



Morvern Community Development Company

Quarterly Newsletter

May 2024



MCDC Latest News

Live Life Morvern Overall Winner at Scottish Planning Innovation Awards

In our February newsletter we reported that Live Life Morvern had been shortlisted for the Scottish Planning Innovation Awards and we're now thrilled to update that it was announced as the Overall Winner! Live Life Morvern was a joint initiative, led by Morvern Community Council in partnership with Morvern Community Development Company and Morvern Community Trust. The steering group worked with Planning Aid Scotland, and the whole community of Morvern, to deliver the plan. Annie Tordoff, of the Live Life Morvern steering group, attended the interview along with Paul Ede of Planning Aid Scotland. She said: "the original steering group was myself and Douglas Taylor (MCC), David Campbell (MCT) and Amy Stammers and Sarah Jones (MCDC). During our interview, the judges applauded our 'crack on' approach and innovation for example using/piloting the place based standard planning tool through a climate lens and employing a local PAS associate (Bonny Mealand). They particularly liked, and mentioned at the award ceremony, that we described our collaboration with PAS as 'PAS and Paul Ede came to Morvern as partners in the process and left as friends'." Congratulations go to the whole steering group who worked tirelessly alongside Planning Aid Scotland to bring this plan into reality. Well done all!



Summer Season at the Harbour!

The 1st April saw the official opening of the summer season at the Harbour. We're looking forward to welcoming locals and visitors alike over the coming months to enjoy the pontoons, moorings and shore facilities. We are delighted to welcome Heather Fyfe who is joining the team as the new Assistant Harbour Master for the summer. The rates for summer 2024 have been fixed and are as follows:



Local non-commercial boats

Maximum boat length 7m. There are a maximum of 8 berths available on a first come, first serve basis for the summer season which runs for 6 months from 1st April until 30th September. The price for up to 5m is £400 and for 5-7m is £475.

Visitor pontoon berths

10m boats and under are charged at a rate of £3.47/m

11m boats are charged at a rate of £3.38/m

12m boats are charged at a rate of £3.30/m

13m boats are charged at a rate of £3.24/m

14m boats are charged at a rate of £3.19/m

15m boats are charged at a rate of £3.14/m

16m boats and over are charged at a rate of £3.10/m

Water, electric and Wi-Fi are included in the price.



Swinging Moorings

The nightly rate for the swinging moorings is £18.00

A book of 5 tickets (one ticket per night) is £75.00 (£15/night)

A book of 10 tickets (one ticket per night) is £140.00 (£14/night)

Commercial boats are charged at the rate of £3.47/m.

For more information or to enquire about anything regarding the summer season at Lochaline Harbour, please get in touch with our Harbour Master on 07583 800500. Lochaline Harbour is now active on Facebook and Instagram so please be sure to give us a follow for updates!

MCDC Board Directors

In our February newsletter we published introductions to each of our new MCDC directors. In this edition we are delighted to be able to re-introduce three existing directors who have kindly provided an introduction to themselves in their own words. If you would like to contact any of the MCDC directors, please email admin@morvern.org and your message will be passed on.



Henriette Laidlaw

I am currently the chair of Morvern Community Council, the Chair of CLAM and represent the community council as a director on MCDC. I am one of the 1% of Danes living on Morvern, yes there are now 3 of us in Morvern. The Vikings are back, I do believe we are a lot more friendly this time around. I first visited Scotland when I was 14, adored the country and came back to study for my degree in Edinburgh. Met Keith at Uni, since then I have lived and worked in England, Germany, Denmark, Singapore and of course Scotland. Today I view myself as a Danish Scot!

I have a background in IT, but my career has taken me through several industries from IT, pharmaceuticals, education to knowledge management and academic research. I worked most recently for the University of Stirling with a focus on research into Dementia Care this was followed by a stint for the University of Highlands and Islands as their digital mentor.

We have lived on Morvern for 7 years, it was love at first sight, and as a family we felt incredibly welcomed by the community.

