



**OPEN STUDIOS HEBRIDES
(OSH)**

MEMBERS' HANDBOOK

The aim of this booklet is to answer all your queries regarding **OPEN STUDIOS HEBRIDES membership.**

Whether you have participated in Open Studios before, or are new to this event, please make sure you read through this booklet.

Email: openstudioshebrides@gmail.com

Website: www.openstudioshebrides.com

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WHAT IS OPEN STUDIOS HEBRIDES?

Open Studios events take place all around the UK and abroad. They have been established to help promote artists and their art practice. These events encourage artists to open up their studios to the public as part of a collaborative event. Participating artists may offer work for sale, commission free. They may also present workshops, and/or demonstrations of their art practice. Open Studios covers a broad spectrum of visual arts, including painting, printmaking, sculpture, ceramics, textiles, glass, wood, metal, jewellery and photography.

Open Studios Hebrides started in the Summer of 2021. It is a unique opportunity for people to follow the Art Trails, explore the beautiful Isle of Lewis, and discover the range of art produced by our skilled artists and makers.

The visitors have been very enthusiastic about the Open Studios held in 2021, 2022 and 2023. We are now developing and expanding the events for 2024 to include Harris. In addition to the summer event, we organise member exhibitions around the islands during the year.

BECOMING A MEMBER

SELECTION CRITERIA:

You can apply to be a member of OSH if:

- Your work is made by you.
- You are showing/selling your artwork or crafts.
- You live and work on Lewis or Harris.

Please don't worry if you have never exhibited your work previously – we really welcome emerging artists and makers, and we will do our very best to help you have a positive experience.

VENUES:

Visitors love to be able to see where artists work, but if your home studio is not suitable for opening to the public, we are happy for you to exhibit your work in one of the shared venues. We might also be able to put you in touch with another artist who would like to share their studio.

There are 2 categories of membership:

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP – this may suit galleries that will be open on a seasonal basis. For an annual membership fee OSH offers:

- a dedicated entry on the website, with details and photos of your art business.
- inclusion in the OSH Brochure.
- participation on the OSH WhatsApp group.
- an opportunity to participate in networking and training events that will either be free or subsidised.
- a monthly newsletter with information on opportunities for artists, exhibitions and workshops.
- inclusion in an extensive marketing and press campaign.

For an additional fee, Associate Members can submit work to exhibitions organised by OSH.

FULL MEMBERSHIP - For an annual membership fee, OSH offers a package for artists, which is valid all year round. This package includes:

- A dedicated entry on the OSH Website per artist, with contact details and photos and inclusion on the online map.
- Inclusion in the Open Studios brochure, which currently has a distribution of 2000 copies.
- Participation on the OSH WhatsApp group, which has proved to be a successful networking platform and a supportive and informative opportunity.
- Participation in networking and training events that will either be free or subsidised.
- A monthly newsletter with information on opportunities for artists, exhibitions and workshops, as well as useful resources and OSH events.
- Registration for the summer OPEN STUDIOS event.
- Participation in the STORNOWAY ART WALK – member artists can be featured in shop windows around Stornoway.
- Inclusion in an extensive marketing and press campaign.

- The opportunity to sell work and meet the public.
- Opportunities to deliver workshops and/or demonstrations of your work.
- Opportunities to participate in EXHIBITIONS and additional events held during the year at no additional cost (*galleries will charge commission on sales of work*)

Please complete [the online application form on the website](#) with your contact details by the deadline stated. Please note that when applying for membership, payment and completed application form (including photos) should be submitted at the same time so that your membership can be processed in good time.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

On paying OSH membership, artists agree to our terms and conditions outlined here:

- Your membership is only valid after you have paid your relevant fee.
- OSH members who do not renew within the allocated time will have their details deleted from the database, as we will assume you no longer wish to be a member.
- Artists are responsible for providing accurate contact information including up-to-date email address, studio details and location.
- Artists are responsible for notifying the management team of any change.
- Artists are responsible for preparing and sending their studio information and images to the management team for inclusion on the OSH Website and in the brochure within the given time-frame.
- Artists accept that no refunds will be given after 14 days of paying for membership.

