

Committee	Learning, Teaching, and Research		
Agenda Item	7		
Date paper prepared	08/02/2023	Date of committee meeting	15/02/2023
Subject	Whalsay Learning Centre		
Author	Laura Burden, Gemma MacGregor		
Action requested	For discussion		
Purpose of the paper	To update the LTR committee on the Whalsay Learning Centre.		
Brief summary of the paper	<p>The paper updates the committee on the work carried out in relation to the Whalsay Learning Centre and seeks committee input to our review. The outcome of the Needs survey is included as Appendix 1.</p> <p>The committee is invited to review the needs survey and to discuss ways forward for the future to feed into the development of options for the centre.</p>		
Consultation	Whalsay community via survey (summary attached); SMG		
Resource implications	There will be resource implications to our final solution, hence our care to try and ensure we get a good solution		
Risk implications	Poor reputation for college if suitable solution acceptable to the community is not found		

Link with strategy	Links to our engagement strategy in supporting community engagement with our college also links to our tertiary education strategy through offering diverse learning journeys to help all students reach their potential
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Seeks to be inclusive of our island communities, we have cases where those responsible for child care are unable to travel
Island Community Impact	Seeks to be inclusive of our island communities
Paper status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open – The paper may be circulated to non-members of the committee and published online without restriction. <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted – The paper must not be circulated to non-members or published online until after the committee meeting. <input type="checkbox"/> Confidential - The paper must not be circulated beyond the committee members and should not be published online. [Please note papers may still be subject to Freedom of Information requests – see below].
Freedom of information	Choose an item. If closed/ withheld, select date this will become 'open': Enter a date.

Whalsay Learning Centre

The Whalsay Learning Centre has been a valued part of community provision by our college over the last 20 years. It enables members of the community to participate in learning without having to travel to Lerwick or Scalloway. Delivery in recent years has been by a dedicated member of lecturing staff based at the centre. In recent years (since 2020/21) very few students (<10) have engaged with the centre. This can be linked to the recent pandemic but also possibly reflects the need to refresh the provision we offer through the centre. We estimate that the Centre has been operating with an average annual shortfall of some £45k.

Retirement of the Whalsay based member of staff offers an opportunity to review and renew our provision. To that end a needs survey was run for the community at the end of last year (included here as appendix 1). The Community Learning and Business section has drafted a report seeking to identify options for the future, consider the various implications and opportunities associated with changes, and to explore the key question - 'Considering the intelligence gathered from the survey, how do we deliver an attractive and sustainable offer that meets the learning and development needs of the population of Whalsay?' Before finalising the options considered, we are seeking to engage in discussions with the community before presenting a final report to our F&GP committee in March.

Options under consideration include:-

- Continuation of the existing model;
- Changes to the location for delivery;
- Changes to the hours of operation;
- Changes to the mode of delivery;
- Changes to the course/learning offer;
- Use of non-lecturing staff to facilitate learning;
- Or a combination of the above.

The committee is invited to review the needs survey and to discuss ways forward for the future to feed into the development of options for the centre.

Whalsay Learning Survey

November 2022

Contents:

Introduction	page 1
Survey methodology	page 1
Online results	page 1
Focused online results	page 6
Under 16s	page 6
16-25s	page 7
25-50s	page 8
50+s	page 11
Paper survey results	page 13
Summation	page 18
Conclusions and Recommendations	page 18

Introduction

UHI Shetland undertook a learning survey in the island of Whalsay, upon the retirement of the local lecturer.

Whalsay, with a population of around 1060¹ and around 410+ households² is an island to the east of mainland Shetland. Its primary industry is fishing³, and is home to many large trawlers. It is not as fertile as other islands, so crofting is not a major industry⁴.

Learning provision has been provided in Whalsay since 2002 and is currently located in the Whalsay School library.

Courses delivered at present include introductory courses, which serve as a natural starting point for students to progress onto higher level qualifications. Areas covered include iPads/Tablets; Computing; Essential Skills; ECDL; Sage; Accounting; Business; Digital Media and General Interest.

Survey methodology

The purpose of the survey was to gather opinions on the provision of learning in Whalsay. The learning centre has seen decreasing numbers, and it is important to understand what the needs are of the Whalsay population.

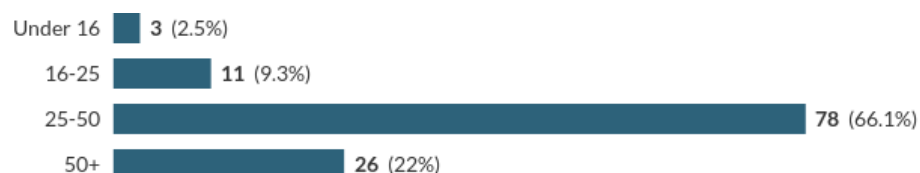
The survey was open for most of November 2022. An online survey was created, and the link was promoted around the UHI Shetland website and social medias and shared in the North Notes of the Shetland Times. Paper copies of the survey were made available in Whalsay with drop off points in the local shops and leisure centres.

Online results

A full breakdown of the results is in *Appendix A*.