I believe in doing your bit, and I have been on several boards. I was president of Stirling Swimming for 5 years while the club expanded to become the feed-in to the Scottish national performance squad. In Morvern it all kicked off with the Corran ferry, where the council needed a representative from Morvern on the steering committee for the replacement ferries (this was before the Corran broke down..... I signed up for a lot more than I bargained for!), this led me to join the council formally and I was then asked by the council to go onto the board of MCDC.

It is amazing what a community of this size is capable of, Morvern definitely pulls way about its weight. During my tenure I have gained some insight into the work involved, we are a strong community, and it shows in what has been build up, I hope to see this growing in a sustainable way for the benefit of all.

I see myself as a facilitator, someone who can bring people and skills together. I am keen to ensure we work for the future of Morvern and that we address the challenges we face to ensure Morvern is the right place for young families with affordable housing, job opportunities and appropriate support for families. Currently the main project I am working on is to develop the local place plan for Morvern, this is an opportunity for the community to put our own stamp on planning for the next ten years. Within MCDC my focus is on two areas. The first is to improve communication locally between MCDC and the community. The other is to develop risk management for the group of companies we run, as we grow in size we need to understand any risks we face and do our best to mitigate those.

I am always open to ideas and in my eyes we are never too old to learn, so feel free to share your ideas and local knowledge with me.

Sue Layton

Born in West Sussex, emigrated to NZ as a toddler, grew up in the native and pine forests of NZ so retiring to Morvern is a home from home!

I spent many years in the volunteer sector fundraising for charitable causes both paid and unpaid. My passion has always been the sea and it was a huge privilege to spend seven years on the Greater Manchester Challenge, the Ocean Youth Trust NW gaff rigged ketch, as sea staff and then acting first mate. I was also a Trustee for three years.

Stu and I set up and ran our own skippered yacht charter holiday company in 2006 doing fifteen years, eight of which we also did RYA training. Attaining my commercial skipper's ticket was more than a dream come true.

Lochaline became a favourite port of call and in inclement weather we did a lot of sail training in the Loch's relatively sheltered waters. We were the first to come alongside the new pontoons and the last eight years of chartering we were liveaboards so spent more and more time here in LA. I've taken on the mantle of treasurer of the Lochaline Mooring Association (LAMA) and have helped, together with the committee, transform the Association into a shining example of how Mooring Associations should be run according to our Crown Estate representative.

Putting myself forward for election as an MCDC director in 2022, I was very honoured that a newcomer was voted onto the Board. My main focus at the moment, along with Sam, is providing MCDC with more robust Articles of Association which reflects the Community's needs and aspirations. The objectives of Live Life Morvern are paramount, as is transparency. When we came to Morvern we were staggered by the diversity of interests, clubs and groups and the shared hard work of those who make Morvern such a vibrant and diverse place to live. It was only natural for me to want to give back and keep that momentum going. We feel very blessed to have found Morvern and made it our home.

Footnote from Stu - Sue and I met sailing as volunteers for OYT NW. Since we became a couple in 2004 and married in 2009, I can testify to Sue's tenacity and commitment to any project she takes on. "If a job's worth doing, it's worth doing well." She has a true passion for doing the best she possibly can whether that be for family, clubs and associations we belong to and indeed the wider community as a whole. Two words that sum her up: Sue cares.



Jane Stuart-Smith

I am a solicitor and specialise in employment law. I trained and worked in London for nine years before moving in 1999 with my family to a newly restored house at the head of Loch Aline. I have run my legal practice from home for the last 25 years, commuting to London on the sleeper for court appearances etc.

I co-founded the award-winning Whitehouse Restaurant in Lochaline with Sarah Jones and we ran it together for just under 20 years.

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Jane Stuart-Smith director biography, continued from page 4.

In 2021 I co-founded SLOW Adventure, a sustainable travel company to help remote communities to build and manage tourism sustainably.

I have been involved on and off in different ways with the community over the years. I chaired Lochaline Primary School Parent Council, starting in 2000 and helped get Highland Council to agree to a new primary school for Lochaline which was completed in 2013. I set up a charity—Morvern Outreach in 2000, a vehicle for obtaining grant funding for educational activities in the community. Ballet, Scottish dancing and Spanish lessons were some of the classes held in the Village Hall.

