

SEILEACHAN

SEIL AND EASDALE COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL

Sorry—no pictures this issue—normal service will be resumed next time (hopefully) - meantime a ditty for you.

Seil 2009 version of “Ten Green Bottles”

*There's seven green boxes sitting by the road,
And if these green boxes should accidentally fail,
We would really be in the s ** t.*

COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWS

We held our AGM and an ordinary public meeting on 26th May and it was attended by 9 members of the public, 2 Argyll and Bute Councillors and a Council Officer. Quite a good turnout as people tend to stay away from AGM's in case they get voted into a job! Not so on this occasion as our members are elected every 4 years. As you may recall, our elections were postponed this year (yes – we have completed a 4-year stint!) because there is a review of Community Councils taking place. Elections will probably be held in October.

Facts and figures may be of interest. During the last 12 months we have held 6 public meetings with an average attendance of 14 people – similar to the previous year, so at least we are maintaining our market share!

The most significant events have been the Conservation Areas Appraisal and the construction of the Balvicar/Clachan Seil waste water system. In order to manage these projects, we have held an additional 7 meetings in committee, a public meeting and 10 sub-committee meetings for the Conservation Areas Appraisal, and 2 public and 2 committee meetings with Scottish Water. Add on another 7 meetings with Argyll and Bute Council and others and we have had our busiest year ever!

The AGM was followed by an ordinary meeting and the main agenda items were as follows:-

Conservation Areas Appraisal

This has been completed and our reports sent to Argyll and Bute Council who will now draft our Management Plan for the future development of the areas. When this is ready, it will be sent back to us – the community – for our approval. It will be subject to 5-year reviews – by the community – so it can be updated, modified and improved. It is very much a community-led Management Plan, enforced by Argyll and Bute Council, which will be followed by all Council departments and service providers.

Scottish Water

We had received lots of complaints about the waste water project so we had a meeting with the Project Manager, a PR representative and Cllr MacIntyre. There follows a resume of replies to our questions:-

- This has been the biggest waste water project they have carried out in the West of Scotland and they think it has been done satisfactorily
- Some access covers did not fit but now do
- Pipe tests and levels were OK
- Some manhole seals failed (there are 100 of them!) but these have been repaired
- The system is still being debugged but the outfall from the main treatment works is better than expected
- The 2.3 metre green boxes will be replaced by 2 metre boxes. A slight improvement but they cannot go smaller – for health and safety reasons!
- Some sea water leaked into the mains works because of a faulty valve and seals at the Balvicar pump station. This has been rectified.

A leak of sewage near the Medical Centre was caused by a fence post blocking a pipe.

These are some of the points – others were discussed but we don't have room for them all here. We are still trying to get the pipe across Balvicar Bay buried. Some say if they can bury diggers, why not pipes? There is a lot of tidying up and reinstatement going on and contractors will be around for a while yet.

Community Council Review

As mentioned, our elections due in April were postponed because of this and are expected later this year. There were some questions about our status as we had completed our elected 4-year term. However, we have been assured that the proper steps have been taken and we are still legal. So you have got us for a bit longer and the possibility of Generals seizing power is no more! The Review should be completed in August. We are going through a second phase of consultation at the moment

Local Roads

It doesn't seem to be getting better except for the mud being put on the verges. However, we are sure it will eventually and we continue to work towards this goal. We are in constant communication with the Roads Department who are keeping close contact with the contractors. They have asked everyone to report faults to help them monitor the situation. Graham Stone is the man to contact. He is based at the Oban office.

STAG Appraisal

It was notable that our AGM Minutes from 2008 reported that we were still awaiting this report! It was formally delivered to the Community Council at this meeting. It has cost £30,000 and has taken over 2 years to completed and is very much what we expected. Stewart Turner – Head of Roads and Amenities at Argyll and Bute Council – explained the purpose and procedures followed in STAG appraisals. It was not meant to be a referendum on the transport link to Easdale Island but to collect information and present alternatives to the decision makers. The report will be presented to the Scottish Ferries Review which reports in 2010 before a decision is made. So a little way yet but it seems likely to result in an enhanced ferry service. More figures – do nothing, £1.7 million, enhanced ferry £2.1 million, fixed link £2.6 million (figures likely to change).

