



2013

## OBAN WINTER FESTIVAL



2013 Report



## CONTENTS

### The 2013 Oban Festival:

In words	Page 2
In numbers	Page 5
In the media	Page 7
2013 Event Gallery	Page 11
Acknowledgements	
Sponsors	

*“The Oban Winter Festival is fantastic.*

*We love, love, love it! Not just for visitors but locals too”*





**Oban Winter Festival** is organised and run entirely by volunteers. The festival had its origins over several years with a number of self-funding events which had the support of local business.



In 2010 a small group of volunteers put together the first **Victorian Market** with hot food stalls, running alongside the established Reindeer Parade. This event was so successful that in 2011, the group launched Oban's inaugural Winter Festival with a full 10 day programme of activities and events.

This first Festival was hugely popular with locals and visitors, generated an estimated **economic impact of £980,000** and laid the foundation for an annual event.



The committee of eight

is responsible for putting together the programme, liaising with media, businesses, charity groups, funders, schools, organising events, parades, workshops, ticket sales and marketing. They are supported by people who have added their names to a 'volunteer bank'.



Running from 22 November to 1 December the 2013 programme of over **50 events offered** something for everyone in this family festival.

Thousands turned out to join in the **Reindeer Parade** and Christmas light switch on, enjoying the Victorian Market, hot food and entertainment.



The Winter Food Market held in the atmospheric Oban Distillery cask room



enabled local producers to promote and sell their wares. Large crowds enjoyed sampling the local produce and complimentary tipples of **Oban Whisky** as they were entertained by local choirs and bands. Alongside the markets were the **winter**

**fairgrounds** bringing light and life on grey November days.

*“100% we will be  
back”  
(Visitor)*





22<sup>nd</sup> Nov – 1<sup>st</sup> Dec 2013

21<sup>st</sup> January 2014

Event Scotland  
Argyll & Bute Council  
MacQueen's Charitable Trust  
Oban Common Good Fund  
Health Improvement Fund  
Rotary Club of Oban  
Cash for Kids

Oban Winter Festival Committee would like to thank you for your financial contribution to the 2013 Festival, which helped to make it a great success.

A copy of the 2013 Festival Report is enclosed for your information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Pamela Lockhart'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pamela Lockhart  
Chairperson  
On behalf of Oban Winter Festival





The aim of the Festival is to **stimulate the local economy** at a traditionally quiet time of year, promoting the town as a late season tourist destination and encouraging local participation in community events. Ceilidhs, pipe bands, Gaelic choirs, historic buildings, local distillery, beautiful scenery, all that our community has to offer and a warm welcome to go with it.



New to the programme for 2013 were **the St Andrew's Day events** showcasing local talent and culture with a whisky produce market in the Distillery, dance show, light show, 5k tartan dash grand ceilidh hosted by Oban Pipe Band featuring world champion pipers, singers and dancers.

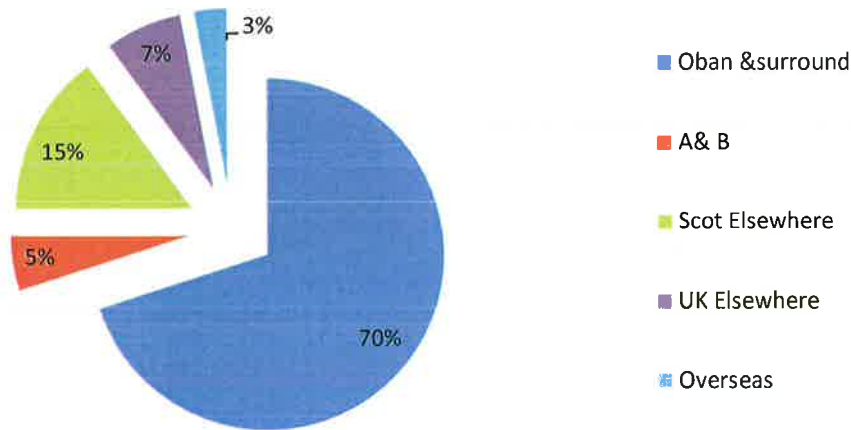
Oban's famous landscape the iconic McCaigs Tower was lit like a beautiful lantern with strobes moving around inside making a wonderful **light show**, the highlight of the night, a huge saltire hovering above the islands. The photographs have been admired from as far away as Australia, putting Scotland and our town on the map.



