



GIGHA NEWS



Welcome to the September 2020 Gigha News

Dear Member,

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

Regards,
Ian Wilson
Chair

For and behalf of Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust

AGM

The AGM recording is now available at www.gigha.org.uk > Heritage Trust > AGM 2020 along with all supporting documents for download. If you are unable to access this, please contact the office. Please note that the appointment of Auditors and approval of the 2019 AGM minutes will take place when Members meetings are able to resume. We intend to hold a Members meeting as soon as appropriate

Director Update

The IGHT board positions were agreed by the board on 28th September 2020: Chair is Ian Wilson; Vice Chair is Brandon Clements; and Secretary is Ken Deacon. Fergus Christie has been co-opted on to the IGHT board.

There is still 1 member vacancy and 2 co-opted vacancies on the IGHT Board. We are looking for members who want to work with the Board and staff team to help us take forward a number of significant projects for Gigha, as well as support the general work of the Trust. If you are interested in becoming a Director, please contact chair@gigha.org.uk or reach out to any current Directors. We have a Directors Induction Pack available in the office which will give you more information about what the Trust does and the role of a Director. The board will be happy to take any comments or questions so please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any concerns.

Kevin Williams from the Gigha Trading Ltd board is standing down as a director after more than 10 years service. We would like to thank Kevin for his hard work and dedication to GTL during this time which saw the development of The Steadings and the Moorings project, as well as overseeing the management of the Hotel until it was taken over privately.

Member Communication

We ask that all Members enquiries and correspondence is addressed to IGHT's Chair, Ian Wilson, who can then share with the Board at their monthly meetings. You may email your enquires to chair@gigha.org.uk or send a letter by post to the Trust office. If you wish to arrange a meeting with the Board, please contact the office. IGHT is always looking at opportunities to cut core costs, therefore members who have already provided the Trust with an email address will receive members communication by email only rather than by post. Members who do not have an email address will continue to receive communication by post.

Gigha Primary School

Gigha Primary School children visited Achamore Gardens and met with Head Gardener Bryony to make a plastic-free biodegradable wreath to present to some of the relatives of those who lost their lives on board the SS Aska in September 1940. After an appropriately socially distanced visit from Michael and David Martin (nephews of John Martin who lost his life on board) the children paid a visit to Gigha and Cara church to view the poppy that had been placed in John Martin's memory. He was 22 years old when he was killed.

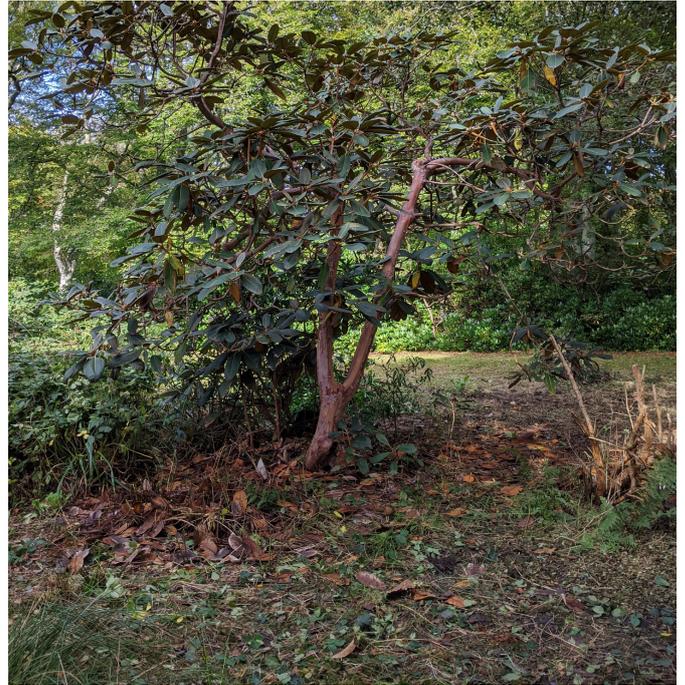
The wreath made by the children was created to commemorate the SS Aska which was bombed eighty years ago on Monday 16th September 1940 and sank in between Gigha and Cara. It was taken to sea on the 17th of September 2020 and dropped above the site where the ship lay to rest to remember those who lost their lives during the Second World War. It was a very special service for the great nephews and for our island.



