



Oban's Quinn pounds the street for Maggie's



Seafood businesses drowning in paperwork

Make the most of your home

Pages 28-31



Drone flight plan kicks off battle over airspace

by Ellis Butcher
ebutcher@obantimes.co.uk



A battle of the skies has broken out over the use of drones in a popular swathe of airspace off Oban, Mull and Coll.

Skyports Ltd, a UK-based drone delivery service provider, has applied to the Civil Aviation Authority to create an overhead 'temporary danger area' between April and May.

It would allow 'unmanned aircraft systems' to fly from the Lorn and Islands Hospital in Oban as part of a push to deliver essential PPE, Covid-19 testing kits and medical samples.

It would mean flights between Mull and Iona Community Hospital, Bunessan Surgery, Tobermory Medical Practice, and Arinagour Medical Practice, Coll.

While the idea has won strong support on the ground from many islanders, it has sparked objections from local and national aviation representatives, flying clubs and pilot trainers.

Around a dozen 'general

While the idea has won strong support from many islanders, it has sparked objections from flying clubs...

aviation' stakeholders are understood to have lodged objections during the three-week consultation, which has been fast-tracked from the standard 12 weeks.

Skyports said the short time scale was necessary due to the urgency of the pandemic. It submitted the application in December and the consultation ends this Sunday.

Backed by funding from the UK Space Agency and the European Space Agency, Skyports said the projects would help the UK Government and NHS Scotland in its coronavirus fightback.

A resident on Mull, who asked

Continued on page six.



Jack picks up on roadside litter problem

Upset at all the litter being discarded near his home in Kilchrenan, six-year-old eco-warrior Jack Grant, with the help of his little brother Hamish, three, and Mum Izzy, set to work picking up the discarded rubbish. Read the full story on page 13.

Surgical masks to be worn in hospital settings

Updated advice from NHS Highland says all staff, patients and visitors coming into hospital settings should now wear surgical masks – also known as Fluid Resistant Surgical Masks (FRSM) – instead of face coverings to help beat Covid.

FRSMs will be provided.

With Covid-19 more prevalent in the health authority board area than previously, and the new more transmissible variant present, NHS Highland says it also applies to all non-clinical/patient-facing staff when it is not possible for them to physically distance from colleagues within offices or moving between departments.

Staff who work in non-clinical shared office spaces should also make sure they are using surgical masks.

Continued hand hygiene is also encouraged. This is particularly important when handling face coverings and masks.

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Silentnight

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OT

Caring Quinn racks up the miles for Maggie's

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Nine-year-old Quinn MacKechnie is raising pounds by pounding Oban's streets for cancer charity Maggie's Centres.

The Park Primary School pupil, whose family run a B&B in the town centre, has raised more than £1,200 so far by taking on the challenge of running and walking 50 miles in January – whatever the weather.

Quinn wanted to help after her Granny Franny, who lived with them, and Papa Gilbert who lived next door passed away from cancer within just six months of each other last year.

Her mum Linzi said: 'She does miss them, they were a big part of her daily life.'

Quinn was 'totally up for it' when she heard about the

Maggie's Centres challenge and wanted to do her bit, added proud mum Linzi.

'She had asked to come out with me and her dad when we go out running and it was when we were out one day that we bumped into a friend who was already doing the Maggie's challenge.

'Quinn's very athletic, she loves football and shinty. She asked me about the challenge and I explained what it meant and how the charity helped people. Once she heard that, she was totally up for it,' said Linzi.

In the first 10 days of the challenge, Quinn had covered 38 miles.

'I'm super proud of her that she is determined to get out everyday, whatever the weather. The cold, rain and ice doesn't faze her at all!' said Linzi.

Maggie's Centres offer

support for free to anyone with cancer. Anyone can visit a centre or join the online community to get help to take back control when cancer turns life upside down. Professional help covers anything from treatment side effects to money worries.

To make a donation, you can go to www.facebook.com/donate/1106026469836104/?-fundraiser_source=external_url

Oban's Quinn MacKechnie running her best for Maggie's Centres in a January 50-mile challenge.



Shaz has been chiselled onto a newly clad wall at Sinclair Drive, Oban.

Who is Shaz?

A vandal who chiselled out the name Shaz on a newly clad building in Oban has been branded selfish by ACHA boss Alastair MacGregor, writes Kathie Griffiths.

The damage at Sinclair Drive in Oban was discovered on Friday, January 22.

Work being carried out on the building is part of a £6million project covering 633 properties in the town to improve the thermal efficiency of the buildings and to reduce fuel poverty.

Mr MacGregor said the plan now is to contact police and he advised anyone who knows who the culprit is to get in touch.

He said: 'It is really disappointing to see such an example of petty vandalism like this. The person that did this must have taken some time to chisel out the damage with an instrument.'

'It is particularly galling to see such selfishness when in these difficult times people have worked so hard to deliver this extensive external modernisation and energy efficiency to people's homes in Oban.'

'The works carried out have also contributed massively to the aesthetic look of the buildings. We plan to pass these picture to the police and would advise anyone who may know anything about this to let us know.'

ACHA board chairman councillor Roddy McCuish backed the appeal to track down the person responsible.

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The debris barrier installed in the vulnerable channel

Longer opening hours for Rest

Longer daylight hours means extending opening hours at the A83 Rest and Be Thankful, writes Ellis Butcher.

When weather conditions allow, the road will remain open from 8.30am to 4.30pm, with the Old Military Road staying in use during the dark with traffic being conveyed through Glen Croe.

Last week engineers completed a 175m long, 6.6m tall temporary bund next to the Old Military Road, which is designed to act as a protective barrier on the route and provide extra resilience during bad weather.

Eddie Ross, BEAR Scotland's North West Representative, said: 'As the days are beginning to get longer we can start our daily monitoring and checks of the area earlier, meaning we

can safely increase the length of time the A83 is open for.'

'We're continuing to divert all road users via the Old Military Road from 4.30pm during the hours of darkness as a safety precaution. Teams continue with work to develop further mitigation measures in the area, with teams monitoring and assessing the hillside and weather conditions in the area at all times.'

'We thank all road users and the local community for their continued patience while we progress with our ongoing mitigation work at the Rest and Be Thankful.'

Real-time journey information is available from Traffic Scotland at www.trafficscotland.org, Twitter at @trafficscotland or the new mobile

Seafood firms drowning in 'quadrupled' paperwork

by Ellis Butcher
ebutcher@obantimes.co.uk



A local seafood firm has called for the export process to Europe to be streamlined amid the bureaucratic backlog following Brexit.

Easdale Seafoods Ltd, a family-owned business based at Balvicar, on Seil, employs 15 full-time staff and supports 15 local fishing vessels and crews by selling catches to Europe.

Now in its 31st year, Easdale exports shipments of live creel-caught langoustines by air-freight or lorry to customers in France and Spain.

But since New Year's Day, new rules for moving goods from the UK to the EU have come into effect.

As a result, it did not shipped at all during the first week of January because of the high risks, while paperwork had 'quadrupled' - piling hours and hours spent on the admin for a product that has a very short time to reach market.

Connie Macaskill, office manager, said: 'We've known this was coming for a year or two and worked really hard to prepare. We didn't know whether there was going to be a deal or not and both scenarios affected the paperwork.'

'We worked flat out to cover all eventualities and when the deal came through on Christmas Eve it gave us less than a week to prepare for the paperwork in reality. We didn't get time to practice or establish what the pitfalls would be.'



Connie Macaskill of Easdale Seafoods.

A new swathe of checks, certification and approval is now required and involves a range of different agencies - from Food Standards Scotland to local councils, Marine Scotland, HM Revenue and Customs, and the Animal and Plant Health Agency, among others.

Shipments are scrutinised with relatively minor errors such as spaces in the wrong place, missing zeros and hyphens all contributing to delays.

Connie stressed she intended no criticism and praised the environmental health officers at Argyll and Bute Council, local fisheries officers, Marine Scotland, and all the agencies which have helped.

She said: 'I wouldn't blame anybody in particular. Everyone is in the same boat and has been treading water. The biggest issue really was there wasn't enough time and we didn't know what the deal was going to be. Time, hopefully, will improve matters.'

Shipment of around 200 iced boxes of chilled prawns tend to command an average price of £8,000, although from that there are costs for fishermen, transportation and staff.

Prices can fluctuate depending on demand, although the coronavirus had made the market very 'fragile' and flights are not wholly reliable.

Connie explained that one entire shipment bound for

Barcelona by road remained in Glasgow for three days before departing for France. This was due to a paperwork hold-up by other exporters shipping goods on the same truck - which condemned the entire live cargo to waste.

At the time of speaking to The Oban Times, question marks remained over two further shipments destined for Spain, which were cancelled having been due to fly from Glasgow to Heathrow and onto Barcelona.

Connie said the company had needed to restrict how many days crews should fish because of doubts over live produce getting to customers in time.

While welcoming the £23

million fund for the UK's seafood sector announced by its government, her concern was it may not be enough and that fishing crews are ineligible.

'We need the fishing boats as they are our lifeline - if you don't support fishermen, there's no point keeping the exporters,' said Connie.

Ideally, the process needed to be simplified and have a single organisation in charge of oversight, she added. It's also essential that we work together with officials in France to streamline processes in order to limit the damage already done to our fishing industry.

Brendan O' Hara MP, who represents Argyll and Bute for the SNP in the UK Parliament, wrote to Prime Minister Boris Johnson calling for a compensation package and said Brexit had not delivered on its promises to Scotland's fishing industry and seafood sector.

Of the £23 million fund, Mr O'Hara said the pay-out would not make up for 'weeks of distress and damage' and said for some businesses it is 'too little, too late'.

Mr O'Hara said: 'What we do know is the compensation won't cover the vast majority of fishing vessels that don't export directly. The Westminster government must ensure compensation is available to all businesses who have been harmed by the imposition of new export requirements, otherwise it will be pointless, cost people their jobs and bring lasting harm to the industry.'

Council says no to axing 55 phoneboxes

A council committee has officially objected to plans by BT to remove dozens of telephone boxes, writes Ellis Butcher.

Sixty-eight public pay phones across Argyll and Bute faced disconnection because of a massive fall off in use with BT holding a 90-day consultation. It included phones in places across Taynuilt, Mull, the Isle of Coll, Islay, Jura, Dalmally, and Lochgilphead, Dunoon, Helensburgh and Campbeltown.

Figures show the vast majority of pay phones have an average of zero calls a month. The most used box in Argyll and Bute was in Burnbank Street, Campbeltown, having seven a month.

Councillors on the planning, protective services and licensing committee (PPSL) objected to the removal of 55 payphones and agreed with the proposed removal of 10.

There are community plans to adopt three, with those wishing to adopt having to pay £1 and provide a contact email address. Some are used to hold defibrillators, small libraries, cake shops and as general public information hubs.

BT said payphone use had declined by more than 90 per cent in the last decade and the need to provide them for emergency use has greatly diminished.

It said at 'least 98 per cent of the UK' now had either 3G or 4G mobile phone network coverage.

It said: 'This is important because as long as there is network coverage, it's now possible to call the emergency services, even when there is no credit or no coverage from your own mobile provider.'

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New fundraising push for Oban pier webcam

Donations have started to roll in to fund a new £2,500 webcam for the Northern Lighthouse Board Pier at Oban, writes Ellis Butcher.

It follows an appeal last summer to raise funds to replace the camera on the opposite North Pier, which was put into position in November.

An appeal to raise money for the NLBP camera is now being run on a JustGiving page at www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/obanwebcam

So far, £360 has been raised with positive comments about Oban having poured in from those contributing to the fundraiser.

Linda Battison, marketing director of the Oban and Lorn and Tourism Alliance (OLTA), said the live streams showing Oban's beautiful seafront are visited by thousands of people every year on its website www.oban.org.uk

'The webcams are always the most visited pages on the website - they really help to drive traffic,' said Linda.

She said the difference in quality between the new and old camera is plain to see, while the ongoing costs of providing the service also included broadband and streaming.

The new North Pier camera provides views around the bay including Mull, the Cathedral, Lismore, the Esplanade, and the Calmac Ferry Terminal, and has had more than 107,000 people visiting.

Linda said: 'The new camera went live in November and there has been a good increase in traffic, with folk clearly enjoying the fabulous clarity and new views. Fingers crossed that our virtual visitors will dig deep once again.'

'Certainly the comments are very encouraging and I am confident we will reach the £2,500 target.'

Contributors Marcus and Anita of Bavaria, chipped in a donation of £50, saying: 'We love Oban and the webcams. Hope we can go on vacation to Oban again soon. Keep up the good work and stay healthy.'

Oban hospital says heartfelt thanks

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Mull man John McGee has been thanked by Lorn & Islands Hospital for his fundraising efforts.

So far Mr McGee, with the support of the public and businesses, has donated nine televisions, including wifi boosters, a tablet, electrical kitchen equipment, £500 worth of toiletries and board games.

Caroline Henderson, rural general hospital manager of Lorn & Islands Hospital, said: 'During this challenging time the hospital has continued to receive welcomed support from our local communities, businesses, volunteers and organisations to support staff members, patients and their families. Every donation is



SNR Charge Nurse Kirsteen Campbell on Ward B with John McGee.

invaluable to boosting morale particularly when visiting in person has been restricted.'

She added: 'I want to send a heartfelt thank you to John McGee for setting up the fundraiser and every community member and local businesses

that have made donations to the hospital. The kindness and generosity demonstrated by our local communities and businesses has been felt and appreciated in wards, units, departments, and teams in every part of our hospital.'

'Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) has received an unprecedented number of donations since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrating how charitable, kind, and thoughtful our local communities and businesses are across Argyll and Bute.'

Mr McGee is now organising a raffle to help buy a rehabilitation chair to benefit stroke patients at the hospital, costing £2,500. Prizes include items gifted by the Rangers Charity Foundation.

Tickets are £5 each by sending payment via Paypal mcee-1965@hotmail.co.uk

Home-Start Lorn

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This is a particularly challenging time for new parents. Can you imagine how it feels to go home with a tiny baby and miss out on all the usual visits from family and friends.

Our volunteers certainly can't replace that but they can definitely help to reduce the sense of loneliness many parents are feeling at this time.

Volunteering with Home-Start Lorn: Although lots of work has been put on hold, here at Home-Start we are still supporting families

What can we do during the current restrictions?

Some of our families are being supported by meeting up and going for walks, some are being contacted digitally e.g. Facetime



or Skype. A volunteer on Mull is even organizing Story Telling on the Beach!

Now is a really good time to contact Home-Start Lorn and find out about how you can volunteer.

Our next course will start in February 2021!

We are now delivering our training via Zoom. So, wherever you are in Oban, Lorn or Mull you can take part in our excellent Preparation Course.

That means, come March or April, when, hopefully, we will be getting back to some form of normality, you will have completed your training and we will have carried out all the necessary checks e.g. PVG and references, and you will be ready to be matched with a family.



As a volunteer you will also have access to ongoing training and external training. Our volunteers attend Argyll & Bute's multi-agency Child Protection Training and as part of Argyll & Bute Council's determination to ensure there is a Trauma Informed Workforce you will also have access to 'Trauma Informed' training.

If you think this might be something you would like to be part of please contact

Aileen Binner (manager)

07515 460655

Kirsty Renton (Mull)

07717 527035

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POLICE FILES

Vandalism

Between 6pm on Friday January 15 and noon on Saturday January 16, on Etive Road, Dunbeg, a school gate was allegedly damaged. Police are investigating and are appealing for any witness or anyone with any information to contact them on 101 or anonymously through Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Charged

About 10.15pm on Saturday January 23, in George Street, Oban, a 46-year-old man was arrested for allegedly behaving in an abusive manner. The man was charged, held for court and a report submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

CONTACTUS

EMAIL US AT
editor@obantimes.co.uk
TELEPHONE
01631 568000

Opposition grows to housing at Ganavan

by Ellis Butcher
ebutcher@obantimes.co.uk



Pressure is mounting on local councillors to reject any possibility of new housing at a cherished beauty spot.

At a virtual meeting of Oban Community Council on Monday night, campaigners appealed to councillors on Argyll and Bute Council to come out against any development at Ganavan Sands.

While no formal planning application has been submitted, a large area – facing the sands – has been pencilled in the council's local development plan two as a 'potential development area'.

The meeting heard any development there would represent an 'appalling, inappropriate disaster'.

Alison Chadwick, representing the community group



Friends of Ganavan, told the meeting it was accepted that the area needed more housing but Ganavan was not the place.

'We haven't got anywhere else within a good distance of Oban which is walkable, cycleable and has good transport to and from the town,' she said.

'It's not just for us, it's for visitors to our area. Everyone is vehemently against this.

Gavin MacLean sold the meeting a 'supposed consultation' on the planning document was held last year but nobody knew about it.

The meeting heard calls for local members of Argyll and Bute Council, which represent Oban, to publicly declare their opposition. However, some councillors who sit on Argyll and Bute Council's planning committee, said strict rules meant they could not 'pre-judge' a planning application.

Councillor Kieron Green, a member of the planning committee, explained that if he made any public commitment about his opinion, committee rules would bar him from participating in any decision should an application for Ganavan come forward.

Roddy McCuish, a long-standing planning committee member and former vice-chairman, said he would rather resign from planning than be party to any housing at Ganavan, adding: 'I say that with a word of caution – am I

better in or out of the room?' Councillor Elaine Robertson, who also sits on the planning committee, said her position was 'well known' and she had worked closely with the Friends of Ganavan.

Councillor Jim Lynch, a member of Argyll and Bute Council, said he was dead set against development at Ganavan, while Councillor Andrew Vennard said it was clear people wanted Ganavan retained as a recreational area.

Laura Corbe, an OCC member, said any housing of any kind would be 'extremely inappropriate' for residents, the environment and would just add to traffic.

The proposed development plan for Argyll and Bute has not yet been formally adopted and requires scrutiny by the Scottish Government Reporter.

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The Oban Times

OT

Around Oban

ANDREW SPENCE

editor@obantimes.co.uk

Another week of lockdown ended with some great weather, including varying dustings of snow across the area.

This made for great walking weather with, again, many people taking advantage.

One of the key events taking place in the town on Saturday last weekend was the much-awaited vaccinations of some of our older residents. There was nothing but praise across Facebook for the Lorn Medical Centre and, of course, the volunteers from Oban Mountain Rescue Team manning the carpark on the day.

I believe that the next round of vaccinations is imminent with letters being sent out and phone calls made to over 70s.

I know there will be many people waiting for these calls and letters but I urge patience. The sooner we are all vaccinated the better and we can hopefully return to some sort of normality.

There is a group of event

WHERE IS THIS?



and festival organisers working in the background in Oban to start to manage how we plan and integrate events etc. This is a major step forward and will support our recovery as a town when we start to come out of the pandemic. The objective is to attract funding and support to all events and planning collectively to have the best events and festivals in Oban.

Last week's photograph was of the windows of Piazza.

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Dunbeg's gritty issue with ice

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Argyll and Bute Council needs to get a grip of unsafe surfaces when ice strikes in Dunbeg, says pensioner Bill Irvine.

Mr Irvine, who lives in Jane Road, says he has made repeated complaints to the council over the past couple of years about the road and pavements being unsafe in winter weather.

Mr Irvine says the area becomes a hazard in its slippery state and badly needs a salt bin put at the top of the road for residents to use so people can spread it themselves and make it safer.

Mr Irvine says he is a casualty of the ice after falling on the road earlier this month and breaking his arm.

He says his arm could be in a sling for another six to eight weeks.



'I went to go up to Dunbeg stores to get the paper. It did look cold outside. I was very careful but when I got to the middle of the road, my feet went from under me and I fell, hitting my shoulder,' he said.

In lots of pain, Mr Irvine called for an ambulance, which took him to A&E, and he had to stay in hospital

for seven days before being allowed home.

'I have told Argyll and Bute Council Jane Road needs treating when we have ice, I've told them several times but nothing happens. Because the pavements are so dangerous, people like me try to walk on the road to get where we need to. We need our surfaces to be

When snow and ice reach Dunbeg, getting out safely is a concern for some residents like Bill Irvine, who fell and broke his arm.

treated,' he said. Oban ward councillor Elaine Robertson said she was sorry to hear about Mr Irvine's fall and said the state of Jane Road and others in the area in icy and snowy weather, was a concern of the community council and hers too.

Argyll and Bute Council's priority is to keep main roads passable but there have been talks about involving community councils and communities in taking on some self-care tasks such as treating areas with salt from roadside grit bins.

Councillor Robertson said she would talk to the council again about getting a grit bin for Jane Road.

Drone flight proposal sparks battle over airspace

Continued from page one.

A resident on Mull, who asked not to be named, told The Oban Times: 'This plan has received a great deal of support from islanders after the successful trials to Mull. It is certainly the view of the vast majority of islanders that this plan is both progressive and of great benefit to the NHS and islands.'

However, aviation opponents argue it effectively forces 'everybody else' out of the sky.

Concerns have been raised it blocks off a '2km passage of airspace as high as 900ft in places'. Some say this has safety implications for flyers who need safety corridors in the event of sudden bad weather or low cloud.

Brendan Walsh runs the 14-room Glenforsa Hotel and self-catering units on Mull, as well as leasing the well-used Glenforsa Airfield from Argyll and Bute Council.

Mr Walsh says he is not 'anti-drone' and has family working in Scotland's NHS.

'This basically shuts down an area of aerospace available to everyone else and I think they have thought that because it is in Scotland there is nobody

there,' said Mr Walsh, who has not reopened his business since closing for winter in 2019.

Mr Walsh said it was 'inevitable' the temporary application would become permanent, with implications for the local economy if aviation visitors were lost to the area.

During April and May 2020, the airfield had 280 movements – including visitors, regulars, groups, clubs, and flying instructors, he said. He believed the timing could not be worse as April was when most returned to flying and there were alternatives to using drones to get supplies to the islands.

It also had implications for military flights, MediVac (medical evacuation) and Scottish Fisheries Protection Aircraft, he said.

Dave Sexton, RSPB Mull officer on an island which has the highest density of nesting golden eagles in Europe, said he had had 'excellent communications' about the plan.

'The Mull hospital is adjacent to the Mull Eagle Watch pair of nesting sea eagles at Craignure Golf Course, so it made sense to liaise over flight paths for the drone,' said Mr Sexton. 'I

am now in touch with Skyports again over their expanded plans and they're anxious to do all they can to give sensitive sea and golden eagle sites a wide berth.'

Skyports has confirmed that if a private aircraft wanted to request entry into the TDA it would be denied if a drone is 'airborne or likely to be'.

But if there are no drone flights taking place or expected to take place, access was 'likely' to be approved, it said.

Skyports said the changes covered a wide area but 'only two' would be operated at any one time with the airspace used for the 'minimum' amount of time.

It said this would leave 'significant volumes' of airspace open to other users.

It added: 'Based on feedback received from the private aviation community, we have already revised our original airspace proposals to minimise any impact our operations would have on them.'

The Oban Times submitted questions to the Civil Aviation Authority but it had not responded at the time of going to press.



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Concern over claims ice cream van came to Oban from Glasgow

by Ellis Butcher
ebutcher@obantimes.co.uk



An ice cream van's visit to Oban has been given a frosty reception amid claims it came from Glasgow at the weekend.

Independent councillor Roddy McCuish told a meeting on Monday night that he 'could not believe his ears' on Sunday night as the chimes of an ice cream van sounded on the Glencruitten estate.

As well as lockdown, it follows a sub-zero weekend in Oban which has seen snow flurries fall to low levels in the town and temperatures dip.

Addressing Oban Community Council, Councillor McCuish said: 'I thought I was dreaming or I had too much of the Whyte & MacKay - there was an ice cream van outside my door!

'As far as I am aware a single nugget is not an essential food.'

Councillor McCuish did not publicly identify the operator during the meeting, but said: 'I know for a fact that ice cream van comes from Glasgow - it is unbelievable.'

He said afterwards it had visited at around 7.30pm, played chimes and parked up near his home with its lights on.



Councillor Roddy McCuish raised his concerns at Oban Community Council's virtual meeting on Monday night.

Asked whether it could be permissible as a 'takeaway serving from a hatch' Mr McCuish said it was possible, although the current restrictions do not allow travel outside local authority areas.

The Scottish Government confirmed that ice cream vans were currently able to operate and Police Scotland said it had not received any formal complaints.

At the meeting, councillors were also told that Oban's pavements had been very icy during the recent cold weather.

Mr McCuish, chairman of

ACHA, the Argyll Community Housing Association, said it had offered to help Argyll and Bute Council grit the pavements, but it had not been taken up.

'The [council] guys are doing a tremendous job; they are out day and night for the council. ACHA offered to help but unfortunately that was refused,' said Councillor McCuish, who is also deputy provost at the authority.

'They never took up ACHA's offer of help which might have helped the situation we are in at the moment.'

Pupil assistants saved in budget

Pupil support assistants are to be spared the axe as part of Argyll and Bute Council's budget-setting process in February.

Councillors have also decided school crossing patrollers will be safe.

A report which went before the council's policy and resources committee at its

December meeting showed that pupil support assistants were one of many savings options being proposed.

It was estimated that scrapping them would have seen 38 jobs lost, but councillors overseeing the budget process have confirmed that it will not be recommended.

The authority will set its 2021/22 budget at a Skype meeting on Thursday, February 25.

The authority's deputy

leader, Helensburgh Central Conservative councillor Gary Mulvaney, who chairs the council's budget working group, said: 'While the council will not finally consider its budget until the end of February, and there are undoubtedly still difficult long-term decisions to be made to safeguard services within tight public finances, it made sense to provide some re-assurance to those particular staff affected.'



If you need help to pay for a loved one's funeral and receive certain benefits, you can apply for Funeral Support Payment. It's a one-off payment towards burial or cremation costs and more. People typically receive around £1700 in financial support and you can apply after a person has died until 6 months after the date of their funeral.

Find out if you're eligible and apply at mygov.scot/funeral-support-payment
Or call our specially trained team on **0800 182 2222**



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Coming to a device near you!

Oban Phoenix Cinema is getting ready to bring the curtain up on a brand new initiative that will deliver a selection of independent films and favourite 'must-see' movies right into the heart of the home, writes Fiona Scott.

Working with INDY Cinema Group Ltd, the community-run venue is preparing to launch an on-demand cinema project which will allow it to provide a screening platform to film lovers across the region and beyond.

'Due to Covid-19 we have no idea when we are going to be able to reopen,' said Oban Phoenix general manager Jennie Larney, pictured.

'In the meantime we have been working away behind the



scenes to come up with ideas on how to deliver this much-needed community resource during the current lockdown.

'For me and countless others nothing can beat actually going along and enjoying the cinema experience, but people can't leave their homes right now and some may not feel confident enough to do so for quite some while yet. This resource will provide a good alternative.

'We are fine tuning the details but would ask that the community continues to support us by using the Oban Phoenix screening platform when it arrives.'

Ian Brown, group CEO and founder of INDY Cinema

Group Ltd, told us: 'INDY are proud to be working with the Oban Phoenix to bring its own custom-curated streaming platform to its audience.'

'INDY set up this streaming solution with our partners at Shift 72 in order not just to help cinemas in these tough times while cinemas are closed, but to create a long-term engagement channel for our cinema partners to reach, grow and develop their film and cultural offering for years to come.

'We have brought together around 20 unique cinemas with a shared vision of working together to strengthen the cinema sector, increase film consumption and help get new filmmakers' voices out to the world through this innovative collaboration.'

More details will follow in the coming weeks.

OT

Oban Pride tackles prejudice during LGBT History Month

by Fiona Scott
fscott@obantimes.co.uk



Oban Pride have launched their virtual programme of events for LGBT History Month taking place throughout February.

Founded in 1994 by a Missouri High School Teacher, LGBT History Month is an annual month-long observance of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and trans history and the history of the gay rights and related civil rights movements.

With many events cancelled this year due to Covid restrictions, Oban Pride is delighted that it has managed to put together an online program which will run across all its media platforms throughout February.

