

Western Isles Lieutenancy Newsletter - Number 22

January to June 2026

WESTERN ISLES KING'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS LIST - June 2026

We were delighted that two Western Isles citizens were named in HM The King's 2026 Birthday Honours List.

Order of the British Empire (OBE)

Malcolm Burr - Lately Chief Executive, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and Convener of the Electoral Management Board of Scotland. For Public Service.

Medalists of the Order of the British Empire (BEM)

Isabella (Bella) Cameron, Head of Kitchen, Grogarry Lodge. For services to Hospitality and to the Rural Economy in South Uist.

The honours system offers public recognition to people from all walks of life who have given outstanding public and community service over many years.

These prestigious awards are well deserved and the whole community congratulate them both for their dedication, commitment and achievements in their respective roles. They have made a positive difference to the lives of many people, with their areas of expertise, interests and experience reflecting the rich talent across our islands.

Of course, all of this would not be possible without people taking time to submit nominations and I thank them for taking the time to do so.

HMV IOLAIRE REMEMBRANCE SERVICE – 1st January

For the first time, due to the inclement weather, the New Year HMY Iolaire Remembrance service was held indoors, in the Stornoway High Church of Scotland. A large number attended the service, led by the Rev Gordon Macleod, supported by John A MacIver and Iain Macmillan. The service followed the usual format, with wreaths laid at the front of the Church.



Two hundred and one lives were lost out of 280 men on board when the HMY Iolaire hit rocks on New Year's day 1919 and sank at the Beasts of Holm, about a mile from Stornoway harbour, making it the UK's worst peacetime maritime disaster.

Following the service, the Lord-Lieutenant and the Comhairle Convener, Cllr. Kenny MacLeod, along with a number of other organisations, went to the Holm Memorial to lay our wreaths.



KINLOCH HISTORICAL SOCIETY - SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS Exhibition Opening - 16 January

I was honoured to be asked to open the Seaforth Highlander's Exhibition at the Kinloch Community Hub. The event was attended by representatives from The Highlander's Museum, QOH Regimental Association, Army Cadets, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, ex Servicemen, the local press and community members from the Lochs district. The collection of exhibits and information boards are a living tribute to the bravery and sacrifice of each soldier who served with the Seaforth Highlanders, ensuring that the history of the Regiment and its local connections are understood and remembered.



This is an excellent exhibition and well worth visiting.

Now, none of this would be possible without the significant input of Chairman Ken Roddy MacKay and Heritage Manager Anna Mackenzie, volunteer supporters and funders.

Special mention to the young Piper, Alexander Macleod, who played a haunting tribute of Amazing Grace to end the two-minute silence, in remembrance of all the brave men and women who have served, and continue to serve in our Armed Forces.



Iain Macaulay L-L with Piper Alexander Macleod

DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD CEREMONY - 23 January

It was real pleasure to be attending and give the closing remarks at the Western Isles Duke of Edinburgh Awards ceremony on 23rd January at the Nicolson Institute. Incredibly, Donald MacSween, Chairman, and Alice Murray with her team supported around 60 students achieve 145 awards at this year's presentation. Everyone involved is to be congratulated on the success of the local programme.

The DoE Award Scheme continues to thrive in the Southern Isles with the help of a dedicated team of school teachers. This year, sixteen Awards were made at the Sgoil Lionacleit annual prize giving in June, bringing the total to some sixty Awards made to successful pupils over the last five years.



DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD Ceremony Programme (Nicolson Institute)

LOCHMADDY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE - 2 February

It was a great pleasure to be invited by the Lochmaddy Women's Institute to give a presentation, with a Uist focus, on the role of the Lord-Lieutenant and my experiences since my appointment in March 2022. It was a real privilege to meet such a welcoming and inspirational group. The venue was the former Lochmaddy Primary School, now being run under the auspices of the North Uist Development Company. Thank you to Alasdair MacEachen DL for supporting me at the event.



CADET PRESENTATION, CONGREIVE HOUSE, BENBECULA 22ND FEBRUARY

Alasdair MacEachen DL, accompanied by Major Norman MacLeod presented certificates in Benbecula



Cadet Atholl Mackenzie (Benbecula Detachment) being presented with Army Cadet Training Syllabus, Basic Training Award.



