



The Community Trust Newsletter

December 2015



Message from Moray

I've been reflecting on my new life on Mull (nearly five years now!). We decided to move here for a change of lifestyle and for me to leave behind a successful but demanding, frustrating and stressful job. My plan was simple; build a house and then find a job. General Manager of MICT was not part of the plan when we bought our plot in Calgary; in fact it got in the way of me working full time to build the house!

Looking back, I realise that the stress of my previous job was self-imposed as being General Manager of MICT is equally stressful and demanding. The main difference is that I find working at MICT intensely rewarding and satisfying. I feel immensely proud to be part of such a team, supported by the volunteer Directors and working alongside a talented, committed and hardworking team of staff and volunteers on the many and varied projects that we have on the go, plus others that we hope to develop. We're always seeking new projects so if you have an idea – bring it on!!

Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year!

The Mull and Iona Community Trust (MICT) is a registered Charity founded in 1997 working to improve the quality of life for all residents on Mull & Iona; tackling economic, social and environmental issues, in an integrated and sustainable way.

We are committed to being an open, democratic organisation working in partnership with other bodies.

Mull and Iona Sustainable Transport

While world leaders engage in Paris discussions concerning climate change, it is very heartening that The Scottish Rural Parliament has conferred its 'Rural Innovators Award 2015-16 for Transport' on MICT's Mull and Iona Sustainable Transport (MIST) project. All due credit to MIST's Nancy Winfield for conceiving the project and winning funds, and to MIST's Becky Lewis for summing everything up to win most votes.

MIST also pays tribute to Ulva Ferry's Community Transport team who were very close runners up in the same category.

With travel and transport choices accounting for up to half or more of many households' total CO₂ emissions, MIST has been focussing on particular challenges facing our islands.

Support from the Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund has enabled the MIST team to achieve significant progress over the past 6 months:

The Mull and Iona Lift Share page established on Facebook has attracted over 350 members to engage, supportive of its purpose: To match willing drivers with willing passengers to share journeys. This group is open to any islander over 18 who is interested in linking up to share journeys.

An electric car has been purchased by MIST to enable islanders to enjoy the experience of driving with zero emissions and very low running costs. We are working our way through the long list of folk who have expressed interest in free test drives and also borrowing the car for a few days.

Following our successful collaboration with the Energy Savings Trust to host Electric Vehicle 'Hot spot' events on Mull, MIST has been offered free loan of the Mitsubishi Highlander hybrid 4WD which attracted so much positive comment and attention. It will be available for islanders to try out at no cost, between mid December and the end of February.

MIST is also acquiring an all electric Citroen Berlingo van for islanders and especially for island businesses to try out for free and to borrow.

MIST is arranging special fuel efficient driving courses in early 2016. There will be 36 places available. High mileage island drivers of fossil fuelled vehicles will be especially welcome! Please get in touch if you would like free training to reduce your driving emissions!

Also early next year, arrangements are being made for a specialist mechanic to visit Mull to share technical knowledge, expertise and insight concerning Electric Vehicles with local garages and others interested.

MIST is keen to promote public and community transport options locally, and liaising with providers accordingly.

It is increasingly recognised in Scotland, that islands may serve as valuable test beds and

proving grounds for emergent technologies, new ideas, and novel approaches to strategic planning for sustainability and resilience. MIST is certainly ticking those boxes with plans for a Car Club to make the most of newly acquired EVs as community assets for use by islanders beyond the life of The MIST project which will finish in March 2016.

Further information from
rlewis@mict.co.uk; nwinfield@mict.co.uk or thegarty@mict.co.uk

Garmony Hydro Project

Following on from our brilliant start/lousy summer, September came and generation almost stopped for the month. That's the issue with a "run of river" hydro scheme, as there's no reservoir to hold the water back, if it stops raining then after a while, the hydro stops generating. However, in November it started raining again, and we've now almost caught up with the low figures from September and October. The recent storms haven't caused us many problems and Garmony is a real success.

The second Green Energy Mull Annual General Meeting took place in September. Apart from a few people complaining about the timing of the event, the meeting was very well attended and enjoyed by all. At the meeting, the accounts were discussed and approved and the Directors re-elected. The trip to the site was good and those who had been there last year were pleased to see the a running generator inside a turbine house, where only a year before all that could be seen was a pile of earth and a trench. Much fun was had when we visited the weir and the issue of weir cleaning came up. One investor couldn't help showing us how he would do it. Thankfully he didn't end up in the burn!

In September we were told that Garmony Hydro had been shortlisted for the Scottish Green Energy Awards - Best Community Renewable Energy scheme. This is a major award and one that we felt that we should attend the ceremony. The evening's main speaker was First Minister Nicola Sturgeon who gave a good speech outlining the contribution that community schemes bring to the Scottish economy. Unfortunately we didn't win, but the experience and publicity gained from the event was worth the trip to Edinburgh.

