

Merry Christmas to all our readers

Collect token 3 in our Tesco Trolley Dash competition – page 12



## 200th parkrun



Runners celebrate at Ganavan Sands on Saturday

• See page 3 for more

## Santa at Connel



Youngsters all smiles after special visit

• See page 7 for more



## Santa's drive-thru grotto goes full throttle!

Ho, Ho, Ho! Oban Community Fire Station got into gear for Santa's drive-thru grotto at the weekend, writes Kathie Griffiths.

A constant flow of traffic kept Santa and his elf helpers busy handing out festive treats to excited youngsters.

The Covid-safe grotto saw the station's inside bay turned into a sparkling wonderland for cars to pass through, stopping for a wave from Santa and to get a gift from his chief elf.

Oban photographer Kevin McGlynn added to the sparkle by donating all the twinkling Christmas trees.

Crew in their finest Christmas jumpers collected just over £800 for The Fire Fighter's Charity. Watch commander Douglas Black said: 'Thank you to everyone who supported us. Merry Christmas to you all.'

Dannin MacDonald, eight, with Santa and his chief elf at Oban Fire Station on Saturday.

# Cluster plan extension

by Kathie Griffiths  
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk

Communities are getting more time to have a say on Argyll and Bute Council's education shake-up proposals.

The date for feedback to be sent in has

now been shifted from Friday February 4 to Friday March 4 - extending the consultation over the council's cluster school plans by one month.

Parent councils, teachers, school staff and community councils should all have seen a copy of the proposals

by now and have a feedback form to respond to the council's renamed Collective Leadership Model. If they have not got it yet, they can contact support@empoweringoureducators.co.uk.

The time extension is about making

sure everyone has the time they need to understand the proposals and have conversations about it, before having their say. It will go to the full council in autumn 2022 for a decision.

Members of the public can also look

Continued on page 6.



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OT

## Large-scale New Year celebrations cancelled

Big outdoor Hogmanay celebrations and street parties are being cancelled as part of Scotland's tougher new Covid rules. All outdoor events from Boxing Day will be limited to only 500 people in a bid to slow down the spread of Omicron.

Edinburgh's street party is just one of many events that will now not proceed.

The Scottish Government's new round of restrictions, set to last about three weeks, will also see indoor events restricted to 200 people seated or 100 people standing. Pubs and other hospitality venues selling alcohol will need to bring back table service from December 27 and reintroduce a 1m distance between groups. Sports matches will effectively be 'spectator free' into January.

First minister Nicola Sturgeon said last week's advice for over Christmas was not changing but pleaded with people to make any gatherings and celebrations as safe as possible to help protect health services and the economy.

For more, visit [www.obantimes.co.uk](http://www.obantimes.co.uk)

# Oban Airport set to be 'world's only' drone hub

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

UK Government funding of £173,400 is to be used to develop a state-of-the-art facility at Oban Airport, which will enable drone pilots to train all year round.

'From climate research to mountain rescue operations, drones can support rural communities in places like Argyll and Bute,' says a post on the UK Government Scotland's Facebook page.

In an accompanying video shot outside Oban Airport, SAMS teaching fellow Dr Phil Anderson explained: 'This is now developing into a technology hub for all sorts of robotic airborne operations. The project we're looking at is having an all-weather facility for training the next generation of drone pilots.



Oban Airport is developing into a technology hub for all sorts of robotic airborne operations.

'We are using these aircraft for climate research. We are interested at looking at harmful algal blooms that affect local aquaculture. We're looking for plastics in the marine environment.

But that leads into people also using this facility for commercial projects.'

Senior drone pilot Richard Dale said in the video: 'Basically this could be a one-off in the world at the

moment. There's nowhere else in Europe that can offer this kind of facility currently. Having the funding here for that, in rural Argyll, is an amazing draw for lots and lots of people.'

Dr Anderson concluded: 'Once this facility is on board and running, we will be able to do so much more all year round. People can be trained up in the middle of winter. Having all that in one place at Oban Airport is going to be a real bonus for the local community with jobs.

'It is going to help aquaculture in the local community, as well as helping save the planet with climate research.'

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## Name for Mull's additional ferry is revealed

A new name for the MV Utne, the second-hand Norwegian vessel bought by CalMac's national owner for the Oban-Craignure route, has been unveiled after a tight race in a public vote.

Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd (CMAL) announced it will be named MV Loch Frisa.

More than 1,000 votes were cast, with Loch Frisa coming out as favourite. Glen Forsa was a very close second, and Torosay in third.

The MV Loch Frisa is currently at Dales Marine Services Ltd in Leith to bring her in line with UK maritime regulations. Work should be completed in early 2022.

A small ceremony will follow in the new year, when Mull councillor Mary-Jean Devon will officially rename the vessel.

The public vote included a competition with a prize for one voter chosen at random, to travel onboard the MV Loch Frisa with a friend and receive a £200 gift voucher for the Isle of Mull hotel. The winner was Alistair Forsyth, from Arran, who said he will take his wife along with him.

## Police campaign to stop spiked drinks this Christmas

Argyll's police force has launched a safety campaign this Christmas to prevent people's drinks being spiked in pubs and clubs, writes Sandy Neil.

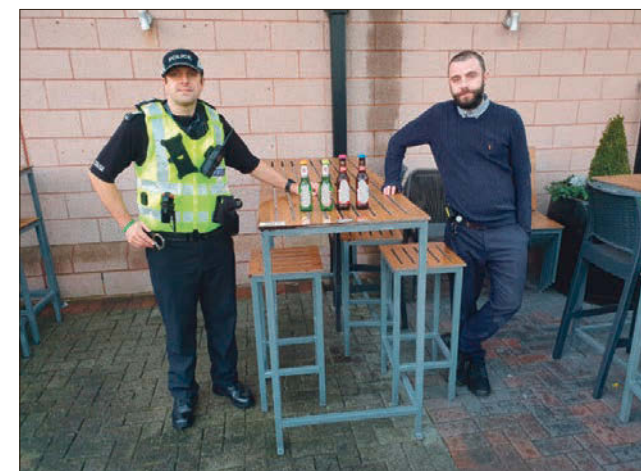
Spiking, whether by adding drugs or alcohol to someone's drink, or by injection, without their consent, is a criminal offence. It can put people at significant risk of harm.

The Christmas initiative was created to reassure people they can go for a night out without fearing that their drinks will be spiked.

Reusable silicon bottle tops are being issued by local police officers to licensed premises and their patrons throughout the region.

Rolling out the scheme across Argyll and Bute, community policing sergeant Chris Edwards from Oban Police Station said: 'This is another great initiative seeing the police and licensees working together to keep everyone safe this festive season, with funding from the Alcohol & Drug Partnership.

'Spiking drinks has been much reported in the press recently and these bottle tops are another great tool to prevent



Sergeant Edwards attended Oban's Corryvreckan pub, and met with its manager David Black to demonstrate the reusable silicon bottle caps.

people being harmed when out enjoying themselves.'

Police Scotland said anyone who reports having their drink spiked or has been assaulted by whatever means, will be taken seriously.

'We would encourage anyone who believes they have had their drink spiked or been assaulted in this way to contact Police Scotland on 101 or in an emergency 999.

'We are working in commu-

nities, with licensees, pubs and clubs offering bystander training to help spot the signs of when someone may be at risk.

'Officers throughout Argyll will be visiting licensed premises and conducting random spot checks with substance misuse wipes to detect and deter the use of drugs. We want everyone to enjoy the festive season, to stay safe and away from the harmful effects of drug use.'

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# parkrun celebrates 200th event at Ganavan

Trainers were laced up and Santa hats pulled on tight to celebrate Ganavan Sands 200th parkrun, writes Kathie Griffiths.

Saturday morning regulars were joined by visitors from Glasgow and North Wales taking part in the event.

Runner Ed Daynes was awarded a special vest-top to mark his 50th run and one of the group's youngest participants Felix Hughes, who turned 11, was hoping for the gift of a birthday best-time yet.

Ganavan Sands parkrun organiser Doreen Henderson was there with cake and other volunteers to cheer the runners and walkers on.

At its peak, the parkrun has attracted 100 runners and walkers in a single session since it started back in 2016 – with only the occasional frost or Covid stopping it in its tracks.

Mrs Henderson said:



'We want to thank everyone for supporting us and we'll be back on New Year's Day to blow the cobwebs away.'

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OT

# Argyll has room for five more asylum-seeking children

As many as seven unaccompanied asylum-seeking children could be housed in Argyll and Bute, a council committee has been told.

A report updated councillors on the situation with those young people (UASCs), the number of whom reaching the UK continues to rise.

Officers from the council and the area's health and social care partnership (HSCP) have been working to develop plans to deliver appropriate care.

The UK Government made it mandatory, instead of voluntary, for UK local authorities to participate in its national transfer scheme for UASCs last month.

However, the council has formally responded, expressing concerns about timing and preparation for bringing the plans forward, with the report expressing hope for



'a degree of reasonableness'. Chief social work officer David Gibson told the council's policy and resources committee of the figure of seven at its virtual meeting on Thursday December 9.

Council leader, Kintyre and the Islands Liberal Democrat Councillor Robin Currie, said:

'It was always our intention to bring two children to Argyll and Bute.

'There has been a lot of work done by officers and COSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities) on this subject and hopefully we will get a good outcome from it all.'

Mr Gibson replied: 'Our

**Council leader Robin Currie – the council is concerned about preparation for bringing the plans forward.**

capacity, as far as the Home Office is concerned, is not one or two – it is seven young people between the ages of 16 and 18.

'Two is the basis for what we are working on now. If, over subsequent weeks, we have to take seven, that will create a much bigger issue and we would come back with reports to the council.'

Mid Argyll Independent Councillor Douglas Philand also raised the issue of mental health of any UASCs arriving in the area.

He said: 'Obviously these young people, if placed here, could have significant mental health issues. I know they will be treated the same, but I am

just keen to nail that fairly quickly just so things do not develop into a later trauma.'

Mr Gibson responded: 'We have no doubt these youngsters have the potential to come with trauma. Some may have come from war zones, equally some may not have.

'But we would expect a degree and we will discuss this with some of our mental health colleagues. The funding we have is to pay for their accommodation and a bit of schooling.

'The numbers will not flood us but we will sit down like we would with any young people and work on a plan.

'We will have interpreters on the ground to help us understand what the young people are trying to tell us. There are services we need to work around but we will do that in a bespoke process.'

## POLICE FILES

■ At 1.20am on Sunday December 12 at George Street, Oban, a man, aged 24, allegedly obstructed police in the execution of their duties and acted in a threatening or abusive behaviour. He was arrested, charged with the offences and a report will be submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

■ Between 1am and 10am on Saturday December 18 at an address in Hazeldean Crescent, Oban, a teenager allegedly stole a vehicle. The 18-year-old man was arrested and charged with the theft, drink driving, careless driving and driving without a driving licence or insurance. He is due to appear at Oban Sheriff Court.

■ At 9pm on Saturday December 18 at Main Street, Tobermory, police had cause to stop a motor vehicle. The driver, a 44-year-old woman, failed the roadside breath test. She was charged with driving while under the influence of alcohol and released to appear at Oban Sheriff Court.

## HMIE inspections to resume

Education inspectors are set to return to schools in Argyll and Bute – with seven schools due to be visited by the end of December, writes Sandy Neil.

A report has detailed arrangements which have been agreed by the area's council for the return of inspections and reports by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE), which were due to resume in September.

Hermitage Academy and Campbeltown Grammar School were earmarked for visits during phase one, which was due to take place between

September and December.

Also listed for visits during phase one were Gigha, Lochnell, Glassary, Achahoish and St Andrew's Primary Schools, as well as the area's community learning and development service.

To date, no reports from any of these planned visits – some of which may have been at least partly conducted virtually – have been published on the Education Scotland website.

A second phase, starting in January, will see a programme of visits to early learning centres (ELC) and schools

resume. Inspections will focus on reduced areas.

The report went before the council's community services committee at its virtual meeting on Thursday December 16.

Executive director Douglas Hendry said: 'As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, HMIE took the decision to pause all inspection activity on March 13 2020.

'In September 2021, HMIE agreed with the cabinet secretary for education and skills the arrangements to resume a programme of scrutiny activities for session 2021/22.'

## Bòrd na Gàidhlig addresses failings

The public body responsible for promoting Gaelic in Scotland has tackled weaknesses in its leadership and governance, the Auditor General for Scotland has said, following a critical report two years ago.

A 2019 report on Bòrd na Gàidhlig, conducted by the national watchdog that oversees how public money is spent, identified multiple failings in the oversight and senior management of the organisation.

It said the Bòrd 'must address a range of concerns, from a lack of openness to poor relationships and organisational culture'. It listed

the public body's 'ineffective leadership', 'a lack of clarity over roles and responsibilities', and 'a lack of transparency in decision-making'.

A new follow-up report from the Auditor General for Scotland said in the two years since, the Bòrd has taken a number of actions, including: restructuring its leadership and management; significantly improving openness and transparency; clarifying roles and responsibilities; reducing the number of non-executive board members; and addressing skills gaps on its board.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig now needs

to monitor the impact of these changes in the years to come.

Stephen Boyle, Auditor General for Scotland, said: 'Bòrd na Gàidhlig has made good progress in addressing the problems in its leadership, and it is now a much improved organisation. The scale of change and pace of improvement since 2019 is welcome.

'Given the long-term change required, it is likely the full benefits of the improvements will only emerge over time.'

Bòrd na Gàidhlig is based in Inverness and employs around 21 staff. In 2020/21, it had a net expenditure of £5.6 million.

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Dunbeg Primary pupils on their sponsored walk at Ganavan beach, which raised an amazing £2,800 for a pancreatic cancer research charity, in memory of the school's parent council chair, Adrian Beard.

# Youngsters raise £2.8k in memory of Adrian Beard

Dunbeg Primary School's 87 pupils raised an incredible £2,840.55 on a sponsored walk for cancer charity Pancreatic Research UK, in memory of Adrian Beard, the chairman of the school's parent council.

'All classes from P1 to P7 set off on a fabulous day on October 5 to Ganavan beach,' said headteacher Marny McCulloch. 'The walk is not long, but it was the first event that we had done as a whole school since before lockdown.'

'Spirits were high and the time to relax on the beach at Ganavan was an extra bonus. I had hoped to raise £200-£500 at most, so you can imagine our astonishment as the money started to pour in from



our community. Adrian was a huge asset to our school and very well respected. In addition, many children here were able to identify with a loved one who had been affected by cancer, which is perhaps why the total has been such a gen-

erous one. We cannot thank everyone enough.

'Every £29 donated pays for an hour of research. As we said to the children before we set off, our donation could fund the vital hour that finds a cure. Fingers crossed.'



## Jura hotel bought by Ardfin Estate

The Isle of Jura Hotel in Craighouse has been bought by Ardfin Estate, writes Sandy Neil.

The 12,000-acre Ardfin Estate at the southern tip of Jura, which includes Jura House, was bought in 2010 by millionaire hedge-fund manager Greg Coffey, who has transformed it into a five-star luxury hotel and world-class 18-hole golf course.

During the same period, the Jura Hotel, home to island's only pub, has been owned and

renovated by islanders Andy and Cath McCallum.

The sale of the 17-bedroom hotel, which included two bars, a restaurant, 'shack' servery, a camping/event field, and a separate five-bedroom owner's house, was expected to fetch £1.2 million.

In an announcement on social media, the Isle of Jura Community Group said: 'Ardfin Estate are delighted to be the new owners of the Jura Hotel and intend to continue

the operation in the same vein as the previous owners, and hopefully if possible build on the success that Andy and Cath have had in their 11 years of owning the hotel.'

The group added that the hotel would close for reorganisation from Friday December 24 until Tuesday January 4, when it will be open on a full seven-day-a-week schedule. The hospitality manager will be looking for staff in the new year.

## Oban's welcoming Christmas tree lit

A Christmas tree in Oban's Dalrigh Gardens was lit up on Friday by ACHA sheltered housing tenants Nancy MacDonald and Mairi Archer.

Dalrigh Gardens, with its bright banner at the entrance to the town, welcomes locals and visitors to Oban for Christmas.

It is a public open space, owned and maintained by Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) for the use of the people of Oban and its many visitors.

The tree was officially switched on by Nancy and Mairi, supported by ACHA's chairman councillor Roddy McCuish and local area committee member councillor Jim Lynch. For good measure Santa turned up to do the countdown.

Councillor McCuish said: 'Dalrigh Gardens is a community asset at the entrance to Oban. The ACHA Christmas tree sends out a message of peace and good will to all at this time.'



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OT

## Around Oban

KAY McDONALD

editor@obantimes.co.uk



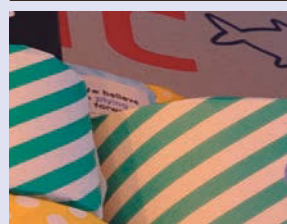
The big day is almost here at last, only two more shopping days to go, and today (Thursday) is one of them.

Thankfully I've finished now, if it's not bought, it's too late and we'll do without. I'm really looking forward to some relaxing days at home with my feet up watching some festive TV. I've hunted out the Scrabble and Trivial Pursuit, even Domino's may make an appearance as we spend time at home where it's cosy, counting our blessings as we think of those not lucky enough to have warm homes and enough to eat.

It's been a strange couple of years but despite everything it's not been all bad. We had a beautiful summer when the town filled with visitors, keen to enjoy all we have to offer. In fact it's not that long since things started to quieten down.

The puppet Storm was one of my favourite things this year – it was an eerie experience seeing this huge sea goddess walking through Oban, but what an

## WHERE IS THIS?



experience it was, something I don't think I'll ever forget.

Then we had an amazing firework display across the harbour, which exceeds my expectations every year, and an immense crowd to watch it followed by the Reindeer Parade, which is always a favourite – seeing Santa in person marks the start of the festive season for me.

On that note I'd like to wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a happy and peaceful New Year.

I don't think 2022 will be starting off the way we want, again, but the year will be what we make of it and we can make it fantastic with lots to look forward to.

The photograph last week was of the beautiful interior of the Lulu Lounge in the Perle Hotel. Time for somewhere a little different this week.

# Council anger as Holyrood 'cuts budgets' for 2022-23

The Scottish Government's budget is a 'bad deal' say all local councils, including Argyll and Bute, as they face a cut in funding.

The 'bold, ambitious, progressive' 2022-2023 Scottish budget, announced by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy, Kate Forbes, MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch, would deliver a 'record' £18 billion for health and social care, and 'almost £12.5 billion for local authorities, representing a like-with-like real terms increase of 4.5 per cent and a fair settlement for councils'.

Welcoming 'many positive announcements', Scottish Land and Estates chief executive, Sarah-Jane Laing, said: '£831 million for affordable



housing and significant investment towards energy efficiency, natural environment restoration and decarbonisation projects will help ensure Scotland is on the right track to becoming a net zero nation.

'With the pandemic ongoing and the emergence of the Omicron variant, it is also pleasing to see many rural businesses will benefit from a continuation of 50 per cent rates relief into at least the first quarter of 2022.'

However, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) described the budget as 'a bad deal for communities', and warned serious financial challenges in key services lay ahead for Scotland's councils.

COSLA's resources spokes-

person councillor Gail Macgregor said: 'This settlement represents a £100m cut to our core settlement, before any other pressures such as National Insurance costs, pay or inflation are taken into account. We wanted a budget for local government that enables people to live well locally – what we have is a budget that barely allows local government to survive.'

'We are left in a position where we do not have adequate funding to provide our range of essential services and support recovery from Covid.'

And COSLA president councillor Alison Evison said: 'The Scottish Government has to realise that cuts to our core budget hit the most vulnerable in our communities the hardest and are damaging to our workforce. That is why council leaders were unanimous today

that we must fight for a fairer settlement.'

Argyll and Bute councillor Yvonne McNeilly (Cowal Ward), policy lead for education, said: 'This terrible settlement has been roundly condemned by COSLA, which represents all 32 local authorities in Scotland, and no wonder. It is inexcusable that ministers are leaving it to us to choose between cuts and tax rises while they squander millions of pounds on their pet political projects.'

Regional Conservative MSP Donald Cameron, pictured, said the budget had 'slashed' funding of key government agencies in the Highlands and Islands. He said: 'It is unbelievable that HIE, central to our efforts to revive the regional economy after the ravages of the Covid pandemic, once again has had its budget cut.'

## More time to have your say on school 'cluster' plans

Continued from page 1.

at and give input on the proposed model at EmpoweringOurEducators.co.uk where details of the consultation timetable can also be found and a short film about the potential changes.

Taynuilt Community Council is planning on running a session in January to discuss the proposals. The date is to be confirmed.

Discussions on it have also recently been raised at Mull and Seil and Easdale Community Councils.

Scotland's largest teaching union EIS calculates that under the proposed changes around 80 current headteacher posts could become just 14.

The council says falling pupil numbers and challenges in recruiting staff are behind proposals for the new 'collective' model which would empower schools to work more effectively together and share resources.

A contract worth £23,180, excluding VAT, was agreed by the council with a marketing agency to help run the consultation for them.

There have been claims the agency-led consultation is

more like 'selling a product' to parents and teachers.

One parent went online to say: 'Part of the issue is the video looks to be a glossy PR product without sufficient information. If the changes were so positive facts would speak for themselves.'

**'We are also asking the council where is the proof that this model has worked in the past and will work in the future?'**

Lobbying group WISE4ALL has thanked councillors who helped to secure an extension to the consultation period but there are still concerns about not having details needed to show how the current cluster leadership proposals were formed and what other ideas were ruled out in the process.

A WISE4ALL spokesperson said: 'We remain concerned that we have not had the evidence necessary to determine how the Collective Leadership Model was determined as the

best model for our schools, or what other alternative models were considered and critically assessed.'

Kintyre and Islands councillor Alastair Redman, who does not support proposed executive headships and believes it would be a 'negative' change, said that by giving a time extension, the council was making an admission that it had not given people enough time or information in the first place to be consulted properly.

'What I'm picking up from people is that they feel the council is trying to sell a product rather than consulting them on it.'

'We are also asking the council where is the proof that this model has worked in the past and will work in the future?'

'What's the point of extending a consultation if it is a flawed consultation?'

Argyll and Bute Council's policy lead for education Councillor Yvonne McNeilly has said on record that best outcomes for young people are at the heart of all the council's work and she pledge the 'proactive' engagement programme was at the core of its decision-making.

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Clockwise: Santa and his helpers and Torran and Freya Felgate; far right, Santa with Benjamin and Harry Laidler; and below right, Oli Smyth gets a present and hug from Santa.



## Connel Christmas outdoor grotto brings festive cheer

Connel Community Children's Parties brought a little bit of festive magic on Sunday December 19 with an outdoor grotto for the village children.

The group of parent volunteers usually run a big party at Hallowe'en and Christmas in the village hall but have

not been able to run them in 2020 and 2021 due to Covid restrictions.

Co-chairperson of the group, Ellie Cooper, explained: 'We were so sad to not be able to hold our parties but the safety of everyone in our community is our highest priority. This

Christmas we really wanted to bring some yuletide joy to the village but in a Covid-compliant way. An outdoor grotto felt like a lovely way and to see the excitement on the children's faces was priceless. It certainly made us full of festive spirit.'



Royal Mail says it has been working hard to improve its service in Oban

## Oban delivery times are 'improving', says Royal Mail

Royal Mail says delivering post on time in Oban is 'improving', writes Kathie Griffiths.

A spokesperson for the service said staff had been working hard to get deliveries back to normal after recent problems, including workers off sick.

Royal Mail has apologised again for any inconvenience that customers might have experienced.

A recent Royal Mail list of towns and cities that might experience more disruptions

to service before Christmas did not include Oban.

A spokesperson for Royal Mail told The Oban Times: 'The vast majority of mail is delivered safely and on time. We aim to deliver to all addresses we have mail for, six days a week.

'In the Oban area, we have been experiencing some delays to service due to resourcing issues and high levels of sickness absence.

'We have been working hard to get our levels of service back to normal as soon as

possible and the situation is improving. We apologise to customers for any inconvenience they may have experienced.'

Oban has been hit by a series of late and missing post – including birthday cards, overdue documents and booster appointments. One woman missed an operation after the Royal Mail delivered four first-class letters from a Glasgow hospital all at once – up to 14 days after the first one was posted and on the day her operation was due.

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# Oban RNLI's advent calendar

Oban RNLI is all onboard for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year by coming up with its own advent calendar on social media.

**December 1** – We have one lifeboat in Oban, the Mora Edith MacDonald, one crew and one aim; to save everyone. But, there's only one thing that makes all of this possible and that's the generosity of the public. Whether it's Christmas Day or any other day, our volunteers will be on call, ready to drop everything to help those in trouble. They'll be ready to brave any weather day or night, to save everyone, every time.

**December 2** – Our lifeboat has is powered by two marine diesel engines. The Trent class lifeboat is driven by two MAN 2840 marine diesel engines, each fuelled by a 2,000 litre tank of diesel. That's 4,000 litres of diesel carried on board.

Her power ensures she can reach a top speed of 25 knots

and cover her 250 nautical mile range. Something we're forever grateful for with the 495 miles of coastline in our patch.

**December 3** – Three is the age of our lifeboat dog! Starting off his crew life on Portpatrick Lifeboat, Flynn moved to Oban in 2019 to join his humans as part of Oban lifeboat crew. His dad Ally is the coxswain, and

## Four babies have been born so far onboard Oban Lifeboat.

mum Lawrie is crew. He's usually on station Monday-Friday overseeing the boats' general maintenance and being the official meet and greet for any visitors.

**December 4** – Four babies have been born onboard Oban Lifeboat. The first was born only two weeks into its service on August 5, 1997, when Jane

Banner gave birth to a baby girl named Hazel Beth Mora Banner, in honour of the lifeboat. It's an old maritime tradition that children are baptised using the ship's own bell. It's then engraved with the child's name, kept safe and sometimes presented at their 18th birthday.

**December 5** – On the fifth day of the fifth month in 1972, Oban's first lifeboat arrived on station. By the end of her first week in operation, she had already saved five lives.

**December 6** – 66,000,000 cubic meters of water flow through Connel's Falls of Lora. Our patch covers miles of spectacular coastline and among it are many unique and notorious tidal features.

**December 7** – Crew number 7 is Ian Henry; he is our longest serving current crew member. Since first joining in 1990, he has responded to his pager over 426 times... and counting!



That's the equivalent of at least one call out a month, for each of those 31 years. During this time he has travelled more than 7,630 nautical miles and spent over 750 hours onboard the lifeboat, just on callouts.

**December 8** – Eight people were rescued by the Oban Lifeboat when the fishing vessel Shemara ran aground in gale force winds on January 31, 1985, shortly after 3am. The 80-tonne fishing vessel had grounded on Lady Rock off Lismore. The rescue was entered into the Silk Cut Nautical Awards where the volunteer crew were awarded with a gold medal for bravery.

**December 9** – Nine is the number of shouts our newest crew member Jasmin Manning has helped with since joining at the start of this year. Originally from Oban, Jasmin is currently studying Marine Science at the Scottish Association of Marine Science. She also volunteers for the Marine Conservation Society, helping with beach cleans and education.

**December 10** – On January 10 1998, Oban Lifeboat launched after a canoeist was reported overdue from Cuil bay in Loch Linnhe. At the time of the page, the volunteer crew were on their way to their annual dinner but, as usual they responded to their pagers and headed to the lifeboat station fully dressed in kilts and bow ties. The hypothermic canoeist was found clinging to his canoe and was a little confused by his rescuers' attire. This shout also marked the 1001st call out in Oban lifeboat's 26-year service.

**December 11** – Oban lifeboat became the first station to reach 100 shouts in a year. That res-

cue in 1998 was a medivac from the Isle of Mull, something that remains a vital part of our lifesaving work to support our many island communities.

**December 12** – After 12 years of firing maroons to alert the crew of a shout, Oban's volunteers received their first ever pagers in 1984.

**December 13** – 1375 is the number of shouts our current lifeboat, Mora Edith MacDonald, has assisted with so far. The Trent class lifeboat first arrived on station in Oban on July 16 1997 and had been designed and built by Green Marine in Hampshire.

## Ally Cerexhe, Mark Scott and Finlo Cottier received 20-year medals

**December 14** – It costs around £1,400 to fully train each volunteer crew member. As the RNLI is funded by your kind donations, it's all thanks to you to that this is possible.

**December 15** – Over 150 knitted yellow wellies were knitted by volunteers for Oban RNLI's Mayday campaign this year. Their efforts not only resulted in being awarded one of the RNLI's first Golden Welly Awards, but they also set the Guinness Word Record for the most number of knitted wellies!

**December 16** – 16-00 is the unique identification number of our very own raft race lifeboat, aptly named the Mora Less. The great Oban Bay raft race has proven extremely successful over the years rais-

ing thousands for the RNLI.

**December 17** – At the age 17, our youngest crew member Andrew Scott joined. He is the second generation of his family to volunteer onboard our lifeboat; following in the footsteps of this dad Mark, who is also a crew member and deputy coxswain.

**December 18** – 18ft was the length of the first lifeboat ever stationed in Oban. Our current Trent vessel is three times her length!

**December 19** – In the 1990s, Oban's volunteers were recognised for developing an innovative piece of equipment onboard the lifeboat.

**December 20** – 20-year service medals were awarded to three of our coxswains this year – Ally Cerexhe along with deputy coxswains Mark Scott and Finlo Cottier.

**December 21** – Crew number 21 is DM Donald Matheson. He spent 15 years volunteering onboard our lifeboat before he retired last year. In that time he had travelled over 5,000 miles and spent over 500 hours at sea. He was present for the birth of one of the babies onboard.

**December 22** – 22 hours is the longest single shout our volunteers have assisted with when on August 19 1984, the coaster Northumbria Rose ran aground in thick fog, with six crew onboard.

**December 23** – Mora Edith MacDonald's official naming ceremony took place on the May 23 1998.

You will have to wait until tomorrow and go to [www.facebook.com/rnliobanlifeboat/](http://www.facebook.com/rnliobanlifeboat/) to find out what the fact is for December 24.

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# Behind the scenes at Atlantis

## December 2021: Another year draws to a close!

Covid has ensured this has been another challenging year for us all but as we wrap up 2021, life at Atlantis passes another significant milestone, which indicates 2022 might look a little more like what we remember as normal.

Read on to find out what's been happening, in this month's gym-exclusive Behind The Scenes:

## Gym move

After over a year in its temporary location, we moved the gym back to its permanent home this month. We first moved the gym into the sports hall as part of our phased re-opening plan following the easing of restrictions as it allowed the most social-distancing for what is arguably our most popular facility. It worked well but took up a large amount of the hall. This meant that lots of other activities and community sports have been unable to return in the same way.

Now that the gym is back in its purpose-lit, air-conditioned space, we're able to welcome back sports such as community football, badminton and athletics as well as increasing the capacity of our PlaySport programme. We've done so with immediate effect - our local footballers have returned to their evening sessions straight after the move. We're also able to host community events and offer one of the largest spaces available in Oban for non-sporting activities. We do all this while continuing to keep a careful eye on what Covid is doing locally as well as the enduring possibility of national restrictions changing.

## New gym equipment

The gym move comes as we consider the facility as a whole, giving particular thought to how we renew our faithful exercise machines and gym equipment, some of which are now more than 12 years old. Whilst now showing its age, our equipment has stood the test of time and endured years of enthusiastic workouts.

As we consider how to renew the kit, we want to make sure we do so in as sustainable a way as possible, making sure the new equipment is as robust and good quality as the last. We particularly want to make sure they have as low



The gym at Atlantis has moved back to its permanent home, with the addition of new equipment.

a carbon footprint as possible (some of the machines are even self-powered!). We also want to move with the times, recognising that the accessibility needs of our gym users have changed in recent years.

You'll notice new pieces of equipment being added over the next few months as we put all this learning into place. The new kit takes up a lot less room than the old gear, with some of the new equipment including five new running machines, two new recline bikes, two new conventional bikes, three new cross trainers, SkiErg, new weights benches and a new shoulder press and back machine.

## Atlantis Health and Wellness Zone

You'll also notice how we've used this time to consider how we use Atlantis' space more widely. During the past month, we started a new project in the old Back Studio area to configure a new Health and Wellness Zone. The new space will be completed in the coming weeks and features an additional dance studio, a new training room and a new assessment room. The space caters for the increasing demand for health and wellness provision at Atlantis, with partners such as Healthy Options, Max Buchanan and the NHS Physiotherapy Department of the Lorn and Islands District General Hospital already set to

make use of the new facilities.

## Healthy Options – Adapt and Thrive

The changes to the physical building are happening alongside changes to the programmes that we offer, with particular regard to our changing partnership with Lorn and Oban Healthy Options. In the next few months, Healthy Options will complete a restructuring that will condense their programme offer into two main seams: Adapt and Thrive.

Adapt continues to work closely with GP referrals, offering a 12-week programme that works alongside clients to help them incorporate healthy habits into their lifestyles.

Healthy Options Thrive is where we see the biggest change at Atlantis. From early 2022, Thrive takes over from our previous StayActive programme, offering an onward programme for previous Adapt graduates whilst also providing a destination service for self-referral clients. As part of this new chapter, Healthy Options and Atlantis have pooled resources to form a hybrid Healthy Living Team made up of staff from both organisations. On the Atlantis side, that's meant a recent focus on training and upskilling, with Claire and Cameron completing their Level 3 Gym Instructor training in the next few weeks and Donna starting

Advertisorial



## Eye to eye with John Wallace

## Language for Good or Bad

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues apace and face masks appears to be with us for months, if not years, to come I had an interesting experience earlier this week with poor communication. I hasten to add the poor communication was from a hospital, not me. In pre-COVID days when we talked to each other, we could see the other person's facial expressions and their lips moving. We have lost all that visual information we relied on for effective communication. Now, we have to listen carefully to what is being said. Irony and faux anger need to be communicated not just verbally, but with facial expression. In addition to facial signals the message needs to be clear. Health professionals are frequently guilty of lapsing



into jargon or forgetting our patients only retain a very small percentage of the message we are communicating. A well-intentioned message can easily be misunderstood due to poor emphasis. Two of my patients this week had cataract surgery last week. The discharge nurse in the hospital emphasised the need to urgently attend our local A&E department if they had

any problems. The problems the nurse was talking about were significant sight threatening problems. The patients listened and apparently understood the message. One of the patients postponed asking for advice because they did not realise the potential severity of their problem and the other did not realise their symptoms were part of the normal post-operative recovery. Perhaps we should all take time to reflect on how we communicate with each other during the pandemic and beyond. My New Year resolution ... practice my listening and communication skills. As this is the season of joy and goodwill here is an unambiguous message from me. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

John Wallace BSc (Hons), FCOptom, DipCLP

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CHURCHES



**The Very Revd Canon Margi Campbell, Provost of St John's Episcopal Cathedral**



'Hark the herald angels sing, glory to the newborn King.....'  
'We have many angels in St John's Cathedral! Paper angels, which have sat amongst us throughout the pandemic to keep us safely distanced. Paper angels, helping us think of those not sitting with us, helping us to be thankful beyond words for families and friends and all who have cared for us by their daily work in hard times.'

