

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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Ambulance staff at end of tether over conditions

TIMESLINE

One million steps and 500 miles...

STAFF at *The Oban Times* are putting their sore feet up today (Thursday March 2) after achieving a staggering 1,000,000 steps to raise cash for the charity Cancer Research.

Ten staff members took part after being challenged by production manager Andy Bruce to raise awareness of breast cancer and to raise money for research.

Staff were seen plodding all over town throughout February wearing step calculators generously donated by Fitbit. Overall they achieved 500 miles during the working day – giving up every lunchtime for a month to achieve their goal.

Andy said: 'It has been great to be supported by my colleagues during the working day – giving up every lunchtime for a month to achieve their goal.'

Donations can still be made via www.justgiving.com/fundraising/OTmillionsteps

Whirlwind return for Miss Hoolie

A DECADE after hit children's TV show *Balamory* came to an end on the island of Mull, Miss Hoolie – everyone's favourite teacher – is set to return.

But this time Miss Hoolie is much taller and moves her arms around – because she is the first wind turbine owned by Argyll and Bute Council.

Officially naming the structure, near Tobermory, Councillor Roddy McCuish said: 'The installation of the highly-efficient and state-of-the-art turbine, now known forever as Miss Hoolie, will help improve energy efficiency on Mull.'



EXCLUSIVE LOUISE GLEN
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AMBULANCE workers in the West Highlands are 'very likely' to vote for further action when a ballot of members is counted tomorrow (Friday), a union boss has said.

Staff will decide on action over concerns about the lack of ambulances for immediate response to 999 calls because of inter-hospital transfers alongside other issues.

At present Oban has 20 staff members working with two ambulance vehicles operating 24/7. Mull has five staff, with one ambulance vehicle operating 24/7.

Oban and Mull workers say there are not enough ambulances to meet the demands of emergencies in the area – particularly in rural areas.

One staff member said: 'It is almost a nightly taxi to Glasgow or Paisley at the moment. We want the very best for every patient and if we are taking a less urgent patient to the city it leaves the town and rural areas short in an emergency.'

Members of the Unite union were asked to agree with the statement: 'I have lost confidence in the divisional management as they have not seriously addressed the issues my Union have raised. Therefore I agree we should now register a formal dispute and collectively pursue the issues through the Dispute Resolution Procedure.'

Scotland Unite union's regional officer Tommy Campbell said Scottish Ambulance staff were at 'the end of their tether'

“ We are sick of the spin ”

Tommy Campbell
Unite regional officer

and wanted bosses of the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) to take notice of concerns about their working practice, including serious health and safety concerns.

Speaking exclusively to *The Oban Times*, Mr Campbell said: 'These are very conscientious hard-working staff who are at the end of their tether. The current state of play is heart-breaking for staff and a source of frustration and anger.'

'They went into the service to help people and communities, and they just want to get the resources to do it.'

'We anticipate a mandate for a ballot to move our concerns to a formal dispute.'

'The staff and the union are sick of the utter spin that the senior management keep putting out.'

'We need to cut through to what is really happening. Problems need to be highlighted so that our MSPs, MPs and the Scottish Government can see the real picture of what is going on and not the line they are being fed by managers.'

Mr Campbell continued: 'We have been consistently raising their concerns about the pressures staff are all facing because of the reduced

resources they are working with. The issues we have raised are over-running of shift time, on-call fatigue, in some areas accident and emergency services being propped up by visiting rural crews thus leaving rural areas uncovered and the absence of proper rest breaks.'

'In spite of the representations Unite have made to senior divisional management, including the SAS chief executive Pauline Howie, and MSPs, coupled with Unite going public via the media, there is a lack of any serious response from the senior divisional management.'

'There is lack of meaningful and transparent partnership working with Unite reps and a lack of partnership working in the investigations in health and safety matters.'

'We also believe that the HR team does not take front line staff concerns seriously. This leaves us without any trust or confidence in their ability to seriously address and resolve these concerns.'

A Scottish Ambulance Service spokesperson said: 'We are aware of the letter to Unite members in our north division.'

'With regards to the concerns over the provision of the ambulance service, we are continuing to work with staff-side colleagues to address the issues raised.'

'This includes working closely with local health boards to help manage hospital transfers.'

'Over the past year we have also invested significantly in our workforce in the area, with the introduction of 52 staff, which is an eight per cent increase.'

Tears of joy as missing dog is found



A WEE dog that was missing for more than 10 days was found safe and well last week at Ganavan beach.

Rowan's owner, Sandra Muir, said she was 'beyond delighted' to get her Jack Russell/Patterdale cross back.

Sandra explained: 'For 10 days we were out looking for her and that morning was the first morning I was late getting to the beach.'

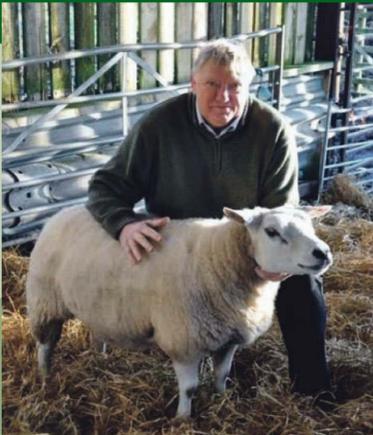
'When I arrived, Karen Delaney [who has

helped search for 10 days] stopped my car. I just knew she had been found.'

A quick visit to Oban Veterinary Surgery and Rowan was given a clean bill of health.

Sandra continued: 'Rowan has lost around a kilogramme in weight and must have lost some of her size to get out of the rabbit warren she was stuck in.' Sandra is pictured with daughter Mirren, who was very emotional about finding Rowan. She said: 'It is the best news.'

Crofting Commission Election 2017 South West Highlands



I am standing because I believe my wide experience in agriculture, crofting and rural affairs can make a substantial contribution to strengthening the future for crofters, their families and the wider community.

VOTE Billy Neilson - Together we can build a crofting legacy to be proud of!

billy.neilson@outlook.com - 01866 822106
Facebook / Twitter @Neilsoncrofting

Claims of bullying aboard ships

BELEAGUERED staff members who are 'sick of a bullying culture' aboard a number of CalMac ferries, have approached *The Oban Times* to raise concerns, writes Louise Glen.

CalMac bosses have refuted the claims, saying they are concerned that matters were raised in the media rather than with unions or management.

Staff claim those being bullied are from throughout the CalMac network.

One crew member explained: 'We are all trying to work together and sometimes the matter comes to a boiling point aboard the ship.'

'Instead of people being reasonable, if one or two of the staff don't like you they make life miserable for you.'

One crew member said he had been off for months hoping that when he came back to work things would be different.

He said: 'Sometimes I find that I cannot sleep because I am so worried about being aboard ship.'

'We all try our hardest aboard ship and for the majority of staff it is a great environment to work in – but as soon as the ship docks the bitchiness starts.'

While staff say they have raised the matter with line managers, nothing has changed.

One worker said: 'I am contemplating giving up one of the best jobs on the West Coast because of the way staff members are treated by senior staff.'

'Anything that can be done to belittle staff is done by some bosses – it is a nightmare.'

Another said: 'I went to bosses and quoted the whistleblowing policy word for word.'

'But it was me that was made to feel like the criminal not the person who had been bullying us.'

A CalMac spokesman said: 'CalMac Ferries takes the well-being of all of its staff, whether on shore or at sea, very seriously indeed and condemns any form of bullying or harassment at work.'

'We have robust policies on bullying and harassment and whistleblowing in addition to a formal grievance procedure which is available to staff to raise any concerns they may have.'

'Staff are also able to contact their trade union representatives should they wish.'

'We therefore absolutely refute the claim that allegations of bullying are not treated seriously or managed appropriately, and are concerned that a number of crew members have chosen to raise this matter through the media.'

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OT



Last year's summer concert was a big success for the young music-makers. Photographs: Richard Kellett

Music project secures fourth successive year of funding



There is huge enthusiasm for the project.

A PARENT-LED music project on Mull has just been awarded funding for a fourth year running.

The Mull Music Makers project was set up in 2013 to increase musical opportunities for the island's youngsters as music provision is limited and finding teachers can be difficult.

The project brings specialist music educators to the island one weekend a month to teach children core musicianship skills through group singing games, rhythm skills, music theory and violin tuition.

The workshops have been hugely popular across the island since the project began and every workshop has been

fully booked with waiting lists.

The project has really boosted the number of children playing music – now there are more than 40 children coming each month to learn the violin.

Laura Mandleberg, who leads the initiative, said: 'The project has evolved from an annual strings summer school which has taken place for more than 20 years as part of the Mendelssohn on Mull festival.

'The problem was that the number of children attending the summer school was rising each year but the number able to play instruments was falling. The demand was there but the resources weren't.

'Running the project is very

rewarding as it brings children together from across the island and supports children who want to learn music but can't access a music teacher. Some children living in more remote parts of the island travel over 100 miles round trip to attend each workshop.'

The project's main funding comes from Creative Scotland's Youth Music Initiative, which aims to create access to music-making opportunities for young people across the country.

The project would also like to acknowledge Argyll and Bute's third sector grant for its support for the past two years and also the Robertson Trust.



Children travel from all over the island.

SWI presentation is a real beauty

Kilbrandon SWI (Seil) welcomed speaker Elaine Smith to its February meeting. Elaine is a hairdresser and beautician and is the owner of Spruce Salon in Oban.

Elaine discussed the pros and cons of a variety of shampoos and conditioners, and gave members tips on how to look after their hair and on how to apply make-up cor-

rectly. One member was given a makeover by Elaine and was transformed into a very glamorous lady with hair and make-up beautifully done.

Elaine donated hair products for the raffle and gave out free samples of shampoo.

It was a most enjoyable and interesting evening.

Shona Neil gave the vote of thanks.

Postal votes for crofting elections

POSTAL voting packs for the four contested constituencies in the Crofting Commission elections have been issued to electors.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar election office spokesperson Mairi Sine Macdonald said: 'I would urge postal voters to take

the time to read the guidance enclosed and ensure that they have completed the ballot paper according to the instructions.

Completed ballot papers must be returned in the reply-paid envelope provided by 4pm on Thursday March 16.'

Rural Watch is set to combat crime

A NEW crime prevention scheme which has been developed for the Scottish countryside had its regional launch in Dalmally.

Rural Watch, which encourages people to report suspicious activity online, is being introduced in the Glenorchy and Innishail area, and is due to be rolled out to other parts of Argyll in the next few months.

The scheme, a joint initiative between Police Scotland and Neighbourhood Watch, was introduced at an open meeting at Dalmally Community Centre last month.

It gives residents a line of communication with the police for non-urgent matters, and allows police to alert members

about crime in their area so that they can take precautions to prevent it.

Through the targeted positioning of weather-proof posters and window stickers, it also aims to send a message to potential criminals that, despite being rural, the area is patrolled and watched.

The meeting was hosted by Neighbourhood Watch's community engagement officer Willie Clark, and PC Darren Miller, who is based in Dalmally and oversees the scheme in the Glenorchy area.

'Rural Watch presents an opportunity for the police to interact with local community members in a proactive and inclusive way, and to ensure the

safeguarding of our neighbours and our property,' said PC Miller.

'Community spirit is strong in the local area and I hope that the scheme will reinforce ties and promote a vigilance that will serve as a deterrent to would-be criminals.'

Glenorchy and Innishail is a large geographical area which includes farms and estates, landmarks such as Kilchurn castle, Ben Doran and Loch Awe, and villages and hamlets including Dalmally, Lochawe, Bridge of Orchy and Portsonachan.

John Kerr, secretary of Glenorchy and Innishail Community Council, said: 'Our whole community welcomes this opportunity to become involved

with a Rural Watch scheme. We all appreciate and support the excellent provision of blue-light emergency services in our local area.

'Rural Watch allows local residents to interact with Police Scotland to increase security. Those who may be tempted to flout the law will become aware that they cannot behave in an antisocial or criminal manner here without suffering the consequences of their actions.'

Police officers in Appin and Ardoch aim to introduce the scheme in their areas shortly, and it will start in Taynuilt, Dalavich and Kilchrenan later this year.

To register or to find out more, go to ruralwatchscotland.co.uk.

CROFTING COMMISSION ELECTIONS

VOTE

Catherine MacKinnon



Why?

South West Highlands crofters and the Crofting Commission need a new face on the Board. We need a fresh start.

What can I offer?

- pragmatism, clear thinking, vision
- honesty, integrity
- representation of the best interests of crofters
- vigilance on Brexit challenges and opportunities
- positive partnership working for the greater good of crofting, not just for today but for tomorrow and for future generations
- a voice and an ear for crofters on the ground

Contact me anytime:

email: catherinemackinnon@btinternet.com mobile: 07881603069

VOTE for CATHERINE MACKINNON by 16th March 2017



Rescued otter cubs are returned to the wild

TWO otter cubs have been successfully released on the Isle of Mull.

The Scottish SPCA rescued Rush and Gribun last year and re-introduced them into the wild last week.

Wildlife centre manager Colin Seddon said: 'Rush had been found alone on Uist last February and Gribun was found by a member of the public on their doorstep crying for help.

'Luckily, both otters were around eight weeks old so we were able to introduce them to each other and allow them to develop together. It's important to rear otter cubs in groups as they depend on play and interaction with their own kind to learn life skills.

'We don't release otter cubs until they are at least 12 months of age as that is around the time they become independent of their mother.

'As both of the otters were from the West Coast, it was important to release them back in that area and we were fortunate enough to be able to release them on Mull, where they could be provided with support feeding to help them adjust to their life in the wild.

'The Mull Otter Group has been a tremendous help, monitoring both Rush and Gribun since the release. I'm delighted that they've been seen in the area a number of times, feeding and interacting as wild otters should.'

The SSPCA wildlife centre at Fishcross treats otters from all over Scotland and has specially designed facilities to care for them. It usually treats around 20 to 25 cubs and adults annually. If you're concerned about the welfare of a wild animal, call the SSPCA helpline on 03000 999 999.



Rush and Gribun are said to be doing well in their new environment.



One of the three helicopters that landed at Dalmally Mart to refuel.

Deer survey's triple helicopter treat

DALMALLY children were treated to an unexpected half-term spectacle, when three helicopters used the mart car park as a refuelling station.

The trio of 350 B2 Squirrels were based in the village on Tuesday and Wednesday, February 14 and 15, while they conducted an aerial deer survey that included estates around Crianlarich, Tyndrum and Inveraray, and ranged as far as Tarbet on Loch Lomondside.

The research, by the Inveraray and Tyndrum Deer Management Group, is part of a Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) national programme and helps with decisions about habitat management and conservation.

While all Scottish estates conduct annual 'foot counts' with teams working on the ground, a helicopter count such as this only happens about once a decade.

'A combination of local geograph-

ical knowledge, GPS and digital photography means we can now build up a pretty accurate picture of deer numbers,' explained Tom Kirsop, head stalker at Argyll Estates, who was one of the specialists on board the choppers.

'The helicopters came from Inverness, and Dalmally was the ideal refuelling station, as there is plenty of space,' he said.

Livestock worrying reaches new high

THE Highlands and Islands saw the highest number of livestock worrying cases in 2016.

Livestock worrying in Scotland has hit a seven-year high, as NFU Scotland issued an open letter to the public urging them to keep dogs on leads when out and about in the countryside over the coming months.

Last year saw the highest number of instances from the past seven years, prompting the union to renew its plea to dog owners to avoid fields with livestock, and keep dogs under control if out enjoying the countryside.

Figures, obtained by NFU Scotland through a Freedom of Information request, detailed that there had been 179 instances of livestock worrying, where the animals have been hurt or killed. That is up by 46 incidents on the previous year.

The Highlands and Islands saw the highest number of livestock worrying at 36, with Lothian and Borders at 27 respectively, with Aberdeenshire and Moray in third with 22.

Gary Mitchell, vice-president of NFU Scotland, said: 'The worrying of livestock can have devastating consequences for a farmer and their stock and, as these statistics suggest, it is becoming an increasing problem for Scotland's farmers and crofters.'

'Sheep are particularly at risk during the spring lambing period and we need dog owners to take action to prevent livestock worrying. Otherwise, if their dog is found worrying livestock, they could face prosecution, as we have seen with some cases that have gone to court recently.'

'The farmer is also within their legal rights to shoot a dog if it is found to be worrying livestock – and that is not a decision that is taken lightly.'

'We are appealing to dog walkers to avoid fields where young livestock or heavily pregnant ewes are present, and if there is no alternative route, owners should keep their dogs on a lead and under close control or at heel.'

'We also ask farmers and crofters to report instances to Police Scotland after they have occurred, taking photographic evidence where possible.'

'Farmers who have an ongoing problem with individuals letting their dogs worry livestock are encouraged to contact their local authority to enforce a Dog Control Notice to deter this sort of behaviour.'

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Teenager is fined after cocaine is discovered in vehicle

A 19-YEAR-OLD man from Lerags was fined £500 for being in possession of £300 worth of cocaine.

Procurator fiscal Eoin McGinty told Oban Sheriff Court on Monday (February 27) that in the early hours of Friday

February 25 this year, Joshua Jamieson's car was found to have four blue plastic wraps of white powder inside. The powder was later identified as 6.7 grams of cocaine.

Jamieson, who is currently unemployed, handed himself in

to Oban police station later the same day.

His defence agent said that the teenager was currently suffering from depression and as a result of his poor mental health he has been making poor decisions.

They also said that he pur-

chased four grams of cocaine for £80, to which Sheriff Ruth Anderson replied: 'You must be the only person to have got a bargain while buying drugs.'

Sheriff Anderson added: 'I don't believe half of what I have been told.'

She also asked how Jamieson would be able to pay the fine. She said: 'He might have to give up his car and stop buying cocaine. The fine would have been £750, but I will restrict it to £500.'

Jamieson agreed to pay it at £100 per month.

POLICE FILES with Sergeant Iain MacNicol

Attempted house breaking

BETWEEN 8.30am on Saturday February 18 and 5pm on Monday February 20, an attempt was made to force entry to a house in Longsdale Road, Oban.

No entry was gained and nothing was stolen. Police are investigating the incident and are appealing for any witnesses or anyone with information to contact them.

parked in Shore Street, Oban, had two non-standard wing mirrors (fitted with extension arms for towing trailers) removed and stolen. The incident is thought to have happened between 2.50pm and 11.55pm.

Police are investigating and are appealing for anyone with information to contact them.

Two men detained and charged

ON THE A816, on the outskirts of Oban, at about 2.30am on Saturday February 25, a car failed to stop when signalled by police, and was found nearby abandoned.

A man aged 20 was traced nearby and arrested for alleged possession of a lock knife and cocaine.

The driver of the car was later arrested and charged with allegedly failing to stop and possession of cocaine.

Both were detained in custody for court and a report was submitted to the procurator fiscal.

Vehicle seized after checks

A CAR was stopped by police for a routine check on the A85 between Dalmlally and Tyndrum around 11.55am on Tuesday February 21.

Checks revealed that the driver, a man aged 64, was allegedly disqualified from driving and therefore there was no insurance for the vehicle.

The vehicle was seized and the man was arrested, held for court and a report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal.

Theft of mountain bike from garden

SOME time between Tuesday and Wednesday, February 21 and 22, an orange and blue mountain bike with a Scotland flag on it, was stolen from a garden in Nelson Road, Oban.

Police are investigating the incident and are appealing for any witnesses or anyone with information to contact them.

Vehicle seized and man charged

Monday February 27, at 9.40am, a car was stopped by police for a routine check, on George Street, Oban.

Checks revealed that the driver, a man aged 45, was allegedly driving without insurance, an MOT or road tax.

The vehicle was seized and the man was charged and a report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal.

Two held over abusive behaviour

ABOUT 5pm on Wednesday February 22, following a report of a disturbance occurring in Albany Street, Oban, a man, 24, and a woman, 20, were detained.

They were later charged with alleged abusive behaviour, and both were held for court and a report was submitted to the procurator fiscal.

Theft of wooden fence boards

BETWEEN February 6 and 20, a quantity of wooden fence boards were stolen from a building site near to the Lynn of Lorne Nursing Home at Benderloch.

Police are investigating and are appealing for any witnesses.

Wing mirrors stolen from car

ON WEDNESDAY February 22, a green Land Rover Discovery,

If any member of the public has information in relation to any of the above, or to any other incident, they can contact their local police office on telephone number 101, or anonymously through Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.



Gemma is learning the ropes as a firefighter but misses partner Andy and baby son Ashton while she is away training near Glasgow.

Mum opts to fight fires after her own emergency

LOUISE GLEN
lglen@obantimes.co.uk

A YOUNG mum was inspired to become a full-time firefighter after her son was born nearly four months prematurely.

Jemma Campbell, 27, was told she was suffering stomach cramps when she was rushed to hospital in December 2015.

But within hours she gave birth to baby boy Ashton – 14 weeks early and weighing just two pounds.

Jemma, from Oban, said her miracle child has now inspired her to help as many people as possible.

She said: 'It was a scary time for me but we have come on

leaps and bounds. Overcoming fear like that is a massive thing and it gives you an appreciation for things you never felt before.

'For me, it made me realise how precious life was and how much you should fight for it – that's why I wanted to become a full-time firefighter.'

Jemma joined the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service as a trainee wholtime firefighter last month.

After recovering from her traumatic birth, she is now being put through a tough training regime at Cambuslang, near Glasgow, tackling fires, giving CPR, responding to floods and cutting people free from car crashes.

Jemma, a former fitness

I couldn't do it without the support of Andy, my family and friends

Jemma Campbell
Trainee firefighter

coach, admitted the hardest part about training was being away from her son and long-

term partner, electrical firm manager Andy Matthews, 23.

She said: 'The team here is great and the instructors really know how to get the best out of you. I'm quite physically fit but there is always room for improvement.'

'Being away Monday to Friday means I miss Andy and Ashton a lot.

'I leave Cambuslang and go back to Oban on a Friday night but have to come back on Sunday evening, so I just make sure that my day and half with them counts.

'It's only for a couple of months and it will be worth it in the long run.

'I couldn't do it without the support of Andy, my family

and friends who I know will helping care for our baby.'

The SFRS is also recruiting retained duty system firefighters throughout Scotland to help protect communities.

Anyone interested in providing this vital emergency service is encouraged to apply.

Candidates must be aged 18 or over, have a good level of physical fitness and the required standard of vision and colour perception. They also need to live or work within five-to-eight minutes of the fire station.

Anyone interested in applying can get more information by speaking to someone at their local fire station or visiting www.firescotland.gov.uk.

Driver hurtled along at 127mph with child in car

A MAN who was caught travelling towards Oban at 127mph in a rented Jaguar has been disqualified from driving for a year and fined £600.

James John Ritchie, 47, from Helensburgh, was clocked driving more than twice the speed limit with his 10-year-old son also in the car

on the A85 Arrivain straight on April 22, 2016.

Ritchie, who appeared in Oban Sheriff Court on Monday (February 27), will have to re-sit his driving test once the ban is lifted.

Procurator fiscal Eoin McGinty told the court that police officers

conducting a routine road check saw Ritchie's car carrying out an overtaking manoeuvre at speed.

His defence stated that he was travelling to a football competition with his son and did not realise how fast he was going.

Ritchie pleaded guilty when he ap-

peared on Monday. However, Sheriff Ruth Anderson was unimpressed by the length of time it took for him to make a plea, having failed to do so on multiple occasions.

His one-year ban started on Monday and his £600 fine will be paid at £100 per month.

Cailean MacUlarig

Do Ghuth ann an Croiteirachd

Colin Kennedy

Your voice in crofting

Five years ago a monumental moment in crofting happened...six crofters were elected to the Crofting Commission to see the internal workings of an organisation that had previously been led by government appointment.

The change was dramatic. For the first time people who worked the land were on the committee of peers.

Who better to know how crofting should work than the crofters themselves? However, the way crofting worked for government was not the way it should work for us – fair and equitably across the country.

It seems to me that those of us elected to serve were to be silent upon the commission – and not speak out about the things that we saw inside that organisation that were simply unfair. We had six crofters who knew what had to be delivered to make the system work best.

Of course we saw issues such as one area being allowed to do one thing, while other areas were not allowed to do the very same thing.

A set of laws that were simply not adhered to universally across the country. A set of laws that needed to be vigorously tested. While we all made some progress in the commission, I realised that we needed a governance review of the whole organisation. I had identified a list of all the wrong doing and took it to the government saying that we had to have an external review in August 2016.

In response to my request a maelstrom blew up and what I got for it was attacks in the media, and abuse.

However those who set out against me – calling for my resignation – did not have the rhino hide I seem to have. They couldn't get rid of Colin Kennedy and here I am standing again.

Should you wish to retain an open, transparent, accountable and active area commissioner with your interests foremost in his mind, who will continue to strive to ensure the rights of crofters are recognised and that crofters are treated in an equitable manner then vote for me.

It is time to look ahead, with the vote to leave the EU it is more important than ever that you have a representative who has vision and understanding of the issues facing crofters who will fight to the last and deliver for crofters going forward. My in-depth understanding of the current regime sets me apart from others, and be assured, Colin Kennedy is the candidate to continue representing Argyll and Lochaber, and the one who will ensure your voice is heard above others within the heart of crofting.

I am a real Highland crofter who continues to graff every day at the coal face of crofting while also representing your interests.

Look out for the voting paper and return immediately, it only takes five minutes. And in return for your vote you will receive another five years of dedicated service.



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We do also offer a same-day complete denture service. This service, however, has to be by prior arrangement only.

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Every denture we make is individually hand-crafted to attain the best fit possible and be aesthetically pleasing. Open Tuesday - Thursday 9.30am - 4.30pm and Friday 9.00am - 12.30pm.

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At Random

MARTIN LAING
mlaing@obantimes.co.uk

Good sports deserve support

I WAS very pleased last week to be asked to go along to a meeting of the recently-constituted Oban Community Sport Hub.

There was a gratifyingly large attendance at Oban Bowling Club for the hub. Chaired by Nicola Hackett, Argyll and Bute Council's Active Schools manager, the hub saw representatives of a broad sweep of local sports clubs, including hockey, shinty, karate, orienteering and the Atlantis Leisure Centre, among others, including councillors.

The local hub is part of a nationwide movement which aims to help promote the members' sports, improve publicity, source funding and increase participation.

Those present were keen to inquire as to how they can ensure their clubs can have reports published in *The Oban Times*. The simple answer I gave them was to make sure information, previews and match reports are sent to us at the earliest opportunity, preferably with photos as well.

We are sports mad here at *The Oban Times*, and it may surprise people how many different sports are covered in the paper and our online platforms. In the past few weeks alone, we have covered shinty (men's, women's and children's), rugby (men's, women's and children's), football, sailing, martial arts, athletics, rallying, table tennis, 10-pin bowling, swimming, badminton and shooting.

The gathered hub members, who also enjoyed a presentation from Derek Connery of Bid4Oban, were hugely positive and bursting with ideas for ways to develop their sports.

One thing they can all be sure of: *The Oban Times* will support them in every way we can.

Beach hut decision is correct

I HAVE been a vociferous critic of Argyll and Bute Council's planning committee and some of its decisions.

However, in the case of the Tirez beach hut, I have to say I agree that ordering its removal is correct.

Yes, it's only a wee hut but when an environment is as pristine as Tirez's beaches – and people come from all over because of that – it requires to be protected.



Erecting the hut without permission was, at best, naive. Had it been allowed to remain, it would have set an unfortunate precedent.

It is a shame for the surfers who used it but that is not the planning committee's fault. And, by the way, the waves will still be there after the hut is gone.

Dogged determination paws off

WASN'T it great news late last week to hear that Rowan, the wee dog that got lost for more than a week down rabbit holes at Ganavan Sands, is back home safe and well?

It is testament to the bond between mutts and their owners that kept Sandra Muir hunting for the wee dog and never giving up hope. But it's also to the very credit of all her friends – and people she didn't know – who helped in the search.

Get in touch with your thoughts

Do you have something you want to share? Let me know by writing to me at *The Oban Times*, Crannog Lane, Oban, PA34 4HB, or by email to mlaing@obantimes.co.uk.

Call for new layby to let bus stop safely at cemetery

LOUISE GLEN
lglen@obantimes.co.uk

CALLS for an area at Pennyfuir cemetery to be turned into a layby for buses was endorsed by Oban Community Council on Monday evening.

At present bus drivers are finding it increasingly difficult to stop safely in the area and will not pull over if the circumstances are too dangerous to do so.

Oban Community Council heard that West Coast Motors' buses had been in talks with the council's road network adviser and Transport Scotland to discuss concerns it has about the road at the tight corner at the cemetery.

While it was suggested that only a few people request a stop at the cemetery, the area is on a tight bend and makes halting safely 'almost impossible'.

Asked if it would be possible for the bus to pull onto the slip road by the entrance to the cemetery, a West Coast Motors spokesman said: 'We have ceased stopping going out the way as it is too close to the corner. We simply don't want to take any risks on the road at all. We have spoken to the local authority and Transport Scotland about this.'

Duncan Martin, community council vice-chairman, said: 'If the bit of land at the entrance to the cemetery could be brought

back into use as a layby then surely it would be simpler for buses to stop and let off passengers at this point.'

The community council agreed that this was a suggestion that should be pursued.

The community council was then told that if any changes to the area were to be made it would be Transport Scotland and not the council that would have to agree as the area was a trunk road.

Asked if changes would be made to the section of the road to make it safer, community council secretary Andrew Vennard directed members to a letter he had received from Transport Scotland.

The government organisation told Mr Vennard there was an ongoing study for the section of road between Oban and Connel.

The community council had suggested to Transport Scotland that there was a huge concern about the speed on the road between Oban and Connel.

Kenny MacLennan, a member of public at the meeting, said: 'You'd be hard pushed to find a road with more accidents than the road between Oban and Connel. If they've not got concerns, then we have.'

The letter from Transport Scotland stated: 'Electronic pedestrian warning signs are being upgraded at Pennyfuir.'

But it also confirmed that there would be no reduction in speed being recommended for the road at the present time. The letter said that an assessment of the road in 2012 had concluded that 'the speed limit was appropriate and should remain the same'.

Calls for extra white lines to stop overtaking on the stretch of road were also dismissed by Transport Scotland. The letter said: 'Funding available is prioritised to those locations that offer the possibility of delivering the greatest accident savings.'

The A85 between Oban and Connel was not considered to be one of the priority roads.



The volunteer crew of Oban lifeboat manage to secure a line to the stricken fishing vessel.

Lifeboat called twice in a day

THE volunteer crew of Oban lifeboat was called out twice in 12 hours last week.

The first incident began shortly after 1pm on Tuesday February 21 when the Mora Edith MacDonald responded to a commercial fishing vessel with a fouled propeller close to Inversanda Bay in Loch Linnhe.

Due to strengthening southerly winds, Stornoway Coastguard transmitted a Pan Pan urgent broadcast to request assistance from vessels in the area until the lifeboat arrived.

As the lifeboat was proceeding to the area, a fish farm support vessel, Orcadia II, responded and dispatched a work boat to assist the drifting vessel.

Oban lifeboat arrived at 1.50pm and quickly passed a tow line and drogue. The fishing vessel was then taken in tow to a mooring in the Sound of Shuna, where the vessel was secured shortly before 3pm. Oban lifeboat then returned to station and was ready for service again by 4pm.

The second incident took place just under four hours later.

At 7.50pm assistance was again requested by Stornoway Coastguard, this time to assist the Scottish Ambulance Service with a medical transfer from the Isle of Mull of a 57-year-old male suffering from chest pains.

The lifeboat left Oban at 8.30pm and arrived at Craignure by 9pm where the paramedics transferred the patient to the lifeboat. The lifeboat then took the casualty to Oban where he was transferred to an ambulance which took him to Lorn and the Isles Hospital.

What's happening at Oban Phoenix Cinema – Jennie Larney

NOW that the Oscars are over and movie fans the world over will be either very pleased or very sad at the outcome, we here at Oban Phoenix thought we would give our own cinema-going community an update on what's on and what's coming up.

Our biggest film this month will be Disney's eagerly anticipated *Beauty and the Beast*. A stellar cast headed up by Emma Watson and Dan Stevens means it is sure to be a family favourite. It carries a PG certificate and we are waiting to hear when we can put it on sale.

Each year we have a handful of films that we take on release and this will be one of them.

Also coming in March will be *John Wick 2*, *Hidden Figures* and *Underworld Blood Wars*. For information about these films and anything we are showing, visit our website, www.obanphoenix.com or our Facebook page Oban Phoenix Cinema.

One of the questions we are often asked is how we choose what we show. Our community and staff have quite diverse tastes, so from the beginning of the year we look at what's coming out and discuss what we think will go down well.

Members of the community who regularly attend screenings will also inform us about films they would like to see. We try to accommodate as much as we can, taking big blockbusters alongside independent films

and documentaries so that we get to see as many different types of films as possible.

Part of our remit is to support community projects and especially those which involve people who may find going to the cinema a difficult or expensive experience.

We are able to do this by showing high impact, big grossing films which allow us to support projects in the town, small film makers and group and school activities.

Our big plan this year is to double the size of the small screen to 44 and to re-arrange our concessions and ticket-selling facilities. Our toilets also need an overhaul. We are hoping to get some funding for this which is unusual as we are pretty much self-sustaining.

At present we are giving the seats a much-needed clean as several people have mentioned to us that they had become a bit grubby. Not so now!

We are happy to say the cinema has been forward for an award at the Scottish Rural Awards at Dynamic Earth on March 16.

Lastly, we would like to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone who supported us through the great boiler crisis. We are now toasty.

Thanks to all of you who donated, to Nick and Co for the installation and to everyone who visits the cinema.

FREE Business Gateway workshops

BUSINESS START-UP WORKSHOP

A workshop for anyone looking to move into self employment, this workshop will help you turn your ideas into a practical and effective plan to start your business. The workshop covers 3 key areas: marketing, business planning and finance.

Oban – 8th (9.30am-4.30pm) and 9th March (9.30am-12.30pm)

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL MEDIA

Are you curious about social media and what it can do for your business? Do you think you're a bit of a digital dinosaur? Then this workshop is for you, designed for businesses who haven't used social media before and would like to learn more.

Oban - Wed 22 March, 1.00 - 5.00pm

DOING MORE WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Do you want to take social media marketing to a new level? Have you been using social media to market your business? This workshop will help you grow your presence, improve your reach and become more effective and efficient in social media marketing.

Oban, Thurs 23rd March, 9.30am - 1.30pm

To book a place call 01546 604555 or email business.gateway@argyll-bute.gov.uk

LOOKING TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS?

The Business Gateway Local Growth Accelerator Programme may be able to provide additional support to help your business grow.

Support available can include Workshops; Specialist Advice (HR, Marketing, Tendering, e-Commerce) and Funding (for tools, equipment, training employees or marketing).

To find out more about your eligibility for the Programme contact the Business Gateway team 01546 604555 business.gateway@argyll-bute.gov.uk www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/bglgap



Disabled drivers gifted £500 by Rotary

OBAN Rotary Club recently handed over a cheque for £500 to Argyll Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) to help them buy a second modern carriage.

Graham Fraser of Alba presented the award to RDA organiser Jane Isaac.

Argyll RDA Driving Group operates from a base in Benderloch, teaching disabled people how to control horse-drawn carriages, which leads to enhanced confidence and wellbeing for those taking

part. The group is currently in the process of fundraising for the second carriage which is more lightweight than the traditional models, making it easier for the horses to pull.

Iain MacIntyre from Oban Rotary Club said: 'Argyll RDA Driving Group is a very worthwhile local initiative involving input from a great number of volunteers who ensure the wellbeing of the participants and indeed the horses, who are integral to the undertaking.'



Rotary president Graham Fraser, left, presents the cheque to Jane Isaac, with fellow Rotarian Ken Oxland, right. On the left in the carriage is Vivienne Price and to her right Elaine Trigg along with RDA horses Red and Dixie.



Oban's St Columba's Primary School shinty side is back and the newly reformed team played in Lochgilphead on Saturday. The school has not had a shinty team for some years but is able to compete again now the team have a new coach in Andrew MacInnes. The youngsters are pictured wearing new strips sponsored by Roddy's Garage.



The Royal Hotel hosted a fundraising quiz in aid of the Oban Community Sensory Garden last month. Hosted by Tony Cave of Craigair Décor, 14 teams took part in the successful event. With raffle prizes also donated by Diageo, the Original Factory Shop, the Music Shop and Spiceworld, a good time was had by all and a total of £357 was raised. The money will go towards a major overhaul of the garden planned for this month. Oban Sensory Garden is in front of the White Church on the Esplanade and is run by a voluntary committee, several of whom have a learning or physical disability. It is fully accessible, creating a quiet space on the Corran Esplanade which is appreciated by locals and tourists. The organisers thanked everyone who gave prizes and attended. Sensory garden chairman Callum Morrison said: 'It was a good way to fundraise, especially because of Tony's help. We'll use the money to tidy up the garden and make it easier to maintain.' Callum recently took part in a live broadcast on Oban FM to say he's on the lookout for more members.

Councillor withdraws storage application

A NORTH Connel councillor has withdrawn an application to legally use land for storage, which neighbours have deemed a 'dangerous', 'shambolic heap of junk', in order to prepare further evidence.

Oban North and Lorn councillor Iain MacLean applied to Argyll and Bute Council in January for a 'certificate of lawfulness' to use his land by Falls View Apartments in North Connel for 'general storage purposes'.

Council planning officers recommended the application be refused. The plan drew no support but 19 objections. One immediate neighbour wrote: 'We have had to put up with views of decaying caravans, a portacabin, dead cars and junk which would make Steptoe's yard look organised.'

Another agreed: 'Making this a legal piece of ground for fur-

ther storage is a disgrace. Not only does it de-value mine and neighbouring properties, it is also a hazard for my children to play in locally, and an eye-sore.'

Mr MacLean apologised 'to everyone for the delays in the regularising process to achieve tidy storage, in an area used as such for many, many years. This has been, in the main, due to circumstances which I have been unable to control.'

The Planning, Protective Services and Licensing Committee was due to rule on the application last Wednesday, but head of planning Angus Gilmour told the meeting it had been withdrawn within the past 24 hours.

Mr MacLean's agent explained in a published email the plan was withdrawn 'to allow further evidence and justification to be prepared in due course to support his application'.



Neighbours of Iain MacLean are upset that his land 'makes Steptoe's yard look organised'.

Additional homes are approved

AN APPLICATION to build three more houses at Barran, Kilmore, has been approved by Argyll and Bute Council, despite calls for a hearing.

An earlier application submitted by Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) for 13 detached houses, granted in 2014, was amended to turn three into six semi-detached homes.

The plan attracted two expressions of support, four objections and 17 representations, with Kilmore Community Council voicing residents' concerns that it 'would result in a further increase in population density, changing the nature of the development in the future'.

Planning officers recommended permission be granted, but Councillor George Freeman said at the planning committee's meeting at Kilmory on Wednesday: 'It is increasing the number of houses from 13 to 16. That is almost a 25 per cent increase. I would move that we have a hearing and a site visit, because it is quite concerning to see the increase in housing.'

Councillor Gordon Blair seconded the move.

However, the Planning, Protective Services and Licensing Committee voted four to two to approve the application without a hearing.

Welcoming an additional six affordable houses in Kilmore, Oban North and Lorn Councillor Kieron Green said: 'I am reassured the existing road through the Barran Estate will be upgraded to cope with the increase in traffic as I know there had been some concern from residents about this.'

Luxury spa set to open at Balloch

200 SVS, Glasgow's deluxe conference and events venue, has announced its expansion plans for 2017, bringing a new wedding and events venue with restaurant and spa to Loch Lomond.

Following a significant investment, the 800 square metres venue, called The Shore, Loch Lomond, is due to open in 2017 at Loch Lomond Shores.

The Shore, Loch Lomond will provide a restaurant and a spa. It will also incorporate a wedding and events venue with a capacity of up to 300 guests.

The Shore, Loch Lomond, will open on two floors in the former Gateway Centre.

BUDGET SPECIAL: All the key decisions and how they will impact residents

Leader promises a budget for security, stability and success

ARGYLL and Bute Council's administration has passed its budget promising 'security, stability and success'.

Twenty councillors voted for the administration's budget motion, proposed by council leader Dick Walsh, defeating the one-year budget proposed by SNP leader Councillor Sandy Taylor, which drew nine votes, and Councillor Michael Breslin's Reform group amendment, which attracted three.

The introductory report, presented by head of strategic finance Kirsty Flanagan at a full council meeting at Kilmory Castle, Argyll and Bute Council's HQ in Lochgilphead, on Thursday February 23, stated more than 1,700 people responded to a consultation on which services matter most and where savings could be made.

Councillor Walsh said: 'We have succeeded in balancing a budget, despite a reduction in Scottish Government funding of £6.3 million. We have secured a surplus of £193,000 that will help to fill the funding gap anticipated next year of £3.6 million. We have delivered another £1.4 million of effi-



Council leader Dick Walsh.

ciency savings this year without impact on communities.

'We are in a better position than many other councils. However, the harsh facts of drastically reducing funding mean that we need the help of our communities to protect the services they use. We are protecting jobs and services in challenging times when our economy most needs them.'

The opposition SNP group proposed a one-year 'community empowerment budget', which Councillor Taylor said would allocate funding across local areas via a 'participatory budgeting strategy' and hand decision-making responsibility to local people.



Soroba residents are among critics of the council's move to three-weekly bin collections which Dick Walsh said has 'worked well'.

Three-weekly waste collection system has 'worked well'

THE new three-weekly bin collection 'on the whole has worked well', council leader Dick Walsh said at his budget promised an extra £200,000 to 'support reliability issues'.

Proposing the administration budget, which was passed by a 13-vote majority at

Kilmory last week, Councillor Walsh said: 'Change in these challenging circumstances is inevitable.'

'One of these was the change to three-weekly bin collections. This has been rolled out to 47,000 households across Argyll and Bute and, on the

whole, has worked well.'

Mr Walsh continued that the council is allocating '£200,000 to support any reliability issues with the three-weekly bin collection programme, assisting with transition and changes to grounds maintenance/grass-cutting services, with

initiatives to tackle dog fouling, litter and marine litter'.

A £2million investment in roads capital improvement works was also announced, alongside '£1m for legionella-related work in council buildings as required by legislation'.

Health and social care

HEALTH and social care will get an extra £2.14m one-off payment to 'smooth' its budget gap, on top of its baseline allocation of £54.22m for 2017-18, Argyll and Bute councillors agreed.

Proposing his administration's budget, Dick Walsh said: 'Protecting services for vulnerable people is important to us and to our communities, who reflect this in their consultation participation.'

'That is why in our budget today we are taking steps to meet the Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership's (HSCP) cost and demand pressures in the short term and support transition with one-off funding of £2.137m.

'It will assist in supporting

transformational change and with smoothing the projected budget gap.'

He added the baseline allocation will drop to £52.773m for 2018-19, and again to £51.323m for 2019-20.

Opposition SNP group leader Sandy Taylor, pictured, said its budget proposals would have seen funds raised by the three per cent council tax rise 'paid directly to the cash-strapped HSCP, to be used to establish a Change Fund of £1.239m to directly benefit some of Argyll and Bute's most vulnerable residents'.

