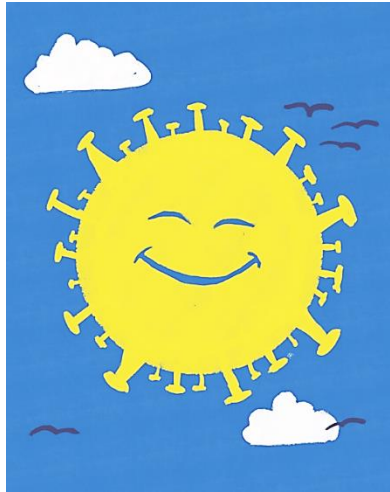


Stephen Clackson's Letter from School Place (still from West Manse)

Keeping the folk of the North Isles ward informed — with Orkney's only councillor newsletter

On 5th June, Orkney moved to COVID-19 Level 0. Despite its misleading name, Level 0 does **not** mean ZERO LEVEL! There are still restrictions, see: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-protection-levels/pages/protection-level-0/>



© MMXX Ælfleda Clackson, student at the Münster School of Design (www.aelfleda.com)

Although most of Orkney's summer agricultural shows have been cancelled again this year, the Sanday Show is an exception. However, in keeping with the Covid restrictions, it'll be a low-key outdoors event limited to the local community. Nevertheless, I'm delighted to see it going ahead, especially to give our new islanders a taste of what Sanday is like in normal times.

Since the 14th June, passengers on Orkney Ferries have been enjoying significantly cheaper fares. Furthermore, my pre-notified amendment and my appeal (a little of which was broadcast on BBC Radio Orkney) at the Special General meeting on the 31st May paved the way for a supportive further amendment by Cllr Rob Crichton, which safeguards, for the forthcoming financial year at least, the books of 50 tickets at their former price. This ensures no rise in travel costs for commuters based (predominantly) in the inner isles. The Development & Infrastructure Cttee must now go back to the island communities and carry out a sufficiently in-depth consultation, take heed of what the people say, and explore options such as an "islander rate".

The 22nd June marked the first anniversary of the wearing of facemasks becoming mandatory on Orkney Ferries' vessels. Under COVID-19 Level 0, this, and the social-distancing rules, still remain in place, preventing, for example, ferries from lying out overnight in the Isles, which is why this year's summer timetables are as they are. Nonetheless, there are Sunday excursions this summer, and I'll be making use of some of them to re-establish face-to-face contact with my ward constituents.

Speaking of such contact, we held a rare face-to-face meeting in Kirkwall to discuss Council priorities for the next 12 months. Other, virtual, meetings I've attended include those of the Orkney College Management Council; Development & Infrastructure Cttee (by invitation); Education, Leisure & Housing Cttee; Monitoring & Audit Cttee; Orkney Health & Care Cttee (OHAC); Orkney Ferries Board; a North Isles catch-up; a discussion about piloting a home-improvement grant scheme in the Isles; and a session with Stephen Brown, the new OHAC Chief Executive. Online in the Isles, I've "been" to meetings of the following community councils: Shapinsay; Papay; and Rousay, Eglisay, Wyre & Gairsay; and to a meeting of Westray Parent Council, at which members (some her former pupils) wished Miss Helen Lumsden a happy retirement after 37 years teaching there.

The **30th June** is the **deadline** for applying for the EU Settlement Scheme and "**Settled Status**" as an EU, EEA or Swiss citizen resident in the UK. If you require help or need advice, contact the Orkney Senior Registrar on 01856-886333 or e-mail: chief-registrar@orkney.gov.uk. You can also ring the EU Citizens helpline: 0800-916-9847. I have requested the OIC Chief Executive to check whether there are any children, vulnerable adults or elderly people in Council care who might be required to apply for "Settled Status" and need assistance to do so. (One of a councillor's statutory roles is that of "corporate parent".)

A forthcoming deadline, which may seem distant at this stage, is the requirement by February 2022 for all dwellings to have interlinked fire/smoke/heat alarms installed. Isles' community councils and development trusts might consider how they could help island residents to achieve this, e.g. through advice, grants, or bulk purchase to keep the unit cost down. Details of the new mandatory standards can be found here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fire-and-smoke-alarms-in-scottish-homes/>

I was delighted to receive a visit from my colleague, Councillor John Ross Scott. Here is a photograph (by Kris Leask) of us enjoying some fish 'n' chips at the Kettletoft Hotel, whilst discussing how we can work together to drive out dysfunctionalities from OIC.

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You can download *Letter from School Place*
from fisp.pbworks.com

