



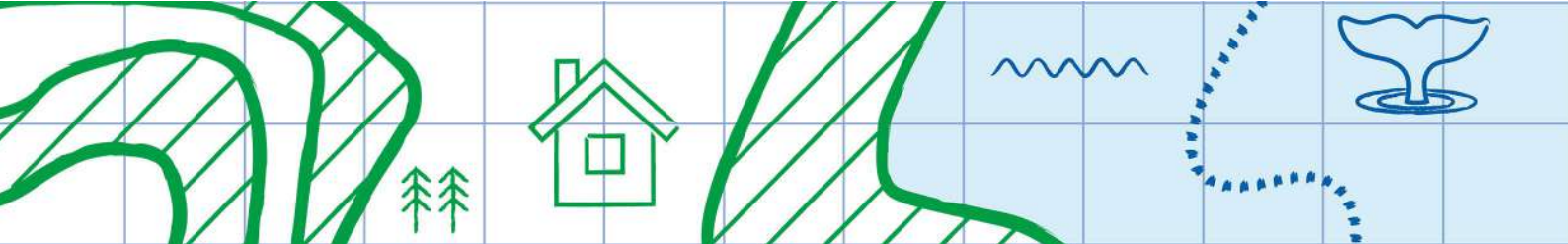
Young Islanders Network

**Young Islanders Network in
Action**

November 2025



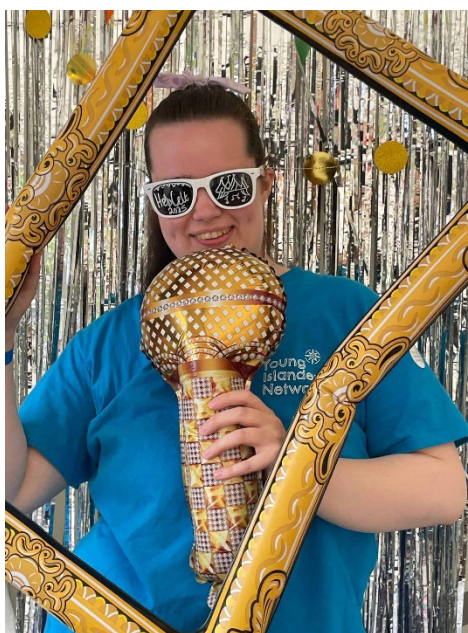
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Youth Hub at HebCelt, July

On July 17–18, the Isle of Lewis hosted the 28th annual HebCelt Festival, attracting visitors from around the globe.

This year, Sophie returned not as a Content Creator, as she had been for the previous two years, but as a member of Youth Scotland and CLD, contributing to the inaugural Youth Hub at HebCelt.



The Youth Hub was designed as a welcoming space for young people to relax, offering a range of activities including a lucky dip, colouring, the "Guess the Scottish Islands" challenge, video games, UNO, and temporary tattoos.

Over the three days of the festival, the Youth Hub received considerable positive feedback from both young attendees and their parents.

Additionally, festival participants enjoyed favourable weather, with sunshine throughout the entire event.

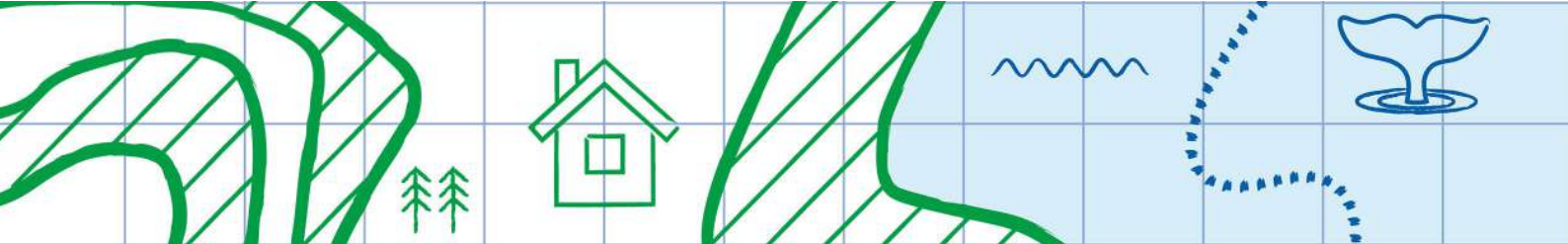
Here is what some festival-goers had to say about the Youth Hub and the festival itself:

"I really liked meeting new people and showing people the retro games"

"I also liked playing uno and everyone was fun and really friendly".

