

Holms Geo Farm, Shetland. Photo: Balazs Onhauzs



## Scottish Sea Farms delivers £170m boost to economy

**Scottish Sea Farms invested nearly £170 million in the local supply chain last year, supporting 573 Scottish businesses across the four regions where the company operates.**

The figures for 2025 show an increase in Scottish Sea Farms' economic contribution, up to more than £167.8 million from £167.3 million in 2024, and reflect an ongoing commitment to sustainable growth in the salmon sector.

A breakdown of the company's annual expenditure has revealed the scale of not just the local spend but also the level of employment in salmon farming in each region, as well as the championing of community projects and charities.

In total, Scottish Sea Farms employed 642 people last year with salary costs of around £33.8 million. The highest wages bill was in Shetland, with more than £15 million paid to nearly 300 staff. The company is Shetland's largest private employer, providing much needed rural jobs, including around 160 in marine roles across 20 active marine farms.

Shetland also saw a total of £27.1 million spent in the supply chain, benefiting 124 island firms and contractors.



**642**  
EMPLOYEES  
**£33.8M**  
SALARY

In Argyll, meanwhile, local investment amounted to £13.5 million, supporting 77 suppliers, and the company's salary costs were £8.2 million with 193 direct jobs.

Spending in the Highlands supply chain totalled more than £10.9 million, among 82 local suppliers, while Scottish Sea Farms salary costs were £3.3 million for the 55-strong workforce.

And in Orkney, more than £1.4 million was spent on 65 suppliers, and the company's salary costs were £3.8 million, with 73 direct jobs across nine marine farms.

'Salmon farming is embedded in some of Scotland's most remote areas, bringing valuable employment opportunities and an economic lifeline to rural communities,' said Scottish Sea Farms Managing Director Jim Gallagher.

'Our farming operations depend on many other businesses and, as these figures show, Scottish Sea Farms invests in an extensive supply chain, from Shetland and Orkney to the west coast of Scotland.'

'As we continue to grow our output, with Shetland's £7.5 million new Billy Baa site coming on line this spring and development plans approved for Fish Holm, we will help retain and create more skilled jobs and contribute even further to the Scottish economy in the years ahead.'

### Modern apprentices

Last year, the company invested in the future workforce, employing 61 Modern Apprentices and dedicating 186.5 hours to 32 careers-focused events and site visits in all its farming regions.

Continued on page 2...

## INSIDE

**First eco lorry transports Shetland salmon**

**Bigger boat future-proofs Orkney farm**

**New trailers will handle growing production**

**Minister champions sector progress at RAIC inquiry**

**Law reform to change fish health management**

**Double delight for SSF at Lantra awards**

**Purchase ledger legend marks 25 years**



INVESTING IN  
SCOTLAND.  
WE SUPPORT  
LOCAL.

**573**

SUPPLIERS

**£167.8M**

IN 2025

...Continued from page 1.



More than 200 local causes benefited from Scottish Sea Farms' Heart of the Community fund, which donated a total of £147,353 in 2025, bringing the total since the initiative was established in 2011 to more than £2 million.

Data for the year also showed that marine survival was at 89.1%, and that 387 audits (internal and external) were conducted. Compliance with Environmental Quality standards (for seabed at pen edge, 2020-2024) was 96%.

In all, Scottish Sea Farms sites occupy around 0.021% (5.57km<sup>2</sup>) of marine inshore waters in Scotland.

### Continued growth

The company's new farm at Billy Baa, which has biomass consent of 4,091 tonnes, and the Fish Holm development, with biomass consent of 6,000 tonnes, are part of the strategy to develop larger farms in better locations, with deeper waters and faster currents.

Local suppliers have welcomed the developments. Colin Leask, Director of Ocean Farm Services, said the continued focus on fewer but larger modern sites supported a more sustainable long term model for Scottish aquaculture

'With Ocean Farm Services operating a team of around 70 employees, all from communities across Scotland, we are proud to support Scottish Sea Farms' operations through our ROV net washing and wellboat services, operating in Shetland, Orkney and the west coast of Scotland.

'We look forward to servicing the new sites with our vessels and crews, contributing to a more efficient, resilient and responsible future for the Scottish aquaculture sector.'

