Thursday June 4th to Wednesday July 1st

FESTIVAL OF EVENTS
in Lewis and Harris

Little Lionhearts!
Full report: Page 5

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If you would like to advertise changes with us online, get in touch by phone on 07867 861090 or email at info@welovestornoway.com
Promotion for island footie

By Annie Delin

Women’s football in the Western Isles is getting more promotion than ever, thanks to support from CalMac’s Community Fund.

More than 140 young women from across the islands took part in the first every primary age women’s football association festival of football, held in Leverburgh before lockdown began.

Lewis and Harris Women’s Football Association coach Euan ‘Moley’ Macleod said: “Our projects have enabled girls from throughout the Western Isles to meet and compete against each other. In Leverburgh we had girls and teams attending from Ness and Barra. In total we had over 60 girls in attendance with ten coaches.

“The CalMac award has not only enabled the young female footballers to play more football this past year, but hopefully for many years to come.”

As a way of sustaining the sport, LHWFRA proactively encourages players to become coaches. Players coming up to age 16 are encouraged to volunteer as lead coaches during primary sessions.

Once the girls turn 16, the club pays for them to gain their SFA coaching qualifications. CalMac support last year enabled the association to pay travel expenses for four girls to attain their SFA club coach award in Dingwall.

CalMac’s Community Fund supports numerous non-profit organisations in the mainland ports and islands the company serves. Last year the fund was designed to benefit the lives of children and young people living in west coast communities, with awards between £500 and £2,000 on offer.

Applications were judged by a screening panel of young people recruited from across the company’s network, in partnership with Young Scot and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar’s community learning and development team.

CalMac’s corporate social responsibility manager, Gordon McKillop, said: “I’m delighted we have been able to support the growth in girl’s football in the Western Isles. We have helped lay the foundations for sustainable growth of the sport across the islands in the future.”

MACFARLANE, WILLIAM.
In loving memory of a wonderful Husband, Father, Grampa, and dear Friend to many, who died on 25th MAY 2019.

Your life was a blessing, your memory a treasure,
You are loved beyond words and missed beyond measure.

Angus & Matri xxx

They say there is a reason,
They say time will heal,
Neither time or reason will change the way I feel.

Gone are the days we used to share
But in my heart, you are always there,
The gates of memories will never close
I miss you more than anyone knows.
Love and miss you every day Dad.

Carolyn xxx

Grampa, you are dearly missed.

Anne xxx

I often took for granted the things you used to do
You often said “I would miss you” - your words oh so true.

This last year without you is the saddest I have known,
I treasure now the memories when you were here at home,
Remembering you is easy every day
The thought of being without you - it never goes away.

Friends of The Nicolson
A recently formed charitable Trust to assist pupils of The Nicolson Institute with the cost of travel to the mainland

Find out how you can help advance the next generation of Nicolson pupils at www.fotn.org.uk

Alasdair Allan MSP/BPA
Surgery Notice

In light of Scottish and UK Government guidance regarding the COVID-19 pandemic my constituency office is currently closed.

My staff and I are still working, although, in line with the current guidance, we are doing so from home.

I can still be contacted via www.alasdairallan.scot as well as by telephone or email as detailed below.

Telephone: 01851 700 357
Email: alasdair.allan.msp@parliament.scot

www.alasdairallan.scot

NEXT EDITION: The deadline for information and advertising is Tuesday 23 June. The newspaper will appear on Wednesday 1 July.
The Community LED by Energy Champions project, run as a partnership between Urras Oighreachd Chàrlabhaigh (UOC) and Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn (UOG), has now come to a close.

Between April 2018 and March 2020, the Community LED team delivered a plethora of positive, energy-related results for members of the two communities, in the form of home visits, training days, informative events and workshops.

Individuals across the demographic benefited from these visits and sessions, with some receiving official qualifications and training as a direct result of their involvement. Additionally, 319 homes across the two Estates gained advice on how to make their homes more energy efficient.

Prior to the Community LED by Energy Champions project, both UOC and UOG had previously been involved in a similar development, delivered by Tighean Innse Gall. This preceding project had provided LED lightbulbs and home energy advice to residents on the Estates. However, as a result of excellent uptake and long waiting lists for visits, clear demand for these services within the community was demonstrated.

Community consultation carried out by the Trusts only further reiterated that fuel poverty and climate change were important subjects in the lives of people on the Estates. However, as a result of excellent uptake and long waiting lists for visits, clear demand for these services within the community was demonstrated.

Community consultation carried out by the Trusts only further reiterated that fuel poverty and climate change were important subjects in the lives of people on the Estates. It was felt that the Community LED by Energy Champions project also enabled 36 volunteers, many of them young people, to gain film-making and editing experience through creating a bilingual documentary called ‘An-Dràsta’ (Now!).

‘An-Dràsta’, which focused on the effects of and responses to climate change in the Outer Hebrides, is the only documentary of its kind, creating a bilingual documentary called ‘An-Dràsta’ (Now!).

Significantly, energy achievements have been made as a result, with lasting legacies. Home visits carried out by the project staff focused on helping households to cut down on energy bills and make homes more efficient. These visits have made individuals more aware of their usage and of methods to help save carbon, which will have many lasting benefits, outwith the obvious economic ones.

Individuals who participated in carbon literacy training are now able to provide advice to colleagues and family alike, enabling them to better refer others to key associated services. And aside from these achievements, the Community LED by Energy Champions project also enabled 36 volunteers, many of them young people, to gain film-making and editing experience through creating a bilingual documentary called ‘An-Dràsta’ (Now!).

‘An-Dràsta’, which focussed on the effects of and responses to climate change in the Outer Hebrides, is the only documentary of its kind, making it a valuable resource. It has gone on to be screened at several notable events, including the FilmG award in the Dùthchais as Fheàrr category, which explores the connection between the Gaelic language and the environment. This aspect of the project has created strong vocational outputs for the young people involved, with one saying: “I learnt loads of different things about film making”. Civic engagement amongst them has also increased as a result.

Further praise has been echoed from partners involved in the overall project. Kathleen Macdonald of Community Energy Scotland said: “Community Energy Scotland would like to highlight our support for the Community LED project and all it has achieved since it began. It has showcased the drive and desire for community groups to take the real and serious issues being faced by individuals within their communities and try and positively impact on these”. Rachel Elliott of Scottish Water added: “By working directly with the community, Carloway Estate Trust were able to give personalised advice, ensuring residents [get] the advice and water saving devices that they will get the most benefit from.”

From the results listed, it is clear that the project has delivered significant outputs for local residents, and some food for thought for wider audiences. Economic and educational benefit surrounding carbon literacy will have a lasting impact on people’s behaviour towards their energy usage, which will only benefit future generations.

Carloway Project Officer Ally Maciver, Galson Project Officer Louise Senior, and Project Administrator Abigail Leach.
Government advice regarding the Coronavirus, COVID-19 outbreak our priority at Harris Tweed Hebrides is to protect our Stornoway. Mill production and order fulfilment will continue as normal. Website and shop telephone orders will continue to be fulfilled.

In light of Government advice around a changing situation with the Coronavirus, Harris Tweed Hebrides has now taken the decision to close its Stornoway Mill and shop. We are sure this will present an inconvenience to our customers but it is necessary to ensure that our workforce is protected.

Although we are now closed because of the Coronavirus, we realise that we have many items that may brighten our days with everyone stuck at home.

Looking at the history of previous pandemics can also inform today’s scientists about what to do and what not to do. Before the discovery of disinfectant, burning clothing and furniture was needed to stop the spread of infections. Some of the most popular posts have been the old milk bottles from local dairies, the two hand grenades, people creating their own mini museums, the Gibson letters and posts relating to the Dualchas na Mara/Heritage of the Sea project, in particular the piratical ‘piece of eight’ and a fisherman’s jumper.

Visitor Services Officer Isabal Macalchan said: “There is something for all the stall to get involved with; the Visitor Assistants who would normally welcome people to the museum have been working on a project to transcribe hundreds of letters from the Gibson collection, so that we can make these fascinating resources available to everyone, and supporting the Dualchas na Mara project by creating colouring pages for children.”

Through the Dualchas na Mara project, funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Museums Galleries Scotland, people with an interest in maritime heritage can find out more about the Museum and Archive’s maritime collections - including the work of the herring gutters and the local fishing boat, ‘The Muirneag’. The project has had to move to create online content, which includes retelling old Gaelic traditional stories and creating a video about Gaelic sea-related words for those learning.

‘Hebridean Connections’ - already an online digital archive - has seen many more people using its website for family history enquiries and our archaeology service continues to provide advice and guidance on planning and archaeological sites. The Museum and Archive service are also still providing general advice and answering enquiries.

Keep up to date with what the Heritage Team are working on by following Museum & Tasglann nan Eilean on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. A new YouTube channel has also been launched.

If you want more information then please contact Fiona or Anne on 01851 822748
email: anne.mackenzie@cne-siar.gov.uk
We are waiting to hear from you.
'Gas-tank' kittens on screen

By Annie Delin

A family of feral cats have become unlikely screen stars after sparking an emergency rescue operation.

Cat rescue group WISCK (Western Isles Support for Cats and Kittens) got an emergency call from staff at the BASF Pharma works at Callanish in mid-May, seeking help with an unusual feline problem.

Production supervisor Jack Gearty said: “We were planning the lift and replacement of a 25-tonne tank when one of our engineers came into reception to say that a cat had run right in front of him while he was getting the site ready.

“After a worrying few hours, where both adults completely ignored the kittens and we feared we may have to step in and bottle feed them, both mums started to feed all the kittens together.”

In fact the adult cats wanted to have as little as possible to do with the humans who rescued them from injury or separation, but they were clearly absolutely devoted to each other.

Karen believes they are mother and daughter who had litters close together and are sharing childcare – but keeping an eye on them proved challenging, and that’s where a bit of screen time proved an ideal way to provide eyes-on care without adding to the stress for the feral mums.

She said: “This very unique family seem to be doing well now and the adults are both eating. They are so sweet together but just to keep an eye on things we’ve moved the Catcam into their pen for the moment.”

Staff at BASF have been given warm congratulations for alerting the rescuers, as Karen said: “Thank you so much to everyone at BASF for alerting us to this family and for being so caring about their wellbeing.”

And BASF’s Jack Gearty said he’s now hyper-aware of cats around the company buildings. “I’ve never noticed them much before, but everyone here is concerned – we’re all into cats and now we’re noticing them around the place.

“I know we’ve never had any issues with mice in the building, even though both we and the fish-farm next door keep the kind of materials which might attract them, so if there is a feral colony around, they’re obviously doing a good job!”

Plea for help with kitten deluge

By Annie Delin

An island-based animal welfare group has issued an urgent appeal for funds as they face a perfect storm – with overwhelming need for their services, limitations on their activities and a loss of fundraising opportunities during the coronavirus pandemic.

Western Isles Support for Cats and Kittens (WISCK) has been in existence for less than six months, but already the group has filled the gap left when the national cat charity quit the Western Isles in December 2019.

Right now, a band of volunteers is providing food, shelter and round-the-clock care for 32 kittens and 15 adult cats – and there are kittens and cats daily in need of more help.

Cat-care co-ordinator and vice-chair of WISCK Karen Cowan said: “Spring is always the busiest time of year for cat rescue, with nature taking its course and un-neutered pets out looking for mates, at the same time as feral colonies produce dozens of kittens at any one time.

“This year there has been the added strain of seeing a collapse in opportunities for fundraising as events are cancelled and shops shut, plus we’ve had to put in place a completely new set of working practices to keep our volunteers safe as well as our cats.”

As lockdown began, WISCK successfully introduced social distancing, a cleaning rota for the pens and home-working foster-carers served by a doorstep drop-off system for food and litter. Then kitten season began and the calls started coming in.

Karen said: “We had increased our social media activity and took all our committee business online, but cat pens still needed cleaning, injured and sick cats need to be taken to the vet and there were urgent calls to step in as feral cat numbers reached their seasonal peak.

“Animal welfare is an essential activity, so we can still travel if we need to – for example when we took a call from BASF at Callanish to rescue a kitten family at risk from heavy machinery when a gas tank was being moved – but we do have to protect our volunteers at the same time as caring for cats.”

And the cats showed no sign of limiting their activities. One trapping exercise in Shawbost brought 20 adults into care, of which eight females were pregnant – hence the deluge of kittens now being cared for.

In normal times pregnant mother cats from feral colonies are taken into care and kept until the kittens are born, before being neutered once they have finished rearing the litter. Feral kittens can make loving family pets if they are socialised young enough and adult ferals are often welcome around crofts and industrial sites for their pest control abilities, as long as reproduction can be kept under control.

Karen said: “The trouble with people failing to neuter their pets is that we end up with far too many stray and feral cats producing kittens. It means overwhelming numbers of cats in some areas and defects and weaknesses because of inbreeding.”

Some of these mean that feral kittens can’t survive despite the best care, and the stress of being in captivity also means that some feral mothers reject kittens or even injure them. There’s been a fair amount of heartbreak this season as well as the picture-perfect cuteness.

Luckily WISCK not only has a strong committee, but a huge back-up team of willing volunteers, as Karen explains: “We have people who will pick up bags full of smelly bedding and return it to us freshly laundered, people who clean out pens and poo trays and one lady who knits us super-cuddly blankets for tiny kittens.

“Kittens may need hand-feeding, bathing, treating for infections or parasites and generally being taught how to trust humans. Our foster carers are brilliant and we are all prepared to lose sleep if a cat needs our help.”

There’s been a plethora of fundraising ideas, including one supporter who is walking 5k a day for the month of May, and another who entered a pet-food competition and won five bags of cat biscuits. An online ‘Pisseag Pageant’ yielded over £700 in entry fees from cat owners – best in show was 19-year old Midge (pictured).

Donations small or large, one-off or regular can be taken by Paypal or direct donation by bank transfer to Western Isles Support for Cats and Kittens, Royal Bank of Scotland. sort code 83-27-12, account number 15988656. Contact WISCK via their Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/westernislessupportforcatsandkittens/ or by email at wisck2020@gmail.com
Intergenerational volunteering in the community

Due to COVID-19, our volunteering has adapted and changed. We are encouraging home-based volunteering unless essential. To carry on building our intergenerational links, we have worked with the Stornoway Primary hub class and Trust Housing in Lewis Street and Matheson Road to bring some entertainment to residents.

The children from the Stornoway Primary went on their exercise hour to sing Gaelic songs and dance for the residents to bring some fun to everyone’s day!

Adhering to guidelines, residents watched from open windows or sat in the courtyard from a safe distance. Volunteer Centre Western Isles has also organised an intergenerational pen pal system between the Stornoway Primary, Faile Centre and Trust Housing, where letters are sent to Volunteer Centre staff and scanned and sent between older and younger pen pals to encourage letter writing skills and to build relationships between pupils and older generation.

For more information, please contact lewis@volunteercentrewi.org

Volunteering and COVID-19

So many people are helping their communities across the Western Isles by volunteering on a day to day basis and right now, the response from people has been amazing. So amazing, in fact, that some local charities are not needing any more volunteers right now, but this may change as the Coronavirus situation changes.

More volunteers will be needed over the coming weeks and as these opportunities become available, we will advertise them through our website www.volunteercentrewi.org and our facebook page Volunteer Centre Western Isles (Lewis).

If you would like to help, there are lots of ideas below.
If you would like to register to volunteer, please contact info@volunteercentrewi.org for details.

If you would like to volunteer:

If you are not currently volunteering but would like to help out then thank you, that is fantastic. Our advice is very simple: Think local and act locally! Basic neighbourliness is absolutely vital in a crisis, whether it is extreme weather or coronavirus, and it is often the little acts of kindness that have the most impact.

We have received a huge number of volunteer requests through Ready Scotland and Volunteer Scotland supported people into a wide variety of volunteering, both in their community in essential roles and in home based volunteering to support the COVID-19.

We have information on a wide range of home-based volunteering that you may be interested in, such as Sewing, knitting and home crafting for local care homes, including making scrubs and telephone befriender for various organisations such as Silver Line, Lewis Befriending, Chest, Heart and Stroke Scotland.

