

# ISLE OF GIGHA HERITAGE TRUST

# NewsLetter August 2024

The IGHTR Board meet the third Monday of every month; therefore, for any correspondence to be considered at these meetings, we ask for it to be submitted at least 1 week prior to give the Board time to review. Correspondence sent within 1 week of the Board meeting will be delayed for review until the following month meeting. Anonymous correspondence will not be considered by the Board.

Contact us by emailing [directors@gigha.org.uk](mailto:directors@gigha.org.uk)

## Members Meeting

The next IGHTR Members Meeting will be held at 7pm on Thursday 12th September in Gigha Village Hall. A calling notice and agenda has been circulated to Members. If you have not received this, please get in touch with the office.

## Gigha Community Fund

Heartstart have been awarded £704 towards the purchase of a training defibrillator, with the aim of teaching the community simple skills that save lives. Heartstart is a charity, and a partner organisation of Save a life for Scotland, promoting and developing basic emergency support throughout Scotland.

## Dark Skies Gigha

Many thanks to the crowd of folks who made it to the Dark Skies Theatre for our annual Perseids Party. A few of the less camera shy posed for a picture - we loved meeting everyone! As usual, Dr Chris Leigh our astronomer was on hand to help us spot shooting stars, navigate the night sky and explain all about meteors. We are grateful to the Campsite staff who encouraged lots of families to come and join us. Also, to Per and Monica for an absolutely delicious brunch the next day at Achamore House.

Chris will be back in the autumn to launch a new series of community astronomy club sessions. We are looking for feedback about the most suitable day of the week and time for these as we want to give all ages from 8yrs+ the best chance to come along and enjoy the fun. Chris is especially keen to train up some STEM Ambassadors if our island young adults have an interest in science, technology and astronomical engineering. Let us know via a comment on our Dark Skies Gigha Facebook page.

Also, if you would like to join in organising or hosting for our upcoming Dark Skies Festival, please let us know via our [dark.skies.gigha@gmail.com](mailto:dark.skies.gigha@gmail.com) email. If you have ideas or want to offer something over the festival weekend, please also let us know - we are open to ideas and opportunities to collaborate on the theme of Celestial Stories. We look forward to releasing programme details soon.

## Dark Skies Gigha Perseids Party



## Save the date!

Friday 6th September – Quiz in Village Hall

Saturday 7th September – Party in Village Hall to celebrate Lynn Cullen

Saturday 2nd November – Fundraising Auction

Friday 15th – Monday 18th November – Dark Skies Festival

## Isle of Gigha Ranger Service

Well we cannot say August has been in any way wonderful when it comes to the weather. Wet, wet, wet. But... August has provided some fabulous jellyfish sightings including blue, moon, barrel and lion's mane, all found on one beach in the south! These are incredible creatures, despite their stingy nature they're made up of 95% water, don't have a brain, lungs or a heart, and move by contracting their watery muscles and squirting water in the opposite direction. Fun!



This has been one whopper of a month for volunteering. Our on-island dream team have been busy managing the Himalayan balsam in the village, and making some awesome discoveries during our monthly "bioblitz" in Achamore Gardens.



Each month we survey as many species as we can find in the Gardens, and this month we spotted plenty of Red Admiral and Peacock butterflies, a queen bumblebee, dragonfly and damselfly nymphs, and a lovely sparrowhawk.



This year we have also seen the return of the Edinburgh Young Walkers who came to help us out and explore the island. It was a weekend of "invasives", firstly starting with the balsam in the village, then heading into the Fire Station Wood to remove Sitka Spruce saplings and other vegetation that is starting to take over the path edges. The rain held us off for one day, but the team were back with full force at the viewpoint in Achamore Gardens where they worked super hard to remove high vegetation that is restricting that beautiful view out west. We are so grateful for EYW joining us again this year, we cannot thank them enough and hope this will become an annual visit.



## Isle of Gigha Ranger Service

In the coming weeks we will be starting our Adult Autumn Sessions that will see us have some grown-up fun in our woodlands. Please keep an eye on social media and on all the regular noticeboards for details and dates.



