



eilean eisdeal

Trust Projects : Update April 2001

Community Hall

Our initial project is the renovation of our Community Hall, a grade C listed building, which has now deteriorated to the point where it is unusable. We have concluded our option to buy the adjacent derelict cottage and have just received our planning consent. We hope to make our funding application to NLCB very soon and, as we have remedied the shortcomings of our previous submission, we are hopeful that this application will have a high probability of success.

As our initial project, the Community Hall has acted as a catalyst in focusing community awareness on Island problems, and it is this will to tackle these long standing problems which has led to the other projects on our agenda.

Refuse Recycling Facility

The collection and transport to the mainland of refuse by Argyll & Bute Council has always been a difficult and less than ideal process. There is no proper storage facility on the Island for refuse awaiting transportation, and the current derelict shed which is used on an informal basis is unsuitably located in the centre of the village. Our plans are well advanced for the provision of a recycling facility located just outwith the village but still in reasonable proximity to the harbour. We have consulted with Argyll & Bute's environmental services department and also SEPA, both of whom are supportive of this project. There is a possibility that we could achieve a 'zero waste' solution, but any improvement on the current situation is desirable. The Council's environmental services department have given a commitment to divert the current expenditure to help meet revenue costs associated with this project.

Sewage Treatment Facility

There is no provision at all on the Island for the emptying of septic tanks, of which there are over fifty. We used to bail them out with buckets when the necessity arose and empty those into the sea or into one of the flooded quarries. Obviously this is now neither legal nor acceptable. Despite many years of lobbying, neither the Council nor the currently responsible authority, West of Scotland Water, is prepared to accept responsibility for the emptying of the tanks. West of Scotland Water are, however, supportive of our proposals to construct a biological sewage treatment facility and this, with a sludge pump

Mike MacKenzie, Eilean Eisdeal Trust, Easdale Island, Argyll, PA34 4TB
tel: 01852 300419 fax: 01852 300394 email: mike@easdale.org web: www.easdale.org

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Registered Office: 6 Easdale Island, Argyll, PA34 4TB. Scottish Charity No. SC027102*

and bowser, should allow us to deal with the problem in a manner which is sensible, legal and cost effective.

Renovation of Harbour

This is our most ambitious and perhaps longest term project. The harbour which serves the island is in a serious state of disrepair and is silted up. The decline of the harbour is accelerating and if action isn't taken in the next few years it will be lost forever. Apart from its historical significance as a grade B listed structure, the harbour is essential for all living on the Island and loss of the harbour would threaten the existence of the community.

Renovation of the harbour would involve at least partial rebuilding of the walls, dredging, and stabilisation of the adjacent foreshore to prevent silting up and blocking of the entrance. Argyll & Bute Council dredge the entrance annually in order to allow access for the ferry.

We have been advised by engineers that there are two methods of stabilising the foreshore. The first would involve gabions or concrete mattresses placed along the length of the shore. The second, our preferred scheme, would involve the construction of breakwaters at the North and South entrances to Easdale Sound. This would have the result of creating a large outer harbour and would have substantial economic benefit for Easdale, the adjacent mainland and Argyll generally. We understand that, because of the topography, such breakwaters could be constructed cost effectively in the required locations. It seems to be generally acknowledged that there is a lack of infrastructure for recreational sailing and boating, a growing aspect of tourism which would appear to be the only ray of hope in an otherwise declining industry.

This is an exciting and ambitious project which could reverse years of economic decline, and we feel that your support would greatly enhance the possibility of a successful outcome.

Other than the Community Hall, these projects are dependent on our securing the required land from the owner, Clive Feigenbaum. We have reached agreement in principle with him for the purchase of plots of ground for the sewage and refuse facilities for £1 each and for a 50-year lease on the harbour for a £1 per annum rental. These agreements are currently in the process of being formalised by the solicitors of both parties.

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Public Consultation

The Trust has had a policy of ongoing consultation with members, residents and property owners on Easdale, other voluntary organisation such as the Easdale Island Residents' Association and Seil and Easdale Community Council, Argyll and Bute Council, and our representatives at both the Edinburgh and Westminster Parliaments.

To further this consultation process, we intend to organise a public consultation meeting, if possible in June this year, to which we will invite local voluntary groups as well as the general public, our local Councillors and National Political representatives.

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