WO 2 Dane Miller receiving the Army Cadets Deputy Commander Cadets' Commendation



Captain Alexander Maciver presented with the Army Cadets Deputy Commander Cadets' Commendation



L Cpl Archie Macphee (Benbecula Detachment) presented with St John Ambulance Youth First Aid Certificate.

LEWIS CHESS PIECES 'CHANGING FACES' RECEPTION - 18 March

I was delighted to attend the "Lewis Chess Pieces – Changing Faces" reception at Museum nan Eilean, hosted by Comhairle Convener Cllr. Kenny MacLeod

The Lewis Chess pieces are among the most famous and fascinating objects surviving from 12th century Europe. The Comhairle, in partnership with the British Museum, unveiled a refurbished display of six pieces.

THE SCOTTISH LORD-LIEUTENANTS AGM – 24 March

The Scottish Lord-Lieutenants' AGM took place in the Palace of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh, with presentations from the Scottish Government, The Lord Lyon, Armed Forces and Lord-Lieutenant Association Chairs, Edward Bolitho (UK) and Johnny Stewart (Scotland). It was a most helpful and informative event.



Scottish Lord-Lieutenants

PIPE MAJOR DONALD MACLEOD MBE MEMORIAL COMPETITION – 2 April

Some of the world's finest pipers performed at the prestigious Pipe Major Donald Macleod MBE Memorial Piping competition in Stornoway at the beginning of April. I was delighted to accept an invitation to speak, as Lord-Lieutenant, at the evening dinner of pipers, judges and guests at the Caladh Inn as they celebrated 30 successful years.

PASSING OF NORMAN 'DOKUS' MACDONALD OBE – 6 April

We were saddened to hear of the death of Norman "Dokus" MacDonald, aged 69, on the 6th of April. Norman served as Convener of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar from 2012 to 2022 and was extremely supportive of the Western Isles Lieutenancy throughout his time in office. He was awarded an OBE in 2024.

Donald Martin and I visited himself and his wife Pat at home just a few weeks before his passing, leaving us with fond memories of a community stalwart.

HRFCA ANNUAL ASSOCIATION MEETING – 18 April

The HRFCA 2026 Annual Association Meeting was held in Dundee. The full programme included updates from across the Armed Forces including an MOD Cadets briefing from Brigadier Gary McDade.

According to a recent new research study “The Impact and Value of School-based Cadet Forces in the UK”, published by the MOD in partnership with the University of Northampton, young people who join school-based cadet forces are more likely to achieve better educational outcomes, improved attendance and behaviours.

At a strategic level, the Defence Investment Plan has now been published. There is no reduction in cadet funding and additional investment is being made to modernise cadet forces and create the conditions for sustainable growth.

The ambition to grow cadet numbers by 30% remains, although the timeline has been extended from 2030 to 2035.



Also attending from the Western Isles was Honorary Colonel Sir Christopher Geidt (R) and Colonel Tim Martin (L), Commandant, both of the 1st Battalion The Highlanders and the Army Cadet Force.

CONDOLENCES

Our condolences are extended to John Murdo Morrison DL MBE and his family following the passing of his wife Helen at home on the 11th of May.

Helen was a regular attender at the Lieutenancy AGMs over the years and we always enjoyed her company. Many of the Lieutenancy team were able to attend the large funeral service in Tarbert to pay our last respects.

SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE AWARDS CEREMONY - 19 May

I was honoured to take part in the presentation of Fire Service Long Service and Good Conduct Medals and 30 Year Clasps at an award ceremony at the Stornoway Station on 19 May. As a community we are grateful for the commitment and professionalism of our Fire and Rescue service.

Award ceremonies provide us with an opportunity to show our gratitude to all those engaged in this life saving service, as they seek to keep our communities safe.





SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR – CHIEF EXECUTIVE CHANGE

After more than 20 years as the Comhairle's Chief Executive, Malcolm Burr retired in March and Martin Joyce was appointed as his successor in April.

