

THE BOARD OF THE IONA COMMUNITY

May 2016

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the report and thank the Board.
2. Commend the work of the Iona Community, its ecumenical vision and commitment to justice and peace, and the contribution it makes to the life of the Church nationally and internationally.
3. Commend the proposed refurbishment plans for Iona Abbey and encourage church members and congregations to support this initiative.
4. Commend the proposed development of the International Volunteer and sabbatical programmes and encourage consultation with Ministries Council.
5. In anticipation of the move to a new Glasgow Centre in 2016, welcome the development of the Iona Community's work with young people, proposed partnerships with local congregations and its wider programme on social justice, environmental issues and resourcing Christians.

REPORT

1. Introduction

1.1 2016 Report to the Church of Scotland Board of the Iona Community

At Pentecost, 1965, a dedication service was held to celebrate the completion of the rebuilding of Iona Abbey. George MacLeod's 'experiment' in ministerial training and communal living has welcomed tens of thousands of pilgrims from around the world.

That experiment continues in the present as each week resident staff and guests form an authentic, relevant and living community. They share in the tasks of hospitality, participating in reflection, worship and programmes related to peace, justice, healing and reconciliation in the world. It is these shared experiences which are life-changing.

The Iona Community also runs its International Volunteer Programme from Iona. Over many years, thousands of

people from across the globe have had the opportunity to gather; to work together; to explore personal faith; create life-long friendships; develop a commitment to the service of others and a passion for peace; and learn vital, transferrable life skills.

Fifty years on from the completion of the rebuilding, the physical environment of the Abbey now needs to be redeveloped to meet the expectations and challenges of the present day.

The Iona Community's ongoing evaluation process, broad consultation, guest feedback and staff experiences have identified key issues surrounding the facilities currently on offer. Significant needs which have been building over a number of years have been highlighted which, if not addressed imminently, will place the long term sustainability of the Centre at significant risk. These include:

- New programming to address the changing complexity of needs in the world for peace and social justice that cannot be accommodated by current configuration of available space.
- Accessibility for all as a fundamental part of hospitality.
- Limitations of existing electrical, plumbing and heating systems to provide a safe, clean and warm environment.
- Limited guest season.
- Dated facilities which do not meet guests' needs or expectations.

If action is not taken now to improve the fabric of the buildings and the associated utilities, there is the prospect of the accommodation being unfit for purpose in 5 – 7 years' time which would in turn place the Iona Community's presence on Iona in serious jeopardy.

Currently the Iona Community's presence at the Island centres contributes significantly to the fragile island economy. The provision of residential and non-residential employment opportunities is considerable with the current annual salary budget in the region of £166,000. The costs of the volunteer programme at the Abbey and the MacLeod Centre are £37,000 annually. Participating volunteers on the island spend approximately £22,000 locally. Furthermore, the Iona Community pays local companies on Iona, Mull and in the Oban area approximately £130,000 for their services.

In addition to the £350,000 outlined above, guests regularly take boat trips to Staffa which they pay for directly. They also contribute significantly to local shops and businesses during their stay. Failure to carry out the urgent works required will undoubtedly place the Iona Community's presence on Iona in serious doubt. The impact of this on the island community of Iona would be catastrophic.

1.2 The Project

With the above in mind, the Iona Community

commissioned Tíree-based Roots Design Workshop (architects with extensive experience of island based projects) to draw up proposals to re-configure the existing accommodation in the Abbey, taking into account the considerable challenges of working in a listed building of significant historical interest, on a remote island.

As a result of the work undertaken by Roots, the Iona Community is acutely aware of the need to undertake critical work to the infrastructure. Sixty years of piecemeal maintenance and sporadic upgrading of internal services, electrical, water, sewerage and heating, have led to constant and uneconomic patchwork repairs. The following capital works are required to address this problem together with the challenges of accessibility, flexibility and sustainability.

The key areas of work focus on:

- Ensuring access for people of all physical abilities
- The re-configuration of the existing staircase and installation of a lift to the accommodation area.
- Re-configuration of the refectory area (not currently accessible to those with any mobility issues) to create an inviting communal space.
- Re-configuration of the dormitory-style bedrooms to maximise space and create rooms designed for single or twin occupancy.
- Improved lighting in all corridors to ease access and create a safer environment.
- The upgrading and improving of all utilities.
- The replacement of all existing services, including the installation of a sustainable hot water and central heating system, with the necessary insulation.

Roots Design Workshop submitted proposals to the local authority for planning permission in November. Once permission is granted the project will be ready to proceed as soon as funding is in place.