But the SNP's budget was defeated 20 votes to nine. 'I'm thoroughly disappointed,' Councillor Taylor said. 'Today was a lost opportunity for Argyll and Bute.'



Administration backs tax rise

COUNCIL tax will go up by three per cent and the 10 per cent discount on second homes will be removed, Argyll and Bute councillors agreed at their budget meeting.

The Scottish Government ended the nine-year freeze on council tax.

All three budget proposals presented by Councillors Dick Walsh, Sandy Taylor and Michael Breslin supported increasing council tax by three per cent in 2017-18, bringing in an extra £1.239m, and removing the 10 per cent discount on second homes, generating £380,000 more.

The change in council tax will mean that Band D increases by £35.34 a year, to £1,213.34. In November, MSPs also voted to increase the top four bands of council tax, E, F, G and H, from April, calculated to make £2.306m more

for Argyll and Bute Council. The average Band E household will pay £2 per week more than at present, and those in the highest band about £10 a week more.

A further £200,000 is expected through a 0.5 per cent increase in households liable for council tax, plus a further £30,000 council tax income made through landlord penalties. Councillor Dick Walsh said the council tax changes in total would raise 'an additional £4.2 million to support services and jobs for people in Argyll and Bute'.

The introductory report, presented by head of strategic finance Kirsty Flanagan, stated council tax brought in £41.314m in 2016-17. The changes will raise council tax income levels to £45.476m in 2017/18, £47.066m in 2018/19 and £48.712m in 2019/20.

Education and population

ARGYLL and Bute Council's budget has promised £700,000 to build 3G pitches at Islay High and Rosneath Primary Schools.

Making the announcement, Councillor Dick Walsh said the administration was determined to ensure that Argyll and Bute is the best place in Scotland for children to grow up.

'We have seen three new school projects - new high schools for Oban and Campbeltown, a new primary school in Kilmory and the major refurbishment and extension of Dunoon Primary school. Alongside this, we have successfully delivered a £2.7million programme of im-

provements to schools across Argyll and Bute - including an award-winning development at Tayvallich Primary School.'

The administration's 'overarching vision', he added, is growing Argyll and Bute's economy and population. 'Our planning service has approved 99 per cent of all the planning applications determined in the last quarter, including affordable housing, bringing the total of new affordable homes to more than 550, with plans for 650 more over the next five years. As well as addressing housing demand, this also helps to contribute to the local economy and employment.'

Future funding for council

LOCAL government funding is forecast to fall by four per cent a year, Dick Walsh stated in his 14th budget, the last of the current administration.

Councillor Walsh told the full council meeting at Kilmory: 'Unless the current direction of travel changes at national government level, then, simply put, services and support as they currently stand will not be able to be sustained and the council will no longer be able to do all that our communities want us to do.'

'The Fraser of Allander Institute notes that the average reduction in funding for

unprotected public services - of which local government is one - is likely to be in the range of 2.6 per cent to 4.5 per cent year on year.

'We faced a reduction in income of around £8.6million, on top of an £8.1m cut the previous year so, for us, this meant a challenging gap of almost £17m to meet in two years. Based on this position, it is reasonable to forecast a four per cent reduction in our funding year on year.'

'The total funding available to us will amount to £235.873m in 2017/18, £229.847m in 2018/19 and for 2019/20 £224.182m.'

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OT

Glenorchy and Innishail

GROUPS are being encouraged to apply to Glenorchy and Innishail Community Council (GICC) for financial support.

Thanks partly to contributions from local renewable energy companies, the community council has a fund to help support and develop local good causes.

Grants, which are allocated at the council's regular meetings, can range from less than £100 to around £3,000 and the money could be spent on anything.

Recent beneficiaries have included the community orchard in Dalmally and Portsonachan Village Hall's lending library. Last year, members of Bridge of Orchy's village hall committee, who are renovating the centre, received £820. John Kerr, secretary of GICC, said: 'If you have a project you can prove helps members of the local community, there's a good chance we will be able to help you.'

To apply for a grant, residents must complete an application form which can be downloaded from www.loch-awe.com/community-council and return it to John Kerr, glenorchyb8074@gmail.com by Tuesday March 7.

Taynuilt

MEMBERS of the Taynuilt branch of the Scottish Women's Institute met in the village hall on Wednesday February 8.

President Jessie Servant welcomed 12 members and one visitor to the evening.

Taynuilt's Alice Campbell, who needed no introduction, demonstrated how to make a variety of pies with savoury and sweet fillings.

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the evening, especially as they were able to sample the lovely baking.

The vote of thanks was given by Jessie Servant.

Competitions – Malt Loaf: 1 Jessie MacFarlane and Tracey Sage. Knit for a hospital patient: 1 Jessie MacFarlane. Hostesses for the evening were Jessie Servant and Marlene Stanners who provided a lovely tea.

AT THE February ceilidh in Taynuilt, piper Rhuaraidh Edwards kicked off proceedings with stirring tunes.

During the second half, an appreciative audience was treated to another round of enjoyable pipe music from Caroline Groat, a member of Lochaber Gaelic Choir.

Niamh Cameron and Ailie Munro, members of the Isla Sinclair Dancers, once again gave polished performances of Highland dancing. Further toe-tapping music was provided by Sileas Sinclair on accordion and Deirdre Beck on fiddle who played brilliantly together. Lochaber Gaelic Choir's Andrew MacDonald also played lively music on his accordion. Soloists who entertained with a wide selection of enjoyable songs were Rachel Walker, Catherine MacKinnon and John Hutchison, all from Lochaber Gaelic Choir.

Under conductor Rachel Walker, Lochaber Gaelic Choir showed exactly why it has won the Margrat Duncan Memorial Trophy at the last two National Mòds with beautiful choral singing. Fear an taighe for the evening was the Reverend Brian Wilkinson who kept the evening flowing smoothly with amusing anecdotes.

Although there was a decent-sized audience, it would be good to see more Taynuilt residents going along to support their local ceilidhs and appreciate the rich talent on show. The final winter ceilidh will be held in Taynuilt Village Hall on Saturday March 18 at 7.30pm.



Andrew MacDonald entertains at the Taynuilt ceilidh.



Iain Forbes, sales director Fusion Marine, left, and John Paul Walker, area manager Hebrides for Loch Duart.

Barcaldine firm lands major order

BARCALDINE firm Fusion Marine has hailed a major order for fish farm equipment as 'great news' for staff and the local economy.

Loch Duart, which runs salmon farms in North Uist and Sutherland, has ordered Triton salmon pens

for its exposed sea site at Lochmaddy.

The contract for 12 Triton 400mm 80m circumference pens and net support wheels follows a previous order in 2014 for Oceanflex 315mm 80m pens for the company's Oldany site in Sutherland.

The pens are currently under construction at Fusion Marine's coastal base at Barcaldine and will be delivered during the first quarter of this year.

Iain Forbes of Fusion Marine said: 'This contract is great news for Fusion Marine and the wider Argyll economy and comes at a

time when we are investing in new staff and equipment.

'Companies such as Loch Duart play a crucial role in helping the sustainable development of communities in the Highlands and Islands and we are delighted to play our part in this vital economic activity.'

Seil

FOLLOWING the success of the '200 years of an island community' display, Slate Islands Heritage Trust is sponsoring another exhibition in Seil Island Hall from April 21-25.

The two areas of special interest are the Rollo factory in Ellenabeich and Balvicar Quarries, the last workings in the Slate Islands, which closed in 1966. The trust is appealing for any information, photographs or personal memories of either of these subjects.

One of the curators, Ron Hetherington, said: 'We've already received some excellent photographs of the workforce and the workings at Balvicar from Hugh MacLeod, whose father and grandfather were both foremen in the quarries. Also, personal recollections of working there from Hugh

McQueen, who along with other Luing men transferred to Balvicar when the Cullipool quarry closed. Information and photographs have also been provided by Drew Connelly, a trust volunteer, who worked for a while at the Rollo factory.

'The trust feels it is vital the personal recollections of the people who worked or had experience of these industries should be recorded before they are lost forever.'

Information can be passed to the teams working on the exhibition by contacting Ron on 01852 300246 or email hetherington246@btinternet.com.

You can also contact Jim Watson, of the Slate Islands' Heritage Centre in Ellenabeich, on 01852 300735/300307. Any photographs will be scanned and the originals returned to their owners.

Argyll and Bute

TIME is running out for community projects in Argyll and Bute to enter Clydesdale Bank's Spirit of the Community Awards 2017 for a chance to share £75,000.

Now in its fifth year, the awards support community projects which are going the extra mile. Entries must be submitted by Monday March 6 and the winners will be announced in summer 2017. Registered charities and not-for-profit organisations are invited to enter under one of three

categories: projects which help people to have a healthy relationship with money, to improve their local environment and projects which help people into employment. Five projects will be selected in each of the three categories, with the 15 winners being awarded £5,000 each.

For further information, visit www.cbonline.co.uk/foundation or the Oban branch of the Clydesdale Bank to receive an application form.

Mull

MULL civil engineers TSL Contractors has won 'The Fastest Growing Small to Medium (SME) Company' at the Business Insider Scottish SME awards ceremony in Glasgow.

The awards celebrate the success of Scotland's best performing SMEs with turnover between £8m and £20m. Hailing the com-

pany's 'phenomenal growth', construction office administrator Gillian Galbraith said: 'With more than 100 staff serving local, national and multi-national clients, the business continues to go from strength to strength. Rural companies continue to thrive in highly competitive markets during challenging times.'



Kitty Millar.

Campbeltown

A CAMPBELTOWN community nurse has been selected for a special professional development programme that will earn her the right to use the coveted title of Queen's Nurse.

Kitty Millar, a practice nurse at Campbeltown Heath Centre, is part of a group of 20 community nurses selected by The Queen's Nursing Institute Scotland to join the first group of 21st century Queen's Nurses.

Ms Millar joins Michelle Duffy, another community nurse from NHS Highland, on the programme. Michelle is an advanced nurse in respiratory care based in Inverness.

On completion of the programme, Kitty and Michelle will be the first nurses to receive the title in Scotland for almost 50 years.

WHITE VAN

Man

Talking politics

WELL, here we are, almost two months into 2017 and for some a time of hope or a time of change. For many it's been a bit of a shambles with rubbish, rubbish everywhere – and I am not just talking about the bins in Soroba.

While we are two months in already, I have not seen any evidence of big changes that are going to make things better.

Donald Trump is now the most powerful man in the world - the president of the United States of America.

This is a man who has, in the eyes of many, not got much political know how.

Trump seems intent on building a wall and stopping anyone with non-Christian and non-white skin into the country. It is a disgrace to think that in 2017 anyone can think like that.

Looking at it from another angle, Trump was, in the minds of many, the underdog. And he appealed to other underdogs saying 'I will build that wall. I will remove you from poverty. I will put America first'.

He said exactly what people wanted to hear and said exactly what he was going to do (like it or not) - unlike the political minefield of this country.

Changes in America are inevitable - but what about here in Oban.

Will the council elections in May vote in the same old, same old? Or will people see the worst of these politicians for what they are?

I have heard them described as backstabbing, self promoters. I don't know if that is right or not, but I do know the culture of the council needs to change now - so use your vote wisely. Don't vote for a nice smile and harmless nature – vote for the person who will get something done.

We've all read about and experienced our cash-strapped council. It has been at the beck and call of the SNP government which froze council tax for several years.

The SNP government uses tax as a means of gathering public support in a points-scoring game. And what do points make? Let me see – yes, you've got it, points make prizes.

What were the prizes for the SNP? In my opinion, there was only one prize: your vote.

And it has been nothing less than an absolute shambles. If the council tax had continued to rise every year, we would be in less of a state than we are at the moment.

Don't get me started on three-weekly bin collections and funding cuts at our hospital.

Argyll and Bute is no longer able to operate efficiently because it did not have the power to collect more council tax. The area is vast – services cannot be centralised, so those in the hardest to reach places are the people suffering the most.

But now, on the horizon for everyone, a three per cent council tax rise – not enough for the council to be getting on with, but still too much for cash-strapped families.

Financial worries could be just around the corner for many, with the possibility of sheriff's officers knocking on the door of the poorest families demanding payment.

To those sitting in elected posts who want to be re-elected, my message is simple – people will not forget the present shambles.

I hope you like my first slot in *The Oban Times*, I look forward to doing many more. If you don't like it, just greet down the phone at me and we will see what we can do.

Leave your moan after my tone.



Overflowing bins are not the only rubbish floating about, according to George Berry.

Kilmore

THE FEBRUARY meeting of Kilmore SWRI was held on February 8, when the president Mrs Anne Ferguson welcomed 17 members.

The visitors for the evening were from Riding for the Disabled which gave a very informative talk on what they do for riding for the disabled which is all done with volunteers and one paid member. They get no funding and have to raise all their own funds at events such as their open day in July.

A raffle was held for them on the evening. Tea was then served and competition winners declared.

Heart Shaped Cake – 1st Mrs. Maimie Nicholson,

Knitted or crocheted pram blanket – 1st Mrs Ann Stewart, 2nd Mrs Mairi Morrison, 3rd Mrs Maimie Nicholson.

KILMORE SWRI 50 Anniversary was held on Friday February 24 in Kilmore Hall, and the President Mrs Ann Ferguson welcomed two

founder members Mrs Margaret Fletcher and Mrs Mary McCorkindale both now living in Oban, and Mrs Ann Love, of Southend, Kintyre, who is an honorary member, along with Mrs Brenda MacLeod, Appin Federation chairwoman and Mrs Alice Campbell, Taynuilt, Lorn Group chairwoman and 16 members.

Grace was said before everyone tucked into a sumptuous meal, after which Ann Ferguson opened cards and gifts received from members, federation and group.

Mrs Margaret Fletcher then gave a short talk on how the Rural started in 1967 and recited a poem she wrote when the SWRI had their annual outing to Gigha nearly 40 years ago.

The cake was cut by Ann Ferguson, Margaret Fletcher and Mary McCorkindale.

Prior to the evening coming to a close flowers were presented to Margaret Fletcher, Mary McCorkindale and Ann Love.



Newly-trained first aid participants show off their certificates after taking part in one of the charity's training days.

Argyll charity needs help to ship urgent first aid supplies to Gambia

AN ARGYLL charity has launched an appeal to help ship urgent supplies to Gambia.

Based in Inveraray, First Aid 4 Gambia is a charity providing first aid training and equipment for schools and nurseries in The Gambia.

Following an accident in Kitty where a taxi ran into a crowd leaving a football game, seriously injuring 30 people, the charity has launched a special appeal to help cover shipping costs for a large donation of supplies.

Founder member of First Aid 4 Gambia Bill Nelson said there was an urgent need for supplies: 'In the hospitals, cardboard

is being used to deal with fractures. And newspaper is being used to cover bleeding wounds.'

Reliance Medical Supplies has donated 14 pallets of supplies, worth £50,000, but Mr Nelson added: 'We are only a small charity and shipping will cost about £2,500.'

'We have launched an appeal to raise funds to cover this and ask that everyone gives a little by visiting www.mydonate.bt.com/events/gambiaappeal

'Or maybe there are some kind souls in Argyll who would run a coffee morning, cake sale or quiz to quickly help raise funds?'

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Cailleach

Get in touch with your stories at bodach@obantimes.co.uk

This week, *The Oban Times'* resident Cailleach (Gaelic: old woman and, by experience, often a storyteller) discovers Boats in the Bay is not a new plan ...

Oban Bay pontoon saga – we've been here before

NEWS that a contract has finally been signed for the Oban Bay project has been welcomed by townsfolk this week – and rejected by others. I trawled through old editions of *The Oban Times* archive to find out whether Boats in the Bay have ever been a reality.

Back in 1937, every week in the newspaper there was a record of the yachts that were in the bay. There is no detail at the time of when and where the yachts docked or whether indeed whether they were simply passing through the waters near Oban.

The list of owners is a who's who of sailing – The Chinnecks from Dawlish, Mr Gardner of Liverpool, some visitors from Ireland, the Campbell Blairs from Inveraray and Robert N MacLeod from Taynuilt.

Readers will be aware of the many plans over the years to improve the bay – including a scheme for digging out a bypass road around the town and using the tonnes of debris that came out of the fairly hilly landscape to fill in the wee bay.

There should be no outcry – we already live on reclaimed land.

But those who have struggled for the step-shore facility will be delighted that it is finally going to be in place – fingers crossed.

My cynicism is merely due to the number of times proposals



Alexander MacTavish, took over King's Arms Hotel. Her late husband was Mr Angus Macdonald well-known Oban fisherman. He had two shops in George Street. In her younger days Mrs Macdonald was very fond of garden and she had to make a lot of trout fishing in her native Oban. Although confined to a wheelchair, she was a great admirer of the newspapers, and she had a great deal of fun in reading the newspapers, and she was very fond of the 'Merry' local organisations in Oban.

you ever know what is a good or bad project until it is up and running? I was involved in the setting up of the cinema and it was easier to circumnavigate the council than involve them in the setting up because some councillors had set their minds against the project because of who was involved with it.

To date, the cinema has had no capital assistance from the local authority and it brings in a grand amount of money, employs 10 people and entertains thousands every year.

Anyway, here we have the Oban Bay project at the point of no return and, for many, it will be a relief to see the plans move ahead.

Also in the news this week, it has been revealed that the age of mortality in some places has gone above the age of 90.

My goodness, in Oban not only could these people see the start of the Oban Bay project, but also the end.

In the days before double glazing and central heating, and keeping active and image consultants, people were often bed-bound at that age and considered very old.

This woman, pictured in her bed, dressed to the nines in her bed jacket and nightcap, celebrated her 100th birthday from her bed with a Champagne party. How wonderful!

But I can't image what was in the editor's head when this picture was approved for use in the newspaper.

for the bay have reached this stage and gone no further.

In the time of the current arrangements, I can count four, maybe five, times when the Oban Bay marina project almost came to fruition.

It failed – though not for the want of trying – in no small part due to infighting between various individuals. This infighting was always done in the nicest possible way but it has deterred things nonetheless.

Finally, the plan has come together and now there is ill feeling about who was invited along to sign the paperwork.

I remember feeling exactly the same way during my short stint in politics. I was challenged by a town worthy one day who asked me to make sure I was spending the money on the correct project.

The truth of the matter is, do

MORVERN lines

The stag who shot the stalker

MAR LODGE Estate, near Braemar on Royal Deeside, has hunting associations going back more than 1,000 years.

It was the largest and most important deer forest in medieval Scotland and popular with several of its kings, who were attracted to it by the quality and quantity of the deer.

The first owners, of whom there are records, were the Earls of Mar who, in 1618, organised a great deer drive for their family and friends. Scores of men and dogs drove hundreds of deer down from the surrounding hills into the Dee valley where 'four-score fat deere were slain with gunnes, arrowes, durks and daggers, in the span of two hours'.

In October 1850, the Duke of Leeds rented Mar Lodge and invited Queen Victoria, the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) and Prince Albert to another large drive. A herd of 300 deer passed within a short distance of the royal party but only two were shot.

The ballroom ceiling of Mar Lodge, now owned by the National Trust for Scotland, is lined with more than 3,000 stags' heads and sets of antlers collected on Mar over the centuries and is one of the wonders of the stalking world.

If they could speak, each head would no doubt have an interesting story to tell – but none more so than the stag that shot the man who stalked it!

In 1866, Thomas Powell, a wealthy coal-mine owner from Newport, Monmouthshire,



The ballroom of Mar Lodge featuring some of the many stags' heads. Photograph: The National Trust for Scotland.

and the first coal-mining millionaire in Great Britain, rented Mar Lodge and took on George Urquhart, a well-known local deer man, to act as his head stalker.

On Friday October 5, George Urquhart, Thomas Powell and two ghillies, John Grant and Peter Macintyre, set off up Glen Geusachan to stalk the face of the 4,236ft Cairntoul, one of the highest hills in the Grampian range to the north of the lodge. About two o'clock in the afternoon Powell shot and wounded a stag which ran towards the boundary of the neighbouring Glenfeshie estate.

Urquhart took the rifle, a double-barrelled, muzzle loader, from Powell and, taking Grant, ran after the stag to head it off. He fired two shots and wounded it a second time.

The stag, now weak with the loss of blood, turned and ran downhill past Loch Stuirtaig before coming to rest in the bottom of the steep-sided Allt Luinneag Burn which empties into the River Eidart.

Urquhart reloaded and

eventually found the stag still alive. Realising if he killed it where it was it would be difficult to retrieve the carcass, he tried to move it further down the burn by prodding it with the butt of his rifle. The stag lashed out with its hind legs and, in a 1,000 to one chance, struck both hammers which were in the cocked position. So hard was the blow it damaged the safety mechanism allowing one of the hammers to fall onto the percussion cap igniting the charge which, in turn, sent the heavy lead bullet into Urquhart's upper body.

Without falling, Urquhart said calmly: 'I am shot.' He then walked across the burn and collapsed against Grant, who laid him gently on the bank and ran in search of Powell and Macintyre.

Immediately, Powell arrived on the scene he sent Grant off to the nearest house, Geldie Lodge, eight miles away. For the first hour Urquhart was perfectly calm and told Powell and Macintyre what had happened. Gradually he grew

weaker and died two and a half hours later – killed by the bullet he had intended for the stag whose blood now mingled with his own in the burn at a spot still known locally as 'the Dead Man's Corrie'.

Assistance, in the form of several ghillies and a pony, arrived about seven o'clock in the evening. By then darkness had fallen and a heavy mist covered the broken and rocky ground. Progress was slow, and it was not until two in the morning that they reached Geldie Lodge where Dr Marshall from Braemar, 16 miles away, was waiting with Dr Maclaren, a visiting physician. There was nothing they could do and when dawn came they helped carry George Urquhart's remains home to his unfortunate young wife, who had been waiting anxiously by the door of their cottage for news of her husband.

George Urquhart was buried in St Andrew's churchyard, Braemar, the following Wednesday and rests under a handsome granite memorial which was probably paid for by Thomas Powell. His funeral was one of the largest seen in the district for many years.

The unusual circumstances surrounding his tragic death and the fate of his sorrowing widow, pregnant with their first child, created such a wave of sympathy throughout the area, it was reported in many British, American and Australian newspapers.

In due course a son was born and named after his father. Although young George remained in the Braemar area he did not become a stalker. He died unmarried in 1922 aged 52.

Iain Thornber
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After a steamy weekend things get clearer for Mike

Oh, Mike, it was so nice to get away last weekend, wasn't it, just the two of us?

Do you know what my favourite thing was?

Aye, it certainly was, Lisa

Ooh, was it that thing I did with the..?

NO! It was the amazing bathroom mirror. You'd been in the shower and the bathroom was all steamed up but the mirror was still clear

Yeah, I guess so

Good... I picked it up earlier today

I found out Cairngorm sell them... please can I get one for us?

Wait, what... Lisa!

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Householders' fury over new £30 brown bin collection fee

MONICA GIBSON
mgibson@obantimes.co.uk

HOUSEHOLDERS who want their garden waste collected will have to pay £30.

Last Friday (February 24), the Highland Council announced via its facebook page that garden waste collections were due to start again on February 27. But from July 1 this year, there will be a £30 annual fee for uplifts.

The post has received hundreds of comments and shares, and *The Oban Times* was also contacted by concerned residents.

Kate Brown, who lives in Lundavra Crescent, Fort William, said: 'When the brown bin scheme was introduced, it was advertised that the waste would be taken away and be composted then made available for purchase at a reduced rate so there were real benefits. I have been told this is no longer the case, that it is used to provide a cover for household waste at the landfill. Now, we find out we are going to be charged for the luxury of this scheme.'

'Everyone I speak to is up in arms about it. I know I will not be paying the council an extra £30 a year, especially when we have a three per cent tax increase. All this is going to do is encourage fly-tipping.'

Ms Brown also described the lack of detail about the change as 'ridiculous'.

'Can I opt out of this scheme?', she asked, adding: 'I have checked the website and can find nothing about this charge. We should have been sent a letter about this. I have been told the brown bins do not come under a statutory obligation so in that sense they can do what they

want. It just seems dangerous. Now people could dump things which are poisonous or harmful and the clean-up job will no doubt be more than what it cost the council to begin with.'

The Oban Times put these questions to the Highland Council and a spokesperson responded that the brown bin collections are provided in larger centres of population - 67,000 households. Sutherland and Skye have no green waste collections at all and it is only Fort William which has a green waste collection in Lochaber. Further, the decision to make changes to the current scheme was part of the council's budget meeting decisions and was agreed unanimously by councillors.

Councillor Allan Henderson said: 'The brown bin service which was originally promoted by the Scottish Government to drive down waste going to landfill was a successful, but divisive issue, with mostly only heavily populated areas receiving the service and rural areas not. On consulting the public, as the council needs to move towards being more commercial, it was made clear all householders should be given an option, but with a small charge for the service. On budget day this was agreed right across the chamber. Now, by starting this service as an optional one, householders have the opportunity to make a contribution towards a more carbon friendly Highlands.'

According to the council, details on the revised brown bin scheme will be made available in due course before the July change and in the meantime those with a brown bin can continue to use it free of charge.



Katie MacSween, Cara Leeds, Alice Lynch and Noel Cameron celebrate Shrove Tuesday. Photograph: Abrightside photography.

Banavie youngsters all smiles on Pancake Day

BANAVIE youngsters celebrated Shrove Tuesday this week by cooking, eating and learning about pancakes.

From nursery up to primary three, the youngsters got involved in various activities. Primary threes followed a pancake recipe, while primary two youngsters

learned how the ingredients changed during cooking as part of their science class.

The nursery class probably had the best day of all as they got to eat the pancakes made by the older pupils. Everyone involved also learned about

the significance of Shrove Tuesday and Lent, and how pancakes are involved.

Primary one teacher Leah Burns said: 'It was great.'

'The children got to make and eat pancakes and they had discussions about why we celebrate pancake day.'

First notice of alloy wheel plant plans

THE HIGHLAND Council has noted a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) for an alloy wheel plant in Fort William.

As a major development, applicant Liberty British Aluminum brought the PAN to the attention of the Highland Council's south planning application committee on Tuesday (February 28).

The proposed application is for the 'development of industrial facilities required for the provision of an alloy wheel plant and rolling mill, and associated ancillary infrastructure and access' at the Lochaber smelter in Fort William.

Fort William councillor Thomas MacLennan said it would be 'a wonderful development' and a 'game changer' for the area, adding that only a year ago people thought the smelter was going to close.

The committee noted housing and road access were issues the council would have to take into consideration when the full planning application was made.

Committee chairman Councillor Jimmy Gray said: 'This is a hugely welcomed development for the Highlands.'

Tomorrow (Friday) Sanjeev Gupta, from the Liberty House Group, will be meeting various public sector agencies, including the Highland Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Rural Economy Secretary Fergus Ewing at the site to discuss plans.

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Fears over Oban zebra crossing

THE ZEBRA crossing on Soroba Road, installed when a supermarket opened in Oban, came under attack from Oban Community Council on Monday night.

The road rules of the crossing, the community council heard, are not being followed by drivers and one councillor said she takes her 'life in her hands' every time she crosses the road.

Jessie MacFarlane, community council, said: 'There is going to be a terrible accident if something is not done. It is a death trap.'

Jessie explained there had been a near miss earlier that week when she was crossing the road but the driver didn't slow down and stop at the crossing.

Jessie said: 'She just missed me and instead of saying sorry she just laughed in my face.'

'Something needs to be done. It is just not a safe road any more.'

Police constable Jeremy Moore, who was at the meeting, said: 'There is much information coming into the driver at that point. Let's see if there is something I can do.'

Community bus given £9,100 to secure service

THE FUTURE of the Ulva Ferry Community Bus on the Isle of Mull has been secured after it was in danger of being forced off the road.

Following news that the running costs, which come to more than £18,000, were not covered from fare income and that the current grant runs out in March 2017, Scottish Sea Farms stepped in with a Heart of the Community grant of more than £9,000, which will cover half the running costs of this vital service.

Helen MacDonald, Ulva Ferry Local Development Officer, said: 'The support from Scottish Sea Farms will keep this essential bus on the road.'

'The service enables residents to attend

medical appointments, community events and make social trips, reducing isolation, particularly for those who have impaired mobility.'

Colin MacDonald, Scottish Sea Farms marine manager at Creran, said: 'Services like the Ulva Ferry Community Bus are so important to island residents.'

'Sometimes there is just no alternative transport and people can miss out on a host of activities and social interaction.'

'Mull is a great place to live and this bus helps everyone to participate in community life.'

'We are delighted our Heart of the Community funding will help keep this bus on the road this year.'

Lochaber Women's Aid celebrates International Women's Day

International Women's Day is March 8 and in the spirit of this year's theme, #BeBoldForChange, Lochaber Women's Aid (LWA) continues to support those affected by domestic abuse and champion women's rights in Scotland.

International Women's Day is a global day to celebrate the achievements of women and to declare bold actions to progress women's status, something that LWA does every day. In fact, since opening its doors in 2003, it has supported more than 600 women and 150 children who have experienced domestic abuse.

LWA is located in Fort William but its area of work extends to communities in and around Kinlochleven and Duror to the south, Fort Augustus to the north and Mallaig and the small isles to the west. Their services are available to all women and children.

The trained experts at LWA offer a one-to-one support service for women who are living with, or who have experienced domestic abuse. They provide practical and emotional support and assistance in making choices and identifying individual priorities. This can include support to attend housing and solicitor's appointments or support to rebuild confidence and self-esteem, when this has been eroded. Whatever your needs, they are there to listen, believe, understand and support.

The children's service also provides support to younger people to help them understand that it is not their fault and to help them make sense of what is happening. Both the women's and children's services are completely confidential.

Deirdre Coull, chairwoman of Lochaber Women's Aid, said: 'As a feminist organisation, we seek a more gender inclusive world.'

'On International Women's Day we would like every-

one to think about what they can do to help progress gender equality and improve the status of women and girls. We would like people to think about what bold action they can take to ensure the future for women and girls is equal, safe and rewarding.'

Those who are in an abusive situation can call Lochaber Women's Aid on 01397 705734 from 9am to 5pm Monday-Friday or the National Domestic Abuse Helpline at 0800 027 1234, which is staffed 24 hours.

Lochaber Women's Aid

International Women's Day

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From the 6th and 8th March, Lochaber Women's Aid is putting together a special window display in the Oban Times's shop in High Street, Fort William to promote and celebrate International Women's Day. Pop by to see a mannequin dressed in the women's suffrage colours and pick up leaflets and information of interest.

Viewpoint



Write to us: send your letters to editor@obantimes.co.uk or The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB

The Oban Times

& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

The story on page three of this week's *Oban Times* is inspiring – what a role model Jemma Campbell is, and will be, not only to the people who know her, but to the people in Oban and the wider area who will be helped by her.

Last month Jemma joined the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service as a trainee full-time firefighter and is currently undergoing training near Glasgow.

What is inspiring about Jemma – other than the fact that she will be a young woman making her way in a predominantly male profession – is the reasons behind her joining the force.

Just over a year ago, Jemma went into premature labour and gave birth to her son Ashton 14 weeks early. The tot underwent eight blood transfusions to save his life and it was a traumatic time for the whole family. Thankfully Ashton is now thriving, but the experience made Jemma realise how precious life is and how much you should fight for it.

So now Jemma is stepping up to the plate and making good on her conviction by joining the fire service. How many of us are that brave?

The *Oban Times* wishes Jemma all the best with her training and her future career.



Days gone by – stationmaster retires

This great photograph was handed into *The Oban Times* anonymously so we posted it on Facebook and asked if anyone knew about it. We had a fantastic response, with it being identified as Oban railway station. Most notably among the respondents was Jessie MacKenzie, who said: 'Not sure of date maybe early 1970s. Robert Gibson, stationmaster, on the right, getting his retirement gift from Alex MacCallum. Also in the picture are Andrew Braid, Archie Graham, Jimmy Christie, Neil Macdougall, Bobby Duncan, Bill Broadfoot, Dick Cornelious, James Mackechne, Herbert Blainey, Willie Power, Willie Currie, Duncan Campbell, John MacKechne, Ali Campbell, Kenny MacIntyre, Jackie Dryden, Micky MacKinney. There's a couple I missed as I can't see faces clearly.' Myrette MacIntyre also identified Stevie Thomson and Robert MacCallum, while Cathy Robertson said: 'My dad Tommy Duncan, five from the right.'

Macphail

ANGUS MACPHAIL

angusmacphail@yahoo.co.uk



The travails of recording an album

RECORDING studios are mysterious places to most people, and to musicians they are familiar but can be frightening.

We are nearly finished recording our seventh Skipinnish album and the process is no easier than it was nearly 16 years ago when we embarked on our first CD. We are much better acquainted with the experience now, but it is every bit as nerve-wracking as when Andrew and myself first entered the in-house studio at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama to record the debut Skipinnish album.

What is markedly different is the means in which the music reaches the listener and the economics of the process. The current recording industry is a different world to the one we joined when we were students and the changing vehicle of recorded music from CD to download is exciting to watch and scary to be part of.

Hard copy album sales in shops that were once the mainstay of music in-

dustry income, are disappearing fast and this nosedive will undoubtedly accelerate as downloads and streaming relentlessly take over.

The impact of music being sold and shared online represents the biggest change in this sector since it was first possible to record and reproduce music well over 100 years ago. Significantly, it has taken a huge chunk of income out of the industry. High Street record shops are sadly fast becoming a relic of the past, large record companies are downsizing or folding left right and centre, and custom-built recording studios are becoming few and far between as the income that once flooded into them is being diverted and depleted by online channels.

This is not all bad and the accessibility of new music the internet provides, gives great opportunities for people to easily share recordings instantly with a wide audience without having to go through major record companies.

The access to large audiences and the instant platform the internet gives was very obvious on the Highland music scene through December and January as five acts in this genre

released download singles with accompanying videos over that period. In fact, the internet at the turn of the year was like a musical dating agency for lonely Highland bands with all the new singles that were kicking around on iTunes and YouTube.

Mànrán, Torridon, Skipinnish, Gary Innes and Skerryvore all released new songs over the course of around six weeks and all did well in music download charts. This would have been unheard of in the days before download.

Further, despite this change to digital sources, CD sales are still strong at live gigs and by online order. As with the continued love we have for books, the value and beauty of having a physical entity to touch, to feel, to open up, have signed, look at, to read lyrics from, to hold and treasure is still keeping the less intimate download at bay to some extent.

While we all lament the passing of the era of the record company and the music shop, we can gain some solace that the music itself is still being created, recorded, shared and performed as much, if not more than ever. The world's tune can cope with change.



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

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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.

Islands need serious road improvements

Sir,
With CalMac boasting about the number of passengers on its ferries, it very much seems to me that the local authorities on the West Coast of Scotland need to stand up and take note.

The situation with the standard of the roads in the Highlands and Islands is not suitable for the onslaught of numbers being talked about, and all authorities need to demand a seven-year programme for improvements.

Here in Uist, a project that began in 1982 is still only halfway completed, and the Isle of Mull and other islands also need major upgrading. In fact, instead of putting an extra ferry on the Mull crossing, leave the MV Coruisk where it was supposed to be.

And CalMac has lied time and time about dedicated services and promises – for instance, the MV Finlaggan was promised to the good folk of Islay, but after a few months it was transferred elsewhere.

If you are going to make statements, carry out what you said would do.

And, to all and sundry, what happened to the initial set up of David McBrayne, when it was categorically, and in good faith, stated that it would be for the welfare and social good, and essentially a lifeline service for the people of the Hebrides?

What happened? I can list a whole load of services that today are nowhere representative of what they were set up to do. Also, if CalMac wants to ensure a regular, dependable service to South Uist, it needs to build a ship on the lines of the Pioneer which did the crossing in the 1970s and would do it in a force nine. It would have had to be storm force 10 before it would not venture out. I know plenty of people now retired who would vouch for such a boat.

Will our local leaders please find the backbone and stop this motoring madness gallivanting on our poor roads so our locals and delivery drivers can get their day's work done? Or will they at least scream at the Scottish Government for better roads?

Obviously somewhere our leaders have taken their eyes off the ball, and the roads as well.

Angus Campbell,
Garrynamonie, South Uist.

Levels of recycling will improve gradually

Sir,
My namesake, an old friend in Dunbeg, who is too shy to write herself (always credit your sources), has come up with the simplest solution to the current bins crisis: empty green bins fortnightly and blue bins three-weekly.

Yes, I know it is all about the overuse of landfill sites and the cost of landfill tax but, as a 'teacher', you cannot expect 100 per cent results first time with a short, sharp shock, hitting

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

ailean@obantimes.co.uk



MARATHA GACH BLIADHNA a' dol seachad tha beatha làitheil a' mhòr-shluaigh ga leasachadh le goireasan de gach seòrsa, agus cuideachd le adhartasan ann am bacadh tinnis agus leigheas slàinte. 'S e firinn na cùise mar bhàidh dol seachad gum bheil sinn a' call sealladh air na sochairean sin a th' againn agus sinn 's dòcha fìu 's neo-ar-thaingeil orra, a' gabhail riutha mar chòir seach mar bhuanachd beatha. Nach tric a chluinnear daoine ag ràdh mar nach ionndrainn thu goireas chun an tèid àicheadh dhut, co-dhù 's e seirbheis an uisge, dealain, neo togail sgudail a bhiodh ann.

Gun teagamh sam bith tha Seirbheis na Slàinte air fear de na sochairean sin air am bheil sinn a' cur luach shònraichte agus 's e pàirt de thoradh na seirbheis sin gum bheil daoine ann an fharsaingeachd a' gleidheadh beò nas fhaide. Tha an sineadh saoghail seo air tachairt beag air bheag thar bhliadhnaichean ach bha mothachadh air agus bha cuideachd tuigse gum faodadh e buaidh a thoirt air cosgais seirbheis slàinte na dùtha. Le riaghaltas an dèidh riaghaltas ag innse mar a bha iadsan a' dìon an t-sochair phrìseil seo dhuinn, 's iongantach gun robh cus dhaoine a' gabhail suim mhòr sam bith anns na h-aithrisean mu ionmhas slàinte is sinn uile ga fhàgail aig luchd-poilitigs cùisean a chumail ceart. Ach le dearbhadh a-nise air ire na fìor èiginn ionmhas a th' air tighinn ann an Seirbheis na Slàinte ann an Sasainn, tha e follaiseach nach eil cùisean idir air dòigh agus tha e iomchaidh dhuinn uile barrachd ùidh a ghabhail anns na h-atharraichean a dh'fheumas luchd-stiùiridh a chur an gnìomh an sin gus ire na seirbheis a ghlèidheadh agus cosgaisean a chothromachadh ma choinneamh buidseat.

Ged a tha gnothaichean beagan nas fheàrr ann an Alba faodar a bhith cinnteach gum bi, ri tìde, buaidh aig poileasaidhean Shasainn mu thuath cuideachd agus tha feum dion an aghaidh crìonadh seirbheis. Canar gur e an tomhas

'pupils' over the knuckles with a ruler.

You must teach kindly, gently and encouragingly, a little at a time, if your pupils are to gain the confidence in and knowledge of all that they can recycle, gradually, for success. Eventually, all will come right.

The motto with all the plastics, cans and other materials is to recycle, recycle, recycle.

Margaret MacKay,
Achinreir, Barcaldine.

Brazen statement from Argyll's MSP

Sir,
I read with interest your item on the front page ('Council tax to rise three per cent', *The Oban Times*, February 16).

Who is correct between Argyll and Bute Council leader Dick Walsh and the area's MSP, Michael Russell? Mr Walsh says there have been significant cuts from the Scottish Government, while Mr Russell says the local authority has increased resources.

I am surprised to see Mr Russell call our council administration 'incompetent'. I wonder what right he has to make such a brazen statement.

George Stewart,
Clachan Seil, Seil Island.

Cost of artwork could pay for bus service

Sir,
I see from recent news items in the media that the Highland Council is inviting bids for a contract to create and install a life-size bronze replica of a Ford Model T car in Cameron Square, Fort William.

At the same time, the same council is planning to withdraw the contract that provides a lifeline public bus service for people living in the isolated settlements along the A861 between Acharacle and Lochailort.

This has happened with rather less publicity and no consultation with the people most affected: they were alerted by the bus operator - not by the council. For households without access to a car, this bus is the only transport option, other than the early-morning school bus, for shopping, medical appointments and such like.

Perhaps on Saturdays, the only day the bus will operate from April, the people of the area can come and gaze at the static statue to the first mass-produced motor car, an invention blamed as a major cause of global pollution, in the knowledge that the £89,000 cost could have kept their lifeline bus service running for many a year.

B M R Green,
Roshven.

SNP should get on with the day job

Sir,
An SNP strategist and wife of SNP

deputy leader Angus Robertson has admitted on social media that independence would be a 'gamble', albeit 'one worth taking'.

Jennifer Dempsie made the remarks in a Twitter discussion. It's a welcome admission from the SNP that separation would be the gamble of all gambles.

This admission comes as remarks made by the Center for Economics and Business Research suggested an independent Scotland would be worse off financially than Greece.

It's time for the SNP to get over its loss in the 2014 independence referendum and accept the sovereign will of the people of Scotland who voted by a clear margin to remain part of the United Kingdom.

This continued constitutional merry-go-round is damaging our economy and creating huge uncertainty for Scotland's businesses. With all the trouble facing the Scottish Government due to the continued mishandling of Scotland's devolved responsibilities, it's time the SNP got on with the day job of governing and stopped its grievance-stoking.

Alastair Redman,
Islay.

Weasel words from the Conservatives

Sir,
In the EU referendum the main leave campaign suggested strongly that a Brexit vote would ensure fishermen from other EU states would be expelled from UK waters.

Yet the Tories' White Paper on Brexit suggests no such thing. Instead it says: 'Given the heavy reliance on UK waters of the EU fishing industry and the importance of EU waters to the UK, it is in both our interests to reach a mutually beneficial deal that works for the UK and the EU's fishing communities.'

Such weasel words are a reminder that, when the then Tory government took the UK into the common fisheries policy in the 1970s, an internal Scottish Office paper said that 'in the wider UK context they [the fishermen] must be regarded as expendable' and that officials estimated that up to half the fishermen in Scottish waters – then 4,000 men – could lose their jobs.

That position of the UK government suggests that just as the UK government sold out Scottish fishermen going into Europe, they will use them as a bargaining chip to leave, perhaps to get other EU states' support to lobby for the banks in the City of London to still have free access to the EU market.

Any votes the Tories get in May this year at the local election in Scotland's fishing communities will be used by them to claim they have the endorsement from those communities to implement that weaselly-worded paragraph. Just as with so many other issues, the Tories will take it as a sign that they can do what they like to Scotland and get away with it again.

James MacDonald,
Dealbhadh Croite, by Benderloch.

Ailean Caimbeul

Social media



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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, to 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.

Le taic bho



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GMB union appeals for help to protect jobs of whisky workers

SANDY NEIL
sneil@obantimes.co.uk

WHISKY workers' union the GMB is urging the UK government to protect the £5 billion Scotch industry amid Brexit uncertainty.

