

We Welcome the New Owners of the Armadale Estate

The Hutchison family are delighted to become the new owners and stewards of Armadale Estate and are excited for the next chapter in this historical place. SCT is very pleased to hear that after many months of necessary paperwork the sale has been completed.

Three members of Sleat Community Council and Sleat Community Trust had an informal meeting on the 11th March with members of the family, as well as the incoming Manager, Chris Guest..

Chris Guest told us "It is a great honour and privilege to be joining the Armadale Estate and taking on the responsibility of caring for this historic part of Skye. Our primary aim is to act as responsible custodians of the land and all that it holds, working closely with the local community to ensure that its heritage, landscape, and community remain at the heart of all future plans.

We fully recognise the unique cultural significance of the estate and its importance to the heritage of the peninsula and are committed to supporting the community while safeguarding the castle gardens and the wider natural environment.

I very much look forward to meeting everyone in the community and to the exciting new chapter that lies ahead for Armadale."



Chris has already been out and about meeting the community. He came to the April Community Café and spoke with Tim Godfrey about the story of the Armadale Gardens and Chris Pendlebury, Chair of Sleat Renewables, amongst others.

The Stables and Armadale Gardens reopened on Friday 27 March

Tormore Community Woodland wins another award

Tormore Community Forest was Highly Commended at the **Scotland's Finest Forests Award** ceremony last November in Scotland's Parliament in Holyrood. Tormore was placed first in the small community woods section and came second within the larger community woods section, competing with woodlands that have paid forestry staff, despite the fact the 440 hectares of Tormore is managed by volunteers.

Polly MacInnes, is on the board of Sleat Renewables, which is overall responsible for the woodland. She attended the ceremony with Duncan, who organises the volunteer work in the woodland. "Our Tormore volunteers come along once a month to develop the footpaths, plant trees, manage the nursery, and develop an amazing asset for walkers, runners and cyclists in Sleat. Their dedication and the support of the local users of the woodland is fully recognised in this award."

Armadale Stores 5th birthday



We are celebrating 5 years in the new SCT building. We feel that this is a major milestone as we've had many challenges along the way, Despite these, we are continuing to grow and become an ever more integral part of the local community. The staff have created a remarkable space from which to serve the community.

The shop foyer has become a regular location for local fund-raising cake-sales, while down the corridor the board-room is available for meetings; there is a room for visiting practitioners, and a place for hot desking.

* **Armadale Stores £1m turnover** – see page 3

* **SCT receives 3-year Funding** – see page 3

* **5th Birthday Photo Winners** – see page 12

Armadales Stores – so much going on!

Armadales Stores needs a newsletter all of its own to keep up with everything that is happening, Just follow Armadales Stores on Facebook and Instagram to catch up with all the daily treats and what is new in the shop.

Opening hours

Shop	Monday to Friday	08.30 to 17.30
	Saturday	08.30 to 15.30
	Sunday	Closed
Post Office	Monday / Tuesday	09.00 – 15.30
	Thursday / Friday:	09.00 – 15.30
	Wednesday / Saturday	09.00 – 13.30 (closed for lunch 13.30 – 14.00)
	Sunday	closed
	Contact	Armadales, Sleat, Isle of Skye IV45 8RS 01471 844289 trading@sleat.org.uk check it all on the website



Have you got your own re-usable coffee cup and cloth bag yet?

Armadales Fuel prices

Competitive pricing

As we go to press, Armadales Stores continues to offer lower prices on fuel compared to nearby fuel stations. Unlike many, we have not put our prices up for profit but instead continued offering our customers the price of the fuel in our tanks. Unfortunately, prices will inevitably rise, but we have done all we can to offer customers a fair price.

We are an independent community-run fuel station, part of Sleat Community Trust, with no franchise contract. Our tanks are smaller than other stations so we can only purchase smaller amounts compared to our competitors, making it more expensive in comparison.

Quality fuel

Our supplier only supplies E5 petrol and not the cheaper E10. E5 might be more expensive and is marketed as a premium fuel – but E5 is better for your lawnmowers, strimmers and boat engines because it absorbs less water when sitting idle in tanks. We adhere to the Rural Fuel Duty Relief Scheme but make next to no profit on fuel.

Friendly service

Armadales Stores rarely runs out of fuel! You are served by our very friendly staff, who are happy to provide a valuable service. Thank you for supporting a small business, supporting local jobs and our community.

Armadales Stores team

Bake Sales in the foyer

The shop foyer is popular for fund-raising events. Over the last few months these have been held by

- * Skyefugees
- * Macmillan Cancer Support
- * Fàs Mor childcare
- * Broadford Youth Club - Under 15s Football
- * Team Otter Broadford
- * The Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association
- * Julie Christie, local artist
- * Kat Lenz, local potter
- * Willie Threlfall, local wood turner

Bun-sgoil Shlèite Bakesale - 8th November



What a generous community this is! The bake sale on 8th November at the Armadales Stores raised £400 for Bun-sgoil Shlèite. The stall was run very professionally by pupil volunteers Josie Threlfall, Lucy Flynn and Belle Crossin

amongst others. They provided beautiful artwork as well as serving up the delicious cakes, savouries and soup. And a first for the bake sale: the accompaniment of lovely busking from Òran McGillivray-Williamson with his whistle and chanter. Thank you to the wonderful Armadales Stores staff for a warm welcome. Thank you to the many many talented bakers and makers from the community who donated their skills and time, and to the Parent Council for organising the event. And thank you to all of you who came and chatted and took home some tasty treats.

