



Wheels in motion: have your say on skatepark

Driving force 8-page motoring special | Health and wellbeing feature

HIGHLAND FIRES SPARK ENQUIRIES

Police Scotland is investigating the 'full circumstances' of a spate of recent fires across the Highlands.

● FULL STORY PAGE 3

Fire crews battling a wildfire on Harris, one of the many across Scotland after the recent dry spell. Photograph: Lewis MacDonald

● INSIDE: NEW LIFELINE CONNECTION FOR NORTH KERRERA

Creating a buzz



Charity-minded Peter has work cut out for him

● See page 6 for more

Queen of the cakes



Island baker has ideal recipe for fundraising

● See page 5 for more

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OT

Covid-19 cases remain 'stubbornly high' in Argyll

Confirmed Covid cases in Argyll and Bute remain stubbornly high, says Dr Ken Oates, consultant in Public Health Medicine for NHS Highland, writes Kathie Griffiths.

The case rate has prompted a reminder from the health authority that the public must keep following the latest guidance, including physical distancing measures.

Extended families meeting up in houses is still a major route of spread, as is sharing a car and giving someone else a lift.

Dr Oates said the Argyll and Bute Council area now has an infection rate of 107/100,000 which is higher than 15 other local authority areas in Scotland, including the cities of Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen.

He said: 'A significant proportion of these confirmed cases are the new UK variant which we know is much more easily caught and spread. We would like to remind the public of the importance of following the national guidance

which is in place to try to protect our communities. Please minimise your contact with other people. This is not the time to be complacent or to try to make the rules fit for you.

'Extended families meeting up in houses is still a major route of spread, as is sharing a car and giving someone else a lift. It is also vital you stay at home if unwell and do not attend work.'

Latest Public Health Scotland data available over five days from February 5 to February 11 showed there had been three confirmed cases of the virus in Oban South during that time. Other areas - Oban North, Benderloch Trail, Mull, Iona, Coll, Tiree and Loch Awe and Mid Argyll - each had zero to two cases. The information is suppressed to help protect patient confidentiality.

YOURSTORY
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New lifeline for cut-off North Kerrera

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Fishing trip skipper Jack Macgregor is casting a lifeline to stranded Kerrera residents thanks to emergency cash.

Since October, the north of the island has been cut off from the mainland with no ferry service of its own, leaving some residents to rely on a few people who have their own small boats, often crossing in dangerous conditions.

But this week, with funding from the Foundation Scotland Response Fund and by the Scottish Governments Communities Recovery Fund, a new North Kerrera Community Ferry service launched running four ferries a day, three days a week.

The total funding is £19,485 and is to support the organisation, increase community resilience and administer and operate the ferry service.



The new North Kerrera ferry service is being operated by local tour boat skipper Jack Macgregor.

Before lockdown Mr Macgregor, with his wife Linda, ran boat and angling trips on the Creagallan from the old Oban Times slipway. When tenders were sought to run the temporary ferry service, the Macgregors put in a bid.

'Our last trip out was with some anglers in November and we've not been making any money since, so when this came up we felt it was something we could do and put in a reasonable offer that lucky for us was accepted,' said Mr Macgregor, a former creel fisherman from Seil who took on the boat trip business in 2015.

Isle of Kerrera Development Trust (IKDT) chairman Martin Shields said it is a welcome lifeline service for the 30 residents living in North Kerrera.

The service is a short-term solution with enough funding to last until the end of May.

Service

'We are hopeful that by this time, with life approaching some level of normality, Oban Marina can be back up and running and residents can access the marina's service to the mainland,' added Mr Shields.

Oban Marina's owners are very generously waiving any landing fees, meaning

the emergency funding has stretched further. The island's long-term solution of a road connecting the north and south of Kerrera, where the Gallanach ferry crosses, is due to start construction in April 2021 and the hope is it will be ready to use before the end of summer.

Mr Shields said: 'Like all communities, Kerrera has suffered the effects of the pandemic but we are very pleased to be able to provide a lifeline service for almost half the population who have effectively been cut off from the mainland for months.'

'It's great that with lockdown easing in the near future, our northern neighbours can be assured of a transport link that will tide things over until the road is in place.'

One of the relieved North Kerrera residents who will be making the most of the new service is Karen Keys, who said: 'This is excellent news and will be really helpful for all of us, especially as lockdown eases and we're able to do more.'

'We can now look forward knowing we have mainland access until the road link is built.'

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Buggy Club picks up pace

A new buggy club for parents wheeling tots in lockdown is throwing a much-needed lifeline into the community, writes Kathie Griffiths.

The club has picked up such a pace since it started that it now has its own app so wannabe walkers and their little one can book a place ahead and, if all the spaces are already taken, can add themselves to the waiting list.

Government guidance means up to seven adults with children aged under five at any one time can meet up outdoors for exercise - as long as they are socially distanced.

Mum-of-two Nikki Wasik was so impressed with the idea started by a friend in Helensburgh that she decided to try it out in Oban and was blown away by the response. She said: 'It's been a lifeline to many parents and it's been the first time some babies have seen another baby in their lives. The babies look at each other and you can see them thinking 'what's that?'



Dads enjoy their socially distanced walk as part of the Buggy Club on Saturday.

'We've had about 200 spaces taken on our walks since the start of the year already. We have lots of new mums and dads joining us. This is something we all really needed because nothing else is happening in the pandemic - no playgroups or anything.'

The club's Facebook has more than 160 members so far, proving it is filling a gap for mums, dads and caregivers needing to meet up with others for a walk and chat.

Nikki, whose son Torran was born just a couple of days before the first lockdown, has also made signs to take with them on their strolls

to politely make it clear that they are meeting up safely and sensibly with the government's go ahead.

'We try to avoid any busy places. Tralee is a great spot and there are quieter routes around Oban, but generally people are good when they see our signs,' said Nikki.

Walks are Mondays to Fridays, with an extra meet-up for dads on a Saturday.

One of the musts for anyone taking part is to download the Protect Scotland app first. To find out more search on Facebook for Scottish Buggy Club: Oban & surrounding areas.

Limited time to have say on fish farm extension

by Kathie Griffiths
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Plans have been lodged to almost double the size of a fish farm near popular Ganavan beach.

The public has until March 13 to have a say, even though there is no date for when the Scottish Sea Farm (SSF) application will go to Argyll and Bute Council's planning committee.

Campaigners against the expansion have already said the go ahead at Norweigan-owned SSF's Dunstaffnage site would be 'permission to pollute' and could make the water out of bounds for some recreation seekers. If the number of salmon pens goes up from nine to 14 and in size as intended, there are concerns more pesticides, fish excrement and uneaten fish food could end up in the sea, making the waters nearby a no-go area – especially for the all-year round wild swimmers and others who might swallow the water.

SSF says no chemicals are used on or around the farmed fish; only licensed medicines prescribed by veterinary professionals are given in safe dosages.

Asked specifically about the use of Salmosan, the longest running sea lice treatment in the world, SSF said its farm manager had not used it during his 10 years at Dunstaffnage.

In SSF's environmental impact assessment, Salmosan is first on the list of consented treatments they can use at Dunstaffnage. On the pesticide's safety data sheet it is noted as being 'very toxic' to aquatic life with long lasting effects', as well as being harmful to humans if swallowed and may cause an allergic skin reaction.

Although Salmosan has not been used in recent years at Dunstaffnage, SSF says there have been occasions at other farms within its 42-strong estate where the pesticide had proven 'to be the best approach in the interests of fish health and welfare'. In those instances, the active ingredient of Azamethiphos is used at



Scottish Sea Farms says the new farm at Dunstaffnage would be no closer than it is now to popular Ganavan.

0.1 ppm (parts per million) dilution. The Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation said this week that based on the levels of medicines discharged into the marine environment from a farm treatment, a human weighing 75kg would need to ingest in excess of 300 million litres of seawater in order for levels to be of concern.

Scottish Sea Farms managing director Jim Gallagher said minimising the impact of the new farm has been considered 'at every turn'.

'As we now look to expand the farm, minimising our impact has been considered at every turn, including aesthetically – for example, by ensuring the salmon pens remain as far away from Ganavan as they currently are, and by re-positioning the new feed barge out of sight from this popular beach,' he said.

The new farm will create two additional jobs and invest £3.2 million in farm infrastructure – the majority of which will be spent with Scottish suppliers.

Objector Ewan Kennedy from Save Seil Sound, said: 'It's madness to allow this close to the only sandy beach for miles around in an area dependent on tourism and leisure.'

Last year the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) announced after a public consultation that it intended to allow SSF to increase its fish production from 1,300 tonnes to 2,350 tonnes. The Dunstaffnage farm has an 'excellent' compliance rating with SEPA.

Dennis Archer from Argyll

and Bute Green party said: 'Close as it is to the beach, it already offers a significant danger to beach users through pollution from excrement and excess medicines, though naturally SEPA assure us that their modelling indicates no problems.'

'How much increased noise there would be on a larger farm both through routine operation and during well-boat operations is another unknown.'

Andy Corbe, one of many regular water users around Oban and Ganavan in particular, is also concerned.

He said: 'Whilst the current installation appears to have a good track record, there is no getting away from the fact the fish farms are permitted to use a variety of toxic chemicals and produce a lot of faeces and food waste that are detrimental to the marine environment. The environmental impact assessment has not flagged the fact that wild swimming is a rapidly growing activity in the area and the number of water users will only increase with the housing development at Dunbeg and potentially Ganavan with more of the smaller beaches closer to the fish farm also being used.'

'Given the large amount of water real estate already occupied by fish farms in the area, the expansion of a farm in such a visible location close to a rapidly growing population centre is rather insensitive to the local community.'

Go online to Argyll and Bute Council's planning portal and search 20/02358/MFF to read SSF's application in full.

Enquiries 'ongoing' into fires

Police Scotland say investigations are ongoing to establish the 'full circumstances' of a spate of fires last week.

Fire crews across Scotland were called out to a string of blazes including Harris, Lewis and Skye, as well as Glen Lonan.

Superintendent Lindsay Tulloch said in a statement: 'We are aware of a number of fires over recent days in the Western Isles, Skye and in Sutherland.'

'Enquiries are ongoing to establish the full circumstances of each of these fires. We would urge people to be responsible in the countryside at all times and particularly in areas which are at risk of wildfire. Such fires cause considerable damage to the land and wildlife as well as placing extra pressure on the emergency services.'

'We would also urge people to be aware of the Muirburn Code and to be mindful of any restrictions in place under the current coronavirus regulations.'

NatureScot said fire as a land management tool requires 'planning, skill and experience' to control it.

POLICE FILES

■ About 3pm on February 8, in Mull Terrace, Oban, a man, 25, was searched by police and found in possession of a small amount of cannabis. The man was charged and issued with Recordable Police Warning.

■ About 5pm on February 8, on Albany Street, Oban, a man, 60, was arrested for alleged drunk driving. The man subsequently failed to provide a breath specimen at the police station and was charged. A report submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

■ About 11.10pm on February 13, in Soroba Road, Oban, a man, 22, was stopped and searched by police and allegedly found in possession of a small amount of cocaine.

He was charged and a report submitted to the Fiscal.

■ Between 2.30pm and 4pm on February 11, at Hazeldean Crescent, Oban, a black Audi A1 car had its passenger door scratched.

■ Between noon on February 5 and 8am on Monday February 8, in Eas Brae, Tobermory, Isle of Mull, a grey Subaru car had its driver's door struck by another vehicle which failed to stop and report the collision.

■ Between 10am on February 8 and 11.10am on February 11, at the Tennis court on Western Road, Tobermory, the padlock on the rear gate was forced open and damaged. Police are investigating.

Fatal Accident Inquiry adjourned

A fatal accident inquiry into the death of James Darren Kerr which opened on Monday last week at Oban Sheriff Court, has been adjourned until March 23.

The inquiry, conducted before Sheriff Patrick Hughes, was adjourned for parties to lodge their written submissions.

Skipper of the workboat

Carol Anne, Jamie Kerr, aged 25, who lived in Oban, was fatally injured on the vessel on April 30 2015 at a fish farm at Balure, Loch Spelvie, Isle of Mull, following the collapse of the onboard crane.

The workboat was owned by Inverlussa Shellfish Ltd and managed by Inverlussa Marine Services, for whom Mr Kerr worked.

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OT

Ganavan toilets out of action after burst pipe

Visitors to Ganavan Sands at the weekend were caught short after a pipe burst closed the toilet block, writes Ellis Butcher.

In only the second weekend of a new arrangement to open the loos to visitors on Saturdays and Sundays, volunteers with Adventure Oban announced on Saturday morning they could not proceed.

Freezing temperatures seen during the last week had apparently caused a pipe burst requiring work, the group said.

It said: 'Argyll and Bute Council are working to fix the issue and rectify the damage caused.'

Since then, offers to help fix the problem have poured in.

Oban's GS Plumbing and Heating offered to help free of charge, while Dunbeg company ABC4D LTD Drainage Supplies also pledged to donate materials.

As of Monday afternoon, there was no official word from Argyll and Bute Council as to whether the toilets could reopen this coming weekend.

A council spokesperson confirmed it was aware of



The toilets were closed at the weekend due to a burst pipe following the thaw.

the matter and an update was expected.

Adventure Oban has promised to notify people as soon as it knows when the toilets can reopen.

Andy Spence, of BID4Oban, who has helped with the partial reopening at weekends until April, explained that the council needed to fix the problem, but that it was excellent to see so many of offers of help to get the toilets back up and running.

The toilet block is closed Monday to Friday through the winter.

To Oban with love on Valentine's Day

by Ellis Butcher

ebutcher@obantimes.co.uk



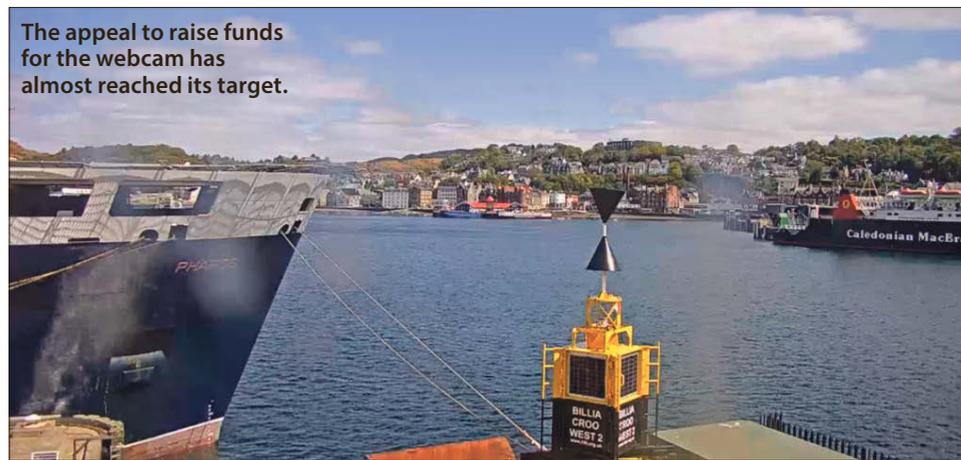
A mystery benefactor has swooped in on Valentine's Day to share some love with the town of Oban.

'Yorkshire Lassie' went online on Sunday and handed over a whopping £1,000 towards a £2,500 appeal to pay for a new webcam at the Northern Lighthouse Board Pier – signing off with a kiss.

She wrote: 'Missing this webcam. I need my morning and evening fix until we are all able to come back to visit and stay in your beautiful town. Hope this helps to get things up and running quickly x.'

The generous pledge along with other vital donations on Valentine's Day of £10, £20 and £40 has now pushed the appeal to within £75 of its target, as of Monday, after less than a month of fundraising, with a

The appeal to raise funds for the webcam has almost reached its target.



total of 56 people contributing to the pot.

The appeal has been organised by Linda Battison, marketing director of the Oban and Lorn and Tourism Alliance (OLTA). She commented: 'My goodness I was not expecting such generosity – we are nearly there! Yorkshire Lassie will be

very welcome in Oban. I hope she lets us know when she's visiting.'

Andrew Spence, BID4Oban's chief executive, also declared the £1,000 pledge as amazing.

The webcam appeal is to provide the sophisticated equipment needed to show live streams of Oban's beautiful

seafront, which is visited by thousands of people every year on its website www.oban.org.uk

The appeal to raise funds for the Northern Lighthouse Board Pier camera is on the JustGiving page at www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/obanwebcam

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History month explores identity with allies and acronyms

In the third of our LGBT History Month series, Oban Pride chairman Phill Dexter takes us through the formation of the local branch.

Oban Pride became a constituted organisation in April 2019 and in November 2019 we became a registered charity.

The first planning session for Oban Pride was held in October 2018 when work started on not only becoming a constituted organisation but also to run our inaugural Pride in 2019.

When we were writing our constitution, one of the first things we wrote was our mission statement, part of which is: 'The purpose of Oban Pride is to promote Equality and Diversity throughout Oban and the surrounding areas, through providing safe spaces for the LGBTQ+ community and its allies to come together to celebrate and promote equal rights throughout Scotland and across the world, while reflecting on our history.'

Throughout February we are reflecting on LGBTQ+ History. The full acronym is

LGBTQQIAAP but we shorten this to LGBTQ+. LGBTQQAAPP represents



everyone within the community – it doesn't matter what your gender identity or sexual orientation is.

LGBTQ+ stands for L - Lesbian, G - Gay, B - Bisexual, T - Trans (Transgender), Q - Queer (once a derogatory term now used by the community as an umbrella term), Q - Questioning, I - Intersex, A - Ally (anyone who stands up for equality and equal rights), A - Asexual, P - Pansexual.

It doesn't really matter who you are, if you stand up for equality and think everyone should be treated the same regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity then you are part of the LGBTQ+

community because you are an ally.

'We work with some amazing allies of the LGBTQ+ community and could not run Pride events without them.'

Talking about why she got involved, committee member and ally of Oban Pride Shona said: 'I first became aware of Oban Pride when I attended the 2019 Oban Pride with a group of pupils from Oban High School.'

'I was staggered by the support from the Oban community and loved the atmosphere and positivity of Pride so much that I joined the committee and it has been nothing but the same since then.'

Helicopter helps in Mull beach clean with a twist

by Ellis Butcher
ebutcher@obantimes.co.uk



Three-and-a-half huge bags of washed-up marine litter has been cleaned off a remote beach on the Isle of Mull - with the help of a helicopter.

Skyhook Helicopters, part of Craignure-based TSL Contractors Ltd, kindly agreed to uplift the 'dumpy bags' full of plastics and fly them to the nearest roadside after they proved to difficult to shift from the remote location.

Somerset Charrington, of Treshnish Farm near Calgary, started beach cleaning along a large inaccessible shore in 2019 while keeping an eye on his lambs. He amassed such a large quantity that he placed it in large feed bags to stop it blowing around. But the location of the rubbish - more than a mile from the nearest vehicular access - meant it proved a headache to shift as there was no way of transporting them back to the farm.

Carolyne Charrington, who runs Treshnish and Haunn Cottages, said: 'Our wildest dream was to get a helicopter in to lift it out to a place where we could reach it with a vehicle but we balked at the potential cost of this.'

However, before Christmas they got word that Skyhook was going to be lifting packs of fencing materials into position on the Isle of Ulva in the New



Somerset Charrington, of Treshnish Farm, with the bags of discarded plastic and, above, the Skyhook helicopter transporting the rubbish to a convenient pick-up point.

Year and got in touch to ask if they could help.

On Saturday February 6, a helicopter piloted by operations manager Murray Graham and assisted by ground crew Terry Maughan and Matthew Rowbottom, removed the bags.

Carolyne said: 'It took all of five minutes. We both felt quite emotional with tears in our eyes at the sight of the bags disappearing over the hill. We are so very grateful to Skyhook for doing this.'

Murray, who pilots the AS350 B3 Plus - aka 'the single squirrel' - said Skyhook had been flying out bundles of fencing

from Mull to Ulva and the job of uplifting the litter was no effort at all with them only too happy to help.

The six-seater helicopter can uplift 1.2 tonnes on an underslung load and TSL owner Andy Knight is from Mull with the company established there. Carolyne said plastics washing up continues to be a huge issue. Finds include lobster tags from Newfoundland, Canada, and fishing buoys from Providence, Maine. A neighbour also found a boat on the shores of Loch Tuath between Mull and Ulva, which had fallen off a container ship

on its way from Denmark to Greenland, she said.

Carolyne said: 'Treshnish has four miles of coastline and it is just not possible to keep every inch picked clean of the marine plastic and rubbish that washes in with the tides. But we do what we can and usually there is access with a quad bike or a tractor.'

Guests had often helped by picking up beach plastic, while Mull Otter Group has also organised beach cleans too.

'All this is a great help and makes the never-ending task feel less onerous,' said Carolyne.

Island bakers provide ideal recipe for charities

Home bakers on the islands of Islay and Jura have been working overtime baking to raise funds for Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance (SCAA).



'We had publicised the sale widely but we never expected anything like the response generated,' said Katherine. 'When we arrived with the van load of cake boxes

Hundreds answered the call for cakes from Islay-based SCAA volunteer Katherine Urquhart and her friend Gemma MacLean when they came up with the idea of a Drive-Through Cake Sale to support the SCAA and RNLI.

'At the start of lockdown, we set up a Stay At Home Bake Off private Facebook group where we staged baking challenges and when we all went back to work last summer we kept the group live to exchange recipes and general baking chat,' explained Katherine.

'I had seen Drive-Through fundraisers held before and thought we should do one with our baking network while the islands are under the less-restricted Tier 3 rules.'

Katherine and Gemma had no idea their appeal would gather such momentum and when the day came to take in all donations, they were overwhelmed.

'We couldn't believe it,' said Katherine. 'I have a holiday let property next door and we literally filled it with cakes.'

The generosity of the island's bakers allowed Katherine and her team to fill 200 cake boxes with nine delicious items in each. And when the sale took place at the local high school, there was another welcome surprise for the fundraisers.

there was already a queue of cars all the way across the car park and onto the road.'

Observing social distancing, mask and hygiene rules throughout, people in their cars exchanged money for cake boxes full of goodies - raising more than £2,500 for the chosen charities.

'Not only did people buy for themselves, but many were buying boxes and donating to retirement and care homes or to the elderly. It was a wonderful community support effort in every sense,' said Katherine.

'It was just amazing. We can't thank everyone enough who helped in any way - baking, packing, transporting, selling, buying and delivering. It was exhausting but hugely rewarding. Special thanks to Lynn Bonar and Susan Main who braved the cold to help at the event.'

Katherine has been SCAA's sole volunteer on Islay for the past three years and has been moved by the affection in which the charity is held by the islanders: 'Air ambulances provide a vital lifeline for island communities and people here and on neighbouring Jura are always happy to support SCAA and enjoy a bit of fun and friendship at the same time.'

The RNLI received £1,000 and £1,553 went to SCAA.

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OT

Around Oban

ANDREW SPENCE

editor@obantimes.co.uk

It was great to hear the reports on social media about the fast and efficient organisation of the Lorn Medical Centre covid vaccinations last weekend.

More than 750 people benefited on Saturday. What a task to undertake.

We all forget about the work done in the background to identify those needing the vaccine, all the phone calls to make, then making sure the day went smoothly. I even heard of some people receiving their vaccines in their cars in the car park. This really gives a new meaning to drive throughs!

On behalf of everyone in Oban, thank you Lorn Medical team and Oban Mountain Rescue. Good to know we are all in safe hands.

Our other unsung heroes last weekend were the cafés and restaurants that were providing afternoon teas and Valentine treats for Valentine's Day.

From the number of orders they received there is obviously no shortage of romance in Oban during lockdown.

WHERE IS THIS?



Some of the feasts on offer really captured the imagination and are a credit to the businesses that do not have their worries to seek at present. Hopefully we will see a repeat of this service if there are further extensions to lockdown. After all these afternoon teas, I am sure everyone got out for a good walk.

Last week's photograph was on the road up to McCaig's Tower.

Lucky ticket wins seahorse in raffle

Sculptor to donate all proceeds to Tobermory RNLI

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Hundreds of pounds has been raised so far in a raffle to own a seahorse.

Tobermory's Peter Macgregor had his work cut out for him when he decided to transform a chunk of cedar into a fundraiser for the town's lifeboat.

The seahorse stands out of water at almost six foot, weighing about 40 kilos and has already attracted more than 50 bids at £5 a go.

People have until noon on Sunday February 21 to visit Peter's Justgiving page and try their luck.

'I've been wanting to raise funds for the RNLI for some time. If you live in a place like Mull, you either know people who are on the lifeboat crew or



Peter with his beautiful seahorses sculpture, which he hopes will raise a decent sum for the local RNLI crew.

down career for himself as a wood sculptor.

His next project is going to be a life-size selkie.

Although Peter, who plans to become a tree surgeon like his dad, has been woodturning for 15 years, it was only in lockdown that he decided to try his hand at sculpting.

'My first design was a very rough bear.

'My next door neighbour loved it so I gave it to him. Within three or four days, people who had seen it were getting in touch so I've just kept doing it. I've done a barn owl in flight and pet portraits, which you have to get absolutely right. It's like drawing someone's child. One of my next commissions is going to be a full-size selkie. That's going to be a fun one,' he said.

To get a raffle ticket in aid of Tobermory lifeboat go to www.justgiving.com/fundraising/MacgregorWoodworkRNLIraffle

someone who has needed their help at some point. It's a great cause. I'd hoped the seahorse would make about £400 but it's already over £700, which just shows how many people want to support the RNLI right

now,' said Peter who had to cut short travels in New Zealand when the pandemic struck.

Since December, the 23-year-old, who qualified as a civil engineer specialising in wood, has been carving out a lock-

Lockdown for longer, some pupils back but Easter off - First Minister

There will be no sudden lifting of lockdown in Scotland as seen last summer as the First Minister warned the Scottish Government would be driven much more by data than 'arbitrary dates'.

In an update to parliament on Tuesday, Nicola Sturgeon said '100 per cent normality' was unlikely for quite some time. She said it was 'very likely' the government would be advising against booking Easter breaks in Scotland or overseas because it was 'highly unlikely' its accommodation sector would be open by then.

In summer, it was 'highly unlikely' overseas holidays would be 'possible or advisable', she said, although staycations 'might be'.

She explained the concern relates to new variants of coronavirus requiring another lockdown in Scotland later in

the year and a lack of evidence about how Covid is transmitted after people have had the vaccine. Miss Sturgeon said: 'I know this is difficult given that all of us are desperate to get back to something closer to normality, but if we open up too quickly to meet arbitrary dates we risk setting our progress back. Indeed, because of the new more infectious variant, our exit from lockdown is likely to be even more cautious than it was last summer. Probably for a while yet, 100 per cent normality is unlikely to be possible. In a world where we can't do everything immediately we will need to decide what matters most to us.'

She said children's education and wellbeing was an 'over-riding' priority and may be the 'trade off' people have to make to stick with restrictions for longer. A new framework

for emerging from lockdown will be published next week.

Pre-school children and pupils in primaries 1, 2 and 3 will return from Monday along with a part-time return for certain senior pupils to allow in-school practical work for the completion of National Qualification courses.

The second phase of school reopening is planned in a fortnight.

In a message to other parents, Miss Sturgeon said: 'We think it unlikely at this stage that there will be any further return to school before March 15.'

She added: 'We know we cannot continue in lockdown indefinitely so we do need to balance all the factors and plan a gradual, phased return to as much normality as possible as quickly as possible and that's what the government is now focussed on doing.'



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OT

Appeal to Argyll to support Campbelltown ferry option

by Hannah O'Hanlon
editor@campbeltowncourier.co.uk

One of the councillors behind the petition calling for a year-round ferry service from Campbelltown to Ardrossan is appealing to all business owners and community groups, as well as members of the public, regardless of their political beliefs, to support the 'once-in-a-lifetime opportunity'.

Councillor Donald Kelly and fellow Argyll First councillor Dougie Philand submitted the petition to the Scottish Parliament in response to the consistent A83 road closures caused by landslips at the Rest and Be Thankful and the suggested 10-year timescale for a permanent solution.

The document calls for a reliable and affordable ferry service, with road equivalent tariff ap-



Argyll First councillor
Donald Kelly.

plied to it, capable of carrying freight, to be introduced from Kintyre to the East Ayrshire coast, all-year round.

'If we want to make this service become a reality, it's vitally important all businesses, both large and small, as well as com-

munity groups and the public sign the petition,' Councillor Kelly told The Oban Times. 'This is the best opportunity we have had in my 20 years as a councillor to make the case for a full-time ferry service. It's imperative we take what

could be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and present positive evidence to the government in terms of the number of people and businesses that are willing to support the introduction of this service.'

Councillor Kelly stressed that the campaign is a community issue rather than a political issue and that as many people as possible need to pull together to give the campaign the best chance of being successful.

He added he has written to all MSPs representing Argyll and Bute to ask for their support.

The campaign has already been supported by the Campbelltown Ferry Committee, chaired by South Kintyre councillor John Armour, which promotes the Campbelltown to Ardrossan summer ferry service.

In a statement, the ferry committee said: 'We are happy

to support this petition. It mirrors what the Campbelltown Ferry Committee has been aiming for in discussions with Transport Scotland and government officials over the last few years, including the committee delegation that met with the then Transport Minister Derek Mackay to put the case - successfully - for a permanent summer service.

'Our delegates to the twice yearly Clyde Ferry Stakeholders Group meetings - Anne Horn, Jim Martin and John Armour - at the most recent meeting on December 7, put the question to Transport Scotland officials that they go and look at a service that would help alleviate the issues the closure of the Rest and Be Thankful brings.

'While we would like to see this all-year round service in place as soon as possible, we ap-

preciate that due to the area of the New Quay being required for timber storage and for the storage of incoming renewables for Kintyre wind farms, some upgrading of harbour infrastructure would be required.

'However, we feel some temporary measure needs to be put in place to accommodate commercial freight and allow current operations to continue as normal until such an upgrade could start. All agencies concerned should be able to come together to reach a workable solution. We would ask you all to sign the petition.'

