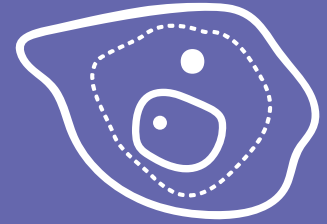


CHARTS.  
ARGYLL & ISLES



# Annual Review

2023–24



# About

The CHARTS network supports a sustainable future for the culture, heritage and arts sector in Argyll and Bute.

It was developed through the Creative Scotland and Argyll and Bute Council Place Partnership Programme, with additional European funding secured through the Leader programme. Following extensive consultation with the sector, CHARTS became a registered, membership-guided charity (SCIO) in 2019.

## We aim to:

- Foster collaborative working across the whole culture, heritage and arts sector
- Build the area's cultural profile
- Co-operatively grow our audiences and customers by marketing ourselves and others locally, nationally and internationally
- Co-design and deliver partnership projects that engage communities and visitors
- Advocate for the needs and benefits of cultural activity

Welcome	1
HOW WE WORK	2
The Board & Core staff	2
Infrastructure, Working groups and Steering Group	3
Delivery themes	4
Our impact	5
Key funders, partners & collaborators	6
DELIVERY THEMES & CASE STUDIES	8
A. Supporting islands as distinct cultural centres	8
Case study: Coastal Cultures	10
Case study: Ràmh	12
Case study: Donald MacDougall	12
Case study: Shannen Calderwood	13
B. Increasing access to heritage	14
Case study: Argyll Aspires	16
Case study: The Argyll Collection, Reconnected	18
Case study: The Argyll Collection, Reconnected – Research	23
Case study: Lily Vaughan	24
C. Gaelic development	25
Case study: Cuairt Chaluim Chille // Touring St Columba	27
Case study: Feàrna/Alder	29
Case study: Embroidery Workshop	31
D. International support	32
My experience: Miel Zwamborn	35
E. Member support	36
F. Supporting engagement, post pandemic	40
Remember Together, Reflect	41
Case study: How it Feels to be Apart	42
OUR TEAM	43
OUR FUTURE	44

# Welcome

**In my fifth and final year as Chair, I am delighted to introduce our Annual Review 2023–24 on behalf of the CHARTS Board.** Throughout this period, a huge amount of work has been delivered, built on an ethos of co-working and collaboration across the culture sector in Argyll and Bute.

The organisation has supported its membership comprised of 678 individuals, arts centres and heritage organisations through building connectivity, the development of new commissions, profile raising, mentoring and assisting businesses and existing projects to sustain and grow their practice, all made possible by the invaluable support of the many funding streams and partnerships outlined in this review.

Our services are increasingly in demand from our members, so to meet goals more effectively, we have continued to grow our relationships with key regional and national bodies. These include the Scottish Government, liveArgyll, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Foras na Gaeilge, greenspace scotland, Creative Carbon Scotland, the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the School of Innovation and Technology at the Glasgow School of Art. For the first time this year, with funding from Creative Scotland, we piloted international development support, leading to opportunities for members in eleven countries worldwide. Additionally,

through the review of the outstanding council-owned Argyll Collection, which includes artworks by prominent African artists, the organisation rekindled links between Argyll and Uganda, first forged in the 1960s. In turn, this has grown the range of collaboration with academic bodies, now including close working with the University of St Andrews and Makerere University, Kampala.

CHARTS projects work in iterative cycles, enabling us to learn as we develop; the Business Plan for 2025–28 shows the areas CHARTS continues to grow, based on the outcomes of past projects.

Reflecting on my five years as Chair, the organisation has grown exponentially in ambition and scope. This would not have been possible without the dedication of the staff and trustees, past and present, and without the ongoing funding support from Argyll and Bute Council and Creative Scotland, amongst others. In a difficult funding climate, organisations such as CHARTS have a hugely important role to play in encouraging and profiling the sector. I will watch with interest as CHARTS continues to grow and support culture, heritage and the arts in the region.

*Jo McLean*

CHAIR



# How we work

## The Board (2023–24)

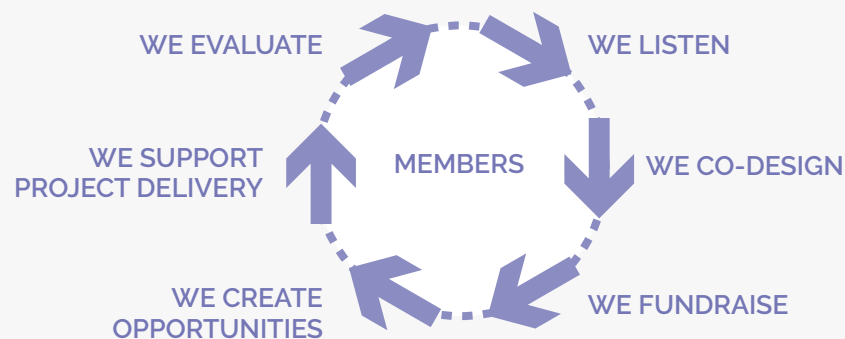
Jo McLean CHAIR  
Seymour Adams VICE-CHAIR  
Julian Forrester  
Rachel Kellow  
Cllr Ross Moreland (RESIGNED APRIL 2023)

### *Ex-Officio Trustees:*

Cllr Luna Martin (APPOINTED JUNE 2024)  
Dr Michael Pierre Johnson SCHOOL OF INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY  
AT THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

### *The Board is supported by:*

Arlene Cullum ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL  
TRANSFORMATION AND REGENERATION,  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
Eleanor McKinnon CHAIR, CHARTS STEERING GROUP



Our way of working creates a virtuous cycle focused on members and their needs.

## Core staff

Kathleen O'Neill	DIRECTOR
Kirsten Millar	COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING MANAGER
Rhiannon McIntyre	VIRTUAL CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

Project teams consist of highly experienced freelance staff commissioned on a project-by-project basis. These staff members work to fixed-term contracts to support arts and heritage commissions and projects with costs met by project funders. Additionally, during 2023–24, Bòrd na Gàidhlig provided funding to secure the employed positions of Gaelic Culture Officer Àdhamh Ó Broin and Islands Culture Officer Caitlin McNeill. All staff work closely across project themes as appropriate, forging skills networks to ensure that all strategic goals are met. Argyll and Bute Council provide year-round in-kind support and, during 2023–24, provided a foundational grant to contribute in part towards core staffing costs and operational delivery.

*Image: Coastal Cultures, Between the Tides, Mary Morrison (CHARTS) and Jen Skinner (Screen Argyll). © CHARTS*



## Steering Group

The Steering Group is an important part of the organisational structure, keeping staff and board informed of needs at local level. This group represents the CHARTS membership and currently comprises 12 people supporting arts, heritage and area profile raising initiatives at a local and regional level. Members of the Steering Group are invited as leaders in their field with an understanding of strategic development and/or by leadership roles in their local council area. Representation includes:

- Oban, Lorne & Isles – The Rockfield Centre
- Mid Argyll, Kintyre & Isles – Iain Johnson (Kintyre Cultural Forum)
- Bute and Cowal – Jenny Hunter (Dunoon Burgh Hall) & Julie Tait (Rothesay Pavilion)
- Helensburgh & Lomond – Alexia Holt (Cove Park)
- Island Development – Jen Skinner (Screen Argyll, Tiree)

Other strategic representation includes: Brian Barker (ArtMap Argyll on behalf of arts collectives); Giles Perring (member support); Anne Cleave, Chair, Argyll and Bute Museums and Heritage Forum; Robert Judge, Operations Manager Kintyre, liveArgyll; Arlene Cullum, Senior Economic Regeneration Officer, Transformation and Regeneration, Argyll and Bute Council; and Antonia Baird, Community Learning and Development Officer, Argyll and Bute Council.

The role of the Steering Group is to assist in facilitating change, advancing knowledge and sharing experience to build the capacity of the CHARTS network. Representatives undertake to:

- Attend regular group meetings
- Feed into the direction of CHARTS' core activity
- Represent CHARTS throughout the region
- Maintain contact with members and groups in the areas represented to disseminate information
- Offer direct hands-on support to projects, also supported by member champions based locally.

This enables strongly networked communications to help inform organisational development.

## Working groups

Working groups are also attached to award-giving, project commissioning and staff recruitment processes to assist the membership in meeting project milestones.

These are strategic groups with specialist stakeholders, often including funders and partnership representation, to support and signpost engagement. Board members, steering groups, and staff also contribute to working groups.

*Image: Coastal Cultures, Between the Tides (2023). © Jack Lockhart*



## Delivery themes

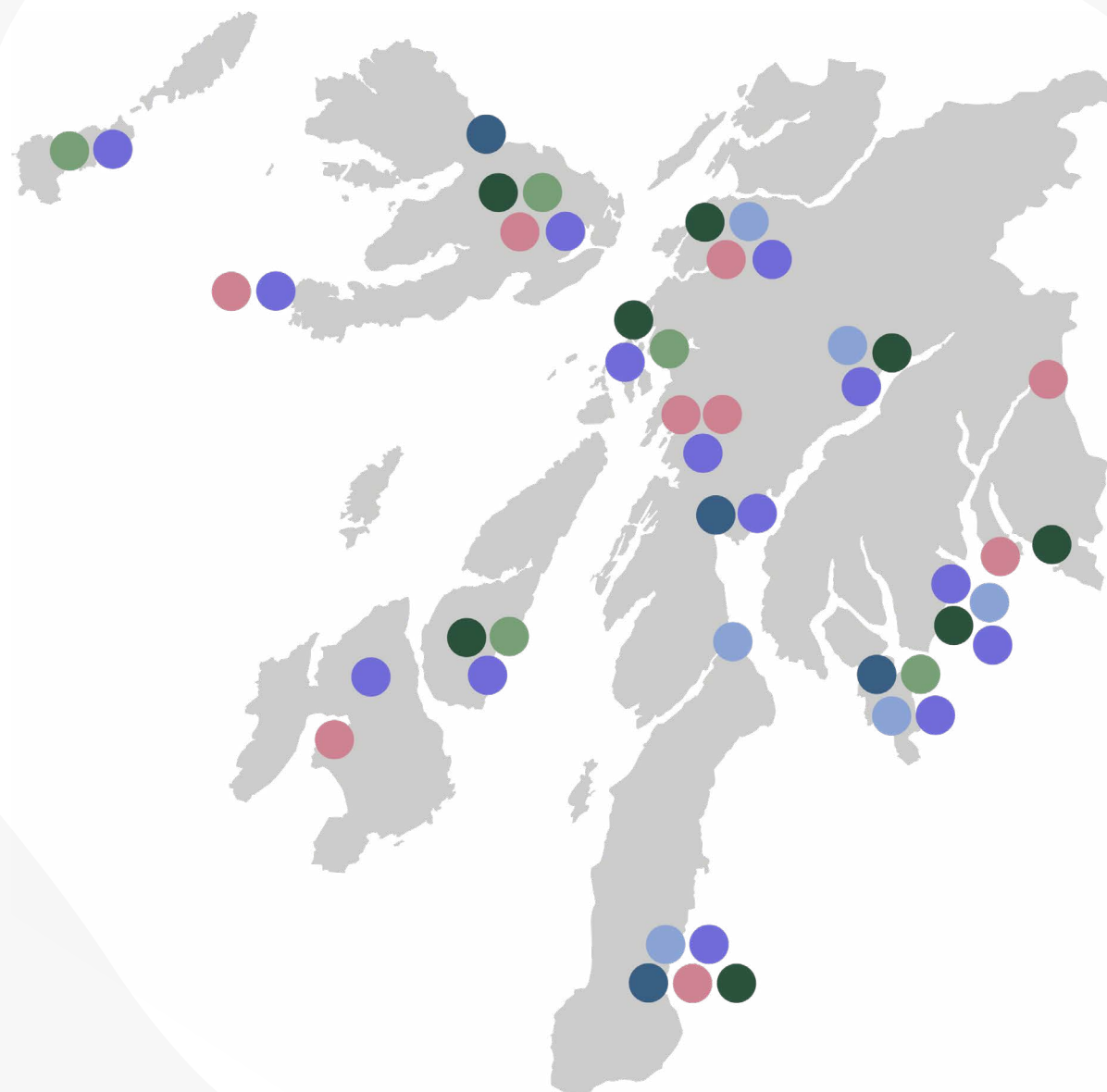
Funders 2022–23 have so far supported investment in the following areas:

