

SHAPINSAY DEVELOPMENT TRUST

Annual report
2024/25



Registered Charity
Company limited by
guarantee

A Message from our Chair

Firstly, I'd like to take the opportunity once again, on behalf of the board, to say a big thank you to all our dedicated staff, funders and volunteers. Your support makes it possible for us trustees to keep the Trust running. There's continual behind the scenes collaboration between all of us to improve and help guide the Trust, and it's that teamwork that helps us support and develop our community — not just for today or tomorrow, but well into the future.

I also want to make special mention to long-term staff who've moved on to new roles in Orkney - Andy, Joanna and Cameron, and to Jennifer and Lewis who are away on further education and apprenticeships. We wish them all the best. We've also welcomed a few new staff members, keeping our team at around 30.

This year also marked the end of the Wellbeing Coordinator role, after two extra years of funding on top of the original three. I want to thank Alison for all her hard work in that post and wish her all the very best for the future.

On housing, things are moving along. We should see some action up at the Cottages in the not-too-distant future. Back in May we welcomed Clare and her family to Rulinvoe — I hope they're enjoying Shapinsay life. We've also seen the Moores move from No. 9 up the island to Braeholland, and Lisa and her family have settled into the toon. We wish them all the very best in their new homes.

And lastly, I want to personally thank my fellow board members, staff, and volunteers for their continued support this year. I can't stress enough the value of having a Development Trust on the island — it only works because people are willing to give up their time and work closely with staff for the betterment of our island community.

If you've ever thought about getting involved as a trustee, I'd wholeheartedly recommend it. Yes, there are undoubtedly responsibilities, and it can be challenging at times, but it's also extremely rewarding. I'd encourage anyone to give it a go.

Ash Boyd

A Message from our CDO/Manager

The past year has been a whirlwind— After 25 years in Shapinsay, myself and my family relocated in April 25—though not far! We can see Shapinsay from our kitchen window, and I still travel to the island at least three days a week. It will likely always feel like home! Although we moved for family reasons, I remain committed to Shapinsay's future. I still have family here and, who knows, we may return one day.

Being a CDO/manager of a trust can be isolating, but HIE set up an online CDO network in response to lockdowns, where we connect with other CDOs fortnightly online, which has been invaluable. This year has involved more networking and knowledge sharing than usual due to the Expert Community of Practice on Transport joint trips with Shetland, which meant a couple of visits to Shetland and them visiting us here. This has widened the net of people we know and experience we can tap into.

In 2024/25, we focused on getting Rulinvoe ready, work on getting Balfour Cottages ready, community engagement, completing the 5-year plan, transport and climate action plans, opening and running the charity shop, and continuing to focus on the café and transport services, which we are continually reviewing for maximum community benefit VS sustainability.

Looking ahead to 2025/26, more consultation is on the cards, alongside work on a tourism strategy, further development of the Climate Action Plan, reviewing and renewing “Wellbeing”, working on creating a Community Resource Centre for Climate Action, Balfour Cottages and starting into the Spion Brae project and hopefully actioning a few of the things to come out of the 5 year plan.

I think we have a lot to look forward to and be optimistic about in the coming year!

Lisa-Marie Muir

Pictured: ECOP group on Whalsay in Shetland



Finance

It has been another successful year for the Trust, and we are pleased to report that our finances remain in a strong position. This is thanks not only to the continued income from the community turbine, but also to the sound financial governance of the board. However, we are mindful that the turbine, like all assets, has a limited lifespan, and so we remain proactive in exploring new opportunities to ensure the long-term sustainability of both the Trust and the island.

Our core aim is clear: to generate and maximise income so it can be reinvested back into the community for the benefit of all. This work is supported through the turbine, community enterprise, housing rents, and by securing external funding – an area in which we have achieved considerable success in recent years.

A significant proportion of our reinvestment continues to focus on community transport, including the out-of-hours ferry, community EVs and E-bikes. While achieving financial sustainability in transport services is challenging, we are committed to finding innovative models that improve efficiency, enhance provision, and, most importantly, continue to meet the needs of local residents.

In the years ahead, our focus will remain on investing in the areas identified by the community, while working hard to deliver sustainable services across transport, housing, enterprise, tourism, the community café, and beyond. Together, we are building a stronger, more resilient future for Shapinsay.