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

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you see the total amount a person has spent on cigarettes since starting smoking. The 'cost calculator' is freely available at: www.canstopsmoking.com/tools/cost-calculator

In addition to the cost of cigarettes there are other costs such as:

- **Home costs** – the costs of using candles and air fresheners to mask cigarette smells can add up. Also redecorating costs because smoke may cause yellow stains to build up on walls, ceilings and paintwork.
- **Lost earnings** - smokers are more likely to be absent from work compared to non-smokers. For workers not entitled to sick pay, extra days off would therefore mean a loss of pay.
- **Insurance premiums** – some insurance companies charge more for Life and Critical Illness, Home Insurance and Care Insurance if you smoke.

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Email: nsh.abcsmokefreeservices@nhs.scot





Far left, brothers Rajbir, left, and Sukhinder Singh; and left, plans for the new distillery include on-site staff housing, a visitor centre and a multi-purpose educational area.

New distillery on Islay given green light

by Ellis Butcher
ebutcher@obantimes.co.uk



Elixir Distillers, run by two brothers, has been given planning permission for a new distillery on Islay.

The first plans were lodged in 2018 but a revised scheme has now been approved by Argyll and Bute Council planning committee.

The project near Parkin, between Port Ellen and Laphroaig Distillery, includes staff housing on-site, a visitor centre and a multi-purpose educational facility.

A statement from the company said co-founders of Elixir Distillers, brothers Sukhinder and Rajbir Singh, share a love of Islay and its whiskies.

Their parents became the first Asians in the UK to be granted a liquor licence and opened what became an award-winning off-licence in north-west London. In the mid-1990s, Sukhinder had one of the largest collections of whisky in the world, with more than 5,500 miniature bottles of single malt.

Sukhinder said: 'The news that our planning application has been accepted is fantastic. We've worked closely with Argyll and Bute Council planning committee to create plans for a distillery that fits into the landscape and supports the community.'

'We want to create whiskies that inspire both the people of Islay and Islay whisky fans world-wide, enhancing the already glowing reputation of Islay whiskies, while also becoming an integral part of the community.'

The company plans to create an apprenticeship programme to train the next generation of distillers.

It said it hopes to work with the local community and Scotch Whisky industry to create other initiatives to support the environment and people of Islay.

The next steps will be to finalise details of its plans with the objective of breaking ground later this year and the distillery name announced at a later date.

Elixir said the design of the distillery features an exterior that keeps with the traditional look of the other south coast distilleries on Islay, alongside some modern touches that reflect the landscape of the site.

The interior will include floor maltings capable of supplying more than 50 per cent of the full one million LA capacity of the distillery.

Oliver Chilton, head blender at Elixir Distillers, said: 'We take great pride in being able to learn, as whisky enthusiasts, and use that knowledge as a guide to find and bottle great whisky, including our independent bottlings brands Port Askaig and Elements of Islay.'

'Having our own distillery will be a fantastic opportunity to apply the same methodology and passion for flavour in a drive to make truly great spirit to enhance the incredible reputation that Islay single malt already has.'

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OT

Oban community skatepark survey online, so have your say

Hundreds of people have already sent in responses to an online survey having their say about a community skatepark for Oban, writes Kathie Griffiths.

Within just 24 hours of the survey going live, more than 350 people had replied, said skatepark chairman Mark MacQueen.

Now he wants those numbers to keep ramping up so the community's views can be fed into a feasibility study.

'It's not just limited to one response per household, you could be four or 80, we want to hear from every individual who has an interest and something to say on this. It is for everyone. It's important we get to hear what people think because it evidences the needs and desires of our community for a skatepark,' said Mr MacQueen.

Recently the skatepark group revealed their preferred town centre spot, having looked at 19 possible sites across Oban, is the grassy area in front of



Our children and young people have missed out on so much in the last year. Wouldn't it be great if everyone helped them get their skatepark?

Atlantis Leisure Centre – but it is 'not set in stone' Mr MacQueen said.

Thanks to £12,000 funding from the Oban Common Good Fund and the MacQueen Brothers Charitable Trust, a feasibility study is ready to start.

Depending on its size and form, a skatepark will cost hundreds of thousands of pounds to build and big

funders will want to see just how much support the project has from the community.

Oban Community Skatepark met earlier this month on Zoom with top wheel park producer Alan Jones Associates of Inverness to discuss what the feasibility study will entail and what needs to be done.

You can find the survey here www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/obanskatepark



Isla McCulloch and Ben Sunderland helped with the clean-up at the toilets, 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.

Adventure Oban appeals for members

by Ellis Butcher
ebutcher@obantimes.co.uk



People who love an adventure have been urged to get involved in a new, not-for-profit outdoor activity group.

Adventure Oban, in partnership with BID4Oban, recently led a community voluntary effort to clean-up and reopen the toilets at Ganavan Sands.

It has revealed it is also interested in revitalising the wooden lean-to next to the toilets into a usable, sheltered space for beach goers and explorers. The group was incorporated in January 2021 and has a volunteer board of directors.

They are chairman Dave Bleazard, Laura Corbe, Doreen Henderson, Neil Matheson, Isla McCulloch and Ben Sunderland.

Mr Bleazard said: 'Adventure Oban is keen to promote and enable outdoor activities for the whole community that will mean more people outdoors more often.'

'Oban already has some great clubs, community-led

enterprises and businesses and we're excited to add to that resource.'

Set up as a company limited by guarantee with an asset lock, Adventure Oban is seeking charitable status from the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

This would ensure its activities are for the benefit of the whole community in perpetuity.

Adventure Oban said it aims to work alongside existing clubs and organisations.

Other projects include new infrastructure at Station Square in Oban.

This follows the addition of Scotrail's new 'adventure carriages' – a fleet of train carriages to provide space for up to 20 bikes and bulky outdoor equipment.

Adventure Oban partnered with Sustrans to install a cycle repair stand at Station Square, equipped with basic tools to keep pedal cycles running smoothly, such as a pump and Allen keys.

The stand also features a

community notice board and information about local routes.

Adventure Oban is also working towards setting up the first Adventure Library based in Oban. Taking inspiration from Edinburgh's Tool Library, it will be a collection of donated and second-hand items enabling library members access to otherwise expensive outdoor kit and equipment.

Anyone can get involved and pitch into the Adventure Oban 'ideas incubator'.

Anyone can become a lifetime member for a one-off fee of £5.

Members are eligible to be elected to the board with provisions made for junior adventurer members and local businesses and organisations to join too.

Anyone can get involved as a volunteer in any capacity.

Find out more about at adventureoban.org or by giving it a follow on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @adventureoban or email hello@adventureoban.org

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Vaccines vital to defeat COVID-19

AFTER BECOMING the world's first country to approve a vaccine for use, the UK Government has bought jabs on behalf of all the UK, distributing them around England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

The government has invested over £300 million in securing and scaling up the UK's manufacturing capabilities to be able to respond to this pandemic.

We already have several authorised vaccines combating COVID-19 ... more than any other country in the world.

The priority is to save as many lives as possible, as quickly as possible, while also reducing

A multi-million pound vaccine programme is being rolled out at a fast rate across the UK with over ten million people having already been immunised. We focus on how jabs are being distributed and the many people working together to ensure everyone receives the vital vaccine.

hospitalisations that create pressure on the NHS. The UK is vaccinating more than double the rate per person per day than any other country in Europe.

This success has been made possible by many people from the scientists developing the vaccine and forces personnel setting up vaccination centres to delivery drivers and remote

doctors vaccinating the elderly within their community, all working together across the whole nation. Vaccination is the best way to protect people from coronavirus and is the best route back to normality.

The vital vaccine works by teaching your immune system how to defend itself against viral attack.



PROTECTING THE PUBLIC: Vaccines will help save as many lives as possible, as quickly as possible.

'ESSENTIAL TO BEAT THE BUG'

PROF SAUL FAUST
ENGLAND



The vaccine rollout is proving "brilliant", confirms Professor Saul Faust, director of NIHR Southampton Clinical Research Facility, University of Southampton.

During this pandemic he is focusing on delivering COVID-19 Janssen vaccine trials, stressing the jabs are "absolutely essential" in beating the bug.

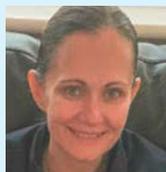
"Without the vaccine and NHS deployment, we will not be able to prevent further waves and impact on the NHS. Even if the infection becomes a condition like 'flu, the vaccine will stop people dying and most people becoming so ill they have to go to hospital," he assured.

Urging everyone to have the vaccine, and not worry about delay between doses, he added: "The vaccination programme is being rolled out in the way that is best for the UK population to try to ease pressure on the NHS and stop people dying.

"It is better to give one dose to more people and then top it up."

'I'M DESPERATE TO DO MY BIT'

LT CDR RUTH FLEMING
WALES



"Really proud to do her bit" is a mum of two involved in the UK's largest peacetime operation to support the UK Government's COVID-19 response.

Swansea University scientist by day, Royal Navy reservist Ruth Fleming is key to vaccine roll-out as part of Operation Rescript.

"I was desperate to do my bit. We had a chat about it and, despite having two young kids, knew my husband would support me," said the 46 year-old, whose furloughed husband Nick, 52, remote teaches their seven year-old son and daughter, aged four.

"I was working really long hours," explained Ruth, the Joint Military Command Wales Operations Officer. "Each of the vaccines have got different requirements around how they can be distributed and utilised, as well as who can give the vaccine, and the training required." She added: "I will be at the front of the queue as soon as I get the opportunity to get the vaccine myself."

'VACCINE IS SAFE AND EFFECTIVE'

CFO DAVID LAWRENCE
SCOTLAND



A finance chief's work developing a unique vaccine in Scotland is enriched by "phenomenal" public support.

Working daily with the vaccine task force, father of two David Lawrence leads discussions with the UK Government around manufacture and roll-out of his biotech company's "inactivated adjuvante" COVID-19 vaccine that saw Livingston-based Valveva "take a different approach".

He commented: "We'll ensure absolutely we've got a safe and effective vaccine. I think people should feel very encouraged. They should be very confident the safety profile will be absolutely fine."

The CFO's 14 year-old daughter Sophie is remote learning while son Cameron, 18, is a university student. "In terms of the support from my family and friends, it's been phenomenal," he said.

"You see neighbours and they say 'great job, keep up the good work' and that's all very supportive.

"I feel very blessed to be involved, being some sort of partner in the overall solution."

'WE REALLY NEED UNSUNG HEROES'

NURSING DIRECTOR
DEIRDRE WEBB
NORTHERN IRELAND



Porters, cleaners and drivers are among "unsung heroes" according to someone at the sharp end of the vaccine rollout. "They deliver everything to us and help with the logistics of the operation. They've done a massive job and we really need them," confirmed Public Health Agency Northern Ireland Director of Nursing Deirdre Webb.

"Then we have a huge volunteer workforce helping people get to clinics. They are all the unsung heroes of this," added the Belfast 57 year-old.

"We hope to see promising results in the springtime. We have small teams helping to deliver the vaccine in patient's homes.

"Then vaccinations are also being given at GP surgeries and mass vaccination centres."

"Everyone has been so enthusiastic and very keen to help out," continued Deirdre, herself set to be trained as a vaccinator. I've been in nursing for 40 years and this has been the biggest vaccination programme I've ever been involved with."



Working together to vaccinate the UK

Across the UK, people are working together to deliver the COVID-19 vaccine. Learn more at [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

All together >

OT

Helping your child with subject choices

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is offering parents and carers an online opportunity to find out more about how they can help their child make their S2/3 subject choices for the Senior Phase.

Scotland's Career Service has organised the virtual session on Thursday February 25 which will also offer information about accessing a wide range of SDS support.

Careers advisers Joan Duncan and Gemma Smith will be providing expert advice. Joan said: 'Thinking about what options to choose at school can be daunting for young people and their parents and carers. As well as this session, SDS also has a Subject Choices tool on SDS's My World of Work website which helps pupils explore job profiles, industries, Foundation and Modern Apprenticeships etc.'

The virtual event runs from 6.30pm until 7.15pm, including a question and answer session. To take part register as www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/helping-your-child-with-s23-subject-choices-tickets-141267909119.

Colonsay crowdfunds for affordable homes

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



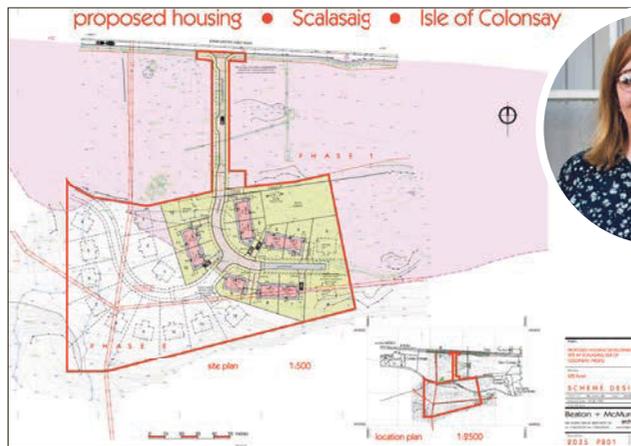
Colonsay is crowdfunding to raise £25,000 towards the 'extraordinary costs' of building community-owned affordable homes on the island.

Residents hope the campaign will gather enough support and funds to help them build four new homes to rent out long-term and keep their fragile community alive.

With a population of just 130 and the school roll about to drop to just four children, this development is a massive undertaking for such a tiny island, but is crucial, says Caitlin McNeill who started the crowdfunder.

There have already been more than 20 expressions of interest in the houses. The overall cost of building each home will be £220,000.

The initial plans at Scalasaig



also include two houses for low-cost home ownership and three discounted self-build plots to help invigorate the community.

The appeal runs until March 9 and can be found at crowdfunder.co.uk/colonsayhousing. 'Like many other rural communities, our resident

population has decreased significantly over the last century. 'Our demographic is unsustainable.

'We have come critically close to losing some of our lifeline services due to the lack of working-age islanders.

'We are at breaking point and we have to make a change,' said

Caitlin McNeill has started a crowdfunder to help build affordable homes.



Caitlin, Colonsay Community Development Company is driving the home-building project.

Out of 130 residents, there are fewer than 30 people under 50, fewer than 10 people aged between 18 and 30 and currently eight children in the primary school.

Factors

'There are many factors that have led to the decrease in our working-age population but the main thing that has been identified, time and time again, by community surveys and speaking to our young people is the lack of affordable, secure housing on the island.

There are currently nine social housing units and only a handful of private rentals on the island,' said Caitlin.

More than 40 per cent of homes on Colonsay are holiday homes or self-catering holiday accommodation.

Caitlin added: 'Homes regularly sell - often unadvertised - for well above the council or Scottish average meaning young people and families on average incomes are priced out of the local property market. There is no shortage of people who would like to live here but the harsh reality is that, for most of us, it is just not an option.'

And she said there are young families with babies and toddlers living in caravans and insecure short-term lets with some families, elderly residents and many key workers struggling in substandard housing over long, wild winters.

Famous ship is preparing for Antarctica mission

A polar research ship named in honour of Sir David Attenborough has generated a wave of excitement onshore, writes Ellis Butcher.

The Royal Research Ship (RRS) Sir David Attenborough was spotted off the coast on Tuesday having sailed up from Holyhead as it spends two weeks on sea trials around the west coast of Scotland and the Celtic Sea.

The 129-metre vessel, owned by the Natural Environment Research Council and operated by British Antarctic Survey, was seen on Tuesday by sharp-eyed members of the Scottish Association for Marine Science.

Since then, it has generated a buzz having been spotted from Oban, Lismore, Mull, and around Lochaline. On Thursday, she headed toward the Isle of Skye for further trials as the crew from the British Antarctic Survey carries out tests on the ship.

These include anchoring, manoeuvring and dynamic positioning, as well as other engineering systems, such as freshwater making, that cannot be tested while in port.

After the sea trials, the ship will undertake ice trials in the Arctic.



It is all ahead of a maiden voyage to Antarctica in November.

After the sea trials, the ship will return to Holyhead, before heading to the Arctic for extensive 'ice trials'.

The ship is forever associated with 'Boaty McBoatface'. The unusual moniker followed a campaign in 2016 for the public to come up with a name for the UK's next world-class polar research ship. The suggestion of Boaty McBoatface quickly gained traction on Twitter.

Due to its popularity, Boaty McBoatface was the name awarded to one of its Autosub Long Range (ALRs) autonomous vehicles which it can

carry on board. Boaty is one of three 'ALRs' capable of travelling thousands of kilometres on missions lasting several months at a time.

They can travel under ice and reach depths of 6,000 metres to explore 95 per cent of the ocean.

Sadly, Boaty McBoatface has not been on board this time. A spokesperson for the British Antarctic Survey explained he is based at the National Oceanography Centre in Southampton and is only onboard for certain research cruises.

You can follow the work and progress of the British Antarctic Survey on Twitter at twitter.com/BAS_News

FERN COMMUNITY FUNDS

The Beinneun Windfarm Community Benefit Fund has been established to support community groups, social enterprises & charitable organisations in the community council areas of Fort Augustus & Glenmoriston and Glengarry.

The fund is now open for applications until the 31st of March 2021.

Details of the application process and fund criteria can be found at ferncommunityfunds.com/beinneun-community-fund/

If you wish for any further information about the fund please get in contact via contactus@ferncommunityfunds.com or call 07871 785583 or by mail to: Fern Community Funds PO BOX 6653 Blairgowrie PH 10 6AU



Tidal power plan for island distilleries

by Ellis Butcher
ebutcher@obantimes.co.uk



A marine energy company has announced a project to produce Scotch whisky distilled by tidal power in the Sound of Islay.

Nova Innovation, based in Edinburgh, has revealed plans to install a series of underwater turbines in the Sound of Islay between the isles of Islay and Jura.

The two islands are home to 10 of Scotland's finest whisky distilleries.

Nova said the plan is to create 'clean, renewable power generated by the tide' to power the distilleries in the Inner Hebrides and displace fossil fuels used on the islands.

It said with Scotland seeking to meet net zero emissions by 2045, distilleries are looking for alternative zero carbon solutions.

The subsea turbines have no visual impact on the landscape, create no shipping or navigational hazard and work in harmony with the marine environment, said Nova.

The revolutionary 3MW project is called 'Oran na Mara' – Gaelic for 'song of the sea'.

It follows Nova's tidal power scheme at Bluemull Sound, Shetland, which has been

powering homes, businesses and the grid since 2016. Simon Forrest, chief executive officer of Nova Innovation, said: 'We are excited by the opportunity to combine Scotland's rich whisky heritage with the immense power of the tide in the Sound of Islay.'

'Tidal energy can play a huge role in decarbonising the whisky industry and ensuring a sustainable future for Scotland's island communities.'

Crown Estate Scotland (CES) awarded Nova Innovation an 'Option Agreement' for the project which enables the company to start its detailed development of the scheme.

Crucial

Mark McKean, development manager at CES, said Nova was taking one of the crucial next steps in Scotland's 'renewable energy journey'.

He said: 'This project is a great example of how a local energy system might work and we're hopeful to see more of these types of projects around Scottish waters, creating new developments that will grow Scotland's blue economy and push us closer to reaching the country's goal of net zero emissions by 2045.'

Nova said it is committed to drawing on local expertise during the project.

Angus Colquhoun, engineering and risk manager at Distell, owners of Bunnahabhain Distillery on Islay, said it was delighted Nova had been awarded seabed rights for the project.

He said: 'This has significant potential to support a raft of improvements that Bunnahabhain distillery is committed to making, to grow the sustainability of the iconic Scotch Malt Whisky brand and supporting the distillery to do its bit to help tackle the climate change crisis.'

AJ Cunningham, operations manager at Bruichladdich Distillery on Islay, said the project was really encouraging news for Islay and sourcing energy locally and renewably.

'Access to a clean and continuous supply of energy such as tidal power could help support our carbon zero ambitions,' he said.

Michael Russell, MSP for Argyll and Bute, said it was good to see two success stories coming together.

'The combination of the two shows the innovation and imagination for which Scotland is famed and I am delighted to welcome this news.'

'It will help decarbonise Islay and give an example of good practice.'

Shock figures reveal scale of problem at Rest and be Thankful

A hundred thousand tons of debris is waiting to fall on to the A83 at the Rest and Be Thankful, an expert has claimed.

Transport Scotland route manager Neil MacFarlane has also told community chiefs in the area that 2020 saw 20,000 tons fall on to the road at that point – double what has fallen in nearly two decades.

Mr MacFarlane also said workers from his organisation, as well as staff from BEAR Scotland, who maintain the route, will be staying on site for years to come.

Discussion of the route and its future took place at a virtual meeting of Helensburgh and Lomond Community Planning Group last Thursday, February 11. Lomond North SNP councillor Iain S Paterson sought information on whether there was an estimated time on when the road would fully reopen.

Mr MacFarlane said: 'I don't know if this is common knowledge, but it can be shared. In the last 19 years or so, there have been about 10,000 tons of



20,000 tons fall of debris fell onto the A83 at the rest and be Thankful in 2020, and 100,000 is 'waiting to fall'.

material moved off the hill on to the road.

'Last year alone, there was 20,000 tons – so that is double everything that's happened in the previous 19 years, in one year. At the moment, there is 100,000 tons on the move on the hill. We are looking at 12 options in a short timescale.'

'We want this to be done by March, because that is the end

of the financial year. The other milestone we have set ourselves is next winter. What can we do before then to build resilience?

'It is impossible to say when the road will be open again 24/7, or two-way, as we do not know what is happening on the hillside. What I can say with certainty is that BEAR Scotland and Transport Scotland will be there for years.'

'We haven't even talked about longer term solutions, but our colleagues in major projects are working on routes to Argyll. We have to keep the road open and get it running 24/7 in both directions as soon as we can.'

Councillor Paterson then asked: 'Those are quite significant changes in terms of figures of what is likely to come down. Are the mitigation measures going to be adequate to deal with that volume?'

Mr MacFarlane replied: 'Not at the moment, but it is very unlikely 100,000 tons will come down in one go.'

'It's something we have to plan for and it will be looked at.'

Advertisorial



Eye to eye with John Wallace

Why does my child struggle to read?

Regular readers of this column will know I am passionate about children's vision problems. I often have parents saying it is all very well to recommend regular eye examinations for children. What happens if they have had an eye examination but are still having issues reading? How can a parent find out if it is a vision related problem?

There are many inter-related aspects to reading that must combine to enable children (and even adults) to read fluently. Obviously light must focus accurately on the retina both for distance vision and when reading. Often I find patients need a prescription that not only focusses light accurately but also changes how their visual world is perceived. Hearing difficulties can also be involved but



vision problems are the main culprit.

So what are the clues?

Some are obvious ... your child avoids reading or, if they do attempt to read, loses their place frequently. They might push books or iPads away. They might find reading more comfortable with one eye closed. They often blink a lot when reading. I have even found children reading fluently with both eyes closed. They listen and memorise a

passage and, when asked to read aloud, appear to read well. Often patients with reading problems will have to read a passage several times to gather any information from it. They frequently prefer to listen, rather than read, to learn.

As well as issues with both eyes working well together, there are frequently problems with poor hand writing. They often have problems with hand-eye coordination and are not very good at catching objects. Letters often get reversed when reading.

The British Dyslexia Association recommends all children, prior to any dyslexia assessment, have a comprehensive assessment by a behavioural optometrist. To find an accredited behavioural optometrist check out www.babo.co.uk

John Wallace BSc (Hons), FCOptom, DipCLP

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OT

LETTERS

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

Kerrera lifeline ferry win

We were delighted to hear the welcome news that residents who live at the north end of Kerrera will now be able to travel to and from Oban three days a week thanks to a new North Kerrera Community Ferry service.

With money from the Foundation Scotland Response Fund and the Scottish Government's Communities Recovery Fund, this new service means the 30 residents currently with little access to the mainland, can now travel to and from Oban for shopping and vital services until the new access road linking the south and north of the island is built.

Congratulations to local skipper Jack Macgregor and his wife who won the contract.

Fish farm extension

Everyone who uses Ganavan is being urged to have their say on a proposed extension to almost double the size of a fish farm near the popular beach.

Campaigners are saying the move would be 'permission to pollute' and could make the water out of bounds for wild swimmers and other recreation seekers.

The editor welcomes letters of approximately 300 words in length for publication on this page.

However we reserve the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and postal addresses must be supplied, including on emails, to indicate good faith. A daytime phone number is also required for verification. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Please email: editor@obantimes.co.uk or write to: Letters page, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB.

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

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Election leaflets

Like other householders throughout Argyll and Bute, I have received a leaflet from the Conservative candidate standing in May's Scottish election. It is an extraordinary leaflet – not for what it says, but for what it does NOT say. Its six pages contain not a single reference to farming, fishing or aquaculture – all vital industries in Argyll and Bute.

The Tories have every reason to be mortified by the devastation their botched Brexit deal has had on the lives of our farmers and fishermen, but to simply ignore these issues is an insult to those who work in these industries and the communities that depend on them.

Les Wilson, Port Charlotte, Islay.

Fort William speed changes

As a virtually daily user of the A82 and a not-quite-so-frequent user of the A830 in Fort William, I'd like to offer the following suggestions on speed limits:

■ A830: From Annat Point to Blar Mhor roundabout, 40mph limit. Then 30mph from there to Lochybridge Roundabout.

■ A82: From Carr's Corner to Lochybridge roundabout, 40mph, as it used to be until not so long ago.

■ Lochybridge roundabout to Inverlochy roundabout, 30mph. I know it used to be 40, but I think the Aldi roundabout breaks up traffic sufficiently to make it 30 for that entire stretch.

■ Inverlochy roundabout to the West End roundabout and then down the 'Golden Mile', no alterations needed.

That would cut down the changes between the Croit Anna Hotel and Annat Point from nine to five. Apart from the roads already mentioned, I think it would be worth considering lowering the current 30mph limit to 20mph in built-up and residential areas.

Davie Kerr, Ferry Reach, Onich.

Sea farm expansion

Obviously nobody should be pleased to learn about the proposed expansion of Scottish Sea Farms (SSF) salmon farm right next to Ganavan beach. It's very untimely news, just when the community is getting up a sense of purpose over preventing housing behind the beach. It must be doubtful whether permission would ever have been given for a farm that close to a popular beach these days.

If the Friends of Ganavan can suggest to Dunstaffnage Estates that they should forego

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

ailean@obantimes.co.uk

'S cinnteach gum bheil cuimhne mhath aig cuid agaibhse cuideachd air màileid mhòr ruadh nan litrichean, agus poca nam parsailean a bhiodh aig a' phost air a dhruim gu sònraichte mu àm na Nollaige. Leis a' mhòr-chuid an eisimeil ceannach tron phost cha robh eallach phasgair na annas, agus tha cuimhne agam air a' phost a' ruigheachd an taighe againn le togsaidhean iocshlaint chaorach, agus taidhr baidhsagal, mu ghualainn a bharrachd air a' mhàileid àbhaisteach!

Mhair cuid de na buidhnean-òrdugh-puist ainmeil a bha a' frithealadh saoghal m' òige, leithid Oxendale agus J D Williams, ach chan eil iad idir air a bhith cho cudromach agus a' mhòr-chuid ag iarraidh aodach is eile fhaicinn mun ceannaich iad e. Bliadhnaichean air ais cha robh an roghainn sin ann, agus ge b' e latha mòr a bh' ann nuair a thigeadh am pàrsail, bhiodh briseadh dùil mòr cuideachd mur a freagradh na chaidh òrdachadh agus a dh'fheumte a thilleadh!

Tha mìosan a-nise bho thòisich a' bruidhinn air mar a bhith a' tilleadh gu "àbhaisteachd ùr" neo eadar-dhealaichte, agus mar is fhaide a tha bacaidhean saorsa gan sparadh oirnn 's ann is cinntiche a tha e nach till sinn idir chun an t-seòrsa saoghail a b' aithne dhuinn mun do nochd Covid-19. Bidh sibh uile mothachail air an diol a tha riaghailtean glasaigh air a thoirt air obair-malairt de gach seòrsa agus, ged a tha gnìomhachas aoiagheachd

is thaighean-bidh air fulang gu sònraichte, tha iomadh bùth agus ionad-seirbheis beag an impis a dhol à bith cuideachd 's gun chead aca fosgladh. Ged nach eil tarraing sam bith ann dhomh fhìn a bhith a' ruith bhùithean tha fios agam nach ann mar sin a tha dha miltean dhaoine eile, agus abair gum bheil an saoghal acasan gu bhith eadar-dhealaichte.

Nach iongantach an sgrìob a th' air tachairt dha bhùithean mòra phrìomh shràidean na dùthcha, is tè às dèidh tè a' dùnadh, is ainmean a bha aithnichte is cliùiteach a' dol à sealladh. Dh'fhuiling iad gainnead luchd-tadhail is ceannach ri linn glasaigh-sluaigh, agus lagaich dìth cosnaidh iad chun na h-ìre 's gun robh cothrom aig buidhnean malairteach eadar-lìon na cloaichean a chreach agus cur às daibh!

Chan e a-mhàin nach eil dad a dhùil aig na buidhnean-malairt eadar-lìon sin làthaireachd sam bith a staidheachadh air na sràidean, cha mhotha na sin a tha iad dol a thairgsinn cosnadh dha na miltean a th' air teachd-an-tir anns na bhùithean mòra sin a chall. Togalaichean falamh a' bhuil a th' ann!

Chan eil teagamh nach bi e nas fhasa, agus nas luaithe, dhuinne bathar de gach seòrsa a cheannach air-loidhne, ach mar a dh'èirich le JD agus Oxendale roimhe cha tèid againn air aodach fhaicinn neo fheuchainn oirnn, agus ma tha an drathais ro theann cha bhì freagairt ach a thilleadh!

Parliamentary inquiry

The SNP has voted to conceal Alex Salmond's evidence to the Parliamentary inquiry.

The Scottish Conservatives brought a vote to the Salmond Inquiry demanding that Salmond's evidence, much of which is already in the public domain, be published.