"I got to go in the pit for Beluga Lagoon which was a lot of fun" – Paul, YIN





If you would like to learn more about HebCelt - [Home :: HebCelt 25 :: Scottish Music Festival](#)

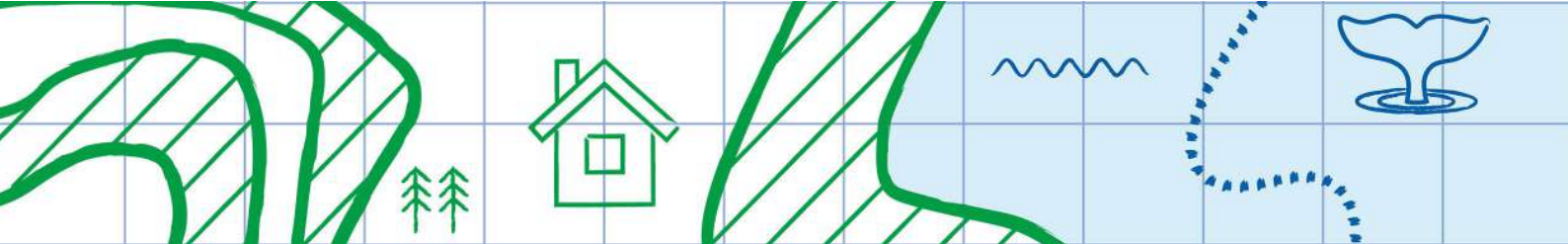


Big Ideas Weekend, August

Always an amazing event from Youth Scotland engaging, inspiring and empowering young people. We were pleased to welcome members and new young islanders from Orkney, Shetland, Lewis, Tiree and Arran. After 4 years with YIN, Andy said, "the best thing was being able to meet the Reps in person for the first time. I enjoyed the workshops and learned a lot from them to take away with me."

YIN held a workshop to update on the progress on the National Islands Plan with Francesco joining us from the Islands Team at Scottish Government. Some inspiring discussions around identity, heritage and culture which will remain a key theme moving forward with our newest Rep role for Language, Heritage and Culture, as well as bringing together our Reps in person. And a ceremonial handover of the YIN banner from Naomi to Louise taking on the Senior Development Worker role.

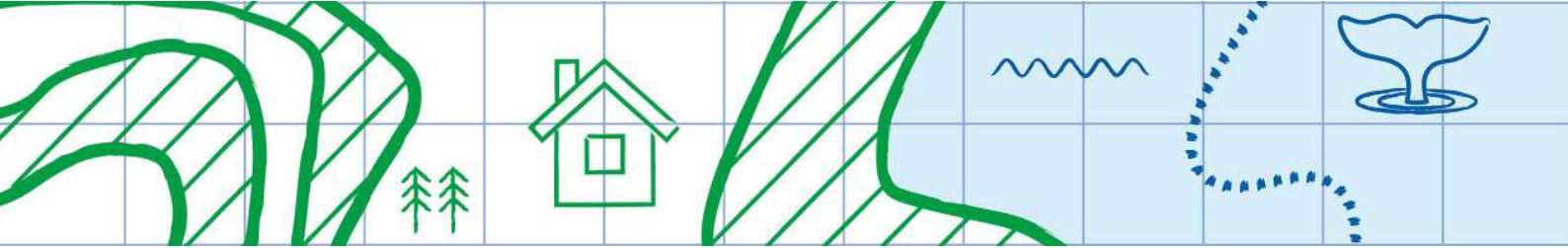




Ministerial engagements, August

We were pleased to facilitate several events in August. Mr Jim Fairlie, MSP for connectivity and agriculture met with young islanders in Orkney and Shetland in August. Shetland Youth Voice attended with a second visit to Orkney the following day attended by YIN Reps, SYP reps and Orkney Youth Café. The insight from young people on the Under 22s ferry voucher scheme and connectivity is always valued and following the engagement, we have been connecting with Transport Scotland around ferry safety ahead of our report being launched.



