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All over 50s to get Covid vaccine

All adults over 50 on Arran will have received their first Covid vaccination after the weekend.

A second vaccination programme is taking place at Arran High School this weekend with 1,450 doses of one of the approved vaccines administered.

Arran Community Council heard this week that it would mean 75 per cent of the Arran adult population would have had at least one jab and there was praise for everyone in North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership involved.

Chairman Bill Calderwood said: 'We owe all of the NHS staff on Arran enormous gratitude for the excellent vaccine roll out and all of the work they have done during this pandemic.'

Meanwhile Arran's MSP Kenneth Gibson welcomed the Scottish Government's announcement that indoor visiting of care home residents by relatives, friends and carers will resume from early March. Mr Gibson said: 'The necessary restrictions on care home visits have been incredibly tough for islanders with loved ones living in care homes.'



Youngsters skipping back to school at Brodick primary this week. 01_B09school01, 01_B09 school09, 01_B09school06.

Skipping back to school

Joy for youngsters but lockdown worries go on for others

by Hugh Boag
editor@arranbanner.co.uk



Schools went back on Arran this week with some parents breathing a huge sigh of relief.

In most schools only the younger pupils are back – in primary one to three – as well as those attending early years classes. However, at the one-teacher schools in Corrie and Pirnmill all pupils are back, as they have a roll of less than 25, and at Kilmory primary four is also back.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon's roadmap out of lockdown should see all primary pupils and some senior secondary pupils back in classes by March 15. But it will be after the Easter holidays, at the start of April, before the majority of pupils are back.

This week pupils at Brodick primary looked delighted to be back in class and bounded into the school playground to start classes. And at the hub at the Arran Outdoor Centre in Lamlash the children of key workers continue to be taught.

Other brighter news this week was the announcement that four people from two households will be allowed to meet outdoors from March 15 and stay at home restrictions could be lifted from April 5 as well as the resumption of some sports and communal worship.

However, while there was some good news around, there was little cheer in Ms Sturgeon's announcement for the tourism and hospitality sector which is likely to remain closed till nearer the end of

April. Businesses have called for more clarity on the easing of Covid lockdown restrictions as it will be mid-March before more details are spelled out.

The Scottish Government said non-essential retail, hospitality, tourism and services such as gyms and hairdressers would not reopen before April 26. From then, Scotland will return to using a levels system of restrictions, where the tier in each area is determined by prevalence of the virus.

All parts of the country currently in level four are ex-

pected to be able to move back to level three initially but the government has warned there may be some changes to what is allowed in each tier.

However, there is further concern on Arran that the high prevalence of the virus in mainland North Ayrshire could keep the whole area in a higher tier.

West Scotland MSP Jamie Greene said: 'The first minister's statement on easing lockdown lacked detail,

Continued on page two.



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Children's delight at school re

But businesses warn that the road back from lockdown 'will feel like a long and uncertain one'

Continued from page one. ambition and unfortunately raises more questions than it answers about how we transition from the current severe lockdown measures.

'We still don't know when pupils and students across North Ayrshire and Arran will fully return to schools and colleges, nor when measures like social distancing will likely be eased. The incredible work of the UK wide vaccination programme is the light at

the end of this dark tunnel, but Nicola Sturgeon also needs to shine a bit of torch into it in the meantime. People are running out of hope and patience with the endless "wait and see" approach from the Scottish Government.

'No one was expecting guarantees today as we continue to tackle the virus, but people are right to expect a clear roadmap and a plan out of this endless gloom.'

Tracy Black, CBI Scotland

director, said: 'For sectors like hospitality, retail and tourism, that have been hit so hard by the pandemic, the road back to a tier system at the end of April will feel like a long and uncertain one. Others, like tourism and aviation, face another prolonged period of hibernation.'

'With jobs and livelihoods still in the balance, continued business support from both the UK and Scottish governments remains essential.

All eyes will be on the forthcoming Budget for an update on the furlough and business loan schemes.'

Joanne Dooney, president of the Scottish Passenger Agents' Association (SPAA), the professional body for travel agents and the travel sector in Scotland, said: 'What the travel sector in Scotland needed from the first minister's statement was a glimmer of hope, but that door was firmly closed in our faces once more.'



Pupils have a go on the climbing wall. 01_B09school05



Meeting friends.



Left: The pupils file into class.

01_B09school11

Right: Pupils come off the school bus.

01_B09school02



Youngsters smile for the camera. 01_B09sch



The primary ones make their way into school. 01_B09school12



All the pupils lined up for classes. 01_B09sch



Youngsters have a chat in the playground. 01_B09school03



Catching up on all the news. 01_B09school04

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Friends at the school gate. 01_B09school07



school08



school10



Relief as B&B licensing proposals suspended

by Hugh Boag
editor@arranbanner.co.uk



Self-catering businesses on Arran breathed a sign of relief this week when proposed short-term let legislation was withdrawn from the Scottish parliament pending further guidance.

The Scottish Government had drawn up a licensing scheme to give councils new powers to tackle problems caused by the rapid growth of Airbnb-style holiday lets, however, they have put the plans on hold until June, pending the outcome of the May election.

The proposals would also have introduced a new requirement for licencing of bed and breakfasts and self-catering, and potentially the need to require planning permission.

The Association of Scottish Self Caterers (ASSC) had worked tirelessly to contest the implementation of this from April 1, with support from many self-caterers on Arran.

The proposals would have introduced a new requirement for licencing of bed and breakfasts and self-catering and potentially the need to require planning permission.

Andrew and Helen How of Carraig Mhòr B&B in Lamlash said: 'We are now faced with punitive legislation, aimed at unregulated short-term lets but which now includes traditional B&Bs and these will render our business and many others on our island communities unviable.

'There has been no consultation about the effects this will have on small B&Bs and

the Scottish tourism industry relies heavily on small B&Bs like ours.

'The impact of this legislation on individual businesses and the overall tourist offer in Scotland has potential to be extremely damaging in both the immediate future and the long term.'

The CEO of the ASSC Fiona Campbell said: 'The ASSC welcomes the withdrawal of the licensing order by the Scottish Government.

'We consistently warned that the proposed legislation was not fit for purpose, would entail unintended consequences for our vital tourism industry and would heap costs on small businesses at a time when they could least afford it.

'The ASSC commits to working constructively with the Scottish Government and

other stakeholders through the new working group to ensure that anything that is taken forward in June - whatever the electoral outcome - is measured and proportionate, and also works to support the recovery of Scottish tourism in these challenging times.'

A significant cross sectoral response, including from NFU Scotland, had indicated serious concerns over the rushed nature of the proposals, lack of information and impact on many agritourism businesses already closed due to Covid-19.

Vice president Robin Traquair said: 'Farm diversification into short-term lets such as bed and breakfast and self-catering accommodation is a significant source of income for many farms in Scotland.

'They have already been dealt a significant blow by the impact of Covid-19 and these ill thought-out and rushed proposals could not have come at a worse time.'

Subject to the outcome of the election, the Scottish Government intends to relay the legislation before Parliament in June, accompanied by the draft guidance, to ensure that the timetable on introducing licensing remains the same. The government will continue with legislation allowing councils to establish short-term let control areas.

This legislation will empower local authorities to implement short-term let control areas, if they wish to do so, to address pressures created by whole property short-term lets, ensuring that homes are used to best effect in their areas.

Pubs expanding outdoor seating

Several pubs on Arran are already gearing up to provide more outdoor facilities for customers when they are able to resume alfresco dining, writes Hugh Boag.

