

MANOR & CASTLE NEWSLETTER

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Manor & Castle Newsletter

Special points of interest:

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

Inside this issue:

Bus Survey	2
Columbia Place Play Park	3
Cooks Corner	4

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

MANY SCOTTISH CAB CLIENTS UNABLE TO USE THE INTERNET

Almost a fifth of people who seek advice from Scottish CABs say they never use the internet, with more than half unable to apply for jobs or benefits online without help, according to new research published by Citizens Advice Scotland. The data is a concern because many social security and justice services are now only or mainly accessible online, which means that many people are not getting the essential support they need. The survey of over 1,200 Scottish CAB clients found that:

- 34% have no or limited ability to use the internet, with 18% saying they never use it at all
- 20% only have access to it through a smart phone
- 21% don't have an email account
- 64% of benefits claimants need help to apply for their benefits online. When asked what were the barriers to internet use, 18% reported it was the cost of broadband, 17% said phone costs, and 64% said they had not received any training or support in internet use. 41% of respondents in rural areas reported poor broadband connectivity. Publishing the report, Citizens Advice Scotland's Policy Manager Keith Dryburgh says, "These findings clearly show that many Scottish CAB clients still have difficulty using digital services, either through lack of skills or lack of access. While the research also shows that younger people are more proficient than the older age groups, the general picture remains a concern." "Although the sample for this survey cannot be said to represent the Scottish population as a whole, it nevertheless indicates that Scotland is not yet at a stage where key services like social security and justice can be moved entirely online without excluding a significant proportion of society from them." "We therefore suggest that all key public services should continue to have alternative options (e.g. paper-based systems) available to people who are not able to competently use online services." "In the meantime, we commit to working with the Scottish government, Digital Scotland, the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organi-

MASSIVE RESPONSE TO BUS – USERS SURVEY

A survey of bus passengers in Western Isles brought a massive response last autumn, with over 300 local people taking part.

The results of the survey, run by the Western Isles Citizens Advice Service, are published today (March 7) with both good and bad news for local service providers.

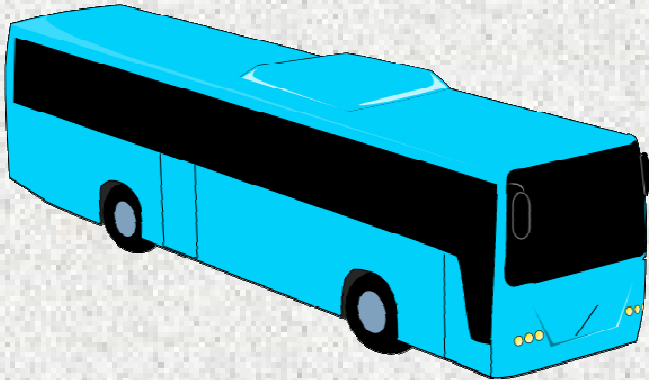
On the positive side,

- 88% of respondents are satisfied with the cleanliness and condition of busses,
- 73% are generally happy with their punctuality, and 86% with driver behaviour.
- 75% report that they feel the services offer good value for money.

The biggest negative to emerge from the survey is the frequency of scheduled services, with only 41% saying they are satisfied with this (59% dissatisfied) – despite the fact that 72% identified it as a top priority issue for them.

The number of responses from Western Isles (315) was one of the highest of the 32 Council areas in Scotland. Only Glasgow, North Lanarkshire and Dundee provided more.

Having gathered this data, Citizens Advice Scotland will now be meeting with bus companies, Local Authorities and the Scottish Government to find ways of delivering a positive way forward and addressing these issues.



OUR POWER

Our Power works alongside Hebrides Energy.

Hebrides Energy is a Community Interest Company formed through a partnership between Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Hebridean Housing Partnership, Tighean Innse Gall, Stornoway Trust and Community Energy Scotland. They are a Community Interest Company and any profits they generate will be reinvested into reducing fuel poverty in the Outer Hebrides.

For further information their details are:

Telephone: 0808 189 4436

Or go to:

our-power.co.uk/hebrides

Councillor's forum

I write this piece whilst we have some of the best weather of the year so hopefully it will continue as will my optimistic train of thought.

It has been a busy time since the council meetings and several issues have come up that directly relate to the Manor area.

With regards to Stornoway Primary, myself and Cllr Mackenzie tabled an amendment to ring-fence capital monies in order to wait for a report on Stornoway primary in 60 days, It was rejected so we are unsure where monies will be found should the report say what we believe it will say that the school needs investment.

I put forward a proposal to establish a care champion who would promote best practice of care , care users and work with different agencies. This was rejected by the Comhairle who didn't believe it was necessary. They accepted to look into a carers champion

I have also asked for a Peatland Management scheme report where land could be rented to companies / organisations to offset carbon footprints – initial estimates at income of this new initiative looks like being on equal basis with money from the proposed turbine schemes.

Assaye Place, I have been assured, will get the traffic order needed to facilitate an no-right turn from Willowglen Road—this will be discussed at the end of the month so a big thanks to all those who have been involved in getting this through.

Roads are in a bit of a state with the constant freezing and thawing but work will be starting on those roads now the cold spell seems to be over—optimistic train of thought!

Councillor Gordon Murray

More money for Columbia Place Play Park

In a meeting last month with Cllr Murray and Cllr Neil Mackay an amount of money was apportioned to a number of play oparks in Stornoway North.

Cllr Murray stated: “It was with great delight that the play park at Columbia Place will receive some money to invest in. The play park is a well-used park

COOKS CORNER

Shortbread

Ingredients

125g/4oz [butter](#)

55g/2oz [caster sugar](#), plus extra to finish

180g/6oz [plain flour](#)

Method

1. Heat the oven to 190C/375F/Gas 5.
2. Beat the butter and the sugar together until smooth.
3. Stir in the flour to get a smooth paste. Turn on to a work surface and gently roll out until the paste is 1cm/½in thick.
4. Cut into rounds or fingers and place onto a baking tray. Sprinkle with caster sugar and chill in the fridge for 20 minutes.
5. Bake in the oven for 15-20 minutes, or until pale golden-brown. Set aside to cool on a wire rack.



STORNOWAY TRUST ELECTIONS

**VOTING NOW OPEN FOR STORNOWAY TRUST
ELECTIONS**