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THIRD SECTOR NEWS
<p>HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM VOLUNTARY ACTION SHETLAND!</p>  <p>Our offices will be closing over the festive period. We will close at 4:00pm on Wednesday 24th December and reopen at 9:00am Monday 5 January.</p>

NEWS FROM THE CHARITY REGULATOR (OSCR)
<p>FESTIVE PERIOD OPENING HOURS 2025-26</p> <p>OSCR offices will be closed during the festive period and will be unable to answer queries during this time. Our phone lines will close at 12 noon on Wednesday 24 December 2025 and will remain closed until 9.30am on Monday 5 January 2026.</p>

During this time, our website and [OSCR Online](#) will be available as usual. Please see our [FAQs page](#) for answers to common queries.

If your online annual return deadline is coming up soon, please log in to OSCR Online now to ensure you have access, as we will be unable to assist with queries between 24 December and 5 January. Our recent article, [Have you submitted your online annual return?](#), includes more information and guidance to help you log in and submit your online annual return.

RESOURCES

[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.

[THE SCOTTISH HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION \(SHRC\) REPORT: STATE OF THE NATION 2025](#)

A comprehensive annual assessment of how human rights are being realised across Scotland, offering a snapshot of the pressures and inequalities shaping people's daily lives. The report focuses on economic, social and cultural rights, the rights that ensure everyone can live with dignity: rights to adequate housing, health, social security, food and fair working conditions.

[PUBLIC HEALTH SCOTLAND: LAUNCH OF CHILD POVERTY PREVENTION DASHBOARD](#)

The [Child Poverty Prevention Dashboard](#) is a new interactive dashboard that provides quantitative data that can be used alongside local data and other types of information to:

- Identify local priorities when developing plans: The dashboard can be used to conduct a data deep dive to help identify local need and priority areas and develop outcomes.
- Annual monitoring of child poverty: The primary data sources can be used to monitor child poverty locally, regardless of priorities.
- Monitoring and evaluating impact: The data indicators can be used alongside other data and information to monitor progress and evaluate impacts of the actions aligned to identified outcomes

[RURAL SOCIAL ENTERPRISE HUB: DIFFLEY PARTNERSHIP SURVEY REPORT DECEMBER 2025](#)

Scotland's Rural Voice report, taking the views of over 3,000 people across Scotland on what matters to rural communities.

[CRANFIELD TRUST WEBINARS \(ON DEMAND\)](#)

Webinars are divided into four key learning areas and offer practical skills training, advice & guidance on key management topics - [Visit webinar library](#).

- Leadership & strategic direction
- Performance & impact
- Financial management
- People management

MUSEUMS GALLERIES SCOTLAND

Museums Galleries Scotland deliver both formal and vocational, skills-based courses through their Skills Academy.

Resilient Heritage Business Modules

This self-directed learning experience is designed to support organisations within the cultural heritage sector as they work towards sustainable growth, and inclusive, effective governance. Modules can be completed as a comprehensive programme, or as stand-alone units.

The programme provides practical insights, real-life case studies, and essential tools for museums and galleries to enhance their cultural mission. [Find out more by visiting the Museums Galleries Scotland website.](#)

Climate and Nature Planning Course

This course helps museums and galleries to embed planetary action into their existing organisational plans. It is available to Museum Futures programme participants, and you will need to have completed an Organisational Health Checker before the course commences. Whether you already have a climate plan or your organisation is completely new to the climate topic, this course can support you in identifying opportunities for resilience within your organisation. [Find out more by visiting the Museums Galleries Scotland website.](#)

Cultural Enterprises Academy

Museums Galleries Scotland have teamed up with the Association for Cultural Enterprises to provide museums with free access to the Cultural Enterprises Academy. Over 40 units of expert-led training, usually costing almost £2,000, is available free of charge. All courses in the academy are available on demand, so you can learn at your own pace, in your own time. This opportunity is open to 50 Scottish museums and access will be on a first come, first served basis. [Find out more by visiting the Museums Galleries Scotland website.](#)

TRAINING AND EVENTS

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.

SAVE THE DATE - ACRE: VILLAGE HALLS WEEK, 16-22 MARCH 2026

In 2026 village halls across Scotland and Wales are invited to join the celebrations and activities of Village Halls Week. ACRE is working with [Scottish Rural Action](#) and [Wales Council for Voluntary Associations](#) to help achieve that.

Hall management committees are urged to put the dates in their diary and [register](#) to receive updates on how to get involved. There will also be bunting and badges but be quick to register as there is a limited supply!