'But through the centuries, angels have been heralds of the glorious message that, despite all the darkness and difficulties around us, God still breaks through with glimmers of hope and streams of light like the dawn of a new day.'

'With rising cases of Covid, our paper angels will continue to help us be thankful, and will keep us distanced in care for each other. And as we approach Christmas, I pray that you will hear the glorious songs of those first angels in your hearts, singing tidings that today God offers us the wonder of new life. Angels telling us that we can have hope through the birth of Jesus; hope seen through those around who care and show love.'

'So with the angels, we pray that you will know joy and be blessed this Christmas and throughout 2022.'

**Lord Wallace, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland (right)**

'It can be no coincidence that the Church chose the winter solstice to celebrate the birth of Christ.'

'At the darkest time of the year the light shines; for only when it is darkest are we open to see the light.'

'The light that shines in the darkness is not an overwhelming light.'

'It is not a ten-thousand-megawatt super spotlight, so bright that it obliterates the darkness.'

'Nor is it the great displays which light up our town and city centres.'

'The light that shines in the darkness is more like the faint glimmer of a single candle.'

'It is a light so tiny that it can be noticed only in the darkest times.'

'It needs the darkness to be seen.'

'The Church has been reminded by its prophets that the big powerful light is not the way Christ reveals the Divine presence.'

'The stories of the birth of Jesus show us a very small light.'

'This light is revealed to a young woman in the middle of nowhere who is shocked that God would choose her.'

'OK, a squad of angels may have lit up the night-sky but isn't it more moving to think of birth by candle-light in a byre?'

'This light is presented to subsistence-living shepherds, huddling by the light of a small fire, who cannot fathom that they would be the ones to see the sign and tell the story.'

'The Christmas story is a humble story. The light comes to those who have nothing to offer or so they think.'

'The light is not overbearing. It is a glimmer of promise in a dark time. And in the darkness, a tiny light can be seen from a long way away.'

'The spiritual rigour to which we are called during this Advent season, is to set aside all the things which can pre-occupy us in the run-up to Christmas and to recognise what is really important.'



'We are to allow ourselves to be lifted up by the expectation of Christ, Christ who is present and active.'

'Jesus said 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.'

'As we know if we are honest, it is often only in the darkest moments, only when we have hit the bottom, only when we realise we cannot do it on our own, that we can see the true light that is the light of the world.'

'It is the light of a single candle. A light which the darkness has never extinguished. And it is all we need.'

'May I wish you a joyful and blessed Christmas.'

**Rev Dugald Cameron, Minister of Appin and Lismore**



'On Christmas Eve the parish churches of Appin and Lismore each welcome people through the doors to sing carols, along with the angels, in praise of God, who drew near in Christ's birth.'

'All through 2022, an angel will be visiting the homes of people of both parishes.'

'She is a candle-carrying wee statue angel. And like Biblical angels she will provoke talk of God. Questions arise. Visitors may ask the recipient: 'Why is she here?' Or: 'To whom will she go next?'

'Meanwhile, the folk of the home in which she stays for a week may find her a prayerful presence. And they will care that their choice of the person or family to receive her next will be similarly blessed.'

'Our hope is that the strong bonds of community which exist here may be woven stronger by a spiritual, prayerful connectedness enhanced by a year's journeying.'

'Our angel's route is unplanned. She will venture according to where she may be needed or celebrated. That is a reminder to us all that the love of God falls upon humanity not according to our plan, rather through God's initiative.'

'So may we look out from the relative safety of our homes and churches to refugee camps and

homeless shelters where God already is, and where human angels of mercy are needed.'

**Kilninner and Kilmelford parish**  
'From Kilninner and Kilmelford Parish, Christmas greetings to all Oban Times readers.'

'We send special best wishes and thanks to all the ministers and worship leaders who have helped with our fortnightly services, throughout our period with no minister.'

'Also thanks to Winnie Campbell Robb, our stalwart organist, who provides beautiful music at every service and really brings the church alive.'

'After initial lockdown closures, we resumed gathering for worship in Kilmelford church car park - with strict social distancing.'

'Now we are back inside Kilmelford church for services at noon, but sadly Kilninner church will remain closed at least until the spring.'

'It is cheering that Xplorers has restarted; a monthly group for younger children which began with a Christingle service.'

'There will be a Christmas Day service held in Kilmelford church, at 11am.'

'For 2022 we send Happy New Year to all. Trust in the Lord for guidance and support.'

**Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, Bishop Brian McGee**

'This year has been another difficult run-up to Christmas.'

Once more we are suddenly faced with a new and rampant



Coronavirus variant. The effects are multiple including the threat to health, anxiety and the prospect of changing our plans to be with loved ones. Glimpses of a new dawn of normality seem to be extinguished.'

'Yet even in the darkness of this

winter a bright light shines. That light is Jesus.'

'At the first Christmas God took on our human nature to redeem us from the greatest darkness, the evil of sin.'

'The warmth of God's love continues to shine so brightly that it will always dispel the darkness of sin as well as other deep shadows including the coldness that fear and anxiety brings.'

'In the beginning of his Gospel St John taught that Jesus is the true light which has come into the world.'

'Sometimes we are tempted to separate ourselves from Christ, relying on our own powers.'

'However, inevitably such detachment only creates deeper darkness. Jesus is the Light we long for. Jesus desires for us to walk in the light of his love.'

'This Christmas let us allow Jesus to drench us in the warmth and brightness of his love!'

'I wish you and your family a happy and loving Christmas.'

ORGANISATIONS

**BID4Oban**

BID4Oban's Kay MacDonald writes: 'Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year to everyone from the team at BID4Oban.'

'After a difficult few years for everyone, it's time to hope that 2022 will bring better things for all of us.'

'Despite the restrictions it's been good to see how the people of Oban have pulled together to support each other and its business community. I've been very proud to be part of such a caring town in the last wee while and I know that Oban will continue and grow as a place where people can turn to each other for help.'

'We'd like to thank everyone who has helped us during the last year, all the wonderful volunteers who made bringing Storm to Oban possible, the Northern Lighthouse Board,

The Oban Times LOCHABER TIMES

We would like to remind you of our Christmas/New Year deadlines:

Monday 27th December 4pm For the issue dated Thursday 30th December

Monday 3rd January For the issue dated Thursday 6th January

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the Auxiliary Coastguard, Scottish Sea Farms and Oban FM who made the amazing fireworks possible and Oban Rotary Club, Oban Lions Club, Oban Pipe Band, Oban FM, OES, Oban Police and everyone who contributed to the Reindeer Parade.

'Thanks must also go to everyone who has supported and helped us in other ways, without everyone working together and contributing none of it would be possible.'

**Oban RNLI**

'We know that every time our crew steps onboard the lifeboat, they hope for a good outcome, but sadly this isn't always the case.'

'This Christmas will be the same as any other day for our selfless volunteers both here in Oban and at every other lifeboat station around the country. They'll be standing by ready to leave loved ones behind to answer the call, each time hoping to reunite another family and see those in trouble at sea safely returned.'

'With thousands of volunteers around the UK and Ireland, each RNLI crew member signs up to

save every one from drowning – it has been the charity's mission since 1824.

'Over the past decade, RNLI lifeboats have launched over 1,200 times during the festive period. But these rescues would not be possible without donations from the RNLI's generous supporters, helping to fund the essential kit, training and equipment needed by lifeboat crews all year round.'

'We would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support of Oban RNLI throughout 2021. 2022 is a hugely significant year for our station as we celebrate 50 years of saving lives at sea. We ask that, if you can, please support our charity to help us continue our work for the next 50 years and beyond!'

'Find out more about how you can support the RNLI's Christmas appeal at [RNLI.org/xmas](http://RNLI.org/xmas)



**Robbie Drummond,**  
managing director of CalMac

'We can all agree that 2021 has been an extremely eventful and challenging year, and

these challenges are continuing for all of us.

'I am sorry for the high number of disruptions experienced this year. Delivering a high-quality lifeline service to the communities we serve every day is our top priority and we will continue to work hard to improve the resilience of our service.'

'We have invested record sums in maintaining and upgrading our vessels and have successfully delivered a number of improvements in relation to how we will maintain our fleet into the future.'

'We want customer experience to be at the heart of our services, and we are working to improve the way in which customers interact with us with the launch of a new ticketing system and a new digital platform, which will make the booking process smoother and more efficient. These will both be introduced in 2022.'

'While many people get to enjoy time off with their family over Christmas, many of our crew members will be working during the festive season to ensure we keep passengers moving and communities connected.'

'We have an extraordinary team working for CalMac who care deeply about our communities and the service we provide. I am proud of

every one of them and thank them for their continued commitment and support.'



**Oban**

Oban Community Council convener Marri Malloy writes: 'We have come to the end of another difficult year. Most of the people in Oban have obeyed the rules and have kept our community safe from this dreadful virus.'

'Oban Community Council has had a very busy year supporting the community with any issues they have brought to our table.'

'Our latest project was when we found out there was no money for Christmas lights and we decided to try and help find some funding. We applied to Oban Common Good Fund who gave us £5,000. We also applied to West Highland Housing Association who very kindly donated £1,500, and Oban Community Council gave £2,000 of our own money.'

'With the support of the people of Oban we will thrive and work together with our local councillors to keep Oban a safe and welcoming town to live in as it is now.'

This only leaves me to thank my fellow community councillors for their loyalty and support this year.

'Have a safe and wonderful Christmas with family and friends and have a prosperous New Year.'



**Dunbeg**

Convener of Dunbeg Community Council

Marion Power writes: 'Greetings from Dunbeg Community Council and a welcome to all the new residents.'

'The village has several large building projects under way and the community council are in regular contact with the developers to minimise, as much as possible, disruption to the community.'

'Further developments are in the pipeline and we have two places on the Dunbeg Corridor Working Group which will enable us to have input and keep residents informed.'

**Continued on page 12.**



**Do a lateral flow test before you travel, mix with others or visit busy places.**



**Living safely this winter**





OT



'We also have a Public Access defibrillator installed and hope it doesn't need to be used.

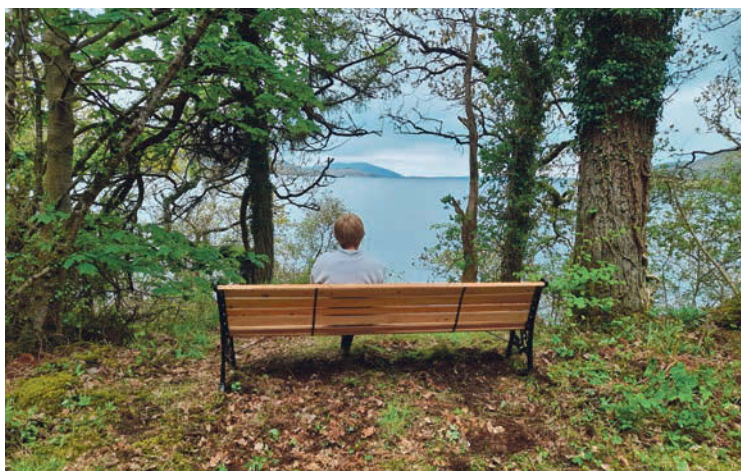
'We hope you manage to have a lovely family festive season. Look after each other, look out for each other, wear a mask, wash your hands and above all, stay safe.

'The next Community Council public meeting is Monday January 10 at 7.30pm in Dunbeg Church.'

**Kilniver and Kilmelford Community Council**

Convener David Wilkie writes: 'Kilniver and Kilmelford Community Council have had another busy year, like most community councils much of it all happening 'behind the scenes'. On the practical side our Speed Cop was stolen but replaced by 'Booby' who still causes strangers to slow down but is now ignored by the regulars - speeding remains a major issue through the village.

'We also installed two benches with support from Carraig Gheal Wind Farm - one of which is pictured - which are much used by locals and tourists alike taking their exercise. We wish all our community a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!'



**Seil**

'Despite the challenges faced in 2021 due to Covid, the community council has continued to serve the community in many ways. The public meetings have been reasonably well attended by Zoom and the November meeting was held in person at the Seil Island Hall.

'In the spring and summer months with the aid of two small grants from Argyll and Bute Council, tubs of flowers were placed at Clachan, Balvicar, Cuan and Ellenabeich. Paint was purchased for a refurbishment of the Clachan bus shelter.

Hampers for older members of the community and activities for the children were provided.

'As the restrictions were lifted it was encouraging to see island life return with activities, such as the family fun day, Seed for Life and the craft fair.

'During the year and in particular now the weather is getting worse, the community council is actively involved in ensuring the fabric of the essential infrastructure which allows for the wellbeing of us all

is being properly maintained. This includes the Kilniver Bridge, Clachan Bridge and the sea wall at Ellenabeich and the harbour at Easdale. Road safety is a priority across many of the communities in our area and we are seeking to have speed monitors installed to collect data to support our local speed control measures before the busy season resumes in the spring.

'Seil and Easdale Community Council would like to wish our communities and stakeholders a peaceful Christmas and a good New Year.'

**Glenorchy & Innishail Community Council**

Convener John Kerr, right, writes: 'Glenorchy & Innishail Community Council would like to wish our wonderful community a very merry Christmas, all the best for 2022 and thank them for all their extremely helpful efforts during a difficult two years!'

'In 2020 G & I CC raised and distributed Corona Virus Community Emergency Funding and in 2021 went on to offer financial support to

several local groups from outdoor fitness classes and book clubs to feeding red squirrels.

'We are particularly pleased to have supported the ongoing restoration of St Conan's Kirk in Lochawe and some of their enterprising events. We have been part of a Community Action Plan Group that developed and produced an outstanding action plan and the group is now recruiting a co-ordinator to develop the themes that the plan has identified.

'G&I CC continues to support the communities' strong objection to the SSEN proposals to build a huge overhead transmission line, over-sailing the sensitive environment around Dalmally and Loch Awe.

'All this with only two public meetings in 24 months!'

'We've pulled together and helped each other, as you do in Scotland! There may still be some hurdles to cross, but with the enthusiasm of the local population, the community can progress and fulfil the aspirations of the implementation of our Community Action Plan.'



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Digital subscribers who have an active subscription covering the period from December 2021, to February 2022, can enter the competition by sending their name, address and email address that they subscribe with to Oban Times Trolley Dash Competition, Crannog Lane, Lochavullin Industrial Estate, Oban PA34 4HB by 10am Tuesday January 11. Only one entry per subscription permitted. Entrant must be able to attend the trolley dash in Oban on the January 17, 2022.

We all spend far too much money over Christmas and New Year, so how great would it be able to fill your shopping trolley COMPLETELY FREE OF CHARGE in January?! Courtesy of our friends at Tesco in Oban, one lucky reader will win the chance to fill their trolley with up to £200 worth of goods (see T&C's for exclusions). All you have to do is collect 4 tokens over four weeks starting on 9th December, get them to us by 10am Tuesday 11th January and you will be entered into a prize draw to win this fantastic trolley dash. What are you waiting for, banish those post-Christmas blues and start collecting your tokens!

All 4 tokens must be sent in a single envelope to Oban Times Trolley Dash Competition Crannog Lane, Lochavullin Industrial Estate Oban, PA34 4HB.

One token from each week is required, multiple entries are allowed, but must be submitted in separate envelopes. Photocopied tokens will not be accepted. Winners must agree to take part in publicity, Employees of Wyvex Media Ltd and their immediate family are not eligible to enter. The editor's decision is final.



# HOGMANAY

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OT

## POLICE



### Message from Chief Inspector Marlene Baillie

'As we welcome in another new year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank officers, staff, the public and our partner agencies for their continued work and welcome support. There is no doubt that throughout the last year, we have all overcome a number of challenges.

'Next year our focus will remain on the key priorities identified by our communities and we will continue to work hard to reduce crime levels and keep our communities safe.

'No success is achievable without the backing of the public. Again this year the communities across Argyll and Bute have shown remarkable resilience, determination and kindness to support one another.

'The festive period is a busy time for emergency services and this year will be no different. We continue to deal with the impact of the Covid pandemic and I would ask everyone once again to follow the guidance and support our NHS staff working to reduce the spread of the virus.

'This time can also be very difficult for people and my thoughts are with those who may find themselves alone or in crisis. If this is you, help is available, whether from the police or the other organisations in place to provide support.

'I wish you all a very merry Christmas and a safe, happy and fulfilling new year ahead.'

### Fire & Rescue Service

Area Commander Joe McKay is the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's Local Senior Officer for Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire and West Dunbartonshire.

He said: 'We hope that all our communities have a safe, peaceful and enjoyable festive season. While it is a time of fun, we should always keep safety in our minds. I



would urge residents to be aware of the additional risks that exist in our homes at this time of year.

'There is a free online self-assessment on our website to find out how safe your property is. On completion you will receive a unique report about your home with safety advice. We're also asking people to look out for anyone who they feel may be vulnerable this Christmas, such as an elderly neighbour, friend or relative.

'If you know someone who is over 50 and smokes, and who has either mobility issues or uses medical oxygen or lives alone, please 'Make the Call' to SFRS to arrange a Home Fire Safety Visit on their behalf. Get in touch via our website or call 0800 0731 999.

'Reaching out to those who are vulnerable can help save lives in our communities. We want everyone to remember this winter, and the festive period, for all the right reasons. Please see our website: [www.firescotland.gov.uk/your-safety/at-home/festive-safety](http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/your-safety/at-home/festive-safety).'

## COUNCILLORS



### Robin Currie, Council Leader

'This Christmas, my hope is that everyone in Argyll and Bute is able to enjoy themselves as much as possible. It may sound simple, but after the challenges of the last couple of years, I don't think that any of us will ever take it for granted again!

'Change is always a possibility in this new and always-moving situation that we are now dealing with. However, one thing that always remains constant across Argyll and Bute is the strong sense of community spirit. That will stand us all in good stead as it has done in the past, whether in times of cheer or challenge. I know that across all our communities, there are people who will find the coming holidays very difficult and my thoughts are very much with them at this time. My



wish for all of us is that we are able to make the very best of the festive season, and to look forward with hope to brighter times ahead.

'May I wish everyone the best possible Christmas, and send them my best wishes for a peaceful, prosperous and healthy New Year.'

### Kieron Green

'I would like to wish everyone in Oban and Lorn a very merry Christmas and happy New Year.

'I must give thanks especially to those keeping public services running, welcoming visitors to the area, and allowing us all to enjoy the shops and facilities we need locally.

'Continuing to show what can be achieved working together gives me real hope for 2022 and may it bring the best to all of you.'

### Andrew Vennard

'My best wishes to everyone in the Oban, Lorn, and the Isles area for the upcoming Christmas holiday period and I wish everyone a happy New Year.'

### Jim Lynch

'It's been another challenging year for all of us. Now is the time to look back over the past year and hope that 2022 will be much more settled and safer for all of us. However, what time has shown us yet again, is what an amazing and supportive community we have across Oban Lorn and the Isles. There have been numerous examples of people of all ages coming together to support each other, both as individuals or in groups.

'May this Christmas end the present year on a cheerful note and make way for a fresh and bright New Year. Here's wishing you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year!'

### Elaine Robertson

'Covid-19 has brought many restrictions, different ways of working and many challenges but it has also highlighted the superb community spirit and the caring ethos of our communities.

'I would like to take this opportunity to thank all on their outstanding, but not surprising, response to the pandemic.

'This year we have seen many matters of strategic importance to

Oban and the area brought forward - Ganavan, as an essential green space, the Oban Harbour Trust Port proposal, Craignure Pier, the Rockfield Centre, 300 new homes being constructed, infrastructure improvements, and the Queen's Platinum Anniversary, plus the Oban City Status, application. Next year will be a defining year for this area.

'Wishing everyone a very happy and peaceful Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year - hopefully Covid free and a return to some sort of normality!'

## MP



### Brendan O'Hara MP, Argyll & Bute

'Looking back to December 2020, my Christmas wish for Oban



Times' readers was for everyone, despite all the necessary restrictions on parties and family gatherings, to enjoy their Christmas as much as possible, and to take some degree of comfort from knowing there was a new Covid-19 vaccine available and that it was being rolled out quickly and efficiently.

'Yet 12 months on and despite a quite incredible job by the NHS in vaccinating so many in the last few months, sadly I find myself saying almost exactly the same thing again this year, as we face another Christmas of uncertainty as Omicron variant sweeps across Europe. We do not yet know how virulent this new strain is, but what we do know is it is far easier to transmit, and therefore to catch than any strain that has preceded it. So, I urge everyone who has not been vaccinated, for whatever reason, please get it done as soon as possible, and for those who require their third dose to have it done as soon as you can.

'I think we have all been shocked by how stubborn this virus is, but as we head into 2022, I make no apology for repeating what I said exactly a year

ago; don't live in fear, please enjoy spending time with people you love, but stay safe this Christmas, follow the rules and make it your New Year resolution to get fully vaccinated. That way, we will get through this together.'

## MSPs



### Jenni Minto

'At this time of year it is customary to look forward, as well as back, and to look forward with hope. That's been difficult for more than a year now, but I really do believe there is reason for cautious optimism.

'The challenges and darkness of the pandemic were not left behind in 2020 as we all hoped so it is important that we all ensure we test at every opportunity to protect our friends and families.

'2021 however, has brought a great deal of hope in Scotland. Hope in the form of a vaccine rollout which has not been without its challenges but has been a huge success in saving lives. Hope through COP26, hosted in Glasgow and a significant opportunity to highlight the urgency needed to save our planet.

'Since my election I have seen so much that fills me with hope for Argyll & Bute, I feel so lucky to represent a constituency so full of people who are so committed and passionate about their communities.

'It is this spirit of hope that I will be carrying into the new year as I begin my first full calendar year as your MSP.

'I want to wish everyone not only a hope-filled happy Christmas and New Year but to all my constituents, colleagues, friends and family a peaceful, joyful and hopeful 2022.'

### Alasdair Allan

'After a year unlike any other in 2020, we were all hoping that 2021 would signal more of a return to normality. While this has thankfully been the case in some areas, this year has still been extraordinarily challenging

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|---|---|
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| Tuesday 21st December 07:30 - 17:00                 | Thursday 30th December 07:30 - 17:00                  |
| Wednesday 22nd December 07:30 - 17:00               | Friday 31st December 07:30 - 13:00                    |
| Thursday 23rd December 07:30 - 17:00                | <b>New Year's Day &amp; Sunday 2nd January Closed</b> |
| Friday 24th December 07:30 - 13:00                  | Monday 3rd January 07:30 - 17:00                      |
| <b>Christmas Day - Tuesday 28th December Closed</b> | <b>Back to Our normal hours of business</b>           |

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for many of us as the impact of the ongoing pandemic continues to be felt. There are, however, a huge number of victories to be celebrated this year, including the fantastic work of our NHS to rapidly administer a complex vaccination rollout across the country.

'I have been pleased to be able to start up constituency visits again this year after the lifting of restrictions, and I enjoyed meeting with constituents and local businesses in Uist and Barra recently.'

'This year's COP26 UN Climate Summit in Glasgow made notable progress in environmental commitments. The danger islands like Uist face from rising sea levels was highlighted at the conference with events such as the "Message In A Bottle" screening, where island school children voiced their concerns and their hopes for the future of their local communities.'

'Looking ahead to 2022, I hope that we can all keep working together to help our local communities rebuild from the effects of the pandemic, uniting to face the challenges that come our way.'

'Nollaig Chridheil agus Bliadhna Mhath Ùr dhuibh uile! Merry Christmas and a happy New Year to you all!'

**Ariane Burgess**

'What a year! Since becoming an MSP, I have been blown away by the

grit and determination of key workers in Oban looking after people in the most heart-breaking of circumstances.

'And still the pandemic rolls on, putting pressure on our public services and making the impacts of storms, ferry disruptions and other transport problems that much more difficult to absorb. My most profound thanks go to everyone in Oban, Argyll and the Islands who are delivering vital services at this time. But these hard times have created strong communities and I am full of hope that we can use the relationships we have made and systems we've put in place during this period to tackle the climate and nature emergencies.'

'During my last visit to Oban, I visited Hope Kitchen and was taken by their holistic approach. I loved hearing of their growth over the years which led them to open the Green Shoots Community Garden to nourish their patrons. In all the challenges we face, I take comfort that the best solutions come from turning to our neighbours, asking for help and working together.'

'I wish everyone in Oban and throughout Argyll a peaceful festive



season and a happy Hogmanay!'

**Donald Cameron**

'As we reflect on the past year, I would like to thank all those people who have kept our society functioning, and enabled us to get through another 12 months, while the Covid pandemic has remained at the forefront of our concerns.'

'We think of the NHS and care home staff, teachers, emergency service personnel, council employees, shopworkers – but also of everyone else who has contributed or made sacrifices. I am particularly mindful of our young people, who have seen their education disrupted, and been worried about issues like assessment of their work, and the implications for the future. They need, more than ever, our support and understanding.'

'Looking back, the year has been especially significant for me personally. I was deeply honoured to be returned for a second term as a member representing the Highlands and Islands. It was particularly gratifying to be joined by three other Scottish Conservative colleagues.'

'Most important is our work bringing to the attention of the Scottish Government the issues that really matter to local people such as the capacity of the NHS, the state of the roads, broadband coverage and, of course, the ferry service. I suspect next year will be just as busy when it comes to tackling these matters.'

'In the meantime, may I wish you a peaceful Christmas and happy New Year.'

**Rhoda Grant**

'Many of us take the availability of food for granted, but the truth is tens of thousands of people in Scotland are living in food poverty, even in 2021. Most commonly it is due to a lack of income, the inability for an individual to feed themselves and their family from what they earn or receive in social security. That's why I'm consulting on a proposal for a Member's Bill which would place duties on the Scottish Government to ensure that food is accessible for all, is adequate and is nutritious. My New Year's wish is to see the Bill become law so that foodbanks are consigned to history.'

'As we reflect on the toughest of times during the pandemic, let's again take the chance to thank our amazing NHS workers, indeed all of our key workers who have kept us going since the pandemic hit. So too, our emergency services workers who selflessly work as hard over the Christmas and New Year period, as they do all year round keeping us safe. It really is appreciated.'



'I hope you have a safe, and peaceful, Christmas and I wish everyone a good New Year!'

**Jamie Halcro Johnston**

'2021 has been another challenging year. As well as the ongoing issues faced by our NHS and other public agencies, the Covid pandemic has continued to impact on all our lives, our businesses and our communities.'

'It has cast a shadow over so much of what we do, limiting our choices and putting increasing pressure on folk. But communities have continued to come together to support each other, even when things have been at their toughest. And as Shadow Minister for Business, as well as a Highland MSP, I have been so impressed by the resilience of our business community who, particularly those in hospitality and tourism, have had to radically change their ways of working. It has not been easy.'

'And the pandemic has also been a reminder of the importance of local infrastructure and local services. Our Highland communities need reliable transport links, improved broadband and local public services such as hospitals, schools and local policing they can rely on.'

'Finally, can I wish all the readers of the Oban Times and the Lochaber Times a very happy Christmas and my very best wishes to all for a better year ahead for themselves, their families and their communities.'

# Clàr na Nollaig

## Christmas Schedule

BBC ALBA



**Cùm Sùil Orm**  
Keep an Eye on Me  
Là na Nollaige, 5.35f  
Christmas Day, 5.35pm



**Bannan**  
27, 28, 30 Dùbhlachd & 1 Faoilleach, 10f  
27, 28, 30 December & 1 January, 10f

**Maorach: Hebridean Shellfish**  
29 Dùbhlachd, 9f  
29 December, 9pm



**Seòid Lang Syne**  
31 Dùbhlachd, 10f  
31 December, 10pm

**O.M.C!**  
31 Dùbhlachd, 11f  
31 December, 11pm



**Cèilidh na Bliadhn' Ùire 2021**  
Hogmanay Ceilidh 2021  
31 Dùbhlachd, 11.30f  
31 December, 11.30pm



## Argyll gardens help to boost winter wellbeing

The weather may be getting colder, but a warm welcome still awaits at some of Argyll's most stunning gardens – and visitors are being urged to get out and explore them during the months ahead.

Ardmaddy Castle in Seil, Crarae on Loch Fyne and Ardkinglas at Cairndow are just some of the gardens across Argyll that will be open throughout the winter.

These green oases offer space to explore, to enjoy the fresh air and to meet family and friends, and they have played a huge part in helping visitors to maintain their health and wellbeing during the last two years of the pandemic.

And now Discover Scottish Gardens, the network of more than 400 gardens, nurseries and estates across the country, has been backed by VisitScotland to boost its website, allowing days out to be planned in advance. Visitors can now search discover-scottishgardens.org for family activities, dog-friendly gardens, accessible spaces and cafés as well as discovering which gardens remain open all year round.

Joanna Macpherson, director of Discover Scottish Gardens, says thousands of people have discovered Scotland's gardens for the first time during the pandemic: 'Overnight the visitor profile changed and suddenly we were seeing young people and families with children who had never set foot in a garden before. What they've discovered is there's so much to see and discover in these beautiful spaces, from the bugs, frogs and squirrels that delight children, to a huge range of unusual trees and plants. And many people have been using gardens for exercise and for places to meet up with family and friends.'

'We want people to keep on enjoying the gardens during the winter months and discover the beauty that only unfolds when there's frost or snow on the ground or highly-scented winter plants are in flower.'

**READMORE**  
www.obantimes.co.uk

# One man and his dog complete 5,000-mile rewilding trek

by Sandy Neil  
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

After a gruelling nine months on the road, which began on the shores of the Pacific Ocean, 32-year Michael Yellowlees from Perthshire and his faithful Alaskan husky dog Luna have finally reached Canada's Atlantic coast, having trekked right across the vast country for Highlands-based rewilding charity Trees for Life.

On Sunday December 5, throngs of well-wishers gathered at the remote Cape Spear Lighthouse in Newfoundland, while political leaders in Canada and Scotland expressed their admiration for Michael's heroic venture.

'My best wishes on the successful completion of your incredible walk across Canada, Michael,' declared Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

Noting that Michael has raised \$50,000 for the Scottish rewilding charity Trees for Life, Prime Minister Trudeau added: 'Michael chose Canada for this mission due to the many Scots who left their homeland generations ago, settled here, and contributed significantly to the fabric of our country.'

'He was also inspired by the many and vast beautiful natural environments Canada continues to enjoy and protect. Despite the challenges faced by the pandemic, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Michael for his inspirational adventure.'

Scotland's Deputy First Minister John Swinney – who is Michael's local MSP – said: 'I warmly congratulate Michael on the astonishing feat of endurance he has accomplished in support of a cause to which he is devoted. Michael has demonstrated the power of individual action to raise awareness of this vital issue of our day.'

'His commitment to restoring our natural environment is an inspiration to us all. I have had the privilege of knowing Michael and his family for many, many years. He is a shining example of the tenacity and inspiration that his family have brought to all they have done.'

Michael, a native of Birnam and a former



pupil of Breadalbane Academy, has Canadian roots and travelled to the country in 2020. While working with sled dogs before he set off on his journey, he befriended Luna, who would become his constant companion every step of the way.

Midway through the journey, Michael was distraught when Luna vanished into the Canadian wilderness. After a week searching high and low, aided by local volunteers, the two were joyfully reunited when Luna suddenly reappeared at his side – having chewed away her lead, which



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# Complete epic k across Canada



**Michael Yellowlees from Perthshire and his faithful Alaskan husky dog Luna have finally reached Canada's Atlantic coast, having trekked right across the vast country for Highlands-based rewilding charity Trees for Life.**

by crowds lining the streets, and inundated with offers of food, clothing and shelter.

It has also been emotional. The huge population of people of Scottish descent in Canada is partly a consequence of the Highland Clearances, which were accompanied by ecological destruction. Canada is a beautiful land with an abundance of woodland and wildlife. This journey has been about raising awareness and funds to help restore the Scottish Highlands to a flourishing ecosystem as part of our contribution to tackling the twin global emergencies of climate change and biodiversity loss.

Steve Micklewright, chief executive of Trees for Life, expressed the gratitude of the whole charity.

Michael, naturally, is feeling pretty exhausted. He said: 'So now I'm looking forward to taking a couple of weeks of rest, decompress, then try and process everything that's happened because it really has been a magical year and experience.'

Trees for Life is dedicated to rewilding the Scottish Highlands. Its volunteers have established nearly two million native trees at dozens of sites, encouraging wildlife to flourish and helping communities to thrive.

To support Michael and Luna's epic fundraising drive for Trees for Life, please visit [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/michaelandlunarewild](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/michaelandlunarewild)

appeared to have become entangled in forest vegetation.

'Apart from that horrible scare, the journey through Canada has been amazing,' says Michael. 'And so, too, have the people. I've been marched into towns by pipe bands, applauded

## Mullman

**DANIEL BROOKS**

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



## Mullman's Merry Christmas

Our older children, Oliver 14 and Hazel nine, expressed an interest in buying presents for friends and family for Christmas. So, in true Brooks family tradition, we took them to earn some cash picking winkles. I grew up doing the same and saved up money to buy my own pool table when I was 10.

Picking winkles is not for everyone, especially if the weather is blowing a gale and hail stoning, but luckily the kids had a nice spell of weather over the weekend and so we had an enjoyable family time scrabbling around on the shore.

We came to an agreement with our youngest daughter Blue that she could get an item of her choice at the shop in Salen if she looked after little Oak for us. Oak didn't really need a lot of looking after though, as he was knee deep in rock pools pointing out all the sea life. The kids' pickings were regularly interrupted with squeaks of excitement every time they found something hiding among the seaweed.

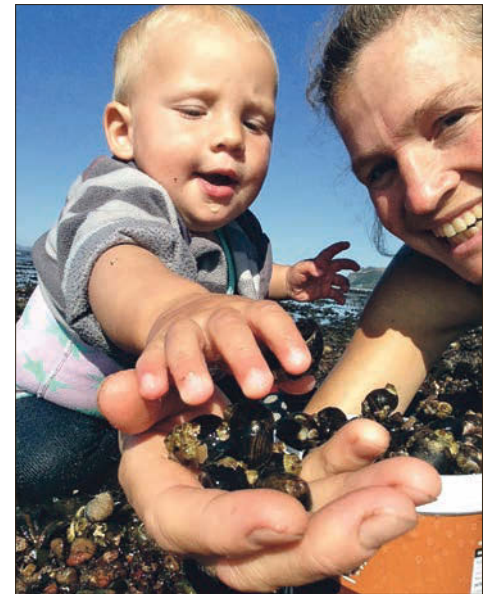
The flapping butterfish were most common, but there were also lots of other small fish that live among the rocks on the shore and are stranded when the tide goes out. Fish that Mull otters love to feed on. Young sea scorpions, five bearded rockling, gobies, pipefish, little flatfish and 15 spine sticklebacks. We also found squat lobsters, something I do not remember seeing before on my winkling excursions.

We all had to be careful for the often half buried small spiny sea urchins, they are beautiful, but get a spine under your nail, and you know about it for days! I found a delicate saddle oyster wrapped around a small stone, a large common whelk attaching its bundle of bubble eggs that you often find washed up on the shore to a rock.

