

Papa Westray



A close-knit island community
with a can-do culture

www.papawestray.co.uk Facebook: Papa Westray (Papay)

Island Profile

Papa Westray, or Papay as it is known locally, is one of the smaller of the Orkney north isles at approximately 4 miles long and 1 mile wide across at its widest point. The landscape ranges from dramatic cliffs and fertile farmland to lochs and maritime heathland. The island is renowned internationally for its bird life, archaeology and beaches. Papay has a vibrant small population of around 85 with a good balance of children, families, working folk and older people. The island has had notable success in reversing population decline and has a well-integrated community that "punches above its weight". Farming, public services, fishing and building trades are traditional occupations while tourism, social enterprise & home working increasingly provide employment for local households.

Getting to Papay

A year-round air service operates between Kirkwall and Papa Westray and the 12 minute, Loganair Islander plane journey to Papay often takes in the world's shortest scheduled flight between Papa Westray and Westray. Orkney Ferries operate a regular passenger ferry service to Westray providing access to twice daily ferry connections from Westray to Kirkwall as well as a direct freight and car ferry service twice a week between Papay and Kirkwall.



Local Services & Facilities

The Papay Community Co-op shop at Beltane House is well stocked with a wide selection of fresh, frozen and general groceries including local produce, Fairtrade, vegetarian and free-from ranges and most family shopping can be sourced through the shop. The shop is licensed, has petrol & diesel pumps, an EV charging point, coal and gas and is open 4 hours each day, Monday to Saturday. Papay Co-op also run the 4* Papa Westray Hostel at Beltane House which doubles as a venue for community events.

Local community organisations also run a well-maintained private water supply, community housing, market garden project, heritage & art center, tourism services, school transport services and common grazings. Our island community's strategic priorities include population numbers, affordable housing, fuel poverty, environment, and increased sustainability.

Papay has a great primary school and nursery with 4 children currently attending. Secondary 1-4 pupils travel daily to Westray Junior High School by ferry. Pupils progress to Kirkwall Grammar School for S5&6, returning home each weekend.

Papay has a retained fire & rescue service and a team of local volunteer first responders provide support to the island NHS Nurse Practitioners. The Westray NHS Practice provide a weekly GP surgery at the Papay Surgery within St Ann's Centre.

The island has good Broadband which is scheduled to be further upgraded to Fibre in 2022. There is also a Post Office and craft shop, a new tea room soon to open, a Ranger service offering tours and boat trips to the Holm of Papay (Papay Ranger on Facebook and Instagram) and a summer RSPB Warden who gives guided walks to the North Hill Nature Reserve.

Social Life

The weekly coffee morning at St Ann's, Thursday Club and the Saturday night pub at Beltane House offer regular opportunities to socialise while Papay Community Association organise a range of family friendly social activities including dinners, traditional dances, cinema & games nights and concerts plus events such as the Papay Fun Weekend. The island choir and the band both meet weekly and there is a fortnightly Lunch Club, monthly garden growers' group, plus French conversation and printmaking classes. The community wing of the school has a well-equipped children's play area, a gym and library as well as a hall & playing field for games and sports, and the Kelp Store heritage center is the venue for a variety of workshops and events

throughout the year. There are lots of volunteering opportunities from gardening, cooking and bike repair, to committee work or first responders. An out of hours boat scheme helps young folk and groups access additional social activities in Westray.