

# Stephen Clackson's Letter from School Place

—connecting with constituents of the North Isles ward.



*MV Earl Sigurd at Rapness*

A ferry cancellation on account of bad weather meant I had to attend our Education, Leisure & Housing meeting “virtually”, which is not my preferred method of attending meetings. Papay School had a very good Education Scotland inspection report for both its primary and nursery classes. The inspectors commended the school’s “authentic connection to the island environment, heritage and culture”, “positive partnerships with the community” and “effective use of the unique setting to provide rich learning experiences for the children.” Well done to all concerned! In the item on the department’s Directorate Delivery Plan, I asked about the provision of nursery places for 2-year-olds in island settings, and I highlighted the very real challenges faced by working parents needing childcare where this provision is not available to them and there are no on-island registered childminders. (Establishing a “grant and subsidy” approach for childminders in hard-to-sustain locations, e.g. where numbers are very small making the business non-viable, is included among the Council Delivery Plan projects.)

Other meetings I have had to attend “virtually” this month include a Joint Isles Health & Care meeting (at which I drew attention to the difficulty commercial drivers in the Isles face when summoned to attend a DVLA eye test), and a meeting of the University of the Highlands & Islands Foundation (on which I am OIC’s representative).

Meetings I have had the pleasure of attending “really” include those of the Monitoring & Audit Committee; the UHI Orkney Stakeholder Group (formerly the Orkney College Management Council); confidential members’ briefings with the Chief Executive; and finance and budget seminars. And in person in the Isles, meetings of Sanday Community Council and Sanday Parent Council; Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre & Gairsay Community Council; and Westray Community Council.

*Stephen*

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**Letter from School Place** is also  
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