

Welcome to the Portree and Braes Community Trust's autumn newsletter 2020 – the first since the COVID-19 pandemic reached the Highlands back in March. The island has experienced many challenges during that time and our thoughts are still with those who have lost loved ones or continue to be distanced from friends and family. It has, however, been incredible to see local community members pull together to support each other and to be a part of the wider response efforts across Skye and Lochalsh.

If you would like to know more about any of the projects detailed below or have any suggestions for what you would like to see included in this newsletter, please get in touch. I hope you enjoy your read.

Fiona Thomson, Development Officer.

Kindelan Grant Architects commissioned to design Portree woodland space

*Outdoor Activity Group members: Chris James, Mo Taylor, Sharon Fenlon, Matt Harrison
Project Officer: Iona MacDonald*

Local architect firm Kindelan Grant have recently been engaged to work with the trust's Outdoor Activity Group to realise their vision for the soon-to-be community owned woodland space situated between Tigh Na Drochaid Resource Centre and the Lisigarry River.

Elena Kindelan and Ian Grant have been given the remit of designing a space which will encourage people of all ages to observe, enjoy and play in nature and they will bring their extensive experience to the table to produce suitable landscape designs for the site.

In 2019 this project was selected by the Coop as a Community Cause and with thanks to local Coop members the Outdoor Activity Group has already received over £3,000 to develop the space. The project has also received £7500 funding from the National Lottery Awards for All, £1000 from Rabbits and a £500 grant from Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association. Look out for further details and community consultation on this project in the next few months.

Trust welcomes new project officer

The trust would like to say a belated but nevertheless very warm welcome to Iona MacDonald, our new project officer at PBCT. With funds gratefully received from the Scottish Land Fund, Iona was employed in April part time for 12 months to take forward the purchase and development of land at Bayfield and The Lump – sites which are currently being sold to the community by Fearann Eilean Iarmain Estate. Iona has had a somewhat unconventional beginning with PBCT given that her start date aligned approximately with the outbreak of COVID-19 in the Highlands. She has yet to meet some of the trustees in person after six months in the role but has shown incredible adaptability taking on additional responsibilities for Skye Community Response and even joining the team a week early to volunteer her services to the cause!

Iona is originally from Dunvegan and has worked in several sectors across Skye – technology and engineering industries, education and the voluntary sector – in Dunvegan, Portree and Sleat in roles including financial and academic administration, community development, volunteer training, marketing and HR. Her interests include local history, Gaelic language and music. We are delighted to have Iona on board and we wish her all the very best in this role.



Image: Iona MacDonald, Community Land Project Officer



Image: Architects Elena Kindelan and Ian Grant

Question marks remain over land ownership at King George V

The boundary of the King George V Playing Field (KG5) - another of the sites which Fearann Eilean Iarmain estate would like to sell to the community - remains unconfirmed and unfortunately without the funds to complete this time-consuming legal work the trust cannot progress with the purchase.

The trust is, however, busy overseeing the purchase and development of three other pieces of land (the wooded area and picnic area at Bayfield, the old tennis and squash court site and land at Am Meall) and will continue to make progress with these projects until an opportunity to progress the purchase of the KG5 arises.

Crown Estate funding soon to be issued by Highland Council

Harbour Group members: Alexander MacDonald, Donnie Nicolson, Calum Matheson, Peter Urquhart, Alistair Danter, Mairi Evans, Faye Macleod, Andrew Norman

The Highland Council are to receive around £1.2 million from the Scottish Crown Estate's marine assets following its first year of devolved management and are soon to announce what the process will be for distributing funds to coastal communities. With this in mind, the harbour group are continuing to highlight to MSP's and the local authority the issues being experienced by harbour tenants and users due to lack of space and inadequate facilities. Congestion on Wentworth Street and Quay Street is more apparent than ever given recent advice to social distance and the trust expect Portree to be considered as a priority for investment given the potential risks being posed to the public with cars, articulated lorries, pedestrians and coaches sharing the same confined space in the centre of the village. This new way of allocating funds will replace the Coastal Communities Fund which groups like the Skye Sailing Club have previously benefited from.