Fèill-bheicearachd Bun-sgoil Shlèite

Abair coimhearsnachd fhialaidh a th' againn! Chaidh £400 a thogail air Fèill-bheicearachd Bun-sgoil Shlèite shìos ann am Bùth Àrmaidail air Disathairne 8mh an t-Samhain. Chaidh cùisean a ruith gu proifeiseanta le saor-thoilich Josie Threlfall, Lucy Flynn & Belle Crossin. Tharraing iad piosan ealain bhrèagha a bharrachd air na cècean blasta, greimean neo-mhilis agus brot a bha ri fhaotainn. Agus airson a' chiad turas riamh aig na fèiltean-bheicearachd seo, chluinneadh ceòl binn bho Òran MacIllebhàraighe-MacUilleim air an fhìdeag agus air an fheadan.

Mòran taing gu sgioba sgoinneil Bhùth Àrmaidail airson fàilte bhlàth mar is àbhaist. Mòran taing dha na bèicearan comasach sa choimhearsnachd a thug an cuid ùine agus sgilean seachad, agus do Chomann nam Pàrant airson an tachartas a chur air dòigh. Ach gu sònraichte, taing dhuibhse a thàinig a chabadaich agus a cheannach agus a chaidh dhachaigh le rudeigin blasta!

Armadale Stores reaches £1m turnover

For the first time, we achieved a £1 million turnover! This is a massive achievement for a small community shop, and it's testament to all the hard work and energy the staff and volunteers put into it.

The Shop Staff and Board says a big thank you to everyone for all their hard work and patience during the stock take which we've been working on over the past few weeks. The accountant was happy with the figures, but of course, turnover doesn't mean profit!..

This massive goal was From approx £445,000 turnover in the year ending 31st March 2021 (which included Covid and

the period with the shop in the container) and the first full year in the shop which was about £760,000.

Ruud van Ruitenbeek, Chair Sleat Community Trading Company Ltd says "Congratulations to everybody in the shop, all the volunteers, Myrielle (we could not have done it without you!). On behalf of the Trading Board a very well deserved thank you for all your hard work. We have had difficult times, and will encounter some more, but with a team like you all are, we can move forward and remain a fantastic resource for our community.

Generator

Sleat has suffered some long power cuts during the past year. Sleat Community Trust is planning to install a generator for the whole SCT office and shop in Armadale. This will protect the stock of Armadale Stores in the chillers and freezers and allows the shop to remain open during a power cut. We could also offer the community a place to come for a warm drink, charge phones and laptops and continue to work.

Electricians with experience in installing and maintaining generators

are invited to give us a quote
shopmanager@sleat.org.uk.

Public toilets in Armadale Stores

The toilet just inside the front door of Armadale Stores is a Highland Council funded public toilet, during shop opening hours. There is no need for anyone to disappear into the bushes if caught short!

First Aid Course

Two spaces possibly available for the First Aid at Work course on Saturday

25th April. This will be run by Mike Shucksmith and held at SMO. Please contact Armadale Stores on 01471 844289 shopmanager@sleat.org.uk

Tarskavaig Café

Yes, summer is on its way and it won't be long before the weekly World Famous Tarskavaig Communities Hall Café opens up.

Sleat Community Trust gets Three-year Development Funding

The Sleat Community Trust (SCT) has been awarded three-year funding through the Scottish Government's Strengthening Communities Programme to employ a Community Development Officer (CDO). This is a significant step forward for the Trust and the community.

The CDO will be the driving force behind SCT's strategic development, working with the board and others to develop new projects and a more sustainable income from our assets, including Tormore Community Woodland and Armadale Stores.

The role covers four main areas: increasing income from our existing assets, developing new projects, boosting community wellbeing and community resilience initiatives. It's a genuinely entrepreneurial position, one that will help translate what the community has told us through the Local Place Plan into real, on-the-ground and sustainable progress. This funding means we can invest in Sleat's future.

SCT will be recruiting soon for someone with development and project management experience with a passion for community-led growth.

SCT Board Meeting no 250!

On Monday 23 February 2026, Sleat Community Trust Board met for the 250th time in its 20 or so years.

Sleat Community Trust SCT main board meets in private, as there will be items of a financial or management nature not necessarily to be shared openly. However, the Board can invite others to talk about particular items on the agenda.

The SCT Board meetings are at 5.30pm, on Monday 27 April and then on the last Monday of the month, in the Board room of the SCT office.

All information is on <https://www.sleat.org.uk/>
SCT has its own facebook page.

Sleat Community Trust

Donaidh MacDonald, chair
Eilidh Grant
Ruud Van Ruitenbeek
Garry Noakes
Andy Williamson, delegated from SCC
Paddy McKay
John MacDonald
Duncan MacInnes
Gillian Munro, delegated from SMO
Sophia Lockley

Sleat Renewables and Sleat Community Trading have their own business board meetings.

Sleat Renewables Limited

Chris Pendlebury, chair
Tim Godfrey
Polly MacInnes
Henrik Micski
Garry Noakes
Alan Drever

Sleat Community Trading Ltd

Ruud Van Ruitenbeek, chair
John Cayley
Archie MacCalman
Flora MacLean
Patricia Petri-Clark

SCT AGM

SCT held its AGM in An Crùbh on 22 January 2026. This was well over quorate and Members heard about all aspects and finances of the Trust. Our chairman Donaidh Macdonald was unable to attend. Andy Williamson stood in for him and summarised the SCT activities in 2025.

