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Pylon protesters power up to battle energy firm

More than 50 oppose homes bid

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk

A tiny community is taking on a Goliath-size battle to kill off an energy giant's pylon plans before it 'fries children's brains'.

A monster-size pylon looms just 70ft away from Dalmally School say campaigners, who want it removed and are hatching a plan to get thousands of energy customers on their side to stop other new pylons being built on their doorstep – as the village already has 29.

No More Pylons in Dalmally says an existing pylon next to the school and currently owned by Scottish Power is the closest pylon in the UK to any primary school. They claim children's health is being put at risk and have branded it 'criminal'.

Campaign co-leader Julian Penney said: 'Currently the pylons that straddle Dalmally Primary School take a very limited amount of electricity from the Cruachan power station to Glasgow. These pylons are owned by Scottish Power Renewables, but Scottish and



Villagers hope their actions will force SSE to move any new power cables underground.

Southern Energy (SSE) wants to connect to this network via the Dalmally substation near the village of Stronmilchan which would add untold amounts of electricity through the existing pylons directly over the primary school, adding greatly to the electromagnetic radiation over and around it.'

Anger and health fears among Dalmally residents are heightened by 55 cancer cases already being linked to a street

next to the school, under the shadow of other Scottish Power pylons above it and the shop.

'Cancer rates in Glen View are pretty alarming already. Imagine if the power overhead is increased. That's the scary thing,' said fellow campaigner Richard Scott at a meeting in the village on Saturday.

In America, pylons are banned from being built within a three-mile radius of schools, said Mr Penney. 'That

says it all, so why is it okay for Dalmally? This community campaign is about saving our children and their future.'

Two years ago a study in the British Medical Journal looked at the health records of nearly 30,000 children with cancer, including 9,700 with leukaemia and a similarly-sized group of healthy children, said Mr Penney. That study found that those within 200 metres of power lines had a 70 per cent

increase in their chance of developing leukaemia, compared with children living more than 600 metres from a power line, he added.

Campaigners in Dalmally want to see off the controversial plans by SSE's network to put up 52 pylons as part of its North Argyll reinforcement project. The campaign has received the backing of MSP Michael Russell who has told the developer any new power lines should go underground. SSE Networks plans to put its final proposals to the government in early 2020.

An SSE spokesperson said as a responsible developer, following feedback received from the local community, it remained fully committed to proactively exploring undergrounding options from the vicinity of the Duncan Ban monument to Dalmally switching station.

He added: 'All proposed overhead transmission infrastructure for the North Argyll reinforcement project is a considerable distance away from local villages, with the closest

Continued on page five

More than 50 people have objected to plans to build 44 homes in Lonan Drive in Oban.

This is the second time residents have protested about TSL Contractors Limited's plans to develop the area.

The company withdrew its plans last year after Argyll and Bute Council's roads department recommended the application be refused. This was because the entrance appeared to be too narrow 'to construct a road to adoptable standards'.

Residents say the development will ruin the only green space within an area of high density housing and will hinder the already overloaded road network. One objector said: 'One of the reasons I bought the property was because of this beautiful woodland area adjoining my back garden. From what I can see, the development will destroy all of this and the tranquillity along with it.'

A TSL spokesperson said: 'The application for 44 houses has been resubmitted and, if granted, will make a significant contribution to social housing in the Oban area.'



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OT

Heather opens up on mental health

by David McPhee
dmcph@obantimes.co.uk



An Oban teenager has opened up about her struggles with mental health to help others in a similar position.

Heather's story was shared by the Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH) to mark Time To Talk Day 2019, which took place last Thursday (February 7).

After grappling with anxiety and depression, Heather Fothergill started to self-harm and have suicidal thoughts. Thankfully, the 18-year-old told someone about how she was feeling, saying that if she had not, she doesn't think she would be here today.

In a video, the former Oban High School pupil said: 'My name's Heather

and this is my story about my depression and anxiety.

'So my story mainly started when I was physically ill for quite a while and then I was going for tests and everything like that.

'That's when I started to find myself being completely unmotivated and trying to avoid all sorts of social situations as much as I could. Just thinking about all those situations would fill me with huge dread and fear.

'It's indescribable how scary that is being stuck in your own head. I was completely overwhelmed by all these emotions, everything was just too much.'

Heather described it as like being numb.

'I would try to feel someone's emotions towards me. I couldn't, and as much as I tried I couldn't,' she con-

tinued. 'That's the loneliest place you can be. I felt so hopeless and so completely numb that I started to self-harm and I started to have really strong and frequent suicidal thoughts.

'At this point, I think almost one of my lowest points, I made the best decision I think I could ever have made and that was to tell someone how I was feeling.

'If I hadn't told someone at that point, I don't think I'd be here today. Once I spoke out about how I was feeling to the important people that needed to know, I started getting help.

'You're never too busy for someone because that can push someone over the edge and it almost did with me a few times.

'If someone needs a hug or some love, just give it to

them, because that can make a huge difference. I'm not fixed magically, not at all, but I'm getting better.'

Jo Anderson, director of external affairs at SAMH said: 'We know that conversations have the power to change lives, so we're pleased to join our partners, See Me, in supporting Time To Talk Day and encouraging everyone to start the conversation about mental health.

'By sharing her own story about how talking to someone helped her, Heather has played a really important part in sharing this message, and we'd like to say a huge thank you to her for that.

'If you want to start talking about mental health but don't know where to start, the SAMH website has lots of information that could help you.'



Heather Fothergill, with SAMH ambassador Sir Chris Hoy and Olympian Adam Peaty. Photograph: Lenny Warren



Former Oban High School pupil Heather shares her story in the SAMH video, which is on the charity's website.

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Emily Firth, right, shows her appreciation for Rockfield Centre volunteers Jane MacIntyre, left, and Margaret MacDonald.

Rockfield Centre is loving its volunteers

Love is certainly in the air this Valentine's Day as the Rockfield Centre pays tribute to the people who give up their time to help out in their busy community charity shop.

Connections officer Emily

Firth told us: 'The shop, staffed by our wonderful volunteers, is open Monday to Saturday from 10am to 4pm and visitors are always greeted with a cheery smile.

'As well as finding hidden treasures in our well-stocked

shop, our customers also enjoy a blether and some friendly banter, and usually go away with a smile on their faces.

'We really do love our volunteers here at the Rockfield Centre.'

Poppyscotland looking for new recruits

Poppyscotland will launch a new welfare support service in the coming months and is on the lookout for two individuals in the west of Scotland and the surround-

ing area to help deliver this exciting new initiative.

The welfare support officers will provide support to those identified as having complex needs in Renfrewshire and

Inverclyde and Argyll and Bute.

Further information on the role and the skills required at www.poppyscotland.org.uk/about-us/current-vacancies/

POLICE FILES

Report submitted

A motorist was stopped for allegedly crossing the solid white centre line and speeding at 12.50pm on Monday February 4 on the A82, near Bridge of Orchy. The 49-year-old man was charged and a report will be submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

Drugs charge

At 3.40pm on Thursday February 7 at Lochside Street, Oban, a man, 43, was stopped and searched by police and allegedly found to be in possession of cannabis. The man was charged and issued with a recorded police warning.

Theft from car

Between midnight and 10am on Thursday February 7, at Glencruitten Road, Oban, a Black Toyota Rav4 vehicle was broken into and items stolen. Police are investigating and are appealing for any witnesses or anyone with any information to contact them on 101 or anonymously through Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

Break-in

Sometime between 5pm on Thursday February 7 and 8.10am on Friday February 8, Oban Computer Services, Mill Lane, Oban, was broken into and computer equipment was stolen. Police are investigating the incident and are appealing for any witnesses or anyone with any information to contact them on 101 or anonymously through Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

Alleged breach

At 1.15am on Saturday February 9, in Lynn Road, Oban, a man, 26, was arrested for allegedly breaching bail conditions by approaching and persistently contacting and following a woman. The man was charged, held for court and a report was submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

Motorist stopped

A man, 45, was stopped by police for allegedly speeding at 9.50pm on Saturday February 9 on the A85 Achnacloch near Oban. The man was charged and a report will be sent to the Procurator Fiscal.

Anyone with information in relation to the above, or to any incident, should contact their local police station on telephone number 101, or anonymously through Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

Islanders face weeks of flights disruption

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



'We can't imagine anyone being able to provide the current service we provide for any less money.'

Scheduled flights linking Coll and Colonsay to Oban could be grounded for at least six weeks after a contract for the service was not renewed.

Argyll and Bute Council abandoned the procurement process after only one tender was submitted and was classed as 'non-compliant'.

For the past seven years, the essential air link has been run on behalf of the council by Hebridean Air Services Ltd (HASL), based at Oban Airport.

Martin McWilliam, HASL's public service obligation manager, said the problem was the council had less money to pay for the service this time round.

He said the HASL tender had exceeded the money the

council had put aside but insisted it had not gone up by 'a huge amount'.

He told The Oban Times: 'It was not a million miles away from what we have put in for the past four years. Our tender has not gone up by a huge amount. The problem is the money put aside is considerably less than it has been.'

'We run an essential air link service. We can't imagine anyone being able to provide the current service we provide for any less money. The council

has asked us to extend our service beyond the end of contract on May 15 but we are waiting to hear what happens at its finance meeting on Friday February 22.'

Among passengers who rely on the air service are eight young islanders from Coll and seven on Colonsay who travel to school in Oban and use the flights to get back home at weekends. Health professionals also use the service.

An Argyll and Bute Council spokesperson said: 'We are actively pursuing a range of potential options to secure a positive future for the vital air services from Oban to the islands of Tiree, Coll and Colonsay following the conclusion of the tender procurement process. While an operator for the services could not be secured beyond the current contract, we re-

main committed to working towards a solution.'

More than £1.5million in council funding was made available for the three-year contract. Additionally, the council provides £750,000 annually for the operation of Coll, Colonsay and Oban airports.

Mr McWilliam said there was 'other contract work out there' for the one aircraft it owns and the other that it leases, but if other work can not be found locally, it will have to leave Oban and deploy craft and crew elsewhere.

The issue is due to be discussed at a policy and resources meeting of the council today, February 14.

Details on the agenda read: 'Following a non-compliant single tender submission for the next Argyll Air Services Public Service Obligation (PSO) contract, the procure-

ment had to be abandoned. Given the delay in securing a new operator there is now a risk of a break in service from one contract finishing to the next starting.'

At the moment, no bookings can be made beyond May 15. Tiree's flights to Oban are also affected by the situation but the island would still have flights to Glasgow.

Approval will be sought from the policy and resources committee to re-tender the Argyll Air Services PSO contract as quickly as possible but a new contract could not be awarded before June 28.

Committee members will be asked to note it is not legally possible to extend the existing air services contract.

Hebridean Air Services Ltd (HASL) also runs a public service obligation for Shetland Islands Council from Tingwall.



Oban High School's eco-warriors cleaned up along the Esplanade and George St last Thursday.

Pupils take eco-friendly lead

Oban High School pupils and staff have been cleaning up litter from the town's beaches and streets.

Working alongside the GRAB Trust's beaches and marine litter project officer Terry Donovan, the group carried out a litter pick last Thursday.

The youngsters have also

started a recycling scheme in the school's classrooms and have been selling reusable water bottles in the school and at parent evenings. They currently recycle paper, plastics and cans in all classrooms and have a project to recycle pens which they plan to promote to other schools and businesses in the town.

Oban marks Care Day 2019

Oban's McCaig's Tower was set to light up pink to mark Care Day 2019.

While the day officially takes place tomorrow (Friday February 15), the tower was scheduled to be lit up from Monday this week.

Heather Nailard, who works for Who Cares? Scotland Argyll and Bute, said: 'We celebrate young people that are in care so they know there are people that love them and care for them.'

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OT

Winter festival adds up to a huge success

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Oban Winter Festival had a £1.72 million impact on the town's economy and helped raise more than £33,000 for charity last year.

While the festival's 2018 report proudly blows its own trumpet, organisers say the programme that spanned 10 days in November and was put together by just six people could not have happened without everyone who supported it.

More than 23,000 people visited it in what was its eighth year, with 100-plus events entertaining residents and giving visitors the chance 'to live like a local', said the report just out.

Feedback for it was collected by volunteers and from an online survey to measure its success.

Word of mouth has spread



Cheeky satsuma girls grab a kiss from bell-ringer Stuart Smith at last year's winter festival.

fast and tour operators have added the festival dates to their own programmes, it said. Local hotels have also offered discounted rates to increase spend in the town

and to encourage even more festival footfall than previous years, the report continued.

Restaurants and other eateries also benefited. The report found 85 per cent of

visitors told the survey they ate out during the festival, spending an average of £110.

The visitor survey also suggested people travelling from elsewhere in the UK were staying longer in Oban to enjoy the event with an average of five days recorded. Overseas visitor surveys particularly noted a presence of tourists from Germany, the Netherlands and Italy.

The markets at Oban Distillery, the Corran Halls and at the Perle Hotel attracted 9,500 people with stallholders reporting record sales. The Winter in the Woods event that turned trees at Glencruitten into an enchanted forest was so popular that it will definitely be back this year. A Lego event also received 600 entries for a competition it ran and a fireworks and light show at the festival's finale was hailed the best yet.

Out of all those who took part in the report survey, 78 per cent said they would be returning for this year's festival.

The vast and varied festival programme – from haggis hurling to a reindeer parade and clootie dumpling competition, as well as a foraged food and whisky pairing night – was supported by volunteers from the community, charities, groups, schools, funders, businesses and media with the aim of livening up the town at what is traditionally a quiet time of year.

A committee spokesperson said: 'The committee would like to thank everyone who supported this event, there are too many to list this year but you all know who you are and we thank you. Without support from volunteers and the community this event couldn't happen.'

Spared jail for damage

A 21-year-old Oban man has been spared jail after recklessly damaging his mother's home.

Joshua Straub, of 7 West Bay Flats, Corran Esplanade, Oban, received a community payback order as a direct alternative to custody. He was sentenced at Oban Sheriff Court on Monday February 11.

Straub admitted shouting, swearing, kicking a kitchen bin across the room and throwing a pot of boiling pasta. He also wrote on the walls with permanent marker, some of which was obscene.

In his defence, Edward Thornton said: 'For a young man, he has a pretty shocking record of convictions.'

However, Mr Thornton said he has since received treatment for an undiagnosed illness, but admitted his client still needs some support with alcohol.

Sheriff Patrick Hughes said Straub's behaviour was disgraceful. Straub will have to carry out 250 hours of unpaid work, and is also subject to social work supervision for two years, and will have to remain indoors from 7pm until 5am for nine months.

Woman admits stabbing her ex-partner under provocation

A woman has admitted stabbing her former partner in Oban.

Karen Irvine, 45, of 114 The Gardens, Southwick, Brighton, pleaded guilty to striking him on the body with a knife to his severe injury when she appeared in Oban Sheriff Court on Monday February 11. However, the plea was accepted by the crown that the offence was under provocation.

The man was left with a flesh wound three centimetres in length in the upper left side of his chest.

Procurator fiscal Eoin McGinty said: 'Had this matter gone to trial, it was anticipated that the evidence would show that the complainant was predominantly the aggressor. 'It would have been the crown's case that the accused was subject to what appears to be an ongoing assault and that she was legitimately defending herself.'

However, Mr McGinty added: 'In doing so, she went over and above what was lawful.'

The procurator fiscal told the court that on 'a number of occasions' both Irvine and the victim have been the

perpetrators of domestic violence. The incident in question occurred on April 27, 2018. Neighbours phoned the police after hearing shouting and banging. However, Mr McGinty said 'mostly the shouting was being done by the male.'

Mr McGinty added: 'As a result of this, the police arrived and in the meantime the accused had phoned 999. She was noted to be quite intoxicated during the course of that call. She stated that she had been attacked and that she defended herself, but did on a number of occasions say that she had stabbed her partner.'

'She was somewhat incoherent throughout the call and said some things that did not make sense.'

Emergency services arrived and found the male lying on the floor.

'It was apparent immediately that he had an injury to his left-hand side of his chest,' Mr McGinty said.

'He was noted to have a wound three centimetres in length on the upper left-hand side of his chest.'

'He remained in hospital

overnight and discharged himself the following day.'

When interviewed by police, he stated that he simply could not remember what had happened.

'That is his position to date,' Mr McGinty said. 'He recalled his estranged partner coming home with a takeaway and he recalled waking up on the floor injured.'

Irvine was arrested at the scene before being taken to hospital. 'Just to be clear,' the procurator fiscal said. 'The plea that has been accepted is accepted under provocation. The accused had a number of obvious injuries that were noted to be fresh. Her entire upper body, arms and neck ... she has bruises and scrapes all over.'

Sheriff Patrick Hughes deferred sentencing in order for the court to obtain reports.

Sheriff Hughes said: 'This is a serious matter and one the court will consider for custody. The court is required to obtain reports. If custody is to be avoided or minimised, it is vital they are available.'

Irvine was released on bail and will be sentenced on March 27.



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TSI defends shake-up of its delivery

by Fiona Scott

fscott@obantimes.co.uk



Argyll and Bute Third Sector Interface (TSI) has defended its decision to vacate its office space and dispense with the role of a support and volunteering officer in Oban.

Consistency across the whole of the region and a change in user needs were cited as two of the reasons for the move, which has left some local groups and organisations that rely on help from the voluntary sector disappointed.

Argyll and Bute TSI chief executive Kirsteen Murray said the office was closed in September last year due to another third sector organisation taking over the lease, and that the former support and volunteer officer had been 'hot-desking' at the venue in her new role as projects worker for the 1000 Voices initiative until another suitable space could be found.

When The Oban Times visited the venue last Monday, however, a sign on the door stated 'for TSI, please ring' – suggesting the government-funded organisation was still actively operating from the venue.

The following day the sign had been removed and Argyll

and Bute TSI issued a statement outlining a shake-up of its service delivery, which stated: 'The TSI will now be offering direct support to all types of third sector organisations, including charities, social enterprises and community groups, in a number of new ways.'

'The new approach recognises that many people now find their information through digital means and the need for information and assistance to be accessible and consistent across the whole of Argyll and Bute, not just in the main towns.'

Website

The statement continued to give details of the new website, www.argylltsi.org, which includes a self-serve area, a central freephone number 0300 303 4141 and a central inquiry email address support@argylltsi.org.uk

The TSI is also planning regular 'surgeries', which will take place throughout the region.

Many local groups and organisations were unaware of any changes regarding the organisation entrusted to make sure the local voluntary sector is well-briefed on local and national policy developments.

David Entwistle, board chairman for Oban Hospice,

said: 'Ideally, volunteers need face-to-face discussions with people.'

'Talking in general, if people aren't careful then changes like this could lead to a watering down of support to groups and volunteers, and I would hate to see them suffer.'

'Only time will tell if these changes will work. I really hope volunteers will be asked for their thoughts on this as part of a review process.'

Ms Murray, who took over as the Argyll and Bute TSI chief executive in 2018, added: 'The previous office-based model of third sector support directed people only to their local support officer. If that officer was out working with client organisations or was on holiday, telephone calls to the office went unanswered, as did emails, until they were back.'

'The turn-around time for queries could be many days, even stretching into weeks.'

'We'll be taking feedback on the new system from organisations in the coming weeks and months, and adding further information and support to match the needs of our client organisations.'

Argyll and Bute TSI will continue to support and promote the Saltire scheme within the region.

Pylon protesters power up to do battle

Continued from page one property to the proposed overhead route alignment more than 100 metres away. We remain committed to keep the local community and other interested parties fully updated as the project development continues.'

Villagers suspect the pylon option will be selected because it would be cheaper, they say.

'We are not just going to roll over and accept this,' said Mr Penney when more than 45 people gathered at Dalmally hall to send out a no-messing message to SSE that it has 'a fight on its hands'.

'We are going to up the ante until they say they are not doing this anymore,' said Mr Penney.

The meeting was united in wanting to stop power

developers putting any extra voltage over the local school and village.

Attendees also supported escalating the campaign, including exposing SSE's network arm 'for the way they operate', 'riding roughshod over small communities', they said.

Villagers hope their action will hit the power company hard by putting off shareholders and prompting SSE customers to swap suppliers in protest. Just last week SSE lost 160,000 customers in three months and had to cut its full-year earnings forecast.

'The public can read about what they want to do to us and think that's terrible and switch accounts. Let's do as much damage so they back down,' added Mr Penney, urging people to keep spreading the

word about their battle on social media.

'Let's give all these people with SSE accounts as much information about what this company is prepared to do us, frying our young people's brains,' he said.

The weekend's meeting heard SSE's upgrading plans 'did not add up' and that the company kept using the word 'resilience' to explain why its reinforcement project was needed.

Other not-so-secret plans being plotted by campaigners to foil more pylons being built include lining the A85 with posters to pull in support from passing motorists and tourists.

Scottish Power, parent company of Scottish Power Renewables, was working on a comment at the time of going to press.



Bill and Helen Gray celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on Valentine's Day.

Diamond couple hit the right notes

Since 1959 former Argyll and Bute piano tuner Bill Gray and his wife Helen have been living in harmony and today, St Valentine's Day, they will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary.

The diamond duo met through the Salvation Army. Bill was the band leader in the Clydebank Corps and Helen (nee Sutherland) was in the choral section of the

Leith Corps. Leith Citadel was the venue for the wedding on February 14, 1959, and the couple have been on song ever since.

Shortly after they married, Bill and Helen moved to Ardrishaig, where they still live today, with Bill's piano tuning expertise taking him all over the region until his recent retirement.

Bill and Helen have

two children, Kenneth and Elaine (McFarlane), and four grandchildren, Michael and Sarah Gray and Alison and Joanne McFarlane.

No one actually knows the secret to a long and happy relationship but Helen and Bill's granddaughter, Alison, believes that her grandparent's 'great sense of humour' must have helped.

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OT

Save Our Seil campaigners vow to continue fighting

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Save Our Seil campaigners will keep fighting Scottish Water plans for a new £5.6 million waste water treatment on the island.

The planning application for the new treatment plant, tucked into a hillside opposite the current works site, will be submitted at the end of March and has divided opinion on the island of Seil.

Campaigners from the Save Our Seil (SOS) group believe the existing treatment site would work fine if a way of stopping excess rainwater getting into its system could be found, but were told by Scottish Water it is not feasible.

Now the group finds itself arguing for that an alternative site at a brownfield quarry further along the coast from Sea View would be a best choice even though it would

still not be a 'great solution'. SOS spokeswoman Lisa Robinson said: 'If I approached the council and asked to build a house on the hillside site that they are proposing, I would be laughed out of the room.'

'Scottish Water will say they want that site for operational need. We say there's no need. There is a brownfield quarry site far away enough from people's houses with hardly any visual impact. The site further on from Sea View is the least worst scenario.'

'The problem fundamentally is that we are now arguing for something that we don't think is a great solution anyway.'

And she added: 'We have spoken to our councillors, the community council and Scottish Water at every stage as we have followed the proposal and consultation process, but we've just been told no, no, no – the decision has been made.'

'The only option left to us



Scottish Water's pre-planning consultation last week at Seil Community Hall.

now is to complain once the application goes through to the planners in March but even then we can only comment on the site they have gone for.

'We can't comment on why the alternative site would have been better but we will be objecting strongly to the option

they have pushed forward.' The SOS group also has concerns that the local stakeholders' group, which unanimously agreed the hillside option as the best option, was not properly constituted and was effectively a closed group.

Campaigners have also

questioned why 'so much time and money has been wasted on public information events if there was never any intention of listening to what was being said' by the wider community, and who will be accountable for the delivery of the proposal, 'given that the decision as to the nature and positioning of the works was determined by the stakeholder group'.

A spokesman for Scottish Water said the public consultations events were required as part of the council's legislative planning process and that Scottish Water would be accountable, not the local stakeholders, because the treatment works was its project.

The stakeholders' group previously told The Oban Times its members had decided the chosen option would use 'tried and tested technology' to maintain the natural environment and amenity of Seil, making sure the waste water

was managed in a way that minimised impact on islanders and their surroundings, well away from housing and hidden from view as far as possible.

In November, planners approved Scottish Water's proposal to give houses at Sea View their own underground septic tank instead of their waste going straight into the sea.

Scottish Water representatives will be at the next community council meeting on March 26 at 6.30pm in Seil hall. They were first invited in July 2017 and repeatedly since but have not taken up the offer before now.

'No one was more surprised than me when I walked into the consultation event last week and they said they would be coming to our next meeting,' said Julie Ferris from the community council.

The meeting is open to the public.

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We should all act to tidy the town

Around Oban

KAY MCDONALD

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Happy Valentine's Day to everyone. Isn't it nice to have a day that's all about love and celebrating how much you care about someone?

It really cheers up the end of winter and seems to herald that spring is on the way.

Combining these two thoughts, I think it's time we show this wee town of ours some love and get it ready for the sunshine coming back.

I've read and heard a lot lately about the litter problems in the town and I have to say it always seems to be the same people who come forward to address this, which is wonderful of them but not fair.

It is time we all took responsibility for the problem rather than just complaining about it.

We have two great groups in the town who are dedicated to

making Oban look good, One is Hope Kitchen, which takes very seriously its commitment to keeping the beaches clean, and the other is Keep Oban Beautiful, which has a wider remit and an equally small band of volunteers given the size of town they cover. It should be up to all of us to help in whatever way we can. It is our town and we're responsible for it too.

If you can get in touch with one of these groups, please do – the work is much more fun with other people helping and if you are not able to do that, then decide what you can do in your own wee way. It doesn't have to be huge: take a bag on the way to work and pick up what you can. Or, if you own or work in a shop, make sure the pavement outside is clean.

If you're out for a walk with your children, teach them about picking up after themselves and, if necessary,

WHERE IS THIS?



after other people. I'm sure I heard someone suggesting we should have a day for tidying the whole town, but unfortunately I can't remember who or where. But if anyone knows what I'm talking about, I would love to be part of it. Let the BID4Oban office in Stevenson Street know on 01631 569915.

It is time we all put our money where our mouths are and take action rather than just talking.

The photograph last week was of the walk up to McCaig's tower via Craigard Road. This week's photograph is much more central, and easier.

Bidfood launches campaign to help homeless

Bidfood Scotland has organised a winter Sharing is Caring campaign to support the homeless and disadvantaged people across Scotland.

All of Bidfood's depots teamed up to donate

Bidfood's insulated freezer clothing and other winter-warming essentials to Shelter Scotland.

The Sharing is Caring campaign aims to bring hundreds of employees from across

the business together to help keep all those struggling on the streets warm this winter. These donations included warm clothing, gloves, outdoor, thick blankets, duvets, sleeping bags and food.

Council warns of danger from doorstep sellers

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Trading Standards are again urging residents to say no to doorstep sellers, after they have received reports of sellers currently operating in the Islands.

A spokesperson said: 'Our advice is never to deal with anyone who cold-calls at your door. Just say no thanks and shut the door.'

'Please keep an eye out for vulnerable neighbours, particularly anyone who lives alone who may find it difficult to deal with uninvited callers.'

Experience has shown that very often goods sold by doorstep sellers are of a poor quality and may be dangerous. Goods which do not comply with safety regulations may result in overheating, catching fire, electrical shocks and could cause serious injury or death.

To report doorstep sellers please contact Trading Standards on 01851 822694 or Police Scotland on 101 or 999 in an emergency.

Screening for genetic disease vital, says mum

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Parents-to-be are being urged to get screened for a devastating genetic fault to avoid heartbreak.

Former Oban woman Jaki Aitken, who lost her five-month-old daughter Rebecca to Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) last year, was speaking to The Oban Times after giving birth to her second child Robyn Vivien Johnson in New Zealand last week.

Family and friends in her home town have helped raise thousands of pounds to support the SMA Trust charity dedicated to finding a cure and Jaki hopes sharing her story will make people more aware of the importance of getting screened for the gene if it runs in the family - and even if it does not, it is still worthwhile to get checked for it, she says.

'It is so important that people



Proud parents Alex Johnson and Jaki Aitken with Robyn.

who are aware that SMA is in their family get themselves screened to see if they carry it. That way if they know they carry the gene for SMA, when they meet someone who they decide to have children with,

they can arrange screening too to make sure to reduce the chances of going through one of the hardest things anyone can endure - losing your child. 'And for those who are unaware of a family history, it

is still a very worthwhile thing to get screened. I'm not sure how they would arrange the screening but I'm pretty sure their GP would be the place to start since there is no national screening.'

New arrival Robyn weighed 8lbs 1oz when she was born on February 4, delighting Jaki and dad Alex Johnson.

'Getting to hold her and see her for the first time was amazing. We already see many similarities with Rebecca - some facial expressions she has are scarily similar, which is both comforting and emotional for us. The difference in the physical strength and movements is night and day though. Robyn is very strong and is miles more active, resisting nappy changes and just being very wriggly in general.'

'Rebecca, before we knew something was wrong, we thought was just one very chilled out and cooperative

little baby - never resisted, gently moved and didn't wriggle excessively.'

'In hindsight and in comparison, it is crystal clear that this was the effects of her having SMA, but as SMA is progressive there were no alarm bells in Rebecca's first few weeks. Those alarms come when further development milestones are not being reached or when the strength they are born with starts disappearing.'

Jaki added: 'Alex and I are really looking forward to getting to know Robyn and seeing her grow stronger and older. There have already been a few tears of sadness in these first days and I'm sure there will be plenty more, but we have both fallen completely in love all over again. We are so lucky to have two beautiful daughters, one is just watching over the rest of us from somewhere else.'

To find out more, go to smasupport.org.uk



Oban Rotary supports young musician

The Rotary Club of Oban's Young Musician of the Year is Neil McCracken, a 15-year-old student at Oban High School who specialises in playing the piano but is also a gifted saxophone player. Young Neil entertained members and guests with his piano renditions to much applause at Oban Rotary's recent annual Charter Dinner, which event also raises funds

for local charities. Neil has gone on from these events to be chosen as pianist for the National Youth Jazz Orchestra of Scotland for their 2019 summer tour. This involves a week's preparation at Sabhal Mor Ostaig in Skye and thereafter playing in Glasgow and Belfast as well as other venues. Although the bulk of Neil's costs are covered

by the NYJOS, Oban Rotary provided £250 towards the amount he has to raise and president Iain MacIntyre is seen here presenting a cheque for this amount to Neil. He also expressed good wishes from all concerned in Oban for Neil's future. Also in the photograph are fellow Rotarians Roger Parry, Kees Van Rein and Douglas Small.

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OT

Fundraising for rare syndrome goes to US

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



A Mull mum championing worldwide awareness of a rare genetic condition is taking on a cycling challenge in Pennsylvania this summer to help fund research at an American university.

Michelle Erskine from Tobermory, who founded The Aarskog Foundation, also has the go-ahead in the States to run it as a charity and fundraise for its work there.

She has just opened an office in New Jersey which is being run by the mother of a child with Aarskog Syndrome.

In June, Michelle and her partner John MacPhail are taking part in the Million Dollar Bike Ride at Pennsylvania University to get fundraising under way for a new research project into Aarskog at the Penn Medicine Orphan Disease Centre.



Michelle Erskine with her brother John who had Aarskog Syndrome and died last year.

Money they raise on the bike ride will be match-funded by a research grant to start up the project, said Michelle, who is also part of Global Genes, a non-profit advocacy helping families and individuals fight rare and genetic diseases.

The Aarskog Foundation already has 400 members across

28 countries but Michelle is hoping to rally more support locally from communities and businesses.

'I really want to get more support locally. There is nothing for rare diseases on the West Coast. I want to put it on the map. It's sad that the only time people usually do anything

or fundraise for charities is often when they have family or friends affected. We need to get Aarskog more widely known and better understood,' said Michelle.

She is already working closely with the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital's Rare Condition Office in Glasgow and is part of a Holyrood working group creating a rare disease strategy 2019 for Scotland.

Michelle's eldest son and two older brothers were all diagnosed with the syndrome, and she is a carrier. Last year her brothers Christopher, 62, and John, 66, who lived in Stockport, died. They shared the same birthday – September 29 – and Michelle has now chosen that date to be the first Aarskog Syndrome Awareness Day.

She is also working on producing educational materials for use by GPs, teachers and

parents, and hopes to get it endorsed by the NHS and by MIND charity, as mental ill health can be an element of the syndrome.

Only females are Aarskog carriers and only males inherit the gene, which reveals itself through stunted growth, wide-set eyes, low-set ears and other broad facial abnormalities. Dyslexia, ADHD and other autistic spectrum disorders are not uncommon.

Other conditions can also develop with age. Michelle's youngest brother Christopher was diagnosed with lymphoma and her oldest one lost his peripheral vision.

Michelle's daughter has also been diagnosed as a carrier, although her middle son, who is 19, has been given the all-clear. To find out more about the charity, go to aarskogsyndromefoundation.co.uk

You can also call the free helpline on 0800 0016623.

Missing man is found safe and well

A man missing from Oban has been found safe and well.

Colin Lintott, 61, was reported missing by family after he was last seen at the bus stop on Station Road, Oban, around 6pm on Tuesday February 5 carrying two large pieces of luggage.

It was out of character for him to go away without anyone knowing.

A statement from the police the next morning confirmed: 'Further to our appeal regarding 61-year-old Colin Lintott, missing from Oban since Tuesday February 5, Colin has been traced safe and well in the Oban area.'

'Members of the public and the media are thanked for their assistance in highlighting the appeal.'

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H2SJ30176 10/18

National report claims are dismissed

Volunteering communities in the Oban and Lorn area are bucking the national trend.

A recent report by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) has suggested that volunteers are more likely to be from white, middle class backgrounds and charities need to 'think about what barriers they may inadvertently be creating'.

However, having read the report, Claire Brown, Police Scotland youth volunteer co-ordinator for Oban, said: 'As our journey in Oban Police Scotland Youth Volunteers moves and we continue partnership working with other volunteer groups within the Oban and Lorn area, there is

little evidence to substantiate the report argument.'

Time Well Spent, a national survey on the volunteer experience, shows volunteering is carried out more by middle class and educated people than by working class and less educated people.

The umbrella body conducted a survey of 10,103 people and found that 40 per cent of working class people have never volunteered at all, compared to 25 per cent of middle class people. The study is the largest of its kind for a decade.

The report also suggests that working class people are also less likely to be involved in organising activities in charities, such as becoming a

trustee, with 23 per cent never taking on organisational roles compared to 15 per cent of middle class people.

The report says: 'The most significant differences between volunteers and non-volunteers relate to socio-economic status and education levels.'

'The community volunteering events held in this area comprise all age groups and a wide diversity of social and education groups,' added Ms Brown.

'Maybe this is because we are surrounded by small communities where families have lived all their lives and where newcomers are welcomed by being invited to volunteer in their new area.'

Good causes urged to apply for funding

Local charities and good causes can now apply for a share of more than £3 million of funding that has been raised by the players of People's Postcode Lottery.

Applications are open until February 20 and good causes, from social enterprises to voluntary groups and registered charities, are eligible to apply for grants of between £500 and £20,000.

The financial support is available through three

different trusts funded by players of People's Postcode Lottery, with the purpose of supporting people and their communities.

These trusts are People's Postcode Trust, Postcode Community Trust and the Postcode Local Trust.

Sports groups for military veterans, counselling support services for young carers and accessible play parks are just a few examples of the more than 1,600 projects that were

successful and received funding in 2018.

Argyll and Bute MP Brendan O'Hara said: 'Funding from People's Postcode Lottery's players makes a huge difference to thousands of good causes. I know that there are many good causes in my constituency that would love a cash boost for a specific project and I would encourage any local charities or good causes who are looking for funding to apply as soon as possible.'

Cancer self-help comes to Oban

by Heather Graham
editor@obantimes.co.uk

A self-help course on how to manage living with cancer is to begin in late spring at the Dove Centre.

The HOPE (Help to Overcome Problems Effectively) programme has been held successfully across the UK but this is the first time it will take place in Oban.

Its aim is to support cancer patients who have completed treatment but are awaiting results, as this is a time when people are particularly vulnerable and support can be lacking.

Lindsay Davies, who will be leading the HOPE programme alongside Lucy Hunt, calls this the 'no-man's land' of a cancer journey.

She said: '[The HOPE programme] will help you get on with day-to-day life so that your condition really isn't you; you're in charge of what's going on.'

The main focus will be to give attendees the tools to get on with life with a positive outlook.

Ms Davies also hopes that making it a booking-only service will be beneficial to all involved. She describes the lack of enthusiasm that can



sometimes occur through GP referrals which can be detrimental to the group dynamics. By booking for themselves, it is hoped the participants will be enthusiastic from the start and everyone will reap the benefits.

Ms Davies said: 'The strength of the group actually becomes the group themselves.'

Oban is not without self-help groups but none currently exists specifically for cancer.

Ms Davies added: 'The bit about it being about cancer is that people are in quite a unique situation that stirs up emotions that a lot of other conditions don't.'

'I think it's going to fill a gap which is definitely what the Dove Centre is about.'

There are booking forms at

Oban Medical Centre, Oban Hospice, the Macmillan service in Oban and Lorn Hospital and it is also advertised on the Dove Centre's Facebook page.

The group will be kept small – about six to eight people – and topics covered will include mindfulness, fatigue and goal-setting.

Ms Davies said they were given a lot of autonomy in regard to the range of topics, so they have chosen the widest to appeal to the broadest group of people. She also stressed how the group was life-affirming.

She said: 'We don't want people to think that you have to be dying to come through the doors.'

Each session will last for two and a half hours and will be split into two parts.

The Dove Centre in Oban.

The first half will be the topic of the week, followed by a tea break, and the second half will be for meditation and relaxation.

There is also no medicalisation in the HOPE programme, as it is focused on how to better the individual and not solely about how their condition affects them.

Ms Davies said: 'Hopefully, through the six weeks the patients will actually get a real sense of support from people that have gone through the same kind of things as each other.'

'There's no right or wrong time to come and say that you're interested.'

The programme is run via a combination of effort between Macmillan, NHS Highland and Oban Hospice.

Charity believes illegal dredging took place

A boat acting suspiciously in the Sound of Mull has been spotted by a charity.

Open Seas believes a boat was illegally dredging in the Marine Protected Area (MPA) on January 26.

The vessel was tracked travelling at a 'walking speed' and in a long circular motion – looping repeatedly into the protected area.

In conclusion, Open Seas said: 'It is highly likely that the skipper was deliberately and illegally dredging inside the MPA. We cannot see that there is another plausible explanation.'

One week later, three concerned divers searched the seabed, noting that the area was largely barren, but spotted smashed shells.

In December last year, we reported about a similar incident in the Firth of Lorn.

Alasdair Firth, chairman of the Community Association of Lochs and Sounds, wrote to the Scottish Government recently to relay his concerns.

In response, Jim Watson, head of domestic fisheries

management, said: 'The Scottish Government takes the enforcement of fisheries management and protection of the wider marine environment seriously.'

He added: 'That is why at the Inshore Fisheries Conference in October last year, the Cabinet Secretary announced a £1.5 million investment in fishing vessel tracking and monitoring technology.'

Mr Firth said: 'I think it is pretty clear that Marine Scotland have not done what they should be doing. They need to get their act together in the protected areas to properly police them.'

Nick Underdown, from Open Seas, said: 'We are really disappointed and we think the Scottish Government does not understand the depth of concern about the problem.'

'We think they have misjudged just how important the health of the marine environment is to people who live and work in coastal areas and that is a problem for communities and the reputation of our seafood industry.'

National Mòd hope for Oban

The Royal National Mòd (RNM) could be heading back to Argyll and Bute.

Organisers are keen to make Oban its host town in 2023, having successfully staged the annual celebration of Gaelic language and culture in Dunoon last year.

Argyll and Bute Council's policy and resources committee will debate the topic at its meeting today (Thursday February 14) along with the possibility of providing £120,000 from council funds to support the initiative.

The next four Mòds are due to be staged outwith the area in Glasgow, Inverness, Perth and Paisley.

A report for the committee meeting, prepared by Pippa Milne, the authority's executive director of development and infrastructure, states: 'The council recognises the cultural and educational

significance of supporting the development of the Gaelic language and the provision of local and national Mòds.

'The Royal National Mòd holds a special place in the history of Argyll and Scottish culture.'

'The value of holding a national Mòd in Argyll has long been recognised by Argyll and Bute Council through its previous support.'

'Over the last six years, the council has hosted two very successful RNMs, the first in Oban in 2015, then in Dunoon in 2018.'

'Both events provided a successful economic stimulus within the area and greatly contributed to supporting the Gaelic language and culture.'

'There are no other routes available for the council to support the RNM in Oban in 2023. It is therefore recommended that the budget

of £120,000 be agreed. It is currently recommended that this be spread over five annual payments, however, members may wish to consider a different breakdown.'

'A new agreement will require to be drawn up and agreed with the RNM to secure the RNM in Oban in 2023 and the associated grant.'

The report adds that bringing the event back to Argyll and Bute would ensure the sustainability of the Gaelic language, ensure extensive media coverage for the area and generate significant economic benefit.

Members of the committee will also be asked to agree that the council works with Live Argyll, the charitable trust which runs the area's leisure centres and libraries, to secure the use of the Corran Halls, Oban, for the 2023 Mòd at no cost to event organisers.

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OT

MacPhail

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It's not too often that The Oban Times' mid-February issue coincides exactly with Valentine's Day, so this week's subject has been chosen to mark that romantic coincidence.

I can with relief report to readers of last week's article that the house-moving hasn't yet been too arduous and on Thursday night, hopefully, we'll manage to extract ourselves from building Ikea furniture and do something fitting to honour the day.

Love is undoubtedly one of the most powerful forces running through mankind and it is no coincidence that it has been the favoured subject of poem, song and other vehicles of literature since these art-forms were conceived.

As well as being powerful, love is one of the most complex areas of life and under its wide umbrella are many variants.