Question one was whether the respondent lived in Whalsay. This was the only difference to the paper questionnaire. We can be reasonably confident the paper surveys have been completed by Whalsay based people, but an online survey can be completed anywhere. All 118 respondents (100%) answered in the affirmative that they lived in Whalsay.

Q2) What age bracket are you in?



The vast majority of respondents were over 25, with nearly a quarter of online respondents over 50.

¹ [Shetland in Statistics 2017](#) pg 12

² [Shetland in Statistics 2017](#) pg 19

³ [Whalsay.pdf \(shetland-heritage.co.uk\)](#)

⁴ [Shetland island guide to Whalsay | NorthLink Ferries](#)

Q3) Have you ever undertaken learning at the Whalsay Learning Centre

More than half of the respondents had never undertaken learning at the Whalsay Learning Centre.

Q4) If yes, when was the last time you undertook a course?

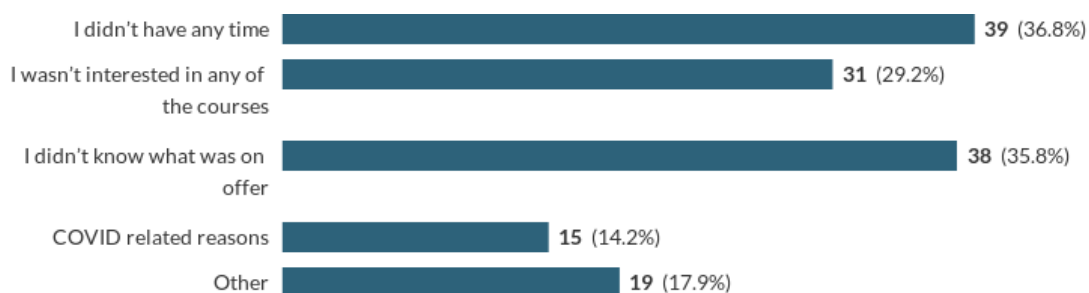
The vast majority of respondents have not engaged in learning at the Whalsay Learning Centre recently, with nearly 80% having last learned over three years ago.

Question 4 had a subset question that asked what were the course(s) that you have undertaken. There was a wide range of response from the 51 people who answered this question. See *Appendix A* for the full breakdown.

This question may not have been clear to some respondents, as some replied with courses that have not been offered by Shetland College (i.e. equine studies and lambing).

Courses that were mentioned numerous times included:

- ECDL (14 mentions)
- Digital Scrapbooking / Photo editing (5 mentions)
- Sage / accountancy (7 mentions)

Q5) If you haven't undertaken any learning at the Whalsay Centre (in the last three years) what are the reason(s).

Nearly 30% of respondents are not interested in the current offering of courses, and 35% do not know what is on offer. Time is also a difficulty for many people, which is looked at more closely in the sub question.

This question also had a sub question in order to gain insights into as to why people were not engaging with the learning centre.

There were 16 answers to the sub question. The reasons vary from new island inhabitants to childcare being an issue (four respondents which was the most frequently cited answer in this sub question). All the responses are in *Appendix A*.

Q6) Would you consider using the Whalsay Learning Centre to undertake learning courses and qualifications in future?

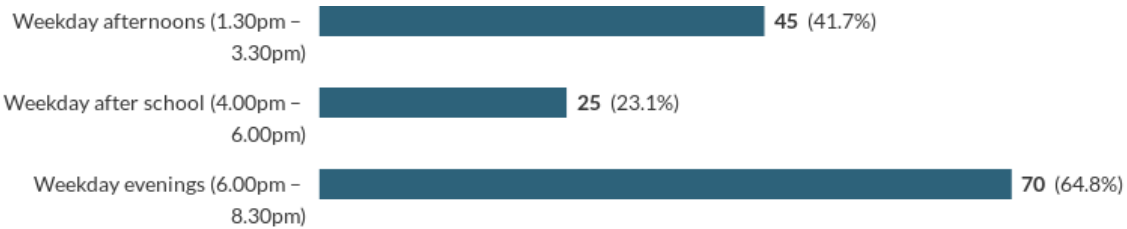


This is a very positive response; and based on the previous Q4 answers, it is important we become responsive to the community learning needs and communicate those well.

A sub question of Question 6 asked **If yes, what subjects, courses, or qualifications would you be interested in being on offer at the Whalsay Learning Centre.**

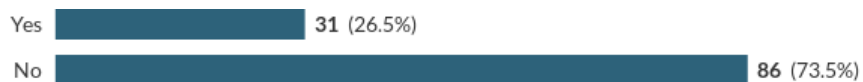
88 people responded to this section, with a wide range of interests and courses that they would be interested to engage with. All the responses are in *Appendix A*.

Q7) What days and times would be best for you to attend learning and courses at the Whalsay Learning Centre in person?



The most popular slot is evenings, followed by early afternoons.

Q8) Would you consider travelling to one of the main UHI Shetland campuses at Lerwick and Scalloway for a learning course?



Q9) Would you consider travelling to learn at one of the other UHI Shetland learning centres (North Mainland, Brae, Northern Isles, Isleburgh)?