Achamore Gardens update from Bryony White

As September draws to a close the plants are putting on their final fiery displays of colour with the woods turning to burnt orange, blazing scarlet, hot pink and golden yellow, with an array of berries and fruits adding their highlights to the kaleidoscope of colour. I always think of this as their sunset tribute to summer and love to see it, even while already missing the long days of summer. There is a funny conundrum in gardening, you can never identify that one moment, that one perfect day in the year when your garden reaches its peak and looks its absolute best. Instead you only recognise it in hindsight, as the garden starts to slip towards autumn and you realise that, yet again, that prime day is already gone; maybe you'll catch it next year. The dark days of winter lay ahead, but already there are signs of spring if you know where to look; next year's flower buds on the rhododendrons and azaleas are already swelling and, if the weather gods allow, it looks like they are going to bless us with an excellent display next spring.

Last month we advertised for a part time seasonal gardening assistant to help with the wide variety of work over the autumn and winter. I'd like to thank everyone who applied and am delighted to say that, thanks to the strength of their applications and interviews, we have decided to employ not one but 2 people to work in the gardens. I'm pleased to welcome both Margaret Lister and Ellie Logan to the Achamore team – the ladies have already got stuck in and have started to clear brambles in Colonel Horlicks "First Garden", the area of Achamore where he first started to carve out the compartments that would house his Rhododendron collection. The First Garden is home to some of the oldest specimens at Achamore with many bearing labels dated to the 1930s, which he must have moved to Gigha when he bought the island in 1944. This week Maggie and Ellie have uncovered a handsome specimen of *Rhododendron falconeri* which had been planted in 1945 and had been choked with brambles and other weeds for many years. We were delighted to discover that not only was the old plant in good health, but that hidden under the brambles were lots of seedlings that we will be able to transplant to other areas of the garden.



COVID-19 Supporting Communities Fund

Cara Gorman has now concluded her role as COVID-19 Co-Ordinator for the Supporting Communities Fund awarded to IGHM in May. The fund is now closed as of 30th September, with the last of the fund being used to purchase a supply of PPE to continue to support the community. If you require PPE, please contact the office. We would like to thank Cara for all her hard work and support during these unprecedented times and we wish her all the very best.

Gateway to Gigha

We are now able to announce that IGHM has been awarded £593,000 from the Low Carbon Travel and Transport Challenge Fund, which is being match funded with £228,100 from the National Heritage Lottery Fund. We are delighted to have secured the funds to progress this island wide project.

Craig Whyte has been appointed as the Gateway to Gigha Project Manager. Craig lives in Dunblane and will be working remotely on the project with plans to visit the island every fortnight. Craig has experience on similar projects and is a keen cyclist, runner and hill walker so has great ambitions for the island.

The Island Ranger position received over 60 applicants and after interviewing 5 candidates, the position has been offered and will be accepted subject to a visit to the island soon.

Should you be interested in joining a steering group for the project (either paths, interpretation or heritage conservation), please get in touch with jane@gigha.org.uk. A Facebook group for those interested will be created soon.

Holiday Cottages Lease

There was considerable interest in the Gigha Holiday Cottages Business Opportunity, with four very strong proposals submitted. Arrangements are being made for the cottages to be taken over by the successful candidate in October. More details will be included in the next newsletter.

Gigha Community Fund

The next submission deadline for the Gigha Community Fund is Monday 19th October. If you have a project which will benefit the community, please contact the Trust office or visit www.gigha.org.uk to download an application form and guidance notes on how to apply.

A message from the Community Nurse

If you are posting a test kit for COVID-19 this must not be placed into the Royal Mail post box. You must take it to the Post Office counter only, where it will be placed into a special envelope to prevent cross contamination with other mail and to protect staff.

AGM Members Questions and Answers

1. Why has the AGM been brought forward?

The AGM was previously held in September however in recent years the AGM has slipped back to November. Given the COVID-19 situation is unlikely to allow for public meetings in the near future, the Board agreed to hold the AGM in September as planned.

2. Why is there so much money in the Trust and subsidiary bank accounts?

To be financially responsible, especially in the current uncertain climate. Some funds within the bank account are restricted for projects (i.e. Campsite funds within the GTL bank account). Build up of funds will allow for lump-sum repayments towards debt when appropriate also.

3. Has the board carried out a housing survey to ascertain if there is demand for new housing?

Yes, a housing feasibility was carried out in July 2019 by Community Housing Scotland. The results of this survey have been made available on the Gigha website and updates and calls for contribution were included in the Monthly Members Newsletter, specifically June, July, August, September and October 2019. Within the Survey results that there were 54 responses to the survey, representing 132 people, 91% said they permanently reside on Gigha. 67% of respondents strongly agreed or generally agreed with the statement that, 'our community needs more affordable homes to rent'.

4. Why would the board pursue a policy of aggressive debt reduction by asset (house) sales, only to increase the debt to build more houses? The original houses created income to service debt - what has changed to make new housing more suitable to this purpose?

The current residential housing stock rental income does not service IGHT's debt. The current residential income supports the on-going maintenance and renovation of our housing stock. Sale of non-strategic assets, or assets requiring significant investment has contributed to the debt reduction strategy. We have not contributed to the housing demand by selling these homes as these homes remain in full-time residential use.

A 25-year cashflow has been produced for the proposed new housing and a mortgage is expected (by funders) to be secured and be serviced by any surplus rental income from these new homes. Relative costs have been factored into this 25-year cashflow including management, maintenance, voids, major repairs, insurance, and interest. Surplus rental income from housing is not expected to contribute to any other IGHT activities or debt reduction.

Scottish Government has been and continues to be supportive of the sale of a small number of non-strategic assets with significant future liabilities in order that the Trust can progress plans to provide fit for purpose housing for specific elements of the community.

5. What land has been sold recently?

Two land sales were made in the last year. These areas of land were adjacent to privately owned properties. Independent valuations were sought for these sales.

- Heatherlea – the House title did not include the full extent of the garden boundary. The homeowners purchased this land that was within the existing garden boundary for £2,000 in June 2019 (map below).

- Ardailly – some land at Ardailly was swapped (map below) and some purchased for £10,000 in November 2019.

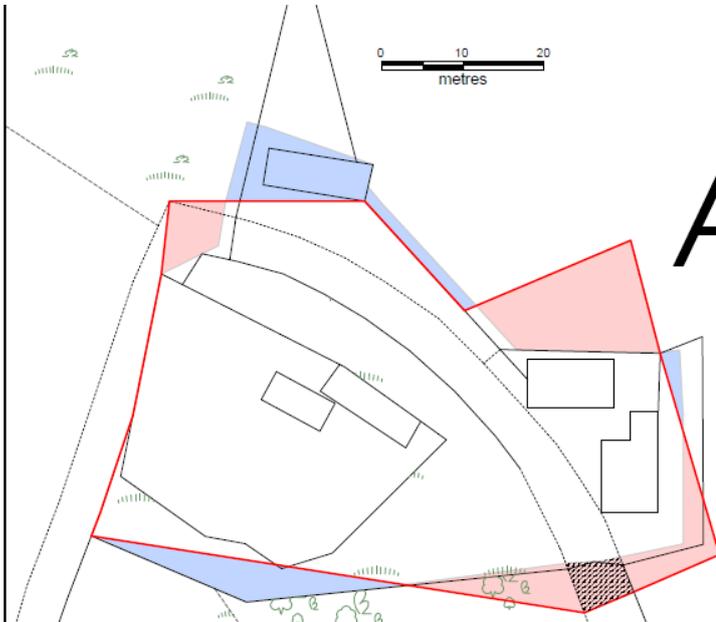
Given the nature of these requests and the land being adjacent to privately owned properties, these small areas of land were not advertised publicly. The Board have agreed to review small land sales on a case-by-case basis.

Heather Lea map



Heather Lea title
 Heather Lea:
 The blue shaded area on the left designates the area purchased.

Ardaily map



Ardaily House:
 The red shaded areas were exchanged for the blue shaded areas.

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

Trust Office Opening Hours:

We ask that you please contact the office using the details above between 9.00 and 5.00pm to avoid direct contact with the office staff whilst COVID-19 restrictions are in place.