

The Community Support Fund - 2022 review

Feb 2022 – Feb 2023



School pupils in Ardfern, Argyll share their knowledge of their seas with Jenni Minto (MSP for Argyll and Bute Constituency and Ariane Burgess (MSP for Highlands and Islands Region). © Argyll Hope Spot and Heart of Argyll Wildlife Organisation

The [Community Support Fund](#) is a dedicated small grant fund operated by [Fauna & Flora](#) to support member groups of the [Coastal Communities Network](#), and other Scottish community-based organisations that Fauna & Flora engage with. The grant fund was established in early 2019 to enable groups to meet specific locally-determined goals, with the overall aim of progressing local biodiversity conservation or group development.

In 2022, Fauna & Flora secured £25,000 for the Community Support Fund – approximately £12,500 for marine focussed projects and £12,500 for land focussed projects.

The Community Support Fund continued to be popular in 2022, its fourth year, with 13 projects (3 terrestrial, 10 marine) receiving grants. £39,211 was granted in total. The fund closed with £1,349 remaining, having utilised £9,618 of £10,967 carry-forward from 2021 due to Covid.

Although there were only 3 terrestrial focused grants, they totalled £15,000. Two were granted to a two-part project by the Knoydart Foundation for the Blackhills project, totalling £10,000. This grant funded baseline habitat survey work in the Black Hills area of Knoydart, as a prelude to a landscape scale habitat restoration project covering c. 3000 hectares. Thanks in part to this Community Support Fund grant and the associated preparatory survey work, they have been awarded a grant of £225,046 by NatureScot for the period 1st July 2022 to 31st March 2024. This will pay for all the project management, deer management and fencing necessary to implement the first two years of the project and kick-start the habitat restoration.

The third terrestrial focussed grant was to the Mull and Iona Community Trust (£5,000) to help them create a Community Rewilding Action Plan for Ardura Community Forest. The plan will be structured around clear outcomes and actions to protect, expand, connect, diversify and to enable the ongoing evaluation of the forests' habitats and species, as well as informing opportunities for sustainable, economic and health and well-being activities.



Floating classroom experience for local school children. Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust's research vessel, Silurian tied alongside the pontoons at Salen, with children from Acharacle getting an introduction © Community Association of Lochs and Sounds

Successful projects in 2022

Green: Land projects	Total spend: £15,000
Blue: Marine projects	Total spend: £24,211
	Total spend: £39,211

	Community Group/ Organisation	Project Title	Project description	Value	Status
1	Craignish Restoration of Marine and Coastal Habitats (CROMACH),	D&R MPA Project officer for CROMACH	This project commissions a part-time project officer to carry out engagement and consultation on a proposal for a Demonstration and Research MPA in Loch Craignish, Argyll. They will make recommendations to the Committee on appropriate local governance and management of the proposed area. They will collate the findings and prepare the relevant paperwork for submission to Marine Scotland.	£4,593 (plus £6,007 Arcadia grant)	In progress
2	Knoydart Foundation	Blackhills Regeneration part 1	The scoping components of the baseline habitat survey work, to understand the condition of all habitats within the Knoydart Foundation project area; and the final reporting components. Activities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project set up. 2. Preparation, study and assessment of existing data. 3. Overview of condition of all habitats within the project area. 4. Final reporting. 	£5,000	Complete
3	CCN Aquaculture Sub-Group	Strategy support - Griggs Review	Two-part strategy workshop with public affairs consultant James Mackenzie in response to the Griggs review of aquaculture regulation.	£187.50	Complete
4	Knoydart Foundation	Blackhills Regeneration part 2	Field work preparation and survey delivery components of their baseline habitat survey work: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Recording of species present (in particular rare / BAP species). 6. Identification of sensitive habitats. 7. Assessment of data. 8. Mapping. 	£5,000	Complete
5	Friends of the Sound of Jura	Argyll Coast & Islands Hope Spot -	Bringing together the four Hope Spot champions to help coordinate activities, opportunities and communication between the groups; Collating and sharing activities and opportunities internally amongst Hope Spot champions;	£3,000	Complete

