

FAIR ISLE TIMES

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Fair Isle Primary School News

Guess who's back? Back again? F.I.P.S is back! And we now have even more children in the school! It has been lovely to welcome children both new and old, seeing those new friendships blossom and flourish as the first week has gone by.

This first edition, we regret to inform you that there are no pieces of extended writing for you to read. This is because we have had a fabulously creative week with CHROMA. The children have utterly embraced all the composition and artwork associated with this year's theme of "Shetland Blues" and the ensemble have been full of praise for their work. We look forward to performing at the concert on Saturday night. We would like to personally thank the entire ensemble: Claire, Chihiro, Jess, Jo and Stu (as well as making them lovely thank you cards for all their hard work). Big thanks also to Marie, for her bonus work with us on giant knitting, which we really enjoyed.



Here are some pictures of what we have been up to along with a quote from each of our superstar learners.

Luca: "I had such a great time and all the CHROMA ensemble are lovely."

Ander: "I had so much fun because they have been making music with us and I loved composing."

Teddy: "It was a good experience and I would love to do it again and again and again."

Khalicee: "I enjoyed meeting the musicians because it was exciting to meet new people and I love music."

Hetty: "I love spending time with the ensemble because I love music and they were energetic and kind."





Congratulations to former Fair Isle Primary pupil, Ythan Shaw of Burkle, who graduated from the University of Edinburgh in July, with a Masters in Chemistry (grade 2:1). Well done and all the best for the future Ythan!

Photo – Ythan with parents Hollie & Deryk





Dis Week Dat's Awa begins in the FIBO lounge, and a midnight toast to assistant warden Luke on his 22nd birthday! After a couple of after-work hours of badminton in the community hall, we are in need of suitable refreshment and Luke welcomes a new year of life by continuing to deplete the bar's stock of Corona with indecent enthusiasm. It is at a more reasonable hour, after the wardening team's census duties, that we reconvene to swap birthday cards, chilled coquitos and a couple of cakes – iced with likenesses of Luke's smartest ornithological finds from 2026: a dapper drake Rustic Bunting and a Trumpeter Finch – pretty in pink and a first record for Fair Isle. Due

to the fine crop of August babes on the Isle, Luke's birthday is shared with the celebrations for Andrew of Upper Stoneybrake's 30th – boy boy boy! We 'pregame' some early evening drinks appropriately while a spotted flycatcher sallies around the building, perching on the windowpanes and plucking flies resting on the render; each one a calorific injection which will help see it travel south to sub-Saharan Africa for the winter. Back inside, raspberry vodka jelly shots are necked to help us on our own migration south to USB.

With its usual selection of ensconced vehicles now lined up in the neighbouring hay park like an agricultural show, the USB shed is both spotless and spacious, and young master Brodie gives us a guided tour before being distracted by some balloons. As more guests arrive and the barbecues ignite, tables groan under island party fodder and I take to the dancefloor with my FIBO colleagues, giving the healthy mix of homemade bread, lamb, potatoes and Tennent's now in my stomach some rhythmic agitation. The DJs lay down their best floor fillers (opinions may vary) and, illuminated by technicolour disco balls, we are watched from above by the house sparrows in the rafters. This is the second 'shed party' of the year, following a rowdy summer bash at Houll; islanders and visitors replete in 'Back in time' fancy dress. There are no Dr Whos, Lady Godivas, Jesus Christs, celts, romans or Fieldy Stouts at tonight's affair however, but a top social is had by all and its 3am by the time I hear the crunch of gravel from my bed, signifying the last revellers have crept up the road back home to the Obs'.

Warm weather dominates the next few days as a switch to a south-easterly wind excites the Isle's birders, now being the time that scarce and rare migrant birds 'drift' across to Shetland on breezes such as these. Barred warblers – bush-bouncers bred in the Baltic – arrive in force, alongside those ant-eating Scandinavian woodpeckers called wrynecks, lovely enough to hold the title of FIBO Warden Alex's favourite bird.

