

# The Shapinsay Sound



LOCAL

The newsletter for the island of Shapinsay produced by the Shapinsay Development Trust.  
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Nursery children are learning about living and growing, and life cycles this term. They will be planting different things later in the term. Recently they have been learning about the story of the 3 little pigs, and made a brick house in the home corner. They even chopped up real vegetables to make stew to go in a pot in their fireplace.

**P1 – 3** children are learning about Ancient Egypt this term. They have been enjoying playing with the playmobile pyramid and boat and have started making their own palace for the Pharaoh and his Queen to live in. They have also learned about the River Nile, hieroglyphics and made a timeline of events from the dinosaurs up to today.

**P4 – 7** are learning about materials this term. They have been learning about dissolving, sieving and separating. There will be a lot of experiments done this term. In French they have been learning and using classroom vocabulary.



Everyone has started work on our pantomime – Aladdin! Please put Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> March in your diaries 2 performances at 1.30pm and 6.30pm.

We are looking out for costumes and props too – so please take a look at the Shapinsay facebook page where requests will be made, and if you can help at all we would be very grateful!

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SHAPINSAY  
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February 2017

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## From the Chair

by Sheila Garson

The Trust have undertaken a lot of work over the past few months reviewing our staffing needs and I'm delighted to say we are now well on in the process of implementing the first phase of this review. Rachel Chrin has been appointed as Boathouse Co-ordinator and started in post on the 9<sup>th</sup> January. Her role is to support and manage our transport service, provide admin support and help develop the Boathouse as a resource for the island. You'll find more about Rachel further on in this newsletter. The other new face is Jan Buchannan, who has taken on the role of cleaner.

We have also been looking at the housing needs on the island. The community has long had an aspiration for some type of supported accommodation and we would very much like this to be part of any project. While we have done a considerable amount of background work in consultation with Orkney Islands Council and Orkney Health and Care we now need evidence to move this forward. As a number of other island Trusts are looking at similar initiatives we have joined together to make a funding bid to undertake a Housing Needs Assessment for each of our islands. In consultation with the community, this will look at the type and quantity of housing necessary to meet the current and future needs of our island and how sheltered/very sheltered housing could be delivered in a viable and sustainable way. If the funding bid is successful we would hope to begin work on the Housing Needs Assessment in the next few months and will of course keep you informed on how this is progressing and how you can feed into the process.

This is an exciting opportunity given that there is funding available at the moment for this type of project through the Rural Housing Fund and for land/property purchase through the Scottish Land Fund. It would be great if we could use this to enhance facilities on the island.





## New Year new role for Rachel!



New Boathouse Co-ordinator Rachel Chrin is looking forward to sharing a cuppa with folks dropping in at the Boathouse for a chat or to hold events during the week.

Rachel moved to Shapinsay from Eday a year ago and came to live in Orkney from Gloucestershire in 2009. She and husband Pete live at the north end of the island where they enjoy far reaching sea views towards the north isles, "I can see the sea out of almost every room of our house and I love that" says Rachel, and Shapinsay's easy access to the mainland compared with Eday makes it a great place to live".

As for her new role at the Boathouse, Rachel is looking forward to seeing the facility developed into a hive of activity with a range of ongoing events. Previously Rachel worked in a bank and believes the skills she learnt there will stand her in good stead for running things efficiently so that everyone gets the most out of the opportunity offered by this useful community space.

"I've always taken an active role in the community" says Rachel "on Eday I ran a tea room, worked in the community co-op and as a relief worker at the school and ran a children's work at the Kirk. And already on Shapinsay I've taken part in hand bell ringing and the 'Sew Shapinsay' project."

Rachel's friendly and approachable style is sure to put visitors at their ease. She will be at the Boathouse most weekdays between 10am and 2pm and she would love to meet you and hear any ideas you may have for using the Boathouse or just pop in to have a 'blether' whether with friends or even if you're just on your own.

## Windy December pays off for Whirly!



Storms Barbara and Conor gave a welcome boost to the amount of electricity generated by Whirly our community wind turbine in December.

Shapinsay Renewables Turbine Manager Adrian Bird says that the wind speed from these storms peaked on Christmas Day reaching 98.6 MPH. The 24th and 26th were also windy at 91 and 93 MPH respectively.