		community and communications	Increasing capacity to reach the public with news of activities and of the species that live in the Hope Spot.		
6	Community Association of Lochs and Sounds (CAOLAS) and the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust (HWDT)	Floating classroom experience for local school children	<p>Provision of research vessel 'Silurian' as a floating classroom. School groups to be taken onboard to learn about cetacean science, techniques to research them, and the types of equipment used.</p> <p>Foster responsible and sustainable attitudes and behaviours and help to develop flexible and optimistic young people that know their actions make a difference, helping to safeguard Hebridean seas for future generations.</p>	£3,087	Complete
7	CCN East Coast Groups	CCN East Coast Hub Meeting	A gathering of six east coast CCN groups in order for groups to build connections and learn about each other's work and challenges. This is the first ever regional CCN gathering, complementing the larger, network-wide gathering.	£216	Complete
8	Mull & Iona Community Trust	Rewilding Ardura Community Forest	<p>The work includes an historical woodland assessment to locate and understand the historical features, community usage and tree species providing a baseline for ecological restoration and help the community to make deeper connections with the forest.</p> <p>Recording of the ancient woodland fragments and baseline condition survey; identifying cultural/heritage features and ensure they are protected alongside the natural heritage; peatland, grassland and riparian habitat restoration and opportunities to link with neighbouring rewilding projects</p>	£5,000	In progress
9	Skye and Lochalsh Environment Forum (SLEF) on behalf of South Skye Seas Initiative (SSSi), Friends of Loch Hourn, and Knoydart	Robolimpets	Community alarm at the decline of previously healthy blue mussel beds has led to a desire to know more about the vulnerabilities of blue mussels and to contribute to their management and protection for future ecosystem health and food security. Therefore, three CCN member groups are undertaking long-term monitoring of intertidal temperature data in NW Scotland lochs and coasts using robomussels/limpets to mimic internal body temperature of molluscs.	£3,500	In progress
10	Fair Isle Marine Research Organisation (FIMRO)	Website	<p>Create FIMRO's first website to disseminate information about how they are achieving their marine research aims within the Fair Isle DR MPA.</p> <p>The website will also contain an information portal to allow the group and the community to collectively share information, guidance, data, research/project outputs, which relate to FIMRO's community research ambitions as well those connected to the DRMPA Citizen Science programme.</p>	£4,998	In progress

11	Orkney Skate Trust	Transforming data management for the Orkney Skate Trust	<p>Improve Orkney Skate Trust website – increase storage allowance, improve website design to better maintain the current status and updates of the species.</p> <p>Data Management support – cleaning and organising data to work in a GIS system. The data will be processed, cleaned and formatted to a standard that’s shareable with other organisations. The data can then be used for further surveying, and to look for patterns within the data.</p>	£3,047	In progress
12	The Community of Arran Seabed Trust (COAST)	2 Pilot Citizen science events for the community of Arran using the new research vessel Coast Explorer	<p>The aim of the project is to get the community involved in citizen science events with the arrival of COAST Explorer, their new research vessel.</p> <p>Pilot two engagement events in two villages around Arran. The focus of these events is habitat mapping because a) it is a good way to get community members involved and b) helps contribute to the aims of the MPA/COAST in terms of ecological monitoring.</p>	£1,200	In progress
13	Berwickshire Marine Reserve	Berwickshire Marine Reserve Rockpooling kit bags	<p>Rock pooling sessions delivered to local school groups on an ad-hoc basis throughout school year.</p> <p>Weekly sessions delivered by Berwickshire Marine Reserve rangers from June-August</p> <p>Raise awareness and understanding of local marine life through experiential learning; Increase participation of, and engagement with the local community; Raise awareness of BMR through sessions to a wider visiting audience; Enable development and increased capacity of the Summer Ranger programme</p>	£382	In progress

This year we have seen an increase in the average value of requests an average of £3,016 compared to grants on average between £1,000 to £2,500 in 2021.

The Community Support Fund will continue in 2023 with a new total pot of £24,423, to be distributed to both marine and land projects. The Fund criteria, application form and successful projects list can be found [on the CCN website](#).



Argyll Hope Spot education and outreach activities. © Heart of Argyll Wildlife Organisation