This would allow Salmond to give crucial evidence in person about the SNP's handling of this case. However, all the SNP MSPs on the committee voted against its publication, meaning it will not be released. The Scottish public deserve to know the truth of what happened and why £500,000 of public money had to be paid to Salmond.

Councillor Alastair Redman

the development gains from housing or even gift the land to the community, then why should the same not apply to SSF and the nearby sea?

The only difference, of course, is that SSF don't actually own the sea bed in the first place – it is held for all of us by the Crown Estates. The only gain resulting from expansion of the site would be to the shareholders of SSF. Nothing for locals – no new jobs, just an eyesore, noise and pollution. Object now. Some salmon farming companies have said that they would not wish to impose a farm on an unwilling local population. The only honourable course of action for SSF would be to withdraw the application.

Dennis Archer, Oban
(Co-convenor, A&B branch,
Scottish Greens)

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DISTRICT NEWS

TAYNUILT

Coronavirus cancels games

This year's Taynuilt Highland Games have been cancelled.

The games committee has taken the 'sad decision' to call off the 2021 event in light of the current pandemic.

The popular summer games, which draw in visitors from around the world, also had to be cancelled last year because of the virus.

Announcing the news, Andrew Servant said on the Taynuilt Highland Games Facebook page: 'Unfortunately, due to the current situation, the sad decision has been taken by the games committee that unfortunately we will have to cancel the games for 2021.'

But he added: 'We very much look forward to welcoming you all back to the games in 2022. Thank you all for your continued support.'

Attendance at the 2018 games was boosted by a MacIntyre Clan gathering and in 2019 the event celebrated its 150th anniversary.

OBAN

Main road litter disgrace

Cyclist Robert Kincaid was so disgusted at verge side rubbish on the way out of Oban that he organised a litter pick.

Mr Kincaid, along with his wife Fiona and friend Mandy Peden, teamed up to tackle the mess scattered along the side of the main road south from Oban and filled a trailer and back of an estate car with more than 20 bags.

Bottles and cans, polystyrene, bits off vehicles and smashed roadside plastic bollards were just some of the waste haul.

He said: 'I had previously cycled up the hill and was appalled at the amount of rubbish along the road edge. We parked at the entrance to the quarry at the top of the hill along with our trailer, and armed with sacks and our PPE we worked the road verges back towards Oban.'

'This stretch is less than 800 metres and the roadside vegetation has caught a lot of the discarded waste, but in the winter it is obvious so we had plenty to pick up.'

There was so much to clear that they ran out of sacks just before they got to the 30 mph signs.

Mr Kincaid added: 'Some of the material had started breaking down and some remains hidden in the undergrowth.'

Happy hampers produced on Lismore

Lismore packed plenty feel good factor into hampers sourced from its own island producers.

Nine of the hampers, filled to the brim with edible and useful goodies, were delivered to elderly residents who before lockdown had been enjoying lunches and entertainment put on by The Lismore Community Trust and funded by a 2019 Postcode Lottery grant.

Anita Bachuil, co-chairperson of the trust, said: 'We had thought the idea up in December before we went into lockdown and had hoped we would be able to give out the hampers for Burn's Night. Best laid plans and all that! But we've delivered them now much to the enormous appreciation of all the recipients.'

And she added: 'The producers themselves enjoyed doing something so positive with a real feel good factor and the fact they were getting a little income in these hard times. We have so many talented and entrepreneurial residents that it seemed a good idea to support them by generating them some income and supporting the elderly here who have been particularly hard hit by the pandemic.'

The Island Hampers included treats from The Dutch Bakery, Shepherd's Cottage Soaps and Luxuries, Lismore Luminations candles, The Oyster Croft Slainte Sauces, meat from The Sailean Project, Lismore Stores, bread from Julia Fayngruen, Isle of Lismore Cafe,

'I was just shocked that in the end our small trailer was filled to capacity as well as the back of the estate car. We collected well over 20 sacks.'

'I took the rubbish to Moleigh refuse site where it was placed in several containers. I got some help from a member of staff and he was equally surprised when I told him it had all come from a small stretch of the main road.'

'I am proud to say it now looks the way it should look, but far from proud that it is the population of Oban that has caused this disgrace.'

Litter collected from the side of the main road to the south of Oban filled this trailer and the back of an estate car. There is still some left, but anyone clearing it must be careful of passing traffic.



Lismore resident Valerie Livingstone with her hamper, filled with goodies from island producers.

produce from Eva Tombs-Heirman's garden, baking from Kirsty Wright, potatoes from crofter Clare Haworth, who also runs a bunkhouse on the island, and Kiki MacColl's special tablet.



At random

MARTIN LAING

editor@obantimes.co.uk



Making a noise

Here's a thing: the first time I saw the group Skerryvore live was up close and personal as some of the guys played an impromptu wee set in The Oban Times' office.

That was back in 2017 when they did a whistle-stop tour of the Oban area ahead of that year's Oban Live festival in June, of which they were the organisers and stars.

I knew of the band before that, of course, but had not heard them play for real. It wasn't the whole band but, four of them, I think, including one of the Gillespie brothers - Martin or Daniel - and lead singer Alec Dalglish. They were brilliant and I've been a huge fan since.

So I was chuffed to bits for the lads when I found out a couple of weeks ago they had broken into the mainstream by making the BBC Radio 2 playlist. Possibly the first Radio 2 airing of their new single You & I was on the lunchtime show hosted by Jeremy Vine, who said of the band and the new release: 'Just such a fresh, real, new sound... I love it.'

Evidently, so do the station's listeners as the song has been given a huge profile and countless playings. It is, for me anyway, a superb song, in keeping with Skerryvore's trad background.

Daniel, one of the band's founding members, said earlier this month that the national recognition had opened up a whole new fanbase and, amazingly, a stellar increase for their streams which rocketed by 700 per cent.

I interviewed Martin and Alec in 2018 outside Aulay's bar in Oban after bumping into them following their knockout success at that year's Oban Live. There's a wee video on The Oban Times' website if you missed it.

The guys could not have been more down to earth and accommodating. They were also marvellously modest despite blowing away the audience and fulsome in their praise for Oban High School Pipe Band who had joined them on stage. The guys deserve all the success coming their way.

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

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BUSINESS NEWS

Help available for hostel businesses

Funding worth £2.3 million has been set aside for the hostels sector in Scotland, which has suffered as a result of Covid-19.

The Hostel – Covid-19 Business Support and Continuity Fund aims to provide a safety net to keep hostel businesses operating while restrictions on opening and travel are in place, and then be trade ready when it is safe for travel to return.

The fund is part of The Scottish Government's £104.3 million allocation to support the tourism and hospitality sectors. The one-off grant for hostels is being delivered on behalf of the Scottish Government by VisitScotland, with input from Scottish Independent Hostels, Hostelling Scotland and Independent Hostels UK.

Hostels provide an affordable and sociable way for visitors to experience some of the best locations in Scotland. Communal facilities and shared spaces are designed to encourage interaction between guests but social distancing and restrictions on household groups have made it very challenging for premises to trade.

The fund is open to proprietors of hostels that either own or lease their business premises and are a registered business or charity.

Malcolm Roughead, chief executive of VisitScotland, said: 'For tourism to be truly accessible to all, we need to have a range of accommodation to suit any budget and hostels provide a unique kind of shared visitor experience that can create lifelong memories and friendships.'

'Our focus for the immediate future has switched from marketing to funding to ensure that the nine funds we are administering get to businesses as quickly and efficiently as possible.'

Eligible businesses will be able to submit an application form from noon next Wednesday, February 17 until noon on March 2, via VisitScotland.org.

Guidance is available at visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/funding/hostels-support-fund

Oban marine park's £4.5M funding nod

by Ellis Butcher
ebutcher@obantimes.co.uk



Funding for two new developments at the European Marine Science Park at Dunstaffnage has been given the go-ahead in a move expected to create 30 well-paid jobs.

The Highlands and Islands Enterprise Agency has announced that nearly £2million will be invested in fitting out the ground floor of the park's Malin House.

It is to meet increasing demand for laboratory and office space for growing marine businesses.

A further investment of £2.77m will take place in groundworks, road development and car parking for the next three buildings at the site.

One already has planning permission and the groundworks costs are supported by Sustrans funding.

It will include the upgrade of Kirk Road to improve facilities for cycling and pedestrians.

The contract for the groundworks, road development and car parking has been awarded to Argyll firm, TSL Contractors Limited.

Work is expected to start soon, with a completion anticipated around July.

Morag Goodfellow, HIE's area manager for Argyll and the Islands, said the Highlands and Islands had an outstanding marine environment which made it a fitting home for world-class marine science, innovation and enterprise.

'It's important that the region benefits from emerging opportunities from the marine economy, which will help increase productivity and provide valuable rural employment.'

'The European Marine Science Park is right at the heart of that. These further investments at the park will support the sustainable growth of our marine industry and contribute to economic recovery.'

'They will create opportunities in skills development and entrepreneurship, particularly for young people, and enhance confidence in Argyll



Caption in here and here and here ranged left.

as a business location for inward investors.'

Donald Cameron, the Highlands and Islands MSP, said: 'This very significant investment is a vote of confidence in the potential of the marine cluster at Dunstaffnage and I very much welcome it.'

Malin House was completed in 2012 and has been fully occupied for some time with 10 different marine sector companies now calling it home.

The new investment has been prompted by companies at the park expressing need for additional space to enable to expand their commercial activity.

The design of the new workspaces has been undertaken in consultation with the companies.

Norwegian-based fish health firm, PatoGen Ltd, is expanding into the UK market from its existing base at Malin House.

Dr Teresa Garzon, key account manager said: 'We are establishing a laboratory for our

preventive and diagnostic services in Oban.'

'PatoGen have been working in Scotland since 2014 and established our office at the EMSP campus in Oban in August 2018.'

'Since PatoGen entered the Scottish market we have collaborated well with the (fish) farming companies with steady increase in activity. The laboratory in Oban is planned to be operational during the summer 2021.'

Adjacent to Malin House is the Scottish Association of Marine Science (SAMS), part of the University of the Highlands and Islands network. It plays a key role in nurturing incubation companies before they look to expand into Malin House.

With a global climate emergency declared, researchers at SAMS and commercial firms at the EMSP are said to be playing a key role at the forefront of safeguarding the oceans through a greater understanding of the marine environment.

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Oban and Islay distilleries win gold at eco-tourism awards

Two local whisky distilleries have been awarded the UK's highest eco-tourism award, writes Ellis Butcher.

Oban Distillery, and Lagavulin Distillery on Islay, operated by Diageo, have both received the prestigious gold certification from the Green Tourism organisation.

The awards recognise environmentally-friendly best practice both in visitor experiences and distillery operations.

Also receiving accreditation this time was the company's distilleries at Blair Athol, Perthshire, and Clynelish, Sutherland.

They now join sister distilleries Glenkinchie, East Lothian, and Royal Lochnagar, Royal Deeside, which have already been awarded Green Tourism accreditation.

Just eight distilleries in Scotland hold the distinction with Diageo holding six of those.

Barbara Smith, managing director of Diageo's Scotland Brand Homes, said: 'To receive the Gold Green Tourism award for not just one, but six of our Scottish whisky brand homes and distilleries in just under six months, is an incredible achievement.'

'These awards are credit to the people at our distilleries and all the work they've done to build the environmental sustainability of our business.'

'This is just the start of our journey and we will be going for gold accreditations at our other distillery brand homes and will continue to raise the bar for sustainable whisky tourism.'

Assessors praised achievements such as sending zero waste to landfill, biodiversity enhancement, energy efficiency, local sourcing, community engagement and plastic reduction.

Diageo said the Oban Distillery had been key to helping raise standards in sustainable practice across the industry.

It switched to biofuels in 2018 - reducing its



Dierdre Henderson Oban Brand Home Manager for Oban Distillery is clearly delighted with the distillery's success.

carbon footprint by 98 per cent.

Last year it introduced a new water reduction initiative allowing the site to save approximately 80,000 litres of water a week.

The distillery is also working with the world's leading Scotch whisky, Johnnie Walker.

A total of 189,000 trees will be planted in Ballygowan, across 85.5 hectares, to restore woodland and promote wildlife diversity in Argyll.

It is part of Johnnie Walker's commitment to plant a million trees across Scotland by 2025.

On Islay, which is world-renowned for its smoky, peaty whiskies, Lagavulin has led the preservation of peatlands through a partnership with RSPB which is working to restore and conserve almost 700 acres of peat bog on the island.

Andrea Nicholas, chief executive of Green Tourism, said: 'The investment and support from Diageo in incorporating green technology and operations has been impressive and one of the best examples of corporate commitment that we have ever seen.'

'This along with the dedication, hard work and creativity of the on-site teams at all of these distilleries has been crucial to achieving their well-deserved gold awards.'

Diageo said its commitment to sustainability is part of a wider 10-year sustainability action plan to make a positive impact on the world by 2030.

It includes a target of being net-zero from its operations by the end of the decade.

The global drinks company is also currently investing £185m in its Scotch whisky tourism experience.

It will see the opening of the state-of-the-art Johnnie Walker Princes Street whisky experience in Edinburgh this summer, investment in 12 of its Scotch brand homes, and the revival of lost distilleries at Port Ellen and Brora.

CalMac beats carbon reduction target, says report

A new report released by CalMac says it has exceeded targets to reduce its carbon footprint off Scotland's west coast.

In the recently-published report covering the period 2018-20, it reveals a carbon reduction of 6.5 per cent - beating its target of five per cent, the company announced. It exceeded the five per cent carbon footprint reduction target ahead of the September 2019 deadline.

The figures were recorded before the first nationwide lockdown in March 2020 and are contained in its official 'biodiversity duty report,' required by law. Its last report covered 2015-17.

In a statement, Klare Chamberlain, CalMac's environmental manager, said protecting the environment in which it sailed was a 'key priority' for the company which had set a number of targets.

She said: 'We have worked hard over the reporting period to normalise and embed biodiversity thinking across our organisation - setting key targets, actions and performance indicators within our business plan and environmental strategy.'

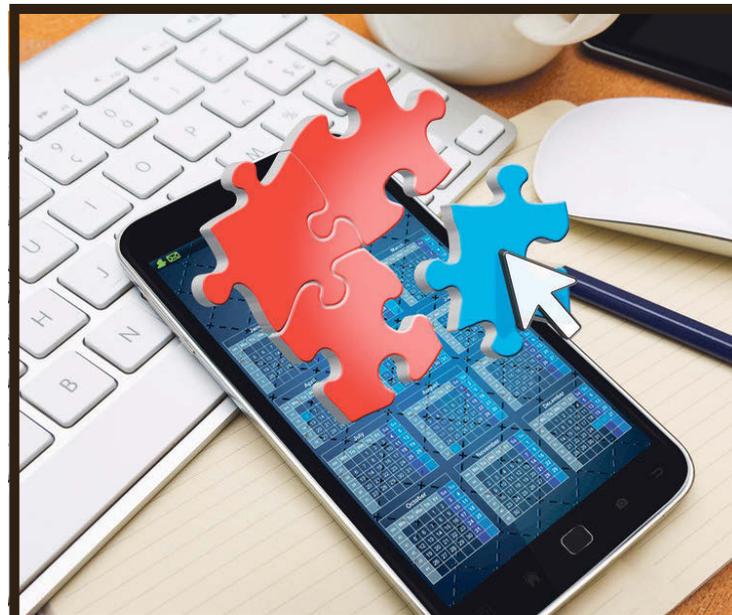
'This report details our commitment to preserving the diverse surroundings in which we operate a lifeline transport service for future generations to enjoy.'

Other achievements highlighted include significantly reduced single-use plastics with plans to eliminate them altogether. The company has also recruited a waste manager and a fuel manager to minimise waste and maximise fuel efficiency to reduce emissions.

Of the coronavirus, it said the pandemic had had a 'major impact' on all aspects of operations leading to reduced staff, passenger numbers, and changing procedures.

But it added: 'Despite the impacts of Covid-19 in 2020, the 2018 to 2020 reporting period has seen significant positive environmental developments within the company.'

YOURSTORY
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Following in St Columba's foot

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IAIN THORNER
 iain.thorner@btinternet.com



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 Iain Thornber continues with his insight on how they came to be built.

Although an office bearer in the Established Church, local laird and clan chief, Colonel MacDougall of MacDougall of Dunollie, supplied the site. Angus John Campbell (1888-1958), 20th Captain of Dunstaffnage Castle, was another landowner who supported the Faith by donating the land for both Connel and Dunbeg Catholic churches, and through giving money and great devotion to St Columba's Cathedral and its modest tin precursor. The Campbells of Dunstaffnage were Protestants, but as a young man Angus converted to Catholicism. Unusually for a convert, he was elected a Knight of Honour and Devotion of the Sovereign and Military Order of Malta, and also made a Privy Chamberlain of the Sword and Cape to His Holiness The Pope. High honours which ensured he was invited to attend many Catholic functions throughout Scotland.

The plans for the 1884 structure were drawn up by the builders, Messrs Isaac Dixon and Co of Liverpool. In technical terms it was a clerestory church, or pro-cathedral, intended as a stop-gap until money could be raised for a more substantial one. But, as is so often the case then and now with anything to do with most buildings in the Highlands, temporary becomes permanent and it stood four square to the wind and rain, and lashed by salt spray for almost 50 years, which says a great deal for the quality of the tin and of the men who built and maintained it.

Eventually, however, the march of time prevailed, happily coinciding with enough money being raised to enable at least part of the new cathedral to be used for worship on the same site. The architect was Sir Gilbert Scott R.A. (1880-



Left, the Captain of Dunstaffnage, Bishop Martin and Sir Gilbert Scott (architect) standing inside the new cathedral; above, a photograph of the interior of the tin cathedral.

Photographs: The Scottish Catholic Archive; and right, an advert for Isaac Dixon & Co who provided the tin pro-cathedral. Photograph: Iain Thornber.

1960), remembered for his work on Cambridge University Library, Battersea Power Station and designing the iconic red telephone kiosk. He was also noted for his blending of Gothic tradition with modernism, which is clearly seen and works so well in St Columba's. The builders were D & J MacDougall, Drimvargie, Oban, glowingly commended by the Oban Times as, 'among the best builders in Britain'. Be that as it may, they were given a great many prime, high-end, contracts in the Diocese and beyond. These included the Royal Bank, Municipal Buildings, Rosebank House and a new pier for the Lighthouse Commissioners in Oban and Hyskeir light. Their mansion houses were: Kingairloch (Ardrisgour), Ichrachan (Taynuilt), Eriska (Benderloch), Lochbuie (Mull), Ardsheal (Appin) and Kilbowie (Oban). The foreman in charge of the new cathedral contract was Mr Joseph MacKinnon. Bishop Martin had the view from the beginning, that as much work as possible should be given to local tradesmen and for this he earned the gratitude of many for his thoughtfulness.

The final services in the pro-cathedral prior to its demolition to make room for the progress of the new building were held in November 1933. The occasion was marked with a certain sadness among the worshippers in having to say farewell to a building that had served the Catholics of Oban for so many years, and, which had been the nursery, as it were, for their increased numbers. Bishop Martin, who succeeded George Smith, in his address, spoke of that feeling of severance, but gladdened his hearers by referring to the solid and beautiful edifice, that was gradually taking shape, which he hoped he would be spared to see in its completion.

At the evening service something extraordinary occurred. The Te Deum, the hymn of praise, was intoned by the Bishop and sung by the choir in thanksgiving for the many graces and blessings received during the past half century. This was followed by the De Profundis, recited for the repose of the souls for those who had worshipped within its walls. Then, as the two hundredweight bell in the tower which had sounded the Angelus three times a day

for almost half a century, was being rung for the last time, an extra strong pull by the bell-ringer brought it crashing to the floor of the belfry. Fortunately there was no damage of any kind and no one was hurt. The bell had anticipated its removal!

The foundation stone of the new Cathedral was laid on September 14, 1932, by the Right Reverend Donald Martin in the presence of a distinguished company. With him were Mgr Mackintosh, Roy Bridge Canon Macdonald, Dunoon; Canon Macneil, Morar; and Canon Butler, Rothesay. The choir was composed of Rev John F Clark, Barrhead; Rev McCann, Glasgow; Rev Cassidy, Perth; Rev Wilfred Gettins, Taynuilt; Rev Francis MacEmlail, Clifton, Bristol; Rev Charles MacDonald, Moidart; Rev Kenneth Grant, Glasgow; Rev Macdonald, Glencoe; Rev Dominic MacKellaig, Barra; Rev John McQueen, Oban; and Rev Donald Macmaster, Oban. After the celebration of the Chapter Mass by Canon MacDougall of Inverie, Bishop Martin, vested in cope and mitre and holding his pastoral staff, and preceded by the



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Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday 18 February, 2021** are listed below with differences for major ports listed alongside. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

18	0338 1.4	20	0507 1.9	22	0123 2.8	24	0358 3.2
	0929 3.4		1056 2.9		0740 2.1		1039 1.6
TH	1607 1.6	SA	1756 2.0	M	1504 2.9	W	1634 3.4
	2130 3.3		2306 2.9		2022 1.9		2219 1.3
19	0417 1.7	21	0614 2.1	23	0305 2.9	25	0439 3.5
	1006 3.1		1312 2.8		0953 1.9		1114 1.3
F	1655 1.8	SU	1907 2.0	TU	1555 3.1	TH	1711 3.6
☾	2211 3.0				2129 1.6		2301 1.0

WEATHER

Thursday
 Light rain and a moderate breeze
 Temperatures 5°C to 7°C.

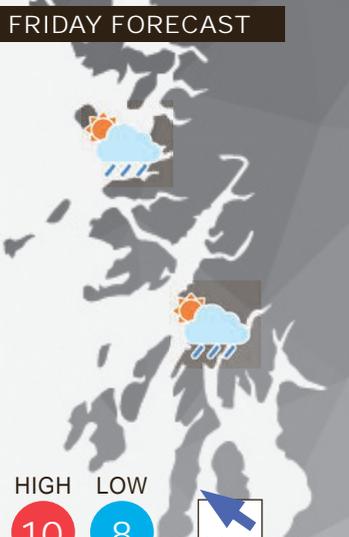
Friday
 Light rain showers and a fresh breeze
 Temperatures 8°C to 10°C.

WEEKEND OUTLOOK

Saturday
 Light rain showers and a fresh breeze
 Temperatures 6°C to 9°C.

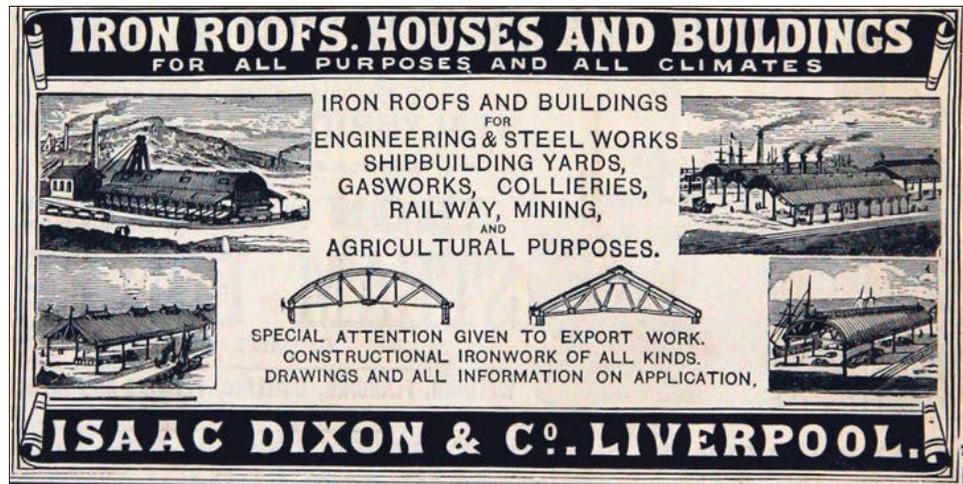
Sunday
 Light rain showers and a moderate breeze
 Temperatures 5°C to 9°C.

FRIDAY FORECAST



Legend: HIGH (10), LOW (8), 20 MPH

Footsteps – part 2



cross-bearer, choir, clergy and Chapter, went to the site of the future altar, where a wooden cross had been erected.

His Lordship blessed the holy water and the foundation stone and then with a silver and ivory-handled trowel, presented by Messrs D & J MacDougall, marked the foundation stone in three places with the Sign of the Cross. Afterwards His Lordship knelt down and the Litany of the Saints was sung; the cantors being Fathers Cassidy and Clark.

The massive stone was then cemented and laid in position. After the singing of the psalm Misere Mei, the Bishop, accompanied by the Chapter and choir, passed through the south door of the chancel and walked round the church blessing the partly erected exterior walls and the ground on which the new cathedral would stand. On the return of the procession to the site of the foundation stone, the hymn Veni Creator Spiritus was sung by the choir, and the ceremony closed with the episcopal blessing.

Before the foundation stone was laid in position two glass vessels were placed inside a cavity underneath containing a parchment in Latin which translated read: 'On the 14th September in the year of Our Lord, 1932, on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Pope Pius XI, happily reigning who, out of his great kindness towards us, gave the two large medals herein included, George V being King of Great Britain – this foundation stone of the Cathedral Church of St Columba, Oban – a church indeed, built with great help by America and Canada – was

laid by me, Donald, Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, in the presence of the Chapter and a large gathering of the faithful'.

The two medals, one silver, and one bronze, gifted by the Pope, a complete set of Vatican State coins, a full set of British coins for 1934, copies of the Oban Times and The Universe (a weekly newspaper for Roman Catholics in Great Britain and Ireland), and a statement written by a Carmelite Nun at Oban expressing thanks for the generosity of Canadian and American friends in contributing to the cost of the building, were put into the two vessels and deposited under the stone.

Among those present at the ceremony were: the Duke of Argyll; the Marchioness of Bute; Lord Rhidian Crichton-Stuart; Mr Michael Crichton-Stuart; Major Colin MacRae of Feorlin, and Lady Margaret MacRae; Miss Gwendoline MacRae, Mr John MacRae; Colonel Iain Colquhoun of Luss; the Captain of Dunstaffnage; Mrs Bardwell; Colonel Ian M Campbell of Airds; Mrs James Cameron-Head and Mr Francis Cameron-Head, Inverailort; Miss Bellingham, Castle Bellingham, Ireland; the Hon Mrs Finlay; Mrs Campbell Preston; Provost MacAlister, Oban, and ex-Provosts MacArthur and Hutton; Bailies McLachlan and Livingstone; Councillor Maxton; Mr A. S. Black, Town Clerk; Mr J W N Black, Town Clerk Depute and Mr David Galloway, Burgh Surveyor. Priests were present from Perth, Glasgow and all parts of Argyll and the Isles.

Continued next week.

DOWN MEMORY LANE

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



This week's photograph shows the volunteers at the Connel Surgery Coffee Shop in their new uniforms after the shop became independent from the Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS) in August 2010. The photograph was originally sent to us by Ann Colthart, project organiser. The shop was previously run by the WRVS but became part of the Taynuilt Medical Practice Charitable Trust.



Following our publication of the above photograph 'Who's the gorgeous faces?', from Fort Augustus, Maureen Ferguson got in touch to let us know who was in the image. She said: 'Back, left to right, Fiona Norton and Fiona Ferguson, my daughter, and in front, Mairi Steven, Cheryl Kennedy and Gemma Mac Lennan. The photograph was taken at the local gala day.'

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LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT

YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S ON IN ARGYLL AND LOCHABER

Midge's embroidery has healing power

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk



Embroidered commissions colourfully created through lockdown by Port Appin textile artist Midge Gourlay are now gracing Greyfriars Kirk in the heart of Edinburgh.

To mark their completion, Midge has just published a 30-page commemorative book telling the story behind the making of the pieces of ecclesiastical stitching that were commissioned as part of the Kirk's 400th anniversary.

Photos she took every step of the way chart show how the Healing Cloth, made from handwoven Indian silk, and the Machair Panel came to be - inspired by the Kirk's history and the wild beauty of the flower-dotted grasslands of the glorious Hebrides.

Midge, who has lived in Appin for 22 years with artist husband Alex, was asked to craft a cover to go on a new communion table being spe-



Textile artist Midge Gourlay with her Machair Panel created for Edinburgh's Greyfriars Kirk and, above, marigolds were part of the design for the communion table cover.

cially made by the Grassmarket Community Project furniture workshop team, as well as a six foot silk patchwork panel to sit below the communion table in the Kirk's Saint John's Aisle where Gaelic services are held.

Before starting work on the actual pieces, Midge made full-size replicas of her design

ideas with paper and paint to get the Kirk's approval.

'Although the Healing Cloth sample was true to size I didn't make the whole six foot of the Machair Panel, I just took along a few sections,' she said.

Once work started on them, Midge 'flitted' between the two. 'I'd have been driven

demented otherwise, so it was duck and dive between them both' she said. The whole project took about one year to complete from her home studio. It would have taken too long to embroider it all by hand after all the sketchings and paintings so special free machine techniques were used to draw with the threads.

Although so delicate looking, the tablecloth in particular had to be sturdy, the centre of it was inspired from one of the Kirk's clear glass windows but Midge has added colour of her own. In a nod to the Franciscan greyfriars associated to the kirk and who were known as great healers, each of the arms around the cloth's

centre depicts a healing plant. I got advice from a local herbalist and found nearly all of my chosen plants close to home. I was growing marigolds in my garden. The Saint John's Wort, Dog Rose and Yarrow were all discovered close to Appin point.

'The tablecloth will particularly get a lot of use so it had to be tough - I hope they'll be careful with the communion wine,' said Midge

The finished pieces were finally delivered to Greyfriars in October but to see them in place, people will have to wait until the church safely re-opens to the public.

'Meanwhile I'm back in my studio pottering about just enjoying myself. Working on the Kirk's commissions was a joy but also like a fulltime job. I'm happy for now treading water waiting to see what comes next.'