Malcolm was Scotland's longest-serving Council CEO and has served the Western Isles and Scottish Local Government well throughout this time. We were all delighted that he was awarded an OBE in the King's Birthday Honours list and we wish him and his wife Chrissie all the very best for his retirement.

I was delighted to meet the new Chief Executive, Martin Joyce, to congratulate him on his appointment and wish him well in the post. It was also a good opportunity to discuss the areas of partnership working between the Comhairle and the Lieutenancy.

EXHIBITION COMMEMORATING 175 YEARS OF CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE - 22 May

I was privileged to attend a civic reception at Museum nan Eilean, hosted by Comhairle Convener Cllr. Kenny Macleod, to mark the launch of an exhibition commemorating 175 years of Caledonian Macbrayne Ferries. Based on the personal collection of John Macdonald, a Port Assistant at Lochmaddy and developed by Comhairle nan Eilean's Siar Heritage Team, the exhibition explores the evolution of ferry services serving the Hebrides and west coast of Scotland.

SCALADALE CENTRE 25TH ANNIVERSARY - 5 June



On the 3rd of June the Scaladale centre celebrated its 25th anniversary of its official opening by HRH The Princess Royal in June 2001.

Scaladale is the only residential outdoor centre in the Western Isles, owned and operated by Lewis and Harris Youth Clubs Association.

The volunteer committee of Chair Gordon Macdonald, Maggie Macleod, Fiona MacInnes, Johan Macdonald and Lorna Eller are to be congratulated for providing such a valuable and highly regarded facility and service to the young people of the Hebrides and beyond.

I was honoured to be invited to cut the Anniversary cake together with long term trustee Dr Lorna Eller.

MEETING WITH LT COL HAUN DAVIES, ARMY RESERVE CENTRE, STORNOWAY - 9TH JUNE

It was most helpful to get the opportunity to meet the recently appointed CEO of the HRFCA, Lt Col Haun Davies, on his first visit to the Western Isles in his new role.

It was an ideal opportunity to wish Lt Col Davies all the very best in the post and to discuss the benefits, opportunities and challenges involved in maintaining an active Cadet Force in the islands, such as travel time and costs, recruitment of adult volunteers and the falling number of young people living in our communities.

HEBRIDEAN REFUGEE FESTIVAL – 12 June

The Hebridean Refugee Festival was formally launched by Comhairle Convener, Cllr Kenny Macleod, at an opening event in Museum nan Eilean in Stornoway. The Convener highlighted the importance of refugees and their experiences, emphasizing that the Western Isles are a welcoming place for people seeking to a new start.



Murtaza Barlas, Chairperson of the Hebridean Refugee Community, also welcomed guests and thanked partner organisations and supporters for their continued collaboration and commitment.

DONALD STEWART MEMORIAL TRUST: LAURA MACLEOD, CASTLEBAY SCHOOL – AWARD PRESENTATION - 16 June

The Donald Stewart Memorial Trust was set up following a fund-raising campaign to establish a Trust which would disburse awards to young people in the Western Isles to commemorate the outstanding work of the late Donald Stewart MP.



The Award for Significant Contribution to Gaelic Development 2026

was won by Laura Macleod, a pupil at Castlebay School on Barra.

Presenting the award to Laura, Christine Galbraith, Depute Lieutenant said, “Laura is such an inspirational and community-minded person, always energetic and committed to promoting Gàidhlig and our musical culture and heritage.

She is a popular person amongst her peers and throughout the Barra & Vatersay community. It was my honour to present her with the 2026 Donald Stewart Memorial Award for Significant Contribution to Gaelic.”

ST VALERY AND DUNKIRK MEMORIAL PARADE, BENBECULA - 19 June

With the Western Isles Company, 1st Battalion The Highlanders Army Cadet Force on parade, the annual commemorative and wreath laying service was held at the Griminish War Memorial, Benbecula. The well attended service was led by Major Rev. Alen McCulloch, supported by Canon Michael Hutson and Rev George MacGillivray.



Following the service, I had the pleasure of joining officers and cadets for the presentation of the Certificate of Appointment as the new Lord-Lieutenant Cadet of the Western Isles to Cpl Morgan Bagley from the Benbecula Detachment

Congratulations Cpl Bagley; we look forward to having you in attendance at many engagements over the next twelve months.