Crofters Bar and Restaurant in Brodick has been given planning permission for the formation of pavement seating area to the front and a change of external area to the rear to form an extension of the licensed bar and restaurant, with an ancillary catering unit, to which it now wants to add an open-sided marquee.

Capacity

According to the planning papers: 'The proposal is the result of attempts by the applicant to find ways to continue trading through the Covid-19-related lockdown and subsequent restricted operations for hospitality businesses.

'The capacity would not exceed 100.'

Temporary planning permission for a period of two years has been granted for the change of use of the external area to the rear of the premises in Shore Road to site the ancillary catering unit, which would contain a food

preparation and packing area, WC, store and a staff area.

The small pavement seating area would project 1.6m from the front of the main building, enclosed by a 1m high moveable barrier and covered by a cassette awning over the tables.

Meanwhile, round the corner the Brodick Bar and Brasserie is seeking licensing approval for an extension to its beer garden which opened briefly ahead of the second lockdown.

In Lamlash the Drift Inn has applied for planning permission to partially cover its famous beer garden with a canopy roof supported by a low level wall to provide more seating for outdoor dining.

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Councillor Donald Kelly is calling for a year-round ferry service to Campbeltown.

Call for Kintyre all year ferry service

A Campbeltown councillor has submitted a petition to the Scottish parliament for a year-round ferry service between the Kintyre town and Ardrossan.

The petition calls for a reliable and affordable ferry service, with road equivalent tariff applied to it, between Kintyre and Ayrshire that could potentially include Arran as a stopping point along the route.

Councillor Donald Kelly, of Argyll and Bute Council, started the petition in response to the regular closures of the A83, owing to landslips at the Rest and Be Thankful, and because the relief Old Military Road has also been closed nearly every day since November 2020.

These closures, the petition asserts, have resulted in all traffic entering Argyll to be diverted, which has caused additional expenses and inconvenience to businesses and the public – a situation he describes as unsustainable

as the projected timeframe for a permanent solution to the landslips at Rest and Be Thankful is 10 years.

Councillor Kelly said: 'We cannot go on for the next 10 years hoping and praying that landslips at the Rest and Be Thankful will stop.

'If we want to make this service become a reality, it's vitally important that all businesses, both large and small, as well as community groups and the general public sign the petition.'

Campbeltown Ferry Committee has already expressed its support for the petition which Councillor Kelly described as a 'community issue' rather than a political one.

Members of the public, business owners and community groups have until Wednesday March 10 to sign the petition, which can be accessed on the following link: www.parliament.scot/gettinginvolved/petitions/campbeltownardrossanferry

Race to get harbour project signed off

by Hugh Boag

editor@arranbanner.co.uk



The agencies involved in the Ardrossan harbour redevelopment face a race against time to get the £35 million project signed off in four weeks – or face further delays.

Two key members of the Ardrossan Harbour Taskforce, the Scottish Government and North Ayrshire Council, enter a six-week purdah period in advance of the Scottish parliamentary elections on May 6.

Approval to proceed with the project from Islands minister Paul Wheelhouse will be required by late March to allow the programme timetable to be met.

Purdah is the period between an election being called and it taking place, which prevents central and local government from making announcements that could be seen to be advantageous to any candidates or parties in the election.

'Significant progress of relevant funding and legal agreements will therefore be required in coming days otherwise further delay of around three months is likely to occur,' according to a report considered by North Ayrshire Council last week.

The report by Karen Yeomans, director of growth and investment at North Ayrshire Council, also out-



The Arran berth at Ardrossan which will be realigned during the works.

The economic impact was a factor as well as it is feared up to 100 jobs could be lost from within North Ayrshire with the ferry service relocated to Troon, with the loss of spending in the Three Towns, a slight reduction in day trips to Arran – given a longer journey time via rail – and the difficulty encountered by employees who currently access work on Arran from the Three Towns.

Arran's MSP Kenneth Gibson said: 'While I would have preferred for the ferry to remain in Ardrossan throughout the process and have fought for years for that to be the case, the delay to harbour works beginning on site has inevitably led to this decision.'

'Throughout this period and beyond, I will do what I can to ensure communities and constituents impacted by the temporary diversion, both in Ardrossan and elsewhere on the mainland, and on Arran, receive maximum support.'

A spokeswoman for Associated British Ports, which owns and operates Troon harbour, said: 'We will continue to work closely with Transport Scotland and CalMac to develop ways in which we can help offer additional resilience to help keep ferry services going.'

lines the reasons why it has been decided that the Arran ferry will sail to Troon during the redevelopment works, as reported in last week's Banner.

It is envisaged work to realign the Arran berth at Ardrossan will start in autumn 2022 for 21 months, leaving only the Irish berth available for the Arran service, leading to concerns of disruption to services.

In another twist, the new much-delayed MV Glen Sannox vessel – still under construction – is due to start on the Arran route late 2022 but cannot use the Irish berth because of her size and would need to operate from Troon or another port.

This led to the proposal for the Arran service to operate from Troon from September 2022 until the spring of 2024.

The council report states:

'One of the main reasons for the move is service resilience.

'It is projected by CalMac that operating from Ardrossan during the construction work would see an average winter cancellation rate of 20-25 per cent. This is due to the service having to operate from the Irish berth which is more exposed to the prevailing south westerly wind.

'The projected rate of cancellation assumes that one cancellation within a day would require all of that day's sailings to be relocated.'

The capital cost of investment required to support the operation of the service from Troon and the provision of a temporary works package at Ardrossan, as well as the revenue cost of the increased operating costs associated with a Troon service, were considered.

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THE ARRAN BANNER

Arran's recovery helped by new islands officer

Sarah Baird will be working with others on a renewal pilot project

by Hugh Boag
editor@arranbanner.co.uk



Arran has its own islands officer whose job it will be to help the economic recovery of the island in the months ahead as it returns from the devastating impact of the pandemic.

Sarah Baird has been appointed the first designated senior officer for the islands. The £50,000-a-year post will drive the development of ambitious 10-year plans to realise the potential of not just Arran but Cumbrae as well.

She will work closely in partnership with island communities, businesses and wider stakeholders to develop and facilitate the delivery of plans to support recovery and renewal.

The Arran Recovery Group worked hard for the creation of the post and chairman Tom Tracey said: 'With this appointment, combined with our cabinet member for the islands in North Ayrshire Council, we are starting to get the correct level of focus on island issues.'

'Next will be improved governance with more control over local decision making. It has taken us three years to get this far. These things take time, but they move us in the right direction.'

Sheila Gilmore, executive director of VisitArran, added: 'This is a really positive step for Arran and we look forward to working with Sarah in the near future, as she commences her role at the end of this month.'

It is part of a £250,000 islands recovery and renewal pilot project, being delivered by North Ayrshire Council, the Scottish Government and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), to look at new ways of supporting Arran and Cumbrae and the delivery of the National Islands Plan.

A key part of the pilot will be to explore ways of delivering an inclusive and green economic recovery, in light of Covid-19, while strengthening the islands' voices to ensure the unique challenges and opportunities faced by islanders



Sarah Baird is Arran's new islands officer.

are reflected in national and local policy.

Sarah has a wealth of experience in economic and community development and collaborative working, including leading the pan-Ayrshire Leader rural development for more than 10 years and is currently delivering South Ayrshire Council's approach to community asset transfer.

Councillor Gallagher, cabinet member for post Covid-renewal, said: 'We have ambitious plans for our island communities of Arran and Cumbrae. A major part of my role is to work with the people on our islands, to listen to their needs and to ensure they are listened to locally and nationally.'

