



GIGHA NEWS



Welcome to the February 2022 Gigha News

Dear Member,

Please find enclosed this month's newsletter and a copy of January 2022 Board minutes.

Regards,

Ian Wilson

Chair

For and behalf of The Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust

Members Meeting

An IGHM Members meeting will take place at the Gigha Village Hall on Thursday 3rd March 2022 at 7:00pm. The main purpose of this meeting is to provide Members with a general update on recent IGHM activity. The updated agenda is as follows:

1. Chair welcome
2. Summary of 20 years
3. Financial update
4. Housing and Estate update
5. Renewables update
6. Development update
7. Gateway update
8. Ranger update
9. Achamore Gardens update

There will be an opportunity for Members to ask questions during the meeting. Should you be unable to attend the meeting or do not wish to raise a question during the meeting, your questions can be submitted to chair@gigha.org.uk or the Trust office. Please note that the meeting audio will be recorded for the purpose of transcribing the minutes. If you do not wish to be recorded, please notify the Office ahead of the meeting or indicate this when you arrive at the meeting. The recording will be held in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 and will only be used for the purpose of transcribing the minutes. The recording will be stored at the Trust Office and access to the recording will be restricted to Trust Directors and Office Staff only. The recording will not be shared

with anyone out with the Trust and the recording will be deleted once the minutes have been approved at the next Members Meeting. The minutes will be circulated to Members with the March 2022 newsletter.

We ask that all Scottish Government Covid-19 guidance that is in place at the time of the meeting is followed. This may require wearing a face covering and signing in for Track and Trace purposes. You may remove your mask to speak at the meeting.

20th Anniversary of the Community Buyout

Invites have been sent to all Gigha households for 20th anniversary celebrations. An outdoor ceremony will be held outside the Craft Units where the flag will be raised, followed by refreshments at the Gigha Hotel. If you are a Gigha resident and haven't yet received your invite, please contact the office. RSVP slips need to be returned by Friday 4th March.

Zero Carbon Gigha

The Zero Carbon Gigha group are hosting an open day on Saturday 12th March 2022 in the Village Hall, which will be open to all community members and local businesses.

The open day will be an opportunity for the group to promote different initiatives that households and businesses can take to reduce their carbon footprint, as well as promoting other larger-scale opportunities for island wide development. Initiatives include tree planting proposals; tree growing (from seed); water saving ideas; re-use, re-cycle and repair ideas; composting; low energy lighting bulbs to trial / Dark Skies light pollution information; Trust update on EV Charging and other low carbon initiatives; and food ideas / recipe swap. Please look out for further information nearer the time.

Property for sale

Kinnererach House is now on the market for offers over £195,000. For full details or to arrange a viewing please contact Stewart, Balfour and Sutherland on 01586 553737, email sales@sbsproperty.co.uk or visit www.sbsproperty.co.uk



SS E T A I R N S G

It's official - Gigha is one of Scotland's best places for stargazing!

We were delighted with the news last month that our Dark Sky Theatre in the north of the island has been designated as a Dark Sky Discovery site by the UK Dark Sky Discovery Partnership.

Gigha's site is Milky Way class, the highest designation, because it is possible to see our galaxy, the Milky Way, very clearly on a dark cloudless night. This award makes the Isle of Gigha one of the top twenty most remote zones in Scotland which have been designated as a Dark Sky Discovery Site in the Milky Way class and which also hosts community events.

When it comes to optimum star-gazing conditions, the Isle of Gigha rarely disappoints. Located far away from the obscuring haze of light pollution, here you can gaze up at celestial wonders with just your naked eye.



Dark Skies Gigha Quiz at Gigha Hotel

Dark Sky Gigha are delighted to invite you to join us for our first fundraiser Pub Quiz so why not get a team together and show us what you know. Five rounds covering General knowledge, sport, movies, music and Gigha places... some with a space theme! Join us at Gigha Hotel on Saturday 5th March at 7pm. £5 entry for teams up to 5 players.