Northwards Commercial Director Neil Leslie said the new farms are important in safeguarding Shetland's transport links and the employment that depends on them.

'We are continually investing in and developing our own infrastructure to support the salmon sector's growth plans but, additionally, it is the wider supply chain that is equally vital. From feed deliveries to the handling and processing of by-products, the industry underpins other key areas of island infrastructure.'

# DFDS launches eco lorry with Scottish Sea Farms salmon



## Scottish Sea Farms salmon was transported in Shetland's first electric HGV on its inaugural run this month.

The DFDS articulated lorry, built by Volvo, is the first electric heavy goods vehicle to operate in the islands, the first in Scotland and one of just ten in the haulier's UK-wide fleet.

In an initiative spearheaded by DFDS' Operations Manager in Shetland, Bryan Hepburn, the £350,000 vehicle will not just reduce carbon emissions but will make savings on energy, repair and maintenance costs.

'Although there were barriers to overcome, especially on price (it is about three times more expensive than a conventional HGV) and creating the necessary infrastructure, I think Shetland is uniquely suited to this kind of transport,' Bryan told The Source.

'The project has been about five years in the planning and we've had to create the environment for the vehicle to live in.

'We've put in two high-voltage chargers, one at our base in Lerwick and one in Yell. You typically need 11,000 volts and a converter to deliver power to the vehicle.

'But the mileage and range anxiety associated with electric vehicles is less of an issue in Shetland because of its size. Fully charged, the eHGV can do more than 200 miles, but it's not going to go off island and you don't need to plan the journey around where you can stop.

'We will make savings on diesel, more expensive here than on the mainland,

of around £150,000 over five years. It is also remarkable just how much less maintenance we expect this vehicle to need when compared to a traditional diesel unit – for example, an eHGV doesn't have a clutch assembly, fuel filters, pumps, injectors, turbos, an exhaust system or complex cooling loops. There are, simply, less moving parts to go wrong.'

For its first transport of Scottish Sea Farms salmon, the lorry had to cover a distance of less than a mile from the factory to the ferry terminal in Lerwick, with all going according to plan.

The eHGV has capacity of 40 tonnes and will be used as part of the 20-strong DFDS fleet in Shetland, carrying Shetland scallops, mussels and wild fish catches, as well as salmon.



# Bigger boat designed to future-proof Orkney farm

**Orkney has just taken delivery of a new workboat designed to handle the company's move to bigger pens in high energy locations.**

At 21m by 8m and with a new winch system, Burra Sound, built by Dutch yard Nauplius Workboats, completes the £6 million modernisation programme at Bring Head.

The £2.2 million vessel will not only be able to accommodate the site's twelve 120m pens but is also geared up for a future expansion to 160m pens.

Bring Head Farm Manager Jeff Taylor told The Source that the farm's move slightly further out to a deeper, higher energy location, and from 80m to 120m pens, provided optimal growing conditions but also required heavier infrastructure.

'It's very tidal here so to keep the nets in place we use nine-tonne sinker tubes, which we have been lifting with a crane.

'This new boat is fitted with two tugger winches with leads running over the



sides so we can lift the nets up directly through the lifting points on the cages.

'It is safer for the fish and the crew, and more cost effective than fitting winches on to each pen, and will allow us to treat and harvest in all weather conditions.'

Jeff worked with the builders on the design of Burra Sound, the third vessel delivered to Scottish Sea Farms by Nauplius and similar to the Fair Isle.

Gerrit Knol, Technical Director Nauplius Workboats, said: 'We are delighted to have worked once again with Scottish Sea Farms on the delivery of Burra Sound.

'Designed for demanding tidal environments and larger cage systems,

the vessel will support the team at Bring Head in operating safely and efficiently with the farm's larger pen infrastructure.'

Ross Stevenson, SSF Vessel and Infrastructure Manager, said: 'It will improve costs greatly because there are days here when we've sometimes got two or three contract boats helping. Now we'll be able to do most of that work ourselves with Burra Sound.'

Bring Head, which was also equipped with a £1.7 million 300-tonne feed barge as part of its redevelopment, will harvest its current crop by April. Then, after the next cycle, the plan is to install eight 160m pens, six of which will be stocked at any one time.