UPCOMING SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SCOTLAND EVENTS

- [Support for Social Enterprise: Funding & Innovation Webinar | 13 January | 12:00 – 13:00](#)
- [Save Energy, Save Money: Low Carbon Living with Changeworks | 27 January | 13:00 – 14:00](#)
- [Thematic Workshop: No One Left Behind Products | 27 January | 13:30 – 15:00](#)
- [Community Learning Exchange: Scottish Sports Futures | 3 February | 10:00 – 15:00](#)
- [Engaging Young Volunteers: Turning Interest into Impact | 18 February | 10:30 – 12:00](#)
- [Thematic Workshop: Lived Experience Panels | 24 February | 13:30 – 15:00](#)

[**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.

[**WEBINAR - COLLABORATE WITH BUSINESS, C&B SCOTLAND FUND, BY MUSEUMS GALLERIES SCOTLAND, ONLINE EVENT, JAN 29 FROM 12PM TO 1PM GMT**](#)

This webinar is open to anyone working or volunteering in Scotland's Museum sector. Culture & Business Scotland explain how to secure an investment for your organisation if you're working in collaboration with a business. It is offered as part of the [Museum Futures programme](#).

The [Culture & Business Scotland Fund](#) is designed to encourage collaboration between business and culture by enabling not-for-profit organisations to give their business sponsors additional rights or benefits, helping to enhance the impact and reach of the sponsorship and cultural activity. Not-for-profit organisations delivering cultural activity for the benefit of a public audience can apply for up to £1 for every £2 of business sponsorship. The minimum request is £1,000 and maximum £10,000.

[**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

The Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament, the Rt Hon Alison Johnstone MSP, and Members on the Cross-Party Group on Disability are hosting Scotland's Disability Summit on 21 February 2026. Join us in person or online to share your ideas, speak with MSPs and help shape a more inclusive future for Scotland.

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.

We would like as many disabled people as possible to join us from across the country and therefore invite organisations or individuals to 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](#).

[SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SCOTLAND: COMMUNITY SPACES NETWORK MEET UP - FROM YOUTH CLUBS TO LIFELONG ROOTS, 28TH JANUARY 10AM - 11.30AM](#)

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.

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.

YOUTHLINK SCOTLAND: [READY FOR YOUTH WORK](#), 15TH JANUARY TO 19TH FEBRUARY, 1PM-4PM (6 DAYS MANDATORY), ONLINE (FREE)

A practical course for youth workers and volunteers to ensure that they can: create a safe space for young people; plan, deliver and evaluate fun youth work sessions for young people; engage young people meaningfully and celebrate and recognise their achievements.

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.**

Due to current restraints the Brae Living Well Hub opening times are reduced. It is currently open 10am to 2pm.

Friday 19th December – this is the last day of the hub for 2025 – reopening in the New Year

- Come along for a cuppa and reminisce about your sporting memories with Danny and Jack between 10am and 12 noon. They will also have some old photos and resources to look at – feel free to bring along anything you have, photos, trophies etc. They will also be taking along some fun activities to help us replay and reconnect with our sporting memories! <https://www.sportingmemories.uk/>
- Adult Learning SIC will be on hand to help support you with your basic digital skills, we can give advice on Internet Security, setting up devices, operating apps and many other IT queries. So pop along and chat with Marc between 10am and 12.30pm
- Lynsey from Community Learning and Development will along between 11am and 1pm running a winter pop in, come along for some lunch, bring your knitting, crafting or just yourself.

The hub contacts will be closed on the public holidays Christmas Day, Boxing Day, 1st and 2nd January 2026. But if you are in crisis you can contact the duty Social Worker out of hours 01595 695611. This out of hours service covers Social Work, Adult and Child Protection, Childrens and Families, Community Care and Criminal Justice.

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


HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS CLIMATE HUB

Join Us on 14 January – Climate Action Ting Applications Open

We're pleased to invite you to an online information session to mark the opening of applications for the **Climate Action Ting**, Shetland's green Participatory Budgeting (PB) initiative.

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.

 **When:** Tuesday 14 January

 **Time:** 7:00–8:00pm

 **Where:** Online [Climate Action Ting Online Info Session | Meeting-Join | Microsoft Teams](#)

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.

