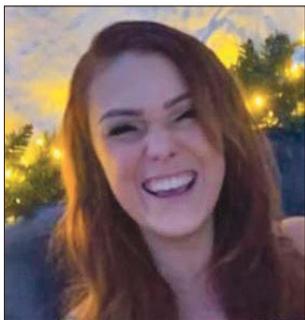




Kilbride Kirk renovations ready for next phase

INSIDE THIS WEEK: Weddings great and small for us all

Megan's Miles



CalMac 'livewire' inspires mental health fundraiser

• See page 3 for more

Changes ahead



More frustration in the post for Taynuilt residents

• See page 5 for more

FAMILY OF CYCLIST IN HEARTFELT PLEA



Devastated family of Tony Parsons appeal for information as police officers distribute posters and leaflets in Tyndrum

Police officers working on the Tony Parsons case descended on Tyndrum this week, distributing posters and leaflets in a fresh appeal for information in relation to the case, writes Mark Entwistle.

Mr Parsons, from Tillicoultry, was last seen during a charity bike ride in September 2017 outside the Bridge of Orchy Hotel. His body was found in a remote area near the A82 at Bridge of Orchy in January.

At the end of December, two men, both aged 29, were arrested then released pending further

enquiries in connection with Mr Parsons's disappearance.

In a statement on behalf of the Parsons family, his son Mike said: 'The last three years have been incredibly hard for us as a family and for all those who knew my Dad.'

'We always hoped there would be a positive outcome and have now been left devastated by my Dad's death.'

'It is still so hard to comprehend that when he

Continued on page three.

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OT

Connel couple thank all our NHS lifesavers

by Ellis Butcher
editor@obantimes.co.uk

A Connel couple have issued a special thanks to NHS lifesavers near and far after a nerve-racking couple of months.

Lachie MacLean and wife Laura praised staff from 'top to bottom' for their care and professionalism despite the huge strain on the Covid front line.

Having suffered a heart attack 20 years ago, Lachie's health unfortunately took a turn for the worse five months ago as he started to suffer terrible angina attacks.

It has required a round of home visits by doctors, being rushed to hospital twice in an ambulance, medical appointments and having intricate heart operations by specialist surgeons in Glasgow.

Lachie, a familiar sight on his delivery rounds with Argyll Haulage Limited, told The Oban Times: "They've done me proud,



Lachie and Laura MacLean.

that's for sure. They have been a lifesaver, I would say so. If I had never got the treatment, I think the old heart would have packed in.'

Lachie, who is originally from Mull, celebrated his 71st birthday last week by being called for a Covid vaccination at the Connel Surgery and he and Laura both

regard it 'the best present' they could have wished for given the worry of the last few months.

The couple said everyone - paramedics, doctors, nurses, specialists and ambulance drivers - from Connel Surgery to Lorn and Islands Hospital and the Golden Jubilee in Clydebank - have all helped him back on his feet.

Wife of 14 years, Laura said: "They've gone above and beyond for us and they've been so good putting others before themselves with the work they do."

"They are always so happy and upbeat."

She added: "If it wasn't for the quick response from the paramedics who go above and beyond to carry out their procedures so quickly and professionally, and at the same time being so reassuring and keeping Lachie nice and calm, and all the staff at Oban hospital being so kind and understanding, it could have been a whole different story."

"It is a very difficult time for everybody just now being in the middle of a pandemic and we can't thank the staff enough. Thank you so, so much to all NHS staff. You all are amazing."

This week, Lachie had his third Covid test as he prepared to go into hospital to have stents put in on the left side of his heart.

Public still have time to protect Ganavan

Argyll and Bute Council still has the chance to wipe Ganavan off its planning blueprint as a potential development area.

The latest Local Development Plan goes before the full council in June. At that meeting, the 36 elected members - eight of whom represent Oban and Lorn - could vote against Ganavan's inclusion in the plan that has marked it out for potential change over the next 10 years.

But by doing that, the whole masterplan for Argyll and Bute could go back to square one for another consultation causing massive delays, Oban Community Council was told during a Zoom meeting on Monday.

The other option, explained councillor Kieron Green, was for Argyll and Bute to send the LDP2 as its 'settled view' along with people's representations for the Scottish Government's reporter to make the final call.

Councillor Roddy McCuish and other elected members at the meeting called on the people of Oban to tell them what way to vote in June.

He said: "At the end of the day it's down to the 36 elected members whether the plan goes ahead in its totality or there are changes. They will probably receive a recommendation from officers to approve it but then it's up to the councillors - eight of whom reside in Oban and Lorn."

Councillor Green said: "When this comes to the council, we can change aspects of the LDP but there's consequences. We would have to go out for consultation again. We could also just put this to the reporter as the settled view of the council but with all the input from the public and say it's up to you."

Scotland's path out of lockdown

Scotland's First Minister has set out some of the landmark dates when the country can start to progress 'cautiously' out of lockdown.

With the caveat that at this stage the dates remain 'indicative' and are dependent on data, Nicola Sturgeon said on Tuesday there would be a progressive easing of level four restrictions with intervals of 'at least' three weeks.

She said: "It is, of course, important for me to stress that all of this depends on us continuing to suppress the virus now and continuing to accept some trade-offs for a period, for example international travel. I am very optimistic that we can make good progress of returning more normality to our lives and the economy."

She said that in the coming weeks, if the 'data allows and positive trends continue', the government would seek to 'accelerate' the easing of the restrictions. The hope is that all parts of the country currently in level four will move back initially to level three at the end of April, said the First Minister.

Full details, www.obantimes.co.uk

Oban drone trials Covid tests and

by Ellis Butcher
editor@obantimes.co.uk

Oban is at the centre of a groundbreaking UK trial to transport medical supplies and samples via drone.

Following initial 'proof-of-concept' trials last year, it was announced on Tuesday that drones are now officially taking part in a three-month trial.

They will fly between the Lorn and Islands Hospital, Mid Argyll Community Hospital in Lochgilphead, Easdale Medical Practice and Mull and Iona Community Hospital, Craignure.

Each drone will be loaded with up to 3kg of 'critical supplies'. They will deliver actual Covid-19 and other test samples, medicine, essential PPE and Covid-19 testing kits after dummy runs last year.

The project involves drone delivery company Skyports, NHS Scotland, Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), Vodafone and digital consultants

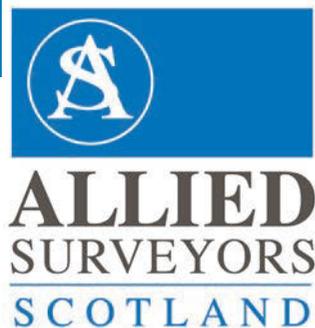
Deloitte. Skyports hailed it as a 'step closer' to a wider roll out of drone delivery services for the NHS.

The unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) will be remotely piloted from the Skyports Operations Centre in Oban and fly 'automatically' along predefined routes.

In a UK first, Skyports becomes the first operator to be allowed to carry diagnostic specimens by drone after receiving formal permission from the Civil Aviation Authority.

Stephen Whiston, head of strategic planning for the HSCP, said the trials would help assess how unmanned drones can enhance its logistics operations and improve services to some of the area's most remote and island communities.

"This three-month project working with Skyports will provide critical evidence on the real benefits this technology can bring to the NHS not only in Argyll and Bute but across Scotland," he said.



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Let's do it for Megan

by Ellis Butcher
editor@obantimes.co.uk

CalMac staff in Oban are flying the flag for mental health as a 'beautiful' colleague continues her recovery.

Popular Megan Baillie, 22, who worked on the MV Isle of Mull ferry, remains under specialist care nine months after attempting to take her own life on May 19.

Nearly 40 colleagues are taking part in the Megan's Miles fundraising challenge from March. They will carry out 126 miles of exercise each to represent the distance between the Oban terminal and the Astley Ainslie Hospital, Edinburgh.

Donations are going to the Scottish Association for Mental Health via an online JustGiving page set up by Megan's friend Nicky MacKechnie of Oban.

Nicky works aboard the MV Clansman and the pair bonded while serving their apprenticeships together.

In no time at all, the fund passed its £2,500 target and has now topped £4,400. Supporters



have dug deep to help fund services for those often suffering in silence.

There had been no outward sign Megan was feeling the way she was. It was only later that 'heartbreaking' notes were found on her phone, her older sister Lauren told The Oban Times. It was clear Megan had been putting on a brave face. With that in mind, Megan's mum Helen Hogarth urged



people to talk and genuinely listen at all times – not just when people are 'visibly' down.

'We need to get people talking before they feel suicide is the only way out for them,' said Helen. 'Talking – not just when they've had one too many cocktails or pints and people think 'It's just drink talk'.

'Talking – not just when they've had a bad day at work and people think 'Aw, it's fine

Megan has shown remarkable determination during her fightback; and right, Nicola MacKechnie with colleagues Alan MacInnes, Ian Rodgers and Keith MacMillan.

Photograph: Kevin McGlynn

things will get better'. Talking – not just when they have split up from their boyfriend or girlfriend and people say 'Oh well, there's plenty more fish in the sea'.

'But instead, talking when they've had a good day – a funny, eventful, productive day – but when they still can only think about when, how and where to take their own lives.'

Despite her family initially

being told she may not survive, Megan has shown remarkable strength and determination during her fightback.

While her memory has yet to return, she has been sitting up and talking but must learn to stand alone and walk again.

Mum Helen added: 'We have been so lucky to get a second chance with Megan but tragically not all families do. That's why what Megan's CalMac work colleagues are doing to raise money for the Scottish Association for Mental Health is not only a fantastic and kind thing to do, but is so important for awareness of mental health.'

Among the range of organisations the family thanked are first responders and those at University Hospital Crosshouse ICU and the Astley Ainslie Charles Bell Pavilion, which provides rehabilitation for patients with brain injuries.

Helen said everyone involved had done 'absolutely everything in their power and ability to keep our beautiful girl here with us'.

She added: 'They also believe

that positive thoughts, prayers and well wishes from hundreds of friends and work colleagues have had a part to play.'

On Monday, at the Oban Ferry Terminal, Megan's colleagues Nicola MacKechnie, Alan MacInnes, Ian Rodgers and Keith MacMillan gathered in specially-made 'Megan's Miles' t-shirts as the countdown to the challenge got under way.

They remember Megan as a 'total livewire' who, despite her young age, seamlessly slotted in to life onboard. As friend Ian Rodgers quipped: 'Within a couple of weeks, Megan was running the ship!' He added: 'You're living with people for two weeks and it's one big family and everyone was genuinely devastated. The whole company is behind it – not just the crew on the boats, but the office as well.'

Recently, work colleagues took part in a special video call with Megan: 'She has blown us all away and is defying all the odds,' said Ian.

■ www.justgiving.com/fundraising/megansmarchmiles

How to transport critical supplies



Duncan Walker, chief executive officer at Skyports, said: 'The experience from this important initiative will put us another step closer to permanent operations from which we hope more NHS facilities could soon benefit. This project underscores the viability of drone technology as a practical way to move goods.'

Supporters say delivery drones can significantly increase the speed of transport and reduces times in some areas of Argyll and Bute from up to 36 hours via road and ferry journey to just 15 min-

utes, whilst also increasing the frequency of pick-ups.

Communication between the drone and the operations centre will be provided by Vodafone's 4G network and satellite communications to ensure connectivity at all times.

Anne Sheehan, for Vodafone UK, said: 'This is an amazing use of technology. The trial is a big breakthrough and we hope we will see drone flights make a real difference to the NHS and for patients in the most remote parts of the UK.'

■ More at www.obantimes.co.uk

Fresh appeal in Tony Parsons investigation

Continued from page one.

went on his charity bike ride three years ago that was to be the last time we would ever see him.

'He has been deprived of so many family events and it hurts us so much as a family to see his grandchildren grow up without their grandad.'

'We would like to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone who looked for my Dad, for never giving up and for giving us the opportunity to make sure he could come home so we could say our final goodbyes. We are extremely grateful to Police Scotland, forensic scientists, all the mountain rescue teams and everyone else involved for their work in such difficult conditions and circumstances. I know we cannot get closure until we find out who did this and why it happened, so I would ask anyone who may have even the smallest piece of information to please speak to the police and help us get the answers and closure we need.'



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OT

NHS Highland vaccination programme progressing well

One third of NHS Highland's over-18 population has now had their first vaccinations against Covid-19.

The health authority says the vaccination programme is progressing well, with 87,698 having been given their first vaccination as of February 15, covering 33 per cent of people aged 18-and-above living in the Highlands and Argyll and Bute.

First dose vaccinations in care homes were completed ahead of schedule and it is planned that all care home residents will be offered their second vaccination by the end of March.

More than 95 per cent of over-80s and over-75s have received their first vaccine, while nearly 85 per cent of over-70s have also received theirs and over-65s have now started to be invited to receive their first vaccine with the hope this group will be completed by the end of this month.

Pam Dudek, chief executive of NHS Highland, above, said: 'The work being carried out by GP colleagues to vaccinate the

general population is extraordinary with additional clinics being held in the evenings and at weekends to ensure the programme continues to meet targets. We have our local teams vaccinating colleagues across health and social care with help from the Scottish Ambulance Service and their mobile unit. There are also a number of teams working behind the scenes teams who are doing everything they can to support the roll out of the programme.

'Thanks must also go to our partners across the NHS Highland area including The Highland Council and Argyll and Bute Council which have provided support in various ways to keep the programme on track.'

Chairman of NHS Highland, Professor Boyd Robertson, said: 'This is a massive undertaking and the challenge really



cannot be overstated. It is thanks to the unstinting efforts of everyone involved throughout NHS Highland that we have been able to deliver the amount of vaccine we have across our vast territory stretching from Wick and Thurso in the north to Campbeltown and Helensburgh in the south and from Tiree in the west to Nairn in the east.'

He added: 'It's been humbling to hear of all the ways that teams across the NHS Highland area are pulling together to ensure the vaccination programme is a success. I would like to offer my sincere thanks to everyone involved. I would also like to thank members of the public who have been coming forward in their thousands to take up the offer of the vaccination. This has been a very challenging time for us all but it is vital that we remain focused on rolling out the vaccination programme and, hopefully, restoring a semblance of normal life beyond the pandemic.'

We get by with a little help from our friends

by Fiona Scott
fiscott@obantimes.co.uk

Oban Pride chairman Phil Dexter rounds off our LGBTQ+ History Month series by paying tribute to the many organisations that give their support to the equality first charity.

Oban Pride, like many other Pride and LGBTQ+ organisations, relies on support, funding, sponsorship and resources from people and organisations from throughout the community.

When the founding members of Oban Pride first came together we were introduced to each other by a member of staff from Waverley Care, which was already doing work in the area and had heard about individuals doing other work in the area.

Waverley Care is a Scottish charity which works with people who are living with or affected by HIV and Hepatitis C. Its work is very important as it helps to support people, tackles health inequalities, promotes good sexual health and helps fight stigma faced by people living with and affected by HIV and Hep C.

When we held our inaugural Pride in 2019 we had many organisations present in our area and were very proud to have this as a feature at Oban Pride. We hope to be able to continue this at future Prides.

Some of the organisations which were present had been involved with Oban Pride from the early planning stages, including Pink Saltire, Equality Network, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Police Scotland and PSYV.

Other organisations have also always been supportive of Oban Pride, including The Oban Times, Argyll and Bute Council, Bid4Oban, Oban Phoenix Cinema, and many others.

Oban Pride wouldn't be where we are today without the



The Virtual Purple Party will be hosted by Crystal and will be streamed to the Oban Pride Facebook page and Twitter feed, and will be available on www.obanpride.com

support of other organisations, we are now working with many others, including Oban FM, with our radio show Oban Pride on the Waves, while we also have a new partnership with Martyn's Monday Club and we will be starting our monthly group Friends of Dorothy in March.

This group is for anyone who is LGBTQ+ living in Oban and surrounding areas who just feels like they need a chat with other friendly LGBTQ+ people during these hard times.

If you would like more information about Friends of Dorothy please email obanpride@gmail.com.

To round off its month of social media posts and live streamed events for LGBTQ+ History Month this February, Oban Pride is delighted to be hosting its Virtual Purple Party on Friday February 26, which is Purple Friday.

An amazing evening has been planned with quiz

rounds, give-aways and special guests including members of the Order of Perpetual Indulgence: Glasgow Mission. There will also be a performance by Michael T Ogilvie.

The whole event will be streamed to the Oban Pride Facebook Page and Twitter Feed (@ObanPride) where members of the community can get involved. The event will also be available to watch via www.obanpride.com.

The Virtual Purple Party starts at 7pm and is followed by Oban Pride on the Waves from 10pm on Oban FM, both of which are being hosted by Pride's very own Crystal, with special co-hosts.

'We are very much looking forward to having you tune in to this special event and would love to get everyone involved by commenting during the stream or even send us pictures of them wearing something purple that we can share,' said Crystal.



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More frustration in the post for Taynuilt

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk

Changes at Royal Mail are delivering more frustration to people living in the Taynuilt area, already fed-up with hold-ups in receiving post.

In 2018 The Oban Times reported how villagers were fed-up with the 'second-class' service they were getting from Royal Mail and the situation has never improved enough to get the community's stamp of approval.

Even a petition signed by the village failed to get a reliable service back.

This weekend, Taynuilt Post Office officially stopped being used as a sorting office, which means all the pressure is at the Oban end – the same is believed to have happened at Dalmally.

Previously, Royal Mail said shifting the sorting process to Oban was for a trial period only.

'I've had umpteen complaints from people. I feel sorry for the customers but I can't do any more. I've told them to report it to the regulators at postcom and to write to their MSPs about it to complain,' said Taynuilt sub-postmistress Lorna MacLennan.

'There's piles of letters and parcels in cages stuck at Oban



Lorna MacLennan back in 2018 with co-worker Lillian Milne when the village hoped a petition would deliver them a first-class delivery service from Royal Mail.

sorting office, it wouldn't be ridiculous to suggest they've been there for weeks. I believe posties have been told to focus on getting the tracked and signed-for deliveries out – most letters aren't tracked.

'The problem's been going on for years. People worry about getting the posties – who are trying their best – in trouble, but if people don't make a noise about what's happening it's only going to keep getting worse. It's how the system is organised from Oban that is at fault.'

Mrs MacLennan is in touch with the Federation of Sub-Postmasters which is working on building up a case. According to Mrs MacLennan, changes after the weekend meant post would also no

longer be sorted at Dalmally Post Office, meaning postal workers will have a massive round trip on their hands to travel to Oban to pick up the mail before their rounds can even start – adding to the chaos of when staff are off sick or on holiday.

'It's an absolute mess,' she added.

There has been talk of Royal Mail renting some space at Inverawe to use as a sorting depot but that has not been confirmed.

Airds Bay resident Dugald McDougall, who has complained to MP Brendan O'Hara, recently went without mail for 10 days. When a delivery eventually arrived at his door he had letters from nine different sources. After no luck

making phone calls to Oban sorting office and before going in in person, he sat for almost two hours next to his nearest post box to quiz the postie – except the postie never arrived to empty the box.

When he flagged it up at Oban sorting office, he was told the collection time did not matter because the boxes were emptied as and when postal workers are able to do it. 'So why is there a time on the box?' he asked.

Another resident Maclain Service said: 'Royal Mail needs to have a back-up system in place for when staff are off sick or on holiday so they can cope. They can't turn round and say get stuffed and wait until they come back to work to get your deliveries. When people put a stamp on a letter or parcel they are entering a legal contract with Royal Mail to deliver that item sooner – it shouldn't be later.'

At the time of going to press, The Oban Times had not received any comment from Royal Mail.

Get your skates on!

Outdoors instructor Kirsty Pallas and her pal Rosie Florence are rolling out a new hobby in lockdown.

While work is out of bounds during the pandemic for Kirsty – who lives in Benderloch – having fun on wheels is not. And it seems the 27-year-old's enthusiasm for 'rollers' has encouraged others across Argyll to get their skates on too.

'I'd seen photos of bikini-clad women in golden sunshine in California doing it along the beach, looking so cool. Our weather can't quite match it over there, but it looked great fun. Rosie jumped on the idea when I mentioned it and our skates arrived in the post the next week,' said Kirsty.

Rosie, who works as a midwife, regularly pairs up with Kirsty when they venture out in search of smooth surfaces to roller on. The cycle track close to Kirsty's home was a good place to start.

'We were wondering whether anyone knew of any good spots to skate so we made a Facebook page and asked the question,

expecting just a handful of people to get back to us. It's just taken off. There are 143 people who have joined the Facebook group so far. It's fantastic. People are posting up videos of themselves skating, asking questions and sharing information.

'When we started it, we weren't sure if it would just be the two of us posting on it. Some people are even saying we've inspired them to get new skates or to dig out their old skates and get them back on,' added Kirsty.

The next plan is to see what people want to get from the group whether, once Covid allows, they want to meet up or organise events.

'We're hoping once we are able to and restrictions ease, to build this into something much bigger. Roll on then!' added Kirsty who always wears protective kit, including a helmet and knee pads.

'We've had a fair few falls but our rollerskating skills seem to be progressing quickly,' she said.

To find out more, search Argyll Roller Skaters on Facebook.



Kirsty Pallas on her skates near her Benderloch home.

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OT

Around Oban

ANDREW SPENCE

editor@obantimes.co.uk

Once again, we had a weekend of reasonable weather which, as usual, resulted in lots of folk out walking.

The good weather even lasted into Monday, bringing a touch of spring with some warmer temperatures – unlike Tuesday when the monsoons returned.

I highlighted last week the number of businesses doing something different for Valentine's Day and this week across social media we see lots of our cafés and restaurants doing special deals for Mother's Day on Sunday March 14. It is great to see diversification and adaptations during the current crisis.

It goes without saying many of these cafés are suffering, so what better way to support them by giving your mum or your gran a treat with a takeaway afternoon tea? The biggest difficulty will be which one to choose as the standards and quality are outstanding.

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wonderful florists in the town who are listed on the Oban Town Directory. By ordering direct from a local florist, you ensure they gain the maximum benefit from your purchase as there is no charges paid to middlemen.

As I write this today, we are awaiting further announcements on the relaxation of restrictions to lockdown. I am sure it will be a slow process but if we are all patient and behave, we will see a return to normality sooner rather than later. As a town, we are desperate to see the non-essential retail, cafés, bars and restaurants open, even in restricted mode.

Last week's photograph was the beautifully crafted new doors inside the Rockfield Centre.

Petition sees action to protect dolphins

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk

A Seil couple's online petition to stop the 'legalisation' of cruelty to dolphins has helped win a U-turn by salmon farms.

More than 30,000 people signed the change.org petition set up by marine biologist David Ainsley and wife Jean who run Sealife Adventures.

A flurry of publicity in the media and lobbying of MSPs asking them to stop Marine Scotland from issuing European Protected Species (EPS) licences to fish farms that would allow them to use Acoustic Deterrent Devices brought about the change of heart.

The clock had been ticking, with Marine Scotland aiming to conclude the licensing process by March 1 this year.

Campaigners said if fish farms got EPS licences allow-

ing them to use ADDs, it would have legalised disturbing and injuring dolphins, porpoises and whales.

Disturbing or injuring cetaceans is illegal under habitat and conservation regulations but Mr Ainsley says Marine Scotland had been 'turning a blind eye' until it gave fish farms the opportunity to apply for EPS licences.

EPS Licences can only be granted if there are no satisfactory alternatives to the use of ADDs. Campaigners say there are satisfactory alternatives: farms in Tasmania, Turkey, British Columbia - where ADDs are banned - and some here in Scotland are already using double-skinned anti-predator nets with mesh size which does not endanger wildlife.

The petition and lobbying had 'very much played a part' in the fish farms' U-turn, but conservationists still had to keep watch and keep campaigning.

In an open letter to director of Marine Scotland Annabel Turpie before the U-turn was announced, campaigners claimed a model published by Marine Scotland calculating



Dolphins.
Photograph:
Sealife
Adventures

how many cetaceans will be disturbed and injured by the ADDs to be licenced was also 'not scientifically robust'. The campaigners were also angry that EPS licence applications were not open to public scrutiny.

'If you use the right nets, you don't have to use ADDs. They couldn't have issued EPS licences while there are these alternatives. I think Marine Scotland will have turned round to the farms and said sorry boys it is not going to get through. That's why they voluntary withdrew their applications,' said Mr Ainsley.

He added: 'Now is the time to say to Marine Scotland they must enforce the law. There would have to be an amnesty

for fish farms still using ADDs until the end of the current production cycle because it's important they can't say they've had massive fish escapes and that it's the fault of conservationists.'

Mr Ainsley cautioned the industry would try to bring in a new generation of lower-frequency ADDs being developed, claiming they would only target seals and not cetaceans because their hearing is different - a claim he says is 'not strictly true'.

'Because there are alternatives to using these devices, for the same reason, they would still not be able to be licenced to use them, so this cruelty to dolphins would still be illegal,' he added.