Our two girls have one day a week at the tiny Ulva Ferry primary school doing shore school. All 15 pupils in the school go out with their teachers - yes, they even have two teachers now at that school, for the first time in a long time - and learn all they can about what they find. They are loving that school. Thank you to all involved for making it a school our kids look forward to going to - most mornings.

We are in full winter now, but already nature is showing signs of the spring to come. Our local sea eagle pair are hard at work building a new nest for the 2022 season already.

One might not expect common dolphins to hang around over the winter, but we have seen



**Winkling is a Brooks family tradition, helping raise funds for Christmas. Pictured is Deb Brooks and baby Oak.**

small groups of them from our home here at Ulva Ferry. We are so lucky to have been granted this home. It's a dream come true to be able to sit at my window and watch all the wildlife we do. And the rays of light!

The lovely late Eleanor Cameron from Bunessan used to pick me up to take me to school, thanks to her those rays of light coming down through the clouds will always be known to me as 'God Speaks' and it seems very appropriate.

It's a regular reminder here on Mull that we are so lucky to be witness to all of Nature's God's creations. I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and enchanting new year. Big festive love from myself and my family.

PS. For those interested, the common dolphin I wrote about last month is still swimming round and round a fishing float in Craignure Bay.

**Daniel Brooks is a wildlife guide, adventure seeker, conservation campaigner, forager, bush-crafter, rewilder and father of four. His website [mullman.co.uk](http://mullman.co.uk) is coming soon.**

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OT

# DISTRICT NEWS

## Exciting development at Rockfield

The doors are open and the lights are back on! Despite many challenges, it's been an exciting year at The Rockfield Centre, with Oban's community hub reopening following its refurbishment, hosting a varied programme of workshops, talks, live music, exhibitions, a conference and other events. There was even a visit recently from Santa himself!

The support of the community has been outstanding since the very start of the centre's journey and, with its board of trustees, hard-working staff team and loyal volunteers, The Rockfield Centre is now embarking on the next chapter of its development as a vital community hub and key venue in the West of Scotland.

Current priorities include completing the internal fit-out of the building, creating a community canteen space with kitchen/servery and opening the centre's Play Museum, as well as continuing to develop a wide-ranging inclusive programme of activity in the centre focused on the four themes of the centre - arts/culture, history/heritage, education/enterprise and health/wellbeing.

With exciting plans ahead, Oban Communities Trust is seeking committed new trustees to join its existing board and, alongside fellow trustees, to support the management team at Rockfield in steering the overall direction for the organisation into the next exciting phase of its development as a well-governed charity,



sustainable for the future. Becoming a trustee is an important role and an opportunity to make a positive difference by supporting and enhancing our community. For further information about the role and responsibilities of becoming a trustee, the particular skills being sought at present and how to apply, please contact Joanie Garvin by email on joanie@therockfieldcentre.org.uk or call 07714 853410.

The deadline for applications is Friday January 14, 2022. Prospective trustees will be asked to stand for election by the members at the AGM in February 2022.

Oban Communities Trust/The Rockfield Centre is a registered Community Benefit Society with charitable status run by the community for the community.

## Christmas at Dervaig proves a hit with

by Kathie Griffiths  
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk

Dervaig Community Orchard is looking forward to a fruitful New Year after a successful Christmas celebration.

The orchard's committee 'took a leap of faith' says treasurer Catherine Evans to sow the seeds for a Christmas event in the middle of this month but they reaped the benefits.

'Some folk might think it crazy to organise an outdoor event for the middle of December but the committee of Dervaig Community Orchard took a leap of faith and went ahead with planning Christmas at the Orchard for Sunday December 12.

'Lots of people of all ages came along and enjoyed socialising in the open air. Many tried their hands at producing a decorated yule log, Christmas wreath or willow star and went home happy with what they had produced.

'There was plenty of sustenance in the form of chestnuts and marshmallows roasted over an open fire, delicious freshly baked pizza provided by the Foodie Shack, mince pies and



other seasonal sweetmeats as well as hot fruit punch to wash it all down. In addition there was a craft stall selling quality items produced by the Orchard Makers Group.

## Thank you, Morag

Residents and staff at Oban's North Argyll House have wished manager Morag Telfer a happy retirement.

Mrs Telfer has worked at the home for 40 years, 20 of which were as manager.

She retired on Friday December 10 with lots of happy memories and is looking forward to spending time with her family.

The new manager at North Argyll House is Moira MacPhee.

Happy retirement Morag Telfer  
after 40 years of service at  
North Argyll House, Oban.



## Willowview's wonderful logo

OBAN

Oban schools have delivered gold after being invited to take part in a competition to design a logo for Willowview Early Learning Centre in Oban, which opened in August this year.

Staff at Willowview asked the children what they wanted when they thought about their nursery - and they asked for rainbow colours, a tree and children. There was more than 65 fantastic entries from Rockfield and Park primary

schools, and the winning entry was by Layla from Rockfield primary.

Head of centre Gillian McDougall said: 'There are so many creative children in our town. We received lots of wonderful entries.

'We feel that Layla's picture really captured what our children asked for and we loved that the children in the picture are in silhouette as it represents that all children are equal at Willowview.

'We have added McCaig's Tower into the logo as it's such a powerful symbol of our home town.'



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# Dervaig orchard with Mull families



Chestnuts roasting on an open fire at Dervaig Community Orchard Day

people of all ages will think that the Community Orchard is a special and magical place, having many happy memories associated with it.

'This was the main aim of the event but the generosity of those attending cannot go unmentioned as the donations received not only covered costs but also exceeded all expectations,' said Mrs Evans.

Dervaig Community Orchard is an orchard made for and by the local community. It began in 2016 and now has a range of apple and pear trees, a fruit cage for delicious berries, a willow labyrinth, a firepit and an outdoor classroom.

Volunteers are always welcome to help out at work parties when the community comes together to look after the orchard. Whether it is pruning, mowing, strimming or painting - there is a job for everyone.

Interested? Go to [www.dervaigcommunityorchard.co.uk](http://www.dervaigcommunityorchard.co.uk) to find out more.

'There was a lovely atmosphere throughout the event and the organisers hope that a lasting result of the day, following on from the success of the Apple Day in September, will be that peo-

## Rooting for free trees on the Isle of Lismore

Mini eco-warriors at Lismore school have taken delivery of hundreds of free trees from The Woodland Trust.

The youngsters have been out and about planting some of the 420 saplings of mixed trees native to Scotland as part of the trust's free trees for schools and communities project.

Just a few weeks ago, Lismore Primary School was awarded its fifth Eco Flag status and has wasted no time in cracking on with pupils' latest project to root in new trees on the island.

Headteacher Debbie Harris said: 'We applied to the Woodland Trust for free trees for schools some time ago and were recently sent 420 saplings of mixed variety trees all native to Scotland.

'We planted some here at school and offered the rest to people in our community who kindly donated to our school fund in return. We also went out to a local croft to help plant more than 80 trees. We were rewarded with some tasty hot chocolate and apple cake!'



A well-deserved treat for Lismore's little tree planters.

## At random



MARTIN LAING

editor@obantimes.co.uk

## Feeling festive

Well, here we are again on the cusp of Christmas, and what a build-up to the festive season we have had.

Oban has marked the advent of winter with its usual joie de vivre and panache (yes, I know, the trouble with the French is that they have no word for entrepreneur, as George W Bush once said), marred only by the arrival of Storm Arwen a couple of weeks ago, and the less severe Storm Barra.

The pages of The Oban Times have been replete with countless photographs of happy, smiling faces enjoying the very many celebratory and fun events organised by the usual army of unsung heroes who toil tirelessly to arrange these highlights in the town's calendar. I have paid fulsome tribute to them in the past and do so very readily once more.

It also behoves me to mention all the workers off the radar without whose efforts we would all be the poorer. It takes the combined contribution of people in numerous trades and professions to keep our society and communities as the very special places they are.

I cannot possibly list all of them but we would not be able to celebrate Christmas as we do without our emergency services, and also everyone such as the bin men and women, council workers, bus drivers, cabbies, delivery drivers, shop staff, publicans and their staff, cafes and hotels, church and pastoral teams, and so on. Well done to all of you for helping to make the festive season so fantastic.

I might also add - now I am no longer on the full-time staff of this august newspaper - that the team at The Oban Times go a considerable way to enhancing the Christmas spirit with superb reporting and photographing of the very many events already mentioned. I know how hard my colleagues strive to keep this newspaper going and they too deserve our thanks.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank all of you dear readers and advertisers for continuing to support us, and wish you all a very Merry Christmas.

## What do you think?

Send your comments to [editor@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:editor@obantimes.co.uk)



Layla, Caroline Fothergill, head teacher at Rockfield Primary and Gillian McDougall, head of Willowview ELC.

# WELL DONE TO EVERYONE THIS YEAR

Wishing festive greetings to all. Remember to check for Festive Slimming World recipes on the website.

WE WILL BE BACK IN THE NEW YEAR

Gillian

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OT

## LETTERS

**Christmas cheer**

Everyone will be thankful this Christmas that while some restrictions kick in on Boxing Day, at least this year we can spend Christmas Day with family and friends, with people we care about, where able.

It has still been a difficult year for many, not least for those of us who have lost a loved one or who have felt lonely and isolated due to the ongoing threat of Covid.

But thinking back on the last year, there is a lot we can give thanks for.

When pulling together our annual Review of the Year, we were reminded of all the great stories we ran in The Oban Times: stories about communities coming together to care for one another; the incredible fundraising that went on to support local good causes and the resilience of our traders, with a number of new businesses opening up in Oban.

We may not know what 2022 holds in terms of how Covid-19 will impact our lives, but we're sure our communities are strong and we will look after each other.

Merry Christmas to you all from everyone at The Oban Times. May it be safe and peaceful.

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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**Positive experience of Covid booster on Seil**

Having read for the last few weeks about the unpleasant experiences the citizens of Oban have endured over the administration of their Covid booster jabs, I feel the need to recount my own experience here on the Isle of Seil.

Not only did our GP practice take it upon themselves to book our community hall for two days to enable us to avoid the trip to Oban, they prepared the hall themselves for NHS Highland the night before, on one occasion at least, after 9.30pm; they cleared up after the event and even organised people to manage the car park. They phoned up to advise the time to attend, giving a 30-minute window and phoned a second time nearer the event to suggest the best time to go to avoid queues. A prime example of 'going above and beyond' or 'going the extra mile'.

It's not only the booster jabs they excelled themselves in either. During the two initial jabs, they phoned us to give us a day and time and we could walk to the surgery as it was so close. This amazed my sister-in-law who, living near York, was left to phone round various centres to set up a suitable day and time and at one point it was suggested she try Manchester as an option.

So a huge thank you to all involved at Easdale Medical Practice and all the other volunteers. In the words of the song, 'You're simply the best'.

Janet Scott, Seil.

**Turn out for local by-election was very disappointing**

It was extremely disappointing to see turnout of just 25.6 per cent at the recent Ward 21 (Fort William and Ardnamurchan) by-election and I hope people will be less apathetic when we have the full regional elections in May.

An SNP win is hardly surprising, since I was told repeatedly when campaigning in 2017 that you could put a yellow rosette on a stuffed teddy bear and they'd vote for it. Thankfully far more said they would vote for anyone other than an SNP, which seems to still be the case since the vast majority (60.3 per cent) of those who did vote, voted against Ms Fanet. At least Sarah Fanet lives in the area which is more than can be said for two of the candidates, the

## YOUR PICTURES



Conservative and Lib-Dem. Not only do they not live here (although one attempted to imply that they did, in their Lochaber Times candidate statement), they clearly weren't interested in doing the most basic of research about the area. Had they done so, they'd know that we make higher-than-average use of Facebook as a means of communication, presumably due to the large geographical area and small dispersed communities.

Both of these candidates have Facebook pages, but neither bothered to use it to communicate with their potential constituents. Whether you love or loathe Facebook, if they aren't interested in doing basic research about the area, they really don't deserve our vote.

It was excellent to see the Green candidate get so many votes, demonstrating how seriously we are all taking environmental issues these days, and Kate lives locally and knows the area well.

Too often I hear people complaining about Westminster, Holyrood or Inverness being completely out of touch with those of us living in small, or remote, or rural communities – the only way to fix that is to vote for people to represent you that do know and understand.

I sincerely hope that more people will vote in May, and that more people will vote for local residents in May.

Joanne Matheson, Acharacle.

**Christmas verse**

Recent on-island discussions about whether to try to maintain a Christmas concert or social gathering with some music, have led to the idea that, instead, maybe some 'safe' carol singing efforts before the break might be possible. These discussions prompted a couple of light-hearted verses, which I jotted down over lunch today.



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or The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB

Oban Times reader Ken MacTaggart, of Inveraray got in touch with us to share this photograph. He said: 'My friend Donald John MacDonald spotted this rare bird, a Little Egret, in Inveraray where it has lingered for several days. It wades around feeding in the bay by the Front Green at low tide. It really stands out from the gulls, dazzling white with yellow feet. I've seen one in the south of England where they are invading from France, probably due to climate warming. It's not yet "officially" a Scottish resident bird, but has been seen in the Borders and elsewhere. They are also seen in Lochgilphead but the Argyll Bird Club says this is the first in Inveraray.'

**YOURPHOTO**  
share with us: [editor@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:editor@obantimes.co.uk)  
telephone 01631 568000

It occurred to me they might also be a bit of light entertainment for readers of the OT?  
Sebastian Tombs, Isle of Lismore.

#### CAROL SOLO

Hark!  
It is the carol singers,  
Come to bring us  
Something cheer  
In this drear and weary dark!

Welcome, my friends –  
Ah! Only one?  
So, tell me, do:  
Is it just you –  
Where is the choir?

"Good Sir,  
I am surprised you ask –  
Have you not heard

The word is  
'No more masquerading'  
Nor, in public, much parading –  
Everyone is tucked at home,  
Many of them all alone  
Where, quite safe,  
They can un-mask!

"So, here I am, a solitary,  
Singing to my heart's content  
All my favourite Christmas Carols!  
The harmonies, I must pretend,  
Provided by the sounds of birds,  
The wind in trees,  
My feet in gravel – and  
By angels, as I travel:  
Can you hear them  
In the breeze,  
Like a wing-beat  
Keeping rhythm,  
Soft and slight,  
Reminiscent of the  
Iridescence of  
The ethereal  
Northern Lights –  
A kind of descant  
Borne by Nature,  
Fleeting, fleeting.....?"

"Well, I must away – I've  
Many a house to pass tonight!  
Goodnight!  
Goodnight!  
I wish you every Christmas Greeting!"

And with that, the carol singer  
Vanished in the gathering night.

## THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

A few weeks ago, I visited St George's Tron Church in the centre of Glasgow and was very moved by the painting, Our Last Supper, which depicts 13 people sitting around a table.

The artist has selected as models some of the guests of Glasgow City Mission and they represent those who are on the margins facing some of life's most difficult challenges.

The artist purposefully hasn't depicted one as specifically showing Jesus.

This speaks to the truth that is found in the words of Jesus, that inspired me most in my faith, where Jesus implores us to feed the hungry, visit the prisoner, clothe the naked and give the thirsty a drink saying

## Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

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



Ged a tha sinn air starsaich na Nollaige tha mi ga fhaotainn doirbh cuspair a lorg anns na naidheachdan air am bheil sunnd agus spiorad na ràithe. Cha chuimhnich mi air àm, seach àm chogaidhean san robh Breatann, san robh na meadhanan cho gruamach is iad a' riaghan eadar buamastaireachd agus casaidean slaigh-tearachd aig àrd-ìre ann an riaghaltas Bhreatainn agus air bhoil le aithrisean mun t-strèan Omicron de Chovid 19 a' sgaoileadh cho bras feadh na dùthcha. Ann an dòigh tha an t-stri an aghaidh Covid mar chogadh feadh an t-saoghail, agus tha gabhaltachd an Omicron a' cur uimhir de dh'èagal air luchd-stiùiridh slàinte is gum bheil cunnart gun caill an sluagh misneachd agus earbsa anna. 'S e firinn na cùise gum bheil eòlaichean gann de dh'fhiosrachadh mun tionndadh as ùire den bhioras agus fhad 's a tha iad a' feuchainn ri làn-aithne fhaotainn oirre tha ise a' siabadh tron t-sluagh mar fhalaig tron ghaoith. Nuair a chaillear smachd air falaisg mar is minig a thachair air Ghàidhealtachd, bhiodh na bha air chomas de mhuintir nam bailtean mun cuairt a' tighinn cuideachd gus feuchainn ri smachd fhaotainn air an teine, agus a chur às. Bha tuigse aca gur e uallach agus dleastanas coimhearsnachd a bh' ann sin a dhèanamh, gus an cuid fearainn is eile a dhion.

Mar a tha mi air a ràdh an seo iomadh uair roimhe tha mise den bheachd gum bheil an aon

seòrsa uallaich agus dleastanas oirne a thaobh dìon a dhèanamh an aghaidh Covid, agus ged nach tuig mi carson a bhiodh neach sam bith a' diùltadh banachdach tha mi ag aithneachadh gum bheil còir phearsanta aca air an taghadh sin. Ach chan eil mi a' creidsinn gum bheil còir aig duine galair sam bith a sgaoileadh feadh dhaoine eile! Sin an dùbhlán as motha a th' aig riaghaltasan an t-saoghail is iad air an aon làimh a' cur bhanachdachaidhean air milleanan den t-sluagh, fhad 's a tha miltean eile a' leantainn air adhart a' gànrachadh an co-chreutairean! Ged a tha riaghaltasan agus ùghdarrasan de gach seòrsa a' dèanamh an dìcheall gus sgapadh a' ghalair a cheannsachadh agus an sluagh a dhion chan eil na nì iad gun chronachadh, mar a tha fìor mu na riaghailtean a tha gan toirt a-staigh às ùr ann an dachaighean cùraim. Tha e doirbh da-rìribh smaoinichadh ciamar a theid aig na h-ionadan sin air, an dà chuid, na seann daoine a tha fon cùram a dhion bho ghalair agus aig an aon àm leigil le càirdean tadhal orra. 'S e dùbhlán dòrainneach a tha sin gun teagamh, agus am feum gliocas Sholaimh!

Chan eil dad a tha nas tlachdmhoire na tadhal air càirdean agus eòlaich agus b' e sin pàirt de spiorad na Nollaige a bha gu ìre air àicheadh dhuinn mun àm seo an-uiridh. Ach aig àm sgrìobhadh seo tha a' chead sin againn am-bliadhna agus tha mi 'n dòchas gum faigh sibh cothrom air! Nollaig chridheil dhuibh!

our community. However, my overwhelming feeling in the lead up to Christmas is one of gratitude to the people that I am privileged to meet on a daily basis at Hope.

Jesus, I think, knew when he challenged us to live our lives with those on the margins that it would be us that would be the most blessed. As it is those who have the least who are the most open-handed, inclusive and willing to help each other.

If anyone wants to learn how to become more generous just spend a lunch time at Hope and you will see love in action in its purest form.

Catriona Petit, Hope Kitchen

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# LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT

YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S ON IN ARGYLL AND LOCHABER

## Local characters inspire Oban man's first novel

by Sandy Neil  
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

A cyber security expert from Oban has published his first novel, *Pawn in the Shadows*, introducing Louise Stewart as a black ops assassin in the employ of the UK government.

'*Pawn in the Shadows* by K J MacMillan is a fast-paced thriller tracking Stewart, the daughter of a prostitute in a Glasgow council estate, with her father long gone, and betrayed by the establishment at every turn,' the book description says.

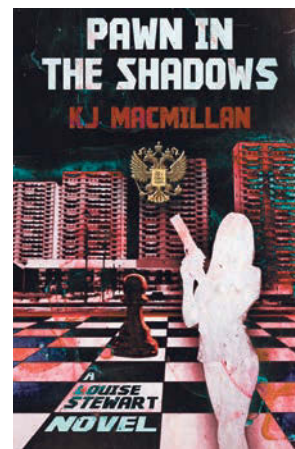
'Joining up with Mac, Storm and Hairy Dave, they form an elite assassination team in the heart of Moscow. Their task is taking out a high-ranking Russian general without being caught.



Cyber security expert K J MacMillan, who has just published his first thriller.

'The most difficult assassination the team has ever faced, against an opponent who is a chess master and rising star of the Russian Intelligence Service.'

Kenny MacMillan grew up in Oban, and attended Oban High School from 1980 to 1986, before going on to study Chemical Engineering at Heriot-Watt University.



His parents, David and Irene MacMillan, still live on Nant Drive. Kenny now lives in Glasgow with his wife Lesley.

He has spent the last 23 years working in the Telecoms and

Cyber Security industry before embarking on writing his first book.

'My book is character driven, and growing up in Oban I met so many amazing characters that I could draw on for inspiration,' he said. 'In a lot of ways this book is a homage to all those amazing people.'

Can you spot yourself in the fictional characters?

### Excerpt

'Louise Stewart had one objective: poison a Russian General with a Russian strain of Novichok and get out alive.

'If she got caught, she would never be seen again. The big Russian machine would just make her disappear, buried in a woodland somewhere just outside of Moscow in a shallow grave. It added a certain amount of spice to the

situation. She thrived on it. The mystique of living a lie and being deep undercover in a foreign country with limited back-up in place.

'To make things even more interesting, the General was the commander of the FSB, the Russian Intelligence service. Not only could what she was doing lead to a death sentence in Russia, it would be a political disaster for the UK Government.

'In her mind Louise still saw herself as just a wee girl from Glasgow who had had a tough upbringing. She was not one of the victims in life, she believed that life makes you who you are. The good bits you enjoy, and the bad bits are where you learn; and the in-between bits, well, they are just life's highway to the next good bit.'

**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all at Hire & Supplies**



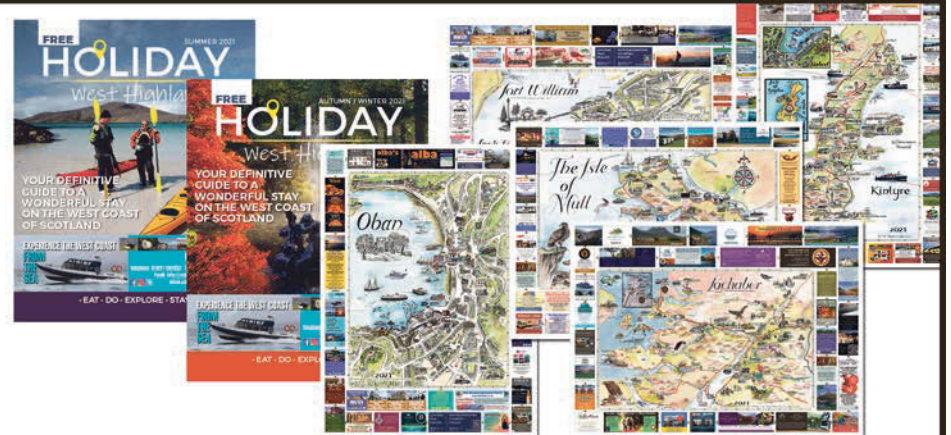
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# Glasgow Letter

**ROBERT ROBERTSON**

robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk



The Glasgow Letter has been a rollercoaster of emotions in the last year – one week waxing lyrical about concerts and gigs going ahead; the next mourning their postponements. Unfortunately, we finish the year with the latter.

After so much progress during the summer, and an autumn full of live music, it was truly galling last week to see online a cascade of cancellations one after the other: first Mànran, then Skerryvore, then Trail West...the list seemed endless and made for tough reading.

For the people of Glasgow, Skerryvore's New Year's Day Live bash in the Barrowlands was a particularly sore one to lose.

I am really cheering you up here and helping you get into the Christmas spirit, amn't I?!

Well it's not all been bad news this week. First of all, let's remember that these call-offs (while disappointing) are the right thing to do in the circumstances. There are a lot of aspects of a live show that can make postponing very complicated and difficult but, at a time such as this, bands really have no other option.

The good news is there are exciting times on the horizon.

During another tough week for the music industry, for example, Gary Innes took to social media to cheer us all up by revealing he has booked none other than Scotland's largest venue, the OVO Hydro,



**Gary Innes cheering everyone up during another tough week for the music industry by announcing a massive ceilidh in the Ovo Hydro next December.**

for what he calls 'the biggest ceilidh the world has ever seen' on Saturday December 17 next year! That is a wonderful thought and something for traditional music lovers to hold onto during this particular time where we can't even hold the smallest ceilidh the world has ever seen!

Tickets went on sale on Wednesday morning and I'm sure many people will come together to support the event by grabbing their tickets nice and early.

More good news to keep us going is the up-coming debut album of 2021's Gaelic Singer of the Year Kim Carnie entitled *And So We Gather*. After a successful Kickstarter funding campaign where pledgers could pre-order the record and get access to all sorts of other rewards, it really is eagerly anticipated and I'm very much

looking forward to hearing it. Until then, my festive listening will be the new Beinn Lee album, *Deò*, which I mentioned a few weeks ago and which is now released. Or 'tha Deò beò' as the band are saying. I'll let you know soon how I enjoy it with my pigs in blankets and mulled wine!

On a personal note, I would like to finish this week's letter by wishing my Auntie Margaret, who reads this column every week (and often reviews it in a WhatsApp message to me!) a happy 80th birthday. Her mother, my Granny, lived to the ripe old age of 106. Auntie Margaret is proof that the key to keeping fit and healthy into your eighties is reading the Glasgow Letter each week!

So mind and get your copy over Christmas, everyone, and enjoy the festivities.

# Moniack Mhor announces its new programme for 2022

Moniack Mhor, the writing centre based near Inverness, is opening its doors again to a full residential programme with a selection of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and crime writing courses and retreats.

The centre is hosting a fabulous new programme of writing tutors including Madeleine Bunting, Scottish crime greats Val McDermid, Abir Mukherjee and Louise Welsh, Booker shortlisted author Graeme Macrae Burnet, award-winning poet and new Edinburgh Makar Hannah Lavery and poet Holly McNish, the highly acclaimed non-fiction writer Cal Flynn, as well as bestselling novelists James Robertson, Tim Pears, Polly Clark and Sara Sheridan, and musician Boo Hewerdine.

Rachel Humphries, centre director of Moniack Mhor, said: 'Moniack Mhor has weathered

the turbulence of 2021; we ceased residential activity in March 2020 when the country went into lockdown and opened our doors in a scaled-down way from summer of this year. I am thrilled that we are launching our full residential programme for next year.

'Having writers with us over the last few months has reinforced more than ever that community is one of the vital components for human happiness. Sharing words around the fire nurtures our wellbeing and fuels the creative drive. To have writers back through our doors makes life seem real once again.

'We are currently working hard to review our writer development programme to see where the gaps are. These will be filled by new support schemes, including a wider online programme, expanded

mentoring opportunities, more international collaboration and courses and retreats with childcare. We are excited to be getting back fully to what we know, welcoming tutors, guests and participating writers with Highland hospitality to a space for creative expression.'

Vicky Adams, Literature Officer at Creative Scotland, said: 'Scottish writers not only produce world-class literature to enthral readers, they're also well versed at supporting the next generation of talent to shape and share their words.

'The glorious landscape and welcoming atmosphere of Moniack Mhor provides space and time for new and established writers to explore and hone their craft, with guidance and inspiration from an amazing array of writers at the top of their game.'

## What's on at Oban Cinema



Showing from 31st December

**The Matrix Resurrections, West Side Story, Mothering Sunday, Spencer, Spider-Man: No Way Home.**

### Friday 24 December

Spider-Man: No Way Home | 12A 13:30/16:00  
It's A Wonderful Life | U 17:00

### Saturday 25 December

Closed Christmas Day

### Sunday 26 December

Spider-Man: No Way Home | 12A 13:00/16:15  
A Christmas Carol | PG 14:30  
Spencer | 12A 17:00

### Wednesday 29 December (screenings marked with ★ are captioned)

Clifford The Big Red Dog | PG 12:30 ★  
Spider-Man: No Way Home | 12A 12:45 ★ / 16:15 ★ / 19:45  
A Christmas Carol | PG 14:45 ★  
Spencer | 12A 17:00 ★  
House Of Gucci | 15 19:30 ★

### Thursday 30 December

Clifford The Big Red Dog | PG 12:30  
Spider-Man: No Way Home | 12A 12:45/16:15/19:45

★ Key: HOH - Captions for the hard of hearing.



You're invited to a free community screening of **It's A Wonderful Life** Christmas Eve **5pm** while tickets last!  
Mulled wine and mince pies a plenty!

Join our mailing list at [www.obanphoenix.com/mailling-list](http://www.obanphoenix.com/mailling-list)

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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**MONDAY:** 8am-12pm Breakfast show with Stephen  
12-3pm Lunch with Bob G  
5pm-7pm Drive Times with Marcus  
7pm-8pm Highland Fling with Rosemary  
8pm-9pm Calum McLuckies Show  
9pm David Cullen Show

**TUESDAY:** 8am-10am Breakfast Show with Stephen  
10am-12.30pm Ken Hunter  
1pm-3pm Macky on FM  
5pm-7pm Drive Times with Archie Darling  
7pm-8pm Highest Praise with Stuart Chalmers  
8pm-9pm Scottish Sounds with Archie Cameron  
9pm Oban Pride on the Waves with Jay & Crystal

**WEDNESDAY:** 8am-11am Breakfast Show with Stephen  
11am-1pm Comfort Zone with Lesley  
1pm-3pm Doug in the afternoon  
4pm-7pm Drive Times with Campbell  
7pm-9pm Country meets Rock N Roll with Len  
9pm Gordon's Grooves

**THURSDAY:** 8am-11am Breakfast Show with Andy & Sarah  
11am-2pm Lunch Show with Steve  
3pm-7pm Drive Time with Stephen  
7pm-9pm Christine's Collections  
9pm-10pm Ann's Ceilidh  
10pm Margo Till Midnight

**FRIDAY:** 8am-10am Breakfast Show with Anna & Phil  
10am-1pm The Brunch Show With The One  
1pm-4pm Bob G Country, Rhythm & Blues show  
4pm-6:45pm Teeney & Tiny Show with Harry & Janet  
6:45pm-7pm Sports View with the Dream Team  
7pm-8pm Country Meets Country with Jackie Craig  
8pm-10pm Evening Show with Peter Rainnie

**SATURDAY:** 8am-10am Breakfast Show with Andy  
10am-1pm Saturday Morning Live with Linda  
2pm-4pm Jukebox Jamboree with Ken Mc  
6pm-7pm Sports View with the Dream Team  
7pm-8pm Sounds Scottish with Archie Darling  
8pm-10pm Evening Show with Dave Hobbs

**SUNDAY:** 9am-11am Sunday Morning with Breege  
11am-2pm Sunday Brunch with Stephen  
3pm-5pm Mental Musings with Mer  
7pm-9pm New Country Show with Dave & Murdoch  
9pm Drum & Bass with Graham.

# Tigerpolis children's coming to radio near

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

A fun, new, children's radio drama about the environment is due to start soon.

Tigerpolis follows the adventures of a family of vegetarian tigers as they battle to save their ancient forest homeland from destruction.

The series is based on the popular children's books written by Glasgow-born author R D Dijkstra and inspired by his many visits to India. The stories entertain, but they also help to inform children about nature and the world about them. Richard was born and brought up in Scotland. He studied at Glasgow University and first became interested in wildlife conservation after spending two weeks on board a small cabin-cruiser in Alaska.

Since then, he has travelled to all seven continents watching and photographing wildlife. His interest in tigers was triggered when he was part of a team helping rural communities in the areas bordering some of India's most beautiful tiger reserves. His first sighting of a tiger in the wild inspired

him to write the series.

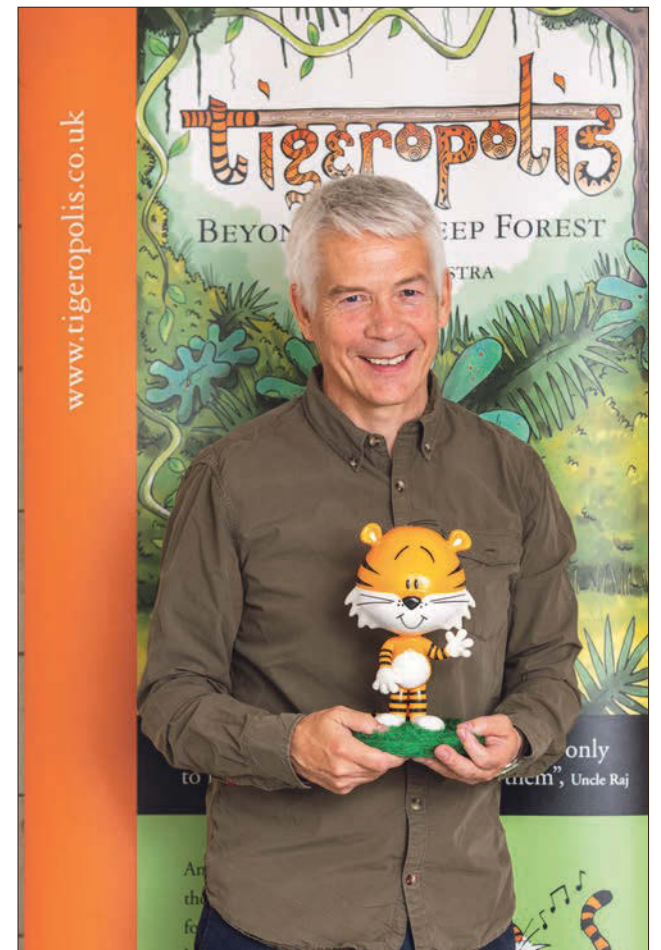
'There's a lot a negativity around what's happening to our planet,' he said. 'I wanted to write a story that children would find informative, based on real issues, but that they'd also find fun and uplifting. The Tigerpolis tigers face lots of challenges, but ultimately they are always triumphant.'

Award-winning young wild-life film-maker Ashwika Kapur narrates the series, bringing her own unique perspective to the stories. Tigerpolis is also broadcast in Gaelic, with well-known actor and singer Gillebride MacMillan reading his own translation.

The series is accompanied by five eco-features where school-children get the opportunity to ask experts about issues that interest them, including climate change, polar bears, beavers and rewilding.

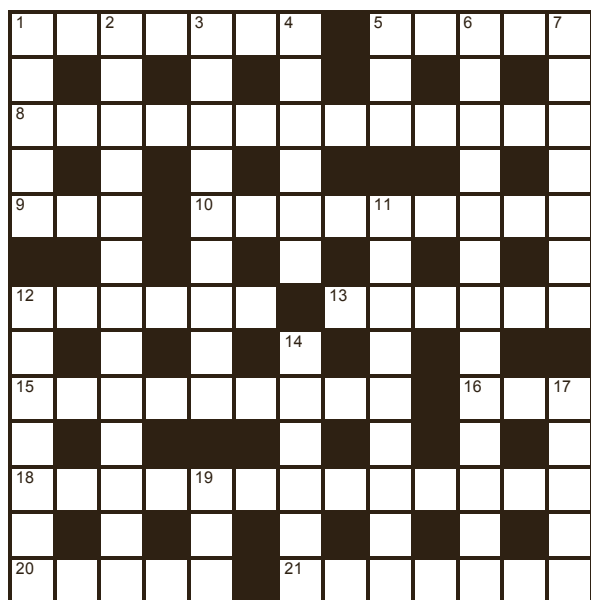
The first of 10 weekly episodes starts at 4.45pm, on Friday January 14 on Fun Kids DAB and on local FM stations across Scotland, including Radio Skye, Nevis FM and Isle FM.