A small but steady flow of donations meant that £275,000 had been received by the end of 2015. Major funding

applications will be made in the coming months with the target of raising a minimum of £1.5m by June 2016.

On the conclusion of the initial stage of the Appeal, the public phase will be launched in May 2016. The Iona Community is grateful for the support of the Iona Cathedral Trust and Historic Environment Scotland in this ambitious venture and will seek as wide support as possible from people with an interest in our work and in the island of Iona.

Meanwhile, the Community's work continues in the everyday witness of members and associate members, and through the dedication of our staff in Glasgow and on Mull and Iona.

2. Rosie Magee, Centres Director, Iona Abbey and MacLeod Centre reports

2015 was a busy one at the Iona Centres. As well as the weekly welcoming of guests to the Centres we took time to take stock of our core mission. During spring 2015 resident staff created an affirmation which speaks to why they choose to work at the Centres and what they see happening there. In part it reads, "We seek to live out the wonder and risk, comfort and challenge of the Gospel in ways that are grace-filled and hospitable to all. We strive to nurture a holistic community with all who participate in the rhythm of our Common Life through sharing worship, work and recreation." Guests find it refreshing, and sometimes challenging, that, in contrast to prevailing norms, the Common Good is given such high value. Everyone connected with the Centres, staff and guests, is engaged in a common endeavour and the energy is intentionally outward-facing leading one guest to comment, "This is not a place of escape it is a place of engagement".

There is certainly no escaping the ongoing practical and logistical implications of running two centres of this size in the Inner Hebrides. In the height of the season guests, volunteer, and resident staff number 140 each week. The economic climate continues to be challenging and we

strive to practice good stewardship of our resources without compromising our vision. However, these very challenges also provide a springboard to creative and collaborative thinking. Both at the Centres and with the wider island community it is humbling to see how the synergy created by cooperation ensures that 'the whole is always greater than the sum of the parts.'

Each week, through guest conversations and evaluation we are reminded of the distinctive nature and value of the pattern of our Common Life together. Fresh eyes are invaluable. People from different walks of life, nationalities, faiths and circumstances encounter one another though being engaged in common tasks – preparing meals, washing-up, creating music for a service in the Abbey or breaking bread together. Relationships are forged, sometimes unlikely ones, which cross cultural barriers and recognise our common search for significance and meaning in a hurting world.

These new relationship and insights do not come to an end with the wave-off at the jetty. Staying at the Iona Centres is transitional, and often transformational, in nature for guests and staff alike whether staying for a week or a year. An evolving community means there are a lot of goodbyes. The end of the 2015 season saw the departure of numerous staff members who had come to the end of their contracts, of up to three years in duration. We remain thankful for their presence and the sharing of their time and talents as we also prepare to welcome new staff who will arrive in February for staff training. We had about 100 volunteer staff members this season from all over the world for periods ranging from 8 weeks - 6 months. During their time here they bring 'new insights and energy' to our community and it is a privilege to see many grow into new experiences, like leading the morning service of worship. They are now a dispersed community with links sustained and strengthened through social media and plans to return.

Throughout 2015 a considerable investment of time and thought went into envisioning the future shape of, and

activities at, the Abbey and MacLeod Centres. The upcoming renovation of the accommodation and hospitality areas at the Abbey, due to begin September 2017, are much needed. They will help make our centres more inclusive and accessible and thus the facilities will become much more consistent with the values of the Iona Community. The renovation of the Welcome Centre is due to begin late 2016 and will provide consolidation of staff offices there. Thus, in the year ahead while remaining very much in 'the present' through ongoing hospitality we will be also be engaged in further strategic planning for this exciting new chapter in the life of the Centres. With the support of those throughout the world who share the vision they can continue to be places to 'live out the wonder and risk, comfort and challenge of the Gospel' for generations to come.

3. Jon Lloyd, Camas Centre Coordinator, Camas Centre reports

3.1 Introduction

We had a great season in 2015 – some new and interesting groups, a fantastic resident and volunteer team and although the weather was fairly shocking for the first half of the season, September and October were amazing – beautiful light, clear skies, blue water and even the Aurora Borealis!

