

SHAPINSAY A PLACE TO LIVE AND WORK

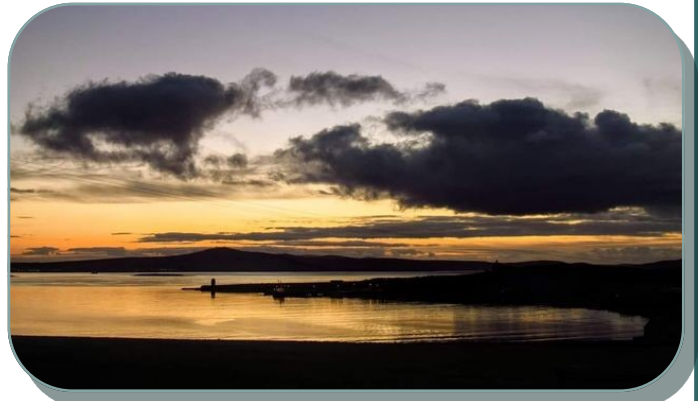
**PRODUCED IN 2020 BY SHAPINSAY
COMMUNITY COUNCIL FOR NHS ORKNEY**

Thinking of working on Shapinsay?

The Shapinsay Development Trust would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for considering moving to our beautiful island.

When considering moving to Orkney, you will want to do some research, and ideally visit before hand. However due to the circumstances we find ourselves in at the moment a visit to Shapinsay is not that easy, so in this leaflet we will try and showcase everything that Shapinsay has to offer and hopefully give you a glimpse of what living and working on the island would be like.

Orkney is totally unique and beautiful. Our Summers can be spectacular with almost perpetual daylight at the solstice; our winters can be equally spectacular with breath-taking scenery and dark nights with unobscured views of the stars. The Winters can be harsh, often windy and cold, however the opportunity to glimpse the Northern Lights, to enjoy amazing sunsets and sunrises and to feel part of a lovely community year round eclipses that aspect of life for most of us.



Getting here

If you haven't been to Orkney before then you have been missing out, our first task is explaining how to get here. First, you need to get to Kirkwall, you can do this by air directly to Kirkwall airport, or by sea with either Pentland Ferries from Gills Bay to St Margaret's Hope or Northlink Ferries from Scrabster to Stromness (which are both just a 20-30 minute drive from Kirkwall), or if you aren't keen on driving the whole way, there is a Northlink ferry that leaves direct from Aberdeen to Kirkwall.

Useful websites for travel

www.orkney.com/plan

www.loganair.co.uk

www.northlinkferries.co.uk

www.pentlandferries.co.uk

www.orkneyferries.co.uk



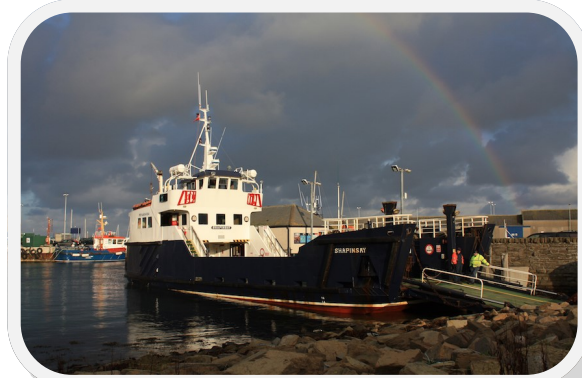
Image taken from the Orkney.com website

Getting here continued

Once you get to Kirkwall, Shapinsay is just another short ferry ride away, the crossing only takes 25-30 minutes. You can travel as a passenger, or our roll on roll off ferry allows you to bring your car, as long as you can reverse!

Boat journeys can be a bit rocky in winter, but it doesn't often last the full trip as it most wind directions, Kirkwall bay is quite sheltered, once you get through "The String". Occasionally we do get days in winter where the boat might be unable to sail due to the weather and tidal conditions, but often, with regular forecast checking, you know in advance that it's a possibility, and have time to change or make plans round it.

The Shapinsay Development Trust run a boat service after hours, allowing travel after the Ferry stops at 6pm.