In other news the community toilet facility at the pier has reopened. The trust has invested in a new pay per use facility that accepts both coins and card payments. Currently the entry fee is set at 50 pence and all income will be used to cover cleaning and maintenance costs. We are still working through some teething issues with the entry system so please report any issues as soon as possible to fiona@portreeandpraes.org/07570652953.

New committee elected for Portree community centre



Image: Aerial view of Camanachd Square and the Community Centre

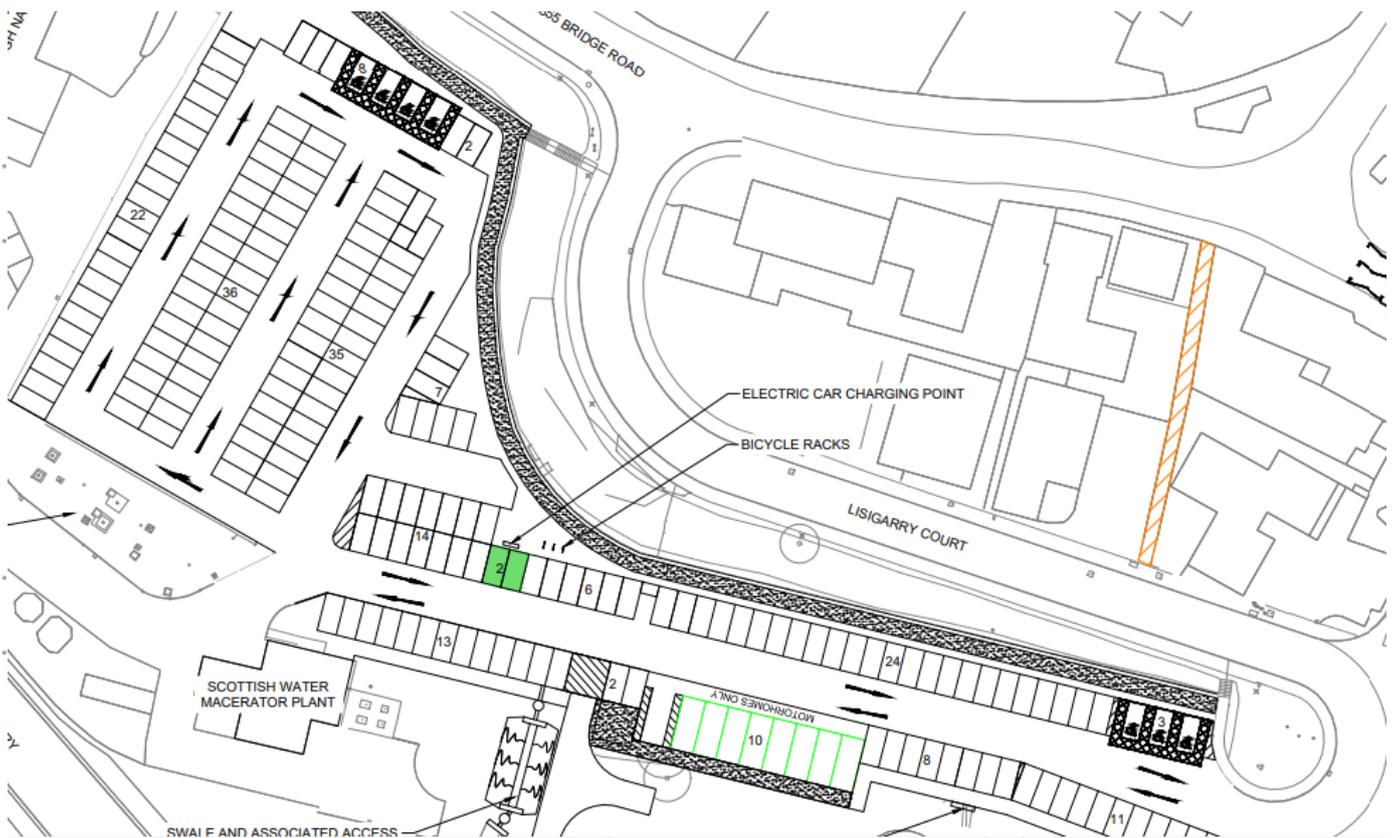
Portree Community Centre Association Committee: Donnie Nicolson (chair), Peter Urquhart (Vice-chair) Hugh MacDonald (secretary), Duncan Brown (treasurer), Scotty Martin, Lorna Cormack, Añnmarie Campbell, Janice MacHugh

