

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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£6.6M Rest plan best route, for now

LOUISE GLEN

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THE TRANSPORT minister has said that no credible permanent solution for the A83 Rest and Be Thankful had been found to date.

MSP Derek Mackay, cabinet minister for transport, said the £6.6 million investment announced on Monday is the correct course of action on the information experts have given him to make the main route into Argyll secure and sustainable.

Mr Mackay said he was willing to listen to anyone who believes they have found the permanent solution – in the meantime meaningful progress is being made.

Speaking exclusively to *The Oban Times* after the Monday morning announcement, Mr Mackay said he was taking a 'rational, responsible approach' to ongoing concerns about the

landslip-prone area having asked the people of Argyll and Bute what the long-term solution for the route was. He said 'no-one can come up with a risk-free solution'.

'Anything other than this would be a waste of tax payers money,' he continued.

'If there is some solution we are missing that would make the entire area safe then we will look at it immediately. We have looked at all the ideas that have been brought before us until now and we will continue doing that.'

'In the meantime we need to make sure we are doing what we know works.'

Mr Mackay said the latest incident at the end of December where a woman was almost killed when her car was caught up in a landslip was 'exceptional', and that the track record was that there were fewer closures due to the netting. He added:

'We need a continuity of access and the new netting solutions will take us nearer to that.'

Mr Mackay admitted that communication with the public had not always been as immediate as he would have liked and that alternative routes were taking too long to open up.

'We need to get the message out there that Argyll is not closed but is 'open for business'.'

'The Old Military Road needs to open as soon as problems happen on the other route. We cannot have a 24-hour delay in it opening. Decisions have to be made promptly and safely. Everything we do has to be about public safety.'

Mr Mackay said further multi-million pound investment in the alternative route, via Loch Lomond, at Pulpit Rock and the Crianlarich bypass, 'have been well received'.

When discussing a plan for a

passage through the most landslip prone area – a 300-400-metre section of the Rest and Be Thankful – put forward by local hotelier Donald Clark, Mr Mackay said this plan would not cover the entire area needing protection.

'If it was the right thing to do then we would do it. But it does not solve all the problems we have in the area.'

Mr Mackay dismissed claims about a central-belt bias in funding and approving roads and transport projects.

'When I go to the control room at Transport Scotland the situation in Argyll is always on the agenda,' he said.

'What is happening anywhere in the country is of importance to me. Let me be clear, we want our roads moving in Scotland and I think that anyone who was at the taskforce meeting on Monday will agree, that this

route is receiving our attention as it would if it were in Glasgow, Edinburgh or anywhere in Scotland. The plain fact is that there are no easy answers.'

'On Monday there was an opportunity for the members of the taskforce to reject the money but everyone around the table agreed the investment.'

Argyll and Bute Council's policy leader for roads, Councillor Ellen Morton, said: 'Being prepared to respond to bad weather is one thing but taking action which will ensure permanent access is clearly the best long-term goal. We are committed to doing all we can as a local authority, but only the Scottish Government can deliver a permanent solution.'

'We are pleased that we continue to have these positive strategic meetings and work with our partners at national government level and on the A83

taskforce to move this forward.' A83 campaigner Donald Clark, from the George Hotel in Inveraray, said: 'I have consistently argued that a simple, safe, open-sided flow-over canopy (closed outer edge at the top three gullies) could be easily cut into the hillsides to give a four-metre wide single carriage-way relief road activated at high landslide alert times.'

'These three dangerous gullies are on a 300m section of the Rest and Be Thankful. Transport Scotland has ruled this out on a cost basis. It has produced an overly complicated design stretching to 1.2km at a cost between £105 and £120m.'

'If the Dawlish seawall and twin mainline railway tracks can be completely rebuilt at a cost of £35 million in eight weeks then Transport Scotland has got its design and costings seriously wrong.'

TIMESLINE

Historic domestic abuse, man fined

A MAN previously convicted of domestic violence found his past being investigated by police, Oban Sheriff Court heard last week.

Members of Scottish Police's Domestic Abuse Task Force interviewed previous partners of Ross Higgins, of 98 Ainslie Road, Cumbernauld, and two further charges were brought against the 40-year-old.

He admitted that between December 25, 2001 and January 4, 2002 he assaulted a woman by pushing her on the body, and between March 1, 2003 and December 7, 2007 he assaulted another woman.

Both these incidents happened at addresses in Oban.

His defence agent said that Higgins was now in a new relationship.

Sheriff Ruth Anderson fined him £250 for each offence.

Correction

A REPORT in last week's Oban Times incorrectly reported that Julie MacKenzie – an SNP candidate for the Oban, North and Lorn by election – was a press officer for the political party.

The Oban Times would like to point out that Ms MacKenzie is not a paid member of staff for the SNP, although she does volunteer with the political organisation.

Raising concern for young carers

HIDDEN carers are at the fore today, January 28, with Young Carer's Awareness Day.

However, support providers are using the event to warn that funding for services for youngsters are at risk.

It is believed there are more than 1,000 young carers in Argyll, with more than 100 youngsters in Oban alone registered at the Carer's Centre.

A full report on the centre's work will appear in next week's Oban Times.

Ice one, Roderick! Mull skipper names berg after island peak

RODERICK Wyness knows a thing or two about icebergs. And he sent us this photograph to prove it.

The skipper, who hails from Tobermory on Mull, works in New Zealand at the country's largest glacier - the Tasman glacier in Mount Cook National Park.

He said: 'I skipper one of four small high-speed vessels around the lake that has formed since the 1970s at the terminal face of the glacier.'

'We frequently witness large parts of icebergs breaking away, which gives the public the opportunity to touch ice that fell as snow 600 years ago.'

'On January 21, a huge iceberg broke free from the base of the Tasman glacier. It is possible it may have originated from as deep as 240 metres below the surface of the lake.'

'When the ice arrives on the surface at first it is blue and glass-like with huge boulders visible deep within it. Very quickly the ice starts to turn white as the sun warms it and its crystals begin to separate.'

'The iceberg is the largest we have seen this season and as such is worthy of a name. I was given the honour of naming it Ben More after my home island's highest peak.'



Tributes paid to retiring councillor

TRIBUTES were made to an Oban councillor at a meeting of the full membership of Argyll and Bute Council last Thursday.

Elected members from across the political spectrum acknowledged the loyal support Duncan MacIntyre had given them. Mr MacIntyre decided to stand down due to illness.

Praised for his work – particularly to do with public transport and roads – it was noted he had been a huge influence on the local authority.

Council leader Dick Walsh said: 'Duncan never missed an opportunity to represent his area and community. His knowledge has been of significant benefit to Argyll and Bute.'

Adding his vote of thanks, Len Scouler, provost of Argyll and Bute, said: 'Duncan made a long and valued commitment to the council and it has been good to hear the many positive comments. He will be missed.'



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Deputy provost axed from posts in last-minute council coup

THE DEPUTY provost at Argyll and Bute Council has been ousted from his position after 'failing to communicate' with the Provost and the leadership team on amendments he was bringing to the chamber.

Dougie Philand only became aware of the move while on the front bench at last Thursday's council meeting.

In a last minute paper presented to councillors, it was revealed that three members of the current front-bench team were being removed because

they had 'chosen to walk away from the administration'. Iain Angus MacDonald and Donald Kelly were also removed from committee positions.

The senior auditor from the Accounts Commission, who was in the chamber, held his head in his hands as councillors spent more than an hour discussing Councillor Philand's removal.

Many councillors said the removal of Councillor Philand went against the commitment within the local authority to

work across the whole chamber. Councillor Donald Kelly said: 'For anyone to vote to remove the deputy provost from his post would be detrimental to the whole council. These papers lead me to think this council has not changed in any way shape or form.'

Councillor Ellen Morton, deputy leader, argued: 'Councillor Philand has brought forward amendments [to council policies] without discussion with the provost and the administration first. It is not

appropriate so I am quite comfortable with this proposal.'

But Councillor Vivien Dance said: 'Members in the chamber are vindictive. If you speak against the council you are not trusted and are put out. I wonder in what way that means we are working together?'

Councillor Aileen Morton said she found Councillor Dance's comments 'disrespectful'.

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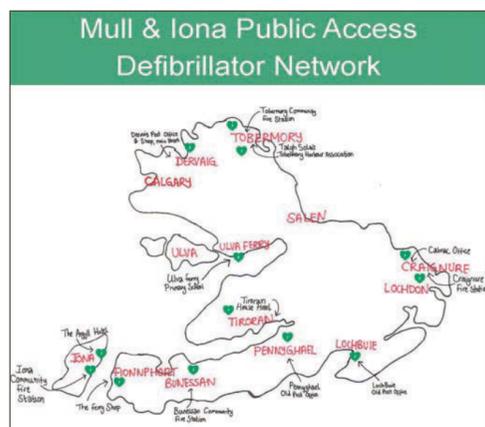
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MULL lines



Defibrillator map to boost public awareness

MULL and Iona Community Trust (MICT) has taken responsibility for working with the Scottish Ambulance Service to ensure public access defibrillators already in place around the island are known to the ambulance service emergency call handlers.

Moray Finch, of MICT, said: 'The number of public access defibrillators is increasing as we secure funding and install them at strategic locations around the island with the agreement of willing businesses and building owners. We have produced a map, which is printed above, and is also available on the MICT website and Facebook page. Please feel free to make use of this on your own websites and publications. The more people aware the better.'

'The defibrillators are checked every month by local volunteer guardians. These checks are coordinated by Cheryl Callow (north) and Jenny Jeffree (south), who then confirm to the ambulance service that each and every unit is functioning and operational.'

'No training is required to use a public access defibrillator; they are programmed to provide verbal instructions and will not provide a shock unless it detects a shockable rhythm in the patient.'

'It is vital that in an emergency, a 999 call is made to ensure that the ambulance service despatches an ambulance and, if they deem it appropriate, a community first responder - please do not forget to call 999 if you ever have to make use of one of the public access defibrillators.'

'Local training sessions can be arranged in basic life support skills and the use of a defibrillator. If you're interested for your area please contact me and I will put you in touch with the various training providers.'

'Anyone calling 999, who might need access to a defibrillator will be advised of the location of the nearest one by the call handler.'

The list of locations which have a 24/7 public access defibrillator are as follows:

- Argyll Hotel - Iona,
- Iona Fire Station (in the fire engine),
- The Ferry Shop - Fionnphort,
- Outside Bunessan Fire Station,
- Tioran House Hotel,
- The Old Post Office, Pennyghael,
- Ulva Primary School,
- Taigh Solais (Tobermory Harbour Association building),
- Craignure Fire Station (in the fire engine),
- Dervaig Post Office and Stores,
- Tobermory Fire Station (in the fire engine),
- Calmac Port office, Craignure,
- The Old Post Office, Lochbuie.

There are current discussions about a site at Calgary, with the location still to be finalised; and plans for a defibrillator at The Salen Spar.

Mr Finch added: 'There is a running cost for the public access defibrillators - to replace the batteries every five years and the sticky pads every three years. So if anyone would like to contribute a small donation, that would be much appreciated.'

'There are now four community first responder networks operating - on Iona, the Ross of Mull, Dervaig and Tobermory. This is thanks to residents volunteering to take on this important and valuable role. We are discussing with the Scottish Ambulance Service plans to set up a new group based at Ulva Ferry and hope that this might happen in the next few months.'

If anyone is interested in receiving defibrillator training and CPR training, is interested in becoming a volunteer community first responder, would like to make a donation or would like to know more, email Moray Finch mfinch@mict.co.uk or call 01680 812905.

MSP tells minister 'people are also endangered'

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Rhoda Grant MSP.

MARINE areas restricted from activities by people were at the forefront of questioning at the Scottish Parliament last week as Highlands and Islands MSP Rhoda Grant questioned the minister for rural affairs, Richard Lochhead.

Ms Grant took to the floor to ask about the impact the recently sanctioned Marine Protected Area (MPA) designations would have on island and fishing communities and what steps the Scottish Government would take to mitigate the effects on those communities. Speaking in parliament last

Thursday, Ms Grant asked Mr Lochhead what social and economic impact assessments the government had carried out on the impact of MPAs.

She also asked how many jobs would be lost on shore and at sea in these locations as a result of their designation.

Ms Grant then asked what compensation would be offered to workers affected by ensuing job losses and if Mr Lochhead would set up a Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE) in each of the affected areas.

After the parliamentary session, Ms Grant said: 'I again tried to emphasise to the minister the impact these MPAs could have on our fishing industry.'

'Industry leaders have condemned the new restrictions stating that they go well beyond what was necessary to meet the

biodiversity aim and will cost jobs in our fragile communities.'

'The minister chose to ignore the industry experts and also the fishermen, who have protected the marine environment for generations, and pressed ahead with all but three of the MPAs.'

'He appears not to grasp the importance of the fishing industry to island and fishing communities.'

'Fishing is one of the last sustainable industries on the islands and the implementation of these MPAs could pose a threat to the fishing industry and island communities.'

'Because these MPAs will become a reality, I asked him to set up PACE groups in the affected

communities in order to provide alternative employment for those affected. He gave me no such commitment, ignoring the points I made.'

Ms Grant continued: 'People living in these fragile communities are committed to the environment, that is why we have fantastic biodiversity which these designations seek to protect.'

'However, people are also endangered species in these areas and need to be afforded protection. It would not be onerous for him to compensate them and commit to providing alternative employment as recognition of their role in protecting our environment.'

Tweed is talk of the town as HTA takes stand at Florence fashion event

HARRIS tweed was centre stage recently at the world's biggest menswear event, Pitti Uomo, held in Florence.

For the first time, the Harris Tweed Authority had a stand at the show, which attracts fashionistas from around the world, while Shawbost-based Harris Tweed Hebrides maintained its usual presence.

The show creates not only an opportunity to meet clients old and new, but also to see how a wide range of market leaders are using the fabric for the season ahead.

And, as usual, there was no shortage of diversity on display.

Harris Tweed Hebrides creative director Mark Hogarth, said: 'This was a really exciting show, which bodes well for the year ahead.'

'We were delighted to see great collections from new clients such as Mackintosh and Palto, an Italian company that visited Shawbost last year.'

Cumbernauld-based Mackintosh is now Japanese owned and has produced an outstanding Harris tweed collection of outerwear using six bold patterns in



From the islands to the Streetwear fashionistas, Harris tweed was turning heads in Florence.

a line of quilted jackets. Harris Tweed Hebrides fabric featured prominently last year in collections by Chanel, Zegna and Lardini. The indications from Florence

are that it will once again be taking its place on the catwalks of London, Paris and Milan in the weeks ahead.

Another new collaboration is with the London-based

streetwear brand Art Comes First.

The self-styled 'punk tailors' have long been fans of Harris tweed from their days on Savile Row.

They premiered a collection of thin-cut suits and biker jackets in leather and Clo Mor.

The limited edition collection will be sold exclusively in the Dover Street Market boutiques of London, Tokyo and New York.

The Harris Tweed Authority, led by chairman Norman L MacDonald and chief executive Lorna MacAulay, was in Florence to promote the generic interest of the industry and occupied a prominent location within the main pavilion of Pitti Uomo, as well as hosting a well-attended reception.

Harris Tweed Hebrides chairman Brian Wilson said: 'The HTA presence gave a very strong focal point for the brand and got a lot of interest.'

'It is worth being at Pitti Uomo not only to see what has been done with our fabric but also to understand the potential for doing a great deal more.'

Patients surveyed to help improve service on islands

SURVEYS have been sent to previous in-patients at Western Isles hospitals to find out what they thought of their time in hospital.

A random selection of patients who stayed at St Brendan's, Uist and Barra or Western Isles Hospital between April and September 2015 have been sent a survey pack.

The pack contains a questionnaire where people are asked to provide feedback on their experience of hospital and any care they received after leaving hospital so the NHS nationally and locally can see what it is

doing well and what needs improvement.

Chris Anne Campbell, NHS Western Isles nurse director, said: 'No-one knows more about the experience of receiving care than our patients. They're the experts.'

'This survey will tell us exactly how patients experience their care and will help NHS Western Isles to tap into lived experiences of our patients. This survey will support the delivery of a programme of continuous improvement which will, in turn, deliver high quality, safe and effective patient-centred care.'

Island pharmacist short-listed for national award

AN ISLAY woman is in the running for pharmacist of the year.

Catriona Brodie, owner and manager of Islay Pharmacy in Bowmore, has been short-listed in the Scottish Pharmacist Awards after introducing first aid advice and a tick removal service.

Ms Brodie said: 'The population on Islay increases from around 3,500 to 10,000 during the summer months, and a lot of visitors walking around the island are unaware of the dangers that ticks pose. We advised them about how to deal with

tick bites, how to safely remove ticks from the body and how to cope with the itching around the bite area.'

'We also gave advice about the early warning signs of the associated Lyme disease; a potentially debilitating disease.'

A pioneering NHS Highland patient safety initiative has also been short-listed for the innovation and change in pharmacy practice award.

The winners of the eight categories will be announced on Saturday February 27 at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre.

Council to offer bird advice

ARGYLL and Bute Council is to provide advice on controlling gulls and other birds that cause problems.

Councillors are regularly told about feral gulls and pigeons causing problems by nesting on properties and harassing people during nesting season.

At a recent meeting of the council's planning, protective services and licensing committee, the problem and a range of solutions were discussed and it was decided that offering an advice service would be the best course of action.

The council will now develop guidance and information on how to minimise problems caused by wild birds which will be widely available.

New distillery for Islay proposal

PLANS for the first new distillery on Islay for a decade have been submitted to Argyll and Bute Council for approval.

Hunter Laing and Co want to build the £8 million malt whisky distillery at Ardnahoe, near Port Askaig, on the north-east coast.

Hunter Laing and Co is a family business run by Stewart Laing and his sons Andrew and Scott. Managing director Mr Laing, who started his career at the Bruichladdich distillery on Islay, said: 'The new facility is being designed to create a particular style of spirit that we know from our experience of selling whisky in 65 countries around the world will appeal to the Islay whisky lover. By building this distillery, we are fulfilling a long-held dream.'

The distillery would be built in two phases and is expected to be completed by the end of 2017 subject to plans being approved.

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Giant worms found on Rum

Earthworms weighing up to 12.5g discovered at Pappadil

WORMS measuring more than a foot long may sound like science fiction but university researchers have found them on the isle of Rum, writes Eala McAllister.

The worms live much longer than worms elsewhere and, unlike most animals, earthworms don't stop growing when they reach adult size but continue to grow throughout their life.

Research coordinator Dr Kevin Butt from the University of Central Lancashire has put their size and longevity down to fertile soil and lack of predators.

He said: 'There's quite poor soil in most places on Rum, but in Pappadil, where we found them, there's really nice brown soil.'

'What would often happen to worms, even before they're a couple of years old, is they would be eaten by birds or dug up for fishing.'

'On Rum there were no predators, so they just kept growing. We think worms can live for up to 10 years and I



Clockwise from above: the giant worms were recently found by researchers working at Pappadil, who discovered larger mounds of earth than usual, below.



absolutely think they were about that age.'

To try and confirm this, the researchers have marked

some of the smaller ones and hope to monitor them to see how long they live.

Dr Butt has been coming to Rum for 20 years and has taken plenty of students there. On one visit, he and a colleague made their way to Pappadil and found a larger than usual mound outside a burrow suggesting much bigger worms than normal. On a return trip, mustard

powder and water was put down to encourage the worms to surface.

What emerged were worms up to 39cm and weighing up to 12.5grams, about three times the usual four-to-five-gram weight.

Dr Butt explained: 'As they came up we realised they could be the biggest in the UK so we weighed and measured them.'

He is convinced there are other worms of a similar size on other islands and the mainland. 'It wouldn't have to be remote islands,' he said. 'What matters are the conditions, the good soil and lack of predators - you could find them on steep woodland.'

The discovery is good news for the eco system on Rum as the giant worms help to aerate the soil and prevent flooding.

Hogmanay gatecrasher jailed

A MAN was jailed last week after he gatecrashed an Oban Hogmanay party where a former girlfriend was celebrating and threatened her with a knife and a bottle.

Paul Donaldson MacMillan, 27, of Smerclait, Pulpit Drive, Pulpit Hill, Oban, admitted forcibly entering a flat in Oban where his ex-partner was amongst those present; refusing to leave when repeatedly requested, being verbally abusive to her, taking a bottle and kitchen knife and brandishing them at her.

Procurator Fiscal Eoin McGinty said the couple had only gone out for six weeks and this had ended a month before.

Oban Sheriff Court heard that early on January 1 MacMillan arrived at the address by taxi and after being told he wasn't welcome he hung around outside before 'barging' in.

The fiscal said: 'He took a seat in the living room; all present asked him to leave but he refused to do so and became abusive to everyone there. This went on for three to four hours.'

When the woman eventually went to call the police, MacMillan said he would leave if she hung up but then grabbed the phone out of her hand went into the kitchen and grabbed a knife and a half-full bottle of Buckfast.

'He turned to face the complainant, waved these above his head, brandishing them in her direction,' said the fiscal.

The girl fled the flat with a friend, having to get out of a window.

When arrested, police had to delay his interview at the police station because MacMillan was 'in an agitated and aggressive state'.

MacMillan's defence agent, Jane Thompson said that MacMillan's on-going alcohol problems were behind the incident and he could be assessed for a place in a rehabilitation unit.

However, in view of his recent record of offending, Sheriff Ruth Anderson QC sentenced him to six months in prison.

Councillor ousted from deputy post

Continued from page 1

The Helensburgh councillor said: 'Councillor Philand has chosen to walk away from the administration.'

'It is not unreasonable to expect him to be cohesive with the administration and expect him to take forward its agenda.'

Mr Philand said he was extremely disappointed in the way he had been treated and that it was a real concern that people would not behave like adults when there was hard business to be done.

Mr Philand was also ousted from the membership of the health and social care integration board where he was overseeing the merging of services provided by NHS Highland and Argyll and Bute Council.

Mr Philand has 37 years' experience in NHS Highland in both general nursing and as a manager in the health board.

Mr Philand was replaced by Maurice Corry, a councillor from Helensburgh.

Seil sewage system is waste of money, say islanders

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AN £11.7 MILLION project to protect an area of the Argyll coast known for its shellfish is being compromised by the sheer volume of sewage 'overspills', claims an island protest group.

More than 50 per cent of the adult population of Seil, south of Oban, have signed a petition against a further proposal from Scottish Water which means abandoning some of the original scheme to pump raw sewage over a hill and release it barely treated into Easdale Bay.

Easdale Bay is known for its dolphins. They have been photographed in the area where the effluent would be pumped into the sea.

Problems started eight years ago when plans for a water treatment system on the Isle of Seil, stretching from the picturesque Bridge over the Atlantic, to Balvicar Bay, were rejected by the community. And eight years later the project is still tipping human waste into the sea before being fully treated.

Scottish Water is accused, by islanders, of wasting taxpayers' money with the state-of-the-art sewage system, which was installed in 2008 against the community's wishes.

A spokeswoman on behalf of islanders said: 'It is clear that the treatment plant at Balvicar



Dolphins playing in Easdale Bay at the same location as a proposed outlet for raw sewage.

is not working correctly and that there are regular overspills of screened but otherwise untreated sewage into Balvicar Bay.

'Year-on-year these are getting worse, in 2014 there were 365 spillages of what we believe is only screened raw sewage.'

'We have the data for spillages for 2012, 2013 and 2014 and they make disturbing reading. We wonder why action has not been taken against Scottish Water by one of the government agencies.'

'Year-to-year comparisons are difficult because of different reporting methods, but they indicate that there were 243

spillage events in 2012, 20 in 2013 and 365 in 2014.

'Compare this with Scottish Water Solutions predicted spill frequency of 1.6 per year. Some of the major spillages may be due to membrane failure and others likely result from excess inputs during wet weather.'

'So, by poor design and incompetence, Scottish Water has succeeded in concentrating raw sewage from 160 properties into the most significant shellfish-growing area of Seil Sound at frequent intervals.'

'Remember, this treatment plant was installed to improve

the quality of the waters in Seil sound and Balvicar Bay.

'The reality is that Scottish Water has been polluting Balvicar Bay significantly thereby polluting supposedly highly-protected waters at an iconic beauty spot.'

The spokesperson confirmed that more than 50 per cent of adults on Seil had signed the petition.

A Scottish Water spokesperson said: 'We are currently developing a project to meet European Directive requirements for wastewater treatment at Seaview Terrace [on Seil]. At the same

time, we are looking at options to address performance issues at the current treatment works at Balvicar, with a focus to ensure we deliver compliant and sustainable wastewater services for customers on the island of Seil.'

'The current works has difficulty passing sufficient flow through the membranes, so while there is a high quality treated effluent, there are increased spills from the network. Scottish Environment Protection Agency has been notified of this, as required, and as a consequence we are developing options for a longer-term strategic solution.'

'We are relatively early in the process of deciding the most appropriate solution and while some options, such as transferring flows from Balvicar to a new and sufficiently-sized septic tank at Seaview Terrace have been more developed, there remains significant appraisal work to confirm whether this solution would be appropriate.'

'With respect to the existing infrastructure, the vast majority of the previous investment supported the delivery of the network assets such as sewers and pumping stations. These will be retained in any future solution.'

'As we work through the options we will continue to engage with the local community and stakeholders, including the involvement of the various regulators currently involved.'

Coll crofter hits out over 'unreliable' ferry service

A COLL crofter has said the unreliable ferry service is making it impossible for people to run businesses on the island, writes Steven Rae.

Colin Kennedy is vice-convenor and commissioner of the crofting commission in the south-west Highlands and has other business interests on Coll.

He was due to travel from Oban back to Coll following a business meeting on January 21. However, the MV Lord of the Isles ferry was delayed in leaving Oban by more than two hours, and once underway needed to turn around and return to Oban due to the weather. He claims that the weather was, in fact, better at 8.15am and the sailing would have been possible were there no delays.

He said: 'It's a lifeline service. How can the captain justify it being delayed for two hours and



Crofter Colin Kennedy fears Coll may become uninhabited.

then leaving? The forecast said the wind would be getting up later in the day; the captain must have seen that. People can't run a business on the island because of this.'

'A two-hour business meeting for me ends up costing me five days because of the service. It's turning into the St Kilda of the

modern era and could end up uninhabited. The service simply isn't up to standard.'

A CalMac spokesman said: 'On January 21, the departure of the MV Lord of the Isles was delayed until 10.30am due to adverse weather and the forecast was for the wind to ease off slightly later in the day. Unfortunately, due to constant 50mph winds the vessel did not manage to get into either Coll or Tiree and returned to Oban. Several other routes were affected by bad weather that day.'

'Adverse weather is fact of life at this time of year and every effort is made to provide a service as long as the safety of the passengers, crew and vessel is not likely to be compromised. We fully understand customers' frustrations when sailings are cancelled or disrupted but trust that they recognise that their safety must be our number one priority.'

Social care plan report published

A REPORT following the public consultation of Argyll and Bute's Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) strategic plan has been published.

From September to November 2015 HSCP carried out a public consultation on its strategy, which detailed how the HSCP intends to improve the way it delivers health and social care over the next three years. It also explained what services the HSCP is responsible for, and what the priorities are.

Stephen Whiston, head of strategic planning and performance for Argyll and Bute HSCP, said: 'During the strategic plan consultation period we received a wide range of feedback and comments from the public, staff, service users, carers and other stakeholders.'

'I would like to thank everyone who responded for taking

the time to participate in this consultation.'

'This report outlines the key themes that emerged from the data collected, which provides additional insight on the priorities and perspectives of the people living in the communities across Argyll and Bute.'

'The strategic plan is currently being updated to reflect the comments and feedback received, especially across key areas including care at home, learning disabilities and mental health. The revised plan will be finalised over the next month and will then be presented to the integration joint board of the HSCP for endorsement in March. It will then be made publicly available.'

A full copy of the report can now be downloaded from the www.healthtogetherargyllandbute.org.

Former bishop dies, aged 83

FORMER Catholic bishop of Argyll and the Isles Bishop Iain Murray has died aged 83.

Bishop Murray, who died on January 22, was appointed to the role of bishop in December 1999 and served until 2008 when, in accordance with canon law, he retired having turned 75.

Scottish bishops had been gathered at the Royal Scots College in Spain and immediately halted proceedings when they heard the news of his passing. A mass was held in Spain on January 23.

His successor, Bishop Joe Toal, who is now Bishop of Motherwell, said: 'We will remember Bishop Murray with great fondness, both as Emeritus Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, and also his wonderful contribution to the Royal Scots College in Spain.'

'We ask God to grant him eternal rest after his fruitful and happy ministry as a priest and bishop in Scotland, and we appreciate all that he did for the church in our country over the past 60 years of his priesthood.'

Archbishop of Glasgow Phillip Tartaglia, who is also president of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland, said: 'On behalf of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland I would like to offer Bishop Murray's family our deepest and most prayerful sympathies.'

'During his active years as a bishop, Iain Murray played a full part in the life and work of the bishops' conference, contributing with humanity, faith and humour to everything that we did. He will be sorely missed.'

Rockfield funding

ROCKFIELD Centre in Oban has been awarded funding from Crerar Hotel's community fund.

The group own the Oban Bay Hotel and it was the hotel that put the project forward.

It was agreed that the £18,000 requested should be awarded in full.

Gordon McNab, head of Oban Community Trust, said: 'This is a very generous award from Crerar Hotels Trust and will allow us to push forward the project. We have already had great support locally from Oban Bay Hotel. Community support has also been amazing, with volunteer input through work parties and in-kind help, as well as donations received from individuals and local businesses. We are delighted that the community hut is now really taking shape.'

Dog fouling fines set to rise

PET OWNERS who refuse to pick up after their dogs are to be hit by an increased fine as of April 1.

From that date the fixed penalty for owners who refuse to pick up after their pet is being increased from £40 to £80, bringing it in line with the fine for littering.

The move to increase the fine comes after an overwhelming majority of responses to a consultation on responsible dog ownership said they would support the increased deterrent.

Oban Community Action on Dog Fouling has highlighted Soroba and Ganavan as problem locations and the group plans to place a dog fouling banner in Soroba to help raise awareness.

Julie McKenzie of Oban Community Action on Dog Fouling said: 'I'm delight-



Supporters of the Oban dog fouling campaign at last year's launch.

ed that following public consultation the Scottish Government has decided to take this positive step to double the dog fouling fine. This sends a clear message

to inconsiderate dog owners that their actions will no longer be tolerated in our communities. It also adds power to the elbow of Mairi Bryce and her team of community activists in Oban, who are working hard to combat the fouling problem in the town.'

Minister for community safety and legal affairs Paul Wheelhouse said: 'Dog fouling can pose potentially significant risks to health, particularly for children, and we're very clear that dog owners who do not clear up after their dogs are breaking the law.'

Derek Robertson, chief executive of Keep Scotland Beautiful, said: 'Increasing the fine is a positive step and will send a clear message to irresponsible dog owners that their actions have a negative impact on people and communities.'

Sheila celebrates 100th birthday with champagne tea

REGULAR *Oban Times* reader Sheila Clifford recently celebrated her 100th birthday with a family champagne tea party.

