

eilean eisdéal

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Newsletter No. 44 May 2010 To all islanders, members and friends

This winter must have been one of the coldest on record for Easdale and probably one of the driest with glorious crisp, sunny days. Thermals have certainly been the order of the day (and night for those of us in caravans). Our usual rough slate paths looked more like mirrors the ice was so thick and the swimming quarry was seriously beginning to resemble an ice rink!! The last few months have seen the worst of the weather with a few gales and plenty rain however these last few weeks have been fair although pretty cold due to a biting north wind. Roll on warm, sunny, summer days and evenings for us all to enjoy and we can only hope that the endured cold winter has helped to diminish our resident midge population!!

The directors have been extremely busy with the many projects and proposals which are taking place at the moment. We welcomed Donald back onto the board of directors at the AGM in December. With so much going on it's great to have another pair of helping hands.

Museum

The museum re-opened its doors on 1st April and has already seen a 13% increase compared to last year up to 30th April. Lynn and Annabel are staffing the museum along with the many volunteers who help throughout the season. We are very grateful to everyone involved in keeping the museum running smoothly and held a small thank you bash in The Puffer late February to offer our appreciation. Marketing the museum is a continuing cost and we are always looking for enterprising ways of making money go further so this year we have advertised in Holiday West under the banner of Eilean Eisdéal for the museum, hall and stone skimming. The same ad was run in The Scottish Field and joining forces with Sea.Fari and The Puffer we have managed to secure cheaper rates which are always welcome. We also received fantastic coverage on STV's The Hour program with 3-4 min slots over 4 nights. The museum was featured in one of the slots with May MacGillivray doing us proud and showing her passion for the island and its history.

Harbour

Summer moorings were re-instated just before Easter weekend and just in time for many harbour users arriving with their boats anxious to get them in the water for the new season ahead. Our thanks go to Jan, Tommo and Colin for their help with this. We have an ever increasing demand for berths and are doing our best to accommodate everyone. Please can we remind harbour users that mooring fees are now due for April-October and our thanks to those who have already paid so promptly.

Hall Events and Arts Programme

Through the cold winter months the hall provided the venue for the usual festive shenanigans-kids Christmas party, panto and Ne'er Day Ceilidh. All were well attended and it was especially nice to welcome back Stephen McNally as compere for the ceilidh proceedings. The panto was hailed another success and caused much hilarity while also raising £217.00. It

should be noted that although this was not as much as the last few years it is probably due to the fact that a lot of the audience are now up on the stage as more and more people want to get involved in this unique production. The traditional Easdale 'Burns Supper' enjoyed a great turn out and even saw some new faces take to the top table. A wonderful meal was provided by Voirrey and Sheila followed by an evening of entertaining speeches, Burns poetry and music.

We can look forward to another fantastic year of events in the hall following another successful award from the Scottish Arts Council towards our arts program. The new program kick started at Easter with the always entertaining puppet show for kids and adults on Good Friday and then critically acclaimed and sold out 'Lau' on the Saturday night. The beginning of May saw us put on our dancing shoes for 'Shooglenifty' an 'arts and business' event and another sell-out (Wee-You're getting good at this!!). You can now buy tickets on our website using your credit/debit cards through PayPal or from The Puffer where you can pay by cash or cheque. To receive advance notice of upcoming gigs we would suggest you go to the website and sign up to the Easdale Island Arts mailing list which will ensure you don't miss out on any of these fantastic events! There are several art exhibitions over the coming months from our friends Ghalia Asaid and Jessica Wolfson and at the moment Vanessa Lawrence is displaying her wonderful work until 6th June. The arts program also brings the theatre to our doorstep and always provides us with some interesting and amazing shows such as the first production of the season Mr Darwin's Tree from Sea View Theatre. Other upcoming events this year include 'The Hidden Masters', 'Ray Harris & The Fusion Experience', Mull Theatre, Red Note Ensemble, 'Lord Rochester', 'Terry Haines', 'Blueflint' and the one and only 'Ceilidh Bandidoes'.