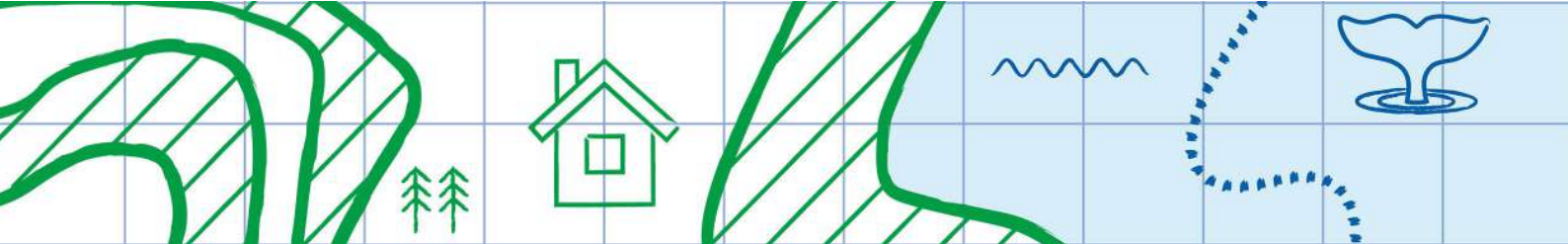


Orkney Youth Cafe



YIN members in Lewis also had the opportunity to meet with First minister, John Swinney in August. As members of Climate Hebrides, we were delighted to be invited along to the meeting. Young people discussed the need for climate action being taken at local level and gave insights into connections between the environment and emerging skills in renewable energy industries integrated in education.





Change Mental Health Forum, August

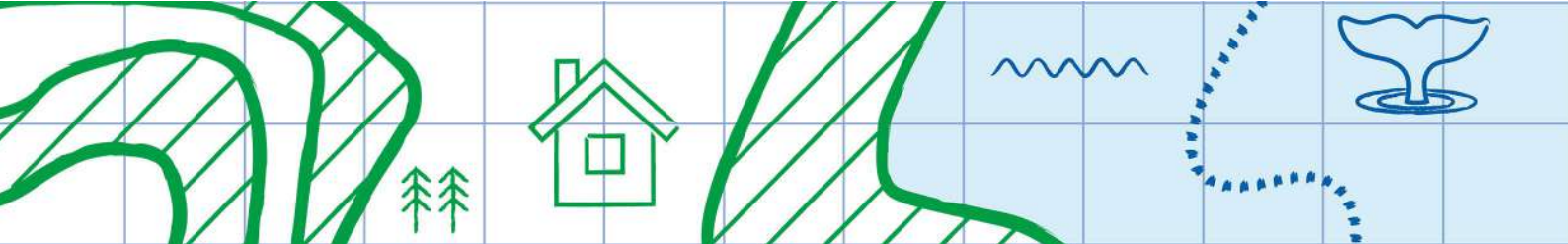
Our Health, Social Care and wellbeing Rep, Sophie co-presented with the Louise at an online webinar. We spoke about taking a cross-cutting approach to mental health and wellbeing through our other work, in particular the impact of housing, transport and education challenges on our lives across the islands. Sophie shared insights into her own journey and development with YIN training as a youth worker and achieving Platinum Youth Achievement Award. Attending monthly webinars, we have been engaging with some new services and organisations including Kooth, ALISS, Alliance, RSABI, Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs and the Distress Interventions, Crisis and Self Harm Team at Scottish Government.

We're excited to bring future engagement opportunities to our members working in collaboration and keen to hear about local projects and emerging themes or challenges from your young people.