Competing with a city festival is difficult for a small town and financial restraints are challenging, but with smaller bespoke cultural festivals becoming more popular, the event ticks all boxes with both locals and visitors to town.

Businesses report a **significant upturn** during the two weekends of the event and local families are opting to stay in town rather than travel to the city as they had previously done.

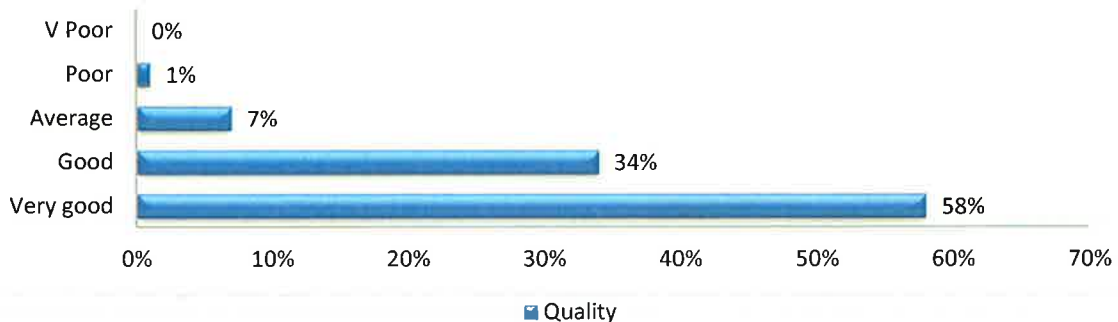
# OBAN WINTER FESTIVAL IN NUMBERS



- 
- Number in party average 4
- Average attendance 4 days
- % visitors stayed on average 3 nights
- 90% of survey response reported spends averaging between £60 - £100 on eating out/ food.
- High percentage on gift spend average £40 – 60
- Local business reported average of 10% increase in takings over the 10 days.

