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|  | **TARBERT & SKIPNESS COMMUNITY TRUST****Autumn 2020 Newsletter** |

COVID-19

As with everything else, TSCT has been affected by Covid-19. We were successful in obtaining government and other funding to support individuals and families struggling during lockdown. Working with Team Tarbert, we were able to pay for vouchers for the Co-op, Butcher and Larder.

Deliveries to outlying areas were possible because the Trust could pay mileage. Not forgetting the stress of families at home over lockdown, the Trust funded mindfulness packs and arts and crafts kits for all primary school children.

Latterly we heard that some children at school struggled with their work due to lack of suitable IT equipment. The Trust has funded 10 laptops for children who would not otherwise have access to them.

Finally, as groups start up again, the Trust has access to a stock of hand sanitiser. If your group needs hand sanitiser please get in touch.

Thanks to our funders:

The Scottish Government, Fern Community Funds, Force 9 and STV Appeal.

In the future Tarbert and Skipness Community Trust would like an ongoing relationship with Team Tarbert, where Team Tarbert could benefit from the Trust’s umbrella structure.

COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE

Please take a look at our website [www.tsct.org.uk](http://www.tsct.org.uk) for an updated action on the challenges to be progressed over the next four years (2020 to 2024).

Just squeezed in before lockdown was our annual Community Plan consultation on March 15th. As in previous plans, housing is a priority, particularly for larger families, adapted housing for people with disabilities and opportunities for older people wanting to downsize.

Acquisition of land and thermal efficiency of our existing houses were also highlighted.

In February 2020, a party of 4 went off on a 2 day fact finding tour across the highlands. They were looking at how other communities work to solve their housing problems. Based on this, a report has been prepared and, with the support of the Community Council, Harbour Authority and Enterprise company, the Trust is ready to approach Argyll and Bute housing providers with the needs of our village.

Other priorities discussed and entered on the updated plan are a general clear up of the village, particularly for visitors coming to Tarbert from Portavadie or on the Waverley, a cycle walking track to Kennacraig, and heritage centre.

STAFF

The Strengthening Communities Programme, now called Investing in Communities, has been given a further extension to funding allowing part-time workers, David, Lorna and Catherine Jane to remain in post until the end of March 2021.

TARBERT LIFE

As many of you will have seen, Tarbert Life was due to open at Easter. However, we have been unable to open this year due to Covid-19 as we are unable to deliver a suitably rigorous cleaning regime.

This year’s exhibition was to have focussed on Tarbert Castle archaeological dig 2019. With the centre closed we went to Plan B. The Trust hopes that you have enjoyed the smaller display in the window about last year’s dig.

In December 2019, the Trust received a Scottish Land Fund grant to progress acquisition of the former Visit Scotland building. An independent survey of the building and subsequent legal advice proved very disappointing. The Trust would have responsibility for between 50 and 70% of the common repairs of this very large building. At the Board meeting in March, just before lockdown, the Trust took the decision that they could not accept the financial risk that the building presents and will arrange to vacate the premises but**…….**

**……**to all our volunteers who worked so hard on the display, do not despair. The Trust is actively looking for premises where we can re-locate the display and develop Tarbert’s own heritage story. As soon as we have further news the display volunteers will be contacted to help with developing the project and new displays.



COMMUNITY BENEFIT DISPERSAL

Despite the difficulties presented by Covid-19 RES Freasdail Community Benefit dispersal was

announced a couple of months late in July. 15 applications were received and, following a meeting of the Community Benefit Advisory Group, £28,000 has been offered to Tarbert and Skipness groups, including Tarbert Guides, Tarbert Golf Club, Tarbert After School Care and Skipness Sheepdog Trials. The full list will appear on the Trust web site as soon as grants are dispersed.

ANNUAL BEACH CLEAN

Unfortunately, the annual beach clean was another victim of Covid-19. Last year over 40 volunteers from 4 organisations took part. Look out for the beach clean next spring, we will have a lot of work to do.

AGM

Our AGM is due in October/November. We are aiming to have a socially distanced AGM and will be in touch with date and venue soon.

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