"Living in Shapinsay is perfect for someone embarking on island life. You get the full island experience with the convenience of its proximity to Kirkwall"

Shapinsay

Shapinsay is one of the inner North Isles of Orkney and is unique in the fact that we have a very regular boat service, which takes you directly into the heart of Kirkwall, so bringing your car isn't essential. You can just head in on foot, have a lovely lunch out in one of Orkneys many lovely restaurants, or browse the high street shops. In some ways, Shapinsay enjoys the best of both worlds, you get to enjoy all that island life has to offer while also being a stones throw (or ferry ride) from the mainland of Orkney and all that it has to offer. There are many things to do and see in Orkney, too many to begin to list, but I would recommend a visit to the Orkney.com website as it will give you a great overview of what Orkney has to offer.

On the Ferry from Kirkwall to Shapinsay you sail through "The String", the sea passage from Kirkwall Bay, you will see Helliar Holm on your right which is a small uninhabited island with an automatic lighthouse. On your left you will see the beautiful Victorian structure of Balfour Castle, built by the late David Balfour, whose influences can be seen throughout Shapinsay. Shapinsay from the sea is a sight to behold.



Shapinsay

Shapinsay is not a large island; I think the dimensions are roughly 7 miles by 3 miles, with a population of around 300. Taking on a job on Shapinsay means that within just a few months you will literally know everyone. You are almost guaranteed a warm welcome on Shapinsay, people will always say "Hello" when you meet them, they will wave as they pass you in their cars. Shapinsay is a safe place, crime is practically unheard of and when crimes are committed the community rallies around to support those affected. It is quiet, there is no such thing as a traffic jam, you might occasionally get stuck behind a tractor until the next passing place but you'll soon get by. People in Shapinsay are generally tolerant, supportive and inclusive and welcoming of "incomers". Shapinsay has an amazing community spirit; it is such a vibrant place with such a lot going on and to get involved with.



Shapinsay Community School

Shapinsay Community School is very much at the heart of the island. At present there are 19 children in the school from Nursery to Primary 7. The children are taught in 3 classes; Nursery/Pre-school, Primary 1-4 and Primary P5-7. The school is generously sized with excellent facilities both indoors and outdoors, and the most recent HMIE inspection deemed the education to be of a very high standard and recently won a gold standard sports award. Small class sizes and personal attention for all are the norm. The school website is regularly updated with things that are happening in the school and is well worth a browse.

Pupils from Shapinsay Primary School move onto Kirkwall Grammar School for their secondary education. Again due to the very convenient ferry service, pupils are able to travel daily by ferry to attend KGS.

Educational provision throughout Orkney is excellent: school buildings and generously-sized grounds are maintained to a level which would be envied elsewhere in the country; this contributes to Orkney's enviable reputation as a producer of graduates, sportspeople and particularly musicians. Above all though, our schools generally produce confident, articulate and mature young men and women.

The school also works very hard to be central the community and regularly updates the community with their news. They have regular interactions with the Lunch club (the local over 50s club) and regularly take part in local events with singing, music playing etc. They do a community play every second year, so great for any budding actors!



Shapinsay Community School Beyond the school



The Shapinsay Community School building, as well as being the local Primary School, also houses the Doctor's surgery, the local Healthy Living Centre (gym) and the Community Centre. There is also a fantastic playpark, which was refurbished and reopened in 2019 with a range of new and exciting equipment making it one of the best in Orkney.

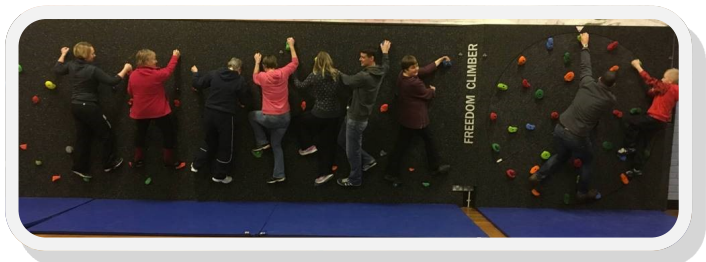
The Surgery adjoined to the Shapinsay Community School is a branch of the Heilendi Practice which is based in Kirkwall. This offers a great deal of flexibility to patients as Heilendi Practice are available to speak to patients out with the Surgery times during the day and patients are also able to make appointments to be seen at the Heilendi Practice.