Oban Pride chairman Phill Dexter told us: 'Although we can't have our annual



Oban Pride Chairman Phill Dexter and committee member Anna Gregory launch their LGBT History Month virtual programme.

February fundraiser at the Lorne Bar this year we are looking forward to holding our virtual programme for LGBT History month.'

Starting on Monday, February 1, the Oban Pride social media channels (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) will have information about a different LGBTQ+ Celebrity,

Advocate or Activist every day looking at how they have supported LGBTQ+ people and rights during their lives.

'Each Thursday evening (6pm) some of our committee will be going live on Facebook, Twitter and our website www.obanpride.com to talk about LGBTQ+ history, issues and look at some of the meaning

behind different items associated with the LGBTQ+ community,' added Phill.

Known as Purple Friday, the last Friday in February (26th) is an opportunity for members of the community to stand up against homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, as well as showing support for LGBTQ+ equality.

Phill explained: 'The day is named after the purple strip on the LGBTQ+ Rainbow flag that is recognised around the world. Each coloured strip on the flag has a different meaning and the purple strip represents spirit.'

'On Purple Friday we will be having a Virtual Purple Party, which will be live streamed on our Facebook and Twitter pages and our website from 7pm. The evening will include live music, quizzes, stories and even some giveaways, and will be rounded off by our fortnightly radio show on Oban FM - Oban Pride on the Waves - from 10pm onwards at 103.3 on your smart speaker and online.'

Upcoming dates for Oban Pride on the Waves, hosted by Crystal and Jay, are January 29, February 12, February 26, March 12 and March 26.

'We are delighted at being able to have such a full programme for LGBT History Month,' added Phill.

'It is only possible for us to deliver these virtual events due to funding from Equality Network through their National Lottery Recovery Fund which they use to support LGBTQ+ groups and organisations throughout Scotland.'

'At Oban Pride, equality is at the forefront of what we're working together towards. Our programmes and activities are designed to be a catalyst that help community members reach their goals and fulfil their potential.'

'Learn more about the positive impact we have and join us in bringing about positive change at www.obanpride.com, or @obanpride on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.'

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, and AITC 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 for regular updates.

Email info@bid4oban.co.uk



Oban Business Improvement District
www.bid4oban.co.uk





Sandy Wilkie says his settlement offer from NHS Highland was an insult.

Tax ruling still awaited on healing compensation

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



NHS Highland is still waiting for a ruling on the tax treatment for compensation received by bullying victims after the Sturrock review.

Last year it emerged that compensation, being paid through payroll to staff who had experienced inappropriate behaviour including workplace bullying and harassment, was being taxed.

NHS Highland wrote to HMRC only last month, after some payments had already been awarded, to seek a ruling on how compensation payments are being treated.

David Garden, NHS Highland director of finance, recently confirmed there had still been no response when asked about it by Highlands and Islands MSP Donald Cameron.

Mr Cameron has now called for 'this episode' to be brought to a conclusion without any further delay.

'NHS staff deserve thanks and should certainly not find themselves still waiting for this matter to be resolved,' he said.

Although it had been noted in the compensation scheme

that payments would be subject to applicable tax and national insurance, there were different assumptions made about what that meant and how those payments would be made.

Highlands and Islands MSP Edward Mountain, who raised the issue of bullying compensation with the first minister on December 10 last year, said NHS Highland should have asked the tax question to HMRC months ago.

'These settlements should not be viewed as earnings...'

'I fully support the Healing Process but it is disappointing that bullying victims have seen their compensation taxed when I believe this could have been avoided. We should never forget that these settlements should not be viewed as earnings, you do not get a wage to be bullied,' he said.

It has also just emerged, via a Freedom of Information request, there were no NHS Highland meetings, including sub-committees, where the Healing Process compensation

payments were discussed. Also, legal advice taken before taxable payments were decided for any payouts to people who signed up for the Healing Process was not received in any formal documents or emails, but was discussed throughout the set up and launch of the process.

Sandy Wilkie, a former head of NHS human resources for Argyll and Bute's health and social care partnership, was the first victim of bullying

to be offered compensation. Mr Wilkie, who now lives down south and has set up a consultancy business, said in his view the Healing Process was 'badly designed' and that the HMRC was not consulted as it should have been about tax and national insurance matters.

'They first spoke to HMRC in mid-December by which time the first payouts had already been loaded and incorrectly coded on HR Payroll as Tax and

NI liable. So a level three victim expecting a £25,000 payout got £13,800 in their hand – and then had their benefits stopped.

'NHS Highland human resources seemed to have no understanding of the impact such news might have on some victims who were vulnerable, still suffering from mental health issues and perhaps even unemployed,' he said.

Mr Wilkie fears NHS Highland has 'taken one step forward in admitting bullying

but two steps back' and claims there are real risks the organisational culture 'remains toxic'.

'A number of us would like John Sturrock to be invited back to review progress, but I don't think NHSH would be brave enough to expose its mistakes,' he said, adding that ultimately it was 'probably going to need the politicians' questions, Freedom of Information requests and pressure from the media to continue to lift a lid on things.

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OT

More than 2,000 claim Universal Credit in Oban

More than 6,000 people in Argyll and Bute were claiming Universal Credit as of mid-November 2020, a report has revealed.

The document by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) also details the help which is at hand for people seeking employment in the area.

According to the report, a total of 2,059 people were claiming Universal Credit via the Oban Job Centre as at November 12, while 1,327 were doing so at the Helensburgh office. The Dunoon centre had 1,126 claimants while there were 956 at the office in Campbeltown, and 658 at the Rothesay headquarters.

A 'Job Finding Support' service has recently been started across the area, designed to

help people who have recently become unemployed, while a 'Job Entry: Targeted Support' scheme was due to start from Monday, January 25.

A DWP spokesperson said in the report: 'Job Finding Support (JFS) is designed to help those who have recently become unemployed (up to 13 weeks), who may not need extensive support but would benefit from personalised support and advice to help them re-enter employment quickly and to improve the likelihood of securing sustainable paid employment.'

The Job Entry: Targeted Support (JETS) supports people who have been out of work and in receipt of benefit for at least 13 weeks, to help them gain paid employment, and maximise the opportunities to support people to find work.

Small Paws clarification

The Oban Times would like to clarify that Small Paws Rescue is not a registered charity.

The Seil-based rehoming centre which takes in cats, kittens and the occasional hedgehog helps stray or aban-

doned animals by providing them with veterinary care, food, and more with the help of generous donations. When the cats are healthy they are then adopted for free to a loving home.

Brian's family welcomes scientists' breakthrough

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



News that scientists are a step closer to being able to reverse motor neurone disease (MND) damage, has been welcomed as 'fantastic' by an Oban family.

John MacDonald, whose brother Brian died last year after battling the disease, said although it had come too late for his family, he hoped and prayed it would be the breakthrough everyone has been hoping for.

The study by University of Edinburgh experts, who have discovered a problem with MND patients' nerve cells could be repaired by repurposing drugs approved for other diseases, has also been greeted as 'exciting' by MND charities, including the foundation set up by Scots rugby legend Doddie Weir.

Retired firefighter Brian had hoped to take part in a ground-breaking drugs trial in search of new treatment when Covid hit and lockdown stopped it.

More than 1,500 people are diagnosed with the degenerative condition in the UK every year. There is no known cure and more than half die within two years of diagnosis.

Scientists have found that in human stem cell models of MND, the long part of the motor neuron cell that connects to the muscle is actually shorter than in healthy cells, impairing the power supply that travels up them. Boosting that power supply can help protect from degeneration.

Dr Arpan Mehta, who led the study at Euan MacDonald Centre for MND research, said work was already under way to identify existing licensed



Brian MacDonald's family welcomes news of a possible MND breakthrough by scientists.

drugs that could boost that power supply and repair damaged motor neurons. This will then pave the way to test them in clinical trials,' he added.

Craig Stockton, the chief executive of MND Scotland, said the results of the research were another piece of the puzzle to finding an effective treatment. 'We look forward to seeing

if these positive results can be replicated for patients.

Once researchers have identified a drug they believe could have the desired effect, this treatment could then be fast-tracked for human trials using the pioneering MND-SMART clinical trial platform – into which MND Scotland has invested £1.5million.

'Researchers, clinicians, charities and supporters are all working hard to take us closer to finding a cure and by joining together we'll get to that day even sooner,' he said.

Brian MacDonald's brother John told The Oban Times: 'This is fantastic news. I wished it had come earlier to save our Brian but this will hopefully stop other families going through what we went through. I honestly hope and pray this is the breakthrough everyone has been hoping for.'

A&B HSCP Transforming Together
Argyll & Bute Health & Social Care Partnership

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Caroline Glen on **07812 485058**

Mid Argyll, Carradale and Muasdale
Jill Denton on **07707 868351**

Oban and Lorn
Kathy Graham on **07972 678923**



LOOK HIM IN THE EYES

AND TELL HIM YOU ALWAYS KEEP A SAFE DISTANCE.

Anthony Covid-19 patient

Around 1 in 3 people who have Covid-19 have no symptoms and are spreading it without knowing. Are you absolutely positive you're not one of them? Only go out if essential. Sticking to the rules stops the spread.

STAY HOME ▶ PROTECT THE NHS ▶ SAVE LIVES

OT

LETTERS

Write to us: send your letters to editor@obantimes.co.uk
or The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB**Remove Ganavan from local development plan 2**

This week, Oban Community Council heard from campaigners appealing to councillors on Argyll and Bute Council to come out against any development at Ganavan Sands.

While there have been no formal planning applications submitted, a large area has been pencilled in as a potential development area in the council's local development plan two.

Visit the beach on any given weekend and the area is teeming with children and families, dog walkers, walkers, runners, wild swimmers, youngsters on bicycles, and just those who want to grab a coffee at Dougie Dan's takeaway van and enjoy the view.

We agree with the Friends of Ganavan that any further development would be an 'appalling, inappropriate disaster', not just for those of us who spend time there for leisure and relaxation – for fun – but for visitors, too, who come to enjoy our beautiful home.

The council must right a wrong and remove Ganavan from the local development plan two, once and for all, and ensure that this precious outdoor space is not sold off to the highest bidder for a few people's financial gain and private benefit.

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 will not be printed. Please email: editor@obantimes.co.uk or write to: Letters page, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB.

The views expressed on our letters page are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of The Oban Times.

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**Thank you to key workers**

May I through your columns extend my thanks to key workers who, for nearly a year, have gone more than an extra mile to make sure the people across the length and breadth of Argyll and Bute have had access to health services, safe roads, all kinds of food, whether from shops or restaurants and takeaways, and the so many 'unseen' services which we are learning not to take for granted.

I am also heartened to see the community spirit whereby neighbours and friends continue to shop, collect prescriptions and phone those who have found themselves alone during this pandemic.

The Scottish Government, Argyll and Bute Council, local third sector groups and so many individuals have rallied round to collaborate and support others...I am proud to be part of this community. Perhaps Councillor Redman could remember this, rather than disappointingly nit picking during the most difficult weather conditions when many of us were out salting and gritting paths, lanes and pavements as he called into question the ability of those who were already at breaking point to work longer hours, be more organised or just get the job done.

As part of the community and as an elected representative of a powerful body – the local council, in fact a member of the administration of that council – I'd rather see him leading by example like many of his fellow councillors do rather than sniping from the sidelines.

I'd like to especially commend Councillor Jim Lynch who has been working on the ground to find out what his community challenges are and has gone about finding solutions without taking to the papers to tell us what he is going to do in the future.

Joy Cameron, Benderloch

Vaccination motivation

Instead of relief or complacency because vaccination has commenced locally, the question that needs to be answered is 'When will this urgent vaccination programme be finished?'

Rightly or wrongly, the government's priority order of vaccinations puts over 80s at the top of the queue. At 82+ and still not vaccinated, I want to be vaccinated now because I want the over 70s, which includes my wife, to be done urgently, the over 60s which includes my nephew, the over 40s which includes my son, the over 18s which includes many other relatives, and everyone over 18 vaccinated urgently because the dangers from delays are devastating.

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

ailean@obantimes.co.uk

Chunnaic mi bho chionn ghoirid cuideigin a' beachdachadh air na bheil dhinn a' dràibheadh an-diugh ann an càraichean cho tur eadar-dhealaichte bhon fheadhainn air an do dh'ionnsaich sinn! Abair gum bheil sin fìor, agus fìor a thaobh a h-uile seòrsa goireas agus fasan a tha toirt buaidh air ar beatha! Aig an àm seo den bhliadhna bidh cuid fhathast 's dòcha a' sabaid ri innealan ùra a fhuair iad mar thiodhlac Nollaige, agus nach tric a thuirt mi fhìn nach robh mi 'g iarraidh bhon fhòn-làimhe ach fònadh leatha! Tha mi cuideachd air foghlam, ma tha ceist agam a thaobh inneal den t-seòrsa, gum bheil freagairt, stiùireadh, agus glè thrìc foighidinn aig na h-oghaichean! Mo bheannachd orra!

Air ais aig na ciad càraichean air am bheil cuimhn' agam agus cha robh leithid de rud ri dòigh teasachaidh nam broinn, agus dh'fheumte deagh èideadh na bha neach a' siubhal annta sa gheamhradh. Cha robh dorsan neo uinneagan uabhasach druidte a bharrachd agus fiù 's ged a bhiodh, far an robh trafaig bha feum aig dràibhear a ghàirdean a shineadh a-mach tron uinneig a chomharrachadh cò 'n taobh a bha e dol a thionndadh. Suarach cho math 's a bha solais airson siubhal san dor-chadas, agus ged a bha suathair glanaidh air an sgàile-gaoithe cha robh iomradh air dòigh gus steall uisge a sputadh air aig an aon àm! Bhiodh gun teagamh daoine a' gabhail òrain

an-dràsta 's a-rithist, mar a bha riamh, is iad a' siubhal oir cha robh guth air rèidio neo dad dhen t-seòrsa ann an carbadan.

Aon rud air nach fhaigh mi fhìn seachad nuair a thèid mi gu taisbeanaidhean seann chàraichean, 's e cho beag, cumhang, 's a bha mòran den fheadhainn air an robh mi eòlach nam òige, 's air an do dh'ionnsaich mi. Bidh mi tric a' feuchainn ri dealbh a dhèanamh nam inntinn de dhithis cheatharnach fhear agus mhnathan air am fàsgadh ann an Austin A35, càr a bha cho bitheanta, neo am Morris Minor! Ach gu nàdarra bha daoine moiteil às na goireasan còmhdaich a bh' aca agus a bha a' comharrachadh adhartas, co-dhiù 's e mot-air-rothair, càr, neo fiù 's tractor, a dhèanadh turas sgiobalta dhaibh gu ruige bùth, cèilidh, neo eaglais!

Theagamh gur e aithne air sùbailteachd ghoireasan a dh'fhàg barrachd chomasan gan cur an innealan de gach seòrsa an-diugh is, mar eisimpleir, fòn-làimhe air chomas dealbhan is fuaim a chlàradh 's a chraoladh, is an t-eadar-lìon a rannsachadh. Fhad 's a bha càraichean ag atharrachadh dh'atharraich seirbheisean slàinte cuideachd, is chan e a-mhàin gum bheil banachdaich air tinneas an a bha bitheanta agus marbhtach, tha mòran dhiubh gan toirt seachad còmhla. 'S dòcha gun tig latha far am bi banachdach Covid 19 agus fiù gan cur còmhla cuideachd?

In my own experience during the Birmingham University Medical Centre Smallpox outbreak (August 1978), the whole of Birmingham, including me, was vaccinated in three weeks. Throughout the UK, various parts have already achieved speedy vaccinations. Extraordinary things have been done because people were really motivated to do so. Argyll and Bute in days would not be an extraordinary achievement if the motivation was there. I am sure it is.

The essential ingredients to speedy vaccinations are to maximise TIME for these, vaccination CENTRES, VACCINATORS, NO WASTAGE. The coronavirus destroys 24/7. Our response must be beyond normal GP surgery hours and go 24/7 or at least local supermarket hours (8am-11pm). Vaccination centres, beyond surgeries.

And AVOID WASTAGE of left-over vials of vaccine by having standby patients on call.

The local economy, the education of local children need it to happen.

Lockdown started on my 82nd birthday 23.03.20. May I hope it and the vaccination programme will have finished before my 83rd.

Tom Dolan, Taynuilt.

Vaccination push

Recently at First Minister's Questions, Nicola Sturgeon conceded she will miss her target to vaccinate 560,000 Scots by the end of January. Vaccines are our best route to reducing restrictions, returning life closer to normal and rebuilding Scotland's communities.

Cllr Alastair Redman, Kintyre & Islands.

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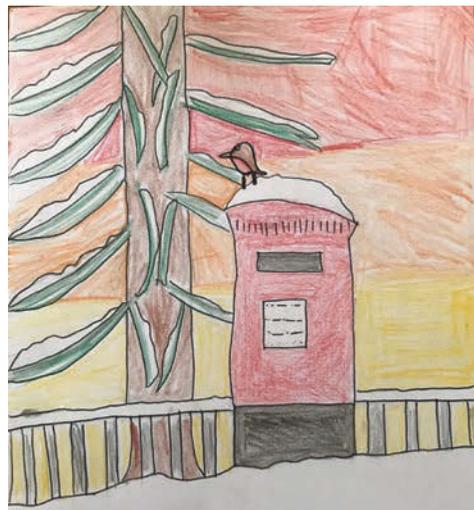
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Exclusive Newsletter



DISTRICT NEWS



Ho ho ho: Joseph Owen creates a heart-warming traditional festive scene.



Impressionistic - P6 pupil Lily Davis' entry.

700 pupils show their brilliant creative skills

Eleven schools and more than 700 pupils took part in a Christmas card competition run by Oban Rotary Club, writes Ellis Butcher.

The club decided the annual contest should still go ahead following the cancellation of the winter festival and the reindeer parade, which usually provided the winners.

The aim was to bring some glitter and creative sparkle to the festive period for children and it proved popular with the number of entries up by nearly 100.

The creative talents of primary school children in Oban and Lorn continue to impress judges.

They had the difficult task selecting winners and runners up for the two age groups - P1-P3, and P4-P7.

This year's theme was Let It Snow and judges Val Leckie and Val Hamilton, art and design co-ordinators from the Rockfield Centre, were particularly impressed with the wide range of interpretations of the theme.

The P1-P3 category winner was Eleanor from Kilninver Primary School and runner-up was Marley MacPhee from Rockfield Primary School.

Lily Davis, of Arinagour Primary School, Isle of Coll, was the winner of the P4-P7 category and



Eleanor of Kilninver Primary the winner of the P1-P3 section of the Oban Rotary Club's Christmas card competition

Joseph Owen, from the Strath of Appin Primary School was runner-up. Covid restrictions meant that rotary president Kees Van Rein was unable to personally congratulate the winners.

However, prizes of 'Love Oban' vouchers and certificates were presented to the children by their head teachers.

Jack picks up on roadside litter problem

Six-year-old Jack Grant was quick to pick up on a litter problem when rubbish started spoiling a roadside near where he lives, writes Kathie Griffiths.

Upset by the mess, the Kilchrenan Primary School pupil got little brother Hamish, three, and mum Issy, with baby Rory in tow, to help pick up the discarded cans, crisp packets, tissues - even takeaway leftovers - and has now asked dad Douglas to build him a bin cart to take on his regular clean-up rounds.

A big fan of save-the-planet crusader and broadcaster David Attenborough, Jack wants to do his best to keep the Ardanaisig road close to

his home waste-free and sent a letter and poster to The Oban Times asking us to help him stop the litter bugs.

'Hamish is a bit handy,' says Jack, who wears overalls with gloves and uses a makeshift grabber when out.

Jack thinks the rubbish is coming from drivers or dropped by people walking on the road, although sometimes it might have fallen out of their pockets by mistake, he says, adding: 'Can you tell it in the news for people to stop dropping litter please?'

Jack is hoping, once lockdown allows, to get some schoolfriends to join him on his mission.



Jack with some of the litter he's picked up.

At random

MARTIN LAING

editor@obantimes.co.uk



Wishful thinking

I had an interesting encounter the other day. I was walking in Stirling (no, I did not break any lockdown rules or restrictions) when I fell into conversation with a public servant working for the local municipal authority keeping the streets clean.

He engaged me in casual chat because I was wearing an Oban Live baseball hat and he wondered what that signified. I explained, of course, that it was an annual two-day music festival - probably the world's best - albeit it didn't take place last year and wouldn't this year for obvious reasons.

I don't know the street cleaner's name but he looked so wistful talking about Oban and its people that I inquired if he had any links to the area. My new acquaintance - a gentleman of similar vintage to myself, I suspect - told me he was originally from Tiree, though he had not been back there for donkeys' years.

He recollected wonderful times and said he loved the ferry rides, and to other islands as well as Tiree. We both reminisced at some length about how blessed the Argyll and the Isles area has been.

It fair made me yearn to get back to Oban.

Heroes in the making

Regular readers will know of the extremely high regard I have for RNLI and all its staff and volunteers.

So I was delighted to read last week that two new recruits had joined Oban lifeboat, the Mora Edith MacDonald.

They are both Oban men, Andy Lockwood and Gillies Pagan, the latter of whom is an acquaintance of mine. Andy has significant maritime experience being a skipper himself whereas Gillies, who runs Fiuran real estate agency with wife Laura, admits to only a little seafaring experience.

The important thing is that both guys have volunteered and will - along with the other crew - risk their lives to help others. Both told The Oban Times they wanted to give something back to the community in which they live. They and their new colleagues are all heroes to my mind.

And, as pledged last week, I've rambled on without once mentioning the word Covid. Oh damn...

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BUSINESS NEWS

Mid-February lockdown 'heavy blow to business'

The extension of lockdown until mid-February at the earliest is a 'heavy blow' to the business community.



Dr Liz Cameron, chief executive of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce, has called on the Scottish Government and UK Government to provide more help in the upcoming budgets.

She said: 'The extended lockdown restrictions will come as a heavy blow to much of Scotland's business community which is already struggling to keep its head above water and which now faces further uncertainty over when it will be able to open its doors again.'

'We cannot emphasise enough the importance of increasing the pace of distributing business support grants; this must be accelerated in order to prevent the significant collapse of businesses and jobs.'

'We also call on the Scottish Government to use the Scottish Budget to outline measures to help restore much needed confidence and investment.'

'We also urge the UK Government to seriously consider the clear need to extend the furlough scheme beyond April 2021 and outline further initiatives to protect business and jobs at the UK Budget in March.'

HAVE YOUR SAY
email us at editor@obantimes.co.uk

£38m of Covid support to Argyll and Bute businesses

by Ellis Butcher
ebutcher@obantimes.co.uk



Around 4,000 businesses across Argyll and Bute have been supported by a total of £38 million since the outbreak of the pandemic, according to Argyll and Bute Council.

The local authority has been in charge of administering a variety of different funds announced by the Scottish Government.

Funds have been made available to a range of business sectors which are required by law to close or modify their operations.

Grants are generally based on rateable value and paid every four weeks in arrears and have been topped-up with one-off larger payments.

The support for hospitality, non-essential retail and leisure businesses which are required to close was increased on January 11 in an announcement by Kate Forbes MSP, cabinet secretary for finance.

She said in addition to the four-weekly grants, additional one-off grants of the following would be made available:

- £25,000 for larger hospitality businesses
- £6,000 for smaller hospitality businesses
- £9,000 for larger retail and leisure businesses
- £6,000 for smaller retail and leisure businesses

Criticism

There has been criticism from opposition Conservatives in parliament that grants are not reaching businesses quickly enough.

Donald Cameron, MSP for the Highlands and Islands, called the funding announcement 'belated'.

'We can only hope that this attempt to catch up lives up to the rhetoric and promises,' he said.

However, Councillor Robin Currie, leader of Argyll and Bute Council, said the authori-

ty had been working 'incredibly hard' to help businesses access funding. 'To help safeguard livelihoods and recover the area's economy, these grants are essential financial lifelines to so many of our communities.'



Where to get help

Mr Currie, an Islay-based Liberal Democrat, said the council's business support teams had been working 'round the clock'.

He said: 'Recovery is key to the ongoing success for the area.'

'There is no denying that these are difficult times but it is important to remember we will move on from this.'

Argyll and Bute Council said help and support for businesses could be found on its website and people should check if they are eligible before contacting the council.

Please visit the website at www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/coronavirus-information-businesses

The council said that if new funding was announced, it would invite applications once it received the criteria from the Scottish Government.

For example, there was a recent taxi fund announced on January 18, which pledges a one-off £1,500 grant to eligible cabbies.

The council said: 'We are awaiting further information from the Scottish Government on how the scheme will operate and will contact drivers directly as soon as we are in a position to do so.'

Businesses can also keep up to date with new funds as they launch, by signing up to email alerts from findbusinesssupport.gov.scot

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Seafood firms are racking up '£1m losses a day' – MSP

Businesses are being left 'on the brink of collapse'

Brexit and its 'devastating impact' on Scotland's fish and seafood exporters has been slammed by Highlands and Islands MSP Maree Todd.

The SNP representative said businesses had been left on the 'brink of collapse' and had reported losses of more than £1 million a day.

Extensive paperwork and red tape have created barriers to trade in Europe since New Year's Day in a sector which depends on getting fresh produce to customers as quickly as possible.

Ms Todd said businesses were given just a few days' notice to prepare for the end of the transition period after the UK Government struck an 11th hour deal with the EU on Christmas Eve.

Ms Todd said: 'Having grown up in Ullapool, I understand the devastating impact these delays will be having on businesses and livelihoods which depend on fisheries as a source of income.'

She has written to the Cabinet Office, Michael Gove and George Eustice, to communicate the realities of an 'extreme Brexit deal' on the Highlands.

She suggested that a 'six-month grace period' should have been agreed with the EU to help adjust – as the Scottish Government had pushed for.

'What we're seeing now is a once-thriving and lucrative industry literally being left out to rot,' she said. On Tuesday, DEFRA announced that



Maree Todd MSP meets a local fisherman, prior to the latest lockdown restrictions.

seafood exporters UK-wide would receive access to up to £23 million of government funding.

It said the money was designed to support businesses most adversely affected by the pandemic and the new requirements for exporting.

But critics condemned it as a drop in the ocean compared to the losses, and there are also concerns that claiming funds could prove bureaucratic.

Ms Todd commented: 'To put that in perspective, the Scottish Government delivered £23.5 million to the Scottish sector alone in response to Covid-19 last year.'

'The Scottish Government was not consulted on this funding package and is yet to see its full details, but it appears that not all businesses will be covered, such as fishing vessels which land but don't export directly.'

DEFRA has published nine different ways it said it had supported the sector.

It added: 'Support will be available immediately and paid retrospectively to cover losses incurred since January 1, 2021.'

'The scheme will be targeted at small and medium enterprises and the maximum claim available to individual operators will be £100,000.'

'In addition to funding, the UK Government will provide further support to businesses in adapting to new export processes.'

'DEFRA and HMRC will be offering targeted, proactive and hands-on support to fisheries exporters to help them successfully meet the new requirements.'

'This includes a new training package and focused workshop sessions.'



Mull chandlery on the market

A marine chandlery business on the Isle of Mull is up for sale.