As always we are indebted to Wee for his enviable talent of picking such great acts for us and a huge thank you to all the hall committee-Lynn, Annabel, Jess and Wee for making sure the events all run seamlessly.

Some of you will have noticed that the hall is looking very smart following work to the exterior woodwork. Eric and John have done a wonderful job and we would like to thank them for their prompt attention to getting this work completed.

Visitor Lodge

The visitor lodge remains high on our agenda following a fantastic positive response to the online questionnaire at the end of last year and the directors are looking forward to taking this project forward.

Scottish Gas Green Streets

The Scottish Gas Green Streets year long project kick started in January with our first community consultation meeting following our winning presentation to secure £130,000 funding towards renewable technology solutions for the island. Invitations were sent to council departments of planning, building standards & operational services, representatives of media, government bodies, other funders as well as islanders and the community. There was an excellent response and we were delighted to welcome Argyll and Bute MSP Jim Mather to facilitate this meeting and lead a mind mapping exercise which gathered and documented everybody's thoughts on the day (available to view on the website). We were disappointed that planning officers did not attend as we face some very difficult obstacles here on Easdale as we try to become more energy efficient and generate our own energy in a conservation area. We were delighted however to have representatives from Building Standards who have pledged their support for our project. The second meeting at the end of January investigated the problems we face insulating and heating our homes on Easdale many of which are 200 years old. Mike and Waseem gave a very illustrative demonstration with a scaled down model of an Easdale cottage and explained the difficulties and challenges that we need to address. An invitation was sent out to all households on the island to participate in the project to help

our community reduce consumption and become more energy efficient. The participants have now had their energy assessments from Scottish Gas and we await their recommendations. We are also collecting meter readings every month which will be used to gauge future savings and reduction in consumption. The third meeting held in April introduced guest speakers Arthur Butler from the Centre of Alternative Technology and Rod MacNeil from a company who install wind turbines, heat pumps and solar (video's of the presentations are available to view on the website). Arthur explained in great detail about all the different technologies that have been proposed and what benefits they can realise for the community. Jack Welch then identified some potential sites and looked at the pros and cons for each site. A questionnaire, photo montage and fact sheet relating to the wind turbine and heat pump is currently being drawn up and will be available to view on the website very soon as well as hard copies being distributed to those without web access.

EGM

An EGM was held on 2nd May to make changes to the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the company. Much has changed since Eilean Eisdeal was formed in 1997 and the current directors felt it only right that this important document reflected this. Legal advice was taken and the changes were also agreed with the charities regulator. A special resolution was passed with a majority of 41 to 4.

Website

Our website has now been updated and modernised by Brownbull web design and has had quite a transformation. It has now gone public and we're sure you will agree that this new design reflects the vibrancy of the community here on Easdale. Many thanks to Wee for his patience and input on this project and to John Hendry for allowing us to update his original design.

Playpark

We are delighted to announce that an application to Awards For All by the play park sub committee has been successful and we have been awarded £9,732 by The Big Lottery to renew and extend the playpark. Congratulations must go to all the parents of the younger kids who initially got together to take this project forward and especially to Zoe for leading it to a very successful outcome. The children have also been involved and chosen the equipment which includes a buccaneer ship, 2 station swing with baby & kids seats, balance beam and stepping stones. The grant award also covers a contribution towards lawn mat safety surfacing and delivery. The kids can now look forward to a great new playpark very soon which we're sure will see lots of use!

Dates for your diary

Atlantic Adventure Day.....Saturday 7th August 2010

World Stone Skimming Championships.....Sunday 26th September 2010

Current Directors

Keren Cafferty.....Chair
Jan Fraser.....Secretary
Stephen Carr.....Treasurer
Donald Melville
Iain McDougall