Countryside Ranger's Photo of the Month



A moment of sunshine in between the storms.

Filming for Visit Gigha Promo Video

Filming will be taking place on the island from the 10th-14th of April for a new Visit Gigha promo video. Stuart Ashley and his team from Aerial Creative Productions are looking for volunteers who would be willing to offer their time and be featured in this exciting project.

In particular, they are looking to feature people taking part in these activities-

- Kayaking
- Wild swimming
- Horse riding

Anybody wishing to get involved in the filming should email marketing@gigha.org.uk to express their interest and gain further information.

The Hub

Exercise equipment for the Hub has now been purchased with funding from the CalMac Community Fund. The Hub is situated behind the Trust Office and will be available shortly to use through membership only. The Hub offers a kitchen / lounge area including Wi-Fi and television (with Disney+ sign in required). Exercise equipment is available in the other areas consisting of rowing machine; cross trainer; exercise bike; weights; weight bench and yoga mats. To enquire about membership please contact shona@gigha.org.uk or telephone 01583 505390.

Mail on Sunday Article

A press release in the Mail on Sunday written by journalist Mark Howarth stating that the Trust drew down fraudulent bounce back loans under GTL and GREL was printed on 30th January 2022. Fiona McGlynn of RA Clement Associates contacted the Trust on the evening of Monday 31st January to let us know of the press release and to offer her support and reassurance in this matter from their point of view as Auditors of the Trust and its Subsidiaries.

We duly contacted the Bank of Scotland on Tuesday 1st February and alerted them to the article and asked if they could investigate this on our behalf to confirm that they were still in agreement to offer us these loans on the terms that were originally set out. They thanked us for reaching out to them and agreed they would discuss this internally and come back to us.

Our Customer Relations Manager contacted us again on Wednesday 9th February 2022 and confirmed, following the internal investigation they were satisfied that we were entitled to all 3 bounce back loans and happy that the year prior to applying for these, all companies had sufficient turnover to allow us to draw down the full £50k each. They also confirmed that we were able to apply for all 3 separate loans despite preparing 'group' accounts.

**Achamore Gardens By Morgan E Russell
Modern Apprentice**

Since planting 2000+ bulbs during our bulb planting weekend in November 2021, a dithering of crocus and iris have braved the gales and are already in bloom up the main drive and in pots. In March we will witness the full effect of new additions such as Crocus 'Orange Monarch' in the Malcolm Allan Garden, the new Narsissi scattered through the woodlands and a variety of bulbs in our new 'pottarium' in the walled garden.



Toward the end of February, Achamore Gardens will see it's Kickstart employee, Kacper, start his Modern Apprenticeship. Kacper has been with us for 6 months and has been a fantastically green finger minion, helping with drainage maintenance, bulb planting, drystone walling and much more. He will be focusing his study and working time around the pond to try and improve its flow and flora- a mammoth task so it's a good thing he seems at home in waders.



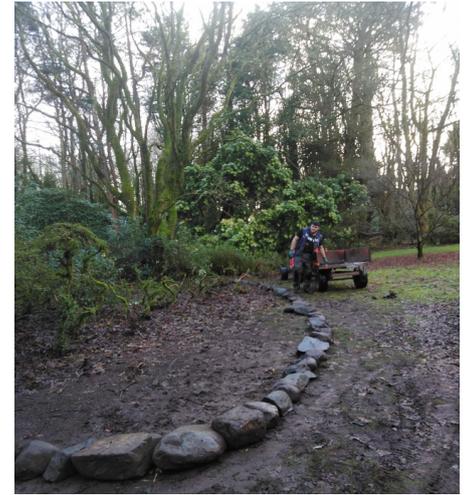
Team Apprentice (Kacper and myself) have started mapping the drainage for the full site after investigation and improvements were completed by Tim Lister & Co.