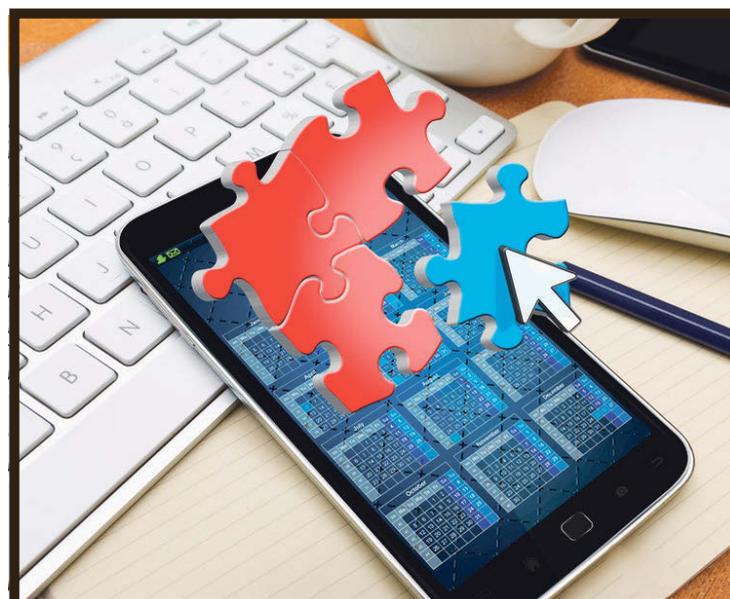
Seafare, on Main Street, Tobermory, is being sold by independent chartered surveyors DM Hall. It says offers over £135,000 are invited plus stock to be sold at valuation with no VAT payable on the purchase. Founded in 1977, Seafare had enjoyed more than 20 years of trading under the current owners, said DM Hall.

It has enjoyed high levels of repeat custom from the area's fishing fleet, boating enthusiasts and word-of-mouth recommendations from customers, it said.

In addition to the sale of standard chandlery items, it also markets nautical clothing, footwear and a range of items for outdoor activities including campervans.

The property is within a small terrace of retail units in Tobermory and within a short walking distance of the pier, harbour and marina overlooking the bay.

Claire Hutton, of DM Hall, is managing the sales process and said: 'Seafare has an excellent reputation with its suppliers and has been, and continues to be, well supported by islanders and boat enthusiasts, with people travelling from further afield to access their facilities. The business has been successfully operated by its founder since its establishment, but due to personal circumstances this unique business opportunity is now available for purchase. Anyone wishing for more information should contact Claire.Hutton@dmhall.co.uk or on 07876 541654.'



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Continued from last week.

'The house is of comparatively modern erection, most substantially built, rough cast and slated, with lofty tower, presenting a commanding appearance in harmony with the surroundings. The accommodation is as follows: on the second floor – two bedrooms in the tower, approached by the principal staircase. A secondary staircase leads to seven bedrooms, WC, and boxroom. On the first floor entered from the north gallery, two large bedrooms and smaller bedroom or dressing room between.

'Out of the south gallery is a large bedroom at the end, two smaller bedrooms and bathroom fitted with large bath with hot and cold supply. The west gallery leads to a large principal bedroom with south and west aspects. Housemaids' closets and WC, small south bedroom, two other large west bedrooms, two adjoining dressing rooms, or bedrooms, corner bedroom with west and north aspect, and maid's room. Hot and cold water are laid on to 13 of these bedrooms and to taps on second and first floor landings. On the ground floor, entrance and staircase hall, capital dining room (22 ft 6 ins by 15 ft 6 ins, exclusive of sideboard recess); elegant drawing room with bay (23 ft by 22 ft); handsome billiard hall (30 ft by 16 ft.6 ins and 33ft high) with gallery along three sides. Cheerful library, garden hall and cloak room, smoke room, bachelor's bedroom, hat and boot cupboards, telephone room. Passage to lavatory with hot and cold supply, two WCs, gun room, with separate entrance from the grounds, sheltered by a waiting porch with ghillie's seat and WC entered from outside.

'The domestic offices are well shut off, and comprise servants' hall, butler's pantry, bedroom, large kitchen and scullery, housekeeper's room, drying room, WC, boot and lamp rooms, store room, range of larders for game, meat, pastry and vegetables, covered yard, coal cellars, side entrance and passage etc. Deer skinning and weighing house, with venison larder over, forming a dwarf south-east tower. Hidden from observation among the shrubberies is a bothy, substantially built, for nine to 12 men in three divisions.



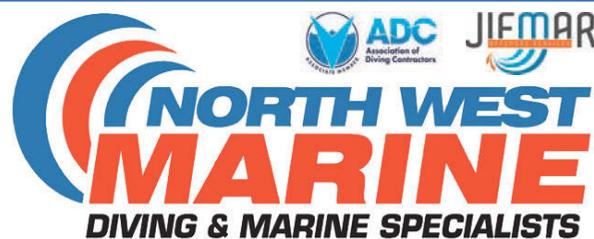
'On the strath, about 80ft below, is the original farmhouse of Glencripesdale (the former main house) occupied by the head keeper. The farm buildings etc are roomy, modern and substantial and include two byres, two barns, silo house (so constructed as to be filled on the level), cattle sheds, cart shed, stable with large loft over. Yacht stores and workshop, a second large cattle shed, divided; bothy for two men, laundry with washing and ironing rooms, water laid on, boiler house and drying green. Here also are the kennels with enclosed runs. Pleasure grounds and policies, including lawns with broad gravelled sweeps around, and amidst thriving plantations of luxuriantly grown rhododendrons in rich profusion; shady serpentine walk radiate from thence through the woods to the glen, up the hillsides and down to the shore, where there is a stone jetty. A tidal dock for a steam yacht of over one hundred tons is at the mouth of the burn, with flood gates for scouring it out in winter.

Sheltered cove with bathing shed and beaching place for yachts and boats, inside of moorings. Glencripesdale House is abundantly supplied with pure water from a spring high up in the hills which by natural gravitation supplies a large tank, from whence it is carried all over the premises. The sanitation has been effected on the most approved modern principles, and is in thorough working order. In the valley below the knoll on which the mansion house stands, and near the farmery, are paddocks, meadow and cultivated land, and these with the home woods and plantations, lawns, garden and policies, comprise together about 250 acres, and are fenced off against deer, the boundary extending from the loch side, west of the Demesne, some distance up the hill, returning again to the shore eastward.

'Two roads have been constructed in a thoroughly sound and permanent manner, most creditably engineered, with easy gradients, crossing the burn by a substantial and pictur-

esque stone bridge, giving a lovely view of the burn rushing along its rocky bed between its wooded and craggy slopes. One road leads to the beach, running along the hanging woods for two miles to Camusalloch, and could be carried on to Laudale House (where the public road begins) without interfering with the deer forest. The other road runs up the glen for about one mile and a half in a south-easterly direction, and from thence a bridle path leads up the mountain side, past the fishing loch of Duncan's lochan, at an altitude of about 1,000 feet (where there is a small fishing lodge) and then winds down to Laudale House. From many points of this pass views of extreme grandeur and majestic beauty are obtained.

'Laudale House stands back from the loch, with rich pasture and meadow land intervening, in a sheltered bay, nestling under the wooded slope of lofty hills which rise precipitously at the back. A considerable stretch of cultivated land runs along the shore and affords rich graz-



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Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday 28 January, 2021** are listed below with differences for major ports listed alongside. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

29	0608 3.9	1	0152 0.6	3	0318 0.8	5	0509 1.2	Ardrishaig	-5.35
	1238 1.1		0753 4.0		0916 3.7		1109 3.2	Campbeltown	-5.30
	F 1835 3.8		M 1427 1.0		W 1553 1.3		F 1800 1.6	Crinan	-0.47
			2016 3.7		2142 3.3		2355 3.0	Islay Port Ellen	2.00
30	0035 0.8	2	0233 0.7	4	0409 1.0	6	0621 1.4	Lochboisdale	+0.30
	0643 4.0		0832 3.9		1006 3.5		1246 3.0	Mallaig	+0.25
	SA 1314 1.0		TU 1507 1.1		TH 1650 1.4		SA 1920 1.7	Portree	+0.55
	1907 3.8		2056 3.5	Ⓞ 2238 3.1				Tobermory	+0.16
								Dover	+5.30

WEATHER

Thursday

Sleet and a moderate breeze
Temperatures 2°C to 5°C.

Friday

Sunny intervals and a gentle breeze
Temperatures 0°C to 5°C.

WEEKEND OUTLOOK

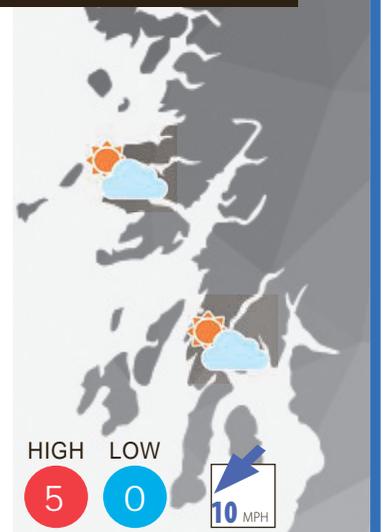
Saturday

Sunny intervals and a gentle breeze
Temperatures 0°C to 4°C.

Sunday

Light rain and a moderate breeze
Temperatures 2°C to 4°C.

FRIDAY FORECAST



Techniques – part 2



Main photograph: Horace Newton (white beard) and family having a picnic in Glen Cripesdale; and above, Laudale House. Photographs supplied by Iain Thornber.

ing ground for cattle and yields excellent crops of corns and roots.

The house is a substantial structure of stone with slated roof, and consisted originally of two storeys with wings, but in recent years a large outlay has been incurred in the erection of an additional story, and now forms a capital shooting box and factor's residence; it contains five bedrooms, bathroom and WC, on the second floor; large sitting room, two bedrooms and store room on the first; two sitting rooms, small office and store room on the ground. In the west wing is the kitchen, scullery and other offices with two rooms over, and in the east wing two rooms upstairs and two rooms down. The outbuildings consist of dairy, boiler house, coal and wood sheds, meat house, etc in an enclosed yard, outside of which in the farmery, comprising large byre, stable, cart shed, hay house, cattle house, silo and hay shed on the strath, with labourer's cottage.

'There is also a shooting lodge at the other end of the estate, at the head of Loch Teacuis known as Kinloch-Teacuis, so called from its proximity to the Kinloch River, which rushes down the mountain behind from a height of some 1,300 feet, and forms a beautiful cascade

at a short distance from the house. There are five bedrooms, bathroom and WC, upstairs. On the ground floor are two parlours, kitchen and other conveniences. Capital farm buildings including modern byre for 20 head, hay house, smearing house, store, stabling etc. Contiguous are excellent parks, arable land and pastures under the hills up the glen and for some distance along the shore towards Rahoy, which is a good steading with dwelling house and needful buildings.

'Conveniently placed in different parts of the property are shepherds' and labourers' cottages and steadings, notably one at Lochhead where there is also a byre; and the same at Achleek, the house there having two storeys, byre and smearing house and cottage. At Camusalloch there is a comfortable house and at Liddesdale a shepherd's house, gamekeeper's lodge, kennels and byre. At Achagavel a specially good cottage for shepherd; as also at Lurga. On Carna's Isle is a crofter's cottage, and outbuildings, and a shepherd's house. It may be specially noted that on the whole of this large estate there is only one crofter, a fact which will commend itself to the sportsman as being indeed a rarity on a property such as this.

DOWN MEMORY LANE

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



This picture was taken on July 17 1986. Mr Willie Hunter, vice chairman of Argyll and Bute District Council, exchanges plaques with the crew of HMS Odin. Their commanding officer LtC Avery holds a figure of the god Odin, which once graced the top of the flagstaff on the HMS Odin and gives rise to the crew motto: 'despite my blind eye I see'.



This photograph was taken on August 4 1992 and shows the Fort Augustus Gala Queen but can anyone put names to these gorgeous faces?





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LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT

YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S ON IN ARGYLL AND LOCHABER

Annual outing is light in darkness

Oban FM's Campbell Cameron takes his seat as Celtic Connections hosts its first ever virtual festival.

It's a real dilemma. Here we are, locked down in January and it's tough. We would like to jump in the car and head for Glasgow for many reasons, but we are patient.

The shining light is the vaccination wave to come, and is only reflected and added to by the wall of marvellous sound emanating from Glasgow's Celtic Connections cheering our souls.

From the terrific opening film sequence of Glasgow visitor attractions extolling us to 'dream now - visit later' to the mellifluous voice of Karine Polwart inviting us to 'Come on away in' at the opening the festival celebration concert, many emotions flooded through and grown men and women let their emotions flow as reported in social media. Oh the delight, the relief was wonderful to behold.

The 2021 CC Big Band was not



as large as the Grit Orchestra of earlier socially together years, but its combined talent was nonetheless a sight to behold. Duncan Chisholm charmed us with his uniquely melodic fid-

dle and the Scottish Ensemble in tow.

Since Friday January 15, we have been glued to the TV each night casting the succession of great acts from the internet

onto our screen. Since March 2020, much of our lives has gone online, and the world wide web has us shopping, talking, doing business and banking, but nothing has gone online

Karen Matheson gave an outstanding performance, with songs from her new album.

Photograph: Gaele Beri

more successfully than music. Celtic Connections festival director Donald Shaw saw the light.

We have had Breabach, Shooglenifty, Ross Ainslie's Sanctuary Band, Rant, Talisk, Chris Stout and Catriona MacKay, and the Paul MacKenna Band who all deserve a mention for being fabulous - but Karen Matheson, Gness, and the Blue Rose Code excelled for me, deserving special commendation.

Karen Matheson is familiar, of course, both as a solo artist and vocalist with Capercaillie. Her new album, from which she selected some tracks, proves she remains at the top of her game. Still Time rends the heart and is out now as a single to be proud of.

Blue Rose Code have been on the radar for a while but until the other night I hadn't really engaged. Now I am a fully paid

up fan of Ross Wilson (for he is Blue Rose Code) because his talent in both songwriting and vocal terms is enthralling, with his country rock band augmenting his Alt folk style marvellously.

Gness were the final act to grace the stage at Benderloch Palladium back before lockdown and the Orkney-based band had us back in the wee reading room gig within the first few notes. Warm, cosy, cooied in, with a wee dram in hand and a great band. They are marvellous online - but live, well, that's another level!

Haste ye back those fine nights, but in the meantime Celtic Connections in virtual terms has its merits no doubt and there are a few more days to go for you to get the vibe!

Tickets and passes are available at www.celticconnections.com and the festival runs until February 2.

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John McPhee

Tracking the journey of Scotland's top motorcycle racer



John McPhee - From the beginning

With a mad keen amateur motocross rider for a father and a former Scottish Road Racing Championship 'Rookie of the Year' and BSB Superstock race winner in the family, John McPhee's interest in motorcycles was hardly surprising.

Dad, Alasdair, raced a Honda CR250 in local motocross events and the annual beach event at Weston-super-Mare, while Uncle Mark, campaigned a Yamaha R1 and Suzuki GSXR 1000 in the Scottish and British national championships.

'Racing bikes is something I have wanted to do for as long as I can remember,' said John, 'I dreamed of making a career from it but never really thought back then that I would.'

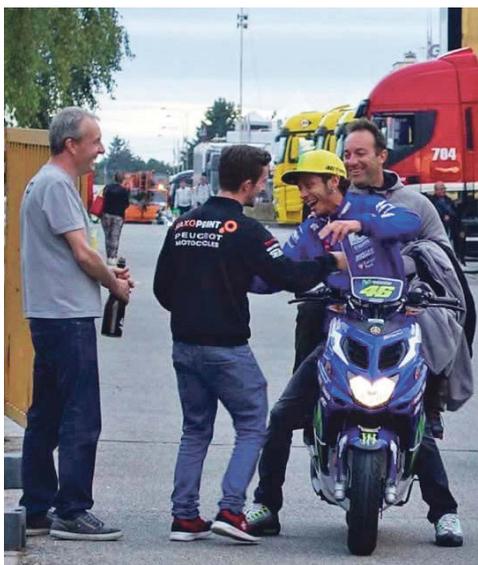
With bikes well and truly in his blood, John was bought an electric bicycle at the age of three and acquired a Yamaha PW50 at five. By the age of eight he was competing with the Oban Youth Motocross Club, rising through the ranks from 50cc to 85cc machines over the course of the next six years before signing off with a class championship in each year.

'This was when I really got a passion for racing,' he added.

'We used to travel around a lot with my dad and uncle and that was when the love of road racing really came to the fore.'

When John turned 12 the family bought an Aprilia 125 for a season-long Formula 125 campaign in the Scottish Championship, but after just two races the plans had to be put on hold for a year when he caught meningitis.

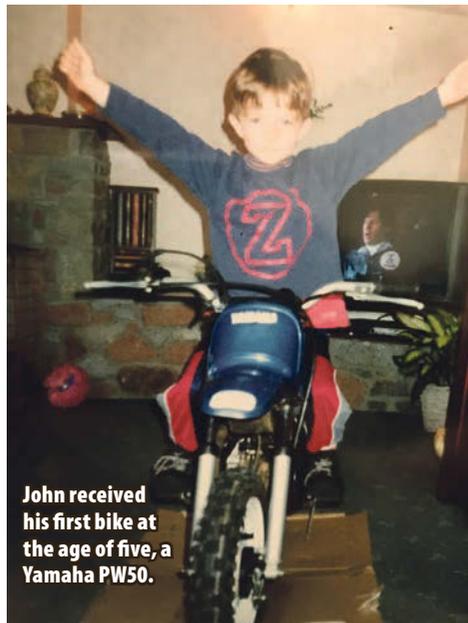
John resumed racing in 2007 and contested 15 races in the Scottish, North East of England and Melville Championships, claiming his first win and a total of seven podium finishes. A return to the championships in 2008 brought more success. He ended the year as triple Formula 125 champion courtesy of 29 wins



Multiple Moto GP World Champion Valentino Rossi stops by to congratulate John on his first ever World Champion race win in Brno, Czech Republic, in 2016.

and 37 podium finishes. His rise through the ranks signalled it was time to move on to tougher challenges and in 2009 he moved up a gear from Formula 125 to GP125 in the British Championship.

An uncompetitive bike impeded progress initially until KRP team boss Mark Keen spotted the privateer's potential and lent a hand with



John received his first bike at the age of five, a Yamaha PW50.

tuning and preparation. Results improved but a broken ankle eventually cut short his season.

He finished 36th in the championship overall and 11th in the integral U17s ACU Academy Cup but Keen had seen enough to recognise a race winner. As a result, in 2010 he joined the KRP squad for a full season in the British 125GP squad.

His first win came in the third round at Oulton Park after a race-long battle with the then-reigning champion James Lodge only for it to be disallowed due to a discrepancy between two sets of weighing scales used by the organisers.

But by the year-end the young rider from Oban had notched up a win that was allowed and four podiums to finish fifth in the championship and runner-up in the ACU Academy Cup.

In 2011, with backing from the Racing Steps Foundation (RSF), he continued with the KRP squad racing to 10th place in his rookie year in the CEV Buckler 125GP Championship in Spain and winning wildcard entries to three World Championship Grand Prix. His best placing was 15th in the British GP at Silverstone.

'When the RSF took me on and took me to Spain it was a real turning point for me,' said John.

'Up until then we had still been a small family run unit and were having to more or less fund ourselves. Spain is the central hub for Moto GP for two wheel racing. I realised then that if I wanted to make a career out of it then now was the time to knuckle down and prove myself.'

And that he did.

In 2012 John returned to the CEV Buckler Championship in the new 250cc four-stroke Moto3 category. John came seventh in the Championship, taking two podiums across the season. He also raced in the Moto3 World Championship in eight out of its 18 rounds, placing 36th.

2013 saw John riding with Jack Miller for SAXOPRINT RTG in his first Moto3 World Championships. He remained with the team for the 2014 season alongside new teammate Efen Vazquez, and 2015 with Alexis Masbou.

The following year he switched to the Peugeot Motorcycles Saxoprint squad, continuing to make his mark on the Moto3 category. Despite ongoing technical issues and injury he took

a stunning maiden victory in the rain at Brno.

Having raced with the newly created British Talent Team in 2017, John joined the KTM powered CIP Green Power Team in 2018, while 2019 saw him competing in the Moto3 World Championship with the Petronas Sprinta Moto3 Team, with whom he had a successful 2020 season.

12-year-old John competed as a novice at East Fortune in 2007 on his first ever road race bike.



John and his mum Maggie.



John and his dad Alasdair.

The Petronas years and looking ahead

Having made the decision to continue his career in Moto3 rather than making the step up to Moto2, Connel race ace John McPhee signed with the Petronas Sprinta race team in the summer of 2018.

And he has never looked back since.

'Petronas came to me in June 2018 which was pretty early as most things don't happen in our season until around August,' he told us.

'They were the biggest team in the paddock at that point and I was struck by their professionalism, so I jumped at the chance.'

'It was at that point I made the decision to stay in Moto3 because I knew that with them I had a great chance at fighting to become World Champion.'

While John makes all the important career decisions himself, he is not averse to taking advice.

'I always discuss everything I do with my family,' he added, 'They have always been there, watch every race and I will never stop being grateful for their support.'

'Peter Ball from the RSF has also been a great help to me, as well as my good friend and ex-racer Michael Laverty.'

'I'm pretty happy with the choices I have made so far. It's pretty difficult to get into the World Championships, so to have been there for nine years now has been fantastic and something I would never have dreamed of when I first started racing.'

'Obviously I would like to step up at some point. I have a target of Moto2 and then maybe onto GP, but right now the main focus is to fight hard this year, win this Moto3 Championship and earn the chance to move up.'

In 2019 John raced his way to fifth in the championship, while last year he notched a seventh despite not finishing five of his 15 races.

Having notched two seconds and a third in a disrupted 2020 season, John took his first win since Le Mans in May 2019 in San Marino in September, coming from 17th on the grid for the dramatic victory. His participation in the event had been in doubt after an inconclusive Covid-19 test. A third test carried out just days before the race confirmed he did not have the virus.

'In 2019 I had the consistency and wasn't making any mistakes and finished every race in the season, but there was the odd race where I was just missing that little bit of speed,' he explained.

'In 2020 I had the speed to win potentially every race but there was just a couple of errors being made. That and being taken out by other riders on a couple of occasions hindered me a bit.'

'There are definitely areas that can be improved on. The good thing is that the speed is there and the racecraft seems to be there, and if we can bring the whole package together I think we can be in for a strong 2021.'

Sentiments shared by his team boss.

Johan Stigefelt, PETRONAS team director told us: 'We really believed in John from the



beginning to step up our level in the category. He's a strong rider and we're delighted to continue our relationship for another third season together. The PETRONAS Sprinta Racing is the first team where John has stayed for more than one year, so that means our relationship is really good.

'In the first season together, we were able to see him mature and he was getting better and better at every race, achieving the first win for the team in France. That's was an historical moment for the whole team.'

'Last year the season was too much up and down when the potential was there to perform at the top level all the way through. There were external factors that perhaps didn't allowed us to focus fully on racing at some moments of the season. Anyway, we achieved another win and three further podiums and we were constantly fighting in the top positions.'

'John has the potential to be in the top three all the time so in 2021 we will work on ensuring this target.'

John will begin his 2021 campaign on March 29 at the Losail International Circuit in Qatar.

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Congratulations to John on his continued success and best of luck for the 2021 Moto3 Grand Prix season.

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John McPhee's Racing to the top!

2019: John finished fifth overall at the end of the 2019 Grand Prix season, with a momentous win in France in May.

The 2020 Moto3 Grand Prix season was badly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic this season, with 15 races able to go ahead from a total of 20 planned.

John finished the 2020 season in seventh place overall – a great result! On October 20 PETRONAS Sprinta Racing Team announced another year with John McPhee.

John's racing calendar – The Moto3 Grand Prix, 2020

Date	Event	Finishing position
8th March	Qatar	2nd
19th July	Spain	DNF (taken out)
26th July	Andalucia	2nd
9th August	Czech Republic	5th
16th August	Austria	3rd
23rd August	Styrian, Austria	DNF (crashed out)
13th September	San Marino and Rimini Riviera (Italy)	1st
20th September	Emilia Romagna and Rimini Riviera (Italy)	10th
27th September	Catalan (Barcelona)	DNF (crashed out)
11th October	France	DNF (taken out)
18th October	Aragon (Spain)	5th
25th October	Teruel (Spain)	6th
8th November	European (Valencia, Spain)	DNF (crashed out) <i>DNF = did not finish</i>
15th November	Valencian Community, Spain	11th
22nd November	Portugal	9th



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To enter submit your answer along with your name, address, email address and telephone number, either by email to nmurphy@obantimes.co.uk or by post to John McPhee/Ecosse competition, The Oban Times, Crannog Lane, Lochavullin Industrial Estate, Oban, PA34 4HB. Closing Date is Friday 12th February. The winner will be notified on Monday 15th February. The Editor's decision is final. The Motorcycle helmet size is offered in either medium or large. No cash alternative. Entries will be handled in line with GDPR regulations and will not be shared with any third party.

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Members of Castle Chorus. Photograph: Friends of the Sound of Jura

A song of hope for Scotland's seas!

Coastal community groups along the West Coast have teamed up with Edinburgh community folk choir, Castle Chorus, to bring together incredible footage from Argyll's coast with the choir's original song, Lullaby Of Unknowing, in a special dedication to Scotland's seas.

In 2019 the waters off the coast of Argyll were declared a Hope Spot – the first in both Scotland and the UK – by international non-profit Mission Blue (mission-blue.org).

The Hope Spot sheds light on the immense beauty, rich history and vibrant life along the country's West Coast.

Mission Blue seeks out Hope Spot sites around the world which contain the presence of rare, threatened or endemic species and sites which can demonstrate active community involvement and a real chance to reverse historical damage.

Four community groups within the Coastal Communities Network (www.communitiesforseas.scot) wanted to secure the Hope Spot and to raise community awareness of the need to encourage protection of our unique marine ecosystems. The waters in Argyll are home to a wide array of native wildlife and hold one of the last remaining strongholds of the critically endangered flapper skate. It is also a vibrant region for community-led conservation initiatives.

These groups, all led by volunteers from within the local areas, have now secured a small amount of funding to increase public awareness and engagement with the Hope Spot's marine



Argyll Hope Spot sheds light on the immense beauty and incredible wildlife in the area. Photograph: Sealife Adventures

biodiversity throughout 2021, and to develop habitat and species monitoring pilots. The team also hope to work with local people and organisations to expand the Hope Spot boundaries and to campaign for better protection of the Hope Spots rich and unique biodiversity.

Although much of Scotland's west coast is sparsely populated, residents here are incredibly proud of their rich Scottish heritage and the unique landscapes that hold onto it.

Community voices have often inspired the introduction of legislation to protect their home's marine ecosystems, and the Argyll Coast and Islands Hope Spot Champions believe more community awareness could lead to greater protection of Scotland's marine ecosystems.

Annabel Lawrence, Hope Spot Champion, says: 'We're delighted to have this song from Castle Chorus dedicated to the Hope Spot – it helps shine the light on the incred-

ible wildlife that lives within our seas. We want to encourage our coastal communities to engage in what is happening just off their shores. The more people get to know and understand the wonders of this marine ecosystem, the more likely they will care about how it is looked after.'

Caro Overy, Castle Chorus musical director, added: 'We've been inspired by the passion and care the communities behind the Hope Spot clearly hold for their local natural environment and so it was a real privilege to put together this remote collaboration – featuring beautiful footage of the area with our song Lullaby Of Unknowing, an appropriate tribute to the hope we share for our planet.'

To find out more about the Argyll Coast & Islands' Hope Spot and to support them with a donation, if you are able, go to www.argyllhopespot.scot.

