EILEAN EISDEAL NEWSLETTER No.37 - MARCH 2007

To all Easdale islanders, members and friends

Albeit a bit late but Happy New Year to you all! It just does not seem possible that it is already half way through April! I am almost afraid to say it but there does appear to be an end to the worst of the winter weather. This has been one of the worst winters that we have had with a particularly persistent spell of stormy weather over November and December. This I think made us all the more determined to have a ball over the festivities; which is exactly what happened.

AGM

The AGM was held on Friday 30th December 2006 at 7.30pm in the Hall. We had a great turnout and once again the feeling overall from the floor was one of support and encouragement. The directors would like to pass on their appreciation to those who did attend and show their support.

During the Chairman's report, the main areas of activity that the Eilean Eisdeal has been involved with throughout the course of another busy year were mentioned. In particular, two main groups have been of enormous help; namely the Hall Sub-Committee, comprising Fiona Blakey, Stephen 'Wee' Brown, Phil Bull, Colin Blakey, Lynn Noble, Wendy Blakey and Annabel Gregory and the Projects Development Sub-Committee involving Jan Fraser, Mike MacKenzie and Sandra Melville. Both groups ran through an outline of the work that they have carried out and their help with keeping things like the diverse Arts Programme going from strength to strength and the progress with the Harbour and Museum Projects are hugely appreciated. Both Colin and Phil have now left us for pastures new, Kendal actually, and their assistance at events will, I am sure, be greatly missed.

Yet again we have a wider group of people who almost always go un-thanked. There are too many to mention all of them but they do take a pride in helping at events in various shapes and guises; bar staff, door people, glass collectors, glass washers, post-event cleaners,...... the list is pretty endless but our sincere thanks goes to them.

Eilean Eisdeal's financial position remains positive and our special thanks goes to Annabel. She gave her Treasurer's Report and explained how the strategy that we have implemented has kept us in a more comfortable position. We can never become complacent but we are delighted by this and would again like to say a thank you to members and supporters for bearing with us and showing their support.

This year as part of the annual rotation, Annabel stood down after 4 years of tireless and often thankless work and her time and devotion to Eilean Eisdeal's duties has been much appreciated and we wish her all the best. This left just one director place to be filled and with one nominees coming forward in the shape of Adrian Laycock, we welcomed him into the vacant spot. Adrian makes a welcome return to Eilean Eisdeal, after all it was his idea to set up the organisation and save the Hall! We look forward to his involvement again.

EASDALE ISLAND MUSEUM

Our quest to secure funding to buy the museum continues and feedback from the funders has been encouraging. The process has been a time consuming one but we are confident that a positive outcome is now in sight. In the meantime we look forward to another successful season and would like to thank Chris Nicholson, the museum owner, for his continued patience and those who have given so generously of their time to keep the museum open.

PONTOON/HARBOUR

We still await fabrication of the ladder which will provide the safe access down on to the pontoon at varying states of the tide. Sadly, until this is in place, we respectfully request that in the meantime people refrain from using it. Once this is done we reckon that it will make a good excuse for a wee celebration to mark the occasion! Whilst on the subject of the harbour, it is worth pointing out that over

this winter we have had the most interruptions to the ferry service ever, thanks to the harbour entrance closing over completely on more than one occasion. The community's thanks go to Mike MacKenzie who, at his own expense, managed to dig out the entrance and bring the ferry back into service. I know many of the working population were extremely grateful for this generous gesture on Mike's behalf. At last, we have just recently had Argyll and Bute Council install gabion baskets {stone-filled wire cages} to halt the worst of the damage done by the wave action on the long fore-shore leading up to the entrance from the North. This has reminded us of Adrian Laycock's Breakwater Scheme which would rid us of this problem for good and mean that we could have a wide deep harbour entrance whilst still having it protected and not have the worry of it continually closing in. More on this later when we will have an open public meeting to show the plans to those who have not seen them before and to remind those of us who have not seen them for a while. We will announce this when we have a specific date.

REFUSE AND RECYCLING FACILITY

Shortly after the last newsletter and following subsequent discussions with the planners, we submitted our planning permission application for this facility. There were one or two technical issues that the planners had and at their suggestion we withdrew our application, we are shortly to re-present the application and the indications that we have been given would suggest that we should be successful.

HALL EVENTS UPDATE

Easter Saturday saw us kick off the year's events with a rocking good night to the sounds of 'Wanderlust' from Oban a four piece guitar driven band who play a mix of older and more recent popular rock tracks. The band played us a huge range of songs and kept us entertained right up until the last note was stuck. Our resident 'rock-chick' Beth was invited up on to the stage to play and sing with the band for one song, which was met with rapturous applause!

There is a varied range of events lined up for this year in spite of the fact that this year we received less funding than in previous years. This Friday {the 13th} we have a Puppet Festival performance with Absolutely Fabulist – an extravaganza performance of Aesop's fables in an energetic and fun delivery. On the 20th, we have The Singin' Sous' Chefs who promise to take us on a travel through time and around the globe with their a cappella singing and comedy!

To come over the next couple of months we have:

'The Gareloch Horties' – Saturday 12th May - This 12 strong, Scotland wide, women's peace group has been established for 25 years and will be on the Island for the weekend. They have kindly offered to host an informal chat in the hall and will be displaying some of their famous protest banners and introducing us to some historical anecdotes through song and stories. Thanks to founder member Kay Carmichael!

and

Saturday 26th May - Rapture Theatre with 'Broken Glass' by Arthur Miller - After their acclaimed and popular productions of "Blue/Orange" and "The Collection", Rapture return with another exciting show which continues their unique ability to merge thought provoking theatre with a good night out.

I look forward to seeing you at one, or all, of the forthcoming events this year. Please keep an eye out on the website for details, future events and any updates.

OTHER NEWS

We continue to provide the charities regulator, O.S.C.R., with information which they have been requesting following mischievous and unfounded complaints to them. We expect that the situation will be resolved soon.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

We are grateful to many of you who have renewed your subscriptions to Eilean Eisdeal and would encourage those of you who have yet to renew them to send off your payment of £25 to our new

Treasurer, Jan, c/o the Hall. Your membership fees go a long way to assisting us in our work on behalf of the community and helping to implement improvements for us all now and in the future.

Your continuing support is valued and very much appreciated. Thank you.

Donald Melville Chairman

Chairman Donald Melville Secretary Jess Hill Treasurer Jan Fraser Directors: Mike MacKenzie Adrian Laycock

For Hall bookings contact; Fiona Blakey - Arts Program Co-ordinator

For Hall access contact any one of the above.