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THIRD SECTOR NEWS
<p><u>YOUTHLINK SCOTLAND: NATIONAL YOUTH WORK AWARDS 2026</u> Deadline on 30th January Nominations are now open for this year’s National Youth Work Awards! This is your chance to recognise and celebrate the youth workers, projects and youth work organisations transforming young lives across Scotland.</p>
<p><u>EXTENSION OF FREEDOM OF INFORMATION IN (SCOTLAND) ACTS 2002 (FOISA) TO PRIVATE AND THIRD SECTOR PROVIDERS OF CARE HOME AND ‘CARE AT HOME’ SERVICES</u> Closes 30 Mar 2026 The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) gives people important rights to ask for and receive information from government and public services in Scotland. In doing so it places clear obligations on Scottish public authorities to provide people with information about their work. Currently, FOISA applies to public authorities with a role in arranging or providing care services, such as local authorities and NHS Boards, but not to private or voluntary organisations delivering social care. This consultation explores whether extending FOISA obligations to these providers would improve transparency and accountability. It also seeks views on the best approach to any extension of FOISA to ensure that this does not create an excessive burden on providers.</p>
<p><u>2026 IS INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER YEAR</u> The United Nations has declared 2026 to be International Volunteer Year, recognising volunteering as a key driver of sustainable development.</p>

NEWS FROM THE CHARITY REGULATOR (OSCR)

[VIDEO: INTRODUCING THE CHARITIES SORP 2026](#)

The new [Charities Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities \('the SORP'\)](#) was published on 31 October 2025. This new accounting framework helps to ensure charities' financial reporting requirements are more proportionate to their size. Charities preparing their annual report and accounts in line with the SORP, and their advisors, will need to ensure they are familiar with what is different in the SORP and understand the practical implications for the accounts they will prepare in the future.

Watch a video recording of this webinar on OSCR's YouTube channel: [Introducing the Charities SORP 2026](#).

RESOURCES

[COMMUNITY BENEFIT GATEWAY](#)

Community Benefit Gateway (CBG) is a free and easy to use online service that connects NHS Scotland suppliers with third sector community organisations within Scotland. In collaboration with Public Health Scotland, the CBG helps improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of local areas and assists in the reduction of health inequalities across Scotland. CBG's purpose is to establish a positive relationship between appropriate suppliers and third sector community organisations through the fulfilment of community needs. Log in to the CBG to raise a community benefit or to view the full list.

[COULD YOU BE SAVING TIME AND MONEY ON YOUR ENERGY TARIFF?](#)

69% of charities report financial strain due to rising costs, including energy bills. CFG with **Utility Aid** are offering a free comparison tool which will ensure you are getting the best deal with your energy procurement. [Find out more](#)

[KEEPING THE PROMISE – HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE](#)

This evidence review was commissioned to explore how longitudinal quantitative data can support monitoring the health and wellbeing of Scotland's care experienced children and young people, in line with The Promise 2030.

[YOUNG PEOPLE ACCESSING SUPPORT OR TREATMENT FOR ALCOHOL AND DRUGS: STANDARDS](#)

The Standards outline what young people should expect when seeking help for drugs or alcohol. The Recommendations offer guidance to Alcohol and Drug Partnerships (**ADPs**), their local strategic partners and service providers to put in place accessible, person-centred support, that meets the needs of young people.

HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS ENTERPRISE - SUPPORT FROM HIE PARTNERS