OH Cop 2025, September

We were delighted to attend OH Cop hosted by Climate Hebrides at An Lanntair, Stornoway. Louise joined 3 reps from Stornoway. We heard from organisations on Lewis about the initiatives underway from recycling toys to crofting and community projects





aligning land use, young workforce and skills development. Another great follow up with our young members in Stornoway and Climate Hebrides following the First Minister visit.

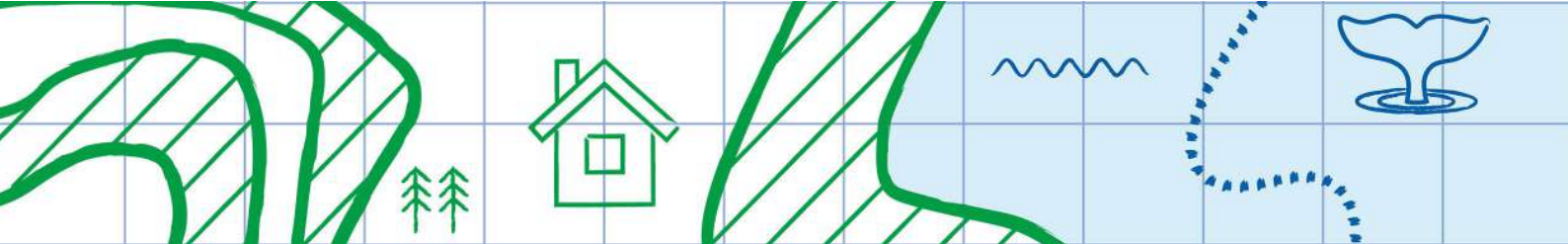


European Rural Parliament & European Rural Youth Parliament, October

Our Climate and environment Rep, Maria joined Louise in Inverurie to attend the European Rural Parliament in October. With delegates from over 40 countries in attendance it was an amazing example of grassroots movement to make change at policy making level. This 6th ERP was truly a collective effort, organised by Scottish Rural Action with a youth steering group planning the ERYP, the action it has sparked will be collective and stronger for that reason.

Several YIN members were part of the ERYP Steering Group, planning and delivering a very inspiring and powerful Youth Parliament. Another fantastic opportunity with youth panel discussions moderated by Mairi Gougeon, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, and questions posed to both the Cabinet Secretary and Alastair Carmichael, MP during the event.



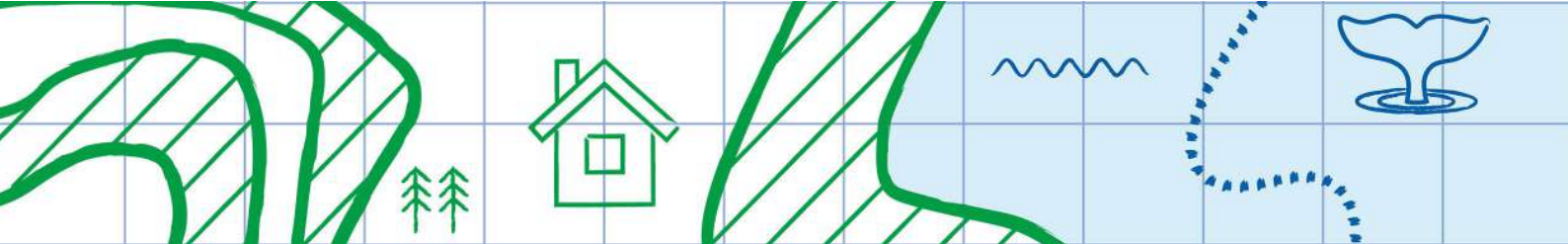


Community Knowledge Matters in person event, November

Our newest Rep for Language, Heritage and Culture attended the Community Knowledge Matters in-person gathering in Inverness, an event celebrating community-led research across rural and island Scotland. Hosted by Science Ceilidh, the gathering brought together grassroots communities, researchers, and decision-makers to explore equitable, creative, and participatory approaches to research and policy.