Sheila was born at Totamore on Coll on January 9, 1916, leaving the island in 1945. She married her husband in Tobermory and they had seven children.

Her eldest, Liz Fletcher, said: 'Up until 10 years ago we visited Coll regularly but those days are gone for her now. Sheila is fit and well - being 100 has invigorated her. She lives in a nice care home now and I visit her every week and take her out regularly. She enjoys her food, which might be the reason for her longevity.'



Sheila enjoys the *Oban Times* and received the traditional birthday card from The Queen.

Councillor to step down from policy lead role

POPULAR Argyll and Bute councillor Mary Jean Devon has announced she is to step down from her role as policy lead for health and social care integration.

Councillor Devon, who lives on Mull, will continue as local councillor for Oban South and the Isles.

She will also remain as a Children's Champion for Argyll and Bute, a role that she is very passionate about.

She told the *Oban Times*: 'I have built up years of experience in that role now and know what's involved in helping young people in Argyll and Bute.'

Ms Devon believes people speaking up to protect children's services and education is more important now than ever, with Argyll and Bute Council looking

to save £9 million this year and more in years to come.

She said: 'Some of the additional support needs, ASN, proposals should never have been put on the table and they caused panic.'

'Every child who enters school at whatever stage is assessed and if they are assessed as having additional needs they need to be supported. It's a statutory obligation.'

Proposals to cut additional support needs in the region saw a public outcry that culminated in children and parents protesting outside the council's headquarters at Kilmory Castle in November. The heated meeting, where cuts were being discussed, saw the proposed 45 per cent cut to ASN removed from the budget consultation.

Inside next week's

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

The Oban Times courier advertiser banner

Building your own home

inside: looking for land, raising finance, fit homes, architecture, planning permission

comprehensive guide to self build.

Building your own home

A comprehensive pull-out guide to self build, from finding land to beautiful interiors

Revamp to put back 'Super' into 'Sprinter' rolling stock

PASSENGERS' love-hate relationship with the trains on the West Highland Line will be sweetened with a Valentine's present next month.

Abellio ScotRail has confirmed that it is on target to begin a major refurbishment of its 38 Class 156 trains which serve routes including the West Highland Line next month.

When scheduled work finishes in late 2018, all these trains will receive at-seat power sockets, improved CCTV, auto-closing doors and upgraded toilets.

The company has the largest fleet of these 'Super Sprinters' in the UK; they were last built in 1989 and are used primarily on commuter routes as well as the journeys along the West Highland Line, which can last as long as five-and-a-half hours to reach Mallaig.

There has been pressure from passengers to up-grade rolling stock more suited to cross-country journeys, or at least for the company to embark on a major refurbishment such as the one

now planned. The West Highland Line journeys to Oban, Fort William and Mallaig are listed amongst the world's best, and the use of such small trains does not help to promote, or capitalise, on the tourism potential.

The age of the trains is not considered an issue in the industry; some of the UK's highest performing routes have rolling stock which is more than 30 years old.

The other piece of good news is not so much for the passengers, but for the people who work to keep the track maintained. Lavatory waste will no longer be dumped on the tracks.

Abellio ScotRail confirmed: 'We are currently in the process of fitting Controlled Emission Toilet (CET) tanks to our entire Class 156 fleet, which is used on the West Highland Line. All of these trains will have the tanks fitted by December 2017.'

Rolling stock serving the West Highland Line is to be upgraded.



Temporary sleeper service

FOR the first time since 1965, Oban will have a scheduled sleeper train service next month and a direct link with the centre of London, if only for three weekends.

The Caledonian Sleeper will travel between London and Oban, instead of Fort William, in February because of engineering works.

Passengers will travel by bus from Fort William on the weekends of February 12-14, 19-21

and 26-28 to join the train in Oban.

Serco, the company which took over the sleeper service last year, is looking for feedback from passengers and the tourism industry in Oban; its managing director Peter Strachan is on record as saying that during its 15-year franchise the company would be keen to see if the route could be extended.

What the three-weekend change has done to booking fig-

ures remains to be seen; whether the switch has seen cancellations from Fort William or an uptake from Oban is unclear as requests for information have gone unanswered by Serco.

Serco experienced a 48-hour strike on the Caledonian Sleeper service in December by Rail, Transport and Maritime union members who said they were taking action to highlight concerns over safety issues, which the company denied.

Queen Street rail works

TOURISTS coming to the West Highlands by its world-famous railway this summer will have 25 minutes added to their journey as a result of refurbishment work at Queen Street station, in Glasgow, due to begin in seven weeks.

For 20 weeks engineers will work around the clock to complete work on the Glasgow-Edinburgh route via Falkirk High, the biggest ever job since it was built in Victorian times.

The West Highland Line will have timetable changes and 25 minutes added to journey times as the trains are diverted

around the work. The high-level at Queen Street station will shut, putting all trains on to the lower level.

'We appreciate the importance of tourism for the West Highlands,' said a spokeswoman for Abellio ScotRail.

'Services on the West Highland Line are planned to run at the same frequency as the current timetable and with the same number of coaches.'

'Trains will continue to arrive at and leave from Glasgow Queen Street but at the low-level instead of the high level station and will take around 25 minutes

longer due to the need to follow a diverted route in the Glasgow area.'

To cope with the demand on the lower level station, extra station staff are being drafted in to help customers with luggage and seat reservations to get trains in and out as quickly as possible.

The work will renovate the main 918m tunnel, which involves extracting 10,000 tonnes of concrete from the existing lining, then installing a 4,000m section of new rails. Once the work is complete longer and faster trains will link Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Holidaying crash driver hid in bothy

A COUPLE from Skye called the police after finding an empty car crashed at the side of the A82 near Bridge of Orchy and prompted a major police search by officers from Glencoe and Oban.

But the driver was found later, hiding back at the bothy where his family was on holiday, Oban Sheriff Court heard last week.

Stephen Nicholson of 48 Ellis Island Avenue, Clydebank, denied drink-driving on June 29 last year on the A82; he had a breath test reading of 60 when the legal limit is 22 micrograms of alcohol for every 100 millilitres of breath.

The court heard that police were concerned for the safety of the driver, whom they feared might be injured and wandering in the remote countryside. Their late-night investigations led them to Smithy Bothy in Glen Etive where Nicholson and his extended family were on holiday.

The family told officers Nicholson had left earlier and that children were asleep in the other room of the bothy. Officers decided to return and check the room and found Nicholson.

Nicholson said after the accident he had been given a lift part of the way and walked the rest of the 19 miles back. He had then drunk vodka, Jack Daniels and lager before going to bed.

Finding him guilty, Sheriff Ruth Anderson QC said: 'I don't accept the evidence; I don't believe it.' Nicholson was disqualified from driving for 15 months and fined £500.

Mull volunteer policeman really is 'special' constable

STEVEN RAE
srae@obantimes.co.uk

A VOLUNTEER policeman from Mull has been named Special Constable of the Year at the inaugural Scottish Policing Excellence Awards.

Neil Morrison, 49, lives in Tobermory and has served the community for 16 years, turning out for the force on more than 40 occasions during 2015 alone.

Due to the remote location of his beat, he has taken charge of a broad range of incidents, including fatal road and marine accidents, mountain rescue situations, when no other policing resources were available, as well as working to address anti-social behaviour concerns, drink driving and poaching.

Mr Morrison was recognised at the awards held on January 22 at the Police Scotland College at Tulliallan. The awards have been designed in partnership with the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) to recognise and reward excellence and innovation in policing.

Inspector Mark Stephen, who is based at Oban Police Station, paid tribute to Mr Morrison: 'It's excellent that Neil is getting the recognition he deserves. He has worked tirelessly over the years on Mull, and in Oban and the surrounding area. It's also good as the award gives some recognition to the other specials and the work they do. They really do provide us with first-class support.'

Chief constable Phil Gormley, justice secretary Michael Mathe-



Special Constable Neil Morrison receiving his award from justice secretary Michael Matheson.

son MSP, Andrew Flanagan, who is chairman of the SPA and Ian Cordwell, Police Mutual's finance director, presented the winners with their awards.

Mr Matheson said at the event: 'Today's ceremony highlights the hugely important impact Police Scotland staff have on not only protecting Scotland's communities, but making them better places to live. Their ef-

forts in going above and beyond the call of duty are not always publicised, but they are always appreciated, and I commend all of the nominees and recipients involved in today's ceremony.'

The awards were sponsored by Police Mutual, which offers financial products and well-being services exclusively for serving or retired police officers and staff, specials and their families.

Warrant issued

A WOMAN facing charges of hammering on the door of a house in Oban with a baseball bat failed to turn up to Oban Sheriff Court last week.

This prompted Sheriff Ruth Anderson QC to issue a warrant for the arrest of Claire Morrison, 26, on Wednesday January 20.

Morrison, listed as 'present whereabouts unknown', has connections with both Oban and Dunoon, said Procurator Fiscal Eoin McGinty.

Morrison is charged with threatening and abusive behaviour; having an offensive weapon - a baseball bat - and destroying or damaging a house door with a baseball bat, all at house on Miller Road, Oban, on November 18 last year.

Pensioner admonished

A COLONSAY man was admonished when he appeared before Oban Sheriff Court last week.

William Graham McWhirter, 68, of 2 Glen Oran, Scalasaig, admitted shouting and swearing at a woman at a house on the island on September 3 last year.

But McWhirter challenged the young woman's version of events and denied that he had ever been threatening or abusive; he felt upset because he perceived that help and support he had given her had been thrown back at him.

LORN lines

The top table at the Burn's Supper. Photograph: Kevin McGlynn

Oban Burn's Club

OBAN Burns Club held its annual Burns' supper on Friday. The event was hailed a success, and thanks went out to all those who took part.

Photographed are: back from left - Maurice Duncan, on fiddle; Ian Smyth, who gave the vote of thanks; Ken Oxland, club treasurer; Ken Hunter, reply to Land We Live In; Jim MacMillan from Inveraray Burns' Club, who recited Tam O'Shanter; committee member Patrick Steeman; and piper Torquil Telfer. Front row - Rev Dugald Cameron, Land We Live In; singer Roddy MacEachan; club chairman John MacLean; Jim Sutherland, of Fort William Burns' Club, who gave the Immortal Memory; and Peter Bain, who gave the Toast to the Lassies.

Tickets on sale for high school reunion dance

GUNNA Sound is set to perform at Oban high school's former pupil association annual dinner dance.

The event will be held in the Royal Hotel, Oban, on Saturday March 12, with former pupil John Wilson as guest speaker.

Tickets are £30 per person. For further information email rutholiver2103@gmail.com

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POLICE FILES
with Sgt Alan Moore

Careless driving charge

A MAN has been charged after a suspected driving offence on a CalMac ferry.

The 47-year-old was aboard the MV Clansman vessel while it was docked in Oban when the incident occurred.

The man has been charged with careless driving after allegedly reversing the vehicle on the ferry while it was not safe to do so.

A report has been sent to the procurator fiscal.

Excessive speed allegation

AN HGV driver has been charged with careless driving after allegedly running a red light on a busy part of the A85.

The 54-year-old was suspected of travelling at excessive speed and failing to obey the traffic signal on January 20, near to Loch Awe village.

A member of the public reported the offences to the divisional road policing unit and the vehicle was traced the next day.

A report will now be sent to the Procurator Fiscal.

Drugs charge

A MAN has been reported to the procurator fiscal after being found with a quantity of what was suspected to be cannabis in Oban.

The 25-year-old was suspected of being in possession of eight grams of the class B drug around 10pm on January 20, when he was stopped and searched by police officers, and was charged under the misuse of drugs act.

Woman arrested

AN OBAN woman was arrested

recently for a series of alleged disorder offences in the town.

The 17-year-old is accused of assault, breach of the peace and vandalism after being arrested in the Longsdale Crescent area on January 21 around 11am.

A report has been sent to the Procurator Fiscal.

Smash and grab

POLICE are appealing for information after four cars had their windows smashed in Oban.

The incidents happened some time overnight between January 20 and 21, in the Ben-voullin Road and Dalriach Road areas of the town, with items taken from the vehicles.

There was also a theft from the nearby Grassroots Cafe. Officers believe the two thefts may be connected.

Anyone with any information should contact Oban Police Station on 101.

Police check

A MOTORIST has been reported to the procurator fiscal after being suspected of driving with no licence or insurance.

The 52-year-old man was stopped in Shore Street in Oban by officers on January 22.

A police check led to the suspected offences of driving while a licence is revoked and without insurance.

Reported

A MAN has been charged after a suspected drink-driving offence on the island of Mull.

The 39-year-old was stopped by officers on Main Street in Tobermory, where he was alleged to have failed a roadside breath test.

A report has now been sent to the procurator fiscal.

Six months for father who sold drugs for birthday cash

A MAN was selling cocaine to raise money to buy birthday presents for his children, Oban Sheriff Court heard last week.

Damian McAuley admitted possessing cocaine, a class A drug, with intent to supply when on bail.

His defence agent told the court that McAuley had a gambling habit and most of his income went on paying off gambling debts.

Procurator Fiscal Eoin McGinty said that police had intelligence that McAuley, 23, was involved with supplying drugs in the area and he was seen by officers leaving his home, Kinloch, Ardconnel Road, Oban, on January 9.

Police officers stopped him in



He is a local man who comes from a supportive family

Laura McManus
Defence agent

Quarry Road with the intention

of speaking to him. 'The accused threw a package over a parked car and then ran off,' said the fiscal, adding that the officers lost him, but found the package which contained a white powder and a set of scales.

The powder was found to be 52g of cocaine; a search warrant for his home address found further paraphernalia and £140.

Mr McGinty told the court that the quantity of cocaine would have cost around £1,400 to buy and had a probable resale value of £2,500.

'When police returned to his home address they found all his belongings sitting in bags which had just been packed as he was not welcome there any more,' said the fiscal.

Laura McManus, defence agent, said that after running off, McAuley had returned to the police officers and said he was sorry.

'He is a local man who comes from a respectable and very supportive family,' she added, saying he was currently studying at Argyll College.

She said McAuley had two young children and gambling debts, having become addicted to gambling, and had thought that selling the drug would have helped raise money to buy their birthday presents.

Sheriff Ruth Anderson QC said: 'There is a drug background here.' She sentenced McAuley to six months in prison and the forfeiture of the £140.

Drink driver over four times limit

A WOMAN claims she was sexually assaulted and threatened with further violence before she got into a car and drove, while more than four times over the limit.

Her case was being heard at Oban Sheriff Court last week where she pleaded guilty to driving on August 30 last year. When breath-tested at Lerags, near Oban, she gave a reading of 95 micrograms. The limit is 22 micrograms of alcohol for every 100 millilitres of breath.

The case against the 45-year-old woman from Newton Mearns will call again in February to hear proof of her special reasons for driving; an interim driving disqualification was imposed.

Russell supports rare woodlands

ARGYLL and Bute MSP Michael Russell has spoke out in parliament in support of Scotland's rare woodlands.

The MSP put forward a motion in October highlighting Plantlife Scotland's Secret's of the Celtic Rainforest project, which aims to raise awareness of the woodlands.

A debate was held on January 5 and MSPs, including Aileen McLeod, minister for environment, climate change and land reform, put forward their support for greater awareness and conservation efforts for the habitat.

Choose your child's nursery

PARENTS of toddlers in Argyll and Bute are being reminded that their two-to-three-year-old child should be registered for a free early learning and childcare place next month.

Registration will take place from February 1-5. Parents are invited to visit their chosen nursery between these dates, to complete the application process, bringing with them the child's birth certificate.

For further information, visit www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/early-years or call 01369 708503/708517.

Food bank overwhelmed by generosity

A CHARITY in Oban has been given £2,000 as well as a supportive banner from STV Children's Appeal.

The Hope Kitchen, which handed out 152 food parcels in December to families with children, will use the money to support children in the town.

Lorraine King, manager of the Hope Kitchen, said: 'Every penny we receive goes directly to support people in need. I have seen first hand how important a food parcel is to families.'

'Our goal is that no child in Oban should go hungry and with this grant from the STV Children's Appeal we believe we are meeting that goal.'

The organisation was also awarded a cheque for £600 from Tralee Bay Holidays. The park hosted a Hogmanay firework display and collected donations from spectators.

'People were just so generous. We have also been receiving dog and cat food; so we are not just feeding people, we are feeding pets too.'

'We now have nowhere to put items people are donating to us, but if anyone would like to help us, financially or by volunteering, they can pop in, telephone or get in touch online.'

To find out more, visit www.hopekitchen.org.uk or phone 01631 565730.



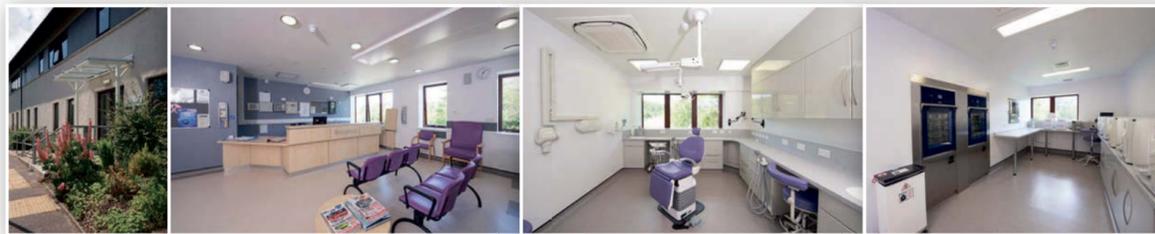
Lorraine King and Jess MacPhee with volunteer Elspeth Malcolm, right.



Oban Dental Clinic
SDC group

Scottish Dental Care Group is delighted to announce the opening of their new NHS dental clinic in Oban

Oban Dental Clinic is situated in a superb, purpose built state of the art facility adjoining the Lorn and Islands Hospital, less than half a mile from Oban town centre. The dental clinic is a fully compliant facility with lift access, three surgeries and two dedicated decontamination facilities offering a bespoke centre for the delivery of all aspects of NHS dentistry to the people of Oban and surrounding areas.



Scottish Dental Care Group is a clinically-led and patient focused dental provider, offering high quality dental care to our patients across Scotland. Your treatment is our number one priority and we offer a full range of NHS and private treatments to suit your needs and budget. Since "it's all about you" at SDC Group, we aim to be there when you need us, with an entirely open and transparent pricing policy on all of your treatments and an open and transparent complaints procedure should you ever feel that we've not quite met our own high standards.

Oban Dental Clinic offers the full range of NHS treatments for the whole family. Regular examinations will ensure that your mouth is as healthy as possible and required treatment can then be carried out when needed through the NHS. The full range of NHS treatments includes EXAMINATIONS, HYGIENIST TREATMENTS, GUM TREATMENTS, ORAL CANCER SCREEN, FILLINGS, INLAYS, CROWNS, BRIDGES, DENTURES, ROOT TREATMENTS and EXTRACTIONS.

There are some treatments which are not available on the NHS, for example TOOTH WHITENING, ELECTIVE COSMETIC DENTISTRY or SHORT TERM ORTHODONTICS. For such cases, these treatments can be carried out on a private basis.

In addition to the above, Oban Dental Clinic will also provide a DENTAL IMPLANT SERVICE, to provide a full range of DENTAL IMPLANT TREATMENT, BONE GRAFTING and MAINTENANCE with our visiting implant dentist.

Oban Dental Clinic will be led by DR ADRIAN SINANAN, who qualified from King's College School of Medicine and Dentistry, University of London. Adrian has undertaken extensive postgraduate training in the eighteen years he has been in General Dental Practice both in the UK and abroad. The treatment of patients who are anxious about dental treatment is an area in which Adrian has great success and excellent patient feedback.

NHS places AVAILABLE NOW at Oban Dental Clinic. To express your interest in becoming a patient, please visit: www.sdgroup.co.uk/patientenquiry and complete the required detail. Following final clinical inspection and opening in the very near future, we will be in touch to formally register you as a patient.

We look forward to welcoming you and your family to this excellent facility.

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Killin

A NEW lease of life to a well-regarded music festival will make it the highlight of the Strathfillan season. Killin Folk Festival (KMF) was started back in 1995 lasting until the early 2000s. A new team is now launching the festival, June 17-19 2016, by bringing numerous headline acts to the stage in Killin. A spokesman for the group said: 'In our maiden year we will welcome Skipinnish, Trail West, BBC Radio Scotland's Young Traditional Musician of the Year 2015 - Claire Hasting, Donald Black, the Scott Wood Band plus many more incredibly talented artists to our stage. 'The festival main stage is being run in the McLaren Hall, Killin, which will limit our ticket numbers considerably compared to the other established festivals, resulting in smaller, more intimate gigs. As our tickets are limited in numbers, we are encouraging festival-goers to make use of local accommodation providers. 'We are also encouraging impromptu music sessions throughout the village in our session bars. There will also be numerous workshops going on. 'We are also holding a fundraising concert in March to help with financing the festival. We are also looking for sponsors who would be interested in our sponsorship opportunities. 'We are very excited and proud to be bringing such a packed card with talent of this calibre to our festival stage and hope this sets the bar at a high standard for any of our future events. We look forward to welcoming the lucky ones that secure tickets in our first year - we're sure you will have a weekend filled with memory making moments.'

Kyle of Lochalsh

THE ONLY two remaining members of Kyle of Lochalsh lifeboat's original crew are to be honoured for their long service. Lifeboat operations manager Sandy Murray and Norman Finlayson, a deputy launching authority, have both been involved with the lifeboat for more than 20 years and will be awarded the gold medal for long and devoted service. A Royal National Life-

boat Institution spokesman said: 'There have been a few changes over the years and Sandy and Norman have been there for them all. They were there for the delivery of the first lifeboat in 1995 and have seen the new station being built and the arrival of two subsequent lifeboats into service on the station in 1997 and 2011. The men have been stalwarts of the station and we would like to congratulate them both.'



Deputy Launching Authority Norman Finlayson, left, and Operations Manager Sandy Murray. Photographs courtesy of Kyle RNLI.



Duror
DUROR Primary School pupils have been given a talk about diabetes by a local nurse. Nurse Gatward explained how diabetes can affect people and how it can be controlled. The pupils also heard about Ms Gatward's work in Malawi and the pupils told her about their involvement with Scotland Lights up Malawi which aims to raise money for solar-powered lanterns in Malawi.



Cadets enjoyed their tour of HMS Blyth. 105cadets01

Cadets ship shape on Oban visit

LOCHABER Sea Cadets saw what it is like on board a Navy warship when they visited HMS Blyth at Oban's North Pier. The cadets were shown around the ship, a Sandown class minehunter, and learned how the engine room works and how the boat is navigated. They also enjoyed a tour of the bridge. Able Cadet Deean Strachan said: 'I want to join the Royal Navy as an engineering officer so it was really

good to see first-hand what the engineers do on a minehunter.' Leading cadet Hannah Calder said: 'It was a real privilege to be given such a fantastic tour of the ship. Everyone was really brilliant.' The cadets' commanding officer Derek Warner said: 'We're tremendously grateful to everyone who made this trip possible. We know from previous experience many of these young people will remember this visit for the rest of their lives. It

also gives them the chance to see how what we teach them is used on a daily basis in a modern warship.' The sea cadets are always looking for new members. Children aged 10 and 11 can join the junior ranks with those older joining the senior ranks. Sandown minehunters seek and destroy mines using a small submarine. This helps keep shipping lanes open and they have been used to destroy mines which have been on the sea bed for 70 years.

Oban and Connel

GUIDES from Oban and North Connel enjoyed a tour round naval warship HMS Quorn when it was docked at North Pier, Oban.

The Guides were shown round different parts of the ship, a minehunter used to keep shipping lanes open and clear dangerous mines. The girls were shown the submarine which is dispatched to blow up mines and were taken to the operations room where they were shown how the submarine was navigated in the water and brought back to the ship. On the bridge, Lieutenant Jonathan Eastburn showed the guides how the ship was steered and they were offered the chance to sit in the Commanding Officer's chair. Finally, in what was a

highlight for many, they were shown the firefighting gear. Guides also met the ship's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander John Cromie, who was keen to point out careers in the Royal Navy were not just for boys. The ship berthed in Oban after carrying out surveying work on the Clyde. Lieutenant Eastburn explained: 'We're here to get supplies and a bit of a break. It's good to come into different ports and get the chance to show people round the ship. We are proud of her and the ship belongs to everyone.' He was also glad to be back in Oban: 'This was the first port I came into when I joined the Navy. I'm navigator now so it was nice to get to steer her in here.'



The Guides got to see the ship's gun. 07_105guides01



Everyone got a shot of the fire hose. 07_105guides03



A Guide tries on the firefighting gear. 07_105guides02

MORVERN
lines

A look back on a bygone era as Royal Mail celebrates 500 years

THIS year Royal Mail celebrates its 500th anniversary. Although it was to be many years after 1516, when King Henry VIII appointed Brian Tuke first Master of the Posts, that a formal postal network was established in Argyll, the event gives an opportunity to have a glance at the early workings of one of the country's oldest public services in the area which everyone now takes for granted.

Passing messages to and from a remote and often hostile countryside in days gone was slow and generally left to trusted runners and boatmen, except when signalling by fire - something ably demonstrated on the evening of June 4, 2012 when 4,200 individual beacons connected the whole of the British Isles in celebration of The Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

Numbered among these was a string of lights starting from a beacon on a knoll above Drimmin House to Mull, Ardnamurchan and Barra. In the 1800s the mail for Morvern came once a week from Oban via Kerrera, Grasspoint and Balmeanach - now Fishnish - on Mull.

The few letters that found their way into the parish were mainly addressed to the minister and one or two landowners. This arrangement continued until 1864 when the railway from the south was extended to Kingussie and Fort William became the head office for Morvern.

The mail was taken over the Corran Ferry to a small sorting office at Inversanda at the entrance to Glen Tarbert, where it was handed over by the Strontian postman to Archie Maclachlan who carried it to Kingairloch where he arrived every alternate morning at 4am.

There he was relieved of the Morvern letters by Hector Currie (Eachan Posta) who was due at Lochaline six hours later.

After the mail was sorted at Kiel, Lochaline, the Drimmin postman set off for Bunavullin, a distance of 10 miles, delivering letters en route and not returning until midnight.

On the morning of alternate days, Hector Currie retraced his steps to Kingairloch making the return journeys on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

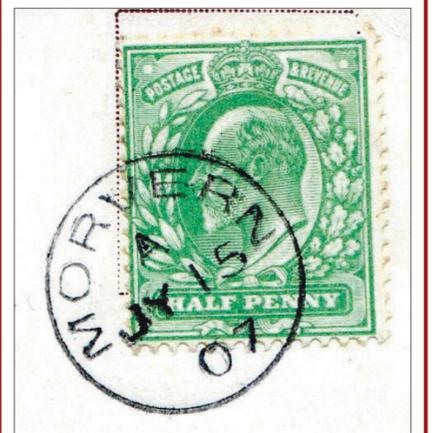
This arrangement lasted until 1880 and the opening of the Callander to Oban railway line making Oban the chief office for the surrounding districts. From there David MacBrayne's boats carried the mail to Tobermory and intermediate ports along the Sound of Mull.

In that bygone era no vans, bicycles or other wheeled vehicles were provided for the postmen - all they needed were stout legs, strong shoulders and a healthy constitution.

Hector Currie was well endowed with these and no matter how boisterous the weather, he never failed in his duties. At that time the parcel post did not exist, nevertheless many a tea-pot, ornament or hat was smuggled into the mail bag and safely delivered to a shepherd's wife far up a glen unknown to the officials at the general postal headquarters in St Martins-le-grand, London.

For more than 60 years Hector's familiar figure, obliging manner and ready wit made him a favourite with everyone. When he retired a pension was mentioned but it was only thanks to the intervention of Alexander Craig-Sellar MP, son of Patrick Sellar of Ardnornish and Sutherland, that the Lords of the Treasury recognised their responsibility to a faithful servant with a long and honourable record to his credit, by awarding him a weekly allowance.

At his farewell party it was calculated that Hector had walked an estimated 112,000 miles on foot and without a break. What a record!



An early Morvern postmark.

Morvern can lay claim to having had one of the most unusual post offices in Great Britain. Although not officially recognised, there was a large boulder on the side of the old bridal-path between Mungosdail and Barr with a natural cavity closed up by a nicely fitting stone. Until about 1899, when any letters for Barr and neighbouring places came to Drimmin Post Office, they were carried by the nearest shepherd or crofter to this convenient office in the rock. Here they were left perhaps for days until someone might pass and feel inclined to deliver them to their destination. The arrangement appears to have worked well and as far as can be ascertained no missive was ever lost, stolen or damaged.

It is worth mentioning that for many years all the Morvern postmasters were Camerons.

The conditions of service applying to the recruitment of postmasters were very strict. It goes without saying that they had to be of unimpeachable character and required a written reference from the parish minister or a justice of the peace and the slightest misconduct could result in instant dismissal. There were certain rules on which the postal authorities were particularly strict.

One of these was a ban on postmasters having anything to do with alcohol and even extended to grocers and storekeepers who ran sub post offices as part of their business.

If they acquired a licence to sell grog and failed to obtain permission from the Post Office beforehand, they were liable to instant dismissal on being found out.

How times have changed as most post offices these days are to be found inside licensed premises.

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Survey reveals many residents now back a rise in council tax

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MORE than half of those surveyed as part of a Highland Council citizens' panel said they would pay an extra £10 in council tax each month to save front line services and schools. But while 61 per cent of the panel wanted to pay more council tax, only two per cent of the respondents – less than 20 people – came from the Lochaber area and Mallaig. Moving away from the Scottish Government's Council Tax freeze would see the local authority possibly having to save up to £38 million from its budget over three years if it breaks the Council Tax agree-

ment. Yet at a special meeting of the Highland Council last Thursday in Inverness, the proposals gave some 'relief' to the leader of the council, who said that Highland people were thinking the 'same as my own community' over proposals to raise the council tax next month. Council leader Margaret Davidson said the results of a budget consultation survey into raising the tax was 'mindful' of the fact that cuts will have a wider impact. 'There is no proposal for an 18 per cent rise yet. But people are mindful of the cuts that will need to be made.' The survey into the council tax was taken when the local



Council leader Margaret Davidson.

“ People are mindful of the cuts that will need to be made ”

Margaret Davidson
Council leader

authority thought it had around £10 million worth of savings to be made. Councillor Bill Clark, speak-

ing at the special meeting, said: 'By lifting the council tax we hit the working poor where every pound counts. Everyone [surveyed] who wants to lift the council tax freeze can well afford it. A Convention of Scottish Local Authorities spokesperson said last week local government in Scotland had restructured and it hadn't worked. Savings could still not be made. We need to have local decision-making powers to make decisions for our constituents. Many people talk about it in here. If we want to save money then we need to get back to smaller local authorities representing local people.' Councillor Richard Laird said the council should not

dismiss results the council had through a Facebook page and online web chat. 'I want to encourage the council against putting too much emphasis on the survey and not enough on the Facebook chat.' He felt respondents to the survey were not representative of people within Highland Council areas. He stressed the differences of the Highland population not just through age but through demographic and that social media results should not be ignored. The survey results were welcomed by the majority at the special council meeting and will now be part of the papers for the budget setting meeting on February 25.

