



## Oban says goodbye to much loved teacher



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### MAKE THE SWITCH

# Operation Oban – feeding the needy during COVID-19

by Ellis Butcher  
ebutcher@obantimes.co.uk



A heart-warming volunteer effort got under way in Oban last week to ensure hundreds of food parcels got out to those in need.

Nearly 350 boxes – brought in by lorry, packed by volunteers and then delivered by council staff – were distributed in just two days.

Dozens of vulnerable people living across Oban, Lorn, Dunbeg, Appin, Seil, Taynuilt, Connel and Mull, have all benefited.

The epicentre of the operation was the Corran Halls, where dozens of crates of food had been brought in by lorry from Glasgow.

The job of making up individual parcels has fallen to 16 local volunteers, overseen by Andy Spence, chief executive of the Bid4Oban business group. Argyll and Bute Council staff have then helped load-up local authority minibuses to make deliveries far and wide.



### Council driver David Hepburn with one of the food parcels delivered across the region last week.

Taynuilt, on furlough from his day job as a joiner with Oban Joinery Services Ltd

'I just wanted to do something productive with all the spare time that I found myself with and wanted to help people in the community,' explained Aidan, carting cardboard boxes to and fro.

Strapping lads Ellis Hunter and Ally Lilley were part of the assembly line, as was mum and daughter Kate and Emily Hunter, all from Taynuilt.

Council traffic warden Juwel Faisal seemed only too happy to swap his day job for the role of delivery driver.

And council driver Iain Hibbert, who usually takes the elderly out on minibus day trips, was visibly touched by the reaction on doorsteps.

'It has been very well received,' said Mr Hibbert.

'People have shed tears of joy. They are not expecting it and it has given them a fantastic boost.

'I feel very proud to be part of this and feel that the Scottish Government has been amazing,' he said.

Indeed, special notes with each box read that the council, the NHS and the Scottish Government wanted recipients to know: 'You are not alone'.

Andy Spence of Bid4Oban was called in to help due to his 22 years with Homebase where managing logistics was all part of the day job.

Mr Spence said: 'It's a huge mix of people giving up their free time which is really important. We couldn't have done it without them and I have been blown away by their support, enthusiasm and speed.'

Hand-sanitiser, gloves, face masks and social distancing were all a feature of the day.

Yet Operation Oban is just one cog in a much larger wheel, said Argyll and Bute Council.

In the last week alone, it revealed that 4,000 food parcels had gone out across its patch, the second largest council territory in the whole of Scotland.

Councillor Aileen Morton, leader of Argyll and Bute Council, said: 'Despite such challenging circumstances, our communities have shown remarkable resilience coming together to make sure people are not left on their own.'

'We are delighted to have played our part in delivering essential food items to people across our communities.'

'This massive effort has only been made possible by working with our partners, existing community groups, local businesses and the army of volunteers who help us every week.'

Anyone who needs help accessing food is urged to contact the council's Caring for People helpline on 01546 605524, between Mon-Friday, 9am to 5pm.

More photographs at [www.obantimes.co.uk](http://www.obantimes.co.uk)



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OT

# Oban bids heartfelt farewell to primary school stalwart

by Kathie Griffiths  
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Oban residents lined the streets to pay their respects to Rockfield Primary School deputy head and 'Miller Road lassie' Margaret Cain.

The well-loved teacher who nurtured generations of pupils in the town over 25 years died after a long battle with cancer.

Oban born and bred, and proud of it, Mrs Cain, 56, fulfilled a lifetime ambition when she returned as a teacher to the old Rockfield campus where she had been a pupil.

During her illness Mrs Cain, who leaves a husband, son and daughter, had managed to return to school a number of times, working as hard as ever and much to the admiration of her colleagues.

Pupils past and present, families, friends and acquaintances – many holding flowers and tribute placards – lined the route of Mrs Cain's funeral cortège on Thursday as it wound its way from



Margaret Cain.

her home in Pulpit Drive to Pennyfuir.

Hazel Kelso and Charles Spreadbury watched on, joined by daughters Alyssa, 10, Aimee, nine, Lucie, eight, Macy, six and Eve, five. Hazel said: 'Margaret was a teacher when I was at school and she has been a great teacher and a great support to the family. We just wanted to pay our respects to her and her family. She's a big loss to the school.'

Dorothy Simpson who is a teacher at the school was also

there. She said: 'She took me under her wing when I joined in 2009 and was just the most amazing, compassionate, warm-hearted person I have ever met and we all loved her so much.'

Mrs Cain's former boss and retired Rockfield Primary School headteacher Jack Degnan, who lives on Mull, also paid tribute and said: 'I know Margaret's family were moved by the sight of the great number of people who lined the streets. Many of the schoolchildren dressed in their school uniform, as the funeral cortège passed on its way to Pennyfuir cemetery. Oban turning out to say farewell to one of its own.'

'They are also greatly touched by the floral tribute on the fence at the pre-5 end of the school and by the many, many messages of sympathy they have received.'

Even as an Oban High School pupil on work experience at Rockfield primary, it was clear she had the makings

of an excellent teacher, said Mr Degnan who first met Margaret in 1997.

Returning to Rockfield after a stint teaching at Kirn Primary School in Dunoon, she fulfilled a dream coming back to Oban and 'delighted in being the youngest member of the teaching staff' where, despite her youth, she was soon promoted to principal teacher.

Mrs Cain, who went on to become deputy, was passionate about treating every child as an individual, encouraging their unique abilities to grow, added Mr Degnan.

She immersed herself in the whole-school experience, the curriculum and all the activities of the academic calendar year – as well as fundraising.

From the annual pupils versus teachers' netball in the playground of old Rockfield, to class trips and residential excursions, Mrs Cain, who called herself 'old Oban' and a 'Miller Road lassie', threw herself 'wholeheartedly' into



Floral tributes were placed on a fence at Rockfield school.



Charles Spreadbury with Hazel Kelso and daughters Alyssa, Aimee, Lucie, Macy and Eve.

school life and all its various physical activities, remembered Mr Degnan.

'She was serious about her work and about the children in her charge, but Margaret had a great sense of fun and mischief about her too.'

'I feel blessed to have known and worked beside her and to have called her my friend,' said Mr Degnan.

A memorial at Rockfield Primary School in celebration of Mrs Cain will be planned later in the year.



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# Mull hospital crowdfunder inspires a 'forever' charity



Volunteers across Mull and Iona have been making scrubs for staff at the hospital in Craignure.

by Kathie Griffiths  
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



A crowdfunding appeal to support Mull's community hospital through the COVID-19 crisis is applying to become a forever charity.

A board of trustees made up of hospital staff, a former doctor and the founder of a rare syndrome charity is ready to carry the appeal into the future helping medics at the hospital in Craignure take best care of the community and those on neighbouring Iona.

Well-wishers topped an initial £7,000 target backing the original COVID-19 Emergency Fund set up by crowdfunders so the goal was upped to £10,000, says founder Michelle Erskine.

With time left to run until the end of this month, more than 140 people so far have donated to the crowdfunding

page, boosted off-line by other donations, smashing the latest target, said Mrs Erskine from Tobermory who also leads a charity raising worldwide awareness of little-known genetic condition Aarskog Syndrome.

Michelle, who has applied to OSCR, the Scottish charity register, said: 'The crowdfunder was initially to support the hospital in caring for people during COVID and in the aftermath of it but when it gets charity status it will live on.'

'The decisions of where and when that money will be spent and on what will be made directly by the people in the hospital. People's generosity has been amazing. From £5 to £1,000, it all mounts up.'

To make a donation, go to [crowdfunder.co.uk/isle-of-mull-community-covid-19-emergency-fund/](http://crowdfunder.co.uk/isle-of-mull-community-covid-19-emergency-fund/) backers

Mull and Iona Community Hospital (MICH) has posted on Facebook how it is dealing with COVID-19.

In a post, the hospital's clinical lead Piers Massey said it had a good supply of personal protection equipment and oxygen. Testing is regularly taking place for those with symptoms, red COVID-19 and green non-coronavirus systems for dealing with patients are in place, and accident and emergency is being kept separate from where patients who may have the virus will be.

There are also plans, if needed, to expand the hospital if more beds are needed.

The Facebook post praised health workers going into people's homes and the carers at Bowman Court and Glen Iosal.

Around 50 people from all over Mull and Iona have volunteered to help make scrubs for hospital staff.

Charity shop Island Castaways was raided first for suitable fabric, followed by an appeal for donations of duvet covers to curtain fabric but they were still short so had to source around 250m of fabric from the mainland. The pattern for the scrubs was downloaded and printed by KFT in Tobermory with The Waterfall Fund paying for the fabric and for printing the patterns.

Moray Finch, general manager of Mull and Iona Community Trust, said: 'It's been a privilege to help make this happen. The commitment and desire to help from so many people has been amazing and really shows community spirit is even stronger in these worrying times. Support for our fantastic NHS team has underpinned the achievement and there is more to come as we've also been asked to make gowns for NHS staff now.'



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## Seasoning and storing firewood

If you source and cut your own wood then spring to early summer is the perfect time to get working on replenishing your wood pile. With so many of us "confined to barracks" just now we can make good use of this time to fill up the log store. And if you have children at home with you then enlist their help and who knows, they may even find it a welcome distraction from online school!

Getting your wood cut and split as quickly as possible will increase the surface area so it dries out faster. Wood should be stacked off the ground and under cover but with a constant through-flow of fresh air to ensure that the drying process continues. Do not stack the wood too tightly. A closed shed does not make a good store for wood as it slows the drying process considerably whilst promoting the perfect environment for fungus and harmful moulds to thrive. Best of all is a polytunnel with both ends open. High temperatures build up very quickly as soon as the sun shines creating an ideal drying climate.

Softwood such as larch, spruce and pine dries more quickly than hardwood and if you can get this cut, split and stored now it will likely be ready to burn by the time Autumn comes around. Hardwoods such as oak and beech will take longer and should generally be left a full year before use.

Wood that is to be burned in a stove should have a moisture content of 20% or lower. If the moisture content is higher you run the risk of creating a build up of tar and creosote in your chimney which can cause a number of undesirable complications including blockages and chimney-fires. If you're not sure whether your wood is dry there are various ways to check:



Bang two bits together - dry wood should sound hollow and green wood will produce a dense 'thud' noise. Dry wood will feel much lighter and may also be cracked at the ends. Monitor how a small piece burns - if it hisses, crackles and you notice moisture or steam coming out of the ends then it is still too wet. Alternatively you could purchase a moisture meter which will give an accurate digital reading of the moisture content of your log. If using this then always make sure you split the log and take the reading from the centre part where it will be wettest.

Finally, just a quick update to let you know that although our premises are still closed we are able to carry out distance surveys (by email), put together chimney designs and estimates for future building projects and continue to supply emergency spare-parts for all Woodwarm, Charnwood, Morso, Jetmaster and Rutland appliances to ensure your essential heating needs are met. Please contact us by phone, email or Facebook if you need any support.

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OT

# Cathedral 'opens doors' for virtual time of peace

by Kathie Griffiths  
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



People seeking a moment of peace are being invited to visit St John's Cathedral in Oban – online.

The Episcopal Cathedral on George Street has been open to the public for almost all of its 156 year life until COVID-19 hit, forcing it to close its doors.

But its Provost, the Very Reverend Canon Margi Campbell, has now come up with a way of allowing people back inside the red-brick landmark again so they can spend time in quiet reflection.

The Very Rev Campbell has turned to technology to record five minutes of peace in the cathedral's Columba Prayer Chapel, starting and ending with a short piece of organ music played by James Campbell.

Even if it still has to be a vir-



tual experience until the virus crisis is over, the Very Rev Campbell hopes the YouTube link it will help give people strength and encouragement to cope through this challenging time and also offer them an opportunity to give thanks to community heroes through prayers.

She said: 'Before COVID-19, St John's Episcopal Cathedral

was open almost every day for the entirety of its 156 year existence. Many came in, local people and visitors, to shelter from life or the weather; spend a few moments in quiet reflection, prayer or light a candle. Now, the building is the stillest it has ever been in its lifetime; but inside it does not feel empty, rather it is simply resting, waiting to be allowed

**The Very Reverend Canon Margi Campbell has come up with a way of allowing people back inside the cathedral for a time of quiet reflection.**

to joyfully fling open its doors again. Of course we cannot open our doors until restrictions are lifted as we protect each other from unconsciously spreading the virus; but the church - the people, are still praying for our community and world privately and through Zoom, via YouTube: praying apart and yet together.

'Now though, we also want to open our doors virtually, for anyone to come in again and spend a moment in stillness; to pray, reflect or simply just be for a short space.

'It maybe something that you used to do or it might be a new way to reflect on all that we are struggling with and the people

we are worried about.

'It could be a chance to ask God for the strength we need to cope or an opportunity to give thanks for the spirit of generosity and care we are witnessing around us daily – our NHS and all care workers, carers, emergency services, essential key workers and all who are putting themselves at risk by doing their daily work to help us live our lives.

'So we welcome you, in a new way, to come into the Cathedral for a moment of quiet space.

'Come in whenever you like, stay for it all or for some as we hope and pray that soon we can open our doors again in reality.'

**YOURSTORY**  
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## Charged

About 9pm on May 15, on the A816, Kilmore, a 51-year-old man was arrested for allegedly driving while under the influence of alcohol. The man was cautioned and charged with the offence and a report has been submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

## Housebreaking

Around 11.35pm on April 28, police were called after a man entered a house in Bonawe then ran off when challenged by the householder. Officers attended and carried out a search of the local area, however there was no trace of the man.

■ On Monday May 4, officers received a report of a theft by housebreaking at a house in Bonawe that took place between April 16 and May 4.

■ On April 26 officers received a report of a theft from a cottage in Bonawe that took place between March 21 and April 10.

**If any member of the public has information in relation to the above, or to any incident, they can contact their local police station by calling 101, or anonymously through Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.**



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# Dad's delight for young Obanvision winner Lachie

Obanvision winner Lachie D'Arcy had double reason to celebrate on Friday, writes Kathie Griffiths.

The all-singing and dancing nine-year-old whose cover of Uptown Funk won the most hearts and votes during the town's Facebook alternative to COVID-cancelled Eurovision, also got his dad back after 11 weeks working away in India.

Commercial diver Sean managed to fly back from Mumbai via COVID screenings, London and an 'empty' Glasgow Airport just in time to watch Lachie's performance from a neighbour's house where he is self-isolating for two weeks.

Lachie was the second act in Friday's line-up helping raise funds to keep The Rockfield Centre ticking over during the coronavirus outbreak.

The fun-packed night that got backing from generous prize-giving businesses had 12 entries in all – including a self-penned ditty from Oban councillor Kieron Green.

Lachie had to wait until 11pm, way after his bedtime, when all the acts were over and the votes counted to reveal that



**Lachie D'Arcy.**

he was the winner but it was the next morning before his dad found out.

Sean, who had been working on oil pipelines for the Indian Government, fought off jet-lag to watch all the acts but fell asleep before the votes were in.

Lachie is now counting the days until he can spend his winning Piazza vouchers on a celebration meal with all the family reunited – and in time for his mum Emma's and brother Sorley's birthdays.

'I didn't really know until a few days before Obanvision that dad might be home in time to watch me. I was a bit worried he might miss it but

he didn't! We set up the computers so we could watch it on Facetime together,' said Lachie who has two other brothers Caley, seven, and three-year-old Murdo – not forgetting his 'fourth brother,' new pup Norie named after the George Street chip shop.

In 2018 the D'Arcy brothers made the Oban Times headlines when they busked in their street for money to buy bags of shopping for Hope Kitchen.

Mum Emma and Dad Sean are incredibly proud. Sean said: 'Getting home for Lachie's Obanvision performance was perfect timing. I'm looking forward to lots of hugs when self-isolating finishes.'

As for Obanvision's future, it is very clear says organiser Fee Shaw: 'The public have spoken so yes we will be doing it again next year. I'd love to say a huge thank you to our community who really got behind this. From the 12 incredible entries, all the businesses who donated prizes to those who came online to support everyone and helped raise over £400 to support the continuing efforts of The Rockfield Centre. Thank you everyone.'

# Appin Aid helps community get through difficult times

by Kathie Griffiths  
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Community donations to Appin Aid have helped set up a hardship fund for anyone struggling to get through COVID-19.

Since the outbreak of the virus, donations have exceeded £8,000 so far to make sure any residents facing financial challenges receive support through the next few months.

Appin Aid started out after a think-tank of all community organisations and a funding page was quickly set up on the Appin.scot website, said its co-ordinator Clare Hunt.

In just a week, more than 50 volunteers had signed up and a similar number of people had registered as needing help from those who had to stay indoors to others who would need help if their family network suddenly had to



Appin Aid volunteer Sarah Keating delivering school meals; and above, the winning posters in the GP surgery window for all to see.

self-isolate. Anyone applying for help from the hardship fund and can show genuine need because of lockdown circumstances will be treated with strictest confidence said

Clare, who can be contacted directly on 01631 730416 or by emailing [clare\\_appintransport@outlook.com](mailto:clare_appintransport@outlook.com)

Appin Community Trust also has a COVID-19 relief

scheme that might be able to help people who have lost serious income during the pandemic, providing essential food supplies from the village's Community Co-op.

Contacts for that scheme are John Landale on 01631 730585, Jessie MacKenzie on 01631 730289 or Iain McNicol on 01631 730433.

Port Appin Co-op has been 'amazing' said Clare, staying well-stocked and taking phone orders, with volunteer drivers dealing with deliveries.

A team of volunteers have also been dropping off school meals daily to families and delivering prescriptions for the doctor's surgery. Local businessman Keith Carmichael also gave a big donation of PPE to people who needed it, and to make sure no one feels alone, people have willingly given up time to have 'a blether' on the phone.

To keep children who are missing their friends feel connected, volunteer Angelina Owen organised a competition inviting youngsters to design posters thanking the NHS and

key workers. The posters were put up on regular walking routes for people to see and the winners were chosen by the GP surgery and put up in the surgery window. Appin Aid gave out prizes.

Clare said the volunteers, who are all given government guidance to make sure they stay safe and everyone is protected, are doing a 'tremendous job.'

To make sure everyone knows the latest on how Appin Aid can help, a second batch of fliers have just been posted through letterboxes.

Separate to Appin Aid, £35,000 from the government's Supporting Communities fund is going to Appin Community Development Trust to distribute across a wide neighbouring area from its own patch out to Lismore, to Benderloch, Ardchattan and North Connel to Barcaldine and Kentallen.

# IF IT'S URGENT, IT'S URGENT

## GP surgeries and hospitals are still here for you.

If you have an urgent, non-coronavirus health concern, please don't wait. Promptly seek help for emergencies, present possible cancer signs and attend immunisation appointments.

OT

# Lockdown birthday shoutouts

Do you have a child celebrating their birthday during the lockdown?

Since they cannot enjoy a birthday celebration with all their friends and family - we would love to give them a shout out in the paper.

Send us a picture of your wee one enjoying their special day and we will publish it and wish them Happy Birthday!

Remember to include their full name, age, where you live - and tell us a little bit about what you did to make the day at home special!

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



Brooklyn Mcnicol from Oban celebrated his third birthday on May 12 and enjoyed playing with his birthday toys with his brother Rome.



Freddie Peter Dunn celebrated his fifth birthday on May 7 in Oban. Freddie celebrated with a family karaoke disco with his mum Lisa, dad Josh and sisters Hollie and Mya using his new karaoke machine.



Benjamin Clarkson from Kilmelford was four on Tuesday, May 12. Benjamin had a video call from his family and blew out candles on his fish fingers.



Aimee Cameron, left, from Oban celebrated her ninth birthday in lockdown on May 12. Aimee was sad not to see her friends in reality but had plenty of FaceTime!

Ellen Hutchison celebrated her 12th birthday at home in Barcaldine with her mum (Angela), dad (Gregor), Adam her brother and her sister Lilly. She enjoyed her day with her family and having a group chat with her grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins from Glasgow, and receiving many messages and calls from her friends.



Thomas Lawn from Oban is far too cool for photos so his mum sent us this one of him as a baby. Thomas turned 13 on Saturday, May 16. Happy birthday.



Izyan MacIntyre turned seven on April 11. His birthday party had to be cancelled but he celebrated it as best he could by playing on the Nintendo Switch, eating Pepperoni pizza and watching his favourite movie Jumanji.

## Coronavirus

BID4Oban are working to provide information to the business community of Oban as regularly as possible.

We are working with our Key Partners Argyll & Bute Council, Business Gateway, AITC and OLTA on a daily basis.



To enable us to keep in touch, please follow BID4Oban on **Love Oban Facebook page** and website [www.bid4oban.co.uk](http://www.bid4oban.co.uk) for regular updates.

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**Oban Business Improvement District**  
[www.bid4oban.co.uk](http://www.bid4oban.co.uk)



Lucie Spreadbury celebrated her eighth birthday on April 30 when she had a tea party in the house with her four sisters. Lucie was surprised to receive presents as she didn't think anywhere was open for Mum and Dad to buy her some!



Maisie Neil from Caol enjoyed her eighth birthday in lockdown. To make her day extra special her family decorated their cars with balloons and made a convoy tooting their horns and playing Happy Birthday from their cars. Lots of fun!



Jack Lockhart celebrated his seventh birthday on May 10. He got a new basketball and net and enjoyed a basketball competition with mum, dad and little sister Lilly-May. Before going to bed Jack said it was 'the best birthday ever'.



Struan Nicholson celebrated his fourth birthday on May 10. Struan's family made it a special day with lots of balloons, food and a special family game.



Millie Margaret Gunn was born on May 4, celebrating her arrival with big cuddles from her big sister Hallie.



Rhys Muir from Dunollie celebrated his fifth birthday on May 9 and had a lovely wee party with his family while mum Julie organised a Facebook chat for Rhys and his nursery friends.

## Think tank draws up COVID-19 interactive map with Oban and Isles at low risk

A think tank has published an interactive map of Scotland showing parts of the country facing the greatest and lowest risk of coronavirus transmission, writes Kathie Griffiths.

The colour-coded map based on the country's 354 council areas puts Oban North and Lorn as one of the constituencies least at threat, along with Oban South and the Isles and Mid-

Argyll. Researchers and analysts at Scotianomics who used various sets of data to create the free online map say it gives the most detailed possible picture of which Scottish communities are most at risk from passing on the virus and potential fatalities from it.

The data used includes population density; how many older people or those with underlying

health conditions live in the area; how many people use road and rail travel; how easy or otherwise it is to access local health services and what residents' average income is in each area.

Gordon MacIntyre-Kemp, founding director of Glasgow-based Scotianomics said: 'We want to be absolutely clear. This is nothing to do with the number of cases in an area or how

well people living in each area have observed the lockdown. It is not a map of COVID-19 cases across Scotland but of the areas most at risk of community infection.'

The brains behind the map say it should help guide the Scottish Government on lifting lockdown restrictions on a phased, geographic basis.

If that happened, it could see

schools or businesses in the Oban area open earlier than in places such as Inverclyde North which is ranked as the riskiest location.

Mr MacIntyre-Kemp said: 'There has already been a great deal of debate on whether the four nations within the UK should ease restrictions in lock-step, despite the fact that Oban is likely to have a completely

different risk profile to Tower Hamlets in London. What our research shows is there are also significant variations even within Scotland.'

The research has been submitted to the Scottish Government's Advisory Group on Economic Recovery.

To see the online map visit [www.scotianomics.org/covid19-risk-monitor/](http://www.scotianomics.org/covid19-risk-monitor/)

# Land sale builds better future on Colonsay

by Kathie Griffiths  
[kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk)



Families needing housing on Colonsay at last have a foundation of hope to build on.

After years in the planning, the island's community development company has now bought two plots from the Colonsay Estate.

Colonsay Community Development Company (CCDC) project officer Carrie Seymour said 'the deal is done', making way for the next stage of design, which will eventually mean more roofs over islanders' heads.

There are currently 11 families and individuals waiting for a home of their own, some relying on other people's goodwill and others living in caravans.

The long-awaited and much-needed new community-led housing development, which will provide six homes and three plots for self-builds, will go on one piece of land across 1.73 hectares towards the south of the public road that runs between the harbour and the church at Scalascaig, while a second site nearby, also just purchased from Colonsay Estate, will make space for two business unit developments.

The Scottish Land Fund awarded £395,000 towards buying land, a substantial award from Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) also helped towards the total amount needed and industry partner MOWI, which operates a salmon farm off the coast, also made a significant contribution.

The new housing will be made up of four affordable properties to rent, two for low-cost home ownership and three serviced low-cost plots offering self-build opportunities, said Carrie.

As for the new business units – the island already has two occupied by the brewery and a book shop – people on Colonsay are being asked what the premises could be used for, workshops or office space.

The next stage of designs including getting a road in and working out costings will have to wait until after lockdown, pushing a building start date further into the future but Carrie says the island is agreed it will be worth the wait.

She told The Oban Times: 'We can't say when work will start on the next step to building. But the deal is now done, the sale has gone through and that's great news, although it's a shame we can't have a party to celebrate the land finally belonging to the community. No doubt as soon as lockdown is over we'll be popping the champagne.'

More funding for the building work will be sought.

At Lower Kilchatten on the island, West Highland Housing Association plans to build five affordable houses.

Councillor Robin Currie, policy lead for housing, roads and infrastructure services, said: 'Argyll and Bute's economic future is based on growing its population. Affordable housing, particularly on our islands, is key to that.'

## Are you a current or former Postmaster?

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If you wish to register a claim, the Historical Shortfall Scheme is open until 14 August 2020.

Cases will be assessed by an independent advisory panel.

For details and to submit a claim please visit [onepostoffice.co.uk/scheme](http://onepostoffice.co.uk/scheme)

POST OFFICE

OT

# Vital message as battle against virus continues

As the national effort continues to slow the spread of coronavirus, it's important to acknowledge the part everyone in Scotland has played in helping save lives.

The restrictions placed on our day-to-day lives have undoubtedly been tough. People are experiencing the loss of social interaction, loss of livelihoods and, for some, the loss of health or a loved one.

But the measures remain necessary to stop coronavirus and it's vital the nation continues to help in the fight against this pandemic.

Every part of Scotland will be affected by this virus and the situation we face is serious. However, as we've seen, by people doing the right thing, together we can reduce the impact, flatten the curve and save lives. Not following guidance – or lifting restrictions too soon – could result in many



more people becoming ill or dying, and risk our NHS being overwhelmed.

It's important to remain aware of the symptoms of coronavirus and latest guidance. These can be found at [www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot)

If you have symptoms you think may be coronavirus, do not leave your home for seven days. If you are in a household with someone else who has symptoms, you should not leave your home for 14 days, even if you remain symptom free.



If you start to display symptoms during those 14 days, you should stay at home for seven days from the date symptoms begin. By doing so, you will help control the spread of the virus. If you need to go out for exercise or shopping, keep two metres apart at all times – that's roughly the length of

a double bed or two shopping trolleys – and wash your hands as soon as you get home.

Regularly washing your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds reduces the risk of catching and spreading the virus. It's also important to avoid touching your face.

Scotland's National Clinical Director Jason Leitch said: 'People across the country have done a great job of following the advice to stay at home and I'd like to say thank you for everything you're doing.'

'We don't underestimate how hard it has been, but every single life is precious. That is why we need people to stick at it and continue to follow the guidance to slow the spread of the virus, protect the NHS and our loved ones.'

'The Scottish Government is working day and night to do the very best it can for the people of Scotland during the

pandemic, guided by the latest scientific and medical advice.'

'While there are some early signs the lead indicators may be flattening off, or not accelerating as they were, it's important to stress the situation remains serious. That's why our message continues to be 'stay at home'.'

'If we remove measures too early, that will crumble. We need to be very, very cautious as we move forward. We are in it for a long haul and it's important to stress everyone needs to play their part.'

'There has been no bigger ask of the nation, but every time you follow the latest advice, you're helping us save lives. I'd appeal to you to continue to do the right thing.'

For information on the latest guidance visit [www.gov.scot/coronavirus](http://www.gov.scot/coronavirus). If you have a health concern, visit [www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot)

## College postpones graduation event

Argyll College UHI has postponed its 2020 graduation ceremony as a result of restrictions in place around large events.

The celebration will now take place on November 20 at the Queen's Hall in Dunoon.

A college spokesperson said: 'We understand how important this event is to the students and their families and friends and are doing all we can to ensure the event goes ahead. However, should COVID19 restrictions still be in place later in the year we may have to make alternative arrangements.'

Final year degree students expecting to qualify will be notified by UHI, however, it is essential they register if they wish to attend the Dunoon ceremony. Students should either complete the registration form at [argyll.uhi.ac.uk](http://argyll.uhi.ac.uk), email [Helen.Gillies@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:Helen.Gillies@uhi.ac.uk) or call 01631 559675.

Further education students, HNC and HND students will have already been emailed invitations and details of the event, but must still register to attend. The deadline for registration for the ceremony is Friday October 30.



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## RNLI appeal to stay afloat

Lifeboat fundraisers in Oban and Tobermory are appealing for help to fill a potential shortfall of thousands of pounds.

Last year the two RNLI stations raised about £3,400 between them as part of their Mayday Campaign.

Appealing for the public to get creative with online fundraising, Billy Forteith, Oban Lifeboat's operations manager, said usually by this time of the year, the Oban lifeboat has been launched 10 to 15 times, but so far in 2020 it has had just five call outs – including one on Sunday, the first during lockdown which turned out to be a false alarm after a kayak was spotted drifting near Craobh Haven.

'This was Oban's first call out since restrictions were introduced and this is testimony to those who have adhered to the guidelines put in place by the government,' said Mr Forteith.

Fundraisers for the Oban lifeboat say it is 'unclear' yet how hard the pandemic has hit the charity and they are still hoping to match the £2,000 last year's month-long Mayday Campaign made.

Instead of the usual car washes and coffee mornings, fundraisers are asking people to get creative while respecting

social distancing, such as organising online quiz nights or having virtual cuppas.

Social distancing is difficult for crews on call-outs so the charity has urged people not to use water for their current daily exercise.

Tobermory lifeboat's last shout was just over a week before lockdown when it was called out to a fish farm support vessel with an engine fire.

### 'We have worked in partnership with THA to promote safety...'

The town's Lifeboat Operations manager Dr Sam Jones said: 'Since then we have fortunately had no call outs. We have worked in partnership with Tobermory Harbour Association to promote safety messaging to encourage recreational water users to follow government guidance and to consider carefully whether heading out onto the water is an essential activity and to take their daily exercise on land and close to home. The harbour has been closed to non-essential visiting traffic.'

'While we remain ready to respond to emergencies at sea

24/7, every lifeboat launch increases the risk of spreading the virus. It may also impede our ability to respond to future incidents if the lifeboat has to be taken off service for a deep clean or if our crew have to self-isolate or become ill.'

By staying off the water, recreational users can also be a lifesaver. We are grateful that so far on our patch, people are following our advice.'

This month marks 30 years since the station reopened but COVID-19 means events have been postponed.

'We had planned an anniversary dinner and a celebratory ceilidh on Saturday May 30. We have postponed the events until later in the year.'