## New trailers will handle growing production in the Northern Isles

**Haulage company Northwards is investing more than £600,000 in eight 'insuliner' curtain sided trailers to meet the growing volume of salmon transported from the Northern Isles to the mainland.**

The new vehicles, which will bring Northwards' insuliner pool to around 25, will further improve efficiencies in Scottish Sea Farms' logistics operation, carrying fresh salmon south and feed north to the islands.

The trailers, ordered from SDC Trailers in Northern Ireland in January and due to be delivered in May, will have insulated floors, rooves, rear doors, bulkheads, and curtains, and will be equipped with larger capacity chill units.

And they will be fitted with state-of-the-art monitoring equipment so Northwards can check on the insuliner's

whereabouts and temperature at all times, to ensure product integrity is maintained.

The trailers, at 4.55m, maximise the available height on the ferry. The company delivers general cargo on return trips to around 900 customers in the islands, with the salmon business helping to keep transport rates low.

The first insuliner was introduced to replace rigid trailers more than ten years ago, following a collaboration between Northwards and Scottish Sea Farms which, for the first time, saw the transport of salmon south combined with feed deliveries north.

Today, Northwards transports around 40,000 tonnes of salmon feed a year and moves salmon from both Orkney and Shetland to the mainland for onward distribution.

'The insuliner is very versatile, taking fish out five or six days a week and bringing back various types of cargo



every day,' said Neil Leslie, Commercial Director of Northwards.

'We're looking to modernise the fleet as some of the older trailers are gradually being retired and we're getting newer ones to meet the need for the increased production order from Scottish Sea Farms in the back half of this year and next year.'

Lyndsay Foster, Scottish Sea Farms' Supply Chain Coordinator, said Northwards has provided a great service over the years.

'The insuliner is good for the environment and they offer full traceability throughout this part of the supply chain. They not only deliver more than 800 loads of salmon annually to the Central Belt, but they make sure our farm sites get the feed when they need it and as efficiently as possible.'

# Minister champions sector progress as salmon farming inquiry winds up

**Scotland's salmon farmers are doing enough to reduce mortality levels and do not need to be further regulated, said the Scottish government in response to the latest parliamentary probe into the sector.**

Speaking to MSPs on the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee (RAIC) on March 11, Cabinet Secretary Mairi Gougeon said research by the Marine Directorate in the past year found that persistent high levels of fish deaths in salmon farms is not a widespread issue.

The minister appeared in the final session of the RAIC inquiry into salmon farming, which began in 2024. The committee published its recommendations in January 2025, urging government to implement reforms within 12 months, and was convening again to check on progress. An earlier session heard from sector and regulatory representatives (see below).

Gougeon, who is standing down as an MSP in the Scottish elections in May, said while it is both the government and the sector's goal to keep mortality to the lowest possible levels, 'persistent elevated mortality isn't a systemic issue for Scottish marine salmon sites'.

Progress has been made on a number of fronts since the RAIC report was published, said Gougeon: 'On

fish welfare, I've already committed to progress welfare standards for farmed fish under the Animal Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006.

'We are also strengthening enforcement of farmed fish welfare by working with APHA [the Animal and Plant Health Agency] to increase the number of trained fish inspectors, increase the number of inspections carried out per year and require the inspections to focus on adherence of those welfare standards.'

The government is also reviewing fish farm consenting pilots, addressing the recommendations of an initial evaluation exercise, and clarifying the rules to allow fish and shellfish farms to apply for consent in waters three to 12 nautical miles from the coast.

To improve transparency across the sector, Scotland's aquaculture website has been updated to provide better access to important data and information.

Responding to other points raised, she said:



- *The government's chief scientific adviser for marine is working to consider the scientific underpinning of the SEPA sea lice risk framework 'to ensure Scotland is taking the right approach for the longer term';*
- *An announcement on the future of the Sustainable Aquaculture Innovation Centre (SAIC) would be made shortly, outlining 'what that new vehicle is going to look like and some of the work it's going to engage in'.*
- *Once the new iteration of SAIC is up and running, it will lead exploratory work on research pens (or innovation sites);*
- *On escapes, there has been collaboration between Fisheries Management Scotland (FMS) and the sector to introduce a penalty system, which the government will prioritise this year;*
- *On the relocation of farms, currently subject to regulatory red tape, the government is exploring whether this process can be speeded up through the consenting taskforce.*

## Salmon farmers compliant and transparent

**Government agencies backed the sector's own assessment of the progress it has made in the 12 months since the RAIC inquiry delivered its recommendations.**

In a session on February 25, representatives from the Fish Health Inspectorate (FHI) and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) agreed that the rate of progress was acceptable to future-proof the industry.

