



Orkney  
Community  
Planning  
Partnership

# Orkney Matters Two

Creative Collaborations

Spring 2025



# Contents

<b>Contents .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Transport .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Health and Wellbeing .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Cost of Living .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Digital Connectivity .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Housing and Planning .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Open Forum .....</b>	<b>11</b>

# Introduction

Orkney Matters Two Creative Collaborations (OM2CC) is part of the Orkney Matters Two (OM2), a consultation carried out by [community planning partners](#) in Orkney and a companion report sets out the background.

OM2CC was designed to give a voice to members of the community who do not traditionally interact with the consultation process. Orkney Matters Arts is a successor to Orkney Matters 'Lesser Heard Voices' in 2022.

The Pier Arts Centre were invited by OM2 and the Local Action Group to deliver a series of creative workshop with groups across Orkney, including:

- The Youth Café
- Orkney Men's Shed
- Women's Aid Children and Young People's programme
- ACF Cadets
- Lifestyles Suite
- Moti Collective
- Stromness Awards Groups
- Pride Tribe
- Blide Craft group
- Papdale parents
- VAO Connect
- West Mainland Youth Achievement Group
- and pupils across a number of Orkney's schools

The participants were asked to discuss three major questions:

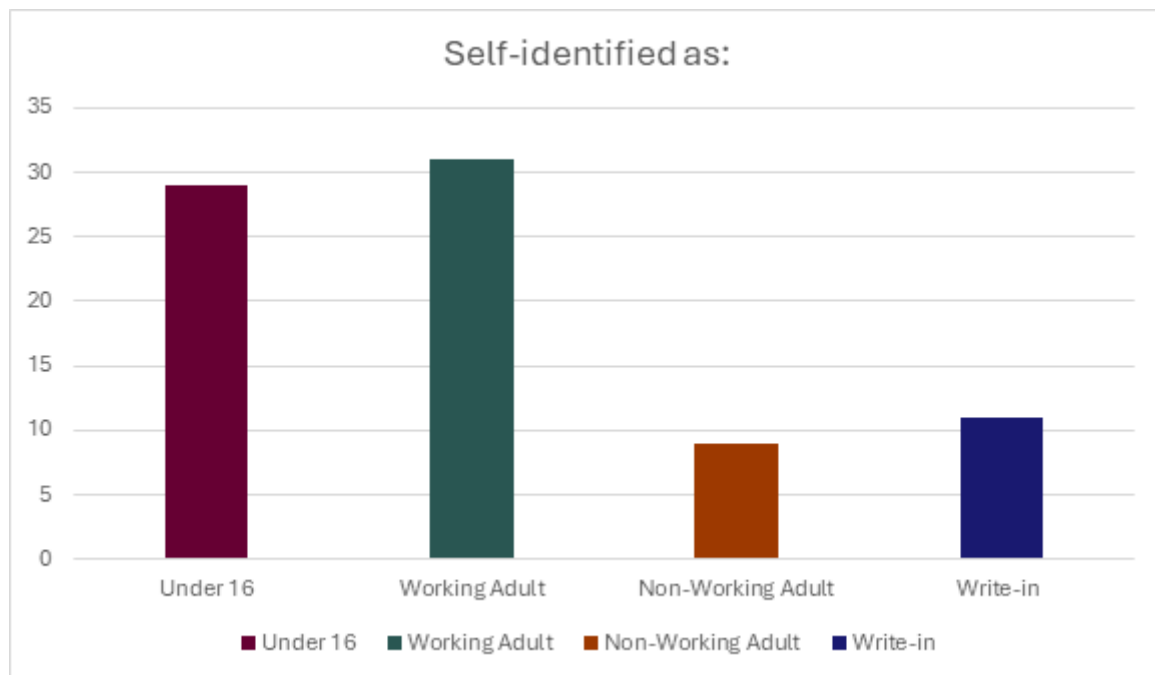
1. What things do you like about where you live/What are the opportunities?
2. What are the barriers? What could be better?
3. How might you make it better?