- A. Supporting islands as distinct cultural centres
- B. Increasing access to heritage
- C. Increasing the visibility of Gaelic culture
- D. International support
- E. Member support
- F. Supporting engagement post-pandemic

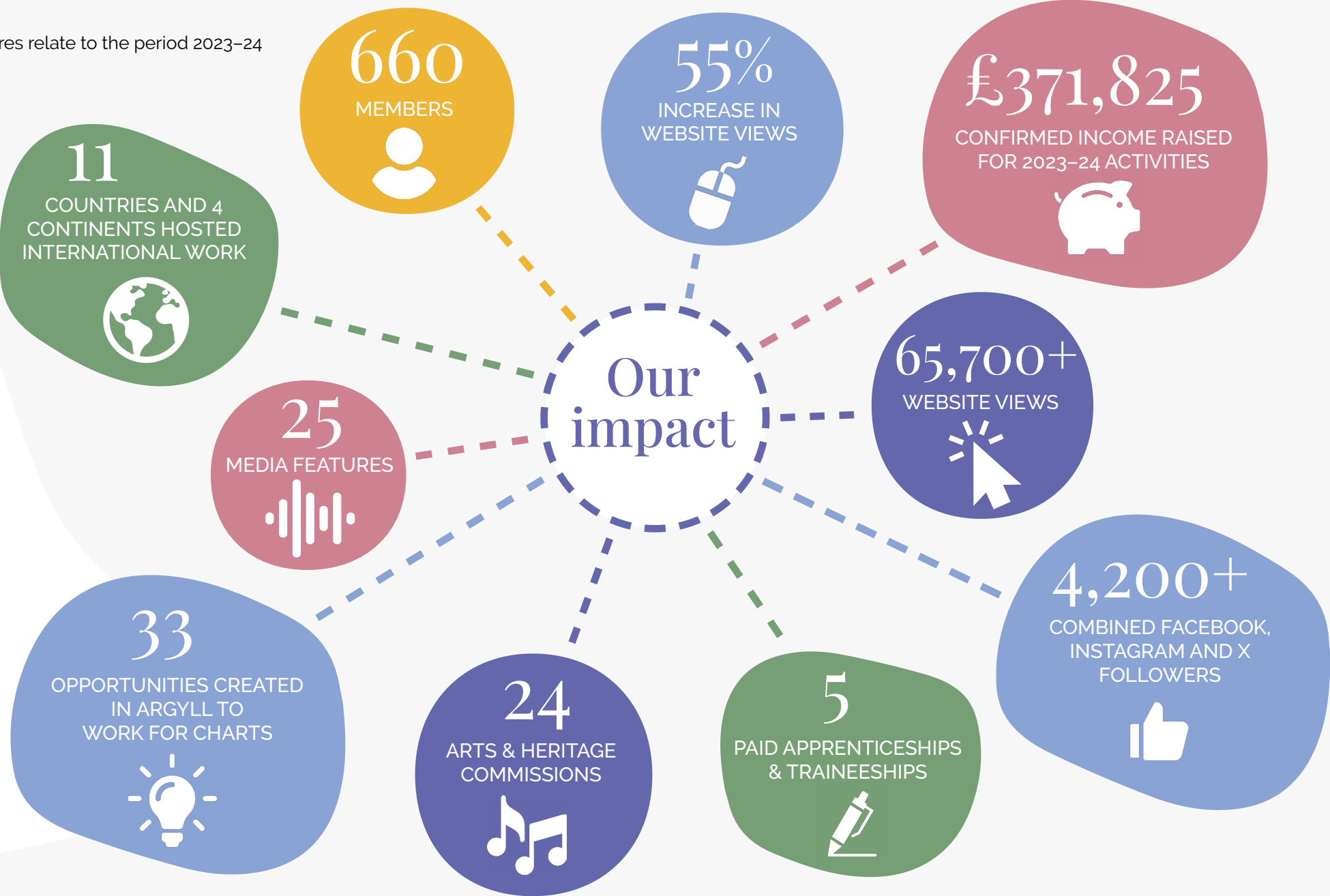
“

*The CHARTS model is based on co-working and collaboration. Project managers work together across shared themes and Steering Group members support project development in local areas, as appropriate. To further support our membership, made up of individuals and organisations (including arts centres and museums), we also create working groups to grow development themes and projects. These groups are comprised of staff, trustees and other professionals, bringing together a wealth of skills and experience matched to the job at hand. This is critical to our success, maximising capacity through joining intellectual and material resources to reach the best possible outcomes for people and projects.*

- Kathleen O'Neill, Director, CHARTS



Figures relate to the period 2023-24



# Key funders

			 ALBA   CHRUTHACHAIL	 Foras na Gaeilge
				

# Partners & collaborators

# A. Supporting islands as distinct cultural centres

Recognising the distinct identities of communities across Argyll's islands, the Ràmh programme, meaning 'sharing the same oar', seeks to create connections and opportunities to better understand the context in which island practitioners and organisations work. Initial scoping included an islands survey and provided insights and recommendations to help inform our work. The most strongly expressed needs from survey respondents were around support for creative development, accessing opportunities and increasing visibility for practitioners, all of which continue to be addressed across our programme for island-based members, with specific initiatives developed for islands through the development framework of Ràmh.

'Coastal Cultures, Islands' was designed as an innovative programme of placemaking and community engagement across Argyll's islands. The project created new commissions for artists to work with island communities, further embedding social-engagement as part of their practice and reinvigorated local economies in three island locations. The project was built on support from the Scottish Government and developed artist-led residencies, embedding socially engaged practice that responded to the uniqueness of island locations, building networks, and promoting participation and audiences.

1. Case study: Coastal Cultures, Island Residencies: Between the Tides
2. Case study: Coastal Cultures, Island Residencies: Expressing an Island
3. Coastal Cultures, Island Residencies: Feàrna / Alder (see page 29)
4. Case study: Ràmh development

Funded by:

Supported by:



## Staff

### *Coastal Cultures – Islands Residencies*

Mary Morrison    PROJECT MANAGER  
Deidre McKenna    ENGAGEMENT SUPPORT MANAGER

### *Ràmh*

Island Culture Officer    CAITLIN McNEILL

*Image (right): Between the Tides project launch, Tiree (August 2023). © Jack Lockhart*

*Image (below): a writing workshop led by Norman Bissell in summer 2023 as part of the Expressing an Island project (Coastal Cultures, Island Residencies). © CHARTS*



“

*There tends to be more need for interdisciplinary ways of working, within the industry or in even wider ways such as working with community groups/schools/businesses. This is a benefit as it builds relationships in the community between people and practices, ultimately contributing to better health and wellbeing as well as building sustainability and a strong sense of investment in the place you live and work in. You are more likely to consider 'people' as part of your work because you rely on each other to make islands a great place to live.*

- Amy Dunnachie, Artist, Jura



# CASE STUDY: Coastal Cultures

## Islands Residencies Tiree, Mull and the Slate Islands

Throughout each project, artists engaged communities in socially inclusive, imaginative and meaningful ways, including sharing their work through curated events, exhibitions and knowledge exchange events, both live and digital.

On Luing and neighbouring Slate Islands, writer and director of the Scottish Centre for Geopoetics Norman Bissell led **Expressing an Island**. Alongside Luing-based artist Lottie May and others, Norman delivered a series of monthly workshops in creative writing, arts, crafts and geology with the aim of building creative networks and creating new work for print and exhibitions. As Lottie May said, the project was about “creating connections not only within communities but across them”.

On Tiree, filmmaker Jack Lockhart and a small team of collaborators developed the project **Between the Tides** with Screen Argyll. The project provided a range of creative opportunities for the local community to engage with tidal themes and work alongside Jack as he created a time-lapse film exploring Tiree's tides.

On the Mull archipelago, Alice Stillman and Rhona Dougall developed **Feàrna / Alder**, with

Dr Alasdair Whyte supporting phase one of the project. Feàrna used trees and human connections as a starting point for focused place-based conversations with the wider community on Mull and explored questions around how to work meaningfully within the constructs of Gaelic language and culture. (See page 29 for more information about this project.)

All three projects were delivered by artists and collectives embedded in their communities, and between July 2023 and January 2024, nearly 500 people engaged with the projects. In addition, 16 local organisations and venues were supported. Nineteen significant paid opportunities were created for creative practitioners, including two distinct project management roles within the CHARTS team. This work included cross-cutting themes of place, young people and Gaelic language and culture.

*Image: Between the Tides project launch, Tiree (August 2023). © Jack Lockhart*



1

“

*You are really changing young people's lives with these activities. They take part in things that not only do they have fun and enjoy but they can have a huge effect on their future; it can influence their pathways in life enormously.*

- Participant, Between the Tides, Tiree

There were multiple outputs from all projects, including four films, publications, podcasts, exhibitions and presentations of new work, which strengthened creative networks across the islands. Each of the projects has identified further development opportunities that CHARTS will seek to support in an ongoing dialogue and by extending our work and focus on islands and coastal areas in the region.

An additional 13 artists who engaged through the residency project activities were supported by Coastal Cultures, Islands Engagement Manager Deirdre MacKenna in a development process, which enabled some of them to secure significant funding for projects, including through a concurrent CHARTS project, Growing Global Networks.

In January 2024, CHARTS hosted an online event for 'Coastal Cultures, Islands, Residencies' with lead artists sharing the learning and processes of their very different projects to a national audience.

*Image (above): Between the Tides project launch, Tiree (August 2023). © Jack Lockhart*

*Image (right): Expressing an Island, Cyanotype workshop with Lottie May (2023). © Expressing an Island*



1

“

*I've found teaching these workshops enormously beneficial to both myself and those who attend. It is hard to quantify this sort of feeling into concrete results, but I can tell you that we're most definitely making a difference to people's lives and local communities.*

- Lottie May, Lead Artist, Expressing an Island, Luing and Slate Islands



2

# CASE STUDY: Ràmh development

**The Ràmh Islands Survey** ran from April 2023 to September 2023 and elicited 90 responses from individuals and organisations based across 17 islands. More than 40 areas of work in arts, culture and heritage were represented, and individual comments, thoughts and requests for support were generously provided.