To see more of Midge's work or to buy a copy of her book, go to www.portappinstudio.co.uk



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Robert in lockdown

ROBERT ROBERTSON

robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk



There's still life in the old boys yet

At what point in your life does exuberant youth make way for mundane adulthood?

Going by the events of this week, it would appear 27 years of age and the middle of a global pandemic is a good enough ball park.

Let me explain. I recently had to return to my flat in Glasgow to deal with a plumbing issue.

I will miss the Highlands, but Glasgow has its own unique charm during winter and it seems I brought the snow down the road with me so I arranged to meet my pal Andy and go sledging.

My sledge has been in the cupboard since the original 'beast from the east' a number of years ago so I dug it out and met Andy on Dumbarton Road from where we carefully walked to Kelvingrove Park.

He had been up the previous night as the snow fell and warned me we would be the oldest in attendance. His ego had been dented that night by a teenager who had witnessed him fall off his sledge and, as he climbed the hill for another go, shouted: 'Look, the old man's coming back for more!'

I simply didn't believe him that, at the youthful age of



A lovely view of Glasgow University in last week's snow.

27, we were already getting called old men so plodded on through the snow undeterred.

When we reached the top of the hill at Park Circus - panting as if we had just scaled the North Face of the Ben - I was struck by the realisation that anyone else with a sledge was at least ten years our junior and eyeing us up suspiciously.

Had it not been for social distancing, I would have fully expected one of them to approach us and ask whether we'd had our vaccines yet.

Feeling like Jack and Victor in the sketch with the £19.99 'Permagrip' soles, we headed

off down the hill in our respective sledges. By the time we reached the bottom, we felt ten years younger and all the better for having gone back to the halcyon days of our youth where we sledged across the hills of Lochaber.

Pleased with ourselves for showing up the teenagers, we headed home and I remembered with excitement that I was due a delivery of a new cordless Hoover. It was at this point we realised perhaps the youngsters who deemed us 'old' were closer to the truth than we thought!

We used to return home from nights out when the sun came up. Now we were returning home to take delivery of new household appliances.

I'm now going to stop hovering and do some hoovering.

I'll be tuning into the virtual Mull and Iona Annual Gathering this Friday evening at 8pm live on the association's Facebook page and on YouTube. They have a cracking line up and I know the committee has put considerable work into the virtual event.

I'll maybe need to ask a youngster to show me how to log in!

Enjoy a Friday night in with the Benderloch Palladium

Stay just where you are and go online for this latest show offering from Joy and Campbell Cameron, who are set to bring you an evening of animated film with music by multi-award winning folk group Breabach, at 8pm on Friday February 26, writes Kathie Griffiths.

DÜSGADH, which translates as awakening, is a new collaboration between Scottish Bafta-winning animator Cat Bruce and Breabach who came up with the original soundtrack for it.

It tells the tale of The Sea Maiden, a folkloric story collected by John Francis Campbell, and can be watched in Gaelic and English - narrated by renowned tradition bearer Margaret Bennet.

To buy tickets go to my-player.uk/dusgadh and find Benderloch Victory Hall. Tickets start from £12.

The film can only be watched on one device at a time and



Multi award-winning folk group Breabach will be online as part of a folkloric animated film show later this month.

can not be shared out of that household.

Joy said: 'Your ticket, once purchased, lets you view once on the night of the broadcast - please be seated by 8pm - and once more until March 8. We do hope you can join us. Just the thought of us all watching together is a fairly powerful thing.'

And she added: 'Ticket sales will be split between the artists

and the individual venues/festivals hosting the show, so you can be confident that your purchase will not only support Breabach but also our wonderful venue The Benderloch Palladium while it is closed and unable to take hires.'

Once a ticket is bought, an email is sent out with information about how to watch the show in the comfort of your own home.

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Source: YouGov 2018

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

Oban Cycles helps you get back on your bike

by Ellis Butcher
ebutcher@obantimes.co.uk



Oban Cycles is taking part in a national scheme to help people get back in the saddle.

It is one of 300 bike shops and projects in Scotland involved in the Scotland Cycle Repair Scheme.

The scheme offers up to £50 towards the repair or service of a bike, a non-standard cycle or manual wheelchair - including adults, children's and electric bikes.

It is aimed at people who would otherwise struggle to afford to have their bike serviced or repaired, and the hope is to get bikes out of sheds and garages across the country and back in to regular use.

Christina Turtle, owner of Oban Cycles in George Street, explained that the shop is open between 10am and 5pm Tuesday to Saturday, and those wanting to take part



in the scheme should get in touch to book their slot.

She said: 'We are delighted to be part of the Scotland Cycle Repair Scheme. We've had a really good response which shows there is a real need here.'

'People want to exercise safely and to maintain social distancing, so cycling is ideal for that. As well as keeping

fit and healthy, they can also use their bikes for essential journeys like getting to work or the shops while avoiding public transport.'

Shona Morris, Scotland Cycle Repair Scheme programme manager at Cycling UK, said: 'It's fantastic to see so many bike shops and community organisations getting

Contact Oban Cycles to book your place on the cycle repair scheme and get back in the saddle this spring.

involved in this scheme.

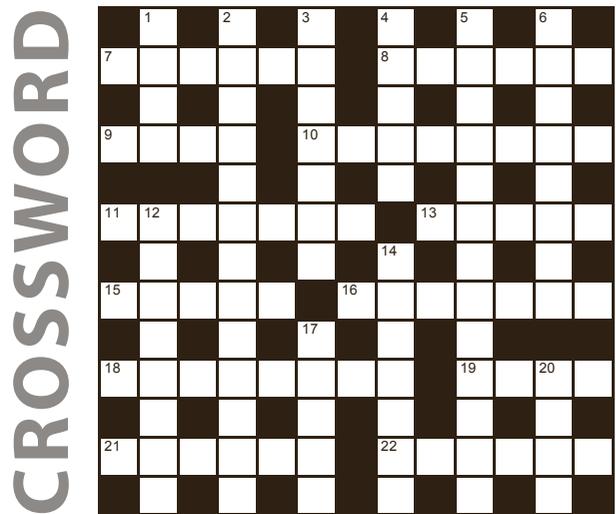
'The Covid crisis has hit many people hard, so we know it can be difficult to pay for essential bike repairs right now.

'We'd encourage those people to dig their bike out of the shed or garage, get it fixed up and get riding again.'

Nationwide, around 30,000 people are set to benefit from the scheme, which is funded by Transport Scotland and administered by Cycling UK.

The scheme offers free repairs until May 31.

To book your bike with Oban Cycles contact 01631 566033, email obancycles1@gmail.com visit its website www.obancyclescotland.com, or Facebook www.facebook.com/obancyclescotland



- Across**
- 7 Game has its faults! (6)
 - 8 Take care of (6)
 - 9 Tissue additive (4)
 - 10 Ballpark figure (8)
 - 11 Science subject (7)
 - 13 Put down (5)
 - 15 Primitive weapon (5)
 - 16 Garden or field surround (7)
 - 18 Try out a vehicle in traffic (4,4)
 - 19 Unite (4)
 - 21 Victor (6)
 - 22 One book in a series (6)
- Down**
- 1 Home in prison (4)
 - 2 Comprehending (13)
 - 3 Significance (7)
 - 4 Snapshot (5)
 - 5 Above suspicion (13)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION



New £2.4 million SpeakGaelic programme coming soon

A new £2.4 million SpeakGaelic project starts this September online and on telly, writes Kathie Griffiths.

It will be delivered over three-years and is being billed as the most comprehensive approach to learning Scottish Gaelic in a generation.

SpeakGaelic will start with a course, a dedicated on-demand learning website and complementary programming across BBC ALBA platforms, including BBC ALBA YouTube.

Between 2021 and 2023, the project will be launched in four stages, each directed at a different ability level.

Users will have the option of face-to-face classes, self-guided online learning, and media content through a variety of platforms - or all three at the same time.

The initiative will complement and extend the range of options already available to learners through other



sources, such as LearnGaelic, existing formal courses and the Scottish Gaelic offering on Duolingo.

Duolingo's success, with around 600,000 registered users learning Gaelic, the doubling of LearnGaelic's website users, and a surge in interest in Gaelic both in Scotland and internationally, will allow SpeakGaelic to offer an integrated structure at a crucial time, says its makers.

Media organisation MG ALBA will deliver it with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the National Centre for Gaelic

Language and Culture in Skye as lead academic partner, and the BBC as media content provider.

Funding is coming from the Scottish Government; the principal body for promoting Gaelic development, Bòrd na Gàidhlig; the BBC; and MG ALBA, which delivers BBC ALBA in partnership with the BBC.

Iseabail Mactaggart who is Director of Multiplatform Content at MG ALBA, said SpeakGaelic is an unprecedented partnership initiative delivering a unique combination of ways for people to take up - and improve - their Gaelic and hoped it would prove game-changing for the future of the language.

And Marsaili MacLeod, Vice Principal and Director of Studies at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, said SpeakGaelic will transform the landscape for Gaelic learning creating

structured, accessible and media-rich learning materials that will support the teaching community from private tutors to councils and community groups to Universities.

'It will support our community of learners and Gaelic speakers, welcoming anyone who has an interest, connection or love of the language to take part,' she said.

Margaret Mary Murray, Head of Gaelic Services at the BBC, said: 'SpeakGaelic will be a fresh and modern approach to learning on the BBC's Gaelic services' offering a fantastic new service for audiences on BBC ALBA, iPlayer, Radio nan Gàidheal, Sounds and BBC ALBA YouTube.

Deputy First Minister John Swinney added: 'This comprehensive and ambitious scheme will have benefits for Gaelic speakers and learners in all parts of Scotland - and all over the world.'

Keep Ganavan Green

Friends of Ganavan (FoG) is a community group set up to try to protect the green space at Ganavan, including the surrounding hills that the public has accessed for generations.



The Oban Times is kindly backing us by providing regular column space so we can keep everyone up to date with what is happening at Ganavan.

When consultation was invited on the Local Development Plan (LDP) 2 there was huge opposition to the designation of a Potential Development Area covering the green space and hills at Ganavan (PDA 4023). This had already appeared in the first LDP in 2015 and it was apparent there was serious intention to develop housing over this area – backed up by an architect's plans.

A consultation process on

the whole plan was carried out in January 2020. Well done to everyone who battled the difficult form and objected to this PDA proposal – 143 against and two in support.

A Facebook group was set up to lobby councillors and council officials to remove the Ganavan PDA, as well as spreading awareness of the issue. We now have 3,400 followers! The plan will be submitted to the Scottish Government in April 2021. Objections that we have made will go to the Government Reporter who will determine the content of the entire Local Plan, including the Ganavan PDA. This examination will be completed in October 2021 and come back to the council for adoption in spring 2022.

We have been told that this

is only a POTENTIAL development area and the housing element may not happen. However, FoG's concern is that once an area is designated a PDA, the success of a future planning application is almost guaranteed.

People should NOT be worried about the beach – it is an Open Space Protected area. The sands, including the strip behind the beach and the car park, was gifted by Dunstaffnage Estate to the people of Oban - now owned by the council.

The remaining land is privately owned by Dunstaffnage Estates. FoG has written to the trustees highlighting the importance of this area to the public and asking if they would gift the area as a legacy to the town and its visitors for the purpose it is currently being used for.

Friends of Ganavan is committed to protecting this very special place from housing development.



A drone captures the area Friends of Ganavan says is under threat of development.

Photograph: James Gray.

Mountain festival goes Covid-19 safe

The new online programme for The Fort William Mountain Festival 2021 has been announced, and includes a superb collection of adventure films covering 12 different themes, each with four to five uplifting, exhilarating, educational films from around the world.

On Sunday, February 14, festival organisers announced the fully digital programme for the 17th edition of the world-renowned festival.

Undeterred by the Covid-19 pandemic, the committee of volunteers will present a stunning line-up of inspirational films; impressive action and adventure, educational and environmental, all organised from the bustling Highland town of Fort William, the beating heart of 'The Outdoor Capital of the UK'. All films in the mixed programme can be viewed online from tomorrow,

Friday February 19, for up to 30 days. Tickets and festival passes will go on sale on the festival website at midnight tonight.

The action-packed programme encompasses a series of world-class outdoor adventure films split into 12 individual categories, each comprising a mix of four to five adrenaline fuelled and thought-provoking films. They have been specially selected from both the festival's International Film Competition entries and the hugely popular Banff Centre Mountain Festival World Tour; together with films produced for the festival's annual Scottish Awards for Excellence in Mountain Culture, which celebrate a range of outstanding achievements, and some thought provoking films with an environmental focus.

The categories include climbing, snowsports, biking,

family, environment and a festival mystery selection.

Of course, the Fort William Mountain Festival is not just for high adrenaline adventure enthusiasts, aspiring explorers, and weekend warriors. It is for everyone who appreciates the value, richness and diversity of the great outdoors.

Rod Pashley, chairman of The Highland Mountain Culture Association, organisers of the Fort William Mountain Festival, said: 'It has been a very challenging year. This year, more than ever, we understand the power of the outdoors for our own health and well-being. The Fort William Mountain Festival 2021 online event has something for everyone with a love for the outdoors.'

To find out more about the Fort William Mountain Festival 2021 and to buy tickets, go to mountainfestival.co.uk.

M'ALBA

MY ALBA

DIARDAOIN 18 An Gearran THURSDAY 18 February

- 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- 19.00 Turas a' Bhradain/ The Salmon's Journey (rpt)
- 19.30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)
- 19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh/ History Shorts (rpt)
- 20.00 An Là – NEWS
- 20.30 NEW Eorpa/ European Current Affairs
- 21.00 Diary of Britain – Shinty Town (rpt)
- 21.40 Ceol Duthchasach/ Ken Burn's Country Music (rpt)

DIHAOINE 19 An Gearran FRIDAY 19 February

- 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- 19.00 An La NEWS
- 19.25 Fraochy Bay (rpt)
- 19.30 Machair (rpt)
- 19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh/ History Shorts (rpt)
- 20.00 Cearcall (rpt)
- 20.30 Garraidhean na h-Alba (rpt)
- 21.00 Donny B/ The Original King of Daytime (rpt)
- 22.00 State of Happiness: Dirdal Valley (rpt)
- 22.45 ALT (rpt)
- 23.00 Seirm | Celtic Connections (rpt)

DISATHAIRNE 20 an Gearran SATURDAY 20 February

- 16.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- 17:45 An Là – NEWS
- 18.00 NEW Scottish Premiership – St Mirren v Livingston
- 19.45 Sgeul Slainte (rpt)
- 20.00 Cearcall (rpt)
- 20.30 Abair Trusadh (rpt)
- 21.00 NEW Seirm | Celtic Connections
- 22.00 QE2 (rpt)

- 22.45 Binneas na Trads (rpt)
- 22.50 Dhan Uisge (Spar Cave)
- 23.00 Scottish Premiership – St Mirren Livingston (rpt)
- 00.45 NEW ALT

DIDÒMHNAICH 21 An Gearran SUNDAY 21 February

- 16.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- 18.15 An La – NEWS
- 18.30 Seachd La/ News Review - NEWS
- 19.30 Alleluia/ Spiritual Praise (rpt)
- 20.00 Eorpa/European Current Affairs (rpt)
- 20.30 An Taigh-Fuine/ The Bakery (rpt)
- 21.00 Macleod MP/ Maclean KGB (rpt)
- 22.00 Seirm | Celtic Connections (rpt)
- 23.00 State of Happiness: Dirdal Valley (rpt)
- 23.40 ALT (rpt)

DILUAIN 22 an Gearran MONDAY 22 February

- 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- 19:00 Vets: Gach Creutair Beo (rpt)
- 19:30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)
- 19:55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)
- 20:00 An La – NEWS
- 20:30 NEW Garraidhean Mora na h-Alba
- 21:00 Trusadh – Laithean Sgoile – An Rum Beag (Schooldays – The Wee Room) (rpt)
- 22:00 Seoid a' Chidsin – The Kitchen Coves (rpt)
- 22:30 Chi mi anns a' Bhothan Thu (rpt)
- 23:30 Na Millenni - Gaels (rpt)

DIMÀIRT 23 an Gearran TUESDAY 23 February

- 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- 19.00 Turas a' Bhradain/ The Salmon's Journey (rpt)
- 19.30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)
- 19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)

- 20.00 An Là – NEWS
- 20.30 An Taigh – Fuine/ The Bakery (rpt)
- 21.00 NEW Tearlach Ceannadach/ Charles Kennedy: A Good Man Speaking
- 22.00 Trusadh – Laithean Sgoile – An Rum Beag (Schooldays – The Wee Room) (rpt)

DICIADAIN 24 An Gearran WEDNESDAY 24 February

- 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- 19.00 Vets: Gach Creutair Beo (rpt)
- 19.30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)
- 19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)
- 20.00 An Là – NEWS
- 20.30 NEW Abair Trusadh
- 21.00 DIY le Donnie (rpt)
- 21.45 Sgeul Slainte (rpt)
- 22.00 Na Millenni-Gaels (rpt)
- 22.30 Diary of Britain: Shinty Town (rpt)
- 23.10 Port – Druthag Bheag Eile (rpt)
- 23.30 Seoid a' Chidsin – The Kitchen Coves (rpt)

DIARDAOIN 25 An Gearran THURSDAY 25 February

- 17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
- 19.00 Turas a' Bhradain/ The Salmon's Journey (rpt)
- 19.30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)
- 19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh/ History Shorts (rpt)
- 20.00 An Là – NEWS
- 20.30 NEW Eorpa/ European Current Affairs
- 21.00 NEW Sruth
- 22.00 Ceol Duthchasach/Ken Burn's Country Music (rpt)
- 23.50 Dhan Uisge (Cuan Sound)



BBC.CO.UK/ALBA | BBC.CO.UK/IPLAYER

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A new Free Service from ACUMEN with support from The Listening Service at The Lade Centre and Support in Mind Scotland for anyone living in Argyll & Bute.

Contact us

☎ 01546 607210 or ✉ sscp@acumennetwork.org

Website: <https://sscp.ramh.org/>

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VERSUS ARTHRITIS

TAI CHI FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Join us from the comfort and safety of your own home and feel the benefits of this gentle exercise. Why not register an interest in attending one of our forthcoming classes?

How to register: contact Scotland Versus Arthritis on 0141 954 7776

or livewell@versusarthritis.org

Our helpline is available free on 0800 5200520





“ For many years I’ve had a vision to open a Holistic Health Centre, a place where like-minded teachers and therapists come together to create a healing space for the community. Last year came with many challenges, including losing some of the already few venues that I had. But as they say, when one door closes another one opens. In August 2020 we were presented with an opportunity to take on what is now ReCentre. Whilst it was an intimidating prospect with so much uncertainty of what the future held, with the help and encouragement of a great team (whom I am now lucky to call my colleagues at ReCentre), I decided to take the leap. In an age where so many people are suffering from mental, physical and emotional illness, as well as social disconnection, we at ReCentre

wish to create a healing, peaceful space for the community to Rest, Restore and Rebalance. The centre now consists of three yoga/ pilates studios, a physio room, two treatment rooms, a counselling room and community chill out zone (available for use when restrictions lift). Among the ReCentres family are highly experienced, passionate teachers and therapists all working with the same ethos – to help rebalance the whole self. Whilst our doors are currently closed, many of us are available via Zoom to continue our work supporting the community through extremely challenging times whilst we eagerly await our return. We look forward to welcoming you to ReCentre. Visit www.recenteroban.com or contact one of our team below.

Susan de Almeida Ferreira”

THE TEAM



Susan de Almeida Ferreira
ReCentre Founder

Susan is an experienced registered teacher with more than 500 hours of training in various yoga disciplines and has been teaching locally for nearly six years. Susan started her journey in holistic therapy nearly 20 years ago. Her training includes Reiki, massage, yoga, sound therapy, Cacao Ceremony Facilitation, and she is currently completing her second year of studies in Ayurvedic nutrition and lifestyle. Susan's intention is to help raise awareness using Ayurvedic and yoga principles for disease prevention and encouraging the maintenance of health through paying close attention to balance in one's life through diet, lifestyle and use of herbs. Zoom consultations and classes – visit www.suasanayoga.com



Ruth Sunderland

Ruth is a physiotherapist registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP). She offers virtual (Zoom, phone etc) sessions or, if clinically justified, in-person sessions. Day and evening sessions are available. Through links with the Sea Hospital and Working Health Services Scotland, fully-funded sessions are offered for seafarers and those who are self-employed or work for small to medium-sized companies. Contact via phone 07806 569 859, email: ruthsunderlandphysiotherapy@gmail.com or Facebook: Ruth Sunderland Physiotherapy.



Iona Fulton & Jennifer Dairon
PILATES at RECENTRE

Pilates aims to strengthen the body through controlled movements, with particular focus on core strength. It improves flexibility, builds strength and develops control and endurance throughout the body. Classes focus on body alignment, coordination and balance and understanding of the core muscles aiding stability. Pilates can be used to keep fit and healthy but also to aid recovery from injuries and can be adapted easily for certain health conditions. The beauty of pilates is that it is suitable for nearly everyone and can be easily tailored for individual abilities. For more information on Pilates at ReCentre see: www.obanphysiotherapy.com Facebook.com/obanphysiotherapy



Iain Bruce-Low

Iain Bruce-low is a Forrest Yoga teacher, coach, meditation and ceremonial practitioner. His classes are known for their dynamic active poses, emphasis on abdominal core work and standing series. Iain's teachings enable the foundation of healing physical and emotional trauma. The pillars of Forrest Yoga are:

- breath
- strength
- integrity
- spirit

As an empathic teacher Iain's classes will guide you to let go of tension, build strength and create more flexibility both physically and mentally. Bringing this unique style of yoga to Scotland is part of Iain's contributions to help heal the circle of the people. www.yogawithiain.co.uk



Rie Emmers

Rie came across Pilates rather late in life but from her first class she was surprised by its immediate and immense effect. Not only has it helped her to grow physically stronger and more flexible but it also increased Rie's stamina, balance and will power, and it has been a great companion and support on her weight-loss journey. Rie's classes are physiotherapy led and she intends to run a 'reach, stretch and strengthen' class for motivated beginners, a challenging class for impressive improvers and a seated-standing combo for those who don't fancy lying on the mat. rie.emmers@gmail.com 07785507466



Jacquie Maclean

Jacquie has trained in Swedish massage and, more recently, with the Western School of Massage incorporating Sports and Remedial into her offering. Whether you are seeking to de-stress, release tension or find relief from chronic pain, massage can help. Jacquie aims to reduce pain and discomfort with her treatments whilst increasing range of motion, enhancing performance and reducing the risk of re-injury. Her intention is always to promote the body's natural healing ability; restoring balance and inducing relaxation, bringing you back on form. www.facebook.com/onformmassage or jamaclean06@gmail.com

Other ReCentre Contacts:

Heather Craig, Shamanic Practitioner/ Teacher & Drumming Circles, www.inner-earththerapies.com
Fiona Hughes, @Kundalini Yoga with Fiona on Facebook, kywithfiona@gmail.com
Emma Grant, Stress Management, www.heartfeltchange.co.uk
Madi Chaney, @Madelaine Chaney Yoga on Facebook, madi.chaney@googlemail.com
Karen McCoss, Scaravelli/ Breathwork/ IRest Yoga Nidra, www.isleyoga.net
Diane Oliver, Dru Yoga, www.woodlandelements.co.uk
Paula Roberts, Complementary Practitioner/ Reiki Teacher/ Luing, paularoberts16@yahoo.com
Claire Hartley, Mindfulness Teacher, Reducing stress & Anxiety, www.clearandmindful.co.uk 01852 300598

Testimonials:

Suibhan of Wee Bay Teepees says:

'How lucky are we in Oban to have a centre dedicated to physical and mental wellbeing, somewhere we can recharge our bodies and minds, away from the stresses of our busy lives. My Friday morning yoga class with Susan at ReCentre is an hour of pure relaxation; I look forward to it all week.'

Becs Barker says:

'Susan's Yoga at ReCentre has changed my life. I join a couple of times a week via Zoom. My regular practice has helped me recover from a significant injury and it helps me manage my long-term conditions. My overall physical fitness has also improved – I can climb hills, dig the garden and do loads more without getting exhausted.'

We are living in strange times, no one would argue with that.

It is incredible to think that we are less than a month away from celebrating the first anniversary of the Covid lockdown – not that anyone would call it something to celebrate.

There is no disguising the fact that Covid has taken its toll during this lengthy and difficult episode in all our lives. Worries for our children's education, the health of our loved ones, finances and employment have gone through the roof.

We humans just were not made to be isolated and cooped up – we thrive in community and in the fresh air with plenty of exercise. So do not be hard on yourself if you are feeling low right now or if there have been times when you might have neglected yourself or each other.

There is plenty of help and good advice at hand, be that from the many organisations around the area or specialist teachers and practitioners.

Hope Kitchen

Hope Kitchen is continuing to offer support to the community via food parcels, doorstep welfare visits, phone calls, a

fortnightly online quiz and Zoom groups.

They are aware that the pandemic and restrictions have had an impact on many people's income and some people have experienced making difficult decisions – such as whether to spend their money on heating or food.

Hope Kitchen urges anyone who is worried about having enough food for themselves or their children to get in touch with them as they can help.

The service is free, confidential and can be accessed as many times as it is needed. Please check their advert to see how to get in touch.

ACUMEN

Most of us struggle with physical and mental health at some point during our lives.

We plan for our physical health by making appointments with the dentist, going to the doctor, taking some exercise, but what about making time for our mental wellbeing?

Creating a self-care plan could empower you to be more resilient during tough times when your mental health is under pressure. If you don't know where to start or you'd like some support, contact ACUMEN on 01546 607210 or



Hope Kitchen

email sscp@acumennetwork.org to access a completely free service to help you create your personal mental health plan.

A SELF-CARE PLAN CAN HELP

Mental health charity ACUMEN is delivering this service, which has been funded by Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership's Living Well Grant, with the charities Support in Mind Scotland and the Listening Service.

Acumen can help you get started on your Self-Care Plan, refer you to a qualified

counsellor if you need it and link you in with other groups and support services in your area if you want that. Find out more at: sscp.ramh.org

We Are With You Argyll and Bute

Phone We Are With You or use their online chat to speak to one of their trained experts. They are there to help you – you can tell them as

little or as much as you want – they will work with you to help you manage, reduce or stop your drug (including prescription drugs) or alcohol use.

You can also talk to We Are With You if you're worried about someone else's drug or alcohol use, rather than your own.

HELP AND SUPPORT

We Are With You staff are working hard to make sure they continue to provide help and support to anyone experiencing issues with drugs or alcohol throughout the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak.

If you come into a service, they can provide masks. If you have any questions, please contact them by phone or chat to them online. They will do their best to make sure you get the help you need.

Need a prescription? The way you get prescriptions for methadone or buprenorphine may have changed during the coronavirus outbreak. Please contact your prescriber to check.

WHO'S THE SERVICE FOR?

This service is for you if:

- you're over 16

- living in Argyll and Bute
- you're worried about either your drug or alcohol use, or someone else's.

Versus Arthritis

Versus Arthritis is the UK's largest charity dedicated to supporting people with arthritis. It was launched in September 2018, following the legal merger of the two leading arthritis charities in the UK, Arthritis Research UK and Arthritis Care in November 2017.

They are the 10 million people living with arthritis. They are the carers, researchers, healthcare professionals, friends, parents, runners and fundraisers all united in their ambition to ensure that one day, no one will have to live with the pain, fatigue and isolation that arthritis causes.

Alongside volunteers, healthcare professionals, researchers and friends, they do everything they can to push back against arthritis.

Together, they'll continue to develop breakthrough treatments, campaign relentlessly for arthritis to be seen as a priority, and support each other whenever it's needed.

we are withyou

We are open and here to support you

To comply with Covid-19 restrictions we cannot offer face to face or drop in support except for the very vulnerable, but we are still here to provide support if you're worried about your own or someone else's substance use.

We are still taking referrals; contact any of the numbers below and a member of staff will be available to talk to you.

We can provide support to you in the following ways:

- Telephone, video calls, email; whatever suits you best
- Virtual MAP & activity based groups
- Socially distanced walk and talk sessions
- Our outreach project in the Helensburgh area; Mon, Wed & Fridays, 10am – 12noon, providing hot soup, drinks, sandwiches and access to services
- If you prefer to chat on line, visit our confidential webchat @ www.wearewithyou.org.uk,

Our needle exchange services

- Click & Collect needle exchange can be accessed at anytime @ argyllandbute-nx.wearewithyou.org.uk or via our
- Dunoon office: Tuesdays, 11am to 1pm, Thursdays, 12 noon to 3pm/ 01369 704 40
- Delivery/postal options to other locations and areas can be arranged through local offices:

Helensburgh: 01436 640 216 | MAKI: 01496 301 455 |
Oban: 01631|01631 700 207|0800 206 1460
www.wearewithyou.org.uk



Run by the community for the community.

Hope Kitchen is currently, temporarily closed as a community café and we are now operating as a Food Bank.

The service is staffed from 10 am to 4pm Monday to Friday and food and toiletries can be picked up between 11am and 2pm. We are also able to deliver to folk who can't get to us or who are shielding. We cover as far as Appin, Ardfern and Dalmally. We are also providing food via the Mull and Iona Pantry.

To get help from this free, confidential service contact us obanhopekitchen@gmail.com, 01631 565730 or on Hope Kitchen's Facebook messenger.
Hope Kitchen, 2 Soroba Road Oban PA344HU



Oban Hospice services continue to offer supportive and reliable services to people with cancer and other life limiting illnesses

Virtual Therapies Telephone support and guidance Zoom meetings
Booked appointments Cairdeas Befriending Service Whats app groups

The Dove Centre, 24 Stevenson Street, Oban
Tel : 01631561315 Email: enquiries@obanhospice.co.uk



The Dove Centre

Dove Centre

Life-limiting illness can have many challenges for those affected and their relatives.

Oban Hospice offers help through its Dove Centre where valued work continues thanks to the effort and dedication of many people including a much appreciated team of volunteers, Friends of Oban Hospice, the Oban Hospice Board and staff.

