



Rooftops

Issue 68

June 2021

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CONTINUING SERVICE DELIVERY

Throughout all the lockdowns, restrictions and different ways of working in the past year, we have continued to deliver all our core services. The way in which customers have embraced the changes is really appreciated. We remain able to help you via telephone, Facebook messenger, email, WhatsApp or remote video call.

We are continuing with limited numbers of staff working in the office, with many working from home. The main difference this means is that our phones are on answer-machine from 1-2pm each day.

All our repairs are being dealt with in the same priority as always, so please continue getting in touch if there are any issues at your home.

We do plan to be able to have a facility for essential visits to the office by appointment in the Autumn once it is appropriate to do so.

If you have any concerns at all about your tenancy, please get in touch with us as soon as possible - we are here to help and the quicker we know about something, the quicker we can work to resolve it.

SUCCESS FOR AIMEE AND LEANNE

Congratulations are in order for two members of the Housing & Customer Service Team. Aimee Leask & Leanne Omand (pictured) have recently gained the Chartered Institute of Housing Level 3 qualification in Housing Practice. This qualification provides a broad knowledge and understanding of the key areas in delivering housing service.



Aimee and Leanne are both looking forward to putting the knowledge gained to use, supporting all our tenants, sharing owners and applicants.

OHAL support the local construction industry and deliver a significant number of highly energy efficient new affordable houses in Orkney

Our latest contract will see new homes built at Walliwall by Orkney Builders (Contractors) Ltd. This project, together with the two already underway at The Crafty, Kirkwall by R Clouston Ltd and Kirk Park, Orphir by WRC Construction, brings the contracted spend with local firms to almost £9m.

Announcing these new homes, our Chief Executive Craig Spence said “Everyone in our community can feel the real and ongoing need for affordable housing to meet the needs of people living and working in Orkney. Once again, it is great that we can work with another excellent local construction firm providing important jobs and apprenticeships.”



Craig outlined that there will be 22 new homes available for rent, but also 6 new build properties to purchase through a New Supply Shared Equity scheme – “Our main focus is rented homes, but I am very aware of the challenges local first-time buyers and others are facing in the current market, so am delighted that we will have these homes available to part-buy also.”

Pictured above are Stephen Kemp, Orkney Builders (Contractors) Ltd, Craig Spence and Richard Flett, OHAL's Development & Properties Manager.

Development Progress

Work is underway with a total of 48 quality new homes at Kirk Park, Orphir (est. completion, October 2021) and The Crafty, Kirkwall (est. completion, January 2022).

The development at Walliwall has started and is due for completion in April 2023.



Are You Struggling? We can help!

Did you know that your rent pays for all of the services we provide as well as investment in your home? This includes new kitchens, bathrooms, windows and heating replacement as well as repairs and the upkeep of the estate. We don't receive any other funding to help with this investment so it's really important that rent is paid on time.

Like most social landlords, we are able to provide a lot of support for anyone who is struggling to pay their rent. Our Housing Officers are always available to help with setting up affordable repayment plans, assisting tenants to apply for benefits and helping with income and expenditure.

We are keen to help anyone who has financial difficulties and understand some tenants will have experienced reduced income due to COVID-19. If you feel that you would benefit from some advice, your Housing Officer can work with you to access existing routes to funding and income maximisation all of which can help you with things like:

- **Rent Payments**
- **Household Bills**
- **Direct Payments**
- **Socially/Digitally Excluded Tenants**

Partnership working can often play an important role in providing this type of support and we work closely with local and national agencies such as Citizens Advice, Orkney Islands Council (Scottish Welfare Fund) and Social Security Scotland. Details of these agencies and more can be found in the newsletter.

Mental Health Support

Orkney Blide Trust services are available from age 16 and include:



THE DROP-IN CENTRE - We are open every day of the year. We exist for the benefit of anyone in the Orkney community who is experiencing mental ill-health, and who would like a place to go where they can meet with others in a friendly, supportive environment, and access support and help from our staff.

OUT AND ABOUT ACTIVITIES - Our programme of activities runs throughout the year. We take advantage of the wide range of social, leisure, cultural, educational and physical opportunities which are available in Orkney. Our activities are planned by members and staff at monthly meetings.