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Seal pup in America has Oban link

A zoo in America has been running a competition to name a grey seal pup - with Oban among the three choices.

A keeper at Louisville Zoo in Kentucky put forward the name to honour the work of the former Scottish Sealife Sanctuary which closed its premises in Barcaldine in 2018.

The centre led the way in seal conservation and rescue and rescued and released 41 grey seals.

US keeper Anna Stradley hailed the 'great' conservation work it did with grey seals and urged people to vote for Oban.

In another link to Scotland, the seal pup's mother is called Rona - after the small island off Raasay.

Other names in the running were Finsbay, from a seal colony at the Isle of Harris, and Noaa, which stands for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, the US' first conservation agency.

The Louisville Zoo is a non-profit organisation accredited by American's Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA).

AZA accredits those attractions which meet the highest standards in animal care and welfare.

The pup, born on December 28, was part of AZA's Species Survival Plan for grey seals to help maintain the genetic diversity of managed animal populations. People had until



The seal pup with its mum Rona. Photograph:
Louisville Zoo.

Tuesday to vote for their favourite name in a competition sponsored by T-Mobile.

A minimum requested donation of \$5 will go towards the care and feeding of the pup.

Eight seal pups have been born at the zoo which will announce the winning name today, Thursday February 25, at <https://www.facebook.com/Louisvillezoo>

MSPs in row over claim Holyrood has been airbrushed from leaflet

by Ellis Butcher
ebutcher@obantimes.co.uk

Two MSPs have clashed over an election leaflet as the parties jockey for position ahead of the Scottish Parliament elections in May.

SNP stalwart Michael Russell, the Argyll and Bute MSP who steps down this time, has accused the Scottish Conservatives' challenger for the seat, Donald Cameron MSP, of 'airbrushing' Holyrood out of a leaflet delivered to every home in the constituency.

Mr Cameron, the current MSP for the Highlands and Islands, was accused by Mr Russell of underplaying the significant contribution of the Scottish Government in the recent rural growth deal for Argyll and Bute.

But Mr Cameron said growth deals, such as Argyll and Bute's, had always been



Donald Cameron, left, and Michael Russell.

'spearheaded and led' by the UK Government.

Mr Russell said: 'Mr Cameron is standing to be a member of the Scottish Parliament yet he is trying to airbrush out anything Scottish about the largest investment ever in Argyll and Bute and its future. The Scottish Tories need to decide who they are working

for - Boris Johnson in London or the people of Scotland.'

Mr Russell said the rural growth deal is a joint project involving £25 million from the Scottish Government and a matched sum from the UK Government with more than £20 million coming from other sources to being the total to £70 million.

He said the deal origins dated back to discussions between himself, then Scottish Government finance secretary John Swinney and former leader of Argyll and Bute Council Dick Walsh in February 2016. The UK Government, said Mr Russell, became involved 'some years later'.

However, Mr Cameron said:

'It's good to see Michael Russell has managed to spare a few minutes from plotting another independence referendum to comment on my leaflet.'

'I welcome the funding from the Scottish Government, but it doesn't make up for more than a decade of SNP cuts to local councils, something which Michael Russell has turned a blind eye to during his time in office.'

Mr Cameron added: 'The UK Government has contributed almost £10 billion to Scotland during the pandemic and it is clear we are stronger together within the United Kingdom. That is the case I will be taking to the people of Argyll and Bute at this election.'

Islay resident Jenni Minto has been selected as the SNP candidate for Argyll and Bute after Mr Russell announced his decision to stand down, having first been elected in 1999.

Oban's Clydesdale bank rebranded

The Clydesdale Bank in Argyll Square, Oban, has been rebranded into a Virgin Money store.

It is part of an exercise involving branches of Clydesdale Bank, Yorkshire Bank and Virgin Money which is expected to be completed by spring. A spokeswoman said each rebranded store would offer full banking services to all 6.6 million customers in the Virgin Money Group.

Covid breach police hotline

Police Scotland has contacted community council secretaries to advise of its online service for reporting covid breaches.

The online form can be found at www.scotland.police.uk/secureforms/covid19/ The form is for that purpose only. It is not for emergency reporting. If there is an emergency call 999.

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If you would like to talk to someone directly, contact your local advisor for Oban and Lorn Kathy Graham on 07972 678923

Alternatively, contact Smoke Free Highland on: **08457 573 077** if you'd like to stop smoking or complete the online form at: bit.ly/Smoke-Free-Highland and your local advisor will get in touch with you.

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OT

POLICE FILES

■ About 11.20am on Tuesday February 16, at Lynn Court, Oban, a man aged 23 was stopped and searched by police and allegedly found in possession of cannabis. A house was subsequently searched under warrant where further cannabis was located. The drugs have been sent for analysis and a report will be submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

■ About 1pm on Wednesday February 17, police searched a house in Shore Street, Oban, under warrant. Subsequently, a man, aged 39, was allegedly found in possession of controlled drugs which were sent for analysis.

■ About 3am on Friday February 19 at Ganavan Sands, Oban, a woman, 34, was stopped by police while driving her car. The woman was subsequently arrested for allegedly driving while under the influence of alcohol. A report has been submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

■ About 10.45pm on Friday February 19, at Gallanach Road, Oban, a car was stopped and searched

by police. A man, 20, was allegedly found in possession of cannabis and cocaine.

Another man, aged 21, was allegedly found in possession of a small quantity of cocaine. Both men were cautioned and charged and a report will be sent to the Procurator Fiscal.

■ Between 6pm on February 19 and 7.30am on February 20, the wing mirrors on a white Vauxhall van parked near Ulva Road, Soroba, Oban, were kicked off. Police are appealing for witnesses.

■ Between July 1 2020, and February 19 2021, at Dalmally, a 33-year-old man allegedly stalked a woman by repeatedly sending messages having been told to desist. The man was arrested and charged and a report has been sent to the Procurator Fiscal.

■ **If any member of the public has information in relation to the above, or to any incident, they should contact their local police station on telephone number 101 or, anonymously, through Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.**

Electrical fault keeps Easdale primary shut

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk

A major electrical fault means Easdale Primary School must stay shut for now.

Pupils in P1 to P3 and nursery-age youngsters were due to go back to class on Monday with the easing of Covid restrictions but problems with the electricians meant alternative arrangements had to be made in haste.

A designated separate space for the affected primary age pupils has been made on site at Oban Primary Campus, including an area to eat lunches and to play during breaktimes while parents of nursery children were being phoned up on Saturday to be given the choice of a number of nurseries – including one an hour's drive away in Craignish.



Easdale Primary School is staying shut because of an electrical fault.

Most have opted for Kilninver School. Parents are now calling on Argyll and Bute Council to turn Seil Island Hall, not far from the school building, into a makeshift school until the problems with the electricians are solved and their children

can safely return. There are concerns among some families about taking their children off the island for schooling and that it could be after the Easter-break before the school reopens. Some parents had contacted Oban North and

Lorn councillor Julie McKenzie for help and she asked council officials for an urgent response. Education officials have now visited Seil Island Hall to carry out an inspection and the hall committee is waiting to hear the outcome.

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Donation a treat for Oban Link Club

Oban Link Club has received £300 to give its members a treat in lockdown.

Marri Malloy from Oban Community Council handed over the much-appreciated cheque to Neil Cameron of Oban Link Club.

Maggie Dougall, who helps run the club, said: 'The donation is very much appreciated and will allow us to provide the members with some treats during these difficult times.'

'We meet in the Baptist



Oban Community Council's Marri Malloy hands over a cheque for £300 to Oban Link Club's Neil Cameron.

Church Hall on Albany Street from 2pm to 4pm every Wednesday.'

The club is for those with who

suffer or have suffered from mental ill health and need support and friendship. New members are always welcome.'

£100 hardship payment boost welcomed

A move to provide low income families with a further £100 Covid hardship payment has been welcomed.

Highlands and Islands MSP Maree Todd has backed the funding boost aimed at tackling poverty. It follows a £37.2 million funding package announced by the Finance Secretary Kate Forbes in the Scottish Parliament.

The £100 payment will be made to qualifying low income families whose children receive free meals in schools or early learning and childcare

settings. There will be additional £20 million for councils in Scotland to tackle 'financial insecurity' - bringing the total to £47 million.

Ms Todd said: 'This extra funding will help to support people in the immediate term who may be struggling due to the pandemic.'

She said the UK Government was 'seeking to slash Universal Credit' and scrap the £20 uplift in payments - introduced during the pandemic - from April.

Ms Todd, for the SNP, said this would mean the value of

Universal Credit dropping by as much as a 25 per cent at a time when Department of Work and Pensions figures show there has been a 75 per cent increase in the number of claimants in the Highlands over the last year.

'The move to cut Universal Credit when it is needed most is indefensible and cruel and will leave a devastating and lasting impact on many of my constituents. The UK Government must act now to make the £20 uplift in Universal Credit payments permanent.'

New network aims to alert elderly and carers to bogus crimes and scams

A new initiative has been launched in Argyll by Police Scotland to help protect elderly and more vulnerable people from scammers.

The aim of the Cared for at Home Network is to alert paid and unpaid carers, befrienders or someone else with regular contact with elderly or vulnerable people to incidents like this in Argyll and Bute so they can

let their clients' relatives know about scams and bogus crimes in the area.

The network has been created by PC Laura Evans, Police Scotland, who added: 'We know our elderly and vulnerable communities are more vulnerable to being targeted by telephone scams and bogus callers. The Cared for at Home Network allows us

to raise awareness throughout vulnerable groups including the elderly who are often not on social media. It is hoped that through sharing information and raising awareness we can help protect those at greatest risk from this type of crime.'

Within Oban, Lorn and the Isles, the Cared for at Home Network has so far been created for North Argyll Carers

Centre, Crossroads North Argyll, the Dochas Carers Centre, The Good Care Group, ALI Energy, Argyll Care and Repair, Carr Gomm, Citizens Advice Bureau.

Peter Minshall, manager of the Dochas Carers Centre, said: 'The Dochas Carer Centre, along with many other organisations in Argyll which support unpaid carers,

welcomes the new Cared for at Home Network and views this smart initiative as a practical way we can all work together to ensure a safer community.'

The Cared for at Home Network is hosted by Neighbourhood Watch Scotland which allows Police Scotland to send out timely, targeted alerts on issues of crime, safety and resilience.

Alerts are sent out to people within the Cared for at Home Network at no cost, by email or text depending on urgency and people's preferences.

If you would like to know more or would like to be involved, contact PC Laura Evans, Local Authority Liaison Officer for Argyll and Bute, at laura.evans@scotland.pnn.police.uk



Charity Dogs for Good has issued helpful advice how to help keep your pets safe from theft.

Protect your dog from being stolen

A charity for dogs is offering practical advice to pet owners after Home Secretary Priti Patel said she will look at tougher measures to tackle the recent rise in thefts.

Dogs for Good said although there has been a rise in dogs being stolen during the pandemic, the numbers of those thefts are still relatively low. But the charity has still issued tips on how to keep your dogs safe.

The best is to keep an eye on him or her and not to be distracted when out and about.

Is your garden secure? Did you lock the gate? When away from home, do not leave your dog outside shops. Tinted car windows can make what is in your car less visible to prying eyes too, says the charity.

Where possible, keep your dog away from the side of the road when you are out on a walk. Doing so will make it far

more difficult for someone to open a car door, take your dog and drive off.

Scope out some safer, free-run locations where you've got clear sight of your dog, says the charity which also recommends using extendable leads and altering routes and times you go walks.

'Even with the current restrictions, you can still take a walk with someone else as long as you keep a safe distance apart. Make sure you've got plenty of recent photographs of your dog, clearly showing identifiable markings, and make sure your dog has been chipped and that you keep any changes to your details updated with the database,' said a Dogs for Good spokesperson.

If your dog is taken, notify police, dog wardens, vets and local rescue centres.

Go to dogsforgood.org for more information.



The new strains of coronavirus are more infectious.



You should self-isolate immediately if:

- You or anyone at home has symptoms
- You have been asked to by NHS Scotland or the Protect Scotland app

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

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

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

To book a test, visit NHSinform.scot/test-and-protect or call 0800 028 2816 if you cannot get online.

*Available to workers on low incomes. Conditions apply.

OT

Ellenabeich foreshore and land sale

A rare opportunity to buy plots of land and foreshore in the conservation village of Ellenabeich on Seil is coming soon, writes Kathie Griffiths.

A freshwater lochan, former slate quarries, extensive foreshore on the Firth of Lorn and the remains of the old pier are going on the market imminently.

Exciting opportunities also include landing stages for small vessels, a small car park and multiple parcels of other land suitable for possible future development.

Paul Nicoll MRICS from The Estates Office Limited in Oban said: 'The combination of land and foreshore potentially opens up many exciting possibilities in an area where access to the sea and sheltered anchorages are surprisingly rare.'

'We have received a number of approaches to date, intimating various uses and we are expecting interest not only locally, but nationally.'

Can black grouse help to protect Ganavan?

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk

Could Black Grouse spotted in woods above Ganavan help save the area from developers?

Two pairs of the UK's fastest declining bird, official name is Tetrao tetra, were caught on camera last week.

Black grouse are classified in the UK as a Red List species under the Birds of Conservation Concern review and as a priority species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP).

The birds were snapped by Laura Corbe and the footage posted on Friends of Ganavan's website as 'undeniable' proof.

'What does it take to get a proposal knocked on the head on environmental grounds?' she said.

Sadly, even rare Black Grouse 'might not come



up trumps', she added. Marsh Fritillary butterflies which are threatened, not only in the UK but across Europe, have also been spotted at Ganavan, as have the narrow Bordered Bee Hawk Moth.

Keep Ganavan Green campaigner Daniel Brooks has been carrying out environmental surveying of the whole

proposed area and gathering records from local naturalists.

Finds include otters, badgers, foxes, pine martens, red squirrels, shrews, stoats and weasel. There have also been falcons nesting, ravens, buzzards, grasshopper warblers, black grouse, snipe and other rare birds using the area for hunting each winter. Merlin,

The green hills at the back of Ganavan sands are rich with wildlife.

short eared owl, long eared owl, barn owl and hen harrier have also been sighted.

'I'm not against houses being built if they are built in the right place. Ganavan's green area is not the right place. It's a mosaic of different habits and needs protecting,' said Mr Brooks.

Friends of Ganavan agree and describe the area as a 'spectacular amphitheatre setting', with a spokesperson adding: 'Not only is the area one of outstanding natural beauty but it has an ecology that needs to be protected for the sustainable benefit of everyone.'

A sign-posted nature trail, a squirrel hide and sowing more wildflowers such as butterflies'

favourite, pretty Devils Bit Scabious, are just some ideas that could be developed on the green area if the land owners gave the nod, said Mrs Corbe.

She added: 'There's some amazing ecology in action across the hinterland there, with lots of evidence of re-growth of pioneer tree species such as birch and willow.'

'A wildlife corridor across the whole area, not just from the ancient woodland on the Ganavan side of the cycle path, but even from Dunollie, may be a great tree planting exercise for school children who would get to see the trees mature as they do. All very possible ideas.'

GETINTOUCH

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Are you a young musician who is passionate about music?

If you are a young musician or music teacher, don't miss out on the wide range of free online opportunities being offered by St Mary's Music School, Edinburgh.

Celebrity 6 Series with internationally-renowned musicians

Celebrity 6 takes place on Friday afternoons and is a chance to hear from some of the world's leading artists in a small and interactive setting. Sir Antonio Pappano, conductor, pianist and Music Director of the Royal Opera House; pianist Malcolm Martineau; viola player Tabea Zimmermann, violinist Zoë Beyers; and cellist Steven Isserlis all join the pupils of St Mary's Music School and guests to share their expertise, insights and inspiration.

SCO Wind and Brass, String and Percussion Academies

In partnership with Scottish Chamber Orchestra these are run over a series of Sunday afternoons and are an opportunity to join our pupils and those from other schools to play alongside and learn from the musicians Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

Instrumental workshops and masterclasses

Our online 'How to Be a Better Player' series continues with a masterclass for young flautists and teachers based around baroque composers Bach and Telemann. It is led by baroque specialist Lis Dooner who played with SCO for 25 years and is suitable for all levels. Piano and brass workshops will follow shortly.

Singing for fun and Saturday Music Classes

For younger children there is Zoomtunes, singing classes on a Friday after-

noon for ages 7 to 9 or our range of group and one-to-one instrumental lessons on a Saturday morning for children age 4 to 12.

Piano, String and Woodwind Summer Schools

Looking ahead we have residential Piano, String and Woodwind Summer Schools which will take place in our beautiful premises in the heart of Edinburgh (digital alternative should courses not be able to run). These are small group sizes (up to 16 players) so you are guaranteed lots of individual attention and

are for Grade 7 and above. These are all activities that form a regular part of life for pupils at St Mary's Music School and we are delighted that we can share them more widely with other young musicians and music teachers around the country. With the exception of Saturday music classes and Summer schools, all events are entirely free.

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Discover how music makes up over 50% of every week. If you are passionate about music and think you have potential, why not join us

for a Virtual Open Day on March 4th or March 7th and find out more about life as a pupil at St Mary's Music School?

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music at university or conservatoire and runs for two or three years from ages 16 to 19.

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- And if you are unsure of whether a specialist music school is right for you, we offer free advisory auditions too.

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

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

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OT

Historic Kilbride ready for next phase of restoration

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk

Volunteers at Historic Kilbride have shovelled five tonnes of pea gravel to protect an ancient floor.

Last week, archaeologists finished work at Kilbride Chapel in Lerags Glen, ready for the restoration project's next phase to begin.

As part of the work, the Argyll Archaeology team uncovered a stairway and a hearth in the 18th-century session house.

Exciting finds also included a fine piece of sandstone carved with dog-tooth decoration, which would have probably edged the door of the once 13th-century church at Kilbride.

Six foot deep rubble, mainly large sandstone blocks and boulders and other fallen stone



were removed with the help of volunteers. With a layer of gravel now protecting the ses-



sion house floor, it is ready for stonemason Michael Hogg to get to work on stabilising the

walls around it. The root bore from a large sycamore felled 10 years ago also needs removing to take away the risk of falling masonry so the buildings can be safe to enter again.

Seymour Adams, chairman of Friends of Kilbride, said: 'We have now done all the archaeology we needed to do. We have cleared out six foot deep rubble. Inside there must have been about 40 tonnes of rock that we have taken out and piled up.'

'We found some significant



Volunteers, including Steve Barlow and Andy Buntin, helped move nearly 40 tonnes of rubble and spread five tonnes of gravel to protect the site during the nine-day dig at Kilbride; Dr Clare Ellis of Argyll Archaeology with an architectural fragment featuring a dogtooth motif from the 13th-century church that was excavated during the dig; Dr Ellis and Hilary McLauchlan of Argyll Archaeology, along with a volunteer and Seymour Adams, moved 22.5 cubic metres of rubble and worked on removing an invasive sycamore root in the walls. Photographs: Imagine Alba.

carved sandstone blocks from the medieval chapel. Although we have known from written histories that it existed, this is the first time we have found physical proof that it existed.'

Last month the Kirk was awarded £68,500 from Historic Environment Scotland's Covid Recovery Fund, meaning Friends of Kilbride can carry out that work as part of phase three of its restoration and renovation of the Kirk and Session House.

The west gable wall and west

door has already been made safe thanks to generous grants from Carraig Ghael Wind Farm Community Trust and the Clan MacDougall Society of North America.

'We would like to have a big grand opening when we are allowed.'

'At the moment it looks very much like a building site but it will be very different when we open up to the public again,' added Mr Seymour.

For further information visit: www.friendsofkilbride.scot



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Residents 'willing to pay more'

More than half of Argyll and Bute's residents would be willing to pay more for collections of bulky waste, according to a council survey.

And nearly half think commercial waste services are worth paying more for, writes Ellis Butcher.

These are two of the findings from a consultation on Argyll and Bute Council's service provision, carried out in late 2020 as part of the authority's annual budget-setting process.

Around 1,100 people took part with more than 40 per cent saying they'd be prepared to pay more for parking permits, while just under a third would pay extra for car parking.

Community involvement was also mentioned during the consultation as a way of delivering statutory services differently.

The findings were revealed in a report that went to the

council's policy and resources committee at its virtual meeting on Thursday February 18.

Council executive director Kirsty Flanagan said: 'While we received feedback specific to the topics covered, this overall reference emerged: rather than cut services, find different ways of working or delivering them, to make them sustainable.'

'Recurring suggestions for how the council might do this were efficiency savings, a campaign for more funding for the council, introduce or increase charges and support communities to get involved in delivering services that matter to them. Charging and involving communities more received some objection as well as support. Main concerns about charging were about the level of charges and the impact on low income residents. Main objections to community involvement were about expect-

tations of what paying council tax should make possible.'

Efficiency savings already identified include reducing management/councillor costs, reviewing how services are delivered, using technology and reducing the council's energy costs.

Data shown further down the report reveals the results of a question on which services residents would pay more for.

Bulk waste uplift attracted 55 per cent of votes, while commercial waste services got 47 per cent. Those were the two most popular.

Respondents to the consultation were also asked whether the council should introduce charges for other services if possible if it meant avoiding a reduction or end to another service. A total of 58 per cent of respondents said yes, 26 per cent said no and 16 per cent did not know.

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Climate change webinar

NFU Scotland hosted a webinar on the Farming For 1.5°C Inquiry Report on Tuesday February 23.

The event involved the co-chairmen of the independent inquiry – Mike Robinson, chief executive officer of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society and former NFU Scotland president Nigel Miller. NFU Scotland president Martin Kennedy chaired the meeting.

The inquiry is looking to find consensus on the best way forward for Scottish agriculture to play its part in limiting global warming to 1.5°C. It is innovative in its make-up as it includes farmers, scientists, activists and environmental non-governmental organisations.



The inquiry's interim report, published in November 2020, recognised that farming uniquely can improve its own performance by reducing emissions from agricultural activity and impact positively on wider societal emissions through good soil and land management, by locking up

The Farming for 1.5°C Inquiry co-chairmen Mike Robinson and Nigel Miller with Martin Kennedy at the 2020 NFU Scotland conference.

carbon in trees and soil and by supporting ecosystems.

It states that without the engagement of the agricultural community, with its ability to absorb emissions not just cut them, it will be impossible for Scotland to deliver against its targets. This engagement must have political and financial recognition.

The interim report, entitled A Transformational Pathway, includes 15 key recommendations available to read at: www.farming1point5.org/reports

ports NFU Scotland president Martin Kennedy said: "The Farming for 1.5 °C independent inquiry, which draws on experience from a wide scientific, environmental, food and farming base, has mapped out a pathway for transformation that is underpinned by science and supported by a huge range of practical knowledge and expertise.

"The report sets out principles that all sectors of Scottish agriculture need to adopt immediately to improve agricultural and carbon efficiency, better manage our soils and develop a new approach to sharing knowledge and technical support.

Importantly, it also acknowledges the role of Scottish Government in funding

this transformation over a sustained period if we are to achieve our ambitious national climate change targets and reverse biodiversity loss.

"The industry must be supported, guided by policy and equipped with science-led advice if we are to reduce emissions while continuing to produce high quality food and drink.

"This inquiry will be hugely influential in setting that policy direction as its recommendations dovetail with the Scottish Government's recently created climate change sector groups.

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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

Let's get behind mental health charity challenge

CalMac staff are pushing the boat out in their efforts to raise money for mental health.

Inspired by their 'beautiful' colleague Megan Baillie, who worked on the MV Isle of Mull ferry, around 40 colleagues are taking part in the Megan's Miles fundraising challenge in aid of a really worthwhile cause, the Scottish Association for Mental Health.

The challenge will see each of them carry out 126 miles of exercise to represent the distance between the Oban terminal and the Astley Ainslie Hospital, Edinburgh, where Megan is recovering after trying to take her own life nine months ago.

Thankfully Megan is now on the road to recovery and colleagues who took part in a special video call with Megan could not believe the progress she had made.

We send our good wishes to Megan and wish the team all the best and, if you are able, please help them to raise as much money for this important charity by donating towards this fantastic cause.

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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Concern over new licence fees for B&Bs and self-catering

I note with interest Oban and Lorn Tourism Alliance is opposed to new licence fees for B&Bs and self catering accommodation.

Many of us who are private landlords and who also enjoy renting self-catering accommodation for holidays in Scotland, believe the Scottish Government has dragged its heels for too long over this important issue.

For more than 10 years, private landlords have required to be registered and their properties checked annually for gas safety. Electrical safety checks are also mandatory every five years.

These regulations are to ensure the safety of those living inside rented properties.

Why then has the safety of self-catering, holiday chalets and, more recently, Airbnb been of less importance? Having stayed in a beautiful self-catering flat just before lockdown, I noticed it did not even have a smoke alarm.

The disturbance to neighbours from 'party houses and flats' (The Oban Times, February 11 2021) is an increasing nuisance to those living close to properties being let in an unregulated manner.

