



MacDougall of Dunollie Preservation Trust

SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT

- 2022 -



ABOUT US

The MacDougall of Dunollie Preservation Trust (DPT) is a registered charity, founded in 1998, when Morag MacDougall, 31st Chief of the Clan MacDougall entrusted part of her estate to the Board of Trustees. Today, the DPT looks after several listed buildings and monuments, including Dunollie Castle in Oban, Gylen Castle on Kerrera, as well as the 1745 House Museum, which was once part of the living quarters of Dunollie House. The Trust also cares for nationally important archives and a collection of more than 10,000 objects.

These charitable purposes are delivered in the main, via Dunollie Museum Castle and Grounds www.dunollie.org and it's thriving community programme Dunollie Links.

WHAT IS DUNOLLIE LINKS?

Dunollie Museum, Castle and Grounds, is a social enterprise run by the charity, The MacDougall of Dunollie Preservation Trust. In 2012, the Dunollie Links programme was established with the vision of creating a busy and extensive community engagement programme. The aim of Dunollie Links is to provide opportunities for a wide range of ages and abilities in Oban and surrounding areas by providing access to local heritage.



With the onset of the pandemic in 2020, the Dunollie Links programme was put on hold, before returning gradually the following year.

The lessons and experience learned throughout the Dunollie Links programme so far, show us that Dunollie Museum, Castle and Grounds can be a leader in our community, providing essential outreach services and, as an organisation, the importance of celebrating our history and heritage.

The Dunollie Links activities of 2022 were generously funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund through the Dunollie GLAD project, CalMac Community Fund, independent donations, and the core funds from Dunollie Museum, Castle, and Grounds.



OUR YEAR IN FIGURES



15,905 visitors

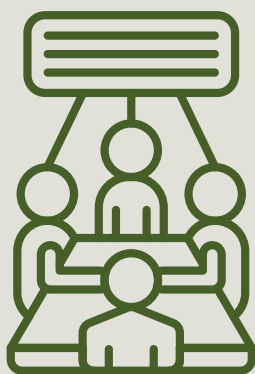


32 Regular Volunteers



2,871 Volunteering Hours

Value to DPT = £37,954



Workshops
for 227
Primary
Pupils



Placements
for 23 High
School
Pupils



234 Gaelic
Learning
Hours



The purpose of this group is to provide a weekly opportunity for men recovering from mental health illness to meet in a safe environment.

As part of the recent National Heritage Lottery Fund GLAD Grant, we were able to facilitate and evaluate practitioner led activities, the first of which, included the design and construction of a creative archway on the path to the castle. Using the University College London Wellbeing Index, we were able to establish that – 80% of participants felt happy, engaged, and comfortable nearly all of the time and 100% of them enjoyed being part of the project as a whole.

NEW ROUTES HEALTH AND WELLBEING GROUP

The participants get a weekly activity, including practitioner led sessions with traditional crafts, artistic activities, and gardening sessions. This helps in building valuable skills and experience, as well as increasing their confidence and providing a regular, sociable experience to improve wellbeing.

New Routes have continued to make a wonderful difference to Dunollie’s grounds. From trimming brambles and weeding paths, to cleaning the pond and cutting back nettles, New Routes contribution to the grounds is invaluable. From feedback submitted between April-October (277 forms) the grounds received a positive average score of 3.6/4, and an analysis of all comments showed the most frequently used words to be “beautiful” and “peaceful.”

The second activity was an archaeological dig, which took place on two areas of the site, the Shrubbery, and the Stable Block. The UCL Wellbeing Index helped us establish that – 100% of participants felt happy, engaged and comfortable nearly all of the time, and 100% of them indicate that they enjoyed being part of the project as a whole



THREADS AND YARNS

Threads and Yarns are another of the incredibly talented volunteer groups at Dunollie, led by award winning Milliner, Jayne Mulqueen. The ladies of this group meet every Tuesday, with sessions taking place on the terrace in Summer and the 1745 House Museum Kitchen in winter. Since returning from the pandemic, the group members continued to show an interest in creating a beautiful range of handmade products for our Draper's Shop. This ranges from a selection of stuffed animals, including, Mhairi McMouse, to hand sewn tartan brooches and handmade decorations.



