



Orkney is 40 km (25 miles) north of Thurso in mainland Scotland and Stronsay is 27 km (17 miles) north of Kirkwall in mainland Orkney. Stronsay is about 11 km (7 miles) long and has an irregular shape with many miles of coastline; its title of “Orkney’s Island of Bays” comes from the three large bays separated by two isthmuses - St Catherine's Bay to the west, the Bay of Holland to the south and Mill Bay to the east, all three bays have long, unspoiled white sand beaches. The island is mainly agricultural with farming and fishing being the main industries. The Stronsay Ranger helps visitors to explore the island with a walking tour to see the rich flora & fauna – including puffins and seals - and learn some history along the way. The island is a haven for photographers with its wide-open skies, natural beauty including the spectacular Vat of Kirbister, and stunning views of the Merry Dancers, the local term for the *Aurora Borealis*.

Stronsay’s 350 residents work together to maintain a tight knit community with a rich social and cultural life underpinned by a sense of place, freedom and self-sufficiency that many city dwellers frustrated with the frenetic pace of modern life can only dream about. There are various opportunities to be actively involved with the community. Many have more than one job – farmers run taxi services and teachers serve as lifeguards. Others run their own businesses and volunteer in community groups, teach music or make craft products. Facilities for locals are outstanding, including a medical centre, Healthy Living Centre, bank, post office, a Church of Scotland church and Catholic chapel, two shops, a community centre, a mobile library and an excellent Junior High School with its own swimming pool that is available for use 3 days a week by the island’s residents.

Transport services between Stronsay and mainland Orkney are good. Orkney Ferries’ roll-on/roll-off ferry makes two return trips every day except Sunday when there is just one return trip, the journey time is around 90 minutes each way. Loganair’s Britten-Norman Islander aircraft make two return trips every weekday from Kirkwall to Stronsay’s airfield with one return trip on Saturday, the journey time is around 10 minutes; residents of Stronsay benefit from favourable discounts on the air fares.

Transport services between mainland and the rest of the UK are good. Pentland Ferries provide a daily link between Orkney and Thurso; Northlink Ferries provide daily links between Stromness and Thurso as well as a twice-weekly service between Kirkwall and Aberdeen or Shetland. Flybe and Loganair provide regular links between Kirkwall airport and several airports in the UK.

All Orkney residents travel at discounted rates on Northlink routes and an Air Discount Scheme provides significantly reduced fares on flights from Kirkwall to destinations on mainland Scotland.

The island has two well-stocked shops selling fresh meat, groceries, tinned & frozen foods, hardware, petrol/diesel fuel and bottled gas. There is a Post Office counter in one of the shops and there is a branch of the Royal Bank of Scotland which opens for one day a week. Items such as white goods and furniture are obtainable from Kirkwall or from suppliers

such as John Lewis, Amazon, IKEA, etc. Jim Holland, the island's haulier, provides a regular service between Kirkwall and Stronsay using Orkney Ferries. There is a taxi service, a mini-bus hire service and one of the shops provides bicycles that are free to use. There are several locally-based suppliers of reasonably-priced, seasonal fresh produce.

The Stronsay Hotel provides hotel accommodation and a well-stocked bar which is open six evenings a week to serve food & drink. There is also the Fish Mart Café & Hostel; the café has been closed for a while but there are plans to open it again early this year. The Stronsay Community Association run the Community Hall which has a fully equipped kitchen and a licensed bar as well as several rooms all of which are for hire.

A mobile library van visits Stronsay every two months and there is a well-stocked Peedie Library in the church hall which opens once a month when residents can exchange their books or simply chat and have a cuppa. The island's monthly newsletter "The Stronsay Limpet" is for residents and former residents of Stronsay, it is published on the last Thursday in the month but is usually available online on the Sunday before printed copies, subsidised by the Stronsay Development Trust, appear in the island's shops. A useful diary of future events is maintained on the "Visit Stronsay" website <http://visitstronsay.com>.

The island has a Church of Scotland kirk which holds a service every Sunday at 11am. There is also a Roman Catholic community with a base at Golgotha Monastery (Transalpine Redemptorists) on Papa Stronsay, daily services are held in Our Lady's Chapel on the pierhead on Stronsay.

The island has a thriving craft community which includes:

- Craftship Enterprise – Dianne Riley-Moore's enterprise, housed in an old chapel built in 1837, facilities include a large workshop studio and a Craft Shop stocked full of craft supplies, kits and books
- Selkie Glass – Rosalind Neville-Smith's stained glass, fused glass coasters, pendants, light catchers.
- Marion Miller Jewellery - unique hand-made silver and gem-stone jewellery.
- Orkney Star Island Soap – Simone Kirk's natural soaps, balms and hand-spun yarns, rugs, wall hangings.
- The Wyrd Weaver – Eunice Bourn-Fernley's primitive/ancestral textiles, rustic folk art, whimsical characters.
- Airy Fairy – Hazel Shearer's personalised baby quilts, cushions, children's clothes.
- Mill Bay Crafts – knitted items by Ruth King.

