



### Elchris holds key to part of Ganavan's history



### Mum takes plunge as thanks to nurses

## OBAN FOR BUSINESS

### A list of local businesses open during lockdown

# Party house landlords are flouting lockdown

by Kathie Griffiths  
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Landlords are renting out big houses in Taynuilt to partying visitors flouting lockdown.

Police have been called to a number of properties in the village where law-breakers were dealt with and charged.

But it is still unclear how landlords at fault are being dealt with and what comeback they could face, say members of Taynuilt Community Council, who want answers.

In January, seven calls were made about one house in particular and there have been others since.

Taynuilt Community Council receives updates from the police and is now asking Argyll and Bute Council if it is – or is considering – taking any action against landlords who are facilitating such breaches by continuing to trade, potentially putting the community at risk from the virus.

Community council chairman David Sloss says they are

**It would appear that due to the size of the properties visiting individuals are using the venues for parties.'**

still waiting for a response from the local authority but want to pass down 'the big picture' to villagers who are feeling frustrated.

'It would appear that due to the size of the properties, visiting individuals are using the venues for parties.

'A police report we received on January 18 said there had been seven calls to one address and individuals had been charged. We know of two more calls to two other properties where there were also charges,' he said.

And he added: 'We want to know what action is being taken against landlords. We want

Continued on page three.

## Adventure group sees Ganavan toilets reopen



People who love adventure in Oban have been urged to get involved in a new not-for-profit outdoor activity group. At the weekend, Adventure Oban, in partnership with BID4Oban, led a voluntary effort to clean up and reopen the toilets at Ganavan Sands, which will now open every Saturday and Sunday between 10am until 4pm until April when Argyll and Bute Council reopens them seven days a week for the 2021 season. For full story, visit [www.obantimes.co.uk](http://www.obantimes.co.uk)

## Covid halts £3M water works at Pennyfuir

A Covid outbreak has brought Scottish Water's £3million work at Pennyfuir to a halt.

The site closed after a small number of workers tested positive for the virus, confirmed Scottish Water.

Work to fit a new water tank will not start again until all the necessary measures have been taken to make sure it is safe for employees and contractors to be back on site.

A Scottish Water spokesperson said: 'In accordance with the current Scottish Government guidelines, we have temporarily closed our works at Pennyfuir following confirmation that a small number of employees/contractors' employees tested positive with Covid-19.

'The health and safety of workers and our customers is our top priority. We would like to reassure everyone that all necessary steps will be taken to ensure a safe working environment prior to the restart of this project.'

Before the temporary closure, work had been progressing well as part of a scheme that will improve service to customers on the north side of Oban and as far out as Appin.

  
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OT

# Hundreds on track for Covid jag at Oban clinic

by Kathie Griffiths  
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Covid jags for over-70s and extremely vulnerable patients are on track, with more vaccine doses on their way.

Lorn Medical Centre took a welcome delivery on Monday morning after receiving none last week. Mairi Dunning, practice manager at Lorn Medical Centre, Oban, said supply improvements were anticipated 'if all goes to plan' and another jag clinic this Saturday will see hundreds more people immunised. A second delivery of doses was due to arrive by the middle of this week.

By the Government's target date of February 5, the medical centre had vaccinated more than 98 per cent of its 450 patients in the over-80s group.

The next target is to have all over-70s and extremely



Oban Mountain Rescue supplied a Landrover and driver to transport a doctor and a medical student to Kerrera.

vulnerable patients vaccinated by February 15, making up for more than 1,000 of its patients.

Staff are phoning round patients now to offer appointments for the February 13 clinic, when it plans to give around 700 of the Oxford AstraZeneca Covid vaccines in the one day.

In a Facebook update from the centre, it said it was difficult to plan clinics in advance because the supply of the vaccine had been unpredictable, but it was anticipated this would

improve, allowing it to reach down the age groups as fast as possible.

In total, the medical centre has more than 9,000 patients eligible for vaccination. Uptake is 'very high' at around 99 per cent and reported side effects have been very low.

Last week Oban Mountain Rescue, whose volunteers have been helping marshal at jag clinics in the town, stepped in with its Landrover and a driver to transport the medical

centre's Dr Robert Waddington and a medical student to Kerrera to roll out vaccinations.

Mull and Iona Medical Group took its first vaccine delivery on January 24, vaccinating 98 per cent of its over-80s. A second delivery arrived on Friday and more than 220 patients were immunised at Bunessan Surgery and Salen Church Hall. The group's community and practice nurses have been out vaccinating housebound patients and a third delivery of vaccines was expected this week. In total the medical group has 2,900 patients eligible for the jags, with uptake so far at almost 100 per cent.

Meanwhile, Easdale Medical Practice had vaccinated 200 patients by Monday and is hoping its vaccine deliveries will become weekly.

Colonsay has also received two deliveries of vaccines, immunising a high propor-

tion of islanders over 50. Taynuilt Medical Practice says 'so far so good' with its over-80s now immunised and the majority of vulnerable housebound patients vaccinated too.

Practice manager Janice McGhee told The Oban Times: 'We are now on to our over-70s. We've had clinics at Connel as well as Taynuilt and Dalmally. We are relying on the chain supply working and so far so good. Hopefully that will continue. People will be notified when it is their turn, so we appreciate their patience.'

On Monday, drones, on behalf of Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership, began operating between Lorn and Islands Hospital, Mull and Iona Hospital, Easdale Medical Practice and Mid-Argyll Community Hospital.

Vaccines are not thought to be among those deliveries.

## Inquiry into Oban skipper's death opens

A fatal accident inquiry into the death of James Darren Kerr opened on Monday at Oban Sheriff Court, conducted before Sheriff Patrick Hughes.

Twenty-five-year-old workboat skipper Jamie Kerr, who lived in Oban, was fatally injured on the workboat Carol Anne on April 30 2015 at a fish farm at Balure, Loch Spelve, Isle of Mull, following the collapse of the onboard crane.

The Marine Accident Investigation Board has already issued its report into the incident involving the workboat owned by Inverlussa Shellfish Limited and managed by Inverlussa Marine Services, for whom Mr Kerr worked.

The inquiry is expected to run for the next two weeks and afterwards Sheriff Hughes will issue his determination.

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## Cameron calls for u-turn on newspaper rates relief

A call has been made to reverse the decision to scrap emergency business rates relief for the newspaper industry, writes Susan Windram.

Highlands and Islands MSP Donald Cameron is among those calling on SNP Finance Secretary Kate Forbes to reverse the decision to call a halt to the help, which ends on March 31.

In a letter to the Scottish Newspaper Society last week, Ms Forbes told the society's director John McLellan that while the 'Scottish Government recognises the difficulties the newspaper industry is facing...this relief will expire on 31 March 2021 in line with what Parliament agreed. As you will recall the Scottish Government did not support the introduction of rates relief. This remains our position...'

This week Scottish Conservative MSP Mr Cameron came out in support of local media, saying: 'I've been very impressed at how our local journalists have kept going during the pandemic and kept their readership up-to-date with what is going on



Donald Cameron MSP.

locally. They are doing a great job and deserve to be supported. Like community radio, they are hugely important as a source of news for locals.

'I find it extraordinary that Kate Forbes can seriously be contemplating a situation which would leave Scotland as the only country in Europe not providing Covid-related support to newspaper publishers.

'We have already lost some well-established newspapers in the region recently and a wrong-headed decision like this will put more at risk.'

Speaking to The Oban Times this week, Mr McLellan echoed Mr Cameron's call, saying: 'It is very disappointing to say the least that the Scottish Government is singling out news publishing for the withdrawal of emergency business rates relief, a vital financial support agreed by the Scottish Parliament, when the pandemic is far from over. This is in sharp contrast with the Northern Ireland government which has just extended rates relief for its news publishers

'Further, the Scottish Government has not renewed its commitment to invest in news publishing to communicate important public information about its pandemic response and its vaccine roll-out, at a time when private sector advertising in Scotland has collapsed because of lockdown.

'There is no doubt this creates an immediate crisis for Scottish journalism and if these decisions are not reconsidered, it could leave Scotland as one of the few, if not the only, democratic European nations to effectively abandon independent news publishing.'

# Mum wades in to say huge thanks to neo-natal units

by Kathie Griffiths  
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Mum-of-two Nikki Waski is taking the plunge – 50 of them to be exact – to thank a hospital that saved her babies.

The 38-year-old from Pulpit Hill took on a challenge to take 50 chilly dips in the sea from January 1 this year to February 28 raising money for Glasgow Children's Hospital Charity and the neo-natal unit at the Royal Alexandra Hospital, Paisley, where daughter Mara, now three, and son Torran were born early.

Torran, whose first birthday is on February 28, arrived seven weeks early just days before the first lockdown started.

The tot, who weighed in at 4lbs 15oz, was delivered just 16 minutes after the ambulance from Oban made it through rush hour traffic and heavy snow.

'He was really poorly to start with. He had problems with his breathing. His lungs were collapsing,' said Nikki.

Torran had to be transferred for special care to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital where he was put on a ventilator for a few days.

'It was traumatic and a very frightening time,' added Nikki, who could not be joined by her husband Shane



Mum Nikki Wasik with Mara and Torran and, right, both babies needed extra special care before they could go home with their parents.



show them how well they are both doing but of course lockdown has made that impossible. So that's where the cold water swim challenge came in.

'I've done snorkelling and paddle boarding but cold water swimming was new to me. I like going early mornings best. It's definitely not a slog, the water is so good, just 20 minutes and I feel refreshed for the whole day. I'm hooked on it now,' said Nikki, who had just completed her 34th challenge swim when she spoke to The Oban Times.

So far Nikki has raised more than £1,800 towards the neo-natal unit and hopes her story will boost funds even more. To support Nikki search Nikki Wasik on just-giving.com

because Mara got chicken pox.

After more time back at Paisley, Torran was thriving and was eventually allowed home to be with his dad, who runs Basking Shark Scotland, and big sister whose name Mara is Gaelic for sea.

'After the first time, when Mara came 10 weeks early, people had reassured me it wouldn't happen with the second one, but it did.

'Although Mara came much earlier, she was the healthier of the two at birth. She was

tiny at 3lbs 6oz but well. We just had to wait for her to grow, spending about six weeks in Paisley and in an incubator. She was a feisty wee monkey and still is.

'We are eternally grateful for what the neo-natal unit did for us, giving us both our babies to bring home. Every single day we are so thankful. The staff there are just the most unsung heroes of all.

'If it hadn't been for Covid we would have taken the children back with cards and chocolates to see the staff and

## Party house landlords are flouting lockdown

Continued from page one.

to know what steps the council will or can take against landlords who are culpable or are showing such reckless conduct. Will they pass it on to other agencies such as environmental health or landlord registration for action and what could that result in?'

The community council is anxious to quell any disputes after some comments and complaints appeared on a 'Taynuilt Facebook page and is instead advising people to report any suspected lockdown breaches directly to the police.

Over on Lismore, the island's Community Emergency Response Team has gone online asking second home owners currently on the island to return to their main place of residence.

A message from the Covid response team also thanked those who have shown their love for the island by staying away and said they will be welcomed back once the pandemic has abated.

The message was posted on the island's Facebook community noticeboard as a reminder that Lismore is 'an extremely vulnerable and fragile community' with limited access to health services.

It read: 'We have done really well to escape Covid to date, but older and vulnerable people are yet to be vaccinated and there is still a high risk of the virus reaching the community. It is the responsibility of everyone to protect not only their own health but that of the community.

'So please limit trips to the mainland and continue to prac-

tice social distancing and hygiene. We have come so far and we mustn't fall at the last hurdle.' And it continued: 'If you own a second home on the island, we will be happy to see you once the pandemic has abated and things are back to normal but for now, we appreciate you showing your love of the island by remaining in your own home.

'To the small number of people who have visited their second homes during lockdown please, think twice about doing this again and if you are currently here then please return home to your main residence. This will be much appreciated by the community.'

Argyll and Bute was asked for a comment but none was received by the time The Oban Times went to press.

### Thinking about the future?



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OT

## Improvement work starts at Dunollie Hill

Woodland Trust Scotland will start work at Dunollie Hill to improve the clifftop route from The Witches towards Dunollie Castle.

It said work would start on Monday February 8 and could last up to four weeks.

The public are being asked to follow all signs and instructions during the work.

Woodland Trust Scotland said the work is the first of several improvements planned across the site this year, including a new orientation board, waymarking and entrance improvements.

Entrance improvements will include measures to deter wheelbarrows at some access points to the wood as dumping of garden waste is putting the rare rainforest habitat at risk from invasive plants and disease.

More than two tonnes of illegally dumped waste had to be removed at the charity's expense during 2020, it said.

Spokesman George Anderson said: 'We hope people will realise Dunollie Hill is quite a special place. Few



**More than two tonnes of illegally dumped waste had to be removed at the charity's expense last year.**

Scottish communities have a rainforest on their doorstep.

'We love that it is accessible for local people to enjoy and we hope it has been helpful during lockdown as a place for exercise and to get some air.

'We would ask that in return the site is given the care and respect it deserves.

'Please don't dump garden waste, Christmas trees or anything else at Dunollie. It threatens the special nature of the wood and is illegal.'

# Catamaran would 'cut ferry rush hour' in Oban

by Ellis Butcher

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Campaigners hoping to win a catamaran service for Oban to Mull say it could help cut traffic congestion in Oban town centre during rush hour.

The issue has come to the fore with the Scottish Government weighing up a move for a larger ferry carrying 125 cars which critics say would 'overload' Oban with vehicles at peak times.

Mull and Iona Ferry Committee is trying to convince Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government to purchase a 'cheaper to buy, cheaper to run' smaller catamaran.

The committee says this would run more frequent services with a longer timetable and be less likely to be cancelled in poor weather.

Acting as a second vessel, it



would carry less vehicles but run more services between Oban and Craignure, members say.

Oban Community Council has been told a catamaran would reduce traffic levels in the centre of Oban – particularly when passengers descend on the town for the last ferry of the day in winter.

William McClymont, a member of the Mull and Iona Ferry Committee, said: 'At

the moment, in the winter for three days a week, the last ferry to Mull is five minutes to four. This is 2021 not 1921.

'In Oban, when you are making for Mull and heading for the four o'clock ferry, you have got to be in the queue for 3.30pm.

'Everyone is trying to get through the town at the same time. People of Oban have got their own lives at that time too, so you've got that and all

**The Isle of Mull takes 50 to 60 cars at a time, which means quite a lot of people heading to the pier at the same time for its sailings.**

the ferry traffic heading for the pier at the one time.

'The Isle of Mull takes 50 to 60 cars at a time and it's quite a lot of people heading in that direction at that time. You imagine 125 people trying to make their way to the pier at the same time every two hours. We think that's quite difficult for Oban to bear.'

He said a smaller vessel running at a higher frequency would be better at 'drip-feeding' cars through Oban rather than a significant volume all converging on the town at once.

'What we would like is a smaller vessel running for a much higher frequency for a much longer time,' he said.

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Representatives from community groups joined Oban firefighters in support of Oban Pride 2019.

## Flagging up the meaning of Pride

In the second of our LGBT History Month articles, Oban Pride chairman Phill Dexter explains the meanings behind the colours on the Iconic Rainbow Flag.

During our inaugural Pride in 2019, we were delighted with how a lot of businesses within Oban rallied behind us and showed their support in different ways.

One way they showed their support was by decorating their windows and venues with Pride flags, Pride merchandise and displaying the rainbow colours in their window in many creative ways. It meant so much to us to see this.

The Rainbow Pride flag means so much to many LGBTQ+ people, but there are many other Pride flags representing different areas of the LGBTQ+ community.

The Rainbow flag was designed by Gilbert Baker and first used in 1978. The original design of the flag had eight stripes, but two of the stripes were removed due to availability of fabrics and colours at the time, resulting in the six stripe flag we recognise today.

Each of the colour strips has a different meaning. Looking at the eight stripe flag we had hot pink=sex, red=life, orange=healing,

yellow=sunlight, green=nature, turquoise=magic/art, indigo=serenity, violet=spirit.

The hot pink and turquoise were removed due to the availability of the colours.

Among the many businesses that decorated for Oban Pride in 2019 was the Lorne Bar which had previously hosted our Pride Launch Party.

Speaking to Debbie at the Lorne about what supporting Oban Pride meant to her, she said: 'It was a great honour to host the launch of Oban Pride. Oban is such a friendly town and the night was an amazing success. We can't wait until we can have another.'

# Have your say on cemetery services

by Fiona Scott  
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One in three cemeteries in Argyll and Bute which currently have lairs are expected to be full within 10 years, a report has revealed.

An online consultation among residents on a review of cemetery services in the area, which involves plans to extend only eight of the remaining 64 facilities which have lairs available, was launched earlier this month.

The cemeteries in question are the main ones in Bute, Dunoon, Helensburgh, Lochgilphead, Oban, Islay and Mull while one will also be identified in Campbeltown and Kintyre.

Other proposals featured in the consultation include no new lairs being offered in the 67 cemeteries currently regarded as closed in Argyll and Bute.

Respondents are also asked whether they have a preference on being buried or cremated when they themselves pass away.

It is anticipated options will take 10 years to implement, and the consultation is open via the council's website until Friday February 26.

A report accompanying the consultation said: 'Action is now needed to allow a planned and sustainable cemetery portfolio which delivers best



**Pennyfuir Cemetery in Oban is part of the consultation.**

value across Argyll and Bute. Without effective planning, we will have areas with far more burial lairs available than others.'

Records show that currently there are just over 8,000 lairs available for sale in Argyll and Bute including 1,942 in Oban, Lorn and the Isles and 2,360 in Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands.

An additional 1,439 have been sold but remain unused more than 70 years later.

The report also stated that over the next 10 years, the council hopes to have a target of at least 10 years' burial capacity at all open cemeteries.

Development and extension at the other 56 open cemeteries will only stop once

all lairs have been filled. The report added information on the council's hope for community involvement in the upkeep of cemeteries across the region.

It states: 'Argyll and Bute, like other Scottish local authorities, is experiencing budget cuts and reduced resources.

#### Volunteers

'As part of a solution to the upkeep of their cemeteries, various Highland councillors and volunteers have supported their local authority by cutting and strimming grass in their local cemeteries which, according to the report, has had 'very positive' community feedback.

The report adds: 'Argyll and

Bute Council feel it would worthwhile engaging with our communities to gauge their views on whether there would be sufficient community volunteer support to assist in the upkeep of our cemeteries.

'This will in turn identify a sustainable method of balancing community burial needs with our statutory duty in line with best value and reductions to funding.'

Island residents have their own concerns and are keen to be part of the wider consultation.

Dr Mandie Currie, secretary of Lismore Community Council, said: 'We did highlight to the council more than a year ago the fact the graveyard was reaching capacity.

'We are currently discussing options for extending the graveyard with the council and other relevant organisations and we are determined to find a suitable solution.'

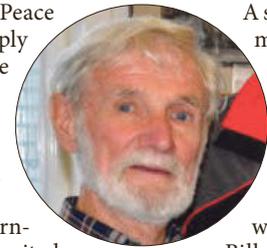
While Andrena Duffin, secretary of Mull Community Council, commented: 'Our council workers here do a wonderful job, even in the remoter cemeteries, and we hope they can find the means to continue.

'We have many visitors coming to trace ancestors so it is important they find places well kept.'

To take part in the consultation visit the argyll-bute.gov.uk website.

## Final salute to War and Peace Museum chairman Bill Leech

Oban War and Peace Museum is 'deeply saddened' by the death of its chairman of trustees and long-serving curator Bill Leech, pictured.



A statement from the museum said: 'The trustees and all those involved with the Oban War and Peace Museum are deeply saddened with the death of Bill Leech after a long

illness. On Tuesday morning, people were invited to social distance and turn out to pay their respects as Mr Leech's funeral cortege passed the museum along the Esplanade on his final journey through Oban for a private funeral service at Cardross Crematorium, Helensburgh.

Mr Leech, who died after a long illness, leaves his wife Carol and other family.

'His wide breadth of knowledge of our collection and commitment to the museum were widely recognised and appreciated and our sincere condolences are sent to his wife Carol and family.'

In 2019, Oban War and Peace Museum celebrated its 700,000th visitor.

## New mental health group on Mental Health Forum agenda

The next Mental Health Forum session for Oban Lorn and the Islands is on Zoom on February 25 at 1.15pm.

To get details on how to join or to receive more information, email sarah.mcfadzean@acumennetwork.org.

This month sees Advancing Community Understanding of Mental and Emotional Needs ACUMEN introducing a new group to help bring issues and discussion to the Mental Health Forum's agenda - straight from lived experience.

The Lived Experience group will meet quarterly, around two to three weeks before the Mental Health Forum session takes place.

Lived Experience Group members do not have to attend

both groups but are welcome to do so, says Sarah McFadzean, a Mental Health Development worker for ACUMEN.

The Mental Health Forum includes a wider range of members from lived experience individuals to statutory services and voluntary and third sector groups.

It discusses issues linked to Oban, Lorn and the Islands and hears updates from the partners it works with.

The forum also invites speakers to come and give information.

To sign up for ACUMEN's newsletter go to ramh.org/our-services/acumen-2/ and for other information go to its Facebook page Acumen Network

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OT

## Around Oban

ANDREW SPENCE

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At the time of writing, we are truly in the grips of winter.

Fortunately for the Oban area it is only the bitter cold we are putting up with and not the snow.

With this in mind, it makes sense to watch the roads and pavements in the cold mornings.

It's good to see the gritters out day and night around rural roads and we should be thankful for the drivers who are out at all hours.

They are not the only key workers keeping our lives moving and we should recognise all the workers from water and electric companies who turn out at all hours, day and night, to keep the lights on and the water flowing in terrible weather conditions at times.

There were some great photographs on social media of members of Oban Mountain Rescue team and Lorn Medical Centre staff visiting Kerrera to vaccinate residents. What an amazing team effort. Sometimes we take these individuals for granted.

## WHERE IS THIS?



With the lockdown dragging on, it is clear lots of people are struggling with this new normal. There are only so many walks you can go on or TV box sets you can watch.

We are all hoping for the easing of restrictions and a return to visiting cafes, restaurants and bars.

This could be a time to take up a new hobby or start planning to get your garden ready for summer.

It is difficult but, with vaccines being administered across the area, we all need to start to look forward to happier days.

Last week's photograph was of the North Pier Pontoons.

# Oban gets its festival comeback show on road

by Kathie Griffiths  
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Eyes will be on Oban getting ready to roll out a major new Covid comeback initiative - marketing itself as a festival town.

Visitor numbers and ticket sales will shoot skywards if a business plan being drawn up by organisers from the town's hit events can secure funding.

Big funders to be approached will include Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Argyll and Bute Council and Oban Common Good Fund, with BID4Oban supporting.

If funding is secured, a festival hub will be set up in the town centre as a one-stop shop for events to receive A-Z marketing support - from deciding a best date to sourcing funding.

Establishing a hub like this is something other towns should



Breege Smyth.

be copying as a way back from Covid, said Breege Smyth, Highlands and Islands Music and Dance Festival chairperson, who was instrumental in getting like-minded event and festival organisers together to work on the plan.

Help with advertising and getting advice on event management technicalities such as data protection would also be on the job-spec of a paid co-ordinator, possibly a role for two people, that would help lift the pressure and burden off organisers who 'just want to get on with' the joy of putting on an event, said Mrs Smyth.

With a dedicated website marketing Oban far and wide

as a festival town, the new hub would also double up as a booking system. And with that infrastructure in place, the town would be in a strong position to put out tenders to bring in other festivals like the Celtic Media Festival. It would also be in a good position to put in a big funding application to VisitScotland, added Mrs Smyth. 'We are proceeding now with the plan to employ someone, possibly two people, to set up the hub. We're looking possibly at a two-year contract to market the town. It's a great initiative and is something other towns should be copying as a way of recovering from the impact of Covid. We are getting great support from the council,' she said.

'The sooner the initiative can start, the better.

'We'd hope to be marketing 2022 now. We want people sitting at home to know they do have something to look forward. With this organisation and paid staff in place we could also even tender for festivals to come here.

That would be very exciting,' she added. A second meeting

of event and festival organisers has been held via Zoom to bring back bustling visitor numbers and reboost the economy.

BID4Oban chief executive Andrew Spence is compiling a wishlist of needs and requests from those at the think-tank meeting to help shape up the initiative's business plan which will be passed on to Argyll and Bute Council to see what support can be offered.

Oban councillor Elaine Robertson said she was delighted by the meeting's enthusiasm and willingness to work together.

'Festivals and events are of huge importance to the town's economy.

'I think we are ahead of the game in looking towards 2022 and not just bemoaning the fact we can't do much in 2021,' she said.

Although a number of Oban events for 2021 have already been cancelled, some are still going ahead in a virtual-world while organisers of this year's 150th Argyllshire Gathering are planning as if the event is on - but a firm decision will be made in May.

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## Tree decorations to stay after bat find

A set of decorative Christmas trees are staying in place in Oban after bats were found roosting in them.

The bats were found by workmen in the process of removing ornamental Christmas decorations from lamp posts across the town.

It had originally been reported the bats were at Aldi and had moved on with the trees

taken down. However, it was clarified this week that the two solar-powered Christmas trees are outside Lidl on Soroba Road and are remaining in place. Bats are a protected European species which makes it a criminal offence to deliberately or recklessly disturb a bat in a roost or any structure or place it uses for shelter or protection. Nature Scotland states

a bat roost is any structure or place bats use for shelter or protection. As bats return to the same places every year, a bat roost is protected even if no bats are present, it said.