Regulation of short-term letting is long overdue. Once implemented it will raise the safety profile of all holiday accommodation.

D I Henderson, Connel.

Ganavan deeds

Does any reader have a copy of the title transfer of land by Dunstaffnage Estates to the old County Council or the name and recording date of the deed? If so, please email me at watsonjohn@hotmail.com. We need to preserve, protect and promote our green open space at Ganavan.

John Watson, chairman Friends of Ganavan.

Sea farm expansion

The SEPA CAR licence for Scottish Sea Farms (SSF) expansion of Dunstaffnage fish farm permits the use of four chemicals to deal with sea lice: Emamectin Benzoate (Slice, in feed), Deltamethrin, Azamethiphos (Salmosan) and Cypermethrin. SSF says it has not used Salmosan in recent years at Dunstaffnage but claims it is the best approach.

Its competitors MOWI says in all its recent farm applications that the first two of these medicines are no longer effective.

This raises an obvious question as to why SSF have included them in the licence application.

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

ailean@obantimes.co.uk

Thug uallach riatanach chun an iar mi bho chionn ghoirid agus shiubhail mi air latha cho fiadhaich 's a chunnaic mi bho chionn greise, eadar gaath is uisge agus fiù 's breacadh de shneachda ùr mun àm a ràinig mi mo cheann-uidhe. Mar a thachair iomadh uair nuair a bhios mi air slighe tro Ghleann Seile, thàinig bàrdachd Nèill MhicLeòid na mo chuimhne is sin a' dèanamh dealbh cho ealanta den t-seòrsa sheallaidhean a bha fom chomhair. "Is chì mi an Cuilitheann mar leòmhan gun tioma le fheusaig den t-sneachd air a phasgadh m' a cheann, 's a ghruaidhean a' srùladh le easannan smùideach, tha tuiteam nan lùban gu ùrlar nan gleann." 'S ann ainneamh a thèid mi seachad air Eas a' Bhradain, aig bun Druim nan Cleòc, nach eil dròbh de luchd-turais a' togail dheilbh, ach cha robh duine beò ri fhaicinn an latha ud is craos de chop geal air an eas, is an abhainn fòidhpe a' cur thairis gu beul na mara.

Bha sgeulachdan a chuala mi mu chaochladh àitichean air an t-slighe a' ruith air m' inntinn, agus bha mi cuideachd a' caoidh an iomadh fiosrachadh a fhuair mi thar nam bliadhnaichean a th' air a dhol às mo chuimhne. Tha mi air leth uasal à cuid de mhuintir an Eilein Sgitheanaich a tha a' gleidheadh eachdraidh an cuid bhailtean is sgìrean, ach tha mi tàmailteach nach eil comainn eachdraidh stèidhichte ann mar a th' air a bhith cho soirbheachail anns na h-Eileanan Siar. Tha mi farmadach da-riribh! Le ruith bhliadhna-

ichean gach ginealach tha atharraichean cha mhòr do-chreidsinneach a' tighinn air àitichean agus tha mi mothachail gum bheil na dealbhan a bhiodh mo sheanair a' toirt dhomh air an sgìre, nuair a bha esan òg, a' dol air ais cha mhòr ceud gu leth bliadhna. Chan eil dòigh-beatha mar a bha agus tha ainneamh a' dol air chall, gu h-àraid far am bheil muinntir na sgìre air gluasad air falbh airson caochladh adhbharan agus gu math tric coigrich a-nise nan àite.

Cha b' e imrich a-mhàin a dh'fhàg cuid a chroitean is bhailtean falamh, bha cuideachd tinneis a' fàgail bhearnan. B' e Taigh Mòr NicAoidh a chanadh m' athair ris an t-seann tobhta a bh' air lot mo shinn-seanair, agus cha do dhìochuimhnich mi fhìn is mo pheathraichean riamh na rabhaidhean a fhuair sinn nach fhaodamaid cluich faisg air an tobhta leis gun do mharbh a' chaitheamh na bha a' fuireach ann. Gann leth-mhìle an iar-thuath chan eil fiù tobhtaichean ri fhaicinn ann an Lèinis far an deach baile beag a sgrios nuair, a rèir aithris, a ghlac fear a mhuinntir an àite am fiabhras breac bho bhobhstair a thog e far a' chladaich. Am bi cuimhne aig duine ann an leth-cheud bliadhna eile, neo am bi fiù 's ainm eile air an làrach!

As Highland and Island communities evolve local historical societies are invaluable resources, of significant interest to visitors and researchers.

Rest and Be Thankful

The Scottish Government's long-awaited Infrastructure Investment Plan is a big disappointment for Argyll and Bute.

The Rest and Be Thankful only gets one small mention. It is to be 'enhanced' but there are no details and no cash allocated.

In contrast, roads in other parts of Scotland have detailed works planned and money set aside to pay for them.

After 14 years of failed attempts at a solution and six months after a major landslide, Argyll deserves better than a vague election promise to 'enhance' the road.

This so-called plan is a shocking neglect of Argyll and Bute.

Olga Hammock, Connel.

Councillor Alan Reid, Cowal.

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DISTRICT NEWS

SEIL AND EASDALE

Community council round-up

Rubbish has been lying on the slip at Ellenabeich on Seil for three months now, awaiting collection by Argyll and Bute Council.

Seil and Easdale Community Council discussed this and other waste matters at their latest meeting.

Problems with dog mess around the island are also getting worse and residents are to blame – because there are no tourists.

The community council is reminding people to pick up after their pets and has decided to contact Argyll and Bute Council's dog warden, warning action may be taken against repeat offenders.

Seil Island Hall committee also noted its disappointment at dog owners allowing their pets to foul the sports pitch.

'With the current lockdown, these are presumably locals, showing complete disregard for other users, including children. The community council has contacted the dog warden about this problem which seems to be getting worse,' said the meeting's report.

On a more positive note, youngsters have taken part in an organised litter pick at Seaview and a rubbish bin has been provided at the bus stop.

Fallen down signs in Ellenabeich have been reported to Argyll and Bute Council. Worries over cracks in the road at Clachan Bridge are to be looked at and other potholes have been reported and repaired.

And the community council has told a recent consultation run by Argyll and Bute Council that it wants to stay in the Oban ward and not be placed in a new island ward with Tiree, Coll and Mull.

Notices of the next community council meeting will be posted around the island with addresses to email for the Zoom link if lockdown is still in place. The next meeting is on Tuesday March 23 at 6.30pm.

KILMORE

January/February 100 Club

The January winner of Kilmore's 100 Club was A Ferguson, with I Stuart picking up the February jackpot.

Work on Kilmore Hall's new kitchen extension has started. Further donations towards costs always welcome.

Granny's walking challenge raises cancer support funds

Mull granny Fiona Brown is going the extra mile in lockdown to raise funds for a cancer charity.

The 80-year-old has taken up the challenge of walking from her doorstep in Pennyghael to Craignure and back, in daily stages, in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support.

Mrs Brown took up walking to keep fit and beat boredom, and wanted to make her steps count.

Her fundraising link is www.justgiving.com/fundraising/walkonmull

'I've known many people who have benefited from the care and support of Macmillan nurses, so I thought it was as good a cause as any to support,' said Mrs Brown whose grand-daughter Rowan Watkins in Taynuilt has been giving social media support so followers can track her granny's progress and make donations.

Mrs Brown hit her target of £1,500 with a few miles to go – past leaning stones and through forests taking in Mull's breathtaking – in more than one way – scenery.

'I started from my door and walked a few miles and back. Now I take the car to where I finished the day before and set off again. By the time the challenge is complete, I'll have got to Craignure and back – about 42 miles,' said Mrs Brown, who has lived on Mull since 1986 but has family links going back long



before that. 'The number of miles I do each day depends on the weather, but people can follow me using Strava. I'm hoping if people see an 80-year-old can do this, it will inspire them to get out walking or make a donation to Macmillan,' she added.

Grand-daughter Rowan said: 'Granny is quite a character. She's pretty impressive. I'm sure she'll inspire a lot of people to get out and get walking. She rang me very excited when she hit her fundraising target and then was back out walking again. She has now just phoned me to say she's extending the walk to include a walk out to Duart Castle as well.'

CRAIGNURE

Temporary changes to Oban to Craignure ferry route

Essential work at Craignure harbour means some ferry services will be limited to foot passengers only.

Argyll and Bute Council has informed CalMac that the work needs to be carried out next month. As a result, vehicles will not be able to sail on services between Mull and Oban on Saturday March 6 and Sunday March 7. Additionally, all sailings after 5.10pm from Craignure to Oban on Friday March 5 will be cancelled so equipment can be positioned at the pier.

CalMac will also be operating a reduced timetable over that weekend.

As a result of CMAL's withdrawal of the Passenger Access System at Craignure, foot passenger boarding and disembarking will be along a narrower passenger gangway that is not suitable for wheelchair users or passengers with reduced mobility, prams or luggage.

Anyone who would struggle with that or who wants to travel with a car is advised to use either the Lochaline to Fishnish or Kilchoan to Tobermory services.

If the weather is poor and there are high winds, the work will be delayed until the following weekend.

For details of the temporary timetable visit www.calmac.co.uk/craignure-linksplan-closure-march-2021

At random

MARTIN LAING

editor@obantimes.co.uk



Positively encouraging

It is perhaps a bit of a curious thing, but I sense a change in the air – almost a sense of excitement – despite the ongoing Covid crisis.

It's a little difficult to put a finger on, but I was chatting online the other day with my chum John McLachlan, mine host at the Whisky Vaults Hotel in the town centre, formerly the Woodside and Rockport.

John told me he and his lovely partner Helen are 'working hard at the hotel, painting and making tables for the beer garden'.

Clearly, they are looking forward to opening once more and are preparing for restrictions to be lifted so they can welcome back customers.

I have no doubt Declan Curran at the Lorne, Aulay Dunn at his eponymous pub, Stevie Shaw at the Oban Inn and all the other hospitality sector bosses are busy making plans to hit the ground running when lockdown lifts.

To that, I can add the positive news that permission has been granted by Argyll and Bute Council for a new distillery on Islay, investment plans have been revealed to create tidal power for the world-renowned Islay whisky producers and funding being found for two new developments at Dunbeg's European Marine Science Park, which could create 30 jobs.

There are many other opportunities being identified, with the Oban area's entrepreneurs gearing up for a resumption of business.

As I've urged previously, when the chance comes, let's all support our local businesses as much as we can.

A wee problem ...

The best laid plans and all that. It was unfortunate indeed that the weekend reopening of the toilets at Ganavan Sands was scuppered by a burst pipe.

It was also a bit of a blow for the new group Adventure Oban, a not-for-profit outfit which is looking for new members to help it in its ambition to encourage outdoor activities, which had cleaned up the beach loos ready for the reopening.

The burst pipe, of course, is a temporary hitch, but Adventure Oban is another project that deserves support.

Go to adventureoban.org or have a peek at them on social media.

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

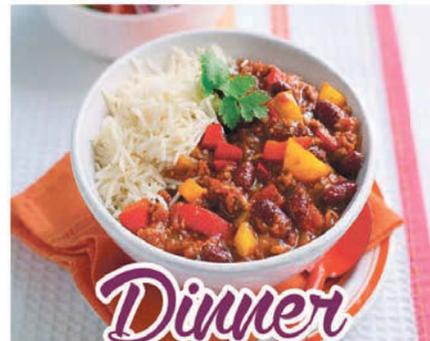
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BUSINESS NEWS

Argyll events face funding delay

Councillors have agreed to delay the release of funding to support 10 events across Argyll and Bute which it had been hoped would take place this year.

Every spring, decisions are made on how to distribute the council's strategic events and festivals fund (SEF) with this year's pot totalling £90,000. However, councillors have agreed that funding decisions will be delayed until May as the events calendar in Argyll and Bute has been practically wiped out. In 2020, eight out of nine events to receive funding were cancelled. The other, the Tíree Wave Classic (TWC) surfing competition, was originally rescheduled to March 2021 but was put back to mid-October just last week.

The council's policy and resources committee decided at its virtual meeting on Thursday February 18 to delay the latest round of funding. Organisers of 10 events were waiting to hear the fate of their applications which opened last year on October 22 and closed on December 7.

Executive director Kirsty Flanagan said at the time Scotland was not facing a national lockdown.

'However, this position has changed very quickly and we are now facing a much more serious position than in March of last year,' she said.

'Given the uncertainty and unpredictability it would seem pragmatic to delay and review the position over the next two to three months rather than agree to award grants for strategic events and festivals that will not be able to go ahead.

'This will allow the council and event organisations to hopefully be clearer as to the feasibility and viability of these events taking place.'

Ms Flanagan concluded: 'The loss of any event from the local economy will be significant and, as such, in an effort to support the economic recovery it is important funding is available to support strategic events when they are in a position to go ahead.'

Mull salmon farm's power project shows 'fantastic' results

by Ellis Butcher
editor@obantimes.co.uk

Scottish Sea Farms is piloting a new power system at Loch Spelve on Mull to significantly reduce fuel consumption and carbon emissions.

The company said it is part of its drive to be more sustainable and contribute to the Scottish Government's ambition to be net zero by 2045.

It involves a 'bespoke hybrid power system' aboard its feed barge.

Alan Tangny, Loch Spelve Farm manager, said the results after just four months have been 'fantastic' – achieving environmental and cost savings.

'We used to be filling our diesel tank at least once a week and now we're probably getting four times longer between fills,' said Mr Tangny.

The kit was designed, built and is monitored by Aqua Power Technologies.

It has been shown to have offset more than 32,000kg in carbon since the pilot began in September – comparable to the weight of a standard fuel tanker.

Sam Etherington, Aqua Power Technologies founder, said the systems had been in existence for 20 years but is typically used in cars, underground trains and off-grid homes.

It had not been deployed on a salmon farm until he approached Scottish Sea Farms.

Mr Etherington said: 'The hybrid system can be remotely configured farm by farm, according to power needs, to yield the highest savings.'

'The peak feeding times are between 10.30am and 2.30pm so all those other hours before and after, the hybrid maintains power to the farm, enabling savings to be made.'



The system also includes a real-time monitoring platform providing an insight into the farm's 'power use' profile.

Sheena Gallie, Scottish Sea Farms environment manager, said: 'This level of monitoring of our power use is something we wouldn't have had otherwise.'

The total annual carbon offset over the course of a year is estimated at 79,400kg, the company said. The annual net saving in diesel costs, based on today's prices is calculated at around £18,000.

Scottish Sea Farms' Loch Spelve fish farm is piloting the new hybrid system, which is achieving 'fantastic results' according to farm manager Alan Tangny. Photograph: Sorley MacLachlan

MacLachlan

The company plans to identify other farms where it might be used.

Ms Gallie said: 'There is a clear opportunity for the company to reduce its reliance on fossil fuels and, in doing so, significantly reduce carbon emissions.'

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Tourism training programme sees deluge of applicants

Thousands of people on furlough or made redundant in Scotland's crisis hit tourism and hospitality industries have signed up for a new online training programme, writes Ellis Butcher. The Tourism and Hospitality Talent Development Programme received 2,000 applications for just 950 places - putting the organisations involved in the difficult position of having to turn away more than 1,000 applicants.

However, additional funding from the Scottish Government and Skills Development Scotland has been secured to extend the number of places.

The industry is said to be experiencing a 'mental health crisis' and widespread unemployment.

The programme is being delivered online by the Hospitality Industry Trust (HIT) Scotland and the Scottish Tourism Alliance (STA).

It is one of the key recommendations to gov-

ernment made by the Tourism Task Force on how to support tourism and hospitality recovery in Scotland.

The aim is to give the future leaders of Scotland's tourism industry the 'skills, knowledge and networks' to make an impact when the sector moves into recovery.

Training

The training got under way with 80 cohorts of 25 people from 600 tourism businesses logging on - making it the largest virtual training course ever to take place in Scotland, according to the STA.

Fergus Ewing, cabinet secretary for tourism at the Scottish Government, said: 'This is the biggest mobilisation of this type of course for tourism and hospitality staff ever seen in Scotland.'

'I'm pleased to see such an enthusiasm for

enrolment and in light of demand, hopefully we can see more schemes launched in the future.'

David Cochrane MBE, chief executive of HIT Scotland, said it would give people the skills and mental resilience to hit the ground running when the recovery comes.

Marc Crothall, chief executive of the STA said Scotland's tourism industry had been 'decimated' by the pandemic with morale at an 'all time low'.

He added: 'However, the volume of applications is testament to the passion for learning and development within our industry and the desire within Scotland's tourism workforce to remain within the sector.'

'Life has changed so much from everything we knew. Our 'new world' will look entirely different, as will Scotland's tourism product.'

Some light at end of Covid-19 tunnel

Following the return this week of some younger children to school and the reopening of nurseries, the first minister has now set out some of the landmark dates when Scotland may start to progress 'cautiously' out of lockdown.

Nicola Sturgeon said on Tuesday there would be a progressive easing of level four restrictions with intervals of 'at least' three weeks. She said that, if the 'data allows and positive trends continue,' the government would seek to 'accelerate' the easing of the restrictions.

At the beginning of April, reopening of retail would start with an extension of the definition of 'essential retail', with the hope that by the end of April, all parts of the country would be able to move from level four to level three.

This would see a 'phased but significant' reopening of the economy - including non-essential retail, hospitality and services such as gyms and hairdressers.

Andrew McRae, the Federation of Small Businesses' (FSB) Scotland policy chairperson, warned last week: 'Half of Scotland's business owners are worried about whether their firm will make it through to the end of this crisis.'

FSB's Highlands and Islands development manager David Richardson added: 'The situation is critical across Scotland, but nowhere more so than in the Highlands, where 54 per cent of businesses are currently closed, 45 per cent of them by law. 'This compares to 35 per cent of all businesses in Scotland as a whole and only 20 per cent in Glasgow.'

'Moreover, 35 per cent of Highland businesses describe themselves as 'really struggling/barely staying afloat', compared to 28 per cent for Scotland and 25 per cent for Glasgow.'

'The Highlands is dominated by its visitor economy and times are really hard. The future of many of our great businesses depends on a relatively early reopening or, failing that, substantial government support to tide them over until we do.'

Addressing rural Scotland's gender imbalance

A new scheme will address inequality and provide greater opportunities for women working in or interested in a career in rural and aquaculture sectors.

The Women in the Rural Economy Training Fund will give women the chance to develop their skills and talents with the help of £100,000 worth of practical training provided by the Scottish Government. The fund follows the Women in Agriculture Practical Training Fund, which opened in January.

This will help address the current gender imbalance within a range of industries including aquaculture, conservation, fisheries, forestry, horticulture, land-based engineering and wild-life management, amongst others.

The scheme will be administered by Lantra



Scotland and will provide practical skills training with full funding of up to £500 per course. Support for courses above this value will be assessed on a case by case basis by a review panel.

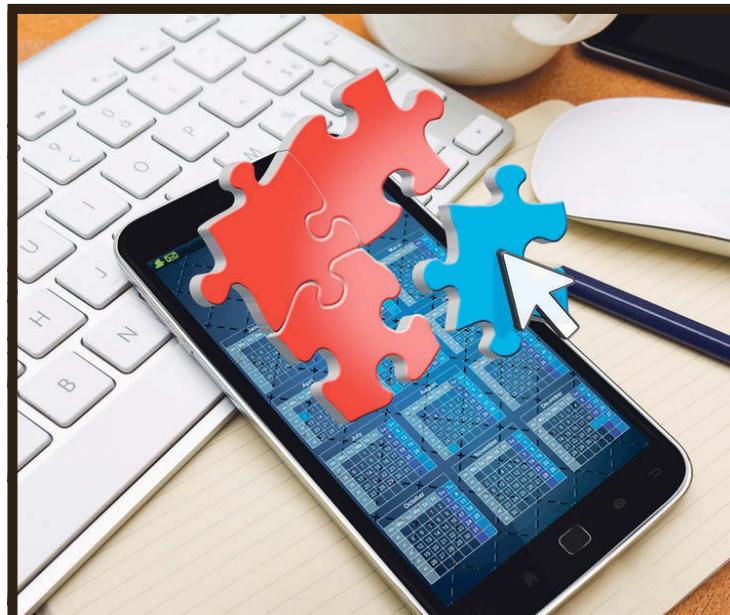
Rural Economy Secretary Fergus Ewing, left, said: 'There is a clear need for providing women in our rural communities with more access to training and reskilling opportunities. We know the pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on women's jobs and incomes.'

'This is the second training fund we've launched for women in rural communities this year. We're investing in their futures and ensuring there is no gap in provision when it comes to upskilling women with technical knowledge

and practical training experience.' Lantra Scotland Director Dr Liz Barron-Majerik MBE said: 'We are delighted to be able to play our part in helping to support women access and develop careers in the rural land-based and aquaculture sector and to extend the work we are already doing with the Women in Agriculture Practical Training Fund. Businesses with a diverse workforce are more resilient, able to appeal to a wider market and better placed to solve problems in innovative ways. This is great news for rural Scotland.'

The fund opened on Saturday February 20 and applications should be made through Lantra Scotland. Applications must be received by March 31 2021.

Women involved in agriculture and looking for training should apply for the Women in Agriculture Practical Training Fund instead.



Wylie & Bisset giving free business advice to steer Scottish businesses through the Coronavirus crisis

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IAIN THORNER

ain.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 concludes his insight on how they came to be built.

Later a sale of work to help fund the new cathedral was held in the church hall, followed in the evening by a dance which was opened by Bishop Martin and largely attended by members of the congregation and well-wishers. The music was supplied by Macfarlane's Orchestra and £160 was raised.

Of great interest to the many visitors who came to see the cathedral going up and to look around, was a model of the building made by a member of the Pro-cathedral choir, Mr J E Corbett. The model was of wood, correct to scale - eighth part - in every detail, from the thickness of the walls to the details of the general layout. All the windows were glass hand-painted and lightened from inside to give the effect of stained glass windows. Externally the model was coloured correctly and looked realistic. One half of the entrance door was open, showing a tiny porch complete with panelling, table, doormat and half-glazed doors in the aisle. Apparently it was completed in six weeks with the aid of a fretsaw, penknife and a few files, which was thought all the more remarkable as Mr Corbett had never attempted wood work of any description, confining his artistic ability to water-colour painting.

Built in pink Aberdeenshire and blue Kentallen granite, the new cathedral took shape, gradually enveloping the old tin building which was left standing for as long as possible to provide a place of worship.

Bishop Martin travelled to the USA, Canada and Ireland to raise funds but the Wall Street crash in 1929, leading to the Great Depression in Europe, delayed its completion as did the



Second World War, and it was not until 1959 when the enormous bells, 'Brendan' and 'Kenneth' were blessed, that the building was finally finished.

Following the death of Sir Charles Gordon in 1845, his family later found difficulty in maintaining the Mission.

A private oratory was opened in Drimnin House where Saint Mary McKillop, Australia's first saint, whose parents worked on the estate, attended Mass on her visit to the UK in 1873. Thereafter the chapel was used only occasionally for marriages, baptisms and funerals until it was finally abandoned and stripped of its contents - some of which went to the tin pro-cathedral and from there into the new cathedral.

One of the Drimnin priests was Father Hugh Cameron, later Monsignor and Vicar General of the Diocese, who served in Barra from 1908-21. From Castlebay he wrote a letter to

Mrs Mary Theresa Gordon, Sir Charles' daughter-in-law, dated May 5 1921: 'As Drimnin was my first mission and I still retain very pleasant recollections of it, I should be sorry indeed to see it [the Mission and the Catholic connection] die out. Some time ago within the last year there was some wish on the part of the Board of Agriculture to settle a colony of people from Barra along the shore of the Sound of Mull to relieve the appalling congestion here and I took it on myself to suggest that if land were to be acquired it should be as near as possible to the church at Drimnin since naturally the whole of the proposed settlers would be Catholics.'

'I don't know whether any progress at all has been made in connection with this scheme, or whether any overtures have been made to you with a view to the Board's acquiring the estate if you were disposed to sell. I am not at all very sanguine that anything may come out of it,

but I should be glad to see a Catholic colony established near you so as to keep the old foundations alive.'

In a second letter later the same year he wrote: 'I called at the Board of Agriculture in Edinburgh but found the Drimnin proposals, like all others, shelved at the moment on account of Treasury stringency. I hope the scheme won't be lost sight of, but if it is to mature I fear it will not be under my direct auspices for I am to be transferred to Rothesay at the next term. Canon MacDonald is to go to Glenfinnan and Fr Macdougall replaces me here.'

'I can't say that I am overjoyed at the prospect of practically ending my 20 years connection with the Highlands but, apparently, there is nothing else for it.'

