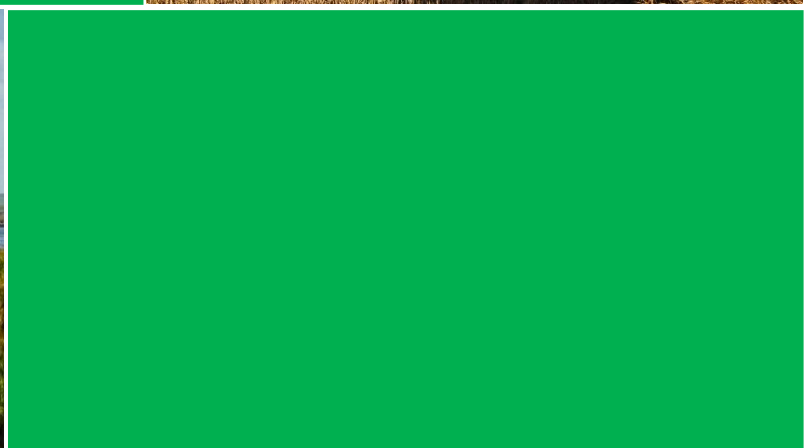
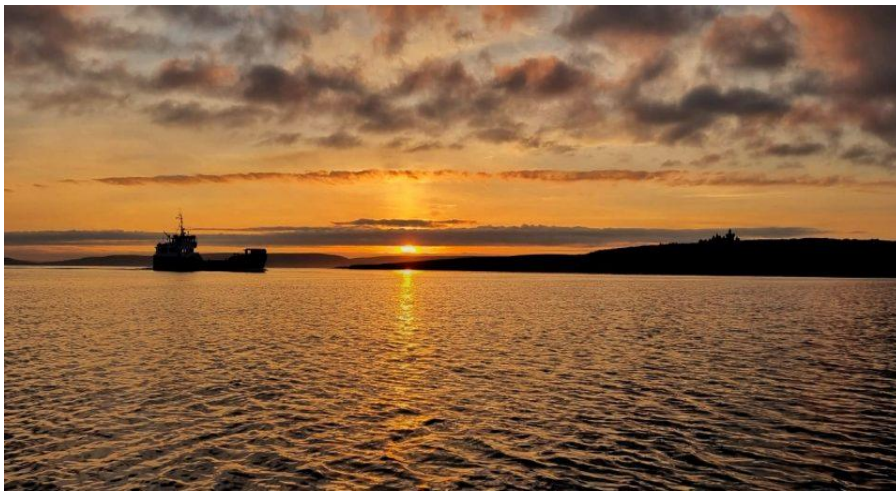


# Shapinsay Island Plan 2025-2030



Shapinsay  
Development Trust



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# 1 Executive Summary

Shapinsay is one of the Orkney Islands, situated off the north coast of mainland Scotland. With an area of 29.5 square kilometres, it is the eighth largest island in the Orkneys. It is low-lying and fertile, with most land used for farming. There is one village on the island, Balfour, where the majority of facilities are located, including the roll-on/roll-off ferry that connects Shapinsay to Kirkwall.

This Plan reflects on and builds on the Island Plan for 2020-2025 that was published in 2019. The core outcomes have not changed: the community want to ensure that Shapinsay continues to develop as an active, welcoming community with thriving facilities and social life, retaining existing residents and attracting new ones to ensure the long-term sustainability of the island community.

This Plan sets out Shapinsay's community vision, under a set of key strategic themes and identifies the projects and activities for delivery.

Shapinsay has a population of 299 people according to the latest census in around 151 households, with 21 empty or second homes. People enjoy living in Shapinsay, with high ratings for the statement "I enjoy living here", although there is some evidence that there are issues with community cohesion. The island has an increasingly aging population, with a disproportionate number of older people living alone. Shapinsay's socio-economic rating has declined over the last 10 years, reflecting the aging population and a worsening economic environment post the financial crisis. Just under half of the population are economically active; one-third of those are full time.

Housing continues to be critical, with Shapinsay within the 30% most deprived areas in Scotland in terms of housing. Health and social care for older people have increasing demand as the population ages. The primary school is one of the smallest in the Orkney Islands, with the fear of closure. Shapinsay is within the 2% most deprived areas in Scotland in terms of geographic access to services.

There has been significant community-led development of facilities and services in Shapinsay, often led by the Shapinsay Development Trust (SDT) and primarily funded through income generated from the wind-turbine that was installed in 2011. This, with support from key stakeholders including HIE and OIC, and with funds from the Scottish Land Fund, has been used to deliver investment in infrastructure, particularly housing and a community café, and to support local services including an out of hours passenger ferry, the island car service, e-bikes, community wellbeing including training and community-led activities and events.

The turbine has a finite life-span, and to continue to deliver against community needs and priorities, it is essential that the energies of the community are drawn together to amplify their impact. Delivery of this Plan will help ensure that Shapinsay stays vibrant and sustainable, through the delivery of social, economic and environmental benefits for current and future generations.

There is now a period of consolidation and focus to review and deliver the achievements and projects from the previous planning period. SDT is already engaged in delivering significant infrastructure projects; one at Balfour Cottages for 4 affordable housing units, and a mixed-use development at Spion Brae for affordable housing, housing plots, enterprise units, and growing space. SDT is reviewing the provision of community transport and of its community café, the Smithy, to ensure these meet community needs and are financially viable.

This plan was produced following extensive community consultation, including a community survey to all households, and four drop-in events including one specifically for young people.

The community can and will continue to lobby for the publicly funded and provided services that are required to deliver the priorities identified in care provision and transportation.

## 1.1 The Community Vision

Our Vision is that Shapinsay is a living island community where people of all ages and circumstances are connected and looked after and where core local services are sustainable.

### **Sharing and connecting**

The Shapinsay community is flourishing, caring and cohesive. It has a strong local identity and a sense of cohesion and pride in all parts of the island. People of all ages know about and create opportunities to come together, socialise, and take part in activities they enjoy.

### **A working island**

Shapinsay has a sustainable economy, providing jobs and income for all members of our community, encouraging new residents, and supporting local services. The community and businesses work together to attract visitors to stay for longer and enjoy our spaces and places.

### **A place for everyone to live**

There is a good mix of available housing types for all households and needs. There is an accessible and affordable housing for all those who wish to live here. Homes and places are able to adapt to changing circumstances.

### **Going places**

Transport on the island and off the island supports continued and inclusive economic development and innovation. It plays a positive role in improving health, reducing inequalities and isolation. It contributes to a successful and just transition to a net-zero carbon and sustainable community.

### **An even better place to live**

Shapinsay's community maintains and enhances its natural and built environment, making it accessible for the enjoyment, health, and wellbeing of all. The community's pride in its environment helps encourage visitors.

## 1.2 The Community Action Plan

Timeline	Action
<b>A sharing and connected community</b>	
Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smithy continues to grow and develop its activities for all</li> <li>• Continue to support provision of carers for the island</li> <li>• Volunteer programme to help address social inclusion</li> <li>• Youth engagement / consultation</li> <li>• Support existing programmes for young people (football, Cycle Orkney, badminton)</li> <li>• Community Larder</li> </ul>
Medium term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Library</li> <li>• Help people with digital connectivity</li> <li>• Handyperson service to help people stay safely in their own homes for longer</li> </ul>
<b>A working island</b>	
Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to facilitate commercial ideas generation and early scoping and prioritisation study</li> <li>• Tourism strategy</li> <li>• Spion brae and island hub feasibility</li> <li>• Future proof incomes to island priorities</li> </ul>
Medium term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission in depth feasibility study and business planning into the marina</li> </ul>
<b>A place for everyone to live</b>	
Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop plans for affordable and accessible housing in line with current and identified future needs</li> </ul>
Medium Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to increase housing provision</li> <li>• Attract working age adults and families</li> </ul>
<b>Going Places</b>	
Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pursue improved ferry provision</li> </ul>
Medium term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review on-island transport provision</li> </ul>
<b>An even better place to live</b>	
Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify sites for a community garden</li> <li>• Identify sites for clean-up, planting and re-wilding, with a view to access and conservation</li> </ul>
Medium term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish polytunnel and community composting unit</li> <li>• Build volunteer capacity for environmental initiatives</li> </ul>
Long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop community growing</li> </ul>

These initiatives would be undertaken with existing community groups and with the support of the broader community. Most of these initiatives – and many more – are already underway; the key need for the Development Trust is to help bring these together, support existing initiatives, and to fill gaps where existing arrangements have not been able to sustain effort for example in area-wide communication and branding.

## Introduction

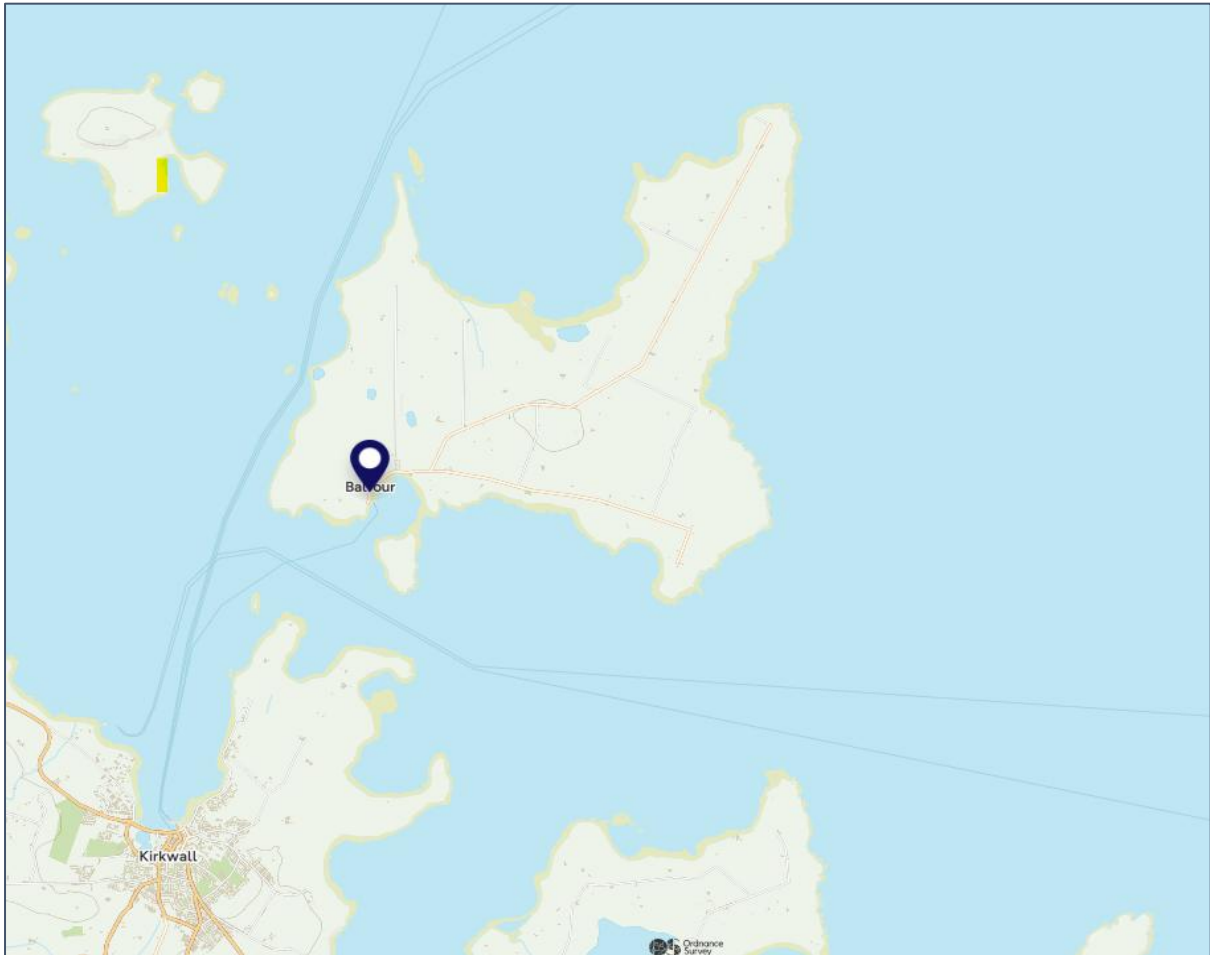
### 1.3 About Shapinsay

Shapinsay is one of the Orkney Islands, situated off the north coast of mainland Scotland. With an area of 29.5 square kilometres (11.4 sq mi), it is the eighth largest island in the Orkney archipelago. It is low-lying and fertile, with most land used for farming. There is one village on the island, Balfour, where the majority of facilities are located, including the roll-on/roll-off ferry that connects Shapinsay to Mainland Orkney in Kirkwall.