'However, we are still celebrating the anniversary. In conjunction with Martin Brant and his brilliant team at Tobermory Co-op, we are running a colouring in competition for our young supporters over the next four weeks. There will be a prize for the best picture each week as voted by our volunteer crew.'

'Lifeboat Day, our big event, is scheduled to take place on Sunday August 13 but at present we don't know whether or not it will go ahead or in what form,' said Dr Jones.

# Women's Aid still offer support in lockdown

by Fiona Scott  
fscott@obantimes.co.uk



An Argyll woman who suffered years of domestic abuse has shared her story in a bid to encourage women in a similar situation to get help.

Skye McLeod from Garelochhead was stressed, depressed, anxious and dropped to six and a half stone in weight while still trying to look okay to the outside world.

'It's only now I realise just how broken I was,' she said.

'I was in a terrible relationship. I was used, humiliated and controlled. I did what most people do in this situation and minimised, even to myself, what was going on. I was ashamed and embarrassed. I needed help but I didn't know how or who to ask. I believed I had made my bed and should lie in it.'

Skye eventually left the rela-



Skye McLeod.

tionship completely in 2018, but not before much more damage was done, including an attempt to take her own life.

Last year she was diagnosed and treated for complex-PTSD and takes medication every day to help.

'I'd rather that than go back to how I felt,' she added.

'I have weekly support sessions from Argyll and Bute Women's Aid (ABWA). I can't describe how amazing this organisation and my support worker has been in helping me get my life back. I know during the pandemic, cases of domestic abuse have risen dramatically.

'I want anyone who is in a controlling or abusive relationship to know there are people who can help you.

'Women's Aid and organisations like them are confidential and non-judgemental. They support you in any decisions you make, even if you decide you are not ready to leave. They will help keep you safe.'

Skye's story is not unique. Year on year, more and more women, children and young people reach out to ABWA for what is often described as life changing support.

With an impressive 3,040

Facebook followers, staff say they are regularly humbled by the kindness of strangers who reach out to offer support including pet fostering, donations of much-needed items such as emergency mobile phones, toiletries and children's toys. Some have offered temporary accommodation for women escaping abuse during lockdown.

ABWA is currently supporting 212 women, children and young people, whose ages range from five to 75 years. With 54 of those service users living in Oban, Lorn or the Isles, lockdown has meant the service has had to respond quickly to the challenges of no longer being able to deliver an outreach service.

Service manager Sandra Paton said her staff have done an incredible job of making sure they make contact, where it's safe to do so, with every

service user who has signed up for weekly support calls. Describing the small but dedicated team as the most valuable resource ABWA has, Sandra added: 'Staff continue to do everything in their power to help service users stay positive during these difficult times.'

ABWA's confidential support service is available Monday to Friday from 9am till 4.30pm. An answer machine operates outwith these times.

During lockdown, a text number has been made available for anyone wishing to send a text rather than call. All text messages will be responded to the next working day.

How to contact ABWA: telephone 01369 706636; text 07483 036 604; email info@abwa.org.uk; visit www.argyllwomensaid.org.uk or Facebook - Argyll and Bute Women's Aid. In a crisis, always call 999.

## Held for court

On Wednesday May 13, Oban officers arrested a man, aged 45, in relation to several crimes committed over the previous weekend. The man was charged with a series of thefts and the deliberate damage to the tyres on two police vans. He was held for court on Thursday May 14 and a report was submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

## Arrest

Between 9pm on Saturday May 9 and noon on Sunday May 10 in Angus Terrace, Oban, a 45-year-old man allegedly broke into a Black Ford Ranger. Police arrested and charged the man who was held for court and a report was submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

## Charged

Between 6.50am and 7.30am on Sunday May 10, in Crannog Lane, Oban, a 45-year-old man allegedly entered a premises with the intention of committing theft. Police arrested and charged the man who was held for court and a report was submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

## LOOKING FOR HELP DURING CORONAVIRUS?

Please cut out and keep this page of useful contacts for use when you may need them.

**National Assistance Helpline**  
(Open office hours Monday to Friday)  
Call: 0800 111 4000  
Text phone service: 0800 111 4114

To help people at increased risk access essential help if they do not have family or other support.

### Health

www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus  
0800 028 2816 for general information only

**NHS 24:** Call 111 if symptoms worsen or if fever for 7+ days

**Shielding local support:**  
www.gov.scot/covid-shielding-contacts

### Feeling anxious or depressed?

#### NHS Inform:

www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus-mental-wellbeing

#### NHS 24:

Call 111  
www.clearyourhead.scot

#### Breathing Space:

www.breathingspace.scot  
0800 83 85 87

### SAMH:

0344 800 0550

#### Samaritans Scotland Helpline:

116 123 / jo@samaritans.org

#### Advice for pregnant women

www.nhsinform.scot/ready-steady-baby or contact your midwife if concerned.

#### Social welfare and financial help

##### Citizens Advice Scotland:

www.cas.org.uk  
0800 028 1456

#### Struggling with energy bills?

**Home Energy Scotland:**  
0808 808 2282

#### Consumer issues

**Advice Direct Scotland:**  
www.coronavirusadvice.scot  
0808 800 9060

### Employment rights advice

www.acas.org.uk  
Helpline: 0300 123 1100

#### Your rights at work

www.stuc.org.uk  
0141 337 8100

#### For business support

www.findbusinesssupport.gov.scot  
Helpline: 0300 303 0660

#### Advice for parents

www.parentclub.scot/coronavirus

#### Parentline Scotland:

08000 28 22 33

#### The Money Talk Team:

0800 085 7145

#### Information for young people

www.young.scot/coronavirus

### Information for older people

www.agescotland.org.uk  
0800 12 44 222

#### Dementia - Alzheimer Scotland

www.alzscot.org  
Helpline: 0808 808 3000

#### Scottish Autism Advice Line

www.scottishautism.org  
01259 222022

#### Domestic Abuse Helpline

www.safer.scot  
Helpline: 0800 027 1234

#### Rape Crisis Scotland Helpline

www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk  
Helpline: 08088 01 03 02



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OT

# From reading to radio – Fiona talks up Oban Times

by Fiona Scott

fscott@obantimes.co.uk



A former journalist has been sharing the local news with communities all over Argyll and Bute since the beginning of lockdown.

Fiona Wallace, from Lochgilphead, is one of the Argyll Talking Newspapers volunteers who, before coronavirus, read and recorded top news items letters, sport, community news and what's on, from six local newspapers onto USB sticks before sending them to people who find reading difficult.

The weekly recordings stopped when lockdown was announced due to the close working process of recording, copying and posting of the sticks to 125 listeners.

Speaking to the Oban Times last week Fiona said: 'It was a necessary, but sad, occasion.

'Our listeners, primarily vis-

Fiona Wallace scrutinises the Oban Times for stories ahead of her Talking Newspapers radio slot.



ually impaired but with other temporary and permanent reasons which make reading their local newspaper difficult, rely on talking newspapers to keep them up to date with what is happening in their area.'

Realising that many of her listeners would miss their weekly news fix during the ensuing 'stay at home' phase, Lanark-born Fiona came up with a plan.

'I decided to continue reading some newspapers, in less detail than we would normally, and post the recordings on the Argyll Talking Newspapers Facebook page – facebook.com/argylltalkingpapers – as a way of continuing to reach some of our listeners,' she explained.

Around the same time, Oban FM were struggling to fill their usual schedule due to some presenters and staff members being unable to travel to the studio.

Talking Newspapers already have a champion in presenter Alan Macdonald – Macky to Oban FM listeners – and Fiona spoke to station managers about having recordings broadcast as a way to fill the airwaves and keep Oban folk up to date with the local news on air.

The idea was welcomed by both organisations, including

Argyll Talking Newspapers chairman Robin Finlay, and since then Fiona has recorded highlights from the Oban Times each week.

Short recordings from the Campbeltown Courier, Argyllshire Advertiser and the Ilead are also posted on the Argyll Talking Newspapers Facebook page.

Fiona began work as a journalist with DC Thomson in their Manchester office in 1976, working as a reporter on the Weekly News, Sunday Post and Jackie magazine.

**'This collaboration has been of benefit to both organisations.'**

On returning to Scotland in 1988 she continued to work as a reporter with the Campbeltown Courier before moving on to take up the position of press officer with Argyll and Bute Council.

Since retiring in 2016, Talking Newspapers has become a big part of her life. Little did she know that radio broadcasting would become part of it too.

'Becoming familiar with the technical side of recording has been a steep learning curve,' she added.

Fiona had never used the microphone or camera on her laptop before and was now faced with the daunting task of converting files from one format to another, transferring them and turning them into videos for Facebook.

'It was a bit intimidating at first but with Alan's help, and lots of encouragement from Oban FM chairman Campbell Cameron, I persevered and now it's a well-trodden routine each Friday,' she told us.

Now the radio station has decided to give the Argyll Talking Newspapers their own regular slot.

'We were only too delighted to help and especially as the talking newspaper features the Highlanders Bible, the Oban Times. That made it a perfect fit,' said Oban FM chairman Campbell Cameron.

'This collaboration with Oban FM has been of benefit to both organisations, and I hope for our listeners, too.'

Argyll Talking Newspapers airs on Oban FM at 7pm on Friday and Mondays.

Oban FM is on 103.3 FM and at [www.obanfm.scot](http://www.obanfm.scot) or on the Tunein App. As soon as the lockdown ends and it is safe to do so, Argyll Talking Newspapers will start reading and recording again.

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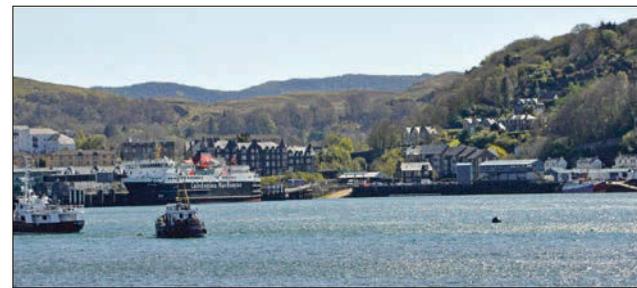
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## Save Oban's seafront webcams

An appeal has been launched to help raise money to keep two vital webcams in Oban running.

The high-spec lenses provide a panoramic window on Oban to people all over the world. But the coronavirus has shut down tourism and there has also been a fall off in vital sponsorship money which kept the cameras maintained and paid the costly streaming and bandwidth bill.

The outdoor units, at the Northern Lighthouse Pier and North Pier, provide high-quality real-time footage and shine a light on local landmarks from the stunning sunsets to the esplanade and McCaig's Tower. Thousands log on to Oban.org.uk just to feel closer to Oban and now the Oban and Lorn Tourism Alliance, which runs the website, is appealing for people to help 'crowdfund the cams' and prevent the curtain being drawn across the



town's spectacular outlook. The alliance has set a target to raise £5,000 and within a few days had hit £1,500.

'Can't wait to return to Oban to watch the sun set and eat lovely fish and chips,' said one donor. Another stumped up £100 and called it the 'best view in the world'.

The positive response has cheered Linda Battison, marketing director and a founding member of the OLTA.

Mrs Battison, owner of Colgin Country Chalets and Lodges, said: 'We have always

known they are the most popular part of the website and attract a huge amount of traffic, but they are not free to run.

'The amount of bandwidth they need is very expensive because of the high quality images, and being outdoor cameras we do have to replace them.

'I think it lifts people's spirits to see the town looking so good with the fabulous weather we have been having.'

To donate, visit: [www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/oban-webcams?utm\\_term=bA2pqrqbe](http://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/oban-webcams?utm_term=bA2pqrqbe)

All together >

# Private firms working for the public good in coronavirus outbreak

People working for a wide range of private companies have been standing side-by-side with public sector staff on the front line during the coronavirus outbreak. Staff at private sector firms

have been doing their bit to help out communities across the country during the crisis. This includes employees from many of the large outsourcing firms that the government works with,

who have both shifted their resources to work on other projects and made sure vital services have continued. Here are just some of the many examples from across the country.

## 'Trying to make a difference'

### CASE STUDY 1 VENTILATORS

AT THE beginning of the Covid 19 crisis, Britain's hospitals had 8,000 ventilators.

They now have 11,500 - of which more than 1,000 are from the Prime Minister's Ventilator Challenge.

Babcock International is one of those companies which has stepped up to the challenge

The company based in London has offices, specialist training facilities, dockyards, equipment testing centres and research and development facilities across England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

Chris Spicer is project manager for the ventilator challenge at the company He said: "On Monday March 16 there was an email asking if there was any way Babcock could provide support. By the Friday we had a working prototype. The weekend was pretty busy preparing for a



**CHALLENGING TIMES:** Chris Spicer is project manager for Babcock International.

presentation to the government on the Monday to propose what our offering would be, how it would meet the requirement specifications, our plan for building it, the time frame and also the volumes we could achieve.

"People worked round-the-clock to get it sorted and have continued to. We've used innovative, bespoke ways of

moving forward. Some of the machine companies we use for submarine parts now make plastic valves for the ventilators. We all want to help in any small way we can. We all have relatives in vulnerable groups and that's a driver - thinking if that was your father or your granny in that scenario how could you make that little bit of difference."

## Stepping up to support Nightingale North West

### CASE STUDY 3 HOSPITALS

GLOBAL construction and support services company Interserve is among the many that has stepped up to help out in the current crisis.

The company was already providing services ranging from security through to cleaning, catering, maintenance and portering duties to 11 NHS hospitals, six healthcare facilities, the London Ambulance Service and the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service.

Within 11 days of taking an initial call, they had everything



**FAST WORK:** Steve Francis.

ready - from cleaning to catering - for Nightingale North West.

Steve Francis works for Interserve as part of the facilities management team at the hospital.

He said: "Teams had to move quickly on the Nightingale contract. The company had a call from the NHS and 11 days later we were live."

## Virtual visiting brings comfort to families

### CASE STUDY 4 LIFELINES

A UNIQUE partnership of medical experts, academics, companies and charities has led to the creation of a way for families to see loved ones in intensive care without actually visiting them.

The team have shared expertise and resources to help patients and families stay connected through Life Lines, a project which provides a secure virtual-visiting solution for families whose loved ones are being treated in intensive care units during the coronavirus pandemic. It means that even though they can't visit,

family members can still be at the bedside via a tablet and secure app.

The Life Lines project was set up by critical care consultant Dr Joel Meyer, professor of critical care nursing Professor Louise Rose and Michel Paquet, who developed the aTouchAway app used in the project and is the chief executive officer of Aetonix.

Partners include King's College London, King's Health Partners, Aetonix, Bray Leino, Google and BT. Initial funding of £1m was provided by the True Colours Trust and the Gatsby Charitable Foundation.

## Ensuring the children of key workers are well fed

### CASE STUDY 2 FOOD

FEEDING THE children of key workers who have still been attending school during the coronavirus crisis has been a significant challenge.

One of the firms that has been helping ensure children are well fed is ISS education, who work with more than 600 education establishments across the country.

They have been providing food hampers packed with all the ingredients families need to cook meals at home for their children

Linda Cregan is the food services director for ISS education. She said around 200 of the schools it serves have stayed open to feed vulnerable and key worker children.



**FEEDING TIME:** Linda Cregan.

"We wanted to make sure we were doing everything possible and making it as easy as possible for schools to find solutions locally to what they needed," she said. "We have had a mixed bag offering packed lunches, collections, and hot meals."

One of the establishments they have worked with is the Waterton Academy Trust, which is based in Wakefield.

Linda said: "The trust wanted to be able to provide families with the ingredients that they could then cook the meals at home with for their children."

## Companies doing their bit

- Interserve have used 40 vehicles and 100 people from their probation team to deliver food to the elderly and vulnerable.
- BAE Systems helped to secure more PPE equipment for NHS staff by using their industrial-scale 3D printers to make tens of thousands of face shields.
- Engie are distributing shielding and welfare boxes to vulnerable

- people on behalf of local councils.
- ISS have delivered recipe books and food hampers to thousands of children who are eligible for free school meals.
- BT have worked with Samsung, Google, MobileIron and TouchAway to provide video services for people in intensive care units, allowing them to communicate with their families.



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and play our part.

# BUSINESS NEWS

## Boat comes in for Mull company

A new workboat has been handed over to a marine services company on Mull.

Inverlussa Marine Services of Craignure, has now added the Damen Multi Cat 1908 – named Patricia Matheson – to its fleet.

It is named after the sister of company director Douglas Wilson and will be used in contracts for off-shore wind farms and fish-farming.

It was built by Damen Shipyards Group in Hardinxveld, situated on the Boven Merwede, a river in the western Netherlands. Inverlussa Marine Services supply vessels to service contracts throughout the UK and Europe.

Ben Wilson, managing director of Inverlussa Marine Services said: 'We enjoyed working with Damen on this project. Their Multi Cats are renowned around the world and when the right opportunity arose, we were delighted to partner with them. The Patricia Matheson will strengthen the breadth of services that we can now provide to our clients in Scotland and further afield.'

Although based on the standardised design, Inverlussa Marine Services have customised its new vessel.

It has included the positioning of the capstan cranes and manoeuvring stands, some tailoring to the vessel's accommodation and the installation of an additional generator to provide the power it needs to serve the aquaculture industry. Additionally, Patricia Matheson features an additional crane and a larger main winch.

Mike Besijn, Damen sales manager, said: 'It's been a pleasure working with Inverlussa Marine Services. They really knew what they were looking for in their vessel and have provided us with valuable input in her development.'



# Seafood sector shares £800,000 cash boost

by Ellis Butcher  
ebutcher@obantimes.co.uk



Shellfish growers and trout producers will receive a share of £800,000 of funding to continue with important projects in the wake of COVID-19.

The grants are from the European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and will go to 11 aquaculture businesses across Scotland.

The fund consists of a £600,000 contribution from the EU and £200,000 from the Scottish Government.

The grants will help ongoing projects including £370,000 to Kames Fish Farming Ltd of Loch Poortiel, Skye; £98,758 to Seaforth Mussels Ltd on the Isle of Harris; and £13,925 to the Sound of Luing Bivalve Seafarm Ltd.

A total of £12,942 has also gone to help projects by Isle of Mull Oysters Ltd; and £12,800 to Tobermory Oysters, Mull.

The investment for small aquaculture businesses is in addition to hardship payments of up to £27,000, said the Scottish Government.

Fergus Ewing MSP, rural economy secretary, said coronavirus had dealt a 'devastating im-

pact' on Scotland's seafood sector. The markets for some products had disappeared almost overnight and left many businesses at risk of financial ruin, he said.

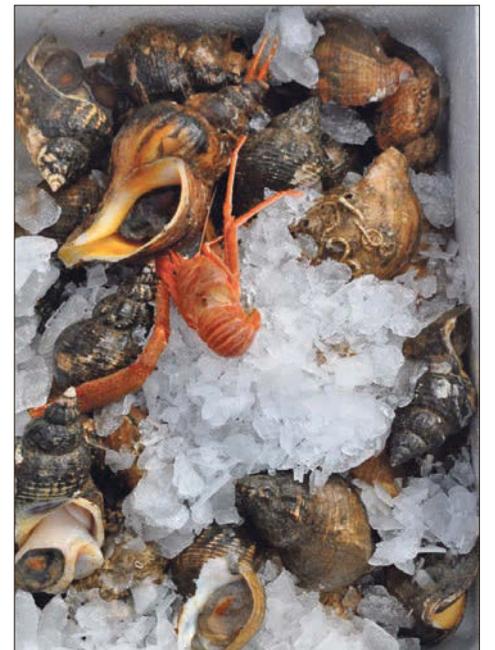
'This new funding is being awarded to businesses working in rural areas who have been hit the hardest by this pandemic, helping them to strengthen their business and recover from the loss of markets,' said Mr Ewing.

'Aquaculture is an important part of our food and drink success story which we need to preserve.

'In addition to this EMFF funding, over the last month we have provided hardship funding payments worth more than £340,000 to 28 eligible shellfish growers and trout farmers.'

Dr Nick Lake, chief executive of the association of Scottish Shellfish Growers, said the grants showed the 'continued confidence' the Scottish Government had in shellfish businesses.

'There is optimism that shellfish cultivation businesses, as part of the wider Scottish rural economy, will continue to deliver quality shellfish which is held in high regard within both the UK and internationally,' said Mr Lake.



Eleven Scottish businesses will benefit.

## Pavilion's main contractor goes into administration

The regeneration of Rothesay Pavilion has been hit by another major blow after the main contractor on the £15million project went into administration.

Argyll and Bute Council, which owns the historic building, is considering its options for the completion of the property's refurbishment after Central Building Contractors (CBC) called in administrators KPMG at the end of April.

The cost of the project – on which work was halted in late March due to coronavirus restric-

tions – has now almost doubled from initial estimates of £8 million.

In November 2017 CBC was named the main works contractor for the Pavilion, worth £10.6m – the same month as councillors were told the overall refurbishment would cost £14m due to the poor condition of the building, which has been exposed to the salty air of the Firth of Clyde since opening in 1938.

At a meeting of the council's emergency 'business continuity committee' (BCC) held via

Skype on Thursday May 14, executive director Douglas Hendry said it was "a matter of public record" that the company had called in the administrators, adding: 'We have now terminated the contract between us and the organisation, and we are looking at the options available to us to engage with another contractor to complete the works.'

He continued: 'There will be an update on the Pavilion to one of the BCC meetings that we are going to look to schedule before recess.'

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## Around Lochaber

ANGUS MACDONALD

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



### The Forgotten West

Never in my lifetime has there been such a marked advantage to living in rural Scotland as there has been over the last ten weeks.

Fantastic weather, easy access to wide open spaces and comparatively safe from COVID. However, when things return to normal it would be fantastic if the Scottish Government were to consider this article, for 50 years and more we have seen low salaries, poor transport infrastructure and emigration from the west. We need to see a balancing across Scotland.

The Scottish National Party dominate politics in our constituencies. But what have they done to warrant such loyalty? They blame the bad news on Westminster but they are in charge of the budgets and delivery for transport, NHS, education and infrastructure and need to take responsibility for shortcomings.

In England, Boris Johnston won a landslide in December on the back of Northern voters who felt that they had been taken for granted by Labour MPs, just as Scottish voters did to Labour when the SNP overturned 60 years of Labour domination. Talk of



The A82 into Fort William is often nose to tail in the summer.

the northern powerhouse, moving civil servants out of London, HS2, even proposing the House of Lords sits in Leeds while the Palace of Westminster gets refurbished has attracted considerable support. London is the financial and commercial centre of England, now, there is real commitment at Westminster to spread that wealth around.

In Scotland, wealthy Edinburgh is the equivalent of rich London. A Fraser of Allander report shows London had growth\* of 99 per cent over the last 20 years but Edinburgh topped that with growth of 105 per cent, meanwhile in the same period muted growth of 85 per cent was achieved across Scotland as a whole. Since 2010 the population of Edinburgh has grown by 23 per cent

while in the Highlands the population has actually fallen. And the gap is getting wider, not least in salaries, with Edinburgh accelerating away.

The central belt has had massive infrastructure spend over the last decade, widening of the M8 and M74, a second Forth Road Bridge, the Edinburgh Tram, and major new hospitals. Aberdeen has had its ring road and Inverness will benefit from the dualling of the A9.

In the year 1999, when Fergus Ewing was campaigning to be elected as an MSP for the Scottish Parliament, he told the assembled audience in Fort William he had two commitments he would deliver on if elected – the replacement of the tired and outdated Belford Hospital, and considerable improvements to the A82. Twenty years later, we are still waiting.

In the Scottish Government Budget in February, Kate Forbes announced a sizeable increase in health spending, finally our new hospital may be built. Perhaps, however the year-long delay of the opening of Edinburgh's Sick Kids Hospital or the accident prone new Queen Elizabeth's Hospital in Glasgow, has knocked the confidence

of Health Secretary Jeane Freeman so much so that she is reluctant to sign off another significant hospital build.

Last November Kate Forbes said at Fort William's Ideas Week that the A82 being repositioned along Loch Lomond was planned for 2025, although I suspect that is the start of the process not the cutting the ribbon. The Loch Lomond stretch is dangerous and a shocking welcome to visitors to the west highlands and Hebrides. Here in Fort William there can be up to an hour-long queue of traffic trying to get into the town in a normal summer, an alternative route is agreed but the money never available.

The Scottish budget also saw £270m on rail services being announced. But it takes three hours 45 minutes to travel the 108 miles between Glasgow and Fort William at a meandering 32mph and a good hour slower than travelling by road. The west highland line was opened in 1894, has there been any upgrade since?

I regularly need to go to Skye on business, so from my home near Arisaig it made sense to take CalMac from Mallaig to Armadale, however on the winter timetable there are only

two trips a day during weekdays and only one on Sundays. Really!

The current £250m cost of the two new ferries that were to be built by Fergusons shipyard for £97m is well known, as is its ageing fleet. These ferries are THE major concern of our island communities – Islay has serious concerns about freight capacity for shipping its whisky off the island.

I have wondered for some time how many of our young remain in the west highlands after finishing their education. Unless we have a good transport network, broadband and well paid jobs, then to the central belt they will continue to go.

The Scottish Government has voiced its support for 'regional inclusive growth', but there are precious little signs of financial commitment to improving our west coast infrastructure that was unfit for purpose 20 years ago when Scottish Parliament was born. Unless Holyrood decides to throw us a lifeline, we are destined to continue to see zero growth and a declining population

■ Growth here is defined as gross value added, the measure of the value of goods or services produced.

## Holyrood doubles business fund following flood of applications

The Scottish Government has doubled a £45 million fund for businesses following a flood of applications.

The Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund saw an 'exceptionally high' number of applications when it opened.

It was 'paused' earlier this month to allow applications already submitted to be reviewed.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon

has announced that a further £45 million will go into the Pivotal Enterprise Fund – doubling the original pot of money set aside for small-to-medium enterprises 'vital to Scotland's economy'.

Supporters say the move will ensure even more SMEs will get support.

Scottish Enterprise, working with Highlands and Islands Enterprise

and South of Scotland Enterprise, will deliver the fund across the area.

HIE will appraise applications and ensure that it takes account of businesses playing an important role in local economies. It said: 'This additional funding from the Scottish Government will help meet the demand from the high-quality approved applications that have been received from via-

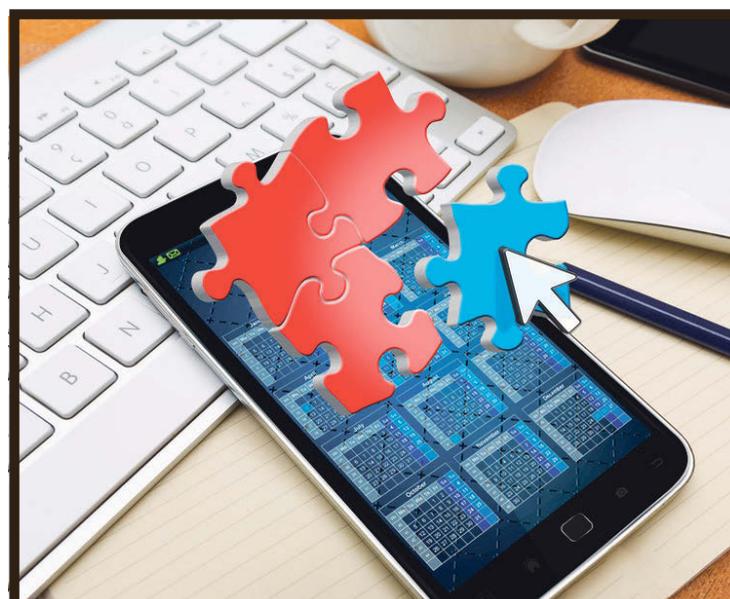
ble, but vulnerable, SMEs. Work continues to ensure the appropriate infrastructure and capacity is in place to deliver this support, and our appraisers are working at pace to get the funding to recipients in a quick and efficient matter.'

The fund runs alongside a £20 million 'Creative, Tourism and Hospitality Enterprises Hardship Fund' for small creative, tourism

and hospitality companies not in receipt of COVID-19 business rates relief

Furthermore, there is a £34 million 'Newly Self-Employed Hardship Fund' for newly self-employed people facing hardship through £2,000 grants.

Updates about support for businesses can be found at [findbusiness-support.gov.scot](http://findbusiness-support.gov.scot)



**Wylie & Bisset giving free business advice to steer Scottish businesses through Coronavirus lockdown**

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OT

## LETTERS

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

## Fond farewell

Last week Oban families took to the streets to pay their respects to much-loved teacher Margaret Cain.

Margaret, who nurtured generations of pupils in the town over 25 years, died after a long battle with cancer.

Her family said they were moved by the great number of people lining Oban's town centre streets, many of them pupils past and present, and while it was a day of great sadness, it was also a time to remember all the love and joy Margaret brought to her family, friends and her work.

The Oban Times staff would like to extend their condolences to the Cain family.

## Operation Oban

A heart-warming volunteer effort got under way in Oban last week to ensure hundreds of food parcels got out to those in need across Oban, Lorn, Dunbeg, Appin, Seil, Taynuilt, Connel and Mull.

Nearly 350 boxes – brought in by lorry, packed by 16 volunteers and then delivered by Argyll and Bute Council staff – were distributed in just two days to people stuck indoors self-isolating from COVID-19. The effort was part of a larger campaign initiated by the Scottish Government, which saw 4,000 parcels sent out across Argyll and Bute.

Well done to everyone involved, your hard work is very much appreciated.

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](mailto:editor@obantimes.co.uk) or write to: Letters page, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB.

At the Oban Times we endeavour to ensure that all our reports are fair and accurate and comply with the Editors' Code of Practice set by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). We realise, however, that mistakes happen from time to time. If we have published anything that is factually incorrect, please email: [editor@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:editor@obantimes.co.uk); telephone on 01631 568000; or email [editor@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:editor@obantimes.co.uk). We will attempt to resolve your issue in a timely, reasonable and amicable manner. However, if you are unsatisfied with our response, you can contact IPSO by email: [inquiries@ipso.co.uk](mailto:inquiries@ipso.co.uk). We will abide by the decision of IPSO.



## Island accommodation provider is failing visitors

Were it not for the outbreak of COVID-19 we would be in your area enjoying the great landscapes, wildlife and hospitality that we normally expect from your part of Scotland. Our thoughts go to those accommodation providers who will be feeling the difficulties of the present position.

Can we express our gratitude to CalMac for a quick refund of our booking charges and to those hospitality providers in Campbeltown, Gigha, Islay and Taynuilt who have kindly moved our booking to 2021 when we hope to undertake most of our holiday.

There is, however, one problem. The only accommodation provider who took in advance our full payment has not only refused to move our booking (which they normally do for a hefty fee) nor to refund our monies. This provider has therefore taken a lot of money from a range of customers and they have told us they have furloughed their staff and are seeking financial assistance from government sources. The morality of this position raises significant questions about such providers.

Yes, our bank and holiday insurance have been very efficient in recovering some of our money and we are grateful to them even though we are significantly out of pocket. The Scottish Tourist Board did not want to know about the problem, Argyll and Bute Council referred us to Citizens Advice who are almost, understandably, difficult to reach. Why one provider has taken this stance we find difficult to comprehend, it appears money is more important than reputation.

So we look forward to coming to Scotland next year but will have to make a change to our itinerary when we will miss out an island we may never now get to visit.