If you are involved in a community group or organisation:

We have launched our new Volunteering and COVID-19 portal page on www.volunteercentrewi.org. On this page where you will find advice on how to help during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We realise there is a lot of information around at the moment – this portal contains trusted information for volunteer involving community groups, organisations and volunteers, including ‘off the shelf policies’ for supporting volunteers during the COVID-19 pandemic and links to funding. We can support you to support your volunteers.

Please check our website www.volunteercentrewi.org for more info or phone us on 01851700366.
Thank You

This Volunteer’s Week, we would like to say a heartfelt thank you to all our local community volunteers, both for the overwhelming volunteer response to the coronavirus crisis and for the volunteering you do throughout the year.

OUR COMMUNITY IS STRONGER BECAUSE OF YOU

from

Volunteer Centre Western Isles

and our partners in

Third Sector Interface Western Isles

www.volunteercentrewi.org
By Annie Delin

A small army of handy crafters are putting nimble fingers to work throughout the Western Isles to meet a new need which has emerged during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Scrubs are the new capes, with super-hero health and care-workers needing several sets each to ensure that they can be clean for work and protected from transmitting infection as they look after the more vulnerable among their residents.

And with more and more people looking for ways they can put their spare time to work to help their community, the Volunteer Centre Western Isles has found a ready army of helpers prepared to get to work stitching the essential items.

Volunteer Centre joint manager Suzanne Macaulay said: “Right at the beginning of lockdown we had over 90 volunteers coming forward through the Ready Scotland volunteer campaign, all looking for things that they could do to help.

“We’ve been placing volunteers into suitable roles to help in their communities, but we’ve also been keen to promote home-based volunteering to protect people from risk and keep as many people busy at home as possible. Sewing scrubs, scrub bags and face-masks is exactly the kind of work people are keen to take up.”

The Volunteer Centre used a grant for Covid-19 response work, £3,000 received from NFU Mutual, to buy the materials for scrubs including fabric, ribbon and buttons and full-size patterns printed at Stornoway Media Centre.

These have been distributed throughout the islands. The Volunteer Centre are working in partnership with Ruth Bharraigh to co-ordinate the Barra response and they have brought together a team of stitchers and sewers in Uist, with a similar approach in Lewis and Harris.

One of the Lewis stitchers is Tina Burgess, who’s been working on scrubs since lockdown began and getting support from Helen Macaulay at Stitch in the Ditch in Tong. Tina said: “I’ve been sending fabric to two ladies in Harris and there’s two of us in Lewis, but I am sure that there are plenty more.

“’The Volunteer Centre has now taken over the co-ordinating role, which is very helpful, and they provide links to tutorials on how to make the scrubs. I personally think that scrub bags are also extremely useful as they allow a whole set of scrubs to be washed with minimal handling.”

In Uist two care homes – Sacred Heart House in Dallburgh and Trianaid Care Home at Carinish, North Uist – have already placed a request for scrubs to fit each of their 60 careworkers. Each needs a minimum of two sets of scrubs to rotate between shifts and Vicki Manchester, Volunteer Centre development worker (Uist), is co-ordinating the Uist-based team.

One of the stitchers is North Uist seamstress Margaret Cowie, who had already done some sewing in a previous job but describes herself as “not very fast.” She has volunteered to cut fabric into lengths and package it up with the right thread, tape and facings to make one set of scrubs per bundle.

Vicki said: “We’ve got a team of nine and rising every day, including ladies from North Uist, Benbecula and South Uist. We even have one lady in Glasgow, who is a costume maker for the TV series Outlander. She’s been furloughed so she has put her time and her studio at our disposal to start producing scrubs for Uist care-workers.”

Some volunteers are also making scrub bags – which allow a whole set to be put straight into the wash without being handled – and face masks.

Vicki calculates that the team needs to create at least 120 sets of scrubs, but she says: “It depends on who we’ve got, how much time they have around childcare, home schooling and their own jobs, what time they want to put in – because after all this is voluntary.”

“As far as we are concerned, as long as we have funding for the materials and volunteers to do the sewing, we will keep doing it and we’ll welcome further demand.”

Anyone who would like to volunteer their time and skills to make scrubs, face-masks and scrub bags, or who is already making items and would like to get free patterns and materials, can contact the Volunteer Centre Western Isles on 01851 700346 (messages are collected regularly from this phone number) or email info@volunteercentrewi.org.

NEW WEBSITE FOR TSI WESTERN ISLES

Funded by the Scottish Government to provide a single point of access for support and advice for the third sector, TSIWI is part of a network of 32 interfaces across Scotland, one for each local authority.

TSI Western Isles is made up of six partners from across the Western Isles:

• Volunteer Centre Western Isles
• Voluntary Action Barra & Vatersay (VABY)
• Uist Council of Voluntary Organisations (UCVO)
• Harris Voluntary Service
• Volunteering Hebrides
• Outer Hebrides Social Enterprise Partnership (OHSEP)

We want to hear from any organisations or individual we can support through these roles.
Volunteers’ Week - which runs from June 1 to 7 - Police Scotland say: "we would like to thank our volunteers once again for the outstanding contribution they continue to make at this extraordinary time.

An appeal was issued to all Special Constables (SPCs) and their employers in March asking them to consider increasing their commitment, and in the space of just nine weeks (March 23 to May 24, 2020) SPCs deployed for 25,656 hours between them, working 2,990 shifts. This is more than double the amount of hours deployed and shifts worked compared to the same period last year.

In addition, in the past year more than 1,100 youth and adult Police Scotland Youth Volunteers (PSYV) have volunteered more than 64,000 hours, assisting at more than 1,500 events across the country. PSYV has not been able to deploy during the pandemic, however they continue to keep in touch with their co-ordinators and have been actively supporting their Police colleagues and other keyworkers from home.

Assistant Chief Constable John Hawkins said: “National Volunteers’ Week is a chance to say thank you to the millions of volunteers across the UK who make such a valuable contribution to their local communities, and none are more deserving than our own SPCs who are increasing their hours on the frontline to help communities at this critical time. While SPCs have always been considered a vital and valued feature of policing in Scotland, they continue to make at this extraordinary time.

It is more important than ever that their role is recognised and I would like to sincerely thank them all once again for their efforts.

ACC Hawkins added: “While Police Scotland undoubtedly benefits from the experience our volunteers bring, we also hope the opportunity is unlike any other where you gain confidence, new skills and get the chance to help people in need and support your local community. Although there are some basic requirements that need to be satisfied, ultimately we are always looking for people who want to make a real difference.

Society has collectively stepped forward over the past few weeks to protect the NHS and save lives, and never have volunteers been so appreciated for the vital role they are playing in this. If you are considering finding a way to give back to your community, joining Police Scotland as a volunteer is a fantastic opportunity to do something great.”

For more information on becoming a Police Scotland volunteer, visit www.scotland.police.uk/recruitment/special-constables

Key role of volunteer Special Constables

Special Constables have pledged tens of thousands of hours so far to support Police Scotland’s response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

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For more information on becoming a Police Scotland volunteer, visit www.scotland.police.uk/recruitment/special-constables

Praise for volunteers from MSP

As Volunteers’ Week (1-7 June) began, Na h-Eileanan an Iar SNP MSP Alasdair Allan paid tribute to volunteers who have helped the NHS and local communities in the Western Isles.

Volunteers’ Week is an annual celebration of the contribution and work of millions of volunteers who give up their time to help others.

During this pandemic, volunteers have signed up to help in record numbers through the Scotland Cares initiative - over 53,000 in one month - joining the thousands of people who were already helping, either with one of Scotland’s many voluntary and community sector groups or informally with neighbours.

Alasdair Allan MSP said: ‘Volunteers’ Week gives us a chance to celebrate the contributions of volunteers who have made such a huge difference to life in the Western Isles.

“I have often said before that I think every week is volunteers’ week in the Western Isles, as we have an exceptional record of volunteering and voluntary work. Many people in the islands have now taken on Covid-19 related volunteering roles to help communities deal with the many consequences of the coronavirus, and it’s more important than ever to show our appreciation for their hard work.

“I want to say a massive thank you to all of the volunteers who have helped, and continue to help, the NHS and their local communities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

“Volunteers will be critical in our efforts to support and rebuild our communities, and I am sure I speak for everyone when I say we are all appreciative and grateful to those who are ensuring people get the help and support they need.”
Westside foodbank under way

By Annie Delin

The latest initiative to tackle hardship brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic is now well under way on the west side of Lewis.

Barvas Foodbank was launched on May 12th and is already meeting the needs of families and individuals struggling to make ends meet as jobs are cut and workers remain on furlough.

It’s the latest in a series of specifically local initiatives run by volunteers to ensure that people in their own districts don’t go short of essentials, with Eilan Star Foodbank, Tong Food Boxes and the Salvation Army’s Stornoway branch among the initiatives to ensure that people don’t go hungry.

Community development worker for Ness and the Westside Sarah Campbell had just prepared for the first meeting of a new Westside youth club closed down and lockdown hit mid-March. Determined to do something within the community to try and address the situation, she spoke to parents who’d been prepared to help with the youth club and they resolved to look at practical support in a different way.

Barv and Brue community centre opened earlier to gather together food items and parcel them up for people who needed a bit of a boost for their shopping essentials.

Sarah said: “We had put together a Facebook page and created a shopping list of essential food items and we approached the councillors for the Westside and Ness. With £500 from their donations and another £500 from the Barvas Trust, plus £1200 from Foundation Scotland, we were able to buy supplies and get a food bank started.”

The food donated is assembled into parcels, with dietary needs taken into account so that anyone with allergies or intolerance to particular foods gets only what suits their diet. It is then delivered to the doorstep of those who need it.

Barvas and Brue Community Centre is now open on Tuesdays and Fridays from 3.15 to 4pm to collect in donations, with volunteers working at safe distances inside to package up parcels.

Sarah said: “The area we cover is between Ness and Dalbeag, and we have been working with school secretaries to make contact with families eligible for free school meals, as well as with community nurses and advocacy workers to identify adults who might need some food support.

“But we’re also accepting requests from individuals, with discretion assured to anyone who needs any help. We’re expecting a lot more demand as time passes, because it seems increasingly likely that this crisis isn’t going away any time soon and we are ready to be of help to anyone who needs it.”

And Sarah added: “A huge thank you to Ivan Brown, Manager of the Barvas Trust, who has been an integral part of the food bank and his support is greatly appreciated.”

If you know anyone who would benefit from food support and who lives between Ness and Dalbeag, you can contact Sarah on 07927 236450, Murdo on 07770 824552 or 01851 840284, or Louis on 07870 362449.

New UK award for wind farm charity

Island community wind farm company Point and Sandwick Trust was on Wednesday May 27 named as the winner of another major UK award for social enterprise.

The Trust, which owns and operates the Beinn Ghrideag wind farm near Stornoway, is the "Environmental Champion" in the NatWest SE100 Social Business Awards 2020.

The organisation was also listed for the first time in the SE100 Index, a list of the top 100 social enterprise businesses in the UK. It was among the eight from that list which received an award for being “the most outstanding achievers”.

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There was a total of eight big awards. The others recognised excellence in Growth, Impact Management, Trailblazing, Social Investment, Leadership, Resilience and Storytelling.

The SE100 judges agreed that Point and Sandwick Trust was “a clear winner” in the SE100 Environmental Champion category, as a “well-structured, impartial organisation serving the local community on a range of social and environmental fronts”.

They also noted the organisation’s focus outside its immediate locality, towards the wider Hebridean islands, and were impressed by its “credible” projects which create “social value”.

The SE100 Index is compiled to “celebrate the growth, impact and resilience of social ventures in the UK” and Megan Peat, CEO of NatWest Social & Community Capital, congratulated “all the social enterprises who have made it onto this year’s lists”.

She added: “In such incredibly tough times, when we don’t really know what’s going to happen next, it’s very encouraging to see the continued interest from them. It shows that things are still going well in the community.”

Point and Sandwick Trust has previously won Best Community Project at the Scottish Green Energy Awards and the Celebrating Communities Award at the Scottish Charity Awards – all in 2018 – and Best Community Project at the Scottish Green Energy Awards in 2015.

"The darkness of this gloomy night shall pass away...

Have patience, wait but do not sit idle; work while you are waiting; smile when you are warmed with monotony;
be firm while everything around you is being shaken...”

-Abdu’l-Bahá

If you are interested in any of the online activities for adults, children or junior youth programme please call 07798 700443

Bahaiteachings.org

www.bahai.org.uk

Elevated Conversations

Calling all who are interested in uplifting, spiritual and elevated experiences; acts of service, artistic expressions for young and old...please call 07798 700443

Although all of us have had to change many arrangements – and our usual pattern of meetings and activities has radically altered – nevertheless the work has continued apace, with innovative and creative ways being found to bring Bahá’u’lláh’s message of hope to many.

Rather than slowing down, the current situation has provided many opportunities for people everywhere to connect together – albeit electronically – to take stock of their lives, and to consider the question of material means and what is truly important in life.

Conversation themes are naturally emerging out of the concerns of this time on many subjects, including global governance, science and religion. The importance of community, environment and the fact that a fundamental change is needed in the world’s economic and social system.

An unprecedented number of people have come forward to share prayers at Devotions, to discuss a path of service, through the study of Ruhi Institute materials, to hold virtual Children’s classes and junior youth programmes, using online platforms.

Sharing prayers has been the most popular activity during the lockdown, with many new devotionalists opening up online, within families and homes. Hopefully these efforts could be sustained in the weeks and months ahead as the health crisis eases.

Devotions for the month of June will be on topics of joy, crisis and wellness.

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www.hebevents.com 04/06/20 - 01/07/20

By Annie Delin

The latest initiative to tackle hardship brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic is now well under way on the west side of Lewis.

Barvas Foodbank was launched on May 12th and is already meeting the needs of families and individuals struggling to make ends meet as jobs are cut and workers remain on furlough.

It’s the latest in a series of specifically local initiatives run by volunteers to ensure that people in their own districts don’t go short of essentials, with Eilan Star Foodbank, Tong Food Boxes and the Salvation Army’s Stornoway branch among the initiatives to ensure that people don’t go hungry.

Community development worker for Ness and the Westside Sarah Campbell had just prepared for the first meeting of a new Westside youth club closed down and lockdown hit mid-March. Determined to do something within the community to try and address the situation, she spoke to parents who’d been prepared to help with the youth club and they resolved to look at practical support in a different way.

Barv and Brue community centre opened earlier to gather together food items and parcel them up for people who needed a bit of a boost for their shopping essentials.

Sarah said: “We had put together a Facebook page and created a shopping list of essential food items and we approached the councillors for the Westside and Ness. With £500 from their donations and another £500 from the Barvas Trust, plus £1200 from Foundation Scotland, we were able to buy supplies and get a food bank started.”

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Bahaiteachings.org

www.bahai.org.uk
New virus books for children

Two new titles have been added to the library of books for children about Coronavirus, presented in Gaelic by Stornoway publishers Acair Ltd.

The short books are centred around characters created by writer Julia Donaldson and illustrator Axel Scheffler and see them taking precautions against coronavirus.

Zog the dragon, Tabby McTat and the Gruffalo – with his child – are all seen taking precautions such as washing their hands, staying at home and wearing face-masks, while home schooling and bringing shopping to older relatives are also featured.

The books were originally published by Macmillan Children’s Books UK and Scholastic and follow on from a number of co-editions between Acair and those two publishers.

An Acair spokesperson said that they were also grateful to Mòrag Stewart, Linda MacLeod and Mairi Sine Campbell, who translated the texts, and that they hope children enjoy reading them.

By Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler

Two new informative PDFs about coronavirus for children.

By Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler

Free to download from Acair’s Facebook and Twitter

AIR AN OIR

Iain D. Urchardan

Sgeulachdan túrail; eibhinn, blàth-chridheach ann an Gàidhlig bhrèagha na Hearadh. Seo an dàrna cruinneachadh leis an t-sàr sgeulaiche Iain Urchardan agus tha e gar toirt air turas drùidhteach tro àbhachdas, caoidh is gàirdeachas, gus meòrachadh air cor a’ chinne-daonna; gu h-àraidh a’ beachdeachadh air an dàimh phrìseil eadar athair is mac, agus an fhadachd is bròn a thig le call a’ cheangail sin.