Hugh Cameron was born at Inveroy, Lochaber, in 1876. He was educated at Rome's Propaganda College (not Scots College) and at St Sulpice



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Tide tables for Oban during the week from **Thursday 25 February, 2021** are listed below with differences for major ports listed alongside. All times are GMT (add one hour BST)

25	0439 3.5	27	0552 4.0	1	0054 0.3	3	0215 0.3	Ardrishaig	-5.35
	1114 1.3		1223 0.8		0700 4.2		0812 3.9	Campbeltown	-5.30
	TH 1711 3.6		SA 1818 3.9		M 1330 0.6		W 1445 0.8	Crinan	-0.47
	2301 1.0		○		1919 3.9		2032 3.7	Islay Port Ellen	2.00
26	0516 3.7	28	0016 0.5	2	0134 0.3	4	0300 0.5	Lochboisdale	+0.30
	1148 1.0		0627 4.1		0735 4.1		0853 3.7	Mallaig	+0.25
	F 1746 3.8		SU 1256 0.6		TU 1406 0.6		TH 1529 1.0	Portree	+0.55
	2339 0.7		1848 3.9		1954 3.8		2116 3.4	Tobermory	+0.16
								Dover	+5.30

FRIDAY FORECAST



HIGH 10 LOW 7 13 MPH

WEATHER

Thursday
Light rain showers and a moderate breeze
Temperatures 6°C to 9°C.

Friday
Light cloud and a moderate breeze
Temperatures 7°C to 10°C.

WEEKEND OUTLOOK

Saturday
Light cloud and a gentle breeze
Temperatures 6°C to 10°C.

Sunday
Light cloud and a gentle breeze
Temperatures 6°C to 9°C.

Footsteps – part 3



The last piece of the old tin pro-cathedral, sitting next to the new building, which has an overall length of 160 feet. The massive square tower rises 100 feet over the promenade with its western side only a few feet from the road and the nave walls rise almost to the height of the tower of the tin church. Photographs: Scottish Catholic Archive.

in Paris. Before and after the First World War, he served as chaplain to the Lovat Scouts. His involvement with Barra's overcrowding may be sensed in his erection of a corrugated-iron chapel on Vatersay. While serving Kingussie he died at Rome in 1931.

Donald Buchanan's Reflections of the Isle of Barra (1943) suggests he went there in search of documents pertaining to Hebridean history.

Between 2008 and 2012 Drimnin Chapel was restored to its original form by Mr and Mrs Derek Lewis, eventual successors to the Gordons. It was rededicated in 2010 in the presence of His Royal Highness Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex; Donald Cameron of Lochiel Lord Lieutenant of Inverness, Lochaber, Badenoch and Strathspey; the Right Reverend Bishop Toal, Bishop of Argyll and the Isles; Monsignor Thomas Wynne; the Reverend Donald MacCorkindale Church of Scotland minister for the Parish of Morvern and many friends in the community.

I am grateful to Father Michael MacDonald, Ardkenneth, South Uist, for drawing my attention to contemporary photographs of the Tin Cathedral and its successor in the superb Scottish Catholic Historical Collection

and to Donna McGuire, its archivist, for her unstinting help in scanning and supplying them. Several months ago the Right Reverend Bishop Brian McGee, Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, appointed Father Michael as Diocesan Historian – an indication of the importance with which he considers the subject of history in general and church history in particular. This is the first appointment of this kind in the history of the Diocese. I would like to thank Alasdair MacEachen, Benbecula, who answered a non-stop flow of emails while I was researching this article, and Mr and Mrs Derek Lewis, who gave me access to their records. Alasdair Roberts, retired full-time writer, who lives beside Loch Morar, has done more than anyone in recent times to record and preserve the history of the Catholic Church in some of the remotest places in the West Highlands and Islands. His latest book, Chapels of the Rough Bounds: Morar, Knoydart, Arisaig, Moidart, adds to an already impressive list of scholarly titles and can be obtained at Mallaig Heritage Centre (www.mallaigheritage.org.uk) and Arisaig's Land, Sea and Islands Centre, priced £7.50, plus post and package. Alasdair can be contacted by emailing: info@arisaigcommunitytrust.org.uk)

DOWN MEMORY LANE

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



This photograph was taken in March 1975 when Comunn Gaidhealach an Obain Dramatic Club was the principal winner at the Scottish Community Drama Association North Argyll District Festival in Connel. Their play, Eilidh, was written by Iain Crichton Smith and produced by Bill Gordon. Cast, left to right, are Agnes Morrison, Hugh MacPherson, Iain Kennedy, Catherine Christie, Anne Ferguson and Neil Macleod.



This photograph was taken at Old Anniesland in Glasgow on May 20 2000 at the Glasgow Celtic Society Shinty Cup Final between Kyles Athletic and Inveraray which Kyles won 3-1 after extra time. This was Kyles' 27th cup win. They were captained by Ewan MacDonald, who is pictured with manager Colin MacColl and the rest of the team. Scott Turner is missing from the photograph. The goal scorers were Sandy Jamieson, Ronnie MacVicar and Neil 'Corky' Nicolson. Their victory over cup holders Inveraray, themselves 11 times winners of the cup, ensured the return to Tighnabruach of the cup after 14 years.

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LEISURE & ENTERTAINMENT

YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S ON IN ARGYLL AND LOCHABER

Workshop instrumental for a music mingle

Musical siblings Emily and Will Goan, who kept their tutoring business afloat in lockdown by offering remote lessons to students as far away as Canada, have come up with a new idea of helping musicians mingle, writes Kathie Griffiths.

The pair have started a new workshop called the music mingle where up to 10 friends, currently separated by Covid, can join each other playing tunes for fiddle and/or guitar that they would be able to play together once pandemic restrictions ease and allow.

'It's an informal workshop, with time to chat and play music,' said Will.

He added: 'We are also hoping to start registering interest for a music weekend once a month in Oban. We would offer in person lessons, a folk session in the evening and maybe a fiddle workshop. Obviously this wouldn't be until such a thing was allowed but people can get started online in the meantime.'

Until then, online lessons are going well with regular remote classes around Scotland, England and to students living as far away as Canada.

'We are both really enjoying it still. Although we haven't been able to travel much it has been so lovely to feel connected to people in places we may be able to go eventually,'



Travelling trad tutors Emily and Will Goan are offering a new workshop idea so musicians can play together.

said Will. The brother and sister, who usually live on sailing yachts at Dunstaffnage Marina, originally set up as travelling trad music tutors to keep money coming in after the pandemic dried up tourist season work. Will would normally be working at Oban Youth Hostel and Emily would usually be working on boats.

They chose the name MacTalla for their business because it comes from the Gaelic word for 'echo,' appropriate seeing as the brother and sister teach by ear with students learning to echo what they are hearing.

To find out more go to www.mactallatutoring.wordpress.com

Taynuilt Ceilidhs make a comeback

by Kathie Griffiths
kgriffiths@obantimes.co.uk

Taynuilt's famous ceilidhs are making a come back in lockdown with help from Hands Up For Trad aficionado Simon Thoumire.

The concertina player, composer and dynamic force behind the traditional music advocacy outfit Hands Up For Trad is helping bring a new series of Saturday night ceilidhs online to a virtual worldwide audience.

The monthly ceilidhs can be watched via The Taynuilt Ceilidhs Facebook page for free.

This year marks 91 years since the ceilidhs started but lockdown, striking the day before its 90th birthday party, had put the popular events on hold - until now.

Taynuilt Ceilidhs' Moira Dunlop said: 'I still have the giant cake and bottles of whisky in the spare bedroom waiting for when we can all get together again but for now these online ceilidhs are the nearest and best we can do to carry on.'

Money from the Feisean Nan Gaidheal Tasgadh Fund is backing the online ceilidhs



Hands Up For Trade's Simon Thoumire is helping bring Taynuilt Ceilidhs online.

and will help organisers support the singers and musicians taking part.

It was Moira's singer and broadcaster daughter Joy Dunlop who made the move to get Simon Thoumire's support with the technical wizardry needed to make it all possible - he will also be performing at one of the future ceilidhs.

'Going online does bring us opportunities of being able to invite musicians and singers who might not otherwise have

been able to travel to Taynuilt, they could be abroad or busy elsewhere.

'For our first ceilidh we have singers from Lewis and Dundee, they can do it from their own homes. The same goes for the audience, it could be people living all over the world. It's very exciting!

'The only thing we won't be able to provide on ceilidh nights is our lovely baking - people will have to supply their own!' added Moira.

The first of the new online ceilidhs took place last Saturday, February 20, with Joy Dunlop and featuring singers Wilma Kennedy, Ronnie Murray and Nicola Pearson as well as Scott Wood on pipes and whistles, Mhairi Marwick on fiddle and Grant McFarlane with the accordion.

The next online ceilidh date for your diary is on Saturday March 13, also at 7.30pm and via The Taynuilt Ceilidhs Facebook page.

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Robert in lockdown

ROBERT ROBERTSON

robert.d.robertson@hotmail.co.uk



As I've highlighted numerous times over the past year, online events have many advantages over the traditional concert or cèilidh.

A number of these were in evidence last Friday evening during the virtual Mull and Iona Annual Gathering - not least that no-one had to worry about missing the concert due to the closure of the Rest and be Thankful.

Just as well, because it was a concert not to be missed.

Starting as always with I See Mull from The Mull and Iona Association Pipers and finishing with the traditional rendition of An t-Eilean Muileach and Soraidh Leibh is Oidhche Mhath Leibh, the intervening hour and a quarter was packed full of wonderful performers as well as some stunning footage from the islands.

The performers were too many to mention but, again, the fact this concert was online allowed a huge number of singers, musicians and speakers across all generations to contribute to what was a perfectly

varied evening. Guest speakers were Sir Lachlan MacLean, Dr Mairi MacArthur, Gordon Buchanan and Rhoda MacInnes who all had interesting things to say about the islands.

As well as individuals, there were some highly impressive collaborative efforts.

Mull Gaelic Choir, with each of its members recording and filming remotely, gave a fantastic rendition of Runrig's Air an Traigh and the specially formed Mull and Iona Association Scottish Dance Band as well as Robert MacLeod's Virtual Dance Band made sure that, in true Mull and Iona fashion, Scottish dance music was well represented. The programme was put together by Ross Wilson and Shannon MacLean and linked brilliantly by the Gaelic voice over of Kirsty MacKinnon.

Much of it is still available on Facebook and YouTube and I really do recommend you take a look. In 'normal' times, islanders always support their association events in Glasgow

by travelling down the road and spending a weekend between the Park Bar, the Snaffle Bit, the Islay Inn, and the Glasgow Uni Union but there are always many, perhaps the elderly or those with work commitments, who miss out on the party. The first annual 'soirée concert and ball' of the Mull and Iona Association was way back in 1867 and, since the formation of all the kindred associations in that era, their central concept has been to help islanders in the city and back home.

Over the years, the type of assistance required has varied greatly, as you can imagine. The online nature of this most recent event allowed everyone to be involved and I dare say, in the middle of lockdown and the depth of winter, it was an evening that brought a lot of much-needed joy into people's lives. Proof, I think, that more than 150 years after its inception and thanks to the current generation of dedicated members, the association is still serving its original purpose.

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

Young creatives invited to hang out with Molly

by Fiona Scott
fscott@obantimes.co.uk

Two of Skye's leading cultural organisations have teamed up to provide a weekly safe space for teenagers to hang out and be creative together.

Atlas Arts and SEALL have secured funding to provide an art and dance club for the island's 14-17-year-olds, led by Molly Scott Danter, a dancer, artist and storyteller, originally from Edinbane.

The cash injection is part of a targeted fund from Creative Scotland's Youth Arts Fund, organised by Dingwall-based Fèis Rois. This ambitious project will work across the nine Highland Council Community Planning Partnership areas to support the recovery of youth arts provision in the region as Covid-19 restrictions begin to lift.

In line with the Scottish Government's Covid-19 guidance and legislation, the hang-outs will take place after school from Tuesday March 23 online and, when permissible, in a range of venues in Portree: outdoors, at the Oyster Table in Bayfield, under canvas, on walks and in large indoor spaces.

Molly will lead the weekly hang-out where teenagers can get together safely to create, make and converse.

Molly said: 'You don't need to have an interest in art, dance or music to take part.

'This is a creative space to hang out and chat. We'll be meeting first online and then, when possible and safe to do so, meeting together in person in and around Portree in the weeks and months ahead.

'This club is a space to experiment, to make things up, to pretend and reinvent. We might use movement, writing, collage, dance parties, drawing and bookmaking, but it's up to you. You decide what you're interested in making, doing and talking about and, together, we'll try and make it happen.'

Sessions take place every Tuesday after school and the first meeting is online via Zoom at 5pm. Anyone living on Skye or Raasay from the age group is invited to attend



Molly Scott Danter, originally from Edinbane, is a dancer, artist and storyteller.

and find out more. During this initial meet-up, participants will be able to decide together on times and content of future hang-outs.

Molly, who is 25, found her love for dance when she joined SkyeDance while she was a pupil at Portree High School. After leaving school, she studied dance at London Contemporary Dance School, including a semester at Salzburg Experimental Academy of Dance. After

graduating she worked with Scottish Dance Theatre, first as an apprentice dancer then for a short time as guest dancer. Since then, she has worked as a freelance dancer, maker and teacher in the UK and Europe. As well as dance, Molly also works with text and film and often collaborates with other artists of these and other media.

Especially interested in the relationship of self and others, empathy plays a large role in

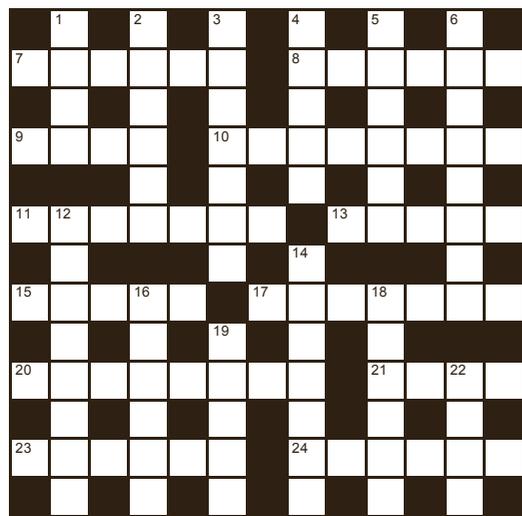
how Molly approaches making, leading and performing work.

The club will run for 21 weeks initially with the possibility of a further extension.

Membership is free and includes an activity pack which will be sent out to participants after sign-up.

To register or for an informal chat with Molly to find out more, email molly.thespace@gmail.com by Friday March 12.

CROSSWORD



Across

- 7 Faint (6)
- 8 Idle (6)
- 9 Similar to (4)
- 10 Person who advocates change (8)
- 11 Railway bridge (7)
- 13 Sink (5)
- 15 Pester (5)
- 17 Raisin bun (7)
- 20 Albumin (3,5)
- 21 Run wild, broken (4)
- 23 One who doesn't eat meat (short) (6)
- 24 Omen (6)
- 6 Star in print (8)
- 12 Dark shade between black and white (4-4)
- 14 Herbaceous (7)
- 16 Alternative movement (3,3)
- 18 Cost on your card (6)
- 19 Toughness (5)
- 22 Ladies fingers (4)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION



Down

- 1 Oppose (the trend) (4)
- 2 Pelted with rocks (6)
- 3 Take back (7)
- 4 Snug (5)
- 5 Mountain chain, type of mackerel (6)

Bethan is Boss on social media

A music student from Mull has been hitting the high notes on social media after a video she recorded attracted the biggest ever engagement on her university's Twitter account.

Currently unable to take part in live gigs, Bethan Sexton, a fourth year Popular Music student at Napier University in Edinburgh, recorded her performance of Bruce Springsteen's I'm on Fire, with some tech help from classmate Robbie Hutchison, and posted it on her Instagram page.

Suitably impressed, the university then posted it on its Twitter feed and the tri-aspect performance ended up drawing the page's biggest ever reaction with 30,000 plays, 140,000 impressions and 8,000 engagements.

Speaking to The Oban Times last week Bethan said: 'I was doing a lot of work teaching harmony for my university schedule and I decided I'm on Fire would be the perfect song to reflect how well harmonies can work and a great example of three part harmony. I decided to do my own recording of it, which I enjoyed thoroughly.'

'I was totally shocked by the response. I was thrilled when Napier got in touch with me asking to share the video and can't believe how well the re-



Bethan Sexton took social media by storm with her rendition of Bruce Springsteen's I'm on Fire.

cording went down with their followers.

'It was really encouraging for me to see and has made me excited to do more recordings.'

'I must thank Robbie for his part in it. The video definitely wouldn't sound as clear and professional without him.'

A former Tobermory High School pupil, Bethan has participated in countless Mòds, recorded a CD with Isle of Mull Mòd Club and is now teaching Gaelic online to children. She's also recorded a song for the 2021 Mull and Iona Gathering called Èitseal Bheag an Leòdhas.

'I have always loved singing this song as the melody is so gorgeous,' she added.

'My style is very much folk/acoustic, it's the genre and mu-

sic I gravitate to most and I'm really inspired by artists such as Rachel Sermanni.'

Before the latest lockdown struck, Bethan was preparing for her final fourth year live performance gig with the university which would have taken place in May.

'It's such a shame that we are unable to perform live with our uni bands,' she said.

'We were all really looking forward to it, but I feel very fortunate that we still have the technology to be creating music and collaborating with other musicians as well.'

'It's definitely made lockdown a lot easier.'

To watch Bethan's I'm on Fire performance visit www.instagram.com/tv/CKmR0ghgIwo/?igshid=h3nrtrm5n89k



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Thank you to everyone who has taken the time so far to fill out our survey canvassing public opinion on the importance of the Ganavan area.



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The survey is still live via our Friends of Ganavan Facebook page and every response we

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In one month alone, we had 1,809 individuals complete the survey which was a staggering result showing just how much people care.

Out of those 1,809 responses, 1,737 of them said using Ganavan's green recreation space for a housing devel-

opment would be a negative move. More and more people are taking part as the survey continues.

If you haven't already responded, please do now.

The community response, and responses from out-of-town visitors and holidaymakers, has been massive – proving beyond any doubt that people identify Ganavan as a 'destination'.

Let's all work together to make sure we keep it that way and keep Ganavan green.

To find the survey, visit www.facebook.com/friendsofganavan and click the survey button at the top of the page.

M'ALBA MY ALBA

DIARDAIN 25 An Gearran THURSDAY 25 February	22.45 Binneas na Trads (rpt)	19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)
17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming	22.50 NEW FilmG: Seonaid	20.00 An Là – NEWS
19.00 Turas a' Bhradain/ The Salmon's Journey (rpt)	23.00 Scottish Premiership – St Mirren v Ross County (rpt)	20.30 An Taigh – Fuine/ The Bakery (rpt)
19.30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)	00.45 NEW ALT	21.00 Birdman of Pollok/ Cuiraidh na Coille (rpt)
19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh/ History Shorts (rpt)	DIDÒMHAICH 28 An Gearran / SUNDAY 28 February	22.00 Trusadh – Làithean Sgoile – An Ard-sgoil (Schooldays – The Secondary School) (rpt)
20.00 An Là – NEWS	16.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming	23.00 NEW FilmG: An-Drasta!
20.30 NEW Eorpa/ European Current Affairs	18.15 An La – NEWS	23.05 Machair (rpt)
21.00 NEW Sruth	18.30 Seachd La/ News Review – NEWS	23.30 Alleluia/ Spiritual Praise
22.00 Ceol Duthchasach/ Ken Burn's Country Music (rpt)	19.30 Alleluia/ Spiritual Praise (rpt)	DI CIADAIN 03 Am Màrt WEDNESDAY 03 March
23.50 Dhan Uisge (Cuan Sound)	20.00 Eorpa/European Current Affairs (rpt)	17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
DIHAOINE 26 An Gearran FRIDAY 26 February	20.30 An Taigh-Fuine/ The Bakery (rpt)	19.00 Vets: Gach Creutair Beo (rpt)
17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming	21.00 Tearlach Ceannadach/ Charles Kennedy: A Good Man (rpt)	19.30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)
19.00 An La NEWS	22.00 Seirm Celtic Connections (rpt)	19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)
19.25 Fraochy Bay (rpt)	23.00 State of Happiness: Hope and Fraud (rpt)	20.00 An Là – NEWS
19.30 Machair (rpt)	23.50 FilmG: Seonaid (rpt)	20.30 Gaisgich Oga an Darna Cogaidh (rpt)
19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh/ History Shorts (rpt)	DILUAIN 01 Am Màrt MONDAY 01 March	21.00 Air a' Chanal/ Scotland's Canals (rpt)
20.00 Cearcall (rpt)	17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming	22.00 Na Millenni-Gaels (rpt)
20.30 Garraidhean Mora na h-Alba (rpt)	19.00 Vets: Gach Creutair Beo (rpt)	22.30 Sruth (rpt)
21.00 Iul a' Chiuil (The Musical Path) (rpt)	19.30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)	DIARDAIN 04 Am Màrt THURSDAY 04 March
22.00 State of Happiness: Hope and Fraud (rpt)	19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh (rpt)	17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming
22.45 Binneas na Trads (rpt)	20.00 An La – NEWS	19.00 Turas a' Bhradain/ The Salmon's Journey (rpt)
22.55 Dhan Uisge (Cuan Sound) (rpt)	20.30 NEW Garraidhean Mora na h-Alba	19.30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)
23.00 Seirm Celtic Connections (rpt)	21.00 Trusadh – Làithean Sgoile – An Ard-sgoil (Schooldays – The Secondary School) (rpt)	19.55 Earrann Eachdraidh/ History Shorts (rpt)
DISATHAIRNE 27 an Gearran SATURDAY 27 February	22.00 Seoid a' Chidsin – The Kitchen Coves (rpt)	20.00 An Là – NEWS
16.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming	22.30 DIY le Donnie (rpt)	20.30 NEW Eorpa/ European Current Affairs
17.45 An Là – NEWS	23.15 Sgeul Slainte (rpt)	21.00 NEW Sruth
18.00 NEW Scottish Premiership – St Mirren v Ross County	23.30 Na Millenni - Gaels (rpt)	22.00 Iul a' Chiuil – An Ceol (The Musical Path – The Music) (rpt)
19.45 Sgeul Slainte (rpt)	DIMÀIRT 02 Am Màrt TUESDAY 02 March	22.30 Eileanan na Banrighe/ Islands of the Queen (rpt)
20.00 Cearcall (rpt)	17.00 Prògraman Chloinne – Children's programming	23.20 FilmG: An-Drasta! (rpt)
20.30 Abair Trusadh (rpt)	19.00 Turas a' Bhradain/ The Salmon's Journey (rpt)	23.30 Na Millenni-Gaels (rpt)
21.00 NEW Seirm Celtic Connections	19.30 Speaking Our Language (rpt)	
22.00 QE2 (rpt)		



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Email morrisonmotorrepairs@gmail.com

Morrison Motor Repairs
Unit 1 Creran Marine, Barcaldine
by Oban, Argyll PA37 1SG

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. There are a list of examples of reasonable exemptions on the [gov.scot](http://www.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. The Oban Times has teamed up with BID4Oban and Oban FM to 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

BUILDING, DIY, HOME, GARDENING & SERVICES

BUILDBASE

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

CITY PLUMBING SUPPLIES

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

CITY ELECTRICAL FACTORS

Mon-Fri 7.30am-5.30pm,
Sat 8.30am-12pm
www.cef.co.uk
Tel: 01631 562362

CRAIGARD DÉCOR

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

HIGHLAND FASTENERS

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

HIRE & SUPPLIES

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

HOMEBASE

Click and collect
Mon-Sun 9am-6pm
www.homebase.co.uk
Tel: 0345 640 7807

KINLOCHLAICH GARDEN CENTRE

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

MACLEOD TV

Tel: 01631 564310 / Email: office@macleodtv.co.uk

MACQUEEN BROS

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

SCREWFIX

Mon-Fri 7am-8pm
Sat 7am-6pm
Sun 9am-4pm
www.screwfix.com
Tel: 03330 112112

WEST HIGHLAND GAS LTD

Deliveries and collection
Mon-Fri 8am-5pm
Tel: 01631 564050

FUEL STATIONS & SUPPLIERS

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

BIRCHWOOD GARAGE

Mon-Sat 6.30am-6pm

HALFWAY HOUSE

Mon-Sun 7am till 7pm

HIRE & SUPPLIES

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

OBAN FILLING STATION

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

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

DAWSONS ESTATE AGENTS

1 George St, Oban
Residential Sales & Lettings - Open 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday
Tel: 01631 563901 or email: mandy@dawsonsestateagents.co.uk

ETHORNTON & CO

Answering machine service.
Telephone: 01631 566 771
Email: info@ethornton.co.uk

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!

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

I'M CONCERNED ABOUT CAN I VISIT MY PRACTICE

Lorn Medical Centre, along with all the other practices in the area have had to adapt the way they work, quite significantly due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

All LMC practices are open for patients but, to keep everyone safe, has adopted the 'Phone First' approach.