The Surgery consists of two consultation rooms, reception, waiting area and office where there is also a stock of drugs for immediate use and for emergencies. Repeat prescriptions are processed in Kirkwall and delivered to the Surgery ready for pick up by the patient.

The Surgery team comprises of two Advanced Nurse Practitioners who work on a rotational basis based on the island 24/7, one GP providing a visiting service twice a week and one administrator. Details of the Surgery times and services can be seen in the GP Practices section on the NHS Orkney Website.

The local Healthy Living centre has a range of gym equipment and currently offers sessions with instructors, in normal circumstances we would have the opportunity to attend the gym during school times with just a "Buddy" they also offer Fatburn Extreme classes. During Covid times it is run slightly different, but all the up to date information can be found on their Facebook page.

The Community Association is responsible for the Community end of the building. The building contains a large sports hall with its very own climbing wall, the climbing wall was fitted in 2019 and has a freedom climber, a rotating climbing panel. We also have a large open playing field and an enclosed tarmac court. In normal circumstances the Community Association hosts a range of sports clubs including Football, Badminton, Netball, Climbing and Scottish Dancing.

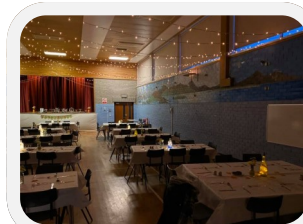


Beyond the School continued

There are also two community rooms which are regularly used by groups such as the local music group, darts club, indoor bowls, Lunch club, handbells group and also host the Shapinsay under 8s playgroup, Brownies, Guides, Youth club etc. There are too many groups and clubs for me to attempt to list them all. All these rooms are also available for private hire.

There are also a wide variety of events which would take place in the Community rooms, hall and the sports field such as:

- The RNLI Ceilidh and Burns Supper in February. The RNLI lifeboat guild produce a fantastic Burns supper and we are treated to a variety of talented acts from Shapinsay and all over Orkney.
- The picnic held in June. The picnic is our island sports day, organised by the Picnic committee. There are a wide variety of sports which people compete in for various trophies, followed by a picnic tea and children's prize giving. The adult prize giving is in the evening at a social event.
- The Shapinsay Show held in August. This is a collaboration between the Agricultural and Horticultural associations. Outside the Agricultural Association have their annual agricultural show where animals of all varieties are judged and there are a variety of stands run by Shapinsay Committees and groups from outwith the island. Inside is the horticultural show where plants, fruit, vegetable and all the handicrafts Shapinsay has to offer are judged. The Horticultural Association also offer an afternoon tea. They also run ploughing matches and stock judging competitions during the year.
- THE RNLI Fete in August. The RNLI Lifeboat guild are involved in a round Shapinsay yacht race, they round off the race with a parade of floats followed by delicious barbecue and a highly contested game of quoits.
- The Harvest Home in November. The Harvest Home is a dinner dance organised by the Agricultural Association as a prize giving for the Agricultural Show and a celebration of the farming year. It is not just for farmers though, it is very much a community event.
- The Christmas Tree lighting in December. Organised by the Community Council and Community Association the island tree is lit with performances from the school bairns and other island groups, followed by Mulled wine, mince pies and hot chocolate.
- The Christmas Tree Party in December. All the islands children are invited along to play fun games and to meet and receive a gift from Santa himself.



These are just a small example of the events which may run throughout a typical year; obviously 2020 is not a typical year!

As you can see the Community has a lot to offer. All the clubs mentioned previously are open to anyone and in a typical week the Community Centre has something on almost every day. Across the road at "The Boathouse" you will find a lot happening too, from drawing group, film club, "Yap and Yarn", writing group, to coffee afternoons and a board game group. There is almost always something to do, and if you are willing to get involved in the community, you will never feel bored.

What else does Shapinsay have to offer?

Shapinsay is incredibly picturesque. As you come into Elwick Bay on the ferry you can't help but notice the features of the surrounding area. The beautiful Victorian Balfour Castle, the Gatehouse to the castle and Gatehouse Square, The Douche (19th century Dishan tower), the Gas House and Balfour Village itself are a beautiful setting for any home. Further into Shapinsay you will find the RSPB Milldam reserve with a bird hide overlooking the Milldam and all the various migrating birds that pass through, The Mor Stein a standing stone allegedly thrown there by a giant on Stronsay and Burroughston Broch an Iron Age Broch.

