



GIGHA NEWS



Welcome to the March 2022 Gigha News

Dear Member,

Please find enclosed this month's newsletter, a copy of February 2022 Board minutes and a copy of the minutes from the Members Meeting on 3rd of March 2022. Copies are also available on the Gigha website www.gigha.org.uk

Regards,
Ian Wilson
Chair

For and behalf of The Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust

Members Meeting

Thank you to all members who attended the Members Meeting on the 3rd of March. This was the first Members Meeting since 2019 due to Covid-19 and was very well attended and well received. One of the follow up actions arising from the meeting was to update the members on the status of intercompany loans held between the Trust and Gigha Trading Ltd (GTL). Our Finance Manager has confirmed that in 2009 GTL took over a development site and built the Steadings self-catering units, which incurred costs of £505k, this being the loan funded by the Trust. In 2019 GTL disposed of the Steadings and the Trust took back ownership of this asset which allowed the intercompany loan to be cleared off in satisfaction of this transfer.

The only current outstanding intercompany loan between the Trust and GTL is the Marine Loan at £45,000.

For information, Gigha Green Power Ltd also has an intercompany loan with the Trust amounting to £135,648.

20th Anniversary of the Community Buyout

Thank you to everybody who came along to our 20th anniversary celebrations and helped to make it a great day - we hope everybody enjoyed the day. We would like to give a special thanks to Ina McNeill who helped raise the island flag, Gigha Primary School for their artwork and performance to the community, Kintyre Schools Pipe Band for travelling

over to perform for us and to Gigha Hotel for welcoming guests afterwards and providing delicious food and drinks. Thank you also to Tan Black for making the anniversary cake. Congratulations again to the people of Gigha on 20 years of community ownership!



IGHT Chair Ian Wilson and Gigha's most senior female resident Ina McNeill raising the Gigha flag



Kintyre Schools Pipe Band

Welcome to Gigha Guide

A Welcome to Gigha Guide has been created for new members of the community to provide vital information on what services are available on the island. Copies of the welcome guide can be requested from the Trust Office or it can be viewed online at www.gigha.org.uk > About Gigha.

Homehunt Gigha

If you wish to apply for Trust housing you must firstly be registered with Homehunt Gigha, even if you are already a Trust tenant. Your registration date could be relevant when properties are allocated as they are allocated using the following criteria:

1. Best Use – do you fit the best use of the property compared to another applicant? i.e. using all available bedrooms.
2. Priority Pass Level awarded – the applicant with the highest level pass (gold, silver or bronze). You may apply for a Priority Pass under 4 different categories.
3. Date of registration – if the first two criteria are equal, the applicant registered first would be allocated the property.

If you wish to register with Homehunt Gigha, please contact the office on 01583 505390 or email shona@gigha.org.uk

Trust properties are allocated by the Housing Allocation Group, made up of islanders, who are independent of the office. If you wish to join the Housing Allocation Group, please contact the office.

Gigha Community Fund

The Gigha Community Fund continues to support local projects and since December funds have been awarded to the following projects:

Christmas Lunch Club £255.00 and Zero Carbon Gigha Group £465.00

There is a vacancy on the Gigha Community Fund Board should you wish to join. Please contact the office for more details.

Gigha and Cara Parish Church

The next service in the Church will be on Palm Sunday April 10th with Rev. Anne McIvor.

The stated AGM of the Church will be after the morning service on May 8th with Douglas Allan. There will be a full copy of the Church accounts at the back of the Church for those who wish to see them. An abbreviated version will be available at the AGM.

Kintyre Gin - Isle of Gigha Coastal Gin

To commemorate the 20th anniversary of the community buyout, we have collaborated with Kintyre Gin to release a very special gin. After collecting a variety of different botanicals from Achamore Gardens and around the island, the talented distillers came up with a unique blend that gives a taste of Gigha- 'Isle of Gigha Coastal Gin'. The gin is made from a blend of botanicals including gorse, sugar kelp, nettle, dandelion root and mountain pepper. If you would like to get your hands on some 'Gigha' gin, it is now available to buy from Ardmish Stores, Hall's of Campbeltown and at the distillery shop in Torrisdale. It should also be available to buy online at a later date from the the Beinn an Tuirc website. £5 from the sale of each bottle is pledged to the Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust. Bottle #1 is going to be auctioned off on the Beinn an Tuirc Distillers Facebook page and with 100% of the proceeds going to the Trust.



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.

