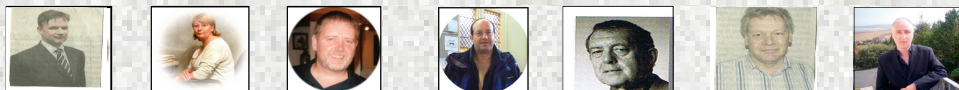




ISSUE 153

SEPTEMBER 2016

MANOR & CASTLE NEWSLETTER



Manor & Castle Newsletter

Special points of interest:

- Chairperson's Comments
- Councillor's Comment's
- Local information

Chairman's Comments

Chairman's Report

Hello everyone and welcome to the September Newsletter. We have not had many sunny days since we last met in June but nonetheless I hope you all had a good break and even managed to get away for a holiday.

I want to look at Attendance Allowance as some of you may be eligible or you may know of someone who could qualify for this benefit and thereby maximise their income.

What is Attendance Allowance?

You need to be 65 or over to claim Attendance Allowance. You also need to have a disability or illness that makes it hard for you to look after yourself. Lots of people are entitled to Attendance Allowance but don't know enough about it to claim. You could get £55.10 or £82.30 a week - the amount you get will depend on how much help you need. You can spend the money however you like - it could help you stay independent in your own home for longer.

Attendance Allowance isn't means tested so it doesn't matter what other money you get. It doesn't matter how much you have in savings either - there's no limit. It won't affect your state pension and you can claim it if you're still working and earning money. You'll need to complete a long claim form when you apply for Attendance Allowance. It might seem daunting at first but help is available from your nearest Citizens Advice so don't let the form put you off applying.

Inside this issue:

HHP on Fuel poverty	2
Attendance Allowance Hebrides Esco	3
Cook's Corner	4

Roddy Nicolson

Councillor's Report

Where did our summer go? I think we had more nicer days that last year but not enough! Hopefully a nice autumn will be winging our way as we are into the second half of the year—unbelievable how time passes.

I hope that there was a chance to use the new picnic benches at ther Columbia Place Play park this summer. A welcome addition to the park along with the bike racks. As we await the spotlight to be fixed, the park is looking a lot better and we should keep up the improvements so that children play facilities are up to scratch.

The offroad parking project is now awaiting permission from HHP to proceed and this will come to their board meeting in November. The lack of funding from the council and government is symptomatic of the times we are living in but we got a very good competitive price and letters will be sent out after HHP make their decision.

Moves are afoot to bring the area between Kennedy Terrace and Westview Terrace to life and I am delighted to see a number of parents take the initiative. There will be a fundraising Halloween Party on 28th October—venue will be confirmed. The area has been out of use for a while and I am sure that a development there will add to the amenity of the area—well done!

A petition organised by councillor Rae Mackenzie and myself to have an ETV stationed at Stornoway was presented to 10 Downing Street earlier in the month—calls intensified after the oil rig ran aground earlier in the month—a cause that gained a lot of support nationally.



I have also asked Martin Dorchester to look again at the Calmac policy of not supporting island sports groups and organisations. A lot of teams and groups are competing to the highest level in their particular sport and as they become more successful, more trips away are required. The costs increase and I have asked Mr Dorchester, chief executive, if he could review the policy.

Next week (week beginning 26th September) sees the council meetings September series. You can listen to it online on the council website. The papers to discuss are also on the website.

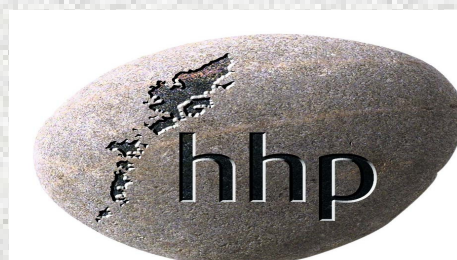
Councillor Gordon Murra

HHP fight against fuel poverty

As fuel poverty in the Western Isles continues to climb a report to the HHP Board on 6th September highlighted HHP's progress as they endeavour to provide their tenants with the best opportunities possible to escape fuel poverty.