'I am absolutely delighted to welcome Sarah. She is going to be a huge asset to myself, the council and, of course, our islands, which have unique strengths and challenges.'

'The islands recovery and renewal pilot project will help realise the potential of both of our islands by working with communities and wider partners to develop ambitious 10-year island plans to support an inclusive and green economic recovery through community wealth building.'

Morag Goodfellow, area manager for Argyll and the Islands (HIE), said: 'HIE is pleased to be supporting this important pilot project to support economic recovery from the pandemic on the islands of Cumbrae and Arran and we welcome the appointment of Sarah to the post of senior islands officer. Within the context of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 and North Ayrshire Council's community wealth building strategy, this project will support collaborative and innovative ways of working to achieve outcomes.'

Sarah said: 'I am delighted to be appointed as the first dedicated islands officer for Arran and Cumbrae and will ensure the unique challenges and opportunities our islanders face are reflected in local and national policy.'

'I am very much looking forward to working with the island communities, businesses and wider stakeholders to maximise the opportunities that the islands recovery and renewal pilot presents in order to realise our islands' ambitions.'

North Ayrshire Council, will contribute £130,000 towards the pilot. Sarah will commence her role shortly.

North Ayrshire firms to get more council work

Council bosses plan to spend 26 per cent of purchasing budget with firms in North Ayrshire by 2024.

About 19 per cent of North Ayrshire Council spending went to enterprises in the region during the financial year 2019 to 2020.

The figure came to light after Tory Councillor Scott Gallacher asked what percentage of goods and services paid for by the council came from businesses with headquarters in North Ayrshire.

Responding at last week's full council meeting, leader Councillor Joe Cullinane said changes had been made to the council's procurement process to achieve the goal of giving more business to companies in the area.

The Labour politician said: 'Fundamental to any success will be ensuring that the business team builds capacity within the local market so that

North Ayrshire businesses are able to bid for contracts and to be competitive when they do so.

'That's why we allocated resources in last year's budget to increase the business team's capacity and to recruit a pro-

Other councils and organisations are involved in trying to boost earnings

urement development officer to work on community wealth building.'

Irvine Councillor Gallacher mentioned there was a turnover threshold in order for businesses to be on the tender list. He asked what could be done to reduce that level of sales so smaller companies could bid for jobs.

Kilwinning Councillor Cullinane said it was about

ensuring the area's businesses got smaller contracts, which didn't have to go through the full tendering process, adding that other councils and organisations were involved in trying to boost earnings in the area. He said: 'It is important to emphasise that our community wealth building strategy is not about the work of the council in isolation from the rest of the public, private and third sector. We are taking an anchor approach to community wealth building and already East and South Ayrshire Councils, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Ayrshire College, Scottish Enterprise and TACT have signed our Anchor Charter which commits them to a number of pledges, including some on procurement.'

The council's community wealth strategy aims to create more jobs and ensure wealth benefits people in North Ayrshire, among other goals.

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LETTERS

Write to us: send your letters to editor@arranbanner.co.uk
or The Editor, Arran Banner, Brodick, Isle of Arran KA27 8AJ**Troon needs to be fit to receive Arran ferry**

So, as we told you last week, the ferry is going to Troon for at least 18 months during the redevelopment of Ardrossan harbour.

It became apparent that this was going to happen as 2020 rolled on and the Banner said it was 'likely' at Christmas while others still dismissed the idea. While going to Troon may not be ideal, it is better than a badly disrupted service from the Irish berth at Ardrossan during the works which, a North Ayrshire Council report this week surmises, could have led to a 20-25 per cent cancellation in winter services.

That, compounded by the fact that the new MV Glen Sannox is at last due on the Arran route late next year, and could not use the Irish berth, sealed the move to Troon. The move – likely in September 2022 – may be more than 18 months away but now that the decision has been taken work must start now in improving the infrastructure at Troon to cope with a daily ferry service.

Associated British Ports (ABP), which owns Troon harbour, pledged this week to work with Transport Scotland and CalMac to offer 'additional resilience' to keep the ferry services going.

These talks must start at once and address the very real issues of the difficulty foot passengers will have accessing public transport in Troon, as highlighted on our letters page this week. Back in Ardrossan things need to be moved quickly forward in getting the redevelopment project signed off in the next four weeks or there have been warnings that there could be yet another three-month delay if things are held up by the six weeks of purdah around the Scottish parliamentary elections.

All parties know time is tight and must go the extra mile in the days ahead to get things pushed through.

Thought for the week

Jesus answered: 'Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, You must be born again.' **John 3:5**

Reappraisal of Ardrossan project needed

Sir,
The article in last week's Banner by the Arran Ferry Action Group sums up very well the continuing 'ferry fiasco'.

The article states that the Glen Sannox will not be able to use the Irish berth.

I would have thought that being able to come into the harbour, avoiding the tight turn into the Arran berth and still having room to slow down before turning into the Irish berth, would be an advantage.

Discussing this with a CalMac skipper at a meeting in Brodick Hall, he said the problem was that the prevailing wind blows the ship away from the quay and that a wider turn into the berth would help.

In the late 1960s, when Burns & Laird operated their Irish service from that quay, the MV Lion was 110 metres – 18 metres longer than the Caledonian Isles and eight metres longer than the Glen Sannox. Her beam was just slightly more than the Glen Sannox and her capacity at 1,200 passengers and 170 cars far exceeded any ferry on the Arran run.

She had stabilizers, a bow thruster, a bow rudder and the 7700kw engines gave her a service speed of 19 knots.

While the move to Troon will not inconvenience vehicular traffic very much, it will be a disaster for foot passengers.

While Arran folk will have to put up with the extra leg in their journey, getting from the ferry to the rail station or main bus route and back, and also that access to the ferry at Troon will be via the car deck and the stairs, does CalMac not realise visitors may not put up with it.

They can choose to go elsewhere and avoid the extra hassle and longer journey time. The time

scale of 18 to 24 months will almost certainly be longer due to unforeseen problems.

The longer journey time and slower turnaround must mean fewer sailings each day and reduced capacity to meet the demand over the busy summer period. Arran needs every possible visitor after the economic downturn caused by Covid.

If the Lion could use the Irish berth I see no reason why, with refurbishment and some dredging, the Glen Sannox cannot.

The new terminal should be built alongside the berth and to a long and high design, providing shelter from the prevailing wind; any extra space not needed for the actual terminal could be rented out.

This could be achieved while the Arran berth is still in use and avoids the huge cost of realigning it. It also removes the need to transfer to Troon.

A full reappraisal of the Ardrossan project is needed and needed now.

Yours,
Jim Climie,
Whiting Bay.

Disaster for foot passengers

Sir,
I would like to ask islands minister Paul Wheelhouse if he can tell the foot passengers of Arran, and there are a large number, how they are going to get to and from the ferry berth in Troon harbour to the public transport system in Troon?

It is quite a long way. Unlike Ardrossan harbour, where the station is only a few metres from the boat and a local bus service is only 0.5 kilometres away in the centre of Ardrossan.

This bus service connects people to Crosshouse Hospital and all the Ayr hospitals. The Troon proposal is a disaster for Arran foot passengers.

I have a solution. At the very minimum there must be a normal timetable to Ardrossan for

foot passengers to connect to the existing excellent public transport system.

This will also work well for the large number of day visitors that Arran can get.

Then the car ferry can go where it likes. This problem must be resolved.

Yours,
Carl Bush,
Lamlash.

No issue is more important

Sir,
I applaud how the Arran Ferry Action Group continues to highlight the abysmal state of the ferry and harbour procurement system.