They then wrote down their opinions on post it notes and attached them under the relevant questions. This report summarises the responses by theme, in line with the main Orkney Matters 2 document, and then by group. Throughout the report there will be some examples of the post-op notes left by the respondents.

In addition to providing written responses, participants were also encouraged to make a visual response, resulting in the works that were displayed at the [Pier Arts Centre](#), 1 April to 3 May 2025, some of which is reproduced in this report and in the partner OM2 report.

### Demographics of the participants

Alongside the post it notes, participants were encouraged to fill out slips of paper detailing some demographic information. Not all participants did so, but we can nonetheless get a good overview of the demographics of those who answered.



Eleven respondents wrote in different answers for the question, including 'student' (5), 'retired' (4) and 'adult' (2).

### Thanks

Thanks go to the artists working on this project: Megumi Barrington, Amy Beeston, Katherine Diaper and Soulisquoy Printmakers; and to the Local Action Group for funding this work,



# Transport

**A need for more accessible transport for those who don't have access to cars, including those who are under-18. More cycle paths, improved bus timetables, and better walkways were all highlighted.**

**Army Cadets:** The older cadets (14-17 years old) mentioned the need for wider roads in Orkney. The 18+ cadets highlighted the need for more reliable and cheaper flights and boats.

**Blide Trust:** The group from Blide Trust wanted more accessible transport changes in Orkney: they suggested more drop down curbs, more shelters outside to wait for buses, and a cycle path to be installed from Stromness to Kirkwall.

**Men's Shed:** The group mentioned the lack of garages and car repairers, as well as a poor driving standard in Orkney.

"More bus stops for access to opportunities/activities."

**Moti Collective:** Improved bus services between Stromness and Kirkwall and the West Mainland were suggested.

**Orphir School:** The students mentioned the need for flatter roads, smoother pavements, and less potholes. They also said that a lack of transportation stops them from accessing opportunities and activities.

**Papdale Primary:** The students suggested more cycle and walker-friendly paths.

**St Colms:** The group mentioned that transport could be better.

**West Mainland Youth Achievement Group:** The group emphasized the importance of good connections for traveling. They would like more bus times on Sundays and evenings and also a Stromness bus up to the college. Unreliable boats and high car parking costs were issues. One person suggested that a ticket should be valid for any carpark for the time paid, rather than being confined to the carpark it was originally bought in.

"Would love a bus from Kirkwall to Stromness at 9:30 pm!"

**VAO Connect:** The group suggested free ferry travel for under 25-year-olds and better ferry transport connections.

**Women's Aid Orkney:** The group mentioned the need for better transport on and off the island, with flights being too expensive, travel to the outer isles tricky, and buses in rural areas making socialisation difficult due to buses running late.

# Health and Wellbeing



Mental health support and services were some of the most frequently mentioned topics. There is a call for more mental health services and a better understanding of mental health and neurodiversity.

**Army Cadets:** Cadets asked for more mental health services. One of the 14 – 17 year old cadets, complained that drugs were at all-time high in KGS.

**Blide Trust:** The group from the Blide Trust were focussed on greater awareness of those with hidden disabilities, and for businesses and services to be more understanding. They would like more indoor quiet spaces, which would be especially important for those with sensory issues.

**Men's Shed:** The Men's Shed considered mental health to be something that was important to them, as well as places to be together. They also said the lack of dentists in Orkney was an issue.

"[I would like to] be able to live by myself, with support – more supported accommodation"

**St Colms:** The group at St Colms were very focussed on the importance of carers and 'places like St Colms' which included the gym and the Pickaquoy Centre. Some were concerned that there is not always enough care available for those who need it and the need for more carers.

There was also an interest in more resources for the group to become more independent – this includes further supported accommodation to allow individuals to live by themselves, as well as better public transportation, and a supported work environment.

