

OCTOBER 2022

Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust Newsletter

Gateway to Gigha

Things continued to tick over this month. Tim Lister was busy on the Southern Loop and has done a fantastic job of stone pitching (creating stone steps) on the previously waterlogged slope to the south of Leim Beach. He has also been helping Calum Williams move stone for the building of the seven drystone plinths. These will soon be complete and ready to receive our interpretation panels. You might also have seen some of our new fingerposts. Mark and Marc from Kinererach and again Tim have been contributing to this work and once Scott Murdoch and his path team return next week (1st week November), you will see the rest of them popping up over the coming weeks.

Overall, we have a busy few weeks ahead, with remaining works on Phase 2 to be completed before Christmas – including the boardwalk in the north at Port Mor – and plans still progressing for the smaller Phase 3 in the new year. The Community Heritage Project, too, has a number of scheduled events, as detailed in the Ranger Update below.



Gigha and Cara Parish Church

The next service in the church will be on November 13th. This will be the Remembrance service led by Alasdair McNeill. The Rev Lyn Peden, who will be our Minister from the 1st of January, will be coming over soon to meet and get to know us. The exact date will be posted on the Gigha Noticeboard Facebook page.

Tea in the Hall

Thank you to everyone who attended Tea in the Hall on 26th October and a very big thank you to the Gigha Primary School children for their talk on the Iron Age. £112 was raised to be donated to the School.



On Wednesday November 23rd we are offering soup and sandwiches from 12:30. Entry is entry by donation with proceeds to the Parent Council's Multi Use Games Area project.

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Gigha Ranger Service

It's here, the cold weather is upon us, the nights are drawing in, and the island is turning a shade of copper. However, this means some of our wildlife are more on show in the rush to fatten up before the winter months – keep your eyes peeled!

It has been a fantastic year for tree seed! This has certainly been a boom year for our species. The Ranger Service along with Forest School participants worked hard this month to collect seed to start our own Gigha seed bank! It was our most attended session to date, a huge thank you to everyone who joined us, it was so much fun!



The Ranger Service has also been working with Gigha Primary School on their Bee Wild Garden. A huge well done to the children who have just received their eco-schools award, for their efforts to help protect our planet, the Bee Wild Garden being just one of them. It's been absolutely wonderful working with the children to create a haven for our wildlife, the work is still ongoing so watch this space!



The Community Heritage Project also continued this month with Kilmartin Museum joining us and Gigha Primary to introduce the children to life from the Stone Age through to the Bronze Age. It was a great week and to top it off we made soap from conkers, as well as nettle and potato soup over a campfire, just like our ancestors used to do!

Photo of the month:



Fungi from a fairytale

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Gigha Ranger Service continued

Please keep an eye out on the noticeboard for our upcoming events, or get in touch:

-5th November: the Community Heritage Project will continue with a story telling session in Gigha Hotel by Claire, Fergus and Freyja McNicol retelling the story of Dun Chibhich and the legends that are buried there. The evening will include a hot Scottish supper and a music session to finish the evening that everyone can join in with!

-11-12th November: Kilmartin Museum will be returning for a second session with Gigha Primary offering us to learn about art forms and pottery making within the Bronze Age, as well as setting up a mini museum. There will be the opportunity for the community to see the children's mobile museum and Kilmartin artefacts.

-It's Forest School's 1 year anniversary! We hope to plan a special session to mark the occasion. Keep an eye on social media and the shop noticeboard.

Zero Carbon Gigha

Over the last few months, Zero Carbon Gigha have been continuing their work with waste management and the food group, but have also been working on new funding bids. The recycling shed at Gigha Primary is proving successful, and the new recycling bin at the ferry slip was well used during the summer by visitors – a couple of great wins on the waste management front. Since then, the Gigha Food group have also held their latest event looking at apples, with the opportunity to try some cider pressing, and share recipes such as apple leather and apple jam. All the recipes from the Gigha Food Group can now be found on <https://www.gigha.org.uk/Zero-Carbon-Gigha->. Keep an eye out on Facebook and the shop for the next foodie event. Additionally, in celebration of Scotland's Climate Week, the group held a film screening of '2040' in Gigha Hotel – a big thank you to the Hotel for putting on such a lovely spread and allowing us the space to host the evening.

As for new ventures, the group, along with kind assistance from the Trust, have submitted a funding bid for two sheds. The first, to improve storage space at the Village Hall for their equipment as well as offer space to other island groups and charities. The second, a storage shed powered by renewables that will assist the community with unwanted, but perfectly usable items, to reduce expensive removal costs, and promote re-use and sharing.

If the funding is successful, the group hope that this could act as a pilot project in taking buildings off grid, and that in the future this space could be used to host events and act as a repair workshop for the community to use at any time.

The group is open to all, so if you are interested in getting involved or wish to know more, contact Casey-Jo Zammit.



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Gigha Primary School

In October, we achieved our Eco-Schools green flag award for all the work we have done caring for the environment in the school garden and local area. We have done work to reduce the amount of dog fouling around the school and to grow more vegetables and fruit for the children to eat. We have also completed the Bee wild garden with the help of our ranger Casey-Jo. The Bee wild garden is an area next to the school car park which has become an eyesore due to the amount of rubbish and dead plants. We have cleared all the rubbish and put in new gravel paths, soon we will have a small pond and next year our wildflowers will be flowering and attract a wide range of insects and pollinators.

