

The Lochgair Update September 2021

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VILLAGE HALL CLOSED AS UNSAFE



Update by Mick Cuthbert

As you are all probably aware, the hall and its grounds have had to be temporarily closed. It became apparent from a fault found during the invasive structural survey The Association had commissioned from ATK Partnership of Greenock, that the same fault could exist in other areas of the building, concealed behind plasterboard (See photos taken by Mick of panel faults in the kitchen).



Editorial

Welcome to the 2021 Sep. edition of Update. Thank you to all our contributors. This issue raises some really important issues in relation to the future of our hall. We are grateful to Mick Cuthbert who has systematically explored the question— Is Lochgair hall safe for us to use?

As he sets out here and on page 2 the answer is definitely 'No'. YOU will decide what happens next (See article on the AGM on page 2). The next issue will come out mid December, so keep us in mind with your news, photos, stories, poems, letters etc.

Therefore, until a method of repair could be designed and agreed with ATK, discussed with Building Control and costed, the hall had to be temporarily closed. The owners (The Church of Scotland), Argyll and Bute Council and ATK were contacted, and all agreed that the hall must be closed until made safe.

A design for repair has now been completed and costed and agreed by ATK, and discussed with Building Control (To be continued on page 2).

**BRIEFING ON PHASED APPROACH TO REPAIR OF HALL
BY MICK CUTHBERT (CONTINUED)**

The first phase of these works is essential to maintain the structural integrity of the building prior to Phase 2. Phase 2 will focus on the internal structural wall, waterproofing and insulation, the internal renovations, and will require all the latest health and safety / disabled/ fire /access /electrical regulations adhered to, in order to satisfy Building Control and grant applications.

The hall's closure will accelerate its level of dilapidation, so it is imperative that these first phase repairs are carried out. With this in mind, we have asked The General Trustees of the Church of Scotland to contribute £6,000 to the costs of this initial repair for the purchase of all materials and costs associated with the works. The Association will supply, on a voluntary basis, the labour to carry them out. This would be a cheaper option for the owners than demolition of the hall, estimated at £8-12,000. Failing this, the hall will have to remain closed for an indefinite period until funds are available to carry out the repairs.

If the Church of Scotland is prepared to help with the initial costs of the first phase works then the work can be started; a labour intensive, but effective way of supporting the building, and the Association can proceed with the purchase/lease.

NOW'S THE TIME TO DECIDE!

The above repair plan assumes that the residents of Lochgair decide in an indicative 'YES' or 'NO' vote to be taken at the AGM and then followed up by a formal on-line survey, to proceed having fully considered potential future usage of the hall.

38 of you said in the survey in 2019—"that the village would be negatively affected if there was no longer a village hall". In the latest survey in June of this year 31 of you said "You would support the refurbishment/renewal of the hall" as this is seen as the 'focal point' for the village.

This is now where YOU come in. This last ditch attempt to save the hall depends on three things

- Firstly, the response by the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland to our request for financial support for initial emergency repairs; and the willingness of a team of volunteers to undertake the initial repair work.
- Secondly, your agreement to taking on the financial burdens of ownership of the hall plus church; or alternatively to a long term lease of the hall (Assuming the current owners would agree to the latter). This will mean a commitment to fundraising for both capital and revenue (to enable the planned major refurbishment and to meet ongoing maintenance expenses).
- Thirdly, your willingness to put on activities in the hall on a regular weekly basis, or run projects from the hall, in order to justify grant funding and income generation.

IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU MAKE YOUR VIEWS KNOWN AT THE AGM ON THE 9TH OF OCTOBER.