Challenges

The past year has brought both significant challenges and positive developments for the Sleat Community Trust, with strengthened governance and clearer strategic direction positioning the organisation well for the future.

New members

Donaidh MacDonald and John MacDonald have re-invigorated the board, along with Gillian Munro from Sabhal Mòr Ostaig who was co-opted to bring additional expertise. Donaidh has stepped up as chair, bringing considerable experience and renewed focus to the Trust's work. These changes have brought fresh energy and skills to the organisation at a crucial time.

Trust Operations

Over the past twelve months, the board has undertaken substantial work to

improve how the Trust operates. Whilst this has involved challenges, the Trust is stronger. Despite these constraints, the Trust continues to develop ideas for community benefit,

Community Funding

The Trust has revised how the Hydro fund operates, offering small grants to community benefit projects across Sleat. This provides vital support for local initiatives that might otherwise struggle to get off the ground.

Armadale Shop success

Our community can be proud of Armadale Stores, which not only provides essential daily services but has been there for us during storms, power outages and snow. The dedication shown by all our volunteers – the shop, community café, bus drivers and those supporting activities at Tormore – exemplifies the community spirit that makes Sleat special.

Armadale Estate Sale

The sale of Armadale Estate dominated much of the year's attention. After a public meeting the Trust and Sleat Community Council set up a working group to examine the options. It became clear the

risks were too great: funding would be virtually impossible following the closure of the Scottish Land Fund, and the seller was hostile to community involvement.

We welcome the new owners

Armadale Estate has now been sold as a single lot. Initial meetings with the new owners suggest a positive outlook, though big estates are complex and challenges will inevitably arise. The Trust looks forward to working constructively with the new owners for the benefit of jobs, businesses and the wider community.

Local Place Plan

Our Sleat Local Place Plan is now registered as a statutory document within Highland Council's planning process. This achievement represents a significant step and serves as a blueprint for Sleat's development, ensuring that community views are considered. Thanks to Sleat Community Council for their extensive work on this important document.

Andy Williamson, AGM chair

Community cafés

The Community Cafés in Ardvasar Hall have been running for the last three years, during the autumn and spring. They are funded from donations by the customers following an initial start up grant. The volunteers, now sporting their new café aprons funded by the community fund, enable us to come together over soup, sandwiches, and a variety of baking.

They are held fortnightly in Ardvasar Hall and ask for cash donations rather than a set price for the food, so everyone to join in no matter what their circumstances.

The Community Cafés invest in the local economy by paying for the hall, buying supplies at the community shop

and have paid a variety of local caterers over the years to provide soup and sandwiches.

Any surplus food is delivered to vulnerable people in the area and who can't attend the café, or into the food shed for people to use.



The community cafés differ from the various Charity Cafés held during the summer months, in Ardvasar Hall which aim to raise money for their chosen charities.

The final café is on Tuesday April 21st from 12.30 to 2 pm

Jo Stokes, café leader

Sleat Hydro community funding

Sleat Hydro continues to perform well – one of the advantages of rainy days! Once the investors have received the annual dividend the surplus is passed to Sleat Community Trust to be made available for community projects.

It was always intended that some funding would be set aside for the community activities in Tormore woodland. At the SCT meeting on 23 February it was agreed that 50% be set aside and the rest made available through grants for community

projects that benefit Sleat. The following have received funding in the last year:

Strath Gaelic Choir for attendance at the Mod - £500

Skye Youth Pipe Band - £250

Ardvasar Polytunnel - £500

BSS parents for sports field - £500

Community Café Tuesday café equipment - £500

SCT will accept applications every four months, with the next deadline at the end of June.

Tormore Woodland Community Group

There are many different groups and individuals using the Tormore Community Woodland. Sleat Renewables Ltd, has overall legal, commercial and deer control responsibility for the forest, for Sleat Community Trust. This will continue.

It has been obvious to those involved in community activities that we could have a lot more joined up thinking. The monthly Tormore volunteers undertake tree planting, path improvement and other access and information projects. The Sleat Nature Group has an interest in invasive species and public events. The mountain bike track is worked on by our young bikers. Many local folk go walking, cycling and even, this winter, ski-ing. There is cultural, historical and archaeological interest, and opportunities for our young people from Bun Sgoil Shlèite and SMO.

We are working to set up a Tormore Community Group. This is NOT a replacement for Sleat Renewables Ltd but will concentrate on the community use of the Woodland. Contact us if your would like to get involved.
tormore@sleat.org.uk

Tormore Open Day Sunday 10 May

Anytime between 11 am to 4pm

Come along to the polytunnel in Tormore Woodland

Guided walks – information about the Woodland

Photos – your chance to say what you would like

Plant a tree – visit the 18th C Capisdal village

Visit Hydro scheme and log business

Bring a bike – bring the dog

bring the kids and bring granny.

Refreshments ~ Everyone welcome

Tormore International volunteers

The eighth visit from the group of international environmental volunteers came with a week of sunshine and hard work in Tormore Community Woodland, in late March. With the support of several of our own Tormore volunteers and the team of Cake Faeries we created a new area of woodland and **50 young trees** across the stream down the Lower Cammaid Path. We planted a further 20 trees below Capisdal and cut down around 20 young self-sown and invasive Sitka Spruce.

Highland Explorer Tours visit Sleat twice a year to work in the Tormore woodland. In late 2025 they received the Arival Spotlight Award for **Community Engagement & Social Purpose 2025**. "We have partnered with the Sleat Community Trust to help transform the forest of Tormore through tree planting, path building, and repair. It's not all hard toil; after volunteering each morning, we will spend the afternoons connecting with communities on Skye."

