

**Arran Community Land Initiative AGM  
November 2nd 2022 at 7:30 pm  
Whiting Bay Hall**

**16 members were in attendance and therefore the required quorum for an AGM as per our constitution was met**

1	<p><b>Previous Minutes</b></p> <p>Previous minutes from 15/11/2021 proposed by Jill Wilkinson and seconded by Mandy Lovejoy</p>
2	<p><b>Outstanding actions/Matters arising from previous AGM</b></p> <p><b>Gift Aid Status:</b> a long a tortuous process to change documentation from previous trustees, now very close to completion.</p> <p><b>Signage:</b> now that the new track is complete we are working on the design of and costing associated with new signage for the site.</p>
3	<p><b>Chairman's Report</b></p> <p>At the previous AGM (November 15<sup>th</sup> 2021) it was decided that we would concentrate our efforts on the following: environmental improvement; working towards sustainability; forging stronger educational links and use of the land for education; improving access across the site and encouraging further community involvement in the site. We believe that we have made good progress with all our objectives and have done so in the following ways:</p> <p><b>Improved access</b></p> <p>The new track gives recreational users a greatly improved route to the Glenashdale exit. It is complemented by the spur to a new bridge across the top burn. It opens up our top fields to the potential of a link up to the forest track. The track also makes it easier for tractors to access the higher part of the community land and for fields to be leased. The increased track length does also mean increased maintenance to keep tracks usable.</p> <p><b>Improved biodiversity: a habitat mosaic</b></p> <p>Volunteers planted hundreds of trees last year and also, very importantly, helped knock back the bracken which can smother newly-planted ones. These trees will not only improve biodiversity and habitat, reduce water run-off and help stabilize the slopes they will also, importantly, in time play a small part in tacking climate change.</p> <p>We are proud of our gradually extending woodland but we have learnt that planting in bracken areas without initial preparation requires significant post-planting bracken</p>

control. This winter there may be a small amount of planting but we want to weaken bracken for a year or two before we return to larger scale planting.

We have had another carbon audit which tells us for our size we are capturing a significant amount of carbon. In addition, we have worked closely with our agricultural advisor applying for grants which best promote biodiversity on the land.

An application for environmental grants to manage scrubland and create wildflower meadows – (of which Scotland has lost 98% in the last 80 years) has been recommended by our case officer. The scrubland management particularly requires removing invasive species. Having different habitats of woodland, scrubland, meadow and wetter areas gives us the best chance of encouraging insects, birds and animals to live on the community land while enabling us to use it for recreation.

The most natural way to manage these habitats is for herbivores to graze different areas at different times. To that end a local farmer has leased two fields for his tups this year and we plan to fence the two fields being turned into wildflower meadows which gives the potential of leasing these fields too.

### **Improved sustainability**

In order to sustain the charity, its land management and core purposes of education and recreation we always need to find ways to maximise our income, partly by applying for grant funding, and opportunities for volunteering. During 21/22 we received £750 from the Scottish Government for basic farming support and have just received £800 for 22/23 support. A grant to replace fencing around the two horse fields meant we could maintain the income we receive from horse field lets.

In a normal year the community garden can probably exist on around £250 of investment, but sometimes there are one-off expenses. The garden produces large amounts of soft fruit and a range of other produce. If this was made more widely known, donations from people willing to 'pick their own' could help the community garden become self-funding.

While we have arranged volunteer days for activities such as tree planting, bracken bashing and board walk construction, we could be better organised in undertaking tasks on a more regular basis. Our purchase of a wee tractor and attachments will greatly help with maintenance tasks. Having a more organised approach would help improve the sustainability of the Initiative.

### **Better educational links and use of land for education**

We were pleased when Mr. Barr from Arran High School was elected as a trustee and it was a loss when he left for another job after a few months. In May pupils from George Watsons College came for a day of bracken bashing and community garden work. In August Keith Robertson led a herbology course and his group also helped clear the side of the barn. Other people, including Kathy Sayer have led groups on garden skills such as pruning. Recently a ranger from the Geopark held an event for young people.

The land hosted a major orienteering event with around 200 entrants; as well as making a donation the organisers also produced a useful map of the area.

### **Increased community involvement**

There continues to be a core group of volunteers who take the lead in the Community Garden. Special thanks must go to Karyn, Mandy, Kathy and Jo for their hard work. In addition, over the past year several new volunteers have come up regularly to help in the community garden and to plant trees and bash bracken and thanks go to all who have volunteered to help out in whatever capacity. Recently a produce point was erected at the community garden for passers-by to take fruit and veg and give a donation. We have also had increased interest in people wishing to take on full or half allotment plots. In addition, more walkers and dog-walkers are using the new track.

At this point I wish to thank our dedicated trustees from the local community for their continuing involvement and help.

### **Future plans**

There are three grant applications outstanding including one to the CalMac Community Fund for a tough scythe mower that can be used on hilly areas where a tractor cannot go. We have asked the Arran Trust for funding for a range of items such as hard core for path maintenance, irrigation kit for polytunnels and signage. We have applied to the Scottish Government for Environmental Funding to support biodiversity and which would offer capital payment in the first year and management fees for five years.

We want to build on community involvement, improve awareness of the availability of produce from the community garden, make more allotment plots available if required, and, as always, there will, as always, be the satisfying occupation of bracken bashing – come and join us!

4.	<b>Treasurers Report</b>		
	<b>Summary</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2020-21</b>
	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>35,797</b>	<b>21,680</b>
	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>25,271</b>	<b>18,689</b>
	<b>Surplus/Deficit for year</b>	<b>10,526</b>	<b>2,991</b>
	<b>Opening Balance</b>	<b>9,183</b>	<b>6,203</b>
	<b>Add surplus for year</b>	<b>10,526</b>	<b>2,991</b>
	<b>Balance Carried Forward</b>	<b>19,719</b>	<b>9,193</b>

5.	<p><b>Election of Trustees</b></p> <p>Three existing trustees indicated that they were willing to stand again together with three new appointees. As there were no other candidates the following were nominated, seconded and therefore appointed as follows:</p> <p>Nick nominated by Nigel Armstrong and seconded by Eric Kaye  Eric Milton nominated by Nick and seconded by Jill Wilkinson  Rob C nominated by Jill W and seconded by John Parker Jones  John nominated by Nanette C and seconded by Colin Fraser  Karyn Costa Wilson nominated by Mandy L and seconded by Eric Milton  Jill nominated by Rob C and seconded by Nick</p> <p>A special thanks to Jo who has been our treasurer since 2017.</p>
6.	<p><b>Questions/AOB</b></p> <p><b>Ticks-</b>it is clear that the site carries a significant tick burden including those carrying Lyme’s disease. It was therefore agreed that signage should include advice on their presence and related follow up if ticks and or ‘bullseye’ marks are found on individuals.</p>

**End of meeting**