**Extract: 'Caught in the Trap'**  
Just then there were two loud bangs in quick succession. 'BANG, BANG'



Richard Dijkstra, author of Tigerpolis, due for broadcast in the New Year.

## CROSSWORD



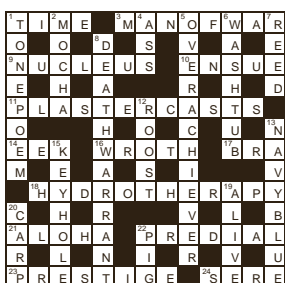
Across

- 1 Mechanised (7)
- 5 Spring in a desert (5)
- 8 Tricky play (7,2,4)
- 9 Become unwell (3)
- 10 Unofficial vote (5,4)
- 12 Hang outside (3-3)
- 13 Manatee (3,3)
- 15 Gum flavour (9)
- 16 What you might do with hat in hand (3)
- 18 Large corporation (13)
- 20 Sad song (5)
- 21 Able to view (7)

Down

- 1 Noodles (5)
- 2 Crafty seller (7,6)
- 3 Record holder (9)
- 4 One with declining mental health (6)
- 5 Silly person (3)
- 6 Members of the opposition (6,7)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION



# Tales from Another Dimension

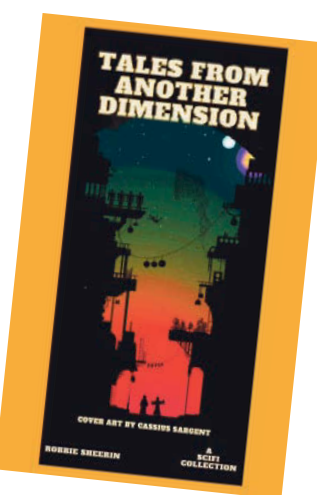
by Sandy Neil  
[sneil@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:sneil@obantimes.co.uk)

How will HG Wells react when he awakes 200 years in the future on a strange planet, faced with a terrible truth?

Two young brothers make a frightening discovery about their neighbours. Do robots secretly want to rule us all? A scientist goes to the extreme in order to change the future of mankind. But is it possible to change our destiny?

Tales From Another Dimension is a strange and fantastical collection of 10 short stories by Oban-born author Robbie Sheerin, whose new book 'invokes frightening twists and turns with each story'.

'Travel to other dimensions and meet strange characters - sometimes human, and at times not so human. They will make you question the solidity of the Earth and mankind. Explore prejudice, fear, imag-



ination, kindness, empathy, and human frailty.'

Robbie was a pupil of Oban High School between 1993-1997, and was active with the local basketball club. After leaving school he owned his own window-cleaning business in Oban, with customers including The Royal Hotel, Oban Fish and and Chip Shop,

The Dungallen House Hotel, as well as various homes in the Oban area. He moved to the United States in 2003, but still has family living in Oban.

'Growing up in the busy town of Oban was fun and spawned some of my fondest memories,' he said. 'Looking out into the bay from McCaig's Tower and seeing Lismore, Kerrera, and Mull was like seeing strange planets floating in the expanse of space. Each had secrets and mysteries hidden within their deep history. It certainly had an impact on my imagination.'

The book is available on Amazon and Apple Books, and find out more on Robbie's website [www.talesfromanotherdimension.com](http://www.talesfromanotherdimension.com)

**Excerpt**

'The wind howled, and rain lashed against the metal roof. Raj looked up at the roof, hoping it wasn't going to rip open. The heavens opened and unleashed a deluge, the rain pounded on the roof like

thousands of little rubber hammers trying to get inside. The thought of running back to the main building worried Raj a little. His wet fingers fumbled on the buttons of his jacket while he prepared to face the daunting storm.

'He swung open the door to greet a vast array of puddles and streams rushing into rivers he'd have to ford. The door slammed behind him.

'He bolted for the main building, key card in hand, until he opened the door and rushed inside.

'Raj sighed, relieved to be safe from the rain and wind, never mind the erratic thunder and lightning—until a sudden rumble shook the building. A huge bolt of lightning struck the roof. Everything went black as Raj tumbled to the floor. He lay in the dark as another rumble of thunder hammered the skies outside. He could feel the power vibrate through his chest and covered



# drama you

'What was that?' asked Tala nervously, 'don't tell me the poachers are outside already. Raj? What are we going to do?'

Looking outside the cave window, Tala could not believe her eyes.

'Oh my goodness - whatever next!' she exclaimed.

'It's your Uncle VJ ... on a Tuk Tuk!'

Sure enough there was Uncle VJ climbing out of the driver's seat of a slightly dilapidated, little green and yellow Tuk Tuk motor rickshaw.

As always VJ was wearing a cream and gold kaftan, with a garland of fresh marigolds round his neck, and smiling serenely as though everything was the best possible, in the best of all possible worlds. The family was now all gathered at the door, 'What do you think of my new wheels, Raj?' VJ called out, clearly very pleased with himself.

**CONTACTUS**  
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01631 568000

## Mull songwriter signs deal for ninth album

Xtra Mile Recordings and Colin MacIntyre, right, AKA Mull Historical Society have signed a new deal for the release of MacIntyre's ninth MHS album, and the fourth with the label.



said: 'I can't believe it's been 10 years working with Colin/Mull and always such a positive experience. We can't wait to work with him on Meltwater.'

Following the release of City Awakenings (2012), Dear Satellite (2016) and the Bernard Butler produced Wakelines (2018) - the new album, titled Meltwater - marks a decade-long partnership together and a new chapter in the long and illustrious career of one of Britain's best songwriters.

'I am delighted to be signing with Xtra Mile Recordings again,' says MacIntyre, 'they are a family as much as a label and are very well named.'

'I'm really pleased to continue what is now the longest creative partnership of my career.'

'I am sitting here in my studio cabin in the woods with a load of songs and I'm about to press record.'

'If I crack the door I can almost hear the ocean, so I'll see what washes back...'

'Loss was about the place of people in communities, local Vs global. So I'm excited to discover where Meltwater takes me.'

Charlie Caplowe, managing director at Xtra Mile Recordings

Next year will be a busy year for MacIntyre, who will also be celebrating the 20th anniversary of his debut album Loss.

MacIntyre kicks off the year playing Celtic Connections, at Saint Luke's in Glasgow, on January 22. The performance of the universally lauded and gold-selling breakthrough is sure to be a fantastic night, with special guests joining MacIntyre on stage to perform the album in full, as well as other MHS tracks.

From the heartfelt charm of game-changing NME Debut Single of the Year, Barcode Bypass, to the rip-roaring MTV-adorned, I Tried and Animal Cannabus, this is sure to be a reflective and celebratory night.

The band will feature Celtic Connections faves Sorren MacLean, Hannah Fisher and Seonaid Aitken. Special reissues of Loss, together with his second and third MHS albums Us and This Is Hope, will also be released later in the year to celebrate this career milestone.



Robbie was a pupil of Oban High School between 1993-1997 and owned his own window-cleaning business in the town before moving to America.

his ears in hopes of blocking out the nightmarish sounds.

'After a few moments, Raj stirred and tried to peer into the darkness, but it was in vain. His eyes had not adjusted and he could not see a thing. He scrambled for his flashlight, but then had a sinking feeling as he realised he had left it in the generator building.'

'He wondered why the generator had not been activated since power was lost from the main grid. He sat encom-

passed by darkness, his sight gone but replaced with heightened hearing. Even through the noise of the rain lashing against the roof, he heard the small motors and servos whirling and whining with each of the robots' movements.

'Then he saw the small, blue glowing lights of their eyes.'

'Something was wrong. When power failed, they were preprogrammed to shut down and enter sleep mode. Instead, they had gathered

and were standing in a group. Raj began to feel a little afraid, trapped with one hundred robots that were not following their programming protocols. Maybe the lightning had created a power surge causing a magnetic field that possibly had a negative - even dangerous - effect on the positronic brains of the robots.'

'He needed to find another flashlight and return to the generator building to restore power.'

# M'ALBA

## MY ALBA

### DIARDAOIN 23 An Dùbhlachd THURSDAY 23 December

- 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
- 19.00 Dealbhan Fraoich/Heather's Portraits
- 19.30 SpeakGaelic S1 Ep9 Biadh & Deoch/ Food and Drink
- 20.00 An Là - NEWS
- 20.30 Eòrpa/European Current Affairs
- 21.00 Cinema Gadelica
- 22.00 Mach a Seò!
- 22.30 Pìob Ola Alasga/Alaska Pipeline
- 23.25 Celtic Connections Shorts
- 23.30 Under Canvas/Music from Eden Court

### DIHAOINE 24 An Dùbhlachd FRIDAY 24 December

- 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
- 18.55 An Là
- 19.00 Mòd 2021-Mòd na Cloinne
- 21.00 Cinema Gadelica
- 22.00 God Save the Quine
- 23.00 Alleluia na Nollaige 2021

### DISATHAIRNE 25 An Dùbhlachd SATURDAY 25 December

- 16.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
- 17.55 An Là
- 18.00 Bho Chaorain Gu Consoles
- 19.00 Mòd 2021 Mòd na Cloinne
- 21.00 Eilean na Dineasar
- 21.00 Spors na Bliadhne 2021
- 22.00 Cinema Gadelica
- 23.00 Julie Fowlis-Ceol aig Baile
- 23.15 Runrig-The Last dance
- 00.45 Binneas-Na Trads

### DIDÒMHNAICH 26 An Dùbhlachd SUNDAY 26 December

- 16.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
- 17.55 An Là
- 18.00 Scottish Premiership-Dundee Utd v Hibernian
- 19.45 Julie Fowlis-Ceol Aig Baile
- 20.00 Alleluia na Nollaige 2021
- 21.00 Spors na Bliadhna 2021
- 22.00 Bannan (S7 Ep4)
- 22.30 Bannan (S7 Ep5)
- 23.00 Mu Chriochan Hoil-Derrick Thomson @100

### DILUAIN 27 An Dùbhlachd MONDAY 27 December

- 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
- 18.55 An Là
- 19.00 Mod 2021-Cuir nan Coisir
- 21.00 Sinne is Speaking our Language/Speaking our Language-The Inside Story
- 22.00 Bannan (S8 Ep1)
- 22.30 God Save the Quine
- 23.30 Mach a Seò!

### DIMÀIRT 28 An Dùbhlachd TUESDAY 28 December

- 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
- 18.55 An Là - NEWS
- 19.00 Mod 2021-Cuir nan Coisir
- 21.00 Alistair Maclean-An Sgeulaiche
- 22.00 Bannan S8 Ep2
- 22.30 Na Trads-An Dara Teud
- 23.30 Machair

### DICIADAIN 29 An Dùbhlachd WEDNESDAY 29 December

- 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
- 18.55 An Là
- 19.00 Mod 2021-Choral Talent
- 21.00 Maorach-Hebridean Shellfish
- 22.00 Scottish Premiership-Livingstone v Dundee
- 23.45 Julie Fowlis-Ceol Aig Baile

### DIARDAOIN 30 An Dùbhlachd THURSDAY 30 December

- 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming
- 18.55 An Là - NEWS
- 19.00 Spors na Bliadhna 2021
- 20.00 Cruth-tìre na h-Alba-Changing Landscapes
- 21.00 Gaisgich sna Glinn
- 22.00 Bannan S8 Ep3
- 22.30 Under Canvas/Music from Eden Court
- 23.00 Eilean nan Dineasar



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## COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

### ABCD

#### Christmas raffle

Due to current Covid restrictions we have been unable to offer for sale many of our raffle tickets prior to the draw before Christmas.

**We have therefore decided to postpone the draw till the Spring of 2022 when we hope to have been able to sell more tickets to the public.**

We apologise for any inconvenience, but all tickets already sold will still be entered into the draw and all prizes will still be available to be won.

*A happy and healthy Christmas from all ABCD Trustees!*



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# Lighting up Oban

## Oban's Hogmanay Fireworks are back with a bang!



Organisers Bid4Oban have pulled out all the stops to make sure 2021 is seen off with style and 2022 is welcomed in with open arms.

When the midnight bells chime, a riot of colour and flashes will light up the sky above the town's iconic McCaig's Tower.

There is no where quite like Oban to celebrate Hogmanay, the ships' horns blasting in the bay add to the celebrations making it an unforgettable experience.

Bid4Oban's Kay MacDonald says there is no where better to be than Oban on Hogmanay this year.

'It's going to be spectacular. To see the fireworks shooting out of McCaig's Tower is just gorgeous, nothing can beat it for a backdrop,' she said.

Covid cancelled last year's display so we are delighted to be back this year and Lighting up Oban's Hogmanay sky. Oban's Hogmanay Fireworks are back with a bang! Having such a long Esplanade

is a benefit at a time like this with plenty of room for everyone to spread out and enjoy the display safely. This year's display is of course subject to change to keep in line with government guidelines but we have our fingers crossed that 2022 will be welcomed in true Oban style.' added Kay.

Fireworx Scotland has the task of putting on a display to dazzle, the company is no stranger to the town and were responsible for Oban's Bonfire night show.

People planning on coming along are being asked to keep themselves and each other safe by following any current Covid guidelines.

'This year we ask people to be mindful, remain in family groups or bubbles and find lovely quiet spots to watch the fireworks, they're visible from lots of gardens so you don't have to go far to see them.,' said Kay

The hope is with plans for the display, that will last about ten minutes,

revealed early - pet owners in the town will have plenty of notice to make arrangements to help keep their pets calm and happy.

Organised fireworks displays also cut down on any risks posed by random rockets being let off from private gardens.

'This year's fireworks are going to be a fantastic way to herald in a super new year for Oban.

'We are looking forward to another good stay-cation year, it's going to be busy. The cruise ships will be coming back, we'll be building on our reputation as a great holiday destination as well as being Scotland's seafood capital - we may even be celebrating becoming Scotland's smallest city!

Events already in the diary for next year is Oban's first in-person International Shanty Festival that will be taking place in venues across the town in June.



Stephen Lawson Photography



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# Oban's Hogmanay sky



## CHRISTMAS VOUCHERS

[www.bid4oban.co.uk](http://www.bid4oban.co.uk)





## Around the markets

United Auctions conducted a sale of farm machinery and accessories at Oban Livestock Market on behalf of the representatives of the late Anne MacLarty, Glenshellach.

The following are some of the prices realised.

Eight Cattle Hurdles £520; Cattle Crush £650; three Cattle Hurdles & Gate £400; Cattle Hurdles & Gate £620; Various Cattle Ring Feeders from £180 to £220; Varied Selection of Cattle Troughs from £180 to £220; Lamb Creep Feeders £320 & £350; Calf Creep Feeders £1,050 & £750; Land Rover, 04 Reg, £7400; MF 5455 Tractor, 08 Reg, £24,000.00; Ifor Williams Trailer £2,600; Polaris Quad £2,500.00, plus many other smaller items.

All items were sold at high values and to a wide radius of farmers who knew the late Anne MacLarty.

Conducting the sale on behalf of United Auctions was retiring Auctioneer Donald Morrison who said afterwards that it was fitting and appropriate and an honour to conduct this auction as he had known Anne since arriving in Oban as a junior, in 1973. To watch a video of Donald conducting the sale, visit [www.obantimes.co.uk](http://www.obantimes.co.uk).

[www.obantimes.co.uk/2021/12/10/wishing-you-a-long-and-happy-retirement-donald](http://www.obantimes.co.uk/2021/12/10/wishing-you-a-long-and-happy-retirement-donald)

**Stirling, United Auctions, Thursday December 16:** sold 8,501 prime sheep comprising of 5,972 prime lambs selling to an average of 269.26p and 2529 ewes and rams.

New Season Lambs - (5,972) - Cuiltburn (BTex) £152.00; Wester Gartchonzie (BTex) £150.00; Groan (BTex) £150.00; Doune Farms (BTex) £149.50; Grangefield (Tex) £152.00 & £145.00; Elmscleugh (Tex) £144.00; Strageath Hall (Tex) £143.00; Little Raith (Suf) £142.00 & £138.50; Bogburn (Suf) £137.00; Little Raith (Suf) £137.00; Bogburn (Cont) £138.00; Peattie (Cont) £119.50; Outerwards (Cont) £106.00; Balgonar (Dor) £137.00; Newton of Crathie (Mule) £132.00; Quinloch (Mule) £120.00; Newton of Crathie (Mule) £120.00; Parks of Garden (Cross) £130.00; Hillhead (Cross) £125.00; Dunbar House (Cross) £124.00; South Hill of Dripps (Chev) £125.00; Fridayhill (Chev) £124.00; Dalcapon (Chev) £123.50; Burnhead (BF) £125.00; Kilmundie & Chamberwells (BF) £119.00; Fridayhill (BF) £118.00; Tomchulan (BF) £116.00; Victoria (Chev/Mule) £124.50; Hallhill

(Chev/Mule) £117.50; Easter Clunie (Chev/Mule) £117.00. New Season Lambs - (5972) - Cuiltburn (BTex) 338.00ppk; Doune Farms (BTex) 330.00ppk; Groan (BTex) 330.00ppk; Wester Gartchonzie (Tex) 333.00ppk; Carse of Trowan (Tex) 323.00ppk; Newton of Crathie (Tex) 321.00ppk; Easter Clunie (Chev) 287.00ppk; Newton of Crathie (Chev) 283.00ppk; Waterside (Chev) 279.00ppk; Peattie (Cont) 281.00ppk; Outerwards (Cont) 279.00ppk; Bogburn (Cont) 261.00ppk; Grangefield (Suf) 279.00ppk; Fornought (Suf) 275.00ppk; Drummie (Suf) 275.00ppk; Wester Gartchonzie (Cross) 277.00ppk; Slatich (Cross) 276.00ppk; Dunbar House (Cross) 271.00ppk; Lower Tirnie (Mule) 273.00ppk; Drumtee (Mule) 264.00ppk; Hillhead (Mule) 263.00ppk; Victoria (Chev/Mule) 271.00ppk; Hallhill (Chev/Mule) 271.00ppk; Dunruchan (BF) 269.00ppk; Fernoch (BF) 268.00ppk; North Deanhead (BF) 267.00ppk. Ewes - (2529) - Nethermill (Tex) £260.00; Elmscleugh (Tex) £249.00; Nethermill (Tex) £238.00; Elmscleugh (Tex) £236.00; Over Finlarg (TexX) £230.00; Newton of Collessie (TexX) £208.00; Pyeston (Suf)

£165.00; Nethermill (Suf) £146.00; Elmscleugh (Suf) £146.00; Nethermill (Suf) £135.00; Cuiltburn (BTex) £158.00; Newton of Collessie (BTex) £152.00; Goddens (BTex) £125.00; Ballinloan (Chev) £127.00; Dalcapon (Chev) £123.00; Ballinloan (Chev) £118.00; Goddens (HB) £126.00; Hallhill (HB) £113.00; Kinragie (Chev/Mule) £130.00; Dalcapon (Chev/Mule) £127.00; Kirkton of Lundie (Mule) £119.00; Kinragie (Mule) £118.00; Merryhill (Mule) £115.00; Kinclaven (Cont) £112.00; Greenford (Cont) £106.00; Kinragie (Cont) £100.00; Elmscleugh (BF) £97.00; Dyke (BF) £95.00; Hillhead (BF) £90.00. Tups - Ballinloan (Tex) £188.00; Elmscleugh (Tex) £182.00; Chalmerstone (Tex) £172.00; Kipperoch (Cha) £175.00; Muirend (Chev) £175.00; Frandy (BFL) £170.00; North Deanhead (BFL) £170.00; Townhead (Suf) £158.00; Little Moss (Suf) £146.00; Merkins (BF) £118.00; Dyke (BF) £100.00.

**Stirling, Caledonian Marts Ltd, December 16 sold:** 125 cattle comprising of 53 bullocks, heifers and young bulls, and 72 OTM cattle. Prime heifers sold to 278ppkg

for a Limousin from W Dandie & Sons, Learielaw purchased by D Campbell & Son, Butchers, Callander and to £1,616 for a Limousin again from Learielaw purchased by G Kirk & Son, Butchers, Denny.

Prime bullocks sold to 245ppkg on three occasions for a Limousin from A Pettigrew, Faskine and twice from J & J Wylie, Knockhouse purchased by W Pinkerton, Helensburgh; T Johnston & Son, Butchers, Falkirk and W Stark, Twechar and to £1,537 for a Limousin from Knockhouse purchased by J Gilvear & Sons, Stirling.

Other leading prices:  
Heifers per kg:  
278p Learielaw  
272p Learielaw & Faskine  
270p Carriston (Twice)  
265p Meadowend & Learielaw  
Bullocks per kg:  
245p Faskine & Knockhouse (Twice)  
240p Shields  
Heifers per Head:  
£1616 Learielaw  
£1559 Shields  
£1552 Meadowend  
£1548 Shields  
£1539 & £1502 Carriston  
Bullocks per Head:  
£1537 Knockhouse  
£1528 Knockhouse

£1510 Knockhouse  
£1505 Moorfield  
£1504 Moorfield  
Also forward were 72 OTM Cattle.

OTMs averaged 140ppkg selling to 164ppkg for a Limousin from A Kennedy & Sons, Seggarsdean and to £1,480 for a Limousin from JH & NT Turnbull, Meadowend, Clackmannan.

Dairy Cows averaged 110ppkg selling to 128ppkg from W Waugh, North Bankhead and to £1020 from R M Reid & Son, The Glen, Falkirk.

Other Leading Prices:  
Beef OTMs per kg:  
164p Seggarsdean  
163p Meadowend  
161p Seggarsdean  
160p Meadowend  
153p Carriston  
Beef OTMs per head:  
£1480 & £1460 Meadowend  
£1400 & £1390 Meadowend  
£1360 Carriston  
£1320 Seggarsdean (twice)  
Dairy Cows per head  
£1020 The Glen  
£950 North Bankhead  
£940 The Glen  
£890 Dalfoil  
Dairy Cows per kg  
128p & 126p North Bankhead  
125p Easter Clunie  
123p & 122p The Glen

# The Ideal Gift

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# New career project to safeguard beef and sheep farms

A new collaborative project between NFUS, Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) and Borders College will help future-proof beef and sheep farms by highlighting benefits of work-based learning to young people, career influencers and farm employers.

The Beef and Sheep Farming Careers project will follow a range of students, all with their own story and pathway, who are at different stages within their agriculture career journeys. The project will highlight different routes towards an apprenticeship whether directly from school, college, as a career changer or through a pre-apprenticeship. These routes can all lead to a modern apprenticeship and further and higher education.

Borders College continue to run a range of agricultural apprenticeship courses which cover all sectors of the industry. Those undergoing their apprenticeship on beef and sheep farms can now get recognition of specialisation in sheep and cattle farming to be

certified by Borders College. In addition to the knowledge and skills required in animal welfare, productivity, mechanisation, and grassland management the apprentices will have the opportunity to complete valuable and highly relevant student induction units in biodiversity and climate change.

The project will help raise awareness of what is involved for both the learner and the employer, and showcase the many benefits work-based learning can bring, helping to ensure there is a pipeline of future employees coming through who have the relevant skills and knowledge required to farm in a dynamic, developing industry.

This project will address many of the recommendations raised in the NFUS Education and Skills in Farming and Crofting Report, which was derived from a series of focus groups within the industry, and to raise the profile of food and farming and to train the trainers and support farmers as employers and mentors.

Planned activity includes a series of case studies showcasing personal experiences from both apprentices, work placement students and employers, shareable infographics, links to resources to support employers and a social media takeover.

George Jamieson, skills policy manager at NFUS, said: 'The focus groups highlighted a number of perceived barriers to employers in hiring an apprentice and we want to address some of these barriers and showcase the many benefits an apprentice can bring to a business and to employers.'

'Borders College is one of the many high quality organisations delivering apprenticeships in Scotland and we are excited to work with them to highlight how they are including sustainability, biodiversity, technology as well as traditional agricultural skills into their programme. We look to work closely with the wider college sector and potentially schools on information and collaboration.'

Mary Thomson, curriculum and learning manager at Borders College said: 'We are delighted to have the opportunity to work with QMS and NFUS to highlight some of the excellent work-based learning opportunities available within the sector and hope that this will encourage more learners to consider a career in agriculture.'

One of the apprentices who will be sharing their story is Rhianna who is currently undertaking a Modern Apprenticeship on Pilmuir Farm, a mainly livestock farm, on the outskirts of Hawick.

Matthews Thomson from Pilmuir Farm, who originally took Rhianna on as a work placement student and has encouraged her to move onto her Modern Apprenticeship, said: 'As a young person myself running a farming business I know opportunities are hard to come by and it's been great to be able to give another young person an opportunity to learn about the industry in a positive manner.'



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# S&S SERVICES



SCOTLANDS NO1 DEALER

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### Isuzu D-Max continues strong sales performance

- Isuzu D-Max sales are up 13.55% year to date
- Sales mix shift with double cab automatic up 49% over last year
- Isuzu D-Max V-Cross proves to be the best-selling variant in the range

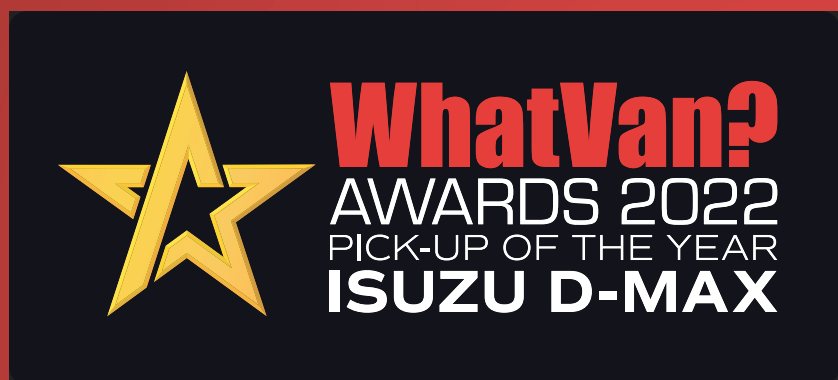
Sales of the All-New Isuzu D-Max, which launched earlier this year, have been strong throughout 2021. At the close of November, sales of the Isuzu D-Max were up 13.55% year to date over the same period last year, with a total of 3,368 Isuzu D-Max pick-ups registered so far in 2021. Overall, the pick-up market in the UK ended November 17% up on a year to date basis, with this years November sales up 31.2% over the same month last year, according to the latest figures published by the SMMT.

There has also been a significant shift in the sales mix within the Isuzu D-Max range, with sales of the double cab automatic version currently 49% up over last year, and the range-topping Isuzu D-Max V-Cross becoming the brand's best-selling variant. Isuzu UK, along with the entire automotive industry is facing increasingly complex trading conditions because of the worldwide shortage of components, semi-conductors, and key materials, which is having a detrimental impact

on vehicle production and availability. William Brown, Managing Director, Isuzu UK said: "The early success of the All-New Isuzu D-Max has been both rewarding and challenging, with customer demand for the

new vehicle outstripping our currently constrained supply. The situation is frustrating for us all, as we could sell many more vehicles than we are currently able to. However, the whole industry is facing these challenges head-on, and whilst

we are not impacted as severely as most other manufacturers, we are constantly working with the factory to satisfy our customers and dealers." Speak to S&S Services to discuss requirements, Tel: 01292 880080.



WHAT VAN? PICK-UP OF THE YEAR  
2018, 2019, 2020

# 4



S & S Services has been supporting the people of Argyll for more that 30 years and its coming to you.  
Tesco Oban Roadshow JANUARY SALE event

S&S Services, Heathfield, Ayr

Tel: 01292 880080 or John Spicer: 07831 808702





# S&S SERVICES



SCOTLANDS NO1 DEALER

## AWARD WINNING DEALER COMES TO ARGYLL FRIDAY 21ST, SATURDAY 22ND & SUNDAY 23RD JANUARY

One of the longest serving Subaru and Isuzu dealers in the UK, S & S Services is glad to be able to showcase its New Year offers. It has been a tough time for showrooms as consumers are facing price rises and shortages of vehicles due to a global shortage in semiconductors. Father and son team, John and Matthew Spicer are both excited to be returning and seeing some familiar faces.

John said: "We are so excited to be back and we are bringing some fantastic models to showcase. We have been supporting the people of Argyll for over 30 years, through three generations, and during that time we have formed many

friends and founded a trusted, reliable business. Come meet us at Tesco Oban this January."

When asked, son Matthew said: "We look forward to seeing customers and we have so many offers available. Tesco car park is a hub for the town and people are used to seeing us there. Come and have a chat with us to start your New Year experience the right way." S & S Services was first started by Brian and Dulcie Spicer in November 1979 from a small building at Sandyford Toll, Ayr. Brian and Dulcie's son John joined the family business and for almost two decades cars were sold, serviced and many friendships formed. The family

business was further enhanced when John's wife Lesley joined the business in 1997. It was in the latter nineties that the business had outgrown the location and it now resides in an impressive state of the art

showroom and workshop at Ayr. Now on to the third generation with Matthew Spicer, business has flourished to unbelievable standards meaning that S & S are now the top UK Subaru dealer, achieving Subaru

UK's dealer of the year status continuously from 2007. S & S Services are your number one for Subaru, Isuzu and Great Wall franchise, with a large stock of new and used cars at competitive prices



**S & S Services has been supporting the people of Argyll for more than 30 years and its coming to you.  
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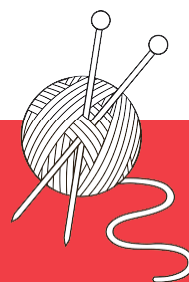


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**The Highland Council**  
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

**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  |
|------------------|---|---|
| 21/04474/PIP     | Land 30M SE of Am Fasgadh, Upper Inverroy, Roy Bridge   | Formation of 2 house plots  |
| 21/04778/FUL     | Land 100M SE of Tigh Na Mara, Onich   | Installation of pod   |
| 21/05434/FUL     | Allt-Na-Reigh, Glencoe, Ballachulish, PH49 4HX  | Demolition of existing cottage, erection of replacement dwelling, renovation and alterations to outbuilding to create ancillary unit  |
| 21/05506/FUL     | Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Fort William Fire Station, Carmichael Way, Fort William, PH33 6FF | Installation of a packaged plantroom housing 80kW biomass boiler, 2000 litre buffer vessel and associated equipment   |
| 21/05589/FUL     | Loch View, Glenborrodale, Acharacle, PH36 4JP   | Internal alterations and extensions to existing hotel; alterations to Loch View and Innis Cove to create holiday accommodation; and part change of use of Innis Cove to include community retail unit, toilet and showers |
| 21/05592/PIP     | Land 500M North East of Old Schoolhouse, Tulloch, Roy Bridge                                      | Erection of a house with associated chalet, outbuilding and external works (Renewal of 18/03832/PIP)  |
| 21/05655/FUL     | Land 370M West of Tor Mor House, Inverie, Knoydart  | Erection of house   |
| 21/05698/FUL     | Kinlochail Outward Bound Centre, Achdaluie, Fort William, PH33 7NN                                | Temporary siting of 6 yurts (part retrospective)  |
| 21/05705/FUL     | Land 130M East of Larchwood, Tortundy, Fort William   | Erection of a house   |
| 21/05709/FUL     | Land 80M NW of The Rowans, Bohuntin, Roy Bridge   | Erection of house and garage  |
| 21/05719/PIP     | Land 135M SW of Campfield, Fort William   | Erection of house and detached garage   |

**Time period for comments are to be received by 17 January 2022**  
ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX  
Email: [eplanning@highland.gov.uk](mailto:eplanning@highland.gov.uk)

**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   |
|--------------|--|--|
| 21/02054/PPP | Site for the erection of dwellinghouse   | Garden Ground Of Staffa, North Connel, Oban, Argyll And Bute         |
| 21/02265/PP  | Demolition of existing farm outbuildings, alterations, change of use and extension of existing barn and farmhouse to form self-catering tourist accommodation, erection of 6 self-catering tourist accommodation cottages, retrospective installation of floating jetty, installation of septic tanks and bio disc treatment plant | Rockhill, Ardbrecknish, Dalmally, Argyll And Bute, PA33 1BH          |
| 21/02328/PP  | Erection of replacement single storey rear extension   | 9 Cullipool, Isle Of Luing, Oban, Argyll And Bute, PA34 4UB          |
| 21/02135/PP  | Erection of store and visitor centre, installation of effluent tank and molasses tank to facilitate the Gin and Rum distillery   | The Old Lemonade Factory, Port Ellen, 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

**Argyll Bute COUNCIL**

**Argyll and Bute Council**

**PLANNING**

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997, AS AMENDED ADVERTISEMENT UNDER SECTION 67(2) OF THE MAKING OF A REVOCATION ORDER OR MODIFICATION ORDER**

Planning Permission in Principle for Renewal of planning permission in principle 17/03214/PPP (Site for the erection of one dwellinghouse and installation of shared private drainage system) at Kentallen Farm Aros Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA72 6JS

**REFERENCE NUMBER: 20/02203/PPP**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Argyll and Bute Council have made an order under section 65 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 to revoke the above planning permission.

The Council have been notified by the owner or lessee (if any); the occupier of the land, and all persons who in the Council's opinion will be affected by the Order that they do not object to the Order.

Any person who will be affected by the Order and who wishes for an opportunity of appearing before and being heard by a person appointed by the Scottish Ministers, must give notice in writing to The Scottish Ministers, Planning and Architecture Division, Planning Decisions, 2F (South), Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ not later than 20th January 2022.

If no such notice is given by that date the Order will take effect by virtue of the provisions of Section 67(7) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 on 3rd February 2022 without being confirmed by The Scottish Ministers.

Date 23rd December 2021  
David Logan, Head of Legal and Regulatory Support, Argyll and Bute Council, Kilmory, Lochgilphead

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**Argyll Bute COUNCIL**

**Argyll and Bute Council**

**PLANNING**

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997, AS AMENDED ADVERTISEMENT UNDER SECTION 67(2) OF THE MAKING OF A REVOCATION ORDER OR MODIFICATION ORDER**

Planning Permission in Principle for the erection of dwellinghouse at Plot 2 Land North West Of Ar-Dachaidh Bunesan Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute

**REFERENCE NUMBER: 18/02201/PPP**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Argyll and Bute Council have made an order under section 65 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 to revoke the above planning permission.

The Council have been notified by the owner or lessee (if any); the occupier of the land, and all persons who in the Council's opinion will be affected by the Order that they do not object to the Order.

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**Argyll Bute COUNCIL**

**Argyll and Bute Council**

**CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR REFUSE AND RECYCLING ARRANGEMENTS**

**Oban and Lorn**  
Refuse and recycling collections over the festive period will be carried out on the normal scheduled day(s).  
Moleigh recycling and civic amenity site will be closed on 25th/26th December and 1st/2nd January.

**Mull and Iona**  
Refuse and recycling collections over the festive period will be carried out on the normal scheduled day(s).  
Glengorm recycling and civic amenity site will be closed on 25th/26th December and 1st/2nd January.