'Every Face to Face consultation takes a significantly longer time than before the pandemic, because of the infection control measures we have to implement to ensure the safety of all of us,' said practice manager Mairi Dunning. 'This has meant our doctors and nurses have had to change the way they consult and have to decide if your problem is something they can resolve with a phone call or a video consultation, which reduces the risk to everyone, or if they really need to see you.'

'Almost without exception, our patients have understood why we need to be careful and cautious,



and they have helped to ensure the practices and our community are kept as safe as possible.'

LMC is currently delivering vaccines to the community and has achieved the target of immunising those in the official shielding categories and those over 65 by mid February.

'This has only been achieved with the co-operation of all

CHEMISTS AND HEALTH

Try to avoid contacting your pharmacy by telephone

BOOTS THE CHEMIST, GEORGE STREET

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

BOOTS THE CHEMIST, B ESIDE DOCTORS

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

CAROL LEKALAKE OPTOMETRIST

6 George Street, Oban
Please check opening hours by telephone
Tel: 01631 569924

GORDON'S CHEMIST

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

SPECSAVERS

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



IN ASSOCIATION WITH

Oban Business Improvement District

www.bid4oban.co.uk



MY HEALTH, WHO'S THE RESPONSIBLE ONE?



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
graeme.bass@marshcommercial.co.uk

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
CALL OUR DEDICATED HELPLINE
Tel: 0141 566 7096

NEWSAGENTS & CONVENIENCE STORES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RESTAURANTS & TAKEAWAYS

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

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

CGL (OBAN)
*New Address
13-15 Combie Street, Oban
Call for sales & support and collection from the door.
Printing, signage and office supplies.
Email: info@cgl-ltd.co.uk
Tel: 01631 565485

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

THE THISTLE & THE ROSE FLOREST
Taking order online and over the phone for contactless delivery
Email: justine@thethistleandtherose.co.uk
Tel: 01631 654219

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
Mon-Sat 8am-10pm
Sunday 9am-7pm

BOOKERS CASH AND CARRY
Mon-Fri 7.30am-4pm
Sat 7.30am-1pm

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

LIDL
Mon-Sat 8am-10pm
Sun 8am-8pm

MARKS AND SPENCER
Mon - Sat 8am-8pm
Sun 9am-6pm

TESCO
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.

members of the NHS family and those who have volunteered their assistance, those coming out of retirement, and those working longer days and giving up their weekends,' added Mairi.

The next stage of the vaccination programme will reach from those aged 65 to those aged 50, together with some of those meeting the criteria for flu immunisations.

HEALTHCARE

...ne, unless it is essential.

JOHN WALLACE OPTOMETRIST

Argyll Square, Oban
OBAN PRACTICE-Open by appointment only.
Telephone consultations also available.

We're open, caring for your sight and hearing DURING LOCKDOWN and we have all the necessary precautions in place.
Tel: 01631 563170



CROSS CODE

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

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

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

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

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

MAGIC SQUARE

TEST NO ONE'S SLEEPY

Using all 16 letters of the phrase above, form four words each of four letters which will fit in the grid to form a magic square in which the words can be read both horizontally and vertically.

Quiz Challenge

- Crockford's directory lists members of which profession?
- Dolly Parton's theme park Dollywood is in which US state?
- TV's Inspector Morse drove which make of car?
- What A is a small cloth placed over the backs or arms of chairs to protect the fabric underneath?
- In the hit film Titanic, what was the name of the character played by Leonardo DiCaprio?
- What is the singular form of the word dice when used in board games?
- What is the naval equivalent of an army field marshal?
- In cycling's Tour de France, what does a rider's possession of the green jersey denote?
- Where do troglodytes live?
- The 1940s 'Windrush Generation' refers to immigrants who came to Britain from which part of the Commonwealth?

NONAGRAM

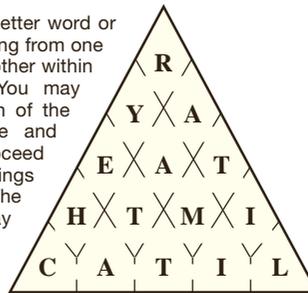
E	T	C
U	S	E
Q	I	N

How many words of four letters or more can you make from this Nonagram? Each word must use the central letter, and each letter may be used only once. At least one word using all nine letters can be found.

Guidelines: 22 Good; 26 Very Good; 30 Excellent. Any word found in the Concise Oxford Dictionary (Tenth Edition) is eligible with the following exceptions: proper nouns; plural nouns, pronouns and possessives; third person singular verbs; hyphenated words; contractions and abbreviations; vulgar slang words; variant spellings of the same word (where another variant is also eligible).

WORD PYRAMID

Spell out a 15-letter word or phrase by moving from one chamber to another within the pyramid. You may only enter each of the chambers once and may only proceed through openings in the walls. The first letter may appear in any chamber.



FIVE ALIVE

PS	HI	IT	CF	TH
IH		AR		WA
AT	ME	NA	ZO	EN
TV		TG		DE
EA	GR	OE	CN	YT

Here are two miniature five-square crosswords using the same grid - but the letters have been mixed up. You have to work out which letters belong to which crossword.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

	1	2	3	4	5				
6									
7			8					9	
10					11				
					12				
13	14				15				
					16				
17				18				19	
				20					
21								22	
23									

ACROSS

- Where craftsmen drink in Hertfordshire? (7,3)
- Girl, one with nine others (5)
- Wreckage floats about at 6 Down (7)
- One might admit having heard it (8)
- Friend holds snobbish boy (4)
- Some run back to place an order inside (6)
- Box at home for milk protein (6)
- Girl returns during the ballet (4)
- Being legally qualified, is fit to be chosen (8)
- Indicated that nothing got knocked on the outside (7)
- Type of tent used on hill? (5)
- Model deems upset intrusive (10)

DOWN

- Peter to appear in brief show at Christmas time (5)
- Bet led Mr Strange to be shaken (8)
- Wrap up in French pleat (6)
- Strung up most of noose shortly (4)
- Variety of sausage used to soften (7)
- Principal leading lady in Berkshire (10)
- Large miner about to be become a skiver (10)
- Jumper that has a pocket (8)
- Mixture produced by poor enamel coating for key (7)
- Promise as security (6)
- Move slightly to cut back on plan for expenditure (5)
- Read endlessly at the horse breeding establishment (4)

QUICK CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
				9			
10							
				12			
13	14			15			
16				17			18
				19			
20			21		22	23	24
					25		
26	27			28			
				29			30
31							
				32			

ACROSS

- Satanic ceremony (5,4)
- Monarch's seat (6)
- Russian emperor (4)
- Woody plant (4)
- Spectre (6)
- Augur (7)
- North American lake (4)
- Withered (4)
- Lair (3)
- Foot digit (3)

DOWN

- Correct text (4)
- Statutes (4)
- Asphalt (7)
- Linked series (6)
- Skin condition (4)
- Wheel covering (4)
- Reddish brown (6)
- Interchange (9)
- Lease giver (6)
- Clergyman (6)
- Morning prayer (6)
- Hotpot (4)
- Fizzy powder (7)
- Asian desert (4)
- Device (9)
- Monetary fund (5,4)
- Cereal food (4)
- Jeans fabric (5)
- Lifeless (4)
- Tapering flag (7)
- Assimilate (4,2)
- Portable computer (6)
- Sea mammal (6)
- Cain's brother (4)
- Blemish (4)

SUDOKU

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

1	6			4	8		2	
7		3		5			6	9
	8	9	1				3	4
				7	1			8
4	9		5		8			
6		8		2	9		5	
	2	1			6	4		
			2	1				
								7

						4		
	5	9		3	1			
		7	6	8				
9						5		
	6							
		4	8					2
4		5				9		
		8		5			2	
			7	6				3

EQUALISER

13	8
7 ○	5 ○
5	5
15 ○	5 ○
2	3

Place the four signs (add, subtract, multiply, divide) one in each circle so that the total of each across and down line is the same. Perform the first calculation in each line first and ignore the mathematical law which says you should always perform division and multiplication before addition and subtraction.

This puzzle page is supplied by Sirius Media Services. To try our new puzzle, Zygolex, go to www.zygolex.com

QUIZ CHALLENGE: 1 The clergy; 2 Tennessee; 3 Jaguar; 4 Antimacassar; 5 Jack Dawson; 6 A die; 7 Admiral of the Fleet; 8 Leader of the points classification; 9 In caves; 10 The Caribbean.

CROSS CODE: 1 G; 2 W; 3 P; 4 V; 5 D; 6 Z; 7 U; 8 O; 9 J; 10 N; 11 C; 12 R; 13 B; 14 L; 15 Q; 16 H; 17 T; 18 F; 19 A; 20 E; 21 Y; 22 I; 23 K; 24 S; 25 M; 26 M.

NONAGRAM: (1) Across - Pith; Tango; Agony. Down - Shave; Rate; Tweet. (2) Across - Shift; Amaze; Erect. Down - Pita; Tango; Handy.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD: Across - 1 Pottery Bar; 7 Annie; 8 Flotsam; 10 Doorbell; 11 Paul; 13 Number; 15 Caseln; 17 Ella; 18 Eligible; 21 Denoted; 22 Down - Pita; Tango; Handy.

WORD PYRAMID: CATYIL

MAGIC SQUARE: 19 Budget; 20 Stud.

QUICK CROSSWORD: Across - 1 Black mass; 9 Throner; 10 Tser; 11 Tree; 12 Wrath; 13 Selve; 14 Sene; 15 Sent; 16 Sente; 17 Sente; 18 Sente; 19 Sente; 20 Sente; 21 Sente; 22 Sente; 23 Sente; 24 Sente; 25 Sente; 26 Sente; 27 Sente; 28 Sente; 29 Sente; 30 Sente; 31 Sente; 32 Sente.

EQUALISER: 13 8; 7 ○ 5 ○; 5 5; 15 ○ 5 ○; 2 3.

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

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Hebridean Toffee was also the first company to include Scottish Tablet into their own

wedding favours. They offer tasteful personalised boxes each containing two squares of freshly made Hebridean Toffee wrapped in airtight packaging which will keep fresh for 6 months.



In 2003, Hebridean Toffee were winners of the Best Marketing award by Ernst & Young and were runners-up in the Best New Business category also that year. In 2010, Hebridean Toffee celebrated 10 years of trading and in that time

more than 15 thousand metric tonnes of Hebridean Toffee and related products have left Barra bound for many satisfied customers.

The recipe for Hebridean Toffee is naturally a closely guarded secret, as the flavour, colour and aroma is distinctly different to other commercial and hand-made tablets and has an unsurpassed shelf-life of 6 months from date of manufacture as no artificial colouring, flavourings, preservatives or additives are used. Every step of daily production is carried out by hand with no automation in either the cooking or the packaging process.

To find out more visit www.hebrideantoffeecompany.com

We have been in lockdown for nearly a year now and realistically it might be another six months or so before things are fully up and open again and running how they used to be for travel and large events.

Prepare for a wedding tsunami!

There is about an 18 month backlog of West Highland and islands weddings that need to catch up.

This is not counting the people who had to go small with their lockdown weddings and now want to throw a huge, big, hooley of a ceilidh to get their families and friends together to celebrate.

Then there are the destination weddings and we can expect couples from across the UK heading here because we have the perfect locations. Many who might have planned a destination wedding overseas will be looking to come and visit us.

Then, before you know it, overseas travellers will be back and looking to say 'I do' on our doorstep.

(Ever wonder how many people have been binge-watching Outlander throughout lockdown and planning their dream wedding in the Highlands?)

The demand is going to be enormous. We are not just talking traditional church weddings but all venues licensed for marriages and every hotel, restaurant and hall for the celebrations.

Plus florists, caterers, cake makers, wedding cars, hair dressers make-up artists and musicians.

It will be good news for all these crafts and professions and the businesses that employ them because they all have had a tough time this last year and everyone will be glad to see them backup in business and thriving.

When it comes to brides' and bridesmaids' dresses, these cannot be organised soon enough – and mothers of the bride and groom please take this on board. Everyone will be shopping all at once, once restrictions are lifted.

And gentlemen, the same goes if you fancy splashing out on a new bespoke kilt for your big day or even arranging kilt hire for your groomsmen.

Everything to do with

weddings will be in great demand – so get planning and booking now!

Smaller can still be beautiful

The good news is that for some people smaller weddings are just what they want.

Feeling overwhelmed by the expectations of both of your families about the size of your wedding? Worried about spending that much cash when the future can look uncertain?

Have you got to the stage when it is: 'Well we've invited my Aunty Mhari so that means we'll have to...'

Fear not. Covid has given you a perfect alibi to downsize, get it all under control and how YOU want it to be.

More but fewer

Here is an idea that works so well which borrows from past traditions: don't just settle for one big event, plan a few to suit your circumstances.

It might well be that the pandemic still means smaller-sized gatherings for a while. Instead of everyone travelling



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within our beautiful region. The AWESOME team prides themselves on listening to their clients and working with them and their venue to create your perfect day. Attention to detail is everything and you can just simply relax and enjoy every moment of your very special day, knowing that they have ensured your wedding looks exactly as you envisioned.





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to you, why not have the bride and groom go to them.
So how about a smaller wedding service and reception for family and a party or ceilidh at a later date? Or if part of the family live some distance away go, to them for a blessing and a party. If you live and work away have a gathering there for friends and neighbours.
Spreading the event across a few occasions harks back to the weddings of old that went on for days, with the newly weds going round the island or a remote neighbourhood to visit

everyone. Weddings on Tiree were legendary!
There is a feeling growing that we will be living in changed times once all this is over so why not change our weddings to match?
But some things will never change – getting dressed up and joining the people who mean the most to us to celebrate marriage with food and drink and music and laughter.
It will take more than a few stubborn germs to ever stop that.



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Balinakill is hired on an exclusive use basis for as long as you choose. This wonderful Victorian country house comes alive with people enjoying themselves and is the perfect venue for small, intimate events or larger celebrations. The house is grand but welcoming with a choice of public rooms and beautiful, mature gardens for your ceremony. It can accommodate up to 30 overnight guests in twelve en-suite bedrooms, an additional children's play/bedroom, three large public rooms (2 with open fires and one with a piano and table tennis/pool table), a Victorian dining room, family kitchen and a cosy stock-your-own bar with a wood burning stove.

Our priority here at Balinakill is to make sure that your Wedding day is exactly how you want it to be. Whether you want to relax in the hot tub before your big day, continue the celebrations into the next day in your very own bar, play pool or simply relax in the garden or in front of the fire, Balinakill can offer it all and more!

Kintyre Weddings – Creating what you want for your very special day!



This Victorian home and Kintyre's Only 5 Star VisitScotland Guest House, has undergone a complete transformation to offer fully licensed, 5 unique high-end rooms with refined décor and with professional in-house Chef, Carradales makes the perfect wedding venue.

If you are looking for that small intimate location for your wedding, then Carradales is the perfect place.

Ceremonies can be held in their garden with views of the countryside or in those winter months in the drawing room.

Quite simply Carradales offers charm and hospitality with character, style and comfort to create what you want for your very special day.

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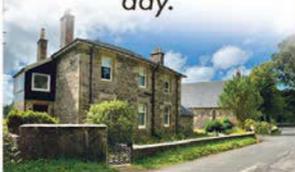
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THE ALL-NEW ISUZU D-MAX ARRIVES IN SHOWROOMS MARCH 2021



The All-New Isuzu D-Max combines smart new styling and impressive safety technology with improved off-road performance. Not only does it deliver the strength and durability you'd expect from an Isuzu pick-up truck, this capable workhorse now adds superior levels of comfort and refinement.

Benefiting from an assertive new exterior design, the All-New Isuzu D-Max boasts a more distinguishable and powerful appearance. The elevated front-end design and sharp contours generate a more imposing presence which is complemented by distinctive 18" alloy wheels and new Bi-LED lights on higher end models.

The interior has been transformed with a sophisticated layered dashboard design and new infotainment systems which provide a more spacious and contemporary feel. This is accompanied by soft-touch panelling and elegant detailing that contributes to a more premium interior which remains fuss-free and practical to operate.

Isuzu is renowned for its 4x4 expertise and the All-New D-Max is even more capable off-road with a faster engaging shift-on-the-fly 4WD sys-

tem and a standard rear diff-lock on All-Purpose and Adventure models. Back on the road, it's even safer thanks to a comprehensive ADAS package that includes Autonomous Emergency Braking, Traffic Sign Recognition, Intelligent Speed Limiter and Lane Departure Warning & Prevention on every model.

The All-New Isuzu D-Max is the only pick-up in the UK to have a rear radar fitted as standard on all double cab variants and this enables even more ADAS functionality. All double cabs have 3 additional ADAS systems: Rear Cross Traffic Alert, Blind Spot Monitor and – for the first time in the pickup segment – Emergency Lane Keeping.

Remaining true to its workhorse pedigree, the All-New Isuzu D-Max is capable of towing up to 3.5t and carrying over a tonne payload. Customers are presented with a wide range of models to choose from including 4x2 or 4x4, three different cab types (single, extended and double cab) and four brand new trim levels.

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- Taking spirit accounts and loading of road tankers.
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DEATHS

FARGUS - Rev Gavin J F, beloved father of Caroline and Kenney, grandfather of David. Peacefully in Belford hospital after a short illness on February 12, 2021, aged 90. Private funeral with Requiem Mass to be held at a later date when Covid rules allow. Sincere thanks to everyone involved in his care.

MACDONALD - Sadly, but peacefully, on Sunday, February 21, 2021, in her 82nd year, Margaret, 34a Soroba Road, Oban (formerly of 6 Lunga Road, Oban). Devoted wife of the late Donald and mother to Donald, Donna and Andrew and grandmother to Euan. Will be dearly missed. A private funeral service will take place at Pennyfuir Cemetery. Family flowers only please.

MACINTYRE - Ann. Peacefully at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, Glasgow on February 11, 2021, Ann in her 95th year. Beloved eldest daughter of the late James and Catherine MacIntyre, Gott, Isle of Tiree, sister of the late Rachael and Archie. Family funeral due to current restrictions, interment

to take place on March 2 at Kirkapoll Cemetery, Isle of Tiree. Family flowers only, donations in lieu to Guide Dogs for the Blind or Marie Curie Cancer Care.

MACINTYRE - Peacefully, at Lorn and Islands Hospital, on February 19, 2021, in his 90th year, Dugald Carmichael MacIntyre (Dougie), beloved husband of the late Jean Kennedy, dearly loved Dad of Christine, Dougie and Gordon and brother to Jessie. Adored Pappa and great-Pappa, and a special friend to many. Will be sadly missed by all who knew and loved him.

MACMILLAN - John Ross, Tiree, Skye and Bishopbriggs, sadly passed on February 16, 2021. Beloved husband of Mary, Tiree and Bishopbriggs. Much loved father of Iain Ross, Kenneth Hector and Finlay John, and a dearly loved grandfather to all his grandchildren. He lived a full and wonderful life. Funeral at Daldowie Crematorium on Thursday, March 4, 2021 at 12 noon. Due to current Covid restrictions, numbers are limited. Service can be viewed online, details available from the family. Family flowers only please.

MILLEN



With love and great sadness, we share the passing of our Dad, Ivor Millen, a well-known character in both Callander and his native Roy Bridge. He died peacefully at home on Saturday, February 20, 2021, surrounded by his loving family, having reached the grand old age of 83. Husband to Pat, adored father to Ailie, Amanda, Blair, Miles; Papa to Rachael, Milo, Theo, Una, Georgie and Floraidh; Great Grandpa to Joseph, Lina and Terry. Friend and drinking buddy to many. On Monday, March 1 at 2pm Ivor will make his final journey from Glasgow to Roy Bridge. He'll stop in Callander at 151 Main Street saying a fond farewell to his good friends and nodding goodbye to his favourite haunts as he passes. Service at St Margaret's RC Church Roy Bridge on Tuesday, March 2 at

11.30am followed by interment in Cille Choirill Cemetery. Anyone not immediate family and wishing to pay their respects can do so outside the church or at the graveside. A live stream will be made available for those of you who wish to view the service for Ivor. The link for this will be made available just before 11.30am on Tuesday morning, primarily from our own page.

MORTON - (Bonawe). Peacefully at Lorn and Islands Hospital, Oban, with her family by her side, in her 92nd year, Mary, beloved mother of John and the late Thomas, mother-in-law of Sarah and Catherine, grandmother to Thomas, Lorraine, Sharon, Karen, John and David, Great Nanny to Christopher, Eoghan, Jessica, Lewis, Alice, Ella, James and Arran, Great-Great Gran to Nathan. A much loved aunt and friend to many. Funeral private due to restrictions.

ROBERTSON - Peacefully at home, and not due to Covid, on February 16, 2021, Alison, née MacPherson, Benderloch, wife of Duncan (Taffy) Ballachulish, aged 92 years. Funeral at St John's, Ballachulish on March 5. No flowers please but donations, if desired, to the Scottish Cot Death Trust, Strathcarron Hospice, or Marie Curie. Funeral numbers are restricted but a memorial service will be held for all Alison's family and friends when restrictions allow.

SILVER - (Oldmeldrum, Aberdeenshire). Peacefully at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, surrounded by his family on February 18, 2021, Colin, aged 81, former Veterinary Surgeon, beloved husband of the late Gillean (née Comrie), the most amazing father of Catriona and Robert, dearly loved grandpa to Lucy, Iona, Alexander and Callum and loved friend to Carol. He will be deeply missed by all his family, friends and community.

THOMSON - Grace, with family at bedside, passed at the Inverclyde Royal Hospital, Greenock, on February 9, 2021, aged 86. Formerly of Dalmally, she will be greatly missed by her surviving relatives and children. Due to current restrictions a private family funeral will be held in Greenock crematorium.

WILLS - Rodney (formerly of Barcaldine and Lochaline). Died peacefully at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary on February 12, 2021 after a short illness. Adored husband of the late Susan, dearly loved father of Christine and the late Anne and sons-in-law Jim and Mike. Cherished Papa of Kirsty, Graeme, Alyssa and Lynne and six great-grandchildren. He will live on in our hearts. Donations if desired to Corstorphine Old Parish Church.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CHRISTINE - The family of the late Evelyn G. Christine wish to extend their sincere thanks for the many kind words of condolences and support that they have received through expressions of cards, messages and flowers following their sad loss. They also send their gratitude and appreciation to the Rev Dugald Cameron for his eulogy at the graveside. Also to Ian MacInnes of D & A Munn Funeral Directors for his guidance and assistance. Petals of Oban for the lovely floral tributes. A sincere thank you to the staff at The North Argyll House Oban for the exceptional care afforded to our Mother over the years she was a resident there. Sorely missed by all.

CLARK - The family of the late Jimmy Clark, would like to thank most sincerely all family, friends and neighbours, for all their help and kindness, after the sudden loss of Jimmy. Special thanks to D & A Munn, Funeral Directors, for exceptional help and kindness, also to Duncan Forgrieve for his lovely music and to the Rev. Dugald Cameron for the lovely and fitting service.

GRAHAM - Mary, Fay and Elaine would like to thank everyone for their phone calls, messages and flowers after the sudden death of Davie/Dad. Sincere thanks to Dr. Harding and all at Connel Surgery, Sarah and Scott from Oban Police for their kindness to us, family who have helped us through this very difficult time and Aileen (mum and dad's carer) whose support got me and mum through. A special thanks to Dawn for the lovely eulogy in the church and to all who braved the weather in Oban and Dunbeg to pay their

respects. Thanks to Andrew for streaming the service for Fay in Canada. A very sincere thanks to Ian from Munn's for such kindness and professionalism. Thanks to Father James for all his help and being a friend. Rest in Peace Wee Davie.

MACINTYRE - Margaret. Alastair, Pauline, Nicola and family would like to extend their sincere thanks to all friends, family and neighbours for the kindness and support, also for the cards, flowers and phone calls received since the loss of Margaret. Heartfelt thanks to Jamie, Beth and staff at Manson and MacBeath Funeral Directors, for their excellent service, empathy, compassion and professionalism shown to us as a family, which made making the arrangements so much easier. We would also like to thank the staff at Moss Park Care Home, in particular the nurses Chrissie, Iona and Val for the loving care and dignity that they showed Margaret, we will be forever grateful. To Father David Connor for his spiritual guidance and comforting service and to Deacon Thomas Wynne for the lovely service at the graveside, Kevin Cameron for the beautiful music and singing and the talented piper James Rosie. A special thanks to Doctor John Wallace for all the care, compassion and support that he showed not only to Margaret during her illness but also to Alastair and for simply being Doc Wallace. Finally, we would also like to thank all who paid their respects to Margaret at Riverside Grove and Lochside, outside St Mary's Church, at the roadside in Inverloch and at the graveside. Margaret will forever be in our hearts.

