



On Reflection

This time last year we were reporting the Greenpeace demonstration on a rig in the firth! How much has changed since then?

One could say 'everything' or equally, 'not a lot!' The climate emergency hasn't gone away. However, our thoughts have switched to protecting ourselves from a different kind of crisis. But the two are linked. The Covid-19 pandemic was surely exacerbated by our global economy and the ease with which people move (or moved) freely around the world without much thought of its impact. Here in the Black Isle many had concerns about tourism and how there appeared to be a rush towards welcoming more and more visitors irrespective of where they came from, how they got here and what their carbon footprint was. A year on and we are now all very conscious of where 'outsiders' may have come from and what they might be bringing with them. This has to be a good thing as it would do no harm for everyone to give a little more consideration to why they're here and how they act.

With the easing of 'lockdown' we are likely to be seeing a lot more 'outsiders' in the coming weeks. The Black Isle Partnership, with the Black Isle Tourism Team, are working to launch a campaign which sends a clear message to folk arriving from elsewhere. One of Cromarty's great strengths has always been the warm welcome it extends to visitors. There is no reason for this to change provided we feel safe, and we sense that others appreciate all we're doing to continue to feel safe.

The messages we will be putting out are:

Support local businesses. Respect local needs.

Stay apart. Keep connected.

If we can all help to promote these values, hopefully we can all get along and get through this. And who knows? We may discover a better kind of tourism – one where visitors slow down and take time to really appreciate what they've come to. That would be a positive for Cromarty, and the world.

Jon Palmer - who as well as selling cheese and editing the newsletter is Chair of Black Isle Partnership.

Cromarty's Voice In The National Response

Community bodies have earned the right to become one of the building blocks on which Scotland's green recovery from the pandemic is founded - according to a national report which features Cromarty.

The document published earlier this month, examines the remarkable efforts by communities across Scotland as they responded to the threat posed by the coronavirus.

It says these community bodies “provided an anchor for local residents as the tide of infection flooded.” They had to make the Scottish Government's ‘stay at home’ instruction work on the ground.

It was they who ensured the most vulnerable could be protected and would have: food; medicines; money; human contact. They created a new front line in local resilience. The report argues Scottish Government ministers should not forget these achievements, as they chart a course out of the economic storm borne on the winds of the coronavirus.

Reconstruction will have to include measures to tackle climate change, which community bodies can help deliver, it says.

The report was produced by Community Land Scotland (CLS) and the Community Woodlands Association (CWA).

CLS is the national organisation which provides a collective voice for community bodies which own land and other assets. They now control nearly 600,000 acres and many buildings from the Outer Isles to the Borders.

Cromarty Community Development Trust (CCDT) is a member of CLS.

Readers of this newsletter may recognise the writing style in the report. This is because CLS commissioned Cromarty-based journalist David Ross (who helps produce the newsletter) to write it. He agreed on condition he could include Cromarty as a case study, to pay tribute to the local effort here.

The report is entitled 'Built-in Resilience: Community Landowners' Responses to the Covid19 Crisis.' There is a link to it [here](#).



New Opportunities For Young People?

Nige Shapcott writes:

'One thing that is clear is that it's a time of change and uncertainty. One of the issues that has come up is that of young people who are having to change plans for their future as a result of the pandemic. Businesses they were planning to work in or take part in apprenticeship training, have themselves had to change their plans. One of the clear choices is to look at Further and Higher Education to gain qualifications and training for future careers.

Unfortunately, people can easily be put off examining this option by their knowledge of local bus fares to get to college using public transport. But there are ways in which people attending courses can have their travel costs subsidised:

The Educational Maintenance Allowance and the FE Bursary from Inverness College, UHI can provide travel funding to help with travel costs. At the moment, those attending could apply travel funding of £22.50 or £30 a week depending on whether the course was 3/4 days a week. This covers the cost of the Mega Rider ticket.

Full time: link [here](#).

Part time: link [here](#).

