

Stephen Clackson's Letter from School Place

Reporting on a busy and challenging month.



The image above was passed on to me by a journalist. The context of what it shows was reported in the local press. My only comments on it are that **there is no place in Orkney for cancel culture**, and that my ward constituents can be assured that bullying and intimidation will not prevent me from listening to all sides in any debate relevant to my work as their councillor.

The 27th August was a bit of a “jet-setting” day for me. It started with a flight from Kirkwall to Papa Westray for the official opening of their new airfield terminal building (see photograph below left). It was quite a gathering; some 60 people were there, with the council leader and the headmaster and pupils of Papay School wearing traditional embroidered vyshvankas (вишиванки) gifted by the island’s visitors from the Ukraine. This is the third such opening I’ve been to in my time as a councillor. (Before I became a councillor, airfield relief fire-fighter was one of my jobs.) The ghostly hands in the photograph below of me flying back belong to the council deputy leader, Sandy Cowie, who was also there. Back in Kirkwall, I went on a tour of OIC’s new 40-bed care home, Kirkjuvagr House with my councillor colleague John Ross Scott (photograph below right). After an excellent buffet at Papay airfield and coffee and cake at Kirkjuvagr House, there was no need (nor time) for lunch before this busy day concluded with my attending a meeting of the Monitoring & Audit Committee at School Place.



Another island event I went along to (on a different day) was Sanday School’s open afternoon (also with refreshments). It was a great opportunity to observe lessons in progress and to see some of the pupils’ work. (Another job I had before becoming a councillor was supply teacher for science and mathematics.) This was followed by Sanday School Parent Council’s AGM. I have also attended (virtually) a meeting of Eday School Parent Council this month.

I went across to Thurso for an evening meeting of the Dounreay Stakeholder Group, on which I represent OIC.

Other meetings I’ve been at include: confidential members’ briefings; a catch-up with the council leader; a seminar on inclusive education; a meeting of the Sport & Leisure Member/Officer Working Group; a drop-in event about plans for the Orkney World Heritage Site; and an all-day meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee. At the meeting of the Education, Communities & Housing Committee, it was encouraging to see how Community Learning & Development partners (CLD) have been supporting projects in the Isles. If your organisation is looking for support, get in touch with the CLD team at OIC.

Finally, congratulations to council leader, Heather Woodbridge and her husband, Dr Tim Ross (the headmaster of Papay School) on the birth of their first child.

Stephen

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