HOUSING SUPPORT - We offer practical support to people with mental health problems to help them to live independently and to work towards recovery from mental ill health. You may access support through referrals from other agencies (such as General Practitioner, or the Community Mental Health Team); by request from carers, friends and relatives; or just by contacting us directly.

BEFRIENDING SERVICE - We provide companionship for those with mental ill-health who would benefit from the activity and company of a Befriender. We provide a link bringing people together to provide opportunities to get out and enjoy activities that they would not attend alone.

Contact your Housing Officer or Blide Trust direct (874874) for further details.

Scottish Welfare Fund

This fund is being administered through Orkney Islands Council on behalf of the Scottish Government and consists of two types of grant for people on a low income or benefits.

Crisis Grants

Providing a safety net in the event of a disaster or emergency. A Crisis Grant may help if you are:

- In crisis because of a disaster like a fire or flood, or an emergency such as losing all your money or having to visit a sick child in hospital.
- Need help with costs that have arisen as a result of the disaster or emergency, to keep you and your family safe from harm. If you qualify for a Crisis Grant, the help you receive will depend on the particular difficulties you face. You may be given money or another form of support, for example, a voucher, fuel card, travel ticket or furniture.

Community Care Grants

Providing help to leave care and live on your own, or to continue living in your own home. A Community Care Grant may help if you:

- Are about to leave care to live on your own in the community, for example after being in hospital or in prison, or face going into care because you don't have the things you need to continue living at home. A Community Care Grant may also be able to help if you are struggling to provide a safe and secure home for your family.
- Need help to get essential household items like a cooker or washing machine but don't have the money to buy it. As with the Crisis Grant, if you qualify for a Community Care Grant the help you receive will depend on your circumstances. You may be given money or you may receive support another way, for example, a voucher, fuel card, travel ticket or furniture.

COVID-19 Self Isolation Support Grants

The Scottish Government has committed to providing a grant of £500 to individuals who are in receipt of low income benefits and who lose income as a result of being required to self-isolate to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Applications are available from 12 October 2020 and grant payments may be available to individuals asked to self-isolate on or after 28 September 2020.

Applications must be made during the 14-day self-isolation period, as it is not possible to accept applications for a backdated grant award once the 14-day period ends.

Individuals will be eligible to receive a grant payment if the applicant meets the Scottish Welfare Fund's eligibility conditions, and the applicant:

- Is required by the Test & Protect Service to self-isolate as a result of COVID-19;
- Is employed or self-employed, and unable to work from home while self-isolating;
- Is in receipt of Universal Credit or another low income benefit; and
- Will experience loss of income as a result of self-isolating.

Applications can be completed online at <https://www.orkney.gov.uk/Service-Directory/S/scottish-welfare-fund.htm>.

Or you can contact the team by emailing swf@orkney.gov.uk.

If you need any help or want to discuss, please speak to your Housing Officer.

Financial Support

The Scottish Government can offer additional benefits through Social Security Scotland. Some of the payments and grants for children, young people and carers are listed below with full details found at <https://www.mygov.scot/benefits/>



Social Security Scotland
Tearainteachd Shòisealta Alba

- ⇒ **Best Start Grant Pregnancy and Baby Payment** – One off payment of up to £600 from 24 weeks in pregnancy up until a baby turns 6 months for families who get certain benefits.
- ⇒ **Best Start Grant Early Learning Payment** – One off payment of £250 when a child is between two and three years and six months for families who get certain benefits.
- ⇒ **Best Start Grant School Age Payment** – One off payment of £250 when a child would normally start primary one for families who get certain benefits.
- ⇒ **Best Start Foods** – A pre-paid card from pregnancy up to when a child turns three for families on certain benefits to help buy healthy food.
- ⇒ **Carers Allowance Supplement** – An automatic payment made twice a year to people who get Carers Allowance through the DWP on certain dates each year.
- ⇒ **Funeral Support Payment** – Money towards the costs of a funeral for people on certain benefits who are responsible for paying for a funeral.
- ⇒ **Job Start Payments** – £250 for 16 to 24 year olds who have been on certain benefits for six months or more to help with the costs of starting a job.
- ⇒ **Young Carer Grant** – An annual payment of more than £300 for people 16-18 who care for people who get a disability benefit from the DWP for an average of 16 hours a week or more.
- ⇒ **Child Winter Heating Assistance** – Payment of £200 for children and young people up to the age of 18. To get the payment they must meet two qualifying criteria on at least one day in the third full week of September.
 - ◊ Get the highest rate of care component of DLA for children
 - ◊ Be resident in Scotland
- ⇒ **Scottish Child Payment** – a new, unique to Scotland, benefit that will give qualifying parents and carers £40 every four weeks to help towards the costs of looking after each child under 6. It is planned to be fully rolled out to children under the age of 16 by the end of 2022.

