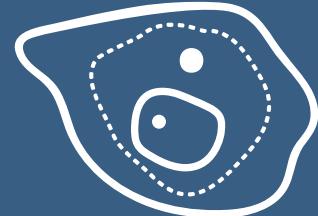




CHARTS.
ARGYLL & ISLES



Annual Review

2024-25

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

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*Group gathering at Aros Walled Garden as part of REFLECT
Remembering Together, Mull, led by Somewhere (Nina Pope
and Karen Guthrie). © Nina Pope / Somewhere*

Welcome



I am delighted to introduce our Annual Review 2024–25 during my first year as Chair of the Board. 2024 was a year of change for CHARTS, but also of significant growth.

Jo McLean stood down as Chair at the AGM in September, after leading the charity since its inception in 2019 and her contribution to founding the CHARTS model remains enormously valued. Julian Forrester stood down in April, having considerably strengthened our financial planning and control systems, and Rachel Kellow stood down representing Gaelic support. Councillor Ross Moreland was replaced as ex officio trustee by Councillor Luna Martin following a change in political control at Argyll and Bute Council, and the Board continues to receive linked officer support from the council, through Arlene Cullum, Snr Economic Development Officer, Transformational Projects and Regeneration.

The AGM saw the appointment of four new trustees: Liz Hunter, David Watt, Rosemary Power and Ruth Wishart. All four of them, bringing complementary strengths to the Board, have hit the ground running and are helping to develop our culture of purposeful but supportive leadership.

Since its creation, CHARTS has attracted inward investment of nearly £1.5m into the cultural economy of Argyll and Bute. This year, projects have been supported by the Scottish Government, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Foras na Gaeilge, Greenspace Scotland, Museums Galleries Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Art Fund. Academic relationships with the University of St Andrews and the University of Glasgow have also been strengthened. Most notably, in December, CHARTS was accepted by Creative Scotland as a candidate for its Multi-Year funding programme, expressly acknowledging the strategic importance of the organisation to Argyll and Bute.

Our work is made possible by the continued financial support of Argyll and Bute Council, which contributes to essential staff and delivery costs. Across recent years, we have strengthened our partnership with the council through taking over the management of the Argyll Collection, a notable group of artworks (including well-known Scottish and Ugandan artists) which forms a key educational resource to schools throughout Argyll. Additionally, through our partnership with liveArgyll that began in 2022, we have supported the care and development of the council's sole museum, located in Campbeltown.

Through this partnership we also look forward to increasingly close working with Kilmartin Museum, supporting its responsibility to liveArgyll for the Campbeltown Museum archaeology collection.

The role of CHARTS, to develop specialist staff teams through securing external investment, has been fundamental to all successes, including that attributed to the Argyll Collection and the council having Campbeltown Museum upgraded in status to a fully accredited nationally Recognised Collection. Our work with members includes one-to-one and organisational support and we continue to create new opportunities and work in the region.

All this is made possible only through the determination and relentless hard work of our staff and freelancers, brilliantly led by our tireless Executive Director, Kathleen O'Neill. Under her direction, we now have a five-year Business Plan which maps out our aspirations and ambitions for the next period.



Seymour Adams
Chair

Image: Remembering Together, Aros walled garden, Mull, 'Making Space' (2024). © Carolyne Mazur

How we work

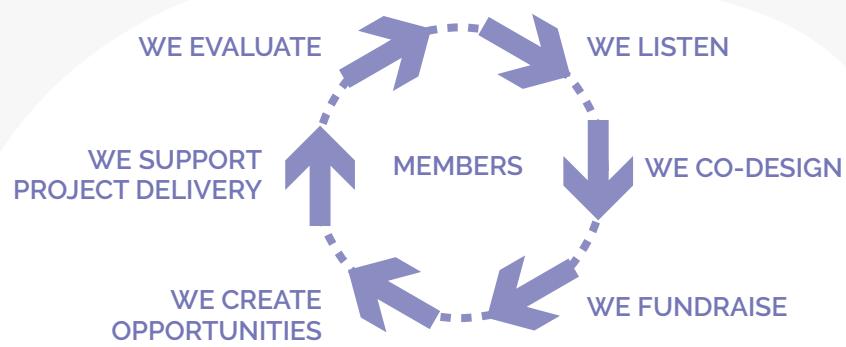
The Board (2024–25)

Seymour Adams	CHAIR
Dr Michael Pierre Johnson	VICE-CHAIR
David Watt	CHAIR, FINANCE AND RISK SUBGROUP
Liz Hunter	SECRETARY
Rosemary Power	
Ruth Wishart	
<i>Ex-Officio Trustees:</i>	
Cllr Luna Martin	ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL
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 (2024)



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

Core staff

Kathleen O'Neill	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Kirsten Millar	PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGER
Moira Chapman	OPERATIONS & FINANCE SUPPORT (2025)
Rhiannon McIntyre	VIRTUAL CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER (2024)

Project teams consist of employees and 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. During 2024–25, Bòrd na Gàidhlig provided funding to secure the employed positions of Gaelic Culture Officer Àdhamh Ó Broin and liveArgyll, in partnership with CHARTS, supported the employment of staff roles at Campbeltown Museum. All staff work closely across project themes as appropriate and are guided by the Executive Director, forging skills networks to ensure that all strategic goals are met. Argyll and Bute Council provide year-round in-kind support and, during 2024–25, a foundational grant was awarded to contribute in part towards core staffing costs and operational delivery.

Steering Group

The Steering Group is an important part of the organisational structure, keeping staff and Board informed of needs at a local level. Steering Group members were invited as leaders in their field with an understanding of strategic development and/or by leadership roles in their local council area, in 2020.

Eighteen people provided support to our membership on islands and mainland Argyll during 2024.

Key support included regular gatherings of island communities and support of a Covid memorial project, Reflect, with Greenspace Scotland (see page 36).

Steering Group Representation 2024 included:

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

Arts members providing online member group-meeting support included Giles Perring (Jura); providing member groups meeting support in person, Sam Kilday (Bute), Rutger Emmelkamp, Miek Zwamborn (Ross of Mull), and Calum Hall (Tobermory, Mull); and providing extra support for Dunoon, Hannah Clinch.

Other strategic representation included:

- Brian Barker, ArtMap Argyll, on behalf of arts collectives
- 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
- Antonia Baird, Community Learning and Development Officer, Argyll and Bute Council

This Steering Group tier of the CHARTS SCIO model aims to strengthen networked communications to help inform organisational development by advancing knowledge and sharing experience to build the capacity of the members' network. Representatives undertake:

- To attend regular group meetings
- To represent the CHARTS network throughout the region
- To maintain contact with members and groups in the areas represented to disseminate information
- To provide direct hands-on support to projects, as member champions based locally.

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.

“

I am particularly pleased that we were able to support artists and local communities to participate in the national Covid memorial programme 'Remembering Together' during 2024. Acting as the enabler, CHARTS was able to listen to and engage with some of our most underrepresented communities and members, to co-produce and support the creation of bespoke local installations and projects across the region with unquestionable legacy. The programme, on both islands and mainland, clearly demonstrated the importance of the outdoor environment in supporting residents of Argyll during and after a very difficult period in all of our lives.

- Eleanor McKinnon, Steering Group, Chair

Delivery themes

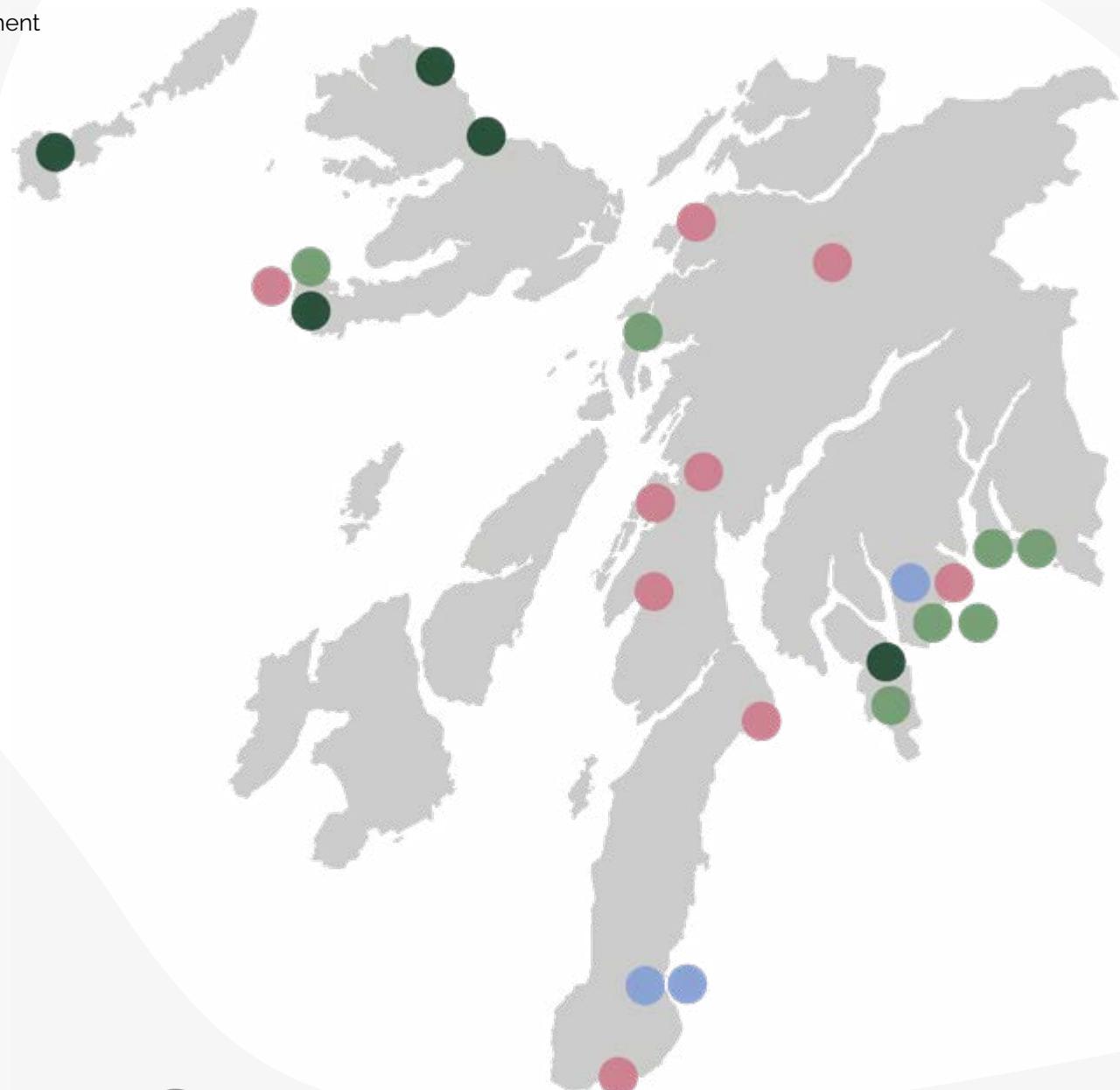
This review highlights case studies from key delivery stands in the CHARTS Business Plan made possible by external investment and support from Argyll and Bute Council:

