



# Shapinsay Get Involved Day - Summary Report

## Introduction

A 'Get Involved' Day was held in Shapinsay as part of the engagement stage in developing the Shapinsay Local Place Plan. The purpose of the event was to provide an open and informal opportunity for residents to share views about life on the island, discuss priorities for the future, and contribute ideas that can inform the Local Place Plan.

The event was designed to encourage wide participation and allow residents to contribute in different ways, including informal discussion, written comments and interactive activities.

Recognising that not everyone would be able to attend the event in person, the engagement was followed by a series of six themed Facebook posts on the Shapinsay Development Trust page, alongside a link to a short SurveyMonkey questionnaire, allowing residents to contribute views after the event.

In the lead-up to the event there were some differing views locally about the nature of the day, what it was intended to achieve, and whether people should attend. The promotion of the event through the Shapinsay Newsletter and social media played an important role in clarifying the purpose of the session and addressing some of these misunderstandings. This communication helped "myth-bust" some of the early perceptions and encouraged residents to come along, contributing to the strong level of attendance and participation on the day.

This report summarises:

- How the event worked.
- Participation levels.
- Feedback gathered during the day.
- Additional input received through social media and the survey.
- Key themes emerging from the engagement.
- Ideas and opportunities raised during the discussions.

## Participation

The Get Involved Day was well attended throughout the day. It is estimated that around 60 Shapinsay residents took part across the event, with many participants staying for much of the day and contributing to several discussions and activities.

In addition, 17 visitors travelled to Shapinsay for the event, including public sector officers, elected representatives, including two north isles councillors, the local MP and MSP, and the Development Officer from Westray, who attended to support discussion and share insight from similar community development work. Their presence helped support discussion around practical delivery, island challenges and opportunities, and future partnership working.

Overall, the level of participation created a lively and productive atmosphere and allowed a broad range of views to be shared.

The follow up survey on SurveyMonkey generated a total of 12 responses.

## How the Event Worked

The event was designed to encourage open conversation and allow people to engage in different ways and at their own pace.

A number of themed discussion tables were set up around the hall, providing information and prompts relating to different aspects of island life and the Local Place Plan. This allowed participants to move freely between topics, absorb information in their own time and contribute comments where they wished.

People were able to share views by:

- Adding comments to flip charts and post-it notes.
- Taking part in informal discussions with others.
- Speaking with individuals and organisations present on the day.
- Responding to interactive prompts.

The layout worked well in creating a relaxed environment where people could drop in and out of conversations throughout the day.

Participants also had the opportunity to speak with others present, including representatives from Warmworks, a display about the Orkney Harbours

Masterplan Phase 2, and to pick up items from Cast Affs, which helped create a lively and practical community-focused atmosphere.

Food also played an important role in bringing people together during the day. A community breakfast and lunch provided by The Smithy were very well received and helped create a welcoming and sociable environment for conversation.

It was particularly positive to see strong involvement from across the community, with people of different ages and backgrounds taking part throughout the day. Many residents also contributed to the practical organisation of the event, helping with setting up the hall and clearing away afterwards, reflecting the collaborative spirit of the day.

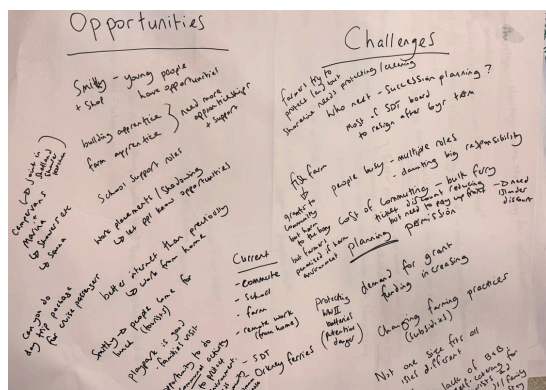
Overall, the format worked well in encouraging participation and enabling people to contribute in ways that felt comfortable for them.

## Feedback from the Day and Follow-Up Engagement

The workshop discussions and activities generated a significant amount of feedback from participants through discussions, flip charts and post-it notes. These discussions form the primary source of insight for this stage of the Local Place Plan engagement.

The themes raised during the event were broadly reinforced through the follow-up Facebook engagement and the SurveyMonkey responses.

Overall, the feedback highlighted a strong sense of pride in Shapinsay as a place to live, alongside recognition that the island is experiencing change and facing some practical challenges.



When asked to describe Shapinsay in one word during the event and through the follow-up survey, responses included Home, Sunny, Welcoming, Beautiful and Generous, reflecting the strong connection residents feel to the island. At the same time, some responses recognised that the island is Changing, and a small number expressed concerns about the direction of travel.

Across the engagement, several key topics were discussed repeatedly.

## *Housing*

Housing was one of the most prominent themes discussed during the Get Involved Day.

Participants recognised the progress already made by the Development Trust in delivering housing projects, with several comments describing this work as “a job well done.”



At the same time, participants highlighted the ongoing importance of housing to the long-term sustainability of the island.