Between people, as well as the physical love of attracting sexes, there is family love, the love of friendship and the wider general love for

the fellow human being. For those who are religious, there is the love of the divine in its many forms, shown both to human representatives or leaders and to the gods of various faiths.

There is also a type of love that relates to place, landscape and ocean, and, of course, there is the love felt for animals, nature and the world as a whole.

Among these and the many other types of love are an infinite number of mixed, interweaving and crossing strands of the mind and body that together create one of the most fascinating and fulfilling and potentially painful aspects of life.

The strand of love celebrated most widely on St Valentine's Day is, of course, what is most commonly called romantic love. The following lyrics are a simple wee love song in that vein. Happy St Valentine's Day to all.

Steering by the Stars – Angus MacPhail

*I will set ahead my course by
the clear celestial sky.*

*I will steer by the stars for
wherever you may lie,
By the guiding lights above to
the heaven no one knows
For the faith I have in you my
soul will trust the compass
rose.*

Chorus

*You, you are the ocean, and I,
the setting sun
In your arms the fire is falling
and the sky and sea are one.*

*I have travelled many shores
and walked upon the waves
But the bonds of old could
never hold for what the spirit
craves.*

*Beyond the bays where shall-
ow ways of consciousness
compel –
The seven oceans of the earth
where love and wonder dwell.*

*Past the far-off west horizon is
the harbour where I'm bound,
Where the promised land of
peace and the golden grail is
found;*

*And the beams of gloried sun-
light in a hundred coloured
kind*

*Give dreams of new tomor-
rows every sorrow left behind.*



Mull's guide to driving on island roads.

Mull motorists asked to be single minded

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Drivers new to Mull's roads are being encouraged to have a 'single-track' mind.

A safe driving guide produced by islanders ready for the start of the tourist season will be handed out by CalMac before cars board its ferries bound for Craignure, Tobermory and Fishnish from the mainland.

Campervans are also being singled out for a leaflet of their own and a helpful driving rules video has been made to show onboard the Isle of Mull vessel.

Locals are hoping the Driving On Mull leaflets will help ease islanders' and visitors' frustration caused by some drivers who use passing places as parking spots and as opportunities for selfie stops which can be 'an absolute nightmare', according to Neal Goldsmith, a hotelier and a member of CalMac Communities Board.

'We all want people to come and enjoy Mull but there are just a few rules to driving that will make everyone's life a lot easier. You get people stopping in passing places to take photos, using them as parking spots and it can cause all sorts of problems. It can be an absolute nightmare. What should be a shortish journey can take a couple of hours.'

'CalMac has assured us



Tourists can make the single-track roads 'a nightmare'.

that drivers will be handed the leaflets before they get to the boats so presumably that means in the ferry queues at the marshalling area or when they pull in to get their tickets from the kiosk.

'This has been a collaboration between Marketing Mull and Iona, Iona and Mull Ferry Committee and Mull Community Council. It's all about educating people. If everyone knows how to drive on the island's roads, then it will all flow a lot better.'

'We also ask people to remember the people who live and work on the island. So if you are driving along at 25mph enjoying the scenery, please enjoy it but be aware there might be someone behind you who could be going home, to an appointment or work and safely let them pass.'

'We're not saying the leaflets will fix everything but it's a start. Education is the best way to inform people. Not

everyone will take notice of the leaflets but hopefully most drivers will.'

Islanders are also producing a leaflet for campervans and motorhomes, giving advice on the roads network, where to camp up and where to get rid of waste water.

Colin Morrison, who is chairman of Marketing Mull and Iona, the destination marketing organisation for the islands, said: 'It is great that Caledonian Macbrayne are working with the people of Mull and Iona to improve things during our busy summer months.'

'We are really happy to work with the community council, the Community Trust and the ferry committee to produce these two leaflets, helping drivers who may rarely encounter single-track roads to understand how to use them.'

To watch the video go to mullroads.co.uk

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f i t i n

School CCTV cameras upset Oban residents

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



People living near Big Brother-style CCTV cameras put up at Oban High School's new car park are demanding they be removed.

Tenants in ACHA flats at Glenfoot Terrace were shocked when they looked out of their windows last week to see a tall pole, bearing three cameras looking right back at them.

One resident, who asked not to be named, said: 'It's like being in Big Brother. No one told us about this. We don't want them to stay. We need our privacy. We want them taken down immediately. We don't want to be watched. It's like being the unwilling star of a TV show. It's intrusive.'

Bob Dow for Hub North Scotland, which is the developer for the new high school,



One of the CCTV poles that have gone up in the new car park at Oban High School.

its pitches and new car park, said: 'The cameras will be a local authority matter. They would have been their call.'

Oban councillor Jim Lynch said: 'CCTV cameras are there for safety reasons but ensuring people's privacy is important. I've raised

this matter with the roads and amenities department at the council and they are now aware of concerns. The cameras are not activated yet and they have assured me they will pixellate any areas beyond the car park. I appreciate it's quite daunting

to have cameras outside your windows.'

A planning application submitted for demolishing the old school and building the new one was previously sent to people living nearby.

Although the application lists new associated car park-

ing there is no mention of any CCTV cameras.

ACHA chief executive Alastair MacGregor said: 'ACHA has had no representation from our tenants in the vicinity of Oban High School regarding concerns with respect to camera installation. The association understands that these cameras are being installed for the purpose of school security for the new school campus, to protect pupils and the buildings and not to survey neighbouring premises, including ACHA homes. I am sure the school representatives would be happy to meet with any residents to discuss their concerns.'

An Argyll and Bute spokesperson said: 'Steps have been taken to try to ensure, as far as possible, that the cameras views do not extend beyond the school boundaries. The cameras point downwards.'

Figures show number of lost bed days in Isles

Western Isles Health Board spent more than £1.6 million keeping patients in hospital last year despite them being fit to go home.

Figures published by the Information Services Division Scotland reveal more than half a million lost bed days throughout Scotland in 2018, with 7,054 lost bed days the Western Isles is proportionately one of the highest contributors.

Labour candidate Alison MacCorquodale said the failure to end delayed discharges from hospitals is due to an underfunding of social care. She added: 'Cash-strapped health boards like here in the Western Isles are spending millions keeping people in hospital when they don't need to be there.'

'This is largely down to the crisis in social care, which in the Western Isles includes the difficulty in attracting staff. It is clear that keeping people in hospital when they could be at home makes no sense for the patient, the NHS or the taxpayer.'

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Report shows Parkinson's crisis facing NHS Highland

From diagnosis to ongoing care, many people with Parkinson's in the NHS Highland area and across Scotland are facing major issues in accessing the care they need from overstretched local NHS and social care services.

That's the conclusion drawn by Parkinson's UK in Scotland in a major report on Parkinson's services published last week.

The charity's report, backed by leading clinicians, makes 13 recommendations that need urgent action if Scotland is to meet the health and social care needs of the growing Parkinson's population. About 12,400 people in Scotland currently have a Parkinson's diagnosis – nearly 900 in Highland alone – and that number is predicted to increase by 40 per cent within the next 20 years.

Parkinson's is a complex incurable neurological condition that affects every aspect of daily living. There are particular challenges for those who live in remote, rural and island communities.

The report highlights unacceptably long waiting times for diagnosis and the nation-

wide shortfall in Parkinson's nurses as major concerns. The report also recommends the establishment of multi-disciplinary Parkinson's teams to provide a more holistic, comprehensive and person-centred approach to Parkinson's care.

Annie Macleod, Scotland director at Parkinson's UK, said: 'This is the first time that we've shone such a searching spotlight on Parkinson's services in every part of Scotland.'

'We recognise that people providing Parkinson's care are doing an incredible job, but we've been challenged by people with Parkinson's to discover whether their individual experiences are unique or part of a bigger and worrying picture.'

'Sadly, we've found problems and failings are not isolated incidents but are part of a Scotland-wide under-provision of services for people with Parkinson's.'

'All but one health board – Western Isles – has inadequate specialist Parkinson's nurse provision. Across Scotland there should be at least 40 Parkinson's nurses, instead we have less than 30. NHS Highland has just 1.5



Barry Moran lives in Glenachulish with his wife and young sons. Barry has been living with Parkinson's since his diagnosis at the age of 39 in 2014.

Barry said: 'Despite the best efforts of the people in the NHS that we see working flat out in Highland, there's a real feeling among the Parkinson's community that we are all too easily overlooked in terms of resources and investment.'

'Too often we have to wait too long for diagnosis. Follow-up appointments are too short and infrequent and accessing other therapists and services can be a real struggle for some. Specialist Parkinson's nurses have a vital role but they are so overworked. We have half as many as we should and that means we don't get to see them as often as we should.'

'It's vital that NHS Highland and local Health and Social Care Partnerships face up to the challenges that Parkinson's presents.'

nurses, when it should have at least three to cover the care needs of its Parkinson's population.

'People with Parkinson's and their families tell us of the anxiety caused by delays in diagnosis. Despite this, neurology services are routinely missing the Scottish Government's 12-week target for new outpatient referrals in all but the smallest island health boards. These targets are typically missed by a large margin. NHS Highland has better waiting times than most areas of Scotland but still routinely misses the target.'

'Parkinson's UK in Scotland finds these delays wholly unacceptable. Across Scotland, at least one in 10 neurology and medicine for older people consultants' posts are unfilled, and urgent action must be taken to recruit consultants with expertise in Parkinson's, speed up diagnosis and enable people with Parkinson's to be properly monitored and have timely access to treatment.'

'We welcome the Scottish Government's new National Action Plan for Neurological Conditions and see it as a real opportunity to improve services and support for people with all neurological conditions, including the

almost 900 people currently living with Parkinson's in Highland.'

'We believe that this plan must be properly resourced, with strong leadership, to enable NHS boards and Health and Social Care Partnerships to provide the support that it needed to keep people with Parkinson's as well as possible for as long as possible.'

Dr Carl Counsell, consultant neurologist at NHS Grampian and UK Parkinson's Excellence Network Lead for Scotland North, said: 'Parkinson's is the second most common neuro-degenerative condition after Alzheimer's. It is a complex progressive disorder, which can have profound effects on many aspects of individuals' lives, both those living with it and their family members.'

'Everyone involved in providing Parkinson's care and services wants to ensure that all people affected by Parkinson's in Scotland receive consistently high-quality care throughout the course of the condition.'

'This is challenging but achievable if we all work together.'

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Spring flower bedding could be scrapped

Springtime flower bedding displays could be scrapped in Argyll and Bute under budget proposals to be debated today (Thursday February 14).

Councillors are also set to mull over the prospect of a reduction in street cleaning and maintenance of sports pitches, play areas and grassland – with some lower priority areas left to grow wild.

The plans will be discussed at the authority's policy and resources committee today and are likely to be continued to a meeting of the full council next Thursday, February 21.

The proposals for floral displays and area maintenance are laid out in an extensive document for the 2019/20 budget planning process by head of strategic finance Kirsty Flanagan.

The report states: 'The proposal for this service through this template is a 10 per cent reduction to current resources.'

'This further 10 per cent would result in a reduction in the level of grassland maintenance, street sweeping and



Kirsty Flanagan.

maintenance of pitches and play areas.

'This would be noticeable with either a reduction to maintenance of all grassland areas or alternatively high profile areas being maintained to a standard similar to current day and lower priority areas being left to grow wild.'

'As part of the reduction in service delivery, it would be proposed that spring bedding displays would cease but summer bedding continue.'

'We will endeavour to seek sponsorship for any of the bedding areas to reduce the reduction in grassland maintenance.'

'However, from previous

attempts there is limited confidence.'

The report goes on to acknowledge that there are risks to the potential service cuts, including litter and increased fly-tipping.

It also states there is a risk of damage to equipment due to longer grassland being harder to maintain, along with a detrimental effect on economic development and tourism.

It is estimated the proposed reductions to the service would save the council nearly £500,000 over the next three financial years, with £120,000 being saved in 2019/20.

The report adds: 'Should this saving option be progressed, it is suggested that an area by area specification be brought to the environment, development and infrastructure committee for consideration.'

'This would set out the frequency of grass cuts, sweeping and cleansing and the areas that would not be treated for each of the four administrative areas. The budget reduction would be taken pro rata from existing budgets, for each of the four areas.'

A Cry For The Wild

HOLLY GILLIBRAND

fort@obantimes.co.uk



Scotland: what it could look like

The bare hillsides stretch out before me as I crouch on the seaweed-strewn loch side.

The land slopes up into the unnaturally rectangular forest of pine trees that banish light from the needle-carpeted ground beneath their branches.

The plantation, to be chopped down for wood in 10 to 20 years time, soon comes to an end and before you is a flat expanse of heather.

Mile upon mile of heather and bracken: purple and brown moorland stretching as far as the eye can see.

Apart from the spinach-green plantation, carving great, black marks in the hillside, there isn't a natural tree or shrub in sight.

But imagine if our moorland, currently a barren, ecological desert, was transformed into a diverse and vibrant landscape.

Imagine if our hillsides were clothed in natural woodland and Caledonian pine forest, which provide habitats for native species such as crested tits, red squirrels, capercaillie, pine martens and wildcats

that are currently stranded in isolated islands of forest.

Rewilding is also about reconnecting people with the natural world and creating new opportunities for communities. Currently, we make about £1 billion to £2 billion from ecotourism, so think how much this would be boosted if we let our wild-life thrive in the natural habitat that was present in Scotland hundreds of years ago ... with wolves and lynx.

But why do we need wolves and lynx and animals such as beavers and wild boar, which are all keystone species?

Our moorlands are either being burned and managed for grouse shooting or overgrazed by a huge number of deer and sheep.

Red deer are not being constantly moved around and chased by wolves and lynx, which results in natural vegetation not being allowed to grow because of overgrazing.

Bringing back wolves and lynx will control the deer popula-

tion, making them move around more and allow a variety of habitats such as grassland, forest and peat bogs to thrive.

Beavers and wild boar have already been reintroduced into Scotland and they have a massive impact on the biodiversity around them – that is why they are referred to as keystone species.

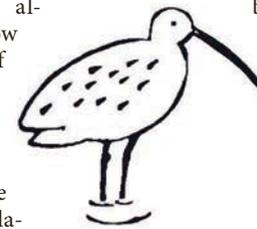
Beavers dam rivers and coppice trees, increasing new growth and the diversity of the landscape, as well as preventing flooding downstream.

Wild boar root around in the soil promoting tree growth and playing an essential part in the ecosystem.

If you want to find out more about rewilding, there are many different charities that are promoting the benefits of rewilding.

SCOTLAND: The Big Picture is one (www.scotlandbigpicture.com), which I have recently become a young ambassador for.

Rewilding Britain is another: www.rewildingbritain.org.uk



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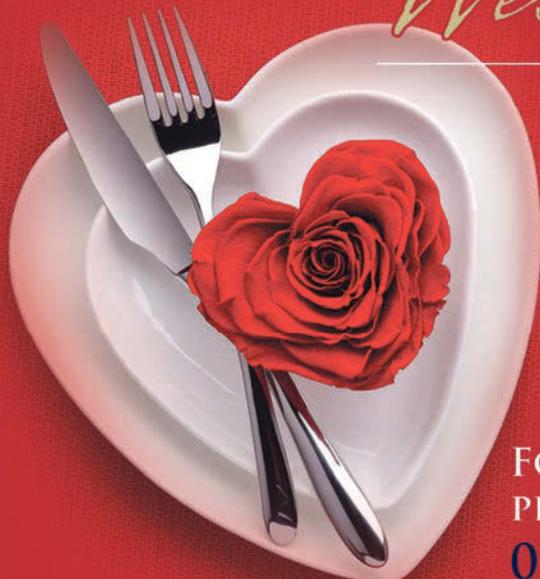
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www.bid4oban.co.uk



BID4OBAN – how does it work?



The principal aim of the BID is to deliver projects and services to improve the trading environment of the BID area to the benefit of businesses, their customers and visitors. BID4Oban is clearly focused on improving Oban as a commercial and tourist destination and its key objectives reflect this.

- Making the best first impression
- Let's shout about what's happening in Oban
- Extend the season
- Making Oban the place to stay, explore and spend
- Working together for a more prosperous future
- Making our town easier to visit

Since the inception of BID4Oban in 2012 and following a successful re-ballot in 2017 the organisation has worked to improve the business and commercial opportunities for Oban.

The BID is funded by a small levy that is charged to every business in Oban with a rateable value of £3,000 or above. The smallest levy paid is £150 rising to £5,000 for the largest businesses generating an annual income of £145,000. The levy is used to supplement and fund services and grants for which there would be no funding available if the BID were not in place.

The BID was originally set up by a group of businesses in Oban; every five years the business community votes for the continuation of the BID or not, working to a fluid business plan that can adapt to the economic climate throughout the duration of the BID.

Details of the current business plan are available at www.bid4oban.co.uk. Bid4Oban is ideally placed to receive additional funding for key projects from various partners, including Argyll and Bute Council.

BID4Oban has supported not just the business community but other groups and organisations within the town with event-funding grants; funding of community projects and offered commercial support for community organisations.

During 2018 BID4Oban was the organisation chosen by Argyll and Bute Council to supply and install the festive lights for the town. Oban Electrical Services carried out most of the work, with an additional 106 lamppost Christmas trees supplied by BID4Oban. It is hoped that for 2019 the displays will be improved and extended to other areas of the town.



TOWN AMBASSADORS

For the last five years Joe Reich and Kay MacDonald have been the face of BID4Oban and on hand to meet and greet visitors to Oban.

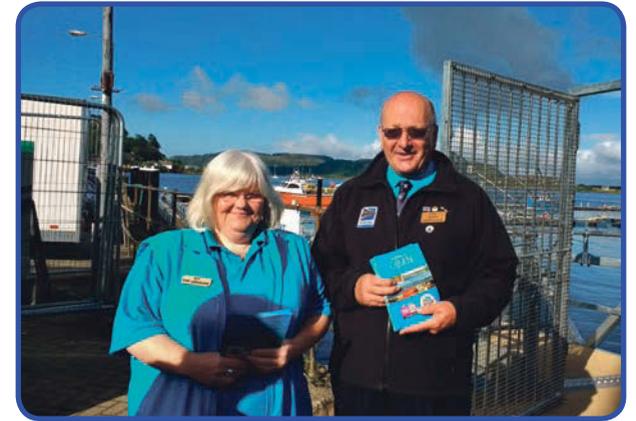
Every day is different with its own rewards and challenges. Almost every nationality on the planet has arrived in Oban at one time or another and between them Joe and Kay have welcomed and directed more than 60,000 visitors arriving by train, coach, ship, car, bike and even on foot.

One of the joys of being a Town Ambassador is not knowing what each day will hold; whether it's going around shops and businesses to distribute maps and leaflets or being on hand to welcome cruise ship passengers as they arrive in their hundreds and sometimes thousands. All cruise visitors are warmly welcomed with a friendly smile, a map of the town and the stirring sound of a piper which, without exception, they love.

With both Ambassadors being dog lovers it is not just human visitors they welcome but also the dogs who accompany them and with the numbers growing every year. It has been good to notice that the number of places in town which welcome dogs is also growing to accommodate them and their owners. Joe and Kay often say that the best part of their job is welcoming all the canine visitors and being able to advise people where the best walks are and know that the dogs are enjoying their holiday too.

It is not just visitors to Oban who speak to the Ambassadors; many local people enjoying a chat with them to find out what's happening in the town and which cruise ships are due in. Local people often help the Ambassadors by telling them of things which need attention, such as rubbish on the beach or advertising boards in awkward places that might be a hazard to a disabled visitor. These facts can then be passed on to the relevant person and dealt with. Many a friendship has been built up over the years with locals who are seen daily, visitors who return year-after-year and workers in local businesses; these are all advantages of being out and about.

Helping to support the many events in Oban throughout the year is also one of the perks of being a Town Ambassador; from directing people to the Highland Games to making sure everyone is safe during the Reindeer Parade and fireworks and enjoying the music throughout the town for Oban Live, the Highland and Islands Music and Dance Festival and the Mòd,



plus the other festivals that take place. It is not all sweetness and light though, with wind and rain being two of the main challenges for Ambassadors; it is not easy to smile and welcome people when the rain is going sideways and your map is disintegrating in your hand. But often the reaction of visitors to our weather is a pleasant surprise as they either love it (they come from Texas) or they're not bothered in the slightest as Scotland is not somewhere you come for the weather.

In the grand scheme of things, the weather is only a very small blip occasionally in what must be one of the best jobs in the world. Welcoming people to a beautiful town that they are passionate about and getting to spend each day telling everyone what a great place Oban; it doesn't get much better than that.

Kay also keeps BID4Oban pages on the Town Diary and the popular Love Oban and BID4Oban Facebook Pages up to date. It is helpful if people get in touch with her about what events are happening in the town from the smallest to the largest.

■ To promote new events, visit obanwhatson.co.uk or Love Oban or BID4Oban Facebook pages. There is no charge for this service, and it all goes to promoting events in the town.

LOVE OBAN VOUCHERS

Love Oban vouchers, the Oban pounds, were launched in 2013 by BID4Oban to encourage spending in local shops, restaurants and businesses.

Since then they have proved very popular and, over the last year, sales of these vouchers have increased by more than 30 per cent. By buying and using the vouchers you can ensure that the money spent stays within the Oban business community and local businesses.

Throughout the year there have been various promotions where purchasers of the vouchers have saved up to 10 per cent off the face value of the vouchers, thus saving on any goods purchased with them. Over the Christmas

period there were record-breaking sales of the vouchers, which can be used in more than 70 businesses.

The Love Oban vouchers make ideal presents for weddings, anniversaries, and birthdays or just to say thank you to someone. They are available from the BID4Oban Office, Oban Phoenix Cinema, The Sports Shop Oban and Alba Art Shop.

By purchasing Love Oban Vouchers, you are supporting local businesses.

■ Full details on where to purchase and spend vouchers are available by visiting www.bid4oban.co.uk

Love Oban Gift Vouchers

Love Oban Gift Vouchers can be redeemed at over 70 businesses throughout Oban and are valid for 12 months! Check out Love Oban on Facebook.



You can buy your Love Oban Gift Vouchers from:

The Sports Shop, Argyll Square, Webster of Oban
Photographic Centre, 122-124 George Street
Bid4Oban, Stevenson Street and Alba Art Shop, Albany Street

NOW IT'S EASIER THAN EVER TO LOVE OBAN!

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT

Ensuring the town looks its best is a key priority of BID4Oban.

During times of budget restraints it is increasingly difficult for the Argyll and Bute Council to fund many of the services previously taken for granted. BID4Oban invested in a street cleaning machine (the Green Machine) and this is in regular use in and around the town, operated by Argyll and Bute Council. BID4Oban is working with the council to ensure that the town is maintained to the best possible standard.

One of the signature projects that BID4Oban undertakes each year is the installation of 256 hanging baskets and planted railing troughs throughout the town.

Last year the overall investment in this project was around £14,000 and covered the installation, maintenance, planting, hardware and delivery. The costs of supplying not only the plants but also the baskets that are used increases every year.

This year BID4Oban is looking for residents and



businesses to sponsor a basket or trough in return for their name to appear adjacently. The cost of sponsoring a basket is £25 and a trough £50.

Improvements to the entrance into McCaigs Tower

are included in this year's programme. This iconic attraction needs some care and attention; it is one of the most visited attractions in Oban and ensuring it is well-presented creates the best first impression for visitors.

■ Full details on how to support or sponsor a basket are available at www.bid4oban.co.uk



WALKING TOURS AND PORT OF OBAN CRUISE GROUP



Oban Walking Tours were set up in June 2018 in conjunction with The Port of Oban Cruise Group.

Twelve guides were trained to Scottish Tour Guides Association standards in a project jointly funded by BID4Oban Ltd, Argyll and Bute Council and The Oban Common Good Fund.

The project was created after requests from cruise ship companies for Oban-based tour guides to give visitors a genuine local tour experience.

Prior to the Walking Tours being set up there were few accredited guides to undertake the task in here in the town. Having locally-based guides enables Oban to provide walking tours of the area which can also be booked for anyone wanting a tour of the town during the peak tourist season.

These can be booked online by visiting www.obanwalkingtours.co.uk. Not only are passengers from some of the larger cruise ships using the service but Bid4Oban is also negotiating with some of the smaller cruise ships to provide bespoke tours for their passengers on a weekly basis.

By providing this service it ensures that most of these passengers spend their time in Oban

using the local services of shops, restaurants and other businesses.

Many of these cruise ships have a very large crew and information is provided for them on what is available in Oban and the surrounding area.

As well as providing Walking Tours every cruise ship that arrives in Oban is met at the North Pier Pontoons or North Pier Harbour and provided with local information. This is in the form of maps, leaflets and the knowledge of the BID4Oban Town Ambassadors, along with a piper to pipe the passengers ashore and is always appreciated by visitors.

There are very few cruise destinations in Scotland providing such a bespoke service to these important visitors; 2019 will see 105 cruise ships of all shapes and sizes visit making it the busiest year ever.

The largest will be the Cunard Queen Victoria visiting on June 7. These visitors generate a huge financial benefit to the town, and BID4Oban will continue to grow and improve the service provided.

■ For further information visit www.obanwalkingtours.co.uk or www.bid4oban.co.uk

SHINE A LIGHT ON OBAN

Shine a light on Oban is one of the key projects that BID4Oban will undertake this year. Following a funding award of £11,500 from The Oban Common Good Fund this will be match funded by BID4Oban.

The project will illuminate various locations within Oban with state-of-the-art controllable lighting to enhance the visitor experience, improve the ambiance of the town centre and create a town that is vibrant and inviting throughout the year. Ultimately there will be a reason to walk round the streets of Oban to view some amazing lighting enhancements that will be the envy of many tourist destinations. This gives Oban another unique reason to visit.

Project 1: The Black Linn Burn – Illuminate the water and foliage of Black Linn from Combie Street Bridge to Oban Hospice Dove Centre.

Currently the Black Linn at Stevenson Street is an unkempt area of the town. There was work undertaken some years ago, including planting of shrubs and installation of net lighting. This lighting is now past its best, has become ugly and has an adverse impact on the wildlife of the burn. Part of the plan is to prune overgrown plants and remove the current lighting. The Black Linn will be illuminated from either side with colour changing lighting which during the evening will significantly improve the atmosphere of the area.

It is also proposed to illuminate the underside of the Combie Street Bridge. Included in this project is the illumination of the six trees either side of the Black Linn on Stevenson Street and Airds Crescent. As an addendum, businesses on either side will be encouraged to apply to BID4Oban for Business Improvement Grants to improve the outward appearance of buildings and illuminate their buildings



with eco-friendly lighting. The preferred local contractor has identified low-cost options for various premises including the Lorn Public House and Ranald Hotel; these premises are in negotiation with the lighting contractor and BID4Oban.

Project 2: Permanent illumination of the large preservation order tree outside the Rockfield Centre.

The current lighting is at the end of its usable life and new lighting will be installed which will be colour changing, eco and low-energy friendly. Given the importance that the Rockfield Centre will have for the town this will make a fitting entrance feature.

■ There are other areas of the town that will be improved in future years and as funding becomes available.

Step this way...

Book your tour on our website below or through Visit Scotland

www.obanwalkingtours.co.uk

BID4OBAN GOVERNANCE



Tony Cave
Chairman



Gregor McKinnon
Vice-chairman

BID4Oban is managed by a board of directors chaired by Tony Cave, proprietor of Craighard Decor. The board is representative of the businesses and stakeholders in the BID area which also includes two representatives from Argyll and Bute Council.

Directors are responsible for the strategic direction of the BID; operating the company in an efficient and transparent manner; financial management and prudence and the delivery of BID projects and services in line with the business plan. They make decisions on grant funding programmes operated by BID4Oban and are responsible for monitoring the performance of the BID plus publishing the company's annual report.

The day-to-day running of BID4Oban is undertaken by the BID manager, Andrew Spence, who is accountable and responsible to the board of directors and manages the working of the BID company.

The BID employs two part-time Town Ambassadors, one of whom supports the BID manager with some administration duties.

BID4Oban is keen to recruit further directors from its levy payers. Please contact the BID office in the first instance.

OBAN TOWN MARKETS



Oban Town Markets which take place in the Station Square area of the town over the summer months have proved highly successful. There are normally up to 10 vendors providing local produce and goods. During 2019 it planned to increase the number of vendors.

BID4Oban supplies the market traders' licence, gazebos and infrastructure to enable these events to take place. By having one organisation running the markets it ensures that there is no duplication or unwanted vendors setting up ad hoc markets.

BID4Oban is keen to take bookings from any interested parties who may want to sell their goods or services. Full details and dates of markets are available on www.bid4oban.co.uk and Oban Town Diary

EVENTS LIST FOR 2019

FEBRUARY

10th & 11th Highland Cattle Society

MARCH

26th Visiting Cruise Ship (V.C.S.) - Hebridean Princess
30th V.C.S. - Astoria

APRIL

2nd V.C.S. - Hebridean Princess
7th V.C.S. - Magellen
13th Oban Town Market
14th V.C.S. - Costa Mediterranean
16th V.C.S. - Hebridean Princess
27th Fiddlers Rally
22nd V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
23rd V.C.S. - Hebridean Princess

MAY

1st V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
3rd - 5th Highlands & Islands Music & Dance Festival
7th V.C.S. - Hebridean Princess
12th Oban Sportive
8th V.C.S. - Astoria & Lord of the Glens
11th V.C.S. - Ocean Nova
14th V.C.S. - Hebridean Princess
15th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
17th V.C.S. - Le Champlain
17th Scottish Islands 3 Peaks Race
31st - 2nd June Oban Provincial Mod
18th V.C.S. - Costa Mediterranean & Ocean Nova
21st V.C.S. - Hebridean Princess
22nd V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
23rd V.C.S. - Seabourn Quest
24th V.C.S. - Hebridean Sky
25th Oban Town Market
26th V.C.S. - Marco Polo & Corinthian
28th V.C.S. - Hebridean Princess
29th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
30th V.C.S. - Variety Voyager

JUNE

1st Oban & Lorn Lions Charities Day
3rd V.C.S. - Corinthian & Astoria
30th - 2nd July
West Highland Tennis Week
4th V.C.S. - Hebridean Princess
5th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
30th - 2nd July
West Highland Tennis Week
7th & 8th Oban Live
7th V.C.S. - Queen Victoria
10th V.C.S. - Silver Cloud
11th V.C.S. - Le Boreal & Hebridean Princess
12th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
15th V.C.S. - Corinthian
18th V.C.S. - Hebridean Princess
19th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
21st V.C.S. - Polar Pioneer
23rd V.C.S. - Corinthian
8th V.C.S. - Hebridean Princess
26th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
28th V.C.S. - Hebridean Sky
29th V.C.S. - Oban Town Market

JULY

26th - 2nd Aug
West Highland Yachting Week
2nd V.C.S. - Hebridean Princess
3rd V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
5th V.C.S. - Corinthian
8th V.C.S. - Variety Voyager & Magellen
9th V.C.S. - Hebridean Princess
10th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
13th V.C.S. - Corinthian
17th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
20th Oban Town Market
24th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
25th V.C.S. - Corinthian
27th V.C.S. - Silver Wind
28th V.C.S. - Variety Voyager
31st V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens

AUGUST

2nd V.C.S. - Corinthian
7th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
14th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
17th V.C.S. - Variety Voyager
21st V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
22nd Argyllshire Gathering
22nd V.C.S. - Corinthian
23rd V.C.S. - Hebridean Princess
24th Oban Town Market & Oban Sea Kayak Race
24th V.C.S. - Ocean Majesty
27th V.C.S. - Variety Voyager
28th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens

SEPTEMBER

4th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
5th V.C.S. - Pacific Princess
6th V.C.S. - Variety Voyager
8th V.C.S. - Dumont D'Urville
11th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
15th Motorfest
18th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
21st Oban Town Market
25th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
26th V.C.S. - Seabourn Ovation

OCTOBER

2nd V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
5th & 6th Craggy Island Triathlon
12th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens
15th V.C.S. - Lord of the Glens

NOVEMBER

5th Fireworks
T.B.A. Reindeer Parade

DECEMBER

31st Hogmanay Fireworks



Fireworks photograph: Anna Forgive

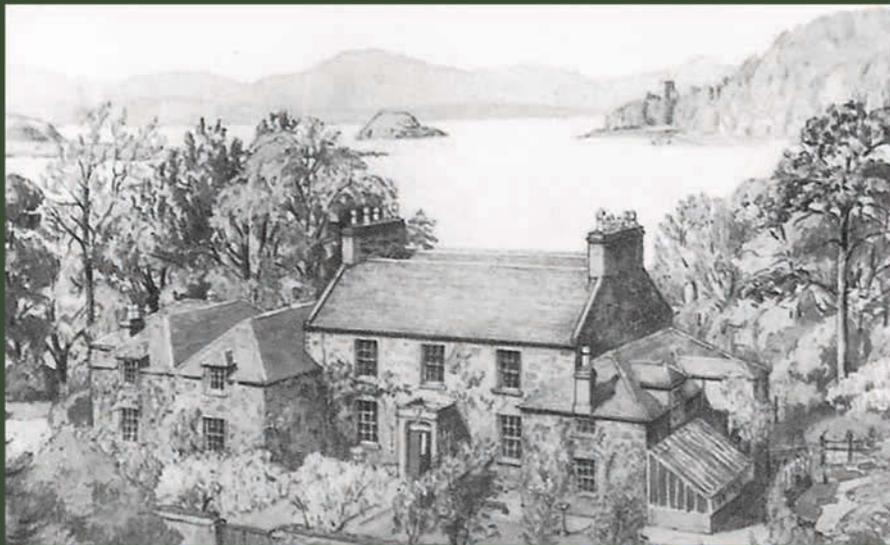


Jamie MacGregor, Joe Reich and crew from Pacific Princess

FOR AN UPDATE LIST OF MONTHLY EVENTS VISIT WWW.OBANWHATSON.CO.UK

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EVENT GRANTS AND FUNDING SUPPORT

BID4Oban uses part of the levy it collects from the business community to help support local events, festivals and community organisations. Since its inception, £212k has been invested in the Oban community ensuring events can function and are supported financially; with the organisation supporting festivals, clubs and community organisations.

Oban Live has been supported from the start and now generates in excess of £1.4M in economic benefit to the businesses in the town.

Daniel Gillespie of Decade Events Ltd who organise Oban Live said: 'Without the outstanding support of BID4Oban in terms of their financial contribution and in-kind support from the BID4Oban employees it would make the event more difficult to organise. BID4Oban work in tandem with our team to ensure Oban Live is the success it is today.'

Another event that has benefited from financial and in-kind support is The Highlands and Islands Music and Dance Festival held in May each year generating an economic benefit to Oban of £1.2M. Motorfest has grown since small beginnings in 2015. Now held in September, it attracted in excess of 70 vehicles on display, many from outwith the local area. Combined with a mountain bike stunt show in 2018 it brought in excess of 2,500 visitors.

The BID4Oban Reindeer Parade and Christmas Lights switch-on has proved one of

the best attended events in Oban during the busy festive season. In excess of 2,000 Obanites and visitors attended this year's parade and celebration. This could not take place without the terrific support of The Rotary Club of Oban and Oban and Lorn Lions Club, Argyll and Bute Council and Oban Electrical Services.

Fireworks displays are always well attended and 2018 was no exception. With the help of Scottish Sea Farms, who sponsored the November 5 display, the event saw huge crowds line the Esplanade and the North Pier to view one of the biggest displays ever seen in Oban. A spectacular display also took place to celebrate the New Year from McCaig's Tower.

During 2018 BID4Oban supported Oban Communities Trust (The Rockfield Centre) with a grant of £9,500. This project will be a key cultural hub that will benefit both the residents of Oban and the many visitors to the town each year.

■ **Details on how to apply for grant funding can be found at www.bid4oban.co.uk or contact the BID4Oban office in Stevenson Street.**



BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT GRANTS



One of the key objectives of BID4Oban is to improve the appearance of the town.

This takes many forms and the Business Improvement Grants have proved highly successful. To date BID4Oban has awarded £39,900 to eligible businesses, with 2018 being the most successful year so far.

These grants enable businesses to invest in the visual impact of their properties by way of improved signs or redecoration of a shop front. Ensuring the frontage of business premises look bright and well-cared for has a major impact on the look of the town. This benefits not just the business but its neighbours and the town as a whole.

Last year BID4Oban also ensured that most of the town centre bollards and railings were repainted as part of its commitment to ensuring the town looks its best.

■ **Full details on how a business can apply for a grant can be found by visiting www.bid4oban.co.uk or contacting the office in Stevenson Street.**

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**BID4Oban AGM and
annual review is held in
March each year. Venue
and date are advised in
the public notice section
of The Oban Times.**

BID PARTNERSHIP WORKING

BID4Oban works very closely with Oban and Lorn Tourism Alliance (OLTA) www.oban.org.uk The two have an understanding that ensures BID4Oban supports them financially with an annual grant of at least £10,000.

This ensures that OLTA can gain access to additional monies through match-funding of the grant given by BID4Oban. This is used to promote Oban as a tourism destination not only on their website but also by way of billboard advertising across Scotland, taxi-wrap advertising and on the Glasgow and London undergrounds.

OLTA pay a crucial roll in marketing Oban as a must-visit

destination. Its website is testament to this being the first site you will see if you Google Oban.

It is part of the Argyll and the Islands Tourism Alliance ensuring influence is not just felt in Oban but the greater geographical area.

Neil McKay, chairman of OLTA said: 'BID4Oban and OLTA have a fantastic working relationship and their financial input is vital to the success and future success of OLTA. This year BID4Oban, Oban Live and OLTA will be promoting Oban as a must-visit destination at the Visit Scotland Tourism Expo in April. By all organisations working together we can

raise the profile and potential of Oban as a place to visit.' During 2017 BID4Oban, supported by Oban Community Council and The Oban Common Good Fund invested in the installation of Town WIFI. This is in the process of being extended to ensure WIFI is available across the North Pier Pontoons and along to the war memorial.

Town WIFI is very important for overseas visitors as many do not want to use their devices on mobile networks due to the costs. Since its installation thousands of visitors have registered or logged into the network provided by local installer Craine Communications.

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BUSINESS NEWS

HIAL announces new chairwoman

Lorna Jack has been appointed chairwoman of the board of Highlands and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL).

Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity Michael Matheson congratulated Ms Jack on her permanent appointment and said: 'She has performed admirably in the role on an interim basis, helping HIAL continue to deliver for the communities that rely on these vital air links.'

'I look forward to continuing to work with her.'

Ms Jack is a graduate of Aberdeen University and a chartered accountant. She joined the board in 2014 and was invited to take up the interim position of chairwoman in October 2017. Additionally, Ms Jack is the chief executive of the Law Society of Scotland and an independent member of the Court of University of Aberdeen.

Her appointment will last three years and she will receive a payment of £310 per day for a time commitment of six days per month.

HIAL is wholly owned by Scottish ministers.

It operates and manages 11 airports in the Highlands and Islands, including Stornoway, Tiree and Barra.

£12m hotel fit for a

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Glencoe's legendary Kingshouse Hotel has reopened after a £12 million revamp creating 54 new jobs.

It took 10 months and a live-in workforce of more than 100 to expand the 17th-century hotel which now offers 57 bedrooms, a 32-bed bunkhouse, a new restaurant, bar and pub at the head of Glencoe on Rannoch Moor.

Rural Economy Secretary Fergus Ewing was at the official opening on Friday and said he was honoured to play a small part in launching the next chapter of the iconic building's history.

For centuries, the Kingshouse Hotel has been a place of respite for drovers, walkers, skiers, climbers and visitors to the area. The original inn was once used as barracks for the Duke of Cumberland's troops, hunting Jacobites after the Battle of Culloden in 1746.

Despite the contemporary feel to the new extension, the charm is still there and log fires extend a Highland welcome. There are



Fergus Ewing MSP at the reopening of the Kingshouse Hotel in Glencoe with, from left, Vicomte Rodolphe de Spoelberch (owner), Mrs Dianne Adriaenssen (owner), Finlay Clark, partner at Bidwells, and Stephen Leckie, CEO and owner, Crieff Hydro Family of Hotels.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson

plans to turn the connecting point between the two buildings into an art gallery showcasing the work of local artists.

The long-standing owners of the nearby Black Corries Estate bought the hotel in 2014 and it is managed for them by the award-winning Crieff Hydro Hotels group.

'These new, enhanced facilities will provide much-needed economic stability for the area by creating jobs and revenue for many years to come,' said Mr Ewing.

Sustainable technology and design has been key to the redevelop-

ment project. The hotel, beneath Buachaille Etive Mor, has its own bio-mass energy supply. It also has bore-holes for its own water source.

The eco-ethos is evident throughout the hotel's footprint and beyond. Great care has been taken to make sure there has been as little impact on the surrounding natural environment as possible.

The fall and rise of the new extension seems to shadow the mountain peaks from the back view and from the road, it blends well into the landscape helped by its natural-look wood front and a

cluster of trees close by that bring shelter to deer.

Looking out of the huge picture windows from the restaurant and bar is like being out in the wild but without the biting exposure at this time of year. Whatever the elements, guests can watch the raw beauty of the great outdoors unfold before their very eyes while staying cosy, well-watered and exceptionally well fed.

This is an all-year-round destination in its own right, equally as attractive to visitors travelling from afar as it will be for daytrippers. It is less than one hour's drive from Oban. The famous Climbers Bar has been renamed The Way Inn,

BUSINESS MATTERS

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king

with live music on a Friday and Saturday. Both hotel bars have their own menus as well as the top-notch restaurant serving traditional favourites using local produce wherever it can. The delicious vension we enjoyed came from an estate less than a mile away. The hearty game broth comes highly recommended too. There were worthy contenders to finish with but I'm glad I plumped for the clotted dumpling with custard and marmalade ice-cream.