The whisky and spirits industry directly supports more than 40,000 UK jobs, according to GMB figures, with a further es-

timated 120,000 jobs connected with whisky production and export, including 7,000 jobs in rural areas where other work is hard to find.

Ten per cent of exports – £400 million – go to markets such as Colombia, Mexico and South Korea, where trade agreements were brokered through the EU, the union stated, and it fears these 'lucrative' exports could

become subject to 'punishing tariffs' following Brexit.

The GMB has called on Secretary of State for Scotland David Mundell to reassure the whisky industry, mirroring reassurances given to Nissan – 'an industry worth around £2.9 billion supporting 28,000 jobs overall'.

Louise Gilmour, GMB Scotland organiser, said: 'Whisky is a massive success story for Scot-

land – and the UK – but we need the government to back us up in the months and years ahead.

'Westminster was quick to pledge support for Nissan – which is also vital for the economy – but is frankly dwarfed by the size of the whisky industry.

'We need parity for workers in our whisky industry and the same guarantees that were given to Nissan. Tens of thousands

of jobs depend on whisky and the government needs to take action to protect our members' livelihoods, post-Brexit. We cannot do without this industry.'

In response, the UK government spokesperson said: 'Scotch whisky is a driving force of our food and drink industry, accounting for nearly one-quarter of all our food and drink exports each year. With the

USA now the biggest market for Scotch, and exports to India up 28 per cent in the first half of 2016, the industry's global success is set to continue.

'As we prepare to leave the EU, there has never been a better time to become more outward-looking – developing new trading relationships and establishing our place as a truly global Britain.'

Argyll elderly targeted in scam

POLICE Scotland is warning members of the public to be on their guard against a telephone scam where victims are being contacted by fraudsters claiming to be from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

There have been a number of incidents reported recently across Argyll, with victims tricked into paying bogus debts and taxes using iTunes gift cards.

Contact is made via automated voicemails, telephone calls and text messages.

A 73-year-old man in Argyll was recently targeted by a fraudster telling him that he owed HMRC money and if he did not pay, the police would be called.

The man was then instructed to go to a supermarket to purchase iTunes gift cards. However, when he told the shop assistant about what he had been instructed to do, he was advised to stop because it could be a scam.

Constable Colin MacMillan from Dumarton police office said: 'It is very concerning that criminals are trying to con innocent people out of money.'

'HMRC will never use texts or ask you to pay a tax rebate or penalty in this way. HMRC will write to you officially regarding any genuine issues. Our advice would be to be aware of this scam and end any suspicious cold calls you receive.'

'There are concerns that the scammers are targeting elderly people in particular and I would urge people to ensure they pass this advice on to any relatives, friends or neighbours.'

'Anyone with concerns of this nature can contact their local police office via 101.'

Islay RNLi races to aid of stricken fishing vessel

THE ISLAY RNLi volunteer lifeboat crew was called to the aid of a disabled fishing boat on the evening of Tuesday February 21 to the north of Dubh Artach lighthouse.

Despite having her anchor down, the crab fishing boat was drifting towards the Torran Rocks in galeforce winds having suffered engine failure.

The Islay lifeboat coxswain calculated that she had five miles of sea room provided her anchor held in the very heavy seas that were running at that time.

On arrival at the scene, with the wind blowing at 45 knots and four-metre to five-metre waves, the lifeboat crew's initial attempts at passing a tow failed, but finally one was secured and a course was set for Port Askaig.

With a heavy swell on the starboard quarter, the tow rope parted a total of four times during the six-hour journey to the shelter in the Sound of Islay, with the crew having to haul the heavy waterlogged rope back on board each time before reconnecting with the fishing boat.

Finally, at about 4am, the 160-tonne vessel Annie was brought safely into the north basin at Port Askaig.



The lifeboat crew had to battle five-metre waves in galeforce winds which caused the tow rope to part four times.

Oban man jailed for knife attack in street

A MAN has been jailed for two years for a knife attack in the street, when the victim escaped by using a road sign as a shield and 'ran for his life'.

Donald McGillivray, 45, of Flat 3-2, 19 High Street, Oban, pleaded guilty to assaulting a man by repeatedly striking him with a knife at Oban's Station Square on May 24 2016 and a lesser charge of possessing an

offensive weapon without a reasonable excuse or lawful authority.

Procurator fiscal Eoin McGinty told Oban Sheriff Court on Tuesday February 28 that the man had greeted McGillivray, who replied: 'You f***** b*****. I am going to get ya.'

Mr McGinty said: 'The complainer realised [McGillivray] had a knife in his right

hand', ran across the road and grabbed a road sign to use it as a shield as McGillivray began to stab. The complainer dropped the sign and ran for his life to the train station,' the fiscal added, as McGillivray 'chased him for a few steps'.

When police arrived, the fiscal said McGillivray told officers: 'It was me who chased [him]. I went to the

house and got a knife and dumped it in a bin.'

The knife, which had a five-inch blade, was later recovered from the bin, the court heard.

'There was no explanation why this happened,' Mr McGinty continued, adding that McGillivray 'has a history of schizophrenia and that might be some form of explanation'.

Defence agent Tom Brown said: 'There are certainly mental health issues, but not the kind that make him unfit for trial. There has been a full and frank admission.'

Sheriff Ruth Anderson QC sentenced McGillivray to two years imprisonment for the knife assault and six months for possessing the weapon, with both sentences to run concurrently.

Council sees red

THE TRAFFIC lights at Oban High School are still causing concern, Oban Community Council heard on Monday.

From the audience, Kenny MacLennan, a member of the public, asked whether the lights were controlled by computer, sensor pads or both. Mr MacLennan, who attends the monthly meetings regularly, said: 'The sequence of these lights needs to be changed to make it work. There are a few concerns about the lights due to people jumping the lights or being kept waiting due to signal problems.'

Councillors at the meeting confirmed the lights are worked by a sensor pad, with one showing a picture of the worn road surface where the sensor pad is exposed.

Project delivers IT skills to schools

MORE than 1,000 primary school pupils in Argyll and Bute have benefited from a pioneering education programme to boost youngsters' computing skills.

The Barefoot Computing project, which has now reached more than one million pupils UK-wide, helps primary teachers get to grips with computing so that they can better help their pupils.

Led by BT and the British Computing Society, Barefoot offers free teaching resources and volunteer-led training workshops to help primary school teachers get confident when teaching IT.

Dalmally farmer impaled lorry with bale spike

A DALMALLY farmer has been fined £500 for impaling a lorry windscreen with a bale spike.

George MacPherson, 51, of Brackley Farm, Dalmally, admitted driving without due care and attention on the A819 near Cladich on December 9, when his tractor carried a load at its front, obscuring his view of the road and collided with a stationary vehicle, causing it damage.

Procurator fiscal Eoin McGinty told Oban Sheriff Court on Tuesday February 28 that a lorry driver had parked at the side of the road around 5pm, put on its flashing lights and left the cabin.

'The accused was driving a rather large tractor,' Mr McGinty said, 'and in front was a spike bale carrier with a bale raised in front of the cabin.'

'The driver of the tractor did not see

the lorry and collided with it, with the spike going through the windscreen and tearing the roof off, leaving much of the bale in the cabin without a roof.'

Defence agent Graham Reid said: 'Mr MacPherson accepts he has erred in how high he put the bale up. It was partially obscuring his view. It was dark.'

'He thought the road was clear. The lorry was parked on the wrong side

of the road. He did not see the lorry. He will not repeat this exercise again, using this mode of transport on a public road.'

Sheriff Ruth Anderson QC said: 'This could have had catastrophic consequences, had it not been for the timing.'

As well as being fined, eight points were imposed on MacPherson's driving licence.

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- is responsive to the needs of crofters and crofting communities and will conscientiously promote the interests of crofting
- is able and willing to work with the Scottish Government, the Scottish Crofting Federation and others, to deliver the 5 Action Points for Crofting (i.e. better financial incentives, simplify legislation, make crofts available, increase affordable housing and deliver crofting development).
- will uphold the 9 Principles of Public Life

If you wish to contact Uilleam, please phone 07788 528067 or e mail uilleammac2@gmail.com

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Sunday 2nd April 11am - 5pm. Corran Halls, Oban

Brides, Grooms and their families are invited to this fabulous free event to meet, greet and discuss all things wedding-themed with local specialists. From cakes to cars and everything inbetween! Enjoy fizz on arrival, bridal fashion shows, hair & make-up demos and a special prize draw.

FREE ADMISSION.

If you are a wedding specialist and wish to book your stand at the Oban Times Highland Wedding Show, don't delay!

Please get in touch with Nicky on 01631 568000. And to all brides and grooms to be... we look forward to seeing you on Sunday 2nd April!



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Please come along and meet old friends.



Eye to eye with John Wallace

Realistic medicine

Earlier this week the Scottish Chief Medical Officer announced a new initiative called "Realistic Medicine". In this initiative health care professionals are encouraged to listen to our patients and discuss possible treatment outcomes before prescribing any form of intervention. By coincidence I was attending an NHS meeting discussing how optometry in NHS Highland can help improve patient care.

Over the past ten years the Scottish government has promoted optometry as the gate keeper for eye care. We are expected to listen to our patients, discuss possible treatment plans and then, where appropriate, prescribe glasses or offer relevant forms of treatment or, where necessary, refer our patients to the appropriate hospital department. Sounds familiar, doesn't it? Because of our expertise in eye-care, and the sophisticated equipment now available in optometric practices GPs encouraged to send their patients with eye problems for an optometric evaluation before being referred to hospital.

This can only work where there is honesty and trust between the optometrist and the patient. Last week I had a patient who categorically refused to discuss his occupation, hobbies and medication. With so many drugs prescribed which can have an effect on the human eye it is essential your optometrist is informed of your general health problems. Likewise, many occupations require specific forms of optical correction; computer glasses or safety glasses being two examples.

Many people simply see optometrists only as providers of glasses. With one exception the national chains heavily promote the sale of glasses with no mention of the importance of eye-care. Your optometrist has spent at least three years in clinical training learning not only about eyes and vision but also much about general medicine and how it interacts with our eyes. Optometrists are bound by the same NHS rules and regulations on confidentiality and behaviour as GPs and dentists.

John Wallace BSc (Hons), FCOptom, DipCLP
Wallace Optometrists
The West Highland Orthokeratology Clinic
11/12 Argyll Square, Oban
Tel: 0845 230 3937 (EYES)
www.wallaceoptometrists.co.uk

Top folk band heads for Oban

A QUARTET of Scotland's best folk musicians are coming to the Corran Halls. Auld Hat - New Heids will play the Oban venue on Saturday April 1, a date that promises to be a real treat for folk fans.

The four musicians - brothers Fraser and Ian Bruce, Pete Clark and Gregor Lowrey - have built up enviable individual reputations over decades, but have now united to form a band.

The material they perform provides a show of Scottish songs now seldom heard but which were once the basis of the folk revival of the 1960s and 1970s, when Scottish folk music was at its peak.

Fraser said: 'Hamish Imlach, Matt McGinn, Archie Fisher, Ewan MacColl and Jimmy McGregor are just a few of the names who starred in the folk scene in those heady days. That time might have passed but the songs are still there. It's just that there are fewer people singing them.'

'We formed our group with the intention of producing a show featuring a selection of these songs from the folk revival but incorporating the developed musical skills of the current era.'

'We want to create a feelgood factor at our shows with audience participation and humour. It's also, for many, a reminiscence of the good old days of folk.'

Between them, the four musicians have more than 30 albums, as

well as extensive radio and TV experience. One reviewer wrote: 'Throughout the years that Celtic Connections have been running, there have been many memorable concerts. This will go down as one of them. It was a truly memorable night and is up there with the best concerts over the years.'

'Seasoned performers Fraser and Ian Bruce, accompanied by Gregor Lowrey (accordion) and Pete Clark (fiddle) put on the show of their lives.'



BBC ALBA

A' cur 's a' Buain

Listings for Thursday 2 March - Thursday 9 March 2017

DIARDAOIN 02 MÀRT
THURSDAY 02 MARCH
17.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's Programming
19.05 **An Solas Buan** - archive series looking at Scotland's lighthouses (rpt)
19.30 **Speaking our Language** (rpt)
19.55 **Earrann Eachdraidh** (rpt)
20.00 **An Là** - News
20.30 **Druthag na Hearadh** - a little drop of Harris - Ep1 (rpt)
21.00 **UR | NEW: DIY le Donnie** - S3 Ep3
21.45 **Sgeul Seirbheis** (rpt)
22.00 **UR | NEW: Pàirc Yellowstone** - Wild Yellowstone
22.50 **Binneas** - Taghadh bho Na Trads (rpt)
22.55 **Scottish Premiership**

DIARDAOIN 03 MÀRT
FRIDAY 03 MARCH
17.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's Programming
18.35 **Machair** (rpt)
19.00 **An Là** - News
19.25 **Pro 12 Live Rugby** - Edinburgh v Ospreys
21.30 **Gach Creutair Beò** - Vets in Scotland - S4, Ep2 (rpt)
22.00 **Seirm** - music from Celtic Connections - Ep5 (rpt)
23.00 **Oighreachdan na h-Alba** - Great Estates S1, Ep3

DISATHAIRNE 04 MÀRT
SATURDAY 04 MARCH
16.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's Programming
19.00 **Machair** (rpt)
19.25 **Fraochy Bay** (rpt)
19.30 **Aiteal** (rpt)
19.55 **Binneas** - Taghadh bho Na Trads - (rpt)
20.00 **Fonn Mo Bheatha** - music and chat (rpt)

DIARDAOIN 05 MÀRT
SUNDAY 05 MARCH
16.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's Programming
18.30 **Seachd Là** - news Review
19.30 **Alleluia!** - spiritual music and verse (rpt)
20.00 **Fuine** - cooking for special diets (rpt)
20.30 **Druthag na Hearadh** - A little drop of Harris - Ep1 (rpt)
21.00 **Bho Mhinistear gu Modaratair** - (rpt)
22.00 **UR | NEW: Air an Rathad** - Ralaidh na Trealaich
23.00 **Pàirc Yellowstone** - Wild Yellowstone - (rpt)

DIARDAOIN 06 MÀRT
MONDAY 06 MARCH
17.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming
19.00 **Aibisidh** - (rpt)
19.30 **Speaking our Language** (rpt)
19.55 **Earrann Eachdraidh** - (rpt)
20.00 **An Là** - News
20.30 **UR | NEW: Gach Creutair Beò** - Vets in Scotland - S4, Ep3
21.00 **UR | NEW: Trusadh - Tàlaidhean** - Gaelic Lullabies
22.00 **Cuirm@Celtic** - Mairi Nic a Ghobhainn (rpt)
22.30 **Please, Mister** - Sgeulachd Tony Miller - drama documentary (rpt)
23.30 **Buskers** - (rpt)

DIARDAOIN 07 MÀRT
TUESDAY 07 MARCH
17.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming
19.00 **An Solas Buan** - archive series looking at Scotland's lighthouses
19.30 **Speaking our Language** (rpt)
19.55 **Earrann Eachdraidh** - History Shorts (rpt)
20.00 **An Là** - News
20.30 **Alba: 1994** - the charts hits and top news stories (rpt)
21.00 **Cobhair Chloinne** - The Paediatric Retrieval Service (rpt)
22.00 **Trusadh - Tàlaidhean** - Gaelic Lullabies - (rpt)
23.00 **Aiteal** - supernatural Scotland - Ep6 (rpt)
23.20 **Cuirm@Celtic** - Moving Hearts - (rpt)
23.30 **Alleluia!** - Spiritual music and verse (rpt)

DIARDAOIN 08 MÀRT
WEDNESDAY 08 MARCH
17.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming
19.00 **Aibisidh** - (rpt)
19.30 **Speaking our Language** (rpt)
19.55 **Earrann Eachdraidh** (rpt)
20.00 **An Là** - News
20.30 **Fuine** - cooking for the outdoors (rpt)
21.00 **Ever Believe Me** - Sgeulachd Madeleine Smith - drama documentary (rpt)
22.00 **Buskers** - S2 Ep3 (rpt)
22.30 **Cuirm@Celtic** - Mairi Nic a Ghobhainn (rpt)
23.00 **DIY le Donnie** - more DIY tips - S3 Ep3 (rpt)
23.45 **Sgeul Seirbheis** - (rpt)

DIARDAOIN 09 MÀRT
THURSDAY 09 MARCH
17.00 **Prògraman Chloinne** - Children's programming
19.05 **An Solas Buan** - archive series looking at Scotland's lighthouses
19.25 **Speaking our Language** (rpt)
19.55 **Earrann Eachdraidh** - history shorts (rpt)
20.00 **An Là** - News
20.30 **Druthag na Hearadh** - A Little Drop of Harris - Ep2 (rpt)
21.00 **UR | NEW: DIY le Donnie** - S3 Ep4
21.45 **Sgeul Seirbheis** (rpt)
22.00 **Rapal TBH** - (rpt)
22.30 **Bonnie & Clyde** - (rpt)
23.20 **Binneas - Na Trads** - Steele the Show (rpt)
23.25 **Fonn mo Bheatha** - music chat show (rpt)

bbc.co.uk/alba | bbc.co.uk/iplayer

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8			9			
10						
11			12		13	
15	16					17
18				19		
20				21		

Across

- Becomes savvy (5,2)
- Dreary sound (5)
- Spoken at the table (5)
- Grilled cheese dish (7)
- Idle (13)
- Arduous (6)
- Baby (6)
- Noxious gas (6,7)
- Calla Lily (7)
- Hear on TV (5)
- Pretend (3-2)
- One at the beginning of the week (7)

Down

- Part of an old train (5)
- Firm (7)
- One from a country of West Africa (6,7)
- Satire (6)
- Cacao powder product (4,9)
- Jewish leader (5)
- Beseech (7)
- Open (7)
- Slid further than planned (7)
- Promotional leaflet (6)
- Change, chemically (5)
- Jet coloured (5)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION

G	S	S	E	O	G
D	I	S	A	R	M
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Friday 3 – Thursday 9 March

20TH CENTURY WOMEN | 15 | 138 MIN

Fri: 21:30, Sat: 20:30, Sun: 15:30, Mon: 21:15, Tue: 19:30, Wed: 21:15, Thu: 16:30

Parent and Baby Screening: Tue: 11:30

With 20th Century Women, acclaimed filmmaker Mike Mills (the Academy Award winning Beginners) brings us a richly multilayered, funny, heart-stirring celebration of the complexities of women, family, time, and the connections we search for our whole lives.

FIFTY SHADES DARKER | 18 | 138 MIN

Fri: 18:45, 21:00, Sat: 18:00, 19:45, Sun: 18:15, Mon: 18:30, 21:00, Tue: 19:30, Wed: 18:45, 21:00, Thu: 19:00

While Christian wrestles with his inner demons, Anastasia must confront the anger and envy of the women who came before her.

HACKSAW RIDGE | 15 | 159 MIN

Sun: 17:00

WWII American Army Medic Desmond T. Doss, who served during the Battle of Okinawa, refuses to kill people and becomes the first Conscientious Objector in American history to be awarded the Medal of Honor.

SING | U | 128 MIN

KIDS CLUB: Sat: 11:00

Sat: 14:30

A koala named Buster recruits his best friend to help him drum up business for his theatre by hosting a singing competition.

LION | PG | 138 MIN

Fri: 16:00, Sat: 17:00 Sun: 12:00, Mon: 16:00, Tue: 17:00, Wed: 16:00

LION is a drama in which a five-year-old Indian boy finds himself lost in Kolkata, thousands of miles from home. After being sent to Australia for adoption, he returns to India as a young adult in order to find his real mother and brother.

NT LIVE: HEDDA GABLER | 12A | 120 MIN

Thu: 19:00

Hedda and Tesman have just returned from their honeymoon and the relationship is already in trouble. Trapped but determined, Hedda tries to control those around her, only to see her own world unravel. Tony Award-winning director Ivo van Hove (A View from the Bridge at the Young Vic Theatre) returns to National Theatre Live screens with a modern production of Ibsen's masterpiece.

SILVER SCREEN - DENIAL | 12A | 130 MIN

Sun: 14:30

Silver Screening - 'Last Chance to See' - Concessions (age 60+) entry just £3! Based on the acclaimed book 'History on Trial: My Day in Court with a Holocaust Denier,' DENIAL recounts Deborah E. Lipstadt's (Academy Award winner Rachel Weisz) legal battle for historical truth against David Irving (Cannes Award winner Timothy Spall), who accused her of libel when she declared him a Holocaust denier.

T2: TRAINSPOTTING | 18 | 135 MIN

Fri, Mon, Wed, Thu: 18:30

First there was an opportunity.....then there was a betrayal. Twenty years have gone by. Much has changed but just as much remains the same. Mark Renton (Ewan McGregor) returns to the only place he can ever call home. They are waiting for him: Spud (Ewan Bremner), Sick Boy (Jonny Lee Miller), and Begbie (Robert Carlyle).

THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE | U | 124 MIN

Fri: 16:15, Sat: 12:00, 15:45, Sun: 12:30, Mon: 16:00, Tue: 17:00, Wed: 16:15, Thu: 16:30

Will Arnett reprises his starring role from THE LEGO Movie as the voice of LEGO Batman, aka Bruce Wayne. Zach Galifianakis (Muppets Most Wanted, the Hangover films) stars as The Joker; Michael Cera (TV's Arrested Development) as the orphan Dick Grayson; Rosario Dawson (TV's Daredevil) as Barbara Gordon; and Ralph Fiennes (the "Harry Potter" films) as Alfred.

£500 up for grabs in Gaelic and Scots songs competition

MUSICIANS can win £500 and top-class tuition with Hands Up for Trad songwriting competition.

After an incredibly successful debut year, Nòs Ùr is set to return giving Gaelic and Scots songwriters, singers and groups the chance to win £500 and one-on-one mentoring from established artists.

The Gaelic and Scots songwriting competition founded by Hands

Up for Trad in collaboration with Creative Scotland, will see the winners receive a lump sum of £500 each and mentoring with an experienced songwriter to the level of £500.

There will be two winners – one for a Scots song and one for a Gaelic song.

Budding songwriters are invited to submit a new and original song in either language via the Hands Up for Trad

website which will then be considered by an industry panel.

To be in with a chance of winning, the hopefuls must submit entries by April 7 2017: <https://projects.handsupportrad.scot/scotlandings/nos-ur>.

Event founder and Hands Up for Trad creative director, Simon Thumire said:

'We have a wealth of incredibly talented musicians in Scotland

and we're really excited to be working with Creative Scotland to see what bright new stars Nòs Ùr unveils. To be in with the chance of winning £500 and on-on-one songwriting tuition with an industry professional, make sure you enter via the Hands Up for Trad website – and good luck.'

Entries can be submitted at: <https://projects.handsupportrad.scot/scotlandings/nos-ur>.

Grand stramash at accordion and fiddle club night

THE chairman, Niall Iain MacLean, welcomed a full house at the February meeting of the Inveraray and District Accordion and Fiddle Club held in the Inveraray Inn.

Supporting players were in abundance – Fyne Folk, with Alex John MacLeod, Sally Hall and Jake MacKay on fiddles and Agnes Liddell on keyboard; on accordion were Calum MacDonald, Alex MacKinnon, Marshall Harkness and Alan Clark; on melodeon was Sandy Carr; on fiddle was Charlie Soane;

and played *The Jacqueline Waltz* quite beautifully and later sang a couple of songs – what versatility.

Then 11.30pm was fast approaching but the audience were in no hurry to leave such was their enjoyment of the music. However, a hearty vote of thanks to all the players was followed by a grand stramash.

Next week the club looks forward welcoming back the popular Ian Muir Trio from Prestwick.

Report by Margaret Mather.

Donald Meek launches new collection of poetic work

AUTHOR Donald Meek has been speaking about his newly published collection of poetry, *Sreathan anns a'*

Ghainmhich, which was launched at the Glasgow University Student Union.

Guests heard from the author and guest speaker Flora MacPhail and singers Ethel MacCalum and Mary Ann Kennedy, all

with Tìree connections. *Sreathan anns a' Ghainmhich* is now available online from Acair and some bookshops.

No clear plan for 10 hours of Gaelic broadcasting

CLARITY is required on the future of improved Gaelic broadcasting after the BBC's announcement regarding support for BBC Alba.

Maggie Cunningham, chairwoman of MG ALBA – which operates BBC ALBA in partnership with the BBC – issued the following statement in response to the BBC's announcement regarding support for Gaelic broadcasting.

She said: 'Lord Hall's declaration of support for Gaelic broadcasting recognises the integrity of BBC ALBA and reflects the views of both the UK and Scottish governments which have stated unequivocally that our channel should have sustained support given the success it has enjoyed.'

'We welcome the commitment to provide a weekend news service on BBC ALBA, something which viewers

have sought. We also welcome the stated aim for the new BBC Scotland channel to "support the delivery of extra programmes for BBC ALBA".

'What we need to do now is work constructively and collaboratively with the BBC to clarify how this extra programming will materialise.'

'We consistently asked the BBC for a contribution of 10 hours per week of programming as part

of the Charter Review so further discussions with the BBC will be necessary to ascertain what exactly is being proposed and how it will be funded.'

'The channel needs new original programming and a significant reduction in repeats in order to thrive. BBC ALBA has proved to be a Scottish broadcasting success story over the past eight years and we are committed to building on that success.'



Four out of five adults use their local paper to find out what's on

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MONDAY: 08:00 AM on FM, 08:10 Breakfast Show, 09:00 Monday Morning with Stephen, 11:00 Ian Simmonds on Monday, 13:00 Clyde 2 17:00 Drivetime, 18:00 Drivetime, 19:00 Rosie's Highland Fling with Rosie Macoll, 20:00 John McLuckie's Show, 21:00 David Cullen Show, 23:00 station close, midnight Clyde 2

TUESDAY: 08:00 AM on FM, 08:10 Breakfast Show, 10:00 Ken Hunter's Tuesday Morning, 13:00 Macky on FM, 15:00 Clyde 2 17:00 Drivetime with Jim Lynch, 19:00 Highest Praise with Stuart Chalmers, 20:00 Elaine Lamb, 22:00 Northern Soul with Gordon Cove, midnight Clyde 2.

WEDNESDAY: 08:00 AM on FM, 08:10 Breakfast Show, 09:00 Sound Scottish Repeat, 10:00 Comfort Zone with Doug Carmichael, 11:00 Comfort Zone, 12:00 Comfort Zone, 13:00 Clyde 2 15:00 Elaine Lamb, 17:00 Drivetime, 17:30 Drivetime with Campbell Cameron, 19:00 Country Meets Rock & Roll with Len & Ken, 21:00 Gordon's Grooves, midnight Clyde 2.

THURSDAY: 08:00 Breakfast with Laura, 10:00 Molly's Mix with Molly Black, 13:00 Elaine's Time Capsule, 15:00 Gordon Covey, 17:00 Drivetime with Stephen McPhee, 19:00 Christine's Collection, 21:00 Ann's Ceilidh, 22:00 Margo till midnight, midnight Clyde 2.

FRIDAY: 08:00 Breakfast with Laura, 10:00 Teeny and Tiny, 13:00 Clyde 2 17:00 Drive Show with Jim Lynch, 18:45 Sports View, 19:00 Country meets Country with Jackie Craig, 20:00 Lewis Binham.

SATURDAY: 08:00 Breakfast show with Archie Darling, 10:00 Saturday Morning Live with Linda Cosher, 13:00 Clyde 2 18:00 Sports View with the Dream Team, 19:00 Sounds Scottish with Archie Darling, 20:00 Dave Lewis, 22:00 Margo till midnight, midnight Clyde 2.

SUNDAY: 09:00 Sunday morning with Breege, 11:00 Sunday Morning with Archie, 12:00 Sunday Brunch, 13:00 Clyde 2 16:30 Archie Darling, 18:00 Ken's Friends with Ken Hunter, 19:00 New Country Show with David Entwhistle, 21:00 Drum & Bass with Graham Scott, 23:00 Station close, midnight Clyde 2.

Glasgow Letter

ROBERT ROBERTSON
robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk



Glasgow Islay Gathering

Tomorrow (Friday March 3) is going to be a great night in the GUU for the Glasgow Islay Association Annual Gathering. With a line-up including Andrew McCowan, Hector MacKechnie, Ryan Johnston, Eilidh and Anna MacDonald, Clare Campbell, accompanist Kirsteen Grant, and the Rowan Brothers, you cannot go wrong!

A fine two days of music

I am sitting writing this Glasgow Letter with a pint glass of water by my side – trying in vain to quench my thirst after the tasty feast of salt herring I devoured at the Glasgow Skye Buntata's Sgadan last Saturday night.

What great fun the evening was. John Gillies, the association piper, got the music off to

a great start with a cracking set of tunes. I then played a selection on the box and gave a song with the help of an enthusiastic crowd singing along.

The highlight of the night was the singing of my good friend Kirsty Mackinnon from Tobermory, whose six songs greatly impressed the audience.

A number of people at the Glasgow Skye had also been at the Glasgow Islay Gaelic Choir concert the evening before and were still talking about what a great night it was. The choir were in great voice, and the soloists performed superbly.

I was very proud of the performance of my wee junior section who sang their hearts out.

It was great to hear Charlie Kirkpatrick's jokes, just to make sure I hadn't forgotten the punchlines from the Mull and Iona Gathering the weekend before! Charlie tells me he's been

telling them for 40 years – and quite right too, the old ones are the best!

A good cèilidh in Stirling

The Stirling Branch of An Comunn Gàidhealach held a cèilidh on February 18. Singers were Calum and Fiona Ross, and Alasdair Whyte. The instrumentalists were Alec Souter on the great highland pipes and the shuttle pipes (an interesting instrument thought to be based on the 16th century French Rackett) and Catherine Speight on fiddle. The Cluaran Highland Dancers gave their usual stylish performance.

What's On

Wednesday March 01: Seisean-Ciùil Gàidhlig / An Lochran's Gaelic Music Session, The

Lismore, Dumbarton Road.

Saturday March 4: The Glasgow Uist and Barra Association Annual Piping Competition in the Piping College, Otago Street.

Friday March 10: Glasgow Gaelic Musical Association Annual Concert at Glasgow University Chapel, 7.30pm – entry by donation and tickets on the door.

Thursday March 16: Comunn an Taobh-an-Iar Closing Concert in the Ellangowan Social Club, Milngavie.

Friday March 17: The Glasgow Skye Association Cothrom na h-Oigridh (Youth Concert), Crawford Hall, Beith Street.

Saturday March 18: Clydebank Highlanders' Supper Dance in the Napier Hall, Old Kirkpatrick.

Friday March 31: The Glasgow Uist and Barra Association Cèilidh Dance in the Crawford Hall, Beith Street.

Pub Scene

This week, on Thursday and Friday in the Park Bar, a very young band from Shetland called Fjanna will be appearing before the late night music begins.

Park Bar.

Thursday March 2: Session
Friday March 3: Eriskay Lilt
Saturday March 4: Gunna Sound
Sunday March 5: Trail West

Islay Inn

Friday March 3: Crooked Reel.
Saturday March 4: Twist of Fate.



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Early farmers of Kilmartin led the way in agriculture

The Lorn Archaeological and Historical Society were delighted to welcome Dr Alison Sheridan, principle curator and head of Early Scottish Prehistory and Archaeology at the National Museum of Scotland to speak to them

at their February meeting. Specialising in Neolithic and Bronze Age Britain and Ireland, Dr Sheridan treated the society and guests to a fascinating presentation on the Early Farmers of the West of Scotland.

She spoke to a packed meeting about a period covering around 4000-1500 BC, starting with hunter gatherers, who moved north with the melting of the ice sheet leaving behind flint tools. She described evidence of Neolithic farmers

represented by their axes and chambered cairns, and Bronze Age activity seen through their exotic jewellery and pottery.

She focused on the movement of people, goods and ideas, showing similarities of design in the monuments and pottery

over wide areas of Europe, suggesting some people made their way up the western seaboard from Northern France.

Some of the Argyll sites and artefacts mentioned were the caves around Oban, the islands and Melfort; the cham-

bered tomb at Achnacreebeag, Benderloch; an Irish style food vessel discovered at Upper Largie Quarry, Kilmartin, and a jet necklace from Melfort.

The society is looking forward to its next meeting on March 17.

The speaker will be Richard Blair, on the subject of his father George Orwell, who wrote the novel *1984* while on the Isle of Jura. Non members are welcome. For details visit www.lahsoc.org.uk

Alison Blackwood

The Oban Times
& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

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How to enter

We are now open for entries! The Oban Times Bonnie Babies 2017 competition is open to babies and toddlers born on or after June 15, 2013 and must live in Argyll & Bute or in postcode areas PH30-PH44, PH49, PH50 and the Isle of Skye. Look out the most adorable photo of your gorgeous little one and enter online by visiting www.obantimes.co.uk/bonniebabies.

The Oban Times Bonnie Babies 2017 Supplement

After you enter your child, look out for our delightful Bonnie Babies 2017 supplement in a future edition of The Oban Times – a lovely little keepsake to show your children when they are older.

Vote for your favourite!

Readers will have the important job of voting for their favourite kiddy-winks in the supplement. We will then break it down to three further rounds of top 30, 20 and finally top 10. From the top 10, the baby with the most votes will be crowned The Oban Times' Bonniest Baby 2017. **Good luck!**

The closing date for entries is midnight, March 24, 2017.

ENTER ONLINE

www.obantimes.co.uk/bonniebabies



Spring Home &

Winter may seem to still have Argyll in its icy grip, but the snowdrops and daffodils tell a different story.

Spring is just around the corner and that means it is time to do some cleaning out and sprucing up around the house and garden.

Don't know where to start? With our handy tips and tricks from the pros, it is easy to get motivated so your home is in tip-top shape when warm weather finally arrives.

Backwoodsman

This is perhaps one of our best purchases ever. Many thanks for your help and advice so freely given.

Mr & Mrs C, Struchur

If you have been mulling over the idea of installing a wood burning stove this past winter, then now is the perfect time to get your project moving. Lead times are short and there is plenty of time to consider your options and get things organised before the onset of next winter.

Buying a stove can be a confusing and daunting experience. There are a huge number of products available and at widely varying quality and price. The cost of buying and installing a stove is not insignificant so you will want to feel confident that you are making a good decision based on sound advice.

At Backwoodsman, our aim is to guide you through this process as smoothly as possible. We want to ensure that you end up with the

right product for your individual requirements and a safe, efficient installation that will give years of good service. In the first instance (wherever practical) we recommend a site survey to enable us to get a clear picture of what you are looking for and what the job specifications entail. Our surveys are free and without obligation. For further information please call us on 01631 720539 to discuss your ideas.



Backwoodsman

Backwoodsman is a specialist supplier of wood-burning and multifuel stoves. We are situated on the edge of Barcaldine Forest 11 miles north of Oban. The business is family run with over 30 years experience in providing the highest quality service possible to Argyll, Lochaber and the West Highlands & Islands

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We are agents and stockists for several manufacturers including Woodwarm, Charnwood & Morsø. The range covers everything from traditional and contemporary models to full central-heating options

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Backwoodsman holds large stocks of chimneys and flue material. We are experienced in chimney design and can provide CAD drawings for complete systems on request to both trade & retail customers

SERVICES

Our services are provided to household customers throughout the local area as well as trades, architects, developers and local authorities. We are able to offer a high level of technical advice and support.

SHOWROOM

We have a showroom (by appointment) at our premises in Barcaldine, 11 miles north of Oban where you are assured of a warm welcome. Please call before visiting to ensure there will be someone available to see you.



www.backwoodsman-stoves.co.uk
Barcaldine by OBAN Argyll PA37 1SG Tel. 01631 720539

Spring Home

From windows that sparkle to a clutter-free garage, spring is a great time to do those things you've been putting off all winter.

Having your home's gutters and downspouts cleaned (and repaired if necessary) is one of the first important tasks to schedule this season. Clogged gutters during a rainy spring can cause water to pool, potentially damaging the roof and siding.

Using a regular garden hose, attach a siding cleaning kit (available at home improvement stores) to clear away winter grime from your home's siding.

Inspect paths and driveway. Repeated freezing and thawing can take a toll on asphalt and concrete. Check your driveway and paths for cracks and schedule repairs as needed.

Create more space in your home by clearing out unloved items. If you have a lot to get rid of, set a date to hold a boot sale. Or contact a local charity to schedule a pick-up – some will send a truck free of charge if you're donating large items such as furniture.

Can you park your car in your garage? If not (or if it's a tight fit), it may be time to make some more space. Clear out the junk, and schedule time to take unused paint, motor oil and other hazardous items to a recycling centre that accepts them.



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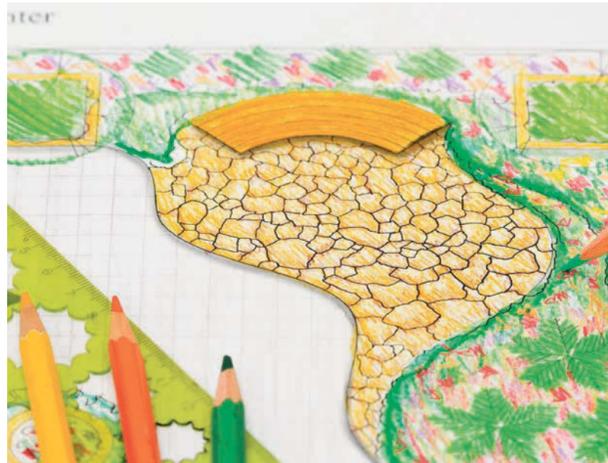
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Garden



Spring garden

March brings some sunny days to tempt gardeners back into the garden. This is the month for sowing seeds and getting the garden ready for the summer months, which includes a general tidy up and some essential pruning. Pruning is not only therapeutic for plants, but gardeners as well – getting rid of all that dead wood and preparing for new growth and flowers. You need to remove dead, diseased or damaged stems from roses. Shrubs and climbers will also need pruning to encourage good, healthy growth. Seed-sowing should be at the top of your 'to do' list at the moment.

Give seeds soil that is wet and warm enough and off they go, and the bigger the seed, the deeper it needs to be in the soil to germinate. Some seeds can be sown direct into the ground, such as vegetables, while some prefer to be in seed trays and a slighter warmer environment to be given a good fighting chance.

For a bit of instant colour, think about a hanging basket. A simple garden solution for March is to create your own hanging basket in the colour scheme of your choice, mixing hardy annuals with small evergreen shrubs for all-year-round interest.



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Spring seems tantalisingly close in March and work in the garden starts to get going again. Here are some jobs you should be thinking about this month:

- Clear away rubble and waste
- Tidy up the lawn
- Start to prune roses removing dead damaged or diseased stems
- Keep your eyes peeled for weeds and slugs
- Sow vegetable seeds and plant potatoes
- Start composting
- Re-pot houseplants

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OUTDOORS

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Argyll is virtually a click away

RECENT research shows that 60 per cent of searches for destination information are made using mobile devices.

This, coupled with the fact that virtual reality (VR) is experiencing growth worldwide, with forecast numbers of users between now and 2018 set to grow by 400 per cent to 170 million, creates a prime opportunity for Scotland to be discovered in a new and innovative way.

A recent report by Greenlight VR showed that travel and adventure VR content is the most sought-after by consumers, followed by movies and live events.

Therefore the launch of a new virtual reality app from VisitScotland means that people across the globe can now journey into the depths of Ben Cruachan, the Hollow Mountain, to inspire them to come for a real-life visit and a first-hand experience of Argyll's attractions and rich heritage.

Hidden deep within Ben Cruachan on the shores of



The VisitScotland app includes The Hollow Mountain, right, where people can tour Cruachan Power Station and find out about one of the country's most amazing engineering achievements.

Loch Awe, Cruachan Power Station – one of Scotland's most fascinating engineering achievements – is one of the leading Scottish visitor destinations featured in the innovative ScotlandVR tourism app.

The app enables prospective visitors to go on a virtual visit to 26 top attractions so they

may also choose, for example, to stroll around the prehistoric village of Skara Brae in Orkney, soar like a bird over Edinburgh Castle, wander through



the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Alloway, or stand under the Northern Lights.

Launched last Tuesday, the ScotlandVR app, which is available for all Android and Apple users to download for free on Google Play and Apple Store, will – it is hoped – inspire more people to escape from their surroundings to discover Scotland in person.

The environment can be experienced in Stereoscopic 3D when used with a Google Cardboard virtual reality headset, or in 360° view using

gyroscope technology in phone mode.

During the 2016 Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design, VisitScotland challenged young talent from Scotland's academia to create an exciting, interactive digital product designed to inspire and motivate people to visit Scotland.

The winners of the competition were a team from Edinburgh Napier University, led by Professor David Benyon and Dr Oli Mival, which developed the concept for an innovative app in which to explore a virtual Scotland.

The app launches with 26 attractions, but future phases of the software will see further attractions added through refreshed content.

The landmark locations for the launch were chosen from set criteria including footfall, product diversity, online searches and links to the current 2017 Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology.

For more information visit www.visitscotland.com/app.

Walking your way to healthier lifestyle

A PROJECT to encourage more people to take up walking for their health is appealing for folk to train as walk leaders or inviting them to come along and enjoy taking part in the walks.

Walking is an effective way of staying fit and healthy, with walking regularly being shown to reduce the risk of many chronic illnesses, including heart disease, type two diabetes, asthma, stroke and even some cancers.

Step It Up Highland (SIUH) is a Partnerships for Wellbeing project, funded by Paths for All and designed to encourage people to reap the rewards and health benefits of walking, with a series of low-level walks.

SIUH recruits and trains local volunteers to become walk leaders who will welcome and encourage newcomers to take part in walks that are accessible to people who might be out of practice or are limited by health concerns.

Health walks are a good starting point for those looking to get into longer walks with community walking groups.

SIUH offers a variety of walks, with the lowest level, Step Out, being outings from 10 minutes upwards and the pace matches the abilities of those taking part. These are ideal for those not able to do a lot of physical activity or as an easy entry point into organised walking. SIUH itself is the next level, with moderate walks that can take up to an hour. Finally, Step It Up Further (SIUF) is the highest level with walks of up to two hours and some may cover more challenging terrain or longer distances.

Within Lochaber there are groups of various levels in Fort William, Caol, Spean Bridge, Ballachulish, Invergarry, Mallaig and there are also a few on Skye. Further information is available at: www.pfw.org.uk/projects/step-it-up-highland.

Fort William also has the Young at Heart walking group, which is an independent club that meets on Tuesday mornings at 10am at the Ben Nevis Highland Centre to do walks of between one-and-a-half and two hours. It works in a similar way to the Ramblers, with walkers able to take part in two or three walks before joining. On these walks people can go at their own pace so walkers of all speeds can take part. For further information, contact Kate Budge on 07900 182894.

Oban Health Walks are also part of the Paths for All initiative. The initiative usually runs two walks to suit different abilities, lasting between 30 and 60 minutes. The walks are on Monday and Thursday mornings and further information and contact details are available on the Paths for All website www.pathsforall.org.uk/pfa-home.



Weekly walks in Lochaber

NEVIS HILLWALKING CLUB

Meeting point for these walks is the car park at the Ben Nevis Highland Centre. Departure 8am. Alternatively, if you want to join the group elsewhere, contact the co-ordinator.

