

Newsletter February 2024

Local news and services

VAO Social Enterprise and Charitable Organisation 1:1 Sessions

Join our community development workers, Clare Gee and India Whitwell for our monthly 1:1 Social Enterprise and Charity Sessions.

Choose a 30 min slot between 10am and 12pm on the first Monday of every month.

If you have an idea, but are not sure how to make it happen, this session is perfect for you. Equally, if you are involved in an organisation that is already established, but you've got some queries or concerns, we can help!

Some things you could ask during your 1:1 session are:

- I have an idea, and I'm not sure if it's a social enterprise or charity.
- I need some advice surrounding my board.
- I need help with identifying funding sources.
- I need help with a funding application.
- I'm not sure how to move my organisation forward.
- I'd like help with my business plan.
- I'd like some advice around getting a building for my organisation.
- I need helping to build a suite of policies and procedures.

During this session, we can explore various topics related to social enterprise and charity, including innovative business models, sustainable practices, and effective fundraising strategies. Our expert community development workers will share their experiences and provide valuable insights to help you navigate the challenges and opportunities in this field.

Whether you are a budding social entrepreneur, a charity enthusiast, or simply curious about making a difference, this event is perfect for you. Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity to learn, connect, and be part of the Orkney Social Enterprise and Charity community.

Book your place by visiting the [Eventbrite website](#).

Our development workers will be in touch with your own Teams link ahead of your session. If you've got any questions or further info you'd like to supply, please email them to development@vaorkney.org.uk

Community Events

New playwriting mini-festival for Orkney

Orkney will be home to one of ten Scottish Society of Playwrights fellowship award projects which celebrate playwriting in Scotland. Information about all the projects can be found on the [Scottish Society of Playwrights website](#).

Orkney's project is called Stromness Plays and is a collaboration between professional playwright Rachael McGill and Stromness Drama Club. Rachael said, *'Stromness Drama Club is really dynamic and great at giving opportunities to budding actors and directors. I think there are people in Orkney, of all ages, who'd like to write theatre too. This is a competition, training opportunity and showcase for them.'*

The inspiration for the competition was Rachael's fascination with the minutes of the Stromness Debating Society, which met for 6 decades, closing in 2012. *'My granddad was a founder member and my dad was one of the last secretaries. I was looking through the minutes, which Dad has now given to the Orkney Archives. They're a funny, fascinating snapshot of Stromness people's thoughts on issues since the 50s; everything from 'Old Stromness is not worth preserving' (1966), to 'the experiment of democracy has failed' (1995).'*

The competition is open to anyone with an Orkney connection. The challenge is to write a 5-25 minute play. It can have any style, theme, or setting but must use one of the debate topics as its title or a line of its dialogue. There's a topic list is on the project's websites and in the Stromness and Kirkwall libraries.

There will be up to three prizes of £300. These winners and other selected writers will have their play performed by Stromness Drama Club in a staged reading in Stromness Town Hall on 1 November. There will be opportunities for those interesting in acting or directing too.

Competition entry is free and is done through the websites, where you can also find the guidance and rules. The deadline to submit your play is 31 May. The competition judges will be announced in April and the winners at the end of June.

Playwriting workshops

Rachael will run two workshops to introduce playwriting techniques. Issy Grieve will run one for young people. Workshops are free: sign up on the websites or by email. If you want to attend but can't make the dates, get in touch book an online session at a convenient time.

Event Details:

Playwriting workshop (adults): 24 March, 2pm-4.30pm - Stromness Library

Playwriting workshop (adults): 26 March, 7pm - 9.30pm - St Magnus Centre

Playwriting workshop (young people): 24 March, 11am -1pm, Stromness Library

Showcase event: 1 November, 7.30pm - Stromness Town Hall

For more information about the competition and events, please visit [Rachael McGill's website](#) or the [Stromness Drama Club website](#).

Funding & finance



Small Grants Scheme

Voluntary Action Orkney (VAO) is pleased to be able to offer grants to voluntary and community groups through the Small Grants Scheme.

We are grateful to both Repsol Sinopec and Liam McArthur MSP for their donations which the VAO Board has decided to disburse as grants in order to support the work of small, community groups.

Constituted groups with charitable objectives (excepting party political groups), are eligible to apply for a grant of up to £500 maximum for a project or activity to help their community.

Priority will be given to organisations that have not previously received an award. Recipients of grants must claim the total sum awarded by 31 March 2025.

The deadline for applications is 5pm on Friday 1 March 2024.

