

# SEILEACHAN

SEIL AND EASDALE COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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## EDITORIAL



In order to keep you abreast of current activity on the island, which is one of the main reasons for producing this cornucopia of information, herewith, a photograph of the Car Boot sale taking place in the hall grounds, on the day of the An Cala garden opening, to boost Hall funds. You will notice, with a bit of careful observation, that the new hall is now fully slated, and that the main part of the old hall is now stateless. The perceived wisdom is that the construction is on schedule, which augurs well for the winter's activities, if this state of affairs continues.

## COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWS

We held our Annual General Meeting and an Ordinary meeting in the hall at Ellenabeich on 24th May. Probably our last meeting in the old hall as our next should be on Easdale Island. Hopefully, all going well, and progress is looking good, we might be able to squeeze into the new building for the one after that. As far as our AGM was concerned, it was notable how many items on our Agenda have been carried over from last year. There are some matters such as Health and Planning which are of ongoing interest and importance but there are also items such as the state of our roads which keep turning up like the proverbial bad penny. One day they may be good enough to drop from the Agenda - but to continue with the figures of speech, pigs might fly! The Community Council membership and office holders remain unchanged and the Chairman thanked them for their past efforts and continued support. The next elections for Argyll and Bute Community Councils are due in April 2009 so we are halfway through this period. He also thanked members of the public for their support, despite the often poor weather and cold conditions! Our average attendance was 13, down a little from last year, but commendable nevertheless. We had hoped that our 4 new Councillors could come to meet us. However, they all sent their apologies and explained that they were trying to work out how to allocate duties in the new multi-member Ward. Under the new arrangements, we come under Oban North and Lorn (albeit we are south of Oban) and our 4 Councillors have to cover 13 Community Councils. We are also wondering how it is going to work! Our Councillors are Duncan MacIntyre (Independent), Neil MacKay (Liberal Democrat), Donald MacDonald (Scottish National Party) and Elaine Robertson (Independent).

**JAPANESE KNOTWEED** At our request, the Council made a desultory effort to eradicate this notifiable plant from our road edges 2 years ago. However, it is now back with a vengeance and

spreading rapidly in a number of places. The roadside by Loch Seil is very bad and there are infestations on the roadside just south of the Tigh an Truish. The new waste water plant is under treatment and there are other patches around the Island. We will write asking the Council to try again. In the meantime, if you see this weed please report it to the authorities.

**HEALTH SERVICES** Our two main concerns continue to be the issues of emergency medical evacuation from Easdale Island and the loss of NHS dental services in Oban. We have written to the Scottish Ambulance Service in Oban asking for clarification of their operating procedures for the evacuation of patients from Easdale in bad weather, at night or when a stretcher case is involved. The ferry may not be available in bad weather, the Air Ambulance cannot land at night without a landing area and lights (and not if the wind exceeds 20 knots) and the ferry cannot take stretcher cases. We have not received a reply and will continue to press for one. NHS dental services in Oban appear to be non-existent at the moment. The one NHS practice in Argyll Square is closing down. The nearest is now in Lochgilphead. Otherwise, we must go privately and even if people are able to choose this option, existing facilities in Oban are overwhelmed. We have been told that NHS Highland are seeking to establish a salaried general dental practice within the Oban area as a matter of priority but this will take time. In the interim, a limited service, for pain relief only, will be available at Oban Hospital. Advice or assistance in accessing NHS dentistry can be obtained by telephoning 0845 8332310 and leaving your name and contact number. We will keep this matter under review. I shall just mention again our own Easdale Medical Practice Patients Participation Group, if you would like to join and become more involved in helping to improve health services at a local level, call Tina Jordan on 300 274.

**LOCAL ROADS** A thank you to everyone who sent one of our petition letters about the horrendous state of our roads to the Director of Operational Services in March. We estimate about 150 letters were despatched and, as a result, mere seemed to be a flurry of activity and even the Area Roads Manager came to look and expressed surprise at the level of damage. We can't think why, as we have been updating him every 2 months about the deterioration. Anyhow, some patching was carried out and we now just have to watch out for the holes between the patches. It is unfortunate that we have to resort to these campaigns to get some action. It is important that we maintain pressure to get improvements and everyone is urged to do their bit by claiming and complaining. Again it has been suggested that we ask for speed limits to be applied to our roads. We have tried in the past but were defeated by the legislation. This has been eased so we will try again. Perhaps 30 m.p.h. through Clachan Seil and a blanket 40 m.p.h. for the whole of Seil? Walking on our roads is no longer safe or pleasurable. More frequent trimming of road edges would help visibility and white lining and pedestrian warning signs might help. If you agree then, please help achieve this by writing to the Council. We will produce another standard letter and place it in Balvicar Stores.

**SCOTTISH WATER - MAINS** Many, perhaps most of you, have been affected by the disruption to our mains water supplies because of bursts in our old mains pipeline. However, Scottish Water are replacing the old pipe with a new plastic pipe and the improvement programme will start on 18th June and last for 16 weeks. We understand the new pipe will run from Loch Seil to beyond Balvicar. They will use modern techniques to reduce disruption and speed the work. However, there will be some inconvenience to traffic and some breaks in water supplies. Advance notification will be given.