## Key findings

The majority of respondents recognised the importance of culture and heritage to island economies. Consistent with national surveys, 50% of respondents made less than £5,000 a year from their work in arts and culture, including a large number who did not earn from their work. This means that investment into paid opportunities for work on islands is a key priority for us.

Higher responses to the survey came from islands where there were active networks linking back to CHARTS support, reinforcing the importance of someone on the ground with established relationships and knowledge and the value of our developing Island Satellite programme.

Other findings indicated a strong inward migration, with 60% having started their businesses within the last ten years.

77% of respondents were over 45, reflecting census data but pointing to issues around the engagement and retention of a younger

demographic on islands. Ràmh is prioritising the engagement and design of support with and for this younger demographic. A significant number of respondents said they had a disability of some kind. Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is a key priority for CHARTS and eliminating barriers to participation and providing access to support and participation will be a significant aspect of our work.

Three respondents spoke Gaelic, though over a third of respondents spoke “a little”.

We aim to identify areas where there are still higher levels of spoken Gaelic and where Gaelic is influencing creative work.

## Ongoing Ràmh support

Feedback has identified priorities to strengthen and nurture networks and enable exchange and shared learning. This has been addressed in a number of ways.

**Four Knowledge Xchange Webinars** delivered in spring 2023 reached online audiences from Argyll and Bute and other Scottish island communities. Speakers Rhoda Meek (isleDEVELOP CIC, isle20, Tiree), Rutger Emmelkamp (KNOCKvologan, Mull), Amy Gear (Gaada, Shetland) and Amy Dunnachie Jura (SO:AR, CHARTS) gave warm, rich and diverse presentations on their practices fostering a great range of conversations.



Image: Rubh'an Eun, still from the film, 'Sketches of Bute', by Scott O'Neill (2024). © Scott O'Neill



“

*Gaelic Language is imperative in understanding the consciousness of the Gael. And this is a consciousness that is desperately needed in the world today.*

- Island survey respondent

Direct support was also given to three practitioners through **Ràmh Islands Artists Support** with bursaries enabling them to undertake projects throughout 2023 and 2024:

- *Mhairi Killin, Iona*: 'Conversations with a Whale' residency at Grinneabhat, Isle of Lewis
- *Scott O'Neill, Isle of Bute*: 'Sketches of Bute' film and photography project
- *Kate Clayton, Isle of Bute*: 'Broken Blue' a mixed media installation and performance as part of Bute Open Studios 2023

For further information, visit:  
[www.chartsargyllandisles.org/projects-and-showcases](http://www.chartsargyllandisles.org/projects-and-showcases)

In order to strengthen creative networks in Argyll's islands and to counter isolation, particularly in the winter months, CHARTS established the **Islands Satellite Group**. The group is an extension of the CHARTS Steering Group and is designed to connect islanders with CHARTS and our resources.

Throughout winter 2023 and early 2024, four Island Advocates in North Mull, the Ross of Mull, Iona and Bute, hosted nine informal gatherings in their respective communities, enabling people to come together and share information about opportunities, challenges and the needs of local practitioners.

These regular meetings continue to foster connections and a sense of community among those in arts, culture and heritage, providing mutual support, inspiration and collaboration.

The meetings are delivered with ongoing support from CHARTS Steering Group member for Islands, Jen Skinner, and we aim to expand this network to other island communities, including on Tiree and the Slate Islands, where Ràmh staff met with local creatives and heritage professionals throughout 2023.

Recommendations based on learning, delivery and consultation to date inform our work around island-based support and investment under Ràmh. Current and future work will continue to strengthen networks – including inter-island connections, support to arts and heritage trails and mapping projects, and focus on young islanders.

An **Islands Working Group** has been established to support Ràmh activity in addition to regular member meetings taking place on Bute, Mull and Tiree. The group includes CHARTS staff, Jen Skinner, Steering Group (Islands), Arlene Cullum, Senior Economic Development Office from Argyll and Bute Council, and ex-officio Trustee Dr Michael Pierre Johnson, representing the School of Innovation and Technology at Glasgow School of Art.

*Image: Tobermory High School Careers Day (2023).*  
© Caitlin McNeill

“

*I am so excited about the possibilities of the island support to grow networks and strengthen links, both in island and the connections that we can make across islands. Through this we can develop more opportunities for those working in culture, heritage and the arts in islands and build audiences, support and connections. Through championing the activity that is happening on islands, we can strengthen it and also encourage and support young people living in islands to work in these sectors, ensuring they continue to develop in the future.*

*Our islands are all so different, with so much to offer and many talented people working hard to support the infrastructure, across culture, heritage and arts often in isolation. This support is vital, to bring people together and to help these sectors grow and flourish.*

- Jen Skinner, Producer, Screen Argyll and CHARTS Steering Group Member (Islands)



## B. Increasing access to heritage

Argyll and Bute faces multiple challenges to both sustain and grow the heritage sector particularly due to the region's geography and its ageing population, many of whom work as volunteers to support public access to venues. CHARTS aims to assist by working with others to create supported training opportunities for young people, establishing new routes to employability for the next generation of heritage professionals. During 2023–24, CHARTS supported young people to learn about local heritage and improve their skills and qualifications. We did this by working creatively with young people, schools and host museum and heritage venues, including two significant programmes of work; Argyll Aspires and the Argyll Collection, Reconnected.

Argyll Aspires built on evidence of the need to develop opportunities in the museums and heritage sector for young people across Argyll and Bute, drawn from the evaluation of an earlier project, 'Heritage Horizons', developed with the Argyll and Bute Museums and Heritage Forum (2021–22). Argyll Aspires evolved over two years and included paid traineeships and apprenticeships alongside school projects and outreach activities. The programme successfully offered young Argyll residents routes to employability with recognised UK qualifications and, for many others, insight into how the sector is managed and the wealth of careers and topics to be explored through heritage. The project was funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and supported by Argyll and Bute Council Education and Economic Development Services and the Gannochy Trust.

1. Case study: Argyll Aspires
2. Case study: The Argyll Collection, Reconnected (region-wide)
3. Case study: The Argyll Collection, Reconnected – Research (region-wide)
4. Case study: Lily Vaughan Exhibition Trainee

Funded by:



Art Fund\_



The Argyll Collection, Reconnected, made possible with support from the Art Fund, focused specifically on a unique collection of artworks owned by Argyll and Bute Council; to review the cultural significance of the collection since it was first conceived several decades ago.

The Argyll Collection is a unique group of 179 art works collected between 1960–90 by political activist and author Naomi Mitchison, and Argyll County Council Arts Advisor Jim Tyre, as an educational resource for the young people of Argyll and Bute. Working with the council-owned Argyll Collection has enabled increased access to art and heritage for Argyll's young people.

*Image: a pupil from Glenbarr Primary working with John R Brunsdon. © CHARTS/Rosalyn McKenna*

## Staff

Claire McDade	PROJECT MANAGER, ARGYLL ASPIRES
Lucy McAra Neish	SCHOOLS MANAGER, ARGYLL ASPIRES
Sarah Longfield	EXTERNAL EVALUATOR AND PROJECT MANAGER, ARGYLL ASPIRES
Rosalyn McKenna	PROJECT MANAGER, THE ARGYLL COLLECTION, RECONNECTED
Kirsty MacNab	RESEARCH MANAGER, THE ARGYLL COLLECTION, RECONNECTED
Lily Vaughan	EXHIBITION TRAINEE, THE ARGYLL COLLECTION RECONNECTED
Khara McPhail	HERITAGE LEARNING AND ACCESS ASSISTANT, CAMPBELTOWN MUSEUM
Muriel MacKavenay	PROJECT SUPPORT COORDINATOR, CAMPBELTOWN MUSEUM

“

*Argyll Aspires provided me with the opportunity to provide a paid traineeship for an archivist to learn 'on the job' whilst also studying for a professional qualification – a rare opportunity in the archives sector. The benefits have absolutely not been solely for the trainee: I have gained so much from having a colleague working with me in the archives, supporting visitors, cataloguing and developing exhibitions and displays amongst many other activities. I have really enjoyed supporting his learning and being able to share and discuss ideas, and I have learned a huge amount from his personal knowledge, experience and specific skills. He has also fitted perfectly into the warm and cohesive environment of archives, volunteers and Friends [group].*

- Alison Diamond, Archivist, Argyll Estates



# CASE STUDY: Argyll Aspires


Heritage training collaborations developed through our Argyll Aspires programme included with Campbeltown Museum (liveArgyll), Campbeltown; Dunollie Museum, Oban; Auchindrain Historic Township, Inveraray; and The Argyll Papers, Inveraray Castle. We also worked with pupils of Rothesay Academy and Dunoon Grammar School alongside Mount Stuart on Bute to support and raise awareness of the council-owned Argyll Collection located throughout the region.

Pupils from other Argyll schools also attended bespoke events designed by trainees. Young people were recruited for paid assignments through modern apprenticeships, traineeships and internships, learning how to care for collections, curate displays, manage volunteers, market heritage assets, fundraise, provide public access, and assist researchers.

Young people who engaged with Argyll Aspires not only gained qualifications and, in some cases, new jobs but also built knowledge and pride of place through raised awareness of heritage.

For further information, [read the Argyll Aspires Evaluation Report](#).

## Outcomes:

- Two professional entry-level heritage positions were created at Dunollie Museum, Castle and Grounds, and at Inveraray Castle for the Argyll Papers.
  - One internship was created at the Argyll Papers supported by Friends of the Argyll Papers and Argyll Estates.
  - Professional peer networks were created including Campbeltown Museum, supported by liveArgyll.
  - Co-curation of an exhibition from The Argyll Collection with pupils from Rothesay Academy at Mount Stuart, developed skills and an understanding of the employment opportunities in the arts and heritage sector.
  - Argyll Collection collaboration development led to an Exhibition Research Traineeship.
  - Argyll Collection Exhibition Traineeship exhibition created at Dunoon Burgh Hall.
  - Collaboration with Developing Young Workforce led to films for national Creative Careers Week (autumn 2023) and developing outreach activities with Dunoon Grammar School and Campbeltown Museum.
- 

Three young people participating in Argyll Aspires were offered jobs with host organisations at the end of the project.
- Developing Young Workforce and the Gannochy Trust supported complementary school projects exploring local design and heritage included new accreditation for participants.
  - National archives and museum conferences were attended by apprentices and trainees in Belfast and Gateshead.
  - Engagement totalled 1,042 direct beneficiaries, 100,958 indirect beneficiaries (visitors who would have benefited from Argyll Aspires team input) and 2,848 website engagements between winter 2022 and summer 2024.
  - Argyll Aspires case studies were included in two UK publications: *Scottish Archives & Records, Year in Review 2022–23* (page 16) and 32nd edition *Group for Education in Museums UK Case Studies: Reimagining Engagement* (page 28).

