

# SEILEACHAN

SEIL AND EASDALE COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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[www.seil.oban.ws](http://www.seil.oban.ws)

April 09



## EDITORIAL

It's a while since these pages have been graced with a picture, so to make amends, here is a record of a Seil Success Story. The Lottery who supplied a wheen of the money to build the new hall wanted proof that it was actually gainfully occupied. Among other activities, an art class with 8 members was inaugurated in the Autumn. Such was the success of this venture that our numbers have now grown to 19. If this publicity should result in any increase in numbers, we shall have to look for larger premises. However there is no truth in the rumour that the Tourist Board are now describing Seil as an Artist's Colony.

## COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWS

Our public meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> March was well attended, partly because we were taking the opportunity to present the results of the Conservation Areas Appraisal which was started in May last year and partly because of the interest aroused by Scottish Water, roads and green boxes!

## CONSERVATION AREAS APPRAISAL

This began in May 2008 with a public meeting to discuss the Appraisal document and prepare a questionnaire. This was distributed to all households on Seil and Easdale and the questionnaires were returned in September for analysis. This has been done and our draft reports are completed. The sub-committee formed to administer the questionnaire and analyse the results must be congratulated for the work and commitment put into the exercise. Throughout, they have been careful to ensure that the formulation of a Management Plan for Conservation Areas is based on the ideas and wishes of the community and driven by reality and commonsense. The returned questionnaires were analysed statistically and all the written comments evaluated. The findings of the project have been presented in two documents, the Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations and the Summary of Statistical Results and Comments. Our conclusions and recommendations were read to the meeting and comments invited. Overall, the community had demonstrated a high degree of unanimity in their views which made the job of drawing up conclusions and recommendations easier, but all views were taken into account. Those at the meeting were unanimous in their support of our findings. There were some additions, observations and views expressed and these will be included in the final document before it is submitted to the Council. One important aspect is that there should be clarity. We refer to Management Plans and Design Guides and do not want these to complicate what some find an already bureaucratic process. The Management Plan is intended to bring consistency and better understanding in the administration of our Conservation Areas.

What will happen now is that our reports will be sent to Argyll and Bute Council, hopefully by the end of April. They will then draft

the Management Plan. This will then come back to the community for scrutiny before it is adopted. Once adopted, it will be subject to periodic reviews (by the community) and if we feel it is not being properly enforced or needs changing, we will have recourse to the Council and be able to do so. The Management Plan will become the 'bible' for all Council departments, utility companies and residents living in the Conservation Areas. An interesting prospect, we think.

## SCOTTISH WATER

We cannot let this opportunity go by without more comment about our new Waste Water Treatment works! We have been in contact with their project managers about the green boxes which, they admitted, were bigger than even they had expected. The good news is that they will be replaced by slightly smaller ones which should make a difference. The contracted height was 2 metres and these are 2.3 metres high. They have also agreed to try to site them more sensitively and screen them where possible – though they are limited by technical considerations.

We have spoken to them about the trans-Balvicar Bay pipeline which we thought was going to be buried. We think this is an eyesore in an area of panoramic quality and a hazard to small craft. We understand the contract only stipulates burial down to the mean high water mark but we would like this changed. We also want to ensure that the main treatment works is adequately screened and that ground cover and wild flowers, which have been lost, are replaced.

## LOCAL ROADS

These have been devastated by all the heavy works traffic over the winter. We are aware that the contractors to Scottish Water are technically only required to repair the bits they have dug up. However, we are trying to persuade Scottish Water that they should do more than this and put right the damage they have done to verges, ditches and road edges. This is complicated by trying to delineate between the construction damage and fair wear and tear. We have been assured by the Council that they are working with Scottish Water to sort this out – otherwise they (us as taxpayers!) will have to cover the work – which, in reality, we probably do in the end anyway! Please keep writing your own letters to the appropriate authorities – every little helps.