TIMESLINE

Education chiefs to cap class sizes

CLASS sizes will be limited at Lochaber High School as education chiefs cap school rolls and reserve places for the next year.

Eight secondary schools in the Highland Council area will be affected by the limit placed on the size of their S1, S2 and S4 year groups.

Places are being reserved for pupils who may move into the area.

A Highland Council spokesman said: 'The authority will do its best to accommodate all pupils in their preferred choice of school. Priority will be given to children in the catchment area and then to siblings of pupils already in each school.'

Thieves take their pick three times

THIEVES stole batteries from the BT telephone exchange at Tomdoun, Glengarry.

The theft took place sometime between November last year and January 18.

In a separate incident, a pair of ladies brown Ugg boots were taken from an insecure locker in the Lochaber Leisure Centre changing rooms on the evening of Wednesday January 20.

And a blanket box with Chinese carvings on the lid was removed from a house in Cuil Bay, Duror, sometime between Wednesday January 13 and Thursday January 21.

Barley spill brings A82 to a standstill

FIVE tonnes of barley spilled from a lorry onto the A82 a mile north of the Corran Ferry last Wednesday bringing the road to a standstill for more than three hours.

Police thanked drivers for their patience whilst work was carried out to clear the road.

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Class act as Lundavra celebrates Burns

Lochaber high school head teacher and Robbie Burns enthusiast Jim Sutherland joined primary seven pupils of Lundavra school who organised a Burns' Supper for family and friends. As well as traditional food, there were songs and poems, with Mr Sutherland sharing a rendition of Tam o' Shanter with pupils. Ethan Cairns addressed the haggis, downing a cup of the 'other' national drink, before he and fellow pupils served up and tucked into haggis, neeps and tatties. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image



Pupils make final of film competition

TALENTED pupils at Lochaber High School have reached the final of a film-making competition.

FilmG is an annual competition that encourages anyone to make a short film, documentary, comedy or any other genre, in Gaelic.

Lochaber High School created a film, *Beatha na Sgoile le Dabhina Attenborough*, which sees host Davina Attenborough take a humorous look at school life.

The film has now been shortlisted for the youth section of the awards.

The Lochaber team will face stiff competition from Dingwall Academy, Tain Royal Academy, Mallaig High School, Gairloch High School and Ardnamurchan High School, which have also been shortlisted.

Voting is open on the FilmG website and the winners will be announced at an event at the Old Fruitmarket in Glasgow on February 19.

Technology Matters with John Orr

Theft, Extortion and Blackmail - That's Cybercrime

Many people and businesses these days use the internet to buy goods and pay for services. Payment involves disclosing credit card or bank details in conjunction with personal 'login' details which tell the on line seller who the buyer is. Businesses are increasingly holding sensitive data on huge numbers of people and individuals are giving sensitive data to an array of on line retailers. The methods used to transmit and store sensitive data are ingenious and robust and on-line shopping websites with the https 'padlock', can be considered safe. That's where the good news stops!

A computer system may be secure but there will be human input in the management of any system. Broadband provider Talk Talk were in the news last year because hackers broke into their system and stole personal information relating to their customers. That information will be sold and shared with other criminals who will in turn use it to try and make money from you.

Software suppliers send out 'patches and service packs' for their clients to download and install. In this instance Talk Talk had not installed the latest service pack and that left their system vulnerable.

Typically the cyber criminal will use email to try and introduce a virus to your computer system. That virus may allow them to monitor the key strokes you make and that could include your logon and password details. Alternatively the virus may allow them to gain access to sensitive data and you will then find yourself subject to a blackmail threat. A third alternative is that your computer becomes encrypted and unusable. A ransom note will follow. A slightly different and alarmingly simple scenario is where a departing member of staff simply connects a memory stick to your system and downloads your valuable data or upload a virus to your system

By comparing stolen logon details with publicly available business listings, information gleaned from social media and company websites a criminal can gain enough knowledge to impersonate an individual. By combining credible personal knowledge with software that masks senders email addresses and phones that can be programmed to give false caller IDs the criminal is well placed to dupe your staff and members of the public into divulging sensitive information or even authorising bank transactions.

If a business holds 3rd party data it has a duty of care to keep that data secure and a hack could lead to legal proceedings. Reputational damage resulting from a hack can lead to an exodus of clients and suppliers and of course gaining new clients could become quite a struggle. Add to that the cost of recovering your data and repairing your system and you can see that it is important for every business to take cyber crime seriously. Next time we will look at how you can reduce the risk of a cyber hack on your business.

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Damp problem fires up Taynuilt tenant

MOULDY homes and high electricity bills in 14 houses in Taynuilt are causing 'concern' to the chief executive of West Highland Housing Association (WHHA).

One woman, Lynne Murdoch, who lives at Aldersyde in the village, has been asking her neighbours what their homes are like and giving the information to the social housing provider in a bid to get something done.

Ms Murdoch, who has lived in the village for eight years, said that 14 of her neighbours' homes had mould and damp, while every home was paying at least £8 a day for electricity.

Ms Murdoch said: 'My son's house across the street was so bad that when WHHA came out to clean the surfaces, the man said he couldn't remove it [the mould] and the wall needed replaced.'

'The problem has gone quite far now. People are finding it cheaper to use their own radiators to heat their homes than the system that is in place. But people who have asked to put in their own fire have



Damp is a serious concern in 14 of Ms Murdoch's neighbours' homes.

not been given permission. We need an architect and a surveyor down here to find out what is wrong. We feel as if we are being dismissed by WHHA.

'I was told I didn't have my fan on in the bathroom. But that is not the problem. Damp is rife throughout the houses.

'We have been complaining for ages, but we feel like nothing is getting done.'

Lesley McInnes, chief executive of WHHA, said she was aware of the problem.

She said: 'We have been considering the problems that tenants in Aldersyde have been having.

'We are concerned about the level of damp in some of the homes.

'We have had staff out to look at the problems in individual homes and we are working with a surveyor and other professionals to consider the best way forward.

'We also understand the concerns about the heating costs and will be speaking to residents about the problem.'

ADVERTISEMENT

Why should girls choose a career in Science, Energy, Engineering or Technology?

Kirsty Jackson-Stark and Katie Evamy are Education and Development Officers whose roles are funded by community benefit money from ScottishPower Renewables Beinn an Tuire windfarm.

A commitment of more than £100,000 has been made by ScottishPower Renewables over three years. Their roles focus on broadening and strengthening the skills base locally, as well as promoting employability skills and preparing school leavers for local opportunities.

Here are the questions people ask when choosing their career:

Are there likely to be jobs in Science, Energy, Engineering or Technology?

In Science, Energy, Engineering or Technology sectors there is a demand for people with the right

skills to fill existing jobs. Therefore, people with the right skills are very likely to get a job. Also, a substantial increase in the number of jobs in this sector is predicted by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) and the Office of National Statistics (ONS).

Science and technology "are the heartbeat of the modern world. From agriculture to aviation, the analytical and problem-solving skills they develop are more valuable than ever in a fast-changing, global economy," says Matthew Hancock former Skills and Enterprise Minister.

Former Education Minister Elizabeth Truss said: "Too many teenagers, especially girls, don't realise that maths and physics get you everywhere, and can open doors to careers in business, journalism,

technology, and engineering – in fact, anything you can probably think of."

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HETAS

Teaching heroes set for awards

IF ANYONE knows a teacher who always motivates their class or a school classroom assistant who goes the extra mile, now is the time to show how valued they are by nominating them for a Scottish education award.

Argyll and Bute Council's policy lead for education and lifelong learning Councillor Rory Colville said: 'Argyll and Bute schools and education staff have an excellent track record in the Scottish Education Awards in previous years, including winning the coveted Head Teacher of the Year award, and I don't expect this year to be any different.'

'Our teachers are enthusiastic and committed to delivering the best quality learning experience for all pupils and are constantly striving for excellence and to improve standards.'

The awards are open to any publicly-funded school and includes a number of categories.

Nominations can be made by visiting www.scottisheducationawards.org.uk and nominations close at noon on February 15.

Veterans funding

THE SCOTTISH Veterans' Fund is now open for bids, with grants of up to £10,000 available. The fund, run by Veterans Scotland, aims to help projects for former armed forces personnel.

Keith Brown MSP, cabinet secretary for infrastructure, investment and cities, said: 'Veterans of our armed forces are a huge asset to Scotland and the Scottish Government is firmly committed to helping them make a smooth transition to civilian life, receiving the best possible levels of support.'

Applications close on March 4.

Land reform MP confirms public register plans

LOUISE GLEN
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THE CREATION of a public register to show who controls land in Scotland is being planned by the Scottish Government.

Land reform minister Dr Aileen McLeod has confirmed she plans to amend the bill at stage three to give the Scottish Government the power to make regulations to create a public register to increase the transparency around who controls land in Scotland.

Dr McLeod said: 'There is rightly a great deal of interest in who owns Scotland. I have listened very carefully to the many views expressed, including by the rural affairs, climate change and environment committee, in favour of greater transparency on who controls land in Scotland.'

'This is something I believe can benefit our country, particularly communities which wish to have more of a say over how land in their area is used and managed.'

'That is why I am pleased to confirm that the government

plans to create a public register of who controls land in Scotland and to enable this we will amend the land reform bill at stage three to give the powers required to create a public register which will contain the information needed to give greater transparency about who controls our land.

'More work is required on complex legal issues, such as what information should be disclosed and how to protect the privacy of individuals.'

'So I will put in place the necessary powers to allow further work to be done and ensure that this bill delivers a framework that gives, subject to parliamentary scrutiny, detailed information about who controls land in Scotland.'

Aileen McLeod plan to amend the land reform bill to allow the creation of a public register.



Banding together against cancer

PEOPLE are being asked to get a unity band to show support for cancer charities on World Cancer Day.

Four charities have unity bands in their own colours – Anthony Nolan has a black band, Breast Cancer Care, a pink band, Cancer Research, blue and white, and the Movember Foundation, a blue and yellow band.

The wristbands have two parts knotted together to show the strength of unity and are available at the world cancer day website for a suggested donation of £2.

Collectively the four charities support millions of people

dealing with a wide range of cancers and the money will go towards the individual projects.

Lisa Adams, Cancer Research UK spokeswoman in Scotland, said: 'So many of us have been affected by the disease, which is why on February 4 we are calling on Scots to join together and wear a unity band with pride. We're partnering with Breast Cancer Care, Anthony Nolan and the Movember Foundation to promote World Cancer Day this year. By working together we can make a bigger impact.'

Television presenters Ant and Dec are backing the event.



Council launches new planning portal on web

THE SCOTTISH Government's existing ePlanning portal is being replaced with a new one.

For the customer the new portal offers the same forms as the current one, and is accessed in exactly the same way.

The layout and functionality of the new ePlanning portal will actually stay much the same.

What is changing is the overall style and colour of the portal which will be refreshed to tie in with the new logos.

Users will have to re-register to use the new portal.

Two new forms will be available for completion online from

today, the post submission additional documentation (PSAD) and the notice of review (NoR).

In the future another two forms will be available, the appeals refusal and the appeals notice.

Over the next four years the portal is predicted to save approximately £17million across Scotland's planning authorities and around £28million for applicants and agents and will mean that applications can be processed much quicker.

For more information visit the website at eplanning.scotland.gov.uk/skin/evelopment.htm

Grassroots support for Oban cafe

VOLUNTEERS at the Grassroots Cafe in Oban have been overwhelmed with the 'kindness, generosity and community spirit shown by the people of Oban and beyond' after a break-in threatened the continuation of the town-centre venue.

The break-in Wednesday (January 20) saw damage to the building and the theft of items from the volunteer-funded group.

But Stacey Felgate, spokeswoman for the group, said that while the break-in was a real disappointment, the 24 hours following the announcement had really turned things around.

Ms Felgate, from Oban, said: 'The kindness, generosity and community spirit shown by the people of Oban and beyond has truly astounded us, and we already thought you all were pretty special.'

'In under 24 hours, we have had enough money donated via PayPal to cover our losses, as well as offers of time, labour and parts to fix what was broken.'

'We want to be totally honest and say that at this point, we have received enough donations to be able to pay our rent and bills and that any further gifts will go towards future cafe running costs and expanding our range of events as opposed to fixing this particular emergency. Donations can still be made via the link which we will leave on our website – www.grassrootsoban.org.

'We would also like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has helped out, shared, commented, donated or offered their assistance. We have tried to get back to everyone individually but if you have slipped through the net, our apologies.'

'Everyone involved in the cafe has been humbled by the reaction and we look forward to seeing you for a cuppa in the cafe soon.'

Anyone with information should call 101, or visit the police station on Albany Street.

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Lighthouses could boost mobile phone cover

A BRIGHT idea to put lighthouses at the centre of mobile phone coverage for the islands and West Highlands has met with a good response from providers.

Mobile companies EE and Vodafone are keen to promote the idea and Western Isles MP Angus Brendan MacNeil says it might be the solution to gaps in coverage.

Mr MacNeil was delighted to receive a positive response from the Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB) which has indicated a willingness to work with mobile operators to make progress in this area.

Mr MacNeil had contacted NLB following a query from EE on the use of sites which could allow them to improve coverage.

This could mean NLB would allow operators to use its facilities to enhance coverage in the Western Isles, Na h-Eileanan an Iar, and across the West Highland islands.

Mr MacNeil said: 'I wrote to NLB at the end of last year after discussions with mobile operators on how to escalate the timetable for bringing 4G to the area. NLB has said that it is committed to developing the Scottish economy and is therefore open to discussions with mobile providers on where opportunities might lie.'

'I would like to thank NLB for its prompt, sensible response and its ability to see the bigger picture.'

'I have already received confirmation from Vodafone that 4G will be delivered to the islands within the next two years but the sooner all companies have infrastructure in place to do this, the better for the economy of the islands.'

'I look forward to further discussions with operators and NLB on how we can take this forward.'

Extension of the mobile networks is dependent on the roll out and availability of fibre broadband as this is needed to connect masts to the core network. Following discussions with Mr MacNeil, BT has also given a commitment to work closely with mobile operators to support development of coverage extension.

Smelter job fears follow in wake of fish farming cuts

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MAJOR concern has been raised about hundreds of jobs after one of Lochaber's biggest employers announced it was reviewing its future in the area. Workers at the Lochaber smelter, Rio Tinto Alcan, which employs 170 people, were shocked to hear the company is launching a 'strategic review of its assets at Lochaber'.

In another blow, Marine Harvest Scotland fish farmers revealed 100 jobs are to go. Its fish farm operations are situated across the Highlands, Argyll and the Western Isles.

Live fish are harvested at Mallaig and processed at the

Blar Mhor processing plant in Fort William.

The Rio Tinto Alcan aluminium plant in Fort William is the last aluminium smelter in the UK and includes its own hydro-electric power stations in the town and at Kinlochleven.

Brian Murphy, councillor for Fort William and Ardnamurchan, worked at the plant for 21 years. He said: 'It's very worrying. I have spoken to several people who are very concerned about this. The site is a very important part of the local economy and is worth around £7.8million.'

'There's also the knock-on effect if it was to close. There's probably double the number of jobs with contractors and

suppliers and affects rail freight and road haulage.'

He added: 'Everyone is hoping the strategic review will offer a positive way forward.'

In a memo to councillors and council leaders, Rio Tinto said: 'We have advised our employees in the Lochaber business that in light of the current market prospects and economic environment, and as part of our on-going review of our businesses, Rio Tinto is launching a strategic review of its assets in Lochaber. This review is the start of a process, during which we will be talking to our employees, key stakeholders and partners.'

'The review will include the aluminium smelter, the hydro-electric power stations in Fort

William and in Kinlochleven as well as estate lands in the Scottish Highlands. I want to emphasise that all options will be considered. Given the broad diversity of assets at Lochaber, the review will consider various scenarios to ensure all options are fully assessed, in keeping with Rio Tinto's standard practice in conducting such reviews.'

It added: 'We recognise that this is a difficult time for our employees and we will keep our staff informed as we move forward. In the meantime, it is paramount that we remain focused on keeping our employees safe and that we keep delivering the same quality product.'

The Highland Council's

Lochaber area leader Councillor Thomas MacLennan expressed his concern and said the council had offered to assist in the review.

He added: 'The smelter is the last remaining aluminium smelter in the UK and, as such, is of significant economic importance, not only to the West Highland area but far beyond.'

Deputy First Minister John Swinney and Business and Energy Minister Fergus Ewing have spoken with Rio Tinto.

The Scottish Government's economic and community development agency, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), is engaging with the company to understand the potential impacts of the announcement.

TIMESLINE

Kinlochleven story project wins praise

A PROJECT planned and delivered by students at Kinlochleven high school has been praised by organisers of National Storytelling Week.

'Storytelling to Inspire' was prompted by stories told by the older generation to the school pupils in the hope their creativity will be passed on to younger kids.

Groups of students will read children's storybooks to youngsters and work with them to act out the story for other groups.

The Kinlochleven organisers will tell them the story of some athletes working towards the Olympic Games in Rio this year.

They will work to pick out the qualities they think the athletes use to reach their goals.

Once the students are familiar with the values, they go back to their groups and recreate the stories using flashcards with key words such as bravery, courage or determination.

Fewer donations to health board

CHARITABLE donations to hospitals, wards and departments within NHS Highland were slightly down on this time last year, according to the latest figures.

Total income for the health board's endowment funds stood at £744,000 for 2014/2015, down around £23,000 from £767,000 raised the previous year.

Donations to NHS Highland go the Highland Health Board Endowment fund, a registered charity which holds the money in trust. It manages individual funds and donations can be made for a specific ward, a particular piece of equipment or amenities for patients.

On course to invest in young people

THERE are free places available at workshops for businesses working towards the investors in young people standard.

Investors in People Scotland is holding two, day-long courses across the Highlands to train people on how to develop a strategy and implement an action plan. The dates in Lochaber are February 10 and February 24. Free places are open to private companies with fewer than 250 employees.

Investors in People Scotland, which aims to encourage businesses to employ and support young people, are running the courses. Although the course is free, companies are asked to pay £20 for lunch and refreshments. Places are limited to one per company.



Kinlochleven high school pupils were given Saltire awards. 105saltire01

School pupils rewarded for community spirit

PUPILS at Kinlochleven high school have been rewarded with Saltire certificates for their voluntary work in the community.

Pupils put on a Christmas show, Glen of Thrones, which raised £2,000 for the community.

Everyone involved, from performers to make-up artists

and stagehands, received a Saltire award.

Head teacher Rebecca Machin said: 'It is only right and proper that our young people's hard work is recorded and recognised through this government-supported award scheme. For a school as small as ours to have so many taking part is a great testament to the

fabulous community spirit and enterprise we have here.'

Councillor Andrew Baxter presented the certificates and encouraged pupils to get involved in the new Walkers are Welcome initiative that encourages towns and villages to be walker friendly.

As part of the Get Set Community Action initiative,

senior pupils decided before Christmas to make up hampers for older people in the community who might be struggling over the festive season.

Pupils donated gifts for the hampers and suggested people in the community they thought should receive one.

They made and distributed

20 hampers and raised more than £100 for Age UK.

One happy recipient sent a note which said: 'It was lovely, not just to receive the gift, but for your young people to make the effort to deliver it themselves. They were so smartly dressed and had time to talk. They were so charming.'

Highland Council tenants urged to share opinions on service quality

AN INDEPENDENT survey by market research company Progressive Partnerships is being carried out on behalf of The Highland Council's Housing Service.

The postal survey has been sent to all 13,799 council tenants inviting them to share their views on the quality of services provided to them by the Council's Housing Service.

The survey results will be used to help the council understand more about tenants' experience of housing services and plan for the future using this knowledge. Tenants who have not yet completed and returned their survey are encouraged to get involved and have their say about their experience as a Highland Council tenant.

Progressive Partnership sent reminder letters and

survey forms to tenants, who have not yet taken the opportunity to have their say, from January 22. No stamp is required for returning the survey questionnaire by post. Alternatively, there is an online survey at <http://tinyurl.com/tenants16>.

Tenants are urged to complete and return their questionnaire by February 10, 2016.

Oban Times
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The architect's drawing of the new-look hotel, detailing the cantilevered dining room and turf-roofed bedroom wing. 105kingshouse02

Kingshouse Hotel to get makeover

THE Kingshouse Hotel in Glen Coe is to get a new look thanks to investment from new owners Black Corries Estate.

Plans include replacing the 1960s' extension with one more in keeping with the area and increasing the number of bedrooms from 45 to 80. A new dining room will be built so visitors can look out on Glen Coe and River Etive while enjoying their meal.

To the relief of many, the popular Climbers' bar will remain almost untouched. Susanna Thomson of managing agents Bidwells said: 'We will be keeping much of the Climbers' bar intact. We know we have some very loyal customers, many of whom have good memories of times had in the bar, and it's important to retain that connection.'

Architect Ben Tindall said: 'Externally the design fits well into the landscape and incorporates a wing of turf-roofed bedrooms. Internally, a wide variety of spaces will provide high quality facilities that capture the views and allows the retention of the Climbers' bar.'

'The dining room's dramatic views are enhanced by cantilevering the structure over the River Etive. Ten superb bedrooms on the first floor, including the king and queen rooms, enjoy the incredible views that Kings House affords.'

Rising rents prompt MSP to call for extension of proposed cost controls

AS RENTS in the Highlands and Islands see tenants pay more than £23 than the national average, MSP John Finnie has called on the Scottish Government to extend proposed rent controls.

The Highlands and Islands MSP said controls were 'urgent' as rents are rising faster than in any other part of Scotland.

Mr Finnie was one of the first MSPs to join the Living Rent Campaign to press for rent controls, scrapped by former prime minister and the late Margaret Thatcher's administration in 1988.

Campaigners were jubilant when Nicola Sturgeon announced last year that she would reintroduce controls, but current Scottish Government proposals

would only limit rent rises during existing tenancies.

Mr Finnie warned that this 'giant loophole' would leave landlords free to increase rents as much as they wanted for new tenants, and might even encourage landlords to evict existing tenants in order to sidestep rent controls. The MSP said: 'The cost of renting a home in the Highlands

and islands is racing ahead of the rest of the country, driven by buy-to-let and holiday-home speculators for whom houses are first and foremost investments, not homes. The result is greater poverty, greater depopulation, and more desperate tenants forced to accept poor-quality homes or unscrupulous landlords. 'Nowhere is the case for

rent controls more urgent.'

Mr Finnie also called on the government to make rent controls reflect the quality of housing, encouraging landlords to make repairs and improve energy efficiency, and to include a hardship clause in eviction rules so that eviction orders could be delayed for tenants who are dealing with difficult circumstances.

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Viewpoint

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& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

Established 1861 No 8216

The news that a £11.7 million project to protect Easdale Bay, an area of the Argyll coast known for its shellfish, is being compromised by the sheer volume of sewage 'overspills' is something that needs urgent attention.

Not least because the problem has been going on for eight years without a viable solution being found. How can that be?

Now more than half the population on the island of Seil have signed a petition against a further proposal from Scottish Water, which would see it abandoning some of the original scheme to pump raw sewage over a hill and release it barely treated into the bay - an area known for its dolphins.

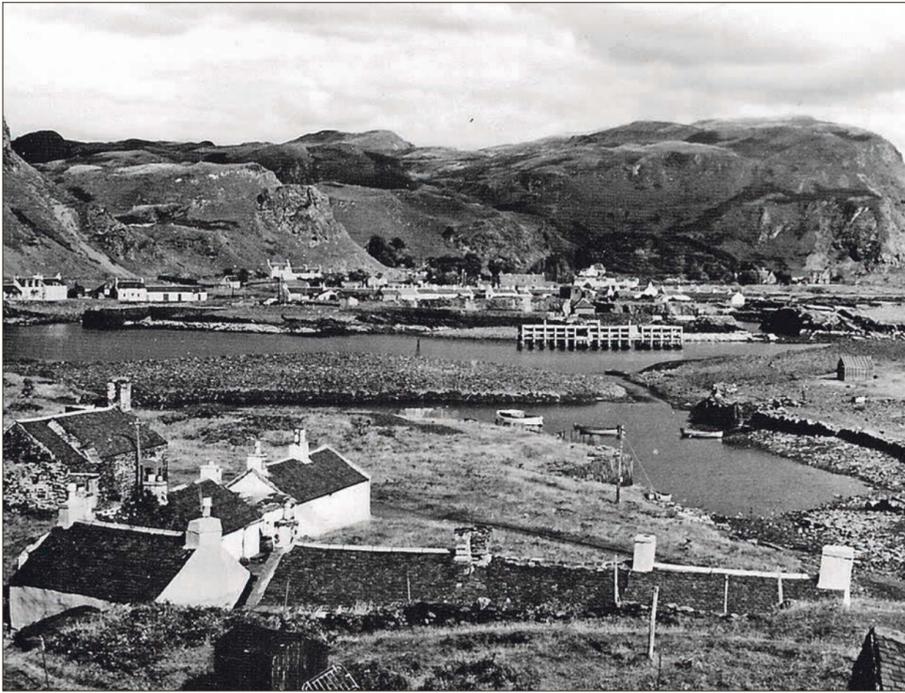
The islanders claim to have figures that show the number of spillages has risen from 20 in 2013 to a

staggering 365 in 2014. That is set against Scottish Water Solutions (SWS) predicting that spill frequencies would only be 1.6 per year.

There is clearly an issue, but is it with SWS's predictions, or with the system that was installed to deal with the waste?

Scottish Water says it is currently developing a project to meet European Directive requirements for wastewater treatment on the island.

Having known about the problem for the last eight years, one would hope Scottish Water has been working on a solution for some time and that it doesn't take too long to put a workable plan in place, one that is sustainable and has the ability to reduce any spillages to the level SWS predicted when the project was first established in 2008.



Days gone by - Isle of Seil

This week's flashback photograph features a view of the Isle of Seil taken from Easdale in days gone by. It was submitted by Stuart Gray of Clydebank, who found the postcard in his mother's belongings. Digital versions of flashback photos for *The Oban Times* can be sent to 'editor@obantimes.co.uk' or prints sent to the editor, *The Oban Times*, PO Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB. Anyone who wishes a print returned should include a stamped-addressed envelope.

Beachd Ailein

Ailean Caimbeul

ALLAN CAMPBELL

ailean@obantimes.co.uk



THA MISE ag aontachadh gu tur leis a' bheachd nach eil còir dhan Ghàidhlig a bhith air a ceangal ri nàiseantachd na h-Alba neo gu dearb dhùthaich sam bith eile.

Gu dearb thèid mise nas fhaide na sin oir tha mi a' creidsinn nach buin Ghàidhlig dha pàrtaidh poiliteagach sam bith ach gum bheil còir aca uile uallach a ghabhail air a son!

Faisg air dà fhichead bliadhna air ais bha mi fhìn is Iain Noble aig coineimh le prìomh fhear-gnothaich Albannach nuair a nochd ceist mun Ghàidhlig anns a' chòmhradh.

'S gann a chreidinn e nuair a thuir an duine sin nach b' urrainn dhàsan taic a thoirt dhan Ghàidhlig air sgàth 's nach robh e airson Alba a' sgaradh bhon Rìoghachd Aonaichte.

B' e seo a' chiad turas a choinnich mise ris a' bheachd gun robh Gàidhlig na cuid de dh'iomairt nàiseantachd ann an Alba.

Tha mi a' creidsinn agus air a ràdh iomadh uair bhon uairsin gur e ceum cho cudromach is a thachair dhan chànan gun deach againn air a dearbhadh mar phàirt dheatamach de

dhuilchhas nàiseanta na h-Alba. Gun teagamh buinidh i dhan t-sluagh a tha ga dìon agus ga cleachdadh ach tha mise agus mòran eile a' creidsinn gum bheil e mar dhleasdanas aig an dùthaich gu lèir leithid seo de dhuilchhas chultarail a ghleidheadh.

Ged a tha Gàidhlig a' tighinn mar dhìleab air Gàidheil na dùthcha seo, tha àireamhan chunntasan-sluaigh is eile a' nochdadh gun robh mòran air an tiodhlac sin àicheadh.

Gu fortanach, agus ri linn iomadh iomairt leasachaidh eadar-dhealaichte, tha ginealaichean ùra a' tilleadh chun an dualchas agus tha cuideachd mòran ag ionnsachadh a' chànan aig nach robh ceangal teaghlach sam bith ri Gàidhlig.

Mar a tha fios aig a' mhòr-chuid de luchd-taice a' chànan, tha astar mòr ri shìubhal fhathast mu ruig Gàidhlig ìre thèarainte, ach nuair a chaidh Achd na Gàidhlig aontachadh ann am Pàrlamaid na h-Alba air 21 An Giblean 2005, bha làn-aonta eadar gach Pàrtaidh a thaobh a bhith a' dìon is a' leasachadh a' chànan.

Sin mar bu chòir a bhith cuideachd,

ach gu mì-fhortanach agus a dh'aindeoin gach gealladh air saoghal ùr toiniseil nan cuid giùlain, tha luchd-poilitigs ro dheiseil slaicheadh air pàrtaidhean a chèile agus rud sam bith a chleachdadh mar bhall-airm anns a' bhuanastaireachd sin!

Nach bochd gum bheil cho beag mothachaidh aig cuid a' Bhuill anns gach Pàrlamaid, air na geallaidhean a chaidh a thoirt beagan is deich bliadhna air ais!

ONE OF the most important steps in Gaelic development was making it clear this language is a valuable part of Scotland's national heritage and that consequently ALL political parties have a responsibility for its survival and development.

There was cross-party unanimity when the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act was passed in the Scottish Parliament on April 21, 2005 and it is unfortunate to find some MSPs now quite wrongly labelling Gaelic as a unique element of nationalism.

Ailean Caimbeul (Allan Campbell)
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Glasgow Letter

ROBERT ROBERTSON

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Celtic Connections almost over

I THINK everyone in Glasgow is looking forward to the final weekend of Celtic Connections - and perhaps life returning to some kind of normality in February after a fantastic month of music.

I am unbelievably excited for our sold out Skipinnish gig this Saturday night in the Royal Concert Hall.

I still cannot believe, and neither can any of the boys, that the main auditorium is sold out - and I'm looking forward to catching up with friends in the audience.

Then, the following day, I am heading down to the City Halls to watch the final of the Young Traditional Musician of the Year. It is a great line-up of talent as always, so I'm sure - whoever wins - it will be an enjoyable afternoon.

Class Kathleen MacInnes concert

THERE is no such thing as too much Kathleen MacInnes.

Which is just as well, really, because she seems to be popping up everywhere at Celtic Connections.

Kathleen put on a fine concert on Tuesday January 19 in the Strathclyde Suite of the Royal Concert Hall.

The evening began with Talisk, a foot-stomping young trio with fiddle, concertina and guitar. Then Kathleen came on stage - joined by three of the most incredible musicians around.