- A. Visual Artist and Craft Maker Awards
- B. Collections Support
- C. Gaelic Development
- D. Coastal Cultures

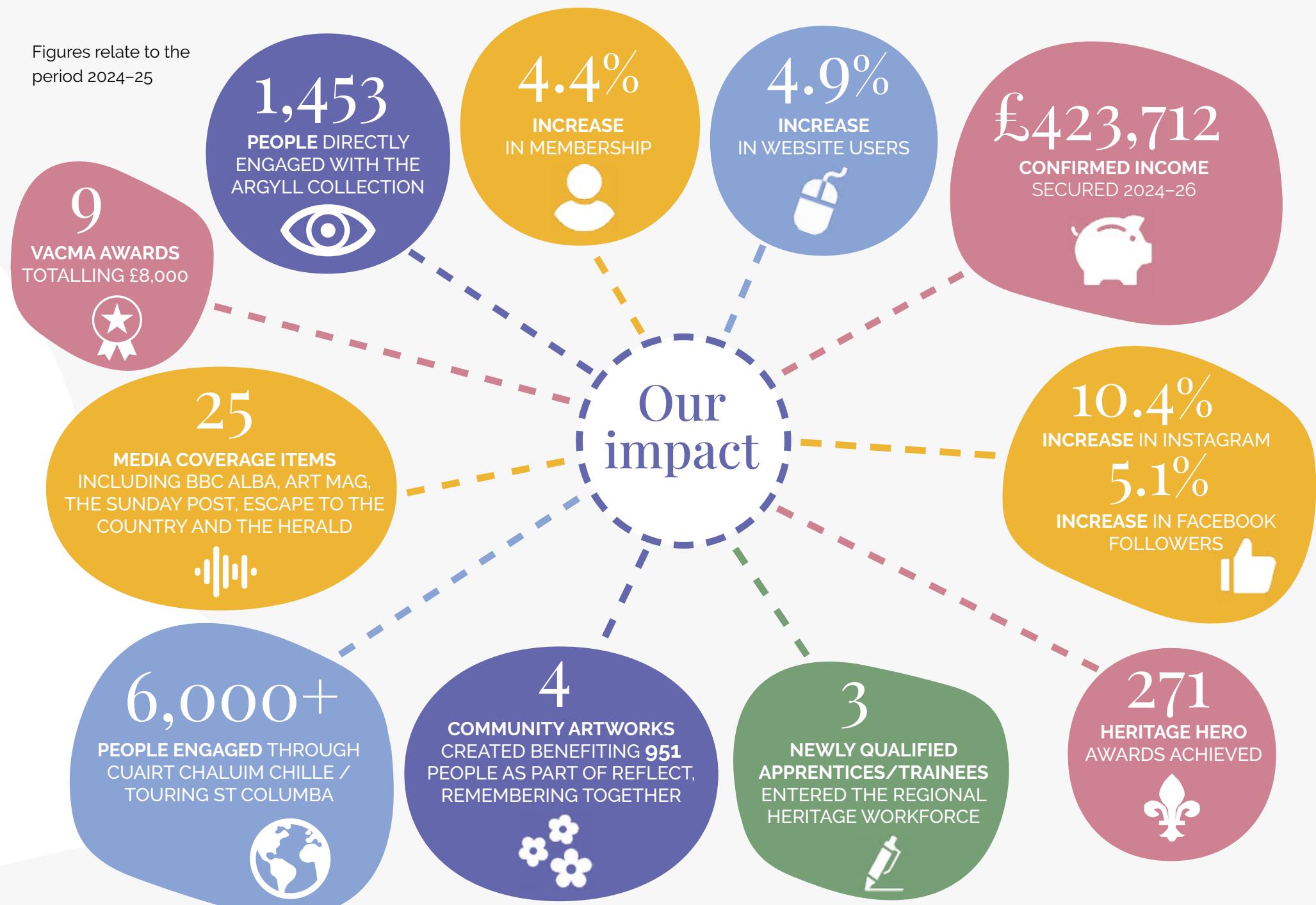
“

Supporting young people and members under 30 years of age remains critical in Argyll and Bute. We aim to increase our reputation in training, offering routes into employability across the sector, and are currently developing national and international relationships with key partners and potential investors to achieve this. Underpinning projects highlighted in this review, we continue to actively build, from international, Growing Global, project outcomes (2023-24), and aim to strategically support member engagement, including through Ràmh, our ongoing island support programme.

- Kathleen O'Neill, Executive Director, CHARTS



Figures relate to the period 2024-25



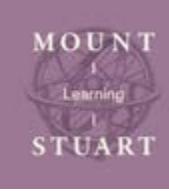
Key funders



Art Fund_



Partners & collaborators

 <p>WILD ABOUT ARGYLL</p>	 <p>ABMF ARGYLL & BUTE MUSEUMS & HERITAGE FORUM</p>	 <p>sccan</p>	 <p>Músaem Chontae Dhún na nGall Donegal County Museum</p>	 <p>Rewards Training Recruitment Consultancy</p>
 <p>SEACHDAIN NA GÀIDHLIG WORLD GAELIC WEEK</p>	 <p>THE ISLANDS SCOTLAND ACT 2018 Achd nan Eilean (Alba)</p>	 <p>ART UK Connecting you to art</p>	 <p>Skills Development Scotland</p>	 <p>SQA</p>
 <p>XPONORTH</p>	 <p>University of Glasgow</p>	 <p>University of Glasgow</p>	 <p>The Gannochy Trust</p>	 <p>SCHOOL OF INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART</p>
 <p>Argyll Estates Archives</p>	 <p>Dunollie Museum • Castle • Grounds</p>	 <p>150 Dunoon Burgh Hall</p>	 <p>MOUNT Learning STUART</p>	 <p>SCREEN ARGYLL</p>
 <p>CAMPBELTOWN MUSEUM</p>	 <p>KILMARNOK MUSEUM</p>	 <p>SMARTIFY</p>	 <p>Scottish Book Trust inspiring readers and writers</p>	 <p>Engage Bringing people and art together</p>

A. Visual Artists and Craft Maker Awards

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 includes through the annual Artists and Craft Makers Awards (VACMA) scheme, managed by CHARTS on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council and Creative Scotland, and applications also serve to inform us of ongoing need. All applications, for this awards scheme and other opportunities, serve to inform us of ongoing need.

Awards have enabled recipients to make successful Creative Scotland applications, adopt sustainable practices, explore routes to market, exhibit solo, and pursue international residencies. CHARTS has seen an ever-increasing number of applications, reflecting regional demand. In 2025, nine awards were granted to artists and craft makers for personal and professional development.

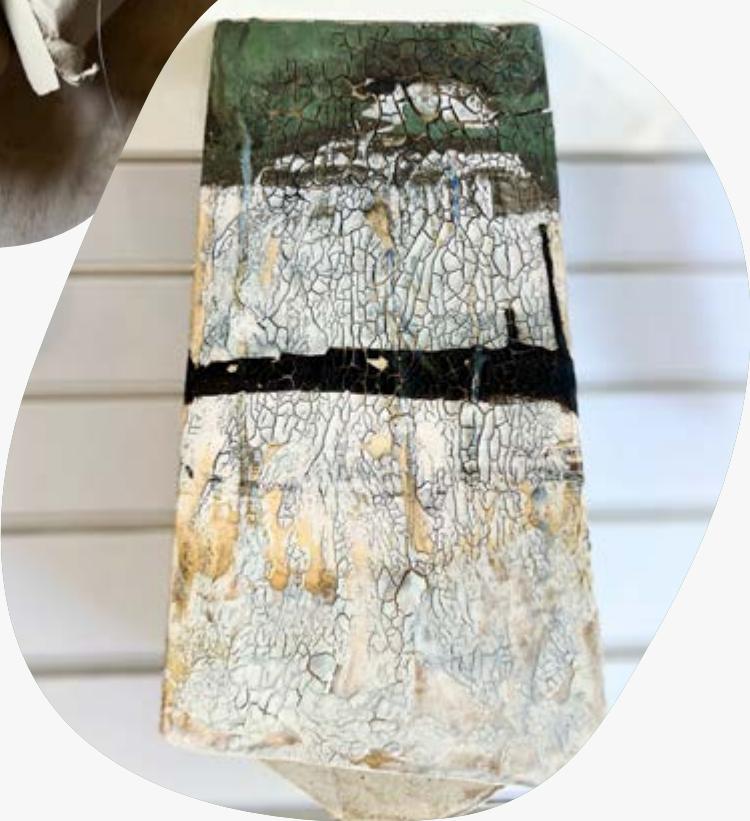
Overarching interest evidenced through applications included climate change and the sustainability of material and particles, as well as natural dyes and pigments, particularly highlighted through awardees Mhairi Killin, a recipient in 2024 and 2025 and James Coogan, receiving an Early-Career Bursary in 2025.