From a financial point of view this helped generate 286.753 KWH in December 2016 compared to 186,804 KWH in the same month in 2015. Productivity hit 42.71% - well above our 30.8% target. This is only the 2nd time in 22 months that we have managed over 40% productivity in a month, and we

have our best two months of the year still ahead of us!

Prior to December, the last big windy day was the 29th of September, peaking at 87.4 MPH but the windiest day of last year was the 29th of January, peaking at 107.3 MPH.

A big thanks to the turbine operators John Phillips and Michael Foubister as December also proved a busy month for them. With the storms and power cuts they have done a great job keeping Whirly working and generating income for the island.

## Shapinsay Heritage, Arts and Crafts

### Annual General Meeting – Wednesday 8th February at 7:30pm in the Clubrooms

During 2016, Shapinsay Heritage Trust undertook a process to change to Shapinsay Heritage, Arts and Crafts and begin a new life as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). The main reasons for making this change were to open up the organisation to enable members to become much more involved in how the organisation is run; enhance and promote new activities; and to ensure that the organisation promoted 'Heritage' in its widest sense, incorporating all aspects of the history, culture, natural history, arts and crafts or other related features of life in Shapinsay, both past and present.

The new organisation is managed by a board of charity trustees, who are elected each year at the AGM by the members from the members. There must be a minimum of 3 trustees and a maximum of 9. In addition to the board, it is intended to run all main activities through sub-groups, made up of members together with at least one trustee. For example, last year, one sub-group set up the exhibition in the Smithy and another the Craft Shop. Another group ran the Christmas shop and activities. Hopefully, members will want to promote and run new activities during the year.

As this AGM is the first of the new organisation, it is a very important step in helping to shape the future. In addition to all current members, we would therefore like to invite anyone with an interest in any aspect of the history, culture, natural history, arts and crafts or other related features of life in Shapinsay to come along to the meeting to share your views and interests. In order to be able to vote at the AGM however, you must be a member of Shapinsay Heritage, Arts and Crafts. Membership runs from January to December each year. Membership forms are available from Robert Grainger, Paul Evans and also from the shop. They will also be available at the AGM for anyone who wants to join on the night.

Although a relatively small amount of more formal business has to be dealt with at the AGM, the meeting will have a strong focus on the activities members would like to see in 2017 and the sub-groups necessary to achieve that. Unlike normal AGM's therefore, please come along bursting with enthusiasm and ideas to help make it happen!

## Kirk news

This month brings the start of a new initiative by the kirk. We have been aware of a lack of a gathering space for folk in the winter months (the Smithy provides that in the summer).

We wondered what could be done about it and many ideas were floated around until we agreed that we could organise coffee afternoons. We're going to start small – once a month – by providing teas, coffees, baking and biscuits at the boathouse. Shapinsay Development Trust kindly agreed to provide a venue for it.

The first coffee afternoon will take place on the 9<sup>th</sup> February between 2 and 4 pm. So on your way to or from the shop (to get your paper!) or before or after you pick children up from school or just because you'd like a chat and a cup of coffee, you'll be able to drop into the boathouse for a blether and home bakes. All ages are welcome and we hope to see you there.

Also in February we're going to have a special guest in the kirk. Christine Perry will offer us an afternoon of storytelling for all ages. She's a trained storyteller and has been to Shapinsay a few times already and would love to invite you all to her event. It will be held at the kirk on the 12<sup>th</sup> February at 3 pm. See you there!!

Rev Julia Meason, 874789, [JMeason@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:JMeason@churchofscotland.org.uk)



## Garden Notes from Old School



As we creep into February I feel at last that spring is in the foreseeable future and that thought keeps me going when the days are so wet and often dreary outside. Wet is definitely the order of the day just now which is so frustrating, as even if we get a bright day, the ground is impossible to work. Looking out of the window I see all manner of little jobs that could be done, such as cutting down last year's growth from the ornamental grasses and tidying away dead leaves from herbaceous perennials. This however would involve wading across the lawn and with no chance of getting a wheelbarrow anywhere near close. Those jobs will have to wait for a drier spell and I suppose the birds will be grateful for the chance to forage around finding small beasties that thought they were tucked away safe and sound.