Brian Finnegan, the famous Irish flute player, was unbelievable and lived up to his reputation as one of the greatest. Dermot Byrne, on melodeon, has been a highlight of the whole festival so far for me. Mike Vass, on fiddle and guitar, was also a class act - accompanying Kathleen's songs with some lovely effects from his guitar pedals.

Sympathy lies with CalMac skippers

Sir, In common with, I am sure, many of your readers, I spent many a frustrating moment over the festive season, thumbing through various weather apps and websites trying to fathom what the wind was up to next.

Attempting to make plans for the arrival and departure of family and friends, heading to Oban to buy the Christmas turkey or getting farm stock to the Christmas sales was increasingly becoming a lottery with the odds stacked against me.

As it happened, the turkey was purchased and the animals arrived safely for the Christmas sale, however, my daughter never made it home for Christmas due to the cancellation of the 4pm boat from Oban to Mull on Christmas Eve. CalMac did, though, ensure the decision was made prior to the Glasgow to Oban train departing, thus making alternative arrangements possible.

In spite of these frustrations, I find it hard to feel negative about ferry services to and from Mull.

In my lifetime, and I first used CalMac when only a couple of days old, I have experienced nothing but goodwill, friendliness, assistance, good food and efficiency from both on-board crew and shore staff.

Yes, there have been frustrations, but with a little understanding these have been quickly overcome.

We have become very used to

those musicians, coupled with Kathleen's characteristically incredible performance, made for a great evening.

Urban Teuchters go down a storm

THE URBAN Teuchters - Kathleen MacInnes and Sineag Macintyre - put on a great night of songs, tunes, and craic in the MacKintosh church on Maryhill Road on Saturday January 23, in front of a large audience.

The funniest part of the evening was the band's reaction to discovering the venue's bar was alcohol free - a fairly foreign concept to two girls from South Uist!

That certainly didn't stop the audience enjoying themselves.

Sineag and Kathleen were joined on stage by Seonaidh Macintyre on pipes and whistles, who also gave a song, Allan Nairn on guitar and melodeon, Andrew Macpherson on pipes, bodhran and drums and Ross Wilson on double-bass and piano.

For the final song, they asked Cathal McConnell - a founder member of Boys of the Lough more than 45 years ago - up onto the stage to join them. This was a lovely moment.

Cathal is a true Irish gentleman and still an amazing singer.

Their encore, the old Uist classic Uibhist Mo Ghràidh, stuttered comically to an endearingly unrehearsed finish.

It left the audience leaving the church with a smile on their face.

Iain Macfarlane launches new album

I'VE BEEN to a few great evenings in the stunning St Andrew's in the Square over the last year or so; but not many so engaging as Iain Macfarlane's album launch last Wednesday January 20.

Iain filled the evening with stories that had the audience in stitches.

Occasionally, he would even play some music.

The album, entitled *The Gallop to Callop*, took 10 days to record over

three and a half years, he explained with a smile.

The Margaret Stewart Trio began the evening. Margaret held the audience in thrall with her uniquely clear voice, her immense stage presence and her knowledge of the songs - particularly those from the piping tradition.

Then on came Iain and his crew. No less than 12 musicians joined Iain on the stage, if we count the Margaret Stewart trio who came on again as an encore.

The famous Henderson clan were out in full force - Ewen and Allan on the fiddle; Megan step-dancing as well as playing fiddle and harmonium; and Iain's wife, Ingrid, on the piano and clarsach.

Iain Macdonald, with whom Iain Macfarlane recorded one of my all time favourite CDs *The First Harvest* some years ago, played the flute alongside Hamish Napier.

Ewan Robertson on guitar and James Lindsay on double bass completed the rhythm section.

Comunn An Taobh an Iar Ceilidh

COMUNN An Taobh an Iar is holding a ceilidh on Thursday February 4 in Ellangowan Social Club, Douglas Street, Milngavie, at 7.30pm.

Singing that evening will be Donald Iain Brown, Norman Mackinnon, Jennifer Campbell and Carrie Mcneil.

Kirsteen Grant will be accompanying the singers, Ian Smith will be playing the box and Kenneth Macfarlane is the piper. Fear-antaighe for the evening will be Peter MacDonald. Tickets are £6 which includes tea, coffee and biscuits at the interval.

Pub scene

Park Bar: Friday January 29 - Gunna Sound. Saturday January 30 - Dun Mor. Sunday January 31 - Dun Mor.
Islay Inn: Friday January 29 - Trail West. Saturday January 30 - Gunna Sound. Sunday January 31 - Deke Meghee's Blues Band.

a timetable with a ferry virtually every two hours, seven days a week, throughout the year, and we become a little irksome if this is disrupted.

We live in an age where on top of the agenda, EEC directives, health and safety and risk assessments increasingly rule the roost. I therefore have every sympathy with the skippers, on whose shoulders these weighty responsibilities rest.

Jamie Howard, Isle of Ulva.

Wind analysis and ferry cancellations

Sir, Brian Swinbanks' report on wind speeds in connection with ferry operations is interesting but not particularly useful.

We need an analysis of wind vectors ie wind speed and direction, and a selection of wind speeds only for those wind directions that cause difficulty docking at Craignure and Oban. Readers would get a clearer picture of the reasons for increasing ferry cancellations if Mr Swinbanks or others would provide an analysis of only those wind directions pertinent to docking at both ends of the Oban-Mull crossing.

Professor Ian Reid, Oban.

Opposition has the right to be heard

Sir, Mr Griffin, last week's letters page,

accuses me of a 'shocking lack of integrity'.

My offence, according to him, was to fail to identify myself as 'an aspiring political candidate'.

Every letter I have sent to a newspaper since I was selected as a candidate in late October has contained a statement that I am the Liberal Democrat candidate for Argyll and Bute.

I expect a letter of apology from him.

What appears to have annoyed Mr Griffin are my letters campaigning for work at the Rest and Be Thankful, superfast broadband and mobile phone coverage throughout Argyll and Bute and sufficient allocation of Scottish Government funding to the council to stop threatened cuts.

Mr Griffin is upset because you printed a few letters from me criticising the SNP Government regarding the above matters.

However, the SNP can't complain about lack of coverage because the local SNP MSP or MP have featured on the front page of three editions this year so far.

The local MP and MSP are in a position to make news and can be expected to feature on your news pages.

Those of us who oppose the Scottish political establishment also have our right to be heard and I thank you for printing some of my letters pointing out the failings of the ruling party.

Alan Reid, Liberal Democrat candidate for Argyll and Bute.

Press policy

WE AT The Oban Times endeavour to ensure that all our reports are fair and accurate and comply with the Editors' Code of Practice set by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). We realise, however, that mistakes happen from time to time.

If you think we have made a significant mistake and you wish to discuss this with us, please let us know as soon as possible by any of the three methods: emailing editor@obantimes.co.uk; telephoning the editor on 01631 568046; writing to the Editor at The Oban Times,

Crannon Lane, Lochavullin estate, Oban, PA34 4HB.

We will attempt to resolve your issue in a timely, reasonable and amicable manner. However, if you are unsatisfied with our response, you can contact IPSO, which will investigate the matter. You can

either telephone IPSO on 0300 123 2220 or email inquiries@ipso.co.uk. IPSO is an independent body which deals with complaints from the public about the editorial content of newspapers and magazines. We will abide by the decision of IPSO.

Your letters

THE EDITOR welcomes letters of approximately 300 words in length for publication on this page.

The editor also reserves the right to shorten, amend or to refuse to print them. Names and

postal addresses must be supplied, including on emails, to indicate good faith. A daytime telephone number is also required for verification.

Anonymous letters or those supplied without a

contact telephone number will not be printed. Please write or fax to: Letters page, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB. Fax: 01631 568001. Email editor@obantimes.co.uk.

SABHAL MÒR OSTAIG

COLAISTE GAIDHLIG

H-ALBA

LEARN GAELIC

CÙRSAICHEAN GOIRID 2016

Bidh cùrsaichean goirid a' tilleadh gu Sabhal Mòr Ostaig as t-Earrach am bliadhna le cùrsaichean Gàidhlig, ciùil, dannsa agus dealbhadaireachd. Bidh an t-Ionad Nàiseanta airson Cànan is Cultar na Gàidhlig a' ruith 17 cùrsaichean thairis air cola-deug bho dheireadh a' Mhàrt. Bidh cùrsa ann an Òrain Ghàidhlig le Cairistiona Primrose, fìdheall le Gabe McVarish, dannsa ceum le Sophie Stephenson agus dealbhadaireachd le Cailean MacIlleathain. Chì sibh gu h-ìosal liosta slàn de na cùrsaichean a bhios a' ruith thairis air an dà sheachdain seo.

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig's Short Courses will be returning this Spring with 5 day courses at the College based in Skye. The National Centre for Gaelic Language and Culture will be running a range of courses in Gaelic, music and dance over a 2 week period including Gaelic language courses from beginner level 1 to advanced level 10. Other courses include Gaelic song, fiddle, step dancing and digital photography. For further information on each course and to book, please contact the Short Courses team or visit the Sabhal Mòr Ostaig website.

EASTER SHORT COURSES 2016

28/03 - 01/04/2016

- Gàidhlig - Gaelic 1, 3, 5, 7 & 9
- Òrain Ghàidhlig le Christine Primrose
Gaelic song with Christine Primrose
- Dannsa Ceum le Sophie Stephenson
Step dancing with Sophie Stephenson
- Fìdheall le Gabe McVarish
Fiddle with Gabe McVarish

04-08/04/2016

- Gàidhlig - Gaelic 2, 4, 6, 8 & 10
- Cùrsa ùrachaidh do luchd-labhairt na Gàidhlig le Ailig 'Bhaltois' Dòmhnallach
Refresher course for Gaelic speakers with Alec 'Valtos' MacDonald
- Beartas cainnt le Iain Urchadan
Beartas cainnt with John Urquhart
- Dealbhachadh Didseatach
Digital Photography with Cailean Maclean

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New direction

FOR AN OBAN INSTITUTION



WHAT'S ON
at the Lorne

TRAILWEST

Saturday
30th January

The Lorne has been an Oban tradition for over 100 years, and now long-time manager Declan Curran has taken over ownership, transforming it into a dining destination as well as a live music venue and pub.

“We’re getting people in the habit of thinking of the Lorne as a food venue.”

Declan Curran
Owner, Lorne Bar

‘The company that had ownership before brought in pre-made food and all you had to do was operate a microwave,’ Declan admits. ‘I’m taking it away from all that. Everything is made with fresh produce, cooked from scratch- quality products such as local produce, and a lot more specials. We’re getting people in the habit of thinking of the Lorne as a food venue.’

Declan does the cooking, building on his decades of kitchen experience, first as a chef for Stena Line super ferry in his native Ireland, then as a pub manager in Glasgow, before he moved to Oban 11 years ago to manage the Lorne. ‘I’m a lot more motivated now that I’m the owner. I got back in the kitchen because I love cooking- and that’s the key to being a good chef, being passionate about it. The new menu features favourites such as Chicken Balmoral and haggis, with highlights such as Declan’s signature Pork Stornoway. The Feast for a Fiver menu is especially popular, with hearty dishes such as haddock and chips, burgers, pizzas and enchiladas- all freshly made with generous portions. Several Quorn based and vegetarian dishes feature prominently on the menu. ‘If you have a food allergy, they really look after you here,’ said regular customer Beatrice Keenan.

Declan is livening up the pub side of the business with a fine choice of ales and lagers. He looks forward to bringing in even more live music, with bigger names such as Trail West, who is playing this Saturday, and starting the music earlier in the evening, around 9pm. With pub quizzes every Thursday from 9pm and Friday specials like free pizza slices, everything that locals love about The Lorne bar is set to be even better.

‘Pubs have changed so much,’ he explained. ‘You’ve got to develop the food side of things. Tourists seem to love us, but locals are a harder sell. Now the quality and the price point are there.’

New and loyal customers approve of the new direction. ‘The fact that Declan has taken over the bar has been a real eye opener,’ one regular said. ‘It struggled under corporate ownership and he has returned it to a home pub.’

‘It’s cosy, comfy and friendly here,’ says regular Eleanor Shepherd. ‘You know the staff will go the extra mile.’

With a focus on welcoming service and quality fare, Declan hopes to set a new standard for pub food. ‘We’re pushing the value for money, giving people an excuse to come in and dine at a traditional pub and get fresh food at a price that actually beats the chains- but the quality is so much better.’



The Lorne serves an outstanding choice of local ales and lagers.



Regulars appreciate the Feast for a Fiver meal for an affordable lunch break.

Wishing the Lorne Bar every success for the future

brakes

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www.brake.co.uk

Arena

> cinema, radio and what's on listings > leisure ideas > local events

BALLET WEST dancers put on an impressive performance to celebrate the 25th anniversary of its first Oban performance of *The Nutcracker*.

More than 200 people packed into the Corran Halls last Friday and Saturday for the opening of a new touring production that will visit nine venues across Scotland.

The largely new performance of *The Nutcracker* featured two of the original cast.

Guest principal Sara-Maria Barton starred as the Sugar Plum Fairy and Senior Principal Dancer and Vice Principal Jonathan Barton was The Snow King.

Ballet West has come a long way since its first performance of *The Nutcracker* when it was a fledgling local dance school. It's now a highly acclaimed professional

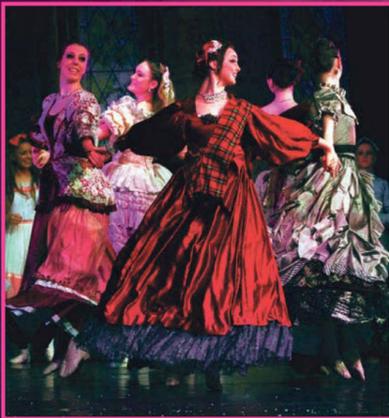
training school in Taynuilt with more than 70 students from across the world.

Ballet West's Principal and Artistic Director, Gillian Barton, said: 'I was very happy with the performance and it was well received by the audience. They are always very supportive and encouraging.'

'It was hard to imagine where all the years have gone, it feels like only yesterday that we were staging our first *Nutcracker*.

'We're looking forward to taking it on tour.'

Paisley Town Hall is the next venue for the tour tomorrow (Friday). There will also be debut performances at the Tour Digital Arts Centre, Helensburgh, and the Edinburgh International Conference Centre.



ballroom scene



grandmother played by Christiana Georgiou



Rats bow to king rat Owen Morris

Rapper holds EP fundraiser for Lourdes trip

STEVEN RAE
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AN OBAN rapper is using his tongue-twisting talents to raise money to help disabled children.

Kevin Irvine, 28, who uses the stage name K9 Kev, is holding a launch night for his new EP on February 13 at Cuan Mor.

All the money raised will go to help Kevin fund a trip to Lourdes with the Hosanna House and Children's Pilgrimage Trust (HSPC). The trust organises trips to the French pilgrimage site for disabled and disadvantaged children and adults.

Kevin, who is an assistant development worker at Lorn Resource Centre, as well as a volunteer youth worker at Oban Youth

Café, hopes the launch night will kick-start his fundraising. He needs to raise £600 for the 'help a helper' scheme to secure his place to Lourdes this summer.

He said: 'I'm having the launch night and charging £5 entry, which will hopefully raise around £300 if there's a good turnout. The trip is free for the children but the helpers have to pay their own costs. It provides a fantastic week of respite for the children.'

Kevin's latest recording, his fifth release and his first solo output for 10 years, features a wealth of local musical talent, including Rory OB, Citizen 9, Lush Puppies, and the Signal Fires.

Kevin said: 'The EP took eight months to record. It's called *Dear Diary* and is based around the past 10 years of my life and my music - me reflecting on my life

and how hip-hop helped me through my teenage years, when I lacked confidence at school.'

Kevin said the EP is also the end of his rapping as, by his own admission, 'the rhymes don't come as quick as they used to'. His plan is to focus more on the production side of music in the future.

'The song *Dear Diary* is one I'm particularly proud of. It features the Lush Puppies, who sang the backing track.'

'It's about me reading from my diary and my thoughts when I am eight, 14 and then finally 40, and reflecting on them.'

The gig at Cuan Mor is going to be noteworthy for another reason - Kevin will be performing his song *Live for the*

Weekend live for the last time.

'It's the song that people seem to associate with me,' said Kevin. 'It was played on XFM radio by Gary Lightbody of Snow Patrol in 2007, after I met him outside a gig in Glasgow and freestyled the song to him.'

As well as assistance from local musicians, Oban artist Anna Twigg designed the cover art for the EP.

The gig starts at 7.30pm on Saturday, February 13, at Cuan Mor, and is £5 at the door. To donate to the 'help a helper' pilgrimage, visit: www.justgiving.com/hcptgroup43

To see an exclusive clip of Kevin rapping, visit: www.obantimes.co.uk

The cover of the E.P, designed by local artist Anna Twigg.



Kevin 'K9 Kev' Irvine in his home studio. 15_105K9kev01



Performers thrive on global stage

WITH the ability to reach a far and wide audience, the internet gives everyone a stage to promote themselves.

Musicians in Oban are taking advantage of this digital age and releasing their music online.

Rory O'Byrne, a hip-hop artist from the town, has recently started posting video previews of his songs online and in a short space of time has amassed more than 10,000 views.

Rory said: 'The reaction I've received is really

positive. Behind the idea [the videos] is to give people a preview of what's to come and show people what I can do as well as

giving other artists I'll collaborate with a bit of attention. There seems to be more and more people getting in to hip-hop which is really promising.'

'I've also seen more and more people that seem to share the same passion for original music in Oban and want to give it a platform.'

'I've always seen a lot of potential in people who perform their own music here and I've always felt they don't really get as much of a chance as people do in the cities, but we're definitely heading in the right direction now.'

Rory is currently working on an EP, which is set to be released in the middle of March. An EP is a musical recording that contains more than a single song, but is shy of qualifying as an album.

To stay up to date with Rory's music, visit www.facebook.com/roryobmusic.

The Signal Fires, an Argyll-based band, released their debut single, *Ignorance is*

Bliss, last year and it received international status, receiving plays all over the world.

Andy Bruce from The Signal Fires said: 'The reaction to the first single was overwhelming - we had lots of messages of support from all corners of the globe.'

'The second single, *Ignite our Fears*, launched earlier this month, is also receiving some encouraging feedback.'

'We plan to release an EP around the summer - there just aren't enough hours in the day to complete all our musical projects, but it's also nice to take some time off to recharge the batteries.'

'Trad bands are enjoying huge success at the moment, but just under the surface we have rock and indie bands, rappers, EDM producers and lots more. Hopefully they can enjoy success too.'

'There's also a great camaraderie between the bands who frequently collaborate with one another - we have just recently had the pleasure of working with K9 Kev on his forthcoming EP.'

Ignite our Fears by The Signal Fires is available from most online retailers and streaming services.



Rory O'Byrne performing last year.

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- Across**
- 1 Bar (4)
 - 3 Etiquette (8)
 - 9 Heartfelt (7)
 - 10 Got up (5)
 - 11 Binding that adheres without glue (8,4)
 - 13 Strip for take-off (6)
 - 15 Served between the starter and main (6)
 - 17 A place to sit? (12)
 - 20 Copy (5)
 - 21 Radio frequency (7)
 - 22 Not cold now (6,2)
 - 23 Intelligence (4)
- Down**
- 1 Dairy (8)
 - 2 Child (5)
 - 4 Sell to the public (6)
 - 5 Crumple holder (8,4)
 - 6 Fall, on plant? (7)
 - 7 Bank claim (4)
 - 8 Shop which sells an assortment of goods (7,5)
 - 12 Crudeness (8)
 - 14 Without expectations of winning (2-5)
 - 16 Seen it all before! (4,2)
 - 18 Circumvent (5)
 - 19 Boast (4)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION

T	C	R	G	S	M	T					
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S	E	A	E	R	E						



sugar plumb fairy Yyu Hromota and Cavalier Prince Jonathan Barton



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29 January - 04 February

Creed (12A) 153mins
Sat: 19:35, Sun: 16:00

Adonis Johnson (Jordan) never knew his famous father, world heavyweight champion Apollo Creed, who died before he was born. Still, there's no denying that boxing is in his blood, so Adonis heads to Philadelphia, the site of Apollo Creed's legendary match with a tough upstart named Rocky Balboa. Once in the City of Brotherly Love, Adonis tracks Rocky (Stallone) down and asks him to be his trainer.

In the Heart of the Sea - Parent & Baby Screening (12A)
Tue: 11:30

In the winter of 1820, the New England whaling ship Essex was assaulted by something no one could believe: a whale of mammoth size and will, and an almost human sense of vengeance. The real-life maritime disaster would inspire Herman Melville's Moby-Dick.

Kids Club: Ice Age - Dawn of the Dinosaurs (U) 99mins
Sat: 11:30

Children's Classic. When Sid's attempt to adopt three dinosaur eggs gets him abducted by their real mother to an underground lost world, his friends attempt to rescue him. Kids £4 - Adults free!

Mystery Movie (15) 149mins
Wed: 19:30

Buy your ticket for just £4.00, sit back, and let us entertain you! Suggestions for upcoming months' Mystery Movies greatly appreciated!
HINT: Come dressed in '70s theme!
(Best costume wins free entry!)

Room (15) 138mins
Daily Except Sun: 16:30, Sun: 17:00

A modern-day story about the boundless love between mother and child; young Jack knows nothing of the world except for the single room in which he was born and raised.

Selma - Silver Screening (12) 130mins
Sun: 14:30

Silver Screening - Concessions (age 60+) entry just £2.50! Includes complimentary tea and cake. A chronicle of Martin Luther King's campaign to secure equal voting rights via an epic march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama in 1965.

Snoopy and Charlie Brown: The Peanuts Movie (U) 113mins
Sat: 14:15, Sun: 13:45

Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Lucy, Linus, and the rest of the beloved 'Peanuts' gang make their big-screen debut, like they've never been seen before, in state-of-the-art 3D animation.

Star Wars: Episode VII - The Force Awakens (12A) 156mins
Daily Except Sat, Sun: 16:15, Sat: 13:30, Sun: 11:45

A continuation of the saga created by George Lucas set thirty years after Star Wars: Episode VI - Return of the Jedi (1983).

The Good Dinosaur (PG) 121mins
Sat: 12:30, Sun: 11:30

'The Good Dinosaur' asks the question: What if the asteroid that forever changed life on Earth missed the planet completely and giant dinosaurs never became extinct? In this epic journey into the world of dinosaurs, an Apatosaurus named Arlo makes an unlikely human friend.

The Hateful Eight (18) 188mins
Fri, Sat, Mon: 19:15, Sun: 18:45, Tue, Thu: 19:00

In post-Civil War Wyoming, bounty hunters try to find shelter during a blizzard but get involved in a plot of betrayal and deception. Will they survive? Directed by Quentin Tarantino.

The Revenant (15) 176mins
Fri, Mon, Wed: 19:00, Sat: 16:30

Inspired by true events, THE REVENANT captures one man's epic adventure of survival and the extraordinary power of the human spirit.

Coming Soon

Dad's Army (TBC) 05/02/2016

Jonas Kaufmann - An Evening with Puccini 11/02/2016

Kids Club: Garfield (U) 06/02/2016

Sing-A-Long Sound of Music 06/02/2016

Lismore accordionist hopes he has key ingredient to win BBC final

A FORMER Oban High School pupil has made it to the finals of a prestigious national music competition.

Accordionist Murray Willis, 22, from Lismore, is among six finalists in the BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician 2016, having coming through a tough semi-final back in October.

The talented box player now hopes he can put the 'squeeze' on the other finalists when they battle it out in the final this Sunday.

A former pupil of Lismore Primary, Murray learned his craft through the strong ceilidh and Mòd culture

that exists in the West Highlands and Islands. He went on to study music at Benbecula College on Uist, before moving to Glasgow, where he currently works as a music tutor and, up until recently, a part-time blacksmith.

Murray explained: 'I've seen the competitions over the years as they are normally televised and they are a really good platform for young musicians getting noticed, so I thought, why not apply?'. I was asked to take part in the semi final.

'I'm delighted to get through to the final as it was a really good standard. It's a really

nice group of people, too, and we all get on great.'

Until recently, Murray was studying music and Gaelic, while working as a blacksmith, but has now made the leap to tutoring music full-time.

The awards, now in their 16th year, are held to try and keep young musicians playing traditional music, to maximise their musical potential, and to help launch the career of young traditional musicians.

Sunday's final will involve a 15-minute set at the City Halls in Glasgow.

'I'm a little bit nervous, and excited too,'

said Murray. 'I've got nothing to lose though. It's a chance to get into the big time, so I'm going to enjoy it and do the best that I can.'

Joining Murray in the final are; fiddle player Hannah Macrae from Lochaber; Jessica Burton, a clarsach player from Orkney; Edinburgh's Robbie Greig, who plays the fiddle, Mohsen Amini, a concertina player from Glasgow, and fiddle player Ryan Young from Cardross.

For details about the event, including tickets and broadcast information, visit: projects.handsupportrad.scot/youngtrad/



Lismore accordion player Murray Willis.

Public opinion sought on artwork

THE PUBLIC are being asked for their opinions on the proposals from the River Ness Art Project.

Highland Council's Inverness city arts working group, icarts, runs the project in partnership with Creative Scotland and Highlands

and Islands Enterprise. The main artwork, The Gathering Place, is proposed for Friar's Shott on Huntley Street and the siting of this work is one of the things the project wants the public's thoughts on.

There will be an exhibition in Inverness Mu-

seum and Art Gallery until February 20 so the public can get a better idea of what is planned.

Icarts chairman, councillor Ken Gowans said: 'We are now at a critical planning point in the River Ness Art Projects. Following advice from the artist,

engineers and planners, members of the icarts working group has chosen a preferred location for the siting of the main attraction, The Gathering Place, and we would like to hear public opinion on this choice and the other art installations planned.'

Scottish Opera coming to Dunbeg

PUPILS at Dunbeg Primary School will get the chance to take part in a very special performance of a new production called Fever.

The pupils will be taught the songs and will spend a day with performers

and educators from Scottish Opera to prepare them for a fully-choreographed performance of Fever in front of parents, pupils and friends.

The show follows a young boy who becomes ill with a mysterious disease.

As doctors battle to help the boy, the press camp out at the hospital looking for a scoop.

A cure is found and injected into the boy. That's when the story really gets interesting. The performance will take place on March 21.

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MONDAY: 0800 AM on FM, 0810 Breakfast Show, 0900 Monday Morning With Andy and Stephen, 1100 Molly Black, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1700 Drivetime With Marcus, 1900 Rosie's Highland Fling, 2000 John McLuckie's Show, 2100 David Cullen

TUESDAY: 0800 AM on FM, 0810 Breakfast Show, 1000 Ken Hunter, 1200 Memories are Made of This with Ken Hunter, 1500 Lesley Blair-Simmonds, 1700 Drivetime with Jim Lynch, 1900 Sounds Scottish with Archie Cameron, 2000 Highest Praise with Stuart, 2100 Elaine Lamb, 2300 Northern Soul with Gordon Covey

WEDNESDAY: 0800 AM on FM, 0810 Breakfast Show, 0900 Sound Scottish (repeat), 1000 Comfort Zone with Doug Carmichael, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1500 Elaine Lamb, 1700 Drivetime with Campbell, 1900 Country Meets Rock with Len & Ken, 2100 Gordon's Grooves

THURSDAY: 0800 Morning show, 1100 Molly's Mix with Molly Black, 1300 CLYDE 2, 1500 Gordon Covey, 1700 Drivetime with Stephen, 1900 Christine's Collection, 2100 Ann's Ceilidh, 2200 Margo Till Midnight

FRIDAY: 0800 Jean Ainsley Breakfast Show, 1000 Teeny and Tiny Show, 1300-1500 Weekend Warmup with Ian Blair-Simmonds, 1700 Drive Show with Jim Lynch, 1845 Sports View, 1900 Country Meets Country with Jackie Craig, 2000 Friday Night with Innes, 2100 TFI Friday with Jim Lawn

SATURDAY: 0800 Breakfast Show, 1000 Saturday Morning Live with Linda Crosher, 1330 CLYDE 2, 1800 Sports View with the Dream Team, 1900 Marcus, 2000 Dave Lewis

SUNDAY: 0900 Sunday Morning with Breege, 1100 - 1400 Sunday Brunch, 1630 Archie Darling, 1800 Ken's Friends with Ken Hunter, 1900 New Country Show with David Entwistle, 2100 Drum & Bass with Graham Scott

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Union leader calls for direct Kintyre dairy support

AS FARM milk prices continue to bump along at their lowest level for decades, the region's farming union chairman has called for direct financial help to keep Kintyre and Bute dairy farms afloat.

In the week that the National Farmers' Union of Scotland described the dairy farming crisis as 'unprecedented in severity and duration', John Dickson, newly-appointed chairman of the union's Argyll and the Isles region, said: 'The milk issue is definitely the most pressing and most crucial for our region. The longer it goes on, the worse it gets, and the danger is that farmers will give up or cut production, and it will get to the point when there's not enough milk to fill a tanker.'

'I don't think anyone wants to see the end of dairying in either Kintyre or Bute, because it contributes a massive amount to the economy in both areas.' He went on to appeal for urgent help:

'I would say that dairy farmers in this area, because of the very low price they are getting for their milk, are needing some direct financial help, just to tide them over,' said Mr Dickson.

'They are milking cows at a loss, so every month they are losing money. The banks have been understanding up till now, but for how much longer?'

'We need to have some financial help directed at dairy farmers in Argyll and Bute to help them get over the next six months to a year.'

NFU Scotland's policy manager George Jamieson said: 'It is critical and undeniable that all parts of the supply chain must better share the risks and the rewards of the volatile market we now face. Dairy producers are currently carrying too much of the burden and have not benefited enough from the opportunities.'

'Analysts remain convinced that the future is positive for the dairy sector,

but for this to be a reality then we must see tangible evidence that processors, retailers and all end-users, governments and the consumer can all work collaboratively to overcome the massive challenges of peaks and troughs of volatility and competition.'

'Scotland wants to be a part of dairying's future, but all parties cannot take dairy farmers for granted.'

Kintyre farmers tell of contracts paying 15 pence per litre or as low as 10 pence for some.

Mr Dickson continued: 'There is a feasibility study going on relation to the future of Campbeltown Creamery.'

'Let the feasibility study come up with an answer, and hopefully there is light at the end of the tunnel. If not, dairy farmers are going to give up. Longer term, part of the solution might involve Bute milk coming to Kintyre.'

He called for support for the union:

'NFU Scotland is not perfect, and I've criticised it in the past myself, but it's the best lobbying organisation we've got. The NFU has a relationship with ministers and civil servants, so it is definitely the way to get things done.'



John Dickson. 06_a05nfuschair01

Farming Focus

Ewen Campbell,
SRUC Kirkton & Auchtertyre farms manager

IT IS the start of a new year, a time when it is customary to look back and take stock of what's been happening over the past 12 months.