1. Mhairi Killin
2. James Coogan





VACMA, artist James Coogan's work in progress. © James Coogan



On location, Svalbard October 2024, Canon Scoopic 16mm camera. © Mhairi Killin

CASE STUDY: Mhairi Killin

Mhairi Killin was supported to undertake a period of professional development mentored by Alex Hetherington in 16mm filmmaking to combine her existing practice of drawing and sculpture with film and to examine new ways of seeing, expanding visual vocabulary, to impact her overall work and thinking as an artist. Mhairi's skills in 16mm filming, expanded through VACMA awards to date, have included outcomes such as a residency at Artica Svalbard, building on Mhairi's 2024 award and 16mm film work and research into Svalbard & The Hebrides – Island Archipelagoes in the Anthropocene.

“

The timing of this support from VACMA was extremely important to the development of my thinking in advance of a residency with Artica Svalbard. Being able to approach this residency with a set of new skills is now contributing to the diversity of artistic outcomes of my time in Svalbard.

- Mhairi Killin, Awardee

1



Image (top): Sgeir nam Mart/Skerry of the Cows to be Killed for Winter', 16mm Experimental Film (2024). © Mhairi Killin

Image (left): VACMA, 'From the Mouths of the Cave', 16mm Experimental Film (2024). © Mhairi Killin

Image (above, right): VACMA, St Martin's Cave, Isle of Iona, 16mm Experimental Film (2024). © Mhairi Killin

CASE STUDY: James Coogan

James will use his 2025 award to support a new body of Arctic-inspired work, developing his experience of marine science and oceanography at the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS), where he researched tidewater glaciers in the Arctic. James will undertake material research, using clay and glaze to explore a tactile reflection on climate grief and ecological fragility. As an early career recipient, James aims to refine sculptural techniques, experiment with glazes that examine environmental instability and document his work for digital storytelling. The award will assist the sustainable growth of James's practice, enabling development in climate-focused art.

2



“

I've been extremely fortunate to realise a dream and explore the Arctic, but the experience was also heartbreakingly sad and I've come out the other side with a passionate, artistic response. The melting is stark and visible year-on-year. So, making my art is a form of therapy and activism, and I'm very thankful for the support.

- James Coogan, Awardee



Images (above and right): Pinch Pots (2025).

© James Coogan

B. Collections Support

CHARTS provides essential support to council-owned art collections. This includes working in partnership with Argyll and Bute education and economic development services to review the Argyll Collection and supporting the management of Campbeltown Museum Collection in partnership with liveArgyll. This area of culturally strategic support includes building profile, audiences, education and community engagement as a critical component to the care and protection of such significant regional heritage assets.

Supported by Argyll and Bute Council and liveArgyll, during 2024, this work was additionally supported by the Kilpatrick Fraser Charitable Trust with the provision of two iPads to assist pupil and community engagement. The Art Fund made possible the review of the Argyll Collection to ascertain its cultural significance, underpinning the assessment of its educational, economic and social value.

1. Case study: The Argyll Collection (region-wide and international)
2. Case study: The Superpower of Looking at the Argyll Collection (region-wide)
3. Case Study: Live Literature Workshops, Campbeltown Museum
4. Case Study: Dunoon Grammar School Study Trip
5. Case Study: Sundial in the Linda McCartney Memorial Garden



Art Fund_



Collections Support staff 2024–25 included:

Ros McKenna ARGYLL COLLECTION, RECONNECTED PROJECT MANAGER

Kirsty McNab ARGYLL COLLECTION, RESEARCH MANAGER

Sam Kilday ARGYLL COLLECTION, TECHNICIAN

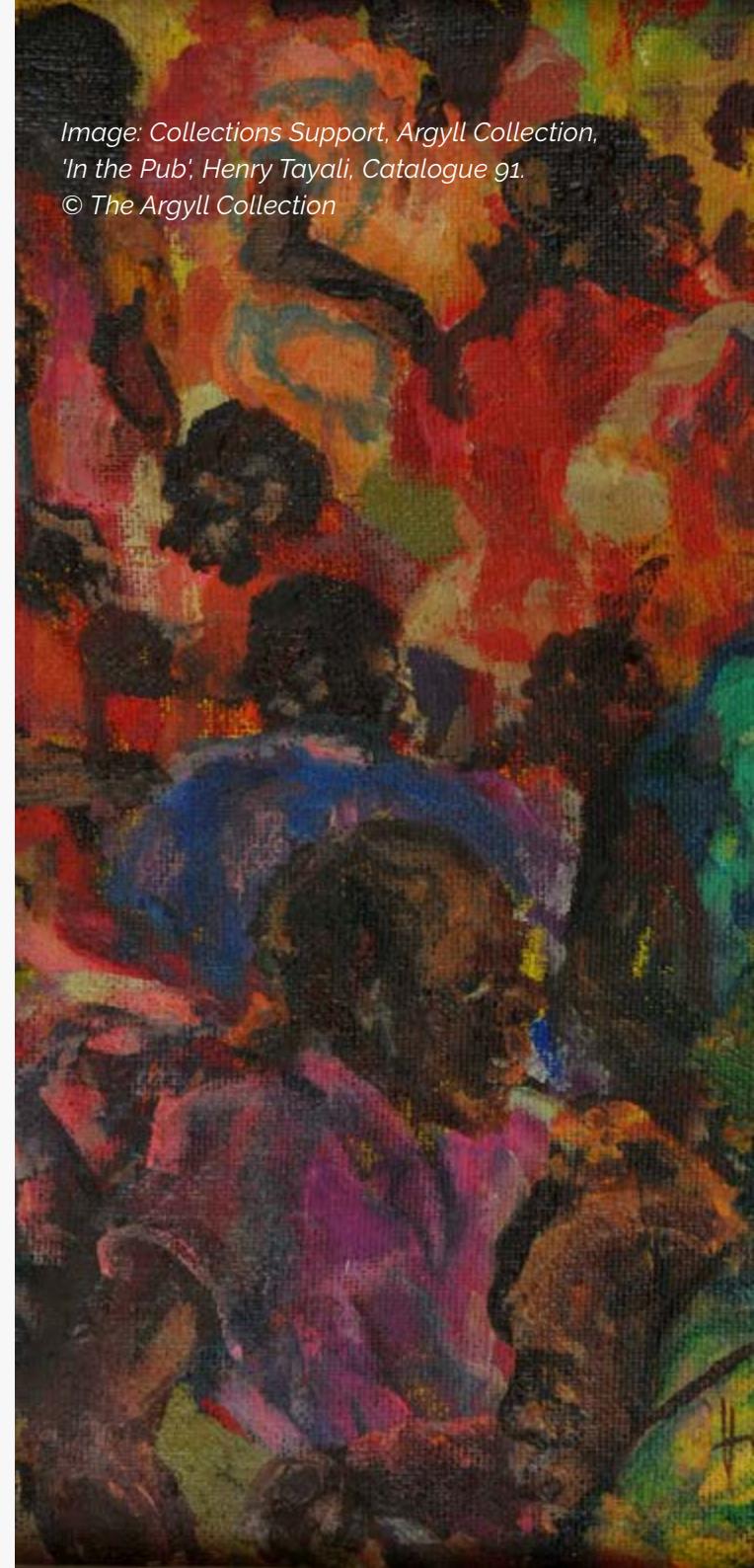
Khara MacPhail CAMPBELTOWN MUSEUM, HERITAGE LEARNING AND ACCESS COORDINATOR

Muriel MacKaveney CAMPBELTOWN MUSEUM, PROJECT FACILITATOR



*The Argyll Collection Reconnected
Project Manager, Rosalyn McKenna,
discusses 'Kelvinhaugh Street' by James
Morrison with pupils from Glenbarr
Primary School. © CHARTS / Sam Kilday*

*Image: Collections Support, Argyll Collection,
'In the Pub', Henry Tayali, Catalogue 91.
© The Argyll Collection*



CASE STUDY: The Argyll Collection, Reconnected

Region-wide and international

The Argyll Collection, Reconnected programme focuses forward-thinking concept which resulted in a unique collection of artworks owned by Argyll and Bute Council. Conceived over 60 years ago, the Argyll Collection "museum without walls" was designed to make contemporary art accessible to rural schools and communities.

Collected between 1960 and 1990, the Argyll Collection comprises of 179 works – paintings, ceramics, textiles, and sculpture acquired by author and political activist Naomi Mitchison and Argyll County Council Arts Advisor Jim Tyre, with the authorisation of the former Argyll District Council.

They sourced works from artists in Scotland as well as South and East Africa, to encourage the use of art as a learning tool. Purchases were authorised up to a value of £100 per item, and the collection is now believed to include one of the most significant groups of African art in Europe, cited by Dr Kate Cowcher at the University of St Andrews, and features works by some of Scotland's most prominent visual artists.

Principally supported by the Art Fund, CHARTS and Argyll and Bute Council have worked together to revitalise how the Argyll Collection is curated, understood, and shared. The central aim is to ensure the collection continues to benefit young people, situated in the context of modern-day Argyll. Our work will cement and grow these original aims while acknowledging changes since the 1960s in education and work opportunities in the region.

