

IONA COMMUNITY BOARD

May 2015

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the report.
2. Welcome the **Food, Fuel, Finance Report** of the Closing the Gap Project and encourage its use as a source of information in campaigning.
3. Commend the work of the centres on Mull and Iona and particularly that of the Camas Centre and its continuing commitment to groups from Priority Areas.
4. Thank Dr Allan Gordon for his convenership of the Board over the past four years and thank the Secretary, Fiona Cunningham, and Board members for their work.

REPORT

1. General

The Board is pleased to report that the Iona Community has come through a period of reflection and review with renewed vision and purpose. The two year Membership Review process involved extensive consultation with members and associate members, with family groups and the Associates Advisory Group. As a result the Community has adopted a new pattern of meeting to encourage local engagement, a new regional structure to encourage the participation of associate members and those living outwith the UK, a revised programme for new members and a rewording of the Rule of the Community.

Members of the Community are committed to:

- Daily prayer, worship with others, regular engagement with the Bible and other material which nourishes;
- Working for justice and peace, wholeness and reconciliation in our localities, society and the whole creation;

- Supporting one another in prayer and by meeting, communicating, and accounting with one another for the use of our gifts, money and time, for our use of the earth's resources and our keeping of all aspects of the Rule;
- Sharing in the corporate life and organisation of the Community.

Associate members are invited to keep the Rule whilst members are held mutually accountable within family groups.

During the period of the Membership Review no new members were admitted and consequently membership fell to 288 members and 1450 associate members. However, the new members programme restarted in September 2014 with 14 participants and with applications for future years in double figures.

In the space of this short report it is impossible to describe the devotional life and endlessly varied work of members across Scotland and the rest of the UK, and further afield.

However commissioners may read about this in the **Coracle** and on the Iona Community website (iona.org.uk).

Sharon Kyle, Deputy Centres Director and reports from Iona:

2014 was a year that the Iona Community built on the success of the many celebrations and anniversaries that we had in 2013. Both our centres on Iona were nearly full throughout the season and an excellent team of both Resident staff and Volunteers worked hard to achieve the goal of building community with our guests each week. Judging by the reviews that our guests complete, not only did we achieve this goal but we also helped guests have a really enjoyable, if sometimes challenging, experience.

The most memorable and heart-warming impressions of the year were the many occasions and opportunities in which people from very different backgrounds found themselves sharing in common tasks like washing up, preparing material for a service in Iona Abbey, or making something in the craft room that was a unique reflection of the week on Iona. In these encounters, which for many are initially rather unexpected and sometimes even a bit daunting, conversations took place that broke down barriers of ignorance and fear, and forged friendships based on insight and respect, drawing on the commonality we all share of the struggle and joys of being human.

It was a year in which some people came and shared the decisions they were trying to make; others came as a way to mark the end of one stage of their life and the start of another stage; others came bringing their hope and their heartbreak as refugees; others came and discovered a new talent or skill or reconnected with a passion they had lost touch with. Perhaps most encouraging of all were the people who came who discovered they could care deeply about the welfare of people they had only met that week.

For the staff one of the biggest challenges is the constant turnover of both guests and staff: getting to know new people and saying goodbye is the constant experience all

year. For the Volunteer staff who are here for short periods of time this can be a particular challenge as bonds are quickly formed working beside people from all over the world but who you might not see in person again. This is where social media comes into its own, providing ongoing links with Iona and staff long after Volunteers have moved on. In one of our centres for a week this summer we had 15 different countries represented between staff and guests. While volunteers were with us it was wonderful to hear so many conversations about things that really matter and many left Iona with a renewed or new interest in Christian faith.

The most significant departure of the year was that of our Islands Centres Director, Rev Joanna Anderson, who left on completion of three years in post. Joanna brought a deep understanding of the Iona Community and its purposes. We are grateful to her and wish her and husband, Pete, well for the future.

The new Director, Rev Rosie Magee, will take up her post in February. Our theme for the coming year is 'Where Journeys Meet' and the evidence of people coming this year and meeting others on very different journeys to their own has in part been the inspiration for this theme. So it is with enormous gratitude to all those who found their way to Iona to build community together, gave so much of themselves and took so much away with them, that we look forward with hope and with excitement to the year ahead and all the joys and challenge it will bring.