Figure i. Aerial view of Shapinsay



Figure i. Map of Shapinsay showing location



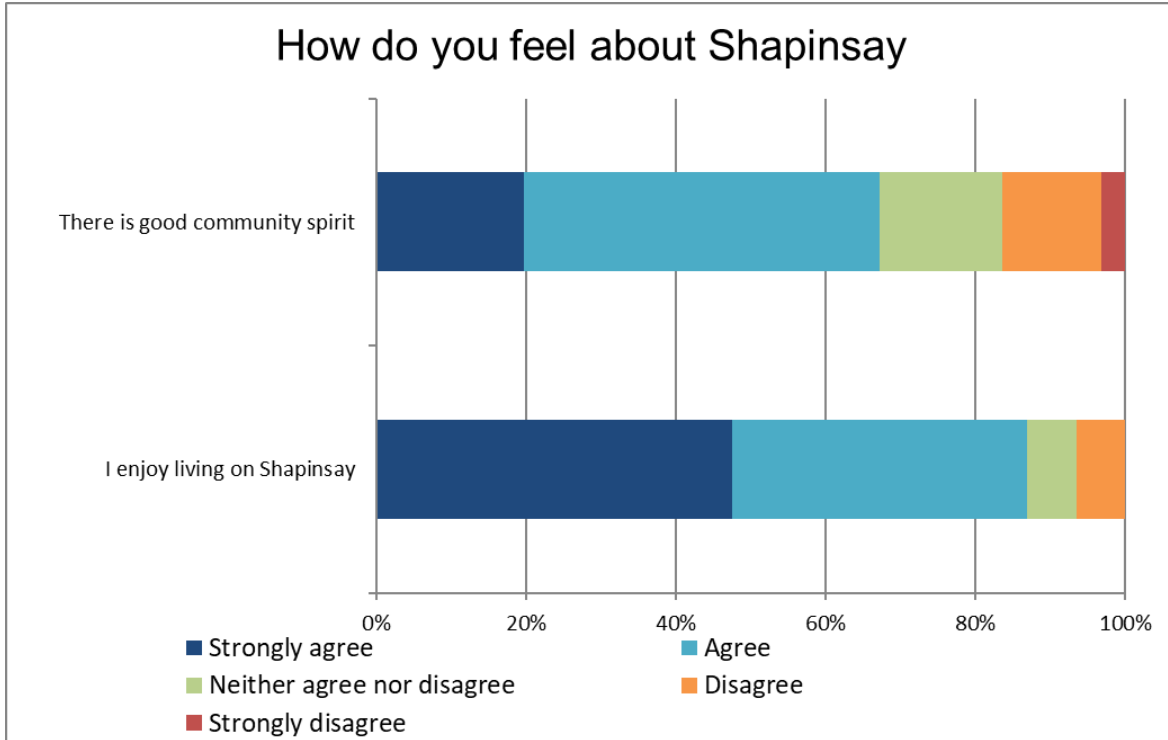
The economy of the island is primarily based on agriculture with a few small businesses that are largely tourism-related, although there are no hotels or hostels in Shapinsay. A number of residents commute to and work on Orkney Mainland, which is 5 miles away by ferry.

The Shapinsay community have a strong sense of place and identity and there is a high level of community activity and volunteering. Individuals and groups are involved in setting up, developing and maintaining a wide range of community assets from the Community Centre to sports clubs. Residents like living on the island, as demonstrated in a community survey that was undertaken in Summer 2024 to inform the development of this plan.





Figure ii. Survey respondents satisfaction with living in Shapinsay



This plan reflects on and builds on the Island Plan for 2020-2025 that was developed across 2018 and published in 2019. The core outcomes have not changed: the community want to ensure that Shapinsay continues to develop as an active, welcoming community with thriving facilities and social life, retaining existing residents and attracting new ones to ensure the long-term sustainability of the island community.

There has been significant community-led development of facilities and services in Shapinsay, often led by the Shapinsay Development Trust (SDT) and primarily funded through income generated, quite literally, from the wind-turbine that was installed in 2011. However, the turbine has a finite life-span, and to continue to deliver against community needs and priorities, it is essential that the energies of the community are drawn together to amplify their impact. Delivery of this Island Plan will help ensure that Shapinsay stays vibrant and sustainable, through the delivery of long lasting social, economic and environmental benefits not just for the current, but for future generations.

The Plan sets out Shapinsay’s community vision, under a set of key strategic themes and identifies the projects and activities for delivery.



## 2 About Shapinsay

People have lived in this area for thousands of years: standing stones show evidence of the island's human occupation since Neolithic times. According to Tacitus, the Roman general Agricola subdued the inhabitants of the Orkney Islands, and a local legend holds that he landed in Shapinsay. The island is mentioned in the Norse sagas: The Saga of Haakon Haakonsson states that Haakon IV of Norway anchored in Elwick Bay before sailing south to eventual defeat at the Battle of Largs. The land and sea have been the mainstays of the island, from historic kelp and fishing industries and from an ongoing dependence on agriculture. The main settlement is Balfour village, built in the late 18th century as a home for smiths, carpenters and masons employed on the Balfour estate.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Shapinsay reflects the ongoing investment by national and local government and by community-led organisations in social assets. It has a primary school, café/restaurant with Heritage Centre, a community centre with hall, clubrooms and fitness suite, additional community/meeting space at the Boathouse, which also serves as the headquarters of the Shapinsay Development Trust (SDT), a shop and post office, a medical centre with part-time GP coverage and a nurse practitioner in post, and a church. There is an out-of-hours ferry service and electric vehicles to provide community transport as well as a fleet of electric bikes including trikes and children's bikes.

The island is rich in natural and man-made assets. Shapinsay has two nature reserves and is notable for its bird life, with large seabird colonies and an RSPB reserve that is one of Orkney's most important wetlands providing a breeding habitat for ducks, waders, geese and swans. Balfour Castle, built in the Scottish Baronial style, is one of the island's most prominent features. Other landmarks include a standing stone, an Iron Age broch, a souterrain and a salt-water shower, converted from a doo-cot. Shapinsay is rich in marine wildlife such as seals and otters and has occasional visits of orca. A natural feature of the island are its storm beaches known locally as 'ayres' - a name rooted in the Old Norse meaning a strip of sea water completely shut off from the ocean by narrow necks of land. There is a Heritage Trail across the island, with a map detailing the areas of interest.

A community-owned wind turbine operated by Shapinsay Renewables Ltd, the trading company of Shapinsay Development Trust, commenced operation in 2011, and has provided funding for projects and development on the island, the majority of which have been delivered and maintained by the Development Trust. These include:

- The Smithy café and restaurant, opened in summer 2023, incorporating the Heritage Centre and craft shop
- A subsidised out-of-hours ferry service
- A car fleet of 3 electric vehicles with a driver service
- E-bike fleet
- Charity shop – Cast Affs
- Community grants (SWAP grants)
- 3 family homes to attract families to the island

However, the turbine is coming to the end of life and a real-time challenge for the island is how to fund and maintain the services that the wind turbine income has been underpinning.

## 2.1 Population

The 2022 Census recorded 299 residents in Shapinsay, very similar to the 2011 Census, but showing a slight decline from the 2018 ONS mid-year estimate of 305 (the data used for the previous island plan). A key challenge for the island is to maintain and ideally increase the population, particularly of younger families and individuals to support the activities and infrastructure.

In terms of demographics, Shapinsay has a relatively old population when compared to the rest of Scotland and even the rest of the Orkney Islands. The 2023-2028 Orkney Plan notes that Orkney has the longest life expectancy in Scotland.

If we compare the Census of 2022 with the 2018 ONS mid-year estimate we can see the impact of an aging island, with a reduction in the percentage of children mirrored by the increase in individuals over 65 years in age.

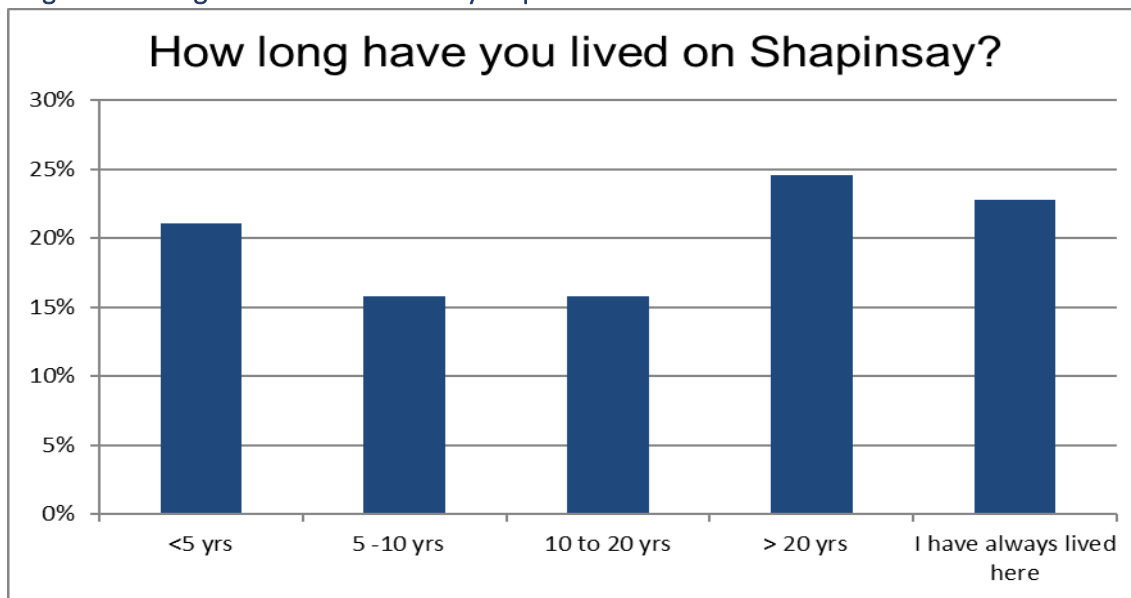
Figure iii. Age distribution – Census data

	Scotland 2022	OIC 2022	Shapinsay 2022	Shapinsay 2018
0-14	15%	15%	11%	15%
15-64	65%	60%	57%	57%
65+	20%	25%	33%	28%

Shapinsay also shows a “population gap” – there are fewer people between the ages of 16 and 45 than there are in Scotland as a whole. This is common in remote and island communities as young people leave their home and local area to seek work elsewhere, and are not replaced by others coming in to the area to start their careers and families. As before, this is more stark in Shapinsay than in Orkney as a whole.

Shapinsay has been successful in attracting new residents to the island. The community consultation carried out in 2024 showed that, whilst over 63% of respondents had lived on-island for over 10 years, over 20% of respondents had lived in Shapinsay for less than 5 years.

Figure iv. Age distribution of survey respondents



The types of household reflect the aging nature of the population. There are 151 households, of which almost half (46%) are single person households. In just over half of these, the occupant is over 66 years' old – totalling 22% of all Shapinsay households. A further 10% of households are occupied by a family in which all members are older than 66, so 1/3 of Shapinsay households are occupied by older residents. Less than 20% of households contain 1 or more dependent children.

33% of households have 2 individuals resident; 9% have 3 occupants, 7% have 4 and 5% (8 homes) have 5 or 6 people living there.

As a generalisation, differences in life ages and stages create welcome variety in peoples' interests and priorities. People with dependent children necessarily focus on issues impacting on their children; those without dependent children may have more free time (depending on other caring responsibilities) and therefore be more interested in a different range of activities. Some of these differences may give rise to the same issues; for example, an older person living on their own and with limited access to transport may feel socially isolated, as may a parent of very young children who is looking after their family full-time and has limited access to a car.

### 3 Socio-economics

On the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), Shapinsay is part of datazone S01011830, which also includes Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre. Overall, the datazone falls into Decile 4; that is, the 40% most deprived areas nationally.

This has declined sharply since 2016, when the same datazone fell into Decile 6. Income, employment and health are the main drivers for this deterioration in ranking.

Figure v. Socio-economic ranking

Indicator	Decile		Commentary
	2020	2016	
Overall	4	6	
Overall rank	2710	3683	
Income	5	6	Reflecting aging population and lack of full-time work
Employment	5	7	Few jobs on island – most commute to Mainland
Health	6	8	Reflecting aging population
Education/skills	7	7	
Housing	3	3	
Geographic access	1	1	
Crime	9	9	

The areas of significant decline reflect an aging population and a worsening economic environment post the financial crisis. It should be noted that any impacts of Covid are not captured, as the pandemic occurred after the most recent data collection.