Thanks to the generosity of the CALMAC Community Fund, we have been able to continue these sessions over the winter months.

6
Participants

Value for
DPT =
£4,475

396
Hours

Group participant, Edwina, recently shared her thoughts on volunteering:

'Volunteering has taken me on this enjoyable journey where I feel, very much, a part of the 'Dunollie Experience' and look forward to our weekly meetings within the museum grounds. The company is wonderful with plenty 'banter' whilst learning new crafting/sewing skills. It is such a sociable time that even visitors to the site will stop and chat to the group. A weekly afternoon which I look forward too immensely'.



ARCHIVE GROUP

The Archive Group at Dunollie is made up of five active members, who come up to Dunollie once a week, in groups of two. In 2022, participants continued their valuable work documenting and cataloguing the archive.

In addition, the group are always on the lookout for interesting extracts that can be used in the Document of the Month feature on social media. Several archive volunteers have also shown a keen interest in assisting with the research project for the 2024 exhibition.



Lead archive volunteer, Jennifer Shaw, has provided a quote on volunteering at Dunollie:

'Over the years of volunteering at Dunollie I have had the opportunity to learn new skills and discover interesting details of history that I could not have come across in any other way. This has been made possible by the staff team who work at Dunollie. I know they value their volunteers and work to make the volunteer experience pleasurable. Conversely, I am grateful to them for letting me be part of such an interesting environment'.

5
Participants

245.5
Hours

Value for
DPT =
£3,069



COFAIDH IS CABADAICH



Running in partnership with the Furan Gaelic centre in Oban as one of their community outreach programmes, Cofaidh is Cabadaich has existed in various capacities at Dunollie since 2017

Led by Gaelic Development Officer, Duncan MacNeil, the sessions take place once a month and have gone from strength to strength. With regular participation from Kilmelford, the Isle of Mull, and as far afield as Tighnabruaich, proves that the sessions are certainly worth travelling for. As the group meets on the terrace at Dunollie, general visitors to the attraction are also encouraged to take part in the sessions.

During the pandemic, a further partnership with the Furan Gaelic centre was established, as a COVID friendly initiative took the session online. After the significant uptake in numbers and the global participation figures, it was quickly decided that the zoom session would remain permanently. In 2022, healthy participation has been a main stay, with highs of 15 and an average of 8 participants tuning in each month. So far this year, participants from, Australia, Netherlands, England, Canada, and the USA – Philadelphia, Michigan, Texas, and Missouri.

20 sessions
with 156
attendees

234
Learning
Hours



PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY WORKSHOPS

2022 marked the return of primary school workshops at Dunollie, as Castle Building, Jacobite's, Victorian's, and Bug Life workshops offered out to the local primary schools. Castle building was certainly the most popular workshop, followed by Buglife and Victorian's. It was wonderful to see how happy the children were when participating in these activities, as for many of them, it was their first ever school trip due to the pandemic. Over the course of the year we welcomed, 11 different classes. 6 x Park Primary, 3 x Rockfield, 1 x Lochnell, 1 x Kilnilver.

Feedback from the Buglife workshop revealed that the three participating schools felt they would definitely use the knowledge gained in future lessons. In addition, the survey revealed that 100% of participants were exposed to new skills. This particular workshop was funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

11
Classes

227 Primary
School
Pupils



Oban High School & Pathways

173 Hours
Contributed

23
Students

In October of 2022, DPT were able to re-establish the Pathways project with

OHS, welcoming two sixth year pupils. Both with a keen interest in Art, they have been designing dresses and bed hangings, inspired by the Dunollie collection. The ultimate goal of the project is to temporarily display their designs in the reading room at Dunollie. In addition, the students will be tasked with writing a blog post on their projects.

In September 2022, a new group of gardening volunteers from OHS was established at Dunollie. . With three regular participants, these students have been a credit to the school as their work ethic and behaviour whilst completing tasks has been impeccable. Some of the tasks undertaken include, trimming back Ivy, uprooting bamboo and clearing drains.



