

Easdale Island Community Meeting

Sunday 26th September 2021 – 2:00 p.m

Easdale Island Community Hall

In attendance

Tony & Jess Hill, Rob Grigg, Alan & Jill Hunter, Simon Orton, Britt & Tony Doughty Godchaux, Voirrey Quillin, Steve Brown, Carolyn Perkins, Steve Patterson, Roy Gamblin, May McGillivray, Sue, Rob & Alex Hadfield, Neil & Amanda McCrerrick, Iain McDougall, Adele Knox, Ina Coombs, Ruth Barratt, Steve Sharp, Maggie Melville (briefly), Also Rachel & Jehanna Devine (new Puffer owners)

Apologies

Georgia Wolfson Kyle Mathews Nigel Chippendale Graham Anderson Robert & Anne Lindsay Alice Clayton Sam & Dave Payn.

Welcome and Introductions

Jess Hill (JH) opened the meeting, welcoming all present and clarifying this was an open community meeting with no fixed agenda as agreed at the recent Eilean Eisdeal (EE) AGM, with the purpose of gathering ideas for benefiting the community, and which can be taken forward by EE.

Iain MacDougall (IM) further explained that this was a brainstorming session for ideas for consideration by the directors of EE

1. Finances

Jill Hunter asked what the financial impact of being unable to hold Stone Skimming for the last two years had made on EE.

IM replied that due to various grants and little expenditure, the financial situation was very strong.

2. Communication

Britt Doughty Godchaux (BG) suggested that communication of projects/events/news needed to be improved and a set of standards put in place to ensure consistency and to reach all the community. Adele Knox (AK) felt that islanders who were not members of EE had been shut out previously from communication of items under consideration or being undertaken.

IM suggested that since he maintained a list of email addresses for passing news to members, any non-members would be welcome to contact him at Iain@easdale.org to provide their own details for inclusion in future communications.

Neil McCrerrick suggested providing more opportunities for a meeting space for islanders, ad hoc events providing coffee and a chat, new community noticeboards etc

Ruth Barrett requested whether director's meetings should be made open access. IM replied that this is not required by the articles of EE. Minutes are available for viewing on the EE website.

JH stated that an email will be sent out to encourage response to gauge people's priorities

3. Puffer

JH introduced Rachel and Jehanna, new owners of the Puffer, and offered the chance to outline their plans for the future.

R and J stated their plan is to open initially in tie for the Christmas period, offering coffee/cakes and food, but exactly to what extent is still to be confirmed

They further explained that they would be looking for local input into how islanders would like the business to grow. They are looking to engage staff locally, and will be setting up a social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram

4. Pantomime

The possibility of putting on a panto was discussed. The general consensus was that this was unlikely in the short term on several levels-

The uncertainty of opening venues to large, closely packed audiences while the covid situation is still relevant.

The lack of an organising structure following the departure of several members from the island and the hiatus due to covid, noting that EE is a facilitator of this event (i.e use of the hall) and not the actual organiser.

The short timescale for planning a winter production

5. Bonfire Night

There was general enquiry about an event to be held this year. JH confirmed that it was intended to hold some sort of event this year, and that Carolyn and any volunteers again looking to organise a bonfire and fireworks. EE would discuss the potential for opening the hall to provide drinks such as mulled wine, and a suggestion that a barbecue could be set up.

6. Stone skimming and committee

BG asked what the plans for relaunching stone skimming were and how the organisation committee was now structured

JH explained that the vast majority of the previous committee had now resigned or had moved off island so that it was in effect defunct. Michelle MacFadyen would be contacted to establish her continued involvement and/or a passing of the organisational template to a new committee.

IM requested that anyone willing to volunteer for any roles on a new committee should email him

7. Arts Programme

Jill Hunter raised the question of the Arts programme.

Rob Grigg (RG) responded that given the suspension of activities during covid, and the adoption of new directors to EE, the programme would need a complete relaunch. This is underway, as was the establishment of a new hall committee to give this a priority.