In January, the Portree Community Centre Association called an EGM and a new committee was selected. Despite the new committee having strong representation from the PBCT the association remains a separate entity retaining ownership of the building. If the trust can identify a viable option for development then ownership of the building could be transferred in due course. With this in mind, before the pandemic and with funds from the Highland Council and the Portree Community Centre Association a condition report was produced. This document outlines that the structure of the building is sound, however, confirms that the fabric of the building and all services (heating, electrics, etc) need significant upgrades to the value of over £100,000.

Currently the Highland Council own approximately 75% of the land on which the community is built, Fearann Eilean Iarmain Estates own the remaining 25% of the land and the PCCA lease for the site has expired. If the trust can develop a strong business plan, it could be feasible to request ownership of the building and pursue funds to renovate it. However, if the Highland Council does not transfer ownership then it is unlikely that there would be an opportunity for the trust to take this project forward.

Meanwhile, the new PCCA group are busy clearing out the main hall with a view to reopening it in the short term. The association have recently received some income from the construction company Compass who have been using it as a storage facility for materials. This will help cover some overheads going forwards.

West Bayfield parking development underway



Bayfield Group members: Duncan Brown, Graham Smith, Bill Edgar.

The construction team were on site for only a matter of days back in March before this project was put on hold due to the coronavirus pandemic. Construction is well underway now, however, and the car park extension and reorganisation are due to be completed before the end of 2020. Once concluded the car park will be leased and operated by the Highland Council and a lease agreement has now been drafted. This will secure the community an annual rent of £10,000 per year plus 40% of the net profit generated through parking charges from the 84 car parking spaces – the number of spaces that will sit on the site owned by the trust. Although *additional* electric charge points are not part of this phase of development the infrastructure will be put in place which would allow the trust to add further charging points in future if funding becomes available.

Daytime camper-van parking and a waste disposal unit will also be created and the trust hope that this will help maximise the space available at Bayfield for car parking and encouraging visitors to the island to dispose of waste in a responsible manner.

A £10 per month permit has been proposed for locals as well as the following short stay fees:

- £1 for up to 2 hours
- £2 for up to 3 hours
- £3 for up to 6 hours
- £4 for up to 12 hours



Image: The site of the old tennis court in August on it's way to becoming a community owned car parking facility.

Looking back on six months of Skye Community Response



Image: Sophie Isaacson, PBCT Health Services Project Officer at the helpline launch. Photo Credit: Hugh Campbell Marketing

Skye Community Response Steering Group members: Donnie Nicolson, Ross Cowie, Neil Hope, Jack MacFarlane, Sophie Isaacson, Cllr John Finlayson, Cllr Calum Munro, Cllr John Gordon, Fiona Thomson, Iona MacDonald, Sharon Campbell, Matt Smith, Hugh Campbell, Myra Macleod.

Shortly after the announcement that the Highlands were affected by the coronavirus pandemic an emergency meeting was held between Portree and Braes Community Trust, Eilean a Cheo Councillors, Lucky2BHere and SLCVO. As a result of that meeting Skye Community Response (SCR) was formed - an umbrella organisation with the aim of ensuring everyone in Skye and Raasay had someone to turn to for help in the face of COVID.