If you would like to invest in the scheme, or even increase your current investment you will be more than welcome. Please contact rthorne@mict.co.uk and I'll be very happy to send you the relevant details. We would far rather pay interest to local investors rather than to the Bank!



Ulva Ferry Housing

The Ulva Ferry Housing Project is committed to meeting the community's brief to deliver affordable rental houses which are both sympathetic to the landscape and are very energy efficient – although this has not been without its challenges! The Project is continuing apace however, and we are currently engaged in a value engineering process with the architect, quantity surveyor and preferred contractor.

We are working hard to close the current funding gap and are delighted to have just heard that the Quaker Housing Trust have offered us a grant of £60,000! This will significantly reduce our shortfall and help us work towards starting work on site in the spring. Once on site, the build is relatively quick. Once we have started building, we will start accepting applications from interested families, and we are currently working with the community to agree the allocation process .

The houses have been designed for modern family life, with three bedrooms, open-plan living/dining/kitchen areas, a utility room, lots of loft storage space and good sized, enclosed gardens. Rent levels for the each house will be around £445 pcm: this is calculated at 85% of the Council's Local Housing Allowance, and is not related to the build costs of the houses. Heating bills will be very affordable, somewhere in the region of £200 per house, per year—thanks to the low energy, highly insulated design which keeps the houses warm without the need for central heating.

The recent Housing Needs Survey carried out by Our Island Home received 25 responses and the results confirm there is demand for further affordable housing, of various sizes, and for affordable self-build plots. We intend to investigate the feasibility of both in the coming months, particularly as the Scottish Government has committed to providing additional financial support for communities through the Scottish Land Fund, and the new Rural Housing Initiative.

If you are interested in renting one of the houses, or would like to find out more about the Housing Project, please contact Helen on 01688 500056 or hmacdonald@mict.co.uk



Ranger Service

News from Up North

The evening of Saturday 31st October saw many gather for a ghost walk run by Mull Aquarium in partnership with the Ranger Service, Tobermory High School Youth Forum and the Forestry Commission, around the loch at Aros Park. Out en route were lots of spooks and ghostly apparitions to make you hair stand on end. Once safely returned to the lawn all eager participants tried their hand at many spooky activities, including dooking for apples and hoopla for witches. Thankfully the rain stayed off and some even went home with enough energy left to go guising.

The wildlife viewing hide at Loch Torr is now open for business, and can be found just up the forest road to the left hand side of the Loch just off the Tobermory- Dervaig road. We now have two hides open to the public, which am sure will be much appreciated refuges in wet and windy weather for the wildlife watcher. Fishnish community wildlife hide has been opened for more than a year and in that time has proved very popular.

Since this will be our last article this year, I personally would like to thank all that have supported us through-out the year, either volunteering, joining us at events or just passing us on our way and letting us know that we are appreciate. Working with such a supportive community is nothing but a pleasure.

Happy Christmas and Merry New Year and Stay Safe

Jan Dunlop, Countryside Ranger Manager

News from the Ross and Iona

"Those of you who live on or regularly visit Iona will no doubt have come across Krittika Bhattacharjee this summer. She's a PhD student who has been studying the interaction of visitors with the island and although she still has to transcribe and analyse many hours of interviews, recently summarised her initial thoughts.

Iona is perceived as a **safe** place which may mean people think or act differently than they would elsewhere. It is a **shared** space, different groups of visitors and residents may use different places on the island sometimes without crossing paths or interacting. It has many **special** qualities, each of which can be found in other places too, but here they are found in a unique combination.

Updating National Trust for Scotland management plans we are regularly asked to reflect on what are the special qualities of the places we care for (in my case Iona, Burg and Staffa) and how we can best look after these aspects, so I'm sure Krittika's research will provide much to reflect on as she develops her thesis.

Emily Wilkins, Ranger - South Mull, Iona, Burg and Staffa NNR



ACCESS Project

The ACCESS project is now moving in leaps and bounds. The project partners have worked hard to ensure that the communication dynamo passed its rigorous testing to achieve the necessary kite mark. We have begun installing new quantum heaters to participants across the island and despite a few hiccups along the way with communication due to lack of phone signal etc., these hurdles have been crossed and work is now progressing smoothly.

Six homes now have new efficient heating, with more installations taking place over the next couple of weeks, we hope to have 15 homes completed before the Christmas break. The project can only programme installations at properties where the participation agreement has been signed and returned and the changeover of suppliers to SSE is going through.