**Tiree, Coll and Colonsay**  
Tiree, Coll and Colonsay refuse and recycling collections due over the festive period will be carried out on the normal scheduled day(s).  
Gott Bay recycling and civic amenity site on Tiree will be closed on 25th/26th December and 1st/2nd January.  
Information is also available on the Council website.

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us at:  
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**Argyll Bute COUNCIL**

**CROFTING COMMISSION**  
COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD  
DECROFTING APPLICATIONS

1. I A Macinnes, 1 Ardess, 0.123 ha, Site for a dwelling house, (107774)

2. J A & K MacDonald, 2 Portnaluchaig, 0.056 ha, Site for a letting pod (111599)

Comments from any member of the crofting community within the locality of the croft and any expressions of demand for the croft (which may be made public), may be sent to the Crofting Commission by 20/01/22 at [info@crofting.gov.scot](mailto:info@crofting.gov.scot) / Crofting Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW.

**Galmore Common Grazings**  
will hold their re-election of office bearers for their Grazings Committee on Friday 28th January 2022 in Roybridge Village Hall at 7.30 pm. (subject to Covid restrictions)

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Location: Currently homeworking, with the option to adopt a hybrid style of working based on individual role, style, and preference when HIE offices fully re-open. HIE has offices across the Highlands and Islands; the normal office location is Lochgilphead, flexibility on other HIE office locations may be considered

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As a key member of the Argyll and the Islands area team, you'll:

- Work intensively with a defined client portfolio to agree an "Account Growth Plan" which will be implemented over an agreed time-period. Activities, whilst not exhaustive, will include: a business diagnostic, identification of areas of growth potential, actions required to accelerate and achieve business growth opportunities etc.
- Act as a conduit to and from the client, bringing fresh insight to help deliver business advantage. There will be a particular focus on innovation and international trade.
- Actively identify new areas of growth and pursue these opportunities. Effective management and monitoring of the client portfolio in conjunction with local area management and Enterprise Support.
- Assess the potential for new account managed businesses through proactive business engagement. Work where necessary with the appropriate team in Enterprise Support and local authority economic development teams.
- Take responsibility for the development and the effective project management of a portfolio of projects. This may include for example, Regional Growth Deal projects.
- Work in collaboration with HIE's sector teams to support development of business growth ensuring strong linkage between HIE's sectoral route maps and account management.
- Using the wide range of HIE products, including finance, achieve leverage to enhance growth. Where appropriate, undertake formal due diligence to support project appraisal.
- Develop an appropriate account team using internal specialists and/or external colleagues where required.
- Proactively share insights, evidence base and knowledge to inform HIE's propositions, products, services, and information offering.
- Actively manage client relationships ensuring that all potential points of contact and influence are being served appropriately.
- Analyse the client's Business Plan, and assess the basis for any HIE engagement from a growth perspective.
- Lead client facing interaction and projects, managing complex delivery and demanding stakeholders.
- It's essential that you have strong client engagement/business management experience, with the ability to build strong client relationships. You'll also have a good understanding of HIE's products and services and the funding routes available to clients, and will use your strong analytical skills to provide advice and guidance to clients through business diagnostics, as well as identifying potential areas for growth, and actions required to accelerate growth.

**TO APPLY, PLEASE VISIT**  
[www.hie.co.uk](http://www.hie.co.uk) and search for reference number 1008.

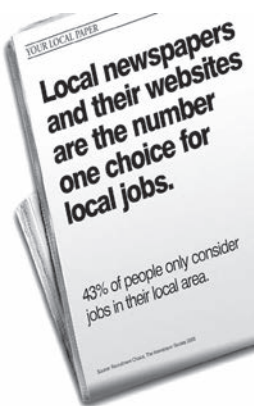
**CLOSING DATE:** 12 January 2022.

**JOB REFERENCE:** 1008

**INTERVIEW DATE:**  
24 January 2022 – via MS Teams.



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## DEATHS

**BROGAN** - David (Davie). Peacefully at the Lorn and Islands Hospital on December 19, 2021, aged 82 years. Much loved husband of Catherine Brogan, dad of Denise and Tracy and special papa to Morgan and Rowan. Funeral service at St Columba's Cathedral on Friday, December 24, 2021 at 10.00 am, thereafter to Pennyfuir Cemetery. Family flowers only please. Donations if desired for St. Columba's Cathedral Fund.

**CARMICHAEL** - Peacefully at home after a brief illness on Sunday, December 19, 2021. Duncan Cameron Carmichael of Inverness, aged 81 years. Formerly of Kentra and Glasgow. Sadly missed by his wife Pat and family. Funeral service on Thursday, December 30, 2021 at 3pm in the Funeral Home of William T Fraser and Son, Culduthel Road, Inverness.

**DOYLE** - Donald. Peacefully surrounded by his family at the Royal Alexandra Hospital, Paisley on December 11, 2021, aged 78. Loving and much loved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather.

**KAY** - Roseleen (Rosie) of Onich, passed away peacefully, surrounded by family at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, on December 17, 2021, aged 74 years. Wife of the late Michael Kay. Much loved Mum of Michelle and Jacqueline and Grandma of Luis, Owen, Michael and Sophie.

**MACCOLL** - On December 8, 2021 peacefully after a short illness at Oban Hospital, Alistair MacColl, of Fanmore, Isle of Mull, in his 80th year,

beloved dad of Alison, Stuart, Carole and Jillian and much loved grandpa of Kimberley, Megan, Iona, Angus, Elsie and Freddie. Will be greatly missed.

**PATERSON** - Betty of North Connel and formerly of Edinburgh died peacefully on Sunday, December 19, 2021 in the care of Etive House. Dear friend and companion of Elsa who was with her at the end of an illness which deprived this private, gentle lady of her dignity and also her memories. She leaves so many and different memories with Elsa, her cousin Wynne and family and her many friends. There will be a graveside service at Achnaba on January 5. Family flowers only are requested but if desired donations to Oban RNLI or Oban Mountain Rescue.

**WILKINSON** - Peacefully at home in Taynuilt on Wednesday, December 15, 2021, Janet Cameron née Inglis (Jan). Beloved wife of Brian. Dearly loved sister, sister-in-law, aunt, great-aunt, and good and kind friend to many. Funeral service at Muckairn Parish Church on Thursday, December 30, 2021 at 1 p.m. and thereafter to Muckairn Kirkyard, to which all are welcome. Family flowers only. Sorely missed.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**GILLESPIE** - Kirsteen and family would like to thank relatives, friends and neighbours for the overwhelming sympathy and support following Moira's untimely death. Special thanks to Rev Andy Campbell for his visits and uplifting service and to those who attended

the church and Pennyfuir cemetery. Also thanks to Ian and staff at D&A Munn's for their caring and professional service, Angela Guy for the beautiful floral tributes and Soroba House for the refreshments. The sum of £937.46 was raised in memory of Moira and will be divided between Teenage Cancer Trust and Oban Community Nurses.

**KENNEDY** - Johnny, Alan, Gary and families would like to thank all of the family and friends that provided support throughout Jean's illness and also everyone for the cards, flowers, messages, kindness and support that they have received since Jean's death. Special thanks to the support of the local district nursing and Macmillan cancer support teams throughout Jean's illness, your kindness and positivity is something we will always be grateful for. Thanks to Rev. Morag Muirhead for a beautiful service, Jamie, Beth and the team at Manson & MacBeath for their caring and professional services, Shiona, Colin and Serena at McDonald Bros for the beautiful flowers and Meg and her staff at the Railway Club for your hospitality. Thank you to all who attended Jean's funeral at the Duncansburgh MacKintosh Church and at Glen Nevis Cemetery thereafter, the turnout was overwhelming and the positive impact she clearly had on so many is of great comfort to us all. Donations received in Jean's memory amounted to £1403.00 and this has been donated to Cancer Research UK and the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB).

**MACCOLL** - The family would like to thank the staff at Oban hospital for their exceptional care during Alistair's short illness. Thanks to Rev Liz Gibson for the lovely service and Billy McClymont for his sensitive and professional funeral arrangements. Finally thank you to everyone who paid their respects inside and outside Kilmore Parish Church, at the graveside and from a distance.

**MACFARLANE** - Elchris, Alastair and Elizabeth would like to thank everyone for the many expressions of sympathy and support following the death after a short illness of Donald (Dodo). Thanking Rev Peter Park for an uplifting service, doctors and staff at LIDH for patience, dignity and humour, ambulance crew, paramedics and community nurses. Thanks also to Catriona and staff of Hamish Hoey & Sons, Neil Kilpatrick, Angus MacColl and Oban & Lorn Strathspey and Reel Society for music. To Petals of Oban for floral arrangements, the Royal Hotel for catering and a big thank you to all who attended at the church and graveside.

**REID** - Allan and Fiona would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for the kind messages of sympathy on Jessie's passing. Thanks to all who attended the funeral, sorry we could not thank you in person due to Covid. Thanks to the Rev Peter Park for the lovely comforting service, to the staff at ward A Lorn and Islands Hospital for caring for Jessie in her last days. Thanks to Soroba House for the lovely food and surroundings after the funeral and thanks to Catriona

MacFarlane for the caring and professional organising of the funeral. Thanks again Allan and Fiona.

**WOOD** - Thomas, Diane, Amanda and family would like to convey their heartfelt thanks to all relatives, friends and neighbours for the many cards, flowers and messages sent to them following their recent loss of their father Tommy. A special thank you to Etive House Care Home for the exceptional care given to our Dad during his stay and for your amazing mark of respect when lining the streets as we passed the care home on his final journey to Oban. Sincere thanks to Rev Richard Baxter for conducting a beautiful church service, to McDonald Brothers for their outstanding flower arrangements and Soroba House for their warm welcome and beautiful catering. A sincere thank you to Pete, John, Peter and Calvin of McLellan Funeral Directors for their compassion, support and professionalism during this difficult time.

## MEMORIAMs

**CAMERON** - Treasured memories of my dear sister and our loving aunt Morag, who passed away December 25, 2013.

Deep are the memories, precious they stay  
No passing of time can take them away  
- Chrissie and family, Caalmojo, Kilmory.

**CAMPBELL** - Remembering Liz, who died so suddenly on December 26, 1998. Gone but never forgotten.  
- Love Simmo x

**CAMPBELL** - In loving memory of my dear wife Liz, who passed away so suddenly on December 26, 1998, age 43. Loved and membered always.  
- Cammie, Fort William.

**CAMPBELL** - Precious memories of our much loved husband, dad and gen Iain Matheson and Iain our treasured son, brother and uncle whose anniversaries occur at this time.

Pray for us as we pray for you both that we may merrily meet in Heaven.

All our love.  
- Seonaid, Annmarie, Marion and families.

**CLARK** - In loving memory of Alexander (Tam), who died on December 26, 2012. Fondly remembered and sadly missed.

From Morag and family.

**CLARK** - Kirsty. This Christmas we quietly remember a wonderful mum and granny, who passed away on December 22, 2012. Also Graham, a beloved dad and grandpa, who passed away on August 7, 2006. So greatly missed by us all. Such happy memories.

## CHARITY DONATIONS

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- Alison, Rhuaridh, Katie and Coll.

**GRANT** - In loving memory of my dear mother and our granny, Morag, who died on December 25, 1999.

Deep in our hearts your memory is kept.

To love, cherish and never forget.

- Elizabeth, Julie and Steven.

**MACGILLIVRAY**

- Remembering my Gran who passed away on December 24, 2009, always thinking about you, so many fond memories

of a wonderful Gran. Also remembering my Mum Katherine MacGillivray, miss you always Mum.

- Paul MacGillivray.

**MACPHAIL** - Treasured memories of a dear husband, dad and Shesh, John, Ardmay, Tiree, who passed away December 26, 2004 and loved ones gone before and after.

Time passes, memories stay as near and dear as yesterday.

- Jean, Tiree x

Every happiness of yesterday is a memory for tomorrow.

- May, Irene and families.

**MAITLAND** - In loving memory of James, died December 23, 2012. Much loved husband, dad and seanair.

Never forgotten, loved forever.

- Teeny, Marie and Ross and families.

**MAITLAND** - In loving memory of a dear brother-in-law James who died December 23, 2012. Remembered with a smile.

- Lorraine, Paul, Jill and Kyle.

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# Merry Christmas

## PERSONAL GREETINGS



*Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year*

to all our friends and family on Tiree and the mainland, from the Macphails of Clachan, Tiree xx




**SEASONS GREETINGS**

To all my relatives, friends and neighbours from Catherine MacKillop, 31 Dunmar Court, Oban




**SCOTTISH FIELD**

January



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**Happy New Year...**

So that was 2021... Stephen Jardine's Credo...  
The Hebridean Baker recipes... Quiz of the Year...  
Stunning aerial photography... Seafront interiors...  
Artist Mouse Macpherson... A Perth garden...  
Rule, Britannia! writer... Book reviews...



OT

## SHINTY ROUND-UP

### Oban Camanachd pre-season friendlies

New Oban Camanachd manager Gareth Evans has wasted no time in putting together a series of friendly matches ahead of the 2022 shinty season.

Whilst the club are still trying to organise a fixture for Saturday February 5, they hope to take on Lochaber at Mossfield a week later.

Oban Camanachd then travel to the Winterton to face Inveraray on Saturday February 19 before rounding off their pre-season programme against Fort William on Saturday February 26 with the venue yet to be decided.

### Oban Celtic cancel Boxing Day clash

Oban Celtic confirmed that their annual Boxing Day match between the young guns (under 30s) and the old crocks (over 30s) side has been called off.

In a club statement, Oban Celtic said: 'The club feels that due to the current uncertainty with the Covid pandemic, it is best to cancel the match for this year.'

### 2021 Shinty Review of the Season – Part 1

As the year draws to a close, it's time to look back on the shinty stories making the headlines during 2021.

### January 2021

#### Covid KOs shinty

Shinty went into 2021 engulfed in Covid concerns and on the back of Scottish Government confirmation that mainland Scotland had moved to tier four from Boxing Day. Therefore shinty was not permitted under the current restrictions.

### February 2021

#### Clubs begin registration process

Shinty clubs started the registration process for players, coaches and committee members ahead of the start of the 2021 shinty season.

The Camanachd Association confirmed their intention to have a four-six week pre-season programme followed by an abbreviated Mowi League campaign, with the early rounds of cup competitions to be played on a localised basis.

#### Camanachd Association sets 2021 priorities

The Camanachd Association presented their three key priorities to act as a guide ahead of the new season starting.

The first priority was to restart shinty and support clubs to understand the new covid-related guidance, providing a safe environment within government guidance.

The second priority was in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion for all with a focus on removing barriers.

The third priority was to have safe and well-organised clubs and, with the covid vaccine well underway, the association pledged to provide leadership and support.

The Camanachd Association also outlined preliminary plans for youth competitions. All competitions will return with the early stages regionalised before opening up for the later stages.

### March 2021

**International Women's Day**  
International Women's Day took place on Monday March 8 2021 and the Camanachd Association encouraged shinty clubs to nominate a woman, whether that be a player, coach, volunteer, mum, sponsor or from the many others who make such a vital contribution to the sport.

#### Covid update

The Camanachd Association welcomed First Minister Nicola Sturgeon's announcement of the further easing of lockdown restrictions. In anticipation of the announcement, updated guidance documents had already been submitted to sportscotland for its approval on behalf of the Scottish Government.

The association anticipated having updated guidance to share with clubs in the coming days. The finer details of the guidance were still to be clarified but would be communicated as soon as possible to allow clubs to access the opportunities now available in line with government guidance.

Camanachd Association Chief Executive Officer Derek Keir said: 'It is so exciting to see restrictions being lifted in a measured way and I am sure everyone in the shinty community will be excited to get back to some form of normality even if that means physically distancing in the first instance.'

#### Camanachd Association announces financial support

The Camanachd Association announced a financial support

package worth up to £32,000 to support members and clubs.

The measures included a 50 per cent reduction in membership fees with every club offered up to five free memberships to support those facing barriers to participation.

### April 2021

#### League and cup confirmation

With regional draws in place to limit travel during the early stages of the cup competitions, the Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup draw delivered some tasty ties, particularly in the Southern Section where Fort William meet Oban Camanachd, Oban Celtic host Glasgow Mid Argyll, Kyles Athletic welcome Inveraray or Lochaber and Kilmallie meet Ballachulish or Bute.

Holders Newtonmore have a derby against Kingussie.

Meantime the Mowi League structure was also announced with shinty's 18 senior clubs split into three regional leagues.

Mowi Senior League A comprised of: Fort William, Glenurquhart, Kilmallie, Kinlochshiel, Lochaber and Skye Camanachd;

Mowi Senior League B featured: Beauly, Caberfeidh, Kingussie, Lovat, Newtonmore and Strathglass.

Aberdour, Glasgow Mid Argyll, Inveraray, Kyles Athletic, Oban Camanachd and Oban Celtic made up Mowi Senior League C.

Camanachd Association Competitions Director Burton Morrison said: 'The approach taken by the Competitions Committee was to provide clubs with the opportunity to play as many games as possible within the restricted calendar.'

'We have developed a competitive league structure which, for this season only, provides most clubs with 10 league matches whilst reducing the amount of travelling involved.'

'These fixtures will of course be complemented by the full array of cup competitions, the draws for which will take place over the next three weeks.'

### May 2021

#### Youth shinty

Youth shinty was to the fore as the first competitive matches of the year took place in the Mowi London Shield. Rhys Kennedy scored four times as Fort William U17 beat Kilmallie U17 7-0 in Section A.

#### Oban interviews

The Half-Swing Shinty podcast was broadcast for the first time and Oban duo Stephen Sloss and Les Kinvig were amongst host Aarron Duncan-Macleod's early guests.

### June 2021

#### Funding for new posts

The Camanachd Association announced funding for five new posts, four of which will be focused on developing opportunities to get involved in shinty in new areas or areas of potential.

This includes a regional development officer post based in Argyll and Bute to focus on supporting clubs in their efforts to restart shinty, on creating new opportunities to engage the wider community and to support the continued effort to provide organised and high-quality experiences in shinty.

Camanachd Association Communications and Facilities Director (South) Roddy McCuish said: 'This is great news not just for the association but for shinty as a whole and it demonstrates the commitment and continuing promotion of our game at all levels. I am excited to see the investment in Argyll and Bute.'

#### Shinty's back

Following an enforced 15-month break, the new shinty season got underway on Saturday June 5 2021. Fixtures were played within current covid restrictions which included no group travel, no use of changing room areas and supporters not permitted to attend matches.

The new regionalised leagues format produced up a number of exciting local derbies.

Oban Camanachd would compete in Mowi Senior League C and manager Stephen Sloss had a period of transition to contend with. He said: 'Andrew MacCuish, Lorne Dickie, Gary McKerracher and Willie Neilson have indicated that they won't play this season whilst Scott MacMillan's work pattern limits his availability. However, Garry Lord is back in training which is a boost and the likes of Blair MacFarlane, Evan MacLellan, Chrissie MacMillan and Ross Campbell were breaking into the first team before the enforced break so they are ready to step up on a regular basis.'

Dougie MacIntyre stayed on as Oban Celtic boss and assistant manager Les Kinvig knew their side would face some testing fixtures starting with Kyles Athletic's trip to Oban. Les said: 'The saving grace is that there is no pressure on us but we will be tested against what would normally be higher league opposition. It is a chance for us to measure where we are and recognise what we need to do to get to the next level. It's been a short run up to the new season with only a couple of weeks of contact training but we had been gathering for twice weekly fitness training for some weeks

now. We'd have liked a longer pre-season but it is the same for everyone.'

When the opening day arrived, Glasgow came out of tier two at midnight meaning Glasgow Mid Argyll were able to host Oban Camanachd just hours later in Mowi League C and the contest finished goalless. Oban Camanachd manager Stephen Sloss spoke afterwards: 'We were poor up front and should have scored but it wasn't a great game overall. I'm maybe expecting a bit much as both sides were rusty having not played competitively for so long. Papa's goals have been important to us over the years and we are trying to replace them throughout the forward line rather than relying on one individual.'

Amongst the other matches played, Roddy Macdonald scored twice as Kyles Athletic won 4-0 at Oban Celtic. Colin MacDonald and Ross Macrae got the others.

Kingussie proved to be the early pace-setters in their Mowi League B and after Alexander Michie's penalty earned a 2-1 win against Lovat, the Kings were 13-0 winners at Caberfeidh. James Falconer and Savio Genini both scored four times with Iain Fraser grabbing a hat-trick. Dylan Borthwick got the other two goals.

Oban Camanachd matched Kingussie's tally, beating Aberdour 13-0 at Mossfield. Daniel MacVicar scored four times, Connor Howe grabbed a hat-trick and Daniel Madej scored twice with Daniel MacCuish, Scott MacMillan, Lewis Buchanan and Daniel Sloss getting the others. Speaking afterwards, Oban Camanachd manager Stephen Sloss said: 'It's difficult to take much from such a one-sided game and we rotated the boys for most of the match to get players on the ball. I felt for Aberdour and they were playing South 1 shinty in 2019 before reaching the national so this was a big step up but they never gave up. It's not ideal but just the way the leagues are at the moment. However we needed to score some goals after drawing a bank against GMA the week before. They were all decent goals too, quite a variety, and they needed to be to get past their keeper who was outstanding.'

Kinlochshiel reached the Artemis Macaulay Cup second round thanks to a 3-1 win at Fort William. Keith MacRae, Donald Nixon and John MacRae got their goals with Craig MacDonald countering. Craig Anderson sent Glasgow Mid Argyll through as they beat Inveraray 1-0.

Fraser Heath's double helped Lovat beat Caberfeidh 4-0 with

Greg Matheson and Lewis Tawse getting the others.

Bute beat Col Glen 3-0 in the Scottish Seas Farms Glasgow Celtic Society Cup first round. Scott Harvey scored twice, one a penalty, with Thomas Morrison getting the other.

Coll MacKay and Fraser Watt cancelled Lennon Campbell's effort as Inveraray recorded a 2-1 midweek win over Oban Celtic in Mowi League C. Oban Celtic assistant manager Les Kinvig said: 'It was a good game with both sides playing attractive, attacking shinty and maybe a draw would have been a fairer result. Inveraray created more chances but the balance of play was pretty even. Work commitments and injuries meant we had a bit of a makeshift line-up which we had to reshuffle a couple of times during the game itself. A couple of the boys were carrying knocks and it was the overall team performance that pleased Dougie (MacIntyre) and I the most.'

David MacLennan and Jed Stoddart netted as Glenurquhart won 2-0 in their Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup first round tie against Strathglass. Oban Celtic and Skye were given byes into the second round.

Covid outbreaks were already affecting the shinty schedule including the Oban Derby between Oban Celtic and Oban Camanachd in Mowi League C.

Lochside Rovers opened their Mowi South League A campaign with a battling draw at home to Bute as Ryan Craig's late leveller cancelled out Lewis Buchanan's early opener. In their only other match during the month, Lochside came from behind to win 2-1 at Ballachulish with Alexander MacDonald and Robbie Brown getting the goals. 'We had a young squad at the start of the season,' said then Lochside boss Gareth Evans. 'I thought we would do well to finish mid-table and I expected Bute and Ballachulish to be strong and it just so happened we faced both these teams in our first two games and it was great to collect three points out of four.'

The Oban Celtic seconds were placed in the Mowi Central League. Goals from Keegan McPhee, Joe MacVicar and Andrew MacDonald's double weren't enough as the Oban side lost 6-4 to their Lochaber counterparts.





Junior members of Oban Shotokan Karate Club with their grading certificates.

## 'Merry Kickmas' at Oban Shotokan Karate Club

Oban Shotokan Karate Club's 'Merry Kickmas' saw the club hold its first grading test for junior students since lockdown began in 2020. The club has only been back training normally since September this year in Oban Scout Hall. These young athletes were put through their paces on Friday December 17.

They had to undergo several routine disciplines to gain their next belt at Shotokan Karate. Being a competitive sports karate club they must pass traditional and sport karate techniques which are very different. One being traditional hard blocking, and

striking techniques, whilst the other is more fluent and athletic for competitive composition. (No mean feat for adults never mind youngsters).

They started off with basic blocking, punching and kicking movement, then went on to performing Kata – a sequence of 24 pre-arranged movements from the five Heian – meaning peaceful mind – Katas.

Once they had passed this element of the exam they had to compete against each other in Kumite, which is sparring. Each candidate had to score at least three points against their opponent in this section.

The last part was showing

their ability in confident assertive body movement (AKA self-defence).

It was great to see that all candidates on this occasion had passed to their next level.

The club hopes to start competing again in the new year at national and international level, subject to government guidance.

It meets every Friday at the Oban Scout Hall any anyone wishing to attend, juniors or adults, are welcome.

Coach Rab Neil congratulated all the students on passing their grading and wished everyone a very 'Merry Kickmas' from all at Oban Shotokan.

## LORN HEALTHY OPTIONS HEALTH TIP

### The pain modifier – sleep

When we sleep we repair ourselves both physically and mentally.

Those suffering with long-term pain will really struggle to improve their quality of life without sleeping seven-eight hours each night. It's a myth that we require less sleep as we get older and lack of sleep is an absolute block to recovery from chronic pain.

Many of us only sleep 4-6 hours each night and believe that this is ok as its 'normal.' Unfortunately it's not.

Pain obviously makes the process of a good night's sleep more difficult as stress chemicals such as cortisol place the human body on high alert and we feel pain more keenly at night when there are fewer distractions.

Research into this field is finding that those suffering with sleep deprivation have a higher sensitivity to pain and a diminished perception of their



capacity to cope in general with life's stresses.

What this tells us is that a lack of sleep could in fact be more debilitating than the pain itself. Research has pointed to the fact that those suffering with insomnia exhibit a 40 per cent higher chance of experiencing chronic pain. So in many cases the pain could be originating from lack of sleep instead of the other way round which is the traditional thought process.

Add to this a compromised immune system, poor mental health, an increased desire to eat and a higher risk of developing cancer, diabetes and coronary heart disease and it's clear to see how important the land of nod can be to our health and wellbeing.

So what strategies can we employ to improve our chance of falling asleep and remaining there without too much fragmentation during the night?

We'll look at that next week but in the meantime the best thing we can do is to develop a sleep routine in terms of the time we go to bed and the time we wake. Perhaps you could decide not to watch that extra episode on Netflix in the evening and perhaps you could ignore the snooze button in the morning and by doing so create a longer period of higher quality sleep.

If this new habit can be sustained over a week the net result could be equivalent to a whole extra night's sleep. That can be life changing and in the long term have the same effect as pain-killing medication. Sleep well.

For the full message go to the free resource section on the [lornhealthyoptions.co.uk](http://lornhealthyoptions.co.uk) website.

**Rob Graham, Lead Exercise Professional, Healthy Options.**

## Mixed emotions at bowling club as year draws to a close

Oban Bowling Club held its AGM in the Dalriach Road clubrooms at the beginning of the month at which president Iain Boyd spoke of the highs and lows during another difficult season.

Although Covid restrictions had relaxed compared to the previous year, regional and Scottish competitions were still unable to go ahead but a good turnout for the many club competitions kept members going throughout the summer.

Iain spoke of the sadness brought on by 'losing several good friends of the club' and members present took a minute of silence to remember those no longer with them.

Grateful thanks were paid to members of the club who gave up their time this season to keep the club running, in good condition, its members fed and watered and all those who have given



Oban Bowling Club Vice President Semple Barrie, left, and President Iain Boyd.

their support during a difficult season.

Members then elected their committee for the year to come.

2022 committee: president, Iain Boyd; vice president, Semple Barrie; immediate past president, Helen MacLean; treasurer, Janice Fraser; secretary, Anne

Stewart; match secretary, Neil MacDougall; child protection officer, Helen MacLean; green ranger, Donald MacLean; bar convenor, Peter Park; committee members, Sandra Grieve, Ian McCuish, Anne Mac-Dougall, John McLaren and Rosemary Miller.

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# Oban Lorne Under 16s are just champion



Oban Lorne RFC Under 16s have battled their way through a season of disruption to be named joint winners of the West Region Development League.

Having played and been beaten in their last game of the season at East Kilbride on December 5 the table-topping Glencruitten youngsters had a nervy wait as the outcome of the league was taken out of their hands.

Sitting only a point behind in second place East Kilbride faced Loch Lomond the following week. Despite losing the game EK managed to pick up a bonus point meaning league honours would be shared.

## Delighted

Coaches Lewis MacFarlane and Kyle Graham were none-the-less delighted with the result and couldn't praise their team enough for their efforts.

Speaking to The Oban Times last week Lewis said: 'It was a hard season not just for Oban but probably for every club in the league coming off a year with no competitive rugby being played.'

'But the boys showed up in all weather every Tuesday and Thursday eager to learn and improve.'

'They've all played out their skin in every game and the results show how hard they've trained.'

'For the younger boys in the team this is a massive jump up as the last rugby they would've



Oban Lorne RFC Under 16s. Photograph by Stephen Lawson.

had was in first year and they've taken to it like a duck to water. We couldn't be any prouder of them.

'All of this couldn't be done without the help from parents helping with post-match food and driving to away games so a big thank you to them and lastly a big thanks to all those who have pulled on that Oban Lorne U16 strip and worked so hard to get the results that they wanted.'

The boys kicked off their season on September 5 when they ran out 43-7 winners against Loch Lomond.

Oban were forced to reschedule their next game away to East Kilbride due to Covid and the season was further dis-

rupted for the Under 16s with Allan Glens not able to field a team to travel up the following week.

Two weeks and no games but the boys knuckled down in training as their next game was up against high flying league leaders Dalziel who had not conceded any points so far.

A strong Oban team travelled to Motherwell where the visitors used their backs to move the big Dalziel team around the pitch to win their second game of the season 54-19.

A comfortable 50-0 victory against a very young Strathaven side the following week saw the Oban team in a good position going into the October break.

Oban were hit with Covid after the holiday and lost some strong, experienced players. They travelled to Loch Lomond with a makeshift back line and lost 65-12 to a much-improved side.

## Positive tests

More positive Covid tests came through, suspending training for two weeks and more rescheduling of games.

On November 14 the team travelled to Allan Glens and came away with a 60-22 win to see them into second place in the league with Dalziel occupying top spot.

And it was Dalziel who travelled to Glencruitten the following week. This was by far the best the Under 16s had

played so far and following a tightly contested game the home side ran out 31-24 winners to reach the summit of the league.

More disruption followed but the Oban side managed to hold on to their lofty position and take a well-deserved share of the spoils.

Oban Lorne RFC president Darrell Williams said: 'Everyone at Oban Lorne is exceptionally proud of the U16 boys for this achievement.'

'Thanks to our two young coaches Lewis and Kyle for all the hard work and dedication they've shown.'

The Under 16s now turn their focus on the cup competition in the new year.

# Covid cancels cup tie

Last Saturday's West of Scotland Cup fourth round tie between Uddingston Anvil and Oban Saints, due to be played at the Sir Matt Busby Sports Centre in Bellshill, was called off when at least one Uddingston player tested positive for Covid with other players waiting test results.

Saints secretary David Buchanan received a phone call late Friday afternoon telling him of the situation and immediately agreed with the Lanarkshire club and the West of Scotland Cup secretary that the game should be called off.

David said: 'We had a similar situation at the start of the season when our opening league fixture away to Drumchapel had to be called off due to one of our players testing positive for Covid, so I sympathise with Uddingston and it was the correct decision to call the game off.'

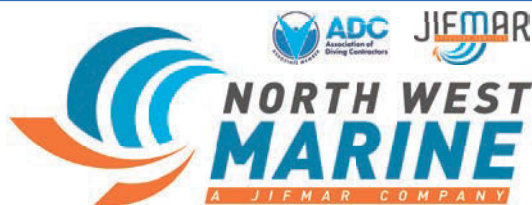
Due to the Christmas and New Year holiday break the game against Uddingston is now scheduled to be played on Saturday January 8.

## Youth result

Lochnell U14s 0, St Cadoc's 5. Lochnell's next fixture is on January 9 with a home against Cambuslang



The Oban Times: 95p



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Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday 23 December, 2021** are listed below with differences for major ports listed alongside. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

|           |   |           |   |           |  |           |   |   |
|-----------|---|-----------|---|-----------|--|-----------|---|---|
| <b>23</b> | 0157 1.3<br>0751 3.7<br>TH 1428 1.7<br>2017 3.5 | <b>25</b> | 0311 1.5<br>0908 3.5<br>SA 1547 1.9<br>2140 3.2 | <b>27</b> | 0453 1.6<br>1058 3.4<br>M 1800 1.9<br>C 2345 3.0 | <b>29</b> | 0112 3.1<br>0708 1.6<br>W 1340 3.4<br>2019 1.7  | Ardrihaig -5.35<br>Campbeltown -5.30<br>Crinan -0.47<br>Islay Port Ellen 2.00<br>Lochboisdale +0.30<br>Mallaig +0.25<br>Portree +0.55<br>Tobermory +0.16<br>Dover +5.30 |
| <b>24</b> | 0232 1.4<br>0827 3.6<br>F 1503 1.8<br>2055 3.3  | <b>26</b> | 0358 1.6<br>0957 3.4<br>SU 1647 1.9<br>2235 3.1 | <b>28</b> | 0558 1.6<br>1215 3.4<br>TU 1913 1.8              | <b>30</b> | 0229 3.3<br>0818 1.4<br>TH 1450 3.6<br>2117 1.4 |   |

## OBAN WEATHER

### Thursday

Light rain showers and a gentle breeze  
Temperatures 6°C to 8°C.

### Friday

Light cloud and a moderate breeze  
Temperatures 4°C to 7°C.

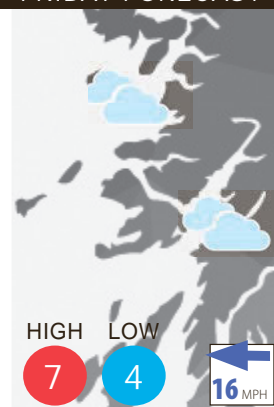
### Saturday

Light cloud and a moderate breeze  
Temperatures 3°C to 6°C.

### Sunday

Sunny intervals and a gentle breeze  
Temperatures 3°C to 6°C.