With financial support gratefully received from Dunvegan Community Trust, Edinbane Community Company and Struan Community Trust, Project Officer, Sophie Isaacson was redirected to work on the new support service, joining PBCT Chair, Donnie Nicolson, Development Officer, Fiona Thomson, new Project Officer, Iona MacDonald alongside a steering group of volunteers from across the island.

Sophie has since been training and overseeing volunteers to provide advice via a central helpline and to deliver food and prescriptions to surrounding areas. She has also initiated regular meetings with community representatives from across the island to discuss challenges relating to infection control and food provision. As a result of these meetings, funding has been secured from the HIE Supporting Communities Fund to provide a supply of fresh fruit and veg to food shares and food banks across Skye and Raasay. Sanitiser dispensers, sanitiser and signage to the value of £20,000 have also been distributed to over 80 locations across Skye and Lochalsh.

To date, over 150 volunteers have registered to volunteer, £84,736 has been raised by the public, around 20,000 miles have been covered delivering test samples to and from Raigmore Hospital and over 1500 calls have been answered via the helpline. Demand, however, is slowly decreasing and as of the date of writing the helpline has reduced from seven days a week to five, the prescription delivery service has also been reduced from five days a week to once a week and PBCT staff have moved to a standby position, ready to help if demand picks up again but starting to revisit their own time-critical projects.

Partnering with Lucky2BHere early on allowed SCR to react quickly and respond to local need. Through this partnership SCR were given access to £38,000 of fluid funds and used these to deliver urgent support to local health and social care services. The loan of £38,000 has now been repaid and with the agreement of the steering group £40,000 is being reserved as an emergency fund which can be issued island-wide should Skye experience another outbreak of the virus. Further discussion is ongoing regarding how any remaining funds will be allocated. Skye Community Response Helpline Number: 01470 373111 (Mon-Fri, 9 am-5 pm)

Man of the Hour



Image: Jack MacFarlane, Skye Community Response volunteer

Flashback to March 2020 and Jack MacFarlane, having previously served as a medical advisor in the Royal Air Force and with experience working in virus-outbreak situations, has just answered a SOS call from David MacDonald (TogetherSkye) who is looking to create a database of people across Skye who have skills which could help bolster the grassroots response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Six months later, after countless late nights and hundreds of emails, telephone calls and Zoom meetings Jack is finally taking a step back for a well-earned rest.

At the start of lockdown, it was Jack who initiated contact with local hospitals, medical centres, nursing homes and other care providers to ask what support they needed. Jack has since dedicated his time, skills, and experience to helping source and issue thousands of pounds worth of emergency PPE for local health and social care workers all the way from Portree to Plockton. He has also provided logistics support to the incredible Skye Scrubs and Skye Bikes volunteer groups and has been a valuable, ongoing source of advice to voluntary groups across the island and further afield. We have without a doubt felt safer in the knowledge that he, alongside Wing Commander Matt Smith and other ex-forces men Ben Greer, Stuart Brumpton and Thomas Wilson have been working to create better prepared communities on Skye in the midst of the pandemic. Jack, you are truly an unsung hero. We hope you enjoy some downtime and that you don't miss the endless emails too much! 😊

Healthcare equipment for north Skye purchased thanks to Dunvegan Trust



Image: spO2 fingertip monitors help to monitor oxygen levels in the blood.

Thank you to Dunvegan Community Trust who donated £1,000 to fund five infrared thermometers and ten spO2 fingertip oxygen monitors recently to help support the management of coronavirus in the area. All equipment was distributed to Portree Hospital for use in the COVID-19 ward and in its COVID-19 assessment centre and the kit is now being used in Urgent Care and Out of Hours care. The equipment will also be made available to the district nurses and MacMillan nurses for use in the community of north Skye going forwards.