Acknowledging that the collection – mostly located in schools and libraries to date – is, in fact, a 'museum worthy' collection, CHARTS applies the same standards to its review, care and protection as those expected within a museum context. The programme is strategically led by the Executive Director and delivered directly by the Project Manager, both of whom have extensive museum experience. Further, a partnership agreement with the council to protect and use this asset to meet its original purpose underlines its cultural value to



1

*Image (above): Argyll Collection Reconnected Technician, Sam Kilday, deinstalls Argyll Collection works at Dunoon Grammar School.
© CHARTS / Rosalyn McKenna*

the region and emphasises the importance of implementing national care and loan standards. The scope of our work is far-ranging, with the intention of CHARTS, the council and academic partners to develop co-working into the future.

“

Argyll school children have very little chance of visiting art galleries. Even if there is an art exhibition in the few centres of population, only those who live close are likely to see it.

- Naomi Mitchison, 'An Artistic Endeavour in Argyll',
The Times Educational Supplement, 23 September 1966

Collections management 2024/25 included:

- A full inventory of the collection
- Condition checks and a priority conservation plan developed and is now being implemented.
- New displays with locations were recorded, and the catalogue was updated.
- Artworks identified as at-risk or not on display were transferred to a fit-for-purpose storage facility.
- Environmentally sustainable storage and packing materials were sourced and implemented.
- An updated professional valuation of the collection was conducted in collaboration with the auctioneers Lyon & Turnbull.

Engagement included:

- New displays were curated and installed at Dunoon Grammar School Art & Design department and Lochgilphead Campus Social Science and Languages departments.
- New interpretive labels were developed and displayed alongside artworks.
- Collaborative relationships were developed with Tarbert Academy and Campbeltown Grammar School, leading to improved displays and plans for future projects highlighting best practice.
- A Visual Literacy session was delivered in partnership with Community Learning to the Phoenix Group, Isle of Bute.
- The Superpower of Looking learning model was delivered across schools (see case study on page 20).
- Dunoon Grammar School study visit delivered at the University of St Andrews (see case study on page 24).

Research

Research Manager Kirsty MacNab was granted access to the private archive of co-founder Jim Tyre, courtesy of his children, Colin Tyre and Gillian Brown. These materials, correspondence, invoices, receipts, photographs, and records, offer a detailed and personal view of how the collection was developed and are immensely important to ongoing work. Kirsty delivered a hybrid presentation, 'The Argyll Collection, Reconnected', on 19th September 2024 at Dunoon Burgh Hall to share research findings with the public.

A notable discovery included a letter identifying the correct title of Henry Tayali's painting, previously listed as untitled. This artwork, entitled 'In the Pub', captures a vibrant social scene.

The revival and future care of the Argyll Collection is contingent upon an appraisal of its history, the provenance of its artworks and disseminating that information to the wider community. To assist with this, CHARTS has continued to develop and nurture highly effective and collaborative partnerships with academics. This has included work 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.

“

As the lead contact for the Argyll Collection in Argyll and Bute, I am both delighted and grateful for the excellent work and continued commitment of CHARTS staff. We enjoy a very strong working relationship, which has led to a heightened awareness of the collection both within Education Services and beyond.

The Argyll Collection is a valuable asset to the council – not only in terms of its financial worth, but also in its cultural and educational significance. It has substantial potential to enrich the learning experiences of children and young people across our education authority.

To maximise this potential, CHARTS staff have taken essential steps to create an up-to-date inventory of the artworks, assess the condition of each piece for conservation purposes, ensure the safe storage of the collection, and keep Education Services informed of its status.

CHARTS staff have undertaken an exceptional volume of work in pursuit of these aims. For the first time in many years, the collection is fully itemised, safe, and secure. A conservation priority list has been developed, and we continue to work in close partnership to manage the collection. We have also recently completed a new valuation of the collection, ensuring appropriate insurance cover is maintained.

– Catriona Garvin, Education Officer, Curriculum (2–18) with Gaelic, Music & Culture Lead Contact for the Argyll Collection, Argyll and Bute



*'The Superpower of Looking' with Art UK visual literacy project, run by Reconnected Project Manager Ros McKenna at Glenbarr Primary School.
© CHARTS / Sam Kilday*

“

Over the past year, I have been focusing on pulling together the research I've amassed regarding Naomi Mitchison and the African artworks in the Argyll Collection. This is research that I began in 2018, as a new lecturer at St Andrews, and has resulted, so far, in the reattribution of ten out of twelve artworks, an exhibition, learning resources, a podcast and initial conservation assessments. In 2024, I was awarded an RSE Personal Research Fellowship to write up my findings as a book/catalogue of this important cluster. In support of my final research for this project, in autumn 2024, I spent a week looking through archives in Lochgilphead and Campbeltown, and in spring 2025 undertook a two-week trip to Uganda and Tanzania. In Kampala, I tracked down the undergraduate dissertations of three artists in the Argyll Collection: Catherine Nankya Katonoko Gombe, Louis Mbughuni and Augustine Alirwana Mugalula Mukiibi. I also met with Mugalula-Mukiibi's son, Enoch, and visited his family home; the late artist, it turns out, was a fan of Scotland! In Tanzania, I studied works by Sam Ntiro in the National Museum, visited the Tinga-Tinga workshops, from where Mitchison bought two works in the early 1970s, and gave a lecture about Ntiro's painting, 'Cutting Wood', an artwork in the Argyll Collection at the University of Dar es Salaam. I also had the opportunity, in February 2025, to deliver a public lecture on the topic to an audience of over 200 people at the National Galleries of Scotland in Edinburgh.

I'm grateful to CHARTS for continuing to support this research through both access to the artworks themselves and through the sharing of digitised family archives, which have been invaluable. I look forward to our continued partnership. Once my book is drafted, I hope to dedicate further time to supporting the growth of links and exchanges between colleagues in Kampala, Dar es Salaam and Argyll, as a renewal of Mitchison's founding vision. The stories of the African artworks in the Argyll Collection, and how they came to Scotland, make them one of the most interesting clusters of African modernism in the UK.

- Dr Kate Cowcher, St Andrews University



Image (above): Dr Kate Cowcher with curator Gadi Ramadhani, Dr Domenicus Makukula and two of Sam Ntiro's sons in Tanzania. (Feb 2025). © Dr Kate Cowcher

CASE STUDY: The Superpower of Looking at the Argyll Collection

Region-wide

Children in Argyll and Bute continue to have limited access to galleries and visual arts, which is precisely why the Argyll Collection was created. Work with the council's education services has been extensive and in the autumn of 2024, Project Manager Rosalyn McKenna toured a selection of Argyll Collection artworks to six primary schools in Kintyre working in partnership with Art UK using its 'Superpower of Looking' model for classroom teaching. Spending a full day in each school, Rosalyn delivered visual literacy sessions, encouraging children to explore the paintings, prints and drawings. Visual literacy is an essential skill, enabling children to decode and make sense of images and develop critical thinking. By exploring artworks through a process of 'slow looking' coupled with guided, open-ended questions, a safe space can be created for children to be curious, creative and empathetic. Visual literacy skills are of huge benefit across the curriculum as well as in day-to-day life.

Argyll Collection artworks were explored with pupils using an exciting variety of tasks designed to develop the children's ability to really 'see', growing their ability to observe critically, analyse, question, interpret and empathise.

A range of specially designed activities actively engaged the children, including a mixture of looking, talking, moving, making and creating.

A range of follow-up lesson plans were also provided for after the visit, including a digital resource commissioned by Art UK and made by artist Lou Fraser. In this resource, Lou demonstrated how to work with sketchbooks and explore materials and techniques. Art UK also provided a pack of materials including a sketchbook, for every pupil participating in the project.

In December 2024, the Superpower of Looking at the Argyll Collection was presented by the Project Manager as a case study of the project to Education Scotland's National Creative Education Network, as well as a short visual literacy Continuing Professional Development session designed for schoolteachers from Argyll and Bute. Long Professional Learning colleagues. Creativity Teacher leads from across Scotland, Creative Scotland staff (Jonathan McLean) and Education Scotland staff (Julia Fenby, Neil Millar and Maxine Jolly) attended.



2

*Image (above): Dalintober pupil showing his creative response to a James Morrison painting (2024).
© CHARTS / Rosalyn McKenna*

These sessions helped to raise the profile of the collection and its unique potential to enhance the educational experience of school children in rural settings. The positive response to the project has highlighted the ongoing need for enabling access to the Argyll Collection and facilitating visual literacy learning within primary school settings, helping to shape future plans.

“

The session was so interesting and the pupils enjoyed it, gaining a deeper insight into looking for details and clues in an artwork. I also felt they really benefited from seeing such a lovely range of real life artworks as this is something which is so difficult for our pupils to access.

I would love for them to have the opportunity to engage in this again.

- Participant (teacher)



*Image (top): Glenbarr pupil showing her creative response to a Joan Eardley painting (2024).
© CHARTS / Rosalyn McKenna*

Image (left): Children and their teacher from Glenbarr Primary look at and discuss 'Kelvinhaugh Street' by James Morrison. © CHARTS / Sam Kilday

“

Kathleen and her team continue to provide invaluable support and expertise to the operations at Campbeltown Museum, as the partnership between CHARTS and liveArgyll goes from strength to strength. From high-level work with Kathleen around museum accreditation, to a wide and varied programme of events run by a great staff team, CHARTS has demonstrably implemented change and increased the museum's footfall and accessibility through additional opening hours. The current working partnership has provided a number of positive outcomes for the museum and the South Kintyre community and I very much look forward to exciting times ahead for Campbeltown Museum.

