

SLATEST NEWS

Your free community newsletter produced by Ballachulish Community Forum

Edition 19 – February / March 2020



Above: Panto cast and crew

Below: Kids Christmas Party



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 history or have found some old photos or want to share a memory, please get in touch, 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 March 2020** with deliveries by the end of January, so please get in touch if you have any events or ideas!

BALLACHULISH TIMELINE

There is no doubt that there is a lot of debate about our communities future at present, but lets first take a moment to look back at the history of our village:

150 Years ago: The cottages and JSMTC building on Loanfern are believed to have been built in c1870.

75 Years ago: The first Co-op opened in the village on 1st December 1945, sited opposite Fern Villa where Quarry Cottages now stand. A few days earlier is the first reference in Hansard to a parliamentary discussion regarding bridging the Ballachulish Narrows, with a road bridge.



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COMMUNITY COUNCIL PUBLIC MEETING PENINSULA DEVELOPMENT REPORT

The following is a brief overview of the numerous points of discussion at the packed meeting on 7th January. Thanks to everyone who attended and provided a near unanimous view on the way the community would like to proceed.

Large parts of the land in the proposal are constructed from waste slate materials produced by the Slate quarries in their production process, the area was dressed during the regeneration of the village in the 1970s by SDA works. There have been test bores done by the Council in the past on the West Peninsula area and it was deemed to be unsuitable for building on due to the base being unstable.

The matter of the purchase of the land was raised. It is known that it was originally leased and at some point this was changed to ownership, although details remain uncertain at present. Highland Council was the previous owner at the time of transfer, further details are being sought from HC for clarification.

A number of issues were raised with Laurence Young, one of the developers of the Proposed Development of the area. Part of the area is designated for commercial and tourist development in the Local Plan, which is available for the public to access either online or in the council offices in Fort William. The designated areas are small on both the West and East Peninsulas and the Developers proposal document shows development extending outwith the designated area, mainly on the West Peninsulas.

The issue of community benefit was raised - what will the Community gain from the Proposal. The West Peninsula is heavily used by locals and visitors; dog walkers; local walking groups; fishermen; photographers and people enjoying the view points. The area is one of the only level walking areas linked into the village for public use and could easily be up graded to 'access for all' standard.

Other environmental issues were also raised about the exposure of the site and future flood level risks. Existing pathways are in poor condition. The area is also home to a wide range of wildlife, including a number of animals, such as otters, seals, herons, pine martins, deer, insects, butterflies and moths. Numerous birds also visit the site. All of these are regularly seen at the appropriate time of the year.

Some interesting issues were raised about community input for using our historical, environmental past and future. We have a Community Action Plan, due to be updated, which has raised a number of the Community concerns.

At the end of the meeting a show of hands for and against the current proposal was raised. The majority voted against the proposal. A subsequent show of hands also showed a majority in favour of investigating the possibility of a community land transfer.

A developer meeting took place, after Slatest went to press, on the 26th January where developers and architects were present to discuss the proposals and answer questions raised by community.

DUROR AND ST MUNDA'S PARISH CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

With challenges to St Munda's church building we're worshipping in the church hall in the winter months. This gives a cosier atmosphere both in terms of temperature and in gathering us closer together. The mood is brighter, the singing better and the hall gives the flexibility for different forms of worship. This will sometimes involve using a projector and will include 'Café Church' on at least a couple of occasions; everyone is always welcome. We now serve tea and coffee before the services so people come a little earlier to have a chat before we start.



In November we had a really interesting and entertaining evening listening to Susan, Sandra and Ewan giving us a wonderfully illustrated talk about their experiences of 'Walking the Camino de Santiago' and evenings of entertainment will continue shortly with a film night with a little something extra! Look out for posters.

Later on in February we'll start a series of thought provoking sessions during the period of Lent. These will be on different days and at different times of day in the hope that it gives everyone a chance to get to at least one. As always – everyone is welcome and details will follow.

We continue to be involved with 'Lochaber Supports Refugees' and are always interested in ideas for charities that we might be able to support.

