#### EILEAN EISDEAL NEWSLETTER No.26 - APRIL 2004

# To all Easdale islanders, members and friends

We generally aim to get out approximately four newsletters a year, however, there has been a lot happening recently and there are several important matters we want to inform members about.

## Constitution

Directors became aware that there are some difficulties with the Constitution in that it is at variance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association which, as the Trust is a company limited by guarantee, is the governing document. Advice has been sought from our solicitors and after some deliberation they have advised that the Constitution should be merged with the Memorandum and Articles. A sub committee will be set up to deal with this. The process will involve consultation with members and with our solicitors and it is hoped that the merging of the documents can be given approval by members at an EGM planned for November.

#### Hall

We all had a hectic Easter holiday in the hall – starting with the Easdale Paradiso's well-received films on Good Friday night and Saturday afternoon. The debut of Lynn MacKenzie's film – 'The Boat Ride' was highly acclaimed.

After a short winter break, live music events got off to a great start with our Rock Night on 10th April, organised by John Merrilees. We had a good turnout of Easdale and Seil Islanders plus lots of visitors, all rocking the night away to the music of local band 'Framed' and John Merrilees' band 'Dillwgaff'. This was followed on Thursday 15th April by a visit from the Banyan Theatre Company from Derry, part of the Puppet Animation Festival in Scotland. 'The Emperor's New Clothes' was a brilliant combination of different kinds of puppetry, the production was inventive and funny. Karen and Ray's presentation was stunning – loved by kids and adults alike.

We now have a Pool and Table Tennis night on Wednesdays at 7.30 pm and Get Fit continues to puff and pant through Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6.30 pm, everyone welcome.

# Watch out for our April/May events.

Films – 'Kill Bill Vol 1' 30th April 7.30 pm and Piglet's Big Move' 1st May 3.30 pm. Also Saturday 8th May – Traverse Theatre 'The Nest' by Alan Wilkins (book early with Geoff). We are lucky to have this world famous company coming back to the Island. Those who came to 'Outlying Islands' last year will vouch for their quality. This is a wry, intriguing play about our obsession with taking to the hills, conquering mountains and collecting Munros. Saturday 29th May – Ceilidh Night – a great night of dancing, music and the odd drink.

The Hall is now nearing the end of its defects liability period. A comprehensive snagging list has been prepared and a meeting has been held with the architect, QS and builder to discuss resolving the various problems. We currently await the builder's proposals and work plan for tackling these defects. Work will be arranged as far as possible so that hall activities and events can proceed without interruption.

## Harbour

We intend to hold an open public meeting on Sunday 2nd May at 3pm to discuss the forthcoming improvements to the harbour and related issues. Funding has been confirmed for a range of interim improvements and first aid measures to prevent further decline of the harbour. There is ever more

competition for funding for these kind of projects and thanks are due to members of the Harbour Steering Group, Sandra Melville, Fiona Blakey, John Merrilees and Mike MacKenzie, for the enormous amount of work they have done to get this funding.

# Improvements include:

- Digital topographical survey and engineering survey of harbour
- · Dredging adjacent to South wall of harbour
- · Provision of Pontoon
- Mooring Trot
- Stabilisation and propping of collapsed corner at North harbour wall
- Levelling of Rush and Gush area and creation of hard standing for boat storage
- Provision of Timber fenders at some places on harbour wall

#### **Finances**

We are faced with a number of financial challenges due mainly to unforeseen costs. The most significant of these is our insurance premium, which has increased dramatically to around £7500. We are in the process of obtaining quotes from other companies. So far these have been higher but one quote looks promising and we hope to be able to get a cheaper insurance package in place before too long. The other significant cost is in heating the hall. Due to various problems with the heating system the costs of this are much higher than anticipated. This is one of a range of problems that has been brought to the attention of the builder and he has a responsibility to remedy the situation. He has also agreed to accept responsibility for some of the higher heating costs we have had to date. Having said that, heating will always be a significant cost of running the building and we are investigating the possibility of installing a heat pump to reduce heating costs. We have been advised that this is the best renewable energy system to use in conjunction with our underfloor heating system and in principle we will qualify for a 100% grant for the cost of installing this.

Despite these costs our reserves have allowed us to survive this difficult period but it has become apparent that we need to implement a competent financial strategy. Accordingly the Board of Directors has drawn up a financial plan for the next year. In doing so we have had to recognise that basic running costs have to be met by reliable revenue streams which are under our control.

Directors have a legal responsibility to ensure that our finances are competent and it is not possible for every member to have the detailed awareness of finances that Directors are obliged to have. For that reason it was decided that members would be consulted about the proposed financial strategy at the public meeting, which was held on 11th April, and that we would use that meeting to gauge the reaction of members to the proposed changes. It was clear at the meeting that there was general approval for the proposed changes. The suggestion was made that a questionnaire should be sent to members to confirm approval to these changes but for the reasons outlined above the Directors have decided that this is not feasible and are implementing these proposals without further delay.

The proposed changes are:

- 1. Membership fees will be increased to £25. Members may apply to pay this fee in instalments at the discretion of the Directors. This will apply from 1st January 2004
- 2. Harbour mooring fees will be increased by 20% to be effective from July 2004

We recognise that no one likes to be faced with increased costs. Under the circumstances the Board of Directors feel that there are no alternatives to implementing these increased costs at this stage. We hope that members will continue to support us through this difficult period. Many people have made helpful suggestions for improving or increasing fund raising activities. Directors will be looking very carefully at every possibility for reducing costs.

# Regatta

The Regatta will be held on Saturday 10th July 2004 with a live band in the evening.

# **Stone Skimming**

The 8th Annual Stone Skimming will be held on Sunday 26th September 2004 with the Pre-Skim Party and Dance on Saturday evening, 25th September.

# **Grand Prize Raffle**

We are holding a raffle, which will be drawn at the Prize Giving at the Stone Skimming on 26h September. We have been given some wonderful prizes:- Dinner B & B for 2 at Ardanaiseig Hotel, Loch Awe; Holiday Cottage for one week on Easdale Island; Steamboat Ride to Kilchurn Castle with Cream Tea for 4 at the Tea Train, Loch Awe, Seafari Adventures Corryvrecken trip for 2. There is still time to donate a prize, please contact Annabel. This is a major fundraiser and raffle tickets, at £1 each, will be available soon.

Thank you all for all your help and support.

Donald Melville - Chair