- [Find Business Support](#) brings together advice, support and funding from public sector partners across Scotland. The Cost of Doing Business section is being updated regularly signposting to services and you can sign up for regular emails to keep up to date.
- [Scotland Food and Drink](#) have a new resource to help employers develop the full talent potential of their existing workforce.
- [Business Energy Scotland](#) provides free impartial support and access to funding to help SME businesses save energy, money and carbon.
- [Zero Waste Scotland](#) provides support and funding for businesses looking to make changes.
- [The Energy Saving Trust](#) works with businesses with energy efficiency strategies, research, assurance and communications. They offer grants and loans to organisations looking to reduce emissions which can also result in cost savings.
- [Skills for Growth](#) delivered by Skills Development Scotland, this service works like a skills diagnostic service for your business. They can work with you to understand your skills needs, create a detailed people plan and guide you to the right support.
- [Scottish Manufacturing Advisory Service](#) can help you lower the costs of doing business by reducing capital, energy, labour and raw material costs.
- [Circular Economy Investment Fund](#) is a funding opportunity for businesses and organisations across Scotland. Zero Waste Scotland is looking for innovative projects that have the ability to deliver carbon savings, leverage investment and create jobs.
- [Interface](#) work with businesses of all sizes, in all sectors, helping them grow. They have connections into all Scottish universities, research institutes and colleges and can save you time and money in finding and accessing academic expertise, research, technologies, specialist facilities and funding.
- [Scotland's Migration Service](#) provides free immigration advice, webinars and one-to-one support to help Scottish employers confidently recruit and retain international talent.

NEW GUIDANCE FOR USING AI IN FUNDRAISING

The Fundraising Regulator has released new guidance to help charitable fundraising institutions comply with the Code of Fundraising Practice when using artificial intelligence (AI) for fundraising purposes.

TRAINING AND EVENTS

THE GATHERING 2026

Scotland's biggest celebration of the voluntary sector at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC) on 10th and 11th February. Organised by SCVO, the Gathering is the largest free voluntary sector event in the UK. It's an opportunity for all the amazing people working in and with the voluntary sector to network, showcase what they do and learn from each other.

[MEET THE FUNDER WITH TESCO STRONGER STARTS – ONLINE EVENT, TUESDAY 3 FEBRUARY 2026, 10AM – 11AM](#)

SCVO are hosting a free online event with Tesco Stronger Starts. Learn about their funding programme which supports thousands of children’s and young people’s projects across the UK. The scheme is open to all schools, registered charities, and not-for-profit organisations. There will be a chance to get grant application tips, learn about the Tesco blue token customer vote process, ask questions, and to network directly with other community groups.

[About Tesco Stronger Starts](#)

[LEAD SCOTLAND - TRAINING THE TRAINERS HUB – CYBER EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT RESOURCES](#)

Lead Scotland, a national disability and education charity, have released their new resource [Training the Trainers Hub](#). Our Training the Trainers cyber courses are now available via video, online at any time. All the resources are free as part of the Cyber Accessibility Project, with our only goal being to make sure that cyber education and empowerment is accessible for everyone.

Videos are just 5-10 minutes long, making them ideal for quick, bite-sized learning. If you support disabled people or those with limited digital confidence—professionally or in an unpaid role—these resources are designed for you, but are suitable for anyone.

The hub helps you build confidence and stay up to date on online safety, so you can support others effectively. It also includes materials to share with those you assist. These videos replicate our live webinars, which can still be booked for groups or organisations. Interested? Contact our Cyber Project team at CyberProject@lead.org.uk.



The screenshot displays a grid of video thumbnails for the 'Training the Trainers' series, each with a 'Resources and links' section below it. A large red banner with the word 'NEW!' in white, slanted text is positioned on the right side of the grid.

Video Title	Resources and links
Using a scam checker to check emails	Visit Ask Silver
Saving passwords to a browser	Visit my.lead course
Assessing your security	Visit digital.lead
Check if your data has been stolen in a data breach	Visit HavelBeenPwned Visit my.lead course
Report an email as phishing	Copy report@phishing.gov.uk

Sign up for our
**Funding information for
 SHETLAND**
 online session
 Tuesday 3rd February, 2025
 7pm until 8.30pm

Heritage Fund

Find out about funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund

For more info email

rikki.payne@heritagefund.org.uk

Register

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/booking/t-ejaqqay>

Picture: Euan Myles/Promote Shetland

To register please click [here](#).

HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS ENTERPRISE: UNLOCKING GROWTH: IP-BACKED FINANCE, THURSDAY 5 FEB 2026, ONLINE, 11:30-12:30

Do you want to use your intellectual property (IP) as a financial asset? Join us to learn its potential role in securing finance. This webinar introduces IP-backed finance, with practical insights, real-world examples, and guidance on how to prepare and access support.

