



## Dad AJ sets the pace to help hospital charity

**SEE INSIDE: A useful, quick guide to self-build homes**

### Connel walkway



Changes in the pipeline for historic bridge

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### Come adrift



As storms batter Oban, a visitor is blown off course

• See page 3 for more



### 'Bra'vo for Seil's supportive Bluetits

Sea swimmers on Seil are making an uplifting gesture by recycling their unwanted bras to a breast cancer charity.

When Bluetits of Dunearn member Beki Cansdale wanted to help charity Against Breast Cancer, she knew she could rely on her fellow open water swimmers for support. The charity runs its own bra recycling scheme to help raise vital funds for pioneering breast cancer research. Saved from landfill, the bras get a new lease of life by being sent to countries in Africa such as Ghana and Kenya where bras are expensive to make.

Last year the Bluetits also raised more than £2,000 for Breast Cancer Now, by swimming 10 miles in laps of the quarry pool near Seil Island Hall.

Interested in donating your own unwanted bras for the cause? Go to [www.againstbreastcancer.org.uk](http://www.againstbreastcancer.org.uk).

## HELP OBAN SHINE THIS YEAR

by Kathie Griffiths  
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Critics of Oban's 2021 Christmas lights are being invited to put their money – and support – where their mouth is.

Improving the lights and putting on a brighter, more colourful and merrier festive display for 2022 will cost £20,000.

To make it happen and make sure it receives public approval, the town needs a group of volunteers with exciting ideas and fundraising experience, Oban Community Council heard at its Zoom meeting this

week. The rallying call from BID4Oban's chief executive Andrew Spence is also going out to the 'vocal critics' who expressed a dim view of the 2021 lights on social media and around town.

'We want to improve the lights for 2022, however this will need substantial funding of £20,000. They are not cheap! The town needs a group of like-minded individuals with ideas and fundraising experience to make this happen – and that includes vocal critics of the 2021 lights.'

'BID4Oban can help and facilitate as this is essential for the town, but we need to have a group in place by the end of March so equipment can be purchased

by June 2022,' Mr Spence said, warning: 'Unless we have a plan and put those orders through in June, we are potentially going to be in the same place this Christmas.'

Thousands of pounds had to be raised at short notice last year to light up the town and replace existing lights that were past their best and decommissioned, but a late order for more snowflakes and festive swirls failed to arrive in time for the switch-on.

Donations from Oban Common Good Fund, Oban Community Council, West Highland Housing Association and BID4Oban bought the batch of latest

Continued on page 4.

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## POLICE FILES

At 12.30am on Monday January 24 at The Corryvreckan, Railway Pier, Oban, a 21-year-old man allegedly seriously assaulted another man. He was charged with serious assault and was due to appear in court.

Between 9.15pm and 10.15pm on Wednesday January 26 at Oban Police Station, Albany Street, a man, 47, allegedly acted in a racist and homophobic manner towards police officers. He was charged with the offences and kept in custody to appear at court.

At 11.40am on Thursday January 27 at Oban Police Station, a man, 47, allegedly spat at a police officer. He was charged with assault and kept in custody to appear at Oban Sheriff Court.

Between 11pm on Thursday January 27 and noon on Friday January 28, at Shore Street, Oban, it is alleged that a motor vehicle was stolen. Inquiries continue and police are appealing for anyone with information to contact 101 or anonymously through Crime Stoppers on 0800 555 111.

# Luke attempts round world trip via Capes

by Kathie Griffiths  
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk

Mull fisherman Luke Crossley is part of a Scots-strong crew attempting a world-first on the high seas.

Luke is one of two chief engineers taking it in shifts to circumnavigate the southern oceans in an former Swedish search-and-rescue vessel.

At just under 23 metres, MV Astra would be the first vessel of her size and style to complete the trip.

The circumnavigation involves crossing the equator twice and travelling through 360 degrees of longitude at a minimum distance of 26,600 nautical miles, taking her around all of the Capes in the Southern Ocean, passing south of Cape of Good Hope in South Africa, Cape Leeuwin in Western Australia, Tasmania's



South East Cape, South Cape in New Zealand and Cape Horn, Chile.

Luke was selected by Iain Macneil who was brought up on Barra and is leading the expedition - as well as other Scottish members of the team

they are joined by a Cuban and South African.

Right now the boat will be approximately 800 miles into its next 4,000-mile stage from Valparaiso, a port city on Chile's coast, to Tahiti that should take about 15 days to cross and will see the crew enter a big black communication spot.

Luke, who has already crewed from Lanzarote to Uruguay's capital city Montevideo, is due to join them in Tahiti. From Tahiti they will head to New

**Mull's Luke Crossley is one of two chief engineers taking it in shifts to circumnavigate the southern oceans in a Swedish ex-search and rescue vessel.**

Zealand and his reminder of the voyage will end in Mauritius.

'I'll probably fly out to Lanzarote for the party when they finish the full loop!' said Luke, who hails from Orkney but has lived on Mull for about eight years where he runs a wrasse fishing business with his brother Jake from May to November.

In the winter months, he takes on chief engineer jobs and the opportunity to join the MV Astra was one job offer he could not refuse.

The world-first attempt was the brainchild of Astra's captain Iain who is CEO of Livingston-based maritime publishers Witherbys.

The team began their expedition aboard Astra at the beginning of December and aim to travel around all of the

capes in the southern oceans by May 2022.

Last week the crew reached and successfully navigated their way around Cape Horn.

The expedition comes after 10 years of ambition and two years of preparation for Iain who has also had a career in the Merchant Navy.

Captain's wife Kat Heathcote, back at their Aviemore home, is keeping constant checks on their progress, writing up reports and updates on social media.

Iain has already missed Christmas, their 10th wedding anniversary and her 60th birthday while away, but Kat has reassurance the ice-class Astra will keep him and the others safe at sea.

She said: 'She's not a pretty little thing, she's really robust. As a search-and-rescue vessel she has earned her spurs in heavy seas. Her build means she can't go over without coming back as long as all the doors are shut so they are all pretty safe. It does mean she's not that comfortable though!'

To follow Astra's progress go to [www.mv-Astra.com](http://www.mv-Astra.com).

## Storms wreak havoc in region

Weekend storms battered the Oban area bringing down trees, sending roof slates flying and saw waves batter the esplanade, writes Kathie Griffiths.

Storm Malik on Saturday also saw the town's RNLI crew launch into a gale force wind in rough seas after a workboat started taking on water in Loch Creran.

Volunteers' pagers sounded just after 10am when they were needed to help Scottish Fire Service try and salvage the vessel which was tied alongside a pier at the time.

Conditions were too severe for the lifeboat to transfer any crew or their salvage pump onboard so they stood by and provided safety cover.

Efforts to pump out water by the fire service from the shore managed to stop more water getting in. Oban's Coastguard Team were also helping.

Argyll Square had to be cordoned off for safety reasons during that afternoon because of risks of falling slates and masonry.

A number of trees were also



**The RNLI were called out to a stricken workboat in Loch Creran and a large tree crashed over a path at the Witches**

(Photograph: Jule Volland).



brought down in the gales out towards Dunbeg, in Bonawe and Appin adding to driving hazards. A tree crashed down across a path at the back of Corran Halls in the Witches, blocking access but no one was hurt - Jule Volland took a photograph.

SESN's teams managed to restore power to around 68,000

customers across the north of Scotland after Storm Malik - Sunday's Storm Corrie brought extreme wind gusts of over 90mph across some of the region.

On Monday morning, 40,000 homes were still without power in the aftermath of both storms, including customers in the Western Isles.

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# Flippers crossed for tropical turtle washed up on Iona

by Kathie Griffiths  
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk

A tropical loggerhead turtle washed up on Iona far from its Florida home is showing signs of improvement despite its cold-water shock.

The turtle, which was discovered during a beach clean, is being warmed up and monitored by a specialist care team at Sea Life Loch Lomond who say the creature is showing signs of improvement.

Marine medics believe it was blown off course into the Gulf Stream and brought to Scotland's West Coast - thousands of miles away from its normal habitat.

Jane Kindlen, who is a lay chaplain at the island's Catholic House of Prayer, made the discovery.

'It was totally bizarre. Usually it's dead seagulls or



Jane Kindlen with the turtle she rescued from a beach on Iona.

them in the dunes before I retraced my steps back to the first beach I'd cleaned. It was quite high up in big strands of seaweed when I caught a glimpse of something out of the corner of my eye. A nano of a second later, I realised it looked like a turtle - and that's exactly what it was! I knelt down by it and gave it a little stroke by its cheek. It's eye started blinking at me and its leg began to move.

'Luckily I had some phone reception and rang a friend to see if she could find a number to help. Eventually we were put in touch with British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR) who were brilliant,' said Jane. To give the turtle any chance

of survival, Jane followed instructions from the BDMLR to put the turtle into a box, get her car and take it over to Mull where it was picked up and taken to the aquarium at Tobermory to spend the night.

The next day its long journey continued and it left the island on the first ferry over to Oban where it was transferred to Sea Life Loch Lomond.

'They told me it must've been blown in on the Gulf Stream from Florida. That's quite a journey! That'll be my claim to fame now, rescuing a turtle washed up on Iona!' said Jane.

Sea Life Loch Lomond's general manager Kathryn Angel told The Oban Times: 'Our specialist animal care team continue working hard to monitor and treat the turtle, to get its temperature up. It is a slow process and there is still a long way to go but we are start-

ing to see some improvement.'

Tropical turtles do wash up in the UK from time to time and are usually smaller, weaker animals that have possibly been pushed off course into the Gulf Stream and end up out of their normal habitat, say BDMLR experts.

Because they are cold-blooded creatures, they can get severely hypothermic, malnourished and dehydrated as their body shuts down due to the cold water.

Some turtles who do survive being washed up on our shores can eventually be returned to the wild in hotter climates - flippers crossed!

'Massive thank you to all parties involved, everyone really came together to help this turtle and give it the best chance of survival, we couldn't be more grateful!' said a BDMLR Facebook post.

## Work to upgrade water pipes to be completed this month

Scottish Water's £4.6 million investment to upgrade Oban's water network should be finished by the end of this month, writes Kathie Griffiths.

Nearly one and a half miles of new pipes will have been laid, with tunnelling work carried out beneath a railway line during the complex project that began in 2020.

News that the work to provide people with clear, fresh drinking water is on track to finish soon will be especially welcomed by people living in Soroba.

It was brought up at this week's Oban Community Council that the work could have been finished quicker if a full working week was put in.

Soroba resident George Berry told the meeting it seemed work only took place three days a week. Parking has also been a serious problem with spaces being taken up by works-related traffic.

Community council convenor Marri Malloy said after the meeting: 'Soroba is choc-a-bloc with residents cars as it is. The workers have had to park their vehicles somewhere but it means residents have been double-parking and that's



Roadworks in Soroba for pipework improvements by Scottish Water as part of the new water mains project.

caused issues and worries about emergency vehicles getting through if they needed.'

In November 2020, The Oban Times reported how people on the estate felt like 'snubbed second-rate citizens' after notice to dig up their roads was given just days before work was due to start replacing pipework between Colonsay Terrace and

the junction of McCaig Road and the A816.

The essential work scheduled to take six months - just for that initial phase of the upgrade project - had to be put off after residents complained they were not consulted first.

The next phases saw an operation to tunnel underneath the railway line from the edge of Oban High School all-weather pitches to the car park at Shuna Terrace which involved round-the-clock drilling - people nearby were carefully communicated with and there was no impact on the railway line, said Scottish Water's corporate affairs regional manager Georgina Reid.

The final phase involves the installation of an extra 500 metres of new pipes, right up to the Tullich water treatment works.

The new re-routed water main will help reduce the risk of flooding in the Soroba area, which has experienced significant bursts, causing flooding to customer properties for a number of years.

The project was being delivered on behalf of Scottish Water by Caledonia Water Alliance.

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OT

# Help make Oban's 2022 festive lights show a real dazzler

Continued from page 1.

lights but this year needs a crowdfunding appeal and it needs to start without delay, community councillors were told.

The final funding for Christmas lights from Argyll and Bute Council was used up in 2020, leaving it up to the town to raise any money needed.

A lot of Christmas lights are made outside of the country. An alternative could be that a lot of the existing equipment, which is over 10 years old could be refurbished, 'but if we want the town looking bright, colourful and festive we have to put our hand in our pocket,' said Mr Spence at the meeting.

'We need a way forward, we need people to get together and support us very, very quickly. Time is of the essence. I will also be contacting some of the critics who were on Facebook so we can deliver something that's fit for purpose,' he added.



Some of the new lights ordered for this year were not here in time for the 2021 switch-on.

If all goes to plan and the £20,000 is raised, the lights would go up in late October ready for the November switch-on.

Can you help? Contact Andrew Spence at the BID4Oban office in Stevenson Street. You can also email him at [andrew.spence@bid4oban.co.uk](mailto:andrew.spence@bid4oban.co.uk) or call him on 01631 569915.

Lack of street lighting in the town centre casting Argyll Square and Station Square into darkness, as well as the plug being pulled on coloured

lights round the harbour was also up for discussion at Monday's community council meeting, with members of the public urged to raise street lighting complaints with the council to try and hurry along fixes.

According to community council convener Marri Malloy, Argyll and Bute's head of economic development, Fergus Murray, said it would be spring before the much-loved harbour lights, which are currently turned off, could be switched on again.



The Greenway family supporting Glasgow Children's Hospital Charity; and below, AJ out on one of his daily 5km runs.

If you would like to make a donation, visit AJ's JustGiving page at [justgiving.com/fundraising/aj-greenway](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/aj-greenway)

# Dad AJ sets the pace for helping hospital charity

by Kathie Griffiths  
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Mull dad and social media influencer AJ Greenway has been running 5km every day in January to thank a hospital for helping his son beat a tumour at the back of his eye.

AJ, whose unique brand of Scottish humour and football comedy has won him more than 160,000 TikTok followers, is raising funds and awareness for the Glasgow Children's Hospital Charity.

He has already raised an amazing £1,670 - an impressive feat for the husband and father of two as he was not a runner and did no training before taking on the mission.

In November AJ's three-year-old son was diagnosed with a tumour behind his eye ball and has been through several serious operations so far.

AJ said: 'The operations have been painful and frightening for him but he has been so brave, and the hospital staff could not have been more amazing.



'I have experienced firsthand some of the great things this charity has done, such as providing beds for parents to sleep on in the hospital so they could be with their children through the nights.

'I would like to thank my family, friends, local community, as well as the wider online community for being so supportive.'

AJ, who can be seen on BBC Social and YouTube as well as

TikTok, has had 3.1 million likes since he joined the platform over two years ago.

AJ added: 'It feels great I can now use my large social media following for good.'

His wife Hannah says she could not be more proud of her husband and son during these last few months.

'This fundraising mission he has set himself helps to distract from the worry and makes him feel he is doing something to help at a time when we are so powerless.

'He also gained a knee injury but has refused to give up; the runs take him about 25 minutes every day - usually while I'm in the car with our two sleeping children after lunch.'

Their son is now recovering well from the most recent hospital stay, and the family are keeping their fingers crossed for good news soon.

To see AJ's Strava routes and to make a donation go here: [justgiving.com/fundraising/aj-greenway](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/aj-greenway).

AJ's running video diary: [tiktok.com/@aj\\_greenway](https://www.tiktok.com/@aj_greenway).

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# Benderloch primary school receives A plus for progress

by Fiona Scott  
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Lochnell Primary School in Benderloch has received a glowing report following a follow-up visit by Education Scotland inspectors in November.

No further visits will be made as a result of the positive report.

Many positive aspects of the school's progress were highlighted while the report also recognised the school's support for pupils and their families during Covid lockdowns when the school was closed.

The inspector said: 'The whole school community has worked very well together to help the school continue to improve.'

'Led very effectively by the head teacher (Louise



Chisholm), the school has made clear progress in meeting each of the recommendations that were identified at the previous inspection.'

The report praised the head for establishing effective systems for quality assuring the work of the school and ELC class, as well as creating an ethos of trust and openness,

where staff can reflect and discuss together what is working well and what needs to be further developed.

'As a result, staff feel empowered to lead improvements and to share good practice together,' continued the inspector.

'The head teacher ensures that the voices of children, parents and staff are heard.

Lochnell Primary received a glowing report after the latest visit from school inspectors, praising the whole school community for their hard work.

She values the views and opinions of all on what will help the school to continue to improve and grow.'

Since the original inspection, staff have been working to improve how they use assessment information to inform next steps in children's learning.

Regular meetings are held to check on the progress that children are making, while staff have participated in professional learning to refresh their approaches to learning and teaching.

At the primary stages teachers now plan lessons that are more challenging and have

introduced better ways to give children feedback. They plan learning and share standards together to ensure that their professional judgements are secure and based on robust data.

'Taken together, these improved measures are leading increasingly to better attainment in literacy and numeracy,' said the inspector.

During the pandemic Lochnell staff worked tirelessly to provide support for families, including carrying out 'doorstep' home visits, delivering school lunches, ensuring all families have access to a digital device, and providing ongoing reassurance and encouragement during uncertain times.

The inspector added: 'This has ensured that the school community has felt connected and included throughout periods of learning at home.'

'The head teacher's foresight meant that the school was ready to move to learning online from the beginning of the first period of remote learning in early 2020. Teachers' and ELC practitioners' confidence grew in using digital technology over the course of the pandemic.'

'Children benefited from being able to join in activities, lessons and whole school assemblies online. As children continued to learn from home, the head teacher's aim was to put some fun back in to school life.'

Teachers and practitioners planned many creative and memorable learning experiences for children during lockdown. In one innovative example, teachers and children in P4 to P7 took part in a 'virtual school trip' to London from their own homes.

## Eleanor retires from Rockfield

Rockfield Centre stalwart Eleanor MacKinnon is about to retire, writes Kathie Griffiths.

What started out in 2014 as six months' community engagement work for operations manager Eleanor ended up as seven years of hard work and commitment to get the former primary school's red doors open once again as a community hub.

Now the renovated building is emerging after Covid, ready for the start of a new era of activities, events and projects, it is the right time to hand over the operational reins to someone new, she told The Oban Times.

'There are exciting times ahead. I hope the community continues to support it the way they have been.'

'None of us involved from the start have had the opportunity to stop and really take in all that has been achieved so far. It's always been so full-on. There was always something else coming



The Rockfield Centre's operations manager Eleanor MacKinnon is retiring.

up and a new target to reach.

'Now I'm retiring I'm really looking forward to having that time to savour what has been achieved and to watch it evolve even more.'

'The centre has so much potential. I feel I'm leaving The Rockfield Centre in very safe hands.'

Eleanor will be keeping in touch and remain involved.

'I want to be able to spend more time with my family. A job like operations manager is and has needed to be all-consuming. I'm not running away and I'm not disappearing off the face of the earth. I'll still be working with the heritage group, helping with more fundraising and writing reports.'

'I'd always said I wanted to take the centre to the end of the capital works but never be the person running the building.

Well, we got to the end of the capital works, Covid hit and I took them through that and we kept things going as much as we could. Now the building is beginning to open up again, it is the right time for change and for me to hand over to someone else.'

Carol Devine will take on the role of operations manager, having provided human resources support to Oban Communities Trust Board and Rockfield staff over a number of years.

Oban Communities Trust chairperson Gordon McNab said it was another chapter of the project.

'As we all try to get back to a new normal, we again look forward to welcoming you all through those famous red doors as our next chapter unfolds,' he said.

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## Around Oban

KAY MCDONALD

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Valentine's Day is approaching at a rate of knots and for those of a romantic persuasion, now is the time to get planning and not leave it until the last minute as everyone usually does.

We're lucky in Oban to have a range of fantastic restaurants and bars which will be catering for Valentine's Day with special menus and glasses of prosecco - follow Love Oban Local on Facebook and we'll keep you up to date with what's happening.

If a gift or flowers is what you would rather give (or receive) then now is the time to start looking round the shops or dropping hints about what you would like to receive, again we have no shortage of lovely jewellery or gift shops to choose from as well as three great florists who can help you to 'say it with flowers'.

If none of these ideas appeal then there's always the gift of a massage or visit to a beautician or hairdresser, or perhaps an afternoon tea

## WHO IS THIS?



by Kathie Griffiths

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somewhere cosy is more up your street.

The ideas are endless, which can be part of the problem, if you're stuck then LoveOban Vouchers are the perfect gift, your loved one can please themselves with any of the ideas above or something you've not even thought of, which lets you off the hook for not having thought of it in the first place.

Not being in a relationship is not a reason to ignore Valentine's Day either, loving yourself is the most important thing of all, so treat yourself to something you love, you're worth it.

Last week's photograph was of the fabulous David Evans.

# Safer walkway planned on side of Connel Bridge

The historic Connel Bridge over the Falls of Lora could get a new, safer walkway outside its steel frame, away from the single lane of trunk road traffic, if plans submitted to Argyll and Bute Council are approved.

Connel Bridge, a category B listed structure, is a cantilever steel bridge taking the A828 road across the narrowest part of Loch Etive, between Connel and North Connel.

It was built by Arrol's Bridge and Roof Company - the Glasgow engineers also built the world's longest-lived giant ferris wheel in Vienna - to carry the Ballachulish branch line of the Callander and Oban Railway, which opened in 1903.

Now though, BEAR Scotland



**The proposed new walkway would be fixed onto the existing bridge, outside the steel frame.**

posed walkway, fixed onto the existing steel bridge section, 'will improve pedestrian safety and cyclists will also be able to dismount and traverse the bridge.

'The proposed walkway will be separate from the carriage-way, and will have 1.4-metre-high handrails either side. 'The handrail will be a similar configuration to the existing bridge's handrail - a mesh infill design. The colour will match the existing bridge colour.

'The walkway will be made of steel and possibly aluminium construction, with a layer of non-slip GRP [Glass Reinforced Plastic] flooring.

'A walking width of 1.5 metres (minimum) will be provided with passing places further implemented to allow passing of wheelchair users and pushchairs.'

The walkway, on the eastern side, will also 'provide a diversion route for the public while the existing bridge footway is closed for bridge maintenance'.

wants to update the bridge, saying: 'The traffic flow on the bridge is approximately 4,000 vehicles per day with four per cent HGVs. As the bridge has only one lane, vehicle movements are controlled by traffic lights. The existing walkway is 1.2 metres wide and is frequently used by pedestrians and mounted/dismounted cyclists. The bridge carriageway serves as part of the NCN78 [Caledonia Way National Cycle Route].

'Cyclists often feel rushed to reach the end of the bridge before the traffic lights change. Some cyclists also choose to

use the current bridge walkway, creating hazards for other non-motorised users as they pass.

'The current walkway width is 1.2 metres next to a live traffic lane. Strong easterly winds may cause pedestrians to lose balance, posing a significant hazard. HGVs pass in close proximity, with only a 120mm kerb providing protection.'

BEAR Scotland is responsible for managing and maintaining more than 2,500km of trunk road and 2,750 structures and bridges, 'making sure the carriageways are safe and sound'.

The company said the pro-

## Oban garden centre and craft beer bar given the go-ahead

Plans for a garden centre and craft beer bar in Oban town centre have been given the go-ahead by council chiefs.

The Garden Tap is set to install the facilities at the vacant site at 29 Lochside Street, with the bar having a roof terrace.

One objection had been received from the public, citing the opinion that the proposed development was 'unbefitting of a community, especially one with aspirations for city status'.

But an Argyll and Bute Council planning officer responded that the planned buildings were acceptable and would improve the town centre.

The officer said in a handling report: 'The garden centre aspect of the proposal is situated within the northernmost part of the site comprising an open area of ground with the application giving an indication of a possible layout for external

storage etc. The finer details of the garden centre layout, including storage etc, will be sought by planning condition to ensure that it is visually acceptable.

'The proposed shop to serve the garden centre is situated to the south of the garden centre area comprising a modest, single-storey, flat-roofed, modular container type structure, sited gable end to the public road with access from both the north and south elevations.

'The craft beer bar is situated parallel to the public road which also comprises a single-storey flat-roofed, modular container type structure.

'The craft beer bar incorporates a set of external stairs to its southern elevation which lead to an external rooftop terrace which spans over both the craft bar beer and shop. The external terrace is to be enclosed by a stainless steel

and glass balustrade. Given the commercial nature of the site within which the development is proposed it is considered that the modular buildings, with appropriate external treatment, are acceptable and will relate to their commercial surroundings whilst at the same time improving the appearance of this part of the main town centre.'

The officer added: 'Notwithstanding the view of the planning service that the proposed development is acceptable, it is proposed to impose a condition limiting the permission to a temporary period of five years given the generally temporary nature of the structures proposed.

'[This] will allow the planning service to retain control of the site and any adverse visual impact that could arise should the development not be properly maintained.'



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# Sheriff orders attacker to pay victim £2,000

A woman who suffered a horrific assault after a night out in Oban has been awarded £2,000 compensation.

The victim's partner at the time, Glen Fullarton, appeared before Oban Sheriff Patrick Hughes on Wednesday January 26 pleading guilty to carrying out an extensive and sustained assault that lasted along The Esplanade, George Street, Station Square, South Pier, Shore Street and back at their hotel - all witnessed by a passer-by who was worried enough to follow them to their room, alerting police and hotel staff.

The 26-year-old, of 31 Binnie Street, Gourrock, had been drinking alcohol since lunchtime on Friday December 3 last year and the couple were on their way back to the hotel when the assault, also caught on CCTV, started.



Oban Sheriff Court

Fullarton pushed her several times, seized her head and struck it on a lamppost. He kicked her, grabbed her and pinned her against a window by her collar.

At one point he was seen to walk away but then turned round and ran at her at speed

pushing her over. Back at the hotel Fullarton knocked her to the floor and choked her by squeezing his hand around her neck, the court heard.

The concerned passer-by followed them up to their room raising the alarm. Police attended and Fullarton was

arrested, but later denied the assault.

The victim did not need medical treatment but had reddening, markings and bruising, the court was told.

Defence solicitor Kevin McGinness said Fullarton, who had no recollection of what happened, had described the relationship before the incident as being 'idyllic'.

'He has expressed his absolute horror about his behaviour and is deeply shocked by it,' said Mr McGinness, adding his client, who is an award-winning apprentice with a promising career ahead of him, had never been in court before or come to the attention of police.

'This behaviour was off the radar - somewhat spectacularly,' said Mr McGinness.

Since the assault Fullarton has not had any alcohol, has

been to see his GP to get help and is eager to be able to apologise to the victim and members of her family.

As an alternative to jail, Sheriff Hughes ordered Fullarton to pay his victim £2,000 compensation, to carry out 200 hours of unpaid community work, to attend 10 sessions of a domestic abuse programme and to undergo social work department supervision for 18 months.

The sheriff also issued a six-month non-harassment order.

He told Fullarton: 'Even hearing this incident described in words in a courtroom has been a horrific experience.'

'What it must have been like for the victim to experience in real time doesn't bear thinking about, it's even more horrific that the person who assaulted her was a person she envisaged as a life partner.'

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OT

# Evidence of change at NHS Highland 'is still needed'

by Kathie Griffiths  
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk

More than 200 financial payouts have been made so far as part of NHS Highland's healing process.

But progress towards a positive workplace culture has been limited with the need for a clearer vision, authentic feedback and real evidence of positive change on the ground – The Oban Times has been told by an anonymous employee.

According to the source there have been 'lots of platitudes but little substance'.

'The Healing Process is making very slow progress, despite reassurances to the NHS Highland (NHS) board. It's been two-and-a-half years since the first Sturrock action plan was produced and very little has altered on the

ground. Sound bites in board papers don't make for tangible change.

'The Culture Programme aims to deal with some people process issues, but does nothing to address the values and behaviours demonstrated by senior HR staff over the years; several were named within participants' personal statements as having supported the prevailing toxic culture and actually contributed harm to staff. These senior staff need to be the subject of an investigation,' they said.

In an update at the start of this year from NHS's director of people and culture, Fiona Hogg, she says 103 apologies written personally by its chief executive have also been made to those harmed by experiences of bullying and inappropriate behaviour while working at NHS Highland.

At the time of her update, there were 283 active participants going through the healing process.

'We've supported healing through our partner Validium, including delivery of 233 assessments, 47 support calls,

**All would benefit from a clearer vision, authentic feedback and real evidence of positive change...**

and with tailored psychological therapies authorised for 172 current and former colleagues,' she said adding: 'We also provided 103 apologies which are personally written by our chief executive and 203 financial payments have been made up so far, with 237 peo-

ple having an outcome from the process, with a further 46 still in progress.'

Three organisational learning reports have been provided by an independent review panel, which have been reported to the board and progress is being tracked on the actions.

NHS's 24/7 Independent Speak Up Guardian service supported 195 colleagues from December 2020 to November 2021 and is also supporting the administration and reporting of the Whistleblowing Standards, launched in April.

The 24/7 Employee Assistance Programme, run by Validium, engaged with 169 staff between January and October 2021, for counselling, advice and support.

'These confidential and easy-to-access services have been well received and complement our other routes to raise con-

cerns and be supported,' said Ms Hogg.

As part of a listening and learning survey, more than 4,200 colleagues responded with 16,000 individual comments to be analysed.

'We're now working on what our colleagues told us. Listening needs to be always on, so we are following that up with executive visits to key locations – in December we managed a number of face-to-face sessions, including Fort William, Wick and Thurso,' Ms Hogg said.

Priorities for this year are the wellbeing plan and rolling out Civility Saves Lives, along with work on diversity and inclusion and performance management.

'So it will be another busy year ahead, building on the progress made in 2021,' she added.

Speaking to The Oban Times, the source said: 'In summary, progress towards a positive workplace culture has been limited over the past 2.5 years. Everyone would benefit from a clearer vision, authentic feedback and real evidence of positive change on the ground.'

A culture programme report to the NHS board on Monday January 24 flagged up that some of its work was on an amber alert – including developing the culture dashboard that would help identify any areas or departments that may need support.

Amber indicates that a project or milestone is at risk of failing to deliver the projected benefits or is behind delivery schedule. However, there were a number of green flags, including posters for next month's Civility Saves Lives campaign being completed.

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## Proposals hope to get lights switched on again on Ulva

Social housing provider ACHA has plans to build five affordable homes to rent on Ulva, writes Kathie Griffiths.

The proposal is due to go before ACHA's board today, February 3, and soon after to the North West Mull Community Woodland Company's board.

Last month representatives from both organisations met on Ulva to look at possible sites. ACHA's Board are already working with the North West Mull Community Woodland Company to provide four affordable homes in Dervaig on Mull.

ACHA chief executive Alastair MacGregor said it was 'humbling to witness the passion and energy' of the Ulva community and its supporters to have 'lights on again on Ulva'. He said: 'Through our fieldwork and research, we believe that there is an opportunity to build five family homes for affordable rent near to the ferry on Ulva.'

He added that ACHA wants to work closely with the community to develop these proposals to tie in as an important part of the island's plans for regeneration and development.

Since 2015 ACHA has been



Reviewing one of the housing sites on Ulva are Alastair MacGregor, Councillor Roddy McCuish, John Addy, Kirsteen McGinn and Wendy Reid, development manager with North West Mull Community Woodland Company.

actively building in rural and island communities off the Argyll coast. Projects have typically involved two to five homes. So far developments on Coll, in Kilmartin, Cairnbaan, Tarbert, Tayvallich and Bonawe have been completed.

Ulva was successfully taken into community ownership in 2018 with support from the Scottish Government Land Fund and other fundraising. In the mid-19th century Ulva had a population of more than 600, but forced emigration reduced that population to just a handful. Today, eight people live full time on the island but

now there are ambitious plans to repopulate it.

John Addy, of North West Mull Community Woodland Company, said the main purpose of the community buyout of Ulva was to secure its social and economic development – both in its own right but also crucially as an integral part of north-west Mull.

'Provision of affordable housing is central to these ambitions and we are delighted to be working in partnership with ACHA on what promises to deliver a transformative new chapter in Ulva's story,' he added.



# Have say on health budget cut

by Kathie Griffiths  
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk

Argyll residents are about to have their say on £4.8 million of proposed budget cuts to health services.

The consultation process, which in previous years has been hosted on Argyll and Bute Council's website at [argyll-bute.gov.uk](http://argyll-bute.gov.uk), will last until Monday February 28.

Options on the table include a one per cent reduction in hospital budgets, which would save the area's health and social care partnership (HSCP) £540,000.

Reviews of other services, such as prescribing process and products, and specific high-cost mental health care packages, have also been mooted as potential savings.

But calls have been made for health chiefs to consult with service user groups earlier in the budget-setting process.

Takki Sulaiman, chief executive officer at Argyll and Bute Third Sector Interface, raised concerns about the high-cost care package review, as well as plans for transport for patients.

A proposal to save £12,000 involves reducing the number and size of vehicles, and encouraging independent travel where possible.

Mr Sulaiman was speaking at the virtual meeting of the HSCP's integration joint board on Wednesday January 26.

He said: "There are no easy options and that is understood from the outset. What would help the IJB to participate more in the process is some early discussions with service user groups.

"For example, this could be with the review of high-cost care packages. I am not sure what that represents but it becomes more challenging.

"If we remove, for instance, horse riding lessons, that is a significant drop in their quality of life. If access to physiotherapy is affected then it might mean people are confined to their houses for longer.

"On transport costs, it may



only be £12,000 but my concern is about the approach. It doesn't look like we are approaching our communities and that could be a really useful tool to aid big decisions.

"I don't think we should wait until the statutory savings have been agreed to do the EQIA (equality impact assessment). But I acknowledge this is a really difficult thing to do well."

James Gow, the HSCP's head of finance, said: "Mr Sulaiman's comments are very valid. We are in the process of working out impact assessments and I can give reassurance, particularly the point around care packages.

"These are savings focused on ensuring that people have the appropriate level of support. It is not about taking essential services away from anybody; these are appropriate changes to care packages which have been pulled together after a detailed review."

Mr Gow had previously said in a report: "The board is asked to note and endorse the savings programme in advance of the consultation process and approval of the budget in March.

"There will clearly be a service impact associated with the savings programme, however, the management team have worked hard to ensure that the proposals have the minimum possible impact upon service delivery and our staff.

"It is also worth highlighting that there is some growth funding available in certain areas and this should enable savings to be delivered with a reduced impact."

The IJB will then set the budget at its next meeting on Wednesday March 30.

## Health overspend slashed but Omicron a savings risk

The forecast overspend for the year by health chiefs in Argyll and Bute has dipped below the £300,000 mark, a report has revealed.

The area's health and social care partnership (HSCP) had predicted a £1.6 million overspend after three months of the financial year, which began in April 2021.

That was quickly reduced to £800,000 after detailed analysis of social work budgets, and by the end of October had been lowered further to £681,000. As of the end of November, the forecast overspend for the end of March 2022 stood at £281,000.

These are the most recent figures in a report that went before the HSCP's integration

joint board (IJB) at its virtual meeting on Wednesday January 26. However, the document also acknowledges that responding to the Omicron Covid variant 'does present an additional risk' to the partnership's planned savings.

James Gow, the HSCP's head of finance and transformation, said: "The forecast position has

improved further and is now of reduced concern... however, the prioritisation of the Omicron response does present an additional risk to the savings programme in the last quarter of the year.

"There is now a high degree of confidence that the HSCP will operate within the resources available to it."