In October the school also got a visit from the Kilmartin museum. They brought in old artefacts from the Stone Age to show to the students such as flint, rope made of nettles, arrow heads and a replica of a skeleton. Then we organised a Stone Age day to bring our learning to life. On Stone Age day the students came to school dressed up as cave people. We also did things that cave people would have done like cooked nettle soup on an open fire and we also made conker soap and oat cakes.

By Mark Dennis and Archie Walker

Dark Skies Gigha

Now that the darker nights are rolling in this is when our stars really get their chance to shine, and also means Dark Skies Gigha can now launch into their winter events programme. First and foremost, next month Dark Skies Gigha will be hosting their first Dark Skies Festival! The festival will run on the 18th and 19th November, is open to all the community, and we would formally like to invite everyone to our opening ceremony for our new Dark Skies Theatre at the north end of the island. Please see the festival poster within the newsletter and on the shop noticeboard for the details of all the exciting events happening over that weekend. We would be absolutely delighted if you could join us and wish to extend our sincere thanks to Gigha Community Fund for contributing to making this event happen! Also keep an eye on the noticeboards and social media for our other winter events!

Campsite

As the summer season on the campsite now draws to close, we are taking time to reflect on all the feedback we've received from the 429 guests we've had to stay with us since we opened on Friday 12th August. The campsite will remain open on the weekends over winter and the quieter months will provide the opportunity to undertake improvement works and make changes ready for the Spring.



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Achamore Gardens

In 2020 we took the hard decision to close Springbank, one of the most significant and special parts of the garden, due to serious safety concerns. The path and steps had deteriorated and the whole area was very overgrown.

This year we were lucky enough to win some funding through Argyll and Bute Council which will allow us to repair the path, replace the rotten steps and install safety barriers, so in advance of Arran Footpaths & Forestry arriving to start work on the path, the gardens team have been working incredibly hard to clear the area. They've done an amazing job in tricky conditions with very limited access.

We plan to have the path fully reopened early next year - I for one can't wait!!



Gigha Motorhome and Campsite Receives Dark Sky Award

Our very own Gigha Motorhome and Campsite has been awarded with the first Dark Sky Friendly Business award, as part of a scheme run by the island's Dark Skies Gigha charity.

Campsite manager Anna Lannigan accepted the award from Dark Skies Gigha committee member Andy York at a presentation in October.

Our island has some of the darkest skies in the country and the new motorhome/campsite is already attracting visitors looking for a stargazing experience. This award recognises businesses on the island who understand the importance of dark skies and have taken steps to enable visitors to engage with nature through the special experience of stargazing, in turn supporting astro-tourism on The Isle of Gigha. The five exterior lights on the campsite building have been adapted to significantly reduce glare and also to direct light downwards giving campers a light pollution free environment to enjoy their stay.

Are you a Gigha business who would like to play a part in protecting our island's night skies? If you are, then please contact dark.skies.gigha@gmail.com and we would be happy to provide advice. Who knows, you might be the next island business to receive a Dark Sky Friendly Business Award. Now wouldn't that look good on your wall and website!



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DARK SKIES FESTIVAL

Dark Skies Gigha, registered Scottish charity SCO 51611 are delighted to announce their first festival!

Friday 18th November 2022

11-12pm Cosmos Planetarium visit Gigha Primary School

Cosmos Planetarium introduce the children of Gigha Primary to the wonder of Gigha's night sky.

1-3pm Gigha Primary School with the Planetarium

The adventures continue in the Planetarium from Cosmos Planetarium, a spectacular state-of-the-art full-dome digital projection system.

7-9pm Community Evening with the Planetarium

An exciting evening packed full of stargazing and adventures with the Planetarium, open to the whole community at the Village Hall. Tea, coffee and cakes will be available. All welcome!

Saturday 19th November 2022

10-10:45am 'Our Gigha and Me' (OGAM) with the Planetarium

Join the Furbochs on a space adventure to discover extreme life forms and aliens on Earth and across the galaxy in the Planetarium at the Village Hall! All welcome!

11-11:45am Bookbug with the Planetarium

Join Bookbug for "Ted's Space Adventure" exploring our solar system in the Planetarium with songs and family fun at the Village Hall. Aimed at pre-5s but all welcome!

2-3pm DARK SKIES THEATRE OPENING CEREMONY

Head to the north pier to witness the official opening of the new Dark Skies Theatre. Buffet lunch provided. All welcome!

7-9pm Evening Talk by Astronomer Chris Leigh

Join Dark Skies Gigha and Chris Leigh, astronomer at the Astrophysics Research Institute of Liverpool John Moores University, for a fascinating evening in Gigha Hotel. Hot supper will be provided, and Gigha Hotel bar will be open for drinks. All welcome!



Dark Skies Gigha wish to express our sincerest thanks and gratitude to our funders for making this festival happen

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Community Grants

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