Issues raised included:

- Housing for families, particularly larger homes.
- Affordable housing for working-age residents.
- Accessible housing options.
- Downsizing opportunities for older residents.
- Energy efficiency and heating costs.
- Housing opportunities for people already living on the island.

One suggestion raised during discussions was the potential development of housing options that would allow older residents to remain within the community while moving to homes that are easier to manage.

During discussion, Furrowend was mentioned as a location that some participants felt could potentially be explored in the future.

Survey responses also reinforced the importance of housing that works for different life stages and supports the long-term sustainability of the island community.

## Young People and Future Population

There was strong discussion about ensuring that Shapinsay remains a place where young people and families can live and build a future.

Participants spoke about the importance of:

- Housing opportunities for younger households.
- Supporting, growing and sustaining employment opportunities on the island. For example, a staffing model like that employed at The Smithy for future developments, such as a Furrowend project.
- Activities and opportunities for young people.
- Transport connections that allow access to education, work and activities.

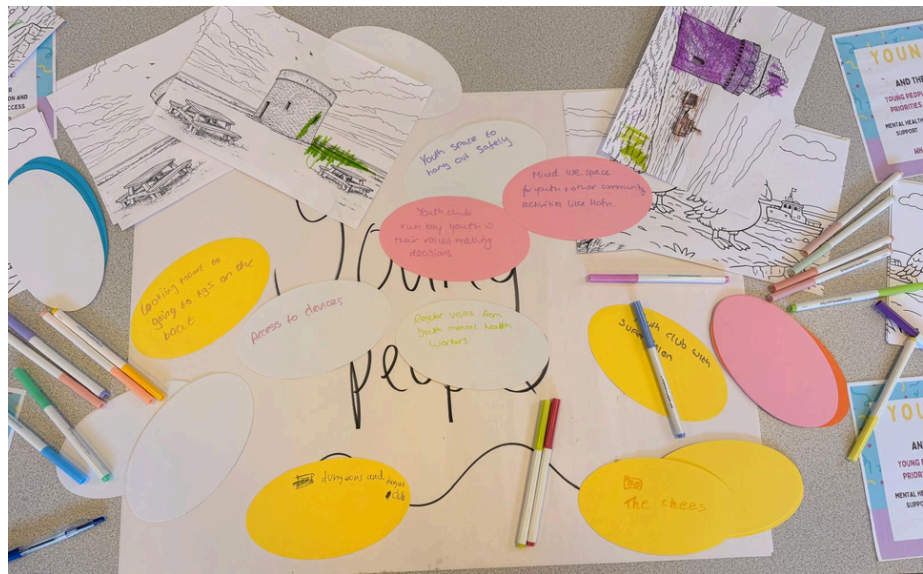
Transport was frequently linked to opportunities for young people, particularly in relation to ferry timetables and access to activities on the mainland.

### *Infrastructure and Everyday Life*

A number of practical issues affecting daily life were raised during discussions and reinforced through survey responses.

These included:

- Ferry timetables and connectivity, particularly into the evenings or earlier mornings.
- Road maintenance and potholes.
- Flooding in specific locations.
- Harbour access and facilities.
- Visitor infrastructure and signage.
- Maintenance of the path network.



Several participants also raised the importance of thinking about longer-term island resilience, including infrastructure planning and adaptation to future challenges.

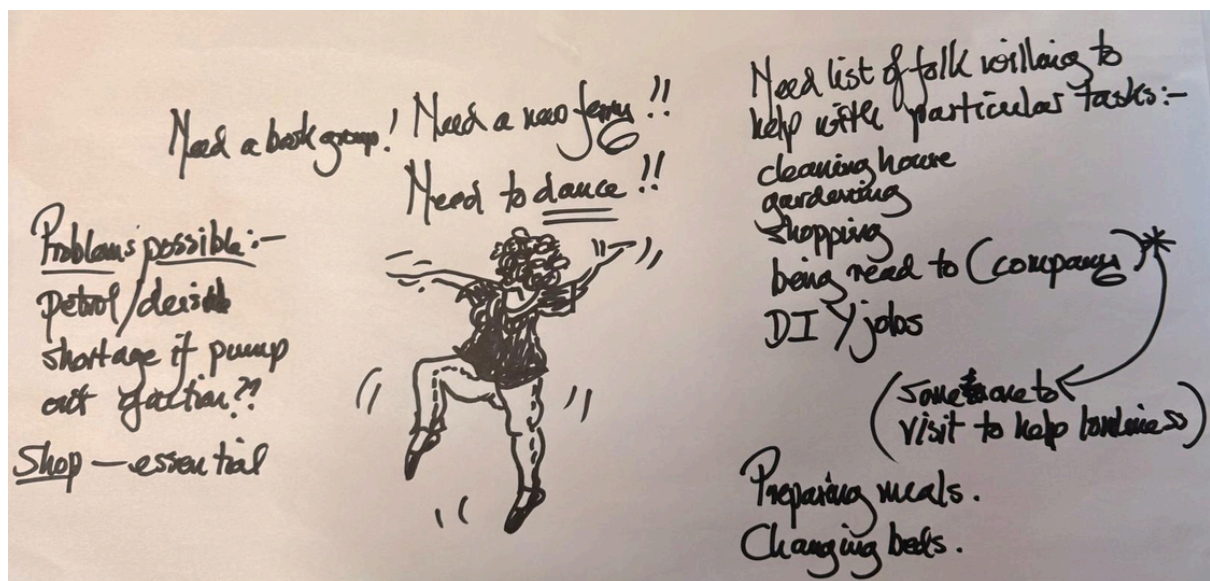
### *Social Inclusion and Community Life*

Many participants emphasised the importance of maintaining Shapinsay's strong sense of community.

