

SEILEACHAN

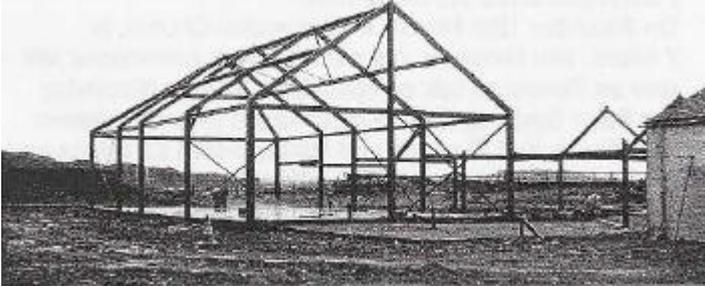
SEIL AND EASDALE COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL



For all the residents of the fleshpots of Balvicar, Clachan Seil, Cuan, and other sheltered climes, who are disinclined to scale the heights of Kilbride, and venture down to the windswept Atlantic fringes, here is a progress picture of the new hall. At the time this picture was taken, there was a large lorry load of timber in the offing, so further progress is imminent.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWS

Our latest and first public meeting of the new year was on Monday 29th January in the rather cold Hall at Ellenabeich. However, it was quite well attended. Councillor Duncan MacIntyre and PC Kevin Moffat (our Beat Officer) were there and 9 other members of the public. What we thought was likely to be a short encounter turned into an interesting evening covering a number of topics. As a result, the heating money ran out and we got even colder!

HEALTH SERVICES We still have a problem with the evacuation of emergency medical cases from Easdale Island. As explained previously, the Ambulance Service do not think the ferry is fit for stretcher cases, and there may be times (quite often recently) when the ferry cannot operate because of the weather. We were hoping to organise a dual response, so a helicopter ambulance and road ambulance could be called together, but this is not possible due to cost and availability. We are still discussing the problem with Scottish Ambulance. In the meantime, they will respond to calls as normal (road ambulance crew) who will, together with the GP, decide what action should be taken on arrival at the pier at Ellenabeich. However, this would delay a call for the air ambulance if it is needed. If the ferry is clearly not available for any reason and evacuation is needed, perhaps a helicopter could be called before the ambulance arrives, in order to save precious time. Tina Jordan is our Health Forum representative and the Community Council's depute at various NHS Patient Groups. Due to the recent windy weather, she has been unable to attend meetings but keeps us informed about developments. The offer of the position for the third Consultant at Oban Hospital was turned down by the preferred candidate and is being re-advertised. Dr Andrew Henderson has retired and has been replaced and a senior midwife has been seconded to the hospital.

Closer to home we have our own Easdale Medical Practice Patient Participation Group. We have written about this before and are still looking for volunteers to join it. It is not onerous and is a good opportunity for local people to have a say in how we would like our health services to work. Let's not leave it to distant politicians! At the most recent meeting, it was agreed that we should try to increase the frequency of collection of test samples, at present, this happens only twice weekly. This would mean we could get results more quickly. The Group would also like to monitor people's experience of undergoing treatment at Oban Hospital. Constructive criticism is a good way to improve services. If you would like to help, please contact Tina on 300 274 and she will give you more information.

POLICE REPORT Kevin Moffat came to the meeting. He tries to attend as many as he can, and it is a good opportunity to discuss policing matters. Fortunately, he had little to report. However, he referred to the recent spate of fatal road accidents and said that Strathclyde Police are starting a campaign to catch speeding and irresponsible drivers. He invited anyone with particular problems or queries to call him at the Oban Police Station. Do not be put off when you dial the number (01631 510 500) as you will be diverted to a call centre in Glasgow. Simply say you would like to speak to PC Moffat at the Oban Station and they will put you through.

MARINE NATIONAL PARK A while ago, we complained that we know nothing about it but now it is rarely out of the headlines! Unfortunately, the feeling is that the supposed consultation has been handled badly by the Scottish Executive and people are still not sure what the implications and effects would be, how much it would cost and how it would be run.

We discussed this at some length and it was agreed that the consultation should start again with more information about the benefits and drawbacks, how it was to be administered (another layer of bureaucracy?) and what the real advantages would be. Once questions and concerns have been answered, perhaps a referendum of people living in the area affected should be held before deciding to proceed. At the moment, we don't think anything more will happen until after the May elections. Argyll and Bute Council have recommended such an approach and we will write in support of this idea.

LOCAL ROADS AGAIN, a dominant item on our agendas. Things don't seem to get better despite our efforts. As fast as holes are filled, they appear again. Some of the cement lying on Kilninver hill might work better! We are trying to arrange a meeting with senior members of the Roads Department to get a better result. We are told time and again that the Council does not have the money. Our view is that the money must be obtained from central government somehow. The longer they delay, the more it will cost to put right. We keep on trying and will send our updated list of complaints to the Roads Manager.