“

*My role here at Dunollie has had an overwhelmingly positive impact on me. It has allowed me to learn about working with collections, as well as all the other activities that go into keeping visitor attractions such as Dunollie Museum, Castle and Grounds running smoothly. I have learned about the vast history of both the site itself – the Clan MacDougall, Miss Hope MacDougall as a social historian – and the wider history of Argyll and the Isles.*

*I have been encouraged to feel confident in my abilities, to learn new things and to present ideas despite being very new to the team. I have never felt part of a more supportive, kind and hardworking team and I feel really lucky to be here.*

- Shannen Calderwood, Apprentice



Image (right): Argyll Aspires Trainees visit to Dunollie Castle. Left to right; Donald MacDougall, Khara MacPhail, Jamie MacGregor (Dunollie staff), and Shannen Calderwood (August 2023). © CHARTS



“

*I first started working with The Argyll Collection in 2018, when I began research on the important cluster of African art works within it that had been long overlooked. In the past year, I have been thrilled to continue this work with colleagues at CHARTS, with a particular focus on thinking about artwork conservation and increased educational access. The loan of the African artworks to the School of Art History at St Andrews this past academic year, in particular, has enabled me to integrate direct artwork engagement into my 'African Modernisms' Honours course—something that my students were deeply appreciative of. It is a real privilege to be able to study up close important artworks from the era of independence, and all the more exciting that these works belong to a collection here in Scotland.*

- Dr Kate Cowcher, School of History, University of St Andrews

Dunoon Grammar School trip to the University of St Andrews, led by Dr Kate Cowcher, showing works from the Argyll Collection. © CHARTS/Rosalyn McKenna

# CASE STUDY: The Argyll Collection, Reconnected

CHARTS worked with the local authority to develop 'Argyll Collection Reconnected', a project to reinvigorate and reimagine ways of working with the collection, ensuring that this cultural asset is better understood, curated and conserved for future generations. Over many years, prior to CHARTS' collaboration, due to a lack of external funding, infrastructure and dedicated staff, the collection had been under used and acknowledged. CHARTS' collaboration with Argyll and Bute Council has succeeded in raising awareness and understanding of a significant range of opportunities. The Argyll Collection is currently located within Argyll and Bute's primary and secondary schools and several libraries .

The essential first step was to undertake a new detailed inventory of the collection in collaboration with Argyll and Bute Council education services. The purpose was multifold:

- To ascertain the precise location of work and how it was exhibited or stored, thus enabling the Reconnected team to update the catalogue, essential in the ongoing care and maintenance of the collection.
- Carry out conservation checks, thereby establishing a baseline understanding of the status of all pieces from which we can monitor their condition in the future.

- Identify needs in terms of a Collection Management Strategy, namely suitable ongoing storage solutions, models of best practise for handling, packing, moving, storing, installing and exhibiting, as well as the best way forward for documenting the collection and its records.
- Building a strong understanding and knowledge of the individual works that make up the collection, essential in the future planning of research needs, exhibition and event programming and exploration of the diverse thematic approaches that can be explored.

In addition to these outcomes, the Inventory was invaluable for other reasons:

- As there was such a lack of awareness of the collection, physically visiting each school and library was critical in understanding their individual, complex requirements and in establishing trust and building strong working relationships. These connections are essential in ensuring the future development of the project.
- Building a real, working understanding of the geography of Argyll and Bute and the associated logistics of managing the



collection – a 'museum without walls' – and thereby establishing the need for dedicated technical support as well as access to fit-for-purpose transport and packaging solutions.

*Image, from left: Prof. Christina Young, Exhibition Trainee Lily Vaughan, Project Manager Rosalyn McKenna, Research Manager Kirsty MacNab and Sylvia Kraus, along with artworks 'Ostriches' by Hezbon Owiti, 'The Fishermen' by Louis Mbughuni and 'Cutting Wood' by Sam Ntiro. © CHARTS*

“

*Argyll and Bute Education Services and CHARTS have been working in close partnership to effectively manage, conserve and promote The Argyll Collection.*

*The Argyll Collection is owned by Education Services but CHARTS staff have been instrumental in supporting the council to manage this valuable asset, particularly given the unique, democratic nature of the artworks. The first task faced by CHARTS staff was to complete an up-to-date and comprehensive inventory of the pieces within the collection. This was a challenging project, given that pieces are stored in a range of schools across the authority and other council-owned buildings. CHARTS staff built positive relationships with staff in schools while compiling the inventory and checking the condition of the art works, designing a programme of conservation. As specialists in their field, CHARTS staff are best placed to address the long-term storage needs of the pieces and nominate appropriate locations.*

*This is of tremendous importance given the social, cultural, historic and monetary value of the collection. CHARTS staff have been instrumental in supporting Education Services in the movement of pieces between schools and universities for exhibition, teaching and conservation purposes.*

- Catriona Garvin, Education Officer, Curriculum (2–18) with Gaelic, Music and Culture, Argyll and Bute Council



*Image (top): Rosalyn McKenna on location (2024). © CHARTS/Kirsty MacNab*

*Image (right): Islay High School art teacher Dawn Worsley condition checks work by Duncan MacLeod. © CHARTS*

## ENGAGEMENT

Prior to the commencement of Reconnected, The Argyll Collection had already generated interest and engagement from academics and universities. With the development of the project, the Project Manager and Research Manager have been able to harness this into highly effective collaborative partnerships. This has included working with Dr Kate Cowcher of the School of Art History, University of St Andrews, and Professor Christina Young of the Conservation and Technical Art History department, University of Glasgow.

The value of a community-academic partnership in relation to this project is particularly evident in the research support and educational outreach that Dr Cowcher and Professor Young are able to provide. The revival and future care of The Argyll Collection is contingent upon an appraisal of its history, the provenance of its artworks and the dissemination of that information to the wider community. The assembling of archives requires a collective effort, and Dr Cowcher's expertise as an art historian has been particularly valuable in identifying materials relevant to the collection's history. Professor Young's contributions to the technical analysis of some of the artworks align with CHARTS' longer-term commitment to developing community-based systems of monitoring and care, and we welcome her expertise in technical art history and conservation as we work to assess the collection's needs. CHARTS also welcome the introduction that has been made to conservator

Sylvia Krauss, and are currently working with her to build a conservation needs working plan for the collection.

Dr Cowcher has shown tremendous commitment to collaborating with the community in Argyll in the development of this project, including leading a study trip for a group of senior secondary students from Dunoon Grammar school to the University of St Andrews. CHARTS look forward to working with both Dr Cowcher and Professor Young on further developments over the coming years.

*Image: Dean Amanda Tumusiime, Dr Kate Cowcher, Dr Deirdre MacKenna, and Dr Angelo Kakande at Makerere University (January 2024). © Kate Cowcher*



“

*In facilitating the loan of the artworks, CHARTS enabled me to introduce the collection to Dr Angelo Kakande from Makerere University (Kampala, Uganda) when he was Global Fellow at St Andrews in 2023–24. With CHARTS, we hope to build further connections with Makerere University, whose own art collection contains several works by artists who have pieces in The Argyll Collection. One particularly exciting aspiration is to revive Naomi Mitchison's founding vision to encourage international connections for communities in Argyll and Bute. The African artworks, all from the 1960s and 70s, provide an ideal anchor for connecting contemporary artists here with creative practitioners in East and Southern Africa, to share expertise, inspirations and collectively explore historical legacies.*

*Finally, it has been great to work with Rosalyn McKenna on opportunities for schools' outreach, and looking forward to hosting a group of students from Dunoon Grammar School later this month for an 'Art History Taster Day'. I share with CHARTS a commitment to diversifying and democratising access to arts and culture, and really appreciate the vital work they have been doing through the Reconnected Project. I look forward to continuing to work with CHARTS in the next academic year.*

- Dr Kate Cowcher, University of St Andrews

Schools' engagement with The Argyll Collection increased with CHARTS support. This included:

- Primary and Early Learning Centre sessions introducing the collection and the development of continual professional development training for teachers and the Superpower of Looking project scheduled with Art UK for autumn 2024.
- Developing relationships with secondary school teachers and the benefits of working with the collection in classroom learning.
- Planning for the development of new school and library displays for autumn 2024.
- Planning for the development of pupil engagement and co-curated exhibitions.

“

*CHARTS came to Glenbarr Primary as part of an interdisciplinary learning project that had outdoor learning and nature at the heart of it.*

*The students had been looking at their local environment and drawing inspiration from what they saw, felt, heard and smelt. They then used this to create art, which was to be exhibited locally. When we reached out to Ros [McKenna, Project Manager] to visit us with work from The Argyll Collection we really had no idea how amazing it would be. The students were able to experience the pieces she brought up close. They then used the artwork as inspiration for their own creations and the outcomes were superb. Talking through the pieces Ros brought gave the children the confidence to paint, layer, chalk and draw. They were so pleased with their creations and were excited to show them at their exhibition. The visit by CHARTS fitted perfectly with the structure of the project, and as a school, we could not have been more proud of the children's engagement.*

- Colette Quinlan, Acting Principal Teacher/Pupil Support Teacher  
Dalintober Primary School & Early Learning Centre and Glenbarr Primary School

*Image: Looking at a Bel Cowie piece with children from  
Kilmodan Early Learning Centre.  
© Kilmodan ELC/Deborah Hardy*



“

*Being able to show the students a Joan Eardley painting, a real Joan Eardley, after discussions about her work, which I do with first years regularly, makes it more real, more tangible. She was a real artist who painted in Scotland and this is a piece of her work.*

*The Argyll Collection can be used in many more ways than just an Art class. It can be a starting point for creative writing sessions or for a history lesson. For example, Anda Paterson's 'Victims of War' can be used in cross-curricular lessons about war, poetry or social commentary.*

- Alison McAlpine, Art & Design Teacher, Tarbert Academy



## DIGITISING THE COLLECTION

The Reconnected team are currently working to digitise The Argyll Collection for global exposure after being chosen to participate in a unique collaboration between XpoNorth Digital, Highlands and Islands Enterprise's specialist digital support programme for the creative and heritage sectors, and Smartify, the world's most downloaded museum app.

Alongside the Orkney Museum and Strathnaver Museum, also supported by XpoNorth, the Reconnected team will be able to feature The Argyll Collection online, enabling new ways of telling the collection's story and opening innovative connections with national and international audiences.

[The Smartify platform](#) enables digitised versions of The Argyll Collection and exhibitions such as the recent exhibition, 'Awaken'. But it doesn't stop there. The platform will also provide commissioned content, offering bold and immersive digital narration of the artworks, artists, and the stories they tell. This multimedia tour, accessible online, will allow smartphone users worldwide to engage with the collection in a whole new way.