I joined the board of MCDC in 2007 because I hoped to help make Morvern an even more amazing place to work and live and bring investment to the community. I have been a director since then on and off and also a director of the trading company, MCTC. When I joined the only assets of the company were the petrol pumps and the Hazelwoods.

I am very proud of what the company and the community has achieved since then: building the marina and shore facilities, 3 houses at Miners Court and the critically important Barr Hydro Scheme and the Hub. MCDC has also supported many community groups over the years including the allotments. This has all been achieved with only one full time employee and volunteer directors. The inward investment into Morvern via MCDC and MCTC in the last 25 years is estimated by HIE to be in excess of £6 million. There is still much to do. In January 2024 I stood down from being Chair of MCDC and MCTC and remain on the board. It is great to have new (and younger!) directors on the boards to help us identify priorities and lead the companies in the next phase of the company's development.

I love being outside walking and travelling and I am a fair weather sailor of sorts.



Barr Hydro Donation of £8,000 to MCT.

MCDC have recently sent the second annual donation of £8,000 to Morvern Community Trust from Barr Hydro funds. This was first given in January 2023 and MCDC are pleased to announce that it is now intended to be an annual donation to Morvern Community Trust and their excellent work locally. The figure £8,000 comes from the standard hydro donation of £5,000 per mW of installed capacity and Barr Hydro's maximum capacity to generate of 1.6 mW.

Housing Project Officer Post

MCDC are delighted to announce that they have recently been awarded a significant grant from the Crown Estates fund operated by Foundation Scotland to enable them to move the housing project forward. As part of this next part of the project, we currently reviewing candidates for a dedicated Housing Project officer to support the company with realising the next stage of the ambitious Phase 2 Housing Project construction 10 family homes in Lochaline. We will update you all as soon as a Housing Project Officer is appointed and as the project continues to progress.





Café L.A.

After several years of providing us with delicious bakes and lunches Annemie has stepped down from running Café L.A. Our thanks go to her and her whole team for all of the hard work they put in over the years and for making the café such a success with visitors and locals alike.

Following Annemie's departure, Morvern Community Trading Company (MCTC) have been looking for a new tenant to take on the running of the café in the Hub. To date, no-one has applied to take over the tenancy which is why it remains closed. MCTC and MDCD are therefore actively coming up with solutions for re-opening the café as soon as possible. We are grateful for the suggestions from members of the community about how this could be achieved and are currently reviewing those and will communicate further updates in due course. MCTC has also recently purchased the café equipment so the café is ready to go as soon as the right person is found to run it.

If you are interested in taking on the tenancy or have a suggestion about how the café could operate, please contact development@morvern.org.

Thank you all for your patience whilst we organise a solution.



EV Charging and Hub Electricity

We have been looking to change electricity providers at the Hub for some time and after extensive research we have found a new provider. We have just had our first bill and are able to see that there should be a saving of over £1000 a month. It is still early days but we anticipate that this will mean a reduction in price for the EV charger situated at the Hub and more information about this will be published as and when we have it.



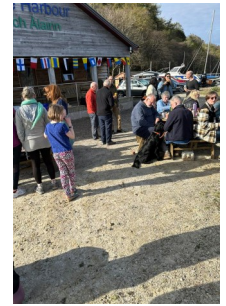
Morvern Eco Wheels

The Morvern Community Trading Company board has taken the difficult decision to sell the community car – Morvern Eco Wheels. It arrived in the community back in 2018 and was a significant asset to the community boasting numerous local members. However, the community use of the car has significantly decreased over the last few years meaning that it has been running at a loss and it has therefore been decided that it is not the best use of community resources going forward. Urram have indicated that they would be keen to purchase the car and are currently liaising with their funders about it. Thank you to all of you who joined the car club and took Morvern Eco Wheels for a spin. We're sorry to see it go but as the old saying goes, all good things must come to an end.



