

The 2023 “Gartmore 4” Coastal Communities Network Workshop Full Report



FRIDAY 12th- SUNDAY 14th May 2023
Gartmore House, Stirlingshire, Scotland

Workshop facilitated by [Fauna & Flora](#)

On behalf of [The Coastal Communities Network](#), Scotland

Report prepared by:

Alan Munro, Coastal Communities Network Coordinator, Fauna & Flora

Note of thanks

Fauna & Flora extends heartfelt gratitude for the time, input, and enthusiasm of everyone who took part in the 2023 event. The success of the Coastal Communities Network (CCN) gatherings is a result of the dedicated efforts of both the Fauna & Flora colleagues in Scotland and Cambridge, and the CCN Advisory Group. We would also like to acknowledge the efforts of the staff at Gartmore House, who ensured the safe & smooth execution of this event.

If you'd like to engage with the Coastal Communities Network, please contact Alan Munro, Coastal Communities Network Coordinator: alan.munro@fauna-flora.org.

1. Background and aims

The inaugural gathering that sparked the formation of CCN was held at Gartmore House in May 2016. It was a resounding success, and members agreed to continue this valuable forum on a bi-annual basis as an opportunity to connect and share knowledge and experiences. Since then, Fauna & Flora has provided funding and organising support for the CCN gathering as part of their marine community support work in Scotland.

Similar to the three preceding gatherings, the programme of Gartmore #4 provided ample networking opportunities, allowing newcomers to familiarise themselves with current members. The objective was to enhance existing connections and facilitate the establishment of new contacts that can be nurtured and maintained in the long run.

This edition of the conference also served as an opportunity for members to discuss the future of CCN, including identifying and agreeing priorities for a new CCN Strategy, as well as exploring what a resilient, and potentially independent, CCN might look like.

For part of the weekend we were also joined by some Friends of CCN and other valuable supporters, who joined us for workshops & discussions.



Gartmore House, image: Fauna & Flora

2. Session Summaries

2.1. CCN in 2022: Celebrating progress and success

In this first session, delegates heard from representatives of four CCN member groups about the progress they have made, and successes they have achieved, during 2022.

The speakers included the Community Association of Loch & Sounds (CAOLAS), The Ecology Centre, Craignish Restoration of Marine & Coastal Habitats (CROMACH) (jointly with Seawilding), and one of CCN's newer members, AFFtheClyde.

You can view the presentations [here](#).



Annabel Lawrence & Fee Zanke, CAOLAS, image: Fauna & Flora

2.2. CCN Planning Session #1 (putting the vision into action)

This session was focussed on identifying key priorities and actions that CCN needs to take to achieve its vision, mission, and aims, which had been agreed earlier in the year. The outputs of this session are intended to inform CCN's strategic planning process.

Delegates were divided into six groups and asked to identify the top three priorities for CCN over the next two years. They were asked to write these onto post-it notes and identify whether it was an immediate priority (i.e. for the next year) or medium-term (i.e. 1-2 years).

In order to rank the priorities, every CCN member was asked to put a sticky dot against their top priority. This resulted in the following being identified as the top-ranking priorities for CCN in the next year:

- 1) **Resource sharing:** Sharing resources within CCN and beyond. This includes developing community toolkits, improving visibility and accessibility to resources, creating a document library, and encouraging active resource sharing among members.

- 2) **Supporting paid capacity within CCN members:** Exploring opportunities for increasing capacity for CCN members to employ staff.
- 3) **Advocacy strategy & effectiveness:** having a stronger influence on national and local politicians and authorities. This involved developing effective advocacy strategies, utilising existing information for change, and improving lobbying skills.

Other priorities that were discussed, but received less votes included:

- 4) **CCN expansion:** Seeking to expand CCN membership and stimulate the formation of new groups, particularly where there are geographical gaps. Additionally, broadening support for CCN members to address social issues.
- 5) **Agreed approach to public outreach and messaging:** Developing solutions-focused messaging and improving publicity to reach a wider audience. This includes creating digested summaries and promoting CCN's offerings effectively.
- 6) **Stronger community voice:** Mediating between antagonistic voices and ensuring that CCN represents diverse views. Demonstrating that CCN represents a significant number of voters.
- 7) **Data management and sharing:** Using network member data to influence high-level policies, providing information in digestible formats, and establishing a focal point for data within CCN. There is also a need to explore the recognition of data provided by CCN members.

The finalised list of priorities is subject to consultation with the wider CCN membership.