You can approach the Student Funding Team by emailing: funding.ic@uhi.ac.uk.

Higher Education students fund their own travel out of their SAAS payments, more information [here](#).

There are lots of really good opportunities, get inspired by looking [here](#).'

Harbour Gets Back To Work

'Finally, Lochshell, the contractors working on the replacement fenders for the inner pier were able to deploy a specialist team diver to remove the broken steel fenders from the harbour entrance. They were so firmly embedded in concrete that the process was much more difficult and took longer than had been anticipated. We hope to see Lochshell back soon to complete the installation of the last of the new greenheart fenders and other scheduled repairs.

As lockdown eases and the harbour cautiously re-opens, we are delighted to have completed another element of our harbour improvements and refurbishment project with the installation of two new(ish) short pontoons which will enable us to berth 4 additional boats. Many thanks to FLAG and our other funders for providing the resources and Tom Mackellar of Mackellar Subsea Limited and all our stalwart volunteers who worked so hard to make this happen. We are also actively looking at ways to finance even more pontoons to increase the capacity of the harbour.

This week saw the return of Cliff Grant and his small team from F and G Builders to continue work on the sheds. Materials supply is still problematic so there is likely to be a break for two weeks whilst the roofing materials are manufactured and warehouses reopen. Following on we should be able to install the new floodlights, CCTV and mooring bollards and ladders.

This week also saw the installation of our new information panels designed by Caroline Vawdrey, depicting the history of the harbour, the marine wildlife of the firth and with an upgraded stand, the story of the Natal.

Volunteers, David Kent, John Ross and harbour master Ronald Young did a great job whilst managing to maintain the appropriate social distancing.

On the funding front we have applied to Historic Scotland's Coast and Waters Heritage Fund and the FCC Communities Foundation, amongst others, to source the funds to allow us to repair the stone paving on the west pier close to the bridge. This is urgently required to improve access for all harbour users and visitors. We are also liaising with the HIE Construction and Built Environment course in the hope that this project will allow students and trainees to gain work experience in construction and stone work conservation techniques (Covid 19 guidance permitting). In the longer term we will be looking for substantial funding to undertake the stone work repairs and stabilisation of the remaining stone piers to secure the structure of the harbour for future generations.'

Pat Haynes



Some familiar faces putting their backs into it - or leaning on shovels as the case may be.

Business Updates

Community Markets

Sheila Currie writes:

'We're all keen to see the Monthly community markets back in the Victoria Hall, but of course we need to wait until the Hall is open again and till we (Transition Black

Isle) are completely satisfied that stallholders and customers will be safe.

The huge increase in demand for local food across the country means we're also looking at other possible ways of bringing food and people together without a physical market.

And look out on the [Cromarty Community Market](#) facebook page for a quick survey on what you like/miss most about the market.'

Sutor Creek Changes

Phoebe Fox writes:

'Small, intimate, busy - three words often used to describe Sutor Creek. Due to our size, it is going to be extremely challenging to introduce social distancing to our restaurant to ensure the safety of our employees and the community. With this in mind, we have decided not to return Sutor Creek to a restaurant for the foreseeable future and instead continue as a Take-Away. In addition to the take-away, we are in the process of converting the front of house space into a Deli to offer a selection of Sutor Creek Salads, prepared Scottish Seafood, delicious desserts and an assortment of fabulous goodies to take away. We will extend our hours to 5 days a week and introduce outside seating within the next couple of weeks. In addition to these changes, we are working on an Online Ordering system for our take-away meals, with the option of collection, delivery within Cromarty, or outside table dining. We are excited about moving forward and hope that this new format works for everyone!