3.2 Groups

We had an almost full season of groups with many of our regular partners - SiMY from Townhead, St Pauls from Blackhill, The Barn from the Gorbals, Muirhouse Youth Development Group, Castlemilk and the GK experience - returning. Some of the groups were a little smaller than usual simply because the young people who normally come, are older and have summer jobs and other commitments. It is a credit to the Youth Groups how their constant and regular interaction changes their participant lives and then cascades into the community. Research into the value of various outdoor residential centres participated in by St Pauls, conducted by Neil Young, compared the cost of the residential experience with savings to society through reductions in crime,

unemployment, welfare payments, etc. Camas came out on top –for every £1 spent at Camas the payback was around £6.

We also welcomed some new groups. Faith in Throughcare is a project which supports ex-offenders and came up for a fantastic week. It was a privilege to hear the guests' stories and be able to offer supportive hospitality. It proved difficult for some of the guests returning to their lives after Camas but we are working with FTC to provide lead up and post residential programme to enhance the value of the experience. We also had a group combining the Grassmarket Project and Edinburgh University which was really fun and worthwhile. In the autumn the International Volunteer Service came and helped out on Garden week which also had some returning individuals from FTC and Grassmarket so that was good. We had a great week with the New Members – painting all the lower windows and doors and getting stuck in ditches

3.3 Finance

2015 was a reasonably sound financial year with income above £60K and costs similar to 2014. We had slightly less income from Priority Area groups and no overseas groups which normally boost income. However, the reinstatement of the New Members programme and significant use of the Access Fund to support individuals in need, to attend Work and Garden weeks, supplemented income.

3.4 Camas Staffing

The Iona Community was so well served by an experienced staff team combining expertise in outdoor activities with calm and caring people skills. We are immensely grateful to Jon Lloyd, Co-ordinator for the past four years, Avril Leonard, James and Abbi Mason. In 2016 we welcome a new Coordinator Irena Arambasic, and two new residents – Rhyddian Knight and Hannah Blyth .

The volunteers were fantastic – most from Scotland, some ex Community kids and from as far afield as Germany. They all got on really well, showed initiative, compassion and enthusiasm for Camas life.

4. Chris Long, Youth Resource Worker, reports

In the work we do with young people we are blessed with the opportunity of working with wonderful and inspiring communities as well as individuals. We also have the privilege of watching those with whom we work grow and change. As we journey with them we hope to explore where the Gospel connects with the lives they live, as they work, laugh, love and struggle. 2015 was no different from previous years and yet completely surprising.

Many of the young people we work with have grown passionate about being actively involved in creating a different world. The great issues of the year brought with it a passion to stand up and be counted and this manifested in us attending a selection of campaigns and demonstrations against nuclear weapons and racism and in support of refugees and asylum seekers and in tackling climate change. We spent time in conversation and exploration talking about what it is to live out our values and discussed how faith and politics mix and the difficulties that brings.

Our Youth Festivals over the summer offered a more concentrated opportunity to explore personal and global themes as well as time to live in community. For the first time our Junior Youth Festival was at the Cairngorm Christian Centre, Kincaig, which was, for some, their first time in the Highlands. We sang, we swam, we saw first-hand what it was to live with others in community and we are all better for it. The Youth Festival on Iona saw 15-18 yr olds from across the UK, Sweden and US shake the wee island up and fill it with energy, laughter and fun

All of our work, particularly the residential work is only possible because of the extremely capable volunteers that are there to care for the young people and plan amazing activities. It is a massive encouragement to us to see those we have worked with go on to make positive impacts in their local communities, as part of the work of the Iona Community or with other organisations. This year we also said a fond farewell to Ben Raw, one of the youth workers,

and we thank Ben for his creativity, passion and friendship. In November we welcomed Sarah Evans, formerly a member of staff on Iona, to the team, who has already got stuck in with the ongoing work.

We have continued our work with both Youth Art, and SiMY youth clubs this year, and have continued to build and maintain strong links with the young people who attend. Part of what we have done in the clubs has linked in to some of our other activities. We spent several weeks at both SiMY and Youth Art looking at the issue of Climate Change, and making protest signs in preparation for attending the climate change march. This provoked interesting discussions with the young people, and led to some of them attending the march with us. During this year, young people from both Youth Art and SiMY attended Youth Festival, Junior Youth Festival, and the parallel sessions we ran for the youth during the AGM. We look forward to the young people from both clubs continuing this level of engagement over the next year.

The year ended with a residential weekend at Glen Kin for some of the young people who had attended the Youth Festival in the summer. We took the Danish concept of 'Hygge' as the theme of the weekend, and used those ideas of warmth and cosiness to put together a fun and reflective programme for those who were there. There was time to reflect on the year that has passed, and time to look to the year ahead. Interesting discussions followed with this group of young people facing a year of significant transition. During the weekend, we also enjoyed some traditional Christmas festivities, including games, Christmas movies, and a full Christmas dinner!