Sunday March 5

Crianlarich – An Caisteal (995m, Munro) (The Castle) and possibly Beinn a' Chroin (942m, Munro) (Hill of Harm or Danger). Suggested and co-ordinated by Gerry Gilbert.

Thursday March 9

Noel Williams will give a talk on scrambling at 7.30pm at West Highland College, Fort William.

LOCHABER AND LORN RAMBLERS

Walk leader to be contacted beforehand for meet up and start times. Car sharing usually possible and you can try before you buy. You can walk three times with the club before joining and Ramblers' Club membership is only £3.25 per month or less if paid annually or concession.

Thursday March 2

Salachan Glen to Appin via Beinn Sgluich, Duror/Appin.

A moderate grade walk covering a distance of 12km and a height of 460m.

Meeting point at Longsdale car park in Oban at 9.10am or Ballachulish TIC at 9.40am. Transport required.

Led by Ann Jones (07770 434 114).

Saturday March 4

River Garry and Loch Luidie, Invergarry.

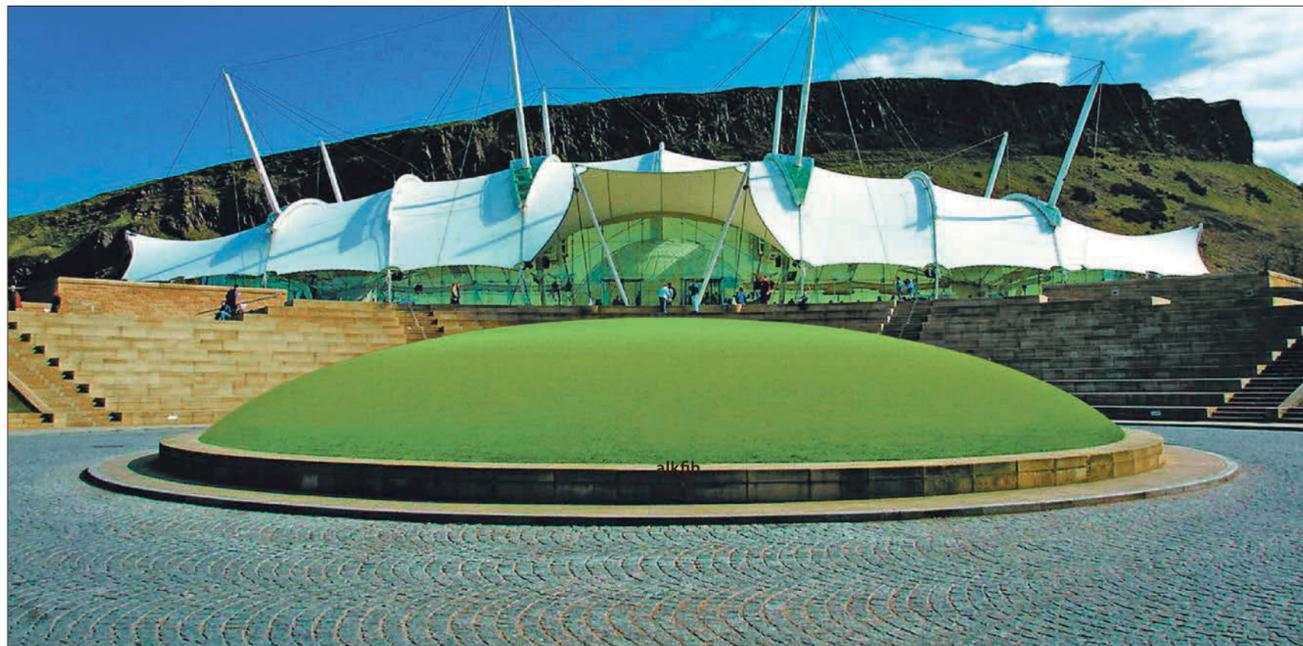
A circular walk with a great variety of scenery including mixed woodland, open moorland, lochs with a backdrop of some well-known hills, and the tumbling, or perhaps frozen, River Garry.

Leisurely grade walk covering 13km and climbing to a height of 188m.

Meet at Longsdale car park, Oban at 8.20am or Ben Nevis Highland Centre, Fort William.

Led by Rick Atkinson (01397 773793 or 07587 549731).

Lotto cash secured for geo heritage project



SCOTLAND'S Earth Heritage will be celebrated during the Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology 2017, thanks to a new project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Visitors flock to sites such as Ben Nevis, Glen Coe and Staffa for their beauty, but these places, and other less well-known sites can also tell us a lot about

how the Earth was formed and how it has changed over hundreds of millions of years.

The Earth Heritage Project will promote 50 places across Scotland where people can experience the beauty and diversity of Scotland's landscape while discovering the fascinating stories behind it.

A Scotland-wide Geodiversity

Festival will take place in October 2017, incorporating a launch of the project resources at Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh.

Scotland's geodiversity is world-class: shaped during some three billion years of our planet's history by the movements of the Earth's tectonic plates, mountain building,

volcanism, ice ages, sea-level change and the processes of erosion and deposition. It is no coincidence that the science of geology was born in Scotland, when the 18th century thinker James Hutton carried out pioneering research on the rocks around him and discovered that Earth was far, far older than anyone had imagined.

This project will ensure that the widest possible audience can enjoy this aspect of our shared Scottish heritage.

The project is being led by the Scottish Geodiversity Forum – a nationwide voluntary association of geological, educational and tourism groups – along with Scotland's UNESCO Global Geoparks.

Benmore's Annie is GetOutside champion

ARGYLL adventurer Annie Lloyd-Evans is one of 30 people selected for Ordnance Survey's exciting new project 'to help make Great Britain a more outdoorsy and adventurous nation'.

Annie and her fellow OS GetOutside champions were unveiled at an event in the New Forest where they were joined by TV presenter and adventurer Ben Fogle and endurance adventurer Sean Conway. The champions, chosen for their ability to communicate their love for being outside, include journalists, bloggers and authors who all write about their adventures in Britain.

Annie, from Dunoon, who works at the Benmore Outdoor Education Centre, said: 'Being outdoors is the best part

of my day. Walking, running, biking or just enjoying a good view makes me happy and keeps me healthy. I want to help others to find their way to enjoy our incredible British landscape, so they can find their own happiness and adventures.' This year she plans to bikepack the north-west coast snorkel trail.

OS GetOutside campaign manager Liz Beverley says: 'The benefits of exercising and getting regular fresh air are already well documented, but more needs to be done to get that message across. By sharing the passion they feel and the fun they have being outdoors Annie and the other champions will help people reconnect with spending quality time outdoors.'

TV presenter Ben Fogle added: 'There are some truly remarkable and inspirational people in this group, and it is an honour and delight to be joining them for what I think is an important campaign, making the outdoors enjoyable, accessible and safe. I urge people to spend more time outside. You'll feel better for it. When I'm outside I smile more. I push myself more. It's the one place that's repeatedly proven to be good for both body and mind.'

Annie is one of 30 people selected to lead the new project.



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NFUS president Andrew McCornick, flanked by vice-presidents Gary Mitchell, left, and Martin Kennedy, met Fergus Ewing, below.

NFUS leaders hold talks with rural affairs minister



NFU Scotland's new leadership team met Scotland's Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Connectivity Fergus Ewing last week (Thursday February 23) in Edinburgh.

President Andrew McCornick and vice-presidents Gary Mitchell and Martin Kennedy discussed how to develop policies that leave the farming industry less reliant on support and farmers and crofters more able to earn enough to make their businesses sustainable.

Speaking after the meeting, Mr McCornick said: 'We discussed the joint responsibility on government and the union to develop policies that leave the farming industry less reliant on support but which equally ensures that farmers and crofters can earn enough from the market to make their businesses profitable and allow for investment.'

'Brexit gives us the opportunity, for the first time in 40 years, to develop an agricultural poli-

cy not based on what is needed to receive support but one that is truly focused on delivering profitable growth through market-led decisions.'

'We need to improve how we sell our produce at home and abroad.'

'We need to ensure key schemes - such as the beef efficiency scheme and the new entrants/young farmers schemes - really deliver improvements and properly support those who are active.'

'We need to drive innovation to ensure what we produce remains the best in the world, and we need to encourage collaboration so that farmers, growers and crofters have the market strength to be properly rewarded for their effort.'

'Working together, the government and the union can get us to a better place where our members can receive a fair share of the rewards in the supply chain and not simply be asked to carry all the risks.'

Study shows rise in cases of lungworm

FEEDBACK from cattle farmers during the 2016 grazing season suggests lungworm (husk) disease outbreaks are becoming more prevalent and unpredictable.

An independent survey last year found that 40 per cent of 202 dairy farmers interviewed had heard cattle coughing at grass. A third of milk producers (35 per cent) said that they had had lungworm confirmed in their stock at some point over the past three years.

More concerning was the age group spread for the lungworm incidence. As might be expected, half the disease outbreaks were reported in dairy youngstock during their first grazing season, but 40 per cent occurred in second season grazers and even 38 per cent in adult cattle.

This suggests animals are simply not developing lifetime immunity to this debilitating disease anymore. Nearly two-thirds of the lungworm cases (60 per cent) were reported in the autumn and just over half

(54 per cent) in the summer, with some farms reporting cases in the summer and the autumn.

According to MSD Animal Health veterinary adviser Paul Williams, planning husk control strategies for youngstock prior to their first grazing season makes sound financial sense. But relying on wormers alone doesn't really allow the animal to develop its own natural immunity, he said.

'Lungworm infestation occurs as a result of infection with the worm *Dictyocaulus viviparus*. Cattle develop it after eating grass contaminated with infective larvae.

'Once in the gut, the larvae migrate through its wall to the lungs where they begin laying eggs after several weeks. A spell of mild, wet weather can create a sudden, dramatic increase in lungworm populations, which can be very harmful, even fatal, to any stock that have little or no immunity. That's why vaccination is so critical,' said Mr Williams.

Online tool for trees

AN ONLINE tool that helps land managers get the right tree in the right place has been upgraded to include key productive broadleaved species as well as conifers.

The move means that forest managers and land owners can now make even better use of this IT-based ready-reckoner to optimise their forestry investment.

The Forestry Commission

Scotland (FCS) has funded the £30,000 upgrade, being carried out by Forest Research, to the Establishment and Management Information System. FCS funding reflects that most hardwood is grown on private sector land, but Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES) is looking to play an increasing role in that market.

Anyone wishing to take part should contact andrew.hunt@forestry.gsi.gov.uk.

Call for Plover award

AN AWARD for innovative management of moorland is now open to applications.

Run by the Heather Trust and the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust Scotland (GWCT Scotland) with support from Lindsay solicitors, the Golden Plover Award aims to highlight the very best of progressive, forward-thinking moorland

management. The award is open to any group, farm, estate or individual with a track record of successful upland management.

The 2017 award focuses on the north and west of Scotland, including Argyll and the islands.

Entries close in the next few weeks.

Find out more at www.goldenploveraward.co.uk.

Around the markets

STIRLING - United Auctions (Thursday February 23) sold 3,965 prime sheep including 2,775 hogs selling to an average of 162.5ppk and 1190 ewes and rams.

Hogs (2775) - Errol Enterprises (Tex) £98; Coilavoulin (Btex) £95.5; Woodhead of Aberdalgie (Chev) £83; Leyden (Suf) £81.50; Littleport (BF) £78; Baleave (Mule) £75.

Hogs (2775) - Coilavoulin (Btex) 222p; Coilavoulin (Tex) 222p; Craighall (Chev) 183p; South Park (Suf) 179p; Pitsundry (BF) 176p; Killipol (Mule) 161p

Ewes (1190) - Hill of Errol (Tex) £108; Hill of Errol (Suf) £85; Old Nursery (BFL) £80; Ballingall Mill (Btex) £79; Ballingall Mill (X) £75; East Dowally (Mule) £67; Viewmount (BF) £58.50; Culfargie Estate (Lley) £58; Parks of Keillour (Jac) £48.

Rams - Townhead of Arngibbon (Tex) £85; Baleave (Cross) £70.

£1245, 228.40p; 551-600kgs - Ravenslie £1250, Duddingston 214.70p; 601-650kgs - Thornyhills £1310, Auchnotteroch 215.90p; 651-700kgs - Duddingston £1285, 192.10p; 701kgs plus - Neuk £1360, 179.90p.

Heifers: Up to 250kgs - Tomnagrew £530, 242.0p; 251-300kgs - Tomnagrew £730, 242.50p; 301-350kgs - Dalhanna £825, 243.40p; 351-400kgs - West Gormack £920, 235.30p; 401-450kgs - East Saucher £1045, 233.30p; 451-500kgs - Craigview £1075, East Saucher 231.60p; 501-550kgs - Darnlaw £1135, Blackbog 210.50p; 551-600kgs - Auchnotteroch £1170, 203.80p; 601-650kgs - Drumneil £1280, 204.50p.

Young Bulls: 251-300kgs - Berryhill £530, 205.40p; 301-350kgs - Beryhill £735, 222.70p; 351-400kgs - Gateside £800, 201.50p; 401-450kgs - Drumroider £680, 161.90p; 451-500kgs - The Ross £1160, 237.70p; 501-550kgs - The Ross £1080, 210.10p.

OTM Cows: £ per head - Newton of Logierait (BRB) £1550; Greenshields (Lim) £1430; Traprain (Sal) £1290; Moneydie Roger (BS) £1270; Traprain (Sim) £1150; Charterhall (Mo) £1150; Clydeside (CH) £1110; Oatridge (AA) £1090; Balleny (Cont) £1060.

Ppk - Newton of Logierait (BRB) 186.70p; Cairn (CH) 186.20p; Meikle Camoquhill (MO) 185.80p; Greenshields (Lim) 179.60p; Drumroider (Cont) 156.90p; Clydeside (Sim) 155.50p; Point (AA) 150.50p; Moneydie Roger (BS) 138.90p; Traprain (Sal) 103.30p.

OTM Bulls: £ per head - Baldoukie (Lim) £1530; Thornyhills (Sim) £1350; Overton (BF) £1150; Titwood (AA) £1130

Ppk - Baldoukie (Lim) 172.30p; Thornyhills (Sim) 129.30p; Titwood (AA) 113.00p; Overton (BF) 98.50p

Store Sheep

purchase by Messrs Hastie, Butchers, Markinch and T Johnston, Butchers, Falkirk and to £1555 from J Brown, Greencraig, Falkirk.

Heifers sold to 255ppkg from J & J Wylie, Knockhouse, Dunfermline to D Campbell & Son, Butchers, Callander and to £1623 from D Dickinson, Brockwoodlees, Canonbie.

Bulls sold to 210ppkg from W Dick & Sons, Mains of Throsk, Stirling to J F Findlay Ltd, Wholesaler, Wishaw and to £1512 from the same home.

Leading prices:-
Bullocks ppkg
235p (three times) Brockwoodlees
235p Learielaw 230p East Camps
228p Nethermyres 222p East Camps
220p Sheilds (Lochwinnoch) 218p Spittal (Gardner), Sheilds & East Camps.

Heifers ppkg
245p Knockhouse 238p (twice) Learielaw 235p Nethermyres, Knockhouse & Bankhead (Kerr) 230p Gillandersland, Brockwoodlees & Croftgarry 225p Todhall & Brockwoodlees 222p Sheilds 220p Gillandersland & Low Crawtree

In the cow section, a plainer show forward with all classes again dealer on the week.

Beef Cows sold to 157ppkg from W Dick & Sons, Mains of Throsk, Stirling and to £1450 from the same home.

Dairy cows sold to 118ppkg from J & I Wilson, Carskerdo, Cupar and to £990 from the same home.

Other leading prices:-
Beef cows per head
£1190 Mains of Throsk £1150 Carhurlie £1090 + £1070 Bruckley
£950 Lammerview £940 Meikle Seggie & Inchie.

Dairy cows per head
£910 Carneil £850 + £810 North Mains £780 Carneil £770 Roseneath

Beef cows ppkg
153p Mains of Throsk 151p Bruckley 145p Auchmar Estate 142p Bruckley 138p Lammerview & Meikle Seggie 135p Greencraig & Auchmar Estate Dairy Cows ppkg
115p North Mains 110p Carneil 109p + 107p Roseneath 107p North Mains

A good show of Black & White bull calves from A Reid, Plean, Stirling averaging £63.75.

£70 gross for a Texel from Lochdhu, Nairn. Ewes (667) averaged £40.77 and sold to £102 gross for Texels from Invercharron, Ardgay.

In-lamb gimmers & ewes (262) averaged £99.77 and sold to £280 gross for Texels from Weston, Deskford.

Rams and feeding sheep (63) sold to £80 gross for Blue Faced Leicester rams from Cawdor Estates, Cawdor.

Leading prices per head:
Lams: TexX - Woodend, Killearnan, £68.50; Chev - Rhannich Farm, Edderton, £67; CharX - 7 Achrimdale, Brora, £63; BeltX - Kinnahaird Farm, Contin, £60; SuffX - Culligran, Struy, £59; Cross - Braelawgwell, Balblair, £53; Suff - Cadbollmount, Fearn, £50; Mule - Rebeg, Kirkhill, £41; BF - Rychraggan Farm, Drumadrochit, £40; SWL - Cawdor Estate, £40.

Ewes: TexX - Woodend, £80; Chev - Ashley, North Kessock, £80; CharX - Ankerville, Nigg, £71; BeltX - Tullyglens, Dunphail, £71; SuffX - Lairgandour, Daviot, £67; CHM - Culmailly Farm, Golspie, £64; Suff - Ankerville & Ashley, £60; HB - Woodend, £50; Mule - Ankerville, £48.50; BF - Lairgandour, £48; ESY - Cadbollmount, £48.

In-lamb gimmers: Tex - Weston, £240; Chev - 3 Balgowan, Struan, £110; CHM - Woodlands Farm, Dingwall, £100.

In-lamb ewes: Chev - 259 Kilbrora, Brora, £150; Mule - Lower Gartally Farm, Drumadrochit, £120; CHM - Woodlands Farm, £110; Tex - Glengolly Farm, Thurso, £90.

Rams & feeding sheep: Chev - Cuilaneilan, Kinlochewe, £70; SuffX - Cuilaneilan, £60; BF - Welbeck, Ousdale Farm, £50; Cross - Rychraggan Farm, £42; BFL - Lower Gartally Farm, £40.

DINGWALL - Dingwall & Highland Marts Ltd (Thursday February 23) sold 19 Blackface females at its show and sale.

Mr P Stewart, Bomakeloch, Keith, judged the Blackface section and awarded his champion to the first prize in lamb gimmer from Midlock Farm, Crawford, a daughter off a homebred son of 50K Dalwyne carrying twins sired by a homebred son of 40K Dalchirla, realising £1100 to Mr J D Davidson, Waterside Farm, Bridge of Alford.

The reserve champion was the second prize in lamb gimmer also from Midlock, a daughter off 40K Dalchirla carrying a single sired by a homebred son of 12K Aitkenhead, realising £800 to the judge Phil Stewart.

STIRLING - United Auctions (Wednesday February 22) sold 1,774 store cattle, native bred cattle and young bulls also forward 123 cast cows and forward cattle and 1564 store and breeding sheep.

Bullocks (1105) - averaged 223.39p to 279.40p per kg for a 272kg Lim X from Gateside and £1360 for a 756kg Sim X from Neuk.

B & W Bullocks (87) - averaged 139.96p to 155.20p per kg for a 464kg BF from Gaineybank and £800 for a 559kg HF from Bottoms.

Heifers (535) - averaged 214.96p to 243.40p per kg for a 339kg CHX from Dalhanna and £1280 for a 626kg CHX from Drumneil.

Young Bulls (47) - averaged 201.10p to 237.70ppk for a CHX from The Ross and £1160 for a CHX from The Ross.

Cast Cows (175) - averaged 131.51p to 186.70ppk for a BRBX from Newton of Logierait and £1550 for a BRBX from Newton of Logierait.

Cast Cows (Dairy) (25) - averaged 95.79p to 121.40p for a HF from Baldoukie and £945 for a HF from Little Raith.

Forward Cattle (9) - averaged 169.65p to 180.00p for an AAX from Humberie and £1170 for an AAX from Humberie.

Bullocks: Up to 250kgs - Glenlyon £655, 262p; 252-300kgs - Succothmore £800, Gateside 279.40p; 301-350kgs - Riccarton £920, 263.60p; 351-400kgs - West Gormack £920, Riccarton 257.30p; 401-450kgs - West Gormack £1060, Knockshinnoch 243.40p; 451-500kgs - Drumlochty £1130, Farden 239.0p; 501-550kgs - High Unthank

STIRLING - Caledonian Marts Ltd (Thursday February 23) sold 150 cattle comprising of 92 prime bullocks and heifers and young bulls, 58 cast cows and bulls and four dairy bull calves.

Considering the weather conditions outwith the Stirling area, we ended up with not a bad show for numbers or quality and once again this week we went against the deadweight trend which is much cheaper again! More could have been sold as always. No waiting lists here.

Bullocks sold to 240ppkg (twice) from M I Wainwright & Sons, Todhall, Cupar and W Dandie & Sons, Learielaw, Broxburn

DINGWALL - Dingwall & Highland Marts (Thursday February 23) sold 1,591 sheep of all classes.

Lams (599) averaged £45.06 and sold to

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Get your boat back



Getting set to launch for the season

BOATYARDS that have been quiet all winter are now starting to see a flurry of activity, with owners keen to get their yachts and motor boats ready for launching for the 2017 season.

For many, fitting out work is left till the last minute so prioritising jobs and setting down a plan of action can be helpful. Check with the yard when they are starting to launch and book your slot – it is always good to have a deadline to work to!

If you are not carrying out work yourself then book the boat service professionals

ASAP. This is their busiest time of year. If you are confident in tackling work yourself then get the overalls on and get cracking. Set your workload down, list alongside tools and materials required. Add an array of rags, silicone and grease, petroleum jelly, lubricating and penetrating oils, cleaning products, brushes, wet and dry sandpaper, rollers and tray, degreaser, rolls of tape, engine spares and treatments for your water and fuel tanks. It is often the best idea to work from the outside in so that if you run out of time to launch any work required inside can be done on the water.

Hull and Topsides

Old antifouling can be really difficult to remove, but if it has built up in thickness then it is a job needing done. A variety of scrapers are available but care needs to be taken not to damage the gelcoat. Hard work will ensure a smooth surface for re-application.

Inspect the keel and keelboats for signs of rusting or pitting and wear at the keel to hull joint that may be more evident after winter lay-up. If anything looks suspect, ask the experts. If there's a lot of pitting on the keel it may need taken back to bare metal and an epoxy protective coating applied.

Look at the rudder and any skeg fittings as well as the propeller. Check for any play in bearings, stock or quadrant. Make sure the bonding wires from the anode are sound and replace the anode if necessary. Grease shaft, steering cables and the log's paddle wheel.

Choice of anti-fouling will depend on boat type, use and where it is kept – there is a wide range of products from powerboat finishes to racing and cruising coatings and upgrades to products.

A chat with your local chandler or yard manager to see what suits best can pay dividends.

Apply according to instructions with a stronger build-up in high impact areas

– the leading edge of the keel and skeg and the keel to hull joint. A long handled radiator roller can be a good option to give a smooth finish with a paint brush to reach the more inaccessible points. Some paints are one-coat and others require more applications. If the boat is launched by the yard, leave some antifouling for painting the keel and cradle support points before the boat takes to the water.

Topsides and deck will require a thorough clean and repair to any problem areas and it is probably better to do this before applying the hull anti-fouling below. Apply a protective wax and polish well to keep the boat looking pristine throughout the season – an extensive range of products is on offer for all requirements. Again – your local chandler will advise on the best for your boat.

Engines Fuel Tanks and Gas System

The powerhouse of the vessel requires good maintenance. Both inboards and outboards need serviced. This is most often done by a professional, whether at the yard or by an independent engineer.

If doing on your own, renew oil, filters, anodes and check exhaust fittings. Check impellers and engine belt tension and that mounts are secure as well as the underside

of the shaft – re bed if any leaks are apparent. Keep spares of everything you think you may need.

With sail-drives the oil level and gaiter seal must be checked as well as the earthing wires from the starter motor. If there's any wear on hose and electrical connections then replace.

Check all batteries are up to charge. If they have not been on trickle charge over lay-up, re-charge now and monitor electrolyte levels if unsealed. Ensure the battery tray is dry and tighten securing straps making sure all gas vents are clear. Clean terminals and coat with petroleum jelly.

Fuel tanks should be full from laying up. If not, drain water off and treat with a diesel biocide. Inspect the gas system regularly and thoroughly. It is good to get a qualified gas engineer to see

the system conforms to current gas regulations and any suspect hoses and fittings should be replaced to manufacturer's recommendations.

Bilges

Inspect bilge pump impellers and gaskets, grease and replace if necessary. With automatic bilge pumps, see float switches work and the strum box is clear. Manual strum boxes should be pumped through to see

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hose is clear of blockages. Service seacocks.

Deck gear, rigging and anchors

Decks need a good clean up of winter dirt and deck gear needs checking for wear and tear. Check the stanchion bases for any place or cracks and inspect any plastic lifeline sheathing in case of corrosion. Replace if suspect. Inspect rigging looking for broken strands and any cracking at terminals. Renew as required since this could be dangerous and boat insurance can be invalidated if it is suspect. Your local sail rigging firm specialist can do this for you if you are in any doubt.

Also look over the instrumentation and furling equipment at the mast-head in case work is required before the mast is stepped.

Overhaul winches and strip down any that are seized - soak components in degreaser and re-grease. Oil springs and pawls. If warps and sheets were removed for winter then this is the time to check over, renew and replace as required.

Similarly, look for corrosion on anchors and chain. Clean manual

windlasses, check for wear and grease. Remove the gypsy in powered versions, grease the drum, look at the foot switch for wear, clean and grease electrical connections.

All wood on deck, teak slats etc should be oiled or varnished and paintwork touched up and stainless polished. This is an ideal time for maintenance of spray hoods and other cockpit coverings.

Interior

Having been left over the winter, the cabin will need a good clean over event if there has been a de-humidifier and heater installed. Clean in all the lockers before replacing everything and remember to display a list of where everything is in the boat for ease of finding, especially in an emergency. Thoroughly clean the galley if this has not been done and check burners - it is easier to replace on land than when the boat is in the water.

Any water in the water tank should be pumped through and a purifier added before re-filling for use. Flush through the heads adding washing up liquid/vinegar to lubricate the hoses and pumps. Check the boat's central heating system if there is one.

Re-install VHF, navigation and other equipment etc that was removed for winter storage.

Safety equipment

The best time to go over safety equipment is at the end of the season which allows time to store properly and replace items if there are any issues. However if this has not been done it is essential now to see all equipment is in good conditions - lives may depend on it.

Inspect fire extinguishers, flares, life-rafts, life-jackets, rubber dinghies. Replace or repair if in any doubt as to condition. Invert MOB lights to see they work and change bulb and batteries if not. Some WD40 on the copper contact strip inside should ensure good connection. Silicone grease rubber seals. The RNLI will carry out a free safety check on your boat equipment and lifeboat stations will check your lifejackets - this is really worthwhile.

Make an inventory of where safety equipment is stored and display prominently in boat - items can then be found quickly and easily in an emergency.

Sails, sprayhoods and cushions

Sailmakers are on hand for advice and since sails are the powerhouse of the sailing vessel it is important they are in good condition. If this hasn't already been done get your sails checked over and repair as required. Similarly sprayhoods and other outdoor canvas should be looked over for wear. If you need new sails get your order in soon since, again, this is the busy time for sail lofts. Berth cushions should also be cleaned as well as any curtains and other items to be fresh for the season.

Expert advice

Professional advice is on hand from boatyards, engineers, marine service and repair firms as well as chandlers and sail-makers. Each has their own area of expertise and don't hesitate to contact them for advice and to carry out work as required.

Now thoughts can turn to planning your activities on the water - whether it be cruising, fishing, racing, or just pottering about on the water. Enjoy a safe and successful 2017 season!



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New manager and new code of practise for busy Oban Bay

THE NEW Oban Bay harbour manager, veteran seaman Paul Jennings, has only been in the job two weeks, but is already making positive changes to the busy port.

Employed on behalf of the community by Caledonian MacBrayne, Paul is now the point of contact for all matters having to do with the bay from the entrance to the Sound of Kerrera, and he will head up the task of establishing Oban Bay as a statutory harbour authority.

'Since they changed the ferry timetable, the number of ferries running went from 8,000 to 13,000,' Paul said. 'Plus another 4,500 vessels are using the pier and south quay. The only harbour in the UK that has

more traffic than that is Dover, and it's all operating through this small bit of water.'

In 2014 a risk assessment of Oban Bay was performed, and even though currently there are two authorities - CMAL and the Council - none of the bay is officially controlled and there is no one authority to take reports.

'We've talked to virtually everybody over the last six months that uses this bay, and from that we came up with a revised code of practise,' Paul said. 'This includes chart changes that will be put in place, and introduces new speed limits, which is 10 knots outside and six knots inside the harbour area. We also want to put a large vessel channel in the

north entrance.

The transport minister saw this assessment and said we needed to establish a statutory harbour authority for the whole of Oban Bay. The work can't go forward unless someone is on the ground doing it, and that's my job.'

Paul, who was a navigator in the Royal Navy and operations manager for RNLI, doesn't have official power until the harbour authority is established, which will take about two years. Meanwhile, he is acting in a coordination role and is the single point of contact for concerns, near misses and incidents in the harbour.

Oban Harbour has launched a website designed to provide practical up

to date information to all bay stakeholders and users, as well as provide a procedure for reporting incidents and near misses. The revised code of practise for operating a vessel in Oban goes live on the website March 31. Paul has also kicked off a 'Be Safe, Be Seen' campaign for small vessels and kayakers.

'It's quite a big move for Oban,' Paul admitted. 'I will be getting out on the street to tell people about it and give flyers out. Anyone can come and speak to me with concerns and questions.'

Paul can be contacted directly at 01631 562892 or info@obanharbour.scot. The website is www.obanharbour.scot.




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Left to right: Director Ernie Cowan, Leona Barclay, Kirsteen McGuire and Tim Roome.

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VX Astra 1.6	13 - 5 door h/back - 9,671 miles	£8,249
Ford Focus Zetec (Auto)	63 - 5 door Estate - 11,135 miles	£8,950
Peugeot 2008 Hdi Access Plus	63 - 5 door h/back - 20,608 miles	£7,850
VX Zafira Exclusive	10 - 5 door h/back (7 seats) - 40,459 miles	£4,650
Skoda Octavia SE TDI	15 - 5 dr h/back - 21,000 miles	£12,495
Suzuki Splash SZ4	63 - 5 door h/back - 11,144 miles	£5,650
Landrover Freelander 2 Diesel Auto	08 - 2.2 TD4 SE - 110,000 miles	£6,500
Peugeot Partner	64 - Tepee 1.6 HDI (Auto) - 6,800 miles	£10,900
VW Caddy Van	64 - 1.6 Diesel - 44,325 miles	£8,995
Citroen Nemo	63 - 1.3 HDI - 39,200 miles	£5,495
Dodge Nitro	57 - 4 x 4 CRD - 63,808 miles	£4,550
Dacia Sandero Stepway Laurete DCi	14 - 5 door h/back 1.5 cc - 27,646 miles	£7,895
Peugeot 207 Verve HDI 70	59 - 5 door h/back - 44,240 miles	£3,495

Mobile - 07956 764375 (Martin - Salesman)
We can also source new and used cars to suit your requirements
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2012 12 BMW 1 SERIES 116 i SPORT	1.6 PETROL 44000 MILES. WHITE	£9500
2011 60 VOLVO XC60 DS SE AWD.	2.4 DIESEL AUTO 68000 MILES	£11995
2014 64 HONDA CR-V I-DTEC EX,	2.2 DIESEL MANUAL 26000 MILES	£18300
2013 13 RANGE ROVER EVOQUE SD4 PURE	2.2 DIESEL, MANUAL 41000 MILES	£21595

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Ford Transit Connect 200

1560cc / 2014 / 57,500 / WILL COME FULLY SERVICED - 12 MONTHS M.O.T - 12 MONTHS WARRANTY. HPI CLEAR ***FINANCE AVAILABLE***

£7,495+VAT

2014 Ford Transit Connect 200

1560cc / 2014 / 38,800 / WILL COME FULLY SERVICED - 12 MONTHS M.O.T - 12 MONTHS WARRANTY HPI CLEAR ***FINANCE AVAILABLE***

£7,995+VAT

2013 Ford Transit Connect T200

1753cc / 2013 / 53,400 / WILL COME FULLY SERVICED - 12 MONTHS M.O.T - 12 MONTHS WARRANTY HPI CLEAR ***FINANCE AVAILABLE***

£5,995+VAT

2013 D-Max Eiger Double Cab

2499 / 2013 / 133,500 / WILL COME FULLY SERVICED - CHASSIS TREATED - 12 MONTHS M.O.T 12 MONTHS 5 STAR WARRANTY

£9,995+VAT

2013 Isuzu D-max Eiger

2499cc / 2013 / 110,000 / WILL COME FULLY SERVICED - CHASSIS TREATED - 12 MONTHS M.O.T STILL UNDER MANUFACTURERS WARRANTY TILL 25/03/2018

£10,995+VAT

2013 Ford Transit Connect T200

1753cc / 2013 / 56150 / WILL COME FULLY SERVICED - 12 MONTHS M.O.T - 12 MONTHS WARRANTY HPI CLEAR ***FINANCE AVAILABLE***

£5,995+VAT

2016 Isuzu D-max Eiger

2499cc / 2016 / 19,800 / WILL COME FULLY SERVICED - CHASSIS TREATED STILL UNDER MANUFACTURERS WARRANTY TILL 29/06/2021

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Repairs Officer Argyll and Bute

Permanent
For more information, please contact David McColl on 01546 605842

Interviews to be held on 23 March, Lochgilphead

Regeneration Officer (New Build) Lochgilphead

Fixed term contract (3 years)
For more information please contact Matthew MacAulay on 01546 605839

Interviews to be held on 28 March, Lochgilphead

Investment Officer Lochgilphead

Fixed term contract (2 years)
For more information, please contact David McColl on 01546 605842

Interviews to be held 21 March, Lochgilphead

The salary range for each of these posts is £27,087 - £31,867 for a 35 hour week

For further details and to apply visit the recruitment section of our website at www.acha.co.uk.

If you are unable to access the website contact the Recruitment Team:

Tel 01546 605917 or email recruitment@acha.co.uk

Closing date for all posts: 12 noon on 10th March 2017

CVs are not accepted.



Effluent Plant Technician

Scottish Sea Farms are an internationally recognised farmer of superior quality Scottish salmon. We pride ourselves in providing industry leading and highly personal development paths which build into fulfilling professional careers.

If you are committed to developing our industry and are driven to put your strengths to work, we would very much like to hear from you.

We are currently recruiting for an Effluent Plant Technician for our processing facility at South Shian, Argyll. Reporting to the Processing Operations Manager and technical accountability to the Processing Engineering Manager.

The role will have the following responsibilities:

- Ensuring the plant is operating to the correct discharge standards.
 - Understanding and adhering to SEPA compliance.
 - Good hygiene and housekeeping standards.
 - Managing the intake and dispatching of the effluent plant chemicals and waste streams.
 - Working in conjunction with the Processing Engineering Manager on rudimentary maintenance schedules to ensure plant is operating at maximum efficiency.
 - Working with laboratory staff to produce and monitor samples.
 - Producing monthly report on plant performance.
 - Working with minimum supervision and showing a high level of motivation and initiative in problem solving.
- The successful candidate will receive full training on:
- The technical aspect of the role, including COSHH chemical handling and awareness training.
 - Tele-handling and forklift training.
 - Report management training.
 - Regulatory framework governing effluent treatment and SEPA legislation.

You will also:

- Work within a flexible shift pattern to ensure maximum effluent plant cover.
- Multi task with the ability to prioritise.

In return Scottish Sea Farms will offer an attractive salary package, depending on experience.

To find out more please contact Angela Hand, Recruitment & HR Coordinator on 01786 445521 or email angela.hand@scottishseafarms.com for an application pack.

Closing date: Friday 3 March 2017

Tarbert and Skipness Community Trust
Development and Administration Officer
2-3 days per week variable - Salary/Fee Negotiable

The Trust is seeking the provision of a development and support service to assist it in achieving its aims and objectives as set out in the constitution. The service can be provided on a direct employment, self-employed or consultancy basis. The hours will vary considerably from week to week but will be as flexible as possible. The contract will initially be for a period of one year but it is hoped to extend this to a more permanent footing. The service will consist of providing administrative support to the Board of Directors; assisting the Trust and other community organisations in seeking funding; the organisation of projects and preparing and monitoring financial reports. The person should be self motivated, able to work on own initiative and be a good communicator. Anyone interested should email info@tsct.org.uk for an information pack.



Part Qualified / Accountant Qualified by Experience & Experienced Bookkeeper

Do you want to be part of a team with an excellent reputation?
Are you keen to continue to develop your skills?
Can you deliver a high standard of work to our clients?

If so, please contact us including your CV, by 10th March to:-
Duncan Grout, Managing Partner.
dg@raclement.co.uk
www.raclement.co.uk



Argyll & Bute TSI

Are seeking two motivated SDS Choices Officers (25 hours pwk, £11.17 per hour) to work as part of a small team delivering information and support regarding Self Directed Support to people across mid Argyll and Kintyre and Oban, Lorn & the Isles. The post involves ensuring communities have the information they need about SDS and supporting individuals often in the rural areas, to access and achieve their SDS journey. Strong interpersonal and communication skills are key. One post is based Lochgilphead and one Oban offices. These are community development and support roles working within the Scottish Government Self Directed Support (SDS) agenda. Posts term to June 2018. To find out more or request an application pack please contact shirley@argylltsi.org.uk or telephone 01631-564839. Closing date for applications is 15th March 2017 Argyll & Bute TSI - Charity No: SC 029947 - Company No: 27745

Redevelopment Project Officer
Kilmartin Museum is seeking to appoint a Redevelopment Project Officer to help the team take forward exciting plans to redevelop the Museum. This is currently a full time project funded contract to 31st December 2017 with the possibility of further extension - subject to funding. The salary is £18,000 per annum.
For more information and an application pack please email jenny@kilmartin.org or phone Jenny on 01546 510 278. The closing date for applications is 10th March 2017.

Easdale Seafoods Ltd
has a vacancy for a
Production worker/driver
to form part of a small team.
Hours - split shifts typically
10pm-1am/2pm -6pm, 5 day week with
guaranteed 40 hours.
Most weekends off. £ 10.00/hour.
Contact: connie@easdaleseafoods.co.uk

Utility Personnel Required for BT/SSE contract in Scotland
GCU (UK) Ltd
require the following urgently

- Tarmac Teams
- Box Teams
- Digging Teams
- Rake Men
- Cable & Sub ducting Teams
- HGV Working Drivers
- Plant/Transport Manager
- Site Agents

All applicants should have at least 3 years experience in the specific trade and possess all relevant tickets.
All positions offer excellent remuneration.
To apply please email kimmc.gcu@gmail.com
Tel: 02871 368042 01463 783371



DUNOLLIE LINKS COORDINATOR

25 hours/week
£22,000 per rata

We need a great communicator to coordinate our busy Dunollie Links programme based at Dunollie Museum Castle & Grounds.

You will run an exciting year-round program of activities for the community focusing on learning, volunteering and participation based around heritage, culture and arts.

You will also coordinate our volunteers, schools visits and individual placements. You will become part of a creative, dedicated team, working together to provide a high-quality visitor attraction and broad range of benefits for the local community.

For the right candidate, there may be an opportunity for additional hours delivering heritage, culture and/or arts workshops.

For a job description and application details please e-mail jane@dunollie.org or telephone the office Tel: 01631570550.

Closing date for applications:
Sunday 12th March midnight.

Dunollie Projects Ltd, North Wing,
Dunollie House, Oban. PA34 5TT.

Enable Scotland
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For more information please call or text Rosalyn on 07909257436, call into our local office at McLeod Buildings, Lochavullin Road, or complete an online application form via our website.
www.enableScotlandjobs.org.uk
£15,818 pro rata

D M MacKinnon Solicitors, Oban
currently have a vacancy for a part-time Cash Room/Administrative Assistant.

Cashroom or accounting experience preferred but not essential.
Please email CV and covering letter to sallyorr@dmk.co.uk

Ardchattan Priory Garden
open to visitors in the summer
Requires a
FULL-TIME GARDENER
Good gardening skills and self-motivation essential.
Accommodation provided.
Please email admin@ardchattan.co.uk for job description and application form.

North Argyll House
Care Home
Bealach an Rìgh, Oban, Argyll PA34 5TG
Recruiting for
Senior Care Officer
Part time permanent post
Care Assistant
Full time permanent post
Domestic Assistant
part time permanent post
For an application form contact Manager
Morag A Telfer 01631 562168

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email aspence@craobhmarina.co.uk for further details

CRAFTSPERSON

STORNOWAY, WICK/THURSO, CAMPBELTOWN, SCOTLAND



A STARTING SALARY BETWEEN £26,355 - £28,331 PLUS AN ESTIMATED £4,500 - £6,500 PER ANNUM DEPENDING ON STANDBY FREQUENCY.

We have exciting opportunities within our Scottish Independent Undertakings (SIUs) for the role of Craftsperson. We have positions available in Campbeltown, Wick/Thurso and Stornoway. The SIU's are unique in the UK in that they are not connected to the National Grid system and use Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) or Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) as a feedstock.

What does the role involve?

These opportunities will be ideally suited to an experienced First Call Operatives who have a 'service' background or experienced heating engineers or those people who are time served plumbers. In addition you will ideally hold a City and Guilds and/or ACS accreditation.

These roles will be challenging and varied, with the successful applicants being involved in various activities including boiler servicing, emergency duties and meter work. Other skills will be developed over time to include mains and service laying as well as other plant duties. Full Training in all SIU activities will be provided.

What we are looking for from you?

- Ideally you will be an experienced heating engineer or time served plumber preferably holding a City and Guilds and/or ACS accreditation.
- You will be dependable, practical and hardworking.
- Have good leadership qualities together with excellent inter-personal skills.
- You must hold a full driving licence.
- The work is physically and mentally demanding and you will be expected to work in a variety of outdoor environments.
- Have the ability to use field IT equipment and achieve high standards of safety and technical competence.

What can we offer you?

- A starting salary of £26,355 plus an estimated £4,500 - £6,500 per annum depending on standby frequency.
- A great place to work and with the right attitude and aptitude, the potential to progress within the business to managerial positions.
- On-going on the job development together with comprehensive training on all SIU activities including repair and servicing of gas appliances, service laying and plant duties.

The nature of the job means that you will be expected to work variable hours and in addition, you will also be required to participate, as necessary, in a high frequency standby rota.

To apply, please download an application form from our website www.sgn.co.uk or request one from jobs@sgn.co.uk. Completed forms along with a full and recent CV should be emailed to jobs@sgn.co.uk or returned by post to Human Resources at the address shown on the top of the application form quoting reference number 16195EXT.