Orkney Citizens Advice Bureau

We would encourage all tenants to contact their Housing Officer in the first instance for support and guidance relating to:

- Debt
- Benefits
- Employment (including redundancy)
- Housing



If you are in need of more specialist advice we can make a referral to Orkney CAB who can offer free and confidential advice for anyone living or working in Orkney.

Tenant Participation Strategy



Following consultation with tenants and stakeholders, our Tenant Participation Strategy 2021–2025 has been approved by our Management Committee. This strategy sets out how we aim to engage with our tenants and seek to get meaningful participation and input into the services we provide and where improvements can be made.

We have compiled a number of different ways in which you can get involved with us, depending on your interests and the time you have available. We would encourage you to contact us if you feel there is anything about your tenancy or neighbourhood that we need to know about. The more we talk, the better we understand – our main aim is to be as approachable as possible.

We have tried to make the strategy as readable as possible and hope that you will take some time to take a look at the document. Copies can be found on our website at www.ohal.org.uk/ in the downloads section or if you would prefer a hard copy to read call us on 875253 and we can arrange to get one sent out to you.



Prize Draw Winners

We offered everyone completing the consultation on the Tenant Participation Strategy the opportunity to be put into a prize draw to win Kirkwall BID vouchers and pictured is one of the 3 lucky winners.

Resident Panel Update

Panel members have continued to hold their meetings virtually via Zoom, inviting different people along to find out more about how services are delivered. For example, at our last meeting Richard Flett, Development & Properties Manager at OHAL and Keith Foubister, Works & Inspection Manager at OIC, spoke about their respective planned maintenance programme - from how the properties are chosen to how tenants are informed and involved in the works. Members were able to ask questions relating to their own experiences.

Members also enjoyed a fabulous catch up with our friends across the water, tenants in Caithness and Sutherland, to speak about their experiences of lockdown and how tenant participation has adapted and continued during this time. It is hoped that we can learn what worked well and what didn't, in a effort to continue to offer both in-person and online engagement opportunities as COVID restrictions are eased.



Our most recent meeting took place outside at the Peedie Sea. It was the first time the group had met in person since the start of 2020 and we discussed possible COVID safe options for other meetings during the summer months.

Northern Tenant Partnership

As well as the Resident Panel for Orkney tenants and sharing owners, we have also joined with landlords across the North of Scotland to form the Northern Tenant Partnership. The purpose of this group is to allow greater communication and understanding of the issues faced by tenants and create a space for open discussions and a place to learn from one another. The group meets 4 times per year and so far all meetings have been virtual, this being the one benefit of COVID lockdowns, and enables more opportunities for wider engagement in rural and remote communities.

Complaints & Compliments

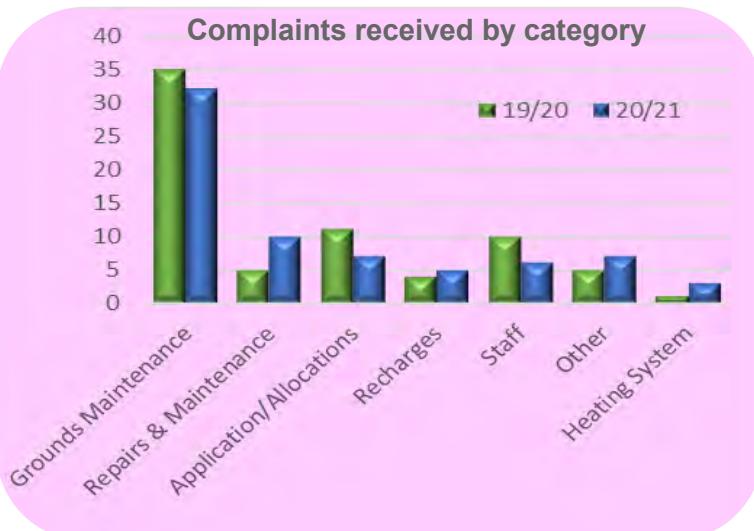
During the year to 31 March 2021, we recorded 70 complaints:

66 Stage 1 and 4 Stage 2.

This is decrease of one since last year.