If you have received your pack but have not returned it yet, please do so as soon as possible. Please encourage your friends and neighbours to return their packs before the holiday season. This will help us schedule works in the New Year. If you have any queries please call Carol on 01680 812909 or the dedicated ACCESS helpline on 0800 1073826.

The ACCESS project wishes all participants a Merry Christmas and a warm New Year.

Childcare Needs on Mull

The Community Trust has recently distributed a survey via the local schools to gauge the need for childcare provision on Mull and Iona. The response has been very encouraging with just over a 50% return rate for some schools. The information on these will be collated to help us build a better picture of where childcare is required, for what age group(s) and the number of hours required.

Information sharing with other rural communities regarding the difficulties of providing childcare through nurseries and/or childminders has already taken place and along with the survey results will be used to plan some possible solutions which work in our community.

Mairi Greig, tel. 01680 812918, email mgreig@mict.co.uk

GigaPlus Argyll

Since August much has been going on in the surveying and planning of the GigaPlus Argyll wireless network. The theoretical analysis of where we think the transmitters should go that was done in the comfort of an office, was backed up by a helicopter survey to ensure that the figure of 8 network design would work. With the main mast sites now identified, the task of contacting each landowner and asking for permission is in progress, this to be followed by soil and ground analysis and then planning permission. All of this takes time and is not very visible, but I can assure you that we are all very busy ensuring that this network will be as rugged and reliable as it possibly can be.

I visited Jura in September to inform the community about the scheme and to find out more about the island, the people and the terrain. The community made me very welcome and they are looking forward to the scheme coming to Jura. Most of the islanders use satellite broadband which is very expensive and not very fast or reliable. They also have many telephone line problems just to add to the feeling of isolation. Jura is a very rugged place with clusters of houses dotted along the one road. From the north of the island it can take easily an hour to reach the one village with its shop, pub, and petrol station. Logistical planning and a good community helps a lot on Jura

If you are interested in becoming a GigaPlus Argyll customer please register on the web site www.gigaplusargyll.co.uk and we will keep you updated and informed. If you would like more information please contact rthorne@gigaplusargyll.co.uk or call 01680 812906



Tobermory Light Industrial

Our recent application to the Scottish Land Fund was successful and we now have all funding in place to purchase 0.8 hectares at Ardmore Forest just outside Tobermory from Forestry Commission Scotland. Purchase of the site will be completed by 31st March 2016.

Plans for phase 1 development of the site will be finalised during the early part of next year. Look out for details of information evenings which will be open to the public to help us finalise these plans. Please do get in touch if you would like to be involved with this project as part of the steering group or if you are looking for storage or business premises.

Mairi Greig, tel. 01680 812 918, email mgreig@mict.co.uk

Training Courses

Since April 2015, I have been busy organising various training courses at An Roth as part of my role as a capacity building officer, helping to create a more sustainable future for the Community Trust.

We had a kayaking course for beginners in July on Loch Spelve with an instructor from Sea Kayak Scotland, a Mindfulness session in September with Everyday Mindfulness Scotland, local trainer Richard Kellett also ran a 3 day first aid course for some of the local school teachers, as well as two 1 day emergency first aid courses. I also organised a 1 day first aid course in Tobermory with a tutor from the University of Highlands and Islands. Recently, over a very wet and rainy November weekend, an instructor came over to Mull from Argyll Small Woodlands Cooperative to run two 2 day basic maintenance and cross cut chainsaw courses.

Looking ahead to 2016, I have plans to re organise the pesticide spraying courses that were unfortunately cancelled last year, as well as a polytunnel vegetable growing course with a rural skills instructor, another 2 day chainsaw course, an outdoor first aid course and a community capacity building workshop.

If you have any suggestions for courses that you are interested in, please get in touch and I'm happy to try and help.

Laura Percy - lpercy@mict.co.uk - 01680 812907

Richard's 24 hours in an electric car

Earlier in this very informative Newsletter you may have read about the trip I made to the Scottish Green Energy Awards with Moray in the Nissan Leaf. This is my recollection of what it's like to live with an all-electric car.

"We'll take the Leaf" Moray told me, "OK" I replied, knowing that this could make the trip to Edinburgh more eventful than I initially thought. I've never driven to Edinburgh, in fact I've never been to Edinburgh before from Mull.

All started out well, and we caught the 11:00 ferry. The awards dinner was due to start at 6:00pm with a drinks reception so I thought that 6 hours ought to be ample time. The trip from Oban to the Real Food Café at Tyndrum started well, and the car behaved like a car really, only eerily quiet at low speeds. You have to keep an eye out for unwary pedestrians when travelling at low speed. We arrived in Tyndrum and hooked the car up to the charger and went inside for a welcome lunch. Returning to the car about 45 minutes later we were all charged up and we set off towards the fast charger at Stirling Services. Disaster almost struck when I took a wrong turn and headed off down the wrong motorway and totally missed the services. This then meant a 20 mile detour, returning to the services with about 14 miles left in the battery.