2.3. CCN Planning Session #2 (building network resilience)

During the CCN gathering in October 2021, CCN members recognised the need to strengthen the network and align it with CCN's vision and mission. To achieve this, members recommended that Fauna & Flora provide support in identifying and developing suitable governance and operating structures.

CCN currently functions as an informal network, albeit with certain formal elements like a Terms of Reference for its Advisory Group. While the informality brings benefits such as reduced bureaucracy and enhanced flexibility, it also presents certain drawbacks. One particular concern arises regarding the legitimacy of local leadership, especially in the context of Fauna & Flora employing and hosting the network's sole paid staff member, the CCN Coordinator. This arrangement raises questions that need to be addressed to ensure the network's community-led nature remains authentic. An internal survey was conducted

earlier in 2023 to kickstart the conversation about the best pathway for the future of CCN, and whether it can achieve its objectives (and remain both resilient & legitimate) as an informal network or if it should become a more formal body (e.g., a charity or other constituted body). The results of the survey revealed three key areas for more focussed conversations: fundraising, paid staff, and governance. These three themes formed the basis of discussions during this session.

During this session, CCN members were once again split into 3 breakout groups, with each session being led by two members of the CCN Advisory Group.

A summary of the discussions, and next steps are provided below, in relation to the 3 intended outcomes of the session:

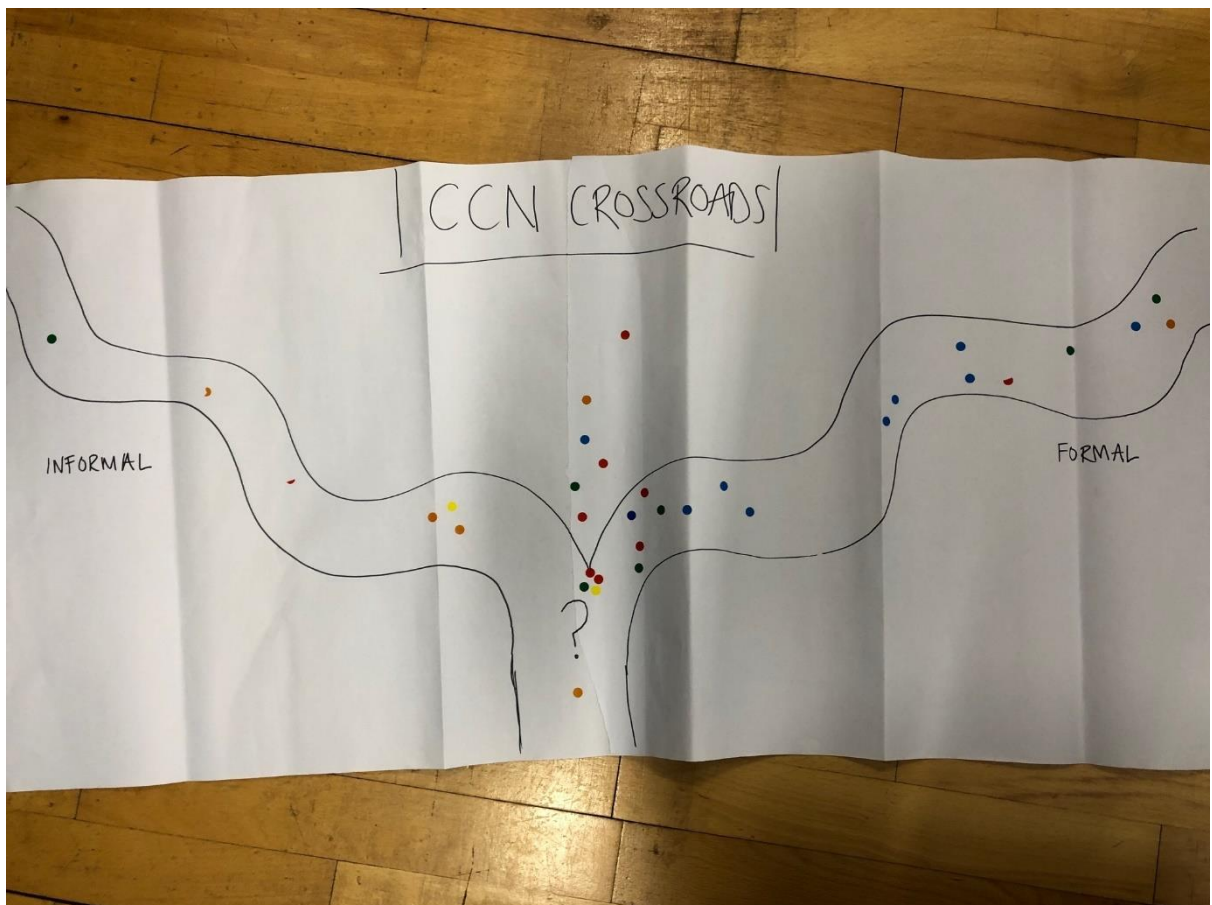
Outcome 1: CCN understands some of the challenges and opportunities associated with fundraising, and employing paid staff, as a formal vs an informal body