As part of the Dunollie GLAD project, we were awarded funding to facilitate land skills workshops. With the recently felled Walnut tree on site, an excellent opportunity to make good use of the timber was presented. Oliver Penny, our woodworking practitioner, led two classes of 8, in designing and constructing garden furniture. Each class was given responsibility in coming up with their own designs, which were then put into practice. One class opted to construct a bench, with the other choosing a table. Each class came up with the designs themselves, with guidance being offered by Oliver. During the session the class understood the importance of teamwork in bringing the project together. Using the UCL wellbeing index, 78% of pupils felt that they developed a new skill. In addition, 87% of pupils indicated that they would like to take part in the project again. The funding for these workshops came from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.





Following on from the land skills workshop a continued partnership with the Oban High School construction class was established. Over the winter, OHS pupils have been designing and building a story throne for DPT. This partnership will give pupils further opportunity to enhance their design and construction skills, whilst giving us an excellent resource to facilitate story telling for children



As of Autumn 2022, we have strengthened our partnership with Oban High School by taking part in the Business Foundation Apprenticeship programme. The purpose of this link is to give pupils valuable insight in to working life and allow them a platform to develop skills and knowledge in a variety of sectors. The partnership has been a resounding success so far, as our business apprentice has thrived in all assigned areas.

Our Business Apprentice has provided us with a short quote about her experience at Dunollie Museum, Castle and Grounds so far:

‘During my apprenticeship with Dunollie Museum, I have gained first-hand experience of how an office works and the social environment within it. The staff are extremely kind and welcoming and always eager to give me experiences which contribute to my apprenticeship’.

In April 2022, DPT established a new partnership with the Learning Support Department of Oban High School, welcoming 6th year pupil, Adam, for work experience. Adam was given responsibilities in the Museum, Reception and Kettle Garden Café. Adam quickly found a passion for the catering aspect of DPT and used the skills developed at Dunollie to aid in his part time work at the Racer Café.

Adam had this to say, upon completion of his work experience at Dunollie Museum, Castle and Grounds:

“Thank you for giving me the opportunity to come and do work experience, I have really enjoyed it”





GARDENING VOLUNTEERS

In 2022, Gardening Volunteers at Dunollie worked extremely hard to keep the grounds looking beautiful throughout the year. With guidance from our GLAD funded gardeners, our nine dedicated volunteers contributed 396 hours. The large accumulation of hours in this sector can be partly attributed to the positive impact on wellbeing that is achieved from volunteering outdoors. No matter the weather, whether it was woolie hats or shorts, the gardening volunteers were here to brighten the place up.

MUSEUM STEWARDING

Volunteers are an integral part of the successful visitor site at Dunollie Museum, Castle and Grounds, and with limited staffing resources, volunteers are the key to enhancing the visitor experience. With five volunteers covering each day of the week, stewards share their enthusiasm with visitors upon entry to the museum. From April until October, the Museum Stewards volunteered 648 hours.



395.5 Hours
Contributed

Value for
DPT = £5,933

Museum Steward, Christine Rae, gave this feedback on volunteering with DPT:
“It’s true what they say about how rewarding volunteering is for the person doing it! At home, I often joke that I’m going to my happy place when I set out for Dunollie but it’s true. I look forward immensely to my days there. It’s such a welcoming place in a beautiful setting and I know I find just being there uplifting and good for the soul. A wonderful experience.”

648 Hours
Contributed

Value for
DPT =
£7,063

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

There are many ways in which you can become involved with the Dunollie Preservation Trust. From caring for the collections to helping out in the gardens, volunteers at Dunollie are given the opportunity to demonstrate their talents, learn new skills and build confidence in a friendly environment. If you would like to volunteer with DPT then we would love to hear from you. Please contact our Heritage Engagement Officer for more information – jamie@dunollie.org

MacDougall of Dunollie Preservation
Trust
North Wing Dunollie House
Oban
PA34 5TT
Charity No. SC028091

info@dunollie.org | 01631 570550



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the CalMac Community Fund**