To listen to the song and watch the video, visit youtu.be/o1_JvBVyZ4Q

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MONDAY:	8am-12pm 12-3pm 4.45pm-5pm 5pm-7pm 7pm-8pm 8pm-9pm 9pm	Breakfast show with Stephen Lunch with Bob G Talking Papers Drive Times with Marcus Highland Fling with Rosemary Calum McLuckies Show David Cullen Show
TUESDAY:	8am-10am 10am-12.30pm 1pm-3pm 3pm-5pm 5pm-7pm 7pm-8pm 8pm-9pm 9pm	Breakfast Show with Stephen Ken Hunter Macky on FM Mental Musings with Mer & Vicky Drive Times with Bob G Highest Praise with Stuart Chalmers Scottish Sounds with Archie Cameron
WEDNESDAY:	8am-11am 11am-1pm 1pm-3pm 4pm-7pm 7pm-9pm 9pm	Breakfast Show with Stephen Comfort Zone with Lesley Doug in the afternoon Drive Times with Campbell Country meets Rock N Roll with Len Gordon's Grooves
THURSDAY:	8am-11am 11am-2pm 3pm-7pm 7pm-9pm 9pm-10pm 10pm	Breakfast Show with Andy & Sarah Lunch Show with Steve Drive Time with Stephen Christine's Collections Ann's Ceilidh Margo Till Midnight
FRIDAY:	8am-10am 10am-1pm 1pm-1.15pm 4pm-6.45pm 6.45pm-7pm 7pm-8pm 8pm-10pm 10pm Late	Breakfast Show with Ana & Phill The Brunch Show with Archie Talking Papers Teeny & Tiny Show with Harry Sports View with the Dream Team Country Meets Country with Jackie Craig Evening Show with Peter Rainnie Show with Jay.
SATURDAY:	8am-10am 10am-1pm 3pm-6pm 6pm-7pm 7pm-8pm 8pm-10pm 10pm Late	Breakfast Show with Stephen Saturday Morning Live with Linda Jukebox Jamboree with Ken Mc Sports View with the Dream Team Sounds Scottish with Archie Darling Evening Show with Dave Hobbs
SUNDAY:	9am-11am 11am-2pm 7pm-9pm 9pm	Sunday Morning with Breege Sunday Brunch with Stephen New Country Show with Dave & Murdoch Drum & Bass with Graham.

Messages of hope in 'out of the ordinary' times

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



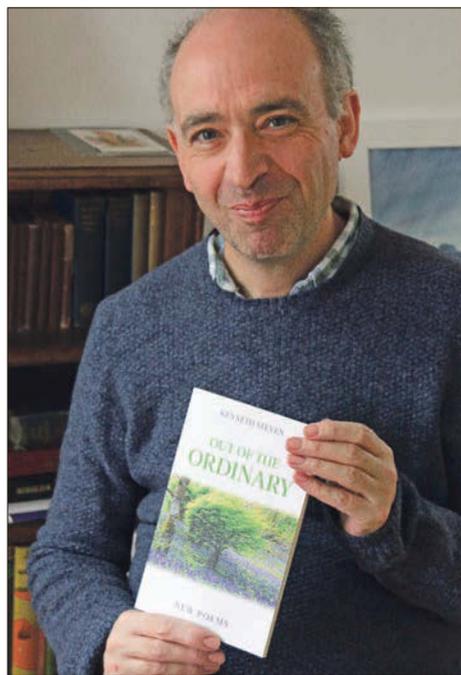
Out of the Ordinary is the title of Seil poet and author Kenneth Steven's new book of poems.

In this time of Covid, it is the everyday sights and experiences that can bring joy, and this collection of poems embraces all of that.

Flights of birds, the stirring beauty of mountains and lochs, day and night creatures, memories of childhood, exchanges of love are touched on within the book's pages as are poems inspired by ancient abbeys and symbols of faith.

Virus restrictions have seen the disappearance of festival appearances and events, and made impossible for Kenneth to hold an official launch of his latest literary offering, but lockdown has also been a gift in its own way, he says, seeing as he is blessed with a writing studio at home and the 'possibility of peace on the beautiful Isle of Seil'.

Lockdown did snatch from him the chance to travel to the BBC studios in Glasgow to record a series of essays on Hebridean Islands for Radio 3 and more recently for Radio



Kenneth Steven with his book of new poems 'Out of the Ordinary.'

4s Poetry Please programme - instead they were recorded from a back bedroom. Anyone who missed them can still find them for free on the BBC's listen again facility.

Another of the lockdown challenges for him to overcome was how to spread word of his new poetry collection without the usual launch event.

'I sent out messages to

everyone I had ever met, waving a flag for it, advertising flagrantly. I have been able to send out a wonderful lot of signed copies with little letters to people both known and unknown. I realised people were sending the books as gifts, sometimes to folk who were lonely, depressed, on their own, struggling, who loved poetry or did not know poetry

and that felt an enormous privilege just being able to write personal letters to them sending a little bit of light and hope.

'While it has been good having the studio and the peace of it, it has also been wonderful to feel part of a community and to make the darkness for some a little bit less,' he said.

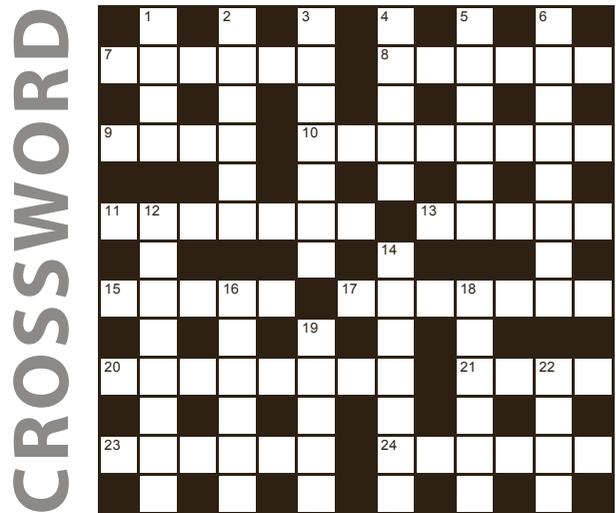
With bookshops shut for now, copies of 'Out of the Ordinary' can still be bought on Amazon or for £12 including postage by emailing info@kennethsteven.co.uk

Looking forward, Kenneth has also just finished a commission for the Episcopal Church of Pitlochry and the organisers of Pitlochry Festival Theatre's Winter Words event.

Called River Song, his contribution to a three-year project called the journey of the river from source to sea.

The work will be delivered at the end of this month, but eager ears waiting to hear it will have to be patient a little longer as the threat of Covid and the restrictions it brings still linger round how this year's plans for Winter Words will pan out.

'It will be interesting and exciting to see,' says Kenneth.



- Across**
- 7 Vulgar (6)
 - 8 Make happen (6)
 - 9 Prince in some Islamic countries (4)
 - 10 Snowball (8)
 - 11 Bestrew (7)
 - 13 Trim (5)
 - 15 Luxurious (5)
 - 17 Florin of Netherlands (7)
 - 20 Not old enough (8)
 - 21 Competent (4)
 - 23 Summer wear (1-5)
 - 24 Except if... (6)
- Down**
- 12 Dimness (8)
 - 14 Pleasing to the ear (7)
 - 16 Panoramic (6)
 - 18 At risk (6)
 - 19 Rash (5)
 - 22 Wear well (4)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION



- Down**
- 1 Well-groomed (4)
 - 2 Vivacity (6)
 - 3 Ready for printing (7)
 - 4 Thumb (5)
 - 5 Confused (6)
 - 6 Without penalties (4,4)

Virtually celebrating best of youth arts

An online celebration of the best in youth arts and creativity in Scotland gets under way this weekend.

The coronavirus pandemic has had an enormous impact on every aspect of children and young people's lives, including their creativity, so in a virtual event on Friday January 29 and Saturday January 30, partners from across the country's youth arts sector will share reflections on the challenges of the past year and consider how young voices and aspirations can be heard in the recovery process.

The partner organisations are: Media Education, Intercultural Youth Scotland, Collective, Arts End of Somewhere/PAMIS, Glasgow Connected Arts Network, Starcatchers, Fèis Rois/Highland Youth Arts Hub and CELCIS.

The UNCON programme, including live and free events, will feature a mix of pre-filmed



Fèis Rois – some of the best of youth creativity coming out of the Highlands

and live performances, presentations and panel discussions, artwork and manifestos created by children and young people.

Children, young people, policy makers and anyone with an interest in children and young people's rights are invited to join in.

Full details of how to get involved is available on the Creative Scotland website at www.creativescotland.com

Fiona Dalgetty of Fèis Rois said: 'Young people from Fèis Rois and the Highland Youth Arts Hub have taken part in every UNCON to date, and we are excited to participate

online this year. Overcoming the challenging move to a digital event, the team at Creative Scotland have put together an ambitious programme and we are excited for the audience to see the video our young people have created.'

Time to Shine manager with Creative Scotland, Sarah Mcadam, said: 'As with so many things, the lead in to this UNCON has felt very different to previous years. We know the coronavirus will continue to have a significant impact on children and young people's futures and it's more important than ever to make sure we are listening to what is important to their lives. As this UNCON takes place at the beginning of a new decade, we look forward to working with a youth arts sector that meets these challenges head-on and continues to support Scotland's children and young people to thrive in and through the arts and creativity.'

Robert in lockdown

ROBERT ROBERTSON

robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk



Of A' the Airts the Wind Can Blaw has been my favourite Burns song ever since my High School music teacher, Mr Young, brought it to my attention over a decade ago now.

It is possibly the lyrical praise of the West that ingratiates the song to me; or perhaps the beautiful melody it shares with one of my favourite Gaelic tunes – a song from Barra called Loch na h-Òb. I dust it off most Januarys (along with other beautiful songs such as Ay Waulkin' O' and The Lea Rig) for various Burns Suppers or whatever gigs Tide Lines happen to have over the days surrounding the 25th.

Needless to say, the chances to sing these songs have been few and far between this year, so we were delighted to be asked to contribute virtually to Janey Godley's Big Burns Supper, which had a great line up and well over 20,000 viewers on Monday evening.

Of A' the Airts was the song we chose and it was lovely to give it an airing. Between that, Jamie MacDougall's programme on BBC Scotland featuring Eddi Reader, Karen Matheson, and Robyn Stapleton, and the full programme of events



currently ongoing for Celtic Connections, I had a very fine Burns Night. Not to mention my mother's plate of Haggis, Neeps, and Tatties.

Celtic Connections may be the biggest virtual event happening this winter; but it isn't the only one! People say President Joe Biden has a difficult task over in the States; but spare a thought for President Dr Alasdair C. Whyte as he and his committee prepare for the Mull and Iona Association 2021 Virtual Gathering which will take the form of an hour-long stream on Friday February 19.

Since the first annual 'soirée, concert and ball', held in the Merchants' Hall on Hutcheson Street in Glasgow in February 1867, natives and friends of Mull and Iona have been gathering annually to celebrate the

arts, literature and music of their islands.

This 2021 virtual gathering will feature some of the islands' most talented singers, musicians, and performers – as well as some well-known Mull and Iona faces in conversation. The event will be free to view online but there will also be a platform for donations to support local causes and groups.

As part of the virtual gathering, the committee are running a competition for young people under the age of 18. First prize will go to the best video performance with a Mull and/or Iona theme or backdrop. This could be a song, a story, a piece of poetry, a piece of music, or whatever takes your fancy! The prize is £30 and the winning video will also feature in the virtual gathering. The committee will aim to share as many videos as they can on their online platforms following the gathering, with the permission of those who submit.

Entries can be submitted by contacting: themullandiona@gmail.com Check out their facebook page (The Mull and Iona Association) for more details on the virtual gathering!

FilmG flooded with entries

FilmG, the Gaelic short film competition, has received more than 100 entries.

Budding young filmmakers from across the country have been taking to their cameras to produce inspiring work and FilmG organisers, MG ALBA and Skye-based Cànan Graphics Studio (CGS), have been impressed by the diversity of those entries

Included among the 104 is the first entry from the Isle of Man in the island's native Manx Gaelic.

FilmG continues to encourage the use of new technology and support young people with their creative endeavours to produce films whilst developing practical and creative skills through the medium of Gaelic.

Filmmakers were supported with virtual workshops, online resources and Augmented Reality workbooks right up until the deadline.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig, the national Gaelic development and advisory body, also gave additional support to the project so young people across Scotland could continue to take part in the workshops and mentoring offerings, despite restrictions.

Judging this year has also



Children at Staffin Primary School on the Isle of Skye working hard on their film for this year's competition.

adapted with the times, taking place entirely over video conferencing. The judges scrutinised each of the entries for storytelling skill, creative use of language and visual impact to create a shortlist of entrants, before selecting the finalists and the winners will be announced at the awards ceremony on Friday March 19.

There will not be an physical live awards ceremony this year due to coronavirus so the FilmG awards will be premiered on BBC ALBA for the first time, on March 19. The ceremony will be filmed in Stornoway and presented by Fiona Mackenzie and Niall Iain MacDonald.

Debbie MacKay, project manager at CGS, said: 'With the number of entries we've

accepted this year, the FilmG judges had quite a job on their hands.'

She said the quality had been remarkable, and it had been evident how much work and enjoyment went into making the films.

'Shortlisting and choosing winners will be no easy task,' she added.

Project supervisor Murdo MacSween, communications manager at MG ALBA, said: 'The feedback we're getting from schools and filmmakers show just how important it is that young Gaels have creative outlets like this and we're proud of everyone involved.'

Voting is open across both the Youth and Open categories and can be found on the FilmG website: filmg.co.uk

MY ALBA

<p>DIARDAOIN 28 am Faoilleach / THURSDAY 28 January</p> <p>17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming</p> <p>19.00 Turas a' Bhradain/ The Salmon's Journey (rpt)</p> <p>19.30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)</p> <p>19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)</p> <p>20.00 An Là – News</p> <p>20.30 NEW (Eorpa/ European Current Affairs</p> <p>21.00 Na Gleidheadairean (The Animal Keepers) (rpt)</p> <p>22.00 Ceol Duthchasach/ Ken Burn's Country Music (rpt)</p> <p>23.50 Dhan Uisge (rpt)</p> <p>DIHAOINE 29 am Faoilleach / FRIDAY 29 January</p> <p>17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming</p> <p>19.00 An Là NEWS</p> <p>19.25 Fraochy Bay (rpt)</p> <p>19.30 Machair (rpt)</p> <p>19.55 Cearcall (rpt)</p> <p>20.25 Garradh Phàdruig (rpt)</p> <p>21.00 NEW BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician 2021 Semi Final</p> <p>22.40 An t-Inneal Espresso (rpt)</p> <p>23.00 State of Happiness: Smoking Ban (rpt)</p> <p>23.45 Tha Thu air Aigeann M'Inntinn (rpt)</p> <p>23.50 Dhan Uisge (River Douchary)</p> <p>DISATHAIRNE 30 am Faoilleach / SATURDAY 30 January</p> <p>16.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming</p> <p>An Là – NEWS</p> <p>17.45 NEW Scottish Premiership – Kilmarnock v St Johnstone</p> <p>19.45 Mischa@Blas (rpt)</p> <p>19.45 Sgeul Slainte (rpt)</p> <p>19.55 Fraochy Bay (rpt)</p> <p>20.00 Cearcall (rpt)</p> <p>20.30 Leugh Mi (rpt)</p> <p>21.00 NEW Cuirm@Celtic Connections 2020/2021</p>	<p>22.00 Highlands – Scotland's Wild Heart (rpt)</p> <p>23.00 Scottish Premiership – Kilmarnock v St Johnstone (rpt)</p> <p>00.45 NEW ALT</p> <p>DIDÒMHAICH 31 am Faoilleach / SUNDAY 31 January</p> <p>16.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming</p> <p>16.45 An Là – NEWS</p> <p>17.05 NEW BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician 2021 (Part 1)</p> <p>19.05 Seachd La/ News Review – NEWS</p> <p>19.35 NEW BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician 2021 (Part 2)</p> <p>20.00 Eorpa/European Current Affairs (rpt)</p> <p>20.30 Na Tirisich (From Tires with Love) (rpt)</p> <p>21.00 An Ceasnachadh (rpt)</p> <p>21.55 Earrann Eachdraidh/ History Shorts (rpt)</p> <p>22.00 Na Gleidheadairean (The Animal Keepers) (rpt)</p> <p>23.00 State of Happiness: Smoking Ban (rpt)</p> <p>23.45 Belladrum – Cridhe Tartan (Highlights) (rpt)</p> <p>23.50 Belladrum – Cridhe Tartan (Highlights) (rpt)</p> <p>DILUAIN 01 an Gearran / MONDAY 01 Febuary</p> <p>17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming</p> <p>Dealbhan Fraoich/ Heathers Portraits (rpt)</p> <p>19.00 Speaking Our Language (rpt)</p> <p>19.30 Earrann Eachdraidh/ History Shorts (rpt)</p> <p>19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)</p> <p>20.00 An Là – NEWS</p> <p>20.30 NEW Garradh Phàdruig</p> <p>21.00 Trusadh – Sean is Ogl' Young and Old (rpt)</p> <p>22.00 NEW Cuirm@Celtic Connections: Co-sheirm</p> <p>22.30 DIY le Donnie (rpt)</p> <p>23.15 Sgeul Slainte (rpt)</p> <p>23.30 TradFest (rpt)</p> <p>DIMÀIRT 02 an Gearran/ TUESDAY 02 Febuary</p> <p>17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming</p>	<p>19.00 Turas a' Bhradain/ The Salmon's Journey (rpt)</p> <p>19.30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)</p> <p>19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)</p> <p>20.00 An Là – NEWS</p> <p>20.30 An Taigh – Fuine/ The Bakery (rpt)</p> <p>21.00 Gladys (rpt)</p> <p>22.00 NEW Scottish Premiership – St Mirren v Hibernian</p> <p>23.45 Belladrum – Cridhe Tartan (Highlights) (rpt)</p> <p>23.50 Belladrum – Cridhe Tartan (Highlights) (rpt)</p> <p>DICIADAIN 03 An Gearran / WEDNESDAY 03 February</p> <p>17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming</p> <p>19.00 Dealbhan Fraoich/ Heathers' Portraits (rpt)</p> <p>19.30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)</p> <p>19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)</p> <p>20.00 An Là – NEWS</p> <p>20.30 Leugh Mi (rpt)</p> <p>21.00 DIY le Donnie (rpt)</p> <p>21.45 Sgeul Slainte (rpt)</p> <p>22.00 Trusadh – Sean is Ogl' Young and Old (rpt)</p> <p>23.00 Fraochy Bay (rpt)</p> <p>23.05 Machair (rpt)</p> <p>23.30 Alleluia/ Spiritual Praise (rpt)</p> <p>DIARDAOIN 04 an Gearran / THURSDAY 04 February</p> <p>17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming</p> <p>19.00 Turas a' Bhradain/ The Salmon's Journey (rpt)</p> <p>19.30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)</p> <p>19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh/ History Shorts (rpt)</p> <p>20.00 An Là – NEWS</p> <p>20.30 NEW Eorpa/ European Current Affairs</p> <p>21.00 Talamh Torrach (Scotland's Food & Drink) (rpt)</p> <p>22.00 Ceol Duthchasach/ Ken Burn's Country Music</p> <p>23.50 Dhan Uisge (River Garry) (rpt)</p>
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Co-bhanntachd eadar MG ALBA agus am BBC | A partnership between BBC and MG ALBA

HIGHLAND FASTENERS LTD

DEAL

25pcs Socket Set

1/4" Drive Ratchet

BAHCO

ONLY £15.00 exc. vat!!!

The socket set offers the most popular sizes sockets, a selections of bits and extensions plus a ratchet offering multiple positions.

Highland Fasteners Ltd, 23-25 Stevenson Street, Oban, Argyll
01631 570584 e-mail sales@highlandfasteners.com

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!

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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 adverts@obantimes.co.uk. Let's spread the word as much as we can!

PLEASE NOTE: You should wear a face covering in an enclosed space or where you will come into contact with people outside your household or support bubble and most businesses require you to call prior to attending their stores/shop.

BANKS

Most banks and building centres have put crowd control measures in place. Please remember to wear face coverings in enclosed spaces.

BANK OF SCOTLAND PLC

Station Rd, Oban
Mon-Fri 9.30am-2pm

CLYDESDALE BANK PLC

6 Argyll Sq, Oban
Mon-Fri 10am-3pm

ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND PLC

26 George St, Oban
Mon-Fri 10am-3pm

TSB

31-35 Airds Cr, Oban
Mon-Friday 9.30am-12.30pm/
1.30pm-3pm

BUILDING, DIY, HOME, GARDENING & SERVICES

BUILDBASE

Lynn Road, Oban
Mon-Fri 7.30am-5pm
Sat 8am-12pm

Specializing in timbers and heavy side goods
Tel: 01631 570518

CITY PLUMBING SUPPLIES

7E Glengallan Rd, Oban
Mon-Fri 7.30am – 5pm
Sat 8am-12pm
Order by telephone or email. Bathroom showroom open by appointment.
Tel: 01631 567640

CITY ELECTRICAL FACTORS

Unit 7, Tweed Mill, Soroba Rd, Oban
Mon-Fri 7.30am-5.30pm,
Sat 8.30am-12pm
www.cef.co.uk
Tel: 01631 562362

CRAIGARD DÉCOR

Craigard Road, Oban
Mon – Fri 9.00am – 5.30pm

Sat 9am-1pm

To place an order please telephone the shop
Email: antonycave@aol.com
Tel: 01631 562680

HIGHLAND FASTENERS

23 Stevenson St, Oban
Mon-Fri, 7.30am-5pm
Sat 8am-12pm
Highland Fasteners Ltd offer a comprehensive range of quality workwear and tools. We provide a wide range of corded and cordless hand and power tools, PPE, fixings, fasteners.
Tel: 01631 570584

HIRE & SUPPLIES

1 Mill Lane, Oban
Mon-Fri 7.30am-5pm
All your essential supplies & hire
Face masks and visors, viral and bacterial cleaning products, building and DIY supplies in stock
Tel: 01631 566306

HOMEBASE

Lochavullin Industrial Estate, Lochavullin Dr, Oban
Click and collect
Sun-Mon 9am-6pm
Tues-Sat 9am-8pm
www.homebase.co.uk
Tel: 0345 640 7807

KINLOCHLAICH GARDEN CENTRE

Appin
Orders for collection or delivery please call 07881 525754 or email fiona@kinlochlaich.plus.com
Plants include vegetables, fruit, compost, shrubs, rhods, azaleas, alpines, and bedding plants.

MACLEOD TV

Unit 2, McLeod Building, Lochavullin Industrial Estate, Oban
office@macleodtv.co.uk
Tel: 01631 564310

MACQUEEN BROS

Glengallan Industrial Estate, Oban
Reduced service – Open for local moves and self storage
Tel: 01631 564848

SCREWFIX

Mill Lane, Oban
Click and Collect service available
Mon-Sat, 7am-7pm (6pm Sat)
Sun 9am-4pm
www.screwfix.com
Tel: 03330 112112

WEBSTERS OF OBAN PHOTOGRAPHIC CENTRE

122-124 George St, Oban
Professional Photo Centre & Digital
Camera Repair, passport photos, etc..
Open by appointment
Email: obanphotographic@btconnect.com
Tel: 01631 562917

CHEMISTS AND HEALTHCARE

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

BOOTS THE CHEMIST, GEORGE STREET

34-38 George St, Oban
Mon-Sat 9am-5.30pm
Tel: 01631 562517

BOOTS THE CHEMIST, BESIDE DOCTORS

5 Soroba Rd, Oban
Mon-Fri 10am-6pm, Closed 1pm-2pm for lunch
Sat 9am-1pm
Tel: 01631 564560

GORDON'S CHEMIST

16 George St, Oban
Mon-Sat 10am till 5.30pm. Closed 1pm-2pm for lunch
Tel: 01631 562053

JOHN WALLACE OPTICIANS

Argyll Square, Oban
OBAN PRACTICE-Open by appointment only. Telephone consultations also available.
We're open, caring for your sight and hearing DURING LOCKDOWN and we have all the necessary precautions in place.
Tel: 01631 563170

SPECSAVERS

George Street, Oban
Mon-Sat 9am-5.30pm
Sun 11am-4pm
Tel: 01631 567640

FUEL STATIONS & SUPPLIERS

All service stations also stock a vast range of food, wine, groceries, confectionery and newspapers.

BIRCHWOOD GARAGE

Soroba Road, Oban
Mon-Sat 6.30am-6pm

HALFWAY HOUSE

A82, Oban
Mon-Sun 7am till 7pm

HIRE & SUPPLIES

1 Mill Lane, Oban
Mon-Fri 7.30am-5pm
Stocking a wide range of gas bottles and heating supplies
Tel: 01631 566306

OBAN FILLING STATION

Soroba Road, Oban
Mon-Sat 7am-8pm
Sun 8am-8pm

WEST HIGHLAND GAS LTD

Torrangorm Industrial Estate, Oban
Supplying Calor, industrial and medical gases, coal and wood heating products
Deliveries and collection
Mon-Fri 8am-5pm
Tel: 01631 564050

GARAGES

All garages are sticking to strict guidelines, please call beforehand.

ALL CARS & COMMERCIALS

1 Crannog Lane, Oban
Mon-Fri 8am-5pm
Tel: 01631 565555

CJ AUTO REPAIRS

Glengallan Industrial Est, Oban
Working to reduced hours, please call
Tel: 01631 566009

FIN'S PLACE

Old Mill Est/Soroba Rd, Oban
Mon-Fri 8.30am-5.30pm
Tyres, brakes, batteries etc
Tel: 01631 566 220 or 07766 757 013

FLIT

2 Glencruitten Road, Oban
Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Vehicle hire, servicing and bodyshop
Email: flit@btconnect.com
Tel: 07810391753

KWIK FIT

Market Street, Oban
Mon – Fri, 8.30am-6pm (till 5pm Sat)
Sun 10am-4pm
NHS 10% discount on tyres, servicing and batteries
Tel: 01631 566282

KERRIE'S TYRES

Quarry Rd, Oban
Mon-Sat 8.30am-5pm
Tel: 01631 570 000 / 0787 6762631

MCCONECHY'S

21 Lochside St, Oban
Mon-Sat 8am – 6pm
Email: oban@mcconechys.co.uk
Tel: 01631 570047

MUNRO'S GARAGE

2B Lochavullin Rd, Oban
Mon-Fri 8.30am-5.30pm
Sat 9am-12pm
All vehicle servicing, repairs, MOT's
Tel: 01631 564463 to book your vehicles in.

MORRISON MOTORS

Unit 1 Creran Marine, Barcaldine, Oban
PA37 1SG
Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm
Sat 9am-2pm
Vehicle rentals for short and long term and all types of motor repairs
Tel: 07825 581171

RODDY'S GARAGE

15 Mill La, Oban
Booking ahead by telephone required.
Tel: 01631 565882

SCOTT ROBERTSON

ACCIDENT REPAIRS
Quarry Road
Mon-Fri 8.30am-5.30pm
Tel: 01631 569441
TRAILWEST
3 Mill Lane, Oban
Open as normal for repair plus new supply and hire of trailers to the agricultural industry
Mon-Fri 8.30am-5.30pm
Tel: 01631 563638

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!

ALBA KITCHEN GARDEN

Albany Street, Oban
Mon-Sat 9.30am-5.30pm
Anything you need, please give us a call and if legislation allows we are happy to help if we can
Tel: 01631 563645/ 07778 003833

GO NAKED VEG ONLINE & SHOP

51 Stevenson St, Oban
A variety of fresh fruit and vegetables, eggs, milk, coffee, hand soap and cleaning products and other essentials.
Shop: Tues – Fri 10am-6pm, Sat 9am-5pm
For delivery: Order a week ahead if possible (up to 3 weeks)
Website: www.gonakedveg.co.uk
Tel: 01631 358200 / 07585 177444

IAIN DARLING/WYNNE BUTCHERS

4 Combie St, Oban
Mon-Sat 9am-2.30pm
Tel: 01631 567400

JACKSON BUTCHERS

George St, Oban
Tue-Sat 9am-4pm
Offering FREE home delivery available Oban, Dunbeg, Appin North, Contact shop.
Tel: 01631 562016

MILLSTONE WHOLEFOODS

15 High St, Oban
The Health Food Shop
Mon-Sat 9.15am--5.15pm
Tel: Saffron on 01631 562704 or email contact@millstonewholefoods.co.uk

TASTE OF ARGYLL

29 Combie St, Oban
Mon-Sat 10am-5pm
FREE home delivery available Oban-Taynuilt. Contact shop.
Pre ordered ready meals available
Tel: 07882 226675

THE OBAN BEER SELLER

29 Stafford St, Oban
Independent craft beer shop selling a range of fresh, exciting, dynamic, innovative, traditional beer.
Deliveries Friday and Saturday and allocated collection times from outside the shop. Orders placed by email and contactless payments.
Up to date information on Facebook and Instagram
Tel: 07796 418973, Email: obanbeer-seller@gmail.com

OBAN FOOD HUB

Locally produced baking, meat, fish, dairy, ales, spirits, coffee, tea, jams, preserves, veg and fruit. Order online by midnight Tuesdays (www.thegreatbritishfoodhub.com/hubs/oban-1), collect Thursdays between 4pm and 6pm from Scout Hut behind Cathedral. Safe pick up. See Facebook page (Oban Food Hub) for news and further information.