An còmhnaidh, tha guth truacanta an ùghdair a’ soillseachadh an dorchadais ag a’ togail a’ chridhe.

ISBN: 978-0-86152-060-6

£11.99

Nach leugh sibh mu dheidhinn ciamar a tha a h-uile duine a’ dèanamh, agus a’ cumail glic an-dràsta? Le Julia Donaldson agus Axel Scheffler Ri ñithceinn an-asgaidh bhò Facebook agus Twitter Acair

Two new informative PDFs about coronavirus for children.

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@acairbooks
RAF plans to mark air-crash anniversary

By Annie Delin

A delegation from RAF Waddington plans to visit the Western Isles as soon as lockdown regulations are eased to pay tribute to the crew of a plane which crashed in Northton, Isle of Harris, 30 years ago.

RAF Waddington is now the home base of RAF 8 Squadron, but in 1990 the squadron were based at RAF Lossiemouth, and it was from there that an Arvo Shackleton aircraft, affectionately named Dylan, took off on a training mission code-named Benbecula at around 12 noon, asking for an approach to Benbecula from the west and saying that he was around 20 miles away.

It is not known how many people were about outside as, late in the morning, the familiar sound of an aircraft passing overhead was heard. The aircraft had also been heard in Tarbert passing low in the mist and many who still live in Harris remember the day well.

The whole village of Northton was shaken fiercely as the plane clipped the top of the hill Maodal and instantly exploded. Houses the length of the village shook and people rubbed outside, some thinking the explosion was in their own house.

One resident said: “I heard a noise that sounded like a roaring tide and I looked towards the sea, because it sounded like a rushing wave breaking – but the sea was flat and I realised later that it was the roar of the flames as the hillside burned.”

Villagers and emergency services raced to the scene. Dr Naylor, recently appointed GP, was one of the first to reach the site, along with school bus driver and special constable Angus John McVicar. He later recalled: “We could not see any wreckage until we got further up and the cloud then began to clear. You could smell the burning fuel. We came across debris and then some bodies and we knew it was really bad.”

Angus John described bodies scattered around a radius of 100 yards and a 10-foot piece of fuselage with a body trapped in it. Another lay alongside and others were scattered. He said: “Helicopters arrived from Lossiemouth and it was a very, very busy scene. We could only account for nine from the plane and some of us were sent to the back of the hill to see if someone had survived and had walked off in a daze. We were later told there was nobody alive.”

Angus John had seen the site and some of the bodies, and he told newspapers that he believed the plane could have cleared the 800-foot hilltop if it had been flying just two feet higher.

Ten men had been in the crew – all had been killed. A cordon was thrown around the crash site as stories circulated of press photographers trying to climb the hill at night to get pictures of the bodies and wreckage.

Three days later, coffins containing the remains of all ten crew members were taken from the hillside and transported, draped with flags, to Stormoway, where they were taken on board an RAF Hercules transport plane for the return to RAF Lossiemouth.

Those killed were:

- Wg Cdr Stephen Roncoroni, pilot
- Wg Cdr Chan Wrighton, navigator
- Flt Lt Jerry Lane, navigator
- Flt Lt Al Campbell, tactical coordinator
- Flt Lt Keith Forbes, fighter controller
- Fg Off Colin Burns, co-pilot
- MACr Roger Scutt, electronics operator
- FS Rick Ricketts, electronics operator
- Sgt Graham Miller, flight engineer
- Cpl Stuart Bolton, electronics engineer

Between the whole crew, six widows and 12 children were left bereaved. RAF Lossiemouth base staff and service personnel lined the route as five hearses carried the remains to a funeral director. A memorial service held a month later at the base filled an aircraft hangar with mourners.

In Harris, a memorial for the crews can be found on a cairn on the summit of Maodal, inscribed with the names of the crew who were lost. To mark the 30th anniversary of the accident, personnel from 8 Squadron had planned to travel to Harris and hold a memorial service alongside the crew’s family, friends and local people from Harris.

A spokesman from RAF Waddington said: “Although current travel restrictions stopped the planned visit, the squadron still want to pay their respects, not only to the lost crew but also to the people of Northton, Harris, of who many were first on the scene and offered a huge amount of support to all involved.”

Instead, on 30 April, Officer Commanding 8 Squadron, Wing Commander Williams gave a short reading followed by a minute’s silence at RAF Waddington. The commemoration was attended by a small number of squadron personnel.

UHI to start autumn term as planned

The University of the Highlands and Islands has confirmed that it intends to start its autumn term on the usual dates, with the majority of higher education students beginning their studies on Monday 7 September.

Further education students will also start at the times they usually would through their individual partner colleges and institutions.

The university partnership, which delivers educational opportunities to learners across the Highlands and Islands, Moray and Perthshire and beyond, will draw on its experience in blended learning to run courses in line with Scottish Government public health guidance. The approach will combine video conferencing and remote learning technologies as well as face-to-face teaching where possible and appropriate.

The decision was agreed by all 14 principals of the University of the Highlands and Islands partnership at a meeting in May.

Professor Crichton Lang, the university’s Principal and Vice-Chancellor, explained: “We have been developing and delivering our courses to students across our partnership and the world for over 20 years, connecting our students and our communities. We have established proven ways of learning through technology, delivering an active and personalised experience to our students who are supported through our university partnership colleges and research institutions.

“We will continue to draw on this experience and knowledge to deliver courses in the autumn term using our blended approach to teaching. This includes using video conferencing, inventive remote learning technologies and some face-to-face teaching where it is safe and important to do so.”

The university has also worked with the Highlands and Islands Students’ Association and Comann nan Oileanach at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig UHI to agree that there will be no graduation ceremonies, either in person or virtually, during 2020. Students who finish their courses this year will still receive official confirmation of their awards from the awarding body, with higher education students having their awards conferred and graduating in absentia. The university partnership is planning to organise events for 2021 which will enable graduates and guests to celebrate when it is safe to do so.

The university is still welcoming applications for courses starting in September. To find out about the range of opportunities available across the partnership or take part in an online open event, visit www.uhi.ac.uk.

Huge support for virtual challenge

Gumshie, smiles and a splash of pink made the Women’s Cancer Challenge on Saturday 16 May a virtual event to remember.

More than 225 people signed up to complete the challenge – even though it was not technically possible to enjoy the company of other runners and walkers, as has happened over previous years.

Instead the Women’s Cancer Challenge Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/WomensCancerChallenge/ was packed with images of people taking to the road, the beach, the Castle Grounds or their own garden path to complete a 30-minute exercise session on foot, by bike or on four paws.

The Women’s Cancer Challenge is one of the biggest annual fundraisers for Cancer Research UK’s Isle of Lewis branch, which like other fundraising groups has been hard hit by restrictions under Coronavirus lockdown.

Race participants look forward to the event each year, and an online poll to resolve whether the challenge should be cancelled or run virtually came up with a resounding 84% of votes in favour of holding a virtual event.

So organisers Tony and Kirsty Wade headed online, meaning that people could register and receive a race number by email, then complete their own challenge while conforming with social distancing guidelines, alone or in family groups.

Tony described the event yesterday as “quite a day” and full of stories – to which he and Kirsty added by filming a masterclass in men’s haircuts, guided by Kay from Men Only, and adding still further to the eventual total raised, to be posted in due course via social media.

All those who completed the challenge were awarded a virtual medal (picture) to add to the already sizeable collection of race t-shirts and medals held by many who have supported the event over the years.
Tomatoes
By John Dory

At the very outset of lockdown when there was a mad, hoarding scramble for supermarket shelves was tinned tomatoes.

Fortunately, the desire to stockpile certain foodstuffs subsidised and tinned tomatoes are no longer as scarce as hens’ teeth. Fresh and tinned tomatoes are incredibly nutritious and versatile and can be used in a huge variety of recipes to make sauces for pasta, pizza and seafood dishes or simply eaten raw in salads with herbs and cheese. There are over 7,500 varieties of tomatoes available world-wide and new hybrids are being constantly introduced, often to meet the needs of particular foodstuffs subsided and tinned products to disappear quickly off supermarket shelves was tinned tomatoes.

Although we sometimes think of tomatoes as quintessentially Mediterranean, the tomato first appeared in Mexico around 500 BC. It is thought that tomatoes were first brought to Europe by Spanish explorers returning from Central and South America. The Spanish and Italians were the first Europeans to recognise the potential of tomatoes in cooking and they featured in recipes from the mid-seventeenth century onwards.

The early development of new and hardy strains was centred around the Mediterranean and by the mid-eighteenth century there were more than 1,000 varieties being grown in Spain, Portugal, Italy and the south of France. These countries, to this day, eat far greater quantities per head of population than we do in the UK. It is interesting to note that earliest varieties grown were yellow in colour and not red and were called “golden apples.”

In recent years, health experts have hailed the many nutritional benefits of tomatoes including, especially, their lycopene content. This natural bioflavonoid is a powerful anti-oxidant and is believed to lower the risk of cancer, particularly prostate and colon cancer, and heart disease. Not only are tomatoes a good source of Vitamins A and C, but they also yield potassium, calcium and other mineral salts. Typically, tomatoes only contain a trace of fat and just 14 calories per 100g serving.

In one town in Spain called Buñol near Valencia there is an annual tomato festival with a difference called, “La Tomatina.” Every year, on the last Wednesday in August, the locals and visitors take part in a vast tomato fight or battle which lasts one hour. Before the fiesta starts, locals protect their houses and shops with plastic sheeting before lorries arrive with huge quantities of tomatoes. In 2015, an estimated 145,000 kilograms of tomatoes were used in La Tomatina. Once the fight is over, the streets are hosed down with water cannons and are left sparkling due to the acidity of the huge number of squashed tomatoes used in this unusual battle.

There are two recipes this month with tomatoes being the main ingredient in each one.

CHILLED TOMATO AND SWEET PEPPER SOUP WITH CROUTONS.

• A jar of roasted red peppers.
• 45ml olive oil.
• 1 onion finely chopped.
• 2 garlic cloves crushed.
• 650g ripe well-flavoured tomatoes or two tins of peeled plum tomatoes.
• 150ml red wine.
• 600ml vegetable stock.
• Salt and freshly ground black pepper.

FOR THE CROUTONS

• 2 slices day old white bread with crusts cut off.
• 60 ml olive oil.

In a large pan, heat the olive oil. Sauté the onion gently for around 10 minutes without browning. Add the chopped garlic for a couple of minutes. Chop up the roasted red peppers and add to the pan. Cut the tomatoes into large chunks and add to the pan. Cook gently for about 10 minutes. Add the wine and cook for a further 5 minutes. Add the stock with a little seasoning and simmer for 20 minutes.

Cut the tomatoes into large chunks and add to the pan. Sauté the onion gently for around 10 minutes without browning. Add the chopped garlic for a couple of minutes. Chop up the roasted red peppers and add to the pan. Cut the tomatoes into large chunks and add to the pan. Cook gently for about 10 minutes. Add the wine and cook for a further 5 minutes. Add the stock with a little seasoning and simmer for 20 minutes. To make the croutons, cut the bread into cubes. Heat the oil in a little frying pan and fry until tender and the cheese is bubbling. Drain on paper towels then store in an airtight jar or box. Process the soup in a blender until very smooth. Pour into a bowl or container and chill for three hours (you can also serve warm if preferred.) Season before serving. Serve in bowls, adding a swirl of cream if you prefer, and the croutons and snipped chives.

AUBERGINES WITH TOMATO AND MOZZARELLA.

• This is a variation on the classic Italian bruschetta but without the bread.
• 40-60 ml olive oil for brushing.
• 1 large aubergine or eggplant.
• 2 or three medium ripe tomatoes thinly sliced.
• A few basil leaves shredded.
• 120g mozzarella cheese sliced.
• Salt and freshly ground black pepper.
• A tin of anchovies (Optional.)

Preheat the oven to 190 C. Brush a baking sheet with a little oil. Trim the aubergines and cut it lengthways into four slices about 5mm or quarter inch thick. Arrange the slices on the greased baking tray. Brush the aubergine slices liberally with the oil and season.

Put under a hot grill for a few minutes. Remove the aubergines from the grill. Add about three or four tomato slices on top of the aubergines, overlapping them slightly, if necessary. Sprinkle over half of the shredded basil leaves. Top with the mozzarella and brush with more oil. (You can add the anchovies at this stage if you wish.) Bake for 15 minutes or until the aubergines are tender and the cheese is bubbling.

Afghanistan is in lockdown but, as we pointed out in last month’s EVENTS, this is difficult to enforce when many earn money daily, have no savings and will starve if they stay in their houses.

Universities are closed although some are continuing with courses through online classes. Many students haven’t a reliable internet connection. Some have returned home to the provinces and will recommence their classes after the summer break. It’s all very confusing for us and is resulting in considerable additional work in Afghanistan.

But, but... we have some great news. Shariwar Khwahany, who received the first medical scholarship from the Linda Norgrove Foundation, completed her studies, her practical training and is registered as a doctor.

She has now started working in a hospital helping Covid-19 patients in her native province of Badakhshan.

This is a real milestone for us; we now fund nearly 50 students studying to become doctors but Shariwar is the first to start work.

She featured in an article in our 2014 newsletter when she reported that her father had just lost his job and, as he was unable to pay for her education, she was very close to being forced into an arranged marriage. An LNF scholarship changed that.

Shariwar is the first but others follow, this year five students completed their academic studies and are receiving hospital-based practical training.

After so many years our programme is starting to make a real difference to so many of the sick in Afghanistan.

It’s all down to our donors and, to those of you who have helped, thank you.

One of our Doctors has started work!
A n Lanntair is offering three commission opportunities to artists to produce works to help redesign some of the art centre's spaces as we look towards reopening when government COVID-19 restrictions allow.

We would like to commission two artists to produce new images for our Café/Bar area, and a third to create a new installation in our Round Room.

In the Café/Bar area we’ll be replacing our two current wall-based artworks with new vinyl decals – one displayed in the harbour room and the other opposite the bar. We welcome submissions from artists around any theme, and especially those who would like to propose work based on or inspired by artwork they have developed or produced during lockdown.

Work can be in any visual medium (such as printmaking, painting, collage and photography) as long as it can be reproduced as a print measuring 6.4m x 2.2m.

An Lanntair will cover the costs of the production of the image, the install, and will also promote the successful commissioned image through our website and social media. The fee for each image will be a one-off payment to the artist of £600, with the artist retaining all copyright and rights to the image.

In our Round Room commission – an area within the cafe, used by families and young people, with an informal atmosphere – we’re looking for a painted installation integrating artwork with the space and its existing furnishings.

In an exciting brief – 'Paint It Over' – we want to radically transform this space using acrylic paint directly on the walls, surfaces, ceiling, furnishings and floor. We're looking for clear ideas which consider the use of the space, and a design which will envelop the room and its furnishings as one piece of art.

Deadline for all submissions is Friday, June 26th, and for full details on how to make your submission, please visit our website at www.lanntair.com.

And don’t forget – we have a huge variety of artistic and musical activities available online for young and not-so-young islanders to enjoy. Included is the stunning Hebridean Handbook, created by Lewis teacher and artist Alice Macmillan, as well as downloadable activities worksheets, sing-a-long Full Circle Music videos and much more.

To mark the 70th birthday on May 6, Derek Morrison’s photo.

He set out to raise £500 for Stornoway – the total now stands at more than £13,000!

S t o r n o w a y R N L I’s Branch Chair, John J Macleod (John Booly), who first joined Stornoway RNLI as volunteer crew in 1971, celebrated his 70th birthday on Saturday, May 9.

To mark the milestone, on Wednesday May 6, he completed a fundraising 37mile cycle from Stornoway to Carbost, via Breasclete, and back with the aim of raising £500 for Stornoway RNLI.

And at the time of writing, his JustGiving page – which is open until June 6 – has reached over £13,000!

"I just cannot get over the magnitude of the response, support and donations you have so willingly and so generously given to our Stornoway Lifeboat," said John in a message to all who have donated.