Find out more by visiting our [website](#).

VAO produces a monthly Training & Funding Update which contains useful information and links about current training and funding opportunities as well as enterprise and governance advice. To sign up, email: enquiries@vaorkney.org.uk and let us know you would like to be added to the mailing list. The latest update can be viewed on the [VAO website under help for groups](#).

Job opportunities

Relationships Scotland Orkney

Relationships Scotland Orkney provide a range of confidential counselling, mediation, and family support services free of charge. They are currently recruiting an experienced Diploma-qualified counsellor to join their team.



Counsellor

20 hours/week for 12 months until July 2025

Salary: £29,000-32,000 FTE

Closing date: 11 March 2024

For more information please contact RS Orkney at enquiries@rsorkney.org.uk or call 877750.

For more information about the work of RS Orkney, please visit their [website](#).

Enable

Enable provide self-directed social care for people across Scotland. They are currently recruiting a team facilitator and personal assistants in Orkney.



Team Facilitator

39 hours/week

£28,961 per annum

Closing date 15 March 2024

Please visit the [vacancies page on the Enable website](#) for more details.

Personal Assistants

Full time, part time and sessional posts available

£14 per hour

Please visit the [vacancies page on the Enable website](#) for more details.

Social Stories

Loch of Ayre Walkway Association

This month, we're talking to John Muir, a trustee of the Loch of Ayre Walkway Association.

John got in touch with VAO at the end of 2023, to discuss the process of registering the Loch of Ayre Walkway Association (LOAWA) as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO).

Previously, as an unincorporated organisation, LOAWA were unable to apply for funding that would help them develop new projects and sustain their site into the future. Our development officers have given John advice throughout the process, assisting the organisation to create a new constitution, as well as providing advice on their application to become a charity.

We chat to John about the process, and what's next for their organisation, who have set up a circular pathway around the Loch of Ayre, encouraging visitors to enjoy the wildlife that frequents the area. At their beautiful site, on the shore front in Holm, you can find a circular walk around the Loch of Ayre, enjoying beautiful views out across the sea, and enjoy bird hide, wildflower meadows and native plants and trees which the LOAWA hopes will be enjoyed year-round.

We asked John about the LOAWA journey so far, the impact they've had in the community, and what comes next for the organisation in the year ahead.

Firstly John, can you talk us through a brief history of the LOAWA, and how the group initially got set up?

The Association was established in 2020. Prior to that Gerry Wilson, the landowner on the west side of the Loch of Ayre, had planted over a period of some 20 years a selection of trees with a track through and a tree house on stilts mainly for the benefit of his grandchildren but also because Gerry himself has a love of trees. A local group of folk, all lovers of nature, then talked about the possibility of establishing a walkway round the loch along with the possibility of planting more trees and wild flowers to make the site more attractive and from that notion was established the Loch of Ayre Walkway Association.

How did you first become a trustee of the LOAWA and what is your role now?

From the group of original members folk with knowledge/expertise of various roles took on different offices and because I had been involved in voluntary work over a number of years I 'volunteered' to act as Treasurer for the Association.

We would love you to share what encouraged you to register your organisation as a SCIO?

The members soon discovered that unless our organisation became a Scottish Chartered Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) many funding bodies would not consider applications for funding. As some of the projects we had in mind required substantial funding we decided that the only way forward was to apply to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) to become a SCIO.

What has been your impact on the community so far, and what impact do you hope to achieve in the future, especially with your pending charitable status?

Members of the Association are delighted to see the walkway being so well used by both local folk and visitors irrespective of the weather. Never a day goes by without seeing folk out taking a walk round the loch. All the facilities provided by the Association are in regular use - the bird hide, the picnic tables and the bridge over the burn. This leads to people showing an interest in the variety of trees planted and in the variety of bird life on the loch.



What's next for your social enterprise as we look to 2024?

In the future we have in mind to do further tree planting as well as wildflowers. We have plans to build a stone structure to further enhance the facility and, in addition, to carry out a geophysical survey of the broch on the north side of the loch. They will involve in due course engaging archaeological

experts to perform the detailed work on the site.

How has VAO assisted your organisation? Have you got any advice for other organisations looking to register as a charity?

Throughout the process of completing both the draft constitution and the OSCR application the assistance received from VAO has been invaluable. A prior knowledge of what is required by OSCR in order to meet its requirements really is a tremendous boon. I would certainly recommend other charities seeking advice on any charity matter whether that be drawing up a constitution, applying to become a SCIO, looking for possible funding bodies, assistance with funding applications or indeed any charity matter your first port of call should be VAO where I am confident you will find a member of staff who can assist you whatever your query.