Oban Hospice keeps in touch via regular telephone contact between staff, volunteers and those who, before lockdown, attended the popular men's and women's groups.

Relaxed and informal Zoom groups provide an opportunity for a chat and catch-up, and WhatsApp groups are a conduit for regular communication, social interaction and support.

Activities such as sharing photographs of Old Oban have proved to be an informative and interesting way of stimulating discussion, while

talented local musicians, giving their time freely, frequently entertain. Therapies that are currently delivered virtually include counselling, mindfulness/relaxation, Reiki and Listening Ear and Dropin is available, telephone in advance for an appointment, when talking face-to-face is preferred.

Cairdeas Befriending offers a support service delivered by Oban Hospice Ltd in partnership with Highland Hospice.

'Our goal is to offer supportive, reliable relationships to people affected by advancing illness, helping them to cope and improve their wellbeing,' said an Oban Hospice spokesperson. 'Feedback for our current services has been overwhelmingly positive, and friendships have grown out of this otherwise difficult year.'

Oban Hospice Services are dependent on the support and goodwill of the people in the Oban and North Lorn area. All donations and funds raised are spent helping local people.

Lochaber services and helpful websites

Lochaber COVID support - if you require assistance with shopping or medication deliveries telephone Voluntary Action Lochaber on: 01397 719514

Mental Health Support

Lochaber Hope
Counselling, depression / anxiety management
www.lochaberhope.org.uk

Ewen's Room
Mental health support based in Acharacle/Strontian
www.ewensroom.com
Tel: -01967 750855

Support in Mind Scotland
Mental Health Community Support, Cothrom
lochaber@supportinmindscotland.org.uk
Tel: 07739 216457

Women's Aid
Support, advice and counselling for women and families of domestic abuse and abusive relationships
www.lochaberwomensaid.org
Tel 01397 70573

Voluntary Action Lochaber
Assistance with shopping or medication deliveries
Tel: 01397 719514

Cancer Support

Macmillan Cancer Support
www.macmillan.org.uk
Tel: 01397 709883
Highland Hospice
Inverness
highlandhospice.org
Tel: 01463 243132

Local Patient Support Groups

Chronic Fatigue / ME
me-lochaber.org.uk

Autism Support Group
<https://www.facebook.com/LochaberAutismSupportGroup>

Housing, Legal, Benefits and Finance

Lochaber Citizen's Advice Centre
CAB, advice on benefits, housing, legal matters
www.lochabercab.org.uk
Tel: 01397 705311

Hanover Housing: sheltered housing
www.hanover.scot

Lochaber Housing Association
Affordable housing
www.lochaberhousing.org.uk
01397 702530

Lochaber Care and Repair

Maintenance and home repair for those over 65 or those living with a disability
lcr.org.uk/ 01397 706444 / (Handyperson service 01397 706 333)

Community Support schemes

Community Car Scheme
www.lochabertransport.org.uk
Tel: 01397 701222

Lochaber Action on Disability
Lunch Club and other activities, Caol
www.disabilityscot.org.uk

Social Interaction and Community for Men
www.menssheds.org.uk
FB: Fort William Mens Shed

Volunteer Opportunities, Voluntary Organisation Support

Voluntary Action Lochaber
www.valochaber.org

Alternative therapies

Lochaber Clinic
Provides osteopathy, physiotherapy, private counselling and alternative therapies
www.lochaberclinic.co.uk
Tel: 01397 702257

SUPPORT IN MIND SCOTLAND

Support in Mind Scotland is an award-winning charity that supports people affected by mental illness, including families and carers. SiMS has been providing support and services in Lochaber for 27 years and runs the Cothrom Resource Centre at the Nevis Centre

in Fort William, as well as a successful outreach service. They offer a friendly, safe and supportive environment where everyone who access their services is treated with dignity and respect.

People who access these services are given help to

build confidence, develop better self-management skills and coping strategies. SiMS supports service users to achieve their personal goals to become more integrated and feel a greater sense of belonging in their community.

The Cothrom and

Outreach services work with referrals from NHS and other professional organisations and look forward to continuing to support the people of Lochaber. For more information about SiMS visit their website: www.supportinmindscotland.org.uk

Smash the circle

Both physical and mental health are linked together so closely. You feel down so you don't bother exercising... that just makes you feel down... it becomes even harder to exercise... you feel even more down.

Break this vicious cycle today – wrap up warm and go outside (within guidelines, of course) or unwrap a bit indoors and do some exercises.

Play a big, bouncy, cheesy pop song and get dancing – Baby Shark anyone?

Little ideas for big mood boosting results

- Exercise and be as active as you can
- Make sure you get a good night's sleep
- Eat healthily
- Steer clear of alcohol, smoking and drugs
- Never forget sunlight is important
- Make time for something you enjoy
- Give yourself a break from social media and screens
- Avoid negativity online and make sure you stick to reliable news and information sources only.

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finding life's balance.

Coaching for Life Health & Wellness

Assisting change in health, habits & behaviours such as anxiety, stress, depression & anger.

Walking Sessions
Online Sessions
Indoor Sessions

07972542138
info@pkgcoaching.com
www.pkgcoaching.com

Support in Mind Scotland Lochaber Support Service

Offering support with mental health for individuals and their families in Lochaber

- Build Confidence
- Develop Better Self-Management Skills
- Learn New Coping Strategies.

Get in touch with us:
Cothrom Resource Centre
An- Aird, Fort William
Tel: 07739216457
Tel: 01397 700574
(landline not currently manned due to Covid restrictions)
Email: enicolson@supportinmindscotland.org.uk

support in mind scotland
action for people affected by mental illness



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 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.

BANKS

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

BANK OF SCOTLAND PLC
Mon-Fri 9.30am-2pm

NATIONWIDE BUILDING SOCIETY
Mon-Tues 9am-2pm
Wed 10am-2pm, Thur-Fri 9am-2pm

ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND PLC
Mon-Fri 10am-3pm

TSB
Mon-Tues 9.30am-1pm
Wed 10am-1pm
Thur-Fri 9.30am-1pm

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

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!

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.
Fresh shellfish and fish
Tel: 01631 562358

DOUGIE DANS 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
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

TASTE OF ARGYLL
Mon-Sat 10am-5pm
Tel: 07882 226675

THE OBAN BEER SELLER
Tel: 07796 418973
/ Email: obanbeerseller@gmail.com

OBAN FOOD HUB
Order online by midnight Tuesdays
www.thegreatbritishfoodhub.com/hubs/oban-1, collect Thursdays between 4pm and 6pm from Scout Hut behind Cathedral. Safe pick up.

LEGAL, PROPERTY & INSURANCE

ANDERSON BANKS SOLICITORS & ESTATE AGENTS
Open 9am-5pm
Oban Office: 01631 563158 Email: info@andersonbanks.co.uk
Benbecula office: 01870 602061 Email: uist@andersonbanks.co.uk

E THORNTON & CO
Answering machine service.
Telephone: 01631 566 771
Email: info@ethornton.co.uk

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 & BROTCHE
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

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

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

What qualifies as essential

So the Scottish Government is quite clear on the stay at home message, however you are permitted to go out for essential services. A list of essential retail can be found on the gov.scot website and handy to know, building merchants and suppliers of products/tools used in building work and repairs is permitted. Please check retailers' websites before travelling.

An Oban business which has helped keep the wheels of construction turning during the pandemic has said it has been a 'privilege' to support customers.

Highland Fasteners, of 23-25

Stevenson Street, which has kept open during both lockdowns has helped provide a vital service to both local tradesmen and major organisations such as the NHS, Scottish Water and Scottish Gas, depending on its quality workwear and tools.

In spite of the latest lockdown, the construction sector has to keep going with local housing developments sorely needed, and tradesmen needing to fix urgent household repairs, explained Sean Murdoch, a co-director in the business and in charge of sales.

Sean said: 'It has been a privilege to stay open and support them.'

BUILDING, DIY, HOME, GARDEN

BUILDBASE

Lynn Road, Oban
Mon-Fri 7.30am-5pm
Sat 8am-12pm
Specializing in timbers and heavy side goods
Tel: 01631 570518
CITY PLUMBING SUPPLIES
7E Glengallan Rd, Oban
Mon-Fri 7.30am - 5pm
Sat 8am-12pm
Order by telephone or email.
Bathroom showroom open by virtual appointment.
Tel: 01631 567640
CITY ELECTRICAL FACTORS
Unit 7, Tweed Mill, Soroba Rd, Oban
Mon-Fri 7.30am-5.30pm,
Sat 8.30am-12pm
www.cef.co.uk
Tel: 01631 562362

CRAIGARD DÉCOR

Craigard Road, Oban
Mon - Fri 9.00am - 5.30pm
Sat 9am-1pm
To place an order please telephone the shop
Email: antonycave@aol.com
Tel: 01631 562680

HIGHLAND FASTENERS

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

HIRE & SUPPLIES

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

HOMEBASE

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

KINLOCHLAICH GARDEN CENTRE

Appin
Orders for collection or delivery
Plants include vegetables, fruit,



IN ASSOCIATION WITH

Oban Business Improvement District

www.bid4oban.co.uk



Essential retail?

Oban is a community town and it has been great to see everybody rallying round and helping each other.'

The business provide fasteners and fixings to the construction trade, as well as power tools and workwear. Housing developments have been permitted to carry on essential works and maintenance during the second lockdown after on-site work was halted during the first lockdown announced in March 2020.

The eye-catching premises has been made fully Covid-secure with all the vital safety protocols in place from two-metre social distancing indicators, sanitising

stations, reminders to sanitise, and its five staff all wearing face coverings.

Highland Fasteners is open six days a week from Monday to Friday between 7.30am-5pm. On Saturdays it opens between 8am-12 noon.

You can get in touch on 01631 570 584 or alternatively its website at <https://highlandfasteners.com/> also provides a click and collect service for customers to order and then pick up. It will also deliver free on certain orders within a radius of around 20-miles.

GARDENING & SERVICES

compost, shrubs, rhodos, azaleas, alpines, and bedding plants.
Tel: 07881 525754 / Email fiona@kinlochlaich.plus.com

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

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

SCREWFIX
Mill Lane, Oban
Click and Collect service available
Mon-Fri 7am-8pm
Sat 7am- 6pm
Sun 9am-4pm
www.screwfix.com
Tel: 03330 112112

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

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

NORIES FISH & CHIPS

Mon-Sun 11.30am-8.30pm
Tel: 01631 563736

KRONKS

Sat-Sun 10am-3pm
01631 358019

NORIES FISH & CHIPS

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

OBAN GRILLHOUSE

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

PIAZZA

Thur-Sun 5pm-8pm
Take away service for collection & delivery
Tel: 01631 563628 / Web www.piazzaoban.com

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

SERVICES & LOCAL ONLINE SALES

MATRIX COMPUTERS

Email 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

WEBSTERS OF OBAN PHOTOGRAPHIC CENTRE

Email: obanphotographic@btconnect.com
Tel: 01631 562917

SPORT AND FITNESS

OBAN CYCLES

Shop Wed-Sat, 10am-5pm
Email: obancycles1@gmail.com
Website: obancyclescotland.com
Tel: 01631 566033

TAXIS

For essential travel only

ARGYLL TAXIS

01631 565293

ETIVE TAXIS

01631 566880

LORN TAXIS

01631 564744

OBAN TAXIS

01631 564148/566676/564666

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

Mon-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

VETS AND PET SERVICES

OBAN VETERINARY SURGEONS

Visit via www.obanvets.co.uk for full Covid-19 guidelines with regard to our services

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

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.





the-bathroom-showroom.co.uk

THE
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SHOWROOM

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Planning an upgrade soon?

Bathroom showroom open by virtual appointments only
TEL: 01631 567640 www.cityplumbing.co.uk

BOILERS

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ALARMS

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HEATERS

PUMPS

FIRES & STOVES

COMMERCIAL HEATING &
PLUMBING

COMMERCIAL
ELECTRICAL

UNDERFLOOR HEATING

PLASTIC PLUMBING

COPPER & BRASSWARE

SOIL & WASTE

KITCHENS

BATHROOMS

COMMERCIAL & CARE

TAPS

SHOWERING

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

POWER TOOLS &
ACCESSORIES

HAND TOOLS & TRADE
ESSENTIALS

SEALANTS & ADHESIVE

CLEANING & HYGIENE

SPARES

DOMESTIC ELECTRICAL

driving FORCE

YOUR NU21 REG



Open for
business

The Oban Times
& WEST HIGHLAND TIMES

LOCHABER TIMES
& Oban Times

argyllshire
advertiser
Incorporating Campbeltown Courier

campbeltown
courier
Incorporating Argyllshire Advertiser

Showrooms and garages Open for Business

Although showrooms are closed, most are offering virtual tours and booked test drives. Contact your local dealers to find out more.

Need a service? No problem. Garages offer an essential service and are still open for bookings.

Buying a car can be the second biggest investment you will make. Choosing a new car is an exciting experience and having a clear idea of exactly what you are looking for can make the process much easier.

Whether you buy from a local dealer, a distant retailer, an online broker or via the internet, it pays to do your homework so you are in the best position to get a good deal. This means deciding what make and model you want, as well as any add-ons you need.

Once you have the facts and figures in front of you, it's time to talk to the dealer and negotiate your best price. Our guide will help you get the right car, with the right features for the right price, so read on and get inspired.



MUNRO'S
OF OBAN



MOTs • Servicing • Repairs

All makes of vehicle serviced and repaired.

Munro's of Oban, Lochavullin Ind. Estate, Oban PA34 4PL

Tel: 01631 564463

Email: munrosofoban@aol.com

Web: www.munrosofoban.co.uk



FIN'S PLACE

OPEN 9AM-5PM TO ASSIST YOU
WITH YOUR REPAIRS. PLEASE
BOOK AHEAD BY TELEPHONE

TIMING BELTS, EXHAUSTS, BRAKES,
CLUTCHES, BATTERIES, SERVICING, M.O.T,
REPAIRS, DIAGNOSTICS

11 OLD TWEEDMILL, OBAN
01631 566220 01766 757013

GUNN'S GARAGE



The
popular
Gunn's
Garage,
available for
servicing
and MOT
testing of
class IV,
V & VII
vehicles.

You can visit Gunn's Garage at: Tynribbie, Appin, Argyll PA38 4DB
or give them a call on... **01631 730 035 / 730 279**

West Coast **MOTORING**

✓ GARAGES ✓ DEALERSHIPS ✓ PRIVATE SALES ✓ NEWS

WANTED

All touring caravans and motor homes, campers etc, high mileage, MOT failures or damp, all considered, any make or model, will travel.

Tel: 07546 788945



WANTED

For immediate cash payment and free collection. All types of 4x4 vehicles, double cab & single cabs pickups. Shogun landrover defenders, Isuzu, Landcruiser, Navara, L200 Toyota Hilux, Discovery, any vehicle considered old or new. Any condition running or not. High miles, rotten chassis, or over heating top. so any condition. Price paid without any hassle we also buy motorhomes touring caravans and commercial vans and trucks.

Tel 07703490572
or email balgowan4wd@gmail.com
ask for Robert

WANTED

All types of motor homes and caravanettes. Any age or condition. We also buy water damaged or in need of repair. Also all types of touring caravans from 95 onwards.

T: 07885 203020
Email: gbplantsales@hotmail.co.uk

WANTED

All types of 4-wheel drive vehicles & pickups, Landrovers, Toyota, Mitsubishi, Kia, Ford and MOT failures, non-runners, etc. Will travel and collect.

T: 07546 788945

WANTED MOTOR HOMES

Caravanettes and camper vans, all makes and models considered. Also touring caravans and statics, instant decision, same day payment. Social distancing measures in place.

Contact William 07730 130284
email wlmotorhomes@outlook.com

WANTED 4X4S FOR CASH



WANTED ALL 4X4'S & COMMERCIAL VEHICLES

We buy for retail, breaking and export so no matter the age or condition we can make a cash offer. Young or old, all makes and models, engine problems, farm used, accident damaged, mot failures etc.

WON'T BE BEATEN ON PRICE,
FAST PAYMENT AND COLLECTION.
TEL: 07789 855381

MAZDA BT-50 4X4



88k miles
 7 months MOT
£3250 ono

07775 501658

WANTED 4X4

All types of 4x4's, Landrover Toyota, Nissan etc. We also buy MOT failures and accident damage vehicles. Anything considered.

T: 07885 203020 or
E: gbplantsales@hotmail.co.uk

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**NEW
 CAR
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 PH7 4BQ
 Tel.01764 652125
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www.suzuki.co.uk/gordonmotors


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www.wdsemple.com
 Inveraray Shore Street
 Tel.01499 302150
 Lochgilphead
 Highbank Park
 01546 606767/ 606272


ISUZU
 S & S Services
 Old Bridge Road,
 Heathfield, Ayr
 01292 880080
 01292 880440


Great Wall
 S & S Services
 Old Bridge Road,
 Heathfield, Ayr
 01292 880080
 01292 880440


SUBARU
 S & S Services
 Old Bridge Road,
 Heathfield, Ayr
 01292 880080/880440

S&S SERVICES SUBARU ISUZU

SCOTLANDS NO1 SUBARU AND ISUZU DEALER

Facelifted Subaru XV available to order in the UK from March

- The facelifted version of the Subaru XV is available from March 1 2021.
- Compact Crossover powered by a 2.0 litre horizontally-opposed petrol engine with motor-assist e-BOXER technology with a choice of SE or SE Premium trim levels.
- Comes with permanent Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive as standard.
- Facelift XV has a new exterior design focusing on a more sporty and rugged look. It also sees the introduction of two new vivid and unique colours: Plasma Yellow and Horizon Blue.
- Now equipped with extra engineering and advanced driver assist technology for improved comfort, driveability and safety, all included as standard.
- Customers can purchase the facelifted version at the same price as the outgoing model.

- Subaru XV received 4x4 Magazine's Crossover Estate of the Year 2021' for the second time.
- Awarded the maximum 5-star Euro NCAP safety rating.

Subaru's revised popular compact crossover features extra engineering technology, a few exterior design tweaks and even more driver assist safety systems.

Subaru is pleased to launch the facelifted version of the XV crossover in the UK. It is available to order in all official dealerships from March 1, with prices starting from £31,665 – the same price as the current model.

Buyers can choose from two trim levels – SE or SE Premium. Standard equipment on both trims include Permanent Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive, Subaru's bespoke EyeSight driver assistance safety technology, automatic LED headlights equipped with high beam assist, 18" alloy wheels, heated front seats, an



intuitive 8" multifunction colour touchscreen with Apple CarPlay™ and Android Auto™ plus Keyless Entry and Push Button Start System.

Customers can upgrade to the SE Premium for £33,665 which includes all the aforemen-

tioned equipment, along with leather seats, 8-way power adjustable driver seat, satellite navigation and sunroof.

Speak to S&S Services on 01292 880080 to find out more.

ORDER YOUR NU21REG TODAY – MANY SPECIAL OFFERS AVAILABLE

JUST WHAT YOU NEED IN THIS WEATHER



SAVE £££ ON A NEW OUTBACK AVAILABLE IN STOCK.



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3 YEAR OR 60,000 MILES WARRANTY



OUTBACK COMES WITH 4-WHEEL DRIVE AS STANDARD. SPEAK TO OUR TEAM TODAY.

CLICK & COLLECT* NOW AVAILABLE

TRADE IN AND TRADE UP



SAVE £2,500 WHEN YOU TRADE IN YOUR 2-WHEEL DRIVE FOR A 4-WHEEL DRIVE FORESTER.



WINTER SPECIAL OFFER ENDS 31ST MARCH



3 YEAR OR 60,000 MILES WARRANTY

FORESTER COMES WITH 4-WHEEL DRIVE AS STANDARD. SPEAK TO OUR TEAM TODAY.

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SUPPORTING THE PEOPLE OF ARGYLL FOR OVER 30 YEARS

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TEL: 01292 880080 or JOHN: 07831 808702

All-New Isuzu D-Max crowned 2021 Pick-Up Of The Year by 4x4 Magazine

The All-New Isuzu D-Max has won its first UK award after eclipsing all the competition at the 4x4 Magazine awards. Judges at the specialist off-road publication were awestruck by its high levels of comfort and even greater capabilities and deservedly crowned the newcomer '2021 Pick-Up Of The Year'.

Isuzu has a solid reputation in the UK for providing tough, practical and proficient vehicles. The All-New D-Max inherits Isuzu's unmistakable workhorse DNA, with an even stronger chassis, and adds greater levels of refinement, safety and off-road capabilities.

After a conducting a comprehensive driving appraisal, testing the safety equipment and comparing its specification with the competitors, the esteemed panel was convinced there was only one worthy winner and bestowed the coveted title on the All-New Isuzu D-Max.

The judges were particularly impressed by the new model's comfortable interior, refined

driving characteristics, sleek dashboard design and new infotainment systems, which include a 9-inch touchscreen display on the top-of-the-range model.

Alan Kidd, Editor at 4x4 Magazine, commented: 'This D-Max is far more refined to drive on the road. It's smoother and quieter at all speeds, with steering and suspension that disguise its size. Its cabin is a quantum leap forward with cutting-edge electronics mounted on a superb looking dash.'



As the UK's only 4x4 and Pick-Up Magazine, its dedicated readership of off-road enthusiasts will also be interested in the D-Max's even stronger chassis, faster engaging shift-on-the-fly 4WD system and the rear diff-lock, which is now standard on All-Purpose and Adventure range models.

The increased refinement, safety and comfort of the All-New Isuzu D-Max hasn't compromised Isuzu's renowned practicality, with the new model offering a 3.5t towing

capacity and a maximum payload of more than one tonne. Power is derived from an efficient, Euro 6D compliant diesel engine, which produces up to 164PS and 360Nm of torque.

Customers have a wide range of models to choose from including 4x2 or 4x4, a 6-speed manual or automatic transmission, three cab types - single, extended and double cab - and four new trim levels.

Each new model comes with a 125,000 mile/ five year warranty and five years UK and European roadside assistance.

Achieving a maximum five-star rating in the new rigorous Euro NCAP test, the All-New Isuzu D-Max has come to S&S services early, offering customers a chance to test drive. Come and experience the new range. Call 01292 880080 to book your place.

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ORDER THE AWARD-WINNING PEUGEOT 5008 AND e2008 FROM CAMPBELTOWN MOTOR COMPANY 01586 552030

PEUGEOT has continued its impressive start to 2021 with double success at the 2021 Company Car Today CCT100 Awards. The new PEUGEOT 5008 was named 'SUV of the Year', while the e-208 took home the 'Electric Car of the Year' title.

The new PEUGEOT 5008 is celebrating a remarkable fourth successive win as Company Car Today's 'SUV of the Year' with this year's title, while the PEUGEOT e-208's win takes its medal haul up to six over the last 12 months, on top of the fully electric model being named European 'Car of the Year' alongside its petrol and diesel counterpart.

Company Car Today selects category winners from the CCT100 list – its rundown of the 100 best fleet vehicles. The CCT100 list is built after the expert judging panel evaluate models based on 13 key criteria including running costs, efficiency, practicality and car park appeal.

The new PEUGEOT 5008 impressed judges once again, thanks to its spacious modular interior with seven independent seats fitted as standard and practical cabin that features the award-winning PEUGEOT i-Cockpit®. The latter features the latest connectivity and safety technologies, including the option of Night Vision*, which is unique in the segment, Autonomous Emergency Braking and Active Blind Spot Detection, standard from Allure trim level upwards).

Its efficient choice of PureTech petrol and



Blue HDi diesel engines also helps keep fuel costs down for fleet operators. The e-208 impressed Company Car Today judges with its zero-emissions range, eye-catching design and high levels of technology to take home the 'Electric Car of the Year' title.

The e-208 was the first new generation, fully electric vehicle from PEUGEOT and features a 50kWh battery connected to a 100kW (136hp) electric motor and is capable of up to 217 miles WLTP from a single charge.

Supporting up to 100kW rapid charging, an 80 per cent charge can be completed in 30 minutes – making it ideal for fleet users. Its 0 per cent BIK rate also helps businesses save even further.

Paul Barker, Editor at Company Car Today, said: 'A pair of wins for PEUGEOT this year illustrates the brand's continued progress, with the excellent new e-208 showing electric cars can be sensible, cost-effective to run and high quality.'

'The 5008's recent revision makes what was already a multiple CCT100 award winner

even better, adding more striking looks to an efficient and practical package.' Steve Wass, Marketing Director of PEUGEOT UK, said: 'I am extremely happy to hear the news of the support for our range from Company Car Today. The PEUGEOT 5008's impressive run in winning a fourth consecutive 'SUV of the Year' title is testament to the hard work all of our team put into developing our model range.'

'This is an extremely exciting period for PEUGEOT as we are continuing to work towards making that all-important transition towards electrification. The PEUGEOT e-208 has received really high praise since it first

launched and it is great to add the recognition of the Company Car Today team to its trophy cabinet.'

The PEUGEOT e-208 and the new PEUGEOT 5008 are available to buy in store with PEUGEOT retailers and via PEUGEOT Buy Online, where customers can configure and order their vehicle entirely online.

PEUGEOT Buy Online makes purchasing a car online simple and convenient, allowing customers to configure their vehicle, obtain a part exchange valuation, personalise their finance and complete their purchase, all from the comfort of their own home.



UNBEATABLE OFFERS FROM CAMPBELTOWN MOTOR COMPANY ON YOUR NEW PEUGEOT

PEUGEOT Campbeltown Motor Company is offering amazing savings as part of the Peugeot 'Exclusively For You' campaign. The limited-time offer is available alongside PEUGEOT's current Service Plan offer which gives new car buyers a free three-year/30,000 mile service plan when purchasing.

PEUGEOT's Service Plan offer runs until the March 31 2021 and covers the servicing costs for the first three years, or 30,000 miles, saving buyers up to £750, depending on vehicle chosen. The Service Plan offer is available across

the entire PEUGEOT passenger car range, including the new 3008 and new 5008 models.

The award-winning new PEUGEOT 5008 has impressed a host of industry experts with its spacious modular interior holding seven independent seats fitted as standard and practical cabin featuring the intuitive PEUGEOT i-Cockpit®.

The PEUGEOT i-Cockpit® provides the SUV range with the latest connectivity and safety technologies, including Night Vision^, Adaptive Cruise Control and Lane Position Assist^^.

Julie David, Managing Director of PEUGEOT UK, said: 'Servicing costs are one of the big fixed costs for new car owners but with our Service Plan offer, we ensure no buyer pays for their first three years or 30,000 miles of service.'

'Combined with our 'Exclusively for You' offer, there are some fantastic offers currently available to help buyers into a new PEUGEOT – all from the comfort of their home.'

Customers can access PEUGEOT's Service Plan and Exclusively For You offers by calling Campbeltown Motor Company on

01586 552030 or buyers can order and purchase their next car entirely online, allowing them to personalise their finance products, get a part exchange valuation and even arrange click and collection or free home delivery for their new car.

The Service Plan offer and Exclusively For You discounts are available for retail customers ordering a PEUGEOT vehicle online before March 31 2021.

Visit www.campbeltownmotorcompany.co.uk to start your new car experience today.





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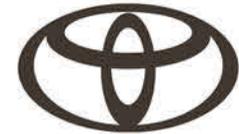
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Around the markets

United Auctions Stirling, Thursday February 11: sold 5560 prime sheep comprising of 4218 prime hogs selling to an average of 274.39ppk & 1315 ewes and rams.

Old Season Lambs (4218) – Easter Ochtermuthill (BTex) £170.00, £169.00 & £168.00; Doune Farms x2 & Luckenburn (BTex) £168.00; Doune Farms (BTex) £166.00; Newton of Crathie (Cont) £164.00 East Bracklinn (Tex) £169.00; Wardhead, Head of Balglass, Bordie & Harviesmailing (Tex) £160.00; Parkhill (Tex) £159.00, £158.00 & £157.00; Wardhead (Tex) £156.00; West Teuchan (Suf) £138.00 & £133.00; Easter Craigduckie (Suf) £130.00; Wester Arngibbon (Suf) £129.00; South Moorhouse (Cha) £129.00; Inverae (Cha) £128.00; West Wood (Chev) £129.00; Strathoich (Chev) £127.00; Pityot x2, Wardhead & North Kinkell (Chev) £123.00; North Deanhead (BF) £119.50; Middleton of

Glassclune (BF) £118.00; Cadogan (BF) £117.50; Coulshill (Mule) £118.50; Auchentrivoch (Mule) £117.50; Muirside of Kinneddar (Mule) £117.00. Old Season Lambs (4218) – Easter Ochtermuthill (BTex) 402.00ppk; Doune Farms (BTex) 391.00ppk & 388.00ppk; Easter Ochtermuthill x2 & Luckenburn (BTex) 378.00ppk; Wardhead (Tex) 381.00ppk; Harviesmailing (Tex) 372.00ppk; Parkhill (Tex) 367.00ppk; Wardhead & Easter Craigduckie (Tex) 363.00ppk; South Moorhouse (Cha) 302.00ppk; West Park (Cha) 270.00ppk; West Teuchan (Suf) 298.00ppk; Wardhead (Suf) 288.00ppk & 287.00ppk; Milnbank (Suf) 285.00ppk; North Kinkell (Chev) 282.00ppk; Pityot & Wardhead (Chev) 281.00ppk; West Wood, Park & Calfward 280.00ppk; Tay & Torridon (BF) 274.00ppk; Elmscleugh (BF) 273.00ppk; North Deanhead (BF) 271.00ppk & 269.00ppk;

Shannachar (Mule) 266.00ppk; Auchentrivoch (Mule) 262.00ppk; Ballingall Mill (Mule) 261.00ppk. Ewes (1315) – Valleyview (Tex) £164.00 & £160.00; West Mains (Tex) £152.00; West Teuchan (Suf) £134.00; Golland (TexX) £136.00; Fass (TexX) £125.00; Old Mill of Schivas (TexX) £122.00; Fintalich (TexX) £122.00; Muirside of Kinneddar (BTex) £122.00; Lower Tarr (Cont) £120.00; Muirside of Kinneddar (Cont) £118.00; West Teuchan (SufX) £119.00; Sauchans (Cha) £110.00; Sauchrie Mains (Mule) £102.00; Castlehill, Glenehervie & Fintalich x2 (Mule) £96.00; Old Mill of Schivas (Chev) £95.00; Loanhead of Duchally (Chev) £81.00; Inch Cottage (Chev/Mule) £90.00; Glenhead (BF) £79.00; Sauchrie Mains (BF) £78.50; Assloss (BF) £77.50. Tups – North Deanhead (BF) £136.00; Middleton of Glassclune (Tex) £124.00 & £109.00; Glenehervie (Suf) £119.00; South Ailey (Chev) £101.00; Middleton of Glassclune (BF) £89.00; North Deanhead (BF) £81.00.

