

SLATEST NEWS

Your free community newsletter produced by Ballachulish Community Forum

Edition 26 – October / November 2020

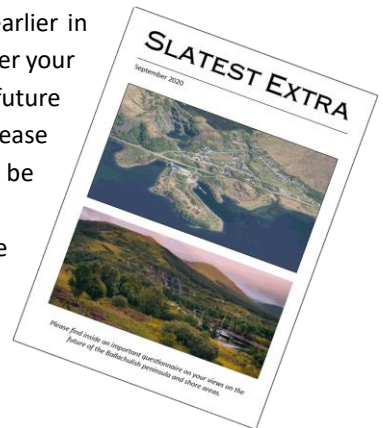


Our Beaver Group enjoying their first meeting in six months!

BALLACHULISH SHORE & PENINSULA SURVEY

You should all have received a copy of Slatest Extra earlier in September, which included a community survey to gather your views on what you would like to see happen in the future along our shoreline. If you haven't already filled it in, please do so, and return it to the collection points. It can also be done online at <http://bit.ly/ballasurvey>.

The results from the survey will be used by the community council and partners to respond to any future development proposals in the area.



WELCOME!

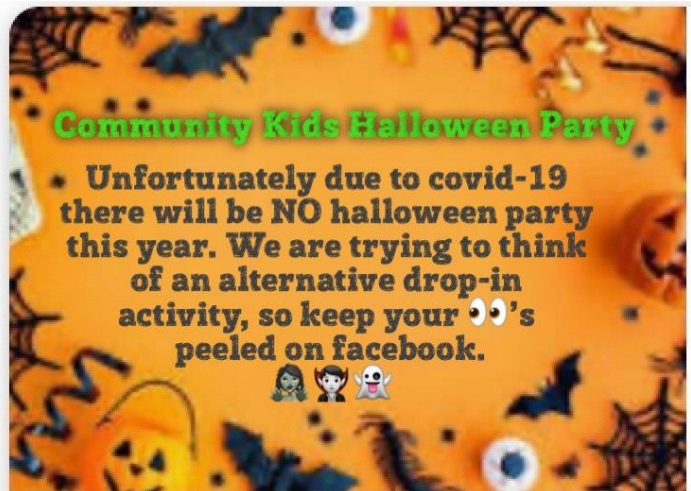
Thank you to everyone who has supplied articles for this edition of Slatest. This is your magazine, and it always has room for new items. If you have some interesting snippets of local news or history or have found some old photos or want to share a memory, please get in touch – rileyrob@btinternet.com, we can also help put articles together.



Slatest belongs to the community, and needs your support to continue being a success. The deadline for the next edition is **14th November 2020** with deliveries by the end of November, so please get in touch if you have any events or ideas!

Donations can be made anonymously and dropped into the Black letterbox at the village hall, or paid direct to the Ballachulish Community Association bank account (please put Slatest News in as a reference): RBS 83-20-16 / 10833089. The same applies for any other donations you wish to make – please put in an appropriate reference (eg: Foodbank or Resilience).

Thank You Everyone.



i **Ballachulish Visitor Centre**

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4th Lochaber Scout Group

Beavers 6-8 years, 5.30-6.30pm

Cubs 8-10½ years, 6.45-7.45pm

Scouts 10-14 years, 8-9.15pm

We meet at Ballachulish Village Hall on Thursdays

Over the last few weeks our local Beavers, Cubs and Scouts have managed to restart, whilst adhering to all of the relevant guidelines. It is a very different kind of Scouting from that which we are used to, with a lot of our normal activities currently impossible. However, our Scouts are hardy and thoroughly enjoying the outdoor activities we are managing to do. We also have, thanks to your generosity through the Co-op Community fund, bought some outdoor shelters for when the weather is not so favourable,

SLATEST NEWS NEEDS YOU!