YUWU CHINESE TAKEAWAY

60 George St, Oban
Wed-Sun 4pm-8pm
Tel: 01631 565078
Web: www.yuwu.co.uk/take-away/

IT SERVICES

Helping you work from home

MATRIX COMPUTERS

Dunollie Road, Oban
Providing telephone and remote support to home and business customers, new and existing.
Email info@matrixcomputers.co.uk
Tel: 01631 571571

OBAN COMPUTER SERVICES

Unit 4, Mill Lane, Oban
The shop is open by appointment. Remote support available.
Tel: 01631 566561



IN ASSOCIATION WITH

Oban Business Improvement District

www.bid4oban.co.uk



LEGAL, PROPERTY & INSURANCE SERVICES

ANDERSON BANKS SOLICITORS & ESTATE AGENTS

(OBAN AND BENBECULA)
Argyll Square, Oban
Open 9am-5pm
Contact us on our usual numbers for telephone appts or Skype/Facetime video calls can be arranged.
Oban Office: 01631 563158 Email: info@andersonbanks.co.uk
Benbecula office: 01870 602061 Email: uist@andersonbanks.co.uk

DM MACKINNON SOLICITORS & NOTARIES

Station Rd, Oban
Contact by telephone/email
Tel: 01631 563 014.
Answering machine service
Email: info@dmmk.co.uk

E THORNTON & CO

17-19 Lochside Street, Oban
Solicitors and Estate Agents
Business as usual by prior appointment.
Answering machine service.
Telephone: 01631 566 771
Email: info@ethornton.co.uk

JELF CLARKE THOMSON

19 Aird's Crescent, Oban
Open for business as usual, 9am-5pm
Mon to Fri. 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.
Tel: 01631 567675.
Answering machine service

MACPHEE & PARTNERS

1st Floor, 26 George Street, Oban
Open Mon-Fri 9am - 5pm
Tel: 01631 562308
Email: law@macphee.co.uk

MORHAM & BROTCHE

We are open while working from home
Mon-Fri 9am - 5.15pm
Tel: 01631 563 721
Email: admin@morhambro.co.uk

STEVENSON KENNEDY SOLICITORS

Linndhu House, 19 Stevenson St, Oban
Open for business as usual but our priority has to be the safety of our staff and clients. We can still meet by appointment and at a safe distance.
Tel: 01631 562317
Email: mail@stevensonkennedy.co.uk

WYLIE & BISSET

4 High Street, Oban
Do you have a business that, through no fault of your own, finds itself confronting various pressing business problems as a direct result of the government restrictions to quell the spread of COVID-19?
CALL OUR DEDICATED HELPLINE
Tel: 0141 566 7096

NEWSAGENTS & CONVENIENCE STORES

Most stores have put crowd control measures in place. Please remember to wear face coverings in enclosed spaces.

ALBANY STORES

Albany Street, Oban
Mon-Sun 6am-11pm
Tel: 01631 564635

SOROBA SHOP

Soroba, Oban
Mon-Thur 9am-9pm
Fri-Sat 9am-10pm
Sun 10am-9pm
Tel: 01631 562999

MCCOLLS

128 George Street, Oban
Mon-Sun 7am till 8pm
Tel: 01631 569896

DUNOLLIE STORIES

Dunollie Road, Oban
Mon-Thur 10am-8pm
Fri-Sat 10am-9pm
Sun 10am-7pm
Tel: 01631 566544

HANNAH'S

5 Stevenson Street, Oban
Mon-Sat 6am-8pm
Sun 6am-6pm
Tel: 01631 566913

DUNBEG STORES

15 Jane Road, Dunbeg
Mon-Fri 7am 10pm
Sat 8am-10pm Sun 8am-9pm
Tel: 01631 566576

CONNEL VILLAGE STORE

Connel Village
Mon-Fri 6am-3pm
Sat 8am-3pm Sun 7.30am-1pm
In store post office Mon-Fri 9am-1pm, Sat 9am-12pm
Tel: 01631 710219

THE PINK SHOP

Benderloch
Mon-Thur 7am-9pm
Fri-Sat 7am-10pm
Sun 8am-9pm
Tel: 01631 720201

BALVICAR STORES

Balvicar
Mon-Fri 8.30am-6pm
Sat 9am-6pm
Sun 9.30am-2pm
Tel: 01852 300373

RESTAURANTS AND TAKEAWAYS

While sit in is not allowed, most eateries are offering a takeaway service from the door. Please call prior to arrival.

BIRCHWOOD FILLING STATION

Soroba Road, Oban
Hot filled rolls, available Mon-Sat
6.30am-2pm
Fuel and essential shopping supplies
Mon-Sat, 6.30-6.30pm
Tel: 01631 565359

CORIANDER

8 Soroba Rd, Oban
Wed-Sun 5pm-9pm
Tel: 01631 570806

GEORGE STREET FISH TAKE-AWAY

George St, Oban
Open 11am-8pm daily
Fish & Chip Shop providing traditional takeaway fish and chips and old favourites.
Tel: 01631 566664

KEBABISH OF OBAN

99 George St, Oban
Sun-Thur 4pm-12am
Fri-Sat 3pm-1.30am
Offering great tasting currys, Biryani's, Tandoori Sizzlers, Burgers, Kebabs,

Pizzas and Popular Indian dishes.
Order online at kebabishofoban.co.uk
Tel: 01631 566885

NORIES FISH & CHIPS

88 George St, Oban
Family run takeaway - great fish and chips
7 days a week 11.30am-9.30pm
Tel: 01631 563736

OBAN FILLING STATION

Soroba Rd, Oban
Garage: Mon-Sat: 7am-8pm, Sun 8am-8pm
Food: Mon-Fri 7am-2pm, Sat 8am-12noon
Your local Londis convenience store offering a wide range of everyday essentials as well as hot filled rolls, pies and sausage rolls etc
Tel: 01631 571101

OBAN GRILLHOUSE

45 Combie St, Oban
Open 7 days, 5pm-11pm Collection or delivery
Tel: 01631 358246

PIAZZA

North Pier, Oban
Thur-Sun 5pm-8pm
Take away service for collection
We are a family friendly pizza/pasta restaurant on a pier in beautiful Oban Bay in Scotland.
Tel: 01631 563628

TASTE OF ARGYLL KITCHEN

9 Argyll St, Oban
Fri 3pm-9pm
Sat & Sun 10am-9pm
Serving field to fork and fine dine on delivery
Visit our Facebook page for more details
Tel: 07882226675

SUPERMARKETS & FOOD-HALLS

Most superstores in town are operating crowd control measures to help manage social distancing, with hand sanitiser for customer and colleague use. They are working tirelessly to restock shelves daily. Please be patient and kind.

ALDI

Lynn Rd, Oban
Mon-Sat 8am-10pm
Sunday 9am-7pm

BOOKERS CASH AND CARRY

Glenshellach Business Pk, Oban
Mon 9am-2pm
Tues-Fri 7.30am-4pm
Sat 7.30am-1pm

FARMFOODS

Dunollie Rd, Oban
Mon-Fri 8am-8pm
Sat 8am-7pm
Sun 9am-6pm

LIDL

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

MARKS AND SPENCER

Retail Park, Unit 1 Lochavullin Dr, Oban
Mon 8am-9pm
Tues-Sat 8am-8pm
Sun 9am-6pm

TESCO

Lochside, Oban
Shopping: Mon-Sat 7am-10pm, Sunday 8am-8pm
Petrol Filling Station - Mon-Sat 6am-8pm, Sun 7am-8pm
Post office - Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm, Sat 9am-12.30pm, Closed Sunday
Café - Mon-Sat 8am-3pm, Sun 10am-3pm- Takeaway only

SPORT AND FITNESS

OBAN CYCLES

George Street, Oban
Shop Tue-Sat, 10am-3pm
Workshop servicing from 19th January.
Book now
Email: obancycles1@gmail.com
Website: obancyclescotland.com
Follow us on Facebook
Tel: 01631 566033

TAXIS

For essential travel only

ARGYLL TAXIS

01631 565293

ETIVE TAXIS

01631 566880

LORN TAXIS

01631 564744

OBAN TAXIS

01631 564148/566676/564666

VETS AND PET SERVICES

OBAN VETERINARY SURGEONS

9B Tweedale St, Oban
Triage service initially. All enquiries by telephone to book appointments where necessary
Visit via www.obanvets.co.uk for full Covid-19 guidelines with regard to our services
Tel: 01631 562876

PETS AT HOME

Unit 3, Lochavullin Industrial Estate, Lochavullin Dr, Oban
Mon-Fri 9am-6pm
Sat 9am-7pm
Sun 10am-5pm

CREATURE COMFORTS

9-10 Aird's Cres, Oban
Mon-Sat 10am-2pm
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.
Tel: 01631 563150

USEFUL INFORMATION

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.

New Hope is staffed Monday to Friday 10am-4pm. Parcels can be picked up 11am-2pm
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.

MOLEIGH RECYCLING CENTRE

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If any sites become too busy or full, or if too much traffic is queueing, the site may need to be closed temporarily.

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WEST COAST MOTORS

At this time the new levels will not impact on West Coast Motors service levels. Over the coming days we will endeavour to keep you updated if this changes.

For all information relating to bus travel during this pandemic please visit www.westcoastmotors.co.uk/travelling-bus

Information correct at time of going to print. This page will run in the Oban Times every week for as long as necessary - printed information will be updated weekly.

What you can do in your ho

Life goes on regardless of lockdowns so use this time wisely to get yourself into the best possible position so you are ready for action when the time comes.

What can we do right now?

'Essential work' only

Amidst all the uncertainty of this pandemic one thing is for sure – we all need somewhere to live and our homes need to be kept in the best possible condition for our well-being.

And that includes not only our personal health and well-being but also our financial well-being; for the vast majority of people our homes are the biggest single expenditure – and asset – in our lives.

This is a time when we do need to keep spending on maintaining our homes because failing to do so would be false economy but in these financially uncertain times the money we spend has to be spent wisely. That means thoughtful and considered purchases of goods and services, materials and manpower.

And most importantly all this has to be done within the pandemic safety guidelines.

Scottish Government rules covering the containment of the Covid pandemic say that work carried out in someone's home can be only for 'the maintenance, upkeep or functioning of the home'.

The work must only be carried out where it is essential or where the house in question is unoccupied.

It is not just pandemic safety that is important, but building safety and that includes utilities.

Today our utilities are not just considered to be electricity, gas and water, be it mains supply or sewerage.

Communications are considered just as essential and include telecommunications and broadband.

The work on all these utilities should be safety checks and repairs, maintenance and installations only where these cannot be delayed.

The all-important definition is: 'repairs and maintenance that would otherwise threaten the household's health and safety'.

It is a fact of life that things break down and wear out and the work which can be done includes delivery, installation or repairing of key household furniture and appliances such as washing machines, fridges and cookers.

Non-essential work, as defined in the guidelines, includes cosmetic painting and decorating, or replacing kitchens and bathrooms; glazing, carpeting and electrical replacements where these are not required to maintain the health and safety of the household.

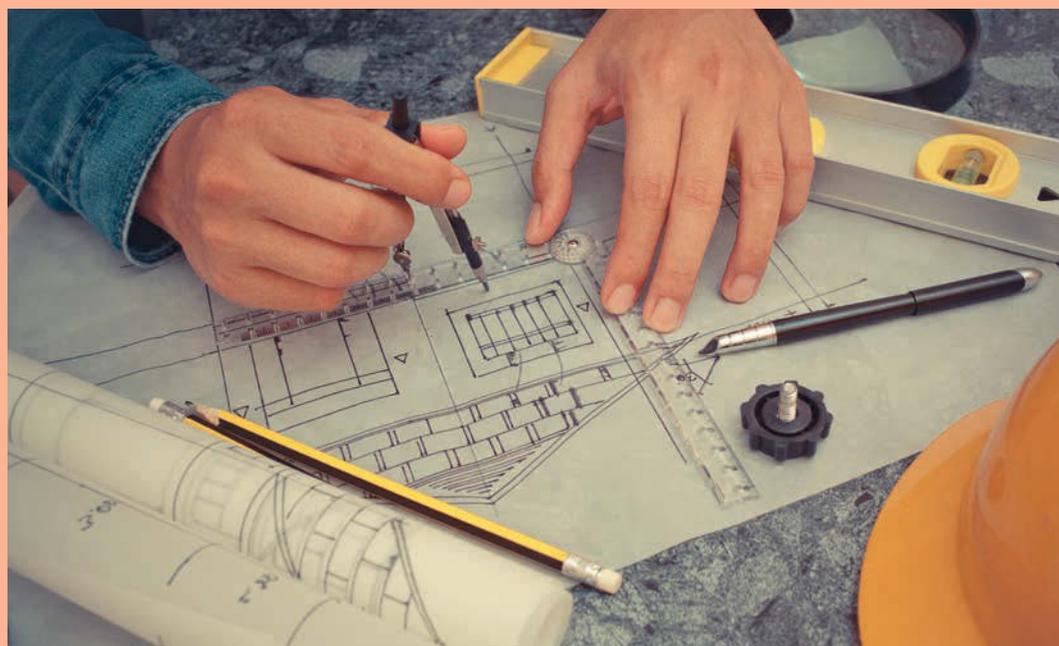
Travelling for the purposes of undertaking essential work on a property which is not your main residence should not be used as a pretext for a holiday, the government stresses.

You should not stay longer than for the length of time required to undertake the necessary work at any second or holiday homes.

The Scottish Building Federation has advised its members: 'Following the First Minister's statement in the Scottish Parliament on the afternoon of Wednesday January 13 the construction industry can continue to operate at this difficult time.

'However, legislation in relation to trades people undertaking essential work in homes has been strengthened as have laws on the requirement for employers to facilitate working from home.' The federation sends daily Coronavirus briefing emails to its members.

Just as we are all learning how to work from home, so too are architects and planners; the Scottish e-planning system had already taken up most of the work online way before the pandemic hit.



What are you planning to do?

If you are not moving house or embarking on a big self-build project, what are you planning to do?

Maybe you want to turn your garden into a paradise, perhaps adding some doors from the living room leading out onto a paved area or decking.

Perhaps the lockdown has made you realise you need to make some interior alterations, like an extra loo, shower room, or the conversion of loft or basement into office or school space; or maybe an extension or a garden room addition is what you need.

Has your old kitchen taken a battering with everyone at home and constant snacks and brewing up as well as breakfast, lunch and dinner for all while doubling as a school room? If your kitchen now resembles a war zone remember that famous military saying: 'Time spent in recognisance is seldom wasted'.

If there is one thing you have got now it is extra time on your hands and the internet is just the place to reconnoitre.

It is just bursting with home ideas to inspire you – from a simple change of cushions to freshen up the sofa to a remodelling of your entire property.

Be inspired by homes around the world as you dream your way through web pages and decide on the exact materials you want by visiting stores' websites – you can even price-up your projects. You have time to shop around and find the best value for money.

If you plan on doing the work yourself YouTube is full of helpful and instructive videos. Often you will find that leading manufacturers of materials and DIY stores have their own expert videos, to show you how to make the most of their products.



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me right now

Plus many skilled trades people make their own videos – and they leave many of the daytime TV shows standing.

Pinterest is crammed full of ideas and so too are podcasts.

When it comes to gardens you can tour some of the most famous in the land online in search of inspiration and once again You Tube is packed full of experts and ideas.

And if you have a project planned – why not share it online by creating a podcast or You Tube videos of your own.

The internet is also packed with opportunities to realise your own plans – manufacturers have their own online planners for you to use to play around with ideas plus virtual makeovers for rooms.

As well as helping you to firm up your ideas, and cost-out your projects, you can also have a helpful collection of images to show your builder, gardener or decorator to explain your ideas to them.

As well as all this inspiration and planning, how about a little fun; ever wondered what your average movie star's home looks like on the inside?

Go to www.dirt.com and have a guided tour of the \$7.5 million 'equestrian estate' that Dwayne 'the Rock' Johnson has for sale in Georgia, or Sylvester Stalone's mansion in California.

If you prefer something with a little more history, visit www.castlelist.com which has a selection of castles for sale around the world.

A mere €880k will buy you a listed 15th century moated castle for sale near Toulouse; a historic Moroccan Kasbah (requires renovation) for €6m, or nearer home Seton Castle, East Lothian, for £8m.



Installing the heart of your home



When designing a new house it makes good sense to consider the heating system as early on as possible since the SAP calculations can impact significantly on the overall design and cost of the building. Specifying a wood burning stove as part of your heating plan can help you achieve a very worthwhile reduction of emissions for the SAP calculations – in practise this offers useful carbon 'credit' which can be traded off against other design aspects of the house.

A stove is an extremely efficient space heater that can be run very economically in the super-insulated modern houses of today. It also provides a valuable and comforting source of heat during a prolonged power cut in an otherwise electric reliant system. And, of course, it goes without saying that a stove is a great looking visual asset which gives a

'heart' to the home and provides the perfect focal point to gather family and friends around! If you are building or renovating and are interested to know what benefits a stove could add as part of your heating mix then get in touch. With over 40 years' experience we can talk you through all the options available and work out what fits your needs best. Call us on 01631 720539.

Just a short note to say thank you for all the help choosing and installing our new Woodwarm stove. Your very professional and extremely helpful family service was second to none. We only wish we had fitted the stove years ago as it has made such a difference to our family home. Mr & Mrs Scott, Oban

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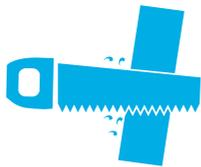
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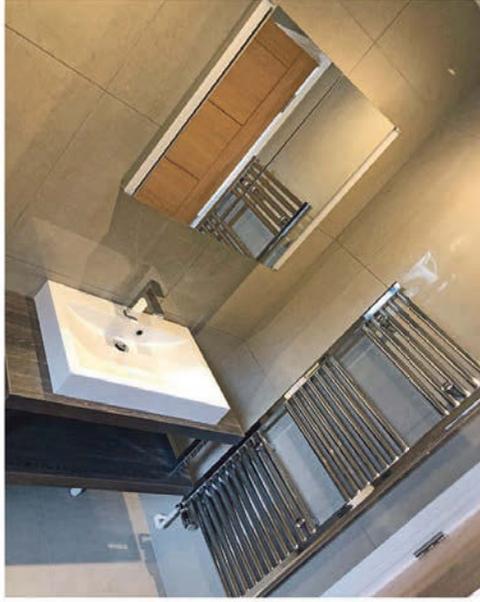
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Around the markets

United Auctions, - Lochboisdale, Islay, Tuesday January 19: sold 179 store cattle, 24 cows and 147 sheep of all classes. Bullocks sold to £1100 for a 435kg, CharX from Mr C Morrison, 136 Stilligarry to average £815.11 (+£85.45) and to 288p/kg for a 295kg, LimX from Miss M Morrison, 18 West Gerinish to average 246.49p/kg (+23.61p). Heifers sold to £955 for a 355kg, AAx from Mr A Campbell, 8 Milton to average £718.63 (+£42.44) and to 274p/kg for a 250kg, SimX from Mr D A MacIsaac, 4 Borve, Berneray to average 236.8p/kg (+31.8p/kg). OTM cows sold to £1160 for an AAx from Mr A Campbell, 8 Milton and 141p/kg for a LimX from Mr E MacDonald, Old Inn, Tigharry.
Lambs sold to £85.00 for SuffX from Kate MacDonald, Croismorag, Clachan to average £60.88 (+£14.86).
An increased entry in all sections sold exceptionally well. United Auctions wish

to thank both mainland and local personnel attending the sale for their conscientious approach to adhering to Covid-19 restrictions set in place.
Leading lots & prices per Head
BLKS - AAx - £970, 310 Kilpheder; £955(4), £950, 8 Milton; £875, 261 Daliburgh. BSHx - £760, 15 Hougharry. BAX - £800, 6 Dunganichy. CHARx - £1100, £1090, £1070(2), £980, £925, £820, 136 Stilligarry. LIMx - £1050, 1 Knockaline; £1030, 7 Frobost; £1025, Old Inn; £1020, 1 Knockaline; £995, £985, 7 Nunton; £985, 100 Carnan; £970, 325 North Boisdale; £955, 1/2 Frobost; £950, 220 Stoneybridge; £950, 7 Nunton; £940(2), 220 Stoneybridge; £900(3), 18 West Gerinish.
HFRS - AAx - £955, 8 Milton; £880, 301 Kilpheder; £820, 319 Kilpheder. CHARx - £940, £930, £880(2), 136 Stilligarry. LIMx - £920, Old Inn; £880, 7 Frobost; £880, 342 North Boisdale. SALx

- £770, 5 Dunganachy.
OTM COWS - £1160, 8 Milton; £1020, 8 Kildonan; £1000, Old Inn; £950, 8 Milton; £940, 290 Kilpheder; £940, Old Inn.
COW & CALF - £900, 5 Frobost.
PRICES PER KILO
BLKS - AAx - 269p(4), 8 Milton; 267p, 3 Bunavullin; 267p(3), 8 Milton; 264p, Hillview; 264p, 6 Askernish; 259p(3), 8 Milton; 258p, 6 Askernish; 257p, 205 Stoneybridge; 252p, Hillview; 251p(2), 2 Drimisdale. BSHx - 253p, 15 Hougharry. BAX - 287p, 325 North Boisdale; 276p, 6 Dunganichy. CHARx - 256p, 253p(2), 249p, 136 Stilligarry. LIMx - 288p, 18 West Gerinish; 278p, 4 Frobost; 275p, 1 Drimisdale; 273p, 325 North Boisdale; 273p, 17 Torlum; 271p, 4 Borve; 271p, 1 Milton; 266p, 100 Carnan; 262p, 9 Milton; 259p, 1/2 Frobost; 259p, 7 Nunton; 258p, 1/2 Frobost; 257p, 7 Nunton; 257p, 1/2 Frobost; 255p, 1 Knockaline; 255p, 17 Torlum.
HFRS - AAx - 269p, 8 Milton; 255p, 252p, 3 Bunavullin; 251p, 205 Stoneybridge; 247p(2), 261 Daliburgh. CHARx - 242p,

241p(3), 136 Stilligarry. LIMx - 271p, 1/2 Frobost; 269p, 9 Malaglate; 268p, 17 Hougharry; 260p, 344 North Boisdale; 254p, 7 Middlequarter; 253p, 9 Malaglate; 252p, 18 West Gerinish; 252p, 9 Malaglate; 251p, 1 Milton; 250p, 19 Carinish. SALx - 243p(3), 5 Dunganichy. SIMx - 274p, 4 Borve, Berneray.
OTM COWS - 141p, Old Inn; 127p, 136 Stilligarry; 124p, 3 Hosta, Old Inn; 121p, 290 Kilpheder; 120p, 8 Milton(2), 8 Kildonan.
LAMBS - SuffX - £85.00, £81.00, Croismorag. TexX - £76.00, £66.00, Croismorag. Chev - £73.00, 8 Peninerine. Cross - £57.00, Croismorag. BF - 71.00, Croismorag; £60.00, 29 Clachan.
RAMS - Suff - £84.00, 7 Sollas. Tex - £95.00, 29 Claddach; £85.00, 6 Milton. Chev - £90.00, 10 Malaglate; £88.00, 469 North Lochboisdale. Cross - £91.00, 6 Milton. BF - £70.00, 15 Aird.
WEDDERS - £109, 1 Malaglate; £100, Dunsellar. EWES - £92.00, 254 Daliburgh.

Caledonian Marts Ltd, Monday January 25: Caledonian Marts Ltd had forward 229 Store Cattle at their fortnightly sale with a strong ringside of buyers forward for all types of cattle resulting in 116 Bullocks averaging £1007 and 113 Heifers averaging £906. With Store Cattle travelling from Argyll and Wigtownshire it was well worth the travel with all roads leading to the Cally. Bullocks averaged 230ppkg selling to 313ppkg for a pen of Limousins from J MacNicol & Sons, Turnault, Lochgilphead and to £1400 for a pen of Limousins from A Kennedy, Seggarsdean, Haddington.
Heifers averaged 226ppkg selling to 306ppkg on two occasions for pens of Limousins from J MacNicol & Sons, Turnault, Lochgilphead and again a pen of Limousins from W H & M Sloan, Mull of Galloway, Wigtownshire, and to £1380 for a Limousin from A Kennedy, Seggarsdean, Haddington. Dairy Bullocks sold to 205ppkg from J & D Mitchell, Offers,

Stirling and to £850 from the same home.
Other Leading Prices
Bullocks per Head
£1370 Seggarsdean
£1360 Howkerse & Seggarsdean
£1310 & £1300 (Twice) Seggarsdean
£1290 Skeoch & Seggarsdean
£1280 & £1270 Seggarsdean
£1240 Skeoch
Heifers per Head
£1330 Seggarsdean
£1240, £1230 & £1200 Seggarsdean
£1190 Hill O' Harthill & Seggarsdean
£1180 Seggarsdean
£1170 Inchgall
£1160 Howkerse
£1140 Shortrigg & Hill O'Harthill
Bullocks per kg
292p Turnault
284p Aird (Campbell)
278p & 268p Offers
266p Turnault
260p Offers
Heifers per kg
283p & 274p Turnault
270p Mull of Galloway
267p Seggarsdean & Mull of Galloway



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- Includes all joining pins/stakes

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OPTION 2
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OPTION 3
10 x 3m (8 railed) sheep hurdles
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• 2 x 2-foot swing gates

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MAIN FEATURES:

- Made from high-tensile steel
- All hurdles are 6 railed x 1.75m high
- A funnel is incorporated into the race-way
- All hot-dipped galvanised finish
- 3000mm (3m) long
- 20-foot race
- 60-foot holding pen. Includes all joining pins/stakes
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Give your car battery a fighting chance during the cold of lockdown, says GEM

Road safety and breakdown organisation GEM Motoring Assist says a few basic battery checks will help ensure your car engine starts when you need it.

During the current period of lockdown, only essential journeys are permitted, so many drivers will be using their cars much less... and mostly just for local journeys. Others will have decided not to drive at all.

Following a weekend of cold weather, the forecast is for another cold snap at the end of this week, potentially causing difficulty for cars, batteries and the drivers who rely on them, says GEM. GEM chief executive Neil Worth says every battery is potentially at risk if it's not being used. "Our recovery agents attend more calls to flat batteries than any other car breakdown.

"If your car battery is getting old, you may find it's simply not strong enough to start the engine. However, new batteries may let you down if they have been unused for a long period of time. "Cold weather slows everything down – including the chemical reactions that take place inside car batteries. It's estimated that when the temperature is at 0 degrees Celsius, a battery loses 35 per cent of its effectiveness.

"Yet so much of the equipment on your car demands electricity – meaning it's more important than ever to ensure your battery is ready to cope with the increased demands placed on it in cold weather.

GEM says it's important to remember that a battery doesn't last forever – in fact its average life is five years, so be ready to replace it as a matter of routine when the times comes; don't wait for it to let you down.

SIGNS OF BATTERY TROUBLE

If the engine won't start, but you hear a slight noise from under the bonnet, the chances are your battery is flat.

If you hear nothing at all, it's likely to be either a loose connection on the battery, or the battery has no charge left at all.



If your car has remote central locking (via a button on the key fob), then this won't work if the battery is flat.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

Check when your car battery was last replaced. Car service centres and garages are allowed to remain open during the current lockdown, so you should be able to book your car in for a battery check and replacement.