I am waiting for more small bare rooted trees to arrive; at only just over a metre high, they should establish well with the shelter of a wall. In the same area as the Whitebeams which were planted last year will be two different types of hawthorn; *Crataegus laevigata* Plena with double white flowers and *Crataegus persimilis* Prunifolia which turns the most amazing colours of red and orange in autumn. There is a special sheltered corner reserved for the flowering cherry *Prunus Shirotae*; described as a vigorous grower with large fragrant pure white flowers in spring, I really hope this will do well. Another two trees with good autumn colours are varieties of Rowan; *Sorbus* Joseph Rock with creamy yellow berries and *Sorbus vilmorinii* with pale pink berries. I have had both these trees in my last two gardens and hope that I can give them a location here where they will be able to do their stuff.

Just before Christmas I noticed a pot of hellebore seeds sown in October 2015 had germinated. The pot has been sitting in the greenhouse all that time and only now have they decided to make an appearance. Some seeds, especially shrubs, trees, many wild flowers and some garden perennials, need a series of warm and cold spells before they will germinate. This process can be replicated by alternating between a heated propagator and the fridge but if you have time, the natural seasons will produce the required conditions. If you sow seeds of perennials in spring and they don't germinate, it's always worth leaving the pot until the following year but this doesn't apply to annuals or biennials. There is a good book called 'Garden Flowers from Seed' by Christopher Lloyd and Graham Rice which covers just about any flower you are likely to want to grow. It's not just informative; the two authors have sometimes had different experiences with a particular plant and don't always agree which can be amusing and goes to show that gardening is not an exact science!

During February some seeds can be sown in modules in the greenhouse without heat; leeks, broad beans and sweet peas can all be started off this way. If you have a heated propagator, sow sweet peppers, chillies and aubergines which all need a long growing season but they do need heat and lots of sun to do really well. Outside, some of the old trunks of flowering currant can be removed right at the base which will stimulate new growth from the bottom and hopefully prolong the life of the shrub. Any smaller shrubs such as potentillas can also be reduced in size now or simply tidied up with a pair of garden shears. Escallonias and hebes are best left until a little later in the year when they start to make new leaf growth so that there's less chance of getting die-back from the point where they're cut. Cuttings from willows and dogwoods can be taken now; make a cut just under a leaf node then push the cutting into the ground until only a third is showing. Weeding is quite satisfying at this time of year too; the ground looks nice and tidy afterwards and it's longer before any new weeds appear. A good mulch also helps to suppress any weeds that might have had any thoughts of germinating!



There are flower buds and new leaves on the Hellebores (Lenten Roses) so I'll cut off all the old leaves from last year to allow light and air to get to the new growth. These leaves are quite tough and don't compost well so they are best burned. When the plants have been tidied they will get a good mulch of garden compost. Primroses are already in flower and snowdrops and miniature daffodils are not far behind. Spring is just around the corner!

If you have any garden tips that you would like to share or any special plants that you would like to tell others about please let me know and I will include them next month.

Karen Evans, Old School, Shapinsay  
[karen@evanssmallholder.plus.com](mailto:karen@evanssmallholder.plus.com)

## Fibre broadband partnership for Shapinsay?

As part of its established remit to look at ways of improving broadband here Shapinsay Development Trust has expressed an interest in forming a community broadband partnership with BT see - <http://www.communityfibre.bt.com>

The aim of the partnership would be to rollout a superfast fibre connection to as many households and businesses as possible. We have just started the process of recording broadband needs (and speeds) across the island. The island phone book is a valuable resource to help us do this. During February, we will use the information in it to check an online resource which indicates the current broadband speed available to each household listed. This will then go off to a team at BT who will assess it.

If you are included in the phone book but would prefer that we did not use your details towards scoping a project, please let us know before Friday the 10th of February. Similarly, if you are not listed in the island directory but would like your line to be included in the study please contact the office by the same date. email: [boathouse@shapinsay.org.uk](mailto:boathouse@shapinsay.org.uk) Phone: 01856 711733.

We hope you agree that this is a scheme worth investigating to the stage that we can know whether it can work here - and how much it would cost to make it happen. Once that information is to hand we can consult more widely about how to proceed.

## Something new that could be just right for you?

SDT has had an approach about the idea of a regular social get-together during the day at the Boathouse where folks could chat, do jigsaws, a bit of knitting and sewing, crosswords, puzzles or just have fun meeting up for a cuppa and a chat.

People could bring things to do together, get on with something they're already working on or just enjoy being in one another's company. If that sound like something you or someone you know might be interested in, please contact [cao@shapinsay.org.uk](mailto:cao@shapinsay.org.uk) and we'll be happy to facilitate this and help in any way we can. Sounds good to us!