 **Book your place here:** [Climate Action Ting Online Info Session Tickets, Wed, Jan 14, 2026 at 7:00 PM | Eventbrite](#)

We hope to see you there as we begin this exciting next step in supporting community-led climate action across Shetland. More information here: [Shetland Climate Action Ting — Highlands & Islands Climate Hub](#)

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE CLIMATE ACTION HUB PROGRAMME

The Scottish Government has commissioned an independent evaluation of the Climate Action Hub programme and they're asking anyone who's partnered with a Hub or benefitted from its services to provide some feedback. In the last 2 years, have you:

- Collaborated with us or our delivery partners?
- Attended events/training run by the Hub?
- Received funding from our demonstrator grants programme?
- Received support from any of our team?

If you have, we'd really appreciate it if you could complete this short survey before the 23rd of December: <https://online1.snapsurveys.com/SGClimateActionHubs>

The evaluation will cover the national Hub programme, and all responses will be anonymised although you can choose to allow your response to be shared with us in the local Hub.

With the elections next year and the potential for a new administration, this is a critical time for the Hub programme as we continue to make the case for community-based and community-driven climate action. Your help with the evaluation really is appreciated – especially at this time of year when most people are just looking forward to some much-needed rest over the holidays.

[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](#).

[SPEAKER PRESENTATIONS FROM THE CARES CONFERENCE: IDEA TO IMPACT – COMMUNITY ENERGY IN ACTION](#)

The CARES Conference: Idea to impact – community energy in action in December 2025 was a great success. Thank you to all who attended, presented and helped with the preparation of event. Below you can revisit any story or session you enjoyed and catch up on anything you missed.

Session 1 – Getting started with community energy: [View presentation](#)

Session summary: If you're new to community energy, this is the place to start. You'll learn about the support available through the new CARES Community Energy Launchpad and Development Fund to get your project going. We'll also help you to think about how to get the most out of early exploratory work such as options appraisals.

Session 3 – Current trends and what's next for community energy: [View presentation](#)

Session summary: This forward-looking session explored what's next for community energy. Our panel discussed the new models that are developing in the community energy sector and what opportunities these bring for communities in Scotland.

Session 5 – Delivering solar partnerships and how communities and the public sector can work together: [View presentation](#)

Session summary: Learn about how community and local authority partnerships work in practice to deliver win-win solar projects. This session discussed the partnerships, roles and responsibilities that have made this a successful model.

Session 6 – Repowering wind farms – an opportunity for communities: [View presentation](#)

Session summary: Forestry and Land Scotland are piloting an opportunity for community organisations to develop renewable energy projects on public land when sites come up for repowering. Find out more about this opportunity and the support that's available to go through the process.

Session 7 – Developing, delivering, and maintaining a sustainable community or faith building: [View presentation](#)

Session summary: Explore how to plan out your project to decarbonise your community or faith building. From top tips to writing your application through to maintaining your heat pumps, PV and batteries and to get the most out of your new system and maximise your income.

Speakers:

Session 8 – Community engagement for shared ownership: [View presentation](#)

Session summary: Good community engagement is key to community shared ownership projects. Listening to concerns and communicating in an open and honest way can help to navigate challenges and bring the community with you. This session brought together those that have been through the process to share learning.

BUSINESS ENERGY SCOTLAND: FREE WEBINARS TO HELP YOUR BUSINESS CUT ENERGY COSTS

Business Energy Scotland is offering a series of free, expert-led webinars to help SMEs reduce energy use, carbon emissions and costs. Take advantage of Scottish Government funding to improve your glazing. Find out if battery storage could cut your energy bills. And don't miss out on CPD-certified Green Champions training — packed with practical tips, tools and best practice examples. Find out more and book your spot today: <https://bit.ly/43Te0Ck>

[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 Burray, 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

[TRANSFORMING EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR](#)

Launch of Equality and Human Rights Mainstreaming strategy, toolkit and action plan to support Scottish public sector organisations in effectively embedding equality and human rights in their work.

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.

We've 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**

👍 Thumb up, 👎 thumb down, or add comments. Contributions are welcome from anyone.

Responses open until 25 January 2026.

Find copies of the Draft Climate Change Plan below:

- [Draft Climate Change Plan](#)
- [Easy Read version](#)

[Children and Young Peoples version](#)

We can send you a conversation guide to help groups discuss the plan offline before submitting their views or we can support you to have these discussions. Email PACT@parliament.scot for more information.

Why It Matters

Your feedback will shape the Committee's scrutiny, inform questions to witnesses (including the Cabinet Secretary), and help hold the Government to account. With limited time before the final Plan is published, **public input is vital**.

Please share widely. Every voice strengthens scrutiny and ensures Scotland's climate policies reflect its people.

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.