Polly Burns, Iona Prayer Circle Coordinator, reports:

The Prayer Circle is part of the healing ministry of the Iona Community, established to help people coping with all that is a barrier to health and wholeness. The Iona Prayer Circle continues to flourish with over 400 intercessors worldwide.

The Service of Prayers for Healing in Iona Abbey every Tuesday is a response to the many requests for prayer from visitors on the Island and from many people further afield who contact the Abbey through phone calls and letters. This is a simple service during which there are prayers of

intercession for people and places who have asked to be remembered in prayer.

Prayer Circle week at the MacLeod Centre last September explored the theme of "Earthing our Prayer". During the week we used the arts, movement and connection with the natural world to discover new ways of praying and how these could be part of healing. There has been significant interest in the possibility of holding a Prayer Circle week on the mainland for those interested in this ministry.

Jon Lloyd, Camas Centre Co-ordinator, reports from Mull:

The 2014 season at Camas was very busy, with groups every week ranging from Priority Area youth groups that have been coming regularly over the last few years to University PhD students studying topics relating to asylum-seeking. The weather was pleasant all season (after one of the wettest winters in living memory) and we had a good group of staff and volunteers who worked tirelessly throughout the year. We feel very fortunate at Camas to have the opportunity to work with many different people over the season, and to be able to offer hospitality, friendship and peace (sometimes!) in a unique physical environment as well as a unique organisational environment, which allows us to focus on simple and uncomplicated aims. We really appreciate the opportunity at Camas to facilitate a therapeutic, if sometimes very challenging, environment for all of our staff and guests.

2014 was a tricky year for staff illness and we had two volunteers who could only commit to half of the season. We were very fortunate to welcome back two volunteers from previous seasons who were also community kids – working at Camas is a big commitment during the season.

The core of the season in July was taken by the priority youth groups of MYDG (Muirhouse), St Paul's (Blackhill), SiMY (Townhead), the Barn (Gorbals) and GK (Church of Scotland Priority areas). In addition we had a group from Castlemilk, Cre8 (Macclesfield) and English Martyrs (Hartlepool). We also had Duke of Edinburgh Award

groups from SiMY and ran our personal development project – The Phoenix Programme. This involved seven young people from youth groups in Glasgow and Oban with whom we had worked previously, and aimed to enable the group to build strong relationships and the confidence to take on new challenges. Of the seven, five are taking College courses – two doing horticulture perhaps inspired by the Camas garden – and one of the others is coming to Iona to volunteer in the 2015 season. Much of the work was supported by our Glasgow Youth workers who have regular contact with young people through youth clubs and other projects. Their support helping with training and coming up with the groups to Camas during the summer is really helpful. We intend to build on this

Expeditions were a new feature of the season as well. We ran two full-day expeditions for GK and the Phoenix Programme but also three two-day expeditions for the Duke of Edinburgh Award and a youth group from Oban Social services on Ulva.

We had two new groups at the end of the season – a women's group seeking some respite and an adult group from Gorbals Crossroads project. It is good to continue the Community's connection with the Gorbals. One person has since commented that the experience at Camas changed his life.

Chris Long and Ben Raw, Youth Resource Workers, report from Glasgow:

This has been another busy, challenging and inspiring year. We have continued to strengthen our relationships with a variety of young people and organisations and develop new partnerships. The Referendum in Scotland highlighted how interested young people are in issues of political and social justice. Wherever we have worked, young people have been eager to articulate a vision of the kinds of communities, nations and the world they wish to live in. Throughout the year we have aimed to listen to and value young folk as people, giving them confidence in their convictions and enabling them to be educated, engaged and active citizens.

Our work with schools still centres on our relationship with Bellahouston Academy who spent a week at the MacLeod Centre for the 26th year running! We were also able to go into the school and explore what kind of society the young people wish to create for the future. This sustained and growing relationship with Bellahouston also saw some pupils take part in our Youth festival on Iona during the summer.

The feedback from the Youth festivals on Iona was very affirming. The young people showed a hunger and passion to learn about global injustices and started to ask questions about how they can equip themselves to be the change they wish to see in the world. The Youth Festivals also reminded us of the richness in bringing together different types of young people from varied places and backgrounds. When these different people gathered together, the young people and group leaders were able to learn from and celebrate the differences they found in one another.