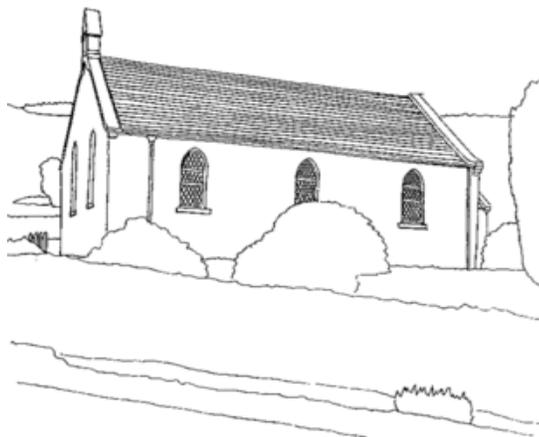
HOWEVER TO MAKE SURE THAT EVERYBODY HAS THEIR SAY AN ON-LINE QUESTIONNAIRE WILL BE SENT OUT AFTER THE AGM WHERE YOU CAN ANONYMOUSLY VOTE FOR OR AGAINST THE COMMITTEE'S PROPOSALS.

**THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
of THE LOCHGAIR ASSOCIATION (SCIO)**

**will be held in Lochgair Church on
Saturday 9th October at 11 am**

MAIN ITEM OF BUSINESS

Do we go ahead or not to save our hall?



WANTEDNEW BOARD MEMBERS....If you're interested in contributing to what the village has to offer please pass your name to the Chair, Jean Smith, 6 Gallanach Tel. 886328

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR OF UPDATE

Vacancy: Secretary of

The Lochgair Association

As you may know in addition to editing the news-letter I have been Secretary of the Association for 4 years. After careful consideration I have decided that it is time to resign as Secretary to allow me to focus more on The Long Memories Project as well as editing the quarterly issues of Update.

I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know everyone in the village. I'm sure whoever decides to take on this important role will find it worthwhile and rewarding.

If you are interested in finding out more about what is involved you can phone either myself (Marion Lacey) on 886232 or Jean Smith on 886328

BEHIND THE SCENES

The work of the Trustees of The Association

The Trustees of a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) are the same as committee members of a voluntary association but with some added legal powers. The Chair, Jean Smith, will report at the AGM on what has been achieved by the Trustees with your help over the last year – grants received, projects initiated, social events taking into account covid restrictions etc.

Behind the scenes Jean and the other members: Bev Cuthbert, Rosemary Dargie, Elsie Freer, Maggie Murray, Alison Wilkinson, and Marion Lacey – have attempted to steer the work of The Association, the biggest hurdle this last year being the various barriers to social interaction, and latterly the added barrier resulting from the current unsafe condition of the hall.

Communication with both members and non members has been a priority. Many thanks to Michael Reid for maintaining Lochgair's website and publishing regular Council updates on its Forum page; and to Rosemary Dargie for setting up Lochgair Village Facebook page – a great opportunity to share photos and news.

Website: www.lochgair.org

Facebook: Lochgair Village



WELCOME TO
LOCHGAIR

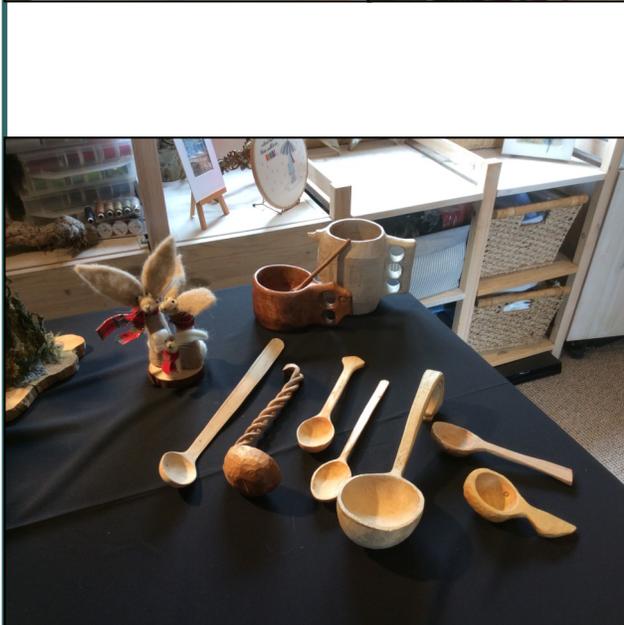
WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON RECENTLY IN LOCHGAIR?



