

Stephen Clackson's Letter from School Place

A report from your councillor at a time of great uncertainty for our nation.

Clearly, I spoke too soon in my [last Letter](#), quoting those words of Alexander Pope (1688-1744), "For sense survived, when merry jests were past". Far from sense surviving, lunacy and chaos have been thriving. Recent events certainly make one reassess the actions of the earlier of our King's namesakes, when he ruled without Parliament for eleven years !



Recent highlights for me have been civic and ceremonial duties. I had the pleasure of presenting a centenarian with a basket of flowers from OIC (photograph above), and I've participated in two Orkney College graduation ceremonies (photograph below). The additional ceremony was held for those graduands who missed out on having their degrees conferred in 2020 and 2021 owing to the pandemic restrictions. The ceremony has developed over the years I have been involved in it. It now begins with the piping-in of the University mace and a procession of academics and dignitaries around the cathedral. The next development I would like to see is for the audience to round things off by heartily singing *Gaudeamus Igitur* accompanied by the cathedral organ, and I've placed this idea before the Orkney College Management Council for its consideration.

Less grand events I have attended this month include: a North Isles ward catch-up; Orkney & Shetland Valuation Joint Board pre-meeting and meeting; a General Meeting of the full council; a seminar on our Learning Estate Strategy; a special meeting of the Education, Leisure & Housing Committee; a seminar on the cost-of-living crisis; Orkney College Management Council meetings; and a Special General Meeting. I went to Stronsay to attend the meeting of their community council, and I am looking forward to regularly getting out to the Isles in person, just like I used to pre-pandemic.

Lately, I have endorsed applications from a couple of community groups for grant funding from charitable organisations. Where groups are needing this sort of support, I am happy to help.

Because Orkney is dependent solely on a single provider for its air services (both internal and external) I have had this added to our Corporate Risk Register. This was very timely, given that Loganair has now announced that it is up for sale.

You may remember my saying, in [Issue 103](#) (August 2021), that when I ordered an NHS Covid-19 test kit online, I'd discovered, to my surprise, that I live in "School Road". I now know that this comes from something called the *Corporate Address Gazetteer* (CAG). Where there is no existing road name in the CAG, it seems that somebody is making them up ! In other words, re-writing our history. I would, therefore, be interested in hearing from the longer-term residents of our islands, if they know of any traditional names of roads that are unmarked, or that have been incorrectly re-named by the CAG. As for choosing names for un-named roads, I really think the local communities and local historians should be involved.

There are various channels through which members of the public can make comments, compliments or complaints to OIC. You can visit your island link officer (if you have one), telephone 01856-873535, e-mail complaints@orkney.gov.uk, do it online at <https://orkney-self.achieveservice.com/MyServices>, or write a letter to OIC, School Place, Kirkwall KW15 1NY. Your comment/compliment/complaint will then be passed to the most relevant department and logged to ensure a timely response. Should you fail to get satisfaction by this route, then your councillor will be ready to investigate.

Prime Ministers may come and go, but Larry, the 10 Downing Street cat remains.

Stephen

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Letter from School Place is also available on-line at clackson.info