To continue to make Slatest News essential reading for our community, both with the printed edition and on Facebook (right), we are looking for some new volunteers to help generate content, and act as admins on the facebook page. In particular, we would like to have someone between 16 and 25 to help. If you would like to get involved, please contact Rob at rileyrob@btinternet.com.



 <p>ARGYLL & LOCHABER JOINERS</p> <p>New Builds Kit Erections Extensions Doors & Windows Kitchens Renovations</p> <p>All Joinery Work Undertaken</p>	 <p>ARGYLL & LOCHABER PLUMBING & HEATING SERVICES</p> <p>Bathrooms Kitchens Boiler Servicing & Repairs</p> <p>All Plumbing Work Undertaken</p>	 <p>ARGYLL & LOCHABER PAINTING & DECORATING</p> <p>Interior & Exterior Painting Ames Taping</p> <p>All Painting & Decorating Work Undertaken</p>
<p>Mobile: 07444 823 647 Email: argyll-lochaberjoiners@outlook.com</p>		

GLENCOE AND BALLACHULISH WELLBEING LARDER

Thank you to everyone who completed our survey about the upcoming winter, in respect of our food bank. Enough people are anticipating a reduction in income over the coming months that we are going to maintain our provision of food support and are seeking out funding opportunities.

Since the food bank started on 13th April, we have given out over 200 food packages which is 1519kgs of food. That sounds like a lot of food doesn't it? It took us a while to get our heads around dealing with weight rather than monetary value but it is the way that most food banks operate their record keeping. There is no stigma attached to the weight of food, it is just a record to justify to our funders. The reality is, however, that we have been supporting only a very small number of people. We have scope to support many more of our community and we don't know how to get the message across. One key result from the survey was the feeling that "others are more needy than me". That's such an interesting human trait isn't it? The truth is, if you have had the thought "times are tight" then we could probably help you out.

As a result of the survey, we are keeping the Wellbeing Bank at Jubilee Park, with plans in place to make it a more permanent feature of our village. You also felt that the name "Food Bank" and the connotations associated with that might put people off, we agree. Therefore we are teaming up with Glencoe, Duror and Kentallen to provide a more comprehensive, cross-village service under the new name of the "Wellbeing Larder". We have a full range of frozen, fresh, store cupboard and household goods. We are here for full food parcels but just as keen for you to visit us to help out with your usual shop, adding a few nice bits you might pass over in the shop. We want to reach more families and more people where times are tight but they are just about managing. We have the provision, now we need people to use it!

Did you know that most of our volunteers are (or were) service users themselves? In fact, Rachael, who has been running the Food Bank since its inception in April, is a self employed mountaineering instructor and hasn't had a drop of her usual work since Lockdown. Times are tight in the volunteer team too!

We have revised our opening times and want to reiterate that we can also deliver. It's a confidential service, we only keep the bare minimum of personal details (so we know your name and how to contact you) and we don't pass this information on to anyone else.

Tuesdays 6pm – 8pm
Saturdays 10am – 12noon
Ballachulish Village Hall
Call the confidential number 01855 604311



BALLACHULISH VILLAGE HALL NEWS

You may not want to think about it just yet, but Christmas is fast approaching. Obviously things are going to be very different this year. It is unlikely that any of our normal festive events will be able to take place, but we have a team working in the background to come up with some ideas for events that could take their place. We are hoping that Santa will still be able to visit, even if it is just with air hugs and waves.



SOUTH LOCHABER BOWMEN

Archery Club at the Leven
Centre, Kinlochleven

Although we are currently not meeting, please keep an eye on our facebook page for re-activated meeting times and dates as soon as we can.



Archery sessions are run by qualified coaches in both Field and Target Archery.

Find us on facebook: www.facebook.com/SLBowmen.

RESILIENCE UPDATE

As Slate News goes to print, the government are on the verge of announcing new restrictions to help combat Covid 19. Rest assured that our resilience team are still there in the background, ready to act if and when it becomes necessary. If you have any questions or concerns, they can still be contacted via the facebook page or leave a message on 01855 604377.