It will come as no surprise to any reader that one of the main features of 2015 was the weather - which can be summed up simply as wet, wet, wet. The total rainfall recorded at the Met Office weather station outside my office at Kirkton was 3,586 mm (141 inches) which was 1,058 mm more than the 1991-2010 20-year average. So there was not only a lot more rain than 'normal' but it was also incessant, with rain being recorded on 292 days throughout 2015. All this wet stuff had an impact on the running of the farms.

Following a wet January, we had a short respite during the first half of February, but the rain soon returned with a vengeance giving us a wet second half of February and a wet March. This made feeding the sheep challenging, and a muddy business. Fortunately, we then had a relatively dry, sunny and at times warm April, which was ideal for the beginning of lambing time. But again, after this May was cool and wet, as were June, July and August.

Although the animals did not suffer too much from these conditions, it played havoc with our day-to-day farming operations. Ploughing was one job which was abandoned altogether in favour of direct drilling, which allowed us to keep to our schedule of re-seeding at least one field each year. Just when I was debating whether or not to cut the grass for silage, we experienced a brief dry spell in the middle of August and we managed to get the grass cut and baled.

Thankfully after all the summer rain we had a bit of an Indian summer, and it was relatively warm and dry through September and early October. In fact, October 1 2015 was not only the warmest October day on record at 20 degrees Celsius, but was actually the first time that this temperature has ever been recorded in October. Like the rest of the country, November and December were very wet. In fact, the wettest month of 2015 was December, when a total of 738 mm (29 inches) of rainfall was recorded, making it the wettest December and the wettest calendar month since records began in 1991.

One of the few positives from these conditions was that the grass kept



A snowy scene at Kirkton.
©05kirkton01no

growing almost until Christmas, and no supplementary feeding was required until the new year. At pre-tupping, the ewes averaged 55 kg and were in good condition, which is good for the start of the mating season, and they were in much the same condition when the tuppers were removed in the first week of January. At this time, we dosed them for fluke and treated them for ticks. Last year, we had a couple of incidences of tick borne fever in our lambs so we have decided to take a 'belt and braces' approach to ticks this year.

As I have mentioned in a previous article, the weather was also the main reason for taking our cows down off the hill early and putting them inside. They should start calving in about three weeks and appear to be in just about the right condition. The sight and sound of a shed full of contented cows, lying down, chewing their cud as the rain hammers off the roof, is one that I find very enjoyable.

Last year, sleet or snow was recorded falling at the weather station on 42 days and lying snow was noted on 43 days. A depth of 20cm of lying snow was recorded on January 14 and 18cm on March 3.

As in the previous winter, we had snow on the mountains above 600m that lasted well into spring, with a few patches on some of the surrounding Munros not melting until August.

And it looks like we are on track for more snow in 2016.

But let's hope we see a bit more sun and a lot less rain through 2016, particularly at key times during our farming calendar. For now though, I better grab my raincoat and leggings again.

New farmers' union chairman sets out priorities

ARGYLL and the islands region has a new NFU Scotland chairman, after John Semple stood down last week.

At the end of a five-year spell as chairman of the regional board, Mr Semple was succeeded by Bute farmer John Dickson at the regional AGM in Tarbert on Friday January 15.

Looking back at his time at the helm, Mr Semple of Lochead Farm, Achahoish, said: 'I feel a sense of pride looking back at what we've managed to achieve over the past five years through the union. There's no doubt I will miss it over the next few months.'

He added: 'What I won't miss is getting up at 4.30am to go to a board meeting in Edinburgh, then coming back home to feed cattle at night. But it's been a great privilege to serve as chairman for this area.'

'I'm not totally going away though - I still sit on the LFA (less favoured area) committee, which has a very important role to play in what happens with Argyll farming in future.'

Mr Dickson farms in partnership with his son, Ian, at Scalpsie Farm on the Isle of Bute where he runs 140 beef cows and 1,000 Blackface and cross

ewes. A past chairman of his local Bute branch, he has also represented Argyll and the islands on the union's tenant farming working group.

Mr Dickson said: 'It is an honour to be elected to this post. Having represented the region on tenant farming matters for some years, I felt it was the right time for a new challenge.'

'An immediate priority will be to support those milking cows on Bute, Gigha and Kintyre.'

'The situation for dairy farmers is now critical and, given their importance to the wider rural economy, we need to look at how we can get more money into the pockets of the region's dairymen.'

'Having represented the region on tenancy matters, the current Land Reform Bill going through the Scottish Parliament could have a big impact and we need to make sure that we fully understand how the bill may affect both land owners and tenant farmers.'

'And given the hugely important contribution that hill farming in Argyll and the islands makes to food production, communities, local economies, tourism, biodiversity and landscapes,

we need to make sure that changes to support arrangements do not undermine this vulnerable sector.'

'Changes to direct support arrangements for 2015 onwards are only just bedding in, but we must remember that pillar two support for our hill farmers, through the less favoured areas support scheme, has also been a crucial lifeline.'



Outgoing chairman John Semple (left) is presented with a bottle of 15-year-old Springbank whisky by newly-elected John Dickson. 06_a04nfus_agm02

Change of heart eases funding blow for young farmers

A SCOTTISH Government funding package worth £30,000 has been agreed to provide agricultural training opportunities for young farmers.

The grant was agreed during a meeting between the Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs (SAYFC) and Minister for Young People Aileen Campbell.

The announcement comes hot on the heels of news that Scottish ministers had axed an annual grant to SAYFC worth £66,000 - equivalent to 13 per cent of

the youth organisation's annual income.

SAYFC, Scotland's largest rural youth organisation, provides members with a range of opportunities including training, travel and personal development.

Rural Affairs Secretary Richard Lochhead said: 'I am firmly committed to helping increase opportunities for young farmers and other young people in rural communities and I recognise the valuable work of the SAYFC.'

'That is why I am pleased to be able to give the organisation

a grant of £30,000 towards the delivery of agricultural and rural training and development activities for its members.'

'During the meeting, the SAYFC updated the minister for young people on its plans for securing the long-term sustainability of the organisation, and the use it is making of the advisory support package provided through Lloyds Foundation, including advice on alternative funding sources and assistance with presenting proposals.

'As part of the on-going national discussion on the future of Scottish agriculture, we have also been in discussion with the SAYFC.'

'I look forward to its continued involvement in helping to realise my vision of a productive, innovative and profitable future for Scottish farming.'

SAYFC national chairman Scott Wilson said: 'We are grateful for this funding offer which will help ensure we can continue providing personal development opportunities for rural youth

throughout Scotland. The meeting with the minister provided an opportunity to discuss with Aileen Campbell

the association and its value to young people.'

'We look forward to working with Mr Lochhead and his team.'

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Landrover Defenders from 1990-2015, all Japanese pickups 2 or 4WD, Toyota Landcruisers, Hilux, MOT'd or not.

All models required.

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Market reports

OBAN

Buinessan bullock tops sale at Oban livestock centre

CALEDONIAN Marts Ltd sold 32 store, breeding and OTM cattle as well as 632 store hoggets and feeding ewes at Oban Livestock Centre on Tuesday January 19.

Bullocks (10) averaged 216p per kg, selling to 230p per kg for a 205kg Salers from J Fisher, Scoor Farm, Buinessan, and to £700 gross for a 386kg Limousin from J McNicol and Sons, Turnault, Barbreck. Heifers (eight) averaged 195p per kg, selling to 225p for a 204kg Simmental from J McNicol and Sons, Turnault, and to £460 for a 204kg Simmental from the same home. OTM cattle (14) averaged 72p per kg,

selling to 106p per kg for a 568kg Limousin from AJ Malcolm, Inshaig farm, Cuil Bay and to £600 for the same beast as well as a 614kg Belgium Blue from D McCormick, Baligarve, Isle of Lismore.

Leading Prices per kg

Bullocks: 200p Lochdar; 195p Scoor Farm; 182p Turnault. Heifers: 180p Turnault; 178p Lochdar. OTM: 98p Baligarve; 96p Inshaig and Frackeraig; 85p Frackeraig. Store hoggets: Cross: £54 and £51 Burnside; £47 Duntrune Castle; £41 Killiechrana. Suffolk: £58 Torbhlaren; £48 Aird Farm; £40 Aird Farm and Poltalloch. Blackface: £50 Lurignish; £48 Castles Estate; £46 Carnasserie; £44 Poltalloch. Chev: £64 Dunach Estate; £51 Park Farm; £50 Barranrioch. Texel: £68 Dunach Estate; £60 Callart Farm; £58 Ballymeanach; £52 Treshnish.

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Integrated approach to energy efficiency

AN A drive for warmer homes and businesses a £14 million fund will allow councils across Scotland to make homes, public buildings and businesses more energy efficient, Social Justice Secretary Alex Neil has announced.

Scotland's Energy Efficiency Programme (SEEP) will help improve warmth in buildings and homes, drive down energy bills and work towards reaching climate change targets. The fund will help local authorities to pilot new and innovative approaches to energy efficiency with community groups and businesses, which can then be taken forward when SEEP is rolled out fully from 2018.

Mr Neil said: 'More than 900,000 energy efficiency measures have been carried out across homes in Scotland since 2008. SEEP will work with businesses and the commercial sector to see how we can achieve similar successes. This pilot phase will allow councils to test the effectiveness of new approaches to energy efficiency. The pilot projects will integrate

support across various building types, to evaluate the impact of innovative approaches to funding and delivery, and to test the market appetite for energy efficiency investments in the commercial sector.'

'Across Scotland we have allocated more than half a billion pounds since 2009 on a raft of measures to help the most vulnerable people in our society heat their homes affordably. SEEP will help extend these measures to ensure homes, businesses and public buildings can benefit from a similar approach.'

'This funding will now help local authorities develop projects and help ensure Scotland leads the way in energy efficiency.'

The projects will build upon and integrate existing domestic energy efficiency programmes, bringing together support from the Scottish Government's low carbon infrastructure transition programme, with the Home Energy Efficiency Programme Scotland (HEEPS); area-based scheme.

Wilson Shaw, chairman of the National Insulation Association in Scotland, said: 'We welcome this new approach to supporting energy efficiency in Scotland. Funding like this is a much-needed boost to the insulation industry and will help support hundreds of jobs across the country.'

'The Scottish Government's HEEPS schemes have been effective in improving the energy efficiency of our homes. It is important to build on this and I especially welcome the promotion of an integrated approach which should improve our ability to help both homes and businesses across Scotland.'



Housing subsidies increased

HOUSING subsidies are being increased for affordable homes for rent being delivered by councils and registered social landlords (RSLs) over the next three years.

Subsidies help councils and RSLs acquire land or buildings and to build, convert or improve housing for social and affordable rent.

Recommendations on increasing subsidy levels made by an expert group, which included housing associations and council representatives, have been agreed in full and will now be implemented for all new grant applications.

Each new home with incentives being offered for those homes achieving the higher greener standard.

This means for RSLs in city and urban areas, the subsidy goes up from £58,000 to £70,000, and for council homes from £46,000 to £57,000.

Housing Minister Margaret Burgess said: 'I would like to thank the group for its work on the report. We are aware of the pressures being faced by councils and housing associations, and support their recommendations on increasing subsidies. Housing is at the

heart of our ambitions to create a fairer and prosperous country and councils and registered social landlords will play a critical role in realising that.'

'We have a strong record on housing, having exceeded our target to deliver 30,000 affordable homes in this Parliament.'

'We also started a new generation of council house building and have taken steps to safeguard social housing for the future by abolishing the right to buy. Our new target will be to deliver at least 50,000 affordable homes, which will be

backed by over £3 billion of investment.'

'The new target is a 67 per cent increase in affordable housing supply, with 70 per cent of the new target being for social rent.'

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Caravan and Camping An adventure to remember

Sweeping lochs, majestic castles and awe-inspiring hills - Scotland has plenty to offer the intrepid camper/caravanner. But what to take with you on your adventure?

Obviously what you take depends on the following factors:

- Who you are travelling with - friends, family, children?
- Where you are going - if it's wild camping then you'll need a different list than if you're visiting a park

How long you'll be away for - a weekend trip may mean you decide to ditch the cooking utensils and eat out

What type of leisure vehicle you own / hire / are visiting and how it is equipped

What the weather is likely to be like - although in the UK it's best to plan for all eventualities.

- Take an old bath-mat (or two!) to leave outside to wipe feet on - they are much lighter and absorbent.
- Sporks - combined spoon, knife and fork - are the best invention, saving space and washing-up!
- Cheap disposable glow-lights (make sure you take them away with you) are a safe and fun alternative for kids instead of torches/

Before you pack games equipment such as footballs, Frisbees or tennis rackets, check your campsite doesn't already supply them as part of the package.

- It's probably worth checking out where the first aid help is when you arrive. The campsite should provide first aid supplies, and have details of the nearest doctor and hospital.
- Write down the menu for all meals for your trip. This way you'll know what you need to take and what you can wait to buy.
- If you only do one thing, make sure you are warm at night - cold, sleepless nights are no-one's friend and are the one thing guaranteed to make you think twice before venturing out again...

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WIN TICKETS TO SCOTTISH CARAVAN MOTORHOME & HOLIDAY HOME SHOW

4-7 FEBRUARY 2016

Sponsored by **BC Motorhomes**

Scotland's largest exhibition, the Caravan, Motorhome & Holiday Home Show opens its doors on Thursday February 4 to Sunday February 7 at the SECC, Glasgow and The Oban Times has 10 pairs of tickets to give away. Sponsored by BC Motorhomes, visitors can look forward to exploring the very latest models in one destination with all the popular touring models on display plus an impressive range of holiday homes and luxury lodges. UK holiday parks, advice from The Caravan Club and The Camping & Caravanning Club, a family camping area and children's activities are on the cards too.

Visit www.caravanshowscotland.com or call 0844 395 4000.

To enter, simply answer this easy question, complete the entry form below and post it to The Oban Times, Caravan Comp, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB. Entries must be received by midnight, Tuesday February 2, 2016.

Question: Which motorhome company is sponsoring the show?

Answer.....
Name.....
Address.....
Postcode.....
Telephone..... Email.....

Winners will be selected at random after the closing date and will receive a pair of tickets to the Scottish Caravan, Motorhome & Holiday Home Show 2016 at the SECC, Glasgow. The prize is not transferable or redeemable for cash equivalent. Tickets do not include travel or parking. The Editor's decision is final. Photocopied entries will not be accepted. Winners may be asked to take part in publicity and may appear in a Wyvex Media publication and website. The competition is not open to Wyvex Media and associated company employees and their families. Digital subscribers can enter by printing this page and submitting their entry accompanied by a letter explaining that you are a digital subscriber. The closing date for entries is midnight, Tuesday February 2, 2016.

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What we are looking for from you

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To apply, please download an application form from our website www.sgn.co.uk or request one from jobs@sgn.co.uk. All applications must quote reference number 1613ext.

Applications must be received by close of business on 12th February 2016.

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In return for your willingness to learn and grow, we will train and support you to provide a professional service to a high standard that respects the individuality and confidentiality of children, young people and parents, and enables you to build a rewarding future with Quarriers.

Please note that IT skills are required for all Quarriers vacancies.

We are holding an open day on Friday 19th February from 10-3 in Fort William. For the opportunity to come along and find out about working for Quarriers please contact Marie McGregor on 07531 194029.

Closing Date: 15 February 2016.

Quarriers is a registered Scottish Charity No. SC001960.

www.quarriers.org.uk/jobs






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Grade C

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If you are interested in applying for this position please send your CV, by 15 February 2016, to:

Jane McCusker, HR Advisor, Dawnfresh Seafoods Ltd, Bothwellpark Industrial Estate, Uddingston, G71 6LS. Office 01698 810008, E-mail: jane.mccusker@dawnfresh.co.uk

Informal enquires can be made to Gideon Pringle, Mobile 07747 487232, E-mail gideon.pringle@dawnfresh.co.uk

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They should also hold a full driving licence.

As well as writing for the newspaper of record for the West Highlands, they will be expected to take pictures on the job, as well as contribute to our social media channels.

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The Oban Times & WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

Trainee Reporter

Fort William office

Here at the Oban Times, the West Highlands' best-selling weekly newspaper, we pride ourselves on producing quality grassroots journalism.

A vacancy has arisen for an ambitious trainee reporter with plenty of ideas, energy and enthusiasm to be based in our Fort William office; someone who can really get under the skin of our communities to find the stories that will engage readers. Ideally you'll have passed your NCTJ diploma exams, including shorthand. You must have a full current driving licence.

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Live-out positions, Closing Date: 3/Feb/16

SYHA Hostelling Scotland is a self-funding charity operating a network of over 60 exceptional youth and affiliate hostels. We are currently looking to appoint a Seasonal Hostel Manager and a Seasonal Hostel Assistant for 2016 season at our Tobermory Youth Hostel.

We are looking for individuals who understand our charitable objectives and can commit themselves to place people at the heart of SYHA, welcoming all guests through our inclusive and accessible culture, embracing diversity as well as understanding different needs of everyone who has contact with SYHA Hostelling Scotland whilst delivering the best possible standards of Customer Service to our guests. You will be undertaking reception duties, cleaning/housekeeping, laundry and basic catering duties and may also be required to stay overnight at hostel as and when required.

You will have worked successfully in a customer facing role with excellent communication skills, flexibility, adaptability, IT literacy, cash handling and ability to work in a small team as well as unsupervised. A good knowledge of the local and surrounding area to assist guests with their travel planning would be an advantage along with catering experience.

Further information on this position and to obtain job description and application form please visit: www.syha.org.uk and forward your application form with covering letter to Argyll Group Manager, Oban Youth Hostel, Corran Esplanade, Oban, Argyll, PA34 5AF or argyllgroupmanager@syha.org.uk.

Scottish Youth Hostels Association (also known as SYHA Hostelling Scotland) is a registered Scottish charity, No. SC013138

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Redevelopment Project Manager

Following a successful Round 1 Heritage Lottery Fund bid, Kilmartin Museum is seeking to appoint a Redevelopment Project Manager to progress our major redevelopment project. The Manager will work in the key areas of capital fundraising, procurement, grant management, and oversee the next stages of the architectural design. This is a full time project funded contract until June 2017 with the likelihood of further extension, subject to successful funding applications. The salary is £29,150 per annum. Some remote working may be considered, subject to business need.

Funded by Heritage Lottery Fund, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Argyll and Bute Council.

For more information and an application pack please email kay@kilmartin.org or phone Kay Owen on 01546 510 278. Closing date 12 February, 2016, interviews will be held during the week commencing 7 March, 2016.

Opportunity: Personal Assistant to Support Physically fit Woman

Hours: Flexible, arranged in advance
Salary: To be discussed

Flexible, friendly, professional assistant to support woman with dementia get more out of life.

For further information, please contact Bess Barker in the first instance on 07766925388, or becsbarker@carrgomm.org

Due to the nature of the role, this post is for females only, and is exempt under section 7 (2)(b) of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975



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BUILT IN DOUBLE OVEN Diplomat double oven. White. Top oven and grill. Lower large fan oven, fully automatic settings. Timer. Glass doors £50 Telephone 07765 425683.

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COOKER white New World electric cooker with four hot plates, in as new condition £99 Telephone 07825 475143 or 0131 3397721.

COOKS PROFESSIONAL NUTRIBLEND 10 piece set. New, unwanted purchase £20 Telephone 01631 720768.

DISHWASHER Haus dishwasher. White. 12 settings. W635x620xH885mm. 6 programmes including ECO £50 Telephone 07765 425683.

DYSON TOOLS Dyson DC05 cylinder vacuum cleaner tools. 2 x brush heads, 3 end of tube tools, good condition £5 Telephone 01546 602546.

FRIDGE FREEZER LEC T5039W Fridge freezer one year old. (Can deliver locally) £50 Telephone 01631 566584.

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DOMESTIC PETS
ENGLISH SPRINGER SPANIEL PUPS liver & white, both parents from working strains and can be seen, mum KC Reg, three bitches left, ready January 30th onwards £350 Telephone 01700 811364 or 07584 664050.

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FURNITURE
CHILD'S DESK / DRESSING TABLE Pine 140cm x 39cm and 59cm high with three drawers on each side. Free to good home. Photo available Telephone 01631 730320.

GREEN LEATHER ARMCHAIR good condition, Lochgilphead area £30 Telephone 07921 468361.

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STORAGE HEATER Creda storage heater. 1.5kw. 56cm x 60cm £20 Telephone 07733 432644.

STORAGE HEATER Creda storage heater. 3kw. 100cm x 60cm £40 Telephone 07733 432644.

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KITCHEN AND BATHROOM
ADDIS SUPERDRY MOP used once with spare sponge head £4 Telephone 01546 602546.

BATHROOM FLOOR UNIT with three shelves, frosted glass, in good condition £20 Telephone 01631 566811.

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CAMPINGGAZ GAS LANTERN little used (owner allergic to gas) £11 Telephone 01546 850287.

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TOYS AND GAMES
ACTION MEN Large box of Action Men figures and accessories including motor bike, fighter jet, kayak, submarine, survival gear, weapons £40 Telephone 07765 425683.

www.highland.gov.uk

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 between the hours of 9.30am - 4.30pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) at the SERVICE POINT, LOCHABER HOUSE, HIGH STREET, FORT WILLIAM, PH33 6EL and 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
15/04612/FUL	7 Laggan Road, Inverlochty, Fort William	Extension to form additional self contained accommodation
15/04646/PIP	Land 200M North of Achaidh, Curtaig, Morar	Erection of house (renewal of 12/04442/PIP)
15/04783/FUL	White Corries Ski Centre, Kingshouse, Glencoe, Ballachulish	Erection of Chairlift to Plateau
16/00093/FUL	Land 850M NE of Reidh-An-Daraich, Knoydart	Construct access road
16/00095/FUL	Land 1040M SE of Conaglen House, Ardgour	Erection of house

Time period for comments is 14 days
ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
Email: eplanning@highland.gov.uk

Upper Sonachan Wind Park Limited
ELECTRICITY ACT 1989
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997
THE ELECTRICITY WORKS (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2000

Further to the notice of an application for consent to construct and operate a wind farm at **Upper Sonachan, near Portsonachan, Ardbrecknish and Cladich** (Central Grid Reference: **NN065188**) and for a direction under Section 57 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 that planning permission for the development be granted. The installed capacity of the proposed generating station would be **up to 64.6 MW, comprising 19 turbines with a maximum overall ground to blade tip height of 136.5 metres.**

Notice is hereby given that additional information has been received by Scottish Ministers on this application. Copies of this information have been forwarded to **Argyll and Bute Council, Municipal Building, Albany Street, Oban, PA34 4AW** to be made available for public inspection by being placed on the planning register. This information can also be viewed on the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit website at: <http://www.energyconsents.scot/>

Request for copies of this additional information from Scottish Ministers or any queries about this additional information should be directed in the following ways: In writing to the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit, 4th Floor, 5 Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw, Glasgow G2 8LU or emailing to energyconsents@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Any subsequent additional information received by Scottish Ministers before determination of the application, if considered to be materially relevant, will be similarly forwarded to Argyll and Bute Council to be placed on the planning register and made available for public inspection. However, no further public notice will be issued.

Any representations should be made in writing to The Scottish Government, Energy Consents Unit, 4th Floor, 5 Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw, Glasgow G2 8LU or emailed to representations@scotland.gsi.gov.uk identifying the proposal and specifying grounds for objection or support, not later than **29 February 2016.**

Representations should be dated and should clearly state the name (in block capitals) and full return email and postal address of those making representation. Only representations sent by email to the address stipulated will receive acknowledgement.

All previous representations received in relation to this development remain valid.

Fair Processing Notice
The Scottish Government Energy Consents and Deployment Unit process applications under The Electricity Act 1989. During the consultation process letters of representation can be sent to Scottish Ministers in support of or objecting to these applications.

Should Scottish Ministers call a Public Local inquiry (PLI), copies of these representations will be sent to the Directorate of Planning and Environmental Appeals for the Reporter to consider during the inquiry. These representations will be posted on their website with all personal data redacted, including the full name, address, email address, signature and home telephone number.

Copies of representations will also be issued to the developer on request, again, with all personal data redacted as previously indicated.

You can choose to mark your representation as confidential, in which case it will only be considered by Scottish Ministers and will not be shared with the Planning Authority, the Reporter (should a PLI be called) or any other third party.

If you have any queries or concerns about how your personal data will be handled, please email the Energy Consents and Deployment Unit at: energyconsents@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

or
in writing to Energy Consents and Deployment Unit, 4th Floor, 5 Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw, Glasgow, G2 8LU

public notices

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Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal agus Bhòid

Argyll & Bute COUNCIL

PLANNING

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected at Municipal Buildings Albany Street Oban PA34 4AW, Monday to Friday 9am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 5pm. On Wednesdays, the Customer Service Points will open at 10am. At the alternative locations detailed below or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
15/03271/PP	Upgrading of blaise pitch including erection of new perimeter fencing and associated access gates	Blaise Pitch Mossfield Glencairn Road Oban Argyll and Bute	Oban Area Office
15/03376/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, garage, installation of sewage treatment plant and formation of vehicular access	Land North of Ardnacross Area Isle of Mull Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Aros Isle of Mull
15/03384/PP	Re-siting of shed (retrospective)	Rhugarbh Croft Appin Argyll and Bute PA38 4BA	Sub Post Office Connel
15/03487/PP	Removal of condition 4 (noise levels) relative to planning permission 15/0092/2PP Demolition of existing secondary school and associated outbuildings/ structures and erection of new secondary school and piping pavilion with associated car parking, bus drop off facilities, playing fields and outbuildings	Oban High School Soroba Road Oban Argyll and Bute	Oban Area Office
16/00135/PP	Demolition of existing shed, erection of 3 dwellinghouses and installation of private drainage system	Bendoran Boatyard Bunnassan Isle of Mull Argyll and Bute PA67 6DU	Sub Post Office Bunnassan Isle of Mull

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09.00 - 17.00hrs Monday to Friday at 1A Manse Lochgilphead Brae PA31 8RD, at the alternative locations detailed below during their normal opening times or by logging on to the Council's website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk. Written comments for the following list of applications should be made to the above address within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013 REGULATION 20(1) ADVERT STATEMENT

Ref	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
15/03383/PP	Erection of distillery and visitors centre, installation of sewage treatment and formation of vehicular access	Land East of Ardnahoe Farmhouse Port Askaig Isle of Islay Argyll and Bute	Sub Post Office Port Askaig

Argyll and Bute council encourages planning applications to be made on-line through The Scottish Government website: <https://eplanning.scotland.gov.uk>

The Council maintain a Register of planning applications which can be viewed during normal office hours at Planning and Regulatory Services, Central Validation Team, 1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead PA31 8RD.

A weekly list of applications can be viewed at the above address and at all Council Libraries.

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.

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CROFTING COMMISSION COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD DECROFTING DIRECTIONS ISSUED

R G Cameron Uisken (3, 4 & 5), Kilfinichen & Kilivkeon 0.34 ha - Site for 2 dwelling houses 4.86.60169 Conditions: 2, 3b, 4

C M Hart Port Appin, Lismore & Appin 0.0180 ha - Amenity ground 4.86.56213 Conditions: 3b, 4

E J Dawes 203 Arivegaig, Ardnarmurchan & Sunart 0.096 ha - Site for a dwelling house (corrective direction) 4.81.62947 Conditions: 2, 3b, 4

Conditions
(2) To provide a site for a dwellinghouse
(3) Complete enclosure of the land with a stock proof fence within 4 months of:
(b) the proposed development
(4) That fence shall be maintained in good order and repair by each successive owner or occupier of the land.

Any person with an interest in the application may appeal against a decision to the Scottish Land Court within 42 days of the date of this advert.

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Oban Times PUBLIC NOTICES

Oban Times

First Registration of a Croft

Mr Angus MacKinnon has registered the croft 1 Acarsaid Mhor, South Uist on the Crofting Register held by the Registers of Scotland. Any person who wishes to challenge the registration may apply to the Scottish Land Court by 05/08/2016. Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.rsc.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is C1938

Source: Business Choice II, The Newspaper Society

Regional Press
Closer to home

BIRTHS

LEES - To Richard and Gillian (née Young) on January 18, 2016 in London, a son, Isaac James Michael. First grandchild for Mike and Fiona (née Campbell), Lismore and James and Hilary, Ballymena, Northern Ireland.

TOLLAN - To David and Yvonne (née Lawson) on December 11, 2015 at Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, Glasgow, a daughter, Leah Jane Sheila.

GOLDEN WEDDINGS

CAMPBELL - MACLELLAN - On January 29, 1966 at Our Lady and St Margaret's, Glasgow, John to Katie Mary. Present address: 6 Islay Road, Oban.

DEATHS

LORO - Joan Everline, died peacefully at Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban on January 14, 2016, beloved wife of Mario, mother of Jack and Janet. Sadly missed by all members of both her own and Mario's family. Funeral service in Appin Parish Church on Saturday, January 30 at 11.30am. No flowers please.

MACDONALD - Unexpectedly, but peacefully, at Perth Royal Infirmary, on Wednesday, January 20, 2016, Katie Mary MacArthur, aged 88 years, born Scalpa Harris, family home Urag, Isle of Colonsay and latterly residing at Bridge of Earn Perthshire, beloved wife of the late John, and dearly loved mother of John, a devoted and much loved granny of Iona and Diarmid, great-grandmother of Archie Scotson, dear sister of Maggie, Mary, Marshley, Morag, Donald, Francis, Dorothy, Fiona, Sheila, Lily and the late Duncan and Joan. A funeral service will be held at Perth Crematorium, on Tuesday, February 2 at 11.30 a.m., to which all family and friends are welcome. No flowers please, donations if desired will be accepted at the crematorium for Cancer Research.

MACINTYRE - Peacefully but suddenly at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Glasgow on January 22, 2016, in his 51st year, Ian MacIntyre, beloved father of Christopher, Mary Catharine, Danielle and Shannon. Forever in our hearts.

MACKELLAR - Catherine Violet, (née Livingstone). Peacefully, surrounded by her family, at Lynn of Lorne Care Home, on January 21, 2016, aged 77 years. Loving wife of Tom and much loved mum of Walter, Duncan and Allan, mother-in-law to Ann and Elizabeth and granny to Anna and Jamie. Funeral service will be held at St. Modan's Church, Benderloch, on Friday, January 29, 2016 at 1.00 p.m. Thereafter to Pennyfuir Cemetery. Family flowers only, retiring collection to Alzheimers Scotland.

MACLACHLAN - Peacefully, at her home Ben Hiant, Kilchoan on January 23, 2016, after a short illness, surrounded by her loving family, Ann MacLachlan, aged 68 years. Beloved wife of the late Allan MacLachlan, a much loved mother of Hugh, Rosemary, Nan and Alisdair, also a loving granny to nine grandchildren, a dear sister of Jessie and the late Mary, a dear auntie, sister-in-law and mother-in-law. Funeral service will be held tomorrow (Friday) January 29, 2016 at 1pm in Kilchoan Church, thereafter to Kilchoan Cemetery. Flowers are welcome or donations, if desired, to Marie Curie Nurses and the Pines Medical Practice can be given at the church door or forwarded to John McLellan Funeral Directors, Dudley Road, Fort William.