We are glad to be able to do the work we do and look forward to the continued energy and insight the young people of the Iona Community bring to the whole movement and organisation.

5. Pat Bennett, Programme Development Worker, reports

The post of Programme Development Worker was created in 2015 to lead the development of Iona Community programmes, to deliver and manage programmes as agreed and to assist the Leader in development of the activities of the Membership and wider Movement of the Community. The main responsibilities are to:

- Develop a programme of activities in the proposed new Glasgow base and further afield.
- Support the programme offered in the islands centres
- Provide leadership for the development of programmes of learning in liaison with Members, other staff, and external agencies as appropriate
- Provide managerial and professional development support for Programme and Youth Resource Workers
- Work with the Wild Goose Resource Group to develop joint programme activities
- Work with administrative staff to arrange details for programmed activities
- Work with the Leader on specific pieces of work connected with Members and the wider Movement

Much of the work in 2015 has been preparing good foundations on which to build a strong mainland programme in the coming years, rather than setting up such programmes. The interconnections between the island programme work, the mainland programme work and the local activism in which Members and Associates are involved suggest many creative possibilities. A key aspect of the post will be to maximize the dynamic synergy between these so that we can use the public programme of the Community to more effectively fulfil its core aims. Alongside this foundational work, there has been active involvement in supporting existing programme events, both at the Island centres and in Glasgow.

2016 will see a move into a much more active phase of programme development working with family groups and associates groups to set up public events of various kinds around the country. The Programme Development Worker will also offer short programme packages to groups from Finland, Sweden and Germany who will be visiting Glasgow in 2016 and who wish to learn more about the life and work of the Community.

6. Sandra Kramer, Publishing Manager, Wild Goose Publications, reports

2015 has been another busy and productive year for Wild Goose Publications during which we have published eight new books and a map, more than thirty original downloads, and nearly forty downloads from previous books. This year our publications have been on subjects as varied as the importance of soil, the world's need for justice, all-age services incorporating stories of a certain frog named Fergie, water in a world where not enough people have access to it, using 'defiant grief', blessings for the non-human beings who give us companionship, the landscape of Iona, marriage, partnership and friendship, and numerous liturgies, prayers, poems, reflections, songs etc relating to the concerns of the Iona Community, the major Christian festivals of the year, and more.

6.1 New books

The Landscape Below, Bruce Ball; In the Mists on the Shoreline, Chris Polhill; Step Gently in the World, Sally Foster-Fulton; A Wee Worship Book – 5th incarnation, Wild Goose Resource Group; Iona: A Map (a new production of the original 1980s' map); A Wee Book of Iona Poems, Kenneth Steven; We Will Seek Peace and Pursue It, Neil Paynter; A Star-Filled Grace, Rachel Mann; In the Gift of This New Day, Neil Paynter.

6.2 E-books

E-books were produced of most of the above publications.

6.3 Original downloads

A wide variety of resources for Advent and Christmas, Lent, Easter and Pentecost.

6.4 Downloads from books included:

- From Moments of Our Nights and Days, including: Sentences and Blessings for Baptisms, Naming Ceremonies and Dedications; Liturgies of Baptism for Older Children and Adults; Liturgies for Celebrating Relationships, Marriages and Partnership; Celebrating Parenthood and Grandparenthood; Health and Caring; and Growing Older.
- From With an Open Eye: Stories for Holy Week (Cycle B), Tom Gordon.
- From The Cross in the Marketplace: All by Dave Broom: Palm Sunday; An Easter Pilgrimage; Maundy Thursday; Good Friday Dispersed Worship; Seven Meditations for Good Friday; Easter Sunday: A Dawn Service; Holy Saturday; Stations of the Cross.

We go into a new year with a lot of upcoming projects and we look forward once again to communicating the message of the Iona Community and exploring relevant issues through our publications.

7. Neil Paynter, Editor report on Coracle

The Iona Community's magazine, Coracle, is published quarterly, along with a regular e-bulletin, e-Coracle, providing up-to-date news and topical views. Both are circulated worldwide, keeping readers informed of the life and work of the Community, offering resources for reflection and worship and giving a platform for the sharing of provocative and diverse perspectives on global and local issues of social justice.