The Celebratory Picnic at Redhouse on the 26th June was a highly successful relaxed affair on a stunning day – warm, still but with no midges – folk meeting in small groups catching up on what’s happened over the lock-down period and generally having an enjoyable afternoon.



An added treat was the display of items from the ‘Creative Activities Project’ which ran through last winter and this Spring. Maggie Murray set up in her little studio an amazing selection of exhibits. There was not enough space for every item that had been created but from the display it was evident that Lochgair is lucky to have such a talented group of artists and craft folk. A big thank you to the hosts Maggie and Douglas Murray.



WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON RECENTLY IN LOCHGAIR? CONTINUED

Exhibition of photos by Allan Redpath



photographic exhibition

Friday September 10th 6-8pm
Saturday September 11th 10-12am

We're delighted to kick off events in the village hall with a photographic exhibition by Allan Redpath on the above dates.

Allan's a keen photographer, and has kindly agreed to create this exhibition of his work for our enjoyment...so please come along and enjoy a glass of wine or fruit juice whilst browsing (if Friday only!)

Photographs will be for sale, with proceeds to the village hall fund.

Entry to the event will be by donation to the village hall refreshment fund.

Please do support this event if you possibly can- we all need to pull together if we hope to retain the hall for ourselves and for future generations.

Relevant updates regarding progress made in forwarding the village hall project will be on display.

A one way system will be in operation and sanitiser will be provided.

Any changes in covid protocols will be respected.

See you there!

Allan, as readers of Lochgair Village Facebook will know, is a very keen photographer. He agreed to share some of his collection at an exhibition in Lochgair Church on the evening of 10th of September and morning of the 11th. Folk were also given the opportunity to purchase prints of photos. Despite the obstacles posed by church pews an amazing exhibition of Lochgair's wildlife, photos taken during lockdown, and photos taken over the years on his travels, proved to be a great success. In addition the exhibition netted £282.10 for the hall fund.

A big thank you to Allan for the tremendous amount of work he put in by selecting photos for the exhibition, printing and then designing the display, and to Bev and Mick Cuthbert who helped set up, publicise and manage the event.

Tai Chi continues despite no hall to meet in!

Sandy Richardson has been undeterred by the lack of a hall for her Monday 37 step form classes, and her Wednesday Chi-kung classes — meeting at the entrance to the driveway of Tigh Na Mara, hidden from passing traffic on the A83. If wet the church has been used for one to one form classes, but given the numbers attending the Chi-kung class some of the pews would be ideally removed (even on a temporary basis over the coming winter) if the hall continues to be out of use.



WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON RECENTLY IN LOCHGAIR? CONTINUED



Vineet and Lindsay Raj of Tigh-na-Tobar with the help of Lindsay's family, threw a very well attended house warming party outside in their garden on 4th September. Several folk commented afterwards that they had met some folk from Lochgair and Gortonronach for the first time!

"Thanks everyone for coming and for the lovely gifts. Kind regards Vineet and Lindsay Raj"

DISMANTLING OF REDUNDANT ELECTRICITY PYLONS



This photograph was taken by Allan Redpath from the path leading to the viewpoint above Upper Lochgair. Engineers were working to remove the redundant high voltage cables in preparation for the pylons to be toppled and subsequently dismantled and removed. The pylon and cables are redundant following the activation of the Inveraray to Port Ann first phase of the Inveraray to Crossaig project. The new, now active, pylons and upgraded high voltage cables are located about two or so miles inland.

The next step was dismantling and removal of the redundant pylons using a helicopter (photo by Heather Rogan).

Observations on impact on accessibility for walkers, by Barbara Service

Aug 19th. "The track they have made up the hillside above me makes a different way to climb the hill. I did it the other day and apart from one very boggy area to cross made a lovely open way to go. I told the men working there the following day that it made a good path. One of them was the environmental officer for the project and he said he would put brushing in the dip to make it an easier walk."

6th Sept. "A short while ago I mentioned that the track taking out the pylons made a lovely open walk. Now there has been some rain there are very treacherous boggy places and the path along the top has been roped off by Balfour Beattie."



WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON RECENTLY IN LOCHGAIR? CONTINUED

Feedback from Visitors to the Bench on Loch Fyne

The diary which sits in a waterproof box under a couple of stones on the bench overlooking Loch Fyne provides some interesting reading—particularly messages from visitors to Lochgair:

June 29th.

Thank you again for the great bench to rest and appreciate our blessings.

July 13th.

Could there be a more tranquil place to sit and ponder (2 visitors from Cornwall) Tony and Hilary

July 21st.

We sailed in on one of the hottest days of the year. On coming ashore we discovered the Lochgair clay/mud. But Jean and Ian Smith kindly allowed us to wash with their hose and told us of the path to this special bench. A tranquil tonic to the past hard year. Stephen and Zahra of "Bluegrass"

August 2nd.

Quiet and mindful seat on the bench to reflect the mood. Carol and Alan Mowatt.

Aug. 20th.

The view is amazing: Very peaceful. Whoever put this box here is a genius. Love reading everyone's lines here. Summer from Manchester.

Sept 10th.

This spot and seat and box are just amazing. Linda Keith and Bryany from Kent.

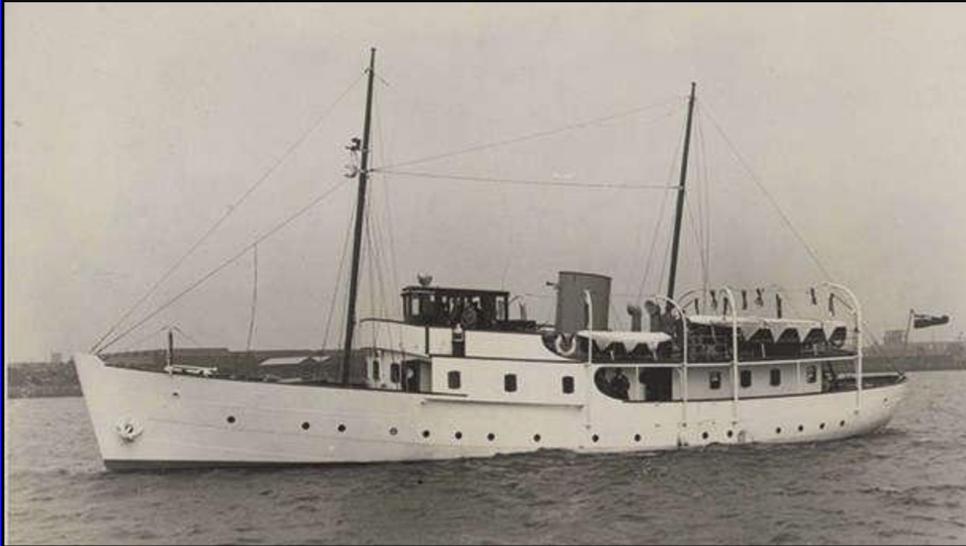


Margaret and Will Rudd's atmospheric photo of Lochgair in June



THE LONG MEMORIES PROJECT

CHICO (MADE FAMOUS BY SIR MALCOLM CAMPBELL AS BLUE BIRD) REVISITS LOCHAIR



This photo of Chico, otherwise called Blue Bird, was an exhibit in The Long Memories Exhibition of March 2018

This is a photo of the same boat which visited Loch Gair on the evening of 19th September and left on its charter in misty conditions the following morning.

It was built as a gentleman's yacht – 22 metres long by 5 metres wide – in 1932 at Miller's yard in St Monans, Fife, to a G L Watson design for Frank Robinson Beavan of Newcastle who named her FREBELLE III. She was sold in 1933 to land

and water speed record holder Sir Malcolm Campbell, the third of four yachts that he was to own, each in turn named BLUE BIRD. Sold again in 1935 to the Countess of Onslow, she was then requisitioned by the Navy in December 1939. She was fitted out with Lewis guns and echo sounding gear and commissioned as CHICO in March 1940, to be based at Dover on minesweeping duty. At the end of May she was ordered to Dunkirk to assist in the evacuation, ferrying troops off the beaches to the ships waiting offshore and then returning twice to bring exhausted men back to Dover. She saw further action with enemy aircraft in the Channel and was finally paid off back into civilian ownership in 1946 after distinguished war service. She is registered as a National Historic Ship and plies the West Coast of Scotland on luxury charters.



