

SEILEACHAN

SEIL AND EASDALE COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL

Those 0845 & 0870 (helpline?) telephone numbers. More accurately a helpline to increase their profit, as the longer they can keep you on the phone, the more you are contributing to their coffers.

To start with you get a recorded message thanking you for your call (which will probably be recorded for training purposes). After this rigmarole is finished you will get the option of pressing a number to get through to a particular department. This is to give off the impression that you are dealing with a large, well staffed organisation. In actual fact, whatever number you choose, will be answered by Bill, Leonard, or Julie. Bill is answering a call at the moment, Leonard is having a tea break and is actually outside the building having a smoke, and Julie is on holiday. So you could have a delay before actually speaking to someone. To prolong your wait and keep you on the hook, they now kindly give you some music, interspersed with a recorded message "*Your call is important to us, and will be answered as soon as possible*". This is a contradiction- it is important in generating cash for them, but the longer they can keep you waiting, the more they make. A further subterfuge, should you be lucky enough to get through to either Bill, Leonard, or Julie (a long shot—she only went on holiday yesterday), is that they find your query a bit technical, and put you on hold while they speak to a supervisor. While on hold, more music to fill your time and their coffers. Whether there is a supervisor being consulted, or purely a ploy to prolong the call, is debatable. Another ploy to keep you on the line is "*You are No 12 in a queue*" - more music- "*you are now No. 7 in the queue*" and so on. To complete the illusion of a busy office they have a tape playing "Busy Office" background noises, continuously, in the off chance that you actually get your query dealt with by a human being.

The answer—go for 0800 numbers, if possible.

Seil and Easdale Community Council met on Tuesday 25th September at Seil Hall.

John Gordon attended his first meeting as a Community Councillor, following recent elections.

Shaun Davidson, Margaret Burnett from Argyll and Bute Council and Sylvia Jost from Carr Gomm and attended to discuss changes to Homecare provision and the outsourcing which will occur in January 2013. Concerns have been raised by a number of members of the community receiving care.

Following a lengthy consultation process it was decided that the majority of homecare provision will be outsourced. Although the Council have retained Colonsay, Tiree and Mull as 'special cases', Seil and Easdale have not been considered similarly. This is despite the increasing numbers of over 65s on the Island (30% above -

-the Argyll average) and the declining younger population.

Under the new system, Carr Gomm will get the majority of existing clients and 60% of new business. Mears will get 25% and Hazelhead the remainder. To ensure that providers have viable numbers of clients within an area, there will be a geographic split with Carr Gomm being the provider for the SECC area. The contracts agreed will be for 3 years with the option of a 4th year being added at the end of the first year. After this, it will be under yearly review. Carr Gomm are obliged to fulfil their contract and cannot withdraw if they fail to make a profit.

Mr. Davidson assured the public that robust quality assurance systems have been devised with facilities in place for concerns to be raised and spot checks to monitor ongoing quality. The Council reserve the right to impose a moratorium on allocation of care hours should standards not be met, at which point the other providers would be asked to make up any shortfall. Carr Gomm have also been in contact with district nurses and will be arranging a monthly meeting to ensure communication is maintained and that concerns were raised timeously.

Cclr. Robertson stressed that during the process, all aspects were looked at. Whilst acknowledging that this was a new way of working and that changes would be unsettling to some members of the community, she was positive about the robust nature of the system. She commended the existing home carers and there is a hope that a number of these staff will continue to provide a service. Cclr. Robertson assured the public that all those affected would have meetings with their care coordinators to ensure that plans are up to date and that there would be a thorough handover to the new provider.

Questions were asked about whether the lower wages being offered to carers would lead to reduced standards of care and recruitment difficulties as the Council had struggled to recruit and retain staff at higher pay rates. It was highlighted that staff were being required to fulfil the same role on significantly less pay. In the 'worst case scenario', other providers would be called in but agreed that this would have an impact on continuity. Concerns were raised that individuals would be admitted to hospital for safety rather than medical need.

Mr. Davidson confirmed that the financial contribution to the nurses from his budget will remain for input into additional district nursing services although it was suggested that some of this would ultimately be used to pick up the slack caused by a shortfall in homecare provision.

It was concluded that a large number of members of the public still had doubts and that more information was needed.

SECC have written to MSP Mike MacKenzie regarding medical evacuation from Easdale and have been assured that this will be raised with relevant politicians.

