

# S TAFFIN NEWSLETTER

IRIS AN TAOBH SEAR

SAMHRADH/SUMMER 2018



## Bun-sgoil Stafainn

MUCH needed improvements to Staffin's main war memorial, led by our school children, will commence in earnest this week. It comes after the school did brilliantly to win a Scotland-wide contest to overhaul the war memorial area, next to the Kilmartin River and Columba 1400, which has been looking tired in the last few years and in need of some attention.

A competition was run by Poppy Scotland to transform 'Poppy Places'.

The school's P4-P7 pupils and teacher Liz MacFarlane had explained how they proposed to improve the local war memorial amenity, which was moved to its current location 25 years ago after the new double-track road built in the 1980s bypassed its previous Stenscholl setting.

The pupils' ideas included a new gate, poppy shaped flower bed and a small "bog garden" etc.

As part of the educational project the children learned about the bloody conflicts which led to the loss of life, which the memorial reminds us all of, and Staffin's keenly felt casualties, including some of the pupils' relatives.

The class beat five other shortlisted entries from across the country and have now received a £1,000 cheque.

On Friday afternoon (27.7) Ms MacFarlane, pupils and parents will be starting the clear-up at the memorial. The broken picnic benches will be dismantled, weeds cleared from the burn, the path tidied and the location of the new bog garden will be marked out. Anybody willing to help is warmly invited to do so between 1pm and 5pm.

## *Gaelic Bollywood*

IT'S a busy summer holiday for a group of talented Staffin dancers who are rehearsing for debut appearance at a sell-out music festival next month.

The Staffin Bollywood troupe will perform at the Tartan Heart Festival in Belladrum, near Beaulay, on Saturday, August 4. The three-day event attracts thousands of people and its theme this year is Bollywood, hence the invitation to the Staffin performers, who are tutored by parent Sonia Gill.

Sonia said her troupe were eagerly looking forward to their 'Bella' performance. "The children have been practising for this regularly and are continuing to do so throughout the holidays," she said. "The performance is unique as it's a Gaelic and Bollywood fusion." Parents will also be travelling to the festival to watch the children on stage. Sonia was a

dancer in Bhangra and Bollywood groups and performed all over the UK.

The 14 pupils performing are:  
Hamish Atkins, Rebecca MacKenzie, Ava Gillies Phoebe Whitehead, Lachlan MacLeod, Holly Clark, Ellie MacQueen, Prayr Gill Alexander Whitehead, Freddie Wallwork, Lexy MacLeod, Heavn Gill, Willow Ferguson and Toby Wallwork.

Staffin pupils shone at the Skye Mòd last month held over two days. The children, *pictured below*, performed very well and took home a clutch of silverware.



#### Staffin Community Hall Association

STAFFIN Gym continues to be popular in attracting new members and visitors, *writes Martin Perry*, the chairman of the Staffin Hall Association. Sam Crowe continues to deliver enthusiasm and drive to vary the classes to try to suit more people but due to other work commitments is restricted to one day a week, Thursday, and is currently running 7-7-7 (cardio-legs-arms) and Abs. Tuesday night members run a DIY class, currently six weeks of FatBurn followed by six weeks of Metafit. In the dark, winter nights we will be using the

projector to follow various fitness classes.

STAFFIN Hall has now had the rear roof repaired with only minor internal ceiling work left to be done. This year, due to increasing visitor demand, the toilets are now open seven days a week and our chosen charity after two years of supporting Toilet Twinning is Water Aid providing clean water for all throughout the world.

STAFFIN Stores continues to do well, profits this year have been reinvested into the shop with new flooring and a new counter. We would like to thank you all for your custom.

**Urras Baile  
Fhlòdaigearraidh/  
Flodigarry Township Trust**

OUR “Ionnsachadh tro Chultar Bèò” (Learning through living culture) courses are almost fully subscribed this summer with only one place left on each of them, *writes Margaret Nicolson*, urras chairwoman.

The course dates are July 16-20 and August 20-24.

Applications can be made through Sabhal Mòr Ostaig’s website following the link to short summer courses.

We are pleased to note that Emma Beaton, from Flodigarry is the new Short Courses Co-ordinator. Meal do naidheachd, Emma!

The Trust’s own project plans are on-going and we are hopeful of some good news to share, in that regard, before the year’s end.