I'll always be very happy to receive requests to visit anyone at home or in hospital (01631 740285).

Thanks for all the support we receive and best wishes to you and yours for 2020,

Rev Sandy Stoddart

Christmas Alphabet Quiz

Many thanks to everyone who took part. A total of £136 was raised, giving £68 to Water Aid and £68 to St. Munda's Church. The winner drawn from those correct entries received was Ann Winning of Glencoe.

Hilary Malpas

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RIVERBANK

As many of you will have seen, the storms and torrential rain so far this year have taken their toll on the riverbank between Albert Road and the Underpass. The community council are closely monitoring the situation, and are in regular contact with Highland Council and our MSP to try and get repair works organised.

At present work is scheduled for May / June due to the possibility of disturbing young fish in the river. However, we are trying our best to get these works brought forwards as a matter of urgency.

In the meantime we would advise anyone using the path to take the greatest of care, particularly with pets and children, as the river is eating away at the path, and the wooden fence is no longer safe. We do not want the path to be closed long term, but this may be necessary, and ultimately is up to the Highland Council.

SCHOOL UPDATE

In a letter dated 20th December, the Highland Council updated parents on staffing changes which took effect at the beginning of this school term. Mr MacGregor has taken up his new post as Cluster Head for St Brides and Glencoe Primaries, allowing Mrs Ainsley Burns to take up her role as Cluster head for Ballachulish and Duror. This means that Carol Divers has returned to be a class teacher in Ballachulish.

This should be the final changes regarding head teachers, and will hopefully lead to a period of stability following the numerous staff changes experienced over the last year.

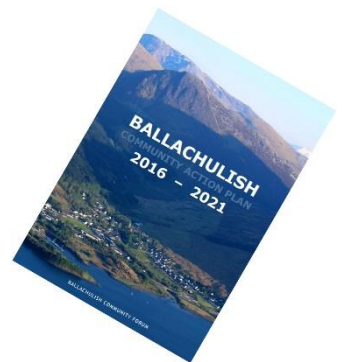
VILLAGE HALL NEWS

Christmas Market & *Lantern Parade*

We would like to thank everyone who helped with and attended these two popular events before Christmas. The Christmas Market and Santas Grotto raised around £1000, while the Lantern Parade took in £350, which means for the first time this event has turned a small profit.

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

At the Community Forum in September, it was agreed that the community wanted to repeat the process of the Community Action Plan for 2021-26. We will therefore start on this in the new year, and are looking for people to help. If you would like to be involved, please come along to the meeting at 7pm on 11th February in the village hall.



NEW YEAR = NEW SHOW FOR LOCHABER SHOWSTOPPERS

Phew! The Lochaber Showstoppers are presently recovering from the tremendous success of their December pantomime 'The Swan Princess', and extend their sincere thanks to everyone involved on-stage, behind the scenes and of course the audiences who laughed, gasped and applauded in all the right places.

Now, what better way to relax after a hectic show than diving head-first into the next one? Rehearsals are now underway for the Showstoppers' production of Rogers & Hammerstein's beloved musical 'The Sound of Music', to be performed at the Nevis Centre, Fort William, Thurs 11th – Sat 13th June.

Set in Austria in 1938, 'The Sound of Music' tells the story of Maria, a young Nun who brings music and love into the austere von Trapp family home through catchy numbers including 'Climb Ev'ry Mountain', 'Do-Re-Mi' and 'Sixteen Going on Seventeen'.

New members are always welcome to join the Lochaber Showstoppers and get involved either on- or off-stage – if you are interested in learning more please contact info@lochabershowstoppers.co.uk or visit their Facebook page.

Rehearsals for 'The Sound of Music' are every Thursday at the Nevis Studio, Fort William, 18:00 – 19:30 (Juniors) 19:30 – 21:30 (Adults)

Altogether now; 'The hills are aliiiiiiiiive...'



CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

The party committee would like to thank all the local businesses who made donations: Highland Titles, The Coop & Post Office, Argyll & Lochaber Joiners & The Laroch Bar, without these it would be very difficult to provide such a great party for free.



Every
Tuesday & Thursday
Ballachulish Village Hall
9:30 - 11:30am
£1.50 inc snack 😊
(Suggested Donation)
Contact Alice Wilson - 07709100618



SOUTH LOCHABER BOWMEN

Archery Club at the Leven Centre, Kinlochleven
Otters (5-7yrs) Cubs (8-12yrs) Juniors (13-17 yrs)
Monday evenings 6-8pm £2.50 per session
Adults 18 and over Tuesday evenings
7:00-9:00pm - £4 per session - All equipment supplied



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

You can also find us on facebook: www.facebook.com/SLBowmen.

The club is now a member of the Scottish Field Archery Association (SFAA) which allows current year card holding members to attend club shoots and Championships all around Scotland. Further details of this opportunity can be obtained through South Lochaber Bowmen Facebook page. Your questions will be answered promptly.

New members are always welcome, whether you are a first timer or experienced archer please feel free to come along and try out your skills!

ALZHEIMER SCOTLAND

Hello, I am Eleanor Brown and Alzheimer Scotland have appointed me as the new Community Activities Organizer for Lochaber. I am looking to set up groups and activities for people affected by Dementia and their families/carers in the South Lochaber area. I will shortly be hosting a Dementia Café in the Village Hall so **watch out for dates in the New Year** and please feel free come along and join me for a chat about what you would like me to try to organise for you.

In the meantime if you would like to contact me, my telephone number is 07920 868848 or you can email me at EBrown@Alzscot.org.

I look forward to seeing you in the New Year

Eleanor Brown, Alzheimer Scotland



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DEVELOPMENTS AT GLENCOE FOLK MUSEUM

Glencoe Folk Museum might be closed for winter right now, but there's plenty going on behind the scenes. Our Curator, Catriona, is busy refreshing our displays ready for opening for the season in April (come along to see what's new!)

Looking ahead we're also making progress with our exciting redevelopment project, which will transform the Museum's exhibitions and visitor facilities including new covered spaces and the installation of toilets for the first time! Over the last few months we've been surveying our visitors and the local community to learn how best the Museum could develop. This has produced some really useful feedback which has been fed into our redevelopment. The project is still at an early stage but we're especially excited by plans to convert our byre outbuilding into a Community Exhibition Gallery for local groups and schools to produce their own displays and allowing for regularly rotating exhibitions – meaning there'll always be something new to see in the Museum. We're also aiming to rejuvenate all our exhibitions to bring local history to life like never before while taking care to retain the existing unique 'quirky' charm which has proved popular with tourists and local visitors.



There's plenty of ways you can get involved with the Museum in 2020 – we always welcome new volunteers to help staff the Museum desk and give visitors from around the world a friendly welcome. Right now we're also looking for advisors to help bring our redevelopment to fruition, so if you have experience of construction, finance or marketing and would like to get involved we'd love to hear from you! Please see our website glencoemuseum.com or email redvelopment@glencoemuseum.com to find out more.

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GLENACHULISH COMMUNITY HYDRO



Lochaber Environmental Group has been given the opportunity to take on the building and running of a low carbon hydro-electric scheme in Glenachulish and we all have an opportunity to be involved in making this clean energy project a reality by purchasing community shares to fund its construction..

The plans to build a 544kw hydro-electric scheme in Glenachulish are well on the way following a positive feasibility study and with the relevant planning permission and licences in place. Once built and operating the hydro scheme will generate enough power for 420 houses and the surplus funds from the Hydro will be used to support LEG's environmental projects across the whole of Lochaber.

"We are very excited to have been offered this opportunity to take on the development of a Community Owned Hydro for Lochaber", said Marian Austin, Chair of LEG. "We hope Lochaber residents and visitors will jump at the chance to support environmental projects across the area by buying community shares in the Hydro".