We have a well-stocked island shop, which can provide all the basic groceries and essentials needed for everyday living. They also have seals which bask on the beach below the car-park and are happy for you to sit and watch them, not many shops offer that! As explained previously our ferry is only 25 minutes and takes you right to the heart of Kirkwall, meaning you have easy access to the myriad of shops in Kirkwall for most other things. We also have a great postal and haulage service if you need to get things delivered.



The local Fire Station has a retained crew who all live on the island, providing a source of income for many families. The local fire station are continually recruiting with notices on display locally. The island also has a dedicated ambulance with a crew of Scottish Ambulance emergency first responders. Our dedicated first responder crew and island based ambulance are invaluable.

The Shapinsay Church can be found halfway up the island and in normal circumstances has weekly Church of Scotland services.

The Church is a big part of the community and hosts regular coffee afternoons and has organised the "Game on Shapinsay" group which hosts get togethers to play board games for all ages.

The Smithy can be found in the heart of the picturesque Balfour Village. The local Heritage, arts and crafts trust have a heritage Centre upstairs in the building, where you can find out everything you need to know about Shapinsay's past. They also sell a wide variety of local crafts from local crafters, from knitting and wool, to Jewellery and Jam!

Downstairs in the Smithy usually houses a café which is usually open in the summer months and has also previously been run as a restaurant. It hasn't been open recently but the Development Trust has recently conducted an island consultation on the feasibility of a café, restaurant or pub, so hopefully something will happen again soon, this may provide job opportunities on the Island. However again the easy access to Kirkwall means that you have access to a wide range of eating establishments, and the out of hours boat run by Shapinsay Development Trust means that it is possible to travel to Kirkwall for an evening meal and return on the charter boat in the late evening.

It is also possible to book a private charter.

There is a closed Shapinsay Facebook page for island residents, which you can follow to keep up to date with things happening on the island and any upcoming events.



Shapinsay Development Trust

Shapinsay Development Trust is run by a group of volunteers, but they now employ a few people. The Trust was instrumental in erecting an island turbine, the profits from which are used to fund the out of hours boat, an electric car (which is a community vehicle that islanders can request transportation from in return for a voluntary donation) and a variety of other local projects.



The Boathouse– The SDTs building, it houses offices for the Trust workers but is also available for meetings and hosts various clubs. We will also be offering electric bikes for hire from the Trust office from early 2021.

Out of Hours Boat-we run a small boat service in the evenings, which allows residents to attend evening classes, evening work, KGS parent evenings, Cinema, evening meals in restaurants and a whole host of other things.



The car - we have 2 electric vehicles that can be used by the community as a sort of "Taxi" one has wheelchair access.

Shapinsay Sound - We produce a monthly newsletter, sharing news and events from the Trust and other island groups, with a

monthly diary of events, including refuse collection days!

Health and Wellbeing coordinator - organises activities and other things to support the health and wellbeing of Shapinsay's residents.

So why would you choose to live and work in Shapinsay?

Shapinsay is a bright and vibrant island community with lots to see and do, lots of new skills to learn and things to become involved with. Most of all though what Shapinsay has to offer is our Community, the sense of being part of something and feeling included and feeling safe. It is worth noting that those who have enjoyed their life in Shapinsay most are those who have allowed themselves to become part of that community, to embrace it and all it has to offer. It's a way of life, and you have to adapt to it, it cannot adapt to you, so be open to trying something new and embrace it!

Useful websites to research all Shapinsay has to offer

<https://www.orkney.com/explore/shapinsay>

<https://www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/SHAPINSAY/>

<http://www.shapinsayschool.org/>

<http://www.shapinsaykirk.info/>

[Www.orkneyferries.co.uk](http://www.orkneyferries.co.uk)

[Www.northlinkferries.co.uk](http://www.northlinkferries.co.uk)

[Www.pentlandferries.co.uk](http://www.pentlandferries.co.uk)

Almost all the images in this publication were taken by Shapinsay residents and posted on the Shapinsay Facebook page.