Ian & Krysia Brodie, Natland, Cumbria.

## BT group director thanks telecommunications workers

I would like to thank all the telecommunications workers in Scotland, many of whom have been designated key workers, for how they've responded to the coronavirus outbreak.

They're providing essential support to the NHS and keeping all of us connected during this difficult time.

From engineers going out to keep our broadband and mobile networks connected, to vital contact centre staff helping our customers when they need it most, they deserve recognition.

My colleagues, working with the Scottish Government and NHS, worked quickly to

## Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

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

Le gluasad air tòiseachadh ann an Sasainn gus riaghailtean bacaidh sgapadh Covid 19 a lùghdachadh chan eil e na annas, aig an àm a tha mi a' sgrìobhadh seo, gum bheil daoine mì-chinnteach agus beagan an-fhoiseil a thaobh na tha gu bhith ceadaichte, agus càite. Chan eil riaghailtean tiomnaichte Alba, Na Cuimrigh, agus Èirinn a Tuath, idir den bheachd gum bheil a' bhìoras fo ìre smachd a cheadaicheas na riaghailtean a lagachadh anns na dùthchannan sin, agus tha mar sin an aon chomhairle làidir a' leantainn dhan t-sluagh aca fuireach aig an taigh gus beatha a shàbhaladh.

A rèir nan seòrsa bheachdan a tha a' nochdadh air meadhanan sòisealta tha coltas ann gum bheil mòran dhen t-sluagh ag aontachadh nach eil an t-àm freagarrach fhathast airson an t-srian fhuasgladh beagan, agus gu dearbh tha e coltach nach eil fianais saidheansail a' cur taic ri a leithid a bharrachd. Ach 's fhuarasta a thuigsinn mar a tha cuingealachadh an aonarachd a' tòiseachadh ri inntinn dhaoine a thromachadh, agus a dh'aindeoin na sgàig a th' orra bhon tinnneas tha iad a' sior fhàs mì-fhoighidneach agus frustrach chun na h-ìre gum bheil barrachd deònach na riaghailtean a bhriseadh.

Tha luchd-riaghlaidh na dùthcha fon aon smachd ris a' mhòr-shluagh agus mar sin tha còir tuigse nas fheàrr a bhith aca air a' bhuaidh a tha an suidheachadh a' toirt air daoine, agus shaoileamaid gum fàgadh sin riaghailtean gan lasachadh cho luath 's a shaoileas iad gum bi sin sàbhailte.

Gun teagamh bhiodh e na b' fheàrr anns a h-uile dòigh nam biodh na gluasadan sin a'

gabhaill àite aig an aon àm feadh na rioghachd, ach tha sin doirbh leis gun tug an galair grunn sheachdainean a' gluasad feadh na dùthcha agus tha cùisean gu follaiseach nas fheàrr aig deas nuair a tha iad aig àirde mu thuath. Saoilidh mi gum bheil e gu bhith air leth doirbh riaghailtean eadar-dhealaichte a chur an gnìomh ann an sgìrean fa leth mar a tha cuid a' moladh, agus dh'fhaodamaid smachd a chall às ùr.

Ach le mìltean de ghniomhachasan an cunnart a dhol fodha mura faigh iad tòiseachadh ri malairt a-rithist, agus ceudan mhiltean chosnaidhean an cunnart cuideachd feadh na dùthcha, tha cuideam do-chreidsinneach air an riaghailtean na riaghailtean fhuasgladh. Chaidh milleanan a chosg mar-thà a' strì ri buaidh na galair seo agus chan eil cinnt gun tèid banachdach fiù 's a lorg a cheannsaicheas i, agus tha dùbhlhan uabhasach gu bhith ron dùthaich seo agus feadhainn eile a' feuchainn ri deiligeadh ri fiachan agus ri ath-nuadhachadh eaconamaidh. Theagamh gun toir sin ùine mhòr, mar a tha briathran an òrain eireachdail aig Runrig ag ràdh a thaobh tilleadh eile, "... chan urrainn dhomh creidsinn gun tug e cho fada ... feabhas!"

I can't believe it has taken all this time...recovering! Runrig's memorable song of a different time has echoed with me these past days, as frustration with lockdown grows and the devastating economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic becomes clearer.

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

provide the temporary NHS Louisa Jordan Hospital in Glasgow with communications. They are doing the same to support the other temporary NHS services across Scotland.

Our people have worked around the clock with health boards across the country to offer new, technical solutions to help frontline health workers get on with their jobs during this crisis.

Our frontline staff in contact centres across Scotland – including Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow and Greenock – have risen to this unprecedented challenge.

We've received a huge surge of customers asking for faster connections to help with

home working, home schooling and running their businesses remotely. These colleagues – most of whom are now able to work from home when they want to – have performed a critical role keeping our customers, including frontline health workers and vulnerable people, connected.

The people in our two 999 contact centres in Scotland are also playing a critical role, answering life-saving emergency calls. I couldn't be more proud of how my colleagues have responded to these challenges and their desire to help us all through this crisis.

Jane Wood,  
BT Group director in Scotland.

## Chicken Kebabs



7 Syns per serving 25 minutes Serves 4

Deduct 7 Syns if using Pita Bread wholemeal as a Healthy Extra 'b' choice.

A simple tikka marinade packs tons of flavour into this fab kebab dinner

## Ingredients

8 skinless and boneless chicken thighs, visible fat removed, cut into bite-size pieces  
3 level tbsp tikka curry powder\* (see tip)  
250g fat-free natural Greek-style yogurt  
3 garlic cloves, crushed  
4 x 60g wholemeal pita breads  
Lemon wedges, to serve

## Method:

Put the chicken in a freezer bag (or a glass or stainless-steel bowl) with the curry powder, yogurt and garlic. Season with salt and stir to combine. Seal the bag or cover the bowl with cling film and marinate in the fridge for at least 1 hour or overnight.

For the salad, put the cucumber, radishes, celery and lettuce in a bowl. Mix together the yogurt and chopped coriander, season, then stir through the salad.

Preheat your grill to high. Lift the chicken out of the marinade, letting any excess drain off, then thread onto 4 metal skewers. Place on a baking tray lined with foil and grill for 10-12 minutes, turning halfway, or until the chicken is lightly charred and cooked through.

Toast the pita breads. Scatter the coriander sprigs over the chicken skewers and serve with 1 pita bread per person with the salad and lemon wedges for squeezing over.

\*Spice blends are Free as long as they're made from herbs and spices only and don't include any Synned ingredients like sugar, flour and oil. Check the label to be sure and count the Syns as necessary

## For the salad:

1 cucumber, halved lengthways, deseeded and roughly chopped  
200g radishes, trimmed and quartered  
3 celery sticks, roughly chopped  
2 little gem lettuces, shredded  
100g fat-free natural Greek-style yogurt  
25g fresh coriander, leaves roughly chopped, reserving a few whole sprigs for the kebabs

## PLEASE NOTE:

**ALL CLASSES ARE CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

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# DISTRICT NEWS

## Mull artists raise money for COVID fund

A Mull couple have drawn on their resources to raise £500 for the island's Community COVID-19 Emergency Fund.

Artists Ronnie Leckie and Aska Marzec-Leckie from The Picture Gallery on Main Street, Tobermory donated an original Isle of Mull painting titled Sunbeams Loch na Keal and two limited edition prints to their crowdfunding efforts and needless to say the artwork drew quite a lot of attention.

People were invited to donate to the page and in doing so were entered into a prize draw to win the paintings. The painting itself was done by Aska and had a value of £350 with the two prints worth £55 each.

'We are very pleased that we were able to sup-

port this great cause and would like to say a huge thank you for all the support from the community either by donating to or sharing the campaign. It all helps, what an amazing community spirit.'

The winners were announced on The Picture Gallery Facebook page on Thursday May 14 with the original painting being won by Laura, who said: 'I can't believe it. I never win anything, I'm so happy. The painting is beautiful and the place means so much to me as I spent most of my childhood there.'

Aska added: 'We are ecstatic that we could make their day and beyond. They can now enjoy the artwork on their walls and escape to the Loch na Keal any time.'

Aska and Ronnie are currently working from



Aska with the original artwork, which she painted.

home and The Picture Gallery remains open online. To see more artwork visit [www.ronnie-leckie.com](http://www.ronnie-leckie.com) or [www.scottishislandart.com](http://www.scottishislandart.com)

## Mull scarecrows decide to plough on through lockdown for virtual show fun

Scarecrow competitions are going ahead on Mull despite lockdown.

Tobermory Horticultural Society has announced a fun contest for children and adults to get busy and come up with ideas before the deadline on July 31.

Some entries are already appearing in Tobermory. The categories are most creative, topical and scariest, and photographs of them should be sent to [clanhoneyman@aol.com](mailto:clanhoneyman@aol.com)

Entrants must remember to send in their names and the name of the category and hopefully prizes will be awarded at the Society's Spring Show on Saturday August 22.

Over on the Ross of Mull, the traditional Mull & Iona Scarecrow Trail will also be ploughing on this summer, says Jack Degnan who helps co-ordinate the popular event which is one of the farthest stretching such trails in the UK.

Usually the trail coincides with the Ross of Mull and Iona Gala and Bunessan Show.



Scarecrow skeletal bride waiting for the purr-fect man was the 2018 winner at the Ross of Mull and Iona Gala and Bunessan Show.

## Coll community comes together for Arinagour pupils

The community on Coll has teamed up with teachers at Arinagour Primary School to provide island pupils with a wide variety of remote learning challenges during lockdown.

As well as the day to day learning tasks set by teachers and residents on the island are also thinking up novel, fun ideas for children to get involved with.

This week's task has been set by the chef at the local hotel, who has invited children to create a recipe for his takeaway menu. The winner of the challenge will then be able to order the meal, as it will be added to the hotel's menu.

Other challenges include a Coll Quiz and a Highland Dance Challenge which saw

pupils dancing for 10 minutes each day with their finished, well-rehearsed piece being filmed and sent into the head teacher at the end of the week. The children loved getting involved and were proud of their final versions.

Argyll and Bute Council's policy lead for education, Councillor Yvonne McNeilly, said: 'This is a great example of our teachers and local residents coming together to ensure that our young people can still take part in a wide variety of learning opportunities during lockdown.'

'This is community spirit at its best. I'd like to thank the staff at Arinagour Primary, the parents and members of the local community for going above and beyond for our young people. Well done.'



## Ganavan pals get creative for Blue Peter Challenge

A group of friends from Ganavan have been getting creative during lockdown and have been rewarded with a much coveted Blue Peter Badge.

Stephen sisters Lydia-Rose, six, and Amelia-Grace, eight, pictured below, were awarded their badges for creating a recipe book for children who celebrate their birthdays during lockdown, while Eilidh Rose Lawson, nine, pictured above, received one on the same day for drawing a beautiful picture of the view from her house.

All three girls are regular watchers of the long running BBC programme and were delighted when their badges arrived.



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## Pipers called on to remember 'the forgotten Dunkirk'

Pipers across Scotland are being invited to join a poignant tribute to thousands of Scots who were killed or captured during 'the forgotten Dunkirk' 80 years ago.

The lesser-known battle of Saint-Valéry-en-Caux is being memorialised by three Scottish Armed Forces charities, and pipers are being asked to play a leading role.

On June 12, 1940, just days after the successful mass-evacuations at Dunkirk, thousands of British troops remained in continental Europe under French command. Largely comprised of men from the 51st Highland Division, they fought almost continuously for 10 days against overwhelming odds until eventually surrounded at St Valéry. Those who were not killed in the fierce fighting, or fell to their deaths from the cliffs trying to escape, were captured and marched hundreds of miles to Prisoner of War camps in Eastern Europe, where they endured appalling conditions for five long years.

At 10am on June 12, 2020, pipers up and down Scotland will take to their doorsteps and play the haunting pipers march, Heroes of St Valéry, and musicians, of all ages and abilities are being invited to download the sheet music and learn the piece over the coming weeks.

Legion Scotland, Poppyscotland and RCET: Scotland's Armed Forces Children's Charity have joined forces to organise the tribute, which will also include online learning resources for young people, virtual tributes and a fundraising campaign to support the vital work of these important military charities.

Dr Claire Armstrong, chief executive of Legion Scotland, said: 'It was incredibly moving to see the country join together to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of VE Day last week - particularly in such challenging circumstances. While this was a day to celebrate, it is vital that we also remember less triumphant periods of our history. The Forgotten 51st should be forgotten no more.'

To register interest in taking part, and to access the sheet music, pipers are being asked to visit [www.poppyscotland.org.uk/st-valery](http://www.poppyscotland.org.uk/st-valery). For more information on the 51st (Highland) Division, visit <https://51hd.co.uk>

# A regular yachtsman in

## Morvern Lines

IAIN THORNER

[ian.thorner@btinternet.com](mailto:ian.thorner@btinternet.com)



There is something noticeably missing for those of us who look out over the water. This time last year the seaways from the Clyde estuary to the Outer Isles and beyond were dancing with yachts and boats of all shapes, sizes and colours. Anchorages and pontoons were thriving and chandlers' tills were singing like spring larks. Only the wake of the sonorous CalMac ferries, the Glensanda bulk carriers and a few other commercial vessels, disturb the shore birds along the Sound of Mull now. The world pandemic has seen to that.

Oban, with its sheltered waters, railhead and ferry terminals lying at the centre of several important sea routes, used to be a popular place for yachtsmen to meet, over-winter their boats and stock up with fuel and food for cruising further afield.

Many well-known boat owners of the past have written about Oban. Chief among them was Charles Cotterell Lynam (1859-1938) who wrote three books. The original Log of the Blue Dragon; The Log of Blue Dragon II and To Norway and the North Cape in Blue Dragon II.

Blue Dragon II was left in Norway at the start of the First World War and Lynam got into trouble for selling it to a Norwegian in 1916. After the war he bought another yacht which became Blue Dragon III. He did not put the subsequent logs together himself but most of them were published in the Dragon School magazine. They were collected from there and put into book form by the late Jim Pitts in 2000. Lynam kept his yacht at Kerrera from 1922 until his last cruise in 1935.

Charles Lynam was an undergraduate at Hertford College in Oxford, before joining the staff of the Oxford Preparatory School in 1882. Four years later the headmaster, Rev AE Clarke, died suddenly and Charles took over until 1920. He said, 'I hate to be called Sir every half-minute; I prefer to be called Skipper' - a name that stuck for the rest of his life. The Dragon School was and still is one of the most famous feeder schools in the world sending pupils to Shrewsbury, Harrow, Rugby, Canford, Cheltenham Ladies, Eton, Radley, Marlborough and many others.

It is the original Log of the Blue Dragon (published in 1908) which, of course, is of greater interest to those of us who live on the west coast



If you are lucky enough to have one, treasure it; if you see one for sale snap it up as they are becoming very scarce. The text is brilliant, full of wit and pithy comments as you would imagine, the photographs are acceptable considering the cameras and development process of the time; the sketches have little artistic merit; however, they catch the atmosphere and bring the book to life. Before going on to quote from the Skipper's logs - sometimes written in the third person - here are some of the original Blue Dragon's measurements: Length overall - 25ft; length on water-line - 19ft 6ins; maximum beam - 9ft; draft plate down - 5ft 3ins; mast, truck to step - 27ft; boom - 14ft 2ins; weight (Lloyd's) 7 tons. Luke & Co, boat builders at Hamble, doubled the depth of her rudder and gave her dead wood aft to counteract her tendency to run into the wind on the top of a short wave, while John Munro, owner of the Kerrera yard

and chandlery in George Street, fitted her with a new and stronger mast, mainsail and jib. The one thing lacking was a coke-stove especially for winter-cruising.

The summer cruise 1893: 'On August 18, we rounded Ardnamurchan for the first time and sailing past Muck we ran through the narrow passage between Eigg and Elean Castel and anchored close in to the rock breakwater. Here we made our first acquaintance with Sandy Mackinnon who works the big red boat that puts off to the Claymore, and Dugald Macleod who then kept The Temperance Inn. We also caught a glimpse of the venerable proprietor, Dr Macpherson, who was sitting in his sunny garden. Sandy's sister brought us milk and eggs in the morning and smiled in farewell... At Balmacara we picked up the vicar. He had been to Portree by the 'swift steamer Gale. At Oban he had spent the night looking for a ho-

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# In Oban – part 1



The skipper, centre, with the mate and steward of the Blue Dragon in Oban; and above, the Sound of Mull has no yachts in it now...

and a hearth with peat fire. The smoke comes out blue, through crevices in the heather and straw thatch, kept down by grass strings with stones attached. The bed is home-made, the roof open, with a few black beams across. The hens stroll in and out at pleasure, and the little highland cattle sniff about.

'It took us all the rest of the day to reach Portree, and we moored just after midnight. The highland games had taken place, and we watched the rockets reach a black canopy of cloud, above which they burst. As we rowed and drifted, the search light of a big yacht helped us in.'

Two days later they sailed, or rather drifted, at a knot an hour, reaching the Shiantis. 'We landed on the isthmus joining two gigantic rocks with some difficulty, and found two old men – one who was deaf and dumb – with four women and children, the sole inhabitants. One said "tobacco", and the skipper said "milk".'

'Taking him on board The Blue Dragon in the dinghy (a risky passage, as he did not realise its tricky ways), we gave him a dram and some tobacco. The skipper went ashore with him, and he gave us some warm milk, all the morning milk of his cow, and a quantity of good potatoes. One woman could say "Fine day". The little girl was blue-eyed and golden-haired but had no English.'

'We left these lonely people and sailed the sixteen miles to Stornoway in three hours with spinnaker set. Here we made the acquaintance of Mrs Macivor, whose son drove the skipper and bosun to Callernish to see the wonderful standing stones. It is a desolate country we drove through, bog and innumerable lakelets, and barren rocks.'

To be continued.

tel - rather a needless search one would think in that town...On August 29, we sailed for Loch Carron...and were rash enough to beat through the narrows in the darkness to Plockton. It was very difficult to distinguish the many rocks and islets, and buoys and perches; but having bumped on a rock and banged into a perch the moment afterwards, we anchored in the middle of the bay.

The following day the skipper and the mate beat out of Loch Carron, hoping to make Rona Sound but they eventually sailed through the Caol Mhor and anchored behind Scalpa in the dark. Here, in the morning, we made our first intimate acquaintance with a crofter's cottage. An old lady, Catherine Macdonald, gave us eggs and let the skipper sketch the interior of her cabin. The plan is very simple. A low wooden partition divides the single room in two. On one side is a bed, on the other a long wooden seat,

## DOWN MEMORY LANE

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



This photographs are again from March 1993 and was a cheque presentation in aid of the Belford Hospital medical ward. The money had been raised through a family walk of the West Highland Way. If anyone has information about who these three people are in the photograph, please email editor@obantimes.co.uk



This photograph was taken in 1993 and is of the newly formed Kinlochleven community centre management board. However, we have no names or any other detail, so if you can help, please send your information to editor@obantimes.co.uk



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# LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT

YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S ON IN ARGYLL AND LOCHABER

## New single for Fort William talent, Keir

Fort William-based alt-pop songwriter Keir Gibson released his third single this week.

The 19-year-old, who lives in the shadow of Ben Nevis, released his first single, *Eyes Wide*, in August last year, the day before performing at the Belladrum Festival, and followed it up with *Hollow*, favoured by Radio One DJs Scott Mills and Molly King.

*Circles* is the third instalment in a series of emotion-laden, escapist pop songs from Keir who was due to bring his full live band out to entertain audiences at the Kelvingrove Bandstand, Belladrum, Live at Leeds and to support arena-fillers The Stereophonics. Instead he has been entertaining music fans virtually, including performing a set on the King Tut's Facebook page as part of the recent Sofathon Singalong.

'It's gutting to have my early 2020 and summer shows postponed, but obviously everyone's safety comes first,' added Keir. 'I've been working hard to reschedule gigs for later this year and hope to announce these very soon.'

'Circles is the first of a few new tracks I'm hoping to release this year. Hopefully it entertains people while they're stuck inside!'

*Circles* is now available to download and stream.



## Lockdown loneliness focus of new book

by Fiona Scott  
fscott@obantimes.co.uk

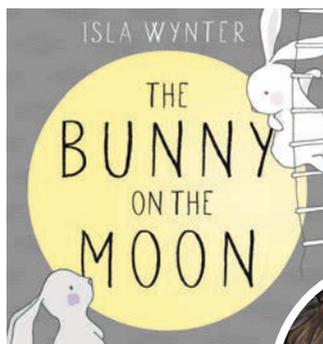


Scottish author Isla Wynter has released a new picture book born from her own experience of self-isolation and being cut off from family and friends.

*The Bunny on the Moon* tells the adorable story of Maribus Honey, a rabbit living all by himself on the moon. One day, when he feels particularly lonely, he builds a ladder and climbs down to Earth – but will he find the friendship he's craving?

Using rhymes and charming illustrations, this picture book encourages children to talk about their feelings and fears, while also telling them that it's okay to feel lonely and scared from time to time.

While the book doesn't mention the coronavirus or lockdown, it is written with the current situation



**The Bunny on the Moon, by Isla Wynter, right, tackles loneliness in young children.**



in mind. 'Many parents have told me how difficult it is for their children to not be able to see their friends or relatives,' said Isla, who hails from Helensburgh.

'Some even think that their grandparents no longer love

them because they don't come for visits. When I heard that, I knew my next book would have to be about being alone and away from everyone else.'

'I live on my own and haven't seen anyone for seven weeks, which sometimes makes me feel like I could just as well live on an entirely different planet. That's why

I decided to have my main character live on the moon, far away from everyone else.'

Research shows that young children in particular are vulnerable to anxiety and stress experienced by their parents, often developing mental health problems themselves in the future. At a time where many adults are faced with uncertainty

about job security, health and personal finances, it is especially important to make sure children do not bottle up their feelings.

'I hope that this book can give children the confidence to talk about their emotions as well as deal with the confusion and unpredictability the coronavirus pandemic has brought with it,' added Isla.

'And even if they just like the story of a cute bunny and it distracts them from reality for a while, that would make me very happy.'

*The Bunny on the Moon* is available as paperback (ISBN 9781913556037, published by Peryton Press), eBook and audiobook, and can be found at all major bookstores, including Amazon.

The eBook and audiobook are also available for free at many libraries.



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# Robert in lockdown!

**ROBERT ROBERTSON**

robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk



Robert and his Tide Lines band members recording their version of Stevie Wonder's Superstition in honour of the star's 70th birthday.

## The joys of lockdown!

One would think it would be easy to keep lines of communication clear between three people living in complete lockdown in the same house. Not so.

I've turned one of the rooms into a small studio which allows me to record remotely with the Tide Lines boys (who are down in Glasgow) and also leave my Mum and Dad to it when they're watching Doctors of an afternoon! The joys of lockdown.

Last week, it was Stevie Wonder's 70th birthday, so Tide Lines decided to try a cover of Superstition to mark the occasion.

On a break from recording, I mentioned to my Mum what I was doing but I could see she was busy with something else and that the information hadn't registered with her.

Later, she was out in the garden and my Dad asked her what I was recording. She admitted I had told her but that she couldn't really remember.

She said she thought it was maybe a song by someone who had died recently. 'Oh, my Dad thought, 'They must be doing a Little Richard cover'. The old rock 'n' roller had died the previous week, aged 87.

That evening, when the recording of Superstition was complete, I showed it to my Dad. 'That's great,' he said 'but I'm sorry to hear that Stevie Wonder passed away.'

I hadn't been privy to their previous conversation so I was totally perplexed as to why he had come to this conclusion.

It's amazing how messages can get mixed up. Much like the story from the Western Front of the First World War where the command was sent along the trenches to 'send reinforcements, we're going to advance', and (by the time it reached its intended recipient) it had changed to 'send three and fourpence, we're going to a dance.'

There was certainly no mixed messages from either my mum or my dad when they found out my recent faux pas whilst trying to order a golf net for

the garden. Both myself and Dad have been pining for the return of golf in recent weeks so, to ease our frustration, Dad suggested we order a net for the garden.

He kindly gave me his bank card with which to place the order and I set about checking the dimensions of various internet examples.

Somehow, and I am still clueless as to how, I managed to order two. Not only that but I put in our Fort William address alongside my Glasgow post code. Numerous emails to the company have since received no reply. The money for both nets has left Dad's account.

Best case scenario, we'll have a golf net each which will help with social distancing. Worst case scenario, my Dad has unwittingly donated two golf nets to the currently deserted streets of Partick.

Between confusion over whether Stevie Wonder was celebrating his birthday or had departed this mortal coil, and the disaster of the golf nets, this week has not been the highlight of my lockdown.

# M'ALBA

## MY ALBA

### DIARDAOIN 21 An Cèitean THURSDAY 21 May

- 17:00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- 19:05 Vets: Gach Creutair Beo (rpt)
- 19:35 Speaking Our Language (rpt)
- 20:00 An Là – News
- 20:30 ÙR/NEW: An Taigh-Fuine/The Bakery
- 21:00 DIY le Donnie (rpt)
- 21:45 Belladrum 2016: Cridhe Tartan – Rachel Sermanni (rpt)
- 22:00 ÙR/NEW: Julie Fowlis – Ceol Aig Baile
- 22:30 Ameireaga air Film (rpt)
- 23:15 ÙR/NEW: Binneas na Trads
- 23:25 Fraochy Bay (rpt)
- 23:30 FUNC (rpt)

### DIHAOINE 22 An Cèitean FRIDAY 22 May

- 17:00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- 18:35 Machair (rpt)
- 19:00 An Là – News
- 19:25 Fraochy Bay (rpt)
- 19:30 Prosaig (rpt)
- 20:00 Ceolmhor@Piping Live (rpt)
- 20:30 Kerry is Kirsty: Srath Narann (rpt)
- 21:00 Look Stranger: Gigha and Rhum (rpt)
- 21:45 Ceol bho Perthshire Amber (rpt)
- 22:00 Garce Harte (rpt)
- 22:50 Binneas na Trads (rpt)
- 23:00 ALT (rpt)

### DISATHAIRNE 23 An Cèitean SATURDAY 23 May

- 16:00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- 17:45 An Là – News
- 18:00 ÙR/NEW: Spors – Scottish Junior Cup 2015-2019
- 19:00 Mach a Seo (rpt)
- 19:30 Prosaig (rpt)
- 20:00 Machair (rpt)
- 20:25 Fraochy Bay (rpt)
- 20:30 Leugh Mi (rpt)
- 21:00 ALT (rpt)

- 22:00 Ameireaga air Film/America in Colour (rpt)
- 22:45 ÙR/NEW: Celtic Connections (BBC ALBA Shorts)
- 22:50 ÙR/NEW: Celtic Connections (BBC ALBA Shorts)
- 23:00 Spors – Scottish Junior Cup 2015-2019 (rpt)
- 00:00 Belladrum 2019 (Highlights) (rpt)

### DIDÒMHNAICH 24 An Cèitean SUNDAY 24 May

- 16:00 Scottish Junior Cup Final 2018 – Auchinleck Talbot v Hurlford United (rpt)
- 18:30 An Là – News
- 18:45 Celtic Connections (BBC ALBA Shorts)
- 18:50 Ar N-Aran Laitheil/ Spiritual Service (rpt)
- 19:30 Sorchar nan Reul (rpt)
- 20:00 Aig Taigh-Fuine/The Bakery (rpt)
- 20:30 Dealbhan Fraoich (rpt)
- 21:00 Steelmen (rpt)
- 22:00 ALT (rpt)
- 23:00 Grace Harte (rpt)
- 23:50 Dhan Uisge (rpt)

### DILUAIN 25 An Cèitean MONDAY 25 May

- 17:00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- Puirt-adhair (Highland Airports) (rpt)
- 19:00 Speaking Our Language (rpt)
- 19:55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)
- 20:00 An Là – News
- 20:15 Sgeul Seribheis (rpt)
- 20:30 Kerry is Kirsty: Beinn Dobhrain gu Loch Liomhann (rpt)
- 21:00 Trusadh – An Tinneas Tuiteamach (Epilepsy) (rpt)
- 22:00 Bannan (rpt)
- 22:35 Opry le Daniel (rpt)
- 23:30 Julie Fowlis – Ceol Aig Baile (rpt)

### DIMÀIRT 26 An Cèitean TUESDAY 26 May

- 17:00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- 19:00 An Lot/The Croft (rpt)

- 19:30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)
- 19:55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)
- 20:00 An Là – News
- 20:30 ÙR/NEW: Dealbhan Fraoich Famous Five (rpt)
- 21:00 Famous Five (rpt)
- 22:00 Trusadh – An Tinneas Tuiteamach (epilepsy) (rpt)
- 23:00 Orain Oir (rpt)
- 23:30 Sorchar nan Reul (rpt)

### DICIADAIN 27 An Cèitean WEDNESDAY 27 May

- 17:00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- Puirt-adhair (Highland Airports) (rpt)
- 19:30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)
- 19:55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)
- 20:00 An Là – News
- 20:30 ÙR/NEW: Leugh Mi
- 21:00 ÙR/NEW: Opry le Daniel
- 21:50 Dhan Uisge (rpt)
- 22:00 Bannan (rpt)
- 22:30 Iul a' Chiuil – An Ceol (The Musical Path- The Music) (rpt)
- 23:00 DIY le Donnie (rpt)
- 23:45 Ceol bho Perthshire Amber (rpt)

### DIARDAOIN 28 An Cèitean THURSDAY 28 May

- 17:00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- 19:00 An Lot/The Croft (rpt)
- 19:30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)
- 19:55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)
- 20:00 An Là – News
- 20:30 ÙR/NEW: An Taigh-Fuine/The Bakery
- 21:00 DIY le Donnie (rpt)
- 21:45 Celtic Connections (BBC ALBA Shorts) (rpt)
- 21:55 Celtic Connections (BBC ALBA Shorts) (rpt)
- 22:00 ÙR/NEW: Julie Fowlis – Ceol Aig baile
- 22:30 Ameireaga air Film (rpt)
- 23:20 ÙR/NEW: Binneas na Trads
- 23:30 Seoid a' Chidsin – The Kitchen Coves (rpt)



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## Islay artist draws inspiration from well kent Gaels

Heather Dewar is a woman of many talents – artist, cook and gardener to name just a few



– but possibly her greatest gift of all is her ability to chat with people and encourage them to tell her all about themselves.

In the fourth series of BBC ALBA's 'Dealbhan Fraoich' Islay-born Heather (78), who still lives on the island, combines the role of artist and interviewer as she creates colour portraits of well-known Gaels while teasing out of them every little detail of their life story.

In the second of eight programmes, on Tuesday, May 19, Heather travels to Point in Lewis where she meets Maggie Mackenzie who will be known to many as the actress who played Fiona Macaskill in the long-running soap, Machair.

Series Four of 'Dealbhan Fraoich' continues on Tuesday, May 19, on BBC ALBA at 8.30pm.

# Classic comfort food courtesy of CalMac

by Fiona Scott  
fscott@obantimes.co.uk



This week's mouthwatering lockdown comfort dish comes courtesy of Highlands and Islands ferry operators CalMac, their take on a classic dish which is an all-time onboard favourite.