Q10) Would you consider undertaking a learning course online i.e. through Microsoft Teams or Zoom?



Q11) What would be your preferred method of learning?

Either in person or a mixture of in person and online has been the most popular options among the respondents.

Final comments

Respondents were given a free text option to make any comments they wished about the survey. Linked to the below **Focused Results**, there is a colour coded breakdown on what comments were made by which age group.

- I would like to see the Learning Centre used as a hub for a range of activities and possibly be able to access short courses in our own local setting (25-50)
- Mornings also would be good when kids go to school (25-50)
- I think it's very important to keep a hub for adult learning in our isles. (50+)
- Very important to keep learning centres in the islands (50+)
- It would be useful to know what has been offered in the past, and if cost is involved (50+)
- I could only do online course at learning centre as my internet is too slow and unreliable (50+)
- The learning centre needs to be relevant to the community needs and change and evolve with these needs (50+)
- Having the reassurance that Ruby was at the learning centre encouraged me to undertake studies. (50+)
- A better variety of more practical things would be really good. (50+)
- The Centre is valuable for all residents (50+)
- I think it's really important to have an accessible hub that has a place where you can study outwith the home which will allow more focused study, even if it's not for a uni course. When was the last time the uhi, looked at the job market for remote working opportunities and tailored the courses that it provides to support those in Shetland/highlands to pursue a purposeful pathway into this job market (25-50)
- Ferry times, lack of their reliability, travel time is too long, with school hours make it impossible to travel out isle but I'd 100% prefer to be in a class out the isle than in. I don't like zoom type meeting. Maybe watch something recorded. So I can't see anything being possible until kids leave school, and I can be based more out isle (25-50)
- More kids courses (U16)
- In person learning is best but if courses are available online in the learning centre there needs to be somebody present to help with technical issues (25-50)
- Such an important resource for the Isle. Could another venue be considered so that mornings could be an option - directly after school drop off? (25-50)
- Childcare / travel times and financial implications prevent college attendance and furthering my career (50+)
- Online learning with the option of attending the learning centre for help and support and a place to study with good ICT connectivity and resources. (25-50)
- Good to have a local learning centre. Not always possible for people to travel off the island to study. (25-50)
- I am now busy babysitting & have no need of any more studying. (50+)

Focused online results

Last modified: 11/02/2023 00:29

For the purposes of this report, a more detailed look at the age bandings gave interesting insights into the usage and future requirements of learning at the Whalsay Learning Centre.

Under 16s age group

There were 3 out of the 118 respondents who fell into the Under 16s age bracket, which was 2.5% of the online responses.

None of them had done courses at the Learning Centre before (0%).

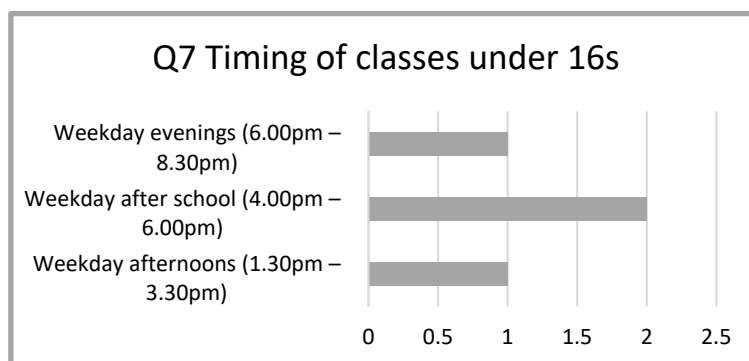
Reasons as to why they had not studied recently:

- 1 was uninterested in the courses offered (33%)
- 2 did not know what was on offer (66%)

Suggested courses for the under 16s (direct quotes):

- Admin, business
- Crafts, knitting, sewing machine, art, woodwork
- Fishing courses

When asked about mode of delivery the under 16s group responded:



Willing to travel to a UHI Campus (Lerwick or Scalloway)

No: 100%

Yes: 0%

Willing to travel to another learning centre

No: 100%

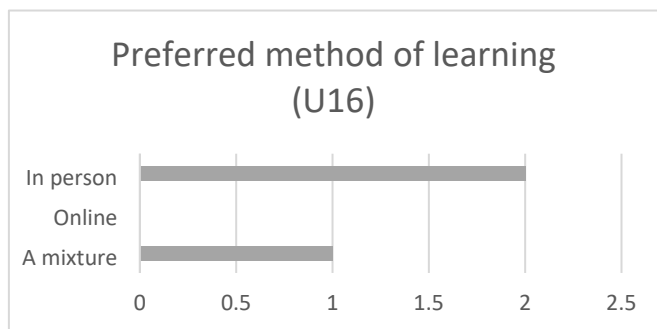
Yes: 0%

Consider an online learning course

No: 100%

Yes: 0%

Preferred method of learning (multi choice)



16-25 age group

There were 11 out of the 118 respondents who fell into the 16-25 age bracket, which was 9.3% of the online responses.

0 of them had done courses at the Learning Centre before (0%).

