and Sanday development trusts, Sanday Parent Council, and Papay Community Council.

**Education (continued):** Our island schools are, I feel, an underutilised resource. Typically, a school building is in use for learning for only 16% of the year—and that is learning by children. I support adults being able to study and sit exams in our schools, too. In fact, I think studying and sitting exams (e.g. N5, ABRSM) in subjects they haven't studied before, would be excellent experiential continuous professional development for teachers—reminding them what it is like to be a pupil. Furthermore, they would come out of the experience with useful, recognised qualifications. On the matter of what it is like to be a pupil, parents in Spain are on a homework strike for the whole of November, refusing to allow their children to do homework at the weekends. In my lifetime I have seen homework becoming an increasing burden on children and parents, interfering in their family life and causing strife and unhappiness. Not only does excessive homework send the wrong message about a healthy work-life balance, but it ingrains educational inequality, because home circumstances, availability of parental assistance, and access to books and the Internet differ markedly for different children. I would like to see homework being replaced by "prep" done at school, where the necessary space, help and facilities are available to **all** pupils. If Government Scotland is serious about "delivering equity" then it must provide the resources to facilitate this. Finnish pupils start school older, have a shorter school day, longer holidays, and do less homework than their Scottish counterparts, yet from the latest OECD PISA figures available, they rank higher than ours by 14 places in maths, 15 in reading and 17 in science!

From the end of this year, it will be illegal to use or have in your possession an air weapon without a licence. Details of how to apply for one can be obtained from Police Scotland, or found via <http://airweapon.scot>.

I shall be endeavouring to come to some of the island tree-lighting events in December.

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