We were able to provide opportunities for the young people we work with to volunteer with the Iona Community in a number of settings. It was especially pleasing to link up the work we do with the wider activity of the Iona Community and its members. Young People volunteered at the Glastonbury Festival as well as on Iona for the summer as part of the international Volunteer Programme. As well as these opportunities, young people volunteered directly with us at the Solas Festival, Junior Youth Festival, Youth Festival and at various youth clubs around Glasgow.

We worked alongside the Camas staff over the spring and summer and witnessed a new generation of young people enjoying all that Camas offers. It is to the continuing credit of staff that Camas provides not just a week at an outdoor centre, but a place where people can experience a different way of life. Camas gives young people a chance to reflect on how they can bring the positive experiences in to their lives and their communities.

We have been able to link up the work we do throughout the year to the work we do with the Scottish Government

in responding to sectarianism. With the young people we have worked with on this project we have been able to start to look towards a vision of our communities in Scotland that celebrates diversity and difference.

Towards the end of the year, we also joined the large anti-Trident demo at Faslane with a group of friends and colleagues with connections to the Iona Community or our youth work in Glasgow.

Throughout the year we managed to tap into the energy of the young people we work with and offer them a much needed space to explore topics that matter to them. They have showed us practical and real life examples of celebrating difference and diversity. We hope to continue to harness the energy, enthusiasm and hope of the young people we work with as we look towards 2015 and beyond.

2. The Closing the Gap Project

In December the report **Food, Fuel, Finance** was launched at an event in Glasgow attended by people from a number of local poverty campaign groups. The report gives an overview of how the 'Poverty Premium' affects people's lives, and recommends action which could be taken to tackle this injustice, by the governments in Westminster and Edinburgh.

The report draws on a year of grassroots research conducted by our staff member, Kenny McBride, and intern, Bev McDade, in Glasgow, with funding and support from Church Action on Poverty, Faith in Community Scotland, the Church of Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church, and Christian Aid Scotland. The report captures the views of some of the many people affected by the 'Poverty Premium' – unfairly high prices for everyday essentials including food, fuel, finance, furniture, and even funerals.

Food, Fuel, Finance tells the stories of how communities across Scotland – and elsewhere in the UK – are tackling the problem themselves through creative initiatives such as food hubs, community gardens and shops, and district heating schemes. But the report also highlights the need for regulation and legislation, and calls on the Scottish and

UK governments to develop plans for tackling the Poverty Premium in partnership with communities.

Martin Johnstone, Chief Executive of Faith in Community Scotland and Secretary of Scotland's Poverty Truth Commission, said at the launch: "This report highlights what many of our poorest citizens already know. If you are poor then food, fuel, furniture and even funerals costs you more than if you have spare money in the bank. That is ludicrous but it is reality. It's a scandal – a scandal that we must overturn, once and for all. Having read this report no politician, no business and no citizen should rest content until things are different."

Peter Macdonald, leader of the Iona Community, said: "It is clear from this report, consistent with other research, that we are not 'all in this together'. The poorest among us are paying the price of austerity. This is morally and economically just plain wrong."

We are now working with Church Action on Poverty on plans to pilot some of the creative ideas from the report in communities across the UK. Meanwhile, our members and Church Action on Poverty's supporters have already sent over a thousand of messages to the ministers at Westminster and Holyrood who have the power to establish a strategy for tackling the Poverty Premium.

The Scottish Government has given an initial reaction to the report. The spokeswoman said: "It is unacceptable that anyone should be living in poverty in a country as wealthy as Scotland... We will consider this report and its recommendations while continuing to help families access support and to buy everyday items that many of us take for granted."

The very same day that we were launching **Food, Fuel, Finance** in Glasgow, the All Party Parliamentary Group on Food Poverty were launching their own report in London. *Feeding Britain* refers to the Poverty Premium as one of the driving factors in the demand for food aid.

This is what the **Food, Fuel, Finance** recommends:

- The principle 'Nothing about us, without us, is for us' should be at the heart of all actions that are taken to address this problem.
- The Scottish Government should develop a plan for tackling the Poverty Premium in partnership with communities.
- The UK Government should develop a strategy for reducing the Poverty Premium over the lifetime of the next Parliament.
- Businesses which provide food, fuel or finance should commit to reducing the Poverty Premium.
- Regulators should adopt a much more robust approach to tackling the Poverty Premium.
- Local authorities, social landlords and others should explore collective purchasing of food and fuel, district heating systems, and community energy co-operatives.
- The partners in this project should pilot a 'community hub' approach to delivering affordable goods and services in Glasgow.