MORRISON - Ronald Malcolm. Mary-Flora and Carrie would like to express thanks to friends and neighbours for their support in recent months. Thank you to Doctors Clarke and Kershaw-Yates and staff at Millig Practice; to all staff at Gordon's chemist; to the district nurses and the carers for the care they delivered in such a respectful and gentle manner. Thank you to the Cooperative Funeral Services and to Robert Ryan, Civil Celebrant. To all who stood outside our home and the cortege

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route to show respect to Ronnie and say goodbye. Thanks to all for the heart-warming cards and flowers following our loss.

SINCLAIR – Mary. The family of the late Mary, wish to thank the staff of Portree Hospital and Dail Mhor, Strontian for their care and kindness, Rev. Richard Baxter for the comforting graveside service, Manson & MacBeath for the professional funeral arrangements. Thanks to friends who stood at the roadside in the rain at Ratagan to pay their respects on Mary's final journey to Ardeag Cemetery. Thanks for all messages of condolences and donations to Inverinate lunch club.

MEMORIAMS

CLARK – In loving memory of Gary Clark, who died February 24, 2012.

- With all our love, your family.

GIBSON – In loving memory of our dear mum and granny Marybell, who died February 23, 1987.

Loved and remembered every day.

- Iain and family, Dalmally and Margaret and family, Canada.

MACDOUGALL – A'cuimhneachadh m'athar, Ewen, a shiubhail 25 an Gearran, 2010. Le ar gaol.

- Eleanor agus John.

MACGILL - In loving memory of Donald, dear father of Anne and Neil, who passed away February 23, 1991. Beloved husband of the late Nancy, who passed away January 18, 2015, dearly loved Granny of Sophie and Donald.

Sorely missed, you are always in our thoughts.

- Anne and Rab, Neil and Jackie, Sophie, Donald.

MACKAY – Margaret, who passed away February 27, 2020.

So many precious memories of laughter, music and dancing

Safe in heaven now with her boys, Alex and Ian.

Beannaich dia thu Mummy.
- Mary, Aulay, Jamie, Denise, Scott and Nicola.

MACVICAR – In loving memory of Teena, died March 1, 2007.

- Johnnie, Mitchell, Catherine and families.

MATHERS – Treasured memories of my partner Vicky, who died on February 23, 2015.

Our memories are etched within my heart

So we are never far apart
Loved and missed always.

- Love Caroline xxx

McLENNAN – In loving memory of Willie, much loved brother and uncle died February 24, 2008.

Loved and remembered always.

- From Margaret, Elsie and families.

MORTON – In loving memory of Catherine Mary, passed away February 24, 1995.

Beloved wife of John, devoted mother of Karen, John, and David. Much loved daughter-in-law to Mary

Forever in our thoughts.

- John, John and David.
Always in our thoughts. Sorely missed mum.

- Norman, Karen, Christopher, Lewis and Arran.

WATSON – Roberta (Bobbie) née Moyes. Two long years have passed since you were taken suddenly and far too soon. We now know why but still seek justice.

You are thought of and missed every day

Love always.

- Bill, Vi and Charlie and family.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

On my office windowsill in Kinlochleven are two battered Denby stoneware jugs.

As a young person growing up they always sat at my Mum's kitchen window. Often overlooked, and sometimes rather dusty, they were just there as part of a collection of her more prized items.

A quick check online proved that they would never be precious antiques, only worth a few pounds at the most, and some people wouldn't give them house room.

They were never really valuable to begin with, and even less so now as the years have gone by, for there is a missing lid, and some hairline cracks inside; however to me they are precious and have the right to a place in my life.

I use them, as my Mother did before me, to hold the first daffodils of spring: gathered in bud from the garden to bring a glorious vision of yellow and green in contrast to the lovely blue glaze. Both jugs filled, indeed a sight to see. And a

vivid memory of a mother's care.

Did you know that Narcissus flowers are linked with what Jesus said

'Think about how the wild flowers grow, if God makes what grows in the fields so beautiful think what he will do for you.'

Jonquil narcissus tazetta, or bunch daffodils, bloom

in Israel from November to January, and are used often to reflect on God's providential care for his people.

Perhaps we could think of this when we see the spring flowers this year.

Reverend Marion Kinnear,
Kinlochleven



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American dream as Bob targets spot in Masters

by Fiona Scott
fscott@obantimes.co.uk

Oban golf ace Bob MacIntyre is teeing up to compete in five world class tournaments in seven weeks with the ultimate aim of landing a prized spot at the US Masters in April.

After spending the last few weeks isolating at home in Oban, Bob, 24, has flown to America for what will undoubtedly be the biggest two months in his career to date amongst golfing's elite on the World Championship stage.

Over the next few weeks, Bob

will live and travel in a protective 'bubble' with Bounce Sports director Iain Stoddart and caddie Mikey Thompson as he blazes a trail through the US.

Speaking from Oban last week Bob, as always, was taking everything in his stride.

'It's all about feeling comfortable about things and at the moment I'm feeling comfortable about most of it. I'm pretty good about not worrying about these things.

'I don't much like being on my own but having Stoddy (Iain) and Mikey with me helps. I'm

just going to go out there and enjoy myself.' Bob's first stop is Florida where he will play alongside the world's best in the Workday Championship at The Concession.

The top 10 ranked players have already committed to the tournament, the first in the 2021 World Golf Championship (WGC) series, including America's Dustin Johnson (1), 2017 FedExCup champion Justin Thomas (3) and triple WGC event winner Rory McIlroy (7).

Providing he stays inside the top 50 - Bob is currently 43rd

in the world rankings - the Arnold Palmer Invitational will be the next, March 4 to 7, while a place at the prestigious Players Championship at Ponte Vedra Beach is also likely from March 11 to 14. Both events are in Florida and are part of the PGA tour.

From March 24 to 28, Bob and his team will travel to Austin, Texas, for the WGC - Dell Technologies Match Play and, all being well, still in the top 50 on March 29, a place at the US Masters in Augusta, April 8 to 11, has Bob's name on it.

When asked how he felt about the prospect of coming up against some of the world's golfing giants Bob said: 'It will feel a bit surreal but it's just someone else marking your scorecard and I don't let it bother me too much.

'Saying that, I do get nervous at big events but that's fine. I enjoy it and am learning to embrace it and work with it.

'The two players that would really rattle me are Phil Mickelson and Tiger Woods. Having the chance to play with them though would be fantastic.'

Weekly tip from Lorn Healthy Options

A fitter body leads to a fitter, more positive mind. Although your brain is not a muscle, it behaves in a similar way.

Physical exercise increases blood flow and oxygen to your brain which helps create more brain cells. Activity also helps your body release good chemicals which give you a sense of well-being and reduces stress.

Did you know our brains have a negativity bias? This serves us well in times of danger but be aware of the information you are feeding your brain.

Choose the moments when you want to feed your brain with news, look for the positives and work on reducing the negative noise.

To see this health tip in full visit lornhealthyoptions.co.uk/free-message-from-Mull



The Johnston family, from left, Charlie, Harry, Jack, Ethel, on the bike, and Andrew.

Johnstons support Doddie Aid

Oban Lorne Rugby Football Club coach Andrew Johnston and his family haven't been letting the grass grow under their feet during lockdown II.

Over the six weeks from the beginning of January, up to the Calcutta Cup kick-off on February 6, the quintet, including wife Ethel and children Charlie, Harry and Jack, walked and cycled more than 1,300 miles between them as part of the Doddie Aid Challenge.

Raising money and awareness for Doddie Weir's MND charity, the fundraiser was fantastically supported across the rugby community and was largely helped by linking it to the old inter-district champi-

onship with teams covering The North and Midlands, Glasgow, Edinburgh, South of Scotland and the Scottish Exiles. More than 25,000 people were involved and more than £1m was raised following a fantastic effort by everyone.

The event culminated in the World in a Day challenge organised by endurance cyclist Mark Beaumont and former Scotland flanker Rob Wainwright. The idea was based on Mark's Round The World cycle in which he went round the world in 80 days which equated to completing 240 miles a day. The Doddie Aid challenge was to complete the 240 miles either individually or as a team on January 31.

'We started at 6am and took turns to complete the mileage and a wee bit more,' said Andrew. 'It was a fantastic day with live Zoom calls with rugby legends John Barclay, Kelly Brown and Rob Wainwright, Olympic medallists Kathryn Grange and Chris Hoy and Glasgow team manager Ally McCoist, all spaced out over the day to help the miles fly by.

'It was great to be involved and it helped fill the time before the Six Nations kicked off with a fantastic Scotland victory over England.'

Andrew is hoping he can get back on the rugby pitch in the weeks to come as the country emerges from the latest lockdown.

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95p

Mountain Festival honours climber Dave

INSIDE THIS WEEK: Weddings great and small for us all



Charles Kennedy



Documentary airs claims of abuse against late MP

• See page 5 for more

Space odyssey



Loch Arkaig's feathered family goes global

• See page 4 for more

FAMILY OF CYCLIST IN HEARTFELT PLEA



Devastated family of Tony Parsons appeal for information as police officers distribute posters and leaflets in Tyndrum

Police officers working on the Tony Parsons case descended on Tyndrum this week, distributing posters and leaflets in a fresh appeal for information in relation to the case, writes Mark Entwistle.

Mr Parsons, from Tillicoultry, was last seen during a charity bike ride in September 2017 outside the Bridge of Orchy Hotel. His body was found in a remote area near the A82 at Bridge of Orchy in January.

At the end of December, two men, both aged 29, were arrested then released pending further

enquiries in connection with Mr Parsons's disappearance.

In a statement on behalf of the Parsons family, his son Mike said: 'The last three years have been incredibly hard for us as a family and for all those who knew my Dad.'

'We always hoped there would be a positive outcome and have now been left devastated by my Dad's death.'

'It is still so hard to comprehend that when he

Continued on page five.

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LT

In-school learning returns for some pupils across Lochaber

This week saw a partial return for Highland school pupils, including for a number in Lochaber, such as these pictured heading in for the start of class at Lochaber High School on Tuesday morning, writes Mark Entwistle.

But school communities across Lochaber and the rest of Highland are being encouraged to remain vigilant on Covid safety measures.

Chairman of Highland Council's Education Committee, Councillor John Finlayson, said: 'I want to thank each child, young person, parent, carer, staff member and their families for their ongoing compliance with these measures and for their patience and understanding while we have worked to deliver a quality education experience in these challenging times. We will continue to work towards the return of our other young people and information will be provided when further guidance is made available from the Scottish Government.'

The reopening has seen



Some young people in senior years were able to attend school this week to complete practical work for their courses. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

full-time attendance for Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) children and for children in P1-3.

Part-time

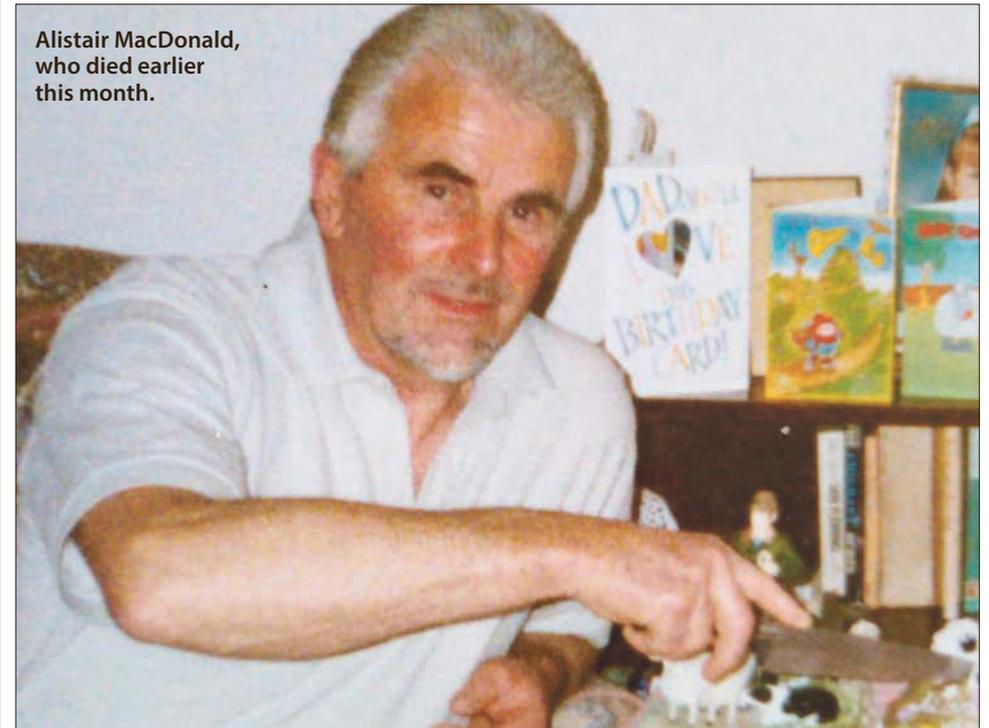
There is part-time attendance for young people in the senior phase who need to attend to complete practical work that is necessary for the completion of national qualification courses.

Vulnerable children are also

catered for, including a small increase in provision for children and young people with significant additional support needs where there is a clear and demonstrable necessity.

The Scottish Government has made a special allowance for schools with a roll of 25 pupils or fewer, where all of the pupils are taught in one single class.

APPRECIATION: Alistair MacDonald of Glencoe



Alistair MacDonald, who died earlier this month.

Tributes have been paid to one of Glencoe's staunchest defenders, Alistair MacDonald, after he passed away at the start of this month.

Born in 1939 in his parents' house in Glencoe, Alistair was the youngest of four siblings, the others being Archie, Grace, and Muriel.

He attended the school next door and helped out in the holidays attending to his mother's livestock. This was ultimately to shape his life in the years ahead.

When sheep gatherings took place in the upper reaches of the glen, Alistair used to cycle the few miles to be part of this learning curve of life in the glen. Later when he left school and became old enough to drive, he was employed as a stalking/fishing ghillie with the Strathcona family who owned the Glencoe Estate.

This was an enjoyable experience for him as he learned more skills of the countryside of which he was passionate about.

When National Service call-up came, Alistair enlisted with the 2nd Battalion, Scots Guards, based at Wellington Barracks in London. He adapted well to army life and made many friends in the three years he spent there.

When his parents required help on the croft, he returned home after serving his time in London. It was during this time he met a young girl from Ballachulish, Rosalind Fraser, and romance blossomed.

After a long courtship, they married, and Alistair secured work on the Altnafeadh Estate, owned by the De Spoelberch family. Children Elaine and Alexander followed and many happy years were spent during the next decade as the children gained an intimate knowledge of wildlife in all its forms at

Altnafeadh and later Black Corries Estate.

During this period, Alistair was offered the chance to buy some sheep on land owned by the National Trust for Scotland in Glen Etive. This was a turning point in his life as his dream to become owner of his own sheep-rearing venture became a reality.

Life was challenging in those days, as he battled the elements on Buachaille Etive-Mhor, with no modern day clothing or footwear which is normal today.

There were days when sheep became stranded on high ledges and help was required from neighbouring farmers at Achtriachan and Achnabeich, even managing to film some of these dangerous episodes.

Blessed with an innovative

'Alistair decided that he must try to save the land of his ancestors.'

mind, Alistair became acutely aware while being a member of the local rescue team of the dangers of mountain accidents.

He worked on a device which he believed could assist climbers who got into difficulty at night. He applied and was invited to attend The John Logie Baird Innovation Awards, sponsored by Deloitte, at Glasgow University.

His invention was among a host of top scientific inventions of the day being mentioned with much interest and he was delighted to be named as runner-up among such prestigious scientists of that time.

Alistair also enrolled his working border collie in the Search and Rescue Dog

Association.

Roy had worked with sheep and was alert to everything around him and proved to be one of his loyal companions searching the hills around Glencoe.

Working days in Glen Etive were never dull, as the glen was a thriving community, with a school and post office, game-keepers and shepherds, which Alistair enjoyed as he journeyed there every day.

He would often assist hill walkers who had set off from a point, only to find they had to walk back by road, which was an arduous journey, and it was quite common for walkers to be given a lift in a trailer of sheep fleeces.

He continued with his sheep enterprise for the next 30 years, when it was time to move back to the village and a less demanding way of life building dry stone walls which he enjoyed.

In 2002, the last remaining lands of the Strathcona Estate came up for sale with much interest attached. Local groups had tried to purchase it but were unsuccessful and with time running out Alistair, being the man that he was, decided he must try to save the land of his ancestors.

The next 72 hours were crucial as he acquired unsecured loans from six donors who believed in what he was doing. His bid for the land was successful and he immediately set up Glencoe Heritage Trust, a non-profit making trust to secure the Glencoe lands and river.

Sadly, Alistair was to be diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease, which he bore with great dignity for 18 years. He was alert in mind and spirit until he passed away peacefully after a short illness on February 2 at Grantown-on-Spey.

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Answers sought over lack of Blàr Mòr liaison group

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Highland Council is being asked to explain why, more than two years after planning consent was granted for the large Blàr Mòr development on the outskirts of Fort William, a stipulated condition that a community liaison group must be formed at the start of the project was apparently never complied with.

Acting chairman of Kilmallie Community Council John Hutchison told this week's meeting of the community body that the apparent omission had only come to his attention after a brief remark from someone.

Mr Hutchison has now written to Highland Council chief executive Donna Manson seeking an explanation.

He told Ms Manson: 'We have been in touch with you previously on this matter but

Building work on phase one started on site at Blàr Mòr in July 2020.



I am now writing to ask the more serious question of why the Highland Council is not implementing planning conditions it has imposed on itself.'

More than a year ago, the community council had asked the Inverness-headquartered authority to involve it as it started to translate the broad Fort William 2040 project aspirations into tangible objectives for development on the Blàr Mòr through preparing an integrated layout and design guidance for individual sites.

However, Mr Hutchison

informed Ms Manson there had been no response to that request, despite Caol and Mallaig Ward councillors also raising the issue with her and planning officers.

'We have felt continually excluded from this major development,' writes Mr Hutchison.

In the planning decision notice of December 19 2018, the relevant attached condition stipulates that 'no development shall commence until a community liaison group is established by the developer,

in collaboration with The

Highland Council, Lochaber Access Panel and affected local community councils.'

Discussing the issue with fellow Kilmallie Community Council members at their Zoom meeting this week, Mr Hutchison said he considered the council's failure to set up a liaison group as 'pretty serious'.

He added that the community council had been trying to engage with Highland Council on the project for the last two or three years to no avail.

'I am extremely disappointed, to say the least, to find that the

council was actually meant to put in place a community liaison group,' said Mr Hutchison, who has also written separately to Malcolm MacLeod, the council's executive chief officer for infrastructure and environment, to ask if the other suspensive conditions attached to the planning consent – conditions which prevent any future actions until they are implemented – have been complied with.

Mr Hutchison continued: 'This is the biggest development to take place here for a long, long time. So it is really pretty poor that this is the situation in which we find ourselves due to a chance comment.'

Asked to comment, Highland Council told the Lochaber Times: 'We aim to establish a community liaison group to continue constructive discussions with the community, through the community council and other stakeholders.'

Vaccination plan progressing well

One third of NHS Highland's over-18 population has now had their first vaccinations against Covid.

The health authority says the vaccination programme is progressing well, with 87,698 been given their first vaccination as of February 15, covering 33 per cent of people aged 18 and above living in the Highlands and Argyll and Bute.

It is planned that all care homes will be offered their second vaccination by the end of March.

Comhairle meet to consider budget

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar met this week to consider its 2021/22 budget.

Recommendations included retaining Council Tax for the Western Isles at the 2020/21 level of £1,193.49 at band D, the lowest in Scotland.

Despite an increase in the settlement for core services, a number of uncertainties may still impact finances, including future pay awards and costs arising from Covid.

Read more at www.lochabertimes.co.uk

Call for information on vandalism to Cow Hill trail

Forestry and Land Scotland's Fort William team is hoping to tap in to community spirit to deal with anti-social behaviour and vandalism at its Cow Hill Trail, writes Fiona Scott.

The agency is asking anyone with information about recent environmental damage at the site to contact Police Scotland on 101.

David John Robertson, FLS Area Visitor Services Manager, said: 'Cow Hill is an incredibly popular and well-used trail that offers residents a great opportunity to get out and enjoy Scotland's forests and land.'

'Lots of local people – and visitors from further afield – have a strong personal attachment to this site and take pride in everything the outdoor capital has to offer.'

'It's therefore really disheartening to see this kind of damage.'

'Trees were cut down and there was an attempt to start a fire – which in a period of high risk could easily have spread with disastrous consequences.'

'It's irresponsible and potentially dangerous and creates an eyesore that gives a bad impression to visitors.'



One of the damaged trees at Cow Hill.

'We'd encourage anyone who knows anything about this to please contact Police Scotland on 101 and help put a stop to this mindless vandalism.'

Dangers

'As well as dangers posed from flying wood chips, trees of this size could easily cause serious injury if they fell on anyone.'

'The debris also presents trip hazards for other visitors to the site and, had a fire been lit, the dry conditions at the

time could have resulted in a serious incident.'

FLS staff have now cleared the debris and will continue to monitor the situation and work with Police Scotland to address anti-social behaviour at the site.

David added: 'I hope the people who did this are ashamed of their actions and at the very least consider the danger they put themselves and others in when taking down trees of this size.'



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Covid breach hotline

Police Scotland has contacted community council secretaries to advise of their online service for reporting covid breaches.

The online form can be found at www.scotland.police.uk/secureforms/covid19/ The form is for that purpose only. It is not for emergency reporting. If there is an emergency call 999.

£100 hardship payment boost

A move to provide low income families with a further £100 Covid hardship payment has been welcomed.

Highlands and Islands MSP Maree Todd has backed the funding boost aimed at tackling poverty.

It follows a £37.2 million funding package announced by Finance Secretary Kate Forbes in the Scottish Parliament.

The £100 payment will be made to qualifying low income families whose children receive free meals in schools or early learning and childcare settings.

Express response to remote access concern

by Fiona Scott
fscott@obantimes.co.uk

A temporary train service has been introduced in a remote part of the Highlands, after locals who have no other access to public transport expressed fears they'd miss out on essential shopping trips and medical appointments.

The 5.37pm Fort William-Glasgow ScotRail service was temporarily removed from the timetable following a 90 per cent fall in the number of passengers using the train during the coronavirus pandemic.

The revised schedule is part of the train operator's strategy to provide critical services during the Covid-19 pandemic, but in this part of Scotland, it meant customers from Corroun or Rannoch, who wanted to make an essential journey would not be able to get back the same day.



The train operator will now run a two-coach service on Mondays and Thursdays from Rannoch, departing at 9.05am, which will call at Corroun, Tulloch, Roy Bridge and Spean Bridge before arriving in Fort William around 10am.

The news has been welcomed by those who lobbied the train operator after they cut the original service.

'We spoke up and ScotRail

Residents from Corroun are delighted ScotRail listened to their concerns.

listened,' said Jan Robinson, who runs the Loch Ossian Youth Hostel in Corroun.

'This two-day-a-week train service will be a fantastic help to me and others in this rural community on the edge of Rannoch Moor.

'We were worried we'd miss out on trips for essential shopping and some people have important medical appointments coming up that they

might have had to cancel. The reinstated services are also a welcome safety net for workers on the Corroun Estate in case the private road is blocked or there are vehicle breakdowns.'

Hege Hernæs, secretary of West Highland Community Rail Partnership, added: 'A single week's response time is impressive for a large organisation like ScotRail and demonstrates their willingness to work flexibly and in liaison with lineside communities in this time of crisis.'

'The West Highland Community Rail Partnership and Lochaber Transport Forum are very grateful to the Fort William station team, ScotRail's Business Development team and the train crews who responded so quickly and positively when asked to work the extra train.'

The new service will give customers an hour and a half

to carry out any essential business before catching the 11.40am service home again. The service will operate every Monday and Thursday until the Caledonian Sleeper service between London and Fort William is reinstated.

Alister MacLennan, station manager West Highlands said: 'The last thing ScotRail wants to do is leave people stranded or vulnerable during this very difficult time.'

'Although we have a duty to run the rail network as efficiently as possible, we also have a responsibility to our customers in some of the remotest parts of Scotland.'

'We're confident the timetable changes we've had to make are helping us provide a critical service for key workers, but we are also willing to look at reinstating certain services if it becomes clear they are vital to the community.'

Out of this world experience for Loch Arkaig ospreys

Loch Arkaig ospreys Louis and Aila along with their 2019 chicks Mallie and Rannoch have achieved universal fame after having their names engraved on chips carried by the NASA 2020 rover Perseverance which landed on Mars last Thursday.

Over the past few years, viewers world wide have been tuning in to the Woodland Trust's live webcam to watch the antics of ospreys Louis and Aila and their offspring, and one dedicated viewer, Linda Keene from Cumbernauld, decided the feathered family deserved wider recognition.

Back in 2019 Linda took part in the NASA scheme to put names on the Mars Rover 2020 mission which departed from Cape Canaveral on July 20 last year. At the time of the nomination, Louis and Aila were looking after chicks Mallie and Rannoch on the nest.