Applications must be received by close of play on the 8 March 2017.

SGN is an equal opportunity employer committed to developing an equal, diverse and inclusive Culture.

HIJOBS HIJOBS RECRUITMENT RECRUITMENT

Oban Hospice Limited Centre Co-ordinator



Full time - 37 Hours Salary - £19,000 - £22,676
Location - Oban

Applications are invited for the post of Centre Co-ordinator, working for Oban Hospice Ltd.

This is an exciting opportunity to lead the development of a newly established centre for people diagnosed mainly with cancer but also including other long term conditions. For further information about this role please contact enquiries@obanhospice.org.uk.

Closing date 24 March 2017 with interviews being held on Thursday 13 April 2017.

Helper Service Administrator Marie Curie, Argyll & Bute



35 Hours per week, 30 month fixed term contract.
£14,601—£16,233 per annum
Base: Oban

Supporting our Helper Service, the role provides administrative support to the Service Manager, working closely with colleagues and volunteers throughout the region.

For an informal chat regards the role, please contact Alison Craig on 0800 304 7027 - to apply please do so on the Marie Curie website (REF: 60110) www.mariecurie.org.uk/jobs

HIJOBS RECRUITMENT

INVERARAY CASTLE ASSISTANT GARDENER Full Time April-October

The position of Assistant Gardener has arisen at Inveraray Castle in Argyll. You will assist the Head Gardener, who is responsible for maintaining the gardens at the Castle, which are generally open to the public. The successful candidate should be hard working and conscientious with practical experience and the ability to communicate.

Please send your current CV to:-
The Factor, Argyll Estates Office, Cherry Park Inveraray PA32 8XE
E-Mail - enquiries@inveraray-castle.com
CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS:
10TH MARCH 2017

RECRUITMENT HIJOBS RECRUITMENT

RECRUITMENT IN ASSOCIATION WITH HIJOBS

RECRUITMENT



BASED IN CAMPBELTOWN

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- + £ Bonus
- + Private Health Care
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- + Good Holidays

If you've got the energy, drive, determination and ambition, we can offer you an exciting and rewarding career with one of Scotland's foremost independent newspaper publishers.

You will be responsible for representing our range of award winning publications, offering high quality advertising packages to local businesses.

You will benefit from on-going training, first class support, job stability and the opportunity to work for a professional company that believes in rewarding success and effort. A full driving licence is essential.

Please apply by email with full C.V and covering letter to: ali@wyvexmedia.co.uk

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

HIJOBS



PRACTICE NURSE VACANCY

Lochgilphead Medical Centre are recruiting a Practice Nurse. This is a Permanent, Full-time post based in Lochgilphead and occasionally Furnace and Inverary Surgeries. Experience in sexual health and family planning are desirable. Further training is available if required. Pay dependent on experience.

Closing date: 31 March 2017.

For further information please contact Team Lead Nurse, Hazel Whiston or to apply for the post contact Practice Manager, Corinne Cheetham on 01546 462002.

Lomond & Argyll Advocacy Service



Independent Advocacy Worker

17.5 hours per week AP3: £21,457 (pro rata) Based in Mid-Argyll

Lomond & Argyll Advocacy Service is a well established independent advocacy provider working hard to strengthen the voice of people who use health and community care services. We wish to recruit an independent advocacy worker to provide independent advocacy for adults with learning disabilities, adults experiencing mental ill health and older people in Mid-Argyll. The successful applicant will have a good understanding of the issues faced by our client groups and a strong commitment to the principles of empowerment and user involvement.

For a recruitment pack please telephone (01389) 726543 or email: admin@laas.org.uk
Closing date for applications 17th March 2017

PUBLIC NOTICES

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us @ www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

Comhairle Earra-Ghàidheal agus Bhòid

COUNCILLOR'S SURGERIES

Councillor Roddy McCuish (E.W. 4 Oban South and the Isles)
Councillor McCuish will be holding a surgery on Friday 3rd March 2017 in the Municipal Buildings, Albany Street, Oban from 1.30pm - 4.00pm.
He can be contacted by email - Roderick.McCuish@argyll-bute.gov.uk and by telephone 01631 567854.

Councillor Kieron Green (E.W. 5 Oban North and Lorn)
Councillor Green will be holding a surgery on Friday 17th March 2017 in the Municipal Buildings, Albany Street, Oban from 2.00pm - 4.00pm.
He can be contacted by email - Kieron.Green@argyll-bute.gov.uk and by telephone 01631 562 444.

First Registration of Muirshearich Township Crofts.

Angus Ross of Nos. 1 & 2, Registration Number (RN) C3639.
Paul & Jennifer Hodges No. 3A, (RN) C3640.
Henry J. Dobson, Katherine I. Dobson, Abigail J.C. Veitch & Adam J. Veitch No. 3B, (RN) C3641.
Archibald M. Macdonald No. 5, (RN) C3642.
Andrew H. N. MacBride No. 4, (RN) C3643.
Alastair MacGillivray, Nos. 6 & 7, (RN) C3645.
Wilhelmina MacGillivray No. 8, (RN) C3644.
Archibald M. Macdonald Nos. 10 & 11, (RN) C3646.
Alan G. Wink No. 12, (RN) C3647.
Moira W. Austin No. 13, (RN) C3648.
Have registered their crofts in the Parish of Kilmallie 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 31st October 2017.
Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (FORESTRY) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 1999

An application for consent under the above regulations has been made to the Forestry Commission to construct a forest road at Dornie Quarry, Leanachan on an area extending to 0.47 hectares.

A copy of the application and the Environmental Statement may be viewed Monday to Friday, during normal office hours, for a period of 28 days beginning with the date of this notice, at the following addresses:

Forestry Commission Woodlands Dingwall Ross-shire, IV15 9XB	Forest Enterprise Torlundy, Fort William Lochaber, PH33 6SW
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Any person or body who wishes to make comment on the application may submit their views, in writing, to the Forestry Commission address given above.
Comments must be received within 28 days from the date of this notice.

Copies of the Environmental Statement may be obtained by writing to: Leiths (Scotland) Limited, Rigfa, Cove, Aberdeen, AB12 3LR at a cost of £25 plus VAT. (in DVD format)
Date of Notice: 2nd March 2017

CROFTING COMMISSION COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACH DECROFTING APPLICATIONS

G MacCormick Sithean, Kilfinichen & Kilvickeon 0.14 - Site for a dwelling house 77189

*C Jamieson 7 Dalnabreck, Arisaig & Moirdart 0.299 ha - Site for a dwelling house 77025

Written comments from any member of the crofting community within the locality of the croft may be sent to the Crofting Commission by 3 April 2017 - Crofting Commission, Leachkin Road, Inverness, IV3 8NW, info@crofting.scotland.gov.uk

*The Commission will consider any expressions of demand when deciding whether to issue a Direction.
Full details at www.crofting.scotland.gov.uk

Proposed Sublet of a Croft

Archibald MacFadyen is applying to the Crofting Commission for consent to sublet part of the croft at 1 Balearmarte, Tیره to Alexander Hector MacDonald of 19 East Hynish, Tیره for five years. If you consider you have a relevant interest in this application, you may submit comments in writing to the Crofting Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness, IV3 8NW or email info@crofting.scotland.gov.uk within 28 days from the date of publication of the advert. Please note that any comments you provide are part of an open process and will be made available to interested parties. Your comments would also be released under a Freedom of Information enquiry.

Proposed Sublet of a Croft

Archibald MacFadyen is applying to the Crofting Commission for consent to sublet part of the croft at 7 Baugh, Tیره to Alexander Hector MacDonald of 19 East Hynish, Tیره for five years. If you consider you have a relevant interest in this application, you may submit comments in writing to the Crofting Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness, IV3 8NW or email info@crofting.scotland.gov.uk within 28 days from the date of publication of the advert. Please note that any comments you provide are part of an open process and will be made available to interested parties. Your comments would also be released under a Freedom of Information enquiry.

Oban Times PUBLIC NOTICES
Oban Times PUBLIC NOTICES

FIRST REGISTRATION OF A CROFT

Fearann Eilean Iarmain has registered their croft Harapul (mill croft) 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 21st November 2017.
Details of the registration can be found at www.crofts.ros.gov.uk/register/home. The croft registration number is 14035.

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 online at <http://wam.highland.gov.uk> or electronically at your nearest Service Point. You can find your nearest Service Point via the following link https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory/16/a_to_z

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
17/00708/FUL	Acharacle Primary School,	Acharacle	Construct a community/school sports pitch facility measuring
17/00754/FUL	Braveheart Car Park, Glen Nevis, Fort William		Upgrading of car park (re-routing of forest access)
17/00805/FUL	Land 50M NE of Sean Airidh, Arisaig		Erection of 1 no. house and 1 no holiday let, formation of vehicular access, installation of septic tank and soakaway
17/00809/FUL	Greenfield on Isle of Rum		Erection of telecommunications mast, ancillary equipment, cabinets and fenced compound

Time period for comments is 14 days
ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
Email: epanning@highland.gov.uk

The Highland Council Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

PROPOSED CHANGE TO SCHOOL CATCHMENT AREAS - INVERLOCHY PRIMARY SCHOOL AND LUNDAVRA PRIMARY SCHOOL

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

The Highland Council has published a consultative paper on a proposal to change the catchment boundary between Lundavra Primary School and Inverloch Primary School, as a result of a new housing development straddling the existing boundary.

The paper has been issued under the terms of the Council's procedure under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended.

The consultation period began on Monday 6 February 2017 and will finish on Thursday 23 March 2017. During this period members of the public are invited to comment on the consultative proposal.

Arrangements have been made for representatives of the Highland Council to meet with parents, children and other members of the public to discuss the proposal at a public meeting to be held on:

8 March 2017, at 7pm in the Council Chambers, Lochaber House, Fort William

All comments made in writing or at the public meeting will be presented in due course to the Education, Children's and Adult Services Committee for their consideration. As this is a public consultation, written submissions, and a note of the meeting, will be made available to the public and any comments submitted may be published on the Council's website - www.highland.gov.uk.

Hard copies of the report have been made available at:
Lundavra Primary School; Inverloch Primary School; Care and Learning Office, Camaghael Hostel, Lochybridge; Fort William Public Library.

Alternatively the proposals can be viewed online at:
<http://www.highland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations>

Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre (Oban) Ltd AGM

Will be held on 21st March 2017 at 7pm in the Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre (Oban) Ltd, Glencruitten Road, Oban Argyll PA34 4PU
Telephone 01631 566602
e-mail: oban.msc@btconnect.com

WATER ENVIRONMENT AND WATER SERVICES (SCOTLAND) ACT 2003 WATER ENVIRONMENT (CONTROLLED ACTIVITIES) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2011 APPLICATION FOR AUTHORISATION CREG AN SAGAIRT (WEST) MARINE CAGE FISH FARM, LOCH HOURN

An application has been made to the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) by Marine Harvest (Scotland) Ltd to vary water use licence numbers CAR/L/1008960 and CAR/L/1008962 authorising the carrying on of a controlled activity at, near or in connection with freshwater cage fish farms on Loch Shiel and Loch Garry, as follows:

Reference Number	Description of controlled activity	Waters affected	National grid reference
CAR/L/1008960	Change(s) to the discharge trade effluent arising from the increased production of salmon at an existing Freshwater Cage Fish Farm	Loch Shiel	NM 8930 7975
CAR/L/1008962	Change(s) to the discharge trade effluent arising from the increased production of salmon at an existing Freshwater Cage Fish Farm	Loch Garry	NH 2218 0162

SEPA considers that the above change(s) to controlled activities may have an impact on the water environment and on the interests of other users of the water environment.
A copy of the application and any accompanying information may be inspected free of charge, at the SEPA Registry below, between 9.30 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. Monday to Friday (except local and national holidays). Alternatively, the application may be viewed on SEPA's website at: www.sepa.org.uk/regulations/consultations/advised-applications-under-car/.
Any person affected or likely to be affected by, or having an interest in, the application may make representations to SEPA in writing within 28 days beginning with the date of this advertisement, either by email to registrywall@sepa.org.uk or to the following address, quoting the relevant reference number.
Registry Department, SEPA Dingwall Office, Graesser House, Fodderty Way, Dingwall, IV15 9XB
Written representations received by SEPA within 28 days of this advertisement will be taken into consideration in determining the applications. Any such representations will be placed in a public register unless the person making them requests that they should not be. Where such a request is made SEPA will include a statement in the register indicating that representations have been made which have been the subject of such a request.
Before determining the application, SEPA will:
• assess the risk to the water to the water environment posed by the carrying on of the activity or activities;
• assess the indirect effects of that impact on any other aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected;
• consider any likely adverse social and economic effects of that impact and of any indirect environmental effects that have been identified;
• consider the likely environmental, social and economic benefits of the activity;
• assess the impact of the controlled activity or activities on the interests of other users of the water environment;
• assess what steps may be taken to ensure efficient and sustainable water use; and
• apply and have regard to relevant legislation.
SEPA will then either grant or refuse to grant the application.

Argyll and Bute Council PLANNING

These applications listed below together with other related documents may be inspected between 09:00-12:30 -13:30-16:00 hrs Monday to Friday at Municipal Buildings Albany Street Oban PA34 4AW, 1A Manse Brae Lochgilphead 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.

Ref. No.	Proposal	Site Address	Location of Plans
17/00408/PP	Variation to Condition 8 ecological survey - variation to time for submission (relative to planning permission 16/01920/PP)	Land Adjacent To Hayfield Oban Argyll And Bute	Oban Area Office
17/00376/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse and installation of septic tank	Land North East Of Tigh Na Mara Kilmelford Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 4XD	Sub Post Office Kilmelford
17/00450/PP	Erection of 4 storey building to form 8no 1 bedroom flats.	Simmers Car Park Albany Chambers Albany Street Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 4AL	Oban Area Office
17/00026/LIB	Renovation of existing building to form 2 new dwellinghouses and external store	The Thatched Terrace Sandaig Isle Of Tیره Argyll And Bute PA77 6XQ	Tیره Area Office
17/00424/LIB	Demolition of stone wall within curtilage of property	Glenigh Cottage Corran Esplanade Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 5AQ	Oban Area Office

Written comments can be made to the above address or submitted online <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/find-and-comment-planning-applications> within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence. Any letter of representation the Council receives is considered a public document and will be published on our website. Anonymous or marked confidential correspondence will not be considered. A weekly list of all applications can be viewed at all Area Offices, Council Libraries and on the Council's website.
To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us at: www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
Comhairle Earra - Ghàidheal agus Bhòid

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Scotland home buyers down three per cent in fourth quarter

In the fourth quarter:

Home buyers borrowed £2.2bn for house purchase, down 0.5 per cent quarter-on-quarter and three per cent year-on-year. They took out 16,800 loans, down one per cent compared to the previous quarter and three per cent on the fourth quarter 2015.

First-time buyers borrowed £910m, down three per cent on the third quarter but up five per cent on the fourth quarter last year. This totalled 8,400 loans, down two per cent quarter-on-quarter but up five per cent year-on-year.

Home movers borrowed £1.3bn, up one per cent quarter-on-quarter

but down seven per cent compared to a year ago. This totalled 8,400 loans, unchanged quarter-on-quarter but down 10 per cent compared to the same quarter in 2015.

Remortgage activity totalled £870m, down two per cent on the third quarter but up 10 per cent on the same quarter last year. This came to 7,200 loans, down one per cent quarter-on-quarter but up seven per cent compared to a year ago.

In 2016:

Home buyers borrowed £8.3bn for house purchase, down three

per cent on 2015. They took out 63,500 loans, down two per cent compared to the year before.

First-time buyers borrowed £3.4bn, up five per cent on the previous year. This totalled 31,400 loans, up five per cent on 2015.

Home movers borrowed £4.9bn, totalling 32,100 loans, down seven per cent by value and eight per cent by volume on 2015.

Remortgage activity totalled £3.4bn, up 10 per cent on 2015. This came to 27,900 loans, up six per cent in 2015.

Carol Anderson, CML Scotland chair, commented: First-time buyer lending continues to show healthy

annual growth in Scotland. Overall, the picture is of a steady market, with affordability comparing favourably with the UK as a whole.'

Affordability in Scotland

First-time buyers typically borrowed £99,800 (£135,000 in the UK overall), almost unchanged from the £100,000 average the previous quarter. The average household income was £33,500 (£40,200 in the UK overall), down from £33,700. The typical income multiple in Scotland of 3.03 (3.02 in the previous quarter) also compared favourably to the UK average of 3.56.



Affordability metrics for home movers saw the typical amount borrowed this quarter was £140,000 (£172,500 in the UK overall), up from £135,300 the previous quarter. The average household income of a home mover was

£50,700 (£54,900 in the UK overall), down from £51,000.

This meant the typical home mover income multiple in Scotland was 2.80, up 2.76 from the previous quarter and the UK average of 3.29.

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- 2 Bedrooms
- On street parking
- Landlord Reg: 207892/130/30200

THE COTTAGE, GLENHELLACH, OBAN
£450 PCM EPC E49

- Part-furnished
- 1 Bedroom
- Parking for 2 cars
- Landlord Reg: 127313/130/1032

LONAN BEAG, GLEN LONAN, TAYNUILT
£650 PCM EPC D60

- Detached bungalow
- Unfurnished
- 2 bedrooms (both en-suite)
- Landlord Reg: 53394/130/28250

Forestry Commission Scotland
Coimisean na Coilltearachd Alba **TO LET**

Forestry Commission Scotland currently has grazing opportunities available in the following locations which will be available from April 2017. The selection process for interested parties will favour New Entrants although others will be considered if no suitable new entrant is identified.

- ARDENTINNY, COWAL PENINSULA, ARGYLL & BUTE**
Approx 1.42 hectares. Would suit sheep or horses. 5 Year SLDT
- LOCHGOILHEAD, COWAL PENINSULA, ARGYLL & BUTE**
Approx 1.5 hectares. Would suit sheep or horses. 5 Year SLDT
- DALAVICH AREA 1, LOCH AWESIDE, ARGYLL & BUTE**
Approx 5.09 hectares. Would suit sheep or horses. 5 Year SLDT
- DALAVICH AREA 2, LOCH AWESIDE, ARGYLL & BUTE**
Approx 2.32 hectares. Would suit sheep, horses or alpaca's. 5 Year SLDT
- BARNAGAD and DUNANS, ACHNAMARA, ARGYLL & BUTE**
Two fields Approx 6.09 and 1.1 hectares. Offered as a conservation grazing for cattle only. 5 Year SLDT
- FAERY ISLES, TAYVALLICH, ARGYLL & BUTE**
Approx 71.25 hectares. Offered as a conservation grazing for cattle only. 5 Year SLDT

For particulars and application form please visit www.scotland.forestry.gov.uk/ grazing-opportunities or email Raymond.mundie@forestry.gsi.gov.uk or phone 03000 676673 specifying which lot you are interested in. Closing date for completed applications 12pm Tuesday 21st March 2017

LANDLORDS, SAY 'GOODBYE SATS' AND 'HELLO SPRT'

Among the main points to note in the Act:

- There will be no minimum period of let and no pre-tenancy notices will be needed.
- There will be a model tenancy agreement which may be used by landlords and tenants. Some of the clauses will be compulsory including, initially, provision for receipts for cash payment of rent, a prohibition on sub-letting without consent and access for repairs.
- Tenancies will continue indefinitely unless the tenant wants to leave or the landlord can give notice on one of the prescribed grounds for repossession.
- Only one notice to leave will be needed to end the tenancy. Tenants must give four weeks' notice to leave.
- Rents may be reviewed once a year; the landlord must give the tenant at least three months' notice of the increased rent. Tenants can challenge the proposed rent increase by seeking an order from a rent officer.

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West

WHINFIELD, OBAN

- Detached house
- 3 Bedrooms / 2 Bathrooms
- Quiet location
- Lovely views over Oban
- Well maintained property
- EPC Rating - F33

OIEO £200,000

Whinfield is a detached 3 bedroom property situated in an elevated position overlooking Oban. The house would make an ideal family home with its excellent location on Pulpit Hill, great layout and well proportioned rooms. The property has been well maintained throughout its 55 years.

LERAGS, OBAN

- Spacious detached bungalow
- 3 Bedrooms / 2 Bathrooms
- With 0.4 Acre Plot with Planning Permission
- Lifestyle & income opportunity
- 1.5 Acres in total
- EPC Rating - E51

OIRO £348,000

A spacious three bedroom detached bungalow located in the beautiful Lerags Glen only a 10-minute drive south of Oban. Enjoying stunning loch views and an elevated secluded position, the bungalow would make an ideal family home or holiday let investment.

MORAY PLACE, FORT WILLIAM

- Top floor flat
- Stunning views
- 3 double bedrooms
- Parking available
- Furnished or unfurnished
- White goods included
- Within walking distance of town

£625 PCM

Top floor, three bedroom flat with stunning views out towards Loch Linnhe. The property is in a highly desirable residential area of Fort William and is within easy walking distance of town centre & Lundavra primary school. Recently refurbished to a good standard with modern & neutral décor throughout.

MORAY PLACE, FORT WILLIAM

- 3 bedroom ground floor flat
- Unfurnished
- Parking available
- Recently refurbished
- Close to town centre
- Electric heating

£625 PCM

Unfurnished 3 bedroom ground floor flat in highly desirable residential area of Fort William with stunning views out towards Loch Linnhe. Within walking distance of town centre and Lundavra primary school. Recently refurbished to a good standard with neutral décor throughout.

MACTALLA, CONNELL

- Spacious Detached Stone Villa
- 8 Bedrooms / 5 Bathrooms
- 2 WC
- Stunning Sea Views
- Successful B&B
- Popular Location
- EPC Rating - E39

£450,000

A beautiful detached granite villa overlooking the Firth of Lorn in the popular village of Connell. This spacious property is currently run as a successful B&B situated in a perfect location for tourists to explore the West Coast. Mactalla has been well maintained by the current owners and offers purchasers a variety of potential uses.

KINTORE, BENDERLOCH

- Spacious Detached House
- 4 bedrooms / 3 bathrooms
- Open plan lounge, kitchen and dining area
- Large garden
- Integrated double garage and private parking
- EPC Rating: C70

OIRO £440,000

A modern 4 bedroom detached house in a popular residential area close to the village of Benderloch. Built in 2006, Kintore is a bright and spacious house enjoying a rural position and views across fields and hills to the North. A small porch leads to the main open plan lounge/dining area which overlooks the front lawn and enjoys plentiful natural light from the floor-to-ceiling windows and patio doors.

GRANGE ROAD, FORT WILLIAM

- 2 bedroom flat
- Fully furnished
- White goods included
- Double glazed
- Electric heating
- On street parking
- Council Tax Band C
- EPC Rating: D (65)

LET AGREED £600 PCM

Furnished 2 bedroom flat in highly desirable residential area of Fort William. Within walking distance of town centre and Lundavra primary school. Recently refurbished to a good standard with neutral decor throughout. The property consists of hall, 2 double bedrooms, lounge, modern kitchen & bathroom. Fully furnished with large items of furniture and white goods included.

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SOFA Three seater, £90 Telephone 07469 943716

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RUBY WEDDINGS

MACCALLUM - On March 5, 1977 at St Matthews Parish Church, Perth by Rev. George MacBride, Sandy to Christine. Present address: Faight, Bunessan, Mull.

GOLDEN WEDDING

MACPHEE - KING - On March 3, 1967 at Appin Parish Church by the late Reverend Kenneth MacMillan, Ian to Laura. Present address: Glenappin, 2 Dunmore Avenue, Lochgilphead.

DEATH NOTICE

BLACKWOOD - Peacefully, at the Mid Argyll Hospital, after a short illness, on February 24, 2017, Robert (Bob) Callan Blackwood, aged 86 years, of Ard Creagach, Kilduskland Road, Ardrishaig and formerly of Ardlamy Gigha, beloved husband of Jean McNeill, much loved father of David, Janette and Robert and proud grandpa of seven. A dear father-in-law and uncle. A good neighbour and dear friend to many. Funeral service will be held in Ardrishaig Parish Church, on Friday, March 3, 2017 at 11.00am. Interment will take place at Keil Cemetery, Isle of Gigha, on Saturday, March 4, 2017 at 11.00am. Family flowers only please. Donations if desired, to Ardrishaig Parish Church.

BROWN - Elizabeth, previously of Kilmallie Road, Caol, died February 26, 2017 in Borehamwood. Sadly missed.

FAITHFULL - (née Crawford), Joan, (Eskbank and Tormore, Isle of Mull). Peacefully at home at Eskbank on Tuesday February 21, 2017, Joan Margaret Caldwell Faithfull, aged 93, loving wife of Monty, loving mother of John and David, loving grandmother to Alec and Annusha, loving friend to their mothers Cath and Devika and loving relative and friend to many. A deeply caring individual who will be greatly missed by all who knew her and especially on Mull. A celebration of her life will be held at Warriston Crematorium Lorimer Chapel on Saturday March 11 at 11.15am. No flowers please but donations may be made to Deaf Blind Scotland, Sightsavers or The Campmill Family.

JAMIESON - James (Jimmy) Jamieson, left us, suddenly but peacefully, on February 14, 2017. We will miss his cheeky smile and he will always be in our hearts. Will be forever missed. The funeral will be held at Cardross Crematorium on March 6 at 13:15.

MCTAGGART - Peacefully at Raigmore Hospital on February 22, 2017, Hilda dear wife of the late Ian, devoted mum of Ian William and Gwen and much loved friend of Diane. Will be missed by all.

STEWART - Mr Peter Brian Stewart of Kinvara, 8 West Drive, Ardbrecknish, Loch Awe, Argyll, passed peacefully on February 21, 2017 at Eadar Glinn Residential Home, Oban. Father of Garry and Kenneth, who will conduct the service to be held at Cardross Crematorium, Main Road, Cardross, Argyll, G82 5HD on Friday March 3, 2017, at 1:15pm. No flowers please, but donations if so desired to the RNLI.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CAMPBELL - Peter, Michelle and grandson Stephen would sincerely like to thank family, friends and neighbours for cards, telephone calls and support given to them following the sad loss of their dad, Peter. Also to all doctors and nurses in Ward B, Lorn and Islands Hospital for their excellent care and attention. To Fr Tom McCarte for the Requiem Mass and comforting words. To Catriona at Hamish Hoey and Sons for their professional and friendly service. To Moreen Gracie for the lovely flowers and Rowantree for their excellent catering. Finally many thanks to family who travelled from away and to all those who paid their last respects at the church and graveside. The retiral collection for ABCD came to £516.57. Thank you all.

MACCOLL - Dianne, Elaine, son-in-law Michael and grandson Jason, family of the late Mary Evelyn MacColl express our heartfelt thanks to everyone who gave their kind expressions of sympathy and support during our recent bereavement through visits, telephone calls, cards, flowers and baking. To all who attended Evelyn's service to pay their respects, to the Doctors and staff at Connel and Taynuilt Surgeries, to Doctor Hasan Fatah and Doctor Ravi Mistry, to the nurses at Lorn and the Islands Hospital, Oban and to all involved in the superb care and attention given to Evelyn in her last illness - thank you all. A sincere thank you to Rev. Cringles for his comforting service and to Ian MacInnes of D & A Munn Ltd for his professionalism and kindness. Finally thank you to the Falls of Lora Hotel for their warm hospitality and to Petals for the beautiful flowers. The retiring collection for the Lynside Day Centre came to £704.62.

MACDONALD - Barbara, Carol and all the family would like to thank friends and neighbours for their support and kindness following the loss of their dear aunt, Jessie. Particular thanks are due to Rev Kinnear of Nether Lochaber Parish Church for the beautiful and most apt service. Grateful thanks to Mrs Mary Ducker and Mrs Mary Michie for the lovely floral arrangements in the church, to Mrs Jean Coke, Mrs Deborah Morgan and Mrs Elizabeth Ross for their unstinting help and kindness to Jessie throughout her growing infirmity, to staff at Abbeyfield Ballachulish for their very professional

care of Jessie, especially in her final months, to Loch Leven Hotel for excellent catering and to Messrs John McLellan for their respectful and professional services. Final and sincere appreciation goes to all those friends and neighbours who attended at the church and at the graveside.

MACEACHEN - Marianne and the family of the late John MacEachen wish to express their sincere thanks to all family, friends and neighbours for the kindness and sympathy shown to them on their recent sad bereavement. Our heartfelt thanks go to all at Lorn Medical Centre for their exceptional care and attention. Especially Dr M Boyle and Dr Jerspen. To the ECC team, Macmillan nurses, occupational therapists, district nurses and Marie Cure care for the kindness shown to John over the last few months. To Catriona and all at Hamish Hoey's for their respectful, caring and professional services. To everyone involved in the celebration of John's life. Amanda and her team at the Argyllshire Gathering Halls for hosting and catering, Moreen Gracie for the beautiful flowers, the musicians Andy, Grant, Tom and Michael for the great music and finally to Sheena Johnston and Sandy Gow for delivering such a warm and wonderful service. The retiring collection raised a massive £3000 so a final big thank you to everyone who attended. Your support is much appreciated.

MCPHAIL - The family would like to thank everyone for their cards and telephone calls and support following the death of their father Charlie. Our sincere thanks go to Carers Direct, Taynuilt Medical Practice who provided excellent care to allow dad to remain at home, district nurses, Lorn and Islands Hospital Ward B staff, Rev Dugald Cameron for conducting a lovely service, Alastair MacDonald for playing dad's favourite music, Flower Basket for beautiful flowers, Ian D & A Munn for their respectful caring and professional services. Dalmally Community Centre committee for putting on an excellent spread and all who donated food. A final thank you to everyone who came to pay their respects. The generous retiring collection for Pulmonary Fibrosis came to a grand total of £702.72.

MEMORIAMS

BURTON - For our boys Paul Gordon Burton and David Campbell Burton. Never forgotten. - Burton family, Oban and East Kilbride.

GRANT - In loving memory of my dear father and our grandpa Angus, who died on March 3, 2016. Never more than a thought away. Loved and remembered every day. - Elizabeth, Julie and Steven, Keeper's Cottage, Dalmally

JOHNSTONE - In loving memory of Bob, dearest husband, dad, grand-dad and great grand-dad, who passed away February 23, 2016. Always in our thoughts. - Elizabeth and all the family.

KIRSOP - Loving memories of Robert who passed away on March 3, 2012. Missed so much, remembered always. - Mum and family

MACDONALD - Precious memories of my dad and papa Hamish. 25 years since you left us. Every day in some small way. Memories of you come our way. Though absent you are always near. Forever in our hearts. - Love Catherine, Michael and family.

MACKINNON - In loving memory of our parents, grandparents and great grandparents, Hamish, died March 5, 1997 and Mary, September 20, 2004. The flowers we place upon your grave. May wither and decay. But our love for you who sleeps beneath. Will never fade away. - Love from your girls, Johan, Annie, Marion and families, Killin, Lawers and Fersit.

MACLEAN - Special memories of Calum a much loved husband, who died March 1, 1992. RIP. Calum those we love, live in our hearts forever. - With all my love Chrissie xx.

MACLEOD - In memory of Captain Donald MacLeod, Kilchoan, who died March 1, 1996. Always remembered. - Inserted by nephew Hugh.

MACVICAR - (MacInnes) Christina (Teena). In loving memory of my devoted wife, died March 1, 2007. Always remembered, Forever loved. - Johnnie

In memory of a loving Mum and Nana, Forever in our thoughts. - Catherine, John, John, Niall and Michael

MATHESON - In loving memory of John (Jakey), who died March 3, 2016. A dear husband of Dorothy. Loved and remembered always.

MATHESON - In loving memory of our dad John Matheson, who passed away March 3, 2016. Loved and remembered every day. - Ruby, John and families

SHANKS - Jimmy. Cherished memories of our much loved husband and dad, who passed away on February 23, 2016. Never more than a thought away. Loved and remembered every day. - Lily, Eileen and Elayne.

WANT - In loving memory of our dear sister, aunt and great-aunt, Margaret MacKinnon, who died March 3, 2014. No day dawns and no day ends. Without a thought of you. We love and miss you. - Elizabeth, Roy, Shirley, Aiden and the girls

Obituary - Peter Angus Ross



The funeral of Peter Angus Ross took place in Glasgow in January, attended by family, friends and a wide representation from the Scottish business community.

Born February 25, 1936, the second son in the five children of John and Evangeline Ross, Peter was schooled at Glasgow Academy from which he joined the family tea merchant firm, Wm Wright & Co, as a trainee. He did his two years National Service with the Royal Artillery after which he returned to work with Wrights as a tea taster/salesman. Following his marriage to Elliot in 1962, the couple moved to East Burnthills, Lochwinnoch.

He was soon to leave family business behind and start on his own, working from home, introducing to Scotland a new system of agricultural drainage, as well as buying a licensed grocer shop, supported by his wife, a primary school teacher.

The couple's hard work led to modest success and this seed business interest was to grow into a group that took its name from their first home. The expanding Burnthills Group was to move to the disused Finlayson-Blousfield Mills, Johnstone, where it developed into Scotland's most diverse collection of industrial businesses with companies specialising in contracting, plant hire, forced-air heater sales (pioneered in Scotland by Burnthills), shops, aviation (including the only ever commercial West Coast passenger helicopter service), demolition, property, house-building, insurance services (Peter was a Lloyds Name), a newspaper, local radio, and hotels.

The latter interest was spun out as Norscot Hotels PLC which Peter took to the market in 1985 capitalising on the Norscot's success in the north-east's oil boom during which they cleverly achieved over 100 per cent room occupancy by selling beds to night-shift oil workers as well as daytime tourists.

The group's hotel portfolio expanded, with properties ranging from Thurso to the Lake District. A favourite of Peter's was Stonefield Castle Hotel, Loch Fyne, which he bought when Norscot was sold to Pleasurama (subsequently Rank).

The castle hosted his wife's 50th birthday and their silver wedding anniversary. After renovation of both castle and gardens this hotel was soon to become the foundation of a new business group.

The Stonefield Group was created in 1990 after Peter took an interest in Bowfield Country Club, Howwood. Peter then built up a mixed chain of hotel and leisure

companies, varying from ten-pin bowling and hi-fi to country house hotels, including Hebridean Island Cruises PLC.

Peter Ross had an extraordinary ability to turn a crisis into an opportunity. Able to leave the day-to-day running to his colleagues, he could give attention to detail through bespoke weekly reporting systems direct to himself even when on holiday.

His style was individualistic and entrepreneurial in the old sense, before television reality shows were invented. He chaired every company in which he invested but would listen to the most junior member of staff and value reports from them as much as from his accountants, managers and fellow directors. Anyone working for him with difficulties could rely on support. Former staff tell stories of how he would privately help them with individual problems within or out-with work.

He could be firm but was always fair. In negotiations, his ability to research then understand the other side's circumstance was remarkable. During his career, he was listed as a director in more than 70 companies.

In 1974 he helped set up Johnstone Rotary in which he served as president and sought out weekly meetings to attend whenever away from his home town. Rotary International honoured him with the Paul Harris Fellowship in 1995. He won the Aims of Industry Scotland Award in 1982.

The Princess Royal was a patron of his Stonefield Castle Hotel and in 2007 her Majesty the Queen granted Royal Warrant to the Hebridean Princess, one of his cruise ships.

In 2008 Peter started to show signs of dementia but even then, he was capable of grasping the enormity of the problems facing the banking world and the impact a looming financial crisis might have on his businesses.

He stepped down as group chairman although continued as a consultant for a couple of years until deteriorating health forced him give up completely, if reluctantly. Elliot, family and friends nursed him at home for as long as was possible before he was transferred to the loving care of Erskine Park where he died unexpectedly on Christmas Day.

Elliot continues to live at the Ayrshire home they shared for more than 40 years. She remains able to enjoy the beautiful grounds which they restored and looked after together.

He was, truly, a Scottish businessman.

Alistair Campbell

The Oban Times

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Thought for the week

'Create in me a clean heart, oh God, and put a new and right spirit within me'
Psalm 51 v10

That was some stoushie at the Oscar Awards Night. In the Best Picture category, the judges' verdict was announced by Faye Dunaway - La La Land. But it wasn't! The actual winner was Moonlight. The company charged with overseeing the results, PWC mucked up. I am sure we are all glad

to know this international company of auditors have our banking interests in safe hands too! I remember one of our Uni. lecturers talking about St. Paul's theology on judgement and verdict. He argued that Paul said that you come before God as judge. And due to the life we lead and the things

we exhibit such as greed, prejudice, intolerance, selfishness we are pronounced guilty. Then the judge removes his wig and you see that it is your father and you are forgiven in love. This isn't La La Land, rather a truth of our existence. We are accountable for who and what we are, yet God loves us into a better self.

I haven't seen Moonlight yet. La La Land was great. So treat yourself to a night out at the Phoenix Cinema. See what you think. And meanwhile get your head around God's verdict and acquittal - and the result is good. Rev Dugald Cameron: Kilmore and Oban Church of Scotland.

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Retiral leads to change in parishes

Monsignor Thomas Wynne will be retiring from his priesthood at St Margaret's Church in Roybridge in June.

Mgr Wynne, now in his mid-80s, has been priest in various parishes across the West Highlands for 60 years and is very popular in Lochaber, coming from a well-known local family.

He will be succeeded by Father Danny Convery from Benbecula, who moves to Roybridge to take over St Margaret's, a

parish which also encompasses Spean Bridge and Invergarry.

Bishop Brian McGee will move from the Bishop's House in Oban to take over the Benbecula parish, in an unprecedented move from the Argyll and Isles Diocese. Bishop McGee, originally from Greenock, will be at the Outer Hebrides parish from now until June, when a more permanent replacement will take over.

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Mull defeat Oban in penalty shootout

OBAN Hockey Club's annual indoor tournament took place last Sunday in Atlantis Leisure centre.

With 60 players competing in the tournament, there was an air of excitement and anticipation.

The walls of the main hall were soon echoing with the sounds of an ever-increasing crowd of spectators, many of whom had made their way across from Mull, for the day's games.

Due to record numbers in attendance, the tournament was played in a league format with the top two teams from each league going on to play-off

Hockey

games. The victors then competed in a single final for the highly coveted indoor trophy and the even more coveted chocolate Easter egg.

After 16 matches involving nine teams in total, two teams emerged from the play-offs, the home team, Oban, and rivals Mull.

The stage was set for a very competitive final. Nerves were showing as the players stepped on the pitch and the game got off to a ferocious start with end to end play from the moment



Hockey players face the camera before the prize-giving at the indoor hockey tournament held at Atlantis Leisure last Sunday.



Action from the indoor hockey tournament.

the whistle blew. Individual skill and teamwork on both sides created multiple scoring opportunities but with two excellent defences it proved impossible to find the back of the net.

The game and tournament trophy went to Mull, narrowly winning on penalty runs 3-2.

Special mention should go to Olivia Sexton from Mull and Stuart Head from Oban, winning female and male player of the tournament respectively.

A fantastic day was had by all, both spectators and players alike, and it was wonderful to see this sport growing so rapidly in the local area.

West Shield semi-final on Saturday

Rugby

Oban Lorne	
Carrick	
West Regional Shield - semi-final	

OBAN Lorne welcome familiar opponents Carrick RFC on Saturday in the semi-final of the West Regional Shield.

The Green Machine have progressed to the semi-final stage courtesy of an impressive 55-0 win over Division 2 champions Stewartry and a bye against relegated Helensburgh RFC.

Saturday's game is set to be an extremely tough test with matches between the two sides being mainly close affairs over the past few seasons. The sides have already met on West Division 1 league duty this season. Oban recorded an impressive 17-15 win at Glencruitten back in October while Carrick won the reverse fixture 43-27 at the start of 2017.

The Green Machine will be full of confidence ahead of Saturday's big match with an upturn in both performances and results since new year. Coach Corrie Louw will have a strong and large squad to choose from this weekend including a couple of key players returning from long-term injury.

Preparations for Saturday's match have been disrupted by a lack of winter training facilities in the Oban area. With Glencruitten currently waterlogged, the team have been forced to cancel training sessions or even train inside the clubhouse. Fortunately at times space has been available on the high school all-weather pitch.

The winner of Saturday's semi-final will progress to the West Regional Shield final on Saturday March 11. This game will be played away to Irvine RFC.

If Oban Lorne reach the final stage of the competition the team will only be two wins away from a historic second cup final appearance at BT Murrayfield in recent seasons.

Saturday's match will be played most likely at North Connel, with kick-off at 3pm. The venue of the game will be confirmed on the club website and Facebook page.

Kevin is just champion

Pool

KEVIN Douglas was crowned the winner of the first annual pool tournament held in the Railway Club in Inverloch.

The pool tournament, which is to be held every year from now on, lasted 12 weeks from November till January, with games being played every Tuesday.

A points system was used and the scores added up each week until Kevin was crowned the league winner as well as the Champion of Champions.

There was also a doubles competition, which was won by Paul MacKay and Brian Johnstone.

Spotlight on Taynuilt badminton star

HARRY Mobey is an elite Scottish junior badminton player and has the highest ranking of any senior or junior Argyll player.

Harry has been a member of Oban Senior Badminton Club since he was in primary school.

He has also been supported by Atlantis Leisure elite membership and he receives sponsorship now from Yonex as well as Glasgow Life.

Harry is from Taynuilt and at the age of 12 applied and was selected for Glasgow School of Sport, which he still attends.

The youngster began playing badminton at the age of nine when he and his brother attended the PlaySport badminton sessions at Atlantis Leisure.

He enjoyed sport but was prevented from participating in a number of outdoor sports due to asthma.

Private coaching

Harry got a taste for the game so some private coaching was arranged.

The Taynuilt youngster entered his first tournament in Larkhall followed by the junior national championships, knocking out several circuit players who were part of the national junior team and securing a place in the last eight of the national tournament.

Harry's progress since entering the school has been

Badminton

outstanding. He has gone from winning Argyll and Bute Primary Championships to being number one in the Scottish secondary schools singles and boys' doubles events.

In addition, he has had huge national success in both men's singles and doubles events, recently collecting six medals in the last two months across men's singles and doubles events in England.

Big future

Harry, now aged 16, is considered a rising star with a big future in Scottish senior badminton.

Next season, Harry's focus will be on men's singles where he will be playing across Europe, also making his debut into the Senior Scottish National Championships and Grand Prix late November.

He will also be a contender for the Scottish Senior Squad prior to leaving school next year.

Harry's ranking is as follows: men's singles ranked fourth in the under-17 Scottish badminton league. He is currently ranked number 17 in the Scottish senior badminton league and is likely to finish with a top 10 ranking by the end of June. Harry has now entered the Senior World Badminton League.



Euan with his trophy.

Trials success for Euan

TRIALS rider Euan Sim, eight, from Taynuilt, recently attended the Scottish Auto Cycle Union's annual presentation of prizes where he received the 2016 Scottish Youth D Trials Championship trophy and the 2016 Scottish Youth D Oset Championship trophy.

Euan has also secured sponsorship from Oset Bikes for

Trials

the 2017 season which starts in April.

He will be representing Scotland during the British rounds this year and has been busy training during the winter at the Bob MacGregor Trials Academy in Dunlop, Ayrshire.