We are still waiting for an inappropriate, oversized ferry, due to be delivered five years late, to a harbour it won't fit into and that won't be ready for another two years after that, all costing more than double the original price – if that's not a 'catastrophic' procurement failure then what is?

However, when I ask North Ayrshire's councillors to hold our inept SNP-run Scottish Government to account for this failure, as I did at last week's North Ayrshire Council meeting, I get no support from Arran's other councillor representatives.

I am the only North Ayrshire councillor to have brought the ferry shambles to the attention of the council over the past four years, and on each occasion I get no support from SNP or Labour councillors.

I was elected to represent the interests of the people of Arran and Ardrossan and no issue is more important for the people of Arran than the ferry.

Responsibility for the ferry rests wholly with the SNP Scottish Government and it must be held accountable for the damage that our inadequate ferry service continues to cause to our communities and economy.

How anybody on Arran can continue to remain uncritical of how such a fundamental Arran issue is being handled escapes me.

For whatever reason, the SNP Government is unable or unwilling to make change. The minister denies that there is a problem and refuses to accept the criticism and recommendations made by the cross-party parliamentary enquiry into ferry procurement.

It is clear that we will only get a better ferry service with a change of Scottish Government.

Yours,
Timothy Billings,
Conservative councillor for Ardrossan and Arran.

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The Editor welcomes letters for publication on this page. The Editor reserves the right to shorten, amend or to refuse to print them. Names and addresses MUST be supplied to indicate good faith, although these details can be withheld from publication. Telephone numbers, if available, should also be included. Anonymous letters will not be considered. Please write to: Letters, The Arran Banner, Brodick, Isle of Arran, KA27 8AJ. Fax: (01770) 302021. Email editor@arranbanner.co.uk Emailed letters can only be considered if they have a name, full address and phone number.



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Donation boost for North Ayrshire Foodbank to help people in crisis

The Clyde Coast and Garnock Valley Crematorium has made a much-needed £4,000 donation to North Ayrshire Foodbank.

This will help people in crisis during these exceptionally difficult times that everyone is experiencing as a result of the pandemic and the lockdown.

North Ayrshire Foodbank is completely reliant on donations and the support of volunteers from across the area in order to deliver help for those in need.

The £4,000 donation by Clyde Coast and Garnock Valley Crematorium includes £1,912 donated by kind-hearted people who have visited the crematorium over the past year, including a number from Arran, and who left money

and spare change in the general collection boxes, with the crematorium match-funding this amount, and rounding it up to £4,000.

Manager of the crematorium, located just above Largs, Philip Ewing, said: 'We are at the heart of the communities we serve, and our sole aim is to support those in need when help is most needed, and we are very pleased to be in a position to make this £4,000 donation to North Ayrshire Foodbank – with our sincere and heartfelt thanks also going to everyone of those people who dropped their spare change and donations into our collection boxes over the past year.'

Craig Crosthwaite, coordinator from North Ayrshire

Foodbank, added: 'We thank everybody for their compassionate giving through the donation box and for the Clyde Coast and Garnock Valley Crematorium more than match funding the amount collected.'



Left to right: socially distanced cheque – Philip Ewing, manager of the Clyde Coast and Garnock Valley Crematorium and Craig Crosthwaite, coordinator North Ayrshire Foodbank.

Machrie glamping and motorhome site plans lodged

A new glamping site, which it is hoped will help alleviate the problem of motorhomes parking indiscriminately when visiting the island, is being proposed.

A planning application for Kings Caves Glamping at Ashlar Farm near Machrie has been submitted to North Ayrshire Council in the name of Angus Smith.

According to the design statement the proposal consists of 22 motorhome pitches, and six handmade timber glamping pods for guests, along with a permeable track through the site with suitable parking/turning areas.

A central disposal point (CDP) area, guest clubhouse and check-in cabin will also feature on the site.

The plot is situated just off the A841 road near Machrie and lies approximately one kilometre (just over half a mile) south of the Machrie Moor Standing Stones and adjacent to the popular Kings Cave forest walk.

The report states: 'The proposed site will provide subtle and discreet countryside accommodation for tourists visiting this area's attractions on short breaks and weekend stays.'

'The proposal will also aim to alleviate the ongoing and increasing issue on the island

of motorhomes pitching overnight in unsuitable/unsafe public areas.

'The site will provide a facility for these vehicles and relieve other areas from unsuitable pitching which currently presents additional burdens on existing public services and utilities.'

A business proposal also submitted says Kings Caves Glamping will be a short-stay campsite for touring motorhomes and campervans, with facilities which will 'encourage vehicles away from overnight parking in the villages, public car parks, roadside lay-bys or wild camping'.

It said there was evidence of growing demand for glamping on Arran and the pandemic had created a new tourism sector which focused on good social distancing measures and private hygiene, like motorhomes and glamping pods.

'Arran tourism is expected to re-establish itself quickly after the effects of Covid and Brexit, with a reduction in international air travel and an increase in "staycation" holidays,' it added. This would mean demand for inexpensive, premium tourist accommodation on Arran which would help to 'extend the season which in turn provides a welcome boost to the island economy'.



The new strains of coronavirus are more infectious.



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- You have been asked to by NHS Scotland or the Protect Scotland app

Isolating as soon as possible reduces the chance of spreading the virus. Remember, don't leave your home unless it's to be tested, and don't wait for a test result to start isolating.

Call the National Assistance Helpline on 0800 111 4000 to access a range of support to help you self-isolate, including:

- £500 Self-isolation Support Grant*
- Access to food
- Access to medicine

To book a test, visit [NHSinform.scot/test-and-protect](https://www.nhs.uk/infocentre/conditions/protect-scotland) or call 0800 028 2816 if you cannot get online.

*Available to workers on low incomes. Conditions apply.

Police warning on telephone scams

Police in Ayrshire and Arran are reminding people to remain vigilant following an increase in telephone and online scams.

A number of residents have been targeted by fraudsters in recent weeks and officers are keen to remind members of the community to stay alert.

Callers, claiming to be from Amazon, have been in contact regarding subscription renewals and refunds.

They ask the victim to download software so the scammers can get into their computer where they can access personal details and banking information.

In another scam reported on Arran, residents have been getting calls to say their National Insurance number has been compromised and used for fraudulent activity.

Police Inspector Catherine

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Glass, of Kilmarnock community policing unit, said: 'We would like to encourage those who receive phone calls or emails of this nature to get in contact with police.'

'These scammers are known to target vulnerable or elderly residents of the community and we are asking all friends, family members and neighbours to remain vigilant. These criminals are well versed and can be influential in their style, tone and approach to make you believe they are genuine.'

'If you are concerned about who you may be speaking to on the phone, hang up and call the organisation directly to ensure you are speaking to the correct people.'

'I would encourage anyone who believes they may have been a victim of fraud or a scam to contact police on 101.'

More advice can be found on the keep safe section of our website: <https://www.scotland.police.uk/keep-safe/>

Co-op art materials boost



Lamlash Co-op's team leader Stuart Godfrey, right, is delighted to present a £250 cheque to Arran High School's Wellbeing Resource.

The cheque was awarded through the Co-op's Community Fund, which provides support to community groups, and will fund fairer access to education for students at the high school.

The money will be used to buy art materials for students which will support their mental health through art.

David Wedge, faculty head of Art and PE, who received the cheque, said: 'We are very grateful to the Co-op for supporting our art and design pupils with their kind donation, which will allow the department to purchase sets of art packs that will include more costly items such as watercolours and pastels.'

'These packs will be made available to any pupil who wishes to take them home to develop their art and design work and personal artistic interests. This donation is particularly appreciated at a time when many families may be struggling with finance.'