Gigha Primary School

The children enjoyed having a stall at the Cleaner Greener Gigha event in the Village Hall at the Zero Carbon Gigha event on 12th March. It was a lovely opportunity to share their learning for sustainability story from 2016 to the present day and to showcase the many initiatives they have led for the community. Please look out for details of the enhanced food waste/composting facility at the School and the opening of our new recycling shed, both of which we hope will provide a chance for Gigha households to reduce their carbon footprint.

As part of the Gateway to Gigha project activities, the children enjoyed their exploration of the Cist opposite the school with our visitors from Historic Environment Scotland. Thank you very much for Craig and Casey-Jo for organising a brilliant day for us. Friends from HES constructed a timeline in the play-ground and we all went through the big tyre time portal to find ourselves back beyond three thousand years of history on Gigha, discovering the Cist with its beaker inside, making some excellent sketches of it and even building our own with a few chocolate bars! We look forward to a return visit from HES in May when we hope to do some mapping of the Ardailly Township and to update the Canmore database with our findings.

The Cist exploration is the perfect example of our approach to nature and place-based curriculum making for children which, with the help of some creative partners, will continue with several new Isle of Stories adventures during the summer term. First of all, in May, we will enjoy a visit from the Scottish Chamber Orchestra who, along with a film crew from Scottish Book Trust, will capture some of the children's stories about their special places on Gigha in music and images. This will be followed in May and June by more musical storytelling adventures with our friends from TREÒIR VOAR VIRR who will be creating some traditional music and natural art with the children, again based on the Gigha places they love.

Our major project for the summer term, however, is the children's leadership of the first Gigha International Children's Festival to be held on Gigha on Friday 10th June (schools visiting day) and Saturday 11th June (families and island visitors day). The children are working hard to host their friends from four other schools on 10th and also to welcome friends, families and visitors to the island on 11th. This project is designed to support post-Covid recovery and to promote children's wellbeing, leadership, resilience and creativity skills through the process of happily reconnecting with others.

The children have organised an afternoon to show the community their festival plans and to invite feedback and suggestions. They would also like to recruit some volunteers to help with festival roles that for safety reasons can only be undertaken by adults. Please look out for their invitation to a festival Dream Day, to be held at the school on Saturday 23rd April. Our creative artist in residence, Kirsty Pennycook from Starcatchers, will be facilitating activities on this day – there will be ice cream and of course lots of fun sprinkles!

Gateway to Gigha

It's been another busy month on the Gateway Project. We received all the stone needed for our Phase 2 paths as well as the waymarkers, and the stone has been lifted by helicopter to the locations at which it is needed. My thanks to Skyhook Helicopters for a very efficient – and quite spectacular - operation. Our contractor, Scott Scott Murdoch and his team, and Tim Lister in the Gardens, are now cracking on with the path building work.

Apart from the Gardens, which will have an easy access aggregate path, these are mainly walking routes with stone pitching, steppingstones and waymarking making for easier navigation and more pleasant walking. As a result, important heritage features like Dun Chibhich Fort and Carn Ban will be easier to access and appreciate.

And speaking of heritage, we had a wonderful 3-day visit by no less than four representatives of Historic Environment Scotland as part of our Community Heritage Project.



Gateway to Gigha continued

A walk to the historic township of Ardailly, an evening of presentations, an exercise with the school in exploration of the Ardmish Cist, and a workshop focused on surveying and mapping the chambered cairns near Tarbert, made for an exciting and rewarding program. Meanwhile, our heritage interpretation development creeps ever closer to finalisation and I have engaged a stone worker to build the plinths to which interpretation panels will be fitted. Elsewhere, I'm pleased to report that we are now in possession of all the 'regular' e-bikes provided by the Project, and we are awaiting the go-ahead to purchase our adaptive e-bikes. I look forward to updating you on all these activities next month.



SETEAIRNSG

Can you spot elusive Mercury?

Some planets are easy to spot in Gigha's night sky. Venus and Jupiter are visible in the morning before sunrise and at the end of the month they appear close together from our perspective on Earth. Mars and Saturn are also morning planets at present although not as bright as Venus and Jupiter.

If you have never seen the planet Mercury before then this is a good month to find it. It sets around two hours after the Sun and between April 27 and May 2 it can be found just to the left of 'The Seven Sisters' open star cluster which is visible to the naked eye.

Mercury, which is the innermost planet in our Solar System appears above the western horizon throughout the month but as it is faint it can be hard to find. If you are having difficulty finding it wait until the last few days of the month when it will be right next to 'The Seven Sisters'.