Many chose multiple reasons as to why they had not studied recently:

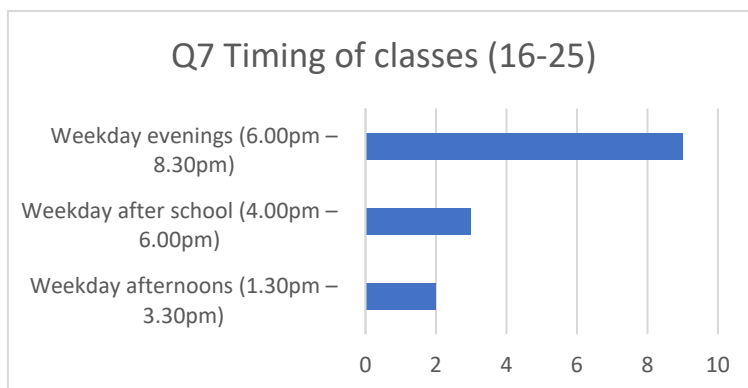
- 1 was uninterested in the courses offered (30%)
- 1 had no time (19%)
- 9 did not know what was on offer (15%)
- 2 'other' - *I went into full time work after leaving school and didn't want to study anything more at this time*

Suggested courses for the 16-25 age group (direct quotes):

- Computer science Business courses
- I have recently started my SVQ2 and it would be brilliant to have somewhere local to go to work/study instead of travelling to Lerwick
- Admin, computing, IT
- maritime engineering
- Local history. Book keeping. Computer skills
- Fitness related courses
- Business

When asked about mode of delivery the over 50s group responded:

Timing of classes (multi choice)



Willing to travel to a UHI Campus (Lerwick or Scalloway)

No: 55%

Yes: 45%

Willing to travel to another learning centre

No: 64%

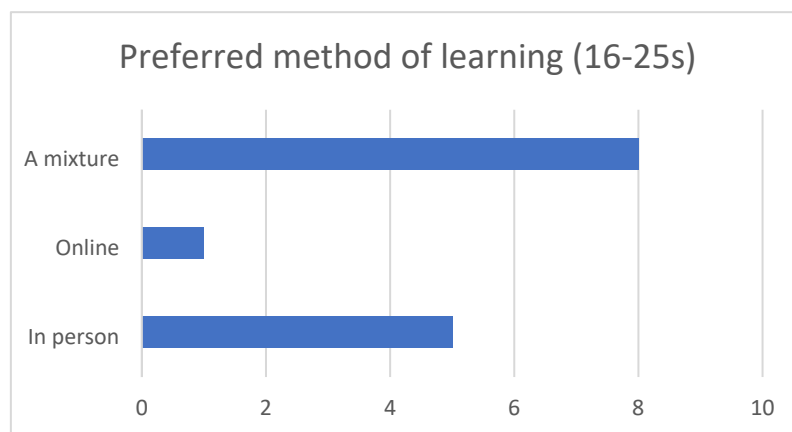
Yes: 36%

Consider an online learning course

No: 27%

Yes: 73%

Preferred method of learning (multi choice)



25-50 age group

There were 78 out of the 118 respondents who fell into the 25-50 age bracket, which was 66% of the online responses.

46 of this age group had **not** done courses at the Learning Centre before (58%).

32 of this age group had previously studied at the Learning Centre (41%)

29 of the respondents had not studied at the Learning Centre in the last three years (37% of the total, or 90% of those who said they had previously done courses at the Learning Centre)

Many chose multiple reasons as to why they had not studied recently:

- 1 was uninterested in the courses offered (1%)
- 1 had no time (1%)
- 9 did not know what was on offer (12%)
- 2 'other' - *I went into full time work after leaving school and didn't want to study anything more at this time*

Suggested courses for the 25-50s age group (direct quotes):

- Healthcare Knitting Psychology
- First aid type courses.
- Introduction to university for mature students. **assume this was meant to be 'mature'**
- Accounting
- Knitting, cooking classes, art and design, language
- SVQ2

