

SEILEACHAN

SEIL AND EASDALE COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL



Eagle eyed readers of this mine of information will have noticed that the illustration above is somewhat different to the one which appeared in the same pole position, in the last issue. This is because we like to keep you up to date with the progress in construction of the new hall, for all those residents who seldom venture over to the Atlantic side of the island.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWS

Our most recent meeting took place in the Hall at Ellena-beich on 21st March. When we last wrote, we were optimistic about having a warmer environment in which to conduct our deliberations - being the Vernal Equinox - but it was colder than ever! However, the meeting was well attended with everyone dressed against the Arctic temperature. The conditions also encouraged a quick, businesslike session!

HEALTH SERVICES We continue to keep this as an item for discussion as the changes to our NHS area and the challenges faced by our Health Service affect us all and it seem impossible for politicians and management to cope. The transition to NHS Highland appears to have gone well and we are very lucky to have an excellent Medical Practice and hospital in Oban. Despite this, services always seem to be under threat and we must all work to ensure that standards are maintained. Various channels are available to achieve this - such as PFPI's and PPF's (Patient Focus Public Involvement and Public Participation Forums) and there are real efforts being made to involve the public. One hopes those at the top will listen.

As we reported before, we have established our own participation group for the Easdale Medical Practice. We would still like more volunteers to contribute to this. It is not onerous and is a good way to pass on feedback, suggestions and ideas to those at the next level. A meeting was held in February, with the next on 4th May. An information and Minutes file is available at the Surgery. If you are interested in taking part, please call Tina Jordan on 300274. For your information - the NHS 24 hub is moving to Inverness in April and hopefully this will be effected seamlessly. There are indications that an NHS dentistry facility may be established at Oban hospital and we understand that the vacancy for a third surgeon at the hospital has still not been filled.

We continue to try to extract a clear operating procedure from the Scottish Ambulance Service for emergency medical evacuations from Easdale Island. It seems

that there are so many rules and regulations that no-one is prepared to put down anything in writing anymore. Our hopes for a 'dual call-out' (road ambulance and helicopter) have been dashed because of expense so we have suggested a dual response in two circumstances - a) when the weather is clearly too bad to use the ferry and b) when the casualty is obviously a stretcher case which cannot go on the ferry anyway. We await their response.

LOCAL ROADS This is another item we have to keep raising (like a broken record) and despite all our efforts - and efforts there are, i can assure you - the roads just keep getting worse. Our bi-monthly list of defects which we send to the Area Roads Manager now runs to a second page with some complaints dating from 2004!

We have now produced a standard letter of complaint, copies of which we will place in Balvicar Stores (our thanks to Jean and Alasdair) and we ask everyone to pick up a copy, sign it and post it to the Council. If we all do this, a few hundred letters might focus minds and fill potholes.

A number of residents have suffered punctures and damage to their vehicles recently. If you are one of them do make a claim against the Council for the cost of repairs. When maintaining our roads becomes easier and cheaper than responding to claims, we should get results!

MARINE NATIONAL PARK We wrote to the Scottish Executive after our last meeting to say that we thought that the consultation process for the MNP had been inefficiently run, was flawed and should be undertaken again properly. The same view has been expressed by Argyll and Bute Council. We have also said that, following a proper consultation, people in the selected area should be allowed a referendum on the proposal. We wait to see though we doubt whether anything more will happen before the May election.

SCOTTISH WATER In all fairness, we must report that Scottish Water have been assiduous in keeping us up to date about plans for our new water main. This will run from Loch Seil to Balvicar. We queried the completion date of March 2007 for obvious reasons and said that we would rather they avoid the summer season. We have been advised that the project is still in the design stage and will be for two months. It is possible, however, that we may have to have pipe-laying during the summer (we don't want them to defer the operation).

There were concerns that they might take the new pipe over Clachan Bridge. We have mentioned this and they confirm that they will not be allowed to tamper with the structure of the Bridge. They might be able to slip-line the original pipe which is there already, otherwise they will use the open-cut technique across the Sound.

CORE PATH PLANNING There was a presentation about Core Path Planning in the Corran Halls on 3rd January. This is an issue that has been running for some time but now Argyll and Bute Council have a statutory responsibility to produce a plan. There are a number of routes on Seil we would like to see developed - some already exist, some have been forgotten over time and some we might like to see established. Whatever, in the future, from time to time funds will become available and if we have a plan, we can bid for them - we don't want to miss out. This will happen slowly over time but we have the chance to establish paths metre by metre. The Community Council have a map indicating the routes already held by the Council. We will analyse these and discuss possible developments, but we would welcome your input. If you have ideas about routes or how we might organise the project, do let us know - preferably in writing. Just drop it in at Torbeag, Clachan Seil.