Caledonian Marts Ltd, Thursday February 11: sold 159 Cattle comprising of 59 Bullocks, Heifers & Young Bulls and 51 OTM Cattle. All classes a lot dearer due to numbers being short for all buyers requirements. Prime Bullocks averaged 227.8p per kg @ 626kg. Prime Heifers averaged 239.7p per kg @ 573kg. Prime Heifers sold to 258ppkg for a Limousin from W Dandie & Sons, Learielaw, Broxburn purchased by G Kirk & Sons, Butchers, Denny and to £1587 for a Limousin from D & L Graham, Mains of Burnbank, Blairdrummond purchased by H A Black & Sons, Butchers, Stirling. Prime Bullocks sold to 255ppkg for a Limousin on two occasions from Learielaw and J & J Wyllie, Knockhouse, Fife both purchased by T Johnston, Butchers, Falkirk and to £1616 for a Limousin from W Dandie & Son, Learielaw, Broxburn again purchased by T Johnston, Butchers, Falkirk.

Bulls (Under 30 Months) sold to £1708 for a Limousin from D & L Graham, Mains of Burnbank, Blairdrummond. **Other Leading Prices:** Heifers per Kg 252p Moorfield 250p Faskine (Three Times), Moorfield & Mains of Burnbank 248p Pitcairn 245p Mains of Burnbank, Knockhouse & Nethermyres Bullocks per Kg 248p Learielaw 245p & 240p Herdmanston 238p Knockhouse & Molemount 235p Molemount 230p Nethermyres, Molemount (Twice) & Malletsheugh Heifers per Head £1567 Pitcairn £1480 Learielaw & Malletsheugh £1431 Moorfield £1430 Mains of Burnbank £1415 Faskine £1396 Knockhouse Bullocks per Head £1577 Herdmanston £1547 Learielaw

£1527 Nethermyres £1518 Moorfield £1500 Blairgorts & Knockhouse £1486 Herdmanston Also forward were 51 OTM Cattle. OTM's averaged 141ppkg selling to 173ppkg for a Limousin from J McAlister, West Thomaston, Banknock and to £1450 for the same animal. Dairy Cows averaged 108ppkg selling to 115ppkg from T Greer, Wharlawhill, Fossoy and to £730 from J & J Kinloch, Walton, Cross. Other Leading Prices Beef OTMs per Kg 161p West Thomaston 160p Thornlea Farming 159p Castlehill (McNeill) 153p Callendoune Beef OTMs per Head £1330 Callendoune £1290 West Thomaston £1200 Castlehill £1190 Wharlawhill Dairy Cows per Head £720 Walton £700 Wharlawhill



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Crush Gate optional extra £599.00 + VAT.
As standard, our Mobile Cattle System comes with a 60 feet holding pen and 20 feet race, 1 sliding gate and all joining pins/stakes included. Our system will safely hold 45 full grown cattle (approx.)

MAIN FEATURES:

- Made from high-tensile steel
- All hurdles are 6 railed x 1.75m high
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PUBLIC NOTICES

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

The Royal Bank of Scotland plc of 36 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh EH2 2AD is applying for a licence to use Argyll Commercial, Glenshellach Terrace, Oban PA34 4BL as an operating centre for 1 goods vehicle and 0 trailers.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's Office.

CROFTING COMMISSION COIMISEAN NA CROITEARACHD DECROFTING APPLICATION

1. A Langley, 5
Cornaigmore
0.26 ha, Site for a dwelling
house (106323)

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 19/03/2021 at info@crofting.gov.scot / Crofting Commission, Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW.

DECROFTING DIRECTIONS ISSUED

1. M Holmes, 1 Upper
Carnach
0.013 ha, Amenity ground,
Fencing/use conditions
(106030)

2. IA Maclean, 206
Acharacle Fillans Cottage,
0.08 ha, Existing House
Site, with fencing
conditions (105456)

Full details at www.crofting.scotland.gov.uk

LETTING OF CROFT TENANCY

Sheila Ogilvie of Keppoch, Taynuilt PA35 1JR is applying to let the tenancy of part of Croft 1 Airs Bay, Ardchattan & Mucknairn to Dugald McDougall, also of Keppoch, Taynuilt PA35 1JR.

Written comments from those with a relevant interest (which may be made public) to: Crofting Commission, Leachkin Road, Inverness IV3 8NW, info@crofting.scotland.gov.uk by 25 March, 2021.

Argyll and Bute Council

PLANNING

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

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

Ref. No.	Proposal	Site Address
20/01961/PP	Erection of 2 chalets and siting of 2 glamping pods for holiday let purposes	Land Between Leafield And Rivendell, Ardmore Road, Salen, Isle Of Mull, Argyll And Bute
21/00090/PPP	Renewal of planning permission in principle reference 18/00119/PPP (Site for the erection of dwellinghouse)	Land North Of Ballygowan Farm (Plot 2), Glenlonan, Oban, Argyll And Bute
20/02168/PP	Erection of dwellinghouse, installation of sewage treatment plant and formation of access	Land North East Of Lower Achachenna, Kilchrenan, Taynuilt, Argyll And Bute
20/02169/PP	Erection of telecommunications equipment compound with 13 metre high monopole and associated works	Land Adjacent To Mast South East Of Balmeanach, (off The B8035), Tioran, Isle Of Mull, Argyll And Bute
20/02279/PP	Alterations, extension and conversion of steading to form dwellinghouse, installation of septic tank and formation of vehicular access	Land East Of Dalmaclare, Ulva Ferry, Isle Of Mull, Argyll And Bute
21/00109/PP	Change of use of offices to flat	132 George Street, Oban, Argyll And Bute, PA34 5NU
21/00089/PPP	Renewal of planning permission in principle reference 18/00118/PPP (Site for the erection of dwellinghouse)	Land North West Of Ballygowan Farm (Plot 1), Glenlonan, Oban, Argyll And Bute
21/00180/LIB	Replacement of existing paving	Duart Castle, Lochdon, Isle Of Mull, Argyll And Bute, PA64 6AP
20/02339/PP	Demolition of building and erection of boatshed and associated works	Bendoran Shore Cottage, Bunnellan, Isle Of Mull, Argyll And Bute, PA67 6DU
21/00107/PP	Erection of 2 business units (Class 4)	Land East Of 1 And 2 Colonsay Business Units, Dunoran, Scalasaig, Isle Of Colonsay, Argyll And Bute
20/02124/PP	Variation of condition 2 relative to planning permission 14/00720/PP. Extended opening hours for take away food service from 8am to 11pm Monday to Sunday (inclusive)	The Munchie Box, Main Street, Bowmore, Isle Of Islay, Argyll And Bute, PA43 7JH

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.

To find out more about living and working in Argyll & Bute visit us at:
www.argyll-bute.gov.uk
Comhairle Earra - Ghàidheal agus Bhòid



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. 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.

www.highland.gov.uk



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

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

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

Reference Number	Development Address	Proposal Description
20/03778/FUL	Boyd Brothers (Haulage) Ltd Annat Pier, Corpach, Fort William	Erection of temporary storage building
21/00538/FUL	Cnoc Fraoch Kinloids, Arisaig	Erection of managers house and smokehouse building with associated parking
21/00303/PIP	Land 65M NE of Nightingale House, Arisaig	Erection of house
20/05058/FUL	Litua, Arisaig	Erection of agricultural building

Time period for comments is 14 days

ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX
Email: eplanning@highland.gov.uk

CATCHMENT LTD

CONSTRUCTION OF AN OUTFALL PIPE AT LOCH LINNHE, FORT WILLIAM PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION

Notice is hereby given that Catchment Ltd intends to apply to the Scottish Ministers for a marine licence to construct a new outfall pipe to replace the existing Caol Transfer WwPS outfall, part of the Fort William Drainage Operating Area (DOA) Grid Reference 'NN 10842 75690'. The proposed works are to abandon the existing Caol No1 WwPS (Caol No1) and Caol Transfer WwPS (Caol Transfer) outfalls and divert the flow to the new Caol Transfer pipe via the Caol No1 land gravity pipe.

The pre-application consultation event will take place online via the video conferencing application 'Teams'. The event will take place on 1 April 2021 starting at 7pm. The event will provide an opportunity for the public and stakeholders to consider and comment on the prospective application.

If you wish to make representations on the proposed development please contact Alexia Chapman by email, PC1651@project.rhdhv.com by 29 March 2021. Event invite and information on the development will be provided by email.

Please note that comments made to Catchment Ltd are not representations to the Scottish Ministers. Once the marine licence application is submitted there will be an opportunity for representations to be made to the Scottish Ministers on the application.

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DEATHS

BROWN - Unexpectedly at Lochside Care Home, Helensburgh, on January 25, 2021, Marie Flora Brown, née Fraser, in her 80th year, of Soroba House, Ardfern and formerly of The Monachs, Nerabus, Isle of Islay and Benbecula. Dearly loved wife of Ronnie Brown, and much loved mother of Audrey, Fergus and Ewen. Adored Granny of Archie, George, Findlay, Callaghan, Honor, Holly, Ronnie and Frank. A private funeral service will take place at Kilvaree Cemetery, Ardfern, on Friday, February 26, 2021. For those wishing to pay their respects, the funeral cortege will pass through Ardfern Village at approximately 11.30am, departing Craignish Parish Church, Ardfern at 11.40am.

BROWN - Ian George Brown (Tosh), of Oban, passed away peacefully on Thursday, February 11, 2021 at home, George was 72. He was born on January 6, 1949 in London to Robert Lister Brown and

Annie MacDonald Brown, George, brother to Robert Duncan Brown. He attended Rockfield Primary School prior to Oban High School. In 1968 he married Marion Sinclair, and together they had four children, Robert, Malcolm, Ian and Alan. George worked as a builder for all his working life before retiring through ill health in 2015, George will be greatly missed not just by his family, but by all who knew him.

CLARK - Sadly on Tuesday, February 9, 2021, Jimmy Clark passed away peacefully at Longsdale Terrace, Oban. Sadly missed by all. Due to current restrictions a private funeral service will be held. Family flowers only.

CRAIG - Suddenly at his home, on January 22, 2021, Matthew Harper Craig, in his 88th year, of Failte, Lochgair. Beloved son of the late Matthew Craig and Mary Jane MacVicar. Dear brother of the late John, Maisie, Elspeth and Sheena. A dearly loved uncle and great-uncle. A good neighbour and dear friend to many. A private funeral

service will be held at Kilevin Cemetery, Crarae on Monday, March 1, 2021. For those wishing to pay their respects, the funeral cortege will pass through Lochgair Village at approximately 12 noon. Please observe social distancing.

MACINTYRE - Donald Roderick (Ruaridh). Beloved husband of Mairead and much loved dad and papa, passed away peacefully at home in his 89th year, after a long illness bravely fought. Forever in our hearts and thoughts. Family flowers only please. Donations in lieu of flowers can be made directly to Cancer Research UK if desired.

MACKENZIE - Fort William and Corby. It is with great sadness that the family of Roddy announces his peaceful passing on January 27, 2021 at home in Corby, aged 89. Beloved husband of Pat, dear brother, brother-in-law and uncle of Winnifred, Charlie and family.

MALCOLM - C.A.R. (Kim). Died peacefully, following a long illness, in the Belford Hospital on Thursday, February

11, 2021, aged 88. A much loved husband, father, grandfather, great grandfather. Will be missed by all the family, friends and the whole community. The funeral will be held at St Adamnan's Church, Duror on Friday, February 26, 2021 at 1pm. Covid restrictions do not allow attendance. Family flowers only. Donations if desired to Belford Hospital, c/o Duncan Gunn funeral directors, Appin.

McKELLAR - Suddenly at home on Friday, February 12, 2021, Dunstan (Don), aged 82. Beloved husband of Mary (née MacDonald), loving dad to Kirsteen and Cameron, much loved Grampa and Papa to Calum, Fergus and Wee Calum. Dear brother and uncle. Sorely missed.

McMILLAN - Peacefully at the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban, on December 30, 2020, Mary Bertram, in her 88th year, 7 Craigard Apartments, Oban and formerly of Shore Road, Carradale, dearly beloved wife of the late Donald McMillan (Donlie) and much loved aunt.

MILLAR - Morag, died peacefully at Hillside Nursing Home, Paisley on Monday, February 8, 2021. Loving sister to Flora, sister-in-law to Dale and aunt to Iain and family in Perth, Australia. A burial service will be held at Kilbrandon Cemetery, Balvicar, Argyll on Monday, February 22.

WILLIAMSON - Peacefully at the Belford Hospital, Fort William on February 14, 2021. Elizabeth (Libby) aged 80, a much loved mum to Harvey and Jason and daughters-in-law Juliet and Daisy, a cherished grandmother to five grandsons and a dear friend to many, who will be deeply missed by all who knew her. The funeral service will take place in private on Friday, February 26. The family ask that those who wish to pay their respects do so as we pause at the large car park beside the Moorings Hotel at around 12.30pm. Family flowers only please. Donations can be made directly to Friends of Nevis via their website if desired. A celebration of Libby's life will take place at a later date.

YOUNG - (Inverness). After a long and worthwhile life, spent in the service of others, Miss Lexie Young passed away at the advanced age of 96 years. The eldest of three children born to the late Alexander and Lily, she outlived both her brother Norman and sister Sybil by some years. Mourned by kin both here in Scotland and abroad, she is survived by her nephew and nieces and their immediate family. Her funeral took place on Monday, February 15, and she was laid to rest close by her late sister and brother-in-law in Morefield Cemetery in the Parish of Lochbroom, Ross-shire. Arrangements by John Fraser & Son of Chapel Street, Inverness.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EVANS - Janet, Jane and Claire wish to thank all relatives, neighbours and friends near and far for the beautiful flowers, letters and condolence cards following the sudden death of our beloved Lloyd. Sincere thanks to Catriona for her support and advice, to Father James MacNeil for a comforting service, Rev Cringles (organ) Jamie MacGregor (piper) and Emma MacGregor (reading) also all those who paid their respects on Soroba Road, outside the Cathedral and Corran Halls. Heartfelt thanks to all. God Bless and keep safe.

LEECH - Carol and family sincerely thank the carers, all at our hospital and medical centre for the skilled care and kindness for Bill, for which he was most grateful, particularly thanking Hilary Brown and Dr Anne Kjerrstrom. Thanks to Hamish Hoey's, especially Catriona, for caring guidance and professionalism. Thanks to those who paid their respects to Bill and for the many tributes and comforting messages. Heartfelt appreciation to Rev. Andy Campbell and Rev. Dugald Cameron for thoughtful services, to Alex Clark for moving eulogy and Emily D'Silva for the recording. Bill will be so much missed.

MACCOLL - The family of the late Angus MacColl (Innes) would like to thank all of their relatives, friends and neighbours for their kind sympathy and support following our sad loss. All cards, flowers and home baking were much appreciated. Special thanks to Rev. Amanda Fairclough for a lovely service at St Adamnan's Church. Duncan Gunn for his kind professionalism in arranging the funeral. Kerr Jameson for playing the organ

and Innes's nephew Angus MacColl for playing the pipes at the cemetery. Thank you also to all at Moss Park Care Home. Lastly thank you to all our friends for lining the road from the church to the cemetery. Innes will be sadly missed by us all.

MACDONALD - Alistair. Rosalin and the family of the late Alistair MacDonald, Glencoe who passed away unexpectedly but peacefully on February 2, 2021 at Ian Charles Hospital, Grantown on Spey would like to express their thanks to Beth and Jamie and all staff at Manson and MacBeath for their professionalism and empathy in the arrangements of the funeral service at Duror Cemetery on February 10, 2021. Also Donald MacKinnon who delivered a comforting service at Duror, the talented piper James Rosie, the beautiful floral tribute from MacDonald Bros, the representatives from the Scots Guards Regiment and to all who turned out on the day in Glencoe and at Duror to say farewell to Alistair. Also to piper John McCallum who stood and piped by the roadside at Ballachulish as Alistair made his final journey to Duror. The family appreciates all the cards, flowers, gifts and expressions of sympathy from family, friends, neighbours and from further afield.

MEMORIALS

CAMPBELL - In loving memory of Ina Lawrie, who passed away February 14, 2017. A loving and much loved mum and dear partner of Joe. Always in our heart. "Oidhche mhath ma tha". - Ewen, Iain, Gemma and Eilidh.

GOURLAY - Precious memories of John (Johnny), a dear husband and father who passed away February 22, 1991.

Thirty years have passed but still sadly missed and always in our thoughts.

- Love Jessie, Gordon, Ken, Alison and family.

MACAULAY - Precious memories of Ian, a loving husband, dad and grampa, who passed away on February 20, 2013, also remembering loved ones gone before in Islay and Stornoway.

You always had a smile to share
A laugh, a joke and time to care

A wonderful nature warm and true

Are the precious memories we have of you.

- Mary, Neil, John and Ginah, Oban, Bulgaria and Cambodia.

FUNERAL DIRECTORS

MEMORIALS

MACDONALD - Treasured memories of our beloved mother, gran and great-gran, Margaret MacDonald, who passed away on February 21, 2005.

Sorely missed.
Carson ma ta bhios shibh ri bron
Mar dhream gun dochas mor
Am bheil sa bhas ach teachdair sith
Gan gairm gu rioghachd na gloir

- Inserted by her loving daughters Maryflora, Sandra, May Margaret and families.

MATHERS - In memory of a dear sister and aunty, Vicky Mathers, who sadly passed away February 23, 2015.

Family bonds may fall apart,
When someone is lost, so close to your heart,
But time, it can heal, to end the pain,
Hearts can mend, and love once again.

Forever in our hearts,
- Becca, Alex, Katie & Joe xxx

McPHAIL - In loving memory of our dear dad Charlie, who passed away on February 16, 2017 and our dear mum, Mary, who passed away on April 3, 2004. Sadly missed.

Forever in our thoughts
- John, Sheonaid and Drew, Dalmally
Love and miss you always
Grandpa and Granny.

- Elizabeth and Andrew xxxxx

ROBERTSON - In memory of my husband Tom, who passed away February 18, 2011.

Always remembered.
- Jean.

Tribute to War and Peace Museum's Bill Leech

Tributes have been paid to Bill Leech, founder, curator and chairperson of Oban's War and Peace Museum who has died aged 82.

With plans to commemorate his name in the museum, Mr Leech will be missed by many people and organisations in the town.

The eulogy at his funeral last week told how he was born in Bromley, Kent, and as a youngster loved to go to Swanage in Dorset to be beside the sea and that perhaps it was these visits which set the seed for his future career as a seafarer.

Starting as a cadet and ultimately Master Mariner serving with the British India Steam Navigation Company, he travelled widely on cargo vessels around the Mediterranean, Africa, Asia and Australia.

After 10 years at sea, he trained as a Port Health Inspector in the Port of London, became a family man and moved from the South East to Stoke-on-Trent. In

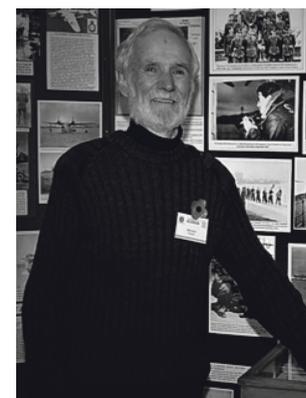
Staffordshire he developed his interest in narrowboats and canal preservation and following another move, to Warwickshire, his varied career led him into working for the RNLI, which he had admired and supported for many years. Those who met Bill found him to be a fount of knowledge in so many areas. His particular area of expertise covered all types of transport, civil engineering and industrial heritage - but with a special interest in railways. He was naturally interested in others and seemed to easily find a point of conversational common ground. This proved invaluable when, in retirement in Oban, he became the town's Auxiliary Superintendent for the Fishermen's Mission in 1997 - a position he held for nine years.

He also quickly developed an enduring association with Oban's War & Peace Museum. A founder member, he worked tirelessly to develop the muse-

um along with volunteers and later with the board and as curator for the last 11 years.

Bill was also a great music lover with a fine bass voice. He lent his enthusiasm and musicality to countless choirs. He also enjoyed playing hymns on the piano and was the regular accompanist at the Congregational Church where his wife Carol was the minister for several years. Bill

always appreciated all that was provided by the hospital in Oban and for nearly 10 years was one of the 'paper-boys' in the Royal Voluntary Service team. He was well-known in the hospital and appreciated by staff and patients for his care and interest in them. As his health declined and he himself received treatment and became a patient, he felt himself to be among friends.



Bill Leech.

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Update on suspension of amateur football

The Scottish Football Association (SFA) has said the Scottish Government has been unable to give them a definite date of when affected leagues can return to the pitch.

A spokesperson for the SFA said: 'In recent weeks, the SFA has engaged extensively with the Scottish Amateur FA, Scottish Youth FA, clubs and leagues - all of which have been affected by the suspension of football across the various sectors due to Covid - to discuss tailored return-to-playing plans for implementation when it is considered safe and appropriate to resume.'

'The Scottish FA has also been in regular dialogue with the Scottish Government to ensure its input into and ultimate approval of the proposed plans.'

'Regrettably, the government has confirmed again that due to the current restrictions in place across the country, it cannot currently commit to return dates for those affected leagues.'

'The Scottish FA will contin-



ue to speak to all parties in the meantime and will provide a further update by March 1.

'This date should not be seen as a proposed restart date, however, it should help provide clarity to affected clubs to help them plan in the short term.'

'Whilst this is disappointing news, Scottish football will continue to play its part in assisting the Scottish Government's efforts to reduce the prevalence of Covid-19 across the country.'



The Scottish Series has a long history of inclusive participation involving multiple classes, international yachts, community engagement and short course and passage racing.

Scottish Series 2021 to move location

Clyde Cruising Club has announced plans to move this year's Scottish Series as a result of the ongoing pandemic, writes Fiona Scott.

Instead of its traditional venue on Loch Fyne, Scotland's premier regatta will move east and operate out of Clyde estuary locations from May 28-31.

The revised event will also see all shoreside and social ac-

tivities cancelled to reduce the risk of the event not running for a second year.

Glenn Porter, chairman of the organising committee, said: 'In 2020, we saw the largest regatta north of the south coast cancelled, something we are keen to avoid again.'

'Born out of a desire to race and socialise over the last bank holiday weekend in May,

we know 2021 will need to be different. By stripping out the high risk social aspects, which we know many love, and operating out of multiple bases we hope to support the many racers who look forward to this annual event.'

Details on the 2021 format will be released later this month on the event website www.scottishseries.info

Change and challenge to stop walks getting stale

Healthy Options lead exercise professional Rob Graham is encouraging people to keep on walking with a few tips.

He said: 'Stop your walks going stale by incorporating intermittent challenges along the way, such as adding some hilly sections or steps to tax your breathing just a little more.'

'Follow these sections with a brief recovery period to get your breath back.'

'The amount of higher intensity periods on each walk can then be increased with time as your fitness improves.'

'Why not make a favourite playlist for your walk and identify several high tempo songs where you can push on a little?'

To read the health tip in full, visit lorn-healthyoptions.co.uk/free-message-from-Mull

Shinty group clocks up more than 2,700 charity miles

Shinty players and supporters didn't hesitate to get on the run when Camanachd Association staff set them a challenge to cover the distance to Barcelona in January.

At the beginning of the year, in lieu of a traditional shinty pre-season, Camanachd Association staff discussed how they could encourage people to get active and decided to ask people to 'run' the 1,350 miles to Barcelona by the end of January.

There was good take up from around Scotland with 103 shinty players,

committee members, parents and fans signing up to the challenge.

The group soon made light work of getting to Barcelona, completing the task in just over two weeks. The group was then challenged to get back home to the association's base in Inverness. Once again, the group excelled, taking the tally for the month to beyond 2,700 miles.

The Camanachd Association ran a competition on the final day of the month - whoever ran the furthest would be rewarded with a Scotland

replica top from association partners Macronstore Highland.

Aberdeen University player Joe Folan set the early pace, clocking up 19.45 miles at 10am. But Paul Ross put in an impressive 22.22 miles an hour later and must have thought he had wrapped it up when checking the group's Strava leaderboard in the evening.

Joe had one eye on the prize too though and snuck out for a 4.42 mile run at 10.05pm to pip Paul to top of the leaderboard.

Derek Keir, Camanachd Association

chief executive officer, said: 'We were delighted so many people joined us in staying active this January. The positive impact being active has on your physical and mental health cannot be overstated. A key component of our strategy is to engage shinty communities. It was especially pleasing to see non-shinty players join our Strava group and help get us to Barcelona and back.'

The Camanachd Association also raised more than £500 for the Scottish Association for Mental Health through the event.

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OPEN FOR BUSINESS

A list of local businesses open during lockdown

Go ahead for smelter expansion consultation

by Fiona Scott
fscott@obantimes.co.uk

ALVANCE Aluminium will begin consulting on plans for a new £94million recycling and aluminium billet plant at its Lochaber smelter next week as it develops Fort William's position as a leading international producer of low-carbon aluminium.

A public consultation will be held online for 21 days from February 22, including a live consultation event on Thursday February 25 from 3.30pm to 7pm, where members of the project team will be available to answer questions.

Part of sustainable industry leader GFG Alliance, ALVANCE announced plans in November for a new recycling and casting plant that will double green aluminium production from more than 40,000 tonne per annum (ktpa) to over 80ktpa.

The plant will produce long, round bars called billets for the domestic construction,

building and transport sectors, supplanting some of the current dependency on imports.

ALVANCE expects to award contracts to local suppliers, including new building works for the facility.

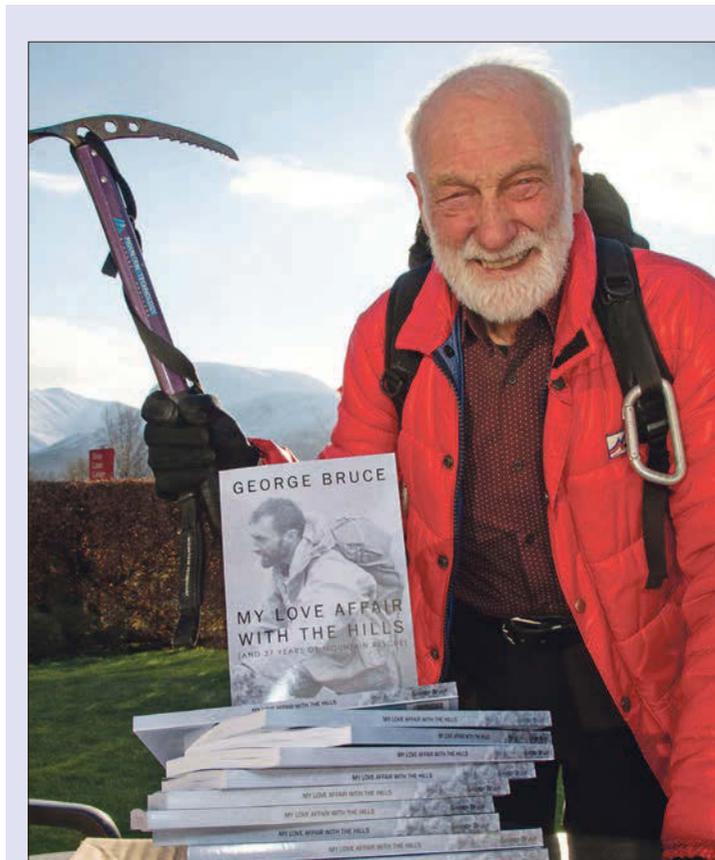
The billet, which is destined for both UK and European markets, will be produced from Lochaber's already low-carbon aluminium and recycled material, giving it some of the greenest credentials on the market.

Future

Once approved, the new integrated business plan and associated developments will secure the long-term future of the Fort William aluminium smelter, safeguarding 200 local jobs and creating 70 new high quality roles. Subject to approvals and any further impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, ALVANCE aims to start the new development works in 2021 and target full operation by 2024.

Brian King, President of

Continued on page two.



Love affair with hills captured in new book

Veteran climber and Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team member George Bruce, of Corpach, with his newly-published book documenting his life and times in the hills over many decades. Through his own notes and press articles, the book is an entertaining but captivating read of real life – and death – stories set in the hills in all weathers. Photograph: Iain Ferguson.

For full story, turn to page eight.

Fort traffic chaos fears voiced

Lochaber residents and businesses hoping they might salvage some kind of tourism season this year, despite the latest coronavirus lockdown, are again facing possible traffic chaos.

This year, work south of Fort William, not north as in previous years, will see one lane of the A82 closed between the Croit Anna and Caledonian hotels for six months. Stewart Maclean, spokesperson for the A82 Partnership, is less than impressed and told the Lochaber Times: 'If traffic flows return to 2019 levels, residents and visitors will face intolerable delays when driving from the north and the south.'

Full story page six.

Lockdown to continue

There will be no sudden lifting of lockdown in Scotland as seen last summer as the First Minister warned this week the Scottish Government would be driven more by data than 'arbitrary dates'.

In an update to parliament on Tuesday, Nicola Sturgeon said '100 per cent normality' was unlikely for some time.

Full report, www.lochaber-times.co.uk



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Glencoe Massacre remembered

Victims of the Glencoe massacre of February 13, 1692, were remembered in an annual ceremony this year, although due to Covid regulations only a few people were in attendance, writes Iain Ferguson.