In its report a year ago, RAIC convener Finlay Carson said the committee expected the sector and the government to 'drive the change agenda required to allow science, research and the regulatory landscape to keep pace with the rapidly changing marine environment'.

Representing salmon farmers at the RAIC hearing, Mowi Scotland boss

Ben Hadfield said the sector had invested more than £1 billion in the last few years in innovation to improve fish health and welfare and minimise mortality. And he defended the sector's transparency in reporting site by site, and cycle by cycle mortalities.

Neil Purvis of FHI said the data they receive is enough to do their job: 'What we get for our purpose and what we publish is satisfactory in terms of us delivering on our regulatory responsibility.'

In terms of the RAIC recommendations FHI has been involved in, significant progress has been made, he said.

Amy Jennings of APHA said her agency had not had to take anybody to prosecution because salmon farms are 'incredibly compliant'.

Alan Wells of Fisheries Management Scotland said progress in the sector had not been fast enough for angling interests, but it would be the same for all the other pressures facing wild salmon.

'We need to see concerted action across the board,' he said, adding he would welcome an inquiry into wild salmon management.



# New 'Fish Health Professional' may result from law reform

**A reform of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, will have implications for the way fish health is managed.**



Under the existing legislation, fish are not covered but the new law will be more aligned with the provisions of the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022, which includes all animals in welfare related regulations.

Scottish Sea Farms Head of Veterinary Services Ronnie Soutar said the exclusion of fish in the original act has affected the way that the sector and the management of fish health has evolved.

'That's going to change. In other animal sectors, the diagnosis and treatment of animals is a monopoly vets have, although there are a variety of non-vets - for example, farmers, vet nurses and farriers - who can administer certain treatments.

'The new law is likely to introduce greater regulation of these paraprofessionals, and our non-vet health managers will become associated with this group and may require a licence to practise.

'At the moment, our integrated fish health service works well. Vets can't be everywhere and are not the best group to do everything. We need health

managers and farm teams to manage fish health and welfare and carry out treatments, including thermolicer, hydrolicer and freshwater treatments, that don't come under vet authority.

'We want to build on what we have and improve it. What I can see coming out of this reform is a new category of Fish Health Professional. I think that will be better for the health managers, creating career paths with more formal and regulated training, and better for the fish.'

The VSA reform is also likely to address anomalies in the prescription of medicines. Currently, there are two categories of prescription only medicines: POMVs, which can only be prescribed by vets, and POMVPS, which can be prescribed by vets, pharmacists or suitably qualified people (SQP).

'We have some fish medicines in the latter category, including most of the vaccines and anaesthetics, but we don't have any SQPs. That designation requires you to get a qualification and I can see a system coming into place where some fish medicines could be prescribed by this new group.'

## Engaging policy makers in sector's future

With the Scottish elections in May, the sector is engaging with politicians and prospective parliamentary candidates from all parties to support the continued success of Scotland's salmon farmers.

Trade body Salmon Scotland has identified three key challenges for the next government to deliver:

- ✓ **Efficient government: faster consenting through better regulation, and a greater focus on economic growth;**
- ✓ **Streamlined business regulation: reducing the costs imposed by regulation;**
- ✓ **Thriving coastal communities: anchoring rural and coastal population strength.**



Ronnie Soutar with Beatrice Wishart at the Lib Dems' business day

The success of Scottish salmon must not be taken for granted,' said Salmon Scotland. 'Our businesses face many regulatory burdens: planning consenting delays, cumbersome regulation, and red tape. Scotland must have a competitive business regime in comparison to other nations.'

Scottish Sea Farms has spelled out its own vision for policy makers, which can be summarised as 'fewer, but larger farms, and in better locations'.