Finance

Community housing also remains a priority. The Trust has taken a leading role in Orkney, with three houses now completed and a further four ready to begin construction at Balfour Cottages. This project, made possible through funding from the Scottish Government, Orkney Islands Council and the Trust itself, is helping to provide much-needed homes, support the school, strengthen the local economy, and generate ongoing revenue. Looking ahead, the regeneration of Balfour Cottages into four two-bedroom units is progressing well, with over £915,000 of external funding secured to date, including £715,000 already awarded.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of our staff and support team. The Trust continues to invest in its people, ensuring Shapinsay thrives despite uncertain times. We are proud to be a Real Living Wage employer and to create opportunities for young people, particularly through employment in the Smithy, which is already delivering positive outcomes for the island's youth.



Pictured: Balfour Cottages before work commences

Transport - Out of Hours Ferry

Community Transport – Out of Hours Ferry Service

In 2024/2025 we serviced around 176 unique users including 40 non-residents, with a monthly average of 106.25 passengers. We did 288 return trips and the service cost £67,172 against an income of £11573.20

This means that the service was subsidised at £55599.30, which is the equivalent of £193.05 per trip. Based on an average of around 4.45 people per trip, that works out at a subsidy of roughly £43 per person travelling.

Currently the service is being provided by an external company, who have been great to work with, but working with an external company creates limitations and at times, they may have other priorities, so it's important for us to continue to look into how we can do something that is sustainable in the long term.

In 2023 we bought the Linnhe Venture to run our own service,. As reported in 2024, we faced some setbacks with this and ultimately in 2025, the board decided to sell the Linnhe Venture.

Other opportunities are being pursued, to see if there is a way in which the trust could run our own service, so that we could offer more of a service for less money and employ local people to run it. This is being pursued currently.

In the mean time, Northerly Marine continue to operate a fantastic service for us and we hope to keep up a good working relationship with them going forward, with them hopefully either continuing to run the service long term or running alongside and us being able to support each other.

Pictured: The Nigg Bay, one of Northerly Marine's vessels



2 years in

The Smithy has been open for 2.5 years, and we've seen real positive impact of having a place like The Smithy on the island. It boosts the local economy and it creates local employment on the island as well as having a big social impact on a small community.



We have a good core staff and are committed supporting their professional development. Over the past 2 years, we've offered training in barista skills, food hygiene, digital marketing, hospitality, licensing, and mixology. A couple of members of our kitchen team have progressed to pursue professional cooking qualifications.

A Warm Welcome—All Year Round

During the winter, we've subsidised a fortnightly community meal, providing a warm, sociable space at an affordable cost of £6. Each meal included two generous courses—such as hearty soups & sandwiches, stews, and puddings, or cakes—along with a hot drink. These events have proven to be a great gathering point during the a long winter.

During the summer The Smithy continues to serve both our local community and island visitors. We offer a destination for visitors, offering shelter and sustenance in poor weather, or a nice sunny spot to eat in the better weather.

It has helped to re-establish Shapinsay as a destination for visitors & for locals, we continue to offer discounted lunches, a weekly takeaway, and pub nights twice a week.



Smithy

Looking Ahead: Sustainability

In early 2025, we brought in a consultant to help us assess how we might operate more efficiently, as The Smithy still relies on a significant subsidy to remain viable. One key recommendation was to close one day per week during the summer, which we have done during the 2025 summer season, we hope this hasn't impacted too seriously on our visitors.

Our season is very short, so we need to try to take advantage of it, while working around the skills and schedules of our seasonal staff who have other commitments to see them through the winter.

We are very fortunate to have such a great committed small team, who go above and beyond every summer season, some have moved on to pastures new and we have welcomed some great new additions to the team, we hope to be able to continue to upskill staff and continue to provide the island with a café and pub service for years to come.

Winter 2025 and Beyond

Looking forward, we've made the decision not to operate the café during the winter months. Instead, we will continue to open the pub, run our Winter Warmer meals, and host special events monthly to support and engage our local community.



Transport - Community Car

In the year 2024 – 2025 we served 76 unique users, 61 residents and 15 visitors, the total number of visits to the shop, surgery, boat, lunch club etc was 2989 covering around 4000 miles. We took in £200 in donations in the financial year 2024/2025, just 0.7% of our costs.

The cost of the community transport service comes in at around £25,000 between staff wages, servicing costs (including boat fares, time and safety checks), valeting, sundries, etc. We received a grant of £5000 from the OIC transport grant towards our overall transport costs, so the subsidy provided by the turbine income for this service is still around £19,800.