Returning visitors 80% would attend following year

## Overall experience of Festival

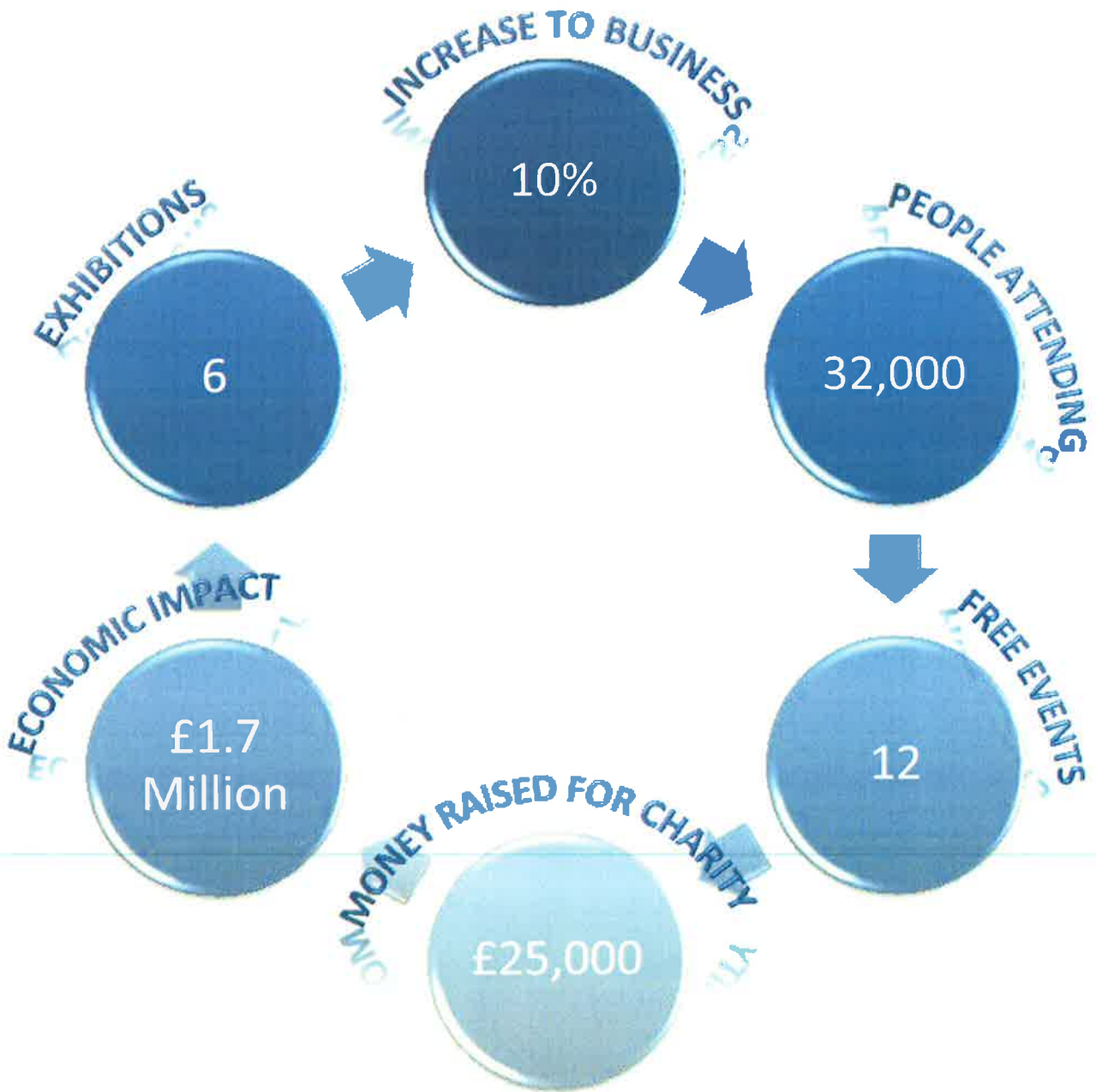


Our survey asked: "If you hadn't come to the festival what would you have done instead?"

Answers were varied from:

*"Went to Central Belt"; "doing nothing"; "housework", "stayed at home"*







Sam and Tony Blair both say, and other children to be a craze at Oban's Winter Festival. (Photo: [unreadable])



The grand finale of the Oban St Andrew's Dance School on the Capan Hall on Saturday. (Photo: [unreadable])

# Festive spirit comes to Oban with a bang

**HUNDREDS** of people led the first Oban Winter Festival parade through the town on Saturday. The parade was led by a committee of local people who had raised the money to fund the festival.

The parade was a success, with many people taking part. The parade was held in the town centre and was a great success.

And the St Andrew's Dance School's performance at the festival was a success. The school's performance was a great success and was well received by the audience.

Thousands of people led the parade through the town on Saturday. The parade was a success and was well received by the audience. The parade was held in the town centre and was a great success.

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A spectacular grand finale fireworks display over Oban Bay. (Photo: [unreadable])



They and other children, from the town, are helping to raise the money for the festival. (Photo: [unreadable])



They are helping to raise the money for the festival. (Photo: [unreadable])



The lantern parade saw thousands head down George Street before fireworks over Oban Bay closed this year's Oban Winter Festival. (Photo: [unreadable])



Above: Two-year-old Quinn MacQuarrie was delighted with the results of her face painting at the concert in Ocean Club on Saturday. (Photo: [unreadable])



McCoy's Tower was transformed into a lantern as part of Oban Winter Festival. (Photo: [unreadable])



ing money at the time in the Capan Hall on Saturday, with a guess the the funds will be used to buy equipment and provide seats to go on. (Photo: [unreadable])



A few art demonstrators took place on the green in front of Water Bay on Saturday. (Photo: [unreadable])



Sue Lurie, Sue Bower, Frances Marvill, Ann Marie Gallacher and Margie St. George served up Victorian fare in the Capan Hall on Saturday. Funds raised will go to the MS Centre. In the background, a group of young bakers were also at the event. (Photo: [unreadable])



Last Friday's Polish Fling in St Columba's Cathedral brought together a mix of Scottish and Polish cultures. Pictured is Agnieszka Rappan and sons Frank and Sita, with event organizer Beata Pusep, all in Polish national dress. (Photo: [unreadable])







## Oban Winter Festival

The Oban Winter Festival brought colour and fanfare to an otherwise dark and cold winter in the town. Highlights included a St Andrew's Day ceilidh, McCaig's Tower lights show, a fire art demonstration, pictured, and a fireworks display over Oban Bay. Billed as the best festival yet, it did not disappoint.

