The Trusthouse Charitable Foundation

Annual Report & Accounts 2016-17

Registered Charity No 1063945
Iona Community, founded in 1938 by the Revd George MacLeod, is an ecumenical Christian community of men and women from different walks of life and different traditions within Christianity. The community began as a project led by Revd MacLeod, taking a group of ministers and working men, to Iona to rebuild the ruined medieval Iona Abbey together, closing a perceived gap between church and working people.

Iona Community now has 300 Full Members, "around 1,800" Associate Members and 1,600 Friends of the Community. Among them are Presbyterians, Anglicans, Lutherans, Quakers, Roman Catholics and people of no denominational allegiance. The community has a strong commitment to ecumenism and to peace and justice issues. The Community runs three residential centres: Iona Abbey being probably the best known. Weeks at the centre often follow a programme related to the concerns of the Iona Community, and people are invited to come and share the life.

Currently the Iona Abbey Centre comprises the buildings that were rebuilt by the founding members of the Iona Community and the buildings have retained a distinctly monastic feel. Built of stone and slate, the corridors and staircases link the shared bedrooms with the washrooms, the magnificent Refectory, the Abbey Cloisters and the medieval Abbey Church itself. The Community approached Trusthouse for its project to improve the fabric of the building and the associated guest utilities including a new accessible entrance and accommodation to enable disabled users to access the facilities. Without a major upgrade the accommodation would be unfit for purpose within the next five to seven years.

The Iona Community's presence at the Island centres contributes significantly to the fragile island economy. This project will enable the Iona Community to extend its guest season from 32 to 40 weeks which will increase economic benefit locally. Iona Community employs 21 people on Iona: 30% of the local working age population.

Trusthouse’s Super Grant of £125,000 has made a major impact on the total project cost of £2.6M.

"Iona Community's presence at Iona Abbey is a vital resource; a heritage site brought to life for its original purpose, which helps to sustain a fragile island community and, through the Iona Community programmes, impacts the lives of many people on the island and far beyond its shores. The generous and timely support of The Trusthouse Charitable Foundation has been critical in securing match-funding to allow Phase 1 of our project to proceed, and ultimately safeguarding the future of Iona Community as part of the social and economic fabric of the island for many generations to come."

Christine Jones (Iona Abbey Appeal Project Co-ordinator)