Amanda McCrirrick (AM) suggested creating a new list of volunteers willing to help set up and assist for events

BG asked about what external agencies could help, and RG replied that there were a number of links already in place needing re-contacting and would encourage suggestions from any residents who could provide further contacts – music/dance/drama/exhibitions etc

It was confirmed that two bookings were in place as 'test' events for the re-opening of the hall – a quiz night and a gig involving the Wicked Hamptons and Fools Gold. These would be live on the website imminently

8. Museum

BG asked for confirmation of the opening times for the museum. JH explained that the museum is planned to be open daily until the end October from 11 until 4. JH further explained that Lynn Noble was having to run the museum single-handedly at present due to the lack of volunteers, and that to ensure full opening would require new support. It was requested that anyone interested would be welcome to volunteer. No-one volunteered at the meeting so the request remains open.

9. Public Toilets and waste facilities

Allan Hunter raised the question of providing public toilets on the island.

Subsequent discussion concluded that this would be something of a poisoned chalice on a number of levels not least the need to engage people to carry out regular cleaning and maintenance.

AK suggested that rather than looking to provide more encouragement to over-tourism that EE should be focussed on facilities which improved residents needs.

In particular, the improvement of waste facilities was discussed. It was pointed out that a previous proposal for creating a waste and recycling facility in the rush and gush had been eventually shelved. Considerations involved the distance from the majority of homes, the smell, the logistics of accessing the site to remove waste by boat, and the scale of compliant building work the site would require.

10. Use of the Community Hall

AM asked for clarification on access and use of the hall by residents.

RG responded by outlining potential rules as discussed by the directors, and that while there was recognition of a desire for ad hoc use for such activities as use of gym equipment, table tennis, music practice etc, there was a need to ensure public safety and controlled access. Some proposals already discussed have been -

- A key remains in the ferry shed, and is available from the ferrymen with a requirement to sign the key out and back in.
- There will be a register in reception for signing in and out
- Use is limited to residents and homeowners, but not to holiday cottage tenants
- Children under 16 must be supervised at all times
- Any groups organised to undertake regular activities should have a nominated contact
- Hall users will be issued with a copy of rules and a liability waiver
- The hall should be left in a clean and tidy condition, and any safety or maintenance issues reported
- Donations should be made where a specific fee is not requested
- All regular and group activities must be booked with the Diary keeper, i.e RG which can be done via email rob@easdale.org or via direct message on Messenger

It is intended that terms and conditions for use will be circulated to residents shortly, once fully agreed.

JH explained that there is a project already underway to install coin operated heaters. In response to a discussion as to whether funds held by EE can be prioritised for upkeep or development of the hall or other projects, JH said there would need to be examination around the rules relating to ring-fencing granted funds in respect of charity legislation.

11. Local Contact List

A request was made about the availability of a contact list of residents and other people locally. Steve Patterson mentioned that he would check with Zim Knight and the community council whether it has done work on this.

It was pointed out that there may be data protection issues around issuing such a list.

12 Defibrillator

BG asked for clarification that there was still access to an island defibrillator, and the possibility of updated training for those who wished.

JH confirmed that the machine is still in the old phone box by the ferry shed and has free access. JH also said that the local medical practice had offered training sessions and perhaps they should be the first point of contact.

13. Firemen and Emergency Contact

MM reminded the meeting that there used to be a group of trained volunteer firemen on the island, as well as a mobile pump, and was this something that might be revisited.

IM replied that it was his belief that no training was available to the over 50s, which would rule out a large percentage of the island population.

It is believed the old pump no longer works and is no longer accessible.

AM sought to clarify the process for accessing emergency help. It was confirmed that calling 111 or 999 as appropriate is the established course of action. The emergency services will then contact any local assistance required.

14 Dog waste

AM raised the subject of the amount of dog waste being left around the island, and suggested extra signage to request visitors and islanders alike to clear up after their animal.

JH concluded by thanking everyone for their attendance and confirming that the issues raised would be taken away for consideration by the directors of EE