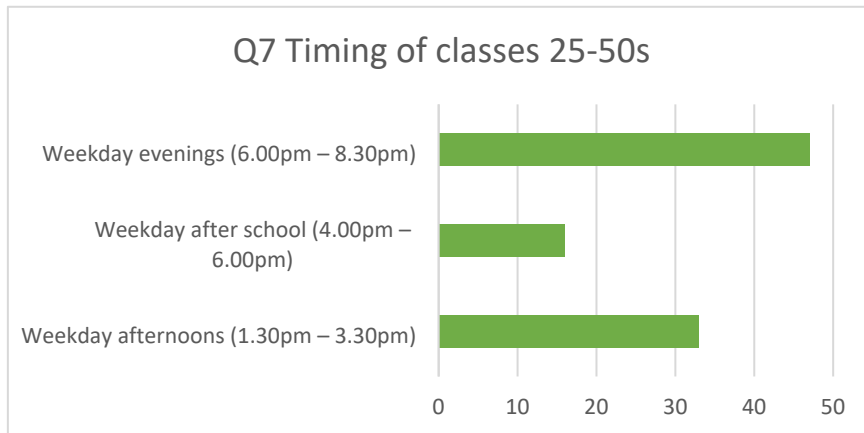
Last modified: 11/02/2023 00:29

- Basic seamanship - knots, navigation etc. Nautical ticket assistance/tutoring
- Anything to do with Social Care and Health.
- Administration
- Counselling
- Education, psychology, mentoring, counselling, history
- I would like to use it as a study place for my cii financial planning exams. Intermediate excel or advanced excel or possible looking at computer programming/data analytics
- Animals, land. Practical like woodwork, welding. Growing plants crops
- crochet sewing machine beginner
- STCW first aid STCW personal survival techniques. Forklift Sea crane
- Cookery classes
- Accounting programme training i.e. Sage.
- Fishing ticket preparation
- Computing, small business management
- Rural skills/Crofting, land management, equestrian, how to grow your own fruit/vegetables, small business owner skills (sage, bookkeeping, accounting, how to manage tax, HR/Management), creative short courses (e.g. Knitting, crochet, fair isle knitting). Introduction to type courses. Access to any Shetland UHI qualifications distance learning more like the way open university is structured. So you can work at your own pace but attend the learning centre for support when needed and to sit any assessments required.
- IT skills
- Sage, ICT,
- Higher English and Maths qualifications
- English and maths
- SVQ2
- First aid and all fishing related courses
- Languages
- Shetland based courses; history, knitting, baking...
- I would like to be able to access any courses which are offered by the UHI
- I would like to see how to do digital photography Scrapbooking video making crafts with the computer as after a few years it's all out of date re learning with the new systems
- Diet & Nutrition Understanding Dyslexia
- Help keeping up to date with technology, photo editing, video editing
- Drystone dyke building
- I would like to do more computing courses. Not sure what's all available.
- Food hygiene, horticulture
- Business courses, book keeping, marketing etc
- IT Mapping software CAD software
- Nutrition, dyslexia
- Craft courses Glow training for parents.
- English
- As many and as wide range as possible.
- Business studies
- camera settings/photography knitting
- Creative courses like writing, art etc. history. Local history. Philosophy. Archaeology. Local archaeology.
- Counselling. BLS. Any health related courses. I am starting a Masters in January via Napier, and would like some support sometime.
- Counselling. Creative writing. Mindfulness.
- Fishing
- Up to date financial book keeping, completing HMRC self assessments etc
- Engineering related.
- Languages
- Knitting
- Languages and social sciences
- Spreadsheets labels

- Ecdl, to finish it. Maybe practical cookery. Local history I'd be interested in a lot of different short courses once I finish my degree.

When asked about mode of delivery the 25-50s group responded:

Timing of classes (multi choice)



Willing to travel to a UHI Campus (Lerwick or Scalloway)

No: 67%

Yes: 33%

Willing to travel to another learning centre

No: 74%

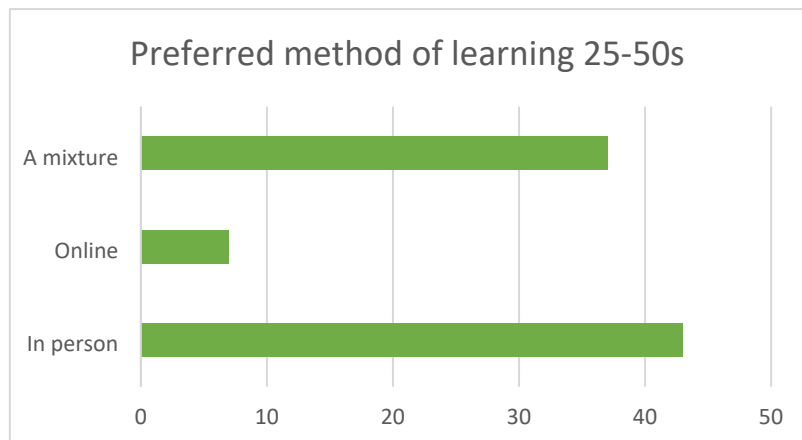
Yes: 26%

Consider an online learning course

No: 38%

Yes: 62%

Preferred method of learning (multi choice)



50+ Age Group

There were 26 out of the 118 respondents who fell into the 50+ age bracket, which was 22% of the online responses.

21 of them had done courses at the Learning Centre before (80%).

17 of the respondents had not studied at the Learning Centre in the last three years (65% of the total, or 80% of those who said they had previously done courses at the Learning Centre).