Like the rest of us CalMac crew and staff have found that staying at home seems to increase our appetites and simultaneously reduce the contents of the fridge.

So, they decided it was a good time to open up the CalMac recipe book and share their secret with us.

A CalMac spokesperson said: 'We are proud to have used and introduced our previous passengers to some of the best produce of the west – and during these unprecedented times we will be publishing updates from our island producer and maker



colleagues via our newsletter, website and social media channels.

'This recipe is one of our most popular menu items. Last year we served up an incredible 50,408 portions of this aboard our vessels.

'Here's how you can recreate it at home, using one of chief cook's easy-to-follow recipes.'

## CalMac and Cheese

### Ingredients (serves 4)

400g macaroni  
70g butter  
50g plain flour  
900ml milk  
100g of Mull of Kintyre Cheddar, grated  
2 tablespoons of Parmesan

CalMac's chief cook's recipe for macaroni cheese is an all-time favourite with passengers.

cheese, grated  
1 tablespoon of Isle of Arran Mustard, or English Mustard  
Salt and pepper to taste  
An oven proof dish.

### Method

- Preheat your oven to 180°C
- Cook the macaroni as per the packaging instructions.
- Meanwhile, melt the butter in a saucepan, then stir in the flour and cook for two to three minutes on a medium heat, stirring continuously.
- Gradually add in the milk and keep stirring to ensure a smooth consistency.
- Next, stir in the Mull of Kintyre Cheddar and Parmesan and allow to melt. Keep a little back for the topping.
- Add the Isle of Arran mus-

tard and then remove from the heat.

■ Drain the macaroni once cooked, then add it to the sauce.

■ Place in an ovenproof dish and add some of the left-over grated cheese as a topping.

■ Cook for around 20-25 minutes.

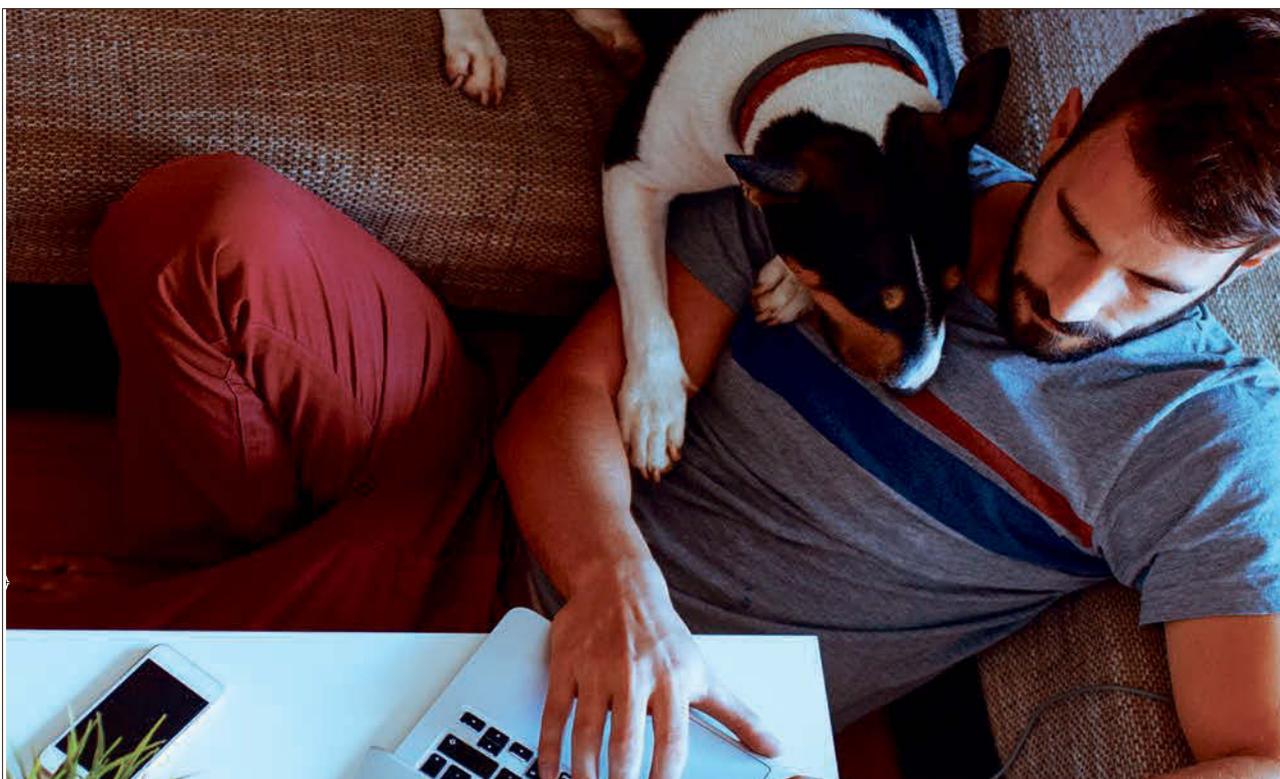
■ Serve with a side salad of your choice.

For additional variety, you could add 150g of Stornoway Black Pudding – cooked and crumbled, which can be added to the sauce, prior to placing in the oven. This will create a delicious Mac'n'Black.

Send your recipes, a photograph and a wee description of yourself, to editor@obantimes.co.uk

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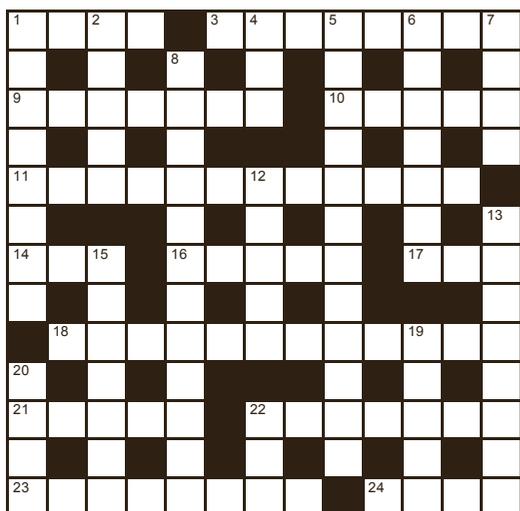
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# Crossword



- Across**
- 1 Pleat (4)
  - 3 A slight infusion (8)
  - 9 Opportune (7)
  - 10 World record? (5)
  - 11 Learning in the holidays (6,6)
  - 14 For each (3)
  - 16 Type of play (5)
  - 17 Fairy (3)
  - 18 Found on Wall Street (5,7)
  - 21 White heron (5)
  - 22 A Czech composer born 1824 (7)
  - 23 Commerce (8)
  - 24 Used to be (4)
- Down**
- 1 Part of a church (8)
  - 2 Ricochet (5)
  - 4 Belonging to someone (3)
  - 5 Safety bar (5,7)
  - 6 Set free (7)
  - 7 Lack of difficulty (4)
  - 8 Inflammation of an organ near the stomach (12)
  - 12 Tie (5)
  - 13 In the wings (8)
  - 15 Freed from work (7)
  - 19 Steer clear of (5)
  - 20 Himalayan legend (4)
  - 22 Word said with a salute (3)

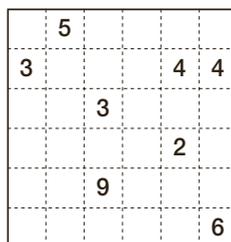
# Quiz Challenge

1. What is the southernmost city in England?
2. Which tall, overweight cartoon rooster with a rhyming name is a rival of Barnyard Dawg?
3. "Although she is dressed up to the nines, At sixes and sevens with you" is a line from which famous song?
4. An eft is the young of which amphibian?
5. In the 2017 series of Strictly Come Dancing, dancer Dianne Buswell partnered which Church of England clergyman?
6. Down Under was a 1980s UK No 1 hit song for which Australian band?
7. On a dice, which number is directly opposite the six?
8. Splott is an area of which British city?
9. Festival No 6 is an annual art and music festival held in and around which village in Gwynedd, Wales?
10. Which golf course on the Open Championship rota is five miles south of Blackpool?



Dianne Buswell - see Question 5

## BOX CLEVER



Fill the 6x6 grid with as many boxes as there are numbers printed. Each box must be either square or rectangular and must contain just one of the numbers. The numbers show how many squares there should be in each box.

## COMMON LINK

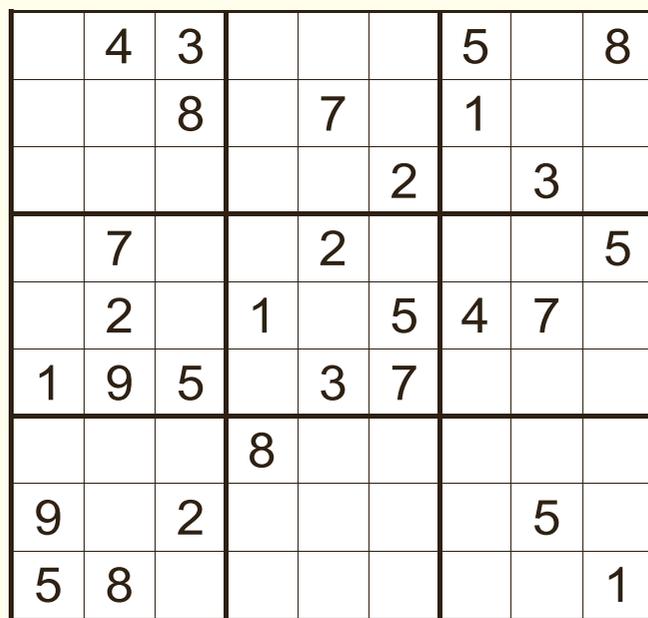
The answers to the following five questions contain a word or words which have a common theme. Can you find the link?

1. Which hairstyle has been described as 'short at the front, long at the back and ridiculous all round'?
2. Which word means both the underside of the foot and restricted to one person or group?
3. Which stretch of water separates Tasmania from mainland Australia?
4. What is the popular name for the piano quintet in A major D667 by Franz Schubert?
5. What name is given to ground chalk used as a filler and a pigment?

## SUDOKU

Each row and each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9, and so must each 3 x 3 box.

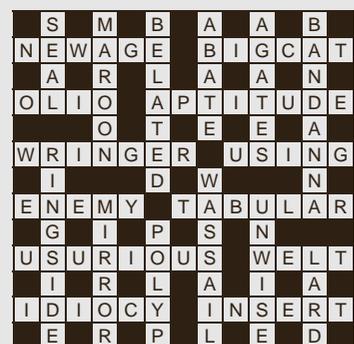
### Easy



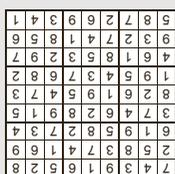
# SOLUTIONS



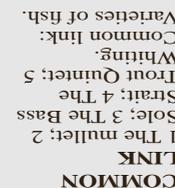
## LAST WEEK'S XWORD SOLUTION



### BOX CLEVER



### EASY SUDOKU



**QUIZ CHALLENGE**  
 1 Turin; 2 Foghorn Leghorn; 3 Don't Cry For Me Argentina; 4 Newt; 5 Reverend Richard Coles; 6 Men in Black; 7 One; 8 Cardiff; 9 Portmeau; 10 Royal Lytham (and St Anne's).  
**CROSS CODE**  
 Sole; 3 The Bass Strait; 4 The Trout Quintet; 5 Whiting; Common link: Varieties of fish.  
**COMMON LINK**  
 1 The mallet; 2 Argentinian; 3 Don't Cry For Me Argentina; 4 Newt; 5 Reverend Richard Coles; 6 Men in Black; 7 One; 8 Cardiff; 9 Portmeau; 10 Royal Lytham (and St Anne's).

**YOUR LOCAL RADIO LISTINGS**  
 Tune in to 103.3Fm or listen live at [www.obanfm.scot](http://www.obanfm.scot) or on the Tuneln app

**In these unprecedented times Oban Fm are maintaining Breakfast and Drivetime shows with a Covid19 News update in each. This helps keep our volunteers and listeners safe and healthy**

We are broadcasting these hours in association with BID4OBAN and the Oban Times, supported by the Scotland's Towns Partnership. Providing resilience for our local business community.

**The Oban Times podcast airs as usual on Wednesday Drivetime and Argyll Talking Newspapers appears through the week.**

Radio Clyde 2 will keep you entertained with your favourite hits and National news too.

	<b>Breakfast 8am-10am</b>	<b>Drive Time 5pm-7pm</b>
Monday	Stephen	Marcus
Tuesday	Stephen	Karen
Wednesday	Stephen	Campbell
Thursday	Andy and Sarah	Stephen
Friday	Stephen	Margo

## CROSS CODE

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	R	10	11	12	13	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	E	21	22	W	23	24	25	26

Each number in the Cross Code grid represents a different letter of the alphabet. You have three letters in the control grid to start you off. Enter them in the appropriate squares in the main grid, then use your knowledge of words to work out which letters should go in the missing squares.

As you get the letters, fill in other squares with the same number in the main grid and control grid. Check off the alphabetical list of letters as you identify them.

**Varied, vibrant, exciting and regularly changing range of beers from Scotland and beyond.**

**Tel: 07796 418973**

**The Oban Beer Seller**

**Oban Beer Seller**

**Here's how it works:**

Email me at [obanbeerseller@gmail.com](mailto:obanbeerseller@gmail.com) for the current stocklist

Order before 6pm and I'll supply the next day!

The extensive range includes STEWART BREWING, OVERTONE, BODEN, RIDE, BIG DROP, VOCATION, TEMPEST, GLEN AFFRIC, BREW YORK, BREW TOON, BUXTON, 71 BREWING, CLOUDWATER, ARBOR, CROSS BORDERS, POLLY'S BREW, TINY REBEL, THE KERNEL, WYLAH, GIPSY HILL, PILOT, NORTHERN MONK and many more.

Our customers are loving it...you will too!

Fantastic selection, friendly helpful staff. Definitely got the WOW factor!  
 Just what Oban needs. 5 star. MacColl.  
 Karen has done a fantastic job of sourcing a huge selection of beers to satisfy all tastes. A Ross.  
 Got my first delivery today and now looking forward to weekend of beer tasting!  
 Great service. H McNeill

Stock up on an amazing collection of beer that you won't find in the Supermarket

**Stay safe and enjoy!**

\*Proof of legal age required at time of delivery

# OPEN FOR BUSINESS

We are publishing this information in association with BID4OBAN and ObanFM, supported by the Scotland's Towns Partnership. Helping to provide resilience for our local business community. Many of these businesses are working under extreme pressure to bring quality products and services to the people of Oban and beyond. Please remember to exercise caution when shopping and only shop for essential supplies. Along with our wonderful NHS staff and carers, our local food, fuel, news platforms and home supply businesses are our community champions!

We realise that many more businesses would love to be open, serving locals and visitors alike – our deepest empathy goes out to these businesses and we look forward to seeing their doors wide open when this is all over. Please feel free to get in touch with us if you would like to feature your business, or know a business that should be included. Email nmurphy@obantimes.co.uk or get in touch via our Facebook page on messenger. Let's spread the word as much as we can!

## SUPERMARKETS & FOODHALLS

Most superstores in town are operating crowd control measures to help manage social distancing and product quantity limits are in place. They are working tirelessly to restock shelves daily. Please be patient and kind.

### TESCO

Mon-Sat 8am-10pm  
Sunday 10am-8pm  
Older, Vulnerable Customers - Mon, Wed, & Fri 9am-10am  
NHS Staff Tesco Staff - Tues, Thurs & Sun 9am -10am  
Petrol Filling Station shop is closed but you will still be able to pay at the hatch.

### LIDL

9 Soroba Rd, Oban  
Mon-Sat 8am-10pm  
Sun 8am-8pm

### ALDI

Mon-Sat 9am-7pm  
Sunday 9am-6pm  
All day everyday key workers in the NHS, Police and Fire Service will take priority ahead of queues into stores upon showing a valid ID. This is in addition to early access on a Sunday, where they can enter stores 30 minutes prior to opening.  
• 4 units on all products  
• 2 units per customer on nappies and baby products  
• 12 units per online order on wines or spirits, 4 units instore.

### MARKS AND SPENCER

Mon-Fri 8am-8pm  
Sat 8am-7pm  
Sun 9am-6pm  
Older & Vulnerable Customers Mon & Thurs 8am-9am  
NHS & Emergency services Tues & Fri 8am - 9am

### FARMFOODS

Mon-Fri 8am-8pm  
Sat 8am-7pm  
Sun 9am-6pm

### BOOKERS CASH AND CARRY

Booker in Oban are still supplying retailers and caterers throughout Oban and Argyll both through normal collect and existing delivered business. Open hours as follows:  
Mon-Fri 7.30am-3.00pm  
Sat 7.30am-2.00pm  
Sunday Closed  
Social distancing measures are in place with hand sanitiser for customer and colleague use to ensure we remain as safe as possible whilst trading through this situation.

## LOCAL FRESH FOOD & DRINK SUPPLIERS

Argyll has a unique natural larder and a range of passionate artisans and suppliers to choose from. With home deliveries too!

### JACKSON BUTCHERS

Opening Hours  
Monday - Closed  
Tuesday to Friday 9am - 4pm  
Saturday 9am - 2pm

Offering FREE home delivery to Oban - daily  
Kilmore and Dunbeg - Wednesday  
Connel, North Connel to Appin Thursday  
Card Payments preferred. Call the shop on 01631 562016 to place your order. We are open for customers who wish to visit the shop.  
Also taking phone orders for collection.

### IAIN DARLING/WYNNE BUTCHERS

9am-3pm  
To place orders call 01631 567400  
Cards payments preferred

### TASTE OF ARGYLL

Mon-Sat 9am-4pm  
Deliveries  
OBAN & KILMORE - Daily  
TAYNUILT - Tuesday  
BENDERLOCH & BARCADDINE - Friday  
To place your order call 07882226675.  
Fresh and frozen fish, meats, veg, milk, breads, jams, coffees, soaps, flours, pasta, cakes, etc...  
\*Pre ordered ready meals available

### MILLSTONE WHOLEFOODS

Closed but orders can be made by phoning 01631 562704  
Orders will be gathered, payment is taken via phone call. Orders can be collected from the shop between 9.30am-2pm, Mon-Sat.  
Delivery can be arranged.

### OBAN BEER SELLER

Shop closed but order before 6pm for next day supply - email obanbeerseller@gmail.com for current list of stock  
0779 6418973

### OBAN FOOD HUB

Order by midnight Tuesday for pick up Thurs 4pm-6pm at the Rockfield Centre  
\*\*\*VERY IMPORTANT NOTICE: COLLECTION @ ROCKFIELD CENTRE\*\*  
If you are collecting a veg or fruit box from Go Naked Veg tomorrow please bring a bag to take your veg/fruit home in. Due to the phenomenal amount of orders there are not enough boxes. Check out the Oban Food Hub Facebook page for strict guidelines on collection and delivery.

### TASTE OF ARGYLL KITCHEN

From Langoustine Curry to Highland Beefburgers - lots in between  
Friday night deliveries (free to Oban, £3 on outskirts)  
Tel: 07882226675

### FROM CRATE TO GATE (THE OBAN INN)

Drinks supplies - for full menu see Oban Inn Facebook page  
Home deliveries daily

## TAKE-AWAY FOOD

Featured take-away food businesses are offering collection or delivery. Collections require strict adherence to social distancing regulations with maximum 2 people entering the outlet at any one time:

### GEORGE STREET FISH RESTAURANT AND TAKE-AWAY

Open 12pm-8pm daily  
Tel 01631 566664  
Take-away only

### OBAN GRILLHOUSE

Open 7 days, 5pm-11pm  
Tel: 01631 358246  
Collection or delivery

### CORIANDER

Fri, Sat, Sun from 5pm  
Tel: 01631 570806  
Collection or delivery

### PIAZZA

From 5.30pm, Thurs-Sun  
Tel: 01631 563628  
Collection or delivery

### TASTE OF ARGYLL KITCHEN

From Langoustine Curry to Highland Beefburgers - lots in between  
Friday night deliveries (free to Oban, £3 on outskirts)  
Tel: 07882226675

### OBAN FILLING STATION

Hot filled rolls, pies and sausage rolls etc  
Open 7am-6pm

### BIRCHWOOD FILLING STATION

Hot filled rolls  
Open 7am-6pm

## BUILDING, TRADES, GARDENING & DIY

### CITY PLUMBING SUPPLIES

Closed doors – phone and email orders only  
EMERGENCY CALL OUT?  
WE ARE HERE FOR YOU  
WITH OVER 20,000 SPARE PARTS TO GET THE JOB DONE  
Browse online at www.cityplumbing.co.uk  
Please call 01631 567640 for free click and collect  
Mon-Fri  
Kerbside deliveries available  
Tel: 01631 567640

### CITY ELECTRICAL FACTORS

Closed doors but open Mon-Fri 8am-5.30pm  
Telephone orders 01631 562362  
Email: sales.oban@cef.co.uk  
Along with the 5,000 unique lines we stock at the branch, our customers still have access to over 30,000 product lines from www.cef.co.uk  
Delivery or collection

### SCREWFIX

Essential supplies only  
PPE equipment reserved for frontline personnel only  
Click and Collect service only  
Mon-Sat 8am-5pm, Sun 9am-4pm Sun  
Tel: 03330 112112  
www.screwfix.com

### HIGHLAND FASTENERS

Mon-Fri, 8am-12pm  
Essential supplies only  
Tel: 01631 570584

### HOWDEN'S JOINERY

Essential supplies for the trade, housing associations etc.  
Closed doors but open 9-3 Mon-Fri via telephone/email.  
Tel: 01631 567083  
Email: oban@howdens.com

### HOMEBASE OBAN

Open 10am-5pm daily  
Card payment only  
It would be useful if you could check the SKU code of the product you want from the website before coming to the store.

### POPPIES GARDEN CENTRE

We are not open to the public however we are operating a order and collect service for the garden centre. We have been posting some of our stock on FB but it's difficult to show everything that's available. Most people know what they're after at this time of year and thankfully we have most of it in stock!  
Orders can be placed by phone: 01631565718.  
Email: sales@poppiesgardencentre.com  
Or if preferred by messenger. Card details and a suitable pick up time can be arranged over the phone.

### KINLOCHLAICH GARDEN CENTRE

We can deliver orders and can leave plants out for collection (see plant options on the Facebook page).  
Orders via 07881525754 or email fiona@kinlochlaich.plus.com (Opens in new tab) plants include vegetables, fruit, compost, shrubs, rhods, azaleas, alpines, and bedding plants

### CRAIGARD DECOR

open 9.00am - 1.00pm, Mon - Sat on an order, pay and collect basis only - no customers will be allowed in the shop at this point.  
To place an order please telephone the shop on 01631 562680 or message us through Facebook. Or email tonycave@aol.com (Opens in new tab). For island services, where possible, Tony will liaise with local carriers for uplift and delivery.

## GARAGES

### RODDY'S GARAGE

Open but with limited staff.  
Booking ahead by telephone required.  
Tel: 01631 565882

### KWIK FIT

NHS 10% discount on tyres, servicing and batteries  
Click HERE for discount  
Tel: 01631 566282

### FLIT

Essential vehicle hire only for front line staff  
Visit Flit self drive Facebook page  
Email: flit@btconnect.com  
Tel: 07810391753

### KERRIE'S TYRES

We are staying open or available for anyone that needs assistance.  
Open 9am-1pm contactable by phone thereafter  
Tel: 07876762631

### MCCONECHY'S

Open as usual: Mon-Fri 8.30am-5.30pm  
Sat until 12.30pm  
Tel: 01631 570047  
Email oban@mcconechys.co.uk

### MUNRO'S GARAGE

Must pre-book, no walk-ins  
Tel: 01631 564463 to book your vehicles in.

### MORRISON MOTORS

Long term vehicle rentals  
Tel: 07825 581171

### FIN'S PLACE

Open for essential servicing  
Tyres, brakes, batteries etc  
Tel: 01631 566 220 or 07766 757 013

### TRAILWEST

Closed doors but open for essential services for repair plus new supply and hire to the agricultural industry by telephone. Tel: 01631 563638

## LEGAL SERVICES

### DM MACKINNON - SOLICITORS & NOTARIES

If you need to get in contact please call us on 01631 563 014. If you are put through to our answering machine, we will get back to you as soon as possible. Alternatively, please email us at info@dmmk.co.uk and your email will be directed to an appropriate member of staff who will respond to you at the earliest opportunity.

### ANDERSON BANKS SOLICITORS & ESTATE AGENTS (OBAN AND BENBECULA)

Due to Government guidelines our offices are currently closed to the public but our staff are working remotely from home to continue to offer the highest level of service.  
Contact us on our usual numbers for telephone appts or Skype/Facetime video calls can be arranged.  
Contact us:  
www.andersonbanks.co.uk  
Anderson Banks Facebook page.  
Oban Office: 01631 563158 Email: info@andersonbanks.co.uk  
Benbecula office: 01870 602061 Email: uist@andersonbanks.co.uk

### STEVENSON KENNEDY SOLICITORS

open for business as usual but our priority has to be the safety of our staff and clients. The office door is locked as recommended by the Authorities.  
We are here for you and can be in touch by phone, mobile, Skype etc. We realise that life and business must go on. We can still meet by appointment and at a safe distance.  
Stay safe and well, Gordon, Sorley, Cat, Louise and Sarah.  
Main office line: 01631 562317  
E-mail addresses:  
gordon@stevensonkennedy.co.uk

### MACPHEE & PARTNERS

Available: Mon-Fri 9am - 5pm  
We remain fully available to assist with your legal and property matters – with protective measures in place. Providing a local and personal service in these difficult times.  
Tel: 01631 562308  
Email: law@macphee.co.uk

## INSURANCE

### JELF CLARKE THOMSON

Open for Business As Usual.  
Office is currently closed, but Jelf Clark Thomson staff are working from home from 9am-5pm, Mon-Fri. If you email us, we will respond.  
If you call us, the phone will be answered (or the call returned if a



IN ASSOCIATION WITH

# Oban Business Improvement District

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



message is left). Whether it's the renewal of an existing policy, enquiries about new insurance arrangements, queries on cover or guidance on loss prevention and risk mitigation, we are here to help. Please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Office telephone number: 01631 567675 (please note calls to this number are being re-routed and thus will not always be answered immediately – please DO leave a message);

Graeme Bass mobile: 07872 131073

## BANKS

### ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND

Open for essential business:

Mon-Fri  
10am-1pm  
Tel: 0345 724 2424

### BANK OF SCOTLAND

Open for essential business:

Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm  
Tel: 0345 602 0000

### CLYDESDALE BANK

Open for essential business

Mon-Fri  
10am-2pm  
Tel: 0345 602 0000

### TSB

Open for essential business:

Mon-Fri 10am-4pm closed 12.30-1.30 for lunch  
Tel: 01631 399 998

## TAXIS - ESSENTIAL JOURNEYS ONLY

### ARGYLL TAXIS

Tel: 01631 565293

### LORN TAXIS

Tel: 01631 564744

### OBAN TAXIS

Tel: 01631 564148/566676/564666

### ETIVE TAXIS

Tel: 01631 566880

## FUEL/SERVICE STATIONS

### BIRCHWOOD GARAGE

Mon-Sat 7am-6pm

### OBAN FILLING STATION

Mon-Sat 7am-6pm, Sun 8am-6pm

### HALFWAY HOUSE

Mon-Sun 7am-7pm

### WEST HIGHLAND GAS

Delivering to your door  
Gates closed but open Tues-Fri, 8am-4.30pm.  
Please call with your order  
Tel: 01631 564050

## CHEMISTS & HEALTHCARE

Try to avoid contacting your pharmacy by telephone, unless it is essential.

Most in town are operating crowd control measures to help manage social distancing:

- Only order medication 1 week in advance of needing it;
- Let your GP Practice know which pharmacy you'd like to collect this from;
- And please be understanding of small delays at this time.

### BOOTS THE CHEMIST, GEORGE STREET

Mon-Sat 9am-4pm  
Closed 1.30pm-2.30pm for lunch

### BOOTS THE CHEMIST, BESIDE DOCTORS

Mon-Fri 11am-6pm  
Closed 1pm-2pm for lunch

### GORDON'S CHEMIST

Mon-Sat 10am-5pm  
Closed 1pm-2pm for lunch

### JOHN WALLACE OPTICIANS

OBAN PRACTICE  
Telephone consultations only  
Tel: 01631 563170

### SPECSAVERS

Reduced staff and hours, for emergency and essential eye care services.

We are here behind closed doors for phone and video consultations and onward emergency referral to hospital eye service when needed.

## CONVENIENCE STORES/NEWSAGENTS

### ALBANY STORES

Mon-Sun 7am-6pm

### SOROBA SHOP

Mon-Sun 10am-8pm

### McCOLLS Oban

Mon-Sun 7am-8pm

### DUNOLLIE SHOP

Tues-Sat 10am-8pm, Sun & Mon 12pm-6pm

### DUNBEG STORES

Mon-Sun 8am till 8pm

### CONNEL SHOP

Mon-Fri 6am-4pm  
Sat 7.30am-1pm, Sun 7.30am-1pm  
In store post office Mon-Sat 9am till 1pm

### THE PINK SHOP, BENDERLOCH

7.30am to 10.00pm daily.

## BALVICAR STORES

Mon - Thurs 8.30am - 6.00pm  
Fri 8.30am - 7.00pm  
Sat 9am - 7.00pm  
Sun 9.30am - 2pm  
A little light entertainment from Wendy on their Facebook page...

## VETS AND PET SUPPLIES

### PETS AT HOME

Mon-Sat 9am-6pm  
Sun 10am-5pm  
Crowd control system in place to help manage social distancing in stores

### CREATURE COMFORTS

Mon, Wed, Fri 9am-1pm  
Creature Comforts is your local pet shop for Oban & surrounding area. We stock feeds & accessories for all kinds of pets & wild birds. Mail order deliveries available.

### KINTALINE FARM

Mon-Sun 10am - 5pm by arrangement

### OBAN VETERINARY SURGEONS

All enquiries by telephone 01631 562876 or via [www.obanvets.co.uk](http://www.obanvets.co.uk)

## SHOPS AND ONLINE SHOPPING

### OBAN MUSIC SHOP

Oban Music is still trading through its web site:-  
[www.musicscotland.com](http://www.musicscotland.com)  
Tel: 01631 566304

### ORSAY

Trading online at [www.orsayoban.co.uk](http://www.orsayoban.co.uk).

### SCOTTISH ISLAND JEWELLERY

Website: [www.scottishislandjewellery.co.uk](http://www.scottishislandjewellery.co.uk)  
And phone mail orders/enquires on 07760297957  
Shop: 01631 570005 and  
Mobile: 07760297957  
[scottishislandjewellery@gmail.com](mailto:scottishislandjewellery@gmail.com)  
<http://scottishislandjewellery.co.uk/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/ScottishIslandJewellery1>

## TRAVEL & LEISURE

### ERIC SMITH TRAVEL

We are still open for new and existing bookings although agency closed at present.  
By email [eric@gowestravel.co.uk](mailto:eric@gowestravel.co.uk),  
[dianne@gowestravel.co.uk](mailto:dianne@gowestravel.co.uk)  
FB message ERIC SMITH TRAVEL

## IT AND COMPUTER SERVICES

### MATRIX COMPUTERS

Computer Support  
providing telephone and remote support to home and business customers, new and existing. Tel: 01631 571571  
Email [info@matrixcomputers.co.uk](mailto:info@matrixcomputers.co.uk)

### OBAN COMPUTER SERVICES

Limited service for essential assistance  
Tel: 01631 566561

## QUANTITY SURVEYORS

### MORHAM & BROTHIE

We are open while working from home - 9am till 5.15pm Monday to Friday  
Telephone: 01631 563 721  
Email: [admin@morhambro.co.uk](mailto:admin@morhambro.co.uk)

## OTHER INFORMATION

### WEST COAST MOTORS

is now offering FREE travel to NHS and workers. The company is also working with local communities and offering a delivery service for those most vulnerable. Well done WCM!