Photos from a Fair Isle summer



The FIBO bird team shag family portrait



Warm up for Fair Isle 10km



Equal opportunities baling



Total eclipse of the sun



Wedding joy for LC & Mhairi



Young Ander and his lamb



F I 10km after the starting gun

On Tuesday these species are joined by the first rosefinches of the autumn, veered off course from their ancestral migration pathway by the weather, and taking a break among the croft gardens to reorient back east for an Indian winter. For these visiting birds, almost all of them barely a few months old, their journeys are ones of necessary survival, a quest stamped in their brains (each weighing about a single gram) with unfeeling accuracy, their bodies using the placement of the stars and the pull of the earth's magnetic field to guide them towards a destination they have never seen nor heard described. It's amazing stuff when you think about it, unmatched by any human achievement (including the results of the Fair Isle 10km fun-run), but I think I understand the concept of a cosmic force willing my body towards a necessary destination as I sweatily ride my bike south in the ravishing sunshine and find the two wheels unconsciously tilt towards Stackhoull, and its freezer full of Magnum ice lollies. An irresistible magnetic pull indeed.

A skirt along the west cliffs from Gunnawark to Lerness is gloriously warm in the late afternoon, with no breeze at all in the lee of the land, but plenty of willow warblers clinging to the clifftops and a pied flycatcher zooms around South Naaversgill. Crunching back over the heather on Swey, the lingering bonxies make half-hearted attempts to drive me off – their offspring may have left the nest, maybe even the island, but the hardwired instinct of the parent to attack intruders, remains.



AW Tom wrestling with a shag



Lachlan in the Fair Isle stag stocks



Bird team in the Sheep Rock



A big crowd on Bunness to see the eclipse

News from the world of celebrity that Dolly Parton has passed away was felt even here on this little rock 4,000 miles away from Dollywood, not least by our own country-singing nurse, Tammy, for whom a visit to the FIBO bar with her guitar is not complete without a few renditions of *Jolene*. Even I once channelled that great woman, at another Houll fancy dress 'shed party' a couple of years ago, with my own version – Dolly *Partan*, complete with teased blonde wig, beachcombed crab accessory, and an enviable bust made of one half-inflated balloon and an urchin shell... I don't want to claim any credit for luring it in, but that year we did record a Tennessee warbler... Perhaps Dolly could get together with that famous Friend of Fair Isle Bill Oddie – now united on that higher plane – and put a divine word in for us mortals. Bill would definitely know what kind of commotion a Nashville warbler in Vaila's trees would cause...

The continuing hot, languid air becomes a wafting sea of floating thistle seeds, pushed about by the movements of the BAM trucks and the ongoing aerial turf war between raven and bonxie. Clocking off from work on Wednesday afternoon I bike south with Alex, via the Plantation trap where we catch a Blyth's Reed Warbler – another bird which heads towards India, rather than Africa, for its winter holidays. Of the seven Barred Warblers on offer today, I manage a hat-trick, and stop in at the shop to buy a 'welcome back' bottle of wine for Tracey, returning FIBO volunteer, seamstress and grant-writer-in-chief. Her reappearance is well timed; the Bird Obs' occupancy hits a healthy stride again midweek, with the dining room a-chatter and guests hailing from Seattle, Bermuda and the Isle of Skye. More hearty meals are enjoyed, capped off with extravagantly steeped Kenaby plums on cake while a round, pink moon looms large over Bunness, now puffin-less for the rest of the year.

I'm writing on Friday, and rain has been steadily hammering the windows of the rooms while housekeeping. It grounds the formerly floating thistle seeds, but thankfully not the Islander planes, which allows for scheduled departures of FIBO guests before the weekend. Soon the wind is wilder, the Haven's sheep shelter along the polycrub and no doubt those visiting barred warblers, wrynecks and such like have gone to ground.

What is it that Dolly reminds us? *The way I see it, if you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain...*

Jonnie at the Obs

SAVE THE DATE!