Menus. We continue to offer weekly specials in addition to our regular menus and wood-fired pizzas - everything is posted on our website www.sutorcreek.co.uk, on FB, Instagram and at the Post Office. We are currently open Thursday to Sunday 10-8pm with coffee & cake, afternoon tea boxes, desserts, ice cream and our prepared seafood deli items. There is also a special lunch offer, Thursday to Saturday 12-4pm, of Battered Haddock & hand-cut chips with a Cromarty Brewing Co. Beer for £10. Just phone, email or stop in and order. Email sutorcreekcafe@gmail.com Phone 01381 600 855, website sutorcreek.co.uk

Pay It Forward. We started the Pay It Forward scheme at the beginning of the lockdown and this service has been

used throughout the community for families in need, thank yous for keyworkers and folk who have needed a wee treat. The fund is now nearly depleted but we are still getting requests for its use. If you would like to make a contribution, just add an amount to your next order or contact us directly to arrange. We would like to continue the scheme as long as there is a need for it!

Calluna

Opening Monday 29th June at 10am, we will continue our regular 10-5pm hours, 7 days a week. We have installed Hand Sanitizer at the entrance, will restrict to 3 people maximum at a time, we have a set-aside policy for any clothes that have been tried on, we have a cleaning system for our changing room, contactless payments, and will encourage customers not to touch items unless they are considering purchasing. Private appointments are also available on request. We look forward to welcoming you back soon to peruse all our new items in stock!

Ingrid's House

Ingrid's House will be reopening from Monday the 29th of June with lots of new stock. We can't wait to see our customers again. We will be open 7 days a week 10-5. For those still shielding or unable to get to Cromarty you can get in touch to book a personal shopping experience with Ingrid via video call. We know it's not the same as being in the shop itself but we hope it will offer a fun and friendly way to shop!

Best wishes, Ingrid



Before we get into seeing more folk around town it was a lovely gesture from those connected with Black Isle Engineering to produce a permanent reminder of the gratitude locals have

expressed for the businesses that stayed open during the last three months.

Church News

The local Church of Scotland continues to livestream a Sunday service at 11am. If anyone would like to join, they can log on to cruparish.online.church. There are no prefixes (e.g. http) or suffixes (e.g. .com). If they have trouble with that site, there will be a Facebook link they can use. There is also a Zoom-based bible study (Wednesday at 7.30pm) and prayer meeting (Friday at 7pm).

New Historical Walks

Historian Dr David Alston has recently published two new walks that will be of interest to locals and visitors alike. The first is a walk along the shore to the west of the town, pointing out many fascinating landmarks that may have escaped people's attention.

The second, rather pertinently given what's been in the news lately, is entitled 'Cromarty: Building On Slavery'.

Fascinating insights as always. Details of the walks can be found at www.davidalston.info

Courthouse News

A reminder that the garden at the back of the Courthouse is open for people to enjoy, whilst respecting an appropriate distance from others. The Courthouse itself remains closed for the foreseeable future.

BUT. Members of the Courthouse team are still gathering items, artefacts and pieces of writing relating to people's experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic. Anything with a connection to Cromarty will be of great historical interest in the years to come.

Please feel free to contact them via their new e-mail: courthousecromarty@gmail.com

The Sea Inside

Izzy Thomson writes:

'As part of Scotland's year of Coasts and Waters, three local artists, Jacqueline Briggs, Alice Taylor and Izzy Thomson, have been supported by Scottish Natural Heritage's 'Plunge In! Coasts and Waters Community Fund' to work in partnership with Cromarty Courthouse Museum, alongside the communities of Cromarty and Resolis. This project will explore our connection with the sea, in the hope to celebrate people's appreciation of the area we live in and our desire to look after our coasts and seas. Research gathered from marine experts and memories/ stories from local residents will be brought together to create a large community artwork in the form of a patchwork sail which will be displayed in the Courthouse garden.

In keeping with the current situation, the artists will create "art parcels" to post through the doors of Cromarty residents (date to be confirmed), for people to make sea-themed artworks on. These will be sewn together to form the patchwork sail.

