

Gigha Greenhearts

HEDGEHOG AWARDS CELEBRATION

While we have been in lockdown, our families have still been busy exploring in nature and having some brilliant backyard adventures. As they have not been in school and nursery and because of restrictions on outdoor gathering due to Covid-19 regulations, connecting with nature has been achieved through opportunities for outdoor exercise and back garden investigations.

The Hedgehog Awards are given by The Wildlife Trusts and children have to complete 8 nature-based activities to achieve their certificate. There are some lovely pictures of some of the activities undertaken over the page which included a beach litter pick, making a bird feeding station, digging the seed beds for bee and bug friendly flower planting and making beautiful ice sculptures.

Well done to each of the children for achieving this nationally recognised award and thank you to families for all the support for children's success in achieving it.

BIRD WATCHING BONANZA

The end of January always finds us taking care of our feathered friends and participating in the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch. We sent bird seed and lard home so that everyone could make their own version of fat balls and bird cake. Some families made bird feeders and thought carefully about where they should be sited to keep birds safe from cats. We have all become very proficient at spotting different species and counting how many we see at the same time. Everyone completed their RSPB sheets and uploaded their data. Some children made cakes especially for the occasion and enjoyed a nice relaxing cuppa whilst they completed their surveys. Our oldest children took part in BBC Birdwatch Live and completed some maths related citizen science observation activities for the British Trust for Ornithology.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Activities.....	2
Gigha Community Nature Reserve	3
Introducing Caille.....	4
Food Growing Garden.....	5
GCNR Logo Competition.....	6
Bird Nest Box Instructions.....	7
Show the Love Campaign	8

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- **Please complete the Gigha Community Nature Reserve Survey**
- **Look out for details of our March Seed and Plant Swap**
- **Enter the Gigha Community Nature Reserve Logo Competition by 24th March**
- **Let us know if you want to volunteer to help with any of our family nature club activities**
- **Share your greenhearts for #showthelove with @isleofgigharanger**

THE WILDLIFE TRUSTS HEDGEHOG AWARDS



"I loved doing my hedgehog award—we found so many things in our garden and made a safe home for our birds with food and water."

BIRD NEST BOX WEEK 15—19TH FEBRUARY

Our Gigha Ranger Casey-Jo helped all our families to attract more birds to nest in their gardens by creating a bird's nest kit for each of them. The kits contained lots of wood cut to size and even nails and screws for joining it all together. Families were asked to think about what birds need to stay safe and healthy at this time of year.

- Fresh water that has not frozen over
- Bird seed and high energy foods
- Nuts and raisins

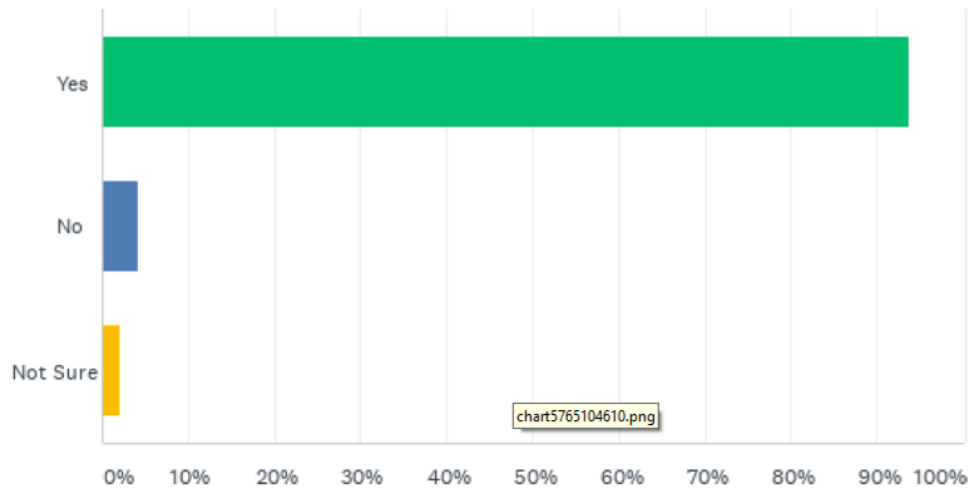
Thanks so much Casey-Jo! Instructions for different species are on the back page!