FRIDAY 6TH OF NOVEMBER

FOR A CELEBRATION OF

10 YEARS

**OF THE FAIR ISLE
DEMONSTRATION &
RESEARCH MPA**



MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW

Some of you may be aware that this year marks 10 years since the Fair Isle Demonstration and Research MPA was legally designated on the 9th of November 2016. To mark this important milestone, FIMRO are planning a community celebration in Fair Isle on Friday the 6th of November. Planning is currently underway, but we will be able to share some more information with you very soon (cake and refreshments guaranteed!).

By way of introduction for those of you who might not know me, my name is Katie Cubbon, and I work for the Fair Isle Marine Research Organisation (FIMRO) aka, Fiona, Neil, Susannah, and Steven as the research officer for the Fair Isle Demonstration and Research MPA project. This role is hosted by NatureScot, and I am based in Stromness, Orkney. I try to visit Fair Isle several times a year, although sadly I haven't managed a visit this summer, so very much looking forward to my next trip in the autumn! My work primarily involves managing the DR MPA project through coordinating and overseeing research, managing budgets, fundraising, as well as coordinating and liaising with project stakeholders. More information on FIMRO and the Demonstration and Research MPA project is available on FIMRO's website here: <https://www.fair-isle-marine.org.uk/>.

Best wishes, **Katie Cubbon** | **Research Officer – Fair Isle Demonstration and Research MPA**

ISLE NOTICES

- **Concert tonight** – Shetland Blues. Chroma and Fair Isle Primary School. Come along for an evening of wonderful music. All very welcome, entry free. 7.30pm at the Hall
- **Chapel this week** – All are very welcome to join in friendly worship at the Chapel at 11am on Sunday, led by Susannah
- **Fair Isle Committee Quarterly Meeting & EGM of FIDC**. 7.15pm on Monday 14th September in the committee room. Any items for the agenda please, to Eileen and Jonathan
- **NTS property Fire Extinguisher** checks on Thursday 10th Sept. As ever (if it looks like plane weather!!) please drop your extinguishers at the Hall car park in time for the morning plane, collecting in the afternoon.

Living with Wind - Co-Creating Fair Energy Flexibility on Fair Isle

What is the project? Fair Isle is preparing to introduce a simple household “traffic-light” signal, designed by Day6 and using data from the new SCADA system implemented by Energy Mutual. The system will show the state of the local electricity system: when renewable electricity is available, when diesel-generated electricity is being used, and when demand should be kept low.

This research project will explore how the signal can be co-designed to work with everyday routines in ways that are practical, fair and shaped by the community.

Project team

Dr Paolo Cherubini - Heriot-Watt University Orkney

Dr Giulia Champion - University of Southampton

We are working with the Fair Isle Development Company. A videographer (Andrew Houldcroft) will also support optional filming and a short documentary about the project.

The project is supported by:

- Failure Modes of Engineering (FeME) Represent and Innovate Seed Fund
- TalEntEd Islands Programme

The universities and project partners are also contributing staff time and specialist support.

When:

The project team will be on Fair Isle from Monday 7 to Monday 14 September 2026.

How residents can take part:

- Informal conversations or interviews: Talk with us about everyday energy use, the island electricity system, and what fair and practical flexibility could look like. Conversations may be individual or in small groups and might include an arts-based component.
- Community workshop: Join a half-day participatory workshop to explore fairness, routines and renewable availability, and help shape how the “traffic light” system will look like and work. The exact workshop date will be agreed locally and circulated separately.
- Optional filming: Residents may choose to be interviewed or filmed for a short documentary. Filming is entirely optional. People can take part in the research and workshop without being filmed or identified.
- Recording for research purposes: interviews will be recorded for the researchers to review the discussion; these will be kept on the university confidential servers and be used solely by the researchers.

Taking part is voluntary. Activities are open broadly to adult Fair Isle residents. You can decide which activities suit you, skip any question, and choose whether your contribution remains anonymous. Participant information and consent materials will be provided before any research activity begins.

Are there any benefits in my taking part?