'I am a big fan of our beloved Aila and Louis,' said Linda. 'They go through all kinds of adversity and I worry about the chicks surviving or Aila getting attacked on the nest and the eggs being eaten.'

'Like lots of ardent fans I put in night shifts watching.



Dedicated webcam viewer Linda Keene registered the ospreys for the flight to Mars in 2019.

I thought of the Mars Rover going through so much to achieve its goals at that time and thought our wonderful ospreys have such amazing goals to achieve in their lives just to survive. They are simply amazing and their names deserved to be onboard together with their weans.'

Perseverance launched to the Red Planet on a United Launch Alliance Atlas V rocket on July 30 2020 and successfully touched down in Jezero Crater last week to explore Mars, searching for signs of life and to study the planet's geology.

George Anderson, from the Woodland Trust, said: 'The ospreys became famous last year becoming a lockdown hit

with people stuck at home desperate to connect with nature. I never thought their fame would stretch this far though!'

The nestcam at Loch Arkaig Pine Forest, supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery, is due to be switched on mid March in time for the expected return of Louis and Aila in early April. The pair raised their first chick Lachlan in 2017. In 2018 the nest failed after a pine marten raided the eggs. In 2019 they raised Mallie and Rannoch, and in 2020 chicks Doddie, Vera and Captain attracted an online audience of nearly 400,000.



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Police officers were in Tyndrum this week to launch a poster campaign and fresh appeal for information about Tony Parsons, below. Main photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

'Devastated' family appeals for information

Continued from page one.

went on his charity bike ride three years ago that was to be the last time we would ever see him.

'He has been deprived of so many family events and it hurts us so much as a family to see his grandchildren grow up without their grandad. Now we know there won't ever be an opportunity to see him again.

'We would like to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone who looked for my Dad, for never giving up and for giving us the opportunity to make sure he could come



home so we could say our final goodbyes.

'We are extremely grateful to Police Scotland, forensic scientists, all the mountain rescue teams and everyone else involved in the investigation for their work in such difficult conditions and circumstances.

'I know we cannot get closure until we find out who did this and why it happened, so I would ask anyone who may have even the smallest piece of information to please speak to the police and help us get the answers and closure we need.'

Close friends reveal 'cruel' online abuse of late MP

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

Close friends and former colleagues of the late Charles Kennedy, including several in Lochaber, have opened up in a new television documentary about what they claim is the cruel social media abuse the Highlands MP endured prior to his death in 2015 at the age of just 55.

The BBC ALBA programme, Tearlach Ceannadach: Labhraiche Lochabair / Charles Kennedy: A Good Man Speaking, broadcast on Tuesday evening at 9pm but is available on the BBC iPlayer for 30 days, tells Mr Kennedy's story from his upbringing on a Highland croft, his dogged fight for the largest parliamentary seat in Britain, to his rise to leader of the Liberal Democrats and ultimately his resignation due to alcoholism and the loss of his seat in 2015.

With his politics steeped in the Highland tradition and armed with the knowledge of how society operated for his forebears, the Fort William-born Mr Kennedy took those ideas and applied them to the international stage.

He was 23 years old when he won the Highland seat Ross, Cromarty and Skye, launching a 32-year career in politics.

Mr Kennedy, a former pupil of Lochaber High School, rose through the political ranks of his party and went on to lead



Friends and former colleagues of the late Charles Kennedy, pictured here with his then wife Sarah, told the programme makers of the online abuse he suffered.

Photograph: Iain Ferguson, The Write Image.

the merged party, the Liberal Democrats. However, he never forgot his Lochaber roots. From his stance on the 2003 Iraq War to the fight to save the Fort William Sleeper train, he stood on principle.

Ultimately his battle with alcoholism led him to resign as leader of the Liberal Democrats. The programme details how the 2015 General Election campaign was a campaign unlike anything seen in the Highlands before.

Journalist and former Labour MP Brian Wilson tells the programme how Mr Kennedy had someone working full-time deleting the abuse towards him on social media.

'Charlie was grieving the death of his parents, the loss of his best friend and trying to hold a family together. Nobody could have been well

equipped to deal with that. It was beyond belief the things that were being said and done,' said Mr Wilson.

'What Charles was subjected to had nothing to do with his politics, had no respect for what he'd done in politics or in public life and had no respect for his personal circumstances. It was naked abuse and denigration of the worst kind. I think what was done to him was cruel beyond words.'

His close friend and former brother-in-law James Gurling reveals that Mr Kennedy had anonymous, very aggressive notes left on his car and put through his letterbox.

He says: 'The level of anger and vociferous nature of the campaign surprised and really worried him.'

'You begin to wonder what's in those people's minds that

they think that is an appropriate way of doing things.

'All politicians get shouted down in meetings and get called all sorts but, generally speaking, that's in a public view that the community can judge is fair or not.

'This was something quite different.'

Mr Kennedy lost his seat in 2015, famously describing it as 'the night of the long sgian dubhs'.

He died a few weeks later and was buried on land in Lochaber dating back to the 18th century when Cameron of Lochiel gifted burial rites to the Kennedys of Cluny for their support during the Jacobite Rebellion.

Among the other contributors to the programme are Hugh Dan MacLennan: his childhood friend, also from Lochaber; Duncan Ferguson, from Plockton, a Lib Dem supporter and headteacher; Mary Ann Kennedy, a friend of Charles and a Lochaber constituent; David Green: Charles Kennedy's aide from 2013-2015; and Catherine Macleod from Lochaber.

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Paper production suspended

Production of community newspaper Dé tha dol? has been suspended with immediate effect.

In the February edition of the paper, which serves Moidart, Ardnamurchan and Morvern, readers were informed the publication had been running at an average monthly loss of around £400 since March last year and that almost all the financial reserves had been exhausted.

'When Covid-19 first arrived, we felt it was important to continue, but that is now impossible to sustain,' said a statement from the management committee.

'In view of the disappointing attendance at our Virtual Annual Review, an open public meeting held online last week, we cannot help wondering whether Dé tha dol? has run its natural course. However, the committee and other interested parties are reviewing all aspects of the management of the paper and will consider all options for relaunching it in the future. Please contact us if you have any questions.'

The committee added:

'We would like to thank Sheila Larkin for her work as editor since April 2017, in particular during this last difficult year.'

On Sunday, management committee member Joanne Matheson posted a message on the paper's Facebook page in which she thanked everyone who had offered support and assistance after news of the ceasing of production.

However, in the statement Ms Matheson stressed: 'The management committee would like to be clear that we have never suggested Dé tha dol? is going to fold. We simply said that, with average losses of £400 per month since March 2020, brought about by Covid-19 restrictions, we cannot continue production at the moment.'

'This is a good opportunity to take stock, review all aspects of production, content and finances and, if there is still a will within the community – which it now appears there is – relaunch it again sometime soon. Thank you for your continued support.'

Corpach marina on track

by Mark Entwistle
mentwistle@obantimes.co.uk

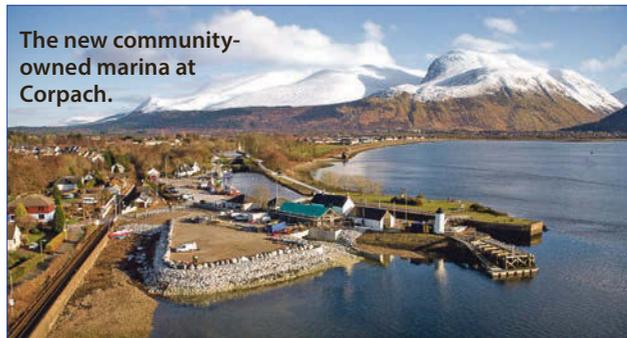
Plans to open a new community-run marina in Corpach in the summer are on track.

The first phases of Thomas Telford Corpach Marina, which is owned by Caol Regeneration Company and run as a community enterprise, are on schedule to open this summer.

When complete the marina will provide a West Coast sanctuary for visitors, with arguably one of the best views of the Caledonian Canal and Ben Nevis. It will be the only marina of comparable scale and quality in the 100 sea miles between Inverness and Oban.

Phase one – civil engineering works, public slipway and dredging – was finished in December. Stage two – construction of the marina building and café by local company GCF Joiners and Contractors – is going well and is due to be finished early this summer.

The new building will be fitted with the latest state-of-the-art equipment and tech-



The new community-owned marina at Corpach.

nology and onshore services. Phenomenal support from local organisations, schools, West Highland College UHI and councillors has seen the project get to this point, overcoming many hurdles.

The project has received £2.3million from organisations including Scottish Government, Highland Council, Highland and Islands Enterprise (HIE), the EU Leader fund and SSE's Sustainable Communities Fund.

The third and final phase of the project will see the construction of breakwaters, pontoons and linkspans and this is currently in preferred

bidder status with Highland firm Gael Force Marine.

A further £1.2m is required to complete this phase and discussions are ongoing with Highland Council Coastal Communities Fund, HIE, Crown Estate Scotland, the Scottish Government's Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund and Scottish Government's proposed Tourism Recovery package.

When complete, the project will deliver a high quality, sheltered and sustainable all-year round marina at the western gateway to the Caledonian Canal, including 40 yacht berths, small boat berths, waste disposal, laundry, toilets,

showers, a public slipway, 40 car and trailer parking spaces and a café/shop/visitor centre.

Thomas Telford Corpach Marina chairman Andy McKenna said he was delighted to see the car park and public slipway in place and the fabulous marina building nearing completion.

'With a final push to get funding to construct the breakwater and berthing, we can realise this long-standing project and play our part in re-energising the local economy after Covid,' he added.

Councillor Allan Henderson said: 'While exactly a year ago, no one had heard of Covid or a Covid Recovery Plan, this project is an excellent antidote. The combined elements of regeneration and recreation are exactly what is needed to ease out of the pandemic.'

'With the added benefits of sea access and employment, this shore base and café has the potential to become popular with walkers as well as sailors.'

'This is all thanks to an extremely dedicated group of volunteers seeking the best facilities for the community.'

VIEW FROM THE CHAMBER

Dr Liz Cameron, the chief executive of Scottish Chambers of Commerce, popped in for a virtual cuppa with Lochaber Chamber of Commerce members at last week's online Chamber Chat.

Dr Cameron is one of the most influential people in the Scottish business community and as head of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce network, represents the views and needs of over 12,000 businesses from 30 Chambers of Commerce.

Previously a business owner herself, Dr Cameron understands the needs of business across the range of sectors represented in the Chamber network and along with her team, works tirelessly to make sure that governments in Holyrood and Westminster are aware of the needs of Scottish business.

This close working relationship with government and key agencies has never been more



vital to Scottish business. Through the Chamber network, businesses here in Lochaber (whatever their size and whatever the sector) have the ability to make sure that their voice is heard by those making the decisions that affect them.

During last week's conversation, Dr Cameron highlighted the importance of Chambers of Commerce work for members and was particularly complimentary about the efforts of Lochaber Chamber of Commerce during the crisis.

We're one of very few Chambers to have grown our membership during the pandemic; a testament to the valuable support we've been able

to give our members and local community, including being one of the first Chambers to develop a contact-tracing app for hospitality businesses.

Dr Cameron stressed the need for strong alliances and collaboration between businesses and was keen to hear directly from the members at the meeting about how their businesses have been affected by the current crisis. This feedback from members directly informs the actions of the SCC.

She also stressed the need for businesses to fill in the SCC Quarterly Economic Indicator Survey, which gives a snapshot of business sentiment every quarter and is a vital tool in representing the needs of business.

You can find links to the survey, upcoming business events, member news, Covid-19 business information, and more at www.lochaberchamber.co.uk

Rethink on short-term let rules welcomed

Donald Cameron MSP has welcomed a Scottish Government decision to postpone new legislation for short term lets which was opposed by tourism operators over concerns about new licensing fees for the B&B and self-catering operators.

Mr Cameron, for the Highlands and Islands, said the sector needed space to recover not 'red tape and bureaucracy'. The government proposed the legislation to combat anti-social behaviour and the loss of residential housing stock to tourism.

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Mountain festival winner's outdoor promotion plea

Events which promote public enjoyment of the outdoors and raise awareness of climate change and biodiversity challenges are vital, according to this year's winner of a prestigious award presented by Fort William Mountain Festival, writes Mark Entwistle.

Dave Morris made the comments to the Lochaber Times this week after being named the 13th recipient of the Scottish Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture.

Sponsored by Jahama Highland Estates, the award sees Mr Morris join the list of previous esteemed winners including Colin Prior, Andy Nisbet, Dr Adam Watson, Jimmy Marshall, Myrtle Simpson, Ian Sykes and Dr Hamish MacInnes.

Mr Morris has devoted most of his life to protecting and promoting access to the wild landscapes of Scotland.



Dave Morris is the 13th recipient of the Scottish Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture.

Photograph: Dave MacLeod.

From the Lurchers Gully enquiry in the 1980s to masterminding the campaign for access in Scotland prior to the publication of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, he has been a leading environmental campaigner. As a director of Ramblers Scotland for many

years, he made great use of the media to convince politicians, landowners and the public that our wild landscapes offers tremendous benefits.

On his retirement from this post in 2014, well-known outdoor writer Cameron McNeish, winner of Scottish Award

for Excellence in Mountain Culture 2018, described Mr Morris as 'a wild-country champion who could lift up the eyes of an uncaring public and show them that in wildness lies the hope of the world'.

Jahama Highland Estates' Chief Operating Officer Julia

Stoddart commented: 'Jahama Highland Estates is an inspiring landscape that attracts access-takers of all kinds and we fully support the right to responsible access as enshrined in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, which owes so much to Dave's work.'

Mr Morris also represented the interests of Scotland on a world stage as president of the Mountain Protection Commission of the International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation for eight years.

He is a lifelong climber, skier and hillwalker, and has been an incredible source of inspiration in the last few years having battled throat cancer.

Now breathing through a small hole in his throat, Mr Morris has defiantly managed to climb to 20,000ft in the Himalayas, ski mountaineer in Alaska and climb alpine

rock routes in Norway. Mr Morris, who lives near Kinross but also has a family home in Newtonmore, told the Lochaber Times: 'This award also reflects the enormous contribution many other people have made, in governments, voluntary organisations and the private sector, as well as my family, as we have worked on issues of concern and I am grateful for such steadfast support over many years.'

'There is still much to do, as intense pressures on the Earth's environment increase. I look forward to helping the Fort William Mountain Festival on this arduous but rewarding journey.'

'And I thank Jahama Highland Estates for its continuing sponsorship of this award and Dave MacLeod for his skill and perseverance in producing an excellent film to accompany my award.'



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Help to protect your dog from being stolen

A charity for dogs is offering practical advice to pet owners after UK Home Secretary Priti Patel said she would look at tougher measures to tackle the recent rise in thefts.

Dogs for Good said although there had been a rise in dogs being stolen during the pandemic, the numbers of those thefts were still relatively low. But the charity has still issued tips on how to keep dogs safe.

The best way is to keep an eye on him or her and not to be distracted when out and about.

Is your garden secure? Did you lock the gate? When away from home, do not leave your dog outside shops.

Tinted car windows can make what is in a car less visible to prying eyes too, says the charity.

Where possible, keep dogs away from the side of the road when out on a walk.

Doing so will make it far more difficult for someone to



Charity Dogs for Good has issued helpful advice on how to help keep pets safe from theft.

open a car door, take a dog and drive off.

Scope out some safer, free-run locations where there is clear sight of your dog, says the charity, which also recommends using extendable leads and altering routes and times that people walk their dog.

'Even with the current restrictions, you can still take a walk with someone else as long as you keep a safe distance apart. Make sure you've got

plenty of recent photographs of your dog, clearly showing identifiable markings, and make sure your dog has been chipped and that you keep any changes to your details updated with the database,' said a Dogs for Good spokesperson.

If a dog is taken, pet owners should notify police, dog wardens, vets and any nearby rescue centres.

Go to dogsforgood.org for more information.



Mountain biker Sean 'Griz' Green is halfway through his Munro challenge. Photographs by Andy Cole.

Mountain biker Griz finds euphoria in the Highlands

Sean 'Griz' Green is a well-recognised face on the mountains of Scotland.

With an eclectic mix of tattoos, and his grizzly frame often with a bike on his back, a shrinking violet he is not.

A childhood spent drawing patterns on himself, while dreaming of the rugged peaks and esoteric endeavours the Highlands provide, left Sean with a drive to summit them all - 'bagging' as it has commonly become known.

While he isn't the first - Paul Tattersal can claim this feat - to make all 282 Munro summits by bike, and being only just over half way through (145), Sean, from Dundee, is a working guy with a young family requiring a deft ability to juggle his own ambitions with the responsibilities of family

life. That makes his project long, arduous and, at times, at risk of being unfulfilled.

In his own words, the dream he is chasing goes beyond the physical experiences.

'I often get asked about my favourite descent and that's a really hard one to answer. I reckon there are maybe six or seven that would battle it out for the top spot.

'What makes it so hard is the romanticism of these mountains and the emotions they evoke.

'Some of the best days on my bike haven't necessarily been on the best trails these mountains offer but, instead, a combination of sights and feelings which filled me with nothing but 'euphoria' for want of a better word.

'Standing atop the summit

of Binnien Mor at 10.15pm on a summer night, watching the sunset over the mighty Ben Nevis. Not a breath of wind, clear skies for 100 miles in every direction, a feeling of true solitude and ultimately insignificance in this world. A clear mind to focus on nothing but your surroundings. All that matters is me, my bike and making it off the mountain with the biggest smile on my face.

'Those are the days I yearn for, the slithers of golden singletrack never before ridden, are just a bonus.'

To view the latest short film featuring Sean and his Munro bagging attempt, produced by DW Agency, go to <https://vimeo.com/511680868>.

The film was shot in November 2019.

Equality outcomes consultation

The public consultation for Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's 2021 to 2025 Equality Outcomes Proposal closes on Friday February 26.

To help deliver the best service possible for communities and staff, the comhairle identifies equality outcomes every four years. The outcomes proposed for the period 2021 to 2025 focus on how the comhairle provides services, engages with the community, delivers education and how diverse the comhairle is as an employer.

Anyone wishing to participate in the consultation should complete the Equality Outcomes Survey which allows people to pass comment on work and accessibility, living standards, equal

opportunities, education, communication, engagement and participation.

A comhairle spokesperson said: 'Your feedback is important and will help to shape the equality outcomes, ensuring they have a positive impact in the areas that need them most. We are keen to hear from as many people as possible. All responses are anonymous and the survey should take around 10 minutes to complete.'

Comments received will be reviewed and the draft outcomes amended as appropriate. The finalised equality outcomes will be published by April 30 2021. www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CNESEqualityOutcomes20212025/



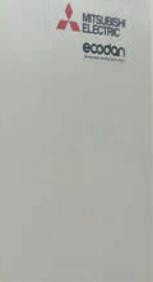
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Renewables recognition for Point and Sandwich Trust

Community wind farm Point and Sandwich Trust (PST) has been shortlisted for Best Community Energy Project at the Scottish Highlands and Islands Renewable Energy Awards 2021.

The organisation, which runs the UK's biggest community-owned wind farm, Beinn Ghrideag, outside Stornoway, already has a number of awards and multiple nominations.

This latest recognition is particularly welcome, however, as PST and other island wind farms are currently facing extremely challenging circumstances caused by the break in the sub-sea power cable linking the Outer Hebrides to the mainland. Norman Mackenzie, PST chairman, said: 'To be shortlisted for yet another award is particularly uplifting news for everyone involved with our trust, given the difficulties we are currently facing.'

Winners will be announced on Thursday February 25.

Wild Words

KIRSTEEN BELL

fort@obantimes.co.uk



A long-tailed tit.

Winter has brought groups of long-tailed tits back to our bird table.

Their thin tails stick out at all angles around the cylinder of fatballs, a quivering, shifting game of KerPlunk, tiny bundles of creamy-white feathers tinged with a rose blush, two black badger stripes across the crown, poised in ready balance. Or, as Collins put it, 'a small ball of fluff with a long tail'.

Leapfrogging away, through the upper branches of the wood up the hill, they call to each other as they go. It's a needling whistle, punctuated by a laser-gun chrrr that belies their cute demeanour.

We play hide-and-seek in the trees beneath them. It is a game I like as I can spend most of it sitting quietly while the children burn off energy looking for me. Each time I hide, I choose a different tree to camouflage myself with, shoulder pressed up against thick birch trunks coated with a lichen filigree, peering

up in the hope I might find the beginnings of a long-tailed nest.

According to a recent Instagram post from The Woodland Trust, nest-building for these wee birds can begin as early as February.

Typical locations are the forks of trees or bramble bushes, the latter perhaps providing some protection from corvids and mustelids.

Built out of moss by both mother and father, the round, papoose-like nest is wreathed in lichen and cobwebs. They might then leave it for as long as a month. If it remains unmailed by predators while it is relatively exposed, there is a good chance it will remain so when it has the additional shelter of spring leaves.

Test passed, the pair will line the nest with hundreds of gathered feathers, ready for their one and only clutch of the year.

There could be 14 eggs in the brood; it is hard to

imagine where they find the energy.

However, the new parents may receive help with feeding in the two to three weeks it takes for the young to fledge. Birds whose nests have failed – usually relatives of the male – come to help in the upkeep of their nieces and nephews. The flocks we see now are last year's social bubbles – a big, noisy group of siblings, their parents, their aunts and uncles.

If the long-tailed tits' sociability helps to ensure successful broods, it also helps them through the cold winter nights. Weighing in at less than 9g, they spend most of their day foraging for insects and spiders. At dusk, they come together in a huddle for warmth, but even with this strategy they will lose an average of nine per cent of their body mass over the course of the night, with those on the outside losing the most. So I am glad to see them stocking up.



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Celebrity 6 takes place on Friday afternoons and is a chance to hear from some of the world's leading artists in a small and interactive setting. Sir Antonio Pappano, conductor, pianist and Music Director of the Royal Opera House; pianist Malcolm Martineau; viola player Tabea Zimmermann, violinist Zoë Beyers; and cellist Steven Isserlis all join the pupils of St Mary's Music School and guests to share their expertise, insights and inspiration.

SCO Wind and Brass, String and Percussion Academies

In partnership with Scottish Chamber Orchestra these are run over a series of Sunday afternoons and are an opportunity to join our pupils and those from other schools to play alongside and learn from the musicians Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

Instrumental workshops and masterclasses

Our online 'How to Be a Better Player' series continues with a masterclass for young flautists and teachers based around baroque composers Bach and Telemann. It is led by baroque specialist Lis Dooner who played with SCO for 25 years and is suitable for all levels. Piano and brass workshops will follow shortly.

Singing for fun and Saturday Music Classes

For younger children there is Zoomtunes, singing classes on a Friday after-

noon for ages 7 to 9 or our range of group and one-to-one instrumental lessons on a Saturday morning for children age 4 to 12.

Piano, String and Woodwind Summer Schools

Looking ahead we have residential Piano, String and Woodwind Summer Schools which will take place in our beautiful premises in the heart of Edinburgh (digital alternative should courses not be able to run). These are small group sizes (up to 16 players) so you are guaranteed lots of individual attention and

are for Grade 7 and above. These are all activities that form a regular part of life for pupils at St Mary's Music School and we are delighted that we can share them more widely with other young musicians and music teachers around the country. With the exception of Saturday music classes and Summer schools, all events are entirely free.

Virtual Open Days

Discover how music makes up over 50% of every week. If you are passionate about music and think you have potential, why not join us

for a Virtual Open Day on March 4th or March 7th and find out more about life as a pupil at St Mary's Music School?

- We consider any instrument including bagpipes, clarsach, accordion and jazz saxophone.
- Music takes up at least 50% of the timetable every week (more in Sixth Form)
- Our academic results are outstanding (over 75% of all SQA grades awarded were Grade A in 2020 with 100% pass rate across all levels).
- Our unique Sixth Form Plus programme is designed to allow intensive preparation to study

music at university or conservatoire and runs for two or three years from ages 16 to 19.

- Our boarding house is a great place to be with twin ensuite rooms and singles
- We offer financial support to cover up to 100% of fees.
- And if you are unsure of whether a specialist music school is right for you, we offer free advisory auditions too.

So what are you waiting for? Join us and find out what is like to be part of a school where everyone loves music.

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<https://www.stmarysmusicschool.co.uk/events/>



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LT

Welcome addition to health board

NHS Western Isles has welcomed the appointment of a non-executive whistleblowing champion to its board.

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport Jeane Freeman MSP announced last week that Sheena Wright, right, has been appointed to the post.

Sheena, who was NHS Western Isles' interim nurse director and chief operating officer for a period in 2008 until 2009, spent her working life in a variety of roles within the NHS, social care, higher

education and the Scottish Government.

She retired in 2018 as executive director of nursing and care with NHS 24, having previously been executive nurse director in NHS Borders.

In retirement, Sheena is a volunteer with the Prince's Trust, an independent prison monitor on behalf of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons and a panel practice advisor with Children's Hearings Scotland.

