

CROC TALK

CUMBRAE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



Garrison Motorhome Site Success

Cumbrae Community Development Company are delighted with how popular our new motorhome site within the grounds of Garrison House is proving to be and to play our part in the generating of income for our island businesses, as our site users enjoy the many cafés (including the one on their doorstep within Garrison House & Courtyard) and bars along with gift, craft & clothes shops, bike hire, gin distillery and much more.

The development became possible after funding was secured through Highlands and Islands Enterprise Capital Tourism Infrastructure Fund and North Ayrshire Council, through the Scottish Government's Improving Tourism Fund.

CCDC were able to use local tradespersons to carry out the work required, and we very much appreciated all the hard work each and every one of them put into bringing our site together, in challenging times.

The Garrison Motorhome Site opened in June 2021, and we have received lots of very positive feedback including our site being described as 'A hidden gem in a stunning location'!

Our dog friendly site, which is open all year round, offers EHU's, an Elsan Point for black waste and grey waste disposal facilities, also fresh water, and a refuse point. The pitches are £15 per night and all amenities listed are included within this price.

At present, bookings are taken via e-mail to: jan.wilkie@garrisonhousecumbrae.org.uk or by telephoning Jan Wilkie on: **01475 531381**. There is also more information available on our website: www.garrisonhousecumbrae.com

Thanks to motorhome site guest Sandra Newland for sharing the stunning photo!



September Weekend is Go!

The committee of The Island of Cumbrae Tourist Association are delighted to confirm that the Millport Illuminations will go ahead on Saturday 25th September. The firework display will be bigger and better than ever.

We have organised with the Caledonian MacBrayne Marine and Operations Teams, to provide additional sailings at the traditional times of 2100, 2130 and 2200, and with Millport Motors for the buses.

Further information regarding other outdoor activities will be announced in due course prior to the weekend, 24th - 26th September 2021. Follow @VisitCumbrae on Facebook for updates. We must advise that if Scottish Government Regulations change and travel restrictions or a higher Covid-19 Protection level is put in place, we will have to review.



The 2019 firework display (thanks Alan Cawley)

**OUR TEAM OF VOLUNTEERS ARE STILL HERE TO OFFER SUPPORT!
IF WE CAN GIVE HELP OR JUST A LISTENING EAR
CALL US ON 01475 789 179**

Cumbræ Ferry Users Group

The group

The Cumbræ Ferry Users Group is a group of volunteers who liaise with CalMac, representing the community on matters relating to the Largs-Cumbræ ferry service. As you can imagine, they've been very busy over the last 18 months!

The Committee is made up of representatives from Cumbræ Community Council, the Isle of Cumbræ Tourist Association, Cumbræ Community Development Company, Cumbræ Festivals Group, Cathedral of the Isles, the Field Studies Council, Commuters Representatives, Age Concern, the Cumbræ Forum, Farming Community, NHS & Millport Motors.

Successes

The group successfully restored the **5 journey books** of tickets, which CalMac intended to withdraw in July 2020, and more recently gained agreement on priority access to ferry travel for those with medical appointments. Island residents can now contact the Largs CalMac office if there is a danger of missing the ferry they need to be on to make that appointment due to queues. Any resident returning from tiring treatment (for example an operation or cancer treatment) can contact the Largs office to arrange priority travel, should it be required on days where there are likely to be extremely long waiting times. The system can also be used in the event of an animal requiring emergency veterinary treatment. The Largs office can be contacted on **01475 674134** (option 2). Note that Blue Badge holders can now book tickets in advance by telephoning **0800 0665000**, although this facility doesn't include concession passenger tickets.

Suggestions

The Committee has continually pushed for the option of smart ticketing on the route and CalMac are now planning to introduce a modern ticketing system, including a smart ticket app, although it's not likely to be available until March 2022. Calmac declined a suggestion for tickets to be available to purchase on the island, due to the implementation of smart ticketing and complexities in enabling a local facility to provide/produce tickets. The committee also continually request an earlier service from the island (pre 7am) to make the island a more attractive option to live and commute from, however this has been continually declined by CalMac for a variety of reasons.