We joined the CES transport Expert Community of Practice for knowledge sharing. We were asked to join as we already run transport services, and have experience to share and we could learn some new things along the way. This has been a funded project, which has allowed for knowledge exchanges across Orkney and Shetland. The project finishes in October 2025 and a transport plan was part of the goals of the project, with a replicability element built in, to help any new groups embarking on community transport, to start up with a base of experience from those of us who have done it before

As part of the ECOP and in conjunction with Shapinsay Community Council ahead of the ZEVVI project, we did a transport survey in 2024, with questions around all transport, including the car service. One of the outcomes was that people were keen for a pub/events run. The board made the decision to trial this throughout the summer, to see if there was any interest in it, or whether it's a service people hope other people will use. As yet, it has not been widely utilised, so some changes may be made.



Youth

Youth provision was identified as one of the top five priorities in our 5-Year Plan finalised earlier this year. However, feedback from young people themselves has been limited, raising the question: do young people want more services, or do adults want young folk to be doing more? How do we get the young folk to engage?

Previous consultations with young people highlighted an interest in a youth club and football. In 2023, we were grateful to receive NILPS funding for a youth club, but attendance was low. This may have been due to the conditions attached to the funding, which required activities linked to heritage, which we kept as loose as we could, with suggestions such as stop motion pictures, photography, building a world in mine craft etc. Those that did stick around did activities such as baking from old SWRI cookbooks and building a LEGO model of the Shapinsay ferry.

A football club was also started, but this too, appeared to be short lived.

We also worked with Orkney Islands Council to support a youth work post, but unfortunately, there was no uptake for the second youth worker role, so that avenue couldn't continue.

Looking ahead to 2025, we're working again with OIC to bring coaches to the island. Despite wide promotion, there was no interest in rugby and limited interest in kickboxing, though football attracted some enthusiasm. We're now exploring options to bring a football coach over and back on the out-of-hours ferry to support this.

Going forward, for any youth project to receive external funding, it must be youth-led. This means we need young people to help shape and drive the ideas. To make that happen, we're keen to set up a youth forum or sub-group under the Trust—we've had no uptake so far.

If you're a young person who wants to see something happening—or a parent or community member who can help make that happen—we need you!



SWAP grants

(SWAP - Shapinsay Way Ahead Programme).

A Budget of £12,000 is set aside annually for SWAP grants. These are given out for training, community groups, accommodation and Driving lessons.

In the year 2024-2025 we awarded £11224.79 in SWAP grants.

We awarded £4324.37 in training/ accommodation grants

We awarded £3440.42 to community groups including the school

We awarded £3460 for driving lessons

This years community group awards included £2000 to the community association to allow them to keep activities free for a whole year, picnic committee £437 towards running costs including food and trophies, and £400 towards the fireworks.



S.W.A.P
Shapinsay's way ahead programme

Housing

Our housing work has continued to focus on attracting families to Shapinsay, helping keep our school a vibrant heart of the community.

In 2024/25, we completed the full renovation of Rulinvoe, a property purchased with a grant from the Scottish Land Fund. Though partially renovated when acquired from a former resident, major internal work was required. Upstairs, we replaced the heating and hot water systems, reconfigured the bathroom and bedroom layout, and addressed damp issues. Downstairs involved significant structural work: rotten lintels were replaced, the floor dug up due to a missing damp-proof course, and underfloor heating was installed to improve efficiency. Internal walls were removed to create a better layout, adding a third bedroom, a second bathroom, utility space, and an open-plan kitchen/living area.

The total cost of renovation was £189,880 with £170,000 of external funding from the Rural and Islands Housing Fund, and Orkney Islands Council.

A new family moved in during May 2025, helping to boost the school roll.



Work on Balfour Cottages is also progressing. Despite planning delays, we hope visible site progress will have started around the time of the AGM. This development will provide four fully accessible two-bedroom homes, enabling older residents or those with mobility needs to live near key services in homes suited to their needs. Potentially, this could also free up housing stock on the island, whether for sale, rent, or possible Trust renovation. Initially, three cottages will be available for rent, with one reserved for potential use by overnight carers.

Elsewhere, the School House remains occupied by a family, and No. 9 has recently become vacant after its tenants bought their own home on the island—giving us a new opportunity to attract another family to Shapinsay. No9 requires some minor works before it's ready to let again, but we hope it should be available around November

Our housing projects have a dual benefit: they provide quality, affordable homes while also creating a sustainable income stream for the Trust beyond the life of the wind turbine.

Transport - Ebikes



In 2024–2025, we recorded 132 hires of our e-bikes and 5 of the small kids bikes, generating an income of £1995 (inc VAT) against expenses of £1020.68 in repairs, maintenance and the booking website.

Our first round of long-term loan e-bikes has now completed the three-year grant period. As a result, ownership has transferred to the community members who took out the original hires.