We were delighted to find that when we removed over 300 old plastic tree

guards there was over 95% success rate in the young trees.

We also cleared vegetation and widened around 200 metres of the Lower Cammaid Path and placed a new bridge on the Red Path. We then cleared bracken from one of the ruins of Capisdal township, after a wonderful introduction to its history from Maggie Macdonald.

Our visitors were also fortunate to see three young White-tailed Eagles above the fank and an adult over Capisdal. And finally we found a newt by the stream amongst the primroses.



Volunteers came from England, Wales, Scotland, Italy, and in the past from the Netherlands, Germany, Australia and the USA

Editorial

We aim to publish An Slèiteach every quarter. As editor, I must apologise that it has now been almost 9 months since the last issue. An Slèiteach is a snapshot of life in Sleat – for the latest news we have our excellent local Facebook pages, the WHFP and occasionally the National Press. This means that some stories are a little old and some not mentioned in detail.

The last issue announced the sudden sale of the Clan Donald Lands with no community consultation. Sleat Community Trust and Sleat Community Council spent a great deal of time behind the scenes attempting to make sense of it. As reported elsewhere in Andy Williamson's Annual Report for SCT "It became clear the risks were too great: funding would be virtually impossible following the closure of the Scottish Land Fund, and the seller was hostile to community involvement."

We held back the next An Slèiteach in the hope that CDLT might care to share information on the sale with the wider community. Meanwhile SCT and SCC at least could focus their time and expertise on supporting our own important community development.

Next Edition

The next edition of An Slèiteach will be for July 2026

The deadline for articles, adverts and photos is **Monday 15 June**. Contact tormore@sleat.org.uk

Not with a bang but a whimper . . .

Many residents in Sleat have had a life-long involvement with the Clan Donald Lands Trust since it arrived in the early 1970s. We have worked there, walked there, attended events, taken friends, paid croft rental and been actively involved in many different ways.

Armada helped create community spirit. Support from the community has been behind the success of CDLT.



The exhibition in Ardasar Hall last summer showed the many ways that the community and CDLT connected.

The iconic 1980s photo of staff in the Stables said it all – 27 staff members - all but two were residents of Sleat.

5 years or so ago that all changed. The community was ignored. The sudden sale of the Estate and all it stood for, became a talking point in the national press, public debate and Holyrood. Ownership of land carries a moral responsibility to the community. Our community felt disenfranchised when denied access and consultation about the estate's future.

After 50 years one might have expected some sort of recognition, a celebration, even a thankyou from the CDLT trustees to the Sleat community.

The community will remember the good things, and the community involvement. We will also remember with sadness the way in which 50 years of Sleat history comes to an end. When T S Eliot wrote "We are the hollow men, we are the stuffed men" he might have concluded: 'This is the way that CDLT ends, not with a bang but a whimper'.

Duncan MacInnes SCT and SCC - editor

Community Payback

For those who have offended in the community, a punishment alternative to fines or incarceration is the Community Payback scheme. This provides for offenders the chance for reparation to the community through various work projects.

Sleat has benefitted from several visits this year on a Friday morning. They have tidied around Armadale Stores and An Crùbh, and helped clear back paths and the main forest track in Tormore. Whatever the reasons for them visiting, we thank them for their efforts.

Use your Vote on 7th May!

It is Scottish Election Day on Thursday 7 May 2026. Your local Polling Station will be open from 7am to 10pm.

Vote in Person, Vote by Post, use a Proxy. You do NOT need to show photo ID or an Anonymous Elector's Document to vote at the Scottish Parliament election on Thursday 7 May. These are only required for UK Parliament General Elections.

Working with other communities

Community development crosses Parish boundaries.

South Skye Community Campus is being developed in Broadford. This will provide us all with community assets. Sleat Community Council has representation, and SCT wrote in congratulation and offering support last November.

Safe Cycling Routes – work is underway to renovate the old Sleat road from Drumfearn to Broadford under the leadership of Ian Hall. Although most of this project is outwith the

boundaries of Sleat, SCT was happy to sponsor the project to enable it go forward.

Community Council co-operation – Sleat Community council now has formal agreements with adjacent councils, to sit on each other's boards, share support and information. This has been particularly active in community comment on the various industrial-scale developments in Strath relating to power lines and windfarms.

An Crùbh – a very lively community hub

Sitting beside the main road just south of Isleornsay, the shop is convenient for visitors and residents. Our local Post Office is also in the building. The well-stocked general store sells a good range of groceries, as well as wonderful local products and gifts. Local produce is a significant feature of the shop – vegetables, meat, seafood and honey. It supports reinvigorated crofting and creates jobs in the area.

South Skye Motorhome Park

Next door is Slea's only fully equipped campervan aire.

A well used venue

with everything from Table Tennis sessions, yoga, to films and concerts – Evangeline Majawat is events organiser.

Film Night: Scottish Outdoor and Adventure Film Tour

April 22 @ 7:00 pm - 9:30 pm

An inspiring event celebrating the very best of the Scottish outdoors, adventure and filmmaking.