How did we respond to the complaints?

- ♦ 94% of complaints were completed on time (96% last year).
- ♦ We upheld 32 (46%) of complaints (51% last year).



What were the complaints about?

Garden and Grounds Maintenance complaints decreased slightly this year but staff continue to work closely with contractors to address any issues.



Compliments

It is always nice to receive compliments and during the year to 31 March 2021, we received 114 compliments. These have been broken down as follows:

OHAL Tradesman Team	48
Repairs & Maintenance	23
Care & Repair Services (general)	35
Grounds Maintenance	7
	1

Thank you for fixing fan so quickly, it's working grand now. Thanks also to Handyperson for being so COVID aware & being very careful - impressive!

Tenant had been getting monthly call backs during lockdown and wanted to pass on how much she appreciated these, as she lives alone and was reassured to know that someone was checking in on her.

I want to say thank you to the two gentlemen from Orkney Care and Repair who came during the week, they extended my front door step, fixed a grab rail at the door, and a handrail along the wall. I really appreciate them coming to do the work in such cold weather and particularly appreciated their advice and expertise.

Thank you for your email and the time you have taken to explain procedures and possibilities to me. You have been extremely helpful and reassuring.

I have recently had a couple of jobs done by Care & Repair and I just want to say a massive "Thank you" to both men who made such an excellent job of both repairs: taking time to do a thoroughly complete restoration. Also to Care and Repair for such an excellent service offered to Orkney Elderly. "Thank you"!

Are you happy with our service?

We aim to provide an excellent service at all times but recognise that there may be occasions when people are not happy with something we have done or failed to do. If you are unhappy with the level of service we have provided please let us know so that we can consider your comments and resolve the problem as quickly as possible.

If you wish to make a complaint about a service you have received there are 2 stages involved:

- 1) **Frontline Resolution (Stage 1):** Contact the person with whom you were dealing and see if it can be sorted out informally;
- 2) **Investigation (Stage 2):** This is for complaints that have not been solved at Stage 1 or are complex and require further investigation.

After we have fully investigated, if you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with your complaint, you can ask the **Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)** to look at it.

The SPSO can be contacted at www.spso.org.uk or 0800 377 7330

Our Complaints Handling Procedure is available on the website or from the office on request.



**Scottish Housing
Regulator**

The **Scottish Housing Regulator** is an independent regulator of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and local authority housing services in Scotland. They were established on 01 April 2011 under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010, and have one statutory objective, to:

"safeguard and promote the interests of current and future tenants of social landlords, people who are or may become homeless, and people who use housing services provided by registered social landlords (RSLs) and local authorities".

They regulate social landlords to protect the interests of people who receive services from them. They do this by assessing and reporting on:

- how social landlords are performing their housing services;
- RSLs' financial well-being;
- RSLs' standards of governance.

Further information on the Regulator can be found on their website:
www.housingregulator.gov.scot/

Programmed Renewals & Replacements for 2021/22

Below are the properties which have been identified as due for planned maintenance and property improvements this year. We will be consulting with the individual tenants in due course.

Please note that all listings may be subject to change and refer to RENTED properties only

External Decoration

- ◆ Marengo Road
- ◆ Phoenix House
- ◆ Phoenix Terrace
- ◆ Meadow Drive
- ◆ Firth Flats
- ◆ Jewadale Drive
- ◆ Buckles Road
- ◆ Grimond Place, Road & Sq
- ◆ Pickaquoy Loan & Place
- ◆ Glaithness Court
- ◆ Stroma & Copinsay Shore Stations (doors)
- ◆ Eunson Kloss (windows, fascia & soffit)
- ◆ MacKenzies Drive, Park & Place (windows)
- ◆ Watson Close, Drive, Park & Place (facia & soffit)
- ◆ Seafield (doors, facia & soffit to paint)
- ◆ Sands Park Phase 1 (windows, doors, fascia & soffit)
- ◆ Kirk Park Phase1 (windows)

