

# Stephen Clackson's Letter from School Place

## *Fiftieth Anniversary of Orkney Islands Council Issue.*

This month I was back in Glasgow again, this time at their palatial and opulent City Chambers in George Square, for the first meeting in ages of the Scottish Councils' Committee on Radioactive Substances (SCCORS), on which I serve as OIC's representative. A new Pope having just been elected, it is maybe appropriate to tell you that the Glasgow City Chambers building boasts more marble than the Vatican. After the SCCORS meeting, a member of staff kindly gave me a private tour of some of the interior.



Back home in the OIC Chamber, I observed some of the University of the Arctic Board's *Spring Meeting 2025*. When I introduced myself to the delegates, I pointed out that if you travel due north from the North Isles ward there is no more land until you've passed over the North Pole and arrive at the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug in the far east of Siberia, hence we are practically Arctic ourselves. Then I was at a seminar on Orkney's place in the North and the Council's international Arctic engagement. And then, one of the items at the meeting of the UHI Orkney Stakeholder Group (formerly the Orkney College Management Council) was on the UHI Arctic Gateway Hub. Despite the glorious sunny spells we have been enjoying recently, the icy North very much seems to have been theme of the month.

Since my last [Letter](#), I have also attended a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee; a couple of confidential members' briefings; seminars on planning policies for new housing, road structures at risk, and waste strategy; and I've been along to meetings of Sanday Community Council and Stronsay Community Council. I was invited to a preview of a new exhibition at Stromness Museum entitled "Powered by People — Orkney's Renewable Energy Story", which is well worth looking at.

As you may have picked up in the media, "Zevi 1", the Artemis Technologies electric hydrofoil vessel has arrived. After familiarisation, it will undergo trials to evaluate its performance in Orkney waters by being put into service connecting Kirkwall with Shapinsay, Egilsay, Wyre and Rousay for a period of 3 years.

This May marked the golden jubilee of Orkney Islands Council. As I explained in [Issue 136 of my Letter](#), the election for the new council took place on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1974, and it existed for a year as a shadow authority until 16<sup>th</sup> May 1975, when it took over local government in Orkney from Orkney County Council, Kirkwall Town Council and Stromness Town Council. You can read the minutes of OIC's first 2 statutory meetings at these URLs: <https://clackson.info/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/GM74MAY28.pdf> <https://clackson.info/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/GM75MAY20.pdf> The ermine robe, tricorne hat and chain of office of the former Provost of Kirkwall Town Council hang in a display case at School Place. Who should wear them now?

*Stephen*

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