## Festival late night shopping

SHOPS in Oban's town centre will open late on Thursday November 28 as businesses look to take advantage of the extra footfall during the town's Winter Festival.

Residents will be encouraged to support local retailers by taking advantage of special deals and giveaways up until 9pm. Meanwhile, festival organisers are encouraging families to enter their competition to design a winter or nativity scene using a shoebox. Entries should be handed in to the Corran Halls by November 16.



Helping mascot Gumbo to launch this year's Oban Winter Festival are St Andrew's School participants. Right left, Gemie MacMillan, Erin Murray and Buffy Baskin.

## Winter festival promises Oban light spectacular

OBAN'S town will be transformed into a bright and magnificent winter scene as the Oban Winter Festival starts to stage its most ambitious light show yet. The spectacle is part of a programme launched last Thursday, packed full of concerts, ceilidhs and social performances.

The event will run from November 22 to December 1 and will be a St Andrew's Day celebration.

The town will be illuminated with 200 local producers by and December 1 and will be a weekly market at Oban Quay, including special community of St Andrew's Day and a St Andrew's Day Show.

Following the light show the Corran Halls will open for a St Andrew's Day Grand Ceilidh. The Festival 'Fiesta' the following night 'Santas December' will feature a specially commissioned number of music and poetry created by students Adam O'Rourke who have been sent out to schools and post 'Santas Special'.

The soundtrack will be

performed by various local and regional acts. Children have entered the Oban area were invited to design The Big Lighters for the winter parade this year and therefore are also being invited to design a winter nativity scene to be shown and exhibit these entries in the Corran Halls by November 17 before the children are displayed throughout the town.

Among the other highlights this year are street markets, parades and fireworks.

Oban Winter Festival is funded by 1000 Scotland, Argyll and Highland Council, Highlands and Islands Council, Oban Community Fund and MacQueen Street Charitable Trust.

## 4 NEWS

# Winter festival set to impress

WITH a Grand Fiesta fireworks display, a star-studded ceilidh and a dazzling light show across Oban this year's Oban Winter Festival is set to impress.

Organisers have unveiled plans for the event, which will run from November 22 to December 1, and promise the biggest festival in 25 years throughout the Oban and Corran area.

Launching the festival on Friday, November 22, a light show will begin at McCaig's Tower from 7pm before a St Andrew's Day Winter Festival parade from 8pm to the Corran Halls.

A number of events that are keeping the children in the Corran Halls, which is open in the evening, will be held to mark the festival and create local excitement.

The year's festival will also incorporate a variety of '90s hits played to the town's young people in a special St Andrew's Day Light Show, which will be held from 8pm to 10pm. The light show will include the production of a light show across Oban Bay, which organisers say will be the best of its kind.

Following the light show the Corran Halls will host a ceilidh starting from 9pm. The event will feature local acts and will be an entertainment.

Keep an eye out for the full festival programme in the Oban News and Web.

of the town's '90s hit parade.

The festival will be '90s in style in Oban. Organisers will be offering a variety of all ages Oban High School Pipe Band will lead a winter parade from the Corran Halls at 8pm to the Corran Halls at Oban Quay. There, people are invited to mark the Grand Fiesta.

Oban Winter Festival organisers, including Linda Baskin, said they were looking forward to the 10-day event that was most recently held for St Andrew's Day in the town.

He said, the festival will be a success and will help to support the great town and that all of us should be proud of our skills. We will spread the festival and create local excitement.

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Keep an eye out for the full festival programme in the Oban News and Web.

# Winter begins in style with music, food and fireworks at festival

## Oban: Event brings business to town as thousands flock to markets

BY SUE RESTAN

Oban Winter Festival has been hailed a resounding success by organisers who say it attracted thousands of extra visitors to the Argyll town.

The 10-day festival - which started on November 22 and finished yesterday - involved more than 50 separate events.