Liz joined a workshop on creative arts-based co-production methods, built skills on an active listening walk, and explored a network library of stories from other rural and island communities as well as sharing insights from her current intergenerational community challenge preserving Orcadian language on Stronsay. It was a pleasure listening to a presentation from our friends at OPEN Shetland and their inspiring youth led charity and research. These activities reflect the network's commitment to centring lived experience and building collective voice.





The day concluded by sitting on the Listening Panel with policy makers, offering reflections on youth-led research and participation. Their contribution exemplified how young people can be meaningfully embedded in spaces where their voices shape dialogue and decision-making and an inspiring model of youth inclusion in participatory engagement.



Feedback Consultations

Young people across the islands have had opportunities to feedback on the National Islands Plan draft, Land Use Strategy 4 following on from our housing challenge and the Scottish Approach to Supporting Children and Young People in Crisis Framework. We are delighted to have youth voice across the islands being part of policy making and reflecting the challenges faced.



Partners Spotlight

Arran Youth Foundations

Arran Youth Foundations have been one of the projects selected from the Scottish Government's Islands Programme to receive funding of £382,399 to build a new, bespoke replacement youth centre in Lamlash.

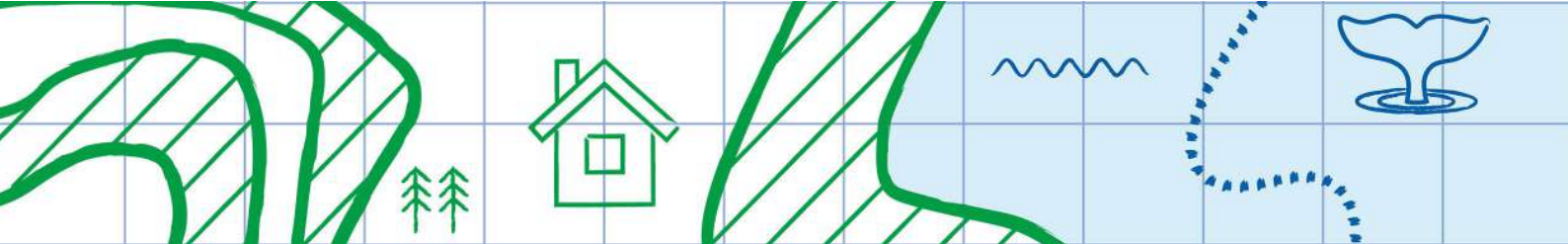
The Programme, working in partnership with local authorities, supports locally developed critical infrastructure projects that involve local communities to help deliver the National Islands Plan's Strategic Objectives.

AF are a brilliant example of a youth charity who share our ambition to boost self-confidence of young people, help them to build resilience and life skills, ensure they are at heart of decision-making.



Western Isles Youth Services

In partnership with Community Learning & Development Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Police Scotland Highland & Islands , Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, and Lewis Car Club this programme provided insider knowledge, real-life scenarios, and hands-on experience that could save lives. First Gear Road Safety was supported by YIN funding and provided an opportunity to understand what it really means to be a safe and responsible road user before you even get behind the wheel. Young people involved had the amazing opportunity of a driving experience at the end of the programme!



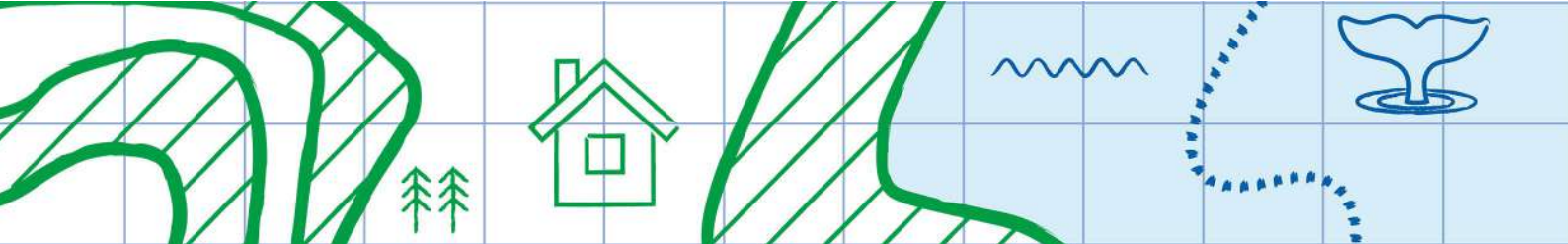
Orkney CLDE

Pupils from KGS, Stromness Academy, Sanday Junior High School and Stronsay Junior High School came together at the Picky Centre for the Orkney Youth Conference 'Your Mind. Your Voice. Your Future.'

