



GIGHA NEWS



Welcome to the April 2021 Gigha News

Dear Member,

Please find enclosed this month's newsletter and a copy of March 2021 Board minutes.

Regards,

Ian Wilson

Chair

For and behalf of The Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust

Enercon E33 "Harmony" Turbine

The Enercon E33 turbine has been down since mid-November due to a fault picked up during the yearly service and grease schedule. The delay in getting this repaired was caused by COVID-19 restrictions and Brexit, as parts are sourced in Germany. Technicians have been in attendance but unfortunately another fault has been flagged up each time which has meant another wait for parts and technician availability. Every effort is being made to have the E33 operational again as soon as possible. Compensation for the downtime is due from Enercon and is currently being negotiated.

Staff Update

Jacki Currie finished working for the Trust in February 2021. We would like to recognise and thank her for her 12 years of service to the Trust and wish her all the best for the future.

The current Trust staff is made up of: Shona Bannatyne, Office Manager; Jane Millar, Development Manager; Andy Clements, Housing and Estates Manager; Bryony White, Head Gardener; Morgan Russell, Apprentice Gardener; Margaret Lister, Gardener; Casey Jo Zammit, Countryside Ranger; Craig Whyte, Gateway to Gigha Project Manager; Hannah Fawcett, Financial Consultant; Thomas Shaw, Senior Maintenance Operative; Malcolm McNeill, Maintenance Operative; Tracy Wilson, Office Cleaner; Nicola Evans, Gardens Cleaner.

Please note that staff working hours are generally 9am-5pm Monday-Friday, so please ensure to only approach staff about IGHM matters during these times.

Members Meeting

IGHT held their first online members meeting on Thursday 22nd April. The presentation was recorded and can be found on the Gigha website at Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust > IGHM Members or IGHM Members Meeting April 2021 - YouTube.

The presentation was hosted by Brandon Clements along with the staff team giving updates on the different activities. A transcript is enclosed.

As this was a first attempt, we would appreciate any feedback sent in to chair@gigha.org.uk

Countryside Ranger

I hope you've managed to get out and enjoy another glorious month of sunshine and a blast of colour from all the wildflowers, mainly those of the purple variety! Carpets of lilac and mauve have flooded the island in the form of grape hyacinths, germander speedwells, dog violets, bluebells, forget-me-nots, and even blue wood anemone, which many usually recognise as the first white flowers within a woodland!



Just creeping in now are small speckles of light pink and white from the cuckoo flowers, wood sorrel and ramsons (wild garlic) pushing their way through and poking their heads above the thick grasses. The beady-eyed among you may have also spotted some lousewort out on the moorland which subtly display their rosy petal tubes, made up of five lobes, and that exist by latching itself to the roots of grasses to share its nutrients!

Countryside Ranger continued



The natural world is about to treat us with its summer displays and you may have already noticed a kaleidoscope of colour from the seaweed along the seashore, and an influx of bright butterfly species such as peacocks, cabbage whites and orange tips! From the end of April onwards the Ranger Service will start its summer biological monitoring of cetaceans, and all the "B's": blossoms, birds, butterflies, bumblebees, and bats! In the upcoming weeks, the Ranger Service will also be putting out a guided walks programme that covers the natural and historical heritage of the island, and starting up monthly events for both the community and visitors focused on nature watching. Please get in touch if there is an event you would like to see carried out, a route you would like to walk, or for more information.



And speaking of events, this month we ran our very first event! We have had to be very careful with organising events in order to comply with government guidelines regarding meeting outside, but earlier in April we ran an event to find the lost ship carving. We had an absolutely glorious day filled with sunshine, biscuits and smiles. Unfortunately, we did not unearth the carving, but we had a team of dedicated people, so watch this space, it may resurface some time soon!



