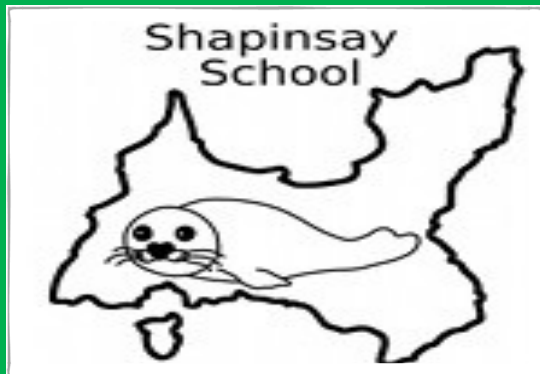


# The Shapinsay Sound



LOCAL

The newsletter for the island of Shapinsay produced by the Shapinsay Development Trust.  
Registered Charity Number: S0034818; Registered Company Number: SC255127.

Contact Information : Email: [SDTOffice@shapinsay.org.uk](mailto:SDTOffice@shapinsay.org.uk)

Telephone: 01856 711733.

We have now started back at school, and the children are busy learning lots of new things. Laura has joined us on the staff team and is working in Nursery on Thursday afternoons.

**P4 - 7** children are going swimming each week at the Picky Centre this term, and have been visiting Kirkwall library for some behind the scenes tours. In class they are learning about the human body and will also be making some hydrogen powered cars.

**P1 - 3** are learning about animals this term. The reading corner is being turned into the Gruffalo's Den, complete with trees and the children are writing their own verses for the Gruffalo story. We hope to visit Northvet with the Nursery to find out about how animals are looked after. **P1-3** also had an impromptu visit from Alistair Carmichael MP over lunchtime.

**The Nursery children** are learning about pets this term. The role play area is a vets surgery. The children have also been enjoying playing with trains, sand and water.

Our school improvement targets this year will be looking at our Social Studies and Religious & Moral Education curriculums. We will also be focusing on Literacy at all levels.

Our self evaluation with the pupils last session showed that children wanted more opportunities to be leaders. With this in mind we are setting up a make it lunch time club (led by Erland and Ian) and will be forming Pupil Council in the next few weeks. Pupil Council will then be interviewing and appointing people who wish to be on the Eco Group, the Sports Committee and the Library Group.



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SHAPINSAY  
DEVELOPMENT  
TRUST

# The Shapinsay Sound

September 2018

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## Chair

by Steven Bews



With September here, we can reflect on what has been a lovely summer and look to what is ahead for the autumn. For Shapinsay Development Trust (SDT) September starts with the trust's AGM; we will be reporting on where we are with the current projects and discussing potential future SDT projects.

The largest of these are the ongoing BIGHIT Hydrogen project and the potential for developing a housing project. Last year's AGM concentrated on the start of the BIGHIT project and this year's will focus on the options for the housing project.

SDT needs to maintain a healthy membership in order to ensure we are fully representative of the community, as the more people who come along to our AGM the more voices and opinions we can draw on. In order to have a vote at the AGM you need to become a member of the Trust first, this can be done by visiting the Boathouse or filling out the membership form provided. I would like to encourage everyone to come along and hear about the work SDT is doing and the potential it has to make Shapinsay a better place for everyone.

As with any community group the SDT relies on individuals volunteering their time to enable these projects to become a reality. With that in mind, I would encourage any member who is community spirited and has a passion for seeing Shapinsay thrive, to consider standing for the board at the AGM.

**Shapinsay Development Trust AGM will be held on the 3rd September at 7.30pm in the Clubrooms**





# Thaw

**THAW Orkney**  
*Helping to make a difference*



Could you be warmer in your home?

Need help with tariff switching?

Looking to save  
 Money on your  
 bills?

**Then please come along to our Energy Café at the  
 Shapinsay Community Hall  
 20<sup>th</sup> September 2018, 11am – 2.30pm**

**Tea, coffee and biscuits are available**

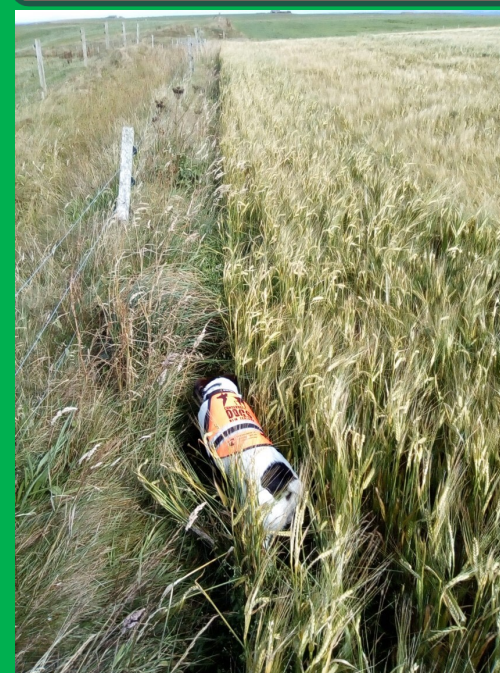
**THAW Orkney is a free, independent and confidential local service**

If you would like to talk to us about how we may be able to assist you, then please visit us at our Energy Café at the Shapinsay Community Hall. If in the meantime, you'd like assistance from us, either in our Kirkwall office or in your own home, then please contact THAW Orkney on:

**01856 878388** or by email at: [info@thaworkney.co.uk](mailto:info@thaworkney.co.uk)



## Conservation dog stoat surveillance Part 2



Thank you to everybody we met along the way; the good stories, lovely hospitality and friendly smiles. We had a good time on Shapinsay, and got to see quite a lot of the landscape, including many many rock walls, barley fields and ditches in our travels.

