



CHRISTMAS 2024



Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust Newsletter



The directors and staff of the Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust would like to thank all members for their support and contribution to the Trust in 2024. We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and all the very best for 2025.



Holiday arrangements

The Trust Office will be closed from Friday 20th December until Monday 6th January 2025. In the event of a **maintenance emergency** during this period, please phone 07706 353795 and someone will get back to you as soon as possible. For electricity outages please call SSE on 105. For mains water issues please call Scottish Water on 0800 0778 778.

Gigha and Cara Parish Church

Services for December and January in Gigha Church at 12 o'clock - all are welcome at these services.

- 21st December Carol Service at A'Chleit Church at 1pm
- 22nd December with Rev Lyn Peden
- 12th January with Mrs Marion MacDonald
- 26th January with Rev Lyn Peden
- 29th December joint service at A'Chleit at 11.30 am

Best wishes for a happy Christmas and a healthy and peaceful 2025.

Advent Adventures

For those that love being outdoors and would like to explore nature-based spirituality this Advent season, we will be hosting a series of advent adventures in the grounds of Gigha Church on Sundays through December. These are open to all ages and will involve exploring the Biblical story of Christmas through creative, reflective and nature-craft activities. Come and celebrate the story of the season with us, share some warming drinks and home-baked snacks and enjoy the beauty of winter outdoors.

- Sunday 15th December - Drop in between 1pm and 3pm at the Churchyard
- Sunday 22nd December - Drop in between 1pm and 3pm at the Churchyard
- Thursday 26th December - Boxing Day Christingle Walk - Meet at 1pm at the Village Hall
- Sunday 12th January - Winter Journeys - Meet at 1pm at the Church

For more information or to volunteer help, please call Julie on 01583 505 310

Save the date!

- Saturday 14th December - Christmas Bar night in Village Hall
- Sundays throughout December - Advent Adventures
- Sunday 15th December till New Year - Community Lights Trail
- Thursday 19th December - Gigha Primary School and ELC play
- Saturday 21st December - Quiz in Village Hall
- Tuesday 31st December - Ceilidh in Village Hall
- Saturday 11th January - Quiz in Village Hall



Renewables update

After nearly 20 years with Vestas and numerous servicing issues over the last couple of years, Gigha Renewable Energy Ltd has engaged a local contractor, David Reid of Wind Turbine Services UK Ltd, who is based in Campbeltown.

A full condition survey has been carried out of all V27 turbines and it was identified that T1 requires a new main shaft and generator, and some repair work to one of the blades. Luckily, GREL has a generator in storage from T3 which was refurbished 10+ years ago.

The main shaft is being dispatched from Vestas in Denmark and along with the crane will be brought to Gigha by barge due to weight restrictions on the ferry.

T3 will also require a new main shaft and bearing and we hope to carry out this work in early 2025.

T2 had a new gearbox fitted earlier this year but also has slight movement in the main shaft, but can continue to operate for a few years yet, hopefully until the planned replacement of the Dancing Ladies.

Helipad Opening Ceremony

This week we had the official opening ceremony for the helipad.

Representatives from the Royal Engineers, local emergency services and local contractors attended a short ceremony at the helipad. The HELP Appeal intended to be there but unfortunately weather affected their travel plans.

Everyone then headed to the Village Hall to join the community in the commemorations. A vote of thanks was given to everyone involved in the project, and a display of videos and photos from the project were shared. Thank you to everyone who attended and joined us in thanking the HELP Appeal who made this project possible!



Achamore Gardens

Coach Park – The coach turning and parking area opposite the Village Hall may be used out of season for additional parking when there are events on at the Village Hall, however, the coach park is not to be used for unauthorised storage of vehicles or belongings as shown here.

Firewood - Loads of split logs or mixed unprocessed (lengths and rounds) are available for a donation. Please contact the Trust Office on 01583 505390 to place an order.



Achamore Gardens Cont.

2024 was quite the year, from the lows of the damage caused by Storm Jocelyn in late January, and the woodland fire that required Campbeltown Fire Brigade to turn out and save the day, to the highs of the most astonishing spring blooming where our rhododendrons were smothered in blossom for weeks on end, and even the trees got in on the act, turning puddles primrose yellow with the huge volume of pollen they were producing. We've had failures and successes in the garden, with some venerable old plants finally succumbing to the long, long sodden winter, but on the other hand, we seem to have cracked the code on growing Rhododendrons from seed completely peat free, something I was told by many rhododendron experts was simply not possible.