Abriachan Nursery Plants Sale

10 May, 10am to 3pm then every second Saturday

Summer Markets

19 July, 30 August 27 and September from 11am to 3pm

Check all events on <https://ancrubh.com/whats-on/month/>

Opening Hours

Café 01471 833417

Wednesday – Sunday: 11.00 – 16.00
(Kitchen closes at 15.00)

Shop 01471 833780

Monday – Saturday: 10.00 – 16.30

Sunday 10.00 – 16.00

Post Office

Monday – Saturday 11.00 – 16.00

Sunday closed

Check <https://ancrubh.com> for changes in the summer



Camuscross and Duisdale Initiative CDI

Those in Camuscross and Duisdale are fortunate enough to have *An Lianag* newsletter as well, expertly organised and beautifully put together by Flòraidh and Nicola. All local CDI houses have had a printed copy delivered to their door and you can find it on the CDI website..

CDI Board is Claire Wylie, Norman Gillies, Emma Armstrong, Lorna Pike, Nicola Thomson, Mark Wringe, Eilidh Robertson, managercamuscross@gmail.com

Fearann Eilean Iarmain FEI

Join the FEI mailing list on

<https://eileaniarmain.co.uk/join-our-mailing-list/>

This historic photo, from the early 1980s, popped up on Facebook as we were laying out the newsletter.



Thank you Skye and Lochalsh memories

Ardvasar Hotel, owned by FEI, will open for 2026 on 3 April, see page 12.

NEWS FROM THE EI

Highland inspired gifts at Bùth Eilean Iarmain.

Jewellery and candle holders, charcuterie boards, local jams and chutneys, local pottery by John Sloan, recycled wool rugs, Skye toiletries, a selection of books, a selection of cards and of course, the award winning Gaelic Whiskies and Gaelic Gins.

With spring ahead of us, why not call in and pick up some delicious FEI Estate Venison for your barbecue?

Opening Hours: Mon-Fri 10am – 6pm
Diluain - Daadaoin 10m – 6f
Sat / Sun: Closed



Gallery An Talla Dearg opens for the 2026 season with the Skye & Lochalsh Arts & Crafts Association exhibiting from 10th to the 22nd of April.

We look forward to seeing you throughout the year!

EILEAN IARMAIN
THE ISLE OF SKYE

t: 01471 833 266
e: info@eileaniarmain.co.uk
w: www.eileaniarmain.co.uk

Cùram nar Coimhearsnachd | Caring for Our Community

There are a number of households locally who are struggling to find additional, private care support.

In most cases, this is alongside formal Care at Home, Crossroads or other third sector support already in place. Needs vary; some are looking for company, some for help with shopping or lifts, others for personal care, and some to give full-time carers a bit of time off. A few hours of support a week could make a real difference, and there is paid work available, typically in the region of £25–£30 per hour.

While a lot of support is offered informally by neighbours and friends, there are still gaps. There are also people locally with skills and a willingness to help - whether that's gardening, admin, giving lifts or doing shopping - but no clear way to connect with those who need it.

As well as responding to these immediate needs, there is an opportunity to look more broadly at how we support care in our community. This is already reflected in the Community Council's Local Place Plan, and it would be worthwhile exploring what a more coordinated approach could look like and how we begin.

Sleat Food Shed

The Sleat Foodshed next Ardvasar Hall was set up by Martin MacGillivray in 2020 when he responded as a Trustee of SCT to the 'Food Sharing Together' project. The aim was to create a Food Bank and allow dispersal of spare food for the community.

Volunteers manage the shed and arrange for foodstuffs to be collected from the Broadford Co-op and Armadale Stores. The Food Shed is always open and there are regular messages put out on The Food Shed Facebook about what and when food is being delivered.

There have been times when Armadale Stores has had to empty its fridges and freezers because of power cuts with a shout out to the community to come and collect items. There is also a basket for the Food Shed in the shop.

More new food items are always welcome in the Food Bank. These should be placed on the left-hand table in the shed. But please - it has to be new items, rather than piles of old CDs and out-of-date jams from private larders !

Facebook - Sleat Food Shed Ardvasar



That neighbourly, informal support is, in many ways, what makes living here so special. People are kind and generally willing to help. But not everyone has those connections, and some households don't know who to turn to when support is needed. That's where we may need to think a bit more deliberately at a community level.

There are a number of organisations who may have a role in that conversation, including Sleat Community Trust, the Community Council, township-specific groups, NHS local services, our churches and SLCVO.

An open conversation will take place soon in Ardvasar Hall. Look out for details and anyone is invited to attend. It would be encouraging to have representation from across the area. In the meantime, if you are interested in care work, have experience to offer, or would like to contribute to the conversation, please get in touch with Nicola Thomson on 07825302548 or email neacag@gmail.com.

Nicola Thompson

Minibus - deliveries and community support

Armadale Stores supports those who struggle to get to the shop, with free deliveries on a Thursday in the Sleat Community Trust's Electric Bus driven by our volunteers.

The Wee Electric bus is in almost constant use with regular visits to Broadford and Sleat surgeries, youth football trips to Portree, connections to trains and buses, Thursday afternoon food deliveries and other Trust related activities. A big thank you to Anne Zajak and Myrielle MacLeod who organise the volunteer drivers.

Please get involved, if only for occasional requests.

It is a good use of your time, gets you out of the house and has a remarkably positive effect on the general well-being of the community.

Contact Anne on anne@sleat.co.uk

or Myrielle on 01471 844776

Ardvasar Café hits national press!



"Found the fab Cafe 1925 on Skye. We recommend this place very highly" – from the Corrugated Iron Appreciation Society

Café 1925 ~ Ardvasar

Breakfasts – lunches – home baking - coffee

Open Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday

9am to 3pm

Sally, Jasmine and Susan are at your service



Sleat Community Council

Sleat Community Council SCC meetings are in public (as distinct from Public Meetings!) ie the community is welcome to attend to listen and might be asked to comment. Usually 10-20 folk come along.