The enlarged hotel has something for everyone. Walkers and climbers will especially rejoice in the drying rooms and bag store – there's a machine so large it can dry 60 pairs of boots at a time.

As well as the basic bunkhouse accommodation, there are two suites in the new extension with large picture-perfect balconies, two accessible rooms and the rest are standard – regardless of type there has been no skimping on quality here. The name Kingshouse says it all.

Exciting times ahead for Oban cinema

by David McPhee
dmcph@obantimes.co.uk



It's an exciting time for Oban Phoenix Cinema and the committee is looking for a bookkeeper to join the team.

The community-owned enterprise, screens an eclectic mix of arthouse, which screens everything from arthouse to big blockbuster movies and live streamed theatre, and plays host to birthday parties, private functions and music gigs, recently received £28,000 in grants to repair the roof and to develop the inside of the cinema, including a new concession stand.

Cinema chairman Gary Brown said: 'Funding is in place to get the roof above screen two fixed. We are waiting for a break in the weather to start getting that repaired.'

'We received a substantial donation from a donor, who wished to remain anonymous. That has allowed us to push forward with the upgrade. One of the things



Oban Phoenix chairman Gary Brown. 16_T18_GaryBrown01

planned in the next few weeks is the concession stand, which will improve customer service. People will be able to get their tickets, then move through and buy drinks and snacks before heading into the cinema. We are also looking to build a ticket office.

'This will streamline things. It is about bringing back the whole cinema experience for the town and I feel we are heading in the right direction.'

Gary added: '2019 started off well with our successful Film Festival of the Outdoors. This was the first time we have run

this event and it was so busy we kept some of the films on for more screenings for two weeks.

'We are planning to have a classic musical on the last Sunday of the month,' he added. 'They are very popular, so book in advance.'

The cinema will also be hosting a series of live streamed events from the Royal National Theatre.

The next monthly musical, on Sunday February 24, will be Seven Brides for Seven Brothers, which won a social media vote. The musical will start at 3pm to fit in with ferries.

To find out more about the bookkeeper's role or to book a ticket, call 01631 562905 or visit www.obanphoenix.com

Promotion and awards shortlist

MacPhee & Partners has double reason to celebrate in its Oban office.

Billie Kirkham has been promoted to associate solicitor and Fiona Anderson has been announced as a finalist in the paralegal of the year category at the Scottish Law Awards.

Billie's promotion is in recognition of her excellent work within the firm's family law and executry departments and also her contribution to the company. Fiona is one of only three paralegals to be shortlisted for the paralegal of the year award.

Christine MacKay, managing partner, said: 'To be recognised as one of the best paralegals in the country is a fantastic achievement and we look forward to the awards ceremony, in Glasgow on Thursday March 21.'



Fiona Anderson, left, and Billie Kirkham.

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Unsung forestry heroes to be recognised

The men of the British Honduran Forestry Unit (BHFU), who travelled 5,000 miles to keep Scotland's timber supplies alive during the Second World War, are to be recognised for their heroic contribution.

Rural Economy Secretary Fergus Ewing has written to the Belize High Commissioner to thank the country's citizens for their efforts.

He has also asked Forestry Commission Scotland to explore ways to celebrate the work of BHFU, along with other Commonwealth citizens, who all rallied to help manage Scotland's forests during the war.

In the letter to Her Excellency High Commissioner Perla Perdomo, Mr Ewing said: 'As part of the recent events to commemorate the contribution of British and Commonwealth military and civilian servicemen and women involved in the two world wars and later conflicts, I was informed of a particularly interesting and largely untold chapter of the people of Belize.

'I therefore wish to formally acknowledge on behalf of the Scottish Government the contribution of the citizens of Belize for their selfless service that the countrymen gave during the war. Importantly, I want to say thank you to them and to your country for this key contribution to our joint war effort.'

Maintaining timber supplies was vital in the war effort. Supply routes by sea from other countries were cut off so home timber needed to be felled, but many men were abroad fighting.

In 1941/42, around 900 men made the perilous journey from British Honduras (now called Belize) across the North Atlantic to a wintry Scotland to work in the forests. They were billeted in a number of camps, including in the western Highlands. The men had to endure harsh weather and very basic living conditions but were welcomed by the local communities.

In 2019, to celebrate 100 years of public forestry in Scotland, the Scottish Government will be celebrating the work of the BHFU.

West Highland Li

Morvern lines

IAIN THORNER

ian.thorner@btinternet.com



Here, by popular request from railway enthusiasts, is a list of some incidents and mishaps which occurred on the famous West Highland line during its construction, taken from police and other records.

September 1890: It has been decided to try three prisoners in connection with the recent outrage at Ardlui, Loch Lomond, and the recent assault and robbery at Arrochar, before the forthcoming Glasgow Circuit Court.

In connection with the first case, a lodging-housekeeper, named Daniel Carswell, is charged with a murderous assault upon a woman, and then setting her house on fire. Two other men are also charged with being accessory to the crime.

In the Arrochar case, two navvies, named James Roger and Charles Charlton, are charged with assault and robbery, and also with housebreaking.

November 1890: While a squad of navvies were engaged in a cutting of the West Highland Railway, near the farm of Glenfalloch, Killin parish, an accident occurred which might have been attended with serious consequences. The cutting is through hard rock, and consequently blasting is carried on. It was after a blast that the navvies set to work to clear away the stones and earth, and while doing so one of them struck an unexploded cartridge with his pick, causing it to burst. The explosion was a pretty severe one, but luckily no one was seriously injured, although one man named John M'Kechnie was badly cut about the face and head.

February 2, 1892: Fort-William – Early this morning there was a renewal of the storm in the Lochaber district. Loch Linnhe rose to an unusual height and a number of the houses in Low Street, Fort William, were flooded to a depth about foot. On account of the gale today the mail steamer Fusilier, which leaves Fort William at eight, could not proceed till after eleven o'clock. Intelligence has just come to hand that two bridges – one over the Blackwater, Kinlochbeg, and another on the public road near M'Braynes pier at Ballachulish – have been swept away. A

bridge in Glen Nevis, about six miles from Fort-William, has also been carried off. Loch Shiel rose to almost unprecedented heights, and inundated the public road for a distance of three miles, making it necessary to convey the mails from Arisaig in a sailing boat.

The monument to Prince Charles Edward at Glenfinnan stood to a depth of ten feet in water, and the wall which surrounds it has been destroyed by the flood. The river Spean during the height of the flood, was washing over the top the railway bridge which crosses it near Spean Bridge. When in its normal state the Spean is about 30 feet below the girders of the bridge.

July 23, 1892: On Saturday morning, on the new West Highland Railway, near Helensburgh, an engine and a number of empty wagons left the rails and went over an embankment 18 feet deep.

The stoker, Thomas Jarrow, an unmarried man, was killed on the spot, and Robert Warnest, the driver, was severely injured about the head and shoulders.

January 1893: Smallpox has broken out in one of the huts at Ardlui in which the navvies employed on the West Highland Railway are lodged. The most careful precautions are being taken to check the outbreak by isolation. It is alleged that the outbreak of smallpox on some part of the West Highland Railway is due to the filthy state of the huts in which the navvies live.

April 1894: When a navy, named John Campbell, employed in the construction of the West Highland Railway, was engaged blasting on Rannoch Moor yesterday afternoon, he was accidentally blown to pieces.

June 25, 1894: This morning an accident occurred on the West Highland Railway near Inverarnan through a couple of North British engines dashing into a siding. It is alleged that the points on the main track had been maliciously shifted. The engines were thrown off the metals, and the four drivers and firemen were injured.

July 30, 1894: On Monday evening a case of a stabbing occurred at Rannoch Moor Station on the West Highland Railway, whereby a man named John Smith was injured.

May 1894: A large meeting was held at Plockton the other day to resolve to requisition the authorities for the establishing of a police station in the locality, in view of the large number of navvies collected in the district by the railway works.



June 18, 1895: On Tuesday morning while Hector M'Kinnon, surfaceman on the West Highland Railway, was attempting to enter a train in motion at Fort William Station, he missed his footing and, falling on the rails, one of the vehicles passed over his left arm. On being conveyed to the Belford Hospital, Fort-William, it was found necessary to amputate the fractured limb.

December 1896: On Wednesday, Ronald Campbell, son of John Campbell, boat builder, Corpach, was seriously injured by a distress rocket. Finding the rocket near the shore, the lad, not knowing what it was, commenced hacking it with a hatchet, with the result that it exploded. Campbell was injured about the face and one of his hands was severely lacerated, was conveyed to the Belford Hospital here, where it was found necessary to amputate four of his fingers.

January 26, 1898: A peculiar accident happened on the Skye section of the Highland

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The Glenfinnan viaduct on the West Highland Line shortly after its completion in 1901.

Photograph: Iain Thornber

Railway yesterday morning. The 6 am passenger train from Kyle of Lochalsh to Inverness was proceeding on its way, when about a mile east of Strome Ferry Station a big boulder was observed lying on the line. The train could not draw up in time to avoid a compact, and the engine and several of the carriages were somewhat damaged. It is supposed the boulder had fallen from the cutting.

December 1898: Another terrible dynamite explosion, the third within a limited period, occurred this morning on the Mallaig Railway works at Craigag, near Glenfinnan. Two workmen were killed and several injured.

The work on the new Mallaig extension of the West Highland Railway is already far advanced. Although the construction of this railway has proved one of the most difficult engineering jobs ever tackled in this country,

it is hoped that with the system of rock cutting in operation the greater part of the heavy work yet to do will be carried through within the next six months.

It is stated as an interesting comparison that on the 40 miles of the Mallaig Railway there is twice the amount of rock cutting that there was on the whole of the hundred miles of the West Highland Railway.

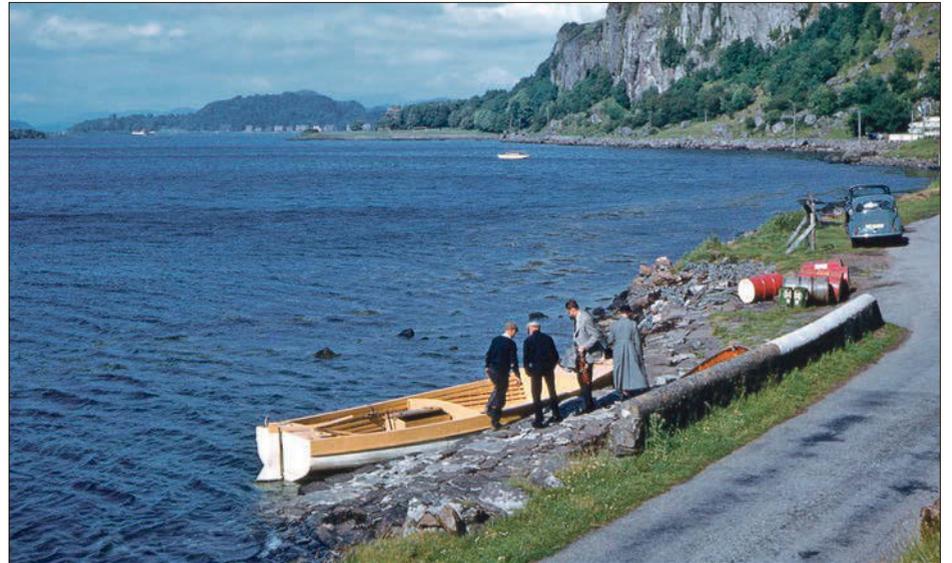
Another interesting feature of the railway is the large number of viaducts that have had to be erected.

The principal viaduct at Glenfinnan consists of 21 spans; it is 50 feet across and 100 feet high. The Glenfinnan viaduct was only begun in the autumn and the contractor hopes to have traffic over it in August next.

There are, on average, from 1,000 to 1,800 men employed at the works.

DOWN MEMORY LANE

We delve into The Oban Times archives to bring you faces and places from yesteryears



Reader David Guest sent this photograph from 1959 and said: 'It shows the Kerrera Ferry launch and slip, and was taken by my aunt, Dr Mary Guest. The ferryman, Mr Beaton, holds the launch by dint of a boot on the gunwhale, as he habitually chats to the passengers disembarking. Beaton, who hailed originally from the Outer Isles, was a tremendously friendly and helpful man. During the busy summer he used to let me, as a 12-year-old, take the tiller as we plied back and forth. As another sign of trust in these times, Beaton's drums of vapourising paraffin lie by the Gallanach roadside with an unlocked tap. The scene is completed by the Ardbhan crags and Oban in the distance.'



This photograph comes from our archive and shows a group of entertainers from the 1999 Lions' Charities Week. But can anyone identify the individuals? Last week's photo of a fire service presentation was explained by retired firefighter Chris Thornhill from Ardfern, who said: 'It shows the official opening of the Colonsay Fire Station at Scalasaig. The ceremony was conducted by Firemaster John Jamieson of Strathclyde Fire Brigade. The station was built to house Colonsay's new fire appliance which was a Steyer Puch Pinzgauer six wheeled off-road vehicle. The two crew members on the left are holding what is probably their Breathing Apparatus certificates. The volunteer leader at this time would be Neil Moodie. Colonsay's appliance is now a Mercedes Volunteer Support Unit.'



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LETTERS

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Councillors face making some tough budget decisions

There will be understandable dismay among many readers this week at the possibility of Argyll and Bute Council members voting to scrap spring flower bedding displays.

The move is one potential area for members of the local authority's policy and resources committee to identify savings. Among others are a reduction in street cleaning and maintenance of sports pitches, play areas and grassland – with some lower priority areas left to grow wild. Councillors will debate the issue when the committee meets today and will be voted on when the full council assembles next Thursday.

Our public spaces and the floral displays which decorate them are important for a number of reasons, not the least of which is their economic impact in impressing visitors and boosting the tourism sector.

However, there is the ongoing reality of austerity, despite the Westminster government saying it is over, which means the council is obliged to make some very tough budget decisions in the face of 'a 10 per cent reduction to current resources'.

We must hope that clear thinking is prevalent and that councillors consider every option.

Deserved success for Oban Winter Festival

The annual Oban Winter Festival has become an established fixture in the social calendar of the town and is much loved by its residents.

However, it also provides a hugely important economic boost during what is traditionally a quiet period during November. It also raises significant sums of money for charity.

So it is a pleasure to be able to report this week the details of its growing success and to commend the organisers.

Council needs to grit pavements in winter

Thursday January 31 was a beautiful day and there were many folk out and about in Oban, enjoying the sunshine in spite of the cold.

As I walked through Station Square at 3pm, I was horrified to see people attempting to walk across what was actually a sheet of ice – from the harbour wall on the one side to the shops on the other. Several elderly people were walking in single file under the eaves of the shops, the only place free of ice. I found that the safest way to walk was pigeon-fashion along the metal grids covering the drains.

How the council can allow this state of affairs to exist, I really can't imagine. I'm sure that a lack of money will be the excuse, but a simple pedestrian-pushed rotary salt spreader can be bought extremely cheaply. I have used them for most of my working life to treat garden roads and paths and could easily salt Station Square in less than an hour.

Such a simple machine could be used to salt some of the slippery pavements too. If somebody was to fall and injure themselves, the compensation would be vastly more expensive than the solution suggested above.

Visitors and residents should be encouraged to take to the streets on such beautiful days, rather than be afraid to venture out.

Maurice Wilkins,
Laurel Road, Oban.

Do not let Westminster cut pensioners' free TV licence

It is interesting to note that Conservative government austerity is not over.

It has perhaps gone by many folks' attention but in November the BBC announced that the government funding to enable people over the age of 75 to receive a free TV licence ends in June 2020.

Consequently, the BBC board of directors has been holding a consultation on how they should react to this cut in funding. Options they suggest include the cutting of programmes to enable retaining the pensioners' free TV licence entitlement. They then point out that the full cost of doing so would be equivalent of closing BBC Two, BBC Three, BBC Four, the BBC News Channel, CBBC and CBeebies. Another option is lesser programme cuts, paid for by way of means testing our elderly relatives or by reducing their entitlement

YOUR PICTURES



We know our readers love to take photographs so we are happy to create this space to showcase people's images each week. If you have a photograph you would like to see published here, send

it to editor@obantimes.co.uk, post it to The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, PA34 4HB or hand it in to our offices in Crannog Lane, Lochavullin Industrial Estate, Oban, or in High Street, Fort William. This week's

by 50 per cent or by increasing the age limit to 80, the BBC board helpfully suggests.

There are few benefits that retired folk can avail themselves of and with the state pension being one of the poorest in Europe, a free TV licence saves £154.50 – for that is to be the cost from April this year. The weekly state pension is £164.35.

This shows the level of back door austerity that the Conservative government is prepared to have its public services implement. It is shameful.

Might I suggest that the BBC request the caring Conservative government to use the

promised Brexiteers savings – some £350 million per week, we understood – or simply leave three nuclear missiles (\$270 million each) at the American store, and respect our elderly residents by retaining a free licence for those over 75.

Campbell Cameron,
Benderloch.

Precious Gaelic archive is safer now than ever

In noting the article written by Iain Thornber (The Campbells of Canna and their precious

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photograph was sent in by Martine Cooper from Duror, who said: 'Lots of people have commented on this photo which I took on the summit of the Buachaille Etive Mor in late December.'

legacy, The Oban Times, January 31), there was much of interest but also, unfortunately, sentiments that we must take issue with.

John Lorne Campbell and Margaret Fay Shaw's precious Gaelic archive is certainly not 'at risk'. On the contrary, it has never been safer than now and is much more accessible than ever before.

Since 1981, the National Trust for Scotland has been tireless in curating and cataloguing the records as well as making significant amounts of material available to the public through publication.

This has included our vice-president,

Professor Hugh Cheape's editing of and re-issuing of Campbell and Shaw's books, as well as the Tobar an Dualchais project for which £1.5 million was raised and which has enabled the collection's sound archives, which span the 1930s to the 1960s, to be digitally formatted and made available online.

Digitisation of the entire archive, including the wonderful photographic collection, is ongoing. At the same time, we are a third of the way through a three-year project to open-up Canna House and garden in a new and sustainable way for future generations to enjoy.

There are few organisations that can match the National Trust for Scotland's flexibility to deploy expertise, resources and generous donations, and doggedly sustain progress towards an objective over a period of years.

John Lorne Campbell himself wished to ensure that every effort was made to retain his library and collections on Canna, which is exactly what the trust is endeavouring to do. The point about digitisation, which Campbell could not have foreseen, is that it makes it easier to fulfil his wish.

As for moving the collection to Lochaber, Mr Thornber conflates accessibility with physical location – a confusion now thoroughly overhauled by modern technology and educational practice.

Alan Rankin, Operations Manager Islands, National Trust for Scotland.

Keep sending your stamps

Thank you so much for all the support that your readers are giving by sending as many stamps as they can for Bone Cancer Research Trust. In 2018, we raised £12,775 and in 2019 we are aiming for £25,000.

Every stamp sent to us will help raise vital funds. On Facebook? Join our group for regular updates.

Every 10 minutes somewhere a child, teenager or adult is diagnosed with primary bone cancer.

Each year since the charity started we have endeavoured to grow our research to save lives. Over the past three years we have encouraged more researchers to explore primary bone cancer and have funded more research projects than ever before in our history but critically our income has fallen. We need your support now.

Thank you for your much-needed support... until there is a cure.

Terri, volunteer stamp appeal coordinator, Bone Cancer Research Trust.

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

editor@obantimes.co.uk



Chan fheàrr an t-urras nan t-earras!

'S e facal cudromach a th' ann an "urras" ann an Gàidhlig, facal a tha bitheanta a' buntainn ri earbsa, onair, agus càird-eas. Bu mhath a bhith a' cluinntinn "thèid mise an urras" ann an còmhradh, chan ann a-mhàin air sgàth facal brìghmhor a bhith ga ghleidheadh ach cuideachd air sgàth tèarainteachd nam buannachdan eile a tha na lùib. Ged a tha an seanfhacal a' toirt aithne dha luach an fhacail "urras" tha e cuideachd a' daingneachadh a' cheangail eadar e agus an t-earras neo am beartas leis am bheil e a' seasamh.

'S dòcha gum bheil sibh den bheachd gur e feallsanachd gum bhrìgh a th' agam, ach thàinig an seanfhacal gum inntinn is mi a' beachdachadh às ùr air cuspair air an tug mi tarraing bho chionn chola-deug agus mar a tha brath ga ghabhail air cumhachd an eadar-lìn gus fiosrachadh agus teachdaireachd mhi-chneasta a sgaoileadh.

Cha b' iongnadh daoine a bhith a' moladh athair na h-ighne, Molly Russell, a

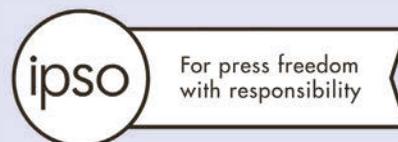
ghabh a beatha fhèin ann an 2017 fo bhuaidh, a rèir a h-athair, cuid de na chunnaic i air làraichean-lìn. Tha an iomairt aig Mgr Russell gus smachd a thoirt air na làraichean sin air aire eadar-nàiseanta a ghlacadh agus tha e na thomhas air ire na h-anshocair a tha sin ag adhbharachadh dha Facebook agus an làrach Instagram aca gun tàinig an t-àrd-oifigeir aig Instagram, Adam Mosseri, gu ruige Breatann a ghabhail an leisgeul airson cuid de na tha iad a' foillseachadh. Gheall e gun tèid dealbhan de fhèin-dhòchann a sguabadh far làrach Instagram, ach saoilidh mi gum bi mòran a' faireachadh nach robh a chuid geallaidh a' dol idir cho fada 's a dh'iar-radh Mgr Russell.

'S i an trioblaid gum bheil làraichean-lìn leithid seo a' tàladh luchd-tadhail ri linn cho fosgarra agus cho follaiseach 's a tha am fiosrachadh a tha iad a' foillseachadh, agus tha an ire gum bheil sin a' tarraing aire sluaigh na argamaid làidir da-rìribh dha buidhnean coimearsalta a dh'iar-radh sanasachd a dhèanamh. Mar a bhiodh dùil tha e uile a' tilleadh gu

airgead, agus prothaid! Sin far am bheil an seanfhacal air an tug mi iomradh a' ceangal ris an t-suidheachadh seo. Ged a tha Facebook "duilich" ma thug dad a dh'fhoillsich iad fhèin neo a' chompanaidh Instagram aca dad ceàrr, agus ged a tha Mosseri a' gealltainn leasachadh, cha bhi iad idir deònach a' mhargaid shanasachd luachmhor a th' aca a chall. Ma thachras, mar a tha mòran an dùil, nach fheàrr an t-urras seo aig Instagram na earras an cuid gnìomh a thaobh an sgioblachaidh air an cuid làraichean theagamh gun tig air an Riaghaltas sealltainn gu math nas cruaidhe air ciamar a ghabhas smachd a thoirt orra. 'S e dùbhlàn mòr da-rìribh a bhios an leithid sin de dh'amas!

Promises are worthless until delivered and the 'cleaning up' of Instagram should be measured accordingly, and ideally people should exercise their power to boycott where appropriate.

Ailean Caimbeul (Allan Campbell)
ailean@obantimes.co.uk



The editor welcomes letters of approximately 300 words in length for publication on this page. However we reserve the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and postal addresses must be supplied, including on emails, to indicate good faith. A daytime phone number is also required for verification. Anonymous letters or those supplied without a contact phone number will not be printed. Please email: editor@obantimes.co.uk or write to: Letters page, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB. Fax: 01631 568001.

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OT

DISTRICT NEWS

OBAN

Soroba Community Centre hosts a bingo night every Thursday from 7pm until 9pm with cash prizes.

Tea, coffee and cakes are also available. Everyone welcome.

Oban High School's annual reunion takes place on Saturday March 9 this year in the town's Royal Hotel.

All year groups are invited to the 'hot buffet and dance'. The Martainn Skene duo will be performing on the night. Tickets cost £20.

To find out more, contact David Brown on 01631 565242 or 07484 735734 or email dabrownoban@btinternet.com.

TAYNUILT

A fundraising quiz night is being held in Taynuilt Village Hall on Saturday March 2.

Proceeds from the event, from 7pm till 11pm, will go to 'Roanne's Expedition to Peru'. Entry is £5 per person, with a maximum of five per team. A light supper will be provided. Bring your own bottle.

APPIN

Appin's 'It's Not Valentine's Night Out' will take place on Saturday February 16 in the village hall.

All proceeds raised will go to the Beatson Cancer Charity and Appin community playpark.

Running from 7pm until late, the free event will feature Trish's Highland Dancers, Rough Edges, Sutherland's Groove and new ceilidh band DICE. There will be a raffle and nibbles. Bring your own bottle. All ages welcome.

ISLAY

A charity quiz night will be held in the Ballygrant Inn, Islay, on Friday February 22 to raise money for Greater Kilmeny Community Group.

The event, for teams of four people, will start at 7.30pm and will cost £10 per group. There will be coffee, tea and home-baking.

Islands Lifestyle Lottery success to be celebrated

WESTERN ISLES

More than £100,000 has been raised by the Western Isles Lottery for communities across the islands since its launch in 2017.

The public is invited to attend the lottery's AGM on February 20 at 6pm in An Lanntair to hear more on the lottery's operation and success.

Since the launch, £71,530 has been raised for a variety of innovative improvements, with all monies raised up to end December 2018 already distributed. In addition, £28,887 in total weekly prize winnings has been shared out to more than 200 happy supporters.

Over 2,000 weekly tickets are now sold and is steadily growing. With this current level of support, the Western Isles are on target to benefit from more than £85,000 during the coming 12 months.

Stornoway town centre has benefited and the Library Lego Club was formed and the hugely successful Disney Day in September 2018 helped a variety of businesses in the town.

The lottery team is now in a position to extend funding for upgrades outwith the town centre during the coming year.

Eoropie playpark, Carlway Community Centre, Westside Agricultural Show and



Representatives from the Western Isles Lifestyle Lottery.

Balantrushal Community Association have benefited from funding in the Ness/Westside area to date. Uig Community Centre, North Lochs Community Centre and the new Keose playpark received money raised by supporters in the Uig/Breascleite/Lochs area.

Harris Voluntary Action replaced its festive decorations in Tarbert and has installed hearing loop systems in local community centres.

Balivanich playpark, Sgoil Lionacleit Pipe Band, Volunteering Uist and Ciumhne Sensory Garden Project all received funding and a new soft play centre is to open at Claddach Kirkibost. Barra enjoyed new festive lighting, Christmas trees and the Herring Trail has been replaced. A community PA system was purchased and, recently, Northbay swing park received funding. A wall is now to

be erected around the Annie Jane memorial shortly.

Malcolm and Janet Paterson, founders of the lottery, said: 'Without the dedication of Tony Robson, Emma Fraser and Shona MacLeod, the lottery could not have been managed. And, crucially, without the support of locals buying tickets, it would never have got off the ground.'

OUTER HEBRIDES

Up to eight athletes from the Outer Hebrides could benefit from £1,500 each to help with travel costs to and from the islands.

The scheme aims to help athletes in the Outer Hebrides, Orkney and Shetland to gain better access to competitive and developmental opportunities on the mainland.

The deadline for applications is 5pm on Friday February 15.

To find out more about the scheme

contact Kevin Morrison (Uist and Barra), telephone 01870 603599; email kevin.morrison@cne-siar.gov.uk or Euan Macleod (Lewis and Harris), telephone 01851 822800; email euan-macleod@cne-siar.gov.uk.

MULL AND IONA

The Mull and Iona Association will be hosting its annual gathering on Saturday February 16.

A concert will take place at

Glasgow University Union from 7pm, followed by a dance at 10.30pm.

The concert will feature Arthur Cormack, Mull and Iona Pipers, Mary Catherine MacLean and more. Beinn Lee will headline the dance.

To find out more, visit [Facebook.com/MullandIona](https://www.facebook.com/MullandIona)

LUING

Luing Community Council will meet on Tuesday February 19 in Cullipool Hall from 7.45pm.

IONA

Iona Abbey is to undergo a £60,000 upgrade. A new heating system is to be installed in the Abbey Church to help protect against increasing levels of water penetration.

The Abbey Church will be closed during the work, due to be completed by the end of March. The usual entry fee to the site will be waived for visitors who can still enjoy seeing round the Michael Chapel, the shrine, the cloisters and St Oran's Chapel.



THE NORTH ARGYLL EVENTIDE HOME was opened by the people of Oban, in 1955, to provide a caring environment for the elderly of the area.

North Argyll Home is run by a local, independent, not-for-profit, charity and we rely on the generosity of local people, trusts, grant-making bodies and legacies to help ensure that we are able to continue our vital work.

If you would like to help or for more information please contact:

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At random

MARTIN LAING

mlaing@obantimes.co.uk



ARDCHATTAN

The next Ardchattan Community Council meeting will take place on Thursday February 28 in North Connel Hall from 7.30pm.

OBAN

Oban hairdresser Nathalie Porter, has recently become an approved Matrix Cutting Master.

Natalie, of Trinity hairdressing, in the town's High Street, successfully passed the course after an intensive three days.

The popular cutting course was taught by industry acclaimed artist and educators Paul Falltrick and Ross Taylor.

The duo were impressed by Nathalie throughout the course.

She said: 'I really enjoyed my time on this intense course. I was able to really focus all my attention on cutting, something that we don't often do in isolation. I have picked up so many good techniques, tips and practices. I would highly recommend this course to others.'

Natalie has now brought these new skills back to the salon where the team and Natalie's clients benefit from her cutting talents.



Natalie pictured with Ross and Paul following her successful completion of the course.



Youngsters in Zimbabwe are receiving Mary's Meals at school for the first time.

Mary's Meals served up to almost 1.5 million children

A Dalmally-based charity is serving meals to 1,425,013 children every school day.

Mary's Meals serves food to children in 18 countries - including Zimbabwe for the first time.

Thanks to the generosity of supporters from the UK and around the world, the number of children receiving Mary's Meals at school has risen by almost 14 per cent since January 2018.

The charity has welcomed 197,363 more children and 414 new schools, nurseries and education centres to its school feeding programme.

Charity founder Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow said: 'Every child welcomed into our Mary's Meals family gives cause for celebration and I am delighted we are now reaching children in Zimbabwe.'

'It is incredible to think that more than 1.4 million children in 18 countries now enjoy these meals, served with love, each day at school.'

'I am so grateful to everyone who makes this wonderful work possible through generous gifts of money, skills, time and prayer. Your kindness is helping children in some of the world's poorest communities to gain

a precious education, which opens the door to the possibility of a brighter future.'

The charity was formed in 2002 when Mr MacFarlane-Barrow visited Malawi during a famine and met a mother dying from AIDS. When Magnus asked her eldest son Edward what his dreams were in life, he replied simply: 'I want to have enough food to eat and to go to school one day.'

GET INVOLVED
email us at editor@obantimes.co.uk

Time to clean up

I was delighted to read our report last week that Oban Community Council is calling for an urgent summit to discuss the increasing problem of litter in and around Oban.

It is a subject I have been banging on about for a considerable time in this space, most recently in our issue of January 17 when I lamented the state of the town centre.

Now at last, it seems, someone has paid attention and is agreeing with me that, first, there is a problem and, secondly, it must be addressed.

According to our report: 'A summit of community councillors, education chiefs and town groups to discuss the escalating problem of litter in and around Oban should be held at the earliest opportunity.'

'That was the unanimous view of everyone in attendance at Oban Community Council's monthly meeting last week when the shocking state of the town's paths and beauty spots was highlighted.'

The summit would be a starting point but simply talking about what is in plain sight will achieve very little.

Argyll and Bute Council needs to assign workers to tackle the problem as a matter of urgency.

The current situation is just not good enough.

Parking plan welcome

Also from this recent Oban Community Council meeting came the proposal to use land at Oban Airport as a long-stay car park.

The idea was suggested by Councillor Roddy McCuish and, at first glance, has much merit to it. Any ideas which will help to alleviate the shambles that is the current system and relieve some of the congestion in Oban are to be applauded and I commend Mr McCuish for coming up with this plan.

He also, however, talked about possible ways to improve parking in the town centre, including the introduction of weekly and monthly tickets and making available payments by direct debit.

With luck, these could be in place by Easter. Heaven knows we cannot go through another packed tourist season with the current mess in place.

What do you think?

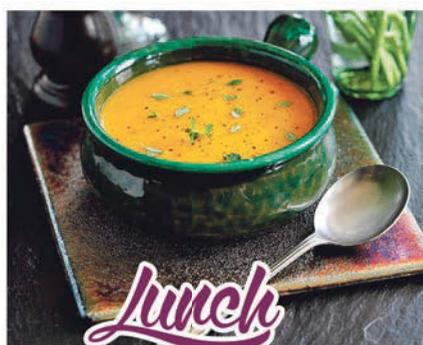
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A typical SYN FREE day - At last, an eating plan that fits into your life



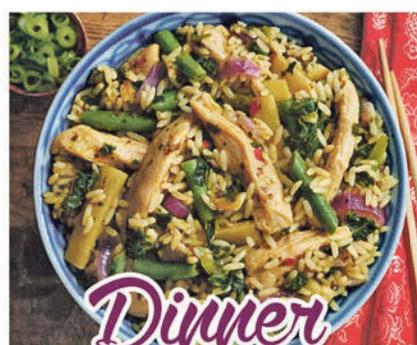
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OUTDOORS

RSPB Scotland welcomes changes to lottery fund

Changes to the Heritage Lottery Fund, newly named the National Lottery Heritage Fund to include a major focus on nature, have been welcomed by RSPB Scotland.

With one in 11 species threatened with extinction in Scotland and future funding support for biodiversity and nature conservation fast diminishing or changing, the needs of nature have never been greater.

The National Lottery has, since its inception, been an enormously important funder for biodiversity, and the announcement indicates that the National Lottery Heritage Fund will continue to play a vital role in backing the sector – providing much-needed leadership in the current climate.

Anne McCall, director of RSPB Scotland, said: 'To learn that nature conservation is a top priority for so many lottery players is enormously reassuring, and signals the huge value people and communities put on our natural heritage and vital conservation work to maintain it – ensuring it continues to play a central role in our health and wellbeing.'

'We are also delighted that decisions concerning how 80 per cent of National Lottery funding will be distributed will in future be taken locally. The NLHF Scottish board, staff and advisers will more fully understand the particular challenges that Scottish heritage faces and they should be in tune with country plans and priorities.'

The overhaul also includes plans to 'go beyond grants', to include loans and partnerships, and RSPB Scotland believes this will make lottery money work harder for heritage, and create opportunities for some lottery money to be 'recycled' and reinvested into good causes. Changes will also simplify the application process.

New forestry strategy has long-term vision

Rural Economy Secretary Fergus Ewing has launched a new strategy that will help to secure the long-term success and sustainability of Scotland's forestry.

Scotland's Forestry Strategy sets out the government's approach over the next 10 years to expand, protect and enhance Scotland's forests and woodlands.

The strategy seeks to deliver greater economic, social and environmental benefits for current and future generations.

Mr Ewing said: 'We can be rightly proud in Scotland of our track record on planting and maintaining trees and forests. Already, Scotland is responsible for nearly 80 per cent of new trees planted in the UK and forestry is a £1 billion industry supporting 25,000 jobs all across Scotland.'

'Our woodlands soak up 12 million tonnes of CO2 each year and, at the same time, thousands of visitors enjoy health and social benefits from these fantastic natural assets, with more than 200 community groups now involved in working with local woodlands.'

'I am determined that we build on this success. Tree planting and woodland creation and maintenance must become a shared national endeavour. The strategy sets out key objectives for the next 10 years and will serve as a framework for everyone who wants to develop Scotland's modern, dynamic forestry sector.'

'The strategy is being launched as we mark 100 years of public forestry in Scotland, celebrate the benefits achieved for habitats, wildlife, communities, people and businesses during that time.'

'It also signals the future, with devolution of forestry functions being completed and two new agencies being established. We have significant aspirations for forestry in Scotland and this strategy will help to deliver those.'

Developed in consultation with a range of organisations, it has three 10-year objectives for Scotland's forests and woodlands:

- to increase their contribution of forests



Rural Economy Secretary Fergus Ewing launched the forestry strategy. Photograph: Alan Peebles

and woodlands to Scotland's sustainable and inclusive economic growth;

- to improve their resilience and contribution to a healthy and high quality environment;

- to increase their use to enable more people to improve their health, wellbeing and life chances.

An implementation, monitoring and reporting framework will be developed to co-ordinate delivery and measure progress in implementing the new strategy. A national stakeholder group will also be established to advise on and support the delivery of the strategy.

The strategy is a key element of the new, fully devolved arrangements for forestry in Scotland underpinned by the 2018 Forestry and Land Management (Scotland) Act, the first forestry Act passed by the Scottish Parliament.

Woodland Trust Scotland director Carol Evans said: 'Woods and trees are at the heart

of what makes Scotland's landscape and environment truly special.'

'This new strategy should help all of us better manage and maintain our existing woodland.'

'It should also ensure that we are planting enough native trees in the right places to look after the wildlife that depends on them, and to meet our national biodiversity targets.'

'We are grateful to Forestry Commission Scotland for acting on what they heard during their consultation on the strategy.'

The new implementation framework should make it clear exactly how to make the strategy's vision a reality, and the new national stakeholder group will definitely provide invaluable support for everyone working to deliver the strategy's outcomes.

'Throughout the process we were struck that this was a genuine, open and honest consultation and the Scottish Government listened and engaged with the feedback they received.'



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This week's walks



Environment Secretary Roseanna Cunningham and head of SNH Kath Leys join reserve volunteers and staff in planting native broadleaf trees to attract red squirrels at Mary's Knowe. Photograph: Duncan McGlynn

Minister launches new fund for nature projects

A new fund of up to £2 million to protect and enhance Scotland's nature has been launched.

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) has issued a call for ambitious ideas to improve habitats, safeguard species and encourage increased access to nature.

Up to £2 million will be available through the two-year Biodiversity Challenge Fund, which was announced in the Scottish Government's programme for government last year.

The first year of the fund is now open, with up to £1 million of investment available in 2019/20.

The funding will support large-scale projects that aim to deliver rapid change on the ground to increase the health and resilience of our natural environment.

SNH is particularly seeking innovative ideas that will help our most at-risk habitats and species, including mammals and birds,

connect existing nature reserves and protected areas and tackle invasive species.

Environment Secretary Roseanna Cunningham launched the fund at SNH's Loch Leven National Nature Reserve, where she joined volunteers planting native broadleaf trees to attract red squirrels.

Ms Cunningham said: 'Scotland is leading the way with work to protect our natural environment and we are committed to doing more to safeguard our biodiversity, species and habitats.'

'I'm delighted to launch this new fund of up to £2 million, which should enable the creation and improvement of habitats across the country, providing vital support to some of our most vulnerable wildlife, as well as encouraging people to access and enjoy Scotland's incredible natural resources.'

SNH chief executive Francesca Osowska said: 'Our nature - from

the green spaces in our towns and cities to our remote and wild mountains, islands, coasts and seas - is a precious national asset and a big part of what makes Scotland so special.'

'Scotland has been recognised as a global front-runner for our efforts to tackle biodiversity loss and safeguard our natural heritage, with notable improvements to our marine environment, peatlands, rivers and woodlands in recent years.'

'I'm proud of the progress that has been made, but we are not complacent in the face of ongoing challenges such as climate change, habitat loss and invasive non-native species.'

'This significant new investment will step up action by supporting ambitious projects to deliver concrete results and help protect our country's incredible natural resources for future generations.'

LOCHABER AND LORN RAMBLERS

The walk leader is to be contacted beforehand for meet-up and start times. Car sharing usually possible and people can try before they buy. Further information at www.lochaberandlorn-ramblers.org.uk. Lochaber and Lorn Ramblers Group can be contacted by email on info@lochaberandlorn-ramblers.org.uk

Saturday February 16:

Spean Bridge Two Corbetts. Although much of the distance covered is on track or paths, this walk is at the top end of its grade. Parking is available at NN253806. However, it is possible to drive S from Corriechoille for 2km on a rough track to park at NN255788. The walk continues along the track for about 4.5km to the watershed in the Lairig Leacach. Descend slightly on the track for a further 600m before leaving it and heading SE across rough ground and fording the burn. Continue SE on a rising traverse aiming for the foot of the SW ridge of Sgurr Innse, just N of the Bealach an Sgurr.

Climb the ridge, crossing a stone-field, until the way is barred by a rocky buttress at NN289746. Avoid this on the right by heading NE along a terrace until the crags give way to easier ground affording access up to the summit of Sgurr Innse, 809m. From the summit, descend NW.

A path may be found leading down to the col at 593mLR. Continue NW on a path that leads up the S ridge of Cruach Innse to its summit, 857m. Descend NW down the grassy slope, curving W to re-join the outward route on the track in the Lairig Leacach. Grade: M+; Distance: 13km; Height to climb: 903m; Map(s): LR41, EX392 Meet at: Fort William WM NN112742 at 0850. Start of walk at 0930. Co-ordinator: Ian Moir 07973 836498

Thursday February 21: Glen Etive Two Munros.

Start at the Coileitir Farm track, NN136468, where limited parking is available. Head E on the track, cross the River Etive and follow it SW, past Coileitir and cross the Allt nam Meirleach on the footbridge. Continue on the path as far as the foot of the NNE ridge of Ben Starav

and climb directly to its summit, 1078m. From the summit take the ridge E over Stob Coire Dheirg and descend to the col at 766mLR.

Descend SE across the slope, past a group of lochans on a spur, to reach the col at the foot of the N ridge of Beinn nan Aighenan. Climb the ridge to its summit at 957m.

