

ISLE OF GIGHA HERITAGE TRUST NewsLetter January 2025

The IGHTR 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

Storm Eowyn

Storm Eowyn arrived on Friday 24th January bringing unprecedented wind speeds of up to 100 mph across the West of Scotland.

Thankfully all Gigha residents were unharmed, and most properties did not sustain any catastrophic damage. As with many parts of Argyll, Gigha experienced a long power outage while SSEN worked to repair damaged infrastructure across the area.

Ferry sailings were also impacted as the ferry could not berth at Tayinloan due to pier damage and debris in the water. The ferry also could not berth overnight at Gigha during the power outage, reducing the number of sailings per day as it travelled to and from West Loch.

Several trees blocked the main road, but they were quickly cleared. Thank you to Andy Clements, Sean Harvey, Emma Dennis and Mark Rennie for carrying out this task.

A significant number of trees in Achamore Gardens were impacted by the storm, and the trees around the Golf Course parking area were also affected.

Thanks to The Nook and Wee Isle Cafe for providing hot food during the power outage, and to Wee Isle Dairy for distributing free milk.

SSEN can be contacted on 105 if you are still experiencing issues with your electricity supply.

Gigha Golf Course

If you wish to make a donation to the Gigha Golf Club or would like to volunteer to help, please contact them via Facebook/Isle of Gigha golf club or email gighagolf@gmail.com



Golf Course car park

Gigha Hotel

We have advertised the lease of the Gigha Hotel with the aspiration to have a new lease holder in place prior to the 2025 season. (Full advert is shown later in the newsletter.)

Works are well underway in the new bar, and electricians are being lined up to rewire and install electric heating on the ground floor. The plan is to carry out a second phase of rewiring and electric heating on the upper floors during the winter and/or when funds allow.

Save the date!

- Saturday 1st February - Quiz in Village Hall
- Saturday 15th February – Race night in Village Hall
- Saturday 15th March – Gigha Day celebrations (TBC)

Public meetings due to be rescheduled:

- Gigha Transport Group
- Gigha Community Action Plan

Achamore Gardens - Closed until further notice

Unfortunately, Achamore Gardens has suffered a grievous blow at the hand of Storm Éowyn and the damage is severe and widespread across the whole site. More than 100 trees have fallen or suffered serious damage and there's hardly a single path that doesn't have a tree down on it, or dangerous, hung up trees and branches overhead. We've lost precious shrubs and plants, including some of the original rhododendrons planted by Sir James Horlick when he first created the Achamore that we know and love.

On the Main Drive 4 huge trees blocked access, including the saddest of all, our UK champion Daurian Larch.

The most important thing is that no one was hurt or worse, and the vast majority of our buildings have also escaped damage.

Please bear with us, as it will take us a bit of time this week to formulate a plan, and a lot longer to clear the devastation. Hopefully we'll be able to open up limited access in the next week or two to the areas that suffered least damage, including the walled garden which, thankfully, survived the storm unscathed.

In the meantime, please do not enter the garden for your own safety and for the safety of those working in affected areas.

The reopening of the garden will be announced as soon as possible. We thank you for your cooperation.

If you wish to make a donation, you may make a bank transfer to:

Account Number: 00353889,

Sort Code 80-05-93

or use PayPal account: office@gigha.org.uk



Achamore Gardens Firewood

Firewood is still available in return for a donation towards the garden's restoration. Please contact the Trust office to place an order for split logs or rounds/lengths. Tel: 01583 505390 Email: shona@gigha.org.uk

Gigha Primary School and Early Learning Centre

Please be aware that there is a clothes recycling bin in Tayinloan village (located down the side of the old hotel by the toilets), the proceeds of which go directly to Gigha Primary School.

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.

Gigha Community Council

We now have a Gigha Community Council email address. If there's a matter you'd like to raise that you think we could assist you with, we can be contacted at gighacommunitycouncil@outlook.com

We will endeavour to get back to you within 48 hours. If you would prefer to write, please send any correspondence to the GCC Secretary - Andy Oliver, Tighnavinish, Gigha, PA41 7AA.

Sound of Gigha

We will be hosting a Race Night at the Village Hall on Saturday 15th February – please keep an eye out for more information on the village and Facebook noticeboards.

We are pleased to announce here first, our line-up for the evening gigs for The Sound of Gigha 2025.