The second round of bikes is nearing the end of its grant period, and those bikes will also be transferred to the long-term users once the final payments are complete.

Unfortunately, the Energy Saving Trust has discontinued its e-bike funding programme, meaning we are currently unable to offer further long-term hire schemes. We will continue to explore new funding opportunities and pursue any that become available.

There may be opportunities to do bike maintenance courses if anyone is interested. Maintenance of our ebikes continues to be an issue with each bike having to go across to Cycle Orkney each time they need repair, so if anyone was interested in doing the course and doing our maintenance, please get in touch.



Wellbeing

From April 2024 to April 2025, Shapinsay's wellbeing program offered residents opportunities to connect, learn, and try new experiences. Across cafés, workshops, groups, and festivals, we welcomed 2,304 attendances in just twelve months.

In December 2024, Voluntary Action Orkney confirmed that all in-home 1:1 wellbeing support across Orkney would stop, due to safeguarding concerns and the risk of coordinator burnout. The focus of the Shapinsay role therefore centred on preventative, community-wide wellbeing delivered through group activities and initiatives.

Key Highlights

- 2,304 attendances across groups and events
- £8,418 secured through VAO Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund
 - £6,618 for community wellbeing initiatives
 - £1,800 for the Shapinsay Men's Shed
- 550+ attendances at weekly game nights (Aug–Mar)
- 84 unique participants and 270 total attendance during Wellbeing & Climate Festival
- Men's Shed registered as a SCIO



Wellbeing

Wellbeing & Climate Festival (September 7 to October 7, 2024)

The festival featured 30+ activities including snorkelling, breathwork, woodturning, upcycling, creative workshops, themed walks, live music, and a dry-stone dyking workshop.

- 270 total attendances
- 84 unique participants
- Volunteer-led, free/by donation, inclusive across ages

The festival highlighted the value of community-led health initiatives, with participants reporting new skills, positive emotions and confidence.

Other initiatives / events

- Women's Health: Intro to Menopause (May 2024)
- Christmas Cheer initiative (Reach: 156 households, £430 spent in local community)
- Mobile Sauna Week (Feb 2025, 30+ participants, all reported uplift and relaxation)
- International Women's Day Retreat (Mar 2025, restorative day of yoga, reiki, meditation, and connection)

Impact

- "Joining the group gave me more confidence to meet people again and chat and enjoy being in company." – Men's Shed member
- "I felt completely rejuvenated after my sauna session!" – Sauna participant
- "It most definitely raised my mood. I'd even say there were moments of joy." – Dance session participant



Wellbeing - What's Next

The Island Wellbeing Project, led by Voluntary Action Orkney, is now coming to a close after just over 5 years. We hope that it will transition into an island-led initiative. On 13 September 2025, the wellbeing coordinator role on Shapinsay came to an end. Over the past year, the role focused on preventative, community-wide wellbeing, with activities such as community cafes, Men's Shed, creative workshops, walks, game nights, traditional skill workshops and live music.

Some residents require more individual support. Meeting these needs lies outside the scope of the coordinator role due to changes in the regulations that came down from VAO and advertised in the Shapinsay Sound at that time. These types of services would require a specialist third-party with the right training, support and safeguards in place to support the person leading them.

Residents also contributed to a Wellbeing Tree, sharing what matters most for their health and happiness. Suggestions included:

- Yoga
- Piece Place
- Practical support/signposting
- More activities
- Repair shop

The opportunity now is to ensure the right structures, funding and partnerships are in place so that wellbeing can continue to flourish for all in a way that suits Shapinsay residents.

Wellbeing - Crossroads care and Podiatry

In the last financial year, Crossroads, like all care areas, struggled with recruiting carers across the isles, including Shapinsay, so the care available on Shapinsay had to be reduced, this means that we didn't have much, if anything, to pay out towards care last year. However as this picks back up again, with the recruitment of a relief carer on the island, we will hopefully be able to go back to funding 50% of the at home care on the island



Podiatry



Podiatry is a service that has been cut by the NHS over the years due to budget constraints, leaving folk with little option but to go to Kirkwall to use services available over there. In 2024 we were approached by Gemma Reid of Walkabout Podiatry services to bring services over to Shapinsay. SDT fund Gemma's travel, organise the booking and pay for the room in the community centre so that the service can be provided in Shapinsay at a comparative price to the mainland. We provide the car service to enable her to do home visits for people who are unable to get down to visit and we pay for the first session for any Shapinsay Residents. Gemma has been fully booked almost every time she has come over, with around 18 regular users of the service.