Taynuilt badminton star Harry Mobey pictured with his medal, after winning an under-18s event in Durham last weekend.

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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.
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SHINTY

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Friendlies fall foul of the weather

WITH the new shinty season imminent, clubs are making their final preparations ahead of the competitive action.

Pre-season friendlies

Only a few pre-season friendly matches beat Storm Doris on Saturday February 25.

Caberfeidh P Newtonmore P

Newtonmore were to host Caberfeidh at the Eilan as part of their annual open day.

Inclement weather meant the event was cancelled on the previous Thursday so the teams tried again at Castle Leod with a 1.30pm throw-up. However, a Saturday morning pitch inspection ruled that Cabers' pitch was also unplayable.

Glasgow Mid Argyll P Kyles Athletic P

There was to be an all-premier-ship friendly at Yoker where Glasgow Mid Argyll were to take on Kyles Athletic but again the wet weather left the field flooded.

Glenurquhart P Strathglass P

The MacDonald and Ali Ban Cup matches between the Glenurquhart and Strathglass first and second teams at Blairbeg will be re-scheduled for a later date.

Inverness P Lochaber P

The match between Inverness and Lochaber at the Bught Park was cancelled off.

Inverness P Caithness P

The meeting between the Inverness second team and Caithness at the Bught Park was postponed.

Kilmallie P Beaulieu P

The BSW Cup clash between Kilmallie and Beaulieu was called off as Canal Parks was unplayable.

Kilmory P Col Glen P

There was also disappointment for Kilmory and Col Glen as their 1.30pm throw-up at MacRae Park was postponed.

Kingussie 4 Skye Camanachd 0

Kingussie beat Skye Camanachd 4-0 at the Dell to win The Hoteliers Cup.

Kingussie's pitch beat the elements, surviving pitch inspections on Friday evening and Saturday morning.

Kingussie started with James Hutchison at full back, Lee Bain at buckshee back and Ryan Borthwick at full centre.

Skye's plans suffered a double blow ahead of throw-up when Steven Morrison and Shockie MacLennan both suffered

injuries in the warm up and had to withdraw. Captain Kenny Campbell and Neil MacVicar were back in the side after missing the team's first two pre-season games. Ally MacDonald went into the full back position.

It was an even start to the game, but Kingussie went in front through Roddy Young. Ryan MacWilliam played a deep shy in on the visiting goal. Skye keeper Iain MacLeod did well to keep the ball out of the net but Roddy Young ran in to score.

James Falconer made it 2-0 when he reacted well to slot the ball low into the net from 15 yards.

Neil Bowman has had the Kingussie players working hard during pre-season and they finished strongly, adding two more goals.

James Falconer's second was the pick of the afternoon's strikes. Falconer played the ball to Chris Holleysong on the wing before taking a return pass and finishing well to make it 3-0.

When the ball deflected into the path of Chris Holleysong, he made no mistake, adding goal number four to round off the win.

The Kingussie forwards were inventive which pleased boss Dallas Young although a back muscle injury to Ryan Borthwick and a hamstring injury to Savio Genini will be of concern.

Scotland U21 defender John Gillies was excellent for Skye.

Kingussie P Aberdour P

There was a Friday evening call-off for the game between the Kingussie colts and Aberdour at the Dell.

Lochside Rovers P Inveraray P

The meeting between Lochside Rovers and the Inveraray second team was postponed on Thursday evening as the Ganavan pitch in Oban was waterlogged.

Lovat 4 Fort William 0

Fort William and Lovat rounded off their pre-season programmes with a game at Balgate.

The fixture was originally scheduled for An Aird but an unplayable field led to a switch of venue and an 11.45am throw-up which Lovat won 4-0.

Lovat were without Greg Matheson, Daniel Grieve and Callum Cruden, whilst Fort William travelled minus Bryan Simpson, Daniel Stewart, Graham Cameron, Mark Grant and Sean Cameron.

Lovat took the lead on 24 minutes when Craig Mainland burst forward from midfield to get on the end of a Lewis Tawse cross from the left to crack the ball home.

Lovat doubled their lead just three minutes later. Lewis Tawse was again the provider with another cross from the left and, when a Fort defender missed a chance to clear the

ball, Lorne MacKay popped up on the Lovat right to score. It was a more even second half but two late goals put gloss on the Lovat win. Lorne MacKay, now on the left, made it 3-0 on 78 minutes when he killed the ball with his caman before sending it low past keeper Paul MacKay's right leg into the net.

Martin Bell rounded off the win on 82 minutes. A ball from the right reached Lorne MacKay and his backhand shot was saved by Paul MacKay, Fort William were unable to clear their lines though and Martin Bell ran in to tap the ball into the net.

Lovat 1 Glengarry 7

It was another high scoring week for Glengarry as they beat Lovat's second team 7-1 at Balgate.

Raymond Rennie scored the home goal but 'Garry, with Andrew Gilchrist in midfield, were comfortable winners with Nick Dalgety scoring four times and Raymond Robertson, Martin Cameron and Archie Johnstone getting the others.

Oban Celtic P Ballachulish P

The Robert Wylie Memorial Cup match between Oban Celtic and Ballachulish was postponed on Friday afternoon as Mossfield was unplayable.

Skye Camanachd 0 Lewis Camanachd 0

A 7am Saturday morning pitch inspection put paid to the John 'Kaid' MacLean Cup challenge between Skye Camanachd and Lewis Camanachd at Pairc nan Laoch, Portree.

Strachur P Bute P

The 2.30pm throw-up between Strachur and Bute at Strachurmore was another match which fell foul of the weather.

Tayforth 6 Edinburgh University 2

Tayforth beat Edinburgh University 6-2 at Musselburgh.

David Arnott, Ewan Menzies, 2, Finlay Stark, Sean Taylor and Conor Sweeney all scored for Tayforth, whilst Duncan Gorman scored the students' two goals.

WCA round-up

The first Women's Camanachd Association matches of the new season took place last weekend.

Marine Harvest North Division 2 fixtures were hit by the weather and the game between Lochaber and Lewis Camanachd was an early postponement.

A Sunday morning pitch inspection ruled out the game between Strathglass and Glengarry at Cannich.

The noon meeting between Strathspey and Inverness went ahead though with Strathspey winning a close match 2-1. Jessica Hart scored twice in the second half to put Strathspey 2-0 ahead but Hannah Johnson pulled a goal back for Inverness.

Later in the day, Strathspey Camanachd hosted the Development East fixtures with Badenoch and Strathspey, Strathspey and Tayforth all taking part in evenly contested games.

The opening round of Development West fixtures were postponed as Cannich was unplayable.

Portree and Inverloch are First Shinty winners

Portree Primary School and Inverloch Primary School won the Gilmour Sports National First Shinty tournaments in Fort William on Saturday February 25.

The Primary 5 and under tournament took place at Lochaber High School. Twelve teams qualified from their local

tournaments and, following the league sections, Inverloch defeated Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abarin in their semi-final tie, with Balnain beating Rockfield to secure their place in the final. Inverloch beat Balnain in the final to lift the trophy.

Portree Primary School and Dingwall Primary School won through to the Primary 7 and under final.

This tournament took place at the Nevis Centre and the standard of play was excellent. Dingwall beat a good Glasgow Gaels side 2-1 in the last four with Portree getting past an impressive Inverloch. Portree took the honours with a final win over Dingwall to re-claim the trophy they won last year.

Bute withdraw from National Division

The Camanachd Association has confirmed Bute have withdrawn their first team from the Marine Harvest National Division and will play in Marine Harvest South Division 1 this coming season.

A statement from the game's governing body advised member clubs that a request was received from Bute Shinty Club on Saturday February 11 to withdraw their first team from the 2017 Marine Harvest National Division.

Bute requested they be allowed to join Marine Harvest South Division 1 instead and, in the process, maintain their second team in South Division 2.

Bute advised: 'The players are unable to commit to our first team due to family and work commitments combined with the additional travel involved with the current National League set up.

'We consider that if we do take part in that league we will be unable to complete the fixture list and will have to withdraw during the season. This would be unfair on the other teams. It would also result in the loss of playing members of our club.'

The Camanachd Association Executive rejected the initial letter and verbally requested the Bute chairman meet with the club's players and managers to determine if there was any way they could be persuaded to see the National Division through this year.

The chairman reported back that there was next to no appetite for continuing in the National and they would inevitably default, sooner rather than later. Perhaps crucially, he made a plea for continuing with two teams because the younger players would be the ones edged out if they were restricted to South Division 2 only.

The request was further considered by the competitions committee and by the board of directors.

Whilst the game's byelaws state the Camanachd Association would be minded to refuse such a request, both the competitions committee and the relevant board of directors have most reluctantly agreed to the request to sustain the participation of two teams from Bute.

However, Bute will be deducted eight points when they start in South Division 1 as the relevant byelaw introduced at the start of the 2016 shinty season states where the association agrees to a club's request for their team to play in a lower league, that team will forfeit 20 per cent of available league points.

Given the short notice, the Camanachd Association does not intend to re-draw the league fixtures.

Where possible, teams in the National Division scheduled to play Bute will play the team which previously had no fixture. Similarly the team in Marine Harvest South Division 1 which had no fixture will be paired



Lovat's Craig Mainland feels the challenge from Fort William's Niall MacPhee. Photographs: Neil Paterson.

with Bute.

2017 Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup final venue

The 2017 Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup Final will take place at the Bught Park, Inverness.

Last year's final between Newtonmore and Oban Camanachd took place at An Aird, Fort William, with 'More winning 1-0 courtesy of a third-minute Glen MacKintosh goal.

Lovat beat Kyles Athletic at Mossfield in the 2015 final whilst the last final at the Bught Park was in 2014 when Kingussie defeated Glenurquhart 4-0.

This season's showpiece game has been moved from its recent mid-September slot to Saturday September 30 at the request of BBC Scotland.

Garry Lord injury blow for Oban Camanachd

Oban Camanachd have been dealt an injury blow on the eve of the new shinty season with the news defender Garry Lord has been ruled out of action with a broken leg.

Garry suffered the injury in last weekend's Murdo MacKenzie Memorial Cup win over Strathglass when a challenge left him in need of a hospital visit.

It was later confirmed he had suffered a break just above the ankle.

With fellow defenders James MacMillan abroad and Ross MacMillan opting to join Oban Celtic, manger Iain Hay has been left short of defensive options so he may have to reshuffle his pack ahead of the season opener away to Kinlochshiel.

MacLean makes Newtonmore switch

David MacLean will play shinty for Marine Harvest Premiership champions Newtonmore this coming season after ending his time with Beaulieu.

David MacLean was one of the top performers in the Marine Harvest National Division last season. He captained Beaulieu to Balliemore Cup success and has previously represented Scotland at U21 level.

He is a versatile player and although he mainly featured for Beaulieu at buckshee back

last season, he can also play in midfield and up front where he may start for Newtonmore.

MacLean hadn't featured in Beaulieu's friendly fixtures this year through injury and his departure, coupled with Conor Cormack's move to Kinlochshiel 12 months earlier, is a blow to Beaulieu's Marine Harvest National Division title chances.

Beaulieu will be managed this term by Alan MacRae, who replaces Stephen MacLean, David MacLean's father, in the managerial hot-seat.

This season's televised shinty

Eight shinty matches will be broadcast live during the new shinty season.

The Camanachd Association has reached agreement with both BBC Scotland and BBC Alba to cover the following games:

Saturday June 10: MacTavish Cup Final, Bught Park, Inverness - BBC Alba.

Saturday June 24: Gregor Cameron Consultancy Glasgow Celtic Society Cup Final, Tainuist Sports Field - BBC Alba.

Friday August 4: Marine Harvest Premiership, Kingussie v Newtonmore, The Dell - BBC Alba. Throw-up - 6pm.

Saturday August 12: Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup Semi Final, venue to be confirmed - BBC Alba.

Saturday August 19: Artemis Macaulay Cup Final, Mossfield - BBC2 Scotland.

Saturday August 26: Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup Semi Final, venue to be confirmed - BBC Alba.

Saturday September 30: Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup Final, Bught Park, Inverness - BBC2 Scotland

Saturday October 21: Marine Harvest shinty/hurling international, Scotland v Ireland, Bught Park, Inverness - BBC2 Scotland.

Camanachd Association president Jim Barr said: 'We value our partnerships with BBC ALBA and BBC Scotland and appreciate the service they provide in bringing shinty to a much wider audience. We look forward to sharing this with spectators present on the day and those tuning in remotely.'

Shinty preview

The countdown is on to the new shinty season which begins on this Saturday, March 4.

Marine Harvest Premiership

Newtonmore v Lovat

Champions Newtonmore open their bid for an eighth successive league title against Lovat at the Eilan.

'More boss Paul John MacKintosh will be without defender Michael Russell for the start of the season. Russell's work took him to Poland in September but he could be back in the fold by the middle of April. The 'More defence will be further hit as Scotland defender Andy MacKintosh is banned for the Lovat match as his booking against Skye in the team's final match of last season triggers a one match ban for passing through the disciplinary points threshold.

Evan Menzies will also miss the opening games of the season as he is carrying out a full scale renovation on a house bought at the end of last year. Menzies and Russell are both maintaining their fitness though so both should be ready for action as soon as their availability allows.

Another forward, Calum Stewart, returns from a spell abroad and the big news at the Eilan is the signing of David MacLean from Beaulieu. Paul John MacKintosh's trusted lieutenant Iain MacKintosh has stepped down.

Senior player Norman Campbell will be a sounding board for MacKintosh whilst Grant Munro will continue to play his role as one of the backroom staff.

Rory Kennedy will captain Newtonmore for the 2017 shinty season.

Lovat were the only team to beat Newtonmore last season, winning their Artemis Macaulay Cup tie at the Eilan after extra-time. Fraser Gallacher could not have been given a tougher start to his competitive tenure as Lovat first team manager. He is without Scotland international Kevin Bartlett who has returned to Caberfeidh and young defender Mark Kelly has a hand injury. Euan Ferguson is another absentee as he has relocated to England whilst Scotland U21 defender Michael MacKenzie will concentrate on his trial kicking activities. Craig Mainland is fit after recovering from a serious shoulder injury.

Scotland U17 player Scott MacKenzie established himself as a first team regular at the end of last season whilst Gallacher will hope his captain Greg Matheson has put last season's injury woes behind him.



Fort William keeper Paul Mackay makes a save during the match against Lovat.

Camanachd Cup Macaulay Cup MacTavish Cup Celtic Society Cup

Sutherland Cup Balliemore Cup Strathdearn Cup Bullough Cup



Graham Cameron is the match official for this game.

Kinlochshiel v Oban Camanachd

Kinlochshiel and Oban Camanachd were two of Newtonmore's main challengers last season and they meet at Kirkton.

Johnston Gill is back in the Kinlochshiel hot-seat, taking over from Colin Fraser. He will be assisted by Doe MacRae. 'Shiel are minus John Don MacKenzie and Duncan 'Ach' MacRae who have joined GMA. 'Shiel don't have the biggest squad so some of their promising youngsters will get the chance to stake a first team claim. It's a big season for 'Shiel as they look to build on last year's successes, whilst there is also the possibility of the club moving to their new pitch at Balmacara during the season.

Oban Camanachd boss Iain Hay is without 2016 captain James MacMillan who has moved abroad, whilst fellow defender Garry Lord is also out with a broken leg. Promising young defender Ross MacMillan has joined Oban Celtic whilst David Lafferty has been hampered by a serious knee injury.

Matt Rippon has rejoined the club and has been scoring goals during the pre-season. Connor Howe is also back following a spell in the States. Youth players Evan MacLellan, Lewis Buchanan and Daniel MacCuish have all taken their chance to shine during Oban Camanachd's pre-season friendlies.

Deek Cameron is the match referee for this one.

Lochaber v Kyles Athletic

Lochaber and Kyles Athletic cross camans at Spean Bridge.

Lochaber boss Ally Ferguson starts this term without seasoned campaigners Neil MacDonald and Lachlan Campbell who both retired from first team duty at the end of last season. Forward Ben Dalgety is also unlikely to be available but Zandz Ferguson should feature more than he did last season whilst Jack Dignan continues to make progress on his return from injury.

Kyles Athletic are another top flight club under new management. Long-term coach James Perlich is now in charge, taking over from Norman MacDonald. Kyles stalwart Kenny MacDonald will continue as part of the management team. Kyles were the only team to take league points off Newtonmore last season, drawing both their games.

Archie Ritchie takes charge of proceedings at Spean Bridge.

Kilmallie v Glenurquhart

Last year's Marine Harvest National Division champions Kilmallie welcome Glenurquhart to Canal Parks.

It's a case of one in and one out for Kilmallie boss Mark MacPherson. Forward Peter McIntyre has returned from a stint at Inveraray, followed by a spell abroad.

Scotland international Liam MacDonald will be sidelined for the early part of the season at least, hoping that a period of rest will cure a persistent knee problem. Otherwise, MacPherson will rely on the squad which did the National Division and Balliemore Cup double last season.

Iain MacLeod replaces co-managers Billy MacLean and Dave Menzies at Glenurquhart. The Glen have fitness concerns over keeper Stuart MacKintosh who underwent a knee operation towards the end of last season. Club chairman Garry MacKintosh deputised during most of the pre-season. Lewis MacLennan has relocated to the isle of Muck where he is a gamekeeper but he may still feature this year. Ally MacKintosh looks to be fit again but David Smart is still sidelined. Daniel MacKintosh has looked lively in front of goal during pre-season games.

Robert Baxter will referee this encounter.

Glasgow Mid Argyll v Kingussie

Glasgow Mid Argyll return to the premiership for the first

time since 2010 and they play Kingussie at Yoker. GMA boss George Hay has made some additions to his squad with John Don MacKenzie returning after his second spell at Kinlochshiel. MacKenzie's 'Shiel team-mate Duncan 'Ach' MacRae has also signed on at GMA with former Lochside Rovers keeper Robert Dunning and ex-Glenurquhart defender Stuart Reid making up a quartet of new signings.

This will be Dallas Young's first competitive match as Kingussie boss after he and his assistant Russell Dallas took over from co-managers Russell Jones and Davie Anderson. The Kings are likely to be without Scotland attacker Thomas Borthwick whilst Fraser Munro won't be available for the early part of the season at least.

Young will hope new first team captain Ryan Borthwick is fully recovered from the back problems which dogged him last season, especially after he was forced off in last weekend's friendly match against Skye. Savio Genini is also an injury doubt for this one.

David Mitchell is the man in the middle.

Marine Harvest National Division

Oban Celtic v Fort William
Oban Celtic and Fort William are both new to the Marine Harvest National Division for different reasons. Oban Celtic take their place in the division as Marine Harvest South Division 1 champions whilst Fort William were relegated from the top flight at the end of last season.

Oban Celtic manager Kenny Wotherspoon has made changes to his title winning squad. Ewan MacCorquodale will play his shinty at Oban Lorn this coming season, whilst Fraser Macmillan has returned to Taynuilt.

Ross MacMillan has joined the club from Oban Camanachd whilst former Glenorchy defender Fulton Ronald and experienced Andrew Hunt from Strachur have also signed up.

Fort William co-managers Victor Smith and Adam Robertson have made 2016 club player of the year James Tangney their captain for the 2017 season. They will hope that Arran MacPhee and Jack Fraser have put their injury difficulties behind them, whilst youngsters Seamus Gall and Lachie Shaw could force their way into the first team plans.

Skye Camanachd v Inverness

Skye Camanachd begin the season with the visit of Inverness to Pairc nan Laoch, Portree.

Skye, relegated from the premiership at the end of 2016, are under new management with co-managers Willie Cowie and Peter Gordon taking over from John MacLeod. Iain MacLeod will be in goal in place of Jamie Gannon, whilst Shockie MacLennan has also returned to the squad after missing most of last season.

Chris MacLennan will miss the opening couple of months of the season because of university studies. Steven Morrison is a weekend injury doubt for the islanders. He missed the pre-season friendly defeat to Kingussie with a groin strain, whilst Shockie MacLennan has a back problem.

Inverness manager Drew McNeil has added former Taynuilt player Ewan Neilson to his squad. He scored on his debut in a friendly meeting with Newtonmore. Inverness will have to do without the experienced Davie Glass as a booking against Bute in the Highland Capital side's last game of the season has led to a one-game ban.

Inveraray v Beaulieu

Inveraray were to open their season with a match against Bute at the Winterton but the Islanders' decision to drop down a division means Beaulieu, who were to be the original nine team league's free team, take their place.

There are changes at Inveraray with veterans David Robertson and Andrew McMurdo stepping



Lovat's Lorne Mackay is marked by Fort William's Sean Cruickshank.

down from first team duty. David MacPherson will divide his time between the first and second teams so expect a number of the club's promising youngsters to burst on to the first team scene.

New Beaulieu boss Alan MacRae has signed former Glenurquhart and Inverness player Liam Girvan. Ryan MacKay and Kenneth MacKenzie have moved to Caberfeidh and David MacLean will be difficult to replace following his decision to join Newtonmore. Barrie MacDonald is sidelined as he recovers from a knee operation.

Strathglass v Caberfeidh

Strathglass welcome Caberfeidh to Cannich.

Strathglass finished second in Marine Harvest North Division 1 at the end of last season with the Newtonmore reserves topping the league. Strathglass made a case for promotion which was accepted by the Camanachd Association. David Balharry's side undoubtedly made progress last season and they will be further tested at national level.

Marine Harvest North Division 1

Beaulieu v Newtonmore
2016 league winners Newtonmore reserves open their league campaign against Beaulieu reserves at Braeview Park.

First team absences could affect Beaulieu early in the season whilst Newtonmore, with Orsten Gardner assisting boss Cammy MacDonald, will have a bigger pool at their disposal.

Newtonmore will start as league favourites again, whilst Beaulieu will look to better last season's sixth-placed finish.

Fort William v Skye Camanachd

Fort William and Skye Camanachd colts meet at An Aird.

The Fort will continue to give youth a chance, selecting their promising youngsters as some of last year's pool are promoted to the first team.

New Skye manager Kenny MacLeod also has a number of promising youngsters to pick from and Ruairaidh MacLeod, Jamie Gillies and Martin Pringle will all get game time.

Kingussie v Aberdeen Uni

The Kingussie seconds play Aberdeen University at the Dell.

Kingussie will again be led by Ally MacLeod and Ronald Ross and, having stepped down from first team duty, Garry Munro could feature in some second string games, as could the returning Martin Dallas.

The students start life in the league having completed a perfect season in North 2 in 2016, taking maximum points from their league games. Boss Jamie

Beaton has the same squad available including Alex Duncan who was prolific in front of goal last year.

Glenurquhart v Kinlochshiel
The Glenurquhart second team and the Kinlochshiel second team do battle at Blairbeg.

Glenurquhart manager Chris Surtees has been impressed with the performances of youngsters Finlay Ralston and Ewan Carroll during the pre-season whilst Calum Miller will add experience to the side.

Willie MacRae continues in charge at Kinlochshiel. He will rely on the experience of Neil Fraser and Scot MacLean coupled with Scotland U17 player Jonnie MacAskill and youths WD MacRae and Finlay MacRae.

Marine Harvest South Division 1

Lochside Rovers v Aberdour
Two of the title challengers have an early meeting as Lochside Rovers host Aberdour at Ganavan.

Aberdour finished second in the division last season, a point ahead of third-placed Lochside Rovers.

Lochside have added Scotland U17 keeper Cameron Sutherland to their squad and after he starred for Ballachulish in the National Division last season, Craig MacDougall is also back at the club after playing for Oban Lorn last year.

Aberdour Boss Lisa MacColl has much the same squad to pick from and David McDougall and Ali Abbott, aged 15, have forced their way into the first team reckoning having both played well in defence in the pre-season friendly win over Glasgow Mid Argyll.

Ballachulish v Bute

Ballachulish were to have no fixture until confirmation came through that Bute would drop down to South 1 so Ballachulish will now play the islanders at Jubilee Park.

Donald Wilson and his assistant Malcolm Grant stay in charge at Ballachulish but highly-rated keeper Cameron Sutherland has moved to Lochside Rovers so the experienced David MacPhee will return in goal.

One concern for Ballachulish is a pre-season knee ligament injury to last year's captain Eoin Fyfe which will keep him out of the side for some time. Forward Lorne Brown has been named club captain for the year ahead.

It's been a turbulent few weeks for Bute and they will be pleased to now focus on the on-field action. Their decision to drop down a division means they start their league campaign with an eight point deduction and attacker Ben Clarke will miss the start of the league season through injury.

Kyles Athletic v Glenorchy

The Kyles Athletic second team welcome Glenorchy to Tighnabruaich.

Kyles finished sixth last season,

a point ahead of seventh-placed Glenorchy so the signs are this will be a close encounter.

Glenorchy's Graham Morrice picked up a two-match suspension courtesy of a red card in the goal-less draw against Taynuilt in what was the Mart Park club's last game of the 2016 season.

Col Glen v Tayforth

Col Glen and newly promoted Tayforth meet at Otter Ferry.

Col Glen will be managed this season by Brian Kennedy and Brian McNaughton, assisted by Ronnie MacVicar. They take over from club stalwart James Edgar who steps down after five years in charge.

Tayforth won promotion after winning Marine Harvest South Division 2 last season. They advertised for a new manager during the close season but have opted to continue with Ewan Menzies and Finlay Stark taking a lead role in their positions as captain and vice captain.

Taynuilt v Kilmory

Taynuilt face Kilmory at Taynuilt Sports Field.

Taynuilt finished fourth in the division last season and Fraser Macmillan has rejoined the club after a spell with Oban Celtic.

Newly-promoted Kilmory pose a real goal threat with 2016 Marine Harvest South Division 2 Player of the Year Hal Jones, Alex Cunningham and Andrew Cunningham sure to test defences in this league.

Marine Harvest North Division 2

Caberfeidh v Lochaber

The Caberfeidh and Lochaber seconds teams clash at Castle Leod.

Neil MacKenzie of Caberfeidh collected a red card in his side's final match of last season, a 3-2 defeat to Glasgow Mid Argyll, so he will miss the opening two matches of the new term.

The Lochaber colts will be able to lean on the experienced Lachlan Campbell whose son Max Campbell is impressing at youth level.

Glengarry v Lewis Camanachd

Glengarry and Lewis Camanachd play at Craigard.

Glengarry pulled off a close season signing coup with Scotland U21 player Nick Dalgety joining from Lochcarron. Dalgety is a trainee gamekeeper at Culachy Estate, near Fort Augustus. 'Garry have a strong squad when they have everyone available with Steven Cameron, Andrew Gilchrist and Raymond Robertson all still involved. Boss Duncan MacIntyre begins his second season in charge at Lewis with a trip to his former club.

He will be without veteran Eoghan Stewart, Seamus Charity and the club's top scorer Will Church this season. Club player of the year Michael MacLeod will be a key player and it is expected to see more of youngsters Steven Morrison and Scott MacLeod. Throw-up is at 1.30pm.

Lovat v Boleskine

The Lovat seconds play Boleskine at Balgate.

Darren Urquhart takes charge of Lovat after Martin Bell stepped down at the end of last season.

Boleskine also have a change at the top with Graham Black replacing Jamie Matheson. Jamie remains as a player though and the forward could line up against former club Lovat in this game.

Strathspey Camanachd v Kilmallie

Strathspey Camanachd and the Kilmallie second team meet at Grantown Grammar School.

Strathspey Camanachd didn't have their troubles to seek during the close season when a fire destroyed most of their equipment. The side rallied to replace the kit and they can now concentrate on their league campaign.

The Kilmallie seconds will be keen to get off to a good start as they face the teams which finished in the bottom three positions in the division over the first three weeks of the new season. Home matches with Lewis Camanachd and the Inverness second team follow this one. Throw-up is at 1.30pm.

Inverness v Strathglass

The newly-reformed Strathglass colts make the relatively short journey to Bught Park to play the Inverness colts.

Allan MacLeod's philosophy at Inverness will be to continue to introduce young players into the team such as Ross MacKinnon and Finlay Calder who both made their debuts during the pre-season.

Strathglass have restored their second team to competitive action following some increased activity at youth level. Eoghan Stewart, who has joined the club from Lewis Camanachd, will lend some experience to the squad.

Lochcarron are given a free week in this 11-team league.

Boss Andrew Slaughter suffered a blow with the news that Nick Dalgety has joined Glengarry.

Matthew Young is an injury doubt after taking a blow to the knee at the pre-season MacKinnon Sixes but Seamus Charity has joined from Lewis Camanachd.

Marine Harvest South Division 2

Strachur v Oban Lorn

Strachur and Oban Lorn are in action at Strachurmore

Strachur make a welcome return to Marine Harvest South Division 2 after taking a year away from competitive shinty.

Oban Lorn finished third in this division last season and with the top two – Tayforth and Kilmory – promoted, they should be in the mix at the top of the table. Oban Lorn duo Calum MacLean and Shaun MacIver will sit out the opening day through suspension.

Bute v Inveraray

Bute and Inveraray seconds meet at The Meadows.

Bute finished fifth in the division last season, whilst the Inveraray reserves were relegated after finishing bottom of Marine Harvest South Division 1.

Inveraray will be able to call on the experienced David MacPherson who will assist boss Graham MacPherson throughout the season. The Winterton side have several promising U14 starlets who will get their chance to shine.

Aberdour v Glasgow Mid Argyll

Aberdour and Glasgow Mid Argyll's second teams meet at Silversands.

The sides met in a pre-season friendly in early February at the same venue. Aberdour will continue to promote players from their U14 set up into the second team whilst youngster Ross Anderson is sure to be amongst the goals for GMA.

Aberdour finished sixth last year whilst GMA were a couple

of places higher. Dunoon are the free team on the opening day of the season in this seven team league. They took part in the Dropkick Murphy Sixes in Musselburgh, where they reached the semi-finals, but the weather hit their other pre-season preparations.

All throws-ups 2.30pm unless stated.



Fixtures

Saturday March 4

Marine Harvest Premiership

Glasgow MA v Kingussie
David Mitchell
Kilmallie v Glenurquhart
Robert Baxter
Kinlochshiel v Oban Camanachd
Deek Cameron
Lochaber v Kyles Athletic
Archie Ritchie
Newtonmore v Lovat
Graham Cameron

Marine Harvest National Division

Inveraray v Beaulieu
Innes Wood
Oban Celtic v Fort William
Lachie Wood
Skye v Inverness
Martin MacLean
Strathglass v Caberfeidh
Calum Girvan

Marine Harvest North Division 1

Beaulieu v Newtonmore
John Angus Gillies
Fort William v Skye
Evan MacRae
Glenurquhart v Kinlochshiel
Neil Ferguson
Kingussie v Aberdeen Uni
Andy Maclean

Marine Harvest South Division 1

Ballachulish v Bute
Alex MacVicar
Col Glen v Tayforth
Iain Kennedy
Kyles Athletic v Glenorchy
Willie MacDonald
Lochside Rovers v Aberdour
Scott McNeil
Taynuilt v Kilmory
Ronnie Campbell

Marine Harvest North Division 2

Caberfeidh v Lochaber
Callum Duff
Glengarry v Lewis
Des McNulty - 1.30pm
Inverness v Strathglass
John Matheson
Lovat v Boleskine
John Wood
Strathspey v Kilmallie
Brian MacKay - 1.30pm

Marine Harvest South Division 2

Aberdour v Glasgow MA
Neil MacDonald
Bute v Inveraray
Jim Innes
Strachur v Oban Lorn
Ewen MacDonald

Womens Camanachd Association

Saturday March 5

Marine Harvest North Division 2
Inverness v Glengarry
Lochaber v Strathspey

Sunday March 5

Marine Harvest North Division 2
Inverness v Glengarry
Lochaber v Strathspey
Marine Harvest South Division 2
Cowan & Bute v Dunadd
Oban Lorn v Glasgow MA
Lorne Ladies v Ardnamurchan



Donald Campbell rifles this shot into the back of the Arkleston net to give Saints a 2-0 lead at Barrhead on Saturday. Match report and photos: Derke Black

Saints play for place in Scottish Cup quarter final

Football

THIS Saturday Oban Saints face their biggest test of the season so far when they travel to Seven Acres Park 3G pitch, Perth to face Letham in the Scottish Amateur Cup 7th round. The game kicks-off at 2pm

Their hosts are reigning Perthshire AFA Division One champions and currently lead the top division with maximum points from their nine games played.

Letham already look well on course to extend their run of three consecutive league titles and will hope to go one better than last season when one solitary defeat cost them a 100 per cent record. Unsurprisingly Letham are also the league's top scorers currently averaging over six goals per game. Their meager nine goals against also marks them out as the league's tightest defence.

On the domestic cup front Letham are on target to successfully defend the Perth and District and Ashleigh Cups won last season and are also going strong in the Smith League Cup setting them up for a possible clean sweep of available silverware.

As well as being Kings of all they survey domestically Letham are also going strong in the district and national cup competitions. They are already through to the quarter finals of the North of Tay District Amateur Cup where they will face league colleagues and four time winners Fair City.

Oban Saints youth results and fixtures

Youth football

LAST weekend's results: Dumbarton United 14, Under 13s 0. Under 14s v Broomhill, postponed. Giffnock 1, Under 15s 7. Scoring for Saints were Eusan Finlay (3), Gavin Forgrieve, Cammy Clark, Kenni Gray and Jordan Norman. Helensburgh 0, Under 16s 9. On target for Saints were Keir MacLean (3), Scott Mossman (2), Cameron Kerr (2), Rory Dowd and Oran Bryce Port Glasgow Juniors v Under 17s, postponed.

This weekend's fixtures: Under 13s no game; Under 14s v East End Utd; Westerton v Under 15s; Under 16s v Ardencape; Under 17s v Loch Lomond.

Over-35s indoor league

Over 35s football

RECENT results from the Over-35s indoor league held at Atlantis Leisure.

Coasters 3, Taynuilt 4.
Coasters 2, Emergency 0.
Clements 6, Emergency 3.
Clements 1, Taynuilt 2.

	P	W	D	L	Pts
Taynuilt	5	5	0	0	15
Coasters	5	3	1	1	10
Clements	5	3	1	0	10
Emergency	7	1	1	5	4
D&K Lafferty	5	1	0	4	3
Teachers	3	0	1	2	1

No Ark required as Saints march into Marshall Cup quarter finals

Arkleston Barrhead	1
Oban Saints	3
Jimmy Marshall Cup - 3rd Round	

LAST Saturday at Cowan Park, Barrhead Oban Saints booked their place in the quarter finals of the Scottish Amateur Football League Jimmy Marshall Trophy with a 3-1 victory over Premier Division 2B leaders Arkleston Barrhead.

The journey to Barrhead was made in heavy rain on flooded roads but safe on the knowledge that the fixture was scheduled for the new 3G facility at Cowan Park. To the relief of all concerned no Ark was required and the rain cleared in time for kick off. The match was played in bright sunshine but with a strong wind blowing across the park towards the parkside touchline where the Saints contingent had assembled.

Manager Alex Craik made several changes from the line-up which had defeated Drumchapel Colts on Saints last outing the most notable being a first competitive appearance of the season for goalkeeper Graham 'Sugar' Douglas. Matthew Kelly was restored to the right back slot with David McArthur moving infield to partner skipper Marc MacCallum.

Scott Maitland completed the back four occupying his regular left back position. After missing his first game of the season against Drumchapel Colts Paul Kerr returned to the midfield alongside Willie Gemmell and Brian Mackay.

Up front Donald Campbell lead the line flanked by Ross Maitland and Craig MacEwan. The Gaffer named himself on a strong bench with Martin Bonar,

Jamie Graham and Dean Smith for company.

Saints kicked off with the advantage of the slight slope and were quickly into their stride dominating the opening ten minutes.

In the fifth minute Willie Gemmell split Arky defenders John McDade and David Fulton with an excellent pass for Donald Campbell to run onto. Unfortunately for Donald Arky keeper Andrew Duncan read the danger with the former Air-drieonians netminder coming quickly off his line to smother the ball at Donald's feet.

Willie Gemmell then decided to try his luck from distance bringing a fine save from Andrew Duncan low down to his left after a lay off from Donald Campbell.

Such was the ferocity of Willie's shot that the keeper was unable to hold it and Craig MacEwan pounced on the loose ball which he sent just over the junction of post and bar from the corner of the six yard box.

The home side created the first of several presentable chances in the 13th minute with Kevin Brown making a good run on the left and cutting back for Paul Quinn who shot wide of Sugar's right hand post.

With the home side having come to terms with the Saints movement the visitors took the lead slightly against the run of play just before the half hour mark.

The goal from Craig MacEwan was virtually identical to his opener against Ferguslie Star at Glencruitten four weeks ago save that the assist this time came from Marc MacCallum. Just as David McArthur had

done previously Marc MacCallum carried the ball into the opposition half and sent a deep cross into the box looking for the head of Craig MacEwan. Craig timed his leap perfectly to get above John McDade and loop a header over Andrew Duncan into the the postage stamp corner.

Saints were almost caught out from the restart when Marc MacCallum and David McArthur were both pulled out the centre leaving Kristoffer Cameron a free header from a Brian McWilliams cross from the right which he mercifully sent wide of Sugar's right hand post.

Saints doubled their advantage in the 33rd minute from a Ross Maitland corner from the left. Donald Campbell threaded a ball down the left wing for Ross who made a jinking run into the box but was beaten by a well timed tackle from Gavin Holley. Ross sent his corner kick deep to the back post where Donald Campbell pulled the ball down and from ten yards lashed a shot past Andrew Duncan's despairing right hand, over the head of Gavin Holley on the goal line, and into the top corner of the net.

Saints were well on top at this point and spurned a couple of excellent chances to make the tie safe before the half-time interval.

The hosts pulled a goal back on the stroke of half-time in slightly controversial circumstances. Jamie Henderson appeared to control a bouncing ball with his upper arm however there was no disputing the quality of his finish with a rasping drive from 25-yards flying past Graham Douglas and into his top right

hand corner. The late counter from the hosts was a blow to Saints who really should have had more than a slender one goal advantage to show for their first half efforts.

The hosts kicked off the second half which, for almost 30 minutes, had Saints wishing they had made more of their early first half domination with the crucial fourth goal of the match looking just as likely to come for either side.



Ross Maitland and Jamie Henderson.

In the 53rd minute Matthew Kelly was fouled just inside the Arky half by Paul Quinn. Donald Campbell took the free-kick quickly almost playing in Brian Mackay who was thwarted by Andrew Duncan's quick dash off his line to snuff out the danger.

Arky second half substitute Michael Brown made an immediate impact on proceedings following a good move on the right wing. Kevin Brown worked the ball along the 18-yard line to namesake Michael who fired in a powerful shot drawing an excellent save from keeper Douglas who turned the ball around his left hand post for a corner kick.

After 18 second half minutes

Saints manager Alex Craik rang the changes replacing Willie Gemmell and Ross Maitland with Jamie Graham and Dean Smith. Michael Brown tested Graham Douglas again in the 66th minute with a good turn and shot which Sugar held comfortably.

At the other end Dean Smith looked to make a similarly early impact trying to catch out Andrew Duncan at his near post with a shot which the Arky keeper did well to hold.

The long ball over the top once again brought a moment of panic for the Saints defence when David McArthur and Jamie Graham lost Kevin Brown with the Arky striker thankfully lofting his first time effort over the crossbar.

Andrew Duncan brought off another fine save from Brian Mackay before John McDade picked up the first booking of the afternoon for a late challenge on Dean Smith in the 72nd minute, a card which was ultimately to prove costly to for the Arky defender. Donald Campbell lined up the free-kick but sent his effort from 22-yards over the Arky crossbar.

The decisive third goal came Saints way in the 72nd minute when a delightful lay-off by Dean Smith from a Donald Campbell pass sent Craig MacEwan in behind the home defence and through on goal. Craig kept his composure to slot the ball past Andrew Duncan and notch his 14th goal of a red hot scoring streak since the turn of the year.

Matthew Kelly made way for Martin Bonar in the 75th minute with the big utility man taking up the wide right position in the five man midfield.

Kevin Brown appealed more in hope than expectation for a 76th minute penalty kick but Mr McNab, who had a good game, was not interested. Regrettably John McDade continued his protests too long for the referee's liking receiving a second yellow card and consequently his marching orders.

Two very tight offside calls from Mr McNab denied Dean Smith and Craig MacEwan

Football

clear sights of goal while at the other end a timely block by Marc MacCallum took the sting out of a Michael Brown shot leaving Graham Douglas with a comfortable save.

Brown continued to keep the Saints defence occupied again latching onto a long ball to race through on goal only to have the ball taken away from him by a perfectly timed last ditch sliding challenge from Jamie Graham.

The Arky substitute was convinced he should of had a penalty however the only award he received was a yellow card from Mr McNab.

In the closing minutes Arky keeper Andrew Duncan denied Craig MacEwan and Dean Smith firstly shovelling Craig's shot onto his own crossbar before throwing out his right leg to deflect Dean's effort away from goal.

Referee McNab made it a hat-trick of declined penalty appeals in the 91st minute. Andrew Duncan appeared to impede Donald Campbell however as Donald managed to maintain his balance long enough to get his shot away the referee turned down what looked like a stone-wall penalty.

There was no more scoring with Saints good value for the 3-1 win. The reward for their exertions is a home quarter final tie against Arkleston Barrhead's Premier Division 2B title rivals Port Glasgow which will be the Glencruitten faithful's last chance to see their favourites in cup action on home soil this season.

Manager Alex Craik was happy with the performance He said: 'We played some good stuff, especially in the first half and should have put the game out of sight before half time.'

'We lost our way a bit for a while in the second half, but once we got back to passing the ball about we were good value for the win which sets us up nicely for the crucial Scottish Amateur Cup 7th round game against Letham in Perth on Saturday.'



Craig MacEwan slots the ball home to round off the scoring.

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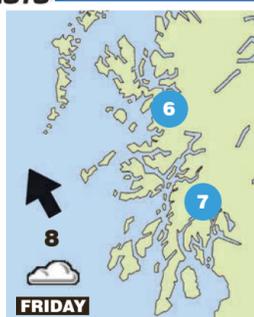
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Chain, shackles, buoys all available to purchase in Oban

WEATHER

Thursday	Light rain showers Winds moderate west south westerly Temperatures 2°C to 7°C.
Friday	Cloudy Winds light south south easterly Temperatures 1°C to 7°C.
Weekend Outlook	Cloudy on Saturday Sunny intervals on Sunday Winds moderate south south westerly Temperatures 2°C to 7°C.



Stop Press: New pontoons at Ulva and visitor moorings installed at Lochaline by North West Marine Ltd

TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday March 2, 2017 are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour) BST)

Date	am	pm										
Thur	01.59	0.5	08.00	4.0	14.23	0.7	20.08	3.7	Ardrihaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25
Fri	02.41	0.6	08.40	3.7	15.07	0.8	20.50	3.6	Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55
Sat	03.29	0.9	09.27	3.5	15.58	1.1	21.38	3.3	Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16
Sun	04.28	1.2	10.26	3.2	17.01	1.3	22.41	3.0	Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30
Mon	05.43	1.4	12.02	2.9	18.16	1.5	** ** *	**	Lochboisdale	+0.30		
Tues	00.21	2.9	07.09	1.5	14.10	2.9	19.35	1.5				
Wed	02.24	3.0	08.50	1.4	15.27	3.1	20.53	1.3				

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

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Householders' fury over new £30 brown bin collection fee

MONICA GIBSON
mgibson@obantimes.co.uk

HOUSEHOLDERS who want their garden waste collected will have to pay £30.