On Friday 6th June, 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. They play driving jigs and reels, Gaelic airs and haunting renditions of local songs and covers of well-known bands.

And after the gig, we can don our dancing shoes for the festival ceilidh with the young band Sgorr, who are just starting to make their mark on the festival scene and have Gigha connections.

On Saturday 7th June, our headline act will be Beluga Lagoon supported by Culla, a young lively trad band hailing from the Western Isles.

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.

Tickets will be on sale soon – look out for announcements on the shop noticeboard, the Facebook noticeboard and in the next IGHT Newsletter.

Gigha Village Hall

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



Dark Skies Gigha

Love Dark Skies Festival February 13th – 15th 2025

Thursday February 13th – Dark Skies Gigha will host a group of young people who are leading our All-Sky Camera project so that we can see what the skies over Gigha look like at any time by accessing the camera online. People will be able to stargaze over Gigha from the comfort of their own home! If you are a Gigha young person and would like to join the group, please speak with Kenny Wilson for more details.

Friday February 14th – Scottish Book Trust Live Literature Workshops at Tayinloan Village Hall

1) 10.15am - Alan Windrum, award winning author of One Button Benny and other amazing stories for children. This active, musical session will be for under sixes and their parents and carers.

2) 1.15pm - Adam Murphy, award-winning comics writer and artist and co-author of the much-decorated CorpseTalk series. This session will be for 7–11-year-olds and their parents and carers.

3) Chasing the Moon storyteller premiere for all primary age children and their parents and carers.

These are ticketed events with spaces registered in advance. Tickets are £3 donation which includes Valentine's Day refreshments from Sunshine Bread. Registration is by email to dark.skies.gigha@gmail.com.

Saturday February 15th – Chasing the Moon Outdoor Session 10pm – weather permitting, join us at the dark skies theatre at the north end of the island for some moon watching activities (and of course a bit of love dark skies star gazing too). Please come warmly dressed and ready for wet or cold conditions.

Co-Op Community Fund

For those of you who are Co-op members, you can choose Dark Skies Gigha as the annual recipient of your vote for community funding. Read about our project, click the tab at the top to sign in as a member and choose DSG in one simple step: [Dark Skies Gigha is](#). Please send this link to friends and family across the UK – anyone can become a Co-op member and vote for Dark Skies Gigha. The more votes we get the more funding comes our way for festivals and events so please encourage people to sign up for membership and vote for us!

Knit the Universe Project

We are part of a national Knit the Universe project where people knit panels for a display of planet and galaxy themed images which we would like to put on display at one of our Dark Skies festivals this year. This is a fun and inclusive project that allows for a lot of creative expression and artistic astronomy! We are organising knitting packs for those who want to join. If you are an experienced knitter or a complete beginner and would like to have a go at knitting a panel for DSG, please contact us via the below details.

Festival Volunteer Leader Training

We are hosting several festivals, art and astronomy outdoor gatherings this year and have funding to train a small team of experienced stewards and volunteer leaders to help us manage these events. The training package includes achievement of a recognised outdoor first aid qualification, a REHIS outdoor food preparation and cooking certificate and Health and Safety for outdoor events training. If you would like to apply for this training and can commit volunteer time to completing it and to helping at our upcoming festivals, please email or call and let us know. No previous experience is required but enjoyment of teamwork, volunteering and working with the general public is a must.

Celtic Moon Club Launch and Solar Eclipse Event – Saturday 29th March

Please look out for more information on this event in the next newsletter.

If anyone would like to lend a hand with any of the above events or share their expertise and experience in our workshops and clubs, we would like to hear from you. Dark Skies Gigha can be reached by email at dark.skies.gigha@gmail.com or by calling Julie Wilson on 01583 505310.

Trust Maintenance Team

In December we said farewell to our colleague Thomas Shaw who was part of the Trust Maintenance Team for over 10 years. We would like to thank Thomas for all his work and support of the Trust during this time. We wish Thomas and Anne all the very best in their new home in Campbeltown.

Trust Maintenance Operative Job Opportunity

The Trust has a vacancy on their Estate Maintenance Team.

This post supports the maintenance of the estate, which covers grounds, tracks, housing, and buildings across the island.