- Robert Judge, liveArgyll, Area Operations Manager, Mid Argyll, Kintyre & Islay

Image (below): A selection of documents and photos from the Tyre family archive relating to the Argyll Collection (Aug 2024). © CHARTS / Kirsty McNabb

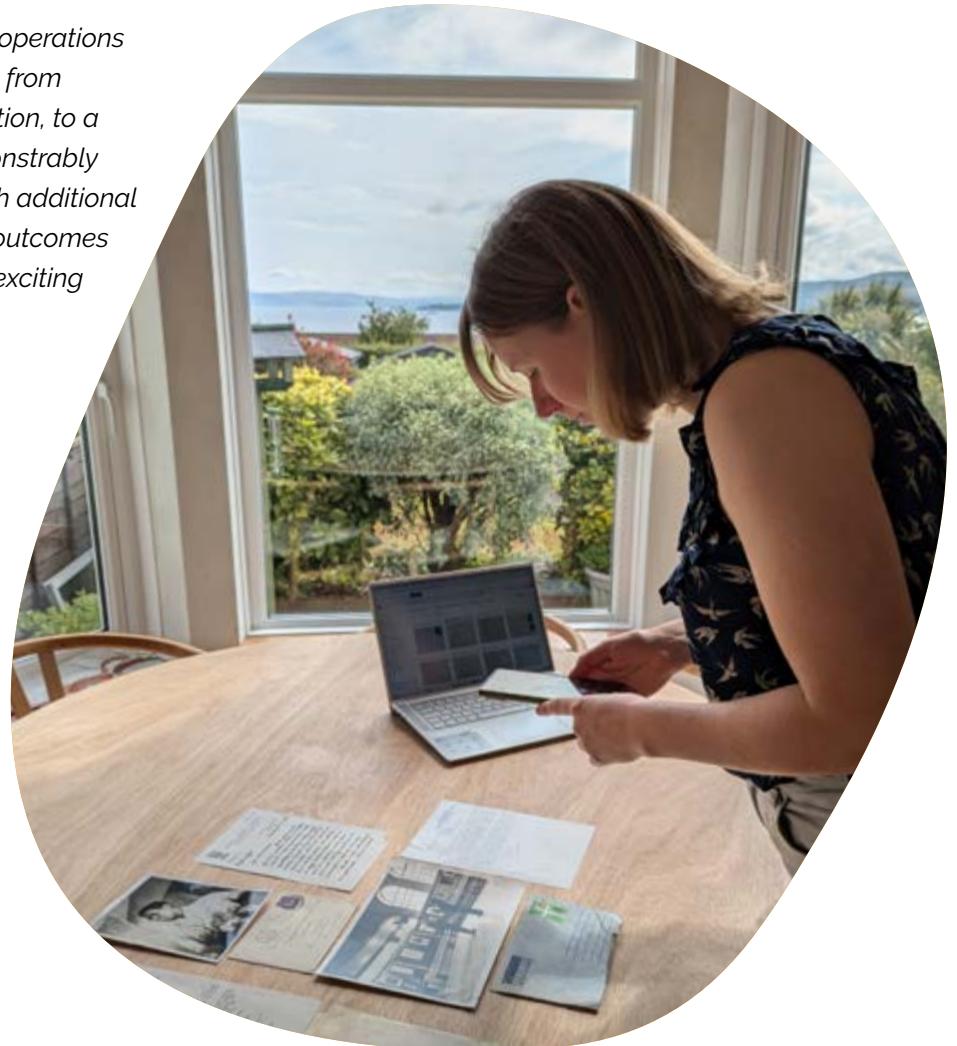


Image (above): Argyll Collection Reconnected Research Manager photographing documents and photos from the Tyre family archive relating to the Argyll Collection (Aug 2024). © CHARTS / Kirsty McNabb

CASE STUDY: Live Literature Workshops

Campbeltown Museum, led by Khara MacPhail

The CHARTS and liveArgyll partnership supports all aspects of Campbeltown Museum's development. Priority delivery areas include school and community engagement, which entails creating events and activities tailored to the needs and demands of the local people.

Each year, staff member Khara MacPhail designs and creates activities with authors with the support of the Scottish Book Trust's Live Literature programme, helping to reimagine museum spaces as explorative places for learning where everyone is welcome. This works well in Campbeltown due to the limited museum opening hours and collaboration with authors, as well as the fact that it provides interactive workshops and builds on our other museum engagement with schools. During 2024, a creative learning programme was developed at Campbeltown Museum that involved workshop hosts John Chalmers and Sandra Marrs, who make up the award-winning author and illustrator duo Metaphrog.

Children from Castlehill Primary School and Dalintober Primary School created their own comic book page, with the subject matter being an object or theme found in the museum collection. This stimulated creative-based learning and active awareness to increase

understanding of local history. The project also helped to strengthen pupils' understanding of the past while drawing comparisons between modern life and the past.

Prior to engaging with the authors, pupils were first invited to explore the museum collection to get inspiration to make their own comics. These were informal sessions with museum staff where questions and discussions with school children flowed naturally, highlighting the curiosity around all aspects of the collection, from minor details in paintings to larger displays of natural history and archaeology. All 87 pupils were given a Heritage Hero award to celebrate their achievement – these and other awards will continue to be included in future projects.

Feedback and visitor book comments are used to both inform and create future educational and community events and aim to ensure the experience and outcomes of engaging with the museum collection continually improve. Demand for school engagement has increased and museum staff delivery to date has strengthened relationships with the teaching staff.

3



Image: A class from a local primary school looks for comic book inspiration within the displayed objects at Campbeltown Museum (2024). © Campbeltown Museum

“

We very much enjoyed the session and could see from their smiles that the young people had fun too.

- Metaphrog

“

Such a great idea to get the children involved in their history in an engaging way. Enjoyed by all and looking forward to more projects in the future.

- Castlehill Primary School Teacher.

CASE STUDY: Dunoon Grammar School Study Trip

University of St Andrews

In June 2024, Ros McKenna organised a study trip for 20 Dunoon Grammar School senior pupils to the School of Art History, University of St Andrews. Art history is rarely taught in secondary schools so an introduction to the subject by Dr Lenia Kouneni, Deputy Head of School and Director of Teaching, proved invaluable.

Following this, Dr Kate Cowcher delivered a visual analysis activity using a selection of African works from the Argyll Collection which she has been researching for several years. This was an opportunity for students to study these outstanding paintings and prints first-hand. For all the young people, this was a completely new experience. Using magnifying glasses and torches, they were encouraged to look closely and decipher visual clues to learn more about the artworks, artists and their culture.

The activity stimulated discussion and encouraged multiple interpretations of the artworks. Despite being unfamiliar with art history as a discipline, as pupils studying art and design, the young people had a strong understanding of the formal elements of each piece and how artists employ techniques to convey messages.



Image (right): Dunoon Grammar School pupil examines African artwork from the Argyll Collection using torch and magnifying glass.
© CHARTS / Rosalyn McKenna

The number of young people from rural communities, in particular Argyll and Bute, accessing the University of St Andrews is low, and this visit was designed to not only strengthen CHARTS' partnership with the university but also to introduce young people from the region to what St Andrews has to offer, aiming to demystify art history and open new pathways and opportunities. The young people were also provided with information and practical advice on applying to universities. The study trip was a huge success with every young person providing positive feedback.

“

I really enjoyed today! I particularly enjoyed analysing the artworks, metaphors and meanings within the pieces and learning about the artist's culture.

- Participant

Image (top, right): Dr Kate Cowcher discusses African artworks from the Argyll Collection with Dunoon Grammar School pupils.

© CHARTS / Rosalyn McKenna

Image (lower, right): Dunoon Grammar School pupils examine African artworks from the Argyll Collection using torches and magnifying glasses. © CHARTS / Rosalyn McKenna

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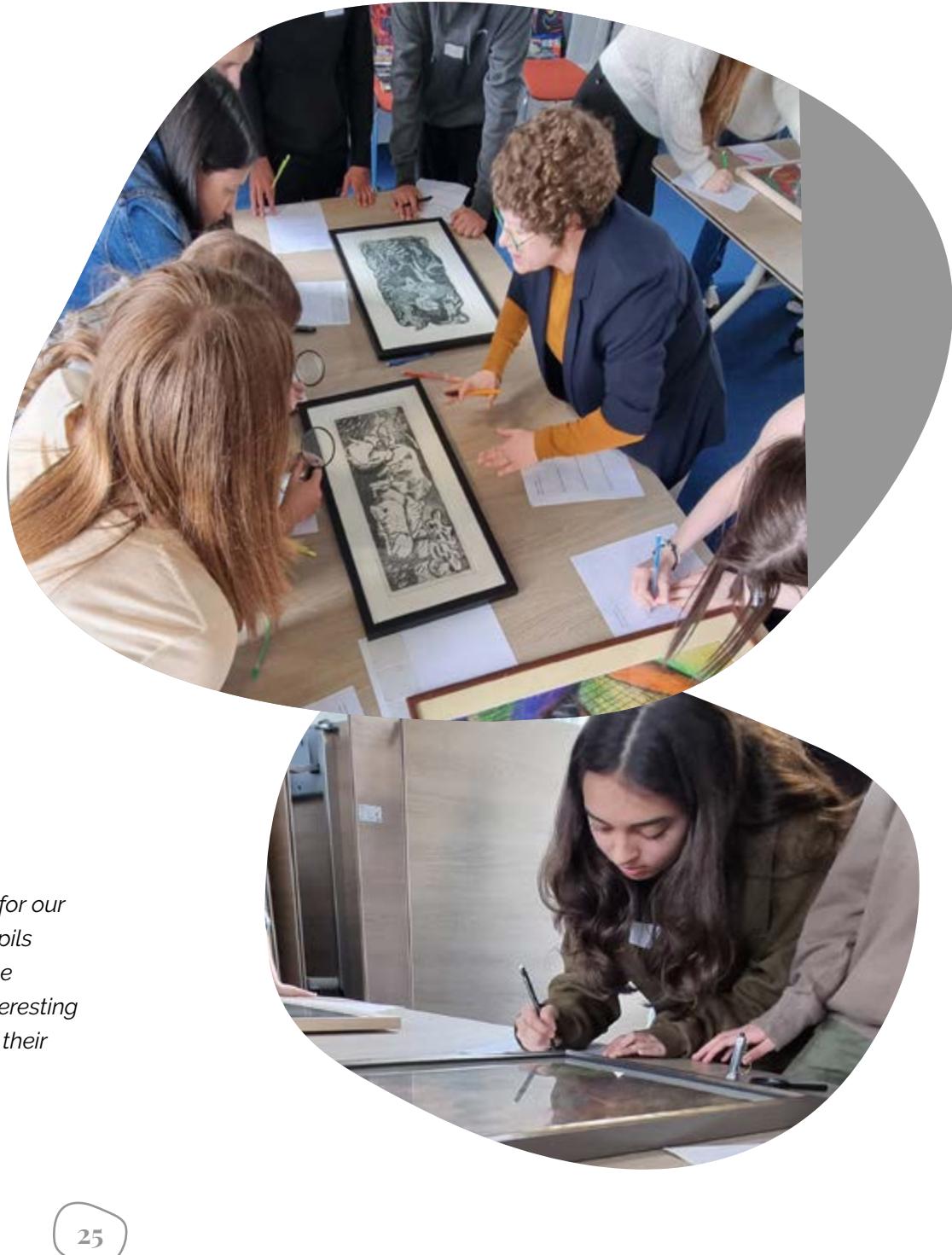
Today showed me that it's important to think more in-depth even when it seems simple... I didn't know much at all about art history before I came here. I learned that art history is about finding out things about the art. I love it.