LOOK AT OUR NEW GFNC BAGS AND BIRD NEST BOX KITS READY TO GO!



Q3: Do you agree that we should establish a community nature reserve on Gigha?

Answered: 48 Skipped: 2



Foundation of Gigha Community Nature Reserve

We are delighted to be able to announce that we have been successful in partnering with a small group of islanders hoping to establish a community nature reserve on Gigha. Some land in front of Gigha Hotel came up for rent and having made an application to be considered for it, the Board of Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust have awarded the land for use as a reserve.

We have launched a survey to gather information from our community about their views and to find out how everyone wants to be involved. If you want to complete the survey for us the link is:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/6Y6DV6N>

The more members of every family complete the survey the better our understanding of what people of different ages want will be. It will be a lot of work to get things going, but we have already had an environmental survey completed and hope to have a biodiversity management plan put together soon.

Look out for details of small online meetings to discuss next steps and also for a competition for young people and children to design a Gigha Community Nature Reserve official logo.



If you want to contact Gigha Community Nature Reserve Formation Group, please send an email to **GICNR2021@gmail.com**

Hi Everyone!

My name is Caitie and I'm a 3rd-year university student, studying Contemporary Art. Part of my course involves a Practical Arts placement which I am delighted to have secured at Gigha Primary School.

Currently I am unable to actually go into the school due to Covid-19 restrictions but have been busy putting together an activity pack for the children, exploring different Island locations and looking at ideas of how to inspire artwork from nature and our beautiful surroundings.

BEING OUTDOORS AND MAKING WITH 'FOUND' OBJECTS IS SOMETHING I AM PARTICULARLY PASSIONATE ABOUT; OBJECTS CAN RANGE FROM THOSE WHICH ARE NATURALLY BEAUTIFUL TO THOSE WHICH WE MAY CLASS AS RUBBISH BUT THAT CAN BE TURNED INTO SOMETHING

It is with this in mind that I have designed the pack and I hope the children and their families find it exciting and enjoyable. All you need is your wellies and to wrap up warm: our beautiful Gigha surroundings will supply the rest!

NATURAL ART PLACEMENT



Caitie will be working with us on natural art in the outdoors.

DESIGN A LOGO COMPETITION

Caitie has organised an art competition to design a new logo for the Gigha Community Nature Reserve project. All children and young people are invited to submit their entries by email to

GCNR2021@gmail.com

by 4pm on Wednesday 24th March. Judges will be artist Amy Wilson, Tony Philpin from Gigha Coastal and Countryside Group and Caitie. The winner will be announced at the GCNR launch event later on in the Spring.



FOOD GROWING GARDEN

Before Christmas Mrs Vipurs worked hard to draft a bid to the Community Climate Action Fund for establishing a food growing area on the land adjacent to the school car park. The bid also included a large poly tunnel and thanks to Mrs Beagan's efforts in costing and sourcing we are due to receive a large polycrub eco-friendly tunnel all the way from a company in Shetland very soon.

This will go into the walled area on the school site and

will provide space for the strawberry and herb growing eco-enterprise projects that the children want to take forward this season.

Mrs Vipurs will also be leading on construction of the new food growing area with some raised beds and fruit bushes. This means that we will have plenty of space for community food growing as well as for some of our weather, Learning for Sustainability and climate change projects.



'Show the love and help create a greener future. In 2021, the UK will host a global climate summit, COP26. It's our chance to lead the world into a greener future. Start now and #Showthelove for the things you want to protect.'

HELP WITH OUR GARDEN PROJECTS

If you would like to volunteer to help with any of our outdoor, nature or garden projects, please call the school office and we'll help you think about how you can do that.

01583505259

Look out for news of our March seed and plant swaps. We will especially be looking for strawberry and herb plants, vegetable seeds and help with small gardening equipment.