### Fèis Thròndairnis

THIS year's Fèis Thròndairnis, which is held in Bun-sgoil Stafainn, takes place between July 23-27. The fèis is for children aged between 8 and 18-years-old and there is always a range of very talented musicians each year as the tutors. The Tutors' Ceilidh was held in Talla Stafainn/Staffin Hall on Tuesday night (24.7.18). A second concert, showcasing what the participants have learnt over the week, will be on Friday afternoon, (27.7.18), again in the Hall.

### Staffin Community Trust/ Urras an Taobh Sear

#### Housing, Health and Business Development

Staffin Community Trust (SCT) and its partners have been making steady progress with the housing, health and business development at the site close to the primary



school. SCT secured full planning permission for the development - which includes six

three-bedroom houses, a business units building and storage base - earlier this year.

SCT has lodged a major grant application to the Scottish Land Fund to purchase the site from the Department and Stenscholl township - and also the current Staffin Surgery from NHS Highland. The latter transaction would see the surgery move into the new business units building and the current surgery become an

affordable home for a couple or individual. The District Valuer, David MacColl, has now valued both the site and surgery and submitted his reports, which was essential for the project to progress. SCT hopes to get a decision next month from the Scottish Land Fund.

SCT will also be soon applying to the Rural Housing Fund for help on the construction side.

10 expressions of interest in living in the homes have been received by SCT. Most of them are young families and residents living with their parents in Staffin, in rented accommodation, or in Portree and Inverness with local links. It illustrates the keen demand with 2019 marking 20 years since the last affordable homes were built in Staffin.

From the initial housing survey back in 2014 it has taken SCT four years to get to this point, with full planning permission.

The next key steps are the Resumption (removal) of the land from crofting tenure, securing all the funding and finance required for the development and the tendering process.

With the continued support of the community SCT is hoping to deliver this development as soon as it can.

#### Skye Ecomuseum: Viewing platform & car park

THE new viewing platform and upper car park is scheduled to open later to the community and public this month.

It is the first structure of this type in Skye and SCT is delighted with the standard of workmanship.

The development's two main contractors are Scott MacDonald of Inverness-based firm MacDonald Contracting Ltd and Ian and Robert MacDonald of Staffin Groundworks.



*L-R: Platform Design Engineer Geoff Freedman, contractors Scot MacDonald and Neil Hope.*

SCT hopes the year-round public attraction will showcase the Trotternish landscape and help take the pressure of other locations like the Quiraing, Kilt Rock and the Storr. This is not just an attraction solely for visitors however, and SCT hopes it will be well used and enjoyed by everybody in the local community,



young and old, and also by all the other communities in Skye. The viewing platform is part of a major heritage project in the Ecomuseum and SCT is looking forward to using it to tell the story of Lealt including the diatomite, salmon fishing stations and quarry through attractive new signage.

An official opening will be organised in September. The platform, *pictured below*, will be accessible by wheelchair users and disabled parking spaces will be marked out very close to the entrance.

The structure is made of galvanised steel and timber. The decking is larch while all the handrail posts are oak. It is hoped the materials used will ensure its longevity. A new parking area for cars and motorcycles is also close to being completed. The access road has been tarred to an excellent standard by Craik & MacRae, *see below*, the car park surface is being laid, road signs will be installed and the existing



car park will be lined. A height barrier to stop busses and large motorhomes from using the upper parking area will also be put up. SCT would like to thank the Lealt Township and The Department for its permission and support for the project.

Thanks also go to a number of local contractors for their work/and or supply on the platform and car park development so far, including engineer Eric Faulds, the main fencing contractors Iain MacLeod and Dougie Ross, fencer Sandy MacLeod, tree surgeon Alex



MacLeod, welder DL Mackenzie, Craik & MacRae, Eyre Plant Hire, Sconser Quarry and the digger operator John Gillies.

The Heritage Lottery Fund, the Coastal Communities Fund and SSE are the three main project funders.

### Skye Ecomuseum: Interpretation

A TWO-day workshop was held at Columba 1400 earlier this month to make decisions on the information presented at all the Ceumannan/Skye Ecomuseum sites," *writes programme manager Angus Murray.*

Volunteers attending these workshops came from a real mix of the community including teachers, a recent graduate, local school pupils fresh from their higher exams and people who had attended SCT's historical society meetings over winter.

Lucy Harland, of Lucidity Media, has been brought in to develop training and content planning to enable members of the community to work on what is presented at each site. She has significant experience of writing text on some of the largest and busiest museums in the country including the Riverside Museum in Glasgow and the National Football Museum in Manchester.