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West coast story gathering events run through March

A series of both regional and thematic online workshops will take place throughout March as part of the story gathering phase of the Coast that Shaped the World project (Coast).

'Coast' is a community-led story gathering project, looking to build a bank of stories, covering the west coast of Scotland from Arran and Kintyre in the south to Wester Ross and Lewis in the north.

These stories will be narrated through a website, interactive app, and innovative exhibition material to encourage locals and visitors to explore the roads less travelled across the islands, peninsulas, and coastline of the west coast.

The 12 workshops to be held will cover the six regions of the project, and six of the focus themes.

The regional focuses are: Clyde Coast and Islands, Wester Ross, Skye and Lochalsh, Lochaber, Outer Hebrides and Argyll and Inner Hebrides.

A key element of the Coast project has been working with a team of story gatherers throughout the west coast of Scotland. The regional sessions will hear from some of the story gatherers as well as provide the opportunity to share 'stories' about communities, places, people, and happenings throughout the west coast of Scotland.

Anne Martin, a Gaelic singer from the Isle of Skye, will also be discussing 'Why stories and our heritage are so important', sharing her passion for place

and culture. The sessions will take place between 2pm - 4pm on March 1, 5, 8, 12, 15, and 22, and will be held on Zoom.

The west coast of Scotland has a wonderful array of heritage and culture, architecture and environments, and stories of migrations to and from the region.

These thematic sessions, focused around the six themes of architecture, environment, culture, migrations, industries, and histories, will have a series of speakers discuss the theme of the day before gathering around a virtual table to encourage sharing of stories around the same theme. The sessions will take place between 11am - 1pm on March 1, 5, 8, 12, 15 and 22, and will be held on Zoom.

The Coast that Shaped the

'This is a really exciting stage in the story gathering work'

World project is part of a new £5 million Scottish programme of projects to invest in the Highlands and islands to provide more and better quality opportunities for visitors to enjoy natural and cultural heritage assets.

The Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund is led by NatureScot and is part funded through the European Development Fund (ERDF).

The Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund will encourage people to visit some of the more remote and rural areas

and create and sustain jobs, businesses, and services in local communities.

The purpose of the fund is to promote and develop the outstanding natural and cultural heritage of the Highlands and islands in a way that conserves and protects them.

Carron Tobin from ruralDimensions said: 'This is a really exciting stage in the story gathering work. We now have more than 400 stories from across the west coast and know there are many more we can gather.'

'The plan is to use these workshops to help people from each area and with specific interests to find out more about Coast and help us gather stories not yet in our story bank. We'd be delighted to see as many people as possible at the events that match their interests.'

NatureScot Project and Funding Officer Susan Webster added: 'The Coast project is a very exciting opportunity for people to share and enjoy stories from the west coast of Scotland. An amazing coast that has, and continues to, shape our world.'

It strongly addresses the objectives of the ERDF Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund to produce a new product which will improve the visitor experience in more remote and rural areas of the Highlands and Islands.'

Workshops can be booked at bit.ly/3boy9Es

This project is not connected to the Community of Arran Seabed Trust, also known as COAST.



An image from the archives of the Coast that Shaped the World project.

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Arran society embraces Zoom

A year ago who would have thought that the Arran Natural History Society would have embraced Zoom technology and be holding the winter talks programme online, writes Kate Sampson.

But this has proved very successful with over 50 participants last month hearing about the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust's new Whale Trail which has a site on Arran as the most southerly point.

Online talks have proved to have some advantages - we can 'meet' up with old

members who have moved off Arran, and no one has to face the cold, dark drive to the Ranger Service, or watch weather forecasts closely to see if the speaker's boat is actually going to sail or if a last minute stand-in has to be found. Even better, we can sit in the comfort of our own homes with a cup of tea in hand while the speakers from far and wide enthral us with their knowledge and expertise.

The next talk will be on Thursday March 4 at 7.30pm by Mark Johnston a ranger

from the North East of Scotland.

He'll talk about the wildlife of the Cabrach and Glenfiddich, give a ranger eye view of nature from salmon in the Deveron to eagles over Corryhabbie Hill, and everything in between from grassland to grouse moor to wind farm.

The Zoom log in will be posted on the Arran Natural History Society Facebook page, or you can email ksampson@nts.org.uk to get details if you are not on Facebook.

Tax penalty dropped

Self assessment taxpayers will not be charged a five per cent late payment penalty if they pay their tax or set up a payment plan by April 1, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) has announced.

The payment deadline for self assessment is January 31 and interest is charged from February 1 on any amounts outstanding.

Normally, a five per cent late payment penalty is also charged on any unpaid tax still outstanding on March 3. But this year, because of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, HMRC is giving taxpayers more time to pay or set up a monthly payment plan online at gov.uk.

They need to do this by midnight on April 1 to prevent being charged a late payment penalty.

HMRC recognises the pressure affecting taxpayers due to the pandemic and encourages anyone worried about paying their tax and unable to set up a payment plan online to contact HMRC for help and support on 0300 200 3822.

Care team goes the extra mile during Covid-19 pandemic

Carers have been going to extraordinary lengths to provide care and support to some of the most vulnerable people in the community during the Covid-19 pandemic, writes Hugh Boag.

North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership's Care at Home service, which currently looks after more than 5,000 residents, has gone above and beyond providing support that enables people to remain independent in their own homes, while also facing many extra challenges.

Using PPE to protect service users and staff, carers have continued to help with daily tasks, including helping those they care for to get in and out of bed, get dressed and washed and assisting with meals and medication, and taken on a number of additional roles.

With social isolation affect-

ing many of our older people at the moment, the team has been using technology to keep service users in touch with their family members while they can't see them in person and where family or friends would normally provide additional support but are unable to do so due to self-isolation, carers have stepped in to cover additional tasks.

Extra visits

The team has also been carrying out extra visits to check on service users who have been affected by the temporary closure of day centres, providing lunch visits where required and signposting to additional services where necessary.

One staff member for the Care at Home team said: 'While this has been a challenging time for us all, knowing we are helping people through this very difficult time by offering



Some of the carers who have gone the extra mile during the pandemic.

reassurance and comfort has made it all worthwhile.

'Assisting our service users to contact relatives if needed

can be just as important as delivering care and being able to put a smile on their faces has been lovely. While it has been

difficult at times, we've all just been getting on with it and if anyone has concerns we pull together as a team to talk about it.

'It's given us a different outlook on life and work.'

Councillor Robert Foster, cabinet member for health and social care, said: 'We are extremely proud of how our Care at Home staff have pulled together and worked as a team to continue providing the highest levels of support to those who use our services, with the safety of our service users and staff being an absolute priority.'

'They really have gone the extra mile during the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure that those they care for are safe and well looked after in their own homes and we'd like to say a huge thank you to the whole team for all of their efforts over the past year.'

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While this stretch seems hardest of all, we can't relax yet. The virus is still spreading, and we need to keep people safe. The more we stick to the current rules and restrictions now, the less chance the virus has to spread and the sooner we will make it through this.

#WeAreScotland gov.scot/coronavirus



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Spurdog on brittlestars. Photo: SaltwaterLifeUK

Call for urgent action on marine habitat and fisheries decline

Carbon-rich seabed habitats are continuing to decline on the west coast of Scotland, prompting calls for urgent action by the Our Seas coalition.

The Scottish Marine Assessment 2020 says many hectares of habitats around Scotland's coasts have been lost in the last 10 years alone.