If you have a second vehicle available – and a set of good

quality jump leads – then it may be possible to jump start the car. Just remember to leave the engine of both vehicles running for several minutes after you've successfully started your car. Also, switch off both engines before removing the jump leads.

If you plan not to drive for the foreseeable future, it may be worth considering a trickle charger you can attach to the battery. Trickle chargers work by releasing a small amount of current to match your car battery's natural discharge rate. Contact your local garage should you be concerned.

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Deer in the headlights: road accidents involving deer increase by 35 percent



Almost 1800 road accidents involving deer were officially recorded in 2018 although tens of thousands more go unreported, according to a Government advisory group.

Winter is a particularly dangerous time, when deer often move to lower ground for grazing and drivers face wet and icy driving conditions in poor light.

Official figures recorded 1,756 collisions involving deer in 2018, an increase of more than a third over the last decade.

However, when the Deer Working Group reported to the Scottish Government earlier this year on how Scotland should manage deer populations, the group concluded that the total number of road accidents involving deer is closer to 8,000 - 14,000, each year.

The significant difference between the official figures and widely accepted estimates of the total number of road accidents involving deer, is due to a number of factors but mainly it is inconsistent recording [see notes to editors].

Forestry & Land Scotland, which was asked to contribute data to the Working Group, reported that its rangers often get called out to tend to wounded deer near the forest areas it manages across Scotland. FLS is responsible for 650,000 hectares across Scotland or 9% of Scotland's land area and deer management is a significant part of its activity.

Ian Fergusson, Head of Wildlife Management for FLS said:

"Scotland's deer population is increasing and we have watched

the deer-related road accident statistics climb steadily over the past decade or so.

"Deer pose many challenges in terms of habitat management; the more deer there are the greater potential damage they can do. When deer numbers are high or food is scarce, they need to range widely for enough food and this often brings them down into more urban areas; and in terms of busy roads the results can be catastrophic."

Deer numbers in Scotland are estimated to have increased from around 511,000 in 1990 to around 1 million as of 2020. To help protect Scotland's national forests and land from the negative impacts of deer, Forestry and Land Scotland employs a number of techniques, including deer culling and fencing, where appropriate, to keep numbers down to a sustainable level, keeping herds healthy and mitigating against habitat loss.

Most recorded road accidents involving deer occur in the Highland, Aberdeenshire, Central Belt, and Fife regions, but areas in west central Scotland, including North and South Lanarkshire have also seen significant increases in the last decade.

Road Policing Area Commander, Chief Inspector Neil Lumsden, said:

"Country and rural roads have many unexpected hazards and the presence of deer on our roads, particularly at this time of year should always be a consideration of road users. It is impos-

sible to predict what will happen on the road ahead and you should always ask yourself "Do I know what is around the next corner?" and "Could I stop in the distance that I can see to be clear if I have to?"

"When using rural and country roads these are all questions you must continually be asking yourself. I would always remind people to drive to the conditions, understand and react to warning signs, they are there for a reason. Ensure you know what they mean, slow down, drive appropriately and expect the unexpected."

Winter is considered to be one of the most dangerous times on the roads for Deer Vehicle Collisions (DVC), with deer typically being more active during dawn and dusk which falls at times when more cars are on the roads.

It's estimated that in Scotland, the actual number of DVCs involving human injury may exceed 120 per year.

Advice to drivers involved in an accident involving a deer

Being involved in a road traffic accident involving a deer, can be a traumatic experience, even when no-one is injured. Forestry and Land Scotland recommends the following advice:

- If anyone is hurt call 999
- If the deer is still alive, but injured, please call the SSPCA
- Do not get out of your car to check on the animal. You could get injured.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

MARINE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 MARINE FARM, AIRD FADA, MULL

Notice is hereby given that Camursory Estate has applied to the Scottish Ministers of the Scottish Government, under Part 4 of the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, in respect of depositing a new mooring at:

Cost	£150,000	
Location	Latitude	Longitude
Aird Fada, Mull	56° 20.667 N	006° 08.957 W
	56° 20.824 N	006° 08.029 W
	56° 20.574 N	006° 07.870 W
	56° 20.407 N	006° 08.803 W

(WGS84)

Plans showing the position of the works may be inspected at <https://bit.ly/2Y0LL2u>

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: 00008878 and Southwest Mull and Iona Development.

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.

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. 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 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
20/02057/LIB	External repointing/harling, installation of lead caps and internal lime plastering	Duart Castle, Lochdon, Isle Of Mull, Argyll And Bute, PA64 6AP
20/02024/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, formation of vehicular access, improvements to existing vehicular access and installation of sewage treatment plant	Croft 25, Achnahard. Bunessan, Isle Of Mull, Argyll And Bute
20/02341/PP	Erection of new accessible public toilet and shelter	Public Toilet, Dervaig, Isle Of Mull, Argyll And Bute
20/02295/PP	Refurbishment and change of use of former retail unit to form escape rooms and retail unit	113 - 115 George Street, Oban, Argyll And Bute, PA34 5NT
20/02368/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse and integrated garage	Kilbowie Lodge, Gallanach Road, Oban, Argyll And Bute, PA34 4PD
20/02301/PP	Erection of 2 dwellinghouses, upgrading of existing access and reduction in height of wall at junction	Land North East Of The Grange, Mansefield Road, Port Ellen, Isle Of Islay, Argyll And Bute, PA42 7BN
20/02312/PP	Erection of venison processing building, erection of pod for use as a holiday let, installation of septic tank and formation of vehicular access	Land North Of Glenora, Keils, Craighouse, Isle Of Jura, Argyll And Bute
20/02292/PP	Erection of telecommunications equipment compound with 15 metre high lattice tower, formation of access and associated works	Land North West Of Ardlussa House, Ardlussa, Isle Of Jura, Argyll And Bute

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, Lochgilphead, 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 Council's website. 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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www.argyll-bute.gov.uk

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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
20/03975/FUL	Delting 6 Hostel Brae, Kinlochleven	Erection of two holiday letting units
21/00161/FUL	Land 320M SE Of Beinn Bhreac Acharacle	Installation of a floating pier, formation of timber transfer area and access track
20/05185/FUL	Ardhu House Onich, Fort William	Proposed food servery
20/05027/LBC	St Andrews East and West Fassfern Fassfern Road, Fort William	Sub-division of Guesthouse to 2 Dwelling Houses - with internal alterations.
21/00119/FUL	Lochiel Villa, Achintore Road Fort William	Increase in height of rear extension, addition of stairwell windows (retrospective)

Time period for comments is 14 days & 21 days for 20/05027/LBC
ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
Email: eplanning@highland.gov.uk

PROPOSED LET OF A CROFT

John James Corbett is applying to let the croft at Fiadh Croft, Pennygown & Torosay Parish, Isle of Mull to Thomas Corbett of Laggan Farm, Lochbuie, Isle of Mull PA62 6AA

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 within 28 days from the date of the advert

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PERSONALS

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ENGAGEMENT

BOYD - CUNNINGHAM

Both families are delighted to announce the engagement of Iain, son of Iain and Isobel Boyd, Seo-nis, Connel, to Miriam, daughter of Martin and Anne Cunningham, Colry, Sligo, Ireland.

DEATHS

FERGUSON - Suddenly at home on January 23, 2021, aged 64 years, Rachel née MacArthur, dearly loved by her son Matthew and his partner Karen, a dear sister, aunt and friend.

HORNE - Sadly but peacefully at the Belford Hospital on Wednesday, January 20, 2021, Mary, aged 90 years old, beloved wife of the late George, devoted mum to Rosie, Angus and David, cherished granny and great-granny to Carrie Ann, David, Michaela, Christopher, Louise, Sophie, Hannah, Emily, Dylan and Lily and a dear mother-in-law to Fergie, Karen and Phyllis. Funeral service will take place in private on Thursday, January 28 at Caol Church. Mary will be sorely missed.

HUNTER



Charlie James Dunlop Hunter. Formerly of Dunbeg. Passed very peacefully at home on Saturday, January 23, 2021, with his family beside him. Husband of the late Irene Hunter. Beloved Dad of Margaret, William and Joanne. Special Grandad and Papa to David, Kyle, Kayleigh, Shaun, Calum, Lily, Ayla and Charlie.

JACKSON - Patricia. Pat, originally from Doncaster, lived in Oban for over 30 years, leaving good friends and neighbours in February 2020, to be near to her family. Sadly passed away January 22, 2021. Donations in memory to British Lung Foundation.

MACDONALD - (Cromarty). Peacefully, in the excellent care of Ward 4A, Raigmore Hospital on January 21, 2021, Catherine M. MacDonald, aged 88 years. Beloved wife of the late Derick, a much loved mum of Val, grandmother of Brian, Laura and Kerry and great-grandmother of Paul, Logan, Tyler and Murray. Due to current restrictions, the funeral service at Cromarty West Church, on Tuesday, February 2 at 10am followed by cremation at Inverness Crematorium, will be private. For those who may wish to pay their respects, the cortege will leave the Church at approximately 10.45am and pass along the High Street, along Shore Road the turn into Church Street, where it will pause for a few moments at the top of Little Vennel before moving onto the Crematorium. Family flowers only, however, donations, if desired, for Chest Heart and Stroke, Scotland and the SSPCA, can be forwarded to D.Gunn Funeral Directors, Blackwells Street, Dingwall. IV15 9NW.

MACDONALD - Peacefully at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, Glasgow, on January 14, 2021, Donald Paterson MacDonald, in his 76th year, Drumeonmore Farm, Isle of Gigha, dearly beloved son of the late Peter and Hannah MacDonald and a loving brother, uncle and great-uncle.

MORRISON - Maimie. Peacefully at Parklands Care Home, Alloa, on Saturday, January 23, 2021, Maimie, aged 91 of Driftwood, Polvinister Road, Oban. Wife of the late John Morrison, beloved mum of Fiona and Iain, grandmother to Seumas and Isobel and mother-in-law of Mandy and the late Iain. Remembered with much love by her family and friends. Due to current restrictions, a private funeral service will be held.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CLARK - Neil. Eleanor and family would like to extend our grateful thanks to all friends and relatives for their kindness and support shown at the loss of Neil. Thanks to Rev. Richard Baxter for his comforting words, to Moira Robertson for piping and to FWSC and Masonic Brethren for their respective roles in the funeral proceedings. Our gratitude to Manson & MacBeath for their guidance and absolute professionalism, and to everyone who turned out to pay their respects on Neil's final journey. £930 was raised in donations which was distributed locally between Macmillan and Community Nurses, and West Highland Home Care Service, all of whom were outstanding in their care for Neil. He will be greatly missed by us all.

MACDONALD - The family of the late Donald MacDonald would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for their messages, cards and phone calls of sympathy and offers of help following our sad loss. Our most sincere gratitude to the Campbeltown hospital dialysis unit and the British Red Cross for their excellent care and attention during Donald's long illness and to the Kintyre Dialysis Support group who worked so hard to bring this service to Campbeltown Hospital. Thanks also goes to our local medical staff. Special

thanks to the Rev. Scott Burton for his comforting service and the support he gave our family, including members not advised to travel home to Gigha. Grateful thanks to the Funeral Directors T A Blair and staff for their professional services and guidance. Finally a special thanks to the island people who paid their respects by lining the route to the Cemetery.

McRAE - The family of the late George McRae would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for their kind expressions of sympathy by card, telephone and beautiful flowers following their recent sad loss. Special thanks to Aden House Care Home for their wonderful care, kindness and affection shown to George during his time there. To D & A Munn for professional funeral arrangements, Rev Jenny Earl, for a sincere and comforting service and to The Thistle and The Rose for floral arrangements. Our thanks also to those who were able to attend the funeral under current government guidelines.

STEVENSON - Nancy and the family of David Stevenson wish to give sincere thanks to his many friends, neighbours and work colleagues, near and far, for their support and kind messages following his sudden but peaceful death on December 8, 2020. All of the cards, letters and flowers were of great comfort to us all. Thank you to MacLellan Funeral Directors, MacDonald's Florist, That Detailing Girl and Farmstead Fayre for their services. Special thanks to all those who lined the route on the day of his funeral to pay their respects and also much appreciation to Fort William Police for their presence on the day. We are also very grateful to Ian Patterson and Angus MacPhail for their personal tributes to David. You left this world so quickly We still wonder why For the saddest part of all You never said goodbye You left us many memories To us you were so dear No matter when we needed you We always found you near You gave us all you had to give Gifts both big and small But most of all you gave us love The greatest gift of all.

MEMORIALS

BRYANS - In loving memory of Bill, a much loved husband, dad, grandad and great-grandad who died January 27, 2020.

A special person, a special face, someone we loved but can't replace.

- Greatly missed by Jean, Fiona and William, Alasdair, Emma and Jacob.

BRYANS - Fond memories of my dear brother-in-law, Bill, died January 27, 2020. Sadly missed.

- Chrissie and MacKay family.

KENNEDY - Angus, February 2, 2015.

Lonely in my home without you Life to me is not the same All this world would be like Heaven

Just to have you back again.

- Fiona, Cloiche, Isle of Coll.

MACCONNACHER - Precious memories of May, a devoted wife, mum, gran and nana who passed away on January 27, 2015.

A beautiful memory dearer than gold

Of a mother whose worth can never be told

There's a place in our hearts no-one can fill

We miss you Mum and always will.

- Alexander, Jill and William, Sander and Laura, Darren, Cameron, Craig and Jamie xxxx

MACDOUGALL - Cathie, who passed away January 29, 2020.

One year ago today the angels came and took you away.

Greatly, loved and missed mum, nanny and great-nanny.

MACDOUGALL - In loving memory of Donnie, dear husband, father and grandad, who passed away January 24, 2020.

Always loved and fondly remembered.

- Morag, Kenneth, Duncan, Sheena and families, Dalmally.

MACFARLANE - In loving memory of Mairi, who passed away on January 25, 2020, a much loved mother, grandmother and sister. Also remembering our father Iain MacFarlane, who died on December 3, 1990.

Always in our thoughts and forever in our hearts, cherished memories.

- From all the family.

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MACFARLANE – In loving memory of Mairi, who passed away on January 25, 2020, a kind and loving mum and a very proud and caring granny. Much-loved and missed every day.

Forever in our thoughts and hearts.

- Helen, Davie, Mairi and Anthony.

MACMASTER – 50th Anniversary. In loving memory of John MacMaster, very dearly loved husband of Morag and father of Hugh, who died on February 7, 1971. Every day in some small way Memories of you come our way Though absent, you are always near

Still missed and loved and always dear.

Rest in Peace.

- Morag (Inverloch, Fort William) and Hugh and Margaret (Perth).

MACMILLAN – Ruth, Fort William, who passed away on January 31, 2020.

Ruth, loving, caring, kind and who was always there for us. In memory of a loving wife, mother, grandmother, sister and mother-in-law.

PORTER – Flora (Patsy), February 2, 2016.

Sometimes we turn and look for you with thoughts we'd like to share

Some days we just can't understand the reason you're not there

Some days we struggle to go on, just wishing you were near, But most days we just feel gratitude that we were lucky to have you here.

- Richard and Dixie.

SMITH – Precious memories of Angus, who died January 23, 2013. A loving husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather.

Always in our thoughts and hearts.

- Myrtle, Angus, Isobel, Calum and families.

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September saw start of rise of Covid cases

The vast majority of Covid-19 cases in Argyll and Bute have occurred since the start of September, a report has revealed. But the area's number of cases per 100,000 people has remained lower than neighbouring council areas, with the exception of a period in December when there was a contained outbreak at Faslane among personnel at HM Naval Base Clyde.

A report for the area's health and social care partnership (HSCP) stated that as of Monday January 18, there had been 1,078 positive cases in Argyll and Bute.

A total of 899 of those cases – 83.4 per cent – have happened since September 1, with a public health expert also saying that cases in Scotland had risen 'rapidly' since Boxing Day.

The report will be discussed at a virtual meeting of the HSCP's integration joint board (IJB) on Wednesday, January 27.

In the week ending Friday, January 15, Helensburgh and Lomond had 97 cases per 100,000 of population while Bute and Cowal had 89.

This was in comparison to 60 in Oban, Lorn and the Isles, and fewer than 20 in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands.

For the full story, please visit www.theobantimes.co.uk

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

As I sat down to write this a variety of current affairs situations came to mind.

Clearly the Covid situation was one of them but, while I could make general comments and observations, specifics could easily change between writing and publication over a week later.

The inauguration ceremony of Joe Biden as the new President

of the United States was due to take place tomorrow, as I wrote this column. Given a week will have passed when you read this, it might seem strange to not mention if anything happens.

Nothing is static, change is the constant and we need a plan, or plans. So much of what we see is reactive. I don't know what governments ought to do; do I even know what I ought to do?

Some people have little control of their life and often it's not their fault. I'm fortunate, I have the freedom and opportunity to make choices.

I pray that God guides me to make wise choices to try to make the most of life.

Reverend Sandy Stoddart,
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Happy new year for Connel race ace

by Fiona Scott
fscott@obantimes.co.uk



Connel motorbike racer John McPhee may have taken his foot off the Moto3 accelerator over the past month or so but he has still had two good reasons to pop the Champagne cork.

On Hogmanay, the world championship contender got engaged to long-term girlfriend Lauren Young.

Speaking to the Oban Times last week John said: 'It was nice to be able to give everyone some good news at the end of what was a tricky year.'

John met Lauren, from Lochwinnoch, at an event in Glasgow while he was on a summer break in 2017 and the couple 'haven't looked back since'. The couple have their sights set on a 2022/23 wedding. 'She had no idea at all about bike racing but we started talking anyway and she began to understand what I



John McPhee finished the 2020 Moto3 season in the top 10

did for a career,' he continued.

'Things just took off from there. She was living with me in Andorra for a while but she has been back in Scotland for the last year and a half training to be a primary school teacher.

'She has another six months until she is fully qualified, so we are both going to be busy chasing our own careers for most of this year.'

Two weeks after announcing his engagement John discovered that he had won the BSN Moto3 Rider of the Year vote by a landslide. The Petronas

Sprinta rider bagged a total of 35.79 per cent of the ballot with the next nearest rival, champion Albert Arenas, on 16.84 per cent.

'The Bike Sport News award was a bit of surprise to be honest. I didn't even know I was in the mix so that was a really nice surprise. I have some good supporters,' he added.

Due to fly back to Andorra at the start of the month, John has been stuck in Connel while he negotiates the complicated Covid travel barriers.

The hope now is that he can

fly back this week, but he will have to isolate for two weeks before he can meet back up with his coach and teammates.

In the meantime he has been keeping himself occupied at home.

A keen mountain biker, he has been spending much of his time cycling, as well as learning to speak Spanish and Catalan.

'I try to learn bits to get myself through. Catalan is very tricky so I have been concentrating on the Spanish for now.

'I'm not very good at holding a conversation yet but if I'm in a situation where I need to get myself out of a hole I can. I have been keeping on top of the fitness side of things while I have been here but need to get back to road training as soon as possible ahead of the first test on March 2.'

John will start his 2021 World Championship bid on the Losail international circuit in Doha on March 26.



Bob MacIntyre was delighted after finishing in a tie for 16th in the Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship.

Bob 'pretty happy' at solid start to season

Robert MacIntyre declared himself 'pretty happy' after he got his 2021 campaign off to a solid start at the weekend finishing in a tie for 16th in the Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship.

After his long lay off over Christmas and New Year, there were initial signs of rust during his opening round and after finding himself three over for his first seven holes, Bob did exceptionally well to recover to post an even par 72.

Playing alongside Ryder Cup Captain Padraig Harrington and fellow cup hopeful Victor Perez in his opening two rounds, the Oban star would have been hoping to make a good impression and force his way into contention for a wild card pick, should he fail to secure one of the automatic places. Harrington was bound to be impressed not only by his opening day fightback, but also his second round score of 69 which saw him comfortably make the cut. Closing

rounds of 71 and 70 in tricky, blustery conditions saw him climb up the leader board each day and at one point a top 10 finish looked within sight, particularly after a strong start to his final round. Unfortunately that momentum then stalled, but a tied 16th finish represents a decent start to the Oban golfer's season.

The tournament was eventually won by world number five Tyrell Hatton.

Bob remains tantalisingly just outside the world's top 50. The tour now moves on to the second leg of the Desert Swing, with another star-studded field assembled for the Omega Dubai Desert Classic starting today (Thursday) before moving on to The Saudi International the following week.



Karen and co step up for Healthy Options funding campaign

Staff at Lorn Healthy Options (LHO) have been putting their best feet forward to kick-start the charity's '5-10 and more' funding campaign.

Support worker Karen MacDonald has raised £150 from her one million steps challenge. She is contracted to LHO through the covid response fund, and finds social interactions for people who are feeling isolated during

lockdown. She set out with her sister-in-law Rhona and mother-in-law Norma to do one million steps by completing their recommended 10,000 steps per day. The trio reached their goal ahead of schedule on December 28.

During lockdown Karen trained to be an integrative nutrition health coach. She is currently studying to hold group fitness classes and



Karen MacDonald

has teamed up with LHO colleague and Les Mills fitness

instructor Katie Galbraith to build an online community to support people wanting to live a healthier and happier lives.

Karen's advice to physically and mentally healthy during lockdown is: 'Set yourself a goal, listen to what your body needs and do something small each day to get you closer to that goal.' Find out more about LHO and the campaign at www.lornhealthyoptions.co.uk.

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Pages 28-31



New short-term let plan sparks warning

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

The economy of rural areas like Lochaber and the wider Highlands could be facing disastrous consequences as a result of proposed Scottish Government regulations for short-term let accommodation.

According to Gavin Mowat, Scottish Land & Estates (SLE) policy adviser (rural communities) all short-term let operators could be asked to pay a licence fee of potentially £1,000 every year, plus an annual 'monitoring fee' and possibly further planning fees.

The new regulations are currently under consideration by the Scottish Parliament's Local Government and Communities Committee.

Devised to tackle anti-social behaviour and lack of available housing in primarily urban areas such as Edinburgh, if accepted by the committee, the regulations would have unintended consequences for self-caterers, B&Bs, and

'Under these proposals huts, glamping pods, wooden lodges... will face unnecessary and costly regulations.'

small businesses throughout Lochaber and the rest of rural Scotland, where SLE says the same issues rarely exist.

With the tourism sector in the grip of economic crisis caused by the pandemic, SLE is urging committee members to vote against proposals it believes will put jobs and livelihoods at risk.

Mr Mowat said: 'Under these proposals huts, glamping pods, wooden lodges and yurts essential to Scotland's rural economy will face unnecessary and costly regulations. When the government consulted on the regulations for short-term lets, these accommodations were far from the

Continued on page five.



Is Lochaber ready for the lynx effect?

It has been about a thousand years since lynx once roamed the forests of Lochaber, but now a major new study will ask people's views about the possible reintroduction of Eurasian lynx, such as this female photographed in Norway's Bardu region, to the Scottish Highlands. Turn to page two for full story. Photograph: scotlandbigpicture.com

Blackford seeks answers into care home concerns

Ross, Skye and Lochaber MP Ian Blackford has written to NHS Highland chiefs seeking answers following concerns about cleanliness and leadership at a Skye nursing home.

Strathburn Care Home in Portree, formerly known as Home Farm Care Home, was transferred from private operator HC-One to NHS Highland in November, following an outbreak of Covid-19 infections at the facility. However, recent Care Inspectorate inspections have raised concerns about the level of cleanliness and the building's poor state of repair.

'I will be asking for a report from NHS Highland on this,' said the SNP Westminster leader. 'My priority is to ensure the local community can be confident that residents are well looked after in a care home that is clean and has excellence in care and hygiene.'

'After the tragedy of the Covid-19 outbreak and shortcomings under the previous owners it is important that everyone can feel fully supported in the new arrangements.'

'The NHS must ensure that we can all have confidence in the running of Strathburn Care Home.'



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Coastguards support Covid test transport

HM Coastguard is providing support to NHS Western Isles as part of the ongoing response to the coronavirus pandemic, with rescue teams in Barra, Lochboisdale, Stornoway and Harris helping with the transportation of completed Covid-19 tests.

Coastguards rescue teams are picking up and carrying tests from Barra to the island's ferry, with the Lochboisdale team specifically involved in transporting tests by road to the Berneray ferry terminal.

The final part of the journey is completed by either Harris or Stornoway teams as they collect samples from the ferry in Leverburgh and carry out the final road transfer to Western Isles Hospital, Stornoway, for processing.

The journey, in total, is about 140 miles in distance from Barra to Stornoway – including two ferry crossings.

These transfers will take place every weekend until the outbreak in Barra is deemed under control by NHS Western Isles.

Is Lochaber ready for the return of the lynx

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

A millennium after wild lynx vanished from the forests of Lochaber through hunting and habitat loss, a major new study aims to assess people's views about the possible reintroduction of the species to the Highlands.

The survey is being launched this month by a new partnership of the charities Scotland: The Big Picture, Trees for Life and Vincent Wildlife Trust.

Ecological research has shown that extensive areas of Scotland could support lynx, but the charities say returning the shy and elusive animal is less about science and more about people's willingness to live alongside a species that has become forgotten on these shores.

The year-long Lynx to Scotland consultation will



A European Lynx adult female in Norway. Photograph: scotlandbigpicture.com

impartially and accurately assess public and stakeholder attitudes around the idea of lynx reintroduction, including in rural communities.

'With a global biodiversity crisis, we have a responsibility to have open and constructive conversations around restoring key native species to the Scottish landscape – and science shows that apex predators

like lynx play a vital ecological role in maintaining healthy living systems,' said Peter Cairns, executive director of Scotland: The Big Picture.

Lynx are now expanding in range and numbers across mainland Europe as hunting laws are enforced and public attitudes to large predators soften. Several successful lynx reintroductions since

the 1970s have brought ecological and environmental benefits to countries more densely populated than Scotland, and in areas used for farming, hunting, forestry and tourism.

As a shy and solitary woodland hunter, lynx are rarely glimpsed and attacks on humans are virtually unknown. Research suggests the Highlands has sufficient habitat and more than enough roe deer – the cat's preferred prey – to support around 400 wild lynx.

Steve Micklewright, chief executive of the Highlands-based Trees for Life, said: 'Scotland has more woodland deer than any other European country, and their relentless browsing often prevents the expansion and healthy

regeneration of our natural woodlands. By preying on roe deer, lynx would restore ecological processes that have been missing for centuries, and provide a free and efficient deer management service.'

Jenny MacPherson, science and research programme manager with the Vincent Wildlife Trust, which will lead the study, added: 'Reintroducing lynx would inevitably bring challenges. Lynx to Scotland will actively include stakeholders representing the full range of perspectives, in order to produce meaningful conclusions about the level of support or tolerance for lynx, and therefore the likely success of any future reintroduction.'

Lynx to Scotland runs from this month until February, 2022 and is not associated with any other previous or current initiatives to restore lynx to Britain.

APPRECIATION: ARCHIE GILLIES 1939-2021

Born in Glasgow to Duncan Gillies of Tarbet, Loch Nevis and Mary McIntyre of Kildonan, South Uist, Archie Gillies was the youngest of five children, his surviving brother Duncan lives in Vancouver, Canada.

As a child Archie spent a lot of his time in Mallaig Bheag playing down by the shore or climbing the Cruach. He cemented local friendships that stayed with him throughout his life.

Aged 19, Archie travelled South to join the Metropolitan Police and found himself living in London's notorious East End – a million miles away from Mallaig – where he tussled with, amongst others, the Kray Twins.

Here he flourished and his common sense, trustworthiness and sense of humour became legendary.

Having first clapped eyes on Moira Gallagher aged 15, he returned to Scotland to entice her away from Glasgow. His prowess as a sportsman and his success on the tennis courts meant nothing to her, he had to prove himself on the dance floor, which he duly did, she relented and married him in 1965.

Archie and Moira headed back down South where they had two children (Fiona and



Archie Gillies remained firmly rooted in his beloved Highlands and will be sorely missed by many.