The Bat Conversation Trust says bats need different roosting conditions at different times of the year and will often move around to find a roost that meets their needs.

## Urgent appeal for Oban festive lights funding

A minimum of £20,000 is going to need to be raised this year to stage a Christmas display in Oban, it has been revealed, writes Ellis Butcher.

BID4Oban said the sum is needed to replace and enhance the festive lights and decorations which go up in town.

However, the business group has stressed it could not pay for it all and a fundraising drive would need to be organised.

Time is also of the essence because the BID4Oban group has meetings with contractors next month, while any new

decorations would need to be ordered in plenty of time as they would need to be made.

Andy Spence, chief executive, said while BID could support funding it could not pay for it all and has said it required another organisation to come along and take on the project.

He said: 'The situation we are in for 2021 Christmas is the vast majority of the lights that were up in the town need to be replaced. BID are under no liability to supply these or fund these, although we are willing to work with any community

group that will support us in raising the revenue.

'We are now at a critical stage and what was up will not be going up this year as it's not fit for purpose. If we want a fantastic Christmas display within the town it will need to be funded. Bid4Oban can support some of it but we can't support all of it.'

The lights for the main trees in Oban were new this year and will stay but all the rest are past their best condition, with 106 smaller Christmas trees also being provided for the town.

# Helping economy bounce back

The UK Government has, during recent months, helped millions of people continue to provide for their families as part of its Plan for Jobs support scheme. The initiative is at the heart of our recovery from the economic impact of the pandemic, continuing to help people of all ages work.



THE UK Government has provided £280 billion to safeguard jobs.

Its Plan for Jobs builds on the nine million jobs protected, with initiatives that include...

## KICKSTART SCHEME

Six-month paid job with local employer, paid for by the UK Government, providing fully funded opportunity for 16 to 24 year-

olds to gain experience of working among many varied companies.

## SECTOR-BASED WORK ACADEMY PROGRAMMES (SWAPs)

Offer opportunities for jobseekers claiming Universal Credit, Jobseeker's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance to build their confidence in a new line of work, enhance

their CVs and gain invaluable work experience and training. Such schemes have so far supported more than 40,000 people across the UK.

## NEW ENTERPRISE ALLOWANCE

This scheme provides money and support to help those receiving certain benefits to start their own enterprises. For the self-employed, it helps to develop businesses.

## FIRM 'TOOK FLIGHT'

A long-time airline cabin crew member's soft toy enterprise really took off after the pandemic clipped her wings. Julie Britton set up Britton's Bears and Bunting with the help of the UK Government's New Enterprise Allowance.

The Wigan entrepreneur was cabin crew for 21 years and when she was made redundant last March, signed up for a Jobseeker's Allowance.

A machinist after she left school, Julie bought a pattern from eBay and, as her creation was such a success, continued making memory bears from recycled fabrics including old airline uniforms.

She was offered New Enterprise Allowance, referred to a



**TOYS VENTURE:** Julie Britton.

business mentor, and received £65 weekly for 13 weeks then £33 for 13 weeks.

Fashion icons Julien Macdonald and Paul Costelloe, both designers of British Airways uniforms, have praised Julie's work.

"We don't know what the future will bring but my little business is now established and will carry me forward," she added.

## 'IMMENSE' SUPPORT

"Immense" Kickstart support is the toast of a unique scheme, worth £200 million to the Scottish economy, at the former home of Johnnie Walker whisky in Kilmarnock.

An £65 million brownfield urban regeneration of 23 acres will create 1,300 jobs, and the UK Government's support is central to Scotland's first town centre net zero carbon energy scheme.

Marie Macklin CBE, founder and executive chair of enterprise managers HALO Urban Regeneration, welcomed £1.5 million training support for 16 to 24 year-olds on Universal Credit. "The money the training is going to give us allows us to



**HALO:** Marie Macklin CBE.

take on 200 young people – 200 because it was Johnny Walker's 200th anniversary.

"The Kickstart Scheme is life-changing in the sense that these areas – not just in Kilmarnock – but some of the most deprived communities in the country are being helped. "We're really trying to put something back. The uptake has been immense."

## 'PROVIDING JOBS'

"Excellent" UK Government Kickstart support has proved just the tonic for an award-winning Welsh distillery. Ellen Wakelam runs "small but ambitious" west coast distillery Welsh Wind, whose spirits include eight prize gins.

"The Kickstart Scheme is an excellent initiative. We're offering local jobs for young people," confirmed the 37 year-old, whose five full-time staff are now developing grain-to-glass whisky with local farmers' barley. "We've been approved for four placements," continued Ellen, who lives near Cardigan. "We teamed up with a training company as our gateway provider to be approved and advertise the places. We think



**WELSH WIND:** Ellen Wakelam.

we can offer young people really good insights into every aspect of the business such as the technical side of distilling as well as bottling, labelling, customer service, marketing and business insight."

Added Ellen: "We're really excited to be able to offer new roles that will give people experience and lots of transferable skills."

Despite disruption caused by the coronavirus outbreak, there are still jobs out there to apply for. The jobhelp site from Jobcentre Plus has the latest vacancies, hints and tips on applying for jobs and ideas about roles you may never have thought of. Visit [gov.uk/jobhelp](https://www.gov.uk/jobhelp)



## Protecting and creating jobs

Support is available to help you get a job.

Find out more at [gov.uk/jobhelp](https://www.gov.uk/jobhelp)

All together >

OT

## Council interested in volunteer gritters

Communities and groups which want to support Argyll and Bute Council's winter maintenance programme are being invited to get in touch with offers of help.

The move follows a story in The Oban Times about Councillor Roddy McCuish telling January's Oban Community Council meeting that an offer by community housing association ACHA to help grit the town's pavements had been turned down by Argyll and Bute Council. His comments followed a flurry of concern about side roads and paths in snow and ice.

During that meeting, Councillor McCuish, who is also chairman of ACHA, had also commended the 'tremendous job' done by council staff to keep the community on the move when bad weather strikes.

An Argyll and Bute Council spokesperson told the Oban Times: 'We thank Councillor McCuish for his kind words of appreciation for all the



Councillor Roddy McCuish.

work put in by council staff during the recent spell of bad weather to keep Argyll and Bute moving.

'We don't have a record of the offer, but if ACHA would like to contact roadsandinfrastructure@argyll-bute.gov.uk, we would be delighted to hear more.'

Any organisation wishing to volunteer should contact roadsandinfrastructure@argyll-bute.gov.uk.

# Can you help track down land owner?

by Kathie Griffiths  
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



A search is on to find the owner of a piece of land used as a shortcut to McCaig's Tower.

Gary Gemmell says he is just one of many people who uses the mud path that cuts up from the back of Oban's Atlantis Leisure Centre, near the tennis courts, towards the iconic landmark that looms above the town.

Mr Gemmell, who lives in Lonan Drive but regularly uses the makeshift path when out walking, wants to give the muddy route a makeover so it can become a safer, more official footpath.

At the top of the path is a short stretch of steep concrete path that also needs to be made safer.

But first Gary has to find out who owns the land and so far that has not been easy. In a



Gary Gemmell at the foot of the muddy path he wants to give a makeover for safe community use.

but to do all that we need to find out who owns it. I'm hoping someone will read this and get in touch so we can make a start,' said Mr Gemmell.

Mr Gemmell has also contacted ward councillor Roddy McCuish for support.

Councillor McCuish said: 'I'm really impressed with Gary's enthusiasm. Anything I can do to help, I will. I'm sure the community will step up too.'

Anyone with information on who owns the land or anyone interested in helping to work on the path, can get in touch with Mr Gemmell on 07496 610869.

bid to track the owner, he has turned to The Oban Times to help him with his search.

The council has already confirmed the land does not belong to it, he says.

'Lots of people use it – children to old people – it's just a mud path at the moment

and can be dangerous. When it rains the water just pours down it. It's become overgrown with trees and bushes that need clearing.

'If we could make it a proper path it would be good to put up some railings and maybe plant it up either side with flowers,

**A&B** Transforming  
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Argyll & Bute Health & Social Care Partnership

Across Argyll and Bute Stop Smoking Advisors delivering the Quit Your Way Stop Smoking services are there to help you have a healthy start to 2021. An important role for this team is encouraging people to never start smoking as well as helping those who do to "quit their way" as part of the team's effort to work towards the Scottish Government's aim of a tobacco free generation by 2034.

**QUIT YOUR WAY**  
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The Argyll and Bute team take great pride in helping people make life changing steps to give up smoking for good. Becoming Smoke Free has immediate health benefits such as a lower heart rate, improved carbon monoxide levels and a better sense of taste and smell. Within weeks improvements can be experienced in coughing, breathing and lung function. For those who have asthma, after stopping smoking for a few weeks the severity of asthma attacks reduce. Within a year, stopping smoking can result in improvements for people with mild to moderate Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and reduce the risk of coronary heart disease by 50%!

Making that first appointment with an Advisor can feel like a really big step so all clients will be welcomed, supported and listened to – everyone's journey is different so Advisors will provide a bespoke stop smoking programme for every individual client. Advisors will explain that the NHS Quit Your Way Stop Smoking Service is free, supportive, non-judgemental and is generally provided over a 12-week programme. Regular contact is made throughout this duration to review each individual's progress and any challenges that arise.

Advisors work with clients to find out what their goals are, what motivates them and how to successfully help them stop for good. Advisors also talk through the medications available, discuss what would work best for the client and arrange for these to be prescribed.



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Being smoke free will also improve the health of family and friends exposed to second hand smoke. Savings of several thousands of pounds each year can be made, allowing your wallet to be much healthier too!

The team are aware many smokers are worrying about Covid-19 and the risk of more severe symptoms which is why it's an important time to get this message out.

If you are thinking about stopping smoking, would like more information or would like to speak to someone about your smoking habits the team would encourage you to get in touch.

Evidence shows that you are four times more likely to stop smoking when supported by a Stop Smoking Advisor so don't delay that quit any longer, the team are here for you to start 2021 smoke free!



### Contact Us | Smoke Free Highland

If you'd like to stop smoking, please complete the form, and your local advisor will get in touch with you.

<https://www.smokefreehighland.scot.nhs.uk/contact/>

If you would like to talk to someone directly, contact our local advisor Kathy Graham on 07972678923

NHS Highland Number on

**08457 573 077**

Mon-Fri 9-5pm

Email: [nsh.abcsmokefreeservices@nhs.scot](mailto:nsh.abcsmokefreeservices@nhs.scot)





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IN SIGHT  
LET'S SEE  
IT THROUGH**

The vaccine is the good news we've been waiting for, with those most at risk already being vaccinated. When offered the vaccine please get it.

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

**#WeAreScotland** [gov.scot/coronavirus](https://gov.scot/coronavirus)



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OT

# Martyn's Monday Club doubles its meetings to cope with demand

by Kathie Griffiths  
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Martyn's Monday Club (MMC) has doubled its sessions to meet a rise in demand for help.

The mental health peer-to-peer support group is also planning a flier drop through letterboxes soon to reach even more people who might need its support during the pandemic.

The flier idea was just one of many suggestions made during a recent Zoom consultation across the community looking for new ways of spreading word about its work as Covid restrictions take their toll.

MMC's Lorraine King said: 'We are getting increasingly worried about people's mental health and wellbeing the longer the pandemic and the lockdown goes on. We want



Des MacMillan with one of the new leaflets.

the community to know that we are still here for them and we are still open for face-to-face meetings in our own premises with the support of the Scottish Government and their directive to allow mental health groups like ours to

keep running, offering help to people during these difficult times. We have doubled our weekly meetings over the past few months to meet the increased need for support from the community.'

MMC's men's group still

meets on Mondays from 7pm-9pm in the group premises at 1 Breadalbane Street. There is also a Zoom meeting on Monday nights at the same time for men who are shielding or having to isolate and Fridays see an informal get together over a cuppa from 3pm to 5pm for men to pop in and see a friendly face.

The women's group still runs every Tuesday night in Breadalbane Street from 7pm-9pm and there is a Sunday drop-in from 2pm-4pm for women to call in for a chat.

'When we meet in our premises we follow strict guidelines of sanitising hands, wearing face masks and track and trace to ensure everyone remains safe whilst they attend.

'We are keen to emphasise that we are a peer support mental health group. We are not professionals. We run by

sharing our own stories about our lives. This can be very powerful as people can identify with similar things that they have been through in their lives which can make them realise they are not alone. We are all there to help each other,' said Lorraine.

And she added: 'Everyone is welcome at MMC. We will not judge you or be shocked by your story. We all have stories to tell. We truly believe in the saying that a problem shared is a problem halved and many of our members find that just coming along and listening to others helps them feel they are not losing the plot and that they are not alone.

'We have lots more plans for 2021, we're just waiting for the restrictions to ease off and then we can get back on with them. We recently consulted the community over a Zoom

meeting and got some great suggestions from people that we are working on.

'One of the suggestions was to send a flier round every house in Oban to let people know we are still here for the community. Watch out for this coming through your letterbox soon.

'We want people to reach out to us, to not suffer in silence and to know that life does and will get better. There's no pressure to talk at our meetings either, you can just come along and listen and enjoy the company. Our motto is #its-goodtotalk and we believe that during these difficult times talking is more needed than ever to get us all through it.'

People can contact MMC through its Facebook pages or on Twitter @MMCclubs or through its website at martynsmondayclub.org.uk

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## Elchris holds key to Ganavan

Eighty-year-old Elchris MacFarlane has the key to Ganavan in her safekeeping, writes Kathie Griffiths

The silver key, almost three inches long, was presented to her grandfather Archibald MacAlister when he was the Provost of Oban and officially opened the now-demolished tea pavilion next to the beach on April 18 1935.

Inscribed on one side with wording marking the grand occasion, the commemorative key was handed down to Elizabeth as a family heirloom and she has been proudly keeping it in a display cabinet at her home in Gallanach Road. On the reverse side of the key is Oban's coat of arms.

With fond memories as a child going into the pavilion for ice cream, Elchris is on the side of campaigners wanting to protect what is left of Ganavan from the threat of more housing.

After all, she says, 'it was gifted to the people of Oban'.

'The pavilion disappeared around the same time as the new houses were built. I wouldn't want to see more being built. Oban has to be left with some space for people to come and enjoy themselves. It needs to be kept,' added Elchris, who is a regular visitor. Elchris



Elchris MacFarlane has the key to Ganavan's old tea pavilion which officially opened in 1935.

will not be handing over the Ganavan key either. She said: 'It's a family treasure now. It'll be handed down to my son or daughter when the time comes. It's like Ganavan - precious.'

John Watson, who has taken on a lead role in helping Friends of Ganavan oppose any housing plans, said many Ganavan users were 'dead against' more homes being built there and has urged everyone to 'make their voices heard' to retain the location as a place for community activities and sports.

He said a plan to further develop Ganavan was 'a step too far', adding: 'There are plenty of alternative sites in the area for more housing, if it is indeed even needed given the

additional Dunbeg stock under construction. The dozens of local people I have spoken to tell me there has never been such a strong collective will against a development in living memory. I have not met a single person who thinks further housing at Ganavan is a good idea.

'We have much activity ready to be actioned should a planning application be made in the future, but we will need the support of everyone in the community and beyond to ensure we obtain a result that is fair to all and protects our precious green space.'

Friends of Ganavan has a Facebook page featuring posts and photographs past and present from supporters.

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# LOOK HIM IN THE EYES

# AND TELL HIM THE RISK ISN'T REAL.

*Tony 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](mailto:editor@obantimes.co.uk)  
or The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB

## Covid jags welcome news

Hats off to everyone involved in vaccinating the elderly and vulnerable across Argyll and Bute and the Islands.

What a fantastic job our doctors, nurses and volunteers are doing.

Despite the unpredictable delivery of vaccine supplies to Oban and other areas, making it difficult for the medical centres to plan clinics in advance, many are reporting high percentages of over-80s having been vaccinated with many over-70s and extremely vulnerable patients now being offered appointments.

We know a huge amount of hard work and long hours are going on behind the scenes across the region to make this happen, so a massive thank you to everyone involved. It is really appreciated.

## Condolences

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Bill Leech – long-serving curator of Oban War and Peace Museum and chairman of its trustees – whose funeral took place on Tuesday.

Our condolences go to his wife Carol and all Bill's family and friends.

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](mailto: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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## Fionnphort breakwater

In light of last week's article about proposed short and long-term developments of Craignure Pier, it is also time for Mull and Iona communities to consider the proposed design and effects of a new breakwater and ferry berth at Fionnphort, principally for the use of ferry operatives CalMac.

Relatively, the impact of a structure, more than three metres higher than the existing pier, on the village would be momentous. Last year CalMac received an award from Keep Scotland Beautiful. Both Argyll and Bute Council and CalMac need to uphold this principle.

The public were presented with a single 'preferred option', validated by the council for planning in November. Following numerous representations questioning the integrity of the design specifications and requests to consider further its effects, the council has belatedly decided to conduct a full environmental impact assessment which is to be welcomed. Photomontages have now been commissioned by the council to demonstrate the visual impact of the development which will change the outlook of Fionnphort, the 'gateway to Iona', for all time.

A further review is now to reduce the design life of the structure to 50 years rather than 120 years. Inevitably the legacy of such a short-term solution will be the problem and expense facing our future generations.

Alternative ideas which fulfil the needs of the ferry service to Iona and our communities but are more appropriate to the landscape have been dismissed without real evaluation or discussion.

Every day we are reminded of the extremes of climate change and our responsibilities to minimise the carbon footprint of our actions. It is vital we try to achieve our needs with appropriate scales of development for both our environment and economy.

Rosie Burgess, Kintra, Mull.

## Regulator should stop TSB bank closures

The banking regulator, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), should stop TSB closing its branches in Helensburgh, Dunoon, Rothesay, Lochgilphead and Campbeltown.

These closures will leave only the Oban branch open in Argyll and Bute. Many TSB customers will have a long journey to reach their nearest branch. Not everyone uses internet banking.

The FCA has already pointed out that during the pandemic it will be hard for banks to reach

## Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

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

'S iomadh rud a dh'fheumas an euslaint, nach fheum an t-slàinte! Cha ghabh firinn an t-seanfhaicail àicheadh, ach tha mothachadh cuideachd gum bheil dìon bho euslaint leithid Covid 19 deatamach. Tha leithid sin de dhion air soirbheachadh feadh an t-saoghail thar bhliadhnaichean, agus tha galaran bàsmhor mar a bha leithid am fiabhras breac, a' ghriùthrach, agus a' chaitheamh, gan cumail fo smachd. Thigeadh dhuinn a bhith glè thaingeil gur ann mar sin a tha cùisean san dùthaich seo, agus bu mhath gum faodadh mòr-shluagh an t-saoghail uile buannachd agus dìon nam banachdaichean sin fhaotainn mar an ceudna.

Thàinig an t-adhartas slàinte sin ri linn innleachd dhealasach agus spàirn mhòran eòlaichean thar nam bliadhnaichean, agus tha làn-mhothachadh ann gum bheil slighe fhada fhathast mun lorgar leigheas èifeachdach air truaillleadh iomadh seòrsa aillse agus euslaintean eile. Ach, feadh an t-saoghail, tha daoine ri saothair dhicheallach, dhùrachdach, a' sireadh fhreagairtean air gach dùbhlann tinneis sin, agus tha na miltean cuideachd an sàs gach latha a' cumail dìon air slàinte an t-sluaigh. Aig amannan faodaidh sinn mothachadh a chall agus a bhith neo-ar-thaingeil air na tha iad sin a' dèanamh dhuinn.

Ged a bha sneachda air an talamh 's i dìreach beagan os cionn ire reothaidh bha am boireannach a choinnich oirnn aig doras an ionaid-slàinte beagan às dèidh ochd uairean sa mhadainn, aoiheil agus càirdeil a' cur fàilte air duine mu seach a bha gu bhith a' faotainn

customers and engage with them on closure proposals effectively. They also pointed out that customers may not be able to get to a bank to make the necessary preparations before the closure. Instead of just pointing out these difficulties, the FCA should tell TSB not to go ahead. Leaving only one TSB branch open in Argyll and Bute is unacceptable.

Councillor Alan Reid, Cowal.

## Why can't emergency drone flights be accommodated?

The Oban Times' coverage of Skyports Limited's proposal for a temporary danger area to provide

banachdach Covid19 an sin Disathairne seo chaidh. Cha b' e sgioba mòr a bh' ann ach, eadar dotairean agus an luchd-taice a bha a' stiùireadh na dh'aontaich tighinn gus banachdach fhaotainn, bha cùisean air an riaghladh gu sgiobalta agus èifeachdach gun choltas diomb sam bith gun robh an luchd-obrach sin a' call fois deireadh seachdaine. Mo mhìle beannachd aca, agus aig a h-uile neach a tha gar frithealadh ann an seirbheisean poblach de gach seòrsa gach latha, is sinn cho dualach mothachadh a chall air na tha iad a' dèanamh dhuinn. Gun teagamh cha phàigh taing na daoine sin, ach gu cinnteach cha mhotha na sin a nì e cron dhuinn taing bhlàth a bhuileachadh dhaibh!

Tha aonarachd a' chuingealachaidh a th' air a bhith oirnn cho fada air daoine a chlaoidh 's a lèireadh agus tuigidh mi mar a bhiodh cuid 's dòcha air am misneachadh agus air am mealladh, an dèidh na banachdach fhaotainn, chun na h-ìre 's gum biodh iad a' creidsinn gun robh làn-dhion aca bhon bhioras sa bhad. Chan ann mar sin a tha idir agus fhuair sinn rabhadh nach tig dìon gu ire sam bith airson cola-deug na mar sin, agus gur còir dhuinn na modhan-giùlain stèidhichte a leantainn fiù 's seachad air sin chun am bi dearbhadh gum bheil an galair air a cheannachadh.

Experiencing the calm and efficient organisation by a small team administering Covid- 9 vaccination at our GP surgery last Saturday morning, we were reminded anew of how much we owe to so many who unstintingly deliver our public services.

a corridor for occasional drone flights from Oban to Mull gives prominence to objections. In particular, Brendan Walsh's concerns for interference with the arrival by air of guests at his hotel business are covered at great length. But what are the views of the other 2,666 residents who might feel that receiving medical supplies in minutes has advantages over a 40-minute ferry crossing which happens at two-hour intervals and for only part of a day, especially in cases of emergency?

From our vantage point on Oban Hill, we are not aware of a busy sky in the Firth of Lorn, even in summer, and wonder why time and space can't accommodate emergency drone flights?

Ian Reid, Oban.



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# DISTRICT NEWS

## MULL

### Island volunteers serve up help to ease Covid impact

From making sets of scrubs to stitching face-masks, volunteers on Mull have also been cooking and delivering hot meals to those in need.

Mull and Iona Community Trust (MICT) has also been helping to support people impacted by the pandemic. Fundraising and volunteers during Covid have helped pump £100,000 back into the community of Mull.

Moray Finch, MICT general manager, said: 'Mull residents have really come together and embraced the initiatives that have been put in place over the last year.

'The assistance and fundraising over the last year has put £100,000 back into the community. MICT has been supporting in the background but the community has done some amazing things. They have really pulled the stops out.'

Last summer, MICT co-ordinated a group of volunteers who wanted to do more to support island health services and sourced a pattern to make scrubs, initially using whatever spare fabric they had available, then fundraising to buy material. Together the volunteers made nearly 100 sets of scrubs in various sizes which were gifted to healthcare workers on the island.

The group is now making face masks, sourcing HEPA material to make filters so the masks can be used in any situation. More than 4,000 face coverings were made by volunteers, with many distributed to those in need with others available for sale to raise money for the Covid Winter Hardship Fund.

Mull and Iona Community Trust is also backing a dedicated group of people who have been taking it in turns to deliver food parcels and pick up prescriptions and groceries for Mull residents who are isolated or shielding.

Some islanders have been cooking and delivering hot meals to those who needed it, preparing 30 meals a day and delivering them in the MICT electric van.

## ISLAY AND GIGHA

### Island shops get funding for single use packaging

A new shopping scheme aimed at dramatically reducing waste from single-use items



Volunteers on Mull have been cooking and delivering meals to people in need during Covid.

on Scotland's islands has awarded more than £250,000 to 20 retailers, including one each on Islay and Gigha.

Grants provided by the Scottish Government and the European Regional Development Fund will allow shops from 12 Scottish islands to take the next steps in the war on waste by introducing shoppers to more reusable options.

In addition to seeing waste frequently washing up on the shores around them, island communities bear the double burden of dealing with imported single-use items then shipping off the waste.

The Islands Green Recovery Programme (IGRP) Refill Fund will provide dispensing and other equipment that enables customers to obtain grocery products in reusable containers brought from home.

Iain Gulland, chief executive of Zero Waste Scotland, said: 'There has been a lot of interest in the scheme and it is pleasing to see the demand is there for retailers and their customers to make the switch to reusables.

'If we can demonstrate the success of refill-type shops on the islands, it could lead the way in changing how we shop nationwide.'

