

Stephen Clackson's Letter from School Place

Informing you what your councillor is doing for you at OIC and beyond

As reported on pages 1, 2 & 3 in *The Orcadian* of the 3rd May, I am delighted and relieved to say that at the Mayday General Meeting my "notice of motion" succeeded in reversing the cut of £65,000 affecting additional support for learning. Although there were a couple of councillors who opposed the suspension of Standing Order 130 "Revoking Previous Decisions", it was not sufficient to prevent the "notice of motion" from being heard, and, in the event, it was carried *nem. con.* I am not convinced, though, that the outcome would have been quite so definite had it not been for the overwhelming public support. And my "notice of motion" would not even have been able to be lodged without the six countersignatures of my fellow councillors Sandy Cowie, David Dawson, Steven Heddle, John Richards, Gwenda Shearer and Magnus Thomson.



Public demonstration supporting my "notice of motion" outside School Place on the morning of the Mayday General Meeting

After the meeting, I was interviewed for *STV News*, but not having a telly, I don't know whether it was broadcast or not.

As pictured on page 3 of *The Orcadian* of the 26th April, I was one of the board directors present at Orkney Ferries to receive the petition calling for a fairer fares policy. I have long been aware of the social injustice inherent in the present system of books of discounted vouchers, and now that I am in a better position to do something about it, I am keen to get it improved.

I enjoyed an evening at the Picky listening to the youngsters performing in the Intermediate Instrumental Music Course concert. This demonstration of hard work, talent and ability is supported by the Council's policy of not charging for musical instrument tuition or for the loan of musical instruments to pupils, and I will continue to oppose any attempt to change this.

I flew to Inverness to attend a meeting of the UHI Foundation, for which I am OIC's representative. The University has reached a critical junction in its path of progression, with some of the larger academic partners (such as Inverness College and Moray College) discussing integration. This is leaving the smaller academic partners, such as Orkney College, in an uncertain position, which makes it all the more important that we have good representation on the UHI-wide bodies.

I went to Stronsay for the AGM of its parent council. I admire the support the Stronsay community gives to its school, and how the school is able to offer such a broad range of subjects and accommodate the exam wishes of its secondary pupils.

Unable to physically get to the meeting of the Highlands & Islands Science Skills Academy Leadership Board, I "attended" by *Skype* from School Place—not a very satisfactory substitute for the real thing, but at least Orkney's voice was heard.

Other meetings I've been involved in at School Place this month include: a meeting about the single authority model; a joint seminar between OIC and Orkney Housing Association Ltd; the Norwegian Constitution Day lunchtime reception; a seminar by Architecture & Design Scotland on design of buildings in the countryside; a seminar on the Regional Improvement Plan of the Northern Alliance (an educational partnership between the eight local authorities in the North of Scotland), and I just made it to the tail-end of the Youth Café open day before having to jump onto the ferry back to Sanday.

I shall be going to community council meetings in Westray on the 11th June and in Shapinsay on the 20th. The 20th June is also the day of this year's community council conference (which I shall be at), and I would encourage each of the North Isles community councils to send a representative along. It is a great opportunity to meet up with your counterparts from other communities and compare notes.

Stephen

Cllr Dr Stephen Clackson
West Manse, Sanday
stephen.clackson@council.orkney.gov.uk

Letter from School Place can be downloaded from fisp.pbworks.com