## FRIDAY FORECAST





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## & OBAN TIMES

No 8595

Thursday 23 December, 2021

www.lochabertimes.co.uk

95p

*Merry Christmas to all our readers*

**Collect token 3 in our Tesco Trolley Dash competition – page 12**



## Gifts galore



**Ben Nevis Auction Mart hosts Christmas market**

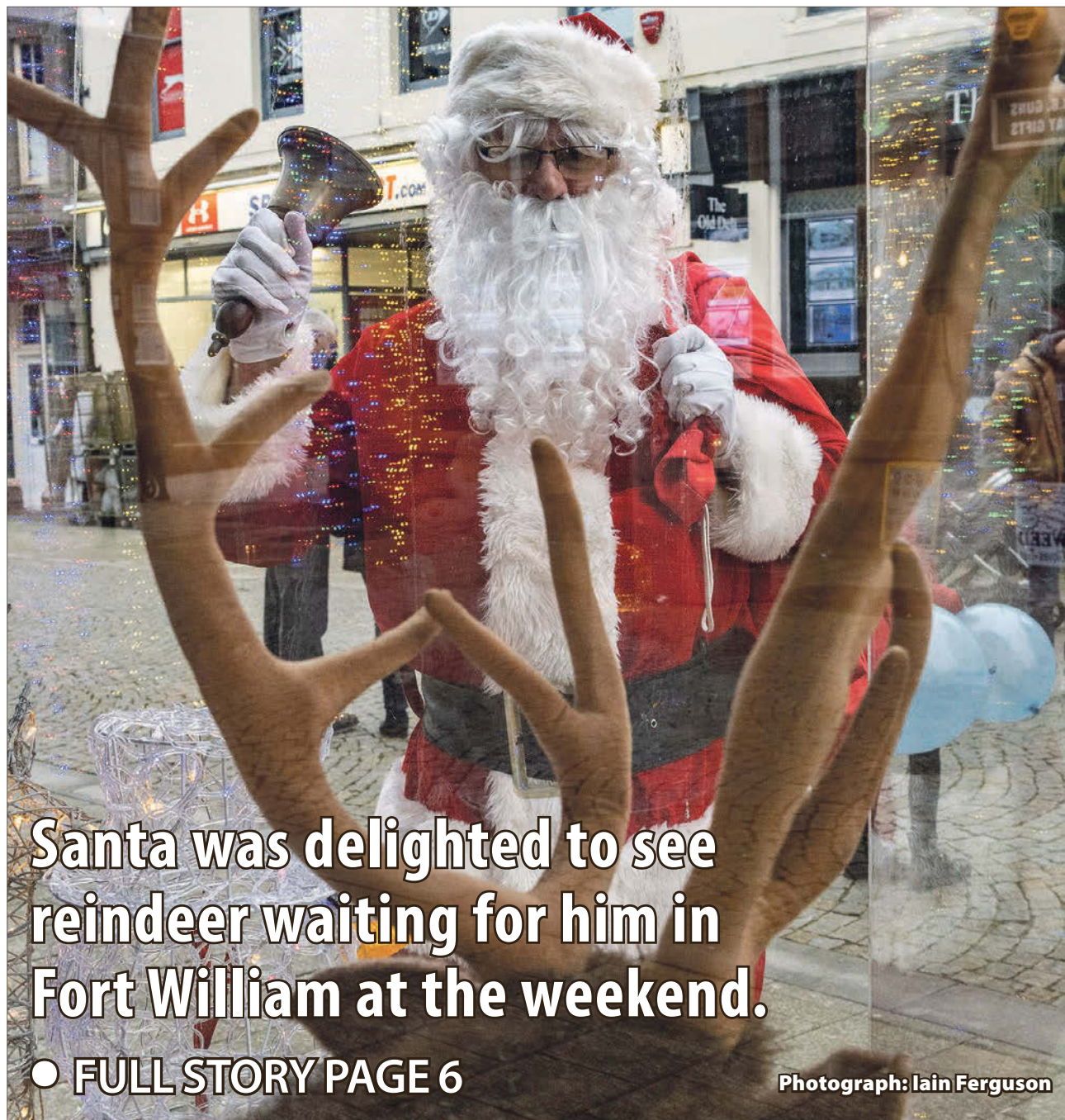
• See page 8 for more

## Festive messages



**Community leaders' seasonal greetings**

• See pages 12-15 for more



**Santa was delighted to see reindeer waiting for him in Fort William at the weekend.**

● **FULL STORY PAGE 6**

Photograph: Iain Ferguson

## Lochaber slumps to joint bottom of monthly earnings league

Employees in Lochaber, Skye and Lochalsh take home the lowest average monthly pay packet in Scotland, new figures have revealed.

The three areas of the Western Highlands saw workers pocket an average of £1,833, which was -9.8 per cent below the Scottish national average.

The depressing figures were released last week when the Scottish Government's Office of the Chief Economic Adviser published a report giving estimates of average monthly pay for the different areas in Scotland.

Tony Mackay, an Inverness-based economics professor who also advises the World Bank, has trawled through the figures and said the estimates, which are for November this year, reveal big differences within Scotland and particularly within the Highlands and Islands.

The Scottish average monthly pay is estimated at £2,032, equivalent to £24,384 a year.

However, the Highlands and Islands monthly average was £1,932 or £23,184 a year, which is -4.9 per cent below the Scottish average.

And with Lochaber, Skye

• Turn to page 5 for more.

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## Inaccurate data causes tanker to run aground

Marine investigators say incorrect seabed data was the cause of a tanker transporting chemicals running aground near Kyleakin on Skye in March last year.

In its just released accident report, the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) said seabed survey data used by the crew of the Gibraltar-registered Key Bora did not show a boulder at a pier they were approaching.

The ship was approaching fish farming company Mowi's pier at Kyleakin, when the incident happened on Saturday March 28 last year.

Noone was injured and there was no pollution, but the Key Bora's hull sustained damage and there was flooding in its

ballast tanks. The vessel was aground for about 12 minutes before refloating.

In its report, the MAIB states: 'The grounding happened because the bridge team relied on locally produced survey data that did not show a boulder obstruction near the pier.'

'This survey data appeared to the crew to be reliable and accurate, so was preferred to the ECDIS data, which did show the obstruction.'

'The investigation also identified safety management issues at Mowi's Kyleakin facility, including that the Port Marine Safety Code was not fully implemented.'

The MAIB has made safety recommendations to Mowi about its operation of the pier.



**The Key Bora which ran aground off Skye last spring.**  
Photograph: www.marinetraffic.com

# Live Fort mountain festival returns

Organisers of the 18th Fort William Mountain Festival have announced they be staging their live, multi-venue event in and around Fort William over five days, from Wednesday 16 to Sunday 20 February.

The action-packed programme includes presentations from world-class outdoor adventurers; adrenaline filled and thought-provoking films from both the festival's very own international film competition entries and the Banff Centre Mountain Festival World Tour; a number of award nights, such as The Scottish Awards for Excellence in Mountain Culture and The Photographer of the Year Award, celebrating a range of outstanding achievements; thought-provoking environmental discussions; and a collection of quality fringe events including winter mountain skills workshops,



**Climber Ali Rose about to tackle the crux cave pitch of the Darth Vader route on Ben Nevis.** Photograph courtesy of Omega Guiding.

producers will also be on hand. The Exhibition Zone at the Nevis Centre will be open daily from 5.30-10pm, where there will be the usual mix of mountaineering exhibits, books and trade stands.

Highland Cinema is also expected to be busy during the festival. Guests include adventurer and climate change graduate James Armour, wild swimmer and TV presenter Calum McLean, members of the Adventure Syndicate, and author and paralympic cyclist Karen Darke MBE.

Festival organisers have also put together a fringe event programme which includes a wide range of workshops with plenty of opportunities for both novices and experts alike to get out and about amidst the beautiful Lochaber winter landscape, including winter mountaineering skills, philosophy walks, wild swimming, biking, running, yoga and outdoor art.

For the full programme for the Fort William Mountain Festival 2022 and to buy tickets go to [mountainfestival.co.uk](http://mountainfestival.co.uk).

philosophy walks, and bike and running themed nights.

Visitors and residents of Lochaber can celebrate everything the great outdoors has to offer at the festival presented in association with the Nevis Landscape Partnership, the OCUK, Ellis Brigham, Jahama Highland Estates, John Muir Trust, and the Highland Council.

Rod Pashley, chairman of The Highland Mountain Culture Association, organisers of the Fort William Mountain Festival, said: 'In 2021 we produced a stunning online

festival amid the challenges of Covid-19. Now we're back to a live event, celebrating the wild landscape that surrounds us in Fort William and Lochaber; the inspiration that fuels the passion and enthusiasm behind the Mountain Festival.'

The fun starts with festival launch night on Wednesday February 16 when film-makers Keith Partridge, Paul Duffley and Dave Macleod will be at the Nevis Centre to celebrate the stories behind the stories from the history of British mountaineering film-making. Live music, beer and street food

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## High school pupils have Christmas all wrapped up for pensioners

It has become a Christmas tradition that the Rotary Club of Lochaber joins forces with Lochaber High School in funding, wrapping and delivering parcels to senior citizens. Working within Covid restrictions this went ahead almost as normal this year, with first year pupils taking care of the wrapping and sixth-year pupils co-ordinating the distribution by various organisations who are in regular contact with recipients rather than handing them out themselves. Photograph Iain Ferguson, alba.photo



# Inverlochy pupils show true spirit of Christmas

Primary five pupils at Inverlochy School, pictured, who decided to turn their Christmas Jumper Day into a fundraiser to help other children, writes Mark Entwistle.

On Friday December 10, staff and pupils were invited to wear a Christmas jumper or dress down for a donation.

Members of the class decided that money raised from this, plus their raffle of fabulous prizes, should be used to buy presents for children who would be in Raigmore Hospital over Christmas.

The idea came from the youngsters themselves who felt sad that some children would not be able to enjoy all the fun of Christmas, so wanted to buy presents and have them delivered to the ward to help bring them more festive cheer.

Pupil Myla MacLeod told us: 'We are doing this because the children in the hospital are sick and we



**Inverlochy youngsters organised a festive fundraiser so they could buy presents for children who will be in hospital at Christmas.** Photograph: Iain Ferguson alba.photos

want to see them smile. I am glad we have done this fundraiser and it has been fun raising the money too.'

Rocco MacMillan added: 'I like it, trying to make other kids happy, and we had fun at the same time', while Erin

MacPherson said: 'I'm loving that we are helping others to get presents, especially when they are in hospital.' And

Lanna Sriprom said: 'They deserve it. I feel happy doing this project because we get to help children in hospital.'

## Large-scale New Year celebrations cancelled

Big outdoor Hogmanay celebrations and street parties are being cancelled as part of Scotland's tougher new Covid rules. All outdoor events from Boxing Day will be limited to only 500 people in a bid to slow down the spread of Omicron.

Edinburgh's street party is just one of many events that will now not proceed.

The Scottish Government's new round of restrictions, set to last about three weeks, will also see indoor events restricted to 200 people seated or 100 people standing. Pubs and other hospitality venues selling alcohol will need to bring back table service from December 27 and reintroduce a 1m distance between groups. Sports matches will effectively be 'spectator free' into January.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said last week's advice for over Christmas was not changing but pleaded with people to make any gatherings and celebrations as safe as possible to help protect health services and the economy.

For more, visit [www.lochabertimes.co.uk](http://www.lochabertimes.co.uk)

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## Merry Christmas as missing dog is found

A border terrier has been found safe and well after being missing for 20 days in the hills around Kinlochleven, writes Mark Entwistle.



Yeshe ran off during a walk on Monday November 29, a short way up the path to Loch Eilde Mor that follows the Allt na h-Eilde from the Cairan path.

Now nearly three weeks later, her owners were overjoyed after a young couple camping during a climb up Binnein Beag found the starving little dog scavenging for food just outside their tent.

Announcing the much-loved pet's safe return, her owners posted a statement on Facebook saying: 'A huge thank you to all the people in Kinlochleven and the surrounding area who have been searching for our missing border terrier Yeshe.'

'The remarkable news is that after 20 days out on the hills she has been found by a young couple who were camping at Coire an Lochain.

'We were so touched by the kindness shown by the community who helped in so many ways,' they said.

'We shall certainly be back walking in the area soon, although the dog will be well and truly on her lead!'

Yeshe's owners said the dog was very weak and dehydrated when she was found by the two young students, having lost about one third of her bodyweight.

'The couple abandoned their climb and carried Yeshe for about three miles in the dark back to Kinlochleven,' said Yeshe's owners.

'We were reunited this afternoon.'

# Glencoe ski station receives £500,000

A £2 million project to transform a major tourist attraction in Lochaber has secured up to £500,000 of funding from Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE).

Funds will go towards the construction of a new base station at Glencoe ski centre which will see the demolition of the current fire-damaged building. The new facilities are expected to create an additional four full-time jobs.

The new and improved base station will include a bar area, café and will be entirely insulated to help reduce energy consumption.

Of HIE's investment, £250,000 will be used to help towards Glencoe's continuing journey to net zero. The net zero tourism investment is part of a £3.95m pledge to Scottish tourism in March 2021 and is one of 10 areas of priority within the Scottish Government's



The previous base station was destroyed by fire in December 2019. Photograph: A Brightside Photography.

as one of the UK's top adventure tourism destinations, while also providing new employment opportunities for the area.'

Andy Meldrum, managing director of Glencoe Mountain Resort, said: 'We are delighted to receive support from HIE toward the rebuilding of the Glencoe Mountain base station café.'

'This support has ensured we can create a modern, well insulated, but still iconic base station building which will not only provide an enhanced experience for visitors but will also allow us to safeguard existing jobs and create new ones.'

'We look forward to welcoming everyone to our new facilities in February 2022.'

£25m commitment to deliver the Tourism Taskforce recommendations and national programme for tourism recovery.

HIE's area manager for Lochaber, Skye and Wester Ross, Alastair Nicolson, said: 'Glencoe ski centre is of course an incredibly popular spot for winter sports enthusiasts, but it is also a popular tourist

attraction all-year round. Following the fire in 2019 which destroyed the previous base station, staff on the mountain have done a fantastic job to keep the business going but we are delighted to be able to help fund the construction of a new facility.'

'This development will enhance the appeal of Lochaber



Primary one pupils from Lundavra Primary School, Fort William, enjoyed their Christmas party last week. All the children got into the festive spirit by donning their Christmas jumpers and party outfits for the occasion. A good time was had by all.

## WALK OF THE WEEK

Saturday, December 25 – Beinn Bheag (616m, Graham Top) – little hill; Stob Mhich Mhartuin (707m, Graham Top); A' Chailleach (903m, Corbett Top) – the old woman; ron Gharbh (873m, Corbett Top) – rough nose

A splendid high-level traverse that affords great views of the fine Munros, corries and the Three Sisters on the opposite side of the Glen.

If this is not exciting enough, it may be extended to include



the Munro Top of Am Bodach and the descent of its steep SE ridge with scrambling opportunities.

Total distance: 11km, 848m ascent or 12km, 975m ascent.

For more detail of the route

please visit our website [www.nevishillwalking.club](http://www.nevishillwalking.club) or the Nevis Hillwalking Club Facebook page.

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 and want to know more about our 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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# Highland business optimism dented by Omicron, survey finds

Optimism among Highlands and Islands businesses increased as the year went on, but it has now taken a big hit thanks to the latest variant of the coronavirus, Omicron.

That was the finding of the last in a series of five business surveys conducted by the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) in 2021.

The FSB said this week the impact of Omicron is growing rapidly and causing considerable pain and concern to numerous customer-facing businesses and their suppliers, but that the survey also highlights staff shortages, and utility and other cost increases as two of the greatest threats to business viability.

The FSB's Highlands and Islands development manager, David Richardson, said this latest survey, which closed on Tuesday December 14, found businesses are the most positive they've been all year about how trading has gone in 2021, with around three quarters [76 per cent] saying they have done OK or better. However, eight per cent are struggling/barely staying afloat.

Mr Richardson continued: 'The Omicron variant started to flex its muscles during the survey period, and the rapidly deteriorating situation as the virus spreads, together with re-imposed Covid measures

and calls for the public to exercise extreme caution, are taking their toll on trading.

'No wonder just over a half [53 per cent] of Highlands and Islands businesses said the potential for future lockdowns or tightening of restrictions was a major fear, and almost a third [31 per cent] were pessimistic about their futures. One wonders what impact the news

## Increasing costs have taken their toll on 85 per cent of Highland businesses surveyed.

since the survey closed would have had on these percentages.'

The FSB's latest survey, which covered all types of business in Highlands, Islands, Moray, Argyll and Arran, also looked at staffing, costs and prices charged. It found that 47 per cent of employers didn't have enough staff to meet their needs, and, given relatively small sample sizes, that situation was appreciably worse in sparsely populated areas like the West Coast and Islands.

And while just over a third (36 per cent) of short-staffed businesses had struggled on, the rest had to cut services, opening hours or both.

Increasing costs have also

taken their toll on 85 per cent of firms, with four in 10 saying their profit margins have shrunk but they are struggling on; a quarter (27 per cent) that they are reducing their ability to invest in or expand their businesses, and 18 per cent that rising costs are impacting their survival chances.

As a result, 47 per cent of Highlands and Islands businesses have increased prices this year, and a quarter plan to do so in 2022.

Mr Richardson added: 'Aside from Covid, the two most potent problems facing businesses are shortage of staff and rising costs, and the two are clearly linked. As regards the former, lack of accommodation, overseas workers and transport to work are all identified as significant problems, and with over eight in 10 businesses being hampered by rising costs and squeezed margins, 45 per cent of them seriously so, it looks like paying higher wages to attract staff from elsewhere in the country is going to become increasingly difficult unless businesses raise prices to pay for it all.

'Whether demand remains strong in the face of price increases remains to be seen.

'More positively, 14 per cent are automating so that they can reduce their dependency on staff.'

# Lochaber slumps to joint bottom of monthly earnings league

Continued from page 1.

and Lochalsh employees on £1,833 per month, it means local workers are receiving -9.8 per cent below the average.

The areas with the highest earnings were, unsurprisingly, Edinburgh City on £2,171, which was +6.8 per cent above the average, closely followed by Shetland on £2,164, which is +6.5 per cent above the average. It means there is therefore a 15 per cent difference between the highest and lowest earnings areas. The report also estimates that average earnings in Scotland increased by +4.7 per cent in the year to November 2021. The Highlands and Islands annual increase was also slightly lower at +4.5 per cent. The estimated annual increases in monthly pay for Lochaber, Skye and Lochalsh, was estimated at +5.0 per cent.

Reacting to the figures, Councillor Allan Henderson

(Caol and Mallaig) told us he had been aware of this disparity in the Highlands, and in particular Lochaber and Skye, due to work he had done with the Inshore Fishermen's Group some years ago.

'Covid is not necessarily the sole cause but it highlights the problems as it did when lockdown came. It is difficult to attract bigger paying jobs to the area with the lack of sustainable connectivity,' he explained.

'With many subsistence crofts depending on summer tourism which was virtually wiped out last year, it is not surprising to see these figures. Unprecedented increases in welfare support cases with Highland Council certainly back up this data.'

And Frazer Coupland, CEO of Lochaber Chamber of Commerce, added: 'Fair work, living wages, real living wages

and real-life competition: that is what drives businesses to pay their employees and we now see businesses offering enhanced working conditions [not just wages] to attract and retain high-calibre staff.

'Lochaber Chamber encouraged businesses to achieve the best possible pay and conditions for our workers - a high-wage economy creates a thriving economy and community. That's why we fully support the Scottish Business Pledge and we're a fair work employer.

'Across the board, we are hearing of increasing wage rates, so we would expect and look forward to seeing wages in Lochaber continue to increase. But it's about more than money - it's housing, it's infrastructure, it's about the whole package, and this can only be achieved through public and private sector collaboration.'



Nursery children from Bun Sgoil Loch Abar spread Christmas cheer as they made their way through Caol to give a short carol service in the shopping square.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

# Gaelic school youngsters' festive walk

Children from Sgoil-àraich Ghàidhlig Loch Abar raised the spirits of Caol locals recently by taking their sponsored Christmas welly walk out into the community, writes Kirsteen Bell.

The children and nursery staff dressed up for the walk, with a Santa, elves, tinsel, Christmas hats, and even fairy lights.

All the children carried bells to jingle and sang Gaelic nursery songs from the school all the way to Caol shopping centre, where there was a fantastic turnout of people gathered to hear the children sing.

Angela MacIsaac, senior early years practitioner at Sgoil-àraich Ghàidhlig Loch Abar, told the Lochaber Times: 'Last year we wanted to raise the spirit of locals who had been affected by Covid and isolation.

'It was incredible. We had some older folk en route to Caol shopping centre waving at us through their window and some came to their door.'

It was so well received the nursery decided to do the walk again this year. Ms MacIsaac explained: 'I got in touch with Linda and Isobel Campbell to

advertise it on Nevis Radio. I am so grateful to them, what a response we had to it!

'This year we had children and babies at the windows too, as well as older folk. Santa gave them a wave at their windows! The smiles and joy on their faces is what it's all about - having fun and spreading the Christmas cheer.

'Our parents are also so supportive of everything we organise, and we the staff are very appreciative of that. Tàing mhor a h-uile duine. Nollaig Chrìdheil agus bliadhna mhath ur!'

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## VIEW FROM THE CHAMBER

This is usually a time of excitement and anticipation for children, last-minute preparations, food shopping and checking of lists for the grown-ups. Once again, it's a bit different this year, although Christmas is still going to be better than 2020.

The Scottish Government has advised everyone to limit contact to three households in the time up to and after Christmas, but has stopped short of imposing restrictions on Christmas Day plans.

The changes in our behaviour due to the new Omicron variant have hit hospitality and retail hard; with bookings being cancelled and shoppers staying home to reduce their contacts in the lead-up to the most important day of the year for many of us. New legal restrictions on businesses to help control the spread of Covid-19 have now taken effect in Scotland.

Firms are now legally required to take measures to minimise transmission amid concerns about the Omicron variant. Shops and hospitality outlets have to work to reduce crowding and queuing, erect screens and barriers and enforce the wearing of face masks. Scottish ministers



have offered £100million of support to firms and called on Westminster to provide more.

As we have been right through the pandemic, Lochaber Chamber of Commerce is supporting our member businesses with the information and guidance they require. Our Covid Business Information hub at [www.lochabechamber.co.uk](http://www.lochabechamber.co.uk) has all the up-to-date information available about help for business, including links to current Government guidance, details of additional top-up for hospitality businesses through the Strategic Framework Business Fund, and details of funding available for businesses to make key ventilation improvements to premises through the Business Ventilation Fund.

We hope everyone will be able to enjoy Christmas with their nearest and dearest, and we will continue to support and speak up for the needs of our business community over this festive period and beyond.

## Caol family ensures Santa brings festive cheer to Fort



Santa and his helpers spent an hour handing out presents in Fort William's Cameron Square and Caol last Saturday thanks to the 'encouragement' of the O'Connell family from Caol.

Below, reindeer impersonator Estelle Gibb receives a present from Santa at Caol Shopping Square. Photographs: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos.



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## Eilidh's Trust helps Lochaber youth pipe band bounce back

A youth pipe band in Lochaber grappling with the continued effects of the pandemic has been awarded funding to support its safe return to teaching.

Mallaig, Ardnamurchan and District Pipe Band (MAAD Pipe Band) is among eight groups across Scotland to have been awarded financial support by the Eilidh MacLeod Memorial Trust.

The money is specifically to help local youth music initiatives to safely return to in-person tuition, group lessons, public performances and competitive events after lockdown has restricted their ability to meet and learn in groups.

The funding has already allowed the group to restart

in-person teaching during the autumn. However, with the recent rise in Covid cases, it will be considering how to safely continue delivering lessons over the coming weeks and how the cash can support that.

The recipients will use the funding for a variety of purposes, from paying tuition costs to covering travel expenses to attend lessons and help make up for an inability to fundraise in traditional ways.

Eilidh's Trust was established in 2018 in memory of the talented 14-year-old musician from the Isle of Barra who died in the Manchester Arena attack in May 2017. The trust supports music education for young people reflecting Eilidh's own love of music and her musical

ability and enjoyment as a piper with Sgoil Lionacleit Pipe Band. The trust will also manage and maintain a permanent memorial to Eilidh and a garden of remembrance and reflection on Barra.

Eilidh's Trust founder Suzanne White said: 'We are delighted to be making this funding available to MAAD pipe band and helping these young musicians and performers to continue to grow in their musical skills.'

'We know it will support them in doing something they love and thrive in. At Eilidh's Trust we understand the challenge groups like MAAD have faced and we want to ensure support is there for when they can safely deliver in person sessions.'



# HopScotch Children's Charity opens new activity centre on Ardgour

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@lochabertimes.co.uk

HopScotch Children's Charity is celebrating the long-awaited completion of its brand new activity centre at Ardvullin in Ardgour.

The charity has been offering respite breaks to Scotland's most vulnerable and disadvantaged children at its converted ghillie's lodge Ardvullin House since 1998.

In 2017, the charity had the dream to expand what it could offer children by developing a new activity centre in the grounds of Ardvullin.

After years of planning, fundraising, and building works which had to navigate the challenges brought by Covid-19, the activity centre was finally completed at the end of November this year – an early Christmas gift for the charity.

The new activity centre was architect-designed to fit the charity's needs, with a child-centred focus at the heart of the project.

It includes a customised mixed-ability climbing wall, sports gear, with basketball, badminton, indoor football, volleyball and yoga equipment.

Children are also able to come together to chat and relax in the centre on the many colourful beanbags.

The charity's Roberta McKay said: 'We're delighted that our fantastic purpose-built activity centre is ready to use.



Left, youngsters having fun at the new activity centre on Ardgour; the centre, above, cost £273,000 to build and HopScotch says it is grateful for the support from funders.

equipment and furnishings were funded by Spifox. The building work was undertaken by local business Corrigan Contractors.

The new activity centre was completed just in time for the last group of the 2021 respite break programme to trial.

Children from Church House in Glasgow arrived for their holiday to be told they would be the first children to use the centre.

Graham Hyndman, of Church House, said the new activity centre was a truly amazing space and a fantastic addition to the already brilliant experience that HopScotch offers young people.

He added: 'The centre ties in with the sense of adventure and fun of the whole trip by giving young people a space

to climb, play games and chill among many other options the centre provides.

'One young person from our group was so excited when they saw the centre that they felt the need to sprint over to the door and do their best King Kong impression in excitement to get in.

'The young people loved using the space and the climbing wall in particular allowed the young people to challenge themselves and each other.

'We can't wait to return with another group for them to experience the activity centre and the excitement of a HopScotch adventure.'

HopScotch's respite break programme for 2022 will begin in the spring, and there will also be a formal launch of the new activity centre for the charity's supporters next year.

It will be a tremendous asset to our facility at Ardvullin.

'It will enable us to increase our centre-based activities for children, extend our annual programme and the age range of our participants. We are so grateful to all the supporters of this project who have made this dream a reality.'

The centre cost £273,000 to build and HopScotch says it is grateful for the support of

major funders The Robertson Trust; The Edward Gostling Foundation, Walter Scott Giving Group, The Cotton Trust, Barratt Homes East Scotland, Chance to Connect and Douglas Brown.

Other funds came from Persimmon Homes, Walker Family Foundation, The Mickel Fund and in memory of Agnes and Robert Strickland. The climbing wall, sports

## Bòrd na Gàidhlig addresses failings

The public body responsible for promoting Gaelic in Scotland has tackled weaknesses in its leadership and governance, the Auditor General for Scotland has said, following a critical report two years ago.

A 2019 report on Bòrd na Gàidhlig, conducted by the national watchdog that oversees how public money is spent, identified multiple failings in the oversight and senior management of the organisation.

It said the Bòrd 'must address a range of concerns, from a lack of openness to poor relationships and organisational culture'. It listed

the public body's 'ineffective leadership', 'a lack of clarity over roles and responsibilities', and 'a lack of transparency in decision-making'.

A new follow-up report from the Auditor General for Scotland said in the two years since, the Bòrd has taken a number of actions, including: restructuring its leadership and management; significantly improving openness and transparency; clarifying roles and responsibilities; reducing the number of non-executive board members; and addressing skills gaps on its board.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig now needs

to monitor the impact of these changes in the years to come.

Stephen Boyle, Auditor General for Scotland, said: 'Bòrd na Gàidhlig has made good progress in addressing the problems in its leadership, and it is now a much improved organisation. The scale of change and pace of improvement since 2019 is welcome.

'Given the long-term change required, it is likely the full benefits of the improvements will only emerge over time.'

Bòrd na Gàidhlig is based in Inverness and employs around 21 staff. In 2020/21, it had a net expenditure of £5.6 million.

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# Auction mart hosts festive event

The Ben Nevis Auction Mart at Torlundy just outside Fort William recently hosted a Christmas market which proved popular with young and old alike.

Right: Douglas MacRae and son Conall were certainly demonstrating the Christmas spirit as they toured the stalls.

Far right, the Wee Wax Shop designed and made a range of Christmas wax melts which proved very popular at the auction mart.

Centre right, Calendars and cards by musician Mark Reynolds of Brass in the Braes.

Bottom right, former volunteers of The Braes community newspaper joined author Richard Sidgewick in promoting the book he is producing, bringing together his series of monthly 'Down Memory Lane' articles.

All photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos



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# Outward Bound centre gets slice of £1.6m

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@lochabertimes.co.uk

The Outward Bound Trust's centre at Loch Eil, near Fort William, is to benefit from a share of £1.6 million in funding from UK national house-builder, Barratt Developments.

The Barratt Foundation, part of Barratt Developments PLC, has announced a £1.6m three-year partnership with the trust.

The charity's Loch Eil centre plays an important role in making positive changes in disadvantaged young people's lives and their futures through providing a space for learning and adventures in the outdoors.

Just some of the activities on offer include exploring beaches, lochs and Britain's highest mountain, Ben Nevis.

The centre, with Barratt Developments' support, is



The charity's Loch Eil centre plays an important role in making positive changes in young people's lives and their futures. Photograph: The Outward Bound Trust.

continuing to provide activities, accommodation and equipment to youth.

Additionally, Barratt Developments employees will directly support Outward Bound by becoming ambassadors and role models to

young people on the centre's residential experiences.

The new partnership builds on the previous work that Barratt and The Outward Bound Trust delivered together before the pandemic, such as the annual Big Barratt Hike

fundraiser.

Nick Barrett, chief executive of The Outward Bound Trust, commented: 'We are delighted that the Barratt Foundation is able to make such a huge contribution to our charity. 'As we rebuild from the pan-

demic, the wonderful generosity of the Barratt Foundation will be truly transformational.

'Young people need our support more now than ever before and this donation will equip them with the confidence, self-belief and resilience they need to succeed.'

Doug McLeod, managing director of Barratt Developments PLC Scotland, added: 'We know what brilliant work The Outward Bound Trust does in helping young people to experience an outdoor adventure, giving them new skills and boosting social mobility.

'However, during the pandemic they have not been able to deliver their normal courses.

'This is why the Barratt Foundation is donating £1.6m to them, so they can continue to build the confidence in young people's lives that is so urgently needed right now.'

## Under-22s urged to get ready for free bus travel

The chairpersons of two Highland Council committees are urging young people and families to be ready for the young persons' free bus travel scheme for under-22s next year.

Councillor Trish Robertson, chairperson of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee, said: 'To take advantage of this free travel, five- to 21-year-olds will need a valid entitlement card.

'The key is that the card must be valid, therefore you may need a new or replacement card.'

Chairman of the education committee, Councillor John Finlayson, added: 'Bus travel is, for many young people living in Highland, their key mode of transport and anything that can support them to have access to travel and meet the costs has to be welcomed.

'To this end I would encourage all young people to ensure that they have the proper card that will allow them to make use of their free bus entitlement.'

## College named national leader in virtual school delivery

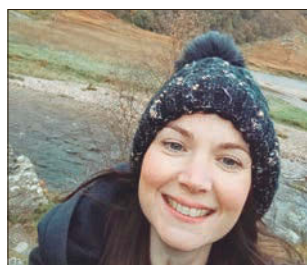
An early festive celebration arrived for West Highland College UHI and its partners in North Highland College UHI, Inverness College UHI and Highland Council with the winning of a national Digital Learning Award for Highland Virtual School at the College Development Network (CDN) Awards this month.

The award is the third plaudit the virtual school initiative has received this year. In May it won the Outstanding Use of Technology in Delivering Remote Teaching and Learning category at the Tes FE Awards. More recently it was shortlisted as a finalist for Best Use of Technology in Education at the Herald Digital Transformation Awards.

Virtual School is an innovative and sustainable partnership initiative delivering high quality technology-enhanced learning and teaching across the UK's largest council area.

Three colleges, the council and 29 high schools serve these rural Highland communities where many schools are small with less than 200 pupils.

Several years ago, senior phase pupils had a limited choice of curriculum com-



Katy MacDonald.

pared to pupils elsewhere in Scotland and some pupils endured lengthy travel to attend college courses, often hampered with poor weather.

Thanks to the virtual school, 20 qualifications are now offered to pupils based anywhere in the Highlands.

The college was also delighted one of its lecturers was commended in the Learning and Teaching Colleague of the Year Award category.

Katy MacDonald is the supported learning programme lecturer who devised the highly successful use of online teaching and collaboration for students who would previously have found the use of digital platforms challenging.

Ms MacDonald and her team ensured their students not

only learned new digital skills to allow them to continue their courses, they also widened its use to include social activities and enable new friendships and connections to be made across different college sites.

Lydia Rohmer, principal and chief executive, commended staff at West Highland College UHI: 'I want to commend the leadership of our Academic Affairs Team and the many colleagues across West Highland College UHI involved in shaping and delivering this fantastic approach to school-college partnerships. I am also delighted that Katy MacDonald was commended for the outstanding work she and her team undertook to create a successful digital learning space, connecting their supported learning students in new and innovative ways during the pandemic.

'Katy's project ensured our most vulnerable learners were able to continue to connect with each other whilst being isolated at home, continuing their learning as well as adopting new skills allowing them to make new friends across the West Highlands they otherwise would have never met.'

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# Battle on to save Lochaber's 'pinewood' from spruce threat

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@lochabertimes.co.uk

Battle is raging once more across a wartime Commando training ground in Lochaber, but this time the fight is to save spectacular remnants of ancient Caledonian pinewood.

Felling and extraction of 70,000 tonnes of non-native timber has started at Loch Arkaig Pine Forest near Spean Bridge in Lochaber. The mammoth effort will free remaining native trees to take back the site in one of the biggest Caledonian pinewood restorations ever attempted.

Woodland Trust Scotland and local charity Arkaig Community Forest bought the spectacular 2,500 acre site in 2016.

Site manager Henry Dobson said a huge amount of preparation had been required since then to allow timber extraction to begin.

'The bridge over the River Arkaig had to be strengthened and the access track into Glen Mallie upgraded to accommodate the vehicles removing the timber. Covid-19 delayed us by a year but we have finally reached what is a major turning point for the restoration of the site,' Mr Dobson explained.

Loch Arkaig Pine Forest has five of just 84 remaining fragments of ancient Caledonian pinewood in Scotland.

Its ancient, wide-crowned 'granny' pines were in



**A wartime commando training at Loch Arkaig.** Photograph: National Army Museum; and right, **Bonnie Prince Charlie.** Photograph: Courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery of Scotland.

danger of dying out without reproducing – squeezed out by non-native commercial conifers planted in the 1960s.

Some 70,000 tonnes of mainly Sitka spruce and lodgepole pine will be removed over the next five years to allow the remaining Scots pine and other native trees to repopulate the landscape.

The project is being partly funded thanks to players of People's Postcode Lottery.

Head of charities at People's Postcode Lottery Laura Chow added: 'This is an exciting leap forward for this extraordinary place. I'm delighted

that funding raised by our players is contributing to the comeback of the magnificent Caledonian pinewood and is helping to make sure these unique woodlands can have a thriving future.'

Loch Arkaig Pine Forest comprises two blocks of woodland – Glen Mallie which can be reached via the new upgraded track, and The Gusach which is usually visited by boat.