- Participant

“

I would like to say a massive thank you for providing the opportunity for our young people to visit the University of St Andrews. Feedback from pupils was extremely positive and I believe they gained a great deal from the experience. Kate is so enthusiastic and knowledgeable, keeping it interesting and engaging. I also think the use of the simple tools really captured their imagination.

- Leeanne Deeney, Art & Design Teacher
Dunoon Grammar School



CASE STUDY: Sundial in the Linda McCartney Memorial Garden

Campbeltown Museum

For REFLECT: Remembering Together, lead artist Kirsten Millar and project facilitator Muriel MacKaveney worked with local artists and the community to co-create a new sculptural sundial for the Linda McCartney Memorial Garden at Campbeltown Museum, in collaboration with the McCartney Memorial Trust. This project explored how the pandemic was experienced by two intergenerational-specific community groups.

The team engaged with Kintyre Care Home and Woodlands Residential from conception to completion, working closely with the Linda McCartney Memorial Garden Trust, located at Campbeltown Museum. The result was a sculptural sundial inspired by memories and conversations about the challenges of the pandemic, what connects us to each other and to Campbeltown, how we perceive time, and what links our past to our future.

The garden already houses two historic sundials; this new piece sought to "bring sunlight back" into the space, symbolising hope and renewal after a dark period. More than 300 people, ranging in age from 5 to over 100 years old, participated in the project.

Over the course of 25 weeks, the programme involved residents, staff, and families who had experienced loss, isolation, and high infection rates during the pandemic. Across spring and summer, REFLECT encouraged intergenerational dialogue, knowledge exchange, and imagination within the community.

Local artists Lori Silvan and Gaia Silvan led creative environmental workshops with three local primary schools and homeschooled children. From these workshops, Kirsten Millar identified key themes that were developed into ideas for the sundial's design. These ideas were shared with Kintyre Care Centre and Woodlands Residential, who helped co-design the final installation. They contributed materials and themes they wished to see reflected in the work, such as Kintyre's farming and fishing heritage.

Quotes from the workshops, responding to the question "What keeps us going?", capturing the intangible feelings and reflections that emerged. This work complemented other museum-based participation activities that engaged local people who would otherwise have had limited access to the museum.



Image (above): Remembering Together, REFLECT, Campbeltown, Kintyre Care Home sundial workshops, with Kirsten Millar (2024).

© CHARTS / Muriel MacKaveney

Project facilitator Muriel MacKaveney and museum staff member Khara MacPhail supported engagement throughout, while sundial expert Alastair Hunter provided invaluable guidance and delivered sundial talks to the community online and in person.

The project concluded with a community open day celebrating achievement, nature, and renewal. The event featured children's artwork from the workshops, a photography exhibition of pandemic memories, and live music and theatre performances themed around local land and sea heritage.

REFLECT brought people together through creativity and contemplation, leaving behind a sculptural legacy and a photographic and video archive held by the University of Stirling Archive, alongside documentation of Argyll and Bute's three other REFLECT projects.

This work is also captured in a film created by Paul Campbell for 'Our Community Reflects Day', 17th August 2024.

“

The complex experiences of such a strange and difficult time were approached and handled with kindness and sensitivity, with an eye to including those who had a particularly difficult year (or two?). The resulting artwork is a distillation of all that and a fitting legacy for the community of Campbeltown and Kintyre.

- Antonia Baird, Community Development Officer,
Argyll and Bute Council



*Image (above & below right): Remembering Together, REFLECT, Campbeltown, (2024), Sundial.
© Paul Campbell*

“

I've been inspired by the variety of ways in which everyone involved has been able to transform and reflect on emotions and experiences from such a challenging time. It's been an honour to share in our reflecting, learning and creating, and it has been an exciting way to hold space for each other.

- Gaia Silvan, Reflect workshop facilitator

C. Gaelic Development

CHARTS has employed a Gaelic Culture Officer since September 2022, funded by Bord na Gàidhlig, to manage all aspects of Gaelic development, including engaging with our members, community and strategic development partners. This work has included developing a Gaelic Strategy 2024–25 building on work since 2020, aiming to continually embed Gaelic language and culture throughout our delivery plans.

This further builds on our Gaelic Policy commitments to increase the use and the learning of Gaelic and promote a positive image of the language. Work to date has raised awareness through Gaelic media and in Gaelic arts, museums, heritage and placemaking contexts, and the Cuairt Chaluim Chille // Touring St Columba exhibition in collaboration with Donegal Museum, highlighted in last year's review, culminated with a total of over 6,000 recorded visitors. Our work has also included the use of bilingual and trilingual services to support the ability of Scottish and Irish Gaelic speakers to engage with our workshops and events through the medium of their preferred language.

1. Case Study: Seanchas Sgibnis / Skipness Lore
2. Case Study: AITHNE / Mapping Gaelic Participatory Visual Artists in Scotland



Engage

Bringing people
and art together



Staff

Àdhamh Ó Broin
Muriel MacKaveney
OIFIGEAR CULTAIR GHÀIDHLIG, GAELOC CULTURE OFFICER
PROJECT FACILITATOR (EVENTS)

“

CHARTS has established itself as an integral part of the cultural landscape of our region, and it is vital to that landscape that CHARTS employs a Gaelic Culture Officer in order to embed Gaelic in the work of the organisation and revitalise local Gaelic language and culture. I welcome the organisation's development of a Gaelic Strategy in 2025 and its continued alignment with the National Gaelic Language Plan.

Àdhamh Ó Broin, in his role as Oifigear Cultair Ghàidhlig / Gaelic Culture Officer, continues to lead the way in developing and delivering projects and events which strengthen Gaelic as a living language and culture within our region. Initiatives such as the Seanchas Sgibnis event – which highlighted the critical need for us to engage with local Gaelic dialects and indigenous wisdom across our region in order to expand our environmental knowledge and work towards a better relationship with our land, sea and coasts – continue to provide a blueprint for other organisations working in culture, heritage and the arts in our region and beyond.

- [Dr Alasdair Whyte](http://www.alasdaircwhyte.com), Lecturer in Celtic Onomastics (Celtic and Gaelic)
www.alasdaircwhyte.com



Dùthchas Beò, Kilmory Oib (May 2025).
© Zoë Prosser / School of Innovation & Technology

CASE STUDY: Seanchas Sgibnis / Skipness Lore

Skipness, Kintyre

In February 2025, CHARTS took part in World Gaelic Week for the fourth year running, bringing focus to local Gaelic culture and language in another community setting with Seanchas Sgibnis. The event was developed through discussions between Gaelic Culture Officer Àdhamh Ó Broin, Kintyre Rainforest Alliance and project staff and delivered with support from Campbeltown Museums staff team; Heritage Learning and Access Assistant Khara MacPhail and Muriel MacKaveney, Project Facilitator. Member support was also provided by local Gaelic learner and swimming coach Dan Coyle. The project considered the many areas within Argyll which have undergone depopulation and in which there remains little awareness of the once-rich Gaelic heritage.

Seanchas Sgibnis / Skipness Lore offered an opportunity to bring a community together, placing local Gaelic language and lore back at the heart of Skipness and providing an opportunity for people of all ages and physical capacities to engage in the event through a series of different activities, each with an environmental focus.

Like so many others, the Skipness community is made up of disparate elements, some native

to Argyll and others having come in from other places. Seanchas Sgibnis presented Gaelic language and culture as accessible and relevant to all and critical to climate conversations. This included leading an exploration of Skipness Woods for local school children in the morning and adults later in the day through reference to Gaelic vocabulary and lore around plant medicine. The event then moved indoors to Skipness Village Hall, where Àdhamh Ó Broin delivered a talk on Gaelic demographic changes in 1881-1921 through examination of census returns. The event continued with a discussion of Gaelic weather lore collected by linguist Nils M. Holmer during the late 1930s and how this indigenous insight could be relevant in today's world. Seanchas Sgibnis concluded with a talk by Kintyre Rainforest Alliance on the importance of some of the area's natural habitats, alerting those in attendance to otherwise unknown flora in their local area.

The event's success drew on the ease with which the very youngest, very oldest and everyone in between was brought together around the same interests, taking inspiration from the Gaelic outlook and mindset to think about how best to preserve the natural environment. Very positive discussions ensued



Image: Seanchas Sgibnis, Clachan Primary School (Feb,2025). © CHARTS

concerning ongoing care and protection of both heritage and the natural environment, including around the roles and responsibilities of residents in a healthy community.