But 2024 has really been about the people. We waved farewell to Maggie Lister at the end of 2023, and to Morgan at the end of the summer, and welcomed Rebecca to the team in the autumn. Kacper completed his apprenticeship and secured a fantastic placement at Logan Botanic Garden (stay tuned for a report from him in the next newsletter) and Maurice finished his traineeship. We're lucky that we've been able to keep both Kacper and Maurice on following their training.

We've had some brilliant events this year; in May we finally got good weather for our Scotland's Garden Scheme charity open day, raising £740.21 for both the SGS national charities and our nominated charity, Gigha Village Hall. May also saw the ever-popular residents' picnic, and in June the gardens hosted the wellbeing day for the Sound of Gigha, with participants enjoying all sorts of activities from sound baths to tai chi and guided walks. Most recently, our volunteer bulb planting day saw over 1,000 bulbs planted in just 4 hours. Some of those bulbs are already pushing through the soil, with the wee green shoots reminding us that spring really isn't that far away.

The real stars of the show this year have been our fantastic volunteers who turn out in all weathers and make a huge contribution to the garden, happily turning their hand to whatever needs doing, from ripping out brambles to planting hundreds of sweet peas and other annuals to make the garden sing in summer.

Achamore Gardens Cont.

Our volunteers beaver away in the greenhouses, flower beds and ditches, working hard to help the staff make the garden the best it can be, and with an amazing 428 hours donated to the garden you better believe that they make a significant contribution to Achamore's restoration! To put 428 hours into context, that's the equivalent of 61 (and a teeny bit) days, or an astonishing 12 weeks of a full-time gardener. Some of our volunteers come every week for several hours, and others donate an hour or two of their time whenever they can, so if you'd like to get involved in 2025 please get in touch – there's volunteer opportunities to suit everyone. On behalf of the gardens team, I'd like to thank all of our volunteers for their hard work this year, and the rest of the community for their continued encouragement and support of the garden's restoration. We wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a joyous New Year.



Ard Bruach Housing

Following delays with the completion of the new housing, we have decided to pause the advertising and allocation process until the houses are completed and the community are able to view the properties. If you have already registered your interest, your application will remain valid.



UK Social Enterprise Award

Following success at the Scottish Social Enterprise Awards, the Trust headed to London for the UK awards. The Trust was 1 of 9 finalists in the "UK Social Enterprise of the Year" award category. We were delighted to be announced as the "high commended" runners up! This is a huge achievement and fantastic recognition for Gigha and all the hard work that has gone into the island. A massive well done to everyone who has helped bring Gigha to where it is today.



Island Ranger Service

As of 3rd November 2024, we are entering our 5th year as a Ranger Service – how crazy! It has been a bonkers few years of BIG projects, but despite the path network, the hedgerows and the invasive species projects, it still remains the small things like community volunteering sessions, community events, and the occasional patrol, that make being the island ranger the utter privilege that it is. As we hit this milestone, we are soon to be introduced to the new community action plan for the island, and it'll be super exciting to be able to fulfil the environmental and green goals the community have worked so hard to produce and refine.



Over the past couple of months we have had some epic fun in the woods. We held our first set of adult woodland sessions, something that was requested after doing so many forest school sessions for children, set up by a wonderful island volunteer. We held four sessions learning a teeny weeny bit about woodland craft, making kindling, setting fires, whittling some amazing pieces, weaving willow bird feeders, making natural candles, and building some Christmassy reindeer from foraged wood. As ever, many laughs were shared, lots of new skills were learned (more so by the Ranger than the participants, because they were all so awesome and creative!), and of course many marshmallows were toasted! It has been a pleasure to run these sessions, and we would love to hold them again next year, or perhaps focus on a different season to change up the activities.

Staying in the woods, we have just completed a seven-week Forest School programme. Gigha Primary School very kindly agreed to include this programme in their curriculum this term to allow us to complete a Level 8 Forest and Outdoor Learning Award, in the attempt to become fully fledged and certified Forest School Leaders, recognised by the national Forest School Association. We are delighted to say we passed our practical assessment, but even more delighted to see the changes in the learners. Their confidence almost reached the stars by the end of the programme, climbing that little bit higher, trying new things, working with tools, and risk assessing their own play and learning as individuals and as a group. These sessions were almost entirely led by the learners, and we had the chance to do some orienteering, bug hunting, fire lighting, and played many games to boot! It really is an honour to see children thrive in the outdoor world, as scary or as off-putting as that may seem to some. All the learners were excellent, and we are exceptionally grateful to the School for allowing us to lead this programme.

Island Ranger Service Cont.

Nicely linked from woodland to trees... Arrived on island, are now 14,000 tree native trees ready to be planted into our system of hedgerows. These trees were selected from community led nurseries where possible, and are all of Scottish provenance. We are also delighted to say that The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) have donated 900 trees to the project through their "I Dig Trees" scheme. This is the third year our applications have successfully received trees and we are delighted to say these little "whips" will help to bulk up our hedgerows. From January through to March we will be planting livestock safe field maple, blackthorn, hawthorn, hazel and crab apple to connect fragmented woodland habitat and support boundaries. This is going to be a mammoth task, but we are determined and ready to go (or we will be after a small Christmas break!) If you would be interested in helping us to plant some of the these trees, please just get in touch. Alongside this, our invasive non-native species removal project is also going extremely well. We have tackled approximately 20 hectares of invasives up to now and will continue to work to remove the remaining stands identified through the project until March 2025.

And to finish off the year in true style and gratitude, we ended our working year with another Volunteer Christmas Lunch. We would like to say another WHOPPING thank you to our amazing island volunteers for all their help with conservation tasks and endless support that they have shown throughout the year. We have racked up an astounding 301 volunteer hours in 2024, and to celebrate we headed to the Village Hall for a beautiful afternoon tea provided by IGHT and produced by Wild Chameleon Tearoom. It was such a lovely afternoon, and whilst this only goes a little way to saying thank you, we completely recognise that the work we do would not be possible without these truly fabulous people.

We are looking forward to 2025, the potential new ideas from the community, and wrapping up our second landscape scale project. Finally to say a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to our community.



Gigha Community Council - Isle of Gigha Transport Users Group

Purpose of the Group:

- Inform Transport Organisations / Public Authorities (PAs) serving the Island.
- Convene as needed to inform Transport needs consultations by drawing together Island transport users and key stakeholders as appropriate.
- Share Island knowledge and needs information.
- Identify common issues and potential solutions to be raised through the appropriate channels to Local Authority, Transport Scotland, CalMac Community Board, HIAL etc.

On 29th August 2024, the first meeting was held in the Gigha Village Hall. Key discussions and actions:

- Proposal to improve ferry linkage with CityLink. Action: letter sent to Citylink setting out the issues for residents and visitors. UPDATE: call being organised with CityLink Commercial Manager late November.
- Addressing motorhome space on ferries. Action: Community meeting proposed for January.
- Residents' priority for ferry bookings. Action: ongoing discussions with Port Manager.
- New berthing proposal at Ardmish bay. Action: Responses prepared and submitted to Scottish Government Marine Licencing and Letter submitted to Argyll and Bute Council requesting Community Consultation, an Island Impact Assessment and holistic economic impact assessment.
- Collaboration / learning from/with other island transport groups. Action: Research is work in progress.

Minutes of Inaugural Meeting can be reviewed on the Community Council Facebook page.

Next meeting will be in the evening of Thursday 23rd January. We suggest a community discussion in the Gigha Village Hall, initiated by the Isle of Gigha Transport User Group, to consider the motorhome issue on Gigha.

This meeting aims to:

- Facilitate transparent discussion
- Gauge island opinions for external consultations
- Represent all those impacted

All welcome.



Gigha Hotel update

Bar renovation works will continue into the new year. Please be reminded that the hotel is a building site and is **not** open to the public. There have been some delays due to additional structural work which wasn't originally anticipated, combined with ferry and weather disruption. The works are still progressing well, and we are looking forward to the community seeing the end result. In the meantime, we have been working with electricians to identify rewiring requirements as well as considering an electrical heating system. We intend to advertise the lease of the hotel early in the new year with an aim to reopening for the 2025 season.

Gigha Primary School & Early Learning Centre

This month we have finished off our Forest School sessions with Casey-Jo. Each week, pupils have spent 2 hours in the Fire Station woods learning more about their natural environment as well as practicing shelter building, fire lighting, tree planting and tying knots. Pupils have learnt to risk assess their own activities and have grown in confidence in all areas of bushcraft. We would like to thank Casey-Jo for the support she has given to the children throughout these sessions which has been a fantastic addition to their curriculum.

At the start of the month we had our Silver Accreditation visit from UNICEF as parts of our Rights Respecting Schools journey. Children were able to speak with confidence about their rights and the way in which the school and wider community helps to uphold these rights. We were delighted to have been awarded Silver status and will be displaying our banner outside the school in the New Year

With the end of term rapidly approaching children at Gigha Primary School and ELC are busy preparing for the annual Christmas Play which will be held in the Village Hall at 7pm on Thursday 19th December. We hope to see as many of you as possible and have a fantastic raffle to follow the play along with mulled wine and mince pies to help bring in the festive cheer. We would like to say a special thank you to the Village Hall Committee for providing the use of the Hall free of charge for the children to perform the play.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year. Mrs Vipurs

GIGHA PRIMARY SCHOOL, EARLY LEARNING CENTER AND COMMUNITY

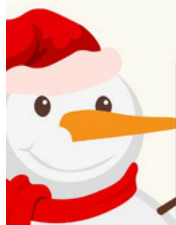
★ CHRISTMAS PLAY! ★

MINCE PIES, MULLED WINE & A RAFFLE!

Village Hall

THURSDAY 19TH
DECEMBER 7PM

RAFFLE TICKETS FOR SALE AT
ARDMINISH STORES AND GIGHA
NATURAL SKINCARE



Scottish Water Winter Newsletter

Be prepared for winter: protect your home and stay informed with text alerts

Here in Scotland, we love talking about the weather...it's not just chilly - it's baltic! It's not just windy - it's blowing a hooley!

Now's the time to turn talk into action. Here's a few things you can do now to prepare and help reduce any impact extreme weather and colder temperatures might have on your home in the coming months. Spend some time now to help save energy, water and avoid the potential hassle & heartache later.

It's also a good idea to stay informed and prepared for any potential disruptions to your water service. Please sign up to our new Text Alert service, designed to keep you updated on essential information, such as emergency outages, and weather-related issues. By signing up, you'll receive timely notifications directly to your mobile phone, helping you manage any issues that may arise. You can sign-up with multiple postcodes, making it easy to keep an eye out for loved ones as well! Don't delay—sign up today to stay in the know this winter. <https://customer.scottishwater.co.uk/alerts>

Protect your pipes from colder temperatures

New or old, water pipes don't like the cold - whether they are indoors or outside, water pipes can freeze and burst when temperatures drop which can cause unwanted damage to homes. Make sure any water pipes are properly insulated - it's one of the simplest & cheapest things you can do to help protect your property.

Do you know where your stop valve is?

It's important to know where the internal stop valve is in your property so that if you do experience a frozen or burst pipe you are able to turn the water supply off straight away. The stop valve is commonly located under a sink (in your kitchen or utility room), in a garage or in a location near to your hot water system.

Don't forget the garden!

Although the gardening season is slowing down, there's still plenty you can do as you put your plants to bed for the next few months.

Mulching beds and borders is a great way to lock moisture in the soil, and of course installing a water butt (or two!) will make the most of any rainy weather and help to save water for when we really need it in spring & summer. Water butts can also help to reduce the impact of sudden heavy rainfall which can cause puddles and damage to your outdoor space.

<https://www.yourwateryourlife.co.uk/winter-smart-gardening-tips>

Ensure 'winter warmers' don't block your drains

Soups, stovies and stews are lovely 'winter warmers' at this time of year. But please don't pour any leftovers & fats, oil or grease (FOG) down the sink. As these cool, they congeal and cause blockages. After you finish cooking, if the leftover FOG can't be reused, let it cool and scrape it into the bin. [Learn how to make your own 'gunk pot'](#) - an easy way to deal with leftover FOG. <https://www.yourwateryourlife.co.uk/homemade-gunk-pots>

Fix any drips & leaks

Any drips and leaks increase the risk of freezing, so check for any drips or leaks in your pipework and at any valves and taps and get these repaired as soon as you discover them. We support the WaterSafe scheme which can help you to find a registered plumber in your area visit: www.needaplumber.org or contact your landlord.



JOIN US FOR A

CHRISTMAS BAR NIGHT

14

DECEMBER

7PM-12MIDNIGHT

GIGHA VILLAGE HALL

LICENSED BAR

CHRISTMAS TUNES

CHRISTMAS JUMPER
COMPETITION

DRINKING, DANCING
AND GOOD TIMES!



YOU ARE INVITED TO

GIGHA COMMUNITY LIGHTS TRAIL ILLUMINATION

SUNDAY 15TH DECEMBER

4:30PM - 6PM

AT GIGHA VILLAGE HALL

JOIN US FOR MINCE PIES, MULLED
WINE, HOT CHOCOLATE, TEAS &
COFFEES

ALL WELCOME

GIGHA VILLAGE HALL

Christmas

Party

JOIN US!

SUNDAY

22

DECEMBER

4PM-6PM

AT GIGHA VILLAGE HALL
ALL WELCOME