We recently had a visit from Archaeologist, Clare Ellis, who came to shed some light and advice on work that we could do to improve the longevity and visibility of the heritage in Kilchattan Chapel. Upon Clare's recommendations we would like to survey the chapel floor to record the gravestones that are being lost to the continual growth of vegetation, with the involvement of Gigha Primary School. This would mean removing the layer of top soil, and producing some artistic and formal recordings that will help us create a future project to further restore the gravestones in the coming years. We would love to hear what the community think of this proposal. Please get in touch at [ranger@gigha.org.uk](mailto:ranger@gigha.org.uk) or on 07596855398.



## **\*\*Auction\*\***

Saturday 2nd November 2024 in the Village Hall at 2pm.

Please bring your donations to the Village Hall on Friday 1st November between 5pm and 6.30pm.

Get clearing out before Christmas!!! PLEASE NOTE: No clothes or books.

Viewing, coffees/teas/cakes from 1.00pm on the day, further information to follow.

## Gigha and Cara Parish Church

Services in Gigha Church are currently held twice a month, on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month. From time to time there may be other services such as when there is a 5th Sunday in the month. On the 5th Sunday in September there will be a joint service with the other churches in the parish, Skipness, Clachan, A'Chleit or Gigha. September 29th will be a joint service at Skipness at 11.30am. This will be the Harvest Thanksgiving service and communion. We will decorate the Gigha Church as usual for Harvest and gifts of nonperishable goods will be donated to the Gigha Food Pantry.

Services for September at 11am:-

8th September with the Minister Rev Lyn

22nd September with Julie and Kenny Wilson

29 September at 11.30am Harvest Thanksgiving and Communion at Skipness

## Gigha Primary School & Early Learning Centre

Pupils returned to school almost two weeks ago and have been busy settling in to the new term. We have been very excited to have our new Class Teacher, Miss Wilkieson, join us and pupils have been enjoying lots of settling in and 'getting to know you' activities.

This term we are driving forward our Rights Respecting Schools Approach as part of our target to achieve our Silver Award this year. The UNCRC Article 31 states that 'Pupils have the right to take part in play, culture and arts' and last week we prepared for the Roots and Industry show, an event which pupils really enjoy taking part in every year. We went on a visit to Skipness Castle and collected lots of interesting pieces of driftwood from the beach which we later decorated. We were very proud of our pupils creative designs with one even achieving second prize in a very competitive category. We also harvested our produce from the garden with the ELC winning second place for their red potatoes. Pupils from both the school and ELC also won awards for their Angel slice and we all enjoyed sharing this when we came back to school on Monday.

This term, following a request from the pupils, our topic is Ancient Egypt. Over the next six weeks all pupils will learn about the history and geography of the country as well as ways in which this historical time period differed to our lives today. If anyone has any artefacts linked to the topic that they would be prepared to share with our pupils they would really enjoy seeing these.

Finally, we would like to invite you to our Big Scottish Breakfast on Thursday 12th September from 9-10am to raise money for the STV Children's Appeal, raising money to tackle poverty with Kelloggs. On the day we will be serving bacon, sausage and egg sandwiches with a cup of tea or coffee. We would love for as many of you to join us as possible to raise money for this cause.

Kind regards, Mrs Vipurs, Headteacher.



## Social Enterprise Awards Scotland

We're excited to share that the Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust are a finalist at the 2024 Social Enterprise Scotland Awards. We've been shortlisted in the "Social Enterprise of the Year" Award sponsored by Keegan and Pennykid. Winners will be announced on 7 November at the Scottish Parliament.

## Development Update

**Helipad** – McFadyens Contractors have completed the surfacing of the access track and reinstatement of the surrounding area. The only works remaining to be completed is the paint markings. Once this is completed, an official opening ceremony will be held.

**Hotel** – Stuart MacDonald Builders have been awarded the contract to complete the bar renovation works which is expected to be completed before Christmas. Electricians have been in to assess the property and shortly will quote for any rewiring requirements and a new heating system. The maintenance team have been tasked with insulating external walls and replacing some windows. There is some external funding available to assist with the cost of these works.

