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Ahoy, mateys: sailing students welcome trust's chairman

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Professor George Fleming, right, is seen here with the students and Kintyre Seasports operations and development manager Jamie Rodgers, second right, alongside the charitable organisation's flagship sailing training vessel, which has been named John Mather.

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CASE TO BE PREPARED FOR NEW SCHOOL

by Hannah O'Hanlon

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South Kintyre's councillors have reacted with cautious optimism to the news that plans for a new Campbeltown primary school could be one step closer to becoming a reality.

At a meeting last Thursday, Argyll and Bute Council's community services committee agreed to request that an initial report is prepared, outlining the way forward and potential for a proposal which would allow for an initial business case to be formulated to replace Campbeltown's Dalntober and Castlehill primary schools.

The report is to be presented to a meeting of

the community services committee for deliberation "in early 2023".

It comes after a motion requesting that this be done, submitted by Councillor Donald Kelly and seconded by Councillor John Armour, was passed at a meeting of the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands area committee in December.

According to Councillor Kelly's motion, Dalntober and Castlehill primary schools, which are both 19th century buildings, are no longer fit for purpose.

The buildings are said to have numerous continuous problems, including dampness, sealed shut windows, broken windows, roofing insulation appearing on children's desks and leaking roofs - one of which led to

an unexpected ceiling collapse at Dalntober. Following last week's decision by the community services committee to further the investigation

into a replacement for the schools, Councillor Kelly said: "I am pleased that, at long last, the council has agreed to move this project forward."

"However, I am under no illusion that much work requires to be done to make this project become a reality."

"We will require to keep the pressure on the council at every turn to ensure a new school is delivered for our community."

Councillor Armour added: "I am delighted that the community services committee agreed to take forward the proposal from Councillor Kelly and myself and I look forward to a report

coming to a community services meeting in the very near future."

Fellow ward councillor Tommy Macpherson said: "Would Campbeltownians be wrong in thinking there is an element of déjà vu to all this? Whilst a report will now be generated, the status quo remains; that of no identifiable funds, with all three school [Castlehill, Dalntober and Campbeltown Grammar School] intake rolls in decline."

"This time round, South Kintyre shares causes in common, and yet the reality remains. We must face the actuality of the present financial situation and be pragmatic to the prospects any time soon of a new unified primary school and early learning centre."

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Flagship sailing training vessel named after funder

by Hannah O'Hanlon
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Kintyre Seasports' flagship sailing training vessel has been named John Mather after one of the charitable organisation's biggest funders.

The wayfarer sailing dinghy, the largest in the sailing training fleet, was officially named during a visit from Glasgow-based Professor George Fleming, chairman of the John Mather Trust, last week.

The John Mather Trust is a charity for the benefit of young people in the West of Scotland to get a foothold in a career.

Kintyre Seasports was formed in 2017 to connect education providers, community groups and watersports clubs to break barriers and provide health, well-being and economic benefits for all.

Thanks to the John Mather Trust's support, which began in 2018, Kintyre Seasports was able to resource a sailing instructor training programme, in partnership with Campbeltown Grammar School and community organisations looking after disadvantaged young people.

The programme provides personal development and leads to internationally recog-

nised qualifications, offering trainees a new employability route, irrespective of academic attainment.

Last Friday morning, joined by Kintyre Seasports chairman Campbell Fox and operations and development manager Jamie Rodgers, Professor Fleming met the first cohort of Campbeltown Grammar School students to take part in the sailing training.

He told the youngsters about John Mather, a man who spent his whole working life with Clydeport, going from "tea boy" to chief executive after being encouraged to carry out an apprenticeship in accounting, despite not doing particularly well at school.

Having achieved success, John used the money he accumulated to set up a fund to help other young people in the west of Scotland to kickstart their careers.

The John Mather Trust was established after his sudden death, aged 62, in 2001 and it continues to support college apprenticeships, as well as individuals and groups supporting individuals with the ambition and talent to become technicians, engineers, business leaders, scientists, musicians and artists.



"What we're doing here is enabling Kintyre Seasports to train young people in boat handling and seafaring in the hope that you will recreationally enjoy the sea and some of you will actually move on to become merchant seamen, or navy personnel, or even coxswain of the lifeboat," Professor Fleming said to the students.

"We continue to support Campbell and Jamie in getting Kintyre Seasports to grow and flourish and we are very keen to see the link between the school."

Professor Fleming, whose mother was born in Saddell, added that the trust also supported Campbeltown Brass to

The new vessel is considerably larger than the dinghies in which the students completed their sailing training, seen here.

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into your village."

Mr Fox thanked Professor Fleming for visiting and added: "I think it's fair to say that if it hadn't been for the trust, I'm not sure if you guys would have had this opportunity so soon.

"We are now a recognised training centre and that's a good platform for the kind of career connections that Professor Fleming mentioned so we're very grateful.

"The vision and support of the trust is helping us make a real difference to young lives."

Mr Fox also thanked Campbeltown Sailing Club for its support of the sailing instructor programme.

The youngsters were also able to explore the newly-named John Mather boat, a vessel considerably larger than the dinghies in which they completed their sailing training.

Dr Rodgers explained that as well as being used for more advanced activities, the boat can be beneficial for beginners.

"There is far more you can do with this boat to take their skills to a higher level," he said. "You can't sail this boat without teamwork, so it's fantastic for developing the more advanced sailing skills and life skills.

"What it is also useful for is if we have any sailing participants who are nervous about getting in a boat or are physically less able; this boat can comfortably carry four adults so we can put them in this boat with an experienced volunteer or instructor and it's a more relaxed way of getting afloat."