Western Isles retailers benefiting from the funding include: Essence of Harris; Sandwick Bay Candles Limited, Stornoway; Carbst Community Shop CIC, Rankins Supermarket, The Selkie Collective, Sleat Community Trading Company Limited, Armadale Stores, Glendale Shop and PO, all Isle of Skye; Raasay Community Stores; Isle of Eigg Shop; Bùth Bharraigh, Isle of Barra; Lismore Stores; Campbells of Islay Limited, Islay; Ardmish Stores, Isle of Gigha; Isle of Arran Brewery;

Arran Ice Cream and Taste of Arran. Joe Teale, proprietor of Ardmish Stores on Gigha, said: 'We are very pleased to have received the IGRP funding.

'It will allow us to create a dispensing area for a range of dried food, oils and vinegar.

'We have no access to blue bin pick-ups on Gigha so our recycling goes out in plastic bags which often get blown around and create even more mess.

'If we can help even a little bit to lessen the amount of plastic used, we will. This will add to community efforts to reduce the large amount of single-use plastic.'

The scheme is part of a £2million programme to inspire locally-led green projects as part of the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

## BALVICAR

### Power cut warning ahead of overhead cable work

Householders in Balvicar on Seil are being warned of a cut to their electrical supply next month.

The supply will be temporarily interrupted on Wednesday March 3 between 9am and 6pm, regardless of energy provider.

Scottish and Southern Electricity Works says the supply needs to be switched off to allow essential work to be carried out safely.

The work is needed to improve overhead cables. The supply will be switched back on as soon as possible, with the aim of minimising any disruption.

## At random

MARTIN LAING

editor@obantimes.co.uk



### 'Wheelie' good idea

I have long had a love affair with the spectacular isle of Kerrera which, as almost all of you will know, lies just off Oban.

There are beautiful walks, some more physically demanding than others, that many of us visitors enjoy.

One of my favourite rambles anywhere in the world involves the short hop from Gallanach to Kerrera on the MV Carvorra, the smallest ferry in the CalMac fleet, then a hike to the bottom of the island for refreshments at the Tea Garden cafe. Essential on this hike, which is about an hour each way for me, is a visit to Gylen Castle. The trek is not too strenuous and views there and back are stunning.

Similarly, a trip across the harbour to Oban Marina's Waypoint Bar and Grill is a regular treat for my wife and I. To sit there on a summer evening with a drink and contemplate Oban from over the water is brilliant.

So it was with interest I read of the plan to start an electric bicycle hire scheme on the island. A grant of £75,000 from the Scottish Government will fund the purchase of ebikes, shelters, bike racks, charging points and signs to help tourists.

Significantly, however, it will also be of enormous benefit to island residents, who now number almost 70. The ebikes will forge closer links between the north and south of Kerrera and facilitate hugely visits to Oban, given the distance from the ferry berth at Gallanach.

Make no mistake, if we do not invest in our island communities, they will eventually dry up and blow away. The £75,000 grant may seem like a lot of money but, in the grand scheme of things, it is a paltry sum, the benefits of which could be incalculable.

This is a splendid initiative and the good folk behind Isle of Kerrera Development Trust deserve a big pat on the back for their effort, as do Oban Cycles, which the IKDT says has been extremely helpful. That said, I think I'll probably stick to Shanks's pony!

What do you think? Send your comments to editor@obantimes.co.uk.

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# BUSINESS NEWS

## Seawater salmon farms meet council standards

Four seawater salmon farms operated by Mowi Scotland Limited have been recognised with accreditation.

Mowi's seawater farms at Loch Linnhe and Gorsten, Fort William, and Marulaig Bay, and Stulaigh, South Uist, have achieved the standards required by the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC).

ASC standards aim to encourage farms to follow best environmental and social processes. Another reason for accreditation is to increase 'certified responsibly produced seafood' in the marketplace, allowing consumers to know they are making the best seafood choice, as well as supporting those farmers who share ASC's commitment to conservation and workers' rights.

Mowi Scotland said it now has a total of eight ASC certified farms and that it represented a 'significant milestone' in its objective to achieve 100 per cent ASC certification for all its sites. Its Loch Leven Farm, Ballachulish, was the first salmon farm in the UK to receive ASC accreditation.

Sam Clegg, certification manager at Mowi Scotland, said: 'I'm incredibly pleased our hard work throughout 2020 is paying off and we are now seeing the first wave of freshly certified ASC sites in Mowi Scotland. ASC Salmon and Freshwater Trout standards are widely recognised as the most robust and far-reaching environmental and social standards for global aquaculture.'

Mowi said all audits were conducted remotely because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The on-site inspections had to be done via video link which, although challenging, was nevertheless thorough, said Mowi, as the process was supported with robust documentation, it said.

Mr Clegg added: 'We can now push ahead to a productive 2021 and 2022. We hope to increase our total of certified sites to 21 by early 2022.'

## Colonsay cheer at grant boost

Hopes to create new business units on Colonsay have taken a step forward.

Argyll and Bute Council has secured £1.7 million of Scottish Government funding towards regeneration and employment projects on Colonsay, Islay and Lochgilphead.

The money is from the government's Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF).

It will help to provide £746,223 for a new Port Ellen community hub on Islay; £335,000 for the Scalasaig housing and business units on Colonsay and £650,000 to the Kilmory Business Park in Lochgilphead.

The council is leading on the Kilmory Business Park plan and worked with South Islay Development (SID) and Colonsay Community Development Company (CCDC) to apply for funding on their behalfs.

The CCDC project will provide business space at Scalasaig, the main settlement on the island of Colonsay. This project is run in tandem with an affordable housing scheme.

Caroline Seymour, CCDC project manager, pictured, said the funding announcement was 'brilliant' news. The total cost for the Scalasaig project was £460,000 so the funding made a 'huge contribution' to that goal, she said.

A planning application has been submitted to



site the new business units between two existing business units and the village hall. The hope is to create around half-a-dozen spaces with a combination of workshop and office space.

Caroline said people on the island had been asked to provide submissions of interest as to what the units might be used for. The CDC is also seeking support from Highlands and Islands Enterprise Agency.

Alastair Redman, councillor for the Kintyre and Islands ward, which includes Colonsay, was also delighted by the news.

Councillor Redman said: 'Colonsay, like all of

our islands, is full of opportunities which can be realised through investment in its potential. This is a winning combination for Colonsay's economy and I'm looking forward to seeing work start in Scalasaig as soon as possible.'

At Port Ellen on Islay, the new community hub will include a social enterprise café with bakery, a community/function space, office rental space, storage rental and an office for South Islay Development Trust.

The new hub is aimed at encouraging 'greater community engagement and collaboration' and support future community regeneration on the island.

Councillor Robin Currie, leader of Argyll and Bute Council, said: 'Argyll and Bute brings together much of what is best about Scotland – natural resources that drive national and international business markets, expertise that inspires innovation and people committed to achieving the prosperous future the area needs and deserves.'

'Each of the funded projects are critical to our future growth and to the needs of our communities. In a year where we have seen a huge impact on our communities and businesses, investment is vital to help the local economy recover and unlock Argyll and Bute's potential.'

## Eriska hotel retains Michelin star

An exclusive five-star hotel on an island near Oban has retained its coveted Michelin star.

The Isle of Eriska Hotel and Spa is under the stewardship of head chef Andrew Turnbull, who led the team to uphold the impressive accolade – one of only 10 Michelin starred venues in Scotland.

Chef Andrew, 35, hails from Dunblane originally and learned his craft in some of the UK's most prestigious restaurants. These include Restaurant Andrew Fairlie at Gleneagles; Sir Andy Murray's Cromlix, Inverlochy Castle Hotel, Fort William; Restaurant Sat Bains in Nottingham, and The Grove, Narberth, Wales. He describes his style as 'classic roots with light

and modern touches using the best of Scotland's seasonal produce'.

A passion for foraging on the 300-acre estate to create bold, seasonal flavours helped the team secure their star, with top-quality ingredients including lobster, lamb and fresh apples in precisely prepared, elegant dishes.

As well as its superior culinary experience, the Isle of Eriska was commended by the Michelin Guide for its flexible approach to dining, including a spacious main room with a formal feel and views over the lawns, a smaller anteroom and a conservatory set beside a majestic oak tree which was planted the year the house was built.

The hotel is managed by luxury hotel manage-

ment company Inverlochy Castle Management International (ICMI) and has moved quickly to create Covid-secure dining, including the creation of a new app to digitally display menus on mobile devices. Norbert Lieder, managing director of ICMI, said: 'Retaining the Michelin star at the Isle of Eriska Hotel is a wonderful achievement for the team, who are dedicated to providing a unique culinary experience that heroes the best of what Scotland has to offer. To have achieved this during a pandemic and with chef Andy still new to the team is something to be truly proud of and we look forward to welcoming guests from near and far to sample the menus when time safely allows.'

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# Concern voiced over new licence fees

## Tourism groups warn self-caterers may quit the holiday market

Self-caterers, B&Bs and Airbnb providers may quit the holiday market because of new legislation coming in, tourism groups have warned.

A new government licensing regime for short-term lets becomes law in April with councils given until April 1 2022 to set up a scheme and hosts given until April 1 2023 to apply.

The Scottish Government says it is necessary because of the impact short-term lets can have in communities including noise, nuisance, anti-social behaviour and reducing residential housing stock which is lost to the tourism sector.

But opponents warn it could cost some businesses thousands of pounds and many would quit, with a knock-on impact on local economies which rely on overnight visitors staying and spending locally.

Oban and Lorn Tourism Alliance (OLTA) and the Scottish Tourism Alliance are among the organisations opposed to the new regime.

Ministers have said it would not be too 'onerous' and operators would be required to pay between £223 to £337 for a three-year licence.

But the Scottish B&B Association claims costs could reach up to £1,000 and more.

The Association of Scotland's Self Caterers (ASSC), based at Arrochar, said nearly half of its members had indicated they might leave the sector once the new fees come in.

Linda Battison, OTLA marketing director, also runs Cologin Country Chalets and Lodges. She said it could add as much as £20,000 to her company's cost base.

Ms Battison said: 'I am seriously concerned; if this passes into law Oban's tourism industry will suffer and that will impact every other busi-



Self-catering operators like Cologin Country Lodges and Chalets face new costs due to the proposed licensing scheme.

**'Many self-catering properties are likely to be left empty for much of the year as owners decide it is simply not worth the hassle and cost of meeting the new licensing scheme.'**

ness in town. Self-catering is a hugely popular accommodation option for visitors, especially those with pets and children. It's Covid-safe and offers flexibility and choice.' She added: 'The sector is well-placed to lead our area's tourism recovery and this is the last thing it needs on top of the increased costs of being Covid compliant and facing another reduced season with travel restrictions and complicated rules on households holidaying together.'

The government said the legislation introduced a mandatory set of standards to protect guests and neighbours in short-term lets.

Most operators would already meet basic safety standards and most, if not all, would meet the mandatory criteria, it said.

But Mrs Battison said the proposal was a 'sledgehammer approach' to cracking a perceived problem with a minority of operators in Edinburgh and some tourism hotspots. 'The legislation will do nothing to combat lack of affordable housing or anti-social behaviour in city centre party flats,' she said. 'Most councils don't welcome this and simply don't have the resources to implement the scheme.'

'Even those operators who have been trading legally for many years and meet all the current health and safety legislation will still have to apply and there is no guarantee they will be granted a licence. Many self-catering properties are likely to be left empty for much of the year as owners decide it is simply not worth the hassle and cost of meeting the new licensing scheme.'

'This will impact negatively on the local economy as self catering visitors support bars, restaurants, shops and all number of tourism businesses, particularly in rural areas,' she said.

## Lockdown latest: Scotland reacts

The chief executive of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce has urged local authorities to speed up the release of government funding following news that lockdown will remain in place until the end of February at least.

Dr Liz Cameron, who leads the group of more than 12,000 members, said the confirmation last Tuesday that lockdown would continue was unsurprising, but said many businesses would be 'disappointed' non-essential shops would remain closed – given the 'immense investment' they had made to ensure safety for staff and customers.

She said: 'We continue to urge the Scottish Government, local authorities and agencies to speed up the release of vital business support funds. This is essential to provide cashflow support to businesses that have been forced to close. Ultimately, the best route to support the economy is to re-open.'

'That's why we urgently need an economic roadmap to recovery that outlines clear conditions and timelines for reopening sectors of the economy if we are to protect businesses and jobs.'

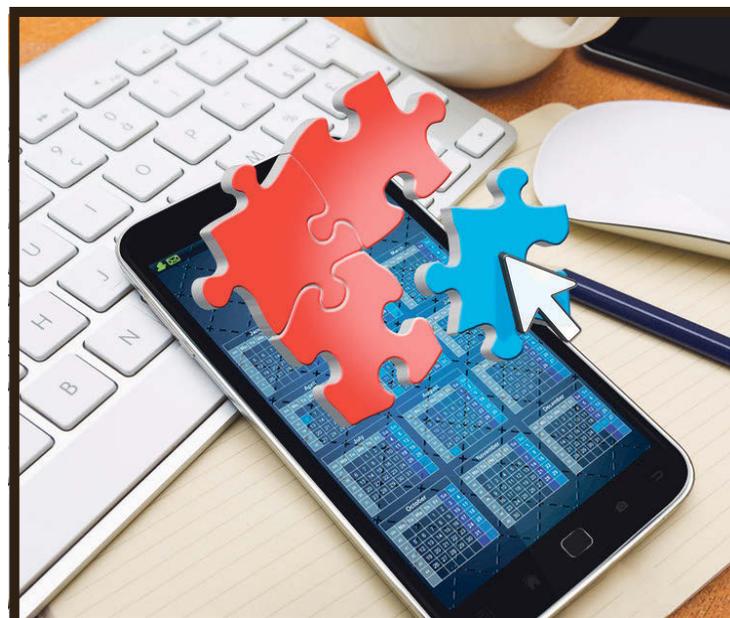
Commenting on the announcement, Maree Todd, an SNP MSP for the Highlands and Islands, said the 'steady decrease' in daily cases showed lockdown is working.

'This virus continues to pose real risks to health and to life and we know that if given the opportunity, the virus can quickly spread and take hold again. Our progress is reliant on adherence to restrictions, so we've got to stick with it.'

She added: 'Well done to our excellent team of vaccinators across the Highlands who are working at pace to get the vaccine into people's arms.'

However, Donald Cameron MSP, the shadow health secretary for the Conservative opposition, said the vaccination programme was a 'growing cause for concern'.

Mr Cameron, a Highlands and Islands MSP, said the target date for all over-70s to receive a vaccination letter had 'slipped by a week and Scotland was 'lagging considerably behind' the rest of the UK.



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# Following in St Columba's foot

## Morvern Lines

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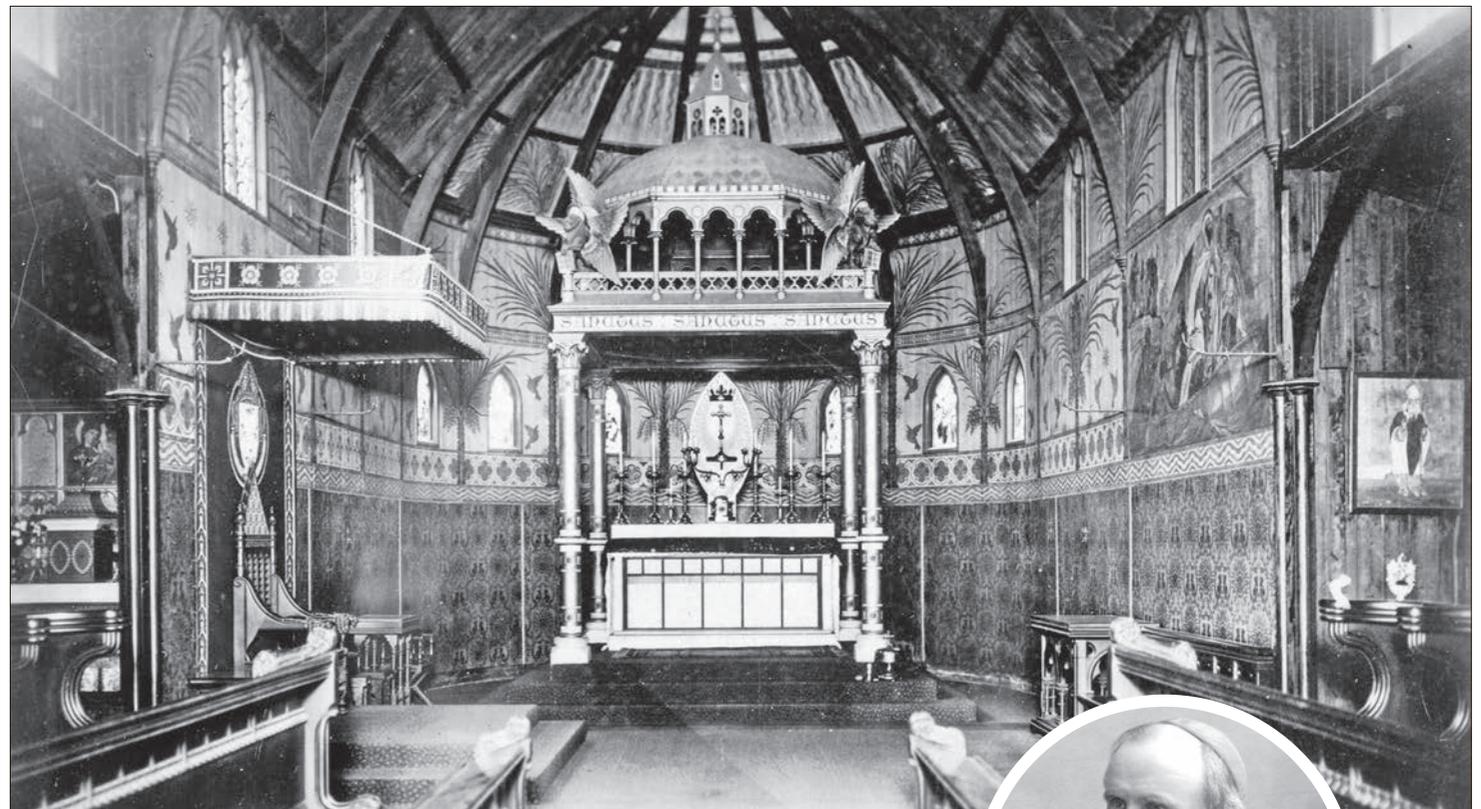
The Cathedral Church of St Columba standing in a prominent position on the north east side of Oban Bay is the seat of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Argyll and the Isles and mother church of the Diocese of Argyll and the Isles. Described for its architecture as one of the finest churches in Scotland it, and its unique predecessor made of tin, has an interesting history. This week, and over the next two weeks, Iain Thorne provides us with a glimpse of how they came to be built.

When the Scottish Catholic hierarchy was restored by Pope Leo XIII in 1878 just over 300 years after the Reformation, when Scotland broke with the Papacy and developed a predominantly Calvinistic national church, the ancient bishopric of Argyll and the Isles was re-established and united under one bishop.

The first was the Gaelic speaking Right Rev Angus MacDonald (1844-1900), descended from an old distinguished Highland family, the MacDonalds of Glenaladale, whose fortunes were closely associated with the 1745 Jacobite Rising. It was on the neighbouring estate of Glenfinnan that Prince Charles Edward Stuart landed when he set out on his ill-starred enterprise and it was a Bishop MacDonald, who, although doubtful of the outcome of the struggle, consecrated the Prince's standard.

The youngest of three brothers, Angus was born on September 8 1844 at Borrodale – a farm lying between Lochailort and Arisaig. He began studying for the priesthood at St Cuthbert's College, Ushaw, County Durham, where he was ordained in July 1872. His earliest charge was St Patricks, Glasgow. His rise in the church from priest to Bishop and finally Archbishop of St Andrews and Metropolitan of Scotland was meteoric. Marking his passing in May 1900, The Oban Times wrote that his death was not only a loss to the church but to every member of his flock who ever came into contact with him.

Although there were very few Catholics in and around Oban at that time, Bishop Angus was aware of its closeness to Iona, the spiritual foundation of the diocese, and the town's



The interior of the old tin pro-cathedral which was built on Oban Esplanade and was thought to be one of the largest iron churches ever erected and, right, Bishop Angus MacDonald. Photographs: The Scottish Catholic Archives.

growing popularity as a tourist destination. It was also the railhead and gateway to the isles, with ferries sailing to and from the Inner and Outer Hebrides where Catholicism flourished long before the Reformation. Here he would build his cathedral.

The early history of the present Diocese of Argyll and the Isles owes a great deal to Sir Charles Gordon, a wealthy Roman Catholic landowner and lawyer from Banffshire, who bought Drimnin estate on the Morvern peninsula in 1835. The following year Sir Charles began building a chapel on the site of the 17th century Drimnin Castle, dedicating it to St Columba who had passed by on his way to Ardnamurchan 1,200 years earlier. The architect was James Anderson of Edinburgh and the well-known church artists Dyce and Hay decorated the interior. It had seating for 80 with a sacristy and gallery for the choir and

cost £500. Opened on September 9 1838, it was erected not only to serve the Gordon family, their tenants and staff but as a centre for the Catholics of Mull, Ardnamurchan and further afield, including Oban. At the time it was considered an important mission and might well be described as the pre-Cathedral of Argyll and the Isles.

Looking through the old files in The Oban Times office not long ago, I came across a short letter from a reader innocently asking if St Columba was a Roman Catholic? Well, talk about lighting the blue touch paper! It seemed a reasonable question, but for weeks afterwards letters were almost leaping off the pages, with some readers tying themselves in knots over the historical evidence, while others let rip with their bigoted views. Wisely, the clergy kept out of it. How quickly times change, for not long afterwards along came the following, 'Perhaps



there is not a prettier spot in the Highlands for the erection of a house of worship than

Oban Esplanade, or a more charming site than that now occupied by the new Roman Catholic Church.' So recorded The Oban Times in October 1885 as the building neared completion. This, of course, was not St Columba's Cathedral of today, as its foundation stone wasn't laid until much later, but a prefabricated corrugated-iron structure known locally as the 'Tin Cathedral'.

If corrugated-iron conjures up an image of a small rusting shed tucked out of sight behind a derelict croft, forget it. Its dimensions were: nave and aisles 70 feet by 40 feet, 30 feet to apex; sanctuary, 30 feet by 20 feet with circular apse; chapel 30 feet by 20 feet; sacristy 18 feet by 14

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	1157 1.0		0646 4.1		0752 4.0		0855 3.6		0929 3.4
12	TH 1756 3.7	14	SA 1314 0.9	16	M 1422 1.1	18	W 1528 1.4	20	TH 1607 1.6
	●		1859 3.8		1957 3.7		2056 3.4		2130 3.3
12	0009 0.8	14	0125 0.7	16	0232 1.0	18	0338 1.4	20	0444 1.0
	0611 4.1		0720 4.1		0824 3.8		0929 3.4		1035 3.0
12	F 1237 0.9	14	SU 1349 1.0	16	TU 1454 1.3	18	TH 1607 1.6	20	W 1713 1.2
	1828 3.8		1929 3.8		2026 3.6		2130 3.3		2236 2.9

### WEATHER

**Thursday**  
Sunny intervals and a moderate breeze  
Temperatures 0°C to 4°C.

**Friday**  
Sunny intervals and a fresh breeze  
Temperatures 1°C to 5°C.

### WEEKEND OUTLOOK

**Saturday**  
Light snow and a fresh breeze  
Temperatures 3°C to 4°C.

**Sunday**  
Sleet and a fresh breeze  
Temperatures 5°C to 6°C.

### FRIDAY FORECAST

<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><td style="width: 50%;">Ardrishaig</td><td style="width: 50%;">-5.35</td></tr> <tr><td>Campbeltown</td><td>-5.30</td></tr> <tr><td>Crinan</td><td>-0.47</td></tr> <tr><td>Islay Port Ellen</td><td>2.00</td></tr> <tr><td>Lochboisdale</td><td>+0.30</td></tr> <tr><td>Mallaig</td><td>+0.25</td></tr> <tr><td>Portree</td><td>+0.55</td></tr> <tr><td>Tobermory</td><td>+0.16</td></tr> <tr><td>Dover</td><td>+5.30</td></tr> </table>	Ardrishaig	-5.35	Campbeltown	-5.30	Crinan	-0.47	Islay Port Ellen	2.00	Lochboisdale	+0.30	Mallaig	+0.25	Portree	+0.55	Tobermory	+0.16	Dover	+5.30	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;"> <span>HIGH</span> <span>LOW</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center; color: white; background-color: red; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; line-height: 30px; margin: 0 auto;">5</div> <div style="text-align: center; color: white; background-color: blue; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; line-height: 30px; margin: 0 auto;">1</div> </div> <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 5px;"> <span style="font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">22 MPH</span> </div>
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Campbeltown	-5.30																		
Crinan	-0.47																		
Islay Port Ellen	2.00																		
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Tobermory	+0.16																		
Dover	+5.30																		

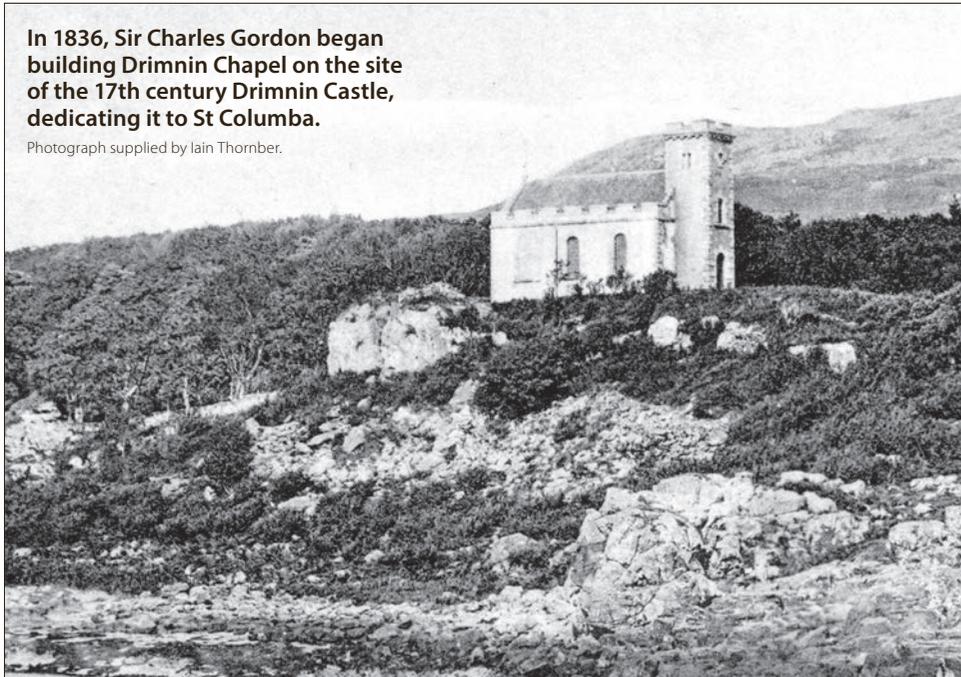
# Footsteps – part 1

## DOWN MEMORY LANE

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

In 1836, Sir Charles Gordon began building Drimnin Chapel on the site of the 17th century Drimnin Castle, dedicating it to St Columba.