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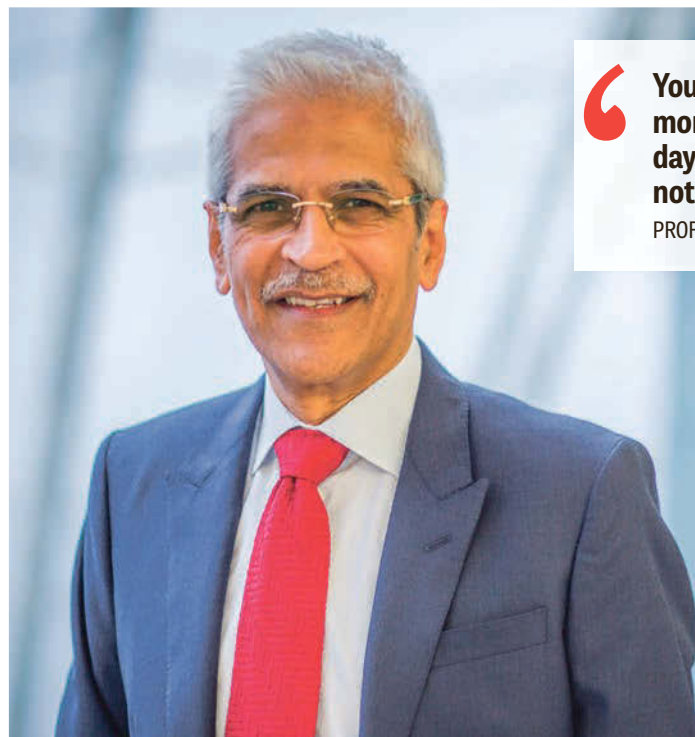
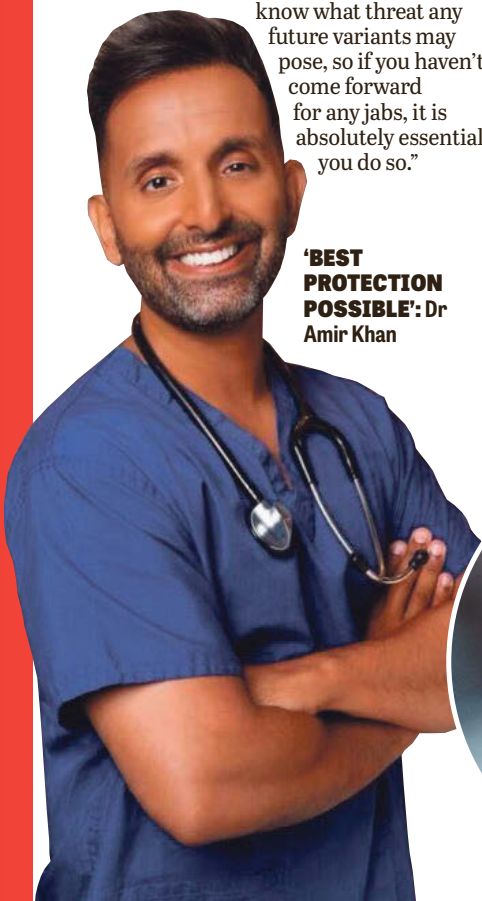
# Experts reveal the facts

Latest COVID-19 variant Omicron is highly infectious and still spreading. It is more important than ever we all get vaccinated to protect ourselves, our family and friends. Boosters increase our protection against the virus up to more than 88 per cent. We talk to myth-busting medical experts who answer your most frequently asked questions about these essential jobs

## What protection does a booster jab give?

DR EMEKA Okorocho, who works in A&E in London and South East, said: "As a doctor, I have seen first-hand the effect COVID-19 can have on people. I want to remind everyone you can still get seriously ill with the virus, so it is so important to get the jab to keep ourselves, your friends and loved ones safe. COVID-19 is highly infectious. The vaccine remains our best line of defence against it. Omicron is highly transmissible and still has the potential to lead to significant numbers of people in hospital, so it's so important your immunity is topped up, and to come forward for your first or second dose if you haven't already. We don't know what threat any future variants may pose, so if you haven't come forward for any jabs, it is absolutely essential you do so."

**'BEST PROTECTION POSSIBLE':** Dr Amir Khan



**You can get a COVID-19 booster three months after your second dose and 28 days after positive COVID test. It's also not too late to get a first or second dose**

PROFESSOR MAHENDRA G PATEL

## When can you have a booster jab?

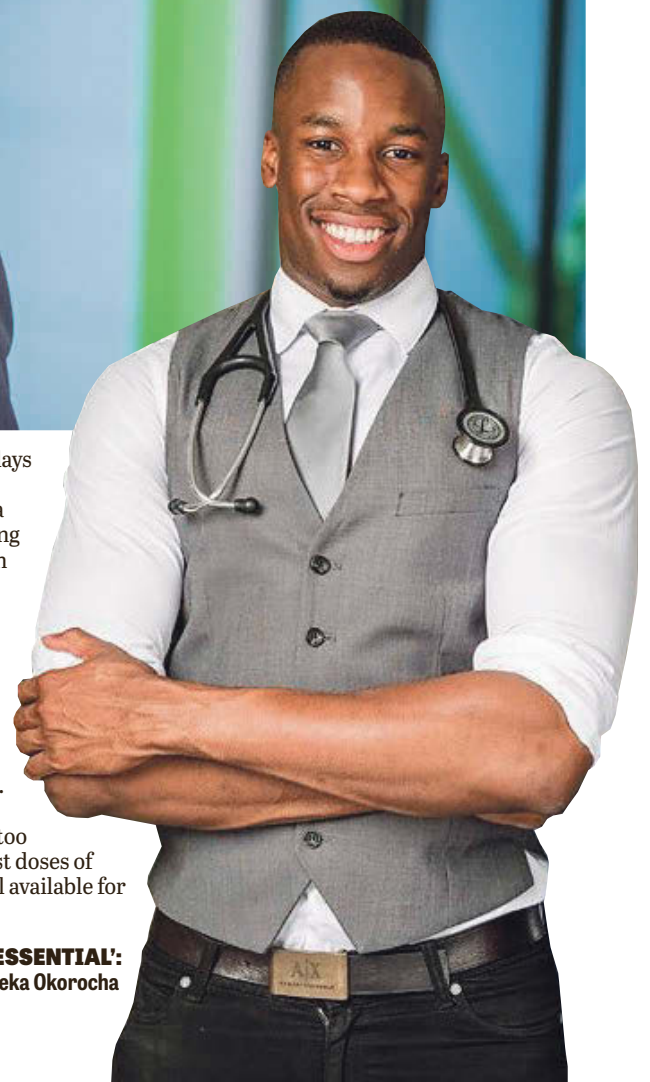
Yorkshire-based Professor Mahendra G Patel OBE, Pharmacy and Inclusion and Diversity Lead, said: "You can get a COVID-19 booster three months after

your second dose and 28 days after positive COVID test. It's also not too late to get a first or second dose. Getting the vaccine has never been easier. Everybody aged 12 and over have now been offered two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine. If you are 12 years old or above on the day the vaccinations are taking place in school, you will be able to access a vaccine. If you have not yet had a COVID-19 vaccine, it's not too late. Appointments for first doses of COVID-19 vaccines are still available for anyone unvaccinated."

**'ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL':** Dr Emeka Okorocho



**'VERY CONFIDENT':** Dr Jenny Jardine



**GET BOOSTED NOW**



GET BOOSTED NOW

# about Omicron variant



## Your booster jab is vital

- Every adult needs to get a COVID-19 booster vaccine, because two doses of the vaccine do not give enough protection against catching the Omicron variant.
- Check your eligibility and find out how to book at [nhs.uk/covidvaccination](https://nhs.uk/covidvaccination) if you are in England.
- If you are in Scotland visit: [nhsinform.scot/covid-19-vaccine](https://nhsinform.scot/covid-19-vaccine)
- For Wales visit: [gov.wales/get-your-covid-19-vaccination](https://gov.wales/get-your-covid-19-vaccination)
- For Northern Ireland visit: [covid-19.hscni.net/get-vaccinated](https://covid-19.hscni.net/get-vaccinated)

### Is it safe to have a booster jab if I'm pregnant?

London-based Dr Jenny Jardine from Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, who is also seven months pregnant and has had her COVID-19 booster jab, said: "Both as a doctor and pregnant mother myself, we can now be very confident the COVID-19 vaccinations provide the best possible protection for you and your unborn child against this virus. I would strongly call on all pregnant women like me, if you haven't had the vaccine yet, to either speak to your GP or midwife if you still have questions and then book right away today."

### Does a booster jab carry side effects?

Dr Okorochoa said: "The COVID-19 vaccine is quick, easy and free. Don't worry about the side effects. Like all medicines, the COVID-19 vaccines may cause some side effects, but most of these are mild and short-term, lasting no longer than a week, and not everyone gets them. Also, if you weren't able to get your booster dose because you had COVID-19, remember to book your jab 28 days after you no longer have the virus."

### How easy is it to get a booster jab?

Bradford-based NHS Dr Amir Khan said: "We know many people are juggling busy

lives, which is exactly why the NHS is making it as easy as possible for you to get your booster. New walk-in vaccination sites have been set up across the country, and existing sites have extended their opening hours, so as many people as possible can get jabbed as soon as possible. And, once you've had your vaccine, then why not encourage your friends and family to book as well, so we all have the best protection possible."

### How effective is a booster jab?

Prof Patel said: "New analysis of vaccine efficacy by UKHSA has found protection against hospitalisation from vaccines is good against the Omicron variant. When

the reduced risk of hospitalisation was combined with vaccine effectiveness against symptomatic disease, the vaccine effectiveness against hospitalisation was estimated as 88 per cent two weeks after a booster dose. One dose of any vaccine was associated with a 35 per cent reduced risk of hospitalisation among symptomatic cases with the Omicron variant, two doses with a 67 per cent reduction up to 24 weeks after the second dose and a 51 per cent reduced risk 25 or more weeks after the second dose."

Everyone aged 16 and over now needs to get a COVID-19 booster vaccine because two doses does not give you enough protection against catching Omicron. To book yours and find out more visit [nhs.uk/covidvaccination](https://nhs.uk/covidvaccination)

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OT

## Islanders lose almost £1m to scammers

People on the Western Isles lost £900,000 in 70 frauds last year, an average loss of £12,800 per victim, Police Scotland have said in a warning about rising cyber scams.

'The location of the Western Isles may present limited opportunities for scams and doorstep crime to be committed in person by fraudsters attempting to take money from people,' said Trading Standards officer Jay Moran.

'In the case of internet, mail and phone scams, these are very real problems for people no matter where they live.'

'There are so many types of scams – some scammers use several different scams with an individual to get what they want,' added Western Isles Council. 'Cyber-fraud is the most changing form of financial crime affecting Scotland.'

Stornoway police constable Fiona Macleod said: 'Anyone can fall victim to this type of crime, not just the elderly and the vulnerable – even if we think we're scam aware, all it takes is for us to be caught

off guard in the moment by a skilled manipulator. The impact of scams and fraud can be financially and emotionally devastating for the victim, with many suffering isolation and hardship as a result – some even become more susceptible to further exploitation.'

Norah MacPhee, of the Western Isles Citizen's Advice Service, added: 'Under-reporting and stigma continue to be barriers in scam/fraud, with many feeling too ashamed and embarrassed to tell someone what has happened.'

Marjorie Gibson, head of operations with Advice Direct Scotland, said: 'Cybercrime is a growing concern and it's always important to check emails or online communications very carefully and always be wary of anyone asking for personal financial information.'

Information on keeping safe can be found online at cas.org.uk (Citizens Advice Scotland), scotland.police.uk/keep-safe, advicedirect.scot, and tsscot.co.uk (Trading Standards Scotland).

# OCHDA backs council-run port for sake of safety

Supporters of developing a community harbour for Oban have pledged to put their weight behind plans for a municipal port - in the interests of safety, writes Kathie Griffiths.

Despite OCHDA (Oban Community Harbour Development Association) still being fully committed to Oban having an independent community-run port in the future, such as successful ones already established in Mallaig and Ullapool, for now they are getting behind the council's work to develop a municipal port for here 'in a timely manner,' they say.

At OCHDA's annual general meeting last week, members made it clear they still believed Argyll and Bute's harbour board's decision not to support an independent community-run port was wrong and was based on inadequate and



Cruise ships are just some of the water users and vessels that frequent Oban Bay.

in place as soon as possible.

'Establishing and running a harbour authority needs close collaboration with the community and all stakeholders, and we believe that OCHDA can support the council in that.'

OCHDA members also officially noted a statement from Argyll and Bute's Harbour Board December 2021 meeting that outlined a programme for developing of a trust port once the municipal port has become established.

OCHDA will now continue to work closely with council officers to make sure planning for the development of a trust port continues smoothly and that council members are provided with all the necessary information.

misleading information.

OCHDA chairman John MacAlister said: 'We know that a trust port is the best way to manage Oban harbour and could have been established more quickly than a municipal port, but our main concern has always been safety for the waters of Oban Bay and approaches.'

'So, if we can help Argyll and Bute Council to develop

and deliver their proposed municipal port, we want to do so. After several years of delay it's essential that the council gets the work completed as efficiently as possible.'

'OCHDA has already done a great deal of the preparatory work towards the development of the new harbour authority and we think that the council should build on our work to help get the right arrangements

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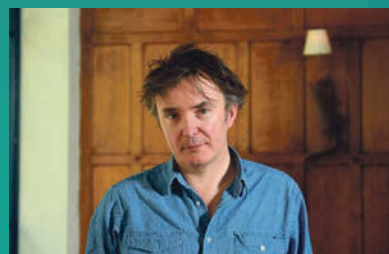
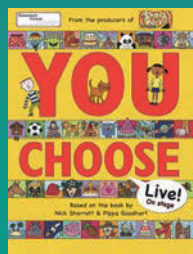
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# Parent councils ask for more time to review school plan

by Kathie Griffiths  
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk

Almost 30 parent councils have signed a letter to Argyll and Bute Council's executive director Douglas Hendry concerned about plans for cluster schools.

The letter asks that the consultation deadline of Friday March 4 is paused to give more time for parents to review the proposals in detail and get a fuller understanding of what the impact could be.

Stella Kinloch who is chairperson of the Hermitage Academy Parent Council and was speaking for Argyll and Bute Parent Council Network, said in the letter: 'Disappointingly, to date, there has been no response from the authority, and parent councils are being left with no choice but continue to be forced to answer what is asked in the pre-printed feedback forms despite repeated calls for more details on the evidence base, the impacts and true costs as well as the research that confirms such sweeping changes are what is needed to achieve the desired outcomes.'

'The parent councils represented within the network are not opposed to change, or striving for improvement and welcome the opportunity to work in partnership with the education team. However, the approach taken by the authority in this consultation lacks partnership, transparency and simply leaves too many key questions unanswered.'

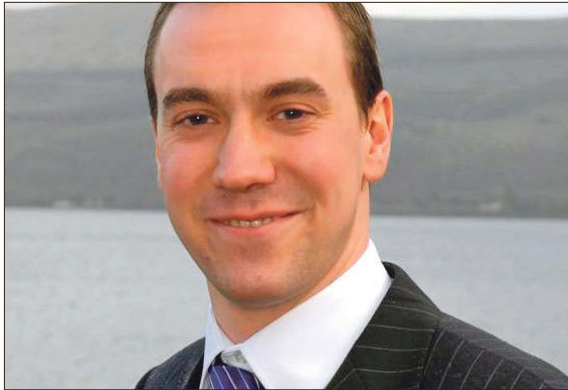
'Parent councils are advised it's a model in principle, but most don't believe this is, in any way, a good foundation for the changes needed in education within Argyll and Bute. Argyll and Bute Parent Council Network has approached WISE4All to work in partnership in raising awareness of parents concerns.'

The authority's proposed Empowering our Educators project would see executive headteachers appointed to clusters of schools across the area in a non-teaching capacity.

At a special press briefing held by the council on Tuesday January 25, it was confirmed clusters will only be put together if the proposals are approved by the authority in the autumn. Education bosses say they want planned changes to the structure of the service to be 'cost neutral'. Findings from the public consultation would be presented by councillors before a final decision is made later in the year.

Teaching union representatives have previously voiced fears that headteacher numbers in the area will be reduced, but a frequently-asked-questions document produced by the council denies this.

During the press briefing Louise Connor, the council's education manager for transformation, said: 'If the proposals are approved by the committee in the late autumn, we go out to consultation on the collectives. Cost neutral is what we are working towards.'



Alastair Redman is opposing the changes because he believes it is a 'leading consultation'.

Jennifer Crocket, the council's head of education for lifelong learning and support, also addressed the feedback received by the council to date.

She said: 'It would be fair to say we are confident the consultation has given a broad range of opportunities to all stakeholders. It has been successful in that we are already getting feedback, from all parties, that we are in a position where we are collating views.'

Iona Community Council has repeatedly asked Argyll and Bute Council for information on the proposals, although not as a Freedom of Information request as reported in last week's Oban Times, and members are still awaiting a response from Pippa Milne.

Speaking after the press briefing, Councillor Alastair Redman, who opposes the shake-up, said it is not a proper consultation because it is a 'leading consultation'.

'Who has asked for this restructure? No parents, headteachers or teachers I know of.'

If it's just a costcutting exercise the council should just be honest about it.'

Lobby group WISE4all said: 'The model of collective leadership is a model of last resort. Across Scotland, shared headships are only used when it has proved impossible to recruit. For example, two neighbouring small primary schools may be led by one headteacher. The collective leadership model is a much grander scheme; based on what? There is no evidence it will improve the quality of life and achievements of young learners. There is no evidence that it will solve any staff recruitment issues. In fact, these proposals could negatively impact the future sustainability of rural and island communities.'

The proposals can be viewed, and feedback submitted to the council, by visiting its website at argyll-bute.gov.uk.

## CalMac essential services timetable ends early

CalMac's essential services timetable has ended thanks to a noticeable decrease in Covid-related absences amongst staff.

The ferry operator introduced an essential services timetable on Monday January 3 when the number of staff absent due to Covid became so high that it was unable to operate a full service. The temporary timetable was due to continue till Sunday February 6. However, the winter timetable for most routes resumed on Wednesday January 26. Port offices also reverted to normal opening hours.

This included the reopening of on-board retail and food and drink offering as well as the Coffee Cabin at Ardrossan Port.

Managing director Robbie Drummond said: 'I am pleased to say that because of a significant drop in the number of staff unable to work due to Covid we can now offer a full winter service on the majority of routes. Thank you to all passengers for their patience and understanding and we look forward to welcoming them back on board.'

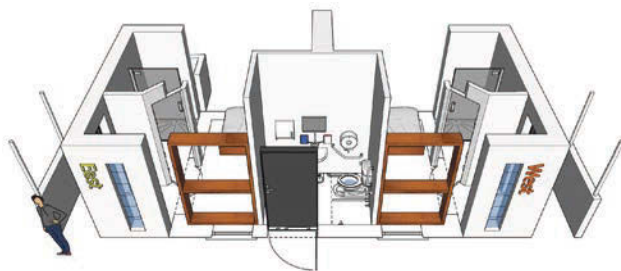
## Plan to turn Oban loo into sleeping pods

Plans have been unveiled to convert an Oban public toilet, which has been earmarked for closure, into two sleeping pods, writes Sandy Neil.

The proposal by Wilson Designs for the Pulpit Hill facilities also includes an accessible unisex public toilet, as well as two side extensions for toilet facilities for the self-contained sleeping pods.

Argyll and Bute Council has been working with SAA Property Ltd to improve the facilities at the public viewpoint site, and has approved SAA's proposal for a long-term ground lease, which will be activated upon the approval of planning permission.

A decision from planning

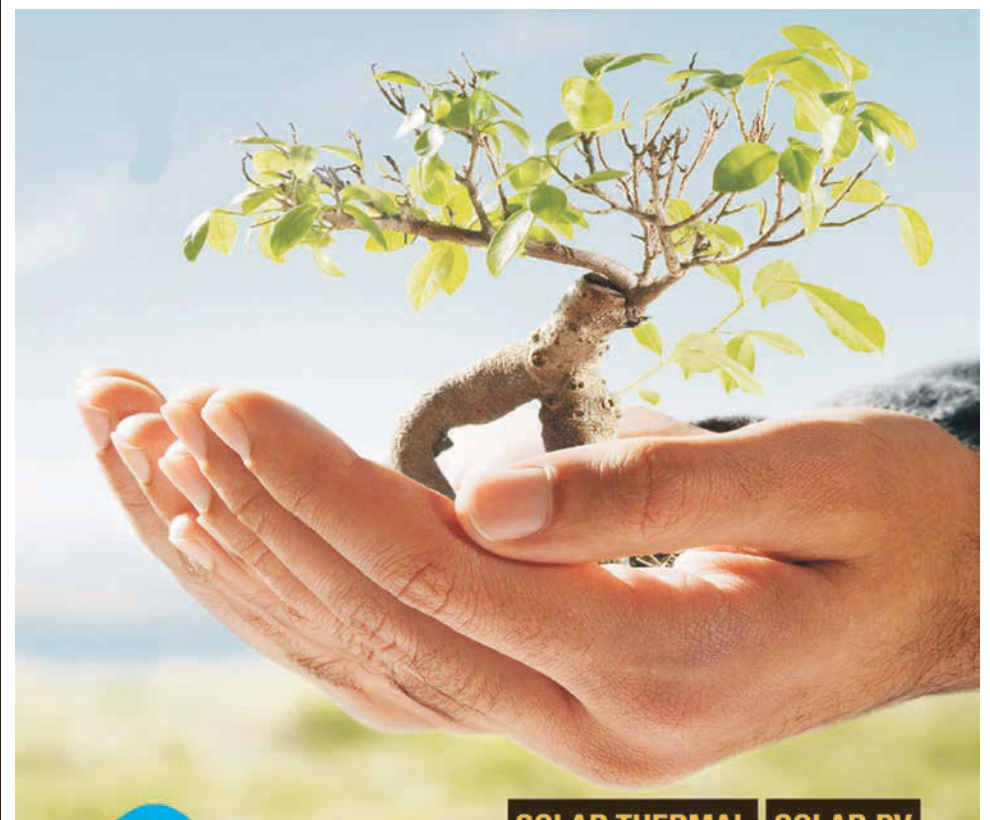


The plan is to change the existing public convenience toilet facilities to two small sleeping pods and one central accessible public toilet.

officers is expected by the middle of March, and feedback can now be given by the public.

Wilson Designs said: 'The council will not only receive rental income that could be

used to help pay for opening, cleaning and maintenance of other toilets in the town, but these proposals will also sustainably utilise an existing building which no longer has a specific need.'



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OT

# DISTRICT NEWS

## SEIL AND EASDALE

### Seaweed farm plan on community council agenda

Plans for a seaweed farm were among items discussed at Seil and Easdale Community Council's latest meeting.

More details for the farm, on the old fish farm site at Easdale Island, will emerge after a meeting between former resident Duncan Small from becomingaseaweedgeneration.com and interested parties soon, community councillors were told via Zoom last Tuesday.

Jenni Minto MSP is due to host a meeting tomorrow, February 4, with Scottish Water and others on progress on the island's waste water treatment. Planning permission for a septic tank for Seaview residents has also been renewed.

Seil Island Hall committee is considering putting up a security camera to catch dog owners falling foul of rules to keep the playing field mess free. Winterton Road in Balvicar also continues to experience problems with dog dirt, as are other road verges across the island.

There are plans to plant more trees at Clachan Farm and the search goes on for ideas on where to put a new memorial bench in Ellenabeich and for an editor to take on the community's monthly newsletter.

Residents were reminded to keep sheds and garages secure after an attempted break-in on the island was reported to police.

And there is nothing new to add to progress on a community buy-out of plots of land in heritage village Ellenabeich - including the seawall.

Community council convener Zim Knight told the meeting Argyll and Bute planners were continuing to 'drag their feet' in referring associated matters to Historic Scotland so the

community council could be sure it would not be landed with a big liability.

'We are chasing them,' he said. 'We have everything in place to start negotiating to buy the land but we need them [Argyll and Bute Council] to refer it to Historic Scotland first.'

Zoom sessions are likely to continue for a while yet, running alongside in-person community council meetings. The next meeting will be at 6.30pm on Tuesday March 22 at Seil Island Hall.

### Big Top fun for Seil

Roll up, roll up to brush up on your circus skills and enjoy a free fire show.

Seil Winter Festival is proud to present circus skills workshops for children and adults by Circus Alba on Saturday February 12 with a free fire show at 6pm with donations going towards the renovation of Seil Island Hall's playpark.

The children's workshop runs from 1pm to 2.15pm following storytelling with Corelo Productions at 11.30am. Bring your own picnic at 12.30pm. The adult workshop is from 2.45pm to 4.30pm. Tickets are £5 for children and £8 for adults. The event is being supported by The Corra Foundation. Book by tomorrow (Friday February 4) by emailing seilislandhall@gmail.com.



A chance to learn circus skills on Seil as part of the island's winter festival programme.

## OBAN



Oban Hospice chairman David Entwistle with Deirdre Henderson from Oban Distillery.

### Distillery's warming gesture

Cheers to Oban Distillery for supporting the town's hospice.

Hospice chairman David Entwistle met with the distillery's Deirdre Henderson to collect a cheque for money raised by selling hot toddies during the winter festival.

The hot toddies made from the distillery's famous single malt Little Bay whisky raised £523 which will be match funded by its parent company Diageo.

Mr Entwistle said: 'Once again, a big thank you to all the staff and people connected with Oban Distillery. This is another fine example of how generous and kind people are in promoting a wee local charity which seeks to improve the quality of life for people and their families living with cancer and some long-term conditions.'

'All the money raised and donated to Oban Hospice stays in the town to support our community.'

### Burns celebrations at Hope

Fiona Ferris took these photographs of Burns Night celebrations at Hope Kitchen last week where haggis, cranachan and friendship were on the menu.



Tam Ferris and Catriona Petit providing musical entertainment at Hope's Burns Night celebrations. Photograph: Fiona Ferris.



Smiles all round at the Hope Kitchen Burns Night celebrations. Photograph: Fiona Ferris.

## Make community defibrillators VAT free, pleads MSP

Argyll and Bute MSP Jenni Minto wants community defibrillators to be made VAT exempt.

Ms Minto has written to seek Scottish Government support.

She has sent a letter to Scottish Government cabinet secretary for finance and the economy Kate Forbes asking for support in her campaign to give life-saving community defibrillators VAT exemption.

Research from the British Heart Foundation

has found that survival chances from a cardiac arrest can double with successful CPR, but every minute that passes without defibrillation reduces the chance of survival by 10 per cent.

Currently, defibrillators are funded through community fundraising, local initiatives and business support.

However, those who look to buy one are still hit with 20 per cent VAT charges, despite other medical equipment being exempt.

Ms Minto MSP said: 'That life-saving defibrillators are not exempt from VAT is wrong. We must do all we can to promote the need for defibrillators everywhere, particularly close to our homes and the removal of this additional cost could go a long way.'

'I know the cabinet secretary is open to supporting this campaign and hope she will now write to the Chancellor Rishi Sunak to ask that this exemption is granted.'

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Stunning East Lothian garden... Artist Naomi Rae...  
Scents of the forest... Deer management...



## At random

MARTIN LAING

editor@obantimes.co.uk



### Well done, Debbie

I mentioned towards the end of last year the splendid charity effort by Debbie Sheppard, the always-engaging joint host of the Lorne Whisky Pub and Kitchen in Stevenson Street.

Debbie has MS and had launched a mission to raise awareness of the condition and money for Oban's MS Centre on Glencruitten Road by walking from the pub to Ganavan beach and back every day for 19 weeks.

That is, Debbie told me back then, 7.5km (4.66 miles) a day, or 619 miles over the 19 weeks. If, like me, you wondered why 19 weeks, it was one week for every year since Debbie was diagnosed.

I caught up with Debbie at the weekend and she tells me the effort was well worth it as she has raised around £400, although the final tally is yet to be confirmed.

As well as support from partner David Nicol, the marathon effort was backed by her dad Jim, who has joined her on some walks, and mum Eleanor, known for volunteering at Mary's Meals in Oban.

Hats off to you Debbie and very well done.

### Height anxiety

Well done, too, to the firefighters in Oban who had to close Argyll Square on Saturday at lunchtime to send aloft crew members to remove a satellite dish from the top of a building.

The essential safety work caused traffic disruption in town but it did not last long and the fire appliances were moved as soon as the street was safe.

As someone who can't climb a step ladder without dizzying panic, I watched the operation with a kind of sick fascination as the two firefighters were hoisted high up to do their work.

Hats off to you as well and, indeed, to all the public servants who helped to clear up the damage caused by the storms.

What do you think? Send your comments to editor@obantimes.co.uk

## YOURSTORY

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# Winterwatch's Iolo smitten with Mull

BBC2 Winterwatch presenter Iolo Williams is smitten with Mull and hopes the popular show watched by millions will do the island justice.

Iolo and a film crew have been staking out wildlife from their base at mighty Loch Ba in the middle of the island for two weeks.

Filming days are packed with rehearsals and Zoom meetings with HQ - the only down time is the 'in between bits' said Iolo, who says Mull is his favourite Scottish island.

He was in his 20s when he first visited, working with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) - and he has not had his fill of it yet, making multiple trips back every year.

'I've always had very fond memories of that first magical visit and I still come back four or five times a year. It's my favourite Scottish island.'

That first visit was just 'a hop and a skip' away from where this season's Winterwatch is based at the Loch Ba, a stretch of freshwater about five kms long.

A technical hitch delayed Iolo's first slot in the series but it is all part and parcel of filming on a place like Mull where the elements cannot be pre-ordered or guaranteed.

'It's always exciting going live. You never know what to expect - either with the technology or the wildlife. Winterwatch is a great way to make a living. I'm so passionate about wildlife and it's a pleasure and so important to be able to share it in this way with people from all over the UK.'

After the first week of no shows by white-tailed eagles on the carcass cameras, Iolo and the rest of the crew were keeping fingers crossed they would put in an appearance at some point during the final and second week of Winterwatch.

The show's cameraman, Jim Manthorpe from Morvern, was having more luck.

It was Jim's camera for Winterwatch that identified the UK's oldest white-tailed sea eagle called Skye, after the island where he hatched in 1994.

Now in his 28th year, the bird of prey was identified by a British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) ring with his number - ZZ0768 - on it. A female was also spotted with him and it could be his mate Frisa, who would be 30



Winterwatch presenter Iolo Williams with RSPB Mull officer Dave Sexton being filmed.



Skye - the UK's oldest white-tailed sea eagle - has been identified on the Isle of Mull after being spotted in film shot for BBC Winterwatch. Photograph: Iain Erskine.

years old. Dave Sexton RSPB Mull Officer said: 'I'm just blown away that we've been able to confirm it is still Skye in that territory. I always hoped it was but it's hard to tell these days.'

'Cameraman Jim Manthorpe's amazing footage allowed us to zoom in on the BTO ring and there it was! And he's a record breaker too as he's in his 28th year.'

'Now we need to work on reading the female's ring to see if it's still Frisa. If it is, she will be 30 this year so will then be the oldest known wild sea eagle ever in the UK.'

'That would be a dream come true for me as Frisa, her mum Blondie and I go back a very

long way and I feel a special connection to them all as the 'first family' of sea eagles.

'It's thanks to Forestry and Land Scotland which has provided a forest home for this amazing pair of sea eagles since they first settled into the area in 1998.'

It will not be until the end of April that Iolo finally gets a few well-earned days off work and will be able to sit down and savour this series' offerings.

'It's hard to take everything in when you're filming and to evaluate how it's gone. The first chance I'll get to do that is the end of April but the feedback we're getting from our faithful audience's reactions is that they are enjoying it.'

'I really hope we have been able to do Mull justice, it has so much to offer,' added Iolo.

As for the white-tailed eagles, it is 'a shame' they get such a knocking, he says.

'Yes they're always going to be controversial but people have to remember we've always had them - it was only because of man's treatment that they disappeared. All they are doing, now they have been reintroduced, is reclaiming their ground.'

'People come to Mull especially to see them as well as golden eagles and otters so they have a vital role to play in green tourism which brings in millions of pounds every year.'

'Without the white tails, Mull would be a much poorer place in many respects,' added Iolo.

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OT

## LETTERS

**Setting aside differences**

This week, despite Oban Community Harbour Development Association's differences with Argyll and Bute Council and members still being fully committed to Oban having an independent community-run port in future, it is good they have decided to get behind the council's work to develop a municipal port.

OCHDA chairman John MacAlister said the organisation's main concern has always been safety for the waters of Oban Bay and approaches and their knowledge and experience will hugely benefit the council develop and deliver the proposed municipal port.

It makes sense for the council to build on the preparatory work OCHDA has already done to help get the right arrangements in place as soon as possible.

We have waited long enough for a harbour authority and the last thing water users and businesses need is more delays.

**Help Oban dazzle at Christmas**

We hope lots of people will offer to get involved in the Christmas lights appeal, volunteering their ideas and fundraising experience. The Oban Times is getting involved, so why not join us to ensure Oban really sparkles over the festive period.

The editor welcomes letters of approximately 300 words in length for publication on this page.



However we reserve the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and postal addresses must be supplied, including on emails, to indicate good faith. A daytime phone number is also required for verification. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Please email: editor@obantimes.co.uk or write to: Letters page, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB.

**The views expressed on our letters page are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of The Oban Times.**

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**Forget fixed link dream**

We want the Scottish Government to be ambitious, but the suggestion of a tunnel or bridge linking Oban and Mull is ludicrous. Anyone thinking this is a good idea needs to be aware of unintended consequences.

Skye provides a lesson. The short bridge linking it to the mainland brought connectivity, but also brought mass tourism and, consequently, seasonal traffic congestion. But, at least many roads on Skye are dual-track. In contrast, Mull has only 10 miles of dual-track road, the remainder being single-track.

Currently, summer journeys can be challenging. But make Mull accessible by tunnel or bridge, even if technically, geologically and economically feasible, and traffic will grind to a halt without the additional expense of a major widening programme on all single-track roads. This will never happen so why spend time dreaming of a fixed link?

Ian Reid, Oban.

**Blown off course?**

Colonsay got plenty of coverage in your columns last week (January 20). Sadly, there was one important omission.

Your article on the Crown Estate's recent lease of area 17 in the Scotwind Renewables project announces Scottish Power as the winner to develop a very large wind farm off the 'west coast of Islay'.

Area 17 in fact lies off the west coast of Colonsay. The area lies to the north west of Islay visible from a largely uninhabited and inaccessible part of that island. Much of Colonsay's charm comes from the great sweep of uninterrupted views out to the western horizon. Just as 'views cannot be eaten', global warming is much too important an issue for NIMBYism or to be nostalgic about how things were.

However, when the day comes that Scottish Power starts contributing to community funds, I shall be reminding Keith Anderson, chief executive officer of ScottishPower, to rename his 'Islay Project', 'Colonsay and Islay Project'.