Now more than 90 concerned organisations and businesses are calling on the Scottish Government to take urgent action to halt and reverse the damage being done to inshore seabeds by bottom-towed fishing gear.

The Argyll marine region has lost more than half of its known flame shell reefs and 35 per cent of its serpulid - a type of marine worm - aggregations, whilst the Clyde marine region has lost 9.1 per cent of its flame shell reefs and 9.9 per cent of its maerl beds.

This totals 101 hectares of lost habitat and carbon-rich seabed that provide vital fish nursery grounds.

The Our Seas coalition was established in response to decades of decline in Scotland's inshore fisheries and, in particular, steep declines in the spawning stock of fish such as cod and whiting on the west coast as a result of a century-long ban on bottom-trawling within three miles of the shore being removed in 1984.

Ailsa McLellan, co-ordinator

of Our Seas, said: 'We have accepted the chronic decline in our fisheries for too long. Now we must address the causes.'

'This is a hidden biodiversity crisis on our doorstep. Some of the habitats being lost are significant carbon sinks. They must be protected and allowed to recover.'

'There is overwhelming evidence that coastal nursery and spawning grounds are damaged by bottom towed fishing gear and that this has directly contributed to a decline in marine life and the historical collapse of many fish populations.'

'These declines are the fault of ineffective fisheries management, not the fishermen. Declines cannot be reversed until the Scottish Government reintroduces spatial management and incentivises a transition away from the use of intensive fishing gears close to shore. Brexit and the pandemic have exposed the desperate situation for our coastal fisheries which currently have little chance to diversify.'

'Conservation need not be at the expense of jobs. There are examples at home and internationally of conservationists and fishermen working together to benefit fisheries, communities and the environment.'

A public petition can be signed on the <https://www.ourseas.scot> website.



A maerl bed. Photo: Andy Jackson SubseaTV

© ANDY JACKSON - SUBSEATV

Survey finds the top 10 garden birds on Arran

Bird notes by Jim Cassels

The last weekend in January 2021 was the Royal Society for the Protection of Bird's (RSPB) Big Garden Bird Watch.

This was the 42nd year of the event.

Some of the households who took part in this survey of garden birds have shared their results with me.

This year, there were 35 sets of Arran results sent to me, compared to 22 last year. This equals the highest total in the 11 years I have done this.

While several gardens reported 15 or more species, one household recorded one.

In total, 31 species were reported - four fewer than last year.

The following species were recorded last year but not this year: fieldfare, great spotted woodpecker, grey heron, lesser redpoll, mistle thrush and redwing.

However, this year three gardens reported blackcap - none were reported last year.

For the first time, a nuthatch was recorded in an Arran garden during the RSPB count.

Comparing species that were seen in both years, siskin went from being recorded in 45 per cent of gardens in 2020 to two per cent this year and goldfinch went from being recorded in 50 per cent of gardens in 2020 to 25 per cent this year.

Carrion and hooded crows increased from being recorded in 22 per cent of gardens in 2020 to 34 per cent this year.

This year robin was reported in every garden except one in the survey, while chaffinch had the largest total of birds - 328. House sparrow had the second largest total, 272, and coal tit the third largest total,



Blackcap: three reports this year - none last year.

Photograph: Brian Couper.



Great spotted woodpecker. There were no reports this year during the weekend. Photograph: Tony Church.



Robin were spotted in all but one garden. Photograph:

Sue Archer.



Chaffinch: the highest number of birds seen.

Photograph: Dennis Morrison.

109. From the collation from all the gardens, the top 10 birds this year in terms of the number of gardens in which they were seen are: robin, chaffinch, blackbird, blue tit, great tit, coal tit, house sparrow, dunnock, collared dove and crow (carrion and hooded).

Crow replaces goldfinch from the top 10 for 2020. The first eight of these species have been in the top 10 in slightly different orders for the last seven years.

For a collation of all the Arran data from the Big Garden Birdwatch for the last five years visit <http://www.arranbirding.co.uk/files/RSPBGardenBirdWatch2021.pdf>

Samples

While this information is interesting, too much should not be read into these small samples.

It is a fun survey to do but it only covers one weekend in the year.

If you enjoyed doing it, there is a garden bird watch that you can join that encourages people to record their garden bird sightings every week of the year, the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) Garden BirdWatch.

To find out more about the BTO Garden BirdWatch visit the website <http://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/gbw>

Enjoy your birding and keep safe.

Please send any bird notes with 'what, when, where' to me at Kilpatrick Kennels, Kilpatrick, Blackwaterfoot, KA27 8EY, or email me at jim@arranbirding.co.uk. I



Nuthatch was reported on Arran for the first time during the Big Garden Bird Watch weekend. Photograph: David Kilpatrick

THE ARRAN BANNER 20 YEARS AGO

Saturday February 24, 2001



Mary Kerr from Lochranza celebrated her 100th birthday at Montrose House last Friday. She is seen here surrounded by her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. 01_B09tweY01



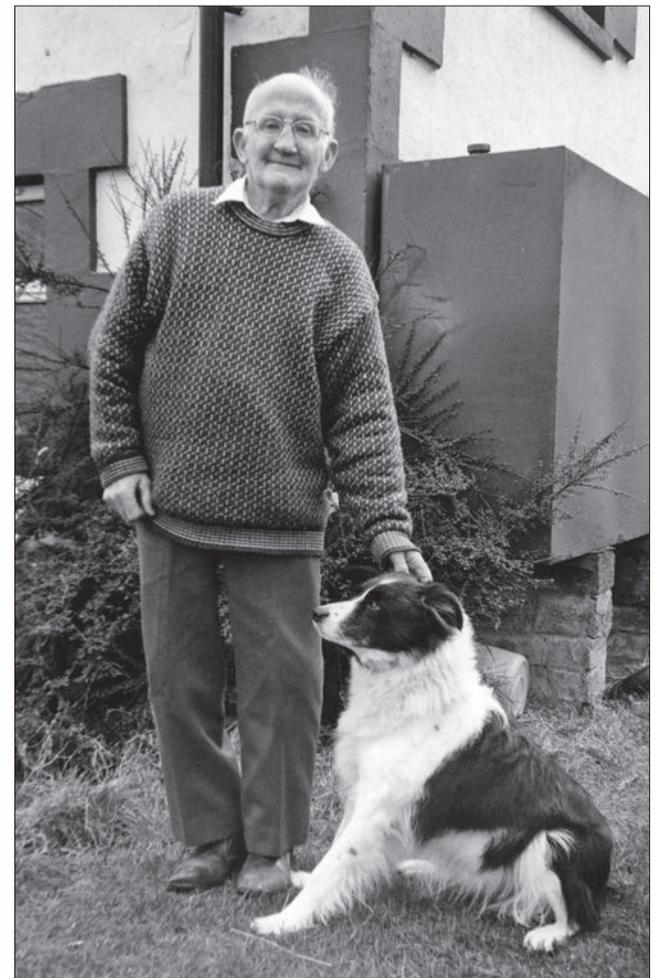
Even the books are having a spring-clean at Brodick Castle as preparations get underway for the new season. Here Joan Stuart, June McLean and Kath De Courcey are seen hard at work in the library. 01_B09tweY02



Torbeg's winning Ryder Cup team, back row left to right: David Henderson, Donald Logan, Hugh McClelland, Ted MacDonald, Colin Bannatyne and Gordon Johnston. Front row: Joe Faulkner, Colin Muir and Gavin Faulkner. Team captain Stan Brothers is not pictured. 01_B09tweY04



Brian Wilson, Labour MP for Cunninghame North, visited Arran on Saturday to hold one of his regular surgeries. He is pictured with constituent Tony Wall from Lamlash who popped in on the day. 01_B09tweY06



James Brown, who has lived and worked at Corriecravie Farm since he was a small boy and has been a face of Arran farming and southend life for more than 70 years, was the subject of an interview in this week's Banner. He is seen here at home with his faithful collie dog. 01_B09tweY03



The popular Bouguille Bay performing at a ceilidh staged by Whiting Bay Improvements Association. Left to right: Donal Boyle, Gavin Pllu, Ian Lambert and Terry Stevens. 01_B09tweY05

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Jamie Greene – MSP for West Scotland region

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Applications listed below together with the plans and other documents may be examined
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Any representations received will be open to public view.