'For this ambition to be realised, however, industry and regulators need to work better together, in terms of speed of achievement and ambition for sustainable growth,' said the company.

As part of the political engagement before voters go to the polls on May

7, the main political parties are staging events across the country.

At a recent Scottish Liberal Democrats business day in Edinburgh, Scottish Sea Farms' Ronnie Soutar joined representatives from other sectors to discuss challenges in the rural economy with current MSPs, including Shetland's Beatrice Wishart, who is standing down in May, and prospective parliamentarians.

'The discussion focused more on people than fish, particularly on issues such as the lack of housing and connectivity in remote areas,' he said.

'The Lib Dem voice is prominent in some of the regions where we farm, and the candidates I spoke to from the islands, Argyll and the Northern Isles were all keen to come on visits to our facilities.'

# People on the move

Bringing you up to date with the latest internal promotions

Starting in Mainland Marine, Dylan Reid, Marine Technician at Bloody Bay, has been appointed Deckhand on the Hollie Rose, alongside Eoin Armour, who was formerly a Marine Technician in Toyness.

At Shuna, Marine Technician Louie Buchanan has been promoted to become a Senior Marine Technician.

In the Northern Isles, Daniel Cruz, Senior Marine Technician at North Voe, has been made a Trainee Manager at Eriboll.

In Orkney Marine, Calder Grieve, Marine Technician at Hunda, is now a Yard Operative in Twatt.

Meanwhile, in Shetland, Dale Chattell, Night Hygiene Operative at Shetland Processing, has been moved to the position of Trainee Marine Technician at Setterness South/Foraness.

And Calum Wishart, Marine Technician at North Voe, has become a Senior Marine Technician in North Voe, while Mark Davies, Marine Technician at Setterness North and South of Linga, has been promoted to Senior Marine Technician, staying at the same farm.



Calum Wishart



Daniel Cruz



Dylan Reid



Eoin Armour



Louie Buchanan



Mark Davies

# Double delight for Scottish Sea Farms at the ALBAS

## Scottish Sea Farms' Craig Findlay was crowned Aquaculture Learner of the Year in the Lantra Scotland Awards for Land-based and Aquaculture Skills (the ALBAS).

And joining the celebrations at a ceremony in the Crieff Hydro Hotel on March 5 was runner-up Finley Forwood, Scottish Sea Farms Shetland Aqua Technician.

Craig, who is based in Strathcarron in the Highlands, completed a Diploma in Aquaculture through UHI Shetland's Marine Science and Technology Department while working as a Senior Marine Technician with SSF.

He described his triumph as 'totally unexpected' and thanked all his colleagues and tutors who had helped drive his success.

Originally from East Kilbride, and a veteran with 13 years in the Army, he decided to try his hand at aquaculture four years ago after moving to the Highlands.

'I was ready for a new career and when I saw the Scottish Sea Farms job advert, I thought it was the perfect chance to learn something different,' he said.

'I was ready for a new career and when I saw the Scottish Sea Farms job advert, I thought it was the perfect chance to learn something different'

At Kishorn North, his Farm Manager, John McCrae, encouraged him to enrol at UHI Shetland.

'John has been very supportive, he has been in the industry long enough to know that the more you learn, the better you are.'



Lantra award winners Craig Findlay (left) and Finley Forwood. Photo: Lantra

Craig managed to fit in his course work on storm days when he couldn't do much at sea and credits his UHI supervisor, Guy Tindall, with guiding him through the challenges.

'He was always on hand to take my calls and help me and, because he is from an aquaculture background, he can speak fish farmer!'

Finley, meanwhile, completed a Modern Apprenticeship in Aquaculture through UHI Shetland's Marine Science and Technology Department while working as a fish health specialist with Scottish Sea Farms.

Nominated for the award by his assessor at UHI Shetland, Saro Saravanan, Finley paid tribute to his team and said being able to complete training alongside his work with the apprenticeship 'has been a brilliant way to develop my skills'.

'Saro and the team from UHI Shetland were a huge help, with their expertise available both in person and over the phone. A big thank you to everyone who helped me complete the course.'

Last year, Finley, who is now working on his Level 4, was named the 2025 Marine Sciences Student of the Year upon graduating at UHI Shetland.