She has a special interest in

supporting the health and wellbeing of communities through the delivery of high quality services. In her volunteering roles she is a mentor, advocate and advisor, bringing her extensive experience to support others.

Sheena is looking forward to re-joining colleagues in NHS Western Isles and contributing to the work of the board.

'I very much enjoyed my time in the Western Isles and am delighted to be joining the board in my new role as

whistleblowing champion,' she said.

Sheena's appointment will be for four years and runs from March 1 2021 to February 28 2025.

As whistleblowing champion, Sheena will promote a continued culture of openness and transparency, where all staff feel confident to raise any concerns they may have in the knowledge they will be supported and their concerns properly investigated.

Being able to provide assur-

ance that staff are able to raise concerns in an open, honest and supportive workplace is a hugely worthwhile role.

Board chairperson Gill McCannon said: 'I am delighted to welcome Sheena to our team of non executive directors at Western Isles Health Board.

'Sheena brings a wealth of experience and knowledge that will support the role of whistle blowing champion.

'I look forward to working with her.'



Advice issued on voting safely in the Scottish Parliament election

Residents in the Highlands and the Western Isles will go to the polls on Thursday May 6 to have their say on who represents them in the Scottish Parliament.

While the election is not until May, planning is already under way to help people stay safe while casting their vote. There are a number of ways to take part in the election in May – voting in a polling station, by post or by appointing someone to vote on the voter's behalf that they trust, known

as a proxy vote. Bill Gillies, electoral registration officer for Highland and Western Isles, explained: 'The Scottish Parliament makes decisions that affect every aspect of our daily lives so it is important to make your voice heard in this election and have a say on who represents you.

'We're thinking about these elections now so that, however you choose to cast your vote in May, you can do so safely. Arrangements are being put in place by the returning officer

to help you stay safe at the polling station. You can expect many of the measures you've become used to in shops and banks over recent months, such as hand sanitiser, floor markings and face masks. But you also have the option to apply to vote by post or by proxy.'

Andy O'Neill, head of Electoral Commission, Scotland, added: 'The choice on how to vote at next May's elections is yours. You can have your say in person, by post or by proxy. If

you're thinking about voting by post, you can apply now. This will ensure your application is processed early and your postal vote can be sent to you more quickly. It's easy to apply and you can find out how by visiting the Electoral Commission website.

'You need to be registered to vote to have a say at the election. The easiest way is online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. And remember, it doesn't matter where you were born, if you are aged 16 and over and are resident

in Scotland you are eligible to register and vote in Scottish Parliament elections.'

Residents can visit the frequently asked questions page on the website at www.saa.gov.uk/h-wi-vjb to find out more about the elections. The page will be updated with new information as it becomes available. Any residents who have questions can also contact the electoral registration team on 0800 393 783 or by email on ero@highland.gov.uk

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£2.3m set aside to support hostel sector in Scotland

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, 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 challeng-

ing 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: 'The pandemic is having a long-term and devastating impact on tourism and the industry will need significant support now and for some time into the future. For tourism to be truly accessible to everyone, 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. But social distancing measures and restrictions on household numbers mixing means it is difficult for hostels to operate. Our focus for the immediate future has switched from marketing to funding to ensure the nine funds we are administering get to businesses as quickly and efficiently as possible. Colleagues from across our organisation have been diverted from their usual roles to this vital task.'

In a joint statement on be-

half of Scottish Independent Hostels, Hostelling Scotland and Independent Hostels UK, a spokesperson said: 'On behalf of the Scottish hostel sector we would like to thank the Scottish Government for this dedicated financial support.

'It shows it appreciates the severe difficulties which individual hostels and hostelling itself are facing during the pandemic. This lifeline recognises the vital role hostels play in Scottish tourism and their contributions to the economy.

'We also thank VisitScotland for working with us to ensure the fund makes a difference to hostelling businesses and their communities. We will continue to work together as a sector and look forward to engaging constructively with the Scottish Government as we face the challenges that lie ahead.'

Businesses which meet all the eligibility criteria will be able to submit an application until noon on Tuesday March 2 via VisitScotland.org.

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

LT

LETTERS

Write to us: send your letters to editor@obantimes.co.uk
or The Editor, PO Box 1, Oban, Argyll PA34 4HBCommunity must have say
in Blàr Mòr development

It is hard to understand why a community liaison group has not yet been set up in connection with the Blàr Mòr development when a condition of the planning decision notice of December 19 2018 stipulates 'no development shall commence until a community liaison group is established by the developer, in collaboration with The Highland Council, Lochaber Access Panel and affected local community councils'.

The building works on phase 1 of the Blàr Mòr development started on site in July 2020 but before that – more than a year ago – the community council asked the local authority to involve it, not realising it was a condition of the planning consent in the first place. So why wasn't a liaison group set up at either of these points?

Highland Council now says it aims to set up the liaison group. Words are easy – Highland Council needs to make sure it is done without delay given that phase one of this important development should not have even started without the community's involvement.

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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Concern over new licence fees
for B&Bs and self-catering

I note with interest Oban and Lorn Tourism Alliance is opposed to new licence fees for B&Bs and self catering accommodation.

Many of us who are private landlords and who also enjoy renting self-catering accommodation for holidays in Scotland, believe the Scottish Government has dragged its heels for too long over this important issue.

For more than 10 years, private landlords have required to be registered and their properties checked annually for gas safety. Electrical safety checks are also mandatory every five years.

These regulations are to ensure the safety of those living inside rented properties.

Why then has the safety of self-catering, holiday chalets and, more recently, Airbnb been of less importance? Having stayed in a beautiful self-catering flat just before lockdown, I noticed it did not even have a smoke alarm.

The disturbance to neighbours from 'party houses and flats' (The Oban Times, February 11 2021) is an increasing nuisance to those living close to properties being let in an unregulated manner.

Regulation of short-term letting is long overdue. Once implemented it will raise the safety profile of all holiday accommodation.

D I Henderson, Connel.

Ganavan deeds

Does any reader have a copy of the title transfer of land by Dunstaffnage Estates to the old County Council or the name and recording date of the deed? If so, please email me at watsonjohn@hotmail.com. We need to preserve, protect and promote our green open space at Ganavan.

John Watson, chairman Friends of Ganavan.

Sea farm expansion

The SEPA CAR licence for Scottish Sea Farms (SSF) expansion of Dunstaffnage fish farm permits the use of four chemicals to deal with sea lice: Emamectin Benzoate (Slice, in feed), Deltamethrin, Azamethiphos (Salmosan) and Cypermethrin. SSF says it has not used Salmosan in recent years at Dunstaffnage but claims it is the best approach.

Its competitors MOWI says in all its recent farm applications that the first two of these medicines are no longer effective.

This raises an obvious question as to why SSF has included them in the licence application.

Beachd Ailein

ALLAN CAMPBELL

ailean@obantimes.co.uk

Thug uallach riatanach chun an iar mi bho chionn ghoirid agus shiubhail mi air latha cho fiadhaich 's a chunnaic mi bho chionn greise, eadar gaath is uisge agus fiù 's breacadh de shneachda ùr mun àm a ràinig mi mo cheann-uidhe. Mar a thachair iomadh uair nuair a bhios mi air slighe tro Ghleann Seile, thàinig bàrdachd Nèill MhicLeòid na mo chuimhne is sin a' dèanamh dealbh cho ealanta den t-seòrsa sheallaidhean a bha fom chomhair. "Is chì mi an Cuilitheann mar leòmhan gun tioma le fheusaig den t-sneachd air a phasgadh m' a cheann, 's a ghruaidhean a' srùladh le easannan smùideach, tha tuiteam nan lùban gu ùrlar nan gleann." 'S ann ainneamh a thèid mi seachad air Eas a' Bhradain, aig bun Druim nan Cleòc, nach eil dròbh de luchd-turais a' togail dheilbh, ach cha robh duine beò ri fhaicinn an latha ud is craos de chop geal air an eas, is an abhainn fòidhpe a' cur thairis gu beul na mara.

Bha sgeulachdan a chuala mi mu chaochladh àitichean air an t-slighe a' ruith air m' inntinn, agus bha mi cuideachd a' caoidh an iomadh fiosrachadh a fhuair mi thar nam bliadhnaichean a th' air a dhol às mo chuimhne. Tha mi air leth uasal à cuid de mhuinntir an Eilein Sgitheanaich a tha a' gleidheadh eachdraidh an cuid bhailtean is sgìrean, ach tha mi tàmailteach nach eil comainn eachdraidh stèidhichte ann mar a th' air a bhith cho soirbheachail anns na h-Eileanan Siar. Tha mi farmadach da-riribh! Le ruith bhliadhna-

ichean gach ginealach tha atharraichean cha mhòr do-chreidsinneach a' tighinn air àitichean agus tha mi mothachail gum bheil na dealbhan a bhiodh mo sheanair a' toirt dhomh air an sgìre, nuair a bha esan òg, a' dol air ais cha mhòr ceud gu leth bliadhna. Chan eil dòigh-beatha mar a bha agus tha ainneamh agus eachdraidh ionadail a' dol air chall, gu h-àraid far am bheil muinntir na sgìre air gluasad air falbh airson caochladh adhbharan agus gu math tric coigrich a-nise nan àite.

Cha b' e imrich a-mhàin a dh'fhàg cuid a chroitean is bhailtean falamh, bha cuideachd tinneis a' fàgail bhearnan. B' e Taigh Mòr NicAoidh a chanadh m' athair ris an t-seann tobhta a bh' air lot mo shinn-seanair, agus cha do dhìochuimhnich mi fhìn is mo pheathraichean riamh na rabhaidhean a fhuair sinn nach fhaodamaid cluich faisg air an tobhta leis gun do mharbh a' chaitheamh na bha a' fuireach ann. Gann leth-mhìle an iar-thuath chan eil fiù tobhtaichean ri fhaicinn ann an Lèinis far an deach baile beag a sgrios nuair, a rèir aithris, a ghlac fear a mhuinntir an àite am fiabhras breac bho bhobhstair a thog e far a' chladaich. Am bi cuimhne aig duine ann an leth-cheud bliadhna eile, neo am bi fiù 's ainm eile air an làrach!

As Highland and Island communities evolve, local historical societies are invaluable resources of significant interest to visitors and researchers.

It also makes one wonder how long it will be before the sea lice have developed immunity to Salmosan as well. It is bound to happen. It's a bit like the South African variant of Covid. There are likely to be increased sea lice burdens caused by greater biomass. Medicines will be used. In addition, there will be extensive use of Thermolicing and Hydrolicicing, increasingly the preferred treatments by MOWI and included in SSF plans. These inhumane, cruel methods are not things we would like to have going on just round the corner from Ganavan beach.

Despite SSF having a good track record for disease and deaths, these will happen increasingly with bigger farms and warming seas. There is no benefit to the community in allowing this expansion – only downsides.

Olga Hammock, Connel.

Rest and Be Thankful

The Scottish Government's long-awaited Infrastructure Investment Plan is a big disappointment for Argyll and Bute.

The Rest and Be Thankful only gets one small mention. It is to be 'enhanced' but there are no details and no cash allocated.

In contrast, roads in other parts of Scotland have detailed works planned and money set aside to pay for them.

After 14 years of failed attempts at a solution and six months after a major landslide, Argyll deserves better than a vague election promise to 'enhance' the road.

This so-called plan is a shocking neglect of Argyll and Bute.

Councillor Alan Reid, Cowal.

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DISTRICT NEWS

KILMALLIE

Community council meeting

Kilmallie Community Council held an online meeting on Monday January 25 when various issues relating to the area were discussed.

A report on the A830 through Corpach identified issues and recommendations highlighted in a survey carried out by a group of Corpach residents.

It was identified speeding remains a problem with the majority of vehicles travelling at more than 30mph. Road signs are also an issue.

The committee said if all the 40mph zones were changed to 30mph between Lochybridge and Annat, it would only add about 0.6 minutes to the journey.

In addition to road safety, traffic noise is a problem with particular concerns about sunken drains and the noise caused from driving over them.

It was agreed to endorse the recommendations in the report and to develop a plan for how to present these to Transport Scotland.

Encouraging membership of the community council was identified and it was agreed to contact the high school again when pupils were back.

Carol Anne Campbell reported that the Covid support group was still operating when needed.

Councillor Denis Rixson commented there had been an increase in applications for Universal Credit and that services such as the Community Cupboard were likely to become increasingly important.

Complaints about fly tipping in Glen Loy had been reported to the community council and SEPA had been informed. It was noted that incidents of fly tipping appeared to be getting more frequent and the situation at Mount Alexander had also got much worse in recent months.

Another problem was the disposal of glass in the wrong bins at the recycling point at the community centre. It was agreed to try and highlight some of the issues in the newsletter to try and encourage more responsible waste disposal.

WESTERN ISLES

Election of trust directors

An election for eight directors to serve on the Western Isles Development Trust is being undertaken on behalf of the trust by the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's election team.



Two directors will be elected for each of the following areas – Barra and Vatersay, Uist, Harris and Lewis.

Nomination forms are available from the Western Isles Development Trust website or by emailing elections@cne-siar.gov.uk.

Only individuals can serve as directors. Corporate bodies cannot stand for election. To be eligible to stand for election an individual must be over 16 years of age and ordinarily resident in the area to which they are seeking election.

The deadline for receipt of nominations is 4pm on Monday March 1 2021.

HARRIS

Harris gritting lorries named

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar last week took to social media to ask for public submissions to help name the six gritting lorries serving the Isle of Harris.

Hundreds of comments were received with no

Douglas keeps busy with helicopter production in Claggan

Keeping occupied in the ongoing lockdown may be posing a challenge for some, but Douglas Barr has found plenty to do by setting up a helicopter production line in his Claggan home.

A keen model maker since he was a boy, Douglas' subject of choice was the Sea King Search and Rescue machine which until recently was a well known sight in the Lochaber skies, buzzing around the Ben to help those in difficulty.

The American-designed Sea King also served in air forces across the globe in different guises and colour schemes, many of which have been accurately recreated in miniature on the Claggan 'line'.

While locals will remember the full sized Sea Kings in Red and Grey as operated by the Navy and in bright yellow RAF colours, the latter is one of his particular favourites due to its historical importance.

As 'XZ585', the helicopter flew its last sortie in Fort William on March 31 2015, before being transported to the RAF Museum in Hendon, where it is now on permanent display.

Douglas said: 'At an early meeting of Lochaber Model Association in the 1980s, an older member complained he was running out of space for his 40 helicopter models.'

'I remember thinking I wish I had 40 helicopters, but now I fully understand what he meant.'

Douglas and his model-making activities are featured in greater depth in the March issue of Lochaber Life.

shortage of creativity and humour while really testing the boundaries of snow-based puns.

Following careful deliberation of all the entries by Sir E Scott School pupils, the six new confirmed names for Harris are as follows: Sleet and Diesel, which was the most popular suggestion; Chlear mi'n Tir, Slushkentyre, Scar-ice-ta, Slushinish and Brrr E Scott.

Look out for them on the Harris roads in the coming weeks and months.

Thanks are extended to everyone who took part.

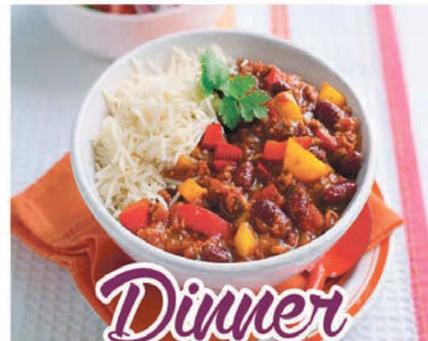
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FOCUS



Skills for work is a crucial part of Lochaber Chamber's role

Lochaber Chamber of Commerce is the hub of Lochaber business, representing over 200 local businesses of all sizes and sectors throughout the Outdoor Capital of the UK.

'Skills for Work' is a key focus of Lochaber Chamber of Commerce's work to support local business. The Chamber is currently recruiting for a new Head of 'Skills for Work' responsible for the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) West Highland programme, the One Lochaber Leadership Programme and the One Lochaber Mentorship Programme.

The DYW West Highland programme plays an important role in preparing young people for the world of work. DYW West Highland helps to connect young people with the world of work through a wide range of employer-led initiatives, ranging from virtual career fairs to work placements.

But the Chamber doesn't just help to develop the business skills of young people - following on from the popularity of their business skills seminars during 'Lochaber Ideas Week', the team identified a need for locally delivered management development training. Following consultation with local businesses, the Chamber developed the 'One Lochaber' Leadership Programme' to provide a one-year accredited course to help develop the next generation of business leaders. Successful delegates receive a Chartered Management Institute (CMI) Level 5 Award in Leadership and Management.

This leadership programme is locally developed and locally delivered. Led by expert leadership trainers, it gives Lochaber businesses the capability to lead through uncertain times, create the capacity to set and achieve challenging strategic goals, take decisive action at pace, out-perform the competition and create an environment that inspires all of your company's people to perform at the highest level.

The Chamber has also recently launched the One Lochaber Mentorship Programme, to complement the one Lochaber Leadership Programme. This new programme taps into the wealth of experience of local business people that can be shared to the benefit of others in the business community.

To find out more and sign up for the One Lochaber Leadership and Mentorship Programmes, visit www.lochaberchamber.co.uk or give the chamber team a call on 01397 705 765.

Business skills from the comfort of home



Lochaber Chamber of Commerce is known for providing training events that deliver what business needs - for all the members of your team. There are some fantastic events coming up to help businesses develop the skills they need to succeed in challenging times. All events are currently online, in an informal, interactive online format. These online masterclasses offer an insight into the One Lochaber Leadership programme and are FREE for Highland Chambers of Commerce members.

1st March Personal Resilience Online Masterclass 10am - 11am

If you feel like the constant uncertainties of the covid pandemic in 2021 are making life difficult, then this session may be just what you need.

Your personal resilience is a bit like a river - when the river is high, the water flows over the rocks and you barely feel them. But when the water is low, you feel the rocks much more, and it can be a bumpy ride. We'll explore your sources of resilience - where does it come from, and how can you capture and hold on to it? And we'll have a look at how you can create balance in your life, making sure you spend at least some of your time focusing on the positives you're surrounded by.

24th March VUCA Business Online Workshop 10am - 11am

'Volatile- Uncertain-Complex -Ambiguous': Dealing with uncertain times

The lack of control we feel about the current situation can cause us to experience feelings of being either Frozen

and unable to carry out our normal work, or Frazzled with so much going on we don't know which way is up.

This 60-minute session will explore what it feels like for each of us at work right now, acknowledging that the experience is different for all of us. We'll discuss how you can raise your own awareness of what keeps you in a balanced, happy and confident place, and we'll provide you with some ideas on activities and exercise you can use to keep you there.

27th April Checking In - Not Checking Up' Online Masterclass 10am - 11am

Top tips to help you manage your team and work relationships when working remotely

For lots of us, working from home or remotely from our colleagues has become the norm over the last year. When you're managing people remotely it can be easy to fall into the habit of calling to check up on whether work is on track or "done". The problem is that when you're on the receiving end of those calls, it can feel a lot like micro-management.

This session will provide practical guidance on how to shift your focus to a "Checking in" mindset, creating a warmer and more trusting environment for your people to work in, where they feel supported. We know that happier people do better work, and taking this approach can create a workplace where people are able to perform to their best, knowing that you're there to help them get the work done.

Book all events at www.lochaberchamber.co.uk



Help to build the future of young people in the West Highlands

As part of Scottish Apprenticeship Week from 1st- 5th March, The DYW Apprenticeship Funding Webinar will be online from 11am - 12.30pm on Wednesday 3rd March to give employers all the information they need about the funding and support available when taking on an apprentice.

This interactive one-hour session will include speakers from Skills Development Scotland, West Highland College UHI, Virtual Learning Academy and Department of Work and Pensions where all up-skilling opportunities and associated funding schemes will be explained in full to interested employers.

Apprentices and young people can bring a wealth of benefits and advantages to your company which include bringing fresh ideas to your business, helping to ease a heavy workload and adding to your talent pool once fully qualified.

During the event, you will hear from a range of experts, who will explain the different opportunities and associated funding available to you as an employer.

Speakers include:

- Funding For Apprenticeships: Jan Bruce, Skills Development Scotland



- Employability Schemes and KICKSTART: Mandy Kellaway, Fort William Job Centre Manager
- Apprenticeship Pathway Funding & Apprenticeship Uptake: Louise Wheeler, The Virtual Learning Academy
- Modern Apprenticeship Programmes: Nigel Patterson, West Highland College UHI

If you are a West Highland employer who'd like to make a difference to a young person's life and increase the talent pool for your business, then book your free place today at www.lochaberchamber.co.uk/events.

Lochaber Chamber of Commerce Skills Development Events Calendar Spring 2021

Mon 1st March

Personal Resilience Online Masterclass
10am - 11am

Learn how to develop your resilience, spot signs to take a break and manage through uncertain times, while learning from others in the local business community.

Wed 3rd March

DYW Apprenticeship Funding Webinar
11am - 12.30pm

Come along to find out about the financial and practical support available to help your business recruit and develop a young person into the team.

Wed 24th March

VUCA Business Online Workshop
10am - 11am

'Volatile- Uncertain-Complex -Ambiguous' Thriving in Uncertain Times

In this 60-minute session we will focus on paying attention to when we feel good, and how we can maintain a frame of mind that allows us to make logical and wise choices under pressure.

Tues 27th April

Checking In - Not Checking Up! Online Masterclass
10am - 11am

Shift your focus as a manager to a "Checking in" mindset, creating a supportive workplace where people are able to perform to their best when working remotely.

Book your free member place on all of these events and more at www.lochaberchamber.co.uk or call us on 01397 705 765.

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Fort mountain bike racer wins ambassador award

by Fiona Scott
fscott@obantimes.co.uk

Fort William's Mikayla Parton has become the sixth recipient of the Fort William Mountain Festival's Scottish Youth Award for Excellence in Mountain Culture.

The festival's youth ambassador award, sponsored by West Highland College UHI, was established in 2015 to celebrate adventurous young people, the landscapes they choose to explore and the outdoor pursuits in which they excel.

The young winner needs to have shown resilience and determination to succeed within their chosen area of expertise, shown results through their own efforts and ideas, given back to their community, whilst being thought of as an example of excellence by others.

Mikayla, a 23-year-old Scottish elite downhill racer, epitomises these winning principles. Her meteoric rise to the top of the international downhill mountain bike race scene, from riding her first trail bike in 2015 to placing fifth at the UCI Mountain Bike World Championships 2020, can be attributed to an obvious raw talent, constant hard work, dedicated training, motivation, focus and a dogged determination for success.

'I am pretty shocked and very grateful to receive this fantastic award,' she said.

'It's pretty cool to have my name alongside the likes of Shauna Coxsey (2018). It was very unexpected and still is. Thank you so much to the mountain festival.'

Mikayla was late to the sport of mountain bike racing. She got her first downhill bike, aged about 17, competing in her first race at Innerleithen in the Scottish Borders just a week later. From that moment, she was addicted – the adrenaline, the tracks, the people, the noticeable progression.

Her first downhill race win came at Nevis Range in May 2017. After multiple wins over the next year and a half in the senior women's category, she made the giant leap to the elite racing circuit.

'We are very proud to have Mikayla as part of the Nevis Range family. She is a true inspiration to the mountain biking community of Fort William'

In 2019, Mikayla was crowned Scottish Downhill Champion and secured her first elite podium finish – second place in the final round of the UK National Downhill Series. She competed in her first race overseas and in her first UCI

Mikayla Parton showed resilience and determination to succeed within her chosen area of expertise.

Photograph: Dave MacLeod.

Mountain Bike World Cup races. Lydia Rohmer, principal and chief executive, West Highland College UHI, said: 'We are delighted this year's recipient is not only an alumni from our School of Adventure Studies, but that Mikayla remains committed to her sport and her own development. It's what this award is all about.'

An extremely talented professional downhill racer, Mikayla is known on the international racing circuit as a 'privateer'.

She doesn't have the backing and benefits of a factory racing team, rather she has the support of a few loyal sponsors including Greenpower, Nevis Range, Trek Bikes and Endura.

She foots the bills for her pro-racing career herself, making her own travel plans and logistics arrangements and keeping her bike race-ready, whilst calling in favours wherever she can.

Chris O'Brien, chief executive officer of Nevis Range, said: 'We are very proud to have Mikayla as part of the Nevis Range family. She is a true inspiration to the mountain biking community of Fort William.'

Despite the pandemic in 2020, Mikayla had a fantastic



race season. She was Great Britain's highest placed women's elite finisher at her first UCI Mountain Bike World Championships, at Leogang, Austria, in an impressive fifth place, with two top 10 results on the World Cup circuit.

To make ends meet, she is a soap scientist, handmaking soap and skincare products for The Highland Soap Company. She has also been part of the Nevis Range Ski School team for many years, working as an instructor in the winter.



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