3. Sandra Kramer: Wild Goose Publications

2014 has been another busy and productive year for **Wild Goose Publications**.

New books published were as follows:

- *The Risen Dust*, by Rachel Mann;
- A paperback edition of *Pearls of Life*, by Martin Lönnebo, Carolina Welin and Carolina Johnsson;
- *The Cross in the Marketplace*, by Dave Broom;
- *Look Well to This Day*, by Tom Gordon;
- *Parables of Northern Seed*, by Alastair McIntosh;
- *Walking Through Advent*, by Jan Sutch Pickard;
- *Glimpsed in Passing*, by Joy Mead; and
- *Moments of Our Nights and Days*, by Ruth Burgess.

E-book versions of the above new books were also published (except for *Pearls of Life*, for which we don't have digital rights). In addition, some more backlist titles

were made available in this format: *The Pattern of Our Days, Like Leaves to the Sun* and *Ready or Not*.

Recent years have seen a trend for an increase in sales of downloadable items (e-books and shorter downloads). During 2014 we produced several new, original shorter downloads including:

- *An All-Age Service for Shrove Tuesday*, Ruth Burgess & Sally Foster-Fulton;
- *Doorway to the Desert*, Ruth Burgess & Sally Foster-Fulton;
- *Mother God*, Sally Foster-Fulton;
- *Mothering God*, Ruth Harvey;
- *Prayers for Holy Week*, John Harvey;
- *Stories for Holy Week (cycle A)*, Tom Gordon;
- *Waiting in Darkness*, David McNeish & Sarah Anderson;
- *Emmanuel Comes (hymn for Advent)*, Pat Bennett;

We continue to publish extracts of books as downloads, such as the various sections of the book *Saying Goodbye*, eg *Resources for When Children Have Died, Sentences and Blessings for Funerals, Grief, Life Goes On – Words for the Journey*, and *Stories for Advent (cycle B)* from Tom Gordon's book *With An Open Eye*. These, together with the original downloads, add to our growing collection of worship and reflection resources categorised by subject which are instantly available to customers on purchase.

Although we are still operating in difficult economic circumstances, it has once again been a satisfying year during which we have made a lot of useful material available to customers all over the world.

4. Neil Paynter: 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 publications 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.

5. Wild Goose Resource Group

Early in 2014, we appeared all together in the same place at the same time! In February we were in Aberdeen for a weekend of workshops and singing with local churches.

Holy City's 2014 January-May programme, 'TARTAN JESUS?...weaving the distinctive fabric of a nation' looked at some crucial issues facing Scotland in the run-up to the independence referendum, through participative workshops and liturgy. In addition to the regular monthly events, during Holy Week - in collaboration with the Glasgow congregations of Kelvinside Hillhead, Colston Milton and Glasgow Unitarian Centre - WGRG and Holy City organised 'Travelling Towards Easter', a series of sings and liturgies exploring the events of each day in the Holy Week story.

The 2014-15 new season of Holy City, again with Graham Maule as chief catalyst, and entitled 'NORMAL SERVICE... will not be (p) resumed', began in October. We set out to question some of the accepted norms of our land, and of the world today, looking at aspects such as community, health, money, media, language, environment, status, imagination and power.

Jo Love, Graham Maule and John Bell were together again on Iona in July, joined by Pádraig Ó Tuama, poet, theologian and peace worker, now leader of the Corrymeela Community. 'Reclaiming the Book for the People' was a cross centre programme, in which we explored ways to engage with the Bible - to share it, sing it, experience it and pray it in all its magnificent variety. Pádraig also led another Glasgow weekend retreat for Holy City in December, this time investigating 'Jesus and the Pharisees'.

During the Iona week, a production company worked with the team to make a recording for a BBC programme, 'Then Sings My Soul', including filming of the Abbey Sunday morning service. Throughout the year, John has continued to contribute to a number of BBC broadcasts.

WGRG were invited back to two summer festivals. At the Solas Festival near Perth, we recreated "Ps" the 150 Psalms in 60 minutes multi-media experience of the Book of Psalms, enabled a Big Sing, and John delivered a talk on marking the centenary of the First World War. In 2014, Greenbelt moved to a new site in Northants, where the Resource Group and supporting team led not one but two Big Sings, plus three worship sessions, and John was again part of the talks programme.