Open every day

QUARRIER

Kitchen

Take away 15.00-21.00
Home delivery 16.00-20.00

A collage of images for Quarrier's Kitchen. It includes a photograph of the exterior of the building, a grid of eight images showing various food items like fried chicken, pizza, and fries, and a logo for Quarrier's Kitchen.

COVID 19

The recent developments in our neighbouring village remind us all how quickly our communities can be affected by Covid 19 and although over the past few months we have been following the guidance issued our rural location makes us even more vulnerable.

With that in mind here is a recap of a number of key factors that can make all the difference to our safety.

- Wash your hands covering all surfaces, especially your fingertips for at least 20 secs.
- Alcohol hand sanitizers are very useful to clean your hands also BUT can only be used on visibly clean hands (dirty, grimy hands render them ineffective).
- Gloves are NOT a substitute for hand washing or sanitiser, if you must wear them change them after each use and wash your hands after removal.
- Face coverings are mandatory in enclosed spaces (unless medically exempt). Please remember that they must cover the nose and mouth, replace them if they get damp and if they are cotton wash them regularly.
- Remember the 2 metre (6 feet) physical distancing when you are out in shops. Most places have clear floor markings. Use them!
- Keep up to date with current guidance on group restrictions

Often making little changes to our practice can make all the difference,

How many times do you reach for the soap first and THEN turn the tap on? What you are doing is effectively rubbing the bacteria already on your hands and likely not washing it off as well as you think.

Good Practice, turn the tap on, put your hands under the running water and then put the soap on. The running water will remove some of the surface bacteria already present so that when you put the soap on you get a good hand wash.

If you have been out shopping or otherwise, wash your hands on arriving home (especially when you have been handling shopping trolleys, baskets etc)

Use a different towel or paper towel to dry your hands. Avoid using your dish towel!!!

Stay Safe, Keep Healthy Everyone.



ST JOHN'S GAELIC SERVICE 2009



These photos were taken at a Gaelic Service on 19th July 2009 at St John's Church. There are some familiar faces to be spotted, and some who are sadly no longer with us.



A PERSONAL LOG BY E W WYLD ON HER FIRST VISIT TO THE HIGH ARCTIC – PART 2

Saturday 31st March

I woke up at 6.30am and looked out of the window. I could see bright green and purple tents, the French contingent had camped on the beach. It was sunny with a slight haze and mist rolling out of the valley. In the distance I could see icebergs sitting in the frozen fjord. The snow looked beautiful and crisp and the silence was awesome. The airport was silent; there are only two flights a week from Norway plus Aeroflot flights from Russia. We had brought out breakfast with us; tea or coffee, cereal with 'five pint' milk, ham, brown bread and butter. We packed, unpacked and repacked, what should I wear no chance to change my mind after I left the warmth of the hotel, no toilets either...

I heard engines, airplane engines and the big bird took off returning to Tromso, my link with the outside had gone. We then heard a helicopter, presumably the Governors, it circled overhead and disappeared. It too can only go out in good weather.

I decided to wear: purple all in one baby gro, thermals, pure wool vest, wool shirt, thick pure wool sweater, winter anorak, new outer anorak (wind and waterproof), cotton ankle socks, loop pileover the knee wool socks, wool balaclava, thin gloves, dachsteins (a brand of alpine wear), gauntlets and goggles. My boots were in the freight boxes which we hoped to find at Norman's depot. After finding these I would put on my bright orange, thigh length overboots. I was nearly ready!

We were all prepared for Norman to pick us up at 9.30 to take us to his depot to pack the sledges and check skidoos. 9.30 came and went so did 10.00. At 10.10 as we were going to phone he appeared, the Frenchmen has visited him at 9.30, enough said. We send Haggis and the luggage along first so that he could start to examine the skidoos we were to hire. After last year, close inspection was to be made! Norman came back for us and we past various obsolete mining equipment to his garage made of material, a tent shaped hanger, plus office, shop, repair shop and facilities for storage for the likes of us. He rented and repaired skidoos and sledges in the winter and boats and outboards in the summer. I noticed stored goods for the Wild Life Trust. They come out periodically to ring geese which come to winter in Solway and nest in Spitsbergen. In his shop were every item you could think of from boots to batteries and white fox furs for 110 pounds. Outside the hut were three skidoos, three sledges and our 29 boxes which had been sent air freight (SAS) and looking all intact.