Woodland Trust Scotland plans to take timber out over the loch via barge from this more remote block starting in 2022.

Woodland Trust and Arkaig Community Forest bought the site in 2016 from Forest Enterprise Scotland under the National Forest Land Scheme, with the aim of restoring native woodland habitats; re-connect local people with the management and stewardship of the site; and use the woods to underpin sustainable rural development in the nearby communities of Achnacarry, Bunarkaig and Clunes.

Gary Servant, of Arkaig Community Forest, commented: 'It is great to see progress with harvesting the

commercial timber on site and we look forward to seeing the benefits.

'We look forward to working together to ensure that Loch Arkaig Pine Forest continues to produce a regular and reliable supply of marketable timber - increasingly of native species such as pine, oak and birch - in future years and for future generations.'

Ten tree seed collection volunteers have been recruited for a two-year pilot project to supply seeds for direct seeding, enrichment planting, and woodland creation in and around Loch Arkaig Pine Forest. Their efforts will also support the establishment of a local tree nursery based at Clunes run by Arkaig Community Forest. All demands for local provenance seedlings will be met.

Arkaig Community Forest has also been developing a deer larder and a woodland scheme adding value to these local resources.

## Ghost Pines and Fire Lichen – The Second World War Legacy

British Commandos and Allied Special Forces, including the Free French, trained at Loch Arkaig during the Second World War. They were based at nearby Achnacarry, which was used as the Commando Basic Training Centre for the British Army and others. During exercises

with live ammunition in 1942 forest fire raged across the hillside. Scots pines cooked in their own resin were preserved and still stand today. Pale in colour they have been dubbed 'ghost' pines.

Scientists have discovered rare 'fire' lichen growing on the stumps of trees destroyed during the war. *Carbonicola anthracophila* only grows on charred conifer trees and has been recorded at just three other locations in the UK - Glen Affric, Glen Quoich and Glen Strathfarrar.

## Harry Potter Location

Loch Arkaig was the location for a sequence in the movie *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. Harry, Hermione and Ron cling to a dragon as it flies above the forest before jumping off into the loch below. Filming on the shore was cut short because the midges were too fierce!



## Jacobite Treasure

According to legend, there is a buried treasure chest in the wood containing gold brought from France to support the Jacobite Rising of 1745. It was destined for Bonnie Prince Charlie, whose allies reputedly hid in the woods, but he fled before the gold reached him. Gold coins found in the forest in 1850 support this tale.

## The Oban Times LOCHABER TIMES

We would like to remind you of our Christmas/New Year deadlines:

Monday 27th December 4pm For the issue dated Thursday 30th December

Monday 3rd January For the issue dated Thursday 6th January

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# 'Commando'



Timber extraction is now under way at Loch Arkaig.

Photograph: Jessica Maxwell/WTML.

### Wildlife

The forest is home to wildlife including pine marten, badger, red deer, red squirrel and wild boar. Some of the UK's most impressive birds of prey - osprey, sea eagle and golden eagle - can be spotted swooping over the loch. An osprey nest camera streams online from March to September.

The standing deadwood is home to a wide variety of lichens and invertebrates. The azure hawker dragonfly, found only in Scotland, has been recorded in the forest. The rare chequered skipper butterfly, which is confined to this area of Scotland, is also likely to be spotted at Loch Arkaig.

Loch Arkaig is in the

rainforest zone running down Scotland's west coast. Where conditions are right the clean, warm, moist air coming in from the Atlantic supports a lush growth of lichens, mosses and liverworts under the tree canopy.

The restoration of native woodland on the site will also expand rainforest habitat.

## Skye farmer is fined £18k for damaging ancient cairn

A farmer who damaged an ancient cairn on Skye while collecting topsoil has been fined £18,000.

Duncan MacInnes used the earth from Upper Tote Cairn in the north of Skye to help with a building project elsewhere on his land.

The 59-year-old plead guilty to damaging the protected monument when he appeared at Portree Sheriff Court on Wednesday August 25. Following his appearance in court on Tuesday December 14, he was fined £18,000.

MacInnes owns the land next to the A855 near Upper Tote on Skye where the Upper Tote Cairn stands.

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) had written to MacInnes on three separate occasions about the existence of the cairn, with the most recent letter being sent in 2015. The agency also carried out routine site visits every 10 years.

MacInnes excavated part of the ancient monument



The damaged cairn. Photograph: COPFS.

between December 1 and 12, 2018. He was building a shed elsewhere on his land and needed topsoil.

Andy Shanks, Procurator Fiscal for Grampian, Highlands and Islands, said: 'As the owner of the land this ancient monument sits on, it was Duncan MacInnes' duty to help protect it. Instead, he showed a complete disregard

for its importance when he dug for soil and damaged Upper Tote Cairn.

'This prosecution shows how seriously COPFS [Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service] takes these crimes, and we will continue to work with Historic Environment Scotland and other partners to make sure Scotland's history is preserved.'



Do a lateral flow test before you travel, mix with others or visit busy places.



Living safely this winter





**Bishop Brian McGee, Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, right**



This year has been another difficult run-up to Christmas. Once more we are suddenly faced with a new and rampant Coronavirus variant. The effects are multiple, including the threat to health, anxiety and the prospect of changing our plans to be with loved ones. Glimpses of a new dawn of normality seem to be extinguished.

Yet even in the darkness of this winter a bright light shines. That light is Jesus. At the first Christmas, God took on our human nature to redeem us from the greatest darkness, the evil of sin.

The warmth of God's love continues to shine so brightly that it will always dispel the darkness of sin as well as other deep shadows, including the coldness that fear and anxiety brings.

In the beginning of his Gospel, St John taught that Jesus is the true light which has come into the world. Sometimes we are tempted to separate ourselves from Christ relying on our own powers. However, inevitably such detachment only creates deeper darkness.

Jesus is the Light we long for. Jesus desires for us to walk in the light of his love. This Christmas let us allow Jesus to drench us in the warmth and brightness of his love!

I wish you and your family a happy and loving Christmas.

**Rev Anthony M. Jones, Moderator of Presbytery of Lochaber, below**  
G.K. Chesterton wrote: 'Christmas is built upon a beautiful and intentional paradox, that the birth of the homeless should be celebrated in every home.'

At this time of year, we are often approached while out shopping by homeless people begging us for our small change. Whether it is at a station or in a shop doorway, the need is still there.

There is always, it seems, a 'crisis at Christmas' for folk who are homeless, living off the street.



We are all tightening our belts while others struggle for the means to survive. We have been saving up to buy our gifts. Then, someone asks us when we are out shopping in town, if we have any spare change!

There is a famous old poem – 'Christmas is coming, the goose is

getting fat. Please put a penny in the old man's hat' (attributed to Edith Nesbit Bland). Those who are homeless sadly do not always find in their experience that 'Christmas is a time for giving'.

The story of Christmas in the Gospel of Luke reminds us of the fact that Jesus was born homeless, in a stable because 'there was no room for them at the Inn' (Luke 2.7). No room for Joseph and Mary and the baby Jesus.

We celebrate giving because this is the time we remember the first 'Christ-mass'. This yearly round recalls when the greatest gift was given to all the world. 'For to you today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord' (Luke 2.11).

There are two sides to the situation you see, the homeless ask for money or shelter – they are poor. We in return often refuse to give a little of what we have – we are the poorer, we have a poverty of heart. Often we give a tiny part and hold everything else back.

The message of Christmas is that God through his son Jesus Christ gave everything for us – the poor, the homeless and the rich and those who



are the poor in heart. Wishing you and your family a happy Christmas and a safe and healthy New Year.

**Kate Forbes MSP, left**

As we approach another Christmas, it can be a time to take stock of what's happened over the past 12 months.

Locally, there has been much to celebrate. We are making progress with a new Belford Hospital, the new Corpach marina is taking shape and the opening of the Advanced Manufacturing Centre was a hugely welcome development.

I realise there is still much work to be done however – and that there are other pressing matters, such as the Corran Ferry and the A82 around Fort William, where progress has been slower than I would like. I will continue to plug away on these issues in 2022.

Christmas will mean different things to different people. For some, it is a time of acute loneliness, for others it's a reminder of happier times, and for others still it will mean family joy.

I know there is pressure to have a perfect Christmas, but families are all imperfect in some way. The more we can focus on other people, and less on ourselves, the happier we are.

I spend Christmas Day with my

family, which I love as I don't get to see enough of them the rest of the year! This is the first year I'll be spending it with my new family, having got married over the summer. Hopefully we'll start some new traditions.

Christmas is ultimately a reminder of one of the most significant events in human history – the birth of Jesus Christ. For me, it means reflecting on the greatest gift of God with family.

I hope you all have a peaceful, restful and enjoyable Christmas.

**Angus Brendan MacNeil MP**



Nollaig Chridheil agus Bliadhna Bhath Ùr.

I would like to wish all of my constituents a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

The last two years have been challenging for everyone and 2021 has been a year of continued fight against the spread of Covid-19.

But it has also been a year of hope and there is a strong light at the end of the tunnel.

In November, I collected messages from children in my constituency during COP26 and their advice to adults on tackling climate change has filled me with optimism that

**Continued on page 14.**

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We all spend far too much money over Christmas and New Year, so how great would it be able to fill your shopping trolley COMPLETELY FREE OF CHARGE in January?! Courtesy of our friends at Tesco in Oban, one lucky reader will win the chance to fill their trolley with up to £200 worth of goods (see T&C's for exclusions). All you have to do is collect 4 tokens over four weeks starting on 9th December, get them to us by 10am Tuesday 11th January and you will be entered into a prize draw to win this fantastic trolley dash. What are you waiting for, banish those post-Christmas blues and start collecting your tokens!

All 4 tokens must be sent in a single envelope to Oban Times Trolley Dash Competition Crannog Lane, Lochavullin Industrial Estate Oban, PA34 4HB.

One token from each week is required, multiple entries are allowed, but must be submitted in separate envelopes. Photocopied tokens will not be accepted. Winners must agree to take part in publicity, Employees of Wyvex Media Ltd and their immediate family are not eligible to enter. The editor's decision is final.

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS**  
Winner must be at Tesco, Lochside, Oban, PA34 4HP for 10.30am January 17th. Excludes tobacco, lottery, baby food, non-food items and alcohol. Quantity limited to two per item. The winner will be given a hand held scanner to monitor spend to the value of £200. We will protect your personal data. We only gather what we need for the requirements of this competition. Entry data will be deleted/disposed immediately upon the competition entry deadline and in a manner appropriate to GDPR regulations. Entrant's details will not be used for any other activity.

**DIGITAL SUBSCRIBERS**  
Digital subscribers who have an active subscription covering the period from December 2021, to February 2022, can enter the competition by sending their name, address and email address that they subscribe with to Oban Times Trolley Dash Competition, Crannog Lane, Lochavullin Industrial Estate, Oban PA34 4HB by 10am Tuesday January 11. Only one entry per subscription permitted. Entrant must be able to attend the trolley dash in Oban on the January 17, 2022.



LT

Continued from page 12.

the future of the islands is in good hands.

A dark time in 2021 has been the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan and this was felt in the islands as the Linda Norgrove Foundation, based here on the Isle of Lewis, was desperate to secure safe passage for its staff and families.

I was in constant contact with the Home Office and the Norgrove family during this time and it was a special moment in October to see the families who worked for the Foundation arrive safely in Stornoway.

2021 was a year of transport problems to the islands, with problems on the ferry network and also the ongoing dispute regarding Air Traffic Control jobs based in my constituency. These issues are ongoing and please be assured that I will continue to focus on these.

As I am writing this message to you, it is exactly one year since the first Covid vaccinations were given in Scotland.

I am proud to say that in my constituency of Na h-Eileanan an Iar, more than 85 per cent of the adult population have received the first dose and more than 78 per cent have had a second dose.

The spread of the new variant Omicron in Scotland is, of course, a huge concern but the vaccine booster process is well under way and I would encourage all who are eligible to make sure they are attending.

I have received all three doses but it is not too late for anyone who has not received the first dose to take it and I would strongly encourage you to do so.

**Alasdair Allan MSP, right**

After a year unlike any other in 2020, we were all hoping that 2021 would signal more of a return to normality.

While this has thankfully

been the case in some areas, this year has still been extraordinarily challenging for many of us as the impact of the ongoing pandemic continues to be felt.

There are, however, a huge number of victories to be celebrated this year, including the fantastic work of our NHS to rapidly administer a complex vaccination rollout across the country.

I have been pleased to be able to start up constituency visits again this year after the lifting of restrictions, and I enjoyed meeting with constituents and local businesses in Uist and Barra recently (despite the fog doing its best to keep the plane away!). This year's COP26 UN Climate Summit in Glasgow made notable progress in environmental commitments from nations around the globe.

The danger islands such as Uist face from rising sea levels was highlighted at the conference with events such as the Message In A Bottle screening, where island school children voiced their concerns and their hopes for the future of their local communities.

Looking ahead to 2022, I hope that we can all keep working together to help our local communities rebuild from the effects of the pandemic, uniting to face the challenges that come our way.

Nollaig Chridheil agus Bliadhna Mhath Ùr dhuibh uile! Merry Christmas and a happy New Year to you all!

**Ian Blackford MP, above**

With the festive season upon us again, we look back on what has been a uniquely trying time but one in which people's resilience offered us hope.

Coronavirus has changed how we have had to live our lives

for a considerable period. I know how hard that has been for people. I have felt it too.

However, I believe everyone should be proud of their actions and the civic spirit shown in looking after the vulnerable in our communities.

Without your actions, many more people would have fallen ill. More lives would have been lost.

The battle isn't over, of course, but we find ourselves in a far greater position than that of a year ago. Special thanks must go to our emergency services, who have been stretched to the limit, and to whom we owe such a debt of gratitude. Without them, the hopeful outlook of today wouldn't have been possible.

As the year draws to a close, I reflect on my time serving as a Member of Parliament for this beautiful constituency. It remains such a privilege to represent the place that I call home, and I go into the New Year full of optimism that we - as a community and a country - can meet head-on any challenges that lie ahead.

Wherever and with whomever you are spending the festive season this year, I wish you a safe and enjoyable time. This year, more than ever, we all deserve it.

Very best wishes to all.

**Councillors Margaret Davidson, Bill Lobban and John Finlayson, Highland Council**

Councillor Davidson, right, leader of Highland Council: While 2021 has been a challenging year of recovery, I look forward with hope and certainty to a positive and sustainable future for the Highlands.

Public and business interest has never been higher in the region with outstanding tourism demand and major investment in green energy and industry.

I wish you all a safe and peaceful Christmas and New Year. Stay well.

Convener of Highland Council, Councillor Bill Lobban: Christmas is a special time for all of us but especially for our children. I wish all young people across Lochaber, their friends and families a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.

Chairman of education, Councillor John Finlayson added: To all Lochaber parents, carers, pupils, staff and school communities - merry Christmas and a happy New Year - Nollaig Chridheil agus Bliadhna Mhath Ùr.

**Donald Cameron MSP, above**

As we reflect on the past year

I would like to thank all those people who have kept our society functioning, and enabled us to get through another 12 months, while the Covid pandemic has remained at the forefront of our concerns.

We think of the front-line workers - NHS and care home staff, teachers, emergency service personnel, council employees, shop workers - but also of everyone else who has contributed or made sacrifices.

I am particularly mindful of our young people, who have seen their education disrupted and been worried about issues such as assessment of their work, and the implications for the future. They need, more than ever, our support and understanding. Looking back, the year has been especially significant for me personally.

I was deeply honoured to be returned for a second term in the Scottish Parliament elections as a

member representing the Highlands and Islands.

It was particularly gratifying to be joined by three other Scottish Conservative colleagues representing the region.

Most important is our work bringing to

the attention of the Scottish Government the issues that really matter to local people such as the capacity of the NHS, the state of the roads, broadband coverage and, of course, the ferry service. I suspect next year will be just as busy as 2021 when it comes to tackling these matters.

In the meantime, may I wish you a peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**Ariane Burgess MSP, below**

This festive season I am reflecting on what has been another historic year, my first as an MSP.

I have been struck, at all times, by the dedication and professionalism of all our key workers maintaining the highest standards of care under the most challenging of circumstances.

Not only are they dealing with the ongoing pandemic but battling exhaustion, disruption caused by recent storms and uncertainty. My heartfelt thanks, and most profound admiration, goes out to everyone who has ensured that essential services are still being delivered in Lochaber.

I have been touched by the community spirit I have seen, talking to my constituents and within my own community.

The people, businesses and third sector organisations in

Lochaber came together to ensure that shopping was delivered, prescriptions picked up and that isolated people could still have some human contact.

It's exciting to see communities working in



**WISHING ALL OUR READERS A MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM ALL AT THE LOCHABER TIMES**

Merry Christmas

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**FESTIVE OPENING HOURS**

|  |               |  |               |
|--|---------------|--|---------------|
| Monday 20th December                         | 07:30 - 17:00 | Wednesday 29th December                        | 07:30 - 17:00 |
| Tuesday 21st December                        | 07:30 - 17:00 | Thursday 30th December                         | 07:30 - 17:00 |
| Wednesday 22nd December                      | 07:30 - 17:00 | Friday 31st December                           | 07:30 - 13:00 |
| Thursday 23rd December                       | 07:30 - 17:00 | <b>New Year's Day &amp; Sunday 2nd January</b> |               |
| Friday 24th December                         | 07:30 - 13:00 | <b>Closed</b>                                  |               |
| <b>Christmas Day - Tuesday 28th December</b> |               | Monday 3rd January                             | 07:30 - 17:00 |
| <b>Closed</b>                                |               | <b>Back to Our normal hours of business</b>    |               |

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the climate and nature emergencies in the years to come.

For many people this connection with nature has bloomed into interests in exciting projects: whether it's planting acorns at the Arkaig Community Forest, exploring locally by bike with the help of Lochaber Environmental Group or getting involved in local community ownership initiatives.

I wish everyone in Lochaber a restful festive season and best wishes for the New Year! Hope you have a lovely holidays!

**Rhoda Grant MSP, above**

Many of us take the availability of food for granted, but the truth is tens of thousands of people in Scotland are living in food poverty, even in 2021. There are a myriad of reasons as to why so many people are relying on an ever increasing number of foodbanks. Most commonly it is due to a lack of income, the inability for an individual to feed themselves and their family

this way and gives me hope that we can use these bonds to tackle

from what they earn or receive in social security.

That's why I'm consulting on a proposal for a Member's Bill which would include a Right to Food in Scot's Law. The proposed Bill would place duties on the Scottish Government to ensure that food is accessible for all, is adequate and is nutritious.

No one should be having to choose between heating and eating this Christmas but sadly, many are. My wish is to see the Bill become law so that foodbanks are consigned to history.

As we reflect on the toughest of times during the pandemic, let's again take the chance to thank our amazing NHS workers, indeed all of our key workers who have kept us going since the pandemic hit.

So too, our emergency services workers who selflessly work as hard over the Christmas and New Year period, as they do all year round keeping us safe. It really is appreciated.

I hope you have a safe, and peaceful, Christmas and I wish everyone a good 2022. Happy Christmas!

**Emma Roddick MSP, above right**

I am struggling to believe it is December - I am certain the May

election was only a few weeks ago!

Regardless, the best part of my job is being able to get out and about and talk to people; learning about niche issues others are passionate about, seeing what local communities do for each other, and helping,

where I can, to sort out issues, and I've fitted in as much of that as I can this year.

Lochaber has a wealth of community spirit and at no time has that been more evident than during the Covid pandemic.

From councillors coming together to lead community support groups to various third sector organisations doing what they could to support people to get food, shopping, prescriptions and other necessities safely, there was a wonderful display of empathy and awareness of the needs of others.

This is not only my first Christmas as an MSP, but the first without my mother - so, it's going to be a very strange one.

I know that there are many other individuals out there who've suffered loss and pain this year,

and I want to let you know that my office remains ready to help if you need assistance from one of your regional MSPs.

Please find hope and happiness where you can and continue to be kind to yourself and others this winter.

**Jamie Halcro Johnston MSP, right**

2021 has been another challenging year. As well as the ongoing issues faced by our NHS and other public agencies, the Covid pandemic has continued to impact on all our lives, our businesses and our communities.

It has cast a shadow over so much of what we do, limiting our choices and putting increasing pressure on folk.

But communities have continued to come together - to support each other - even when things have been at their toughest.

And as Shadow Minister for Business, as well as a Highland MSP, I have been so impressed by the resilience of our business community who, particularly those in hospitality and tourism, have had to radically change their ways

of working. It has not been easy. Supported by UK Government schemes such as furlough, as well as the UK world-leading vaccination programme, we have started to see light at the end of the tunnel. But the emergence of the Omicron variant is a reminder we're not out of the woods yet, with support likely needing to continue.

And the pandemic has also been a reminder of the importance of local infrastructure and local services.

Our Highland communities need reliable transport links, improved broadband and local public services such as hospitals, schools and local policing they can rely on.

Finally, can I wish all the readers of the Lochaber Times a very happy Christmas and my very best wishes to all for a better year ahead for themselves, their families and their communities.



**KEEPINTOUCH**

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**Clàr na Nollaig**  
Christmas Schedule

**BBC ALBA**



**Cùm Sùil Orm**  
Keep an Eye on Me  
Là na Nollaige, 5.35f  
Christmas Day, 5.35pm



**Bannan**  
27, 28, 30 Dùbhlachd & 1 Faoilleach, 10f  
27, 28, 30 December & 1 January, 10f

**Maorach: Hebridean Shellfish**  
29 Dùbhlachd, 9f  
29 December, 9pm



**Seòid Lang Syne**  
31 Dùbhlachd, 10f  
31 December, 10pm

**O.M.C!**  
31 Dùbhlachd, 11f  
31 December, 11pm



**Cèilidh na Bliadhn' Ùire 2021**  
Hogmanay Ceilidh 2021  
31 Dùbhlachd, 11.30f  
31 December, 11.30pm

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**BBC ALBA**



LT

# DISTRICT NEWS

SKYE

## Long-thought-lost school records reveal Skye history

Skye school records dating back to 1877 containing school log books and admissions registers – long thought lost – have been rediscovered.

Found within the vaults of the education office in Ardross Street, Inverness, the records, which go through to 1980, have been handed to Skye and Lochalsh Archive Centre.

High Life Highland archivist Catherine MacPhee said the recent additions to the collections include Portnalong School, North Talisker and Knockbrek Primary, Waternish.

'In 1919, the Land Settlement (Scotland) Act was passed, designed to provide smallholdings fit for heroes returning home from the first world war,' she explained. 'The Board of Agriculture for Scotland purchased 60,000 acres of land in North Talisker from Norman MacLeod of MacLeod, having previously been a sheep farm following clearance in the 19th century.'

In 1923, approval was given for 68 new holdings at North Talisker forming townships at Fiskavaig, Portnalong and Fernilea. These areas were largely populated by families from Harris and Lewis as a reaction to overcrowding in the Outer Hebrides.

Ms MacPhee continued: 'The influx of families to North Talisker meant a new school was required for the area, as the closest school at Carbost was too far away. As a result of pressure from parents on the local education authority, a school was opened in 1924, based in a hut on the pier, accommodating 56 pupils.'

The teacher at Portnalong School, James Campbell, wrote to the director of education Murdo Morrison in May 1924 saying: 'I opened this school yesterday, the 19th. I had 19 pupils present. Today I had 26 pupils, but this is not all that are to come. I got a man to collect the names of all the children within school age and the list I received show that there are 44 children. The hut would hold comfortably 20 children so how I am to house 44 – or if the Fernilea children come – about 60 in it – I don't know.'

The new records show Knockbrek school had a regular attendance of 60 pupils by 1877.

Ms MacPhee added: 'Throughout the 1920s, a side school was provided in a thatched house in Trumpan but by 1924 it was deemed unfit for purpose and was forced to close in 1925 before the roof fell in. The public health authority was also concerned cattle were polluting the

## New Bernera Bridge welcomed

The official opening of the new Bernera Bridge has been welcomed by Alasdair Allan, SNP MSP for Na h-Eileanan an Iar, who attended the opening ceremony last week.

Despite additional celebration events being cancelled due to the current Covid-19 situation, there was an excellent turnout at the bridge's opening ceremony.

In February this year, Mr Allan campaigned for funding to be allocated to allow for a replacement bridge to be built between the island of Bernera and the rest of Lewis.

Cabinet secretary for finance and the economy Kate Forbes confirmed in her February budget update that an additional £32 million would be provided to help rebuild and maintain key lifeline bridges such as the Great Bernera bridge.

And it has recently been confirmed £2.62m of the £3.1m cost of the replacement bridge

will be met by this Scottish Government funding. Work began in March after serious structural defects were discovered in August 2020, leading to an immediate 7.5 tonne weight limit being introduced on the original bridge. Commenting after the bridge's opening ceremony, Mr Allan said he was delighted the Bernera Bridge replacement had been completed and was open to the public. 'Projects such as this are incredibly important for island communities and I am glad the Scottish Government provided the necessary support for the Bernera Bridge replacement as well as many other lifeline bridges across Scotland,' he said.

'I congratulate the comhairle, the contractors and engineers for their tireless work on this project and residents and businesses for their patience during this period of disruption.'



The school records.

school water supply at Knockbrek in 1930 and brought the matter to the school management committee. During 1932-33, the HM Inspector was impressed the junior children were equally fluent in English and Gaelic.'

Current chairman of The Highland Council's education committee Councillor John Finlayson said: 'What a fascinating find, which I am delighted will now be conserved in Skye and Lochalsh Archive Centre for public viewing.'

'It's interesting to see the pressures on school accommodation and demand for new schools were being experienced by our predecessors, just as they are today.'

Knockbrek School is still open, with a roll of seven primary pupils.



Lochaber High School pupils and the Rotary Club of Lochaber joined forces again this year to deliver Christmas parcels to senior citizens. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

## Covid fails to unwrap Lochaber pupils' festive parcels effort

It has become a Christmas tradition that the Rotary Club of Lochaber joins forces with Lochaber High School in funding, wrapping and delivering parcels to senior citizens. Working within Covid restrictions, this went ahead almost as normal this year, with S1 pupils taking care of the wrapping and S6 pupils co-ordinating the distribution by various organisations which are already in regular contact with recipients rather than pupils handing them out themselves.

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MSP Alasdair Allan, centre, welcomed the opening of the new Bernera Bridge.

Christmas cards, which will be sent to more than 2,500 individuals and organisations in the constituency and across the country.

Since he was elected in 2007, Mr Allan has invited school pupils across the Western Isles to submit Christmas card design entries.

Mr Allan commended this year's winning design: 'There were a huge number of fantastic entries this year and it was very difficult to choose a winner.

'That being said, Isla's design stood out in that it encapsulated some of the unique nature and fun of celebrating Christmas time in the Western Isles.

'I like to think if Santa did live here, he'd be helping out with some crofting in between his present deliveries.

'My thanks to all the pupils who took part in this year's competition and this year's sponsors - Castlevie Dental Practice, Ken MacDonald Lawyers and Estate Agents and Bob Golland Oil and Plumbing Services - for their generous donations towards the cost of printing the cards.

'I wish each of my constituents a restful and Merry Christmas with their loved ones. Nollaig Chridheil dhuibh uile.'



### Santa brings cheer to Fort William baby and toddlers group

A visit from Santa brought extra festive cheer to the baby and toddler group held in the Salvation Army Hall, Fort William, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. With an eye on Covid regulations, Santa visited the group in two separate rooms in the hall to keep numbers down, but there was no dampening of spirits and enjoyment.

### STORNOWAY



Isla's winning Christmas card design.

### Artistic Isla wins Christmas card competition

A primary seven pupil at Stornoway Primary School is the winner of Alasdair Allan MSP for Na h-Eileanan an Iar's annual Christmas card competition.

Mr Allan recently presented a prize to this year's winner, Isla Morrison.

Isla's design shows Santa riding a quadbike adorned with Christmas lights, with sheep in the trailer against a backdrop of falling snow.

The design will feature on Mr Allan's



### Lundavra Primary School pupils in fine voice for Christmas carols

Lundavra Primary School pupils have been working on a variety of enterprise projects over the last month. The primary seven Fort William youngsters formed their own companies, with each child fulfilling a role to enable them to raise money to buy sweatshirts. The companies decided it would be a good idea to get together to raise funds before the end of term. They decided to sing carols outside Morrisons supermarket in the town and people donated generously as the children sang and played instruments for two hours, raising £374.63.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

**WELL DONE TO EVERYONE THIS YEAR**  
 Wishing festive greetings to all. Remember to check for Festive Slimming World recipes on the website.  
**WE WILL BE BACK IN THE NEW YEAR**  
 Gillian

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LT

## LETTERS

**Christmas cheer**

Everyone will be thankful this Christmas that while some restrictions kick in on Boxing Day, at least this year we can spend Christmas Day with family and friends, with people we care about, where able.

It has still been a difficult year for many, not least for those of us who have lost a loved one or who have felt lonely and isolated due to the ongoing threat of Covid.

But thinking back on the last year, there is a lot we can give thanks for.

When pulling together our annual Review of the Year, we were reminded of all the great stories we ran in the Lochaber Times; stories about communities coming together to care for one another; the incredible fundraising that went on to support local good causes and the resilience of our traders, despite the difficulties they may have faced to keep their heads above water.

We may not know what 2022 holds in terms of how Covid-19 will impact our lives, but one thing we are sure of is our communities are strong and we will look after each other.

Merry Christmas to you all from everyone at the Lochaber Times. May it be safe and peaceful.

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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**Positive experience of Covid booster on Seil**

Having read for the last few weeks about the unpleasant experiences the citizens of Oban have endured over the administration of their Covid booster jabs, I feel the need to recount my own experience here on the Isle of Seil.

Not only did our GP practice take it upon themselves to book our community hall for two days to enable us to avoid the trip to Oban, they prepared the hall themselves for NHS Highland the night before, on one occasion at least, after 9.30pm; they cleared up after the event and even organised people to manage the car park. They phoned up to advise the time to attend, giving a 30-minute window and phoned a second time nearer the event to suggest the best time to go to avoid queues. A prime example of 'going above and beyond' or 'going the extra mile'.

It's not only the booster jabs they excelled themselves in either. During the two initial jabs, they phoned us to give us a day and time and we could walk to the surgery as it was so close. This amazed my sister-in-law who, living near York, was left to phone round various centres to set up a suitable day and time and at one point it was suggested she try Manchester as an option.

So a huge thank you to all involved at Easdale Medical Practice and all the other volunteers. In the words of the song, 'You're simply the best'.

Janet Scott, Seil.

**Turn out for local by-election was very disappointing**

It was extremely disappointing to see turnout of just 25.6 per cent at the recent Ward 21 (Fort William and Ardnamurchan) by-election and I hope people will be less apathetic when we have the full regional elections in May.

An SNP win is hardly surprising, since I was told repeatedly when campaigning in 2017 that you could put a yellow rosette on a stuffed teddy bear and they'd vote for it. Thankfully far more said they would vote for anyone other than an SNP, which seems to still be the case since the vast majority (60.3 per cent) of those who did vote, voted against Ms Fanet. At least Sarah Fanet lives in the area which is more than can be said for two of the candidates, the Conservative and Lib-Dem. Not only do they

## YOUR PICTURES



not live here (although one attempted to imply that they did, in their Lochaber Times candidate statement), they clearly weren't interested in doing the most basic of research about the area. Had they done so, they'd know that we make higher-than-average use of Facebook as a means of communication, presumably due to the large geographical area and small dispersed communities.

Both of these candidates have Facebook pages, but neither bothered to use it to communicate with their potential constituents. Whether you love or loathe Facebook, if they aren't interested in doing basic research about the area, they really don't deserve our vote.

It was excellent to see the Green candidate get so many votes, demonstrating how seriously we are all taking environmental issues these days, and Kate lives locally and knows the area well.

Too often I hear people complaining about

Westminster, Holyrood or Inverness being completely out of touch with those of us living in small, or remote, or rural communities – the only way to fix that is to vote for people to represent you that do know and understand.

I sincerely hope that more people will vote in May, and that more people will vote for local residents in May.

Joanne Matheson, Acharacle.

**Christmas verse**

Recent on-island discussions about whether to try to maintain a Christmas concert or social gathering with some music, have led to the idea that, instead, maybe some 'safe' carol singing efforts before the break might be possible. These discussions prompted a couple of light-hearted verses, which I jotted down over lunch today.

It occurred to me they might also be a bit of



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or The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB

**Oban Times reader Ken MacTaggart, of Inveraray got in touch with us to share this photograph. He said: 'My friend Donald John MacDonald spotted this rare bird, a Little Egret, in Inveraray where it has lingered for several days. 'It wades around feeding in the bay by the Front Green at low tide. It really stands out from the gulls, dazzling white with yellow feet. 'I've seen one in the south of England where they are invading from France, probably due to climate warming. It's not yet "officially" a Scottish resident bird, but has been seen in the Borders and elsewhere. 'They are also seen in Lochgilphead but the Argyll Bird Club says this is the first in Inveraray.'**

**YOURPHOTO**  
share with us: [editor@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:editor@obantimes.co.uk)  
telephone 01631 568000

*'No more masquerading'  
Nor, in public, much parading –  
Everyone is tucked at home,  
Many of them all alone  
Where, quite safe,  
They can un-mask!*

*"So, here I am, a solitary,  
Singing to my heart's content  
All my favourite Christmas Carols!  
The harmonies, I must pretend,  
Provided by the sounds of birds,  
The wind in trees,  
My feet in gravel – and  
By angels, as I travel:  
Can you hear them  
In the breeze,  
Like a wing-beat  
Keeping rhythm,  
Soft and slight,  
Reminiscent of the  
Iridescence of  
The ethereal  
Northern Lights –  
A kind of descant  
Borne by Nature,  
Fleeting, fleeting.....?"*

*"Well, I must away – I've  
Many a house to pass tonight!  
Goodnight!  
Goodnight!  
I wish you every Christmas Greeting!"*

*And with that, the carol singer  
Vanished in the gathering night.*

light entertainment for readers of the OT?  
Sebastian Tombs, Isle of Lismore.

#### CAROL SOLO

*Hark!  
It is the carol singers,  
Come to bring us  
Something cheer  
In this drear and weary dark!*

*Welcome, my friends –  
Ah! Only one?  
So, tell me, do:  
Is it just you –  
Where is the choir?*

*"Good Sir,  
I am surprised you ask –  
Have you not heard  
The word is*

## THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

A few weeks ago, I visited St George's Tron Church in the centre of Glasgow and was very moved by the painting, Our Last Supper, which depicts 13 people sitting around a table.

The artist has selected as models some of the guests of Glasgow City Mission and they represent those who are on the margins facing some of life's most difficult challenges.

The artist purposefully hasn't depicted one as specifically showing Jesus.