"As you know, traditional fund-raising opportunities like coffee afternoons, bag packing, flag days, and quiz nights are all suspended with Covid 19. So, your donations are extra meaningful.

"I am utterly amazed by the generosity of all who have donated to the worthy cause of Stornoway Lifeboat. That is just wonderful and the best Birthday present. So, a heart-felt thank you to all who have contributed."

Stop. Think. Stay Safe

RNLI in Scotland issues important safety advice before easing of lockdown

The RNLI in Scotland has reacted to the Scottish Government’s plans for easing lockdown with an important safety warning.

The government plans which will permit people to travel short distances, limited to five miles within their local area, for exercise including allowing outdoor swimming, kayaking and angling have promoted the lifesaving charity to call for the public to stay safe.

"With an unusually warm spring coupled with the easing of a lockdown which has seen many of us unable to visit our favourite beaches, we expect many people to be eager to hit the coast," said Jacob Davies, RNLI Lifesaving Manager for Scotland.

"However, just because the lockdown restrictions are being relaxed does not mean our coasts are safe, the dangers that have always been there remain. We ask those who are local to beaches to continue to be aware of the inherent dangers and to avoid taking risks.

"Scotland’s air temperature may be warming up but the sea temperature remains consistently chilly all year, jumping or falling into cold water or spending longer periods than normal submerged in the water can lead to, potentially fatal, cold water shock."

Michael Avril, Scotland’s Water Safety Lead for the RNLI and Chair of Water Safety Scotland, added: “The Scottish public need to remember the following safety advice: Stay in familiar surroundings, follow Scottish Government advice of remaining within five miles of your home, don’t put yourself, your family and emergency services at risk by taking risks, or assuming ‘it won’t happen to you’."

"If you do see someone at risk, call 999 and ask for the Coastguard."

The message from the RNLI in Scotland is clear, an easing of lockdown does not mean an instantly safer coast and water temperatures remain dangerously cold.

Remember: This is only Intermission; we’ll be back soon! Stay Safe. Keep Creating. And Keep Connected!
Scottish Crofting Federation

Focus on crofting policy

By Patrick Krause

Despite the current difficulties, with all-hands-on-deck to help with the Covid-19 response, there is still work being carried out within Scottish Government on policy issues that affect crofting.

At a recent meeting Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy, Fergus Ewing, gave SCF officials an update on what’s going on.

Whilst a lot of the work on a new agricultural policy for Scotland has been shelved due to the pandemic, the Farming and Food Production Future Policy Group work is continuing and a report should be published over the summer. Whilst a lot depends on funding coming from UK Government, which is as yet unclear, it is absolutely essential that we have a structure and the delivery mechanisms worked out as soon as possible – we cannot be left in the lurch. Catching up on the development of agriculture policy will be a priority as the crisis abates.

£70m is to be paid-out in March as the second tranche of convergence payment, following the same pattern as the first payment earlier this year, targeting the Less Favoured Areas. However, the 2021 rate for the Less Favoured Areas Support Scheme will fall to 40% of the amount the scheme used to pay. This is due to the phasing out of LFASS in Europe and the introduction of a new scheme for Areas of Natural Constraint, an option Scottish Government chose not to take. The 60% shortfall is to be made up using the convergence money, so the rebate ‘windfall’ expected as due compensation for under-payment in the past will be taken by Scottish Government to plug the self-inflicted gap in LFASS.

Plans for the replacement of LFASS with a Scottish scheme for the areas of natural constraint have been shelved for now, so it is not known yet what will happen in 2022. The Crofting Agriculture Grant Scheme should not be affected by Covid-19; inspections should not hold up payments as most can be done remotely. A significant proportion of payments can be made even if some parts of the process (e.g. planning) are delayed apparently. CAGS is under review currently to seek ways of improving the process and widening eligibility to reflect how crofts are worked now.

The Croft House Grant Scheme continues to operate and has recently awarded its 1000th grant. Since the scheme was launched in 2007, more than £21.2 million has been awarded to 1,008 families and individuals in rural and island communities.

SCF was heavily involved in revamping the scheme, improvements seeing an increase in grant levels and more targeting to those in need. Scottish Government is working on risk models and advice to ensure that livestock sales go ahead, and a lot has already been put in place – not least owing to the first-rate work the marts have done. Some croft businesses are falling through gaps in compensation schemes, for example the loss of tourism-related income. HIE runs a scheme for businesses in genuine hardship which fits B&Bs well but may exclude holiday cottages. People using a personal bank account were excluded, which could be many crofters. The scheme excludes those whose tourist-based business is below 50% of total income. Scottish Government acknowledges this and is looking at how to fill the gap.

Many crofters are also in-shore fishermen; a scheme for small boats (under 12m) has been introduced in Scotland – the first in UK to pay out.
While the library is closed, the eLibrary is open 7/24 for you to borrow and listen to or read the latest books. Here are our top ten lists, for adults and children, to give you a taster of what is available.

For more information on how to access these books, visit the Library from Home section on the Your Lockdown Library website – www.cne-siar.gov.uk/yourlockdownlibrary.

Enjoy!

TOP NEW EADUO BOOKS FROM BORROWBOX
Carver, C.J. Tell Me a Lie (Dan Forrester; 2) Thriller
Chapman, Julia Date with Death (Dalec Detectives Agency; 1) Detective
Jewell, Lisa The Family Upstairs popular title! Crime/Thriller
Jones, Sandie The Half Sister Crime/Thriller
Marks, Nadia One Summer in Crete Romance / Family
O’Leary, Beth The Switch Romantic Comedy
Parks, Alan Bobby March Will Live Forever Tartan Noir
Pokkanen, Sarah & Hendricks, Greer The Wife Between Us Thriller
Scott, Manda Roulica Historical Adventure

Halle, Stacey The Foundling Historical Fiction
Hawkins, Alis Those Who Know Detective mystery
Hiller, Jennifer Little Secrets Mystery
Jewell, Lisa The Family Upstairs Thriller
La Plante, Lynda Buried Thriller
Morris, Heather The Tattooist of Auschwitz Fiction
Pattchet, Ann The Dutch House Fiction
Pullman, Philip The Secret Commonwealth Fantasy
Ramsey, Coro The Seamer Detective mystery
Swati, Heidi The Secret Seaside Escape Romance

Top NEW EBOOKS FROM LIBRary / OVERDRive

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Pullman, Philip The Secret Commonwealth Fantasy
Ramsey, Coro The Seamer Detective mystery
Swati, Heidi The Secret Seaside Escape Romance

Featured titles:

**eBook**

*The Tattooist of Auschwitz*
by Heather Morris

In 1942, Lale Sokolov arrived in Auschwitz-Birkenau. He was given the job of tattooing the prisoners marked for survival – scratching numbers into his fellow victims’ arms in indelible ink to create what would become one of the most potent symbols of the Holocaust.

Waiting in line to be tattooed, terrified and shaking, was a young girl. For Lale – a dandy, a jack-thief, a bit of a charmer – it was love at first sight. And he was determined not only to survive himself, but to ensure this woman, Gita, did, too.

**eAudio**

*The Wife Between us*
by Greer Hendricks and Sarah Pekkanen.

A New York Times top-ten bestseller, ‘A fiendishly clever thriller in the vein of Gone Girl and The Girl on the Train. This one will keep you guessing.’

When you read this book, you will make many assumptions. It’s about a jealous wife, obsessed with her replacement. It’s about a younger woman set to marry the man she loves. The first wife seems like a disaster; her replacement is the perfect woman. You will assume you know the motives, the history, the anatomy of the relationships… You will be wrong!

End of era as librarian retires

By Annie Delin

Several generations of Barra children have been encouraged, sed and stimulated to a lifetime love of reading by Castlebay community librarian Linda Mackinnon, who retires from her post on June 11th after 36 years at her post.

And whatever the changes we have seen in the world recently, not seeing Linda among the bookselves at the school and community library is likely to be one of the changes most keenly felt when staff and pupils return in August.

Linda Mackinnon was, according to one colleague and former pupil ‘there with the bricks’, having started work when the library opened in 1984. Michelle Maclean, now head teacher at Castlebay primary school, said: “I was a pupil at the school when Linda was first librarian and she has not changed one single bit in the whole time I have known her – in the way she presents herself or in the enthusiasm that she has for books and children.

“She has always been really supportive of the primary children, passionate about the library and the children using it. Her library is in the heart of the school, so the kids are in and out all the time.

“She helps us to organise book hunts in the library, puts together bundles of books ready for us to use for our school topics and organises World Book Day so that children can come in and vote for their favourite book, with voting slips and pencils all ready like a little election.”

School secretary Mairi Campbell is one of Linda’s contemporaries and passes through the school library every day on the way to the school office. She’s also a personal friend and sees Linda every day, and she has seen how times have changed while Linda has been in the job.

She said: “I moved home to Barra in 1979 and the new school opened in 1983, which is when Linda started in the library. It was pen and paper that she used then and, when computers were introduced, she said ‘Oh no, I’ll stick with my pen and paper.’ That didn’t last – she became a whizz kid with the computer and there’s no pen and paper now.

“She is an amazing person and fantastic at her job – the children love her and she loves them. She is so keen to ensure that they are encouraged to read.”

Linda’s enthusiasm for books isn’t just limited to literature for children – she also keeps all the generations in Barra supplied with reading material matched to their interests.

Mairi said: “She has a huge passion for reading and it’s her own pastime too – she will quite happily spend hours reading. That shows when it comes to meeting the needs of library-users of all generations. She knows what people like and she is always picking books for them and thinking of other things that they would like.”

Linda’s passion for her job and for the people who come in to choose a good read has placed the library at the absolute heart of the Barra community, according to Western Isles head of libraries Kathleen Milne.

She said: “Linda is a born librarian, she just loves books. She knows what people like and her knowledge of children’s books is just extraordinary. Her mind is like a reference system – she knows where everything is kept and how to find something that would suit any reader.

“Her support for the children is fantastic. She is always encouraging them to read and suggesting what they could try.”

Retirement at a time of social distancing means there won’t be an event on June 11th – although staff are determined the day will not go unmarked. A proper send-off for Linda is planned when lockdown is lifted and people are free to gather and show their appreciation of everything she has done for the island’s readers.

In retirement, according to friend and colleague Mairi Campbell, she’s likely to spend more time appreciating her other passion, football. And, she says: “She’s a real sun-worshipper, so I can imagine her in a sun-lounger with a book in her hand and her cat by her side. We’ll definitely miss her, but it’s not as if she is going away from the island. I am sure we will be seeing her among the bookselves still!”

The Summer Reading Challenge is back with Silly Squad!

It’s almost time for this year’s Summer Reading Challenge, and for 2020 it’s all about funny books, happiness and having a laugh!

The Silly Squad is a team of animal friends who love to go on adventures and get stuck in to all different kinds of funny books. This year, our Challenge features extra special characters designed by the award-winning author and illustrator Laura Ellen Anderson, who you’ll know from amazing reads like Amelia Fang and Evil Empress Penguin.

You can join the Silly Squad on a new adventure by setting your own personal reading challenge to complete this summer. The new online platform will help you keep track of your books, reviews and the rewards you unlock along the way.

As always, we’ll have loads of brilliant book suggestions to get you started, and tips on how you can keep reading even while schools and libraries are closed. We’ll also have heaps of super silly activities, quizzes, videos, games and more to keep you entertained at home!

The library has a great collection of eBooks and eAudio books just for you so you can take part in the challenge. Head over to the Library from Home section at Your Lockdown Library (www.cne-siar.gov.uk/yourlockdownlibrary) to discover lots of fun and silly books you can read or listen to.

Silly Squad officially begins on Friday 5 June 2020 at summerreadingchallenge.org.uk

Keep an eye on the website for the latest Summer Reading Challenge news, including details of the fantastically silly Silly Squad launch party!
PLANNING APPLICATIONS DURING MAY 2020

The following planning applications are pending consideration by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

All information and accompanying documents are publicly available on the CnES website.

**ISLE OF LEWIS**

**Heat exchanger building, Callanish**

BASF (Pharma) Callanish has applied for planning permission to erect a heat exchanger building to house sea water cooling system and install pier access above MHWS line, associated with existing adjacent factory at BASF Pharma Callanish Ltd The Factory Breasclete.

**Additional development of factory, Callanish**

BASF (Pharma) Callanish has applied for planning permission for additional development at the factory at BASF Pharma Callanish Ltd, Breasclete. Developments will comprise of: new factory buildings; solvent recovery unit; new boiler house; sprinkler pump house and tank; fire water recovery tank; bunded tank farm; walkway-bridge, connecting to the existing factory building; and new service yards and access roads.

**New polycrub, Breasclete**

Murdina MacKenzie of 28a Breasclete has applied for planning permission to erect a polycrub at 28 Breasclete. The polycrub is to be 8 metres long, 4 metres wide and 3 metres high.

**New house, Vatisker**

John MacKenzie of 45 Overton Road, Sheffield, has applied for planning permission to erect a house at 19b Vatisker. Work is to include creating a new access, parking suitable for two cars and installing an air source heat pump. The two-storey house is to have three bedrooms, a kitchen/dining room, a living room, two bathrooms and a utility room.

**New polytunnel, Tolsta Chaolais**

Jenny Allenby of 12C Tolsta Chaolais has applied for planning permission to erect a polytunnel at 12C Tolsta Chaolais.

**New house, Point**

Stuart MacLeod of 2 Portvoller, Point, has applied for planning permission to build a house at 16B Portvoller. Work is to include creating an access and parking suitable for two cars.

**New house, Lochs**

Rosemary Bugler of 43 Lighthouse, Back, has applied for planning permission to build a new house at 48 Habost, Lochs. The house is to consist of two bedrooms, one bathroom, a kitchen/living/dining area and a boot room. Work is to include creating parking suitable for two cars.

**Extension, Point**

Mr and Mrs MacGeoch have applied for planning permission to build an extension and renovate the existing house at 3 Flesherin. Work is to include creating a new access.

**New agricultural building, Sandwich**

Daniel Maciver of 7 Esplanade Court, Stornoway, has applied for planning permission to erect a new agricultural building at 23 East Street, Sandwich. The building is to be 8 metres long, 5 metres wide and 4 metres tall.

**New polycrub, Barvas**

Calum Mackay of 9 Upper Barvas has applied for planning permission to build a polycrub at 9 Upper Barvas. The polycrub is to be 9 metres long, 4 metres wide and 2.7 metres tall.

**Renovation and extension of barn, Bragar**

Donald MacPhail of 41 South Bragar has applied for planning permission to renovate and extend the existing agricultural barn at 41 South Bragar. Work will also include erecting an 8 metre long, 4 metre wide and 2.612 metre tall polycrub.

**New agricultural barn, Tong**

S & G Stewart has applied for planning permission to erect an agricultural building at croft 8, Tong. The building is to be 22.86 metres long, 12.192 metres wide and 6.205 metres tall. Work is to include creating a new access and parking suitable for five cars.

**New agricultural building**

Donald Matheson of 40A Upper Coll has applied for planning permission to erect an agricultural building for storage of agricultural implements and material at 40A Upper Coll. The building is to be 7 metres long, 4 metres wide and 3 metres tall. The building is to have a timber frame and 0.5mm thick box profile coating.

**New house, Vatisker**

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**New domestic garage**

Alan Mackay of 31A Coll has applied for planning permission to erect an 8 metre by 12 metre domestic garage at 31A Coll.

**ISLE OF HARRIS**

**New electricity poles, Grosecleit**

Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks has applied for planning permission to interpole two new poles (one single pole 1a and one H-Pole 1b) on the existing 33kV overhead line at Stockinish substation, Harris at NG134942 to reinforce the network. One existing pole (pole 1) will also be replaced. All new poles and replacements will be of similar size and height of the existing overhead lines at Sub Station Grosecleit.

**Three new warehouses, Ardhasaig**

Isle of Harris Distillers Ltd has applied for planning permission to erect three new warehouses at 8 Ardhasaig. Work is to include creating an additional 12 parking spaces taking the total number of spaces to 16.