There is still the ongoing risk that stoats could get to Shapinsay from Mainland Orkney at any time, especially as the population there is at a high density, so it is good to report any potential sightings or relevant information to SNH by calling 01856 886163, by emailing [north@snh.gov.uk](mailto:north@snh.gov.uk) or through the '[Stoats in Orkney](#)' Facebook page.

Mac on the North coast



## Kirk News

First of all a reminder that the Shapinsay Kirk is fundraising in the Blue Door from 17<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2018. We need people to help in the shop during this time. Suggested shifts are 9.30 – 11, 11 – 2 and 2 – 4.30. If you are able to help for one or more shifts during the week, please contact Emma Clements on 711740. Any donations for the Blue Door will also be gratefully received – to arrange collection please contact myself (contact details below).

This autumn we're also looking to serve in the community as an expression of our worship. We're hoping to release a few of our members during worship on Sunday who could lend a hand with anything you might need help with: gardening, decorating, grocery shopping etc. Feel free to come forward if you or someone you know could do with a helping hand. Also don't be surprised if folk will be asking you if you need a hand with anything – we know it's sometimes tricky to come forward and get in touch!

On the 16<sup>th</sup> September after worship we're going to provide lunch and have a 'working' lunch where we will review where we are going as a church. We have done it a few times over recent times but this time it's part of a bigger exercise of our Presbytery of Orkney which is looking at ways of supporting congregations and therefore would like to know where we are in our ministry and mission. Come and be fed and let's look at our present and future together!

See you soon hopefully!  
 Julia

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



## Conservation dog stoat surveillance on Shapinsay

### Angela Newport and Macca (stoat detection dog)



In August, Macca and I were lucky enough to visit Shapinsay for two weeks, from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> (In some very nice weather too!). We were there to search for any stoat scent or sign as part of the Orkney Native Wildlife project, a partnership between Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and RSPB Scotland, which aims to protect Orkney's native wildlife by removing stoats, an invasive non-native predator that was first recorded in Orkney in 2010.

Our task was to help determine whether stoats had made their way to Shapinsay from Mainland Orkney, either on their own accord by swimming (they are very capable swimmers, known to be able to cover 3km of open water), or via straw and feed bales transported from Mainland Orkney.

There have been several sightings reported of stoat-like animals on the island since November 2017. Shapinsay is a large island (2948 ha) for one person and a little dogs' nose to cover, and we relied on the good weather and the wind, to help preserve and carry any scent that we could pick up on.

We targeted areas where there are relatively high amounts of natural food/prey available for a stoat, like wetlands, waterways,

coastal fringes, and bird nesting areas. We were able to cover the island reasonably well in our time there, not encountering any definitive sign or scent of stoat presence over the ground we searched. However, we did learn that there is a very high number of rather large rats on the island, with some happy to frolic in the pasture as we passed by.

With the results that we have had, we can conclude that there does not seem to be a population of stoats present on Shapinsay. However, our confidence in the presence or absence of an individual roaming the island, is not as good as we would have liked especially because there are a few areas we weren't able to fully check.

As a precaution, we are keeping in place an incursion response with DOC200 traps, focused around the Braefoot property where the latest sighting of a potential stoat was reported. With this trapping and some follow up visits with Macca, we hope to get better confidence in the situation over the next few months.



## Garden Notes from Old School

The sound of large flocks of geese winging their way to Mill Dam and a definite nip in the air in the evening are signs that the seasons are changing. As summer gradually moves towards autumn I'm hoping for a continuation of the good weather to be able to enjoy all the late colour the garden has to offer.

Autumn colours are different from summer colours; they are bolder, richer and more intense. The day lily *Hemerocallis* 'Golden Prize' is a large, strong growing plant with thick flower petals that stand up to the weather quite well. What a shame each one lasts only a day. Originally it was planted a distance from the hebe hedge but I hadn't noticed how much the hedge had grown until this year when the poor plant was almost smothered.

After cutting the hedge back severely there was enough room to plant *Buddleja* 'Black Knight' which flowers at about the same time and should provide a lovely backdrop in a couple of years. I have another day lily, *Hemerocallis* 'Gentle Shepherd' which has gorgeous creamy flowers earlier in the year. I saw it in a border at Stillingfleet gardens planted next to the deep blue *Salvia* 'Caradonna'. Unfortunately, the day lily has been disappointing here as the buds seem to stick together at the top and struggle to open, possible due to the salt in the air, I don't know.

