

eilean eisdéal

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DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

Sunday 28th June saw the third public meeting to discuss proposals to develop the wasteland adjacent to the harbour. Many of you will remember that this was a key component of the harbour purchase and is even more pertinent in the light of to-day's funding climate, as access to the public purse becomes increasingly more challenging and a self-help model of achieving sustainability is the recognised way forward. We were very fortunate to have John Campbell QC facilitate the meeting and we had a constructive discussion which was most useful. In response to this and to the many comments and questionnaires we have received it would seem appropriate to postpone the proposals for social housing and workshop premises until further consultation can be undergone. There were concerns that the proposed visitor accommodation was too large and should not be in front of the Coalree. We are therefore looking at plans for a relocated smaller facility for visitors, probably in the region of 12 beds, and shall, of course, keep you posted.

HALL EVENTS AND ARTS PROGRAM

And the winner was..... Easdale Island Community Hall for Best Village Hall in the ForArgyll 2008 awards. A fantastic achievement made only better by us then scooping the Best Tourist Attraction for Easdale Island itself. This is a great boost and along with the new Easdale brochure, which features the hall and other local businesses, should help encourage more visitors and people to attend arts events.

Towards the end of the year the hall hosted a Christmas craft fair and then Julian Penney's 'Sea Kayaking the Norwegian Arctic' talk. The usual fun and frolics took place in the festive break with a great turn out at the Ne'er day ceilidh and another successful panto performance by Easdale very amateur dramatics with 'Ali Baba and the Magic Barra'raising, in donations to escape the hall, £372.00!!! The festive film this year was 'Indiana Jones and The Kingdom of The Crystal Skull'. A whip cracking adventure with a slightly ageing 'Indy' but it still managed to make us laugh. We also celebrated with Rosie Noble at her surprise 21st birthday in January and the annual 'Burns Supper' was well supported with many people travelling some distance to be with us. It was great to see some new young blood taking the floor and showing up the adults with their talent. Many thanks to Lynn for the catering and Annabel for the table decorations.

Perhaps the best news we could have for the hall is that after much legal wrangling the directors were finally given the go-ahead to start tackling the problems in the hall. We asked Mike for his help in ascertaining what exactly the problem was with the roof and how we could fix it. Both Mike's and Iain's expertise in this field has been invaluable. They identified several problem areas in the roof which needed to be addressed and helped us contract specialist tradesmen to do the work. Although

much of the work was exterior and could only be done in good weather, Mike's guys started tackling the interior which soon resembled a war zone. Timbers were rotten and needed stripped out and replaced, plasterboard and chipboard just disintegrated on touch. Everything was soaking and time was running short as we headed towards the start of the Arts Programme at the beginning of April. However Mike's guys pulled out all the stops and miraculously finished in time. It's certainly a joy to have a foyer that is not full of buckets put out to catch the drips, however due to the nature of the work there is no guarantee that the repairs will solve the problem 100% and next winter will be the real test. On the positive side the recent wet and windy weather has not caused any leaks!! The directors would like to say a huge thank you to Mike and Iain for all their time, hard work and help overseeing the repairs and also to Iain and Ross for their help in getting the job finished.

Once again we have been successful in being awarded a grant from the Scottish Arts Council and the Arts Programme kicked off at the beginning of April with a ceilidh and Clamjamfrie. Easter weekend brought The Puppet Lab with Funny Bones which was enjoyed by both adults and kids alike. During May events ranged from jazz with Gina Rae to a self proclaimed brand of 'Dirty Pop' from Sandra MacBeth. There was also theatre from Seaview productions with "The Last Cuckoo". June brought us Clarsach and traditional harp with Mary MacMaster and Donald Hay with Donald returning as part of Mystery Juice, a stomping gig which certainly blew the last of the cobwebs out the hall.

After an extremely generous donation from Adrian Laycock Ltd we also secured match funding from a Scottish government initiative known as Arts and Business which has allowed us the opportunity to entice some bigger names to Easdale. The first of these gigs was John Renbourn and Robin Williamson on 11th April. The gig sold out and was enjoyed by all especially the boat ride home! Dougie MacLean entertained us with his banter and songs on the 4th July. He encouraged another sell out audience to sing along and a rousing version of "Caledonia" soon followed. We look forward to another great gig with Dick Gaughan on 12th September.

The hall committee continue to do a fantastic job to ensure all the events run smoothly. Wee, Lynn, Jess and Annabel your hard work is much appreciated. Our thanks go to Voirrey who is now employed to keep our award winning hall clean before every event which we feel makes a good impression on visitors. The directors would also like to thank all the volunteers that have helped out along the way.

WEBSITE AND ONLINE SHOP

It has been noted that much of the Eilean Eisdeal website is very out of date. We approached John Hendry regarding making some changes but due to business commitments he was unable to undertake the work, however he has given us permission to allow Wee to start updating some of the sections as we re write them. We have also decided to move into the 21st century and create an e-commerce shop within the website which will offer suitable gifts from Easdale, stone skimming memorabilia and other items.

Easdale Island Community Hall, Easdale Island, Oban, PA34 4TB
email: secretary@easdale.org
website: www.easdale.org

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This is still in the early stages of development but we hope to be up and running later in the year.

NEW EILEAN EISDEAL WHISKY

STOP PRESS.....a new Eilean Eisdeal Whisky is in the pipeline and will soon be available to purchase. Featuring a brand new label and a secret bottling the single malt will be winging its way to the island very soon. Good excuse for a party?? We hope you will come and have a dram..... WATCH THIS SPACE.....!!!!

MUSEUM

Once again the museum attendances have exceeded all previous figures since we started keeping accurate records in 2006. We are 13 ½ % up on our previous best and 43 % better than last season.

We would like to thank Zoe for her voluntary assistance in the museum since we opened for the season she has had to stand back for the moment.

The BBC Gardeners World program contacted us to supply information about An Cala which led to us arranging for Jess to do a piece in front of camera up at the allotments.

HARBOUR UPDATE

The new moorings have all been laid as outlined in the summer plan in the last newsletter. These have now been inspected and approved by the relevant authorities. Many thanks to Tony Hill and his helpers especially the North Warwick BASC for all this work, which will go a long way towards turning the harbour into a sustainable community enterprise, and hopefully generate funds which will contribute to the regeneration of the harbour area in the future. The new arrangements appear to be working successfully. If anyone has any problems with their mooring please contact Jan Fraser at 300739.

As we know the harbour will be busier during the summer, can we just ask that the spaces allotted for temporary use by visitors of harbour users coming alongside for a short time are kept clear. These are the inside berths on the pontoon and the space by the steps at the top of the ferry slip.

New mooring application forms will be sent out this month; previously these ran from July to June, but the next will run to April 2010 to fit in with the April – October summer berths and Oct to April winter berths.

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