Rory) with English accents and Scottish sensibilities. The family continued to divide their time between north and south.

Archie's links with the Highlands were fundamental to his life, they remained strong and central. He retained an interest in local affairs and never failed to take the opportunity to promote his homeland when he travelled to the corners of the globe.

He took great pride in stewarding the pipers at the Mallaig and Morar Games – his father Duncan had been a piper and judge and Archie

hugely enjoyed the company of musicians.

Archie's Highland background gave him a confidence, a positivity and a life-long delight in the company of others that was relished by those fortunate enough to come into contact with him.

The epitome of a Highland gentleman, Archie leaves behind a loving family, four proud grandsons and a wide community of friends who will sorely miss him.

In the words of Robert Burns...

An honest man here lies at rest,

As e'er God with His image blest:

The friend of man, the friend of truth;

The friend of age, and guide of youth:

Few hearts like his, with virtue warm'd,

Few heads with knowledge so inform'd:

If there's another world, he lives in bliss;

If there is none, he made the best of this.

Beatha beò gu math (A life well lived)

Archie will be buried on February 5 in Wraybury alongside his wife Moira. His family will hold a memorial/celebration for Archie's life in August in the Highlands.



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French connection with Corsica to be explored

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

The views of a number of Fort William residents are to be informally canvassed to find out how much interest there is in a possible twinning between the town and a similar town on the island of Corsica.

At its January meeting, Fort William, Inverlochly and Torlundy Community Council agreed members would contact a number of local people and if there is sufficient interest in a twinning arrangement with the town of Biguglia, the council will look to form a sub-committee to take this forward.

Biguglia is located in the north of Corsica and is home to 8,350 people. In the 14th century it was the capital of the Mediterranean island and is one of France's 18 regions.

The potential twinning has come about after the council was contacted by Paul Poli, a mountain guide/lecturer



and councillor who has been coming to Scotland for more than 20 years.

Mr Poli told the community council in a recent email: 'Separated by two seas, yet our countries are strangely similar: our social structures, based on clans, are analogous, our musical instruments are alike, and our history is quite similar considering that our peoples fought for their identity and for the respect of their rights. Recently elected in Biguglia, a town of Northern Corsica near

Bastia, I'm now a city councillor in charge of the culture, heritage and environment commission. This is precisely the reason for my letter.

'Our commune was the capital of Corsica and its history is very rich. We share the same patron saint, Saint Andrew, patron saint of Biguglia since the 12th century.'

Mr Poli said that the historical links with Scotland and Corsica go back to 1524 when John Stuart, Regent of Scotland, met Sampiero Corso,

Biguglia in Corsica and Fort William share many similarities, according to Mr Poli.

colonel of the Corsican troops during the reign of the French monarch, King François I.

Mr Poli continued: 'But it was in the 18th century, in 1719 more exactly, that the Jacobites and the Stuarts were in direct contact with the Corsicans in exile in the kingdom of Naples, Spain and Rome.

'Today, the Stuarts are still present in Corsica, not only in the commune of Biguglia, but mainly in the village of Castifao.'

Mr Poli added that an association entitled Corsica Stuart was set up, while books have been published on the links between the two countries.

Community council secretary Patricia Jordan told the Lochaber Times that all councillors felt exploring the twinning possibility was worthwhile.



Sarah Fanet, Kinlochleven Community Trust Resilience and Recovery Coordinator, with one of the hampers.

Kinlochleven Trust have Burns Night in the bag

To coincide with the birthday of the National Bard, Kinlochleven Community Trust launched a brand new initiative just in time for Burns Night as part of their Covid-19 Resilience and Recovery Project, writes Fiona Scott.

With support from Morrison's in Fort William through their Store Community Champion, 75 food hampers containing the ingredients for a Burns Supper, fresh and long-life food, as well as a recipe book to encourage cooking at home were made up and delivered by Monday, January 25.

The mouth-watering hampers were made possible mainly through funding from the Weir Charitable Trust with the Co-op Food Fund paying for the recipe books.

The Kinlochleven group were also grateful to Age Scotland who donated 25 Burns in a Bag, a canvas bag with a Burns quote and activity pack put

together by the Scots Literacy project, to add to some of the hampers.

Lucy Cooke, development officer at the trust, said: 'We are so thankful to the Weir Charitable Trust and the Co-op Food Fund for funding this initiative, Morrison's in Fort William, Age Scotland and our wonderful staff and volunteers for making it happen.

'January is not a favourite month for many people and the pandemic is certainly having an impact. We hope these Burns hampers will provide a little joy, inspiration and sustenance in the village at a time of uncertainty and difficulty.'

For further information on the Kinlochleven Resilience and Recovery project follow it on Facebook @kinlochlevenCommunityTrust or @kinlochlevensupport, and via the website www.kinlochleven.co.uk, which is currently being updated.



Lochaber Hope's hard-working volunteers are recognised

Volunteer Action Lochaber's volunteers earned some well deserved recognition recently.

The charity, which helps organisations to work towards achieving the Volunteer Friendly Award, was itself on the receiving end of the

Alyson Smith, manager at the Lochaber Hope, with the award. Photograph: Iain Ferguson

achievement. Ms Smith told The Lochaber Times: 'We are delighted to receive the Volunteer Friendly Award. Thanks very much to Voluntary Action Lochaber for taking the time to support us through this and it's just great to have our well deserving and hardworking volunteers recognised this way, they do a fabulous job.'



A selection of items included in the hampers, including haggis, turnip and tatties, plus trifle and shortbread.

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Acharacle residents at 'breaking point' in row over cold homes

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

A group of residents from Acharacle's Morrison Place claims Lochaber Housing Association (LHA) has left them to struggle with chilly homes – a problem they allege is now affecting some people's health.

It was in 2014 that their association homes were fitted with a new air source heating system. However, the residents claim that problems with the systems started within just weeks of being fitted.

Residents also say the costs of running the systems are 'outrageous' and that the system is failing to heat the houses adequately.

'First, we were told we were operating it incorrectly and to run it at a constant temp. When this failed to allow us to

adequately heat our homes we again contacted LHA,' stated the residents, who did not wish to be individually identified by name.

'We were then told to leave all doors in the house open to allow the heat to circulate and allow the system to operate properly. This is completely against fire safety advice.

'This has been an ongoing issue for us since 2015. The residents are now suffering poor health as a result of their living conditions. We now feel we have done all we can to have this matter resolved and have got nowhere. We really are at breaking point now.'

However, LHA told the Lochaber Times it carried out three successful investigations in 2015, 2017 and 2018, following separate complaints from individual tenants, which it says showed the systems were

heating the rooms to either the required standard or above the standard.

Then, after it received a letter in November 2019 on behalf of a group of residents, regarding high running costs and a lack of heat from the units, LHA again fitted data and heat loggers in February 2020 to four properties.

LHA added: 'Due to the Covid-19 outbreak, however, there was a delay in both uplifting the loggers and receiving the download information from the engineer regarding usage pattern and daily running costs.

'Visits were conducted to each of the properties to assess individual issues from the association's Asset Management department allowing us to get a further indication of the electricity usage of each dwelling. This demonstrated a

large variance of running costs between households despite the properties being the same build type and size.

'Some concerns have subsequently been raised regarding insulation and heat retention, and to address these the association has engaged an external consultant to survey the properties in February 2021 to identify any heat loss.

'The association's tenancy sustainment officer will also conduct a survey during 2021 looking at the total usage of electricity. The current restrictions make it difficult to arrange times and dates as this comes outwith emergency and essential works.'

On the claim residents were told to leave doors open to allow heat to circulate throughout the properties, LHA said: 'With the type of heating systems installed in these properties the

association does recommend that all doors are left open to allow air and heat to equalise throughout the property and to boost the bedroom area before going to bed then allowing the bedroom doors to be closed, we would also suggest that lounge and kitchen doors are closed at night. Fire safety advice also suggests that all appliances should be switched off and all electric heating also switched off before bed.

'A further action point we have agreed is to install further data loggers within properties over the coming months when Covid-19 restrictions allow.

'The tenancy sustainment officer will also follow up with individual tenants to look at costs, tariffs and if tenants are paying past electrical debt within their current costs and further access support where available.'

Lochaber affordable homes

Highland Council's Lochaber Area Committee has welcomed an update on the local authority's housing programme for the area, including progress being made on the provision of affordable housing.

Councillor Ben Thompson, chairman of the council's Housing and Property Committee, added: 'It's fantastic to see so many houses being built in Lochaber and not just in Fort William, but particularly in the more rural and islands areas where the impact is providing massive benefit to local communities.'

Developments include the conversion of Fulton House to create 12 flats and Lochaber House to provide nine flats, with six for mid-market rent; 117 new homes at Blar Mor, 37 on the former Achintore Primary School site; six at Glasdrum Road, with another six at Rankin Crescent.

Progress was also welcomed on Rum (four units), Spean Bridge (20 units) and Strontian (five units).

Home-Start Lorn WE ARE STILL SUPPORTING FAMILIES

This is a particularly challenging time for new parents. Can you imagine how it feels to go home with a tiny baby and miss out on all the usual visits from family and friends.

Our volunteers certainly can't replace that but they can definitely help to reduce the sense of loneliness many parents are feeling at this time.

Volunteering with Home-Start Lorn: Although lots of work has been put on hold, here at Home-Start we are still supporting families

What can we do during the current restrictions?

Some of our families are being supported by meeting up and going for walks, some are being contacted digitally e.g. Facetime



or Skype. A volunteer on Mull is even organizing Story Telling on the Beach!

Now is a really good time to contact Home-Start Lorn and find out about how you can volunteer.

Our next course will start in February 2021!

We are now delivering our training via Zoom. So, wherever you are in Oban, Lorn or Mull you can take part in our excellent Preparation Course.

That means, come March or April, when, hopefully, we will be getting back to some form of normality, you will have completed your training and we will have carried out all the necessary checks e.g. PVG and references, and you will be ready to be matched with a family.



As a volunteer you will also have access to ongoing training and external training. Our volunteers attend Argyll & Bute's multi-agency Child Protection Training and as part of Argyll & Bute Council's determination to ensure there is a Trauma Informed Workforce you will also have access to 'Trauma Informed' training.

If you think this might be something you would like to be part of please contact

Aileen Binner (manager)

07515 460655

Kirsty Renton (Mull)

07717 527035

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Glencoe Mountain Resort cafe to rise from ashes

'Disaster' for rural economy if short-term let rules approved

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Hopes are high that work will start on a new cafe at Glencoe Mountain Resort to replace the one gutted by the Christmas Day blaze in 2019.

A planning application for consent to demolish the fire-damaged facility and erect a replacement is currently under consideration by planners at Highland Council.

Fire crews from across the region with eight appliances were dispatched to tackle the blaze which ripped through the resort's Base Station building in the early hours of Christmas day just over 12 months ago.

The timber building which housed the cafe was almost totally destroyed.

Glasgow-based architect ABC was appointed to design a replacement building and have come up with a design that



The true destruction of the 2019 fire can be seen in this photograph taken the following day.

Photograph:
Abrightside
Photography

sees the proposed new Base Station linked directly to the ski facilitates adjacent to the building, whilst providing a cafe/bar space, main reception and toilet facilities accessible to campers and users of the building.

The resort's managing direc-

tor, Andy Meldrum, told the Lochaber Times this week of his delight that the cafe rebuild project was now out to tender and, all going well with regard to the current Covid pandemic, work on the new building should begin in early April with the new cafe scheduled to

open in the autumn, just in time for the next ski season.

'The new building will retain all the amazing views but will have more seating, a dedicated bar area and a lovely new modern kitchen. We can't wait to see it completed,' Mr Meldrum added.

Continued from page one. 'forefront of policy makers' concerns. Licensing for this type of rural accommodation is completely disproportionate. 'If and when cash flows return to normal, rural businesses from self-catering cottages to yurt or glamping pod operators will have to plan for a future in which operating costs increase without any real benefit.

'Forcing unwelcome and unnecessary regulations on small rural businesses, the lifeblood of our communities, will not solve problems with anti-social behaviour or lack of residential housing in Edinburgh.'

In his submission to the Local Government and Communities Committee, Councillor Allan Henderson, Caol and Mallaig, criticised the proposed legislation as being a 'one-size-fits-all' approach.

On the question of whether the proposed changes strike the correct balance, Mr Henderson responded: 'Not at present. This legislation is a one-size-fits-all - the Highlands do not fit into that

category. Long-term sustainability of local communities in the Highlands requires the flexibility of the B&B system which is well policed and controlled by the 24/7 nature of the business, Environmental Health inspections and quality requirements of partner advertising portals.

'While I understand the city problem, it should only be the control area part of the legislation that is carried forward at this time, allowing local solutions.'

Mr Henderson also said the government had failed to define short-terms lets in a clear and correct way and worries Highland Council would struggle to cope.

Mr Henderson's concerns were echoed by David Richardson, Highlands and Islands development manager for the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB).

He said: 'Quite simply, while FSB Scotland supports appropriate regulations for short-term lets, we believe that the Scottish Government is using a sledgehammer to crack nuts.'



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Appreciation: Pipe Major Iain Murdo Morrison

The Lewis and Harris Piping Society has paid tribute to the late Pipe Major Iain Murdo Morrison. The words below were shared by Dr John Smith, chairman of the Piping Society, at a recent committee meeting held via Zoom.

'Pipe Major Iain Murdo Morrison passed away at the Western Isles Hospital, Stornoway, on December 17.

'Although he had been unwell for some time his death came somewhat unexpectedly, and caused ripples of sorrow in the community of Back where he lived, and in the wider piping community, where he was well known and respected.

'Several tributes have already been paid to him, in the local press, in the piping press and on social media.

'These included a very nice tribute to him by Neil Smith, originally from Point, testifying to the kindness and generosity of PM Morrison, when he was a pupil of his more than 30 years ago.

'That was the experience of

all those who were taught by PM Morrison over many years, from the most amateurish youngster struggling with grace notes and doublings, to the most accomplished such as the late PM Alasdair Gillies, whom he coached to achieve the unique record of 11 wins of the Northern Star for Light Music at the Northern Meetings in Inverness, the equivalent of an Olympic Gold Medal for piping. It is a record unlikely to ever be equalled, let alone bettered.

'In his own competing days PM Morrison won all the top prizes. He was considered by his peers to have been the best at playing competition 2/4 marches, and he had a unique 'round' style of playing reels, which was very musical. His

Army career culminated in a period as Pipe Major of the Queen's Own Highlanders.

'On retiring from the Army he returned to his native island and shortly afterwards took up the post of piping instructor for schools on the East side of Lewis, succeeding Angus 'Boxer' MacLeod.

'In addition, PM Morrison was happy to share his knowledge, skill and expertise freely in his own time.

'For many years he held a weekly evening session at Back school for youngsters learning the pipes.

'He was assisted by the late Angie 'Scotch' MacRae, who would tune the pipes for the youngsters before they went in to their 'one to one' with the pipe major.



The late Pipe Major Iain Murdo Morrison, left, with James Duncan Mackenzie, when James won the Silver Medal at the Northern Meeting in Inverness in 2019.

level, were brought to bear in devising the format of the competition.

'He also advised from year to year on the pipers and the judges to be invited to Stornoway to 'commemorate the man and his music', and the piping society would like to express their deep sense of gratitude for his stewardship over the years.

'He was justifiably proud of what had been achieved with the competition, ably assisted by his daughter Donalda for the last decade, making it one of the best invitational competitions on the professional circuit.

'Iain Murdo was a devoted family man, and will be most sorely missed by his wife Flora and their children, Catherine, Donalda and young Iain and their respective families, and we extend our deepest sympathy to them, and other close relatives.

'His funeral, held under Covid restrictions and in inclement weather, was nevertheless well attended, and he was laid to rest in the cemetery at Gress to the strains of James Duncan Mackenzie, his most successful local pupil, playing the piobaireachd Scarce of Fishing.'

'He also gave lessons privately in his own home, where all visitors were offered generous hospitality by Mrs Morrison.

'He was a member of the committee of the Lewis and Harris Piping Society for more than 30 years, serving for most of that time as piping secretary.

'In that capacity he was responsible for arranging recitalists, he was closely involved in the annual junior competition, and for many years he was the main driver in organising the annual Donald MacLeod

Memorial Competition.

'The original idea for that competition was developed in the early '90s by PM Morrison and his good friend and fellow soldier Captain Angus 'Dodo' Stewart, who was the society treasurer at the time. Sadly Dodo did not live long enough to see the success achieved by the competition under PM Morrison's guidance.

'His personal knowledge of Donald MacLeod and his music, and his extensive experience of piping at the highest

VIEW FROM THE CHAMBER

Tourism is a hugely important part of Lochaber's economy and this sector has been particularly hard hit by the effects of the pandemic.

A large proportion of Lochaber Chamber of Commerce's members are in tourism and hospitality and we've been working hard to support them through this toughest of times.

Results from an industry survey carried out late last year by The Scottish Tourism Emergency Response Group (STERG) have just been published and show key changes in the way tourism businesses are planning for the future.

According to STERG's survey, around a third of busi-



nesses have already changed the way they work, with another 17 per cent planning changes. Of those, 60 per cent are targeting new markets and 67 per cent are looking at new ways to market and sell their products.

Whether it is encouraging takeaway sales or targeting domestic or ultra-local markets, these businesses are putting innovation at the heart of their survival.

If you have a tourism business, there is a lot of great help

available to help you adapt. The Tourism Business Digital Essentials webinar from VisitScotland and Business Gateway on February 4 will guide business owners through the key topics to think about now.

You'll find booking details on our website. Lochaber Chamber of Commerce is working with the other Highland Chambers to help ensure tourism and hospitality businesses across the Highlands are ready for the digital future.

Visit www.lochaberchamber.co.uk for more events and information on creating a safe and sustainable recovery for our vital tourism sector.



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Transport Scotland agrees to review Fort William trunk road speed limits

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Transport Scotland has instructed a review of the varying speed limits in and around Fort William following pressure from two Highlands MSPs.

From the Croit Anna Hotel beside the A82 on the south-side of Fort William to the Annat Industrial Estate near Corpach on the A830, the speed limit changes no less than nine times.

At the end of last year Donald Cameron MSP and Kate Forbes MSP wrote jointly to Transport Scotland to see if a streamlined speed limit would be more beneficial.

In his response to the politicians, chief executive Roy Brannen confirmed Transport Scotland has instructed BEAR Scotland 'to review the speed limit on the A830 between A82/A830 roundabout and Corpach for consistency with limits in the surrounding area and any changes since the network-wide review in 2012'. Mr Brannen added that the study will begin in the current financial year.

Welcoming the news, Conservative Highlands and



Constituency MSP Kate Forbes, who linked up with fellow MSP Donald Cameron to request a review of the myriad of different speed limits in and around Fort William. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

Islands MSP Mr Cameron MSP, said: 'It's important that public agencies are responsive to local concerns, so I am pleased that Transport Scotland has responded positively and recognises that there is a case for reviewing the speed limits.'

'I look forward to receiving their recommendations which I hope will improve traffic flow and road safety.'

Lochaber constituency SNP MSP Ms Forbes added: 'It does seem bizarre that the speed limit changes nine times in

such a short stretch. I think consistency matters, and I am pleased that Transport Scotland has recognised that.'

'This was first raised by a constituent - it shows the power of constituency representation and joint party working. In these days of fraught political debates, it's refreshing to be working across party lines.'

'Should any changes be recommended from the review, these will then be subject to a statutory consultation process.'

Leader writes to Commission to reject boundary proposal

Following discussions at the recent Highland Council meeting, the local authority's leader has formally written to the Local Government Boundary Commission on its proposals for councillor numbers and ward boundaries in the Highland Council area.

Councillor Margaret Davidson told the Boundary Commission the council rejected the Commission's proposals in their entirety and formally requested they stop the process immediately and review the whole issue of remote and rural area boundaries and councillor numbers in consultation with the Highland Council and other local authorities who have mainland councils with inhabited islands.

If approved, the proposals would see Highland Council lose two councillors overall, while Inverness would be di-

vided into four wards with two extra councillors and the Great Glen would become two wards.

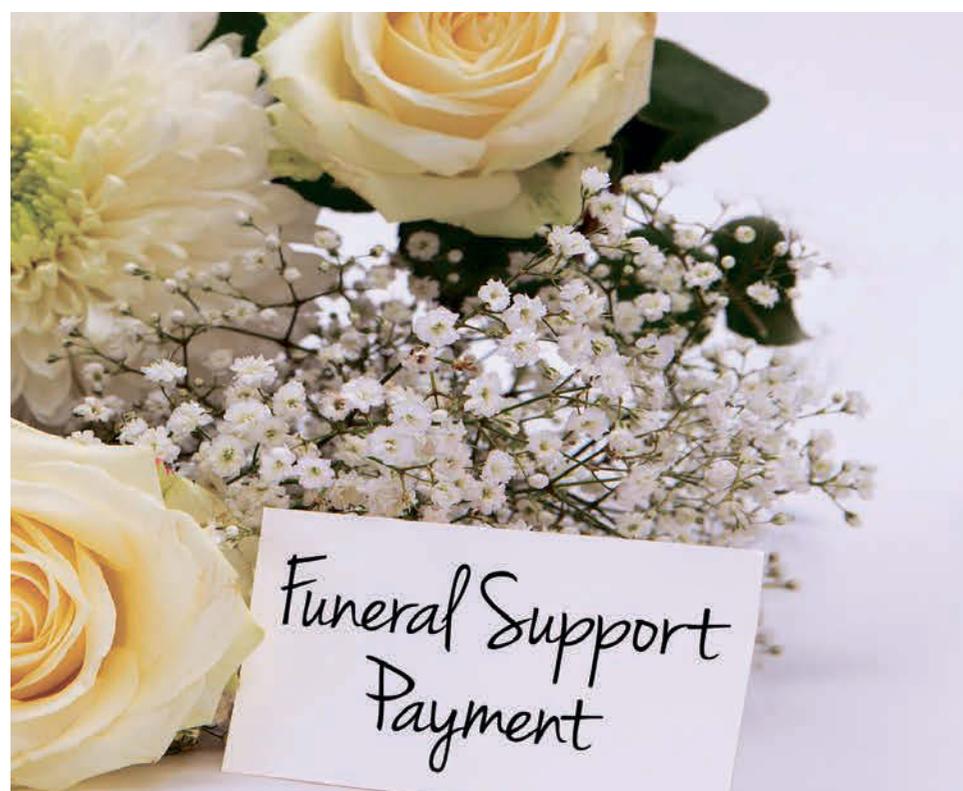
Commenting on the proposal, Mrs Davidson said: 'The council is deeply unhappy with the commission's proposals. They totally contradict the ethos of the Island (Scotland) Act, which was to enhance the democratic process and increase representation of remote and geographically disadvantaged areas. Much of our mainland areas are more remote and have far fewer transport links than many of the islands who have quicker and more reliable links to Scotland's major cities. The parity level for the islands is one to 800 electorate. In Highland the parity level is a staggering one councillor to 2,800 electorate.'

'There is no justification to subject our remote and fragile communities to an undemo-

cratic and unwanted boundary review on the back of the Islands Act - particularly in the middle of a national pandemic.'

'If our mainland ward structures are being altered then it should be the case that the whole of Scotland's local authorities must also be looked at. If not, it appears clear that Highland is being unilaterally singled out for a reduction in the number of councillors and that is wholly unacceptable. We are receiving a remarkable degree of support from our community councils and individuals across Highland.'

She ended by saying: 'The Commission's approach to determining fair representation for geographically sparsely populated areas is profoundly unfair, contradictory and undemocratic and should be subject of a fundamental review.'



If you need help to pay for a loved one's funeral and receive certain benefits, you can apply for Funeral Support Payment. It's a one-off payment towards burial or cremation costs and more. People typically receive around £1700 in financial support and you can apply after a person has died until 6 months after the date of their funeral.

Find out if you're eligible and apply at mygov.scot/funeral-support-payment
Or call our specially trained team on **0800 182 2222**



Social Security Scotland
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Wild Words

KIRSTEEN BELL

fort@obantimes.co.uk



The spell of those few sparkling days of frost has broken. The snow comes and goes, and, on the whole, we have been returned to our rather more wet reality.

I am not walking on the hill behind the house, I am wading.

The uneven surface of desiccated heather and sedge is saturated and overflowing. This is a landscape built on water – built on moss.

Mosses depend entirely on moisture to exist. Without it they will not photosynthesise, will not grow green. Their colour is a welcome relief now, in what is otherwise a sea of brown.

I need a stick to walk up here if I don't want to end up floundering to and fro in that sea, flapping like a fish out of water.

If I forget though, I can always attempt to follow the fence, lurching between each post.

I will be thwarted though



where a few metres of fence have sunk into the ground, surrounded by pillows of sphagnum moss.

Standing on the slope above this wee bit of fence, even on a dry day, you can hear trickling all around you.

A heel dug into the vegetation reveals a Lilliputian river winding down between the heather stalks.

Further exploration reveals

countless more, an inconceivable number of flows teeming across this landscape, towards the bowl in which the old fence sits.

I have got it the wrong way round: the fence didn't sink – the ground rose up to meet it.

All of this water, all of that rotting sphagnum pooling within it, slowly reforming the surface of the land.

Only the top bright colour

Mosses depend entirely on moisture to exist. Without it they will not photosynthesise, will not grow green.

of the sphagnum moss, its capitulum, breathes light. The cells on the leaves underneath are mostly dead, but it is those empty cells that hold the water.

They draw it up towards the green that still forms a path through sunlight. And, as the top grows, the old moss underneath is further steeped in the gathered rainfall.

Empty space and water be-

come the solid peaty ground that we can walk upon. Every year the rain continues to fall from the sky, saturating even the highest ground so that it rarely dries out completely.

Every year the sphagnum continues to reach up, out of the old wet growth.

Over time that growth becomes compressed, creating and perpetuating the acidic and anaerobic environment through which everything up here roots, forming peat.

I am surrounded by land that would swallow me if I could stand here long enough. Peat gathers the surface into itself, growing at a rate of around 1mm a year.

I am 5 foot 6 inches tall in my bare feet. I would need to stand here for 1,707 years to wholly become a part of this landscape. Add another 50 years for the thick soles of my wellies.

I guess I'll just have to be content with walking on water.

Ballachulish honours memory of Robert Burns

To honour Scotland's National Bard, Ballachulish Community Resilience Group organised a virtual Burns tribute recently, starting in Ballachulish quarry.

The narrator, Bill Strachan, gave a very powerful tribute to the virtual haggis and followed it by a delightful To a Mouse.

The event culminated with the beautiful vocals of Aileen Hornby set against a stunning snowy backdrop singing Ae Fond Kiss.

The community would like to extend their thanks to Bill Strachan (narrator), Aileen Hornby (vocals), Karl Griffin (Quarry filming), Peter Duggan (low whistle), Chaz Stewart (acoustic guitar) and Paul Hornby Battrick on keyboards and production.

YOURSTORY

share with us: fort@obantimes.co.uk
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Coronavirus

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

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Oban Business Improvement District
www.bid4oban.co.uk



View from the Edge

CATHERINE MACDONALD

fort@obantimes.co.uk

There has been distressing news lately, not only of more Covid-19 deaths and the increase of cases, but also of the large number of people with other illnesses whose treatment and operations have been postponed due to the fear of hospitals and NHS staff becoming overwhelmed with the numbers of Covid-19 patients with which they are dealing.

The Outer Hebrides is in tier three (with the exception of Barra and Vatersay) and the number of cases have been few, but there have been new cases on the Isle of Barra.

However, there was some comforting news in the isles to raise our spirits. That was that the vaccine had arrived on the islands and vaccination, first of the most vulnerable, was on going.

As we all know the lockdown, isolation and keeping distancing has been hard.

In our islands many members of families live and work on the UK mainland, or elsewhere off the islands, and still

continue to be unable to travel here to visit families.

Christmas and New Year were very different this year, with no visitors or grandchildren from the mainland cheerfully filling up the homes.