A year on Mercury is a short one compared to Earth - it lasts only 88 Earth days. However, because the planet spins slowly it has very long days. On Earth a day is 24 hours but on Mercury a day lasts 59 Earth days!

Easter Egg Hunt

The annual Easter Egg Hunt Will be held on Sunday 17th April between 2-4pm at the Village Hall. Instructions will be given at the Village Hall on where to find clues. Teas and coffees will be served with home baking and hot cross buns.

Everyone welcome!



**The Scottish
Salmon Company**

Engagement Meeting

The Scottish Salmon Company (SSC) is in the process of applying for permission for a new marine aquaculture site to the west of the Isle of Gigha and is inviting the local community to share their views on the proposed development. The proposal is for eight pens (160m circumference) and a feed barge, with associated moorings. There is no land-based development associated with this project.

As part of the SEPA Aquaculture Regulatory Framework it is recommended that any proposed application for a marine fin fish aquaculture site should undergo a Screening Modelling and Risk Identification process.

As part of the formal application process, SSC is hosting an engagement event on Gigha to allow for further discussion and information sharing on the proposed development, along with the conclusions of SEPA's screening and risk assessment report. Details of this public event are below.

Where: Gigha Village Hall

When: Wednesday 6th April: 1130 – 1500

Members of the local community are welcome to attend at a time of their convenience.

An additional online engagement event will also be held on Tuesday 5th April from 1730 to 1930 for members of the local community who are unable to attend the in-person event.

To find out more about the proposed plans and to register your interest in attending either the in-person or online engagement event, please email Freddie.parffrey@scottishsalmon.com.

You can access the SEPA report here <https://www.sepa.org.uk/regulations/water/aquaculture/screening-modelling-and-risk-identification-report/>

Visit Gigha website and logo

The new Visit Gigha website and social media channels will be launching on Thursday the 31st of March. These platforms will be visitor focussed and will provide people with all of the information needed to plan their time on Gigha. The current Gigha.org website will remain but will be directed more towards community related content.

For the 'Visit Gigha' website and social media channels, we have worked with consultants to create a new logo which can be used island wide for promotion and tourism purposes. We encourage all businesses on the island to make use of the logo so please feel free to use this in your own marketing if you wish. If you would like a downloadable version of the new logo sent to you, please email marketing@gigha.org.uk



Visit Gigha promo video

Stuart Ashley and his team from Creative Edge Studios and Aerial Creative Productions are going to be travelling to Gigha to film a promo video for the island. The team will be on the island filming from the 11th-14th of April. The filming will take place across the whole island, both indoors and outdoors on location. If you do not wish to be identified on the video then please kindly make yourself known to either Anne White (primary contact), Mark Jordan or Stuart Ashley from the production team.

07835555355 – Anne White

07971469939 – Mark Jordan

07403053569 – Stuart Ashley

Campsite update from Anna Lannigan, Campsite Manager

I'd like to start with a great big thank you to all for the warm welcome I've received since arriving on Gigha, I know I still have lots of people to meet and I hope to see you all soon.

And now on to the campsite update: The build itself has suffered a few delays with supply chain issues, the bad weather in February and now one of the contractors has Covid-19 (you couldn't make it up!). But we're getting there now - the facilities building is looking fabulous, the electric was connected last week and the septic tank should be installed on site soon. The build is now scheduled to complete by the end of April, and we hope to open before the end of May. Hopefully now nothing else will hold us back! Meanwhile I've been getting on with a few things behind the scenes – setting up accounts and the booking system, starting to advertise the Campsite and kicking off social media accounts – please give us a follow on Facebook and Instagram. And I can't wait to get on to the site next month and start getting my hands dirty!



Playpark

Unfortunately, the weather has taken its toll on some of the Playpark equipment. We were aware of some of the issues and had ordered parts from the manufacturer in France but during one of the winter storms the climbing wall and other parts of the XL tower play structure blew down, partly due to wood rot. After an inspection we took the decision to remove this piece of equipment due to safety issues. The Maintenance Team are now replacing parts on the rest of Playpark and hope to have it all up and running before Easter.