Return to the foot of the N ridge and climb back up to the 766mLR col. Head down N on the path along the W side of the Allt nam Meirleach to rejoin the outward route at the foot of the NNE ridge of Ben Starav and return to the start. Grade: S; Distance: 18km; Height to climb: 1581m; Map(s): LR50, EX384/377. Meet at Longsdale CP Oban, NM862307 at 0715; Glencoe Village CP NN098587 at 0810. Start of walk at 0900. Leader: Rick Atkinson 07587 549731.

NEVIS HILLWALKING CLUB

Full walk details at www.nevis-hillwalking.club. If anyone would like to go out on the walk please contact club secretary Suzanne Theobald on 01397 701783 or email enquiries@nevis-hillwalking.club.

Sunday February 17: Stob Dearg (1021m, Munro) - Red Peak Stob na Broige (965m, Munro). Maps LR41 and EX384 Glen Coe Buachaille Etive Mor. The route below may be varied in response to weather and snow conditions.

Start from the lay-by at Altnafeadh, NN220563. Head S over the river, past Lagangarbh and take the path towards Coire na Tulaich.

Once across the stream, head up to the steep grassy slope to the W of the coire and follow the broad ridge up to a summit at 902m.

Head E and climb the final slopes of Stob Dearg to its summit at 1022m. Retrace steps to the head of Coire na Tulaich, then turn SW and follow the crest of the ridge over Stob na Doire 1011m and Stob Coire Altruim 941m to reach Stob na Bròige.

Return to Stob Coire Altruim and descend its SE ridge. At NN2007852947, just before the col, turn N and descend into Coire Altruimex on a well-built path to reach the Lairig Gartain. Follow the path NE to the A82 and return to Altnafeadh.

Route: 15km, 1,160m ascent. Suggested and coordinated by Gerry Gilbert.

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The Fort William Mountain Festival has got it all going on!



The Fort William Mountain Festival is a celebration of all things adventurous and outdoors, and what better place to hold the festival than in the Outdoor Capital of the UK itself. By bringing together athletes, speakers, films, photographers and outdoor enthusiasts from a whole variety of backgrounds, the festival aims to encourage others to get out and explore the wilderness around them. Here's just a few more of the highlights

**20th - 24th February
The Highland Bookshop**

Mountain Festival Special Literary Fringe Events - not to be missed!

Once again, The Highland Bookshop will be hosting literary fringe events on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, giving you plenty of time to nip to the Nevis Centre afterwards for all the evening action.

The Climbing Taxman Mick Fowler will kick off proceedings on Saturday at 2pm with *No Easy Way*, his new autobiographical book.

Renowned photographer Nadir Khan will follow

up at 4pm with *Extreme Scotland*, a stunning collection of photographs featuring outstanding athletes working in Scotland's best outdoor locations.

Sunday afternoon will be a celebration of women in the outdoors with Edinburgh-based Australian author Sandy Bennett appearing at 2pm in conversation with fellow author Anne Hamilton.

Sandy will entertain us with tales of her life, travels and contribution to *Waymaking*. An Anthology of Women's

Adventure Writing, Poetry and Art.

And, finally, at 4pm, Fort William's Adele Pennington, a two-time Everest summiteer, will present *Dilemmas, Decisions and Days Out* showcasing her incredible climb of Dhaulagiri (8167m) in 2017.

The Highland Bookshop will be operating a pop-up shop in the exhibition space in the Nevis Centre on Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 6pm stocking a wide selection of outdoor books, guides and vintage climbing magazines.

MOUNTAIN FESTIVAL WHISKY TREASURE HUNT

The festival has created a treasure hunt sponsored by the Ben Nevis Distillery and especially for climbers and mountaineers.

We know the Ben Nevis Distillery is nestled at the foot of Ben Nevis - Britain's highest mountain - making the original source of the dew of Ben Nevis hidden amid the impressive slopes above.

Three Ben Nevis Whisky vouchers have been carefully hidden at these secret locations on the slopes of Ben Nevis. Climbers and mountaineers are invited to search for a voucher and bring it along with them to the mountain festival on Saturday evening,

where they can exchange it for a bottle of whisky wonderfully donated by Ben Nevis Distillery.

Three cryptic clues have been provided to give climbers and mountaineers a head start on their climb ... 'Looked after by a Roman Soldier' ... 'Find it before it disappears' and 'Look out for one in the right place'.

Successful searchers are encouraged to share their find on the Festival Facebook page treasure hunt post!

Good luck!

For more information about the Fort William Mountain Festival, visit www.mountainfestival.co.uk

Come and 'tap' to support the Nevis Partnership at the Fort William Mountain Festival!

The Nevis Partnership is supporting the Fort William Mountain Festival, this time with the addition of state-of-the-art contactless technology from fintech start up goodbox

Once again in 2019, The Nevis Partnership will be supporting the Fort William Mountain Festival through the Celebrating the Wild Project as part of the Nevis Landscape Partnership Programme. The NLP programme has been a major sponsor of the Festival since 2015 and has also been a large contributor to the film programme through the Ben Nevis Film Project.

Ben and Glen Nevis are at the centre of mountain culture in Fort William so taking care of them is of great importance. Over 160,000 people walked up Ben Nevis along the mountain path in 2018 and we estimate that 300,000 visit the Glen each year! These figures don't even include those who take other routes up the Ben, like via the Allt a' Mhuilinn or Càrn Mòr Dearg. Maintaining the paths and visitor facilities, conserving habitats and ecosystems for wildlife, and planting trees to regenerate native woodland in Glen Nevis are all important

activities carried out by The Nevis Partnership - without any statutory funding. In order for the team to continue this vital work, they need as much support as possible from everyone who enjoys access to this incredible landscape. It's an exciting time for The Nevis Partnership as the team raise funds to continue their work to conserve and enhance Glen and Ben Nevis for everyone to enjoy.

We are excited to announce that at this year's Fort William Mountain Festival, we have partnered with charity technology specialists GoodBox to collect donations through contactless technology. As fewer and fewer people carry cash, this new technology is increasingly important to charities like The Nevis Partnership to whom donations are critical.

So, where can I 'tap' to show my support? Come and see The Nevis Partnership on the

High Street during Festival launch event on Wednesday 20 February - look out for the minibus supporting a slackline! Or visit The Nevis Partnership at the exhibition zone in the Nevis Centre from the Thursday until Sunday evening where you can 'tap', sponsor a tree, pick up a t-shirt or 2019 calendar, and get a copy of our latest book on the North Face Survey project. Following the festival, the GoodBox device will be in the Ben Nevis Visitor Centre until 8 March.

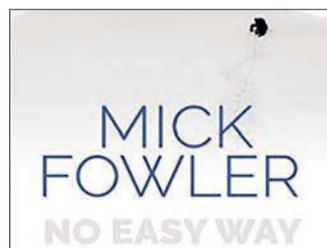
If you miss The Nevis Partnership at the Mountain Festival, there are many other ways to support us by visiting our website, www.nevispartnership.co.uk. If you love the mountains, why not give something back!



**Fort William Mountain Festival
Book Events at The Highland Bookshop**



Saturday the 23rd February 2019



2pm Mick Fowler
- *No Easy Way*



4pm Nadir Khan
- *Extreme Scotland*

Sunday the 24th February 2019



2pm Sandy Bennett
- *Waymaking*



4pm Adele Pennington
- *Dilemmas, Decisions & Days Out*

All events will take place in our upstairs Big Outdoors Lounge
Tickets are £7 per person per event
and are available via Eventbrite or the bookshop.
Further details at www.highlandbookshop.com

LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT

YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S ON IN ARGYLL AND LOCHABER

Oban's wizards and witches had a magic time for Harry Potter Night 2019

Waterstones hosted a spell-binding event last Thursday for Harry Potter Book Night 2019.

Staff at the Oban book shop, in partnership with Oban Library, were working like

house-elves to equip the store with games and decorations.

Wizards and witches donned their best robes and entered Waterstones via Platform 9 3/4.

Once inside, they were able to play quidditch, pin the nose on Voldemort, find what house they belong to, create potions, have their fortunes told, and mould their very own

mandrakes. There was even a rack of invisibility cloaks that non-muggles could test out.

Ewan Soutar of Waterstones in Oban said: 'It is fantastic and it is a great turnout.'

'More and more kids seem to come every year.'

'The popularity of Harry Potter never seems to wane and everyone seems to be having a good time.'

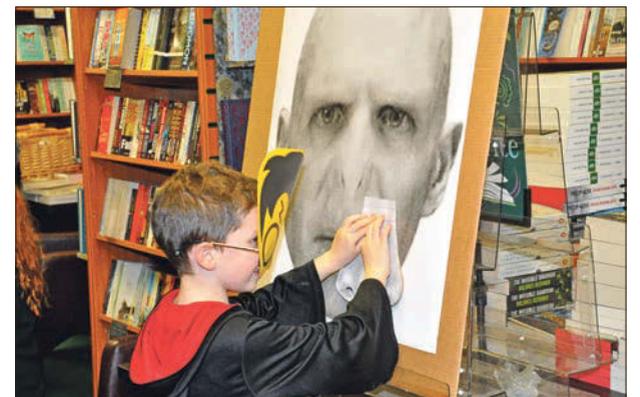
Harry Potter Book Night 'is all about passing on the magic of J K Rowling's amazing books to the next generation of readers.'



Ewan 'Hairy Potter' Soutar and Glynis Sloss. 17_T07_HarryPotterNight01



Hollie Cameron is told by the Sorting Hat that she belongs to Hufflepuff. 17_T07_HarryPotterNight02



Alasdair Bullock, seven, tries to pin the nose on Voldemort. 17_T07_HarryPotterNight03



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STODDARTS OF OBAN

Isle of Mull artist features in major exhibition in Poland

A major new art exhibition opening at the National Museum of Poland in March will show just how vital Europe has been to the British painting tradition.

Titled *Made in Britain*, the exhibition consists of 82 paintings by artists from all

over the UK and will include works by the likes of Tracey Emin, David Hockney, Alan Davie and Isle of Mull artist Pippa Gatty.

Pippa said: 'I have never been to Poland and it is exciting that my painting will. It is good also to show in Europe

as a European one last time before (in my opinion) the disaster of Brexit.'

This new show draws works from the Priseman Seabrook Collection of 21st-century British painting, which was set up in 2014 by Robert Priseman, who wanted to do

something to promote the art of painting.

Robert said: 'In 2014, I came to realise that many contemporary painters like Pippa who are working in Britain today had yet to be collected with the same geographical and chronological focus of their predecessors and foreign contemporaries.

'So, along with my wife Ally Seabrook, I began the process of bringing together a body of work by artists like her which followed the simple criteria of being painting produced after the year 2000 within the British Isles.'

So far, the couple have acquired more than 120 paintings from over 100 artists, which has now become the first collection of art dedicated to 21st century British painting in the UK.

Robert added: 'I really love Pippa's paintings and especially admire the way they appear to hover between

abstraction and realism. I first saw her work in 2016 at a solo show she had with the Herrick Gallery in London, and it is a real honour to be able to show her work in Poland alongside many other important artists.'

Made in Britain: 82 Painters of the 21st Century runs from March 14 to June 2 at The Green Gate, Długi Targ 24, The National Museum, Gdańsk, Poland. The gallery is open between 10am and 4pm from Tue

Awards for Western Isles Gaelic writers

Two writers hailing from the Western Isles have been announced as winners in the Gaelic New Writers Awards 2019.

The Gaelic Books Council and Scottish Book Trust awarded the prizes to June Graham, a part-time tutor at Lews Castle College in Stornoway, and Liam Alastair Crouse, a Gaelic communications officer based in South Uist.

They follow in the footsteps of Gaelic authors such as

Calum L MacLeod, Morag Ann MacNeil and Marion F Morrison, all of whom have gone on to see their work in print after participating in the awards programme.

Over the course of this year, June and Liam will have the opportunity to engage in a programme that can include mentoring, manuscript appraisal, professional development workshops, and a retreat at the Moniak Mhor Creative Writing Centre near Inverness.

They will also link up with other writers at a similar stage in their careers, and perform their work at a showcase event in Edinburgh at the end of the programme.

Further information about the Gaelic New Writers Awards, and samples of the 2019 awardees' work can be found on the Gaelic Books Council's website www.gaelicbooks.org and on Scottish Book Trust's website www.scottishbooktrust.com.



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Spotlight on Tevye as Imperial Russia comes to Oban

A little corner of Imperial Russia will appear in Oban next week when local company Spotlight Musical Theatre Group brings the much-loved show *Fiddler on the Roof* to the Corran Halls from Wednesday February 20 to Saturday February 23.

The story centre's on Tevye, the dairyman, a firm believer in traditional Jewish values and community, and his long-suffering wife Golde and five daughters.

His older headstrong daughters decide they want to marry for love rather than concede to whoever Yente the Matchmaker presents.

This family tension is mirrored by a nation on the brink of revolution with anti-Semitism growing under the tsar.

Director Stephen Day explains why he wanted to direct this show and what goes into putting it all together.

'There is such an important

story to tell wrapped up with the wonderful music and movement,' he said.

'To actually be at this point, so close to opening night, I do sometimes have to pinch myself to remind me that it's happening.

'So much hard work has gone into this production from so many people (I would estimate at least 60-plus individuals – maybe more) also involving business and organisations around the town – it really is a community effort.

'Nobody gets paid for doing the show, it is all done for the love of theatre and (hopefully) the approval of the audience.

'And with the hard work there is the enjoyment that comes with the process.

The laughter as we make mistakes, the joy and fun as we run ourselves ragged on movement and song – but then the realism and emotion

of the show which suddenly hits us as we work through some of the more poignant moments in the story.

'We hope that our audience will join us on this journey and understand why, although set in 1905, it is still very relevant in today's society.'

The show opened on Broadway in 1964 but most people know it from the 1971 film which featured Topol as Tevye.

Taking on this iconic role in this production is Ian Henry, who told us: 'This is a long-held ambition after playing Mendel 35 years ago in the Kings in Glasgow.

'It's frightening and exhilarating in equal measures to take on a part like this.

'Everyone has their own picture of how this character should be, as the musical is so well known. It can be an emotional roller-coaster for everyone, cast and audience

alike. I just hope the audience enjoy watching the show as much as we enjoy performing it.

'And I can't wait to get my hair cut and beard trimmed.'

Tickets are available from the Corran Halls box office

on 01631 567333 priced from £6 to £12.50 with family tickets available from £31-£36.



From left to right back row – Ellie Cooper as Tzeitel, Moira Beaton as Chava, Fran Melville as Golde, Katie Baker as Hodel. Front row from left – Jessica McCann as Bielke, Ian Henry as Tevye and Megan Day as Shprintze. Photograph: Stephen Day.

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BREAKING NEWS

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7.30pm, Corran Halls
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This amateur production is presented by arrangement with Music Theatre International (Europe)

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DIARDAOIN 14 AN GEARRAN THURSDAY 14 FEBRUARY

17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
19.00 O Mo Dhùthaich (rpt)
19.25 Binneas – Na Trads (Phil & Aly) (rpt)
19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt)
19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)
20.00 An Là – News
20.30 **UR | NEW:** Eòrpa
21.00 **UR | NEW:** FilmG 2019
22.20 Ceathrar air Chuairt (rpt)
22.50 Dhan Uisge (Loch Morlich) (rpt)
23.00 An Lot S3 (rpt)
23.30 Mach a Seo (rpt)

DIHAOINE 15 AN GEARRAN FRIDAY 15 FEBRUARY

17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
18.35 Machair (rpt)
19.00 An Là – News
19.25 Binneas – Na Trads (rpt)
19.35 **UR | NEW:** SPFL Challenge Cup
21.50 FilmG 2019 (rpt)
23.05 Corp agus Anam (rpt)

DISATHAIRNE 16 AN GEARRAN SATURDAY 16 FEBRUARY

16.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
17.45 An Là – News
18.00 **UR | NEW:** Scottish Premiership – Livingston v Dundee
20.00 Machair (rpt)
20.25 Fraochy Bay (rpt)
20.30 Vets: Gach Creutair Bèo (rpt)
21.00 **UR | NEW:** ALT
22.00 **UR | NEW:** Bèo air Bòrd Stèisean-Fànais

22.50 Dhan Uisge (Loch Morlich) (rpt)
23.00 Scottish Premiership – Livingston v Dundee (rpt)

DI DÒMHNAICH 17 AN GEARRAN SUNDAY 17 FEBRUARY

16.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
18.15 An Là – News
18.30 Seachd Là – News Review
19.30 Alleluia (rpt)
20.00 Eòrpa (rpt)
20.30 Leugh Mi (rpt)
21.00 Gladys (rpt)
22.00 ALT (rpt)
23.00 Corp is Anam (rpt)
23.50 Dhan Uisge (Loch Morlich) (rpt)

DILUAIN 18 AN GEARRAN MONDAY 18 FEBRUARY

17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
19.00 Puirt-adhair (rpt)
19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt)
19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)
20.00 An Là – News
20.30 **UR | NEW:** An Lot S3
21.00 Trusadh – Gin: Spiorad an t-Sineabhair (rpt)
22.00 Iùl a' Chiùil – An Ceòl (rpt)
22.30 Farpaisean Chon-Chaorach (rpt)
23.30 Ceathrar air Chuairt (rpt)

DIMÀIRT 19 AN GEARRAN TUESDAY 19 FEBRUARY

17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
19.00 O Mo Dhùthaich (rpt)
19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt)
19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)

20.00 An Là – News
20.30 Vets: Gach Creutair Bèo (rpt)
21.00 **UR | NEW:** DIY le Donnie S5
21.45 Sgeul Slàinte (rpt)
22.00 Trusadh – Gin: Spiorad an t-Sineabhair (rpt)
23.00 Ceolraidh (rpt)
23.30 Alleluia (rpt)

DICIADAIN 20 AN GEARRAN WEDNESDAY 20 FEBRUARY

17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
19.00 Puirt-adhair (rpt)
19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt)
19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)
20.00 An Là – News
20.30 **UR | NEW:** Leugh Mi
21.00 Talamh Torrach (rpt)
22.00 **UR | NEW:** Mach a Seo
22.30 Iùl a' Chiùil – An Ceòl (rpt)
23.00 The Northern Lights (rpt)
23.55 Fraochy Bay (rpt)

DIARDAOIN 21 AN GEARRAN THURSDAY 21 FEBRUARY

17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
19.00 O Mo Dhùthaich (rpt)
19.25 Binneas – Na Trads (Malinky) (rpt)
19.30 Speaking our Language (rpt)
19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)
20.00 An Là – News
20.30 **UR | NEW:** Eòrpa
21.00 Sgiobair nan Taighean-solais (rpt)
22.00 Ceathrar air Chuairt (rpt)
22.30 **UR | NEW:** Side nan Seachd Sian
23.20 Dhan Uisge (Loch Mhìsteam) (rpt)
23.30 Mach a Seo (rpt)



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Co-bhanntachd eadar MG ALBA agus am BBC | A partnership between BBC and MG ALBA

The Corran Halls was packed for the annual OHS dance show

More than 200 pupils and staff performed in front of a packed audience for the annual Oban High School Dance Show in the Corran Halls.

The show, now in its 12th year, was opened by the Oban High School Pipe Band and a large group of Highland dancers.

This was followed by a 'fantastic' mix of routines with music from TV and film, both old and new.

Parents, family and friends had the opportunity to catch the show on

three different occasions, as performances took place last Wednesday night, Thursday afternoon and Thursday night – all to a large crowd.

A lot of work goes into producing an event of this scale.

Twenty-two senior dance leaders have been working since June, choreographing routines for younger year groups, which forms the backbone of the show.

The Oban High School gymnastics squad created a routine of exceptional difficulty which must have

had the audience holding their breath as pupils were thrown in the air or perched on shoulders.

Another performance that would have captivated the crowd was when teachers and staff from Oban High School dressed up as the cast from The Greatest Showman and danced to a popular scene.

Four dances from the show came from the Oban High School of Dance programme where pupils from across the school can take part in one double and one afternoon



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What's on at The Nevis Centre



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Superbowl

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The Nevis Centre

An Aird, Fort William

Tel: 01397 700707 www.neviscentre.co.uk



session a week. These classes have been hailed a success, with many pupils attending classes they may not otherwise have had access to.

Helen Sloan worked with two sixth year soloists Molly MacPherson and Ilona Vermot as well as a group

dance from Mamma Mia.

Helen, a former professional dancer, said: 'The girls rehearse for six months before the finished product.

'They work with tenacity, endurance, a strong desire to please and a true team spirit.'

Amanda Sloss and the Ballet West outreach group performed three dances each with atmosphere and feeling.

Oban High School thanked parents and the wider community for their massive support.

Boost for Hebridean artists in £60,000 grant for An Lanntair

An Lanntair's Artists' Support Programme has received a great boost this month with the appointment of a new artist support coordinator, Sandra Kennedy.

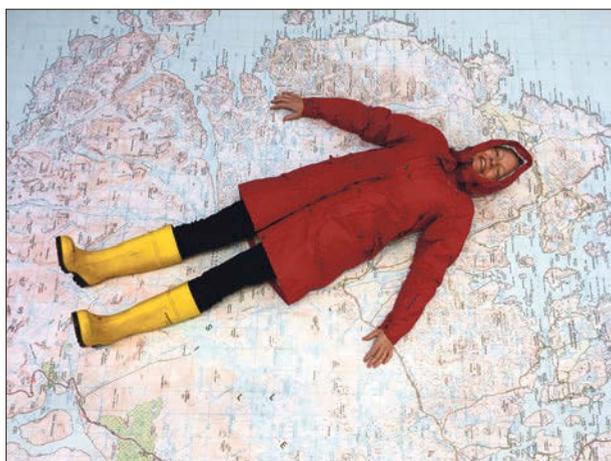
The Artist Support Programme at An Lanntair, at Stornoway on Lewis, which is funded by a £60,000 grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation over the next three years, has been a great benefit to the creative community of the islands.

Many local artists have developed their practice and progressed their professional development and creative enterprise by taking part in mentoring or workshops delivered by the programme to date.

Sandra is an experienced artist and facilitator with a strong bond to the island and its Gaelic culture and language. Her formal education was at Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen, and Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design, London.

Sandra has worked across a wide range of disciplines, including sculpture, painting, printmaking, film and theatre. Central to her practice is her desire to share skills and ideas and to encourage other artists to develop their work.

Sandra will be launching the new Artists' Support Programme on Friday February 15 with informal drop-in sessions in An Lanntair's Project Space



Sandra Kennedy is the new artist support coordinator at An Lanntair.

from 1pm-5pm followed by a talk and reception in the Café Bar round room at 6.30pm.

At 8pm in An Lanntair's auditorium, local musicians who have previously been mentored through the scheme will perform as part of Whatever Gets You Through The Night, an programme of films by Daniel Warren, and live performances by Emma Pollock, Rachel Sermanni, the Sea Atlas, and Ceitlin L R Smith, all focused on the hours between midnight and 4am, as part of An Lanntair's Hebridean Dark Skies Festival. <http://lanntair.com/events/event/whatever-gets-night/>

Sandra said: 'In my own experience, I am most productive and my work is more

exciting when I have the confidence to take risks. That courage comes from working alongside others, having discussions about art and the reassurance that I am part of a bigger scene.

'When I feel isolated, my work shrinks in ambition and scope. The artist support scheme will be important as it'll provide a fruitful social environment and practical support, with the focus on meeting individual needs through mentoring.'

This is a very exciting new chapter in An Lanntair's Artists' Support Programme for Hebridean artists, which will continue to benefit creative practitioners and help them to progress, network and grow.

The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation aims to improve

WHAT'S ON IN OBAN



In partnership with Oban Town Diary BID4oban.co.uk

THURSDAY 14TH FEBRUARY

Slimming World
Salvation Army Hall, Fort William
3.00pm, 5.00pm & 7.00pm
Tel; Gillian 07796 040803

Oban Health Walk
Oban Congregational Church Hall
10am - 11.30am

Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Dans
FREE JUKEBOX EVERY THURSDAY

FRIDAY 15TH FEBRUARY

Oban Dance Academy - Cheerleading
Glencruitten Church Hall
All Day

Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Dans
Danny Mooney. Open till 2am

Live Music & Entertainment @ The Lorne Bar Oban

From 9pm. Free Entry
Wine Tasting Event - Oban Pipe Band
Masonic Lodge, Albany Street
7.30pm

SATURDAY 16TH FEBRUARY

parkrun
Ganavan Sands, Oban. 9.30am

Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Dans
Sandra MacBeth & Lorna Thomas
Open till 2am

Taynuilt Winter Ceilidh
Taynuilt Village Hall. 7.30pm

Live Music & Entertainment @ The Lorne Bar Oban
From 9pm. Free Entry

SUNDAY 17TH FEBRUARY

Live Music & Entertainment @ Markie Dans

QUIZ NIGHT at 9.30pm
£1 per person, max of 6 per team
Win £20 bar voucher

MONDAY 18TH FEBRUARY

Slimming World
Union Street/Argyll Street, Lochgilphead
5.30pm & 7.30pm
Tel; Rhona 07880 878906

WEDNESDAY 20TH FEBRUARY

Fiddler on the Roof
The Corran Halls, Oban
7.30pm - 10.15pm

Slimming World
Glencruitten Church Hall, Oban
9.30am, 11.30am, 5.30pm & 7.30pm
Tel; Gillian 07796 040803

Events may charge. Please visit www.obanwhatson.co.uk for more details. To list your event, please call 01631 568000

WHAT'S ON AT YOUR LOCAL CINEMA THIS WEEK

Tel: 01631 562905 or see

www.obanphoenix.com for more details

FRIDAY 15	12:00/14:30/17:00	12:00/17:00	THE LEGO MOVIE 2: THE SECOND PART U
	THE LEGO MOVIE 2: THE SECOND PART U	16:15	STAN & OLLIE PG
	12:15/14:30	18:30	COLETTE 15
	HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON: THE HIDDEN WORLD PG	19:30	THE MULE 15
	17:00		
	19:30		
	19:45		
	MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS 15		
	THE MULE 15		
	COLETTE 15		
WEDNESDAY 20		16:00/18:30	THE LEGO MOVIE 2: THE SECOND PART U
		16:15/18:30	HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON: THE HIDDEN WORLD PG
		20:45	COLETTE 15
		20:45	THE MULE 15
THURSDAY 21		16:00/18:30	THE LEGO MOVIE 2: THE SECOND PART U
		16:15/18:30	HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON: THE HIDDEN WORLD PG
		20:45	COLETTE 15
		20:45	THE MULE 15
SUNDAY 17		11:45/14:30	HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON: THE HIDDEN WORLD PG

the quality of life for people and communities throughout the UK both now and in the future.

The foundation is one of the largest independent grant-makers in the UK. In 2017, it made grants of £40.5 million towards a wide range of work within the arts, children and young people, the environment and social change. It also has a £45 million allocation to social investments for organisations with the aim of creating social impact.

www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk

For more information about An Lanntair's Artists' Support Programme, email sandra.kennedy@lanntair.com.



Oban Phoenix Cinema operates as a charitable social enterprise and screens an eclectic mix of arthouse, big blockbuster movies and live streamed theatre. With our two screens seating 148 and 22 people respectively, we attract all ages through our doors and play host to birthday parties, private functions and music gigs.

We were incorporated on 18th April 2011 and opened our doors in August 2012. We are a Private Limited Company by Guarantee, SC397947; and are registered as a charity, SC042407.

We use a specific cinema software system, "VEEZI" which works in tandem with accounting systems.

We would like to invite book-keeping/accountancy businesses to apply to tender for the contract which will run from 1 April 2019 for a period of 3 years, with the option of extending.

For full details, please contact Jennie Larney, Manager, 140 George Street, Oban, Argyll, PA34 5NX (01631 562 905) Email: cinema@obanphoenix.com

Your local radio listings
Tune in to 103.3Fm or listen live at www.obanfm.com or on the Tuneln app. For requests, competitions or questions please call us on 01631 570057 or email: studio@obanfm.org.uk



MONDAY: 08.00 am on Fm, 08.10 breakfast show, 9.00 Monday morning with Stephen, 11.00 Ian Simmonds Monday Mix, 17.00 Drivetime, 19.00 Rosie's Highland fling with Rosie MacColl, 20.00 John McLuckie's show, 21.00 David Cullen show, 23.00 Through the night with Clyde 2
TUESDAY: 08.00 am on Fm, 08.10 Breakfast show, 10.00 Ken Hunter's Tuesday morning, 13.00 Macky on Fm, 17.00 Drivetime with Jim Lynch, 19.00 Highest praise with Stuart Chalmers, 20.00 Clyde 2 through the night with the Greatest Hits.
WEDNESDAY: 08.00 am on Fm, 08.10 breakfast show, 09.00 Sounds Scottish repeat, 10.00 The Comfort Zone with Lesley Blair Simmonds, 13.00 Doug Carmichael in the afternoon. 17.00 Drivetime with Campbell Cameron, 19.00 Country meets Rock & Roll with Len Ford & Kenny MacLachlan alternating, 21.00 Gordon's Grooves with Gordon Macintyre, 12.00 Midnight through the night with Clyde 2.
THURSDAY: 08.00 - 11.00 Breakfast with Andy and Sarah, 11.00 Molly's Mix with Molly Black, 15.00 Drivetime with Stephen McPhee, 19.00

Christine's collection, 21.00 Ann's Ceilidh, 22.00 Margo till midnight then Through the night with Clyde 2.
FRIDAY: 08.00 breakfast show with Laura, 10.00 Teeny and Tiny aka Harry, Janet, and Anna, 17.00 Drivetime with Jim Lynch, 18.45 Sports View, 19.00 Country meets Country with Jackie Craig, 21.00 Peter Rainnie 12.00 Midnight through the night with Clyde 2.
SATURDAY: 08.00 The Breakfast show with Stephen MacPhee. 10.00 Saturday Morning live with Linda Crosher, 13.00 Clyde2 Sports and the Greatest hits, 18.00 Sports view - Oban Fm Dream team, 19.00 Sounds Scottish with Archie Darling, 20.00 Dave Lewis, 22.00 Margo till Midnight then Through the night with Clyde 2 and the Greatest Hits.
SUNDAY: 09.00 Sunday Morning with Breege, 11.00 Sunday brunch with Allan MacKechnie, 13.00 Clyde 2 on a lazy Sunday afternoon with the Greatest Hits, 19.00 New Country show - David Entwistle, 21.00 Drum & Bass - Graham Scott, 23.00 Clyde 2 through the night with the Greatest Hits.

Glasgow Letter

ROBERT ROBERTSON

robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk



Mull and Iona annual gathering

The weekend of the annual Mull and Iona gathering is upon us and here is a reminder of the fantastic line-up in store for the concert this Saturday evening.

Singers will be Arthur Cormack, Mary Catherine MacLean, Janet Campbell and Fiona Ross.

Niall Kirkpatrick will give a few tunes on the box and the Mull and Iona pipers have assembled especially for the occasion.

The dance afterwards will be played by Beinn Lee who, since the release of their album last year, have pretty much consolidated themselves as the 'go to' band for dances in Glasgow - and rightly so.

Doors for the concert open at 7pm in the Glasgow University Union and the dance follows at about 10.30pm. Tickets are available from themullandiona@gmail.com

Buddha Beag and band bring Park Bar to feet

A casual observer of the Park Bar on Sunday night might have wondered why it was so incredibly busy. Yes, it was a school holiday on Monday, but this was no ordinary February weekend crowd.

The answer, of course, is that it was the first Park Bar appearance of Sean 'Buddha Beag' MacCallum and his band and half of Tiree had appeared in the Park to support their fellow islanders on their debut Glasgow performance.

And a fine job the boys made of it too - the whole pub was bouncing to the sound of well known West Coast singalong classics, as well as a great selection of Highland tunes. I dare say we will be seeing much more of the boys in future.

BBC Alba Celtic Connections highlights

Keep your eye on BBC Alba for the series Seirm and make sure not to miss it.

Broadcast every year, this programme showcases the best from Celtic Connections. It is filmed throughout the festival from the Hillhead Bookclub.

This year, the only act I managed to catch was Allan Henderson and his 'formative playlist' project. A set list based on songs Allan enjoyed in his youth, it had everything from Ossian, to Peter Gabriel, to Boys of the Lough and, of course, plenty of excellent humour from Allan himself which may or may not make the telly!



Beinn Lee will take to the stage for the dance of the Mull and Iona Association Annual Gathering this weekend in the Glasgow University Union.

What's on

Saturday February 16: The Mull and Iona Association annual gathering in the Glasgow University Union.

Saturday February 23: Glasgow Skye Buntata's Sgadan Supper in Crawford Hall, Beith Street, at 7.30pm.

Wednesday February 27: Cèilidh Comunn Oiseanach at 8pm in the Glasgow University Union.

Thursday February 28: Mòd Ghlaschu cèilidh at 7.30pm in the Oran Mòr.

Saturday March 02: The Glasgow Islay Association

annual gathering concert at 7.30pm in the GUU and dance thereafter at 10.30pm.

Saturday March 09: Gaelictronica in the CCA, Sauchiehall Street, at 7.30pm

Pub scene

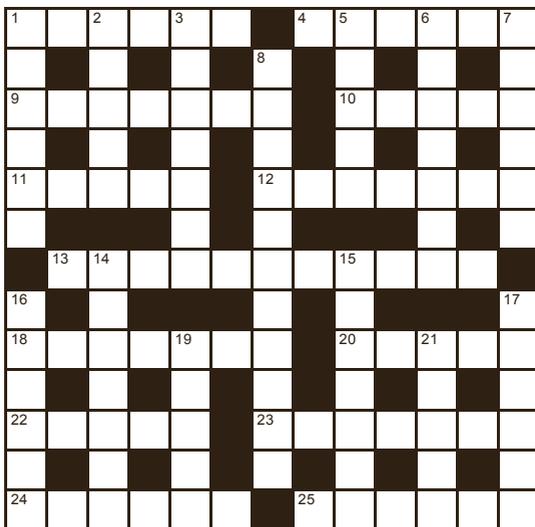
Park Bar.
Friday February 15: Eriskay Lilt.

Saturday February 16: Gunna Sound.

Islay Inn.
Friday February 15: Hullabaloo.

Saturday February 16: The Keelies.

Crossword



Across

- 1 Modernize (6)
- 4 Unexcitable (6)
- 9 City destroyed by a volcano (7)
- 10 Ill-suited (5)
- 11 Trunk with a chest (5)
- 12 Lost (7)
- 13 Show (11)
- 18 Meal after lunch (4,3)
- 20 Harmony (5)
- 22 Linked row (5)
- 23 Oval (7)
- 24 TV series type (6)
- 25 Very still object (6)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION



Down

- 1 Snobbish (6)
- 2 Object (5)
- 3 Vibrating effect (7)
- 5 Tie up (5)
- 6 Of a political view (7)
- 7 Foolish affection (6)
- 8 Chemical indicator (6,5)
- 14 Propagate (7)
- 15 Ivy's clinging part (7)
- 16 Oyster shells (6)
- 17 Decorative wall band (6)
- 19 Ballroom dance (5)
- 21 Storage building (5)

Rock and roots mix heads for Benderloch stage

James Edwyn and The Borrowed Band play live at Benderloch's Victory Hall tomorrow, Friday February 15.

Doors and bar open at 7.30pm for the gig to start at 8pm.

The Glasgow sextet stumbled on to the music scene 2013 with a mix of alt-country, indie/folk rock and roots orientated Americana.

Their first album The Tower was released in 2014 through the band's own Dead Records Collective label getting significant airplay and positive reviews.

High Fences in 2018 was the band's follow up to The Tower

with Grammy-nominated and ARIA-winning engineer Adrian Breakspear on mixing duties.

The first two tracks on the LP, Passing San Ysidro and Pushing Statues, have been played across the BBC and other radio networks.

Other highlights of 2018 included invitations to showcase at Glasgow's famous Celtic Connections festival and the UK Americana Music Association festival in London, along with performances at Country 2 Country in Glasgow. They also completed their first mini-tour of England in



James Edwyn and The Borrowed Band play live at Benderloch's Victory Hall on Friday February 15.

November, including their first headline London show at The Slaughtered Lamb. The band is now working on their

third studio album. Tickets for the Benderloch gig are £10 in advance, £12 at the door. Call 01631 720247.

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

CONCERT - SUNDAY FEBRUARY 24th 2019 at 3.30 pm
ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL, OBAN

OBAN BACH CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA

Mozart: Symphony no. 29 in A Samuel Wesley: Two Motets
Cimarosa: Concerto for Two Flutes
Boyce: Symphony no. 8 in D minor
Bach: Jesu, joy of man's desiring
Derek McLeish and Donna Kirkhope flutes
John Marsden organ Conductor: Norman Nicholson
SEAT WITH PROGRAMME
(OBTAINABLE AT THE DOOR) £8-00 CONCESSIONS £7-00

**An Comunn Gàidhealach -
Meur Chruachain
TAYNUILT WINTER CEILIDH**

Julie MacFadyen, Ruth Lunny,
Linn Phipps
and Emma (Scalpay) MacLeod
Plus Full Supporting Programme
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Saturday 16th February, 7.30pm
Supper and Raffle
Adults - £4 - Children £2

Netherlorn Piping Society
Is holding a recital by

**SEONAI DH
MACINTYRE**

on Thursday 21st February 2019
Argyllshire Gathering Halls
7.30pm
Entry: Adults £3 and Children Free

West Highland Weddings



Image courtesy of
www.abrightsidephotography.co.uk

Let the romance begin! *Planning the big day to celebrate the start of your life together*

Have you just said 'Yes'? Was there a proposal this week on St Valentine's Day, or perhaps a wee bit earlier at the bells on Hogmanay – or perhaps you announced your engagement at Christmas? Well, hit the ground running, because here is our latest wedding guide.

We do live in one of the most romantic places in the world, but don't just take our word for it. People come from all over the globe to get married here, to have a small part of that something special we take for granted for their very own special day.

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www.abrightsidephotography.co.uk

When it comes to 'venues and menus' the West Highlands and islands excel. We have so many incredible places to hold your ceremony and your celebrations – long established hotels and restaurants to vibrant new hot spots. If you want to get married in a magnificent Scots-baronial castle or a bothy or anywhere in between, then this is the place to be.

Some of the finest food in Europe is farmed, produced or caught here and we have hoteliers and restaurateurs and chefs who are passionate about what they do, be it gourmet fine-dining or all the fun of a delicious hog-roast.

We have so many talented local business people who will help you bring the vision for your wedding to life; from hairdressers and beauticians to chauffeurs, florists and all kinds of fine food, drink and favours.

It is always a good idea to visit wedding shows – where you'll find some of the very best of these businesses and services under the same roof to make decision-making so much easier!

The Loch Fyne Restaurant & Oyster Bar is a perfect place to celebrate your wedding day.

Set in a stunning location at the head of Loch Fyne in Argyll, the venue recently won the accolade of Scotland's Finest Seafood Establishment. It is a perfect place to celebrate your wedding day with family and friends.

Weddings at Loch Fyne can be tailored for 25 guests or fewer, and up to 80. Meal options include our full a la carte menu, a bespoke three- or four-course banquet, to sensational sharing plates or a stunning buffet – it's your choice for your special day!

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or call: 01546 605521

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That's the motto of Argyll and Bute registrars, who are here to help make your big day the magical experience you've always dreamed of.

Whether it's a castle, a beach or even your own garden - you can get married almost anywhere. Why not make your ceremony truly unique by including personal readings, your choice of music or even a hand-fasting or quich ceremony? We're more than happy to help.

Registrars are the only celebrants who can deal with all your ceremony's legal arrangements, including the delivery and collection of the marriage schedule, making preparations easier for you.

Get in touch with us on 01546 605521 or visit www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/marriage/ to find out what we can do for you.

Looking for something different for your wedding, event or party?

Well, here's one local caterer that will go the whole hog.

Argyll Hog Roasts is an outdoor caterer supplying hog roasts, barbecues, paella, crepes and buffets to Argyll, the west coast islands, Glasgow and beyond.

You may have met Jonathan and his team at weddings from Lochnell Castle and Crear to the Rhinns of Islay, Craignure on Mull and a beach on the Isle of Colonsay.

'We can cater for any event and offer a large variety of accompaniments,' Jonathan said. Canapes are the perfect way to break the culinary ice at your event - see the Argyll Hog Roasts website for some delicious options.

'All of our staff are uniformed, fully trained, friendly and professional,' Jonathan said. 'We use top quality equipment and the best local food.'

Try something original at your stag or hen party

Laser clay pigeon shooting is a safe electronic version of the popular country sport of clay pigeon shooting. This activity is ideal for hen and stag parties, corporate events, parties and just for fun too! We are based in Fort William but offer a mobile service where we can come to you.

Honeymoon time

You have just planned a wedding until you think you can plan no more and then you have to plan your honeymoon.

Oban-based travel adviser Lesley Fraser of Not Just Travel told us: 'I look forward to helping people plan their honeymoons; planning a wedding can be hard work.'

One great feature of Not Just Travel is its honeymoon gift list where guests can buy a gift voucher towards the cost of the couple's honeymoon.

Lesley said: 'This is so popular. Today many couples have established homes or are downsizing two homes into one so they already have the traditional items which people would usually give as gifts. A gift towards the cost of the honeymoon is a very welcome surprise and much appreciated.'

