

Stornoway Science Fair celebrates British Science Week

More than 1000 people attended a STEM fair in Stornoway as part of British Science Week.

The event included a range of activities for families with local community and industry partners including light experiments, chocolate welding, creating shampoo from seaweed, and building Lego robots.

Held at Stornoway Town Hall, it was organised by the local RAiSE Primary Science Development Officer and supported by teachers who volunteered their time to celebrate the week's theme of connections, showing families how STEM is connected to many aspects of life.

Children's feedback included:

"I loved looking at things up close in the microscopes."

"I guessed what was in the bag by using my sense of touch."

"My favourite thing was the chocolate welding because you got to eat it after and I had used four milky bars!"

"This is so much fun!"

The families of children attending shared:

"This is absolutely fantastic! Great to see so many people here and the amount of work that's gone in to organising this is phenomenal!"

"What a great way to spend a Saturday!"

"So much effort put into the planning of the day but definitely paid off because people were loving it! Everyone was smiling, there was such a buzz in the room."

"I think I'm going straight home to make our own feely bag or box. We could have hours of fun with that!"

"I was running a stall and my 7-year-old daughter came with me. She was off round the other stalls for almost 3 hours. She loved every second. So much fun getting hands-on activities to do!"

"It makes such a difference doing things like this when it's busy. I don't know where the time went!"

The fair was organised by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's Primary Science Development Officer who has responsibility for organising professional learning, events, and networks which support improved STEM engagement for primary pupils through the RAiSE (Raising Aspirations in Science Education) investment.

Maria said:

"I am incredibly pleased with how engaged the families were with the experiences on offer. There are many myths and misconceptions surrounding science and STEM which can make people nervous. We were really keen to highlight the excitement and accessibility of it, while working off children's natural curiosity."

"We wanted to build science capital and increase awareness of STEM in a fun and accessible way, highlighting how it is woven into so much of our life locally. It feels like we achieved those goals."

"Feedback showed attendees rated the event as excellent and that they felt much more interested in science."

"I'd like to thank everyone who contributed to the success of the Science Fair, the teachers who led activities and supported the running of the event and all the organisations."

The event costs were supported by a grant from British Science Week.

Connections have been built between partners and schools with a number of opportunities now in development and there is hope the event will be repeated next year.

Dr Chris Leigh of Liverpool John Moores University was one of the contributors. He said:

“I enjoyed chatting to so many enthusiastic young minds and there was a really good mix of activities in the hall.”

The activities on the day included:

- Local skincare company Ishga shared science behind the effect of seaweed on the skin and gave young people the opportunity to make shampoo and conditioner.
- UHI Outer Hebrides did badge making and bridge construction activities.
- Podiatry, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and speech and language therapy from Western Isles Hospital hosted games about speech, as well as a Velcro skeleton puzzle, balloon lungs, and balancing games.
- BASF gave children the chance to make colour spinners and separate colours using chromatography.
- RAF Lossiemouth had paper aeroplane making, as well as Lego Spike robots.
- Dr. Chris Leigh from Liverpool John Moores University, who runs Astronomy for Remote



RAiSE is a programme of **The Wood Foundation**, **Scottish Government**, **Education Scotland**, and participating local authorities which empowers primary practitioners with the skills, confidence, and networks to develop and deliver motivating and exciting STEM experiences.