Without the usual church service, the march through the village, lament on the pipes or clan representatives

from across the world, two wreaths were laid at the monument by Ros MacDonald and George Roy on behalf of Glencoe Heritage Trust and Clan MacDonald.

In place of a religious service and hymns, a brief passage, known locally as the Psalm of James of the Glen, was read by trust member George Grant.

This psalm calls for people to stand up to their oppressors, call for salvation and put their souls to shame.

Ros MacDonald said: 'The ceremony today is the closest to when it was first started in 1935 by Angus MacDonald of Glencoe, when he stood by himself to lay a wreath.

'This small ceremony is actually

quite a tribute to him and is very different to what usually happens, when the monument is surrounded by people from across the world.

'The main things we all remember today is the act so cruelly carried out 329 years ago today and that it still lives on in history and the minds of people.'



Left: George Roy, left, and Roz MacDonald of the Glencoe Heritage Trust prepare to lay wreaths at the monument to victims of the Glencoe massacre after George Grant, right, gave a short reading.

Right: George Grant reads at the small ceremony to mark the anniversary of the Glencoe Massacre. Only a few people were present in line with Covid regulations. Photographs Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.



Half a million reasons to visit hotel

A Scottish hotel group is preparing to emerge from lockdown with a six-figure investment in the highlands – with the aim of delivering a boost to tourism once travel restrictions are lifted.

Crerar Hotel Group is investing £500,000 plus in The Glencoe Inn to create the ultimate boutique hotel experience at the heart of the world-famous glen.

The significant spend will see bedrooms, food and drink offering and outdoor areas of the four-star highland property revamped in preparation for reopening following lockdown.

Chris Wayne-Wills, CEO of Crerar Hotels, said: 'Investing in our hotels to offer guests the highest standards and best possible experience has been an absolute priority over the past few years, and has continued despite the industry-wide impact of the coronavirus pandemic.'

'This significant investment in The Glencoe Inn will create a small boutique hotel experience in the highlands that offers low-key luxury, with the finest Scottish hospitality set against one of the country's most beautiful landscapes.'

Lochaber smelter consultation

Continued from page one. ALVANCE British Aluminium said: 'We are pleased to bring our plans for a new billet plant in front of local residents and businesses and welcome views from across the community.'

'Because of the current Covid-19 restrictions, we have to conduct the consultation virtually but we'll do everything possible to make it as interactive as we can and I'd encourage all our local communities to join in and hear about our plans.'

'We are confident that local people will get behind these proposals to reinforce Fort William's position at the centre of green industrial production in the Highlands, securing and generating new jobs, and providing a pipeline of opportunities to the wider supply chain in Scotland.'

Further information may be obtained from Leah Watton of planning agents JLL at

Leah.Watton@eu.jll.com and on 0141 567 6620/ 07711 772152 or from the ALVANCE group website.

Cameron urges health bosses to crack on with Belford project

Scotland's Shadow Health Secretary, Donald Cameron, has urged NHS Highland to drive forward the project to replace the Belford Hospital in Fort William, saying that he is concerned that it seems to have made little progress.

Highlands and Islands Conservative MSP Mr Cameron made his comments after receiving a reply from NHS Highland chief executive Pam Dudek after he wrote to her on behalf of local people worried about the slow progress and lack of news about the project.

Lochaber constituency MSP Kate Forbes has also been pressing NHS Highland to progress the project.

It was reported that at a meeting in December of the local steering group, which is attended by NHS Highland officials, the figure of six years until the new hospital opens its doors to patients was mentioned as a possible 'worst case scenario'.

Mr Cameron said he welcomed the update from

Ms Dudek, and especially the news that NHS Highland has put dedicated staff in place to drive forward the project, but wondered why it has taken so long to get to this point.

Judging by the response from the chief executive we are still at an early stage in the commissioning process,' commented Mr Cameron.

'The people of Lochaber have been waiting a very long time for a replacement for the Belford and, frankly, unless there is a greater sense of urgency about this, I suspect we will be waiting for a long time to come.'

'The difficulties caused by the current wintry weather, combined with the immense challenge of the Covid pandemic, underlines why we so badly need a fit-for-purpose hospital here in Fort William.'

'Local people are immensely loyal to the Belford so the replacement must do justice to them and to the dedicated staff who work there.'



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Call for more cash and ambition to support rural transport services

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Lochaber Transport Forum has taken the Scottish Government to task over what it says is its 'timidity and lack of ambition' for rural bus services.

The comments came after news that Hitrans, the regional transport partnership for the Highlands, is drawing up an action plan in a bid to halt the sharp decline in the use of bus services in rural and island communities, which has been heightened by the impacts of Covid-19.

The partnership wants more funding from the Scottish Government to be targeted on sustaining rural and island bus services and believes lessons can be learned from the pandemic to tailor future services more closely to the needs of local communities, with major input from com-



Bus services, such as this Shiel Buses service, are a vital link for rural areas, including Lochaber; below, Brian Murphy.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson.

support rural and island communities which he says have been hit hardest by the pandemic and which are not

eligible for much of the existing and new support for bus services. Mr Henderson said many residents who were reliant on subsidised local bus services and community transport for access have become increasingly isolated through the lockdown and the Covid experience.

'We now have the challenge - with partners - to support these residents, often younger residents and older people, to

become socially active again, to regain their mobility and improve their wellbeing,' added Mr Henderson. 'This is a prime example of where transport affords benefits far beyond transport itself, benefitting wider health and social care services.'

But Lochaber Transport Forum chairman Brian Murphy told the Lochaber Times that if the Hitrans proposals are agreed and funded in full, although welcome, the real problem is the timidity and lack of ambition of the Scottish Government which has resulted in 100 million fewer bus journeys over the last 10 years in Scotland while at the same time there's been a 13 per cent increase in new cars registered.

Mr Murphy said: 'What's needed is to reintroduce regulation of bus services to allow local authorities to run buses as used to be the case prior to Mrs

Thatcher de-regulating them in the 1980s. They should be looking at what other European countries have been doing, such as free bus transport for young people and the over 60s.'

However, Mr Henderson believes there is potential to benefit from community involvement on the back of the community response to the Covid pandemic: 'This could be captured through the development of targeted funding for rural and island areas focused on delivering across all four of the National Transport Strategy priorities - reducing inequalities, taking climate action, helping deliver inclusive growth and improving health and wellbeing,' he said.

'There is a real opportunity to deliver services in new ways, using technology as well as community involvement, to improve good service design and delivery for the years ahead.'

Police appeal for information following spate of island fires

Lochaber and Skye Police have appealed for information after saying that the large fire in the Moll area of Skye on the afternoon of Friday February 12, was started and damaged fencing and resulted in 'dangerous road conditions' which led to the closure of the A87, writes Fiona Scott.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Portree police on 101 quoting incident no 1,442 of February 12.

During the last week, appliances were called out to blazes in Harris, Benbecula, Bernera, Skye and near Oban, with Skye seeing five separate callouts within 24 hours and nine in three days.

Frozen vegetation and windy conditions led to fire spreading rapidly putting emergency services under pressure.

Blazes on Harris and Benbecula also broke out, the latter being very remote and equivalent to a couple of hundred acres with a 500-metre fire front.

Alasdair Allan, MSP for Na h-Eileanan an Iar, praised those across the Western Isles who had responded to a high number of call-outs to bring



The wildfire near Bunavoneader on Harris on Thursday (February 11). Photograph: Tom McCluskie

muirburn under control. The fire crews are to be praised for their efforts in helping protect life and property,' he said.

'Many are volunteers, attending call-outs after a full day's work only to be up all night fighting the blazes. Several of the fires have been of considerable size and in difficult to access areas.

'Fire crews, alongside the Coastguard, have also been busy assisting with vaccination clinics.

'In the current pandemic, we should avoid any actions which may put our emergency services under any unnecessary pressure.

'I would urge people to refrain from undertaking muirburn under the present extreme conditions.'

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Fort Masons hand over cheques to Belford Hospital endowment funds

Brother George Mackay, Immediate Past Master of Lodge 43 Fort William, above, had the pleasant duty last week of presenting two £250 cheques to the Belford Hospital in Fort William.

These will be used by the Belford staff endowment fund and Belford patient endowment fund to help them supply staff and patients with

basic necessities during this difficult time.

Pictured with Brother Mackay are Jane Morrison, left, and Mhairi MacKinnon from the Belford Hospital who accepted the cheques at the Masonic Hall in Fort William's High Street.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

Fort XR plea over landscape reform

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

If the Scottish Government and Highland Council are truly committed to reforming land use to support a green recovery and transition to net zero CO2 emissions in a fair and inclusive manner, they need to look to the organisations and partnerships that are already transforming the Highland landscape for ideas and advice.

So said the XR (Extinction Rebellion) Fort William environmental activist group, commenting on news from the Scottish Government that the Highland Council area will be one of five areas being piloted as Regional Land Use Partnerships to help develop an approach to land use in support of Scotland's green recovery and transition to net-zero.



Extinction Rebellion campaigners outside Highland Council headquarters in 2019.

The Scottish Government has said it will work with the pilot groups to test approaches to partnership governance that best suit the local situation and priorities, so helping inform future decisions on wider establishment of partnerships.

It also said the partnerships will help national and local government, communities, land owners and stakeholders

work together to find ways to optimise land use in a 'fair and inclusive way', meeting local and national objectives and supporting the journey to net zero.

But XR Fort William along with the XR Highlands and Islands umbrella group want to see action and not just more talk on the issue.

Asked to comment, an XR

Fort William spokesperson said: 'Many people may not know that Scotland is one of the most ecologically depleted countries in the world. Large areas of the Highlands continue to be managed for the benefit and profit of the few.'

'So if Highland Council really is truly committed, it will use the opportunity of the Regional Land Use Partnership to act swiftly to reform land use and reverse the biodiversity decline in the Highlands.'

'Extinction Rebellion Highlands and Islands will expect to see the Partnership supporting the development of visionary community projects such as those already under way by Trees for Life, Cairngorms Connect and the Coigach and Assynt Living Landscape Partnership, which are helping to rewild and rejuvenate the Highlands for all.'

Mallaig gets new toilets to help improve visitor experience

New high-quality toilet facilities to help improve the provision for motorhomes overnighting in Mallaig are one step closer following installation of the necessary building in the village, writes Mark Entwistle.

The installation of the modern eco-friendly toilet and shower facilities on the approach to the village at West Bay car park, is part of a project to provide new toilet and motorhome servicing facilities along the stretch of the western coast of Lochaber at Traigh Beach and Mallaig.

The application was submitted by The Road to the Isles Facilities Group, through the Highland Council, in round one of the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF).

The project has cost £446,012, with RTIF money covering £300,000 and Highland Leader Programme providing match funding.

The dilapidated Traigh beach toilets, which had been derelict for many years, were demolished last year and the new facility, with two fully-accessible composting toilets, installed in September 2020 and now open to the public. The building will



The new modern eco-friendly toilet and shower facilities.

now be fitted out and waste disposal facilities for campervans and motorhomes incorporated. It is hoped that visitors will be able to use the new facilities in time for the summer season.

Mallaig and Arisaig have long been popular tourist destinations, making a significant contribution to the local economy of west Lochaber and The Road to the Isles.

However, in recent years visitor numbers to Highland in general have been increasing and last summer, at the height of the pandemic when local domestic travel was eventually encouraged, numbers boomed, in particular, more wild campers and motorhome users. This has all caused problems with complaints from local residents about so-called 'dirty

camping' at Lochaber beaches and other beauty spots as local infrastructure and services struggled to cope.

The Mallaig project aims to address a number of issues and once fully fitted out, Mallaig will have a toilet facility, a chemical waste unit, an accessible toilet and shower.

Caol and Mallaig councillor, Allan Henderson, said the project had been a 'feat of endurance' on the part of the Road to the Isles Facilities Group: 'I would like to congratulate the group on staying with this project and in fact taking on another one to develop the Tougal facility to introduce a suite of toilet facilities from Traigh to Mallaig which should alleviate some of the challenges of seasonal hyper tourism.'

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Charity refutes claim of careless deer management

by Fiona Scott
fscott@obantimes.co.uk

A national charity has reacted angrily to claims it left butchered deer carcasses within 50 yards of a public footpath on land near Fort William.

The John Muir Trust (JMT), a conservation charity dedicated to protecting and enhancing wild places, was responding to a press release issued by the Scottish Gamekeepers Association (SGA) which accused it of leaving dead deer in public view in the JMT-owned Nevis Gorge area last month.

Alerted by a 'horrified dog walker', the SGA also issued photographs of the carcasses taken within sight of Steall Bothy.

'The lady (dog walker) didn't want publicity but she was very upset and asked that we look into it because she loves seeing deer. She was basically disgusted,' said SGA chairman Alex Hogg.

'The area is well visited and what surprised her most was that this was the last thing she thought she would find in an area owned by a nature conservation charity.'

The SGA statement continued: 'The SGA has ruled out poaching due to the way the deer have been butchered and understands the cull will have been part of the charity's deer management activity.'

But the John Muir Trust is adamant that neither it nor its



A deer, dead for some time, lies within sight of Steall Bothy.

deer stalking contractors left the carcasses in public view.

David Balharry, JMT chief executive said: 'We can verify this with documentary evidence if necessary.'

'One of our contractors notified us on Sunday January 31 that on the previous day he had been surprised to see seven carcasses laid out near the public footpath. He and his colleagues had culled these deer several weeks earlier on January 4 and left them higher on the hillside after removing as much venison as possible.'

'On discovering the carcasses had been located to a more visible location, he removed them from public sight. On

reading the report from our contractor, we were curious as to why these carcasses had been dragged from the hillside and grouped closely together, which appeared to be for the purpose of a photo opportunity.

'It is disappointing but not surprising that two weeks later, these images have found their way to the press.'

'We note that this story has emerged just as the Scottish Government is about to announce its response to the report of the Independent Deer Working, which has proposed major changes to deer management in Scotland for the benefit of nature, local

communities and climate.'

Bill Cowie of the SGA Deer Group is urging members of the public to contact their MSP if they come across any discarded carcasses.

'Every few years these things seem to happen on John Muir Trust ground. It is not isolated, sadly,' he said.

'Regarding the deer in the photographs, there may have been some access problems extracting them from one side, but it is known there is access out from the other.'

'Do the public really want

'There may have been some access problems extracting them...'

to see this when taking daily exercise?'

JMT argues that it is impossible to get an ATV through the steep gorge and it is not possible to remove carcasses to the east, because of protected peatland.

The charity is not prepared to use helicopters, which means its contractors remove venison from carcasses on the hillside and leave the remainder for raptors and other scavengers as part of an arrangement with NatureScot.

'We believe this model of deer control will, in the future, allow greater community access to venison,' added Mr Balharry.



The east view of pier demolition.

New pier taking shape at Tarbert Ferry Terminal

The new pier is beginning to take shape at Tarbert Ferry Terminal on Harris as part of the £14.3million upgrade project at the harbour.

Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited (CMAL), which owns Tarbert Ferry Terminal and is leading the upgrade project, has said work is continuing at the harbour and provided reassurance to the island community that stringent Covid-19 safety measures are being adhered to.

The demolition of the old pier deck is complete and work to install piles for the new pier is under way.

The reclamation of the seabed is nearing completion, allowing the additional marshalling area to take shape. Installation of essential services, such as electricity and lighting, is also taking place, and following granting of temporary planning permission, work has begun to reinstall the EV charger in the car park opposite the Harris Hotel.

John Quinn, senior civil engineer at CMAL, commented: 'Work at Tarbert is progressing well, despite the occasional

challenge of harsh winter weather.'

'The old pier deck has been demolished and the reconstruction of the new pier is taking shape as we install the new supporting piles and remove the old ones.'

'We'd like to thank the community for their patience as we carry out the work and assure them we are adhering to the Scottish Government Covid-19 guidelines for construction to maintain the health and safety of our employees, contractors, harbour staff and the island community.'

'We appreciate there may be some concern from islanders about the ongoing construction during this lockdown, however, additional care is being taken to implement measures on-site and these have been integrated into daily operations and they continue to work well.'

The revised expected completion date for the harbour redevelopment project is autumn 2021, with the new terminal building due for completion in autumn 2022 under a separate project and contract.

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Six months of 'traffic chaos' south of Fort

Lochaber residents and businesses hoping they might salvage some kind of tourism season this year, despite the latest coronavirus lockdown, are once again facing possible traffic chaos on the A82, writes Mark Entwistle.

This year, work south of Fort William, not north as in previous years, will see one lane of the A82 closed between the Croit Anna and Caledonian hotels for six months.

Trunk roads operator Bear Scotland says the lane closure is needed to allow repair work to be carried out to the sea wall which was damaged during recent storms.

The work had been scheduled to start at the end of January but it had to be delayed due to the impact of adverse weather on winter maintenance resources and the subsequent delays to other projects.

The re-scheduled work, due to last six months, were



now scheduled to start on Monday of this week. Stewart Maclean, pictured, spokesperson for the A82 Partnership, is less than impressed and told the Lochaber

Times: 'Unfortunately this, once again, demonstrates the inadequacy of our road infrastructure with half of the carriageway requiring to be closed to carry out these off carriageway repairs.'

'I'm not sure our politicians fully realise the negative impact the inadequate road infrastructure has on our economy and our lives. If traffic flows return to 2019 levels, residents and visitors will face intolerable delays when driving from the north and the south.'

There will be traffic lights two miles south of Fort William on the A82 all the way through the height of the summer tourist season until mid August.

Six figure sum for glens project

by Fiona Scott
fscott@obantimes.co.uk

A project which aims to empower tourists to explore Glencoe and Glen Etive responsibly is set to receive vital funding to help balance the needs of visitors, local people and the landscape.

The Sustainable Visitor Infrastructure project, run in partnership by the Highland Council, the National Trust for Scotland and Glencoe and Glen Etive Community Council, has been awarded £375,000, subject to conditions, in Round Three of the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF). The project will be boosted by contributions from project partners, including £100,000 from the National Trust for Scotland.



The project is one of 13 initiatives across Scotland.

Launched by the Scottish Government in 2017 and administered by VisitScotland, the RTIF has so far invested £9million in infrastructure at scenic areas and popular rural tourist spots.

The project in Glencoe and Glen Etive is one of 13 initiatives across Scotland to receive support in this third round of funding. It aims to make the community and landscape more resilient to rising visitor numbers with more fit-for-purpose parking, paths for walkers and visitors, signage and waste disposal facilities.

The largest element of the

project will be an upgrade of Glencoe's busiest parking areas beside the A82 at the iconic Three Sisters viewpoint.

The planned improvements will maximise vehicle capacity within the existing car park and an all-ability path will replace an existing informal trail to a viewpoint near the Coire Gabhail parking area, helping to safely separate pedestrians from vehicles and reducing the impact of thousands of feet on the sensitive hillside habitat.

Other parking hotspots likely to receive attention include Altnafeadh, where the

West Highland Way climbs up the Devil's Staircase and Glen Etive, including the popular view made famous in the James Bond movie, Skyfall.

A key element of the project is the construction of purpose-built visitor waste hubs at four locations in the glens while improvements to footpaths include an upgrade of the trail from Glencoe village towards the Clachaig Inn.

Emily Bryce, the National Trust for Scotland's operations manager for Glencoe said: 'Over the last few years we have worked together on the challenges we share as a result of a growing number of visitors. We are now keen to take a step forward with solutions.'

Viki Sutherland, chairperson of the Glencoe and Glen Etive Community Council added: 'We have developed an action plan to help accommodate everyone who wishes to visit our stunning area.'

The project has been informed by local collaboration, extensive traffic monitoring and the results of an online survey with the introduction of new facilities and infrastructure improvements expected in autumn and winter 2021.

VIEW FROM THE CHAMBER

It's widely known that the Covid-19 pandemic has hit young people's education and career plans especially hard. Across Scotland there's a huge push to help young people into fulfilling careers through the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) programme that works to connect with young people, schools, colleges, and businesses.

You've probably heard of Developing the Young Workforce - this is a Scottish Government programme that aims to reduce youth unemployment by working in partnership with businesses to equip young people with the skills that they are looking for. It's a win-win: for business and our young people.

The recognition that young people now need even more help is reflected in the increased size of the DYW West Highland team and an evolving way of working that will see DYW In-School



Co-ordinators based directly in local high schools to assist pupils with accessing a range of opportunities to help them build their future career options.

This exciting new development means an expanded role of DYW West Highland throughout Lochaber, Skye, and Wester Ross. The DYW In-School Co-ordinators have now been recruited and are raring to get going! We look forward to introducing the new team in a coming Lochaber Times feature.

Lochaber Chamber's focus on skills doesn't end with young people - we know that continuing professional development and access to good quality learning and

skills development training is vital for businesses to create the best opportunities for their employees and create an environment that encourages progression and development. That's why we launched our One Lochaber leadership programme, specially tailored to the needs of local businesses and delivered right here in Lochaber.

We're delighted to be hosting a series of short leadership skills masterclasses over the next few months to help people adapt their approaches to new ways of working. The first in the series is The Resilient Leader on Tuesday February 23, where our expert trainers will also be joined by a panel of local business leaders.

To sign up for this and other events, visit www.lochaber-chamber.co.uk to find out how we can help you and your teams develop the leadership skills needed to thrive in the new world of work.



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LT

Corpach author's 'love affair' with the hills documented in new book

Many people in the area have a fascination with the hills, spending much of their spare time climbing and walking around the dramatic heights which surround us, writes Iain Ferguson.

None more so than George Bruce from Corpach who recorded his memories of trips and adventures as he made them, resulting in a large number of scrapbooks full of pictures, stories and his thoughts of the time.

Two years ago George was going through them when his wife, Brenda, suggested he should turn them into a book.

He set himself a target of having it ready and published before his 80th birthday and now, aged 79, he has achieved just that.

Aptly titled *My Love Affair with the Hills* and *37 Years in*



Veteran climber and Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team member George Bruce with his newly-published book documenting his life and times in the hills over many decades. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

George reels off amazing tales as though they were everyday events, setting off with friends to spend weekends climbing in the Alps, safely shepherding charity events in all parts of the world and his time with Lochaber Mountain Rescue, with both tragic and happy outcomes.

He recalls with sadness his first callout as a member of the team to recover the body of a 14-year-old boy from the 'waterslide' in Glen Nevis.

There were to be many more of these less than perfect outcomes in his 'rescue' years, but most had happier conclusions, where without the unfailing response of the team lives would have been lost.

One event, documented in newspapers of the time, was 'The Ice Maidens', two girls who were discovered cold but well in a snow hole after a two-day search. Those members of the team who found them – George was one – were dubbed 'the most handsome rescuers ever'.

Underlining the dedication of mountain rescue volunteers, George and a colleague were competing in a half Ben race when they were told two women were stuck in a gully. They immediately abandoned the race and went to their aid, discovering one of them was

pregnant. Thanks to this quick action, they were safely taken off the hill.

Through his own notes and press articles, the book is an entertaining but captivating read of real life – and death – stories set in the hills in all weathers. The fact it is presented in such a matter-of-fact manner belies the sheer courage, determination and dangers faced by Lochaber Mountain Rescue Team, potentially on every call-out.

It is also a gripping catalogue of climbing achievements undertaken for sheer pleasure, which will appeal to his fellow climbers of all ages and experience.

Due to current lockdown restrictions, the book is not yet available locally but it can be bought from Amazon in hardback at £8.95.

Mountain Rescue, it is now available to amaze readers with tales of climbing, not only in Lochaber, but across the world. Many of his local companions

on these adventures are still around and are highly regarded in the climbing community.

Modest as ever about his achievements and exploits,



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LOCHABER TIMES



Titanic yard owners buy Arnish site in welcome £850k deal



The yard at Arnish.

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Trade unions have welcomed the news that the troubled Arnish fabrication yard on Lewis has been bought by energy firm InfraStrata, owners of the Belfast shipyard Harland and Wolff, best known for building the ill-fated Titanic passenger liner.

Speaking last Friday, GMB Scotland and Unite Scotland welcomed the announcement that two of the three BiFab fabrication yards have been bought out of administration by InfraStrata.

BiFab, which had three fabrication yards – in Fife and on Lewis – went into administration in December after the Scottish Government withdrew previous financial guarantees to support the manufacture of eight turbine jackets for the Neart na Gaoithe (NnG) offshore wind project at the yards.

As well as Arnish, InfraStrata bought the sites at Methil in Fife as part of the £850,000 deal. It is understood InfraStrata will bring the Scottish sites under the Harland and Wolff name as it attempts to bid for offshore wind projects and shipbuilding contracts.

In a joint statement, Unite Scotland secretary Pat Rafferty and GMB Scotland secretary Gary Smith said the announcement was welcome news.

‘It is also testimony to our members and their communities who have fought hard to keep these yards alive,’ said the duo.

‘We look forward to working with the company to ensure it is primed to win contracts for the offshore wind sector and to having a positive working relationship underpinned by the Fair Work principles.’

‘We have always believed that the BiFab yards, and indeed yards and ports all over Scotland, are uniquely placed to capture the benefits of the offshore wind sector.’

‘However, the story so far has been one of government failure. Thousands of jobs and billions of pounds have been outsourced around the world when Scottish communities should have been benefitting from these contracts.’



The Harland and Wolff shipyard is best known for its construction of the Titanic, seen here being launched in Belfast in May 1911. Photograph: Shutterstock.

‘Now the Scottish and UK Governments have been given a reprieve, they need to step-up and support the new ownership.’

Na h-Eileanan an Iar SNP MSP Alasdair Allan also welcomed the acquisition announcement: ‘I firmly believe the yard does have a future and Harland and Wolff has obviously seen its potential,’ said Mr Allan. ‘I am eager to hear more about their plans and have sought a meeting with the company.’

However, the comhairle says it is too early to judge whether the acquisition by InfraStrata delivers on the former’s aspirations for an outcome that delivered year-round economic activity with long-term sustainable employment.

Councillor Donald Crichton, chairman of Sustainable Development, said: ‘We will be writing to the company to seek early engagement and reassurances around their strategy for the next period and to get an understanding of the proposals which they have outlined.’

‘It appears at this stage, InfraStrata will have a licence to occupy Arnish and that during the licence period, they will seek to negotiate terms of a new lease with the landlords, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE).’

‘HIE should be clear they will only grant a lease if InfraStrata can evidence a robust business plan that demonstrates there will be year-round economic activity with long-term sustainable employment at Arnish.’

‘We will be seeking engagement with HIE to see if we can develop a collective position around the headlines of that lease.’

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Outer Hebrides consortium to build on community success

An exciting new community organisation has been established in the Outer Hebrides, built on the success of community land ownership in the area, writes Mark Entwistle.

Community Land Outer Hebrides (CLOH), a consortium of community land trusts, will seek to build on the strengths of community land ownership in the area.

Around three quarters of the Outer Hebrides population live on community-owned land and, as a result, the area is considered to be leading within the sector of community land ownership.

Various unique opportunities have sprung up as a result and trusts in the area are keen to explore these further. A series of meetings was set up in 2016 for trusts to share best practice and knowledge, from which the formal consortium has arisen.

Lisa Maclean, chairperson of CLOH and chief executive of Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn, said: 'There are great benefits to increased

collaborative working and exploration of the unique opportunities available to the community land sector.'

Sally Reynolds, CLOH board member and development manager of Urras Oighreachd Chàrlabhaigh, continued: 'This next step to establish CLOH is a natural progression. Land trusts share many strategic and operational issues and the network has already provided many efficiencies.'

Learn

The group is not yet at the stage of a community buyout, but they truly believe being part of CLOH is a great way to learn from communities who have gone through the process.

Claire Macneil, CLOH board member and development manager of Coimhearsnachd Bharraidh Agus Bhatarsaidh Limited, added: 'The collective focus of the group is special and has potential to drive forward transformational change for our islands.'

'Being based on Barra can often feel isolating and far from other activity, however,

this group has a real sense of sharing and strength.' David Cameron, Community Land Scotland, said: 'The formation of Community Land Outer Hebrides represents a very important step in community land development by bringing together and emphasising the importance of the development staff who work day-in, day-out on projects which reflect the wishes of their community.'

'Whilst retaining the individual characteristics of an area, working collectively on local challenges and working with Community Land Scotland on national policy will benefit all of the Outer Hebridean groups from the Butt to Barra.'

Covid-19 has changed how the world operates, with the focus in recent months being on renewal and recovery.

CLOH believes community land trusts and other anchor organisations are integral to those discussions, if real change and reform that works for those living in every part of the islands is going to occur.



Ballivanich School winners Thea Fraser and Leah Hamilton.

Islands open new chapter for libraries

New Western Isles Mobile Library Service vans have been formally launched with the official naming of the two vehicles.

In celebration of last year's Book Week Scotland in November, a competition was held for children aged from four to 11 years to suggest names for the shiny new vans.

The response was overwhelming with more than 200 entries received from pupils and schools across the Western Isles.

Naturally it was a very tough decision for the judges going through all the amazing names sent in, but the names finally decided upon were Lexy for the Lewis and Harris van and Lachaidh for the Uist and Benbecula van.

Congratulations go to the winners, of which there were actually four due to each name being nominated twice.

Thea Fraser from Sgoile Bhaile a Mhanaich and Joey Macleod from Sir E Scott both suggested Lexy and Leah Hamilton, also from Bhaile a Mhanaich and Archie Brown, also from Sir E Scott, came up with Lachaidh.

The winners each received a certificate and their school



The two winners from Sir E Scott School and, below left, the new mobile library vehicle, Lexy, on its way to Harris.



received a £50 book token for their achievements.

Kathleen Milne, libraries manager, said: 'We were thrilled to receive so many entries from so many schools across the islands.'

'The mobile libraries play such a valuable role in the community connecting schools, pupils, individuals, families and communities with books, DVDs, audio books, information and other resources and we hope Lexy and Lachaidh will become an even more familiar and friendly sight on our roads in future.'