Congratulations are also due to Cpl Anna Chisholm from the Harris Detachment, who received her promotion to Sergeant.

Anna's year as Lord-Lieutenant cadet has now come to an end and I want to thank her for her support and commitment at all the events she attended throughout the year.

Anna was an excellent ambassador for the HRFCA and we wish her well as she continues her studies at Sir E Scott School.



Finally, congratulations to Adult Volunteer CSgt Innes MacLeod from the Stornoway Detachment on being awarded the Lord-Lieutenant's Certificate for Meritorious Service.

Very well deserved.

VETERAN'S BREAKFAST CHARLIE'S CAFÉ BALIVANICH - 20th June

It was a privilege for Major Norman Macleod, 1st Battalion The Highlanders Army Cadet Force and I to join the Veterans' get together at Charlie's Bistro in Benbecula the morning following the Parade Service.

Each Saturday, the group meets for breakfast, hosted by owner Iain MacRury, himself a former soldier. With around 20 members, their get together over breakfast provides an opportunity for peer support and friendly conversation. Members share their military service experiences, offering encouragement, understanding and mutual support in a relaxed and welcoming environment.

Major Norman took the opportunity to highlight the ongoing need to recruit adult volunteers in the Cadet Force and encouraged those present to consider applying.

ARMED FORCES DAY - 22 June

The Western Isles' events took place on Monday 22 June in Stornoway, Tarbert, Balivanich and Castlebay, to honour the courage, dedication and sacrifice of those who serve, or have served in our Armed Forces.

Lest we forget, and may we always remember those who serve to defend our nation.

Stornoway Flag Raising



Balivanich Flag Raising

CONDOLENCES - JAMES ROBERT HARRISON BROWN (HOVIS)

We were all saddened to hear of the sudden passing of James Brown, better known as "Hovis", on the 6th of May. "Hovis" was a faithful and ever-present Standard Bearer at numerous Remembrance, Armed Forces and civic events over the years and was a constant source of encouragement and guidance to myself and Lieutenancy colleagues. The large attendance at his funeral in the Stornoway High Church was testament to his popularity and strong community connections.

HONOURING A HERO COMMEMORATING CORPORAL DUNCAN MACAULAY - 9 May

Corporal Duncan MacAulay, a Sandwich soldier who saved 27 of his comrades during the Second World War, but never received official recognition was honoured by his local community more than 80 years later.

I was privileged to be part of a well organised event, titled "Honour a Local Hero," at Sandwich Community Hall on 9 May 2026.

Corporal Duncan MacAulay, of East Street, Sandwick, was 27 when he lost his life in January 1945 during fierce fighting near Sitard in Holland while serving with D Company, 7th Cameronians. According to fellow soldier Mr Jack Rafferty, who witnessed the action, Corporal MacAulay located the enemy position and charged forward alone. Reaching the wall of the building from which the gun was firing, he threw a grenade to silence it. He was fatally wounded moments before it exploded, but his actions allowed his comrades to advance, complete the attack, and ultimately capture the village. Mr Rafferty later confirmed that this single act of bravery directly saved many lives and among others in the battalion believed Corporal MacAulay would have been awarded the Victoria Cross. However, due to the loss and wounding of officers during the battle, his actions were never formally recorded or submitted for official recognition.



Murdo Macaulay, son of Corporal Duncan Macaulay unveiling the tribute detailing his father's heroism.



Cllr Angus McCormack and Lord-Lieutenant Iain Macaulay unveiling the "Commemorating a Local Hero" plaque, alongside Donnie MacLeod, Queen's Own Highlanders Association.



Sandwick Community Council is to be congratulated on ensuring that his courage and sacrifice are finally acknowledged. Corporal MacAulay's son, Murdo MacAulay, who still resides in the area, welcomed the opportunity for the community to come together and was present on the day to unveil the specially designed plaque in memory of his father. A beautiful tribute to an amazing hero soldier who sacrificed his own life to save others. Also included are the names of Sandwick's Fallen from both World Wars.