# Purchase ledger legend Carol marks 25 years

**As Scottish Sea Farms prepares to celebrate its 25th anniversary this year a number of colleagues are marking their own 25-year milestones with the company in its current form.**

Among them is Purchase Ledger Clerk Carol Alexander, who has been a mainstay of the finance team and a key player in the Scottish Sea Farms story.

For almost 20 years, it was Carol alone who handled the purchase ledger which, in the days before computerisation, was a laborious role involving pink slips attached to paper invoices and a complex filing system.

Today, she is part of a bigger team in a much bigger organisation than the one she first joined.

'I am proud of the company and how it's grown, and I'm proud I'm still here,' Carol told The Source after the party in honour of her long service.

From Dunblane, Carol's route to the salmon farming sector included spells at Abbey Craig laundry in Stirling, R L Dolby Dunblane, Graham's Dairies, and Maclays Brewery.

Arriving at Scottish Sea Farms in August 2000, initially as a temp, she was scheduled to have an interview with Jim Gallagher, then the financial controller. But there was no time so she started immediately, without the formalities.



Carol with Jim Gallagher and Chief Financial Officer David Archibald

'And that's me been there ever since. I bet Jim rues the day!'

Carol's role was made permanent in January 2001 and she set about organising and running the purchase ledger as Scottish Sea Farms continued to expand, acquiring sites in Orkney, Shetland and then, in 2022, taking over Grieg Seafood.

While based in the Stirling office she has visited farms in Shetland and Scallastle in Mull, as well as Barcaldine and the processing operation in Shian, but she admits she is better suited to handling figures than fish.

'At Scallastle, Michael (Keenan) asked if I wanted to hold a sedated salmon and I said, absolutely not! Then in the factory, when the big fish were going through the gutting machine, I was standing with my jacket over my face. I'm a bit squeamish.'

Carol said when she does eventually retire, she will miss her friends, especially her long-time buddy Pam (Stewart), and her work.

'I'll be sorry to leave. There have been a few hiccups along the way but Scottish Sea Farms are really good to their staff, it's like a family here.'

## Brothers go the distance for farm visits

**Transporting visitors to salmon farms in safety and comfort can be a challenge, given Scotland's weather and the distances covered.**



But on the west coast, the boat trips have become something of a treat in themselves, thanks to twin brothers Cameron and Struan Smith (pictured) and their family business, Coastal Connection.

With a fleet of four cabined RIBs (rigid-hull inflatable boats), the skippers regularly

deliver parties of up to 12 to Scottish Sea Farms locations off the mainland. Visitors include buyers, Norwegian colleagues, students, vets, and, just over a year ago, MSPs from the Rural Affairs and Islands committee (RAIC).

As Cameron told The Source, the experience of a farm visit can change attitudes towards the sector: 'You do see people who've read negative headlines but when they actually see a farm, it blows their mind how much goes into it.'

'We now have three 11m boats and one 12m and we might be getting a fifth,' said Cameron. 'Our father had a Redbay - built near Ballycastle in Northern Ireland - and they punch above their weight, making them suitable for the climate we get up here.'

Coastal Connection is in its 18th season and the brothers have notched up more than 200,000 nautical miles each since 2008.

## Career spotlight



**Seumas Hitchings,  
Summer Isles Trainee Manager**

### What does your role involve?

Overseeing day-to-day operations and planning for the next crop. I try not to be a middle man and encourage the guys on the site to deal with issues themselves, which gives them a level of accountability so they can grow in the role.

### What's your background?

I was born in Livingstone and moved to Achiltibuie when I was eight, living at first in my granny's house, which Sarah (Seumas's wife and Summer Isles Manager) and I have now bought. I went through school thinking I was going to university to be an engineer but I'm happy I've ended up staying here.

### Why did you choose this job?

I had applied to join the police at 18 but narrowly failed the fitness test. While waiting to re-apply I met the then Manager and Senior Husbandry of the fish farm while watching rugby in the pub and they offered me a job. I enjoyed it and here I am, more than 10 years later.

### What are the biggest challenges?

Fish health and welfare and environmental factors are part of the job, but I'd say managing people is the toughest challenge. When I was made a Trainee Manager four years ago, I was focused on production, but Sarah told me it was all about the people and I realised she was right. I've since completed the company's management course, which I found very useful.