Please note that 'piggy-backing' will not be permitted. Only artists who are full members of OSH are permitted to have their work on show at the Open Studios Hebrides summer event. This is only fair to those artists who are paying and taking part in good faith.

REFUND POLICY

There is a 14-day limit for a refund of membership fees.

Within this 14-day deadline, if you pay for membership and decide to withdraw your membership, you will be entitled to a refund of 75% of your membership fee. The timeline will be taken from the day you paid the membership fee. In the case of a member having significant reason for withdrawing from Open Studios Hebrides outwith the 14-day limit, a refund will be considered by the management team, and may or may not be agreed at their discretion.

WHAT WE OFFER OUR MEMBERS

Our aim is to showcase your work to the island community and tourists, giving you the opportunity to meet new people, make new connections and share your arts and crafts in your own studio settings or at a shared venue.

We are a network of artists and makers who support one another, share our personal creative experience and relevant information and advice.

We will do our best to promote you as individual artists and makers, providing a detailed brochure with maps of the Art Trails around the island, keeping the OSH website current and full of useful information, producing publicity products (flyers and posters etc), organising venues and events and ensuring that you are informed of arrangements and events via email, WhatsApp and social media.

You will be provided with road signage for your studio or shared venue.

As we populate the website and brochure with your details, we will offer you the opportunity to proofread and check your entry for accuracy.

EXPECTATIONS OF MEMBER ARTISTS AND MAKERS

Members are expected to:

- Read and agree to our terms and conditions.

- Get involved in our artist community via WhatsApp or Facebook and, where possible, attend meetings in person or online so that your input can contribute to the planning and organisation of OSH.
- Meet deadlines for sending in artist bios, photos of current work etc for the website and for the publication of the brochure (these are emailed to all members and also included in the monthly newsletter).
- Access and read emails and the monthly newsletter for updates and information about the Open Studios event and other events throughout the year.
- Offer a range of artwork or handcrafted work for sale – a minimum of 12-15 pieces of work of varying sizes/prices. Many artists also have cards and calendars made of their artwork or have small inexpensive items for sale (coasters, mugs, small unframed pictures etc). This caters for the more casual visitor who may get in touch later in the year to buy a piece of your work.
- Let us know if they have disabled access and parking facilities if they are opening their own studios, so that this can be detailed in the OSH brochure. (Check deadline for information to be sent in).
- Help to promote Open Studios events by sharing on Social Media and also distributing brochures, posters and flyers in their area.
- Be responsible for setting up their own studio or area of a shared venue, ensuring that their work is well displayed/presented and that the area is checked for trip hazards and easily accessible for visitors.
- Where possible assist in putting up and taking down the road signage to their venue.
- Take part in optional events i.e. exhibitions, Stornoway Art Walk, Free Art Friday.
- The studio must be open for the hours advertised, and one or more of the participating artists should always be present.
- Promote their own studios. The more you put into this event, the more you will get out of it.
- Distribute copies of the brochure to their local shops and public venues etc.
- Accept that only full OSH members can participate in the Open Studios event.

- Proofread their brochure insertions and notify OSH within required deadlines of any errors or necessary amendments.
- Artists accept they are required to distribute marketing material to local shops and venues in their area.
- Open their studio on the dates of the Open Studios event.
- Display clear studio signage to the public. OSH road signs will be supplied, but additional signage may be needed if your studio is off the beaten track.
- Make their studio area safe and respectable ready for the public.
- Consider showcasing to the public an element of their working practice. This can be through a working studio or, if an artist is exhibiting in a shared venue, then work in progress and demonstrations should also be presented.
- Promote their own studio through their own contacts and networks, and not to rely entirely on Open Studios marketing.
- Get actively involved as soon they have registered to take part in Open Studios Hebrides.

PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE

PLI will provide insurance cover for you and your small business against damage to members of the public, your artwork, products or property and the cost of any legal claims that might be made against you. This is a necessary protection if you are taking your work to craft fairs, exhibiting work in galleries, or taking part in an Open Studios event.

It covers your work while in transit to and from an event, for theft, damage, fire etc. Many craft fairs and venues will ask you to show evidence of your insurance cover.

As an OSH member you need to have PLI whether you are in your own studio or in a shared venue. Community spaces are unlikely to be covered if your artwork is damaged or stolen, or if injury to a member of the public is deemed to be your fault.

There are many companies providing PLI insurance for artists and crafters and the prices vary. It is worth looking at [Artists Information Company](#). Or you could try the insurance company that you use for

household contents, as they may be able to provide PLI at a reasonable rate.

YOUR OPEN STUDIOS

This is **your** OPEN STUDIOS – make it work for you. When planning how you will exhibit your work, please bear in mind that visitors will:

- Wish to see a variety of work, so display work-in-progress as well as the finished article.
- Enjoy chatting with the artist about their work. Although some may wish to purchase artwork, many will simply be coming to view and/or to meet the artist. They may make a purchase on another occasion or when they have had time to think.
- Expect to see work presented to a high standard. This improves the credibility of your work and may encourage sales. It is advisable wherever possible to have some inexpensive articles for sale, such as greetings cards of your work.
- Need to see clearly priced work. (Please note that if you are showing work at another studio or in a local gallery or online your prices should be consistent.)

Do talk to other artists to share tips and experiences of how to make Open Studios an enjoyable experience for both yourself, and your visitors. Nothing can compare to speaking directly with those who have already taken part in this or another Open Studios event.

SUGGESTIONS

Send out your own invitations – use the flyers or postcards you will receive to mail out to your friends, family and neighbours, or email invites using the PDF file of the postcard available to download from the members' page.

Host a private view - this could take place on your first day, or the Thursday evening? Friends, neighbours and family will all love to support you, so make them feel welcome and invite them to a special

event. But keep it simple, e.g. sandwiches, cakes and juice (low cost but effective!!)

Don't just assume people will turn up - create your own press release, keep it interesting, focus on a particular story, contact your local community newsletter.

Have a good variety of work - e.g. samples, work-in-progress, unframed work, and framed pieces, greeting cards, postcards, limited edition prints. All can generate income and interest. Presenting your work well can make all the difference to people's perception of the quality of your work.

Keep a Visitors' Book – this can provide you with a mailing list of interested clients. Why not have a bowl of mints or sweets beside your Visitors' Book: this makes people feel welcome and encourages them to sign!

Make your studio welcoming and interesting. Have old portfolios, sketchbooks, a folder of images of past work, anything that visitors may find interesting and will keep them browsing, and therefore lead to conversations and hopefully sales!

Sales –It is very useful to invest in a simple phone-linked card machine e.g. [SumUp](#) or [Zettle](#). If a visitor wishes to purchase but has only a card with them and you do not have a credit card machine, then ask for a cash deposit, even as small as £10. This can ensure the visitor returns to pay the balance and collect the artwork. If someone pays by cheque, take his or her address, card details and a telephone contact number.

We will be providing a local area map of each Art Trail for you to display. Find out which studios are open near you, and encourage visitors to continue their journey on to other studios.

The most important thing to understand, when taking part in Open Studios Hebrides, is that each and every artist/maker is an ambassador for the event. We rely on all of our artists to be open when advertised in the brochure, to be friendly and welcoming, to have their artwork well presented, clearly labelled and for their studio to be inviting to the public.

We all need to work as a team.

EVALUATION

We ask all our Open Studios artists to complete a short evaluation form each year. This evaluation takes place after the summer OSH event.

We use the information collected to assess the effectiveness of the project and membership scheme, look for ways of improving the scheme and look at market trends to assess how the market affects the project and scheme.

The results of the evaluation are shared with the membership and used to help us develop OSH and make any necessary changes for future years.

It is also a requirement of our funding provider that we use this information as part of the end-of-project feedback report.