If you have been inspired by John's organisation, and are thinking about setting up your own charity, our Development Workers, Clare Gee and India Whitwell would love to discuss your idea to see how we can help you get started. Email development@vaorkney.org.uk to begin your journey.

Training



Free training on Child Impact Assessment (CIA) toolkit for children and young people affected by family members who are engaged with the justice system in Scotland – 19 March

The Orkney Community Justice Partnership (OCJP), in conjunction with Families Outside, a charity which works solely on behalf of families in Scotland affected by imprisonment, are pleased to offer free training sessions on Tuesday 19 March 2024, at the St Magnus Centre, Palace Road, Kirkwall, KW15 1PA.

The training is aimed at professionals across a broad spectrum of agencies who support children and young people in Orkney.

Morning Session 09.30 - 12.00

The session will examine the impact of the justice system on families from arrest all the way through to release and will help professionals, across multi disciplines, develop their understanding of contributory factors to consider when supporting families as they navigate this experience. Attendees will learn about the work of Families Outside, available support and a general overview of the impact of imprisonment and navigating the justice system on children and families.

Afternoon Session 13.00 – 15.30

The session will focus on the impact of the justice system on children and young people and how the Child Impact Assessment (CIA) toolkit is a useful tool to help professionals guide a conversation to enable children's rights to be upheld when someone in the child's life is involved in the justice system. Children who experience a relative in the criminal justice system are particularly vulnerable, yet very few receive support. CIAs are a helpful tool in building children's resilience to cope with the trauma, grief and stigma that they often experience. This will examine the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and how the criminal justice system impacts on children's rights. Attendees will also learn about the CIA resource and how and when it can be used to support children.

Should you wish to be considered for this in person training please email community.justice@orkney.gov.uk Places will be allocated on a first come first served basis, however it is intended to achieve an even distribution of this training across the wider partnership of agencies and professionals who support children and young people in Orkney.

Further online training will be available later this year for anyone who cannot attend, and expressions of interest can also be made to community.justice@orkney.gov.uk

For more information on Child Impact Assessments, please visit the [Prison Reform Trust website](#).

Volunteering news

Need volunteers to help your organisation?

We can help match up volunteers to opportunities, so if your organisation, charity or community group has a volunteering opportunity, let us know. We can spread the word, promoting this on our website, social media and to volunteers we are meeting in person or at events. Just complete and return the [Volunteer Opportunity form](#) in the I need volunteers section of our website to get started.

Volunteering opportunities

If you're interested in doing some volunteering, you can check out all the latest [volunteering opportunities and complete a Volunteer Registration Form](#) in the Volunteering Opportunities section of our website. You can also contact Aimee Harvey our Volunteer Development Worker at aimee.harvey@vaorkney.org.uk who can help to find a role to suit you.

Opportunities of the month



St Magnus International Festival

Join the St Magnus International Festival Team as Front of House Volunteers or as Technical Crew. A fantastic opportunity to get involved in one of the UK's leading arts festivals. The 2024 festival will run from Friday, 21st to Friday 28th June. To find out more and sign up visit the [volunteering opportunities section of our website](#), or contact boxoffice@stmagnusfestival.com to discuss further.

Orkney Blide Trust



Orkney Blide Trust are Orkney's only dedicated mental health charity for adults. They are seeking to appoint several new trustees from a variety of backgrounds who can help in furthering the work of the Charity. For further information, please visit the [volunteering opportunities section of our website](#) or contact Clare Allison, Service Director and Company Secretary on 01856 874874 or by email at clare@blidetrust.org

Opportunity of the year – International Island Games 2025

Do you want to be part of the largest event ever to come to Orkney?

The International Island Games is coming to Orkney next year from 12-18 July and they need 700 volunteers to make it happen. If you'd like to volunteer at this fantastic event, you can find the application form on their website at www.orkney2025.com/volunteer



ORKNEY 2025

You can also pop into the Orkney 2025 office at 2 West Tankerness Lane, Kirkwall on the first Friday of every month between 10am and 2pm and they will help do the application form for you.
Pop in on: Friday 1st March • Friday 5th April • Friday 3rd May • Friday 7th June • Friday 5th July.

If you would like to promote your organisation, an activity or project or have an interesting story to share, please contact Cecily.cromby@vaorkney.org.uk