The ability for concession card holders to buy a 5-journey book of tickets is another issue that the Ferry Users Group has been pushing for over a number of years. So far this has been rejected by Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) due to concerns about fraud. However, the proposal continues to be raised with CalMac and North Ayrshire Council to lobby SPT for a change in policy.



Priority ferry access

The recent long car and passenger queues for the ferries have prompted discussions about priority access to the ferry for residents. Current Transport Scotland policy is that island residents do not get priority over any other passenger, so there would need to be a significant change in their position to introduce any priority access proposal. The pros and cons of introducing a booking system for the Largs-Cumbræ route have also been considered. Booking was rejected as an option last year, due to concerns that it could become even more difficult for residents to access travel unless they made plans well in advance. The infrastructure at the slips at Largs and Cumbræ makes handling separate booked and turn-up-and-go traffic very challenging, although this may be resolved by changes to the layouts following the recent consultation. There's likely to be wider community consultation when a workable plan and impact assessment allow people to make an informed decision about introducing ferry booking. There may be a variety of options, from fully bookable but with a proportion of last-minute spaces set aside for residents (as happens on other routes), to leaving the service as 'turn-up-and-go' but with a small number of advance bookings possible on each sailing for residents.

The Cumbræ Ferry Users Committee welcomes input through their member organisations, or the group can be contacted by email at **cumbraeferryusers@gmail.com**

Community Projects Forge Ahead

Millport Town Hall has been fortunate enough to recently receive funding from the National Lottery and Kelburn Wind Farm and is inching closer to beginning the regeneration work on the building to create a modern and energy-efficient space for so many different activities. The Community Asset Transfer is now complete and the charity looks forward very much to working with other island groups to strengthen the social and economic infrastructure of Cumbrae.

Watch out for the crowdfund launch on 8th September. The funding sourced so far is ringfenced for the build by the funders, but there are bills to pay now and equipment to buy for the interior. There will be a chance to buy a Brick in the Wall, to win a holiday to Paris or Venice or a stay at the lovely Figgitoch Bothy. Of course you can simply give a donation and no matter how small, you can rest assured that every penny will be appreciated and well used. Anyone who's not online can phone 07984473532 for the Charity Bank details to make a donation.

Meanwhile the volunteer group at the Cumbrae Wave are at the beginning of their journey to secure control of the former Watersports Centre site for the benefit of the Community. As one of the first developments that visitors see, it's an important gateway to the island - indeed, one of the proposed services for the location is Tourist Information.

SportScotland has been liaising with the Wave Team on the possibility of a Community Asset Transfer of the site and, following a very positive online community consultation, the Team has been busy developing a business plan and successfully securing funding from the North Ayrshire Venture Trust to employ a Project Development Officer. A site visit has shown the many challenges to managing and developing the facility, and further discussions are under way, including the possibility of conducting a professional feasibility study to explore how to ensure a successful and sustainable community ownership of the asset.



Volunteers from the Wave and Town Hall teams have been sharing skills and experience between the two projects, which both groups have found really constructive.

The Plant to Plate Garden, a project set up by Cumbrae Primary School, Cumbrae Parish Church and Cumbrae Community Garden to engage local children in growing and using vegetables, has benefitted from grant funding to install an irrigation system. The Cumbrae Forum secured the funding for the work at the garden, which is in the grounds of Cumbrae Parish Church, from Foundation Scotland. The project is a great example of different community groups working together and the garden and seating area is open for anyone to enjoy.



Charity shop donations

The Cumbrae Forum is always happy to receive donations for the charity shop (excluding clothing, furniture or electrical items) but asks if people could please hand



these in to the shop rather than leave them at the door. The shop is open from 10 to 4 Monday to Saturday just now and winter opening hours from 1st October will be 11-3, Tuesday to Saturday.