JUST ENTERPRISE

[Introduction to Business Planning, \(Online Workshop\), Next date: 13th January](#)

You've had a eureka moment about a social enterprise, or you've already begun to trade, you need to plan properly to make sure your bright idea becomes a commercial success. Learn the basics with this workshop.

[Introducing AI in your Social Enterprise, \(Online Workshop\), Next date: 20th January](#)

Join us for this introductory event on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and explore the transformative power of using AI across various elements of social enterprises, revealing new opportunities for growth, efficiency and impact!

[Charitable Trading, \(Online Workshop\), Next date: 27th January](#)

More and more charities are trading, or considering trading, as a way to generate income, but it's essential to keep within the law. This session outlines what you can and can't do to trade legally.

[An Introduction to Social Investment, \(Online Workshop\), Next date: 28th January](#)

Investment can be a great tool to help you grow and increase your impact. The session will talk about what social investment is, who provides investment finance, where to find further information and where it fits with other sources of finance.

TRAINING COURSES FROM [PLANNING AID SCOTLAND](#)

A new programme of free training funded by [the Scottish Government](#) through the [National Planning Hub](#)

All the courses are currently operating a waiting list. However, people signing up should have access to the recording of the training.

The training is free and open to anyone across Scotland. It provides a clear introduction to engaging with the planning system, with a particular focus on renewable energy, community engagement and place-based planning. The sessions are available to any community or individuals across Scotland who want to engage more confidently in decisions that affect their places. The programme includes the following sessions:

- [How to engage your community: A practical introduction](#)
- [Understanding renewable energy and planning: Part 1](#)
- [Understanding renewable energy and planning: Part 2](#)
- [Local Place Plans: Knowing the essentials](#)
- [Ask Away: Local Place Plans](#)
- [Beyond the survey: Creative approaches to community engagement](#)
- [Where water meets land: Offshore wind & how it connects to the grid](#)
- [Understanding the electricity network & how power line routes are chosen](#)
- [How to create your project management plan](#)
- [Online & engaged: Learn how to use Placecheck](#)
- [How to analyse community feedback](#)
- [How to benefit from a renewable energy as a community](#)

Planning Aid Scotland

This is a one-off programme of sessions and will not be repeated, so we encourage early booking. All sessions will be delivered in early 2026 and will be recorded, with recordings available to rewatch for three months after delivery. Please keep an eye on our [Eventbrite page](#) as additional sessions will be added in the new year.

If you have any questions or accessibility requirements, please contact our Planning & Projects Officer Anne Kripler at anne@pas.org.uk

#VILLAGEHALLSWEEK2026 RUNS 16–22 MARCH 2026!

Celebrate the vital role your hall plays in your community's health and wellbeing. This UK-wide campaign is run by [ACRE](#), in partnership with [Scottish Rural Action](#) and [WCVA](#). [Register by 13 January](#) to receive free bunting, badges, and posters for your events.

Highlights of the week:

- Thematic events: [Scottish Rural Action](#) and [Social Enterprise Scotland](#) will run two events for Community Spaces Network members. Sign up to the network and receive registration details: [Thematic Social Enterprise Networks - Register your Interest](#).
- Resources: SRA and partners will release useful resources including the latest [Village Halls Handbook](#) edition, with guidance on governance, facilities, funding, net zero, and more.
- Local celebrations: Share photos & stories of your hall using #VillageHallsWeek to be featured! Keep an eye on the [Local Events map](#) to see what's happening in your area.

NB THE NEXT COMMUNITY SPACES NETWORK MEETING IS ON 28TH JANUARY AT 10AM-11.30AM, AND WILL FOCUS ON YOUTH PARTICIPATION. CLICK [HERE](#) FOR MORE DETAILS AND TO REGISTER.

SCOTLAND'S MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID (SMHFA) COURSES ARE RETURNING TO SHETLAND IN JUNE 2026

(LIMITED EARLY BIRD OFFER AVAILABLE UNTIL 13 FEBRUARY)

Early bird prices (until 13 February)

 £175 per person (*full price £210*)

 £800 for 5 places (*full price £950*)

Discount codes to use at booking:

• **EBPLACE** – single place

• **EBGROUP** – 5 place group booking

book at: www.chrisgrantgla.com/courses

Invoicing also available

Course dates

• 18 & 19 June 2026 - Islesburgh

• 20 & 21 June 2026 - Clickimin

I'll be delivering two courses to offer flexibility - one weekday and one weekend course.