Image courtesy of
www.abrightsidephotography.co.uk



HOG ROASTS - PAELLA - BBQ - CREPES

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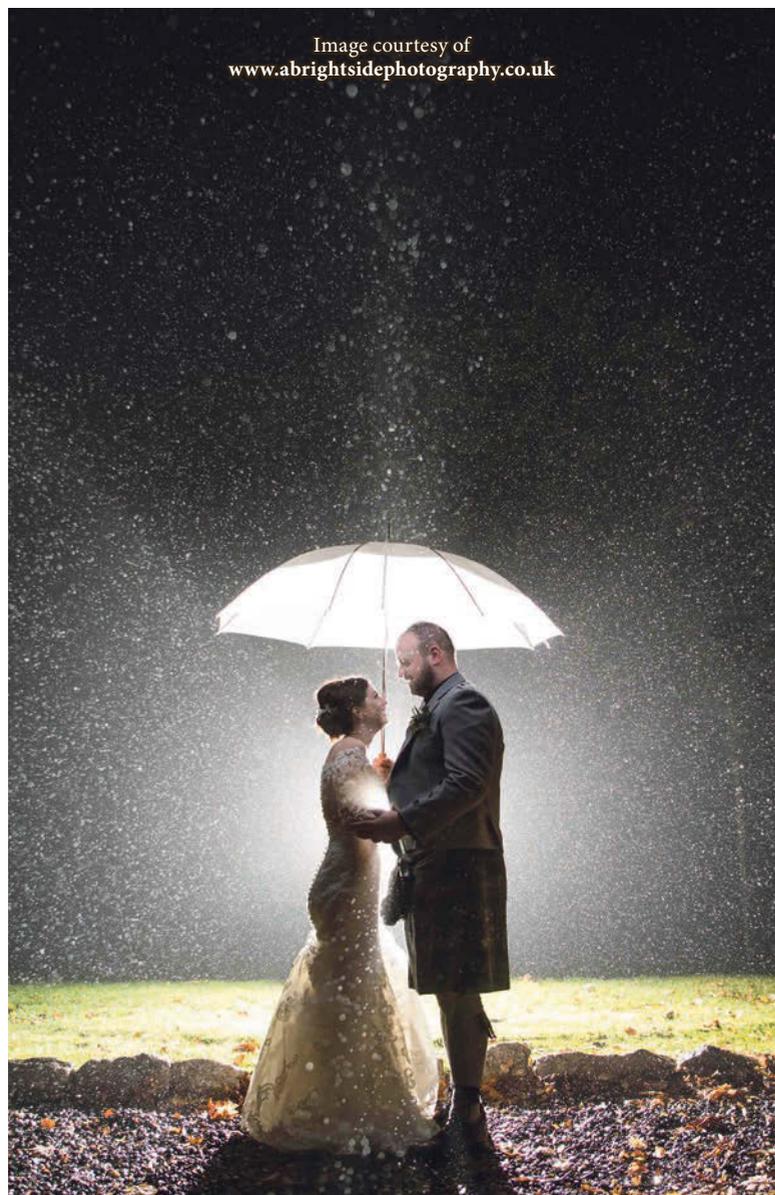
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Natural and creative wedding photography

Other than memories, the most tangible piece of your wedding day which remains are the photographs and it is very important to make sure you get the best images to look back on and relive the moment. Johnpaul Peebles of Abrightside Photography is a true professional who puts tremendous effort and skill into giving you astounding images and service, fitting in with your day, rather than intruding into it.

Getting married in Scotland

Whether you are choosing a civil or a religious marriage ceremony, it is vital you do not forget the legal preliminaries to marriage. All necessary paperwork and supporting documents must be submitted to the registrar in the district in which you wish to marry no earlier than three months, and no later than 29 days before your wedding date. Information on this is available from the Highland Council website or by contacting your local registration office.

Did you know our team of registrars across Highland can now conduct civil ceremonies anywhere? We are no longer restricted to an office, and could marry you at your own home, a local venue or historic landmark.

The Highlands are blessed with such stunning locations, stately homes, beaches, lochs and mountains – the choice really is yours! Your ceremony can be personalised to your wishes and can include readings, music, and additional enhancements such as quiaichs, handfasting, candle-lighting and so much more. If you have chosen a civil ceremony, your registrar will work with you to ensure your day is everything you wish for.

For general marriage inquiries, please contact Inverness. Registrars@highland.gov.uk in the first instance.

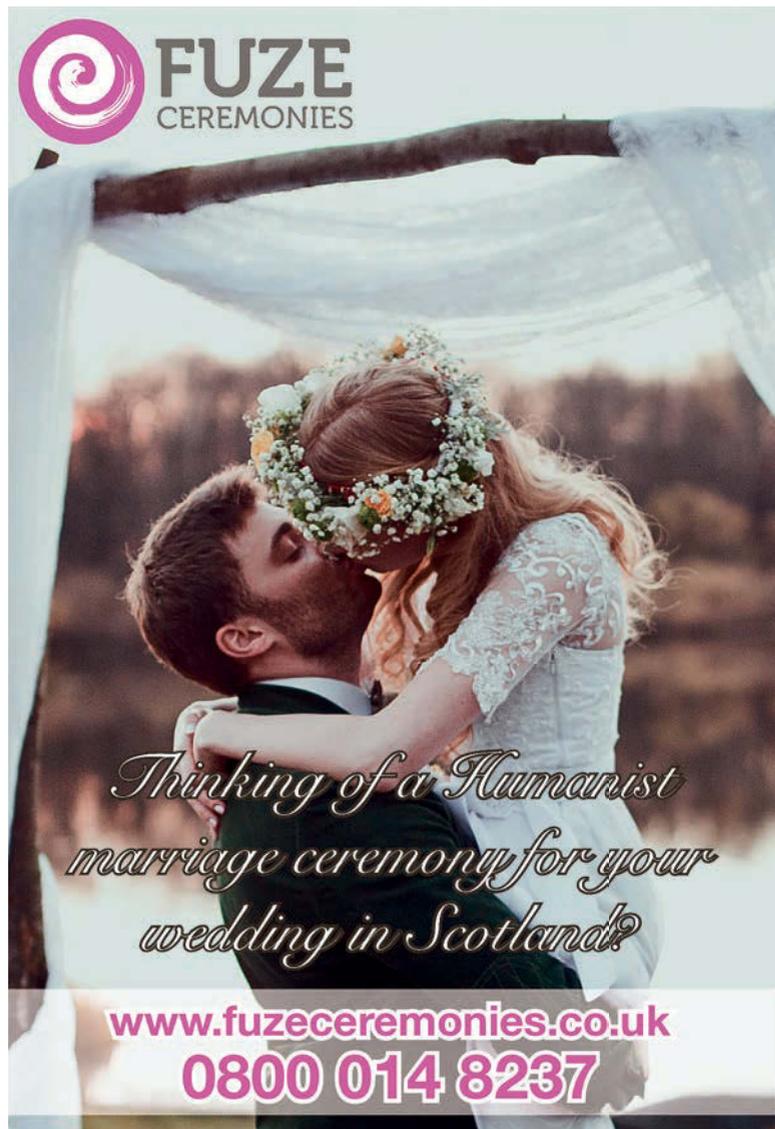
If you're looking for a one-of-a-kind wedding ceremony, then look no further!

Not only is Scotland stunningly beautiful, it is also blessed as it is one of only six countries in the world where couples are free to marry anywhere their hearts desire. From mist-swirled glens to ancient forests and from medieval castles to consecrated churches, couples have unlimited flexibility as to where and when they say: 'I do.'

By choosing a humanist wedding ceremony, the same flexibility can be offered to the structure and content of ceremony scripts, meaning that every single wedding ceremony is as unique as the couple.

Families have always enjoyed gathering for special occasions to bring their unique tapestry of life experience together. It's a social hub. And we recognise that. There's a major shift in how and where families gather, and our customers want to celebrate by having a ceremony that symbolises what's important to them. We are all about giving more choice and opportunity to unite.

Fuze Ceremonies boasts a wondrous team of professional, trained and insured humanist celebrants who are based across Scotland. Fuze always tries to match you with the celebrant who lives closest to you or your venue in order for you to familiarise yourselves allowing for a highly personalised ceremony, packed with personality.



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Hardy Highlanders put on biggest spring show for years

Highland cattle enthusiasts headed to Oban from around the world at the weekend to witness the hardy breed society's 128th spring show and sale.

The town was buzzing and the Royal Hotel booked out as breeders and buyers and members of the Highland Cattle Society gathered for the spectacle at Oban Livestock Centre.

Organisers said the 128th spring show was the biggest for years, with numbers of animals up by more than 20 on 2018.

Good numbers showed the increasing popularity of the breed not just in Scotland but beyond the borders as the farming community 'recognises the value of having tough economic genetics on their farms and the need for this type of cattle for both income and conservation', said the society.

Breed secretary David Hyland added: 'We are well up on numbers from last year and are delighted.'

Judge Alun Garton said standards were so high that it made deciding the winners difficult: 'As usual there was high standard of animals and stockmanship. The standard of the cattle was a lot higher than the past couple of years making it difficult to select winners.'

Cattle, descending from the original Highland bloodlines, travelled from all over the UK to take part as well as many



Bjorn Berdurtig bought the top-selling bull Muran Eerchie of Ardbhan for 11,000gns. He is the son of the late Geert Berdurtig who was made an honorary member of the Highland Cattle Society last year and who became a pioneer for Germans attending the society sales.

original folds from the West Coast and Western Isles.

The animals started arriving at the mart on Friday and Saturday to get washed and groomed ready for the show on Sunday with its 14 classes.

Competition for the champion bull was fierce with many summer show champions in the mix but the overall bull champion was eventually declared as two-year-old bull Brodie of Corntown from Ron MacLean with the reserve being the senior bull

Eoin Mhor 18th of Mottistone from Michael Poland.

Judge Mr Garton said: 'The overall champion was a worthy winner. He had good locomotion confirmation and the breed characteristics we are looking for in an animal.'

The heifers classes followed the bulls, again with some notable champions among them.

Monday's sale reflected the quality of the cattle and the demand for both bulls and heifers across the UK. The top

price of 11,000gns for lot 36 was paid for Muran Eerchie of Ardbhan UK501273401283. Born 21/04/16. He will leave Scotland for his new home in Germany. The Ardbhan fold is on North Uist owned by Mr and Mrs Angus MacDonald.

Also in the sale were quality heifers, two of them bought by The Yorkshire Vet of Channel 5 fame. The TV crew who follow the work of Skeldale Veterinary Centre in Thirsk - once the practice of James Herriot - were at the sale.



Angie Beag of Miungairigh Glengorm bred by the late Angus J MacColl sold for 6,500gns led out by stockman Alexander Craig. Photograph: Kevin McGlynn



Kerrie MacGillivray from Pennygown Farm, Mull, takes the lead.

Auctioneer Raymond Kennedy from United Auctions said the sale offered breeders both new and old, a fantastic opportunity to add to and strengthen the genetics of their own folds with some of the UK's top cattle.

'Another highlight of the sale was the inclusion of an excellent draft of pedigree in calf stock heifers and a selection of pure-bred bullocks which showcase the versatility of the breed. It was a joy and an honour to sell such

quality stock,' Mr Kennedy added.

And Gordon McConachie, president of the Highland Cattle Society, added: 'More and more land managers are recognising the importance of Highland genetics to produce economic suckler cows which will contribute to production of public goods at the same time as providing farm income at low cost and good margins. Our shows and sales in Oban are a celebration of all things Scottish.'

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Best junior young handler was Lewis Ralston, 11, from Jedburgh.



It was a good day in the ring on Monday for Shirley and Bob Strachan, Cailaich, Mull, who sold Neili Kirkibost of Ardbhan for 3,000gns at Oban Livestock Centre.

Photograph: Kevin McGlynn



Show judge Alun Garton said standards were so high it made selecting winners difficult.



Chloe Roberts from Seamfold, County Durham, shares a tender moment in the show ring.

Market report

Fort William, Dingwall & Highland Marts, February 7: sold 388 sheep of all classes.

Lambs (240) averaged £50.67 and sold to £80 gross for a pen of Lleyn crosses from Steall, Fort William.

Ewes & feeding sheep (40) averaged £40.34 and sold to £67 gross for a Lleyn cross ewe from Steall.

Rams (108) sold to £75 gross for a pair of Cheviots from Glebehill, Kilchoan.

"All classes of stock were brought forward in strong condition, this was reflected in the price which saw a large increase in value on the year, resulting in a successful sale."

Leading prices per head

Lambs: BF - Ardnamurchan, Kilchoan, £79, Glendoe Estate, Fort Augustus, £75, 19 Blarmacfoldach, Fort William, £72; SuffX - East Croft Roy, Newtonmore, £77; LlyX - Steall, £73, Chev - Steall, £71, Ardnamurchan, £68.50, 6 Stronaba, Spean Bridge, £62, Arisaig Farms, Arisaig, £60; Mule - Glendoe Estate, £66.50

Ewes & feeding sheep: LlyX - 19 Blarmacfoldach, £64; Chev - South Laggan, Spean Bridge, £55; Cross - 6 Stronaba, £49; BF - Muirshearlich, Fort William, £47.

Rams: Chev - 4 Glebehill, £70; BF - 4 Glebehill, £69.

Dingwall and Highland Marts Ltd, February 5: sold 16 prime cattle. Prime bullocks (6) averaged 207.7p (-0.4p) and sold to 210.0p per kg twice for a 570kg Limousin cross form Easter Hardmuir, Nairn and for a 625kg Simmental cross from Easter Sheeppark, Balblair both selling to Messrs John M Munro Ltd, Dingwall and £1,339.80 gross for a 660kg Saler cross from Easter Hardmuir.

Prime heifers (10) averaged 213.2p (+4.4p) and sold to 222.0p per kg for a 535kg Limousin cross from Suliven, Evanton selling to Messrs Fraser Brothers, Butchers, Dingwall and £1,365.25 gross for a 635kg Limousin cross from Easter Strath of Auchterflow, Killen selling to Messrs John M Munro Ltd, Dingwall.

Other leading prices per kg:

Bullocks: Easter Hardmuir, Nairn, (CharX), 209.0p; Bridgend Farm, Dingwall, (AAx), 208.0p, 207.0p; Easter Hardmuir, (SAX), 203.0p.

Heifers: Easter Strath of Auchterflow, (LimX), 220.0p, 215.0p, 212.0p, 211.0p; Mountgerald, Dingwall, (LimX), 215.0p; Bridgend Farm, (LimX), 210.0p; Easter Hardmuir, (CharX), 210.0p.

Other leading prices per head:

Bullocks: Easter Sheeppark, (SimX), £1,312.50; Bridgend Farm, (AAx), £1,283.40, £1,206.40; Easter Hardmuir, (LimX), £1,197.00.

Heifers: Bridgend Farm, (LimX), £1,333.50; Mountgerald, (LimX), £1,333.00; Easter Strath of Auchterflow, (LimX), £1,318.75, £1,298.00, £1,229.60.

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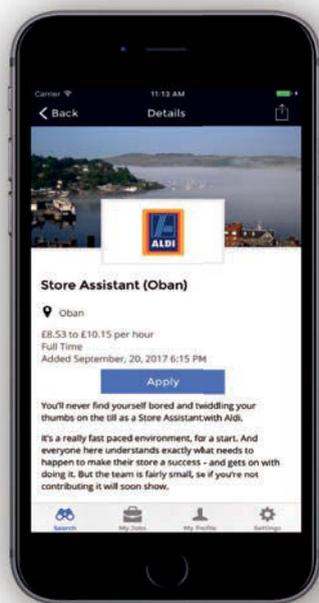
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Ref. No.	Proposal	Site Address
19/00173/LIB	Alterations to existing lead roof and re-pointing works	St Conans Church (Bruce Chapel) Lochawe Dalmally Argyll And Bute PA33 1AH
18/02768/PP	Use of land for the parking of 3 motor homes, formation of access and siting of waste water disposal tank	Land Opposite Garage And North East Of Public Toilets Ulva Ferry Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute
18/02769/PP	Use of land to form extension to public car park and formation of access	Car Park (North East Of Public Toilets) Ulva Ferry Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute
19/00161/LIB	Internal alterations to form 3 flats and formation of new window opening	First Floor 10 George Street Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 5SB
19/00167/PP	Erection of single storey building to facilitate workshop, office accommodation and associated car parking	Land South Of Unit 7A2 And Northeast Of Bookers Glengallan Road Oban Argyll And Bute
19/00199/PP	Erection of agricultural barn	Land South East Of Blarhasgaig Appin Argyll And Bute
19/00149/PP	Use of land for the siting of 6 no camping pods	Dalavich Social Club Dalavich Tainuill Argyll And Bute PA35 1HN
18/02767/PP	Use of land to form public car park and formation of access	Land Opposite Car Park And North East Of Public Toilets Ulva Ferry Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute
18/02589/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, installation of septic tank and formation of access	Garden Ground Of Drumbuie View Aros Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute PA72 6JS
19/00151/LIB	Installation of internal secondary glazing to windows.	Perle Oban Hotel Station Road Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 5RT
18/02782/PP	Change of use from car showroom (sui-generis) to storage or distribution (class 6) including external alterations.	Unit 1 Hazelbank Motors Mill Lane Oban Argyll And Bute PA34 4HA
19/00152/PP	Erection of 2 No dwellinghouses, installation of sewage treatment plan and formation of access	Land North Of Ath An Fhiona Coullabus Bridgend Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute
18/02683/PP	Use of land for siting of modular building to provide additional living space for seasonal staff	Land West Of 1 Squint Street Scalasaig Isle Of Colonsay Argyll And Bute
19/00182/PP	Erection of 8 dwellinghouses and formation of vehicular access	Phase 3 Imeraval Port Ellen Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute
19/00144/PP	Construction of artificial pitch, erection of fencing and 6 lighting columns and associated works	Islay High School Flora Street Bowmore Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute PA43 7LS

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 Councils website.

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33 Achadafail, Kilfinichen & Kilvickeon
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R Stephenson
M E Stephenson
7 Lower Scotstown, Ardnamurchan & Sunart
0.216 ha – Site for a dwelling house
95140

A Gray
7 Blaich, Ardgor
0.099 ha – existing garden ground
94252

Written comments from any member of the crofting community within the locality of the croft and any expressions of demand for the croft (which may be made public), may be sent to the Crofting Commission by 15/03/19. Crofting Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW, info@crofting.gov.scot

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0.111 ha
Reason – Proposed new development
Condition – With fencing & use conditions.

I M Fyfe
3 Stronaba, Kilmonivaig
93655
0.639 ha
Reason – Existing house site & accommodation
Condition – With fencing conditions.

C S McKinlay
Loch Awe View (Stronmilchan), Glenorchy & Innishail
92963
0.173 ha
Reason – Existing house site
Conditions – With fencing conditions

A Gillies
6 Bunacaimb, Arisaig & Moidart
92955
0.197 ha
Reason – Existing croft house site and garden ground
Conditions – With fencing conditions

K A Gibson
Fiadh Cottage, Pennygown & Torosay
90732
0.183 ha
Reason – Existing Croft house site and garden ground
Conditions – With fencing conditions

R A Bennett
C J Bennet
14 Kilmaree, Ardchattan & Muckairn
87972
0.097 ha
Reason – Part Existing House Site & Garden Amenity Ground
Conditions – With fencing conditions

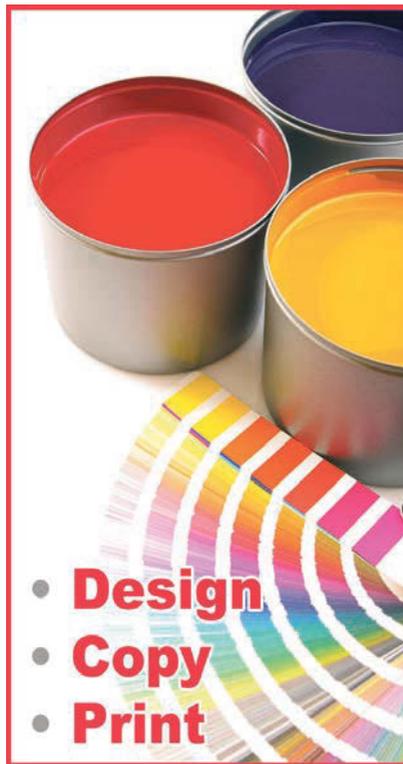
L Sutherland
1 Ranachan
92768
0.068 ha
Reason – Site for micro hydro scheme
Conditions – With fencing conditions

Full details at www.crofting.scotland.gov.uk

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PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A GAELIC MEDIUM CATCHMENT AREA FOR MALLAIG PRIMARY SCHOOL NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

The Highland Council has published a consultative paper on a proposal to establish a Gaelic Medium catchment area for Mallaig Primary School.

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 4 February 2019 and will finish on 22 March 2019. 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:

20 February 2019, at 6.30pm at Mallaig Primary School

All comments made in writing or at the public meeting will be presented in due course to the Highland Council's Care, Learning and Housing Committee for 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:

Mallaig Primary School; Lady Lovat Primary School; Arisaig Primary School; Eigg Primary School; Inverie Primary School; Muck Primary School; Rum Primary School; and the Mallaig Public Library.

Alternatively the proposals can be viewed online at:

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations>

MOLADH GUS SGÌRE-SGOILE FOGHLAIM TRON GHÀIDHLIG A STÈIDHEACHADH AIRSON BUN-SGOIL MHALAIG SANAS AIRSON COINNEIMH POBLAICH

Tha Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd air pàipear co-chomhairleachaidh fhoillseachadh mu mholadh gus sgìre-sgoile Foghlaim tron Ghàidhlig a stèidheachadh airson Bun-Sgoil Mhalaig.

Chaidh am pàipear fhoillseachadh fo theirmean modh na Comhairle fo Achd nan Sgoiltean (Co-chomhairleachadh) (Alba) 2010, mar a chaidh atharrachadh.

Tha an ùine cho-chomhairleachaidh a' tòiseachadh air 4 Gearran 2019 agus a' crìochnachadh air 22 Màrt 2019. Rè na h-ùine seo, tha cuireadh aig buill a' phobail gus beachdachadh air moladh na co-chomhairle.

Bidh riochdairean bho Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd a' coinneachadh ri pàrantan, clann agus buill eile den phoball gus bruidhinn mun mholadh aig coinneamh phoblach a chumar air:

20 Gearran 2019, aig 6.30f aig Bun-Sgoil Mhalaig

Thèid beachdan sam bith a gheibhear ann an sgrìobhadh no aig a' choinneimh phoblach a chur, rè ùine, fa chomhair Comataidh Cùraim, Ionnsachaidh agus Taigheadais Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd airson beachdachadh orra. Seach gur e co-chomhairle phoblach a tha seo, bidh tagraidhean sgrìobhte, agus nòta den choinneimh, rim faotainn dhan phoball agus math dh'fhaodte gum foillsichear beachdan sam bith a gheibhear air làrach-lìn na Comhairle - www.highland.gov.uk.

Gheibhear lethbhreacan cruaidh den aithisg aig:

Bun-Sgoil Mhalaig; Bun-Sgoil na Baintighearna MhicShimidh; Bun-Sgoil Àrasaig; Bun-Sgoil Eige; Bun-Sgoil Inbhir Aoidhe; Bun-Sgoil Eilean nam Muc; Bun-Sgoil Rùm, agus Leabharlann Poblach Mhalaig.

No faodar na molaidhean fhaicinn air-loidhne aig:

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/schoolconsultations>

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL (B863 NORTH BALLACHULISH) (30MPH SPEED LIMIT) ORDER 2019

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that The Highland Council proposes to make an Order in terms of Section 84 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 entitled as above, to improve the general safety of all road users.

When the Order comes into effect a 30 mph speed limit will apply on the road listed on Schedule 1. The Order will revoke the "Highland Council (B863 North Ballachulish) (40mph Speed Limit) Order 1994"

Copies of the proposed Order, as drafted, together with a copy of the relevant plan, and a copy of the Authority's Statement of Reasons for proposing to make the Order, can be inspected at Community Services (Roads Department), Carr's Corner Industrial Estate, Fort William and the Service Point, Charles Kennedy Building, Achintore Road, Fort William during normal opening hours.

Any person wishing to object to the proposed Order should write to the undersigned specifying the Order to which objection is being made, and the grounds of the objection.

All letters of objection must be received by the undersigned not later than Date: 8th March 2019

Date: 11th February 2019: Richard Porteous, Roads Operations Manager, Carr's Corner Industrial Estate, Fort William PH33 6TL

Statement of Reasons:

1. To improve the general safety of all users

SCHEDULE 1

30 MPH SPEED LIMIT

B863 NORTH BALLACHULISH

Commencing at the junction of the A82 extending south-eastwards to a point 28 metres or thereby south east of the centre line of the access road to the property known as Dunbeg, a total distance of 620 metres or thereby.

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 Council Service Point. You can find your nearest Service Point via the following link https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory/16/a_to_z

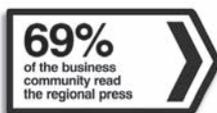
Written comments should be made to the EPC at the contact details below within the time period indicated from the date of this notice. Anyone making a representation about this proposal should note that their letter or email will be disclosed to any individual or body who requests sight of representations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

Reference Number	Development	Address	Proposal Description
19/00370/LBC	Abernethy School Of Adventure Leadership,	Ardgour, Fort William	Conversion of a first floor store in steading to form two bedrooms with en-suite shower rooms and installation of 2 no skylights
19/00333/PIP	Land 15M SE Of David Mee Architect	3 Cameron Square, Fort William	Erection of office building
19/00384/FUL	Westwind House, Perth Place, Upper Achintore,	Fort William	Siting of a Pod for holiday letting
19/00493/PIP	Land SE Of Cnoc Mor	Isle Of Eigg	Erection of house
19/00492/PIP	Land 85M SW Of Cnoc Mor,	Isle Of Eigg	Erection of house (on site with previous permission for four chalets)
19/00357/FUL	Land 140M NW Of Bayview,	Isle Of Rum	Erection of house and formation of access
19/00414/FUL	Lochaber High School	Camaghael, Fort William	Installation of 250kW PV array (resubmission of 18/05964/FUL)
19/00360/FUL	Land 30M SW Of Oakrange,	Spean Bridge	Erection of house
19/00239/FUL	Land 80M SW Of Lyon Cottage,	Isle Of Rum	Amendment to 17/05923/FUL for the erection of eight dwellings - Change of house type design and repositioning of Blocks C & D
19/00430/FUL	Apartment 5, Meall Na Mara,	Alma Road, Fort William	Change of use from apartment to an office
19/00443/PIP	Land West Of Westfield	Inverie, Knoydart	Erection of house
19/00467/FUL	Lochiel Villa, Achintore Road,	Fort William	Formation of french doors and balcony
19/00408/TPNO	Land 470M SE Of Allt A'Choire Cottage,	Morvern	Installation of 15m telegraph pole with 3 no antenna and 2 no 300mm dishes 2 x cabinets and associated ancillary equipment.

Time period for comments is 14 days & 21 days for 19/00370

ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX

Email: eplanning@highland.gov.uk



Blast date:

Monday 18th February 2019

Blast time: 12:00hrs - 14:00hrs

Banavie Quarry

Dunbeg Phase 3 Landscaping & Play Space Consultation Evening

Link Group would like to work with the community of Dunbeg to develop the design of high quality landscaping and play spaces throughout the new development area

Come along and have your say at our initial consultation evening and view the early plans

19th February 2019 6:45pm

SAMS, Dunstaffnage



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PERSONAL

THANK YOU
I would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to my "Ken's Friends" surprise evening, Wow! Thank you to all who came, to those far and wide who couldn't make it! for the wonderful gift of a cheque, "the shortbread tin", whisky, quail, the beautiful picture of Oban, telephone call (thanks Mary), wonderful words said on the night, Wee David for the impromptu heartfelt words! God Bless you young man!, Duncan for his music, Sandra for the beautifully made card, Julie singing, Grant the photography, for supper, and special thanks to Eala and to Beatrice who initiated the evening, and kept it such a secret.
Audrey, and I feel very blessedand so grateful to have made such special friends here in Oban. I will still be active in and around the town and carrying on with ministry duties.
God Bless You, and thank you again.
You truly are "Ken's Friends"

DEATHS

ADDISON - Peacefully, at home surrounded by his loving family on Sunday, February 10, 2019. Hendry Addison of Mallaig. Loving dad of Margaret and Jaqueline. Funeral Service will take place on Saturday, February 16, 2019, at 1pm, at St. Columba's Church Mallaig, thereafter to Beoraid Cemetery. Flowers are welcome, donations are for St. Columba's Church Funds and Mallaig Community Council Flower Fund. All enquires to John McLellan Funeral Directors Fort William, 01397 702128.

BELL - Peacefully at home, after a short illness, on Saturday February 9, 2019, aged 90, Iris Bell, loving mother to Alex and mother-in-law to Anne, step-mother to Julian and gran to Ian and his wife Kathy.

MACKECHNIE - John McKenzie MacKechnie of 20 Lynn Court, Oban, passed away peacefully on January 21, 2019 in his 94th year. On behalf of all of John's family we would like to express our sincerest thanks to the kind staff at both Lorn and Islands Hospital and Eader Glinn Care Home for the sensitive and professional care given to John in his later days. Funeral took place on January 31. Thanks to Rev D Cameron and D & A Munn for their caring services.

McGHEE - Eddie passed away peacefully after a short illness bravely borne, on February 11, 2019 at Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban. Beloved Husband to Jane, Father, Step Father, and Grandpa to Morgan, Rowan, Innes and Anna. Sadly missed.

SINCLAIR - Peacefully, at Lochside Care Home, by Helensburgh on February 7, 2019 in his 76th year, John, formerly of Corran Brae, Oban younger son of the late James and Catherine Sinclair, brother of Finlay and brother-in-law of Mary. Funeral service at Cardross Crematorium on Monday, February 18 at 11.15am.

STEWART - George William Stewart, beloved husband of Janice, much loved father of Gordon and Shona, grandfather of David, brother of John, passed away peacefully on February 2, 2019, aged 82, at the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban. Funeral service at Mortonhall Crematorium (Pentland chapel), Edinburgh at 12.30pm on February 21. Family and friends welcome to attend. Family flowers only, donations to the Macmillan Day Bed Unit, Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CAMERON - The family of the late Mary would like to thank all friends and relatives for the care shown at this sad time. Special thanks to Invernevis House for the love and care given to Mary while in their loving care. Grateful thanks to The Alexandra Hotel for the wonderful catering to Rev Arnold and Janette Hall for all their help. Sincere thanks to John, Linnie and the team at John McLellan, Funeral Directors for all the funeral arrangements and guidance. Finally, thanks to all who attended the service and graveside on the day.

HEGARTY - Linda and family would like to sincerely thank all family and friends for the sympathy, support and kindness shown to them following the sad loss of Denis. Grateful thanks to doctors, district nurses and staff at L.M.C. Oban, staff in A & E, Ward B and most of all Dr Fattah who fought so hard for Denis at Lorn and Island Hospital, Oban Community Carers who made Denis's last 2 months more comfortable. Rt Rev Mgr James Canon MacNeil for his comfort, support and a beautiful funeral service Denis would have been proud of. Thanks also to Hamish Hoey & Son and Ian at Munn's for their professional services. Also Soroba House for lovely refreshments. God bless you all.

MACGILP - The family of the late Duncan would like to sincerely thank friends, family and the local com-

munity for their wonderful cards, kind letters, flowers and other expressions of sympathy and support throughout the last few difficult weeks. We would also like to thank all those who travelled to be with us at the funeral, and who helped to make it such a celebration of his wonderful life, in particular we'd like to thank Rev John Paton, Rev Neil MacMillan, Mr Ian Nicoll (organist), Alasdair Satchel and Kirsty Blackhall (fiddles) and Mull Gaelic Choir. A special thanks to Billy McClymont for sensitive and smooth funeral arrangements and Park Lodge for their warm welcome and tasty lunch. We're also grateful to the staff of LIDGH and Mull and Iona Community Hospital for warm, tender and personalised care. The retiring collection of £1800 has been split between Tobermory Parish Church and Mull and Iona Community Hospital. Moran taing dhuibh uile.

MACLEOD - The family of the late Jenny would like to thank everyone for their kind condolences and attendance at the funeral. A special thanks to Donald MacKinnon for a lovely service, the Appin Hall committee for a splendid buffet, Catriona MacKenzie, organist and Duncan Gunn for such efficient funeral arrangements and bringing Jenny home to us. A collection of £600 was raised for Lochside Care Home.

MEMORIALS

CURRIE - Cherished memories of Lily, died February 15, 1989 and Archie who died June 1, 1998. Always in our thoughts Margaret, Donald and family. Remembering with love Mike - London.

LOCKHART - In loving memory of my mum Violet Lockhart, who died on February 18, 2013, my father Louis Lockhart who died September 27, 1984, also brothers Neil and Cecil Lockhart and nephew/son Martin Lockhart. Loved dearly and remembered always. - From family in Dundee & Dunedin NZ

MACDONALD - In loving memory of our dear parents, Thomas Freeland passed away February 12, 1986 and Jessie MacKenzie, passed away February 7, 1994. Forever in our thoughts. - Inserted by Donald, Neil, Isobel and family.

MACFADYEN - John D, passed away February 16, 2018. We think of you always And talk about you too We have lovely memories But we wish we still had you. - Lorna, the children and grandchildren.

MACFADYEN - In loving memory of John Dugald, who passed away on February 16, 2018. "Big Brother" memories drift to scenes long past. Time rolls on but memories will always last. - Helen and Alex xxx

MACNICOL - In loving memory of my brother Campbell, who died February 14, 1972. Always in my thoughts. - Hamish and family.

McPHAIL - In loving memory of our dear dad, Charlie, who passed away on February 16, 2017 and our dear mum, Mary, who passed away on April 3, 2004. Sadly missed Forever in our thoughts. - John, Sheonaid and Drew, Dalmally Love and miss you always Grandpa and Granny - Elizabeth and Andrew xxxx

NEILSON - Colin. Ever loving memories of Colin who died February 15, 2018. Dearest Coco life is just an existence It's nothing without you You were my every thing And though you had to leave me Our love will never end I know one day we will meet again. Just promise me you'll be there waiting At the gate for me. All my love always and forever. - Grace x

NEILSON - Colin. Our much loved dad, wonderful papa and most loving papa Coco. We can't believe a year has passed You are missed every day And loved more than words can say. - With love Colin, Shiona, David, Serena, Lyn, Gary, Ellena, Holly and Zander.

POULTON - Remembering with love, our beautiful baby son and brother, Danny, who died on February 15, 1992, Forever in our hearts - Mum and Hannah, Bunessan.

POULTON - In loving memory of our grandson and nephew, Danny, who died on February 15, 1992. Loved and remembered always. - From Freena and family.

ROBERTSON - In memory of my husband Tom, who passed away February 18, 2011. Always remembered. - Jean.

ROSS - In loving memory of a dear mother Lorraine, who passed away February 12, 2016. Some time has passed since that fateful day When Gaea swooped in and took you away You are with me still as a whisper in my mind It does get easier, but you see I find Each day has news I want to share But you are a whisper and still not there I miss you mum with each passing day But know you are watching in your own special way I love you mum always and forever Your loving family, we shall forget you never XxxxX

SUTHERLAND - In loving memory of our dear nephew and cousin Innies, died February 14, 1999, aged 21 years. Today, tomorrow our whole lives through We'll cherish the memories we have of you. - Love from Robert, Julie, Siobhan and Robbie.xx

WEDDINGS



ROXBURGH-PARR

On October 6, 2018 at Muckairn Parish Church Taynuilt by the Rev Tom Telfer. Emma, daughter of Marina Mackecknie and Morris Roxburgh, Oban, married Steven, youngest son of Lynn and Nigel Parr, Taynuilt. Many thanks to family and friends who helped us celebrate this special day.

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Obituary: Dr Colin Alexander MacDonald

Born August 27, 1949;
died January 27, 2019

Dr Colin MacDonald, who has died from a brain tumour at the age of 69, was one of the last of a precious breed – an excellent doctor who chose to apply his expertise in the role of single-handed general practitioner in a remote Scottish community.

The benefit for the Uig area of the Isle of Lewis was immense. It enjoyed that priceless service for a decade longer than most similar places, while Colin also became a key figure in community initiatives, including the Suileachan project which created a wonderful memorial to the Rìof Land Raiders.

Colin was Hebridean by birth, genealogy and temperament though most of his early life and medical career were spent in Lochaber. His father, Dr Duncan MacDonald, was a Glasgow Gael who, after a distinguished war career, opted for general practice in South Uist which is where Colin was born. His mother was Glaswegian.

Colin was fond of reminding his siblings that, unlike them, he had been born a Hebridean. His elder brother, Dr Ewan MacDonald, said that he, too, should have been but his father insisted on putting his wife on the plane to Glasgow. 'When it came to Colin's birth, dad was much more relaxed and left the delivery to the nuns in the Sacred Heart Hospital in Daliburgh while he went fishing and caught a salmon the same weight as Colin.'

The family also had connections with Lochaber and, after a few years, the elder Dr MacDonald decided on a move to Fort William as a single-handed GP.

Ewan recalled: 'We learned a lot about practical medicine from our father because back in the 1950s and 1960s when we were young, he regularly visited his "chronics" up the glens and would always take us with him.'

'The visits were semi-social and we would see how he related to everyone. We were imprinted with communication skills which stood us both in good stead. Particularly Colin had the same ability as our father to see someone across a room and suddenly observe – that man is anaemic or

she has thyrotoxicosis, or knowing how you were feeling as soon as you walked into his surgery.'

Colin was educated at Lochaber High School before going on to Aberdeen University to study medicine. From the outset, he was set on general practice as his career preference and after GP training in Orkney and a spell in Inverness, he took the decision to return to Fort William where, in the mid-1970s, he became a partner in the Tweeddale Medical Practice.

His practice partner for almost 20 years, Dr Jim Douglas, recalled that it had been a concern for Colin that he would always be in his father's shadow. However, the tumbledown surgery of 'old Dr MacDonald' in Fassifern Road gave way to swish modern premises in the town centre and it became clear that Colin had his own ideas about how to operate as a GP in Fort William.

A great lover of the outdoors, he became involved in the Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team as its medical officer and spent many days and nights on Ben Nevis and Lochaber's other hazardous peaks. The late Sam Galbraith – a highly-skilled climber – was a great family friend who often did locum work at Fort William's Belford Hospital because of the proximity to the mountains. A plaque in the Uig surgery testifies that Sam, by then Health Minister, later performed the opening ceremony when Colin refurbished it.

Jim Douglas recalled Colin's quick wit and humour at a time when, he said, general practice was less constrained by bureaucracy and could still be good fun. 'Colin's humour was observational around the human condition and the Hebridean culture he loved so much. The church, drink, the social conventions were all beautifully observed. As a doctor, he understood human frailties.'

In 1994, Colin entered into a six-month job swap with a GP in New Zealand before returning to his practice in Fort William and then in 1997 to the Hebrides when a single-handed practice became available in Uig. This was at a



Dr Colin Alexander MacDonald.

time when many single-handed practices were heading in exactly the other direction because of the strains imposed by round-the-clock responsibilities.

As Jim Douglas put it: 'He stood against these trends which judged single-handed practice as unsafe professionally and personally. The net result is that Uig had Colin for 10 years of amazing personal service dedicated to his patients.' His wife Donella became head teacher of Uig primary school and they built a welcoming home in the crofting village of Rìof, both linchpins of a very active local community.

New Zealand continued to compete for their affections and Colin spent three years in general practice in Nelson, South Island. However, the lure of the Hebrides remained strong and the family returned to Uig for the final stages of Colin's medical career and then into a very active retirement. In 2017, he was diagnosed with a brain tumour.

Colin was a sociable man and a great conversationalist who particularly loved the company of his extended family. From a

first marriage, he is survived by his daughters Ali and Charlotte and five grandchildren – two in Florida and three in Fort William. Donella survives him along with their two sons, Andrew and Cailean, as well as brothers Ewan and Steven.

Always respectful of others' convictions, Colin was not religious and the funeral service took the form of a celebration of his life in Uig Community Centre. There was a very large attendance which reflected the high regard in which he was held and appreciation of the service he had rendered. A generation of Uigeachs knew just how fortunate they had been.

Colin had chosen music which reflected his journey through life, including the Maori song, Pokarekare Ana, a pipe tune composed by Dr John Napier MacAskill to mark Dr Colin A MacDonald's Farewell to Fort William; the great Uig song, An Ataireachd Ard, and a tune Joie de Vivre, composed and recorded by Cailean for his father.

Colin was interred on a glorious winter day in the stunning setting of Valtos cemetery.

Brian Wilson

THOUGHT for the week

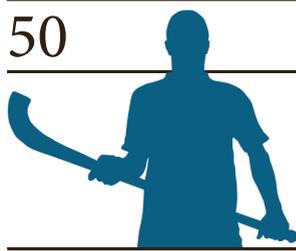
I am not a fan of February. There is still some momentum from Christmas and New Year that gets us through January. By the time we get deep into this month, the going gets a lot harder. There is one redeeming feature about February and that it usually only has 28 days!

Mind you, I wish our moods were not at the mercy of the seasons as much as they are. When spring is in the air, you do feel that something is happening. When summer suns are glowing, you can find yourself remarkably happy. When autumn leaves fall, you can start to think how old you have become. Winter can get you quite down with you just popping your head up for the merry festivals.

However, there is a rhythm to the seasons and if you can't beat them perhaps it makes more sense to join them. A wee bit planning now can get you ready to plant something for spring. I myself am trying to think of what projects to aim for this year. And summer should have some lazy days planned for just enjoying life. A bit of travel in autumn feels right or something that keeps you on the move at least. Winter is about recovery and rest though with Christmas and New Year about, that takes serious planning.

All of this goes against the 24/7 lifestyle that is now expected. A world driven by the grip of 'cities that do not sleep' and have their own busy way of doing things that takes no heed of the seasons. But to be at peace with where we live and to enjoy the freedom that we have – we would do well to go with the ebb and flow all around us.

Reverend John Paton
North Mull Parishes



SHINTY NEWS

Best for all shinty news, results and fixtures

Red and blacks off to a winning start

Shinty's pre-season friendlies were affected by the weather for a second successive weekend with most games on Saturday February 9 called off.