MACMILLAN - Suddenly but peacefully in Glasgow Royal Infirmary on Thursday January 21, 2016 in his 53rd year, David William (Here). Much loved son of Bill and the late Helen, stepson of Margaret, partner and world to Janet, cherished friend to granny, treasured brother, uncle, nephew, cousin and friend. Sadly missed.

SEMPLER - James Campbell died peacefully at home on Friday, January 15. Memorial Service at Oran Mor, Glasgow on Sunday, March 6.

SMITH - Joe. On Saturday January 16, 2016, whilst out climbing on Stob Coire nam Beith, we lost our beautiful, funny, witty and inspiring son, brother and partner. With love Mum, Dad, Chris, Martin, Emma and Kristin. The funeral service will take place at St. Peter's R.C Church, Stonyhurst on Monday February 1 at 12.30pm. Donations in Joe's memory, if desired, may be given for the Glencoe Mountain Rescue.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CLARK - Iain and Elena would like to thank all friends and relatives, for the support and many expressions of sympathy they received in the sad loss of Iain's mother, Annie, (Nan). Also, to all who paid their respects at the service in Oban Parish Church. Our thanks to all who cared for Nan - the doctors and staff of the Lorn Medical Centre, Mrs. Isobel McKinney, Nan's home help for over 20 years, Carers Direct (Oban) and to all who visited Nan at her home at Glenshellach Farm. Many thanks to Ian MacInnes of D & A Munn for very efficient funeral arrangements, to the Rev Dugald Cameron for his comforting service and to the Royal Hotel for catering arrangements. A retiring collection was taken at the church for Carers Direct (Oban) which raised £261.12.

MACLEOD - Marion and Stephen would like to thank everyone for their cards, phone calls and kind support on the sudden loss of their brother David, and to all who attended the funeral and donated. The sum of £274 goes to Diabetes Scotland. Special thanks to Fr Roddy McAuley for a touching service, Mike McFall for efficient funeral arrangements, Shiona and Serena for beautiful flower arrangements and Fay and staff at Caol Community Centre for the lovely buffet.

McNAUGHTON - Flora and family would like to thank family, friends and neighbours for the kindness shown to them on the death of Neil. We have been overwhelmed by the cards, flowers, phone calls and visits. Special thanks to Mathew Ramsay for a comforting and appropriate service, organist Marjorie Kelly, for her beautiful playing and The Larder, Tarbert for excellent floral tributes. A special mention for our nephew, John (Bogie), for piping and his lovely humorous tribute to Neil, complete with the impressions which were spot on. Thanks also to funeral directors, David Gauld of Aberfeldy and Stan Lupton for professional arrangements, to Tarbert Hotel for catering and to all who travelled from near and far to pay their last respects at church and graveside. Finally, thanks to all for the donations for the Air Ambulance, the great sum of £850 was collected.

ROSS - Jean and the family of the late Leonard Ross would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for their many kind expressions of sympathy and support following their sad loss. Our grateful thanks to paramedics Lorna and George for their prompt and efficient help. Sincere thanks to Dr Phillips, Dr Ward, Dr Simpson, Dr Helliwell and all the staff of the A and E and Glenary Ward, Mid Argyll Hospital for their kindness and exceptional care, which was greatly appreciated. Also thanks to all the staff of the Lochgilphead Medical Centre. A special thanks to the Rev Hilda Smith for a comforting service and to Donald MacDonald Funeral Directors for all the arrangements.

URQUHART - Morag and family of the late Colin Urquhart would like to thank most sincerely all family and friends for the many cards and kind expressions of sympathy received in their recent sad loss. Also to all who paid their respects at the church and graveside. Special thanks to Rev James Beaton for his comforting service and support. Grateful thanks to nurses in Macmillan Unit and also doctors, nurses and staff in Wards A and B Lorn and Islands Hospital for their dedicated care and kindness to Colin. Thanks also to Dr Glen and nurse Fiona Thompson of Lorn Medical Practice. Sincere thanks to D & A Munn for excellent and caring funeral arrangements and to the Royal Hotel for hospitality. The generous retiral offering amounted to £815 which has been given to Oban Free High Church.

MEMORIAMS

BIRCH - Betty Strang (née Henry) at rest January 30, 1988. The perfect wife of Peter, a love that never dies!

BUCHANAN - In loving memory of my dear sister and our auntie Anne, who passed away on January 31, 2015. Though our days together are over

We will remember you always with love

- Margaret, Kenneth, Cheryl, Lorraine and Scott xxx

KENNEDY - Angus. February 1, 2015.

I think of you in silence

I often speak your name

But all I have are memories

And your picture in a frame

Your resting place I visit

And put flowers there with care

But no-one knows the heartache as I turn and leave you there.

- Fiona

KERR - Remembering always

Willie, a dear father, father-in-law, papa and great-papa, who died January 29, 2015.

- Love John, Morag and family.

MACCOLL - Fondly remembering our mother

Margaret who passed away on January 24, 2013.

- Morven, Christina, Deirdre, Duncan and families

MACONNACHER - Precious memories of May, a devoted wife, mother, gran and nana

who died January 27, 2015.

Our lives go on without you

But nothing is the same

We have to hide our heartache

When someone speaks your name

Sad are the hearts that love you

Silent are the tears that fall

Living without you is the hardest part of all

You did so many things for us

Your heart so kind and true

And when we needed someone

We could always count on you

The special years will not return

When we are all together

But with the love in our hearts

You walk with us forever.

- Alexander, Jill and William, Sander and Laura, Darren, Cameron, Craig and Jamie. xxxxx

MACDONALD - In loving memory of Kenneth John

loving husband, father and grand-father, who passed away

January 28, 2013.

Missed always.

- Eileen and family

MACDOUGALL - Precious memories of my darling son and brother David, died tragically in a road accident on January 24, 1996, aged 31 years, also my darling husband Duncan, father and papa, who died August 26, 1996.

Behind a smile there's many a tear

For ones we loved and lost so dear

To a beautiful life came a sudden end

He died as he lived, everyone's friend.

- Inserted by Mum, Ann, Darren, Liam, Siobhan and Aiden.

MCCOMBIE - In loving memory of a dear father, father-in-law, grandad and great-grandad Bert, who died January 31, 2015.

A tired heart stopped beating

Two gentle hands at rest

God came and took you to him

He only takes the best

Sadly missed

- John, Teenie and Peter

You are always in our thoughts

grandad

- Fraser, Fiona and Kevin

Gentle Jesus up above give grandad Bertie all our love xx

- Kyle and Summer

NEWTON - In loving memory of my dearly beloved

husband, Fenick who died January 31, 1976.

Forever in my thoughts.

- Amy x

POULTON - In loving memory of my dad Chris, who

died January 30, 2006.

Sorely missed and forever in my heart.

- Hannah, Tobermory

POULTON - Chris, I can't

believe its ten years since I

lost my good friend,

always in my thoughts

- Catriona.

RUSSELL - Treasured

memories of my dear wife

Mary who died on January 29, 2010.

She is missed more than ever.

Love never ends.

RUSSELL - Treasured

memories of our dear mum

and nana Mary who died

January 29, 2010.

Loved, missed and

remembered every single day.

- Mhairi, Ian, Katy, Fiona and Morven xx

RUSSELL - Treasured

memories of a most loving

mother and nana, Mary who

died January 29, 2010.

Though absent you are always

near, loved remembered and

very dear.

All our love.

- Kirsty, Rebecca, Scott and Callan xx

Obituary – Keith William Willis (Bill)

3rd April 1929 - 20th December 2015

Bill Willis, Royal Navy diver, anarchist, miner, electrician, farrier, fisherman, shepherd, boatbuilder, bee-keeper, welter-weight boxer, computer geek and the nearest Lismore has ever had to Renaissance Man, must still be laughing about his funeral last month. Too bad the weather wasn't as dry as his humour. He would have enjoyed watching his two sets of mourners, diehards and Dionysians, waiting at Port Appin for a break in the weather. Gale force eight gusts made the ferry crossing impossible.

The diehards – battered, drenched, and despondent – huddled on the jetty to make sure of a place when Ferryman Fats gave the go ahead. The 10 o'clock managed to get across but failed to land in the heaving Loch Linnhe swell and eventually brought its ashen-faced cargo back to the mainland.

Meanwhile, the Dionysians did what Bill would have advised. They converged on the Pier House bar and drank Cragganmore and Old Pulteney – his favourite tipples – and toasted his memory.

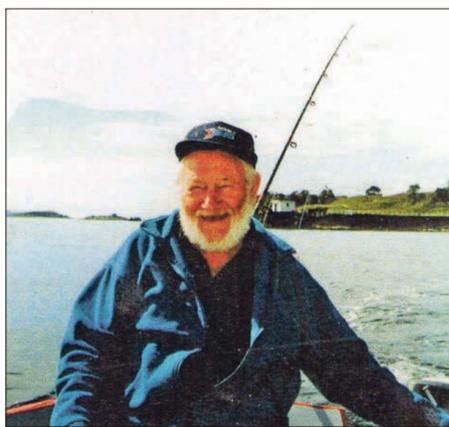
'Well, maybe just a top up, I'm the designated driver,' said a man slowly collapsing against the wall.

That so many people should brave flooding, rockslides, gales and hourly red weather alerts to come to Bill's funeral is no surprise.

He was a seriously special person. Big, tough, practical, hard-drinking, and laconic (until you passed muster – not everyone did), he was made of the metal of Hemingway heroes.

The grizzled photograph of him on the front of the Order of Funeral Service could have illustrated the jacket of Hemingway's *The Old Man And The Sea*.

It wasn't a church service. Two weeks before he died Bill asked the new Lismore minister to drop in. He wasn't only an anarchist, he informed the Reverend Dr Iain Barclay, he was also a heathen. He wanted to be buried in St Molua's churchyard next to his beloved wife Doranne (nee Brown), but he definitely did not want a religious ceremony. The mourners should simply gather outside the church for the interment of his willow-plaited coffin accompanied by a piper. And when we all finally got across



to Ballygarve in biblical rainfall, even by West Highland standards, that is just what we did.

It was Doranne who introduced Bill to Lismore. He grew up in Devon, left school at 13 to become, first a stable lad, then a jockey – the youngest ever over the sticks at Doncaster. Then Royal Navy service in Hong Kong (he learned Cantonese), a stint as a miner in Wales, and off to London. At the Anarchists Club in Highgate he met and immediately fell for tiny, feisty Glasgow University graduate Doranne. They married in 1956 and spent their honeymoon on Lismore in a cottage belonging to life-long friends Chris and Margaret Small. When in 1958 Doranne became the Lismore schoolteacher, the Willis's moved permanently to the island. At a stroke the two passions of his life Doranne and Lismore were realised.

From someone who could stow his worldly goods into a rucksack and hit the road at a minute's notice, Bill became the quintessential family man. He rarely left the island. Why would he? Everything he wanted was here – his wife, three children, four grandchildren, his dogs, his boat, his bees, his latest quirky interest – at 81 he found an interesting DIY website and started building his own electric guitar. Bill had a large diverse circle of friends reflecting his own

talent for multi tasking and eclectic interests. He liked people who did things, not people who talked about doing things.

The big comfortable front room of Taobar nan Iasgair, The Fisherman's Well – the house he built overlooking Achnacroish pier when Doranne retired in 1987 – was where you stopped for a chat on your way to or from the Oban ferry. Jim and Vic his sheepsdogs announced your arrival. 'You'll have a dram,' he'd say, emerging from the kitchen. It wasn't a question, it was a statement. You didn't always make it to the ferry. Bill's drams were never few. Besides, you were too busy talking to another visitor, an old diving mate from Hong Kong maybe, or the young fisherman from down the lane with a live crab the size of a sombrero that he'd just caught for Bill's supper. Or a Canadian academic interested in pharology who'd heard Mr Willis often fished near the Lismore lighthouse. Any chance of a lift?

Bill's curiosity was boundless, his questions narrow, his interest genuine. He was a good listener and great company. When I used to phone to say we were coming up to Lismore and ask, was it still raining? I always got the same grave reply: 'You know it never rains on Lismore, Sue.'

Of course it doesn't Bill. We'll miss you.

The Oban Times

& West Highland Times
THE REGIONAL NEWSPAPER FOR THE WEST HIGHLANDS, ISLANDS AND ARGYLL



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LIFE lines
A to B

IT HAS been interesting to note the language of the A83 debate. Members of the public 'demand' a long-term solution and government ministers repeatedly refer to the 'best option'. Certainly the public expects and deserves a road network free from travel interruptions, but the uncertainties of traffic movements and weather conditions mean there will be occasional disruptions. The same variables apply to rail, ferry and air transport: things sometimes go wrong.

One study last year estimated that a tunnel or protective cover solution for the Rest and Be Thankful would cost more than it would save over 50 years, but cost-effectiveness is not necessarily the most important factor. The recent structural issues with the Forth Road Bridge have amply demonstrated the absolute need for the new crossing; and highways authorities struggle to upgrade roads in response to dramatic increases in traffic.

Geotechnical experts cannot promise that future instabilities will occur above the same stretch of the existing road, so even if some major civil engineering project did go ahead, it could not possibly guarantee the end of dangerous landslips or rockfalls in other locations. Nobody looks forward to lengthy and inconvenient diversions, but they do exist. Regrettably, Scotland's – and much of the UK's – roads do seem under-maintained in comparison to continental Europe, Scandinavia and Ireland.

There was a time – or an understanding – that the road-fund licence would help pay for maintenance of and upgrades to the trunk road network. With more and more vehicles on the roads and ever-increasing amounts of duty it is hard to understand where the money goes.

GRADUATION



IONA MACINTYRE
Daughter of Lorraine and Angus MacIntyre, Ford, granddaughter of James and Violet Brown, Ford, and the late Angus and Mary MacIntyre, graduated from Glasgow Caledonian University with a Bachelor of Nursing, Paediatrics. She has taken up a Staff Nurse post in Critical Care at Children's Hospital, Glasgow.

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D &

Green Machine face fixture backlog

BT West Division 1 Oban Lorne P Carrick P

SATURDAY'S match between Oban Lorne and Carrick was postponed as a mark of respect to well-known club member Bruce Smith, who sadly passed away last week. Bruce was a proud father of sons Cameron and Struan, who turn out every week for Oban Lorne. Thoughts of all were within the Oban Lorne family are with Heather, Cameron, Struan and Nicola.

The Green Machine will hope to get back to winning ways this Saturday with an away trip to bottom placed Garnock RFC.

Oban Lorne lost in disappointing fashion away to Lenzie in their first game of 2016 and will be hoping for a much-needed win to take a firm hold on the top half of the table.

The team are on the brink of a fixture headache going into the second half of the season with 11 league games still to play.

Training continues every Tuesday and Thursday evening from 7pm at Glencruitten.

BT West Division 4 Argyll and Bute P Hyndland P

ARGYLL and Bute were again left frustrated on Saturday as Hyndland RFC failed to make the trip to Oban for the West Division 4 game.

Argyll, like Oban Lorne, have only played one fixture in 2016. This Saturday Argyll host

league leaders Police Scotland in Oban. Kick-off 2pm.

BT Women's National League Division 1 Oban Lorne Ladies 5 Ayr Ladies 56

THE CLOUDS cleared for a brief spell of reasonable playing conditions on a waterlogged pitch at North Connel. The first game to be played for around three months and intermittent training over the festive season, this was definitely one for dusting off the festive cobwebs and refocusing everyone's heads into game mode.

Oban ladies were once again joined by a few players from development team Helensburgh, who they have been building bridges with to increase everyone's game time. With Ayr sitting top of the league, the girls in green knew they were up against tough opposition and it was quickly obvious that they were a fit and well-drilled squad, travelling with a team of 16 players, including a well-rehearsed back line and some strong individual runners.

In the opening few minutes of the game, Oban were quick to assert their dominance and prove they would put up a fight.

However, despite having the majority of the possession, they spent a lot of time in their own half, allowing Ayr to exploit small handling errors and drive the ball over the line in the right hand corner after only five minutes of

play. This was the nature of the first half, with Oban exerting constant pressure on the Ayr attack to force forward passes and knock ons, but still struggling to make ground themselves.

The main game plan for Ayr appeared to be drawing the Oban defence into the centre to create space for themselves on the right wing, where six of their tries were to be scored.

Oban centre Kirsty Sinclair made a very convincing break up the left wing, only for Ayr to capitalise on missed pick-ups to secure turnover ball.

Green Army prop Ellie MacNiven took a knock to the head and left the park for the recommended five minutes' rest, whilst Ayr scored once again in the same corner, with 13 players against 12. The next three tries were all scored under the posts in quick succession after breakaway runs by the speedy Ayr scrum half, bringing the half time score to 0-34.

Oban did well to come back fighting and not let their heads drop after the half time break. It took only two minutes to drive the ball over the line, with a try for inside centre Julie Campbell after repeated rucking by the strong forward pack.

Good covering tackles into touch were made by stand-off Emma Roxburgh and chasing runs by scrum half Audrey Barr and Sinclair, however, spurred on by Oban's try, Ayr's handling and speed proved too



Oban Lorne Ladies pictured before last Sunday's game against Ayr at Connel.

much, scoring twice again to demonstrate their higher level of experience and fitness (5-44).

After another knock to the head, MacNiven left the pitch permanently with 15 minutes left to play leaving the final numbers at 12 aside, and two impressive runs by Ayr number 17 to score twice under the posts in the closing minutes of the game brought the final score to 56-5.

Oban put up a fight right to the end of the game but, with new players on the pitch and lots of cobwebs to clear out after the long break, they proved no match for the current league champions.

Player of the match was awarded to Julie Campbell, who came back from absence to play out of position in the back line, demonstrating some strong crash balls in attack and an equally solid

defence. The Oban Ladies are at home once again next Sunday, this time against the Aberdeenshire Quines.

The ladies train every Wednesday at the Oban Rugby Clubhouse from 6-8pm, with beginners very welcome.

Mini rugby

OBAN Lorne and Etive Vikings Mini Rugby sections are hosting

Rugby

an indoor festival in Atlantis Leisure this Sunday. All clubs in the area have been invited to attend. The festival will be running from 12.30-3pm in the main hall.

S1/S2 rugby

OBAN'S S1/2 fixture away to Mull was postponed on Saturday due to the weather. A new date will be arranged for the fixture.

Under 15 girls

OBAN U15 Girls hosted Ayr in the Scottish Cup on Wednesday. In a thrilling encounter Oban narrowly lost out by 45-39.

Tries were scored by Grace Thompson (4), Eilidh Shearer, Isla Head and Kelsey Whitlow.

Special mention was made of all girls who played their first competitive game for the team.



Competitors and prizewinners with their trophies. 16_05badminton01

Feathers fly at school championships

FEATHERS were flying at Atlantis Leisure Centre on Monday, as pupils from across the area took part in the Argyll and Bute School Badminton Championships.

Joining Oban High School were pupils from Dunoon Grammar, Campbeltown Grammar, Lochgilhead High and Tobermory High School, the first time the Mull school has competed in a number of years.

Oban High School PE teacher Denise Gemmill said: 'The standard has been exceptionally high.

Badminton

There have been really close games, even in the early matches.

'It's good to see Tobermory competing as it's the first time they've had a team in a long time. It's really good also that the schools all managed to send full squads.'

For a full list of prize-winners, see next week's Oban Times.

Badminton stars should shuttle to Kintyre

YOUNG badminton players are sure to have a smashing time at the Argyll and Bute Primary Badminton Championships next month.

The event on Saturday February 6, between 11am and 4pm, in Victoria Hall Campbeltown is open to all P5, 6 and P7 pupils from across the county.

Organiser Anne Littleton said: 'This event, which has been running for about 10 years, is one of the few county level sporting events for primary school children held in Argyll and Bute.

Badminton

'It would be great to see more entrants from Oban and Mid-Argyll.'

Last year's boys' singles winner was a P7 pupil, Elliot Gemmill, from Carradale and in the girls' singles Jane Scott, a P6 player, from Campbeltown.

Entry forms are available from Active Schools Co-ordinators or organiser Anne Littleton on 01583 421241 or anne.littleton@btinternet.com

Shinty cup draws made at Inverness Museum

Gregor Cameron Consultancy Celtic Cup

First round: March 26 - Glenorchy v Oban Celtic; Bute v Strachur; Ballachulish v Col Glen; Taynuilt v Aberdour. Byes - Inveraray, Kyles Athletic, Oban Camanachd, and Glasgow Mid Argyll.

Second round: 16 April - Ballachulish / Col Glen v Oban Camanachd; Kyles Athletic v Bute / Strachur; Taynuilt / Aberdour v Inveraray; Glasgow Mid Argyll v Glenorchy / Oban Celtic.

Semi finals: May 14 - Taynuilt / Aberdour / Inveraray v Glasgow Mid Argyll / Glenorchy / Oban Celtic; Kyles / Bute / Strachur v Ballachulish / Col Glen / Oban Camanachd. Final will be held on June 25.

RBS MacTavish Cup

First round: March 26 - Kingussie v Fort William; Newtonmore v Lovat; Inverness v Beaulieu; Skye v Kilmallie; Lochaber v Kinlochshiel. Byes - Caberfeidh, Glenurquhart and Strathglass.

Quarter final: April 16 - Strathglass v Kingussie / Fort William; Skye / Kilmallie v Newtonmore / Lovat; Inverness / Beaulieu v Lochaber / Kinlochshiel; Caberfeidh v Glenurquhart.

Semi final: May 14 - Skye / Kilmallie / Newtonmore / Lovat v Caberfeidh / Glenurquhart Inverness / Beaulieu / Lochaber / Kinlochshiel v Strathglass / Kingussie / Fort William. Final will be held on June 11.

Aberdein Considine Sutherland Cup

First round: April 9 Caberfeidh v SCOTS Camanachd; Oban Lorn v Lewis; Aberdeen University v Kin-



Margaret Davidson, leader of Highland Council and Jim Barr, president of the Camanachd Association made some of the cup draws at Inverness Museum on Monday morning.

lochshiel; Boleskine v Bute; Kyles Athletic v Fort William; Kilmallie v Lovat; Inverness v Lochaber; Caithness v Beaulieu; Kilmory v Inveraray; Glenurquhart v Lochside Rovers; Aberdour v Kingussie; Glasgow Mid Argyll v Skye. Byes - Lochcarron, Glengarry, Tayforth and Newtonmore.

Second round: April 30 - Kilmory / Inveraray v Oban Lorn / Lewis; Newtonmore v Glasgow Mid Argyll / Skye; Boleskine / Bute v Caithness / Beaulieu; Glengarry v Aberdour / Kingussie; Aberdeen University / Kinlochshiel v Kilmallie / Lovat; Lochside Rovers v Lochcarron; Caberfeidh / SCOTS Camanachd v Kyles Athletic / Fort William; Tayforth v Inverness / Lochaber.

Quarter finals: May 28 - Glengarry / Aberdour / Kingussie v Kilmory / Inveraray / Oban Lorn / Lewis; Caberfeidh / SCOTS Camanachd / Kyles Athletic / Fort William v Tayforth / Inverness / Lochaber; Boleskine / Bute / Caithness / Beaulieu v Glenurquhart / Lochside Rovers / Lochcarron; Aberdeen University / Kinlochshiel / Kilmallie / Lovat v Newtonmore / Glasgow Mid Argyll / Skye.

Semi finals: July 2 - Caberfeidh / SCOTS Camanachd / Kyles Athletic / Fort William / Tayforth / Inverness / Lochaber v Aberdeen University / Kinlochshiel / Kilmallie / Lovat / Newtonmore / Glasgow Mid Argyll / Skye; Boleskine / Bute / Caithness / Beaulieu / Glenurquhart / Lochside Rovers / Lochcarron v Glengarry /

Aberdour / Kingussie / Kilmory / Inveraray / Oban Lorn / Lewis. Final to be held on July 30.

Ballemore Cup

First round: April 9 - Strathglass v Bute; Kilmallie v Inveraray; Oban Celtic v Glenorchy; Caberfeidh v Inverness; Ballachulish v Glasgow Mid Argyll; Aberdour v Col Glen. Byes - Taynuilt and Beaulieu.

Quarter final: May 21 - Caberfeidh / Inverness v Aberdour / Col Glen; Kilmallie / Inveraray v Ballachulish / Glasgow Mid Argyll; Strathglass / Bute v Taynuilt; Oban Celtic / Glenorchy v Beaulieu.

Semi finals: June 18 - Oban Celtic / Glenorchy v Beaulieu / Inveraray / Ballachulish / Glasgow Mid Argyll; Inveraray / Ballachulish / Glasgow Mid Argyll; Strathglass / Bute v Taynuilt; Oban Celtic / Glenorchy v Beaulieu. Final to be held on July 16.

Bullough Cup

First round: May 14 - Tayforth v Lochside Rovers; Dunoon v Aberdour; Kyles Athletic v Inveraray; Glasgow Mid Argyll v SCOTS Camanachd. Byes - Bute, Oban Lorn, Kilmory and English Shinty Association

Quarter final - June 11 - Oban Lorn v Kilmory; Dunoon / Aberdour v Kyles Athletic / Inveraray; Glasgow Mid Argyll / SCOTS Camanachd v English Shinty Association; Tayforth / Lochside Rovers v Bute.

Semi finals: July 16 - Glasgow Mid Argyll / SCOTS Camanachd / English Shinty Association v Tayforth / Lochside Rovers / Bute; Dunoon / Aberdour / Kyles Athletic / Inveraray v Oban Lorn / Kilmory. Final to be held on September 10.

Oban Saints youth results and fixtures

LAST weekend's results: Regional 13s 5. Scoring for Saints were Connor Cup - Saturday - Condorrat 1, Under Moore (2), Adam Munro, James

Youth football

Beaton and Euan Morgan. Sunday - Under 13s 16, Dumbarton Riverside 0. On target for Saints were Connor Moore (6), Euan Morgan (2), Adam Munro (2), James Beaton (2), Ruairidh Munro, Szymon Chmielecki, Ellis Hunter and an own goal. Dumbarton United v Under 14s postponed.

Under 15s 4 Cali Thistle 4. Saints goalscorers were Keir MacLean (2) and Cameron Kerr (2).

Port Glasgow 2, Under 16s 3. Scoring for Saints were Lewis Buchanan (2) and Ruairidh Horne.

Under 19s 0, Mill United 4. This weekend's fixtures: Under 13s v West Park United; Under 14s v Kilpatrick; Cali Thistle v Under 15s; Under 16s v Port Glasgow; Under 19s v Milngavie.



Cameron Kerr is swamped by his team mates after scoring the equaliser to give Saints a share of the points. Photograph: Kevin McGlynn

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You may hand it into The Oban Times Head Office, Lochavullin, Oban by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.
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Please remember to enclose £1 for 20 crosses. The maximum number of attempts on this coupon is 20, but you may enter on separate coupons as many times as you wish. No photocopies allowed. You agree to abide by the rules. How to enter: Mark your crosses using a ballpoint pen. Twenty crosses may be put on this coupon for £1. Send to "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, P.O. Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB

The game starts with a jackpot of £500 and will increase by £50 per week until it is won outright. To win the jackpot, the centre of your cross must be in the exact centre of the ball. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void. If no correct entry is received, two 'near miss' prizes of £25 will be awarded. When the jackpot is won, no other prizes will be awarded that week.

competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company. In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company. The Company reserves the right to declare the competition null and void at any time, subject to its discretion and to make full refund of the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time. Employees of Wyvex Media, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter.



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Royce rolled over in a narrow victory for Saints

Oban Saints 2
East Kilbride RR 1
SAFL Premier Division

OBAN Saints closed to within one point of Scottish Amateur Football League Premier Division leaders St Joseph's FP with a hard-fought win over East Kilbride Rolls Royce at Glenclruitten last Saturday afternoon.

Despite failing to hit the heights of their last outing against Craigshill Thistle, Saints did enough to squeeze past the Rolly and keep themselves firmly in the title race.

Manager Alex Craik named the same squad that had propelled Saints into the sixth round of the Scottish Amateur Cup two weeks previously and, unsurprisingly, opted to stick with the same starting 11.

When the two sides met in the West of Scotland Amateur Cup in East Kilbride earlier in the season, Saints ran out comfortable winners by five goals to one.

This time, the Rolly were determined not to make things so easy for Saints and pressed hard in the middle of the park cutting off the supply line to the front three.

The home side took the lead in the 19th minute when Ross

Maitland produced an excellent delivery from a corner which Saints right full back David McArthur met with a prodigious leap on the six-yard line to send a crashing header high into the net to give Saints the lead.

Saints doubled their advantage in the 24th minute when a good pass from McArthur found Craig MacEwan on the left edge of the Rolly box. MacEwan made an excellent turn to get past Scott Woods and deftly lifted the ball over the advancing Dean Trainor for his 12th goal of the season.

The Rolly pulled a goal back just after the half hour mark when Paul Walker delivered another good left foot cross picking out Austin Reid, who beat Marc MacCallum to bullet a near post header past Thomas McCulloch.

This setback rocked Saints who were unable to find their passing range failing to muster another effort on goal in the remaining 13 first half minutes.

The Oban side started the second half as they had the first by immediately taking the game to the visitors.

Donald Campbell and MacEwan linked up well in the 55th minute to carve out a shooting opportunity for Campbell. From



David McArthur, No 2, out-jumps the Rolls Royce defence to head Saints into the lead during last Saturday's match at Glenclruitten.

12 yards out on the left side of the box Campbell curled a right foot shot towards the far corner which slipped agonisingly wide of the post.

The Rolly were enjoying a decent spell of possession at this point forcing Saints to sit deep and hit on the counter attack which almost paid off when Dougal Graham made a rampaging run up the left only to show too much of the ball to Trainor, who made a good save at the feet of the Saints' full back.

With 20 minutes remaining Saints received a massive slice of good fortune when Reid took advantage of a mix-up on the left of the Saints defence to bear down on goal. Reid rounded the stranded McCulloch, who resisted the temptation to bring down the Rolly striker. With the

goal at his mercy Reid somehow managed to send his shot wide of the far post much to the relief of all in navy blue.

Two minutes later good pressing on the left forced Craig Duncan to concede a throw in which MacEwan took quickly finding Campbell well placed inside the box. Once again Campbell took aim for the postage stamp corner but narrowly failed to find the target.

With 15 minutes remaining manager Craik made a triple substitution, replacing Willie Gemmell, Ross Maitland and Dean Smith with Dene Cassells, Scott Maitland and Allan Mackay.

The substitutions had the desired effect of reinvigorating Saints but still the killer goal wouldn't come.

Saints' top scorer Donald

Campbell completed an unwellcome hat-trick of missed chances in the 80th minute when he again failed to find the postage stamp corner with a curling right foot shot.

Substitutes Mackay and Scott Maitland combined well on the Saints right with Mackay sending Maitland scurrying up the right and getting on the end of Maitland's cut back to fire in a powerful shot from 16 yards, which was deflected behind for a corner kick. Maitland flighted in the corner kick which Cassells met but was unable to generate enough power on his header to test Trainor.