**Housing** – The housing project continues to progress well. The drainage system is still to be installed which may cause some temporary disruption and closure to the main playpark entrance, however alternative routes will be signposted.

**MUGA** – We are still waiting for planning permission approval before any works can progress.

### \*\*\* SMALL HOLDING OPPORTUNITY\*\*\*

#### ACHAVINISH FARMHOUSE & LAND

The Trust are offering a rare opportunity to lease a small holding which includes a 3-bedroom farmhouse, outbuildings and approximately 22 acres of agricultural land.

To register your interest and find out more about this exciting opportunity, please email [shona@gigha.org.uk](mailto:shona@gigha.org.uk) or telephone 01583 505390. A Marketing Pack and viewings information will be issued upon request. The deadline for applications will be 5pm Monday 30th September.



## Gigha Community Council

Date of next meeting 25th September 2024 6pm Gigha Primary School.

Gigha Community Council updates and minutes are available on their Facebook page.

Email: [isleofgighacommunitycouncil@groups.outlook.com](mailto:isleofgighacommunitycouncil@groups.outlook.com)

### Broadband for Gigha

The Scottish Government made a commitment that every property in Scotland should receive broadband of at least 30Mb/s. Despite a £600m procurement won by Openreach, Gigha has not been included in their coverage plans. To address the issue of unserved areas, the Government is offering grants of up to £5,000 per premises to use an alternative supplier. The grants are designed to be aggregated to form the capital budget to build new infrastructure.

Scotnet operate several high-speed broadband networks across Scotland and would love to bring high-speed services to Gigha. Using a combination of fibre and radio technology, we would aim to deliver 100Mb/s services at a typical monthly cost for residential customers of £34.99. We are being supported by the Scottish Government, Argyll & Bute Council and HIE, and hope that the community on Gigha are interested in joining this project. Ultimately the network build will only progress if sufficient interest is shown. We appreciate that there are different levels of internet usage from home to home, however most properties have some sort of internet connection, and the typical cost is likely to be similar or greater to our pricing - for a much slower and less reliable service. We are aware that some people may be in contract, and we are therefore offering 6 months free service on a 12 month contract, or 12 months free on a 24 month contract - this should negate any contractual penalties associated with moving provider.

Gigha Community Council plan to hold an event on Gigha soon and hope to meet the community and gain support for these plans.

In the mean time, if you'd like to register interest, please visit [www.scotnet.co.uk/gigha](http://www.scotnet.co.uk/gigha) and complete the online form.

### Achamore Gardens

#### **Words from the First Gardener, Morgan Russell, who has worked at Achamore Gardens after it started it's renovation journey.**

Over the last three and half years Achamore Gardens has undergone considerable change at the hands of staff, contractors and volunteers. The gardens are hugely grateful and fortunate to have been revived by so many hardworking people, many of whom have volunteered countless hours of personal time to rescue the gardens from monstrous brambles, abundant sycamores and numerous invasive non-natives. On a more personal note, Achamore Gardens have been a place for me to cut my horticultural teeth, discover my plantmanship passions and develop my own leadership and teaching practices. Being allowed to experiment freely and gradually implement improvements means that the changes we've achieved in the gardens are unique to the space and often consider biodiversity, plant conservation, design aesthetics and practical maintenance. From path building to bulb planting, meadow creation to tree felling, planting into borders to wood chipping, daily maintenance to future planning, what the small team of gardeners and volunteers have managed to achieve at Achamore is remarkable. It has been an honour to work with a group of people from many different backgrounds and interests and I hope I'll see you pottering around in the gardens in days to come. I will definitely not be a stranger to Achamore.

## Achamore Gardens continued

Throughout my time working at Achamore I have held the hat of apprentice, gardener, and finally, first gardener at the start of this soggy Summer. I've been allowed a huge amount of creative freedom across the site which ranges from creating hanging planters, building feature plant supports, chainsaw carving, designing flower beds, developing the Malcolm Allan Garden and setting the vision for some of our largest dead hedges - all of which have had input from staff and enthusiastic volunteers. These highlights have really helped to support the plant collection and sometimes promote the local ecosystem by providing habit and food for wildlife.