Peter O'Donnell, HHP's Investment Manager said: "HHP's commitment to investing in new efficient heating and insulation systems has ensured our existing homes are as efficient as possible. A recent HHP study, which was funded by Calor Gas and the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA), showed that our heating replacement programme was helping to take tenants out of fuel poverty with heating bills under £15 per week."

HHP have partnered with Citrus Energy ([link](#)), an energy switching company, to help tenants reduce their bills even further. Mr O'Donnell commented: "Switching to the cheapest electricity provider has seen some tenants weekly heating bills reduced to under £10 per week. Citrus Energy provide this service free of charge to all HHP tenants."



More on Attendance Allowance....

How you can spend your Attendance Allowance

You can spend your Attendance Allowance however you like - it's up to you. Lots of people spend it on something that makes life a bit easier, for example:

- paying for taxis
- helping towards bills

paying for a cleaner or gardener

Examples of how people spend their money

Betty is 79 and has arthritis in her knee and hip and also has a heart condition. She says: "I use some of my Attendance Allowance to visit my friend, Nancy, who lives a few miles away. I used to get 2 buses and it took an hour and exhausted me but my Attendance Allowance means I can get a taxi there in 10 minutes. I also get a taxi to go to appointments, like the doctor or a consultant, or even the hairdresser. I still have enough money to pay for a cleaner once a week. It's made a huge difference to my life."

David is 82 and has dementia. He says: "I struggle to make ends meet on my pension so I use my Attendance Allowance to help with bills. It means I don't have to worry about having the heating on if I'm cold. The money also means I can see more of my grandchildren. They mean the world to me and it would be difficult to see them without the extra money as I can't get public transport on my own."

Next steps

[Check if you're entitled to Attendance Allowance](#)

[Extra benefits and help you can get on Attendance Allowance](#)

PAYING MORE TO BE POOR

A new report by Citizens Advice Scotland shows that those on a low income can find themselves particularly susceptible to financial detriment. One such manifestation of this is when those on a low income pay more for goods and services due to their weaker position in consumer markets. This is known as the "poverty premium" and new research has been carried out examining the common causes and manifestations of the poverty premium in energy, telecommunications, credit, loans and insurance in Scotland and the impact it has on low income consumers. Based on the findings of this research recommendations are being made regarding the ways in which government, regulators, consumer organisations, businesses and other stakeholders could work together to reduce the burden of the poverty premium on low income consumers in Scotland

Outer Hebrides ESCO update—Energy Supply Company

The Hebrides Energy Board and the Comhairle are working closely with the private sector partner towards the launch of the 'Hebrides Energy' fixed and variable electricity tariffs. There has been some slippage in launch date due to the operational capacity of the private sector partner to put in place required processes within the initially anticipated timescale. Partners are now working on the basis of a launch in the Autumn and a verbal update can be provided on this at the Sustainable Committee.

COOKS CORNER

Summer Cheesecake

Ingredients

450g/1lb [self-raising flour](#)

125g/4oz [caster sugar](#)

1 tsp [baking powder](#)

1 tsp [mixed spice](#)

pinch [salt](#)

125g/4oz unsalted [butter](#)

- 450g/1lb mixed fruit and peel

1 tsp [bicarbonate of soda](#)

250ml/9fl oz [milk](#)

Method

Preheat the oven to gas 150C/300F/Gas 2. Grease and line a 1.4kg/3lb loaf tin.

In a bowl sift together the flour, sugar, baking powder, mixed spice and salt.

Rub in the butter and then fold in the mixed fruit.

Stir the bicarbonate of soda into the milk then add to the mix and stir until well combined.

Spoon the mixture into the loaf tin and place in the oven for 1hr 45 minutes. Keep an eye on the cake and cover it with a sheet of foil if it's getting too dark.

Allow to cool a little and then turn out. Serve in slices with plenty of butter.



Extended visiting times in Western Isles hospitals

NHS Western Isles recently launched new extended visiting times across the three hospitals in the Western Isles.

A spokesperson said: "It is widely recognised that support from family and friends, in the form of hospital visits, is an integral part of any patient's recovery. Extended visiting has therefore been introduced, from 11am to 8pm, seven days a week.