

ISLE OF GIGHA HERITAGE TRUST

NewsLetter February 2025

The IGHT 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. Anonymous correspondence will not be considered by the Board.

Contact us by emailing directors@gigha.org.uk

IGHT Board Action Plan 2025

Every year the IGHT Group prepare an Action Plan to help focus the work of the Trust over the next year. The 2025 Board Action has considered the aspirations within the 10-Year Community Action Plan and identified 10 realistic goals for 2025:

1. Progress the succession planning of the wind turbines or alternative income sources.
2. Identify a small portfolio of community-agreed residential building plots to sell.
3. Identify opportunities for a sustainable future for the Gigha Hotel.
4. Undertake a strategic review of IGHT properties, Achamore Gardens and staffing.
5. Work with the Parent Council and the Primary School to deliver a multi-use sports facility and consider the future of the playpark.
6. Continue the promotion of the Gigha Community Fund to support island projects and initiatives.
7. Progress the Woodland Management Plan to allow required thinning works to be carried out at Achamore Gardens. Investigate further funding opportunities for further woodland management and hedgerow creation.
8. Work towards the community's aspirations for a heritage space by supporting a heritage working group to begin the process of reviewing archives and developing aspirations for a community heritage centre.
9. Work with the Gigha Community Council and other local partners on mutual interest projects such as Keil Road, the new ferry, and the parking provision at Tayinloan.
10. Secure additional resources to review, update and publish Trust policies and procedures.

Gigha Hotel

Works continue to progress inside the Hotel, with the new bar area expected to be completed shortly. The bar and lounge area will be the venue for our Gigha Day celebrations, so a great opportunity to see inside (an invite for Gigha Day is included in this newsletter, but please confirm your attendance so we have numbers for refreshments). Iain Meikle Electrics is working on rewiring and installing electric radiators on the ground floor. Iain will also work on installing a generator which will allow the Hotel to be used by the community during power outages. The Trust Maintenance Team is scheduled to replace windows. We have recently advertised the Hotel lease and had a good level of interest. Interviews will be held in the coming weeks, meaning we should be able to report on the position of the Hotel management next month.

Save the date!

- Saturday 8th March – Quiz in Village Hall (TBC)
- Thursday 13th & Friday 14th March – Screen Machine
- Saturday 15th March – Gigha Day celebrations (RSVP)

GIGHA DAY



Dear Gigha Resident

Join us to celebrate Gigha Day!

SATURDAY 15TH MARCH 2025

12-3pm

GIGHA HOTEL

12pm - Flag raising ceremony

12.30pm - Ard Bruach Housing viewing

1-3pm - Followed by refreshments at the Gigha Hotel

**RSVP required by the 7th of March to
jane@gigha.org.uk or 01583 505390**

Gigha Emergency Plan Group

Following Storm Eowyn, local members of the Gigha Emergency Plan Group (representation from all our volunteer emergency services, NHS, IGHT, SSEN and Community Council) met to reflect on how Gigha coped during the severe winds and subsequent prolonged power outage. The local representatives are part of a larger group, which includes Argyll and Bute Council, Police Scotland, HM Coastguard, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, CALMAC, Scottish Ambulance Service, NHS Highland and collectively this Group has been instrumental in compiling a Community Emergency Plan, which is currently being updated.

A Community emergency plan is activated on request from an emergency service or local authority, in the event of a major incident, which would include a red weather warning.

As part of this update, the Group would like to reach out to community members who may have specific skills and resources that the Emergency Group could utilise, should an emergency situation occur. Suitable skills will be varied, but examples may include experience in health and social care, access to 4-wheel drive vehicles and machinery, pastoral skills, taking charge of areas which may be a useful space in an emergency situation, cooking/baking skills and other practical skills.

Although adverse weather and prolonged power outage is foremost in peoples' minds at the moment, those who sit on the Emergency Plan Group may be involved in a variety of emergency situations. Volunteers would not be expected to help outside their areas of comfort or expertise and could obviously decline where they felt uncomfortable or not adequately prepared.

The group would urge every household to update their own household emergency plan and encourage you to include a buddy up system if you feel vulnerable or isolated, ensuring a family member or close friend is identified to check on you, when safe to do so. The Group plan to circulate an updated plan for you to personalise, to meet your own personal requirements, as well as hold some more general information with regards to communication, health care, etc.

If you would like to volunteer to be part of our community volunteer group to support the Emergency Plan Group, then please make contact by March 20th: email admin@gigha.org.uk or telephone 01583 505234.