- There is now a written list of opportunities and challenges in the summary documents for each of the three break out groups (Links here: [Fundraising](#); [Paid staff](#); [Governance](#)).
- **The fundraising breakout group:** It was felt that there were more fundraising opportunities for CCN if it became more formalised, and many challenges if it remained an informal network.
- **The paid staff breakout group:** There was a much more even spread of opportunities and challenges. However, they outlined more challenges associated with remaining an informal network, and more opportunities associated with becoming more formalised.
- **The governance breakout group:** There was quite an even spread of opportunities and challenges, but with a few more challenges than opportunities for becoming more formalised. This group suggested there was a 'middle ground' between informal and formal.

Outcome 2: CCN has indicated whether it would like to be a formal or informal network in the future

Following the discussions and sharing of reflections with the plenary, CCN members were asked to indicate their preferences for either remaining an informal network or transitioning to become a charity (or other constituted body). They were to put a dot on the pathway they thought most appropriate for CCN to go down (formal or informal). The further down the pathway that people put the dot, the more strongly they felt towards this option. This was intended to provide a temperature check of feeling in the room, rather than a final vote. However, the choice will help shape the governance and operational frameworks that will be established going forward.

As can be seen below, the choice was not entirely clear-cut, but it indicates a move in the future (no timeframe defined) towards a more formalised model. Some members suggested there was a 'middle ground' between informal and formal, which will be explored further.



- **From the individual ‘votes’** (i.e. coloured dots in the photo) that were made by all CCN members at the end of the working group sessions:
 - 5 votes for remaining an informal network
 - 11 votes somewhere in between – a ‘middle ground’
 - 17 votes for some sort of formalisation

- **The fundraising breakout group:** This groups could not envision a way forward for CCN without it ultimately becoming more formalised. This is because they didn’t see how CCN could fundraise for itself if it remained an informal network, without putting too much pressure on individual member groups to fundraise on behalf of CCN (as well as for their own staff). There were a few comments about the opportunity to get government funding if CCN became its own constituted body.

- **The paid staff breakout group:** There was a split between those preferring remaining an informal network and becoming more formalised, based on the differing experiences of members. Discussions need to continue on what staff members would be most useful to CCN collectively, as opposed to staff needed for CCN member organisations.

- **The governance breakout group:** This group considered that there was an opportunity to be somewhere in the middle of formal and informal. This will be explored further.



CCN members discussing their future, image: Fauna & Flora

Outcome 3: CCN have explored the decision-making structures and processes in CCN, and have decided how this will need to change in the future

- There were discussions within the governance breakout group about the role of the CCN Advisory Group, its structure, and ways of working. Members felt that the Advisory Group is currently representative of all CCN Forums, and is working well.
- There were some comments about the future of the Advisory Group, including how it manages issues that contentious might arise, or how it could improve the processes around member selection.
- This discussion has helped illustrate some of the actions that CCN takes (e.g. responding to statutory consultations), and ideas of the processes that might need to be in place (e.g. a plan/process for managing issues) for the Advisory Group to continue to function well.

2.4. Keynote & discussion – Ariane Burgess MSP



Ariane Burgess, image: Fauna & Flora

We were delighted to have Ariane Burgess, Green MSP for the Highlands & Islands, along as our keynote speaker and guest. Ariane has on numerous occasions championed community voices in her various roles in the Scottish parliament, including as member of the Rural Affairs & Islands Committee and Convenor of the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee.

During her talk, Ariane elaborated on various policy areas where she sees opportunity to support community resilience, including community wealth building, the Scottish Land Fund, and community-led housing. She noted the need to address the imbalance of power between local communities and Government.

The topic of Highly Protected Marine Areas also came up, on which Ariane reflected on how we can turn the currently polarised debate into one in which opportunities might be gained.

Feedback from CCN members following the gathering highlighted how much they appreciated having a politician in the room to hear their perspectives and learn from their experiences!

2.5. Talk by Bally Philp, Scottish Creel Fishermen’s Federation

“Right gear, in the right place, at the right time”

The above mantra neatly describes Bally’s vision for inshore fisheries management in Scotland. In this thoughtful talk, the audience gained a first-hand account of the mess of fisheries management for the inshore. Existing laws (of which we have plenty) and commitments are not being implemented and there appears to be no plan or framework,

spatial or otherwise, for how the Scottish Government intends to achieve the overarching ambition of Good Environmental Status of Scotland's marine environment.

