



GIGHA NEWS



Welcome to the May 2020 Gigha News

Dear Member,

Please find enclosed this month's newsletter and a copy of April 2020 Board minutes.

Regards,
Ian Wilson
Chair

For and behalf of Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust

COVID-19

Calmac have extended their essential lifeline ferry timetable until Sunday 14th of June.

Please remember that during the lockdown to prevent the spread of COVID-19 the following public places remain closed: Achamore Gardens, the moorings and pontoons, Gigha Golf Course and the Play Park. Your co-operation is much appreciated.

Supporting Communities Fund

The Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust has been awarded £11,000 from the Scottish Government Supporting Communities Fund, via Highlands and Islands Enterprise, to support the island during the COVID-19 crisis. The £11,000 secured by IGHT will support activities within the community that are in response to COVID-19. This includes temporarily employing a COVID-19 Co-ordinator based on island together with a small Fund to help the community.

We welcome Cara Gorman from 1st June as the Community Coordinator. Cara will help to support volunteers on the island, manage the distribution of the COVID Fund, and be a point of contact in the community in relation to COVID-19. Cara is contactable at covidsupport@gigha.org.uk should you wish to register an interest in the support or funds available.

Gigha Community Fund

The Gigha Community Fund has awarded £1,370 to 2 community projects. £1,000 has been awarded to the Gigha Golf Course as part of an overall strategy to improve the condition of the Greens. The funds will support an increased visitor and user experience and help sustain an attraction/activity for the island. £370 was awarded to Keith Wilson to purchase anti-dog fouling signs and dog bags and dispenser boxes for use on the island. The purpose is to alleviate dog fouling on

Gigha and encourage residents to help protect and conserve the islands environment.

The Fund is still open for application which is available to download from www.gigha.org.uk > Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust > Gigha Community Fund. Alternatively, please contact the office for an application. The Fund is available on a rolling basis, however the next deadline for submissions is set for the 22nd June prior to the next Fund Board meeting.

Should you have a project that is developed in response to COVID-19, please refer to the separate COVID 19 fund mentioned above.

Achamore Gardens update by Bryony White

The weather so far this month has been lovely, and the gardens are enjoying all the sunshine we've had with colour blooming everywhere, and the garden's wildlife coming to the fore as well.

I've been discovering lots of lost and hidden parts of the garden on my regular walks and works, including some really old Rhododendrons which I uncovered in an area of the garden marked on Horlick's map as "First Garden". These may have been some of the earliest plants that he put in at Achamore. One is a massive shrub with a label date of 1931 - Rhododendron "Mrs James Horlick" with wonderful smooth, peeling grey bark and huge, showy pink flowers. We are lucky to have 15 or more of these rhodies at various ages scattered across Achamore, but her sibling, "Lady Horlick", is proving to be far more elusive. The plant survey done in the early 2000s only lists two of these in the entire garden, and so far I have had no luck tracking them down, but the hunt continues! I'm really hoping we find "Lady Horlick" as the last time she was listed on the RHS Plantfinder was 2003 so she may well be lost to commercial cultivation.



Achamore Gardens continued

There's colour to be seen all over the garden now, with the Rhododendrons and Azaleas being joined by many others. The candelabra primulas and the wildflowers are also playing their part in the tapestry (photographed on the next page). I've found four clumps of pure white bluebells which is incredible as they are quite rare – did you know that only 1 in 10,00 bluebells come up white?



We've also begun work to cut back and clear the brambles, nettles, ferns, sycamore saplings and other assorted overgrowth around the gardens. We are concentrating on areas where plants are at most risk of succumbing to their thuggish neighbours and it's slow (and sometimes bloody!) work, but hopefully you will begin to see the difference when you are allowed back into the gardens.

Whilst the Rhododendron flowers are beginning to fade, their new foliage is a constant source of surprise and wonder. It comes in all sorts of colours – here is one of my favourites.