### And the greatest rewards?

The change of pace throughout the crop and seeing the results of all our hard work at harvest time. Also, the team spirit is a reward in itself, especially when we've been doing treatments and the guys have worked 12-hour shifts in rubbish weather, yet everyone is still having a laugh and a joke at the end of the day.

# How art therapy aids Orkney youngsters



## Women's Aid Orkney, a charity for the victims of domestic abuse, is using art therapy to help the children and young people under its care.

Being able to express themselves through painting or, for the very young, just being creative often encourages vulnerable youngsters to process traumatic experiences, said Sarah Wylie, Children and Young People's Practitioner at the organisation.

She and her colleague, Debbie Ralph, are training for art therapy certificates - delivered online by the Association for Person Centred Creative Arts - so they will be able to better support the children within the service, an affiliate of Scottish Women's Aid.

The charity provides one-on-one and peer group sessions in a safe and confidential environment for boys and girls impacted by domestic abuse.

'Children referred to our service range in age from three to 18 and this means their conversation skills and comprehension all vary as well, including additional support needs,

and those severely impacted by trauma,' said Sarah.

'We recently undertook some work alongside local artists and saw how interested our young people were in trying different art techniques and mediums.

'Using art therapy skills, we will be able to provide support to any child, regardless of whether they are verbal, non-verbal and at any age or stage within their journey.

'We believe this extra training will benefit not only the child at the centre, but will also help improve outcomes for the family as a whole.'

Scottish Sea Farms' Heart of the Community fund has helped towards the cost of the training and Sarah and Debbie are now fund raising so they can both complete the course and purchase art resources too.

Although their work can be challenging, with around 60 youngsters currently using the service, there are rewards, especially when they can see they are making a difference, said Sarah.

'Sometimes in a session, you notice a shift in the child's behaviour as they relax more. We couldn't do what we do without support from the community.'

# Farm managers' boost for community causes

## Scottish Sea Farms site managers donated a total of £15,509 to more than 30 separate good causes in the past year.

As part of the company's Heart of the Community fund, every farm manager is allocated £500 each year to distribute to a local charity or project of their choice.

In 2025, a huge variety of initiatives and organisations were given a helping hand, from whale and dolphin conservation to school trips, and from football clubs to a dance academy.

In all, there were nine donations made in Argyll, seven in the Highlands region, five in Orkney, and 13 in Shetland, including from the processing factory in Lerwick, which divided the grant between the Eric Gray Centre (£200

for the Hansel Fund), Scalloway Nursery (£200), and Sleepless Circus (£100).

One group to benefit on the Mainland was Police Scotland Youth Volunteers (PSYV) after Shuna Farm Manager Andrew MacDougall met their Oban representative at a careers fair in Tobermory.

'I was approached by PC Faye Stewart, group coordinator of the Oban PSYV, to see if we could help with funding. She and I have attended these types of events a few times and I am always impressed with how well she manages to engage and inspire pupils, spreading a great message about community spirit and positive policing.

'PSYV support local policing priorities through volunteering, give young people a chance to be heard, and inspire them to participate positively in their communities. I was more than happy to assist in this great community programme.'

In Orkney, Eday Farm Manager Jimmy Dakin has again donated his £500 to the North Isles Dance Academy, based on Sanday. The initial approach came from site colleague Andrew Powell, who is now Health and Safety Coordinator for the Orkney region.

'Andy's partner, Charlotte Hoque, was setting up the academy and I was really proud to be able to help out,' said Jimmy.

Charlotte said the money helped provide costumes for all the dancers, aged two to those in their 80s, for the summer show.

'In our island community, this support helps reduce social isolation by enabling people in remote areas to access and take part in the arts, while also bringing audiences together to share in performances and feel connected,' she said.

## Heart of the Community at a glance



**2026** so far  
**21** grants and donations given  
**£6,990** given

**All time** (2011-present)  
**1320** grants and donations given  
**£2,162,894** given

Got a news item from your region or business area? Email [thesource@scottishseafarms.com](mailto:thesource@scottishseafarms.com)



Scottish  
Sea Farms

[scottishseafarms.com](http://scottishseafarms.com)