The Trust Maintenance Operative will work within the staff team of IGHT and report to the Housing and Estates Manager. The post is based on the Isle of Gigha, but the post holder will be expected to work all over the island with use of the company vehicle, therefore a clean driving licence is essential to this post.

The post holder will be expected to work to their own initiative to ensure general maintenance of the island is carried out whilst responding to maintenance inspections and repairs. The post holder should build good working relationships with IGHT colleagues, tenants, and contractors.

The post is 30 hours on a permanent basis with the opportunity for flexible hours. Full personal protective equipment and uniform will be provided for the post.

To find out more about this job opportunity, head to: <https://www.gigha.org.uk/Maintenance-Operative>

To apply, please submit a covering letter and CV. Applications should be made by 5pm on Friday 7th February 2025.

Email: office@gigha.org.uk or post to: Andy Clements, Housing & Estates Manager

Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust Office, Craft Workshop 1, Isle of Gigha, PA41 7AA

Campsite Assistant Job Opportunity

The Isle of Gigha Camp and Motorhome Site is looking for a Campsite Assistant starting in April 2025 to assist with the running of the site during the high season.

The Campsite Assistant will provide support to the Campsite Manager and existing Campsite Assistant during busier hours as well as running the campsite when other staff are not available. It is expected that the work pattern will be one weekday afternoon per week (2pm-6.30pm) with overnight on-call cover in April and May, and 1 full day per week (9.30am-1pm and 2pm-6.30pm) with overnight on-call cover in June, July and August, this may include weekend work. However, there is some flexibility to these hours, and it may be possible to adapt to meet the needs of the successful candidate. There may also be additional hours to cover holidays and sickness throughout the season.

•Work pattern: Part time: 1 afternoon a week in April and May, and 1 full day a week in June, July and August.

•Contract length: Temporary: The contract will run until the end of August.

•Salary: £12.60 per hour.

To find out more about this job opportunity, head to: <https://www.gigha.org.uk/Campsite-Assistant> Please apply by sending your CV and a covering letter detailing why you consider yourself suitable for the job and outlining any relevant experience you may have via email to campsite@gigha.org.uk. Deadline for applications is 12 noon Wednesday 19th February.



Island Ranger Service

We welcomed 2025 with a bit of a bang really, first another beautiful display of the Aurora Borealis, followed by the stranding of a common dolphin, and then full force into planting 13,000 trees! Needless to say, on the calmer side of things, the wildlife as usual at this time of year, provides us a reason to stop, even for just a moment! The great northern divers are now back in large numbers around our bays – winter visitors that visit the Sound due to the diversity of seabed and sediment which make it rich for a variety of prey such as small fish, crustaceans and sometimes insects! Even if you don't spot them, keep an ear out for their eery, spooky call that sends you immediately into a thriller television drama, especially in the morning mist (TV studios are missing a trick there). The skies are at their best in January, in our opinion. Wonderfully named, January's Wolf Moon, always seems to be that little bit brighter, bigger and clearer, and without the science, we are always glad to see it, especially amongst the array of planets that have been visible in the last weeks such as Mars and Venus.

Strandings are always a sad event, seeing an animal in such distress means it's impossible not to become emotionally involved. At the beginning of the month, a common dolphin became stranded on our eastern shoreline. We think it must have come in on high tide, and became stuck between the various sandbanks in the bay, pushing it into shallow water as the tide went out. Thanks to an observant visitor and the Campsite Manager who managed to spot the dolphin and call the British Diving Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR), we were able to get to the dolphin relatively quickly, and were given great advice. Three more fabulous residents attended to help, and we were able to walk the dolphin out to deeper water, taking us around 40 minutes to get to a reasonable depth. The dolphin was definitely distressed and exhausted by its limp movements and confusion about the direction of open water, but once it reached depths it was more comfortable in, it became slightly stronger. It was able to use its tail more effectively pushing it's way through the water, and moving faster than we could keep up with. Whilst the release was not the energetic movie scene we would have liked, with the dolphin breaching, jumping and dancing among the waves as it reached deep water, it was definitely trying its utmost to get itself to safety, which was a good sign. The dolphin had no sign of injury when we found it, and having spoken to the BDMLR, they helped us to understand that the dolphin was still in good condition and was not malnourished. It wasn't without the help of the whole team that this dolphin made it to safety, and we sincerely hope it has now reunited with its pod, and is living its best life among the waves (deeper ones!).