## LITTER PICKING

National Spring Clean Plans for organised litter picks are in the air. We have already spoken to Scottish Water about the mess some of their contractors appear to be making. While it is not all their fault, they have agreed to do a clean up of the area towards the end of March when most of their work will be complete. On a recent walk from Clachan Seil to Balvicar, we counted 293 bottles, cans and paper cups! Perhaps we should have picked them up as well!

The National Spring Clean is a campaign co-ordinated by Keep Scotland Beautiful with the aim of getting people all over Scotland to organise a clean up event in their local area. Everyone registering will receive a clean up kit, including yellow tabards and collection bags. The Council will arrange collection of the bags. We know people are interested on Easdale Island and in Ellenabeich. Do we have any offers from co-ordinators in Clachan Seil or Balvicar? There is a website – [www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/springclean](http://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/springclean) - which offers advice about how to set things up. Shouldn't be too difficult and we think there would be plenty of helpers – especially if we finish at a pub!

## HEALTH MATTERS

The Editor will be complaining about us taking up too much space again but we feel we must mention the bowel screening service which came up under Health Matters. All residents aged 50 to 74 years will soon be sent a screening kit with the results being returned to individuals. This will be repeated every two years. Those over 74 may 'opt in' and request a test. People will receive kits at different times so do not worry if yours seems delayed.

## IT ASSISTANCE

[www.seil.oban.ws](http://www.seil.oban.ws) – you may be familiar with our website which is going from strength to strength. This has been developed and managed by Nick Bowles (Webcraft UK Ltd) on an entirely voluntary basis and he has also given the Community Council a lot of help which is much appreciated.

Nick is keen to encourage more people to use the site and feel comfortable doing so. To facilitate this, he has set up a section where anyone can vote in polls. This could be a useful tool for the Community Council if we need feedback on an issue. Have a look at the site if you would like to become involved. Our thanks to Nick for his generous support.

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Our next meeting is on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May and will be our Annual General Meeting followed by an Ordinary Meeting. We look forward to seeing you there.

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**SIGNS OF SPRING** can be seen everywhere this month from frogspawn, which was first noticed at the end of February, to Lesser Celandines and Primroses which are opening everywhere on warmer days. Another yellow flower out now is Coltsfoot on roadside verges and waste land. The name describes the shape of the leaves, which resemble horse's hooves. These appear a month or two after the flowers and give the plant another name: 'son before father'.

In sunny spells Small Tortoiseshell and Peacock butterflies emerge from hibernation and provide a dash of colour, whilst Ladybirds, of which there are 46 native species, also come out of hibernation this month. They cannot fly until they are warm and so may be seen sitting on leaves in the spring sun. The earliest ladybirds to appear are usually the seven-spots, followed by the two-spots. The brightly-coloured wing cases protect the wings beneath so, in order to fly, the ladybird has to lift them behind its head and unfurl the translucent wings beneath.

If you happen to be out at dawn you will hear the beginnings of a dawn chorus: the singers will be mostly blackbirds, thrushes and robins. The wrens, finches and summer visitors have yet to join in. Everywhere nest building is progressing. Song thrushes line their nests with mud which they collect from the edges of puddles whilst Blackbirds use mud in their nests too, but add a lining of dry grass on top of the hardened mud. Robins are also prospecting for suitable nesting sites and some will have started to build.

Blackthorn, a member of the plum family, often flowers in a cold March snap. The flowers en masse can look almost snow-like and a cold spell of weather now is referred to as a 'blackthorn winter.' Trees are coming into leaf with Sycamore buds very green before they open and the familiar 'sticky-buds' are opening on the Horse Chestnut trees. Many hawthorns are in full leaf and some will have been out for several weeks. The hawthorn is also known as 'May' because of the month in which it flowers. The new green leaves and flower buds which they used to call 'bread and cheese' can be eaten.