Replacement/renewal works

External Doors

Pickaquoy Loan
Sutherland Court & Park
King Harald Kloss
Eunson Kloss



Heating Replacement

Copinsay & Stroma Shore Stations
King Harald Kloss
Queen Sonja Kloss

Fascias & Rainwater Goods

Millbank, Shapinsay

Window Replacement

Copinsay & Stroma Shore Stations
Millbank, Shapinsay

Kitchen Replacement

King Harald Kloss
Eunson Kloss
Watson Close, Drive & Place

Development Programme for 2021/22

Crafty, Kirkwall – expected completion Jan 2022
12 x 2 bedroom amenity standard properties

Kirk Park, Orphir – expected completion Oct 2021
2 x 1 bedroom amenity standard properties
4 x 2 bedroom, general needs properties
2 x 3 bedroom, general needs properties

REPAIRS TIMESCALES		
Type of Response	Timescale	Description
Emergency	0-6 hours	Works to make safe where there is either a risk to the tenant or members of the public or to make a property secure or prevent further damage.
Urgent	1-3 working days	Works not classified as emergencies but which would cause a high degree of inconvenience or may cause further damage if not attended to within 3 days. Some repairs are covered by the 'Right to Repair Scheme'. For further information please refer to your Tenants Handbook.
Routine	20 working days	All other repairs which are not Emergency or Urgent.

The Scottish Secure Tenants (Right to Repair) Regulations 2002

Under the terms of the above legislation the Association is required to let its tenants know of the provisions of these Regulations - this leaflet can be found in the downloads section of our website, or a copy can be obtained from the office.

Shown below is a list of the contractors approved by the Association who are prepared to carry out qualifying repairs:

CONTRACTOR	ADDRESS & TELEPHONE NUMBER	
G & A Barnie	4B Quarryfield Road, Hatston, Kirkwall	871999
R Clouston Limited	10 Grainsore Drive, Kirkwall	877914
Alfred Flett	St Mary's, Holm	781209
E Fraser Electrical (Orkney) Ltd	The Store, Finstown	761762
JMF Groat & Sons	Anchorfast Buildings, Longhope	701273
D Hall	Greenfield, Rousay	821248
Daniel Harcus Construction	Old School, Rapness, Westray	01857 677301
Johnny Mackay Plumbing & Heating	Upper Fleck, Houton, Orphir	811379
A J Mathers	The Workshop, Cromlech, Stenness	850887
R S Merriman Ltd	Garson Way, Stromness	850105
Barry Moncrieff Joinery	Arrowon, Shapinsay	711376
W Muir	Hooking, North Ronaldsay	01857 633257
Orkney Builders (Contractors) Ltd	Crowness Road, Kirkwall	871447
Steven R Paterson Ltd	10 Crowness Road, Kirkwall	870088
Pipedream Plumbing	Crowness Crescent, Hatston, Kirkwall	874343
A Stevenson Ltd	Hestwall House, Holm	781224
WRC Construction	Crowness Crescent, Hatston, Kirkwall	871176



Schedule of Garden & Grounds Maintenance 2021

Please note that all dates are weather dependent - check our Facebook page for updates or contact the office.



Women's Aid Orkney

Offering a free and confidential support to women and children affected by domestic abuse.



Contact details

Office hours are 9am – 4.30pm.

Phone: 01856 877900

Email: info@womensaidorkney.org.uk

Need support, information or advice outside of these hours?

Scotland's 24 hour Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline can provide information, advice or support at any time of day.

Call: Scotland's 24 hour Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline on 0800 027 1234

Email: helpline@sdafmh.org.uk

Or visit: sdafmh.org.uk



It's an emergency? Call the police on 999

White Ribbon Campaign



A White Ribbon group in Orkney was launched in December 2020. The group aims to unite men in a commitment to speak out against gender based violence.

Support and training for groups can be delivered and if you are interested in getting involved, or would like more information, please email: whiteribbonorkney@gmail.com

Smoke Alarms

The manufacturer recommends the following:



1. Regularly check to see that the green mains power light is on.
2. Press the test button (5-10 seconds or until the alarm sounds) weekly to check all alarms in the system.
3. Regularly check that the red light under the test button or on the cover flashes approximately every 40 seconds.
4. Clean the cover of the alarm regularly using a barely damp, lint free cloth.
5. On a monthly basis (at least) check the alarm for signs of contamination from dust, cobwebs or insects. Use a vacuum cleaner around the cover of the alarm to remove contamination.
6. Check (at least annually) that the alarm will operate on back up battery power only by switching off the mains supply and pressing the test button.