**Extension of hardstanding, Bowglass**

Irene Morrison of 2 Bowglass has applied for planning permission to create a hardstanding at Tasta n Sea Kiosk, 2 Bowglass. Work is to include creating a new access and sitting a storage unit.

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**Finding the right number for your council services...**

**SWITCHBOARD** 01851 600501
**CUSTOMER SERVICE** 01851 600502
**EMERGENCY OUT OF HOURS** 01851 701702

**SOCIAL WORK OFFICES:**
- **Stornoway:** 01851 822708
- **Tarbert:** 01859 502367
- **Bolavenich:** 01870 602425
- **Caithness:** 01871 810431
- **Business Gateway:** 01851 822775
- **Harbour Office/Mineral Fuels:** 01859 502367
- **Stornoway Bus Station:** 01851 704327
- **Council Tax:** 01851 600502
- **Roads & Pavements/Street Lighting:** 01851 822644
- **Cleansing Services/Refuse Collection:** 01851 822699
- **Recycling:** 01851 709900
- **Planning (Stornoway):** 01851 822690
- **Planning (Bolavenich):** 01870 604990

**Major Investment Projects:** 01851 822656

**TELEPHONE DIRECTORY:**
- [www.me-siar.gov.uk](http://www.me-siar.gov.uk)
- [ipservicetelephone.asp](http://ipservicetelephone.asp)
- [enquiries@me-siar.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@me-siar.gov.uk)
- [www.me-siar.gov.uk](http://www.me-siar.gov.uk)

**Automated Payment Line:** 0300 323 0090

**Ag Obar Còmhairle airdson na h-Eileanan Siar**
**Working Together for the Western Isles**
ONLINE GAELIC COURSE

Siuthadaibh - Go on!

Take this great opportunity to learn Gaelic at a time and place of your choosing. Lews Castle College’s on-line Gaelic course will give you the tools you need to have a chat with colleagues, understand Gaelic conversation in the office, in the staffroom or among friends.

A complete beginner? No problem. Have some Gaelic already? We’ve got that covered. Our two 12-week programmes will allow you to choose the level suited to your needs.

Gàidhlig don h-ùile duine - Gaelic for Everyone

For further information please contact: Angela Weir
angela.weir@uhi.ac.uk
01851 770457

NEW GAELIC MUSIC ONLINE LESSONS TO BE OFFERED FREE DURING LOCKDOWN

ARTS ORGANISATION OFFERS NEW SERVICE TO SUPPORT MUSIC LEARNING FROM HOME

19 May 2020. In a bid to support people, of all ages, with their learning and practicing of traditional music and Gaelic skills at home during lockdown, leading arts organisation, Fèisean nan Gàidheal, has launched a new online music tuition service, which will be free of charge to all.

Under the banner of FeisTV and with funding from Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Creative Scotland and Highlands & Islands Enterprise, a video series of traditional music lessons, at different levels, has been created in Gaelic and English to support those with no Gaelic, learners of the language and fluent Gaelic speakers. The Oide (meaning tutor in Gaelic) series currently offers lessons in accordion, fiddle and Gaelic song, with more instruments available soon, thanks to further funding from the Scottish Government.

The lessons, which are suitable for all ages and abilities, are led by some of the most experienced traditional music tutors in the country, including accordionist Ian Smith from popular folk band, Trail West, fiddler Robbie Greig, who plays with electronic folk band, INYAL, and singers James Graham, Eilidh Cormack (a member of female singing trio, SIAN) and Deidhe Graham.

With more than 70 video lessons at levels appropriate for beginners, intermediate and advanced learners, this resource will provide something for everyone, allowing people to continue their musical creativity or even learn a new skill during lockdown.

A bheil ceum agaibh mar-thà? A bheil ùidh agaibh ann an teagasg tro mheadhan? A bheil ceum agaibh ann an teagasg tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig? A bheil ceum agaibh mar-thà?

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PGDE Slighe Ghàidhlig –Colaiste a’ Chaisteil OGE

A bheil ceum agaibh ann an teagasg tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig? A bheil ceum agaibh mar-thà? A bhith sibh a’ beachdachadh air for-cheum ann an teagasg? Tha feum air le feidhead ann am feumadh Gàidhlig!

Thèid agaibh air PGDE (Slighe Ghàidhlig – bun-sgoil, ard-sgoil) no cuspair tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig san ard-sgoil a dhèanamh aig Colaiste a’ Chaisteil OGE. A bharrachd air a bhith strìdhiche ann an sgire air lèith beagba, beireadadh seo cothrom dhuibh a bhith ag iomnachadh ann an coinbhearnachd bhrosnasachail Gàidhlig – sàr dheasachd a’ bhith ann an sàs ann am feumadh tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig ann am seachtaine.

Cuiridh sinn fàilte air tagraidhean tro UCAS suas ri 19 An t-Ogabhainn 2020. Dh’fhaoiladh taic airson dh’fhaoiladh bhios na Gàidhlig a bhith ann an teagasg tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig ann am seachtaine.

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PGDE (Gaelic pathway) – Lews Castle College UHI

Are you interested in teaching through the medium of Gaelic? Do you already have a degree? Have you considered doing a post-graduate diploma in teaching? This could be the opportunity for you!

You can complete your PGDE (Gaelic-medium primary, secondary or secondary Gaelic-medium subjects) at Lews Castle College. Not only would you attend college in a beautiful part of the world, you would have the opportunity to study in a supportive Gaelic community – an excellent grounding for anyone wishing to teach through the medium of Gaelic in schools.

We welcome applications through UCAS until 19 June 2020. Additional funding to support you to into Gaelic teaching may be available from Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Further information on the programme is available here:

https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/courses/pgde-gaelic-medium/
PST launch delivery and wellbeing service

Community wind farm organisation Point and Sandwich Trust has launched a new delivery, meals on wheels and befriending service in its latest effort to support the community in the fight against Covid-19.

Three new members of staff have been appointed to make the deliveries and check in by telephone on the wellbeing of people in need in the Point and Sandwich area.

Peter McNeill and Matthew Smith have been appointed as delivery drivers, while Sandra MacLeod has been appointed as co-ordinator of the service. They will be in post for several months and the jobs have been funded by grants to Point and Sandwich Trust from the Corra Foundation and the Scottish Government’s Supporting Communities Fund via Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

A flyer informing households of the service has been produced and will drop through every letterbox in the Point and Sandwich area presently. It has two vital phone numbers on it – one for arranging the delivery of groceries and other foods for the household, and one for telephone befriending support. This second number is a telephone befriending service and the way for people to request the delivery of freshly cooked meals to their door.

Call 01851 871286 to organise grocery delivery and 07385711473 for wellbeing support. Both lines are open 9am to 1pm, Monday to Friday.

Donald John MacSween, general manager of Point and Sandwich Trust, said: “PST are delighted to expand our Covid-19 Community Support to include a daily cooked food delivery and befriending service with funding from the Corra Foundation, and are pleased to welcome three new members to the PST staff to set up and deliver the services.

“This service is free and available to anyone in need in the Point and Sandwich area and is supported by our partners at Point Community Council and Sandwich Community Council.

“A leaflet with details about how to access the two services — grocery delivery using local shops, and the new cooked food service — will pop through the letterboxes in every occupied house in the Point and Sandwich area in the next few days.

“The services will be delivered with regard to the latest NHS Western Isles and Government Covid-19 guidelines, and the safe handling of cooked food.

“We will be using our volunteers to keep in close touch with community activists to deliver some aspects of both services. Updates will be posted regularly on our popular Facebook page and our website as the services develop.”

The grocery delivery service aims to help those residents who are self-isolating, unable to get to the shops due to transport difficulties or who have any other circumstances that have been exacerbated by the pandemic lockdown.

The drivers will safely pick up and deliver shopping that has been ordered and prepaid from local stores including Blackhouse Bakery, Ruthan Rubha, MacLeod & MacLeod Butchers, WJ Macdonald Butchers and Islander Shellfish. They will also be helping with deliveries from the food bank.

Residents should order directly with the shops, advise them it will be a PST delivery and then call the delivery line number to confirm. Call before 1pm and the drivers will do their best to make the delivery the same day.

The organisation is also offering support to help ease lockdown loneliness through the telephone befriending service and can supply freshly cooked meals – prepared by The Chef Cook. People can get in touch on either their own behalf or on someone else’s – the aim is to make sure that everyone who needs help gets it – and the organisation will do its best to help, free of charge.

The launch of the service, with its two elements, is the latest action from Point and Sandwich Trust to help mitigate the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

It follows the set up of the emergency community pandemic fund, in which Point and Sandwich Trust pledged to donate all spare funds for the rest of the year to fighting the crisis. A donation of £40,000 was made to NHS Western Isles from that fund, to support frontline staff and mitigate suffering, and a total of £15,000 – £5,000 each – has been made to the Point, Sandwich and Stornoway Community Councils to act as a ‘hardship fund’ to support residents in their area.

Announcing the creation of the pandemic community fund in March, Calum Macdonald, the former MP for the Western Isles who is also the development manager for Point and Sandwich Trust, said the Point and Sandwich Trust board had decided to devote “all the income that isn’t already committed to key local organisations like Bethesda to support the community effort we are going to need to get through the pandemic.”

He said: ‘’Whatever happens, we will have to pull together to help each other.’’
When in 1935 Andrew Mackenzie turned a key in the already closed door of his former home, a momentous day of history was created within the Harris Tweed workshops, and by doing so he would herald a new era for Harris Tweed.

For the love of Harris Tweed

Andrew’s Textiles in New York. We were getting as much time, and well into the 1980s, went to the American market. At that time, we recalled that Derick had kept Shawbost Wool, the buildings and finishing needed modernising. Unfortunately, however, the business in Shawbost was not successful as the quality and workmanship did not meet the high standards that were expected. This resulted in the business being sold to the Shawbost Mill, then owned by the Harris Tweed Hebrides.

The Harris Tweed connection did not end there. In 2004, when Ian Angus Mackenzie turned a key in the already closed door of his former home, a momentous day of history was created within the Harris Tweed workshops, and by doing so he would herald a new era for Harris Tweed.

For the love of Harris Tweed

Andrew’s Textiles in New York. We were getting as much time, and well into the 1980s, went to the American market. At that time, we recalled that Derick had kept Shawbost Wool, the buildings and finishing needed modernising. Unfortunately, however, the business in Shawbost was not successful as the quality and workmanship did not meet the high standards that were expected. This resulted in the business being sold to the Shawbost Mill, then owned by the Harris Tweed Hebrides.

The Harris Tweed connection did not end there. In 2004, when Ian Angus Mackenzie turned a key in the already closed door of his former home, a momentous day of history was created within the Harris Tweed workshops, and by doing so he would herald a new era for Harris Tweed.
Getting back to the schoolroom after lockdown

By Katie Macleod

When First Minister Nicola Sturgeon announced at the end of May that Scotland was entering “Phase 1” of leaving lockdown, and that schools would start to reopen from 11th August, thoughts turned to how these changes will be implemented across the country.

In the Western Isles, staff will be returning to schools from 8th June, with four main aims: planning learning for August; undertaking training; setting up classrooms for social distancing; and managing the transition for pupils at important stages of their school lives, such as nursery to P1, and P7 to S1. Provision for the children of key workers in the designated “school hubs” will continue throughout this month, and possibly in some form over the summer.

A number of pupils will also be returning to school in small groups this month. As Bernard Chisholm, Director of Education at Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, said in a Facebook video on 26th May: “That would apply for some children with additional support needs or vulnerable groups, and maybe some young people to do some transition work, which is an important part of the year.”

Bernard also noted that for next term, home learning is “a long-term proposition.” While the government have indicated the blended learning approach – socially-distanced part-time learning in school, combined with learning at home – may continue until October or beyond, the Western Isles are strengthening their curriculum offerings in the event blended learning needs to continue for longer than expected.

Home learning has been going well for pupils in the Western Isles in the two months since schools closed. Efforts have been made by everyone involved to ensure that learning continues even in these unusual times, and the high rate of engagement with home learning shows these efforts are working.

“Every week we’re seeing at least 92.5 per cent of our children making contact with teachers and engaging with home learning, which is very high,” says Donald Macleod, Senior Education Officer at the Comhairle.

Typically up to 140 children are currently attending the hubs across the Western Isles, which accounts for roughly four per cent of the pupil population; taken in that context, the home learning engagement rate shows that nearly every pupil in the region is engaged in some form of home learning.

That learning has been taking place in a number of ways. Primary pupils throughout the islands have been engaging in home learning provided by their teachers, accessed through their Glow email accounts, and on video calls using VScape technology from e-Sgoil, the Comhairle’s digital learning service. For secondary pupils, learning has included both remote teaching using VScape and individual study tasks provided by teachers.

The new e-Sgoil National Programme, which launched on 4th March that the exams would not be going ahead as usual in May and June, and in late April, a new system was put in place across the country to ensure young people will be rewarded for their work at an appropriate level by the SQA.

A number of pupils will also be returning to school in small bands in rank order of how they are predicted to perform. As Dr Frances Murray, Rector at The Nicolson Institute, explains:

The newly devised system asks schools to make an estimate of how each pupil would have performed in their exams, based on a number of factors including preim grades; grades in any other formal assessments throughout the session; project or course work completed; and class work.

As Dr Frances Murray, Rector at The Nicolson Institute, explains: “Estimates normally categorise pupils into Upper A/Lower A, Upper B/Lower B etc. and are useful in the case of a pupil who is unable to sit an exam. This year, however, schools have been asked to make the estimates more refined and detailed, placing pupils within smaller bands in rank order of how they are predicted to perform.

Once the estimates have been made and checked by at least two teachers in each subject, there will be further checks at whole school level, looking at whether the overall grades in a subject are in line with usual expectations, or whether robust explanations can be made for any changes.

Thanks from Boris Johnson

A result of the coronavirus lockdown, Scotland’s National Qualification exams were cancelled this year for the first time since their introduction in 1888.

The Scottish Qualifications Agency (SQA) announced in mid-March that the exams would not be going ahead as usual in May and June, and in late April, a new system was put in place across the country to ensure young people will be rewarded for their work at an appropriate level by the SQA.

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Once these checks have been carried out, the school will submit the data to the SQA. The SQA will then carry out further checks, including looking at overall national performance. Following this process, grades may be reallocated in line with their findings. For this reason, schools will not be sharing estimates with candidates and parents at this point.”

Final estimates were due to the SQA at the end of last month, and pupils are expected to receive their exam results on 4th August as planned. “At that time, an Appeals Process will open, allowing schools to challenge the awarding of particular grades. This will be similar to the former appeals system and will be free of charge. More detail will be made available about this later in the summer,” says Frances.

What else happened in 1888: Stuttgart – One of mankind’s oldest dreams came true on 10 August 1888 when Leipzig-based bookseller Dr Karl Wölfert’s motorised airship successfully completed the world’s first engine-driven flight with a combustion engine. The flying machine, powered by a single-cylinder Daimler engine, flew four kilometres from the factory yard of the Daimler Motor Company at the Seelberg in Cannstatt to Kornwestheim. Wölfert undertook experimental flights with steerable balloons for many years. In 1896 Gottlieb Daimler supplied him with a 7-hp (5.1 kW) two-cylinder engine with a light alloy crankcase for his “Deutschland” airship. Wölfert completed several successful test flights. In June 1897 he crashed and was killed when the balloon caught fire.
Music shows go on-line as lockdown ends events

By Katie Macleod

The school summer term is usually filled with high spirits and end-of-year events, and the Provincial Mòds – which see class teachers, music teachers, and parents busy helping pupils prepare for their Gaelic music performances and competitions – are just one of them.

Although this year’s local Mòds in the Western Isles were cancelled due to coronavirus restrictions, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar’s Education, Skills and Children’s Services Department, the Multimedia Unit, and the Western Isles Instrumental Music Service all came together to produce alternative digital musical events for young people and their families to enjoy: fortnightly e-Ceilidhs and the day-long e-Ceilidh nan Òg.