*Image (left): The Argyll Collection, Reconnected, Project Manager Rosalyn McKenna (2024).*

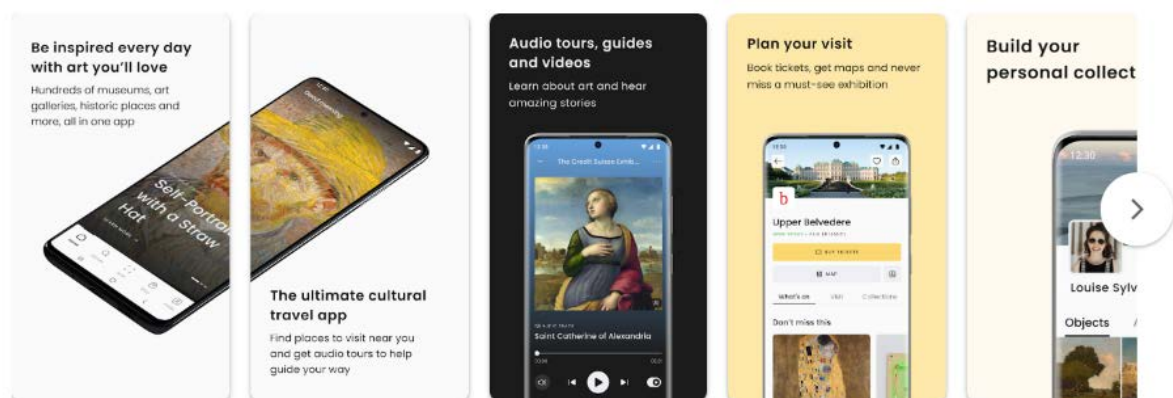
© CHARTS/Kirsty MacNab

*Image (below): Smartify is partnered with over 700 cultural organisations throughout the world.*

“

*CHARTS is thrilled to be collaborating with Smartify. This presents an extraordinary opportunity to connect a global audience with The Argyll Collection, to both champion the collection and explore the many stories that it can tell.*

- Rosalyn McKenna  
Project Manager, Reconnected, CHARTS



# CASE STUDY: The Argyll Collection, Reconnected – Research

Kirsty MacNab, Research Manager for The Argyll Collection, Reconnected, has been delving into the history of the collection and the artworks it contains. This research is key to better understanding the collection – the motivation behind it, how it was amassed, the reasons for choosing particular pieces or artists, and learning about the artworks themselves.

This knowledge helps us engage new and current audiences, consider how to develop the collection in the future, advocate for the collection's care, and assess its national and international significance.

Research began by interviewing Gillian Brown, daughter of Jim Tyre. Gillian recalled that as Art Advisor, her father bought works for the collection and toured them around the county in his Austin van. She spoke about visiting galleries with her father and said that her brother Colin accompanied their dad to the home of Robin Philipson. She stated that her father loved his job and that he and Naomi Mitchison got on very well.

This friendship is evident in the copies of their letters held at liveArgyll Archives in Lochgilphead. It is fascinating to read their correspondence, sales receipts, exhibition catalogues, and letters to discover how they purchased work for the collection.

On 1st March 2024, Kirsty used her research to give a presentation at the Scottish Society for Art History's anniversary conference, 'Forty Years of Art and Art History in Scotland, 1984–2024' at the Pleasance Theatre in Edinburgh. Attendees included art historians, lecturers, art curators, colleagues from Art UK, and members of the public. Many were very intrigued by the collection and its history, opening the door for multiple possible future partnerships.

*Image: the Scottish Society for Art History's 40th anniversary conference (2024). © CHARTS/Rosalyn McKenna*



“

*Researching The Argyll Collection is an amazing task. Knowledge of its history and the artworks contained within it enables CHARTS to create truly meaningful engagement opportunities.*

- Kirsty MacNab, Research Manager  
The Argyll Collection, Reconnected, CHARTS

# CASE STUDY: Lily Vaughan, Exhibition Trainee

## The Argyll Collection, Dunoon Burgh Hall

From January to April 2024, Lily Vaughan, from Innellan, near Dunoon, undertook an Exhibition Traineeship with 'The Argyll Collection Reconnected' project. Based at Dunoon Burgh Hall, Lily had the opportunity to curate a public exhibition from The Argyll Collection on a theme of her choice.

This was made possible with the support of the National Lottery Heritage Fund, linked into the Argyll Aspires programme.

Lily, a promising young ceramicist, applied for the opportunity so that she could learn how to curate and display a group of artworks. She first encountered the collection at Dunoon Grammar School and was excited to discover more.

With a public opening date of April 2024, Lily worked hard to get through all the steps of her exhibition in time. Her first step was to learn about the collection and those who created it. Next, she began looking at the individual artworks. With 179 pieces, Lily had lots to choose from and a lot of work to whittle down her selection to 12. Quickly, however, she settled on the theme of the five senses, following her preference for trying to imagine the sounds, smells, sights, tastes, and tactile experiences an artwork presents.

Lily learnt that her selection would also have to give way to practical considerations such as wall space and the physical condition of the artworks. Bearing this in mind, she developed an exhibition layout and consulted condition reports to make sure artworks were suitable for display. Lily gave a lot of consideration as to how to interpret her exhibition. In addition to traditional written interpretation, she created auditory, olfactory, and tactile opportunities for visitors to interpret the works.

Lily's hard work came to fruition on the evening of 11th April 2024, when 78 people celebrated the opening of 'Awaken'. Between 10th–28th April, a further 341 people visited her display. Lily learnt the practical skills around curating an exhibition, and in a fantastic outcome, outwith our original aims, delivered creative workshops with school pupils at Dunoon Grammar School and with members of the public at Dunoon Burgh Hall. Lily gave her community the chance to experience an art collection that was historically not often on public display and was successful in achieving her SVQ unit: 'Support the organisation of an event or exhibition'.

4



“

*My time with CHARTS has had a huge impact on me. It has shown me how capable I am. Seeing my vision come to life was just fantastic. It has shown me I'd definitely like to open a gallery alongside my pottery studio.*

- Lily Vaughan

# C. Gaelic development

Gaelic development in Argyll and Bute is underpinned by the CHARTS role of Oifigear Cultair Ghàidhlig, currently funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Argyll and Bute Council support this role in growing opportunities in Gaelic language and culture and embedding Gaelic across a range of services.

Work to date has included developing a Gaelic Culture Strategy with key stakeholders, establishing projects and creating Gaelic resources. This role has increased the visibility of Gaelic language and culture in Argyll, and grown support for Gaelic speakers relating to both regional and national priorities. This work also supports the intergenerational transmission of Gaelic language and lore within Argyll and encourages an environmentally sustainable working culture informed by Gaelic traditions and outlook.

During the financial year 2023–24, CHARTS' Gaelic engagements have included collaboration with Donegal Museum to develop the flagship Cuairt Chaluim Chille exhibition tour and the development of Fearn through the islands support programme. Bòrd na Gàidhlig has commended CHARTS for building relationships between Ireland and Argyll and for the development of Cuairt Chaluim Chille, supported by Foras na Gaeilge, the public body responsible for the promotion of the Irish language throughout the island of Ireland, both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

1. Arrochar
2. Campbeltown
3. Cove
4. Craignish
5. Case study: Cuairt Chaluim Chille // Touring St Columba
6. Case study: Feàrna/Alder
7. Case study: Embroidery Workshop

Funded by:



## Staff

Àdhamh Ó Broin	OIFIGEAR CULTAIR GHÀIDHLIG, GAELIC CULTURE OFFICER
Rody Gorman	TRANSLATION SUPPORT
Muriel MacKaveney	PROJECT FACILITATOR (EVENTS)
Khara McPhail	CAMPBELTOWN MUSEUM EXHIBITION & WORKSHOP SUPPORT
Mary Morrison	ISLANDS SUPPORT

Far-reaching intergenerational support for Gaelic culture has included bringing together tradition bearers from Gaelic and Traveller communities across the region. Working together with Gaelic speakers and learners, our work profiling the Gaelic language has included exploring Gaelic culture through topics of climate change and the natural environment. This has included working in collaboration with Glasgow University and Mull tradition bearer Dr Alasdair Whyte, focussing on oyster populations, both contemporary and historical, and how they have been referenced in Gaelic song (August 2023) and a climate challenge-focused event 'Dùthchas Beò' in Knapdale, led by Àdhamh Ó Broin (May 2024). These events brought positive attention to elements of the local countryside in order to foster a sense of responsibility and care for Argyll's natural environment.

Contributions to Seachdain na Gàidhlig, World Gaelic Week have included co-hosting an intergenerational lore and language share with Companaich Dhail Riada and Kilmartin Museum (February 2024) and through this work Elders from mid-Argyll, whose voices are seldom heard, have been enabled to pass on their knowledge and stories, sharing local myths and legends, supported by music, reviving tradition in the area.

Supporting collaboration and partnership across Gaelic communities is central to our work and developing events through which to explore the role of Gaelic in contemporary Argyll.

This includes supporting the Argyll Gaelic Gathering and language lessons, for example, at Arrochar's Three Villages Hall, by providing tuition for those seeking to place language learning at the heart of their community.

“

*CHARTS have given Gaelic in Argyll a new boost during the last two years. It is evident that there is more support from the organisation for the language and it is a great encouragement to me personally that they have a Gaelic Culture Officer. It is not just that this officer is there though; it is clear that there is far more Gaelic and Gaelic lore woven into the work and the aims of the organisation as a whole. Furthermore, the officer himself, Àdhamh, is to be commended on what he has managed to achieve in the role.*

- Dr Alasdair Whyte, University of Glasgow

*Dùthchas Beò, Revitalising Reciprocity with the Gaelic Landscape, Dunadd Fort (May 2024).*  
© CHARTS



# CASE STUDY: Cuairt Chaluim Chille

## // Touring St Columba

Cuairt Chaluim Chille // Touring St Columba was made possible by a matched funding partnership between Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Foras na Gaeilge.

Created for Colmcille 1500 by Donegal Museum, this exhibition was loaned to CHARTS for one year to tour throughout Argyll and Bute, culminating on the Feast Day of St Columba, 9th June 2024. The exhibition travelled to five locations, bringing the CHARTS' staff team into contact with over 400 people at launch events with a total participation of over 6,000 through associated audience visits and workshops, including Gaelic song, poetry and talks. The project covered an estimated 1,500 miles across Argyll and included 17 ferry crossings for the staff team.

This collaborative project was designed to explore the cross-cultural links between Ireland and Scotland, language, culture and heritage, and events at each host venue included Gaelic speakers and performers: 15 musicians from Argyll and Ireland were commissioned to perform at these events.

“

*As leth Bòrd na Gàidhlig, bu mhath leinn CHARTS a mholadh air son an dàimh eadar Éirinn 's Alba a neartachadh. Tha sinn air ar dòigh taic a chur ri taisbeanadh Cuairt Chaluim Chille gus dualchas beairteach na Gàidhlig a tha air a roinn eadar Éirinn 's Alba a chomharrachadh.”*

*On behalf of Bòrd Na Gàidhlig, we would like to commend CHARTS in strengthening the bonds between Gaelic Ireland and Scotland. We are delighted to support Cuairt Chaluim Chille // Touring St Columba Exhibition and celebrate the rich Gaelic heritage shared between Scotland and Ireland.*

- Brian Ó h-Eadhra, Manaidsear Chom-pàirteachasan is Leasachaidh, Bòrd Na Gàidhlig / Brian Ó h-Eadhra, Partnerships and Development Manager, Bòrd Na Gàidhlig

*Image (top): harpist Ciorstaidh (Kirsty) Beaton performs at Iona Village Hall (June 2024). Both images © CHARTS*

*Image (right): the exhibition was launched at Islay Gaelic Centre.*



“

*Fabulous ceilidh in the best sense of the word – story, song, music, Book of Kells, fun, deep, moving – come back!*

- Caro Penney, Iona Community at Iona Abbey

Image (left): Dr Rosemary Power at Iona Village Hall.

Image (right): Argyll Elders with Àdhamh Ó Brion, at Kilmartin Museum (February 2024).

