

Atlantic Islands Centre

Ionad Dualchais nan Eileanan A-Staigh

Progress on site

Good progress is being maintained on the construction of the Atlantic Islands Centre despite some challenging weather conditions in the early part of the year. With the previously documented site issues all resolved, the contractor has been able to push ahead with work on the foundations and ground floor slab and over 70% of this is now complete. At the same time work to divert existing services running through the site has commenced (water and telephone.) along with work to allow installation of drainage systems. Some of you may also have noticed that the pre-fabricated steelwork and some of the timber frame for the superstructure of the building have already been delivered to the site so as soon as the base slab is complete, the erection of the frame will commence.

Project management

Pete Hooper and I attend all scheduled site progress meetings as the 'client representatives' and in this role we provide input on the various discussions that take place on the detailed design and construction activities. At each site meeting we also review progress against the construction programme and at this week's meeting it was reported that we remain on schedule for completion in late summer / early autumn. Financial management of the building contract is important, and as well as having to ensure that adequate grant funds are drawn down to allow contract payments to be processed on time, we constantly review costs against budget so that we can avoid any overruns.

Fit-out of the building

While I spend quite a bit of time maintaining close contact with the contractor and design team to ensure that building construction progresses in accordance with the revised programme and budget, a much greater proportion of my time is now allocated to the fit-out and operation of the building. During January, a design brief was developed for the Interpretative content and fit-out of the exhibition spaces and an advert for professional support in relation to the design, planning and implementation of this aspect of the development was published. Meetings have also been held with the Luing History Group to consider the content of the Heritage Gallery in more detail and small working groups have been established to look at the requirements for the catering and retail facilities included within the building. Funding for the fit-out has been enhanced with grant awards by the Hugh Fraser Foundation and the Robertson Trust.

Appointment of Exhibition designers

The advert for professional support in relation to the exhibition spaces produced seven strong submissions from leading UK design organisations. These have now been assessed and following interviews with a short list of two companies, Leach Colour Ltd have been appointed to work with us to develop all the displays and interpretative material. At the beginning of April they will bring 5 members of their team to the island to develop the storylines and exhibition plan with us.



CULLIPOOL MOORINGS

We are pleased to report that our application to ABSA FLAG for funding to increase the number of moorings at Cullipool has been successful and a grant of £13,611 towards the cost of the project has been awarded (approx 80% of the total costs). Our bid was one of only nine successful bids made to this funding programme. Working in partnership with the Luig Moorings Association, we can now progress to obtain the necessary formal approvals from Marine Scotland and Crown Estates. When implemented, the project will provide a small number of summer moorings for visiting yachts at Cullipool, many of whose crew we hope will visit and use the facilities at the Atlantic Islands Centre.

HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND

The IoLCT wants to ensure that high speed broadband is available at the Atlantic Islands Centre so we have an interest in any current developments to improve existing services in our area. Community Broadband Scotland (CBS) is a Government funded initiative and its role is to facilitate the provision of high speed broadband to rural communities that will not be serviced by commercial providers.

Building on some earlier work to investigate how broadband might be delivered to Colonsay, CBS are now co-ordinating the establishment of a wider Argyll Isles Community Broadband Partnership. This partnership brings together Colonsay, Jura, parts of north west Islay, Luig, Lismore, Craignish, south western Mull and Iona and is being led by Mull & Iona Community Trust (MICT). The IoLCT is actively engaged with this new partnership and the hope is that a high speed broadband service will be made available to all residents on the island later this year.

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