Path works have helped to elevate the gardens and provide a crisp clean edge for the main beds to bounce off. It's easy to forget that in our first two years of renovation many of the old paths became aisles of mud in the wetter months but with our new peach paths the gardens have become more accessible. Ditch maintenance has also played a key part in keeping paths dry and free draining. It's been great to see our now qualified apprentice, Kacper, and gardener, Maurice, take so keenly to Achamore's waterworks, they seem oddly at home in the swamps!

The propagation area is full to the gunwales after a breakthrough growing *Rhododendron* species in peat-free growing media. With the removal of the invasive *Rhododendron ponticum* across the site we will have plenty of species shrubs and trees to fill gaps and vastly enhance the plant collection like never before (I'm sure Colonel Horlick would be proud).

Propagating plants through cuttings and seed sowing has driven my curiosity into horticulture and has allowed me to recognise my skills and knowledge in botanical plant care.



## Achamore Gardens continued

The culmination of these skills has been the successful propagation of many plants, some champion trees and notably the Wollemi pine which was once thought to be extinct until a small wild population was discovered in New Zealand in 1993. I'm sure that many of our volunteers would agree that it is astounding how some plants can be propagated. At the risk of sounding a tad airy fairy, propagating a botanical plant collection physically connects us with the places they once existed in, for example we have a *Begonia hatacoa* plant in our greenhouse that was taken, as a cutting, from a wild plant in Japan and donated to the gardens. The historic plants at Achamore have a much wider reach than the island and carry with them the history of the people who collected them and the cultures they were taken from.

Achamore Gardens is rooted in the history of Gigha and it's amazing to have locals helping out with improving displays. One of the biggest volunteer days we have is the bulb planting day in late autumn. The addition of bulbs to the garden displays shows-off early colour. The pottarium has been a resounding success with a bright spring display that gradually becomes a sunny spot for begonias, succulents and unusual plants later in the summer. It seems so long ago that the space and the adjacent bed were pummelled by the unexpected collapse of a large *Pittosporum* tree.



Balancing practical maintenance with plant collection care and aesthetic development is not always an easy task but our team will continue to renovate and inject curiosities into the wider garden. I can't wait to see what you all achieve.

Lots of Love, Morgan





# YOUR VIEWS on Kilchattan Chapel

**WE HAVE IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL FUNDING TO HELP CONSERVE KILCHATTAN'S HISTORY.** Since July 2022, local residents have regularly visited Kilchattan Chapel, ensuring the site is accessible and visible.

**WE WANT TO KNOW IF THE COMMUNITY WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE INSIDE OF THE CHAPEL RESTORED AND MORE VISIBLE, OR FOR RECORDS TO BE PRODUCED AND PRESENTED IN A MORE SUSTAINABLE FORMAT**

Historic Environment Scotland visited in June to assess the site and encouraged us to put together a community project to make the graves inside the chapel visible or to record and capture the stones that are being lost to vegetation.

Suggestions include (among others):

- Elevating one side of the stones to help water run off and improve visibility.
- Removing and replacing the top soil layer to make an artist impression of the graves and record the information.
- Aggregating the chapel floor to prevent future growth.

**FIRST WE NEED TO KNOW IF THE COMMUNITY SUPPORT THIS. WE WILL THEN APPROACH AN ARCHAEOLOGIST TO GIVE US THE BEST RECOMMENDATIONS TO PRESERVE THE SITE BEFORE APPLYING FOR SCHEDULED MONUMENT CONSENT AND FUNDING TO CARRY OUT THE PROJECT IN 2025.**

**PLEASE GIVE US YOUR OPINION OR CONTACT US TO KNOW MORE AT [ranger@gigha.org.uk](mailto:ranger@gigha.org.uk)**





**PLEASE JOIN US TO RAISE MONEY  
FOR THE STV CHILDREN'S APPEAL**

**THURSDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER**  
9-10am at Gigha Primary School & ELC

Enjoy a bacon, sausage or egg sandwich and  
a tea or coffee and help us raise money  
towards this vital cause.



All welcome.  
Donations appreciated.