Last Friday (February 24), the Highland Council announced via its facebook page that garden waste collections were due to start again on February 27. But from July 1 this year, there will be a £30 annual fee for uplifts.

The post has received hundreds of comments and shares, and *The Oban Times* was also contacted by concerned residents.

Kate Brown, who lives in Lundavra Crescent, Fort William, said: 'When the brown bin scheme was introduced, it was advertised that the waste would be taken away and be composted then made available for purchase at a reduced rate so there were real benefits. I have been told this is no longer the case, that it is used to provide a cover for household waste at the landfill. Now, we find out we are going to be charged for the luxury of this scheme.'

'Everyone I speak to is up in arms about it. I know I will not be paying the council an extra £30 a year, especially when we have a three per cent tax increase. All this is going to do is encourage fly-tipping.'

Ms Brown also described the lack of detail about the change as 'ridiculous'.

'Can I opt out of this scheme?', she asked, adding: 'I have checked the website and can find nothing about this charge. We should have been sent a letter about this. I have been told the brown bins do not come under a statutory obligation so in that sense they can do what they

want. It just seems dangerous. Now people could dump things which are poisonous or harmful and the clean-up job will no doubt be more than what it cost the council to begin with.'

The Oban Times put these questions to the Highland Council and a spokesperson responded that the brown bin collections are provided in larger centres of population - 67,000 households. Sutherland and Skye have no green waste collections at all and it is only Fort William which has a green waste collection in Lochaber. Further, the decision to make changes to the current scheme was part of the council's budget meeting decisions and was agreed unanimously by councillors.

Councillor Allan Henderson said: 'The brown bin service which was originally promoted by the Scottish Government to drive down waste going to landfill was a successful, but divisive issue, with mostly only heavily populated areas receiving the service and rural areas not. On consulting the public, as the council needs to move towards being more commercial, it was made clear all householders should be given an option, but with a small charge for the service. On budget day this was agreed right across the chamber. Now, by starting this service as an optional one, householders have the opportunity to make a contribution towards a more carbon friendly Highlands.'

According to the council, details on the revised brown bin scheme will be made available in due course before the July change and in the meantime those with a brown bin can continue to use it free of charge.



Katie MacSween, Cara Leeds, Alice Lynch and Noel Cameron celebrate Shrove Tuesday. Photograph: Abrightside photography.

Banavie youngsters all smiles on Pancake Day

BANAVIE youngsters celebrated Shrove Tuesday this week by cooking, eating and learning about pancakes.

From nursery up to primary three, the youngsters got involved in various activities. Primary threes followed a pancake recipe, while primary two youngsters

learned how the ingredients changed during cooking as part of their science class.

The nursery class probably had the best day of all as they got to eat the pancakes made by the older pupils. Everyone involved also learned about

the significance of Shrove Tuesday and Lent, and how pancakes are involved.

Primary one teacher Leah Burns said: 'It was great.'

'The children got to make and eat pancakes and they had discussions about why we celebrate pancake day.'

First notice of alloy wheel plant plans

THE HIGHLAND Council has noted a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) for an alloy wheel plant in Fort William.

As a major development, applicant Liberty British Aluminum brought the PAN to the attention of the Highland Council's south planning application committee on Tuesday (February 28).

The proposed application is for the 'development of industrial facilities required for the provision of an alloy wheel plant and rolling mill, and associated ancillary infrastructure and access' at the Lochaber smelter in Fort William.

Fort William councillor Thomas MacLennan said it would be 'a wonderful development' and a 'game changer' for the area, adding that only a year ago people thought the smelter was going to close.

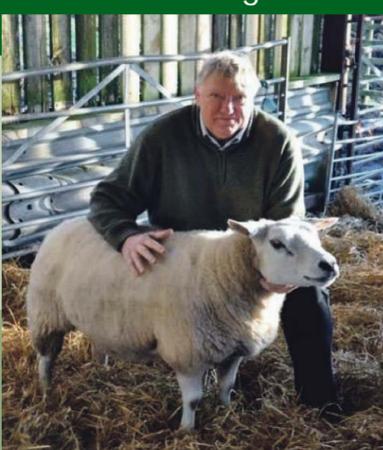
The committee noted housing and road access were issues the council would have to take into consideration when the full planning application was made.

Committee chairman Councillor Jimmy Gray said: 'This is a hugely welcomed development for the Highlands.'

Tomorrow (Friday) Sanjeev Gupta, from the Liberty House Group, will be meeting various public sector agencies, including the Highland Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Rural Economy Secretary Fergus Ewing at the site to discuss plans.



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Green light for 12 High Street flats

AN APPLICATION to build 12 new affordable flats in Fort William has been approved.

The Highland Council's south planning committee granted permission at its meeting on Tuesday (February 28) for the former Scottish Whisky and Craft Centre, in High Street, to be demolished and turned into self-contained flats with eight car parking spaces.

The proposed building will be four storeys high and set back from its High Street location, next to the Free Church of Scotland and Spice Tandoori restaurant.

One area of concern was the impact on the category B-listed church next to the whisky centre. Reverend Mair of the church raised concerns about the church

being damaged during the centre's demolition, but the council confirmed any damage would be repaired.

Lochaber Disability Access Panel requested that one of the ground floor flats should be made fully accessible, that the dimensions of the lift should meet the needs of residents/visitors with disabilities and that one of the parking spaces be allocated as disabled parking.

In response it was said the flats are at least 18 months away from being completed and had not been allocated yet so there were no plans for an accessible flat at this stage. The lift will be built to accommodate disabled people and one of the car parking spaces could be adapted should the council allocate one of the houses to a disabled person.

Fort William and Ardnachurchan councillor Thomas MacLennan said he was pleased the council was developing the site, which he described as 'an eyesore'.

Mr MacLennan told *The Oban Times* after the meeting that the application is 'a positive thing for Fort William'.

He said: 'The council has spent around £12 million on three Fort William eyesores - this one, the old school and the Tweedale site. This will make a huge difference to Fort William.'

'As I said at the meeting, this signals a real turn around of Fort William to face Loch Linnhe.'

In its application the council said: 'The proposed building is modern in design and finish, and will have a striking appearance, particularly from the bypass.'



STAG & BUCK

NEW BARBERS OPENING TUESDAY 7TH MARCH

OPENING TIMES

Monday - Closed

Tuesday - 9.15am-5.15pm

Wednesday - 9.15am-5.15pm

Thursday - 9.15am-6.30pm

Friday - 9.15am-5.15pm

Saturday - 8am-2pm

Sunday - Closed

Sharon Sweeney & Terri Nicolson

The Old Station Bar, Fort William




Fort William's Leisure and Recreation Facility

The Nevis Centre

What's on at The Nevis Centre

March

4th 8pm
Concert Manran & Tidelines

11th 2pm
Cinema Sing

11th 7.30pm
Cinema Fifty Shades Darker

25th 8pm
Comedy The Uncles

29th 7.30pm
Comedy Kevin "Bloody" Wilson
Stand up show

April

7th 8pm
Comedy Russell Kane Stand up show

8th
Cinema The Lego Batman Movie

8th
Cinema Beauty and the Beast

19th 2pm
Community Blood Donors

27th 7.30pm
Concert Patsy Cline & Friends

An Aird Fort William

Tel: 01397 700707



FW

First staff taken on for new Skye plant

MARINE HARVEST has started appointing staff for its new fish plant at Altanavaig Quarry, near Kyleakin, Skye, which should be up and running within 18 months.

The two new appointments are for a project manager/global engineer and an operations director processing and feed Scotland.

Ben Hadfield, chief operating officer feed and managing director of Marine Harvest Scotland, said: 'I'm delighted with the positive decision from the local authority and even more heartened by the overwhelming support we have had from the local community. We will do our utmost to ensure this large construction project is managed in a sensitive way.'

Welcoming the two new posts, Mr Hadfield said: 'This is a major investment for the company and we have brought together an experienced team which has already proved themselves on previous projects. We now have a great combination of outstanding technical expertise and experience in both construction and operation, together with excellent local knowledge and understanding.'

Welcoming the decision, Skye Councillor Drew Millar said the creation of more than 50 new jobs outweighed the visual aesthetics of the factory. He said: 'I was delighted to move the motion to approve the application by Marine Harvest for its excellent project at Kyleakin and to receive the support of so many of my colleagues. It is great news for the area and the island, with around 50 jobs being created, which will bring long-term security for families.'

While recognising the scale of the factory, it will only be visible from the Skye Bridge by passing motorists for a few seconds and, in my opinion, given the finished exterior, will be a lot better than what is visible at the moment. The creation of long-term employment must be paramount on Skye where so many people are wholly reliant on tourism which is subject to so many variables.

'Marine Harvest should be congratulated for its investment and faith in the Highland workforce and trust it will continue to invest in our area.'

The new plant is expected to be completed in 18 months.



Skye councillor Drew Millar welcomed news of the new fish plant. Photograph: Sara Bain.

Island groups take a share of £10 million climate fund

ELLIE FORBES
eforb@obantimes.co.uk

COMMUNITY groups on Skye and Eigg have received a share of £10 million from the Climate Challenge Fund.

More than 100 organisations across Scotland benefited from the funding to support local action on climate change.

Broadford and Strath Community Company, based in south Skye, received £58,900.

Project officer Nicolas Kelly said the money will be used to create new community food growing areas.

The community company has six poly-tunnels on the island where residents take a plot and grow their own produce. It hopes to buy another two tunnels this year.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'We



Some of the poly-tunnels set up by the Broadford and Strath Community Company.

want to encourage more people to grow their own food to reduce the area's carbon footprint.'

Twenty-two people are currently using the poly-tunnels to grow vegetables including carrots, corn and courgettes.

Mr Kelly said the company is

working with schools and hotels on a compost scheme. Food waste is disposed of in a compost bin which the community company uses at the allotments to reduce the amount of waste going to land fill.

Mr Kelly added: 'We are

hoping to work more with the schools. We already have one group of pupils from Portree High School, but would like to get Plockton High School and Broadford Primary School their own plants.'

The company is also working on a wood re-cycling base where joiners and builders bring wood waste to be re-used rather than binned.

'The key is to reduce the area's carbon footprint and encourage people to be aware of climate change,' said Mr Kelly.

The money has also created a new part-time position for a project officer who will focus on working with schools to promote environmental projects.

Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust has also had a cash boost of £130,550. The trust, which runs Eigg Island Going Greener project, provides residents with

advice on energy efficiency to reduce carbon emissions.

Maggie Fyffe of the heritage trust said the project will also provide locally-sourced wood to help residents and businesses switch from coal heating.

Ms Fyffe said: 'Part of the money will be used to build a drying shed for wood to encourage more people to use wood as their main source of fuel and lessen their reliance on coal. The money will also be used as part of a larger forestry project.'

Other groups in the Highlands and Islands getting a cash injection were Lochaber Environmental Group, Spean Bridge Community Centre, Taga Uibhist, Tighean Inne Gall and Bragar and Arnol Community Trust.

Since the fund was launched in 2008, 986 awards totalling £85.8m have been made.

Shoppers urged to sign up to project

MALLAIG community groups are encouraging shoppers to sign up for a supermarket scheme which will boost their coffers.

Mallaig and Morar Community Centre, Mallaig Swimming Pool and Mallaig Heritage Centre are all eligible for the Co-op Local Community Fund which sees one per cent of money spent on own-brand products donated to local projects.

Shoppers must register to become a Co-op member, then select the cause they wish their spending to benefit.

More than £700 has already been raised for Mallaig Community Centre and while chairwoman Jacqueline MacDonell recognises it is a real boost, she says there is a great deal more available.

She said: 'We've already raised £751 through the Co-op Community fund, but people who haven't yet chosen who to support have raised another £3,000. You can choose Mallaig and Morar Community Centre, Mallaig Pool and Leisure or Mallaig Heritage Centre. If you are one of the shoppers who hasn't chosen, we'd all be grateful for your support.'

Jacqueline told *The Oban Times*: 'We are in a more fortunate position than the pool, for example, because we are making enough money to operate and cover our costs. The swimming pool is trying to raise enough to fund a huge renovation project. That being said, we did just receive a bill for £1,400 for one month, so this money is a great wee boost that we do need and has come at the right time.'

'Each of the funds would welcome the extra cash. We don't want to take money from anyone else, we just want people to know that it is really simple to allocate the money themselves.'

Shoppers have another six weeks to show their support, after which another round of funding can be applied for.

Visit <http://www.coop.co.uk/membership/local-community-fund/> for more.

Islanders get say on parliament

ISLE of Skye residents have been invited to have their say on how well the Scottish Parliament is working.

As part of the first regional outreach meeting of the newly-formed Commission for Parliamentary Reform, set up by the Scottish Government's Presiding Officer Ken Macintosh MSP, there will be a public meeting at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Sleat, on Thursday March 9 at 3pm.

To book a place, call 0131 348 6400 or email cpr@parliament.scot.



An Sgoil Shamhraidh drama won the best film in the FilmG youth category. Photograph: Alan Peebles.



Kate Bradley with international footballer Gemma Fay. Photograph: Alan Peebles.



Nicholson Institute pupils with actress Dolina MacLennan. Photograph: Alan Peebles.

Talented youngsters honoured at FilmG awards

HIGHLANDS and Islands entrants swept the board at the ninth FilmG awards.

Deputy First Minister John Swinney presented the best youth film award to youngsters from Fèisean nan Gàidheal's summer school An Sgoil Shamhraidh Dràma for their film *Faigh WiFi*.

Fèisean nan Gàidheal drama officer Angus MacLeod said: 'I'm really excited for them. It's great for them to take part in the competition and bring their work to a wider audience.'

Kate Bradley, a fifth-year pupil at Ardnamurchan High School, won the new youth sports commentary award for her work covering the women's shinty Valerie Fraser Cup Final.

Kate, who was presented with her award by Scottish footballer Gemma Fay, said: 'When my name was read out, I was really excited. I enjoy the media side of Gaelic and would be interested in keeping this up.'

Ardnamurchan High School head teacher Christopher Millar-Craig said: 'We are all very proud of Kate's success. She is an excellent shinty player with a keen interest in the sport and in Gaelic. We hope to see more of her on BBC Alba in the future.'

Stornoway's Nicholson Institute pupils were presented with the prize for Best Fluent Gaelic for their comedy *Siri na Dileab* by actress Dolina MacLennan.

Their rector Dr Frances Murray said: 'It's a fitting accolade to a group of pupils who have come through Gaelic medium education from primary school to sixth year. I'm very pleased for them and the award is proudly displayed in the school.' She added: 'It's nice to have this as encouragement for future generations of Gaelic medium pupils.'

Uilleam MacDhùghail from Barra received the Best Performance Award for his role in *Eilean an Dòchais*. Catherine NicDhòmhnaill from Harris won the Best

Young Filmmaker award. Portree filmmaker Kerr Gibbs won the best documentary award for *Taobh Eile Duilghe*.

The award for Best Comedy and the people's choice award went to Alannah Pheutan, also from Skye, for her entry, *Gaidheal Gu Luath*.

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig student Hannah McKirdy bagged The Best Performance Award for her role in the comedy, *Cheating Our Language*.

Donald Campbell, Chief Executive of MG ALBA, said: 'This year's FilmG has been bigger and better than before and we have been impressed with the level of entries across every category. Congratulations to this year's winners and to everyone who dedicated a lot of time and effort in creating a short film entry.'

The awards ceremony was held in Glasgow on Friday February 17 and hosted by BBC Alba's Fiona MacKenzie and radio presenter Niall Iain Macdonald.

MSP meets with EE representatives over controversial mast plans

A SKYE MSP and representatives from mobile phone giant EE met last week to discuss controversial plans for a new mast in the West Highlands.

The Highland Council's North Planning Committee approved the 30m steel structure last Tuesday.

MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch Kate Forbes met with EE last Thursday.

More than 200 people signed a petition objecting to the proposed site at Lochalsh Business Park in Auchtertyre, near Kyle of Lochalsh, stating the mast is too

close to a nursery and school and would prefer the mast was situated elsewhere.

Ms Forbes said: 'I met with a representative from EE to discuss the roll out of masts across Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch and specifically to ask why the site at Auchtertyre was chosen in light of community concerns. Planning consent has obviously already been granted by Highland Council but it's still important EE respects the local community.'

'One of the main concerns is why the current site, which is 400 metres away

from residents, was used instead of other sites. We spoke at length about the other sites and what the reasons were and it does appear as though the current site does maximise signal coverage and minimises impact on local residents, however, I've asked for more details to verify that. We also spoke about why there wasn't sufficient community engagement and on this matter it's clear a lot more could and should have been done to work with the community to find the right site for everyone.'

EE confirmed to *The Oban Times* a number of changes have been made to the plans following community feedback. EE said it was pleased the site had been giving planning approval and highlighted new mobile infrastructure is essential to support an emergency services network in Scotland.

An EE spokesperson said: 'We recognise the sensitive nature of some of our new sites and are working to ensure new infrastructure is sited sensitively whilst still providing the required coverage.'

CROFTING COMMISSION ELECTIONS

VOTE

Catherine MacKinnon



Why?

South West Highlands crofters and the Crofting Commission need a new face on the Board. We need a fresh start.

What can I offer?

- pragmatism, clear thinking, vision
- honesty, integrity
- representation of the best interests of crofters
- vigilance on Brexit challenges and opportunities
- positive partnership working for the greater good of crofting, not just for today but for tomorrow and for future generations
- a voice and an ear for crofters on the ground

Contact me anytime:

email: catherinemackinnon@btinternet.com mobile: 07881603069

VOTE for CATHERINE MACKINNON by 16th March 2017



Annie Macdonald is hoping a new, lighter weight Harris tweed blend which she wore meeting HRH at the Waldorf Astoria in 2016 will be part of a brighter future for HTT Manufacturing.

Jobs secured as buyout saves firm from brink

A LEWIS-BASED company which was on the brink of administration just 12 months ago has been taken over, saving 17 jobs.

HTT Manufacturing Ltd in Carloway has been bought by new company, The Carloway Mill Ltd.

Derek Reid, a founding director of HTT and its chief executive officer and chairman, announced the company together with land and buildings at Carloway has been sold to a management buyout team led by Annie Macdonald and businessman and investor Anthony Loftus. Na h-Eileanan an Iar

SNP MP Angus MacNeil and MSP Alasdair Allan welcomed the announcement which should provide a more certain future for the current 17 employees with the potential to provide more jobs in future.

Alasdair Allan MSP commented: 'It has been clear for some time that Carloway needed new investors and I have been working closely with the Scottish Government and its agencies, as well as with the Comhairle, towards this end.'

'I'm delighted with the announcement securing the future of the mill and it is especially pleasing all current jobs have

been retained. This is good news for the area and good news for the Harris Tweed industry.'

'I wish the new management and staff at the mill every success and I look forward to hearing about their plans for the future.'

Angus MacNeil MP commented: 'This is positive news and I wish everyone at Carloway Mill the very best for the future.'

Annie Macdonald told *The Oban Times* it had been a very uncertain year for HTT which just 12 months ago was on the brink of administration. 'It's exciting and very positive, a great story for the area,' she added.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise to retain independent board

A REPORT into Scotland's enterprise and skills agencies has said Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) will retain its independent board.

The news came last week when Professor Lorne Crerar published phase two of his review into Scottish enterprise and skills agencies.

Professor Crerar recommended the set up of a national strategic board but the retention of a Highlands and Islands advisory board.

The report was backed by MSP for Skye, Loch-

aber and Badenoch Kate Forbes and Na h-Eileanan an Iar MSP Alasdair Allan.

Ms Forbes said: 'The enterprise and skills review has not been concluded yet, but I welcome this governance review which states there should be an independent board for HIE.'

Scottish Labour 'cautiously' welcomed the report but said concerns still remain over the SNP plans which, it claimed, could see 'HIE being ruled by a central belt dictatorship'.

Highlands and Islands MSP Rhoda Grant said: 'While Professor Crerar's recommendations are heartening, the structures proposed are top down and bound up with collective responsibility.'

'This could mean the strategic board would dictate policy to chairpeople who would then have powers to direct their boards.'

'It is of the utmost importance the HIE board continues to have meeting needs of our communities as its primary objective.'

Work to start on new town roundabout

WORK to install a new roundabout in Fort William is due to start in two weeks.

The project is on the A82 on North Road at the existing Lochaber Smelter junction ahead of a new retail unit being built by Morbaine Limited.

The project, which is expected to see Marks and Spencer, Aldi and B&M Bargains coming to the area, is scheduled to begin on Monday March 13. It will involve drainage work, service diversions and cycle path construction.

A Toucan crossing, a bus stop/layby and street lighting are also included in the plans.

Alex Brodie from Morbaine Ltd explained the initial works will take place off the carriageway and, in accordance with their agreement with Transport Scotland, traffic will be kept moving.

He told *The Oban Times*: 'The work will be split into five stages. The contractor is already on site and work on the roundabout will start on March 13 until April 24 approximately and be towards the smelter side. 'We will work to the north of the new roundabout, then the south and then on it.'

'The crucial time will be from May 25 until the end of June, but a diversion route will be in place so there should be no disruptions to traffic. It has been a very important part of the agreement that two way traffic is flowing at all times.'

A public notice with full details will be released by Morbaine.

School Fairtrade coffee morning

ST COLUMBA'S RC Primary School is holding a Fairtrade coffee morning from 10am until noon tomorrow (March 3).

The event is part of the school's Fairtrade fortnight, where pupils have been learning more about the subject in class and taking part or watching games of football using Fairtrade footballs.

The event is open to everyone. The committee and primary 7 pupils will be helping out and would appreciate donations of baking made with Fairtrade products.



From left: Callum MacColl, Andrew Macdonald, Hugh MacCallum, Ian Joseph MacDonald, Ally MacKenzie, Alex MacLean and Deirdre Beck at the front on fiddle. Photograph: Anthony MacMillan.

Annual accordion and fiddle event goes down a storm

MUSIC enthusiasts and friends gathered for an annual dinner dance last month.

Fort William Fiddle and Accordion Club held the event in the Railway Club, Inverlochy, on Friday February 17 and organisers say it was a fantastic affair.

Marion MacDonald added: 'We had a great night at the dance, with superb music provided by the club band. The dancers filled the dance floor all night. The Railway Club provided a lovely meal which was enjoyed by everyone.'

'The club is grateful to the musicians who gave up their time to play and to everyone who attended.'

The next club night will take place in the Railway Club on Tuesday March 7 with guest artist Janet Graham.

Anger grows over plan to axe Sunday bus service

ELLIE FORBES

eforbes@obantimes.co.uk

ALMOST 250 people have signed a petition demanding a national bus company drops its plans to withdraw a Lochaber Sunday bus service.

Stagecoach announced the move as part of its proposed Highland timetables which are set to change on Monday April 24.

The bus giant plans to withdraw its 44 Sunday service between Kinlochleven and Fort William, which currently operates two buses on a Sunday.

Fort William and Ardnamurchan councillor Andrew Baxter started the *Route 44 - Save Our Sunday Service* petition saying: 'Stagecoach Highland has sneaked out proposed changes to bus timetables without highlighting they have axed the Sunday service on bus route 44 between Fort William and Kinlochleven.'

'They have failed to bring this to the attention of consultees such as the Highland Council or local councillors. The explanatory text on their consultation website makes no mention of this service withdrawal.'

Mr Baxter told *The Oban Times* two buses leave Kinlochleven on a Sunday and previously there had been three. He added that because the bus does not leave



Councillor Baxter's petition has been signed by more than 250 people. Photograph: Abrightside Photography.

the village until around 11am currently some people have had to turn down job offers because they cannot commit to early shifts on a Sunday.

Mr Baxter said: 'To lose the Sunday service completely will have quite a marked effect on people, especially people who use the service for going to work. In the summer it will also affect walkers doing the West Highland Way and visitors who use the buses.'

Responding to comments, a

spokesperson for Stagecoach North Scotland said: 'Our timetable proposals have been available online at stagecoach-bus.com since Monday February 20 for customer feedback ahead of finalising our plans for our network in the Highlands. The timetables were also sent to Highland Council offices on Monday February 13 as part of the required consultation period prior to registration.'

'Due to consistently low passenger use over a number of years, the Sunday service on service 44 is proposed to be withdrawn as part of this revision. Feedback is welcomed on our proposals until Friday March 3. Our local team will also be available in Fort William High Street on Wednesday March 1 from 10am till noon to discuss the proposals.'

On Monday, The Highland Council announced it has renewed its public transport contacts from April 24, following a decision on bus route savings taken by members of the Community Services Committee in December.

The Highland Council explained the contracts are issued following a tendering process. Evaluation of tenders is based on the assessment of compliance with the specification and on price. Highland Council is required to assess all tenders

equitably and to achieve best value for money.

The council said many bus routes in the Highlands are operated commercially, with bus companies running them without financial support from the council. The council awards contracts for services, where possible, which are not provided commercially.

Mr Baxter said residents have also raised concerns about the 503 service between Acharacle and Lochailort being withdrawn by the Highland Council. The council said the service carried 944 passengers last year and on this basis the cost of a new contract worked out at £17.82 per passenger.

Contracts 500, Acharacle/Mallaig - Fort William, and 506 Kilchoan - Acharacle - Strontian - Fort William, provide alternatives, although at different times.

The council added a separate contract has been awarded to ensure the home-to-school journeys currently made under contract 503 will continue. School pupils are not included in the figures above.

Chairman of the community services committee councillor Allan Henderson said: 'The council agreed to a savings target over four years of £2.246 million on the £15 million budget for bus and home-to-

school transport.

'While we are pleased to have been able to retain the same level of service on the majority of routes, due to financial constraints it has been necessary to make service reductions on some routes and some contracts have been withdrawn.'

Caol and Mallaig councillor Ben Thompson told *The Oban Times* he is concerned about across town services in Fort William.

Mr Thompson explained the council has awarded two different operators to the service between Fort William and Corpach - with Shiel Buses running the service during the day and Stagecoach at night.

People who live in Fort William and work in Corpach, and buy a weekly pass, have questioned how this will effect them as they would be using one operator to get to work and another to get home.

He said: 'I think this could affect a lot of people and it's immensely frustrating for folk because they could end up having to pay more. They don't know if they will have to buy two separate weekly passes.'

A council spokesperson said: 'Highland Council is aware of the emerging issue and councillors have been in touch with officials with a view to exploring the matter.'

TIMESLINE

Climber in fatal fall is identified

A 25-YEAR-OLD man who died in the Cairngorms has been identified.

Owen Griffiths, from Evesham, Worcestershire, was killed in a fall on Tuesday February 21. Police were alerted to the incident in the Coire an t-Sneachda area of the Cairngorms by members of the public around noon. Mr Griffiths was airlifted to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary by Coastguard Helicopter R951.

Mountain rescue team personnel who attended to Mr Griffiths have been thanked for their help. Mr Griffith's family has requested privacy at this difficult time.

New Fort William family centre

THE FIRST phase of a project to establish a new Fort William family centre has begun.

The aim of phase one is to bring health professionals together on a single site, within the old school hostel adjacent to Lochaber High School at Camaghael, Fort William. It will provide offices for health and social care staff ahead of the lease of their existing accommodation at Fulton House, Gordon Square, Fort William, ending in December this year.

Announcing the news on Monday February 27, the Highland Council said there will be a child and family-friendly space where families can seek help in a relaxed environment.

NHS Highland funding boost

NHS Highland is to receive an additional £9.4 million in the coming financial year, health secretary Shona Robison has announced.

The increase represents a rise of 1.6 per cent, bringing the board's overall funding to £586.9 million. For NHS Highland, this includes an additional £0.8 million to bring the board within one per cent of parity under the NHS funding formula, known as NRAC. It is one of nine boards to receive this extra payment under the formula. The uplift includes £6.2 million for investment in social care as part of the ongoing integration of health and social care and a share of £128 million to help support delivery of service reform.

Car park move costs drink driver £1,000 fine and one-year ban

A MAN who moved his car from one parking space to another after drinking alcohol has been fined £1,000 and banned for driving for a year.

Ruslan Levinschi had been drinking with friends outside a rented chalet at the Spean Bridge Hotel on May 19 2016 when he was spotted behind the wheel.

Fort William Sheriff Court heard on Monday Levinschi worked seasonally as a barman in the hotel and that he was seen moving the car ten feet before making four or five attempts to park. He was then seen drinking an alcoholic beverage before leaving the vehicle. Solicitor Hamish Melrose said Levinschi, from Moldova, is

single but sends some of his income to his sick mother who still lives in his home country. Levinschi stays in staff quarters at the hotel and had been socialising with co workers when he decided to move the car closer to the chalets to listen to music from it.

Mr Melrose said the incident was reported around 9.30pm. The police

located Levinschi shortly before 11pm when he was found to be 134mg of alcohol on his breath when tested. The legal limit in Scotland is 22mg. Mr Melrose told the court Levinschi had no doubt drank more alcohol between driving and being breathalysed but that he had admitted driving the car to the police.

Cailean MacUlarig

Do Ghuth ann an Croitearachd

Colin Kennedy

Your voice in crofting

Five years ago a monumental moment in crofting happened...six crofters were elected to the Crofting Commission to see the internal workings of an organisation that had previously been led by government appointment. The change was dramatic. For the first time people who worked the land were on the committee of peers. Who better to know how crofting should work than the crofters themselves? However, the way crofting worked for government was not the way it should work for us - fair and equitably across the country. It seems to me that those of us elected to serve were to be silent upon the commission - and not speak out about the things that we saw inside that organisation that were simply unfair. We had six crofters who knew what had to be delivered to make the system work best. Of course we saw issues such as one area being allowed to do one thing, while other areas were not allowed to do the very same thing. A set of laws that were simply not adhered to universally across the country. A set of laws that needed to be vigorously tested. While we all made some progress in the commission, I realised that we needed a governance review of the whole organisation. I had identified a list of all the wrong doing and took it to the government saying that we had to have an external review in August 2016.

In response to my request a maelstrom blew up and what I got for it was attacks in the media, and abuse. However those who set out against me - calling for my resignation - did not have the rhino hide I seem to have. They couldn't get rid of Colin Kennedy and here I am standing again. Should you wish to retain an open, transparent, accountable and active area commissioner with your interests foremost in his mind, who will continue to strive to ensure the rights of crofters are recognised and that crofters are treated in an equitable manner then vote for me. It is time to look ahead, with the vote to leave the EU it is more important than ever that you have a representative who has vision and understanding of the issues facing crofters who will fight to the last and deliver for crofters going forward. My in-depth understanding of the current regime sets me apart from others, and be assured, Colin Kennedy is the candidate to continue representing Argyll and Lochaber, and the one who will ensure your voice is heard above others within the heart of crofting. I am a real Highland crofter who continues to graff every day at the coal face of crofting while also representing your interests. Look out for the voting paper and return immediately, it only takes five minutes. And in return for your vote you will receive another five years of dedicated service.



Argyll and Bute Cosmetic Dentures introduces new competitively priced range from £300

WE HAVE been trading in Oban for more than six years specialising in hand-crafted dentures for the local market.

Due to increased demand, we are introducing a specific range of value dentures at extremely competitive prices, which we believe will be of a much higher standard than those which are supplied by other providers.

This offer will be for a limited period only. We will, of course, still have our bespoke range for the more discerning clients.

Our service is greatly appreciated, especially by the clients who travel long distances and from the islands. We very often offer two or three appointments on the same day, therefore greatly reducing travelling costs, and saving clients from taking unnecessary time off work and several journeys into Oban.

We do also offer a same-day complete denture service. This service, however, has to be by prior arrangement only.

Our high impact denture base material (virtually unbreakable in the mouth) and chrome cobalt denture base are also very popular with our clients.

Every denture we make is individually hand-crafted to attain the best fit possible and be aesthetically pleasing. Open Tuesday - Thursday 9.30am - 4.30pm and Friday 9.00am - 12.30pm.

Telephone 01631 566631 or email info@argyllandbutecosmeticdentures.co.uk.

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We are not dentists and we do not carry out any dental procedures and are independent of the General Dental Council.

FW

New youth group opens in Ballachulish

YOUNGSTERS in Ballachulish are doing their bit to tackle things that worry them.

Socialize is a new group designed to empower young people and provide a place to relax, have fun and discuss any issues on their mind.

The group, a Highlife Highland initiative, already runs in Kinlochleven and thanks to funding from the Scottish Government, was launched in Ballachulish last month.

Jennifer Davidson and Kara Gillespie, youth development officers appointed by Highlife Highland for South Lochaber, organise the group which takes place every Wednesday evening in Ballachulish Village hall.

Jennifer explained the community council had helped set up the group which saw the number of attendees double in the first two weeks.

She told *The Oban Times*: 'The local development plan released in 2016 flagged up a lack of provision for young people in the area and when the action plan was drawn up for 2016 to 2021, youth development was mentioned, which was great for us.'

'The first night we had three people and the next week we had six so that's been really positive. It has been all boys, aged 14 or 15, who have come down so far so we are really pleased because it is not always easy to appeal to people that age. The guys were telling us if they were not at the group they would be cycling around town in the cold and dark, so even if we can provide somewhere safe and welcome one night a week to hang out it is worthwhile.'

Jennifer said the idea is for the youngsters to drive the group so how it progresses will depend on their suggestions.

'The group is run by young people for young people so we are really keen to hear what they want to do and we can discuss what they feel they need. We have played human hungry hippos which was really popular. I've borrowed equipment for indoor activities and we also ordered pizza and just sat and chatted. We hope to see many more faces in the coming weeks.'

Socialize meets in Ballachulish Village hall every Wednesday from 7.30pm to 9.30pm.

Charity shops struggling to recruit Fort volunteers

KATIE CARABINE
kcarabine@obantimes.co.uk

A FORT WILLIAM charity shop manager is appealing for volunteers, saying charities in the town are struggling for help, particularly during the week.

Cancer Research UK shop manager Sharon Smith said: 'Sometimes I'm here alone and I have to go onto the till myself. I have my assistant manager and three young helpers on Saturdays though.'

Ms Smith is offering to set up taster sessions for prospective volunteers to spend a few hours in the shop to see what is involved.

One volunteer told *The Oban Times*: 'I volunteer because I'm retired.'

'I've got family members who have been affected by cancer and I want to give something back. Volunteering doesn't take up your whole life. You can still do things and have time with your family. It's very flexible if you have holidays or are not well.'

A Highland Hospice volunteer

said: 'If you are retired, volunteering gets you out and about, helping people in the community, but a lot of people are just not interested or don't want to know.'

PDSA shop manager Caroline Campbell has also had difficulties recruiting. She says the shop is only open on Sundays during the summer as she does not have enough volunteers to open all year, despite advertising for help.

She said: 'People don't want to volunteer but we wouldn't be here without them.'

The PDSA offer volunteers 26 retail training modules, meaning they can come away with a qualification similar to an NVQ, which can help them find employment.

Ms Campbell said: 'I've been the manager for five years and all the young ones that were here are all employed now. They only left here when they got a job.'

Ms Campbell says she also has long-term volunteers, including one who has been helping out for 12 years.

British Heart Foundation has 15 volunteers, ranging in age



Cancer Research UK's Sharon Smith is one of the Fort William charity shop managers struggling to find volunteers.

from 17 to 80, of which 10 volunteer regularly.

Manager Katie MacMillan said: 'People come to work with us for work experience. It looks good on their CV and it gets them out and doing something.'

'We always need new volunteers. We are a very busy shop with lots to do and we

are open seven days a week.'

New Start Highland Volunteer co-ordinator Fiona Rodgers said: 'A lot of people use volunteering as a replacement for work. It gives them a routine and sense of self-worth and belonging.'

Helping people to build skills and get themselves back into

work in this way fits with New Start's aim to 'transform Highland lives'.

However, Ms Rodgers says long-term volunteers, such as retirees who want to give something back and have time and life skills – what she calls 'platinum volunteers' – are hard to find.

'As there is no upper age limit for work, you are competing with paid employment. You're asking for the same level of responsibility, service and customer care but without payment.'

The nature of the work with New Start makes it more difficult as a certain level of physical ability is required to move furniture.

To volunteer in any of the charity shops mentioned, simply visit the shop and ask about opportunities.

There are some charities which have no problem finding volunteers.

Manager of Blythswood Care in Caol, Barbara Matheson, said: 'We are a very happy and busy shop. I always have people asking to help and lots of stuff coming in.'

Transports boss on awards shortlist



A Fort William based business leader has been shortlisted in the 'director of the year' awards.

Alasdair Ferguson, above, of Ferguson Transport and Shipping, has been selected by the Institute of Directors (IoD) in both the large business and regional business categories for Scotland.

The IoD says the number of entries rose by 25 per cent this year and the 41 who made the cut will go through to finals to be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Glasgow, on Thursday March 23.

WHAT'S ON

A WORLD Day of Prayer service will take place tomorrow, Friday March 3, at 2pm in St Andrew's Church with refreshments in the church hall to follow.

THE TROTTERNISH branch of the Scottish Women's Institute's next meeting will be on Monday March 13 at 1.30 pm in Kilmuir Village Hall. Representatives from Isle of Skye Chocolate will be speaking to the group and hopefully taking along a few samples to test.

RE-ACT Lochaber is holding a fundraising gig next Thursday, March 9, in the Crofter Bar, Fort William.

Acoustic Refu-Jam will have live music, a raffle and a live DJ set from Separator and Bloc to finish off the night.

The music kicks off at 8pm and will run until 11pm, with a break at 9.30pm for the raffle. The suggested donation is £5, but any contribution will be greatly appreciated.

REPRESENTATIVES of Lochaber Sensory Care for Sight and Hearing support will be at Mallaig medical centre on Tuesday March 7.

The team will be there from 2pm until 3pm to offer help and advice to those with a sight or hearing loss.

Re-Act refugee group's appeal

A LOCHABER charity has sent more than 1,000 aid packages to refugees in the last seven months.

Lorraine Wheelan from Re-Act Refugee Action Lochaber and Argyll said: 'A lot of very, very kind and generous people have contributed. Thanks to every single person that has been involved.'

The group meets in the former

Fort William Primary School canteen to sort through donations and make up the aid packs. But the charity will have to leave the school in April as the school is scheduled for demolition.

Miss Wheelan told said the charity is now searching for new premises in Lochaber.

She said: 'Although it would be ideal to have premises that are free, having somewhere we

could pay a low rent would also be fine as we would raise funds if needed.'

Around 76 volunteers work with Re-Act but it is always on the look out for more volunteers.

Re-Act Lochaber and Argyll has an Amazon wish list where people can see what donations are needed.

There are drop-off points at Ballachulish St Munda's Church hall, Brecklet, which is open daily from 9.30am to 4.30pm, Kinlochleven Library, Riverside Road, Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, Tuesday and Thursday 9am to 8pm, and Saturday 10am to 1pm.

For drop-off points in Duror contact 01631 740300 and Fiona Hutchison, Kinlochlaich Garden Centre, Appin, to check available drop off times on 07881 525754. The Oban drop-off point is Oban FM radio station, 136 George Street.

If you know of suitable premises for the charity or want to get in touch with Re-Act Lochaber and Argyll contact reactlochaber@yahoo.com



Emily Duffy P6, Lucas Livornese P5 and Ruairidh MacLellan P7 picked up the award last week.

Top class digital pupils

KINLOCHLEVEN Primary School has gained national digital school status for excellence in digital technology in teaching and learning.

Recognised by Education Scotland, the Digital Schools Award is designed to promote, encourage and reward schools that make the best use of digital technology in the classroom.

Head teacher Heather Thomson said: 'The programme offers an opportunity for primary schools to build on their digital capabilities. Promoting digital literacy in school is hugely important for developing our workforce of the future. I am so proud of every pupil and staff member in our school for their level of participation and enthusiasm.'



Some of the Re-Act volunteers.

FREE Business Gateway workshops

BUSINESS START-UP WORKSHOP

A workshop for anyone looking to move into self employment, this workshop will help you turn your ideas into a practical and effective plan to start your business. The workshop covers 3 key areas: marketing, business planning and finance.

Oban – 8th(9.30am-4.30pm) and 9th March(9.30am-12.30pm)

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL MEDIA

Are you curious about social media and what it can do for your business? Do you think your a bit of a digital dinosaur? Then this workshop is for you, designed for businesses who haven't used social media before and would like to learn more.

Oban - Wed 22 March, 1.00 - 5.00pm

DOING MORE WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Do you want to take social media marketing to a new level? Have you been using social media to market your business? This workshop will help you grow your presence, improve your reach and become more effective and efficient in social media marketing.

Oban, Thurs 23rd March, 9.30am - 1.30pm

To book a place call 01546 604555 or email business.gateway@argyll-bute.gov.uk

LOOKING TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS?

The Business Gateway Local Growth Accelerator Programme may be able to provide additional support to help your business grow.

Support available can include Workshops; Specialist Advice (HR, Marketing, Tendering, e-Commerce) and Funding (for tools, equipment, training employees or marketing).

To find out more about your eligibility for the Programme

contact the Business Gateway team 01546 604555

business.gateway@argyll-bute.gov.uk

www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/bglgap



Argyll Resources Group

Mobile welfare units available for hire

New for 2017, Argyll Resources Group now have mobile welfare units for hire. Towable, lightweight and compact, they are quick and easy to hitch up, move to site and set up. These units are totally self-contained with an integrated diesel generator for charging the on board battery unit to provide electricity for lighting, heating, cooking and hot water. Complete with a toilet cubicle accessed directly from the outside, the separate canteen compartment consists of comfortably padded wipe clean bench style seating around a table, with a kitchen sink, water heater and storage cabinets and microwave cooking facilities. These welfare units are ideal for use on sites as canteens, drying rooms and site offices. Secure and very robust, they are also excellent for safe on site storage. The West Coast Loos division of Argyll Resources Group has been supplying and servicing portable toilets throughout Argyll, Lochaber and the Islands to construction sites, local shows, sports and private events for a number of years and will be



servicing these units on site for customers.

Argyll Resources Group, through its John MacLachlan Quarries and Oban Skip Hire companies, also supplies ready

mixed concrete, quarry materials, crane hire, skip hire & recycling, while the West Highland Gas division supplies Calor, Boc and Air liquid gases. www.argyllresources.co.uk.

For further details please phone Argyll Resources Group on 01631 566370 or email enquiries@argyllresources.co.uk.

View from the Chamber

THIS week we heard that the Scottish Government has taken the decision to review the proposed changes to non-domestic (business) rates.

Lochaber Chamber of Commerce lobbied hard against the proposed changes collaboratively with the Scottish Tourism Alliance and the Scottish Chambers of Commerce.

Businesses across Scotland will see rates capped at no more than 12.5 per cent, recognising concerns that were raised with the Chamber by businesses in the hospitality sector across Lochaber.