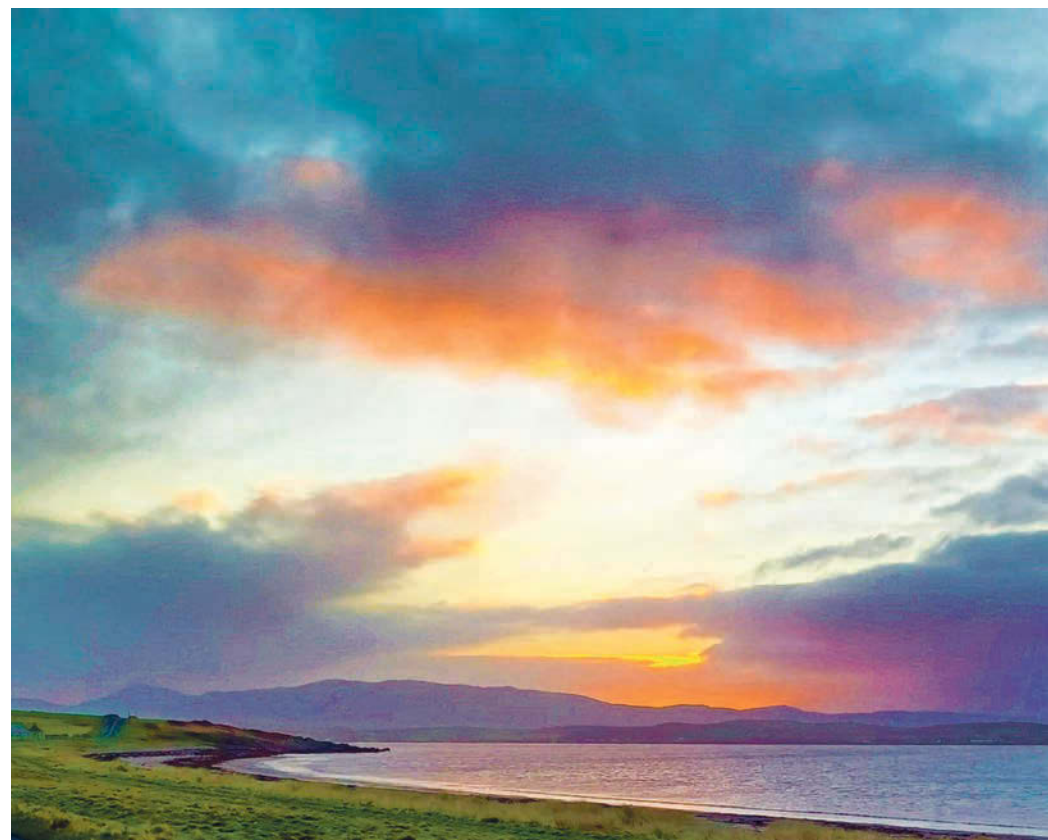
Andrew Abrahams, Colonsay Oysters/Black Bee Reserve.

**Salmon farm objection**

Mr Holder says he is a close neighbour to the salmon farm about which he objects (letters).

I presume he made his views known at the time when the farm was established 34 years ago in January 1988. However, as it has been

## YOUR PICTURES



This photograph of Port Ellen was taken by councillor Alastair Redman on his way to visit some of his constituents. If you would like to share with our readers, we would love to see it. Please email the jpeg (1MB) to editor@obantimes.co.uk

only two to three years since Mr Holder seems to have become vocal on the issue, I suspect he is a relatively recent neighbour.

This begs the question that if he so objects to this salmon farm and the wider salmon farming industry, why did he choose to live in close proximity to it?

In my experience, the most vocal opponents to salmon farms have moved into the area without doing much research and not understanding that people actually live and work there. They are then horrified to find there are local industries and businesses that don't match their pre-conceived expectations of the area they moved to. Consequently, they then embark on

an individual crusade against salmon farming, fuelled by many often-repeated misconceptions about the impact of salmon farming.

**Dr Martin Jaffa, Callander McDowell.**  
Callander McDowell offers strategic planning and marketing for the aquaculture industry.

**Municipal port for Oban**

As a management committee member of OCHDA, I endorse the issues raised by Derek Wilkinson in his letter (Questions still need answers - January 27) regarding the establishment of an interim Municipal Harbour Authority for Oban, particularly the need for

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that to happen quickly. That urgency was the main reason behind the harbour board's reversal from its previous position of endorsing a trust port. The harbour board instructed council officers to develop a consolidated Harbour Revision Order in September 2018 and it is on record that the council's legal department has consulted with Transport Scotland on its contents. Therefore, there is no reason why the draft order and its associated Purpose and Effects Notes should not be circulated around stakeholders for consideration before its formal expedited submission to Scottish ministers.

Other issues need to be faced by the council.

Local authorities with Statutory Harbour Authority responsibilities have adopted approved guidance to establish governance of harbour undertakings through a dedicated management sub-committee which has the power to exercise the functions of the duty holder. This has been resisted by Argyll and Bute Council.

Consultation with and empowerment of harbour users and stakeholders lies at the heart of Scottish Government ports policy. Local authorities have established advisory committees for individual harbours, which involve the harbour master, councillors and invited stakeholders, with their own terms of reference and answerable to the relevant management body. No such body exists for Oban harbour, nor indeed for any other of the council's statutory harbours. The self-serving OBMG is not a substitute for that role either. This must be rectified through appropriate provisions being incorporated in the Harbour Order.

Oban remains the only statutory harbour in Scotland whose founding legislation has not been updated to the post-1964 Harbours Act standard.

Council officers must accept legal reality and get the job done. The council is not accountable to the Scottish Government but to the people of Argyll and Bute through their elected representatives. The unelected occupants of Kilmory and Manse Brae would do well to remember that.

Fergus G R Gillanders, Kilmelford.

**HAVE YOUR SAY**  
email us at [editor@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:editor@obantimes.co.uk)

## Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

[ailean@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:ailean@obantimes.co.uk)



Bidh cuid a rudan nach atharraich ri linn 's gum bheil daoine riarachtaid le cùisean mar a tha iad, fiù 's ged a bhiodh iad seann-fhasanta is mì-ghoireasach an taca ri taghadh nas ùire. Aig amannan 'e cosgais an leasachaidh a tha na bhacadh 's gun dòigh aig daoine air ruigheachd air an seòrsa airgid a dh'fheumte air a shon. Ach a dh'aindeoin nan caochladh bhacaidhean sin bidh daoine mothachail gum b' fheàrrde iad leithid nan leasachaidhean air am bi iad a' bruidh, mar eisimpleir nan dachaighean, agus ri tide gheibh mòran a' mhisneachd a dhol air adhart.

Glè bhitheanta bidh an co-dhùnadh sin a' leantainn sgrùdadh air ire nan cosgaisean bliadhna a tha co-cheangailte ri gleidheadh is càradh seann acfhainn, agus tuigse nach eil e gu diofar dè na dhèanar ris nach eil ann fhathast ach seann stuth. 'S cinnteach gur ann mar sin a bhiodh nuair a bha sluagh nan coimhearsnachdan Gàidhealach a' feuchainn ri gluasad bho thaighean "dubha" tughaidh a dh'fheumte a thughadh às ùr gach dàrna bliadhna neo na bu trice ma bha droch shìde ann, gu taighean "geala" le mullaich sglèat a sheasadh bliadhnaichean ri aimsir sam bith. Abair adhbhar moite a bhith cuidhteas fàileadh an t-sùith, agus smal snighe, air a h-uile càil a bh' aig daoine agus cha b' iongnadh miann adhartais a dhol na amas dhan a' mhòr-chuid.

Air an t-seachdain a chaidh bha mi a' moladh gun robh feum air planaichean dàna gus goireasan còmhdaidh dha eileanan a leasachadh gus gum biodh na bu lugha buaidh aig droch aimsir air na coimhears-

nachdan sin. Bho chionn beagan làithean chunnacas a-rithist coimhearsnachdan eile a' call cumhachd an dealain ri linn chraobhan a bhith a' tuiteam air loidhnichean ann an droch stòirm.

Tha cosgais mhòr dha luchd-cleachdaidh agus dha buidhnean-libhrigidh nan seirbheisean ann an leithid sin de thachartasan agus chan iongnadh daoine bhith ag ràdh gum bheil còir innleachdan a dheasachadh gus leithid a dhùbhlain ann an seirbheisean còmhdaidh agus goireasan riatanach uile a leasachadh neo a lùghdachadh. Nan robh planaichean air an deasachadh agus aontaichte dh'fhaodadh an leasachadh tachairt beag air bheag, agus ged a bhiodh e daor bhiodh na cosgaisean bliadhna a th' ann an-dràsta a' lùghdachadh is seirbheisean a' fàs nas goireasaiche mar a bha an obair a' dol air adhart.

Feumaidh luchd-deilbh phoileasaidhean riaghlaidh a bhith faiceallach gum bheil na h-innleachdan aca a' tighinn a rèir a chèile agus nach eil an dàrna rud a' leamhachadh amas eile. Tha rùn oifigeil ann sluagh a chumail anns na h-eileanan agus sgìrean iomallach na Gàidhealtachd gus, am measg amasan eile, cànan is dualchas Gàidhlig a bhrosnachadh, ach aig an aon àm thathas a' tuigsinn nach gabh sin coileanadh mur a bi taighean, deagh goireasan coimhearsnachd, agus cothroman cosnaidh an sin a ghleidheas daoine òga. Leis na caochladh uallaichean leasachaidh sin an urra ri buidhnean eadar-dhealaichte tha e nas duilghe adhartas luath fhaotainn, ach bhiodh plana coileanta na dheagh thoiseach tòiseachaidh.

## THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Monsignor James MacNeil

Most people know about the Wedding Feast of Cana. The meaning of the story has little to do with marriage but rather is a symbol of the Feast of Life; it is to do with Jesus' promise: I have come that they may have life, and have it more abundantly.

There is a tendency to live as if the wine had run out; without sparkle, without fullness of joy and gratitude for the gift of life. We all

go through periods when mere survival is an achievement. O for the freedom and peace to live lightly! That full aliveness comes when we can just be who we actually are.

The abundance of wine is God's relationship with us. We can be who we are when we are in the presence of someone we trust. The more we trust God and sip of his wine, the more we can relax into who we are. To the extent that we trust

reality as loving, we know that no matter what we have done or not done, what we are capable of or not capable of, He is going to go on loving us. Darker episodes of self-knowledge rather than causing angst and self-reproach will, in the presence of God's love, bring us a freedom and an energy that will bring us to life in a new way.

To savour the flavour and impact of the wine of Cana will provoke us to thirst for even more.

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OT

# Islanders await new chapter in a charming ferry tale

Passengers and crew are bidding farewell to a ferry boat that has plied one of Scotland's most scenic crossings for more than 30 years, writes Ronnie Kerr.

The diminutive passenger-only vessel will complete her final voyage from the island of Lismore to Port Appin next month, leaving a trail of memories in her wake.

MV Lismore first made the one-mile crossing of Loch Linnhe in 1988 and has shuttled islanders, visitors and – occasionally – livestock in fair winds and foul weather ever since.

Her successor, the Lady of Lismore, is ready to start in February, but the quirky, tub-like craft, captured on countless tourists' phones, will be a hard act to follow.

Such sentiments seemed unlikely when this one-off creation, made by a Glasgow firm more used to making steel

**The new boat bears a striking resemblance to her predecessor.**



water tanks, first set sail. Her predecessor, the Highlander – an elegant, open wooden vessel, produced by time-served boatbuilders – was an altogether different craft.

So, when a bright blue, all-steel boat bobbed up – less than 40 feet long, almost cartoonish – scepticism was understandable.

Clyde-built she may have been, but not conventionally so.

'Most people thought she looked a little rough and ready at first,' recalls Lismore skipper Donald MacColl, who has been part of the ferry's two-man crew since 2005. 'There were lots of sharp edges, but she's softened up over time and proved herself

to be a seaworthy wee boat.' Donald shares duties with fellow skipper Allan MacKellar. Both men are continuing the work of two revered Appin seafarers – John Thomson, who skippered the ferry until 2002; and his late father, Jimmy, who captained from 1974 to 1990.

Lismore skippers have a keen sense of the channel's quirks, which are intensified by spring tides. 'It's a nice, scenic crossing,' says Donald, 'but it can turn nasty at times. It's a very tidal stretch of water because it's so shallow, and when those tides clash with a gusting wind the sea can lift quite quickly.'

'She's an easy boat to handle, even in rough seas, and she has a nice feel to her. There haven't been too many days when we couldn't get out in her.'

That reliability has served passengers well. Among them are daily commuters – up to 12 at

a time – who leave Lismore for cars parked permanently at Port Appin for onward journeys.

Allan, a skipper for 20 years, recalls scurrying across the channel one glorious spring day in 2004, the ferry decked in bunting as he made sure a bride reached Lismore church on time. By contrast, he recalls medical emergencies in the dead of night that required him to ferry patients with the island's GP, often in the most testing of conditions.

'We'll be sad to lose the Lismore,' reflects Donald, 'but there comes a time when you have to let an ageing vessel go – though there's still a lot of life in her for any potential buyer.'

Thoughts now turn to the replacement vessel, which will bear a striking resemblance to its predecessor. Familiar features include the ferry's distinctive blue and white livery and its

shallow hull, which will enable it to negotiate the fluctuating harbour tides. Tellingly, there is a guard rail on its prow – a feature strangely absent when the Lismore left Glasgow and the cause of much consternation when it arrived in Argyll.

'Having trialled the new ferry, says Donald, 'I'm sure it will serve us every bit as well as the Lismore has done.'

The new all-steel vessel, designed by Keel Marine of Hampshire, will accommodate 23 passengers and have a cruising speed of eight knots.

Built at a cost of £500,000 by Mainstay Marine Solutions in Pembrokeshire, Lady of Lismore was expected to begin her 300-mile sea journey to Loch Linnhe last Wednesday with an estimated arrival date of Monday. Both dates were heavily dependent on favourable weather conditions.

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Unlike other kitchen suppliers who provide flat-pack units that need to be assembled before fitting, Three Square Kitchen units come ready-built and that means less disruption for you.

Each of their kitchens is designed to be unique to you with all those little details that really count.

Three Square is an expansion of local cabinet-making business Michael Acey Furniture & Bespoke Interiors, best known since 2015 for manufacturing fitted interiors and free-standing designer furniture.

Michael got the idea for the name Three Square from 'three square meals a day' - the kitchen is his favourite room of any house.

'I've always had a passion for kitchens. I like the connection that people have with them. The kitchen is the hub of the house and I love the idea that the work we produce will be part of people's daily lives,' he said.

Your first move is to contact Three Square Kitchens and they will arrange to visit you at home or if you prefer, via video call. The team, with all their skills and experience are on hand to help guide you every step of the way, whether you are looking for some inspiration, or know exactly

what you want, they will work with you to make your bespoke dream-kitchen become a reality.

'We might sound a bit interrogative with our questions, but in order to deliver something that is not just aesthetically pleasing but practical, we need as much insight as possible into how you use your kitchen.'

'As well as the style of kitchen, we'll think about what you cook, where you sit and how you want to maximise what's important to you and your family. Then we'll talk about layout, design and all the practical considerations,' said Michael.

Once 3D visuals are finalised and specifications agreed, the Three Square Kitchens team make a start in the workshop where all units are handcrafted using a combination of traditional skills and high tech machinery and equipment.

'Thanks to our units being assembled in our workshop and transported whole, the fitting process is streamlined which means less disruption to you



EnaMay Photography



EnaMay Photography

and your home. Quality is always our priority but production speed is also high up on our list of what we need to do to make sure we deliver your vision'.

The Three Square team are environmentally conscious, and as an alternative to the wasteful plastic, cardboard and polystyrene wrapping you would find in other flat pack kitchens, Three Square

Kitchens will instead wrap the kitchen in thick blankets, returned for reuse after delivery.

They use local, sustainable resources where possible, with Loch Awe Hardwoods a consistent supplier and they encourage you to select finishes that are durable, child and pet proof for longevity.

'If there is any waste, we dispose of it in the most

eco-friendly ways possible whether it is using hardwood offcuts to fuel the stove which heats the warehouse building, disposing of paints and thinners responsibly through Enva, or giving bags of wood shavings away for other uses'.

To find out more, to arrange a consultation or take a look at Three Square Kitchens' product range, go to [www.threesquarekitchens.com](http://www.threesquarekitchens.com)



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# BUSINESS NEWS

## Fyne Ales celebrates another top award

Argyll farm brewery Fyne Ales is celebrating winning a top national award for its flagship session ale, Jarl.

The Champion Beer of Scotland is the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA)'s ultimate prize for Scottish cask beers and the 2021 gold was presented to Fyne Ales for its single-hop blonde ale earlier this month.

'It's fantastic Jarl has been recognised as Scotland's best cask ale again, especially in the year that our brewery celebrated its 20th birthday,' said Jamie Delap, managing director of Fyne Ales, which is based at Cairndow at the head of Loch Fyne.

'The past 18 months have been a real challenge for our brewery and the entire beer industry, so it's great to have something to celebrate and to kick off 2022 with some really good news.'

'Huge congratulations to Fyne Ales, who has taken home the gold for Jarl in this year's Champion Beer of Scotland competition,' shared CAMRA's Katie Wiles. 'Jarl is an easy-drinking and perfectly balanced session ale that is bursting with flavour - it's considered the cream of the crop of Scottish ales.'

Established in 1996, the Champion Beer of Scotland is usually awarded as part of the Scottish Real Ale Festival, however, due to Covid, the 2020 competition was cancelled and 2021 winners determined by CAMRA member nominations and tasting panel recommendations.

Orkney Brewing's Dark Island was awarded silver, while Loch Lomond and Five Kingdoms breweries shared bronze awards for their Silkie

The Fyne Ales brewery at the head of Loch Fyne.



Stout and Dark Storm stouts, respectively.

Fyne Ales was founded in 2001 by husband and wife team Jonny and Tuggy Delap. Returning to Tuggy's family estate at the head of Loch Fyne, they sought to do something with the land beyond simply farming - they wanted to create jobs and bring people to the area.

After toying with a variety of ideas including candle-making and a smokery, a lack of proper cask ale north of the border led to the installation of a small brewhouse in a converted dairy building and the hiring of a head brewer. The first brew took place in November 2001.

Today, fresh from celebrating their 20th birthday, Fyne Ales is run by Jonny and Tuggy's son Jamie Delap and a team of around 20. The brewing water is drawn from the surrounding hills and all the spent grain from the brewing process goes directly to the farm's herds of Highland cows and red deer.

A spokesperson said: 'Winning CAMRA's Champion Beer of Scotland is extra special as cask beer is so important to British brewing and still very much at the heart of what we do. Of the 50 or so different beers brewed by Fyne Ales in 2021, more than 30 were specifically for cask.'

## Funding for business

StartUpMull, a new fund for start-up and early-stage businesses on Mull, has announced the first grants offering more than £12,000 in support for two local businesses.

The StartUpMull Trust launched the new fund in August 2021, inviting start-up and early-stage businesses on Mull and surrounding islands to apply for support.

The fund's primary objective is to help promising new businesses to get off the ground by awarding small but transformational grants between £5,000 and £10,000. The fund is managed by independent grant-making charity Foundation Scotland, Scotland's community foundation, and is expected to re-open to applicants in the summer.

One of the grants awarded went to Seafood Eat Food Ltd, which received £5,220 towards its start-up costs for its new seafood enterprise.

Business partners Wil Craig and Mollie Macfarlane will be launching Seafood Eat Food in late March, supplying hospitality businesses in North Argyll and the Highlands with shellfish direct from the fresh waters around Mull.

By offering langoustines, lobsters, brown crab, oysters and mussels, and other local produce, they hope to showcase to the rest of Scotland the amazing produce the island offers, while buying directly from source.

Wil Craig, one of the partners in the new venture, said: 'With funding from the StartUpMull programme, we have secured shellfish holding equipment, mainly lobster and langoustine tanks, allowing us to guarantee 100 per cent fresh produce to our customers. We look forward to getting the ball rolling at the start of the 2022 season by showcasing what is arguably the best shellfish in the world.'

A grant was also awarded to Eas Fors, which received £7,000 to help develop its slow fashion business based in Gribun. The brother and sister team will design and manufacture high-quality,

## Dalmally glamping pods approved by planners

Plans for three glamping pods to be situated at Dalmally have been given the go-ahead by council planners.

The proposal by Jon Strickland for the site on land north of Pirnmill Cladich, in the village east of Oban, attracted no objections from the public.

The three self-contained units are single-storey structures, approximately three

metres tall, with an area of approximately 23 square-metres.

An Argyll and Bute Council planning officer said in a report: 'The pods will nestle into the site without breaking the skyline and where they will not be readily visible from any public vantage points or from the Cladich Steading to the southeast.'

'The site represents a suitable opportunity

within the minor settlement for this small-scale tourism development without having any significant adverse impact on the site or wider landscape.

'[It is also felt to be] one which will benefit the local economy in accordance with one of the central challenges for Argyll and Bute; that of delivering sustainable economic growth.'



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# Boost for two new ventures on Mull



Brother and sister team Joe and Flora McFadden are celebrating receiving one of the first grants made by StartUpMull. Their £7,000 award will help develop their new Mull-based sustainable knitwear business, Eas Fors.

**'The funds will cover most of our remaining start-up costs and allow us to launch our Isle of Mull-based knitwear business, Eas Fors, this year.'**

long-lasting knitwear clothing and accessories using high-quality lambswool. Every step from concept to the finished garment will take place on Mull, ensuring maximum use of local resources and minimum impact on the environment. Focusing initially on women's wear and accessories, the garments will be sold locally and more widely through its e-commerce website.

On receiving the grant, Joe McFadden from Eas Fors said: 'We were so pleased to hear we had been awarded the StartUpMull Grant. Having faced lots of challenges setting up a new business amid a pandemic, the funds will cover most of our remaining start-up costs and allow us to launch our Isle of Mull-based knitwear business, Eas Fors, this year. StartUpMull is a fantastic initiative to help up-and-coming busi-

nesses and we look forward to seeing it grow.' Chris Holloway, head of social investment for Foundation Scotland, was involved in assessing the StartUpMull applications: 'We were really encouraged to see such a high number of quality applications for our first StartUpMull awards.'

'To read about so many new business ideas for Mull and the surrounding islands proved that despite the challenges we've all faced since 2020, there is still a strong appetite and demand for new local enterprises. We look forward to following the progress of Seafood Eat Food and Eas Fors in the coming months and wish them every success.'

StartUpMull expects to announce details of its 2022 grant round in June. For the latest information visit its website.



Advertorial

Scottish Water is investing £3.4 million in Tarbert's waste water infrastructure.

## Out with the old, in with the new

Around one pound a day doesn't buy much these days – you wouldn't get a takeaway coffee or a bus ticket.

But around a pound a day is what we pay, on average, for the water and waste water services provided by Scottish Water to virtually all of Scotland. And for that pound we get a long list of things essential to our lives, including taking a shower, washing, cooking, heating our homes and having a cup of tea. It's a service many of us take for granted because we're used to our water and waste water services being there all day, every day. And, as a nation, we are very proud of the clean, clear water that comes from our taps, especially when we think of tap water elsewhere.

We pay our water and waste water charges alongside our council tax bills, which means it's a bit out of sight, out of mind. Now though, the service we take for granted is at a crossroads. Much of the infrastructure, including treatment works and pipes need replaced. Some of it dates back to Victorian times.

The other big challenge is climate change. It's a reality that is having an impact now. More extreme weather means there's heavier rain that causes more flooding of our streets and homes, while drier spells in summer means there's less water to use and sometimes the quality of it drops.

For these reasons, publicly-owned Scottish Water is going through a multi-billion pound transformation including a big increase in the money to be invested in new infrastructure, from around £600 million a year at the moment to £1 billion a year in future.

And that means customer charges will need to increase. Douglas Millican, Scottish Water's chief executive, said: 'I am very proud we have been recognised as delivering the best customer service in the UK water sector. But to continue to deliver the service we all rely on, we must transform Scottish Water to

meet the challenges of replacing our ageing assets and responding to climate change. That will mean higher levels of investment and while some of that money will come from us doing things even more efficiently and some from increased borrowing from the Scottish Government, it will also mean charges must go up.'

He added: 'I am determined we will make our charge increase slow and steady and as fair as we can. The support of our customers and communities is vital in everything we do at Scottish Water and I'm asking for their support now as we build our future water and waste water services together.'

### Improvements

One of the places Scottish Water is making improvements is the River Kelvin.

The multi-million pound investment in new infrastructure will help prevent items which are wrongly flushed down the toilet getting into the river due to extreme rainfall.

The project requires upgrade work at 11 locations along or near the River Kelvin.

More info: [www.scottishwater.co.uk/in-your-area/investments-in-your-area/river-kelvin](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/in-your-area/investments-in-your-area/river-kelvin).

A waste water treatment process which maximises the production of biogas has helped a Scottish Water site at Nigg, Easter Ross, to transform its carbon footprint and start exporting energy to the national grid.

The CAMBI thermal hydrolysis plant was installed 20 years ago at Nigg Waste Water Treatment Works and since a programme of upgrade work was carried out over the past couple of years, it has now halved its CO2 emissions since 2019.

More info: [www.scottishwater.co.uk/About-Us/News-and-Views/2021/11/161121-Nigg-WWTW](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/About-Us/News-and-Views/2021/11/161121-Nigg-WWTW).

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# WHERE TO SPEND



## Where can you spend your Christmas Love Oban vouchers?

Many people over Christmas, received the gift of Oban and the treasured Love Oban Gift Voucher, but where do you spend them?

More than 80 businesses in Oban now accept the vouchers. From florists to a tasty treat, Oban is brimming with fantastic places to tempt you to spend locally. This week we have listed just some of the businesses to visit. Love Oban Vouchers, also known as the Oban Pound, were set up by BID4Oban to encourage spending in local shops, restaurants and businesses. 'The highly successful initiative helps keep money in Oban and spent with local independents, said BID4Oban chief executive Andrew Spence. Andy added: 'We have a lot of new local businesses opening in the town and given what we have just been through, it's clear the town is extremely vibrant and people have the confidence in Oban to invest. We are a destination town and a key hub.'

### Why should a business accept the vouchers?

When asked, Andrew Spence from BID4Oban said 'Love Oban Vouchers support local businesses. They have generated significant sales over the last nine years and encourage customers to Shop Local, Use Local and Buy Local. The face value of the vouchers can be redeemed by the participating business and we aim to credit your account within one week. The scheme is easy to use with minimal paperwork. Any business that wants to accept them can do so by contacting Kay or Andy at the BID4Oban Office.'

### Are you wanting to love Oban more?

The Love Oban Vouchers make ideal presents for weddings, anniversaries, and birthdays, or just to say thank you to someone. In denominations of £10, £20, £50, they are the perfect gift for any occasion. As well as buying Love Oban Vouchers directly from the BID4Oban office in Stevenson Street, you can purchase vouchers from the following businesses. The Sports Shop Oban, Argyll Square; Webster's of Oban Photographic Centre, George Street; Alba Artshop, Albany Street; Button Nose Boutique, Airds Crescent, and Etive Restaurant, Stevenson Street. Alternatively, you can go online to the BID4Oban website and purchase them in denominations of £10, £20 and £50, but in as high a value as necessary. <https://www.bid4oban.co.uk/overview-love-oban>

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# LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT

YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S ON IN ARGYLL AND LOCHABER

## Tribute paid to Rinns of Islay in new symphony

by Sandy Neil  
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

Islay has inspired a new 20-minute symphony by Perth composer Helen MacKinnon, which has been performed by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

The Rinns of Islay presents 'a musical journey around the Inner Hebridean island', which was home to the composer's grandparents and generations before.

Inspired by stories of Islay in her youth, Helen began sketching the work during her composition studies at The University of Glasgow and returned to complete the work nearly 15 years later.

The 20-minute piece for symphony orchestra was recorded in Glasgow Royal Concert



Hall, with American-based PARMA Recordings and GRAMMY-winning producer Brad Michel.

Helen, who grew up in Lochgilphead, explained: 'It was a privilege to record with Scotland's national orchestra.

'The musicians and conductor David Watkin breathed glorious life into the work, which takes us on

The Rinns of Islay presents 'a musical journey' around the island, which was home to the composer Helen MacKinnon's grandparents and generations before.

Photograph by Fraser Band.

a musical journey around the island. Due to Covid, we had a cross-Atlantic recording team, with technology connecting a producer in Boston with a team on the ground in Glasgow. It was a fascinating experience.'

The new orchestral work was inspired by Islay's stunning natural environment, known for its rich terrain and peaty whisky.

Five short thematic movements celebrate Islay's sunrises and coastal shores, while giving a playful nod to the island's abundant whisky industry.

Helen added: 'The work centres around The Rinns - a beautiful peninsula overlooking the Atlantic Ocean.

'My father used to talk about The Rinns of Islay and, as a child, I started to create stories

and soundscapes linked to the island. The work offers a visual, almost cinematic listening experience, with atmospheres and landmarks inspiring the visual imagination.'

The work features on a new album Legends and Light Vol. 2, featuring works by seven composers.

While many of the pieces are arranged for orchestral ensembles, listeners will also find Highland bagpipes and Irish Uilleann pipes featured on the album.

Helen is delighted with feedback so far: 'I'm thrilled with audiences' responses to the music.'

'Listeners have tuned in from across the UK, the USA and as far afield as New Zealand, keeping Scotland on the international map for new music.'

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# Glasgow Letter

**ROBERT ROBERTSON**

robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk



When I read of Nanci Griffith's passing in August last year, I suddenly felt a deep sense of regret that I had never managed to hear her live.

I had known (and grown to love) her music since I was a really young boy listening to a cassette of hers my dad used to play in the car. While clearly there is no substitute for concerts by legends of her stature who are now sadly gone, Scotland Sings Nanci Griffith came pretty damn close last week at Celtic Connections.

Karen Matheson, James Grant, Emily Smith, Dean Owens, Jill Jackson, Megan Henderson, Lisa Rigby and Kirsten Adamson all shared in the singing of a comprehensive selection of Nanci Griffith's best-loved songs and were backed by a simply incredible house band led by musical director, Stuart Nisbett.

There were upbeat moments where the concert hall clapped along with the likes of Jill Jackson's rendition of Lonestar State of Mind and James Grant's performance of the Pete Seeger classic If I Had a Hammer, a regular fixture at Nanci Griffith concerts. Then there were numerous moving moments such as Emily Smith's rendition of Troubled Fields, which I always think is a song that can speak to any rural community.

Without any hint of bias, of course, I loved hearing a Lochaber accent in amongst it all with Megan Henderson's performance of Cold Heart, Closed Mind, as well as her



A well deserved standing ovation for the wonderful singers and musicians who performed at the Scotland Sings Nanci Griffith concert.

duet with James Grant on the stunning Gulf Coast Highway.

As the concert finished with all the singers and musicians together singing From a Distance, led by the always amazing Karen Matheson, it occurred to me that I could happily have sat and listened to the whole concert again, and again, and again.

## What's on at Celtic Connections

■ Gness, The Light of the Moon and Mairi McGillivray on Thursday at 7.30pm in the MacKintosh Church

■ RANT with The Ledger on Thursday at 7.30pm in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, New Auditorium

■ Mother Tongue: Kathleen MacInnes, Brendan Begley and Cynefine on Thursday at 7.30pm in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, Strathclyde Suite

■ Adam Holmes and Clare Sands on Friday at 7.30pm in the Drygate Brewery

■ The Sharon Shannon Quartet and the Trials of Cato in the Glasgow Royal Concert

Hall, New Auditorium on Friday at 7.30pm

■ Sing Me a Story – Cuir Seinn ri Seanachas at 7.30pm in the Mitchell Theatre

■ Transatlantic Sessions on Friday at 7.30pm in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall

■ Eabhal with The Friel Sisters on Saturday at 7.30pm in the Òran Mòr

■ RURA: Our Voices Echo and N'famady Kouyaté on Saturday at 7.30pm in the Theatre Royal

■ Sian with Michael McGoldrick Quintet and Leyla McCalla on Saturday at 7.30pm in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, New Auditorium

■ BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musical of the Year Final 2022 on Sunday at 5pm in the City Halls

## Pub Scene

**Park Bar**

Thursday: Session

Friday: Ellie and Ruairidh

Saturday: Scott Harvey

Sunday: Seonaidh MacIntyre and Ian Smith

# Mod brought £1.2m boost to Highlands amid Covid

The Royal National Mòd 2021, which took place at Eden Court Theatre from October 8-16, generated £1.2m for the Highland economy.

The 129-year-old event, which celebrates Gaelic language and culture, featured online and in-person competitions, performances and cultural activities, with 2,840 attendees to the city providing an economic uplift that helped support around 14 full-time jobs.

The national festival, organised by An Comunn Gàidhealach, elevated the Highland capital's tourism and hospitality sector during a quieter month in 2021, after the industries faced a difficult year due to Covid.

Allan Campbell, An Comunn Gàidhealach president, said: 'We are delighted that the 2021 Royal National Mòd has given the economy of Inverness and the surrounding area a significant boost in what was a difficult year for tourism in the city.'

'It is especially gratifying because we were not certain until August if the Mòd could take place on a face-to-face basis.'



'We are also absolutely delighted that the Mòd has played a crucial role in helping to offset the negative aspects of social isolation and some of the mental challenges caused by lockdown.'

'We very much hope that the Mòd in Perth in 2022 can go ahead in full.'

Councillor Calum Munro, chairman of Highland Council's Gaelic Committee, said: 'The Mod's economic boost to the Inverness and Highland economy is hugely welcome particularly during these difficult Covid times.'

# What's on at Oban Cinema

## Friday 4 February

Belle (English Dub) | 12A 16:15  
Sing 2 | U 16:30  
Scream | 18 19:00  
Belfast | 12A 19:30

## Saturday 5 February

Sing 2 | U 12:00/14:30  
Belle (English Dub) | 12A 14:30/17:00  
Maisie | 15 19:30  
Belfast | 12A 20:00

## Sunday 6 February

Spider-Man: No Way Home | 12A 11:30  
Sing 2 | U 11:45/14:30  
Belle (English Dub) | 12A 14:30/17:15  
Scream | 18 17:15  
Nightmare Alley | 15 19:45  
Belfast | 12A 20:15

## Wednesday 9 February

(screenings marked with ★ are captioned/subtitled)

Belle (English Dub) | 12A 11:15/17:00  
Sing 2 | U 11:30★/14:30★  
Spider-Man: No Way Home | 12A 14:00★  
Nightmare Alley | 15 17:00★  
Belfast | 12A 20:00★  
Scream | 18 20:00★

## Thursday 10 February

Belle (English Dub) | 12A 11:15/17:15  
Sing 2 | U 11:45/14:30  
Spider-Man: No Way Home | 12A 14:00  
Nightmare Alley | 15 17:00  
Scream | 18 20:00  
Belfast | 12A 20:15

## DEATH ON THE NILE COMING FRIDAY 11 FEBRUARY

### Belle (12A)

Anime

Suzu is a 17-year-old high school student living in a rural village with her father. For years, she has only been a shadow of herself. One day, she enters "U," a virtual world of 5 billion members on the internet. There, she is not Suzu anymore but Belle, a world-famous singer. She soon meets with a mysterious creature. Together, they embark on a journey of adventures, challenges and love, in their quest of becoming who they truly are.



### Belfast (12A)

Drama/Comedy

A semi-autobiographical film which chronicles the life of a working class family and their young son's childhood during the tumult of the late 1960s in the Northern Ireland capital.

### Maisie (15)

Documentary

For LGBTQ+ History Month. New feature length documentary MAISIE is an intimate portrait of ageing and friendship as Maisie Trollette, Britain's oldest performing drag artiste, prepares for his 85th birthday celebrations and meets Darcelle XV, Guinness World Record Holder and still performing at the age of 88, for the first time.



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Face coverings must be worn when moving within the building. Once seated you can remove your face covering. All showtimes are subject to availability and change. Updates can be found on our Facebook page.