### ROYAL MAIL

Royal Mail have restricted sorting office hours to 9am-11am  
Closed Wed and Sun.

### HOME-START LORN

Are you finding it difficult with your children at home all day, need some adult conversation – our volunteers are here to help  
Tel: 07718 768305

### HOPE KITCHEN

Hope Kitchen is now delivering/providing food assistance to people who are experiencing financial difficulty at this time. Please don't hesitate to get in touch either via messenger or on 01631 565730 if you find yourself short of essentials.  
Those who can afford to pay for food but are self-isolating and unable to get supplies, Argyll and Bute Council has a dedicated phone line 01546 605524 to help you.

*Information correct at time of going to press. Check [www.obantimes.co.uk/openforbusiness](http://www.obantimes.co.uk/openforbusiness) for updated information. This page will run in the Oban Times every week for as long as necessary - printed information will be updated weekly.*



West Highland Housing Association would like to thank all our tenants and residents for their understanding during these difficult times. Our organisation is following the Government guidelines and the office is closed but our staff are taking calls and working as much as possible in the circumstances.

We will try and provide as much help and assistance during this crisis. We can help make claims for universal credit and other benefits and provide a listening ear if you just need to have a chat with someone.

Please contact us either by phone on our FREE number **0300 3231170**

Email us  
[mail@westhighlandha.co.uk](mailto:mail@westhighlandha.co.uk)  
or login into your My Home account online

**WEST HIGHLAND HOUSING ASSOCIATION SUPPORTING OUR TENANTS AND COMMUNITY.**

# OPEN FOR BUSINESS



IN ASSOCIATION WITH

Oban Business Improvement District

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## Broadband's 'Bear Grylls' camps on Coll to fix fault

by Ellis Butcher  
ebutcher@obantimes.co.uk



Broadband fixer Scott McPartlin has been nicknamed 'Bear Grylls' after camping on an Inner Hebridean island for three days.

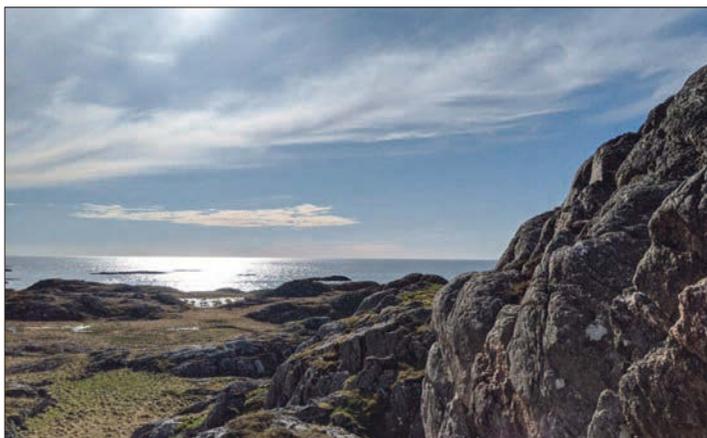
The Openreach engineer headed to Coll after a lightning strike left a remote and vulnerable couple who were self-isolating without connection to the outside world.

Scott parked his van when he could drive no closer and made the first of several three-mile hikes over the beach to Crossapol to reach the household.

The 46-year-old explained: 'There's no road from the ferry to their home so it meant a long march over the beach - it was scorching and as much as Coll is stunning, it was tough going.'

Aware that he was going to be on the 13-mile-long island for days because of the ferries and that local accommodation was unavailable due to the lockdown, the enterprising outdoors man had taken along his own tent.

After repairing the lightning damage, Scott set up camp at the panoramic Feall Beach.



He had just settled down to watch the sunset when he got an emergency call-out to say there had been a phonline fault at the

island's surgery at Arinagour which needed fixing. He has since been back to Coll to improve broadband.



**Openreach engineer Scott McPartlin had quite a job on his hands when he went to Coll but the scenery and friendliness of islanders more than made up for the challenging work.**

Scott joined Openreach six years ago after a career as an insurance broker and is full of praise for the welcome he received on Coll.

He added: 'Connectivity has never been more important than it is now, and I'm really happy to help. It's no hardship as the island is incredibly beautiful and the people here are fantastic.'

'Once they knew what I was doing, they opened up the bunkhouse for me to sleep in. It'll be top of my list of places to visit out of work, once things get back to normal.'

Andy Baillie, Openreach patch manager, said: 'Scott is a keen outdoors man and loves nothing more than spending the evening under the stars in his tent on some mountain top somewhere.'

'He's always willing to take on these challenges and the more remote and lonely the better. He's Openreach's very own Bear Grylls.'

Openreach engineers are classified as key workers during lockdown.

Their main focus is on connections which support critical national infrastructure like the NHS, pharmacies, emergency services and food distribution outlets; vulnerable customers; and those without any service.

## Looking for a job? Fair Start Scotland could help

People in Argyll and Bute who are unemployed and want to find work during these challenging times, are being encouraged to sign up to Fair Start Scotland.

Fair Start Scotland is delivered by PeoplePlus and trusted local delivery partners - in this case, Argyll and Bute Council's Employability Team.

Together, they have a lot of experience helping people back into work in a variety of ways, including: helping to break down the barriers that might be stopping you from working; developing a programme of support which will help you to progress towards employment; keeping in contact and offering personalised support to

ensure the service is meeting your needs; and keeping in touch with you when you find employment to make sure everything is going well and to answer any questions you might have giving you the chance to take part in engaging activities to build your confidence

During lockdown, the Employability Team is still available to provide free support by phone and online, to prepare you for employment. The team can offer access to accredited on line training, help with CV building, job applications, interview skills and much more. Fair Start Scotland does not affect your benefits and participation is tailored to suit you.

Fair Start Scotland may be for

you if you are living in Scotland, are eligible to work in the United Kingdom and are: over 18 and out of work; or 16 or 17 and are either disabled or in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit.

To find out more, call the Council's Employability Team on 01586 555990.

For further information telephone 01546 604 171, or email [press@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:press@argyll-bute.gov.uk)

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## Call on UK Government to ease rules for working migrants

Scotland's migration minister Ben Macpherson has called on the UK Government to recognise the importance of migrants working in essential front line services.

In an open letter to Home Secretary Priti Patel, he asked that all migrants be granted 'leave to remain' status and that around them having 'no recourse to public funds' should be lifted, so they can access public services without worrying about breaching the conditions of their visa.

He has argued that the coronavirus crisis has demonstrated the UK's reliance on non-UK citizens, with many working in hospitals,

care homes, supermarkets or the supply chain.

Mr Macpherson said: 'The COVID-19 crisis has clearly and starkly demonstrated the UK's reliance on key workers, many of whom have settled here from all over the world, providing vital care and essential services in our greatest hour of need.'

'I believe it is now incumbent upon the UK Government to pause and reconsider its immigration plans, as to plough ahead would be both reckless and wrongheaded.'

Mr Macpherson urged the UK Government to work constructively with the devolved governments.

# West Coast MOTORING

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PRESS RELEASE

## MOT extension confusion and vehicle neglect could cause chaos for businesses and their drivers as lockdown is eased

A survey reveals 69 per cent of motorists are unclear about the MoT extension parameters and one in four have not carried out any basic vehicle health checks.

Venson Automotive Solutions is urging fleet managers to encourage company car drivers to ensure their vehicles are road ready as the nation anticipates an easing of lockdown.

The advice from Venson follows its latest survey of UK motorists which revealed that one in five do not know when their MoT is due, and 69 per cent are unclear about when the Government's six-month MoT exemption came into play. The survey also found that one in four drivers has de-

ferred a service or repair until after lockdown is lifted and as many as 28 per cent have failed to carry out any basic vehicle health checks since March 23.

Alison Bell, marketing director at Venson Automotive Solutions comments: 'Even with the current six-month MoT exemption in place, drivers are still responsible for keeping their vehicle in a road-worthy condition - drivers can still be prosecuted if at the wheel of an unsafe vehicle.'

'Businesses also have a duty of care to ensure their employees who drive on company business are safe and should therefore be encouraging regular safety checks. By carrying out basic maintenance checks, drivers will not only help to

reduce the time their vehicle is off the road but importantly, eliminate unnecessary cost for themselves and/or their employer. Additionally, a vehicle kept in a safe, driveable condition, limits their personal inconvenience if it has to be repaired and lessens the burden on roadside assistance providers.'

Encouragingly, respondents to the Venson survey have carried out some basic but important tasks; 51 per cent have checked the tyre pressure and 49 per cent have run the engine regularly to keep the battery charged; 42 per cent have checked the oil level. Other maintenance that drivers have carried out include moving the car to test the brakes (41

per cent), measuring tyre tread depth (39 per cent) and ensuring headlights and brake lights are all fully-functioning (34 per cent).

Alison Bell continued: 'When lockdown is eased, businesses will be keen to begin to make up for lost time, so the last thing they need are drivers to be out of action due to a flat tyre, flat battery, or worse. It's great to see that half of the respondents have checked their tyre pressure and run the engine to keep the battery charged. This is a simple bit of maintenance which is often neglected but could save hundreds of pounds if the vehicle has to be off the road for repairs.'

'What's more, regardless of

the government's extension, we recommend vehicles are booked in for MoTs well in advance of their new due date in order to help avoid bottlenecks building after lockdown. Those responsible for fleet vehicles should also ensure that service routines are maintained to avoid invalidating warranties and generating unnecessary maintenance costs for their business.'

### Venson Vehicle Safety Checklist

- Battery care: start the engine once a week and allow it to run for about 15 minutes. This will recharge the battery and help keep the engine in good condition.
- Oil: check oil levels.

- Check windscreen wipers and screen wash
- Coolant: is level correct?
- Damage: is there any damage to bodywork that might affect roadworthiness? If you're not sure ask for advice.
- Dashboard: check for warning lights when the engine is running.
- Rubber: are the tyres safe, correctly inflated and legal? Do you have a working spare or alternative solution in the vehicle?
- Windscreen and mirrors: do you have clear all-round vision and is the glass damage free?

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## Around the markets

**United Auctions, Stirling,  
Saturday May 16** had forward  
213 heifers and calves.Heifers with bull calves at foot:  
West Thomaston (LimX) £3300  
& £3100; Little Kilchatten (BP)  
£3000; The Ross (Cont) £3000;  
Derry (B Blue) £2750; Crosshouse  
(Cross) £2750; Little Kichatten  
(B LimX) £2600 x2; Porterstown  
(SimX) £2450.Heifers with heifer calves at  
foot: The Ross (BP) £3650 &  
£3400; West Thomaston (LimX)  
£3500 & £3300; West Thomaston  
(B LimX) £3300; Crosshouse (Cont)  
£3050; Mill of Inverarity &  
Little Kilchatten (B BlueX) £2600;  
Witton (Cross) £2450; Skeoeh  
(SimX) £2200.**United Auctions Stirling,  
Thursday May 14** sold 6184prime sheep comprising of 481  
spring lambs selling to average  
252.33p also 4725 prime hogs  
selling to average 204.31ppk and  
978 ewes and rams.New Season Lambs (481) –  
Easter Ochtermuthill (BTeX)  
£129.00 & £125.00; Penston(Tex) £125.00; Cauldcoates  
Holdings & South Ballaird (Tex)  
£122.00p; Hoprig (Suf) £123.00;  
Penston (Suf) £121.50; Penston  
(Cha) £120.00; Netherton (Cha)  
£118.00; Powblack (Hamp)  
£107.00; Campbeltown (Dor)  
£104.00; Greystone (Zwa)  
£101.00.New Season Lambs (481) –  
Easter Ochtermuthill (BTeX)  
287.00ppk; & 269.00ppk;  
Bangour (Tex) 283.00ppk  
Cauldcoates Holdings (Tex)  
271.00ppk; Parks of Garden  
(Suf) 281.50ppk; Penston (Cha)  
272.00ppk; Bangour (Cha)  
266.00ppk x4; Campbeltown  
(Dor) 239.00ppk; Whitehouse  
(Zwa) 228.00ppk.Old Season Lambs (4725)  
– Cultburn (BTeX) £119.00;  
Harviesmailing (BTeX) £118.00;  
Spittal (Tex) £114.00; West  
Mains (Tex) £113.00; Crofthead  
(Suf) £112.00 Shannocher (Suf)  
£111.50; Croftgary (BF) 109.50; St  
Mungoes (BF) 108.50; Yorkston  
(Mule) 103.00; West Thomaston  
(Mule) 103.00; Cummnock House  
(Chev) £99.00; Snawdon (Chav)£98.50; Snawdon (Cross) 95.00.  
Old Season Lambs (4725)  
– Cultburn (BTeX) 269.00ppk;  
Harviesmailing (BTeX) 257.00ppk;  
Spittal & Shannochar (Tex)  
239.00ppk; Wardhead (Chev)  
227.00ppk Easter Balgillo  
(Chev) 226.00p x2; Dall (BF)  
218.00ppk; Duncroisk (BF)  
217.00ppk; Carrubber Mill &  
Lenaig (Suf) 217.00ppk; Yorkston  
(Mule) 217.00ppk & 208.00ppk;  
Snawdon (Cross) 204.00ppk.  
Ewes (978) – Cherryfield  
(Tex) £167.00; Broomknowes  
(Tex) £152.00; Ballechin (Cont)  
£148.00; Nether Pratis (Cont)  
£146.00 & £130.00; Easter Ochter-  
muthill (BTeX) £130.00; Over Hill  
House & Carrat (TexX) £129.00;  
Netherton (Cha) £123.00; Easter  
Ochtermuthill (BTeX) £115.00;  
Gathercauld (Chev) £108.00;  
Powblack (Hamp) £86.00;  
Cherryfield (Mule) £78.00; Busses  
(Mule) £77.00; Cauldcoated (BF)  
£78.00; Yorkston (BF) £73.00.  
Tups – Knock O Ronald (BFL)  
£108.00; West Mains (Tex)  
£102.00; Huntingfaulds (Tex)  
£100.00; Clockan & Coulshill(Chev) £100.00; North Deanhead  
(BTeX) £90.00; Coulshill (BF)  
£66.00.**Dingwall & Highland Marts  
Ltd, May 13** sold 683 store  
cattle.Bullocks (336) averaged 219.9p  
and sold to 273.1p per kg for a  
pair of 216kg Limousin crosses  
from 1 Obbe Road, Leverburgh  
and £1,185 gross for a 595kg  
Simmental cross from Kincaig  
Farm, Invergordon.Heifers (327) averaged 213.8p  
and sold to 300.0p per kg for a  
420kg Aberdeen Angus cross  
from Kincaig Farm and £1,320  
gross for a 530kg Charolais cross  
also from Kincaig Farm.Young bulls (20) sold to 250.0p  
per kg for a 152kg Whitebred  
Shorthorn from Mucomir Farm,  
Spean Bridge and £1,000 gross  
for a 465kg Limousin from  
Strone Farm, Banavie.Other leading prices per head  
and per kg:Bullocks up to 250kg – Moy  
Farm, Banavie, £660, 269.4p;  
251-300kg – Balmaglaister, SpeanBridge, £735, 273.1p; 301-350kg  
– Moy Farm, £860, 261.6p; 351-  
400kg – The Arr, Lethen, £955,  
Raitcastle Farm, Nairn, 252.1p;  
401-450kg – Easter Craggach,  
Kirkhill, £1,030, Meikle Geddes  
Farm, Nairn, 234.5p; 451-500kg  
– Kirkton Farm, Golspie, £1,120,  
235.5p; 501-550kg – Kincaig  
Farm, £1,125, Borowston Mains,  
Thurso, 211.9p; 551-600kg –  
Kincaig Farm, £1,155, 205.2p.Heifers up to 250kg – Moy  
Farm, £610, Hillcrest, Kyle,  
282.9p; 251-300kg – Ardtornish  
Farms, Morven, £745, Insh Farm,  
Spean Bridge, 253.9p; 301-350kg  
– Pitmain, Kingussie, £840,  
254.6p; 351-400kg – Raitcastle  
& Park Farm, Nairn, £900,  
243.2p; 401-450kg – Kincaig  
Farm, £1,260, Raitcastle Farm,  
234.1p; 451-500kg – Kincaig  
Farm, £1,100, 224.5p; 501-550kg  
– 6 Balnabeen, Conon Bridge,  
£1,085, Kincaig Farm, 249.12p;  
551-600kg – Kincaig Farm,  
£1,185, 209.7p.OTM prime & feeding cows  
(99) averaged 128.9p and sold  
to 172.4p per kg for a 750kgBeef Shorthorn from Todholes,  
Thurso, and £1,290 gross for  
a 935kg Limousin cross from  
Drumsmittal Croft, North  
Kessock.OTM prime & feeding bulls (8)  
sold to 119.5p per kg and £1,410  
gross for an 1180kg Limousin  
Knocknagael, Inverness.

Other leading prices per head:

OTM prime & feeding cows:  
Kildun, Dingwall, (Lim), £1,210;  
Kindeace, Alness, (SalX),  
£1,170; Kindeace, (AAX), £1,170;  
Kindeace, (BRBX), £1,150; 192 The  
Doll, Brora, (LimX), £1,150; Polly  
Estates, Ullapool, (Lui), £1,050;  
Balnuran, Culloden Moor, (ShoX),  
£1,050; Upper Duntulm, Kilmuir,  
(SimX), £1,030; Raitcastle, Nairn,  
(GasX), £1,030.Other leading prices per kg:  
OTM prime & feeding cows:  
Balintraid, Invergordon, (AAX),  
158.3p; 1 Borrodale, Glendale,  
(LimX), 157.7p; Morvich Farm,  
Rogart, (SimX), 157.5p; Kindeace,  
(SalX), 151.0p; Raitcastle, (BShoX),  
148.3p; Upper Duntulm, (SimX),  
146.1p; Kindeace, (BRBX), 142.0p;  
Groom, Kirkhill, (CharX), 138.6p.**FARMGATES UK**

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where required and can be easily  
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- Made from high-tensile steel
- All hurdles are 8 railed x 970mm high
- All hot-dipped galvanised finish
- 3000mm (3m) long
- Includes all joining pins/stakes

**OPTION 1**10-foot race and 8-foot  
holding pen  
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holding pen and 10-foot  
race, 2x 2 feet swing  
gates and all joining  
pins/stakes included.  
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hold 100 fully grown  
sheep (approx.)**PARTS LIST:**

- 10 x 3m (8 railed)  
sheep hurdles
- 12 x Joining pins/  
stakes
- 2 x 2 feet swing gates

**OPTION 2**20-foot race, 100-foot holding pen  
**£1795.00** + VATComes with a 100-foot holding pen and  
20-foot race, 2 x 2-foot swing gates and  
all joining pins/stakes included. Our  
system will safely hold 150 fully grown  
sheep (approx)**PARTS LIST:**

- 14 x 3m (8 railed) sheep hurdles
- 12 x joining pins/stakes
- 2 x 2-foot swing gates

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- Made from heavy tubular steel
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- 3000mm (3 m) long
- 20 feet race
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# Climate responsibilities not forgotten amid pandemic

The Scottish farming industry's focus remains firmly on keeping food and drink on the nation's table during the coronavirus pandemic, writes NFU Scotland vice president Martin Kennedy on the NFU Scotland website.

However, in the background, NFU Scotland continues to recognise its responsibility to respond to climate change.

'NFUS recognises the risk climate change poses and why we are committed to continue playing an active role in tackling it,' said Mr Kennedy. 'We want to see an approach to mitigate climate change that also enhances biodiversity and drives benefits for food production and for our landscapes and communities.'

'We need to take opportunities to adopt management and measurement tools. We know this can bring win-win solutions: small changes to more

efficient farming methods can cut greenhouse gases per unit of food produced while delivering financial wins for farm businesses.

We must continue to make decisions based on the most relevant and up-to-date scientific evidence. It is crucial we are not selective with our approach – even if we discover things that don't seem at first to be to our liking.

'We know recovery from COVID-19 will present unique challenges for all of society, businesses and government. Despite this uncertainty, Scottish farmers remain committed to producing high quality food in a way that reduces our carbon footprint and protects the environment.'

The union's ground-breaking work in partnership with the Scottish Environment, Food and Agriculture Research Institutes (SEFARI) will bring

clarity on the impact Scottish agriculture has on the climate when it is published over the coming weeks, summarising current knowledge and showing an accurate picture of agriculture, highlighting where there is certainty and areas where we need more research.

'Scotland is already recognised as being well ahead of the curve when it comes to climate change and so long as we continue to drive positive measures to improve our position, market opportunities for our products can only increase,' concluded Mr Kennedy.

Right: NFUS vice president Martin Kennedy.



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# PUBLIC NOTICES

**MARINE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010**  
**MARINE FARM, EILEAN MO SHLINNEAG, LOCH SUNART**

Notice is hereby given that has applied to the Scottish Ministers of the Scottish Government, under Part 4 of the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, in respect of the deposit of a marine farm at:

Cost Location	Latitude	£2000 Longitude
Eilean mo Schlinneag,	56° 41.766' N	005° 43.078' W
Loch Sunart	56° 41.813' N	005° 42.930' W
	56° 41.581' N	005° 42.680' W
	56° 41.533' N	005° 42.841' W

(WGS84)

Plans showing the position of the works may be inspected at <http://marine.gov.scot/ml/marine-licence-shellfish-farm-eilean-mo-schlinneag-loch-sunart-07292>

Objections relating to safety of navigation in respect of the application should be made by email to:

MS.MarineLicensing@gov.scot within 28 days of the date of this notice, quoting reference: 07292 and Fassfern Mussels Limited.

**Fair Processing Notice**

The Scottish Government's Marine Scotland Licensing Operations Team (MS-LOT) determine applications for marine licences under the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 and the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. During the consultation process any person having an interest in the outcome of the application may make representation to MS-LOT. The representation may contain personal information, for example a name or address. This representation will only be used for the purpose of determining an application and will be stored securely in the Scottish Government's official corporate record. Representations will be shared with the applicant and/or agent acting on behalf of the applicant, any people or organisations that we consult in relation to the application and, where necessary, be published online, however personal information will be removed before sharing or publishing.

A full privacy notice can be found at: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Licensing/marine/PrivacyNotice>. If you are unable to access this, or you have any queries or concerns about how your personal information will be handled, contact MS-LOT at: [ms.marinelicensing@gov.scot](mailto:ms.marinelicensing@gov.scot).

**MARINE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010**  
**MARINE FARM, AULISTON POINT, LOCH SUNART**

Notice is hereby given that has applied to the Scottish Ministers of the Scottish Government, under Part 4 of the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, in respect of the deposit of a marine farm at:

Cost Location	Latitude	£2000 Longitude
Auliston Point, Loch Sunart	56° 39.007' N	005° 59.381' W
	56° 39.031' N	005° 58.890' W
	56° 39.016' N	005° 58.883' W
	56° 38.994' N	005° 59.374' W

(WGS84)

Plans showing the position of the works may be inspected at <http://marine.gov.scot/ml/marine-licence-marine-farm-auliston-point-loch-sunart-07291>

Objections relating to safety of navigation in respect of the application should be made by email to:

MS.MarineLicensing@gov.scot within 28 days of the date of this notice, quoting reference: 07291 and Fassfern Mussels Limited.

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

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

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

Ref. No.	Proposal	Site Address
20/00752/PP	Retention of 80 metre high wind monitoring mast previously approved under application reference 17/01570/PP for a further period of 3 years	Land Approx. 3.4 KM South East Of Balliemeanoch Farm East Lochaweside Dalmaily Argyll And Bute
20/00023/PP	Erection of telecommunications equipment compound with 25 metre high lattice tower, construction of gabion wall, installation of culvert and associated works	Lagalochan Track (off The C29) Near Kilmelford Argyll And Bute
20/00736/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse	Land Adjacent To Ben Hiant View Tobermory Isle Of Mull Argyll And Bute
20/00757/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse and garage, installation of biodisc treatment plant and formation of access (amended design relative to planning permission 18/01431/PP)	Land East Of Achnealaidh North Connel Oban Argyll And Bute
20/00792/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, installation of sewage treatment plant and formation of vehicular access	Land North West Of Kennovara (Plot A) Benderloch Oban Argyll And Bute
20/00793/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, installation of sewage treatment plant and formation of vehicular access	Land West Of Kennovara (Plot B) Benderloch Oban Argyll And Bute
20/00697/PP	Modification to the existing barley intake conveyor to provide new intake elevator and offloading swing arm conveyor, with associated access platform	Port Ellen Maltings Port Ellen Isle Of Islay Argyll And Bute PA42 7AJ

Written comments can be submitted online <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/find-and-comment-planning-applications-or-to-argyll-and-bute-council-development-management-kilmory-castle-lochgilthead-argyll-pa31-8RT> within 21 days of this advert. Please quote the reference number in any correspondence. Any letter of representation the Council receives is considered a public document and will be published on our website. Anonymous or marked confidential correspondence will not be considered. A weekly list of all applications can be viewed on the Councils website. Customers are requested to use electronic communication where possible during the coronavirus pandemic as our ability to process postal mail is restricted.

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (as amended)**  
**Submission of a Social and Economic Development Masterplan for the Island of Ulva.**

Notice is hereby given that the North West Mull Community Woodland Company – Ulva Subcommittee has submitted a Masterplan to Argyll and Bute Council setting out their proposals for the repopulation and regeneration of the Island of Ulva.

A copy of the Masterplan (reference 20/00804/MPLAN) may be viewed electronically through the Argyll and Bute Council website at [www.argyll-bute.gov.uk](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk). Having regard to Schedule 6, Part 3, s10 of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020, documents are only available to inspect electronically at this time. Customers requiring assistance can contact us by e-mail [planning.hq@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:planning.hq@argyll-bute.gov.uk) or tel 01546 605518.

Written comments can be submitted online <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/find-and-comment-planning-applications-or-to-argyll-and-bute-council-development-management-kilmory-castle-lochgilthead-argyll-pa31-8RT> within 28 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. Customers are requested to use electronic communication where possible during the coronavirus pandemic as our ability to process postal mail is restricted.

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

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

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

Reference Number	Development Address	Proposal Description
20/01648/FUL	Land 40M NW Of Aldi North Road, Fort William	Formation of a vehicular access off the A82 North Road
20/01714/FUL	Glenmamie, Lochailort	Change of use for holiday 4 pods and parking
20/01602/FUL	Talamh Nua Ariundle, Strontian	Erection of house and letting unit
20/01596/FUL	Land 140M SW Of Seaview Cleadale, Isle of Eigg	Erection of house

**Time period for comments is 14 days**  
ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX  
Email: [eplanning@highland.gov.uk](mailto:eplanning@highland.gov.uk)

**NOTICE OF PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION (PAC) EVENT**

AquaMoor Ltd has been appointed as an agent to handle Marine License applications for clients planning to establish algal farms at the following locations: 56.598N 5.369W; 56.505N 5.454W; 56.495N 5.463W; 56.678N 6.003W & 56.925N 7.505W. Subject to licensing consent, these farms will be deployed in Q4 2020. PAC events would normally be held at a local Community Centre but due to Covid-19 restrictions they are to be held as an online consultation instead. The PAC event, including presentation of the prospective licence applications, will now be held as a Zoom Webinar from 13:00-16:00 on Thursday 2nd July. For further information regarding the planned activity please register for the PAC event or submit a comment by the 26th June by email to [licensing@aquamoor.co.uk](mailto:licensing@aquamoor.co.uk). Comments should not be sent to MS-LOT - there will be an opportunity for representations to be made to MS-LOT on the application.

**Proposed Division of the Croft by Owner-occupier Crofter**

Mary Keith is applying to divide the croft at Keills, Jura, into 6 new crofts.

Written comments from those with a relevant interest (which may be made public) to: Crofting Commission, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW, [info@crofting.gov.scot](mailto:info@crofting.gov.scot) within 28 days from the date of this advert.

**Proposed Assignment of a Croft**

John Angus Gillies is applying to assign the tenancy of the croft at Fladda Island Croft, Fladda Island, Isle of Raasay to Mr John Cater of 3 Fladda Island, Isle of Raasay.

Written comments from those with a relevant interest (which may be public) to:- Crofting Commission, Leachkin road, Inverness, IV3 8NW, [info@crofting.scotland.gov.uk](mailto:info@crofting.scotland.gov.uk) by 18th June 2020.

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### PERSONAL NOTICE

**THANK YOU**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my family, the Oban Ambulance Service, doctors and nurses in Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Glasgow for saving my life.

Peter Miller

Keeping our community informed

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## BIRTHS

**RAYBOULD** - Alex and Vairi are delighted to announce the safe arrival of their son Donnie Blake at Cumberland Infirmary on May 11, 2020. A wee brother for Laila, grandson for Julie and Mike, Carlisle and Joanie and John, Tobermory.

## DEATHS

**CLARK** - Duncan Gillies, of Achnamara, Main Street, Port Charlotte, Islay passed away peacefully at home on Wednesday, May 13, 2020, aged 79. Much loved brother to Effie, dear father and father-in-law to Mary, David, John and Shona. Special Papa to Helen, Rosie, Kathryn, Sophie and Lucy. Funeral service and interment was held at Kilchoman Cemetery on Monday, May 18, 2020.

**GILLIES** - Margaret. Peacefully at Eader Glinn Care Home, Oban on Tuesday, May 12, 2020 in her 83rd year. Margaret, cherished mother to the late James, loving mother-in-law to Sheena, devoted Gran to Nick and adored sister

to Robert, Anne, Elizabeth and Philip. Sister-in-law to Heather, Wilbert, Romas and Caroline. A very special auntie to Wendy, Julie, Scott, Ross and families. Special thanks to the wonderful staff at Eader Glinn for their exceptional care in these difficult times, and the Macmillan nurses who treated her with love and compassion for many years. A private service was held at Pennyfuir Cemetery on Monday, May 18. Donations are welcome to Macmillan Cancer Support or Eader Glinn in Margaret's memory. A very dear friend and neighbour, Margaret will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

**MACKECHNIE** - Gilbert John. Peacefully at his home in Oban on May 12, 2020, aged 76, with his family at his side. Beloved husband of Iona. Much loved dad to Jan and Iain. Stepdad to Paula and Laura and adored Papa to Nadia, Joe, Quinn, Georgie, Lucas, Kai and baby Neil. Gilbert's funeral took place on May 19 at his home and thereafter to Pennyfuir Cemetery. Sorely missed and

forever loved. Any donations will be given to Eader Glinn Care Home as Gilbert was very grateful for the care they gave his uncle John.