“Although the e-Ceilidh nan Òg event has come to a halt due to the current period of lockdown created by the coronavirus pandemic,” said Rhona Johnston, the e-Ceilidh project coordinator, “we wanted to find a way to share the musical talent of our islands, keep the music flowing, use it in a positive way to engage and unite our communities and lift our spirits during these difficult times. I hope that the e-Ceilidh project will do just that and contain something for everyone of all ages regardless of their musical tastes.”

The fortnightly e-Ceilidhs are to be confused with the Comhairle’s live weekend “Còidh Ceilidths” which are held at 7.30pm on Saturdays. “Our fortnightly events are pre-recorded broadcasts involving contributed videos from pupils, music staff, and professional and local community musicians, with a different host each time,” explains Rhona. To date, the e-Ceilidhs have featured local pupils in Gaelic singing, oral, instrumental, and Highland dancing. More than 110 video performances were submitted in advance, a response so enthusiastic that not all of them could be shown on one day. Instead, it was announced at the beginning of the Facebook broadcast that the one-off event will become a series, with the second ceilidh taking place before the end of the school term this month.

E-Ceilidh nan Òg was split into morning and afternoon sessions, both featuring P1-7 pupils from schools throughout the Western Isles. Local musician and teacher Iain “Costello” Maciver hosted the 10am session, as well as an 11am sing-along session with favourite Gaelic tunes like Uibhist mo Graidh and Far am bi mi thin. Gaelic Singing teacher Penny Burgess hosted the 1pm session, and the 2pm “play-along” session then saw Neil Johnstone, Anna Black, Rhona Johnstone and Esther MacDonald perform Fear a’ Bhata, The Dark Island, and Trasda mi na Colleagan for pupils to join in with at home.

The digital ceilidh day was part of the Dìcanamaid Dhòbaoin or “Let’s Do it Friday” online events for primary pupils, which during the school closures have offered special learning events that allow pupils to get creative, get active, and try outdoor learning. So far they’ve included an e-Safety Day, a Social Studies Quiz, and a Biodiversity Day, and this month will see primary pupils getting involved in a remote STEM Day and Sports Day, too.

“We intend to provide as much education to bring children back to school. Meantime steps are now being taken in a gradual way as we move through to the next phase of this crisis, that we continue to do so together.”

Praise for staff, pupils and parents

On 29 May 2020 in his regular Comhairle Leader’s Statement, Councillor Ruddy Mackay said:

“This week, I want to focus on the fantastic work which has been ongoing in our Education system and pay particular thanks to all the parents/guardians, pupils, teachers and all our education employees, across the Western Isles, for their continued response to the COVID-19 crisis.

The support that teachers and education employees have provided, from the announcement of the lockdown, the supervision and feedback to all pupils through online learning and physical resource packs, and maintaining provision and support for vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers throughout the last few months, has been nothing short of outstanding. Teachers do what they do because they love their jobs and get great satisfaction from contributing to the learning experience of pupils and indeed every single one of our employees in Education has stepped up to the plate during this crisis.

I would like to pay tribute to the response from parents and pupils which has been equally outstanding. This week I was very pleased to hear that the average total attendance at our school hubs, throughout the Western Isles, has been in the region of 100 pupils which is about 4% of the total pupil population. The remaining 96% are, of course, learning from home and we have seen very high levels of engagement based on weekly reporting from schools with over 99% of learners engaging with teachers’ learning content each week since the lockdown began. We appreciate that it has not been an easy task for you all to navigate and interact through the various platforms and resources, but throughout all of that Education and learning content has been provided. That is something which you should all be very proud of.

LOOKING AHEAD

In terms of planning for the reopening of schools, officers and HTs are preparing for schools to re-open to pupils on 11 August in-line with national announcements. We are planning for school staff to begin to return to schools from the week beginning 8th June to start preparing for the return of pupils and the planning of learning approaches to be used in August. Event provision for the children of key workers will continue throughout June and we also continue to prepare and develop the local delivery plan for the reopening of school buildings and that will be shared in the coming days.

I would like to assure you that we are working hard to plan to support the recovery process in full collaboration with you as a community of school leaders. Your commitment to teachers, guardians, and teachers to supporting all of the children, young people and families in the Western Isles is unquestioned and we intend to ensure that as we move through to the next phase of this crisis, that we continue to do so together."

Conclusion

We remain committed to keeping everyone updated at the earliest possible opportunity and we will continue to do so through press releases, radio broadcasts, TV, social media and other means. In addition, we have arranged for another Education LiveStream Q+A session and details of that will be issued early next week. This will be another opportunity for parents, pupils and education employees to gain more information on the current situation which, as we all appreciate, is very fluid and changing on an almost daily basis.

As we follow the guidance provided by Government regarding the potential gradual easing of lockdown it is more important than ever that we maintain the good practice we have all followed over these last few months. I am much impressed at how you have all risen to the challenge and I know it has not been easy.

Councillor Angus McCormack,

Chair, Education, Sport and Children’s Services writes:

Dear Parent, Pupil, Teacher and Support Workers,

We are all living through the most difficult time we have ever experienced. The Covid19 pandemic has consumed the world.

The closure of schools was inevitable under lockdown and it is good to see that steps are now being taken in a gradual way to bring children back to school. Meanwhile the Comhairle’s Education Department has endeavoured to provide as much education as possible remotely. It has been very challenging and remains so.

I wish to thank all our CT colleagues, the Multi Media Unit and eSgoil for enabling remote education to take place.

I am acutely aware that at the time this is published, events could have moved forward significantly but I am confident that our colleagues in the Comhairle will keep us all informed.

Thank you again for all your efforts. Safety has had to be the number one determinant. Let us hope it will not be too long until we can, even slowly, return to some kind of normal.
Cancer charity aided by album launch

Gaelic singer and musician, Calum Martin, launched a new album in May to help raise funds for Macmillan Cancer Support.

The album, Storm released under the band name, O.C.O.T.E. features music written by Calum and guests from as far afield as the USA. All the proceeds are going to Macmillan Cancer Support’s award-winning Isle of Lewis Fundraising Group.

It is dedicated to ‘Granny Martin’ a very special lady and Calum’s mother, Catherine who sadly passed away last year. For one of the songs on the album, ‘Feels Like a Storm’ her grandson sings in her memory.

Chair of the group, Maggie Martin is Calum’s daughter-in-law and the idea behind the album was prompted by the hugely positive response to a concert the musical family held on the Isle of Lewis last year.

Maggie, Chair of the Isle of Lewis Fundraising group said: “Last year, the fundraising group decided to put on a concert to help raise funds.

“Words cannot explain how grateful and proud we all are of making this happen. A huge thanks to my father in law Calum, my husband Do and all our family and friends who came together to make it possible.”

Calum Martin, musician and the creator of Storm said: “After the concert last year, I thought it would be a great idea to raise more funds by recording an album. I asked a few musical pals along with members of my own family to help out and of course they were delighted to take part. It has just gone from arms and legs to months.

“Some of my favourite singers and musicians have contributed, along with amazing new talent which I always love to encourage.

“The album is fantastic and has something for everyone. My family have close links across the water in Nashville – so it has reached far and wide.”

Shirrie Greedies, Senior Fundraising Manager in the north of Scotland, said: “This is yet another innovative fundraising initiative from an award-winning team of volunteers and their supporters, near and far, which I’m sure will be a great success.

“An incredible pool of talent has come together to make this project possible. Macmillan needs your support more than ever just now and we are very grateful to everyone involved, for their contribution.”

Macmillan Cancer Support are doing everything they can to help address the immediate and unique challenges that having cancer during this pandemic brings but they need your support. Your donations are vital to enable them to continue to be there for people living with cancer.

Storm was available from Friday 22nd May with all sales and downloads going exclusively to the charity. All production costs have been donated. The album is available to download on iTunes and Spotify.

To purchase a copy of the CD you can also visit: https://macmillan.org.charitycheckout.co.uk/ idoollewiss profile. A minimum donation of £10 will be required plus £1.50 for postage & packaging.

Author thanks NHS with iPads

By Annie Delin

Author Peter May has put his money where his heart is, donating six iPads to NHS Western Isles to facilitate its new Virtual Visiting service.

Peter, who is the author of the best-selling Lewis Trilogy of crime novels, set in and around the Isle of Lewis, also recently released the novel Lockdown, penned in 2005 but only recently seeing the light of day.

Mr May had spent time as a patient in Western Isles Hospital in the 1990s, when he was staying in Lewis during filming of the popular series Machair.

He said: “Having pledged the entire amount of the advance on my novel to the frontline of the fight against coronavirus, I have tried wherever possible to see that a good proportion of that money goes back to the people of the Western Isles, to whom I owe so much of my success.

“I think the Virtual Visiting scheme at the NHS hospital in Stornoway is a brilliant idea and hope that my small contribution will help keep patients and loved ones in touch. It is particularly satisfying to be able to give back to this particular hospital where I received such wonderful care during a week spent as a patient.

“NHS Western Isles chief executive Gordon Jamieson said: ‘We would like to sincerely thank Mr May for this very generous and thoughtful donation.”

“Our Virtual Visiting services brings patients and their families together at a time when we have unfortunately had to introduce restrictions on visiting. The feedback on the new service from patients and their families has been very positive.

“Mr May’s contribution is a very welcome addition to the service and will be of great benefit to those being cared for in hospital, particularly in helping to maintain their mental health and wellbeing.”

Vandals strike at waterwheel

The waterwheel in Lewis Castle Grounds has once again been vandalised, provoking strong reactions from the Stornoway Trust, local councillors and members of the public.

Police are asking for any information about the incident, which saw the locked outer doors of the building forced open, windows broken and the area left strewn with broken glass, bottles, cans and other rubbish.

The vandalism was reported by a passer-by on Monday 18th May and viewed soon afterwards by Stornoway Trust factor Iain Maciver, accompanied by police officers.

Iain Maciver said: “Police are looking into this and it is going to have to be reported to the trustees. In the meantime, the area has been tidied up and the door secured by our groundman.

“It’s an ongoing problem that we have with vandalism to that area. What seemed to be a good idea at the time of its construction has proved to be a costly and burdensome problem.

“It’s disappointing that a place that gives so much pleasure to so many people is spoiled by the behaviour of a few.”

His disappointment was shared by members of the Facebook group Our Castle Grounds, who commented on the prevalence of dumped rubbish and evidence of drinking sessions, even during lockdown.

One said: “It’s a nightmare trying to walk my dogs in the grounds at the moment due to broken glass, cans, bottles and carry-outs getting left there.” Another added: “I wonder how these people behave at home! If they don’t behave like this, then leave the grounds alone and have some respect.”

Stornoway Councillor Charlie Nicolson said: “The evidence of drinking there was quite apparent and that is wrong in itself. Parents should know where their young people are during lockdown.

“What are they doing gathering together? The police can’t be everywhere at once and parents should know where their children are and what they are doing.”

Police are appealing for anyone who witnessed any suspicious activity at the Waterwheel or in the surrounding area over the weekend of 16/17 May to contact them on the non-emergency number, 101, quoting incident number NHSh020
This year Dementia Awareness Week is being marked very differently to previous years with the Alzheimer Scotland annual conference sadly cancelled and planned events and gatherings replaced with alternative supports.

However, the message is clear: “We are still here for people and families so if you need us please get in touch.”

Alzheimer Scotland want to send best wishes to their colleagues in health and social care locally who are working so hard to make sure everyone is safe and looked after in these difficult times.

“Our thoughts go out as always to people living with dementia and their families and especially to those who have faced hardship and loss.”

This Dementia Awareness Week they’re hoping people will continue to do what they do so well all-year-round in that they continue to reach out and support people in their local communities.

“Pick up the phone, write a letter or send a message to let people know they have not been forgotten. It really does make a huge difference - we are told this by people and families all the time. Friendship and knowing that people care is very important and now more so than ever.”

Alzheimer Scotland would like to thank everyone that has supported to keep people connected through hosting and supporting various digital activities.

“Also I would personally like to thank our volunteers for their befriending support calls and our staff team for continuing to provide front line support safely to people and families where it is most needed,” says Marion MacInnes, Locality Lead for the Western Isles.

Overall, Dementia Awareness Week 2020 is an opportunity to support the 90,000 people living with dementia in Scotland and their families and carers. Alzheimer Scotland want to let people know they’re still there and that their priority remains to ensure nobody faces dementia alone.

Dementia is not on lockdown. Social isolation, loss of networks and disrupted routines will be a huge challenge for those people living with dementia and their carers during this crisis, particularly since they will face restrictions for an extended period of time. Alzheimer Scotland have adapted how they work as a charity to boost their 24/7 Freephone Dementia Helpline capacity and deliver online support groups, digital reminiscence therapy sessions and virtual Dementia Advisor ‘visits’ to ensure that no one is facing this crisis alone.

If you have the chance to get involved in any way, online or in person, please support Dementia Awareness Week by following the conversation on social media (#DementiaAwareness) and reach out to your fellow citizens living with dementia and their carers.

If you have any questions about dementia, or want to find out about support in your area, call Alzheimer Scotland’s 24-hour Freephone Helpline on 0808 808 1000.

To keep in touch with activities and virtual fundraising events in Dementia Awareness Week 1st-6th June – or any other time – please follow the Alzheimer Scotland Western Isles Facebook page or contact Marion MacInnes, Locality Lead on 07771 925730 for more information.

Get involved with Scotland’s Dementia Awareness Week (1-7 June 2020) by:

- Become a Dementia Friend online at www.alzscot.org/dementiafriends
- Support our Fair Dementia Care campaign here www.alzscot.org/fairedentiicare
- Support at this time could make a real difference to the lives of people living with dementia and their carers, many of whom are already at crisis point and are relying on Alzheimer Scotland as a lifeline. Help will go a long way to supporting our local frontline services throughout Scotland and for that we are deeply grateful. To support Alzheimer Scotland visit www.alzscot.org/donate

Join the Dementia Awareness Week conversation on Twitter with @alzscot using #DementiaAwareness.

Please contact us if you need support, information or advice.

Alzheimer Scotland

Scotland’s Dementia Awareness Week 1-7 June 2020

Free 24 Hour Dementia Helpline 0808 808 3000
Keep safe! We hope to see you soon.

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The 20th century lived to the full – Murdina Macleod remembered

By Annie Delin

The death of Murdina Macleod of Upper Carloway in April this year saw the passing of a way of life now more usually spoken of as part of history in the Isle of Lewis.

Having turned 106 in January, Murdina was by some stretch the oldest person living in the islands, indeed one of the oldest in Scotland, and she had a character well-recognised by those who remember the generations forged in wartime.

Born on 10 January 1914, Murdina was one of eight children born to Angus ‘Bhroillgean’ and Annie Maclean in Carloway. Angus was a veteran of the Boer War and Murdina’s early years, first in Carloway and then in Breasclete, were lived against the backdrop of the Great War.

At the age of 16 Murdina left home for domestic service on the mainland, where she worked in Dalmally (Argyll) and Bridge of Allan, near Stirling, in the houses of doctors and other professionals.

When the Second World War began she joined the Women’s Royal Air Force as a cook and was stationed in Olban and various places around the UK.

Once that war was over, she came home to Breasclete and was on the bus heading for a day of shopping in Stornoway when she met her future husband. Today ‘Bhroillgean’ Macleod, also heading into town from Carloway.

He courted her persistently, cycling from Carloway to Breasclete in all weathers to meet her, and they were married in 1948. Four sons were born to the couple – Iain Duncan, Angus ‘Mickey’, Angus ‘Angie’ and Neil.

Neil’s daughter Catriona was very close to her grandmother. She said: “My grandfather built the house, Rockdale, at 77 Upper Carloway where I still live. They didn’t have a croft, but a feu on a shed, on which he was still weaving well into his 70s. Granny used to work on the hobbins and I would sometimes help her with my sister Kirsteen.”

Murdina became a mother to Catriona after a family tragedy when Catriona was 14. She moved to live with her grandparents and benefited from her grandmother’s strength and independent outlook.

She said: “I remember her as a very independent and determined woman, not a sweet granny sitting in the corner. She was tough and strong, not someone you would mess with, and she had a great sense of humour – she was funny without being aware of it. My relationship with her was wonderful but, if we ever did clash, she would always win. She didn’t dwell on things, but she was the boss of the family.