Island Ranger Service continued

On to terrestrial tasks. This is the month we are now planting our 2280m of hedgerows. We have managed to complete two out of the eight so far, and of course we have had the help of our wonderful conservation volunteers. The team of eight managed to plant 300 trees, stakes and guards and all, in just over two hours, which was an amazing effort! This will be the principle task until the end of March when we will wrap up our Protecting Gigha's Woodlands Project, funded by NatureScot. The *Rhododendron ponticum* removal will also be continuing until then. The team have come up against some unprecedented growth and have really worked to clear as much as humanly possible within the project period. Monitoring and removal will be ongoing work for the next few years tackling any regrowth from the existing seed banks – but we are immensely pleased with the project progress – we have to start somewhere, and we reckon it's been a whopping great start. If you would like to be involved in tree planting, please just get in touch!



More trees...

Prior to the storm, those who regularly use the Fire Station Woodland will have noticed that many of the trees have been either pruned heavily or felled. These trees were posing a risk to path users, so it was felt that these should be removed. The tree surgeons did a wonderful job of felling the dangerous trees, leaving standing deadwood, and working some chainsaw magic to create habitats in the pruned limbs and trunks. Woodlands operate best with an estimate of 20% deadwood, without being too fussy about numbers and percentages, it is great to see lying and standing deadwood that create habitats for the whole food chain, from plants and fungi exploiting the decay, to homes for invertebrates, as well as shelter and feeding spots for birds and bats. There is no intention to "tidy" the felled trees, as this is a natural space, and we would like to keep it as wild and as intended by nature as possible. We actually think it makes the woodland look more interesting, we hope you can see the value too.

That being said, Storm Eowyn has presented the island with, what seems, no end of damage and destruction. However, we have taken the decision to keep **Fire Station Woodland and Leim Woodland closed** as there are currently dangerous trees over hanging our paths and well used areas, as well as a series of dominoed trees falling towards that path that are being suspended by much smaller trees that could fail underneath the weight or further winds. The team has dealt with as many trees as we are able, but for now these paths will remain closed until we can get further equipment and some assistance. Please stay safe by avoiding these areas for now.



BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY - GIGHA HOTEL

Are you passionate about hospitality and seeking a unique lifestyle opportunity?

Just a stone's throw from the beach, the Gigha Hotel has 12 bedrooms, a cozy bar, and a homely restaurant. Situated on the picturesque Isle of Gigha, a 20-minute ferry ride from the mainland, our island offers natural beauty and a welcoming local community.

We are currently working to partially refurbish the hotel to a good standard; ready to welcome guests in 2025 with comfort, cleanliness, and a sense of community.

We are searching for someone who will grasp the opportunity to lease the hotel from the Trust. We're looking for a dynamic team who will be the heart and soul of the hotel, bringing experience in hospitality and a willingness to get stuck into the day to day running of the hotel. The lessee will run the hotel, restaurant, and bar, helping transform the Gigha Hotel into a thriving year-round hospitality destination.

The hotel is at the heart of the community and offers one of the only places for islanders to socialise, especially during the winter months. We are looking for partners who will embrace island life, support the local economy, and make Gigha their home.

Gigha is a community owned island, 7 miles long by a mile and a half wide, three miles west of the Kintyre peninsula, less than three hour drive from the city of Glasgow. The Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust owns several of the islands assets, including the Hotel.

If you share our passion to make the Gigha Hotel the heart of the community, we invite you to learn more about this exciting opportunity.

Please email shona@gigha.org.uk or telephone 01583 505390 to register your interest. Applications must be submitted by Friday 21st February 2025.

Please be aware that the Hotel is currently undergoing refurbishments and any viewings must be arranged by prior appointment.



GIGHA SURGERY

In a Medical Emergency Always Call 999

Surgery Hours :- Monday to Friday 09:00 - 17:00

Drop in Clinics Daily: 10:00-11:00 and 14:00-15:00

(Excludes Wednesday)

Medication Pick up: Any Drop in Clinic

For Non-Emergencies and Enquiries:

Call Gigha Surgery on 01583 505223. Leave a message on the answering machine. Checked intermittently throughout the day until 17:00

NHS 24

Monday - Friday 18:00-09:00 and Weekends on 111