### 3.1 Income and employment

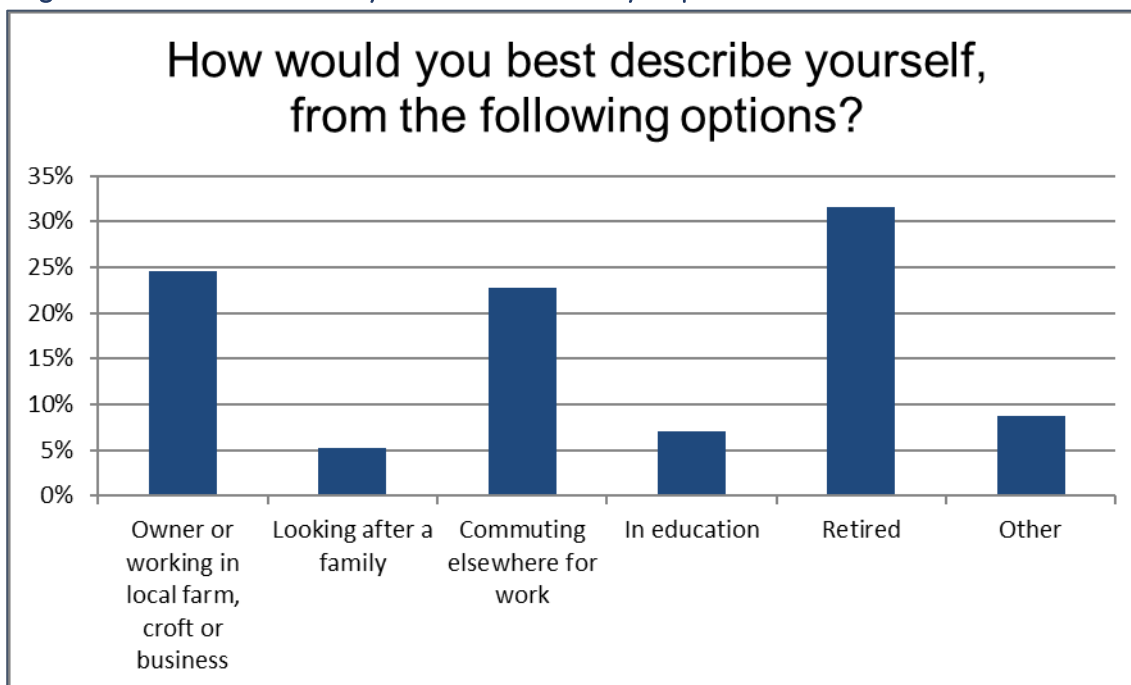
Shapinsay falls into the 40% most deprived areas in Scotland in terms of income and the 50% most deprived in terms of employment (SIMD 2020). Census 2022 information is that Agriculture remains the largest single occupation, employing almost one-quarter of the workforce, with education and healthcare/social care employing a further 21%. These are not typically highly-paid sectors so that while employment rates are high, pay rates may be below the Scottish average.

According to the Census 2022, the largest proportion of the workforce, including students (38%) work at or near home with almost 1/3 commuting by car/taxi and 8% walking or cycling. 17%, 24 respondents, reporting 'other' – i.e., using the ferry service to Kirkwall.

Excluding full-time students, just under half of the population are economically active: 1/3 of the adult population of Shapinsay are employed, 1/3 of whom are full-time, meaning that 11% of the adult population are in full-time employment. A further 15% of residents are self-employed, either full or part-time. The lack of full-time employment is one of the reasons for the relatively poor ranking of income in the SIMD statistics.

The respondents to the 2024 community survey mirror the Census information, with 48% reporting as economically active, 31% retired, 5% carers, 6% in education, and 8% "other" including those looking for work.

Figure vi. Economic activity status of 2024 survey respondents



Scottish national labour market statistics show an employment rate of 74%, an unemployment rate of 4%, and an economic inactivity rate of 23% for adults of working age (16 to 64). The comparable statistics for Shapinsay are a 72% employment rate, a 6% unemployment rate, and an economic inactivity rate of 22%. While Shapinsay is only slightly under the Scottish average in terms of employment statistics, these percentages hide the unemployment due to lack of highly-paid or full time jobs.

### 3.2 Housing

Shapinsay falls into the 30% most deprived areas in Scotland in terms of housing (SIMD 2020). At the 2022 census, 103 (68%) dwellings in Shapinsay were occupied by the owner, while 22 (15%) were socially rented (up 3 from the previous 2011 census). There has been a significant increase in private rentals, rising from 8 in 2011 to 15 (10%) in 2022, reflecting the societal changes seen nationally.

The Development Trust has delivered 3 social houses, with a further 4-8 in the pipeline.

There have been improvements in housing since the 2011 census which reported 18 houses lacking central heating on the island, (20% of the total). This have fallen to 10 (7% of housing stock) by the 2022 census. However, it is likely that fuel poverty has increased due to the significant increase in the price of fuel – both oil and electricity, which are the main means of home heating in Shapinsay. Across Scotland, in 2022, 791,000 households (31% of all households) were estimated to be in fuel poverty, of which 472,000 (18.5% of all households) were in extreme fuel poverty. This is higher than the 2019 estimates of 24.6% (613,000 households) and 12.4% (311,000 households) respectively.

Fuel poverty levels were already high in Orkney, with the OIC survey of 2015 estimating the overall rate of fuel poverty at 54%, but at over 70% in the smaller islands.

### 3.3 Health and wellbeing

Shapinsay falls into the 6th decile in terms of health (SIMD 2020). At the time of the 2022 census, 70 (23%) people in Shapinsay reported a disability that limited day to day activities either a little (44) or a lot (26). As Shapinsay's population is older than average, health and social care for older people have increasing demand.

The island's health centre is staffed by a nurse practitioner Monday to Friday, with a GP in attendance twice a week. Patients are also able to make appointments in Kirkwall.

The centre has access to an ambulance, with local residents as first responders.

The Well-being Co-ordinator (funded by Esme Fairbairn through VAO) and employed by the Trust is a vital component of promoting well-being with residents, leading activities such as walks and activity sessions.

On the SIMD 2020, Shapinsay falls into the 9th decile, meaning that it is one of the least deprived areas in Scotland in terms of crime.

### 3.4 Education

There is a primary school on the island which currently has 15 pupils: 3 of them in the nursery and pre-school class and 12 in the primary classes. Older children travel to secondary school in Kirkwall daily.

One of the key issues in Shapinsay is keeping the Primary School open. The school is split into 2 classes; Nursery / Preschool and P1-7. In 2021, the Primary School had a school roll of 17 primary pupils and 1 pre-school pupil, and this was forecast to fall to 6 primary school and 2 pre-school pupils by 2026. This would make the Primary the third smallest primary school in the islands, with only North Ronaldsay and Papa Westray forecast to have smaller rolls. The potential for the primary to be mothballed and its pupils sent to Kirkwall is a significant concern for the island, and creates a driver to attract more families with primary school age children to live in Shapinsay.

Shapinsay falls into the 7th decile in terms of education and skills (SIMD 2020).

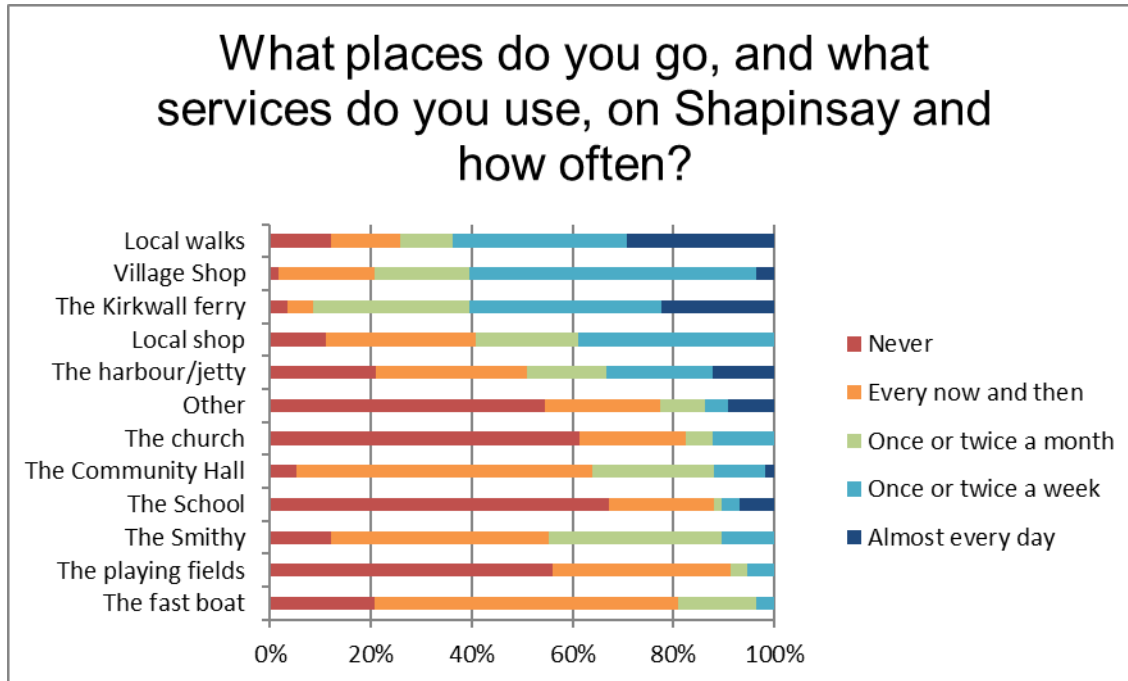
As of the latest census, the proportion of people with no qualifications is higher than the Scottish average: 24% of the working age population (Scotland: 17%), while the percentage of people with a degree-level qualification is average, at 32% (Scotland: 32%).

### 3.5 Access to services

Shapinsay falls into the 2% most deprived areas in Scotland in terms of geographic access to services (SIMD 2020). At the 2022 census, 25 households (17%) had no car – the same as in the 2011 census.

Shapinsay retains some key services in the community. It has a shop with Post Office, a Primary School, Community Centre, a Health Centre with a full-time nurse practitioner and visiting GP, and the recently refurbished and reopened Smithy. This provides a café and restaurant facility and also houses the Heritage Centre, which incorporates a craft shop. There is also a Church, which remains in operation. As part of the 2024 island survey, residents reported their use of existing services as set out in Figure vii.

Figure vii. Use of Shapinsay assets



Local walks, the village shop and the Kirkwall ferry are used at least once or twice a week by over 60% of respondents. Other facilities are used less intensively but regularly; respondents used the following services at least 1-2 times per month:

- The harbour/jetty – 49%
- The Smithy – 45%
- The Community Hall – 36%
- The fast boat – 19%

Other services, including secondary education, fuel provision and retail are in Kirkwall. In the winter months the ferry service operates 6 crossings per day Monday to Friday with 4 on Saturday and 3 on Sunday.

Residents reported a realistic approach to access to facilities and amenities, generally accepting of the current position, with 57% agreeing that they meet current needs and almost 60% feeling that they were easy to get to and use (see details in Community Survey section).

The lack of easy access to major services in Kirkwall is not an issue for people who can access the ferry. However, it is an issue for people who either cannot drive or who do not have a car. There is no public bus service on island. The Development Trust have sought to address this through the island car service and e-bike provision.

According to Digital Scotland, superfast broadband is available in Shapinsay in and around Balfour village and is due to be in place by December 2024 at Helliar View. Residents themselves report good accessibility to broadband across the island. The National Islands Plan Implementation Route Map 2024 notes ‘During 2024/25 we expect to connect premises in Westray, Eday, Rousay and Shapinsay ...through the R100 North contract’.

### 3.6 Community activity

The community in Shapinsay is active, with people volunteering to lead and support a variety of groups and activities.

The 2024 community survey reported that the majority of residents felt that there were good opportunities for recreation and activities:

## 4 Key players

### 4.1 Shapinsay Development Trust (SDT)

SDT is governed and managed by an active volunteer Board. It is typically the focal point for community development, and has been very active in the acquisition and development of facilities and services. These have been predominantly funded by income from the wind-turbine, which in 2023 generated over £700k from electricity generation. SDT was shortlisted for a SURF award in 2023, a national award which recognises and rewards best practice in and innovation in community regeneration, and highlights the role that regeneration projects have in improving the wellbeing of individuals and communities.

The SDT subsidises several local services, including transport and personal care. Income to do this comes almost exclusively from Shapinsay Renewables Ltd, a trading company which operates a wind turbine.

Shapinsay Renewables Ltd operates as a separate trading arm of the Shapinsay Development Trust, overseeing the turbine's management. The company is run by a dedicated board of five volunteers with business experience, supported by a manager who is responsible for the turbine's day-to-day operations and optimising its income. Each year, profits are drawn down as Gift Aid and transferred to the Trust to provide core funding.



Since its installation in 2011, the turbine has faced challenges, particularly significant curtailment periods when it had to be shut down due to grid capacity issues. In recent years, however, income has increased thanks to a favourable

Feed-in Tariff (FIT) agreement and reduced curtailment as other turbines have gone offline.

While the turbine has enjoyed a couple of strong financial years, the FIT agreement is approaching its end, and the turbine is nearing the end of its expected operational lifespan. Looking ahead, Shapinsay Renewables Ltd must consider future options. One potential solution is *repowering*—extending the planning permission for an additional five years and undertaking the necessary work to extend the turbine's operational life. This would ensure continued income generation and support for the Trust's activities.

The Trust is developing affordable housing, which supports the objective of attracting and retaining residents to Shapinsay and will also generate an ongoing income stream for SDT. However, net income from the Balfour development is anticipated to be of the order of £30k, significantly below turbine income and insufficient in itself to maintain the current level of subsidy for the fast boat ferry service (around £65k per year); the car service (around £25k per year).



## 4.2 Community Council

The Community Council represents Shapinsay as a statutory consultee in a range of matters to Orkney Islands Council, the Scottish Government and other organisations who could be taking decisions that impact the island. This includes planning matters and provision of services such as ferries, waste and recycling, roads. The Community Council can also support small local projects, events and school trips through the Community Council Grants Scheme.

## 4.3 Shapinsay Community Association

Shapinsay Community Association manage the community centre for Orkney Islands Council, facilitating a variety of groups and clubs for people of all ages on the island and ensuring the smooth running and upkeep of the facilities.

The Community Association is constituted from approximately 30 key holders from the various groups and clubs who use the facilities provided at the community side of the school.

## 4.4 Agricultural Association

The Agricultural Association organise the Agricultural Show, judging events and an annual ploughing competition. It is the main group for the farming and crofting community in Shapinsay.