Both courses require 2 days attendance

If you'd like to discuss group bookings, **would prefer an invoice** or have any questions before committing, feel free to get in touch - **Chris Grant**, contact@chrisgrantgla.com

JUST ENTERPRISE

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MICROSOFT E LEARNING - AI BASICS

Microsoft have a free [AI E Learning Hub](#). Courses include:

- [Create and Draft with Microsoft 365 Copilot](#). 27 min (8 units). Use Copilot to create, draft, and brainstorm new ideas and materials in Word, PowerPoint, Teams, and Outlook.
- [Explore AI Basics](#). 11 units. Discover the world of AI by exploring its foundational concepts and history. Learn how AI technology powers everyday items and transforms daily life.
- [Responsible AI: Ethical Policies and Practices](#). Offers guidance on how to implement governance structures for AI within organisations. Includes tools like the Responsible AI Dashboard and Human-AI Experience Workbook. Ideal for trustees setting strategic direction and oversight.
- [Azure Skilling for Non Profits](#). 4 courses ranging from beginner to advanced

CHARITY EXCELLENCE - [AI TRAINING \(FREE\)](#)

In association with Microsoft, Charity Excellence has launched a range of free, certificated, online courses that enable anyone in any nonprofit to use AI effectively, keep themselves and their charity safe, and gain valuable career skills. The 45-minute courses require no prior AI knowledge, are completed at your own pace, using engaging bite-sized lessons, demo videos, practical tasks, and fun quizzes.

Courses include:

- **An Introduction to AI** - the basics of what it is and how it works (and doesn't!) - for everyone.
- **Getting Started with AI** - how to get started and to get the most from using AI.
- **AI Safety for Everyone** - how to recognise the new risks and what to do to keep yourself and others safe; particularly women, children, and marginalised groups.
- **Understanding AI Risks** - and cyber security, for anyone running a non profit, no matter how small.
- **Finding Funders with AI** - for those involved in or managing fundraising.

[THIRD SECTOR'S POUNDS & PURPOSE ONLINE SUMMIT \(FREE\), 12 FEBRUARY 2026](#)

Charities face rising costs, reduced donations and growing demand for services. Pounds & Purpose is a free one-day virtual summit on 12 February 2026, chaired by Emily Burt, editor of Third Sector, featuring sector leaders and finance specialists sharing practical, usable actions on topics such as financial leadership, AI and more.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SCOTLAND

[SUPPORT FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE: FUNDING AND INNOVATION WEBINAR, 13TH JANUARY, 12PM, ONLINE](#)

Social Enterprise Scotland are hosting a webinar designed to empower social enterprises with the tools, insight, and confidence to grow sustainably. They will be joined by [Easyfundraising](#), the UK's leading charity and community shopping platform, and [FreshSight](#), a student-led consultancy specialising in social impact innovation.

[TUESDAY 20 JANUARY | 1PM, SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE OF EMPLOYER RECRUITMENT INCENTIVES](#)

Have you used or thought about using Employer Recruitment Incentives (ERIs) in your social enterprise? This informal, online session is a chance to feed into national thinking on ERIs, and share your experience about what has worked well, what's been challenging and where there is room for improvement.

[TUESDAY 27 JANUARY | 1PM, SAVE ENERGY, SAVE MONEY: LOW CARBON LIVING WITH CHANGeworks](#)

We'll be joined by Changeworks for this important session where you'll learn how to save energy in the home, make the most out of low carbon technology and how to get started with an electric vehicle or e-bike.

[TUESDAY 27 JANUARY | 1.30PM, THEMATIC WORKSHOP: NO ONE LEFT BEHIND PRODUCTS](#)

1 year on from the publication of the Government's No One Left Behind Strategic Plan, a number of guidance documents have been produced to support partnership working and delivery at local level. Come along to this session to find out more about No One Left Behind Policy in Scotland, and hear directly from the team who helped to create these new resources.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SCOTLAND (CONT)

WEDNESDAY 28 JANUARY | 10AM, FROM YOUTH CLUBS TO LIFELONG ROOTS: COMMUNITY SPACES SHAPING RURAL FUTURES

How can village halls and community spaces better support young people as they step into adulthood? Join us for an inspiring online event exploring how rural and island communities across Scotland can help 18+ year olds build belonging, skills, and brighter futures – right where they grew up.