THE SEQUEL FROM BARRY MEREDITH'S MEMOIRS

"Tales of a Charter Boat Skipper"

[This is a précis of Barry's second chapter to whet your appetite for the full unedited version—to request a copy either email the editor of Update or contact Barry and Viv c/o An Cala Tel. 886282]



Barry was getting very busy with charters including boat trips during the Tarbert Seafood Festival. But his normal crew had let him down. However he happened to bump into Roy McNeill at the Lochgair Hotel (which in those days was a local meeting place) and mentioned his predicament. He suggested his son Scott could maybe help, so Barry agreed to give him a try. "Well, he was absolutely brilliant, very quick with the ropes and fenders. He was only about twelve at the time, so obviously still at school, but quite grown up for his age". Then Tona in Argyll Printshop in Lochgilphead suggested her father Neill McAlister might be interested in crewing as he had recently sold his trawler and was at a bit of a loose end. "I asked what money he would require. He said he would do it for nothing. I told him that the charter money was divided into four. Two fourths for the boat, one fourth to the skipper and one to the crew. He was a wonderful crew and that

was the start of a really great friendship."

Barry then took on charters for academic institutions doing survey work. The first one was for Oxford University Department of Engineering Science. They came to Lochgair and set up a test rig on the foreshore on his land next to Redhouse. Assembled it was about 6 feet x 6 feet with twelve transducers. "A short while later they phoned to say that their van was stuck on the land and could I pull them out. Viv had a brand new Mitsubishi 4x4 pick up, so we took that down to see if we could get them on their way. Like most academics they were somewhat lacking in common sense, as when Viv started to pull the van out they were all standing there staring. She told them she did not want to burn the clutch out so could they PUSH please! No problem, out it came."

They then headed to Inveraray where there is a sunken landing craft. Barry positioned the boat over it. "I turned round and looked at one of the computers. The operator pressed a key on the computer and a picture came up on the monitor. I couldn't believe my eyes.... there was a picture of the landing craft just like a photo negative, unbelievable. I asked what sort of system it was and they said they couldn't tell me, but it was something they were developing for the Navy." However their generator stopped working so Barry headed back to Lochgair where he met Jim Keith who asked what they were doing. "I told him about the generator and he said they could borrow his. I said no they can hire it! They could not believe that the situation had been resolved in less than three quarters of an hour as they had five days to complete the survey so time was of the essence." Their next destination was the sunken submarine HMS Grampian. "I could not believe what I saw on the computer screen. The sub had gone bow first into a bank. They could actually measure that it was 26 metres into the bank, which you could view from port or starboard, stern or bow with amazing clarity...This was about twelve years ago and there is nothing remotely like that system available to the public even now, but you can bet your bottom dollar that the Navy is using it and no doubt it will be even more sophisticated than it was at that time."

"Tales of a Charter Boat Skipper" continued

The next interesting job was for Dr. Mauvis Gore, marine research scientist based at Millport, Isle of Cumbrae. The job was tagging basking sharks, which entailed putting a GPS tracker into the dorsal fin of these magnificent creatures, which after six months would drop out. They spent two days trying to attach these trackers with no success—"every time we got near the basking shark it would dive". They borrowed a 3 hp electric outboard but could still only get about 10 feet away before the shark would dive. However the scientists had taken some really good photos of the sharks and so would be able to identify them by their fins and tails.

This then led to a job for a marine biologist from the University of London, based at the Biological Station at Millport. "We dropped a 56 lb weight with a buoy on it about twenty metres from the shore of Holy Island (Arran) and started to feed in the net. When we came to the end we dropped another 56 lb weight with a buoy on it. We then dropped all the poles with a buoy on. Splash, splash, splash in went the three divers. Within twenty minutes they were all up. I asked what they had done and they had put up a 3 foot fence along the seabed. The bottom of the net was weighted and the top had small floats on and every so often it was cable tied to a pole which kept it upright. The idea was that the fish would swim into the net, swim along it trying to find a way out and end up in the cod end. They could then see later which species of fish there were. The following day we went back to Holy Island to empty the cod end, which was full of tiny fish, into a container. They then made a note of all the different species and let them go. Because of this work the back of Holy Island was found to be a breeding ground and nursery for fish and consequently was declared a conservation area and no fishing boats were allowed to fish there."