Photo of the month: the crosier of a young fern

Island re-opening / Visitor Management

We have ordered 2500 Visitor Information leaflets to be printed. These leaflets outline the key facilities available on island, responsible visitor behaviour, camping and motorhome guidelines and information for road users. The leaflets should arrive soon and will be available on the ferry as well as other key places on the island. You will also see similar posters around the island, on the ferry and at Tayinloan.

The toilets and shower at the Boathouse will not be open this year which the Board are disappointed about, however there will be toilets available at the ferry slip and at Achamore Gardens with entry by donation. The new campsite will provide appropriate visitor facilities in 2022.

Activity Centre

Craig Bott and his partner Lynn Park will be running the Activity Centre for the 2021 season. Craig has serviced all the bikes and holds all relevant certificates (power boat, first aid and Disclosure Scotland).

Facebook: Gigha boats and activity centre

Email: gighaboats@gmail.com

Tel: 07549 682700

Achamore Gardens picnic for residents

We had 47 adults and 15 children register for the residents picnic at Achamore Gardens. Residents booked in for their packed lunch which was prepared by the Gigha Hotel. Residents were then able to take their picnic and enjoy spending time in the Gardens with their household bubbles. Thank you to Gigha Hotel and to Ellie Logan, Margaret Lister and Morgan Russel for providing some musical entertainment.



Gateway to Gigha – Update from Project Manager Craig Whyte

The return of swallows and willow warblers heralds the coming of a new summer season in which the Gateway to Gigha paths project will gradually roll out across the island. Each planned route has presented its own particular complexities and considerations and there are still issues to iron out, not least the logistics of getting hundreds of tons of path building materials to the start of routes! While conveyance by truck and ferry was the originally favoured option, the detailed paths design process has revealed the sheer volume that would be required and the number of truck loads that this would entail. This in turn has sparked new interest in re-opening the island quarry, an option we are studying carefully, along with a third possibility of shipping material directly from Glensanda.

The Planning Permission process, too, has not been without complication. The original advice that we should be able to encompass the whole network within a single application was changed to a recommendation that 3 separate applications would be required. However, the latest directive is that we must submit individual applications for each path separately, and this process is now underway.

Meanwhile, the tendering process is ongoing, and we hope to be in a position, relatively soon, to announce details such as who will be carrying out the work and when.

As I write (27th April), our heritage consultants, Lateral North and Lucidity Media, are on Gigha and Casey-Jo, Bryony, Keith Wilson and I have been showing them various aspects of the island's heritage. This is informing the interpretation planning process and decisions as to which aspects will be interpreted physically, on site, and which will be conveyed digitally, including through a new website. We have also been thinking more about a potential focus for our Community Heritage Project. The Ardminish cist, the Kilchattan grave slabs, and a possible small heritage centre have all been suggested, but I'd love to hear what you think! Of course, there are many other strands to the Gateway Project and in the coming month we will be devoting more time to planning and implementing our e-bike acquisition, public events, school projects and provision of community training opportunities.

I look forward to updating you on these and on paths and heritage development in future newsletters.
craig@gigha.org.uk

Gigha Internet

We are actively looking into the internet issue on Gigha and have been in touch with BT (3rd March) and requested a survey to bring over fibre and link up with a transmitting aerial, possibly on the existing mast that transmits TV. The survey will identify whether this is feasible or not. If so, households would then need a terrestrial aerial, but the connection would be good and fast. There are two phases necessary; firstly, the survey to bring a fibre cable to the island from Tayinloan and then a second survey (not BT as they do not offer this service) to establish connections to a mast that transmits from a transmitting aerial to businesses and households in Gigha. We are following this up as much as we are able but in the meanwhile invite comments from residents, as all input is appreciated.

First Aid Training

Arrangements are being made for Trust staff to undergo First Aid training. As there may be additional spaces available on the course, please contact the office to register an interest if you wish to attend. The date and costs involved are still being agreed with the trainer.