**McKERRELL** - John Douglas (Ian) sadly passed away peacefully at his beloved Island Farm, Bowmore, on May 17, 2020, aged 75 years. Much loved husband to Margaret, devoted dad to Tracey, Morven and Arlene and cherished papa to Ryan, Rachel, Olivia, Freya and John. Ian was a much loved and respected member of the farming community on Islay and beyond and he will be sorely missed by all who knew him. A private funeral service was held at Bowmore Cemetery on Wednesday, May 20 where family paid their last respects to him. A celebration of Ian's life will be held at a later date. "A gentle nature, a heart of gold, these are the memories we will hold, Gentle Jesus up above, please give papa all our love".

**NICOLSON** - Suddenly but peacefully on May 11, 2020 in his 83rd year, Donald (Nicky) Nicolson, husband of Ann, brother to John and the late

Catherine, Dorothy, Malcolm and Margaret. Much loved dad of Margaret and Janet, dear father-in-law to Colin and Stewart, devoted seair to Isla, William, Nicola, Jacquelyn and Emma. Gone but never forgotten.

**ORR** - Jan (née Gemmell), aged 81. Peacefully at home with her family on Sunday, May 17, 2020. Wife to Willie, mother of David, Kate, Erin, Sally and the late Jamie. Mother-in-law to Sandy, Sue, Tim and Gordon. Beloved grandmother of eleven and great-grandmother to three. Irreplaceable.

**REID** - Florence Phoebe Reid née Lazenby, formerly Boundary Cottage, near Kilmore, peacefully at Victoria Park Care Home Edinburgh on May 4, 2020. Mother of Peter, Brian and Andrew, grandmother of Corinna and Abi and great-grandmother. Sadly missed.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**BRADY** - Betty and Kathleen would like to thank neighbours, friends, family and the many people who telephoned,

sent cards, letters, Mass cards and flowers. Your kind words and memories of James meant so much to us. We especially want to thank those who held us in prayer throughout this time. Thank you to everyone who came out to pay their respects and to Fr David and Deacon Thomas for the beautiful and peaceful farewell at Glen Nevis and for all their love throughout. Thanks to Manson and MacBeath for their perfect care and professionalism. Finally, our grateful thanks to Tweedale surgery, particularly Dr Pooleman, the district nurses Mags and Joan, Macmillan, Crossroads and Day and Night Owls for all their loving care. Deo gratias.

**COKE** - Andrew. Jean and family would like to thank all medical staff at Belford Hospital and the quick response from the Ambulance Service. To Reverend Dr Malcom Kinnear for his comforting service at the graveside. To Jamie and Beth for their kind, professional help. Thank you to all friends and neighbours for their kind expressions of support as the

cortege passed through the village. This was much appreciated by the family.

**MACLEAN** - Neil, Edna and family would like to thank everyone for all their kind expressions of sympathy and attendance at the funeral on the loss of Addie. Many thanks also to Billy McClymont for the funeral arrangements and the Rev Liz Gibson for the lovely graveside service.

**MACLEAN** - Marion, Margo and families wish to thank most sincerely all relatives, friends and neighbours for kind expressions of sympathy extended to them in their recent sad loss of their Mum, Chrissie. Special thanks to Calmac crew for respect shown and D Chisholm & Sons of Inverness and Co-op, Tiree for caring and efficient funeral arrangements.

**McCRACKEN** - David Dunbar. The family of the late David McCracken would like to thank most sincerely all relatives and friends for the kind expressions of sympathy extended to them in their recent bereavement. Special

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thanks to Rev. Lyn Peden for a beautiful service and our grateful appreciation to all at Co-op Funeralcare in Lady Lane, for professional handling of arrangements.

**MONTGOMERY** - Marlene. Donnie and Raymond would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for the love and kindness shown after Mum's sudden passing. Thanks also to the emergency services and Manson and MacBeath for all their help and support with the funeral arrangements. Our thanks to Rev Dr Malcolm Kinnear for his comforting funeral service and the kindness shown to Mum over the years. Over £1,900 has now been raised in memory of Mum for Mary's Meals at [www.justgiving.com/marlene-montgomery](http://www.justgiving.com/marlene-montgomery). Thanks everyone for all your wonderful donations. Mum would be so pleased that over 120 children will be fed every day for the next year.

**MONTGOMERY** - Donald and Jane would like to thank everyone who sent cards, telephone calls, flowers, baking and fresh eggs following the sudden passing of our sister Marlene. We were overwhelmed by your kindness. Marlene will be sadly missed.

### MEMORIAMs

**BEATON** - Fondest memories of Angus Campbell, passed away May 17, 2019. At rest now, Bunessan, Mull.  
- From friends in Oban.

**CAMERON** - Marion (née MacCuish). Precious memories of a much loved mother and seanmhair, who passed away May 22, 2018.

Remembering also our dear father, Ian Cameron, who passed away February 18, 1991. Forever in our hearts and so deeply loved.

- Sandra, Kenneth, Alasdair and families.

**CAMERON** - Treasured memories of my sister-in-law and our dear aunt Morag née MacCuish, who passed away on May 22, 2018. Lovingly remembered.

- Inserted by Chrissie and family.

**CAMERON** - Precious memories of my dear husband Alexander, who passed away on May 20, 2018.

You may be gone from my sight  
But you are forever in my heart  
Loved and missed every day.  
- Euphemia.

**CAMERON** - In loving memory of Alan Cameron (Cammy), who died May 26, 2016.

Sadly missed.  
- Elma, Ian and family.

**CAMPBELL** - Precious memories of a dear husband, father and grandfather Hugh, who passed away on May 23, 2019. Every day in some small way Memories of you come our way  
Though absent, you are always near  
Still missed, loved and always dear.  
- Nell, Mary Flora, Gilleasbuig, Eilidh and families, Garaphail, Tiree.

**MACCOLL** - In loving memory of dear Neilie, who passed away May 13, 2003.

Your memory is as dear today as in the hour you passed away.  
- Margaret, Torloisk.

**MACCORQUODALE** - William (Willie). In loving memory of a dear husband, dad, father-in-law and papa who passed away on May 25, 1995 after a sudden illness.

Those we love don't go away,  
They walk beside us every day.  
Unseen, unheard but always near,  
Still loved, still missed and very dear.

- Ellen, Sandra, James, Ian, Wilma and families.

**MACDONALD** - First anniversary, May 23, 2019. Caroline, a beautiful daughter to Arthur and Josie, who passed away too soon, aged 52 years. A devoted wife to Calum and a very proud mum to Iona and Calum. Also beloved sister to Linda and brother-in-law Duncan, sister to the late John and a great friend to her step-mother Mary. Words cannot describe how we all miss her.

Love you forever Caroline.  
- Dad and Mary xx

**MACLEOD** - Duncan, died May 24, 2014. In loving memory of my Husband, our Dad and Papa.

**McGUIGAN** - In loving memory of Daniel who died May 24, 2019.

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- Gran and family.

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# Saints youth football season comes to a premature end

With the Scottish Youth Football Association confirming the 2019/20 football season was finished as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, it meant a premature end to participation in the Glasgow and District Youth Football League (GADYFL) for all Oban Saints youth teams.

The season started in August 2019, with the club's new U13 team joining teams at U14, U15 and U17 levels, playing in a highly competitive GADYFL league.

U13 coaches Keith Millar, Alasdair Crowe and Jim Muir were delighted with the development shown by the youngest Saints' team in their first season of 11-a-side football.

With 13 out of 16 league

games played, a mid table finish in Division Two was looking like a good reward for the U13s.

The season had started with the league cup group stages, with two wins and two defeats in the four group games. That was followed by a narrow 5-6 home defeat in the Scottish Youth Cup second round to Glasgow Boys in an entertaining game full of goals. After a great comeback to draw level, a late goal unfortunately ended the U13s cup run for the season.

The U14s built on their form from the previous season and competed well in Division One.

Sitting fifth, having played 12 league games, the boys had



Goalmouth action from the U14s 5-3 home win over Park Sports Project at Glencruitten earlier in the season.

their sights set on fourth place having recorded a fantastic

1-0 away win against fourth-placed Milton Rovers in early March.

Coaches Alex Craik and Allan MacDonald noted some better away results and performances this season as a particular highlight, along with more competitive performances against the top three teams in the division.

The league cup campaign in August had started with two wins and a draw, qualifying the team for the quarter finals. Unfortunately, the good Scottish Youth Cup run of the previous season couldn't be repeated, with a 2-4 defeat at home to Milton Rovers in the second round.

The U15s, under coaches Colin Campbell, Robert MacKay and Scott Buchanan, were having another successful season in Division Two.

Top of the league by one

point, having played seven of their 11 games away from home, they would have hoped home advantage in the remaining games would have given the Saints' boys a good chance of winning their league.

The U15s have used their squad of 20 players, with all getting game time in matches. The coaches were happy with the performances this season in a very competitive league.

The club had also entered a team at U17, with a number of U16 players involved which meant they were playing 'up' a year. Coach Stewart Duncan was really pleased with the commitment of the boys throughout the season. From eight league games played, Saints had three wins and five defeats, although three of the defeats were only by a single goal.

Similar to some of the other age groups, the U17s were also hoping for a mid table finish.

Oban Saints Youths thank a number of people for their involvement during the season.

Chairman Donald Black and the rest of the volunteer committee thank all the players and parents for their continued commitment and support during the year and will hopefully see them all again for the 2020/21 football season once details for the start have been confirmed.

Thanks also go to referees Martin Rae and Jimmy Litster for covering a number of games during the season, to the janitorial staff at Oban High School and to the Argyll and Bute Council ground staff.

A number of local organisations and individuals have continued to offer financial support through donations and sponsorship. This is greatly appreciated by the club. They include Nicky Lane, J & M Boyd Heating & Plumbing; Ian Campbell, D & J Campbell Haulage; Oban Filling Station; West Coast Motors; Stevie Shaw, The Oban Inn; William Martin, Painter and Decorator; Argyll Beats Cardiovascular Disease and the Ryan MacPhail Memorial Trust.

## Oban Saints senior teams eagerly await league decisions

Oban Saints secretary David Buchanan along with counterparts from other member clubs met with the executive committee of the Central Scottish AFL via Zoom recently when a number of proposals were put to the clubs.

The committee hoped the 2019/20 season would resume in some form when given permission to restart by the Scottish Government and the Scottish FA.

It was proposed the third round of fixtures in Divisions 1A and 1B be scrapped, which would mean Saints would be champions of Division 1B as they only have two league games remaining and their 100 per cent points total of 14 wins from 14 games could not be caught. This would mean the D & K Lafferty-sponsored Oban side would play in the Premier Division next season which was the club's aim from the start.

The four Central AFL cup competitions would be suspended but teams involved

in the latter stages of the Scottish Cup and District Cups would play their ties whenever it was safe to do so. Also on the table is a proposal the Central Scottish AFL move to two divisions of 14 teams.

All these proposals are subject to review, however, and will be dependent on direction from the Government and the Scottish FA. All Scottish football is currently suspended with another review due on June 10.

The executive committee of the Greater Glasgow AFL, where Oban Saints' second team play, have sent out a proposal to all member clubs that the season be declared null and void with no promotion or relegation and that trophies for the league and cup competitions would not be awarded. They have also proposed new league formations for next season along with a financial package. Clubs had until today, May 21, to vote in favour or against these proposals.

## TIDES Thursday May 21, 2020

Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday May 21, 2020 are listed below with differences for major ports listed underneath. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

<b>Thur</b>	04.55	3.7	11.11	1.0
	17.06	3.6	23.28	1.1
<b>Fri</b>	05.30	3.8	11.42	1.0
	17.37	3.7	** **	* *
<b>Sat</b>	00.00	1.0	06.03	3.8
	12.15	0.9	18.07	3.8
<b>Sun</b>	00.33	1.1	06.35	3.7
	12.48	0.9	18.38	3.7
<b>Mon</b>	01.06	1.1	07.07	3.6
	13.21	1.0	19.11	3.7
<b>Tues</b>	01.41	1.2	07.42	3.5
	13.58	1.1	19.49	3.6
<b>Wed</b>	02.20	1.3	08.23	3.3
	14.41	1.2	20.31	3.5

## OBAN WEATHER

**THURSDAY**  
Sunny intervals and a gentle breeze  
Temperatures 12°C to 18°C.

**FRIDAY**  
Light rain showers and a fresh breeze. 9°C to 14°C.

**WEEKEND OUTLOOK**  
**Saturday**  
Light rain showers and a fresh breeze. 10°C to 13°C.  
**Sunday**  
Light rain showers and moderate breezes. 10°C to 14°C.

## Tidal Constants:

(Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrishaig	-5.35	Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Portree	+0.55
Campbeltown	-5.30	Lochboisdale	+0.30	Tobermory	+0.16
Crinan	-0.47	Mallaig	+0.25	Dover	+5.30

## FRIDAY FORECAST

**HIGH** 14 **LOW** 9

22 MPH

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## & OBAN TIMES

No 8512

Thursday 21 May, 2020

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## MAKE THE SWITCH

# Lochaber at low risk of virus transmission, says think tank

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Lochaber council wards are among those rated at lowest risk from COVID-19 transmission in Scotland, according to a new Scottish think tank.

So says a team of researchers and analysts at Glasgow-based Scotianomics, which has ranked all of Scotland's 354 council wards, from highest to lowest, for the risk of COVID-19 transmission and the potential for fatalities. However, Scotianomics stressed the rankings have nothing to do with the number of cases in an area or how well people have observed the lockdown.

Fort William and Ardnamurchan fares best of our mainland wards, ranking 326th out of 354 with a risk score of just 9.2. Caol and Mallaig ward is ranked 324th, with a risk score of 9.9, while Eilean a' Cheòward (Skye) is ranked 312th with a risk score of 13.7.

Wards in the Western Isles are ranked as being of similarly low risk, while Oban is ranked

321st with a risk score of 10.8. Ranked in first place (worst) is Inverclyde North with a risk score of 112.7.

The risk index and associated interactive map shows significant differences between communities, and suggests a phased, geographic easing of lockdown should be considered by the Scottish Government.

### The risks vary hugely in different communities across Scotland.

Scotland's northern rural regions, such as the Highlands and Islands, are least at risk the report suggests, because despite their older populations with many vulnerable members, there are decreased levels of connectivity and geographically spread-out populations.

Launching the index, Scotianomics founding director, Gordon MacIntyre-Kemp, said what was evident is that, for a wide variety of reasons, the risks vary hugely in different communities across Scotland.

In terms of both the economy and health and wellbeing, we believe it makes sense to ease the lockdown according to those differences in risk,' he added.

The research was conducted during April and has already been submitted to the Scottish Government's Advisory Group on Economic Recovery.

Currently the research does not factor in actual infection rates or fatalities in each area as these figures are not yet publicly available with sufficient detail.

Rather it is based on existing data for the 354 council wards and calculates each area's risk of exposure according to two factors - transmission probability and potential for fatalities.

Mr MacIntyre-Kemp added: 'We want to be absolutely clear. It is not a map of COVID-19 cases across Scotland but of the areas most at risk of community infection.'

'However, what it sets out very clearly is that the risks of transmission and the likelihood of fatalities within particular communities can be predicted with a high degree of confidence.'

## Lockdown lunacy on Fort footpath



Police and firefighters were called to an incident in Fort William on Tuesday morning when a Volkswagen 4x4 came off a muddy woodland path at the town's Cow Hill. Photographer Iain Ferguson was on hand to capture the scene and the car can be seen on the hill behind the town's swimming pool with its front wheels dangling precariously above a 15-foot drop. Police Scotland said no one was injured and enquiries were ongoing to 'establish the full circumstances surrounding the incident'. Photograph: Iain Ferguson

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## Stream of water bills still flowing to Kilmonivaig Church

Scottish Water subsidiary Business Stream says it has apologised for an administrative error that has seen a bill issued for nearly £900 for a water supply for a Lochaber church that has never had so much as a single tap in the two centuries since it was built, writes Mark Entwistle.

Over two years ago, the Lochaber Times documented church treasurer John Fotheringham's long-running battle with Business Stream after it issued the church trustees with a torrent of water bills for a non-existent water supply.

Then, in the February of 2018, Business Stream relented and confirmed the Supply Point Identification Number (SPID) assigned to Kilmonivaig Church, had now been removed.

But Mr Fotheringham said he has now had to take to his keyboard once again, after last week receiving a water bill back-date for three years for just over £867 for the same non-existent water supply.

Quizzed on the latest unwelcome invoice, Business Stream Customer Services Director, Jo Mayes, told us: 'As soon as we were made aware of this issue we very quickly identified that it was caused by an administrative error.'

'We contacted Mr

Fotheringham in a matter of hours to apologise for any inconvenience caused and to confirm that there is no balance outstanding.'

Asked if he was happy with the way the matter had been resolved, Mr Fotheringham told us: 'They may hope it is going away, but I am writing to Kate Forbes [local MSP] because there is an important principle here. This is a publicly-owned company that has tried to persuade a tiny Highland charity to pay £867.71 in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic emergency for a service it was impossible to provide.'

'They were well aware that Kilmonivaig Parish Church building does not and has never had, water, toilet, or sewerage services, since it was built 208 years ago, and the charity which runs both the church and hall applies for and is granted exemption on an annual basis.'

'To arbitrarily try and charge the church from 2017 is a nonsense, particularly after we were told the church had been de-registered after the last shambles, and another waste of my time, so you might understand why happy is not a word I would use.'

'I just wonder how many others will be receiving similarly silly bills.'

# An army of teddies cheer up Caol kids

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

More than 200 teddy bears of all shapes and sizes appeared in the windows of homes across Caol recently for a competition designed to boost the spirits of local youngsters as the coronavirus lockdown continues.

The event was dreamed up by humanist celebrant and retired paramedic, Alyson Stewart, who felt she needed to do something to help younger residents focus on something fun.

She explained: 'When lockdown started it was a hard time for all. It was an alien world from what we had always known and very difficult to comprehend what was going on as this deadly virus is hidden.'

'There was nothing visible to see or touch or hold, only terrible news feeds telling of the deaths worldwide. It was so difficult for adults but I felt for the children - how on earth would their wee minds take it all in?'

'Because of lockdown and being restricted in movement they could only go out on walks or cycles for exercise,



Prize winners Ellie Clarihew, from Lochyside, and sisters Caira Grieve and Jessica Grieve-McCaffrey, from Caol.

Photographs: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

so I saw on the internet a place that had rainbows in the windows of their homes and thought that perhaps little teddies would be nice for the kids to try and spot.'

Each bear was given a number and the children took down the numbers and address of the house where they saw them and sent them in to Alyson.

'I had a huge response and over 216 people popped teddies in their windows of all descriptions. Some big some small, some cute, some scary

and the kids loved them all,' she added.

'The winners spotted an amazing 65 teddies and the runner-up was not far behind. So many wee ones enjoyed it so much.'

'It was all down to all those people who took part, as without them there would have been no teddy hunt.'

'Many had no children of their own but loved to see the kids outside taking the numbers down and giving them all a wave and a smile. I have had wonderful messages from two

separate ladies about how it was the highlight of their last five weeks as they lived alone, having the kids walk past and stop.'

The three overall winners were sisters, Caira Grieve and Jessica Grieve-McCaffrey, from Caol, and Ellie Clarihew, of Lochyside. Alyson bought them all teddies and Caol Community Council donated three special Easter eggs.

And Alyson said she has a new challenge under way in the form of a painting / drawing challenge focusing on animals, insects and birds, and open to both adults and children.

Alyson told us: 'Morrison's has very kindly offered to support for this challenge and provide some prizes for the winners.'

'If any other people would like to donate towards prizes it is most welcome and I can then make sure that everyone who enters gets a small something in return.'

'Thanks to all who are supporting and participating in trying to keep our wee ones occupied. They get a massive clap from me on a Thursday night as all these little people are doing so well.'



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## Tesco delivery boost for Skye shielders

Shielding shoppers on Skye will now benefit from extra weekly shopping slots after sharing their concerns over the availability of the vital service.

Tesco has committed to almost 200 extra weekly slots for Skye and Lochalsh since the beginning of the month.

Constituents on the island in the shielding category had approached Kate Forbes MSP after finding they were unable to book a slot for weeks in advance. Some feared they would have to break self-isolation to go to the local shops for essential supplies.

Following talks with Tesco's Dingwall store management who are responsible for all Skye and Lochalsh deliveries, an extra two vans were added to serve the route.

Ms Forbes welcomed the move saying: 'I am hugely grateful for the Dingwall store team. It just goes to show that a can-do attitude often bears fruit. I hope this will especially help those who are shielding.'

# Bosses of virus-hit home defends sick pay stance

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

The operator of Home Farm Care Home at Portree on Skye, where 10 residents have so far died due to an outbreak of coronavirus, has defended only paying statutory sick pay to infected employees if they do not qualify for company sick pay.

HC-One's comments came after local Skye constituency MP Ian Blackford lambasted the firm, which has seen more than 200 residents in its homes across Scotland, die as a result of COVID-19.

Last week, the Care Inspectorate announced it had started legal action in the sheriff court to have HC-One's registration to run Home Farm cancelled.

But this week saw HC-One again in the firing line with Ross, Skye and Lochaber MP Mr Blackford urging the



**Local MP Ian Blackford wants staff at the Portree care who test positive for the virus to receive full pay.**

Photograph: BBC Scotland.

owners of the stricken care home to pay full wages to staff who are signed off sick with COVID-19.

He has now written to HC-One to point out its 'moral and ethical responsibility' to adequately remunerate staff members who are off sick.

The SNP's Westminster Leader has also written to

Chancellor Rishi Sunak to request immediate top up payments for careworkers elsewhere who are facing similar circumstances.

The move follows an approach to Mr Blackford by several local care workers who tested positive for COVID-19 and were forced to take sick leave from the privately-run facility. As a result, they have been left reliant on statutory sick pay in place of their usual income.

'This company has a moral and ethical responsibility to pay full wages to staff members who are off sick with COVID-19,' said Mr Blackford.

'It is not acceptable that they should have to deal with the added stress of financial difficulties on top of the very real health concerns they are facing while fighting this disease.'

'Furthermore, we can't have a situation where anyone feels forced to return to work

early as a result of financial restraints.'

Asked if it was willing to listen to Mr Blackford's sick pay appeal, a spokesperson for HC-One told us: 'Colleagues who test positive or self-isolate due to COVID-19 are paid their normal contractual sick pay from day one or, if they are entitled to it, Company Sick Pay as per their contract.'

'This reflects the significant financial constraints facing every local authority-funded care provider in the UK, a situation which has only been exacerbated by the additional cost pressures of responding to COVID-19.'

'Within these constraints we have developed a comprehensive package of wellbeing support for colleagues. This has been enhanced and includes access to online GPs, mental health support, free meals for colleagues, and discounts at various high-street stores.'

'We've created a dedicated bereavement support package in recognition that our residents are often also our friends and losing them during this outbreak may have a profound impact on our colleagues. We've also invested significantly in making sure our homes have the PPE they need.'

Last week, NHS Highland agreed to immediately deploy additional resources to support staff and residents at Home Farm.

The legal move by the Care Inspectorate could end HC-One's role as the care provider at Home Farm, and see NHS Highland taking over completely.

Mr Blackford added: 'What has happened at Home Farm has shaken all of us on the Isle of Skye. Our thoughts are with all those who have the virus, those who have died, their families and friends and the wider community.'



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## Seasoning and storing firewood

If you source and cut your own wood then spring to early summer is the perfect time to get working on replenishing your wood pile. With so many of us "confined to barracks" just now we can make good use of this time to fill up the log store. And if you have children at home with you then enlist their help and who knows, they may even find it a welcome distraction from online school!

Getting your wood cut and split as quickly as possible will increase the surface area so it dries out faster. Wood should be stacked off the ground and under cover but with a constant through-flow of fresh air to ensure that the drying process continues. Do not stack the wood too tightly. A closed shed does not make a good store for wood as it slows the drying process considerably whilst promoting the perfect environment for fungus and harmful moulds to thrive. Best of all is a polytunnel with both ends open. High temperatures build up very quickly as soon as the sun shines creating an ideal drying climate.

Softwood such as larch, spruce and pine dries more quickly than hardwood and if you can get this cut, split and stored now it will likely be ready to burn by the time Autumn comes around. Hardwoods such as oak and beech will take longer and should generally be left a full year before use.

Wood that is to be burned in a stove should have a moisture content of 20% or lower. If the moisture content is higher you run the risk of creating a build up of tar and creosote in your chimney which can cause a number of undesirable complications including blockages and chimney-fires. If you're not sure whether your wood is dry there are various ways to check:



Bang two bits together - dry wood should sound hollow and green wood will produce a dense 'thud' noise. Dry wood will feel much lighter and may also be cracked at the ends. Monitor how a small piece burns - if it hisses, crackles and you notice moisture or steam coming out of the ends then it is still too wet. Alternatively you could purchase a moisture meter which will give an accurate digital reading of the moisture content of your log. If using this then always make sure you split the log and take the reading from the centre part where it will be wettest.

Finally, just a quick update to let you know that although our premises are still closed we are able to carry out distance surveys (by email), put together chimney designs and estimates for future building projects and continue to supply emergency spare-parts for all Woodwarm, Charnwood, Morso, Jetmaster and Rutland appliances to ensure your essential heating needs are met. Please contact us by phone, email or Facebook if you need any support.

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# Council rethink urged on grass cutting plans

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Local environmental groups in Lochaber have called on Highland Council to rethink its plans to restart some grass cutting services, albeit on a restricted scale due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The local authority said all work will adhere to the national guidelines on what are essential services, including mowing grass, essential roadside maintenance where there may be a road safety issue.

Grass cutting in parks to enable people to take exercise is also planned and there will also be limited grass cutting in burial grounds, areas of council housing and in some other open spaces.

But Highland councillor Niall McLean (Fort William and Ardnamurchan) was scathing about the proposals.



He told the Lochaber Times: 'Highland Council seems to be back to business as usual with excessive cutting and the use of weed killer, despite my motion passed at full council for a moratorium on the use of weed killer due to safety concerns.

'We have seen terrible misuse of glyphosate-based weed killers in the past by Highland Council such as spraying on

and around children's play equipment and near water courses. The council needs to respect the democratic process within council and stop using glyphosate. Instead of using a pandemic as an excuse to carry on as usual, it may well be an ideal time to try reducing grass cutting.

'I would also question if grass cutting is essential works. If

**Campaigners are calling on Highland Council to cut back on its grass cutting to improve wildlife and people's wellbeing.**

the council is as affected as it says it is with a huge budget impact from COVID-19, why is it wasting money on grass cutting and not accepting that creating a more biodiversity landscape with long grass and wild flowers is a better way forward?'

Asked for their views, Lochaber Environmental Group (LEG) called for the council to rethink its plans.

LEG told us it was 'saddened and disappointed' to see council mowing was to resume.

'During lockdown, the profusion of wildflowers growing along road and path verges and

in public spaces has been an uplifting sight, contributing to many people's wellbeing over the last couple of months,' said a spokesperson.

'We had hoped that Highland Council would take this opportunity to adopt a more wildlife-friendly management regime to grass cutting as COVID-19 restrictions are eased. Not only would this give our precious wildflowers and insects the opportunity to thrive, reduced cutting regimes will also help the council reduce its carbon emissions, and cut costs.

'If you would like to see wildflowers flourishing along our road verges and in public spaces, please write to your local councillor. You can also sign the Plantlife Road Verges petition.'

To sign the petition visit [plantlife.love-wildflowers.org.uk/roadvergecampaign](http://plantlife.love-wildflowers.org.uk/roadvergecampaign)

## Author says sorry after flying to Skye

Neil Gaiman has apologised to islanders after flying 11,000 miles from New Zealand to his home in Skye.

The Good Omens writer hit the national headlines last week after splitting from his wife, singer Amanda Palmer, and leaving her and their four-year-old son in Auckland, travelling to 'isolate' on the island.

Subsequently Gaiman was paid a visit by local police who gave him 'suitable advice about essential travel' and reminded him about the current guidelines in Scotland.

On Tuesday morning Gaiman wrote on his online journal: 'I've managed to mess things up in Skye, which is the place I love most in the world. I want to apologise to everyone on the island for creating such a fuss. I'm sure I've done sillier things in my life, but this is the most foolish thing I've done in quite a while.'

Earlier this week Skye MP Ian Blackford tweeted that he was gobsmeaked at Mr Gaiman's actions.

**A Thank You from  
Ian Blackford MP,  
Ross, Skye & Lochaber.**

**On behalf of everyone in Ross, Skye & Lochaber, I would like to thank all health and social care staff and other key workers for helping our communities through this Covid-19 crisis. I would also like to thank every one of you for playing your part by staying at home.**

**Ian Blackford MP**

Contact details:  
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## Local newspapers needed more than ever, says Fort minister

Fort William minister, Reverend Richard Baxter, says local newspapers such as the Lochaber Times are vital sources of information and will be needed more than ever as the coronavirus lockdown is lifted, writes Mark Entwistle.

Rev Baxter was speaking after former Church of England PR chief Peter Crumpler issued a public appeal recently urged Christians to buy their local newspaper – warning them they are in danger of losing their 'best friends in the media' if titles close.

Writing for Christian Today, Mr Crumpler urged churchgoers to support local newspapers which he said were 'teetering on the brink of extinction' due to the virus outbreak.

Asked if his parishioners were managing to keep informed of local news events during the lockdown restrictions, Rev Baxter, minister at Duncansburgh MacIntosh Church in Fort William, told the Lochaber Times he had not seen the story about Mr Crumpler's appeal.

'But I am happy to be quoted endorsing that because we will all keep needing local informa-



**Reverend Richard Baxter has been providing online resources and services for parishioners.**

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba. photos

tion as the lockdown is lifted,' said Rev Baxter. 'We can't risk losing local papers as they are a vital community resource.'

Asked how the initiative of holding church services and funerals online was progressing, Rev Baxter said things were going as well as they can.

'We're still seeing about twice as many people online as we used to see in person, local and from various countries, such as Canada, USA, Malawi, Netherlands, Norway and New Zealand,' he told us.

'I've been doing video funerals to go alongside the graveside services. My last three funerals had a combined total of about 50 people in

person and more than 1,000 online all told. I've also done an online school assembly, services for people in homes and hospitals, and I'm working on some stories for primary RME classes. The Church of Scotland just installed a new moderator online, and also had a great online celebration of church life which lots of local people linked into.

'We also put out a daily email thought for the day and we're soon going to send out another set of home worship resources by post and email. Anyone who wants it who didn't get previous versions can email me at [rbaxter@churchofscotland](mailto:rbaxter@churchofscotland) or send me a note.'

# Indian tycoon calls in administrators at two of his Lochaber hotels

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Administrators have been appointed for two local hotels little more than two years after wealthy Mumbai tycoon, Sanjay Narang and his sister, Rachna, paid £3 million for them and one other property and then reportedly spent triple that on an ambitious refurbishment programme.

Mr and Ms Narang launched Mars Black Sheep Hotels Ltd, which now comprises only the Cluanie Inn at Glenmoriston and Whispering Pine Lodge near Spean Bridge, formerly the Letterfinlay Lodge.