Photograph supplied by Iain Thorber.



feet, with a porch and small organ chamber. Built to accommodate 600 people, it was thought to have been one of the largest iron churches ever built.

This gem was lit by 50 windows of Gothic design, glazed with green-tinted cathedral glass. The outer walls were covered with galvanised corrugated iron painted in oil colours. Those inside were lined with inodorous felt to match the boarding which was stained and varnished in light and dark oak colours. The roofs were lined of the same materials.

The benefactors were the Marquess and Marchioness of Bute – the UK's leading 19th-century philanthropists, who bank-rolled numerous church buildings including St Edward's on the Island of Canna.

John Patrick Crichton-Stuart, 3rd Marquess of Bute, was baptised as an Anglican, but while studying at Oxford in 1866 abandoned Presbyterianism in favour of Catholicism believing that the Roman Catholic Church was the true Church as it had not been corrupted by reformation.

The Butes planned the interior according to their liturgical preferences and artistic taste and he who pays the piper ensured the furnishings were equally fine.

The Blessed Sacrament was reserved in a side chapel beautifully adorned for private devotion and adoration. The high altar and sanctuary, places of sacrifice and ritual worship, were separated from the nave by an ornate rood-screen, surmounted by a triptych – a work of art divided into three sections, or three carved panels that are hinged together and can be folded shut or displayed open.

The pro-cathedral, The Oban Times reported, 'was built in such a high way, it is as good an advertisement for the builders, who have performed their part with great satisfaction and who have been represented here by Mr Henry Sidell'. 'Quietly and unostentatiously', it went on, 'the Roman Catholics are growing apace all over the West Highlands and Islands and especially in Oban. This is in some measure due to the labours of Bishop MacDonald [Angus, Bishop of Argyll and the Isles 1878-1892 who was succeeded by George Smith] of whom it can be said there is not a more devoted prelate, as well as a thoroughly Christian man, in the country. We congratulate the Roman Catholics of Oban on their exceedingly pretty church, so much in keeping with its magnificent natural surroundings.'

Continued next week.



We have no information about this photograph so we are hoping someone recognises one or two faces and can tell us who they were, what the occasion was and when and where the photograph was taken. Don't you just love the person pressed up against the bus window making sure she gets in the shot?!



This image came from the archives of our stablemate Scottish Field magazine. We think it was taken around August 31 1987 at Mallaig. We would love to hear from anyone who knows who the people are in the photograph.

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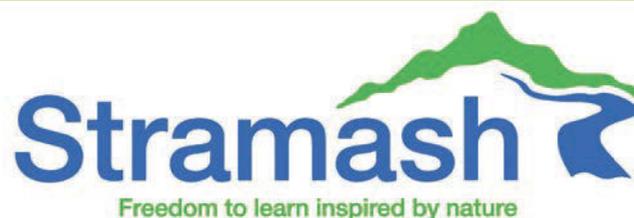
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# LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT

YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S ON IN ARGYLL AND LOCHABER

## Celtic Connections 2021 comes to a crescendo!

*Oban FM's Campbell Cameron gives a standing ovation as Celtic Connections 2021 online extravaganza comes to a close.*

The second and final week of the greatest winter music festival in Europe, Celtic Connections, does what it always does.

Reaches a crescendo! Despite being audience-less and online the festival has maintained superbly high standards throughout and although unlikely to repeat the venture, assuming the auld vaccines are doing their bit by next January, maybe it will be made available online as well as in the flesh.

My guess is world audiences are up this year as travelling to Glasgow is impossible of course so that audience might be retained – something for



festival director Donald Shaw and his team to muse over as they settle back into February and count on the success of this year's event.

So, what rocked me? Well,

Roddy Hart is one of my favourite performers and runs a decent show on Radio Scotland with the Americana theme that threads through the Roaming Roots Review

**Biffy Clyro front man Simon Neil rocked Campbell's world on the Songs for Survival set.**

Photograph by Gaelle Beri.

that he hosts and leads with his Lonesome Fire Band each year. Made it for the first time this year...well!

Songs for survival gave us the roots theme and what a gig it was, with Biffy Clyro and Deacon Blue personnel influenced on favourite well-loved American Tunes. The concert was a real winner with a Travelling Wilbury's hit leaving us begging for more. Hart and Ricky Ross are a formidable duo on vocals and the Field music duo in support were a revelation.

Quebecfest deserves an hon-

ourable mention too – Gros Isle were new to me, De Temps Antan were familiar, and Le Vent Du Nord are mega. So, there are three tips for your next playlist. Along with final band advice in song - J'aime le Vin. Word from the Iona correspondent was favourable as it is for much of the event and my friend and I have caught most events, including the marvellous Uists celebration. This is the advantage of being online. You miss nothing.

The Transatlantic sessions are always a hit, bringing up the rear of the festival, but this year Phil and Aly were separated from their North American fraternity by 3,000 miles and a pandemic. Nashville based co-director Jerry Douglas's Dobro playing sometimes veers toward over-

whelming a live performance, so I feel but the separation this year tempered the slide guitar well. Tim O'Brien and the Nashville-based team played a blinder as always and this will be one concert that a live version in the Royal concert hall will be all the better for next January.

So that is us done for 2021 in the new normal, hopefully a temporary thing and full service will be resumed next year. But last week's dilemma continues. Online or live – what is best? My pass this year (thanks Santa) is still valid for a few days and everything is available. This year has one thing in its favour – we can rerun the whole thing. What a binge fest that would be!

All the best from Benderloch world music HQ.



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Deirdre Sheiling stonework artist and designer David Wilson.

# Video declares undying love for Deirdre's Sheiling

by Kathie Griffiths  
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Taynuilt's own memorial to love is continuing to win the hearts of walkers escaping lockdown.

Now a new video about the making of the Deirdre Shieling and the characters involved is about to increase its appeal even more – especially among hikers keen to escape the confines of lockdown.

Long before Covid struck, the sheiling, which sits 1,500 ft up the slopes of Beinn Ghlas, looking down on Glen Etive, had already found a special place in many hearts of people who were touched by the love stories behind it.

The sheiling with its Celtic bell and knot seat was commissioned by Sam MacDonald as a love token to his wife Evelyn, who died of cancer in 2017.

The couple had long wanted to somehow leave a legacy of their time together and the sheiling up at their favourite picnic spot is what Sam promised to fulfil. It also marks the couple's own fascination with the love story of Deirdre of the Sorrows, a mythical tale about two lovers who fled from Ireland to Glen Etive. As well as a 'kiss' statue, the hillside memorial also has two standing stones representing the legendary pair.



Deirdre's Sheiling and the stunning view to Loch Etive that lies beyond.

Since it officially opened in 2018, the path up to it has become well trodden and now a new 10-minute video has been released to coincide with a relaunch of the attraction's website.

Stonework artist and designer David Wilson from Perth, who constructed the sheiling, collaborated with Sam on this lockdown project, compiling the video charting the story behind and during the making of the memorial retreat. The Glenmasan tone poem by Swiss composer Marc Jeanbourquin, who was inspired to write it by Deirdre and Naoise's story, is played in the background.

David said: 'There was so much to the sheiling project that I just felt it needed recording more succinctly. I had so many good photos and, of course, I was obviously aware of the music, so I thought why don't I marry the two together in a video.'

Sam said: 'We seem to have taken flight with Deirdre and Naoise, the romance of their story, the echoes of their pres-

ence in Glen Etive and beyond, and the setting for the sheiling, looking out on a magical view of the West Highlands: Evelyn and Sam just lit the spark!'

He added: 'I was up there about two weeks ago and to my astonishment there were 18 cars parked at the road end with people who had gone up to see the sheiling and take in the spectacular view

'Word is getting around that it's an easy road to walk up - the view is just out of this world.'

To get there, once at the village crossroads in Taynuilt take the road marked Glen Lonan for about 2 miles on a single track road, then on your left, there is a wide entrance with a cattle grid and a sign marked Sheiling for Deirdre and Naoise. From there, follow the blue and white Sheiling for Deirdre signs for three miles.

You can watch the video by going to David F Wilson's Youtube channel (youtu.be/4QFgOJ-NEHI), as well as visit the Deirdre Sheiling Facebook page.

YOUR LOCAL CINEMA IS COMING TO YOU WATCH THIS SPACE!



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<b>MONDAY:</b>	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
<b>TUESDAY:</b>	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
<b>WEDNESDAY:</b>	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
<b>THURSDAY:</b>	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
<b>FRIDAY:</b>	8am-10am 10am-1pm 1pm-1.15pm 4pm-6.45pm 6.45pm-7pm 7pm-8pm 8pm-10pm 10pm Late	Breakfast The Small & Tall Show 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.
<b>SATURDAY:</b>	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
<b>SUNDAY:</b>	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.

# Hector's keeping it in the family

Emerging Scottish indie-roots artist Hector Shaw is releasing his debut single Gravity on Friday February 19.

Brought up in a family of acclaimed musicians, it was no surprise when Hector began etching out his first unique song ideas during school downtime. Now just 20 years old, Hector couldn't wait to release his own material.

Hector has grown up surrounded by the musical creativity of his parents: musician, composer and producer Donald Shaw (Celtic Connections/Capercaillie) and revered songstress Karen Matheson (Capercaillie), whose collective passion for song has inspired Hector to forge his own artistic path.

With Hector's music already drawing favourable comparisons to the likes of Jeff Buckley



Hector Shaw's debut single comes out on February 19.

and John Martyn, Gravity announces the arrival of an exciting young artist with

captivating, warm vocals and intricate guitar work that features a rich palette of chordal colours.

Hector's vocals and guitar are accompanied on Gravity by Sorren Maclean on guitar, Hannah Fisher on backing vocals and Andrew Samson aka DUNT on drums.

Hector said: 'Gravity is a song that's really close to my heart and explores the desperation of witnessing someone you care about suffering. The track talks of the confusion and longing you feel when you see that person distance themselves from the world.'

'Musically, I'm continually inspired by John Martyn and Joni Mitchell, particularly their percussive hybrid of folk and jazz guitar playing. I wanted to recreate that timbre in a song of my own.'

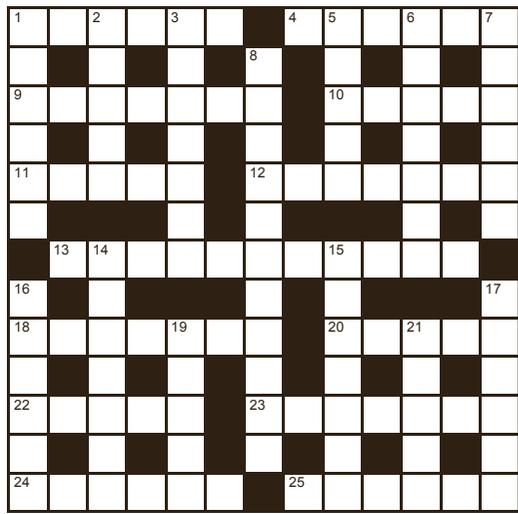
'This has been my first proper recording experience and I'm grateful to have had the chance to collaborate with the musicians involved and for their support. I'll always look back on the experience of recording my first single with real fondness and now feel so excited to share it with others.'

The debut single was produced by Sorren Maclean and recorded and engineered by Gordon Maclean at An Tobar in Tobermory on Mull in September 2020.

Hector plans to drop a string of singles in 2021, followed by his debut EP in the early summer.

Gravity will be available to download and stream on Friday February 19. It can be pre-saved by visiting <https://verticalrecords.ffm.to/gravity.opr>

## CROSSWORD



**Across**

- 1 Area of a church and community
- 4 Ill will (6)
- 9 Stock holder? (7)
- 10 Transported (5)
- 11 Unusual object (5)
- 12 Engine located within a boat (7)
- 13 No need to turn the key! (4-7)
- 18 Female who acts like an adolescent (7)
- 20 Plant or musical instrument (5)
- 22 Have the throne (5)
- 23 Picture or sculpture (7)
- 24 Not bright (6)
- 25 Start (6)
- 7 Even (6)
- 8 Tribe doctor (8,3)
- 14 On its edge (7)
- 15 Loving (7)
- 16 Started up fiercely (6)
- 17 Small parcel (6)
- 19 Purport (5)
- 21 Thunderstorm product (5)

**LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION**



**Down**

- 1 Period of time a Pope is in office
- 2 Stair part (5)
- 3 Close (4,3)
- 5 Wealthy one (5)
- 6 Cattle disease (7)

# Skye author receives New Writers award for Gaelic work

Highland-based author Roddy Neithercut is one of 11 recipients of Scottish Book Trust's New Writers Awards 2021, writes Fiona Scott.

Roddy, who lives on the Isle of Skye, grew up near Callander and won his award under the Gaelic section. He has worked in Gaelic medium education across the country as a secondary school teacher and, in recent years, as a primary school teacher.

Writing has played an important part of Roddy's teaching career and he has engaged with many genres, including fiction, poetry and non-fiction, and he has also written for Gaelic publications such as Steall. With the support of this award, he hopes to expand his writing skills and complete his first novel.

The awards provide a selection of talented writers who have not yet published a full-length book or collection, with professional guidance to help them move towards publication, as well as financial support. Funded by Creative Scotland and run by Scottish Book Trust the awards have supported over 100 creative individuals since 2009.

'I am incredibly humbled to be offered this New Writers



Roddy Neithercut hopes to expand his writing skills and complete his first novel.

Award. It is a fantastic opportunity for any writer, and I am sure will help me take my writing to the next level,' said Roddy.

Each of the 11 recipients will receive a £2,000 cash award and support tailored to their needs including mentoring from writers and industry professionals, training opportunities, and the platform to showcase their work to publishers and agents.

Alison Lang, director of the Gaelic Books Council that judged the Gaelic section, said: 'The Gaelic Book Council's on-going partnership with

Scottish Book Trust allows us to give Gaelic writers this valuable opportunity early in their careers to work with experienced mentors and develop their craft, and we are excited to be working with new writer Roddy's calibre this year as he works towards his first publication.'

The New Writers Showcase, a celebration of work by last year's awardees, will be held online through Scottish Book Trust's social media accounts on Wednesday, March 31. Information about tickets will be available on Scottish Book Trust's website soon.

# Roddy Woombie takes to virtual stage with Mull's An Tobar

An Tobar is continuing its Music For Winter Solitude series of films on February 18 with a short concert from Scottish singer/songwriter Roddy Woombie.

Best known for his work with Idlewild, Roddy was drawn to Tobermory's creative and cultural beacon in November last year to record some vocals for his next solo album and to film the concert.

Roddy's solo career began with My Secret Is My Silence back in 2006 and he has also made three records in An Tobar - The Impossible Song and Other Songs, Listen To Keep and Live in the Hebrides.

This film features songs from his most recent EP Everyday Sun, one from his last album The Deluder, two new ones, a favourite from My Secret and ends with an Idlewild hit.

The concert will be aired at 8pm on February 18 on the An Tobar Vimeo, YouTube and Facebook channels.

The Music For Winter Solitude films are free to watch but donations, 100 per cent of which go direct to the artists, are welcome.

# Robert in lockdown

**ROBERT ROBERTSON**

robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk



Over the past month, I am sure a great many of you watched BBC Alba's Cuirn aig Celtic series, which filmed some of this year's virtual Celtic Connections.

I was scrolling through social media last week and was absolutely stopped in my tracks by Darren MacLean's contribution to this programme. Darren is a good pal of mine and I have always enjoyed his singing, but his rendition of Màiri Nighean Alasdair, accompanied by the Scottish Ensemble, in the stunning surround and acoustic of the Kelvingrove Art Gallery, was something particularly special. I would genuinely encourage you to go and find the whole programme on iPlayer and take a quiet moment to listen. It also features incredible performances from Karen Matheson and Mischa MacPherson.

I have been focusing my columns for the last month on my own Celtic Connections memories in order to reminisce about the days of live gigs. This video inspired two such memories.

First, was a show at the Royal Concert Hall a couple of years ago in which about a dozen of us sang Gaelic songs accompanied by the BBC Scottish



**Darren MacLean.**

Symphony Orchestra. Nothing can quite replicate the unique emotion added to songs by a sympathetic orchestral arrangement. This is the case in Darren's video and it was also very much the case that night.

For the special occasion, BeesNess Media had given each singer an allowance of £100 to buy an outfit. The instruction was to return any money we hadn't spent. I am not suggesting I am frugal but I managed to come back with a pair of tartan trousers, a shirt, and a waistcoat for £99.99! I returned the penny and asked the director to invoice me for it.

Meanwhile, as I recall, Griogair Labhruidh (Gaelic

singer and rapper extraordinaire), blew the whole £100 on a cracking tweed bunnet which he wore onstage that night with exactly the clothes he had arrived in for rehearsals!

My other memory that was inspired by last week's Celtic Connections video was of Darren MacLean himself.

I had not long moved down to Glasgow when I was invited to sing at the Glasgow Skye Annual Gathering. This is, of course, a big and historic event so I was nervously excited.

Darren (a Dunvegan man and a few years older and, possibly, wiser than me) gave me some sage advice. 'Robert,' he said. 'You have two things onstage: your voice and your pater. With your pater, you must make them laugh; and with your voice, you must make them cry.'

I told him I would bear his advice in mind. While I was onstage at the concert, the back door of the hall opened and in walked none other than Darren MacLean!

I alerted the audience to his late-coming, told them of the advice he had recently given me, and said: 'The thing about Darren is it's usually his voice that makes you laugh and his pater that makes you cry!' Just as well we're pals!

# Hotel group urge children to get creative

To mark National Storytelling Week Crieff Hydro Family of Hotels, has launched a search for budding young authors to submit stories for a new bedtime story book based on one of its venues.

Children aged five to 14 can submit a short story of up to 200 words, fact or fiction, with the 30 shortlisted stories being printed in a limited edition book.

The entries will be split into three age categories and one story from each category will be brought to life in an illustration for the book - as well as the three authors winning a family hotel stay.

The eight hotels within the family, including the Isles of Glencoe and Kingshouse hotels in Ballachulish, are all set in iconic and picturesque Scottish locations, an ideal setting for a fairytale or action adventure and children are encouraged to submit their true or fictional story based or inspired by one of the hotels.

The submissions will be read by a panel of independent judges - John Bray, Helen Grant and Susy McPhee - selected



**Kingshouse Hotel in Ballachulish**

with help from Strathearn Arts.

Entries close on Monday March 1, with the book created by summer, and if restrictions allow, shortlisted entries will be welcomed to a Mini Book Festival at Crieff Hydro Hotel in July to be presented with their prizes.

Nic Oldham, head of customer and commercial at Crieff Hydro Family of Hotels, said: 'Storytelling is a powerful tool that allows us to share tales which can inspire and teach others.'

'We hope this competition will inspire young people and get the creative juices flowing

as we eagerly anticipate restrictions lifting so we can experience our own adventures again.

'Many families are currently home-schooling and we hope this may be a welcome assignment for imaginative youngsters. We can't wait to read the entries and our one piece of advice is to remember that imagination knows no bounds!'

Entries should be emailed to nsw@crieffhydro.com

To read the full competition details, terms and conditions, visit [www.crieffhydrofamily.com/national-storytelling-week](http://www.crieffhydrofamily.com/national-storytelling-week)

## MY ALBA

<p><b>DIARDAOIN 11 An Gearran</b> <b>THURSDAY 11 February</b></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 &amp; Drink) (rpt)</p> <p>22.00 Ceol Duthchasach/ Ken Burn's Country Music</p> <p>23.50 Dhan Uisge (Sanna) (rpt)</p> <p><b>DIHAOINE 12 An Gearran</b> <b>FRIDAY 12 February</b></p> <p>17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming</p> <p>19.00 An La NEWS</p> <p>19.25 Fraochy Bay (rpt)</p> <p>19.30 Machair (rpt)</p> <p>20.00 Cearcall (rpt)</p> <p>20.30 Garradh Phadruig (rpt)</p> <p>21.00 Beloved Wilderness (rpt)</p> <p>21.55 Binneas na Trads (rpt)</p> <p>22.00 State of Happiness: 69 Meters Down (rpt)</p> <p>22.50 Dhan Uisge (Sanna) (rpt)</p> <p>23.00 Cuirn@Celtic Connections 2021 (rpt)</p> <p><b>DISATHAIRNE 13 an Gearran</b> <b>SATURDAY 13 February</b></p> <p>16.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming</p> <p>17.45 An Là - NEWS</p> <p>18.00 NEW Scottish Premiership - Motherwell v Hamilton</p> <p>19.45 Sgeul Slainte (rpt)</p> <p>20.00 Cearcall (rpt)</p> <p>20.30 Air Iomall - Music from the Edge (rpt)</p> <p>21.00 NEW Seirm   Celtic Connections</p>	<p>22.00 Concorde (rpt)</p> <p>22.50 Dhan Uisge (Sanna) (rpt)</p> <p>22.55 Scottish Premiership - Motherwell v Hamilton (rpt)</p> <p>00.45 NEW ALT</p> <p><b>DIDÒMHNAICH 14 An Gearran</b> <b>SUNDAY 14 February</b></p> <p>16.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming</p> <p>18.15 An La - NEWS</p> <p>18.30 Seachd La/ News Review - NEWS</p> <p>19.30 Alleluia/ Spiritual Praise (rpt)</p> <p>20.00 Eorpa/European Current Affairs (rpt)</p> <p>20.30 An Taigh-Fuine/ The Bakery (rpt)</p> <p>21.00 A' Suathadh Ri Iomadh Rubha/ The Campbell Family Story (rpt)</p> <p>22.00 Seirm   Celtic Connections (rpt)</p> <p>23.00 State of Happiness: 69 Metres Down (rpt)</p> <p>23.50 Binneas na Trads (rpt)</p> <p><b>DILUAIN 15 an Gearran</b> <b>MONDAY 15 February</b></p> <p>17.00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming</p> <p>19:00 Vets: Gach Creutair Beo (rpt)</p> <p>19:30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)</p> <p>19:55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)</p> <p>20:00 An La - NEWS</p> <p>20:30 NEW Garraidhean na h-Alba</p> <p>21:00 Trusadh - Laithean Sgoile - An Rum Beag (Schooldays - The Wee Room) (rpt)</p> <p>22:00 Seoid a' Chidsin - The Kitchen Coves (rpt)</p> <p>22:30 DIY le Donnie (rpt)</p> <p>23:15 Sgeul Slainte (rpt)</p> <p>23:30 TradFest (rpt)</p> <p><b>DIMÀIRT 16 an Gearran</b> <b>TUESDAY 16 February</b></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 Macleod MP/Maclean KGB (rpt)</p> <p>22:00 Trusadh - Laithean Sgoile - An Rum Beag (Schooldays - The Wee Room) (rpt)</p> <p>23:00 Fraochy Bay (rpt)</p> <p>23:05 Machair (rpt)</p> <p>23:30 Alleluia/ Spiritual Praise</p> <p><b>DICIADAIN 17 An Gearran</b> <b>WEDNESDAY 17 February</b></p> <p>17:00 Prògraman Chloinne - Children's programming</p> <p>19:00 Vets: Gach Creutair Beo (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 Abair Trusadh</p> <p>21:00 DIY le Donnie (rpt)</p> <p>21:45 Sgeul Slainte (rpt)</p> <p>22:00 Na Millenni-Gaels (rpt)</p> <p>22:30 Talamh Torrach (Scotland's Food &amp; Drink) (rpt)</p> <p>23:30 Seoid a' Chidsin - The Kitchen Coves (rpt)</p> <p><b>DIARDAOIN 18 An Gearran /</b> <b>THURSDAY 18 February</b></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 Diary of Britain - Shinty Town (rpt)</p> <p>21:40 Ceol Duthchasach/Ken Burn's Country Music (rpt)</p>
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**BBC.CO.UK / ALBA | BBC.CO.UK / IPLAYER**

Co-bhanntachd eadar MG ALBA agus am BBC | A partnership between BBC and MG ALBA

## ARGYLL REMOVALS & STORAGE

• **REMOVALS** • **STORAGE**

• **HOUSE CLEARANCE**

**Phone Duncan on 01852 200378 or 07919 122570**  
**or email: [info@argyllremovals.co.uk](mailto:info@argyllremovals.co.uk)**

# OBAN FOR BUSINESS

To minimise the risk of spreading the virus, you must stay at home as much as possible. Full guidance is available from [www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot) and it is expected that these restrictions will last in Scotland until at least mid February but will be reviewed. There are a list of examples of reasonable exemptions on the gov.scot website. Although you can leave home for these purposes, you should stay as close to home as possible. Shop online or use local shops and services wherever you can. Travel no further than you need to, to reach a safe, non-crowded place to exercise in a socially distanced way. To minimise the risk of spread of coronavirus it is crucial that we all avoid unnecessary travel. Over the next 4 weeks, the Oban Times, in conjunction with BID4Oban and Oban FM, will give readers an insight into our local services, what you can and can't do and the struggles some businesses owners are facing.