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<b>MONDAY:</b>	8am-12pm 12-3pm 5pm-7pm 7pm-8pm 8pm-9pm 9pm	Breakfast show with Stephen Lunch with Bob G Drive Times with Marcus Highland Fling with Rosemary Calum McLuckies Show David Cullen Show
<b>TUESDAY:</b>	8am-10am 10am-12.30pm 1pm-3pm 5pm-7pm 7pm-8pm 8pm-9pm 9pm	Breakfast Show with Stephen Ken Hunter Macky on FM Drive Times with Archie Darling Highest Praise with Stuart Chalmers Scottish Sounds with Archie Cameron Oban Pride on the Waves with Jay & Crystal
<b>WEDNESDAY:</b>	8am-11am 11am-1pm 1pm-3pm 4pm-7pm 7pm-9pm 9pm	Breakfast Show with Stephen Comfort Zone with Lesley Doug in the afternoon Drive Times with Campbell Country meets Rock N Roll with Len Gordon's Grooves
<b>THURSDAY:</b>	8am-11am 11am-2pm 3pm-7pm 7pm-9pm 9pm-10pm 10pm	Breakfast Show with Andy & Sarah Lunch Show with Steve Drive Time with Stephen Christine's Collections Ann's Ceilidh Margo Till Midnight
<b>FRIDAY:</b>	8am-10am 10am-1pm 1pm-4pm 4pm-6:45pm 6:45pm-7pm 7pm-8pm 8pm-10pm	Breakfast Show with Anna & Phil The Brunch Show With The One Bob G Country, Rhythm & Blues show Teeny & Tiny Show with Harry & Janet Sports View with the Dream Team Country Meets Country with Jackie Craig Evening Show with Peter Rainnie
<b>SATURDAY:</b>	8am-10am 10am-1pm 2pm-4pm 6pm-7pm 7pm-8pm 8pm-10pm	Breakfast Show with Andy Saturday Morning Live with Linda Jukebox Jamboree with Ken Mc Sports View with the Dream Team Sounds Scottish with Archie Darling Evening Show with Dave Hobbs
<b>SUNDAY:</b>	9am-11am 11am-2pm 3pm-5pm 7pm-9pm 9pm	Sunday Morning with Breege Sunday Brunch with Stephen Mental Musings with Mer New Country Show with Dave & Murdoch Drum & Bass with Graham.

# Highland writer and teacher's delight at Young Quills Award

A Highland writer's children's book about a Lowland castle, printed by a Hebridean publisher, has won a top award from the UK's national charity for history.

The Siege of Caerlaverock by Inverness-based author Barbara Henderson, pictured right, published by Cranachan Publishing in Stornoway, has won the Young Quills Awards for Historical Fiction, in the ages five to nine category.

Barbara, an English and drama teacher, said: 'I am utterly humbled and delighted to win a Young Quills Award - I didn't expect it and still can't quite believe it!

'It's a book about a Lowland castle, by a Highland author, and published by a Western Isles publisher, so it feels very Scottish to me.

'I first visited Caerlaverock Castle with my family on a rainy day in April several years ago, and the story of the real-life siege in the year 1300 ambushed me and wouldn't let me go.

'My warmest thanks go to Anne Glennie of Cranachan Publishing - the wonderful small press behind The Siege of Caerlaverock. Anne's enthusi-



asm, advice and support have been more crucial than she'll ever know!

The Historical Association ran school pupils' reviews of the book, including this one from Emily: 'This tells the story of Ada who is 12. She is the cook's daughter and works as a laundress at Caerlaverock Castle in Scotland.

'She is in danger when the King of England attacks the castle with 3,000 men. There are only 60 men to fight back. Ada has to survive this and the attention of the castle commander who suspects her of helping a prisoner.

'I learnt about life in the Middle Ages and some historical vocabulary from this book.'

Another school pupil, Taz, added: 'This book is based on true events in Scotland, in 1300, where the Siege of Caerlaverock takes place.

'Ada is a daring character. Her father is the cook at the castle, she steals food from the kitchen to feed one of the prisoners. Ada makes friends with an eight-year-old page boy. Together, they have to try to survive the war and uncover traitorous plots.

'The author is good at describing the taste and smells

of life in the castle. I felt as though I was there with Ada. I learnt a lot from the book though, including historical words. I would recommend it to people who like learning about the Middle Ages.'

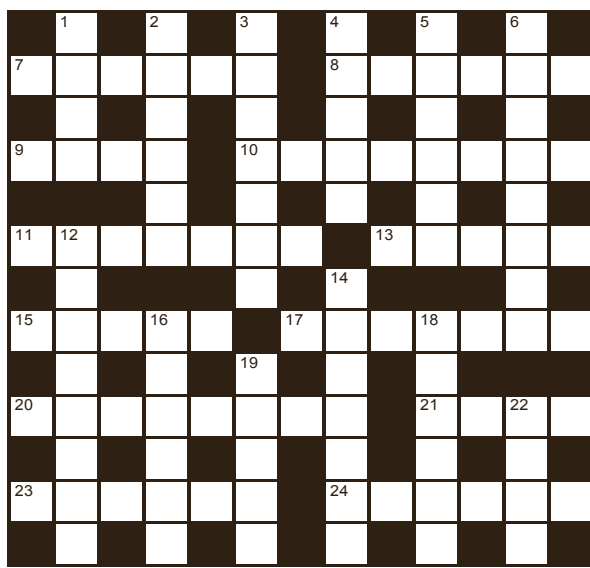
Matthew said: 'The book is very descriptive, interesting and fast-paced. Each chapter ends in an exciting way, which makes you want to read more.'

Barbara is the author of other historical novels, Fir for Luck and Punch, says Cranachan Publishing.

'Her energetic school visits are increasingly taking her across the length and breadth of Scotland, and sometimes beyond. As a drama teacher, she loves to get young people on their feet as they respond to stories.'

'Writing is like magic,' Barbara says. 'I see something in my imagination, and I try to capture it by writing it down - nothing more than black marks on white paper. Much later, young people see these black marks on white paper and suddenly they see something too, feel something of their own. I cannot think of anything more special than that.'

## CROSSWORD



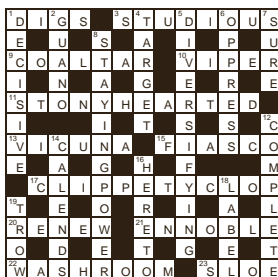
**Across**

- 7 Vulgar (6)
- 8 Make happen (6)
- 9 Prince in some Islamic countries (4)
- 10 Snowball (8)
- 11 Bestrew (7)
- 13 Trim (5)
- 15 Luxurious (5)
- 17 Florin of Netherlands (7)
- 20 Not old enough (8)
- 21 Competent (4)
- 23 Summer wear (1-5)
- 24 Except if... (6)
- 12 Dimness (8)
- 14 Pleasing to the ear (7)
- 16 Panoramic (6)
- 18 At risk (6)
- 19 Rash (5)
- 22 Wear well (4)

**Down**

- 1 Well-groomed (4)
- 2 Vivacity (6)
- 3 Ready for printing (7)
- 4 Thumb (5)
- 5 Confused (6)
- 6 Without penalties (4,4)

**LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION**



## Celebrating success at Argyll's N

by Sandy Neil  
[sneil@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:sneil@obantimes.co.uk)

Argyll's National Nature Reserves (NNRs) celebrated some great success stories in 2021, including sightings of the rare marsh fritillary butterfly at Glasdrum NNR.

Two sightings of the endangered butterfly were made at the reserve in June by local ecologist and Glasdrum butterfly transect volunteer Jessie Wormell.

The butterfly was first recorded at Glasdrum, on the shores of Loch Creran, in 1974 by Jessie's father Peter Wormell, an important figure in the NNR's designation.

The species has been recorded five times since on the reserve, the last sighting being



A rare marsh fritillary butterfly.



Moine Mhor peatland restoration work.

made by Andrew Masterman in 2016.

NatureScot reserve manager Heather Watkin said: 'This sighting was a definite highlight for us at Glasdrum this year, especially as it has been such a poor season for

butterflies across Argyll.

'Marsh fritillary relies on an abundance of its foodplant, devil's-bit scabious, which has done well towards the east of the reserve this year.

'It is interesting to note that this is the same section where

marsh fritillary has been recorded in the past.

'There are other known populations surrounding the reserve so hopefully, with an increase in devil's-bit scabious, we will continue to see this beautiful butterfly on the



# Disbanded art club draws on funds for Oban Open Draw

The Oban Art Society has generously donated funds to one of the Rockfield Centre's new public art initiatives, the Oban Open Draw, writes Sandy Neil.

Having recently disbanded, Oban Art Society wished to find a cause or outlet that furthers the practice of visual art-related activities within the community.

Facilitated and initiated by local artist Renuka Ramanujam, the open draw is modelled on the event of the same name in Amsterdam, and the idea is simple; artists, doodlers and those who want to simply be creative come together in a space with supplies, prompts and activities.

Strangers are encouraged to sit together - or draw portraits of each other, should they feel so bold - and the intention is to create a creative, safe and fun environment for anyone.

From January onwards, in an attempt to initiate skills sharing, there will be a monthly activity workshop within the draw session.

In an attempt to keep the sessions accessible, they are run on donations.

These donations go towards replenishing supplies and the use of facilities, which at the moment are generously given by the Rockfield Centre.

The Oban Art Society donation will go a long way in continuing these sessions and allowing for more exciting skills sharing during the sessions to come.

**Above, right: John Drummond Peterson of Oban Art Society hands over a cheque for £1,463.57 to Renuka Ramanujam of the Oban Open Draw. Right: people come together to share skills and ideas at Oban Open Draw.**



# ational Nature Reserves



**One of the Giants in the Woods.**

reserve in years to come. 'The reserve is a real hotspot for butterflies - it also hosts the rare pearl-bordered fritillary and is one of the last remaining strongholds for

chequered skipper butterflies in the UK.'

Elsewhere at Moine Mhor NNR, drone imagery has revealed some impressive results from peatland restoration works aimed at re-wetting as much of the bog as possible.

Restoring peatlands is one of the most effective ways of locking in carbon; offering a clear nature-based solution to both the climate crisis and biodiversity loss.

The 2020 work on the North Moss trialled new techniques such as peat bunding, and the new footage shows that one year on there has been significant re-wetting of the bog.

This year also saw the restoration of the Giants in the Woods at Moine Mhor NNR

with help from Kilmartin Primary School pupils and local artist Jane Walker.

These three fantastic sculptured heads made from willow weaving and foraged materials from the reserve are much-loved by pupils visiting the outdoor classroom.

Meanwhile Taynish NNR was also busy connecting people to nature through art with the return of the reserve's popular Art Trail after an absence due to the Covid pandemic.

The outdoor exhibition featured seven Argyll artists and included life-like herons, carved stone otters, poems and 'goddess' sculptures, and the reserve is looking forward to the trail returning for a seventh year in May 2022.

# M'ALBA

## MY ALBA

### DIARDAOIN 3 An Gearran THURSDAY 3 Feb

- 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- 19.00 Dealbhan Fraoich
- 19.30 SpeakGaelic
- 20.00 An Là – NEWS
- 20.30 Eòrpa – European Current Affairs NEW
- 21.00 'San Fhuil |It's in the Blood
- 22.00 Dana/Scotland's Wild Side
- 22.30 Slighean Trailleachd (Slavery Routes)
- 23.20 Cèilidh na Bliadh' Uire 2021 - Seudan

### DIHAOINE 4 Am Faoilleach FRIDAY 4 Jan

- 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- 19.00 An Là
- 19.25 Dàn
- 19.30 Machair
- 19.55 Fraochy Bay
- 20.00 Vets: Gach Creutair Beo
- 20.30 Fuine
- 21.00 Cuirn @ Celtic NEW
- 22.00 Peat & Diesel
- 23.00 Man in Room 301
- 23.45 ALT

### DISATHAIRNE 5 Am Faoilleach SATURDAY 5 Jan

- 16.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- 17.45 An Là
- 18.00 Scottish Premiership – St Johnstone v Dundee Utd.
- 19.45 Julie Fowlis | Ceòl aig Baile
- 20.00 Vets: Gach Creutair Beo
- 20.30 Golf: Mun Cuairt Alba
- 21.00 Cuirn @ Celtic NEW
- 22.00 Slighean Trailleachd (Slavery Routes)

- 22.50 Cèilidh na Bliadh' Uire 2021 - Seudan
- 23.00 Scottish Premiership – St Johnstone v Dundee Utd.

### DIDÒMHAICH 6 Am Faoilleach SUNDAY 6 Jan

- 14.00 SWPM – Rangers v Glasgow City
- 16.05 Siubhlachan/Time Traveller
- 16.40 Celtic Connections Shorts
- 16.45 An Là
- 17.00 Dàn
- 17.05 BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician of the Year
- 19.00 Seachd Là/News Review
- 19.30 BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician of the Year
- 20.00 Alleluia!
- 20.30 Eòrpa – European Current Affairs
- 21.00 Sàr-sgeòil – As the Women Lay Dreaming
- 22.00 'San Fhuil – It's in the Blood
- 23.00 Man in Room 301
- 23.45 Dealbh is Slighe

### DILUAIN 7Am Faoilleach MONDAY 7 Jan

- 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- 19.00 Turas a' Bhradain/ The Salmon's Journey
- 19.30 SpeakGaelic
- 20.00 An Là
- 20.30 Fuine
- 21.00 Trusadh – Return of the Sea Eagle
- 22.00 Piping Live
- 22.30 Opre le Daniel
- 23.20 Dàn
- 23.30 Dana | Scotland's Wild Side

### DIMÀIRT 8 An Gearran TUESDAY 8 Feb

- 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- 19.00 Dealbhan Fraoich
- 19.30 SpeakGaelic
- 20.00 An Là - NEWS
- 20.30 Gàrraidhean Mòra na h-Alba
- 21.00 Sàr-sgeòil – The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie
- 22.00 Trusadh – Return of the Sea Eagle
- 23.00 Machair
- 23.25 Dàn
- 23.30 Alleluia!

### DICIADAIN 9 An Gearran WEDNESDAY 9 Feb

- 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- 19.00 Turas a' Bhradain – The Salmon's Journey
- 19.30 SpeakGaelic
- 20.00 An Là - NEWS
- 20.30 Golf: Mun Cuairt Alba
- 21.00 Opre le Daniel
- 21.50 Dhan Uisge
- 22.00 Scottish Premiership – Hearts v Dundee
- 22.45 ALT

### DIARDAOIN 10 An Gearran THURSDAY 10 Feb

- 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- 19.00 Julie Fowlis | Ceòl aig Baile
- 19.25 SWPL – Glasgow City v Celtic
- 21.00 An Là – NEWS
- 21.30 Eòrpa – European Current Affairs NEW
- 22.00 'San Fhuil |It's in the Blood
- 23.00 Slighean Trailleachd (Slavery Routes)
- 23.55 Cèilidh na Bliadh' Uire 2021 - Seudan



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## COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

### THE MACMILLAN BALL

(Held in honour of Kevin Lane) Saturday 19th March 2022

Caol Community Centre

Doors open at 6.30pm

Pre-dinner drink on arrival

3-course buffet dinner from 7.30pm

Bar open until 12.45am

Grand Auction/Raffle

Dancing to: The Great Glen Swing Band & Cheezy Gee Disco (tbc)

Tickets £35 per person

(All proceeds from the evening will go to Lochaber Macmillan) For ticket or table reservations contact Jeanette Lane on 07887 870483 or lochaberball@gmail.com

Or

Chris Jones on [cjones@btinternet.com](mailto:cjones@btinternet.com)

Dress Code: Men – Black Tie/Suit, Collar & Tie or Kilt/Trews

Ladies: Party Dress/Trouser Suit



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## North Argyll Blackface Sheep Breeders Association

## ANNUAL STOCK JUDGING

Held within United Auctions, Dalmally Auction mart

11th February 2022, 7pm for 7.30pm start

Open Top hogg class B.Y.O.B

## Around the markets

**United Auctions, Oban**, Tuesday January, 25 sold 824 sheep of all classes. Hogs sold to £100 for cheviot crosses from Mr Cameron, Hillside Farm, Kilchoan, while cast rams sold to £117 for cheviots from Mr MacDonald, Rhuilios, Barra. An increased entry on the year sold to favourable rates and to seller's satisfaction.

## Leading lots and prices:

HOGGS – CHEV – £100, Hillside; £89, Caddleton; £83, Kengharair; £79, Caddleton; £75, Gallanachmore; £72, Hayfield Estate. CROSS – £86, 2 Baligrundle; £85, Balnagown. BF – £94, Blarghour; £86, Hillside; £81, Ederline Estate; £72, Kilbride; £72, Blarghour; £70, Fidden.

EWES – TEXx – £100, Fidden; £94, Strontoiler; £92, £87, Ardlarach; £84, Fidden. CHEVx – £76, Srongorm. CROSS – £100, Ardlarach. BF – £80, Caddleton. MULE – £82, 2 Baligrundle.

RAMS – BFL – £95, Ardachy. SUFF – £80, Glenmachrie. TEX – £92, Garraron. CHEV – £117, Rhuilios; £100, Stroneskar; £96, Treshnish; £95, Torloisk. BF – £70, Fidden.

# Inflation to hit farm business margins

Rising costs will be crucial to farm business planning over the next six months as high rates of inflation impact the UK agricultural economy, according to the latest AHDB Agri-Market Outlook.

The aftershocks of EU exit, the economic ramifications of Covid and the ongoing energy crisis, with its knock-on effects on input prices, are all likely to put pressure on bottom lines over the next six months.

Sarah Baker, AHDB economic strategist, said: 'The pandemic has been unusual in economic shock terms both in its speed of onset and its magnitude, as well as its uneven impact across the economy as a whole. The agricultural industry has been particularly hard hit in a number of areas, such as the reduction of the

food service market or staff absences exacerbating labour shortages in abattoirs and across food processing caused by Brexit.

'Both Covid and EU exit have led to the so-called scarring of the economy – those permanent changes that will slow down its ability to return to 'normal'. These factors can be seen clearly in agriculture, both in supply chain management and in consumer behaviour.

'Overall, it will be a year of recalibration as individuals and businesses adapt to a new operating environment.'

AHDB's Agri-Market Outlook, produced every six months, is intended to highlight the various elements that will shape farming's fortunes to help levy payers plan, prepare and budget for the challenges

and opportunities ahead.

It features detailed market outlooks for each levy-paying sector – beef and lamb, cereals and oilseeds, dairy and pork – alongside sector-by-sector insight into retail and consumer demand for agricultural products.

**Key findings include:**

■ Beef production forecast +1% in 2022, as more prime cattle become available

■ Overall beef consumption forecast down -1% with beef imports forecast to grow slightly (+1%)

■ Exports of beef forecast to increase by over 10%, helped by higher domestic production and increased import demand on the continent

■ Increase in number of available lambs to kill, while lamb imports forecast to remain

low as New Zealand continues to pivot towards China and shipping costs high

■ Demand expected to fall 3% as restrictions ease and Easter demand improves, but environmental concerns play a role

■ A contraction in the breeding herd is expected, leading to a 2% fall in UK pig meat production, weighted towards the second half of 2022

■ Export markets remain challenging

■ Headline figures for 2022: Production down 2%, exports up 9%, imports up 1%, demand down 2%

■ GB milk production is forecast to end the 2021/22 season down on the year as high input costs impact yields

■ Overall, wholesale and farmgate prices are likely to remain supported through the

first part of 2022

■ Both globally and domestically, the wheat balance sheet remains tight, supporting prices

■ UK wheat area forecast up but barley area back on the year. A reduction in spring cropping in favour of winter drilling is driving this. Currently, winter crops are looking in good condition, however, current high input costs (e.g. fertiliser/fuel) could affect application programmes in the spring

■ Animal feed demand supported by livestock backlogs on farm

■ A rebound in brewers, maltsters and distillers barley demand is expected

■ Read the full outlook at [ahdb.org.uk/agri-market-outlook](http://ahdb.org.uk/agri-market-outlook)



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# Finance your dream



**If you are renovating, extending or converting an existing property a self-build mortgage might also work for you**

## Get VAT back

When you self-build or convert a property you can reclaim a substantial part of the Value Added Tax paid.

New builds are 'zero-rated' so your builder should not charge you VAT because they can claim it back themselves later.

Your claim for VAT on any other aspects eligible must be made within three months of completion and can only be done once – make sure you have claimed for everything because there is no second chance.

## Mortgages

When you build your own home you will always need a larger sum to begin, to buy land and pay to complete the first stage on site before the mortgage starts.

Typically, the standard self-build mortgage pays out at the end of six key points:

- Land purchase
- Preliminary costs and foundations
- Wall plate level (brick and block) kit erected (timber frame)
- Wind and watertight
- First fix and plastering
- Second fix and completion



**With separate forms for different categories of materials and fixtures, hiring an expert to make the claim can be a wise move.**



## No mortgage? Try the loan fund

The Scottish Self Build Loan Fund has committed more than £5 million in loans of up to £175,000 to self-builders across Scotland unable to obtain mainstream self-build mortgage finance.

The Loan Fund is administered on behalf of the Scottish Government by the Communities Housing Trust, an Inverness-based charity.

Last year, the Scottish Government added another £2 million to the Loan Fund, and extended the time. It is now open until August 31 this year; the loans must be repaid by August 2023.

The loans are repaid when the homes have been completed, by acquiring a standard residential mortgage.

Loans already repaid are now being 'recycled' to finance additional builds, allowing even more people to build their own homes.

For more information about the Self Build Loan Fund, and to apply: <https://www.chtrust.co.uk/scotland-self-build-loan-fund>.



**Make sure you have the correct insurance cover for your project. NEVER proceed without it.**

## Backwoodsman

Established 1978



[www.backwoodsman-stoves.co.uk](http://www.backwoodsman-stoves.co.uk)

Barcaldine OBAN Argyll PA37 1SG Tel. 01631 720539

## The wood burner is seen as a desirable addition to any glamping accommodation

Indeed statistics show that customers are more drawn to staying somewhere featuring a stove than accommodation without; the draw of a real fire adds a winning combination of comfort and romance that is hard to beat and helps to entice use of the accommodation throughout the chilly winter months.

The Charnwood Aire 3 with pod is a complete, quick-fit fireplace solution designed specifically for glamping accommodation and small space living. Comprising of their ultra efficient Aire 3 log burner and a safe and secure enclosure, the Charnwood Stove Pod is perfect for cabins, yurts, tents, boats and huts. The stove delivers a range between 1.5 – 5kW and meets with Ecodesign 2022 requirements and the package comes with a 10 year guarantee giving you peace of mind.

To discuss your options further please call us on 01631 720539. [www.backwoodsmanstoves.co.uk](http://www.backwoodsmanstoves.co.uk)



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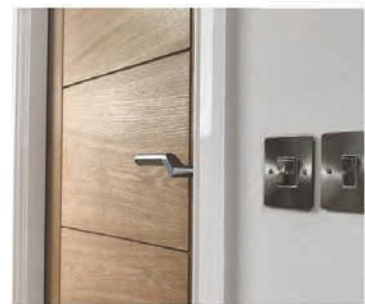


# Timber Frame Kits

you can rely on...



**M**acLeod Construction Ltd are your complete construction company whether you are taking the self-build or full build option. They can cater for all your construction needs.



Stylish, spacious, affordable homes customised just for you



MacLeod Construction Ltd is the largest timber frame design and manufacturing company in the area with over 40 years' experience and a proven track record in quality timber frame construction. In their Lochgilphead factory they use innovative technologies, methods and materials to manufacture precision timber frame kits. Their approach is quick, easy and accurate.

As a family run business they are passionate about everything that they do and timber kit supply is at the heart of that. You can choose one of their own quality house designs or work with them on your own bespoke designs. MacLeod Construction Ltd can cater for all your timber frame needs.

Mairi Coleman Business Development Manager said, "Our timber frame kits have always been popular but now they are more in demand than ever. The speed and efficiency of construction are some of the main benefits of

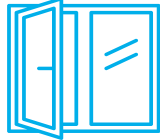




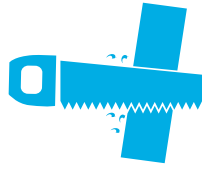
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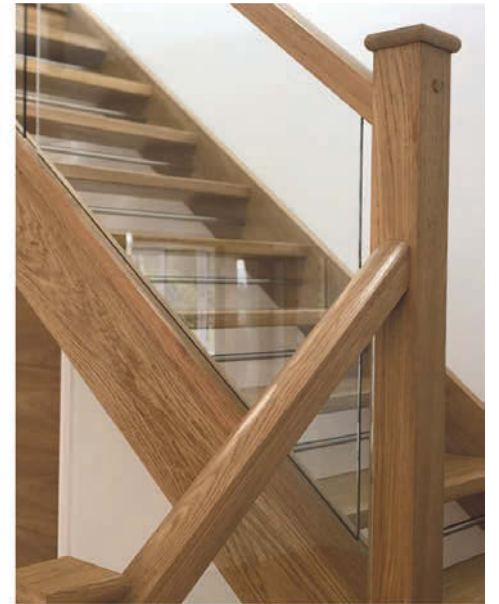
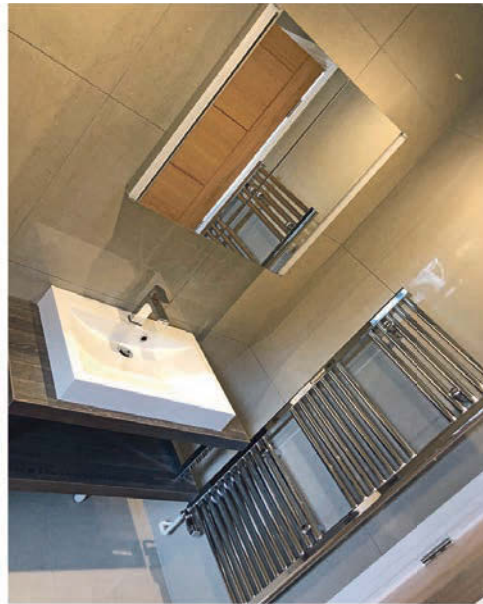
Windows & Doors



Joinery & Refurbishment



Conservatories



a timber frame kit. We ensure that our designs are energy efficient through high levels of insulation, double glazing and are adapted for the latest in renewable technologies. We offer kit supply nationwide for self-build or a full build service in Argyll, so we have everyone's needs covered."

MacLeod Construction Ltd offer a full range of building services. Working together with you they can help make your future dream home a reality.

- Plumbing & Electrical
- Windows & Doors
- Conservatories
- Roofing
- Joinery & Refurbishment
- Building Aggregates (Sand & Stone)

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# Land, plans and permission

## Get plotting!

Location, location, location is what they say but the formula for self-build should be location + affordability + feasibility = dream home.

You have seen a plot in the right location but can you afford it? Does it need remedial work laying land drains or waste removal or excavating through thick rock before work can begin?

How feasible is installing utilities; mains water, drains and National Grid or private supply, septic tank or self-generation. How strong are the broadband and mobile signals? How remote is the plot and ease of access, as these can also ramp up the build-price.

What can you build there? Scotland's planning laws are strict about designs in historic conservation areas and sites of environmental and landscape importance.

## The importance of an architect

Be it land, plans or permissions, an architect is not just about design; they are one of your keys to success.

They negotiate planning permissions and building warrants with ease; know the best and latest methods of insulating and heating and have far better contacts within in the building industry than you could ever hope to achieve.

Architects' fees are part of your house building project's overall cost and are traditionally calculated in one of three ways.

- Percentage is based on the total construction costs in the building contract.
- Lump sum fees are best when the project can be clearly defined right from the start and has no surprises for either side.
- Time charged is the flip-side of that coin and best where the amount of work cannot 'reasonably' be seen; an agreed upper limit is needed.

Pre-application advice is available from your council's planning officers; always talk to your local council first.

You might not need planning permission; there are also householder permitted development rights for smaller alterations to properties. So much can be done within this legislation – another reason why you should talk to the planners first.

Today's planning system has an online service which is available around the clock for both professionals and members of the public alike, run by the Scottish Government in partnership with councils and planning authorities. You can do it all on the eDevelopment.scot website.



**Always remember the need to reach agreement on the method of paying fees with at the start and whether expenses will be included within the agreed fee or charged separately.**



**If you are planning to build, extend or convert in a conservation area, National Scenic Area, or Site of Special Scientific Interest, then extra consent must be applied for.**



**Study the local plan, and keep your eyes and ears open. Financial problems, post Covid, could see businesses of all kinds, charitable organisations and trusts looking to raise funds by selling off land.**

## Perfect planning

Planning permission is needed for a new build or a major physical change to an existing property or a change of use from industrial, agricultural, commercial or retail to domestic.

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Contact: 07788 233119





# Get building

## Find the kit that fits

Scotland loves timber-frame kits they are more than 85 per cent of the nation's new builds. They solve so many of the problems faced when building in Argyll and the West Highlands and islands

It is their ease of construction, good cost ratios and the fact that so much can be done off-site to get property weather tight as quickly as possible on-site.

But there are others vying for our affections: modular and SIPS are becoming more popular.

An off-the-shelf plan might be fine and all kits have the ability to be adapted to suit your needs: move a window to capture the view, have the kitchen over there or add an extra door here.

## Beat the heat bill

We face a worrying and uncertain future with energy costs but rest assured today's new build designs include top of the range insulation and opportunities for solar gain as standard with solar panels and heat source tailored to location, design and budget. You can also retrofit to renovation projects.

The design of your heating system will be decided by choice and circumstances; with items like solar panels and heat source tailored to location, design and budget.

Air source heat pumps extract heat from outside air just like a fridge extracts heat from its inside. Ground source heat pumps are more efficient than air source because heat is transferred by water, giving a greater capacity to hold heat.

And there is Scotland's favourite - wood - be it biomass systems or a log burning stove.



**Click to save - Visit [www.homeenergyscotland.org](http://www.homeenergyscotland.org). Did you know that most eligible households get around £5,000 of support through the Warmer Homes Scotland programme and on average reduce their heating bill by £300 per year?**



## Fixtures, fittings and finishing touches

Kitchens, bathrooms, stairs, doors and windows, fireplaces and garden landscaping all add ultimate personal touches to a self-build project, with carpets, flooring and soft furnishings as the final flourish, along with outdoor lighting and planting.

There has never before been such an incredible choice but remember, some choices have to be made fairly on in the project and as it progresses.

Oban-based Three Square Kitchen design company can make your dream kitchen become a reality.

Superb local craftsmanship blended with quality materials and a personal touch will make your kitchen the perfect fit for your home - and your life.

Unlike other kitchen suppliers who provide flat-pack units that need to be assembled before fitting, Three Square Kitchen units come ready-built and that means less disruption for you.

Each of their kitchens is designed to be unique to you with all those little details that really count.

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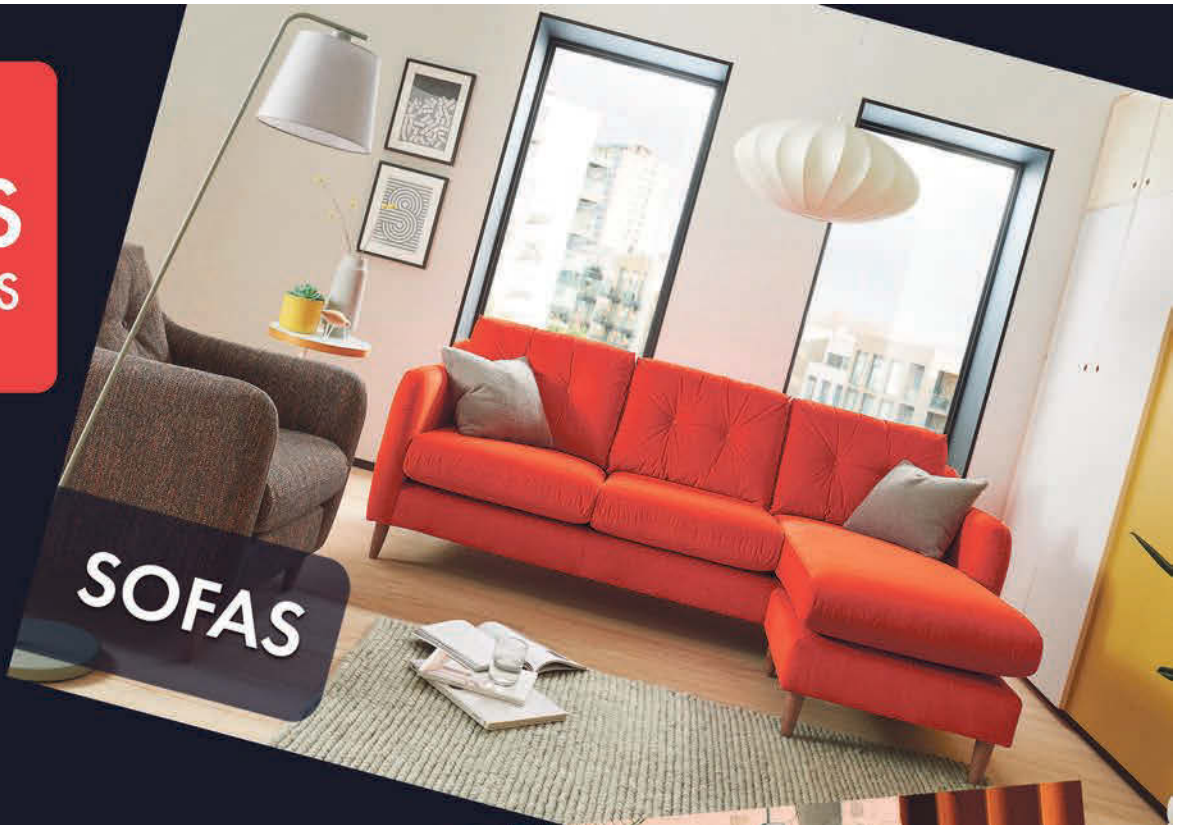
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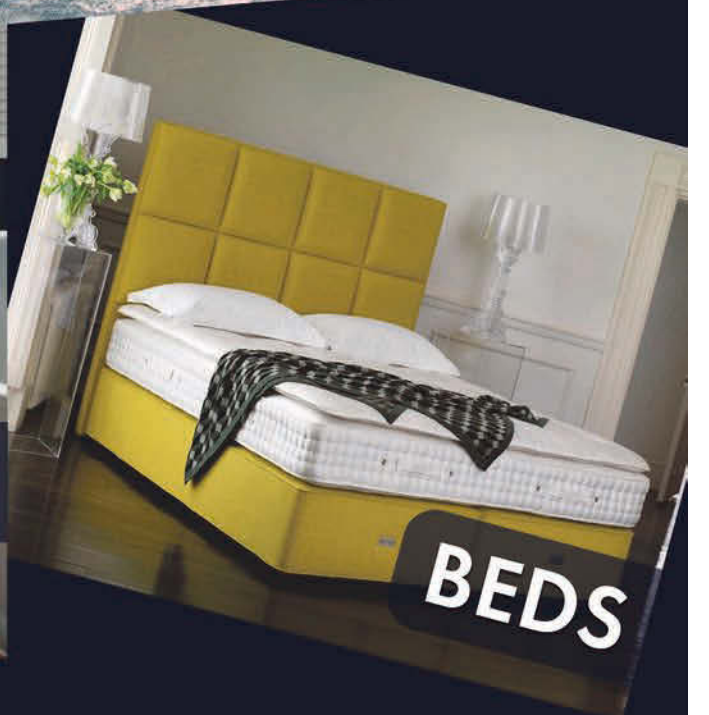
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**Please call or WhatsApp James on 07789 138028/ 07487 548703**  
Email: [wanted4x4s@gmail.com](mailto:wanted4x4s@gmail.com)

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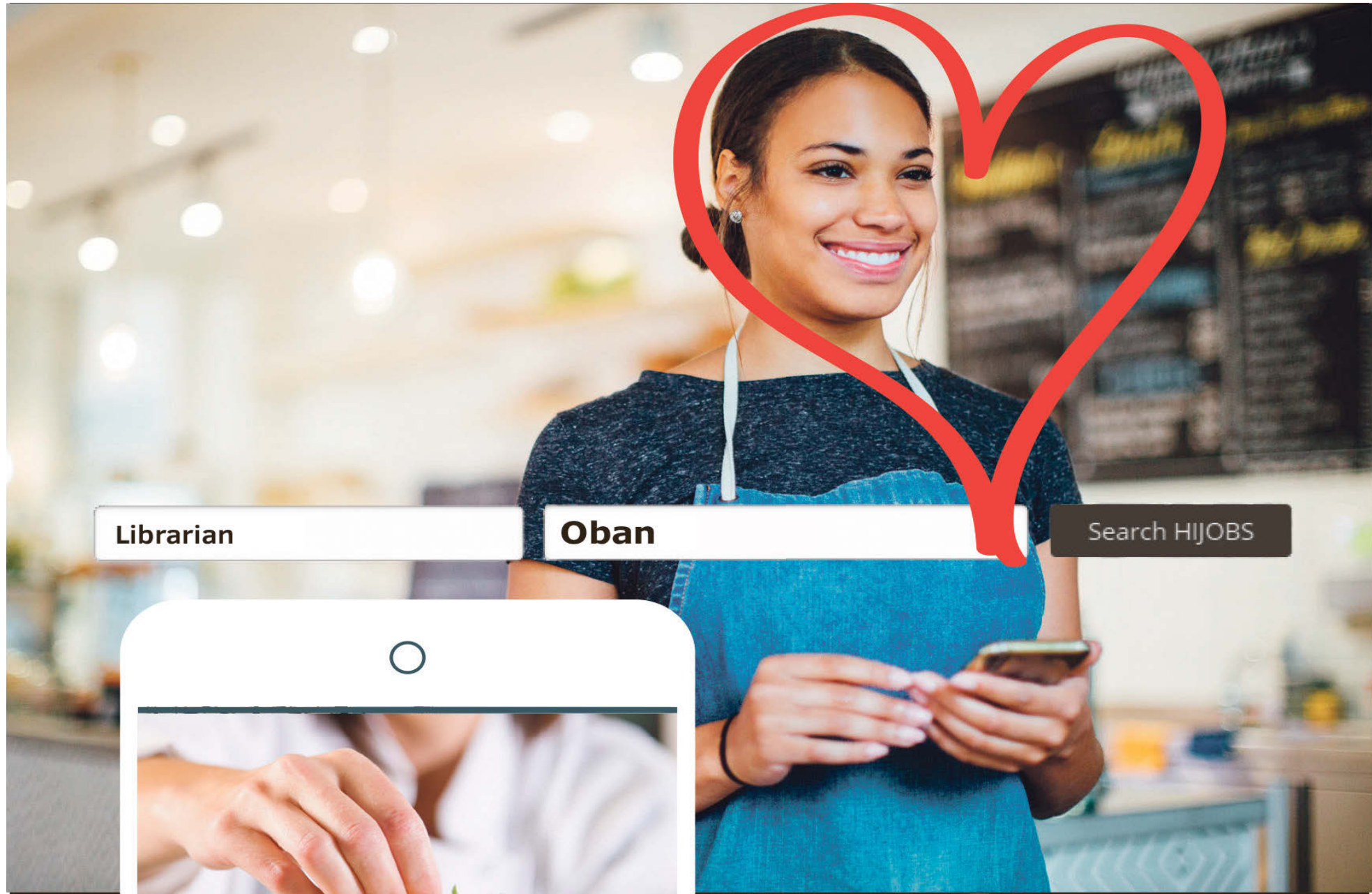


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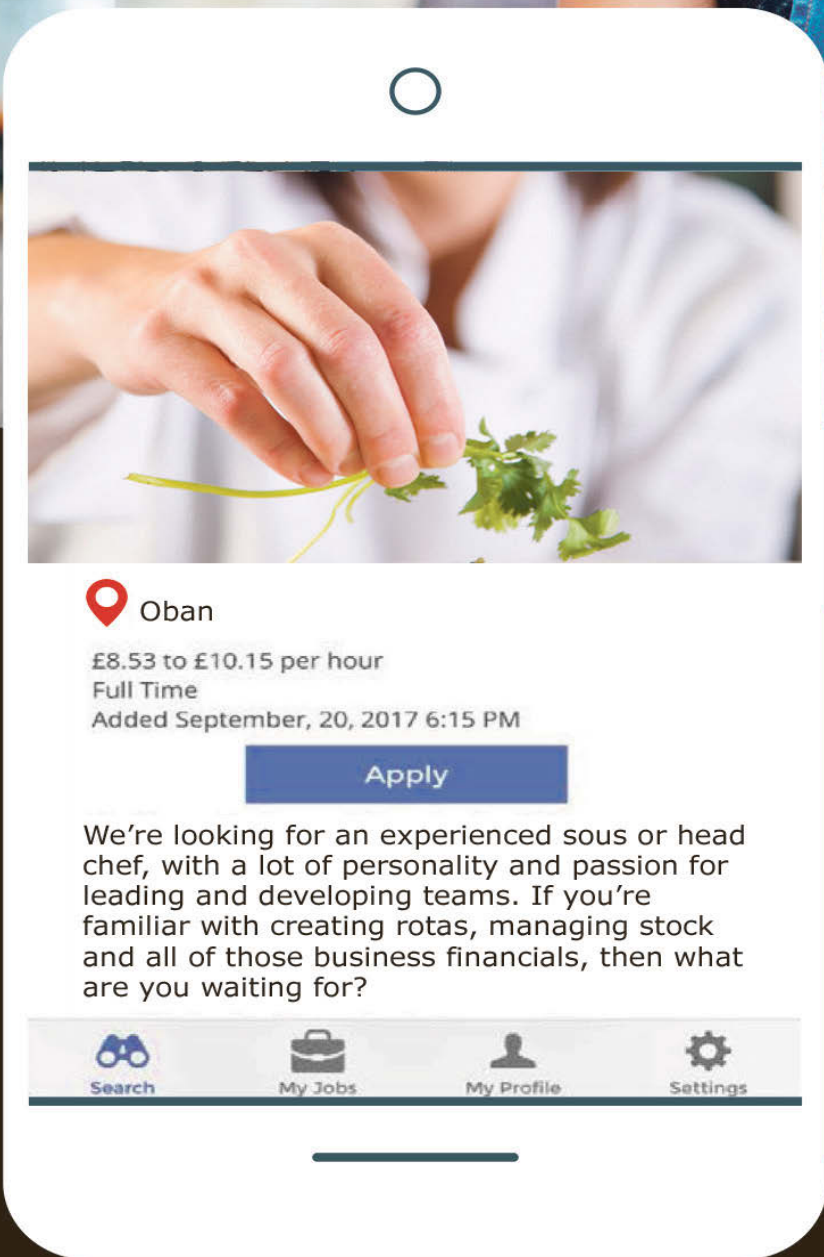




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agus nan Eilean  
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**Instructor - Beauty**

**Ref No: WHC IB 02**

West Highland College UHI is looking to recruit two Instructors in Beauty based at our Fort William and Portree Learning Centres.

The successful candidates will be required to deliver structured training to students using a variety of approaches to enable them to meet the standards required. Carrying out assessments to the standards set by the industry/awarding body, maintaining accurate assessment records, evaluating student performance and achievement, making recommendations and highlighting support needs as appropriate are also requirements of the role.

An industry related qualification at SCQF level 6 or above, combined with recent relevant industry experience is essential. Experience as a trainer / instructor is desirable.

Successful candidates must be self-motivated and enthusiastic, with the ability to problem solve and relate to students of all ages.

**Location:** Portree and Fort William

(please state on application which location you're applying for)

**Salary:** Day rate £151 (based on a 7 hour day)

**Working Hours:** 7 hours per week on Wednesdays

Fixed Term Contract

3 weeks work in June 2022, followed by

36 weeks in Fort William from August 2022

33 weeks in Portree from August 2022

**Closing Date:** 27th February 2022, 12 noon

**Interviews:** 9th March 2022

**How to Apply:**

For an application form and further details visit our website

[www.whc.uhi.ac.uk](http://www.whc.uhi.ac.uk) or email [hr.whc@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:hr.whc@uhi.ac.uk)

*In line with our Equality and Diversity policy, West Highland College UHI is committed to ensuring that all candidates are treated on the basis of their merits and abilities, and that unfair and unlawful discrimination is eliminated. We positively welcome applications from all sections of the community.*



University of the  
Highlands and Islands  
West Highland College

Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd  
agus nan Eilean  
Colaiste na Gàidhealtachd an Iar

**Lecturer - Beauty**

**Ref No: WHC LB 03**

West Highland College UHI is looking to recruit a Lecturer in Beauty, based in Fort William, to teach SCQF Levels 1-6.

The successful candidate will ideally hold a minimum qualification of SCQF Level 7 or equivalent level qualification in a relevant subject and/or have at least 5 years relevant sector work experience.

Successful candidates must be self-motivated and enthusiastic, with the ability to problem solve and relate to students of all ages. Experience using digital technologies for learning and teaching is desirable.

Job share is possible – please state in your application if you wish to be considered for this, and include your availability.

**Location:** Fort William

**Salary:** Pay will be on our teaching scale P1-5 £34,170 - £42,357 per annum (pro-rata, with placement dependent on teaching qualifications)

**Working Hours:** 27 hours 25 minutes per week

Fixed Term Contract for 39 weeks, paid over 52 weeks

(starting August)

**Closing Date:** 27th February 2022

**Interviews:** 9th March 2022

**How to Apply:**

For an application form and further details visit our website

[www.whc.uhi.ac.uk](http://www.whc.uhi.ac.uk) or email [hr.whc@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:hr.whc@uhi.ac.uk)

*In line with our Equality and Diversity policy, West Highland College UHI is committed to ensuring that all candidates are treated on the basis of their merits and abilities, and that unfair and unlawful discrimination is eliminated. We positively welcome applications from all sections of the community.*



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**CLEANER**

£15/hour, for mid Argyll holiday home. Mostly Saturdays, occasional Fridays/Sundays/other. If you are enthusiastic about having delighted guests, we would love to hear from you, even if not available all days or every week, as a job share is possible.

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Unit 7 is located within Nevis Square, Fort William - fitted with basic electrical provisions, lighting and washroom facilities and is available for the accepted tenant to move in immediately. The unit benefits from an open layout with good clearance and has adequate floor space to allow a small business to operate.

**Closing date:** 18 February 2022

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**Rent:** Offers invited

For further details or an application form please contact:  
Christopher Kyle - t: 07827 231608 e: [christopher.kyle@bidwells.co.uk](mailto:christopher.kyle@bidwells.co.uk)



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# PUBLIC NOTICES

**Argyll and Bute Council**  
**PLANNING**


The applications listed below together with the plans and other documents submitted with them may be viewed electronically through Argyll and Bute Council website at [www.argyll-bute.gov.uk](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk). Having regard to Schedule 6, Part 3, s10 of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020, documents are only available to inspect electronically at this time. Customers requiring assistance can contact us by e-mail: [planning.hq@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:planning.hq@argyll-bute.gov.uk) or tel. 01546 605518.

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT**  
**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED), RELATED PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997**

Ref. No.	Proposal	Site Address
21/02473/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, installation of sewage treatment plant and formation of access	Land Between Barronrioch Mews And Barran Brae, Glencruitten, Oban, Argyll And Bute
21/02315/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, detached garage with storage and office facilities, installation of biodisc treatment system and formation of vehicular access	Land North Of Greenbank, Kilmaluig, Isle Of Tiree, Argyll And Bute
21/02717/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse and shed, installation of biodisc treatment plant and formation of vehicular access	Land East Of Pine View (Plot C), Barcaldine, Oban, Argyll And Bute
21/02613/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse and garage	Plot 3 Achnacree Bay View, North Connel, Oban, Argyll And Bute, PA37 1AF
21/02609/PP	Erection of post smolt seawater re-circulating aquaculture system (RAS) unit with ancillary building with water treatment, waste treatment, PH Regulation and workshop; separate seawater pumping station	Scottish Sea Farms Ltd, Barcaldine, Oban, Argyll And Bute, PA37 1SE
21/02729/PP	Renovation and erection of extensions, installation of air source heat pump and re-location of existing roof mounted pv panels to a ground array system	Brandon Cottage, Balvicar, Oban, Isle Of Seil, Argyll And Bute, PA34 4RD
21/02334/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, installation of septic tank and formation of access	Land Opposite The Old School House, Ardbeg, Isle Of Islay, Argyll And Bute
21/02393/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse, 3 holiday cabins and ancillary building	Land Adjacent To Braeside, Portnahaven, Isle Of Islay, Argyll And Bute

Written comments can be submitted online <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/find-and-comment-planning-applications> or to Argyll and Bute Council, Development Management, Kilmory Castle, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence. Any letter of representation the Council receives is considered a public document and will be published on our website. Anonymous or marked confidential correspondence will not be considered. A weekly list of all applications can be viewed on the Councils website. Customers are requested to use electronic communication where possible during the coronavirus pandemic as our ability to process postal mail is restricted.

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us at:  
[www.argyll-bute.gov.uk](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk)  
Comhairle Earra – Ghàidheal agus Bhòid



[www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk)

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Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997**  
**PLANNING (LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997**

The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined online at <http://wam.highland.gov.uk>;

Written comments should be made to the EPC at the contact details below within the time period indicated from the date of this notice. Anyone making a representation about this proposal should note that their letter or email will be disclosed to any individual or body who requests sight of representations in respect of this proposal.

Reference Number	Development Address	Proposal Description
21/05879/FUL	Land 55M NW of Cuidlorag Cottage, Onich	Erection of house
21/05888/PIP	Land 300M SE of Sandaig Lodge, Sandaig Bay, Inverie, Knoydart	Erection of house
21/05929/LBC	Laudale House, Ardgor, Fort William, PH33 7AF	Alterations & extension to existing outbuildings next to Laudale house
22/00251/LBC	Glenfinnan Railway Viaduct	Inspection coring works, ballast retention, installation of handrails and scour protection works
22/00253/FUL	Development Site in Grounds of Auchendarroch, Achindarroch Road, Duror	Erection of 2 houses
22/00263/PIP	Development Site in Grounds of Auchendarroch, Achindarroch Road, Duror	Demolition of steading and erection of house

**Time period for comments is 14 days from the date of this notice with the exception of 21/05929/LBC & 22/00251/LBC which is 21 days**  
ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX  
Email: [eplanning@highland.gov.uk](mailto:eplanning@highland.gov.uk)

**FIRST REGISTRATION OF A CROFT**  
Prof John G Day & Mrs Gillian W Barton register their croft, Croft 4 Ichrachan, Glenorchy & Innishail on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland. Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by the 11th September 2022. Details of the registration can be found at [www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home](http://www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home). The croft registration number is C8154

**CROFTING COMMISSION COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD APPLICATION TO CREATE A NEW CROFT**

South West Mull & Iona Development are applying to create 6 new crofts in the Parish of Kilfinichen & Kilvickeon. Case nos 113104, 113105, 113106, 113107, 113108, 113109.

Comments can be made to the Crofting Commission within 28 days of the date of this newspaper and a copy will be forwarded to the applicant.  
Crofting Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW – [info@crofting.gov.scot](mailto:info@crofting.gov.scot)

**LETTING OF CROFT TENANCY**

Richard and Dr Claire Cronin are applying to let the tenancy of part of Croft 24 Auchinahard, Kilfinichen and Kilvickeon to Thomas Cronin.

Written comments from those with a relevant interest (which may be made public) to:  
Crofting Commission, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW, [info@crofting.scotland.gov.uk](mailto:info@crofting.scotland.gov.uk) 11 March 2022.

**CROFTING COMMISSION COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD DECROFTING DIRECTION ISSUED**

1. Mansefield J G Limited, 4 Port Ellen, Housing Development, Fencing/Use Conditions (111095)

Full details at [www.crofting.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.crofting.scotland.gov.uk)



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## BIRTH

**CADZOW** - To Alexander and Rachel, a son, born on January 10, 2022 at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary.

## DEATHS

**DART** - Jeanette sadly passed away on January 20, 2022 at Exeter Hospital, aged 85 years. Will be greatly missed by all her family and friends. Funeral at Exeter Crematorium on Tuesday, February 15 at 1pm in St Paul's Chapel. Family flowers only, donations if desired for Alzheimer's Research UK may be sent to Le Roy Funerals, 10 Alphonson Road, Exeter EX2 8HH.

**FREW** - Suddenly, but peacefully at Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban on January 18, 2022, aged 80 years, Wilma Anne Frew, beloved wife of Dr Ronnie Frew, dearly loved mum to Colin and Carole and mother-in-law to Marjorie, devoted grandmother to Olivia and Carys, dearest sister to Elizabeth, Edith, Alison and Sheila. Wilma will be sorely missed by all her family and her many friends. The funeral will take place at Oban Parish Church on Tuesday, February 15 at 12.00 noon. Cremation will take place at Inverness Crematorium on Wednesday, February 16 at 1.00 pm. Family flowers only please. Donations in lieu of flowers can be made directly to Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland or R.N.L.I. using the link [www.wilmafrew.muchloved.com](http://www.wilmafrew.muchloved.com)

**HAYWARD** - Suddenly at home, with family by her side on Saturday, January 29, 2022, Catherine of 9 Longsdale Crescent, Oban. A much-loved

mother, grandmother and sister and good friend to many. Sadly missed. A date for a memorial service will be confirmed and friends are warmly invited to attend.

**MACLEAN** - Neilina. It is with deep sadness that the family of Neilina (Lena) Maclean née MacDonald of the Isle of Tiree and Mull report her peaceful passing at Edinbarnet Nursing Home on January 27, 2022. Lena was the beloved wife of the late John, and much loved mother to Janette, William and Niall. Her children thank all those who contributed to her care. The funeral service will be held at Faifley Parish Church at 12pm on Monday, February 7. Thereafter at North Dalnottar Cemetery. Family flowers only. She will be greatly missed. Aig fois.

**ROBINSON** - Suddenly and tragically at home on January 15, 2022, aged 41 years, Rebecca Jean Robinson (Beckie), much loved partner, mother and daughter, sister, aunt, and dear friend to many. Sorely missed by all who knew her. Funeral date to be announced. Enquiries to Hamish Hoey & Son Ltd, Tel: 01631 562269.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**CAMERON** - Cathie, Janet, Bobby, David and all the family of the late Ann would like to sincerely thank everyone who kindly phoned, sent cards, messages and flowers, stood in the street, and attended at Oban Parish Church and Pennyfuir to pay their respects. Thanks to Petals for their beautiful flower arrangements and to Soroba House for their refreshments and warm hospitality. Sincere thanks to Rev Ken Hunter for

his comforting, fitting service for Ann, and his company. To Ian and all at D & A Munn, grateful thanks for their guidance, kindness, care and thoughtfulness. Finally, to Ann's Eadar Glinn family, heartfelt thanks for their loving care and attention for Ann over the past 14 years, where she was safe and so well cared for. The collection at the service gathered £409.00 for Eadar Glinn Residents Comfort Fund.

**FOGGO** - Yasmin and family would like to express their heartfelt gratitude for all the cards, flowers and messages of sympathy after the recent loss of David. We're exceptionally grateful to all at John McLellan & Co Funeral Directors for their kindness, compassion and support during this difficult time and to Alyson Stewart for such a personal and fitting tribute to David during his funeral service. In addition, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to Lochaber Macmillan nurses who treated and supported David during his illness, to the staff at Oban Hospital for the care, kindness and compassion shown to him during his time there in December and to the community nurses and GPs who tended to him in his final days. A special thank you also goes to Corries and the Hire Centre for the support given during David's illness and also for arranging the display of flatbed trucks, digger and work vans on the day of his service. The support we have received from everyone at this very difficult time is very much appreciated.

## MEMORIAM

**MACLEAN** - Cherished memories of Ian (Cleasy), a much loved son, brother and uncle, who died February 5, 2004. Memories are a gift to treasure, ours of you will last forever.  
- Mum, Ann, Sandra and families.

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Stunning East Lothian garden... Artist Naomi Rae...  
Scents of the forest... Deer management...*

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**BEHIND THE SCENES AT ATLANTIS LEISURE**

Off into another year we go. It always feels good to get back into a rhythm after the holidays and this year is no different.

And after the uncertainty caused by the re-introduction of some Covid restrictions before Christmas, the reduction of these is firing the Atlantis team up even more.

Read on to find out what's been happening at the centre as we kick off 2022:

**Normal service resumes**

Following the return of certain restrictions as part of the response to the Omicron Covid variant, the government announced the easing of some of these in January.

This is great news for Atlantis as the restrictions had a significant impact on the way our activities could run. The easing means we can revert to 1m social distancing which allows us to go back to normal capacity within the gym, move fitness classes back to their home in the dance studio and welcome back contact sports.

**New covers please**

This month's installation of new covers for both swimming pools is a big step towards Atlantis realising its environmental goals as it keeps heat in the water overnight

New gym equipment started arriving last month and is due to be installed in the coming weeks. The newly upgraded gym will be ready by the end of February.

**Atlantis in the community**

Five of the Atlantis team joined colleagues from across the Highlands to start a six-day leadership training course with the Social Enterprise Academy this month.

Atlantis is acting as an anchor organisation for this edition, funding the training for others joining from Oban Phoenix Cinema, Hope to



**Claire Keen and Cameron Johnson with their Level 3 Gym Instructor certificates.**

Oban, Healthy Options and the community-run Mallaig Pool and Leisure Centre. Atlantis has worked closely with the Social Enterprise Academy for many years, with numerous past and present team members testifying to the enduring impact attending their courses can have.

**The team behind the action**

We welcomed a new member of staff to the team this month.

Lora MacLeod joined our leisure attendant and reception team, helping to cope with the increasing workload as we continue to implement our Covid recovery plan.

In addition to our Social Enterprise Academy course, training continues elsewhere.

Claire Keen and Cameron Johnson completed their Level 3 Gym Instructor certificates this month and we are planning a new pool lifeguard course to help continue the upskilling of the whole team's lifesaving expertise.

**Gift gives back to Healthy Options clients**

**Continued from page 48.**  
back into Healthy Options in June 2021.

This time there was no holding back the former teacher and Rotarian as his general health and mobility improved quickly through guided cardiovascular and resistance exercise.

Walter is now a different person and feels he has recovered much of his independence. He is more active at home and his posture has improved dramatically which has reduced his falls risk.

A key area to strengthen for those with poor posture is the muscles of the lower back which pull the body upright and Walter and his brother highlighted the fact that although Atlantis has a fantastic array of gym kit, it was missing a user friendly option to specifically target these muscles.

Walter and his brother kindly offered to buy a lower back machine for Atlantis Leisure in the knowledge that he and many other Healthy Options clients could benefit from its use. The equipment cost more than £2,000 and Walter and his family were kindly assisted through a £500 donation from



**Walter Burton checks out the lower back machine that he and his family bought as Healthy Options team members Claire Keen, Rob Graham, Ian Milarvie, Cameron Johnson, Donna Moore and Anna Gregory look on.**

the local Rotary Club. The new machine is now in situ at Atlantis Leisure and Walter has had his first training session on it. Senior exercise specialist Rob Graham told The Oban Times: 'Walter's story is a prime example of how Healthy Options can improve someone's physical condition and mental wellbeing and act as an early warning system when we see a worrying dete-

rioration in our client's health. 'Walter deserves huge credit for his determination to improve his health.'

The new equipment will sit well among a new range of gym kit which Atlantis will be installing this month.

Healthy Options launched its new 'Thrive' programme on Tuesday (February 1). More information at [www.lornhealthyoptions.co.uk](http://www.lornhealthyoptions.co.uk).



OT

## Youth shinty developments

Les Kinvig has been busy since taking on the Camanachd Association Regional Development Officer (West) role last August.

Les Kinvig said: 'The effects of Covid have blighted youth shinty in the west region. However, as well as in Oban, Glenorchy, Taynuilt Juniors, Inveraray and Kilmory have all gone to great efforts to get primary school shinty through what has been a difficult time and it is great to see clubs in the area providing these opportunities for young shinty players.'

'I really hope we can get school shinty back to normality though and get a full outdoor season for primary youngsters.'

There are ambitious plans, as Les explained: 'We want to have festivals and tournaments up and running and have an Argyll and Bute school league in place ahead of the national competitions so the players aren't going into these games cold.'

'There is also a need to re-establish area development groups to enhance shinty provision at primary and secondary level. We want to galvanise youth shinty through a collaborative approach between clubs and the association to develop the game and have a clear player pathway from primary to secondary school.'

'The rural nature of many clubs means it is more important than ever to work together to celebrate and sustain participation whilst maintaining the age-old tradition of representing your shinty community.'

Les Kinvig has already led taster sessions for primary school players at St Columba's Primary School, Oban, whilst sessions at Appin are currently taking place. Dalmally and Dunbeg are next on the list with others to follow.

Any volunteers able to assist with shinty in any way in the west region should contact Les by email at les.kinvig@shinty.com.

## Oban Celtic annual general meeting

Oban Celtic's annual general meeting at The Lodge, Albany Street, on Friday January 28 was a routine event.

Club president Andrew MacKenzie remains at the helm, with Vivienne Duffy as club secretary and second team fixtures secretary.

Shinty stalwart Dougie MacIntyre stays on as Oban Celtic first team manager, assisted by Allan Duffy.

Les Kinvig takes charge of the Oban Celtic second team, with John Turnbull senior

# Ferguson Transport & Shipping Balliemore Cup

The draw for the first round of the Ferguson Transport & Shipping Balliemore Cup took place on Monday January 31 at Ferguson Transport & Shipping HQ, Fort William.

2022 is the first year of Ferguson Transport & Shipping sponsoring the Balliemore Cup after a longstanding partnership with the Camanachd Association.

The draw was conducted by Ally Ferguson, managing director, Ferguson Transport & Shipping, along with fellow directors Jack Ferguson and Lesley Innes.

The first round was regionalised with the quarter final onwards an open draw.

Ally Ferguson said: 'I've been involved in shinty for more than 40 years and I know what it means to the communities that play the ancient game. Many of the areas in which we operate across Scotland play shinty



Ally Ferguson, centre, managing director of Balliemore Cup sponsors Ferguson Transport & Shipping with fellow directors Jack Ferguson and Lesley Innes. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

and that includes a number of our employees so we are delighted to extend our support for the sport by signing a three-year deal for title sponsorship of the Balliemore Cup.'

Derek Keir, Camanachd Association chief executive officer, said: 'We are delighted Ferguson Transport & Shipping has extended its sup-

port for shinty to encompass the title sponsorship for the Balliemore Cup – a national competition that always provides an exciting final. We now stand on the precipice of a full season once again and this draw will undoubtedly excite players, coaches and volunteers.'

Steven MacKenzie,

coming on board as assistant manager.

The management pool is strengthened with Calum Fox covering first and second team coaching and training.

Lennon Campbell will likely miss the opening weeks of the season as he finishes the football season with the Oban Saints second team. However, Michael MacKinnon has confirmed his availability to the club after missing a large part of last season.

Dougie MacIntyre's side have a couple of signing targets who could be confirmed ahead of their opening pre-season match against Lochaber at Mossfield on Saturday February 5. Throw-up time to be confirmed.

Oban Celtic will open their Mowi National Division campaign at home to Skye Camanachd on Saturday March 5. The Oban Celtic second team are away to Ardnamurchan on the opening day.

Kilmallie held their annual general meeting at Caol Community Centre on Saturday January 29 ahead of what will be a big year for the club as they return to the Mowi Premiership.

## Kilmallie annual general meeting

This was Kilmallie's first annual general meeting since January 2020 due to the Covid pandemic. Chairman Alistair Macintyre presided, thanking volunteers, supporters and players for their commitment during a really difficult couple

of years. The determined efforts of first team manager Martin Stewart and second team boss Kevin Toyne were acknowledged. The club also noted with regret Toyne's decision to stand down, with great encouragement taken from the bond within the squad and the number of young players coming through the ranks since he took up the post in 2018. Kevin Toyne will continue to serve Kilmallie as a player.

James MacIntyre, Corpach, stood down as a Kilmallie board member due to family and work commitments.

The MacIntyre family has been a huge part of the club since its foundation in 1929 and with James' father, Hugh 'Shep' remaining as club chieftain.

Other board members were re-elected with Calum MacDougall and Alan Ewing added to the numbers. Calum, a senior player, will have a particular interest in merchandise, whilst Alan, a schools coach, will help cement connections between school shinty and the board. Martin Stewart was unanimously approved by club members to continue his work as first team manager. The side's return to the Mowi Premiership begins with Lovat's visit to Canal Parks on Saturday March 5.

Liam Cameron was unanimously appointed Kilmallie second team manager after injury prompted his decision to step down as a senior player. He will be assisted by Bryan Mackay, with other experienced players offering their support.

## Oban start season away to Glasgow

New Oban Camanachd manager Gareth Evans takes his side to Peterson Park to play newly-promoted Glasgow Mid Argyll in the Mowi Premiership on the first day of the competitive shinty season.

Lochside Rovers host the GMA seconds in Mowi South Division 2.

## New Inveraray chairman

Andrew Watt is the new chairman of Inveraray Shinty Club.

Andrew is a former Inveraray player, captain and Camanachd Cup winner who, along with his twin brother Ally and older brother Douglas, was an integral part of Davy Macpherson's successful winning era at the club during the late 1990s and early 2000s.

In recognising the impact Covid has had on shinty and the increasing challenges clubs have faced in terms of maintaining squads, particularly for teams in the south, Andrew is keen to work with the committee to ensure the club's longevity and build on the excellent work of previous committees.

Key to this plan will be the establishment of a structured player development pathway and a drive to strengthen links between the club and the community.

Andrew Watt said: 'As a former player, I'm incredibly honoured to be taking on the role of chairman and look forward

to working with all committee members to do everything we can to help and support all of our teams and coaches from primary school through to the senior team.

'The aim is to bring success back to the club at all levels. We're fortunate we have so many people involved with the club who are passionate and committed to achieving that.'

Ruaraidh Graham remains in charge of the Inveraray senior side, with Andrew McMurdo and Scott Robertson taking the seconds.

Ferguson Transport & Shipping Balliemore Cup, first round May 7:

Northern section: Glenurquhart v Strathglass; Glengarry v Skye; Inverness v Lochaber. Bye: Beaulieu.

Southern section: Oban Celtic v Cruachanside; Ballachulish v Col Glen; Bute v Aberdour. Bye Inveraray.

to working with all committee members to do everything we can to help and support all of our teams and coaches from primary school through to the senior team.

'The aim is to bring success back to the club at all levels. We're fortunate we have so many people involved with the club who are passionate and committed to achieving that.'

Ruaraidh Graham remains in charge of the Inveraray senior side, with Andrew McMurdo and Scott Robertson taking the seconds.

## Newtonmore confirm managers

Norman MacArthur, Evan Cheyne and David Cheyne have been confirmed as Newtonmore's senior management team following the club's emergency general meeting on Thursday January 27.

Colin Stewart was unable to sign up because of work commitments. The new coaching team replaces Orsten Gardner who stepped down from the manager's role at the end of last season.

## Newtonmore P Fort William P

Fort William's pre-season preparations got off to a false start when their friendly match against Newtonmore at the Eilan was called off on Saturday morning due to high winds coupled with debris on the pitch and on the roads.

Fort William's opening Mowi Premiership match will be against Kyles Athletic at An Aird on Saturday March 5, whilst the Fort seconds

travel to Skye in Mowi North Division 1.

## Pre-season friendlies

A number of pre-season friendlies are scheduled for this weekend.

They include Oban Celtic's meeting with Lochaber at Mossfield, whilst Newtonmore travel to Beaulieu.

Kilmallie and Ballachulish were to meet but decided to cancel their match due to the poor weather forecast.

Lovat, captained this season by Craig Mainland, play Caberfeidh at Balgate and the Kinlochshiel first and second teams will meet at Ràraig.

Ardnamurchan is due to welcome the Lochaber second team.

Skye Camanachd host the John MacKinnon Sixes in Portree, whilst Kingussie play the Liz Young Sixes at Dalfaber, Aviemore.

With the unpredictable weather, it is advised to check the arrangements with the clubs concerned before taking in a match.

## Taynuilt and Glenorchy merge

Taynuilt Shinty Club and Glenorchy Shinty Club have decided, due to a lack of numbers on both sides, to amalgamate under the name of Cruachanside Camanachd Club.

Both clubs have experienced team difficulties in the past and the Covid pandemic has made the situation worse with players retiring and having other interests on a Saturday.

In the early 1970s, Dalmally and Taynuilt primary schools won the MacKay Cup under the name Cruachanside, coached by the local vet Kenneth Campbell, hence the change of name.

Both clubs will continue to have their own junior teams and it is hoped to start a joint under-14 team.

Cruachanside will play their home matches alternating between Taynuilt and Dalmally to keep an interest in both villages.

Dawnfresh Seafoods, which has fish farms on Loch Awe and Loch Etive, is to sponsor the new club.

The manager and the assistant manager will be appointed shortly.

The club has two friendlies arranged so far, against the Lochaber seconds and Lochside Rovers.

The Camanachd Association has agreed to Cruachanside's request to take Taynuilt's place in Mowi South Division 1 next season. It is hoped the decision to merge the two clubs will keep shinty alive in the two villages.



# Oban Lorne RFC seniors pack a punch in Paisley

## RUGBY

### Paisley 8 Oban Lorne 12 West Region Division 2

Oban Lorne battled the storms last weekend arriving in Paisley just in time for kick-off.

Despite the difficult travelling conditions, the boys in green started strongly with the first try coming in the first minutes of the game.

Heavy conditions on the park made for a tight game with both sets of forwards playing a huge part in moving the ball around. Paisley got a penalty just before halftime to close the gap to 5-3.

Conditions worsened in the second half with the forwards once again controlling play and keeping the ball tight.

Oban got the second try with a converted kick to stretch their lead.

Seeing the game slip away,



Oban coach Corrie Louw was delighted with the win and the determination shown by his team on a very heavy park.

Paisley battled away at Oban's defence and found a gap on the left-hand side to score their first try of the game in the closing stages, but the visitors had done just enough to take

the points. Oban coach Corrie Louw was delighted with the win and with the determination showed by his team on a very heavy park.

Both Oban tries came from

Jethro Anderson, who was also man of the match.

With six games remaining, Oban sit fourth in the table with a lot to play for.

This weekend the seniors

have a break as the Six Nations kicks off.

Their next game will be on Saturday February 12 when they play Waysiders/Drumpellier away from home.

## Oban Saints youth results and fixtures

Last Sunday's results: Under 13s 0, Notre Dame 9.

Under 15s 2, Lochgilphead 2. On target for Saints were Rhys Millar and Keiron Griffin.

Under 16s 8, Ashfield 0.

Scoring for Saints were Louis Paterson, 2; Michael Campbell, 3; Preston MacIntyre and Craig MacDougall, 2.

This Sunday's fixtures:

Under 13s v Charlie Miller Academy; Rossvale v Under 15s; Under 16s v Renton.

## CONTACTUS

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## LORN HEALTHY OPTIONS HEALTH TIP

### The double-edged sword of technology

There is not doubt for most of us technology has played a key role in our journey through the pandemic.

Whether that be Zoom, Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter or other forms of social media many have been able to maintain contact with family or friends and continue to work by adapting their approach to modern tech.

At Healthy Options we continued to support current and past clients through the long initial lockdown via online services including a successful Whatsapp group which is still functioning with around 180 members. This was a huge change and a challenge for a 'tech dinosaur' like myself but I count myself extremely lucky to have been able to continue to carry out the work that brings me so much satisfaction, enjoyment and pride.

Having said that, I'm 'Zoomed out'. After so many years of working with clients face to face, it was amazing to return to activity sessions at Atlantis after the various lockdowns and just last week



Rob Graham.

we returned to face-to-face education sessions which made me feel we had really turned a corner.

During the pandemic we have vastly increased our screen time and currently many UK adults are spending six to seven hours a day in front of a screen which has been boosted by online streaming services. Add to this the fact many already work in front of a PC and it's easy to see how the associated symptoms are on the rise.

Excess screen time leads to poor cognitive function including reduced focus, attention span and impaired memory which reduces our ability to learn.

Blue light from our devices can lead to significant sleep deprivation causing significant fatigue, reduced reaction

times and an increased desire to eat through hormone imbalance. Physically we move less when engaged with tech so obesity rates increase and we tend to suffer more from musculoskeletal issues such as back and neck pain. The fact we focus our eyes back and forth a short distance from our screens also increases eye strain leading to painful and dry eyes and an increased prevalence of headaches.

So perhaps we could reduce our screen time a little and use the time to be a bit more active? What about a little less tech...a bit more trek? Imagine what our lives would be like if our days and nights were as immersed in active hobbies, healthy eating and other acts of self care as they are in technology? Why not use your new free time to get out into some of the amazing forest parks and nature reserves we have on our doorstep and benefit from the physical and mental improvements that come with a little more engagement with nature.

There may be no wi-fi in the forest...but you'll find a better connection. It's all about finding the right path for you.

**Rob Graham, lead exercise professional, Healthy Options.**

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## SCOTTISH FIELD



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### March Photo Essay...

Former Marine JJ Fenton's best Scottish snaps...  
Exclusive interview with Gordon Ramsay...  
Pastiche architecture... Inspirational Scots...  
Stunning East Lothian garden... Artist Naomi Rae...  
Scents of the forest... Deer management...



Bob MacIntyre.

## Disappointment in Dubai for Bob

Despite his missed cut the previous week, hopes were still high Robert MacIntyre could bounce back at the Slync.io Dubai Desert Classic when he teed it up last Thursday in his second tournament of the new season.

A third-place finish at the same event in 2021 meant there were real grounds for optimism going into the tournament. However, rounds of 74 and 75 meant his +5 total was well outside the cut mark. In an extremely strong field, the tournament was eventually won by Victor Hovland who climbed to number three in the world. Bob's sluggish start to the new season has seen his world ranking slip to 63rd and he will be hoping for a quick reversal of fortunes today (Thursday) at the Ras al Khaimah Championship.

The Oban star has opted not to join some of the world's biggest stars at the controversial Saudi International tournament and will instead play at the regular DP World Tour event in the UAE, aiming for a swift return to form.

# Saints blown away at Glenhead Park

Drumchapel	7
Oban Saints	2
Central Scottish Amateur Football League Premier Division	

Failure to capitalise on the first half wind advantage cost a much-depleted Oban Saints side any chance of taking anything from last Saturday's clash with title contenders Drumchapel Amateurs.

Gale force winds made for farcical playing conditions, but it was the home side who dealt with them better to establish a slender lead at the interval.

Manager Willie Gemmell's resources were severely stretched with veterans David Dunlop and Alex Craik once again given starting roles. Aidan MacDonald and Preston Macintyre were called up from the youth ranks.

Saints captain Craig MacEwan won the toss of referee Michael O'Neil's coin and elected to play with the wind in the first half which was only two minutes old when the Oban side took the lead.

Storm Malik was playing havoc with Drumchapel keeper Stephen Mather's kicking and when the wind helped his clearance land into the stride of David Beaton, the Saints' wing back had the relatively straight forward task of passing the ball into the unguarded net for the opening goal.

Saints' good start was undone in the 12th minute when Steven MacLeod was

adjudged to have tripped Jamie Ross inside the Saints penalty area and Drumchapel striker Connor Higgins made no mistake from the spot.

Good pressing from the Saints central midfield three of Matty Kelly, Daniel MacCuish and Gavin Forgive won possession deep inside opposition territory, with Kelly sending Craig MacEwan through on goal. The Saints skipper rounded Stephen Mather and evaded a last-gasp challenge from Adam Douglas before tapping in from six yards to put Saints back in front.

The hosts equalised straight from the restart with Alan Kelly finding the net.

The hosts got in front for the first time on the stroke of half-time. David Dunlop's lack of mobility contributed to him dropping an Alan Kelly left wing cross at the feet of Paul McConachie who had the simplest of tasks to poke home from close range.

Saints began the second half well and squandered an excellent opportunity to restore



David Dunlop in action for Saints on Saturday.



Craig MacEwan rounds Stephen Mather to score Saints second goal. Match report and photographs: Derek Black.

parity in the 49th minute. The hosts capitalised on this let-off in the 55th minute when Paul McConachie headed home from eight yards.

Three minutes later, Jamie Ross beat Ruaridh Horne on the edge of the box and fired a low, left-foot shot past David Dunlop's right hand.

Before the action could restart, the Saints manager sent on Scott Maitland to replace Cammy Hill.

Drumchapel completed a devastating spell with a third goal inside eight minutes when Alan Kelly tricked his way past David Beaton on the Drumchapel left and sent a low cross to Connor Higgins for yet another easy close range finish.

There can be no questioning David Dunlop's commitment to the Saints cause, however, there was no way his hamstring injury would allow him to continue and his place between the posts was taken by Alex Craik.

Dunlop's departure allowed a second club appearance for James Conington, who joined Steven MacLeod in central defence.

Manager Willie Gemmell used the final ten minutes to give youngsters Aidan MacDonald and Preston Macintyre another taste of first team action when the pair replaced Kyle Cooper and David Beaton respectively.

Saints were punished on the counter-attack on the stroke of full time. Connor Higgins slammed home a left wing cross, completing his hat-trick and rounding off a disappointing afternoon for Saints.

This Saturday, February 5, Saints travel to Renfrew to face Glynhill Moorcroft in the fifth round of the West of Scotland Amateur Cup. The winners will be at home to Shortlees in the quarter final. Saturday's game will be played at Renfrew High School's 3G pitch. Kick-off 2pm.

## Walter's gift gives back help to Healthy Options clients

Benderloch resident Walter Burton and his family have really put their backs into an amazing donation to charity Healthy Options and Oban's Atlantis Leisure Centre.

Walter was referred to Healthy Options during the initial national lockdown where he was supported via online resources and a home exercise programme to improve his mobility and enhance his mental health.

Walter suffers from a rare autoimmune condition known as myasthenia gravis where the communications between his nerves and muscles are compromised resulting in weakness of the skeletal muscles. This has significantly affected Walter's general strength and posture and he walks with the use of a walking aid.

In November 2020, during his initial referral, Healthy Options staff noticed a downturn in Walter's health and referred him back to his GP for further investigation.


This turned out to be an exacerbation of his condition and resulted in a hospital admission to get him back on an even keel. Fortunately Walter's brother Alasdair was able to come across from America and stay with Walter as he recovered from this setback and he was eventually re-referred

**Continued on page 45.**



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Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday 3 January, 2022** are listed below with differences for major ports listed alongside. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

<b>3</b>	0106 0.5 0709 4.2 TH 1337 0.7 1923 3.8	<b>5</b>	0228 0.7 0824 4.0 SA 1455 1.0 2030 3.6	<b>7</b>	0345 1.2 0937 3.5 M 1612 1.5 2135 3.2	<b>9</b>	0515 1.7 1112 2.9 W 1753 1.9 2311 2.9
<b>4</b>	0148 0.6 0748 4.1 F 1417 0.8 1958 3.7	<b>6</b>	0306 0.9 0900 3.7 SU 1532 1.3 2102 3.4	<b>8</b>	0426 1.4 1018 3.2 TU 1658 1.7 2215 3.0	<b>10</b>	0615 1.9 1254 2.8 TH 1859 2.0

**OBAN WEATHER**

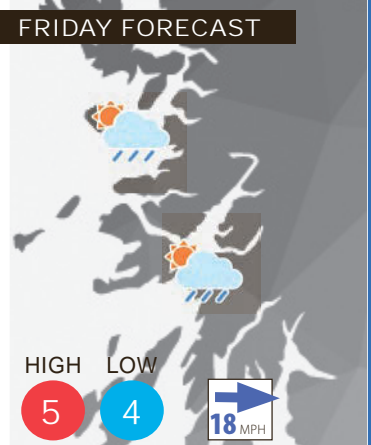
**Thursday**  
Light rain showers and a fresh breeze  
Temperatures 3°C to 9°C.

**Friday**  
Sleet showers and a fresh breeze  
Temperatures 4°C to 5°C.

**Saturday**  
Light rain showers and a fresh breeze  
Temperatures 6°C to 7°C.

**Sunday**  
Light rain showers and a fresh breeze  
Temperatures 7°C to 8°C.

**FRIDAY FORECAST**



Ardrishaig -5.35  
Campbeltown -5.30  
Crinan -0.47  
Islay Port Ellen 2.00  
Lochboisdale +0.30  
Mallaig +0.25  
Portree +0.55  
Tobermory +0.16  
Dover +5.30

HIGH 5    LOW 4    18 MPH



# LOCHABER TIMES

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## Writer Sine wins Lochaber literary accolade

**SEE INSIDE: A useful, quick guide to self-build homes**

### Digital donation



**Fort library helps get tech to teens and tots**

• See page 15 for more

### End of an era



**Tributes paid to crofter and passionate Gael**

• See page 6 for more



### New indy ref group launches in Lochaber

There was a good turnout at the Nevis Centre, Fort William, on Monday night for the inaugural meeting of new Scottish independence campaign group Yes Lochaber.

Yes Lochaber will hold its first annual general meeting – to which members and non-members are welcome – on Thursday February 17 in the Nevis Centre.

Broadcaster, journalist and independence activist Lesley Riddoch will be the guest speaker.

**Left: Bill Lees of Yes Lochaber with the group's logo.** Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba. photos

## BACKLASH AFTER DEER SHOOT

EXCLUSIVE by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@lochabertimes.co.uk

The shooting of red deer in Kinlochleven under the cover of darkness, in what is understood to have been the early hours of Saturday morning, has been slammed by a number of villagers as alarming.

There has been a long-running divisive issue concerning red deer coming into the village, with accusations that people were feeding the animals which in turn were becoming a nuisance and posing a public safety risk.

NatureScot, previously Scottish Natural Heritage,

this week confirmed to the Lochaber Times it had granted licences for night and out-of-season shooting of deer to Jahama Highland Estates and Kinlochleven Community Trust. But some villagers are incensed the culling was carried out in darkness and claimed there had been no advance warning and it was too close to their homes.

NatureScot told the Lochaber Times it has been working closely with Jahama Estates, Kinlochleven Community Trust, Highland Council and members of the community to find 'solutions to the problems caused by red deer in the village'.

It added: 'We advised people to stop feeding deer in

the area but this has continued, leading to many of these wild animals losing their fear of humans.

'As a result, many residents have complained directly to us that deer are posing a danger to public safety in the village and causing significant damage to property and gardens.

'For public safety reasons, NatureScot issued licences for night and out-of-season shooting to allow these animals to be removed by a trained marksman with detailed local knowledge, after discussion with partners, including community representatives.

'NatureScot only issues authorisations for night

**Continued on page 5.**



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LT

# Glencoe museum digitises Clan Donald family tree

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@lochabertimes.co.uk

## Genealogical chart will be available online for anyone to see

A significant piece of Scottish history is now accessible online for the first time, thanks to a grant from the Institute of Conservation, supported by the Radcliffe Trust.

Glencoe Folk Museum was thrilled to be successful in obtaining funding to digitise its Clan Donald Genealogical Chart last year.

Compiled in 1814 by John Brown, the chart records the descent of various branches of Clan Donald – as well as the line of the Kings of Scotland – from the 10th century onwards.

It is beautifully illustrated and features well-known names such as Robert the Bruce, Flora MacDonald and Alexander 'MacIain' MacDonald, the 12th Chief of Glencoe, who was murdered during the infamous Massacre of Glencoe in 1692.

It is a rare object, with only a few known to exist.

The chart was damaged by smoke



Far left: Photographer Jim Dunn taking high quality photographs which captured the tiny writing and intricate details of the chart. Left: Paper conservator Richard Aitken inspects the previous restoration work.

and water in 1984 when an arsonist set fire to the museum's heather-thatched roof, but was later restored thanks to a grant from the Gordon Fraser Charitable Trust.

As part of this recent project, Glencoe Folk Museum enlisted paper conservator Richard Aitken to inspect the previous restoration work, assess the chart's current condition

and make recommendations for the future. He also assisted with handling the large document and reframing it appropriately once the photographs had been taken.

Photographer Jim Dunn took high quality photographs which captured the tiny writing and intricate details of the chart.

Each section was uploaded onto

the museum's website, where viewers can zoom in on smaller details, read names and study information.

Up until recently, the chart was only accessible to those visiting the museum; now it can be viewed online from anywhere in the world.

Museum curator Catriona Davidson explained: 'The restrictions on physical visits to the museum caused by Covid and the resultant lockdowns made us realise that we needed to make some of our collections accessible remotely.'

'The chart is such a valuable piece of Scottish history, both for academic and personal research, and we are so excited to have finally made this beautiful object available online.'

The digitised chart can be viewed on the museum website at [www.glencoemuseum.com/klan-donald](http://www.glencoemuseum.com/klan-donald) or can be seen in person when the museum reopens for the season in April.

## Police school liaison officer post reinstated

A dedicated police liaison officer is being assigned to schools in the Fort William area after it was decided to reinstate the role which had remained dormant for a number of years.

Police Scotland Sergeant Brian Heriot told the recent meeting of Fort William, Inverlochy and Torlundy Community Council that PC Paige MacDonald, who is from Fort William herself and a former pupil at the Lochaber High School, has been chosen for the position and will be supported by PC Gary Mackinnon.

News of the resurrection of the schools liaison officer position came during a discussion of recent spells of anti-social behaviour by youngsters in the Caol and Inverlochy areas.

High Life Highland Youth Development Officer Mary Barker told the meeting that the older groups of boys that 'seemed to have been running riot' in recent times had calmed down a bit.

'But there is a new group that has come up and we've

not got that relationship with that younger group as yet and I just wondered if you had come across them much?' she asked Sgt Heriot.

Sgt Heriot gave the meeting an update on the situation. 'Caol was giving a bit of a problem - there was a guy in [one particular street] who was getting a lot of hassle from the same band of youngsters.'

'We've not had much in Inverlochy where it was pretty bad before. The An Aird thing has also kind of died down as well.'

'There are peaks and troughs. It comes and goes. I think the cold weather and the schools being back helps things.'

'But we're coming towards half term and Easter when it will obviously peak and rise again. So we're trying to take a harder stance on it and reporting them more to the Children's Reporter.'

'But all the boys that were causing all the hassle in Caol and Lochside, where you walk through from Inverlochy - were at that kind of age of 15, coming up to 16.'

'They were getting warnings and threats that "next time you do this it goes to the fiscal" and that tends to calm them down a little when they realise it is not just going to the reporter.'

Sgt Heriot said the school liaison officer role had 'kind of died a death' in recent years.

He added: 'Paige and Gary will be going into schools – both officers born and bred Fort William and former pupils at Lochaber High School. That's why they were chosen for the job to try and get that message over to the kids.'

'We've also got a guy who used to work in care homes before joining the police in Edinburgh. The kids here are child's play compared to what he was dealing with down there so he's also going to get in amongst the schools with Paige and Gary for talks and stuff, so hopefully they are going to be able to nip anything in the bud quite quickly.'

Ms Barker responded: 'That's good news. That should make a difference.'

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Inverness Sheriff Court sits at Inverness Justice Centre.

## Fort hammer man spared jail

A 22-year-old Fort William man who attacked his uncle and former boss with a sledgehammer was spared a jail sentence last week.

Samuel Nixon, of St John's Road, Fort William, appeared for sentence at Inverness Sheriff Court on Tuesday after previously admitting assaulting James O'Donnell to his severe injury and permanent impairment at his home in Old Banavie Road, Banavie on May 16 this year. Mr O'Donnell required subsequent surgery to his thumb.

Sentence had been deferred by Sheriff Sara Matheson for a background report and she decided against jailing Nixon after reading it and hearing from defence solicitor advocate Neil Wilson.

The lawyer told the court: 'There was a previous grievance with his uncle and this was impetuous. It was a reaction to events.'

'He went to his uncle's, lost his temper, saw the sledgehammer lying in the garden and he knows he did a bad thing.'

'He has been diagnosed with ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) and has genuine mental health difficulties. The lockdown restrictions prevented him from getting the help he needs. He is immature for his age and is horrified at the possibility of going to prison.'

Sheriff Matheson ordered Nixon to carry out 180 hours

of unpaid community work and placed him under two years' social work supervision.

She told him: 'Because of your limited record, your remorse, and the submissions by Mr Wilson, I can deal with this by a community payback order as an alternative to prison.'

'But you can take it from me if you breached this order in any way you will be brought back here and you will go to prison.'

At an earlier hearing, fiscal depute David Morton told the court that Nixon used to work for Mr O'Donnell some time ago: 'Mr O'Donnell was at home when he heard his door being struck. He opened it to see Nixon there. He used a pack of threaded steel bars which were at the door to defend himself and managed to deflect the blows.'

'But Nixon swung the weapon two or three times and it caught his thumb. Nixon then threw it at him, striking him on the thigh.'

Mr Morton said Mr O'Donnell received an open fracture and dislocation to his thumb and a severed tendon which required surgery at Raigmore Hospital in Inverness.

'He can't bend his thumb fully and has lost feeling in most of it, apart from pain at the top of the thumb. He had three sessions of physiotherapy but it only worked to a degree,' Mr Morton added.

## Body recovered from Carn Mor Dearg

Following a mountain rescue and search operation on Monday January 24, the body of a man was recovered from the Carn Mor Dearg area, near to Ben Nevis.

Police Scotland says there are no suspicious circumstances surrounding the death and the man's family has been updated and supported by police. A report has been submitted to the procurator fiscal. Members of Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team were out searching for the man on Sunday and again on Monday, in what were described as treacherous conditions, with a Coastguard helicopter also involved.

# Hydro spoil could be dumped at Gairlochy site

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@lochabertimes.co.uk

Heavy plant machinery will be needed to move up to 2.6 million tonnes of spoil from the construction site of a massive hydro scheme.

A scoping request has been submitted by SSE Renewables (SSER) to Highland Council to find out if land at Mucomir, near Gairlochy, which already has consent for quarrying activities, would be suitable.

The spoil would come from the already approved massive pumped storage scheme at nearby Coire Glas.

Details of the sort of works and equipment, including dumper trucks, excavators, conveyor belts and barges and possibly even a rock crushing facility, have been included in the scoping request, which aims to find out what would need to be in any Environmental Impact Assessment which would accompany a planning application.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was carried out by EnviroCentre Limited in September 2021 of the site proposed for use.

Biological records of bats, red squirrel, pine marten, hedgehog, brown hare and a range of bird species were returned during the desk study.

The habitats on site offer commuting and foraging habitat for bats, amphibians, otter, water vole, red squirrel, pine marten, badger, hedgehog, brown hare, reptiles, a range of bird species, wild boar, fish species and freshwater pearl mussel.

SSER received consent for the Coire Glas 1055MW Pumped Storage Hydro (PSH) project in October 2020 but as spoil storage in this location was not originally included further planning permission was required.

SSER now wants planning permission for this purpose at Mucomir Farm as one potential spoil management option.

A spokesperson for SSER told the Lochaber Times: 'This is the first step in a process to examine whether Mucomir quarry could be used as an area for the storage of excavat-

**'This is the first step in a process to examine whether Mucomir could be used as an area for the storage of excavated material'**

ed material that is generated during construction of Coire Glas.

'The site has been identified as a potential storage area for excavated material while work is in progress at the main Coire Glas site. It could be used

either as a primary storage area to reduce the amount of excavated material that must be transported by road, or as an emergency storage area if required. The submission of a scoping request to the Highland Council enables us to begin a process that will establish the location's suitability for the proposed activity.

'This process will include an in-depth consultation process with residents, businesses and community organisations to ensure we understand and address any points of concern that are raised about potential impacts to the area.'

The site at Mucomir Farm also lies within the important

geological area of the Parallel Roads of Lochaber Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which is located in the wider Lochaber Geopark.

According to the scoping request documentation, a jetty or other form of land-loch boundary would need to be established either within Mucomir Cut or on the foreshore of Loch Lochy or a combination of both.

It could also see spoil barges shuttling between Mucomir and the Coire Glas lower works area, as well as spoil handling equipment at the jetty area to unload barges (excavators, dumper trucks and grading machinery).

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## Evicted Lochaber MP defends comments made in the House

Ross, Skye and Lochaber MP Ian Blackford is standing by comments which saw him ejected from the House of Commons earlier this week.

Mr Blackford was ordered to leave by Speaker Lindsay Hoyle during Prime Minister's Questions on Monday as a furious debate saw politicians from all parties expressing their anger over 'partygate'.

The SNP Westminster leader accused the Prime Minister of misleading Parliament after the Sue Gray report confirmed he and his team broke lockdown rules and misled Parliament.

Mr Blackford said later: 'This is what truth to power looks like in the broken Westminster system. Boris Johnson is allowed to keep his place while I am forced to leave for telling the truth. There cannot be one rule for Boris Johnson and another for the rest of us. If the Prime Minister won't do the honourable thing and resign, he must be forced out of office by his own MPs.'

# Lochaber Hope in plea to value people more

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@lochabertimes.co.uk

People need a reason to feel proud of where they live and who they are if the consistently higher rate of deaths by suicide in the NHS Highland area is to be tackled.

Lochaber Hope manager Alyson Smith's comments come following publication of a report by NHS Highland's director of public health Dr Tim Allison that called for a greater focus on improving mental health and wellbeing and reducing suicide rates across Highland.

In his second annual report to the NHS Highland board, Dr Allison highlighted there is a consistently higher rate of deaths by suicide in the NHS Highland area than the Scottish average.

Dr Allison believes a public



Lochaber Hope manager Alyson Smith with the VAL award received by the charity in January 2021.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

health approach to reduce deaths by suicide and improve mental health and wellbeing is important, and widely regarded as the best way to achieve

sustained reductions in suicide rates.

Dr Allison said: 'More work is required to understand why this is the case and we must plan and develop our work to reduce the number of deaths from suicide within a broader mental health context that will inform local plans and strategies.'

'A public health approach helps us to understand risk factors and how we can work to reduce deaths from suicide and improve support for those in crisis, as well as those bereaved by suicide.'

But Ms Smith told the Lochaber Times she found it 'frankly baffling' that the report said more work was required to understand why the rate of suicide in the NHS Highland board area was higher than the Scottish

national average. It's perfectly obvious to anyone living in the Highlands outside of Inverness why this is the case,' she told the Lochaber Times.

'Look around Fort William, for example. There is not enough affordable activity or housing for our own community members.'

'Cost of living in terms of rent has skyrocketed due to neighbourhoods being filled with unregulated short-term lets - and who can blame the local people who run these.'

'You would be a fool to turn away such sums when opportunity in the area is so diminished.'

'The Highland Cinema is one of the only things I can recall that has been established recently which is meant for the benefit of locals. We lack basic amenities and services for local people.'

'Most of the jobs in the area are in tourism and services and these can sometimes be quite low paying and not in keeping with the cost of living in the area, which is why there's such a huge demand for social housing.'

'Until these issues are addressed, the underlying issues that they cause in terms

of specific conditioned low self-esteem and self-worth, conditions and contributors will continue.

'We need investment in our communities and people need a reason to feel proud of where they live and who they are.'

Ms Smith went on to say she found it strange the report did not mention Lochaber Hope as a supporting organisation when between February 2018 and the following February, 62 people had come through its doors saying they wanted to end their lives - one of whom was just nine years old.

Ms Smith said there were various individual reasons people attempted suicide, with reports saying those at high risk have poor mental health, major depressive disorder, bipolar, anxiety, schizophrenia, substance misuse, trauma, adverse childhood events, unemployed and social exclusion to name a few, but the fact they were being labelled as such actually created a stigma that prevented them accessing the support needed.

Ms Smith added: 'When those who are writing the report don't know what's going on successfully in the communities and build on that, there will continue to be more research, more reports and less funds for the relationships to be built that actually do save lives.'

'There is amazing expertise in the community - stop talking in labels and allow people to come forward and be proud to ask for help.'

## Council tax increase not ruled out

The Highland Council has given a cautious welcome to Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Economy Kate Forbes's announcement that the Scottish Government has identified an additional one-off £120million for local government funding from this year's budget, writes Fiona Scott.

The local authority has warned, however, that the payment 'will not bridge the gap caused by the reduction in the ongoing core budget'.

Leader of The Highland Council Councillor Margaret Davidson said: 'Highland Council campaigned really hard for a fairer budget settlement for Scotland's local au-

thorities to address recurring pressures.'

'The council is working hard to find ways to manage many increased costs, all of which will need to be met through front-line savings in a way that has least impact on those who struggle to pay, but it will be impossible to mitigate completely given the scale of the challenge.'

Depute leader Alasdair Christie added: 'This is a one-off payment which won't be recurring for future years so we will still have the same issues in 11 months.'

'It will certainly help but it's not going to solve all the problems local government

has. The Cabinet Secretary has given this additional money to stop large above inflation increases of council tax but it will not stop council tax increases.'

'Unless we receive more money for local government, we cannot rule out council tax increases.'

'At a time when folk are coming off periods of furlough, struggling to pay soaring energy bills and seeing prices in supermarkets move continually upwards, surely more financial help could be given by the government to support council services which underpin community wellbeing at these difficult times.'

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# Invergarry's Sìne wins Lochaber Rotary's young writer competition

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@lochabertimes.co.uk

A forbidding tale of an apocalyptic environmental future by a young Invergarry school pupil has taken top spot in Lochaber Rotary's Young Writer Competition.

Lochaber Rotary has been running its annual Young Writer Competition which this year generated entries from Lochaber High School, all of which were in the intermediate age group of 11 to 13.

Winning this year's competition was Sìne Grant from Faichemard, Invergarry. The competition is run across the UK and Ireland and Sìne's entry will now go forward to the West of Scotland District heat and hopefully beyond.

When told about her success, a delighted Sìne said: 'I was happy to be able to participate in the competition and very surprised to have won.'

Rotary President Simon Hardiman told the Lochaber Times: 'We always find it so encouraging to see talented young folk coming forward, particularly on this year's theme of the environment. We

wish Sìne well in the next heats and for the future.'

For those interested in future, entries will be through schools and age groups are junior, seven to 10 years; intermediate, 11 to 13; and senior, 14 to 17.

The Lochaber Times has pleasure in printing Sìne's winning entry in full below.

## Environment – the last one, by Sìne Grant

The year 2981. This will be my final entry.

As the last sun set upon the last day, the people knew what they had done. I watched as the last wild animals cried, heart-wrenching shrieks, as they keeled over and fell, never to rise again.

I saw the last plants wither and die, acid and nuclear chemicals running down like miniature rivers into the creases in the stems, poisoning their very essence.

The other people stood around the last tree, watching it fall. They looked at the charred grey stumps and felt



Young Sìne Grant.

the tight, uncomfortable press of their suits – the only things keeping them alive.

The oxygen tanks on their backs were bolted on tight, so as to stop others from stealing them for their own survival.

The rain from the sky was acidic, as the carbon emissions had dissolved into the oceans and then risen again. It was the last rain that would ever come. The air was intolerably hot, penetrated with a smell like burning, charring, rotting flesh.

The city skylines were crumbling, as if the last will of

the planet was to destroy the things that had obliterated it. The mechanical marvels, the last spaceship that had been meant to leave, had no air, no fuel, no potential.

The last robots had rusted and broken, their artificial minds grinding to a halt, only to explode seconds after stopping. The last dogs crawled, hairless, eyeless, mindless, searching desperately for more air, more food, more life, but it was not to be.

The sky heaved and thundered as the earth seemed to take its last breath. Cockroaches, the only creatures other than humans to survive, were slowly dying too, and would be gone very soon.

The sky rained acid as the universe seemed to mourn the death of the beloved planet, the cities washing away in

rivers of pain. The buildings crumbled and the dry hollows that had once been the ocean filled with liquid misery. The rubble crawled forwards, consuming the decaying plants, the ash-coloured sky shaking.

All the mountains were crumpled, left in heaps on the floor like discarded clothing. Without a stable atmosphere, meteor after meteor struck the ground, leaving blemishes and indents wherever they hit. Some of the larger ones left craters, turning the once lush landscape into a barren, moon like place.

The hot, hard, grey, unnatural skin of the other humans was invisible under their masks, suits, nets, any way we could find to cover our bodies and protect ourselves from the poisons, fumes and unwanted chemicals that we had brought

here. EVD made our sweat glands cry for mercy.

Our cracked grey hands were hidden under thick gloves. Our yellow, dark eyes could just be seen under the goggles that covered them. Our hairless, rough heads were stoned under the moss of our headwear. And we knew it was all our fault.

As the last oxygen slowly depleted, the last people fell, one by one. All their families and loved ones were long gone and they knew what they had done as they ran out of breathable air. The people all knew.

As I, with the last oxygen, saw the last creatures and the last plants in a dead decaying pile, and my last two thoughts were 'I wish we'd saved the environment when we had a chance' and 'The human race finally got what they deserved'.

## Backlash after night-time deer shooting in Kinlochleven

Continued from page 1.

shooting when there is clear evidence of damage or a potential risk to public safety. Responsibility for the safety of the shooting operation lies with the controller.

'However, anyone shooting deer at night under authorisation must be registered as fit and competent with NatureScot, must abide by best practice guidelines and comply with the Night Shooting Code of Practice.'

Police Scotland also confirmed all the correct paperwork had been in place.

Asked for its view, Jahama Highland Estates, which owns land in the area, said: 'Safety is the top priority in all our work, and safe shooting practices are clearly set out and adhered to as part of our night-time licence. We will continue to work closely with NatureScot, other rele-

vant agencies and bodies and the local community to ensure public safety in Kinlochleven remains paramount.

However, local resident Penny Clay told the Lochaber Times: 'My understanding of the guidelines is that residents should be informed and this did not happen. I cannot believe anyone in their right mind thinks it is okay for someone to be wandering about in the street on a dark, stormy night with a high velocity weapon, shooting. The potential for an accident is high and I would really like to see an apology from the estate for endangering and frightening residents. This happened 50 metres from our house. I want an assurance from the estate that shooting on residential streets will not happen again.'

The Lochaber Times understands that, in consultation

with NatureScot, Jahama Highland Estates paused deer control measures in Kinlochleven as of Tuesday afternoon.

Another resident, Debbie O'Hara, told the Lochaber Times: 'Who else would put up with this behaviour from local agencies? No blame should sit with the gamekeeper or the police – this is pure agency politics being imposed upon this community.'

MSP Kate Forbes told the Lochaber Times: 'Whilst I can see why the estate and NatureScot have taken steps to cull the deer, and I understand from my initial conversations that all strict paperwork and processes have been followed, I also recognise the discomfort of residents regarding reports of deer shooting in the middle of the night in the vicinity of a residential area.'

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**OBITUARY: RONNIE CAMPBELL – JULY 24 1931 – JANUARY 10 2022**

The death of 'Ronnie the Crofter', aged 90, marks the end of an era for a traditional way of life in the Highlands.

He was born in Bohuntin, Glen Roy, and worked his croft until aged 88. He was a passionate Gael and the last speaker of the traditional vernacular Gaelic in the Braes of Lochaber.

The famous glacial Parallel Roads of Victorian geology were Ronnie's natural habitat with sheep, cattle and deer. He continued the centuries old oral tradition of storytelling, music and local history throughout his life.

He was a pluralist who became the focal point for the expatriate diaspora whose families had left the Braes of Lochaber for the New World in Canada, America and Australia following the Highland Clearances.

He had an amazing clarity of recall which, combined with a sense of humour and fun, made him an entertaining storyteller and companion. He was a good dancer and traditional singer which made him popular at traditional ceilidhs in Roy Bridge village hall, but also in Cape Breton and Australia. He



**Ronnie Campbell.**

was born less than 200 years after the Battle of Culloden and inherited the folk memory of the subsequent sufferings of the indigenous population of his glen.

He was brought up in a time when there were many more people in the glen, where locals would spontaneously gather for a ceilidh to tell stories of the past, argue about their genealogy, discuss politics, gossip about the glen, make music and sing.

Much of this disappeared with TV, but Ronnie had been interviewed on TV talking about the glen. Ronnie could take visitors exploring their roots to the remains of stone houses to give life to their family histories and

clearance from their land.

The reformation never reached the Braes of Lochaber and the Clan MacDonald of Keppoch had backed Bonnie Prince Charlie in his bid to restore the Jacobite Stewart heir to the throne in London before his defeat at Culloden in 1746.

The values instilled in his upbringing, which emphasised a demand for social justice and an obligation to support the vulnerable and marginalised fuelled his forays into politics.

He was passionate opponent of what he saw as the continued exploitation of the Highlands and its people by greedy, powerful and wealthy interests and the government agencies which enabled them.

He became well known as a crofting activist and land reform enthusiast, who served a term as chairman of the Crofters Union. To further these aims, he stood as a candidate in the Westminster and Holyrood elections at the remarkable age of 85.

Sadly, neither institution was graced with his dress code of a woolly hat and downturned wellies covered in cow dung, to make his points eloquently on

behalf of his Crofting Party.

Ronald Joseph Campbell was born on the croft in Bohuntin on July 24 1931. He was the second oldest of eight siblings. He could trace his lineage back 500 years. His mother was a MacDonald from the tenant farm beside Old Inverloch Castle in Fort William, which had been built in 1280 and was the site of famous battles. His father's singing had been recorded by the School of Scottish Studies and was passed on to the son.

His father was a Campbell in Glen Roy, full of MacDonalds. Campbells and MacDonalds had traditionally been a difficult mix since the Massacre of Glen Coe in 1692, so Ronnie searched for an explanation for Campbells in a MacDonald Glen.

His Dalmally Campbell ancestor had been invited to be the piper for the Keppoch MacDonald. In those days, pipers and poets were important in the clan system and they could transfer teams like a modern footballer.

He was a child during World War Two and his education did not go beyond Roy Bridge primary and Fort William high schools. However, he was a very intelligent man who became wise through nature and the Highland oral tradition.

The outdoor life made him extremely fit for nine decades. He played badminton and was fine hill runner, but his real sporting passion was shinty.

His lifetime love of this traditional Highland game spanned the entire period of the modern

game. He was brave, fast, wily and agile with an innate tactical awareness to read a game. He was captain of the Lochaber Camanachd team which won the Sutherland Cup in 1965 and every other junior honour over a three-year campaign. He was a great motivator in later years for the second team, passing on his skills to the developing young players.

In agricultural circles he ran the sheep stock club and was a champion shearer. He was very proud of being one of the last men to drive a flock of sheep back to Lochaber from Badenoch in the traditional manner in 1949 and was interviewed by Roy Bridge Primary School, aged 82, on a video channel with clarity.

He delighted in passing on his crofting skills to younger people. At the age of 86, he was passionate about his new bull Euphrates from Aberdeenshire and his potential bloodline via his son Tiges.

Ronnie had observed that Euphrates ate bracken which is normally toxic to cows.

Bracken is the invasive species which harbours ticks and Ronnie could see a great future in this bloodline to reduce Louping Ill in sheep and improving croft land naturally.

Ronnie was a devout adherent to the ancient Catholic faith of the Brae Lochaber Glens. Two uncles had been archbishops of Glasgow and his MacDonald grandmother was a close relation to Saint Mary MacKillop, the first Australian saint.

Ronnie became a great resource for those who flocked to the area to trace her origins and he travelled to Australia and Rome to take part in the canonisation ceremonies where

he presented the Pope with a Highland crook. He also played a key role in the preservation of the ancient Cille Choirrill church which stands on a hill overlooking Glen Spean and where he is now buried.