I would try to help her in the house, but I was a bit of a tomboy at a time when there were very clear rules for women. I would rather be working with the sheep and so on than cooking and cleaning. The men weren’t too keen on it, but she would back me up and encourage me – although truthfully, I think it was because she liked to be the ruler of her own kitchen!”

“I would say she had too really good years. When she was 100 BBC Alba made a feature about her and showed her pulling the wheelie bins up the path, which was pretty steep, but she insisted on doing them herself. There was also a radio interview when she was 105 – she pretended not to, but I think she liked the attention.”

When she was 105 years old Murdina fell and broke her femur in the doorhouse of the house. She later underwent surgery and, although she recovered remarkably quickly, she had to accept a homecare package. Catriona moved back in to care for her and says: “I could see she was frustrated that she couldn’t do things herself, it made her angry to have to accept help.”

But Catrina’s memories are of the good times that she shared with her strong-minded, independent granny. She said: “When I think of her, it’s as someone really active who never sat down. All the chairs in the house were hard, there were no easy chairs – she didn’t allow herself much comfort.

“I remember walking down to the shore with her when she was well into her 80s and hauling back busy and other finds for the garden. She loved her garden and she was always busy in it, never sitting down or sunbathing, never still.”

Murdina is survived by her eldest son Iain Duncan, seven grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. She was interred at Dalmore Cemetery, with the graveside service conducted by Rev Murdo Campbell.

Remembering Sammy MacLeod of The Anchorage, Ardhasaig

By Annie Delin

The sudden passing of Sammy MacLeod of The Anchorage, Ardhasaig, on Monday (18 May) at the age of 77 has taken some of the sparkle and mischief out of island community life.

Described as a legend, a gentleman and an entertainer, Sammy was known to be kind-hearted and loveable, with an eye for the ladies. In recent years he could often be found in Tarbert exchanging yarns and light-hearted banter with friends, something that was lost to the village with the coming of lockdown.

Sammy fished for lobsters for some years out of his home village of Ardhasaig, where his croft also supplied a few sheep. He was remembered by his friends as being more a man of the sea than of the land.

He was instrumental in the setting up of the Macleans fish farm at Ardhasaig, giving some of his croft to allow them to establish the buildings which are still there. Sammy also worked as a carpet fitter in the Islands then, but it puts food on the table for a lot of families and no-one had a bad word to say about Sammy himself.

“Everyone got on well with him. He was a really nice man, a good family man and a guy who would give you his last penny if he thought you needed it. He was a loveable rogue with a cheeky grin and a kind heart.”

Neil was one of four fellow musicians in the ceilidh band The Sound of Harris, in which Sammy played drums – although Neil says the craic was of a higher standard than the music – together with Angus MacAswecan and accordion players Neil and John Alex Shaw.

In his later years Sammy would mend creels for other fishermen and used to go round to the old folks’ homes, demonstrating how he made creels before selling the creels for charity.

Sammy’s grand-daughter Karen Macdonald has spoken of the family’s great sense of loss at his sudden death, as well as thanking four paramedics who worked for over an hour to try and revive him.

She said: “Gramps had appeared on the television programme From Harris With Love and had become a bit of a local hero. People would recognise him on the street in Stornoway.

“One time when he was in the Co-op and had put all his shopping through the cash-out, he found he was without his bank card. The manager called and he was told ‘We know who you are, we’ve seen you on the telly’. They let him take the shopping home and he called them later to pay.

“He was my world and it’s going to be so different without him. I spoke to him many times a day and would see him almost every day. He’s left a big hole in my life, and not just in mine. But we were so lucky to have him and to have the memories and the photographs that we do.”

Sammy is survived by his children Cathie, Shonnie (Inverness), Angie (who lived with him at Ardhasaig) and Sam (Glasgow), by grandchildren Karen, Roddy, Laura and Graeme and by his sister Dolly Cathie (Tarbert) and brother Roddy in Inverness.

Remembering Deirdre Macdonald...correction

The tribute to Deirdre Macdonald published in the last edition of EVENTS contained a number of factual errors which arose from confusion between different sources of supplied information.

Deirdre Macdonald, formerly of Lewis, has died at the age of 92.

Her father, Thomas Babington Macaulay (1896-1984) was the son of Donald Macaulay, draper, of 28 North Beach Street and his wife Christine (née Maclean). Donald was born in Uig. Her father’s name echoes that of the noted early 19th Century British historian whose father’s ancestors also came from Uig. Her mother was Anne, daughter of Mr and Mrs K.D. Henderson.

Deirdre married Alasdair Macdonald from Newton. He was better known as “Alasdair a’ Ghaoil”. Alasdair was the headmaster in Aird School on Point for many years until he retired in 1982. They had four children, Tom Macdonald, Sandy Macdonald, the late Timothy Macdonald and Alison Morag Smith.

Deirdre’s parents also had a wool shop around the corner on Bank Street where a takeaway pizza outlet is nowadays. With the Macaulay family shop situated on North Beach, and her other grandparents, Mr and Mrs K.D. Henderson running Henderson’s shop on Bayhead, Stornoway town centre was a playground for young Deirdre...
Delivering miracles

Tuesday 5th May 2020 was International Day Of The Midwife and NHS Western Isles took the opportunity to celebrate and thank our midwives across the Isles, and how they continue to bring new life into the world in a time of crisis.

2020 has been designated by the World Health Organization as the first ever International Year of the Nurse and Midwife; it is also Florence Nightingale’s bicentennial year.

Nurses and midwives make up the largest numbers of the NHS workforce. They are highly skilled, multi-faceted professionals from a host of backgrounds that represent our diverse communities. The Year of the Nurse and Midwife presents the opportunity to reflect on these roles and skills, the commitment and expert clinical care they bring, and the impact they make on the lives of so many. This year is also an opportunity to say thank you to the professions; to showcase their diverse talents and expertise; and to promote careers in nursing and midwifery.

NHS Western Isles Nurse and AHP Director/Chief Operating Officer, William Findlay, said: “All our midwives work hard on a daily basis to ensure mothers, their babies and the wider family circle receive the high quality care that they deserve.

“Midwifery is one of the services that has had to continue, despite the pandemic, as babies tend not to wait - they come when they are ready. Our midwives across the Western Isles continue to do a very special job and contribute to a time of great joy as they welcome babies into our communities.

“Their care, attention and compassion is unaltering, and all the more important during such difficult times.”

He added: “Acknowledging a special day like today could not be more important and relevant than it is now, during a time of such challenge. In the midst of this pandemic, midwives have risen to the challenge and have continued to provide vital services to local women and babies.

“They, like others, have had to work in new, challenging and very different ways – but they have embraced the challenge. We are proud of each and every one of them and we know that our midwives hold a very special place in the hearts of Western Isles families. We thank them for their invaluable contribution over the years, today and into the future.”

NHS Western Isles Nurse and AHP Director/Chief Operating Officer William Findlay

Nursing the nation

International Nurses Day - this year on Tuesday 12th May 2020 - is an annual celebration of the crucial work nurses do around the world.

It is especially important in 2020 as they continue to lead the frontline charge against the Coronavirus pandemic.

NHS Western Isles Nurse and AHP Director/Chief Operating Officer, William Findlay said: “International Day of the Nurse is particularly special this year not just because we mark the 200th anniversary of Florence Nightingale’s birth, but because of the extraordinary work all those who have followed in her footsteps are doing in the fight against coronavirus.

“I would like to thank our nurses across the Western Isles for the care they give patients each and every day. Nursing is a large family and right now in our pandemic we are reliant on the expertise of a range of specialist nurses, from infection protection and control to health protection, as well as our frontline nursing teams. A massive thank you to you all.”

‘Hospital at Home’

NHS Western Isles last month (May) took further support patients to be cared for in their home environment.

The new ‘Hospital at Home’ service aims to provide care in the community equivalent to the care provided within hospital. It is used where a patient would normally require admission to hospital, whilst ensuring appropriate and timely discharge from hospital, or to avoid people having to remain in hospital unnecessarily.

The decision on a patient’s suitability for the Hospital at Home service will be made by a Medical Consultant when a patient attends either the Emergency Department, Medical or Respiratory Assessment Unit; or during a patient’s stay in hospital. The range of conditions that could be managed through Hospital at Home is not prescriptive, and includes a wide range of conditions such as infections needing intravenous antibiotics, respiratory patients needing short term oxygen therapy, and those requiring intravenous fluids for dehydration.

Patients will remain under the care of the hospital consultant and will be monitored on a ‘virtual ward’ within the hospital’s electronic systems.

Debra Vickers NHS Western Isles Cardiology Nurse Consultant, who along with Jane Gillion, Diabetes Lead Nurse, is leading the Hospital at Home service, said: “We are pleased to be working very closely with a wide variety of hospital and community based colleagues to develop this new service, which aims to be of benefit to our patients and their families by reducing in hospital stays in a safe and effective manner.”

NHS Western Isles is also this week launching ‘Hot Clinics’, an initiative covering the whole of the Western Isles.

Primary Care Clinicians (GPs) now have access to a virtual Hot Clinic which allows them to get Consultant level advice on patients to support their continued care within a community setting, where safe and appropriate. GPs can send an e-mail equivalent referral into Western Isles Hospital in Stornoway. These referrals will be collated every morning (Monday to Friday) to allow the consultant of the day to review them, and provide any appropriate advice and support to the GP. A same day response will mean that appropriate investigations and treatment can be quickly commenced.

Dr McAuley commented: “The hope is that the Hot Clinics will help support primary care clinicians who are caring for vulnerable patients who may be heading towards a hospital admission and give advice to prevent this, if possible. It will also help identify patients who maybe need their hospital admission expedited.”

Health Visitors work on

Families are reminded that their local Health Visiting team continue to provide frontline community work across the Outer Hebrides, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the pandemic began, the team continues to support families, maintaining frequent contact, building therapeutic relationships and providing a crucial role in providing support and advice to children and families.

Home visits have had to be reduced, but Health Visitors remain in the community doing face to face consultations as needed. Providing swift support is key, and despite restrictions on face-to-face contact, local staff have adapted to ensure families in need are able to receive the care and advice they require.

From increased telephone consultations and video calls to provide high quality care and support, to risk assessments over the phone before visiting to ensure use of the correct PPE, keeping children and families safe is a top priority.

Raising a new baby can be a stressful and challenging time in normal circumstances, and many new mothers rely on Health Visitors as a key source and primary contact to help answer their questions, and support their babies and children with appropriate development.

Health Visitors continue to provide practical advice and support for topics relating to breastfeeding, nutrition, safety – including safe sleeping arrangements to infants and mental health, among others. Health Visitors also continue to recommend further support in families with additional support needs, for example to support postnatal depression, parenting advice, and also in partnership with third sector agencies and social work for child protection support plan.

It is acknowledged that family life has changed massively since the pandemic began, and many families are under even more pressure than normal. Having a new baby is a huge transition and at this time most parents don’t have the support they would normally rely on. Parents and/or families can feel isolated and overwhelmed. Having somebody to turn to, during this unprecedented time, is invaluable and contributes to the ongoing safety and wellbeing of their children.

The way Health Visitors engage with patients may have changed due to COVID-19, but they are still here, and continue to work within the communities to help families access the services they need, while providing them with practical advice and support to ensure the best outcomes for their children. To contact your Health Visitor, parents are asked to use the office number given to them and/or the individual’s mobile number.

Alternatively, you can e-mail the Health Visiting Team at: whbh.nps@nhs.net
### Aid for seamstresses

The Outer Hebrides Alcohol & Drug Partnership appreciate this is a worrying time for everyone in our community and that people may be anxious about the situation with Covid-19 and the increased restrictions in place.

Current evidence shows that Scotland’s drinking habits have changed during lockdown with some Scots reducing their intake or having completely stopped drinking alcohol. However, evidence also shows over 1 million adults are drinking more at home with off licences and online sales up by 30%.

To reduce your health risks from drinking alcohol you should not drink more than 14 units per week and this should be spread evenly over 3 or more days. You should also consider having several alcohol-free days each week. Regularly drinking over the 14 units each week can affect your sleeping patterns, energy levels and can also impact on your mental and physical health. Cutting down on how much you drink will have a positive effect on your health and wellbeing.

In order to know what this all means for each individual, there are several ways you can keep track of your alcohol consumption. You can visit the Scottish Government website www.Count14.scot, where you will find clear examples of what 14 units looks like, and a virtual unit calculator so you can select how many drinks you have in a week, which will show the number of units. The website also highlights the short and longer term risks of drinking over the safe recommended guidelines with signposting to NHS Inform for further information and advice.

If you do think you are drinking over the recommended units and feel that you would like to talk to someone about your drinking or if you are concerned about someone else’s drinking, please check out the Outer Hebrides Alcohol & Drug Partnership Recovery Services Directory on www.outerhebrides-dr.com. You can also speak with your GP.

Other tools you can access are ‘We Are With You’ which is a free confidential support helpline offering support for anyone dealing with issues around alcohol, drugs and or mental health https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/#.

### Drinking during lockdown

Many smokers may not be aware that as of midnight on May 20th 2020, the sale of menthol-flavoured tobacco products was prohibited across the European Union.

This legislation will remain in place in the UK even after it exits the EU at the end of the year because it was agreed back in 2016. Evidence indicates that menthol, which makes the smoking experience less unpleasant, increases the uptake of smoking in some of our young people. This is backed by a survey carried out in 2018 that found that one in eight 15 year olds are smoking regularly.

Sheila Duffy, the chief executive of charity ASH Scotland, believes the new move will help to lower the number of youngsters who smoke. She said: “This is a welcome measure as evidence suggests that menthol cigarettes – which mask some of the harsh effects of smoking – are particularly appealing to young people and can even reduce the likelihood of quitting. We hope this will help drive down youth smoking rates in Scotland where 12% of 15 year olds and 4% of 13 year olds are smoking either regularly or occasionally.”

Further information on this can be found at the ASH Scotland website: https://www.ashscotland.org.uk/

Here in the Western Isles, your own ‘QUITYOURWAY’ Hebrides support service, is operating as normal during the COVID-19 pandemic. You can call on 01851 70 1623 or 07919290949 (both numbers have answering machines and the mobile number lets you text if you prefer). If staff are not available when you call, our advisors will get back to you as quickly as possible.

So if you or someone you know is a regular user of Menthol flavoured tobacco products, and is anxious about this ban, please call us for more information and support.

Anyone who is currently smoking is very welcome to call us for a chat about how we can help. We are here to help you at all times and you will be surprised how much easier it is to quit than you think!
**We're here to support you**

NH Western Isles has produced a local 'We're here to support you' Coronavirus (COVID-19) infosheet which is currently being made available throughout the Outer Hebrides.

NH Western Isles recognises that there may be a number of individuals who may not be able to access or receive information, for various reasons.

'We're here to support you' provides information on the common symptoms of COVID-19 and advice on what to do if someone within your household has symptoms. It also reminds individuals not to ignore warning signs of serious conditions, and that they should continue to seek support for non-coronavirus health related concerns, through either their GP, NHS 24 (111) out of hours, or their emergency department for emergencies.

Information is included on how to access the local Community Support Hub and Helpline (tel. 01851 700822 or 601151), which offers anxiety support to general public and local NHS and healthcare staff.

The local COVID-19 Health Concern Helpline (tel. 01851 601151) is also featured, which helps answer local Coronavirus health-related queries or concerns from members of the public, health and social care staff and category 1 responders.

To complement the infosheet, a number of large posters have also been produced for displaying in local supermarkets, with community shops also to receive copies.

NHS Western Isles Communications and Claims Manager, Maggie Fraser, commented: “We hope this infosheet will be of value to those within our communities who are struggling to access information at this difficult time. Our aim is to ensure everyone has access to the information and advice that they need. We would like to sincerely thank the Psychological Resilience Hub – Western Isles; local Community Councils, Land Trusts, supermarkets, community shops, and other local organisations and businesses for their support in making this infosheet available to their communities. Community groups across the Western Isles are doing an exceptional job in such challenging circumstances to support the most vulnerable individuals within their localities and we would like to take this opportunity to highlight and applaud their invaluable input at this time. The infosheet is available and can be downloaded from our website at www.coronavirus.wi.nhs.scot and copies are also available on request from coms.wi@nhs.net”

**Digital Health and Wellbeing**

NH Western Isles has been awarded over £1.46 million for projects aimed at supporting the health and wellbeing of those living in the Outer Hebrides.