Scottish illustrator Eilidh Muldoon will be creating name illustrations for each vehicle and the team of mobile librarians – Steven, Donald Ewen and Iain – are looking forward to an official naming ceremony when the vans will finally receive their nameplates.

At the moment, people are not allowed on board the mobile vans due to Covid restrictions, but Lexy and Lachaidh are still out on the road, delivering books for all ages across Lewis, Harris, Uist and Benbecula.

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Families benefit from winter hardship fund

A total of 283 families in Na h-Eileanan an Iar have received a £100 COVID winter hardship payment to support them through one of the most difficult winters in living memory.

New figures show that more than £14million was paid out to families in December, with £28,300 given out to families in the Western Isles.

The payment, announced by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, was made available to families who were in receipt of free school meals and was paid from November 30 to the start of the winter school holidays.

SNP MSP Alasdair Allan said: 'This has been an incredibly difficult time for families in Na h-Eileanan an Iar who may have faced lost earnings, increased food bills and cold weather.'

'The £100 winter payment will hopefully have eased the financial strain many have been facing.'

New wildlife officer sets out his priorities

Tackling raptor persecution, poaching and hare coursing will be top priorities for a new wildlife crime specialist covering all of Scotland who was appointed late last year, writes Mark Entwistle.

As the National Wildlife Crime Unit's (NWCU) Investigative Support Officer (ISO) for Scotland, PC Gavin Ross will be a source of expertise in wildlife crime at local and national level. He will work with individual police wildlife liaison officers, non-governmental organisations, the Scottish Government, NatureScot, RSPB, the SSPCA and Scottish Land and Estates. The position is funded by NatureScot.

PC Ross, who has 21 years' service was the community police officer for Dunbar. He has an extensive background in wildlife crime issues, community policing, problem



solving and educational work.

Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment Ben Macpherson MSP said: 'Wildlife crime is despicable and tackling it has been a long-standing priority for the Scottish Government.'

'We work closely with a number of agencies to ensure perpetrators are brought to justice.'

'The Animals and Wildlife Act, which recently became law, increases the maximum penalties for the most serious wildlife crimes and extends the time available to Police Scotland to investigate.'

'The work of the National Wildlife Crime Unit is hugely valued by communities across Scotland and we are committed to supporting it. I look forward to working with PC Ross in the future and congratulate him on his new role.'

PC Ross said: 'When I was in Edinburgh, early in my service, I became involved in investigating wildlife crime because of my interest and experience in this area. I've been a part-time wildlife crime officer throughout my service

PC Gavin Ross has been appointed the National Wildlife Crime Unit's new Investigative Support Officer.

and the new job is the pinnacle of my career.

'I worked hard preparing for my interview and was keen to secure the job, which is a dream post. I am looking forward to settling into the role and working with different partner agencies which are so important in the fight against wildlife crime.'

'In the six weeks I've been in post, I've concentrated on meeting many of the partner agencies we work with in wildlife crime. Unfortunately most of the meetings have had to be done virtually, but they have all been positive and I look forward to building on these initial foundations and to when we can meet face to face.'

Head of the NWCU Chief Inspector Hubble added: 'I was extremely pleased when PC Ross was successfully appointed as our new Scottish ISO and I am sure he is going to be a valuable asset to policing wildlife crime.'

Andy Turner, NatureScot wildlife crime officer, said: 'Eliminating wildlife crime is a huge priority for us, which is why we've provided funding for this post since 2014. Wildlife crime doesn't just cause irreparable damage to Scotland's nature, it also affects tourism which, in

turn, impacts on the economy. We are committed to working with NWCU, Police Scotland and other members of the Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime (PAW Scotland) to tackle this challenging issue.'

'We worked closely with Gavin's predecessor, Charlie Everitt, to prevent wildlife crime and raise awareness. I look forward to continuing to this important work with Gavin and the NWCU.'

NWCU's main role is to assist in the prevention and detection of wildlife crime by obtaining and distributing information from a wide range of organisations and by helping police forces investigate wildlife crimes. NWCU also produces analysis which highlights local or national threats.

The appointment of PC Ross comes after the retirement of PC Charlie Everitt, who had spent the last 11 years developing the role of Scottish ISO within the National Wildlife Crime Unit.

PC Everitt furthered countless operations, provided expert advice to police wildlife liaison officers and acted as the central point of contact between the police and a vast range of partner agencies.

He was well-known throughout the Scottish wildlife crime arena and his professional knowledge, enthusiasm and willingness to assist were beyond question. PC Ross recognised he had 'big shoes to fill'.

Advertorial



Eye to eye with John Wallace

Why does my child struggle to read?

Regular readers of this column will know I am passionate about children's vision problems. I often have parents saying it is all very well to recommend regular eye examinations for children. What happens if they have had an eye examination but are still having issues reading? How can a parent find out if it is a vision related problem?

There are many inter-related aspects to reading that must combine to enable children (and even adults) to read fluently. Obviously light must focus accurately on the retina both for distance vision and when reading. Often I find patients need a prescription that not only focusses light accurately but also changes how their visual world is perceived. Hearing difficulties can also be involved but



vision problems are the main culprit.

So what are the clues?

Some are obvious ... your child avoids reading or, if they do attempt to read, loses their place frequently. They might push books or iPads away. They might find reading more comfortable with one eye closed. They often blink a lot when reading. I have even found children reading fluently with both eyes closed. They listen and memorise a

passage and, when asked to read aloud, appear to read well. Often patients with reading problems will have to read a passage several times to gather any information from it. They frequently prefer to listen, rather than read, to learn.

As well as issues with both eyes working well together, there are frequently problems with poor hand writing. They often have problems with hand-eye coordination and are not very good at catching objects. Letters often get reversed when reading.

The British Dyslexia Association recommends all children, prior to any dyslexia assessment, have a comprehensive assessment by a behavioural optometrist. To find an accredited behavioural optometrist check out www.babo.co.uk

Remote learning to continue for majority of school pupils

Most primary and secondary school pupils will continue with remote learning until at least mid-March, while children in early learning and childcare and primaries 1 to 3 will return full-time to classrooms from Monday February 22.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon confirmed on Tuesday that only strictly limited numbers of children and young people will return to classrooms next week, backed by strengthened school safety guidance and enhanced test-

ing for staff and senior pupils. Limited numbers of S4 - S6 pupils who need to complete practical work to achieve an SQA certificate will also return from Monday. As part of the move, Ministers also announced a package of support and safety steps including a further £40 million to help councils implement safety mitigations aligned with clinical advice and £60m of additional investment in education recovery. Comprehensive testing guidance has been issued to schools and local authorities

and by the start of this week, more than 2,200 schools had received test kits, with deliveries to remaining schools continuing throughout the rest of this week. The programme will be expanded to stand alone childcare settings as soon as possible.

All secondary pupils will be required to observe two metre physical distancing while in school and on school transport in the period immediately after the return. This is in addition to existing measures, including the use of face coverings.

John Wallace BSc (Hons), FCOptom, DipCLP

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My best life decisions taken against advice

Take my advice or, better still, take the bits of it you most like and ignore the rest.

For my 40th birthday, my husband gave me a cloth bag with 'Ignoring advice since 1974' written across it. He also gave me several other gifts but that one, given mostly in jest, was actually my favourite.

Most of my best life decisions and favourite memories are based on the times when I ignored advice. But I couldn't have ignored it if it had not been offered.

One piece of advice I regularly return to is from a famous newspaper column by Mary Schlich.

Entitled Advice, like youth, wasted on the young, it reached global recognition when released as a Baz

Luhrmann song Everybody's Free (to wear sunscreen).

If you have not heard it, or even if you have and it's been a while since you last listened to it, I would strongly advise you to play it again. I am aware you may ignore this advice!

The single line which most resonated with me, which I often repeat to myself and to my husband and children, is the one which offers counsel to 'do one thing every day that scares you'.

This does not have to mean rollercoaster rides, ghost hunting expeditions or walking in the woods at night, although I have tried and heartily recommend all of these for getting your heart racing, your senses on high alert and making you feel



Thanks to lockdown some of the scary things about learning a new skill have gone away and now you can focus on the challenge of trying something different.

alive. I take it to mean 'do one thing every day which challenges you and pushes you outside of what you know and are comfortable with'.

The pandemic and resulting lockdowns have closed off many opportunities and offered quite a lot to be scared and worried about. The impact on our mental wellbeing of the events of the last year

has been much debated along with the physical risks of both contracting and avoiding Covid.

There have also been a host of new things to learn, from the meaning of 'R' numbers and lockdown tiers to the correct way to wash our hands. Who knew you were supposed to sing along while you did it? Many of us

learned new baking skills, got involved in online choirs or took up a new form of exercise.

I have found myself searching out online courses and workshops to learn more about things I always meant to do but had never quite found the time for. Suddenly rural living is not the barrier it was to joining a choir, signing up for creative writing workshops, exercise classes or guided meditation.

It doesn't matter if it's a dreadful night for driving, and I don't need to worry about whether I'll feel overdressed walking into a room full of strangers.

The peripheral scary things about learning something new have all gone away and now I can just focus on the challenge of trying something new.

'Feel the fear and do it anyway' has long been a mantra for wellbeing and building positive mental attitude. With so many free and low

cost options for having a go at something new which pushes you a bit beyond what you feel comfortable with, maybe this is the right time to choose learning a new skill as the something that scares you today.

In the coming weeks, I am signed up for a songwriting and creative arts workshops with local mental wellbeing charity Ewen's Room, a feather identification workshop with UHI and a photo editing session with the National Union for Journalists.

Am I a little bit daunted by all of them? Yes I am... but if you can't take your own advice then who can you listen to?!

■ Ewen's Room - www.ewensroom.com workshop information on the website

■ West Highland University Highlands and Islands <https://www.whc.uhi.ac.uk/business/best-courses/>

■ National Union of Journalists courses <https://www.nuj.org.uk/events/>

New Highland youth convener sought

The search is on for a new Youth Convener to champion the cause of young people in the Highlands.

The Youth Convener is the sounding board for youth issues in the Highlands and has direct communication with policy makers and decision takers.

It is a unique role in that the post holder is a member of The Highland Council's Education, Children and Adult Services Committee, with full voting powers. The Youth Convener also works with the High Life Highland Youth Services Team in developing the Highland Youth Parliament and other

initiatives that increase youth involvement in decisions that affect them.

A key requirement of the role is an awareness of issues affecting young people and an ability to represent their views. Good communication skills are required, as is the ability to work with and relate to a wide range of people and organisations.

In 2020-2021, young people involved in the Highland Youth Parliament highlighted their issues and concerns which included mental health concerns as a result of Covid-19, isolation and academic stress; anxieties

about the school environment; effects of exam challenges as a result of Covid-19 and worries about the alternatives and employment concerns and lack of information about opportunities.

Mark Richardson, Principal Youth Work Manager for High Life Highland, commented: 'Now, more than ever, young people are needing support and a voice to highlight what they need. The Youth Convener role provides a platform for that over the next 12 months to provide a full-time face, voice and connection for young people and a link to youth services across the Highland area.'

Help name the Harris gritting lorries

Members of the public are being given the chance to help name the five unnamed gritting lorries serving the Isle of Harris

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's roads team has already named one of the Harris Gritters, Snow Shifter and the four Lewis gritters Snowvid 19, Snow Bad Cove, It's Snow Bother to Us and Benny's Baby.

One of the comhairle's Lewis gritting contractors previously ran a competition to name their gritters Snow-mo-peel,

Margrit and Gritty Gritty Bang Bang. Suggestions can be sent by personal message to the comhairle Facebook page or in writing to Communications Team, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Sandwick Road, Stornoway, HS1 2BW.

So far this season, gritters in Lewis and Harris have gritted around 23,000 miles and spread more than 5,000 tonnes of salt. Gritters in Uist and Barra have gritted nearly 7,000 miles and spread nearly 2,000 tonnes of salt. Drivers

are reminded that before they start any winter journeys they should: consider the need to travel; check the weather forecast; make sure your vehicle is ready for a journey in poor weather; consider what you might need in an emergency and allow extra time for your journey. The comhairle's winter roads maintenance policy is available through the following link: <https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/roads-maintenance-winter-gritting/>

FERN
COMMUNITY FUNDS

The Beinneun Windfarm Community Benefit Fund has been established to support community groups, social enterprises & charitable organisations in the community council areas of Fort Augustus & Glenmoriston and Glengarry.

The fund is now open for applications until the 31st of March 2021.

Details of the application process and fund criteria can be found at ferncommunityfunds.com/beinneun-community-fund/

If you wish for any further information about the fund please get in contact via contactus@ferncommunityfunds.com or call 07871 785583 or by mail to:
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LETTERS

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

Smelter public consultation

ALVANCE Aluminium has finally announced it will hold a public consultation on its plans for a recycling and aluminium billet plant, which will begin on Monday.

We urge everyone to take part – and listen in to the live consultation so you can ask questions.

While the potential jobs boost this plant could give the area would be welcome, it's important the proposal is carefully scrutinised.

A82 seawall works

Traffic woes in Fort William are not going to go away anytime soon with the news Bear Scotland plans to close one lane of the A82, setting up traffic lights two miles south of the town, to last through the height of the summer tourist season – if we ever see that – until mid August.

Even with the current restrictions and the likelihood these will be extended, this will undoubtedly exacerbate the negative impact this terrible road already has on the local economy and people's lives.

The editor welcomes letters of approximately 300 words in length for publication on this page.



However we reserve the right to shorten, to amend or to refuse to print them. Names and postal addresses must be supplied, including on emails, to indicate good faith. A daytime phone number is also required for verification. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Please email: editor@obantimes.co.uk or write to: Letters page, The Oban Times, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll, PA34 4HB.

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Election leaflets

Like other householders throughout Argyll and Bute, I have received a leaflet from the Conservative candidate standing in May's Scottish election. It is an extraordinary leaflet – not for what it says, but for what it does NOT say. Its six pages contain not a single reference to farming, fishing or aquaculture – all vital industries in Argyll and Bute.

The Tories have every reason to be mortified by the devastation their botched Brexit deal has had on the lives of our farmers and fishermen, but to simply ignore these issues is an insult to those who work in these industries and the communities that depend on them.

Les Wilson, Port Charlotte, Islay.

Fort William speed changes

As a virtually daily user of the A82 and a not-quite-so-frequent user of the A830 in Fort William, I'd like to offer the following suggestions on speed limits:

■ A830: From Annat Point to Blar Mhor roundabout, 40mph limit. Then 30mph from there to Lochybridge Roundabout.

■ A82: From Carr's Corner to Lochybridge roundabout, 40mph, as it used to be until not so long ago.

■ Lochybridge roundabout to Inverloch roundabout, 30mph. I know it used to be 40, but I think the Aldi roundabout breaks up traffic sufficiently to make it 30 for that entire stretch.

■ Inverloch roundabout to the West End roundabout and then down the 'Golden Mile', no alterations needed.

That would cut down the changes between the Croit Anna Hotel and Annat Point from nine to five. Apart from the roads already mentioned, I think it would be worth considering lowering the current 30mph limit to 20mph in built-up and residential areas.

Davie Kerr, Ferry Reach, Onich.

Sea farm expansion

Obviously nobody should be pleased to learn about the proposed expansion of Scottish Sea Farms (SSF) salmon farm right next to Ganavan beach. It's very untimely news, just when the community is getting up a sense of purpose over preventing housing behind the beach. It must be doubtful whether permission would ever have been given for a farm that close to a popular beach these days.

If the Friends of Ganavan can suggest to Dunstaffnage Estates that they should forego

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

ailean@obantimes.co.uk

'S cinnteach gum bheil cuimhne mhath aig cuid agaibhse cuideachd air màileid mhòr ruadh nan litrichean, agus poca nam parsailean a bhiodh aig a' phost air a dhruim gu sònraichte mu àm na Nollaige. Leis a' mhòr-chuid an eisimeil ceannach tron phost cha robh eallach phasgair na annas, agus tha cuimhne agam air a' phost a' ruigheachd na taighe againn le togsaidhean iocshlaint chaorach, agus taidhr baidhsagal, mu ghualainn a bharrachd air a' mhàileid àbhaisteach!

Mhair cuid de na buidhnean-òrdugh-puist ainmeil a bha a' frithealadh saoghal m' òige, leithid Oxendale agus J D Williams, ach chan eil iad idir air a bhith cho cudromach agus a' mhòr-chuid ag iarraidh aodach is eile fhaicinn mun ceannaich iad e. Bliadhnaichean air ais cha robh an roghainn sin ann, agus ge b' e latha mòr a bh' ann nuair a thigeadh am parsaill, bhiodh briseadh dùil mòr cuideachd mur a freagrachd na chaidh òrdachadh agus a dh'fheumte a thilleadh!

Tha mìosan a-nise bho thòisich a' bruidhinn air mar a bhith a' tilleadh gu "àbhaisteachd ùr" neo eadar-dhealaichte, agus mar is fhaide a tha bacaidhean saorsa gan sparadh oirnn 's ann is cinntiche a tha e nach till sinn idir chun an t-seòrsa saoghail a b' aithne dhuinn mun do nochd Covid-19. Bidh sibh uile mothachail air an diol a tha riaghailtean glasaidd air a thoirt air obair-malairt de gach seòrsa agus, ged a tha gnìomhachas aoi gheachd

is thaighean-bidh air fulang gu sònraichte, tha iomadh bùth agus ionad-seirbheis beag an impis a dhol a bith cuideachd 's gun chead aca fosgladh. Ged nach eil tarraing sam bith ann dhomh fhìn a bhith a' ruith bhùithean tha fios agam nach ann mar sin a tha dha miltean dhaoine eile, agus abair gum bheil an saoghal acasan gu bhith eadar-dhealaichte.

Nach iongantach an sgrìob a th' air tachairt dha bhùithean mòra phrìomh shràidean na dùthcha, is tè às dèidh tè a' dùnadh, is ainmean a bha aithnichte is cliùiteach a' dol a sealladh. Dh'fhuiling iad gainnead luchd-tadhail is ceannach ri linn glasaidd-sluaigh, agus lagaich dìth cosnaidh iad chun na h-ìre 's gun robh cothrom aig buidhnean malairteach eadar-lìon na cloaichean a chreach agus cur às daibh!

Chan e a-mhàin nach eil dad a dhùil aig na buidhnean-malairt eadar-lìon sin làthaireachd sam bith a staidheachadh air na sràidean, cha mhotha na sin a tha iad dol a thairgsinn cosnadh dha na mìltean a th' air teachd-an-tir anns na bhùithean mòra sin a chall. Togalaichean falamh a' bhuil a th' ann!

Chan eil teagamh nach bi e nas fhasa, agus nas luaithe, dhuinne bathar de gach seòrsa a cheannach air-loidhne, ach mar a dh'èirich le JD agus Oxendale roimhe cha tèid againn air aodach fhaicinn neo fheuchainn oirnn, agus ma tha an drathais ro theann cha bhì freagairt ach a tilleadh!

Parliamentary inquiry

The SNP has voted to conceal Alex Salmond's evidence to the Parliamentary inquiry.

The Scottish Conservatives brought a vote to the Salmond Inquiry demanding that Salmond's evidence, much of which is already in the public domain, be published.

This would allow Salmond to give crucial evidence in person about the SNP's handling of this case. However, all the SNP MSPs on the committee voted against its publication, meaning it will not be released. The Scottish public deserve to know the truth of what happened and why £500,000 of public money had to be paid to Salmond.

Councillor Alastair Redman

the development gains from housing or even gift the land to the community, then why should the same not apply to SSF and the nearby sea?

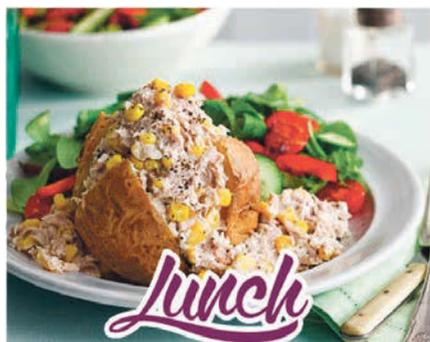
The only difference, of course, is that SSF don't actually own the sea bed in the first place – it is held for all of us by the Crown Estates. The only gain resulting from expansion of the site would be to the shareholders of SSF. Nothing for locals – no new jobs, just an eyesore, noise and pollution. Object now. Some salmon farming companies have said that they would not wish to impose a farm on an unwilling local population. The only honourable course of action for SSF would be to withdraw the application.

Dennis Archer, Oban
(Co-convenor, A&B branch,
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DISTRICT NEWS

STORNOWAY

Windfarm auction failure sparks community reaction

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 Contracts for Difference (CfD) auction.

Rhoda Mackenzie made the statement on behalf of Sandwick North, Sandwick East, Melbost Branahuaie and Aignish Community Energy companies, calling for 'a new approach' in developing renewables on the Isle of Lewis – one that puts community 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 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. There is still plenty of scope to develop renewables on the islands but we need to do so in a way that puts community-owned energy front and centre.

'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 comhairle must not see the CfD outcome as a defeat but as an opportunity to take the lead in developing a new partnership with the community energy companies in the islands to work together and to unite around a new 'Plan B'.'

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RSS Sir David Attenborough spotted near Lochaline



The RSS Sir David Attenborough.

The polar research vessel named in honour of Sir David Attenborough was spotted in the Sound of Mull, near Lochaline, last Wednesday.

The 129-metre vessel, owned by the National Oceanography Centre (NOC) and to be operated by the British Antarctic Survey, is understood to have sailed from Holyhead, Wales, as part of sea trials, and was captured on camera by sharp-eyed Isla Robertson.

The unusual moniker followed a campaign in 2016 for the public to come up with a name for the UK's next world-class polar research ship.

The ship itself was named RRS (Royal

Research Ship) Sir David Attenborough but due to the popularity of 'Boaty McBoatface', that was the suggested name awarded to one of its 'Autosub Long Range' autonomous vehicles (ALR).

'Boaty' is one of three 'ALR's' capable of travelling thousands of kilometres on missions lasting several months at a time and can travel under ice and reach depths of 6,000 metres.

The ship is due to undertake ice trials in the Arctic in the early part of this year and in November will make its maiden voyage to Antarctica.

Ten new homes for mid-market rent in Achintore

A new housing development near Fort William will include 10 homes for mid-market rent, provided by not-for-profit development company HHA.

Applications are now open for the two- and three-bedroom properties in Achintore and, due to the anticipated high demand, HHA is encouraging prospective occupiers to get in touch well in advance of the March 31 deadline.

The new Angus Maciver Way is on the site of the former Achintore Primary School and is due for completion in June.

HHA's homes on the development will be comprised of four two-bedroom cottage flats, two two-bedroom semis, two two-bedroom mid-terraces and two three-bedroom villa end-terraced homes.

Gail Matheson, HHA chief executive, commented: 'We are really pleased to add more mid-market rent properties to Lochaber. We are anticipating high demand for this new collection of attractive homes in Achintore. To



The new Achintore housing development.

avoid disappointment, interested parties should contact HHA now. Fort William town centre can be reached in minutes and the development will have a communal parking area.

As standard, each home will be fitted with floor coverings and blinds throughout. They will also include a kitchen cooker, oven and ex-

tractor fan, while the bathrooms have a shower over the bath.

'The development is progressing well and it is scheduled for completion by the summer. We are delighted to be partnering with The Highland Council to deliver a mix of different types of homes and tenures.'

New fund can help support Lochaber fishermen

The Fisherman's Mission has been offered access to a fund of up to £300,000 to help in its welfare work with fishermen working in Lochaber and the rest of Scotland.

This fund, announced by Scottish rural economy minister Fergus Ewing SNP and

Marine Scotland, will help the Fishermen's Mission support fishermen who are dealing with mounting rent, mortgage and utility bill debt.

David Dickens, chief executive officer of the Fishermen's Mission, said: 'If you are an active

Scottish fisherman and you are struggling to provide for yourself or your family, please get in touch to see if we can support you.'

The nearest area officers are Karen Calder, Lochaber, 07917 754407 and Chris Holden, Oban, 07788 674376.

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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 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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Sun: 9am-6pm
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Update on suspension of amateur football

The Scottish Football Association (SFA) has said the Scottish Government has been unable to give them a definite date of when affected leagues can return to the pitch.

A spokesperson for the SFA said: 'In recent weeks, the SFA has engaged extensively with the Scottish Amateur FA, Scottish Youth FA, clubs and leagues – all of which have been affected by the suspension of football across the various sectors due to Covid – to discuss tailored return-to-playing plans for implementation when it is considered safe and appropriate to resume.'

'The Scottish FA has also been in regular dialogue with the Scottish Government to ensure its input into and ultimate approval of the proposed plans. Regrettably, the government has confirmed again that due to the current restrictions in place across the country, it cannot currently commit to return dates for those affected leagues.'

'The Scottish FA will continue to speak to all parties in the meantime and will provide a further update by March 1.'

'This date should not be seen as a proposed restart date, however, it should help provide clarity to affected clubs to help them plan in the short term.'

Fort personal trainer is one Tough Cookie

A Fort William-based personal trainer who posted a 21-day challenge on social media to help people through dark days of lockdown has already attracted 1,100 followers, writes Iain Ferguson.

Jonathan McCook, 26, of Tough Cookies Fitness set up the free event at the start of the year to encourage a positive mindset and improve physical fitness. Each week Jonathan led a combination of five physical and mental challenges, inviting participants to take part in at least one, though ideally completing all of them.

He explained: 'I didn't want anyone to start a new year with a negative mindset, as I know it

was really tough year mentally and financially.'

'The least I could do was to invite them to look at it with a new year, new me, attitude.'

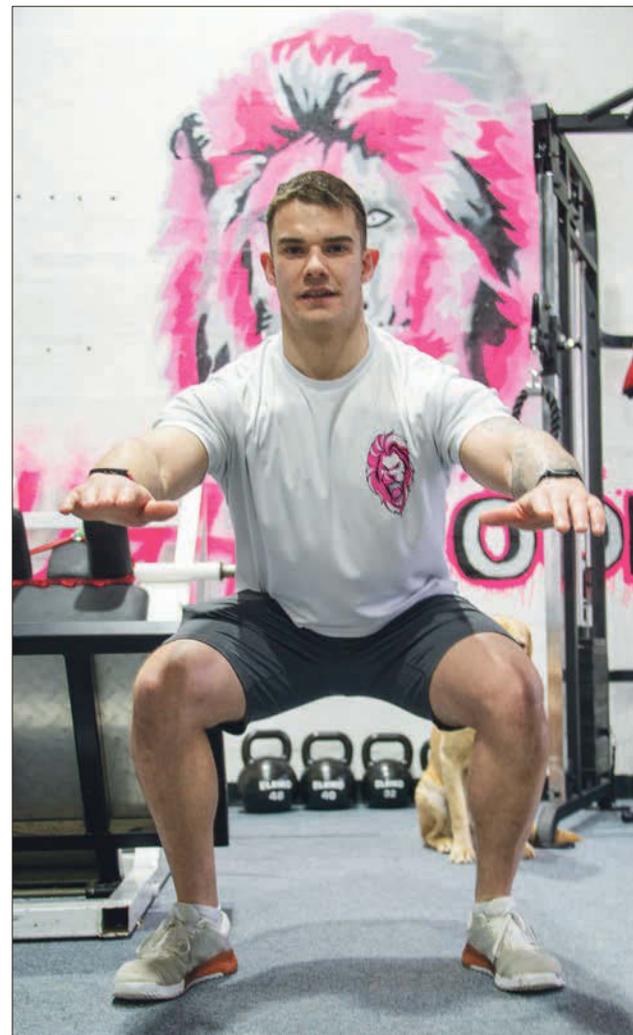
His idea was to get those willing to take action and not regret doing nothing a week later, continuing into the year with that failing mindset. He also made it clear he was there to help with anything they wanted to ask.

Jonathan used a teaching from Stoicism in setting his programme, based on a quote by which he also runs his own life: 'The whole future lies in uncertainty: live immediately' – a phrase which is perhaps even more relevant at this

moment in time. Challenge one was 'Do something cold', 15 minutes of repeat exercises, five burpees, 10 push ups, 15 air squats and additionally, take 10,000 steps.

Other sections included 'reflect and recover' time with tasks, drink two to three litres of water, take 12,000-15,000 steps, spend time being grateful and get in touch with someone you hadn't spoken to for some time.

Following these successful activities, Jonathan is continuing to work online, delivering his positive healthy mind and body attitude to a wider audience, including online fitness sessions for schoolchildren.



Jonathan McCook.

YOURSTORY

share with us: fort@obantimes.co.uk
telephone 01397 703003



Shinty players quick on the run for charity

Shinty players and supporters didn't hesitate to get on the run when Camanachd Association staff set them a challenge to cover the distance to Barcelona in January.

At the beginning of the year, in lieu of a traditional shinty pre-season, Camanachd Association staff discussed how they could encourage people to get active and decided to ask people to 'run' the 1,350 miles to Barcelona by the end of January.

There was good take up from around Scotland with 103 shinty players, committee members, parents and fans signing up to the challenge.

The group soon made light work of getting to Barcelona, completing the task in just over two weeks. They were then challenged to get back home to the association's base in Inverness. Once again, the group excelled, taking the tally for the month to beyond 2,700 miles.

The Camanachd Association ran a competi-

tion on the final day of the month – whoever ran the furthest would be rewarded with a Scotland replica top from association partners Macronstore Highland.

Aberdeen University player Joe Folan set the early pace, clocking up 19.45 miles at 10am. But Paul Ross put in an impressive 22.22 miles an hour later and must have thought he had wrapped it up when checking the group's Strava leaderboard in the evening. Joe had one eye on the prize, too, though, and snuck out for a 4.42 mile run at 10.05pm to pip Paul to top of the leaderboard. Derek Keir, Camanachd Association chief executive officer, said: 'We were delighted so many people joined us in staying active this January. The positive impact being active has on your physical and mental health cannot be overstated.'

The event raised more than £500 for the Scottish Association for Mental Health.

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Research shows that for every £1 spent with a local, independent business, between 50p-70p circulates back into that local economy



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local business but a whole range of local businesses

we



local