Cast Affs - Shapinsay's Charity shop



Cast Affs has been open for a year as of 4th of July 2025 with a footfall of 1404 people in that time.

We have raised through sales, a total of £2834.20, Of that £1133.66 has been given to 12 Community groups.

Leaving an income to cover costs of: £1700.34

Community groups have also raised, through baking and raffles, a total of £2236.18

Cast Affs costs have been £5797.83 in wages and expenses, so SDT have subsidised costs of £4097.49. By increasing volunteer input and reducing our open days to once per week, we hope that Cast Affs will be more sustainable, therefore able to run longer term. If you would like to volunteer for Cast Affs so it could open more than once per week, please get in touch.



Thank you to Alison Meason, Gemma Leslie and Sally Wootton who are on the Cast Affs Group that help make the decisions on how Cast Affs will be run, this helps free up the board to deal with other issues and gives experienced knowledge and feedback into how the shop is run.

Shapinsay Renewables Limited

End of year report – 2025

It's been a successful year for the turbine. A mixture of good wind yields, and misfortune of others have contributed to a great year. Whirly generates much of the development trusts income.

We generated a record amount of electricity which was sold into the grid. It was the best year since we erected the wind turbine. Curtailment was low but still reducing our ability to sell everything we can produce.

We only had one breakdown which was repaired the following day by the Enercon service team. The local team are operating at full strength and are on top of all the maintenance, allowing them to react to breakdowns quicker.

We managed to secure another year of high export prices. This was less than 2023-24 period but it was still higher than other Orkney generators managed.

Overall, everything came together at the right time. This is the first year this has happened since the turbine was erected in 2011. The result is good income for the island.

I mentioned misfortune of others. We managed to generate so much power due to other turbines in Orkney being off grid. 2024 was the year of the turbine breakdown in Orkney. Several turbines were offline for most of the year. We had that misfortune a few years back and know the dire impacts of a broken turbine.

2025 will be a very different year. Turbines have been fixed and are up and running again, resulting in higher curtailment for Shapinsay. Electricity wholesale prices are lower this year and are going to continue to fall. The year has started off with low wind yields but I'm sure that will change as we head into the winter months. If we can stay breakdown free across the year that will give us the best chance to maximise our income.

Adrian Bird
Turbine Manager

Who's who of Shapinsay Development

The Board:

Ashley Boyd - Chair
Barry Moncrieff - Vice Chair
Simon Meason - Treasurer
Adrian Bird
Graham Rendall
Toby Diamond
Christine Leslie (resigned
May 2025)

**Number of meetings attended
since last AGM (out of a possible
9 meetings since November
2024 AGM)**

Ashley Boyd - Chair	6
Barry Moncrieff - Vice Chair	9
Simon Meason - Treasurer	8
Adrian Bird	9
Graham Rendall	7
Toby Diamond	8
Christine Leslie (Until May 2025))	5

Trust

Our Staff 2025

Lisa-Marie Muir - CDO/Manager
Carol Moncrieff - Admin
Andrew Stewart - Assistant manager (until August 25)
Eileen Phillips - Weekday driver
Alison McDougall - Wellbeing coordinator (until Sept 25)
Sally Wootton - Booking coordinator OOH ferry
Jenny Hall - Relief Driver
Joel Chaney - Relief Driver/weekend driver
Charles Hay - Weekend Driver/relief Barperson
Chris Moore - Barperson/weekend driver
Sharon Boyd - Front of house(FOH) supervisor - Smithy
Sally Irvine - Boathouse and Smithy cleaner
Keira Moncrieff - Smithy all areas
Calleigh Muir - Smithy Cook/FOH
Rhianon Bird - Smithy all areas
Sally Armitage - Smithy Cook, Charity shop assistant
Leilah Muir - Smithy FOH
Logan Muir - Smithy FOH
Erika Bews -Smithy FOH
Alison Meason - Smithy Barperson
CJ Battye - Smithy Barperson
Lenka Mellor - Smithy Barperson
Jennifer Meason - Smithy all areas
with us till Summer 2025 were:
Joanna Sosnowska - Lead cook
Lewis Moncrieff - Smithy FOH
Cameron Boyd - Smithy FOH
Joining us in Summer 2025 were:
Lyndsey Hill - Smithy relief cook, Charity shop assistant
Ewan Makin - Smithy FOH
Orla Boyd - Smithy FOH
Lucy Moore - Smithy FOH
Phoebe Dunnet - Smithy Relief all areas
Sophie Makin - Smithy Relief FOH
Colin Leslie - Smithy Relief barperson
Caroline Bird - Smithy Relief all areas