The skidoos were not satisfactory and did not comply with the Haggis check list. We were paying 250 pounds a week for each skidoo and could not afford to take out unsatisfactory machines. We needed new track sliders, Vee belts, the XLV needed the front ski holder tightening up. They had to change one machine as they had no new track sliders for it, and exhaust needed fixing, plug caps were changed after a vehicle wouldn't start. I am sure the mechanic was glad to see us depart! (we were not very pleased either...)

Whilst the skidoos were being checked we found last years stores, checked the boxes, transferred food for week three, found harnesses, boots, hardware, collected jerry cans of petrol, oil, paraffin, bought fresh bread and cheese and were then ready to pack the sledges. Mike went to see about hiring two rifles but Norman only had one available – this meant we should all stay together. There were many things to think about and we were lucky that it was a clear sunny day as we were working outside. We had made flasks of tea which were very welcome with ham, cheese slices, bread and chocolate biscuits.

Kitty, the hotel lady, appeared to see if all was well. She gave us a lift to the shop, which was shut, and so we proceeded to the café where she negotiated bread and cheese for us. Each house has a wide pipe leading into it containing all the services, including central heating from a diesel generating station. Mining equipment is everywhere from the eight drift mines although all are not being worked. There had been an accident in the mine the day before, a stone chute, fortunately no one had been killed. It was funny to see plastic shrouded push chairs being dragged along in the snow. Most folks were in all in one suits and moon boots. We saw the hospital, school, church, museum, community centre, store and café. Glasnost has reached here too and the people employed by Aeroflot live in the town. At one time the Russian miners had no contact with the other communities but we heard the Norwegians were going to give a concert that weekend in their camp. Travel by skidoo was the only way to get there!

It was very difficult to pack the sledges even though we had worked out a plan of tea chest,



jerry cans, boxes and personal gear on each sledge. One sledge was a different length and some boxes were a different shape and I could only fetch and carry not having tried this before. We had large sheets of heavy gauge polythene to cover the sledges and this in turn was fastened down by straps which had to be carefully tensioned or they upset the whole load and a box would be pushed out of position. I forgot to mention two huge unwieldy British Antarctic Survey tents which didn't want to lie anywhere but may have saved our lives and had to go.

is so valuable. We arrived at the hut, built by the coal company, to find it was necessary to dig the doorway out before entering.

Eventually we were ready to go. The weight of each sledge had been carefully calculated to be able to be pulled by the machines they had used last year, alas this year's machines were having none of it. We looked at each other in disbelief, it was getting late in the afternoon, we were tired after a long journey, the sun was losing its heat, and we began to feel the cold.

We had everything we needed but we could not afford to spend another night in Longyearbyen, time was precious. We decided to take ten jerry cans off our machines and try again. That was enough, the cans were stashed beside the garage, no-one would touch them, and we set off.



I'd looked at the map over the years but a map tells you very little in conditions like this. Out along the road a little and veer left, straight onto the fjord. How did they know it was safe? I clung onto Avril as we bumped along turning frequently to make sure the other sledge was following along with Mike and Kelvin on the other skidoo. Your headlights come on automatically and sometimes you could see the reflection of the headlight behind in the windscreen which made it easier. I was looking straight ahead and so missed four or five silver reindeer which the others saw. I missed a lot of things on the journey out including the stick markers and three large beacons to help travelers on the way across Sassendalen. A speeding skidoost pulling a pulke (A sort of toboggan used to carry supplies) passed us at some outrageous speed. There had been a very bad snow storm the previous week, putting down a lot of snow and covering any tracks previously made. It is really a cold desert in this high arctic and snow fall is not necessarily high and often falls as granules of ice which is blown and acts like sand in the desert. In a way the new snowfall was to our advantage in places as it provided a cover on stony ground which would have worn the tracks on the skidoo.