Bally believes a key solution is to incentivise (e.g. give preferential access to) low impact fishing methods, such as creeling and hand diving, to generate higher-value catches and create local jobs. He sees sorting out the management of our inshore fisheries as a prerequisite for other environmental measures, such as HPMAs.

However, he was careful to emphasise however that it isn't just about gear – it's about the management of that gear. Even creeling is not entirely benign if not carefully controlled!

One thing we can all do to support the health of our seas, in Bally's view, is to hold our politicians to account for their existing commitments.

2.6. Six years of CCN: insights from Howard Wood (COAST) & Abi Entwistle (Fauna & Flora)

We rounded Saturday off with an informal conversation between two long-term friends whose collaboration back in 2011 played a key role in initiating the establishment of the Marine Community Support Project, which was the crucible for the creation of the CCN.

The conversation revealed that CCN came about through a series of fortuitous events. Abi was introduced to Howard via Professor Callum Roberts, creating the opportunity for collaboration. Fauna & Flora was invited to engage in Scotland, applying approaches to community-led conservation they had developed elsewhere and focussed on identifying and supporting (marine) community-led initiatives during a time when the Scottish Government was taking forward consultations on what has become Scotland's MPA network. This convergence of timing and mutual interest, and the direct support given to individual groups over time became the catalyst for CCN's emergence in 2017, as a growing number of coastal community groups were seen to be working in the space and there were clearly opportunities for peer-to-peer support and guidance.

When discussing the future potential of the CCN, Abi and Howard envisioned a more influential role in advocacy. They expressed a desire for the Network to amplify its voice, bringing together diverse community perspectives to shape policies.

3. Workshops

The final part of the gathering was a series of engaging workshops designed to equip participants with the foundational knowledge needed to engage in effective policy advocacy to drive policy change. These included:

- 1) Fauna & Flora's Policy Director, Catherine Weller, led a workshop on the building blocks of advocacy. Her take home message was to prepare your foundations (access, credibility & content) ahead of time and be sure to target both decision-makers and their opinion formers.
- 2) Director of the marine charity Open Seas, Phil Taylor, led a workshop on the more tangible aspects of influencing a decision-makers, including the need to map your target against a political hierarchy of needs before deciding how to capitalise on the things that are important to them. He also emphasised not to come in hard with your long-term goal, but rather engage in a long game of building rapport with your target (we enjoyed the analogy of "tennis not baseball").
- 3) Angus Hardie, Director of the Scottish Community Alliance spoke on why communities need to work together to influence change. His presentation looked back at the emergence of the community empowerment agenda and how the Scottish Community Alliance has evolved in response. It is clear that there is still much work to do to improve local democracy in Scotland and discussions centred on the upcoming local governance review.

During the panel discussion with the three workshop leads the need For CCN to form strategic alliances/partnerships, plan ahead, and coordinate political engagement activity at the network level all came through as critical.

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, Gartmore #4 was a resounding success, with good attendance and a diverse representation of CCN members and partners. The strategic and forward-looking discussions held during the event have led to the identification of high-level priorities for CCN. These priorities will be further discussed and agreed by the broader network to ensure their alignment with the collective vision for CCN, which will go on to form the basis for the first CCN Strategy.

The discussions on the future of CCN have revealed a clear inclination towards a level of formalisation while recognising the importance of maintaining certain informal elements within the Network. This balanced approach aims to harness the benefits of structure and organisation while preserving the flexibility and dynamism that have contributed to CCN's success thus far. Fauna & Flora will work with the Advisory Group to explore what this looks like.

The growing visibility and influence of CCN were acknowledged during the gathering, and the Sunday morning workshops aimed to support members with a grounded understanding of and strategies for effective policy influencing. These will undoubtedly be put into practice before too long and hopefully lead to tangible outcomes for the marine environment.

Overall, the gathering itself was an inspiring and energising experience, marked by the enthusiasm and engagement of the attendees. The collective passion exhibited throughout the weekend really demonstrated the commitment of CCN members and partners to driving positive change and advancing the Network's goals.