Dark Skies Gigha has been on hold due to the Covid pandemic and unfortunately our Dark Skies Festival which was booked for 2020 had to be cancelled. However, as the situation improves during 2021 we hope to get things moving forward so that islanders and visitors can get back to enjoying and learning about the wonders in Gigha's beautiful night sky.

Here is an update of our plans for 2021.

- Firstly who are we and what are we about? We have four islanders on the Dark Skies Gigha team - Kenny and Julie Wilson, Casey-Jo Zammit and Keith Wilson. Our aim is to encourage and facilitate an interest in stargazing and other aspects of astronomy for all ages and abilities in our community, making good use of Gigha's exceptionally dark skies.

- Designs are underway for a small interpretation board for the 'Dark Sky Theatre' at the far north of the island to assist observers in identifying some constellations and other objects in the night sky across the seasons. We also hope to add a few benches at this location. A useful stargazing guide available in pamphlet form for islanders and visitors to use is in preparation which will be full of stargazing tips and charts to help you.

- If we are successful in obtaining funding we would also hope to be able to provide some observation resources such as binoculars for islanders to use at events.

- We have three events planned for later in the year which, if still required, can be compliant with social distancing rules. All of course are weather dependent!

Monday September 13: Gigha Primary School astronomy event

Friday October 8 and Saturday October 9: Community stargazing event. (Further details to follow)

Friday December 10 and Saturday December 11: Community Moon and planet watch.

(Further details to follow)

- Monthly 'Seeing Stars' stargazing articles in the Gigha newsletter to keep you informed of what you can look out for in Gigha's night sky.

If you have any questions or suggestions in relation to stargazing on Gigha please don't hesitate to get in touch with us by e-mail: dark.skies.gigha@gmail.com

Please also follow Dark Skies Gigha on Instagram. You can message us and more importantly contribute to the group using the Instagram app ([dark_skies_gigha](https://www.instagram.com/dark_skies_gigha))



SETTING STARS

Can you find the two evening stars this May?

May is a great time to spot the two closest planets to the Sun - one is easy to spot, the other a little harder but worth the effort. You can't miss brilliant Venus blazing in the north-west soon after sunset. Look just above Venus and you should find the much fainter planet Mercury. Binoculars may help you find it.

Mercury is the closest planet to the sun. It circles the sun faster than all the other planets, which is why the ancient Romans named it after their swift-footed messenger god. To find the planet Mercury the trick is not to look too soon or too late. If you seek it out too soon, Mercury will be washed out by the glow of evening twilight but if your search is too late, Mercury will have followed the sun beneath the horizon and you will have missed it. The best time for spotting this little planet is around one hour after sunset. Good luck!

Mercury is a tiny planet, not much bigger than our own Moon and because it is so close to the Sun a year is only 88 Earth days long. It is covered with craters and unusually for such a small planet it has a molten core like Earth. Despite surface temperatures of up to 700°C water vapour has been detected by spacecraft at the planet's poles where sunlight doesn't reach.

If two planets aren't enough for you then try and find the red planet Mars once it gets darker which is higher up in the constellation of Gemini not far from the stars Castor and Pollux (The Twins).

Gigha Community Fund

In the latest round of the Gigha Community Fund, Keith Wilson has purchased more dog waste bags and a new dispenser for the ferry road at a cost of £262.26. Gigha and Cara Parish Church have also received an award of £40.20 for grass seed to keep the Church grounds in good order.



Gigha Primary School

Seed and Plant Swap – the children have planned a seed and plant swap for the week of 17th May. There will be a red table in the entranceway to the school car park with trays of plants and seeds. Please bring any seeds and plants you want to swap to put them into the trays underneath the table and help yourself to seeds and plants that are on top of the table. We are especially looking for strawberry, tomato and herb plants for our polytunnel as well as seeds or plants for winter vegetables – cabbages, root vegetables, cauliflower, etc.