Both images, right: Cuairt i Chaluim Chille // St Columba Travels to Iona, June 2024, Iona Village Hall, Ciorstaidh Beaton. © CHARTS

“

Thank you CHARTS for such a fabulous event today; I loved every minute of it. The people caring enough to attend, the wonderful connections to Gaelic heritage and culture, the link to communities past, present and future. And for including us and helping to anchor us within the community engaging others in the gorgeousness of the rainforests.

- Sarah Moorcroft,
Kintyre Rainforest Alliance

This project amplified the values of intergenerational workshops and events. Across the centuries, the most powerful conduit for the learning and sharing of Gaelic language and culture has come through intergenerational contact. CHARTS is committed to continued intergenerational engagement to actively learn from elders.



“

Dair a bha sinne òg, bha a h-uile duine 'dèanadh tuilidh am miosg a chéile. Chan eil an uiread dheth sin ann a-nis seach mar a b' àbhaist dha bhith, daoine 'cur seachad ùine le seanairean 's seannmhairean. 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 ás bho chéile. Tha iad uile cho trang a' tighinn bò.

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're all too busy surviving.

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

CASE STUDY: AITHNE / Mapping Gaelic Participatory Visual Artists in Scotland

Building on previous national engagement supporting Gaelic artists during the pandemic, CHARTS undertook a commission from Engage Scotland in November 2024 to deliver a national pilot project to map and profile the work of Gaelic Participatory Visual Artists across Scotland.

This targeted artists delivering their work within the context of Gaelic language and culture with the public and included developing a survey that gathered insights into the creative practices of visual artists. A total of 37 responses were received from artists across Scotland, contributing to a resource that now supports the visibility of Gaelic in the arts and is a starting point for future development.

The completed survey is now available online through Engage Scotland and the CHARTS website, providing a valuable platform for artists and the wider public to explore the work and contributions of visual artists working with Gaelic.

The research gathered aims to assist in informing future initiatives to strengthen creative networks across Scotland further, increase Gaelic's visibility in the visual arts, and foster collaboration between artists and organisations with shared interests. Information provided can help further explore the themes and challenges facing artists working in the Gaelic context, as well as identify opportunities for new projects and partnerships to support the continued evolution of Gaelic culture within the arts.

With strict pilot timescale limitations, this project benefited from conversations with participants who identified gaps in the survey generated by the engagement methods, which have helped inform ongoing development. This scoping exercise was a valuable learning opportunity on how to engage and attract new visual artist engagement and build opportunities for Gaelic-speaking artists.

The project included planning for digital events in July 2025.



2

*Image: Photograph submitted by Judith Parrott of Flora MacDonald, developed for the Grounded exhibition.
© Judith Parrott*

“

It was fantastic and heartening to see responses to the survey from across the Gaelic World, from Gaels themselves to Gael adjacent; the breadth of artistic talent working directly through the medium of the language or referencing Gaelic language and culture in their work.

- Ádhamh Ó Broin, Gaelic Culture Officer



Images, clockwise from left: CHARTS Duais Dileab Chaluim Chille / The Colmcille Legacy Award © Gina MacDonald; Screen Argyll Animation Academy © Alasdair Satchel; and Seanchas Seanchas Sgibnis, Clachan Primary School, (Feb 2025) © CHARTS.

D. Coastal Cultures

Coastal Cultures is a key delivery strand to expand with new commissions for artists and cultural practitioners over coming years. It aims to develop creative placemaking and community engagement programming to reinvigorate local economies and support community health, wellbeing and wealth-building strategies.

1. Case Study: THIS IS ENOUGH – GÀRRADH GU LEÒR
2. Case Study: Ràmh Beacons



As a theme developed with members through Placemaking webinars during the pandemic, this is now part of our [Business Plan 2025–28](#), which will celebrate and nurture the distinctive and interconnected cultural identities of the region's coastal communities, where 96.5% of the population live within 10km from the coast. It aims to support people and organisations working in the culture, heritage, and arts sector in responding to the challenges Argyll and Bute's coastal communities are particularly impacted by – the effects of climate change, rural inequalities and deprivation, and digital exclusion. From 2023, supported by Creative Scotland and Argyll and Bute Council via the Scottish Government National Island Plan,

Images: Ràmh Beacons, Grafting Connections event celebrating heritage and sustainability, Mull, (Jan 2025). The group outside (right, © Rutger Emmelkamp) and in Knockvologan Greenhouse (far right, © Nina Pope).

CHARTS engaged 453 individuals and 15 organisations in Coastal Cultures themed delivery based on islands, led by three artist-in-residence commissions, including the Scottish Centre for Geopoetics, Feàrna, and Screen Argyll.

In August 2024, in support of island residents, delivery on Mull supported artists SOMEWHERE, working on 'This is Enough' in the Aros Walled Garden. This was made possible by the CHARTS project Reflect, Remembering Together, funded by the Scottish Government, and delivered in partnership with Argyll and Bute Council and Greenspace Scotland.



CASE STUDY: THIS IS ENOUGH – GÀRRADH GU LEÒR

Isle of Mull

Project outline by SOMEWHERE, artists Nina Pope and Karen Guthrie

This project was built through an approach to the CHARTS Remembering Together Covid-19 memorial commission, developed to reflect on experiences of lockdown.

Working under the title 'THIS IS ENOUGH' this two-stranded project celebrated the many small acts of kindness and support we saw unfold around us during that time, and built 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. We began the project by writing almost a 'manifesto' laying out an approach and used this as an invitation to collaborators to work with us using materials to hand within the Aros Walled Garden.

The slow approach necessitated by working with this particular site meant that we were also able to host a parallel event on 17th August, for the 'Our Community Reflects Day' coordinated by CHARTS, as a separate part of the project, which allowed for wider participation. Ninety people had taken part directly in our project by the end of August 2024, excluding digital audience participation and views of the film produced for CHARTS by Paul Campbell.

Events and workshops included:

THIS IS ENOUGH – GÀRRADH GU LEÒR included two-day hands-on workshops by invitation in the Aros Walled Garden, with individuals of diverse skills and experience. The group mapped and documented the space in detail and made gentle land interventions to enhance and understand the site. Future plans were discussed, including how a sustainable model for supporting the space could develop and how safe public access could be provided.

Project partners included Aros Historic Walled Garden Group and Mull Museum Archives.

Remembering Together ... How It Feels To Be Apart centred around a drop-in opportunity to make a hand-tied posy of locally-grown flowers for anyone significant to participants during the Covid-19 pandemic. Local growers contributed flowers, and optional photographic portraits were produced. Refreshments were on offer and many participants stayed for the afternoon sharing recollections from lockdown. This was followed by a screening of 'Islands in Film' lockdown documentary by Struath Films, Alasdair & Georgia Satchel, featuring footage shot by 75 local residents and featuring the Mull Gaelic Choir, who joined to sing their section live from the audience.



Project support also included Tobermory Horticultural Society and Tobermory Church.

Image: Remembering Together, REFLECT. How It Feels To Be Apart, Mull (Aug 2024). © Carolyne Mazur

“

In the end I took my posy to Caroline in the Co-op. I have this picture of her, day in and day out managing the queue when the 'traffic light' system was down. She was delighted. Thank you for a lovely afternoon. – M, participant

Legacy

The core project group continues to meet and has committed to meeting seasonally in the garden, with the view to further developing and supporting community engagement. Work to date has included:

- Ongoing development with the Aros Park Historic Walled Garden Group, Forestry & Land Scotland and other local networks
- Researching the Gaelic language of natural history for potential work with Mull Gaelic Partnership
- Photographing 20th century archival collection of pressed flowers from Tobermory
- Collecting local oral histories and reminiscences of Aros (to be deposited with the archive)
- Researching land and ecology interpretation strategies and tools including biofluorescence, lichenology, bush crafts, permaculture
- Study of forest gardening practices in Scotland and creating Food Forest Guilds
- Dry stone walling course participation
- Food production

Artists & contractors

THIS IS ENOUGH workshop participants:

Miek Zwamborn (Artist)
Rutger Emmelkamp (Artist/Designer)
Lucille Bonne (Artist/Writer)
Alice Stillman (Artist)
Jenny Wyness (Architect)
Andy Robinson (Woodland Crofter Trees & Shrubs)
Karen Elwis (Crofter/Linguist/Teacher)
Alister Elwis (Crofter/Drystone walling expert)
Carolyne Mazur (Photographer/Farmer)
Tim Olden (sound)
Paul Campbell (filming)

Consulted on the Aros project:

Eilidh Wilshire (Local resident whose father was the gardener at Aros)
Olive Brown (Archives)
Stuart Gibson (Fungi/Lichen expert)
Ruth Fleming (local foodbank)
Janet MacDonald (Gaelic)
Rhona Dougall (Gaelic)
Alasdair Satchel (Gaelic & Filmmaker)
Georgia Satchel (Archivist)
Mike Swift (Horticulture)
Richard & Anne West (Aros Historic Walled Garden Group)



*Image: Remembering Together, REFLECT. How It Feels To Be Apart, Mull (Aug 2024).
© Tim Olden, Somewhere*

“

A special afternoon involving people coming together to remember and to make posies of thanks to give to those who supported and helped others during Covid – and posies of remembrance for those who died. Buckets full of beautiful flowers from local gardens and hedgerows. A poignant and important project.
- CM, participant

Artist's statement – the starting place

Working with a garden, even a 'wild' one, takes time. It's often said when you move to a new garden you should do nothing for a year – except watch. Watch what comes up and when, look for what you like, what sits well together and what takes over. Look at where the sun shines, where frost gathers, gauge how much rain falls and feel how the wind blows.

Such advice might equally apply to artists creating new work – in our case, a memorial for a given place: for how long do you need to look and listen to see beyond the surface, to feel what is really special about a place?

"Unprecedented".

We heard this phrase so often during the pandemic, and we all knew that, for once, what we were enduring really did fit this description. And yet what modest trials did our days often demand of us in this crisis? 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.