Countryside Ranger

My last newsletter entry started with “wild, windy and wet weather”, what a contrast this month. We have been absolutely blessed with some spring sunshine (hopefully not false spring rays!), that has pulled the primroses, wild garlic and celandines well and truly out in full force. Amongst the daffodils also, the eagle eyed among us may have also spotted wood anemone popping up in Achamore Gardens or the coltsfoot near the road edges. However, this time last year our first bluebell was out on the 23rd of March – this year it seems they are hiding for a little bit longer, in the next few weeks we can expect those classic bluebell carpets! This is also the time of year when nesting gets serious among our island birds, you may have noticed the dawn and dusk choruses getting louder, and much more activity around the bird feeders – this is so our bird species can fuel up as much as possible and keep their energy levels high for a successful breeding season.



March has also been an exceptionally busy month for us humans. The Zero Carbon Gigha group held their first event which was a major success. We were able to offer every a free tree and energy saving light bulb to those who wished to contribute to cutting their energy levels and encourage carbon capture, and provide a space for other community groups to showcase their efforts towards reducing their carbon footprint, including Gigha Primary School and Dark Skies Gigha. The group will now work on achieving some of their other targets such as improving recycling facilities, tree planting schemes and facilitating community exchange and storage options.

Our conservation morning this month was also centred around trees. To bolster our efforts in January at the Achamore planting day, last week we planted an additional 200 or so trees in the south shelter belt with native species such as willow, oak, birch, hornbeam and rowan. Despite our great intentions, we were incredibly surprised and pleased to see the level of natural regeneration of lime, beech and sycamore trees within the shelter... 1-0 to nature!



One of the most exciting things to happen this month, was a visit from Historic Environment Scotland who offered us a busy week of engagement. The week started with a walk out west to learn more about Dun an Trinnse, and the township at Ardaily, leading on to an evening talk discussing amazing archaeological findings in Scotland in sites similar to those on Gigha, a session with Gigha Primary learning all about the recently cleared cist opposite the school grounds, and finished with a morning of archaeological surveying at the Bronze Age burial site just north of Tarbert Farm. A HUGE thank you to everyone who joined us for this week of activities, we had so much fun. There are plans for Historic Environment to return in May, as well as a visit from Archaeology Scotland to help us kick start our ‘Adopt a Monument’ scheme to conserve our historical sites. Notices about these will go out as soon as possible. We hope you can join us.

Housing update

The smoke alarm replacement programme is nearly complete, using an electrician for a few of the properties due to the alarms in some properties being obsolete. Wireless systems are required for some of our unrenovated properties but these have been out of stock due to high demand.

We hope to start this year’s exterior property inspections soon so if you have any issues you are aware of, please let us know when we visit over the coming few months.

Our Gigha and Me

The 'Our Gigha and Me' (OGAM) Project officially kicked off on Saturday 26th March down at the Village Hall! The community had the opportunity to meet the friendly Furbochs, take a look inside the Furbochs' house, and try out some of the nature based activities. We had a fantastic afternoon full of fun and sunshine, and we wanted to thank all the families and members of the community who came along to support the project.



Alongside meeting the Furbochs, the children had a chance to take part in some of the first research activities, painting rocks and making maps of their favourite places on Gigha. The project is aiming to offer the opportunity for ideas to be developed from local people, enabling researchers and communities to explore ways to improve mental wellbeing. We are working with researcher, Louise Senior, to understand whether community-led nature interventions, including the Furboch house and activities you will find here, the Gigha Furboch storybook, and an outdoor shelter for young people, can help to improve the wellbeing of children and families.

The Furbochs have now started their adventures, travelling to different locations around the island and are waiting to be found (psst, clues to the Furbochs' location are at Ardmish Stores). Keep an eye out on the noticeboard as they will move regularly, and the activities within the Furboch home will also change on a seasonal basis for families to enjoy throughout the year. In the coming weeks Maggie and Casey-Jo are hoping to catch up with families to find out more about their experiences of following the Furboch journey, as well as using their house and activities. We would also love to know what thoughts you have about our Project by using the feedback logbook located in the Furboch house, which we would appreciate you completing after a visit. A huge thank you to the community again for the amazing response we have received!

Wind Turbine update

Finally, the Enercon E33 turbine is up and running. Enercon were monitoring it for a few weeks and gradually brought it back into full production. We are still actively working on the compensation claim which is due to us by Enercon and our insurers are also working on the insurance claim for the loss of income.

The Dancing Ladies have had the hydraulic error sorted, but we still have an issue with T1, but parts have been ordered and hopefully she should be up and running in April.

John Martin has stepped down as a director from GREL & GGPL. We thank him for his 10+ years and input over the years. and ask if anyone wishes to come onto the renewables board to let the office know.