The funding will be used by NH Western Isles, in its role in a number of European innovation partnerships, to develop and test new services and technologies in various ways to support health and wellbeing.

The first project relates to ‘ChatPal’, which involves the development of ‘Digital Wellbeing Conversations’ to support and promote mental health and wellbeing. €220,000 will be received for the ChatPal project over three years, to develop and test chatbot technologies. A key objective is for the ChatPal project over three years, to develop health and wellbeing support.

During this time, the local mPower project has created three Community Navigator roles based across the Western Isles, who provide support through Health and Wellbeing Plans for persons facing a range of difficulties affecting their health. This may be from loneliness, mental health difficulties, lifestyle issues or practical things such as difficulties getting to hospital appointments or in keeping their home warm. The project also helps people with potential technologies that may assist them in improving their health. This ranges from help with simple communication devices for maintaining social connections to home health monitoring solutions for remotely managing a health condition.

mPower has, to date, directly helped over 130 people via Wellbeing Plans or technology support. The project has now been allocated a further €151,514 funding over the next two years to further develop learning which will be used to fund a new Improvement Advisor role and tap into knowledge experts in a range of topics to promote the project learning and build into existing practice.

Martin Malcolm, Head of Public Health Intelligence and Projects Lead at NHS Western Isles, said: “These are fantastic opportunities to harness both financial resources and international expertise to develop and test out new innovative approaches in supporting people with their health and wellbeing, which we would otherwise not be able to do.

It is great too that, in so doing, we will be able to create around eight exciting new job roles in such an innovative area that hopefully will stand us in great stead as we look to the future and how we sustain health and care services on the islands.”

Despite the UK’s decision to leave the European Union by the end of 2020, participation in these projects is safeguarded till the end of their funded periods between 2021-2023, as confirmed by the relevant Scottish and UK Government departments.

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**Keep in touch with your local health service**

Keep up to date with news and information on services and developments by:
- visiting our website at www.wbhp.scot.nhs.uk
- liking NH Western Isles on Facebook
- following NHSSW1 on Twitter

**Help your local health service improve your care by providing feedback**

Tell us about your experience by:
- speaking to a member of staff
- visiting our website www.wbhp.scot.nhs.uk/feedback
- sharing your story at www.careopinion.org.uk or tel. 0800 122 31 35
- telephoning 01851 704704 (ext 24208) on a Tuesday or Friday afternoon between 1pm and 4pm.
We're here to support you...

ABOUT COVID-19
The most common symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

- a high temperature (37.8°C or greater)
- and/or a new and continuous cough
- and/or a loss or change in your sense of smell and/or taste.

If you are concerned about possible COVID-19 symptoms, view our handy guide below...

I DON'T HAVE SYMPTOMS
If you do not have symptoms but want to find out more information visit www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus
A free free helpline is also available if you do not have symptoms but are looking for general advice - tel. 0800 028 2816.

I HAVE MILD SYMPTOMS
If you have mild symptoms you are expected to stay at home for 7 days from the start of your symptoms even if you think your symptoms are mild. Do not go to your GP, pharmacy or hospital.

All other household members should isolate as a household for 14 days even if they don’t have symptoms themselves. The 14-day period starts from the first day the person had symptoms.

Further information is available at: www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus

MY SYMPTOMS ARE GETTING WORSE
You should phone 111 if:

- your symptoms worsen during home isolation, especially if you’re in a high or extremely high risk group
- breathlessness develops or worsens, particularly if you’re in a high or extremely high risk group
- your symptoms haven’t improved in 7 days.

If you have a medical emergency, phone 999 and tell them you have COVID-19 symptoms.

Your NHS is still here to help!
NHS Western Isles is reminding communities that their local Health Service remains available to them when needed.

If you have an issue that you would normally have contacted your GP Practice, Emergency Department or other healthcare staff with before coronavirus, please continue to seek advice as normal.

Be assured that anyone displaying COVID-19 symptoms is being treated separately to patients attending for other reasons.

Get checked early
Whilst NHS screening services for breast, bowel and cervical cancer have been paused during COVID-19, if you have noticed symptoms and are concerned, your GP practice is open and ready to help.

Getting checked early is one of the main reasons why more people survive cancer. For further information visit www.getcheckedearly.org

Get immunised!
If you or your child has an immunisation appointment, make sure you attend, or reschedule if you’re showing symptoms of COVID-19.

Regular appointments
If you have a regular appointment for a chronic condition such as asthma or diabetes you should contact your GP for advice. If your hospital appointment has not been cancelled you should still attend.

Local support
Many of us living on the Outer Hebrides are feeling the strain of the ongoing COVID-19 situation, and some of us may be struggling to make ends meet.

If your usual food bill has increased, you are not alone. Buying even basic food supplies and paying for heating/electric has many people and families worried. We want to reassure you that there are systems to support you, even if you have never needed extra help before.

This could be supplying you with free food shopping, offering free food vouchers, or other financial support.

If you are not sure who best to contact, please call in the Community Support Hub and Helpline, led by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, on 01851 600 501. It offers community support for anyone in the Outer Hebrides who requires assistance whilst self-isolating or may be considered vulnerable or at high risk during COVID-19.

We would also ask you to share this information safely with others in your community where possible, and look out for our vulnerable neighbours, who may benefit from additional support, but are not aware of the helpline number.

Community Support Hub and Helpline:
01851 600 501
A dedicated Coronavirus (COVID-19) website is available at www.coronavirus.wi.nhs.scot and offers easy access to:

- essential and accurate information on COVID-19 and links to the latest guidance from NHS Inform, Scottish and UK Government
- local information on support and services, commonly asked questions and answers and local film updates provided by Gordon Jamieson, NHS Western Isles Chief Executive
- support, tools and tips to help individuals and families keep well whilst at home during isolation
- support on how to stay in touch with family and friends outwith your household.
- information on the local Community Support Hub and Helpline for those who require support whilst self-isolating or may be considered vulnerable during this time.
- local support, financial and accommodation support, as well as water and energy supplier information.

Local COVID-19 website: www.coronavirus.wi.nhs.scot

A local COVID-19 Health Concern Helpline is available to help answer general Coronavirus health-related queries or concerns from members of the public, health and social care staff and category 1 responders. Please note that the local helpline is not a replacement to NHS24’s advice line on 111, and NHS24 should always be used in the first instance.

The local helpline offers support to help you understand more about the virus, the symptoms it causes and the important ways in which you can help reduce its impact in our communities. It is open from 9am-5.30pm Monday-Friday.

Local COVID-19 health concerns helpline: 01851 601 151

A new Psychological Wellbeing Hub service has recently been launched to help people of all ages across the Outer Hebrides manage their anxiety while coping with the coronavirus outbreak.

The Western Isles Psychological Wellbeing Service will operate the normal working hours of 9am-5.30pm Monday to Friday. Referral to the hub can be made by downloading the referral form at https://bit.ly/3eYa3RQ and then emailing it to: wi-hb.PsychologicalSupportForCorona@nhs.net

For those without internet access, a referral or self-referral can be made by phoning the Community Navigator Team on 01851 708022 or the NHS Western Isles COVID-19 telephone line on 01851 601 151.

USEFUL CONTACTS

**Western Isles Citizens Advice Service**
01851 705727
bureau@lewiscab.casonline.org.uk

**Hebridean Housing Partnership**
0300 123 0773
customerservices@hebrideanhousing.co.uk
www.hebrideanhousing.co.uk

**Tighean Inne Gall**
01851 706 121
info@tighean.co.uk
www.tighean.co.uk

**Jobcentre**
01851 743 663 or 01851 743 664
stornoway-jobcentre@dwp.gov.uk
www.gov.uk

**Western Isles Women’s Aid**
01851 704750
office@wiwasty.org
westernisleswomensaid.co.uk

**CnES COVID-19 Information**

**CnES Homelessness Service**
01851 822 821 (Lewis & Harris)
01870 602 425 (Uists & Barra)
Out of Hours: 01851 701 702
hservice@cne-siar.gov.uk

**CnES Financial Inclusion Service**
Financial Inclusion: 01851 822 654
inclusion@cne-siar.gov.uk

**CnES Benefits Office**
01851 822 642
benefits@cne-siar.gov.uk

**CnES Social Work Service**
01851 600 501
Out of Hours: 01851 701 702

If you would like to join our e-subscription list to receive the latest COVID-19 news from NHS Western Isles, simply email coms.wi@nhs.net
ISLE OF LEWIS WHISKY SHOP RAISES SPIRITS WITH DELIVERY SERVICE

A whisky shop based on the Isle of Lewis has successfully adapted to lockdown with the launch of a new delivery service with help from Business Gateway.

Founded by Iain Faller, The Island Spirit Whisky Shop offers customers a selection of high-quality Scotch malt whiskies, Scottish artisan gins and other fine spirits. While initially due to move into new premises in April 2020, Iain adapted his business in response to COVID-19 with the launch of a delivery service available across the Outer Hebrides and mainland Scotland.

Prior to the pandemic, Iain attended a number of Business Gateway and DigitalBoost workshops, which equipped him with the skills he needed to use social media as a marketing tool to raise awareness of his business and its service.

Iain also accessed a variety of business start-up services over the last two years which have been instrumental in keeping the business stable during the COVID-19 pandemic. This included one-to-one business support, advice on his business plan and a successful grant application to the Outer Hebrides Young Entrepreneurs Start Up Scheme (Plus) (OHYESS+). The OHYESS+ scheme provides support to new businesses and is funded by Highlands and Islands Enterprise and delivered by Business Gateway Outer Hebrides.

Iain Faller, owner and founder of The Island Spirit Whisky Shop, said, “I had always dreamt of turning my hobby of collecting whiskies into a business, and after attending twenty Business Gateway workshops, I finally took the plunge.

“While I was not anticipating the current situation, the skills I gained from attending Business Gateway workshops equipped me with the confidence to diversify and utilise social media to advertise and market our business, without having the presence of our high street shop. Practically, the business support grant I applied for has helped keep the business on track with our original plan and prevented us from spending money allocated for stock purposes.

“I have been overwhelmed with the support and encouragement I have received from the local community and other local businesses and I can’t thank Business Gateway enough.”

Derek Maclean, Business Adviser, Business Gateway said, “Over the past two years Iain has been able to take advantage of a wide variety of services which we offer and it is always rewarding to see someone take the leap and start their own business.

“While the ongoing circumstances are not what anyone could have predicted, it has been brilliant to see how Iain has adapted, with the successful launch of his new service and I look forward to when Iain can open his shop so that customers can enjoy the experience he offers.”

For support and advice on critical business issues during the pandemic visit our dedicated Coronavirus Hub which is updated with new information daily: https://www.bgateway.com/coronavirus-business-support-across-scotland

Support Finder

The UK Government has launched an online business support finder tool which shows some of the supports available to you and your business. Please note, this service mainly focuses on UK Government support schemes. Your business may also be eligible for support schemes operated by the Scottish Government or other agencies.

The business support finder tool can be accessed at https://www.gov.uk/business-coronavirus-support-finder

OHYESS

BUSINESS START UP GRANT FUNDING

The OHYESS scheme is financed by Highlands and Islands Enterprise and administered by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

Grant funding for entrepreneurs, based in the Outer Hebrides with businesses in key sectors that have been trading for no longer than two years. The funding will be used towards capital costs only.

- Full time businesses—up to £2,500 grant
- Part time businesses—up to £1,250 grant
- Level of support—up to 50% of eligible costs.

To find out more, please contact Business Gateway on 01851 822775 or businessgateway@cne-siar.gov.uk.

*Key Sectors - renewables & energy related activity, recycling, tourism, creative and other culture-based industries, food & drink, information technology, life, health and other sciences, research & development, innovation, manufacturing & processing, traditional industries (indigenous to the Outer Hebrides)

Find us on Facebook – search for Business Gateway Outer Hebrides

CORONAVIRUS SUPPORT

Business Gateway is here to help you and your business through this difficult time. Our advisers are working remotely and continue to be able to offer support and guidance. The Business Gateway website is regularly updated with a wide range of relevant advice and information on things like business contingency, digital platforms, trading online, working from home, HR and more. All this useful content can be found at www.bgateway.com, where you will also find helpful webinars and the latest updates on the Government financial support for businesses.

The Comhairle’s website also contains up to date information on the Coronavirus situation. Please visit www.cne-siar.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/coronavirus/ to see the latest updates.

To find out how Business Gateway can support your business, please contact us on businessgateway@cne-siar.gov.uk or 01851 822775.

Self-employment Income Support Scheme

This scheme supports self-employed individuals (including members of partnerships) whose income has been negatively impacted by COVID-19. It provides a taxable grant worth 80% of profits, up to £2,500 per month. HMRC will work out the grant based on your average trading profit over the last three tax years.

Further information is available on the UK Government website at www.gov.uk/guidance/self-employment-income-support-scheme.

Business Support Fund

This fund provides businesses with a rateable value up to £18,000 and registered for non-domestic rates, including those in receipt of the Small Business Bonus Scheme relief, with grants of £10,000. Businesses with a rateable value of between £18,001 and £51,000 in the hospitality, leisure and retail sectors can apply for grants of £25,000.

Self-catering businesses may be eligible if they are registered for non-domestic rates, if they provide a primary source of income for the owner (a third or more) and if the property was let for at least 140 days in 2019-2020.

If you have multiple eligible properties, you may be eligible to apply for a grant for each one from 5 May. This means you may be able to get a £10,000 or £25,000 grant on the first property. Then each additional property may be eligible for either a Small Business Support Grant of £7,500 or a Retail, Hospitality, Leisure Support Grant of £16,500.

For more information, visit www.cne-siar.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/coronavirus/business-support-scheme/.

COVID-19 Local Business Support Scheme

The Comhairle has established this fund to assist businesses in hardship with ongoing costs if their normal trading has been affected by COVID-19.

The scheme cannot cover cashflow and day-to-day expenses but can potentially help with expenses such as maintenance of plant and equipment that would otherwise become obsolete, interest payments on business borrowing and some utilities and insurance costs.

For more information, contact us on businessgateway@cne-siar.gov.uk or 01851 822775.

Newly Self-employed Hardship Fund

If you are ineligible for the UK Government’s Self-employment Income Support Scheme, you can apply for support through this fund. It is anticipated that the scheme will be open from early May and will be managed by the Comhairle. Contact us on businessgateway@cne-siar.gov.uk for further details on the eligibility criteria and application process.

Bounceback Loans

The government has announced plans to offer Bounceback Loans up to £50,000 to support small businesses during the recession. The loans will be interest free for the first 12 months and 100% government backed. Applications will be open as of 4th May. You can find out more by visiting www.gov.uk/government/news/self-employment-income-support-scheme.

For the full list of support and all the latest information please visit our coronavirus hub: https://www.bgateway.com/coronavirus-business-support-across-scotland
CORONAVIRUS/COVID-19
Business Support from
Business Gateway Outer Hebrides

Business Gateway is very conscious of the scale of the impact that the pandemic is having on businesses, and the wider community, and is here to support you as much as we can.

We have put in place actions to allow us to deliver a virtual advisory and online tutorial service to you wherever you are. Our local advisers are still very much available, by phone, email or online to offer free support on a wide range of business matters including continuity planning, managing cashflow and dealing with suppliers.

Our website offers a range of free resources to help you during this pandemic. Some key information that may be of use includes:

- Official guidance for business owners in Scotland
- Actions for businesses to consider during the pandemic
- Coronavirus funding and grant support
- Business news and official updates

Our online tutorials and webinars have been developed to cover topics particularly relevant to the crisis e.g. digital marketing, PR in a crisis, email marketing and trading online.

Contact your local office on 01851 808240,
email outerhebrides@bgateway.com
or visit bgateway.com/coronavirus-support