Both images © CHARTS

“

Dair a bha sinne òg, bha a h-uile duine 'dèanadh tuilidh am miosg a chèile. Chan eil an uiread dheth sin ann a-nis seach mar a b' àbhaist dha bhith, daoine 'cur seachad ùine le seanairean 's seanmhairean. Mar sin, chan eil iad a' togail eachdraigh an àite. An ceann fichead bliana, bidh iad an aithreachas nach d' fhuair iad tuilidh. Tha daoine tuilidh 's a' chòir fad às bho chèile. Tha iad uile cho trang a' tighinn bèò.

When we were young, everyone was doing more among others, together. There's not the same amount of that happening the way it used to, people spending time with grandfathers and grandmothers. Therefore, they are not learning the history of the place. In twenty years' time, they will be regretting that they didn't learn more. People are too far away from one another. They are all too busy surviving.

- Àirtidh MacColla, Lios Mòr /  
Archie MacColl, Isle of Lismore



“

Air son an cànan a ghleidheil mar a b' àbhaist dhi bhith, dh'fheumadh ead a bhith ann gu domhain. 'S e an aoin dòigh gun toireadh tu Gàilig air ais, nach biodh ead a' bruidhinn an còrr ach Gàilig. Gàilig, Gàilig, Gàilig, o mhoch gu dubh. 'S e sin an aoin dòigh a theirinns' a gheobhadh tu air ais i. Feumaidh tu cainnt an àite anns an do rugadh tu a ghleidheil cuideachd. Theirinn gum biodh rudaigin air a chall mur an gleidh sinn sin.

In order to preserve the language as it used to be, people would need to be in deep. The only way that you would bring Gaelic back would be not to be speaking anything but Gaelic. Gaelic, Gaelic, Gaelic, from morning till night. That's the only way I would say that you'd get it back. You need to preserve the dialect of the place you were born in too. I'd say that something would be lost if we don't keep that.

- Uilleam Mac an Sporain MBE, Giogha /  
Willie MacSporran MBE, Isle of Gigha

# CASE STUDY: Feàrna / Alder

## Coastal Cultures – Islands Residencies Mull

Feàrna was developed by Alice Stillman and Rhona Dougall, with Alasdair Whyte supporting the project's first phase by sharing research around Gaelic place names relating to trees as part of a 'counter-mapping' process. Feàrna took trees as a starting point for human connections, particularly their symbolic importance in Gaelic culture. Trees' long life spans remind us of the past and link us with the future. The emphasis of this project was on process, focusing on slow growth and relationship building to foster trust and enable a safe space for dialogue.

After an initial period of developing the project through research, gathering resources and creating a framework for engagement, Feàrna hosted gatherings in different locations around Mull using the traditional 'house cèilidh' as a template for events' format. People with local roots in each area of Mull and/or Gaelic speakers were invited.

In the second stage, the Feàrna collective developed further gatherings, events, and activities around the island, shaped by collaborators who joined the project as it moved forward. In the final months of the project, the focus was on documentation, review and gathering materials to disseminate and share

project outputs. Resources were created around the processes undertaken during the project and around issues of decolonising and re-indigenising art practices in the Gàidhealtachd from the point of view of both Gaelic and non-Gaelic artists. This included sharing certain elements of practising well via questions, Gaelic terms/concepts and facilitated discussion.

The project was motivated by observations and from Rhona and Alice's individual experiences around how to practise more inclusively in the contemporary Highlands, a much more diverse community than it used to be. There was a shared understanding of imbalances and of certain people not being 'in the room'.

*Image: Coastal Cultures, Island Residencies, Feàrna.  
© Rhona Dougall*



“

*As someone of Gaelic heritage working in the arts, I had been very conscious of [imbalances] for some time and the patterns of (non)participation we were seeing in arts and community projects, where often the 'local' people of Gaelic heritage are not present. We started by looking at ourselves, working out how to navigate having sometimes uncomfortable conversations, and then looking at how to expand that to the wider community.*

- Rhona Dougall

The emphasis on process and building trust in this project created the space for developing conversations and methodologies.

In the final phase of the residency, Rhona and Alice held a gathering at Knockvologan on the Ross of Mull, with a small, mixed group invited. They were able to test out some of the working methodologies which they'd developed through Feàrna, including sharing certain Gaelic terms and concepts, such as *Gàidhealtachd*, *dùthchas* and *brìgh*.

Feàrna worked with Mull-based filmmaker Nina Pope to create a filmed conversation between Alice and Rhona about the project's development and processes. The film evidences the collaborative working relationship and trust established between Rhona and Alice during the project, which clearly had a profound impact on their own practices. A project website for Feàrna was created with Lenny Stillman, sharing learning, processes and resources relating to decolonising, understanding and connecting with Gaelic culture and heritage in the Highlands and Islands. These conversations continue.

*Image (above, left): Coastal Cultures, Island Residencies, Feàrna. © Sarah Darling*

*Image (above, right): Coastal Cultures, Island Residencies, Feàrna, Counter Mapping Gatherings (September 2023). © Feàrna*



“

*Funding to give us the time and resources to do this – while we've both done unpaid work of this type at times – allowed us to prioritise this work and achieve more than we could have otherwise. It also allowed us to engage others (dendrochronologist Dr Coralie Mills, filmmaker Nina Pope, and web designer Lenny Stillman) with particular expertise to achieve specific goals. Everyone we worked with at CHARTS seemed to understand and appreciate how we worked – process-oriented rather than outcome-orientated – and it was really valuable to feel supported and understood in this aspect.*

- Rhona Dougall, Artist, Feàrna

“

*There is amazing potential in this sense. Gaelic culture can be ignored totally, with no engagement. We need these conscious opportunities to immerse ourselves in it.*

- Participant, Feàrna

# CASE STUDY: Embroidery Workshop

## Campbeltown Museum

Building on interest in Gaelic heritage in Kintyre, public engagement workshops were developed at Campbeltown Museum including Gaelic-speaking hosts and Colmcille embroidery workshops were led by artists Kirstie Campbell and Aoife Cawley. These were designed to complement the travelling Cuairt Chaluim Chille // Touring St Columba exhibition, which was based at Campbeltown Museum from June to October 2023, as visitor responses highlighted the missing interactive element of the exhibition.

Museum activities allowed participants to learn or develop needlework and embroidery techniques by creating a medieval-inspired design.

These were informal workshops aimed at participants of all ages and skill sets and were to encourage people to step back in time and take part in an activity that Colmcille/St Columba, would have undertaken.

Participants took inspiration for colours, themes, designs, and lettering from the exhibition panels and used stencils and pre-made designs based around Irish saints and creatures, guided by Kirstie and Aoife.

Sessions prompted conversation and encouraged participants to engage with the Irish language, folklore and culture, which evolved

into conversations around the connections between Ireland and Scotland.

These skill-sharing sessions, involving people aged in their 20s to 60s, also allowed for stereotypes of museums as old places reserved only for history lovers to be broken down. This has acted as a foundation for our upcoming warm spaces programme in autumn and winter.

Overall, the positive response to the education programme has highlighted the need for increased, consistent engagement in the community by using museum objects and themes to create relaxed, informal events.

Feedback and response from all activities help create new outreach projects, including with local schools, and an increased number of family and intergenerational activities are now taking place.

The ongoing liveArgyll and CHARTS partnership supports all aspects of development at Campbeltown Museum, started after the pandemic when the museum was reopened with limited opening hours. CHARTS manages museum staff to run events tailored to the needs and demands of the local community, with extended access during weekends and school holidays.



*Colmcille embroidery workshop at Campbeltown Museum, Aoife Cawley workshop leader and participant Mary Cook (October 2023). © CHARTS*

“

*Loved the chat and the teaching from people who were experts and keen to share their talents. Enjoyed the history session as well. Would definitely come back, thank you.*

- Participant

# D. International support

## Growing Global Networks

During 2023–24, CHARTS delivered its first international support programme with the sector. Growing Global Networks (GGN) was the first of its kind in the history of our region, aiming to facilitate discussion and growth around international practice and including webinars and mentoring support for CHARTS' members to undertake international working and a series of online case studies.

Grown from a previous CHARTS project, 'Placemakers: Microcluster Networks', Growing Global Networks was developed in collaboration with ex-officio Trustee Dr Michael Pierre Johnson, Creative Economy Innovation Leadership Fellow at the School of Innovation and Technology at the Glasgow School of Art. A key resource generated from Dr Johnson's Placemakers publication, titled [The Value of Creative Growth](#), continues to inform, guide and encourage Growing Global Networks development.



*Image: Dr Deirdre MacKenna, Dr Kate Cowcher and Dr Angelo Kakande with delegates from the British Council in Kampala, Uganda (2024). © Kate Cowcher*



## Staff

Deirdre MacKenna    PROJECT MANAGER

## Funded by:



**SCHOOL OF  
INNOVATION  
AND TECHNOLOGY  
THE GLASGOW  
SCHOOL OF ART**

Growing Global Networks included:

- International knowledge exchange, to support research, enquiry-driven and social-engagement member interests, to develop and grow international relationships, exchange and collaborations.
- International export, supporting enterprise and commercially driven member interests to develop and grow international routes to market for artists' cultural products.
- International tourism, supporting place-based member interests to develop and grow international visitor markets and experiences; outcomes included the development of products and visits to Argyll for individual practitioners.
- Nine artists benefited directly from facilitated international visits, including to Norway, Denmark, Brooklyn (USA), Zürich (Switzerland), County Donegal (Republic of Ireland), Mauritius, Kyushu (Japan), and Worcester (USA).

During January 2024, by invitation of Dr Kate Cowcher, School of History, University of St Andrews, the Growing Global Networks project manager visited Uganda and met with the British Council to further develop the scope for collaboration between CHARTS, the University of Makerere (Dr Angelo Kakande) and the Ugandan Arts Trust.

This work highlighted how CHARTS staff work together addressing cross-cutting themes, by bringing together the Growing Global Networks and Argyll Collection, Reconnected projects, to maximise positive outcomes. The visit also built on themes of regional identity in Uganda and Argyll, which were first initiated by Naomi Mitchison through her links to the development of council-owned The Argyll Collection.

*Image: Dr Deirdre MacKenna in Kampala, Uganda.*  
© CHARTS



“

*CHARTS is for creative people in Argyll and Bute and thus for their audiences across Scotland. But in a shrinking world, the sympathies or otherwise of geography and culture lying beyond our borders matter more than ever. Indeed, CHARTS recognises the most welcome ambition of many of its members to work on a broader canvas and aims to support them.*

- Julian Forrester, Trustee

## About the Growing Global Process

Growing Global Networks was designed to develop the capacity of CHARTS members to successfully work internationally and consider new routes to market for commissions and sales. These new relationships led to members taking steps to join global networks, making new work and developing new collaborations. This assisted knowledge about how coastal Scotland shares issues and characteristics with communities and places around the world. Structured to explore member needs towards new collaboration in ways which would increase communication, early project planning included to roll-out framing questions, seeking response from members, generating many insights as well as requests for dialogue and support.

Members were asked to consider their motivations (why) and who their work is for; in turn, they expressed that this had led to deeper consideration of how to approach and plan for their international working, and what might be expected of them.

