

EILEAN EISDEAL NEWSLETTER No.33 - NOVEMBER 2005

To all Easdale islanders, members and friends

This newsletter arrives with you just as the grips of winter appear to be arriving in earnest. Did anyone see Autumn? I hope that you all had a good summer and are looking forward to Christmas! As they say, "the nights are fair drawin' in!"

A lot has been happening since our last newsletter, No 32 in June, and I will now do my best to keep you up to speed with what has been going on.

DIRECTOR NEWS

As some of you will by now have heard, Jan Fraser has accepted an invitation to be co-opted on to the Trust as a director. We welcome Jan onboard and look forward to benefiting from her knowledge and experience. We have already had her hard at work for us on the museum project.

EASDALE ISLAND MUSEUM

Following the approach by the Scottish Slate Islands Heritage Trust earlier this year, the Trust has been working flat out to help buy the museum. This has been a huge task which needed immediate attention were we to have any chance of saving it. We knew this was of importance to the community and this was clearly demonstrated by the overwhelming response and support for this project in the most recent questionnaire. Positive progress is being made with funders and we will have more to report hopefully in the near future.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

It was decided at one of our latest directors' meetings to set up a sub-committee specifically for the purpose of dealing with the larger projects that the Trust is currently dealing with and for the future ones that come up. As funding applications and criteria become more complex and funding becomes more sought-after, it was decided to set up this sub-committee to utilise the skills that have been built up on the island during previous funding applications. It comprises Fiona Blakey, Jan Fraser, Mike MacKenzie and Sandra Melville, all of whom are familiar with collating the necessary and relevant information required in these situations. There are probably few of us now who have not at some point been asked to help out on one or more of the projects that the Trust has worked on to date.

RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECT

On Sunday the 9th of October, the energy consultants who carried out the investigations into possible sources of renewable energy {wind, hydro, solar power, etc.} for the island, gave their presentation on suitably wind-lashed day! Their presentation was both interesting and informative and copies are available by asking anyone of the directors.

Obviously no decisions were made on the day as this had never been the purpose of the presentation. However, we were made aware of the possible sources of renewable energy that we might tap into for the island.

The overall impression we got from the consultants was that, in their professional opinion and greater experience, there were two main options to supplement the Hall's heating system.

The first was a small Wind Turbine which would either heat a storage heater in the Hall or be used to join in to the fuse box in the Hall and reduce electricity bills.

The second was to use a Heat Transfer Pump, either from the ground or the water, probably one of the quarries on the south east side of the island. Rooftop Wind Turbines were mentioned as possibilities for households on the island for which there is grant assistance available. These would also feed into the fuse box and reduce bills accordingly.

Roof-mounted Solar Photovoltaic and Thermal panels was the second options for households but neither the Photovoltaic nor the Thermal panels figured greatly as they will never pay for themselves before needing replaced. Tidal schemes were mentioned but again due to the cost implications were really not considered viable.

On a Community-wide scheme a larger scale Wind Turbine scheme was looked at but Easdale Island has some challenges being small, having access issues and given the existing grid connection. However, the consultant did mention the possibilities of a joint scheme between Easdale and Seil who share the same grid connection. A wind scheme on Seil would look feasible but would require thorough consultation and approval from Seil.

It should be pointed out that this was only a suggestion from the consultants and was in no way led by the Trust. It should be noted though, that a successful community-owned wind scheme can provide a valuable source of revenue to help improve sustainability.

Due to other work on our hands at the moment, we have not had enough time to dedicate to this project and as soon as we have had the time, we will be carrying out further consultation.

HALL EVENTS

Since the last newsletter in June, we have had another successful run of events in the Hall, with probably the main use being the 'Keep Fit Girls' who are in at least twice a week. Keep up the good work ladies, you might be able to out-run me yet!

We have also had some very energetic dances since June and that alone is enough to keep you fit {or finish you off} in the shape of; the Boat Band who played a cracking set of Cajun tunes after the Regatta, Blazin' Fiddles with Seil's own Aidan O'Rourke and The Wildebeests who played the night before the Stoneskimming Championships at the Pre-Skim dance. We have also had wonderful performances from Dick Gaughan, folk singer and Nomadiqua, a middle Eastern-flavoured group, both of whom who went down a storm.

For the kids we had a very productive Carnival Costume Making workshop led by long-time island friend, Rob Welsh and also a 2 day animation workshop run by another 'weel-kent' face to Easdale, Cormack. We have also had Ian Stephen the Storyteller from Uist, Oban's Comedy Club and a wedding between Chloe and James.

Chloe and James are both regular visitors to Ellenabeich and really wanted to get married in our new Hall. The event took a lot of organising and everyone rallied round to make the day the success that it was. Chloe and James were so impressed by the reception they received, that they have donated the mirror-ball and mechanical lights they brought for their disco, to compliment our existing system for which we are extremely grateful. Everyone was invited to the dance in the evening and all who attended had a great night.

Our forays into the thespian world have kept up the high standard to which we have become accustomed as we saw Mull Theatre's 'Katie Morag' and 'I Was A Beautiful Day' by Traverse Theatre. All visiting artists continue to comment on how lovely a space the Hall is to work in and that they can't wait to return, again and again and again and.....

Sadly we are still in negotiations with the liquidator over the snagging problems with the Hall and our hands are legally tied until the situation is resolved. We apologise for the condition of parts of the Hall and can only report back that as it stands, we are hopeful of resolving the outstanding issues.

Anyone who is interested in helping out at events in the Hall is encouraged to contact the Hall Team through Fiona in the first instance. Her contact details are at the end of this newsletter. If you wish to book the Hall for something of your own, please do so as early as possible as Fiona tells me the diary is filling up already!

There is also an Open Evening planned as an Arts Round Up / Ideas session where everyone's thoughts and a 'wish list' will be compiled. The date has yet to be decided and will be circulated once this has been confirmed.

For details of the Hall and all forthcoming events, please look on the Hall website at www.easdale.org/hall . We hope to see you there!

FUNDRAISING

Two of our major fundraising events this year, the Funday/Regatta and the Stoneskimming, have done wonders to help the Trust's funds. At the Funday we managed to raise an enormous £2,121.92 plus £818.50 via the hardy swimmers from the sponsored swim. From the Pre-Skim Dance, a total of £994.65 was raised. Thank you to all involved in helping put these events together and ensuring their continued success.

AGM

This year's Trust AGM will be held on Friday 30th December at 7.30pm in the Hall. This year there will be two vacancies for new directors and anyone wishing to be considered for one of the places can obtain a nomination form from Jess Hill, Secretary, or Donald Melville, Chairman. Please complete the nomination forms and return to Jess Hill, Secretary no later than 5th December 2005.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Finally, a reminder to members who have not yet paid to try and do so in order to be a fully paid member before the AGM, also, next year's fees become due again on January the 1st! Cheques should be made payable to 'Eilean Eisdeal Trust' and sent to Annabel. Thank you.

HARBOUR FEES

On the matter of fees, can I also take this opportunity to ask those of you who have not paid their harbour fees also to do so. These funds, both Harbour and Membership, go a long way to helping the Trust in all its activities and are very gratefully and appreciatively received.

Your continuing support is valued and very much appreciated.
Thank you.

Kindest regards.

Donald Melville
Chairman.

Chairman Donald Melville
Secretary Jess Hill
Treasurer Annabel Gregory
Directors Wendy Blakey
Mike MacKenzie
Jan Fraser

For Hall bookings contact:
> Fiona Blakey - Arts Program Co-ordinator

For Hall access contact any one of the above.