Referee John Scott, who had a good game, added three minutes for stoppages before bringing the match to an end with Saints securing a narrow victory to reach

Football

the halfway stage of their league campaign in second place.

Manager Craik, although happy to get the three points, was a disappointed in the performance of his team. He said: 'We lacked urgency at times and never got our passing game going. We gave the ball away a lot which is not like us. We have three big games coming up so we need to get back to doing what we do well.'

The first of the big games comes this Saturday when New Farm Loch from Kilmarnock are the visitors to the town in the fourth round of the West of Scotland Cup. The game will take place on the 3G all-weather community pitch with a 2pm kick-off. Referee in charge is Stephen Payne.

Scottish Amateur Football League results and fixtures

LAST Saturday's results:
Scottish Amateur Cup, 5th round - Campbeltown Pupils 1, St Patrick's FP 2; Centenary Cup, quarter final - Dunoon 2, Ferguslie Star 3; Hall Cup, quarter final - Carlton YM v Dunoon Athletic postponed; Premier Division - Oban Saints 2 East Kilbride Rolls Royce 1; Premier Division One - Drumchapel Amateur Colts 5, Lochgilhead Red Star 1; Premier Division Two - Tarbert 3, Milbeg Villa 3.

This Saturday's fixtures: West of Scotland Cup, 4th round - Oban Saints v New Farm Loch; Premier Division - Finnart v Campbeltown Pupils; Premier Division One - Lochgilhead Red Star v Kilbowie Union; Neilston v Dunoon; Premier Division Two - Rutherglen v Tarbert; Division One - Dunoon Athletic v Paisley.

Oban Camanachd announce pre-season games Shinty

OBAN Camanachd Club have announced their pre-season fixtures starting with a game against Inveraray at Mossfield on Saturday February 6 followed by an away trip to face Kilmallie on February 13. Their final warm-up game will be against Lochside Rovers at Ganavan on February 27.

Lochside Rovers' pre-season games are - Lochaber 2nds at Ganavan on February 13; Newtonmore 2nds at Ganavan on February 20, finishing off with a game against Oban Camanachd at Ganavan on February 27.



Oban Saints goalkeeper Thomas McCulloch collects a cross during the first half of Saturday's match. Photographs and match report: Derek Black

Shinty exhibition at Hampden Park

A UNIQUE exhibition detailing shinty's past, present and future has been running at the award-winning Scottish Football Museum at Hampden Park, Glasgow.

The exhibition is organised by the Camanachd Association, in partnership with the Scottish Football Museum.

The group which organised the display was led by shinty historian and broadcaster Dr Hugh Dan MacLennan.

The exhibition is strongly bilingual with Gaelic elements throughout, and was supported by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, the national Gaelic development agency.

Given shinty's participation in the Scottish Sporting Heritage network, which is also based at Hampden, the partnership between football and shinty looks set to develop. Many trophies and artefacts on display have rarely been seen in public, and the exhibition includes significant collections of memorabilia and medals from throughout the shinty community.

Shinty and football facts

1) Shinty and football is recorded

at Aberdeen's King's College as far back as the 17th century; three times a week students were permitted to go out on to the links for recreation where they enjoyed playing football, shinty and golf.

2) Whilst Aberdeen University Shinty Club is the oldest 'constituted' shinty club in the world, it is not the first shinty club to be recorded. A 'North of Spey' shinty club is reported to have existed in Aberdeen as early as 1849 and is the earliest known club.

3) George Keith, 5th Earl of Marischal, who founded Marischal College in 1593, was himself a keen footballer. In the 1580s he got into a quarrel with Francis Stewart, 5th Earl of Bothwell, after a bad football tackle led to an altercation. Only an intervention from King James VI stopped the two noblemen from settling matters with a duel.

4) Shinty has been played throughout Scotland, even in St Kilda and the Borders, but never in Orkney or Shetland.

5) The 'Paisley Football and Shinty Club', founded in 1855, is the only known club to have been

Shinty

devoted entirely to both sports.

6) A number of early association football clubs were formed by shinty players; these include Vale of Leven FC (Scottish Cup winners in 1877, 1878 and 1879) and Renton FC (Scottish Cup winners in 1885 and 1888).

7) Rangers FC are said to have supplied the original blue and white strips which have been carried with distinction by Kyles Athletic.

8) A number of top footballers were noted shinty players in their day, notably Duncan Shearer, ex-Aberdeen and Chelsea, and Donald Park of Inverness Caledonian Thistle, Hearts, Hibs and Partick Thistle.

9) Shinty has been played at a number of famous sporting venues in Glasgow, including Hampden Park, Parkhead and Ibrox.

10) Several football teams and stadia in England have a shinty connection such as Nottingham Forest, Old Trafford and Stamford Bridge.

Lancaster beat Lochnell in top of the table clash

THE OBAN Pool League provided the full complement of fixtures again last week. But only one contest truly captivated the imagination of the neutrals.

The eagerly-awaited collision between the Lancaster 'A' and Lochnell was without a doubt the box office tie with the four other matches taking subsidiary status, such was the magnitude of the clash.

No public relations stunts or false advertising were required: both undefeated, both top, two thirds of the league's triumvirate and both looking to end the championship dominance of the Lochavullin's Cellar.

Originally scheduled to take place across the Connel Bridge with Loch Etive as the backdrop, the fixture had been put into doubt with the Lochnell premises closed whilst the proprietors enjoyed some well-earned sunshine.

Lancaster 'A' rather charitably forfeited home advantage and reversed the fixture to allow the match to go ahead, using 'The Pool Pit' as opposed to their own table which was being used by their 'B' team.

Affectionately dubbed 'The Theatre Of Dreams', the venue had served the Lancaster 'A' well so far this campaign, so conceding home advantage so easily could have been construed as arrogance and their unrelenting confidence ironically self-inducing a nightmare.

The much deliberated scorecard comprised no fewer than seven undefeated individuals as the game commenced, a figure to be less than halved come the conclusion of the night.

So far this season Lancaster

'A' have come out of the traps like pedigree greyhounds in the doubles, hence their sole ownership of top spot in the relevant championship. This has fast become an envious trait which was to persist as their more fluent pairings simply manipulated and outmanoeuvred the less cohesive duos of the visitors to race into early supremacy.

The singles saw the pool prize-fighters trading clearances and jibes in equal measures as the camaraderie was as evident as the high class level of pool being served up.

Several household names had to square off and relinquish their standings in the player of the year award, but that played second fiddle to winning a coveted point for their team of contenders.

Ultimately it was in the crown-jingling that the Lancaster 'A' delivered the telling blow to the solar plexus of the Lochnell and unsurprisingly their resolute double-acts finished the job off before the Ben Lora boys could reach for their defibrillators.

It would be premature to profess the result as decisive in the title race, but it could certainly prove to be instructive.

Lochnell don't have long to lick their wounds and will have to pick themselves up from the canvas quickly as tonight's opponents Lochavullin's Cellar will certainly be looking to all but end their title challenge.

Defending champions Lochavullin's Cellar will enter tonight's match undefeated and second only by game difference after a comprehensive victory on their travels to Dunstaffnage.

Frog's mid-break feast proved to be their most potent weapon against another of the league's elite outfits. Despite receiving glowing reports from all visiting teams, it's not gaining them any points on the table.

The reigning holders cruised to the two points, although they would have hoped to have eroded some of the game difference which the Lancaster 'A' have in their favour.

Markie Dans 'A' might just be watching over their shoulder in fourth spot, despite thumping an under-performing Lochavullin.

A return to winning ways is always desirable after a confidence quashing defeat and Markie Dans 'A' certainly looked to have returned to their flamboyant selves in an excellent all round display, probably confining the Lochavullin to a bottom half finish in the process.

The Gluepot also recorded a resounding win for the second consecutive week meaning they are just one point behind after overpowering Markie Dans 'B'.

Quietly the Gluepot have ascended up the league table almost undetected after a sluggish

Pool

start, raising the question of why it took so long for their season to take off?

In sixth place, but very much in contention for a top half finish, are Lancaster 'B' after white-washing compratios Outreach.

Unfazed by the glamour tie within the same building the Lancaster 'B' were merciless as they put friendships to one side to remain hot on the heels of both Markie Dans 'A' and The Gluepot.

With a far more favourable run-in to the half-way mark, they have realistic desires of a top five position if they can hold up their end of the bargain.

Results 21/1/16 - Markie Dans B 3-9 Gluepot; Lancaster B 12-0 Outreach; Wide Mouthed Frog 3-9 Lochavullin's Cellar; Lochavullin 2-10 Markie Dans A; Lancaster A 8-4 Lochnell.

Fixtures 28/1/16 - Lochavullin's Cellar v Lochnell; Lancaster A v Markie Dans A; Outreach v Wide Mouthed Frog; Gluepot v Lancaster B; Markie Dans B v Lochavullin

OBAN POOL LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP TABLE									
	P	W	D	L	Ff	Fa	Fd	Pts	
1 Lancaster A	7	7	0	0	68	16	52	14	
2 Lochavullin's Cellar	7	7	0	0	62	22	40	14	
3 Lochnell	7	6	0	1	62	22	40	12	
4 Markie Dans A	7	4	1	2	55	29	26	9	
5 Gluepot	7	4	0	3	43	41	2	8	
6 Lancaster B	7	3	0	4	44	40	4	6	
7 Lochavullin	7	2	0	5	34	50	-16	4	
8 Markie Dans B	7	1	1	5	32	52	-20	3	
9 Wide Mouthed Frog	7	0	0	7	12	72	-60	0	
10 Outreach	7	0	0	7	8	76	-68	0	

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WEATHER

Thursday Heavy rain
Winds strong south westerly
Temperatures 3°C to 8°C.

Friday Heavy rain
Winds strong west south westerly
Temperatures 3°C to 9°C.

Weekend Outlook Light rain on Saturday
Heavy rain on Sunday
Winds strong south south Westerly
Temperatures 3°C to 7°C.

FRIDAY

Stop Press: New pontoons recently installed by North West Marine at Kyle Lochboisdale for visiting yachts

TIDAL INFORMATION
Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday January 28, 2016** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour) BST)

Date	am			pm		
Thur	02.12	1.0	08.00	3.9	14.48	1.4
Fri	02.48	1.1	08.32	3.7	15.22	1.6
Sat	03.25	1.4	09.05	3.6	16.00	1.7
Sun	04.05	1.6	09.41	3.4	16.45	1.9
Mon	04.52	1.8	10.24	3.2	17.42	2.0
Tues	05.49	1.9	11.26	3.0	18.49	2.1
Wed	01.01	2.9	06.54	2.0	13.42	3.0

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrishaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25
Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55
Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16
Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30
Lochboisdale	+0.30		

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate

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Survey reveals many residents now back a rise in council tax

LOUISE GLEN

lglen@obantimes.co.uk

MORE than half of those surveyed as part of a Highland Council citizens' panel said they would pay an extra £10 in council tax each month to save front line services and schools.

But while 61 per cent of the panel wanted to pay more council tax, only two per cent of the respondents – less than 20 people – came from the Lochaber area and Mallaig.

Moving away from the Scottish Government's Council Tax freeze would see the local authority possibly having to save up to £38 million from its budget over three years if it breaks the Council Tax agree-

ment. Yet at a special meeting of the Highland Council last Thursday in Inverness, the proposals gave some 'relief' to the leader of the council, who said that Highland people were thinking the 'same as my own community' over proposals to raise the council tax next month.

Council leader Margaret Davidson said the results of a budget consultation survey into raising the tax was 'mindful' of the fact that cuts will have a wider impact.

'There is no proposal for an 18 per cent rise yet. But people are mindful of the cuts that will need to be made.'

The survey into the council tax was taken when the local



Council leader Margaret Davidson.

“People are mindful of the cuts that will need to be made”

Margaret Davidson
Council leader

authority thought it had around £10 million worth of savings to be made.

Councillor Bill Clark, speak-

ing at the special meeting, said: 'By lifting the council tax we hit the working poor where every pound counts. Everyone [surveyed] who wants to lift the council tax freeze can well afford it. A Convention of Scottish Local Authorities spokesperson said last week local government in Scotland had restructured and it hadn't worked. Savings could still not be made. We need to have local decision-making powers to make decisions for our constituents. Many people talk about it in here. If we want to save money then we need to get back to smaller local authorities representing local people.'

Councillor Richard Laird said the council should not

dismiss results the council had through a Facebook page and online web chat. 'I want to encourage the council against putting too much emphasis on the survey and not enough on the Facebook chat.'

He felt respondents to the survey were not representative of people within Highland Council areas. He stressed the differences of the Highland population not just through age but through demographic and that social media results should not be ignored. The survey results were welcomed by the majority at the special council meeting and will now be part of the papers for the budget setting meeting on February 25.

TIMESLINE

Education chiefs to cap class sizes

CLASS sizes will be limited at Lochaber High School as education chiefs cap school rolls and reserve places for the next year.

Eight secondary schools in the Highland Council area will be affected by the limit placed on the size of their S1, S2 and S4 year groups.

Places are being reserved for pupils who may move into the area.

A Highland Council spokesman said: 'The authority will do its best to accommodate all pupils in their preferred choice of school. Priority will be given to children in the catchment area and then to siblings of pupils already in each school.'

Thieves take their pick three times

THIEVES stole batteries from the BT telephone exchange at Tomdoun, Glengarry.

The theft took place sometime between November last year and January 18.

In a separate incident, a pair of ladies brown Ugg boots were taken from an insecure locker in the Lochaber Leisure Centre changing rooms on the evening of Wednesday January 20.

And a blanket box with Chinese carvings on the lid was removed from a house in Cull Bay, Duror, sometime between Wednesday January 13 and Thursday January 21.

Barley spill brings A82 to a standstill

FIVE tonnes of barley spilled from a lorry onto the A82 a mile north of the Corran Ferry last Wednesday bringing the road to a standstill for more than three hours.

Police thanked drivers for their patience whilst work was carried out to clear the road.



Class act as Lundavra celebrates Burns

Lochaber high school head teacher and Rabbin Burns enthusiast Jim Sutherland joined primary seven pupils of Lundavra school who organised a Burns' Supper for family and friends. As well as traditional food, there were songs and poems, with Mr Sutherland sharing a rendition of Tam o' Shanter with pupils. Ethan Cairns addressed the haggis, downing a cup of the 'other' national drink, before he and fellow pupils served up and tucked into haggis, neeps and tatties. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image



Pupils make final of film competition

TALENTED pupils at Lochaber High School have reached the final of a film-making competition.

FilmG is an annual competition that encourages anyone to make a short film, documentary, comedy or any other genre, in Gaelic.

Lochaber High School created a film, *Beatha na Sgoile le Dabhina Attenborough*, which sees host Davina Attenborough take a humorous look at school life.

The film has now been short-listed for the youth section of the awards.

The Lochaber team will face stiff competition from Dingwall Academy, Tain Royal Academy, Mallaig High School, Gairloch High School and Ardnamurchan High School, which have also been shortlisted.

Voting is open on the FilmG website and the winners will be announced at an event at the Old Fruitmarket in Glasgow on February 19.

Police appeal for help in hunt for car vandals

POLICE in Fort William are appealing for information after numerous cars were vandalised.

A vehicle was damaged in the forecourt of Ben Nevis Motors on North Road, Fort William, on the evening of Tuesday January 19. The following day, a vehicle was targeted whilst parked in Olywn Courtyard, Caol, between 9.15pm and

10am the next morning. Meanwhile, a car windscreen was damaged on Foyers Road, Kinlochleven, between 4pm on Thursday January 21 and 11am the following morning.

A caravan window was hit when it was left at Chisholm's Recovery Garage, Ballachulish, between December 28 and Saturday January 23. Damage was

caused to a vehicle parked in Olwyn Courtyard, Caol, between 11pm on Saturday January 23 and 11.30am on the Sunday. Another car was damaged in Connochie Road, Fort William, between 7pm on Saturday January 23 and 12.30pm the next day.

Anyone with information should contact Fort William Police on 101.

St Kilda visitor centre moves a step closer

A VISITOR centre sharing the history and culture of St Kilda took a step closer to fruition this week after a leading consultancy firm was named as its developer.

Metaphor, which enjoys a worldwide reputation for developing visitor destinations and cultural projects, came

through a highly competitive tendering process to win the HIE-funded brief for the proposed St Kilda Centre (Ionad Hìort) in Uig. It will now work closely with the local group, which has been taking the project forward to bring it to the point at which funding applica-

tions can be made. Its team includes master-planners, designers, multi-media experts and architects.

Rachel Morris of Metaphor described the cliff-top site identified for the centre as 'astonishing', offering 'a major opportunity to create a world-class centre'.



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Support for Private Landlords in Lochaber

A new initiative to work with Landlords to provide information and practical assistance and ensure the provision of excellent quality private rented accommodation across Lochaber.

Join us for our launch event on Thursday 28th January 2016 to understand how to look after your investment and ensure a return in the future.

Call or email to reserve your place.

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Lighthouses could boost mobile phone cover

A BRIGHT idea to put lighthouses at the centre of mobile phone coverage for the islands and West Highlands has met with a good response from providers.

Mobile companies EE and Vodafone are keen to promote the idea and Western Isles MP Angus Brendan MacNeil says it might be the solution to gaps in coverage.

Mr MacNeil was delighted to receive a positive response from the Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB) which has indicated a willingness to work with mobile operators to make progress in this area.

Mr MacNeil had contacted NLB following a query from EE on the use of sites which could allow them to improve coverage.

This could mean NLB would allow operators to use its facilities to enhance coverage in the Western Isles, Na h-Eileanan an Iar, and across the West Highland islands.

Mr MacNeil said: 'I wrote to NLB at the end of last year after discussions with mobile operators on how to escalate the timetable for bringing 4G to the area. NLB has said that it is committed to developing the Scottish economy and is therefore open to discussions with mobile providers on where opportunities might lie.'

'I would like to thank NLB for its prompt, sensible response and its ability to see the bigger picture.'

'I have already received confirmation from Vodafone that 4G will be delivered to the islands within the next two years but the sooner all companies have infrastructure in place to do this, the better for the economy of the islands.'

'I look forward to further discussions with operators and NLB on how we can take this forward.'

Extension of the mobile networks is dependent on the roll out and availability of fibre broadband as this is needed to connect masts to the core network. Following discussions with Mr MacNeil, BT has also given a commitment to work closely with mobile operators to support development of coverage extension.

Smelter job fears follow in wake of fish farming cuts

CAREN MCPATE
fort@obantimes.co.uk

MAJOR concern has been raised about hundreds of jobs after one of Lochaber's biggest employers announced it was reviewing its future in the area. Workers at the Lochaber smelter, Rio Tinto Alcan, which employs 170 people, were shocked to hear the company is launching a 'strategic review of its assets at Lochaber'.

In another blow, Marine Harvest Scotland fish farmers revealed 100 jobs are to go. Its fish farm operations are situated across the Highlands, Argyll and the Western Isles.

Live fish are harvested at Mallaig and processed at the

Blar Mhor processing plant in Fort William.

The Rio Tinto Alcan aluminium plant in Fort William is the last aluminium smelter in the UK and includes its own hydro-electric power stations in the town and at Kinlochleven.

Brian Murphy, councillor for Fort William and Ardnamurchan, worked at the plant for 21 years. He said: 'It's very worrying. I have spoken to several people who are very concerned about this. The site is a very important part of the local economy and is worth around £7.8million.'

'There's also the knock-on effect if it was to close. There's probably double the number of jobs with contractors and

suppliers and affects rail freight and road haulage.'

He added: 'Everyone is hoping the strategic review will offer a positive way forward.'

In a memo to councillors and council leaders, Rio Tinto said: 'We have advised our employees in the Lochaber business that in light of the current market prospects and economic environment, and as part of our on-going review of our businesses, Rio Tinto is launching a strategic review of its assets in Lochaber. This review is the start of a process, during which we will be talking to our employees, key stakeholders and partners.'

'The review will include the aluminium smelter, the hydro-electric power stations in Fort

William and in Kinlochleven as well as estate lands in the Scottish Highlands. I want to emphasise that all options will be considered. Given the broad diversity of assets at Lochaber, the review will consider various scenarios to ensure all options are fully assessed, in keeping with Rio Tinto's standard practice in conducting such reviews.'

It added: 'We recognise that this is a difficult time for our employees and we will keep our staff informed as we move forward. In the meantime, it is paramount that we remain focused on keeping our employees safe and that we keep delivering the same quality product.'

The Highland Council's

Lochaber area leader Councillor Thomas MacLennan expressed his concern and said the council had offered to assist in the review.

He added: 'The smelter is the last remaining aluminium smelter in the UK and, as such, is of significant economic importance, not only to the West Highland area but far beyond.'

Deputy First Minister John Swinney and Business and Energy Minister Fergus Ewing have spoken with Rio Tinto.

The Scottish Government's economic and community development agency, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), is engaging with the company to understand the potential impacts of the announcement.

TIMESLINE

Kinlochleven story project wins praise

A PROJECT planned and delivered by students at Kinlochleven high school has been praised by organisers of National Storytelling Week.

'Storytelling to Inspire' was prompted by stories told by the older generation to the school pupils in the hope their creativity will be passed on to younger kids.

Groups of students will read children's storybooks to youngsters and work with them to act out the story for other groups.

The Kinlochleven organisers will tell them the story of some athletes working towards the Olympic Games in Rio this year. They will work to pick out the qualities they think the athletes use to reach their goals.

Once the students are familiar with the values, they go back to their groups and recreate the stories using flashcards with key words such as bravery, courage or determination.

Fewer donations to health board

CHARITABLE donations to hospitals, wards and departments within NHS Highland were slightly down on this time last year, according to the latest figures.

Total income for the health board's endowment funds stood at £744,000 for 2014/2015, down around £23,000 from £767,000 raised the previous year.

Donations to NHS Highland go the Highland Health Board Endowment fund, a registered charity which holds the money in trust. It manages individual funds and donations can be made for a specific ward, a particular piece of equipment or amenities for patients.

On course to invest in young people

THERE are free places available at workshops for businesses working towards the investors in young people standard.

Investors in People Scotland is holding two, day-long courses across the Highlands to train people on how to develop a strategy and implement an action plan. The dates in Lochaber are February 10 and February 24. Free places are open to private companies with fewer than 250 employees.

Investors in People Scotland, which aims to encourage businesses to employ and support young people, are running the courses. Although the course is free, companies are asked to pay £20 for lunch and refreshments. Places are limited to one per company.



Kinlochleven high school pupils were given Saltire awards. 105saltire01

School pupils rewarded for community spirit

PUPILS at Kinlochleven high school have been rewarded with Saltire certificates for their voluntary work in the community.

Pupils put on a Christmas show, Glen of Thrones, which raised £2,000 for the community.

Everyone involved, from performers to make-up artists

and stagehands, received a Saltire award.

Head teacher Rebecca Machin said: 'It is only right and proper that our young people's hard work is recorded and recognised through this government-supported award scheme. For a school as small as ours to have so many taking part is a great testament to the

fabulous community spirit and enterprise we have here.'

Councillor Andrew Baxter presented the certificates and encouraged pupils to get involved in the new Walkers are Welcome initiative that encourages towns and villages to be walker friendly.

As part of the Get Set Community Action initiative,

senior pupils decided before Christmas to make up hampers for older people in the community who might be struggling over the festive season.

Pupils donated gifts for the hampers and suggested people in the community they thought should receive one.

They made and distributed

20 hampers and raised more than £100 for Age UK.

One happy recipient sent a note which said: 'It was lovely, not just to receive the gift, but for your young people to make the effort to deliver it themselves. They were so smartly dressed and had time to talk. They were so charming.'

Highland Council tenants urged to share opinions on service quality

AN INDEPENDENT survey by market research company Progressive Partnerships is being carried out on behalf of The Highland Council's Housing Service.

The postal survey has been sent to all 13,799 council tenants inviting them to share their views on the quality of services provided to them by the Council's Housing Service.

The survey results will be used to help the council understand more about tenants' experience of housing services and plan for the future using this knowledge. Tenants who have not yet completed and returned their survey are encouraged to get involved and have their say about their experience as a Highland Council tenant.

Progressive Partnership sent reminder letters and

survey forms to tenants, who have not yet taken the opportunity to have their say, from January 22. No stamp is required for returning the survey questionnaire by post. Alternatively, there is an online survey at <http://tinyurl.com/tenants16>.

Tenants are urged to complete and return their questionnaire by February 10, 2016.

Oban Times
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The architect's drawing of the new-look hotel, detailing the cantilevered dining room and turf-roofed bedroom wing. 105kingshouse02

Kingshouse Hotel to get makeover

THE Kingshouse Hotel in Glen Coe is to get a new look thanks to investment from new owners Black Corries Estate.

Plans include replacing the 1960s' extension with one more in keeping with the area and increasing the number of bedrooms from 45 to 80. A new dining room will be built so visitors can look out on Glen Coe and River Etive while enjoying their meal.

To the relief of many, the popular Climbers' bar will remain almost untouched. Susanna Thomson of managing agents Bidwells said: 'We will be keeping much of the Climbers' bar intact. We know we have some very loyal customers, many of whom have good memories of times had in the bar, and it's important to retain that connection.'

Architect Ben Tindall said: 'Externally the design fits well into the landscape and incorporates a wing of turf-roofed bedrooms. Internally, a wide variety of spaces will provide high quality facilities that capture the views and allows the retention of the Climbers' bar.'

'The dining room's dramatic views are enhanced by cantilevering the structure over the River Etive. Ten superb bedrooms on the first floor, including the king and queen rooms, enjoy the incredible views that Kings House affords.'

Rising rents prompt MSP to call for extension of proposed cost controls

AS RENTS in the Highlands and Islands see tenants pay more than £23 than the national average, MSP John Finnie has called on the Scottish Government to extend proposed rent controls.

The Highlands and Islands MSP said controls were 'urgent' as rents are rising faster than in any other part of Scotland.

Mr Finnie was one of the first MSPs to join the Living Rent Campaign to press for rent controls, scrapped by former prime minister and the late Margaret Thatcher's administration in 1988.

Campaigners were jubilant when Nicola Sturgeon announced last year that she would reintroduce controls, but current Scottish Government proposals

would only limit rent rises during existing tenancies.

Mr Finnie warned that this 'giant loophole' would leave landlords free to increase rents as much as they wanted for new tenants, and might even encourage landlords to evict existing tenants in order to sidestep rent controls. The MSP said: 'The cost of renting a home in the Highlands

and islands is racing ahead of the rest of the country, driven by buy-to-let and holiday-home speculators for whom houses are first and foremost investments, not homes. The result is greater poverty, greater depopulation, and more desperate tenants forced to accept poor-quality homes or unscrupulous landlords. 'Nowhere is the case for

rent controls more urgent.'

Mr Finnie also called on the government to make rent controls reflect the quality of housing, encouraging landlords to make repairs and improve energy efficiency, and to include a hardship clause in eviction rules so that eviction orders could be delayed for tenants who are dealing with difficult circumstances.

Inside next week's

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Building your own home

Building your own home

A comprehensive pull-out guide to self build, from finding land to beautiful interiors

inside: looking for land, raising finance, fit homes, architecture, planning permission, comprehensive guide to self build.

£6.6M Rest plan best route, for now

LOUISE GLEN
lglen@obantimes.co.uk

THE TRANSPORT minister has said that no credible permanent solution for the A83 Rest and Be Thankful had been found to date.

MSP Derek Mackay, cabinet minister for transport, said the £6.6 million investment announced on Monday is the correct course of action on the information experts have given him to make the main route into Argyll secure and sustainable.

Mr Mackay said he was willing to listen to anyone who believes they have found the permanent solution – in the meantime meaningful progress is being made.

Speaking exclusively to *The Oban Times* after the Monday morning announcement, Mr Mackay said he was taking a 'rational, responsible approach' to ongoing concerns about the

landslip-prone area having asked the people of Argyll and Bute what the long-term solution for the route was. He said 'no-one can come up with a risk-free solution'.

'Anything other than this would be a waste of tax payers money,' he continued.

'If there is some solution we are missing that would make the entire area safe then we will look at it immediately. We have looked at all the ideas that have been brought before us until now and we will continue doing that.'

'In the meantime we need to make sure we are doing what we know works.'

Mr Mackay said the latest incident at the end of December where a woman was almost killed when her car was caught up in a landslip was 'exceptional', and that the track record was that there were fewer closures due to the netting. He added:

'We need a continuity of access and the new netting solutions will take us nearer to that.'

Mr Mackay admitted that communication with the public had not always been as immediate as he would have liked and that alternative routes were taking too long to open up.

'We need to get the message out there that Argyll is not closed but is 'open for business'.'

'The Old Military Road needs to open as soon as problems happen on the other route. We cannot have a 24-hour delay in it opening. Decisions have to be made promptly and safely. Everything we do has to be about public safety.'

Mr Mackay said further multi-million pound investment in the alternative route, via Loch Lomond, at Pulpit Rock and the Crianlarich bypass, 'have been well received'.

When discussing a plan for a

passage through the most landslip prone area – a 300-400-metre section of the Rest and Be Thankful – put forward by local hotelier Donald Clark, Mr Mackay said this plan would not cover the entire area needing protection.

'If it was the right thing to do then we would do it. But it does not solve all the problems we have in the area.'

Mr Mackay dismissed claims about a central-belt bias in funding and approving roads and transport projects.

'When I go to the control room at Transport Scotland the situation in Argyll is always on the agenda,' he said.

'What is happening anywhere in the country is of importance to me. Let me be clear, we want our roads moving in Scotland and I think that anyone who was at the taskforce meeting on Monday will agree, that this

route is receiving our attention as it would if it were in Glasgow, Edinburgh or anywhere in Scotland. The plain fact is that there are no easy answers.

'On Monday there was an opportunity for the members of the taskforce to reject the money but everyone around the table agreed the investment.'

Argyll and Bute Council's policy leader for roads, Councillor Ellen Morton, said: 'Being prepared to respond to bad weather is one thing but taking action which will ensure permanent access is clearly the best long-term goal. We are committed to doing all we can as a local authority, but only the Scottish Government can deliver a permanent solution.'

'We are pleased that we continue to have these positive strategic meetings and work with our partners at national government level and on the A83

taskforce to move this forward.'

A83 campaigner Donald Clark, from the George Hotel in Inveraray, said: 'I have consistently argued that a simple, safe, open-sided flow-over canopy (closed outer edge at the top three gullies) could be easily cut into the hillsides to give a four-metre wide single carriage-way relief road activated at high landslide alert times.'

'These three dangerous gullies are on a 300m section of the Rest and Be Thankful. Transport Scotland has ruled this out on a cost basis. It has produced an overly complicated design stretching to 1.2km at a cost between £105 and £120m.'

'If the Dawlish seawall and twin mainline railway tracks can be completely rebuilt at a cost of £35 million in eight weeks then Transport Scotland has got its design and costings seriously wrong.'

TIMESLINE

Historic domestic abuse, man fined

A MAN previously convicted of domestic violence found his past being investigated by police, Oban Sheriff Court heard last week.