Richard Wesley – Seil Natural History Group

Website :- <http://seilnature.spaces.live.com>

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## BBC BEECHGROVE GARDEN COMMUNITY PROJECT

When we applied to be considered for the BBC Beechgrove Community Gardens Project, little did we think, that some six months later we would discover, we had been successful with our application. Once the initial feeling of euphoria had worn away, the realisation of the tasks ahead was quite daunting. Filming is to take place between 15 to 18<sup>th</sup> June 2009, so that gives us less than twelve weeks to have most of the work completed on site. Beechgrove Gardens will provide us with the time and talents of a garden designer, support from the Beechgrove team, and around £3000. The publicity that the programme brings should benefit Seil Island and the surrounding area, but most of the work will have to be completed by ourselves.

We still have some site preparation to be finished before we can start planting and any structures will have to be purchased before installation can start. We are therefore looking to the community to provide help in any way they can, from manpower to machinery and donations of materials and suitable

plants. We would hope that some local businesses will provide their expertise or donate what they can towards the project. This is something for the whole of the island to be involved in and show again what can be achieved with some organisation and determination. We will be working evenings and one Saturday/Sunday every week, so please put your name down to help. A public meeting will be held in the near future to raise awareness of the project and to encourage everyone to take part in some way. Please contact Kim/Lisa/Richard on 300040/300573/300388 to be included in this very worthwhile project. **YOUR ISLAND NEEDS YOU !!**

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## OBAN HOSPICE

The LIGHT UP A LIFE event held on 5th December 2008 at Dalana-saig, Clachan Seil, raised the magnificent sum of £768.00. This wonderful effort was added to the Friends of Oban Hospice Christmas Campaign funds, which at the moment stand at £15,341.00, with further donations still to be received. The Friends are delighted with the support given to their campaign by the residents of Seil, and thank everyone involved. Supporters are urged to watch the press for news on the progress of the specialist palliative care area which is planned for the first floor of the Oban, Lorn & Islands District General Hospital.

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## FORTHCOMING EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

### ISLAND CAFE

Our Guiding Centenary (100 year birthday) is due to begin in September 09. In the run up all Guides have been given a "Community Challenge" with one of 19 Charities. Our Guide unit, 1<sup>st</sup> Kilbrandon Guides, has chosen to raise money for Girl Guides in overseas territories including Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, St Helena and dependencies and Turks and Caicos Islands. This money will help them to build meeting places where they can socialise in a safe and secure girl only space. This will also give them access to the internet and provide opportunities for them to be able study, join homework clubs and be able to improve their education.

We will be holding an Afternoon tea, with a Tropical Theme on **April 25<sup>th</sup> in the Seil Community Hall, 2-4pm.**

Please come along and support our fundraising for others, Any donations of baking will also be gratefully received. You can contact any Girl Guide or Mary Norris on 01852300339.

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### STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

A further chance to hear an updated illustrated talk on the stained glass masterpieces crafted by Douglas Strachan for Kilbrandon Church. The talk—by Rev Alastair McLachlan (who is shortly to retire from his charge here) will take place in the church on **Friday 17th April at 7.45pm.** This will be a non-ticket event—just turn up, although donations will be gratefully accepted. Tea/coffee/biscuits will be served.

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### YOGA CLASSES

A ten week session of KUNDALINI YOGA classes will begin on Monday 20th April. These will be held on Monday evenings from 8-9pm in the Seil Island (small) Hall and will cost £4 per session.

To register call 01852 300174

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### SPANISH CLASSES

Whether for the purposes of travel or general interest it is always useful to have at least a basic command of another widely spoken language.....now's your chance to learn!

We have a tutor available to run classes on a Tuesday afternoon or evening. Whilst the format has yet to be decided, a 10 week, 20 hour course is usual, at a cost of around £31.80.

There is a discount of 25% for over 60's and a fee waiver for people who are receiving benefits.

In order for the classes to run we need a minimum of 6 people. Therefore if you are keen to take part please contact Lisa Robinson as soon as possible to register your interest. TEL: 01852 300573

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### HALL LOTTERY RESULTS –MARCH

£50 Rollover  
£10 Kathleen Gordon  
£10 Ruth MacKechnie  
£10 Dave Pearson