As we came off the fjord all the valleys looked the same and we stopped to make sure we were heading in the right direction. We agreed to change course and I tried to look around at the huge ranges of sedimentary rocks and the white gullies pouring through them. We had heard that a bear had been about in Adventdalen but I could see no ice bear anywhere. It was necessary to stop at least every hour for a rest and a brew and fortunately the rest knew of the Passhytta where we could do just that. One can become very easily dehydrated in this climate without realizing as you are not hot or perspiring. This is where experience is so valuable. We arrived at the hut, built by the coal company, to find it was necessary to dig the doorway out before entering.

Haggis got the primus going and we soon had a brew and some chocolate. There were two pairs of bunk beds here and I would have been quite happy to stay the night, but was told that we must press on and that it was my turn to drive. One can only drive for so long as fingers seize up, concentration is very demanding and the person on the back gets very cold.

I had been dreading this moment for weeks and now it had come. If you are part of a team you must pull your weight, I had been told, so there was no choice.

Our machine was easy to start and the control was simply thumb on the throttle and go, remember to steer into the slope. That was not so easy as I found it quite an effort to turn the machine where I wanted it to go. On the flat straight ground the speedo was reading 35 which I thought was miles per hour but it was kilometers per hour so I was not going as fast as I thought I was. I knew I must try and avoid stones, watch out for bumps and rise off my seat for unavoidable humps. I thought I was getting the hang of it when we came over a rise to go down a hill on a slope. The snow was thick and I felt myself beginning to slide as if I was going out of control and I was afraid of tipping over. I just threw myself out of the path of the skidoo. I don't think I had much thought for my passenger but fortunately she did the same and the skidoo and sledge just carried on in the upright position. Simon and Haggis were a little further on and not aware of our plight. It was very difficult at times to make sure everyone was together. Thank goodness there was no damage to persons, skidoo or sledge. It gave me quite a shock when I thought about what I might have done. Avril drove on and I concentrated on watching the sledge and behind. The load on one of the sledges shifted so we stopped and reloaded it. After a while I was delighted to see another hut, was this to be my bed? This was Fredheim, base of past expeditions and stopping place of others as it was today and therefore not our resting place for the night. Here were two huts, a Norwegian hut and a hut with the Governer's plaque on it. In front of us lay Tempelfjorden looking like a disaster zone after an earthquake, huge lumps of ice thrown up on the shore, crevasses, icebergs and huge tide cracks. I didn't think we would be going any further but Mike found a way onto the fjord. We weaved our way out onto the fjord and after a while the ice became smoother and we picked up speed. Ten kilometers on and after passing Kapp Schoultz where gypsum used to be extracted, we saw another hut sheltering under the moraine. We held our breath and then breathed a sigh of relief as there were no signs of habitation, rest was in sight. Simon and Haggis grounded their sledge on a tide crack but we managed to reach the beach.

***To be continued in the next edition of
Slate News!***

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OBITUARY — DUNCAN CAMERON

It was with great sadness that the villages of Ballachulish and Glencoe received the news of the passing of Duncan Cameron, Former president of the Camanachd Association.

Duncan was the first son of the late Iain and Betty Cameron, both well known and respected stalwarts of the area. Duncan and his three siblings, Kay, Iain and Hamish, were brought up at 11 Park Road, Ballachulish and later moved to Lorn Drive, Glencoe. Duncan, like his siblings attended the Ballachulish Public School before going on to complete his education at Kinlochleven Secondary School.