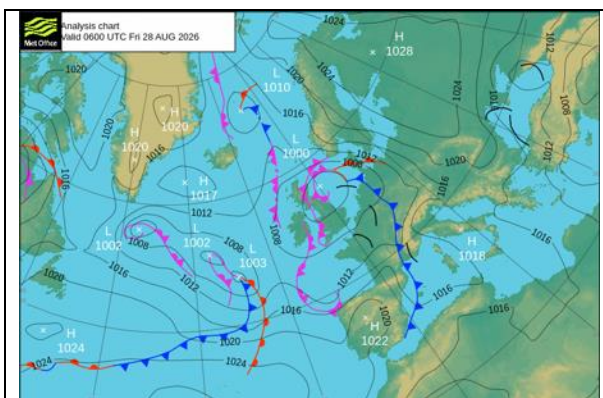
You may not receive a direct personal benefit, but your contribution may help shape how the traffic-light signal and related energy-flexibility practices are introduced fairly and practically on Fair Isle. The project will return accessible findings and a co-created output to the community. Participants may receive compensation through vouchers of up to £75 in recognition of their time for each activity undertaken and the arrangements explained in the invitation. Compensation is not conditional on answering every question or agreeing to be recorded or filmed.

Interested, curious, or simply want to meet us?

While we are on the island, residents will be welcome to speak with us informally, ask questions about the project, or arrange a conversation. In the meantime, feel free to contact us if you have curiosities or questions:

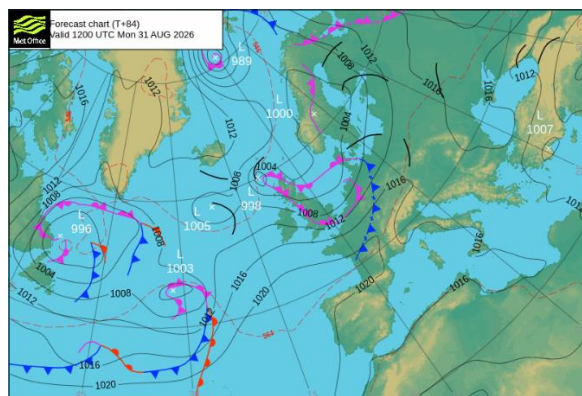
Paolo Cherubini | p.cherubini@hw.ac.uk; Giulia Champion | g.champion@soton.ac.uk

FAIR ISLE WEATHER FORECAST



Analysis Chart 0600 UTC

Friday 28th August 2026



Forecast Chart 1200 UTC

Monday 31st August 2026

GENERAL SITUATION Friday 28th August 2026

Pressure is low across the UK, with a low centre close to northeast Scotland and a depression southwest of the British Isles - the latter driving a fresh set of fronts north-eastwards during the weekend. Further areas of low pressure tracking eastwards are likely to maintain unsettled weather through much of next week.

OUTLOOK FOR TODAY AND THE WEEKEND

Temperatures 13° or 14° by day, 11° overnight.

SATURDAY 29th: A cloudy start with mist and patchy rain. F5 N winds. The afternoon drier and brighter with some sunny spells. F4 NNW winds. A cloudy evening and night with a few showers. **Sea State:** Mostly moderate at NE 2 metre.

SUNDAY 30th: Rather cloudy though mainly dry with a few brighter spells. F3-4 NE or E winds. **Sea State:** Slight or moderate at N 1 to 2 metre.

FORECAST FOR NEXT WEEK Temperatures 13° by day, 10° overnight.

MONDAY 31st: Cloudy with showery rain and fresh E winds. **Sea State:** Slight or moderate at N 1 to 2 metre.

TUESDAY 1st: Some sunny spells between fairly frequent showers. Fresh SW winds.

Sea State: Moderate or rough at WSW 2 to 3 metre. East of Shetland slight or moderate at SW 1 to 2 metre.

WEDNESDAY 2nd – SUNDAY 6th: Scattered showers and fresh NNW winds on Wednesday. Thursday mainly dry and bright as winds fall light. S winds strengthen overnight bringing rain and

low cloud for Friday. Then blustery showers with strong W or NW winds, possibly gale-force at times for the weekend. **Sea State Wednesday:** Mostly moderate at NW 2 metre.

Dave Wheeler