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
PROCEDURE) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013 REGULATION 20(1)**
21/00119/PP; Site To South Of Craighard, Lochranza, Brodick, Ayrshire; Demolition of
existing bungalow and cottage and erection of new 2 bedroom holiday let cottage.
21/00093/PP; Tormore Cottage, Machrie, Brodick, Ayrshire; Formation of glamping site
with 6no glamping pods, 22no motorhome pitches, with associated facilities, Clubhouse,
private drainage system, permeable tracks, footpaths, parking and
landscaping.

Craig Hatton
Chief Executive
Cunninghame House
IRVINE KA12 8EE



NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL TAXI FARE SCALES CIVIC GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 1982, SECTION 17(4A)(C)

The Council are reviewing the Scales of fares and other charges for Taxis, and propose
the Scales shown on the Council's website. Search for "Taxi Fares" or type:
[https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/business/licences-and-permits/taxi-licences/
taxi-fares.aspx](https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/business/licences-and-permits/taxi-licences/taxi-fares.aspx)

This is a draft proposal for consultation purposes. The Council have not fixed the
Scales and are publicising the proposals to get the views of Taxi Operators and the
general public. Anyone can email the Council's Licensing Committee by 7 April 2021.
There is more information on the website about how anyone can
give their views.

Craig Hatton
Chief Executive
Cunninghame House
IRVINE KA12 8EE



PERSONAL NOTICES



A big thank you to all family and friends for
the beautiful gifts and cards for our Ruby
Anniversary and my 70th birthday.

Ian and Catherine

PROPERTY

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RECRUITMENT

THE PIERHEAD TAVERN LAMLASH ARRAN

Hospitality management trainee position

Applicant should demonstrate potential & desire to become
general manager within two years. Some knowledge of bar/
restaurant working is desirable. You should be tech savvy, able
to deal with tills, computers & social media plus have
exceptional social & communication skills. Training in all areas
of the business will be provided along with a competitive
salary. Accommodation is available. Closing date 8th March
Bar/waiting staff required part time/full time start tbc
Email CV to info@thept.co.uk or call Jane on 07816991425

ARRAN FARMERS' SOCIETY host of the annual Arran Show

VACANCY

SECRETARY / ARRAN SHOW EVENT ORGANISER

In this role you will supporting the Committee with secretarial
responsibilities and the overall organisation of the show.
Previous experience is not required but good computer,
administration and organisation skills are essential.
An agricultural or equestrian background would also be
advantageous.

Voluntary role with honorarium.

Expressions of interest and CVs to secretary.afs@gmail.com
Closing date: Friday 5th March 2021

PERSONAL NOTICES

WANTED

I am looking to purchase original Arran paintings
by Waller Hugh Paton: 1828-1895.

He had a house on Arran and painted extensively
there. Please contact Alastair on 077241 55470
or email jdwalker48@gmail.com

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CHURCH NOTICES

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND Parishes of North Arran, Brodick, Corrie, Lochranza, Pirnmill and Shiskine

Independent but working together
CHURCHES IN NORTH
ARRAN PARISHES WILL BE
CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER
NOTICE. THERE WILL STILL
BE ON-LINES SERVICES AND
FOOD BANK WILL STILL BE
AVAILABLE.

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND Whiting Bay and Kildonan Church of Scotland

Charity Number: SC014005
DUE TO THE NEW SCOTTISH
GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION
ON CORONAVIRUS, THE
CHURCH WILL BE CLOSED
FOR WORSHIP UNTIL
FURTHER NOTICE.

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND Kilmory linked with Lamblash

"A faith to proclaim ~ a
fellowship to share"
Scottish Charity SC015072
DUE TO THE NEW SCOTTISH
GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION
ON CORONAVIRUS, THE
CHURCH WILL BE CLOSED
FOR WORSHIP UNTIL
FURTHER NOTICE.

SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

(Part of the Worldwide Anglican
Church)
St Margaret's, Whiting Bay.
ALL SERVICES ARE
CANCELLED UNTIL
FURTHER NOTICE
Services from Christchurch,
Lochgilphhead will be available on
Facebook and ZOOM.
Please contact Richard Trewby
on 01770-600236 for further
information

DEATHS

CUMMING - Archie, died peacefully on February 17th in Arran War Memorial hospital. Much loved husband of Maureen, devoted dad of Archie, Jane and Katherine, an amazing grandpa and friend to many.

McCONNELL - Walter Scott OBE, peacefully at home on February 9, 2021. Scott beloved husband of the late Liz (Elizabeth Ramsay), much loved Dad to Beth, Morag, Robbie and Katy, best Grampa to Scott, Matthew, Anna, Ryan and David, Great Grampa to Lottie, brand-new father-in-

ARRAN BAPTIST CHURCH

A reminder that our mini-service is still available every week on our website: www.arranbaptistchurch.btck.co.uk If you go to the homepage and look below the map picture you will find the link to pick up the service. To access click on the first letter of the link.
We would love you to join us.

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC CHURCH

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE
SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT
RESTRICTIONS OUR
CHURCH REMAINS CLOSED
FOR MASS AND PUBLIC
WORSHIP UNTIL FURTHER
NOTICE

THE RT REV BRIAN MCGEE,
BISHOP OF OF ARGYLL AND
THE ISLES WILL CELEBRATE
MASS FROM HIS ORATORY
IN OBAN AT 10AM DAILY.
LIVESTREAM ACCESS IS
AVAILABLE AT www.rcdai.org.uk

A WEEKLY PARISH BULLETIN
IS AVAILABLE BY EMAIL.
PLEASE EMAIL. peterdwilko@gmail.com IF YOU WISH
TO RECEIVE A REGULAR
BULLETIN

BLESS O LORD THIS ISLE OF
ARRAN
ST ROCH PATRON OF THE
SICK PRAY FOR US
OUR LADY OF THE ISLES
PRAY FOR US
ST COLUMBA PRAY FOR US

BANNER
ANNOUNCEMENTS

law of Billy, Nathan and Tony, uncle and valued friend to many. A kind and gentle man Scott will be greatly missed by all who knew him in Whiting Bay, Strathaven and through his distinguished Pharmacy career. Funeral service at 2:30pm on March 3 for family only but is available on webcast, contact family for link or those wishing to pay respects can do so as the cortege passes on the A71 between Scott's home at Priestgill (1:35) & childhood home in Hurlford (2:15) en route to Holmsford Bridge Crematorium, Dreghorn

Big prize fund for Coral Scottish Grand National

The Coral Scottish Grand National to be run at Ayr Racecourse on Saturday April 17 will have a prize fund of £150,000, making it the joint second richest handicap chase in Britain behind the Grand National, writes Hugh Boag.

The Class 1, Grade 3 chase is run over four miles with a field of up to 30 runners and boasts the fourth biggest betting turnover in the UK.