TUESDAY 3 FEBRUARY | 10AM, COMMUNITY LEARNING EXCHANGE: SCOTTISH SPORTS FUTURES

Join us for this informal and interactive Learning Exchange to Scottish Sports Futures (SSF) who have been using the power of sport for 25 years to help young people build confidence, resilience, and healthier lives. This session is now fully booked but there is a waiting list in operation.

TUESDAY 3 FEBRUARY | 11AM, THE BENEFITS OF FAIR WORK

The Fair Work agenda is gaining momentum in Scotland, with many supportive social enterprises and charities understanding the practical benefits of Fair Work policies. Hear from Scottish Government officials and employers about what Fair Work is and how to do it yourself, share your own experiences and get answers to your questions.

TUESDAY 24 FEBRUARY | 1.30PM, THEMATIC WORKSHOP: LIVED EXPERIENCE PANELS

Lived Experience Panels can make a big difference to how we plan and deliver public and community services. And that, in turn, can truly transform people's experience of accessing these services. This thematic workshop will provide a safe space to explore top tips from experienced Lived Experience Panel participants and hosts, helping you avoid common mistakes and get off to a good start, or rebuild a flagging group.

MAKE YOUR MARK INCLUSIVE VOLUNTEERING CONFERENCE 2026: POWER IN PARTNERSHIP (ONLINE AND IN PERSON AT EDINBURGH ZOO), WEDNESDAY 4TH FEBRUARY, 10AM - 4PM

Make Your Mark is the campaign to increase the number and diversity of heritage volunteers in Scotland. This one-day event will explore how co-creation and collaboration can transform volunteering across the heritage sector and beyond by helping to build inclusive, sustainable volunteer programmes.

UNLOCKING MUSEUM AUDIENCE INSIGHTS: MAKING THE MOST OF DATA, ONLINE, WEDNESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2026, 10:00AM TO 12:00PM

This webinar is offered as part of the Museum Futures wraparound programme. The Museum Futures programme of essential support has been developed in direct response to the significant and ongoing financial and capacity challenges faced by the sector.

The session will cover:

- Context: an overview of museum/ heritage sector and national data on audience trends
- The purpose of audience evaluation and what you can use it for
- What funders are looking for
- A simple data collection framework
- Different methods you can use and when to use them
- Pragmatic tips on how to make the most of what you have and what you can do with limited or no budget and time

THRE TRAINING COMING UP SOON:

[PANEL Workshop: A Human Rights and Equalities First Approach in Practice](#),
Wednesday 14 January 2026, 1pm-4pm, online on Zoom

[The Basics: A Human Rights and Equalities First Approach \(2 days\)](#)
Tuesday 27 and Wednesday 28 January 2026, 2pm-4pm, online on Zoom

[RURAL SOCIAL ENTERPRISE NETWORK MEETING \(ONLINE\): FEBRUARY 2026 TICKETS, TUE, FEB 3, 2026 AT 2:00 PM – 3.30PM](#)

Delegates from the Rural Social Enterprise Gathering 2025 held in Malaysia will share their experiences. We will also hear how rural communities in Scotland are putting Net Zero partnerships into action.

SCOTLAND'S DISABILITY SUMMIT - SATURDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2026

This hybrid Summit will bring together disabled people, carers, advocates, and allies to reflect on progress and look to the future. As Scotland heads towards the next election, we would like to invite disabled people in Scotland, and their organisations to discuss ideas for change. What you would like to see your Parliament achieve in order to create a more inclusive society. What progress do you want to see around transport, social care, inclusive education, social security and voting.

Organisations or individuals can register an interest to attend in-person by 5.00pm on Monday 12 January 2026. Registration and further information can be found here www.parliament.scot/summit.

Those wishing to attend online can register right up to Wednesday 18 February 2026. If you're interested in taking part, [register your interest now](#). Information about registering is also available in [easy read](#) and [BSL](#).