Many chose multiple reasons as to why they had not studied recently:

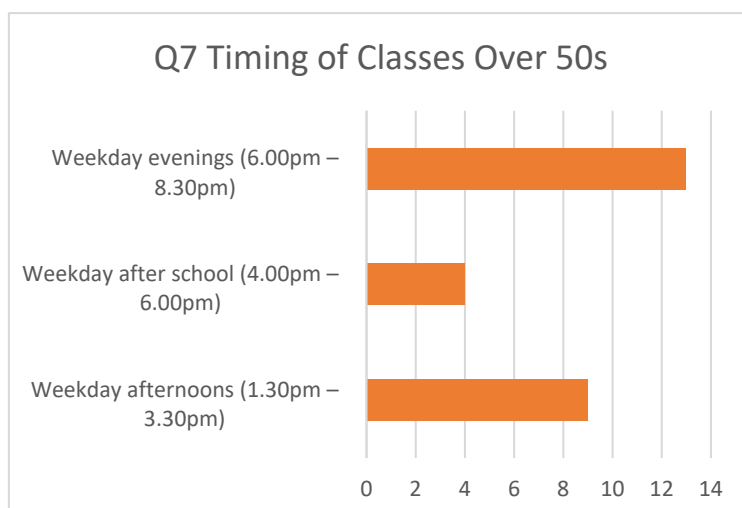
- 8 were uninterested in the courses offered (30%)
- 7 Covid related reasons (26%)
- 5 had no time (19%)
- 4 did not know what was on offer (15%)

Suggested courses for the over 50s (direct quotes):

- Cookery
- A learning hub and support for learning courses e.g. online modules Languages History
- Climate change Supporting refugees Maybe French
- Family History type course. Drop in sessions to maybe do HND course in Business Admin
- Pilates or yoga
- Using my computer more effectively etc Painting Crafting Writing
- Photos,
- Computer classes
- I enjoy learning of all types and enrol on courses I think sound interesting
- Using an I-pad Learning about spreadsheets/powerpoints Staying safe online
- Practical courses pottery woodwork different types of cookery classes and the like.
- Professional Development, Arts and Crafts
- Currently doing a diploma
- Highers
- Svq level 5 Advanced ecdl Health and fitness
- Machine knitting
- ECDL
- Drawing Nature
- Spreadsheets/PowerPoints
- Depends on what I am doing

When asked about mode of delivery the over 50s group responded:

Timing of classes (multi choice)



Willing to travel to a UHI Campus (Lerwick or Scalloway)

No: 88%

Yes: 12%

Willing to travel to another learning centre

No: 88%

Yes: 8%

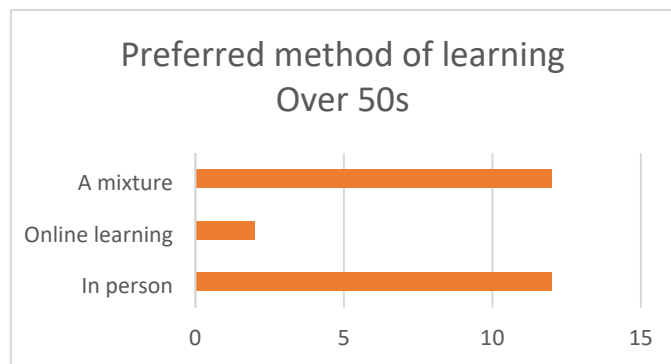
Unanswered: 4%

Consider an online learning course

No: 65%

Yes: 35%

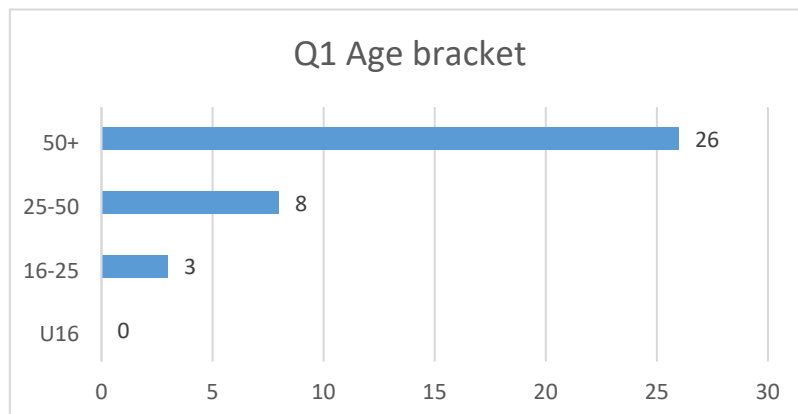
Preferred method of learning (multi choice)



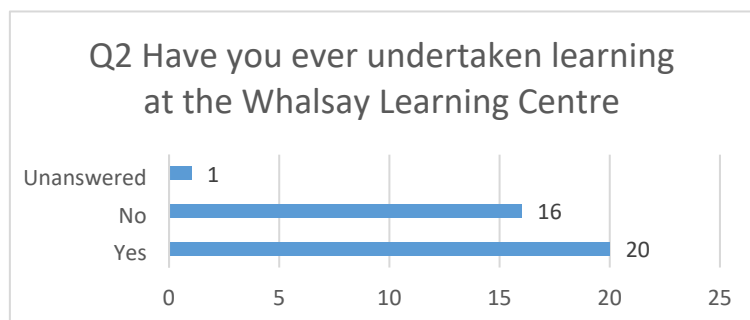
Paper Survey Results

There were 37 responses by completion of the paper survey.

Q1) What age bracket are you in?