The third hotel bought at the same time, the former Craigard Guest House at Invergarry – since relaunched as Rokeby Manor – is unaffected by the administration.

According to documents



**Businessman Sanjay Narang pictured last year at his new home near Invergarry.**

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

filed with Companies House, Donald Iain McNaught and Matthew Purdon Henderson of Johnston Carmichael were appointed joint administrators of Mars Black Sheep Hotels Limited, in March.

The administrators con-

firmed to the Lochaber Times that both Whispering Pine Lodge and the Cluanie Inn are both now being operated under management that will continue under the administration, although both sites are currently closed due to

the coronavirus lockdown. Rokeby Manor is unaffected by the administration as it is owned by a separate entity.

Mars Black Sheep Hotels Ltd went into administration following a dispute with a building contractor.

Educated at a school in the Himalayas, Mr Narang studied hotel management at Cornell University in the United States and established the Mars Group in 1991 – it is now a major force in the food and hospitality industry in India.

The Lochaber Times, which interviewed the Narangs after they also bought adjacent private homes with 200 acres of land near Invergarry, tried to contact the Mr Narang.

But according to Saket Gupta, marketing director for Black Sheep Management Services Ltd that, while Mr Narang was prepared to meet and discuss the situation once the lockdown had ended, he did not want to make any comments at this stage.

Allan Henderson is one of three Highland Council members representing the

Caol and Mallaig local authority ward that includes Whispering Pine Lodge as well as Rokeby Manor.

Councillor Henderson said: 'It is really disappointing hearing of company failures, especially after so much investment in the well-known properties, but not really surprising as business trading is suspended during the pandemic and before the hotels have had any real chance to trade.'

'There is always a risk of over investing, as companies chase the dollars, rupees and yuans, but COVID-19 has added a new dimension to that, in fact to catastrophic levels.'

'During this crisis many businesses will have the potential to fail with no grant support for larger companies and none for smaller B&Bs paying domestic rates.'

# IF IT'S URGENT, IT'S URGENT

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If you have an urgent, non-coronavirus health concern, please don't wait. Promptly seek help for emergencies, present possible cancer signs and attend immunisation appointments.

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## New head teacher for Gaelic primary school

The new head teacher of Lochaber Gaelic Primary School, at Caol, is Kieran Joseph MacInnes, who took up his post on Monday.

Councillor John Finlayson, Highland Council Education Committee chair said: 'This is great news for Bun Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar that they have a new head teacher and I welcome Mr MacInnes to his new role in Lochaber and The Highland Council.'

Mr MacInnes comes to Fort William from Rockfield Primary school in Oban as Acting Principal Teacher for Gaelic and prior to that taught in Glendale Gaelic Primary school in Glasgow.

A fluent Gaelic speaker, Mr MacInnes originally comes from Fort William and was awarded the Traditional Gold Medal for Gaelic singing at the National Mòd in Dunoon in 2018.

He undertook the initial course design and is a lead contributor for the highly successful Scottish Gaelic course on Duolingo.

Mr MacInnes said: 'I am



**Kieran MacInnes is the new headteacher at Bun-Sgoil Loch Abar.**

thrilled to have been appointed as head teacher of Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar. It is a real privilege to be able to return to my hometown to take up such an important role.

'I look forward to building on the excellent work undertaken by staff, children, parents and the wider school community to ensure the highest quality of learning for pupils, rich in Gaelic language and culture.'

# Community group lodges bid for Morvern estate

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

After three years of community effort, Morvern Community Woodlands (MCW) has submitted a £2.7 million bid to the Scottish Land Fund to purchase the 2,500 hectare (6,000 acre) Killundine Estate in Morvern.

The vision is to create 'a living, working 21st-century estate promoting the re-population and regeneration of Morvern and the conservation of its natural environment'.

Morvern is a fragile community with an ageing population of around 350 and a falling school roll. There is currently no one living on the Killundine Estate and it supports no full-time local employment.

Tilly Painter Jones, one of MCW's eight directors, told the Lochaber Times: 'This buyout will turn around a neglected estate and bring opportunities to



**Tilly Painter Jones is one of the eight directors of the community group behind the bid.**

local people. Post- COVID-19 it will bring housing and jobs, reverse depopulation. It will increase the economic and environmental resilience of the peninsula and its people and help tackle other major issues like climate change.'

The estate is made up of farm land, forestry, hills, woodland and five properties, all currently unoccupied.

A feasibility study and detailed business plan completed as part of the bid have confirmed the viability of managing the estate as mixed farmland and woodland with the establishment of new crofts and affordable housing supported by income from timber.

A local resident from the nearby village of Lochaline resident added: 'Having my

own croft would not only help me realise a life-long personal ambition, it would inspire the younger generation to come back into crofting. Productive use of land for agriculture, stock or arable is very important to me.'

It is the integration of modern crofting with sustainable, wild-life-friendly development that lies at the heart of the bid. In its first phase this includes the sale of affordable housing plots, the creation of six new crofts, the development of a local tree nursery and wildlife tourism linked with the

Scottish wildcat – for which Morvern is a priority area.

The bid, which will be decided later this month, has been the subject of extensive local consultation. It is supported by Ian Blackford MP, Kate Forbes MSP, Morvern Community Council and Morvern Community Development Company.

## Coronavirus recovery board to help with return from lockdown

A Highland Council Recovery Board has been established to lead and plan the local authority's emergence from the coronavirus lockdown and provide strategic coordination for a recovery action plan for council services.

The board will also provide oversight and direction for the council's partnership with communities and partners to support the Highland Region's return to wellbeing, prosperity and economic success.

The composition of the board will be on the basis of political balance and it will be chaired by the council's Deputy Leader, Councillor Alasdair Christie, and will also report and make recommendations for the Highland Council to determine the progress.

Early priorities for the board to consider will be restoring council governance to normal, how to safely return the workforce, prioritising of services and a focus on budget and resource, in addition to addressing the wider economic



**Highland Council has set up a coronavirus recovery board, chaired by Alasdair Christie.**

situation.

The council said an agile, flexible workforce is central to recovery and enhanced IT and skills development will be fundamental to moving the council to a 'new normal'.

Councillor Christie commented: 'This is perhaps the most difficult, complex and important challenge that the council has ever had to address; the extent of the damage caused by coronavirus in Highland will take us a very long time to recover from.'

The board will work with individuals, groups, businesses and partners to ensure we have a dedicated team established to take on board views and ideas, as we set about starting this mammoth task.'

And he added: 'The assessment of impact on our staff, on partners and on our communities will also be an important part of what guides us in decision making.'

The Recovery Board will present its draft plan and seek ratification at the next meeting of Highland Council, planned for June.

Highland Hospice

# MAKE A WILL MONTH

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[www.highlandhospice.org/mawm](http://www.highlandhospice.org/mawm)

Highland Hospice, Ness House, 1 Bishops Road, Inverness IV3 5SB.  
Highland Hospice is a registered Scottish Charity No: SC011227

## More than 1,000 items of essential supplies now delivered in Spean Bridge area

In the eight weeks since the lockdown started, volunteers supported by Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) have delivered over 1,000 essential food and medicine packages, writes Mark Entwistle.

The figure comprises 265 essential food boxes, 665 children's lunch boxes, 50 filled

prescriptions and 90 personal shopping requests. More than 80 Pulse Oximeters have also been provided to local residents.

The local charity has received a generous donation of £5,000 from the Lund Trust to support its local response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to the Scottish Government's Supporting

Communities Fund.

The group has also this week moved to a dedicated local phone number (01397 470960) staffed by volunteers from May 19, with the contact number and list of available services sent out in a new leaflet being distributed by the Royal Mail to all local residents this week.

Charity chairman John Fotheringham told the Lochaber

Times: 'The SCIO Trustees are extremely lucky to have Marianne Fraser-Stewart, her husband Liam, mother Mary Fraser and all the volunteers on the ground doing the work supporting our communities during this emergency.'

'We committed our funds immediately and unconditionally when the lockdown was announced and have

taken the lead in support of the volunteers. We have had support from the Scottish Government's Supporting Communities Fund administered by HIE, the Lunn Trust, Corroul, Lochaber Foodbank, Morrisons, the SSE Stronelairst Windfarm Community Fund, the Bridge Café, Spean Bridge Senior Citizens and the ABC Community Group.

'We have also received donations from local residents and businesses, and we are eternally grateful to all for their kindness and generosity.'

'Given we have the largest community council area in the Highlands, it has been a struggle to reach everyone but our volunteers have gone the extra mile to ensure no-one is forgotten.'

# LEG work could offer power to the people

A vision to build a renewable energy scheme which would also generate funds to secure the future of Lochaber Environmental Group (LEG) and its environmental projects, has taken the next important step, writes Fiona Scott.

Registered by the Financial Conduct Authority, LEG Power is now established as a Community Benefit Society able to issue community shares to raise the funds needed to build a hydro-electric scheme in Glenachulish.

The scheme has also led the way in being the first Community Benefit Society in Scotland to be registered under new rules which recognise the special relationship between LEG Power and LEG.

Plans are under way to launch the share offer later this year, as the current circumstances allow, and to offer residents of Lochaber and supporters of renewable energy schemes across the UK a chance to invest in this exciting project.

The share offer has an ambitious target, to raise £700,000 towards the construction costs. Shares will be valued at £50 and the minimum shareholding is £250 (5 shares).

'Community shares are a practical way of supporting this local environmental project that serves the Lochaber community,' said a spokesperson from LEG.

'This primary motivation is

different from that of shareholders in companies. LEG Power aims to pay interest on shares and will allow shareholders to withdraw their share capital, subject to terms that protect the society's financial security.'

Plans and permissions are in place and the feasibility of the scheme has been confirmed.

'Commercial loans will enable us to start building the Hydro and the funds raised from the share offer will offset these and free up more money for Lochaber environmental projects,' added the spokesperson.

In addition to applying for shares, LEG Power is looking for new board members to help take the project forward.

Three directors of LEG have signed up as founding directors of LEG Power, but the group want to create a diverse board with a range of skills to help drive the project forward.

They are inviting applications from individuals from Lochaber who are passionate about environmental sustainability and can spare a few hours each month to participate in board meetings and support the work.

Anyone interested in getting involved or to register an interest in buying shares when they become available should contact James at [jhilder@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jhilder@hotmail.co.uk) for more information and an application form.

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If you wish to register a claim, the Historical Shortfall Scheme is open until 14 August 2020.

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For details and to submit a claim please visit [onepostoffice.co.uk/scheme](https://onepostoffice.co.uk/scheme)

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# Exiled islanders may return after lockdown

Exiled islanders living in cities and elsewhere on the mainland may want to return home to the Western Isles when the coronavirus lockdown ends after witnessing the impact it has had on public health, the economy and social behaviour, says Comhairle leader Roddie Mackay.

In a long statement pondering the impact of the pandemic, Councillor Mackay said the outbreak had affected the lives of every single person living on the islands.

'However, as we contemplate the ways COVID-19 could change our islands, big and small, I have also considered the pandemic's combined effect on public health, the economy and social behaviour may cause fundamental shifts in human geography,' he said.

'For example, why would people from the islands living on the mainland and in the big cities not want to return



Comhairle leader Roddie Mackay.

here when the restrictions are lifted?

'Over recent weeks, we have all seen the vast number of benefits of living in the Western Isles, ranging from the stunning coastline for daily exercise, to the fantastic community spirit and volunteer response.

'The Western Isles is truly an amazing place to live, to

visit and to work, so it is little wonder so many people want to come here.'

Elsewhere, Councillor Mackay said the virus had seen jobs, pastimes and social lives disrupted.

'Some of these effects might linger for longer than others, of course. Thankfully, as yet, we have only had six confirmed cases of the virus - all of whom are getting on well at home - but we cannot become complacent,' he said.

As far as tourists returning to the islands is concerned, Mr Mackay added: 'People love and want to come to the Western Isles all year round, for so many different reasons.'

'At the moment, we - alongside our partner agencies, Scottish Government, CalMac and Loganair - have firm restrictions in place to ensure there is no unnecessary travel.

'These restrictions must remain in place as long as it takes

## 'Why would people from the islands living on the mainland and in big cities not want to return?'

to ensure the safety and health of our population.

'As comhairle leader, it is vitally important I do not allow looking back on what has taken place over recent weeks and months to deflect my attention and focus away from what lies ahead of us all.

'At some point, hopefully soon, the lockdown will ease. Travel restrictions will eventually end and planes and ferries will start operating full services again.

'We must be prepared for that next phase. There will be many, many challenges, but one of the key ones for us will

be to reboot the economy and be creative and innovative in our strategies to provide employment for people and to step up support for businesses and communities.

'Hopefully we can start that reboot soon with in-island activities gradually resuming but with travel restrictions, which have been so effective, remaining in place for longer.

'For the moment, please keep up the effort, support each other where you can, remain vigilant and maintain the now established good practice of social distancing.

'Our message is clear - the islands are not currently open for business. We continue to prioritise taking care of ourselves and each other.

'But when it is safe to do so and restrictions are eventually lifted, we will once again warmly welcome everyone to the Western Isles, whether that be to visit, to work or to stay.'



Angus B MacNeil.

## Islands MP hosts meeting with Nordic politicians on virus outbreak

Na h-Eileanan an Iar SNP MP Angus B MacNeil has hosted a meeting with Icelandic Justice Minister Áslaug Arna Sigurbjörnsdóttir, Faroese MP Kristina Háfoss and a group of cross-party MPs from across the UK to discuss the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Iceland and the Faroe Islands are successfully controlling the spread of COVID by continuing to test, trace and isolate.

Commenting after the meeting, Mr MacNeil said: 'I am grateful to political friends in Iceland and the Faroe Islands for taking time to share their experiences in an informative meeting on how Iceland and the Faroe Islands are leading in the testing of their population and reducing active coronavirus cases, with the Faroe Islands having zero active cases and Iceland having just 12.'

'The Faroe Islands have tested 16 per cent of the population and this will continue despite having zero active cases.'

'In the case of Iceland all infections were traced. What these countries show is they have used lockdown wisely by testing and tracking wherever necessary. Both countries maintain a strict border policy and arrivals have to quarantine for 14 days, unlike the UK which will not start this policy until June, almost three months after lockdown.'

'It was noted that lifting restrictions could be possible sooner in some parts of each nation as well as each nation going at a different pace. Also, governments should have a plan in place for dealing with further hotspots/outbreaks and whether real time small lockdowns might be needed.'

'The Faroes and Iceland have started to reduce their restrictions, Iceland never locked down fully and the Faroe Islands have just about lifted internal restrictions, bar mass gatherings.'

'From today (Thursday), the Faroese social distance has reduced from two to one metre, while in Iceland facilities such as public swimming pools will reopen this week.'



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Maisie Neil from Caol enjoyed her eighth birthday in lockdown. To make her day extra special, her family decorated their cars with balloons and drove in convoy tooting their horns and playing Happy Birthday from their car windows outside her house. Lots of fun!



Adele Claire MacMillan had to celebrate her 16th birthday in isolation at Kinlochleven on May 3, joined by her mum Susan and little sister Casey while her dad called from his work on an oil rig in Cameroon.

## Happy lockdown birthday to you!

Do you have a child celebrating their birthday during the lockdown?

Since they cannot enjoy a birthday celebration with their friends and family, we would love to give them a shout out in the Lochaber Times.

Send us a photograph of your

wee one enjoying their special day and we will publish it and wish them Happy Birthday.

Remember to include their full name, age, where you live and a little bit about what you did to make the day at home special. Send your photos to [editor@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:editor@obantimes.co.uk)

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## Baby bonding boost as classes go online

Babies in the Western Isles will not miss out on their weekly massage thanks to an online service being delivered by the NHS.

Following a trial session for parents in Uist and Barra, NHS Western Isles Health Promotion Department and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's Early Years Service are offering the service to all parents living in the Outer Hebrides. Certified by the International Association of Infant Massage, instructors raise awareness with parents and carers of how baby massage can help them to feel closer to their baby.

'Before babies can speak, or even actively respond to sounds and sights, they communicate through touch,' said Alison MacDonald, NHS Western Isles Senior Health Promotion Officer.

For further information contact your health visitor. Alternatively, for Lewis and Harris, contact Jann Skelly, Community Staff Nurse, by emailing [jannskelly@nhs.net](mailto:jannskelly@nhs.net) or, for Uist and Barra, email Alison at [alison.macdonald9@nhs.net](mailto:alison.macdonald9@nhs.net)

# Vital message as battle against virus continues

As the national effort continues to slow the spread of coronavirus, it's important to acknowledge the part everyone in Scotland has played in helping save lives.

The restrictions placed on our day-to-day lives have undoubtedly been tough. People are experiencing the loss of social interaction, loss of livelihoods and, for some, the loss of health or a loved one.

But the measures remain necessary to stop coronavirus and it's vital the nation continues to help in the fight against this pandemic.

Every part of Scotland will be affected by this virus and the situation we face is serious. However, as we've seen, by people doing the right thing, together we can reduce the impact, flatten the curve and save lives. Not following guidance – or lifting restrictions too soon – could result in many



## Healthier Scotland



more people becoming ill or dying, and risk our NHS being overwhelmed.

It's important to remain aware of the symptoms of coronavirus and latest guidance. These can be found at [www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot)

If you have symptoms you think may be coronavirus, do not leave your home for seven days. If you are in a household with someone else who has symptoms, you should not leave your home for 14 days, even if you remain symptom free.

If you start to display symp-

a double bed or two shopping trolleys - and wash your hands as soon as you get home.

Regularly washing your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds reduces the risk of catching and spreading the virus. It's also important to avoid touching your face.

Scotland's National Clinical Director Jason Leitch said: 'People across the country have done a great job of following the advice to stay at home and I'd like to say thank you for everything you're doing.'

'We don't underestimate how hard it has been, but every single life is precious. That is why we need people to stick at it and continue to follow the guidance to slow the spread of the virus, protect the NHS and our loved ones.'

'The Scottish Government is working day and night to do the very best it can for the people of Scotland during the

pandemic, guided by the latest scientific and medical advice.

'While there are some early signs the lead indicators may be flattening off, or not accelerating as they were, it's important to stress the situation remains serious. That's why our message continues to be 'stay at home'.

'If we remove measures too early, that will crumble. We need to be very, very cautious as we move forward. We are in it for a long haul and it's important to stress everyone needs to play their part.'

'There has been no bigger ask of the nation, but every time you follow the latest advice, you're helping us save lives. I'd appeal to you to continue to do the right thing.'

For information on the latest guidance visit [www.gov.scot/coronavirus](http://www.gov.scot/coronavirus). If you have a health concern, visit [www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot)

## LOOKING FOR HELP DURING CORONAVIRUS?

Please cut out and keep this page of useful contacts for use when you may need them.

**National Assistance Helpline**  
(Open office hours Monday to Friday)  
Call: 0800 111 4000  
Text phone service: 0800 111 4114

To help people at increased risk access essential help if they do not have family or other support.

### Health

[www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus](http://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus)  
0800 028 2816 for general information only

**NHS 24:** Call 111 if symptoms worsen or if fever for 7+ days

**Shielding local support:**  
[www.gov.scot/covid-shielding-contacts](http://www.gov.scot/covid-shielding-contacts)

### Feeling anxious or depressed?

**NHS Inform:**  
[www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus-mental-wellbeing](http://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus-mental-wellbeing)

**NHS 24:** Call 111  
[www.clearyourhead.scot](http://www.clearyourhead.scot)

**Breathing Space:**  
[www.breathingspace.scot](http://www.breathingspace.scot)  
0800 83 85 87

### SAMH:

0344 800 0550  
**Samaritans Scotland Helpline:**  
116 123 / [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

**Advice for pregnant women**  
[www.nhsinform.scot/ready-steady-baby](http://www.nhsinform.scot/ready-steady-baby) or contact your midwife if concerned.

**Social welfare and financial help**  
**Citizens Advice Scotland:**  
[www.cas.org.uk](http://www.cas.org.uk)  
0800 028 1456

**Struggling with energy bills?**  
**Home Energy Scotland:**  
0808 808 2282

**Consumer issues**  
**Advice Direct Scotland:**  
[www.coronavirusadvice.scot](http://www.coronavirusadvice.scot)  
0808 800 9060

### Employment rights advice

[www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)  
Helpline: 0300 123 1100

### Your rights at work

[www.stuc.org.uk](http://www.stuc.org.uk)  
0141 337 8100

### For business support

[www.findbusinesssupport.gov.scot](http://www.findbusinesssupport.gov.scot)  
Helpline: 0300 303 0660

### Advice for parents

[www.parentclub.scot/coronavirus](http://www.parentclub.scot/coronavirus)

**Parentline Scotland:**  
08000 28 22 33

**The Money Talk Team:**  
0800 085 7145

### Information for young people

[www.young.scot/coronavirus](http://www.young.scot/coronavirus)

### Information for older people

[www.agescotland.org.uk](http://www.agescotland.org.uk)  
0800 12 44 222

### Dementia – Alzheimer Scotland

[www.alzscot.org](http://www.alzscot.org)  
Helpline: 0808 808 3000

### Scottish Autism Advice Line

[www.scottishautism.org](http://www.scottishautism.org)  
01259 222022

### Domestic Abuse Helpline

[www.safer.scot](http://www.safer.scot)  
Helpline: 0800 027 1234

### Rape Crisis Scotland Helpline

[www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk)  
Helpline: 08088 01 03 02



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# The Croftless Crofter: Nic Goddard

'A friend in need is a friend indeed' is a saying we have all heard and likely used over the years.

There appear to be various interpretations of the proverb though suggesting it may mean that someone offering friendship when you most need it is the truest friend of all, someone who is in need of your help will be a true friend because they need you or that actually it should be 'in deed' rather than 'indeed' as in your true friends will show their worth by their actions.

Many of us are in need just now and many of us are offering help and friendship. In our small communities across the peninsula looking out for our neighbours has been a way of life long before coronavirus changed the pace and way we live.

Crofters and farmers coming together to share machines and labour at busy times for livestock or crops, swapping produce or crafts with neighbours, offering a lift or picking something up for a friend when you pop into



town, informal childcare help or just being there with a cup of coffee and a friendly ear to listen.

It was this sense of community across the Highlands and islands which was a major factor in drawing our family to make our home here nearly a decade ago.

I have had some sort of voluntary role for as long as I can remember; from being one of the leaders in my children's scout and guide groups when they were small, setting up a

children's reading group at the local library and volunteering as a shepherd keeping an eye on grazing sheep for the local council when we lived in Sussex, to being a director of the community trust on the Isle of Rum and the car club initiative for the area.

Once we settled here in Ardnamurchan all four of our family found voluntary roles; with the local Cats Protection League, with the Hospital Transport Project, with Lochaber Women's Aid

and with Ewen's Room mental health helpline. It is in these voluntary roles that we find so much reward; often there is training required so we are increasing our skills and knowledge.

Not everyone is fortunate to be doing something they love as a way of earning money but it is usually possible to match your passions, interests and things you enjoy doing to a volunteering opportunity.

You usually meet like minded, interesting people and find yourself feeling good about what you are doing at the same time as helping others. Win: win!

When the full implications of lockdown and social distancing became clear various voluntary initiatives have sprung up around Lochaber offering shopping and medicine deliveries, telephone chats and check-in visits.

Having found myself furloughed from one of my jobs and with no work coming in from another, I signed up for a weekly shift with the local 'Helping Hands' phone line to

take calls from anyone needing help. There are more than 50 people volunteering just in this one small area, with the same sort of initiative running in most communities across the whole of Lochaber.

Most are reporting that they are very quiet and I am yet to take a single phone call on any of my shifts. Everyone is hopeful that the reason for the lack of calls is a true lack of demand, but I have a suspicion that it may also be that people are not actually very good at asking for help.

It would appear there are far more of us offering help than accepting it just now, which is brilliant if it is reflecting the truth of the situation.

But I urge you, if you are struggling with anything whether it is getting out to buy food and supplies, even affording to pay for those supplies, dealing with having your children at home all day every day, with a domestic situation or relationship, or indeed with feeling lonely and overwhelmed by everything that is going on right now to

reach out. Because there is a whole army of volunteers just waiting to help you and support you.

I've always interpreted 'a friend in need is a friend indeed' in a slightly different way. Being able to offer help to someone in need is an honour and a privilege. Feeling you have been able to do a good deed is one of the best feelings in the world.

If you need help then don't think of it as asking for help – think of it as offering someone that wonderful opportunity to be a friend.

■ Sunart Helping Hands: 01967 750832 or email [helpinghands@sunartcommunitycouncil.co.uk](mailto:helpinghands@sunartcommunitycouncil.co.uk)

■ Acharacle Community Council: 01967 431411 or email [c19acc@gmail.com](mailto:c19acc@gmail.com)

■ Lochaber Womens Aid: 01397 705734

■ Ewen's Room: 0800 689 3317

■ EwenMe phone line set up for matching people up for regular phone chats to combat social isolation: 01967 750845

■ Lochaber Food Bank: 01397 700212

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## Is future bright for active travel in Fort William?

During the coronavirus crisis we have seen big changes around the world in the way people are travelling.

With fewer cars on the roads, the streets are safer and people are out and about walking and cycling. As a result, there has been a vast improvement in air quality, especially in big cities. But will this transformation in the way we travel disappear as we are released from lockdown? Will more cars return to the roads because people are reluctant to use public transport? Those currently enjoying the quiet streets may be forced back to their cars.

Many cities around the world are repurposing their streets for people, putting in place measures that will ensure walking and cycling remain a viable option into the future. Roads are being closed, paths widened, and cycle lanes put in place. In Scotland, Edinburgh and Glasgow are leading the way with road closures, path widening, and new cycle lanes, returning the roads to the people and enabling car-free access to outdoor spaces and places of leisure and work.



At the end of April, the Scottish Government announced a new £10 million fund, "Spaces for People", to support pop-up active travel infrastructure. At first glance this sounds wonderful. But further investigation reveals that the fund is for temporary short-term measures only, and that the money has been diverted from an existing fund, "Places for Everyone", which funds long-term active travel projects.

Does the Spaces for People initiative replace a long-term transformational vision for active travel with short-term objectives that will then disappear once the coronavirus crisis is over? Coronavirus is not the only crisis we are facing: the climate crisis is a real and ongoing threat to society, and measures implemented now to maintain public health as we emerge from lockdown, could, if properly designed, also help

to reduce the impacts of the climate crisis.

Lochaber Environmental Group's new Bike Library, which is part of our new Climate Challenge Fund project, Low Carbon Lochaber, has been helping community volunteers during lockdown with the loan of bikes free of charge. LEG also has the opportunity to deliver an ambitious electric bike hire scheme in Fort William, with plans for 80 ebikes and 15 docking stations located at key locations around the wider Fort William area.

The long-term vision for the ebike hire scheme is to transform the way we travel locally, reduce traffic congestion, and provide an inexpensive, healthy mode of transport that will be available for all to use. With a considerable portion of the project funding already secured, the ebike scheme will only become a reality if LEG can find match funding.

The future for active travel in Fort William could be bright, but it requires long-term planning and the funding to take it forward.

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## LETTERS

Write to us: send your letters to [fort@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:fort@obantimes.co.uk)  
or The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB

## Administrators called in to Lochaber hotels

Many will have been shocked to hear that the administrators were called in to deal with the Cluanie Inn at Glenmoriston and Whispering Pine Lodge near Spean Bridge, formerly the Letterfinlay Lodge, back in March, reportedly following a dispute with a building contractor.

It is barely two years since wealthy Mumbai tycoon Sanjay Narang and his sister, Rachna paid £3 million for them and one other property and then reportedly spent triple that on refurbishing them.

This is disappointing news, not only for the owners, but for the staff, local suppliers and the many businesses who would no doubt have benefited from its guests.

## Sick pay shock

This week operator of Home Farm Care Home at Portree on Skye, where 10 residents have so far died due to an outbreak of coronavirus, has defended only paying statutory sick pay to infected employees if they do not qualify for company sick pay.

This is hugely concerning on so many levels, but for the staff off sick, this added financial stress at what must be a very scary time is not something they should have to bear.

We applaud Ian Blackford's efforts to get them full wages while they are off sick.

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](mailto:editor@obantimes.co.uk) or write to: Letters page, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB.

At the Oban Times we endeavour to ensure that all our reports are fair and accurate and comply with the Editors' Code of Practice set by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). We realise, however, that mistakes happen from time to time. If we have published anything that is factually incorrect, please email: [editor@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:editor@obantimes.co.uk); telephone on 01631 568000; or email [editor@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:editor@obantimes.co.uk). We will attempt to resolve your issue in a timely, reasonable and amicable manner. However, if you are unsatisfied with our response, you can contact IPSO by email: [inquiries@ipso.co.uk](mailto:inquiries@ipso.co.uk). We will abide by the decision of IPSO.



## Island accommodation provider is failing visitors

Were it not for the outbreak of COVID-19 we would be in your area enjoying the great landscapes, wildlife and hospitality that we normally expect from your part of Scotland. Our thoughts go to those accommodation providers who will be feeling the difficulties of the present position.

Can we express our gratitude to CalMac for a quick refund of our booking charges and to those hospitality providers in Campbeltown, Gigha, Islay and Taynuilt who have kindly moved our booking to 2021 when we hope to undertake most of our holiday.

There is, however, one problem. The only accommodation provider who took in advance our full payment has not only refused to move our booking (which they normally do for a hefty fee) nor to refund our monies. This provider has therefore taken a lot of money from a range of customers and they have told us they have furloughed their staff and are seeking financial assistance from government sources. The morality of this position raises significant questions about such providers.

Yes, our bank and holiday insurance have been very efficient in recovering some of our money and we are grateful to them even though we are significantly out of pocket. The Scottish Tourist Board did not want to know about the problem, Argyll and Bute Council referred us to Citizens Advice who are almost, understandably, difficult to reach. Why one provider has taken this stance we find difficult to comprehend, it appears money is more important than reputation.

So we look forward to coming to Scotland next year but will have to make a change to our itinerary when we will miss out an island we may never now get to visit.

Ian & Krysia Brodie, Natland, Cumbria.

## BT group director thanks telecommunications workers

I would like to thank all the telecommunications workers in Scotland, many of whom have been designated key workers, for how they've responded to the coronavirus outbreak.

They're providing essential support to the NHS and keeping all of us connected during this difficult time.

From engineers going out to keep our broadband and mobile networks connected, to vital contact centre staff helping our customers when they need it most, they deserve recognition.

My colleagues, working with the Scottish Government and NHS, worked quickly to

## Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

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

Le gluasad air tòiseachadh ann an Sasainn agus riaghailtean bacaidh sgapadh Covid 19 a lùghdachadh chan eil e na annas, aig an àm a tha mi a' sgrìobhadh seo, gum bheil daoine mì-chinnteach agus beagan an-fhoiseil a thaobh na tha gu bhith ceadaichte, agus càite. Chan eil riaghaltasan tiomnaichte Alba, Na Cuimrigh, agus Èirinn a Tuath, idir den beachd gum bheil a' bhìoras fo ìre smachd a cheadaicheas na riaghailtean a lagachadh anns na dùthchannan sin, agus tha mar sin an aon chomhairle làidir a' leantainn dhan t-sluagh aca fuireach aig an taigh gus beatha a shàbhaladh.