Coracle will undergo a makeover in 2016 being published in full colour for the first time

8. Wild Goose Resource Group

'NORMAL SERVICE... will not be (p) resumed' was the theme of Holy City's monthly workshop and liturgy event January-June, when we questioned some of the accepted norms of our land and of the world today. Three of the main issues explored were health, money and gender

equality, with expertise from Sir Harry Burns, Positive Money and Dr Lesley Orr respectively, informing and provoking us. The season ended with a celebration of Columba's life and legacy.

After the summer break, the Holy City planners, led by Graham Maule, discerned that the time was right for a 'gap year' in our usual big monthly events. Entitled 'THE GAP ... taking stock, dreaming big, making it up as we go along', the 2015-16 programme has taken a different shape, to ask questions about our methods and opportunities for engagement. This is happening alongside the process of exploring ways of reanimating and expanding the Community's public programme activities. WGRG & Holy City were tasked with catalysing this process alongside Pat Bennett, the Programmes Development Worker, and we organised a few initial interactive consultations about developing this, under the working title of "Wee Wonder Box".

This session's HC programme has included some experimental "Root 66" outings (biblical blethers on the hoof) and a "Travelling Circus" (working with a grouping of local congregations on approaches to creating relevant liturgy). Still to come there may be "Traffic Island Slipped Discs" (conversations with folk who have interesting stories to tell) and "Wee Sings".

One thing which stayed the same by popular demand was Holy City's annual Urban Retreat with Pádraig Ó Tuama, Leader of the Corrymeela Community, which this year reflected on need and desire in the gospel of Mark, incorporating storytelling, poetry and sharing from the participants.

The WGRG team were together on Iona in September, leading 'Viable Alternatives'. Initially planned for just the Abbey, with John Bell & Graham Maule, this became a cross-centre week due to the level of interest, and Jo gladly joined the leadership to explore alternative ways of worship, drawing on positive experience. One of the highlights of the week was a liturgical installation of "Song of Songs", an experience of immersion in the text and

textures of this sensual Biblical poetry, through a variety of stations and activities engaging body, mind and soul. We hope to rerun SoS in other locations in 2016.

WGRG were invited back to the 'Solus' Festival near Perth in June, where they were one of the partners in the new venture of the Just Peace tent. A foursome of partnership members, including Jo Love, planned and co-led the 'Big Communion'.

In June, as part of the SPARK Festival of Worship, Liturgy and The Arts at Greyfriars Kirk in Edinburgh, Graham Maule gave the keynote presentation on 'Sacred GAMES for the scARrEd and scUrrilourS' on the play-fullness and uselessness of 'Ritual'.

The summer became an actively artistic one for Jo as she worked with different groups in enabling three mosaic projects to take shape - in a community garden, autism charity premises and church sanctuary. Among her autumn commitments, Jo shaped and co-led three "Bible Roadshows" for Girls' Brigade Scotland, with encouragingly positive feedback from officers who came and learned creative approaches to exploring scripture. She also took up a short-term involvement with children's ministry in a local congregation at a time of transition in their provision for young people.

Also in the autumn Graham and Jo were invited to help plan and lead Christian Aid Scotland's 70th anniversary service which was held in St Giles' Cathedral in November.

John continues to receive invitations from churches, seminaries and retreat centres in North America and some of his working time overseas was spent there, as well as in Germany, with Graham, where the new book of German

translations of 100 Wild Goose Songs, 'Freut Euch und Singt', was launched in Düsseldorf, Cologne and Darmstadt. The Rhineland Church, which initiated the project, agreed that the work would be done on a co-operative basis by a team of translators; the church and Strube (the publishers) have remarked how the variety of musical genres, textual styles and subject matter should be of lasting value to German congregations.

The 5th incarnation of A Wee Worship Book was published in April, and the new Wild Goose Collective CD, with material from the songbook Enemy of Apathy, was printed at the end of the year, and published early in January 2016.

WGRG launched a new website – www.wildgoose.scot – which incorporates more information about the work of the group, and which we'll be developing further in 2016.

9. Membership

Following the resumption of the New Members' Programme, there are currently twenty two people on the programme. The Community mourned the deaths of six members in the last year – John Jardine, former teacher and founder member of the Gorbals Group; Murdoch MacKenzie, former URC minister and missionary in India; Margery Turnbull, former deaconess and missionary; Marie Louise Gooljary, architect and artist; Michael Smith, former minister in the Methodist Church; and Margaret Hughes, educator and prison visitor. Their names will be added to the list of those we continue to remember with love and thanksgiving.

In the name of the Board

ALAN KIMMITT, *Convener*
PETER MACDONALD, *Leader*