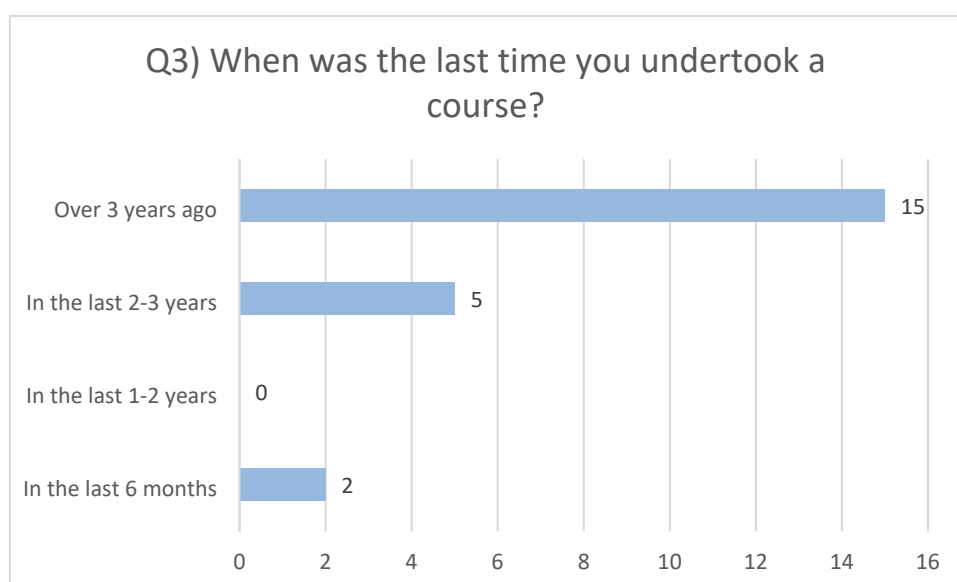
The vast majority of respondents were over 50.

Q2) Have you ever undertaken learning at the Whalsay Learning Centre

54% of respondents had undertaken a course; 43% had not.

Q3) If yes, when was the last time you undertook a course?

Of those who answered this question:



The vast majority of respondents have not engaged in learning at the Whalsay Learning Centre recently, with 68% of those that answered this question not having last learned at the Learning Centre over three years ago.

Question 3 had a subset question that asked what were the course(s) that you have undertaken.

- Knitting
- Introduction to computing
- Assistance with study through work
- Family trees
- Photos
- ECDL
- Using computers
- English
- Photo editing
- Web design
- Learning computers
- Literacy
- Numeracy

- Family history research
- SAGE
- IT Support for UHI degree
- Business studies: spreadsheets
- Swimming and woodwork

Q4) If you haven't undertaken any learning at the Whalsay Centre (in the last three years) what are the reason(s).

This was a multiple-answer question where respondents could circle as many as they felt were relevant:

I didn't have any time: 12

I wasn't interested in any of the courses: 6

I didn't know what was on offer: 5

Covid: 8

Other: 5

Unanswered: 6

Comments under 'Other' included:

'clashed with work'; 'shift work hindered me to attend as it meant I missed some of the weeks in the course'; 'recovering from a left hip replacement'; 'health issues'

Q5) Would you consider using the Whalsay Learning Centre to undertake learning courses and qualifications in future?

Yes: 32 (86%)

No: 5 (14%)

One respondent wrote a comment at this point: *'Learning yes, qualifications no'*.

A sub question of Question 5 asked **If yes, what subjects, courses, or qualifications would you be interested in being on offer at the Whalsay Learning Centre.**

31 people responded to this section, with a wide range of interests and courses that they would be interested to engage with, and comments. As above, it has a colour coded bracketed age group after each suggestion. Ad verbatim below:

- History archaeology (25-50)
- Computer lessons and iPad (50+)
- Business: Databases Business: PowerPoint (50+)
- Improving IT skills (50+)
- IT skills how to use my phone and tablet better. How to be safe online (50+)
- Support for my OU course. Help with essay writing, proof reading, etc (25-50)
- Accounting other than Sage, family history research (50+)
- Lambing (16-25)
- Family history research (50+)
- I would consider SVQ2 – needed for work (50+)
- More CPD, personal development, skills dev., admin/sage/office skills, maths, English, general interest – family history etc (25-50)
- Computer related subjects (50+)

- Making a website (50+)
- Knitting (25-50)
- I would like to be better working my laptop and iPad, I am also interested in history (50+)
- Access to FE & HE (16-25)
- Basic computing (50+)
- Photos (50+)
- Computer courses (50+)
- SVQ support (50+)
- UHI support (50+)
- Local history (50+)
- Computer courses (50+)
- Help booking things online, build confidence with online shopping (50+)
- Computing, working with photos on computer (50+)
- At my age not after qualifications. But interested in being able to move/transfer photos from my mini iPad to an external drive and possibly making calendars etc.
- Computing skills (25-50)
- Accounts (50+)
- Language, crafts, wildlife, climate, philosophy (50+)
- Help to get work/applications, homework support (16-25)
- Counselling course, massage course, learning how to think about poetry, DIY courses – painting, tiling, child development (25-50)
- Forestry, bee-keeping, goat-herding, welding, car mechanics, dry stone walling, stone sculpture (or grave stone making) (50+)
- Word, excel, welding, lathe work, navigation (50+)
- Computer type courses for older people (50+)

Q6) What days and times would be best for you to attend learning and courses at the Whalsay Learning Centre in person?