## 4.5 Shapinsay Heritage Arts and Crafts (SHAC)

SHAC was created for the advancement and preservation of the historical, cultural, natural heritage, arts and crafts of the Island of Shapinsay. The group operate the heritage and craft centre on the first floor of the Smithy (opened in August 2023), showcasing artifacts and Shapinsay history and culture through displays, wall boards and a large-scale mural. There is also a craft shop in the newly renovated space.

## 4.6 Orkney Islands Council

The Council are key partners, providing the standard services such as education, roads and infrastructure, waste management etc. 3 local councillors represent the North Isles, of which Shapinsay is one. OIC have funded investments in infrastructure undertaken by the SDT including purchase of the Schoolhouse,

In 2024, OIC set up the Orkney Towns Board to channel funding under the UK Government's Levelling Up Programme to smaller towns including those outside Kirkwall. This infrastructure programme will be delivered over the next 10 years. The priorities for this fund include Transport and Connectivity, a vital service in the Orkney Islands and in Shapinsay.

Health and social care provision is in partnership with NHS Orkney through the Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP). The Partnership aims to improve and develop social care, community health and wellbeing.

The Orkney HSCP is responsible for the delivery of the full range of the Council's social work and social services, for all age groups and service user groups, and NHS Orkney's community-based health services, under joint management arrangements.

## 4.7 NHS Orkney

Shapinsay has a health centre, operating under a Kirkwall based practice with a nurse practitioner available Monday to Friday and provision of an early evening service on Wednesday. A GP is on-island Monday afternoon and Thursday morning, with appointments available in Kirkwall throughout the week. After hours service is through NHS 24.

Prescriptions are delivered to Shapinsay for collection from the health centre.



#### 4.8 Highlands and Islands Enterprise

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) is the economic and community development agency for the Highlands and Islands area, seeking to build and sustain a greener, fairer and more resilient region that benefits everyone. Shapinsay is well-supported by HIE, for example the development of the Island Plans was funded through HIE; they also part funded the Smithy, the bike shed, the charity shop and the solar panels at the Boathouse.

HIE's strategic plan 2023-2028 chimes with the challenges experience in living in Shapinsay, and its commitment to address these challenges which are consistent across its area are reflected in its key outcomes:

- A more balanced population and a growing skilled workforce;
- An increase in average wages;
- An increase in economic and community benefit from the transition to net zero;
- Increase in productivity and innovation.

Delivery of these outcomes includes a commitment to community wealth building and to place-based planning and development.

## 5 Actions and achievements during the last plan period

The 2020-25 plan had identified the priorities for the island and the island, and particularly the Shapinsay Development Trust, has been active in addressing them.

### 5.1 Progress against previous plan

A community that is connected			
Timeline	Target	Achievement by 2024	Complete?
Short term	Improved broadband connectivity	All Shapinsay households have fibre broadband connectivity	Complete
Medium term	Accessible map of walking and cycling routes Art trail/geocaches	Heritage trail in place and Reflective Routes Map available for walking trails	Complete
Long term (beyond plan period)	Pursue improved ferry provision	Fast boat service set up; ongoing service improvements being consulted on	Complete
		Zevi project (Zero Emissions Vessel and Infrastructure) electric hydrofoil granted in 2023 – delivery expected 2025 (Hydrogen project scrapped)	In progress – OIC

A community that attracts visitors			
Timeline	Target	Achievement by 2024	
Short term	Options appraisal for a possible community-run café/pub with visitor accommodation	Smithy project delivered and opened 2023	Complete
Medium term	Listing of residents with practical skills	Website page set up, renewing request for people to list skills	In progress
	Develop island website and promote Shapinsay as a destination for walking, cycling and birdwatching	Shapinsay.org.uk in place highlighting birds, beaches and wildlife; electric bike hire	Complete
Long term (beyond plan period)	Tourism strategy	To be developed	Not progressed
	Cafe/pub and programme of events to bring in income from visitors	Part of Smithy development plan	In progress

		A community that Grows	
Timeline	Target	Achievement by 2024	
Short term	Identify sites for a community garden	Will be part of Spion development	In progress
	Identify sites for clean-up, planting and re-wilding, with a view to access and conservation		Not progressed
Medium term	Establish polytunnel and community composting unit	Will be delivered with Spion project	In progress
	Build volunteer capacity for environmental initiatives	Charity Shop and Mens Shed in place, with volunteer support	Complete
Long term (beyond plan period)	Develop community growing	Will be delivered with Spion project Part of Smithy development plan	In progress

		A community with housing for all	
Timeline	Target	Achievement by 2024	
Short term	Develop plans for affordable housing in line with current and identified future needs	Balfour Cottages identified and actioned and Rullinvoe purchased delivering 3 homes to date	In progress
Medium term	Assess need for housing for people with disabilities and/or care needs	Balfour Cottages identified and actioned	In progress
Long term (beyond plan period)	Manage properties for full occupation to contribute to population sustainability in Shapinsay and to generate an income for the Trust.	Ongoing - will be delivered through existing and planned projects	In progress

A sustainable community			
Timeline	Target	Achievement by 2024	
Short term	Island enterprise working group, to facilitate commercial ideas generation and early scoping studies	Spion Brae site will provide housing, units and opportunities. Smithy also a commercially focused enterprise	In progress
Medium term	Commission in depth feasibility study and business planning into a short list of ideas	As above re Spion Brae and Smithy	In progress
Long term (beyond plan period)	Secure investment in the most viable idea(s) so that income will be coming on stream before the turbine income ceases	Housing projects will deliver income stream. SDT searching for new projects and to maximise efficiency of existing services such as the fast boat and the island car.	In progress

Overall, SDT has made significant progress against a set of ambitious targets. Those which have required access to land and to significant capital funding are well-developed and completed to the extent that planning, regulation, and funding permit. More details are below.

SDT will continue to progress these major projects – Balfour Cottage, the Spion project – into the next planning period. It is also continuing to review the offering from the Island Car service, the Smithy and the Fast Boat service to help ensure these achieve community needs at an affordable cost to SDT.

## 5.2 The Smithy

The Trust purchased the Smithy from Orkney Islands Council in 2022 and have subsequently renovated to provide a Heritage Centre upstairs, with restaurant and café downstairs. It opened on the 12th of July 2023.

Seating up to 30 people in the café, the Smithy provides lunch, takeaway and evening bar meals and a bar, open until midnight Friday and Saturday. During the summer months there is a marquee and picnic benches in the garden, extending the service provision for patrons and their dogs.

### *The Smithy*



## 5.3 Community Transport

### 5.3.1 Out of hours boat

SDT provide a passenger-only out-of-hours boat service, running between Balfour village and Kirkwall Harbour. Currently operating 1 return sailing per day (with prior booking), Monday to Saturday, the fares are heavily subsidised by the Trust, with current pricing of:

Adults: £8.50 (increasing to £10 as of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2025)

12+: £2 (Increasing to £3 as of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2025) with under 12-year-olds free of charge

This compares to the Orkney Ferries foot passenger flat fare of £3.05 each way.

### 5.3.2 Electric vehicles and island car



Supporting the drive to net zero, the Trust operate 2 electric people carriers that can be booked, with driver, for a wide range of uses, such as transport to events and facilities on the island. They are also used to support outings to Mainland by community groups.

A fleet of 7 electric bikes are available to residents and visitors, housed in a purpose built shed by the Boathouse, protecting and maximising the lifespan of these assets. These can be booked online or in person. 21 electric bikes are out on long term rental to islanders for wellbeing and commuting.

The Trust also funds up to 10 driving lessons for residents, recognising the importance of independent travel.

In late 2024 the Trust commenced a review of community transport position as part of its commitment to continue to review and improve services to meet community needs and to ensure that services are sustainable. This included a full survey to all households in Shapinsay to identify uses, needs, and potential changes.

## 5.4 Housing

Shapinsay Development Trust have been very active in securing and developing housing for island residents.

The Trust secured grant funding from the Scottish Land Fund (SLF) to purchase two properties in Balfour village: Number 9 in July 2020 and the Schoolhouse in January 2021. These have been renovated and have been let to local residents since Spring/Summer 2021.

The Trust next purchased Balfour Cottage in February 2023, again with support from SLF and has commenced conversion into 4 x self-contained properties for older island residents. This will help to address the challenges associated with the increasing numbers of elderly households, often in properties with poor fuel economy, exacerbating health and financial pressures. The Cottages are close to the village facilities and transport links.

In the summer of 2023 the opportunity arose to purchase Rullinvoe, a house in Balfour village. The property has been fully renovated and insulated prior to being let.

### ***Balfour Cottages***



#### **5.5 Economic development**

The Trust has put in place facilities to support meetings, with a meeting room available in the Boathouse. In 2023 the Smithy project was completed. The Trust is the island's largest employer, of over 25 people across the Smithy, the car/driver service, fast boat and Trust operations.

The plans for Spion Brae include an enterprise zone; please see below

#### **5.6 Island Wellbeing Project**

The Island Wellbeing Project is a partnership between Voluntary Action Orkney, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Orkney Health and Care and the Development Trusts of Hoy, Sanday, Shapinsay, Stronsay, Westray and Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre. It is funded by Esme Fairburn and The Tudor Trust, with each Development Trust employing a Community Wellbeing Coordinator.

The project aim is to improve the wellbeing of island residents across health, economic, social and place metrics, tying back to the Scottish Government and OIC priorities. This is progressed through both community-led initiatives and provision of support to address priority community needs, whilst developing long-term capacity.

In Shapinsay, the Well-being Co-ordinator has been instrumental in developing a community larder, supporting the creation of a Mens Shed and helping recruit carers for the island, as well as instigating Health Walks. Previous initiatives include the pop up charity shop and pop up café, both of which the trust have gone on to create a more permanent replacement. The Wellbeing project works with partner organisations such as THAW and Warmworks to try and identify need on the island for insulation and warmer homes.

**The Spion Project**

In 2022, SDT began an asset mapping project to identify potential sites for housing or renovation on the island. As part of this effort, we reached out to most landowners to explore opportunities. Following this, the Board conducted site visits to evaluate several possibilities, ultimately identifying Spion Brae as the most promising location at that time.

In 2023, SDT secured funding to purchase the site and developed an ambitious plan to maximise its potential while avoiding the challenges of becoming a large-scale developer. This approach ensures that the necessary infrastructure costs remain manageable. The proposed development at Spion Brae would feature a mix of community, residential, and commercial facilities, including:

- An enterprise zone with one or two large buildings to house studio or office spaces, providing a permanent home for the charity shop and spaces for other commercial activities.
- A community garden, following extensive but ultimately unsuccessful efforts to secure another site for this purpose.
- Allotments, a wellbeing walk, and recreational spaces.
- Two family homes, two starter homes, and three serviced plots.
- A potential tourism offering, such as glamping pods or a campsite.

Progress on this project was paused due to new opportunities that arose in quick succession. Balfour Cottage and Rullinvoe were offered for sale to the Trust, enabling us to advance two housing projects more immediately. The Spion Brae initiative is planned for revisitation in 2025.





## 6 The Policy Context

As part of the Community Action Plan process, national and local policies and strategies have been reviewed and the following summarised as having a direct bearing. It will be important for the Development Trust to align its developments, where possible, with work already underway locally.

### 6.1 National policy: Key Priorities

The 2024/25 Scottish Government priorities remain consistent with established policy:

- eradicating child poverty
- growing the economy
- tackling the climate emergency
- ensuring high quality and sustainable public services.

These are supported by specific policies and initiatives of relevance to Shapinsay including:

- Carbon neutral islands pilot project (including Hoy in Orkney)
- National Islands Plan (2019) – under review with a new plan anticipated 2025
- Islands Deal Programme

### 6.2 Orkney Islands Council

Turning to Orkney Islands Council (OIC), the 2023-2028 plan has now been published. This reflects the ongoing Scottish Government priorities and highlights:

- Growing our economies
  - We will reduce poverty and disadvantage and minimise the effects of the cost-of-living crisis
  - We will create favourable conditions for sustainable economic growth
  - We will work towards becoming net zero
- Strengthening our communities
  - We will support communities to develop local solutions and deliver what is important to them
  - We will establish the highest standards of public support and protection
  - We will widen access to opportunities for better learning, achievement and wellbeing
- Developing our infrastructure
  - We will invest in homes, supporting choice, inclusion and economic growth.
  - We will remove barriers to digital connectivity and vital transport
  - We will invest in projects that further our economic ambitions

There are also specific strategies supporting Scottish Government priorities including:

- Orkney Child Poverty Strategy 2022-2026
- The Orkney Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2018-2022
- Orkney Islands Council Carbon Management Programme 2016-2026
- The NHS Orkney Clinical Strategy 2022-2027
- Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan 2022 2025

## 7 Community consultation

A series of community consultation/engagement activities were undertaken to inform this plan.

An initial consultation was held at the popular Shapinsay Show on August 6th 2024, engaging with both local residents and visitors to hear views and generate ideas.

This was led by SDT, with boards highlighting recent and current projects and providing space for comment and input. The stated preference for residents at that consultation was to have the opportunity to reflect and consider in advance of sharing their views, so a community-wide survey was undertaken, distributed on-line and sent out with the SDT newsletter to every household on the island.

The responses to the survey are detailed below. The questions asked were based on the Place Standard and the responses have been summarised into the Place Standard toolkit.

Separately, the SDT sent out a questionnaire on the transport services.