If you have any concerns or require assistance with your detectors, please contact us and we will arrange for someone to visit.

Orkney Foodbank - Helping people in tough times

If you need help from Orkney foodbank there are a few simple steps to follow.

THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP IS TO GET A FOODBANK VOUCHER.

In order to provide the most appropriate help for the circumstances of your situation, the foodbank work with local agencies such as OHAL. If you are struggling to put food on the table, we will email you a foodbank voucher. We can also provide long term support or refer you to Citizens Advice, if needed, to help address some of the issues behind the reasons for your crisis.

1. GET IN TOUCH WITH US

By phone **01856 875253**, email enquiries@ohal.org.uk or Facebook messenger or speak to your Housing Officer and we can email you a voucher for the Foodbank.

2. TAKE YOUR FOODBANK VOUCHER TO THE LOCAL FOODBANK

The Foodbank in Orkney is located on Junction Road and is open Tuesdays and Fridays between 12noon and 2pm. When you arrive, you will be welcomed with a warm drink and their trained volunteers will chat with you about your situation. They will also discuss any dietary needs you may have and exchange your foodbank voucher for a parcel of three days of emergency food. They will also help to support you in any other ways that they can. Most foodbank centres offer a cafe style environment and their aim is to provide non-judgemental support at the point of crisis.



Emergency Energy Vouchers

Home Energy Scotland offers:

- Support for households with prepayment meters, including access to newly available crisis funding for those at risk of self-disconnection or running out of credit on their gas or electric meter to make sure they can keep their power on.
- Practical help for people who find themselves without heating or hot water.
- Clear advice on ways to save energy and reduce fuel costs while staying warm at home.
- The latest information about extra help from energy suppliers to make sure households don't get cut off.



Here's how you can help:

- You can refer your clients directly to Home Energy Scotland through their secure online referral portal and they will call them back within two working days.
- If you aren't on their portal, please call or email Michael Cromby on 07881109002 or michael.cromby@hi.homeenergyscotland.org and request to be added. This doesn't take long, and they can arrange a short online training session on how to use it, for example via Zoom or Microsoft Teams.
- You can also advise your clients to call them direct on **0808 808 2282** to talk to one of their friendly advisors about ways they can support them. All calls are free and confidential.

Relationship Scotland Orkney – Offer a range of support services to families and individuals in:



- Relationship Counselling
- Individual Counselling
- Family Mediation
- Child Contact Centre
- Substance Misuse Counselling
- Play Therapy
- Children and Young Person Counselling
- Substance Misuse Support
- Family Support

Most services are being offered either online or over the phone and you can get in contact by phoning 01856 877750 and leaving a message or by emailing enquiries@rsorkney.org.uk.

Join the OLIO food sharing app



Volunteers in Orkney have started a new initiative in which food due for spoiling is collected from the supermarkets and can be collected at a specified location by anyone using the app.

The app can be downloaded on either Iphone or android smart phone and you can see what's available that night and where to collect it.

Breathing Space – Offer a free and confidential support for anyone aged over 16 when you are feeling low, stressed or overwhelmed. Their advisors come from a range of mental health, counselling and social work backgrounds. There is an equal ratio of male to female advisors. The number is **0800 83 85 87** and is open Monday to Thursday 6pm until 2am, Friday to Sunday 6pm until 6am.



Crossroads Care Orkney is a charity which was established with the aim of improving the life of Carers and those for whom they care by giving information, emotional support and practical help. They can provide a fully trained Care Attendant to allow Carers to take a break. If you would like to get in touch you can email carers@crossroadsorkney.co.uk or call 01856 870500.

Crossroads Care Orkney

The Peer run **Baby Feeding Support Group** meets at the Life Centre Wednesday mornings from ten till half past eleven – with Mums, Dads, Children and Mums-to -Be all welcome. For further info, contact your midwife or health visitor



Orkney Men's Shed – The group are meeting in person at the Firth Community Centre on Tuesdays 10-12 and Thursdays 2-4, and once a week virtually for a cuppa and chat. Check out their [Facebook page](#).

CRUSE is a national organisation offering support to the bereaved through counselling and social activities. The

Orkney branch of CRUSE started in 1991 and holds regular social meetings and covers all areas of the county.



Telephone: 01856871871

National telephone number: 08456002227