“

*This international working has led to my practice being programmed within a forthcoming group exhibition in New York as well as a reciprocal visit from USA to Argyll of artists to continue and further build from their peer-to-peer collaboration.*

- Adrien Howard

As the project progressed, there was a growing level of dialogue between members, and it was recognised that at the formative stages, time was needed for collaboration to grow. Concurrently, we worked to create an ethos of sharing; reciprocity and exchange within the dialogues around members' practices. Feedback gathered during well attended webinars generated a very rich source of information to enable CHARTS to shape its support for international working.

Micro-projects generated as an outcome of the project reached a large number of people in eight countries outside the UK.

Seven members undertook travel and exchange with collaborators they would not otherwise have been able to work with and this has led to more opportunities, sales of work and to reciprocally hosting visitors in Argyll.

*Image: 'Evergreen', Eve Campbell's work made for the Worcester Centre for Crafts, USA. © Eve Campbell*



“

*This project has already begun to grow my international market, and it is important that I follow through and use this opportunity for growth. Many benefits come from working internationally including not relying entirely on one market. I have also created a group with international followers who would like workshops. I intend to attempt to arrange a workshop for them and this may lead to new opportunities.*

- Eve Campbell

# MY EXPERIENCE: Miek Zwamborn

“

My encounters at Kyushu University re-framed, re-contextualised and re-positioned my own practice, stimulating many ideas of how I could further develop my visual and poetry work with scientific work.

Some of the insights I gained included:

- the joy of seeing the endless possibilities of seaweed showcased (in food),
- increased definition of the question of how to incorporate food in my practice,
- a larger awareness and appreciation for our natural environment,
- awareness of the challenges involved in translating all these discoveries into creative work.

On this journey, I became much more aware of how I should/could/will engage with the landscape around me at Knockvologan [in Mull, Argyll; I realised that my practice is enabling me to collect and generate material and time-sensitive information and that these could/can contribute to deeper awareness and understanding of climate change.

I also understood the importance of collaboration across the ocean and experienced how those different partners could benefit from each other and how working internationally enables me (and others) to:

- learn about related projects in rural situations,
- connect with like-minded people beyond my immediate horizons,
- have a stronger and more diverse frames of reference through which to make sense of and evaluate my work,
- gain awareness of my own locality,
- find more routes to sell my work,
- share my knowledge (and gain a sense of value while doing so),
- promote cultural exchange as a worthwhile activity,
- be challenged by opportunities that will strengthen and enrich my practice.

The next steps include to design and organise the first summer school at Knockvologan on Mull



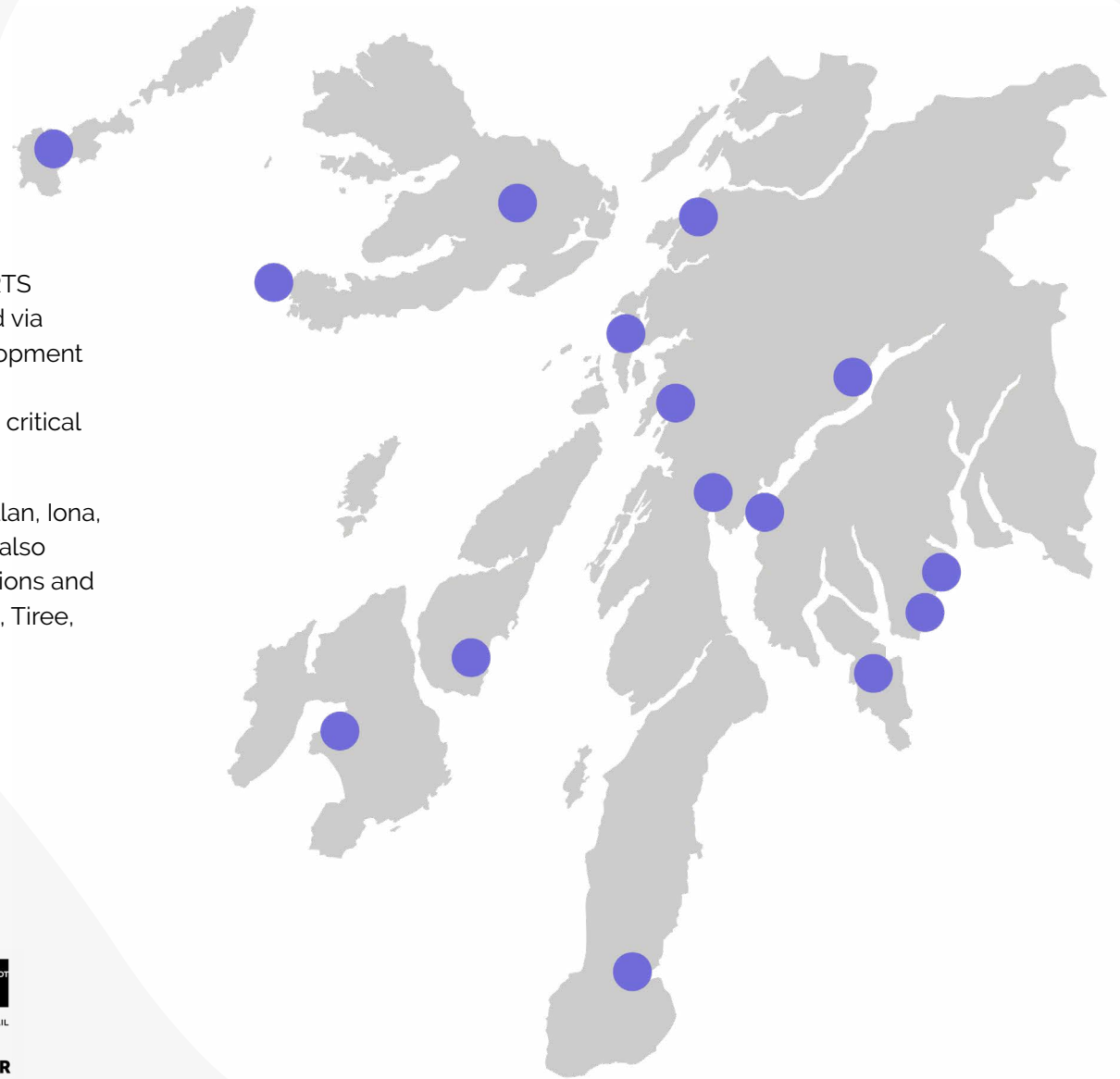
*Both images: Mekari Shinji ceremony, Kitakyushu City, Japan, supported by CHARTS' Growing Global Networks programme (2024). © Miek Zwamborn*

# E. Awards & member support

As a member-guided SCIO, it is critical that CHARTS supports its members in meeting their needs and assisting cultural development and sustainability. Our programmes underline this year-round, and the organisation supports its members individually.

This has most recently included through the annual Artists and Craft Makers Awards (VACMA) scheme, managed by CHARTS on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council and Creative Scotland, and via bespoke mentoring services offered as part of the island development programme, Ràmh; through application processes and general feedback, the island team became aware of members needing critical one-to-one mentoring and development support.

VACMA-supported artists were based in Ardfern, Dunoon, Innellan, Iona, Lochgilphead and Oban. Communities in many other locations also benefited from one-to-one mentoring leading to new commissions and opportunities. This included artists based on the islands of Mull, Tiree, Luing, Jura, Seil and Bute.



Funded by:



## Visual Artist and Craft Makers Awards Argyll and Bute

The Visual Artist and Craft Makers Awards (VACMA) offers small grants to visual artists and craft makers for creative development at all career stages, offering two levels of bursaries: £500 and £750. Through VACMA, awardees have greatly benefited from the award's financial support; many have gone on to achieve successful Creative Scotland Open Funding for Individuals applications, develop sustainable practice, participate in national art festivals, and host solo exhibitions.

Over the last five years, CHARTS has received a high number of applications showing the need for support and investment in the region. VACMA is a highly regarded national programme, and this year, it received a breadth of applications from established artists and makers in Argyll and Bute, focusing on sustainability and climate adaptation. Seven awards were granted in February 2024.

Awardees included Lizzie Rose, who received support in February 2024 to undertake a two-day tailor-made intensive pigment-making course with London Pigment to further integrate sustainability into Lizzie's practice by equipping them with the knowledge of how to create botanical dyes and earth, waste streams and lake pigments.

“

*Thanks to a VACMA, I was enabled to delve into the world of pigment making through a two-day course with London Pigments. It opened my eyes to the potential all around us and into the empathy with place that using found and foraged pigments can offer and will slowly become part of my practice – I hope to enable a transition to a more caring place.*

- Lizzie Rose

*Image: Blue Pigment, Lizzie Rose, VACMA (2024).  
© Lizzie Rose*



During 2023, Renuka Ramanujam also received support to create brushes, pigments and inks using a suite of plant and food waste derivatives in the form of prototypes such as 'natural pigment crayons'. Renuka was able to engage in several knowledge-sharing events, including an ink and dye-making demonstration as part of cultural textile workshops in collaboration with The National Archives (Manchester) and a circular economy workshop at Easdale Primary School.

### Mentoring CHARTS Members

Responsiveness to members' needs lies at the heart of CHARTS' method of working.

Mentoring used an iterative and formative approach through dialogues and member feedback to identify how artists could undertake processes in their work, which would lead to deeper engagement with people/stakeholders/participants. This led to greater insights about member artists, their roles, motivations and methods of working.

Mentoring support encouraged artists to undertake periods of reflection, stop production and assess the value of their work for the people they wanted to work with/for. This process of identifying value and significance enabled artists to think through the detail of the dynamics between themselves and their constituents and

“

*The VACMA grant has been instrumental in enabling me to take time to learn a skill that can benefit my practice in so many ways. I am so excited to be able to take what I've learned into further projects and continue to develop more opportunities for myself with it.*

- Renuka Ramanujam

*Images from Renuka Ramanujam's Colours of Oban project (2023). © Renuka Ramanujam*



how each of these is unique and requires effort and consideration.

Only a few of the artists had undertaken a process like this before.

In many cases, members successfully applied these insights to their work reporting successes, including major funding awards and greater levels of satisfaction/impact with their collaborators.

They reported an increase in confidence in their work, more critical progress in their development, that their ambitions had grown, and deeper insight into the places their work operates in and represents. They also reported expanded thinking into new places and contexts.

Mentoring has helped achieve/fulfil CHARTS' aim of co-producing with its members and also encouraging members to collaborate and create natural clusters of collaboration through common themes, locations and other aspects.

Throughout all of this, CHARTS staff achieved deeper levels of collaboration with their members and more insight into both the characteristics of the places they work in and ways to support their work.

*Image: Naoko Mabon and Deborah Gray approaching Belfast, supported by CHARTS Growing Global Networks programme (2024). © Naoko Mabon*

“

*Having a series of dialogues with CHARTS in the context of international working was really useful for my work. I have found it challenging but important to reflect on the value of international working while working locally in Argyll, and to present those values to wider audiences.*

*As CHARTS' staff are experienced cultural producers working internationally, I was grateful for their advice and critical friendship.*

- Naoko Mabon



“

*As part of my Mekari project in Japan, CHARTS helped me formulate a plan of action. Because of their precision and encouragement, I left with a clear head and could also fall back on what we discussed and the notes we took in the process. Normally I would quickly lose overview, but I was able to do very focused research.*

*CHARTS has given me a lot of support since my arrival on Mull, both in the form of two awards to date and mentally. I feel very lucky that such enthusiastic and professional people take care of the work and wellbeing of artists. That is certainly not something that can be taken for granted.*

- Miek Zwamborn

# F. Supporting engagement, post pandemic

CHARTS is taking part in Scotland's Covid Community Memorial Programme, 'Remembering Together', working in partnership with greenspace scotland and Argyll and Bute Council. As an arts-led national project involving 32 local authority areas, Remembering Together encourages acts of reflection, remembrance, hope and healing within communities across Scotland.