A rèir nan seòrsa beachdan a tha a' nochdadh air meadhanan sòisealta tha coltas ann gum bheil mòran dhen t-sluagh ag aontachadh nach eil an t-àm freagarrach fhathast airson an t-srian fhuasgladh beagan, agus gu dearb tha e coltach nach eil fianais saidheansail a' cur taic ri a leithid a bharrachd. Ach 's fhurasta a thuigsinn mar a tha cuingealachadh an aonarachd a' tòiseachadh ri inntinn dhaoine a thromachadh, agus a dh'aindeoin na sgàig a th' orra bhon tinnas a iad a' sìor fhàs mì-fhoighidneach agus frustrach chun na h-ìre gum bheil barrachd deònach na riaghailtean a bhriseadh.

Tha luchd-riaghlaidh na dùthcha fon aon smachd ris a' mhòr-shluagh agus mar sin tha còir tuigse nas fheàrr a bhith aca air a' bhuaidh a tha an suidheachadh a' toirt air daoine, agus shaoileamaid gum fàgadh sin riaghailtean gan lasachadh cho luath 's a shaoileas iad gum bi sin sàbhailte.

Gum teagamh bhiodh e na b' fheàrr anns a h-uile dòigh nam biodh na gluasadan sin a'

gabhadh àite aig an aon àm feadh na rioghachd, ach tha sin doirbh leis gun tug an galair grunnnd sheachdainean a' gluasad feadh na dùthcha agus tha cùisean gu follaiseach nas fheàrr aig deas nuair a tha iad aig àirde mu thuath. Saoilidh mi gum bheil e gu bhith air leth doirbh riaghailtean eadar-dhealaichte a chur an gnìomh ann an sgìrean fa leth mar a tha cuid a' moladh, agus dh'fhaodamaid smachd a chall às ùr.

Ach le miltean de ghniomhachasan an cunnart a dhol fodha mura faigh iad tòiseachadh ri malairt a-rithist, agus ceudan mhiltean chosnaidhean an cunnart cuideachd feadh na dùthcha, tha cuideam do-chreidsinneach air an riaghaltas na riaghailtean fhuasgladh. Chaidh milleanan a chosg mar-thà a' strì ri buaidh na galair seo agus chan eil cinnt gun tèid banachdach fiù 's a lorg a cheannsaicheas i, agus tha dùbhlann uabhasach gu bhith ron dùthaich seo agus feadhainn eile a' feuchainn ri dèiligeadh ri fiachan agus ri ath-nuadhachadh eaconamaidh. Theagamh gun toir sin ùine mhòr, mar a tha briathran an òrain eireachdail aig Runrig ag ràdh a thaobh tilleadh eile, "... chan urrainn dhomh creidsinn gum tug e cho fada ... feabhas!"

I can't believe it has taken all this time...recovering! Runrig's memorable song of a different time has echoed with me these past days, as frustration with lockdown grows and the devastating economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic becomes clearer.

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

provide the temporary NHS Louisa Jordan Hospital in Glasgow with communications. They are doing the same to support the other temporary NHS services across Scotland.

Our people have worked around the clock with health boards across the country to offer new, technical solutions to help frontline health workers get on with their jobs during this crisis.

Our frontline staff in contact centres across Scotland – including Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow and Greenock – have risen to this unprecedented challenge.

We've received a huge surge of customers asking for faster connections to help with

home working, home schooling and running their businesses remotely. These colleagues – most of whom are now able to work from home when they want to – have performed a critical role keeping our customers, including frontline health workers and vulnerable people, connected.

The people in our two 999 contact centres in Scotland are also playing a critical role, answering life-saving emergency calls. I couldn't be more proud of how my colleagues have responded to these challenges and their desire to help us all through this crisis.

Jane Wood,  
BT Group director in Scotland.

## Chicken Kebabs



7 Syns per serving 25 minutes Serves 4

Deduct 7 Syns if using Pita Bread wholemeal as a Healthy Extra 'b' choice.

A simple tikka marinade packs tons of flavour into this fab kebab dinner

## Ingredients

8 skinless and boneless chicken thighs, visible fat removed, cut into bite-size pieces  
3 level tbsp tikka curry powder\* (see tip)  
250g fat-free natural Greek-style yogurt  
3 garlic cloves, crushed  
4 x 60g wholemeal pita breads  
Lemon wedges, to serve

## Method:

Put the chicken in a freezer bag (or a glass or stainless-steel bowl) with the curry powder, yogurt and garlic. Season with salt and stir to combine. Seal the bag or cover the bowl with cling film and marinate in the fridge for at least 1 hour or overnight.

For the salad, put the cucumber, radishes, celery and lettuce in a bowl. Mix together the yogurt and chopped coriander, season, then stir through the salad.

Preheat your grill to high. Lift the chicken out of the marinade, letting any excess drain off, then thread onto 4 metal skewers. Place on a baking tray lined with foil and grill for 10-12 minutes, turning halfway, or until the chicken is lightly charred and cooked through.

Toast the pita breads. Scatter the coriander sprigs over the chicken skewers and serve with 1 pita bread per person with the salad and lemon wedges for squeezing over.

\*Spice blends are Free as long as they're made from herbs and spices only and don't include any Synned ingredients like sugar, flour and oil. Check the label to be sure and count the Syns as necessary

## For the salad:

1 cucumber, halved lengthways, deseeded and roughly chopped  
200g radishes, trimmed and quartered  
3 celery sticks, roughly chopped  
2 little gem lettuces, shredded  
100g fat-free natural Greek-style yogurt  
25g fresh coriander, leaves roughly chopped, reserving a few whole sprigs for the kebabs

## PLEASE NOTE:

**ALL CLASSES ARE CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

Your consultant for Lochaber and Oban is Gillian on 07796 040803, Lochgilphead & Campbeltown Rhona 07880 878906. Available for Slimming World phone support and guidance.

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# DISTRICT NEWS

Send us your district news by emailing  
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## Youth groups reap the benefits of CalMac fund

Seventy-six youth groups from Campbeltown to Ullapool have been given a boost thanks to CalMac's Community Fund.

The ferry operator's initiative enables groups to set up projects that help break down barriers faced in island and coastal communities.

The fund was open to any non-profit organisations, registered in a mainland port or island the company serves, delivering projects to benefit the lives of children and young people. Organisations applied for an award of between £500 and £2,000.

The projects supported range from women's football in the Outer Hebrides, to Campbeltown Sea Cadets, a Gaelic youth club on Skye and a community radio station in Millport Primary School.

Mallaig Primary School Parent Council received cash to fund a range of outdoor activities for pupils.

Each application was judged by a panel of young people recruited from across the company's network, in partnership with Young Scot and local youth services.

'The creativity and imagination that has gone into the projects we've supported so far has really stood out for us,' said CalMac's Corporate Social Responsibility Manager Gordon McKillop.

'Youth groups have captured what the com-



Mallaig Primary School Parent Council's award will enable them to organise a Winter Activity Residential where pupils can take part in range of outdoor activities.

munity fund is all about, creating opportunities for the lives of children and young people. We are supporting projects that are developing life-

long skills and positive habits including sport and exercise.' CalMac is planning for its next round of funding later this year.

### MALLAIG

## Fishermen urged to prepare for a post coronavirus world

North of Scotland Fishermen's Mission is urging fishermen to get ready for the months to come as the coronavirus continues to have a major impact on the fishing industry.

Karen Calder, Fishermen's Mission Area Officer in Mallaig, explained the urgency to act now.

'We know life for our fishermen is tough at present, but we have to be realistic and recognise COVID-19 will impact our lives for months to come. As some lockdown measures begin to be lifted, there is hope for better days ahead, but we also fear there could be longer term problems with debt, as payment holidays and Government support schemes come end.'

The Mission is urging fishermen to get their personal paperwork and business affairs in order.

'The Fishermen's Mission is here for our fishermen, always ready to listen and offer guidance and practical support whatever the future may hold,' added Ms Calder. 'We understand the unique pressures fishermen can face, both financial and personal. You can talk to us in confidence and we can access specialist advice on your behalf.'

Contact Karen at the Fishermen's Mission by calling 07917 754407 or email [MallaigCentre@fishermensmission.org.uk](mailto:MallaigCentre@fishermensmission.org.uk). To offer your support, text AFLOAT to 770085 to donate £2.

## Shinty ladies aim high in step-up challenge

Lochaber's Claire Delaney joined 11 fellow shinty players in a race to ascend the equivalent of the world's highest mountain on Sunday.

The challenge was set up by the Women's Camanachd Association to tie in with a national fundraising effort by Chest, Heart and Stroke Scotland (CHSS). Captained by Kingussie twins Elizabeth (Betty) and Jeanette (Netty) McGregor, members of two teams of six were asked to log 9,576 steps each during a walking relay race which would cover the 57,455 estimated steps it would take to scale the 29,029 foot high Mount Everest. Individual times were recorded on Strava/Fitbit with the fastest team declared the winner and the losing captain subjected to a forfeit.

Team Betty scaled Mount Everest in seven hours 17 minutes and 46 seconds, while team Netty chased them up in seven hours 58 minutes and 38 seconds. As both captains play for Badenoch in the women's top division, it was

deemed appropriate the losing captain should be photographed wearing the blue and white stripes of rivals Newtonmore.

Team Betty consisted of Elizabeth, who is also fixtures secretary of the WCA; WCA president Lisa MacColl, Aberdour; Camanachd Association director Lindsay Bradley, Ardnamurchan; Karen Williamson, Invergarry; WCA vice president and events co-ordinator Taryn Neilson, Aberdour, and WCA treasurer Natasha Andean, Badenoch. Team Netty included Jeanette, Niamh Donnelly, Aberdour, an NHS worker currently in the front line of the COVID-19 fight; referee Tina Marshall; Claire Delaney, Lochaber; Gillian Brown, Aberdour; and U18 league co-ordinator and WCA secretary Melanie Williams from Bute.

At the time of writing, the WCA ladies had raised £1,705. Donations can still be made to the WCA Step Up Challenge [JustGiving](https://www.justgiving.com/wca-step-up-challenge) page.



Netty (Jeanette McGregor) paid the ultimate forfeit after losing out to the team led by her twin sister Elizabeth, aka Betty.

### PLOCKTON

■ Train driver Donnie Maclean has retired after 37 years as watch commander at Kyle fire station. Donnie made the decision to stand down on health grounds. His son Andrew also works for the fire brigade.

■ Villagers are still turning out to clap for the NHS on a Thursday night, with student Cameron Sharp joining in on the pipes.

■ In the past few weeks, there have been several deaths including James Fraser and Kyle and Grant Maclean from Glenshiel. Villagers were also saddened to hear of the death of George Mackie in Essex. George was a regular visitor to Plockton. Sympathy is expressed to relatives.

■ Ales Glasgow has completed a 240-mile cycle run on his training bike at home. Hoping to raise £240 for the NHS, Ales completed the run in a day, raising £696.

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# OPEN FOR BUSINESS

We are publishing this information **in association with** Lochaber Chamber of Commerce. Featuring the businesses in Lochaber that are open and able to offer vital products and services to our community during the current Covid-19 pandemic. Many of these businesses are working under extreme pressure to bring quality products and services to the people of Lochaber and beyond. Please remember to exercise caution when shopping and only shop for essential supplies. Along with our wonderful NHS staff and carers, our local food, fuel, news platforms and home supply businesses are our community champions!

We realise that many more businesses would love to be open, serving locals and visitors alike – our deepest empathy goes out to these businesses and we look forward to seeing their doors wide open when this is all over. Please feel free to get in touch with us if you would like to feature your business, or know a business that should be included. Email [nmurphy@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:nmurphy@obantimes.co.uk) or get in touch via our Facebook page on messenger. Let's spread the word as much as we can!

## SUPERMARKETS AND FOODHALLS

**MARKS & SPENCER FOODHALL**  
Open 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, until 6pm Sun  
Mon and Thurs 8am-9am elderly customer priority  
Tues and Fri 8am-9am NHS staff only  
Social distancing measures in place  
Tel: 01397 600208

**MORRISONS**  
Open Mon-Sat 7am-8pm  
7am-8pm Sunday  
Weekdays 7am-8am for NHS workers priority and 7am-8am Sunday  
All colleagues with an NHS badge will be able to get into the store to stock up on the products they need.  
Please note all our cafes are now closed.  
Tel: 01397 700333  
Tel: 0345 6116111 option 5 for doorstep deliveries for elderly and vulnerable

**LIDL**  
Open Mon-Fri 8am-10pm  
Sun 8am-8pm  
Tel: 0800 977 7766

**ALDI**  
Open Mon-Sat 8am-8pm  
Sun 9am-8pm  
8am-9am for example plus key worker priority at tills  
Tel: 0800 042 0800

**FARMFOODS**  
Open: 8am-8pm Mon-Fri  
Sat: 8am-7pm  
Sun: 9am-6pm  
Tel: 0121 700 7160

**CO-OP STORES**  
CAOL, CORPACH, MALLAIG  
Mon-Sun: 7am-8pm  
Key worker priority shopping: 8am-9am (Sun 10am-11am)  
Tel: 01397 703302

**TESCO EXPRESS**  
Open: 7am-9pm Mon-Sat. Sun: 10am-5pm  
NHS/Key Worker Priority Hour: Tuesday/Thursday 9am-10am Sunday 9am-10am.  
Vulnerable customers Monday 9am-10am, Wednesday 9am-10am, Friday 9-10am

## TAKEAWAY FOOD

**THE GEOGRAPHER**  
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Order from 2.30pm  
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Delivery service  
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Tel orders: 07795 232324

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Fort William  
Open 11am-4pm  
Tues, Thurs, Sat  
Doors closed but we will assist at the door  
Usual selection of delicious vegan food  
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Wildcat.groceries@gmail.com

### FOOD LOCHABER

We're back soon!  
Orders for locally grown fresh produce open on Thursday 23rd April, and we'll deliver safely to your doorstep on the 30th. There's never been a more important time to shop locally and support small scale growers in the community.  
Visit: [www.foodlochaber.org](http://www.foodlochaber.org) for more info.

### WILDCAT

Vegetables!  
Deliveries can be arranged locally please pre-order fruit and vegetables. Check FB for catalogue. Please place orders by 2pm  
Sundays for delivery to us the following Thursday. If you can't collect, have a delivery from us on the Thursday, we can keep fruit and veg for you for the Saturday or following Tuesday.

### ARDSHEALACH SMOKEHOUSE & FINE FOODS

Glenuig  
Order online: [www.smokedproduce.com](http://www.smokedproduce.com)  
Tel: 01687 470266

### NEVIS BAKERY

Fort William shop closed to the public but products available from Road to the Isles filling station, Spar Claggan, Grange Stores, Co-op stores in Caol, Corpach and Mallaig  
Tel: 01397 772087

## BUILDING, PLUMBING, DIY SUPPLIES

### LBS

the shop floor is closed to non-staff. emailed orders/ enquiries preferred.  
alternatively by phone  
[sales@lochaberdiy.co.uk](mailto:sales@lochaberdiy.co.uk) or 01397 700350  
orders will be left out the back of our yard at a pre-arranged time.

deliveries may be possible but please enquire first. we will try our best to accommodate.

### H.I.S

Call/email to order then collect  
Open 8am-5pm Mon-Fri for collections  
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Tel: 01397 702346 ahead of travelling for opening hours

### MORRISONS SERVICE STATION

Open 6.30am-10.30pm,  
Tel: 01397 700333

### GLENCOE FILLING STATION

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E. [contact@morarmotorskyel..](mailto:contact@morarmotorskyel..) (Kyle)

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### BOOTS THE CHEMIST

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Open Tuesday - 9:00am until 5:30pm  
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See FB for full menu and pricelist  
[www.glenspeanbrewing.com](http://www.glenspeanbrewing.com)

### GREAT GLEN CHARCUTERIE

Delivered to your door  
Check FB for recipe ideas and updates  
[www.greatglencharcuterie.com](http://www.greatglencharcuterie.com)  
Use code FREEDELIVERY for orders over £20  
Tel: 01397 712121

### SKIRR SKINCARE

Skirr is the sustainable solution for adventure and endurance athletes who love nature and the outdoors.  
[www.skirrskin.co.uk](http://www.skirrskin.co.uk)  
Tel: 07709014479

## EMPORIUM OF WORLDLY GOODS

We are delivering to the local area for free (minimum order £10, Fort William to Corpach to Torlundy) or you can collect food, soaps, disinfectant, essential oils, or anything else you might need, from the shopfront by appointment  
Visit FB page for details on how to order online

## THE HIGHLAND SOAP COMPANY

Beautiful selection of handmade soaps, candles, bath, body and skincare products  
[www.highlandsoaps.com](http://www.highlandsoaps.com)

## MARSHALL & PEARSON

Telephone orders taken on Wednesday between 10am and 12pm for same day delivery.  
Order on 01397 700500  
Enquiries via messenger

## THE GRANITE HOUSE

Lots of games and toys, books and more  
FREE local delivery on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays (check FB page for delivery areas on these days)  
Email [gillian@granitehousefortwilliam.co.uk](mailto:gillian@granitehousefortwilliam.co.uk)  
Visit [www.granitehousefortwilliam.co.uk](http://www.granitehousefortwilliam.co.uk)

## OTHER INFO FOR ESSENTIAL SERVICES

### FOODBANK BALLACHULISH

Visit FB page for more information FB: Covid-19: Ballachulish Community Support  
New foodbank at the Ballachulish Village Hall on Fridays 12PM-2pm

### FOODBANK LOCHABER

Tel: 01397 700212/077785 03276  
[www.lochaberfoodbank.org](http://www.lochaberfoodbank.org)  
FB: lochaberfoodbank

### OFF BEAT BIKES

Bike Hire & Shop  
Open Mon, Wed, Fri 12pm-4pm  
or by appointment only

### LOCHABER CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

We are still working, although we are working from home we are still here for you.

Due to COVID-19, we are running a reduced service. To help keep you and our staff safe, our bureau will only be operating a telephone and email advice service. Tel: 01397 705311 (10 am to 4 pm), Email: [adviser@lochaberCAB.casonline.org.uk](mailto:adviser@lochaberCAB.casonline.org.uk)

### LOCHABER HOPE

Running a fully remote service.  
Tel: 01397 704836,  
email: [reception@lochaberhope.org.uk](mailto:reception@lochaberhope.org.uk)  
FB: lochaberhope or [www.lochaberhope.org.uk](http://www.lochaberhope.org.uk)

## TRAVEL & TRANSPORT

### SHIEL BUSES AND CITYLINK

Both companies continue to run reduced timetable for essential journeys  
[www.shielbuses.co.uk](http://www.shielbuses.co.uk)  
[www.citylink.co.uk](http://www.citylink.co.uk)

*Information correct at time of going to press. Check [www.obantimes.co.uk/openforbusiness](http://www.obantimes.co.uk/openforbusiness) for updated information. This page will run in the Lochaber Times every week for as long as necessary - printed information will be updated weekly.*

# OPEN FOR BUSINESS

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COMMUNITY



# Lochaber community set to give Nevis Range a lift

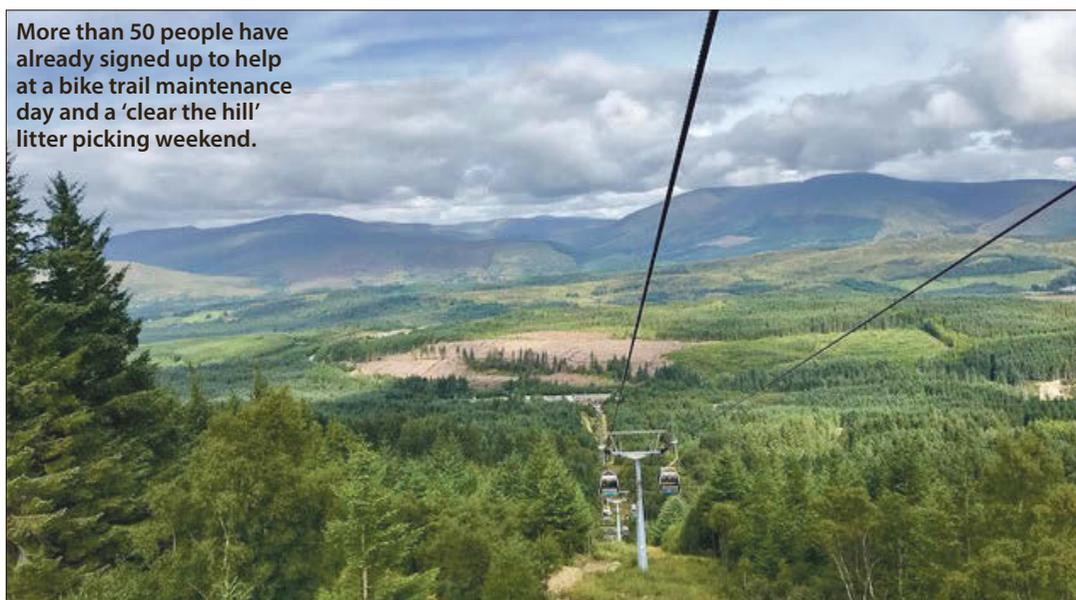
As for most businesses in the UK in lockdown, Nevis Range, Scotland's leading snowsports, mountain biking and outdoor activities destination, near Fort William, is facing the biggest challenge in its 30-year history.

The management team are more determined than ever to get the venue back on its feet as soon as they possibly can after Government restrictions are eased. Two volunteer events have been organised, a bike trail maintenance day and a 'clear the hill' litter picking weekend.

The events are aimed at local mountain bike and snowsports enthusiasts, hillwalkers and climbers, who have spent time with family and friends at the venue on a regular basis over the summer, autumn and winter seasons and who are keen to give something back and help to get the venue back on its feet and fully operational after lockdown.

The dates for these events will be scheduled as soon as Scottish Government coronavirus restrictions are eased, and it is safe for both staff and local volunteers to work alongside each other. However, having shared their plans for their volunteer days on their social media channels in the last couple of weeks, the Nevis Range team has been overwhelmed by the hugely positive response to their

More than 50 people have already signed up to help at a bike trail maintenance day and a 'clear the hill' litter picking weekend.



call out. More than 50 people have already signed up to help Nevis Range bounce back after this difficult time with others expressing interest in getting involved.

Chris O'Brien, CEO of Nevis Range, said: 'We have been overwhelmed by the extremely positive reactions from the community to our volunteer days. We are incredibly fortunate to be part of an industry and community that stands together when things get tough.'

'We take our responsibility as

a top visitor attraction in The Outdoor Capital of the UK very seriously, and we badly want to be operational as quickly as possible, when it is safe, because we understand the role that we play in keeping a huge number of supporting companies and individuals in business.'

'With the continued support of our incredible customers and wider Lochaber community Nevis Range will be back stronger than ever!'

During Nevis Range bike trail

maintenance days - dig days - the team are keen to work with mountain bike enthusiasts who will help to get the downhill trails into top condition ahead of their reopening. The venue's 'clear the hill' weekend is aimed at snowsports enthusiasts, as well as keen walkers and people who enjoy the beautiful landscape and natural beauty of Aonach Mor, who will help with litter picking and maintenance in order to get the hill ready for the 2020/21 ski season. Nevis Range will provide tools, food and a great atmos-

phere at both volunteer events. With safety for staff and visitors always the main priority, the Nevis Range closed its doors on Friday March 21 as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The venue had already had a tough winter season, with unprecedented storms affecting the first few months. At the end of February things were starting to look a lot brighter, with lots of snow on the hill and beautiful blue bird days; it truly promised to be one of the best spring ski seasons for many years.

Chris O'Brien added: 'Following last year's difficult winter and this year's COVID-19 crisis, the company has run at a loss for two winter seasons.'

'In the peak of winter there are 135 people employed at Nevis Range. We need to protect these jobs and we have to continue to attract people to Lochaber not just to enjoy what we have to offer but also to stay in Lochaber's incredible hotels, book with fantastic mountain guides and hire mountain bikes from the excellent dedicated shops in Fort William.'

For more information about volunteering on the Nevis Range bike trail maintenance days and 'clear the hill' litter picking weekend, email the Nevis Range marketing manager, Michelle Osterhaus on [michelle@nevisrange.co.uk](mailto:michelle@nevisrange.co.uk)

## VIEW FROM THE CHAMBER



As restrictions remain in place for Scotland, the business community and all of us as customers still face the uncertainty and unknowns that surround a trip to the High Street, getting back to the office, pulling a pint or enjoying the company of friends on a Saturday afternoon watching your team on the big screen or supporting

them at their weekend fixture. As a business, you can start to lay the foundations of a post-COVID-19 roadmap, a plan through recovery and take those first steps in ensuring that your assets are in the best shape possible; ready, waiting and poised for return.

Taking a holistic view of your business during lockdown may provide you with the best opportunity to understand exactly what your business can offer, the products you have available and give you some time for those 'creative juices' to start forming ideas for recovery. You may have started this

process already, which is awesome, but if not then don't fear.

Map and review your physical and digital assets, get them looking the best they can be and think about how you can showcase these to your audience. Think about how you write and talk about your business, any print material or online text that you are using on your website, social media or sales platforms.

When was the last time you updated your images or video content? When did you last review your online listing or update your website? Have you looked at your

customer data to understand your audience?

When you've reviewed and either created some new content or generated ideas on what you'd like to change, write these down and start formulating your plan. Think broader than a COVID-19 response or a single campaign, think of your business strategy and pull all strands together such as your marketing, finance, sales, customer support, product development etc. Create value with your plan and be open to making small incremental changes along the way. Learn from them and experience.

Ask your customers and bring them along for the journey.

If you would like to refresh your skills or learn something new to help with what has been discussed, you can enrol in FREE online courses that cover a wide range of topics currently offered by Business Gateway at [www.bgateway.com/events](http://www.bgateway.com/events)

Plus, My World of Work have collated a number of free online courses including Google Digital Garage on their website at [www.myworldofwork.co.uk/learn-and-train/find-free-online-courses](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/learn-and-train/find-free-online-courses)



**Players Player of the Season 2019/20 Ross Gunn.** Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

## Hartson announces Fort FC awards

Fort William Football Club came up with a novel idea to announce two of its coveted accolades, writes Fiona Scott.

Unable to hold its usual gathering because of lockdown restrictions, The Player of the Season and Players Player of the Season were revealed on Facebook by former Celtic, Arsenal and Welsh interna-

tionalist John Hartson who added a personal message to Ryan Fyffe and Ross Gunn who won the respective titles.

'I hear you have had a brilliant season as a centre half,' he told Ryan.

### Special

And to Ross he said: 'For me that is a very special award because it is voted for by your

fellow players, the players you go in the trenches with every weekend.'

John, who has relatives living in Fort William, said he would visit the club the next time he was visiting and offered his congratulations to both players.

Earlier this month, the club won the Virtual Scottish Cup,

played out on Twitter. An online knockout tournament, the winner of each game was decided by Twitter polls.

Fort William beat Inverurie Locos, Fraserburgh, Bonnyrigg Rose Athletic, Elgin City, Queen's Park, Penicuik Athletic and Cove Rangers before going on to beat Lossiemouth in the final.



**Player of the Season 2019/20 Ryan Fyffe.** Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

# Lochaber athletes on track to design new club mascot

Youngsters have been taking part in an art competition to design a mascot and T-shirt logos for Lochaber Athletic Club (LAC) Juniors, writes Fiona Scott.

The theme was to design motifs reflecting the main training and competition activities in the summer season – run, jump and throw. The cartoon characters brought to life have been nicknamed Speedy, Jumpy and Chucky.

The Juniors Club, which incorporates Mallaig Juniors, received 18 entries from artists with an average age of nine years.

The designs ranged from speedy cheetahs, jumping kangaroos to javelin throwing monkeys which were judged 'blind' by nine junior coaches giving equal weight to the fun element, artistic flair and suitability as a club mascot.

The winners have been picked in each category, with Aaron



**Aaron Tresidder, left, with the first placed mascot in the speedy category, with brother Kai, aged six, with his LAC vest-wearing cheetah.**

Tresidder and globe conquering Speedy taking the overall prize and the run section award.

First equal in the jump category were Maddison MacMillan, for her kangaroo, and Aaron Tresidder for his world conquering jumper. Maiya MacDonald came first in the throw section for her hilarious javelin throwing monkey.

A family award was given to the MacMillans for their three entries the Three Chuckies.

It is hoped all the drawings can be part of a display in public areas once movement restrictions have eased.

LAC coach and welfare officer James Treasurer said: 'It was really difficult to pick the winners as all the entries were of a good standard.



**Maiya MacDonald, from Mallaig juniors section, showing her winning entry in the throw category with a javelin thrower, a favourite event with the juniors, and other drawings in the speed and jump category.**

'The club has welcomed community support to the young athletes in this lockdown period. Members may be confined to their homes for the time being but coaches have been posting routines on the LAC Facebook page for the youngsters to complete.

'We encourage the children to do these close to home with a parent and advise them to en-

sure they do these in a socially distancing way,' added James. 'Other activities are the Stay at Home Olympics which consist of events including the standing long jump that youngsters can do in their back yard. We also set quizzes.'

With no let up in the lockdown as yet, the club is taking guidance from its governing body Scottish Athletics. The

hope is outdoor training can resume in some form over the next few months.

'My view is athletics is an outdoor sport and can be an individual event so social distancing can be done,' added James. 'However, it is likely our indoor winter training will be cancelled this year and we will train outside. An added complication is our coaches will have to maintain a safe distance and we will not be able to coach close technical events that involve handling equipment. We are liable for youngsters' welfare and it will be a cautious approach to any comeback, strictly regulated by Scottish Athletics.'



## TIDES Thursday May 21, 2020

Tide tables for Oban during the week from Thursday May 21, 2020 are listed below with differences for major ports listed underneath. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

<b>Thur</b>	04.55	3.7	11.11	1.0
	17.06	3.6	23.28	1.1
<b>Fri</b>	05.30	3.8	11.42	1.0
	17.37	3.7	**.**	**
<b>Sat</b>	00.00	1.0	06.03	3.8
	12.15	0.9	18.07	3.8
<b>Sun</b>	00.33	1.1	06.35	3.7
	12.48	0.9	18.38	3.7
<b>Mon</b>	01.06	1.1	07.07	3.6
	13.21	1.0	19.11	3.7
<b>Tues</b>	01.41	1.2	07.42	3.5
	13.58	1.1	19.49	3.6
<b>Wed</b>	02.20	1.3	08.23	3.3
	14.41	1.2	20.31	3.5

## FORT WILLIAM WEATHER

### THURSDAY

Sunny intervals and a gentle breeze  
Temperatures 12°C to 18°C.

### FRIDAY

Gusty winds and light rain showers. 9°C to 15°C.

### WEEKEND OUTLOOK

#### Saturday

Light rain showers and a fresh breeze. 11°C to 13°C.

#### Sunday

Light rain showers and moderate breezes. 11°C to 14°C.

## Tidal Constants:

(Add or deduct from High Water at Oban)

Ardrishaig	-5.35	Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Portree	+0.55
Campbeltown	-5.30	Lochboisdale	+0.30	Tobermory	+0.16
Crinan	-0.47	Mallaig	+0.25	Dover	+5.30

## FRIDAY FORECAST