Councillors are Andy Williamson, chair, Kate Duffus, Janet MacDonald, John Weir, Tim Shone and Duncan MacInnes

The next meeting is at 7pm on Thursday 2 April in Ardvasar Hall.

Then 7pm Tuesday 5 May in An Crùbh, Duisdale.

Then 7pm Wednesday 3 June in Tarskavaig hall. That will be the AGM and we take a break til September.

All info on <https://www.sleatcommunitycouncil.org.uk/> and it has a Facebook page.

Notice Boards

Sleat Notice Boards have been getting in a pretty parlous state. There are around 11 of them and they play an important part in informing our community. Not everyone gets their information on-line! SCC has been

looking at funding new ones, but they are getting repaired and replaced through local support from community members and local builders.

The one in Kilmore is looking for love.



Lessons from January's snow

The heavy snow in early January left many parts of Sleat cut off for days. Sleat Community Council ran a survey to find out what happened and what we can do better next time. Ninety people responded, and the picture they paint is striking.

The numbers speak for themselves: 87% of people couldn't get their car out, half couldn't get to work, and nearly three-



quarters couldn't reach the shops. More worryingly, one-in-five missed medical appointments, and 14% couldn't visit relatives with additional support needs. The inability of emergency services to access side roads, particularly in townships with ageing populations, was a serious concern.

Most people thought the A851 was well gritted—58% found it sufficient. But fewer than one-in-ten held this view about the township roads. Aird, Caligarry, the Tarskavaig loop, Camus Cross and Drumfearn were isolated for days, despite having no shops and being home to several essential workers. Over half of respondents said snowploughs never reached them. The reality is that main road gritters can't handle our single-track roads, and clearing the A851 counts for little if people can't reach it.

The community stepped up, as it always does. Forty per cent helped clear roads, 51% put down grit, the same number brought in shopping for neighbours and 48% helped move cars. But the shortage of grit was a serious issue: only 7% said there was enough available, and 41% said they had none. Where grit had been left in piles rather than bins, it had often washed away or been eaten by deer and livestock.

On top of this, almost nine out of ten said the freezing weather had worsened the already poor state of Sleat's roads, with many highlighting the severe pothole situation as an urgent issue.

What needs to change? As a community, we can create a snow plan—mapping who has tractors with ploughs, 4x4s or snow chains, and building an emergency contact list. We can identify grit locations and gaps, stock up ahead of bad weather, and look after vulnerable neighbours. Social media can help us share real-time information about passable roads and who needs help. For Highland Council, we'd like to work in partnership on practical solutions. That means exploring arrangements with local farmers and crofters who have the equipment and local knowledge, though we recognise the significant challenge of public liability insurance. It means reviewing grit provision—more bins in the right places, stocked before forecast severe weather. It means looking at whether smaller 4x4 vehicles might work better on our township roads. And it means building a realistic winter resilience plan together for what is likely to be increasingly extreme weather.

The Community Council would like to thank Highland Council staff for their hard work during the snow and afterwards restocking grit supplies, and everyone in the community who stepped up to help. We are now keen to meet with council officers to discuss our suggestions and build a plan that works.

Andy Williamson, Chairman of Sleat Community Council. 12-Feb-2025

Armadale Stores Plaque



After far too many years' delay SCT arranged for a plaque for the wall of the new Armadale Stores..

Donnie and Colleen MacKinnon were invited to unveil a plaque at Armadale Stores commemorating their sale of the old Skye Ferry Filling Station, garage and house to Sleat Community Trust in 2007.

Business Network Meeting Wednesday 22 April

ORGANISED BY
VISIT SLEAT

Hi!

"What more can we do to PROMOTE SLEAT"

LOCAL BUSINESS NETWORKING EVENT

"SLEAT MEANS BUSINESS"

Wednesday 22nd April - 5pm onwards
AT THE STABLES, ARMADALE CASTLE

Meet the new Estate Team
Introduction to the West Highland Chamber of Commerce

Connect with local business + leaflet swap
Drinks & Nibbles

RSVP
visitsleat.org/meetup

SLEAT Community SKYE

West Highland Chamber of Commerce

ARMADALE CASTLE

Sound of Sleat Ferry Users Group SUSFUG

A new pressure group linking the communities of Mallaig and Sleat has been formed and already has had considerable success in bringing the dire state of our ferry service to the attention of the national press.

SOSFUG is represented by Paddy McKay and Tim Shone for Sleat.

The ongoing saga of the ferries changes everyday and as we go to press we have no idea if there are

going to be any ferries here over Easter. Currently there is going to be a passenger service from the Shearwater and a 6 car (?) service from a chartered boat over Easter.

We will be challenging CalMac's policy of taking the Coruisk and Bhrusda away from Sleat, and are building the case for this. If anyone can share some actual instances where ferry cancellations/



reliability have affected you and/or your business, please let Paddy McKay know on paddy@sleat.org.uk.

Over the sea to Skye? You'll be lucky with CalMac

Sleat Community Council joins Mallaig Community Council in condemning CalMac's abandonment of the Mallaig-Armadale ferry service.

Sleat Community Council wholeheartedly endorses the statement issued by Mallaig Community Council condemning the latest failure of CalMac to provide a reliable ferry service on the Mallaig-Armadale route. We stand in full solidarity with our neighbours across the Sound of Sleat, and share every one of their frustrations.