John Martin on Gigha Day



Achamore Gardens

Hasn't the weather been lovely recently? The gardens have certainly appreciated the longer daylight hours and warm sunshine and are bursting into life wherever you look. The early rhododendrons are starting to flower, with particular highlights this month including *Rhododendron montroseanum* near the summerhouse, *Rhododendron sino-grande* (and it's various hybrids) throughout the woods, and I'd highly recommend you visit the pure white blooms of *Rhododendron maddenii* which is blooming on the track behind the walled garden – on a warm day the sweet scent drifts out across the garden, but even on a cool day it's worth burying your nose in a bloom to enjoy the heady smell. Simply delicious! Elsewhere, the buds on the trees are just beginning to break, with a slight haze of green visible on the birches and larches, and the woodland floor is carpeted with the fresh green leaves of bluebells, studded with the sunshine yellow of lesser celandine and patches of wood anemone, in both white and blue, are brightening up shady corners. Every spring I am amazed at all the different varieties of daffodils that pop up across the gardens; from traditional yellow to white, some with long trumpets, some almost flat faces, some with petals that reflex back so far they look like they're standing up to the fiercest gale, and some that are doubled or even bicolour doubles that look like fireworks! See how many different daffs you can spot on your next visit, but please don't pick them - leave them for other visitors to enjoy.



Talking of bulbs, the spring bulbs in the walled gardens are an ever-changing delight. The crocuses have finally finished, to be replaced by grape hyacinths, early tulips and daffodils, and the main tulip display is just about to begin. Our wee "pottarium", next to the stone bothy is also looking brilliant and has made a real splash in this previously forgotten corner – it's worth visiting regularly as we frequently change the pots about, putting out whatever is about to come into flower. As well as looking lovely for our visitors, we use the pottarium to help us assess bulbs for the future, looking at features such as flowering height, length of flowering time, colour, how they grow in our climate, and even if they are value for money... That's been a particularly interesting category this year, as our two most expensive bulbs, both plants I've wanted to try for several years, have been amongst the most disappointing, neither of them living up to my long-held expectations. Oh well, at least I won't be wasting money buying any more of them for the garden!

The pottarium will soon start to fill up with all sorts of "black" tulips as we are running a trial on them this year. "Black" tulips can look amazing, but there's no such thing as a truly black tulip, all of them actually being very dark shades of purple, burgundy or pink. That can lead to disappointment for gardeners, particularly if the bulb catalogue you order from tweaks its photos to make them look darker than they truly are. By growing lots of varieties side by side we'll be able to pick our favourites to use in future years and reject the ones that don't quite live up to the hype. We'd love to know which ones you like or dislike, so if any of them catch your eye do tell one of the gardens team.

I'll end with some good news. The gardens were lucky enough to be awarded funding from the Islands Infrastructure Fund for path upgrades, allowing us to make safe and reopen the path along spring bank, resurface all the paths in the south walled garden and pay for the repairs to the viewpoint path. The paths team have been working hard to replace the rotten old sleepers with new pitched stone steps and by the time you read this the viewpoint path will once again be open.

Pottarium at Achamore Gardens



Dog Fouling

It doesn't take much to remember that we have lots of pet dogs on Gigha. In fact, if you don't watch your step, you are liable to step in one such reminder on our grass verges!

Besides being unsightly and smelly, dog waste can be hazardous to the health of our children who play in the community, to visitors and also other dogs. Did you know that one of the most common forms of disease transmission between dogs is through dog poo.

When out walking your dog please remember to clean up after it poops. Take along a dog bag or use one of the free ones available and then pop it in a bin. Cleaning up after your dog will help keep Gigha beautiful and our shoes free of dog poo.

Free dog poo bags are available in three locations around the island: next to the new Campsite entrance; next to the gate of the path leading to Johnny's Shore and in the layby near Ferry Crofts.



Countryside Ranger's Photo of the month



The clear waters of the west

Gigha Day



Main Contacts

- General: shona@gigha.org.uk
- Development: jane@gigha.org.uk
- Housing and Estate: office@gigha.org.uk
- Gigha Trading Ltd: trading@gigha.org.uk
- Accounts / Finance: ightcentralaccounts@gigha.org.uk
- Achamore Gardens: gardens@gigha.org.uk
- Countryside Ranger: ranger@gigha.org.uk
- Marketing: marketing@gigha.org.uk