Eleanor MacKinnon, who is one of the organisers, said: "The aim of the festival is to bring additional business into the town and we have had a very busy 10 days as it has been really successful."

"The markets have been

extremely busy and there has been lots of music involved."

She said there were more than 3,000 people at the Victorian market and the food market on the first weekend of the town's third winter festival.

Mrs MacKinnon added



HIGHLIGHTS: Fireworks heralded the end of the 10-day festival which included a Victorian market

that one of the festival highlights of the event was the St Andrew's Day ceilidh dance at Corran Hall on Saturday evening with music provided by Oban Pipe Band, Oban High School Pipe Band and Skip Innish.

The town's first winter festival was held in 2011 after a small group of locals decided the start of winter was a great chance to have a festival.

Since then, it has grown and the St Andrew's Day celebrations were included for the first time this year.

Mrs MacKinnon said: "It was just a fantastic night.

There was a real buzz in the town and a great sense of community."

The festivities were further enhanced by the addi-

tional Christmas lights along the Black Lynn by Stevenson Street and new, impressive and permanent lights on the tree east

side the Arnes Rockfield School.

And the grand finale of the festival was a fireworks and light display on the esplanade last night.

The specially commissioned artwork for the display was created from original works by two local artists - musician and composer Alan O'Rourke and genre-punk-historian Norman Russell.

Mrs MacKinnon added that the festival committee members were very grateful to everyone who helped make the event so successful.

All the money raised will go to various charities.

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Oban sea and air cadets with their lantern at the parade

## Yarn-bomb brightens play park

### COMMUNITY

A colourful "yarn bomb" has been dropped on an Argyll community play park to help raise money for new equipment.

Oban Community Playpark has been decorated with multi-coloured knitted and crocheted items created by nimble-fingers' craftpeople and locals who had never attempted the technique before.

Yarn-bombing is a colourful street art, where everyday items such as trees, lampposts and railings are covered in woolen items.

The work is normally the first one under the cover of darkness to protect the

identities of those involved, but those responsible for the Oban yarn-bomb took a different approach and involved the community.

Initially, seven lampposts were dressed in skirts and the swings were wrapped in 6ft leg warmers. Two

months and more than 300 hours of stitching later, a 32ft long banner with the message "Save Our Play Park Now" made up of 226 6in squares has been added.

Trees in the adjoining garden have also been

adorned with more than 100 pom-poms.

The 20-year-old park was closed briefly for safety reasons three years ago and the threat of losing the facility motivated a group of parents to campaign to replace equipment and restore the park, at an estimated cost of £400,000.

So far, the group has raised £23,000.

The yarn-bomb was the idea of artist Alex Strange and Lyndsay Elliott, who has two daughters and is chairman of Friends of Oban Community Playpark.

She said: "The play park needs to be replaced as there is a limit to the number of times it can be painted up to keep it safe."



Parents are raising money to revamp the play park



# A feast of fun for all the family

**O**BAN enjoys many titles: Capital of the West Highlands, Gateway to the Western Isles and - its most recent accolade - Scotland's Seafood Capital. Of course, the only way to put such plaudits to the ultimate test is to experience this beautiful tourist destination for yourself on a weekend break or week-long holiday.

Your first impressions undoubtedly will be of the majestic Lorn mountains, which offer a truly dramatic backdrop to the Victorian architecture of the harbour town. Cast your eye seawards not across Oban Bay and you'll spy the island of Kerrera, just one of the Outer Hebrides' jewels easily accessed from here, as well as Kerrera, there are Coll, Tresh and Lisnorn. Also just a ferry trip away is the Isle of Mull.

Oban, however, is a hub of activity itself and for those who like a holiday adventure, Stramash offers outdoor pursuits from Oban for all the family throughout the year. You can choose from high adrenalin sports that vary from canoeing to canyoning and gorge scrambling to coastering.

There is also the popular Atlantis Leisure Centre where you can swim and play football, tennis and archery.

To get an overview of Oban itself take the short walk up to McCaig's



Tower, the famous folly built by John Stuart McCaig, which boasts spectacular views over the bay. You can also stroll along Oban's Esplanade to Dunollie Castle, the 800 year old home of the Clan MacDougall.