CalMac's announcement that no vessels will be available to operate the Mallaig-Armadale crossing over Easter 2026 and beyond, because they are being redeployed to cover other routes, is not a scheduling inconvenience. For the people of Sleat, it is a serious blow. Whilst the Skye Bridge provides an alternative connection to the mainland, it adds considerable distance and time to journeys from the south. The ferry is our direct, natural link to Mallaig, to Fort William, and to the wider Lochaber area on which many Sleat residents depend for healthcare, retail, and essential services, and for onward travel to Glasgow and the Central Belt. Its absence does not simply reduce convenience; it reshapes daily life and adds actual cost and time to journeys that people cannot avoid.

The harm to the local economy is immediate and tangible. The loss of the ferry crossing dramatically reduces the flow of tourist traffic arriving in Sleat — visitors travelling the Road to the Isles who would otherwise step off the boat and onto the peninsula. That passing trade, and the visitor economy it supports, is not replicated

by the Bridge. Businesses across Sleat — tourism, hospitality, food and drink, trades, and the many micro-enterprises that make up our local economy — have built their livelihoods around the promise of a reliable, timetabled ferry connection. When CalMac once again fails to deliver that service, bookings are cancelled, suppliers face longer and more expensive journeys, and visitors choose other destinations. Investment decisions are shelved. The cumulative effect, year after year of service erosion, is the hollowing-out of a community that deserves better.

The Mallaig-Armadale route is not peripheral to Scotland's tourism offering. It is the 'Over the Sea to Skye' crossing, one of Scotland's most iconic journeys, travelled by millions since the early twentieth century. To treat it as 'non-essential', as CalMac's management consistently appear to do, is to misunderstand its role entirely.

Sleat Community Council calls on CalMac, CMAL, Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government to:

- * take immediate action to restore the Mallaig-Armadale crossing throughout the coming season;
- * commit publicly to a permanent, two-vessel service on this route; and
- * end, once and for all, the culture of treating this crossing as a reserve to be raided whenever capacity is needed elsewhere.

An abridged letter to CalMac - Dr Andy Williamson Chair, Sleat Community Council andy@sleat.org.uk

Ardvasar Play Park

The Ardvasar playpark was looking tired and the equipment worn out. The area wasn't inviting for children (or parents!) and was not being used as much as it could have been.

Sleat Community Trust was approached by local parents to see if the playpark could be brought back to life. With the Sleat Community Council and Highland Council we secured funding from Highland Council's Community Regeneration Fund and the Scottish Government's fund for playground.

Highland Council supported the project. They helped us to reach out to suppliers. The community helped develop the plans and following extensive consultation—particularly with the local children—a design was agreed.

The new playpark has transformed a tired, drab space into a fun place to play

and hangout. A new picnic bench gives families somewhere to sit. Whilst Highland Council will maintain the equipment, local parents have taken on



looking after the site and we hope to see it grow and develop over the coming years.

The result is a playpark the children love and want to visit. It's got a great range of equipment and space to hangout. Why

not drop in for a visit? The playpark is on Dail Conaig in Ardvasar.

Marquee

SCT has been donated a marquee on a metal frame 6ms by 8ms. This can be hired by the community. Please contact the SCT office for details.



Sleat Nature Group

The Sleat Nature group is active in arranging walks and talks throughout the year and providing environmental advice to Sleat Community Trust. It works with Skye-wide beach cleaning groups. In February it hosted a talk on Marine Mammal Strandings and early March arranged a 'Build your own Birdbox' morning in Ardvasar Hall. Many of these boxes are now up on local houses and more are for sale in Ardvasar Store foyer.

The Nature Group has its own Facebook page for up to date information.



Nature Festival

The South Skye Nature Festival will run from Friday 24th July pm until Sunday 26th July.

The developing programme will include walks and talks and displays around Sleat and in Tormore woodland. More details soon from the organisers are Dan Milner (Chair SNG) Dorothy Jackson, Peter Roberts and Kate Rawlinson.

The Roads!

The ongoing complaint has been the shocking state of the roads – and this is all over Skye, all over the Highlands and indeed the UK.

Sleat Community Council has been passing on comments and details to Highland Council. John Finlayson reported back to SCC on 5 March "At today's HC special meeting the Council Budget was passed. This included an increase in Community Council grants and local discretionary funding. The allocation for Roads on Skye was just over £3m – noting that £40m is needed to undertake all necessary



repairs. Council tax will rise by 7% (5% tax and 2% for the Investment Plan) which is lower than neighbouring Councils."

MacKenzie Sutherland (Mack), Roads Engineer for Skye, joined the Council meeting by video link. He spoke in detail and answered questions from SCC and the floor. Roads are dealt with through a Capital Programme and Revenue

Funding. All roads suffer from coming towards the end of their initial build lives, exacerbated by lack of planning and funding over recent years.

Mack has been doing his best to rectify that by bringing roads back up to standard area by area. In the current 25-26 financial year this was undertaken in the north end. In 2026-27 the focus will be in the south. The Revenue funding allows for a new system of planing out potholes and refilling (as demonstrated by the current work at the SMO gate). The Capital Programme will then allow for a major overlay. The emphasis is on the A roads.

Mack works to make most efficient and cost-effective use of funding, materials, machinery, and staffing – which is affected by weather and local deterioration. Whereas once Skye had 120 roadmen there are now only 17. Furthermore, local spend is assessed on the monies needed per head of population served by local roads, so that communities like Ord, Tokavaig and Tarskavaig with a long road, suffer.

As we go to press there has been substantial work on the A851 between Kilmore and Ostaig and now at Duisdale.