Dunvegan Trust has previously supported the health services project officer for North Skye and we are incredibly grateful for their ongoing contribution towards improving health services in the area.



SKYE COMMUNITY RESPONSE

PRESCRIPTION DELIVERY SERVICE UPDATE (REDUCED DELIVERY DAYS)

SKEABOST BRIDGE
UIG
KILMUIR
STAFFIN
PORTREE
BRAES
SCONSER
RAASAY

*** FROM NOW ON DELIVERIES WILL BE - EVERY THURSDAY**

*DELIVERIES MADE LATE AFTERNOON

*DELIVERY REQUEST TO BE MADE TO HELPLINE BY 1PM LATEST

(Service to be reviewed when sheltering period ends)

Helpline number 01470373111

Virtual meetings planned for Ritchie Group

Health Care Services Group members: Ross Cowie, Myra Macleod, Neil Campbell, Bill Edgar
Project Officer: Sophie Issacson

Since 2018 community members have been actively contributing to planned improvements to health care services across north Skye as a result of the Sir Lewis Ritchie Independent Report on Out of Hours Care in Skye, Lochalsh and South West Ross. This process was put on hold when it was announced that COVID-19 had spread to the Highlands however now, six months later, a date has been set for a virtual Steering Group meeting. At this meeting progress will be reviewed and discussions taken forward about how community beds are to be provided in North Skye in the long term.

The recent announcement that the ownership of Home Farm Nursing Home is being transferred to the NHS is welcomed by the PBCT health services group however there is some concern that this move will have an impact on the number of beds NHS Highland are willing to provide at Portree Hospital going forward. With this in mind the group will be raising these concerns and will continue to represent the health care needs of Portree and surrounding areas in the Ritchie process.

Partnership formed to reduce food waste in Portree and Braes

The Portree and Braes Community Council, The Skye and Lochalsh Community Food Bank and The Portree and Braes Community Trust have joined forces to encourage food sharing and reduce food waste in the area. The Food Share project is into its fifth month now and is being coordinated by Sharon Fenlon and Drew Millar on behalf of the partnership. The project's aim is to reduce waste and lower household bills in the area and this is achieved by re-homing food from the small Coop and other local food businesses.

Thanks to everyone who has supported the project to date Tigh na Drochaid Resource Centre have been incredibly helpful, allowing the centre to be used as a base for the Food Share before the project moved into the foyer of Portree Community Centre. Mackenzie's Bakery has been donating some delicious cakes and other baked goods on Saturdays and Viewfield Garden Collective has also been in touch offering to donate some of their own locally grown fruit and vegetables. Thanks also to Phil the Barber for helping us to establish the service at the community centre.

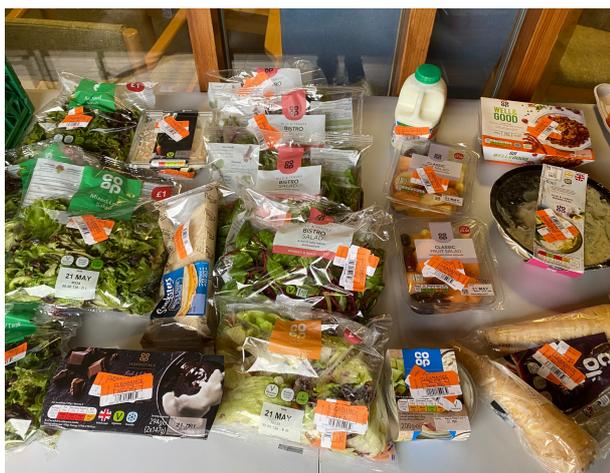


Image: Food donated by the small Coop in Portree.



Image: Portree and Braes Food Share Coordinators Sharon Fenlon and Drew Millar, Staffin Kindness Container Coordinator Màiri MacDonal and MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch, Kate Forbes.