Barry then bought a Grand Banks 36 motor cruiser - "just for pleasure". He then got a call on a satellite phone asking if he could take a client fishing. It turned out to be the owner of Le Grand Bleu (one of the largest privately owned motor yachts in the world) with a 68 ft Sunseeker as a tender. Barry suggested they could fish the "puffer wreck" at Barmore Island and the Sunseeker would be able to pick up a buoy at Stonefield Castle. "The owner of Le Grand Bleu, his son, the bo'sun, Neil and I started fishing. We caught two boxes of mackerel and a mixture of pollock and cod. They suggested that we go round to

'the tender' and have a cup of tea and a bite to eat. I asked if they wanted us to fillet the fish first, but they said no and that they had three chefs aboard the main boat and a smoker that could smoke a hundredweight of fish at a time! The owner saw the Stonefield Hotel and asked if he could get a scallop meal in there. I said I was sure they would be able to do that for him. Then a huge man with blond hair and a large bulge on the inside pocket of his jacket (the bodyguard), the owner and his son went ashore." While they were away it gave Barry the opportunity to find out more about Le Grand Bleu—"It used to be owned by Roman Abramovich, but he lost it in a bet to the present owner Eugene Shvidler. There has to be some sort of dodgy deal going on there, I thought." The coxswain said that they had had a fabulous day and that two days before they had been fishing at Oban and had not caught a single fish. "He then pulled out a wad of notes which I thought were tenners and started counting them out. He got to thirty and I said stop that's more than enough. I thought what a great day. A hundred pounds an hour, no fuel costs or overheads, a free meal and a very satisfied customer. I then went to pay Neill and saw that what I thought were £10 notes were in fact £20 notes, so it was double what I had thought! What it is to be a rich Russian oligarch!"

A FOND FAREWELL to WILLIAM ROBERT GRAY "BILL"



Bill who passed away on the 17th August this year is sorely missed by his immediate family and by all of us in Lochgair who knew him, and admired his bravery and determination despite the ill health he latterly experienced. We appreciated the effort he made to join us at the picnic in the grounds of Redhouse in June of this year. It was also a great honour to join in the celebration of Margaret and Bill's golden wedding on the 12th of July this year.

The funeral service in Kilevin Cemetery, attended by nearly the whole village, was a fitting send off, a highlight of which was his daughters, Catherine and Marion, playing the fiddle music—"The full rigged ship", "The new rigged ship", and "Leaving Lerwick Harbour" by Willie Hunter.



The following extract from Captain Carelli's Mandolin by Louis de Bernieres sent to Margaret by Jan Williams was felt to be a fitting tribute.



*Those that truly love,
have roots that grow towards each other underground,
and when all the pretty blossom has fallen from their branches,
they find that they are one tree and not two.*

A FOND FAREWELL TO BETTY MAULE

Betty Maule of Kames Cottage, Mid Kames, who passed away on the 8th July, was less able to take part in community activities after her husband Stan died.

However up until the Covid lockdown she enjoyed her regular morning coffees with her neighbour Tom Glen, and thanks to lifts by Phil Risby of Port Ann was able to socialise with her Lochgair neighbours at the Lochgair lunch club.



In her younger years Betty was active in a number of community groups in Lochgair such as the Guild and the local institute of the WRI. She was known as a beautiful knitter and this is a photo from 1990 when the local WRI won the Potalloch Trophy.

The Potalloch Trophy for hand knitting went to four members of the Lochgair Institute. Pictured are Mrs Mary Risby, Mrs E. Maule and Mrs Elspeth Wells. The missing member is Mrs Margaret Studholme

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

How things have changed...by Fiona Rice

I was staggered at the amount of rubbish collected along the roadside - many congratulations to all involved!