SEALL – a new Creative Director – from Sleat

We welcome Benny Goodman who has recently returned to Skye as Creative Director of SEALL.

In his youth, when SEALL was largely Sleat-based, Benny lived in Sleat. In his last few years at the High School, he worked with SEALL for the summer-long events programme and Fèis an Eilein, where he proved to be a remarkably talented lighting and sound engineer. That inspired him to go to the Conservatoire in Glasgow

where he studied Lighting Design. He graduated in June 2017, receiving the Simon Crowther Award for Excellence and Commitment to the Institution. Since graduating, Benny has been working in theatres across the country in a variety of projects and productions.

Lilke so many young people with good jobs on Skye, Benny needs accommodation.

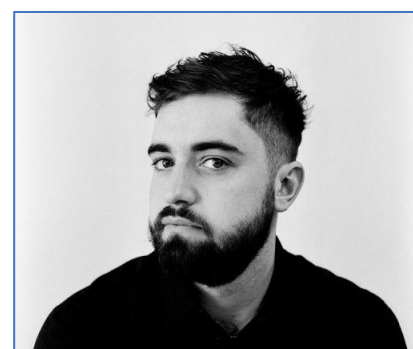


Photo Competition Winners

Thank you to everyone who entered the Armadale Stores 5th birthday photo competition themed 'What Makes Sleat a Great Place to Live.'

Overall winner, over 16 Heather Clyne

Overall winner, for the under 16 - Jamie MacPherson

They will receive a canvas-backed print of the image, courtesy of Paddy McKay of Skyelark on Armadale Pier.

Winners from each category, under 16:

Heritage Jamie MacPherson (Border Collie Pup)

Land & Seascapes Jamie MacPherson (Log over Stream)

16 and Over:

Activities Jane Lafferty (Boy fishing at the Pier)

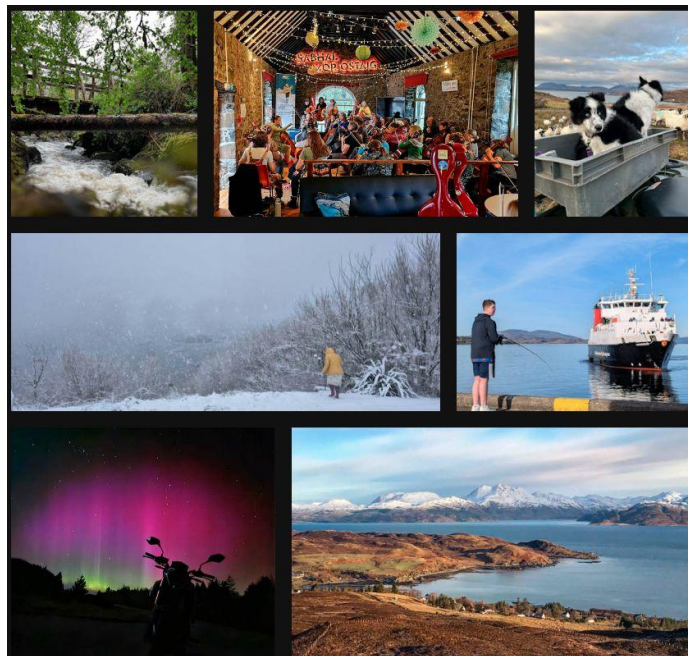
Heritage Heather Clyne (SMO Concert)

Land & Seascapes Heather Clyne (View over to Loch Hourn)

People Tracey Raymond (Lady out in the Snow)

Other Ciorstan Howarth

Look at the winning photos on <https://www.sleat.org.uk/armad.../photo-competition-winners/>



We were pleased to see such a wide variety of subjects, demonstrating both curiosity and a growing understanding of photographic principles.

Over 16 Category

The Over 16 age group displayed a strong command of technique and composition.

Duncan commented, "There's a clear confidence in how these photographers are handling their subjects—many images feel polished and intentional." Tricia highlighted the emotional impact of several entries, saying, "Some photos really stay with you—they tell stories that go beyond the frame."

Overall Impressions

Across both age groups and the five categories, the competition reflected a vibrant and diverse range of photographs which made judging both challenging and enjoyable with robust discussions taking place when picking the winning images.

The judges commend all participants for their effort, creativity, and enthusiasm. The competition not only highlighted technical ability but also celebrated the power of photography as a means of expression and storytelling.

Special thanks go to Paddy for co-ordinating the entries.

Ardvasar Hotel opens for 2026

Lucilla, Lady Noble of Fearann Eilean Iarmain and owner of the Ardvasar Hotel, has agreed a lease with Gary and Claire MacLeod, who will take over the running of the Ardvasar hotel. The hotel reopened to residents on **3 April**, marking an exciting new chapter for the historic Sleat hotel.

Gary MacLeod said, "Claire and I are absolutely delighted to be taking on 'The Ardvasar'. It's a very special place with a long history, and we're excited to begin this new chapter. We've already had a great deal of encouragement and we're very much looking forward to getting started."

Tormore Wood Fire Logs

Sleat Renewables has wound down the wood chip and log business in the Tormore Forest.

We are delighted that the Woodshed has now been leased to Matt Adams who has invested considerably in new equipment and is now supplying fully dried, home delivered logs and kindling.

Please support this local business

An Slèiteach is collated by Sleat Community Trust and Sleat Community Council.

Editor on tormore@sleat.co.uk
We welcome articles and comment from all groups in Sleat.

Sleat Community Trust is recognised as a Charity in Scotland



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