

Case for Support – August 2016

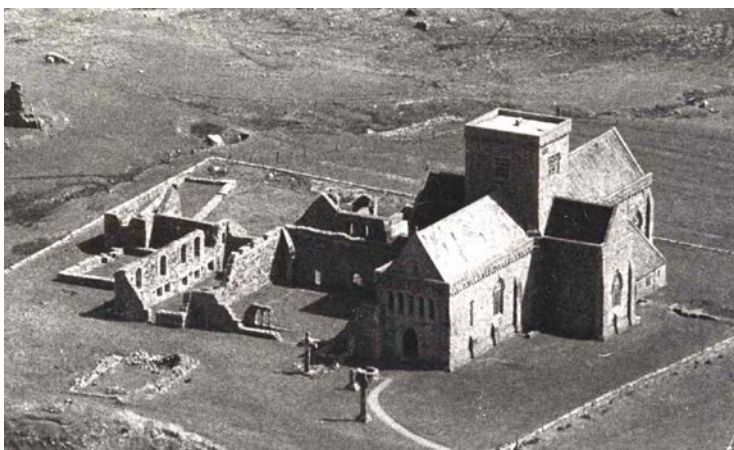
The Iona Community - *Transforming Lives to Change the World*

We need your support to ensure this reality does not become history

The Background

The Iona Community is a unique organisation which empowers ordinary people to do extra-ordinary things. It is a living network, an international ecumenical Christian movement based in Scotland. The Iona Community motivates and inspires people of all ages, from different countries, different backgrounds and different cultures to learn more about their lives meaning and purpose in the company of others.

Inequality, injustice and exclusion are as relevant, and felt as strongly today, as when the Iona Community was founded by George MacLeod in 1938. George MacLeod was a Church of Scotland minister at a time of high unemployment and poverty, and a visionary and prophetic witness for peace and social justice. He brought together trainee ministers and craftsmen from the hardship of Glasgow to rebuild the living quarters of the ruined Abbey of Iona. That physical rebuilding became a sign of hope for the rebuilding of individual lives and of community in Scotland and beyond. It worked then and is still working today, in an age where society is more fragmented, families are dispersed and the breakdown of many real social networks leave people with a hunger for relationship and a sense of belonging and a desire to counter inequality, injustice and exclusion.



“The building of community is crucial to human existence, for only in community can justice and love be done. Only in community is found responsibility – the activity of responding, the demands of accountability - to and for others” Kathy Galloway - former Leader of the Iona Community.

Fundamental to the success of the Iona Community's work, and at the very heart of our belief, is the celebration of community in which to welcome, support and connect those for whom faith leads to commitment and action for peace; for social and environmental justice and to nurture, equip and empower new leaders through our inspirational programmes for guests, resident staff and volunteers.

Glasgow is home to the Iona Community's administration team, youth team and programme resource workers. Here programming is organised in partnership with other like-minded organisations including Christian Aid, Church Action on Poverty and Corrymeela, as well as local schools and churches. The Glasgow base also houses The Wild Goose Resource Group and Wild Goose Publishing which together produce the books, liturgies and music created by members of the Community.

However, the island centres on Iona and Mull remain the heart of the organisation's activity. Almost 3,000 guests share in the common life of our island centres every year between March and October. 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 volunteers from across the globe have had the opportunity to come together; 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.

Just a short boat ride across the Sound of Iona, on the island of Mull, is Camas, an outdoor activity centre which has been run by the Iona Community for over 50 years. Camas provides primarily young people, from some of the most deprived areas and difficult backgrounds, a safe and healthy outdoor environment in which to experience personal growth and learn about themselves, others and society through activities that combine adventure, learning, challenge and achievement, under the guidance of positive role models who help them to see new possibilities in their lives.

The Need

As a pro-active and forward thinking organisation, the Iona Community is continually evaluating what it offers to members, to guests, to resident staff and to volunteers, to ensure the most positive and beneficial experience on Iona, in turn leading people to make the biggest impact possible when they leave – for themselves, for their communities and for society in general.