The screening at Pumping Station 3 is again under discussion with Environmental Health now requesting joined boards of equal height on the grounds of noise. It was questioned why, if the reduction of noise is important, they were initially willing to have no fence at all and it was agreed that Environmental Health should have been more actively involved from the early stage. Charles is in ongoing discussions with Scottish Water. There are concerns that community opinion is being overridden.

The footpath and kissing gate between the cemeteries has been installed. Concerns have been raised about the size but this may be to allow for wheelchair access.

Landscaping is now complete at the Pumping Station by the shop but the agreed notice board is still to go up. SECC will continue to pursue this.

The removal of the orange fence opposite Tigh Cladich will take place once the verge is more stable with plastic bollards due to be put up in its place.

Charles had a drive round with Cclr. Glenn-Lee and Jim Smith from A&B Council. There is a recognition that Cnoc a' Challtuinn needs resurfacing. Discussions are ongoing with Lars Brunner and Rory Young regarding providing some further land to allow buses to park without affecting visibility at Atlantic Bridge. Parking at Cuan was also raised following concerns raised by Luing residents that they are having to pay for taking their cars on the ferry due to a lack of space.

Argyll & Bute Council continue to be actively involved in knotweed remediation. Private land owners are reminded that they have responsibility to treat outbreaks on their own land.

There has been no recent movement at Kilniver Bridge but the Community Councils affected are still pushing for contingency plan and permanent solution.

A 30 mph speed limit at the Clachan end of Seil will go ahead. The advisory 40mph speed limit at Kilmore will become an enforced limit.

There are ongoing moves to push for a repair to the sea wall at Ellenabeich. Although the Kilbrandon Trust are interested in purchasing the land for the Community, they are keen that the quality of any repair reflects the conservation status of the wall. Seumas Anderson is now a director of the Kilbrandon Trust. It was agreed that all facts were needed before further progress be made.

The Easdale Stone Skimming attracted more members of public than usual due to recent press coverage. This led to issues with parking and access. Communication will be made with organisers regarding increased marshalling of future events.

For details of planning applications, see <http://publicaccess.argyll-bute.gov.uk/publicaccess/>

The Clachan Wind Farm application went to determination on 19th September. There will now be a public hearing, probably at the end of October. Although none of the local Councillors representing Seil are on the planning committee and thus will not be able to vote on the outcome, they are able to speak on the day.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 27th November, 19:30 at Easdale Hall (Seil Hall if ferry not running)

EASDALE CARPET BOWLING CLUB

Play for the season 2012-13 will commence on Thursday 25th October at 8pm in Seil Island Hall. During the winter season the club will meet in the hall each MONDAY and THURSDAY at 8pm except for 6-9 nights during the season for away Lorn League and Cup fixtures. This fixture list comprises home and away matches against 6 other village teams in the area from Benderloch to Ford, offering opportunities to get to know people from other villages (and some very nice teas and sandwiches). Our performance last season was "middling" (5th in the League). The club would benefit from a larger (and better?) pool of players (a match team requires 12-16 players), and extends a warm invitation to new members (no former experience needed) to join us for the season.

SKIFF NEWS

The boat building has progressed to gluing the first 8 planks on. Anyone who is interested is very welcome to come up to Oban Seil Farm Shed on Wednesday evenings from 6.30pm. After the remaining 4 planks go on, the boat will need sanded and painted and then turned over. At this stage joinery skills would be very welcome to make the rudder, seats, oars, and general fitting out. Progress is on <http://www.seil.skiff.org.uk/> There are only 4 shares left at £60 per share. Cheques can be made out to The Isle of Seil Rowing Club.

FORMER SEIL CHOIR

This is now rebranded and is now known as "SEIL SOUND", and will be singing carols and Christmas songs at the CRAFT FAIR in SEIL ISLAND HALL on SUNDAY 2nd DECEMBER. (Editor—please note this forthcoming attraction) We now have over 20 members with pianists and flautists to accompany us. We meet every Wednesday at 7.30pm in Seil Island Hall—if you love singing (no auditions involved), or playing a musical instrument, why not come along and join us?

And finally—Seil Sound will be having a (very) informal musical evening in the T&T on Saturday 28th October at 8pm. Everyone is invited to sing along, or just have a drink & listen