*Helenium* 'Moerheim Beauty' is a trouble-free plant. It doesn't seem to be bothered by slugs and even though it is about 3ft tall, as long as the wind is not too fierce it stands up fairly well unaided. It has mahogany-red petals which glow against darker brown central cones and the sedge, *Carex comans* 'Bronze' growing at its feet seems to bring out the colour even more. Further along the border, *Helenium* 'The Bishop', a lower growing bright yellow variety has been flowering for weeks but when it does eventually stop, *Rudbeckia* 'Goldsturm' is right behind waiting to fill the gap.





# Garden Notes

## Part 2



Personally, I need to have contrasts to be able to really enjoy these strong colours; shades of orange, yellow and lime green need a darker colour to bring out their best. The blue Geranium 'Rozanne' scrambles through Potentilla 'Tangerine', the wine-coloured Knautia macedonica 'Mars Midget' threads its way up through a zingy lime green euphorbia and the late flowering poker Kniphofia 'Bees Sunset' thrusts its head up through the foliage of a pinky grey-green leaved rose, Rosa glauca.

In another part of the garden this rose is allowed to grow to about 5ft and this year has produced its delicate pale pink flowers but here it is pruned to about 2ft 6ins high and grown purely for the colour of its foliage as a foil to the more vibrant colours. Another combination that works well is Spiraea 'Anthony Waterer' with vibrant pink flowers and Potentilla 'Daydown'; these are both easy shrubs to grow and flower at the same time in late summer into autumn.

I don't know if I've just been unlucky this year but some annual flower seeds have been very variable. A packet of the Scotch Marigold, Calendula 'A Touch of Red' has produced flowers of many different shades and forms all of which have been worthy plants, but in no way uniform and there was a similar story with Nasturtium 'Golden Jewel'. Perhaps some seed companies are better than others but when I buy a packet of seeds I should be able to expect that most plants will resemble the variety they are supposed to be.

I am re-reading Mirabel Osler's book 'A Gentle Plea for Chaos' and it has inspired me to plant more bulbs in grassy areas that are short early on in the year and then don't get mown until late summer. The bulb catalogues are starting to arrive through the letterbox so I will be looking for suitable crocus, tulips and narcissus for meadow style planting. I love the wilder parts of the garden as much as the more managed areas but will someone please tell me where the heck the hens are laying their eggs just now!

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)

# RSPB

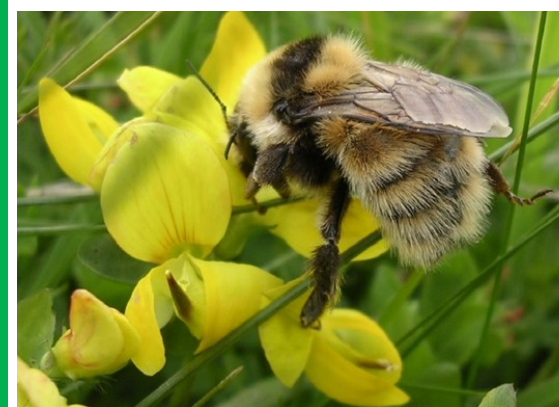
## Bees and flowers at Mill Dam RSPB Reserve

One of the great delights of a real summer like this in Orkney are the vast number of insects to be found. There have been far too many klegs or horse flies for sure, not anyone's favourite insect as far as I know! However, there have been loads of butterflies, damselflies, moths and bees about. At the Mill Dam we monitor bumblebees every year. Transect lines eight metres apart are walked military style at a slow pace looking diligently for bees.



Here's Tim Lill the Mainland RSPB warden walking the field up near Broadgreen in August.

He has a particularly keen eye. Between us we counted 111 carder bee workers, plus 14 males and 3 queens, 68 garden bumblebee workers plus 1 male and 3 queens, one heath bumblebee worker, three white tailed workers and five workers of the star species Great Yellow bumblebee. All these were in one 3 acre field.



A great yellow bumblebee feeding on meadow vetchling. Key identification features to note are the black line in the middle of its thorax and big yellow striped abdomen.

This field was reseeded in 2017 by Chris Muir to create a permanent species rich grassland. Unfortunately, fodder radish from the previous year germinated in profusion and dominated the crop. Their flowers were good for bees then, but nothing like the dominant red clover crop that flourished this year. Most of the bees that we saw were feeding on red clover. None of the fodder radish returned this year. Other flowers like meadow vetchling, ox-eye daisy, yellow rattle, spear thistle, knapweed and linseed are now doing well in this field too. These provide welcome food for bees and many other insects such as hover flies, moths and butterflies.

Great Yellow bumblebees are a nationally rare species found only in the Western Isles, northern mainland Scotland and Orkney. The main sites to see them in Orkney are on Copinsay and at Marwick Head, where a staggering 242 were found this August.

I have been working for the RSPB at Mill Dam for 25 years and it is now time to hang up my binoculars and retire. So from mid-October this year Tim Lill will look after the reserve. I will still do voluntary work on the reserve, but enjoy letting others complete the paperwork!