CYRENIANS SCOTTISH CENTRE FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION: FREE ONLINE EVENTS FOR PROFESSIONALS AND PRACTITIONERS

[ANXIETY AND RESILIENCE, WEDNESDAY, 12 FEBRUARY, 12PM, ONLINE](#)

'Anxiety and Resilience' highlights the state of being anxious and afraid and the difference between anxiety and stress which are underlying causes for this state. We'll look at how anxiety can drive conflict and what we can do to reduce it.

[UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONS AND ANGER, WEDNESDAY, 18 FEBRUARY, 8.30AM, ONLINE](#)

'Understanding Emotions and Anger' will introduce you to primary and secondary emotions, emotions we present and emotions we feel. It demonstrates how the process of anger works, its trigger, escalation, release, de-escalation and resolve.

SCOTTISH WOMEN'S AID: [UNDERSTANDING THE DYNAMICS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE AND COERCIVE CONTROL](#), 22ND JANUARY, 9.30AM-12.30PM (FEE APPLIES), ONLINE

By developing a greater understanding of domestic abuse, in all its forms and how it impacts victims and survivors, the session will enable individuals and organisations to be better placed to be alert to the signs of domestic abuse, understand how it impacts people and where to signpost to support and specialist services.

DOMESTIC ABUSE IN RURAL & ISLAND COMMUNITIES, WEDNESDAY 18 FEBRUARY 10:30-11:30AM, ONLINE

Join this webinar and hear from [Professor Sarah Pedersen](#) of Robert Gordon University about the work of a five-year research project exploring the unique challenges of supporting survivors and policing Domestic Abuse within remote, rural or island communities of Scotland. Explore how to respond effectively.

LIVING WELL HUB BRESSAY, SPELDIBURN, WEDNESDAY MORNING 9.15AM – 11.15AM AND LIVING WELL HUB SCALLOWAY - WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON 2-4PM

Due to current restraints these Living Well Hubs will be suspended for the rest of 2025.

**LIVING WELL HUB, BRAE COMMUNITY HALL, CLUB ROOM, FRIDAY 10AM – 4PM
Brae Community Hall, in the Club Room between 10am – 4pm on Friday's.**

The Living Well Hub is based at the **Brae Community Hall, in the Club Room** and open on Friday's between **10am – 2pm**. [Living Well, Advice & Support – Shetland Islands Council](#) please pop along for a cuppa, a chat or to browse the leaflets that we hold.

The community cupboard is currently located in the side porch at the hall, please pop along if you are needing any food supplies.

CLS Living Well Hub@Community Care Social Work livingwellhub@shetland.gov.uk
The Hub is contactable Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm, 01595744120

CLIMATE RELATED NEWS, EVENTS & TRAINING

YOUR CHANCE TO INFLUENCE THE [SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT DRAFT CLIMATE PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 2026-2040](#)

The Plan sets out how Scotland will reduce greenhouse gas emissions over that period, whilst making sure the transition to net zero is fair, practical and supportive. It recognises that change needs to happen across society; in how we heat our homes, travel, use land, produce energy, run businesses and support communities, and that people need clear, accessible information to take part in that journey.

Voluntary Action Shetland will be running three workshops to enable people in Shetland to help shape the final version of the Plan.

Choose from one of three options (in-person or online) to have your say! Click on the links below to register for the option which suits you:

In- person events:

- [Wednesday 21st January, 12.30pm – 2.30pm, Market House, Lerwick](#)
Lunch is provided
- [Thursday 22nd January, 6pm – 8pm, Islesburgh Community Centre, Room 11](#)
Dinner is provided

Online event:

- [Wednesday 21st January, 6pm – 8pm, Online \(zoom\)](#)

[**HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS \(HIE\) CLIMATE SPRINGBOARD - FREE NET ZERO SUPPORT**](#)

Join a free six-week online programme to kick-start your net zero journey. Climate Springboard helps SMEs, social enterprises and community organisations across the Highlands and Islands measure carbon emissions, create a compliant footprint, and build a practical action plan. You'll gain expert guidance, quick-win tips to cut costs, and access to a growing network of like-minded organisations.