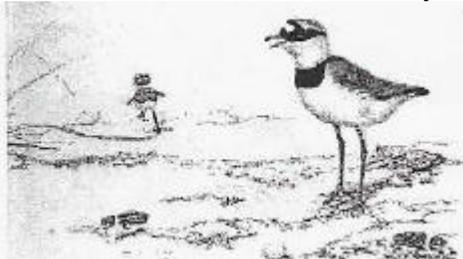
MINK CONTROL Our trusty trappers have been trying since June last year but, to date, not one critter has been caught! A few have been sighted - but only occasionally. We hope this is because there are few around to be caught rather than a reflection on the trapping skills of our volunteers. Perhaps we should try tins of Aldi sardines rather than the current Lidl bait! Anyhow, we have a bit more funding from SNH and will purchase a few more traps for the spring - which is the minks' most active time. If anyone sees a mink, please let us know and we can put a trap on the run. We do assure you that all those involved have had the proper training and we follow strict guidelines about the despatch of any mink caught. All our traps have 'otter bars' to prevent any animal larger than a mink being accidentally trapped. If you would like to join a volunteer group, please let us know.

Our next meeting which is our AGM, followed by an ordinary meeting, is on 24th May at 7 p.m. in the Hall at Ellena-beich. This time, unless climate change is making the earth colder, you should not need your thermals!

GILLIEBRIDE'S CORNER

Spring is advancing in jerks to the consternation of both birds and islanders. Buzzards and Hoodies are vying with one another for nest sites in trees, Mallards and Pheasants are laying, Greenfinches are nest building and Collared Doves are incubating. Goldfinches, Bullfinches and Yellowhammers are back and Song Thrushes seem to be much more evident than they were during the winter. Blackbirds, Robins, Dunnocks, and Wrens are in full song claiming territories and seeing off rivals. Siskins are visiting garden feeding stations less often now that the Birches and Alders are coming into flower.

This year the BTO is undertaking a nationwide survey of breeding Ringed Plovers and Seil Island is a core site for records. The last survey was undertaken 20 years ago and it is believed that the numbers of breeding Ringed Plovers has decreased since then. If you would like to take part in this survey -it only entails two visits to designated stretches of shoreline one in April/May and one in May/June should contact me on 309.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Two local gardens will be open in May for Gardens of Scotland charities—Argyll Animal Aid, and Save the Children.

DUACHY on Sunday 20th May from 1-5pm. Teas and plants.

KILBRANDON on Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th May 1-5pm Teas.

HALL NEWS

Work on the new hall is progressing well. Most windows and doors are fitted, the external blockwork is 70% complete and the roof is on schedule to be watertight by mid April. As reported in the last issue, scaffolding will be erected around the old hall in order to remove the slates for re-use on parts of the new hall roof. To enable continued use of the old hall tarpaulins will be used to cover the roof. The contract is still ahead of schedule but it is much too early to be predicting a completion date. **FUNDRAISING**

Thanks are due to the organisers of a recent sale of oriental carpets held in Kilmelford hall, who made a generous donation of £500 to the development fund, and to Iain Nicolson whose talk on Neighbour Worlds, a joint fundraiser with Kilbrandon Church, raised £258 for hall funds.

By kind permission of Sheila Downie, an open day at An Cala gardens in aid of hall funds will be held on Sunday 27th May. Opening times are 1.30pm until 4.30pm—admission £2.50. Teas will be available in the hall from 2pm till 4pm—cost £2.50 and there will be a car boot sale at the hall from 1.30pm.

The Ardmaddy fete will take place on Sunday 12th August 2007. As this is our biggest fundraising event it is a very important day. The plan is to run it on similar lines to previous years, and it is hoped that all the helpers and contributors will turn out again. More details later.

LOTTERY WINNERS

January	February
£75 Rollover Jean Miller	£50 Anne Campbell
£10 Mrs W Baxter	£10 Else Mellor
£10 Maureen McAndrew	£10 Douglas Bardwell
£10 Nick Wesley	£10 John McFarlane

March	April
£50 Rollover	£50 Rollover
£10 SGollan	£10 H. Barr
£10 M Drew	£10 JWhitehead
£10 M McSweeney	£10 TShaw

BROWNIES, CUBS, ETC

2007 sees the return of Brownies and Cubs to Seil. A combined unit (the first in Scotland) of Rainbows, Brownies, Beavers and Cubs started in January and at present they have 26 children attending. Meetings are held in the hall on Thursday evenings - 6.30—7.30pm.

The unit is currently looking for a Cub leader. This could be a shared position, so even if you could only manage a couple of evenings a month, then please get in touch. They are also looking for anyone (young or old) to assist at meetings.

If anyone feels they can help in any way, whether you have a skill that you feel the children would be interested in, or perhaps you have some arts/crafts materials, sports equipment, etc that you would like to donate, or if you would like to join them weekly/monthly to assist at their meetings, please contact anyone below -Mary Norris 300339 Sue Croft 300137 Jan Fraser 300084 Aileen MacFarlane 300329 Karen Wesley 300020