After leaving school, Duncan moved to Glasgow, where he remained for the rest of his life. In the late 1940s, early 1950s, Duncan was one of many excellent shinty players, who represented the village juvenile shinty club and he was a member of the teams that won the MacKay cup in seasons 1950-51, 1951-52 and 1952-53, and the MacDougall under 14s cup, in seasons 1950-51 and 1951-52.

On moving to Glasgow, Duncan, like many of his contemporaries, joined Glasgow Mid Argyll and stayed with the club throughout his senior shinty career. Duncan created a club record by winning seven Glasgow Celtic Society Cup medals with the club. That record still stands today. When Duncan retired from playing, he devoted his time to the coaching and administrative side of the game. His strong desire to see shinty develop and flourish in the Glasgow and surrounding area, led also to his involvement over many years with the Glasgow Celtic Society, and once again, almost inevitably, to his becoming President of that society. Given his dedication to the game, it was only a matter of time before he became involved in the wider administration of shinty. His vision, innovative thinking and communication skills were seen as attributes which would bring benefits to the Camanachd Association and he was appointed first of all as Development Convenor before commencing his first term of office as President in 1994. It was in this role that he made the most significant contribution to the game, where he had the unique distinction of being the only president in modern times to twice serve in the post, for a total of three terms.

Duncan Cameron was a Ballachulish man at heart and he took great pleasure in the successes and achievements of his home shinty team. His passing has been deeply felt by all those in the shinty community. The sympathy of the Ballachulish and Glencoe villages, is extended to his wife Liz and his family, Fiona, Erin, Rachel and his siblings, Kay, Iain and Hamish and their families.

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VANDALISM AND LITTER IN BALLACHULISH.

Can we as a community come together and take action?

Recent, and not so recent posts on social media highlight the mindless, senseless, ignorant acts of vandalism and littering that are taking part in our community.

These have included, from way back, damage done to the Cro in the Quarry (posts ripped off, the perpsex smashed and burnt), persistent littering, cigarette butts, alcohol cans, red bull cans, paper torn up into tiny fragments, the list is endless.

More recently the following areas have been affected - the shinty park and the well being bank. The latter with bits of rubbish thrown in amongst the books, bakery items opened and thrown about. At the Isles Underpass and by the steps there is a regular display of empties and food wrappings from the Co-op. When that area loses its attraction and to keep it varied they move to the wooded area at the Albert Road Underpass and leave their smashed bottles behind.

Also down at the Isles damage was done to a display stand with bits of slate and stone broken and thrown about.

In the Quarry today a local resident posted a picture of part of the picnic bench table pulled off and burnt.



This has been going on for so long now, members of our community have been regularly cleaning up on a daily basis and especially at the weekend.

The purpose of this article is to highlight what is going on and to appeal to the individuals who are spoiling and defacing our naturally stunning landscape.

- **Stop littering, take a bag with you and put it in a bin or take it home.**
- **Perhaps individuals can be encouraged to go down the next day and clean up then.**
- **Stop smashing glass, its only a matter of time before a dog or someone is injured.**
- **Stop vandalising property, its an offence and action will be taken.**
- **Have some respect and consideration for the area you are lucky enough to live in.**



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NOTES ON THE WEATHER IN GLENACHULISH

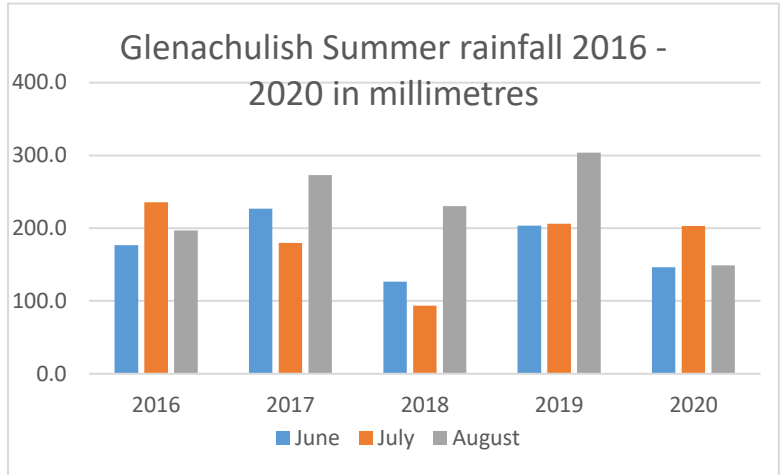
As can be seen from the chart the rainfall over the summer months has been lower than normal, the average over the 5 years being almost 600mm while this year we had 500 mm. June had no 'really wet days' while we needed 3 days, the 3rd, 4th and 5th of July to give us 68 mm. The 4th of August was wet with 43mm.