David Brown, managing director, Ayr Racecourse, said: 'We are acutely aware of the position the Coral Scottish Grand National holds in the jumps racing calendar. It sits right up there with the most prestigious races of the year and we felt it only right despite the difficulties horseracing faces due to the coronavirus epidemic we maintained the prize money at the highest possible level we could.'

'This is only possible thanks to the continued support of Coral who have sponsored this great race since 2007 and who cherish it as much as the team at Ayr do.'

'The Coral Scottish Grand National Saturday normally sells out weeks in advance but unfortunately we are unable to welcome any crowd at all



The stands at Ayr Racecourse will sadly be empty for this year's Scottish Grand National.

working with Ayr to put on a great show for the millions of people watching the event from home on ITV Racing, and Racing TV.'

The Coral Scottish Grand National was last run in 2019 owing to last year's race falling foul of the epidemic. The winner that day was the Nicky Richards' trained Takingrisks who is expected to line up in the race again this year having recently won a Listed Chase at Doncaster.

Most of the top stables in Britain will be represented in the race which was famously won in 1974 by Red Rum who became the only horse ever to have won the Grand National and the Scottish Grand National in the same year. Other famous winners include Grey Abbey in 2004, Merigo in 2010 and Vicente in 2016 and 2017.

Entries for the Coral Scottish Grand National close at noon on Tuesday March 23.

to this year's big day because of ongoing restrictions. ITV 1 will of course be covering the action and in 2019 an amazing 1.2 million viewers watched the race - a record for the race and one of the highest viewing audiences of the year for racing on ITV.'

Simon Clare, Ladbrokes Coral PR director, said: 'The Coral Scottish Grand National is quite simply one of jump racing's most important races, being the fourth biggest betting race in the calendar and the most prestigious race run in Scotland.'

'So whilst sadly there will be

no crowd this year, this has not affected our commitment and financial support for the event one iota, and we have worked closely with Ayr Racecourse to ensure that the big race is run for the maximum prize possible under the very challenging unique circumstances we continue to face.

'We are also thrilled to enhance our support for this brilliant racing event, by adding the Coral Scottish Champion Hurdle to our long-standing sponsorship of the Coral Scottish Grand National which dates back to 2007, and look forward to

ARRAN BANNER GOLF



Corrie Golf Club

Monday February 15, Monday Cup. 1 M Elliott 77-20=57. 2 G Andrew 71-9=62 and scratch. Magic twos M Elliott@17th J Adams@4th and 5th J McGovern@17th R McLean@17th.

Monday February 22, Monday Cup. 1 I Bremner 65-8=57 BIH and scratch, 2 A Napier 67-10=57. Magic twos I Bremner@14th, A Napier@11th, A MacDonald@14th, R Burke@17th.

Fixtures: Saturday February 27, 18-hole sweep. Monday March 1, draw at noon or arrange own game.

Brodick Golf Club

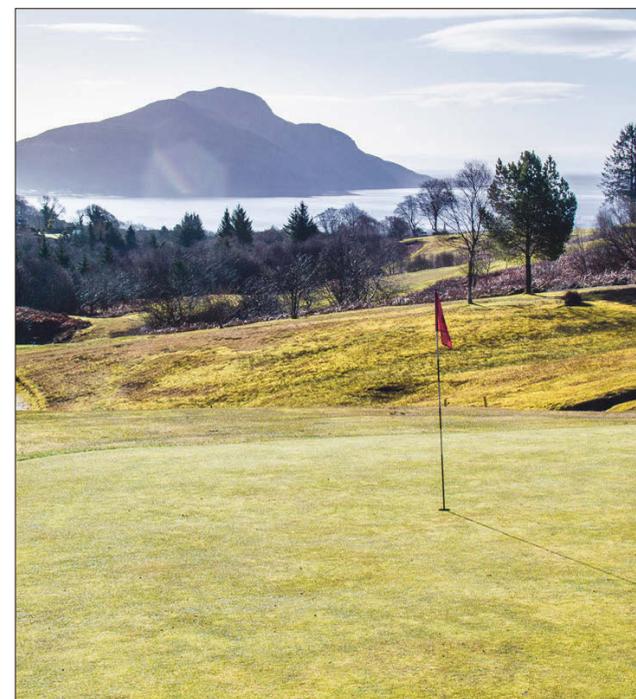
Sunday February 21, Brandon qualifier, 27 played. 1. Alistair Hume 71(14)57, 2. Iain MacDonald 69(8)61, 3. Brian Smith 75(13) 62 acb.

Fixture: Sunday February 28, Winter Cup Stableford.

Machrie Bay Golf Club

Fixtures: Tuesday March 2, Winter Cup, tee-off noon. Saturday March 6, Lochranza Hotel Cup, tee-off noon.

Lamblash golf course on a beautiful, sunny morning.



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Council pledges support as KA Leisure looks to recover

by Hugh Boag
editor@arranbanner.co.uk



The organisation which provides gym and sports facilities on Arran has come up with a recovery and renewal plan which aims to help it build back from the Covid-19 pandemic.

KA Leisure, which operates leisure facilities and activities across North Ayrshire, has been badly affected by the lockdown restrictions over the past year.

The Arran Community Sport Hub at Arran High School provides a number of sports halls, a theatre, seven-a-side 3G sports pitch and a well-equipped fitness suite open to residents and visitors to the island. But it has been closed for most of the pandemic.

With restrictions still in place and expected to continue in the short term, that poses ongoing financial challenges for leisure facilities across the country.

A report, considered by the council cabinet this week, shows how KA Leisure is responding to the challenges of the pandemic against a backdrop of a drop in visitor numbers – from 2,663,489 in 2019/20 to a projected figure of 208,604 for 2020/21, assuming tier four restrictions continue over the coming weeks.

In September last year, cabinet approved additional support to North Ayrshire Leisure Limited, which trades as KA Leisure, of up to

£2.743m to ensure it continues to operate but the ongoing financial shortfall is expected to continue to present challenges in the months ahead.

The report for cabinet outlines KA Leisure's proposed recovery and renewal strategy and highlights that additional financial support will be required from the council in the financial year ahead.

This will be considered within the context of additional Scottish government funding and as part of the council's financial monitoring arrangements.

Strong partnership arrangements continue to underpin the joint planning.

'KA Leisure has been hit hard by the restrictions'

KA Leisure chairman Gary Higgon said: "The current pandemic, which has necessitated many site and activity closures, has proved extremely challenging for KA Leisure in the last year.

"The support from our partners, in particular North Ayrshire Council, has been pivotal and very much appreciated in the continuance of our business.

"The safety of our customers and staff are of paramount importance to KA Leisure and with the support of North Ayrshire Council through the recovery and renewal plan,



The KA Leisure sign outside Arran High School. 01_B31campus01. Insert: The well equipped gym at the Arran campus.

together with the hard work of our dedicated staff, we look forward to rebuilding and refreshing our service for the benefit of all North Ayrshire residents.'

Innovations

North Ayrshire Council leader Joe Cullinane said: "There's no doubt that since March last year, KA Leisure has been hit hard by the

restrictions. Despite that, it has continued to try to provide services and activities to our residents amid trying circumstances and has introduced a series of innovations to help improve the health and wellbeing of customers, including a comprehensive digital programme.

"It's clear that as lockdown restrictions continue to affect

all parts of Scotland and the UK, there will be no quick solution, but we are committed to providing support in the months ahead.

Commitment

"The council has made a significant commitment to support KA Leisure financially during the pandemic and we will continue to support it where we can with the fi-

ancial pressures it faces and will be a key stakeholder in it developing its recovery and renewal plans.'



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