## BUILDING, DIY, HOME, GARDENING & SERVICES

### BUILDBASE

Mon-Fri 7.30am-5pm, Sat 8am-12pm  
Tel: 01631 570518

### CITY PLUMBING SUPPLIES

Mon-Fri 7.30am - 5pm  
Sat 8am-12pm  
Tel: 01631 567640

### CITY ELECTRICAL FACTORS

Mon-Fri 7.30am-5.30pm,  
Sat 8.30am-12pm  
Tel: 01631 562362

### CRAIGARD DÉCOR

Mon - Fri 9.00am - 5.30pm  
Sat 9am-1pm  
Tel: 01631 562680 / antonycave@aol.com

### HIGHLAND FASTENERS

Mon-Fri, 7.30am-5pm  
Sat 8am-12pm  
Tel: 01631 570584

### HIRE & SUPPLIES

Mon-Fri 7.30am-5pm  
Tel: 01631 566306

### HOMEBASE

Sun-Mon 9am-6pm, Tues-Sat 9am-8pm  
Tel: 0345 640 7807

### KINLOCHLAICH GARDEN CENTRE

Orders for collection or delivery  
Tel: 07881 525754 / Email fiona@kinlochlaich.plus.com

### MACLEOD TV

office@macleodtv.co.uk  
Tel: 01631 564310

### MACQUEEN BROS

Reduced service - Open for local moves and self storage  
Tel: 01631 564848

### SCREWFIX

Mon-Sat, 7am-7pm (6pm Sat)  
Sun 9am-4pm  
Tel: 03330 112112

### WEBSTERS OF OBAN

#### PHOTOGRAPHIC CENTRE

Open by appointment  
Tel: 01631 562917 / Email: obanphoto-graphic@btconnect.com

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!

## CHEMISTS & HEALTHCARE

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

**BOOTS THE CHEMIST, GEORGE STREET**  
Mon-Sat 9am-5.30pm  
Tel: 01631 562517

### BOOTS THE CHEMIST, BESIDE DOCTORS

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

### GORDON'S CHEMIST

Mon-Sat 10am till 5.30pm. Closed 1pm-2pm for lunch  
Tel: 01631 562053

### JOHN WALLACE OPTOMETRIST

Open by appointment only.  
Tel: 01631 563170

### SPECSAVERS

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

Mon-Sat 6.30am-6pm

### HALFWAY HOUSE

Mon-Sun 7am till 7pm

### HIRE & SUPPLIES

Mon-Fri 7.30am-5pm  
Tel: 01631 566306

### OBAN FILLING STATION

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

### WEST HIGHLAND GAS LTD

Mon-Fri 8am-5pm  
Tel: 01631 564050

## GARAGES

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

### ALL CARS & COMMERCIALS

Mon-Fri 8am-5pm  
Tel: 01631 565555

### CJ AUTO REPAIRS

Working to reduced hours, please call  
Tel: 01631 566009

### FIN'S PLACE

Mon-Fri 8.30am-5.30pm  
Tel: 01631 566 220 or 07766 757 013

### FLIT

Mon-Fri 9am-5pm  
Tel: 07810391753  
Email: flit@btconnect.com

### KWIK FIT

Mon - Fri, 8.30am-6pm (till 5pm Sat)  
Sun 10am-4pm  
Tel: 01631 566282

### KERRIE'S TYRES

Mon-Sat 8.30am-5pm  
Tel: 01631 570 000 / 0787 6762631

### MCCONECHY'S

Mon-Sat 8am - 6pm  
Tel: 01631 570047 / Email: oban@mcconechys.co.uk

## MUNRO'S GARAGE

Mon-Fri 8.30am-5.30pm  
Sat 9am-12pm  
Tel: 01631 564463  
to book your vehicles in.

## MORRISON MOTORS

Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm, Sat 9am-2pm  
Tel: 07825 581171

## RODDY'S GARAGE

Booking ahead by telephone required.  
Tel: 01631 565882

## SCOTT ROBERTSON ACCIDENT REPAIRS

Mon-Fri 8.30am-5.30pm  
Tel: 01631 569441

## TRAILWEST

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

Mon-Sat 9.30am-5.30pm  
Tel: 01631 563645/ 07778 003833

## D WATT & SON

Tues- Sat 9am-1 pm.  
Tel: 01631 562358

## DOUGIE DUNS CATERING VAN

Thur-Sun 11am-4pm  
Tel: 07783 329805

## GO NAKED VEG ONLINE & SHOP

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](http://www.gonakedveg.co.uk)  
Tel: 01631 358200 / 07585 177444

## IAIN DARLING/WYNNE BUTCHERS

Mon-Sat 9am-2.30pm  
Tel: 01631 567400

## JACKSON BUTCHERS

Tue-Sat 9am-4pm  
Tel: 01631 562016

## MILLSTONE WHOLEFOODS

Mon-Sat 9.15am--4.15pm  
Tel: Saffron on 01631 562704 or email [contact@millstonewholefoods.co.uk](mailto:contact@millstonewholefoods.co.uk)

## TASTE OF ARGYLL

Mon-Sat 10am-5pm  
Tel: 07882 226675

## THE OBAN BEER SELLER

Tel: 07796 418973  
/ Email: [obanbeerseller@gmail.com](mailto:obanbeerseller@gmail.com)

## OBAN FOOD HUB

Order online by midnight Tuesdays  
[www.thegreatbritishfoodhub.com/hubs/oban-1](http://www.thegreatbritishfoodhub.com/hubs/oban-1), collect Thursdays between 4pm and 6pm from Scout Hut behind Cathedral. Safe pick up.

## LEGAL, PROPERTY & INSURANCE

### ANDERSON BANKS SOLICITORS & ESTATE AGENTS

Open 9am-5pm  
Oban Office: 01631 563158 Email: [info@andersonbanks.co.uk](mailto:info@andersonbanks.co.uk)  
Benbecula office: 01870 602061 Email: [uist@andersonbanks.co.uk](mailto:uist@andersonbanks.co.uk)

### ETHORNTON & CO

Answering machine service.  
Telephone: 01631 566 771  
Email: [info@ethornton.co.uk](mailto:info@ethornton.co.uk)

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](mailto:adverts@obantimes.co.uk)

# Am I really safe shopping

The message from the Scottish Government is clear that you must stay at home but you can still go out for essential shopping and that includes shopping for a vulnerable person too.

Using online shopping, stores or other services in your local area wherever you can is best. To help manage social distancing and keep shoppers safe, most superstores

in town are operating crowd control measures and have hand sanitiser at the doors for customer and colleague use.

Staff are working tirelessly to keep shelves stocked for you. Remember, they are trying to protect you against infection and are classed as key workers as well. Be patient and be kind to these store colleagues and fellow shoppers.

Dean Conway, Store Manager

# 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 - 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 - Closed



IN ASSOCIATION WITH

# Oban Business Improvement District

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



## g in the store?

at Tesco, Oban, said the vast majority of shoppers in his store are sticking to the rules - thank you.

'It's going really well in Oban. I'd say 90 per cent are compliant with wearing masks and shopping alone - obviously some are exempt for medical reasons and for carers or some parents it's not possible to shop by yourself. We understand that but our customers also understand why these

measures have to be in place - to keep us all safe.

'Our staff have been working exceptionally hard, putting in extra hours and adapting to so many changes in the last 11 months to support the community.

'Through our .com service we are now getting supplies to seven remote destinations so they don't have to make the journey themselves, Walton's of Oban are delivering for us.'



### DM MACKINNON SOLICITORS & NOTARIES

Tel: 01631 563 014.  
Answering machine service  
Email: info@dmmk.co.uk

### MARSH COMMERCIAL (formerly Clark Thomson)

9am-5pm Mon to Fri.  
Tel: 01631 567675

### MACPHEE & PARTNERS

Open Mon-Fri 9am - 5pm  
Tel: 01631 562308  
Email: law@macphee.co.uk

### MORHAM & BROTHIE

Mon-Fri 9am - 5.15pm  
Tel: 01631 563 721  
Email: admin@morhambro.co.uk

### STEVENSON KENNEDY SOLICITORS

Tel: 01631 562317  
Email: mail@stevensonkennedy.co.uk

### WYLIE & BISSET

4 High Street, Oban  
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

Mon-Sun 6am-11pm  
Tel: 01631 564635

### SOROBA SHOP

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

### MCCOLLS

Mon-Sun 7am till 8pm  
Tel: 01631 569896

### DUNOLLIE STORIES

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

### HANNAH'S

Mon-Sat 6am-8pm, Sun 6am-6pm  
Tel: 01631 566913

### DUNBEG STORES

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

### CONNEL VILLAGE STORE

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

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

### BALVICAR STORES

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

### RESTAURANTS & 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

Hot filled rolls, available Mon-Sat 6.30am-2pm  
Mon-Sat, 6.30-6.30pm  
Tel: 01631 565359

### CORIANDER

Wed-Sun 5pm-9pm  
Tel: 01631 570806

### GEORGE STREET FISH TAKE-AWAY

Mon-Sun 11am-8pm  
Tel: 01631 566664

### KEBABISH OF OBAN

Sun-Thur 4pm-12am, Fri-Sat 3pm-1.30am  
Tel: 01631 566885 / Order online at kebabishofoban.co.uk

### KRONKS

Sat-Sun 10am-3pm  
01631 358019

### NORIES FISH & CHIPS

Mon-Sun 11.30am-9.30pm  
Tel: 01631 563736

### OBAN FILLING STATION

Garage: Mon-Sat: 7am-8pm, Sun 8am-8pm  
Food: Mon-Fri 7am-2pm, Sat 8am-12noon  
Tel: 01631 571101

### OBAN GRILLHOUSE

Mon-Sun 5pm-11pm  
Collection or delivery  
Tel: 01631 358246

### PIAZZA

Thur-Sun 5pm-8pm  
Tel: 01631 563628

### TASTE OF ARGYLL KITCHEN

Fri 3pm-9pm  
Sat & Sun 10am-9pm  
Tel: 07882226675

### YUWU CHINESE TAKEAWAY

Wed-Sun 4pm-8pm  
Tel: 01631 565078  
Web: [www.yuwu.co.uk/take-away](http://www.yuwu.co.uk/take-away)

### SERVICES & LOCAL ONLINE SALES

### MATRIX COMPUTERS

Email [info@matrixcomputers.co.uk](mailto:info@matrixcomputers.co.uk)  
Tel: 01631 571571

### OBAN COMPUTER SERVICES

The shop is open by appointment. Remote support available.  
Tel: 01631 566561

### SCOTTISH ISLAND JEWELLERY

Order online and over the phone, repairs by post.  
Tel: 01631 570005 / 07760 297957  
Email: [scottishislandjewellery@gmail.com](mailto:scottishislandjewellery@gmail.com)

### SPORT AND FITNESS

### OBAN CYCLES

Shop Tue-Sat, 10am-3pm  
Tel: 01631 566033  
Email: [obancycles1@gmail.com](mailto:obancycles1@gmail.com)

### 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

Tel: 01631 562876

### PETS AT HOME

Mon-Fri 9am-6pm  
Sat 9am-7pm  
Sun 10am-5pm

### CREATURE COMFORTS

Mon-Sat 10am-2pm  
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

Mon-Fri 9am-4pm  
Sat-Sun 11am-4pm

In order to keep both staff and customers safe, please ensure you follow social distancing rules when using the site, and stay 2m apart from staff and other customers

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

#### OBAN FM

103.3FM

Your community radio station bringing you all time favourites and news, 7 days a week

#### ROYAL MAIL

Albany Street Sorting Office

Mon 7am-9am

Tue 8am-10am

Wed Closed

Thur-Fri 8am-10am

Sat 8am-12pm

Sun Closed

#### 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](http://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.

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Lines open: Mon to Fri 9am- 5pm  
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Please remember to give your name, address, postcode and phone number.

# Spate of sheep worrying cases sparks warning to keep dogs under control

A fall in reported incidents of livestock worrying to Police Scotland last year has been welcomed but a spate of attacks in 2021 has sparked warnings to those visiting the countryside to keep their pets under control.

A new survey of dog owners commissioned by NFU Mutual reveals that 64 per cent of dog owners are letting their pets roam free in the countryside, despite half of owners surveyed admitting their dog doesn't always come back when called.

The research revealed that 42 per cent of dog owners have been walking their pets more often in the countryside during the pandemic, and that 81 per cent of survey respondents have noticed more people exercising their pets in rural areas.

Mark McBrearty, Regional Manager for Scotland at NFU Mutual, said: 'We are encouraged by the decrease in Scotland last year and it is a testament to the proactive work which has been led by police and farming groups.

'However, horrific incidents continue to cause unbearable suffering to farm animals as well as huge anxiety for farmers and their families as they deal with the aftermath.

'With more people walking in the countryside as Covid restrictions continue and an increase in dog ownership, we have seen many more brutal attacks resulting in large numbers of sheep being killed and a trail of horrific injuries.

'It's a critical time in the farming calendar and there is widespread concern as we en-

ter the peak lambing season.' Police Inspector Alan Dron, National Rural Crime Coordinator, said: 'Unfortunately too many instances of dogs attacking or worrying livestock still occur and whilst we want everyone to enjoy our countryside, it is important that dog owners or those in charge exercise greater caution when accessing rural areas, particularly if livestock are present.'

Alarmingly, only 40 per cent of the dog owners surveyed by NFU Mutual accepted that

their pet could cause the injury or death of a farm animal.

Debs Roberts, a farmer from Auchterarder and co-founder of the Ladies Who Lamb network, said: 'Dog attacks cause deep anguish to our members. It feels like crisis point at the moment, with daily reports of terribly upsetting incidents where dogs chase and sometimes attack sheep close to lambing.

'The distress and frustration is something that doesn't go away, even flashbacks of the horrific injuries and deaths are

very traumatic. It's important that dog owners realise that all breeds, not just the big, fierce-looking ones, are capable of chasing and attacking sheep. Even if a dog doesn't make physical contact, the distress and exhaustion of the chase can cause sheep to die or miscarry their lambs.

'We really send a plea to dog owners in the countryside that they keep dogs on leads for the next few months. Please follow signs, as they are there to protect you and your dog, and to make your walk safe for all.'



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- 3000mm (3m) long
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Source: YouGov 2018

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**SERVICE ENGINEER**

Due to an increasing work load we require an experienced engineer to join our team to assist with the maintenance and repair of our fleet of forestry machinery, both onsite and within our workshop.

The successful applicant must hold a full UK driving licence and should be self-motivated and reliable. Experience of forestry, agricultural or heavy plant machinery would be desirable.

This is a full time permanent position, and salary will be dependent on the successful candidate's knowledge and experience.

**If this position is of interest or for further information please contact Jude Broly on [jude@colinbrolyforestry.co.uk](mailto:jude@colinbrolyforestry.co.uk)**

**OFFICE MANAGER**

We have a position for a full-time office manager based in our office at Achnabreac who would be responsible for the smooth day to day running of the office and as the role covers a wide range of office duties, a flexible approach to working would be advantageous.

A knowledge of accounting and payroll software, and Microsoft Excel is required.

The role would involve liaising with and providing support for the workshop and harvesting teams

**If this position is of interest or for further information please contact Jenny Broly on [jenny@colinbrolyforestry.co.uk](mailto:jenny@colinbrolyforestry.co.uk)**

**General Estate Worker/Caretaker**

RORO ESTATE, GLEN LYON

**General Estate Worker/Caretaker required for Highland Perthshire Estate in Glen Lyon.**

Duties will include assistance with maintenance of a Hydro Electric Scheme, upkeep of estate properties. Depending on experience and agreed terms tasks may include assistance with gardening and general estate work.

Full time and Part Time applicants will be considered. Competitive salary along with 3 bed semi-detached property.

Applications to be made in writing with CV to: **Roro Estate, c/o Edwin Thompson, 76 Overhaugh Street, Galashiels, TD1 1DP**, or via email to [Galashiels@edwin-thompson.co.uk](mailto:Galashiels@edwin-thompson.co.uk)

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**For further information please send your CV to Mary Ann at Hire and Supplies 1 Mill Lane or give her a call on 01631 566306.**

**Covid-19 restrictions are in place**

**PUBLIC NOTICES**



**Digital Engagement Officer**

12 months fixed term with potential to extend  
Salary: £23,854 pa  
Closing date for applications – 21 February 2021, 11.59pm

MG ALBA are recruiting a Digital Engagement Officer. This new post will work to strengthen the visibility of Gaelic digital content, by working with independent content creators but also including digital content connected to MG ALBA, its brands and other Gaelic content creators.

As a response to the Covid-19 pandemic, MG ALBA have successfully transitioned to remote working and this option will continue to be available to the successful candidate.

The Digital Engagement Officer will report to the Communications Manager whilst implementing and delivering the new MG ALBA social media project. They will also assist in day-to-day social media operations for MG ALBA and will support the wider communications team when required.

Core to the success of this position are a passion and competency for social media and an awareness of the existing Gaelic content creator environment. Further information and the Job Application Pack can be accessed on our website:

[www.mgalba.com](http://www.mgalba.com)

Closing date for applications – 21 February 2021, 11.59pm

Interviews – held by Zoom, 1 March 2021

**Blaich Common Grazings are to hold a meeting on 24th February 2021 at 7pm to form a Blaich Common Grazings Committee and appoint a new Township Clerk.**  
Due to current COVID-19 restrictions the meeting will be held on Zoom. For more information and to get the code to join the meeting please contact Calum Boyd on **01397 772 235**

**CROFTING COMMISSION COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD CREATE A NEW CROFT DECISION ISSUED**  
Application by Mr A Barge has been Approved. Maireannach Croft., Case No: 105801  
Any person with an interest in the application may appeal against the decision to the Scottish Land Court within 42 days from the date of this advert.

**CROFTING COMMISSION COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD DECROFTING APPLICATION**  
1. E Campbell, 74A Camaghael  
0.12ha Site for a dwelling house (107630)  
Comments from any member of the crofting community within the locality of the croft and any expressions of demand for the croft (which may be made public), may be sent to the Crofting Commission by 12/03/2021 at [info@crofting.gov.scot](mailto:info@crofting.gov.scot) / Crofting Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW.

**Oban Times PUBLIC NOTICES**

**Argyll and Bute Council**

**PLANNING**

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997, AS AMENDED ADVERTISEMENT UNDER SECTION 67(2) OF THE MAKING OF A REVOCATION ORDER OR MODIFICATION ORDER**  
Planning Permission for Erection of dwellinghouse (amended house design to planning permission 17/03093/PP) at Land West of Kenmore Cottage Bonawe Argyll And Bute

**REFERENCE NUMBER: 18/01121/PP**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Argyll and Bute Council have made an order under section 65 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 to revoke the above planning permission.

The Council have been notified by the owner or lessee (if any); the occupier of the land, and all persons who in the Council's opinion will be affected by the Order that they do not object to the Order.

Any person who will be affected by the Order and who wishes for an opportunity of appearing before and being heard by a person appointed by the Scottish Ministers, must give notice in writing to The Scottish Ministers, Planning and Architecture Division, Planning Decisions, 2F (South), Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ not later than 11th March 2021.

If no such notice is given by that date the Order will take effect by virtue of the provisions of Section 67(7) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 on 25th March 2021 without being confirmed by The Scottish Ministers.

Date 11th February 2021

David Logan, Head of Legal and Regulatory Support, Argyll and Bute Council, Kilmory, Lochgilphead

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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
21/00382/FUL	Marine Hotel	Station Road, Mallaig	Alterations to bar frontage
21/00398/FUL	Moorings Hotel	Banavie Fort William	Reconfiguration of and extension to hotel, creating a new storey accommodating an increase of 25 bedrooms
21/00445/FUL	Land 3520M SW Of Bothy	Kingie, Invergarry	Modification of track route and compound location (Allt Garaidh Ghualach hydro scheme)
21/00260/FUL	Tigh Na Mara	Salen, Acharacle	Erection of house and outbuilding

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

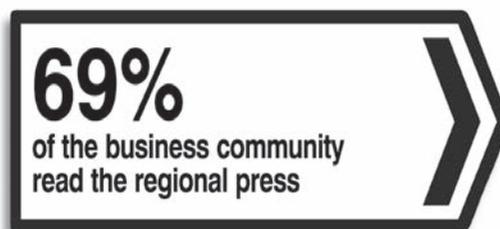
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# PUBLIC NOTICES

## TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013 & THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (MISCELLANEOUS TEMPORARY MODIFICATIONS) (CORONAVIRUS)(SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2020

### Notice under Regulation 7(2)(b) Pre-application consultation by the prospective applicant

Proposed development at Lochaber Smelter, Fort William, PH33 6TH by ALVANCE Aluminium Group for an aluminium billet production facility with associated hardstanding, infrastructure and landscaping.

Due to current Covid-19 restrictions and following emergency legislation from the Scottish Government and associated government guidance, a public consultation will be held online at <https://alvancealuminiumgroup.com/billet-plant-consultation/>. The website will be live from **22nd February 2021** where full information on the project will be available to view. A live and interactive consultation event will also be held on **Thursday 25th February 2021 from 3.30pm - 7pm** where members of the project team will be available to respond to questions. Full details of the live event will be posted on the website, <https://alvancealuminiumgroup.com/billet-plant-consultation/>.

Further information may be obtained from Leah Watton of JLL (Planning Agents) at Leah.Watton@eu.jll.com and on 0141 567 6620 / 07711 772152. Persons wishing to make comments on the proposal should do so by 15th March 2021 via the above website or by email to: [downstream@alvancegroup.com](mailto:downstream@alvancegroup.com). Alternatively, comments can be mailed to Rosie Flannigan of ALVANCE at Lochaber Smelter, North Road, Fort William, PH33 6RN.

This notice does not relate to a planning application. Comments should not be made to The Highland Council. Any comments made to the prospective applicant are not representations to the planning authority. If a planning application is subsequently submitted to The Highland Council, normal neighbour notification and publicity will be undertaken at that time and you will have the opportunity to make formal representations regarding the proposal at that time.

Signed JLL

On behalf of ALVANCE Aluminium Group.

## Argyll and Bute Council

### PLANNING

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

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

Ref. No.	Proposal	Site Address
20/02359/MFF	Modification of fin fish farm (Atlantic Salmon) from 9 x 80m circumference cages to 12 x 100m circumference cages, including increasing biomass to 1925 tonnes	Port Na Ledaig Fish Farm Loch Linnhe, Isle Of Lismore, Argyll And Bute
20/02358/MFF	Modification of fin fish farm (Atlantic Salmon) from 9 x 80m circumference cages to 14 x 100m circumference cages, including increasing biomass to 2350 tonnes and installation of replacement feed barge	Dunstaffnage Fish Farm, North Of Ganavan Hill, Dunbeg, Argyll And Bute
21/00055/PPP	Site for the erection of dwellinghouse	Land East Of Cruachan Cottages, Taynuilt, Argyll And Bute
20/02303/PP	Proposed external alterations to hotel buildings	Loch Melfort Hotel, Arduaine, Oban, Argyll And Bute, PA34 4XG
20/02266/PP	Erection of dwelling house and workshop/storage shed, installation of sewage treatment plant and formation of access	Land West Of Laggan Cottage, Stronmilchan, Argyll And Bute
21/00034/PP	Rehabilitation of boathouse to form boathouse with dwellinghouse over	Boathouse, North Of Spring Cottage, Appin, Argyll And Bute
21/00005/PP	Alteration and extensions to dwellinghouse and erection of detached garage/store/workshop	Fonn Aline, Aros, Isle Of Mull, Argyll And Bute, PA72 6JP
20/02186/PP	Change of use of shed from agriculture to aquaculture. Use of agricultural land for fish hatchery (Retrospective)	Keepers House, (Glenforsa Hatchery), Glenforsa, Aros, Isle Of Mull, Argyll And Bute, PA72 6JN
20/02289/PP	Alterations and extension to dwellinghouse and erection of decking area to the rear garden	31 Ellenabeich, Isle Of Seil, Oban, Argyll And Bute, PA34 4RQ
20/02290/LIB	External/internal alterations, erection of extension to dwellinghouse and decking area to the rear garden	31 Ellenabeich, Isle Of Seil, Oban, Argyll And Bute, PA34 4RQ
20/02352/PPP	Site for erection of dwellinghouse	Land East Of Camusdarach, Kilmelford, Argyll And Bute
20/02296/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, installation of septic tank and formation of vehicular access	Land Approximately 480 Metres South West Of Steam Mill House, Bowmore, Isle Of Islay, Argyll And Bute
20/02327/PPP	Site for the erection of 2 dwellinghouses, formation of vehicular access and the installation of septic tank	Land South West Of 7 Distillery Houses, Caol Ila, Isle Of Islay, Argyll And Bute
20/02369/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, installation of sewage treatment plant and formation of vehicular access	Land Between Willow Cottage And Eala Dubh, Lotts, Isle Of Islay, Argyll And Bute
21/00017/PP	Alterations, extension and change of use of byre to form dwellinghouse	Byre Between Houses 3 And 4 Glassard, Isle Of Colonsay, 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 Councils website. Customers are requested to use electronic communication where possible during the coronavirus pandemic as our ability to process postal mail is restricted.

#### THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2017 NOTICE UNDER REGULATION 20

Planning Application Reference Number: 20/02359/MFF

Proposed development at: Port Na Ledaig Fish Farm Loch Linnhe, Isle Of Lismore, Argyll And Bute

The proposed development at the address noted above is subject to environmental impact assessment under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017.

Notice is hereby given that an EIA Report has been submitted to Argyll and Bute Council by Scottish Sea Farms Ltd relating to the planning application in respect of Modification of fin fish farm (Atlantic Salmon) from 9 x 80m circumference cages to 12 x 100m circumference cages, including increasing biomass to 1925 tonnes.

Possible decisions relating to the application are: approval of the application without conditions; approval of the application with conditions; or refusal of the application.

A copy of the environmental report and the associated planning application(s) may be inspected electronically through Argyll and Bute Council website at [www.argyll-bute.gov.uk](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk). Having regard to Schedule 6, Part 3, s10 of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020, documents are only available to inspect electronically during the emergency period. Customers requiring assistance can contact us by e-mail: [planning.hq@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:planning.hq@argyll-bute.gov.uk) or tel. 01546 605518. In the event of the emergency period ceasing, documents will be available for inspection by appointment during office hours in the register of planning applications kept by the Planning Authority, at 1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RD. Documents will be available for a minimum of 30 days beginning with the date of this notice.

Copies of the EIA Report may be purchased from Scottish Sea Farms Ltd at a cost of £120 for a paper copy. An electronic copy (email, CD or USB pen) can be supplied free of charge.

Any person who wishes to make representations to Argyll and Bute Council about the EIA Report should make them in writing within 30 days from the date of this notice. Written comments can be submitted by email to [planning.hq@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:planning.hq@argyll-bute.gov.uk) or to Argyll and Bute Council, Development Management, Kilmory Castle, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT. Customers are requested to use electronic communication where possible during the coronavirus pandemic as our ability to process postal mail is restricted.

Signed: Mrs S. Davies, Major Application Team Leader on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council

#### THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2017 NOTICE UNDER REGULATION 20

Planning Application Reference Number: 20/02358/MFF

Proposed development at: Dunstaffnage Fish Farm, North Of Ganavan Hill, Dunbeg, Argyll And Bute

The proposed development at the address noted above is subject to environmental impact assessment under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017.

Notice is hereby given that an EIA Report has been submitted to Argyll and Bute Council by Scottish Sea Farms Ltd relating to the planning application in respect of Modification of fin fish farm (Atlantic Salmon) from 9 x 80m circumference cages to 14 x 100m circumference cages, including increasing biomass to 2350 tonnes and installation of replacement feed barge.

Possible decisions relating to the application are: approval of the application without conditions; approval of the application with conditions; or refusal of the application.

A copy of the environmental report and the associated planning application(s) may be inspected electronically through Argyll and Bute Council website at [www.argyll-bute.gov.uk](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk). Having regard to Schedule 6, Part 3, s10 of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020, documents are only available to inspect electronically during the emergency period. Customers requiring assistance can contact us by e-mail: [planning.hq@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:planning.hq@argyll-bute.gov.uk) or tel. 01546 605518. In the event of the emergency period ceasing, documents will be available for inspection by appointment during office hours in the register of planning applications kept by the Planning Authority, at 1A Manse Brae, Lochgilphead, PA31 8RD. Documents will be available for a minimum of 30 days beginning with the date of this notice.

Copies of the EIA Report may be purchased from Scottish Sea Farms Ltd at a cost of £120 for a paper copy. An electronic copy (email, CD or USB pen) can be supplied free of charge.

Any person who wishes to make representations to Argyll and Bute Council about the EIA Report should make them in writing within 30 days from the date of this notice. Written comments can be submitted by email to [planning.hq@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:planning.hq@argyll-bute.gov.uk) or to Argyll and Bute Council, Development Management, Kilmory Castle, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT. Customers are requested to use electronic communication where possible during the coronavirus pandemic as our ability to process postal mail is restricted.

Signed: Mrs S. Davies, Major Application Team Leader on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council

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## BIRTH

**POULTON - WATSON** - Daniel and Hannah are delighted to announce the safe arrival of their daughter Edith Freena, born on January 19, 2021. Perfect little sister of Heidi and Darcy. A very welcome addition to the family. Huge thanks to Sheila, the midwife, and all staff at Oban Maternity and RAH.

## DEATHS

**CHRISTINE** - Evelyn Goldie, beloved wife of the late Stewart Christine passed away peacefully at the North Argyll House, Oban on February 8, 2021 aged 99 years. Much loved mum of Stewart, Bobbie and Fiona, dear mother-in-law of David, Karen and Mhari. A loving grandmother and great-grandmother. Sadly missed by all. Due to current Covid-19 restrictions a private funeral service will be held. Family flowers only. Anyone wishing to do so is invited to send a donation to Alzheimer Scotland.

**HAY** - Peacefully at Lorn and Islands Hospital on February

9, 2021, age 90, Annie Margaret McIntyre née Gargan, beloved wife of the late George Hay (Taylor). Much loved sister, mum, mum-in-law, grannie, aunt, friend and neighbour. Sadly missed. Rest in peace Annie.

**MACNEILL** - Margaret MacNeill (née MacLellan) peacefully in Abbeyfield Care Home, Ballachulish on February 4, 2021, aged 86, beloved wife of the late John MacNeill (formerly Mossfield Drive, Oban). Mother to Iain, sister to Maureen, Mary, Theresa and Rene. A loving auntie and great-auntie, will be sorely missed by all relatives and friends. Funeral service will take place in private, at St Cumin's RC Church, Morar on Monday, February 15, 2021 at 10.00am, followed by interment in Beoraid Cemetery. Family flowers only please.

**QUELLERON** - Sadly on January 30, 2021, Margaret Quelleron (née MacMaster, Shielbridge, Acharacle), passed away peacefully at Ellen's Glen House, Edinburgh. Sister to Canon Iain MacMaster and Ronald, and the late Alastair,

Ewen and Elizabeth and much loved wife of Ian Quelleron for 51 years and dear mum to Alan, Derek and Saskia and aunt to Tracy. Sadly missed and will forever remain in our hearts, rest in peace. Due to current restrictions the funeral service will take place in private.

**SINCLAIR** - Peacefully at Dail Mhor Care Home, Strontian on February 6, 2021, Mary (née MacIntyre), in her 92nd year. Loving wife of the late Ian and a loving sister and aunt. Will be sorely missed. Mary's home for 62 years was 8 Forestry Houses, Ratagan, Glenshiel. Funeral service will take place in private at Ardearg Cemetery, Ratagan on Tuesday, February 16 at 1pm. Funeral cortege will pass through Ratagan at 12.30pm pausing briefly at the Youth Hostel before a service of committal at Ardearg. Family flowers only please. Donations, if desired, can be given directly to the Lunch Club, Inverinate in memory of Mary. Arrangements by Manson & MacBeath Funeral Directors.

**TURNER** - Peacefully at

home, Chiskan House, Campbeltown, on February 4, 2021, Margaret Howieson Duncan M.B.E., in her 92nd year, formerly of Flatterton Farm, Greenock and High Balevain Farm, Campbeltown, beloved wife of the late David Turner, loving mother of Robert, William and David, mother-in-law of Susan and Margo, proud grandmother to Emma, Matthew, Gary, Charles, Ruth and Fraser and great-grandmother to Isla and Anna.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**MACLACHLAN** - Mary. Alister would like to thank, most sincerely all friends, family and neighbours for their many cards and phone calls after the sudden loss of Mary. Thanks to MacDonald Brothers for the lovely flowers and to Sean Cameron for piping. Special thanks to Rev. Morag Muirhead who gave an outstanding tribute to Mary that was of huge comfort. Heartfelt thanks to Beth, Jamie and staff for their excellent service and professionalism. A huge comfort having local people to help at such a difficult time. It made things so much easier. Finally, thanks to all those who came out onto the street and attended the cemetery to pay their final respects to Mary who will be so sorely missed.

## MEMORIAMS

**CURRIE** - Cherished memories of Lily, who died February 15, 1989 and Archie, who died June 1, 1998.

Always in our thoughts.  
- Margaret, Donald and family.  
Time slips by, memories stay.  
- Mike.

**MACDONALD** - In loving memory of my dear wife Catherine MacDonald, Churchfield House, Kinlochewe, who passed away on February 1, 2007. Also remembered at this time are my dear cousins, Hugh MacDonald, Stronaba Farm, Spean-Bridge, who passed away on February 1, 1984, and Robert MacDonald who passed away on January 17, 1990 at Maidstone, Kent. Rest in Peace, Rise in Glory.  
- Malcolm Mac Donald.

**MACLEAN** - In loving memory of our dear mum and gran, Annag MacLean, Kinlochleven, who passed away on February 10, 2011. Also remembering my dad Calum MacLean, who passed away on May 19, 1984.

- Roddy, Fiona and family.  
**MACLEAN** - In loving memory of Mary Campbell, who died February 8, 2005, a dear

sister, sister-in-law and auntie and Alistair, who died March 19, 2016, a dear brother-in-law and uncle.

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

- Margaret, Archie, Fiona and Duncan.

**MACLELLAN** - In loving memory of a much loved wife, mother, gran and great-gran, Flora Ann MacLellan, who died February 15, 2016.

Always in our thoughts Forever in our hearts.

A very special lady.

- Inserted by the MacLellan family.

**MACLELLAN** - Remembering with love my dear son Michael, who died February 12, 2020.

Life handed him a few hard knocks;

Sometimes his luck was bad.

He had the usual ups and downs

As most of us have had.

Grief had its day along his way, Great fortune passed him by.

But he always came out a winner

With a twinkle in his eye.

This legacy of laughter,

A gift from some forbear.

Was all the weapon that he had To fight life's pain and care,

But he kept his sense of humour.

And he laughed away the tears, And he went on spreading

chuckles

All around him down the years.

And I know I'll find him waiting.

When I join him by and by.

Likely joshing with the angels, With that twinkle in his eye.

Miss you so much.

- Your loving Mum xx

Remembering our special Dad on his first anniversary.

Love you past the moon

Miss you beyond the stars

- Paige and Archie xx

**MACLELLAN** - Happy memories of our nephew and cousin, Michael, who left this world on February 12, 2020.

Your laughter and smile lives on in our hearts forever.

- Uncle D.J., Auntie K.T. and family x

**MACLELLAN** - In fond memory of our nephew and cousin, Michael MacLellan, who died February 12, 2020.

The smile, the laugh, the style, all sorely missed but never forgotten.

Eternal rest Mick.

- From Allan, Siobhan, Beth, Evan, Liam and Julia.

**MACNICOL** - In loving memory of Campbell, who died February 14, 1972.

A loving thought, a silent tear, A constant wish that you were

here.

- Hamish and families.

**McGHEE** - Precious memories of my husband Eddie, who died February 11, 2019. Love and miss your forever. - Jane.

**NEILSON** - Treasured memories of my dear loving husband Colin Neilson, Freeman of the Borough, died February 15, 2018.

Dearest Coco you were all the world to me and I will love and miss you for all eternity.

My love always.

- Grace.

Our dearest Dad and adored Papa

Your presence we miss,

Your memory we treasure.

Loving you always,

Forgetting you never.

All our love forever.

- Colin, Shiona, David, Serena and families.

**POULTON** - Remembering with love, our baby son and brother, Danny, who died on February 15, 1992.

Forever in our hearts.

- Mum and Hannah, Isle of Mull.

**POULTON** - In loving memory of my dear grandson and our nephew Danny, who died on February 15, 1992.

Always in our hearts.

- Freena and family

**ROBERTSON** - In loving memory of Robert (Sugar) died February 11, 2015, beloved husband, father and grandfather.

We little knew that morning

That God was going to call your name

It broke our hearts to lose you

You didn't go alone

For part of us went with you

The day God called you home

You left us precious memories

Your love is still our guide

And though we cannot see you

You are always by our side

Our family chain is broken

And nothing seems the same

But as God calls us one by one

The chain will link again.

- Margaret, Anne and Robert.

**ROSS** - In loving memory of my dear mother Lorraine, who passed away February 12, 2016. Five years have passed since that fateful day,

When Gaea swooped in and took you away.

What a year it has been, such troubles and strife,

It's been hard to keep going, with work and life.

I hear your whispers every day in my mind,

"What would I do", I listen - but still find.

Sometimes I need you here for a hug,

Till we meet again, in the skies high above.

I love you mum always and forever

Your loving family, we shall forget you never XxxxX

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## THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

*The Trinity - Lockdown, Faith and Freedom. Acts 2. 1-13*

In this season of Lent, we confront the sufferings of Jesus, his crucifixion and ultimate resurrection. To gain a clearer understanding of his earthly teachings however, we must realise that everything in his ministry was pointed to the 'will of the Father'.

Ultimately, as the Creed reminds us, 'we believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting'. Christ died so that we might have life and in order that an even greater power might be wrought through all his followers ever since. This is the power of the Holy Spirit that transforms the Church wherever it exists.

Dramatically the traditional Pentecost reading reminds us 'the disciples were all in one place (verses 1 and 2) when all of a sudden there came a sound like a mighty rushing wind and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit' (verse 4). As Christians we are called to celebrate God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The Trinity is central to the belief of all Christian churches throughout the world.

As a boy, I was brought up reciting the creed every Sunday. As I grew older and through much study, I came to a fuller understanding of the meaning of the words that introduce the Christian creed. The coming of the Holy Spirit on the first disciples is often thought to have taken place in the Upper Room in Jerusalem. This was when God breathed his breath upon the first followers of Jesus. In

our Sunday school books of old we have the powerful (and frightening) image of tongues like flames of fire resting on the heads of those who witnessed this amazing experience at first hand. They were never the same again.

It is true, when God touches people's hearts, he also transforms their lives. A situation of complete fear and utter despair became one of renewal, hope, and real conversion. During my time working with the churches in Jerusalem and the Middle East, I had the wonderful opportunity of visiting the Cenacle, the site of the Upper Room in Jerusalem. It is as one would expect. It has a tangible atmosphere of stillness and holiness surrounded as it is by the hustle and bustle of the noisy souks and markets of the old city just outside. Yet, it is also a very ordinary room, impressive in its architecture and fulfilling in the mind's eye the traditional image from the famous painting of Leonardo da Vinci.

There is not one of us that cannot change or be changed. Not many of us have such an amazing life changing experience as the first disciples. An experience that draws us out in to faith is rare. We are often blessed, however, in simple ways through the influence of another person. This could be a teacher, a minister, a writer or a friend who completely changes our own way of seeing things by their faith and example. It does not matter how it happens but, St Paul promises, if we believe, we are being 'trans-

formed by the renewing of our minds' (Romans 12.2). If we allow ourselves (and our lives) to be the clay in the potter's hands (Jeremiah 18.6) - we are in some way touching the hem of Christ's garment. As friends and members of Christ's body, the Church on Earth, we are being continually drawn in to the power of knowing God's love.

We can be born again in to the liberating freedom that is God's gift to us through the power of Jesus Christ. The disciples were 'all in one place'. All of us are 'in one place'. The experience of the pandemic we have been travelling through, the isolation from loved ones, the closure of our church buildings, the lockdown at first seem like obstacles to our belief. All these things, however, do not prevent us from closing our eyes or putting our hands together in prayer and believing.

Wherever you are at this time, believe this - God is with you. The death of Christ did not destroy Christ. Christ himself destroyed death. 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but, have everlasting life'. (John 3. 16).

There are no physical walls or doors that can hold back the power of the Holy Spirit and God's love for you. May you know the joy and powerful peace of Christ's Spirit.

**Reverend Anthony M. Jones, F.R.S.A, Parish Minister: Fort Augustus and Glengarry Churches.**

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## Bob rounds off a solid start to season in Saudi

Oban's Bob MacIntyre completed the third leg of golf's desert swing with a solid performance at the Saudi International at the weekend.

Up against the strongest field of the year so far, including world number one and eventual winner Dustin Johnston, Bob finished in a tie for 29th to consolidate his position inside the world's top 50.

The Oban star was unlucky to find himself on the wrong side of the draw on Thursday and Friday which meant he had to contend with the toughest conditions both days.

Despite that, he battled hard to make the cut, with an impressive 68 on day two and a scintillating 65 on Saturday giving him a realistic chance of another high finish. His final day 71 wasn't enough to move him up the leaderboard but still rounded off an impressive trio of performances to kick-off the season.

His focus now shifts across the Atlantic to the WGC Mexico which, despite its name, is being played in Florida due to coronavirus concerns.

With an elite field comprising the top 50 players in the world, there are plenty of world ranking points up for grabs as well as a \$10.5million prize fund.

With that tournament not starting until February 25, Bob's management team will no doubt also be hoping to secure a spot in the Genesis Invitational in California the week before.

# Lorn group backs bid for health cash boost

Lorn Healthy Options (LHO) is backing an ambitious proposal to secure a healthier future for Scotland.

Blueprint for a Healthier Scotland will be presented to the Scottish Government by Scottish Communities for Health and Wellbeing (SCHW), which comprises 78 community-led health and wellbeing improvement organisations including the Oban-based registered charity.

The blueprint seeks to secure direct funding into established community health organisations across Scotland which have proved to improve the health and wellbeing of the communities they serve.

If successful, it would give an element of financial security to community health organisations that currently rely on an annual grant from NHS trusts to part-fund their work.



Lorn Healthy Options is leading the way towards a healthier Scotland. Photograph taken before current lockdown restrictions were in place.

Roy Clunie, LHO vice chairman, said: 'The grant is not guaranteed, is on a year-to-year basis and makes it impossible to invest in staff and develop services. 'Creating health in our

communities works. It changes people's lives and it saves the NHS significant amounts of money. The only challenge that faces Healthy Options is one of financial sustainability. It is a real challenge and a real

threat. We have everything else we need to support people to improve their health and to change their lives. SCHW Blueprint for a Healthier Scotland is part of the solution and we are fully supportive of it.'

Healthy Options believes good health starts in the community and that 50 per cent of an individual's health is down to their own personal behaviours, 20 per cent genetics, 20 per cent environment and 10 per cent access to health services.

Mr Clunie says that around 4,000 people – approximately 40 per cent of the population – in Oban have chronic/long term health conditions that can be control managed or improved through having an active, healthy lifestyle.

He continued: 'That is the focus of Healthy Options, to

support our 40 per cent to better health and wellbeing through non-medicalised prescriptions, a social health prescription.

'With an increasingly sedentary lifestyle and an ageing population, we have a growing number of people who would benefit from our services.

'We have highly qualified, dedicated staff, we have excellent resources through partnership working with Atlantis Leisure and other community organisations and we have an excellent working relationship and support from health professionals. Collaboratively we have developed the award-winning Oban Living Well Support model deemed as 'world class' and 'unique' in Scotland.

'Healthy Options staff and directors are motivated to increase our services and support more of 'our 40 per cent'. Health professionals support and encourage us to do so and our community and our clients are supporting us with fund-raising and volunteering. All we need now is financial stability,' he added.

To find out more and to read the blueprint visit the [www.schw.co.uk](http://www.schw.co.uk) website.

## Shinty board confirms 2021 competition plans

Competitive shinty is a step closer to returning thanks to positive planning from the Camanachd Association.

At a meeting recently, the association's board of directors backed the competition committee's plans for the 2021 season following the 100 per cent registration from member clubs for the 2021 season.

It was agreed that, when it is safe to return, clubs will be given a four to six-week pre-season to get fitness and stick work back up to the required standard. This will be followed by a league and cup campaign.

The plans include Mowi leagues of six

teams playing 10 fixtures each. How these leagues will be split will be determined on locality. Regional competitions, including the cottages.com MacTavish Cup and Celtic Cup, may be moved to a later stage in the season, subject to necessary agreements. National cup competitions will be regionalised in the early rounds to reduce long distance travelling. Burton Morrison, competitions director, said: 'Under the current restrictions, we are unable to confirm a start date for the revised season. However, we are optimistic we are able to plan for a number of options

for a competitive structure which will give teams the opportunity to get back playing.'

Steven MacKenzie, Camanachd Association president, said: 'I and all of my fellow directors were pleased to endorse the plan put forward. I would like to thank competitions director Burton Morrison and the committee for developing a robust plan that enables us to maximise our shinty playing opportunities while minimising the risk. We are all eager to get back to playing shinty in line with government guidance and with this plan in place we are one step closer to doing so.'



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# Covid sees huge rise in Universal Credit claims

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

The number of people claiming Universal Credit in the Lochaber West data zone rocketed by almost 142 per cent in the eight months up until Christmas.

Statistics recently published by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) reveal there was almost a 75 per cent increase in the number of Universal Credit claimants throughout Highland when comparing take-up at March 2020 with the position in December 2020.

Whilst the number claiming Universal Credit in all areas of Highland has increased significantly, DWP reports a staggering 49 out of the 56 of these areas have increased by 50 per cent or more.

In addition, 19 areas experienced staggering take-up levels in excess of 100 per cent. The largest increase was in Skye North West with an increase of 185 per cent, while Lochaber West registered the

### Areas of Lochaber and Fort William saw spikes in people claiming

fourth highest increase among Highland data zones at 141.91 per cent – an increase from 136 claimants to 329 in the period in question.

Fort William South saw claimant numbers soar from 313 to 654 (up 108.95 per cent); Lochaber East and North saw claimants increase from 173 to 360 (108.09 per cent); Fort William North saw a rise in claimants from 198 to 361 (82.32 per cent) and Lochalsh experienced a rise from 108 to 248 (129.63 per cent).

Caol and Mallaig councillor Denis Rixson told Kilmallie Community Council recently that the economic pressure on Lochaber communities was clearly 'enormous'.

Speaking to the Lochaber Times this week Councillor

Continued on page four.

### Lochaber woman in robotic lung cancer first



Fort William resident Allison Kane, inset, says she is making a good recovery after becoming the first patient in Scotland to undergo pioneering lung cancer surgery with the assistance of a surgical robot, pictured. Carried out at the Clydebank-based NHS Golden Jubilee Hospital last autumn, the operation was much less invasive and increased Allison's rate of recovery. Full story, turn to page eight. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

### Fire stations in Fort and Acharacle in latest Covid testing rollout

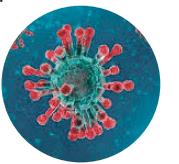
Following the success of Covid-19 testing trials in Thurso and Lochgilphead fire stations, the Scottish Government is expanding access to a further 21 stations in rural areas of Scotland, including Fort William and Acharacle.

Other areas which are to benefit from more convenient access to testing include Portree, Broadford and Fort Augustus.

Welcoming the move, Highlands and Islands MSP Maree Todd said the expansion will make a huge difference to her constituents who would otherwise have to travel to access a test.

'A massive thank you to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, NHS Highland, the Highland Council and Argyll and Bute Council for their support in rolling this out,' said Ms Todd.

People within driving or walking distance of these locations who have Covid symptoms will be able to book a test at the stations by calling 01463 706015.



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# Hardly magic for rail workers as steam train under fire over sewage on line

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Unfortunately for rail workers, the Jacobite steam train, made famous as the Hogwarts Express in the Harry Potter films, is not holding onto its chamber of secrets due to rules which still permit the locomotive to release raw sewage onto the tracks as it passes through Lochaber.

Scottish union bosses this week blasted the exemption which still allows the practice to continue for another two years as the Jacobite travels along the West Highland Line.

ScotRail, which operates the normal regular daily scheduled services along the West Highland Line, no longer continues this practice, however, operators of what are classed as 'heritage' carriages, such as those hauled by the Jacobite, have a dispensation that allows



the practice to continue until 2023.

The issue was raised at a recent meeting of Kilmallie Community Council when deputy chairman John Hutchison, who chaired the session, said the lack of effluent tanks on the Jacobite, had come up at a meeting of the new Loch Linnhe Alliance which is attended by a number of community councils.

He said: 'I understand the Jacobite steam train operator intends to install effluent tanks but no-one seems to know when they are going to be doing it or whether there is an environmental deadline by when they should be doing it.'

Responding, Caol and Mallaig councillor Denis Rixson said Jacobite operator, West Coast Railways (WCR) had a dispensation concerning

**The Jacobite steam train has until March 2023 to upgrade its effluent tanks.** Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

the fitting of the tanks. 'In actual fact there are platforms in Arisaig and Glenfinnan, where passengers who wish to board a train may have to cross to the platform.

'If a train is at the platform and stationary and the toilet is flushed, effluent will go onto the tracks and people will have to walk across that. At Morar the train crosses the road and it is possible for things to go wrong there.