If you would like to contact the artists to find out more, get involved or request an art parcel then please email: theseainside2020@gmail.com

Look out for updates on 'The Sea Inside' page on the Courthouse's website: www.cromarty-courthouse.org.uk

Or on the Courthouse's notice board and their instagram account: @cromartycourthouse '



Arts Trust Latest

Georgia Macleod writes:

'Thanks to everyone that completed our online survey. The findings showed that the desire to return to our courses, events and gigs when we are permitted to do so, is strong as long as the necessary Coronavirus precautions are put in place. We are delighted to be making small steps therefore towards running our first post-lockdown course at the end of August and of course will be implementing social distancing, use of PPE, supplying extra hand washing facilities, limiting numbers, etc to provide as safe an environment for all as we possibly can.

If you would like a booking form for the following courses or to purchase tickets to concerts, email info@cromartyartstrust.org.uk or tel: 01381 600354. All further info [here](#). Please note: there are many date and venue changes to our original, printed programme so please double check!

22/23 Aug - Landscape Painting in Oils - 2 PLACES LEFT

29/30 Aug - Portrait Painting

5/6 Sept - Beginners Sewing - FULLY BOOKED

12/13 Sept - Life Drawing

18 & 19 Sept - Stained Glass - FULLY BOOKED

26 & 27 Sept - Lino Printing

28 Sept - 3 Oct - Stone Letter Cutting

10 October - Lizabett Russo & Graeme Stephen (Stables)

11 October - Fyrish String Quartet

17/18 Oct - Dressmaking

7/8 Nov - Celtic Art

We hope our participants and audiences will give us the support we so desperately need to get back up and running again and we look forward to welcoming you through the doors of our venues before long!



Community Development Trust

Slipways

Hopes are rising that at long last real progress may be made shortly towards the upgrading of the ferry slipways at Cromarty and Nigg.

As reported in earlier newsletters, the CCDT was granted planning permission for the work on the two structures. In addition we are optimistic that the Marine Licence will soon be issued by the Scottish Government's agency Marine Scotland. When it arrives that will be the final required consent from the authorities in place.

But the CCDT directors have had many months of frustrating dialogue with different companies. We sought a construction plan for the slipways, that would approximate the projected budget for the project. It proved elusive.

In recent weeks, however, the Beaulieu-based building firm Simpsons has proposed a different engineering approach, which should mean the work can be done at a realistic price. It involves demolishing the existing structures and reusing some of the crushed material.

Simpsons' engineers are currently engaged in further preliminary examinations. If they go well, representations will be made to the Highland Council and VisitScotland to release the appropriate amount from the Rural Tourism

Infrastructure Fund award. If that all falls into place, work could begin next month. Fingers crossed.

The campsite

In response to the Highland Council's concerns over lighting, access and the trees at Whitedykes, our architect Neil Grant has had to draw up new plans for the campsite. These are being submitted to the council planners.

This unfortunately will mean that there will have to be a new round of public consultation on the revised plan. Nothing has been simple.

And finally...

We started with the rigs and we'll finish with the rigs. Fraser Mackenzie writes:

'There have been various noise complaints regarding rig and other chronic generator noise from the operations of the Port of Cromarty Firth and Global at Nigg Yard raised through the Highland Council website by about 10 residents in the last few weeks.

The Highland Council is currently taking some action but I would encourage any resident who is affected by the noise and vibration to make an official complaint through the Highland Council [website](#).

It only takes a few minutes and it is the only official way to register your concerns but it's not a particularly easy online form - you need to quote a postcode for the noise source- which is a bit difficult for a rig or a noise source that might not be easy to identify at 01.00am. If you just put in either the Port of Cromarty Firth Office - IV18 0HD or Nigg Energy Park IV19 1QU- that works.'

We hope you've found this an interesting and informative read. Please let us know what you think, or send suggestions and ideas for articles via editor@cromartylive.co.uk

The Cromarty Live Newsletter team is Jon Palmer, Jeremy Price, David Ross, Laura Shepherd

The Newsletter is currently sponsored by Sutor Creek. Printed

copies are available at the Stores for those unable to access the online version.

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