As part of my role as an Apprentice, I have also been encouraged to focus on a specific area within Achamore. It was decided I'd focus on rejuvenating the Malcolm Allan Garden, improving its diversity and interest throughout the year.



Achamore Gardens continued

Visitors here will notice various Rhododendron have been cut back severely, this is to renovate the shrubs shape and encourage plenty of new basal growth. The space might feel bare just now but by introducing new plants, these gaps will be filled promptly. We've set up a stone border to help protect the ground from foot fall but also to help give a glimpse of what is to come. While working on the shelter belt just south of this space I noticed two interesting Rhododendron had been successfully layered by a previous gardener. Now big enough to plant elsewhere these layered Rhodos are perfect examples of how to preserve the Achamore collection and highlight the importance of this method of propagation, especially in the Malcolm Allan Garden which has been continually damaged by high winds over the years.



Countryside Ranger

Wild, windy and wet weather. I think we are all praying for some sunshine and drier days at the moment, as these storms and flooded fields seem to be relentless. But, our wildlife doesn't seem to mind. We have had two separate sightings of white tailed sea eagles, a golden eagle, prowling peregrine falcon, and a huge abundance of seabird species – especially our winter visitor, the great northern diver. It's not just the wildlife of Gigha that were particularly active this month, the Ranger Service has had an AMAZING level of engagement from the community throughout February. THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HAS JOINED US!



Since the last newsletter we have had our two busiest Forest School sessions. First, to mark RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch, where the children led their own walk around Achamore Gardens searching for different species of birds from sight and sound... the great tit sounds like "tea-cher tea-cher"! One amazing participant made the most fantastic bird hide and we finished the session with the compulsory marshmallow toasting. Our second was a brilliant afternoon planting trees in the woodland that houses the new path on Achamore Farm, as well as tucking into warm scones and jam. The sessions have been so well attended, and have been so much fun!

In the form of more structured volunteering, weekly sessions have allowed us to carry out some habitat management. Again, along the new path on Achamore Farm we have been busy reinforcing woodland edges and clearing the area to improve woodland structure to support both farmland and woodland birds, as well as to improve ground flora diversity for insect and butterfly species. In the coming weeks we hope to plant hedgerow species along the path to provide enhanced habitat for our birdlife.

Additionally, the Ranger Service organised a tree planting day, where a ferocious group of volunteers must have been close to setting a world record by planting 265 trees in less than 90 minutes! The Conservation Volunteers (charitable organisation), OVO Energy, and Gigha's Coast and Countryside Group kindly donated a fabulous selection of native tree species including oak, alder, hornbeam and downy birch to improve shelter belts and biodiversity in Achamore Gardens.



Countryside Ranger continued

Our volunteer sessions have also given us a little success story which has been wonderful to be a part of. In January 2021, Poll Mor, east of Cuddyport Bay, was inundated with coloured plastic, fishing gear, rope, boxes, and agricultural bags. Over the past 12 months, a combination of



keen residents, monthly volunteer sessions and one beach clean event have now allowed the area to flourish and the litter is finally under control. The surrounding reedbeds have increased, expanding on to the beach and are a fantastic habitat for birds, otters, invertebrates and water voles. They can also regulate water levels preventing flooding, and they act as a buffer zone for polluted waters by turning toxic chemicals into nitrates, which are less harmful for our environment. An added bonus... the beach is now a much nicer place for the community to enjoy! We will also hold a volunteer conservation morning. We will be working on clearing the vegetation around the cist opposite the primary school which was recently uncovered when Historic Environment Scotland and Archaeology Scotland came to visit. It's so exciting that we are able to conserve Gigha's rich historical heritage, especially as it's the engagement and enthusiasm of the community that are enabling this preservation process.

If you're interested in volunteering in any capacity with the Ranger Service, ping me a message on Facebook, by email ranger@gigha.org.uk, or by phone 07596 855398!