**Scottish Water are holding an 'Open Day' in the Tigh an Truish Inn on Tuesday 12th June from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. where you can see plans and ask questions.**

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**SCOTTISH WATER - WASTE** The Scottish Executive is investing in improvements to waste water systems and SEPA have identified Clachan Seil and Balvicar as an area that may benefit from environmental improvement work. You may have seen them already. Scottish Water design engineers have started surveying and visiting properties to collect information for a design/feasibility study. Once this is complete, a decision will be made as to whether or not it is possible to put in a public system. In the meantime, you may be visited by Scottish Water consultants, engineers or surveyors who might like to access your garden or land. This does not commit you to connect. Please check the identity of anyone calling at your house from or on behalf of Scottish Water. If work does go ahead, it is anticipated to begin in Spring 2008. If you have any questions on either of these projects, please contact their helpline: 0845 601 8855 quoting Environmental Improvement Clachan Seil and Balvicar First Time Sewerage or Clachan Seil Mains Improvement.

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**POLICE REPORT** PC Kevin Moffat was unable to come to our meeting but asked us to mention a spate of thefts of small (and some not so small) amounts of petty cash from some properties on Seil. This has been going on, we think, since August last year until the 'perp' (guess who watches CSI!) was caught red-handed in April. PC Moffat urges people not to become complacent about home security. Villains from distant cities are finding it harder to earn a living in their localities as house-holders become more security conscious so they look for opportunities in traditionally less crime-ridden areas. Such is life, unfortunately.

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**STAG APPRAISALS** (Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance) The STAG appraisal for a link between Seil and Luing has been completed and they have recommended a fixed link in the form of a high level bridge. This has been accepted by the Council and we understand finance is available through HITRANS. We now await a decision from the new government in Edinburgh. A STAG appraisal into the transport link between Ellenabeich and Easdale has just begun and the consultants, Steer Davies Gleave, have carried out preliminary meetings with stakeholders. Under the appraisal, they will consider the environment, safety, economy, integration and accessibility in order to identify options to improve the transport link for the future. Throughout the process, they will consult with residents and stakeholders and are presently planning the most effective way of doing so. The appraisal will be reported in stages and is likely to take several months.

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**The next meeting of the Community Council will be on Easdale island from 7.30 p.m. to 8.50 p.m. on Wednesday 25th July. Ferries at 7.20 p.m. and 9 p.m. if you can make it.**

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**AMENDMENTS TO THE TELEPHONE DIRECTORY**

Add—On Page 1 Nurse (office) The Surgery 212  
SinclairT&A Glenshellach, Clachan Seil 308

#### **SEIL ISLAND COMMUNITY HALL UPDATE**

The project is progressing on time and within budget. The exterior walls are complete and almost ready for painting. The roof is very nearly slated, using slates from the old main hall, on to the small new hall and kitchen wings. The electrical works have started and the plumber will begin interior work shortly. The temporary roof on the old hall has stood up to the recent bad weather, and we are hopeful that it will continue to keep out most of the rain until we begin demolition in October. Various small cost overruns have begun to eat into the contingency sum within the budget, so we are very strongly resisting any ideas for last minute alterations, while at the same time continuing with fundraising. The financial position continues to be slightly tight but entirely sustainable. The "An Cala Day" on Sunday 28th May was a great success. The weather was kind, Mrs Downie's garden was looking magnificent, and the event was well attended. Great efforts and hard work by volunteers in the garden, round the hall, and in the teas department, following considerable organising work, resulted in an excellent day. The many patrons who enjoyed the event, many of whom were local families, were generous in their support, and the sum raised was in the region of £750: very creditable and very useful. The committee members express their warm thanks to Mrs Downie for the use of her garden, to David Croucher for his donation from plant sales, to the suppliers of bakery for the teas, and to all involved as workers and patrons. They will circulate a complete report on the money raised, with the minutes of their next meeting.

**The Ardmaddy fete will be held on Sunday 12th August, at Ardmaddy Castle. Everyone is urged to come along and take part, and as usual we will be seeking all kinds of assistance from members of the community. Officers of the various local clubs are especially invited to take stands and help to make it another memorable and enjoyable day.**

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#### **SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND**

The North Argyll Branch of the Save the Children is to close. Fund raising will continue, but without a formal branch organisation—funds will go direct to the Edinburgh headquarters.

The committee expressed their particular thanks to the residents of Seil Island—in past years they have given support to Save the Children, quite out of proportion to the size of their community. It is hoped that when future events take place, Seil islanders will again rally to the occasion and continue to contribute to the fund. Thank you. Catherine Shaw, ex Chair. N.Argyll branch

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**"ROALD'S SNOW WHITE". This is the title of the musical and dance performance being produced by Easdale School. Senior citizens are invited to attend the dress rehearsal in the Seil hall on Tuesday 19th June at 1.30pm. All members of the public can also see the finished article at 7pm the same evening in the same place. No entry fee, but a collection will be taken**