Summary information from the survey was shared at the SDT AGM on the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2024, attended by over 30 people. At the AGM, 4 tables of 6-10 people per table were asked to consider and respond to more three more detailed questions relating to priority themes and actions (See Appendix B):

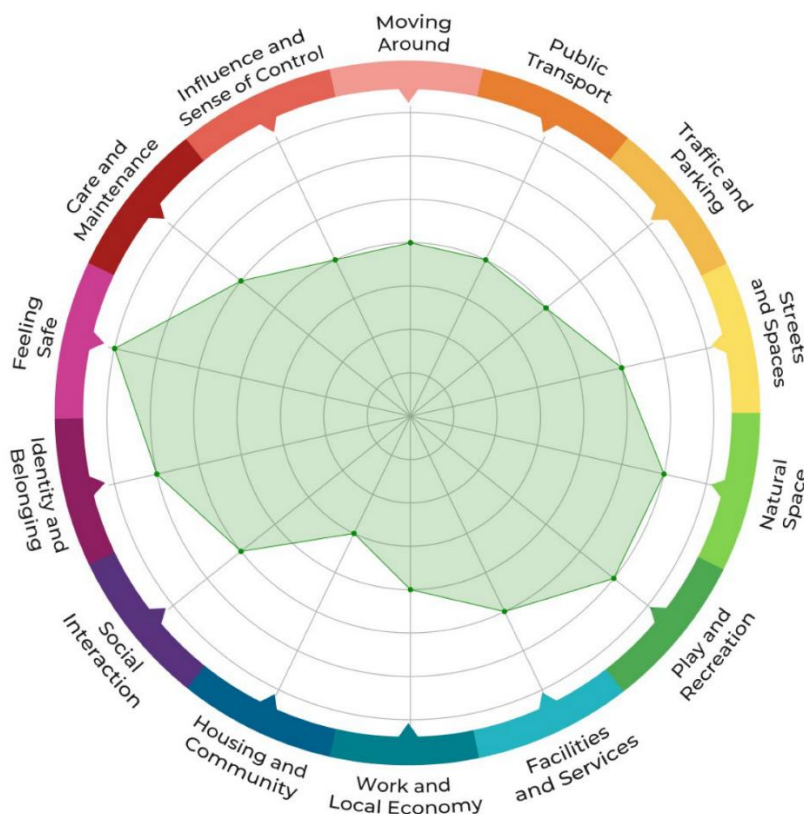
- Support and care for vulnerable people
- More for younger people to do
- The fast boat service.

Specific engagement activities were held with the young people of the island through a drop-in session.

### 7.1 Survey summary

We summarised the survey results using the Place Standard tool, to help show what people thought about aspects of their life in Shapinsay.

Figure viii. Shapinsay Place Standard Wheel



The responses to the survey showed that generally people scored highly (6-7) about

- Feeling safe
- Identifying and belonging
- Access to and experience of natural spaces
- Access to opportunities and spaces for play and recreation

People scored in the middle (4-5) about

- Easy to walk and cycle
- Public transport meeting needs
- Traffic and parking being safe and meeting needs
- Buildings, streets and public spaces are easy to get around
- Facilities and amenities meeting needs
- Opportunities for social interaction
- Shapinsay being looked after and cared for

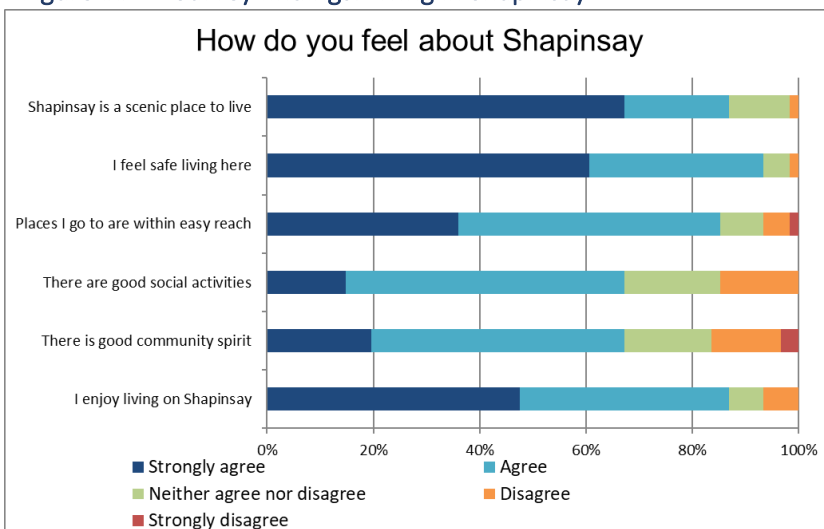
The lowest scores were (3 – 3.5)

- Housing supporting the needs of the community
- An active local economy and the opportunity to access good quality work.

### 7.2 What is good about living in Shapinsay?

Overall, people felt positive about living in Shapinsay. The community survey, which had 63 responses from 151 households, asked people about how they felt about living in Shapinsay.

Figure ix. Survey findings: Living in Shapinsay

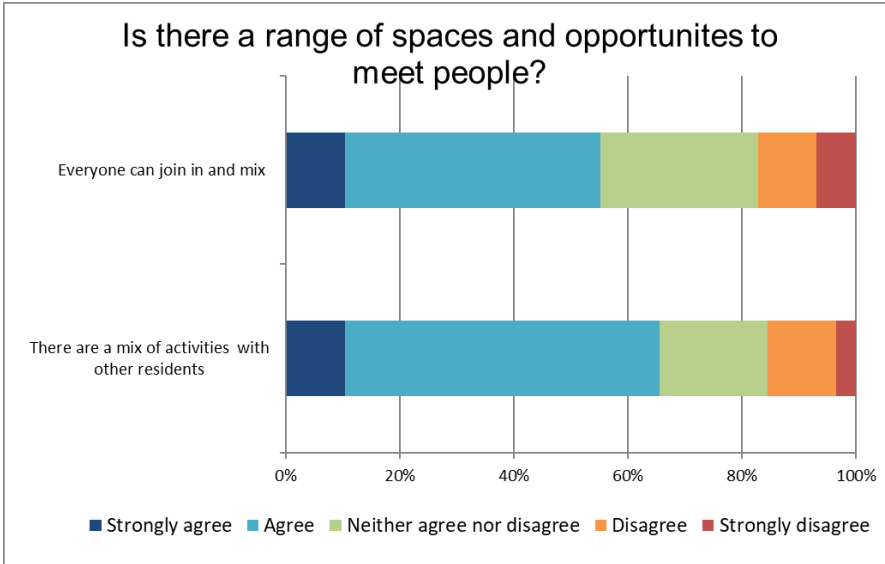


Almost everyone who responded (87%) strongly agreed or agreed that they enjoyed living on the island, and safe place to live (93%).



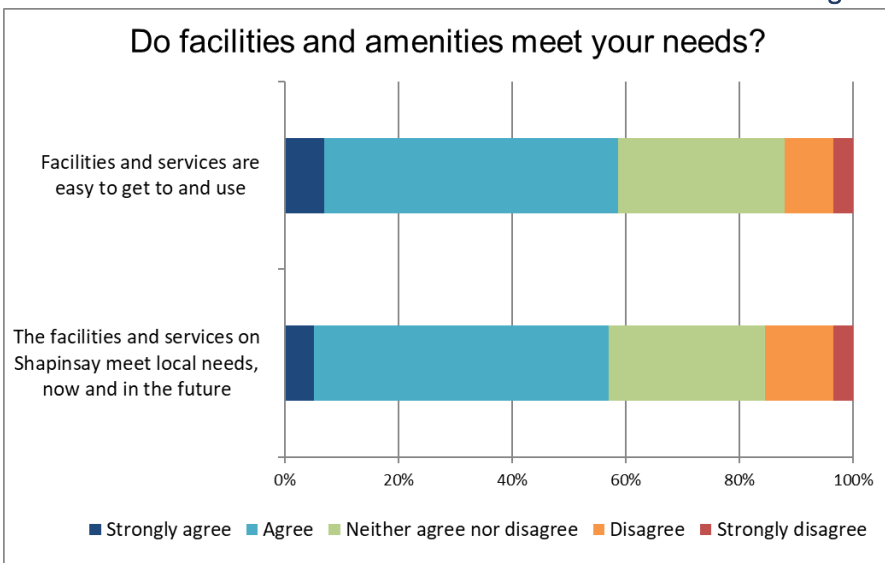


Figure xiv. People’s feelings about social activities



Generally, just under two-thirds of people strongly agreed or agreed that there was a mix of activities, and slightly less felt that “everyone can join in and mix”.

Figure xv. People’s feelings about facilities and amenities



Responses were slightly less positive about facilities and amenities meeting needs. Although Shapinsay has a good range of community assets, for many people they will need to visit Kirkwall in order to access larger shops and a range of shops and services, activities for children and young people, and cultural activities.

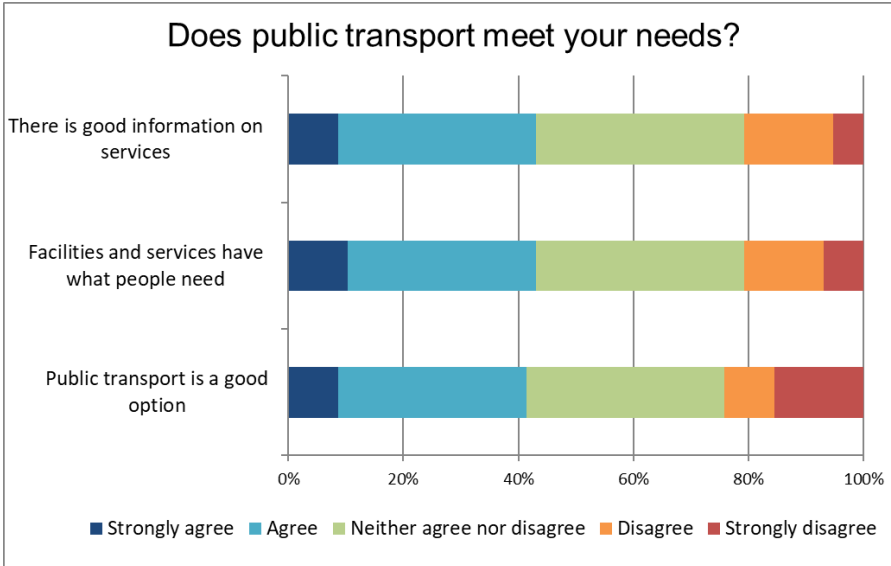
The majority positive response reflects the efforts of the SDT, of other community organisations and their volunteers to bring people together both through structured clubs and events, and through the provision of an informal meeting space at the Smithy. Provision of a range of activities in a population as small as Shapinsay reflects positively on the efforts being made.

There does appear to be a lingering sense of exclusion felt by around 15% of respondents, who were entirely from the 45 – 64 age group. These respondents had a range of resident periods on the island – both long term and relatively recent – and a range of occupations, from employed / self-employed through caring and otherwise economically inactive.

### 7.3.2 Connectivity and transport

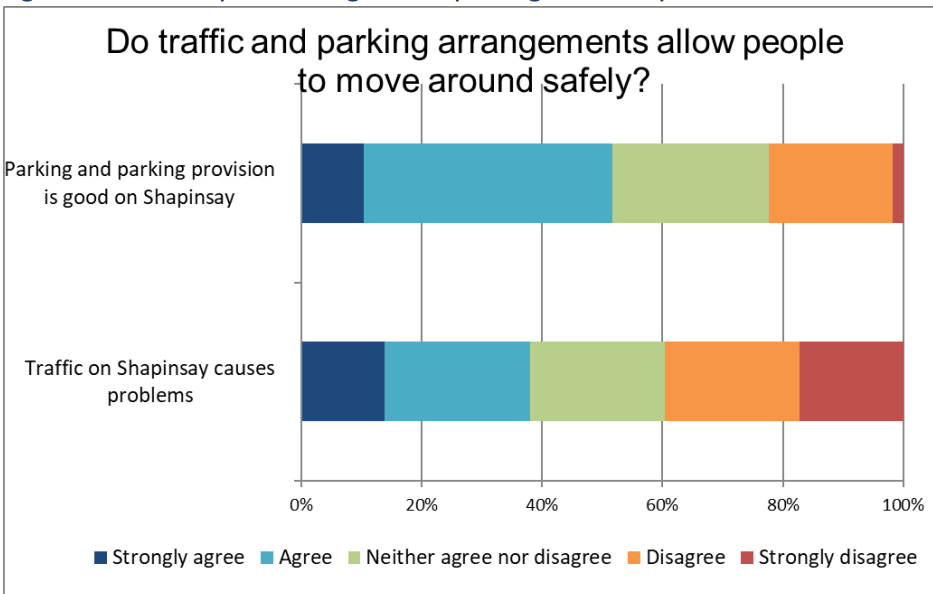
There is no public transport in Shapinsay other than the scheduled ferry service. Comments on the service were that it is expensive with poor/no facilities/accommodation for individuals with mobility issues or buggies.

Figure xvi. People’s feelings about public transport



The island car was seen as a very positive service, but several individuals noted that this was not always well known about although it is advertised in the newsletter and on the SDT website.