We looked in detail again at our immediate surroundings, at the lockdown landscapes with which we believed we were familiar. A continual news stream detailing the daily Covid-19 mortality rates made a jarring soundtrack to

the tender care of germinating seedlings. Both seemed strange and sad, close by and far, far away. In 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. In Aros Walled Garden, community plans to transform the space went on hold and in the lull, nature wasted no time. Trees blossomed largely unobserved, bracken shoots unfurled, brambles gained ground, lichens and mushrooms flourished. Occasionally a stone crumbled away from the wall that once surrounded the space.

That wall is like a frame, an enclosure which once enabled a productive garden for a private house. But now could this be the frame in which to view a new public garden? Maybe this frame gives us 'enough' to see the space already (or still) as a garden?

What would this garden look like if we held back from bringing in plants, seeds, a digger, top soil? What if instead we look again at what it already contains?

What if we remember together, honour perhaps, the garden that once was here, how past communities have grown together and recent communities of plants and people who have occupied the space. How can we care for

the precious and particular biodiversity it now contains?

Looking closely we can already see a garden full of lichens, a collection of mosses, green mounds of comfrey pushing through the brown bracken that match stumps of box hedging that once delineated beds. Two elderly fruit trees send blossom spinning across the garden in the breeze, catching in the blackcurrant bushes that have long since formed their own fragrant copse.

What can we make with what we have here? What can we build with the stones from a fallen wall? What can we compost down, graft on, layer up or grow together in this already abundant garden in a forest?

When we use the wall to frame what we already have, we start to see Aros as a forest of plenty, somewhere to forage for food, to build things, play or botanise. We can gently intervene perhaps, co-design guilds of plants and trees that can flourish together and spaces where we can gather amongst them. We can trust what grows well here and what we have.

We can work from the starting point that THIS IS ENOUGH.

“

It might be interesting to do something similar in a different space – as a model for me it worked – to come and join something where I'm not just being told 'right you need to trim all this/cut that down etc. that's how I'm used to working, with pressure to get stuff done. But... to have this open-ended thing where we can see what happens together is new for me – I'm all for it.

- Andy Robinson, Native Tree Croft



Image, left: Remembering Together, REFLECT, Aros Walled Garden, Mull.

Image, above: Remembering Together, REFLECT, How It Feels To Be Apart, Mull (Aug 2024). Both images © Alice Stillman

CASE STUDY: Ràmh Beacons

Bute, Mull and Tiree

As a result of members' meetings supporting island development through the CHARTS Ràmh programme, Beacons events took place on 18th- 19th January 2025. This event invited active island membership groups who had met in person regularly during 2024 and delivered projects, to deliver community activities to highlight their Place and to help identify how CHARTS can best support membership and island development into the future

CHARTS members on Bute, Mull and Tiree developed complementary projects best suited to area needs:

Bute and Mull

Lead members – Miek Zwamborn, Rutger Emmelkamp, Nina Pope, Sam Kilday and Karen Guthrie

On 18th and 19th January 2025, Fermenting Futures and Grafting Connections brought together artists and community members across Mull to explore food preservation and sustainable horticulture. The event unfolded in two parts: a fermentation workshop and a collaborative artist study day, engaging 15 people.

The Community Fermenting Workshop and Lunch took place at the Harvest Archway

in KNOCKvologan Studio, led by the artists sharing recipes and tasters made on Mull and special 'guest ferments' bought by Karen from her long-term 'House of Ferment' project. Participants from the Ross of Mull and beyond gathered to exchange fermentation techniques, recipes, and cultural traditions. The workshop fostered intergenerational learning and revealed fermentation as a tool for storytelling, sustainability, and social bonding. Attendees experimented with European and Asian fermentation styles, taking home starter cultures to continue their practice.

The Artist Gathering and Study Day on 19th January connected creative practitioners through shared exploration of historical and contemporary horticultural practices and built on connections formed through the work at Aros Walled Garden for 'Remembering Together'. A tour of local walled gardens on Erraid and at Pennygheal and Carsaig focused on fruit tree grafting and garden restoration. Discussions illuminated the potential for using walled gardens to support community food systems and biodiversity conservation. The event fostered deep connections, inspiring new collaborations such as a ferment club and collective efforts to revive underused garden spaces for the benefit of the wider community.

2



Image: Ràmh Beacons, Fermenting Tales, Mull, (Jan 2025). © Rutger Emmelkamp

On Bute, members learned from Katharine Barrington of Atlas Arts, Skye, about using guillotine, creaser and perfect binding machines with their 'Making Publics Press'. Themes discussed included the current cultural scene on Bute and collage was used to assist with the collection of development ideas from which the group aims to publish a Cultural Manifesto in due course. Fourteen people attended the event on Bute, including Morven Gregor from Mount Stuart Trust Contemporary Visual Arts Programme and Samuel Lindsay as a representative of Bute Community Forest.

Tiree

Lead members – Brodie Sim and Jack Lockhart

The Tiree Makery worked with islanders of all ages, from 1 to 77 years of age, to create lanterns inspired by the traditional houses of Tiree. These lanterns, made from recycled plastic bottles and decorated with vibrant tissue paper, were displayed as a temporary exhibition throughout January. The community played a key role by collecting bottles and containers, which were transformed into lanterns by participants from Cùram Craft Club, Tiree Primary School, families and members of the wider community who joined in the open workshop. Together, they created a colourful window display that brightened the dark winter days.

The workshops offered a wonderful opportunity for everyone to come together and make something meaningful that reflected Tiree's unique heritage. The process sparked discussions on the themes of the workshop and beyond. While working with the school's Gaelic primary class, young pupils even taught lead artists the Gaelic words for "door" and "window", as well as the names for the different coloured roofs that are part of the island's distinctive architecture.

The result was a collection of beautiful lanterns inspired by Tiree's houses, which brightened up the Makery's window throughout the dark

days of January. As the lanterns illuminated Crossapol in the early mornings and evenings, participants and their families were able to see their creations on display, strengthening their connection to the Makery.

Tiree Makery is a new venture. They explain, "We want to root our program in Tiree and build on the rich cultural landscape of the island. We want to generate collective resources and hope to strengthen our community through creative practice. At Tiree Makery we believe art is for everyone and want to develop a creative space that makes art and making accessible for all of Tiree's community and contributes to the thriving arts ecology of the wider Argyll, Highlands and Islands."

Although the project was small, it was felt to be a fantastic opportunity to engage with a broad cross-section of people and demonstrate what can be accomplished. One unexpected aspect of the project was its intergenerational impact. Elderly members of the community created lanterns, and then some of their grandchildren – primary school children – joined in the process as well. This led to conversations at home about their lanterns and discussions about the project across generations.



Image: Ràmh Beacons, Tiree, (Jan 2025).

© Jack Lockhart

On Tiree, the Makery hopes that this project has laid the foundation for future events. Seeing so many community members come together to create an exhibition that lit up their windows during the darkest winter months has been felt to set the tone for how meaningful creative work can be created moving forward, deepening artists' connections with the community and the local environment. The project also presented the first opportunity for Tiree artists to work directly with the school as Tiree Makery, collaborating with both teachers and students.

Our future

2024 focused on strategic development, looking towards improved prospects for sustainability across the sector. Our new Business Plan aligns with the needs that have been evidenced since 2019, and we recognise that there are areas to strengthen, which now seem possible thanks to a recent grant award from Creative Scotland and other major funders that consider CHARTS well-placed for multi-year support. Our work depends on securing external investment to help others and – being aware of the ever-challenging economic climate and multifaceted issues faced by our members – we aim to work more closely with individuals, organisations and collectives, to offer bespoke area support to the best of our ability. This will include strengthening connectivity with members in-person and digitally and through the implementation of Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion and Environment Actions Plans. The Board is also committed to supporting Fair Work in all areas of development.

It is heartening to be firming foundations for the future, and ongoing plans include increasing commissioning opportunities, and developing collections care and commissions for artists working with council-owned collections. With ongoing Highland and Islands Enterprise support, we will continue to grow the reputation of the Argyll Collection by enhancing the content of the Smartify global museums' app.



Image, left: Ràmh Beacons, Fermenting Tales, Mull, (Jan 2025).
© Rutger Emmelkamp

Image, right: Heritage Heroes, Woodlands residential, (April 2025).
© CHARTS

In 2026, we look forward to taking part in RSA 200: *Celebrating Together*, which marks the Royal Scottish Academy's bicentenary. Amongst all, we aim to expand arts and heritage member support across artforms and meet a wider range of heritage interests.

We are always keen to hear from members and people interested in supporting cultural development in Argyll and Bute. To ask about support, projects and plans, please do not hesitate to get in touch – community needs inform CHARTS' path and your input is vital to our success.

- Kathleen O'Neill, Executive Director

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The Ràmh Beacons commission was one of my highlights from last year. It brought island based communities together. It supported artists to make inter-island connections, enabling them to connect and develop projects in their individual settings, identifying the needs for their own practise and bringing light to the darkest days of winter.

- Jen Skinner, Screen Argyll, Steering Group lead, Islands

For more information about CHARTS projects and members visit:

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

Image (right): Mzee Mayunga, Simon G Mpata. Catalogue 74.

© The Argyll Collection

Image (below): Cuairt Chaluim, St Columba Travels to Iona (June 2024).

© CHARTS / Mhairi Killin

Image (below right): Remembering Together, REFLECT, Campbeltown, school workshops facilitated by Lori and Gaia Silvan (Aug 2024).

© CHARTS / Muriel MacKaveney



Stay in touch

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Become a member of CHARTS for free: www.chartsargyllandisles.org/register



Cover image: Ràmh Beacons, Tiree (January 2025). © Jack Lockhart

Review designed by CHARTS members, Abigail Daly (ruskinlane.co.uk) and Hannah Clinch (tacit-tacit.co.uk).
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