After School Clubs and Reading Buddies – with a change in the Covid regulations we are able to start clubs again to enable our children to access additional opportunities for recreation and play. If you are interested in volunteering for after school clubs (sports, arts, cooking, nature/science, dance/drama) or in becoming a reading buddy for one of our children, please ask for a volunteer form from the school office (01583 505 259). All Argyll and Bute volunteers are subject to a Disclosure Scotland Child Protection check.

Food Growing Garden – we will have two weekend opportunities for members of the community to help us construct and fill some raised beds for our food growing garden. Please look out for dates and details for this. Experience in construction projects would be very helpful, but anyone can help with the filling and planting! There will be a schedule for this and people can book in for a timeslot so that we remain Covid secure with regards to health and safety.

Sponsored Walk – the children are planning a sponsored walk to raise money for the food growing garden activities and for the NSPCC's maths day. We are looking for businesses to sponsor their target distances. If you are a business or individual, or know a business that would like to contribute to sponsoring a distance please call the school office and let us know.

Health and Safety on the Roads – Thank you to everyone who is working hard to drive safely so that our pedestrians are kept safe and well. As part of our health and wellbeing curriculum we have been out and about rehearsing our road safety skills and reminding ourselves how to keep safe around busy traffic when there are not pavements to walk on. Please continue to help us stay safe and do support children with reminders where it is necessary.

Gigha Community Nature Reserve – We are in process of passing on all the entries submitted for the GCNR logo competition to our judges. Hopefully, by the next newsletter we will have a winner to announce and can officially proceed with a design and launch!

Gigha and Cara Parish Church

As treasurer to Gigha Church I would like to thank all those who have supported the church financially over the past year either by giving directly into our bank account or by handing donations to me.

We are not planning to open the church just yet for worship and since there will be no AGM again this year I will give a brief statement of the accounts.

We started 2020 with £10166 and ended with £5633. The main income came from the donations, the raffle raised £500. Main outgoings were our contribution towards the minister's stipend and other ministerial expenses, insurance and council tax on the Manse. The Manse has now been sold and we welcome Andrew and Karen York to Gigha and hope they will be happy living here once they have renovated the Manse.

The money from the sale of the Manse will be invested by the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland and we will be able to use the income from this for maintenance of the church building. We will still need your donations though and if anyone else would like to donate directly into our bank account I can provide a mandate form.

I would also like to thank Jeff Hill for all the hard work he has been doing in the church grounds.

Thank you all for your support. Susan Allan

Main Contacts

For general IGHM enquiries:

shona@gigha.org.uk Tel: 015883 505390

For development enquiries:

jane@gigha.org.uk

For housing and estate enquiries:

office@gigha.org.uk

For all GTL enquiries:

trading@gigha.org.uk Tel: 01583 427300

For accounts/finance enquiries:

ightcentralaccounts@gigha.org.uk

For Gardens enquiries/volunteer opportunities:

gardens@gigha.org.uk

Trust Office Opening Hours: The office will be staffed but will be closed to the public during COVID-19. Please contact the office using the above details.

Isle of Gigha

Visitor Information

Spring/Summer 2021



Responsible Visitors

Please pick up dog waste and dispose of responsibly. Always keep your dog in sight and under control, especially in farmed areas where livestock is nearby. Please use bins provided or take your litter home with you. Do not use beach cleaning bins for anything other than marine litter. Help to take care of our natural environment and leave the surroundings as you would wish to find them.

Facilities

There are public toilets situated next to the ferry slip and near the Walled Gardens in Achamore Gardens with entry by donation. The Boathouse Restaurant and Gigha Hotel offer food and drink. Ardminish Stores is fully stocked with a variety of fresh and frozen products. For more information on places to eat, attractions and accommodation, visit: www.gigha.org.uk



Road Users

The roads on Gigha are narrow single-track road with few passing places. There are limited places for large vehicles, such as motorhomes, to park and turn. Please do not park in front of farm gates, access points, residential homes, or locations that will damage our verges. Please remember to drive slowly on Gigha and respect other road users. We advise no more than 20mph when passing the village and when approaching corners.