Figure xvii. People’s feelings about parking and safety

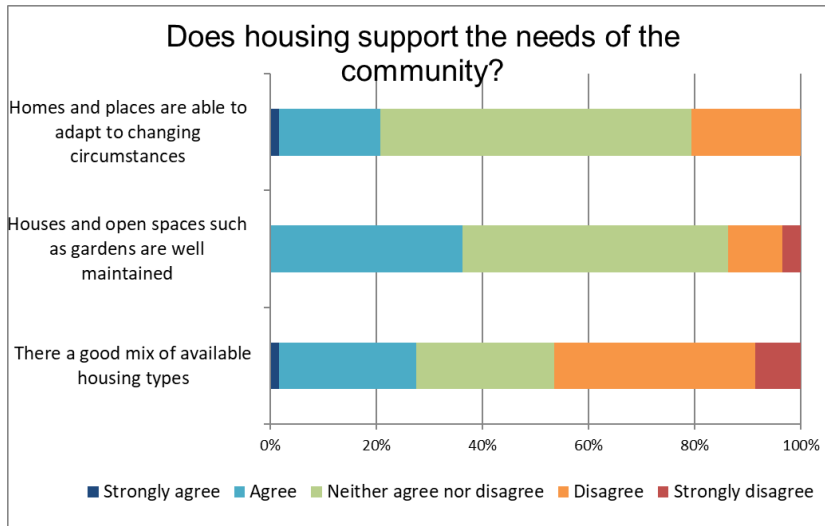


There were strong views expressed that parking in the village and at the ferry was inadequate. Speeding and inconsiderate driving were also raised. These factors led to a relatively low satisfaction with arrangements for vehicles.

### 7.3.3 Housing

SDT have led significant investments in housing in Shapinsay over the last 5 years, creating 3 social housing units and with 8 more planned. One of the housing units at Balfour Cottages is planned to be for key workers if required. However, housing remains an issue, identified both in the SIMD datasets (see section 3.2 and in the community survey. While there were few comments on housing, it was one of the areas where people expressed greatest dissatisfaction in the survey questions.

Figure xviii. People's feelings about housing



Only around a quarter of people agreed that there was a good mix of housing available. Almost half disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

This finding is consistent with that of the Orkney Islands Council Housing Strategy Consultation Report 2024 which identified key themes:

- The need to reduce empty homes, second and holiday homes – this was the most common theme expressed across all responses.
- Increasing housing supply – including the need for different types and sizes of housing to meet a range of housing needs for individuals, families and starter homes.
- Quality of existing homes – highlighting the need for maintenance, and the need for focus on energy efficiency/fuel poverty especially in Council housing, and the lack of access to tradespeople for people who want to make repairs to their own home.
- Location – consultees argued that housing was needed across different locations/communities with some also noting that new development should be sustainable – in the right place for amenities, travel, and within communities.
- Key workers and local households – many noted the need for housing for key workers (including incoming workers), but with a similar strength of opinion around ensuring local resident's housing needs are met.

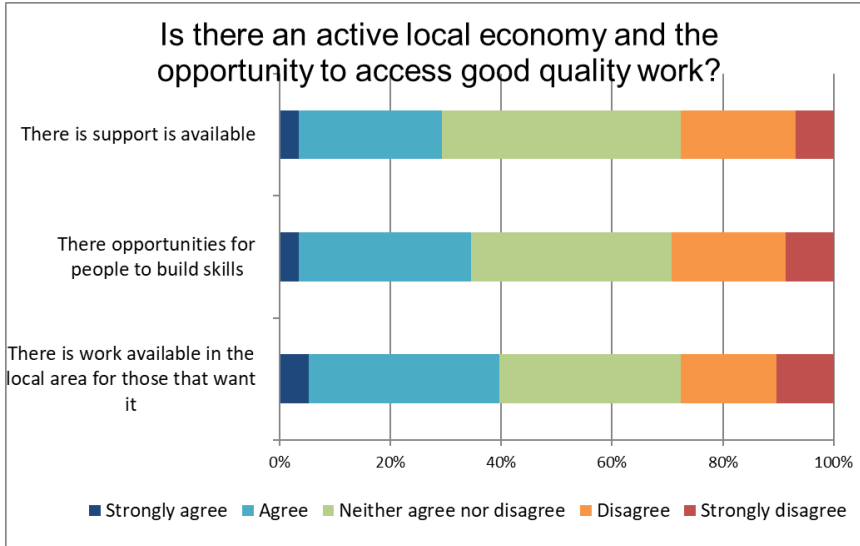
The availability of land and the cost of building houses are key barriers in all sparsely populated areas, exacerbated by Shapinsay being an island off an island. The Scottish Government subsidy for creating new social housing is around £96,000 per 2-bedroom unit; the cost of building far exceeds this amount and in some island communities is triple this cost. National pilots for off-grid homes, for modular homes, and for standard architecture are all underway but these issues continue to prevent expansion of the housing supply. The high proportion of older people living alone in what were family homes or crofts leads to an issue of under-occupation, both nationally and in Shapinsay. Resolving these issues would require an incentive to move and somewhere more accessible to move to; and also require that people could afford to purchase these houses.

#### 7.3.4 Work and the economy

Given the Census 2022 information, the SIMD information and the survey information about accessing good quality work (see section 3.1) it is unsurprising that respondents to the survey were less satisfied with the availability of work. As noted above, SDT has enabled The Smithy to employ young people part-time, often in their first job, providing invaluable experience which is unique to the island.



Figure xix. Priorities for Shapinsay over the next 5 years



40% of respondents thought that there was work available for those who want it; this ties to experiential evidence from the SDT, one of the major employers in the area, about difficulty of recruiting staff locally. These respondents were at a range of ages and life stages.

A smaller proportion, 36% and 30%, thought that there were opportunities to build skills and to obtain support; again these respondents were from across the population.

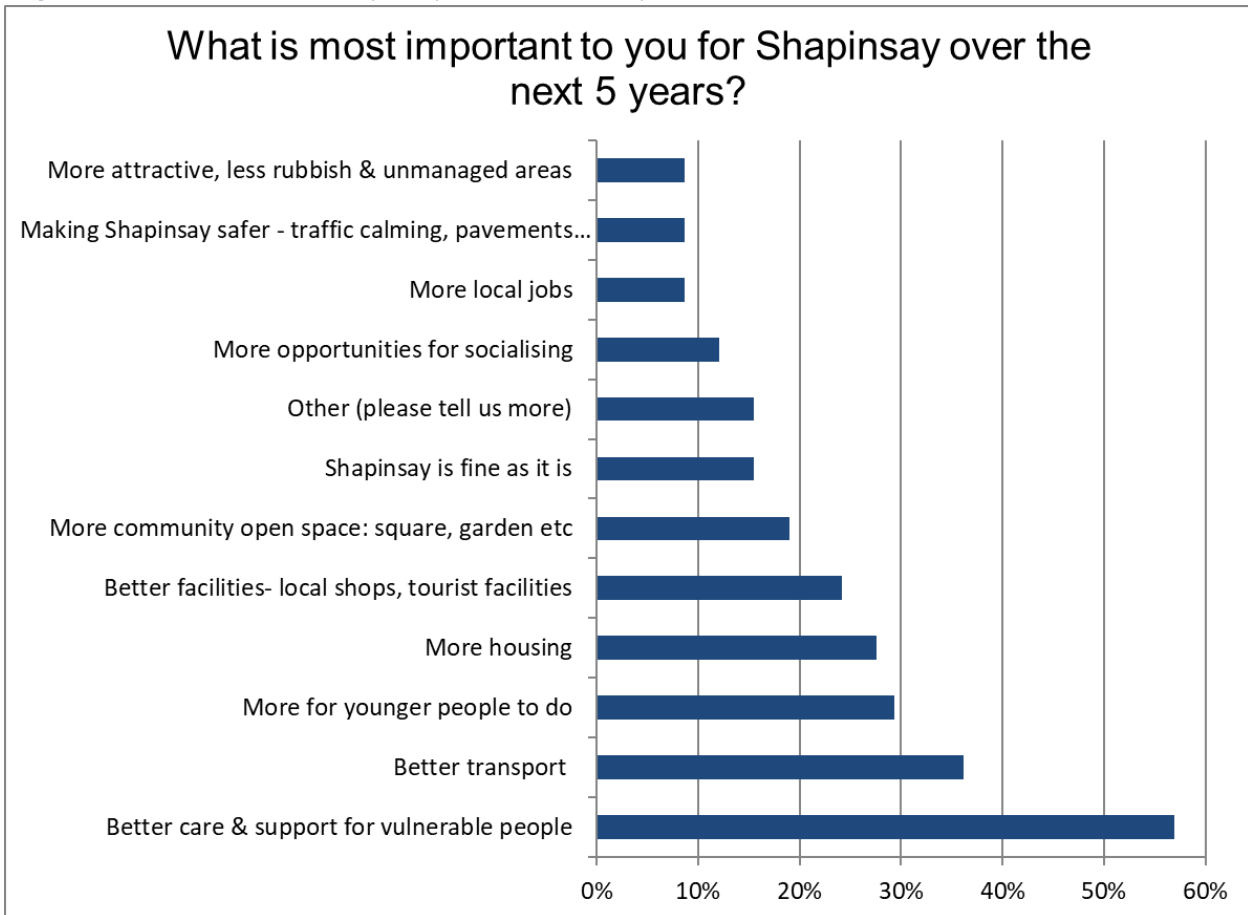
The survey did not ask specifically about employment on the island, and the relatively short journey to Kirkwall on a regular ferry may have had a bearing on these answers. As with all sparsely population areas, access to transport is a significant requirement to accessing employment; again, the island car is provided by SDT.

What actions should be prioritised?

People’s choices about what could be improved here matched to the concerns raised about living here.

In the survey, people were asked to choose the 3 most important themes for Shapinsay in the future

Figure xx. Priorities for Shapinsay over the next 5 years



15% of people thought “Shapinsay is fine as it is”.

The three top choices were:

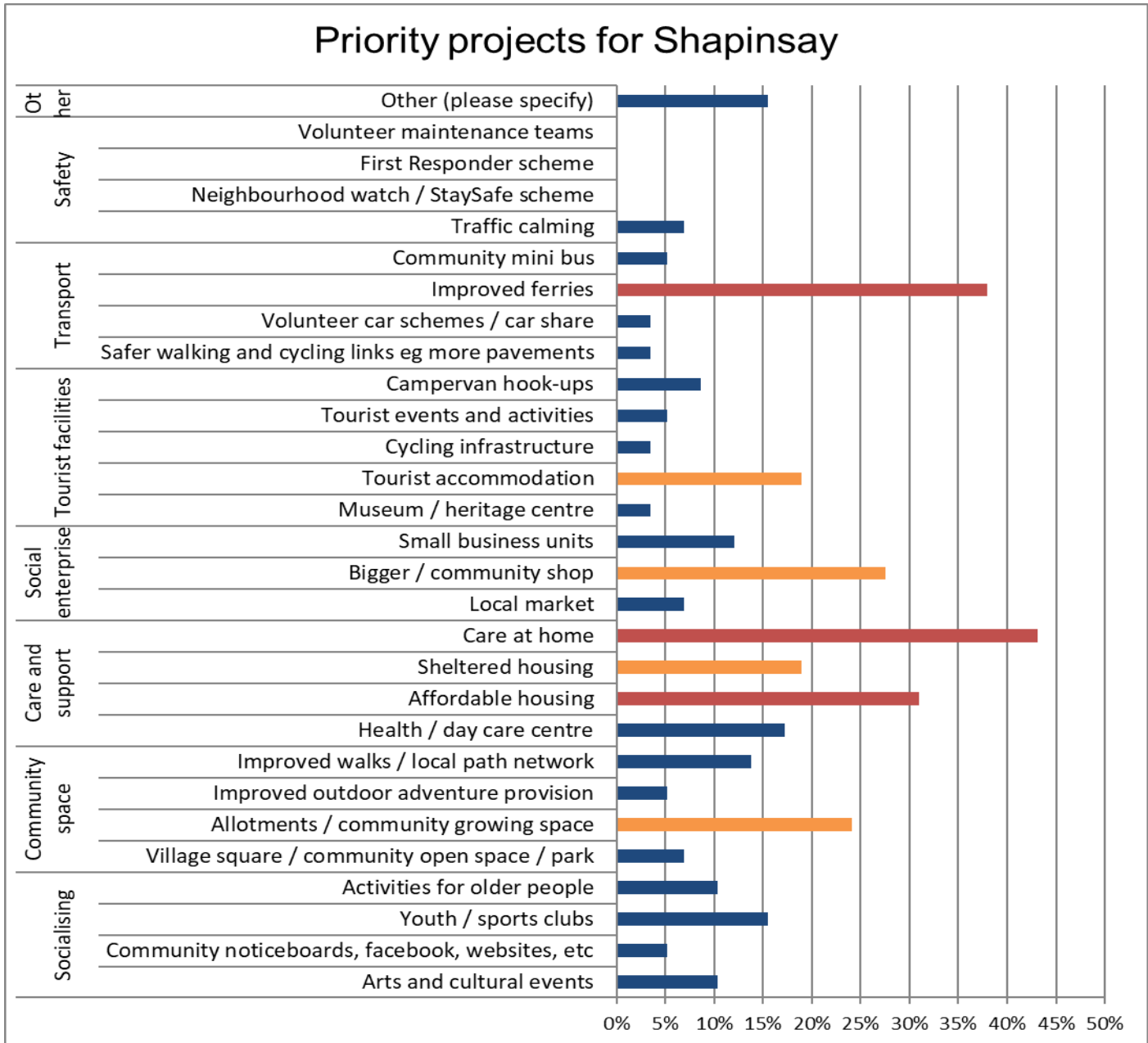
- **Better care and support for older or vulnerable people** – over half of the people choosing this were retired, but equally half were not.
- **Better transport**
- **Jointly:**
  - **More for younger people to do**
  - **More housing**

Better local/visitor facilities and more community open space were next, reflecting the concerns that facilities are limited and those that do exist have scope for improvement.

