

SEILEACHAN

SEIL AND EASDALE COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL

Back in the good old days we had our septic tanks. These beavered away underground and were de-sludged every two years or so, and that was it.

Along came big brother and cajoled us with dire threats into accepting a state of the art public system. This, with considerable disruption was duly installed, although in all fairness some residents did finish up with enhanced grounds. However we did inherit some rather unsightly green boxes and a very unsightly sewage farm right beside the main road.

Had this spanking new installation behaved as efficiently as our old septic tanks, it might conceivably have been money well spent. However it has not lived up to its promise - to this day, we still have almost daily visits from a tanker, and men in yellow outfits digging holes and peering into them.

Is this a civil engineering cock-up or a cunning ruse on behalf of the authorities to bolster the employment figures?

COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWS

The public meeting of Seil and Easdale Community Council took place on the 22nd March in Seil Hall. An important item on the agenda was the long-awaited appearance by representatives of Scottish Water, invited to give a report on the state of play with Seil's new sewage treatment works. This was a well-attended meeting, and most of those present seemed to have come chiefly to hear what Scottish Water had to say. Argyll & Bute Councillors MacIntyre and Robertson and PC Jeremy Moore were also in attendance.

LOCAL ROADS

All agreed that Cuan Road has been substantially improved in recent weeks. As part of a mammoth project across the authority, all roads on Seil, apart from the lane to Ardencaple, are scheduled to be surface dressed in the coming months. In the meantime there are plenty of pot-holes in evidence, and community members should continue to report these by phoning the roads department on 01546 605514.

PROPOSED CLACHAN and RAREA WIND FARMS

Although an appeal against the rejection of the Raera wind farm proposal was expected, Npower have no current plans to lodge such an appeal.

The proposal for a wind farm at Clachan continues via talks with Scottish Natural Heritage. There has been a redistribution of the sitings of the turbines, but the total number of them remains, as far as we know, unchanged. The planning application now looks likely to go public at the end of April at the earliest.

POLICE REPORT

The new police shift patterns have resulted in their presence on the island being less predictable. PC Moore stated that this could have benefits for the prevention of crimes such as drink driving. The increase in fuel prices could potentially lead to thefts of fuel, so we should ensure that all fuel stores are secure and vehicles have lockable fuel caps.

EASDALE HALL PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The proposal for an illuminated sign was passed by the council. The second application for a wind turbine has again been recommended for refusal by the planning committee, and the other application (for photovoltaic panels and an air source heat pump) is still in the balance.

HEALTH MATTERS

Tina Jordan has resigned as Community Councillor following her move to Kilmore. Acknowledgement was given to the major contribution Tina has made to the work of the Community Council, particularly as our representative in health matters. Her departure leaves us temporarily without a health representative.

EASSDALE ISLAND EMERGENCY EVACUATION

Following a survey of the proposed helicopter landing site, the Scottish Ambulance Service have announced that it is unsuitable for use during the hours of darkness, and even in daylight they will only use it for transferring patients with life-threatening conditions. This service is vital as the ambulance service will not use the ferry to transfer patients, so helicopter is the only other route. This decision leaves winch recovery by the RAF Sea King or Coastguard helicopter as the only alternative. Oban Mountain Rescue Team have stated they will transfer patients by ferry, but there is no protocol in place to call them out via the 999 service for this kind of emergency. Councillor Robertson will speak to all parties to try to arrange a table top simulation exercise, which could identify other solutions.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Laura MacDonald briefed the meeting on her work as Community Development Officer for Oban, Lorn and the Isles. Her main role is in supporting community groups in whatever community development initiatives they are involved. She welcomes calls from anyone who thinks she might be able to help, at laura.macdonald@argyll-bute.gov.uk or on 01631 562 466.

SCOTTISH WATER

Sheila Campbell-Lloyd, Wastewater Regional Manager North of Scotland, updated the meeting. She expressed both regret at the major customer and operational issues that were outstanding at the time she took over the plant, and acceptance that these are now her responsibility to resolve. She will be compiling a snagging list over the next few weeks, and some community members have already received commitments from Sheila and her team that specific work will be carried out. On a community level, a landscape architect will be commissioned to carry out screening work on eyesores such as the large shore-side compound opposite Mutiara, and on the pumping station in front of Balvicar Stores.

Water is still finding its way into the system and impeding its operation, and this water has been analysed and identified as fresh, not salt water. Work is continuing to address this problem, evidenced by the tankers which are used to temporarily draw down the level in the system, to allow cameras to locate breaches in the pipework. Ms Campbell-Lloyd and her colleagues maintain that this type of system provides the best eventual water quality, and that initial problems with the operation of the system can be overcome. You may be interested to know that the total spend has been £11.7m, around £90k per household, and operating costs will be £100k per annum.

Next Meeting The next meeting is the Annual General Meeting, on Tuesday 24th May, in Seil Community Hall. Please email the secretary Jane Nichols on ljanenichols@btinternet.com in connection with any Community Council business. A full copy of the minutes can be viewed at <http://seil.oban.ws/cc.html>.

Life Cycle of the Bumble Bee.