In the meandering streets, visitors can indulge their passion for arts and crafts in the range of bespoke shops and boutiques filled with local artwork and jewellery. Remember, too, to take a tour of the whisky distillery.

And, if all this builds up an appetite,

there are plenty of cafes to stop for a snack, as well as fine restaurants where you can sample the Seafood Capital's freshly caught delicacies.

Or why not get out on to the Atlantic Ocean? You can join boat trips or sea kayaking tours, while at the Scottish Sea Life Sanctuary, children can feed sharks and explore marine displays.

With so much to see and do, you'll need time to take it all in: thankfully, there is a wide range of accommodation, from luxury hotels to cosy B&Bs.

## Music, parades and laughter at festival

November sees the return of the spectacular Oban Winter Festival. Kicking off on November 22, the festivities go on until December 1, as part of an annual extravaganza celebrating local culture.

This year will see the biggest Oban Winter Festival yet, with plans for stunning street parades, music and comedy from near and far, artists, fire art, traditional pipers and more.

As part of the St Andrew's Day Celebrations, new to the programme will be the Whisky Products Market held in the Oban Distillery Cask Room, while the Grand Caillech will feature Oban Pipe Band and Shqipinsh Celtic Band.

A St Andrew's Day Lightshow will be beamed across Oban's harbourside bay on November 30 and McCaig's Tower will light up on December 1 in a Festival finale featuring a soundscape of music and poetry created by local artists.



# OBAN

It's Closer Than You Think!



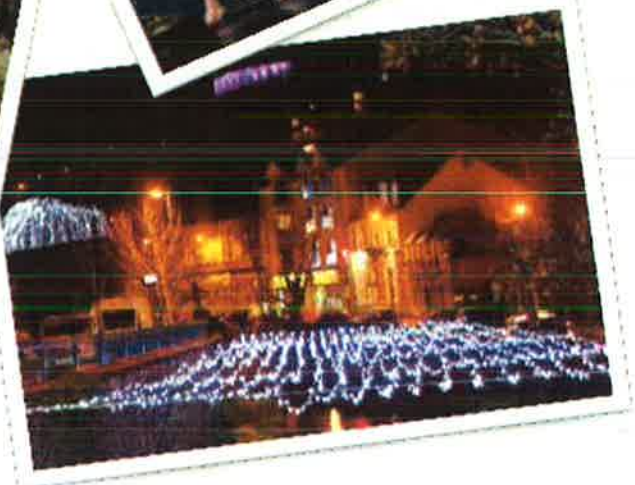

Visit [www.oban.org.uk/winter-festival](http://www.oban.org.uk/winter-festival)

Main Photo by Dennis Heathley [www.woolphoto.com](http://www.woolphoto.com)





# 2013 EVENT GALLERY





# MERRY CHRISTMAS OBAN



## OBAN WINTER FESTIVAL SPONSORS

The Oban Winter Festival is grateful to our sponsors for making the Festival possible.

Event Scotland

Argyll & Bute Council

Oban Common Good Fund

McQueen's Charitable Trust

Health and Wellbeing Network

Oban Cash for Kids

Rotary Club of Oban

The committee would like to thank the following people for their support.

Oban Distillery staff, The Caledonian Hotel, Oban Lions, The Rotary Club of Oban, Oban Express, Oban Times, Mediation Centre, Corran Halls Staff, VisitScotland Information Centre, Oban, Lorn Tourism Association, Oban Pipe Band, Oban High School Pipe Band, Feis, Hollow Mountain String Band, Oban Gaelic Choir, Oban Sequence Choir, Oban Community Singers, Air Training Corps, Sea Cadets, Argyll College, Local schools, Oban Marina Staff, Northern Lighthouse Board, Bookers Cash and Carry, James MacPherson Band, DMK Joinery, Photography kindly provided by - Kevin McGlynn, Stephen Lawson and David Mac Millan, Roads Department, Forestry Commission, Adam Cakebread and Martin Holzke for website. Lighting, Fergie MacIver and Steven Finlayson

All local business for decorating their windows, hosting events and special offers.

Finally to all the volunteers - too many to name -who gave their time making lanterns, helping at dance shows and concerts, painting faces, selling raffle tickets and assisting with the fabulous light shows. You all know who you are and we thank you.