SCOTTISH WATER A result! We have received a letter from the Chief Executive of Scottish Water (it has also been in the Press) saying that £600,000 has been earmarked for the renewal of 9 km of water mains from the Easdale Service Reservoir (Loch Seil, I think?) to Balvicar. Cllr MacIntyre said this is entirely due to pressure from the Community Council and residents, including our public meeting. Hopefully, an end to our leaks and disruption to services, except, of course, while the new pipe is being installed. The target date for completion is March 2007. We think this is optimistic but at least it is on its way. Do keep the pressure up (no pun intended!). If you are without water for 12 hours, you are entitled to £20 compensation. It works, because I have tried it and the address to write to is:- Scottish Water, Fairmilehead House, 55 Buckstone Terrace, Edinburgh EH10 6XH

CORE PATH PLANNING If you are a follower of Community Council business, you will remember this from previous meetings some time ago. It is becoming increasingly difficult to enjoy walking on our busy roads and there is a limited number of pathways on Seil. It is our opinion that designated pathways are needed and it would be good to link our four main hamlets with paths. There is a right to roam, responsibly, of course, under the Land Reform Act but many people are happier walking on designated pathways. Under the Act, Argyll and Bute Council have an obligation to propose a Core Path Plan and funding will become available to help communities establish pathways where permission is granted. It would be a pity to miss out on funding opportunities and no doubt we will return to this matter in the near future.

ELECTIONS AND STV The elections for local Councillors in May will be under the new Single Transferable Vote system. The Secretary (Stuart Reid 300 311) has a few copies of a document explaining how STV, a proportional representation voting system, works. Feel free to ask for a copy. The elections on the same day for the Scottish Executive are still based on first past the post, and the top-up system. This could be confusing but I suppose it is democracy at work. All the different voting systems on the same day!

Our next public meeting will be at 7 p.m. on Wednesday 21st March (Vernal Equinox) in the Hall at Ellenabeich. I am sure it will not be so cold, so we look forward to seeing you there.

SEIL ISLAND COMMUNITY HALL CHARITY

The last New Year Dance in the old hall was held on Tuesday 2 January. The event was very well supported and a large and enthusiastic crowd danced the night away. A sum of £1541 was raised for hall funds. Work on the new hall has resumed with the erection of the timber frame. This should take about 4 weeks after which the slates will be stripped from the old hall and used on part of the new hall roof. The roof of the old hall will be kept watertight using tarpaulins and we are assured that community use of the old hall can continue during and after this operation.

The committee is now focusing on a number of aspects of the project such as the PA and sound system including hearing loops, the exact layout of the kitchen and a scheme for the car park and landscaping. The latter is not part of the present contract.

The encouraging news is that the project remains ahead of schedule.

FUNDRAISING The sale of the 2007 Calendar, a joint effort with Kilbrandon Church, raised £270 for hall funds. Some events are planned for the spring and summer. More news of these in the next Seilachan. **LOST PROPERTY.** Some items which have been left in the hall-

- 1) A multicoloured mohair woman's coat.
- 2) A Hoodie's black 3/4 length jacket.
- 3) A man's navy blue pullover.
- 4) A child's two tone blue/white fleece jacket.

If not claimed by the end of February they will be given to charity. To claim phone Daphne on 300359.

FORTHCOMING ATTRACTION

On Saturday 10th March, in Kilbrandon Church, at 7.45pm, Iain Nicolson, our own resident Astronomer will give an illustrated talk on Neighbour Worlds (Exploring the Solar System). This is a combined project between the Church and the Hall, and tickets priced £5 Adults and £2 scholars, are now on sale - which bargain price also includes tea/coffee and biscuits.

ANOTHER FORTHCOMING ATTRACTION

On Tuesday 6th March, the WRI are having a meeting in Kilbrandon Church at 7,30pm, at which representatives of the RAF will be present to discuss concerns about low flying aircraft. This meeting is open to all interested parties.

GILLIEBRIDE'S CORNER



The early Spring weather has brought out some flowering plants before their due time. They may suffer for this if any hard frosts descend this month, or March winds batter them. Birds as well may suffer if they set about nesting in the odd balmy weather we

are experiencing.

The hardy Ravens snug in their wool lined nests tucked away under sheltering overhangs are immune to the weather, but others may rue their early start. Some, like the Collared Doves don't seem to care too much about losing early broods. They seem to remain amorous whatever the weather and their flimsy nests are speedily built.

Whatever the weather, we should begin to think seriously about the birds returning to our island's shores. Ringed Plovers, for instance, need some privacy before they settle down for the breeding season.

THANK YOU

The fundraiser for LIGHT UP A LIFE for Oban Hospice held in December raised £509, and the committee would like to thank all those who contributed.

CARPET BOWLS

Easdale Carpet Bowls Club's annual open doubles competition was held on Saturday 3rd February with 32 pairs entered. The MacKinlay Cup and a first prize of £140 was won by Ronald Gordon and Barry Ferguson of Benderloch who defeated brothers Alistair and Angus Dickie, Kilmore, in a closely contested final.

TELEPHONE DIRECTORY-ADDITION

To bring your current edition up to date, please add -BARR C&F Callanish, Clachan Seil, 300004, and while on this subject, any further newcomers to the area can have their number listed by contacting Jim Cunningham.