

Argyll First present to Scottish Parliament on A83



Councillors Donald Kelly and John MacAlpine

Donald Kelly, John MacAlpine and Dougie Philand, the 'Argyll First' councillors, attended the Scottish Parliament on 16th May to make an oral presentation in support of their petition calling for the Scottish government to address a number of key concerns regarding the A83 "Rest and Be Thankful".

The petition has been signed by more than 10,000 people and has the support of 142 businesses from within and outwith Argyll and Bute. It also enjoys cross party support from eight MSPs, 33 Councillors, The Road Hauliers Association, Federation of Small Businesses and from many national and local tab-

loids. Following the presentation, Argyll First were congratulated by Jamie McGrigor MSP who pointed out that: "The A83 is as important to the people of Argyll & Bute as the M8 is to the people of Glasgow and Edinburgh."

Michael Russell MSP said: "I will continue to argue for the major work that is required, support the local campaign for that work and I hope today has marked a major step forward in that regard." Argyll First said: "It is our intention to continue with this campaign until there is a firm plan of action in place to address (all the) issues raised in the petition."

Phil Preston appointed Chief Operating Officer at Loganair



New Loganair CEO, Phil Preston

Loganair has announced the appointment of Philip Preston as its new chief operating officer. Mr Preston, who was managing director of CalMac Ferries until late 2011, joins Loganair in a role which will oversee the airline's flight crew, cabin crew, engineering and ground service delivery functions. He will be based in Glasgow and will be responsible for a team of 380 at locations

throughout the Highlands and Islands.

Mr Preston takes over from Jonathan Hinkles, Loganair's current chief operating officer, who is leaving the company next month after three and a half years in post. Commenting on the new appointment, Loganair's chief executive David Harrison said: "We are delighted to welcome Phil Preston to Loganair. I am certain that he

will make a tremendous contribution to Loganair's success and continue to maintain the excellent standards of safety, punctuality and customer service which enabled the airline to reach its 50th anniversary earlier this year. "We would also like to thank Jonathan Hinkles for his sterling service over the last few years, a period which has seen Loganair continue to expand."

Martine and Francois to "Cook with Whisky" - the French Way - at Islay High School during Feis

Martine Nouet and Francois Bernier will be hosting two 'Cooking With Whisky Classes' in Islay High School kitchens as part of the Feis Ile celebrations. On Tuesday 29th May they will be featuring Laphroaig (with mussels) while on Thursday 31st they will be showcasing Kilchoman (with venison). Plus lots of other lovely ingredients of course.... Plus a glass of whisky (of course!!).

There will only be twelve places on each session, which run from 6.30-8.30pm. The cost will be £35pp. Which sounds like a great way of buying dinner. To discuss the details and book your place please call 07946 935765 or email martine.nouet@gmail.com or fcinslcatering@aol.com

CalMac consider change in ferry fares to Mull

A story appeared on the website forargyll.com on 17th May announcing a remarkable concession on ferry fares to the island of Mull. The story reads:

"Martin Dorchester, CalMac's new Managing Director, has agreed a change to the company's fare structure between Oban and Mull which will be of significant help to accommodation and holiday providers on the islands of Mull and Iona.

"Up to now, the company has offered only a 5-day supersaver ticket on the route - at a 30% re-

duction on the normal fare.

"This is unusable by visitors on a one week residential or self-catering holiday to Mull and Iona.

"Mr Dorchester has agreed to change this to a 9-day supersaver which will comfortably embrace the needs of holiday visitors.

"We understand that the change has now been agreed by all concerned and is waiting only for signing off by Transport Minister Keith Brown - with Scottish Ministers the ultimate owner of CalMac.

"With tourism operators on

Mull finding the coming season a real challenge in slow bookings and the price of fuel in the Highlands and Islands inflated above an already high average, this initiative from CalMac is a welcome one.

"Tourism is Argyll and the Isles' lifeline industry. It could not be more important. It is appropriate and commendable the CalMac lifeline ferry service weighing in to help."

The Ileach approached the Scottish Government's ferry company for clarification and a CalMac

spokesman said: "Following an approach from community representatives in Mull who were keen to find ways of encouraging tourists to stay longer, we have asked Transport Scotland if they would be willing to consider extending the five day saver to nine days on the Oban-Craignure route for a temporary pilot period and are awaiting their formal response. At this stage it remains simply a proposal that we have agreed to explore further with Government, and there is some way to go before we would be in a position to implement it."

International help for the Greenland white-fronted goose

An international agreement to take urgent action for one of Europe's rarest geese, the Greenland white-fronted goose - 50% of which spend winters in Scotland - was signed at a major international meeting in France.

Greenland white-fronted geese

breed in west Greenland and migrate through Iceland to Ireland, and northern and western Britain. Numbers fell from a peak of 35,600 in 1999 to just 22,600 in 2010, caused by long-term reductions in breeding success. It is 'Red-Listed' under international conservation

criteria, and is a priority for action in the UK.

Scotland holds around half of the world's population of Greenland white-fronted geese during the winter, with 50% of these on Islay.

Others are distributed in smaller flocks along the north and west

coasts of Scotland from Orkney to Dumfries. The distribution is linked to what was ancestrally their peat bog habitat, although now they feed most commonly on agriculturally improved grasslands, there is usually a link to traditional peat bog or loch roost sites.