Above Image: A new display fridge and freezer was purchased with funding from HIE's Supporting Communities Fund - a fund which provides support to community groups who are providing vital services throughout the pandemic.



Image: The Portree and Braes Food Share now open at Portree Community Centre from 9.30am-5pm on a Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

Trust working with The Pier Restaurant to deliver Meals on Wheels project.

Since May, Cat Macpherson from the Pier Restaurant has been working with the trust, with input from other voluntary support groups in the area, to provide cooked meals to individuals across Portree and Braes who would otherwise find it challenging to access or prepare meals at this time. HIE are also supporting this project, and Cat and her team, alongside a group of dedicated volunteers have been cooking and delivering up to 100 wholesome meals each week. Extra meals are also prepared and left at the Food Share should anyone need them at short notice. We'd like to say a huge thank you to Cat and her team for all of their hard work over the past few months – you have all been absolutely incredible!

Calling all skate ramp users!

The Trust continue to support young people in the community with the provision of ramps for wheeled sports at the "Red Pitch" in Camanachd Square in Portree. This facility is provided at considerable expense to the Trust - annual public liability insurance costs £2300 on top of the initial capital costs of £12,000 to purchase the equipment in 2018.

The ramps are insured until September 2021 but after providing the first 3 years of insurance cover, the Trust hope for business sponsorship or fundraising support from users of the facility to help fund some of the running costs in future years.

To continue to support the facility we need feedback from users of the ramps - if you or your friends / family use the ramps please let us know. A short email / Facebook message or even photos or videos would be hugely appreciated to help keep this facility available to the community. Thank you!



Image: Some of The Pier Restaurant's cooked meals ready for delivery.

Skye Climate Action working with PBCT to identify allotment site

Throughout lock-down there has been a noticeable increase in local people taking an interest in growing their own fruit and vegetables and as a result the trust have had a number of inquires about the status of the allotment project.

The allotment project was first discussed in around 2006 and hit a brick wall in 2013. Detailed plans has been produced and initial ground works had even been carried out when the Housing Association came up against a legal issue when attempting to transfer the site identified for allotments to the community.

Seven years later and the legal issue has unfortunately not been resolved. In the meantime the trust, encouraged by **Skye Climate Action** and their **Grow. Skye! Dùisg an talamh** project, have begun searching for possible alternative locations and Councillor John Gordon is now helping to assess the suitability of a council owned site adjacent to Am Fasgadh. Initial positive discussions have taken place with some of the adjacent land owners but further investigations are required.

Portree and Braes Community Council reformed

Portree and Braes Community Council (PBCC) was reformed in March with five members. The Council committee is made up of Neil Campbell (Chairman), Bill Edgar (Vice Chairman), Drew Millar (Secretary), Roger Lilley, (Minute Secretary), and Sharon Fenlon. Fay Thomson has also recently been co-opted as a member.

As it was reformed just at the beginning of the Coronavirus pandemic the Community Council (CC) has not managed to meet in public yet although the members have met frequently by video conferencing, which is kindly supplied by Jan's Vans. This has allowed the council to elect office bearers and start the process of representing the community as much as possible. The CC now meets regularly on the third Thursday of every month and members also stay in close contact by email. The CC works closely with the Portree and Braes Community Trust and receives a report from trust members monthly. The CC also takes a close interest in local health services and intends to have representation on the Lewis Ritchie options appraisal process when it restarts again.

So far the CC has received grants from the Highland Council to assist Young Carers with meal vouchers, has set up the Food Share initiative in Portree and Braes; has supplied face coverings to any group requesting and has planted flower beds in Portree village to enhance the local appearance as we emerge from lockdown. It has also made representations to the Highland Council on various matters from planning and roads to education matters.

The CC has set up a generic email address **secretary_PBCC@googlegroups.com** which allows the community of the PBCC area to contact the Community Council directly. The C.C. has a Facebook page which is updated regularly with the minutes of meetings and items of local interest. As soon as circumstances allow meetings will once again be in public in the meantime please contact any member directly or through the generic email address.