The low priority given to “more local jobs” is surprising given the comments on employment and transport challenges.

The community survey asked people what the most important projects could be under those themes.

Figure xxi. What projects are most important for Shapinsay – choose 3



The three most popular priority projects (red above) echoed the question on key themes and were:

- *Care at home*
- *Improved ferries*
- *Affordable housing*

The next three most popular priority projects (orange above) were:

- *A bigger shop*
- *Allotments or a growing space*
- *Jointly*
  - *Sheltered housing*
  - *Tourist accommodation*

The theme of “more for younger people to do” was not regarded as priority project.

#### 7.4 Follow up workshop at the AGM – findings

The survey results were summarised into the Place Standard Tool, as at Figure viii; together with key findings.

People were set into groups of 8-10 and asked to respond to three questions (please see Appendix B) relating to:

- *Care at home*
- *More for younger people to do*
- *The Fast Boat*

People responded much more widely than to these questions and developed a wish list of actions and activities to be prioritised. These suggestions were grouped into key themes:

- Better care and support for older or vulnerable people
- More for younger people to do
- Economic activity – tourism
- Economic activities – residents
- Facilities for local people
- Waste management
- Transport – Fast Boat

and considered by the SDT Directors in terms of:

- Which agency would be the lead
- What was the existing provision
- What the next steps might be
- What the role of the SDT could be
- Whether it was a high, medium or low priority for the SDT.

The full matrix is at Appendix B. A summary of medium and high priorities is at Figure xxii.

Figure xxii. Outcomes from AGM consultation

Action	Responsibility	SDT role	Priority
<b>Better care and support for older or vulnerable people</b>			
Continue to support provision of carers for the island	NHS Orkney OIC Crossroads	1 unit of Balfour Cottages intended for off-island carers Fast Boat to enable carer access SDT fund 50% of carer provision	In progress
Volunteer programme to help address social inclusion	SDT	Work with Volunteer Action Orkney on volunteer recognition programme to raise awareness of the value of what volunteers do and help recruit volunteers to community café, wellbeing walks, befriending, charity shop	In progress
Help people with digital connectivity	SDT	Drop-in digital inclusion café as part of community café – possibly intergenerational	Medium
Handyperson service vital – mental health and practical	OIC	Undertake feasibility for a paid-for service	Medium
<b>More for younger people to do</b>			
Youth engagement / consultation	SDT/OIC	Continue to engage with youth to identify needs and how they would help deliver	High
Support existing programmes (football, Cycle Orkney, badminton)	SDT	Liaise with existing organisations to assist youth connection from the island	Medium
<b>Economic activity – tourism</b>			
Develop tourism strategy	SDT/Orkney Tourism	Set up a tourism sub-group	Medium
Consider campsite and hostel	SDT	Requires feasibility work on Spion	Medium
Pontoon/Marina	SDT	Set up a marina sub-group Requires feasibility work	Medium
<b>Economic activity – residents</b>			
Future proof incomes	SDT	Continue to consider how to continue income from the turbine to support Island development Seek alternative sources of income	In Progress
Attract working age adults and families	OIC / SDT	Continue to build housing stock and look at serviced sites Create video to promote Shapinsay and attract residents	In Progress
<b>Facilities – residents</b>			
Community Larder	SDT	Continue to monitor community larder (privately funded) and its usage	In progress

Community Library	SDT	Consider funding 2 extra library visits again to supplement provision in mobile library, community shop	Medium
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## 8 Priority actions and projects

The community engagement process, reflecting on the benefits and challenges of living in Shapinsay has reinforced that the key issues facing Shapinsay remain:

- An aging population, with a need to:
  - Support residents to age well in place
  - Retain and attract younger individuals and families to the island with improvements to
    - Transport
    - Housing
    - Facilities and services
    - Economic opportunities

This is against an environment of increasing economic pressure:

- Decline and cessation of income from the wind-turbine, with a need to
  - Identify and pursue new income streams
  - Continually review, re-imagine and reconsider services and facilities that the income from the turbine can fund
- Constraints on public sector funding and services

The island team have delivered and continue to progress significant infrastructure projects in housing and in the fast boat service. Facilities such as the island car and e-bikes help address issues of transport. Given the commitments to these significant projects, there is now a period of consolidation and focus to review and deliver the achievements and projects from the previous planning period.

The community can and will continue to lobby for the publicly funded and provided services that are required to deliver the priorities identified in care provision and transportation.

The following priorities have been identified to be taken forward by SDT:

- Secure future income streams for the island
  - Extension/replacement of wind turbine
  - Infrastructure projects delivering new income sources
    - Housing
      - Complete the Balfour Cottages project
      - Spion Brae Project – Housing, micro-enterprises
    - Tourism
      - Tourism strategy subgroup with additional volunteers
      - Investigate feasibility of a marina
- Regular review of existing service provision for efficiency and effectiveness and affordability
  - Fast Boat
  - Island Car
  - Wellbeing
    - Continue to support carers
    - Befriending
    - Celebrate volunteering
    - Consider digital inclusion project

- Consider handy person project
- Ongoing engagement and communication
  - General
  - Youth specific

## 8.1 The Community Vision

Our Vision is that Shapinsay is a living island community where people of all ages and circumstances are connected and looked after and where core local services are sustainable.

### **Sharing and connecting**

The Shapinsay community is flourishing, caring and cohesive. It has a strong local identity and a sense of cohesion and pride in all parts the island. People of all ages know about and create opportunities to come together, socialise, and take part in activities they enjoy.

### **A working island**

Shapinsay has a sustainable economy, providing jobs and income for all members of our community, encouraging new residents, and supporting local services. The community and businesses work together to attract visitors to stay for longer and enjoy our spaces and places.

### **An place for everyone to live**

There a good mix of available housing types for all households and needs. There is an accessible and affordable housing for all those who wish to live here. Homes and places are able to adapt to changing circumstances.

### **Going places**

Transport on the island and off the island supports continued and inclusive economic development and innovation. It plays a positive role in improving health, reducing inequalities and isolation. It contributes to a successful and just transition to a net-zero carbon and sustainable community.

### **An even better place to live**

Shapinsay's community maintains and enhances its natural and built environment, making it accessible for the enjoyment, health, and wellbeing of all. The community's pride in its environment helps encourage visitors.

## 8.2 Making it happen: the Action Plan

This Action Plan summarises the projects and proposals that came from the community consultation process.

Figure xxiii. Island Action Plan

A sharing and connected community		
Timeline	Action	Next steps
Short term	Smithy continues to grow and develop its activities for all	Review of operations after one year and development in consultation with community
	Continue to support provision of carers for the island	1 unit of Balfour Cottages intended for off-island carers Fast Boat to enable carer access SDT fund 50% of carer provision
	Volunteer programme to help address social inclusion	Work with Volunteer Action Orkney on volunteer recognition programme to raise awareness of the value of what volunteers do and help recruit volunteers to community café, wellbeing walks, befriending, charity shop
	Youth engagement / consultation	Continue to engage with youth to identify needs and how they would help deliver
	Support existing programmes for young people (football, Cycle Orkney, badminton)	Liaise with existing organisations to assist youth connection from the island
	Community Larder	Continue to monitor community larder (privately funded) and its usage
Medium term	Community Library	Consider funding 2 extra library visits again to supplement provision in mobile library, community shop
	Help people with digital connectivity	Drop-in digital inclusion café as part of community café – possibly intergenerational
	Handyperson service to help people stay safely in their own homes for longer	Undertake feasibility for a paid-for service



A working island		
Timeline	Action	Next steps
Short term	Continue to facilitate commercial ideas generation and early scoping and prioritisation study	Feasibility for elements of Spion Brae including camping, hostel, workshops .
	Tourism strategy	Identify tourism subgroup including local enterprises to develop the strategy
	Future proof incomes to island priorities	Continue to consider how to continue income from the turbine to support Island development Seek alternative sources of income
Medium term	Commission in depth feasibility study and business planning into the marina	Identify marina subgroup including local enterprises to develop the strategy

A place for everyone to live		
Timeline	Action	Next steps
Short term	Develop plans for affordable and accessible housing in line with current and identified future needs	Complete Balfour Cottages development
Short term		Continue Spion housing development
Medium Term	Continue to increase housing provision	Look for further opportunities to invest as housing becomes available
	Attract working age adults and families	Create video to promote Shapinsay and attract residents

Going Places		
Timeline	Action	Next steps
Short term	Pursue improved ferry provision	Review the Fast Boat provision to ensure it meets the needs of the community and is more financially sustainable.  Electric hydrofoil vessels are to be trialed in Orkney, with a twelve-passenger version to arrive in early 2025 to travel between Kirkwall, Shapinsay, Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre
Medium term	Review on-island transport provision	Review Island Car provision to ensure that it meets community needs and is financially sustainable

An even better place to live		
Timeline	Action	Next steps
Short term	Identify sites for a community garden Identify sites for clean-up, planting and re-wilding, with a view to access and conservation	Will be part of Spion development
Medium term	Establish polytunnel and community composting unit Build volunteer capacity for environmental initiatives	Will be part of Spion development
Long term	Develop community growing	Will be delivered with Spion project

These initiatives would be undertaken with existing community groups and with the support of the broader community. Most of these initiatives – and many more – are already underway; the key need for the Development Trust is to help bring these together, support existing initiatives, and to fill gaps where existing arrangements have not been able to sustain effort for example in area-wide communication and branding.



## Appendix A. Activities, groups and events

### Regular activities

- Lunch club
- Playgroup
- Children's football (5 years +)
- Brownies, Guides and Scouts
- Darn Good Yarn knitting club
- Mens Shed
- Darts
- Charity Shop (Cast Affs)x2 per week
- Community larder
- Wellbeing cafe
- Periodic history and heritage workshops
- Various keep fit activities such as Active Movers and Health Walks
- Music Group
- Climbing – the Community Centre has a climbing wall
- Horticultural Association
- Agricultural Association
- Shapinsay Heritage Arts and Crafts
- Creative practice
- Monthly quiz nights
- Book bug sessions
- Games nights

There have also been bowls, clubbercise netball and dancing activities, and the Community Centre hopes to restart these.

### Events

Shapinsay hosts a number of events throughout the year including

- Show Week, incorporating the Agricultural Show and Dance
- Ploughing matches
- Biannual Open Stock Judging event
- Harvest Home
- RNLI Ceilidh and Burns Supper
- Christmas Tree party
- Island Picnic
- Christmas Tree lighting
- Christmas Market
- Quoits

## Appendix B. AGM Consultation Materials

### Support and care for vulnerable people

The community survey showed that support and care for vulnerable people was a priority for many respondents.

Other rural and island communities also struggle with helping people stay in their own community. Some have initiated a range of support and care services such as:

- Volunteer-led shopping, pet care, befriending services (including phone-based “Morning Call”)
- Lunch clubs, trips, coffee and craft mornings
- Volunteer-led transport
- Gardening and handyman services, volunteering or paid-for
- Community-led support for personal care (e.g. encouraging / supporting individuals to train as carers, working in partnership with care providers and the NHS to identify and support vulnerable people)
- Providing accessible housing in the community
- Seeking funding and support to enable in-community respite care and “step up step down” beds

#### What SDT is already doing:

- Providing of an accessible car and driver on a donations basis, subsidised by SDT
  - SDT has consulted separately on the provision of the car service
- Developing one affordable house for carers

#### What priority actions would you support SDT to undertake?

### Opportunities for younger people

The community survey showed that “more for younger people to do” was a priority for many respondents.

However, “youth and sports clubs” were NOT a priority project.

#### What SDT is already doing or has tried to do:

- Setting up The Smithy to provide hospitality jobs including for young people
- Investigating the possibility of using the Hall to host a gathering place for young people
  - This proved impossible due to the need for supervision, safeguarding, and other regulatory requirements

#### What priority actions would you support SDT to undertake?

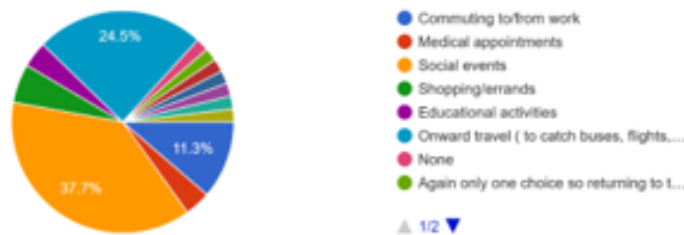
## Transport

A key issue identified in the community survey and elsewhere is the need for reliable and frequent ferry services to Mainland Orkney.

SDT has carried out a separate survey on transport.