Ronnie never married, explaining: 'Those who were desirable were not available and those who were available, were not desirable.'

His 11-year-old nephew Corin came to Bohuntin into the care of his aunts when his mother died, and his father Angus was widowed. Ronnie, aged 67, knew instinctively the croft would be a healing and distracting environment in such tragic circumstances and took him to the hill to learn about nature and stories.

His non-judgmental view of his fellow humans, down on their fortunes, helped many people locally in kind and deed. He lived his faith practically and had no interest in possessions or position.

Sadly, his final years on the croft caused him heartache when he came up against modern bureaucracy. He was not very good at filling in animal tracing forms and his sheep and beasts became unsaleable.

Young professionals, with no experience of crofting, came with clip boards to judge him. He had nursed sheep through Louping Ill and identified significant bloodlines in cattle and sheep over 70 years, but the 'department knows best'.

His last year was in a nursing home during Covid. However, his final hours were marked by a Gaelic song and the Last Rites at his bedside from Father Danny, in the company of his sisters Sally, Ishbel and godson Kenny. **KM, JD and CC.**

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**VIEW FROM THE CHAMBER**

Lochaber Chamber of Commerce manage and host The Outdoor Capital of the UK to bring marketing and destination management benefiting the region.

We might not have expected an autumn/winter season like we are experiencing, however, our current campaign is part of a national effort, led by VisitScotland, to support destination recovery and showcasing why Scotland should be the visitor destination of choice.

It all starts with a visit. Lochaber is a destination to visit, live, work, study and a place for your growing business. As a destination for all, we showcase the best of what Lochaber has to offer and have seen encouraging results, including accommodation interest from domestic and international markets.

Particularly encouraging is the interest and booking showing strong signs of a busy



spring and summer, as well as next autumn, in Lochaber.

If you've not read our destination strategy, be sure to head to [outdoorcapital.co.uk/](http://outdoorcapital.co.uk/) strategy for more.

Since September 2021, we have amassed more than one million interactions with our social media content, which has a particular focus on outdoor adventure and the accommodation choices across Lochaber. And we can attribute more than 950 bed nights coupled with £100,000 of accommodation bookings made across the region and in a mix of accommodation types.

More collaborations are coming, with booking channels, influencers, publications

and showcasing the combined effort across Mallaig/ Arisaig, Glencoe, Fort William and Ardnamurchan area marketing groups as we finalise plans for a TV and digital campaign in the next few weeks.

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## Council pilots new scheme in bid to boost housing stock

Highland Council is piloting a new open market purchase scheme to bolster its housing stock.

The local authority is asking anyone considering selling a house to contact them and help make a difference to families needing a home in communities across the Highlands.

Chairman of the council's housing and property committee, Councillor Laurie Fraser, stressed the purchases would be in addition to the council's policy of building new affordable housing. He said there was a continuing need for good quality, affordable housing across Highland, especially for three, four and five-bed properties. 'We welcome the opportunity to meet some of this need through purchase of individual properties,' added Mr Fraser.

The council will consider buying properties across Highland which meet certain criteria including condition and value.

The council will provide a valuation for any property of interest and will not require a home report nor for the property to be advertised.

Lochaber councillor Allan Henderson, Caol and Mallaig ward, told the Lochaber Times: 'This is really a scheme that is being refreshed. The council is in the market for houses to suit families, but only if they are at market value. The council cannot end up in a bidding war.'

'As far as I know, one was purchased recently in Ardour when a private tenant decided to move on and the owner was willing to be philanthropic and do a deal. With the current bubble in Lochaber, it is very difficult for the council once a house is advertised, hence the release going public.'

'We are fortunate there are still people out there who remember when their family got the opportunity to buy local authority housing at a very advantageous price.'

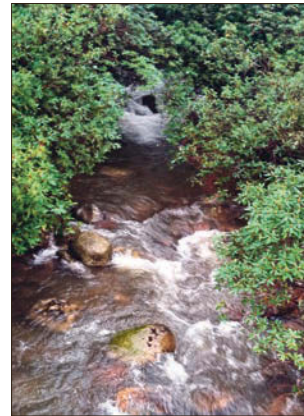
# Campaigner lodges FOI request over Glen Etive hydro reports

A Freedom of Information Inquiry (FOI) has been lodged that would see Highland Council forced to release nearly a year's worth of reports into the ecological condition of water courses used by seven new hydro schemes in Glen Etive.

Last month the Lochaber Times reported on concerns of silt in the Allt Charnan burn - one of the seven hydro projects approved by the council three years ago.

The boss of the company which constructed the hydro scheme on the Allt Charnan burn, William Dickins of Dickins Hydro Resources, recently told the Lochaber Times 'every care' had been taken to ensure problems with silt do not occur.

Two days before Christmas, the parkswatchscotland website and blog carried a report - accompanied by photographs supplied by a resident - appearing to show the Allt



Charnan burn water coloured brown. The silt concerns were reported to Highland Council and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

SEPA bosses have said they have no current concerns regarding 'significant environmental damage', while Highland Council said it had received weekly reports from the Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) - whose job it is to

The most recent photograph of the Allt Charnan with higher water levels last week. Photograph: John Sinclair.

prevent environmental damage - but that there has been a delay in uploading these to the electronic case file.

But now environmental campaigner Nick Kempe, from parkswatchscotland, has lodged an FOI request seeking the public release of all the ECoW reports submitted to the council between April 4 2021 and January 21 2022.

In his latest blog post on the issue, Mr Kempe said the most recent photographs of the Allt Charnan showed the water is not as cloudy as it was last month, but that he believes due to the current large volume of water it was possible even more silt was being washed down the water course.

'The destructive impact on aquatic life in the Allt Charnan and the River Etive below is

likely to have been considerable,' claims Mr Kempe.

'As for Highland Council's comments to the Lochaber Times, just how long does it take to upload the ECoW reports to the planning portal?'

Mr Kempe said on checking last week he discovered the last ECoW report uploaded to the planning portal was in April.

Mr Dickins previously told the Lochaber Times that his understanding of the situation was that there had been an issue with a culvert that failed, causing dirty water to mix with clean water runoff which, in turn, caused silt to be washed into the Allt Charnan.

This, he said, was reported to SEPA for which the mitigation was to replace the culvert and improve the silt fence. Replacing this was a controlled action which would have caused a pulse of siltation during the remedial works, Mr Dickins had told the Lochaber Times.



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Tommy Moore and his wife, Chrissie.

## Plockton and Kyle churches welcome back minister

On Sunday January 16, Reverend Roddie Rankin preached in Plockton Free Church, making his return after an absence of nearly two years.

The following Sunday, he also preached a service in Kyle Free Church.

Rev Rankin had a kidney removed in 2020 and subsequently needed a transplant. Luckily, his wife Margaret proved a suitable match and the operation was carried out in September, in Edinburgh Royal Infirmary.

The couple have three grown-up children and Mrs Rankin, who is a dentist, was home in Erbusaig four days after the operation and is also now back at work, while her husband returned home after six days.

Congratulations to Tommy Moore on his 80th birthday on Sunday January 9. Mr Moore was born in Plockton, where his mother owned the Plockton Hotel. He emigrated to Canada with his wife Chrissie, who is from Stornoway, in 1963. They have returned to Plockton 15 times since then.

# Proof of positive change 'still needed' at NHSH

More than 200 financial payouts have been made so far as part of NHS Highland's healing process.

But progress towards a positive workplace culture has been limited, the Lochaber Times has been told by an anonymous employee, with the need for a clearer vision, authentic feedback and real evidence of positive change on the ground.

According to the source there have been 'lots of platitudes but little substance'.

'The Healing Process is making very slow progress, despite reassurances to the NHS Highland (NHS) board,' they said. 'It's been two-and-a-half years since the first Sturrock action plan was produced and very little has altered on the ground. Soundbites in board papers don't make for tangible change. The Culture Programme aims to deal with some people process issues, but

does nothing to address the values and behaviours demonstrated by senior HR staff over the years; several were named within personal statements as having supported the prevailing toxic culture and actually contributed harm to staff. These senior staff need to be the subject of an investigation.'

In an update at the start of

**All would benefit from a clearer vision, authentic feedback and real evidence of positive change...**

this year from NHSH's director of people and culture, Fiona Hogg, she says 103 apologies written personally by its chief executive have also been made to those harmed by experiences of bullying and inappropriate behaviour while working at NHS Highland.

At the time of her update, there were 283 active participants going through the healing process.

'We've supported healing through our partner Validium, including delivery of 233 assessments, 47 support calls, and with tailored psychological therapies authorised for 172 current and former colleagues,'

she said, adding: 'We also provided 103 apologies which are personally written by our chief executive and 203 financial payments have been made up so far, with 237 people having an outcome from the process, with a further 46 still in progress.'

Three organisational learning reports have been provided by an independent review panel, which have been reported to the board and progress is being tracked on the actions.

NHSH's 24/7 Independent Speak Up Guardian service supported 195 colleagues from December 2020 to November 2021 and are also supporting the administration and reporting of the Whistleblowing Standards, launched in April.

The 24/7 Employee Assistance Programme, run by Validium, engaged with 169 staff between January and October 2021, for counselling, advice and support.

'These confidential and easy-to-access services have been well received and complement our other routes to raise concerns and be supported,' said Ms Hogg. As part of a listening and learning survey, more than 4,200 colleagues responded with 16,000 comments to be analysed.

'We're now working on what our colleagues told us.

Listening needs to be always on, so we are following that up with executive visits to key locations - in December we managed a number of face-to-face sessions, including Fort William, Wick and Thurso,' Ms Hogg said.

Priorities for this year are the wellbeing plan and rolling out Civility Saves Lives, along with work on diversity and inclusion and performance management.

'So it will be another busy year ahead, building on the progress made in 2021,' she added.

Speaking to The Oban Times, the source said: 'In summary, progress towards a positive workplace culture has been limited over the past 2.5 years. Everyone would benefit from a clearer vision, authentic feedback and real evidence of positive change on the ground.'

A culture programme report to the NHS board on January 24 flagged up that some of its work was on an amber alert - including developing the culture dashboard that would help identify any areas or departments that may need support. Amber indicates a project or milestone is at risk of failing to deliver the projected benefits or is behind delivery schedule. However, green flags included posters for next month's Civility Saves Lives campaign being completed.

## Highlands and Islands Greens' plea to abolish standing charges

With fuel prices already crippling many households and small businesses, and set to rise even further, the Highlands and Islands Greens are calling for standing charges to be removed from bills, writes Mark Entwistle.

The local branch of the Scottish Green Party has written to the UK Government requesting it to take the necessary action to scrap them.

It has also written to the leader of Highland Council and local MPs, inviting them to join the campaign to urge the UK Government to remove them.

The Greens say standing charges are the same or more for a studio flat or a mansion

**Local environmental campaigner and marine scientist Dr Kate Willis, pictured, of the Lochaber Greens.**



and cost an average £100 a year per domestic connection for electricity; with gas as well the charge doubles to about £200 but can be a lot more.

This arrangement makes gas and electricity proportionately more expensive for lower-use households and businesses compared to higher-use ones.

They are also unfair for householders who generate a lot of their own energy such as through solar panels on which

VAT is charged afterwards. Lochaber Greens candidate for Fort William and Ardnamurchan Dr Kate Willis said Highland homes and businesses pay the highest electricity tariffs in the country, have the coldest weather and least hours of winter daylight in addition to the 'regressive' standing charge.

'It is not surprising there is such a high level of fuel poverty and small businesses find energy bills such a struggle, especially as Covid has caused the income of many to crash,' added Dr Willis. 'We are calling on the UK Government to scrap the standing charges. We also support the Inverness Courier's 'End the Chill' campaign to remove the unfair electricity tariff 2p per unit surcharge here.'

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Lorna McLean, pictured, is hoping this story in the Lochaber Times might help her trace more information about her Scottish ancestors.

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Thank you for your support and we hope you continue to enjoy reading your Lochaber Times.

# Aussie Lorna in search for Lochaber ancestors

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@lochabertimes.co.uk

A resident of Perth in Western Australia has issued a plea for help in tracing records of her family's Lochaber ancestors before they emigrated in the first half of the 19th century.

Lorna McLean contacted the Lochaber Times recently after hitting a bit of a brick wall in trying to trace information on her ancestors prior to 1837, when they departed from Duisky.

Ms McLean told us she had struggled to source information from online newspaper archives and was now considering employing a genealogist in Scotland to aid in her hunt.

She told the Lochaber Times: 'Can you please direct me to a reliable local research genealogist who may be able to assist me with sources that are not online in this search? I say not online, because I have researched for 35 years with only online resources.'

'My family lines track back from 1837/38 in South Australia - where I was born. They departed from Duisky, Lochaber, via a local port on August 24, 1837.'

'My great-great-great-

grandmother, Christina McPhee, born 1787, was born on the Loch Arkaig north shore village of Crieff.'

Ms McLean said anecdotal information passed down in the family suggests that her great-great-great-great-grandmother had married into the Cameron family of Achnacarry.

'Unfortunately there are no old parochial registers due to destruction/attrition from 1783,' she added.

Ms McLean would like to trace information about her family prior to them living at Crieff.

She said anyone wishing to find out more information about her search can check the website: christinaand-donaldmclean.com.

She can also be reached via email at ladyjane2333@gmail.com.

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# LEG to join partnership to tackle climate change in the Highlands

Lochaber Environmental Group (LEG) is joining other community groups across the Highlands to reduce waste, to change the throwaway culture and lessen human impact on the environment.

And it will be recruiting for a three-year full-time post to take this work forward.

LEG is a member of the Highland Community Waste Partnership, which is co-ordinated by the environmental charity Keep Scotland Beautiful and funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. It also comprises Broadford and Strath Community Company (Isle of Skye); Ullapool Community Trust; Thurso Community Development Trust; Lairg Learning Centre; Transition Black Isle; The Highland Good Food Partnership (Highland-

wide) and Velocity (Inverness). The partnership aims to promote a programme of collaborative grassroots activity to raise awareness on reducing impact on the environment by reducing food waste, phasing out single-use products and encouraging replacing new purchases with a greater use of pre-loved, repaired or shared items.

The partnership will work together and share resources and experience to build a movement for sustainable consumption and support communities to reduce their carbon footprints.

This will contribute towards Scotland's targets to create a circular economy and become a net zero nation by 2025.

Welcoming the funding, Marian Austin, chairman of LEG, said: "Tackling consump-

tion is key to sustainable living. We are delighted to unite with other groups across Highland to strengthen our impact. LEG will focus on composting and will also tackle single-use items and encourage repair and re-use."

Barry Fisher, chief executive officer of Keep Scotland Beautiful, added: "We're thrilled that the Highland Community Waste Partnership project is to receive National Lottery funding over three years from the Climate Action Fund."

"This exciting new project will enable us to work in partnership with eight community groups across the Highlands to reduce consumption and waste, helping them to connect with each other and scale up activities that we know work whilst also piloting new ones.



The partnership aims to promote a programme of collaborative grassroots activity to raise awareness on reducing our impact on the environment by reducing food waste, amongst other issues.

"The project will bring focus to how unsustainable consumption contributes to climate change working across four key objectives to: increase understanding of how the

choices we make can impact our climate; increase the use of pre-loved, repaired and shared goods; support people and businesses to reduce food waste; and reduce single-use

items and packaging.' The project has been made possible by a £1,498,568 award, announced by the National Lottery Community Fund.

It is one of 21 community-led projects across the UK to have received funding from the Climate Action Fund.

National Lottery Community Fund's Scotland chairperson Kate Still added: "Congratulations to Keep Scotland Beautiful and its partner organisations which will each bring to bear their own skills and experience to deliver this new Highland-wide climate action project."

The Highland Community Waste Partnership will officially get under way in April, running for three years.

For more information contact [info@lochaberenviron.org.uk](mailto:info@lochaberenviron.org.uk).

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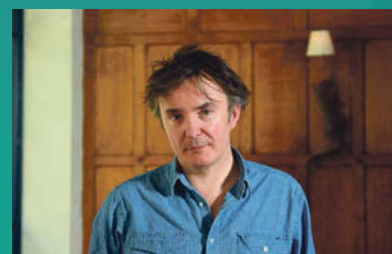
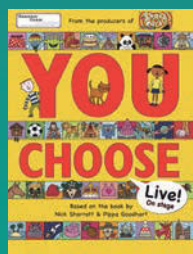
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# Nearly £900k lost to fraudsters in Western Isles

Police in the Western Isles dealt with more than 70 reports of fraud in 2021, with personal financial losses totalling nearly £900,000 - an average loss of approximately £12,800 per victim.

Western Isles Citizens Advice Service, Police Scotland and Trading Standards at Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (CNES) have now come together to raise awareness about frauds and scams.

It is not always possible to recover these losses and Norah MacPhee, of Western Isles Citizens Advice Service in Stornoway, said: 'Scams aren't just a minor inconvenience to people.'

Fiona Macleod, of Police Scotland in the Western Isles, said: 'The impact of scams and fraud can be financially and emotionally devastating for the victim, with many suffering isolation and hardship as a result - some even become more susceptible to further exploitation.'

'Anyone can fall victim to this type of crime, not just the elderly and the vulnerable

- even if we think we're scam aware, all it takes is for us to be caught off guard in the moment by a skilled manipulator.'

Jay Moran, of CNES Trading Standards, added: 'The location of the Western Isles may present limited opportunities for scams and doorstep crime to be committed in person by fraudsters attempting to take money from people. In the case of internet, mail and phone scams these are very real problems for people no matter where they live.'

'This can, of course, also include our businesses that may also be targeted by the same means and which also need to be vigilant too.'

As life becomes increasingly busy and complicated, so do criminals and the means by which they seek to take advantage of people for financial gain. There are so many types of scams, with new scams tactics consistently emerging and tricking consumers - some scammers use several different scams with an individual victim to get what they want. Cyber-fraud is the most



Susanne Smith, Money Advice at Citizens Advice; Fiona Macleod, Police Scotland, and Jay Moran, Trading Standards.

changing form of financial crime affecting Scotland. Ms MacPhee added: 'Under-reporting and stigma continue to be barriers in scams and fraud, with many feeling too ashamed and embarrassed to tell someone what has happened. There are so many types of scams, with new scams tactics consistently emerging and tricking consumers; as well as scams that we don't know about, which makes it very difficult to help, prevent and support those who have fallen victim.'

## Cross Party Group on Islands given green light

The Convener of the Scottish Parliament's new Cross Party Group on Islands says he is delighted the group has been formally recognised by the parliament.

Confirmation was received last week after Highlands and Islands Conservative MSP Jamie Halcro Johnston had appeared before Holyrood's Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee to give evidence about the new group.

Mr Halcro Johnston, who lives in Orkney, said: 'I am delighted that, having got over the last procedural hurdle, the Scottish Parliament now has a group that can devote itself full-time to the issues that matter to our island communities.'

'Our agenda will include the ferry network, the threat posed by depopulation, and the delivery of essential services such as health and social care.'

## Extra funding for projects welcomed

Two projects that do 'excellent work' in the Western Isles have received additional funding from the Scottish Government's Islands Communities Fund.



SNP MSP for Na h-Eileanan an Iar Alasdair Allan, pictured left, said: 'It is welcome news indeed that a further two projects here in the Western Isles have been successful in securing this funding from the Scottish Government.'

The West Harris Trust has been awarded £127,794 for the second phase of the Seilebost School refurbishment, and Tagsa Uibhist has been awarded £34,654 for its Uist Social Connectivity through Green Community Transport project.

The fund provides investment for community-led projects that support employment and community resilience, and contribute to Scotland's transition to net zero and climate resilient living on islands.

'Tagsa Uibhist and the West Harris Trust do excellent work in our local communities, and their new projects will be of significant social, economic and environmental benefit to our islands.'

'It is vital that community organisations continue to be given the support they need to continue to lead the way in sustainability as part of Scotland's just transition to net zero.'

## Air traffic jobs to remain in Stornoway

The announcement last week that air traffic tower services will continue to be provided at five local airports, including Stornoway, has been welcomed.

Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd (HIAL)'s board met on Monday January 24 to discuss the views submitted by working groups regarding proposals for alternative delivery options for their ATMS programme.

Surveillance for Sumburgh, Kirkwall, Inverness, Dundee and Stornoway airports will in future be based at HIAL's existing radar approach facility at Inverness Airport.

However, as a result of a sustained effort by local campaigners and politicians, HIAL has now confirmed that air traffic control jobs will continue to be based at individual airports, instead of also being centralised to Inverness.

SNP MSP for Na h-Eileanan an Iar Alasdair Allan said: 'I was very pleased to read HIAL's confirmation that these skilled jobs will remain in Stornoway.'

However, it is important to bear in mind that the decisions regarding Benbecula airport within the ATMS project have not yet been made, and so, work remains to be done.

'I would like to thank all of those who have fought tirelessly against HIAL's plans to centralise island jobs, and I encourage HIAL to continue engaging constructively with their employees and with Prospect Union to come to a resolution for Benbecula airport which above all prioritises the needs of island communities.'

HIAL's ATMS programme indicates that the air traffic control service at these airports will be changed to a flight information service like those already in place at HIAL's smallest airports.

Isles MP Angus MacNeil said: 'It is sensible of HIAL to do this as it was at risk of losing the 'I' for islands in Highlands and Islands Airport Ltd. We must however keep a sharp eye on HIAL including the make-up of the board.'

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# DISTRICT NEWS



George Roy of the Glencoe Heritage Trust lays a wreath on behalf of Clan MacDonald last year, with Ros MacDonald and George Grant, also of the Glencoe Heritage Trust, in a small ceremony due to Covid restrictions to mark the anniversary of the Glencoe Massacre. Photograph Iain Ferguson, alba.photos.

## Glencoe Massacre memorial service to go ahead as normal

The annual service to commemorate the Massacre of Glencoe in 1692, including the laying of wreaths, will take place on Sunday February 13.

It has been confirmed that a service will take place in St Mary's Episcopal Church, Glencoe, at 11am.

After the church service, everyone can make their way up the village to the Bridge of Coe, then proceed to the Massacre Cross – Upper Carnoch – where a short service and the laying of wreaths will take place.

As in previous years, the piper organised by the Glencoe Heritage Trust will be piping throughout.

It is hoped Covid will not curtail the annual service this year.

Despite the Covid situation last year, an informal service by the Glencoe Heritage Trust trustees – secretary Rosalin MacDonald, George Grant and John Roy – did take place on the 13th at the cross, including the laying

of the wreaths on behalf of those who were not able to attend due to travel restrictions in force at the time.

On its Facebook page, the trust posted: 'February 13 is a poignant day to remember all those who perished and were put to the sword in 1692; there will be many people around the world, although not able to attend, who will be thinking of those that met their fate on this day.'

'Throughout the rest of the year, the Massacre Cross is visited by many people who wish to pay their respects.'

'It is a peaceful, well-maintained spot with stunning views looking up the glen giving many time to reflect.'

Should anyone have any queries about the memorial service on Sunday February 13 or any other queries, contact the secretary, Glencoe Heritage Trust by email at glencoe-heritage@talk21.com or by telephoning 01855 811490.

### HIGHLAND

## Highland Council trains up 320 new apprentices

A graduate, apprentice and intern scheme run by Highland Council has provided opportunities for more than 300 people aged 16 to 67.

Members of the council's corporate resources committee welcomed the success of the programme last week. The modern apprenticeship programme attracted 320 trainees across Highland.

Opportunities were available across a range of sectors including business, engineering, construction/trades, business, housing, IT, social services and legal.

The council also brought in 11 graduate interns through its economic prosperity fund.

The programme is part of the Young Person's Guarantee, which aims to connect every 16- to 24-year-old in Scotland to an opportunity.

This could be a job, apprenticeship, further or higher education, training or volunteering.

'Employment has been at the top of my mind for some time, and particularly now, as we work out the employees we need going into the future,' said council leader Margaret Davidson.

'This is important as we look at green jobs, defining them, as we look at making seamless links between our schools. Making young people aware of what they can do when they leave school – in Highland – instead of feeling that they have to go away,' she added.

The council plans to take part in Apprenticeship Week from March 7-11 this year. It plans to create a programme of engagement with schools, parents, employees and partners to promote the opportunities available.

Mrs Davidson observed that a new council would take the reins in May, with its own programme and ambitions. Senior managers are already working on how to pull everyone together with the same messages around employability.

'We are facing the most astonishing opportunity in Highland and we need to be fit for it,' she added.

### LOCHABER AND SKYE

## Trainee cooks to feel the heat of the kitchen

Twenty-two people in Lochaber and Skye will have the chance to experience a commercial kitchen while gaining a qualification.

Highland Council has launched the Skye and

Lochaber Cookery Initiative Pilot, in partnership with The West Highland College UHI, NHS Highland, Lochaber Chamber of Commerce and Skills Development Scotland.

Up to 22 individuals across Lochaber and Skye will be encouraged to gain experience across a range of council, NHS Highland, and commercial kitchens, while undertaking an accredited college course.

Co-ordinated by the council's Employability Service, the Cookery Initiative pilot aims to reduce local unemployment, while providing upskilling and invaluable work experience, and increasing sustainability of employment within the hospitality sector. It is hoped that the participants will then choose a career in cookery, secure employment and further training in the sector or progress on to a full-time cookery course before joining the sector.

Chairperson of the council's Economic and Infrastructure Committee, Councillor Trish Robertson said: 'This is an excellent example of partnership working to address local employment issues.'

'I would encourage unemployed people interested in cooking to apply for this opportunity and for local hospitality businesses to get involved.'

The Cookery Initiative Pilot is suitable for school leavers and those who have been unemployed for eight-plus weeks.

Participants can expect a six-month paid training placement; industry-recognised certificates; SQA accreditation; guaranteed entry onto a cookery course at West Highland College UHI on completion of programme; a guaranteed job interview at end of programme and mentoring support.

The Skye and Lochaber Cookery Initiative Pilot is funded by Highland Council and the Scottish Government under the Youth Guarantee, No One Left Behind, Long Term Unemployed and Parental Employment Support funding streams.

For more information or to register an interest for either the Skye course or the Lochaber course email the Employability Team at employability@highland.gov.uk.

### GLENFINNAN

## Still no sign of medieval bell stolen from Loch Shiel island

Nearly three years after it disappeared from an island in Loch Shiel, Police Scotland says there is still no sign of a rare medieval bell.

The theft of the bell from St Finan's Isle - Eilean

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## SCOTTISH FIELD

### March

### Photo Essay...

Former Marine JJ Fenton's best Scottish snaps...  
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Pastiche architecture... Inspirational Scots...  
Stunning East Lothian garden... Artist Naomi Rae...  
Scents of the forest... Deer management...





The bell which was stolen in 2019 from a tiny island in Loch Shiel in Lochaber. Photograph: Moidart History Group

Phianain in Gaelic and also known as the Green Isle - is believed to have occurred in late June or early July in 2019.

Asked if there had been any developments in the investigation into the theft, a Police Scotland spokesperson told the Lochaber Times recently: 'Nothing major I'm afraid - nobody was arrested in connection with the theft and the bell has not been recovered.'

Experts from Moidart History Group (MHG) believed the bell was taken by thieves who would have had to launch an amphibious raid, possibly involving kayaks or canoes, on the tiny islet in the loch made famous in the Harry Potter movies.

St Finan's Isle has been a Christian burial ground since the days of St Finan, a Columbian-trained monk who died in 661 AD.

Loch Shiel is famous the world over, not just for its place in history when Bonnie Prince Charlie raised his standard at Glenfinnan, which sits at one end of the loch, at the start of the Jacobite Rising of 1745, but also for its role as the 'Black Lake' in the Harry Potter films.

For centuries, the altar stone in the roofless chapel held the missing early-medieval hand bell, which is said to be of great religious and cultural value, and of a particular type found in Scotland and Ireland, perhaps even brought here by St Finan himself more than 1,000 years ago.

The missing bell stood on the altar in the ruined chapel on the island, which is remote, and which until only four or five years prior to

# Libraries accepting old laptops to help disadvantaged Lochaber youngsters

Donations of old laptops and PCs are being accepted at Fort William, Ardnamurchan and Portree Libraries and other High Life Highland (HLH) libraries to help give children access to technology.

HLH has teamed up with Budding Engineers, a community interest company based in Wick that provides a scheme called Tech4Tots and Teens.

Its aim is to give children and young adults access to digital technology and encourage an interest in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) subjects.

HLH senior network librarian June Robertson said: 'This is a great project to be involved in and we have agreed for 14 of our libraries to be drop-off points for anyone willing to donate their old laptops or PCs to Budding Engineers so that it can wipe them, refurbish them and then donate them to families in our communities.'

The full list of libraries accepting donations are Ardnamurchan, Brora, Culloden, Dingwall, Dornoch, Fort William, Fortrose, Glen Urquhart, Grantown, Invergordon,

Inverness, Nairn, Portree, Thurso and Ullapool.

People donating equipment will be asked to fill in a permission form with their details and will receive a certificate from Budding Engineers to confirm their device has been securely erased and wiped.

The enterprise was set up by Dave and Liz Kerr from Caithness and has already seen hundreds of devices given to children and young people.

Mr Kerr explained: 'We know there are a lot of youngsters out there whose parents just can't afford to buy a device. The laptops we refurbish are donated with a version of the Linux operating system and we also install several additional educational applications.'

'This is a fun way to learn, as these are in a game format and will help with their numeracy and literacy skills. All our devices will be PAT tested prior to being sent out to the families.'

'Some of the applications we install are known to help those children with additional needs and some of the feedback from parents has been amazing.'



Dave and Liz Kerr from Budding Engineers handing a box of laptops to Robert Gill, headteacher of Milton of Leys Primary School in Inverness.

the theft, was visited by just a handful of people each year.

However, at the time of the discovery of the 2019 theft, MHG said the growing popularity of kayaking saw these numbers increase to an estimated 2,000 by 2016.

It is believed the thief or thieves would have needed heavy bolt cutters, since the flimsy chain that attached the bell to the altar was replaced by a hand-forged bronze chain in 2017, so the theft was likely to have been a planned affair.

**HAVE YOUR SAY**  
email us at [editor@lochabertimes.co.uk](mailto:editor@lochabertimes.co.uk)



## Nevis Hillwalking Club diary date - Glenfinnan

Saturday February 5 - Glenfinnan

Sgurr Ghiubhsachain (849m, Corbett) - Peak of the Fir-wood;

Sgorr Craobh a'Chaorainn (775m, Corbett) -

Rowantree peak.

Two Corbetts in a dramatic setting high above the splendid Loch Shiel and the site of Prince Charlie's recruitment rally.

The 849m Corbett being the highest point in the group of mountains that stand south of Glenfinnan. For a shorter day there is an option to do just the one hill.

18km, 1,241m ascent;

15km, 938m ascent - one summit only.

For more detail of the route please visit website [www.nevishillwalking.club](http://www.nevishillwalking.club) or Facebook page - NevisHillwalkingClub

Please note that walks may change at short notice due to conditions on the day and Covid restrictions.

If you are a keen hill walker, want to know more about the club, participate in walks or are interested in becoming a member, please contact us at [enquiries@nevishillwalking.club](mailto:enquiries@nevishillwalking.club).

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## LETTERS

**Turning the tide on suicide**

It is a huge sorrow for many people that the NHS Highland area has a consistently higher rate of deaths by suicide than the Scottish average.

While the report by NHS Highland's director of public health Dr Tim Allison is to be welcomed, we can't help but agree with Lochaber Hope manager Alyson Smith's comments that if Dr Allison had spoken to or been liaising with organisations in and around Fort William already working within their communities, he would have had many of those questions answered.

As she said, a lot of it isn't rocket science.

Neither is it easily solved. But rather than commissioning more reports and launching lengthy consultations, wouldn't it make sense for NHS Highland to consult the people on the ground who are in the know, partnering with them to start turning the tide on this heart-breaking issue?

**Write on**

Congratulations to young writer Sine Grant from Invergarry who has taken top spot in Lochaber Rotary's Young Writer Competition. Sine's entry – a stark warning about the environment and our responsibility – will now go forward to the West of Scotland district heat.

The editor welcomes letters of approximately 300 words in length for publication on this page.



However we reserve the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and postal addresses must be supplied, including on emails, to indicate good faith. A daytime phone number is also required for verification. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Please email: editor@obantimes.co.uk or write to: Letters page, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB.

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**Forget fixed link dream**

We want the Scottish Government to be ambitious, but the suggestion of a tunnel or bridge linking Oban and Mull is ludicrous. Anyone thinking this a good idea needs to be aware of unintended consequences.

Skye provides a lesson. The short bridge linking it to the mainland brought connectivity, but also brought mass tourism and, consequently, seasonal traffic congestion. But at least many roads on Skye are dual-track. In contrast, Mull has only 10 miles of dual-track road, the remainder being single-track.

Currently, summer journeys can be challenging. But, make Mull accessible by tunnel or bridge, even if technically, geologically and economically feasible, and traffic will grind to a halt without the additional expense of a major widening programme on all single-track roads. This will never happen, so, why spend time dreaming of a fixed link?

Ian Reid, Oban.

**Blown off course?**

Colonsay got plenty of coverage in your columns last week (January 20). Sadly, there was one important omission.

Your article on the Crown Estate's recent lease of area 17 in the Scotwind Renewables project announces Scottish Power as the winner to develop a very large wind farm off the 'west coast of Islay'.

Area 17 in fact lies off the west coast of Colonsay. The area lies to the north west of Islay visible from a largely uninhabited and inaccessible part of that island. Much of Colonsay's charm comes from the great sweep of uninterrupted views out to the western horizon. Just as 'views cannot be eaten', global warming is much too important an issue for NIMBYism or to be nostalgic about how things were.

However, when the day comes that Scottish Power starts contributing to community funds, I shall be reminding Keith Anderson CEO of ScottishPower to rename his 'Islay Project', 'Colonsay and Islay Project'.

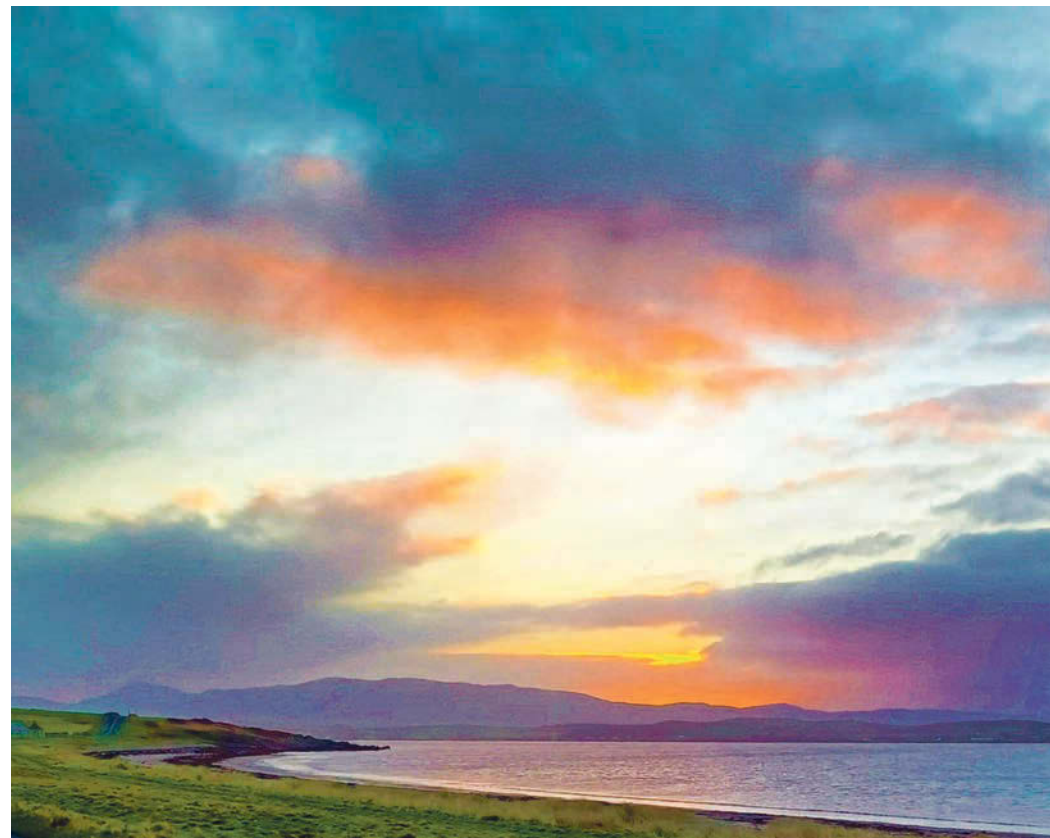
Andrew Abrahams, Colonsay Oysters/Black Bee Reserve.