Grab your gloves - Clean-Up Club is back!

Paths and Signs Group Members: Ross Cowie, Shona Cameron, Sue Reeves, Bill Edgar, Irene Deplano, Janice McGuire, Roddie McGuire, Neil Campbell, Matt Harrison

The Clean-Up Club restarted on Saturday 12th of September at the new time of 11 am – 1 pm and depending on restrictions will continue to run on the second Saturday of the month going forwards.

It's important that the trust have contact details for those attending. Please email fiona@portreeandbraes or get in touch on 07570652953 to let us know if you would like to come along and to find out details of where to meet and what to bring. Looking forward to seeing you all there!



Image: Before



Image: After



Image: Clean up club members at the first Clean-Up Club since lockdown

Portree and Braes Community Trust SC046593

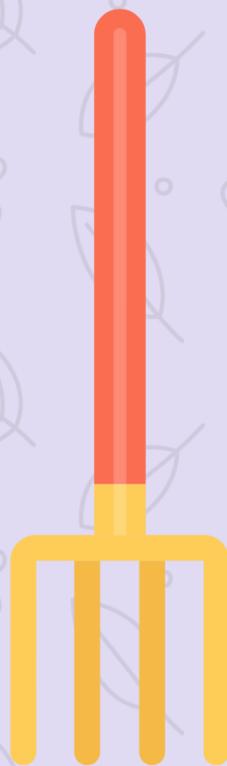


Clean-Up Club

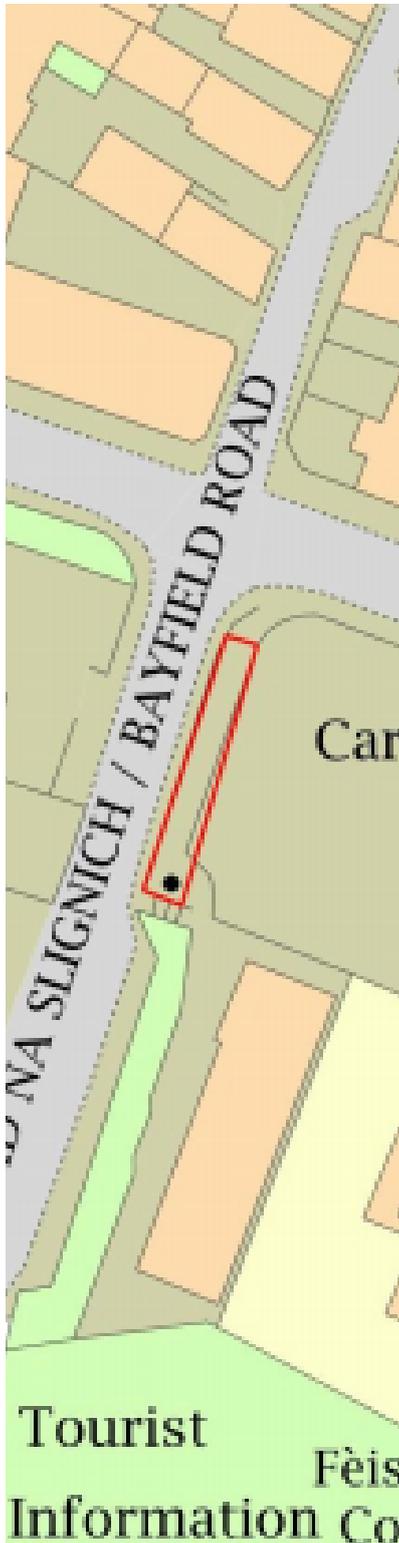
MONTHLY CLEAN-UPS AROUND
PORTREE AND BRAES

SECOND SATURDAY OF THE MONTH. 11AM-1PM.