After another 45 minute charge we headed out, Edinburgh bound. Moray sensibly suggested that we top up the car by charging in town so I could make it back to Stirling in the morning. Moray consulted his ZapMap to tell us where the nearest charge point was and we headed off guided by various Sat Navs. After a few trips around the same few streets in Edinburgh looking for the charge point, we arrived damp and a bit bedraggled at the hotel and off we went to the awards ceremony.

So, what did I think of driving all electric? Well for a trip like that it wasn't the best driving experience, but the technology is new and getting better almost by the week. The network of charging points is growing rapidly so if I ever need to do this again it won't be quite so fraught. If you are looking for a 5 seater mid-sized hatchback and most of your driving is within a 60 mile radius then electric would do you fine. If you do need to go further than that, it can be done, but currently there are limitations, but these will get fewer as the months go by.



If you would like to try out the leaf, contact the guys working on the MIST project mist@mict.co.uk. You never know you might like it.

Mull Community Development Plan

During October and November, we ran a series of community café conversation events to find out what people enjoy about living on Mull and what would make Mull an even better place to live and work. As part of the work we also visited all the primary schools in the north of Mull plus Tobermory High School.

The events were informal, relaxed get-togethers with home baking and other refreshments. They were generally well received and attended by a range of people with different backgrounds (those born and bred on Mull and those who've recently moved) and of different ages.

Comments from one young person who took part in the High School conversations: 'I'm really glad that we, as young people were asked for our opinion because sometimes our option never gets put across so it really made me feel included.' 'In my opinion other people in the community will get involved if they see the promise of change and our discussion were a good example of that'.

The conversations were both enlightening and wide-ranging in nature, with new project ideas, statutory related issues for local and/or national government to consider and further actions/ideas identified.

A big thank you to everyone who has taken part so far!

So what's next then...

For anyone who couldn't make it along... look out for an online survey in early January (available too in paper copy by request).

Also we'll be holding another couple of meetings, in late January to feedback on the key findings and to ask people to confirm what their priorities are.

All of the information collected is now being analysed and drawn together for inclusion in the plan. The recommendations in the plan will then inform the Trustees of the Waterfall Fund when they are looking at applications for grant assistance – from the profits generated by Garmon Hydro. The plan will also provide a baseline to guide Mull Community Council on issues which need solutions from the local and national governments.

For future information and/or to share your thoughts, please contact Sian on 01680 812904 / sscott@mict.co.uk.



Mull and Iona Community Trust in partnership
with Alzheimer Scotland presents...



MULL MUSICAL MINDS

Come along to enjoy an afternoon of songs old and new. Make new friends and renew old ones too.

A warm welcome awaits you!

2015/16 DATES

THURSDAYS 1.30PM, AN ROTH

28TH JANUARY
11TH FEBRUARY
25TH FEBRUARY
10TH MARCH

PHONE 01680 812900 FOR MORE INFORMATION

TEA & CAKE

TRANSPORT AVAILABLE

Suitable for people with Dementia, Parkinson's Disease, strokes or who just like singing!

Alzheimer Scotland Action on Dementia

MULL & IONA COMMUNITY TRUST



An Roth Notice Board



Room Bookings at An Roth Community Enterprise Centre



All room hire includes
Fast and secure wireless
Digital projector & screen
Flip chart & pens
Direct dial telephones
Whiteboard & pens
Quality video conferencing
Teleconferencing

We can also offer affordable print,
copy & scanning services

Island Castaways Fashion Show

Island Castaways held a very successful fashion show at the Western Isles hotel recently. A team of volunteers had a fun evening modelling a range of clothing from MESS Island Castaways. The van driver John Weir entertained the crowds as compare and Grant Young a Craignure volunteer arranged the sounds.

Our aim was to show the public that second hand isn't second best and the audience were given the chance to purchase lots of lovely outfits at the event. People said they were very impressed at the quality of goods we had to offer and some who hadn't visited the shops before were eager to come along and see what we have to offer. Hazel Cowe



Upcoming Courses at An Roth...

- 2 day chainsaw cross cut course - TBC January 2016
- Elementary Food Hygiene - Thursday 14th January 2016
- Polytunnel growing course - Friday 5th February 2016
- Outdoor first aid - TBC early Spring 2016

To book onto any of these courses please call Laura on 01680 812907

Members are invited to attend our monthly board meetings and take part in the Member's Forum. The next meetings are on Monday 11th January and Monday 8th February, at An Roth Community Enterprise Centre, Craignure.