Members of Scottish Police's Domestic Abuse Task Force interviewed previous partners of Ross Higgins, of 98 Ainslie Road, Cumbernauld, and two further charges were brought against the 40-year-old.

He admitted that between December 25, 2001 and January 4, 2002 he assaulted a woman by pushing her on the body, and between March 1, 2003 and December 7, 2007 he assaulted another woman.

Both these incidents happened at addresses in Oban.

His defence agent said that Higgins was now in a new relationship.

Sheriff Ruth Anderson fined him £250 for each offence.

Tributes paid to retiring councillor

TRIBUTES were made to an Oban councillor at a meeting of the full membership of Argyll and Bute Council last Thursday.

Elected members from across the political spectrum acknowledged the loyal support Duncan MacIntyre had given them. Mr MacIntyre decided to stand down due to illness.

Praised for his work – particularly to do with public transport and roads – it was noted he had been a huge influence on the local authority.

Council leader Dick Walsh said: 'Duncan never missed an opportunity to represent his area and community. His knowledge has been of significant benefit to Argyll and Bute.'

Adding his vote of thanks, Len Scouler, provost of Argyll and Bute, said: 'Duncan made a long and valued commitment to the council and it has been good to hear the many positive comments. He will be missed.'

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Correction

A REPORT in last week's Oban Times incorrectly reported that Julie MacKenzie – an SNP candidate for the Oban, North and Lorn by election – was a press officer for the political party.

The Oban Times would like to point out that Ms MacKenzie is not a paid member of staff for the SNP, although she does volunteer with the political organisation.

Raising concern for young carers

HIDDEN carers are at the fore today, January 28, with Young Carer's Awareness Day.

However, support providers are using the event to warn that funding for services for youngsters is at risk.

It is believed there are more than 1,000 young carers in Argyll, with more than 100 youngsters in Oban alone registered at the Carer's Centre.

A full report on the centre's work will appear in next week's Oban Times.

Ice one, Roderick! Mull skipper names berg after island peak

RODERICK Wyness knows a thing or two about icebergs. And he sent us this photograph to prove it.

The skipper, who hails from Tobermory on Mull, works in New Zealand at the country's largest glacier - the Tasman glacier in Mount Cook National Park.

He said: 'I skipper one of four small high-speed vessels around the lake that has formed since the 1970s at the terminal face of the glacier.'

'We frequently witness large parts of icebergs breaking away, which gives the public the opportunity to touch ice that fell as snow 600 years ago.'

'On January 21, a huge iceberg broke free from the base of the Tasman glacier. It is possible it may have originated from as deep as 240 metres below the surface of the lake.'

'When the ice arrives on the surface at first it is blue and glass-like with huge boulders visible deep within it. Very quickly the ice starts to turn white as the sun warms it and its crystals begin to separate.'

'The iceberg is the largest we have seen this season and as such is worthy of a name. I was given the honour of naming it Ben More after my home island's highest peak.'



Technology Matters with John Orr

Theft, Extortion and Blackmail - That's Cybercrime

Many people and businesses these days use the internet to buy goods and pay for services. Payment involves disclosing credit card or bank details in conjunction with personal 'login' details which tell the on line seller who the buyer is. Businesses are increasingly holding sensitive data on huge numbers of people and individuals are giving sensitive data to an array of on line retailers. The methods used to transmit and store sensitive data are ingenious and robust and on-line shopping websites with the https 'padlock', can be considered safe. That's where the good news stops!

A computer system may be secure but there will be human input in the management of any system. Broadband provider Talk Talk were in the news last year because hackers broke into their system and stole personal information relating to their customers. That information will be sold and shared with other criminals who will in turn use it to try and make money from you.

Software suppliers send out 'patches and service packs' for their clients to download and install. In this instance Talk Talk had not installed the latest service pack and that left their system vulnerable.

Typically the cyber criminal will use email to try and introduce a virus to your computer system. That virus may allow them to monitor the key strokes you make and that could include your login and password details. Alternatively the virus may allow them to gain access to sensitive data and you will then find yourself subject to a blackmail threat. A third alternative is that your computer becomes encrypted and unusable. A ransom note will follow. A slightly different and alarmingly simple scenario is where a departing member of staff simply connects a memory stick to your system and downloads your valuable data or upload a virus to your system

By comparing stolen logon details with publicly available business listings, information gleaned from social media and company websites a criminal can gain enough knowledge to impersonate an individual. By combining credible personal knowledge with software that masks senders email addresses and phones that can be programmed to give false caller IDs the criminal is well placed to dupe your staff and members of the public into divulging sensitive information or even authorising bank transactions.

If a business holds 3rd party data it has a duty of care to keep that data secure and a hack could lead to legal proceedings. Reputational damage resulting from a hack can lead to an exodus of clients and suppliers and of course gaining new clients could become quite a struggle. Add to that the cost of recovering your data and repairing your system and you can see that it is important for every business to take cyber crime seriously. Next time we will look at how you can reduce the risk of a cyber hack on your business.

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Damp problem fires up Taynuilt tenant

MOULDY homes and high electricity bills in 14 houses in Taynuilt are causing 'concern' to the chief executive of West Highland Housing Association (WHHA).

One woman, Lynne Murdoch, who lives at Aldersyde in the village, has been asking her neighbours what their homes are like and giving the information to the social housing provider in a bid to get something done.

Ms Murdoch, who has lived in the village for eight years, said that 14 of her neighbours' homes had mould and damp, while every home was paying at least £8 a day for electricity.

Ms Murdoch said: 'My son's house across the street was so bad that when WHHA came out to clean the surfaces, the man said he couldn't remove it [the mould] and the wall needed replaced.'

'The problem has gone quite far now. People are finding it cheaper to use their own radiators to heat their homes than the system that is in place. But people who have asked to put in their own fire have



Damp is a serious concern in 14 of Ms Murdoch's neighbours' homes.

not been given permission. We need an architect and a surveyor down here to find out what is wrong. We feel as if we are being dismissed by WHHA.'

'I was told I didn't have my fan on in the bathroom. But that is not the problem. Damp is rife throughout the houses.'

'We have been complaining for ages, but we feel like nothing is getting done.'

Lesley McInnes, chief executive of WHHA, said she was aware of the problem.

She said: 'We have been considering the problems that tenants in Aldersyde have been having.'

'We are concerned about the level of damp in some of the homes.'

'We have had staff out to look at the problems in individual homes and we are working with a surveyor and other professionals to consider the best way forward.'

'We also understand the concerns about the heating costs and will be speaking to residents about the problem.'

Why should girls choose a career in Science, Energy, Engineering or Technology?

Kirsty Jackson-Stark and Katie Evamy are Education and Development Officers whose roles are funded by community benefit money from ScottishPower Renewables Beinn an Tuire windfarm.

A commitment of more than £100,000 has been made by ScottishPower Renewables over three years. Their roles focus on broadening and strengthening the skills base locally, as well as promoting employability skills and preparing school leavers for local opportunities.

Here are the questions people ask when choosing their career:

Are there likely to be jobs in Science, Energy, Engineering or Technology?

In Science, Energy, Engineering or Technology sectors there is a demand for people with the right

skills to fill existing jobs. Therefore, people with the right skills are very likely to get a job. Also, a substantial increase in the number of jobs in this sector is predicted by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) and the Office of National Statistics (ONS). Science and technology "are the heartbeat of the modern world. From agriculture to aviation, the analytical and problem-solving skills they develop are more valuable than ever in a fast-changing, global economy," says Matthew Hancock former Skills and Enterprise Minister.

Former Education Minister Elizabeth Truss said: "Too many teenagers, especially girls, don't realise that maths and physics get you everywhere, and can open doors to careers in business, journalism,

technology, and engineering – in fact, anything you can probably think of."

Is a career in Science, Energy, Engineering or Technology exciting?

Science, Energy, Engineering or Technology gives you enormous opportunity to pioneer the technologies of the future, to innovate and to make the most of your potential, talent and creativity, and have the chance to turn dreams into reality.

Are the jobs in Science, Energy, Engineering or Technology sector well paid?

In Science, Energy, Engineering or Technology the middle income is £39,027 which is considerably higher than the middle income for all employment sectors, which is £27,017 – figures according to UKCES and ONS.

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HETAS

Hogmanay gatecrasher jailed

A MAN was jailed last week after he gatecrashed an Oban Hogmanay party where a former girlfriend was celebrating and threatened her with a knife and a bottle.

Paul Donaldson MacMillan, 27, of Smerclait, Pulpit Drive, Pulpit Hill, Oban, admitted forcibly entering a flat in Oban where his ex-partner was amongst those present; refusing to leave when repeatedly requested, being verbally abusive to her, taking a bottle and kitchen knife and brandishing them at her.

Procurator Fiscal Eoin McGinty said the couple had only gone out for six weeks and this had ended a month before.

Oban Sheriff Court heard that early on January 1 MacMillan arrived at the address by taxi and after being told he wasn't welcome he hung around outside before 'barging' in.

The fiscal said: 'He took a seat in the living room; all present asked him to leave but he refused to do so and became abusive to everyone there. This went on for three to four hours.'

When the woman eventually went to call the police, MacMillan said he would leave if she hung up but then grabbed the phone out of her hand went into the kitchen and grabbed a knife and a half-full bottle of Buckfast.

'He turned to face the complainant, waved these above his head, brandishing them in her direction,' said the fiscal.

The girl fled the flat with a friend, having to get out of a window.

When arrested, police had to delay his interview at the police station because MacMillan was 'in an agitated and aggressive state'.

MacMillan's defence agent, Jane Thompson said that MacMillan's on-going alcohol problems were behind the incident and he could be assessed for a place in a rehabilitation unit.

However, in view of his recent record of offending, Sheriff Ruth Anderson QC sentenced him to six months in prison.

Councillor ousted from deputy post

THE DEPUTY provost at Argyll and Bute Council has been ousted from his position after 'failing to communicate' with the Provost and the leadership team on amendments he was bringing to the chamber.

Dougie Philand only became aware of the move while on the front bench at last Thursday's council meeting.

In a last-minute paper presented to councillors, it was revealed that three members of the current front-bench team were being removed because they had 'chosen to walk away from the administration'. Iain Angus MacDonald and Donald Kelly were also removed from committee positions.

Mr Philand was also ousted from the health and social care integration board where he was overseeing the merging of services provided by NHS Highland and Argyll and Bute Council.

Mr Philand has 37 years' experience in NHS Highland in both general nursing and as a manager in the health board. He was replaced by Maurice Corry, from Helensburgh.

Seil sewage system is waste of money, say islanders

LOUISE GLEN
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AN £11.7 MILLION project to protect an area of the Argyll coast known for its shellfish is being compromised by the sheer volume of sewage 'overspills', claims an island protest group.

More than 50 per cent of the adult population of Seil, south of Oban, have signed a petition against a further proposal from Scottish Water which means abandoning some of the original scheme to pump raw sewage over a hill and release it barely treated into Easdale Bay.

Easdale Bay is known for its dolphins. They have been photographed in the area where the effluent would be pumped into the sea.

Problems started eight years ago when plans for a water treatment system on the Isle of Seil, stretching from the picturesque Bridge over the Atlantic, to Balvicar Bay, were rejected by the community. And eight years later the project is still tipping human waste into the sea before being fully treated.

Scottish Water is accused, by islanders, of wasting taxpayers' money with the state-of-the-art sewage system, which was installed in 2008 against the community's wishes.

A spokeswoman on behalf of islanders said: 'It is clear that the treatment plant at Balvicar



Dolphins playing in Easdale Bay at the same location as a proposed outlet for raw sewage.

is not working correctly and that there are regular overspills of screened but otherwise untreated sewage into Balvicar Bay.

'Year-on-year these are getting worse, in 2014 there were 365 spillages of what we believe is only screened raw sewage.'

'We have the data for spillages for 2012, 2013 and 2014 and they make disturbing reading. We wonder why action has not been taken against Scottish Water by one of the government agencies.'

'Year-to-year comparisons are difficult because of different reporting methods, but they indicate that there were 243

spillage events in 2012, 20 in 2013 and 365 in 2014.

'Compare this with Scottish Water Solutions predicted spill frequency of 1.6 per year. Some of the major spillages may be due to membrane failure and others likely result from excess inputs during wet weather.'

'So, by poor design and incompetence, Scottish Water has succeeded in concentrating raw sewage from 160 properties into the most significant shellfish-growing area of Seil Sound at frequent intervals.'

'Remember, this treatment plant was installed to improve

the quality of the waters in Seil sound and Balvicar Bay.

'The reality is that Scottish Water has been polluting Balvicar Bay significantly thereby polluting supposedly highly-protected waters at an iconic beauty spot.'

The spokesperson confirmed that more than 50 per cent of adults on Seil had signed the petition.

A Scottish Water spokesperson said: 'We are currently developing a project to meet European Directive requirements for wastewater treatment at Seaview Terrace [on Seil]. At the same

time, we are looking at options to address performance issues at the current treatment works at Balvicar, with a focus to ensure we deliver compliant and sustainable wastewater services for customers on the island of Seil.

'The current works has difficulty passing sufficient flow through the membranes, so while there is a high quality treated effluent, there are increased spills from the network. Scottish Environment Protection Agency has been notified of this, as required, and as a consequence we are developing options for a longer-term strategic solution.'

'We are relatively early in the process of deciding the most appropriate solution and while some options, such as transferring flows from Balvicar to a new and sufficiently-sized septic tank at Seaview Terrace have been more developed, there remains significant appraisal work to confirm whether this solution would be appropriate.'

'With respect to the existing infrastructure, the vast majority of the previous investment supported the delivery of the network assets such as sewers and pumping stations. These will be retained in any future solution.'

'As we work through the options we will continue to engage with the local community and stakeholders, including the involvement of the various regulators currently involved.'

Former bishop dies, aged 83

FORMER Catholic bishop of Argyll and the Isles Bishop Iain Murray has died aged 83.

Bishop Murray, who died on January 22, was appointed to the role of bishop in December 1999 and served until 2008 when, in accordance with canon law, he retired having turned 75.

Scottish bishops had been gathered at the Royal Scots College in Spain and immediately halted proceedings when they heard the news of his passing. A mass was held in Spain on January 23.

His successor, Bishop Joe Toal, who is now Bishop of Motherwell, said: 'We will remember Bishop Murray with great fondness, both as Emeritus Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, and also his wonderful contribution to the Royal Scots College in Spain.'

'We ask God to grant him eternal rest after his fruitful and happy ministry as a priest and bishop in Scotland, and we appreciate all that he did for the church in our country over the past 60 years of his priesthood.'

Archbishop of Glasgow Phillip Tartaglia, who is also president of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland, said: 'On behalf of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland I would like to offer Bishop Murray's family our deepest and most prayerful sympathies.'

'During his active years as a bishop, Iain Murray played a full part in the life and work of the bishops' conference, contributing with humanity, faith and humour to everything that we did. He will be sorely missed.'

Coll crofter hits out over 'unreliable' ferry service

A COLL crofter has said the unreliable ferry service is making it impossible for people to run businesses on the island, writes Steven Rae.

Colin Kennedy is vice-convenor and commissioner of the crofting commission in the south-west Highlands and has other business interests on Coll.

He was due to travel from Oban back to Coll following a business meeting on January 21. However, the MV Lord of the Isles ferry was delayed in leaving Oban by more than two hours, and once underway needed to turn around and return to Oban due to the weather. He claims that the weather was, in fact, better at 8.15am and the sailing would have been possible were there no delays.

He said: 'It's a lifeline service. How can the captain justify it being delayed for two hours and



Crofter Colin Kennedy fears Coll may become uninhabited.

then leaving? The forecast said the wind would be getting up later in the day; the captain must have seen that. People can't run a business on the island because of this.'

'A two-hour business meeting for me ends up costing me five days because of the service. It's turning into the St Kilda of the

modern era and could end up uninhabited. The service simply isn't up to standard.'

A CalMac spokesman said: 'On January 21, the departure of the MV Lord of the Isles was delayed until 10.30am due to adverse weather and the forecast was for the wind to ease off slightly later in the day. Unfortunately, due to constant 50mph winds the vessel did not manage to get into either Coll or Tiree and returned to Oban. Several other routes were affected by bad weather that day.'

'Adverse weather is fact of life at this time of year and every effort is made to provide a service as long as the safety of the passengers, crew and vessel is not likely to be compromised. We fully understand customers' frustrations when sailings are cancelled or disrupted but trust that they recognise that their safety must be our number one priority.'

Social care plan report published

A REPORT following the public consultation of Argyll and Bute's Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) strategic plan has been published.

From September to November 2015 HSCP carried out a public consultation on its strategy, which detailed how the HSCP intends to improve the way it delivers health and social care over the next three years. It also explained what services the HSCP is responsible for, and what the priorities are.

Stephen Whiston, head of strategic planning and performance for Argyll and Bute HSCP, said: 'During the strategic plan consultation period we received a wide range of feedback and comments from the public, staff, service users, carers and other stakeholders.'

'I would like to thank everyone who responded for taking

the time to participate in this consultation.'

'This report outlines the key themes that emerged from the data collected, which provides additional insight on the priorities and perspectives of the people living in the communities across Argyll and Bute.'

'The strategic plan is currently being updated to reflect the comments and feedback received, especially across key areas including care at home, learning disabilities and mental health. The revised plan will be finalised over the next month and will then be presented to the integration joint board of the HSCP for endorsement in March. It will then be made publicly available.'

A full copy of the report can now be downloaded from the www.healthtogetherargyllandbute.org.

Rockfield funding

ROCKFIELD Centre in Oban has been awarded funding from Crerar Hotel's community fund.

The group own the Oban Bay Hotel and it was the hotel that put the project forward.

It was agreed that the £18,000 requested should be awarded in full.

Gordon McNab, head of Oban Community Trust, said: 'This is a very generous award from Crerar Hotels Trust and will allow us to push forward the project. We have already had great support locally from Oban Bay Hotel. Community support has also been amazing, with volunteer input through work parties and in-kind help, as well as donations received from individuals and local businesses. We are delighted that the community hut is now really taking shape.'

Dog fouling fines set to rise

PET OWNERS who refuse to pick up after their dogs are to be hit by an increased fine as of April 1.

From that date the fixed penalty for owners who refuse to pick up after their pet is being increased from £40 to £80, bringing it in line with the fine for littering.

The move to increase the fine comes after an overwhelming majority of responses to a consultation on responsible dog ownership said they would support the increased deterrent.

Oban Community Action on Dog Fouling has highlighted Soroba and Ganavan as problem locations and the group plans to place a dog fouling banner in Soroba to help raise awareness.

Julie McKenzie of Oban Community Action on Dog Fouling said: 'I'm delight-



Supporters of the Oban dog fouling campaign at last year's launch.

ed that following public consultation the Scottish Government has decided to take this positive step to double the dog fouling fine. This sends a clear message

to inconsiderate dog owners that their actions will no longer be tolerated in our communities. It also adds power to the elbow of Mairi Bryce and her team of community activists in Oban, who are working hard to combat the fouling problem in the town.'

Minister for community safety and legal affairs Paul Wheelhouse said: 'Dog fouling can pose potentially significant risks to health, particularly for children, and we're very clear that dog owners who do not clear up after their dogs are breaking the law.'

Derek Robertson, chief executive of Keep Scotland Beautiful, said: 'Increasing the fine is a positive step and will send a clear message to irresponsible dog owners that their actions have a negative impact on people and communities.'

Sheila celebrates 100th birthday with champagne tea

REGULAR *Oban Times* reader Sheila Clifford recently celebrated her 100th birthday with a family champagne tea party.

Sheila was born at Totamore on Coll on January 9, 1916, leaving the island in 1945. She married her husband in Tobermory and they had seven children.

Her eldest, Liz Fletcher, said: 'Up until 10 years ago we visited Coll regularly but those days are gone for her now. Sheila is fit and well - being 100 has invigorated her. She lives in a nice care home now and I visit her every week and take her out regularly. She enjoys her food, which might be the reason for her longevity.'



Sheila enjoys the *Oban Times* and received the traditional birthday card from The Queen.

Councillor to step down from policy lead role

POPULAR Argyll and Bute councillor Mary Jean Devon has announced she is to step down from her role as policy lead for health and social care integration.

Councillor Devon, who lives on Mull, will continue as local councillor for Oban South and the Isles.

She will also remain as a Children's Champion for Argyll and Bute, a role that she is very passionate about.

She told the *Oban Times*: 'I have built up years of experience in that role now and know what's involved in helping young people in Argyll and Bute.'

Ms Devon believes people speaking up to protect children's services and education is more important now than ever, with Argyll and Bute Council looking

to save £9 million this year and more in years to come.

She said: 'Some of the additional support needs, ASN, proposals should never have been put on the table and they caused panic.'

'Every child who enters school at whatever stage is assessed and if they are assessed as having additional needs they need to be supported. It's a statutory obligation.'

Proposals to cut additional support needs in the region saw a public outcry that culminated in children and parents protesting outside the council's headquarters at Kilmory Castle in November. The heated meeting, where cuts were being discussed, saw the proposed 45 per cent cut to ASN removed from the budget consultation.

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Trials cyclist Danny remembers his roots

'Skye is an amazing place to grow up. I always had enough space to explore, ride my bike and be a kid'

A WORLD-FAMOUS trials cyclist has said Skye is the foundation of his career.

Danny MacAskill, who grew up on the island, released his latest video, Cascadia, last month and already it has racked up almost 12 million views online.

In the video MacAskill, 30, flips from building to building in an 'insane' journey across the rooftops of Gran Canaria.

Speaking to the Oban Times, he said: 'Skye is an amazing place to grow up. I always had enough space to explore, ride my bike and be a kid.'

'It has also helped me stay grounded. I'd say Skye is the foundation of my career.'

'Even though now I travel all

Trials cycling

around the globe, I still see photos of my friends back home and get a slight feeling of jealousy they can be there. Luckily I get a few good times a year to hang out with friends and family.'

Different jobs
Growing up MacAskill didn't have any aspirations of becoming a professional biker and tried his hand at a couple of different jobs.

He added: 'Riding my bike is something I have always just done for fun.'

'When I lived on Skye I did some labouring for a local firm called Donald Mackenzie Builders in the village and I also



Top trials rider Danny MacAskill in action on his beloved Isle of Skye.

worked in a fish farm.'

Filming for his latest video, which is just more than five minutes long, took MacAskill and his team 17 days.

They spent five days scouting out the area and finding the best

locations and 12 days of filming.

Beach holiday
MacAskill said: 'It was pretty much a 12-day beach holiday with a wee bit of riding in between.'

But performing some of the tricks and stunts MacAskill does

comes with a degree of risk.

He added: 'When growing up on Skye I didn't really break many bones.'

'I was younger and less brittle - so I just bounced. 'Since leaving the island

though I have had my fair share of broken bones.'

The biker will be performing in a series of shows all over Europe this year.

To find out more, visit www.dannymacaskill.co.uk.

Creeps are new leaders of handicap division

Ten pin bowling

AFTER week 12 of the Lochaber Building Supplies ten pin bowling leagues at the Nevis Centre in Fort William, Alleycats stay at the top of the scratch division with 58 points followed by The Creeps with 48 points. Ardtoe & Co are in third place on 41 points.

The handicap division is much closer where The Creeps are the new leaders with 43 points with Ardtoe & Co in second place on 41 points. Previous leaders British Legion Fort William slip to third place on 39 points.

Individually this week, the best game was rolled by Brian Johnstone (Alleycats) with 183. Other good games this week came from Ben Weller (The Creeps) with games of 176 and 171, John Weller (Alleycats) with 175 and Tony Whitelocke (Alleycats) with 170. Brian Johnstone also had the top handicap game of 228 and the top two-game handicap series of 434. Ben Weller had the top two game scratch series of 347.

Team wise Alleycats swept the board with the best scratch game of 633, the best handicap game of 823, the top two-game scratch series of 1252 and the top two-game handicap series of 1632.

The top scratch average is held by Pam Weller (Alleycats) on 155 followed by Ben Weller on 152 and Tony Whitelocke on 151.



The Leanachan race gets under way on Sunday.

Good turnout for Leanachan race

A FIELD of 64 runners set off on the Leanachan race on Sunday, organised by Lochaber athletic club.

The event started at the Nevis Range car park, taking runners across a challenging 9.5-mile route.

Winner for the day was Craig Mattocks of Gala Harriers, who was only 10 seconds away from a sub-hour finish, crossing the line in one hour, nine seconds.

Lochaber athletic club's Michael Bossard was

Athletics

second in 01:01:00. Kate Jenkins of Gala Harriers was the first woman, coming in with a time of 01:10:24. The first local woman was Diane Baum of Lochaber athletic club, in a time of 01:10:47.

Ernie Orr of Lochaber athletic club was noted for being the only entrant over-70 in the race, finishing in a time of 01:55:06.

Mountain bike event being held at the Nevis Centre

OVER the years Fort William Mountain Festival has hosted some of the bike industry's biggest names at its bike nights - and it's about to do it again.

I Want To Ride My Bicycle on Saturday February 20 at the Nevis Centre, in the town includes talks from Aneela 'the bothy queen' McKenna, Crawford Carrick Anderson, Chris Ball and Julia Hobson.

Keen to explore the idea that mountain biking is much more than racing world cups or riding dirt jumps, this year's festival aims to celebrate the great outdoors, highlighting the wonderful environment and the fantastic opportunities for travel across the globe on a mountain bike.

Nikki Stafford, of the Fort William Mountain Festival organising committee, said: 'The brief for the 2016 bike night is much more about celebrating the lifestyle and the sheer pleasure of mountain biking. Living and working in the Outdoor Capital of the UK and a super keen

mountain biker myself, I am very much looking forward to the event and hope to be inspired for my next adventure.'

Aneela McKenna will host the evening. She is an avid mountain biker, partner of Go Where Scotland, and Juliana Bicycles brand ambassador while Crawford Carrick Anderson is no stranger to the Outdoor Capital of the UK.

World-renowned
Carrick Anderson, a former British team skier, has skied at Nevis Range. He helped in the early design off the world-renowned mountain bike downhill course and went on to compete as a downhill racer, making it into the world top 10 in the rankings.

Carrick Anderson's talents extend to the world of motor sport where he also successfully participated in motorbike Enduro and trials, regularly taking part in the Scottish Six Days Trial.

Chris Ball is a global adventurer and part of the team behind the Enduro World Series (EWS)

Mountain biking

and the man who started Dirt School. Ball has also worked for the UCI, was a downhill racer and is passionate about mountain biking. He also enjoys a variety of other outdoor activities including climbing and skiing and, most recently, a bit of sailing. And last, but not least, Julia Hobson lives the dream. She is a mountain bike guide in Scotland and abroad and, like McKenna, is also a Juliana brand ambassador.

As a racer, Hobson has competed some of the big races; she has cycled John o' Groats to Lands End off road, and is a well 'kent' face in the Outdoor Capital.

Saturday February 20 also sees the return of the very popular No Fuss Runduro Event which will see runners enjoy the mountain bike Enduro format on the trails around Fort William and Glen Nevis.

Find out more at: <http://www.mountainfestival.co.uk/>

Day out for Kinlochleven footballers

Football

THE BOYS' football team from Kinlochleven enjoyed a football match at Ross County thanks to social enterprise group Kinlochlovin', which supports young people in Kinlochleven.

Connor MacKenzie was one of the lucky footballers who spent the day at Victoria Park on January 17.

He said: 'We got to Ross County's stadium, which is a quite a high quality stadium, in plenty of time to find our seats before kick off at 12.15pm. It was a really exciting game with a man sent off, a penalty kick and five goals. Aberdeen won 3-2 in the end.'

'We then went on a tour of Ross County's training facility, the Highland Football Academy. It was great to see how the players prepare for training and what they do on their training days.'

'After that we did some training and played five-a-side games ourselves. The day was a great success and we all thoroughly enjoyed it.'

The next trip to Ross County takes place on February 20 when the girls' team will visit.

Fort net six in friendly match at Invergordon after Claggan Park fails pitch inspection

FORT William's home game last Saturday against Fraserburgh was called off after a pitch inspection found Claggan Park to be waterlogged.

The Lochaber side will be hoping the weather relents in time for their next Highland League fixture, away to Clachnacuddin on Saturday January 30.

With the Fraserburgh match postponed, manager Ally Ewen took the opportunity to give his players some much-needed game

time in a friendly match against Invergordon FC.

After an even first half, Glenn Fell thundered home a stunning 20-yard drive to give the Fort the lead at the interval.

Invergordon equalised at the start of the second half through Michael Grimes and this seemed to spur the visitors into action.

Stefan MacRitchie restored the Fort's lead almost immediately, and this was followed by strikes from Richard Tawse (2), Darren

Athletics

Quigg and Scott Chisholm.

There were some good Fort performances, in particular Tawse, who was only denied a hat-trick by a brilliant save from the Invergordon keeper.

Manager Ewen said: 'We would like to thank Invergordon for the game. They gave a good account of themselves and made life difficult for us at times.'

Mick inducted into mountain culture hall of fame



THE LATEST inductee to the Excellence in Mountain Culture Hall of Fame has been named as Mick Tighe, who has been called a 'stalwart' of mountaineering.

The Fort William Mountain Festival organisers made the announcement after members of the public nominated him.

Mike Pescod, chairman of the Highland Mountain Culture Association, organisers of the

Mick Tighe will be inducted into the hall of fame. ©05mick01

festival, said: 'Mick embodies the spirit of mountaineering perfectly, from its slightly rebellious side to its social and cultural side.'

'Mick has dedicated his life to mountaineering and has helped countless others do so as well. It was Mick who first came to rescue me after an accident 11 years ago so it is on a very personal level that I say I am delighted that Mick is the recipient of this year's mountain culture award.'

Mick owns his own business as a mountain guide and has also been a member of Lochaber

Mountaineering

mountain rescue team for nearly 30 years.

He has also contributed to numerous mountaineering publications and has perhaps the biggest collection of mountaineering memorabilia which he donated to form the Scottish Mountain Heritage Collection.

The induction will be made as part of the Fort William Mountain Festival that runs from February 17 until 21.

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WEATHER

Thursday Heavy rain
Winds strong south westerly
Temperatures 3°C to 8°C.

Friday Heavy rain
Winds strong west south westerly
Temperatures 3°C to 9°C.

Weekend Outlook Light rain on Saturday
Heavy rain on Sunday
Winds strong south south Westerly
Temperatures 3°C to 7°C.

TIDAL INFORMATION
Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday January 28, 2016** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour) BST.

Date	am			pm		
Thur	02.12	1.0	08.00	3.9	14.48	1.4
Fri	02.48	1.1	08.32	3.7	15.22	1.6
Sat	03.25	1.4	09.05	3.6	16.00	1.7
Sun	04.05	1.6	09.41	3.4	16.45	1.9
Mon	04.52	1.8	10.24	3.2	17.42	2.0
Tues	05.49	1.9	11.26	3.0	18.49	2.1
Wed	01.01	2.9	06.54	2.0	13.42	3.0

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Port	Difference	Port	Difference
Ardrihaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25
Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55
Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16
Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30
Lochboisdale	+0.30		

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Route	Sea State
Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate