

AUGUST 2023

Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust Newsletter

Board Correspondence

The 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. Contact us by emailing directors@gigha.org.uk

Members Meeting

Minutes of the most recent members meeting have been issued with this Newsletter.

Any amendments or comments on the Member Meeting minutes from 17th August should be emailed to shona@gigha.org.uk before 15th September.

Gigha Hotel

Volunteers and IGHT staff have been working on tidying up and cleaning the hotel. If you wish to volunteer to carry out any remaining tasks such as cleaning and taking inventories, please contact the Trust Office.

Gigha and Cara Parish Church

There will be two services held in the Church in September. Rev. Lyn Peden will be here on Sunday 10th September and Rev. Anne McIvor will be here on Sunday 24th September.

Renewables

The E33 turbine experienced downtime of 11 days in July due to an issue with the generator. T1 is running again but Vestas is still to address some hydraulic issues. Unfortunately, Vestas' third-party contractors were supplied with the wrong parts which has delayed the ladder recertification on the turbines. The work is now scheduled for the week commencing 28th August.

Campsite

The Campsite has celebrated its first birthday this month. It's been an exciting year, with ongoing developments and improvements based on guest feedback and experience. Over the year, there have been almost 2,500 guests bringing 515 tents, 690 vans and 1028 dogs! We've started to get repeat bookings already, and we hope to build on this strong base next year. We'll be open for bookings again this Winter, as well as implementing some more improvement projects, ready for next Spring.



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Gigha Community Fund

The Gigha Community Fund has awarded £1000 in August to the Gigha Food Pantry.

Gigha Food Pantry

The Gigha Food Pantry, up and running from 11th September 2023, is an independent, non-means-tested Food Bank which has been set up using community funding to support residents living on the Isle of Gigha. The increased cost of living has added financial strain to many people; the Gigha Food Pantry has been set up to allow residents experiencing hardship on the Isle of Gigha to confidentially and discretely access free, long-life food and drink products and basic toiletries.

The Food Pantry is located in the wooden shed in the Gigha Primary School Food Growing Garden and can be accessed by Gigha residents as required on a 'help yourself' basis. (However, we would ask that the Food Pantry is not used if pupils are using the area). For security reasons, the shed will be secured with a coded padlock. Initially this code will be shared confidentially with any island resident who has accessed the recent Cost of Living Fund. However, should you require access to the Food Pantry, please contact Morven Beagan (Gigha's Natural Skincare), Alex Vipurs (Gigha Primary School), Yvonne McDougall (Community Nurse) or Shona Bannatyne (IGHT) and the code will be shared with you. All communication will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Any donations towards the Gigha Food Pantry will be gratefully received and can be dropped at Gigha Primary School or at Gigha's Natural Skincare shop.

Thank you, Morven and Alex.

Achamore Gardens

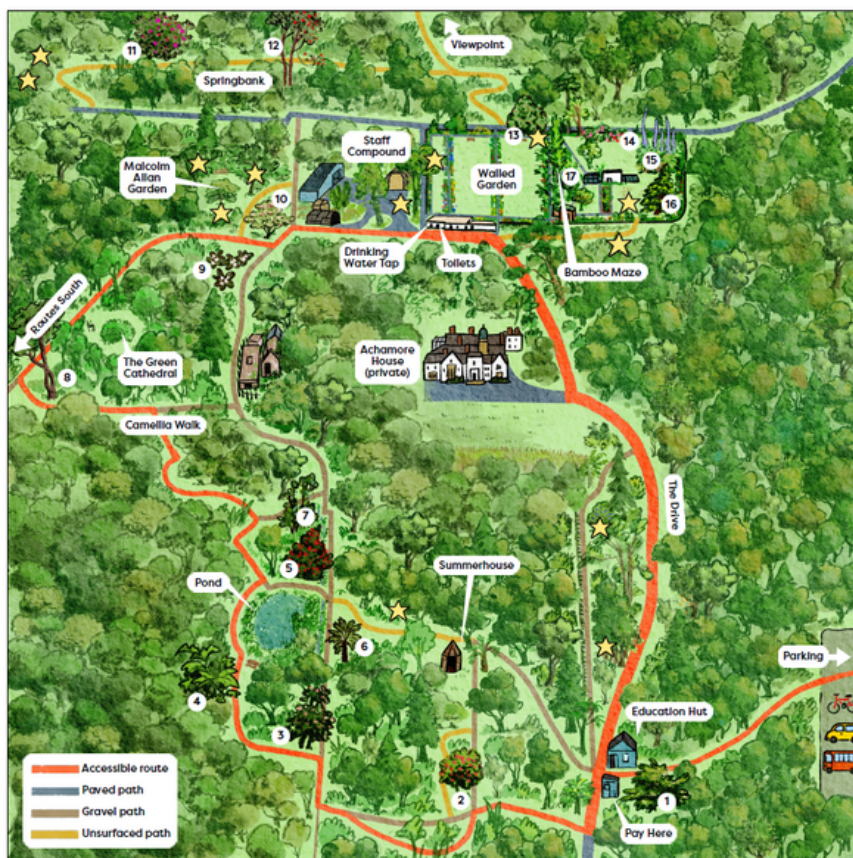
Some good news to begin with this month. Achamore Gardens has recently been awarded funding from the National Trust for Scotland to hire an architect to design and obtain planning consents for our much-dreamed-about new plant propagation facilities in the North Walled Garden. One of our biggest challenges in the restoration is to secure and expand the plant collection that has been created in the garden over the last 80 years, and one of the best ways to do this is to propagate from existing plants in the garden, be that by seeds, cuttings, or divisions. In the case of many of Horlick's hybrid rhododendrons, the only known examples are at Achamore, so if we lose the original plant before we've had a chance to propagate it successfully, that cultivar could be lost forever, with no means to recreate it. We've done well with the existing propagation facilities and a bit of make do and mend, but new facilities will allow us to propagate more plants - when you consider that it takes at least 7 years to grow a rhododendron from seed to a size suitable for planting out, you suddenly realise that you need at least 7 years' worth of space! It will also allow us to include automated systems such as watering and ventilation to save staff time, and allow us to comply with current best practices around plant bio-security, renewable and sustainable energy, and water capture and runoff management. This funding will only get us to the design and planning permission stage, but we will then use that work to secure the necessary funding to allow us to go ahead and build the new facility.

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Achamore Gardens

Adam Murphy has also been hard at work designing and drawing a new map and leaflet for the garden. It's looking fantastic and will soon be on the way to the printers, so keep your eyes peeled for it appearing in the next couple of weeks. In the meantime, here's a sneak peak at the map.

Leaflet cover photograph:
Mrs James Horlick



The one good thing that came out of all the felling work in January is that our wood stores are now bulging with firewood, split and stacked and currently drying out. As soon as the wood is seasoned and dried enough, we will once again be distributing it to residents in return for a donation to the gardens. I hope to have more news on this next month, so watch this space.

Household Resilience Advocate

Due to the current cost of living crisis a Household Resilience Advocate post has been created to work with people through outreach. Covering both Gigha and Glenbarr areas the post is assisted by local partners to promote household resilience, signposting to specialist support to address issues of fuel poverty, increasing household income, energy efficiency and promoting climate action.

If you or someone you live with would like help to access support on heating costs, benefits rights, debt advice or just need a bit of help filling in forms or attending appointments please get in touch.

Please contact Leighann Burns by emailing leighann@inspiralba.org.uk or calling 07477 709681. Leighann is able to visit you in your own home if required or can arrange a telephone appointment if this would be more convenient.

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Isle of Gigha Ranger Service

What a mega busy month this has been, and it's been all about volunteers!

The first weekend of August saw our first "residential volunteers", Edinburgh Young Walkers of Rambler's Scotland come to Gigha. The team stayed down at the campsite and had nothing but compliments for the site and management and did some utterly fantastic work maintaining two of our Gateway to Gigha paths. We topped it off with a guided walk that was focused mainly on community ownership, as the group were eager to know more about what they were contributing to. We sincerely hope they will return next year and spread the word, as their help was invaluable. A huge thank you to this wonderful team.

We had another fabulous Forest School session this month also. We went on a fungi hunt, made some spore prints and dissected some mushrooms learning the secrets of identifying different species, and responsible behaviours when out and about and looking at these glorious organisms.



Conservation volunteers managed to clear the whole site of Himalayan Balsam this month! We are under no illusions that more flowers will be rearing their heads, shortly but what an awesome achievement. These hardy volunteers also tackled Poll Mor in horrendous weather for our summer survey with Scottish Islands Federation and Marine Conservation Society.



The beach was relatively clean, but we suspect that the growth of vegetation in the reedbeds are concealing most of the litter. The volunteers did manage to pull a huge fishing net from the shoreline, which will be added to our survey. This data is then sent on to government bodies to help tackle marine litter across the west coast.

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Isle of Gigha Ranger Service

Upcoming events in September will be based around Scottish Archaeology month! As ever keep an eye on social media and the noticeboards for details!

- Heritage guided walk
- 10th September, Forest School, focusing on some Bronze Age round houses
- Volunteering sessions to conserve one of our historical monuments

Ranger's photo of the month:

On topic... Volunteers witnessing an amazing summer sunset from Creag Bhàn



Gigha Primary School

After a lovely summer break pupils returned to school on the 15th August. It was lovely to see all the pupils again and to welcome our new P1 pupils to the class. The term began by preparing for the Root and Industrial Show with a few days of baking and making. We were delighted with all our pupil entries and especially with the rosettes we were awarded for our rock cakes, Harry Potter poetry, windmills and Bumble Bee drawings!

Outside pupils have begun the job of harvesting our fresh produce crop which we grew last term. This includes garlic, potatoes, carrots and beetroot. This is supplementing our school meals and any surplus will be taken home by the pupils and shared within the community.



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Gigha Primary School

In addition we were very excited to hear that we had been successful in our Food for Thought funding application which will allow us to continue growing our own fresh food throughout the year. Furthermore, the bid will allow us to purchase our own chickens to provide us with fresh, free range eggs as well as teaching the pupils valuable life skills. We will also be visiting local farms to find out where our food comes from and to help develop pupils understanding of sustainable food growing practices and the importance of buying locally grown food.

I am also delighted to announce that following a successful interview, I will shortly be taking up the Headteacher position at Gigha Primary School and Early Learning Centre. Although I know you in my current position as Acting Principal Teacher, I look forward to working with the community in my new role when I take over from our Acting Headteacher, Mrs Blake. If you have any ideas or suggestions around developing the school's community links, please contact me at school. I am keen to build on the work of the last twelve months in developing stronger community links to support our wonderful primary school and ELC for future generations.

Kindest regards, Mrs Vipurs.

Archives

South Ardmish Farm and hotel also known locally as 'The Inn' circa 1905. The building on the left is Gigha Parish Church before it was rebuilt in its current position.



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The Furbochs

The Furbochs and their antics have been a legacy from the 'Our Gigha and Me' wellbeing project which ran from 2021-2022, financially aided by the Ideas Fund and supported by the British Science Association. The Project looked specifically at the wellbeing of young children and families on Gigha, and whether simple, nature-based interventions could help support wellbeing. Findings supported this positive approach, with much of the success attributed to the fact this was a community grown project, supported by the community and tackled wellbeing in a diverse and with a non-judgmental approach. The sense of community ownership became very apparent through the research, and today the Gigha Furbochs are very much part of this.

To celebrate the Project, many will remember our brilliant Ceilidh in 2022 with Ceol an Aire. Despite reservations you shouldn't try to replicate, that things are never as good second time around, we decided to hold a further Ceilidh this year, Friday 24th August, and hopefully you all felt, as we did, that it was pretty fantastic!



The ethos of the Project, trying to support wellbeing through simple interventions continues, although the research part of the Project is now finished. We have our quiet space in the fire station woods, 'the den', for families to use, to sit and relax, to play or to meditate, and I am aware it is regularly used. The Furbochs and their hut continue to move around the island and welcome children and their minders to enjoy what they offer. Funding has long stopped, but revenue from the book sales and the 'comfort stones' (sold in shop) will hopefully be enough to maintain it (otherwise you'll see me advertising a coffee morning!)

For those who are not aware of the 'comfort stones', they are small stones (sometimes called worry stones but I wasn't keen on this term) which children hold in their hands and try to tap into their senses, to try and develop mindfulness practice, which can help when feeling worried or anxious. The stones have a picture of a Furboch on them. Children are encouraged that whilst thinking about what they can feel and see and touch, they also concentrate on their breathing pattern and relate to the touch of the smooth stone in their hand, having a calming and settling effect.

We have had a lot of positive feedback, but I would like to share a summary of message that I received recently from the mum of a little girl who does not live on Gigha. She has consented for me to share her story...

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The Furbochs

...'Hi Maggie. I wanted you to know that my daughter had a bit of a wobble about going back to school and was pretty upset when going to bed. We brought out her Furboch stone and read the card and talked about how these things can make us feel calmer. She took it to bed that night and has done ever since. The other morning, she told me how much the stone is helping her. Today she has decided she wants to take the stone and the story to school for show and tell. Thank you so much for the stone.'

Further evidence if we needed it, that simple approaches do help. With that in mind, and on the theme of wellbeing, hope everyone felt their wellbeing pot was well and truly filled up on Friday night at the Ceilidh, and with luck we can plan for this to be an annual event, an ongoing reminder of the necessity of looking after our own wellbeing, the impact kindness can have on ourselves and others, and the importance of supporting our young children and families.

Here is the link to the evaluation film in case you haven't seen it!

<https://vimeo.com/ayeglas/ogammaster>

Thank you again for everyone's ongoing support, and the huge efforts from you generous people to make Friday such a success.

Maggie, Our Gigha and Me

Upcoming event: concert organised by Sound of Gigha



The poster features the 'hungrytown' logo in a large, bold, black font at the top. Below it, the tagline 'music that feeds the soul' and the website 'www.hungrytown.net' are visible. The central text, enclosed in a black box, reads: 'GIGHA VILLAGE HALL', 'Saturday 9th September', 'Doors 7pm', and 'Tickets £10'. Below this box is a QR code and the text: 'Buy tickets now from www.thesoundofgigha.co.uk or speak to Anna at the Campsite'. To the right of the central box is a blue vertical banner with the text: 'FOLLOWED BY DISCO', '10PM ONWARDS', '£5 ENTRY', and 'LICENSED BAR'. On the left side of the poster, the website 'www.facebook.com/Hungrytown' is written vertically.

Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry



Help inform the independent Inquiry's investigations and recommendations so we are better prepared in future

To find out how you can make your voice heard:

- Visit lbh.covid19inquiry.scot
- Scan the QR code
- Write to us at **Freepost SCOTTISH COVID-19 INQUIRY**
- Leave us a message on **0808 175 5555**



Share your experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic

act now. enjoy forever.

'Relevant climate change learning for everyone'.

The successful, and free, delivery of Carbon Literacy Training in Argyll and Bute is set to continue. The training has been designed by ACT, is suitable for all residents, and is called **'Carbon Literacy for Scottish Communities'**.

Previously, 94 members of the Argyll and Bute community have taken part in this Carbon Literacy training.



This training, as with all Carbon Literacy Training, covers the following:

- The science behind climate change
- Social equity & climate change
- What you can do to act on climate change
- Strategies and skills for communicating action on climate change



Following successful completion of the training, and short assessment, you are awarded a **Carbon Literacy Certificate**.

This training can form part of your workplace CPD.

This training takes place over two morning sessions-

August 30th & September 6th – 0930-1300 both days

To find out more or reserve a space contact course facilitator, Jamie Joyce, at jamie@act-now.org.uk or call 07943020241



Business Opportunity Holiday Letting Business



The community-owned Isle of Gigha is the most southerly and one of the most beautiful of the Hebridean Islands. The Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust is the community organisation that manages the assets of the island on behalf of the community. They are seeking a new operator for their well-established holiday cottage business on the island. There are 5 holiday cottages available for lease, giving someone the opportunity to develop the business, support tourism in the beautiful west coast of Scotland, be part of the island community and most importantly, be your own boss!

The cottages have been in community ownership since the buy-out in 2002.

The Trust and its subsidiary company own a range of strategic tourism assets across the island, including the Boathouse Restaurant, Gigha Hotel, Achamore Gardens, Café, Skincare shop, Camp and Motorhome site, pontoon and mooring facilities and an Activity Centre. The Trust therefore is keen to find an operator that can work with existing tourism businesses and the Trust to develop Gigha as a visitor destination.

The Isle of Gigha is situated three miles west of the Kintyre peninsula, less than three hours drive from the city of Glasgow. Gigha is serviced by hourly CalMac 20-minute sailings and has some of the most beautiful and safe beaches on the west coast of Scotland.

To find out more about this exciting opportunity, please email shona@gigha.org.uk or telephone 01583 505390.