Many thanks, Emergency Plan Group

Campsite

We've been making the most of the quiet period on the campsite and undertaking some improvement works. This has included the installation of a new septic tank and treatment system, levelling another 5 tent pitches, installing electric hook-ups to all campervan pitches and refreshing the paintwork internally. As soon as things warm up and bit, we'll be able to get some wildflower and grass seed sown on the now bare areas of earth.

Screen Machine

The mobile cinema returns to Gigha ferry car park on Thursday 13th March showing "Wicked" and "Bridget Jones: Mad About The Boy", and on Friday 14th March showing "Paddington in Peru" and "A Complete Unknown". Tickets can be purchased online or on the door.

<https://www.screenmachine.co.uk/locations/gigha/>



Gigha Village Hall Whist

So the whist has come to a close for another year, and we're delighted to announce the winners - Ian Wilson (adults) and Martha Teale (<18s). It was a fitting 'last night' as we said cheerio to stalward Anne Shaw and her more reluctant side kick Thomas, as they head off to pastures new, but promising to come back for Friday night whist! We wish you all the best.

We are grateful to all who have supported, either by attending, purchasing raffle tickets and the amazing ongoing supply of prizes, which causes excitement and amusement in equal measure. Phoebe Brown deserves a special shout out for coordinating the baking each week, not an easy task, and thanks to those bakers. We also need to give a special thanks to other contributors who not only bake but always go beyond to help make our 'special nights' special, and that's Lorna Macalister, Margaret Andrew and Heather Gorman.

We are pleased to be able to donate £1,235 to the Gigha Village Hall, who in turn use this money to support community events, primarily the children's Christmas party, the Easter event and Halloween, with the rest of the monies contributing to ongoing running costs.



To book the Gigha Village Hall please email gighavillagehall@gmail.com or telephone Joe on 01583 505251.



Gigha Food Pantry

The food pantry has been extremely well used in the month of January, and we are happy to announce successful grant funding from Tesco 'Stronger starts' of £500 which will enable us to restock. We are also grateful for any donations, mainly tuna, pasta, cereal, uht milk, jar sauces and any treats like crisps or individually wrapped biscuits - these can be dropped off at the school or at Gigha's Natural Skincare.

Just a wee reminder we are an independent non-means tested food bank to allow ANY residents experiencing hardship to confidentially and discretely access free long-life food and drink products and basic toiletries.

Food costs are still high and if you need access, please contact Morven Beagan (Gigha's Natural Skincare) Alex Vipurs (Primary School), Claire Robertson-Guthrie (Island nurse) and Shona Bannatyne (Gigha Heritage Trust) and the code will be shared with you in the strictest confidence.

Thank you for your on-going support. Morven & Alex

Gigha Church in the Parish of Mid Kintyre and Gigha

Recently circumstances have prevented Lyn, our minister, from coming to Gigha for Sunday services. We have been trying different ways of coping with this. One Sunday, thanks to Karen York, we were able to have a service by Zoom in the Church using a laptop and mobile phone. One service was cancelled altogether in the aftermath of storm Eowyn due to the power cut. The last Sunday in February Lyn zoomed into the homes of members who have the facilities to cope with it and asked us to invite others to join us. This worked reasonably well except during the hymns when sound was cut off.

March services in Gigha Church will be weather permitting!

9th March at 12pm with Mrs Marion MacDonald

23rd March at 12pm with Rev Lyn Peden

The World Day of Prayer will be at A'Chleit Church at 1.30pm on Friday 7th March

30th March joint service in Clachan Church about 10am

Gigha Primary School and Early Learning Centre

It has been a busy February at Gigha Primary School and ELC. Following last month's storm, pupils were upset by the amount of rubbish washed up on our beaches and requested a beach clean. We therefore spent a few hours with Casey-Jo, Island Ranger, and other island volunteers at Cuddyport Beach and collected over 8kg of single use plastics along with various pieces of fishing net, ropes, bottle and even some shoes!



Last term we also began our 'Weather and Climate' topic which included a trip to the Glencoe Ski Centre to experience snow. Although we often get hail showers here, pupils have never experienced a really snowy environment and had said they would love to find some snow. After taking the chair lift up the mountain, where we saw a frozen waterfall, pupils spent time in a mountain environment, sledging, making snow angels, rolling down snow banks and playing in the snow. Pupils were surprised at the texture and temperature of snow which they had previously thought to be soft and fluffy. Brogan said "This is the best school trip ever! The chair lift up was amazing!" Archie also commented "Being able to play in the snow and make snowballs was really good. I've never done that before." Older pupils have also said they would like the opportunity to learn to ski next year. Watch this space!

We have now started our spring growing programme and have cleared some of our raised beds. This week pupils planted potatoes and garlic and we will be planting seeds in the polycrub next week. Our 6 new chickens will be arriving next week and we are looking forward to fresh eggs soon! We will also be creating an insect corridor using our new raised beds to help support the biodiversity of insect species travelling from the Bee Wild Garden and through the playground. If any islanders have any spare plants or seedlings they would like to donate to the school please let me know as these would be gratefully received. Mrs Vipurs, Head Teacher.

Gigha Community Council – Local Place Plan

In 2019 the Scottish government decided to encourage local communities to get more involved in planning and devised the Local Place Plan (LPP) to achieve that.

The new Argyll & Bute Gigha Local Plan for 2025-2035 is due to come into effect in July/August 2025, so we have a rare opportunity to have our say as islanders on planning issues that affect us by approving a Gigha Local Place Plan before that time.

Questionnaires have now been distributed, and we are looking forward to receiving completed responses so our views can be taken into account in future planning on Gigha.

Please return your questionnaire in the envelope provided to our CC box at Ardmish Post Office by the 8th March 2025.

We've also included a prize draw as an incentive to return the questionnaire and we look forward to receiving your completed questionnaire with one strip of raffle tickets for inclusion in the draw.

Contact email address: gighacommunitycouncil@outlook.com

Island Ranger Service

A fair few people dislike February, however, it is quite an exciting month we think. Also known as the Imbolc season, a Celtic calendar tradition marking the midpoint between the winter solstice and the spring equinox, it's short for a winter month – hallelujah, and all the signs of new life are beginning to show! The odd celandine is making an appearance, the daffodils have their stems and buds waiting to pop, the snowdrops are open finally revealing their little green belly buttons, and the ramsons (wild garlic) is already beginning to show on the verges. Bring on the Spring!



This month we trialled our first residential volunteer weekend. We have previously been lucky enough to have Edinburgh Young Walkers and 19th Argyll Scouts for overnight stays – and what an amazing effort they make – but this was our first call to visitors to stay at the campsite for a reduced rate and help out with a little bit of volunteering. We had a few cancellations, but four hardy and awesome volunteers (and a local!) answered the call and helped us plant another 400 trees in our hedgerows. These were an amazing group of people that had so much enthusiasm, asking for more trees and more volunteering time (no guys, it's time for a tea break!). We sat with a cuppa and a biscuit overlooking the west side of the north end towards Eilean Garbh, and who came to greet us, only a lovely little otter. The volunteers' luck continued at the Race Night organised by the Sound of Gigha Festival Committee, where they won some bubbles and a few pennies. We were elated with the work and enthusiasm these guys had for the island and wish to sincerely thank them for taking time out of their lives to help our little project here on this little island. Another massive thank you is needed to the Isle of Gigha Camp and Motorhome Site and Anna for supporting our project with this initiative, and the Sound of Gigha Festival Committee who laid on a wonderful dinner and warm space for our volunteers. We hope we can do this again in the future to benefit volunteers, the campsite and our environment.

Despite these wonderful volunteers, hedgerow progress has been slow this month due to storm damage, project monitoring and huge beach cleaning efforts. Gigha Primary School were first to respond asking for a little bit of assistance with the uplift of marine litter at Cuddyport beach. The fabulous students and local volunteers managed to collect a CanAm's worth of litter, which was mainly bits of plastic sheeting, bail wrap, bottles and even the odd shoe or two! We weighed it all and collect approximately 8kg. Whilst this sounds minimal it is amazing when you think of how light plastic sheeting and fragments are. Absolutely brilliant effort, and thank you Gigha Primary for putting out the call to help our environment!



Island Ranger Service continued

It doesn't stop there, local residents also called for a clean at Garbh beaches. A great number of residents turned out to again collect a huge amount of litter. This time it was unweighable, as there were oil drums, recycling wheelie bins, ginormous fishing nets, fish boxes, plastic strapping, and of course the usual small microplastics and fishing line. We filled two and half 1200 litre bins with the rubbish which was kindly removed by Argyll and Bute Council.

Our conservation volunteers have also been on the case, at Grob Bagh (Leim beach). This one saw the destruction of our beach bin with the loss of a sign and a couple of rails, but the beach has suffered serious erosion at the land adjacent to the sand, and the beach is strewn with plastic, mostly fishing rope. We have started to make a large pile, firstly to see how much we really are getting on our beaches in one storm, but also to make this more manageable as this is harder to remove from our beaches, fill our dedicated council bins, and ask the refuse workers to collect. Both Garbh and Leim will be ongoing battles for a while yet, but it is incredible how much difference can be made in just a couple of hours with some eager and passionate folk! A real, massive thank you to all the community and volunteers that are helping to keep our beaches clean!



The Sound of Gigha

Tickets for The Sound of Gigha 2025 will go on sale on **Saturday 1st March** and will be available online and from the campsite.

Friday 6th June – seated concert with Archie and Arran MacAllister, followed by a ceilidh with Sgòrr. Tickets are £20 for the whole evening or £10 for ceilidh only (from 10pm). Under 12s are available for £10.

Saturday 7th June – The main gig with Beluga Lagoon, supported by Culla. Tickets are £40 and £20 for under 12s. Tickets for island residents purchased from the Campsite in March will be available at the discount rate of £30.

We expect tickets to sell very fast this year and therefore we will hold half for islanders until the end of March and there will be a limit to the number an individual can buy. From 1st April all tickets will be released for general sale and will only be available online and at full price.

More information about the acts:

Archie and Arran McAllister will join forces to entertain us for the first part of the evening. Archie McAllister is a Scottish fiddler who has played and recorded with many folk artists. He most recently is known as fiddler with Skippinish. Arran McAllister is a young and up-coming star in the music scene and has had a great start to his musical career. He's best known for being the lead singer with the band Rhuvaal. Archie and Arran both hail from Campbeltown and coming from a great musical landscape they have varied musical tastes which they bring to the floor. expect driving jigs and reels, Gaelic airs and haunting renditions of local songs and covers of well-known bands.

Sgòrr are an up and coming traditional music band based in Glasgow, with members from all four corners of Scotland, Kilmartin, Skye, Evanton and Fife. This four piece band consists of fiddle, Highland bagpipes, drumkit, piano, vocals and whistle. Their sound is strongly rooted in the West Coast piping and Gaelic traditions with some added modern elements.

The Sound of Gigha continued

Culla is a young up and coming lively trad band with roots in both the Outer Hebrides and the Central Belt. A variety of different cultures rolled into one, it just works... bringing something new and fresh to the traditional Scottish music scene.

Beluga Lagoon is the musical project of Andrew O'Donnell, a wildlife cameraman and filmmaker whose music encapsulates the beauty of the Scottish landscape. His songs evoke feelings and memories of wandering through glens, sitting by rivers, or being out at sea. This unique ability to express the essence of Scotland's natural wonders through music has garnered him a dedicated following, as evidenced by a sold-out performances in Aviemore and Glasgow's famous Barrowland Ballroom.

Achamore Gardens

As everyone is all too aware, it's now been a month since Storm Eowyn wreaked havoc at Achamore, knocking over or seriously damaging more than 150 trees and forcing us to close the gates to keep everyone safe. Since then, we've been blown away by the support we've received from locals and friends far away. Islanders have helped us in so many ways, and their support has been, and continues to be, invaluable. From the skilled chainsaw volunteers who helped us deal with the most urgent trees to enable us to safely access the site, to those who have dragged brush, run bonfires and got stuck into making the walled garden look great, and those who have offered a quiet word of solace and encouragement, or baked a wee treat for the gardens team, we'd like to sat a massive thank you for your support, your help and your patience whilst we work to get Achamore safe to reopen. It's once again obvious how dearly loved Achamore is by all of you, and the gardens team can't wait to welcome you all back as soon as we can.

Locals and those further afield have also been a huge help in spreading the word about our fundraising appeal. By donating to and, even more importantly, sharing the link for our fundraising page you have helped us raise over £19,000 so we are already a third of the way to reaching our target! Raising that much so fast means that we have been able to secure the services of our excellent tree surgeons who, all being well, will be starting work on the 10th March. We've also booked a visit from our tree safety consultant who will check the trees in the public areas of the garden, as well as those along the paths in Fire Station and Leim Woods.

Because we have been able to book the tree surgeons so quickly, I am delighted to say that we are now hopeful that we will be able to reopen a good part of the garden by the beginning of April, just in time for the Easter holidays. The worst affected parts of the garden will be closed for quite a bit longer though, and we still need your help to raise the funds required to properly put Achamore back together again. If you have any ideas for fundraisers we'd love to hear them, and we'd really appreciate everyone sharing the link to the fundraising page again – the further we can spread it, the more money we can raise. You can share the fundraiser by using the QR code, or sharing the link to the website <https://www.gofundme.com/f/achamore-gardens-storm-recovery>.

You can also donate directly to the Trust, either in person, by bank transfer – please contact the Trust Office for details and Gift Aid forms. Tel: 01583 505390 or email shona@gigha.org.uk