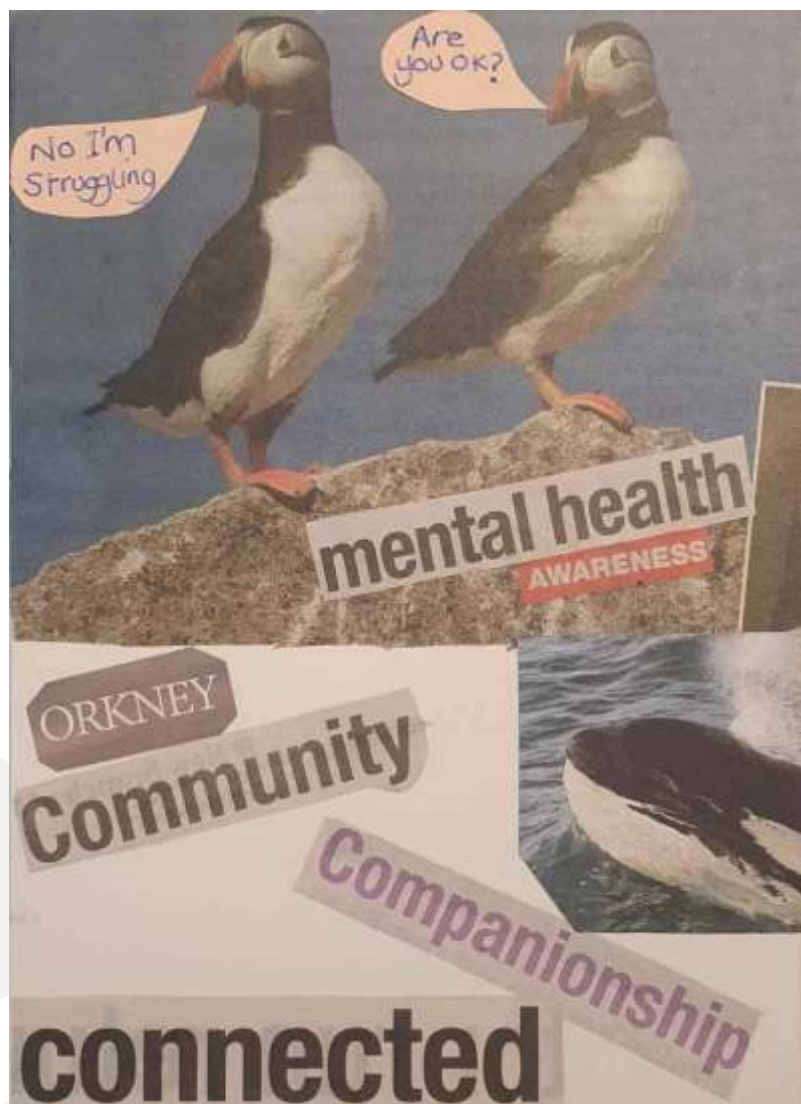
**West Mainland Youth Achievement Group:** This group asked for more attention to be given to the dental system in Orkney, with too many adults being forgotten and appointments being cancelled. They were also concerned with social health issues, including the prevalence of vapes and underage smoking and drinking.

**Youth Café:** Supporting positive mental health was a key priority for this group. This includes more early-intervention mental health support, increased mental health services and support groups (in particular for those with ADHD), more safe spaces for teens and young people, and larger proposed infrastructure changes (e.g. the CAMHS building makes people feel uncomfortable).

"[I would like to] have more safe spaces for groups like teens, disabled and special needs ..."

The group was concerned with making Orkney more accessible for those with disabilities. Clear signposting, more quiet spaces, more accessible information online, and more British Sign Language interpreters in public spaces.

**Women's Aid Orkney:** Women's Aid considered health services and mental health support to be important to them.





# Cost of Living



Despite its prominent featuring in the *Orkney Matters Two* document, the Cost of Living Crisis was not a top priority for many groups in this work. Only the Army Cadets, St Colms, and Women's Aid Orkney discussed this topic in any way.

Of larger importance to most groups was the accessibility of arts and activities in Orkney (see Open Forum section).

**Army Cadets:** The younger cadets were concerned that there are not enough career options for them.

**St Colms:** Service users were concerned about having money to save, and suggested that a better question to ask them would be 'do you feel you get enough money to live?'

**Womens Aid Orkney:** Women's Aid would like cheaper school lunches and better food.





# Digital Connectivity



Despite being a priority for the OM2 groups, digital connectivity was not considered a priority by OM2Arts participants. Only two groups mentioned digital connectivity in any way: Orphir School and West Mainland Youth Achievement Group.