And finally here's a wee good news story from the walled garden, where I've been keeping an eye on a pair of Chaffinches who decided to make their nest in one of the bushes. The eggs hatched around the 5th of May, and all four babies successfully fledged on the 21st May. Good luck wee ones!



Home Energy Scotland

Home Energy Scotland, the Scottish Government's free and impartial energy advice service, is open as usual with telephone advisors working safely from home to help you if you are worried about your energy bills or struggling to stay warm at home.

Advisors can help with any questions you may have around staying warm and saving energy. The team can check on your eligibility and make referrals for schemes that can help improve the insulation and heating for your home. They can also help with practical advice and energy saving tips to help ease pressure on household finances, which is particularly useful whilst we all spend more time at home.

The service is free and impartial and you can speak to a Home Energy Scotland advisor by calling 0808 808 2282, Monday – Friday 8am – 8pm and Saturday 9am – 5pm.

IGHT, in conjunction with Home Energy Scotland, are looking at options to replace electric heating systems, such as storage heating, in Trust properties. Tenants living in eligible properties will be contacted in due course.

HOMEENERGYSCOTLAND.ORG
0808 808 2282
FUNDED BY THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Campsite update

The timescale for the campsite project has now been affected by COVID-19. Building Standards, the Quantity Surveyor and the Engineers have all been affected by furloughed employees and we also do not know when contractors will be allowed to the site. Taking these factors into consideration, we anticipate the completion of the project will now be March 2021.

Gigha Primary School

We are carrying with on our Eco-Schools Scotland Green Flag work even in the present lockdown situation. Our three actions plans are:

Litter – Dog Fouling and Marine Plastics

Food – Recreating a new Food Growing Garden

Biodiversity – Looking at the local impact of Weather and Climate Change

Mrs Vipurs is working with the community to lead this work and has made a start on recreating our food growing garden. The area to the left of the driveway to the carpark has been cut and cleared to make way for the construction of some large raised beds, a milk carton greenhouse for soft fruit growing and a school weather station. We are presently looking for donations of the following to make the garden ready for children to use when school returns:

1m tall wire fencing

Fenceposts

Small gate and gateposts

Wood for building raised beds

Topsoil for raised beds

6 slabs for the base of the weather station

Wood for the greenhouse frame

If anyone has any spare of the above, no matter how old and used we can reuse it. Thank you very much to community members who have already donated vegetable plants and seeds – we are so grateful and they are all growing beautifully in our classroom greenhouse.

Holiday Cottages Lease

The lease of the management of the holiday cottages is expected to be delayed in light of COVID-19. Please still continue to register your interest to keep informed of any new timescales.

No decision has been taken yet as to when bookings will reopen.

Poem by GREL & GGPL director John Martin

'Take the Floor'

Dance, dance wherever you may be

From the road at the North, way down tae New Quay

Lets dance tae the North, wae yer hairy knees

Just keep on dancing in case ye freeze

We dance to the South, where comes the heat

Keep on dancing, wae blisters on yer feet

We dance to East, where the sun will rise

Keep on dancing, till yiv bleary eyes

Last dance of the day, is it in the West

Don't lose any sleep, if yer not the best

The Dancing Ladies, keep us afloat

So! Keep on dancing, and throw off yer coat

Keep the wind blowing, more and more

It's easier to dance, when we have 'all four'!

Main Contacts:

IGHT enquiries: **01583 505 390**

GTL enquiries: **01583 427 300**

For general enquiries:

shona@gigha.org.uk

For development enquiries:

jane@gigha.org.uk

For housing and estate enquiries:

office@gigha.org.uk

For all GTL enquiries:

cottages@gigha.org.uk

For finance/accounts enquiries:

ightcentralaccounts@gigha.org.uk

For COVID-19 support:

covidsupport@gigha.org.uk

Trust Office Opening Hours:

The office will be staffed but will be closed to the public during the COVID-19 lockdown. Please contact the office using the details above.