Our ongoing evaluation process, broad consultation, guest feedback and our own records and experiences have identified key issues surrounding the facilities we currently offer and highlighted priority needs which have been building over a number of years, 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 we do not act now to improve the fabric of the buildings and the associated utilities, we face the prospect of all 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.

The Project

With the above in mind, the Iona Community commissioned Tiree-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 we can welcome people of all physical abilities by way of new level access and doors.
- ⤴ 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 with improved kitchen facilities.
- ⤴ Re-configuration of the dormitory-style bedrooms to maximise space and create rooms designed only for single or twin occupancy.
- ⤴ Light in all corridors will be improved to create an environment in which to move about easily.
- ⤴ The upgrading and improving of all utilities, including waste services.
- ⤴ The replacement of all existing services, including the installation of a sustainable hot water and central heating system, with the necessary insulation. *This will enable the Iona Community to extend its guest season from 32 to 40 weeks (increase of 25%), improving financial sustainability and reaching many more people.*

The Impact

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 £166,388.00.

The costs of the volunteer programme at the Abbey and the MacLeod Centre are £37,000 annually. Participating volunteers on the island spend approximately £21,655 locally.

Furthermore, the Iona Community pay local companies on Iona, Mull and in the Oban area approximately £128,000 for their services.

In addition to the £353,043 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.

The Capital Appeal

Through careful financial governance over many years, the Iona Community is financially stable. The Iona Community is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. Elected by the members, the Leader, governing Council and management committees manage an annual operating budget of £1.6 million and 20 staff members in Glasgow. Approximately 63% of annual income is generated by goods and services (guest charges on Iona and Mull, Wild Goose Publications and Abbey Welcome Centre sales), 25% of annual income is from member dues and unsolicited donations. The balance is from grants/fundraising, legacies and project income.

The Iona Community currently operates a small endowment fund which allows for financial support to groups and individuals with financial constraints which prohibit them from being able to afford to come to Iona. In its future business planning the Iona Community will ensure funds are available to maintain the accommodation to the highest standards possible in the face of the adverse weather conditions often suffered on Iona.

However, the Iona Community is now seeking external support to help raise the estimated £2.5 million required to carry out these vital works. (Please see attached for full breakdown of costs)

A carefully planned campaign of action is underway across the world to reach this target before September

2017. After a considerable programme of research and the creation of a Capital Appeal Management Team and Advisory Committee, tailored approaches are being made to members and friends, to high net worth individuals with an interest in our work, to Trusts and Foundations and to Corporate Supporters. To date these approaches have generated in the region of £1,000,000 in donations with a number of further applications to key funders in Scotland submitted and awaiting outcome.

A planned strategy of marketing, communication and use of social media is supporting the Appeal in ensuring all supporters and potential donors are kept up to date with developments and progress.

The Outcomes

- ⤴ Working in partnership with Historic Environment Scotland, we will ensure that active use of this iconic building, for its original purpose, is safeguarded for the future.
- ⤴ The planned improvements will enable the Iona Community to provide facilities which match our hospitality and to refresh the programme of activities we offer to both guests and staff.
- ⤴ They will enable us to extend our long standing commitment to young people, to education and training, by developing our international volunteer programme.
- ⤴ 25% increase in guest season will allow for increased capacity in guest numbers.
- ⤴ Through the expansion of the guest season, the increased numbers of guests and volunteers will safeguard existing employment and offer further opportunities, in turn contributing to the local economy.
- ⤴ Greatly increased access will allow us to welcome everybody regardless of mobility.
- ⤴ Through the use of sustainable materials, use of renewable energy and reduction of waste we will reduce the negative environmental impact.



Prototype Bedroom

Summary

The successful completion of the works outlined above will have a major impact on both the Iona Community and on the local community of Iona.

The greatly increased **accessibility** allows us to welcome everybody regardless of mobility. Increased **flexibility** for increasing guest numbers and extending the Programme season, allows us to widen that

welcome to many more people. Better **sustainability** in maintenance and use of the facilities allows us to continue to offer our unique benefits which then echo in our guests' own lives, to contribute to and build upon our fragile local island economy and to empower many more to contribute to the global pursuit of peace and social justice.



The Iona Community is transforming lives to change the world – your support is crucial to ensure this continues to be a reality and not history.