Gateway to Gigha

This month, our contractors Arran Footpaths & Forestry have been putting the finishing touches to Phase 1 pathworks – just a couple of snagging issues to address and we'll be there! In due course we will be signposting the network, including these built routes and the yet-to-be created Phase 2 paths.

Speaking of Phase 2, we are now receiving stone that be used as steppingstones in wet areas and stone steps in the steeper stretches. As I write, a helicopter lift to carry stone to locations that cannot be accessed with vehicles should have been underway, but due to the wild weather, it has been postponed until 14th and 15th March. In the meantime, Tim Lister will start on the Achamore Gardens easy access route, and Scott and his team have been bagging stone at the quarry that will be used on the path to Dun Chibhich.

Work with our heritage consultants continues and we are hoping we will have final versions of our interpretation panels and wayfinders ready by the end of next month. Planning permission for the stone plinths for the panels has been lodged, and we hope that these can be built before the summer season kicks off.

We had visits from Historic Environment Scotland and Archaeology Scotland this month, and both are planning a return in March, along with the Ogham experts from Glasgow University. Training and activities are being planned and an 'Adopt-a-Monument' initiative developed around our historic spiritual sites: Kilchatten and perhaps Ridh a'Chaibheil at Tarbert. During February's visit we uncovered the Bronze Age cist opposite the school, which might be the subject of some activities. It just shows the depth of history hidden on our doorstep!

Finally, the remainder of our e-bikes will be delivered soon, and we have firm plans now for the purchase of adaptive e-bikes. More to come on that in March's newsletter... craig@gigha.org.uk, 0755 469 2799.

Achamore Gardens Funding

£30,000 has been secured from the Argyll and Bute Council infrastructure fund to support access improvements at Achamore Gardens. This includes re-opening and repairing the viewpoint to Springbank paths, upgrading the Camillia Walk path, and tidying the South Walled Garden paths. This is in addition to the Easy Access path which is being funded by the Gateway to Gigha project. We are delighted to have secured this funding which will allow more people to access and enjoy Achamore.

EV & PV Projects

We previously noted that £75,600 was secured from the Island Communities Fund to deliver 10 ebikes and a solar PV system at the Activity Centre. This project is now underway and the funding secured is able to support an additional solar PV system for the Campsite building.

HIE have awarded us 100% funding to install an EV charge point at the Campsite, which will be a fantastic addition towards helping reduce our carbon footprint.

Both projects are being delivered by 1 contractor and works are expected to commence over the coming months. More details will be shared as they become available.

Story Telling - Paid Opportunity with Scottish Island Passport

The creators of the Scottish Islands Passport project are looking for keen storytellers to share their stories and help celebrate the Year of Scotland's Stories.

Their spring 2022 release of the app will feature islanders sharing stories about their islands. These can be folk tales, historic stories or stories of daily life. You don't need fancy recording equipment – just a good story teller, someone who can speak clearly, a quiet location and a decent mobile phone is all that is required. The Scottish Islands Passport team are paying £75 per 2-3 minute story (they would need both the recording and a transcript).

'We are looking for stories which tell the listener something interesting about your island that might not otherwise learn from tourist information already on the island – for example, we are not looking for you to simply repeat a story which is available on an information board.

You are welcome to tell stories of your own experiences of the island, for example, what it was like travelling to school via ferry, or your memories of island events.- Scottish Islands Passport'.

If this is something that you would like to get involved in, please send an email expressing your interest to marketing@gigha.org.uk for further information on how to sign up.

Wind Turbine update

The Enercon turbine has been turning for the last couple of weeks now but unfortunately it is only in heat mode after all the repairs were finally carried out. The intention was to put her into generator mode on Monday 21st, but due to high winds this has not happened yet, but finally, we are getting closer to getting her back into production. The insurance claim and compensation claim are still ongoing.