Further to community consultation across the region, CHARTS commissioned four artist and community partnerships, creating outdoor artworks, concluding in a celebratory hybrid event, 'Our Community Reflects' on 17th August 2024 which we will feature in more depth in next year's review. Commissions have included engagement with people of all ages and outreach workshops in the community, schools and care homes.

1. Remembering Together, Reflect
2. **Case study: How it Feels to be Apart**

Funded by:



## Remembering Together, Reflect lead artists

Emma Henderson	CENTRE 81, GARELOCHHEAD
Kirsten Millar	LINDA MCCARTNEY MEMORIAL GARDEN, CAMPBELTOWN
NINA POPE & KAREN GUTHRIE (SOMEWHERE)	AROS PARK WALLED GARDENS, ISLE OF MULL
Luke Winter	SAWA, ISLE OF BUTE
Paul Campbell	LEAD FILM MAKER
Sean Catlin	ASSISTANT FILM MAKER

Image: community workshop in Rothesay led by Luke Winter (June 2024). © Luke Winter

“

*As Chair of the Steering Group, I have this year enjoyed working on the management of Reflect supporting the lead artists in local areas across Argyll.*

*Designed to understand the impacts of the pandemic in our region, it has been specially important to highlight healing aspects of the outdoor environment. This project has built on the knowledge across the CHARTS network at local level to enable regional participation, engaging typically under-represented communities in a national programme. I am pleased to have been part of this project with such a lasting legacy.*

- Eleanor McKinnon, Chair, Steering Group

“

*We at greenspace scotland have really enjoyed working with CHARTS on Remembering Together since 2021.*

*Given the co-created and collaborative nature of the project, CHARTS has been an ideal local partner to deliver this community and artist-led project as it required an organisation with not only local knowledge of the diverse communities and local artists but also sensitivity to the subject and ability to manage the challenges of such a complex project.*

- Carla Almeida, Remembering Together Programme Co-Lead



# CASE STUDY: Nina Pope and Karen Guthrie

## How it Feels to be Apart, Isle of Mull

Artist Nina Pope of Somewhere, describes the approach to her work involving the Aros Park Walled Garden and her experience on Mull.

“

I've begun from my own experience of lockdown – spent in Tobermory – but having arrived here with my young family only a few months before it began. Working under the title 'THIS IS ENOUGH' the project celebrates the many small acts of kindness and support I saw unfold around me during that time and builds on the sense that having time to look closely at our own surroundings and celebrate what we can make and grow ourselves 'at home' can be of value. I was extremely grateful to find myself somewhere with an overgrown garden during lockdown and took a lot of pleasure from growing and gifting flowers – sometimes, I admit, as an escape from home schooling!

In August, I co-hosted a day at Aros Park Walled Garden near Tobermory where I invited people to come together and use the simple activity of making a hand-tied posy as a way to think together about this time. Using home-grown and wild flowers, we made up bunches to take away and gift to those we wanted to remember or thank from that time – a helpful neighbour, delivery driver, Co-op shopper, relative or friend.

'Unprecedented' was heard so often during the pandemic, and we all knew that, for once, what we were enduring really did fit this description. And yet, what the days often demanded of us during the crisis could seem modest. Making the most of a walk, missing friends and family, meeting one person outside, innovating meals with what we had in the cupboard and growing what we could with the seeds we had. This had to be 'enough', even when we had all had enough.

Here on Mull, the first months of lockdown were blessed with uncharacteristic sunshine, an absence of traffic noise and a tourist season that didn't begin. Infrequent, almost empty ferries diminished even the usual hum of boat noise from the Sound. The continual news stream detailing the daily Covid-19 mortality rates contrasted with domestic excursions, and both could seem strange and sad, close by and far, far away. Many of us looked in detail again at our immediate surroundings, at the landscapes with which we believed we were familiar.



In August I was delighted to collaborate with Alasdair and Georgia Satchel as part of a special in-person screening of 'Islands in film' – created during lockdown and featuring footage from 75 of us! In celebration of the fact we can all now come together in person to once again enjoy music, film and company and everyone was invited to continue to share reflections.

*Image: a posy-making workshop using home-grown and wild flowers was held in Tobermory. © Nina Pope*

# Our team

We employ a highly experienced and dependable workforce, with dedicated managers at the helm of every themed programme guided by Director, Kathleen O'Neill. Operating a Fair Work policy, we ensure that individual team members, whether employed or freelance, are afforded professional development opportunities, funds permitting. During 2023–24, we offered training to three staff to become Arts Awards moderators to provide accreditation for young people and communities across a range of projects. Staff have also been supported in participating in professional network events, training courses, and conferences, as well as developing relationships with peers across Argyll and nationally.

We have increased work opportunities across Argyll and Bute: currently 50% of our staff team are resident in the region, and others are based in Angus, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling and the Isle of Lewis. Although mostly working remotely, staff are exceptionally close-working, communicating regularly via digital channels and meeting in person as necessary. We also commission members across all Argyll and Bute Council community areas to support projects at a local level.

Our model delivers to a high standard, addressing local needs: work during the year 2023–24 included international research and development for Growing Global Networks, The Argyll Collection, Reconnected and Gaelic Culture staff teams.

*Image: from left, Rosalyn McKenna, Kirsty MacNab and Muriel MacKaveney.*



*CHARTS is an essential resource that nourishes my sense of professional identity, my belief in my ambitions and my general mental wellbeing. Without CHARTS I would not be able to stay in Argyll.*

- Deirdre MacKenna, Engagement and International Project Manager 2023–24



*I have wanted to take part in [Arts Awards] training for many years [prior to working with CHARTS]. Through my work with developing young people's visual literacy skills, I recognised the value of acknowledging and celebrating their achievements and, in turn, the increased importance that schools could place on arts learning in the future. Within my work for CHARTS, the potential to deliver arts awards is hugely exciting and paves the way for increasingly meaningful and directed work with young people across the region.*

- Rosalyn McKenna, Project Manager,  
The Argyll Collection, Reconnected



*I originally began working with CHARTS as their Modern Apprentice in Digital Marketing in 2021, after finishing a Master of Arts in Contemporary Art Practice. This apprenticeship enabled employment using my creative skills and equipped me with the tools to work confidently as part of a remote digital team. I have continued developing my skills post-apprenticeship, included undertaking courses such as 'Developing My Leadership', delivered by Social Enterprise Academy and Museum and Galleries Scotland. This course helped crystallise my understanding of management and allowed me to gain further skills and confidence in management, action planning, resilience and delegation*

- Kirsten Millar, Communications and  
Marketing Manager

# Our future

Since 2019, CHARTS has grown from an innovative Place Partnership into a key strategic supporter of the cultural and heritage sectors in Argyll and Bute. As we enter our sixth year, we aim to build on the successes of our key projects and also extend our operations into areas of continuing unmet need, with a particular focus on islands, on Gaelic culture, and upon creating opportunities for young people in heritage and the creative industries.

Our mission is to ensure Argyll and Bute has a growing and sustainable arts and heritage sector which makes a valued contribution to community wealth building throughout the region. In order to continue to advance this agenda, we need to strengthen our organisational capacity through a programme of carefully targeted increased investment in our management and communication infrastructure and also to recruit new trustees to our Board who will more fully represent the range and diversity of those who live and work in Argyll and the Isles. These will be priorities over the coming year.

Alongside this, we will continue to grow our membership by a projected 25% over three years and strengthen the support provided to our Steering Group by increasing our use of task-orientated working groups, including membership at Board level.



Our new three-year Business Plan sets out how we will achieve these ambitious aims. CHARTS prides itself in punching above its weight, and we are gaining increasing recognition, both nationally and internationally for our work, including inclusion in national reviews and case studies. We fully expect to continue building Argyll and Bute's reputation as a beacon of excellence in the creative arts and heritage sectors over the coming year.

- Seymour Adams, CHARTS Vice-Chair

*Image (above): Dunoon Grammar School pupils at the University of St Andrews' Argyll Collection.*

*Image (right): Campbeltown Museum's Burnett Building.*



“

*The partnership between liveArgyll and CHARTS continues to go from strength to strength, improving on the strong foundations put in place back in 2022 regarding Campbeltown Museum's fine art, social history and natural history collections. Kathleen and her team bring a high level of assistance and expertise to the daily operations of the museum, and their creativity has been instrumental in ensuring the delivery of a wide range of projects, exhibitions and events benefit the general public. I very much look forward to the partnership continuing, and am excited about what this will bring to the museum in the future.*

- Robert Judge, Area Operations Manager, liveArgyll

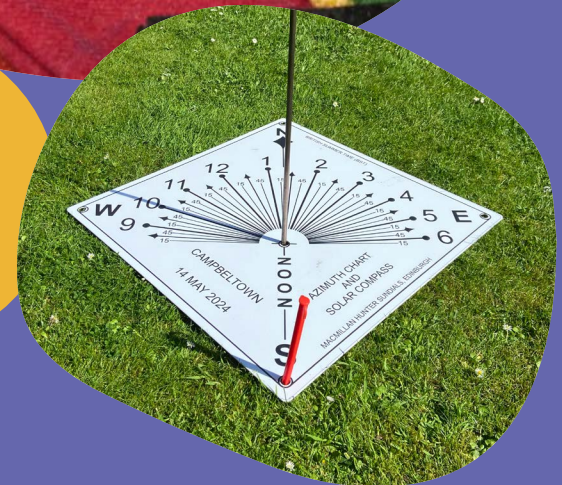
For more information about CHARTS projects and members visit:

[www.chartsargyllandisles.org/  
projects-and-showcases](http://www.chartsargyllandisles.org/projects-and-showcases)

*Image (right): Campbeltown Museum, Colmcille Embroidery Workshop  
(October 2023). © CHARTS*

*Image (below, right): Reflect sundial experiments, Campbeltown  
(May 2024). © Kirsten Millar*

*Image (below): Growing Global Networks, Entebbe Airport, Uganda  
(January 2024). © CHARTS/Deirdre MacKenna*



# Stay in touch

info@chartsargyllandisles.org  
chartsargyllandisles.org



/CHARTArgyllIsle



/chartsargyllandisles



/CHArtsArgyllandIsles

Become a member of CHARTS for free: [www.chartsargyllandisles.org/register](http://www.chartsargyllandisles.org/register)



*Cover image: Coastal Cultures, Expressing an Island, group shot – Patrick Corbett Geology-Poetry Workshop (July 2023). © Glenda Rome*

Review designed by CHARTS members, Abigail Daly ([ruskinlane.co.uk](http://ruskinlane.co.uk)) and Hannah Clinch ([tacit-tacit.co.uk](http://tacit-tacit.co.uk)).

The Culture, Heritage and Arts Assembly, Argyll and Isles, is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered in Scotland: SC049113