Graham and Jo were involved in facilitating worship and workshops at the Church of Scotland National Youth Assembly, further afield in Denmark at a weekend conference for clergy, and at day events with local churches in Maybole and Perth. We also co-led Big Sings in Edinburgh and Blair Drummond, and at the Heart and Soul event, where we were 'graced' by a royal presence.

Jo handed on the baton of Chaplain to Greater Glasgow Girls' Brigade in June, but continued to be involved with occasional training workshops for GB and initiating a national training project for 2015 about ideas for creative Bible exploration. Her locum primary school chaplaincy also came to an end at Christmas, with a final flourish of enabling a group of pupils to produce a fantastic giant paper mosaic saying 'Live, Laugh, Love' along a school corridor wall!

The themes of art and creativity continued to crop up in Jo's involvements with the Church of Scotland Priority Areas' holiday week and conference, a youth Advent Art project, Cranhill Crazy Church and Spill the Beans.

As well as completing three North American itineraries, John has been working throughout the UK, and at events in Spain, Denmark and Switzerland, and he and Graham visited Düsseldorf to meet with a group of translators who are working to produce the first major collection of German translations of WGRG songs. This collection of around 100 items will be published in 2015 by Strube Verlag of Munich, and several WGRG songs will be included in the planned Kirchentag Songbook in June 2015.

We're glad to report that John and the team have been completing a fifth incarnation of A Wee Worship Book, and finishing the recording and editing of the next Wild Goose Collective CD, which includes material from the songbook *Enemy of Apathy*.

6. Financial Matters

Voluntary income in 2014 showed a slight decrease over 2013, partly because of one-off grants in connection with the Poverty Project Worker costs, as outlined above. After a very good year in 2013 the Shop on Iona had a weak year for sales. Wild Goose Publications continued to benefit from an improvement in royalties income but sales to bookshops fell significantly once again. Island Guest Charges were up at the Macleod Centre and level at the Abbey and Camas. Cost control remained tight across all areas, with spending up on Iona because of some highly necessary property work.

After normal transfers between funds the General Fund had a useful increase during 2014 to £275,317.

7. Access Fund and Crerar Fund

The Iona Community has two restricted funds which can only be used to assist our work with people living in poverty in the UK. The Access Fund has been built up through donations from many people over many years, and is strictly for subsidising people staying at our Island Centres. The Alastair Crerar Fund was formed from a one-off donation in 2011 and has the purposes:

- to enable greater numbers of single poor people to access our Centres on Iona and Mull or similar residential facilities as appropriate, by meeting travel and accommodation costs;
- to support social care and outreach initiatives in Glasgow
- to encourage partnerships with other agencies working with the single poor in Glasgow and elsewhere.

In 2014 we utilised £17,945 of the Access Fund and spent an additional £25,192 of our general funds offering

subsidised stays on Iona and at Camas. This is a total of £43,137 – an increase from 2013 because the Youth Festival and Junior Youth Festival were successful in attracting more people living in poverty.

8. Future Investment

Consultation with members and associates, friends and supporters, has consistently affirmed the value of our presence on Iona and of our work in the Abbey. The Iona Community was founded as an ‘experiment in fellowship’, and the Abbey rebuilt as a ‘laboratory’ for the renewal of the life and worship of the Church that it might more effectively engage with the challenges and needs of the world. Just as laboratories need to be re-equipped periodically if they are to sustain the experimental practice for which they were built, the physical environment of our centres now needs to be refurbished and renewed to meet the challenges for the coming years.

A small development group is working with architects on refurbishing the accommodation in the Abbey to meet these key challenges:

Accessibility – by installing a lift, removing bunk beds, providing new accessible bedrooms and individual washrooms, and adopting a comprehensive approach to inclusiveness

Flexibility – by providing personal space for reflection or study and group work facilities,

Sustainability – by improving insulation and using renewable energy sources to improve the heating; by improving sound insulation and by upgrading the kitchen and server facilities to meet current standards.

A major fundraising appeal will be launched in 2015 and, if successful, the work will be completed by summer 2017.

In the name of the Board

ALLAN GORDON, *Convener*
PETER MACDONALD, *Leader*

ADDENDUM

Dr Allan Gordon

Dr Allan Gordon will retire as Convener at the conclusion of this year’s General Assembly, after four years of service to the Board. Allan’s opening prayers and reflections set the tone at the start of each meeting setting the tone and gently guiding the Board through its business. He has the Board’s grateful thanks.

PETER MACDONALD, *Leader*