DESIGN A LOGO COMPETITION

Get involved in creating an identity for our new island group –
Gigha Community Nature Reserve

Rules are as follows:

- Must have the words 'Gigha Community Nature Reserve' on it clearly.
- Can be hand drawn images, coloured graphics or photos.
- Must work well in colour and black and white.
- Should be square.
- Should work well at any size.



Some Examples:



Ideas you could explore:

- Wildlife
- Gigha landmarks.
- A favourite beach or view.
- An adventure you go on with your family.
- Something you've learned at school.
- What makes Gigha special to you?



Please send entries to GCNR2021@gmail.com by 4pm on Wednesday 24th March with your name and age.



BLUE TIT & COAL TIT

Gigha Family Nature Club

Facts and tips for your box

Entrance

The entrance is cut at 25mm. Perfect for blue and coal tits!

Position

1. Avoid too much sun.
2. Place the entrance in a north-east direction.
3. Place box 6-7 feet off the ground.

Nesting

Blue and coal tits lay between 8-10 eggs, and incubate them between 12-16 days. The little chicks fledge after 14-22 days in the nest!

Watch

Monitor the behaviours of the birds in your box! Main nesting season is between April and May!

Blue tit



Coal tit



Simply tack together the base, sides and back, with 1 tack in each of the four corners. Use the screws to secure the roof - we use screws so we can open up the boxes and give them a clean once a year when breeding season is over!

Why not decorate your box with water-based paints or natural materials, take some pictures and share them with ranger@gigha.org.uk



HOUSE SPARROW

Gigha Family Nature Club

Facts and tips for your box

Entrance

The entrance is cut at 32mm. Perfect for house sparrows!

Position

1. Avoid too much sun.
2. Place the entrance in a north-east direction.
3. Place box 6-7 feet off the ground.

Nesting

House sparrows lay between 4-5 eggs, and incubate them for around 12 days. They can have 2-3 broods a year! The little chicks fledge after 14-15 days in the nest!

Watch

Monitor the behaviours of the birds in your box! Main nesting season is from April to August, and the pairs stay together for life!

Male House Sparrow



Female House Sparrow



Simply tack together the base, sides and back, with 1 tack in each of the four corners. Use the screws to secure the roof - we use screws so we can open up the boxes and give them a clean once a year when breeding season is over!

Why not decorate your box with water-based paints or natural materials, take some pictures and share them with ranger@gigha.org.uk



SHOW THE LOVE

Gigha Family Nature Club

For everything you want to protect from CLIMATE CHANGE

1

Use a metal clothes hanger to bend into a heart shape and cover in green fabrics



2

Print some of your favourite green landscapes from across the island and cut them into heart shapes



3

Use natural materials to stick to cardboard hearts and create bunting



4

Use an old green t-shirt or fabric, cut into heart shapes, sew them almost all the way round, stuff with paper or discarded fabric as mini pillows



THE CLIMATE COALITION

Examples



Don't forget to hang your creations in a window to show that you care about climate change, and join the coalition to ask decision makers to tackle the climate crisis. Snap your displays, tag them using #ShowTheLove and share them with @isleofgigharanger

OUR GRATEFUL THANKS

Many people have been helping us lately with outdoor and nature based projects and activities. We are very grateful for all the support and encouragement we have received, most especially this month from:

Mrs Vipurs, Mrs Beagan and Mrs Sheriff for co-ordinating action to get our new poly tunnel and food garden installed.

Casey-Jo Zammit for the instructions and Finn Beagan for helping her to make the bird nest box packs. Stevie Dickie for wood for bird boxes for the new nature reserve.

Caitie Wilkieson for creating the Nature Art Packs for us.

Gigha Family Nature Club was started by the children of Gigha Primary School and Pre-Five Unit to encourage everyone to enjoy, care for and protect our natural habitats, biodiversity and heritage.

GFNC activities and events are open to all those with a love of nature who want to follow the rhythm of the seasons through the year with us. If you would like to receive this newsletter regularly, please email the school: enquiries-gigha@argyll-bute.gov.uk with GFNC in the subject line. Alternatively you can call the school. Thank You!