Oban Camanachd make winning start

Oban Camanachd came from a goal down to defeat Glasgow Mid Argyll 5-1 at Mossfield.

Red and blacks manager Stephen Sloss had a good squad to choose from and he used both keepers - Cameron Sutherland and Gavin Stobbart - during the game.

New GMA boss Mark Bain travelled north with a full squad.

The pitch was in good condition considering the recent rain, which is a great credit to groundsman Iain Hay.

The visitors started with a strong wind in their favour and Garry Luke gave them the lead in the third minute with what proved to be the only goal of the first half. GMA keeper Robert Dunning took a goal-hit which found Garry Luke who turned and shot goalwards from around the penalty spot with the ball taking a deflection, wrong-footing keeper Cameron Sutherland, on the way into the net.

It was a fairly even first half, although GMA maybe edged possession.

The wind dropped as the game went on but the hosts drew level when Andrew MacCuish took a shot from the Oban right and Daniel MacVicar got in before his marker to flick the ball home to make it 1-1.

The Oban side went in front when

Scott MacMillan collected the ball by the corner flag and cut across towards goal. Malcolm Clark made a run to the near side and thumped a first time shot into the roof of the net on his left side.

When keeper Robert Dunning was penalised for going to ground on top of the ball inside the D, the referee awarded a penalty. Andrew MacCuish sent the spot-hit into the top right corner of the net.

Aidan MacIntyre added a fourth with a shot from 40 yards out which deceived the keeper and nestled in the top corner.

Scott MacMillan rounded off the scoring. Aidan MacIntyre played a diagonal ball from the right wing, over the top to Scott MacMillan who ran forward from the left side. MacMillan, from just outside the 'D', took the ball out the air with a first time volley, using the back of his stick as he guided the ball into the bottom right corner of the net to round off the 5-1 win.

Camanachd manager Stephen Sloss reflected on a good afternoon's work. He said: 'We had more pressure overall and scored some good goals. We made a lot of changes during the match to try a few things out so it's always hard to judge the overall performance. Our fitness gave us a real advantage as the match wore on so the training is definitely paying off.'

'GMA are a good side, though, and they will do well this season.'

'We didn't pick up any injuries and it was a good run out and that's all we wanted. Ballachulish this week will be another step forward.'

'We are hoping to have Gary

McKerracher back soon and that would be a real boost to the squad.'

Meantime, the match between Lochside Rovers and the Glasgow Mid Argyll second team was postponed on Friday as Ganavan was waterlogged.

Robert Wylie Memorial Cup re-scheduled

The annual Robert Wylie Memorial Cup match between Taynuilt and Oban Celtic at Taynuilt Sports Field on Saturday February 9 was postponed.

The game was called off on Friday evening as the pitch was waterlogged.

However, with neither side having a game this Saturday, the sides will try again at the same venue in what will be a first match in charge for both managers, James McLaren for Taynuilt and Dougie MacIntyre at Oban Celtic.

Throw-up is 2pm.

Lovat 1 Skye Camanachd 2

Skye Camanachd regained the George Michie Memorial Cup, beating Lovat 2-1 at Balgate.

The match was reversed to Lovat's home ground when Skye's Paic nan Laoch pitch was deemed unplayable.

Skye took the lead on 27 minutes through James Pringle. Jordan Murchison found Ross Gordon who was closed down by three Lovat players. Gordon managed to flick the ball to James at the edge of the 'D' and he scored.

Marc MacLachlan drew Lovat level early in the second half after Skye failed to clear their lines.

Skye won it late in the game, however, when newly-installed captain Will Cowie picked out Jordan Murchison and his shot came back off the inside of the post.

Lovat keeper Stuart MacDonald flicked the ball away, but only as far as Ross Gordon, who took a touch before scoring to give the islanders a morale boosting win over their Mowi Premiership opponents.

The George Michie Memorial Cup was presented to Skye captain Will Cowie by George's sister Fiona MacDonald.

Ballachulish 1 Fort William 3

Ballachulish and the Fort William reserves met at Jubilee Park.

Former Oban Camanachd player Robert Dunning, now playing for Glasgow Mid Argyll, makes a save from Malcolm Clark during the pre-season friendly at Mossfield. Photograph: Kevin McGlynn.



Lorne Brown scored for Ballachulish but strikes from Connor MacRae, Jamie Duncan and Arran MacPhee gave Fort William a 3-1 win.

In the other scheduled fixtures, Kilmallie's trip to the Bught Park to play Inverness was first to fall with the weather leading to a Thursday afternoon postponement.

Strathglass had invited Lochaber to Cannich to contest the Murdo MacKenzie Memorial Cup but the rain in the lead up to Saturday left the pitch waterlogged.

Caberfeidh and Newtonmore tried hard to beat the elements but their match was postponed as both Castle Leod and the Eilan were unplayable.

There was to be another all-Mowi Premiership contest as Inveraray looked to host Kinlochshiel at the Winterton but it was called off on Friday evening.

There was also disappointment for Glenurquhart and Fort William with Blairbeg ruled unplayable.

A frozen pitch led to the call-off of the Braeview Park clash between the Beaulie colts and the Kinlochshiel colts whilst Boleskine's bid to host the Glenurquhart second team at Smith Park was also beaten by the weather.

This weekend's pre-season friendlies

After two weekends in which the weather came out on top, many clubs will hope for third time lucky as pre-season friendlies continue on Saturday February 16.

Ballachulish will be tested as Oban Camanachd visit Jubilee Park for an 11.30am throw-up.

This year's Robert Wylie Memorial Cup match between Taynuilt and Oban Celtic takes place at Taynuilt

Sports Field. Throw-up is at 2pm. The Oban Celtic second team take on St Andrew's University at Oban High School's all-weather pitch. Throw-up is at 10.30am.

Lochside Rovers come up against the Kilmallie second team at Mossfield, with a 1.30pm start.

Beaulie and Kilmallie clash at Braeview Park at noon, whilst Mowi Premiership sides Lochaber and Lovat meet at Spean Bridge.

Glenurquhart welcome Newtonmore to Blairbeg.

Boleskine are at home to the Kinlochshiel seconds, whilst the Beaulie and the Glenurquhart second teams are trying to arrange a fixture.

cottages.com MacTavish Cup draw

The draw for the cottages.com MacTavish Cup first and second rounds took place at Culduthel Christian Centre, Inverness on Monday February 11.

First round:

Lovat v Kinlochshiel
Kilmallie v Newtonmore
Strathglass v Inverness
Caberfeidh v Lochaber
Skye Camanachd v Fort William
Byes

Beaulie, Kingussie, Glenurquhart
The first round ties will be played on Saturday March 30.

Quarter finals:

Glenurquhart v Skye Camanachd/
Fort William
Kilmallie/Newtonmore v
Caberfeidh/Lochaber



A textbook block from Lovat's Lewis Tawse against Skye's Martin Pringle. Photograph: Neil Paterson.

Beauly v Strathglass/Inverness

Kingussie v Lovat/Kinlochshiel
The quarter final ties will be played on Saturday April 20.

The draw was made by Stuart Walkden and Mark Whitehouse from the sponsors with Camanachd Association president Keith Loades and chief executive officer Derek Keir also present along with students from Inverness Gaelic School.

Stuart Walkden from cottages.com said: 'We hope the draw will kick-start a fantastic year of sport. We are proud to be the official sponsors of the cottages.com MacTavish Cup in 2019.'

Derek Keir added: 'We are delighted to confirm a second year of sponsorship with an increasingly influential partner at cottages.com.'

Camanachd Association president Keith Loades said: 'Sponsorship for our trophies helps the association continue to strive towards our vision of protecting and enhancing shinty's iconic status in the landscape of Scottish sport. Shinty is deeply grateful to cottages.com for its continued sponsorship of the cottages.com MacTavish Cup and its support of skill development in the game.'

Regional league fixtures preview

Some eye-catching regional league fixtures lie ahead as the season starts on Saturday March 2.

Mowi South Division 1

Lochside Rovers have home advantage in their opening game against the Inveraray second team.

Brian MacCallum's side follow up with trips to Taynuilt and Col Glen, either side of a home match against the Glasgow Mid Argyll second team.

The Taynuilt squad travel to Col Glen before Lochside Rovers come visiting. James McLaren's side then have a free Saturday before Aberdour come to Taynuilt Sports Field.

Ballachulish welcome newly-promoted Glasgow Mid Argyll second team to the Jubilee Park on the opening day of the season before making for the Winterton to face the Inveraray colts.

Col Glen follow up their opening day fixture at home to Taynuilt by travelling to Tighnabraich to take on the Kyles Athletic reserves.

Aberdour and Tayforth open their respective campaigns at Silversands.

With nine teams in the division, the Kyles Athletic second team are without an opening day fixture but start at home to Col Glen a week later.

Mowi North Division 1

The Newtonmore second team will find it difficult to improve on a treble-winning season. Orsten Gardner's side open their competitive season with a match against one of last year's nearest challengers; the Fort William second team.

The Glengarry squad travel to the Granite City to play Aberdeen University at Balgownie. The students finished bottom of North 1 last season but have been allowed to avoid relegation.

The Caberfeidh second team finished second in North 2 last season, two points off the top, but they successfully made the case to step up, recognising the benefits of playing in North 1 with a senior side in the Premiership. They start at home to the Skye seconds.

The Kingussie and Glenurquhart seconds open at the Dell, whilst the Kinlochshiel seconds begin with home advantage against their Lovat counterparts.

Mowi South Division 2

The Oban Celtic second team have a tough opening day fixture at home to Kilmory, followed by an equally challenging encounter against 2018 champions Strachur in Oban. They then journey for a clash with the Aberdour seconds.

Ardnamurchan restart their league campaign at Glenorchy before heading for Strachur a fortnight later.

Strachur start against the Aberdour second team at Strachurmore.

Mowi North Division 2

The Kilmallie and Beauly seconds open at Canal Parks.

Lochcarron start at home to Lewis Camanachd, whilst Inverness have a derby meeting with Boleskine at the Bught.

The Strathglass seconds have opening day home advantage against Strathspey Camanachd.

Drew Ferguson Memorial Trophy

The annual Drew Ferguson Memorial Trophy will once again be contested between Fort William and Kyles Athletic at An Aird on Saturday February 16.

The teams and supporters will remember Fort William player Drew Ferguson who died tragically on May 15 2013, aged 24.

Kyles are the holders having won 3-0 last year.

Throw-up this Saturday is 12.30pm.

Glenorchy add youth training

Glenorchy have started shinty training sessions for primary school age children in Dalmally Community Centre.

The sessions take place on Wednesday nights from 7.30pm until 8.30pm, with senior training from 8.30pm until 9.30pm.

Everyone welcome.

New Celtic Society president

Donald Fletcher is the new president of the Glasgow Celtic Society.

Donald Fletcher took over from John MacLeod at the society's recent annual general meeting.

The Glasgow Celtic Society also put on record its indebtedness to John MacLeod for his stewardship over recent years. The society is delighted he will continue as a director.

Bobby Nicholson has taken on the role of vice president.

SPOT THE SHINTY BALL

THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT £1100

We have removed the shinty ball from the photograph opposite. Now look carefully at the position of the players and use your skill and judgement to place a cross at the exact point where you think the centre of the ball was. You may have a maximum of 20 attempts on this coupon at a cost of £1. If you wish to have more attempts, you must enter on separate coupons.

The game starts with a jackpot of £500 and will increase by £50 per week until it is won outright. To win the jackpot, the centre of your cross must be in the exact centre of the ball. If the crosses overlap the entry will be void. If no correct entry is received, two 'near miss' prizes of £25 will be awarded. When the jackpot is won, no other prizes will be awarded that week.

Easy to enter

Cut out your completed coupon and put your entry plus £1 per 20 attempts into a sealed envelope and post it to "Spot the Shinty Ball" Competition, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB by noon Tuesday. No refunds will be given for entries received after the deadline.

You may hand it into The Oban Times Head Office, Lochavullin, Oban by the same time. Otherwise all entries must be posted.

Competition rules

No responsibility will be accepted for entries which are delayed, mislaid or lost, and proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery.

The Company's decision is final on all matters relating to the competition and no correspondence will be entered into. The final decision rests with the Company.

In the event of more than one correct entry, the jackpot will be shared equally between all winning entries. Any decision regarding the awarding of a prize is entirely at the discretion of the Company.

The Company reserves the right to declare the competition null and void at any time, subject to its discretion and to make full refund of the price of the coupon to any person who has entered the competition at that time. Winners agree to have their photograph taken for publicity purposes. Winners' names and home towns will appear in the newspaper. Employees of Wyvex Media, their immediate relatives and any person otherwise connected with the competition are ineligible to enter. We will protect your personal data. We only gather what we need for the requirements of this competition. Entry data will be deleted/destroyed within 30 days of the competition entry deadline and in a manner appropriate to GDPR regulations. Entrant's details will not be used for any other activity.



Please remember to enclose £1 for 20 crosses. The maximum number of attempts on this coupon is 20, but you may enter on separate coupons as many times as you wish. No photocopies allowed. You agree to abide by the rules. How to enter: Mark your crosses using a ballpoint pen. Twenty crosses may be put on this coupon for £1. Send to 'Spot the Shinty Ball' Competition, The Oban Times, P.O. Box 1, Oban PA34 4HB

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Please tape your £1 coin here (only if posting)

LAST WEEK'S SHINTY BALL WAS HERE...



This week's nearest the ball winners, who each receive £25 are:
M Fletcher
Oban
F Mackie
Oban

OT

SHOOTING



The winning team: Archie MacGilp Junior, Jonathan Gargan, Roy Laird, Martin O'Keeffe and Andy Peden.

Struggles in snow at Tarbert Gun Club

Tarbert Gun Club members had a busy weekend recently when they took part in a charity afternoon and their winter league February competition.

On Saturday February 2, Craig Samborek invited workmates and friends along to Barmore Shooting Ground to break clay targets.

Although billed as a 'fun afternoon', it got a bit serious as Steph Kirk was in top form.

Her colleagues challenged her on the down the line stand.

The real winner, though, was the Scottish Air Ambulance as £500 was raised for its funds.

The club thanked everyone involved.

Sunday February 3 saw 10 teams of five shooters trying to increase their scores in the winter league. Some did, some didn't.

The lying snow should have made the targets easier to see, but it had the opposite effect and it was a struggle to pick out the clays.

Archie MacGilp Junior's team was top lot on the day. John Weir and Brian Baird were the top individuals.

SPORTS HALL ATHLETICS

Indoor athletics at Atlantis Leisure

Mid Argyll Athletic Club's Oban area indoor competition takes place on Sunday February 24 in the games hall at Atlantis Leisure.

The competition starts at noon, with all entries on the day from 11.30am. Specialist equipment is used for running, jumping and throwing events for six age groups, starting at under seven up to under 17, with age qualification as on September 1 2018. There's an entry fee of £2 per competitor, or £5 for families of three or more.

Medals will be awarded to all competitors with trophies for individual winners in each age category. Successful athletes will qualify to compete in the Argyll final to be held at Atlantis Leisure in Oban on Sunday March 24.

The Oban and district event on February 24 is the third of four local area competitions this winter promoted by Mid Argyll Athletic Club, Mull Athletic Club, Kintyre Harriers and Atlantis Leisure.

The last local competition is at the Victoria hall, Campbeltown, on Sunday March 3.

The competition on February 24 is an ideal opportunity for boys and girls to try indoor athletics for the first time.

Boys and girls who may have missed the earlier competitions in Lochgilphead and Tobermory are welcome to enter the Oban event on February 24.

Sports desk 01631 568000

Under 18s have no chance against West of Scotland

Oban Lorne	0
West of Scotland	52
U18 Regional Cup Group B	

Oban Lorne U18s welcomed West of Scotland Rugby Club to Glencruitten.

This was the second group stage match for the U18 team which performed well in their league before Christmas.

The Oban side is strengthened by from Lochaber RFC players who regularly make the journey to Glencruitten.

West were the strong fa-

vourites going into this match and the young Oban team knew they would need to step up to get a result.

The game was refereed by Eddie Ingram and kicked off at 1pm. Stephen Lawson took the team photograph for the season, which is always appreciated, but after the photo shoot it was down to business.

Oban started well and kept possession but they found it difficult to break down the visitors. Strong runs from Craig Cook, Ewan Shearer and Kieron Morrison pro-

vided a good platform on occasions for Angus Neil to ship the ball wide. Jordan Norman enjoyed space on the wing, but West were up to the challenge defensively and Oban didn't get any points on the board.

The first 20 minutes would have to be given to Oban even though the score remained 0-0. Towards the end of the first half, West got the journey out of their legs and started to look sharp with the ball in hand. The well drilled and organised Bearsden side took

full advantage of some weak tackling and crossed the line with a well-executed move down the right wing. This set the tone for the remainder of the half, with West of Scotland stepping up a gear and the Oban side looking stretched at every play.

The second half saw some slick play from West which helped them to open up a significant lead, Oban struggled to find breathing space with their kick chase game and the West wing and full-back relished the opportunity to run



Blair McFarlane launches himself into this tackle.



Jordan Norman breaks through the West defence.

Ellen breaks four records at Mull event

The number of entries to Mull's Sports Hall Athletics in early February were down on 2018, but the level of performance was still encouraging.

This was especially so in the under-11 girls competition where five new Mull indoor records were set.

The Mull event, in Tobermory High School, was the second of four local area competitions in Argyll this winter.

Top athlete on the day was the girls under-11 champion Ellen MacRae from Salen who broke four Mull age records and came close to surpassing an Argyll age record.

Ellen won five out of the six events, starting with the standing long and triple jumps recording 1.94 metres and 5.52 metres respectively and setting new Mull age records.

Next was the four-lap race in which Ellen was timed at 24.57 seconds, improving the old record set in 2006 by almost two seconds. Such was the high standard in this age group, Lexi Dalgleish and Ellen's twin sister Gemma also ran inside the old record time.

Ellen ended the day by winning the high jump and the speed bounce, recording 82 jumps in 30 seconds.

This was only one jump less than the Argyll record set by Lyndsay Derrett from Dunoon in 2002.

Runner-up Lexi Dalgleish won the

javelin and improved her Mull age record set last year by a metre, throwing 13 metres. Ciara Cameron from Bunessan was the under-7 champion, winning all five events and improving the Mull age record in the standing long jump to 1.44 metres. Ciara's time of 32 seconds in the four-lap race was just half a second slower than the record.

Another Bunessan girl Palmo Jones won the under-9 contest, just two points ahead of Sienna Munro from Salen Primary School. Palmo won the long and triple jumps, while Sienna won the high jump on countback.

In the same age group, Erin Greig from Salen won the javelin and speed bounce and another Salen girl, Eilidh Cameron, won the four-lap race in 26.6 seconds, only 0.3 slower than the local age record.

Evie Kellett, from Salen, won five events in the under-13s ahead of Katie Qiu MacCrone from Tobermory who won the shot putt.

Evie just missed the four-lap age record with a 25.13 second time.

Quinn Soames from Bunessan won all five events in the under-7 boys contest. Quinn equalled the Mull age record in the speed bounce completing 49 jumps and was close to the record in the four-lap race and the standing long and triple jumps.

Ruaridh Dalgleish from Salen was the

SPORTS HALL ATHLETICS

under-9 champion, winning the four-lap race in 26.9 and the high jump. Runner-up Bailey Brown, Salen, won the long jump, triple jump and speed bounce.

In the same age group, Angus MacLean from Tobermory won the javelin with an impressive 12.25 metre throw.

Logan Gibson, Salen Primary School, was the under-11 winner ahead of Murdo Morrison and Liam Munro.

Logan dominated all six events including a javelin throw well over 17 metres in the small hall and could threaten the Argyll age record in this event at the Argyll Final in the games hall at Atlantis Leisure in Oban.

Robin Haddock-Farrier from Bunessan and Cameron MacVicar from Salen had a close contest in the under-13s with Robin winning by one point thanks to outright wins in three events.

The boys shared first place in the high jump.

Successful athletes from the Mull competition will compete at the Argyll Final at Atlantis Leisure, Oban, on Sunday March 24.

Events at the final will start at noon with registration from 11am.

Qualifiers will be advised by letter through their schools in early March.

no answer to



Oban Lorne Under 18s with coaches Gordon Shearer and Murray Hamilton before the game against West of Scotland. Photographs: Stephen Lawson.

the ball back at a disorganised Oban defence. Finn Charlton was making West work for the ball at the breakdown, along with Stuart MacQueen, but it was all too little too late for the Oban team.

Oban did have two occasions of pressure on the try line of West but were unable to finish.

The difference in the teams was evident and lessons will be learned by the Oban players.

It was good to face a high calibre opposition at home and congratulations to West who were well deserved winners on the day and should progress well in the competition.

Final score: Oban 0 - West of Scotland 52.

YOUTH RUGBY

The Oban U18 team will face Cartha Queens Park RFC at home on Saturday February 23.

This will be another tough test for the West Highland boys who face another well-established Glasgow team.

After this, the team will progress to a semi-final in either the Plate, Shield or Bowl, depending on how they finish in the group stage.

All supporters are invited along to support the boys on Saturday February 23.

Later that evening, after the Scotland game is shown on the club's big screen, there will be a curry and quiz night.

The club's 1st XV get back into action this Saturday



Craig Cook barges his way through the West of Scotland defence.

after the international break when they travel to play third bottom Bishopton.

Scottish Sea Farms continues Celtic Society Cup sponsorship in 2019

Scottish Sea Farms, a leading salmon farmer and a key employer amongst many remote and rural communities, is to sponsor the Glasgow Celtic Society Challenge Cup Final for a second year.

First played in 1879, the Glasgow Celtic Society Challenge Cup is the premier knock-out competition for clubs in the South of Scotland.

This year's cup final, hosted once again by Taynuilt Sports

Council at the village sports field, will take place on Saturday June 29 and will be broadcast live by BBC ALBA.

Donald Fletcher, the society's incoming president, said: 'We are delighted at Scottish Sea Farms' continued support following the outstanding success of last year's final.

'The buy-in and support of our sponsor allowed us to stage our most ambitious final yet and we look forward

SHINTY

to working closely with them to ensure a similar success this June.' The sponsorship was secured via Scottish Sea Farms' long-standing Heart of the Community initiative which provides grants to teams, groups and organisations in and around the areas in which it farms: everything from sports clubs and events, to mother and toddler clubs, playparks, adult learning and support with alcohol and drugs dependency or depression.

Georgie Mackenzie, Heart of the Community co-ordinator at Scottish Sea Farms, said: 'Shinty is a game of huge relevance and we are delighted to be returning as sponsor of the Glasgow Celtic Society Cup final, a tournament that has been instrumental in keeping this uniquely Scottish sport alive in the hearts and minds of young and old.'



Oban Camanachd won the Scottish Sea Farms-sponsored Celtic Society Cup last season.

Martial arts

IAIN RODGER
editor@obantimes.co.uk



Kyokushinkai Karate

Preparation for The Scottish Open is in full swing with entries coming in from all over the UK and Europe.

Some new countries have thrown their hat into the ring so for the first time there are entries from Switzerland and Germany.

Paul MacKay is training hard towards his 2nd dan grading which will take place on Saturday March 23. Drew Mackinnon and Charlie McLaughlin have also stepped up their training as they have dan grade tests coming up later in the year.

For further information on the Kyokushinkai Karate club, contact Iain Rodger (6th dan) for a chat on 07584 166542 or email iain@ikku.co.uk. Alternatively, message to Caledonia Kyokushin on Facebook.

Kickboxing

Training continues on Wednesdays, 5 to 14 years 4.30pm until 6pm and 15 years and over 6pm until 7.30pm. New starters welcome. Either message Senshi Do Kickboxing on Facebook or email shihanwill@gmail.com for details.

Shukokai Karate

Anyone looking for more details on these clubs should contact Kenny Gray (5th dan) on kenni.gray@btinternet.com or 07884 183905.

BJJ and MMA

Oban MMA continues to have students training for upcoming competitions and has restarted its beginners BJJ syllabus.

The monthly seminar with head coach Marcos Nardini was busy with students going over the De La Riva guard and the

intricacies of sweeping opponents from this position.

Marcos had positive feedback on the progress of students in the club, which was great to hear.

The MMA side of the club has been concentrating on striking and setting up takedowns which is proving to be popular and good for everyone's cardio.

Coach Coogie Potter said: 'Our classes are not just for those with ambition to compete or fight, but also for those who would just like to learn to defend themselves or get fit. We are always looking for beginners to start BJJ or MMA.'

If you would like to try BJJ or MMA, Oban BJJ can be found on Facebook or email coogiepots@gmail.com

Wado Kai Karate

The Park and Dunbeg sections of the Wado Kai club had a grading test at end of January. A full report will be in the next article.

Classes continue at the usual times, Park Primary School on Mondays at 3.15pm and Dunbeg Primary School at 6.30pm.

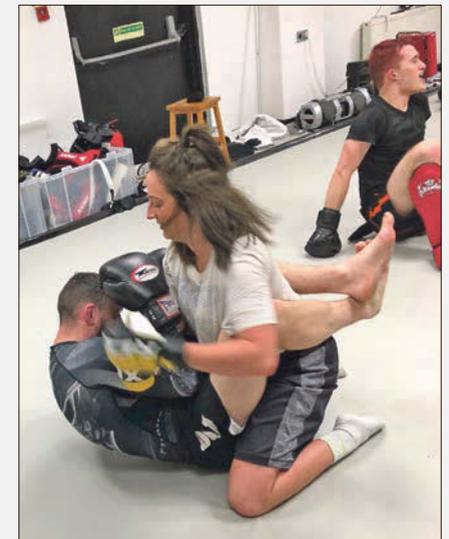
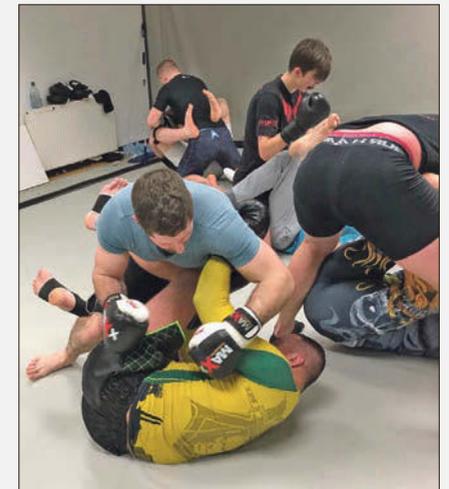
Use the details below if you would like more information about Wado Karate.

Park Primary School: Mike Faulkner m.faulkner6@btinternet.com

Dunbeg Primary School: Sensei Chris Bruce (7th Dan) at crb999@btinternet.com

Knights of The Tower - Medieval Combat Oban

Anyone wanting to try out medieval combat is welcome to training on Tuesday nights from 7pm until 9.30pm above Stoddart's of Oban, in the old Crofters.



Members of Oban MMA drilling striking set-ups and takedowns.

OT

GOLF



Bob MacIntyre. Photograph: Bounce Sports.

Second cut the deepest for Oban golfer Bob

Oban's Robert MacIntyre took part in the ISPS Handa Vic Open last week at the 13th Beach Golf Club in Geelong, Australia.

Although he made the cut after the first two rounds, with excellent scores of 67 and 70, Bob failed to make the cut for the final day.

Round one of the tournament, which is played on two courses and by both men and women, saw the Glencruitten left hander card an excellent five under par round of 67 on the Beach Course with six birdies and only one bogey.

Bob then carded a two under par 70 on the Creek Course in round two with three birdies and again only one bogey.

However, the 22-year-old struggled in a strong wind in round three and finished with a three over par 75 which still featured an excellent six birdies but two bogeys and three double bogeys ended his interest in the tournament.

Fellow Scot David Law from Aberdeen won the first place prize money of 156,250 euros.

Bob now heads for the ISPS Handa World Super 6 in Perth at Lake Karrynup Golf Club. The competition gets under way on Thursday February 14.

SCOTTISH AMATEUR LEAGUE

Results and fixtures

Last Saturday's results: Premier Division - Dunoon 1, Oban Saints 5; Premier Division One - Campbeltown Pupils no game; FC Argyle 3, Lochgilhead Red Star 1; Premier Division Two - Villa Park v Tarbert, postponed.

This Saturday's fixtures: West of Scotland Cup 5th round - Oban Saints v Neilston; Premier Division - Dunoon v St Joseph's FP; Premier Division One - Lochgilhead Red Star v Campbeltown Pupils; Premier Division Two - Tarbert v Paisley.

OBAN SAINTS YOUTHS

Results and fixtures

Last Sunday's results: Whitecraigs 1; Under 13s 16. Scoring for Saints were Aidan MacDonald (3), Duncan MacEwan (3), Calum Macmillan (2), Finlay Cameron (2), Preston MacIntyre (2), Gabriel Tidser, Zander Craik and Logan Black. Under 14s 0, OLM FC 1; Busby 9, Under 15s 0; Under 16s v Winlinton Wolves, postponed.

This Sunday's fixtures: Under 13s v Knightswood; Broomhill v Under 14s; St Rochs v Under 15s; Rutherglen Glencairn v Under 16s.

Dunoon blown away

Saints at home to Neilston on Saturday with a great chance of reaching last eight of the West of Scotland Cup

Dunoon	1
Oban Saints	5
SAFL Premier Division	

Oban Saints continued this season's dominance over Argyll rivals with an emphatic 5-1 win against Dunoon Amateurs at a blustery and chilly Dunoon Stadium.

Saints made four changes to the squad that had seen off Lochgilhead Red Star two weeks ago. Out went youngsters Aaron McKay and Kenneth Black, the injured James Ford and suspended co-manager Donald Campbell.

Taking their places in the match day pool were Steven MacLeod, Lewis Cameron and the other co-manager Willie Gemmell.

Holding role

Saints lined up with an unchanged back four of Ruaridh Horne, Dougal Graham, captain Dene Cassells and Scott Maitland. Willie Gemmell returned to the holding role in midfield alongside Matthew Kelly, just behind a three of David Beaton, Lewis Cameron and Fraser MacFarlane, with Craig MacEwan having the task of leading the line. The subs bench was made up of veteran defenders Jamie Graham and Steven MacLeod, midfielder Kerr Newbigging and young striker Keir MacLean.

Lochgilhead whistler Jimmy Litster took charge just as he had in the previous encounter earlier in the season in Oban.

One of his first duties was to award an early Saints free kick



David Beaton opened the scoring after two minutes.

Photographs: Derek Black.

as Dunoon midfielder David Zavaroni set the tone with a crunching tackle on Saints Scott Maitland. The away side, however, worked a quick free kick through Dougal Graham who slipped a pass to Craig MacEwan before the striker played a delightful ball into the stride of the speedy David Beaton who gleefully rounded the Dunoon keeper before stroking the ball home two minutes after the start.

Yellow card

Zavaroni then picked up the first yellow card of the afternoon with an out of control lunge on Dougal Graham. This was to set the tone for the opening 25 minutes with Saints having much of the ball and Dunoon giving away free kicks in dangerous areas of the field. Saints created

several chances, particularly down the right hand side, with Ruaridh Horne getting forward at will and creating chances for Craig MacEwan and Fraser MacFarlane, though neither forward could find the target.

Crossbar

Dunoon then had their best spell of the match. Forward Scott Cameron latched on to a long wind assisted ball that beat the Saints central defenders before rounding the advancing Graham Douglas in the Saints goal. Fortunately for Saints, the striker's effort came back off the crossbar and was cleared to safety by Matthew Kelly.

The home side weren't to be denied an equaliser though and on the stroke of half time Zavaroni's miss hit shot

somehow managed to bobble and find a way past Saints' keeper Graham Douglas leaving the sides all square at the break

The D & K Lafferty-sponsored Oban side remained unchanged as they came out for the second half and started on the front foot with chances created down both wings allowing Fraser MacFarlane, David Beaton and Craig MacEwan to trouble the Dunoon number one Ryan Nugent, with the goalkeeper coming out on top on all three occasions.

Scythed

Saints re-took the lead in the 63rd minute when Lewis Cameron's quick feet were too much for David Zavaroni who scythed him down in the box. Saints' top scorer this season dusted himself down and calmly placed his spot kick beyond the despairing goalkeeper.

This seemed to settle the Oban side back into the fluid football they had played for much of the first half and when a good move between Scott Maitland and Lewis Cameron resulted in a perfect ball across the six-yard box, Craig MacEwan steered the ball home and give Saints a two-goal cushion.

Co-manager Willie Gemmell then left the field to introduce the side's first substitution of the game, fellow midfielder man Kerr Newbigging coming into the fray in the 70th minute.

Saints went on to score a fourth goal in the 73rd minute when a Lewis Cameron corner was headed



Ruaridh Horne scored his first senior goal for the club against Dunoon with a well-taken half-volley.



Lewis Cameron netted from the penalty spot to make the score 2-1.

y by five-goal Saints



Two-goal hero against Dunoon Craig MacEwan is congratulated by Lewis Cameron, Matty Kelly and Scott Maitland after scoring in the recent West of Scotland Cup fourth round win over Thorn Athletic. Match report: John Horne.

on by Dene Cassells to the back post where the alert Ruaridh Horne was waiting to hammer home a precise right foot half volley. This was the young full back's first senior goal for the club and he celebrated in style.

Saints made their second substitution, bringing on Jamie Graham for Fraser MacFarlane and reverting to a back three in the 75th minute.

Final goal

Young striker Keir MacLean would also get a run out with ten minutes remaining and he had a hand in the game's final goal.

MacLean linked up well on

the left with Lewis Cameron before Cameron set up Craig MacEwan for the striker to score his second of the match. With time ticking away, young MacLean had a great chance to open his account but he blazed his effort over the bar.

Referee Jimmy Litster, who had a good game, blew for full time with Saints running out comfortable winners and gaining a well-deserved three points.

After the game Willie Gemmell said: 'I thought we played well in difficult conditions.'

'We dominated most of the game but, credit to Dunoon,

they made it difficult for us, but as the game wore on our fitness told and we ran out comfortable winners.'

Saints return to cup duty on Saturday when they take on SAFL Premier Division One side Neilston at Glencruitten in the fifth round of the West of Scotland Cup.

Saints and Neilston met back in August at Lochgilphead Joint Campus in the 2018 Argyll and Bute Cup tournament where Saints ran out 3-0 winners thanks to goals from Fraser MacFarlane, Donald Campbell and Kerr Newbigging.

Saturday's match at Glencruitten provides both sides

FOOTBALL

with a fantastic opportunity to progress to the last eight of one of the major cup competitions and looks set to provide another entertaining afternoon of cup football for the Glencruitten faithful.

Finish

The tie must be played to a finish on the day with extra-time and penalty kicks coming into play to decide the winner if the two sides cannot be separated after 90 minutes.

Taking charge of proceedings is experienced referee Thomas Gilchrist. Kick-off at Glencruitten will be 1.30pm.



Kerr Newbigging scores the third goal against Neilston during the Argyll and Bute Cup tournament at Lochgilphead earlier in the season.



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WEATHER

Thursday
Sunny intervals and a moderate breeze
Temperatures 7°C to 10°C.

Friday
Light rain showers and a moderate breeze
Temperatures 5°C to 10°C.

Weekend Outlook

Saturday
Sunny intervals and a moderate breeze

Sunday
Light rain and a moderate breeze
Temperatures 6°C to 10°C.



FRIDAY

TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday February 14, 2019** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

	06.04	1.8	12.36	3.0
Thur	19.03	1.8	***	**
Fri	00.54	3.0	07.34	1.8
	14.44	3.1	20.17	1.6
Sat	02.50	3.2	09.04	1.5
	15.48	3.4	21.24	1.3
Sun	03.53	3.5	10.17	1.2
	16.35	3.6	22.21	0.9
Mon	04.42	3.8	11.11	0.9
	17.17	3.8	23.11	0.6
Tues	05.25	4.1	11.58	0.6
	17.56	4.0	23.58	0.3
Wed	06.07	4.2	12.42	0.4
	18.34	4.1	***	**

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrishaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25
Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55
Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16
Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30
Lochboisdale	+0.30		

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate

Stop Press: New pontoons at Ulva Ferry and visitor moorings installed at Lochaline by North West Marine Ltd



INSIDE THIS WEEK:
Dunoon blown
away by five-goal
Saints

**NORTH WEST
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OBAN TIMES WEATHER
AND TIDES - SEE PAGE 55

John McPhee gears up for new Moto3 season

The PETRONAS Sepang Racing Team has presented its ambitious project for 2019 at the PETRONAS Twin Towers, unveiling the stunning new colour scheme that will adorn the team's five riders and their machines across the three categories of the MotoGP World Championship this year.

The new PETRONAS Yamaha Sepang Racing Team riders in MotoGP – Franco Morbidelli and Fabio Quartararo – and their 2019 Yamaha YZR-M1 machines lined up alongside PETRONAS Sprinta Racing riders Khairul Idham Pawi (Moto2), Ayumu Sasaki and John McPhee (Moto3) were the stars of the ceremony. This historic moment in Malaysian motorsport took place in the Dewan Filharmonik PETRONAS foyer recently.

This special occasion also served as a statement of intent from the team which, for the first time in Southeast Asia, will have a presence in all three categories of Grand Prix motorcycle racing – MotoGP, Moto2 and Moto3. Indeed, it was an unforgettable day for the whole of the PETRONAS Sepang Racing Team and the country in general – demonstrated by the presence of some of Malaysia's dignitaries as well as the many partners who have made this dream a reality.

The headline news of the event was the official unveiling of the PETRONAS Yamaha Sepang Racing Team line-up in MotoGP, which will feature 2018 Rookie of the Year Franco Morbidelli and the man who will look to relieve him of the title, Fabio Quartararo, who makes the step up from Moto2. The



John McPhee with his Moto3 teammate Ayumu Sasaki. Photographs: PETRONAS Sepang Racing Team

team will be Yamaha's only satellite representation on the grid, receiving top level material and factory support thanks to the magnificent working relationship between the team and Yamaha Motor Co. Ltd.

In the intermediate category, the PETRONAS Sprinta Racing outfit heads into its second season with a new face on board – Malaysia's two-time Grand Prix winner Khairul Idham Pawi.

Meanwhile in Moto3, Ayumu Sasaki welcomes a new teammate in Oban's John McPhee, forming a new pairing ready to fight for the positions of honour at the front of the pack.

Test

The first track appearance for the new-look PETRONAS Yamaha Sepang Racing Team took place from February 6 to 8 at the first official MotoGP test of 2019 in the Sepang International Circuit. Later,

from February 11 to 13, the PETRONAS Sprinta Racing Moto2 and Moto3 teams took part in a private test at the same track.

John McPhee said: 'What an amazing day here in Kuala Lumpur. To have the PETRONAS Sepang Racing Team launch at the PETRONAS Twin Towers was something special.'

'The new livery looks great and I'm really excited to get the season under way.'

MOTO3

'We've got an exciting year ahead with lots to look forward to.'

John's first race is the Qatar Grand Prix at the Losail Circuit on Sunday March 10.



John in conversation with some of the PETRONAS engineers.





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No 8446

Thursday 14 February, 2019

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SPOT THE SHINTY BALL

THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT **£1100**

Plea to ditch ferry fare hike falls on deaf ears



New tourist footpath for Glenfinnan Viaduct



Transport minister to 'fast track' action on Fort roads

Exclusive

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Transport Secretary Michael Matheson has ordered the fast tracking of part of the project aimed at tackling roads congestion in Fort William.

It follows discussions between Kate Forbes and Mr Matheson at the end of last year, when the Lochaber MSP pressed home the need for urgent work to speed up journey times on the A82 during the peak tourist season.

And in a recent letter, the Transport Secretary confirmed he will now instruct his officials to push on with part of the project.

He told Ms Forbes: 'From our discussions, it was clear your preference was for delivery of a solution to the traffic congestion in Fort William beyond any potential short-term interventions.'

'I have therefore instructed my officials to complete further work on the evidence base of the pre-appraisal for

Fort William now, rather than within the wider timescales of the full STPR2 [Scottish Transport Projects Review].'

Ms Forbes has repeatedly made the case that Fort William needs its trunk road realigned or, preferably, a new link road created.

She told the Lochaber Times this week: 'I am pleased that, after my meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Mr Matheson has agreed to progress work on the A82 faster than the normal timescales of Strategic Transport Projects Review.'

Significant

'He has instructed his officials to develop a range of options for the road network, as well as looking at other forms of transport. This is a very significant step, with direct Scottish Government intervention and instruction.'

She added: 'At my meeting, I pressed home the importance of the A82 and the huge frustrations of the summer congestion.'

'Since summer 2017, Transport Scotland and

Highland Council have both progressed work but there are no quick fixes and changes at the Nevis Roundabout have yielded very minor improvements.

'Tweaks to the roundabout did not deliver the anticipated improvements we all hoped for and, unfortunately, additional work is severely restricted.'

'More optimistically, there has been a lot of work to gather evidence for the pre-STAG [Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance] appraisal of a new road, either a link road or a realignment, which would, of course, require significant Scottish Government funding.'

'At the meeting, Mr Matheson agreed work needs to be expedited in Fort William to deliver a solution to the traffic congestion.'

'While I welcome the review of the National Transport Strategy which began in December, I think the A82 needs a quicker timetable than the Strategic Transport Projects Review.'



Move over Ray Mears, here comes Fort's Rob

Rob Cochrane, a volunteer ranger, Cub, Scout and Duke of Edinburgh leader from Inverloch, has won the prestigious Scottish Youth Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture in 2019, as part of the Fort William Mountain Festival. For the full story, turn to page seven.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson
alba photos.



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LT

New tourist footpath for Glenfinnan Viaduct

Work has started on a new footpath with several viewing areas overlooking Glenfinnan Viaduct, writes Mark Entwistle

Passenger numbers to the area's West Highland rail station have doubled in the last 10 years, with more than 11,000 visitors in 2017-18 flocking to the area to catch a glimpse of a train crossing the A-listed structure made famous by the success of the Harry Potter films.