On the first warm days of Spring, following hibernation, you may see your first Bumble Bee of the year flying busily about the early bulbs and flowers. These large slow bees are queens searching for nectar and pollen to turn into honey and food for their newly hatching brood. There are over 200 types of bumble bee and they look for a variety of sites. Most common are the leaf litter in a hedge bottom, an old mouse hole, a cool dark place under a large stone or under the wooden floor of a garden shed or other building. Because the bumble bee does not live in a large colony the nest is usually little bigger than half a grapefruit even in the busiest days of high summer.

The queen begins a new nest with a ball of pollen and wax into which she lays just a few eggs at a time. When the eggs hatch they try to eat their way through the pollen reserve but the queen continually adds to the pollen and wax sealing them in. Eventually the grubs pupate and the queen spins a bright yellow cocoon of the finest silk from which the grubs emerge a few days later as fully grown worker bees. As soon as they dry their wings the worker bees begin work to support the colony and their queen. She continues to lay eggs, but as it takes more and more of her time the pollen and nectar collection is delegated to the workers, the queen spending her whole time in the nest. This co-operation continues throughout the high days of late spring and summer until the nest has reached the right size for its species. At that point the queen lays eggs destined to become next years queen bees as well as drones or male bees. The drones once hatched leave the nest and live independent lives, their only purpose being to mate with the young queens to ensure the survival of the species. Unlike honey bees the young bumble queens will continue to live and work in the mother colony for the remainder of the summer and autumn. Come the first sharp drop in temperature and frosts the old queen, her workers and the independent drones will die. Only the newly mated queens will survive in hibernation to begin the cycle again the following spring.

THANKS (1)

A big thank you to everyone who came on 15th January in support of the sale of the late Meryl Fraser's craft and sewing items, and to those who were unable to attend but gave very generous donations in her memory. Also, thank you to all those who came to help on the day and those who provided home baking. As well as the funds raised on the 15th January, some of the left over items were sold at a meeting of Lorn Quilters, and Oban & District Needlework Group, giving a grand total of £1296.52. I think you will agree that this is a terrific result. The raffle contributed a total of £121.00 towards this sum. The winners were—1) Barbara Nathan, Ellena-beich, 2) Gill Glasgow, Luing, and 3) Isobel Smith, Kilmelford. The proceeds have been distributed to the two beneficiaries, Marie Curie Cancer Care and Easdale Medical Practice.

Margaret Willoughby

THANKS (2)

Just to let you know that the sum raised for the Oban Hospice from the Wine & Wisdom evening was £510. Fifteen tables took part in an excellent quiz by Nick Bowles with some very good fun and friendly rivalry.

Ann Campbell

ISLE OF SEIL GOLF CLUB

The club has invited all existing members to renew their memberships for the coming season commencing on the 1st of April 2011, it is therefore an appropriate time to invite all members of our community to consider joining as a playing member or supporting the club as a non-playing member. Playing categories are as follows - Ordinary, Junior, Student, Country, Junior country, Disabled or Non playing (Supporter). We also invite local businesses to participate as sponsors. There are currently 3 types of sponsors: 1) Non-playing sponsor - £100 2) Non-playing sponsor with 20 day tickets - £200 3) Playing sponsor with 10 day tickets - £200. All sponsors will have their business name on our board by the 1st tee.

Membership forms and any queries can be obtained by contacting the club secretary by phone on - 01852300548 or by email - geo11adam@yahoo.co.uk (You can also obtain membership forms from the club hut in Balvicar.) Sponsors can contact Mary Phillips on - 01852300475 or email - kilbridecroft@aol.com .

The committee would also like to remind returning and new members that they are not eligible to play in club competitions until their fees are paid in full.

All the best for the upcoming season starting with the April monthly medal being played on the weekend of the 2nd & 3rd G. Adam (Secretary.)

MORE GOLF STUFF

The fixture list for the coming season started on Sunday 27th March with the Rab Marshall Pairs Trophy. The event was attended by 20 members.

The competition was held over 9 holes of the scenic course and was played as a 2 ball better ball stableford (That will probably be Greek to all non golfers and even I who have wielded a mashie niblick since I could walk, have problems with handicaps and scoring systems—editor).

The event was won with 21 points by Gordon McColl and Ian Wyllie.

HALL LOTTERY WINNERS

FEBRUARY

£25 Martin Waddell
£10 Jean Ainsley
£10 Morag MacKenzie
£10 Jean MacFarlane

MARCH

£25 Ivy Davies
£10 Emma Ainsley
£10 Ewan Warnock
£10 Murdoch Baxter

Hall Lottery subscriptions for 2011/2012 are currently being collected. Income from the lottery provides the bulk of the running costs of the hall. The Lottery costs £12 per year to enter, and there is a monthly draw for a first prize of £50 and 3 prizes of £10. If you are not yet a member and would like to join, you can simply leave a cheque for £12 payable to "Seil Island Hall" in an envelope with your name and address, and marked "Hall Lottery-New member" at Easdale Medical Practice or Balvicar Stores. Alternatively, please contact John Gordon (300332) or Brian Mitchell (300348).