The good news is that we are still hopeful of getting our pathway from the new cemetery up to the old one and the War Memorial. Scottish Water see this as a small acknowledgement of the disruption caused by the project.

That's all for now. Our next meeting is on 28th July in the Hall on Easdale Island. Have a good summer!

Large Red Damselfly (*Pyrrhosoma nymphula*)

This is one of our commonest and most easily identified damselflies, and is the earliest to be seen each year in this area. The adult flight period extends from May to August. It is found in most habitats except for the most exposed sites. It has a preference for small acidic lochs but is able to persist on many very dry sites that have become unsuitable for other Odonata. It is also quick to colonise newly created ponds. We recorded this species on our recent survey visit to Loch Charn at the end of May.

Both the male and female have a red abdomen with black markings. The thorax is black with red stripes, and the legs are black. Damselflies rest with their wings folded lengthways along their body (unlike dragonflies, which rest with wings outspread). During mating the male clasps the female by her neck while she bends her body around to his reproductive organs – the shape that this creates is called a mating wheel. The pair fly together over the water and eggs are laid within a suitable plant, just below the surface. The eggs hatch and the larvae, called nymphs, live in the water. Nymphs eventually climb out of the water up a suitable stem to emerge from their split skins as damselflies.

Richard Wesley – Seil Natural History Group
Website :- <http://seilnature.spaces.live.com>

HALL NEWS

Beechgrove Garden Project

Viewers of the BBC's Beechgrove Garden programme will recently have seen some of the community gardens featured, and our day is fast approaching. Filming of the Seil Island Hall garden will commence the week beginning 15th June, for 4 days and will be televised the following Wednesday 24 June. Two of the presenters, Jim MacColl and Carole Baxter, visited the garden during May and seemed quite taken with the project, the area and the community support that has underpinned the venture. They will be joined by Carolyn Spray, George Anderson and a 9 strong production crew.

During the filming the Beechgrove team will want to see us completing some of the hard landscaping, planting the hedges and wildlife garden and adding the finishing touches. So whilst at the time of writing we were on schedule, there is still a lot to do in the garden and continued help will be greatly appreciated.

For those who are unable to work in the garden, but who can help to keep the troops happy by providing a never-ending supply of tea, coffee and cakes, we will also be grateful for your support.

And last but not least we need as many people as possible to be around during the filming, even if it's raining!

We owe a great deal of thanks to all of those who have wielded a spade or otherwise donated of their time, equipment or money and in recognition of all of the hard work a celebration Ceilidh open to the whole community is being held at 8pm on Wednesday 17th June. Bring your own bottle and a stout pair of dancing shoes.

For further information about how to get involved contact: Kim Rowswell 300040, Richard Wesley 300388 or Lisa Robinson 300573.

Hall Lottery Winners

April

£75 Sheila Downie
£10 Barbara Nathan
£10 Mary Sandilands
£10 Duar Fleming

May

£50 rollover
£10 Morag McSweeney
£10 Donald Clark
£10 Paul Drew

June

£75 Torquil Shaw
£10 Flo MacAskill
£10 Ted Chance
£10 John Brown

The lottery runs from April to March and costs £12 year. You can join at any time. Contact Brian Mitchell (300348) Mary Norris (300339) or John Gordon (300332) if you would like to sign up.

Classes

A Spanish class is currently running on Tuesday afternoons, courtesy of Community Regeneration and it is hoped that an Art class can start after the summer.

Improvements

There have been a few small improvements in the hall – kitchen towel rail, telephone table, local directory and a new notice board in the foyer. To aid the outside works a tap and power supply have been installed externally.