When I was young the road was quiet and the verges verdant, in the summer holidays we used to spend a lot of time picking the raspberries which grew along the road edges - and I don't remember being hampered by rubbish! Even in 1979 this was the case, as it was while picking raspberries with my father on the roadside that Peter asked him for my hand in marriage...! How things have changed!

Extract from Argyllshire Advertiser, Frid. 17th Sept.
By Barabel McKay, Chair of Mid Argyll-based Health and Care group

**'ARGYLL'S ALMOST SECRET SERVICE—LICENSED TO HELP'
[The Sensory Impairment Service]**

"You will have to wait another few weeks to see the new James Bond movie, but Argyll's very own secret service is available now. It is a lifeline for those who need it. It can rescue people who have sight or hearing loss from the additional pain of giving up everyday tasks and hobbies.

The service offers support to people of all ages who are deaf or hard of hearing, blind or partially sighted. It doesn't matter whether you have always been like that, or if the way you perceive the world has been changed by age or a life event. This is the kind of professional help that will make a difference...A home visit is necessary to assess your needs. That will provide the best thing of all, someone who really hears and understands your difficulties, and can help you find solutions. You can get in touch with the Sensory Impairment team by phoning or writing to them at Ellis Lodge Dunoon, 01369 708484".

WELCOME TO
JOHN AND HEATHER ROGAN

Our names are John and Heather Rogan and we recently bought Cabarfeidh. Though still to sell our old house in West Lothian we are trying to spend as much time as we can up at Lochgair where we plan to stay full time.

Lochgair was not our original choice but, due to Covid, competition increasing for properties further west, and an elderly mother at Ardfern, we widened our search and found Cabarfeidh. We viewed it, loved it, walked to the point, talked to Maggie about the village in passing and put in a bid, we couldn't resist.

We are both retired engineers, enjoy walking, sea kayaking, sailing and wood turning and are hoping to be able to do more once we finish our move. Heather is thinking about trying wild swimming in Loch Fyne, from the point, but isn't sure she is brave (or stupid) enough, even if she gets a wetsuit.

We have been really impressed by the friendliness of everyone we have met and are looking forward to village life here in Lochgair.

Best Wishes, Heather and John.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY & NOTICEBOARD



BEACH CLEAN SATURDAY 25TH SEPTEMBER

Briefing 9.30 at 6 Gallanach by Fred Bruce and by Christina Saunders from the Grab Trust



AND BBQ AT REDHOUSE
FROM 12.30 A.M. ONWARDS

Bring your own picnic, beverages, something to sit on etc. For those who wish to cook on a BBQ this will be available. As the weather may be inclement a couple of gazebos will shelter us from the worst of the weather.

LOCHGAIR PLANT SALE
SATURDAY 2ND OCT FROM 10 RD 12 A.M.
At Knock Steading

Bev Cuthbert has kindly offered the use of her driveway, summerhouse/conservatory for the event (as the hall is unavailable).

We hope to have a plant stall, home baking for sale, teas/ coffee etc. It will be a smaller event due to the time of the year and making sure we follow covid guidelines.

We will need plants, surplus home grown vegetables, baking and volunteers.

Proceeds after expenses 50/50 to Lochgair Association and Lochgair Garden Group.

If you have any queries please contact Carol Braidwood, Lochgair Garden Group, Tel. 886251



AMAZON SMILE.

Remember you can donate to the Association via Amazon Smile. 0.5% of the net purchase price of eligible purchases are donated to the Association. Amazon Smile is also available in the Amazon Shopping App to all Amazon customers using an iPhone or Android phone.

However you're welcome to choose an alternative charity of your choice.

THE TRUSTEES OF
THE LOCHGAIR ASSOCIATION (SCIO) are:

Jean Smith, Chair (Tel. 886328), Bev Cuthbert, Rosemary Dargie, Elsie Freer, Maggie Murray, Alison Wilkinson, and Marion Lacey

Email: info@lochgair.org