Programme schedule

The next cohort starts **Tuesday 13 January 2026**. The online sessions will be:

- Workshop one: Tuesday 13 January, 9.30am - noon
- Workshop two: Tuesday 27 January, 9.30am - noon
- Workshop three: Tuesday 10 February, 9.30am - noon
- Springboard accountability session: Tuesday 24 February, 9.30 - 11.30am

Can't make this training group? Here are our future online cohort dates for your diary:

Cohort 3: Thursdays - 12, 26 Feb; 12, 19 March

Cohort 4: Tuesdays - 17, 31 March; 21, 28 April

Cohort 5: Thursdays - 30 April; 14, 28 May; 4 June

Cohort 6: Tuesdays - 26 May; 9, 23, 30 June

[**APPLY NOW**](#)

[**THE ENERGY TRANSITION IN SCOTLAND'S ISLANDS: JOINT MEETING OF THE CROSS PARTY GROUP OF THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ON RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY \(SPREEE\) AND THE CROSS PARTY GROUP OF THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ON ISLANDS \(CPG ISLANDS\) TUESDAY 13 JANUARY 2026, 18:30-20:00**](#)

The next Cross Party Group meeting will explore the challenges and opportunities relating to the energy transition in Scotland's islands. This will be a **hybrid** meeting taking place in person in the Scottish Parliament or via MS Teams but please note that in person registration has now closed due to capacity limits. Register for [online attendance here](#).

[**INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMUNITY ENERGY LAUNCHPAD, 13TH JANUARY 2026, 10AM – 11.30AM, ONLINE**](#)

Starting a new community energy project can be daunting and it's tricky to know where to start. **The Community Energy Launchpad will provide early stage support to communities interested in learning about community energy & exploring the options available.**

With the help of the Community Energy Launchpad, you could end up installing solar panels on a community building, developing a community-owned wind turbine, or investigating shared ownership, where a community group invests in a commercially owned renewable energy project. The Launchpad will help in the initial stages, supporting community organisations to be ready to work with the team at Local Energy Scotland and deliver your project.

Join [Development Trusts Association Scotland](#) for a free online session introducing the [support available through the Community Energy Launchpad](#).

HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS CLIMATE HUB

CLIMATE ACTION TING

[ONLINE INFORMATION SESSION TO MARK THE OPENING OF APPLICATIONS FOR THE CLIMATE ACTION TING, SHETLAND'S GREEN PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING \(PB\) INITIATIVE, 14 JANUARY, 7PM – 8PM](#)

This session is designed to help you understand the application process, what makes a strong project, and how the participatory budgeting vote will work. Whether you're already developing an idea or just curious about taking part, you're welcome to join.

What to expect:

- Walk-through of the Climate Action Ting application form
- Overview of the participatory budgeting process
- Open Q&A for anyone preparing a project or wanting to understand the funding process

This session will be a helpful starting point for groups looking to submit a project, especially if you couldn't make our previous "Grow Your Idea" event. More information here: [Shetland Climate Action Ting — Highlands & Islands Climate Hub](#)

[WEBINAR: ROADMAP TO CIRCULARITY FOR ISLANDS AND RURAL COMMUNITIES TICKETS, WED, JAN 21, 2026 AT 10:00 AM | EVENTBRITE](#)

Zero Waste Scotland is Scotland's circular economy public body, working across government, business, and communities to rewire the economy from our current "take, make, waste" model to one where we make the most of the materials we have. These workshops are part of a series of online and in-person stakeholder engagement events taking place and will build on our recently published [Energy Infrastructure and Built Environment System Maps](#).

[BUSINESS ENERGY SCOTLAND: FUNDING FOR WINDOW UPGRADES – ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW, 22 JANUARY, 10:00AM - 10:45AM, WEBINAR](#)

During winter, heating our workplaces to comfortable levels is essential. But it's also a big expense. Upgrading glazing can help, but it's typically one of the more expensive changes to make. The good news is, right now, the Scottish Government is providing funding to help eligible businesses.

[UNBOUND SCOTLAND](#)

Unbound Scotland is a new project empowering people to come together to take local climate action that supports good health in their communities.

Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, Unbound Scotland aims to:

- Work in each of Scotland's 32 local authority areas to understand local issues, priorities, and needs.
- Provide practical support, knowledge and skills around both climate impacts and how we address health inequalities through a series of Unbound events.
- Capture this activity and learning so we can better understand the policy and practice conditions that support community-led action on climate impact and health inequalities.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES/ VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

OLD HAA TRUST: ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEERS AND TRUSTEES REQUIRED

Old Haa Trust manages and runs the Old Haa Museum in Burravoe, Yell.

We are open from April to October, 6 ½ days a week. We are closed during the winter months but work continues all year round.

We are looking for voluntary trustees for the management team. We would like people who are enthusiastic with a variety of skills to help keep our museum running and open to the public. If being a trustee is new to you, we are happy to hold an informal discussion to help you get a flavour of what's required.

We're looking for additional volunteers to help with:

- preparing Old Haa for opening i.e. deep cleaning rooms, etc
- helping with setting up history and art exhibitions,
- helping to organise the storage for artefacts
- occasional help in the tearoom alongside our Museum Assistants at busy times.

You would be working alongside experience trustees/staff who will help you understand the job required. Work would be flexible and to suit both you and trustee time scales.

Trustees meet once every 4-6 weeks, and occasionally have catch ups on matters which arise.

If you would like to find out more, then please get in touch with us by contacting the Chair, Robert Odie robertodie@btinternet.com or 01957 722315 or you can e-mail theoldhaatrust@btconnect.com

We are a friendly lot and would really appreciate your help!

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT NEWS

REPORTS

REPORT ON CARE EXPERIENCE BILL

On 17 December, the [Education, Children and Young People Committee](#) published its stage 1 [report](#) on the [Children \(Care, Care Experience and Services Planning\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#). While it supports the general principles of the bill, the committee raised some concerns. These include issues with proposals to tackle excess profits in residential care, which it says have not been properly consulted on and do not seem to be well thought through.

REPORT ON THE WELLBEING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL

On 19 December, the [Social Justice and Social Security Committee](#) published its stage 1 [report](#) on the [Wellbeing and Sustainable Development \(Scotland\) Bill](#). While the committee supports the broad aims of the bill, the majority of the committee do not believe the case has been made for the suggested approach to achieve those aims.

REPORT ON CYBERCRIME

On 12 December, the [Criminal Justice Committee](#) published a short [report](#) setting out the scrutiny it had undertaken on cybercrime ahead of the Parliament's [debate](#) on cybercrime and cyber-security for business and vulnerable individuals in Scotland, which took place on 17 December.

LEGISLATION

CALLS FOR VIEWS: [THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT IS OPEN TO HEARING YOUR VIEWS ON A RANGE OF TOPICS:](#)

[DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE PLAN CONSULTATION](#)

Closes: 29 January 2026

The draft Climate Change Plan to 2040 sets out actions designed to reduce Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions and meet our first three carbon budgets, whilst supporting jobs, growth and community regeneration.

Support Parliament in Scrutinising Scotland's Draft Climate Change Plan

On 6 November, the Scottish Government published its draft Climate Change Plan, setting out how Scotland aims to cut emissions across the economy. The Scottish Parliament has 120 days to scrutinise the Plan. The Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee will lead this work before reporting back with conclusions and recommendations. They have launched an online engagement platform where individuals and community groups can share views on the draft Plan.

Themes for discussion:

- Accessibility of the Plan
- Transparency and accountability
- Community-led climate action
- Support for households to reach net zero

Find copies of the Draft Climate Change Plan below:

- [Draft Climate Change Plan](#)
- [Easy Read version](#)
- [Children and Young Peoples version](#)

[DRAFT CIRCULAR ECONOMY STRATEGY CONSULTATION - SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT](#)

Closes: Tuesday 13th January 2026

The draft circular economy strategy sets out the rationale and benefits of a more circular economy within the wider economic framework and describes the Scottish Government's overall vision to 2045 and the outcomes that it is working towards. A consultation is now open and all are invited to give their views about the suggested priorities outlined in the draft circular economy strategy. It is aimed at everyone who has a role to play: the people and communities of Scotland, businesses, the third sector and the public sector.