The event was co-ordinated in partnership with Scottish Action for Mental Health SAMH to spark open conversations about wellbeing, resilience and the importance of looking after our mental health.

YIN Senior Development Worker, Louise took the opportunity to attend the marketplace and had meaningful conversations giving insight into young islanders perceptions of mental health services and how they would access them.





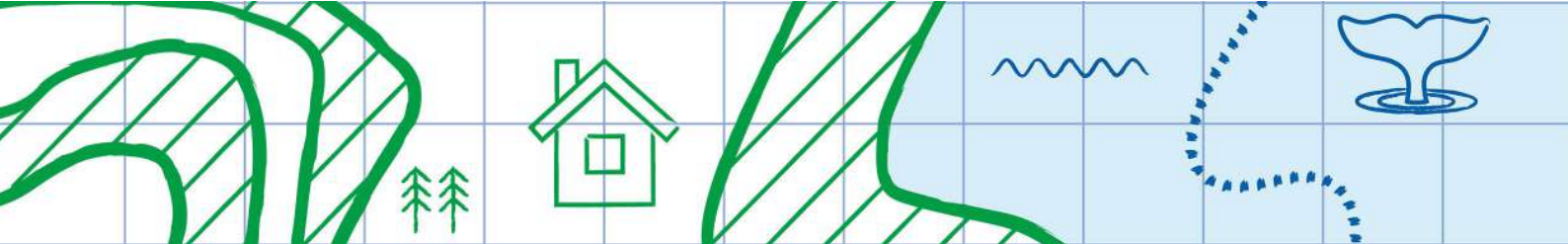
Shetland Youth Voice

This summer, young people part of Shetland Youth Voice took part in the school in-service day in Brae & Lerwick. Part of this, was about sharing the new Nurturing Relationships guidance to support relationships in schools. Young people were able to bring this guidance to life with a creative film. This directly links to one of Shetland Youth Voice's priorities: Mental Health & Wellbeing.

<https://linktr.ee/ShetlandYouthVoice>

As part of the response to the Mental Health & Wellbeing Summit Shetland Youth Voice have created a pledge which they're passed onto Children's Services to promote positive relationships and kindness in learning environments which was shared at their November event held at Mareel, *Shetland Youth Voice, A Year in Action*.





Membership

Volunteer Youth Workers

We have an exciting new addition of Volunteer Youth Workers to our membership! A progression pathway for our young people to develop their skills in supporting young people through youth work, the role comes with training from Youth Scotland and support from YIN SDW.

Andy, previously our long standing Housing Rep is one of our first volunteers to sign up and said, "I wanted to continue to help deliver YIN and progress the views of young people at government level. It's good having the connections with Shetland and the Western Isles and having close working relationships."

Reps & Champions

If you are interested in any of our current Rep roles, contact louise.mcquaid@youthscotland.org.uk for more details.

We also have regional Champions that feedback from their local groups about what matters most to island young people and take on YIN challenges.

We have also added an additional tier for anyone aged 26+ of Volunteer Youth Worker.

Role descriptors are being added to our website or get in touch for details.

Role	Rep	Depute
Climate Change, Environment & CNI	Maria	VACANT
Education, Youth Work & Sport	VACANT	VACANT
Housing & Employment	Sapphire	Keryn
Transport	Mack	Alex
Transport Orkney	Liz	
Transport Shetland		
Islands Voice – Rural & Islands National Engagement	VACANT	Kaydence
Social Care, Mental Health & Wellbeing	Sophie	VACANT
Language, Culture & Heritage	Liz	VACANT