Feedback highlighted:

- The value of existing community groups and activities.
- The importance of supporting volunteers, especially where there is a small pool of people supporting multiple groups and activities.
- Opportunities for informal gathering spaces.
- Visiting support for those who are housebound or don't get out so much.
- Improving communication about events and activities.

Some respondents also highlighted the importance of ensuring that both long-standing residents and newcomers feel welcome and included within the community.



### *Ideas and Opportunities Raised During the Day*

Alongside identifying issues and priorities, the discussions also generated a number of ideas and opportunities that could potentially be explored further.

These ideas varied in scale and were raised as early suggestions rather than developed proposals. However, they provide a useful indication of the types of projects residents would like to see explored.

## **Examples included:**

### *Housing for Different Life Stages*

Exploring housing options that support older residents to downsize while remaining within the community, potentially freeing up larger homes for families.

### *Community Wellbeing and Social Space*

Several participants spoke about the value of informal spaces where residents can spend time together outside of organised activities or commercial venues. Creating welcoming community spaces that support wellbeing and reduce isolation was suggested as a potential opportunity.

### *Community Transport*

Ideas were raised around enhancing connections within the island, including possible transport options that help people reach more ferry services, activities or appointments.

### *Visitor Facilities and Local Economy*

Participants discussed opportunities to improve visitor facilities and encourage visitors to spend more time on the island, supporting the local economy, and supporting the creation of additional opportunities for visitors to the island.

### *Community Projects and Activities*

Ideas were also raised around initiatives that bring people together, such as community gardens, conservation projects or shared activity spaces.

These ideas will be reviewed alongside the wider feedback as part of developing the Local Place Plan.

## **Key Themes Emerging Summary**

Across the Get Involved Day discussions, Facebook engagement and SurveyMonkey responses, several consistent themes emerged.

### **Housing**

Housing was one of the strongest themes raised. Participants recognised the progress already made by the Development Trust but also highlighted the need for housing options that support families, younger residents and older residents wishing to downsize.

### **Supporting Young People and Families**

There was a strong desire to ensure that Shapinsay remains somewhere where young people and families can live, work and build a future.

### **Transport and Connectivity**

Transport, particularly ferry timetables and connections to activities and services on and off the island, was frequently raised as affecting daily life and opportunities on the island.

### **Infrastructure and Everyday Improvements**

Road conditions, flooding, harbour access and visitor facilities were identified as practical issues affecting everyday life.

### **Community Connection**

Many participants emphasised the importance of maintaining Shapinsay's strong sense of community, including supporting social activities, informal gathering spaces and initiatives that reduce isolation.

### **Community Voice**

Several comments highlighted the importance of ensuring residents feel able to contribute to decisions affecting the island and that engagement leads to visible outcomes.

## **Overall Reflections**

The Get Involved Day provided a valuable opportunity for residents to come together and share views about the future of Shapinsay.

Participation was strong, discussions were constructive and the atmosphere remained positive throughout the day.

The combination of in-person engagement, social media discussion and follow up survey responses helped ensure that a wide range of views could be captured.

A particularly valuable aspect of the event was the depth of conversation and the range of perspectives shared, which helped surface both practical issues affecting everyday life and longer-term ideas for the future of the island.

Overall, the engagement highlighted a community that feels proud of Shapinsay and strongly connected to the island, while also recognising the need to address practical challenges and plan for the future.

Lisa-Marie played a central role in the success of the event, bringing together the various elements of the day, supporting contributors and helping ensure the discussions ran smoothly. Her work on promotion, including through the Shapinsay Newsletter and social media, together with the personal effort she made in encouraging people to attend, contributed greatly to the strong turnout and the positive and constructive atmosphere throughout the day.

## Next Steps

The workshop discussions and activities generated a significant amount of feedback and ideas from participants. This information is currently being reviewed and collated.

Alongside the Development Plan and other supporting evidence, this material will help inform an initial draft of a Shapinsay Local Place Plan. An initial version will be prepared over the next 2–3 weeks and shared for early review and discussion.



As part of this process, it will also be helpful to identify a small number of practical actions that could be progressed relatively quickly. These could form part of a simple “You said, We did” approach, demonstrating how community feedback from the Get Involved Day can translate into tangible outcomes.

These actions would not replace the longer-term ambitions of the Local Place Plan, but would help maintain momentum following the event and reinforce the value of community participation in shaping the future of Shapinsay.