Scottish Land Fund

MCDC have secured funding from the Stage 1 Scottish Land Fund (SLF) to value the land at Lochaline Harbour for a potential acquisition from the Ardtornish Estate. The valuation is now complete and MCDC are in communication with the Estate to progress the possible acquisition. In the meantime, MCDC are also applying for funding from the Stage 2 Scottish Land Fund. If successful, MCDC plans to purchase the land from the Estate to secure the future of Lochaline Harbour for the community. SLF can fund up to 95% of costs. If you are interested in learning more about this, please get in touch with us.



Hub Bookings

The Hub Meeting room is still available to book for hot desking, meetings and much more and it has been great to see that it is being well used. Following a couple of recent incidents however, may we remind everyone to please remember to book in by emailing admin@morvern.org before using the room. It is important to ensure we don't have any double bookings and also so that we are aware of who may be in the building in case of emergency. Please also remember to fill in the visitors book with your times as it is very helpful for us when invoicing. Thank you! We're very glad the room is proving so popular for individuals and groups/businesses alike and look forward to welcoming you soon!



Morvern Watersports Club

Thank you to Morvern Watersports Club who are based by the Harbour and who have kindly contributed the following article about their recent news.

Morvern Watersports Club were delighted to recently be awarded a substantial grant from the Highland Council Community Regeneration Fund of £13,800 which has been used to purchase new equipment to help the club grow and to help secure it's future.

Together with £2000 match funding from the club's own funds, the club have purchased and taken delivery of a Rigidflex Powerboat with 9.9hp Mercury Outboard, to be used as an essential safety boat while club activities are underway, 3 stand up paddleboards, 3 sit on top kayaks, 3 sit in touring kayaks complete with spraydecks and 12 bouyancy aids. Much of the clubs existing equipment was dated and had originally been gifted to the club, so this injection of brand new equipment to the club was very well received.

The club held an open day on Saturday 30th March to launch the new powerboat and Paddlesports, and enjoyed a good turnout from the local community. The club, which has over 50 members, is looking forward to hosting another event as part of Morvern Games and Gala week and is in the planning stages for this. If you are interested in joining the club please contact morvernwcsecretary@gmail.com and follow our facebook page for details of upcoming events and open days.



A day in the life of...the admin assistant

Morvern Community Development Company Admin Assistant—Isla Robertson



Hi! My name's Isla and for a year now I've been the administrative assistant for MCDC. I work part time, 16 hours a week, and help Lilia, Adeline and Heath respond to the needs of different parts of the company as and when things come up. A typical day for me involves processing the paperwork for various parts of the company for example monitoring fuel sales, processing harbour income and statistics and managing bookings for the Hub meeting room. More recently, I have started working more on developing MCDC's social media accounts following on from the launch of the newsletter last year. Both MCDC and Lochaline Harbour can now be found on Instagram and Facebook and you can follow us for updates and news in between our quarterly newsletters.

Some other projects I've been involved with in the last year have been helping with the funding application to the Crown Estates which we've recently learned was successful, enabling us to move forward with the Phase 2 Housing project through the hiring of a new Housing Project Officer. I've also helped with the creation of the new morvern.org website. Part of my on-going work is to keep this updated, publishing Barr reports, MCDC news and local interest stories. My admin@morvern.org email address is your first point of contact if you need to get in touch with anything to do with MCDC so if you have any queries or questions please don't hesitate to email me and either myself or one of the rest of the team will be able to help.

When I'm not working for MCDC I'm working as a freelance writer. I've recently worked with Mull theatre developing an audio drama and for the last year have been working on a Masters in TV Fiction Writing at Glasgow Caledonian University. James and I have also loved writing and directing the last two Lochaline Primary Pantos! We, and Elsie, love living with you all in Morvern and we're really looking forward to spending more time with everyone as soon as I hand in my last uni deadline! Looking forward to more wild swimming, walking, playing in the playpark and finally getting our house finished!



If you would like to donate, volunteer or become a member of MCDC please email Isla at admin@morvern.org. All that is required to become a member is to fill in a short form providing your address (to show that you are a resident of Morvern) and to pay a £1 lifetime membership fee.