This was a multiple-answer question where respondents could circle as many as they felt were relevant:

Weekday afternoons (1:30pm – 3:30pm): 17

Weekday after school (4:00pm – 6:00pm): 12

Weekday evenings (6:00pm – 8:30pm): 15

Unanswered: 6

Q7) Would you consider travelling to one of the main UHI Shetland campuses at Lerwick and Scalloway for a learning course?

No: 86% (32 respondents; 3 16-25s; 7 25-50s; 22 over 50s)

Yes: 10% (4 respondents; 1 25-50 and 3 over 50s)

Not sure: 4% (1 respondent over 50)

Q8) Would you consider travelling to learn at one of the other UHI Shetland learning centres (North Mainland, Brae, Northern Isles, Isleburgh)?

No: 86% (32 respondents; 3 16-25s; 7 25-50s; 22 over 50s)

Yes: 10% (4 respondents; 1 25-50 and 3 over 50s) *one comment 'don't drive'

Not sure: 4% (1 respondent over 50)

Q9) Would you consider undertaking a learning course online i.e. through Microsoft Teams or Zoom?

No: 81% (30 respondents; 2 16-25s; 7 25-50s; 21 over 50s)

Yes: 14% (5 respondents; 1 16-25; 1 25-50 and 3 over 50s)

Maybe/not answered: 5% (2 respondents over 50)

Q10) What would be your preferred method of learning?

This was a multiple-answer question where respondents could circle as many as they felt were relevant:

In person: 29

Online learning: 1

A mixture of the above: 8

Not answered: 4

Final comments

Respondents were given a free text option to make any comments they wished about the survey. Linked to the colour-coded **Focused Results**, there is a colour coded breakdown on what comments were made by which age group. All ad verbatim.

- When I did hear about the learning centre it sounded as if it was aimed at young people (50+)
- Would like to have another stab at the computer, iPad, phone (50+)
- I have used the learning centre on and off for the past 25 years & have gained various qualifications that I wouldn't have got otherwise (50+)
- This is a really important service for our community, helps to reduce loneliness & isolation and make learning accessible – reduces inequalities (25-50)
- This is a vital service in our remote rural community. It must be retained. It enable equality, people to think and reach their full potential without having to leave. (25-50) Sustaining vulnerable rural communities. You must retain an island provision. (25-50)
- Not for myself personally but I would like to see the return of the fishing based courses run at Scalloway (25-50)
- I think it is essential to keep the learning centre open as it has helped so many people gain qualifications in the past and could continue to do so (50+)
- I have been attending the Whalsay Learning Centre since it opened and have gained many qualifications. Invaluable service to Whalsay (50+)
- I am old, I can't travel, I want help to feel safe online, I want to be connected (50+)
- I would not want to drive in the dark (50+)

Summation

The Whalsay survey was well participated in by the local Whalsay population, with 155 respondents. Offering online and paper surveys allowed as wide a possible way for the locals to respond and ensured that lack of digital access and skills did not hinder any participation.

The main points that have been raised from this survey are:

- The majority of online respondents were in the 25-50 age bracket
- The majority of paper respondents were in the 50+ age bracket
- For online respondents, the majority had not engaged with the Whalsay Learning Centre (54.7%), and for those that had, the vast majority had not engaged in the last three years (79%).
- In particular 100% of the age 16-25 age group online respondents had never engaged with the Whalsay Learning Centre.
- For paper respondents, 54% had engaged with the Whalsay Learning Centre, however for those that had, the majority had not engaged in the last three years (68%).
- Covid was a highly cited reason for non-engagement for the over 50s in both online and paper respondents.
- The main reasons for non-engagement however was a lack of interest and lack of knowledge of what was on offer (65% of online respondents).
- Both online and paper respondents answered positively to considering the Whalsay Learning Centre in the future.
- Less willingness to travel to other UHI Shetland learning centres or campuses was shown by respondents online and on paper.
- A mixture of in-person and online learning was fairly well received by online respondents in particular

Conclusions and Recommendations

This market research shows that the people of Whalsay are keen to retain learning provision on the isles. Comments show that they face barriers to learning elsewhere such as poor connectivity and ferry timetables that does not allow learning outside the isle to work around school and childcare issues.

This however does not negate from the fact that the vast majority of Whalsay inhabitants are not engaging with the learning centre.

In a small place, word of mouth is vital, and the comments provide a confused picture. One written comment indicated that they felt this was a place for young people – but young people in particular are not using the facility. One comment complimented the Whalsay Learning Centre for support with their SVQ, however others said they wished they could get SVQ2 support there. Communication is clearly mixed, and people do not know what is offered, and what use the facility can be used to support local learning needs.

This picture however also shows that there are a wide range of courses and learning requirements that are not being met by the current offering at the Whalsay Learning Centre. A recommendation would be to thoroughly examine the curriculum offering and look towards a 're-launch' with clear communications about the offerings in 2023.