

EILEAN EISDEAL NEWSLETTER No.30 - JANUARY 2005

To all Easdale islanders, members and friends

Happy New Year to You All

May I extend a warm welcome to you all for the forthcoming new year and wish you all the best for 2005. This is the first newsletter of 2005 and covers quite a few subjects to keep you all 'up to speed'.

AGM

Last year's AGM was held on Thursday 30th December at 7.30pm in the Hall and was attended by a good-sized and enthusiastic audience. The Directors would like to thank everyone for turning out and showing their support, especially at such a busy time of the year. The Directors feel encouraged by the kind words and positive feeling that came from the 'body of the kirk'. We look forward to another year of action.

The points summarised in the report covered the main activities of the Trust over 2004, yet another busy year in the life of the Trust. The first was the realisation that the Trust's financial situation had received a blow from the huge increase in our insurance premium and then the implementation of a strategy to get things back on a level footing. Open meetings were held to inform people of the situation and to try and identify any possible sources of income to alleviate matters. This done we presented the proposed strategy and have been successfully working towards this ever since. The Directors would like to extend a big thank you to the community for rising to the occasion and paying the increased membership fees and harbour mooring fees (which were part of the financial strategy to help alleviate matters). Mike's presentation clearly showed that the projections look very encouraging.

The fact that we have had criticism levelled at us this year was mentioned and in such a small community is bound to be expected. In this respect it is worth stressing that the Trust does want to hear first direct from people if they have any concerns at all about what is going on. Please contact one of us if you have any questions or would like something clarified.

Many events were held in the Hall this year and we were able to make contributions towards both The MacMillan Cancer Relief and the Chernobyl Children's Charity. Also, more recently, an island collection organised by the Residents' Association over the New Year period saw £570 raised to go towards the Asian Tsunami Disaster Appeal. In fact the Trust donated half of the collection on the door from the Panto on the 3rd of this month towards this appeal.

There is now a Suggestion Box in the Hall awaiting your thoughts.

Unfortunately, the situation with regard to the snagging list of Hall defects was exacerbated when the builder, MacVicar and MacInnes, went into liquidation. We continue to fight this one and will inform you all once this has been resolved.

The directors have continued to progress the other projects on our community plan and will be taking the recycling and zero waste initiative and the sewage treatment plans forward as a priority this year as part of an overall Waste Management strategy which is badly needed on the island. Channels of communication have been re-opened with the respective organisations involved.

In the course of this year Directors John Merrilees and then Denise Whyatt both stood down. It was with great regret that we saw them leave as both had great qualities which enhanced the Board of Directors. Mike MacKenzie also comes to the end of his tenure as a co-opted Director and stood down at the AGM. We are sure that you will agree that we are most indebted to them for all their hard

work and offer them on behalf of the remaining Directors and the rest of the community our sincere appreciation.

Wendy Blakey was appointed as a director to fill the one vacant position. Wendy brings with her years of experience in various previous roles of Councillor and Justice of the Peace to name but two. We extend a warm welcome to Wendy and look forward to working with her on Trust matters.

Jess Hill remains as Secretary, Annabel continues as Treasurer and I remain as Chairman. Mike MacKenzie has been co-opted for another year.

Slate Sign for Hall

As some of you will know from the article in the 'Easdale People', Gillian Forbes, a Stone Carver from Perthshire, was commissioned to collect and engrave stones from all over Scotland for the new Scottish Parliament. Gillian chose Easdale slate as one of the types of stone due to its historical importance in Scottish building and because it is a beautiful and distinctive stone. The two finished stones are now in place in the Canongate Wall of the new parliament building and should not be missed, they look wonderful. In return for the pieces of slate, Gillian very kindly and generously offered to make us a name sign for the Hall, which she was immediately taken up on. This did leave us with one problem and that was what name do we want to go on the sign? The Hall is officially called the 'Eilean Eisdeal Hall' but the Directors are aware that not everyone thinks this should be what goes on the sign. The two main names that we believe to be in discussion are;

1 Eilean Eisdeal Community Hall

and

2 Easdale Island Community Hall

What we would like to know is what the majority of people would like to see permanently in slate as the Hall's name sign. Please contact one of the Directors with your choice from the two above or one of your own before the 28th of February. After this date we will choose which one has received the most requests and will proceed with it.

Harbour

You will have read in the last newsletter that the Harbour Interim Improvements work is all but complete and now only the pontoon remains to be put in place. We await the final design from the engineer for the pontoon and then we can start the process of having this installed. As previously intimated, volunteer labour will be utilised as part of the installation of the pontoon and we will be arranging probably a weekend work group once we have a clearer idea of when this will be likely. An expected completion time should be around about Easter.

Hall Events

Since the last newsletter, we have had the following events in the Hall; Saturday 20th November saw another stunning and captivating Mull Theatre production in the shape of 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde', on Saturday 27th November, we heard traditional music from Scotland, Ireland and Asturias with Simon Bradley on fiddle and Luke Plumb on bazouki. The first event of 2005 in the Hall was the DIY Ceilidh on the 1st. We were entertained by many brave souls who had the courage{albeit that some of it was Dutch courage!} to get up and sing, play instruments and even tell stories. Thanks to all who performed! There were many, but not enough, Panto rehearsals leading up to the big event, Robin Hood and his Band of Ferrymen, on the 3rd. All who attended I am sure enjoyed it judging by the peels of laughter. Next year we will practise MORE!

Burns' Supper

The next event in the Hall is the annual Burns' Supper which is being run in conjunction with the Trust and the Puffer Bar again this year. Last quick reminder to say that if you are coming up to the island this weekend, it is taking place at 7.30pm this Saturday 29th January. Tickets are priced at £15 per head so book with Fiona on now to secure your place.

RYA Yachtmaster's Theory Course and Examination (Shorebased yacht or powerboat)

As mentioned in the last newsletter, Sea.fari Adventures are organising the above course and examination based in the Hall. Dates are 19th & 20th Feb, 26th & 27th Feb. The final course and examination dates are 12th & 13th March.
Open to all. For details contact Tony;

Recent Storm

As I am sure you will all be aware, the West Coast of Scotland was, this week, battered by the worst storm that it has seen in many, many years. Whilst we all came through unscathed, it was nonetheless an awesome 'event' to witness. The Rush'n'Gush has closed over and the 'wall' of stone to the North West part of the Rush'n'Gush has been flattened. The situation is not terminal but it does highlight how vulnerable the island is to the elements when they turn as nasty as they did recently and emphasises the need for some form of protection. Adrian's Breakwater Scheme has come up in conversation a lot since last Tuesday's storm.

Membership Fees

Finally, a reminder to members that their membership fees became due on January the 1st. Fees are £25 per person per annum and cheques should be made payable to 'Eilean Eisdeal Trust'. You will find that a membership form is attached so please complete it when returning your fees so we can check that we have your up-to-date details. Thank you.

We look forward to hearing from you with your preference or other suggestion for the name of the Hall.

Kindest regards,

Donald Melville
Chairman.

Hall Manager	Geoff Heslop
Chairman	Donald Melville
Secretary	Jess Hill
Treasurer	Annabel Gregory
Director	Bert Baker
Director	Wendy Blakey
Director	Mike MacKenzie