**Orphir School:** one child was worried about needing the new wi-fi, with two properties that have no wi-fi at the moment.

**West Mainland Youth Achievement Group:** One participant wanted more 'Orkney' social media on TikTok and Instagram.



# Housing and Planning



This topic was not discussed by all groups, but where it was it was considered a high priority. Most believed that there was not enough housing in Orkney, with suggestions like re-using old, abandoned properties, and building more affordable housing being suggested as remedies.

**Army Cadets:** The older Cadets thought that housing in Orkney could be larger and better funded. They were also concerned about overcrowding and making better use of empty buildings.

**Men's Shed:** The housing crisis was particularly important to the group from the Men's Shed, with suggestions that OIC relax their local planning rules and urgently build more social housing. The group asked us "what is being done to expand and speed up construction of affordable housing?"

**Moti Collective:** The group was very worried about the housing crisis in Orkney. There are not enough homes for people to do all the jobs that are needing to be filled, for college students, and NHS workers.

The group highlighted the number of empty buildings in Orkney that could be used for housing. As well as the planning process feeling 'deliberately obstinate' and detrimental to the housing crisis.

**St Colm's:** Service users would like more supported accommodation available so that they can live by themselves. They also thought that old buildings could be re-used.

"[I would like] everyone to have a house"  
Papdale Primary



# Open Forum



**Key themes were nature and the environment, community and family, youth activities and spaces, education and career opportunities, and recreational facilities.**

**Army Cadets:** Wanted a better education system to keep up with other schools. They also wanted the police to respond more to crimes and drugs in the community.

The older cadets (18+) were concerned with the amount of money managers were paid, with too many middle managers who do very little for a lot of pay. They were also upset with those in authority 'making promise they can't keep' and never consulting with the community.

**Blide Trust:** Valued compassion, tolerance and nature. They wanted more outdoor shelters.

**Men's Shed:** Some from the group were focussed on more international issues. When asked what was important to them, answers included 'Trump and fascism in general,' 'the risks of AI and AGI [artificial general intelligence]' and the 'security situation in Europe.'

The group was also interested in setting up community interest organisation that would set up and maintain the wind turbines on Orkney, rather than the money going down south.

The collapse of the pub trade was considered important.

**Moti Collective:** Valued the Arts, Education, and creative communities. They want increased funding for the arts, with long-term funding for projects prioritised. They are also concerned about the lack of activities for teenagers who are not interested in music or sport.

**Orphir School:** Valued nature, community, and friends. They wanted more activities local to them, like a playpark, theatre, and shops. Transport and a lack of after school learning is what stops them from being able to do these things.

**Papdale Primary:** Valued fun, nature and community events (like youth clubs, singing clubs and creative sessions). They wanted more intergenerational work, afterschool activities, a club house, a cycle path from Stromness to Kirkwall, a zero-waste food shop, abattoir, and soft start on Mondays at KGS.

**St Colms:** Valued nature, wanting more trees, and outdoor sheltered areas for picnics. They were also interested in more activities in Orkney, including horse riding, art therapy, college courses, and concerts.

**West Mainland Youth Achievement Group:** Valued family, nature and different community clubs. They wanted more shops in the West of Orkney, more parking in Stromness, and a games room in Stromness for young people (they suggested re-purposing empty buildings in Stromness).

They also talked about litter clean-ups, and reducing cat abandoning, and giving young people a space to hang out where they will not be judged or seen as a problem.

**Youth Café:** Valued nature, the community, social justice, family and friends. They wanted more out-of-school activities, more LGBTQ+ Pride and counselling for LGBT children, more seating inside and outside, more accessibility to nature.

**VAO Connect:** Valued the environment, VAO connect, and peace. They wanted more places to go for young people that are safe, predictable and quiet, and that are not always revolving around sport. They wanted more creative activities, including resurrecting the anime festival, cooking and sewing.

**Women's Aid Orkney:** They wanted more playparks, cultural events, and winter activities.