There have been a few deaths, not due to Covid-19, and with only a certain small number allowed to attend the funerals.

Sometimes the funeral cortege would drive through the home village of the deceased and some residents and friends would stand on the road as the cortege was passing to pay their last respects.

Church services are being held on Zoom on a Sunday morning with prayer meetings on Wednesday evening. One can listen to them on the phone or go on screen, with computer or laptop.

When they first began, I feared my old laptop would not have Zoom and I listened on the phone using the given ID numbers.

However, as the weeks and

months passed it became clear that life was not going to return to normal after a few months, as had been hoped by the optimistic.

I then tried going on screen, and to my surprise found it incredibly easy on my old laptop!

This was welcome as all

community meetings were also held on Zoom. When the Harris Forum met recently on Zoom it was good to see everyone and talk in a lively discussion with 16 other members, especially as the former weeks had been very quiet.

Facemasks were worn and

distancing strictly adhered to in the shops, but it is a less chatty ambience in the small shops as some have found it not always easy to recognise those who greet them, or to speak, due to the facemask.

Nevertheless, all abide by the rules as they should.

It is good to know that we will receive notification as soon as those giving the vaccines are ready to make appointments with us.

We are delighted to have the vaccine in the islands and look forward to our vaccination soon.



Highland Council headquarters in Inverness.

Homelessness network new route for council

The Highland Council is joining a pioneering national network programme aimed at tackling homelessness.

The Centre for Homelessness Impact has created the What Works Community to provide a space for leading councils to develop ideas, network with peers and receive world-class guidance on improving their homelessness service.

As a participant, Highland Council will benefit from expert assisted learning from the fields of behavioural insights, design thinking and data-informed decision making.

This will include guided learning, one-on-one support with the centre's staff and a platform for officers and peers from other councils to share and exchange information and learn from. Chairman

of the council's Housing and Property Committee Councillor Ben Thompson, Caol and Mallaig, said the authority was committed to tackling the issue of homelessness and helping households in acute housing need. 'This is an exciting opportunity to review and improve the housing services we provide to vulnerable clients in Highland,' he said.

The What Works Community is the first of its kind in the UK and follows a successful pilot programme run by the Centre for Homelessness Impact.

Dr Ligia Teixeira, CEO, said: 'The needs of local authorities are as diverse as the communities they represent, and we're excited to be working with a variety of new councils which bring unique challenges to the table.'

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A fishing boat works the waters off the island of Eigg

UK fisheries minister asked to meet fishermen

The UK's fisheries minister has been asked to meet island fishermen to hear first-hand about the crisis their industry is facing.

The EU is an important export market for island produce, particularly seafood which is worth millions of pounds to the local economy. Since the UK left the EU single market and customs union on January 1, exports have been disrupted by regulatory issues and delays at the border putting added pressure on fishermen already coping with the impact of Covid-19.

As a result, Na h-Eileanan an Iar SNP MSP Alasdair Allan and MP Angus MacNeil have written to Fisheries Minister

George Eustice MP to ask him to meet island fishermen.

Mr Allan said: 'The last few weeks have seen prices collapse, produce left behind and vessels told not to go out to sea. The UK Government has labelled these issues as 'teething problems'. While the announcement of a compensation scheme for seafood exporters is welcome, the level of funding will be a drop in the ocean compared to the damage done and it doesn't remove the Brexit red tape exporters now have to face.'

Mr MacNeil added: 'This is a problem of Westminster and the Brexiteers' making and it is for Westminster and the Brexiteers to sort.'

Action for Arnish has welcomed HIE assurance

The Action for Arnish campaign group has welcomed an assurance from Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) that it has a 'shared objective' for the future of the Isle of Lewis fabrication yard.

This follows urgent concerns raised on the island about possible implications of the administration process involving BiFab which also controls yards at Burntisland and Methil in Fife. BiFab's assets include a lease of the Arnish yard from HIE.

Following a meeting that also involved Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and the Stornoway Trust, HIE has expressed willingness to participate in an Arnish working group to take forward shared objectives for the yard.

The three island-based organisations had formed a united front to highlight concerns about the risk of Arnish being



The yard at Arnish, which is under administration.

caught up in any deal agreed by the BiFab administrators which might not be in the island yard's best interests.

Following the meeting, Alistair Dodds, chairman of HIE said it had been helpful to hear directly from the Action for Arnish Group, Stornoway Trust and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar about their ambitions for the future of Arnish.

'We support the shared ob-

jective to find the best possible outcome for Arnish from the BiFab administration and welcome the proposal to form the Arnish working group to facilitate this process,' added Mr Dodds.

Iain MacLeod, chairman of Action for Arnish, said: 'It was quite an encouraging discussion insofar as HIE clearly understands the issue at stake - which is to prevent Arnish

being caught up in a deal with the BiFab administrators which is not in the yard's best interests when standalone alternatives might be available.

'We appreciate that HIE cannot tie itself in advance to any one preferred outcome but it is important that its voice is heard and we are more than willing to promote the case for Arnish through a working group that HIE is involved in.'

Councillor Roddie MacKay, leader of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, said: 'This was a useful meeting that helped to define a shared agenda around Arnish. We will now move forward collectively to develop a shared document around what we believe success at Arnish looks like and what we believe would be the most appropriate outcome from the administration process for both Arnish and the wider economy of the Outer Hebrides.'

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LETTERS

Write to us: send your letters to editor@obantimes.co.uk
or The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB**Don't use this hammer to kill off small businesses**

We agree with David Richardson, Highlands and Islands development manager for the Federation of Small Businesses, when he said this week that the Scottish Government 'is using a sledgehammer to crack nuts'. He was talking about the proposed regulations for short-term let accommodation.

The proposal that all short-term let operators could be asked to pay a licence fee of potentially £1,000 every year, plus an annual 'monitoring fee' and possibly further planning fees, would kill off our fragile self-catering accommodation providers and B&Bs that haven't already been put out of business by the unavoidable Covid restrictions. It could be the final nail in the coffin.

We agree with Councillor Henderson that this 'one size fits all' approach should be taken no further.

We urge the Scottish Government to make changes so only the control area part of the legislation is carried forward at this time – do not burden Highland businesses and communities with legislation that could have severe long-term consequences that are entirely avoidable.

The editor welcomes letters of approximately 300 words in length for publication on this page.



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Glencoe Massacre oversight?

The Scottish Episcopal Church has often been described as 'the English Church in the heather' – nowadays, with the large proportion of Church of England clergy, it is hard to defend this description.

While some do, not all those who cross the Border, always acknowledge local religious history or embrace local customs.

'Slaughter under trust – a treasonable charge!' is one quote to describe the Massacre of Glencoe, perpetrated on February 13, 1692, from Professor Allan I MacInnes, Professor Emeritus of Scottish History, University of Strathclyde.

Allan spent his formative years in Ballachulish, the neighbouring village, and learned his initial history on the Massacre from his relatives and local sources.

My grandmother's uncle, was Dean Alexander Stewart MacInnes, a local man, who served as Rector of St Mary's Scottish Episcopal Church for 42 years and helped to arrange the monument in the village, beside the River Coe, with monies from Mrs Ellen Burns MacDonald of Glencoe in honour of her ancestors.

Each year on February 13, Glencoe Heritage Trust, clan members and others meet at the Celtic Cross to remember the atrocity. Before this Gathering, there is a Requiem Mass in St Mary's for the souls of the massacred Episcopalian clansmen and clanswomen. The two occasions have, over the years, become a custom.

While one accepts that due to the pandemic, that neither can take place – although Ros MacDonald, of Glencoe Heritage Trust has said a wreath will be placed at the memorial on February 13 – I and many others from throughout Scotland, will be unable to travel to Glencoe.

However, I was deeply saddened to read in February schedule, published on the Scottish Episcopal Churches' West Highland Region Facebook page, that the current Rector, arrived from the Diocese of Liverpool in 2017, had omitted mention of the Massacre – not even comforting prayers listed. It cannot have been an oversight, as there continues to be direct descendants of Clan MacDonald in the congregation and this service means so much to them.

I fear that her action indicates a lack of empathy of a significant day in the local community, in Scottish History and is a neat way to at last eliminate this historical fact from the Church diary.

Mary Stewart MacInnes, Cumbernauld.

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

ailean@obantimes.co.uk

Chunnaic mi bho chionn ghoirid cuideigin a' beachdachadh air na bheil dhinn a' dràibheadh an-diugh ann an càraichean cho tur eadar-dhealaichte bhon fheadhainn air an do dh'ionnsaich sinn! Abair gum bheil sin fior, agus fior a thaobh a h-uile seòrsa goireas agus fasan a tha toirt buaidh air ar beatha! Aig an àm seo den bhliadhna bidh cuid fhathast 's dòcha a' sabaid ri innealan ùra a fhuair iad mar thiodhlac Nollaige, agus nach tric a thuirt mi fhìn nach robh mi 'g iarraidh bhon fhòn-làimhe ach fònadh leatha! Tha mi cuideachd air foghlam, ma tha ceist agam a thaobh inneal den t-seòrsa, gum bheil freagairt, stiùireadh, agus glè thrìc foighidinn aig na h-oghaichean! Mo bheannachd orra!

Air ais aig na ciad chàraichean air am bheil cuimhn' agam agus cha robh leithid de rud ri dòigh teasachaidh nam broinn, agus dh'fheumte deagh èideadh ma bha neach a' siubhal annta sa gheamhradh. Cha robh dorsan neo uinneagan uabhasach druidte a bharrachd agus fiù 's ged a bhiodh, far an robh trafaig bha feum aig dràibhear a ghàirdean a shineadh a-mach tron uinneig a chomharrachadh cò 'n taobh a bha e dol a thionndadh. Suarach cho math 's a bha solais airson siubhal san dorchadas, agus ged a bha suathair glanaidh air an sgàile-gaoithe cha robh iomradh air dòigh gus steall uisge a spùtadh air aig an aon àm! Bhiodh gun teagamh daoine a' gabhail òrain an-dràsta 's a-rithist, mar a bha riamh, is iad a' siubhal oir cha robh guth air rèidio neo dad dhen t-seòrsa ann an carbadan.

Aon rud air nach fhaigh mi fhìn seachad nuair a thèid mi gu taisbeanaidhean seann chàraichean, 's e cho beag, cumhang, 's a bha mòran den fheadhainn air an robh mi eòlach nam òige, 's air an do dh'ionnsaich mi. Bidh mi tric a' feuchainn ri dealbh a dhèanamh nam inntinn de dhithis cheathnach fhear agus mhnathan air am fàsgadh ann an Austin A35, càr a bha cho bitheanta, neo am Morris Minor! Ach gu nàdarra bha daoine moiteil às na goireasan còmhdaich a bh' aca agus a bha a' comharrachadh adhartas, co-dhiù 's e motair-rothair, càr, neo fiù 's tractar, a dhèanadh turas sgiobalta dhaibh gu ruige bùth, cèilidh, neo eaglais!

Theagamh gur e aithne air sùbailteachd ghoireasan a dh'fhàg barrachd chomasan gan cur an innealan de gach seòrsa an-diugh is, mar eisimpleir, fòn-làimhe air chomas dealbhan is fuaim a chlàradh 's a chraoladh, is an t-eadarlìon a rannsachadh. Fhad 's a bha càraichean ag atharrachadh dh'atharraich seirbheisean slàinte cuideachd, is chan e a-mhàin gum bheil banachdaich air tinneasan a bha bitheanta agus marbhtach, tha mòran dhiubh gan toirt seachad còmhla. 'S dòcha gun tig latha far am bi banachdach Covid 19 agus fiù gan cur còmhla cuideachd?

The bewildering range of functions available in the ubiquitous mobile phone challenges many of my generation! An efficiency of evolution which might soon be reflected in a single annual inoculation for flu and coronavirus?

Cut your speed on A86

Having read an article recently in the Lochaber Times that more officers had been trained to use speed guns, I wonder if some may be deployed to check the speed of traffic in and out of Spean Bridge on the A86.

The speed of some of the vehicles is shocking. Children have to walk beside their road to get to and from school and, indeed, some have to cross it. They also have to cross it to get to the village playpark.

For the safety of everyone something should be done.

Linda Andrews, Spean Bridge.

Vaccination push

Recently at First Minister's Questions, Nicola Sturgeon conceded she will miss her target to vaccinate 560,000 Scots by the end of January. Under questioning, Ms Sturgeon admitted that all over-80s would not get the jab until February 7 a week later than the SNP previously claimed.

GPs say they could be delivering the vaccine far more quickly, but the SNP are failing to get supplies where they are needed. Vaccines are our best route to reducing restrictions, returning life closer to normal and rebuilding communities.

Councillor Alastair Redman,
Kintyre and the Islands.

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DISTRICT NEWS

LOCHABER

Mask guidance for hospitals and care settings updated

With Covid-19 more prevalent than previously, and the new more transmissible variant present, NHS Highland has updated its guidance on face coverings and masks.

Having taken advice from Infection Control, health chiefs are now asking that staff, patients and visitors in all hospital and care settings -- including the Belford Hospital in Fort William, should now use Fluid Resistant Surgical Masks (FRSM) instead of face coverings. These will be provided.

With immediate effect, all visitors, patients and staff should put on a FRSM rather than any other face covering when coming into a care setting.

This guidance also applies to all non-clinical/patient-facing staff when it is not possible for them to physically distance from colleagues within offices or moving between departments.

Staff who work in non-clinical shared office spaces have also been told they should also ensure they are using FRSM.

'We would also continue to encourage hand hygiene - this is particularly important when handling face coverings and masks,' said NHS Highland.

Further information is available online in the National Infection Prevention and Control Manual.

Lochaber Environmental Group hosts Greta film night

What better way to spend another dark lockdown evening than to join Lochaber Environmental Group for its first environmental film night of 2021 on Wednesday, February 3.

At 7pm people will be tuning in to watch I Am Greta (currently available to watch on BBC iPlayer), the story of teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg and her rise to environmental stardom.

This award-winning documentary follows the story of Greta, a shy school student with Asperger's, who, fed up with her government not doing enough to combat climate change, stages a one-person strike outside the Swedish Parliament.

Little did she know that this was just the

First patients in Western Isles at vaccination centre

Ishbel MacAulay from Lewis had the first scheduled appointment at last week's Covid-19 mass vaccination clinic at the Lewis Sports Centre in Stornoway.

Ishbel, aged 80, is encouraging others to receive the vaccine, when invited, saying it was 'very important' to get it.

Around 460 people from across Lewis were invited to attend vaccination appointments at the sports centre on the first day, which was last Thursday.

It was the first clinic held by NHS Western Isles in the sports centre, and NHS Western Isles said it was grateful to Comhairle nan Eilean Siar for the use of the premises and for its support in logistical arrangements.

The clinic provided appointments for those in the over-80 priority group, those aged over-75, and for a number of health and social care staff.

Vaccinations are continuing this week across the Western Isles, with additional clinics being planned in the sports centre.

Explaining that this was only the second time she had been out of her house since the original lockdown last March, Ishbel, from Sandwick in Lewis, said: 'Because of my own health issues I was very keen to receive the vaccination.'

'I had previously weighed up the pros and cons of getting it, and decided that as Covid is not going anywhere fast, I needed to get the vaccine to help myself and my family.'

beginning of what would become the global climate movement Fridays For Future, as she inspires young people from around the world to strike for action.

The film also joins her on her sailing journey across the Atlantic to speak at the United Nations Climate Action Summit in New York, where she opens up about how being the voice of a generation has impacted her own life.

After watching the film, there will be a Zoom call at 8.45 pm to discuss the documentary.



Ishbel MacAulay receiving her vaccination from NHS Western Isles Occupational Health Nurse Janet Miskovic.

'Previously I had lived abroad for a number of years so was quite used to having various vaccinations, so felt that this was nothing to worry about.'

'It really is just another injection and I'm happy that I'm doing my part to try to control this pandemic. We all need to get back to normal and getting the vaccine will help us all.'

The Zoom call will be joined by three Fridays For Future activists, Holly Gillibrand and Lily Bloom from Fort William, and Lily Henderson from Inverness, for a QandA to discuss issues raised in the film and how everyone can play a part in the climate and ecological emergency.

To join the film night, please register on Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/lochaber-environmental-group-film-evening-and-discussion-i-am-greta-tickets-137444300603> (or just google Lochaber

Environmental Group Eventbrite).

And stay tuned as there will be more film evenings in the coming weeks. To find out more about what LEG does, please visit website at <https://lochaberenviron.org.uk/>.

For more information about Fridays for Future Scotland, visit the website at <https://climatestrike.scot/> and follow Fridays For Future Highland on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/FWclimatestrike>

GLENCOE

Community group ready

Glencoe and Glen Etive Community Resilience Group is still fully functioning and stands ready to help any resident in need, particularly in the current coronavirus lockdown situation, councillors heard earlier this month.

At the January meeting of the community council, members were informed that funds remaining in the council bank account at the last statement amounted to £126.57. It was agreed this sum could now be transferred to the group's new bank account by cheque - this will be arranged as soon as possible.

The group is now operating out of the new account, with £5,000 funding available currently, and new funding options being sought.

LOCHABER AND SKYE

More Covid home tests

There has been a significant expansion of rural postcodes available for Covid home test kits following intervention by the Scottish Government.

Previously, home test kits were unavailable for some mainland and island locations because the Royal Mail system was unable to send the kits to laboratories quickly enough but now the extended post box system can receive home test kits, and there is temporary courier support for areas within NHS Highland where UK-wide courier provision is not yet available.

Of the 98 extra post boxes, 36 are in Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch, including Kyleakin, Kylerhea, Drumfearn, Kilmore, Armadale, Taskavaig, Portnalong, Sconser, Broadford, Portree, Plockton, Dunvegan, Bracadale, Duror, Lochaline, Fort Augustus, Fort William, Spean Bridge, Invergarry, Glenfinnan, Lochailort, Arisaig, Morar, Mallaig, Rum, Isle of Canna

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FOCUS



Working together for a thriving community

Lochaber Chamber of Commerce is the hub of Lochaber business, representing more than 200 local businesses of all sizes and sectors throughout the Outdoor Capital of the UK.

Lochaber chamber members don't just benefit from local support, they are also part of Scotland's strongest business network of 30 chambers of commerce that work together for the needs of business throughout the country.

Chamber members benefit from a range of great opportunities to help their business – informal networking, regular members' events, training seminars, a bespoke leadership programme, mentoring, business advice, promotional opportunities, member-to-member special offers and discounts and more!

Lochaber Chamber of Commerce events may be virtual for the time being, but they're also international. As part of the Scottish Government's commitment to growing international trade, the chamber has recently hosted virtual trade missions to Nova Scotia, with another one scheduled for North Carolina in May.

During the pandemic, Lochaber chamber has fought hard for the needs of its members, regularly engaging with politicians and decision-makers to make sure that the needs of Lochaber are on the agenda and to help them access support.

Tourism is hugely important to Lochaber, and Lochaber chamber also promotes the area to visitors using the Outdoor Capital of the UK brand. It works with local marketing groups and VisitScotland to support and develop tourism initiatives so that our destination is ready for the recovery when the time is right.

As well as all of the above, the chamber hosts **Developing the Young Workforce West Highland** which plays a key role in preparing young people for the world of work. DYW West Highland helps to connect young people with the world of work through a wide range of employer-led initiatives, ranging from virtual career fairs to work placements.

The effects of the pandemic have disproportionately affected young people and Developing the Young Workforce has never been more important. We need to work together – all businesses are encouraged to contact DYW West Highland to help inspire and create opportunities for our young people and benefit their business, the local economy and our community.

DYW West Highland helps inspire the workforce of the future



Representatives of DYW West Highland Board, from left: Matthew Jackson of Sonas Hospitality (chair), Oliver Stephen of BSW Timber (vice chair), Chris Vind of Muthu Fort William Hotel, Sandra Milne previously of Crieff Hydro Family of Hotels, Angela Coburn of TSL Contractors, Lydia Rohmer of West Highland College UHI, Frazer Coupland of Lochaber Chamber of Commerce and Donald Waring of MOWI.

Chances are you that you've heard of **Developing the Young Workforce**, but do you know what it actually is and how it is benefiting our local young people and businesses?

Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) is a Scottish Government Youth Employment strategy. Our local team, **DYW West Highland**, is one of 21 regional DYW groups in Scotland, leading and driving change in the way employers connect with young people, schools, and colleges.

DYW West Highland is hosted by Lochaber Chamber of Commerce and funded by the Scottish Government. The team engages with secondary school pupils and employers throughout Lochaber, Skye, and Wester Ross. In an exciting new development, the team is currently recruiting for the new positions of in-school co-ordinators to help create closer connections between young people at high school and local employers.

Frazer Coupland, DYW West Highland lead and CEO of Lochaber Chamber of Commerce said:

'At a time when our West Highland young people might be struggling to obtain employment opportunities, linking up with DYW West Highland is a fantastic way for employers to make a difference to the future of our community.'

Developing the Young Workforce is all about highlighting the opportunities that are available to young people, by linking them up with local employers to create the win-win scenario of making young people better equipped to make positive career choices and giving employers access to a pool of young local talent.

The work of DYW is shaped by the DYW West Highland Board; members of which are drawn from major local employers. This ensures that the focus of the work relates directly to the needs of local business, helping ensure that young people have the right skills and opportunities to contribute to the local workforce.

There are lots of ways to get involved with DYW and employers can choose the type and level of engagement that works for them.

Your involvement might just be that 'light bulb moment' that encourages a young person into a fulfilling career in an industry that they'd never considered before.

Activities could involve things like taking part in mock job interviews, workplace visits (when possible), work experience, mentoring, presenting to high school pupils to build awareness of your industry sector, and more. There is also a wide range of apprenticeship options that allow young people to earn while they learn at work.

At the moment, face-to-face and workplace visits and work experience aren't possible in person, but DYW West Highland has adapted to offer online services to help young people in this difficult time. They've been able to host interactive online career insight sessions to introduce young people to the different opportunities available within thriving local sectors like aquaculture, adventure tourism, the NHS and construction.

If you are a West Highland employer who'd like to make a difference to a young person's life and increase the talent pool for your business, then get in touch today on info@dywwesthighland.org. Visit www.dywwesthighland.org to find out more.



MOWI Virtual Careers Showcase

On Wednesday June 17 2020, DYW West Highland launched a new events series to increase awareness of employment opportunities for young people in the West Highlands.

The first virtual event was delivered in partnership with Mowi, the world's leading seafood company, via the Zoom online-conferencing platform.

Speaking of the event, Donald Waring, learning and development manager at MOWI, and DYW West Highland Board member, said:

'Mowi were delighted to take part in our first ever online careers event. Partnering with DYW West Highland and education colleagues is the best way to connect with our future aquaculture talent.'

More than 65 young people joined the free, interactive session that saw five MOWI employees deliver personal insights into their role, career pathways and hopes for the future.

The energy and passion shown by the young people for their daily work reminded the audience of just how important a meaningful and rewarding career can be. It also highlighted the career possibilities available across the rural areas of the West Highlands.



Emily Connelly, electrical engineering apprentice at MOWI.

Frazer Coupland, DYW West Highland lead and CEO of Lochaber Chamber of Commerce was impressed by the possibilities of online delivery:

'Thanks to virtual delivery, geography is no longer a barrier and allows us to reach across our whole network at once; and employees can take part in this rewarding experience from their own workplace.'

We encourage any employer who would like to showcase their business, opportunities, and experiences to get in touch with the DYW team by emailing info@dywwesthighland.org

DYW West Highland helps deliver the Young Person's Guarantee

The Scottish Government's new Young Person's Guarantee aims to give all young people in Scotland the chance to succeed despite the economic impacts of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Economy Secretary Fiona Hyslop said:

'The pandemic is having a disproportionate economic effect on our young people, reducing job opportunities just as they are starting out on their careers. I want Scotland's young people to know we are right behind you; we want you to be successful and we will do everything we can to give you the opportunities you need.'

Organisations backing the Guarantee make five pledges to help young people at this critical time:

- Prepare young people for the world of work through work experience, volunteering and work-based learning opportunities.
- Engage with and provide opportunities to young people who face barriers to work.
- Create work-based learning, training, and upskilling opportunities for young people.
- Create jobs and opportunities for young people through apprenticeships, paid internships, and work experience.
- Create an inclusive workplace to support learning and enable young people to meet their potential.

Contact the team at DYW West Highland to find out how they can help your business invest in the future of our young people.

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Fundraiser on target for damage limitation

by Fiona Scott
fscott@obantimes.co.uk



A fundraising page set up by an Inverness man has raised more than £2,000 towards the cost of surveillance equipment to deter vandals at Fort William Football Club.

Clachnacuddin FC fan William Corbett set up the GoFundMe page after hearing about the recent damage to the club's Claggan Park ground.

William said: 'Their ground, overlooked by the big ben, is one of the most picturesque and iconic in Britain and having been involved through the Highland League with the club I have followed for many years, Clachnacuddin FC, I have found the people involved with Fort William to be among the friendliest in the league.'

'I was shocked and dismayed at what they have faced with the damage caused and have

'A huge thank you to everyone who has donated to the Go Fund Me page'

set up this fundraiser to try and help them out in some small way. All donations for this great wee club, on my fundraising page, will be greatly appreciated. Thank you.'

At the time of writing the appeal had already raised £2,185 of its £3,000 target.

Commenting on its Facebook page this week Fort William FC responded: 'Once again a huge thank you to everyone who has donated to the Go Fund Me page, it is greatly appreciated by everyone at the club. And once again a massive thank you to William Corbett for setting up the page.'



Damage caused by vandals at the Claggan Park ground.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos.

Police are investigating the latest vandalism at the ground which resulted in damaged seats, broken bottles, forced entry to the clubhouse and the lifting of recently laid turf covering new drainage areas on the park. The club hope that

the money raised will enable it to have CCTV round the park and hopefully stop vandalism happening in the future.

Go to the Help for Fort William Football Club for Repairs GoFundMe page to donate.

Ryan wins Lee's champion boxer shorts in lucky draw

Former Featherweight title holder Welshman Lee Selby is no stranger to Lochaber Phoenix Boxing Club, having visited in 2017 to give a demonstration of sparring.

While another trip may be on the cards this year, should Covid regulations allow it, he has stayed in contact by giving the club a pair of his shorts, signed, framed and with a certificate of authentication to help raise much-needed funds.

Fifty keen boxing fans from

across the country took part in an online lucky numbers game and the winner, picked by a random computer generator, was Ryan Stewart from Caol, who was presented with his prize by the club's Stephen Mcmanus.

Stephen McManus, left, of Lochaber Phoenix Boxing Club presents a pair of signed and authenticated Lee Selby shorts to raffle winner, Ryan Stewart.



Bob MacIntyre was delighted after finishing in a tie for 16th in the Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship.

Bob 'pretty happy' at solid start to season

Robert MacIntyre declared himself 'pretty happy' after he got his 2021 campaign off to a solid start at the weekend finishing in a tie for 16th in the Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship.

Understandably after his long lay off over Christmas and New Year, there were initial signs of rust during his opening round and after finding himself three over for his first seven holes, Bob did exceptionally well to recover to post an even par 72.

Playing alongside Ryder Cup Captain Padraig Harrington and fellow cup hopeful Victor Perez in his opening two rounds, the Oban star would have been hoping to make a good impression and force his way into contention for a wild card pick, should he fail to secure one of the automatic places.

Harrington was bound to be impressed not only by his opening day fightback, but also his second round score of 69 which saw him comfortably make the cut.

Closing rounds of 71 and 70 in tricky, blustery conditions saw him climb up the leader board each day and at one point a top 10 finish looked within sight, particularly after a strong start to his final round.

Unfortunately that momentum then stalled, but a tied 16th finish represents a decent start to the Oban golfer's season.

The tournament was eventually won by world number five Tyrrell Hatton.

Bob remains tantalisingly just outside the world's top 50. The tour now moves on to the second leg of the Desert Swing, with another star-studded field assembled for the Omega Dubai Desert Classic starting today (Thursday) before moving on to The Saudi International the following week.



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