'Having said that, they do try and close the toilet doors on approaching Mallaig and in Fort William and restrict access to the toilet at those stages. They didn't stop at all at Glenfinnan and Arisaig in the summer.'

He continued: 'I think it is

extremely unsatisfactory. But we can't force them to because it's something which they have undertaken to do but still have a timeframe within which to do that. My view would be the sooner the better.'

Mick Hogg, spokesperson for the RMT rail union in Scotland, called it 'disgusting' that such practices were still continuing in the 21st century.

'Charter trains like these use old rolling stock that might be 50 or 60 years old, but I still don't think it's acceptable in this day and age that all trains don't have tanks fitted by now,' Mr Hogg told the Lochaber Times this week.

A spokesman for WCR, which normally runs the Jacobite service between Fort William and Mallaig from Easter until October, explained: 'We appreciate there is a problem with the vintage carriages that we use

on the Jacobite but you must remember they were built in a different era.

'That's why the Government has given a special dispensation until 2023 for heritage railway like ours to bring trains up to modern-day standards without detracting from their historic appearance.

'Nevertheless, maintenance teams at our Carnforth depot have been working extremely hard to fit retention tanks to all the carriage lavatories.

'That work is continuing and we are confident it will be finished well in advance of the government's deadline.

'We had hoped all our carriages would have been fitted with retention tanks before this season starts.

'Because of Covid, that may not now be possible. But rest assured we will do our best and if necessary the work will continue during summer.'

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## Glencoe and Glen Etive council meeting

Glencoe and Glen Etive Community Council will be holding an online meeting via Zoom on Tuesday February 16 at 7.30pm.

Anyone who would like to join should email chairperson Viki Sutherland at chair@glencoe-glenetivecc.org for details.

Since the last meeting, the council has been working on the following items:

- applying for a £12,000 grant from the HC Coastal Communities Fund for a feasibility study as the first step

in achieving a new village car park

- completing paperwork to convert Glencoe and Glen Etive Community Company to a Scottish Charitable Organisation (SCIO), liaising with lawyers to draw up a legally binding contract between the Community Company SCIO and Dickins Hydro, regarding the hydro works in Glen Etive

- liaising with HC Roads Department to have a weight limit put on the B-listed hump-

back bridge in the village which dates back to 1785 and liaising with them on the timescale for the replacement of the passing place signs in Glen Etive

- looking to source scree and infill locally for the laybys and carparks the council is planning to upgrade

- exploring funding options for dual language information boards planned along the orbital path

- applying to the National Lottery Fund for funding to set up a community wardens team

## Stornoway wind farm auction failure sparks community response

The four community energy companies seeking to develop renewables on their common grazings on Lewis have responded to last week's announcement that Stornoway windfarm was unsuccessful in the 2019 CfD auction.

Rhoda Mackenzie made the statement on behalf of Sandwich North, Sandwich East, Melbost Branahuie and Aignish Community Energy companies calling for 'a new approach' in developing renewables on the Isle of Lewis – one that puts commu-

nity energy at its heart. The four companies, which have been locked in a legal battle with Stornoway windfarm developer Lewis Wind Power for the right to develop on the common grazings, said it was time for a plan B.

Ms Mackenzie said: 'Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and the Stornoway Trust have always argued that the Lewis Wind Power windfarm was essential to get a new interconnector to the Western Isles.

'The logic of that argument is the interconnector cannot now

happen, given LWP's failure in the subsidy auction.

'We believe it is time for a new approach. The right way forward is to increase the capacity of the existing grid via new demand through electrification and hydrogen, install new storage via battery and start working on an upgrade of the existing Skye connector.

'It is essential the new plan B is built around, by and for community-owned energy as that is the only way to keep the income and profits in the islands.'



The phased return to school will see secondaries, such as Lochaber High School, above, initially have no more than five to eight per cent of pupils physically present at any one time.

# Phased return to in-school learning is welcomed

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

The planned return to in-person learning and teaching starting on February 22, announced by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon last week, has been welcomed.

Chairman of The Highland Council's Education Committee Councillor John Finlayson said that Highland area was 'very fortunate' in that it was ahead of most local authorities as the pilot organisation for the Scottish Government's project to deliver a device for every child.

'However, while we had already rolled out Chromebooks for every pupil before Covid-19, the impact of lockdown and delivering remote learning across the vast school estate of more than 200 schools across an area the size of Belgium has been an immense task,' added Mr Finlayson. 'I thank all our staff, parents and carers, pupils and partners in their continuing efforts to deliver education to our young people.'

'Since lockdown our staff have achieved amazing advancements in online learning with our children and young people in challenging circumstances. There is, however, no substitute for face-to-face learning and social interaction. For our rural and remote pupils the social benefits of attending school are perhaps also keenly felt. The

mental and physical wellbeing of all our young people is vitally important and for those among our disadvantaged communities a phased return to in-school learning will be of vital importance.'

Mr Finlayson said he welcomed COSLA's endorsement of the Scottish Government's decision to return to school and added the decision centred on factors including the rate of community transmission, evidence about the new variant and the impact of loss of access to in-person provision on educational outcomes.

'School staff supported by other education officers will work to identify the senior phase pupils for whom in-school presence is required along with children in the early years of primary school and how provision for them all can be delivered safely for staff and pupils,' he concluded.

The news was welcomed by Fort William and Ardnamurchan councillor and former Highland Council education committee chairman Andrew Baxter. However, he said he also wants to see some forward planning as to how children will be supported to catch up with a missed year of learning.

He told the Lochaber Times: 'As a parent, like many others, I worry about the impact the last year has had on our young people and the long-term effect

it will have on their lives. Our teachers have put an enormous effort in to providing support for home learning but it is no substitute for real face-to-face learning. At this week's Education Committee I expect to see more detail how this new plan will work and how we will keep both pupils and teachers safe.'

'Likewise, I want to see some forward planning as to how we support children as they catch up with a missed year of educational opportunities.'

The Scottish Government's intention is that from the week beginning February 22 there will be:

- a full-time return of early learning and childcare for all children below school age;
- a full-time return to school for pupils in primaries 1 - 3
- a part-time return, albeit on a limited basis, for senior phase pupils to allow in-school practical work necessary for the completion of national qualification courses. Initially though, it is intended there will be no more than around five to eight per cent of a secondary school roll physically present at any one time.

The Scottish Government also intends to allow small increases in existing provision for children and young people with significant additional support needs where there is a clear and demonstrable necessity.

# Lochaber snow conditions 'phenomenal' but resorts still closed due to lockdown

Snow sport operators in Lochaber will be feeling frustrated at the moment on looking out of their windows at some of the best snow conditions in years covering the slopes, writes Mark Entwistle.

With day after day of blue skies and great snow cover, people are desperate to get resorts including Glencoe Ski Centre back open again after the latest national lockdown hopefully ends soon and start welcoming the return of snow sports enthusiasts.

Glencoe Mountain Resort boss Andy Meldrum told the Lochaber Times: 'Not only have we got great snow, but the weather has been really good as well, with very little of the wind that normally affects early season operations.'

'We remain ever hopeful that we will open at some point in February. With most



Glencoe Ski Resort which is reporting fantastic snow conditions but remains closed due to the Covid lockdown.

other outdoors sports such as golf and tennis open, and hundreds of ski tourers on the mountains most days,

it's hopefully only a matter of time before we get the green light.'

Calling the snow conditions 'phenomenal', the Nevis Range Mountain Experience posted online on Monday: 'Nevis Range is absolutely loaded with snow and more is forecast later this week. Conditions are awesome and we can't wait to welcome you back onto the mountain when it is safe to do so.'

'We would like to thank the Scottish Government for all their help during these tough times and we completely support every decision they have made to safe guard our health and wellbeing.'

'We are continually reviewing our Covid-19 safety measures and are 100 per cent satisfied that when we are able to reopen we will provide a safe environment for you all to enjoy!'

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## More than 400 people get Covid jabs at Barra mass vaccination clinics

Around 420 people were vaccinated at two Covid-19 vaccination clinics in Balivanich Hall on Benbecula last week.

A phenomenal amount of work was undertaken by Benbecula Community Association and volunteers to get the hall ready for use, with two clinics held on Friday and Saturday.

NHS Western Isles says it is hugely grateful to the community association for its assistance and support.

In attendance at last week's clinics in Benbecula were personnel from Scottish Fire and Rescue Services and the Coastguard Service who provided significant and invaluable assistance.

Iain (Donyards) MacDonald, director of Benbecula Community Association, said: 'As a committee, we had absolutely no hesitation in allowing Balivanich Hall to be used as a vaccination hub and welcomed the Covid team.

'In addition, our message is clear – keep up the outstanding work you are all doing and fingers crossed our lovely islands can get back to some normality in the near future.'

Additional clinics were due to take place this week, again in Balivanich Hall and across the Western Isles in Tarbert Community Hall in Harris, Southend Hall in South Uist, Barra Learning Centre and the Caberfeidh Hotel in Stornoway.



Some of the staff at the Barra vaccination clinics.

# Corsican connection with Fort would be a first for Scotland

Fort William could become the first Scottish town to enter into a twinning arrangement with Corsica.

Last month the Lochaber Times reported on the first contact between a representative from the Corsican municipality of Biguglia on the Mediterranean island.

At its January meeting, Fort William, Inverloch and

Torlundy Community Council agreed members would contact a number of local people and if there is sufficient interest in a twinning arrangement with Biguglia, the council will look to form a sub-committee to take this forward.

Biguglia, located in the north of Corsica, 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 got back in touch with the Lochaber Times this week to shed a little more light

on why it was felt Fort William would be such a good match.

'To twin Corsica with a Scottish town would be logical and natural. History, culture and environment could be a subject for sharing,' he said.

Mr Poli said it was in 1719 that the Jacobites and the Stuarts were in direct contact with the Corsicans in exile in the kingdom of Naples, Spain and Rome. The Corsicans accepted the sovereignty of the Stuarts who, regaining legitimacy, agreed to submit themselves to a constitution administered by the Corsican people and ensured their independence.

And as to why Fort William was chosen as the target of their twinning overtures, Mr Poli said: 'Since the 12th century, Saint Andrew, patron saint of all Scotland, is Biguglia's patron saint.

'In addition, Corsica has a university located in the



Biguglia in Corsica.

centre of Corsica, in Corte. This university is part of the RETI network (Excellence Network of Island Territories) which includes the University of the Highlands and Islands. The tourism and hiking sector is one of the most important assets of the Highlands and Corsica. For the last two years, trips were organised to allow Corsicans to discover the formidable territory of the West Highlands, from Glencoe to Fort William or from Ben Nevis to the Five Sisters. 'A study trip with Biguglia

Primary School was planned for this year but unfortunately in view of the current conditions was not able to take place.

'Children and parents of the municipality are enthusiastic about this project of study trips and our teachers are in demand for exchanges with Fort William College.

'As well as sports and cultural associations, the citizens and elected representatives of Biguglia would be delighted to set up this twinning and to exchange on the different themes of our respective regions.'

## Covid sees huge rise in Universal Credit claims

Continued from page one.

Rixson went further, saying the pandemic was having 'catastrophic economic consequences' in Lochaber.

And he added: 'DWP's figures show the number of claimants receiving unemployment-related benefits in Ward 11 (Caol and Mallaig) rose by 213 per cent between November 2019 and November 2020 – the fourth worst figures in Highland.

'Unemployment in Highland, as measured by the number of people aged 16-64 seeking work, increased by 99.6 per cent in Fort William between March and October 2020.

'Behind these figures there are a lot of families facing really difficult circumstances. Those of us with salaries or pensions are not experiencing the same

hardships as those who are seasonal workers or dependent upon casual labour.

'With the economy marking time there are many families without any earnings at all. And fuel poverty is an increasing issue.'

However, Mr Rixson said one strength of Lochaber is the extraordinary number of community resilience groups – amongst the highest number in all the Highlands.

'Thank goodness for them and their community ladders,' he told the Lochaber Times. 'But the Scottish Government should recognise the pandemic has had different economic consequences in different places. Our people have been hit hard. We need a lot more help than visitor management

plans and distant rural tourism infrastructure funding. Only it has the resources for large-scale intervention now.'

Highland Council deputy leader and chairperson of the recovery board Councillor Alasdair Christie said this scale of increase in the take-up of Universal Credit has not been seen before.

And he warned: 'The fact that more than a third of the 56 geographical areas within Highland are experiencing such eye-watering increases of more than 100 per cent in the number of Universal Credit claimants, is a real cause for concern and underlines the disproportionate financial impact of Covid-19 for an increasing number of our citizens.'

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# Writer helps fund vital school packs

by Mark Entwistle  
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Caol Primary School pupils were counting the proceeds of crime last week, thanks to Fort William-based publishing company Zertex Media Limited and its locally-set DCI Logan crime fiction series.

Shortly after the Christmas break, the company's directors, Fiona and Barry Hutchison, reached out to local schools to offer help in funding the cost of laptops to help pupils who are currently studying at home.

Although the schools they contacted had sufficient supplies of technology, Caol school's acting deputy head Kerry Lamont identified a need among some families for paper, pens and other school-work supplies and immediately set to work acquiring all the materials she would need.

Working with other staff at the school, Ms Lamont put together 67 learning packs filled with a range of materials and quickly arranged their distribution.

'With so many families struggling financially due to the coronavirus situation and having to prioritise spending, we felt the packs were a great resource for our pupils, giving them access to vital supplies without adding further financial burden,' said Ms Lamont.

The packs, which were distributed last week, will also in-



**Barry Hutchison, who writes his crime fiction under the pen name JD Kirk.**

clude resources to help pupils look after their mental health, something which teachers feel is important with the current uncertainty and isolation.

'We're absolutely delighted to be funding such a fantastic initiative,' said Zertex Media director Mrs Hutchison. 'Readers across Lochaber have been huge supporters of JD Kirk's DCI Logan series, which we publish, so we were keen to put something back into the community.'

'All credit goes to Kerry and other school staff who have worked so hard to pull the whole thing together.'

Once all the packs were distributed, leftover supplies were made available for collection from the Co-op in Caol on a first-come, first-served basis.

**'Team Caol' outside the Co-op where children were able to pick up 'study essentials' including pens, pencils and other stationery.** Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

Since 2019, Mr Hutchison, by then an already well-established author of books for children and science-fiction comedy for adults, started penning Scottish crime fiction under the pen name JD Kirk.

The most recent in the series of novels about detective DCI Logan, *A Death Most Monumental*, has proved another hit with his fans.



**Scotland's former rugby captain J D Boswell, back left.** Photograph: Viki Sutherland.

## Rugby win sparks trip down memory lane

As Scotland celebrated the national rugby team's first Calcutta Cup victory at England's home Twickenham ground since 1983, one Lochaber resident had cause to mark the occasion for a particularly special reason.

Glencoe and Glen Etive Community Council chairwoman Viki Sutherland was among those at home cheering on the boys in blue on the television as they earned a well-deserved 6-11 victory on the opening weekend of this year's Six Nations tournament.

This week, Mrs Sutherland told the Lochaber Times about her grandfather: 'With Scotland's fantastic win at Twickenham, I dug out the notes I have about my Scottish grandfather, J D Boswell, who captained the Scottish rugby team in 1893/4. In both of those years while he was captain,

the Scots won the Calcutta Cup!

'On February 7, 1891, exactly 130 years ago to the day, he was part of the Scottish team which defeated Wales 15-0 in the first of the three games which that year saw Scotland win their first Triple Crown. J D Boswell played in all three games and was the highest scorer.'

And Mrs Sutherland added: 'In a letter from the secretary of the SRU [Scottish Rugby Union] upon the death of J D Boswell in 1948, the secretary writes: 'We wish to place on record the committee's sense of loss sustained by the death of Mr J D Boswell, a past president of this Union who was one of the most outstanding players of his day and generation and who had since taken a great interest in rugby football.'

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Dealing with change is a challenge at the best of



times, but when so much happens at once, it's especially hard. Lochaber Chamber of Commerce is pleased to offer our members a new series of free training webinars on managing yourself and staff teams during these unprecedented times.

The four leadership workshops – The Resilient Leader, Personal Resilience, VUCA Workshop, and Checking In- Not Checking Up – will give us all new skills to help us manage change and offer support to get the best out of our teams, while looking after ourselves and each other.

Check out our events section on [www.lochaberchamber.co.uk](http://www.lochaberchamber.co.uk) to find out about the ways we can help you deal with the pressures of modern working life and support you in your business life.

Drop us an email to [membership@lochaberchamber.co.uk](mailto:membership@lochaberchamber.co.uk) to arrange a chat about the benefits of joining Lochaber Chamber of Commerce.

# Students focus on more film success

Ardnamurchan High School pupils have once again been nominated for film-making awards.

Last year, the Gàidhlig medium film 'Redite!' made by the school's first and second year pupils won FilmG's International Representative Award and would have gone forward to represent Scotland in the International Film Awards in Venice had it not been for the coronavirus pandemic.

The school's senior learners class won the Gaelic Award for Learners for their film An Cuach, na h-Iuchraichean agus an Dròn.

This year, the school's short film 'Sherlock ann an Alba!' by Parker Dawes and Caraidean is nominated for Best Young Filmmaker, FilmG Gaelic Award, Best Production and Best Film - FilmG youth 2021 with this year's online final



**Ardnamurchan High School won Film Award for Gaelic Learners last year and hope to be successful again when the winners are announced this month.** Photograph: Alan Peebles.

ceremony due to take place in February.

As a result of Covid restrictions, the International Film Awards in 2020 were cancelled and the school trip to Venice could not take place last summer.

However, the school received £1,200 which they have used to buy an iMac Pro laptop to strengthen the Gaelic department's already impressive

skills in film-making and editing, which has become an integral part of the Gaelic curriculum at Ardnamurchan High School.

Gaelic teachers Mr MacInnes and Mr O' Rua said: 'We are very proud of the pupils who took part in the FilmG competition again this year.'

'It's a great opportunity to learn about filming and editing skills as well as using drama

and scriptwriting skills. It was also great to see the pupils who did so well last year put their skills to use independently and we hope 'Sherlock ann an Alba' will succeed in the awards.

'We are grateful to FilmG for coming to Ardnamurchan High School every year to work with pupils and pass on their film-making skills which point to a possible career choice using Gaelic.'

'It gives pupils a fantastic chance to use their language skills in a creative environment which enhances their language experience.'

Pupil Parker Dawes who was involved in last year's S1/S2 winning entry as well as directing this year's successful entry 'Sherlock ann an Alba!' told the Lochaber Times: 'We were inspired to make this film after watching an episode of the BBC Sherlock series in our English class.'

'We became totally hooked on producing our own original story.'

'It was certainly a challenge to fit all this into a five-minute film but we had such a fun time making this and we are all very proud of what we have produced.'

## Plans to redevelop former school and community centre progress

Carloway Community Association is pressing ahead with its plans to redevelop the former Carloway school and Carloway Community Centre on Lewis.

An invitation to tender for the construction phase of the project was recently posted on the Scottish Contracts Portal with returns due back mid-February.

Mairi Steele, chairwoman of Carloway Community Association, explained: 'We started our fundraising activities in earnest just a few months before the outbreak of Covid-19 and there can be no doubt that has had an impact on our fundraising efforts. As a result, we had to re-evaluate our plans to make cost savings.'

'By the end of 2020 we had received support from the Scottish Government Regeneration Fund, HIE, the Scottish Landfill Community



**The former Carloway school site on Lewis.**

Fund and The Robertson Trust. Just recently we were delighted to receive £32,000 from the CnES Crown Estate Fund which has been a huge boost.

'We have raised our own contribution towards the project of around £15,000 and last Friday launched a Crowdfunding campaign with the hope of raising an extra £10,000. We have been overwhelmed with support so far with more than a third of our target secured already.'

The plans for Carloway

include a community shop, a commercial kitchen adjacent to a refurbished hall, an office and meeting space and a permanent home for Comann Eachdraidh Chàrlabhaigh.

Ms Steele added: 'All the elements of the project have been identified as priorities by the community in a series of consultations and are supported by a comprehensive business plan. All donations towards our project mean so much to us and take us another step closer to making our aspirations a reality.'




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# Pioneering surgeons lead the way with Fort patient

In a pioneering medical first for Scotland, Fort William lung cancer patient Allison Kane has benefited from a minimally invasive surgical technique which allowed her to recover faster and get home sooner.

Surgeons at the NHS Golden Jubilee Hospital in Clydebank have continued to provide urgent heart, lung and cancer care throughout the coronavirus pandemic and have now used a Da Vinci Surgical Robot to perform Complex Sleeve Lobectomies for patients with lung cancer.

The procedure, also known as a Sleeve Lobectomy, involves removing part of the lung and lymph glands around it.

Part of a blood vessel or airway with the tumour growing in it is also removed and the remaining ends connected back together. This allows the tumour near the middle to be



**Allison Kane, who underwent pioneering surgery.**

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

removed, without the need to remove the entire lung.

Lung surgeon Mr Rocco Bilancia told the Lochaber Times: 'Traditionally, an operation like this would require a large incision to be made, but



**Lung surgeon Mr Rocco Bilancia who performed Allison's surgery.**

using the DaVinci robot allows us to carry out this procedure using highly accurate keyhole surgery, where only very small cuts are made to the body.

'This way of operating, which has only been attempted a few times in the UK, is extremely safe and patients benefit hugely from this type of procedure as it means far less pain post-operatively, lower risk of

complications and a faster recovery time compared with conventional surgery.'

The first patient in Scotland to benefit from this new technique, Allison had the robotic lobectomy carried out after being diagnosed with a benign tumour.

Allison, 55, who works with Care Lochaber, had the operation towards the end of October 2020 and told the Lochaber Times: 'My recovery has been so good and the wounds have healed so well that I've been able to get back to painting furniture and running around after my five-year-old grandson Oliver.'

'I'm a little bit tired and a little bit sore but I can really feel the benefit of having the robotic surgery. I feel great, absolutely great.'

Using traditional lung surgery, patients would normally

be in hospital for up to six days, or five using innovative video-assisted thoracic surgery. With the assistance of robotics, patients can now go home after four days.

The robot works by inserting rods into the patient which are operated by the surgeon seated at the control pod. Its articulated instruments can bend and rotate better and with more precision than a human can, allowing the surgeon to operate with a steady natural motion, causing less trauma.

Surgeons have used the DaVinci Surgical Robot to perform complex lung cancer surgery for more than two years, with 300 patients benefiting so far.

Allison, who prior to the operation was out in the community picking up prescriptions and shopping for vulnerable people when the coronavirus

lockdown hit, also works for Voluntary Action Lochaber for 10 hours a week.

Speaking about her tumour she said: 'It was classed as a type of lung cancer – carcinoid tumour – but was benign. If not caught, it could have turned nasty the surgeon said. He managed to remove it all.'

'The surgeon was amazing. They showed me a video of the robot with him in a wee cubicle separate from it the night before my op.'

'It's absolutely amazing they can do this.'

'I honestly don't feel like I've had any of my lung removed now. Fitness is nearly back to normal – walking up hills without getting breathless. I wouldn't be anywhere near this level of healing if it had been open chest surgery.'

■ To watch the video, visit [www.lochabertimes.co.uk](http://www.lochabertimes.co.uk)



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# LOCHABER TIMES



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## Wild Words

KIRSTEEN BELL

fort@obantimes.co.uk

# Ravens herald the slow return of life

Tuesday February 2 was Imbolc, or St Brigid's Day or Candlemas. Underneath all these names, halfway between the winter solstice and the spring equinox, is the slow return of life.

The skies are edging towards lightening earlier and darkening later. Between times, they are scored through with the flight of ravens, buoyant on the frigid north wind. Pairs lift and curl in their nuptial flight, the males mirroring the birling females. If they get the steps to the dance right, they have a chance of becoming a mate; the successful twosomes will have eggs in the coming weeks.

Everything below them though is still biding its time; the ground is frozen

hard. There is no give at all in earth that normally slides beneath my boots. I am itching to create new beds this year: pumpkin, kale and turnip are all neatly laid out in an excel spreadsheet on my computer, hundreds of miniscule seeds wrapped in brown paper in their drawer. Waiting in the darkness for the ground to be released.

I did notice the first garlic shoot the other day, a few millimetres of green spearing the frosted crust of soil below the pallets that lie across the tops of the beds. At first the barrier of wood was there to stop the hens digging up the seedbulbs and now it stops the sheep from eating those fresh, bold shoots.

Some of the sheep are ro-tund, expectant with lambs. It is difficult for them to fill their



Ravens in flight.

bellies though. They nibble anything and everything they can find and it still isn't much. They are not our sheep – there is no cattlegrid now to stop them wandering off their own grazings ground and they make a mess around our unfenced house – but I don't

chase them at this time of year.

I realise in retrospect that by chasing them last year I have done them a favour: I have protected some grass for them to eat now. Elsewhere, the moss and lichen growing up the sides of the oak trees have

been cleared as far as each sheep's desperate neck can reach. They even bite the softer rushes down.

That said, these sheep will probably be fine. In Highland Folkways, historian Isabel F Grant records that the hardiness of Blackface and

Cheviot was one reason they prospered in this landscape. They can survive a winter on the hill. Introduced in the 18th century, they replaced the more delicate breed – now lost – that Highlanders had kept mainly for milk before the Clearances changed the habits of lifetimes. Habit is why these sheep are here now. It draws them back to the ground on which they were born to have their own lambs.

We sit on a cusp, midway between the darkest night of winter and the first day of spring.

Underneath the frost and snow, the swelling of life is almost imperceptible. But it is there, heralded by the ravens.