Lesley Benfield, chief executive of Lochaber Chamber of Commerce, along with Inverness, Caithness and Cairngorm Chambers of Commerce CEOs, will meet the Highland Council, led by Margaret Davidson, pictured, in early March to express the business views in their respective areas on matters such as rates valuation methodology and government policy around rates exemptions.

Business has announced that 'it is exactly at times like this that we need local Chambers of Commerce to take the views of local business to the government'.

Chambers of Commerce campaign on behalf of local business. Contact Fiona McCormick to find out how to join Lochaber Chamber of Commerce on (01397) 705765 or membership@lochaberchamber.co.uk and have your voice heard.



A861 crash driver was on wrong side of road

A MAN has lost his driving licence for two years after he caused an accident near the Corran Ferry by driving on the wrong side of the road.

Mark Thompson collided with Brian Cowley's vehicle on March 8, 2014, on the A861.

Fort William Sheriff Court heard on Monday (February 27) that Thompson had driven up from Leeds on March 8 on business and had taken the ferry to Ardgorr with the intention of heading to Mingary Castle. He was one of only three cars who had taken the crossing and was the only car to turn left.

Thompson recalled there was a line of traffic to the left of the carriage way waiting to board the ferry. This, combined with the fact when he usually disembarks a boat it means he is 'back home in France', caused a moment of confusion and led Thompson to drive on the wrong side of the road.

The court heard Thompson drove approximately 150 metres. It was only on noticing the second 'slow' sign on the road was upside down that he realised his error.

Thompson tried to rectify his mistake but Mr Cowley's car had come round the corner and there was a collision which left Thompson's car in a ditch and knocked him unconscious.

Mr Cowley explained he was travelling with his wife and two dogs who were all injured and badly shaken. He sustained three broken bones in the accident. The 72-year-old said since the event he has recovered as well as can be expected for a man his age.

Thompson admitted full responsibility for the accident but said he had not set out that morning with the intention of crashing and deeply regretted it. Solicitor Stephen Kennedy explained Thompson's work takes him all around Europe, that he is in demand and a ban would hinder what projects he could accept in the future. He asked the sheriff to take into consideration the short distance driven and Thompson's explanation.

Sheriff Taylor said Thompson's actions were dangerous and merited a more lengthy ban. 'He appears not to have even noticed the first of the signs which would have provided an opportunity to correct his ways,' he added.

As well as the two-year ban,

Elaine a step closer to nursing dream



Health and Social Care course leader Andy Gibb with Elaine Stoddart outside Fort William college. Photograph: Abrightside Photography.

ELLIE FORBES
eforbes@obantimes.co.uk

A CAOL woman with aspirations of being a nurse has taken a big step towards making her dream a reality.

Earlier this month, *The Oban Times* ran a story about Elaine Stoddart after she launched a social media campaign to gauge interest in the number of people who would like to be able to study nursing in Lochaber.

Potential Fort William students had taken to Facebook to express their disappointment at being unable to study for a nursing degree in their home town, having to travel almost 200 miles to Stornoway or more than 60 miles to Inverness if they wanted to undertake a course.

Elaine, a health care assistant at Tweedale medical practice, Fort William, for 16 years quit her job recently to pursue her dream of becoming a nurse.

The *Oban Times* article prompted Elaine to visit The University of the Highlands and Islands' Fort William college last week and the 33-year-old has now enrolled to study full time.

Elaine signed up to a one-year social services course and said it is exactly 'the push' she needed: 'It's going to be a big change and I am a bit scared. I have worked at Tweedale for 16 years, so I am nervous. I haven't studied for years.'

Elaine told *The Oban Times* she will be doing two days a week in college and two days on placement at the Belford Hospital starting in August.

'I wouldn't have been aware of the course had I not been able to talk to people at the college.'

Lydia Rohmer, principal and chief executive, said: 'We are determined to introduce a curriculum in all areas, including healthcare and childcare that will give people in our local communities the opportunities

to study now for local jobs of the future. Our recently expanded portfolio of health, social care and childcare courses are proving extremely popular with students and employers, and can lead to substantive career development opportunities.'

Mandy Cameron, from Carr Gomm, which provides community and home-based support for people with additional needs and disabilities, said: 'Working in the social care sector is extremely rewarding and enjoyable but because there can be a negative perception of what the job entails and the challenges it can sometimes present, it can be difficult to recruit.'

'We decided we should adopt a more creative approach to recruitment.'

'That is why Carr Gomm contacted West Highland College UHI to see if there was anything we could get involved with that might help lead to an uptake in staff.'

TIMESLINE

Nevis Bakery has expansion plans

FORT WILLIAM-BASED Nevis Bakery has applied to extend its commercial premises in Annat Point Industrial Estate, Corpach.

The plan is to form a new product dispatch area at the unit. As the land was previously used as a timber yard, the potential for contamination was flagged up as a risk during investigation.

However, it was advised the development would not dramatically increase the risk of contamination.

The application was submitted to Highland Council planners on Thursday February 2 and the last date for neighbours to be consulted about the plans is March 11.

As well as the industrial unit, Nevis Bakery has a shop on Fort William High Street and sells products in various stores throughout Lochaber.

Council website embraces emoji

PEOPLE looking for shortcuts to their most used pages on Highland Council's website via their Smart phones can now use emoji to take them there faster.

Darren MacLeod, digital services manager, said: 'Although Emoji are usually associated with fun there is a serious message, with the use of Emoji becoming more popular. For example where our web users have literacy challenges or perhaps English is not their first language, Emoji have become a universal symbol for conveying a feeling or an idea.'

Type www.highland.gov.uk into an address bar, then add a forward slash followed by an Emoji.

Helping teachers help their pupils

A PIONEERING project led by BT and the British Computing Society is helping primary school teachers get to grips with computing so they can better help their pupils.

BT Scotland director Brendan Dick said: 'Computing is a vital skill for Scotland's future. BT volunteers are running Barefoot Computing workshops at schools the length and breadth of the country, giving teachers the confidence to teach computing to young people. Those skills will undoubtedly be used to successfully navigate a host of real-world challenges as they go through life.'

Once-in-a-lifetime chance to get road upgrade right

ELLIE FORBES
eforbes@obantimes.co.uk

A ROADS campaign group fears Transport Scotland is under-estimating the increased traffic volume and economic benefits of an A82 upgrade.

The A82 Partnership has appealed to transport minister Humza Yousaf, Highlands and Islands MSPs and cabinet secretaries seeking their support in ensuring the upgraded A82 between Tarbet and Inverarnan will have a carriageway width of 7.3 metres.

The partnership believes Transport Scotland may recommend a carriageway width of six metres.

Fort William councillor Brian Murphy, chairman of the A82 Partnership, said: 'We believe Transport Scotland is under-estimating the increase in traffic which will result following the upgrading of this section of road. We are already aware of hauliers, carriers and individuals who, at present, avoid this section of road and take the longer route via the A84 and A85. This traffic will return to the A82 when it is upgraded.'

'In addition, we do not believe it has accounted for the inevitable increase in economic activity



Fort William councillor and chairman of the A82 partnership Brian Murphy. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

“We need a road fit for purpose”

Alasdair Ferguson
Ferguson Transport and Shipping

in the West Highlands and Islands. The recent investment in the aluminium factory in Fort William being just one example.'

David MacGillvray, chief executive of Shiel Buses, said: 'We use this section of the A82 regularly and currently run eight services daily on behalf of Scottish Citylink along with numerous private hires and tours. We believe the proposed six-metre width is not sufficient for safety and comfort.'

'This is the main route to the Highlands with substantial volumes of traffic. The only safe option would be a 7.3m carriageway.'

In support of its case, the A82 Partnership highlighted the most recent upgrade to the A82, the Crianlarich bypass, is 7.3 metres wide.

The Tarbet to Inverarnan

section of the A82 has seen little improvement since the 1930s, leading the campaign group to identify the proposed upgrade as a 'once-in-a-lifetime' opportunity which will have a 'major positive impact on the West Highlands and Islands'.

In the letter, the partnership said: 'There is considerable anecdotal evidence that hauliers, carriers and individuals at present divert via the A84 and A85 rather than using the Loch Lomond section of the A82.'

Alasdair Ferguson, managing director of Ferguson Transport and Shipping said: 'The Department of Transport is trialling longer length trailers throughout the UK. A six metre road would likely rule the West Coast out of the opportunity for using longer vehicles with more carrying capacity and the benefit of less vehicles on the road.'

'Engineering a six metre road instead of a 7.3 metre road, in my mind, is very much penny wise and pound foolish.'

'We need a road fit for purpose and to save a little money at the expense of the people on the west coast of Scotland and on this vital arterial route, would be a disgrace and very short-sighted on behalf of the Government and Transport Scotland.'

Court told youngsters bit and threatened to kill officers

TWO YOUNG people who bit police officers and threatened to kill them have been handed supervision orders 'as they require ongoing support', a court heard.

Malcolm Watson and the young woman appeared in Fort William Sheriff Court on Tuesday (February 28) in relation to incidents between Thursday January 19 and Sunday January 22.

Procurator Fiscal Robert Weir told the court that police had been called to Lochaber Road on January 19 to attend an incident where they found the woman in a highly agitated state.

Female officers tried to calm her down but she lashed out and bit one of them on the left wrist.

While being handcuffed, the 16-year-old tried to bite the other officer, breaking the skin and causing cuts which bled for 20 minutes after the incident.

The charges against Watson related to events on January 22. At 7.30pm police officers

attended Lochaber Road again following reports of an incident and, again, the female made repeated attempts to bite them.

'She claimed, although wrongly, she had a blade on her and threatened to kill the police officers,' said Mr Weir.

The fiscal further explained Watson at this time was behaving erratically and was not complying with the ambulance service.

The court heard Watson shouted 'he would burn their houses, burn their children and throw acid in their eyes' and that he also tried to bite the police officers.

Hamish Melrose explained to the court that in the first incident, Watson had been calm. In the second incident Watson was not initially involved but had a one-and-a-half inch cut to his forehead. When ambulance staff tried to treat his injury, coupled with attempts by police officers to arrest the woman, Watson became aggressive.

Mr Melrose said both defendants are ashamed of their actions and Watson had written letters of apology to the hospital and the police officers.

The solicitor said social work reports had shown the female to have a good work ethic but that background checks had shown support was still very much needed.

Watson has a previous conviction from an event four years ago. Since these incidents, bail conditions had meant the young girl had moved back into the family home.

Mr Melrose explained that it had been suggested that close checks be kept on the two young people and support be made available. The sheriff issued a community payback order with a supervision requirement for the female for two years.

Watson was handed a community payback order with a requirement to complete 150 hours of unpaid work in nine months.

Spotlight on apprentices

COMHAIRLE nan Eilean Siar is hosting a series of events to demonstrate how apprenticeships work.

As part of the Skills Development Scotland (SDS) Scottish Apprenticeship Week, the event will also showcase successful apprentices who have chosen to get a job, get paid and get qualified to develop their careers.

Western Isles Council is inviting employers, school pupils, colleges and training providers as well as interested members of the public to participate in the events.

Drop-in session venues and dates are: e-Sgoil, 44 Francis Street, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, Monday March 6, noon till 5pm; Tuesday March 7, noon till 7.30pm; and Friday March 10, 10am till 12.30pm.

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Supermarket bag charge funds boost Kinlochleven trust

KINLOCHLEVEN Community Trust (KCT) has been awarded £1,000 from Tesco as part of its 'Bags of Help' initiative project.

The scheme, a partnership between the supermarket chain and environmental charity Groundwork, uses the money raised by the 5p bag charge to award outdoor community projects with funding grants. Local communities were asked to nominate projects to be in the running for

the money. KCT was one of three short-listed groups, which were then voted for in store using free tokens given out to every shopper.

The money will be used to help with the trust's 'Mission Compostable' project which aims to train volunteers to run the compost site in Kinlochleven. The volunteers will be offered training in a range of skills, including chainsaw use, chipper use, composting and health and safety.

Marion Smith, development officer for Kinlochleven Community Trust, said: 'We will use the funding to train new volunteers, who will work alongside existing volunteers to provide a fit-for-purpose composting site for the residents of Kinlochleven. The money will also go towards new equipment and materials for the site. We are also hoping to recruit more volunteers to help make Mission Compostable a success.'

FW

Corpach

CORPACH in Colour is looking for volunteers to take on the roles of secretary and treasurer.

Nicola Muir and Louise Pescod are no longer able to commit to these organisational roles but are happy to continue helping out with planting.

In a joint message they said: 'Please keep our village vibrant. It would be a shame if the legacy that the 'two Margarets' created more than 10 years ago could not be continued.

'Thank you to everyone who has helped, supported or volunteered their services to Corpach in Colour up until now. It is greatly appreciated.'

Interested parties should call Nicola on 01397 772870, email mrsnicolamuir@gmail.com or comment on the Corpach in Colour Facebook page.

Ullapool

A HIGHLAND community trust has received a cash windfall to expand its community space.

Ullapool Community Trust (UCT) has been awarded £138,000 from the Scottish Land Fund to transform its New Broom community shop in Argyle Street, Ullapool.

Since July last year, when UCT began renting the property, the New Broom has been selling re-used goods and donating proceeds to the Highlands Supports Refugees project. Rag bags were also given to Ullapool High School and material has been used by the Brownies.

Community development officer Ben Williams said: 'This award has come after the culmination of a lot of hard work over the past six months. A massive thank you to all the volunteers and local groups who have made this project possible. I hope it continues to create positive opportunities for local people well into the future.'

'It is amazing to think we can now secure this asset on behalf of our community and develop the New Broom into a unique community space.'

UCT's aims to transform the building into community hub for local groups and community-based organisations. It also hopes to provide a retail outlet for second hand items and to encourage upcycling.



Kim Cameron of the Gin Bothy, collecting pine needles at Loch Arkaig. Photograph: Steve Morris.

Loch Arkaig

SALES of an artisan gin are raising cash to conserve the precious ancient pine trees whose needles give it flavour.

Loch Arkaig pine forest near Spean Bridge was recently bought in a partnership between the Woodland Trust and community group Arkaig Community Forest.

Now distiller 'The Gin Bothy' is infusing its 'bothy Original' with Arkaig pine needles and donating £1 a bottle to help conserve and regenerate the forest.

Gin Bothy founder Kim Cameron said: 'When I heard about the Woodland Trust's appeal for funds to buy and restore Loch Arkaig pine forest, I just knew we had to get on board. It is a spectacular place and there are such exciting plans for its future.'

The Woodland Trust's Scotland director Carol Evans said: 'We are delighted to have The Gin Bothy on board. Kim's passion for what we are doing is evident and we are great fans of the gin. One or two glasses have already been raised to toast the future of the forest!'

The Loch Arkaig Appeal is also benefiting from a Scots Pine candle produced by the Isle of Skye Candle Company - with £1 being donated from each sale.

Gin Bothy goods can be found in Deli Craft in Fort William High Street.



Third year students at Ardnamurchan High School visited Strontian Fire Station.

Pupils learn about emergency services

THIRD-YEAR pupils from Ardnamurchan High School who are taking the uniformed and emergency services unit of the Scottish Studies Award have enjoyed visits and talks from various services over the last couple of months, learning about recruitment, training and job opportunities.

WPC Angie Campbell talked to the pupils in school before they visited Fort William police station where

they met CID and traffic police officers. They saw the cells and interview rooms and were shown how the 'stinger' is deployed to stop cars.

Bo Wilson visited the school to explain the different roles in the ambulance service and how to join. He was called out before pupils had a chance to look around the ambulance.

Craig Burton, Salen coastguard team's deputy station officer, ex-

plained the roles of the volunteer and full-time coastguard services. He brought a lot of equipment to demonstrate how jobs within the service are carried out.

Lastly, pupils enjoyed a tour and talk at Strontian fire station with Neil Mellis and Pat McElhenney.

Other Strontian pupils are studying travel and tourism, step dance and earth's natural resources.

Arisaig

A NEW adventure play ground on Arisaig playing field moved a step closer to being completed last week.

Arisaig Community Trust (ACT) volunteers finished the latest phase of the park when they installed a new scramble frame.

ACT negotiated a long-term lease for a village playing field in 2011. After several fundraising efforts, trust volunteers made the field suitable for community use and bought new children's play equipment to be installed around the main pitch area.

With skills, time and effort by community volunteers, installation of the new play equipment began in 2016 and was completed with the new climbing frame being installed. It has already proved a hit with village youngsters.

Now work is complete in the main playing field, the trust aims to start fundraising for a makeover of the much-used adjacent junior play park.

Gordon Stewart said: 'The major upgrade of the village field and installation of the equipment has been an important and satisfying project for the Community Trust to undertake.' He thanked all of the volunteers who had been involved.



Volunteers put up the latest addition to the playing field.



Ronald Mackenzie of Cruise Loch Ness.

Fort Augustus

A FORT AUGUSTUS businessman has been shortlisted for a top national award.

Ronald Mackenzie, who owns family-run business Cruise Loch Ness at Fort Augustus, has been shortlisted alongside six others for Businessman of the Year at the inaugural Scottish SME Awards.

Cruise Loch Ness was established in 1968 by Ronald's father Norman and has been running boat trips from the southern bank of Loch Ness ever since. The firm has carried more than 1.5 million passengers in that time.

The awards are voted for by the general public who nominate their favourite businesses and entrepreneurs for the various categories. Mr Mackenzie said: 'I'm delighted to have been nominated for this award. It's also particularly pleasing that it's members of the public who have voted.'

The awards ceremony will take place on Monday March 13 in the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Glasgow.

Kinlochleven

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Marion Smith, development officer for Kinlochleven Community Trust, said: 'We will use the funding to train new volunteers, who will work alongside existing volunteers to provide a fit-for-purpose composting site for the residents of Kinlochleven. The money will also go towards new equipment and materials for the site. We are also hoping to recruit more volunteers to help make Mission Compostable a success.'

Highlands

ENVIRONMENTAL charity Keep Scotland Beautiful is calling for Highland communities to register to take part in this year's annual Beautiful Scotland awards, which bring communities together to help deliver local environmental improvements and recognise efforts Scotland-wide to enhance local areas.

The competition, which this year will focus on birds, bees and trees, is run in partnership with the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS). Its purpose is to bring communities together to help deliver local environmental improvements and recognise the efforts of volunteers across Scotland as they work hard to enhance local areas.

Beautiful Scotland celebrates and supports the achievements of entire villages, towns, cities, residential communities and Business Improvement Districts from across Scotland who help to improve the places they care for.

Smaller-scale projects, such as community allotments, friends of parks groups, after-school clubs and community gardens, can celebrate too by entering the non-competitive It's Your Neighbourhood campaign.

Derek Robertson, chief executive of Keep Scotland Beautiful, said: 'Communities are doing their bit to keep local spaces in the Highlands clean, green and beautiful, and all too often these efforts are overlooked. Beautiful Scotland and It's Your Neighbourhood are an annual celebration of the outstanding achievements of thousands of volunteers who enhance the areas they live in, and are an opportunity to put their efforts in the national spotlight.'

Online registration for the Beautiful Scotland awards and for It's Your Neighbourhood is now open and further information can be found at www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/beautifulscotland/ or www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/IYN.

Wester Ross



Celebrating their new partnership are Joanna Macpherson and Alec Cormack, managers of family-owned Attadale Estate, and Kevin Frediani, right, Inverewe Garden property manager.

ONE of the top accolades for any quality garden is to be recognised as a partner garden by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) - and Wester Ross has not one but two.

The National Trust for Scotland Inverewe Garden in Poolewe and Attadale Gardens in Strathcarron are now both official partners to the world-respected RHS. Attadale has just achieved this status and joins Inverewe, which obtained its status two years ago through the efforts of head gardener Kevin Ball. Now both gardens are working closely together to share expertise and knowledge to mutual benefit.

Inverewe property manager Kevin Frediani is delighted with the fact that Attadale has now joined this prestigious group of gardens. He says: 'All partner gardens offer inspiration to keep gardeners through high standards of design and/or planting. We certainly have a great amount here in Wester Ross, particularly as there are now two in this beautiful part of the north-west Highlands for visitors and locals alike.'

Managers of the family-owned Attadale estate, Joanna Macpherson and her husband Alec Cormack, are thrilled with the new quality status, further building on their family's development of the garden overlooking Loch Carron. Joanna is a founder member of 'Discover Scottish Gardens' which was launched in May 2014 to showcase and inspire visits to gardens in Scotland.

She said: 'My grandfather bought Attadale Estate in 1952 and my mother started seriously working in the garden following some devastating storms at the end of the 1980s.'

Joanna's mother and father still live on the estate and are active in its development and operation.

Ms Macpherson continued: 'The whole team here at Attadale are delighted with our new RHS accolade, and are so pleased to be working hand in hand with Inverewe, sharing our horticultural expertise over future years.'

The two gardens open their 2017 season on April 1 when both will be part of the Scottish Rhododendron Festival over April and May. Inverewe has a wide-ranging events programme, while Attadale also offers visitors some great garden events.

There is more information on websites www.ntr.org.uk/ Inverewe and www.attadalegardens.com.

Mr Frediani added: 'We are both on the North Coast 500 touring route which is bringing visitors to this part of the Highlands, and both Attadale and Inverewe are great stopping-off points along the way. By working together, we are confident that all our visitors will have a truly memorable time and hopefully want to return. Our two garden teams are very proud to be recognised by the Royal Horticultural Society in this way.'

RUSSELL KANE

"One of the quickest, most stimulating stand-ups in the land"
★★★★
The Times



"Extremely funny"
★★★★
Evening Standard

'...at the top of his game'
The Guardian

Win 2 Tickets

to see multi award winning stand-up comedian Russell Kane at The Nevis Centre, Fort William

Answer this simple question: Russell Kane is described by the Guardian as being 'At the top

Email your answer to nmurphy@obantimes.co.uk no later than Friday 17th March. One lucky reader will win 2 tickets to the show on Friday 7th April. Please include your name and telephone number with your email entry. No cash alternative. Editor's decision is final. The winner will be notified by telephone and/or email and must give permission for Wyvex Media to announce the winning entry thereafter, via social media.

FORT WILLIAM

Friday 7th April Doors 7.00pm Show 8pm
The Nevis Centre, An Aird, Fort William PH33 6AN
Tickets: £18 each (Age 14 years and over)
01397 700707 (Box Office)

Singer returns to Highland roots

A 'MESMERISING' musician is going back to her roots as part of an upcoming tour.

Kaela Rowan will be returning to the Highlands and her beloved Genuig to promote her new album. *The Fruited Thorn* contains 11 traditional ballads, said to act as a nod to the songs she learned as a young session singer and to the sounds of those who inspired her.

Rowan is joined by her band - James Mackintosh (Shooglenifty, String Sisters, Grit Orchestra) and Ewan MacPherson (Shooglenifty, Salt House, Alan Kelly Gang) for the tour and album which has been described as a work of raw and powerful beauty. It also helped earn Rowan a nomination for Gaelic singer of the year at the Scots Trad Music Awards in December 2016.



Kaela Rowan is joined by her band James Mackintosh and Ewan MacPherson.

The trio will perform on Saturday March 11 at Crafts & Things in Glencoe and on Saturday March 25 in Genuig Hall.

Young people urged to vote

TWO PEOPLE tasked with helping to give young people from the Western Isles a voice are reminding 16- and 17-year-olds to take advantage of the fact they can vote in this year's election.

Charlie Nicolson and Donnie Steele were elected in 2015 as Western Isles Youth Champions, with Charlie covering Lewis and Harris and Donnie in Uist and Barra.

The champions are encouraging young voters who are eligible to vote in the upcoming local government elections in May to make sure they are registered on the Electoral Register by April 17, 2017.

This will be the first time in a local government election 16- and 17-year-olds will have the opportunity to vote on who should be representing their ward and their interests.

Charlie Nicolson said: 'I believe it is a major step forward in politics throughout our country that 16- and 17-year-olds now have the opportunity to vote. The services which are delivered in our communities impact our young people's opportunities and choices in life, and I would encourage them all to come out and vote on May 4.'

Donnie Steele said: 'I am confident this opportunity to vote will encourage young people to participate in the decision-making process for the future of our islands and I would urge each of them to have their say when the local government elections take place later this year.'

The elections take place on Thursday May 4 and young people can register to vote at www.aboutmyvote.co.uk or by contacting the local electoral registration officer.

Ambulance staff at end of tether over conditions

EXCLUSIVE
LOUISE GLEN
lglen@obantimes.co.uk

AMBULANCE workers in the West Highlands are 'very likely' to vote for further action when a ballot of members is counted tomorrow (Friday), a union boss has said.

Staff will decide on action over concerns about the lack of ambulances for immediate response to 999 calls because of inter-hospital transfers alongside other issues.

At present Oban has 20 staff members working with two ambulance vehicles operating 24/7. Mull has five staff, with one ambulance vehicle operating 24/7.

Oban and Mull workers say there are not enough ambulances to meet the demands of emergencies in the area - particularly in rural areas.

One staff member said: 'It is almost a nightly taxi to Glasgow or Paisley at the moment. We want the very best for every patient and if we are taking a less urgent patient to the city it leaves the town and rural areas short in an emergency.'

Members of the Unite union were asked to agree with the statement: 'I have lost confidence in the divisional management as they have not seriously addressed the issues my Union have raised. Therefore I agree we should now register a formal dispute and collectively pursue the issues through the Dispute Resolution Procedure.'

Scotland Unite union's regional officer Tommy Campbell said Scottish Ambulance staff were at 'the end of their tether'



We are sick of the spin

Tommy Campbell
Unite regional officer

and wanted bosses of the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) to take notice of concerns about their working practice, including serious health and safety concerns.

Speaking exclusively to *The Oban Times*, Mr Campbell said: 'These are very conscientious hard-working staff who are at the end of their tether. The current state of play is heart-breaking for staff and a source of frustration and anger.'

'They went into the service to help people and communities, and they just want to get the resources to do it.'

'We anticipate a mandate for a ballot to move our concerns to a formal dispute.'

'The staff and the union are sick of the utter spin that the senior management keep putting out.'

'We need to cut through to what is really happening. Problems need to be highlighted so that our MSPs, MPs and the Scottish Government can see the real picture of what is going on and not the line they are being fed by managers.'

Mr Campbell continued: 'We have been consistently raising their concerns about the pressures staff are all facing because of the reduced

resources they are working with. The issues we have raised are over-running of shift time, on-call fatigue, in some areas accident and emergency services being propped up by visiting rural crews thus leaving rural areas uncovered and the absence of proper rest breaks.'

'In spite of the representations Unite have made to senior divisional management, including the SAS chief executive Pauline Howie, and MSPs, coupled with Unite going public via the media, there is a lack of any serious response from the senior divisional management.'

'There is lack of meaningful and transparent partnership working with Unite reps and a lack of partnership working in the investigations in health and safety matters.'

'We also believe that the HR team does not take front line staff concerns seriously. This leaves us without any trust or confidence in their ability to seriously address and resolve these concerns.'

A Scottish Ambulance Service spokesperson said: 'We are aware of the letter to Unite members in our north division.'

'With regards to the concerns over the provision of the ambulance service, we are continuing to work with staff-side colleagues to address the issues raised.'

'This includes working closely with local health boards to help manage hospital transfers.'

'Over the past year we have also invested significantly in our workforce in the area, with the introduction of 52 staff, which is an eight per cent increase.'

Tears of joy as missing dog is found



A WEE dog that was missing for more than 10 days was found safe and well last week at Ganavan beach.

Rowan's owner, Sandra Muir, said she was 'beyond delighted' to get her Jack Russell/Patterdale cross back.

Sandra explained: 'For 10 days we were out looking for her and that morning was the first morning I was late getting to the beach.'

'When I arrived, Karen Delaney [who has

helped search for 10 days] stopped my car. I just knew she had been found.'

A quick visit to Oban Veterinary Surgery and Rowan was given a clean bill of health.

Sandra continued: 'Rowan has lost around a kilogramme in weight and must have lost some of her size to get out of the rabbit warren she was stuck in.' Sandra is pictured with daughter Mirren, who was very emotional about finding Rowan. She said: 'It is the best news.'

TIMESLINE

One million steps and 500 miles...

STAFF at *The Oban Times* are putting their sore feet up today (Thursday March 2) after achieving a staggering 1,000,000 steps to raise cash for the charity Cancer Research.

Ten staff members took part after being challenged by production manager Andy Bruce to raise awareness of breast cancer and to raise money for research.

Staff were seen plodding all over town throughout February wearing step calculators generously donated by Fitbit. Overall they achieved 500 miles during the working day - giving up every lunchtime for a month to achieve their goal.

Andy said: 'It has been great to be supported by my colleagues to raise cash for Cancer Research alongside raising awareness of the condition.'

Donations can still be made via www.justgiving.com/fundraising/OTmillionsteps

Whirlwind return for Miss Hoolie

A DECADE after hit children's TV show *Balamory* came to an end on the island of Mull, Miss Hoolie - everyone's favourite teacher - is set to return.

But this time Miss Hoolie is much taller and moves her arms around - because she is the first wind turbine owned by Argyll and Bute Council.

Officially naming the structure, near Tobermory, Councillor Roddy McCuish said: 'The installation of the highly-efficient and state-of-the-art turbine, now known forever as Miss Hoolie, will help improve energy efficiency on Mull.'

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Fears over Oban zebra crossing

THE ZEBRA crossing on Soroba Road, installed when a supermarket opened in Oban, came under attack from Oban Community Council on Monday night.

The road rules of the crossing, the community council heard, are not being followed by drivers and one councillor said she takes her 'life in her hands' every time she crosses the road.

Jessie MacFarlane, community council, said: 'There is going to be a terrible accident if something is not done. It is a death trap.'

Jessie explained there had been a near miss earlier that week when she was crossing the road but the driver didn't slow down and stop at the crossing.

Jessie said: 'She just missed me and instead of saying sorry she just laughed in my face.'

'Something needs to be done. It is just not a safe road any more.'

Police constable Jeremy Moore, who was at the meeting, said: 'There is much information coming into the driver at that point. Let's see if there is something I can do.'

Community bus given £9,100 to secure service

THE FUTURE of the Ulva Ferry Community Bus on the Isle of Mull has been secured after it was in danger of being forced off the road.

Following news that the running costs, which come to more than £18,000, were not covered from fare income and that the current grant runs out in March 2017, Scottish Sea Farms stepped in with a Heart of the Community grant of more than £9,000, which will cover half the running costs of this vital service.

Helen MacDonald, Ulva Ferry Local Development Officer, said: 'The support from Scottish Sea Farms will keep this essential bus on the road.'

'The service enables residents to attend

medical appointments, community events and make social trips, reducing isolation, particularly for those who have impaired mobility.'

Colin MacDonald, Scottish Sea Farms marine manager at Creran, said: 'Services like the Ulva Ferry Community Bus are so important to island residents.'

'Sometimes there is just no alternative transport and people can miss out on a host of activities and social interaction.'

'Mull is a great place to live and this bus helps everyone to participate in community life.'

'We are delighted our Heart of the Community funding will help keep this bus on the road this year.'

Lochaber Women's Aid celebrates International Women's Day

International Women's Day is March 8 and in the spirit of this year's theme, #BeBoldForChange, Lochaber Women's Aid (LWA) continues to support those affected by domestic abuse and champion women's rights in Scotland.

International Women's Day is a global day to celebrate the achievements of women and to declare bold actions to progress women's status, something that LWA does every day. In fact, since opening its doors in 2003, it has supported more than 600 women and 150 children who have experienced domestic abuse.

LWA is located in Fort William but its area of work extends to communities in and around Kinlochleven and Duror to the south, Fort Augustus to the north and Mallaig and the small isles to the west. Their services are available to all women and children.

The trained experts at LWA offer a one-to-one support service for women who are living with, or who have experienced domestic abuse. They provide practical and emotional support and assistance in making choices and identifying individual priorities. This can include support to attend housing and solicitor's appointments or support

to rebuild confidence and self-esteem, when this has been eroded. Whatever your needs, they are there to listen, believe, understand and support.

The children's service also provides support to younger people to help them understand that it is not their fault and to help them make sense of what is happening. Both the women's and children's services are completely confidential.

Deirdre Coull, chairwoman of Lochaber Women's Aid, said: 'As a feminist organisation, we seek a more gender inclusive world.'

'On International Women's Day we would like every-

one to think about what they can do to help progress gender equality and improve the status of women and girls. We would like people to think about what bold action they can take to ensure the future for women and girls is equal, safe and rewarding.'

Those who are in an abusive situation can call Lochaber Women's Aid on 01397 705734 from 9am to 5pm Monday-Friday or the National Domestic Abuse Helpline at 0800 027 1234, which is staffed 24 hours.



International Women's Day

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From the 6th and 8th March, Lochaber Women's Aid is putting together a special window display in the Oban Times shop in High Street, Fort William to promote and celebrate International Women's Day. Pop by to see a mannequin dressed in the women's suffrage colours and pick up leaflets and information of interest.

Phoenix boxer retains Scottish title

Boxing

LOCHABER Phoenix boxing club's Cameron Whyte successfully retained his Scottish boxing title last weekend to stretch his title reign to an incredible five years.

Cameron, who turns fifteen later this month, produced an outstanding performance in his semi-final against the fearsome Sam Allan from Springhill boxing club. Allan was Scottish champion and GB silver medalist last year at a weight class three weight divisions above Cameron.

In his first competitive bout since the final of the European championships seven months ago Cameron produced a first round to remind everyone present just why he became the first Scottish schoolboy to reach a European final and also why he became GB champion last year.

Time and again he used quick footwork to land shots and evade any counters from Allan. After Cameron's victory was announced over the tannoy, the coach of his opponent in the final approached the Lochaber camp to announce he was withdrawing his boxer as he felt he needed to make this decision for the welfare of his youngster. Thus Cameron was immediately declared champion.

Fifteen year old Robert MacDonald was one of three Lochaber boxers to take home silver in these championships. His semi-final opponent was Jimmy Laing from Insh. These two had fought in final of the Northern Districts two weeks previously when Robert had pipped Laing on points in an incredibly close contest.

Ten-year-old Josh Diegano almost gained a gold in his first ever Scottish championships when he was defeated in his final against Tyler Craig by the tightest possible margin of three judges votes to two in a real battle royal which threatened to swing one way then the other over three action packed rounds.

Twelve-year-old Max Derbenovs also featured in a final against Linwood's Stuart Fletcher.

Fletcher took the opening round due to his elusive footwork keeping Max at bay but even as the round drew to a close the Linwood boxer was noticeably breathing heavily as the Fort William youngster launched wave after wave of attacks.

The early work of Fletcher won the contest for him but the huge heart of Derbenovs impressed everyone watching.

Fort league game called off

Football

FORT William's weekend home Highland League game against Rothes was called off after a week of poor weather led to a waterlogged pitch at Claggan.

This is the second home game to be called off this season.

Fort William travel to Inverness to take on Clachnacuddin on Saturday.

Prizewinners at Spean

SPEAN Bridge golf club held its annual awards ceremony last weekend with members taking home some top prizes.

The club held a small competition before the prize giving kicked off in the club house with some lunch.

John Muncie of the club told The Oban Times that members held a minute silence in memory of past president Neil Fraser who sadly passed away last Friday after a long illness.

The clubs 2017 season start on May 1 this year.

The winners were as follows: Championship - Aeleen Campbell; Handicap Champion - Katherine Ann Munro; Ferguson Cup - Tricia McIvor; Charlie Taylor Cup - Pat Davidson; Medals - May - Pat Davidson; June - Tricia McIvor; July - Pat Davidson; August - Virginia Millen; September - Katherine Ann Munro; Bronze Medal - Tricia McIvor; Eclectic - 1 Tricia McIvor; 2 Aeleen Campbell; 3 Virginia Millen; Winter League 2015/2016 - 1 Aeleen Campbell; 2 Mary Robson; 3 Liz Britton.

Trophy winners 2016: Medals Category 1 - May - K Dalziel; June

Golf

- K Dalziel; July - J MacLennan; August - C Davidson; September - C Coltart; October - J MacLennan; Final - J MacLennan. Medals Category 2 - May - C Astleian; June - O Walmsley; July - D Swanson; August - H Campbell; September - D Langan; October - I Graham; Final - I Graham. Senior - May - I Graham; June - T Laggan; July - G Brown; August - A MacDonald; September - B Colman; October - G Brown; Final - I Graham. Stableford Pairs - C Davidson/W Atkinson; Stableford Singles - W Atkinson; Greensome Cup - T Richardson/W Atkinson; McLaren Trophy - T Richardson; Bogey Cup - A Morrison; Drummond Cup - K Dalziel; Edbroke Trophy - T Richardson; Hotel Trophy Scr - A Reid; Hotel Trophy H'cap - J MacPhee; Captain's Prize - T Richardson; Pairs Trophy - J MacLennan/W Atkinson; Bell Cup - C Davidson; Kenning Cup - O Walmsley; Club Championship Ser- G Martin; Club Championship H'cap - O Walmsley; Gordon Pearson Trophy - C Astleian; 3/4 Man Texas Scramble - J MacPhee/T Richardson/W Atkinson/D Langan.



Trophy winners of Spean Bridge Golf Club pictured at the annual presentation.

Photo: Anthony MacMillan Photography.

Railway club lift HUD Cup



The HUD cup was played at the Fort William railway club last weekend. Photo: Abrightside Photography.

HOSTS Fort William railway club won the HUD cup from holders Roy Bridge hotel in what proved to be on this occasion a one sided affair.

The railwaymen steamed through the singles matches winning six and drawing four giving an unassailable lead of 8pts -2pts, with Inverloch man John "cubby" Cuthbertson sinking the all important black

ball to secure the cup.

Although now rendered meaningless to the outcome of the competition the five doubles matches were still played out with railway club winning 4-1 giving a final score of 12pts -3pts.

The competition was held last weekend in memory of Frank Hudson, who had played in previous friendly matches for

Pool

the railway club between the two teams.

A spokesperson for Fort William railway club said: 'As ever a great day had by all with the last act being the presentation of the cup by Meg Laing, on behalf of Franks brother, Jackie who unfortunately could not be in attendance on this occasion, to Railway club captain Harry Fairgrieve.'

About eight years ago Frank was a member of the Railway pool team who played the first of a series of friendlies versus Roy bridge hotel pool team which subsequently after Frank's passing has been played in his memory with the cup engraved with Frank's nickname and affectionately known as the HUD cup.

'Frank has not only been missed by his old friends at Inverloch but also by the new ones he had made in Roy bridge through the pool.'



Forty-two runners set off on the new cow hill race route at the weekend. Photo: Abrightside Photography.

Runners gear up for end of winter league

LOCHABER athletics club penultimate winter league race took place at the weekend.

Last Sunday, runners took to the new cow hill race route - five miles in length and climbing to the summit of cow hill through the peat track and and the front of the hill.

Despite the heavy rainfall before the race 42 runners took part. The first three places were hotly contested from the start with Luke Taylor, and John

Yells, battling all the way to the line with Stephen Traill not far behind, with only one second between first and second.

The ladies race was won by Lisette Walter, Amanda Blackhall was second, and Sarah MacKenzie third.

A spokesman for the club said: 'Well done to all that took today and a big thank you to our time keepers and marshals, Ellen, Corina, Pamela, Jon, Raymond, Barrie and Manny.'



The Portree primary 7 and under team which won the Gilmour Sports National First Shinty tournament held in Fort William on Sunday. The boys are pictured with Camanachd Association President Jim Barr (left), coach Callie MacLean (second from right) and Ronald Ross of the Camanachd Association. See shinty pages for tournament report Photo: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image



Inverloch won the Primary 5 and under section.

Alleycats can't be caught

10-pin bowling

AFTER week 14 of the Lochaber Building Supplies 10 pin bowling leagues at the Nevis Centre in Fort William Alleycats continue to lead of the scratch division with 60 points.

And with only one week to go they cannot be caught after beating second place team British Legion Fort William 5-0. British Legion Fort William stay in second place with 46 points closely followed by Don't Give A Split on 45 points.

The handicap division is much closer and is led by Don't Give A Split with 46 points closely followed by British Legion Fort William with 42 points and Alleycats with 41 points.

Next week is the final week and will be crucial for both the scratch and the handicap divisions as Don't Give A Split and British Legion Fort William play each other.

Individually the best game in week 14 was 180 from Pam Weller (Alleycats). Also this week Tommy McKnight (Alleycats) chipped in with 172. Pam Weller also had the top two game scratch series with 334 whilst Tommy McKnight had the best handicap game of 232 and the top two game handicap series of 421.

The best team scores of the week all came from Alleycats who had the top scratch game of 625, the top handicap game of 805, the top two game scratch series of 1207 and the top two game handicap series of 1567.

The top scratch averages for the season so far are currently held by Pam Weller (Alleycats) on 163 followed by Tony White Locke (Alleycats) on 155 and Ben Weller (Don't Give A Split) on 151.

lottery numbers

Lotto

WINNING numbers for the Caol Community Centre Bingo Lotto on Sunday February 26 were 2, 9 and 19. There were no winners so the jackpot is up to £1,000 for this weeks draw.

Ryan Dibsdales scooped up £1,300 in the Fort William golf club lotto draw last Thursday (February 23). The winning numbers were 4, 18 and 19. There is £100 available for today's draw.

The winning numbers for last Thursday Caol Regeneration Lotto were 2, 8 and 19. There were no winners so the jackpot is up to £400 for today's draw.

The numbers for the Ballachulish Shinty Lotto draw on February 26 were 13, 16 and 17. There were no winners so the draw is up to £800 this week.

The Kilmallie lotto winning numbers for the draw on February 26 were 1, 5 and 17. There were no winners so the draw is up to £1,300 for this week.

League results

Indoor football

RESULTS from Week 15 of the indoor league: Nevis Range 6, HW Energy 2; The Goon Squad 7, Inverloch 2; Fiorentina Turner 3, Mallaig 0; Doghouse Thistle 6, The Young Team 0; Portoway 3, Ballatasaray 2.

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WEATHER

Thursday Light rain showers
Winds moderate west south westerly
Temperatures 2°C to 7°C.

Friday Cloudy
Winds light south south easterly
Temperatures 1°C to 7°C.

Weekend Cloudy on Saturday
Sunny intervals on Sunday
Winds moderate south south westerly
Temperatures 2°C to 7°C.

FRIDAY

Stop Press: New pontoons at Ulva and visitor moorings installed at Lochaline by North West Marine Ltd

TIDAL INFORMATION
Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday March 2, 2017 are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour) BST)

Date	am	pm	Ardrihaig	Mallaig
Thur	01.59 0.5 08.00 4.0 14.23 0.7 20.08 3.7		-5.35	+0.25
Fri	02.41 0.6 08.40 3.7 15.07 0.8 20.50 3.6		-5.30	+0.55
Sat	03.29 0.9 09.27 3.5 15.58 1.1 21.38 3.3		-0.47	+0.16
Sun	04.28 1.2 10.26 3.2 17.01 1.3 22.41 3.0		2.00	+5.30
Mon	05.43 1.4 12.02 2.9 18.16 1.5 *** **		+0.30	
Tues	00.21 2.9 07.09 1.5 14.10 2.9 19.35 1.5			
Wed	02.24 3.0 08.50 1.4 15.27 3.1 20.53 1.3			

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate