



# CHRISTMAS 2023



# Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust Newsletter

## Message from the Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust

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 2023. We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and all the very best for 2024.

## Holiday arrangements

The Trust Office will be closed from Friday 22nd December until Wednesday 3rd January 2024. 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 Community Fund

The Gigha Community Fund has awarded £450 to Hannah Storie who has organised a pensioners Christmas lunch in the Village Hall in conjunction with Shopper-Aide.

## Holiday Cottages Lease

The Trust owned holiday cottages have been leased out to Karen and Andy York from 1st December 2023. Bookings are open so please contact Karen on 07538 435628 to enquire. We wish Karen and Andy all the very best with the business.

## IGHT AGM

The Annual General Meeting of The Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust and subsidiary companies will be held on Thursday 14th December 2023 in the Gigha Hotel at 7pm.

## Renewables update

The gearbox changeover on T2 has been delayed by Vestas due to additional health and safety requirements. GREL continues to pursue Vestas to carry out this work as soon as possible.

## Gigha and Cara Parish Church

There will be a Christmas Carol service on Wednesday 20th December, featuring the Primary School children. The first service in 2024 will be on 14th January at 12 noon led by the elders. If you have a favourite hymn let us know and we will try to include it.

On Saturday 23rd December there will be a walk, Carol singing, and a Christingle service in the afternoon.

Please remember to keep the postage stamps from your Christmas cards and hand them in to Margaret Andrew. They will be used to raise funds for charity. We wish you a blessed and happy Christmas and a good and peaceful 2024.

## Campsite

The campsite is open again for the rest of the winter and booking is now open for Spring/Summer 2024. Spread the word as booking early really is essential in the summer months!

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## Gigha Hotel

Works continue to progress at the hotel. We are waiting for final quotes for rewiring the building and a new drainage system is being designed in conjunction with the housing development. Business Energy Scotland have provided a report on energy efficiency improvements and potential funding streams. We are working with HIE on the delivery of an Options Appraisal on the future management of the hotel. The outcome of the funding bid for renovating the bar area is expected by early 2024. Should the funding be successful, further discussions will take place regarding the renovation design.

## The Sound of Gigha

The date is set for next year's Sound of Gigha Weekend as the 7th-9th June. We've got a few things booked in already and some idea of what we think the weekend will look like – but we want to put the community of Gigha at the centre of the fun, so we want to hear from you! We'll be hosting a drop-in session on Sunday 14th January, with free home baking, teas and coffees and we'd love you to join us to learn about The Sound of Gigha CIC, feed back on The Sound of Gigha 2023 and come up with ideas for The Sound of Gigha 2024. Saturday 14th January, 2-4.30pm at Gigha Village Hall.

## Concert

The Mad Ferret Band will be playing at Gigha Village Hall on Friday 12th April 2024. Tickets can be purchased on Eventbrite.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/.../the-mad-ferret-band-whirl...>

**Gigha and Cara Church part of the Parish of Mid Kintyre and Gigha invites you to our Christmas Events Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2023**  
**12.30pm – 3pm**

**12.30pm Winter Treasures Christmas Walk**  
(self-directed [@bigstufflife](#) on Instagram)

Download the guidelines to join in where you live or join with others starting at the Gigha Boathouse Footpath

**1pm Carol Singing outside Gigha Hotel**

Lantern Procession to the Churchyard  
Hot Chocolate and Christmas Nature Activities

**2pm Christingle Service in the Church**

Songs, Prayers, Reflections for Christmas

Visit <https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/how-you-can-help/fundraise-and-events/christingle> for details.



Please come in clothing and footwear suitable for wet, windy and cold weather and bring a change of footwear if you are joining us indoors for the Christingle Service. For further information or to offer help for practical tasks on the day, please call the Wilson Family 01583 505310.



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## Gigha Winter Bar

There's a lot going on this month at Gigha Winter Bar – including a Christmas Sing-a-long with the Gigha Ukelele Group on Saturday 16th December, a Christmas party (with karaoke, crimbo jumper competition and secret santa) on the 23rd and an afternoon of boardgames, quizzes and console games on Friday 29th. And then, on the 31st we will be hosting a big Hogmanay Celebration complete with free buffet feast and dedicated dance floor! We hope to you see there!

## Old Photos of Gigha

On Sunday 7th January from 2pm Dave Lannigan will be hosting a session at the Gigha Winter Bar to go through some old photos of Gigha. We'd love you to join us to go through them and record information about the photos as well tales about the times and people in the images. We're hoping to digitise the photographs and link the stories to them.

## HOUSEHOLD RESILIENCE

WE CAN REFER YOU ONTO ALIENERGY. ALIENERGY CAN PROVIDE YOU WITH ADVICE AND SUPPORT FOR WARMER AND DRIER HOME. THEY CAN HELP YOU WITH PAYING FOR YOUR ENERGY, ENERGY DEBT, HEATING CONTROLS, SMART METERS, INSULATION MEASURES, HEATING REPLACEMENTS, APPLIANCES, ENERGY SAVING TIPS, METER READINGS AND RENEWABLES.



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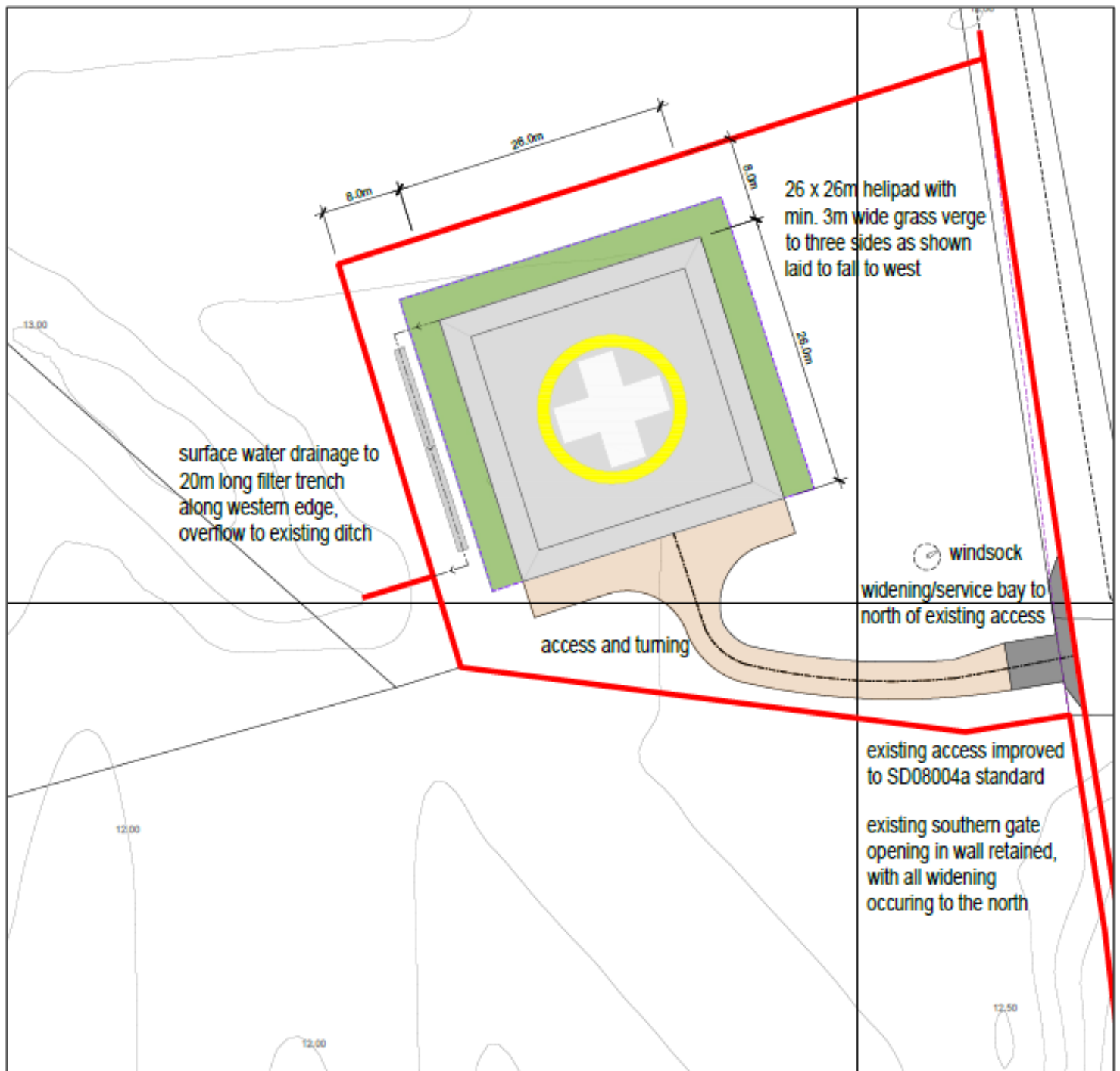


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## Community Helipad

We are delighted to share that an opportunity has been secured to deliver a dedicated landing pad at the existing airfield to service helimedcs. Following issues with emergency vehicle access onto the airfield, HELP Appeal were approached. The timing was just right as they were looking to fully fund the delivery of a landing pad in conjunction with the Royal Engineers who would like to build it. The project is fast moving as the Royal Engineers have limited availability and hope to construct the landing pad by the end of March 2024. Those involved locally with the emergency services have been approached for input and guidance, and a plan has been drawn up which will be submitted shortly for planning permission. The delivery of this project will ensure better access and care for both patients and emergency responders on the island.





# CHRISTMAS 2023



## Gigha Primary School

At the beginning of November we were awarded the Bronze Rights Respecting Schools Award and have received feedback on our silver action plan. This is a key milestone in our journey to ensure that children understand their rights and that these are central to the decisions that are made by themselves and others around them. As part of this pupils have been learning how children's rights have changed over time and this week we visited Inveraray Jail to find out how the rights of children differed in the nineteenth century. ELC pupils have also taken part in collaborative visits to Campbeltown with Rhunahaorine ELC which have included opportunities for joint play at the Indoor Soft Play and visits to the library to explore and take home new books to read.



We have also been developing links with our community partners and last month we hosted a visit from the island Minister, Lynn Peden, who shared family artefacts from the Second World War. Pupils also created their own Remembrance Wreath which was laid in the church on Remembrance Sunday.

As we approach Christmas, pupils have enjoyed helping out with island festivities. As well as making and delivering Christmas cards to all islanders, children in the Primary School have created six centre piece decorations for the Shopper Aid Christmas lunch; we have also begun rehearsals for our Christmas Performance which will be held on Friday 15th December in the Village Hall at 7pm.

We would like to thank Fyne Homes for their very generous donation to cover the cost of hiring the Village Hall for us. We would also like to thank all businesses who have kindly supported our wonderful wee school through sponsoring the cost of the performance and costumes. We could not have done it without you! We are still looking for raffle prizes and donations of home baking for the supper after the performance and hope to see as many of you there as possible.

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



# CHRISTMAS 2023



## Achamore Gardens

Early December saw International Volunteers Day celebrated, so we'd like to start by thanking all of our fantastic volunteers who help make Achamore better! Thank you to our regular volunteers who turn up week in, week out in all weathers, and cheerfully turn their hand to whatever task they're asked to do – they've donated many hundreds of hours to the garden over the last few years. Thank you to all the volunteers who came to our bulb planting day – between them, they managed to plant a remarkable 2,000 bulbs on the day, so next spring the garden will look amazing. And thank you to our "specialised" volunteers, from ditch clearers and wood processors to members of our steering group. Every single one of you has made such a difference to the restoration project, and we wouldn't be where we are now without you.

The end of November saw Euan and Jonny the tree surgeons back in the garden for a week, tackling a number of diseased, damaged and dead trees, focussing on trees that posed a risk to people, important plants or buildings. Many of the trees were challenging to fell, but none were more difficult than the big ash on the viewpoint path.

Unfortunately, this beautiful tree had to come down as it had been infected with Ash Dieback Disease which had progressed rapidly, causing lots of dieback in the crown, and it had already begun to shed small branches onto the path. Because of its location, the only option to safely fell it was for Euan to climb it and carefully dismantle it bit by bit, which took nearly 6 hours! Remarkably, not a single significant plant underneath it was damaged, and it was amazing to watch such skilled work being carried out. Our thanks go to Euan and Jonny for their hard work and professionalism.



All of that tree surgery means that we have a lot of clearing up to do, with lots of brash to deal with and tonnes of firewood to process. The gardens team, ably assisted by several of our volunteers, have made great progress tidying up the wood and are creating several new dead hedges from the brash. Dead hedges are a fantastic resource for insects, birds and many other small creatures and really help to improve the biodiversity of the site by providing shelter, nesting sites and feeding opportunities.



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## Achamore Gardens

The local robins didn't even wait for us to finish our first dead hedge – while we were still building it they were already making use of it, foraging for insects in the twigs and using it as an arena for their battles!

Finally this month, we've had great news from one of our funders, the National Trust for Scotland, who have agreed to pay for the initial design work for our proposed new plant propagation centre in the north walled garden,

and landscape architects Rankin Fraser have been appointed to do this work.

Propagating our plant collection is crucial to the ongoing restoration and is the best, and often only, way to ensure it's survival, but we desperately need improved and enlarged facilities to allow us to do this important work well. We will be holding a community consultation event early next year to share our plans with you and gather your thoughts, so keep an eye out for that.



## Gigha Ranger Service

It's almost the end of year 3! That is absolutely unbelievable, but what a year it has been: The Gateway to Gigha project was wrapped up earlier in the year; Argyll and Bute Council's Supporting Communities Fund has allowed us to continue Forest School for another twelve months; We were lucky enough to receive another round of funding to carry out some finishing touches to the path network; And we were awarded a whopping £248,000 to tackle the invasive non-native species across the island! On top of that we had our first two residential volunteer groups: 19th Argyll Scouts Group and Edinburgh Young Walkers, which were utterly fantastic; We hosted 20 engagement sessions and events; And we ran two projects with the Primary School. Our volunteers also have been INCREDIBLE this year, racking up 386 hours of volunteer time carrying out beach cleans, invasive removal, path maintenance, historical monument management and tree planting.

We want to say a massive thank you to everyone who has engaged with the Ranger Service this year, this role literally would not be possible without the community, and I am so grateful.

This month also saw our Forest School Extravaganza! Zoe Sills from Jackdaw Forest School joined us for a weekend of Forest School fun inspired by the barn owl that has recently been seen around the village. We spent the first evening hearing beautiful stories and poems about owls in the darkness, lit with fairy lights and accompanied by hot jacket potatoes and marshmallows on the fire.



# CHRISTMAS 2023



## Gigha Ranger Service

The second day was filled with wood whittling, exploring owl pellets, and trying our hand at an underground Dutch oven bread making session. Sadly this part was a little bit unsuccessful, but it's all lessons learned and we're ready to try again in the new year. We want to say a massive thank you to Zoe for making our weekend so special, sharing her skills and knowledge and simply being a fabulous example and practitioner. Forest School will start up again next year!



## Path works

Due to extremely poor weather in November, the works for Dun Chibhich and Cuddyport have been put on hold until the spring. Fisherman's cave is now complete due to the addition of stepping stones from the roadside down to the beach to avoid the muddy sections at the start, and the aggregate addition to the Northern Loop is still ongoing.



## Protecting Gigha's Woodlands Project

The project is well underway, and we are currently selecting contractors to carry out the invasive species removal and fencing of the hedgerows. Works for invasive removal are aiming to start as soon as possible in the new year, whilst the fencing will take place in the spring when the ground is drier.





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## Gigha Community Light Trail

*The Gigha Community Light Trail will take place this year along the woodland path from the Village Hall to the Fire Station.*

*Friday 15th December from 4pm until 10:30pm*

*Thereafter every evening from 3:30pm until 8pm (both times are approximate) until after Christmas.*

*For your own safety please:-*

**STAY ON THE PATH**

*Wear suitable outdoor footwear*

*Bring a torch*

*Keep dogs under control*

*A small donation towards running costs will be much appreciated.*

*A red donation bucket will be sited by the side of the path at the Village Hall end.*



## Ranger photos of the month

*Barn owl and Buzzard in the village*



## The waning gibbous moon at Kilchattan chapel

*Photo courtesy of Bryony White*





# Christmas PARTY

SUNDAY 17th DECEMBER  
4PM - 6PM  
AT GIGHA VILLAGE HALL

COME ALONG FOR SOME PARTY  
GAMES, A BITE TO EAT AND A VISIT  
FROM A SPECIAL GUEST!

ALL WELCOME