This speaks to the truth that is found in the words of Jesus, that inspired me most in my faith, where Jesus implores us to feed the hungry, visit the prisoner, clothe the naked and give the thirsty a drink saying

## Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

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



Ged a tha sinn air starsaich na Nollaige tha mi ga fhaotainn doirbh cuspair a lorg anns na naidheachdan air am bheil sunnd agus spiorad na ràithe. Cha chuimhnich mi air àm, seach àm chogaidhean san robh Breatann, san robh na meadhanan cho gruamach is iad a' riaghan eadar buamastaireachd agus casaidean slaightheadh aig àrd-ìre ann an riaghaltas Bhreatainn agus air bhoil le aithrisean mun t-strèan Omicron de Chovid 19 a' sgoileadh cho bras feadh na dùthcha. Ann an dòigh tha an t-stri an aghaidh Covid mar chogadh feadh an t-saoghail, agus tha gabhaltachd an Omicron a' cur uimhir de dh'eagal air luchd-stiùiridh slàinte is gum bheil cunnart gun caill an sluagh misneachd agus earbsa annta. 'S e firinn na cùise gum bheil eòlaichean gann de dh'fhiosrachadh mun tionndadh as ùire den bhioras agus fhad 's a tha iad a' feuchainn ri làn-aithne fhaotainn oirre tha ise a' siabadh tron t-sluagh mar fhalaig tron ghaoith. Nuair a chaillear smachd air falaisg mar is minig a thachair air Ghàidhealtachd, bhiodh na bha air chomas de mhuintir nam bailtean mun cuairt a' tighinn cuideachd gus feuchainn ri smachd fhaotainn air an teine, agus a chur às. Bha tuigse aca gur e uallach agus dleastanas coimhearsnachd a bh' ann sin a dhèanamh, gus an cuid fearainn is eile a dhion.

Mar a tha mi air a ràdh an seo iomadh uair roimhe tha mise den bheachd gum bheil an aon

seòrsa uallaich agus dleastanas oirnn a thaobh dìon a dhèanamh an aghaidh Covid, agus ged nach tuig mi carson a bhiodh neach sam bith a' diùltadh banachdach tha mi ag aithneachadh gum bheil còir phearsanta aca air an taghadh sin. Ach chan eil mi a' creidsinn gum bheil còir aig duine galair sam bith a sgoileadh feadh dhaoine eile! Sin an dùbhlán as motha a th' aig riaghaltasan an t-saoghail is iad air an aon làimh a' cur bhanachdachaidhean air milleanan den t-sluagh, fhad 's a tha miltean eile a' leantainn air adhart a' gànrachadh an co-chreutairean! Ged a tha riaghaltasan agus ùghdarrasan de gach seòrsa a' dèanamh an dicheall gus sgapadh a' ghalair a cheannsachadh agus an sluagh a dhìon chan eil na nì iad gun chronachadh, mar a tha fìor mu na riaghailtean a tha gan toirt a-staigh às ùr ann an dachaighean cùraim. Tha e doirbh da-riribh smaoinachadh ciamar a thèid aig na h-ionadan sin air, an dà chuid, na seann daoine a tha fon cùram a dhìon bho ghalair agus aig an aon àm leigeil le càirdean tadhal orra. 'S e dùbhlán dòrainneach a tha sin gun teagamh, agus am feum gliocas Sholaimh!

Chan eil dad a tha nas tlachdmhoire na tadhal air càirdean agus eòlaich agus b' e sin pàirt de spiorad na Nollaige a bha gu ìre air àicheadh dhuinn mun àm seo an-uiridh. Ach aig àm sgrìobhaidh seo tha a' chead sin againn am-bliadhna agus tha mi 'n dòchas gum faigh sibh cothrom air! Nollaig chridheil dhuibh!

our community. However, my overwhelming feeling in the lead up to Christmas is one of gratitude to the people that I am privileged to meet on a daily basis at Hope.

Jesus, I think, knew when he challenged us to live our lives with those on the margins that it would be us that would be the most blessed. As it is those who have the least who are the most open-handed, inclusive and willing to help each other.

If anyone wants to learn how to become more generous just spend a lunch time at Hope and you will see love in action in its purest form.

Catriona Petit, Hope Kitchen

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# Glasgow Letter

**ROBERT ROBERTSON**

robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk



The Glasgow Letter has been a rollercoaster of emotions in the last year – one week waxing lyrical about concerts and gigs going ahead; the next mourning their postponements. Unfortunately, we finish the year with the latter.

After so much progress during the summer, and an autumn full of live music, it was truly galling last week to see online a cascade of cancellations one after the other: first Mánran, then Skerryvore, then Trail West...the list seemed endless and made for tough reading.

For the people of Glasgow, Skerryvore's New Year's Day Live bash in the Barrowlands was a particularly sore one to lose.

I am really cheering you up here and helping you get into the Christmas spirit, amn't I?!

Well it's not all been bad news this week. First of all, let's remember that these call-offs (while disappointing) are the right thing to do in the circumstances. There are a lot of aspects of a live show that can make postponing very complicated and difficult but, at a time such as this, bands really have no other option.

The good news is there are exciting times on the horizon.

During another tough week for the music industry, for example, Gary Innes took to social media to cheer us all up by revealing he has booked none other than Scotland's largest venue, the OVO Hydro,



**Gary Innes cheering everyone up during another tough week for the music industry by announcing a massive ceilidh in the Ovo Hydro next December.**

for what he calls 'the biggest cèilidh the world has ever seen' on Saturday December 17 next year! That is a wonderful thought and something for traditional music lovers to hold onto during this particular time where we can't even hold the smallest cèilidh the world has ever seen!

Tickets went on sale on Wednesday morning and I'm sure many people will come together to support the event by grabbing their tickets nice and early.

More good news to keep us going is the up-coming debut album of 2021's Gaelic Singer of the Year Kim Carnie entitled *And So We Gather*. After a successful Kickstarter funding campaign where pledgers could pre-order the record and get access to all sorts of other rewards, it really is eagerly anticipated and I'm very much

looking forward to hearing it. Until then, my festive listening will be the new Beinn Lee album, *Deò*, which I mentioned a few weeks ago and which is now released. Or 'tha Deò beò' as the band are saying. I'll let you know soon how I enjoy it with my pigs in blankets and mulled wine!

On a personal note, I would like to finish this week's letter by wishing my Auntie Margaret, who reads this column every week (and often reviews it in a WhatsApp message to me!) a happy 80th birthday. Her mother, my Granny, lived to the ripe old age of 106. Auntie Margaret is proof that the key to keeping fit and healthy into your eighties is reading the Glasgow Letter each week!

So mind and get your copy over Christmas, everyone, and enjoy the festivities.

# Moniack Mhor announces its new programme for 2022

Moniack Mhor, the writing centre based near Inverness, is opening its doors again to a full residential programme with a selection of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and crime writing courses and retreats.

The centre is hosting a fabulous new programme of writing tutors including Madeleine Bunting, Scottish crime greats Val McDermid, Abir Mukherjee and Louise Welsh, Booker shortlisted author Graeme Macrae Burnet, award-winning poet and new Edinburgh Makar Hannah Lavery and poet Holly McNish, the highly acclaimed non-fiction writer Cal Flynn, as well as bestselling novelists James Robertson, Tim Pears, Polly Clark and Sara Sheridan, and musician Boo Hewerdine.

Rachel Humphries, centre director of Moniack Mhor, said: 'Moniack Mhor has weathered

the turbulence of 2021; we ceased residential activity in March 2020 when the country went into lockdown and opened our doors in a scaled-down way from summer of this year. I am thrilled that we are launching our full residential programme for next year.

'Having writers with us over the last few months has reinforced more than ever that community is one of the vital components for human happiness. Sharing words around the fire nurtures our wellbeing and fuels the creative drive. To have writers back through our doors makes life seem real once again.

'We are currently working hard to review our writer development programme to see where the gaps are. These will be filled by new support schemes, including a wider online programme, expanded

mentoring opportunities, more international collaboration and courses and retreats with childcare. We are excited to be getting back fully to what we know, welcoming tutors, guests and participating writers with Highland hospitality to a space for creative expression.'

Vicky Adams, Literature Officer at Creative Scotland, said: 'Scottish writers not only produce world-class literature to enthral readers, they're also well versed at supporting the next generation of talent to shape and share their words.

'The glorious landscape and welcoming atmosphere of Moniack Mhor provides space and time for new and established writers to explore and hone their craft, with guidance and inspiration from an amazing array of writers at the top of their game.'

## HIGHLAND CINEMA

### FRI 24TH - FRI 31ST DEC



PLEASE NOTE THAT A ONE-SEAT GAP BETWEEN BOOKING PARTIES IS IN EFFECT FOR ALL SHOWINGS, UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

#### CHRISTMAS EVE FILMS!



**FRIDAY 24TH DECEMBER**  
 CBeebies Christmas Show (U) 10:30am. Home Alone (PG) 11:15am.  
 Spider-Man: No Way Home (12a) 12:30pm, 3:45pm + 7:15pm.  
 The Muppet Christmas Carol (U) 1:45pm. It's A Wonderful Life (U) 4pm.  
 The Matrix Resurrections (15) 7pm.

**SATURDAY 25TH AND SUNDAY 26TH DECEMBER**  
 Closed for Christmas and Boxing Day.

**MONDAY 27TH DECEMBER (S - SUBTITLED SHOWING)**  
 Encanto (PG) 10:15am(S). Highlands From The Air (U) 10:45am.  
 Spider-Man: No Way Home (12a) 12:15pm(S), 3:40pm + 7pm. West Side Story (PG) 12:45pm. The Matrix Resurrections (15) 4:15pm + 7:30pm(S).

**TUESDAY 28TH DECEMBER**  
 Spider-Man: No Way Home (12a) 12:15pm, 3:40pm + 7pm. House Of Gucci (15) 12:45pm. The Matrix Resurrections (15) 4:15pm + 7:30pm.

**WEDNESDAY 29TH DECEMBER**  
 Encanto (PG) 10:15am. Highlands From The Air (U) 10:45am. Spider-Man: No Way Home (12a) 12:15pm, 3:40pm + 7pm. West Side Story (PG) 12:45pm. The Matrix Resurrections (15) 4:15pm + 7:30pm.

**THURSDAY 30TH DECEMBER**  
 Encanto (PG) 10:15am. Highlands From The Air (U) 10:45am.  
 Spider-Man: No Way Home (12a) 12:15pm, 3:40pm + 7pm. House Of Gucci (15) 12:45pm. The Matrix Resurrections (15) 4:15pm + 7:30pm.

**FRIDAY 31ST DECEMBER**  
 Clifford The Big Red Dog (PG) 10:15am + 12:40pm.  
 West Side Story (PG) 11:15am. The Matrix Resurrections (15) 2:45pm + 6:45pm. Spider-Man: No Way Home (12a) 3:15pm + 6:15pm.



**FILM SYNOPSIS, TRAILERS, TICKETS AND TO SIGN UP FOR OUR WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER:**  
[WWW.HIGHLANDCINEMA.CO.UK](http://WWW.HIGHLANDCINEMA.CO.UK)





## A look back at 2021 for Lochaber Chamber of Commerce

2021 has been a productive but challenging year for Lochaber Chamber of Commerce, and indeed all of our members. We strive to offer innovative support to all industries in our region and also to schools and our young people that aspire to become tomorrow's business leaders through the DYW West Highland programme. Here's a little look back at the past year and what we have been up to! We would like to wish all of our members a very safe and happy Christmas and remember, we are right behind you in continuing to offer support and guidance as we enter 2022 and beyond.

### 28th January 2021

## DYW West Highland helps inspire the workforce of the future



Representatives of DYW West Highland Board, from left: Matthew Jackson of Sonas Hospitality (chair), Oliver Stephen of BSW Timber (vice chair), Chris Vind of Muthu Fort William Hotel, Sandra Milne previously of Crieff Hydro Family of Hotels, Angela Coburn of TSL Contractors, Lydia Rohmer of West Highland College UHI, Frazer Coupland of Lochaber Chamber of Commerce and Donald Waring of MOWI.

Chances are you that you've heard of **Developing the Young Workforce**, but do you know what it actually is and how it is benefiting our local young people and businesses?

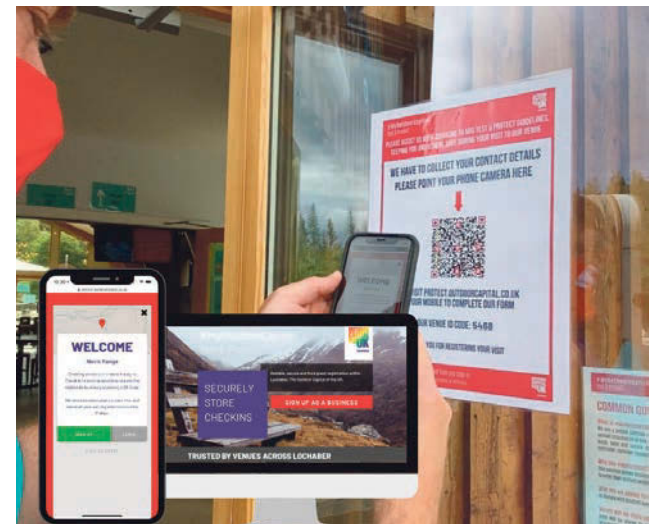
Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) is a Scottish Government Youth Employment strategy. Our local team, **DYW West Highland**, is one of 21 regional DYW groups in Scotland, leading and driving change in the way employers connect with young people, schools, and colleges.

DYW West Highland is hosted by Lochaber Chamber of Commerce and funded by the Scottish Government. The team engages with secondary school pupils and employers throughout Lochaber, Skye, and Wester Ross. In an exciting new development, the team is currently recruiting for the new positions of in-school co-ordinators to help create closer connections between young people at high school and local employers.

### 1st April 2021

## Tourism assistance at the tap of an app

Lochaber Chamber of Commerce was one of the first organisations in Scotland to create a bespoke track & trace app to help hospitality businesses easily record the customer details they needed to keep.



A customer uses the free Outdoor Capital Test & Protect App to quickly check into a registered venue.

This easy-to-use mobile web app was made available for free to all Lochaber hospitality businesses and will be available for all businesses to use when hospitality opens up again to local guests on 26th April.

### 29th April 2021

## #RespectProtectEnjoy Lochaber

This is an exciting time. This week has seen the first significant reopening of hospitality, tourism, and non-essential shops since late last year. There is a feeling of anticipation in the air...and maybe a bit of understandable hesitation too. As home to some of the most iconic and inspiring locations in the country, Lochaber is likely to see a strong resurgence in visitors over the coming months.

As we welcome visitors back to the Outdoor Capital of the UK and venture further out and about ourselves, we can all do our bit to feel reassured by keeping to the rules to keep us all safe.

Visitors are encouraged to enjoy our fabulous landscape responsibly through the #RespectProtectEnjoy campaign.



### 3rd June 2021

## Love the local life in Lochaber

At Lochaber Chamber of Commerce, we're passionate about supporting and promoting local business. Our recent 'Lochaber loves Local' campaign videos on social media showcased the range of activities, food and drink, places to stay and areas to explore right here in Lochaber, the Outdoor Capital of the UK.

The pandemic has encouraged more people to support the local economy, with just under half of British holidaymakers (48%) planning trips that will allow them to explore areas in the UK with lots of small independent businesses.

Buying local is becoming ever more popular and there's a great range of shops and food and drink producers to tempt you in Lochaber – from unique gifts to fresh produce, artisan baking and brewing – choosing to shop local is a choice that supports the local economy and community.



Delicious local produce was the order of the day at the West Coast Wild Food Festival showcasing Lochaber's rich larder.



29th July 2021

## Working for the future: Hospitality needs you

The Outdoor Capital of the UK released its Destination Strategy in 2020 detailing how, as a destination organisation, we will work with Lochaber stakeholders, community and employers to make Lochaber the destination of choice to live, work, visit and stay.



A big part of this commitment is how we utilise opportunities to support sectors to be sustainable but also how we can be agile and react to those business challenges.

29th August 2021

## Develop your leadership skills right here in Lochaber!

When it comes to business success, we know it's all about leadership. The ability to lead individuals and teams to success is arguably the most important skill a manager can possess.

But when you live and work in a rural Highland location, what is the most effective way to develop your staff's leadership potential and skills?

Following the popularity of our business skills seminars, we surveyed local businesses and developed the 'One Lochaber' Leadership Programme' to provide a bespoke one-year accredited course to help develop the next generation of business leaders within organisations - right here in Lochaber. Successful delegates receive a Chartered Management Institute (CMI) Level 5 Award in Leadership and Management.



30th September 2021

## Dive back into the deep end with Lochaber Ideas Week

Hurrah! Lochaber Ideas Week 2021 is back! Lochaber Chamber of Commerce's week of inspirational business events will return to celebrate business inspiration in Lochaber from the 15th to 19th November.

Now in its seventh year (after a two-year break due to Covid), Lochaber Ideas Week is well established as a favourite fixture in the local business and community calendar.

While this year's event will be a slimmed-down, Covid-safe version of the business week, the schedule is full of events that focus on key themes of growth, sustainability and innovation for the area.



2nd December 2021

## Meet Jamie Moan

### The newest member of the DYW Board



Growing up in Fort William, Jamie Moan didn't even realise there was a sawmill in Corpach; now he's part of the management team that leads operations at BSW Timber Group!

Jamie, 28, has recently come on board as the newest voluntary Board Member of the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) West Highland programme. This means he'll help guide the activities and priorities of the local DYW team across the west Highlands.





LT

## SHINTY ROUND-UP

### Oban Camanachd pre-season friendlies

New Oban Camanachd manager Gareth Evans has wasted no time in putting together a series of friendly matches ahead of the 2022 shinty season.

Whilst the club are still trying to organise a fixture for Saturday 5 February 2022, they hope to take on Lochaber at Mossfield a week later.

Oban Camanachd then travel to the Winterton to face Inveraray on Saturday 19 February 2022 before rounding off their pre-season programme against Fort William on Saturday 26 February 2022 with the venue yet to be decided.

### Oban Celtic cancel Boxing Day clash

Oban Celtic confirmed that their annual Boxing Day match between the young guns (under 30s) and the old crocks (over 30s) side has been called off.

In a club statement, Oban Celtic said: 'The club feels that due to the current uncertainty with the Covid pandemic, it is best to cancel the match for this year.'

### 2021 Shinty Review of the Season – Part 1

As the year draws to a close, it's time to look back on the shinty stories making the headlines during 2021.

#### January 2021

##### Covid KOs shinty

Shinty went into 2021 engulfed in Covid concerns and on the back of Scottish Government confirmation that mainland Scotland had moved to Tier 4 from Boxing Day. Therefore shinty was not permitted under the current restrictions.

#### February 2021

##### Clubs begin registration process

Shinty clubs started the registration process for players, coaches and committee members ahead of the start of the 2021 shinty season.

The Camanachd Association confirmed their intention to

have a 4-6 week pre-season programme followed by an abbreviated Mowi League campaign, with the early rounds of cup competitions to be played on a localised basis.

##### Camanachd Association sets 2021 priorities

The Camanachd Association presented their three key priorities to act as a guide ahead of the new season starting.

The first priority was to restart shinty and support clubs to understand the new Covid-related guidance, providing a safe environment within government guidance.

The second priority was in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion for all with a focus on removing barriers.

The third priority was to have safe and well-organised clubs and, with the Covid vaccine programme well underway, the association pledged to provide leadership and support.

The Camanachd Association also outlined preliminary plans for youth competitions. All competitions will return with the early stages regionalised before opening up for the later stages.

#### March 2021

##### International Women's Day

International Women's Day took place on Monday 8 March 2021 and the Camanachd Association encouraged shinty clubs to nominate a woman, whether that be a player, coach, volunteer, mum, sponsor or from the many others who make such a vital contribution to the sport.

##### Covid update

The Camanachd Association welcomed First Minister Nicola Sturgeon's announcement of the further easing of lockdown restrictions. In anticipation of the announcement, updated guidance documents had already been submitted to Sportscotland for their approval on behalf of the Scottish Government.

The Association anticipated having updated guidance to share with clubs in the coming days. The finer details of the guidance were still to be clarified but would be communicated as soon as possible to allow clubs to access the opportunities now available in line with government guidance.

Camanachd Association Chief Executive Officer Derek Keir said: 'It is so exciting to see restrictions being lifted in a measured way and I am sure everyone in the shinty community will be excited to get back to some form of normality even if that means

physically distancing in the first instance.'

##### Camanachd Association announces financial support

The Camanachd Association announced a financial support package worth up to £32,000 to support members and clubs.

The measures included a 50% reduction in membership fees with every club offered up to five free memberships to support those facing barriers to participation.

#### April 2021 League and Cup confirmation

With regional draws in place to limit travel during the early stages of the cup competitions, the Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup draw delivered some tasty ties, particularly in the Southern Section where Fort William were to meet Oban Camanachd, Oban Celtic were to host Glasgow Mid Argyll, Kyles Athletic to welcomed Inveraray or Lochaber and Kilmallie were to meet Ballachulish or Bute.

Holder Newtonmore were to have a derby against Kingussie.

Meantime the Mowi League structure was also announced with shinty's 18 senior clubs split into 3 regional leagues.

Mowi Senior League A comprised of: Fort William, Glenurquhart, Kilmallie, Kinlochshiel, Lochaber and Skye Camanachd

Mowi Senior League B featured: Beaulieu, Caberfeidh, Kingussie, Lovat, Newtonmore and Strathglass.

Aberdour, Glasgow Mid Argyll, Inveraray, Kyles Athletic, Oban Camanachd and Oban Celtic made up Mowi Senior League C.

Camanachd Association competitions director Burton Morrison said: 'The approach taken by the Competitions Committee was to provide clubs with the opportunity to play as many games as possible within the restricted calendar.

'We have developed a competitive league structure which, for this season only, provides most clubs with 10 league matches whilst reducing the amount of travelling involved.

'These fixtures will, of course, be complimented by the full array of cup competitions, the draws for which will take place over the next 3 weeks.'

#### May 2021

##### Youth shinty

Youth shinty was to the fore as the first competitive matches of the year took place in the Mowi London Shield. Rhys Kennedy scored four times as Fort William U17 beat Kilmallie U17 7-0 in Section A.

##### Oban interviews

The Half-Swing Shinty podcast was broadcast for the first time and Oban duo Stephen Sloss and Les Kinvig were amongst host Aarron Duncan-Macleod's early guests.

#### June 2021

##### Funding for new posts

The Camanachd Association announced funding for five new posts, four of which will be focused on developing opportunities to get involved in shinty in new areas or areas of potential.

This includes a Regional Development Officer post based in Argyll and Bute to focus on supporting clubs in their efforts to restart shinty, on creating new opportunities to engage the wider community and to support the continued effort to provide organised and high-quality experiences in shinty.

Camanachd Association Communications & Facilities Director (South) Roddy McCuish said: 'This is great news not just for the Association but for shinty as a whole and it demonstrates the commitment and continuing promotion of our game at all levels. I am excited to see the investment in Argyll and Bute.'

##### Shinty's back

Following an enforced 15-month break, the new shinty season got under way on Saturday 5 June 2021. Fixtures were played within current Covid restrictions which included no group travel, no use of changing room areas and supporters not permitted to attend matches.

The new regionalised leagues format produced a number of exciting local derbies.

Oban Camanachd would compete in Mowi Senior League C and manager Stephen Sloss had a period of transition to contend with. He said: 'Andrew McCuish, Lorne Dickie, Gary McKerracher and Willie Neilson have indicated that they won't play this season whilst Scott MacMillan's work pattern limits his availability. However, Garry Lord is back in training which is a boost and the likes of Blair MacFarlane, Evan MacLellan, Chrissie MacMillan and Ross Campbell were breaking into the first team before the enforced break so they are ready to step up on a regular basis.'

Dougie MacIntyre stayed on as Oban Celtic boss and assistant manager Les Kinvig knew their side would face some testing fixtures starting with Kyles Athletic's trip to Oban. Les said: 'The saving grace is that there is no pressure on us but we will be tested against what would normally be higher league opposition. It is a chance for us to measure where we are and recognise

what we need to do to get to the next level. It's been a short run-up to the new season with only a couple of weeks of contact training but we had been gathering for twice weekly fitness training for some weeks now. We'd have liked a longer pre-season but it is the same for everyone.'

When the opening day arrived, Glasgow came out of Level 2 at midnight meaning Glasgow Mid Argyll were able to host Oban Camanachd just hours later in Mowi League C and the contest finished goalless. Oban Camanachd manager Stephen Sloss spoke afterwards: 'We were poor up front and should have scored but it wasn't a great game overall. I'm maybe expecting a bit much as both sides were rusty having not played competitively for so long. Papa's goals have been important to us over the years and we are trying to replace them throughout the forward line rather than relying on one individual.'

Amongst the other matches played, Roddy Macdonald scored twice as Kyles Athletic won 4-0 at Oban Celtic. Colin MacDonald and Ross Macrae got the others.

Kingussie proved to be the early pace-setters in their Mowi League B and after Alexander Michie's penalty earned a 2-1 win against Lovat, the Kings were 13-0 winners at Caberfeidh. James Falconer and Savio Genini both scored four times with Iain Fraser grabbing a hat-trick. Dylan Borthwick got the other two goals.

Oban Camanachd matched Kingussie's tally, beating Aberdour 13-0 at Mossfield. Daniel MacVicar scored four times, Connor Howe grabbed a hat-trick and Daniel Madej scored twice with Daniel McCuish, Scott MacMillan, Lewis Buchanan and Daniel Sloss getting the others.

Speaking afterwards, Oban Camanachd manager Stephen Sloss said: 'It's difficult to take much from such a one-sided game and we rotated the boys for most of the match to get players on the ball. I felt for Aberdour and they were playing South 1 shinty in 2019 before reaching the national so this was a big step up but they never gave up.'

'It's not ideal but just the way the leagues are at the moment. However, we needed to score some goals after drawing a bank against GMA the week before. They were all decent goals too, quite a variety, and they needed to be to get past their keeper who was outstanding.'

Kinlochshiel reached the Artemis Macaulay Cup second round thanks to a 3-1 win at Fort William. Keith MacRae,

Donald Nixon and John MacRae got their goals with Craig MacDonald countering.

Craig Anderson sent Glasgow Mid Argyll through as they beat Inveraray 1-0.

Fraser Heath's double helped Lovat beat Caberfeidh 4-0 with Greg Matheson and Lewis Tawse getting the others.

Bute beat Col Glen 3-0 in the Scottish Seas Farms Glasgow Celtic Society Cup first round. Scott Harvey scored twice, one a penalty, with Thomas Morrison getting the other.

Coll MacKay and Fraser Watt cancelled Lennon Campbell's effort as Inveraray recorded a 2-1 midweek win over Oban Celtic in Mowi League C. Oban Celtic assistant manager Les Kinvig said: 'It was a good game with both sides playing attractive, attacking shinty and maybe a draw would have been a fairer result. Inveraray created more chances but the balance of play was pretty even. Work commitments and injuries meant we had a bit of a makeshift line-up which we had to reshuffle a couple of times during the game itself. A couple of the boys were carrying knocks and it was the overall team performance that pleased Dougie (MacIntyre) and I the most.'

David MacLennan and Jed Stoddart netted as Glenurquhart won 2-0 in their Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup first round tie against Strathglass. Oban Celtic and Skye were given byes into the second round.

Covid outbreaks were already affecting the shinty schedule including the Oban Derby between Oban Celtic and Oban Camanachd in Mowi League C.

Lochside Rovers opened their Mowi South League A campaign with a battling draw at home to Bute as Ryan Craig's late leveller cancelled out Lewis Buchanan's early opener. In their only other match during the month, Lochside came from behind to win 2-1 at Ballachulish with Alexander MacDonald and Robbie Brown getting the goals. 'We had a young squad at the start of the season,' said then Lochside boss Gareth Evans.

'I thought we would do well to finish mid-table and I expected Bute and Ballachulish to be strong and it just so happened we faced both these teams in our first two games and it was great to collect three points out of four.'

The Oban Celtic seconds were placed in the Mowi Central League. Goals from Keegan McPhee, Joe MacVicar and Andrew MacDonald's double weren't enough as the Oban side lost 6-4 to their Lochaber counterparts.



# Fort William Tyre Service support for boxing club

Lochaber Phoenix Boxing Club had a very welcome early Christmas present when Alec Cottam of Fort William Tyre Service became the club's latest major sponsor with a substantial donation to their funds.

The donation is particularly welcome because - as with many other sporting clubs - the shutdown caused by Covid really hit home financially with no income from training fees or fundraising events, while still having to meet regular bills. Due to this, finance was reaching its lowest point since the club was founded.

Alec has been a great friend of the club for some time, taking an interest in activities as well as supporting the recent home show by sponsoring a bout, advertising in the programme and making the winning bid on an auction item.

Accepting the cheque on behalf of the club, head coach Vince Lopez said: 'We can't thank Alec enough for his help.'

'The club is hugely popular



It may have been cold and dark outside, but members of Lochaber Phoenix Boxing Club were happy to go along and personally thank Alec Cottam of Fort William Tyre Service for his sponsorship which will help them further develop their skills.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos.

in the community and all of our training sessions are very well attended from age nine in the junior section to as young as you feel in the seniors, both male and female. All are

welcome. 'Due to our location we have no option but to travel to other clubs and competitions right across Scotland so that our boxers can gain the experience

and awards they are so keen to get and certainly deserve.

'While we are more than happy to do this, each trip costs quite a bit of money.

'With Covid restrictions lift-

ing for the moment there will be more opportunity for our boxers to take part and demonstrate their abilities, including the National Championships in Motherwell over two week-

ends this coming February.

'This sponsorship will certainly be a big help so big thank you to Alec and Fort William Tyre Service for the support.'



Fort William's new manager Shadab Ifitkhar is due to take charge of his first game when the Fort visit Forres Mechanics on December 27.

## Fort game at Formartine frozen off

Last Saturday's Highland League fixture between Formartine and Fort William due to be played at North Lodge Park, Pitmedden, was called off due to a frozen pitch.

The Fort's next game is scheduled to take place on Monday 27 December when they travel to take on Forres Mechanics.

This is followed by the long trip to Dudgeon Park to play Brora Rangers on Monday 3 January.

# Exercise classes for people affected by cancer

A programme of exercise for those affected by cancer is being offered by High Life Highland (HLH).

Macmillan Move More offers physical activity and support for those recently diagnosed or those that have completed treatment.

HLH Activities Development Officer Eilidh MacLean said: 'We offer the programme online and classes are varied to offer activity suited to individual needs - whether brand new to physical activity or for those comfortable with fitness classes.'

'Move More is based on research showing the significant benefit physical activity can have before, during and after treatment for cancer.'

'Not only does physical activity benefit physical health, building strength and improving flexibility, it also provides mental health benefits that can reduce anxiety and improve confidence.'

The classes offered include stretching, mobility, building muscle and improving balance to help develop people's overall fitness.



Move More classes are now available online on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings.

Online classes take place on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings.

Consultant Nurse - Cancer Care at NHS Highland Chrissie Lane said: 'Having a

range of activities and support available for people affected by cancer to increase the amount

of movement and physical active they participate in is vitally important.

'The classes being offered by High Life Highland are a really important aspect of the improvements we are developing in Highland to help prepare people for their treatments and their recovery.'

### Benefit

'This partnership approach between NHS Highland, High Life Highland and Macmillan Cancer Support has been running successfully for several years and I look forward to it continuing to go from strength to strength for the benefit of people affected by cancer.'

'My clinical colleagues and I would highly recommend anybody who has had a cancer diagnosis to get involved in the activities being offered.'

The programme can also advise on other activities or classes at leisure facilities across the Highlands and links with other groups such as walking groups.

For more information and to join, visit [www.highlifehighland.com/mm](http://www.highlifehighland.com/mm) or email [move-more@highlifehighland.com](mailto:move-more@highlifehighland.com).





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Artist Mouse Macpherson... A Perth garden...  
Rule, Britannia! writer... Book reviews...

# Boxing Day comes early for Lochaber Phoenix



A different sort of boxing was underway at the Lochaber Phoenix gym last week as members packed up chocolate filled selection boxes for delivery to Lochaber Food Bank. Regulars and volunteers at the club each made a donation to buy the gifts which they hope will bring an additional round of Christmas cheer to clients of the Food Bank.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos.



# New course record in LAC Winter League

Around 60 hardy athletes completed the fourth race in the 10 round Lochaber Athletics Club Winter League recently when taking part in the Cour Loop in the Nevis Range.

Congratulations go to Ross Gollan from East Sutherland Athletics Club on his win and also setting what organisers are pretty sure is a new course record in one hour, five minutes and 14 seconds.

LAC's Liam Hutson was 2nd with Shaun Cumming (Highland Hill Runners) in 3rd place.

### Undefeated

A mention must also go to LAC's Alan Ross on being fourth overall and 1st Male Veteran 40 - undefeated in his category in the league so far.

HHR women put on another strong performance. Caroline Marwick took the win with

Hanna Ward-Penny in 2nd and LAC's Georgia White in 3rd.

A good day for running with some PBs and competitive racing right through the categories. Big thanks to the organiser and all the helpers.

### Thanks

The second race in the junior winter league series was also held at Nevis Range.

Aaron Tresidder continued

his good racing form with a first place in the under 11s over the 1600-metre course in seven minutes and 20 seconds.

He was followed by Caoimh Bellshaw in 8:20 while 3rd place went to Kai Tresidder in 8:48. 4, Jethro Cameron in 12:26; 5, Merry Wells in 13:54.

Maddison Macmillan was 1st under 13 in 15:08 for the 3200-metre course.

The first boy in the under 13 age group was Osian Bellshaw in 15:20 with Angus Davies 2nd in 18:51.

### Training

Well done to all young athletes. Youngsters are invited to come to athletic training in the New Year and improve their fitness.

Thanks to Margaret Rose MacPhee, Willie Anderson, June Watt with the race, and

to all the parents for their support. The next Winter League race will be at the end of January.



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Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday 23 December, 2021** are listed below with differences for major ports listed alongside. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

|           |   |           |   |           |  |           |   |
|-----------|---|-----------|---|-----------|--|-----------|---|
| <b>23</b> | 0157 1.3<br>0751 3.7<br>TH 1428 1.7<br>2017 3.5 | <b>25</b> | 0311 1.5<br>0908 3.5<br>SA 1547 1.9<br>2140 3.2 | <b>27</b> | 0453 1.6<br>1058 3.4<br>M 1800 1.9<br>C 2345 3.0 | <b>29</b> | 0112 3.1<br>0708 1.6<br>W 1340 3.4<br>2019 1.7  |
| <b>24</b> | 0232 1.4<br>0827 3.6<br>F 1503 1.8<br>2055 3.3  | <b>26</b> | 0358 1.6<br>0957 3.4<br>SU 1647 1.9<br>2235 3.1 | <b>28</b> | 0558 1.6<br>1215 3.4<br>TU 1913 1.8              | <b>30</b> | 0229 3.3<br>0818 1.4<br>TH 1450 3.6<br>2117 1.4 |

### FORT WILLIAM WEATHER

#### Thursday

Heavy rain and a gentle breeze  
Temperatures 5°C to 7°C.

#### Friday

Light rain and a gentle breeze  
Temperatures 2°C to 6°C.

#### Saturday

Sleet and a gentle breeze  
Temperatures 1°C to 5°C.

#### Sunday

Light cloud and a gentle breeze  
Temperatures 0°C to 4°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 |