Pay as you Go



A contactless payment option has now been added to the beautifully refurbished public toilet at the Crocodile Rock.

CCDC, who maintain the public toilets on Cumbrae, recently upgraded the facility with grant support from Highlands and Islands Enterprise and North Ayrshire Council, installing a coin entry system to collect the 40p charge. Initial funding didn't stretch to a contactless system, but the Millport Support Group and Cumbrae Community Council came to the rescue with funds from the Supporting Communities grant to pay for the installation (to the relief of locals and visitors alike!)

Cumbræ Forum Update

As we look forward optimistically to our lives getting back to some form of normality, The Cumbræ Forum would like to take this opportunity to update you on our progress. We have now purchased the premises at 45 Stuart Street, formerly known as Scootaboot, and are making arrangements to have it established as a support hub for the community. We still have a long way to go but later this year we should be in a position to deal with a range of concerns and issues brought to us by island residents. Work on the Forum Hub should be evident in the coming weeks.

Our charity shop is now open, and doing really well. And as you can see, the Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme has just about completed the renovation of the shop front. I think you'll agree it looks very smart. I would like to thank all our volunteers and especially those in the shop who are doing sterling work in difficult circumstances.



The minibus is being maintained and serviced in preparation for a restart and discussions are underway to restart the Library Club and the Lunch Club later this year. We will of course keep you advised of any developments and details of start dates. Financially, the Cumbræ Forum, is in a satisfactory situation and the board is confident that we can proceed with our plans for the future.

If you wish to renew your membership, or join us for the first time, please go along to the Newton Bar on 13th or 14th September between 10 and 11.30am where you will be able to enroll for 2021/22. Annual membership is £5. Lunch Club Membership £15. Once a member of the Lunch Club no further payment for lunches will be necessary.

Best wishes for the rest of the summer and I look forward to us all getting together later in the year.

James Farrell Chairman

Island welcomes new Minister



After the departure of Jonathan Fleming, who has now settled in to his new ministry position in Greenock, we welcome the very Rev. Dr. Graham McWilliams, minister of Fairlie and Largs: St Columba's Parish Churches, as interim Moderator of Cumbræ Parish Church

Graham originally came from Greenock but moved to Largs with wife, Lesley, more than 26 years ago. After training for ministry, while retaining their house in Largs, they were called with sons Lauder and Callum to the central Perthshire villages of Comrie & St Fillans, where Graham was Parish minister for more than 13 years. These were good years, but God's plan seemed to be that they were to return to the west coast, and our lovely part of the river Clyde.

In addition to his own two parishes, Graham has been appointed by the wider Church to be Interim Moderator for Cumbræ and Largs: St John's. What this means is that he will be working with the local church Elders and Mr Gus McKay to ensure that Christian ministry, through the workings of the Church of Scotland, continues around the island of Cumbræ.

Over the coming months, from time to time, he will be around the island and he promises to do his best to help support the ongoing ministry of the Church of Scotland on Cumbræ. Should you see him and wish to chat, he asks that you just stop him and say 'hello.' However, he is equally accessible through the churches in Fairlie and Largs.

Millport Curling Club



Millport Curling Club is kicking off the season with a practice session on Wednesday 22nd September.

Anyone who would like to join the club, or just give curling a try, is warmly invited to come along. Contact Susan Forrest on 01475 530806 for more details



1st Millport Boys Brigade

The new session of the Boys Brigade (Anchors, Juniors and Company Section) will start 01 September in the DA Hall. For further details contact Jackie Wilson at Jwilsonbob@aol.com

Next issue we'd like to include a summary of all the different clubs and activities that are on in Millport over the winter. Could local groups please send details of the club/activity, where and when it's on and who to contact for more details to cumbræcs@gmail.com by 15th September

We're also always happy to receive suggestions for future content, or articles to include in Croc Talk, to the same address