**Salmon farm objection**

Mr Holder says he is a close neighbour to the salmon farm about which he objects (Letters).

I presume that he made his views known at the time when the farm was established 34 years ago in January 1988. However, as it has been

## YOUR PICTURES



This photograph of Port Ellen was taken by councillor Alastair Redman on his way to visit some of hi would like to share with our readers, we would love to see it. Please email the jpeg (1MB) to editor@

only two to three years since Mr Holder seems to have become vocal on the issue, I suspect that he is a relatively recent neighbour.

This begs the question that if he so objects to this salmon farm and the wider salmon farming industry, why did he choose to live in close proximity to it?

In my experience, the most vocal opponents to salmon farms have moved into the area without doing much research and not understanding that people actually live and work there. They are then horrified to find there are local industries and businesses that don't match their preconceived expectations of the area they moved to. Consequently, they then embark on

an individual crusade against salmon farming, fuelled by many often-repeated misconceptions about the impact of salmon farming.

**Dr Martin Jaffa, Callander McDowell.**  
**Callander McDowell offers strategic planning and marketing for the aquaculture industry.**

**Municipal port for Oban**

As a management committee member of OCHDA, I endorse the issues raised by Derek Wilkinson in his letter (Questions still need answers – January 27) regarding the establishment of an interim Municipal Harbour Authority for Oban, particularly the need for

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**Oban- Glencruitten Church Hall**  
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Thursday - 8am & 9.30am  
Gillian 07796 040803

**Campbeltown - Masonic Recreation Club**  
Wednesday - 9.30am, 5.30pm & 7pm  
Tracey 07984 473361

**Fort William - Salvation Army Hall**  
Thursday - 3.30pm, 5.30pm & 7pm  
Friday - 9.30am & 11am  
Gillian 07796 040803

**Lochgilphead - Lochgilphead Baptist Church**  
Monday - 5.30pm & 7pm  
Miriam - 07765 020776





Send your constituents on Islay. If you have a photograph you would like to share, please email [obantimes.co.uk](mailto:obantimes.co.uk).

Local authorities with Statutory Harbour Authority responsibilities have adopted approved guidance to establish governance of harbour undertakings through a dedicated management sub-committee which has the power to exercise the functions of the duty holder. This has been resisted by Argyll and Bute Council.

Consultation with and empowerment of harbour users and stakeholders lies at the heart of Scottish Government ports policy. Local authorities have established advisory committees for individual harbours, which involve the Harbour Master, councillors and invited stakeholders, with their own terms of reference and answerable to the relevant management body; no such body exists for Oban harbour, nor indeed for any other of the council's statutory harbours. The self-serving OBMG is not a substitute for that role either. This must be rectified through appropriate provisions being incorporated in the Harbour Order.

Oban remains the only statutory harbour in Scotland whose founding legislation has not been updated to the post-1964 Harbours Act standard.

Council officers must accept legal reality and get the job done. The council is not accountable to the Scottish Government but to the people of Argyll and Bute through their elected representatives. The unelected occupants of Kilmory and Manse Brae would do well to remember that.

Fergus G R Gillanders, Kilmelford.

**HAVE YOUR SAY**  
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that to happen quickly. That urgency was the main reason behind the Harbour Board's reversal from its previous position of endorsing a trust port. The Harbour Board instructed council officers to develop a consolidated Harbour Revision Order in September 2018, and it is on record that the council's legal department have consulted with Transport Scotland on its contents. Therefore, there is no reason why the draft order and its associated Purpose and Effects Notes should not be circulated around stakeholders for consideration before its formal expedited submission to Scottish ministers.

Other issues need to be faced by the council.

## Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

[ailean@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:ailean@obantimes.co.uk)



Bidh cuid a rudan nach atharraich ri linn 's gum bheil daoine riarachtaiche le cùisean mar a tha iad, fiù 's ged a bhiodh iad seann-fhasanta is mì-ghoireasach an taca ri taghadh nas ùire. Aig amannan 's e cosgais an leasachaidh a tha na bhacadh 's gun dòigh aig daoine air ruigheachd air an seòrsa airgid a dh'fheumte air a shon. Ach a dh'aindeoin nan caochladh bhacaidhean sin bidh daoine mothachail gum b' fheàrrde iad leithid nan leasachaidhean air am bi iad a' bruidh, mar eisimpleir nan dachaighean, agus ri tìde gheibh mòran a' mhisneachd a dhol air adhart.

Glè bhitheanta bidh an co-dhùnadh sin a' leantainn sgrùdadh air ìre nan cosgaisean bliadhnaile a tha co-cheangailte ri gleidheadh is càradh seann acfhainn, agus tuigse nach eil e gu diofar dè na dhèanar ris nach eil ann fhathast ach seann stuth. 'S cinnteach gur ann mar sin a bhiodh nuair a bha sluagh nan coimhearsnachdan Gàidhealach a' feuchainn ri gluasad bho thaighean "dubha" tughaidh a dh'fheumte a thughadh às ùr gach dàrna bliadhna neo na bu trice ma bha droch shìde ann, gu taighean "geala" le mullaich sglèat a sheasadh bliadhnaichean ri aimsir sam bith. Abair adhbhar moite a bhith cuidhteas fàileadh an t-sùith, agus smal snighe, air a h-uile càil a bh' aig daoine agus cha b' iongnadh miann adhartais a dhol na amas dhan a' mhòr-chuid.

Air an t-seachdain a chaidh bha mi a' moladh gun robh feum air planaichean dàna gus goireasan còmhdaile dha eileanan a leasachadh gus gum biodh na bu lugha buaidh aig droch aimsir air na coimhears-

nachdan sin. Bho chionn beagan làithean chunnacas a-rithist coimhearsnachdan eile a' call cumhachd an dealain ri linn chraobhan a bhith a' tuiteam air loidhnichean ann an droch stòirm.

Tha cosgais mhòr dha luchd-cleachdaidh agus dha buidhnean-libhrigidh nan seirbheisean ann an leithid sin de thachartasan agus chan iongnadh daoine bhith ag ràdh gum bheil còir innleachdan a dheasachadh gus leithid a dhùbhlain ann an seirbheisean còmhdaile agus goireasan riatanach uile a leasachadh neo a lùghdachadh. Nan robh planaichean air an deasachadh agus aontaichte dh'fhaodadh an leasachadh tachairt beag air bheag, agus ged a bhiodh e daor bhiodh na cosgaisean bliadhnaile a th' ann an-dràsta a' lùghdachadh is seirbheisean a' fàs nas goireasaiche mar a bha an obair a' dol air adhart.

Feumaidh luchd-deilbh phoileasaidhean riaghlaidh a bhith faiceallach gum bheil na h-innleachdan aca a' tighinn a rèir a chèile agus nach eil an dàrna rud a' leamhachadh amas eile. Tha rùn oifigeil ann sluagh a chumail anns na h-eileanan agus sgìrean iomallach na Gàidhealtachd gus, am measg amasan eile, cànan is dualchas Gàidhlig a bhrosnachadh, ach aig an aon àm thathas a' tuigsinn nach gabh sin coileanadh mur a bi taighean, deagh goireasan coimhearsnachd, agus cothroman cosnaidh an sin a ghleidheas daoine òga. Leis na caochladh uallaichean leasachaidh sin an urra ri buidhnean eadar-dhealaichte tha e nas duilghe adhartas luath fhaotainn, ach bhiodh plana coileanta na dheagh thoiseach tòiseachaidh.

## THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Monsignor James MacNeil

Most people know about the Wedding Feast of Cana. The meaning of the story has little to do with marriage but rather is a symbol of the Feast of Life; it is to do with Jesus' promise: I have come that they may have life, and have it more abundantly.

There is a tendency to live as if the wine had run out; without sparkle, without fullness of joy and gratitude for the gift of life. We all

go through periods when mere survival is an achievement. O for the freedom and peace to live lightly! That full aliveness comes when we can just be who we actually are.

The abundance of wine is God's relationship with us. We can be who we are when we are in the presence of someone we trust. The more we trust God and sip of his wine, the more we can relax into who we are. To the extent that we trust

Reality as loving, we know that no matter what we have done or not done, what we are capable of or not capable of, He is going to go on loving us. Darker episodes of self-knowledge rather than causing angst and self-reproach will, in the presence of God's love, bring us a freedom and an energy that will bring us to life in a new way.

To savour the flavour and impact of the wine of Cana will provoke us to thirst for even more.

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LT

# Lochaber's Canadian connection

In the 1800s, a group of Lochaber men, women and children crossed the Atlantic in three ships to begin a new life in Canada, writes Savannah Cobb-Thomas.

They settled in the province of Nova Scotia and created a community for themselves at the head of a lake there, which was originally named 'College Lake'.

After settling, the Scottish emigrants named their new home in honour of their native land, 'Lochaber', and consequently the lake became 'Lochaber Lake'.

Lochaber lies in the south-west corner of Nova Scotia's Antigonish County and saw its first European settlers in 1810.

Maren Fassnacht, a genealogy librarian at the Pictou-Antigonish library, explained that the first families to have settled bore the surnames McMillan - later to be spelled MacMillan in the 1900s - and Cameron and later those of the family name Stewart joined, along with some other ethnicities, including those



The Clark engraving of 1830 depicting the area of Nova Scotia that was to become Lochaber.

of Irish descent. A genealogy enthusiast and blog writer of the area, Jackie Corrigan, says the reasons for their emigration were 'economic, with inexplicable rent increases and the Highland Clearances well underway'.

Jocelyn Gillis from the Antigonish Heritage Museum added: 'Long-standing family names exist in our Lochaber of today including Stewart, Brown, Cameron, Inglis and MacMillan.'

'There is a pride in the com-

munity that these people possess. Several individuals are actively working on the compilation of family histories.'

The Scottish emigrants were undoubtedly hardy, arriving at a time winter preparations were crucial, with little more

than what they could carry. Carolyn MacDonald from the Chronicle Herald newspaper in Nova Scotia commented: 'How hard it is to imagine what life must have been like for those first settlers.'

Despite settlement occurring more than 200 years ago, the Scottish roots of the first settlers are still alive and today's Nova Scotia Lochaber residents are fondly aware of their ancestry, with overtly placed town plaques as a daily reminder.

#### Roots

Ms Gillis told the Lochaber Times: 'There is an interest in roots and culture.'

'The Antigonish Highland Games, presented by The Antigonish Highland Society - which were founded in 1861 by their Scottish forefathers - are held annually in the second week in July and are the major festival in this district.'

'They feature traditional piping, drumming and dancing and athletic and heavy events.'

A parade, street fair, pubs, concerts, church services and

more all feature. There are community activities that revolve around the major events such as dinners and more.

'A kilted golf tournament is also held, but shinty is virtually unheard of in this area.'

These links are not only kept alive by past reminders and a pride in a shared heritage, but by the many young people from Lochaber in Scotland who also travel to Canada, in the footsteps of the original travellers from Scotland, despite the differences in their modes of transport.

The stark similarities of the two allow those who cross over to travel and experience the new, but in a setting that is reminiscent of that which they love and enables the activities they have grown up with too.

This Lochaber is geographically smaller, but nonetheless has a significant area of impressive mountains, forests, lochs and glens and it is easy to see the resemblance Scottish emigrants saw all those years ago in their new home from home.

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# Glasgow Letter

**ROBERT ROBERTSON**

robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk



When I read of Nanci Griffith's passing in August last year, I suddenly felt a deep sense of regret that I had never managed to hear her live.

I had known (and grown to love) her music since I was a really young boy listening to a cassette of hers my dad used to play in the car. While clearly there is no substitute for concerts by legends of her stature who are now sadly gone, Scotland Sings Nanci Griffith came pretty damn close last week at Celtic Connections.

Karen Matheson, James Grant, Emily Smith, Dean Owens, Jill Jackson, Megan Henderson, Lisa Rigby and Kirsten Adamson all shared in the singing of a comprehensive selection of Nanci Griffith's best-loved songs and were backed by a simply incredible house band led by musical director, Stuart Nisbett.

There were upbeat moments where the concert hall clapped along with the likes of Jill Jackson's rendition of Lonestar State of Mind and James Grant's performance of the Pete Seeger classic If I Had a Hammer, a regular fixture at Nanci Griffith concerts. Then there were numerous moving moments such as Emily Smith's rendition of Troubled Fields, which I always think is a song that can speak to any rural community.

Without any hint of bias, of course, I loved hearing a Lochaber accent in amongst it all with Megan Henderson's performance of Cold Heart, Closed Mind, as well as her



A well deserved standing ovation for the wonderful singers and musicians who performed at the Scotland Sings Nanci Griffith concert.

duet with James Grant on the stunning Gulf Coast Highway.

As the concert finished with all the singers and musicians together singing From a Distance, led by the always amazing Karen Matheson, it occurred to me that I could happily have sat and listened to the whole concert again, and again, and again.

## What's on at Celtic Connections

■ Gness, The Light of the Moon and Mairi McGillivray on Thursday at 7.30pm in the MacKintosh Church

■ RANT with The Ledger on Thursday at 7.30pm in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, New Auditorium

■ Mother Tongue: Kathleen MacInnes, Brendan Begley and Cynefine on Thursday at 7.30pm in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, Strathclyde Suite

■ Adam Holmes and Clare Sands on Friday at 7.30pm in the Drygate Brewery

■ The Sharon Shannon Quartet and the Trials of Cato in the Glasgow Royal Concert

Hall, New Auditorium on Friday at 7.30pm

■ Sing Me a Story – Cuir Seinn ri Seanachas at 7.30pm in the Mitchell Theatre

■ Transatlantic Sessions on Friday at 7.30pm in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall

■ Eabhal with The Friel Sisters on Saturday at 7.30pm in the Òran Mòr

■ RURA: Our Voices Echo and N'famady Kouyaté on Saturday at 7.30pm in the Theatre Royal

■ Sian with Michael McGoldrick Quintet and Leyla McCalla on Saturday at 7.30pm in the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, New Auditorium

■ BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musical of the Year Final 2022 on Sunday at 5pm in the City Halls

## Pub Scene

**Park Bar**  
Thursday: Session  
Friday: Ellie and Ruairidh  
Saturday: Scott Harvey  
Sunday: Seonaidh MacIntyre and Ian Smith

# Mod brought £1.2m boost to Highlands amid Covid

The Royal National Mòd 2021, which took place at Eden Court Theatre from October 8-16, generated £1.2m for the Highland economy.

The 129-year-old event, which celebrates Gaelic language and culture, featured online and in-person competitions, performances and cultural activities, with 2,840 attendees to the city providing an economic uplift that helped support around 14 full-time jobs.

The national festival, organised by An Comunn Gàidhealach, elevated the Highland capital's tourism and hospitality sector during a quieter month in 2021, after the industries faced a difficult year due to Covid.

Allan Campbell, An Comunn Gàidhealach president, said: 'We are delighted that the 2021 Royal National Mòd has given the economy of Inverness and the surrounding area a significant boost in what was a difficult year for tourism in the city.'

'It is especially gratifying because we were not certain until August if the Mòd could take place on a face-to-face basis.'



'We are also absolutely delighted that the Mòd has played a crucial role in helping to offset the negative aspects of social isolation and some of the mental challenges caused by lockdown.'

'We very much hope that the Mòd in Perth in 2022 can go ahead in full.'

Councillor Calum Munro, chairman of Highland Council's Gaelic Committee, said: 'The Mod's economic boost to the Inverness and Highland economy is hugely welcome particularly during these difficult Covid times.'

# HIGHLAND CINEMA

## FRI 4TH - THUR 10TH FEB



**FRIDAY 4TH FEBRUARY**  
Belfast (12a) 12:30pm + 3pm. Highlands From The Air (U) 12:45pm.  
Sing 2 (U) 2pm + 4:45pm. Moonfall (12a) 5:25pm + 7:30pm.  
My Son (15) 8:30pm.

**SATURDAY 5TH FEBRUARY**  
Highlands From The Air (U) 10:30am. Belfast (12a) 11:15am + 8pm.  
Sing 2 (U) 11:45am, 2:30pm + 5:15pm. Torn (12a) 1:45pm.  
Moonfall (12a) 4:15pm + 7:15pm.

**SUNDAY 6TH FEBRUARY**  
Belfast (12a) 11am + 1:30pm. Sing 2 (U) 11:15am, 2pm + 4:45pm.  
Moonfall (12a) 4:15pm + 7:30pm.  
Nightmare Alley: B&W Noir Edition (15) 7:15pm.

**MONDAY 7TH FEBRUARY - ALL SHOWN WITH SUBTITLES**  
Belfast (12a) *Bairns At The Box Office*: 12:20pm + 2:45pm.  
Highlands From The Air (U) 1pm. Sing 2 (U) 2:15pm + 5pm.  
Moonfall (12a) 5:15pm + 7:40pm. My Son (15) 8:15pm.

**TUESDAY 8TH FEBRUARY**  
Torn (12a) 12pm. Highlands From The Air (U) 12:30pm. Sing 2 (U) 1:45pm + 4:30pm. Belfast (12a) 2:15pm. Moonfall (12a) 4:45pm + 7:45pm.  
Nightmare Alley: B&W Noir Edition (15) 7:15pm.

**WEDNESDAY 9TH FEBRUARY**  
Torn (12a) 12pm. Highlands From The Air (U) 12:30pm. Sing 2 (U) 1:45pm + 4:50pm. Belfast (12a) 2:15pm + 8pm. Moonfall (12a) 4:30pm + 7:30pm.

**THURSDAY 10TH FEBRUARY**  
Highlands From The Air (U) 1pm. Sing 2 (U) 2pm + 4:45pm. Belfast (12a) 2:30pm. Moonfall (12a) 5pm + 7:30pm. Piano To Zanskar (12a) 8pm.



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# Runners' fast and testing start to year

ATHLETICS

Lochaber Athletics Club (LAC) members enjoyed an eventful start to the year in Irvine and Skene.

Three Lochaber athletes were selected to run for Scotland North district and they made an important contribution to the team at the Scottish Inter District cross country championships on Irvine beach park course.

The dunes course was well drained with several small hills to negotiate to give a fast and testing race.

First up for LAC was Maddison Macmillan, winning her first North Scotland vest in the under-13 year age group. Maddison ran the 3,200 metre course in 14 minutes 49 seconds.

Fraser Anderson ran in the highly competitive under 17 boys race over six kilometres and finished in 23:49.

The final runner for Lochaber was Isla Mackay, who is improving with every race after making a big impact in the North district championships.

She was fifth counter for the North team and collected a team bronze for her 29:26 performance over eight kms.

This was a tough encounter in which the North teams had to be at their best against strong West and East teams with their large number of runners.

The following weekend saw the third North district cross country league race at Skene, Aberdeenshire.



From left, Aaron Tresidder, Liam Hutson and Isla Mackay travelled to Skene, Aberdeenshire, to compete.

This was a long journey for Lochaber but the course was hilly with 180 metres of climb which suited them well and the runners enjoyed bright sunny weather on a course which could be seen by spectators over the whole race.

The highlight performance of the day was Aaron Tresidder in the under-11 boys.

He quickly built up a large lead with a runner from the North. Both fought it out with each taking the lead at some stage.

A hilly section near the end of the race proved hard and Aaron gained an advantage but was unable to shake off the second-placed runner.

Both athletes battled over the

last 150 metres and Aaron was pipped by less than a metre to take second place with a time of five minutes 48 seconds over the 1,600-metre course.

Isla Mackay ran three laps over eight kms and had another consistent performance within a pack of talented runners to finish well up in the field in seventh place in a time of 29:29.

Liam Hutson was in the leading group over the first part of the men's race but found the pace of international Kenny Wilson of Moray just too quick. The long climbs and rapid descents proved challenging but Liam managed to hold his position to finish in 33:37 over 10 kms.



Fraser Anderson of Lochaber, far right, at the start of the Under 17 men's race.

Left: Maddison Macmillan drives up a dune in the inter district championships at Irvine Beach Park.

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LT

## Youth shinty developments

Les Kinvig has been busy since taking on the Camanachd Association Regional Development Officer (West) role last August.

He told the Lochaber Times: 'The effects of Covid have blighted youth shinty in the west region. However, as well as in Oban, Glenorchy, Taynuilt Juniors, Inveraray and Kilmory have all gone to great efforts to get primary school shinty through what has been a difficult time and it is great to see clubs in the area providing these opportunities for young shinty players.'

'I really hope we can get school shinty back to normal though and get a full outdoor season for primary youngsters.'

There are ambitious plans, as Les explained: 'We want to have festivals and tournaments up and running and have an Argyll and Bute school league in place ahead of the national competitions so the players aren't going into these games cold.'

'There is also a need to re-establish area development groups to enhance shinty provision at primary and secondary level. We want to galvanise youth shinty through a collaborative approach between clubs and the association to develop the game and have a clear player pathway from primary to secondary school.'

'The rural nature of many clubs means it is more important than ever to work together to celebrate and sustain participation whilst maintaining the age-old tradition of representing your shinty community.'

Les Kinvig has already led taster sessions for primary school players at St Columba's Primary School, Oban, whilst sessions at Appin are currently taking place. Dalmally and Dunbeg are next on the list with others to follow.

Any volunteers able to assist with shinty in any way in the west region should contact Les by email at les.kinvig@shinty.com

## Oban Celtic annual general meeting

Oban Celtic's annual general meeting at The Lodge, Albany Street, on Friday January 28 was a routine event.

Club president Andrew MacKenzie remains at the helm, with Vivienne Duffy as club secretary and second team fixtures secretary.

Shinty stalwart Dougie MacIntyre stays on as Oban Celtic first team manager, assisted by Allan Duffy.

Les Kinvig takes charge of the Oban Celtic second team, with John Turnbull senior coming on board as assistant manager.

# Ferguson Transport & Shipping Balliemore Cup

The draw for the first round of the Ferguson Transport & Shipping Balliemore Cup took place on Monday January 31 at Ferguson Transport & Shipping HQ, Fort William.

2022 is the first year of Ferguson Transport & Shipping sponsoring the Balliemore Cup after a longstanding partnership with the Camanachd Association.

The draw was conducted by Ally Ferguson, managing director, Ferguson Transport & Shipping, along with fellow directors Jack Ferguson and Lesley Innes.

The first round was regionalised, with the quarter final onwards an open draw.

Ally Ferguson said: 'I've been involved in shinty for more than 40 years and I know what it means to the communities that play the ancient game.'

'Many of the areas in which we operate across



Ally Ferguson, centre, managing director of Balliemore Cup sponsors Ferguson Transport and Shipping with fellow directors Jack Ferguson and Lesley Innes. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

Scotland play shinty and that includes a number of our employees, so we are delighted to extend our support for the sport by signing a three-year deal for title sponsorship of the Balliemore Cup.

Derek Keir, Camanachd Association chief executive officer, said: 'We are delighted Ferguson Transport &

Shipping has extended its support for shinty to encompass the title sponsorship for the Balliemore Cup – a national competition that always provides an exciting final. We now stand on the precipice of a full season once again and this draw will undoubtedly excite players, coaches and volunteers.'

## Oban start season away to Glasgow

New Oban Camanachd manager Gareth Evans takes his side to Peterson Park to play newly-promoted Glasgow Mid Argyll in the Mowi Premiership on the first day of the competitive shinty season.

Lochside Rovers host the GMA seconds in Mowi South Division 2.

## New Inveraray chairman

Andrew Watt is the new chairman of Inveraray Shinty Club.

Andrew is a former Inveraray player, captain and Camanachd Cup winner who, along with his twin brother Ally and older brother Douglas, was an integral part of Davy Macpherson's successful winning era at the club during the late 1990s and early 2000s.

In recognising the impact Covid has had on shinty and the increasing challenges clubs have faced in terms of maintaining squads, particularly for teams in the south, Andrew is keen to work with the committee to ensure the club's longevity and build on the excellent work of previous committees.

Key to this plan will be the establishment of a structured player development pathway and a drive to strengthen links between the club and the community.

Andrew Watt said: 'As a former player, I'm incredibly honoured to be taking on the role of chairman and look forward

to working with all committee members to do everything we can to help and support all of our teams and coaches from primary school through to the senior team.

'The aim is to bring success back to the club at all levels. We're fortunate we have so many people involved with the club who are passionate and committed to achieving that.'

Ruaraidh Graham remains in charge of the Inveraray senior side, with Andrew McMurdo and Scott Robertson taking the seconds.

Ferguson Transport & Shipping Balliemore Cup, first round May 7:

Northern section: Glenurquhart v Strathglass; Glengarry v Skye; Inverness v Lochaber. Bye: Beaully.

Southern section: Oban Celtic v Cruachanside; Ballachulish v Col Glen; Bute v Aberdour. Bye Inveraray.

## Newtonmore confirm managers

Norman MacArthur, Evan Cheyne and David Cheyne have been confirmed as Newtonmore's senior management team following the club's emergency general meeting on Thursday January 27.

Colin Stewart was unable to sign up because of work commitments. The new coaching team replaces Orsten Gardner who stepped down from the manager's role at the end of last season.

## Newtonmore P Fort William P

Fort William's pre-season preparations got off to a false start when their friendly match against Newtonmore at the Eilan was called off on Saturday morning due to high winds coupled with debris on the pitch and on the roads.

Fort William's opening Mowi Premiership match will be against Kyles Athletic at An Aird on Saturday March 5, whilst the Fort seconds

travel to Skye in Mowi North Division 1.

## Pre-season friendlies

A number of pre-season friendlies are scheduled for this weekend.

They include Oban Celtic's meeting with Lochaber at Mossfield, whilst Newtonmore travel to Beaully.

Kilmallie and Ballachulish were to meet but decided to cancel their match due to the poor weather forecast.

Lovat, captained this season by Craig Mainland, play Caberfeidh at Balgate and the Kinlochshiel first and second teams will meet at Réaraig.

Ardnamurchan is due to welcome the Lochaber second team.

Skye Camanachd host the John MacKinnon Sixes in Portree, whilst Kingussie play the Liz Young Sixes at Dalfaber, Aviemore.

With the unpredictable weather, it is advised to check the arrangements with the clubs concerned before taking in a match.

## Taynuilt and Glenorchy merge

Taynuilt Shinty Club and Glenorchy Shinty Club have decided, due to a lack of numbers on both sides, to amalgamate under the name of Cruachanside Camanachd Club.

Both clubs have experienced team difficulties in the past and the pandemic has made the situation worse, with players retiring and having other interests on a Saturday.

In the early 1970s, Dalmally and Taynuilt primary schools won the MacKay Cup under the name Cruachanside, coached by the local vet Kenneth Campbell, hence the change of name.

Both clubs will continue to have their own junior teams and it is hoped to start a joint under-14 team.

Cruachanside will play their home matches alternating between Taynuilt and Dalmally to keep an interest in both villages.

Dawnfresh Seafoods, which have fish farms on Loch Awe and Loch Etive, is to sponsor the new club.

The manager and the assistant manager will be appointed shortly.

The club has two friendlies arranged so far, against the Lochaber seconds and Lochside Rovers.

The Camanachd Association has agreed to Cruachanside's request to take Taynuilt's place in Mowi South Division 1 next season. It is hoped the decision to merge the two clubs will keep shinty alive in both the villages.





Lochaber Athletic Club members were joined by fellow runners from across the country in Sunday's challenging 'Fassfern Faff' race. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba. photos.

## No 'faffing' for runners on Green Gates course

Lochaber athletes braved the storm on Sunday to continue with their winter cross country league.

A total of 45 runners turned out at the Green Gates course to tackle the Fassfern Faff. There were lots of smiles at the end of the tough undulating

course. Whether they were inspired by joy or relief is known only by the competitors. Lochaber Athletics Club (LAC) commended its volunteer marshals for keeping everyone safe and encouraging the runners on their way. Results: Top three males: 1 Brian Sharp,

unattached, 1:09:02; 2 Alan Ross (LAC), 1:12:19; 3 Matt MacDonald (LAC), 1:14:48. Top three females: 1 Caroline Marwick, Highland Hill Runners (HHR), 1:24:39; 2 Hannah Ward-Penny (HHR), 1:27:27; 3 Amanda Blackhall (LAC), 1:28:48.

# Last gasp victory for 13-man Lochaber away to tough Birkmyre

Birkmyre	14
Lochaber	15

West Region Division 3

Lochaber travelled to Kilmacollm for what they knew would be a tough game against Birkmyre on Saturday.

Again, Lochaber travelled with only 15 men, including a winger and a centre in the forward pack that also included returning prop Innis Ireland fresh off a 30-hour flight from Malaysia.

Lochaber started the game aggressively, putting Birkmyre under pressure early on.

A rampaging run from captain Callum MacDonald

### RUGBY

smashed through Birkmyre's defence before offloading to vice captain Callum Boyd to run in and score.

Strong winds made the conversion kick too difficult, but the visitors kept the pressure up and were soon rewarded with a second try.

A training ground move from the ruck saw William Stewart pass the ball out the back door to Callum Boyd who broke the first few tackles before offloading to centre partner Jack Hamilton to score.

Birkmyre started to come back into the match towards

the end of the first half but some strong defence from Lochaber kept them out time and time again. Half time score: 0-10.

With Lochaber now down to 14 players, Findlay Ireland having picked up a knock just before half time, Birkmyre looked to pile on the pressure after the restart and were soon rewarded with a try after using the extra man to create space.

The wind had dropped in the second half giving their kicker a much easier shot at goal.

Lochaber suffered another blow when Innis Ireland went off with severe cramp. Now playing with a two-man advantage, Birkmyre worked their way down and forced

their way over the line and with another easy kick took the lead.

Lochaber's determination to get back into the game was emphasised by a massive hit by Dean Hutchinson driving Birkmyre's big prop back and, after turning their hosts over, kicked for the corner to get some territory.

The ball stayed in but the kick chase put the home backs under severe pressure, forcing a knock on in midfield.

As the two teams started to form the scrum, the referee called last play. From the base of the scrum, Conor Taylor picked up the ball and charged for the line.

Having drawn in the home

defence, Taylor passed out to Boyd who, in turn, floated a perfectly timed pass to Henry Luke who ran in to score in the corner for a well celebrated last gasp victory.

Youngsters Jack Hamilton, Davy Duncan, Ronnie Fulford and man-of-the-match Ben Fulford led from the front with big hits and strong carries throughout the game.

Lochaber have a week off before they welcome Loch Lomond to Banavie for their last home fixture of the season. Kick-off to be confirmed due to Scotland playing Wales in the Six Nations.

Check Lochaber Rugby Football Club's social media for updates.

## Islands games association to hold biennial general meeting

The Western Isles Island Games Association (WIIGA) will hold its biennial general meeting (BGM) on Tuesday February 15 at 6pm ahead of the 2023 NatWest International Island Games.

Having been postponed in 2021 due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the rescheduled games will take place in Guernsey between July 8 and July 14, 2023 and will feature 14 sports, with more than 100 participants and team managers expected to represent the Western Isles at the 18th staging of the games.

WIIGA chairman Norrie MacDonald said: 'The past two years have been frustrating for our athletes and team managers, with training severely restricted and few opportunities to take part in competition. WIIGA and the Island Games has been a powerful driver for many over the years and it is important we have a strong supported committee in place as preparations begin for Guernsey 2023.'

The WIIGA BGM will give members the chance to hear from the chairman on preparations for next year's games. The election of an executive committee will also be held.



## SCOTTISH FIELD



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Boxers from Caithness and Inverness travelled to the Lochaber Phoenix Gym in Corpach for a day of sparring in preparation for the forthcoming Scottish Novice Championships. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos.

# Boxing event warm up

Lochaber Phoenix Boxing Club welcomed a few new faces to their Corpach Gym last Sunday when members of Caithness Boxing Club and Highland Boxing Academy joined local boxers for a day of sparring.

All three clubs have entrants in the forthcoming Scottish Novice Championships to be held in Motherwell over the next two weekends where they will face competitors from across the country, each with their eyes set on reaching the finals and medal glory.

To expand their experience in competition with boxers they may never have

met before, everyone tries as much as possible to get in the ring with different opponents prior to the main event.

This is to make them aware of and help them identify and react to the subtle differences in technique and stances used by other boxers, rather than growing used only to those of club mates.

Like so many other activities, Covid restrictions have severely limited the ability of groups to engage with others in the sport.

This is especially true in the Highlands where visiting the nearest club can mean a round trip of more

than 150 miles, while in the central belt they are much closer together.

Lochaber Phoenix head coach Vince Lopez said: 'It is a real advantage to give our boxers the opportunity to pit their skills against others from different clubs. They can learn a lot from this. We would normally have been away quite a few times by now in preparation for the Scottish Novice Championships but that hasn't been possible due to Covid. We have been up to Inverness recently and it is really great to have them and the guys from Caithness come to our gym.'

'I know it will be really beneficial to

everyone who was here to have had this session.'

Until a few weeks ago it wasn't even certain these championships would be going ahead as no one could predict the Covid regulations in place on the suggested dates. However, most clubs have been preparing for it and working within regulations in the hope it would not be cancelled.


Since its creation, the Lochaber club has shown the quality of talent and coaching in its small catchment area by bringing home many awards from these and other championship events and is aiming to make sure this continues.

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Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday 3 January, 2022** are listed below with differences for major ports listed alongside. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

<p><b>3</b> 0106 0.5 0709 4.2 TH 1337 0.7 1923 3.8</p> <p><b>4</b> 0148 0.6 0748 4.1 F 1417 0.8 1958 3.7</p>	<p><b>5</b> 0228 0.7 0824 4.0 SA 1455 1.0 2030 3.6</p> <p><b>6</b> 0306 0.9 0900 3.7 SU 1532 1.3 2102 3.4</p>	<p><b>7</b> 0345 1.2 0937 3.5 M 1612 1.5 2135 3.2</p> <p><b>8</b> 0426 1.4 1018 3.2 TU 1658 1.7 2215 3.0</p>	<p><b>9</b> 0515 1.7 1112 2.9 W 1753 1.9 2311 2.9</p> <p><b>10</b> 0615 1.9 1254 2.8 TH 1859 2.0</p>
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FRIDAY FORECAST

Ardrishaig	-5.35
Campbeltown	-5.30
Crinan	-0.47
Islay Port Ellen	2.00
Lochboisdale	+0.30
Mallaig	+0.25
Portree	+0.55
Tobermory	+0.16
Dover	+5.30

FORT WILLIAM WEATHER

<p><b>Thursday</b> Heavy rain and a fresh breeze Temperatures 3°C to 10°C.</p>	<p><b>Friday</b> Sleet showers and a moderate breeze Temperatures 3°C to 5°C.</p>	<p><b>Saturday</b> Light rain showers and a moderate breeze Temperatures 6°C to 7°C.</p>	<p><b>Sunday</b> Light rain showers and a moderate breeze Temperatures 7°C to 8°C.</p>
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