LEG is now in the process of creating a new 'society', to be known as 'LEG Power', which is legally allowed to raise funds by offering 'Community shares'. In line with other successful community owned Hydro schemes in Scotland, local residents and visitors to Lochaber will soon be offered the opportunity to buy 'community shares' to help fund the building of the Hydro.

Community Shares are a practical way of supporting a local business that serves your community and the primary motivation is different from that of shareholders in companies because financial motivation is at best secondary. However interest rates on community shares are likely to be equivalent to or better than you will currently get from a bank. Community Shares cannot be transferred between people: instead, the Society allows shareholders to withdraw their share capital, subject to terms that protect the society's financial security. All community shareholders have one vote, regardless of the size of their shareholding, so LEG Power will be democratic.

Any shortfall in the funds raised from the Community Share offer will be financed by commercial loans. Most importantly, net profits will be handed to LEG to ensure maximum community benefit with the majority of payments used to fund more environmental initiatives across Lochaber.

A public drop-in information session held in December in Glenachulish (right) was well attended and the feedback was positive. This was the first of many events planned by LEG to tell Lochaber residents and visitors about the scheme and the opportunities it offers. Any individuals or local groups interested in hearing more should contact LEG. LEG Power will launch their Community Share offer early in 2020 so look out for more details.



For more information contact: LEG 01397 700090, or email Hydro@lochaberenviro.org.uk or Joint Project Managers, James Hilder jhilder@hotmail.co.uk and Dale Meegan dalemeegan@mail.com

CONGRATULATIONS OWEN!

Congratulations to 13 year-old Owen Callander who is a 2nd year pupil at Kinlochleven High School.

Owen was recently awarded Best Young Sailor from Glencoe Boat Club. He took part in Glencoe Regatta and the Round Shuna Race and was delighted to have the opportunity to skipper for part of the way. He would like to thank his skippers, Peter Watt and Neil Slinger and fellow crew members.

Owen has taken up Laser Sailing and Winter Academics. Well done Owen!



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CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

There is growing interest in getting new Christmas Lights for the village. The Community Council have been working towards this in recent years, but we need more community involvement and support to raise sufficient money. Below is an outline of the current position:

We currently have 23 power outlets on posts for lamps to be fitted. Of these 20-22 have been in use in recent years.

Our current lights are as follows:

- 4 New in 2019, which are cheap stopgap units
- 4 New in 2018
- 7 New in 2014
- 8 are approximately 10-12 years old and have received running repairs
- 2 are older and there are also 3 or 4 broken units which are probably not repairable.

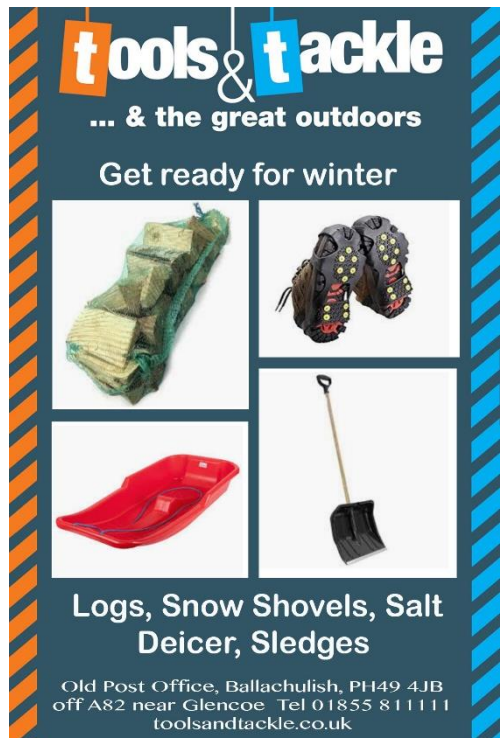
There are approximately 8 other locations where lights could be added, but these would need to have power sockets added by the council, who have been reluctant to do so in the past. Some of the existing outlets could be used to power two units on one pole – such as in front of the houses on Albert Road.