All ages welcome. Dress for the outdoors. Please get in touch to find out this month's meeting point.



fiona@portreeandbraes.org / 07570652953



ADVERTISE WITH PORTREE AND BRAES TRUST

Planning permission has been secured to install three additional notice boards at The Green, Portree. Get in touch now for more information and to reserve your space for 2021.

Email: info@portreeandbraes.org



Light Up Portree group hoping to bring some festive cheer to 2020.

Light Up Portree Group members: Lorna Cormack, Joey

Graham, Ann Brandie, Paul Spence, Jen Pearson, Vasilie Siritanu, Suzy Lee, Donnie Nicolson, Fay Thomson, John Gordon, Myra Macleod, Anne-marie Campbell, Sandra Milne.

Despite a global pandemic, the enthusiasm of the Light Up Portree Group has not been quashed and the team has been meeting recently to discuss how they could, potentially work within restrictions to deliver some events this year. With this in mind, tentative plans are in place to hold a socially distanced Christmas lights switch-on event on the evening of Friday 20th November and to celebrate the switch-on with a short ceremony. Local businesses would also be encouraged to stay open to offer a late-night shopping experience or festive food and drink.

The possibility of a children's event on the afternoon of Saturday 21st November is also being explored. The Light Up Portree team would very much like to bring back the reindeer parade and, possibly other attractions such as, an ice-rink or carousel and give local charities who will have missed fundraising opportunities this year a chance to have a stall to raise some much-needed funds. This of course will depend on how the Coronavirus situation develops over the next few months. Watch this space!

Messages of thanks for Harry and Netta

The organisers would like to thank everyone who took the time to contribute towards Harry and Netta's retirement collection and to sign the thank you books left at Jans and the Post Office over the past few month:

A total of £300 was collected and will be presented by the trust to Harry and Netta on behalf of all their customers over the years.

Dates for the diary

- Second Saturday of the Month – Clean Up Club, 11 am - 1 pm
- PROVISIONAL - Friday 20th November 2020, 5pm - 7.30pm *Light Up Portree Presents: Portree Christmas Lights Switch-on*
- PROVISIONAL – Saturday 21st November 2020, 1pm - 3pm *Light Up Portree Presents: Reindeer Parade*

Get in touch

If you would like to know more about any of the trust's projects, please speak to one of the trustees or a member of the staff team. Trust meeting minutes can also be viewed online at www.portreeandbraes.org/minutes-agendas

Donnie Nicolson (Chair) - Calum Matheson (Vice Chair) - Duncan Brown (Treasurer -associate member) - Annmarie Campbell (Secretary) - Neil Campbell - Ross Cowie - Irene Deplano - Bill Edgar (co-opted) - Chris James - Janice McGuire - Shona Cameron - Graham Smith - Janice MacHugh - Roddie MacHugh - Matt Harrison - Jen Pearson

Fiona Thomson – Development Officer (9-5 mon-fri) / 07570652953 / fiona@portreeandbraes.org

Sophie Issacson – Health Services Project Officer (part-time) / 07900065976 / sophie@portreeandbraes.org

Iona MacDonald - Community Land Project Officer (part-time) / 07716249584 / iona@portreeandbraes.org

Address: Portree and Braes Community Trust, Office 5, Jans, 6 Broom Place, Portree, Isle of Skye, IV51 9HL.

Thank you for reading. This newsletter can be accessed online at portreeandbraes.org/news

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SKYE COMMUNITY RESPONSE

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GROCERY & DELI SHOP

Our new Grocery & Delicetessan shop is open daily from 8am til 8pm.

We have a wide range of good quality fruit & veg, lots of vegan, vegetarian and gluten free options, wholefoods, and general grocery.



RESTAURANT

Our restaurant is open daily from 9am serving good homemade meals, snacks, teas, coffees and homebaking.

CINEMA

We are now once again showing weekly screenings.
Due to current restrictions we have limited capacity so are advising that you pre-book your seats.

WWW.AROS.CO.UK

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