Many other tourists stop off at Glenfinnan on their journey to Mallaig to view the station museum, viaduct and monument to the Jacobite rising.

However, the surge in tourist numbers has not been without problems, causing severe congestion on the roads in the small village and the growing popularity of the area has meant some people stray too far from the hillside and onto the railway to snap the perfect photograph.

To improve views, the severely eroded 1.4km walkway that crosses the hillside between the railway station and



the viaduct is being upgraded to provide easier access to several new viewing areas, with information panels and signs introduced to raise awareness of railway safety.

Tree clearance work has also been undertaken by Glenfinnan Station Museum, working with Friends of

the West Highland Lines, Glenfinnan Estate and Network Rail.

The project, a working partnership between ScotRail, West Highland Community Rail Partnership (WHCRP), Glenfinnan Station Museum, Glenfinnan Estate, Network Rail and Transport Scotland,

is intended to increase the proportion of visitors arriving by public transport by improving services available to them and is due to be completed by the end of February.

Once complete, the walkway will provide scenic views of the Glenfinnan Viaduct, the National Trust for Scotland's

Hundreds of thousands flock to Glenfinnan each year.

Jacobite Monument and the Loch Shiel Special Protection Area.

With permission of landowner Glenfinnan Estate, the 1.4 km Viaduct Trail was originally built by Glenfinnan Station Museum in 2012 to improve visitor access to the Grade-A listed structure built by 'Concrete Bob McAlpine' in 1901.

Support came from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. Over the years, significant numbers of voluntary hours have been poured into maintaining the path, but the volunteers have been fighting a losing battle against the wear caused by the ever-growing footfall. ScotRail project manager Anouska Chisolm said: 'The new footpath and viewing areas at Glenfinnan Viaduct

will be fantastic for tourism in the area and we hope it will encourage more visitors to travel here by rail instead of car.

'It's important we continue to work with our key partners on how we can boost tourism and bring wider economic benefits, along Scotland's most scenic railways.'

WHCRP secretary Hege Hernæs added: 'We are delighted the rail industries are prioritising this work, which enhances sustainable tourism.'

'We hope ScotRail will now capitalise on the investment by marketing and further improving Glenfinnan's train service.'

'We need to promote the best possible viaduct experience – cross the viaduct by train, then view it from a hillside vantage point – taking away the hassle of finding a parking space first.'

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'Harry Potter Line' enjoys magic boost

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Passenger numbers on the famous 'Harry Potter Line' between Fort William and Mallaig are rocketing every year, according to new figures.

And Lochaber MSP Kate Forbes has now called on ScotRail and Network Rail to further invest in train services in the West Highlands after the latest figures revealed the significant increase.

According to the Office of Rail Regulation, station use grew year-on-year at Fort William (up 17,342 or 12.5 per cent), Glenfinnan (up 2,498 or 27 per cent) and Mallaig (up 9,472 or 11 per cent) – on a journey which has previously been hailed as one of the most scenic in the world.

Annual passenger numbers were up by six per cent (almost 50,000 passengers) across Ms Forbes' Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch constituency, with growth at other towns including Aviemore, Dingwall and Kyle of Lochalsh.

Ms Forbes commented: 'It's fantastic to see more people choosing to go on the 'Harry Potter Line' and experience the fantastic scenery at the Glenfinnan viaduct, as well as the breath-taking views from Fort William to Mallaig.'

'Ultimately, I would like to see more people using public transport instead of driving as it reduces congestion and is good for the environment. That means public transport needs to be reliable, comfortable and regular.'

'I would like to see ScotRail

invest more significantly on this line and capitalise on the clear growth in tourism the area is experiencing.

'Strategically, especially given the frequent delays with Fort William traffic in the peak summer months, it makes sense to get more people off roads and onto trains.'

Ms Forbes added: 'Seeing passengers up by more than 17,000 in Fort William and also by nearly 10,000 in Mallaig is absolutely brilliant.'

'For a relatively small fishing village like Mallaig, where parking is under pressure, that is a colossal increase and I hope local shops and businesses have felt the benefit of the rise in visitors. If demand continues to grow, ScotRail and Network Rail should invest more so that visitors and locals can enjoy the beauty of the West Highlands.'

Plea to ditch ferry fare hike falls on deaf ears

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Pleas for Highland Council to drop proposals to increase Corran Ferry fares have hit the rocks, according to lead Lochaber councillor Andrew Baxter.

The council is due to debate its draft budget proposals today (Thursday) and last week, ahead of the meeting, Mr Baxter issued a last-ditch call to scrap any move to hike up ferry fares.

In an open letter to The Highland Council budget leader Councillor Alister Mackinnon, Mr Baxter warned he would not support any budget proposals that include a fare increase.

Mr Baxter says the ferry is producing an overall operating surplus and that the council should not increase fares on a lifeline service,



Councillor Andrew Baxter, above, left, wants Highland Council to ditch its plans to increase fares on the Corran Ferry, top right.



when there are no alternatives for peninsula residents who travel to Fort William for work, shopping or to access services. The threat of increased fares comes after previous changes to parking fees in Fort William and the loss of free parking for residents in the town's long-stay

car parks, which other towns in the Highlands have failed to implement.

Mr Baxter claims that taken together this would mean residents paying an extra £205 per year to travel to work in Fort William because of council policies.

He believes the council

cannot justify an increase in fares on this lifeline service, particularly when it has argued it should break even.

'It's been operating a surplus and is predicted to continue to do so. Officers should concentrate on implementing the suggestions supported by the local community, instead

of taking the lazy option of sticking up fares across the board,' he said last week.

Asked to respond towards the end of last week, a Highland Council spokesperson said: 'The council's budget proposals are still being finalised for consideration by members on February 14 at the special meeting of the Highland Council.'

But responding this week to the publication of the budget proposals, Mr Baxter told the Lochaber Times: 'My plea has fallen on deaf ears and the council administration has published a budget that includes a three per cent increase for each of the next three years. Yet again, Lochaber communities are being penalised and it seems all the discussions and consultations the council has conducted about the ferry have been a waste of time.'

Figures show lost bed days in Western Isles hospitals

Western Isles Health Board spent more than £1.6 million keeping patients in hospital last year despite them being fit to go home.

Figures published by the Information Services Division Scotland reveal more than half a million lost bed days throughout Scotland in 2018. The estimated cost of each day is £234 – at 7,054 lost bed days the Western Isles is proportionately one of the highest contributors.

The previous health secretary pledged to eradicate the practice of delayed discharge, but her successor Jeane Freeman has made no such commitment.

Labour candidate Alison MacCorquodale said the failure to end delayed discharges from hospitals is due to an underfunding of social care. She added: 'Keeping people in hospital when they could be at home makes no sense for the patient, the NHS or the taxpayer.'



Members of the Fort William and District branch of the Royal British Legion Scotland at the recent Burns supper. In the front row sitting are branch president Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Lane, Sir Alister Irwin and branch chairman Hugh Macinnes.

Special Burns Supper in 65th anniversary year

Fort William and District branch of the Royal British Legion Scotland held its annual Burns supper on Saturday February 2 at the Ben Nevis Hotel and Leisure Club.

Now in its 65th year, this was a particularly special occasion for the branch and members were joined by the national president of Legion Scotland Lieutenant General Sir Alistair Irwin and Lady

Irwin. The branch thanks everyone who attended and performed on the night and hotel staff. Thanks also go to David Brady, Gaynor Weldon and Tony Weldon for organising the evening.

Proposal to raise Council Tax by three per cent

Highland councillors gathering in Inverness today (Thursday) will be asked to approve a proposed rise of three per cent in Council Tax to help tackle a budget gap over the next three years of £60million.

The rise is part of The Highland Council's proposed revenue budget for 2019/20 to 2021/22 and includes a programme aimed at delivering £37.456m in savings over

the three years. The Council Tax rise would generate an additional £3.602m for local authority coffers and comes on the heels of the last financial year's three per cent rise.

The council does have the flexibility, under the Scottish Government's revenue grant settlement, to increase Council Tax by 4.79 per cent but says it recognises the demands this would place on taxpayers.

The council's strategy for the next three years is set out in a paper entitled 'A Sustainable Highland'. There will, says the council, be an inevitable impact on certain roles, but with a reduction in the size of the local authority's workforce achievable through restructuring. And the council says it is committed to do everything it can to avoid redundancies in its workforce of more than 10,000 staff.

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Ardgour hall struggles to find builder for work

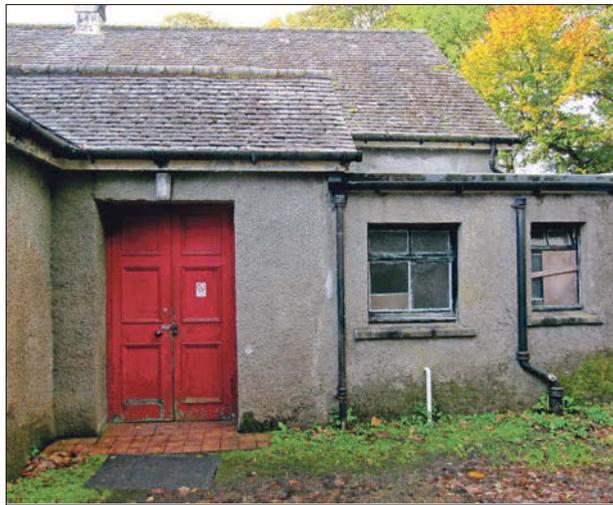
by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Ardgour Memorial Hall seems destined to never get its toilets renovated despite achieving funding, obtaining planning permission and having the full support of the community.

For at least a decade, residents of Ardgour have been desperate to find funding to renovate the dilapidated toilets in their community hall.

Initial work by a quantity surveyor had tender quotes coming in at over £100,000 – a daunting target which would prove to be unattainable despite applications to multiple sources.

The hall committee made the decision to focus their efforts on the ramshackle entrance porch and male toilets. The plans incorporated an aesthetically pleasing curved new build structure clad in wood,



The dilapidated toilets and porch at Ardgour hall.

housing a new unisex disabled toilet, baby changing facility, shower and a welcoming entrance porch.

Estimates for the work were sought and this time funding was obtained from the Ardgour

Area Fund and the Big Lottery Awards for All. However, it was again not to be as the single tender came back well over the estimated budget.

Once again the committee returned to the drawing board,

this time altering the plans for a more traditional rectangular shape, losing a few features and getting various community members on board to take on work or donate materials.

Additionally, it was discovered that disabled toilets can be zero VAT-rated which considerably altered the final sum. Satisfied costs had been reduced sufficiently, fate delivered a cruel blow which saw the sole tender contractor unable now to complete the work.

'We really do not know where to go from here,' said Ewen Maclean, chairman of the hall committee. 'Each time we thought we had done enough and approached the project sensibly and professionally, but it seems we just cannot get over that final hurdle.'

On top of not being able to find a contractor, there is also now a real risk of the hall losing

the funding as the designated time frame runs out.

Mr Maclean added: 'To have that happen would be a disaster. The hall committee have put many voluntary hours into this and spent precious monetary reserves getting plans drawn. So to have it all just collapse would be an incredible waste of resources.'

In a desperate attempt to keep the funding, and get the toilets built, the committee is therefore appealing to building contractors far and wide.

And Mr Maclean commented: 'It is not such a big job that a one-person contractor can't take it on, so we really are looking to hear from anyone who is interested.'

If you think you can help, contact Ewen Maclean, who can provide drawings and bill of quantities at, Ewen@ardgourestate.co.uk

Energy saving project nears completion

Glenug Community Association's 'Less Energy, More Recycle' project is nearing a successful completion.

New LED lighting is installed in Glenug Hall, saving about £300 a year on electricity, while extra insulation and draught-proofing, to be fitted next month, will further reduce the centre's carbon footprint.

Glass-recycling bins, supplied and serviced by Highland Council, are in place next to Glenug Community Shop and a new recycling notice board has been put up nearby.

A final environmental evening will be held in Glenug Hall on Wednesday March 20 at 7pm with talks and a chance to discuss recycling and environmental issues. The project was funded by £8,311 from the Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund which supports community-led organisations to run projects that reduce carbon emissions.

Kyle fatal road accident victim named

Police Scotland has confirmed the identity of the woman who died following a road traffic collision on the A87 near Kyle of Lochalsh on Monday February 4.

She was Anne Marie MacDonald, 62, from Portree on Skye.

Mrs MacDonald was the front-seat passenger in a black BMW 320d which had been travelling west on the A87 before leaving the road near Kirkton and colliding with

a tree. Emergency services were called shortly before 5.20pm. However, she died of her injuries at the scene.

The 64-year-old male driver suffered serious but non-life-threatening injuries and no other vehicles were involved in the collision.

Sergeant Alasdair Mackay commented: 'Our thoughts remain with the family and friends of Mrs MacDonald at this difficult time.'

'Our investigation into

the collision is ongoing and I would like to pass on our gratitude to everyone who has already assisted with our inquiries.

'I would ask anyone who has information of value but has not yet spoken to an officer to come forward as soon as possible.'

Anyone with information can contact Police Scotland by calling 101 and quoting incident 2735 of February 4, 2019.

Abellio jobs loss fears despite backlash

The relocation of Abellio's call centre jobs from Fort William looks to be going ahead, according to Lochaber MP Ian Blackford, despite a last-ditch attempt to rescue the 19 jobs.

Abellio took over the ScotRail franchise in 2015 and plans to relocate jobs from its Ben Nevis Industrial Estate base to its shared services centre in Glasgow, making it virtually impossible for the workforce to keep their jobs.

Mr Blackford met with Abellio management in his London office in an effort to convince them to reverse the decision. However, following the meeting, the MP said Abellio still plans to go ahead with the proposals. He said:



Ian Blackford.

'It is quite clear what has gone on. They have deliberately run down this business in an attempt to cut costs – all at a human cost to the employees. We must remember Abellio is effectively a public-funded service provider. They have a

responsibility that stretches beyond the central belt.

'People in the Highlands and Islands have worked extremely hard to fight depopulation over the years. Companies like Abellio have a duty to help not hinder that fight. If the current management do not take their responsibilities seriously then quite simply they have to go.'

A spokesman for Abellio said: 'Last week we shared our proposals with staff and their trade union and we have been continuing our consultations with them. Until we have completed this process with our staff and heard their proposals and preferences, it would be inappropriate for us to comment on Mr Blackford's statement.'

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Highland pine martens sent to Wales

Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES) staff are celebrating the success of a pine marten reintroduction programme in Wales, after helping to source and capture specimens from across Scotland.

The Pine Marten Recovery Project has been led by the Vincent Wildlife Trust under licence from Scottish Natural Heritage and in full compliance with the Scottish Code for Conservation Translocations.

Between autumn 2015 and 2017, a total of 51 pine martens were translocated from FES woodlands across the Highlands to the forests of Cambrian Mountains in mid-Wales.

Kenny Kortland, Species Ecologist with FES, commented: 'Pine martens are fairly abundant in many forests of the national forest estate, so we could easily spare some for this fantastic project. However, the trust was very careful to assess the robustness of the donor population before trapping took place.'

'The majority of the animals that were released in Wales very quickly claimed home ranges for themselves and they are establishing a thriving population.'

'Kits have been born every year since the first release so it looks like the pine martens' return to Wales has been an unqualified success.'

Bonnie chair fit for a prince goes on show

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

A beautiful chair which once belonged to Bonnie Prince Charlie will be on display to the public at Glencoe Folk Museum this year after undergoing incredible restorative conservation.

The Stuart Chair, which dates from around 1660, was reputedly gifted to the MacDonalds of Glencoe by Princess Charlotte, the daughter of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, after his death.

It was presented to the Clan Donald Society of Edinburgh by the family of the Chiefs of Glencoe, and thereafter was donated to Glencoe Folk Museum.

The chair has been in storage for a number of years due to its fragile state, but a generous grant from the Association of Independent Museums' Pilgrim Trust Conservation Scheme allowed the museum to have this essential work carried out.

The conservation work was undertaken by Younger Conservation Ltd, whose impressive client list includes the National Trust for Scotland, Historic

Environment Scotland and the Palace of Holyroodhouse. Fiona Watt, textile conservator, said: 'The conservation of the Bonnie Prince Charlie chair was a very rewarding job. At each stage of the treatment, improvement could be seen.'

'The appearance of the extremely damaged velvet has been transformed by the support stitching and the dyed support fabric, which tones in with the worn areas. We can't wait to see the chair back on display.'

The museum has long had strong links with the MacDonalds of Glencoe.

Mrs Jean MacDonald-Clarke - a direct descendant of the MacDonald Chief murdered during the massacre of 1692 - was very involved in the early days of the museum, and it was through her that a number of the museum's more significant Jacobite items came into their collections.

Museum curator Catriona Davidson added: 'It is exciting for us to have such a strong line of provenance for an item of this age.'

'It is one of our oldest and most significant items, and with interest in the Jacobites increasing thanks to the

popularity of the Outlander books and TV series, we feel it is the perfect time to highlight Jacobite collections which remain in the Highlands.'

The museum's Jacobite collection covers a period of more than 50 years, spanning from the massacre of the MacDonalds of Glencoe in 1692 to the fierce repression of Highland culture after the Jacobites' famous last stand at the Battle of Culloden in 1746.

The Bonnie Prince Charlie Chair will take pride of place in this exhibition this year, alongside other fascinating Jacobite artefacts such as a bible which belonged to the MacDonald Chiefs, a white cockade dating to the 1745 uprising, and items belonging to Captain Robert Campbell, the man notori-



The chair before restoration, left, and afterwards.

ous for leading the Massacre of Glencoe. The museum will reopen for the new season on Saturday, April 6.

Reward offered for return of missing parrot Lola

The hunt continues to find an African Grey parrot that went missing from its owner's Spean Bridge home more than a month ago.

Lola disappeared from her cage in Kim Ferguson's home in early January and despite a Facebook appeal and poster campaign has not been seen since.

Kim now says she will pay a reward for her pet's return.

Lola is normally quite tame, but will probably be frightened and hungry by now and possibly hiding from predators at ground level.

Lola often whistles and 'talks' and might be possible to catch if sighted. However, Kim says this should only be attempted if possible without



Lola has been missing for 30 days.

scaring Lola, otherwise best recourse is to ring her on 07780 707376.

On her most recent Facebook post, Kim said: 'Still no luck with finding Lola, my African Grey. Yesterday was very windy and she could have been blown along for miles. African Greys are not homing animals. She will never find her way home un-

less she can hear us shouting for her, so I need everyone to keep an eye out for her.'

'Just as the sun comes up and again, goes down, is when they are at the noisiest and most active. Please, please be vigilant.'

'African Greys tend to go to ground rather than up a tree, so bear this in mind if you are out walking please and if any of the children in the village want to look for her, I would be delighted to offer a monetary reward for her return.'

'I have been looking everywhere that I can think of myself, so I feel it will be down to good luck and perseverance. She'll be getting hungry now so may seek human interaction.'

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Special report: Lochaber pupils remember Holocaust

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Every year in January a couple of weeks are set aside at Lochaber High School for learning about the Holocaust in the run up to Holocaust Remembrance Day on the 27th of the month. This year was no different but it was more poignant.

The school's Holocaust Ambassadors, Jaynie Ireland and Zuzanna Kruk – who took part in the Holocaust Educational Trust's Lessons From Auschwitz project this year – led S2 pupils' learning in particular about the Kindertransport survivors, brought to the UK by Sir Nicholas Winton.

One of these was Harry Bibring, who came to the

UK with his sister from Austria in 1939. Harry spent many years sharing his story with school pupils across the UK and visited Lochaber High on two occasions.

In 2011, he planted the school's Holocaust Memorial Tree in memory of his mother who died in Sobibor concentration camp. Harry had been planning a visit to the school in June but he sadly passed away on January 31 at the age of 93.

S2 pupils completed their lessons on the Holocaust by placing a special stone around the tree.

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Zuzanna Kruk – a personal account

I feel hugely privileged to have been chosen for the Lessons From Auschwitz project and do not think that I will ever forget it.

After taking part in the first seminar and hearing Eva Clarke's incredible story, I was very moved and more anxious than ever about the visit to Auschwitz and Birkenau.

After returning, I was asked by all who knew where I had been: 'How was it? Was it really sad?', but I felt unable to answer those questions and finally understood the meaning behind 'hearing is not like seeing', repeating it to all who asked.

I find it difficult to select the appropriate words to



Above, Zuzanna, far right, and Jaynie, centre, giving their presentation; and left, stones were put round the memorial tree in memory of the late Harry Bibring.

describe the events which took place there or to describe my reaction. I feel as though it is not my right to be traumatised or scared or sad when I did not experience the horrors which were forced upon the thousands. I should only honour them, remember them and not let it happen again.

A feature of the tour which had an especially strong impact on me was the book of names where I found many pages of my own surname.

As a Polish person from Łódź, I can be sure that members of my family were lost in the Holocaust, although I can never know their names.

I flip through the pages like looking at a tragic family cemetery. I can't help but wonder how many of these individuals are my family. Which could have been my distant cousins, aunts and uncles, which of their unknown faces would otherwise be in my photo albums.

With the hundreds of portraits on the walls, I wonder how many of them walked the corridors in which I stand. Looking at a photograph of Lucyna Białek, who has my mother's maiden name, who looks so similar, I feel uneasy. I feel as though I should know her, or her



name at least. She lasted just two years there.

A little shoe is among the thousands of others. What a tiny foot must have worn it and for what a short amount of time. Children grow out of shoes so fast. How could we have ever done this to each other? Sweet, innocent children. What did they know of what it all meant?

I'm furious. All of a sudden I imagine a crowd of barefoot people walking in to find their shoes. Mothers holding children, rummaging through the grey mountain to look for that little shoe.

It so frustrating when you can't find a shoe. But I look around and it's just quiet and I'm terrified and it settles in that they will never come back and that the mother who put her daughter's shoes down neatly in a place that she would remember is name-

less ashes. I feel so useless. What is the point in the half-hour-long PowerPoint presentations we held in school, when I could never express those frustrations that I feel and the fear, the pure fear that the victims felt and their bravery?

How each individual who was murdered was an individual?

How could I explain that the perpetrators were real people, not fictional monsters? How could I say, to a room of 13-year-olds that each of them is capable of equal cruelty?

The Holocaust did not happen to teach us a lesson but indeed a lesson can be learned from it. A lesson can be taught. And although I am not as articulate or eloquent as I wish I could be, I still want others to understand.

That is why I took part in this project. For those who have no one to remember them. And the presentations we held in our school may not be mighty or world-changing, but they were the very best we could do so that the memory lives on.




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Inverlochy's Rob wins prestigious youth award

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

A volunteer ranger, volunteer Cub and Scout group leader, and a Duke of Edinburgh leader from Inverlochy has won the prestigious Scottish Youth Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture in 2019, as part of the Fort William Mountain Festival.

A keen Scout leader, Rob Cochrane has done much to expand the organisation's activities in Fort William.

Having moved to the area from Aberfeldy to study Adventure Tourism Management at West Highland College, he got involved in the local Cub and Scout group.

Starting out in a volunteer role he has now taken over as leader and has grown the group as a whole in all areas of Scouting. He often spends his spare time fixing and upgrading the local hall in Kilmallie.

Rob is also a regular Duke of Edinburgh leader and has worked as a trainee volunteer ranger with Nevis Landscape Partnership.

Rob recently graduated from West Highland College with a first in Adventure Performance and Coaching.

On being told of the award, he said: 'It means an awful lot to receive this award. I really love these mountains: I love living and working in them and sharing them with others.'

'It is truly humbling to have been given this award, and I would like to thank my friends and family who have helped me become who I am. I would also like to thank the festival committee for its hard work behind the scenes.'

Rod Pashley, chairman of the Highland Mountain Culture Association, which runs the Fort William Mountain Festival, said: 'Rob is such an excellent example of a young person getting involved and inspiring younger generations in not only



Rob Cochrane is the winner of this year's Scottish Youth Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture in 2019.

Scouting activities but the broader aspects of mountain life.

'We're delighted to be able to recognise Rob's achievements so far and look forward to all that is to come.'

Rachel Bradley, who nominated Rob for the award, said she had put his name forward for dedicating much of his time to both looking after and teaching others about the amazing landscapes we're lucky enough to call home.

'With his love of bush craft ... he is the next Ray Mears'

'His many years volunteering as a Scout leader and his constant encouragement to others to get outside and appreciating wild places is commendable. With his love of bush craft and practical mind, he is the next Ray Mears in the making,' she said.

Marc Wilson, marketing manager at Gael Force Boat

Building, added: 'Gael Force Boat Building in Corpach wishes to express its sincere congratulations to Robert Cochrane on his award win, which is thoroughly deserved given his incredible dedication to local outdoor activities as a volunteer and through Duke of Edinburgh leadership.'

The Scottish Youth Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture, sponsored jointly by Gael Force Group and the Nevis Landscape Partnership/Heritage Lottery Fund, will be presented to Rob at a special ceremony on February 23, during the Fort William Mountain Festival 2019, which runs in and around Fort William and Lochaber, the Outdoor Capital of the UK, from February 20 to 24.

The award is sponsored by the Gael Force Group, which acquired Corpach Boat Building Company in October 2018 and is to be renamed Gael Force Boat Building.

College welcomes three new board members

West Highland College UHI is delighted to welcome three new members to its board of management this week, including one Lochaber resident.

The college will also soon begin its search for a new chairperson in the coming weeks to replace the current chairman, John C Hutchison, who will step down at the end of June.

Training

Mr Hutchison said: 'As the college is committed to developing its plans in line with the education and training needs across the whole of the West Highlands, I am particularly pleased to welcome members who, between them, cover much of the west coast.'

'Their membership will help us to ensure that we are kept fully informed about local issues and needs, and therefore best able to support the communities we serve. Their particular skills will enhance what we can offer the college as we continue



Ross Lynn.

to support and guide it over the next few years.' Lochaber resident Ross Lynn will take up her new position on the West Highland College board having recently moved to the area from Devon after leaving

her role as a management consultant in the voluntary sector. She has enjoyed a long and varied career in teaching and business, as well as completing two postgraduate Masters degrees.

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LT

Fancy footwork takes centre stage at Fèis fundraiser

by Neill Bo Finlayson
nfinlayson@obantimes.co.uk

Fèis Lochabair raised almost £500 at its annual fundraising on Saturday February 9 as dancers of all ages took to the floor to show off their nifty footwork in front of around 80 people at the Ben Nevis Distillery.

A large crowd turned out to enjoy a stellar evening of music and dance, courtesy of Fèis Lochabair youngsters.

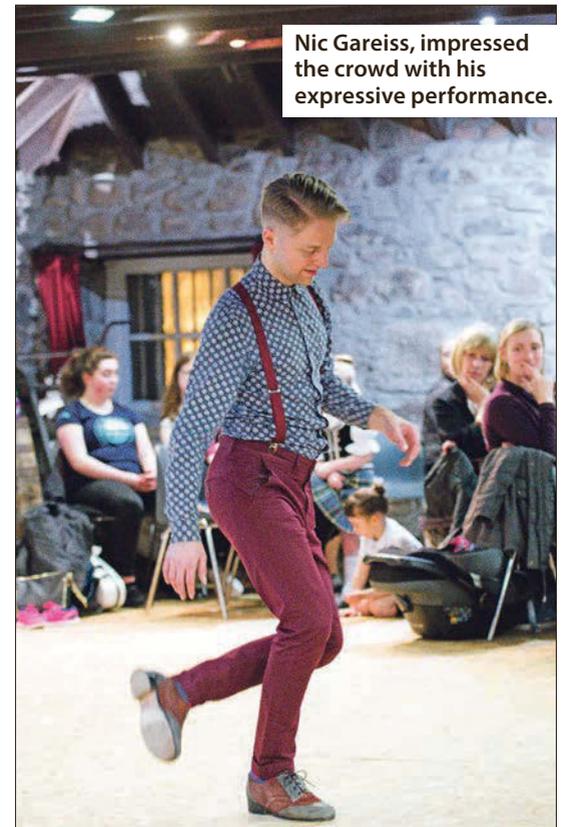
There were performances from young musicians of Fèis Lochabair and the Fèis step dance class (they meet once a week and are tutored by Jane Douglas). Fèisean Lochabair Cèilidh Trail were the cèilidh band for the night and there were performances, too, by Jane Douglas Dancers, as well as the internationally

renowned step-dancer Nic Gareiss, from Michigan, who wowed the audience with his energetic performance.

Nic had earlier in the day delivered workshops for children and adults. The workshops were funded by the Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland and Fèisean nan Gàidheal. Both organisations are partners in the First Footing residency along with the University of Edinburgh.

Thanks to donations and raffle prizes, the evening raised £463 to help towards funding classes and workshops for the youngsters.

Fèis Lochabair is a voluntary run opportunity for children to gain access to the Gaelic arts and is run as part of the charity organisation Feisean nan Gaidheal.



Nic Gareiss, impressed the crowd with his expressive performance.

Above, dancers of all ages had a chance to get on the floor on Saturday. All photographs: ABrightside Photography.



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H2SJP30176 10/18



Dancers bow before the audience.

VIEW FROM THE CHAMBER



It was a busy week for the Chamber of Commerce team last week, with four events in four locations over the two days of our Tourism Roadshow around Lochaber.

The aim of the roadshow was to take staff from key tourism organisations out to meet people with tourism

businesses on their own doorstep. We had a great response to the events, with around 120 people – from accommodation, retail and activity businesses – attending across the four events

in Ballachulish, Strontian, Arisaig and Fort William.

The roadshow gave us the chance to connect local tourism businesses with key people in the industry in an informal way and we were delighted that so many people joined us to make the most of the opportunity.

The three-hour drop-in format meant there was ample time for everyone to have face-to-face chats with Chris and Cassie from VisitScotland, Stephanie from Expedia, and Ian and Elinor from Freetobook, an online booking system. The friendly chamber team also had a

Lochaber High School film wins top award

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Lochaber High School won the top prize for Best Film at Friday's FilmG Awards, for a powerful story about bullying.

The Scottish Government sponsors the top prize in the youth category.

Like many of this year's entries, Lochaber High's film *Origami* focuses on bullying, but from the unusual perspective of the bully.

In attendance on the evening was Deputy First Minister John Swinney MSP, who praised the Lochaber High young film-makers: 'My congratulations to Lochaber High School, and all the winners and nominees of tonight's awards.'

'We recognise the cultural, economic, educational, health and social benefits that Gaelic language and culture brings to the whole of Scotland.'

'That's why we want to increase the number of users of the language while increasing opportunities to

use it in everyday situations. Broadcasting Gaelic-speaking film and television is vital to ensure its continuation at the heart of our cultural identity.'

Faye MacKinnon and Annie MacNeil accepted the award on behalf of all the Lochaber High School FilmG crew, which also included Laura Robertson, Evan Patterson, Serena Matheson, Josephine Matheson, Aine O' Rua and Flora Stevenson.

Other winners included wild swimmer Calum Maclean who won Best Director for his experimental film, *Fo Bhuaidh*, who said: 'I'm delighted to be awarded the FilmG Best Industry Director prize. The standard in this year's competition was excellent with some very strong films.'

'FilmG is a brilliant platform for film-makers and creative people to try new ideas, or to showcase their talents, and a further opportunity to use their Gaelic.'

The film about facing fears was nominated for three awards in total, but



Faye MacKinnon and Annie MacNeil who accepted the award on behalf of Lochaber High School's winning film crew in the FilmG awards 2019. Photograph: Alan Peebles

was pipped to the post by rival film *Sòlas* in the Best Drama and Best Performance categories.

Sòlas, a powerful film about domestic violence by creator Lana Pheutan, scooped the £1,000 prize, with lead actor, Lewis-based Mairi MacLennan, picking up the £200 prize for Best Performance for her moving portrayal of domestic abuse victim Jenna.

FilmG is run by MG ALBA and Skye-based media company Cànan Graphics Studio, to encourage the growth of Gaelic media talent. It has been running for 11 years.



Mairi MacLennan with Steven Cree.

Around 120 people from accommodation, retail and activity businesses attending across the four events in Ballachulish, Strontian, Arisaig and Fort William.

came along to find out more about what's going on and to ask their questions. We've come back to work with lots of inspiration and look forward to bringing further business events on the road soon.

In the meantime, check out www.lochaberchamber.co.uk to find all the latest news and events from the chamber.



chance to catch up with folk about business issues, the range of benefits that chamber membership offers and our upcoming events.

We had a fantastic time

meeting up with members and prospective members, and learned a lot about different business needs across Lochaber.

Thank you to everyone who

WHAT'S ON in Lochaber

Fort William Library is hosting a family day on Monday February 18 to celebrate families of all shapes and sizes in the area. Come along to the free events and enjoy some family time together. Children must be accompanied by an adult for all events.

The day begins with a Bookbug session at 10.30am and finishes off with children's craft club from 6pm-7pm.

Representatives of Lochaber Sensory Care for sight and hearing support will visit Abbeyfield House in Ballachulish on Monday February 18. The team of staff and volunteers, from the Caol-based charitable organisation, will be there from 10.30am until 12.30pm. They will offer help and advice to residents and local people with a sight or hearing impairment. They will also re-tube and maintain NHS hearing aids and supply NHS batteries for these.

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MacPhail

ANGUS MACPHAIL

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It's not too often that The Oban Times' mid-February issue coincides exactly with Valentine's Day, so this week's subject has been chosen to mark that romantic coincidence.

I can with relief report to readers of last week's article that the house-moving hasn't yet been too arduous and on Thursday night, hopefully, we'll manage to extract ourselves from building Ikea furniture and do something fitting to honour the day.

Love is undoubtedly one of the most powerful forces running through mankind and it is no coincidence that it has been the favoured subject of poem, song and other vehicles of literature since these art-forms were conceived.

As well as being powerful, love is one of the most complex areas of life and under its wide umbrella are many variants.

Between people, as well as the physical love of attracting sexes, there is family love, the love of friendship and the wider general love for

the fellow human being. For those who are religious, there is the love of the divine in its many forms, shown both to human representatives or leaders and to the gods of various faiths.

There is also a type of love that relates to place, landscape and ocean, and, of course, there is the love felt for animals, nature and the world as a whole.

Among these and the many other types of love are an infinite number of mixed, interweaving and crossing strands of the mind and body that together create one of the most fascinating and fulfilling and potentially painful aspects of life.

The strand of love celebrated most widely on St Valentine's Day is, of course, what is most commonly called romantic love. The following lyrics are a simple wee love song in that vein. Happy St Valentine's Day to all.

Steering by the Stars – Angus MacPhail

I will set ahead my course by the clear celestial sky.

*I will steer by the stars for wherever you may lie,
By the guiding lights above to the heaven no one knows
For the faith I have in you my soul will trust the compass rose.*

Chorus

*You, you are the ocean, and I, the setting sun
In your arms the fire is falling and the sky and sea are one.*

*I have travelled many shores and walked upon the waves
But the bonds of old could never hold for what the spirit craves.*

*Beyond the bays where shallow ways of consciousness compel –
The seven oceans of the earth where love and wonder dwell.*

*Past the far-off west horizon is the harbour where I'm bound,
Where the promised land of peace and the golden grail is found;*

*And the beams of gloried sunlight in a hundred coloured kind
Give dreams of new tomorrows every sorrow left behind.*



Representatives from the Western Isles Lifestyle Lottery.

Islands lottery passes £100,000 milestone

More than £100,000 has been raised by the Western Isles Lottery for communities across the islands since its launch in 2017.

The public is invited to attend the lottery's AGM on February 20 at 6pm in An Lanntair to hear more details of the lottery's operation and success.

Since the launch, £71,530 has been raised for a variety of innovative improvements, with all monies raised up to end December 2018 already distributed. In addition, £28,887 in total weekly prize winnings has been shared out to over 200 happy supporters.

The lottery is now supported by more than 2,000 weekly tickets and is steadily growing in numbers. With this current level of support, the Western Isles are on target to benefit from more than £85,000 during the coming 12-month period.

Stornoway town centre has been showcased at its best over the past two festive periods as well as during last year's busy tourist summer season.

Some of the improvements are permanent displays and this is being developed further by Stornoway Amenity Trust which received lottery proceeds for the area.

The Library Lego Club was formed and the hugely

successful Disney Day in September 2018 benefited a variety of businesses in the town.

The lottery team is now in a position to extend funding for upgrades outwith the town centre during the coming year.

Eoropie playpark, Carloway Community Centre, Westside Agricultural Show and Balantrushal Community Association have all benefited

'Crucially, without the support of locals ... it would never have got off the ground'

from funding in the Ness/Westside area to date.

Uig Community Centre, North Lochs Community Centre and the new Keose Playpark have all benefited from funding raised by supporters in the Uig/Breascleat/Lochs area with more presentations to be given.

Harris Voluntary Action replaced its festive decorations in Tarbert last year and has installed hearing loop systems for those hard of hearing in local community centres.

Balivanich playpark, Sgoil Lionacleit Pipe Band, Volunteering Uist and

Ciumhne Sensory Garden Project all received funding and a new soft play centre is to open with funding at Claddach Kirkibost in the north of Uist.

Barra enjoyed new festive lighting, Christmas trees and the Herring Trail has been replaced. A community PA system was purchased and, recently, Northbay swing park received funding. A wall is now to be erected around the Annie Jane memorial shortly.

Malcolm and Janet Paterson, founders of the lottery, said it had been impossible at the outset to predict how successful or otherwise the lottery would be as it was such an innovative venture.

'Without the dedication of Tony Robson, Emma Fraser and Shona MacLeod, the lottery could not have been managed,' they commented.

'And, crucially, without the support of locals registering and buying tickets, it would never have got off the ground. We are also grateful to all extended family and friends on the mainland who have also contributed to its success for the islands.'

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Trust gives another £30,000 to Bethesda

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Bethesda Hospice, which provides end-of-life care and support to Western Isles families, has received another £30,000 from community wind farm charity Point and Sandwick Trust.

The money is the latest tranche of funding from the award-winning trust, which owns and operates the Beinn Ghrideag wind farm for the sole purpose of generating profit to reinvest in the community of the Western Isles.

Point and Sandwick Trust has a 25-year commitment to support Bethesda, located in Stornoway, and will be giving the hospice a total of £55,000 every year for the lifetime of its turbines. The grant on Friday brings its support for Bethesda to £110,000 over the past two years.

The money is the biggest pledge that Bethesda has received and is the biggest grant given regularly



Pictured are Norman Mackenzie, PST chairman; Christina Smith, PST office manager; Carol Somerville, Bethesda general manager; Rhoda Mackenzie, PST board member; Murdo MacLennan, Bethesda vice-chairman; Natalie Keiller, Bethesda finance development officer; and Calum MacDonald, Beinn Ghrideag wind farm developer.

Photograph: Sandie Maciver of SandiePhotos.

by Point and Sandwick Trust – and the only one it has committed to for 25 years.

The financial support was pledged to Bethesda six years before the wind farm became a reality, with the signing of a memorandum.

At the time the first cheque was handed over in late 2016,

the then PST chairman Angus McCormack (now honorary president) said: 'Bethesda means so much to our community ... it has been uppermost in our minds since the earliest days of the project.'

His successor, chairman Norman Mackenzie, added that it was a partnership to be proud

of, saying: 'Bethesda provides a vital service to our local community. There is no better use of community money than palliative care, which is there for the whole community when they need it,' he said.

Carol Somerville, Bethesda general manager, said the money from the trust was a massive boost – as it could be counted on at the start of every financial year, when they have to begin fundraising afresh.

Western Isles MSP welcomes backing

Western Isles MSP Alasdair Allan says Holyrood's backing for the SNP's budget plans offers economic stability in the face of Brexit while giving a cash boost to the NHS, schools and other vital services.

Despite Westminster cuts of almost £2 billion in a decade to the money which the Scottish Government has available to spend, Dr Allan says the SNP is proposing additional funding of almost £730 million for Scotland's health and care services bringing NHS Western Isles' budget up to £75.7 million.

Under the deal reached, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar will receive an additional £1.6 million in spending power compared to last year's budget as part of a total overall settlement of £11.1bn for local government.

'With the UK government in complete chaos, the SNP in government are offering certainty and stability with a budget which protects public services, supports the economy, and helps build a fairer country,' he commented.

'Giving our schools, hospitals and other vital services in the Western Isles the money they need to deliver better services for our communities is vital to this government. This is why I welcome Holyrood's support for the budget.'

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Report shows Parkinson's crisis facing NHS Highland

From diagnosis to ongoing care, many people with Parkinson's in the NHS Highland area and across Scotland are facing major issues in accessing the care they need from overstretched local NHS and social care services.

That's the conclusion drawn by Parkinson's UK in Scotland in a major report on Parkinson's services published last week.

The charity's report, backed by leading clinicians, makes 13 recommendations that need urgent action if Scotland is to meet the health and social care needs of the growing Parkinson's population. About 12,400 people in Scotland currently have a Parkinson's diagnosis – nearly 900 in Highland alone – and that number is predicted to increase by 40 per cent within the next 20 years.

Parkinson's is a complex incurable neurological condition that affects every aspect of daily living. There are particular challenges for those who live in remote, rural and island communities.

The report highlights unacceptably long waiting times for diagnosis and the nation-

wide shortfall in Parkinson's nurses as major concerns. The report also recommends the establishment of multi-disciplinary Parkinson's teams to provide a more holistic, comprehensive and person-centred approach to Parkinson's care.

Annie Macleod, Scotland director at Parkinson's UK, said: 'This is the first time that we've shone such a searching spotlight on Parkinson's services in every part of Scotland.'

'We recognise that people providing Parkinson's care are doing an incredible job, but we've been challenged by people with Parkinson's to discover whether their individual experiences are unique or part of a bigger and worrying picture.'