## Spreading some warmth at a chilly time of year!

Youngsters on Shapinsay are taking up the Shapinsay Kindness Challenge in February. **Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Cubs, Beavers and Scouts** will be looking at ways to make our already kind island an even kinder place to be.

There could be some parents noticing a difference with extra offers to do the dishes or tidier bedrooms for example! The 21 day challenge is part of a Kinder Scotland Campaign organised by the Carnegie UK Trust and U-Lab. People of all ages are invited to take part and folks can download a Kindness Chart off the Shapinsay Development Facebook Page or use the one on the back of the Calendar to help keep up the momentum. Brownies leader Alison Meason says "we're looking forward to seeing this make a real difference within our community".



## VOTE for your favourite project for Shapinsay!!!!

Shapinsay folks will have the chance to vote this month on which of five new projects they most want to see win funding to benefit the island. The ideas have come in as applications for all or part of a sum of £2,300 available to Shapinsay as part of 'Your Islands Your Choice' funding administered by Voluntary Action Orkney. The options for voters are:-

1. **A Trim Trail for youngsters to use at the Play Park**
2. **'Shapinsay Speaks' – an oral history project to gather peoples' memories about the island**
3. **Stacking chairs with arms for Shapinsay lunch club and Community Centre use**
4. **Elwick Bookwrights – a new creative writing group**
5. **A regular youth drop-in session for the over 12's**

A public event is to be held at 7pm on February the 17<sup>th</sup> at the Community Centre where those who've suggested the projects will have three minutes to pitch for attenders' support before a live vote. The outcome of the ballot will be known on the night and more than one project might benefit. Anyone who can't be there on the night can vote at the Boathouse between 10am and 2pm weekdays from February the 1<sup>st</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> and those votes will be added to the total count on the night.

It's all part of a new move by the Scottish Government to involve local communities in decision-making about a percentage of their local authority's budget and this is part of a pilot to look at how it might work. Known as participatory budgeting the idea is that communities get involved in the whole process. That includes deciding relevant themes into which applications for funding should fall, creating a steering group, involving as many people as possible in putting forward projects in the categories decided and making choices as a community about what will be best use of the money for Shapinsay.

## Shapinsay Lifeboat Ceilidh and Dance

**Saturday 4th February 7.30pm**

**Graham Rendall Compere**

Prices - as last year.

Ceilidh+ supper + dance £10 Adult £5 Under 16's

Ceilidh/Supper Ceilidh/dance £6 Under 16's £3

All participants Free or donation towards supper cost

**Raffle and Bar  
followed by Dance to David Bowen(accordianist  
from Sanday)**

Mixture of music and entertainment including  
Shapinsay Music Group  
Bell Ringers  
Schoolbairns  
Shapinsay Singers  
New Band "Tone Deaf"

**Haggis/Mince and clapsnot Supper**

## Shapinsay Wildlife Matters

by Paul Hollinrake

### Gannets



*Diving adult gannet by Mike Pennington*

If you look out to sea on a stormy day in winter there is a good chance you will see gannets. Gannets spend their winters far out at sea, and windy weather can bring them closer to land to find shelter. Watch them long enough and you'll see them dive.

They fold their wings right back to make their bodies arrow shaped and can hit the water at up to 60 mph. To withstand the impact of hitting the water time after time at speed, they have some clever adaptations. Their neck muscles are very strong, they have membranes which protect their eyes like goggles and the base of their bill has a spongy plate which acts like an air bag. To help them spot fish their eyes unlike most birds are positioned at the front of their heads rather than the sides, which gives them binocular vision, so they can also judge distances to their prey well.

Once under water during a dive gannets can swim down to depths of up to 15 metres in pursuit of fish.

They always swallow their catch below the surface as they swim back up, and you never see a gannet with a fish in its mouth (unless you dive with them!!).



*Young Gannet*

Gannets are our largest seabird with wingspans up to 180cm, and the adults are quite easy to recognise being all white with black wing tips. When they develop their first set of feathers gannets are all brown as young birds, and they take up to 6 years to develop their full adult plumage. As they age, they grow more white feathers as in the picture. So you may see an odd looking seabird and now you might have a better idea what it is.

I have watched young first year gannets diving close to shore in Veantrow Bay, and marvelled at how they survive diving for fish in the shallows without hitting the bottom, and wondered in awe at how every bird has to pluck up courage to do its first dive.