

LOCHABER TIMES & OBAN TIMES

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Mallaig youngsters enjoy Six Nations



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Glencoe massacre



Clans gather to mark 333rd anniversary

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Hugs and smiles as teddy bears come out to play



Youngsters had an absolute ball at the Teddy Bears' Picnic in New Connection at the weekend, with teddy bear crisps, and fun and games on the menu. For the full story and more photographs, turn to page 5. Photograph: Iain Ferguson, alba.photos

LOCHABER COUNCILLOR UNDER FIRE

by Jamie Wills
editor@lochabertimes.co.uk

Fort William and Ardnamurchan councillor Andrew Baxter has been criticised by colleagues after he revealed the content of a private Lochaber councillors meeting in the name of transparency.

Writing on his Lochaber Voice website on February 11, Councillor Baxter said he was "shining a light" on monthly closed door area business meetings held between Lochaber's seven councillors.

The Liberal Democrat representative said that although the meetings did not involve formal decision-making, they did shape policy and council actions and it was therefore undemocratic to keep such discussions secret.

Summarising the latest meeting, Councillor Baxter said the group had spoken with Lochaber's new waste officer, as well as discussing

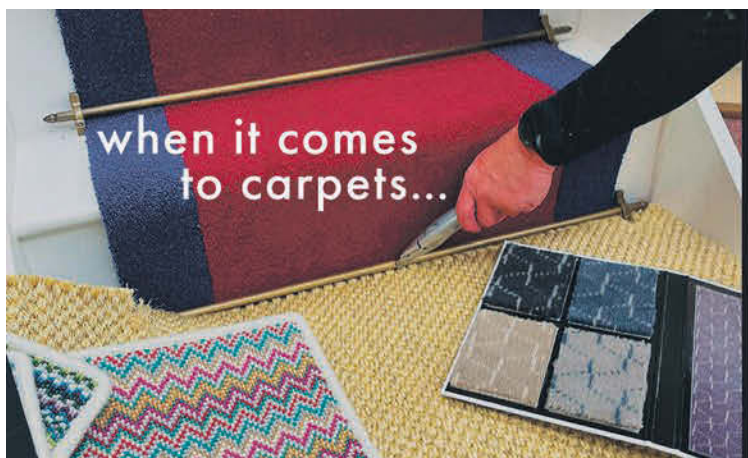
progress on improving Middle Street in Fort William and the effects of a trial speed reduction.

Fellow councillors were unimpressed by the move. Councillor Bill Lobban, convener of Highland Council, said that private meetings were important to allow discussions of confidential material, and that council decisions were made at formal meetings, all held in public.

He added that local members would need to assess their meeting operations in light of "the latest position".

Two of Councillor Baxter's fellow Lochaber representatives, Green Party councillors Andrew Baldrey and Kate Willis, also responded negatively, with Councillor Baldrey saying that Councillor Baxter – who was expelled from Highland Council's Independent group in 2020 – was "specialising in making himself unpopular".

"The situation is quite simple to me: the Lochaber
Continued on page 5.



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