'Sadly, we've found problems and failings are not isolated incidents but are part of a Scotland-wide under-provision of services for people with Parkinson's.'

'All but one health board – Western Isles – has inadequate specialist Parkinson's nurse provision. Across Scotland there should be at least 40 Parkinson's nurses, instead we have less than 30. NHS Highland has just 1.5



Barry Moran lives in Glenachulish with his wife and young sons. Barry has been living with Parkinson's since his diagnosis at the age of 39 in 2014. Barry said: 'Despite the best efforts of the people in the NHS that we see working flat out in Highland, there's a real feeling among the Parkinson's community that we are all too easily overlooked in terms of resources and investment. 'Too often we have to wait too long for diagnosis. Follow-up appointments are too short and infrequent and accessing other therapists and services can be a real struggle for some. Specialist Parkinson's nurses have a vital role but they are so overworked. We have half as many as we should and that means we don't get to see them as often as we should.' 'It's vital that NHS Highland and local Health and Social Care Partnerships face up to the challenges that Parkinson's presents.'

nurses, when it should have at least three to cover the care needs of its Parkinson's population.

'People with Parkinson's and their families tell us of the anxiety caused by delays in diagnosis. Despite this, neurology services are routinely missing the Scottish Government's 12-week target for new outpatient referrals in all but the smallest island health boards. These targets are typically missed by a large margin. NHS Highland has better waiting times than most areas of Scotland but still routinely misses the target.'

'Parkinson's UK in Scotland finds these delays wholly unacceptable. Across Scotland, at least one in 10 neurology and medicine for older people consultants' posts are unfilled, and urgent action must be taken to recruit consultants with expertise in Parkinson's, speed up diagnosis and enable people with Parkinson's to be properly monitored and have timely access to treatment.'

'We welcome the Scottish Government's new National Action Plan for Neurological Conditions and see it as a real opportunity to improve services and support for people with all neurological conditions, including the

almost 900 people currently living with Parkinson's in Highland.

'We believe that this plan must be properly resourced, with strong leadership, to enable NHS boards and Health and Social Care Partnerships to provide the support that it needed to keep people with Parkinson's as well as possible for as long as possible.'

Dr Carl Counsell, consultant neurologist at NHS Grampian and UK Parkinson's Excellence Network Lead for Scotland North, said: 'Parkinson's is the second most common neuro-degenerative condition after Alzheimer's. It is a complex progressive disorder, which can have profound effects on many aspects of individuals' lives, both those living with it and their family members.'

'Everyone involved in providing Parkinson's care and services wants to ensure that all people affected by Parkinson's in Scotland receive consistently high-quality care throughout the course of the condition.'

'This is challenging but achievable if we all work together.'

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Skye schools are 'priorities' for council cash

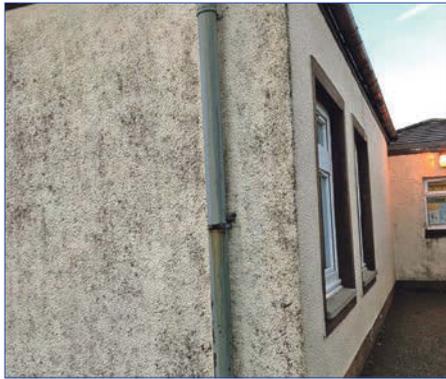
by Neill Bo Finlayson
nfinlayson@obantimes.co.uk

Highland Council has this week confirmed that both Broadford and Dunvegan Primary Schools are now 'key school investment priorities' and will be included in a future funding bid to the Scottish Government.

Last year footage emerged of water pouring into Dunvegan Primary School, while Broadford has limited disabled access, as well as no safe drinking water supply nor a gym hall for pupils.

Kate Forbes MSP, who received the latest news in a letter from Sandra Campbell, the local authority's interim director of care and learning, described the new approach from the council as 'refreshing'.

The Skye politician said: 'I've met with the new chief executive of Highland Council and her proactive approach to school buildings in Broadford and Dunvegan is refreshing. Within a matter of weeks of her appointment, I met to press home the importance of prioritising new school



The deteriorating condition of Broadford Primary School has been well documented in the last year.

buildings for Broadford and Dunvegan.

'I'm grateful that the interim director of care and learning has confirmed the council has identified Broadford and Dunvegan Primary schools as key priorities and they have been progressing discussions with local communities about options.'

She added: 'There is a lot of work to be done, but it is excellent news that the council appears to have a plan - it recognises the importance of Broadford and Dunvegan Primary Schools and finally we're moving in the right direction.'

Skye and Raasay

Councillor John Finlayson said that he, too, was pleased with the ongoing work that officers were currently taking forward to support partnership working with the Scottish Government.

'A major ingredient in terms of bringing these badly needed projects to fruition will be joined up working and a shared vision,' he said.

'The community, staff, parents, Highland Council officers and our MSP have all worked together to plan ahead to ensure that Broadford and Dunvegan receive 21st-century schools that provide pupils with a 21st-century learning environment.'

A Cry For The Wild

HOLLY GILLIBRAND
fort@obantimes.co.uk



Scotland: what it could look like

The bare hillsides stretch out before me as I crouch on the seaweed-strewn loch side.

The land slopes up into the unnaturally rectangular forest of pine trees that banish light from the needle-carpeted ground beneath their branches.

The plantation, to be chopped down for wood in 10 to 20 years time, soon comes to an end and before you is a flat expanse of heather.

Mile upon mile of heather and bracken: purple and brown moorland stretching as far as the eye can see.

Apart from the spinach-green plantation, carving great, black marks in the hillside, there isn't a natural tree or shrub in sight.

But imagine if our moorland, currently a barren, ecological desert, was transformed into a diverse and vibrant landscape.

Imagine if our hillsides were clothed in natural woodland and Caledonian pine forest, which provide habitats for native species such as crested tits, red squirrels, capercaillie, pine martens and wildcats

that are currently stranded in isolated islands of forest.

Rewilding is also about reconnecting people with the natural world and creating new opportunities for communities.

Currently, we make about £1 billion to £2 billion from ecotourism, so think how much this would be boosted if we let our wildlife thrive in the natural habitat that was present in Scotland hundreds of years ago ... with wolves and lynx.

But why do we need wolves and lynx and animals such as beavers and wild boar, which are all keystone species?

Our moorlands are either being burned and managed for grouse shooting or overgrazed by a huge number of deer and sheep.

Red deer are not being constantly moved around and chased by wolves and lynx, which results in natural vegetation not being allowed to grow because of overgrazing.

Bringing back wolves and lynx will control the deer popula-

tion, making them move around more and allow a variety of habitats such as grassland, forest and peat bogs to thrive.

Beavers and wild boar have already been reintroduced into Scotland and they have a massive impact on the biodiversity around them - that is why they are referred to as keystone species.

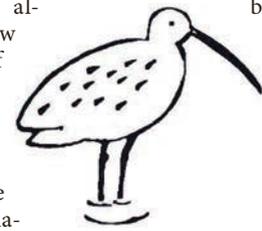
Beavers dam rivers and coppice trees, increasing new growth and the diversity of the landscape, as well as preventing flooding downstream.

Wild boar root around in the soil promoting tree growth and playing an essential part in the ecosystem.

If you want to find out more about rewilding, there are many different charities that are promoting the benefits of rewilding.

SCOTLAND: The Big Picture is one (www.scotlandbigpicture.com), which I have recently become a young ambassador for.

Rewilding Britain is another: www.rewildingbritain.org.uk



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LETTERS

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

There is no justifiable argument for raising Corran Ferry fares

There is understandable anger over the prospect of a rise in fares for users of the Corran Ferry.

The Highland Council is due to debate its draft budget proposals today (Thursday) and an increase in fares is on the agenda.

Last week, ahead of the meeting, Councillor Andrew Baxter issued a last-ditch call to scrap any move to hike up ferry fares.

According to Mr Baxter, the Corran Ferry returns an overall operating profit, so it is difficult to see any convincing argument to support the mooted rise.

Furthermore, as Councillor Baxter emphasises, the Corran Ferry is a lifeline service for residents of the peninsula who have no alternatives when they travel to Fort William or elsewhere in the area for work, shopping or other activities.

Concern has been further voiced as this putative increase comes after a change to parking costs in Fort William, and the loss of free parking for residents, which do not apply in other Highland towns.

There is a pervading sense of them and us in the Lochaber area, with the council appearing to favour other places. It should keep the Corran Ferry fares as they are.

Train route is on the right line to success

It is many years since the first Harry Potter film hit the silver screen but the popularity of the series continues to have an economic impact, including in Lochaber.

As we report this week, passenger numbers on the famous Harry Potter Line between Fort William and Mallaig are rocketing.

We fully support the call from MSP Kate Forbes for ScotRail and Network Rail to invest in train services across the region.

Council needs to grit pavements in winter

Thursday January 31 was a beautiful day and there were many folk out and about in Oban, enjoying the sunshine in spite of the cold.

As I walked through Station Square at 3pm, I was horrified to see people attempting to walk across what was actually a sheet of ice – from the harbour wall on the one side to the shops on the other. Several elderly people were walking in single file under the eaves of the shops, the only place free of ice. I found that the safest way to walk was pigeon-fashion along the metal grids covering the drains.

How the council can allow this state of affairs to exist, I really can't imagine. I'm sure that a lack of money will be the excuse, but a simple pedestrian-pushed rotary salt spreader can be bought extremely cheaply. I have used them for most of my working life to treat garden roads and paths and could easily salt Station Square in less than an hour.

Such a simple machine could be used to salt some of the slippery pavements too. If somebody was to fall and injure themselves, the compensation would be vastly more expensive than the solution suggested above.

Visitors and residents should be encouraged to take to the streets on such beautiful days, rather than be afraid to venture out.

Maurice Wilkins,
Laurel Road, Oban.

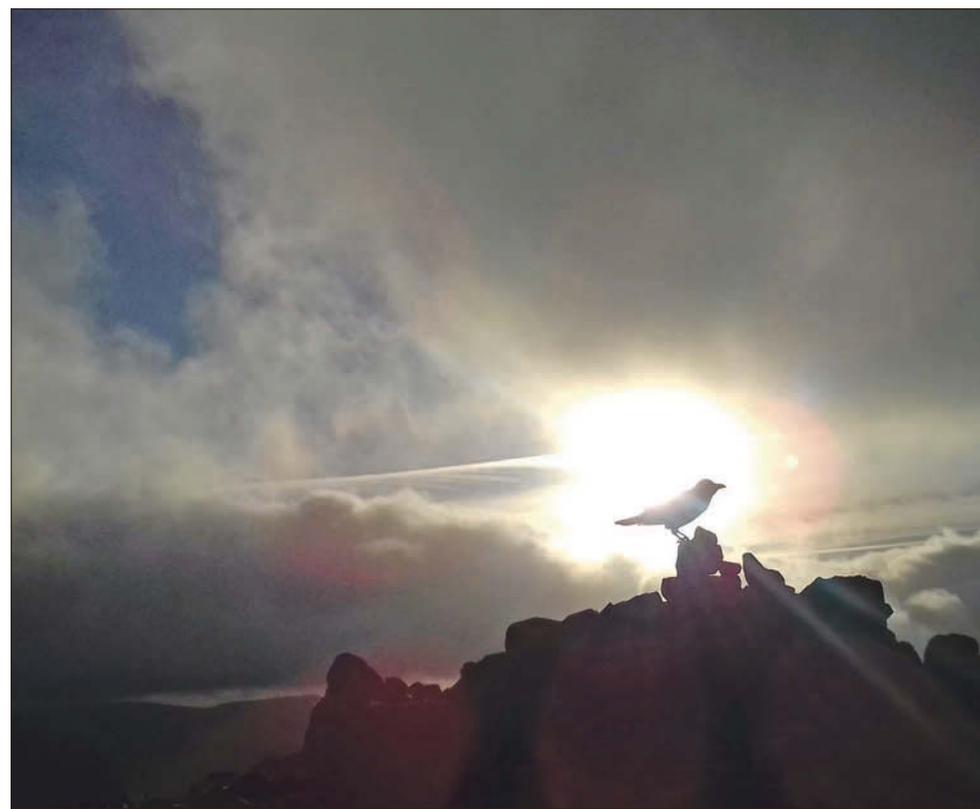
Do not let Westminster cut pensioners' free TV licence

It is interesting to note that Conservative government austerity is not over.

It has perhaps gone by many folks' attention but in November the BBC announced that the government funding to enable people over the age of 75 to receive a free TV licence ends in June 2020.

Consequently, the BBC board of directors has been holding a consultation on how they should react to this cut in funding. Options they suggest include the cutting of programmes to enable retaining the pensioners' free TV licence entitlement. They then point out that the full cost of doing so would be equivalent of closing BBC Two, BBC Three, BBC Four, the BBC News Channel, CBBC and CBeebies. Another option is lesser programme cuts, paid for by way of means testing our elderly relatives or by reducing their entitlement

YOUR PICTURES



We know our readers love to take photographs so we are happy to create this space to showcase people's images each week. If you have a photograph you would like to see published here, send

it to editor@obantimes.co.uk, post it to The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, PA34 4HB or hand it in to our offices in Crannog Lane, Lochavullin Industrial Estate, Oban, or in High Street, Fort William. This week's

by 50 per cent or by increasing the age limit to 80, the BBC board helpfully suggests.

There are few benefits that retired folk can avail themselves of and with the state pension being one of the poorest in Europe, a free TV licence saves £154.50 – for that is to be the cost from April this year. The weekly state pension is £164.35.

This shows the level of back door austerity that the Conservative government is prepared to have its public services implement. It is shameful.

Might I suggest that the BBC request the caring Conservative government to use the

promised Brexiteers savings – some £350 million per week, we understood – or simply leave three nuclear missiles (\$270 million each) at the American store, and respect our elderly residents by retaining a free licence for those over 75.

Campbell Cameron,
Benderloch.

Precious Gaelic archive is safer now than ever

In noting the article written by Iain Thornber (The Campbells of Canna and their precious

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LT

DISTRICT NEWS

FORT WILLIAM

Fairtrade Fortnight 2019 will run in Fort William from Monday February 25 to Sunday March 10.

The Fairtrade Town campaign has partnered with The Emporium of Worldly Goods, The Highland Bookshop, Fort William, Delicraft and the Co-op, Corpach, to raise awareness of this year's campaign – supporting a living wage for cocoa farmers, particularly women, in West Africa.

A poster competition for school pupils is being organised as part of the event. Pupils wishing to take part should design an A4 poster about this year's campaign.

The entries will be collected from schools on Monday March 4 and will be displayed in The Highland Bookshop for a week, alongside a Fairtrade Foundation information table.

The winning poster will be chosen on Sunday March 10, with the artist receiving a gift certificate from the bookshop, Fairtrade treats from The Emporium, a bag of coffee beans and Suki tea from Delicraft and a £25 voucher and box of Fairtrade bananas for their school from the Co-op.

MORVERN

Morvern Community Council has been formed uncontested following the closure of nominations last week.

An interim election had been scheduled for next month after the resignation of some members brought the community council down to below half of its membership.

Iain Thornber and Sally Semple were nominated and, as the number of candidates nominated was equal to or less than the number of councillors to be returned, no poll will take place.

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Belford Hospital tea bar serves up cash boost



Belford Hospital tea bar organisers Betty Campbell and Christine Dennis along with some of the other volunteers presented a cheque for £5,500 to Dr Patrick Byrne and staff on Friday, top. The occasion was also the last tea bar session for stalwarts Jeanette Smillie, left, and Doreen Martin. They are pictured, right, with Dr Byrne after serving up their last cups of tea on Friday, following 18 years of volunteering at the tea bar.

It is now estimated that the tea bar has raised a fantastic £40,000 since first 'putting the kettle on' in 2000.



Katie Lamont, left, hands over the cheque to Maggie Wilson.

Welcome hospice boost

Highland Hospice has received a £300 cheque from Fort William-based solicitors and estate agents MacPhee and Partners.

Every year, McPhee and Partners staff donate items for hampers and hold a raffle to raise money for a local charity.

Katie Lamont, property director for MacPhee and Partners, presented the cheque to Maggie Wilson of Highland Hospice's Fort William branch.

Katie said: 'We were delighted to present the funds to Highland Hospice this year. Most of us know someone in our community who has benefited from the excellent service it provides. We thank our staff for their generous contributions.'

Alan is told to get on his bike by Liberty

While in Fort William last week to oversee the start of ground investigations work for the new alloy wheels plant at Lochaber smelter, Liberty Industries Group chief executive Dr Douglas Dawson also turned his attention to wheels of another kind when he presented a Liberty-made superbike to Alan Donald.

Mr Donald is a process controller in the aluminium smelter who chose a name for the new office block just opened at the site to house the project team overseeing the building of the wheels plant.

Mr Donald chose the Gaelic name Aisling Mor, which means 'Big Dream' to reflect what he said was the ambitious vision Liberty has for the site as a future centre of manufacturing excellence for Britain's multi-billion-pound car industry.

Dr Dawson said: 'That name was perfect for a building that will be at the heart of this exciting project.'

'We have chosen to dream big because Fort William has so much potential and we want to unlock that potential and create something of real value for the local and regional economy.'



Dr Douglas Dawson, chief executive of Liberty Industries Group, left, presents a bicycle made in the Liberty factory in Livingston to Alan Donald.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

A LOCAL - CARING - CHARITY

NorthArgyll

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ASSOCIATION LTD

THE NORTH ARGYLL EVENTIDE HOME was opened by the people of Oban, in 1955, to provide a caring environment for the elderly of the area.

North Argyll Home is run by a local, independent, not-for-profit, charity and we rely on the generosity of local people, trusts, grant-making bodies and legacies to help ensure that we are able to continue our vital work.

If you would like to help or for more information please contact:

North Argyll Eventide Home Association Ltd.

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Lundavra pupils cook up cafe success



A community cafe run by Lundavra Primary School pupils has raised more than £64 for Fort William's Invernevis House care home.

Primary six pupils were learning about loneliness as part of a health topic and set up a community cafe for members of the local community.

The cafe runs every four weeks and has been a huge success, according to the school. At each event, a different class provides the entertainment and homebaking, and chooses where it would like the money raised to go. Primary 2/3 pupils picked Invernevis House as their beneficiary of the most recent cafe and raised £64.45.

Invernevis House residents receive a cheque from Lundavra Primary School pupils.



Banavie pupils enjoyed the drumming session.

Photographs: A Brightside Photography.



OUTER HEBRIDES

Up to eight athletes from the Outer Hebrides could benefit from £1,500 each to help with travel costs to and from the islands.

The scheme aims to help athletes in the Outer Hebrides, Orkney and Shetland to gain better access to competitive and developmental opportunities on the mainland.

The deadline for applications is 5pm on Friday February 15.

To find out more about the scheme, contact Kevin Morrison (Uist and Barra), telephone 01870 603599; email kevin.morrison@cne-siar.gov.uk or Euan Macleod (Lewis and Harris), telephone 01851 822800; email euan-macleod@cne-siar.gov.uk.

FORT WILLIAM

Fort William Accordion and Fiddle Club welcomed guest artistes Duncan Black on accordion and Marie Fielding on fiddle and concertina, as well as a host of familiar faces, to a well attended event at

the Railway Club, Inverlochy, on Tuesday February 7.

Supporting locals on accordions were Heckie Henderson, Robert Nairn, Calum MacColl and two of the club's young accordion players in the shape of Cameron MacIsaac and Craig Kennedy. Accompanists were Simon Andrews on drums and Sheila Henderson and Heckie on keyboard.

Thanks to everyone who attended and to the musicians. More young talented players are welcome to join the club.

Next club night is on Tuesday March 5. All welcome.



Iona Abbey.

IONA

Iona Abbey is to undergo a £60,000 upgrade.

A new heating system is to be installed in the Abbey Church to help protect against increasing levels of water penetration.

The Abbey Church will be closed for the duration of the work, which is due to be completed by the end of March.

During this period, the usual entry fee to the site will be waived for visitors who can still enjoy seeing round the Michael Chapel, the shrine, the cloisters and St Oran's Chapel.

Banavie primary pupils get with the beat

Banavie Primary School pupils kept to the beat last week when they enjoyed a session with Drumfun.

The organisation provides drumming programmes and workshops for groups and organisations throughout Scotland and the UK.

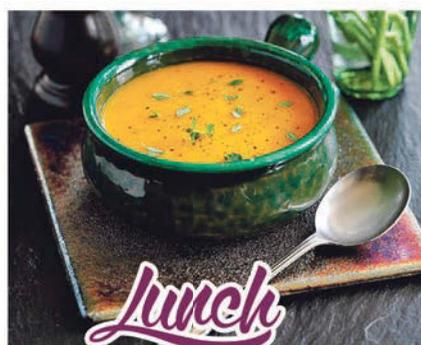


A typical SYN FREE day - At last, an eating plan that fits into your life



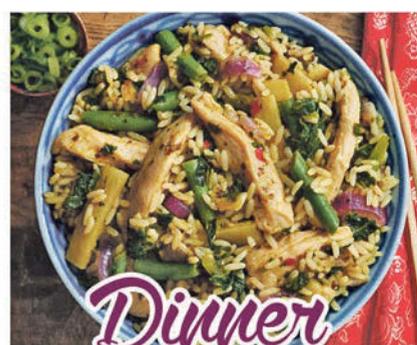
Breakfast

All-day breakfast omelette
Bacon & Syn-free Pork Sausages - why yes you can. Enjoy your favourite brekkie flavours morning, noon or night! 30mins



Lunch

Butternut squash soup
This deliciously smooth soup is perfect for lunch or to fill a flask 45 mins



Dinner

Slimming World Nasi goreng
A delicious Free Indonesian rice dish with tender chicken and vegetables in a fragrant sauce. 40mins

FORT WILLIAM
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5pm & 7pm
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OBAN
Glencruitten Church Hall,
Glencruitten Road
Wednesday 9.30am,
11.30am, 5.30pm & 7.30pm
Tel: Gillian 07796 040 803

LOCHGILPHEAD
Lochgilphead
Baptist Church
Union Street/ Argyll Street
Mondays 5.30pm & 7.30pm
Tel: Rhona 07880 878 906

CAMPBELTOWN
Masonic Recreational
Lodge, St John Street
Tuesdays 1pm,
5.30pm & 7.30pm
Tel: Rhona 07880 878 906

Detailed recipes available at:
slimmingworld.co.uk



LT

GOLF



Bob MacIntyre. Photo: Bounce Sports

The second cut is the deepest for MacIntyre

Oban's Robert MacIntyre took part in the ISPS Handa Vic Open last week at the thirteenth Beach Golf Club in Geelong, Australia, and although he made the cut after the first two rounds with excellent scores of 67 and 70, he failed to make the cut for the final day of the tournament, which is played on two courses and by both men and women.

Round one saw the Glencruitten left hander card an excellent five under par round of 67 on the Beach Course, with six birdies and only one bogey.

Bob then carded a two under par 70 on the Creek Course in round two, with three birdies and again only one bogey.

However, the 22-year-old struggled in a strong wind in round three and finished with a three over par 75 which still featured an excellent six birdies but two bogeys and three double bogeys which ended his interest in the tournament. Fellow Scot David Law from Aberdeen won the first place prize money of €156,250.

Bob now heads for the ISPS Handa World Super 6 Perth at Lake Karrinyup Golf Club. The competition gets under way today (February 14).

SCOTTISH AMATEUR LEAGUE

Results and fixtures

Last Saturday's results: Premier Division – Dunoon 1, Oban Saints 5; Premier Division One – Campbeltown Pupils no game; FC Argyle 3, Lochgilphead Red Star 1; Premier Division Two – Villa Park v Tarbert, postponed.

This Saturday's fixtures: West of Scotland Cup 5th round – Oban Saints v Neilston; Premier Division – Dunoon v St Joseph's FP; Premier Division One – Lochgilphead Red Star v Campbeltown Pupils; Premier Division Two – Tarbert v Paisley.

OBAN SAINTS YOUTHS

Results and fixtures

Last Sunday's results: Whitecraigs 1; Under-13s 16. Scoring for Saints were Aidan MacDonald (3), Duncan MacEwan (3), Calum Macmillan (2), Finlay Cameron (2), Preston MacIntyre (2), Gabriel Tidser, Zander Craik and Logan Black. Under-14s 0, OLM FC 1; Busby 9, Under-15s 0; Under-16s v Winlinton Wolves, postponed.

This Sunday's fixtures: Under-13s v Knightswood; Broomhill v Under-14s; St Rochs v Under-15s; Rutherglen Glencairn v Under-16s.

Sammy's Indoor League



Fiorentina Turner beat Eintracht Frankfurt 4-2 to cement their second place in the league.



Portowcy had a comfortable victory over Exeter Gently, winning 7-1.

Sammys Indoor 5 aside League

League Table

Teams	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1. Doghouse	15	15	0	0	120	20	100	45
2. Fiorentina	15	13	1	1	85	20	65	40
3. Portowcy	15	11	1	3	118	61	57	34
4. Eintracht	15	8	1	6	55	55	0	25
5. Nevis Range	15	7	1	7	72	85	-13	22
6. Hamilton	14	5	1	8	46	56	-10	16
7. #Teamfreeca	14	5	0	9	38	57	-19	15
8. Exeter Gently	15	3	3	9	31	93	-62	12
9. Old Yins	15	2	2	11	35	105	-70	8
10. Expected	15	0	0	15	2	50	-48	0

Week 15 results: Fiorentina Turner 4, Eintracht Frankfurt 2; Portowcy 7, Exeter Gently 1; Nevis Range 1, Doghouse 17, Old Yins 3, Walkover 0. There are still three games remaining but Doghouse are all but confirmed as champions.



League leaders Doghouse thrashed Nevis Range 17-1.

Saints play for West Cup quarter final place

FOOTBALL

A goal with the last kick of the ball against Neilston denied South Lochaber Thistle a place in the last 16 of the West of Scotland Cup which would have led to a West Highland derby match with Oban Saints on Saturday.

SLT were leading 1-0 thanks

to a Martin Munro goal in the 85th minute, but with the game in time added on by the referee, Neilston equalised through a Nicky McCarron header to take the match into extra time.

Paul McLean then curled a great effort into the top corner of the net during extra time to give Neilston

a narrow 2-1 win. Saints and Neilston met back in August at Lochgilphead Joint Campus in the 2018 Argyll and Bute Cup tournament, where the Oban side ran out 3-0 winners thanks to goals from Fraser MacFarlane, Donald Campbell and Kerr Newbigging.

Saturday's match at Glen-

cruitten provides both sides with a fantastic opportunity to progress to the last eight of one of the major cup competitions and looks set to provide another entertaining afternoon of cup football for the Glencruitten faithful.

Saints club secretary David Buchanan was disappointed that SLT failed to get through as a derby match would have certainly have drawn a big crowd.

He said: 'Although we beat Neilston earlier in the season we will not be taking them for granted and I'm sure our co-manager Willie Gemmell will be touch with Alan Gray to get some pointers on the Renfrewshire club.'

Saturday's tie must be played to a finish on the day, with extra-time and penalty kicks coming into play to decide the winner if the two sides cannot be separated after 90 minutes.

Taking charge of proceedings is the experienced Central Scottish AFA referee Thomas Gilchrist. Kick-off at Glencruitten will be 1.30pm.



Some of the Oban Saints squad who will be hoping to land a place in the last eight of the West of Scotland Cup.

The Way of the Empty Hand now well rooted in Lochaber

With 36 years of teaching and practising traditional Japanese karate under his 6th dan black belt, Sensei Alistair Burns provides his Lochaber students with an unbroken link stretching back to the legendary classical Japanese masters of the past.

Sensei Burns – the word ‘sensei’ translates as ‘teacher’ in English – is a member of the Karatenomichi World Federation based in Japan and has run Matsuyama Karate Academy in Fort William for 18 years.

He is the highest ranking member and instructor associated with the federation in Scotland and qualified to ‘B’ level as an instructor, examiner and referee.

The academy’s students train at the dance studio at Lochaber High School twice a week and in nearly two decades of teaching, hundreds of students have been introduced by Sensei Burns to the ‘Way of the Empty Hand’.

He personally has trained under some of the greatest of the modern karate masters, including Enoda, Ohta, Kawasoe, Kase, Tomita and the legend that is Hirokazu Kanazawa.

These names will not mean much to those with little or no interest in martial arts, but to those with a passion for the fighting arts of the Far East they will need no introduction.

The Karatenomichi (meaning ‘Way of Karate’) World Federation traces its roots to classical Shotokan karate, and its members, regardless of their backgrounds in different styles of Karate, have come together to share the ideals of what in Japan is

referred to as ‘Budo Karate,’ meaning the the traditional martial art of karate as opposed to solely training in it as a competition sport.

The Fort William club is open to anyone from Primary 1 age with no upper age limit.

Sensei Burns firmly believes that, as well as the physical benefits of karate, much else can be gained from its practice.

From the very first lesson, the beginner learns to respect their fellow students and instructors, listening carefully to what is being said and demonstrated, following every move in sequence and seeking to concentrate and communicate politely.

Progress

With numerous trips to Japan to ensure he himself continues to progress along his own karate development path, Sensei Burns realises that karate is not a mainstream activity and in a rural area like Lochaber, even less so.

‘Karate is a niche participation activity and all martial arts clubs will be able to tell the same story of student numbers fluctuating between good and bad years.

‘But for people like me it is not about making a profit – there are plenty of times over the years I’ve had to subsidise the club from my own pocket – rather, it is about continuously developing as both a karateka and a person, and passing on that knowledge so that others can do the same and enjoy the benefits of karate that I have,’ he told us.

Watching the enthusiasm of all who attend his regular classes at the high school is certainly a lesson in itself.



Members of the club strike a karate stance for our photographer.

Sensei Burns encourages the most experienced young students to school their peers under his careful eye, building skills in communication, teaching, organisation and of course, confidence in their own abilities.

Over the years he has seen many of his pupils work their way through the different grades from white to the coveted black belt in their teenage years.

At the moment the academy boasts one British champion in the shape of 13-year-old Rosana Shepherd, currently a 1st kyu (one belt away from black), who competed in her first federation competition in Luton earlier this year.

Rosana beat many black belts to become champion in the 13-15 age group. She is now training for the next step to gain her own black belt under Sensei Burns’ careful guidance.

And with karate due to make its Olympic debut when the next games are hosted by Japan in 2020, we may yet see a further blossoming of this most ancient art in Lochaber.

Matsuyama Karate Academy meets every Monday and Thursday 7-9pm and potential members are welcome to come along and watch a class in progress. More details on the club Facebook page and website.



Shihan Alistair Burns teaches a karate class. All photographs: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.



Young club members practice a drill.

LT

10-PIN BOWLING

Alleycats continue to lead scratch division

After week 13 of the Lochaber Building Supplies 10-pin bowling leagues at the Nevis Centre in Fort William, Alleycats continue to lead the scratch division with 61 points followed by Council on 53 points and new third place team The Empire with 47 points.

In the handicap division the top three teams all ran out 5-0 winners, which means Alleycats continue to lead with 50 points followed by The Empire with 47 points and Council with 42 points.

The top individual scratch game this week went to Gaynor Weldon (British Legion Fort William) with 192. Also this week Bill Clark (Council) had a 179. Bill Clark also had the top two game scratch series with 332 and the top two game handicap series with 436, while Gaynor Weldon had the top handicap game of 255.

The best team scores of the week came from Alleycats who had the top scratch game of 581 and the top two game scratch series of 1133 whilst British Legion Fort William had the top handicap game of 809 and The Dominoes had the top two game handicap series of 1534.

The top scratch averages are currently held by Brian Johnstone (Alleycats) on 160 followed by Pam Weller (Alleycats) on 146 with Gus Fraser (Council) and Brian Stewart both on 143.



Lochaber 10-pin bowlers.

LOTTERY

Lochaber club lotteries

This week's 9/2 Ballachulish shinty lottery numbers were 7, 14 and 18. Only needed one draw and there were two lucky winners who shared the £2,000 on offer – Ryan Tozer in Kinlochleven and Anne Blake in Glencoe. Next week's draw will revert to a modest £200.

Caol Community Centre bingo club lotto numbers for February 10 were 04 / 12 / 19. There were no winners, so £600 jackpot today, February 14.

Fort William Golf Club lotto drawn February 7 – numbers were 5, 8 and 18. There were no winner so £700 available for draw today, February 14.

Lochaber Camanachd Lotto results for February 5 were 1, 9 and 11. No winner, so £700 next week.

FOOTBALL

SLT game called off

South Lochaber Thistle's Greater Glasgow League Premier Division Two game against GSC Jordanhill due to be played at Norwood last Saturday was called off due to the torrential rain which made the park unplayable.

This Saturday the South Lochaber side travel to play old rivals Newshot at Renfrew Leisure Centre, kick-off 2pm.



Jasmin Paris against the Glencoe skyline.

Ultrarunner Jasmin Paris in demand at Fort Mountain Festival

RUNNING NIGHT

Organisers of The Fort William Mountain Festival 2019 say the venue for the Running Night, featuring record breaking ultrarunners Jasmin Paris and Nicky Spinks, has been moved to the 400-seat main theatre at the town's Nevis Centre to cope with the high demand for tickets.

The event is scheduled for Friday, February 22. It was last month that 35-year-old Paris, a vet and ultrarunner from Midlothian, smashed the 268-mile Montane Spine Race – a route that traverses

the full Pennine Way from Derbyshire to the Scottish Borders – in just 83 hours, 12 minutes and 23 seconds. Paris beat the existing record by a blistering 12 hours and was the first woman to win the race outright. All this and Paris also had to juggle breastfeeding her 14-month old daughter throughout the race.

'Ever since Jasmin's incredible achievement, we have been inundated with running enthusiasts from Lochaber and further afield desperate to get their hands on a ticket to hear her speak about the Montane Spine Race and her other incredible

ultrarunning feats,' said a festival spokesperson this week. 'In order to cope with the demand, we have moved the event to the bigger 400-seat main theatre.'

Paris, a national fell running champion, and the Bob Graham Round and Ramsay Round record holder, will be joined by fellow endurance runner Nicky Spinks.

Spinks, 51, was the first-ever person to complete a Double Bob Graham round, running 116 miles and summiting 48 peaks, a total ascent is 28,500ft, in the Scottish mountains in a time of 55 hours and 56 minutes – all this in celebration of her

10-year cancer survival. At the Nevis Centre event, Paris will share her love of the mountains, and the challenges of staying fit while juggling caring for a young baby and working full-time as a veterinary scientist.

Spinks will talk about all her many extreme challenges, how she stays fit and trains for them.

The lectures from David Hetherington – The Lynx and Us; and Peter Cairns – Scotland: The Big Picture, previously programmed in the main theatre on February 22, will now be staged in the Nevis Centre's Studio Theatre at the same time.

Fort put up a brave fight at Lossiemouth

Lossiemouth	5
Fort William	0
Highland League	

FOOTBALL

New Fort manager Russell MacMorran would have been desperate to get his reign off to a winning start in his first game in charge with this away trip to Lossiemouth's Grant Park.

Sadly, that was not to be with case, the 5-0 defeat seeing the Coasters open up a 14-point gap to leave Fort anchored at the bottom of the Highland League table and facing finishing the season with a negative points tally.

But while he will be disappointed with the final score, MacMorran can take heart from the performance put in by his players.

It was only 15 minutes into the game when the Coasters slotted their first, when a free kick was turned goalwards and the attempted goal line clearance bounced back off Brodie Allan and over the

line. Fort rallied and dug in deep to keep it to 1-0 until half time. And the scoreline remained the same until mid-way through the second half with the visitors' defence holding solid.

But the first cracks appeared when the home side's Ryan Stuart cut in from the left and lifted the ball high over Fort keeper Mateusz Kulbacki to make the score 2-0.

Ross Archibald was next on the scoresheet just five minutes later when he rocketed a cutback from Fraser Forbes into the top corner of the visitors' goal from eight yards out.

That saw the trickle become a torrent, with Dean McCall heading goal number four home from a corner before Connor Macauley then slotted the fifth into the net from 12 yards.

Fort William face Nairn County at Claggan Park this Saturday, kick-off 3pm.



Fort William manager Russell MacMorran.

Scottish Sea Farms are to continue sponsorship of the Celtic Society Cup

The Glasgow Celtic Society is delighted to announce that Scottish Sea Farms, one of the country's leading salmon farmers and a key employer among many remote and rural communities, is to sponsor the Glasgow Celtic Society Challenge Cup Final 2019 for a second year.

First played for in 1879, the Glasgow Celtic Society

Challenge Cup is the oldest of its kind in the sport of shinty and the premier knock-out competition for clubs in the South of Scotland.

This year's cup final, hosted once again by Taynuilt Sports Council at the village sports-field, will take place on Saturday June 29 where it will be broadcast live by BBC Alba.

Donald Fletcher, the Society's new incoming president said: 'We are delighted at Scottish Sea Farms' continued support following the outstanding success of last year's final, the buy-in and support of our sponsor allowed us to stage our most ambitious final yet and we look forward to working closely with them to ensure

SHINTY

a similar success this June.' The sponsorship was secured via Scottish Sea Farms' long-standing 'Heart of the Community' initiative which provides grants to teams, groups and organisations in and around the areas in which it farms: everything from sports clubs and events, to mother and toddler clubs, playparks, adult learning, and support with alcohol and drugs dependency or depression.

Georgie Mackenzie, Heart of the Community Co-ordinator at Scottish Sea Farms, said: 'Shinty is a game of huge relevance to many of the communities in which we live and farm, and the team are delighted to be returning as sponsor of the The Glasgow Celtic Society Cup Final; a tournament that has been instrumental in keeping this uniquely Scottish sport alive in the hearts and minds of young and old alike.'



Oban Camanachd won the Scottish Sea Farms-sponsored Celtic Society Cup last season.



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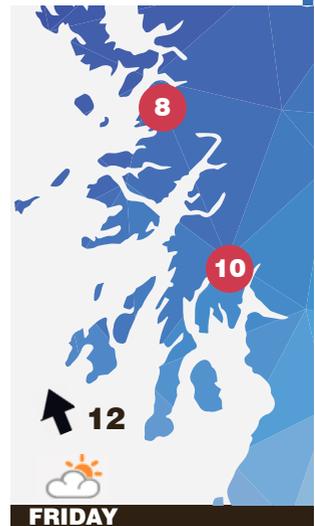


WEATHER

Thursday
Sunny intervals and a moderate breeze
Temperatures 7°C to 10°C.

Friday
Light rain showers and a moderate breeze
Temperatures 5°C to 10°C.

Weekend Outlook
Saturday
Sunny intervals and a moderate breeze
Sunday
Light rain and a moderate breeze
Temperatures 6°C to 10°C.



TIDAL INFORMATION

Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday February 14, 2019** are listed below with differences for major ports listed on the right. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

	06.04	1.8	12.36	3.0
Thur	19.03	1.8	***	**
Fri	00.54	3.0	07.34	1.8
	14.44	3.1	20.17	1.6
Sat	02.50	3.2	09.04	1.5
	15.48	3.4	21.24	1.3
Sun	03.53	3.5	10.17	1.2
	16.35	3.6	22.21	0.9
Mon	04.42	3.8	11.11	0.9
	17.17	3.8	23.11	0.6
Tues	05.25	4.1	11.58	0.6
	17.56	4.0	23.58	0.3
Wed	06.07	4.2	12.42	0.4
	18.34	4.1	***	**

Tidal Constants: (Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrishaig	-5.35	Mallaig	+0.25
Campbeltown	-5.30	Portree	+0.55
Crinan	-0.47	Tobermory	+0.16
Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Dover	+5.30
Lochboisdale	+0.30		

Ferry Crossings/Sea States

Oban to Barra/South Uist	Moderate
Oban to Coll/Tiree	Moderate
Kennacraig to Islay	Moderate

Stop Press: New pontoons at Ulva Ferry and visitor moorings installed at Lochaline by North West Marine Ltd



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Lochaber Phoenix boxers come home as champions

BOXING

Lochaber Phoenix boxing club had a successful Northern District Schoolboy and Junior Championships in Aberdeen last weekend when both their representatives returned as champions after tough final bouts.

Fifteen-year old Jack Dieguno won his first title when he lifted the Northern District Novice title against the slightly more experienced Jake Moir of Fair City boxing club.

Dieguno showed a lot of

maturity in his first final as he remained composed throughout the contest and attempted to dictate the range behind a busy lead hand.

The opening round was a template for the entire contest as Dieguno pressed from the centre of the ring with straight shots and Moir employed circling techniques to limit the amount of exchanges the Caol youngster could initiate.

The next round saw the Lochaber club fighter try to remedy this mistake, but this time he fell short with a lot of his punches by keeping the distance from his opponent

too long, but again clearly won the round as Moir struggled to deal with the sheer volume of punches coming his way.

The third round was the charm for Dieguno as he found the range for his straight backhand, knocking Moir's head back regularly, forcing the referee to inflict a standing eight count and the round finished fittingly with Dieguno in full control and Moir under pressure on the ropes. A comprehensive victory for Dieguno and his first title in boxing.

And 10-year-old Josh Hunter was not to be outdone by his team mate's performance as he also produced a blistering performance against Granite City's Lewis Shaw.

Hunter kept Shaw on the back foot throughout round one and while Shaw landed his share of counters it was Hunter who landed the more eye-catching shots.

In round two, Hunter started to work both head and body as he moved into range with his shots, cleverly phasing his attacks on occasion to keep Shaw guessing and again keep Lewis on the back foot.

Round three again saw a lot of quality from both boys but by now Hunter was in a groove and actually upped his work rate landing double jabs before his backhand to keep his forward momentum going.

Another great win for Hunter and one that sets him up for his first challenge for the Scottish title next weekend.



Josh Hunter put in a blistering performance.



Lochaber fighter Jack Dieguno showed a lot of maturity in his first final.

Photographs: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.



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