Photo credit Sandie Photos

VISIT TO THE HEBRIDEAN PRINCESS – 5 June

With Angus Morrison, Manager of Acair, and his staff, we were invited aboard the cruise ship Hebridean Princess. We had the opportunity to donate a selection of Gaelic publications, along with a copy of the *Lieutenancy@50* anniversary book, to the ship's library on board. After enjoying the warm hospitality of Captain Heaton and Chief Purser Jim Fraser, we were given a tour of the vessel. It was a thoroughly enjoyable morning, made possible through Angus Morrison's careful planning and organisation.

It was therefore with great sadness that we learned of Angus's passing just a few weeks later, following a long illness. His support for the *Lieutenancy@50* anniversary publication is deeply appreciated, and his contribution will be remembered with gratitude.

To his wife, Janet, and the wider Morrison family, we extend our deepest sympathy and sincere condolences.



**Back row: Margaret-Anne Macleod, Angus Morrison, Captain Heaton, Iain Macaulay, Chief Purser Jim Fraser.
Front: Sandra MacRae**

INVESTITURE SERVICES



Donald John MacSween MBE Point at the Palace of Holyroodhouse where he received the award from HRH The Princess Royal



**Rebecca Lindsay MBE, Stornoway
with HRH The Princess Royal at Windsor Castle
Photo credit Macaulay College**



Angus Campbell OBE South Uist, with HM King Charles and his family in the background, at the Palace of Holyroodhouse

PLANS TO HONOUR QUEEN ELIZABETH

The Scottish Government has announced plans to create a permanent national memorial to Queen Elizabeth II in Scotland as part of wider UK commemorations marking what would have been her 100th birthday in 2026.

UK funding has been confirmed for memorials in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, alongside the main UK national memorial in London.

The Scottish memorial is intended to reflect Queen Elizabeth II's long association with Scotland, including her time at Balmoral Castle and her deep connections with Scottish public life.

The Western Isles Lieutenancy and partner agencies will consider local possibilities to provide a fitting and lasting tribute to Queen Elizabeth in the Outer Hebrides, in gratitude of her strong affiliation for our Islands and lifetime of public service.

SGOIL A' BHAC PRIZE GIVING 23 June



Photo credit Sgoil à Bhac

I was delighted to be invited to speak at this year's prize giving at Sgoil a' Bhac. It was a privilege to be asked to present some of the prizes and to see all the achievements of the talented pupils attending the school.

The Lieutenancy would like thank Miss Maclean and her staff for all they do to promote such a positive learning environment for the young people in the Back community. I wish all the very best to all those on Primary 7 moving to the Nicolson in August.

ROYAL GARDEN PARTY AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE

Catherine Macdonald, Vatisker, was recently invited along with three of her NHS colleagues to the Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. They were invited as representatives of the NHS Sexual Health Assault Referral centre, or SARC.

Queen Camilla has supported the service since 2013, providing wash bags for survivors of sexual assault, alongside Boots and the charity IN Kind Direct. The day was particularly special as the quartet was hosted in the Royal Tent for tea.

Photo credit Catherine MacDonald and Loch à Tuath News



Catherine Macdonald, far right.

LIEUTENANCY WEBINARS – 12 January, 21 April and 16 July

I attended three webinars that focused on the PVG process, the development of AI and The King's Award for Enterprise (KAFÉ)

The KAFÉ award is given annually for outstanding achievement by UK businesses in the categories of Innovation, International Trade, Sustainable Development and Promoting Opportunity through Social Mobility.

Previously known as the Queen's Award for Enterprise, the award came to the Western Isles on three occasions over a ten-year period to Kenneth MacKenzie Holdings, Tweed Mill, Stornoway in 1997, 1981 and 1986 for International Trade Exports in Harris Tweed.

KINGS AWARD FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE - LEVERHULME COMMUNITY HUB

We were all delighted that the LEVERHULME COMMUNITY HUB had been awarded The King's Award for Voluntary Service. This is the highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK and is equivalent to an MBE.

Leverhulme Community Hub is amongst the 231 winners from across the UK, and 25 from Scotland, who received the prestigious award this year.

The award ceremony was held at the Leverhulme Community Hub on the 14th of May 2026 at which I had the honour of presenting the crystal award and certificate, assisted by Lord-Lieutenant Cadet Anna Chisholm.



Also participating in the celebrations was Comhairle Convener, Cllr Kenny Macleod and DL Katie Ann Mackinnon.



The large crowd of volunteers and supporters gathered enjoyed the evening proceedings and hospitality, all immensely proud of their community's recognition by HM King and everything the community had done over the years to make this excellent facility happen in the first place.

ROYAL GARDEN PARTY PALACE OF HOLYROODHOUSE, EDINBURGH - 30 June

HM The King, HM Queen Camilla, HRH The Princess Royal and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh were in attendance.

We fulfilled our invite quota of twenty-four names for the Royal Garden Party at The Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh on the 2nd of July. Many thanks to my Deputy Lieutenants for your nominations and to all guests who have shared photographs of the special day.

In addition, representatives from the Leverhulme Community Hub attended, having received their King's Award for Voluntary Service Award last year, along with representatives from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Children's Hearing Scotland, HM Coastguard Western Isles and Advocacy Western Isles.

Some pictures from those who attended



L to R: Iain Macaulay L-L, Martin and Evelyn MacLeod, Mairi and Calum George Buchanan, Cllr. Ranald Fraser



Paul and Elizabeth Ross



Carol Campbell (left) from HM Western Isles Coastguard (Stornoway) with her sister Janet Curran.



Rev. Colin and Mrs Aileen MacLeod



Angus Macleod and Pippa Stevens from Leverhulme Hub, Isle of Harris - King's Award for Voluntary Service



L to R: Anne MacKinnon, Lachina MacVicar, Isabell and Donald MacInnes, Iain Macaulay L-L, Fiona Macaulay and Mairi MacLennan



Norma and Alasdair Dunlop



Michael and Catrona Dunn



Alexander John MacIver and Angie Macdonald.



Jocelyn Corderoy and Tania MacLeod from 'Tarbert in Bloom, Harris,



Left to Right: Anne Macaulay, Iain Macaulay L-L, Cllr. Calum MacLean and his wife Joan



Advocacy Western Isles Chief Executive Iain MacRae and his wife Mrs Chrissie MacRae, Board Member Alex John Murray and his son Alex Murdo Murray.
(photo credit Advocacy Western Isles)

CONCLUSION

My grateful thanks to all my Lieutenancy colleagues, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, partner agencies and voluntary and community organisations for their support and encouragement over the past six months.

Initial sales of our Lieutenancy@50 anniversary book have been strong, demonstrating that our decision to produce and publish "Fifty Golden Years Serving Our Monarchy in The Western Isles" was well judged. Many thanks to all the local shops and community outlets that have stocked the book and managed sales on our behalf. Also, to the Islands Book Trust, who continue to provide an online sales and P&P service. Feedback on the book has been favourable, from Royal Households and mainland Lieutenancy colleagues, which has been a source of much encouragement.

Finally, many thanks to DL Maggie MacKay, Lieutenancy Clerk, for her ongoing commitment and support.

Iain Macaulay

Lord-Lieutenant Western Isles



Known Lieutenancy Events and Engagements - July to December 2026

13th July	Armed Forces Flag Lowering, Perceval Square, Stornoway
1 st September	Western Isles Lieutenancy AGM (Benbecula)
5th September	Merchant Navy Day, Stornoway Ferry Terminal
11th September	Battle of Britain RAFA Ensign Flag Raising Ceremony, Perceval Square, Stornoway
13 th September	Battle of Britain Church Parade, St Columba's Church
14th September	Battle of Britain RAFA Ensign Flag Lowering Ceremony, Perceval Square, Stornoway
16 th – 17th September	UK Lieutenancy AGM & Seminar, Belfast
7 th – 8th November	Remembrance Weekend Services – Western Isles
To be confirmed	Mrs Bella Cameron BEM – Medal Presentation Ceremony, South Uist
To be confirmed	SS Arandora Star Memorial Service (Uist & Barra)
11 th December	Princess of Wales Carol Service – Westminster Abbey
1 January 2027	Iolaire Memorial Service