

Stephen Clackson's Letter from School Place

A regular report from your councillor written with intelligence not of the artificial kind.

On the 1st April, the Scottish Government introduced a scheme whereby residents of Orkney, Shetland and the Outer Hebrides aged under 22 are now able to travel between islands free of charge as foot passengers on inter-island ferry services by presenting their Young Scot Card. This is something North Isles councillors have long been calling for, and for our youngsters it puts travel on our ferries on par with bus travel elsewhere.

Another transport issue I have been pushing on for some time is getting buses to connect with inter-island flights at Kirkwall Airport in the afternoon during the week in term time when Service 4 buses are called off to do the school run. I am pleased to announce that a new trial bus service to meet this need and fill the gap started on 24th March and will continue until 31st March 2026. It is designated **Service 4D** and is operated using a small wheelchair-accessible vehicle. Booking is recommended by ringing 07438-268883, 01856-870340 or 01856-871515. Use it or lose it.



I attended a meeting with Isles' community council and development trust representatives to look over and discuss possible designs for some of the proposed future outer-isles' ferries. The photograph above shows some of us in the ferry office. (Photo credit: Kieron Brogan-Wadley)

I've been at a couple of meetings to do with the first-responder situation in the Isles—a situation which is defying resolution owing to the intransigence of the Scottish Ambulance Service. My feelings are made plain in an article in *The Orcadian*, 10th April, page 6 (not for the first time, see [Issue 142 of my Letter](#)).

Following comments made in the press (*The Orcadian*, 20th March), I visited the Orkney Foodbank to remind the current manager of conversations I'd had with a predecessor of his about how the Foodbank could best serve clients in the North Isles. Any resident of the North Isles experiencing difficulty accessing the services of the Foodbank, please do not hesitate to contact me in confidence.

At the meeting of the Education, Leisure & Housing Committee, I congratulated Stronsay Junior High School Nursery on their very good report from the Care Inspectorate's unannounced inspection of day care of the children, which took place last September. Well done to all concerned.

Before the Easter recess, as well as confidential members' briefings with the Chief Executive, I was also at meetings of the Monitoring & Audit Committee and the Orkney & Shetland Valuation Joint Board.

Over the recess, I went down to Glasgow to see former part-time Rousay resident John Shuttleworth "Raise the oof" at his 40th anniversary gig. (The ticket was a Christmas present from my younger son.)

I would like to wish Council Leader, Heather Woodbridge and Papay School Headmaster, Dr Tim Ross heartiest congratulations on their recent marriage.

Stephen

Cllr Dr Stephen Clackson

Member for the North Isles Ward,
Depute Convener Orkney & Shetland VJB

West Manse, Sanday

stephen.clackson@orkney.gov.uk

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