The recent wet weekend on the 11th, 12th and 13th September gave us 150 mm, with almost half of the total, 71mm falling by 7 am on Sunday morning.

We had some lovely warm weather in June

when we had a fortnight with the daily temperature usually getting above 20 degrees and soaring to 28.5 degrees (83 degrees Fahrenheit) on the 25th July was cooler with only a couple of days in the whole month getting over 20 degrees. August again gave us a wonderful warm sunny fortnight with temperatures around and above the 20 degree mark and possibly made all the sweeter as the East coast had low cloud rolling in from the North Sea.

However we are lucky in comparison to my brother in law in Colorado where the temperature earlier this month dropped from 30 degrees to below freezing, with 2" of snow, in 24 hours, the biggest temperature drop in 150 years.



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sky SPORTS

USEFUL CONTACTS

If you have any questions about what is going on in the community, or would like to help with anything, please get in touch with someone below:

Community Council: www.ballachulish.org.uk

Our Community Councillors are: Michael Chisholm, Shirley Grant (Vice-Chair), Alisdair Jack (Treasurer), Dave Kitson (Secretary), Rob Malpas, Anthony McKenna, Kevin Smith (Chair)

Community Association: www.balla-hall.co.uk

Our Trustees are: Brian Dickie (Vice Chair), Mags Ingram, Donella MacDonald, Rob Malpas (Secretary), Sheila McLean, Ruth Sime, Sandy Stoddart

Community Company: [on Facebook](#)

Brian Dickie, Simon Ingram (Treasurer), Dave Kitson, Angus MacInnes, Niall McLean, Ruth Sime, Kevin Smith, Morgan Smith

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

It hopefully doesn't need saying that most of the regular activities and events are on hold at time of going to press. We hope that things will continue to improve and that the community calendar can return in the next issue of Slatest News.

Please look out for posters and keep an eye on facebook for updates as community activities start to resume.

Advertising

If you would like to advertise your local business in this newsletter, please get in touch. Adverts will cost £20 per issue, for a quarter page. We will take a maximum of 12 adverts per issue, and can do the artwork for you if that helps.

Ballachulish Community Council, Ballachulish Community Company and Ballachulish Community Association SCIO (SC023308) have worked together to produce this newsletter.

Editors: Rob Malpas and Sheila McLean

Distribution: Sheila McLean (with helpers) to approximately 380 properties in the Ballachulish and Glenachulish community. Funded through Ballachulish Community Association SCIO, Ballachulish Village Hall, East Pier Road, Ballachulish PH49 4LE



HELPS PREVENT THE SPREAD OF VIRUSES

Do you need ppe to help you get back to work safely ?

Contact us and we can help you

Claymore Limited

The advertisement features a collage of images. On the left, a construction worker in a blue uniform and yellow hard hat is working on a wooden structure. In the center and right, two women are shown wearing black and light blue face masks. Surrounding them are various PPE products including boxes of 'EMERGENCY BLEACH TABLETS', 'EMERGENCY FACE MASKS', 'EMERGENCY TOILET COVERS', 'EMERGENCY DISPOSABLE GLOVES', and 'EMERGENCY DISPOSABLE COVERS'. A red heart with a white pulse line and a red 'no' symbol over a virus are also present in the top right corner.

Claymore Limited Tyndrum Road Glencoe Tel 01855 811308