The island has a variety of clubs and societies:

- Musicality – a recently founded group for musicians of all ages and abilities playing music in a variety of styles and on a variety of instruments.
- Stronsay's Silver Darlings – a traditional music group for musicians of all ages which has produced several CDs.
- Bookworms - readers group, meets monthly.
- Drama group – has put on pantomimes in the last few years.
- Stronsay Stitchers - informal knit-&-natter-type group, meets monthly.

- Stronsay Spinners - beginners & experienced welcome, meets monthly.
- Craft Workshops & pop up sessions - throughout the year at Craftship Enterprise.
- Scottish Women's Institute - meets monthly from September to May.
- Diabetes Support Group – meets five times a year.
- Health & Fitness - instructor-led sessions 4 times a week, also operates a buddy system for attendance outside these times, at the Healthy Living Centre.
- Swim Club - general sessions held 3 days a week. Also swim club classes for children of all ages at the Swimming Pool (Stronsay School).
- Sunday Club - attached to Moncur Memorial Church, Sundays 11am - 12pm, term time classes and crèche outside of these dates.
- Playgroup - for all pre-school age children and parents. Friday afternoons 1.30-3pm in the Community Hall.
- Community Greenhouse Group – users of the large “polycrub” greenhouse.
- The “Stronsay Limpet” – monthly newsletter for residents & former residents of Stronsay, available online at www.stronsaylimpet.co.uk.
- Stronsay Community Association – runs the Community Hall and organises various events on the island.

STRONSAY SURGERY

Stronsay surgery caters for the needs of a resident island population of approximately 350 and on occasion there is also the need to provide care for visitors to the island.

Our island population ranges from the new-born, through all age ranges, with our eldest resident now 99 years old, having lived here all her life. The mix of residents is approximately 50/50 local Orcadians and incomers to the island. There is a wide variety of medical conditions.

The surgery is situated in the centre of the island geographically, very close to the school, swimming pool and healthy living centre. The school caters for approximately 40 children from 3 years of age through to S4 (secondary). The surgery has 2 consulting rooms, a reception area, a waiting room and a small dispensary. There is also a room where VC equipment is set up which allows for some remote consultations and also the opportunity to attend meetings remotely. Once a week there is an INOC (Isles Network of Care) meeting via VC, where all outer isles practitioners meet to discuss clinical issues including admissions, interesting cases, learning points etc.

Main prescriptions are dispensed from the Orkney mainland pharmacies and sent across via the haulier on the ferry. The G.P also has oversight of the patients on Eday, a neighbouring island (1/2 hour by ferry) with a population of approximately 150. This is staffed by Nurse Practitioners who work a 2 weeks on and 2 weeks off rota. The Stronsay G.P visits Eday one day a week (usually a Thursday) to provide appointments for patients needing to see a G.P.

Emergency admissions can be evacuated from the island by SAS Helimed transport, and these usually go across to Kirkwall A&E for stabilisation, and then onwards to a major

hospital from there if necessary. The Balfour hospital in Kirkwall offers a full range of in-patient and out-patient services, but more specialised treatments are usually referred to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. Some orthopaedic patients are seen in Glasgow, and eye patients at Raigmore hospital in Inverness.

Staffing, other than the G.P, consists of 2 nurses (who work a 7 on and 7 off rota) who undertake treatment room work, long term condition reviews, as well as home visits to their community caseload. They are also on 24-hour call for out of hours emergency situations. There is also a practice administrator who works 30 hours a week, and a cleaner who comes twice a week. We have a team of 5 home care workers who provide care for the elderly residents who require assistance with activities of daily living.

Surgery hours are morning and afternoon 4 days a week on Stronsay and 1 day a week on Eday. There is a pager provided for out of hours contacts and to respond to emergency situations.

There is a fully furnished house which is attached to the surgery for locum personnel to use. It is a 4-bedroom property, with kitchen/diner, bathroom, lounge & downstairs cloakroom. It has a telephone line and broadband. There is also a car provided for the GP's use which is fully kitted out with Sandpiper Trust emergency equipment.

There is also a team of 5 voluntary 'First Responders' who are trained first aiders, they also drive the island ambulance and are on call on a rota system to respond to emergency situations when required. There is also a full team of Fire and Rescue crew who can also respond in emergency situations.

USEFUL LINKS:

Visit Stronsay website <http://visitstronsay.com>.

Visit Stronsay Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/779139792540696>.

Stronsay Limpet website <https://www.stronsaylimpet.co.uk>.

Orkney Ferries website <http://www.orkneyferries.co.uk>.

Loganair website <https://www.loganair.co.uk/destinations/scotland/orkney-inter-island>.

Pentland Ferries website <http://pentlandferries.co.uk>.

Northlink Ferries website <https://www.northlinkferries.co.uk>.

Kirkwall airport website <http://www.hial.co.uk/kirkwall-airport>.

Stronsay Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/476168409207488>.

Moving to Orkney guide <https://www.orkneyology.com/moving-to-orkney.html>.

Stronsay Junior High School blog <https://stronsay-jh.blogspot.com>.