The 10 participants reviewed the existing panels from the sites and discussed what worked best and what was missing. By the second day there was broad agreement on the key stories from each site and some excellent plans for how they could be improved upon, including the important role of Gaelic and new features such as suggested things to do for families. The next

stage will include research and conducting interviews.

The project will be launched with a programme of events in April 2019. Keep an eye out for a big mix of other things connected to the project happening in Staffin in the lead up.

Please email Angus

at [skyeecomuseum@gmail.com](mailto:skyeecomuseum@gmail.com)

if you are interested in getting involved.

### SCT Gaelic course

SCT's award-winning Gaelic in the Environment course, run in partnership with the broadcaster Ruairidh MacLean, will start on Monday, August 6 and run for five days.

Columba 1400 is the teaching centre for the course but, as the title suggests, getting out to examine Staffin's landscape; the shoreline, hills, rivers and plants and wildlife is essential

All the students stay locally, in Gaelic speaking households. Bòrd na Gàidhlig helps fund the course.

### Staffin Slipway

A NEW redevelopment plan for the Slipway is an immediate priority for SCT.

Basic amenities such as water, fuel and electricity are not available at the Slipway, which is not currently fit for purpose. There are no secure boat storage facilities, while increased shelter for vessels, and the ability to berth at times of the day is often highlighted as a restriction for commercial and tourism usage.

SCT has the support of Highlands and Islands Enterprise to help fund a marine engineer to produce a

new site plan which would be shared with Slipway users, the community and other landowners in the area, like the Department and Highland Council, for their views and input.

In April, full planning permission for two new organic fish farms at Tote and Culnacnoc was secured by the company Organic Sea Harvest following a council

**WANTED:  
POTENTIAL SITE  
FOR SEAFOOD  
PROCESSING  
UNIT**

- Following full planning approval of two new organic fish farms at Tote and Culnacnoc, the company, Skye Sea Harvest, is seeking a 2-acre site in Staffin to build a seafood processing unit.
- This building would employ staff who would process and package the produce sale.
- If any Staffin resident, township or landowner has any suggestions could they please contact Hugh Ross at the Staffin Community Trust, by Friday, August 17<sup>th</sup> 2018.
- Tel: 562 464, e-mail [staffin.lido@gmail.com](mailto:staffin.lido@gmail.com) or visit the SCT office.

planning meeting in Inverness. OSH has agreed to contribute a payment per tonne of fish landed at the Slipway to SCT, which could be in turn used by the community organisation to help deliver its redevelopment. The company also wants to build a processing base in Staffin where the fish would be packed and labelled for sale. A site which is approximately 2 acres in size, close to water and power supplies and the main road is required. A 'Call for Sites' will soon be issued locally with the poster, *above*. If any resident or landowner has any suggestions they can contact Hugh Ross at SCT

via 562 464, email [staffin.lido@gmail.com](mailto:staffin.lido@gmail.com) or call in to see him at the office.

### Staffin Sheepdog Trials

A FORT Augustus handler won the 2018 Staffin Trials at Ellishadder last week. John MacKillop scored the highest number of points, with his dog Ben, as judged by Ewen McKinnon, Strathcarron. It comes a year after he was crowned the Lord of The Isles and won the cup for the week-long Hebridean circuit of trials events, of which Staffin is an integral part of. Uig's Seumas Campbell was the first of the locals coming in an excellent third in the open competition with Flint. took home the Calum Gillies Memorial Cup for the best pen and shed. More than £3,000 was raised for Cancer Research. The organisers thanked everybody who helped support the event.

Results 1) John Mackillop, Fort Augustus (Ben) 93; 2) James Gilman, Macclesfield (Bonny); 91  
3) Seumas Campbell, Uig (Flint) 90; 4) James Gilman, Macclesfield (Bob) 86; 5) Peter Martin, Perthshire (Daisy) 83; 6) Billy Morrison, Shetland (Nell) 83;

### Whale and Dolphin Watch

WHALE and dolphin lovers are invited to take part in a research gathering exercise from Saturday (28.7) onwards. The annual count of the various species on the Trotternish coast starts at Kilt Rock on Saturday between 4pm and 6pm. On Tuesday, July 31 it is at Rubha Huinish at 11.30am and the following day at Rigg Viewpoint between 4pm and 6pm. Contact Sylvia Porter on 07787 569330 for details.