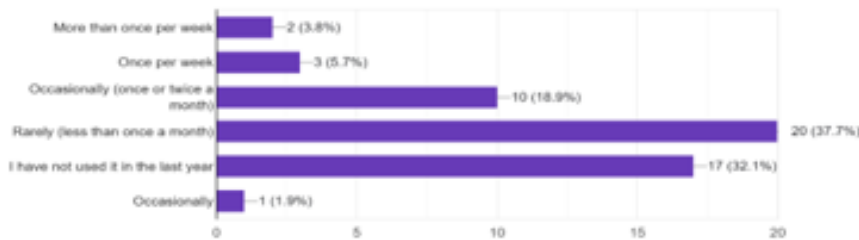
SDT provides a “fast boat” out of hours service as a passenger ferry to Kirkwall. People mainly use the service for onward travel, social events and for work, which are often planned in advance :

What would be the main reason for using the boat service?  
53 responses



But **most** respondents rarely or never use the service:

In the past year, how often have you used the out of hours boat service?  
53 responses



### Use of SDT resources

So far in 2024 SDT have delivered 712 passenger journeys

- It has cost over £30,000 in the last 9 months
- Average cost to SDT per adult journey is £54.00
- Fare by SDT per adult journey is £8.50

**SDT hire a boat to provide this service.** In addition, Orkney Islands Council are trialling an electric Hydrofoil service from early next year.

**Should SDT continue to prioritise the Fast Boat, given its financial cost and social value?**

## 1. Better care and support for older or vulnerable people

### 1.1. Personal Care

Suggestion	Lead responsibility	Island existing provision	Next steps	SDT potential role	SDT priority for action
Carer training provision	NHS Orkney / OIC / Orkney College	OIC online training provided free	None	None	Low
Potential short stay house for hospital discharge	NHS / OIC	None	Feasibility study, and work with partners	NHS is developing hospital-at-home provision in other sparsely populated areas; SDT would support feasibility	Low
Advertise for Crossroads carers/make job more attractive	Crossroads	Crossroads advertise on the boat / school / newsletter	Continue to work with Crossroads to promote	SDT - 1 unit of Balfour Cottages intended for off-island carers	Taking place
Crossroads awareness for islanders – mention in Sound	Crossroads	Crossroads advertise on the boat / school / newsletter		SDT – OOH boat to enable carer access SDT fund 50% of carer provision	
Support services re medical professionals	NHS Orkney	Facility and services already provided in Hall; wellbeing co-ordinator part-funded by SDT and VAO SDT organises podiatrist visits	None	No further expansion identified; the Balfour is centrally located and accessible in Kirkwall	Low
Balfour Cottage Warden support	NHS Orkney / Crossroads	None	Feasibility study, and work with partners	1 unit of Balfour Cottages intended for off-island / overnight carers Consider tri-partite agreement to pool SDS to pay for Warden	Low

## 1.2. Social inclusion

Suggestion	Lead responsibility	Island existing provision	Next steps	SDT potential role	SDT priority
Befriender service	SDT / Age Scotland / OIC	None		Wellbeing coordinator is in the process of setting up this service	In process
A way of helping people with internet issues	SDT / Age Scotland / OIC	CLD provide introduction to computing / internet safety courses  Difficulty in getting sufficient numbers to attend  SDT attempted digital inclusion projects post-Covid where take-up was low		Consider potential for drop-in digital inclusion café as part of community café – possibly intergenerational	Medium
Some kind of volunteer programme	SDT	Wellbeing coordinator has set up a programme to recruit volunteers to assist in e.g. community café, wellbeing walks, befriending, charity shop.		Work with VAO on volunteer recognition programme to raise awareness of the value of what volunteers do	In Process

### 1.3. Accessibility to services

Suggestion	Lead responsibility	Island existing provision	Next steps	SDT potential role	SDT priority
Island car to deliver groceries, prescriptions, takeaways etc		SDT car insurance does not cover delivery services  Prescriptions are covered by existing nomination service by individuals		Wellbeing coordinator to consider to what extent this might be incorporated into a volunteer befriending service	Low
Airport service re hospital trips	NHS Orkney	Island car service to the ferry; taxi service to the hospital		Already provided	n/a
Thursday shop and Smithy run		SDT already provide the island car to the local shop		Already provided	n/a
Facilitate trips to the mainland for events allowing people to stay in the car on the ferry		Lunch club in the summer use hire buses for trips to Kirkwall		Wellbeing coordinator to consider to what extent this might be delivered; would require a volunteer minibus drive and would be a paid-for service	Low
Rentable mobility scooters		Provided by Mobility Orkney in Kirkwall; could be brought across by the boat if necessary		Advertise as an option	Medium
Handyperson service – mental health and practical	OIC / NHS Orkney			Undertake feasibility for a paid-for service	Medium



## 2. More for younger people to do

Suggestion	Lead responsibility	Island existing provision	Next steps	SDT potential role	SDT priority
Youth shed – semi supervised/non-supervised/ space for younger folk which isn't used by another group – portacabin  skate park, table tennis, snooker, computer games, own space, games – like Sanday	OIC/SDT/Youth/  Community Association/  Community Council	Nothing – SDT previously allowed the boathouse to be used for this but it's not an ideal space due to its function as an office that also contains sensitive information and equipment – when the youth that organised it out-grew it, no-one else took on the mantel post-covid	Consult with youth about what it is they actually want	Feasibility for some sort of youth hub – if that's what they want. Or to liaise with other partners that could potentially take on a role.	Medium
Use island car for youth transport	SDT	Nothing after 5pm			Medium
Football coaching	School/SCC	Existing football club throughout the winter. A volunteer is trying to set up coaching sessions and seeking volunteers to help	Re-advertise for volunteers	Work with the people trying to set it up to see what can be done	Medium
Coaching/training opportunities	Orkney College/SDT/OIC	Regular opportunities for Badminton training offered			Low
Scrambler track at Spion		Some people use the hill/quarry for a scrambler track	Find out if it's what the community want?	Feasibility	Low
Bike mechanics course	Cycle Orkney	Nothing	Seek help from CO	Liaise with Cycle Orkney and try and set something up	Medium
Youth engagement / consultation	Sdt/OIC	In diary for 26 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2024	Collate information	To keep trying and to find other ways to engage youth	High

### 3. Economic activity – tourism

Suggestion	Lead responsibility	Island existing provision	Next steps	SDT potential role	SDT priority
Tourism strategy	Orkney Tourism	None – there was a tourism group, but not sure if that still exists	Set up a sub-group	Set up a tourism sub-group	Medium
Smithy – packages including boat plus meal, winter warmers in the evening, kids parties, pizza party, ice-cream cones to take away, hot rolls to takeaway/breakfasts	Smithy/SDT	Provide feedback for the Smithy		Did breakfasts/rolls when first open, uptake was low, expense was high.  (do these need to be included – not really relevant to DP?)	
Smithy opening to coincide with cruiseships		As above		As above	
Enhance Local assets – Broch, battery, douche, gashouse, nature paths, marina, castle	OIC/SCC	SCC already have some provision in place but none of those assets belong to the island	Liaise with SCC	Find out who owns the areas and try to liaise with them about possibilities for “enhancing” the assets	Low/Medium
Campsite and hostel	SDT	It’s on the plan for Spion brae	Feasibility	SDT is already looking into doing some feasibility work on elements of Spion	Medium
Pontoon/Marina – encourage liner launches to come in	OIC/Marine Planning, SCC/SDT	Mooring buoys and the councils marine plan	Set up a sub-group	To set up a sub-group, liaise with sub-group and with Marine planning	Medium
Tourist Map for Shap	Tourism group	Already one that there are hundreds of copies of		Share the copies of the map wider and find where we can put it	Medium

Suggestion	Lead responsibility	Island existing provision	Next steps	SDT potential role	SDT priority
Tours using SDT bus for tourists one day per week	Tourism group/SDT	Our Driver will take people on tours with the car or take people to places and pick them up later		Feasibility? This requires more, seasonal staff	Low
bookable sleep pods	OIC maybe	Nothing – hotels do cheap isles rates	?	?	Low

#### 4. Economic activities – residents

Suggestion	Lead responsibility	Island existing provision	Next steps	SDT potential role	SDT priority
Shop takeover – not for profit	Not an option unless the shop closes	There's a locally owned shop and a lot of provision right across in Kirkwall	None	None - SDT M&As are very clear that we cannot compete with local business. We have liaised with local shop owner about future plans. A shop on an island this size so close to Kirkwall will never be able to compete with supermarkets and it cannot be subsidised by a Trust – OSCR would have an issue, as seen in other areas	N/a
Farm share/collectives to prevent farms closing	NFU	None	None	NFU offer a land-matching service	N/A
Future proof incomes	SDT	Lots	Continue to look at sustainability	SDT is always looking at sustainability – the next step might be to make the island aware of the lifespan of the	High

				turbine and why future proofing incomes is a priority	
Attract working adults	SDT/OIC	Creating homes for families	Creating homes for working age single adults/couples	Continue to build housing stock and look at serviced sites	High

### 5. Facilities for local people

Suggestion	Lead responsibility	Island existing provision	Next steps	SDT potential role	SDT priority
<p>Community space</p> <p>Reading room/library/craft space/quiet space</p> <p>Make better use of old waiting room space</p> <p>Nice space in town to hang out/wait for the ferry</p> <p>~Adding sleep pods here~</p>	OIC/SDT	<p>Wellbeing coordinator is setting up a wellbeing library. The portacabin is full of free books,</p> <p>Waiting room is still a waiting room and toilets and for people who are using the old pier</p> <p>Waiting room, library and cafes in Kirkwall to wait for ferry</p>	Speak with SCC about possibility of “making better use of the old waiting room”	Re-start conversation with other isles about a potential isles space – but currently there is very little funding out there and it would be almost impossible to run without it being used like a hotel and would be very costly, costs would need to be met by isles – Peedie hostel is an option.	Low
Community Fridge	SDT	This has been extensively looked into by both wellbeing coordinators and requires a LOT of man hours, maintenance, electricity supply and where does the food come from, we only have one local shop, coop etc throw out their near dated		This has already been heavily researched over 3 years, we will continue to monitor how other communities deal with it. Wellbeing can also signpost to foodbanks	Medium – this does remain a priority – it’s just not feasible to do it as a fridge

Suggestion	Lead responsibility	Island existing provision	Next steps	SDT potential role	SDT priority
		food after 8pm, we cannot access it, so it's not feasible so we set up a community larder in the waiting room instead – this is funded by a generous member of the community – there is no funding for this on-going without donations			
Community Library		Mobile library & Portacabin+ cheap books in charity shop, plus Kirkwall Library 20 mins away		Look into funding 2 extra library visits again	Medium
More electric bikes for the community	SDT	21 bikes on long term, 6 on short term and 1 trike	Look for funding	Look for funding for more bikes	Low
Film Club	SCA	This was run for years through Sound Cinema but was stopped when it had to move over the community centre due to the changed environment not being favoured	Seek volunteers to re-start	To assist in finding volunteers to re-start it	Low
Expand wellbeing project	<b>VAO</b>	Wellbeing project is funded for 14 hours per week through VAO (facilitated through SDT) and another 4-7 hours funded through SDT	None	The project is currently under threat and undergoing some changes, so we cannot look to expand anything further till we see what the future of the project is and how much SDT is going to have to fund on-going	LOW

Suggestion	Lead responsibility	Island existing provision	Next steps	SDT potential role	SDT priority
Fund maintenance of beach roads to ensure accessibility	OIC/SCC	None	Speak with SCC and OIC	Write to OIC/SCC	Low
Promote living in Shapinsay to young families – make film aimed at young families	SDT	We've just done an SDT video funded through the CLLD - Eday did a video to attract families	Seek funding to do another video	Once there are houses for families to come to, look into doing a video to attract tenants	Medium

## 6. Waste management

Suggestion	Lead responsibility	Island existing provision	Next steps	SDT potential role	SDT priority
Receptacles for beach recycled items	OIC/SCC	Bin at the pier		OIC already refuse to empty more bins, SCC have already asked for more bins but been told that there is no capacity in the refuse section to do any more	LOW
Large recycling facility	OIC	Island recycling collections fortnightly	Look at what other islands are doing	To look at what other islands are doing	Low
Shore litter officer		Bag the bruck and Marine conservation beach cleans		Not a priority for SDT – we have organised 5 beach cleans now and only 4 extra people showed up as volunteers to help between all 5!	LOW

## 7. Transport – Fast Boat – Comments from the community consultation at the AGM.

### Fast Boat – timetabling

- Young people use service for activities
- Should OOH be prioritised?
- SDT still needs to priorities OOH depending on Hydrofoil provision
- Sunday boat
- Cater boats to suit meetings - *This is currently not possible and “meetings” are no more of a priority than training, jobs, regular social events, darts etc*
- Link boat to tourist trips and cruise ships – *This is only possible if we own the boat*
- Pub runs *This can happen now if folk want it – just needs to be done within the current timetabling and folk need to be sure not to be going back too intoxicated to safely travel on board the vessel.*

### Fast boat – service provisioning

- Get a new boat
- Consider OOH electric boat
- Run own boat as a priority
- Cheaper/sustainable if SDT own boat
- Better if based in Shapinsay

### Fast boat – other

- Increase fare (*January 2025*)
- Interisland connectivity – passenger only? *Being looked at by OIC ZEVI project*
- Service must continue –
- Raise boat fare to £10
- Keep OOH to keep young folk on the island – there is a need
- Info leaflet for OOH incl times, map, contacts - *all on the website currently*