It is also important to know that a number of the lamp posts in the village are, allegedly, unsuitable for mounting lights. These include the columns in some of the side roads and also on West Laroch at the playpark.

As for cost, the most recent purchases in 2018 cost approximately £300 each including brackets. It is possible to buy cheaper units, but they are not such high quality, and prices can stretch into the thousands.





To fully refresh the older lights around the village, and add in extras where possible, we could easily be needing to raise in the region of £4-5000.

If you would like to be involved, please contact a community council member, or see the facebook page.



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ABBNEYFIELD FUNDRAISING



Abbeyfield Ballachulish is currently trying to raise funds to increase the number of its nursing beds to meet demand for the care of older people within its surrounding areas. Charitable Trusts and the National Lottery have been approached to secure funding, but these applications have not been successful. Our independent, stand-alone charity is now registering with "Just Giving" in the hope that we will be able to raise enough funds to enable charitable Trusts to step forward with matching funds.

The demand for care beds continues to rise in the area and we wish to continue to support the partnership we have with our local communities going forward and, in particular, to provide a valuable resource that supports the work of Health and Social Care services.

Should you wish to help the charity in any way please contact Wilma Allan, Director of Care - Tel 01855 812950. Alternatively, please pass on our appeal to donate to the "Just Giving" page, the link is also available on our website at abbeyfieldballachulish.co.uk and our Facebook page.

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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)

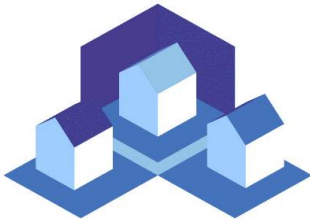
Community Association: www.ballah-hall.co.uk

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

Booking Secretary: Judy Bigham 811758

Community Company: [on Facebook](#)

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



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REGULAR WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Please note some activities do not meet during school holidays.

Monday

- 10am Local Walking Group meet at TiC 
- After school primary football – Jubilee Park
- 7pm Highland Hustle at School
- 8-10pm Scottish / Country Dancing at Village Hall

Tuesday

- 9.30-11.30am  Playgroup at Village Hall
- 6-8pm Junior Shinty Training at Village Hall / Jubilee


Wednesday

- 6.30-7.15pm Zumba at Village Hall
- 7.30-9pm RockSkool at Village Hall

Thursday

- 9.30-11.30am  Playgroup at Village Hall
- 10.30-1pm Knit & Knatter, Coffee & Crochet at TiC
- 5.30-9.15pm   &  at Village Hall
- Evenings – Shinty Team Practice at Jubilee Park

Friday

- 10am Local Walking group meet at TiC 
- After school dancing session at school

Sunday

- 11.30am Church of Scotland Service at St Munda's
- Episcopal Church Service at St Mary's, Glencoe
- Catholic Church Service at St Mun's

RBS Mobile Bank

Tuesdays

10:45-11:15 Abbeyfield

11:30-12:30 V Hall

Fridays

10:30-12:00 V Hall



Mobile Library

Thurs 20/2 & 12/3

12:40-12:55 Square

13:00-13:10 Lochside

Cottages

Wed 5/2; 26/2 &

18/3

(13:30-14:25 School)

14:30-15:15 W Laroche

15:20-16:00 Park Rd &

Abbeyfield

16:05-16:30 Albert Rd



As you can see, ours is a very busy community with lots going on. However, if your group isn't mentioned above, please get in touch!

If you are interested in any of the above, we're sure you will be made very welcome. Contact details can be found elsewhere in this newsletter, on facebook or simply ask us and we shall pass your enquiry on!

Also active locally:

- South Lochaber Bowmen – Archery Club
- Ballachulish Football Club

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

February

- 4th Community Council Meeting, 7pm at shinty pavilion
- 11th Community Forum Meeting, 7pm at Village Hall
- 17-19th School Mid Term break
- 29th Don't forget it's a leap year!

March

- 5th Community Council Meeting, 7pm at shinty pavilion
- 27th Schools break up for Easter Holidays

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 and Kath Small (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



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