## Island shops given funding to reduce single use packaging

A new shopping scheme aimed at dramatically reducing waste from single-use items on Scotland's islands has awarded more than £250,000 to 20 retailers, including 15 on the west coast.

Scottish Government and European Regional Development Fund grants will allow shops from 12 Scottish islands to offer shoppers more reusable options.

In addition to seeing waste frequently washing up on the shores around them, island communities bear the double burden of dealing with imported single-use items and then shipping off the waste.

The Islands Green Recovery Programme Refill Fund will provide dispensing and other equipment that enables customers to obtain grocery products in reusable containers brought from home.

Iain Gulland, chief executive of Zero Waste Scotland, said: 'If we can demonstrate the success of refill-type shops on the islands, it could lead the way in changing how we shop nationwide.'

Retailers benefiting from the funding include: Essence of Harris; Sandwick Bay candles Ltd, Stornoway; Carbost Community Shop CIC, Rankins Supermarket, The Selkie Collective, Sleat Community Trading Company Ltd, Armadale Stores, Glendale Shop and PO, all Isle of Skye; Raasay Community Stores; Isle of Eigg Shop; Bùth Barraigh, Isle of Barra; Lismore Stores; Campbells of Islay Ltd, Isle of Islay; Ardmish Stores, Isle of Gigha; Isle of Arran Brewery; Arran Ice Cream and Taste of Arran.

Emma Bee, founder of The Selkie Collective, said: 'We are very excited to have received the IGRP funding. It will allow us to widen our existing range

of refill options by funding dried food dispensers.'

'We will now be able to provide not only household cleaning refills but foods such as pasta, flour and dried fruit to our customers in Skye and Lochalsh.'

'This will add to the efforts in our community to reduce the large amount of single-use plastic.'

The scheme is part of a larger £2million programme designed to inspire locally-led green projects as part of the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Islands Green Recovery Programme Refill Fund is part of Zero Waste Scotland's Resource Efficient Circular Economy Accelerator Programme, which will invest £73m in circular economy and resource efficiency projects, thanks to support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

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## LETTERS

Write to us: send your letters to [editor@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:editor@obantimes.co.uk)  
or The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HB**'Eye-watering' rise in Universal Credit claims**

This week's story about the massive rise in people forced to claim Universal Credit because of Covid-19 is heartbreaking and shocking.

The fact that so many people in Lochaber are reliant on seasonal work, such as tourism and hospitality, highlights just how enormous the economic pressure is on communities. Winter weather and the resulting fuel poverty is exacerbating many people's problems – putting huge pressure on people's mental and physical health.

While we must say a huge thanks to the many resilience groups and food banks in the area, this is not sustainable in the long-term and nor should it have to be.

As Councillor Denis Rixon said: 'Only the Scottish Government has the resources for large-scale intervention now.'

And he's right. Lochaber has done a fantastic job of helping people in need over the last year and beyond. But now the government must act decisively to help those in dire need. Our communities are counting on them.

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](mailto: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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**Fionnphort breakwater**

In light of last week's article about proposed short and long-term developments of Craignure Pier, it is also time for Mull and Iona communities to consider the proposed design and effects of a new breakwater and ferry berth at Fionnphort, principally for the use of ferry operatives CalMac.

Relatively, the impact of a structure, more than three metres higher than the existing pier, on the village would be momentous. Last year CalMac received an award from Keep Scotland Beautiful. Both Argyll and Bute Council and CalMac need to uphold this principle.

The public were presented with a single 'preferred option', validated by the council for planning in November. Following numerous representations questioning the integrity of the design specifications and requests to consider further its effects, the council has belatedly decided to conduct a full environmental impact assessment which is to be welcomed. Photomontages have now been commissioned by the council to demonstrate the visual impact of the development which will change the outlook of Fionnphort, the 'gateway to Iona', for all time.

A further review is now to reduce the design life of the structure to 50 years rather than 120 years. Inevitably the legacy of such a short-term solution will be the problem and expense facing our future generations.

Alternative ideas which fulfil the needs of the ferry service to Iona and our communities but are more appropriate to the landscape have been dismissed without real evaluation or discussion.

Every day we are reminded of the extremes of climate change and our responsibilities to minimise the carbon footprint of our actions. It is vital we try to achieve our needs with appropriate scales of development for both our environment and economy.

Rosie Burgess, Kintra, Mull.

**Regulator should stop TSB bank closures**

The banking regulator, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), should stop TSB closing its branches in Helensburgh, Dunoon, Rothesay, Lochgilhead and Campbeltown.

These closures will leave only the Oban branch open in Argyll and Bute. Many TSB customers will have a long journey to reach their nearest branch. Not everyone uses internet banking.

The FCA has already pointed out that during the pandemic it will be hard for banks to reach

**Beachd Ailein**

ALLAN CAMPBELL

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'S iomadh rud a dh'fheumas an euslaint, nach fheum an t-slàinte! Cha ghabh firinn an t-seanfhaicail àicheadh, ach tha mothachadh cuideachd gum bheil dìon bho euslaint leithid Covid 19 deatamach. Tha leithid sin de dhìon air soirbheachadh feadh an t-saoghail thar bhliadhnaichean, agus tha galaran bàsmhor mar a bha leithid am fiabhras breac, a' ghriùthrach, agus a' chaitheamh, gan cumail fo smachd. Thigeadh dhuinn a bhith glè thaingeil gur ann mar sin a tha cùisean san dùthaich seo, agus bu mhath gum faodadh mòr-shluagh an t-saoghail uile buannachd agus dìon nam banachdaichean sin fhaotainn mar an ceudna.

Thàinig an t-adhartas slàinte sin ri linn innleachd dhealasach agus spàirn mhòran eòlaichean thar nam bliadhnaichean, agus tha làn-mhothachadh ann gum bheil slighe fhada fhathast mun lorgar leigheas èifeachdach air truaillleadh iomadh seòrsa aillse agus euslaintean eile. Ach, feadh an t-saoghail, tha daoine ri saothair dhìcheallach, dhùrachdach, a' sireadh fhreagairtean air gach dùbhlann tinneis sin, agus tha na mìltean cuideachd an sàs gach latha a' cumail dìon air slàinte an t-sluaigh. Aig amannan faodaidh sinn mothachadh a chall agus a bhith neo-ar-thaingeil air na tha iad sin a' dèanamh dhuinn.

Ged a bha sneachda air an talamh 's i dìreach beagan os cionn ire reothaidh bha am boireannach a choinnich oirnn aig doras an ionaid-slàinte beagan às dèidh ochd uairean sa mhadainn, aoigheil agus càirdeil a' cur fàilte air duine mu seach a bha gu bhith a' faotainn

customers and engage with them on closure proposals effectively. They also pointed out that customers may not be able to get to a bank to make the necessary preparations before the closure. Instead of just pointing out these difficulties, the FCA should tell TSB not to go ahead. Leaving only one TSB branch open in Argyll and Bute is unacceptable.

Councillor Alan Reid, Cowal.

**Why can't emergency drone flights be accommodated?**

The Oban Times' coverage of Skyports Limited's proposal for a temporary danger area to provide

banachdach Covid19 an sin Disathairne seo chaidh. Cha b' e sgioba mòr a bh' ann ach, eadar dotairean agus an luchd-taice a bha a' stiùireadh na dh'aontaich tighinn gus banachdach fhaotainn, bha cùisean air an riaghladh gu sgiobalta agus èifeachdach gun choltas diomb sam bith gun robh an luchd-obrach sin a' call fois deireadh seachdaine. Mo mhile beannachd aca, agus aig a h-uile neach a tha gar frithealadh ann an seirbheisean poblach de gach seòrsa gach latha, is sinn cho dualach mothachadh a chall air na tha iad a' dèanamh dhuinn. Gun teagamh cha phàigh taing na daoine sin, ach gu cinnteach cha mhotha na sin a nì e cron dhuinn taing bhlàth a bhùileachadh dhaibh!

Tha aonarachd a' chuingealachaidh a th' air a bhith oirnn cho fada air daoine a chlaoidh 's a lèireadh agus tuigidh mi mar a bhiodh cuid 's dòcha air am misneachadh agus air am mealladh, an dèidh na banachdach fhaotainn, chun na h-ìre 's gum biodh iad a' creidsinn gun robh làn-dhìon aca bhon bhioras sa bhad. Chan ann mar sin a tha idir agus fhuair sinn rabhadh nach tig dìon gu ire sam bith airson cola-deug na mar sin, agus gur còir dhuinn na modhan-giùlain stèidhichte a leantainn fiù 's seachad air sin chun am bi dearbhadh gum bheil an galair air a cheannsachadh.

Experiencing the calm and efficient organisation by a small team administering Covid-9 vaccination at our GP surgery last Saturday morning, we were reminded anew of how much we owe to so many who unstintingly deliver our public services.

a corridor for occasional drone flights from Oban to Mull gives prominence to objections. In particular, Brendan Walsh's concerns for interference with the arrival by air of guests at his hotel business are covered at great length. But what are the views of the other 2,666 residents who might feel that receiving medical supplies in minutes has advantages over a 40-minute ferry crossing which happens at two-hour intervals and for only part of a day, especially in cases of emergency?

From our vantage point on Oban Hill, we are not aware of a busy sky in the Firth of Lorn, even in summer, and wonder why time and space can't accommodate emergency drone flights?

Ian Reid, Oban.



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# DISTRICT NEWS

## ARDNAMURCHAN

### Lighthouse trust gets more than £27k in Covid support

Ardnamurchan Lighthouse Trust Limited is to receive financial Covid support from Historic Environment Scotland, which has announced funding of £1,916,238 to be shared among more than 40 organisations across the country.

The trust is getting £27,171 from the Historic Environment Recovery Funding scheme which is aimed at supporting Scotland's historic environment sector recover from the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

The cash is part of a first stream – Reopening Historic Buildings and Sites – which offers money to pay for repairs, PPE equipment and changes to allow social distancing.

The second Sector Resilience and Recovery stream will help organisations protect jobs or skills training posts, as well as assist with activities to help them adapt to the ongoing impacts of Covid-19.

## GLENCOE

### Anniversary service online due to Covid restrictions

The customary church service marking the anniversary of the Glencoe Massacre is to be replaced with an online event this year.

The Reverend Amanda Fairclough, priest in charge of St Mary's Church, Glencoe, is planning a 'Service of the Word' by Zoom on Saturday February 13 at 11am in place of the church service marking the anniversary.

Reverend Fairclough has organised a Zoom-link for the service and anyone wishing to share in this should contact her.

As a result of Covid-19 restrictions, there can be no formal gathering at the massacre memorial this year, but Reverend Fairclough will walk to the memorial after the service to offer private prayers.

At least two wreaths will still be laid, one of which will be the traditional wreath on behalf of Clan Donald.

William Mather, chairman of the Clan Donald Society of the Highlands and Islands, told the Lochaber Times: 'We very much regret, as members of the Clan Donald Society of the



Scott MacDonald lays a wreath during last year's service. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

Highlands and Islands, that we can't do no more than this.

'We normally make the commemoration a major event of the year and it is well supported.' Reverend Fairclough can be contacted at [a.fairclough@amandafairclough.co.uk](mailto:a.fairclough@amandafairclough.co.uk) or on 01855 811633.

## LOCHABER

### New chapter as air cadets soar into new formation

A new chapter for Air Cadets across Lochaber and the rest of Scotland has begun following a review of the current structure.

The existing Highland Wing and the majority of North East Scotland Wing have been integrated to become North Scotland Wing.

The new Wing will contain all the existing Highland Wing units – including 1730 (Lochaber) Squadron, with the exception of 2521 (Oban) Squadron – along with the majority of North East Scotland, except squadrons based in Angus, which will form part of Central Scotland

Wing. 2521 (Oban) Squadron will transfer to West Scotland Wing.

The new North Scotland Wing HQ will be in the existing integrated Highland Wing HQ at RAF Lossiemouth. This facility already manages and supports the Highland Wing units.

Group Captain James Leggat, Regional Commandant Scotland and Northern Ireland Region, welcomed the new structure commenting: 'It is an exciting time for the Air Training Corps cadets and staff in several parts of Scotland.'

'With changes in cadet and adult volunteer numbers, the Wing organisation has been reviewed and with effect from February 1, a new structure is being implemented.

'This structure will result in a more equitable delivery of the cadet experience to our cadets with best use being made of our available adult volunteers and permanent support staff. A big thank you to all the staff, volunteer and permanent, who have worked behind the scenes over the last 12 months to make this change feasible, especially during the current Covid-19 situation.'

Suggestions from cadets and staff contributed towards the design of the new Wing crest, below, with the idea being to incorporate different aspects of the organisation and the area.

The map of North of Scotland provides the background, whilst the Scottish Thistle represents bravery, devotion, durability and determination. The stag is a popular symbol and in Celtic culture it represents strength, freedom and purity.

In the crest, the stag's antlers are depicting the bringing together and protecting of the area. The overall crest visually describes the history and future of the two Wings that have come together to form the new North of Scotland Wing.



Finally, Amas Ard, shown at the bottom of the crest, is understood to mean Aim High, an ethos that will be encouraged to all members of the Wing.

## PLOCKTON AND LOCHALSH



### Huge amounts of seaweed have been washed up on Plockton's foreshore.

Due to very strong east and north east winds over the past two weeks, and no sign of change, huge amounts of seaweed have been washed up on Plockton foreshore.

Charlie M MacRae, who has lived by the foreshore all his life, said it was the most he had ever seen. He feared it may not move and will rot in the summer.

Congratulations to Edmund and Irene Mackenzie, Plockton, who celebrated their golden wedding on February 6.

Sam Bilner, in conjunction with the Plockton Past and Present Facebook page, decided to make a calendar of Plockton views for charity, inviting people to enter a competition by sending them their photos to see what photos would make it into the calendar.

Twelve photos were chosen and 100 calendars were made. All 100 were sold and the profit of £781.06 was given to Kyleakin Connections.

Deaths recently with Lochalsh, Glenshiel and Glenelg connections were Eleanor Macfadyen, Kyle; Tom Tasker, Kyle; Ian Davies, Plockton; Farquhar Macrae, Inverinate; Louise Matheson, Glenshiel; Jean Simpson, Plockton; and Chris Main Glenelg. Sympathy is expressed to sorrowing relatives.

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The advertisement includes three photographs: one showing the exterior of a large industrial building, one showing the interior of a workshop unit with a desk and chair, and one showing the interior of a larger workshop unit with a roller door.

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The advertisement features three photographs of home improvement projects: a porch, a window extension, and a door. It also includes the APCA logo and a Facebook icon.

# OPEN FOR BUSINESS

We are publishing this information **in association with MOWI**. Featuring the businesses in Lochaber that are open and able to offer vital products and services to our community during the current Covid-19 pandemic. Many of these businesses are working under extreme pressure to bring quality products and services to the people of Lochaber and beyond. Please remember to exercise caution when shopping and only shop for essential supplies. Along with our wonderful NHS staff and carers, our local food, fuel, news platforms and home supply businesses are our community champions!

Here we are again, in lockdown! It's a rollercoaster ride but we are here to support you. We have listed many of the essential businesses that are open to locals or operating online. Our deepest empathy goes out to the businesses that have had to close again and we look forward to seeing their doors wide open when things ease up again. Please feel free to get in touch with us if you would like to feature your business, or if you know a business that should be included. Email [nmurphy@obantimes.co.uk](mailto:nmurphy@obantimes.co.uk) or get in touch via our Facebook page on messenger (Lochaber Times) Let's spread the word as much as we can!

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venison-sales/  
01397 902355

## BUILDING, PLUMBING, DIY SUPPLIES

### LBS

Opening hours  
Monday-Friday  
7.30am-5.30pm  
Saturday 8am to 11.45am  
Sunday closed  
Limited to 3 customers in store at any one time  
sales@lochaberdoy.co.uk or 01397 700350  
Deliveries may be possible but please enquire first, we will try our best to accommodate.

### H.I.S (HIGHLAND INDUSTRIAL SUPPLIES)

Call/email to order then collect  
Monday – Friday 7:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
Saturday 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM  
Sunday CLOSED  
Visit: www.hisltd.co.uk

## LEGAL SERVICES

### MACPHEE & PARTNERS

Available: Mon-Fri 9am - 5pm  
We remain fully available to assist with your legal and property matters – with protective measures in place. Providing a local and personal service in these difficult times.  
Tel: 01397701000  
Email: law@macphee.co.uk

## GARAGES

### FORT WILLIAM TYRE SERVICES

Open for essential workers and commercial freight organisations  
Tel: 01397 700277 or 07702 433 495

### MCCONECHY'S TYRES & EXHAUSTS

Open as usual Mon-Sat 8.30am-5.30pm  
Sat 8.30am-12.30pm  
Social distancing measures in place  
Tel: 01397 706197  
Email: fort-william@mcconechys.co.uk  
www.mcconechys.co.uk

## FUEL/SERVICE STATIONS

### BP ROAD TO THE ISLES

Open 7 days, 24 hours  
Jet wash, shop and off license  
Tel: 01397 703406

### ESSO GARAGE

Open 24 hours, 7 days  
Tel: 01397 702706

### GLEANERS

(Ben Nevis Filling Station Fort William and Onich Services)  
Tel: 01397 702346 ahead of travelling for opening hours

### MORRISONS SERVICE STATION

Open 6.30am-10.30pm,  
Tel: 01397 700333

### GLENCOE FILLING STATION

Open 7 days 8am-6.30pm (from 10am Sun)  
Tel: 01855 811308

### THE FERRY STORES & KILCHOAN FILLING STATION

Open Mon-Sat 9am-5.30pm,  
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Tel: 01972 510201

### JOHNSTON BROS FILLING STATION, MALLAIG

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Recovery 01687 462118  
E. morarmotors@aol.com (Mallaig)  
E. contact@morarmotorskye (Kyle)

### STRONTIAN FILLING STATION

Open Mon-Sat 8am-7pm. Sun 10.30am-6pm  
Tel: 01967 402135

## TAXIS

For essential travel only:

### A&A TAXIS

Available 24/7  
Tel: 01397 701702

### SPEEDERS CABS

Available 24/7  
Tel: 01397 704000

## CHEMIST & HEALTHCARE

### BOOTS THE CHEMIST

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Please call ahead to ensure repeat prescriptions are ready  
Tel: 01397 705143

## CONVENIENCE STORES/ NEWSAGENTS

### STRONTIAN STORES

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Email strontianshop@gmail.com

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Fruit, veg, meat, lottery, wines, beers and spirits  
Tel: 01397 702558 – Claggan  
Tel: 01397 705562 – Grange Road

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### DIRECT PET SUPPLIES/PETSTOP

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Thursday - 9:00am until 5:30pm  
Saturday - 10:00am until 5:00 pm  
Social distancing measures in place  
Tel: 01397 700715

## SHOPS & ONLINE SHOPPING

### HOLROYD GALLERY, NORTH BALLACHULISH

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www.holroydgallery.co.uk  
sarah@holroydgallery.co.uk  
01855 821277

### GLEN SPEAN BREWERY

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See FB for full menu and pricelist  
www.glenspeanbrewing.com

### THE WORKSHOP – LOCHABER HOPE

Orders being taken for bespoke furniture  
Opening hours are Monday to Friday from 8am to 4pm, and the best ways to get in touch are either through email at theworkshop@lochaberhope.org.uk, via Instagram @theworkshop\_lochaberhope, or via facebook.com/aplacetobuild  
A social enterprise business, created to support Lochaber Hope

### PH33 WEB SHOP

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www.highlandsoaps.com  
Click and collect service, weekdays 10am-12pm after receiving a 'ready to collect' email.

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Visit FB page for more information  
Order on 01397 700500  
Enquiries via messenger

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www.highlandtitles.com/nature-reserves/

## OTHER INFO FOR ESSENTIAL SERVICES

### BALLACHULISH COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUP

Visit FB page for more information  
FB: Covid19balla  
Wellbeing Larder  
Tuesdays 5.30pm to 7pm  
Saturdays 10am – 12pm  
Call confidentially on 01855 604311

### FOODBANK LOCHABER

Unit 4, Airds Crossing, High Street, Fort William  
Tel: 01397 700212/07421087463  
Open Mon, Wed and Fri 12pm-2pm  
www.lochaberfoodbank.org  
FB: lochaberfoodbank  
Call confidentially for sing  
High Street, Fort William33 6EUI. 01397 700212 or 07421087463

### LOCHABER CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

We are still working (from home)- we are still here for you. Due to COVID-19, we are running a reduced service. To help keep you and our staff safe, our bureau will only be operating a telephone and email advice service. Tel: 01397 705311 (10 am to 4 pm), Email: adviser@lochaberCAB.casonline.org.uk

### LOCHABER HOPE

Running a fully remote service.  
Tel: 01397 704836  
email: reception@lochaberhope.org.uk  
FB: lochaberhope or www.lochaberhope.org.uk

### SHIEL BUSES AND CITYLINK

Both companies continue to run reduced timetable for essential journeys  
www.shielbuses.co.uk  
www.citylink.co.uk

### OFF BEAT BIKES

Bike Hire & Shop  
Covid Level 4 – we are now open TUESDAY, FRIDAY and SATURDAY (inclusive) from 10am to 5pm  
If you need help outwith these hours get in touch using email, Facebook or Instagram

### CRANKITUPGEAR

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www.glencoebikehire.com

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## Caol's Ruaridh has world at his feet

A young man from Caol has turned his passion for football into a full time job which has taken him round the world as an international and domestic coach for Celtic Football Club.

Ruaridh Macinnes, 23, left Lochaber High School to study sports at college in Glasgow but was also accepted for a place on the Celtic's Pathway to Coaching course. On completion he was one of only two members of the class to be offered a position with the club.

Since then Ruaridh has travelled the world coaching youngsters in locations including Chicago, Montreal, across Australia and in Scotland and Ireland.



Ruaridh Macinnes.

In his 'own time' he is also head coach of Clyde FC Under 19s and coaches Glasgow Gladiators' disabled footballers in their leagues.

**'It is great coaching for Celtic. I was so lucky to get on their course.'**

Since lockdown has prevented Ruaridh from travelling, he has set up his own coaching business in Glasgow, RM Academy, using outdoor grass pitches to meet Covid regulations. He has taken on two extra coaches, running up to 25 sessions each weekend.

He is also using lockdown to complete his college studies and gain additional coaching and football-related qualifications.

He said: 'It is great coaching for Celtic. I was so lucky to get on their course when I moved to Glasgow, then to get a job which I love which takes me around the world. I was due to spend several weeks in different countries last year and this year, but obviously this isn't possible at the moment.'

'I am using this time to gain more qualifications which will help to take my coaching further and was lucky enough to set up RM Academy just before lockdown. It is great to carry on coaching young people through this when times are really difficult for them.'

# Winds of change at Claggan Park

High winds earlier this month caused further damage to the beleaguered Fort William Football Club ground at Claggan Park.

As well as down trees at Achintee Road, the blustery conditions blew off part of the roof of the already precarious old stand.

Club spokesperson Colin (Woody) Wood told the Lochaber Times: 'Thankfully the wind damage was limited to some conifer trees and the roof of the old stand, which has been in a state of disrepair for some time.'

'The Highland Council quickly closed the road until the weather eased. It is hoped this prompts a conversation about the demolition or refurbishment of the stand.'

Floodlights were also badly



Colin 'Woody' Wood of Fort William Football Club with the wind damaged stand at Claggan Park. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba. photos.

buffeted by the wind and the club is getting them safety tested.

The damage came just weeks after a spate of vandalism at

the Claggan Park venue which saw the destruction of seats and recently laid turf.

A fundraising effort organised by Clachnacuddin

Football Club fan William Corbett has raised £2,800 towards installing CCTV at the venue.

In other news, the club has made new signings, who will be announced in due course, while former chairman Peter Murphy has returned to the town to start up an estate agent. The club is remaining tight-lipped as to whether or not he will be coming back on board. 'We wish him all the best with his new venture,' said Woody.

Elsewhere, police are appealing for information in relation to vandalism at Kilmallie Shinty Club in Caol. It occurred sometime between noon on Friday January 29 and 9am on Saturday January 30. Anyone with any information should contact 101.

## Shinty board confirms 2021 competition plans

Competitive shinty is a step closer to getting off the ground thanks to planning from the Camanachd Association (CA).

At a meeting recently, the CA board of directors backed the competition committee's plans for the 2021 season following the 100 per cent registration from member clubs for the 2021 season. It was agreed that, when it is safe to return, clubs will be given a four to six-week pre-season to get fitness and stick work back up to standard. This will be followed by a

league and cup campaign. The plans include Mowi leagues of six teams playing 10 fixtures each. How these leagues will be split will be determined on locality.

Regional competitions including the cottages.com MacTavish Cup and Celtic Cup may be moved to a later stage in the season, subject to necessary agreements.

National cup competitions will be regionalised in the early rounds to reduce long distance travelling.

Burton Morrison, competitions director, said: 'Under the current restrictions, we are unable to confirm a start date for the revised season. However, we are optimistic we can plan for a number of options for a competitive structure which will give teams the opportunity to get back playing.'

CA president Steven MacKenzie said: 'I and my fellow directors were pleased to endorse the plan put forward. I thank competitions director Burton Morrison and

the committee for developing a robust plan that enables us to maximise our shinty playing opportunities while minimising the risk. We are all eager to return to play shinty and with this plan in place we are one step closer to doing so.'



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