The Dancing Ladies are also awaiting parts as there has been a new hydraulic error appearing on all of them, something that we had not had before. Parts were due to be arriving this week but again they too have been held back with the poor weather.

Argyll Recovery scrap car service

Argyll Recovery are now in a position to take cars away with a £50 payout for complete vehicles, if they can be moved to the mainland for collection. Any vehicles required to be uplifted off the island will incur a small cost to cover the ferry and time away from the mainland. Contact Argyll Recovery via Messenger or call Keith on 07706 551809 to make arrangements.

Gigha and Cara Parish Church

The next service in Gigha church is on 13th March with James MacLellan. All are welcome.

Because there is a general shortage of ministers in the Church of Scotland all presbyteries are having to make new plans. Argyll presbytery have produced a draft plan which initially has to be discussed by the session. We have been asked to let congregations know what is happening. For us the plan suggest that we be united rather than linked with Clachan and A'Chleit and Skipness and then linked with Tarbert and Kilberry with one minister plus a local ordained minister or reader. If you want to know more please contact one of the Elders.



Our Gigha and Me

Everything is progressing well with the Our Gigha and Me Project. We were disappointed not to have been able to hold further events with the community to develop and discuss the Project, but we've had lots of help and suggestions following our requests, so thank you all very much. Our plans next are to 'launch' the more active part of the Project on Saturday March 26th at 2.30pm at the Village Hall. This event will again be drop-in, and everyone is very welcome to come along. On the Saturday we plan to have the Furbochs there and the story, and you are very welcome to have a copy if you wish. It will also give you a chance to see the Furboch's shepherds' hut with nature activities inside, before they all go out to their first location for you all to find and have fun with.

We also plan to give out little research boxes to the children which will contain fun tasks to do over the Spring, geared towards pre-school up to primary school age. Alongside giving these to our local children we would also be really keen to offer these to any children who visit regularly, perhaps to see grandparents or other relatives. Don't worry if they cannot manage on the 26th, someone can come along on their behalf or get in touch with myself or Casey-Jo to reserve a box.

We can discuss more fully what we hope to gain from these activities on the 26th but as you'll be aware that we are keen to determine whether we can see a link between the use specific nature interventions and wellbeing. Supporting us with this is researcher Dr Louise Senior, who is in regular contact and is desperately keen to come to Gigha soon.

We are also hopeful the den will be constructed in the woods between the Fire Station and Village Hall by the 26th. This was planned to be a gathering space for children or families and there have been some other great ideas already about what it could be used for, suggestions such as musical equipment, natural play, a chill-out area ... Casey-Jo and I plan to take a bit of a back seat with this and let this develop over time naturally with what's important to the children and their families.

We'd just like to say thank you again for all the good wishes and support we've had so far; it's really encouraging to see such interest in this. Remember to save the date of Saturday March 26th, and also that this and all our events are open to everyone. Despite the interventions being specific to young children and families, there is the potential for wider positive impact to all of us. Also, please remember to get in touch if there are visiting children you know who may like to get involved with this, would hate to not have enough boxes! The Project will run from beginning April right through early summer although the Furbochs, their shepherds' hut and the den will remain following the evaluation of the project, August 2022.

Best wishes, Maggie Wilkieson (01583 505234) & Casey-Jo Zammitt (07851 750488)

Local Events

Introduction to Line Dancing in Gigha Village Hall at 7:30 pm on Monday 7th and 14th March.

Table Tennis in Gigha Village Hall on Thursdays at 7:30 pm.

Crafty Gigha in the Church every Wednesday between 2 and 4pm.

Also on occasionally is **Yoga, Tia Chi and Singing** – look out for updates on the Gigha Noticeboard Facebook page and on local noticeboards.

Main Contacts

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Achamore Gardens: gardens@gigha.org.uk

Countryside Ranger: ranger@gigha.org.uk

Marketing: marketing@gigha.org.uk