5. Next Steps and Action Points

Fauna & Flora to:

- 1) facilitate a consultation process with the wider CCN membership to gather their input and feedback on the identified priorities for CCN
- 2) work with the CCN Advisory Group to develop the first CCN Strategy, based on the discussions and feedback received.
- 3) share a write up of discussions on the future of CCN and seek input from those who were unable to attend the event as to their preference
- 4) collaborate with the CCN Advisory Group and members to explore suitable governance and operating structures for CCN. This should clarify the role of Fauna & Flora in supporting the Network and address the issues raised in the session on building network resilience, including fundraising, paid staff, and governance & decision-making. Work will be undertaken to understand how the Advisory Group can evolve in the future to address CCN's challenges.
- 5) support members in developing the building blocks of advocacy, mapping targets, and engaging in long-term relationship-building with decision-makers.



Gartmore delegates, image: Graham Richardson

Appendix.1. Delegate List

Name	Group/Organisation
Abigail Entwistle	Fauna & Flora
Alan Munro	Fauna & Flora
Alex Higgs	Berwickshire Marine Reserve
Allison Jackson	CAOLAS
Amanda Root	Largo Communities Together
Andrew Duff	Largo Communities Together
Andy Jackson	CAOLAS
Angus Hardie	Scottish Community Alliance
Annabel Lawrence	CAOLAS
Anne Archer	Argyll Bird Club
Ariane Burgess	Green MSP for Highlands & Islands
Bally Philp	Scottish Creel Fishermen's Federation
Dr Bryce Stewart	University of York
Carol Duff	Largo Communities Together
Catherine Weller	Fauna & Flora
Catriona Spink	Ocean Gives
Charles Millar	SIFT
Caitlin Turner	SIFT
Danny Renton	CROMACH / Seawilding
Dr David Bailey	University of Glasgow

David Nairn	Fairlie Coastal Trust
Dennis Archer	Friends of the Sound of Jura / Friends of Loch Hourn
Eileen Armstrong	South Skye Seas initiative
Esther Thomsen	Project Seagrass
Fee Zanke	CAOLAS
Graham Richardson	Film maker
Hayley Wolcott	Our Seas Coalition
Hilary Warton	#AFFtheClyde
Howard Wood	COAST
James Merryweather	South Skye Seas initiative
Janet Marshall	Clean Coast Outer Hebrides
Jess Stewart	Fauna & Flora
Jessica Black	Clean Coast Outer Hebrides
Jill Keegan	Scottish Community Alliance
Jo McFarlane	Charlestown, Limekilns & Pattiesmuir Nature Conservation Group
Joe Richards	Blue Marine
John Aitchison	Friends of the Sound of Jura
Julien Moreau	Plastic@Bay
Karen Chambers	Edinburgh Shoreline
Dr Katherine Simpson	University of Glasgow
Keira Anderson	Argyll & Islands Hope Spot

Leanne Cullen-Unsworth	Project Seagrass
Leonie Alexander	Edinburgh Shoreline
Lindsay Thatcher	South Sky Seas initiative
Lucy Kay	COAST
Lyle Boyle	The Ecology Centre
Martha Kimmel	Fauna & Flora
Nick Underdown	Open Seas
Crawford Paris	Plastic@Bay
Peg Shaw	Fauna & Flora
Peter Nichols	Fairlie Coastal Trust
Phil Taylor	Open Seas
Priya Logan	Largo Communities Together
Richard Lilley	Project Seagrass
Peg Shaw	Fauna & Flora
Peter Nichols	Fairlie Coastal Trust
Rosslyn Barr	Edinburgh Shoreline
Sally McNaught	Highlands and Islands Environment Foundation (HIEF)
Sarah Brown	SMEEF
Sophie Plant	COAST
Violet Fraser	Clean Coast Outer Hebrides
Wendy Murray	East Haven Together

Will Goudy

[CROMACH](#) / [Seawilding](#)

Appendix.2. Workshop Agenda

Friday 12th May

16:00 – 18:00	Arrival (refreshments available from 17:00)
18:00 – 18:30	Welcome from the team & housekeeping
18:30 – 19:30	“Coastal connections” networking activity
19:30 – 20:30	<i>Dinner (bar available from 7pm)</i>
20:30	Move to the bar

Saturday 13th May

07:00 – 08:00	<i>Morning walk</i>
08:00 – 09:00	<i>Breakfast</i>
09:00 – 09:15	Introduction to the weekend
09:15 – 10:00	CCN in 2022: Celebrating progress and success
10:00 – 11:00	CCN Planning Session #1 (putting the vision into action)
11:00 – 11:15	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:15 – 12:50	CCN Planning Session #2 (building network resilience)
12:50 – 13:00	Where do we go from here? – summarising next steps
13:00 – 13:45	<i>Lunch (and arrival of non-CCN members & officials)</i>
13:45 – 14:00	Group photo outside
14:00 – 14:30	Keynote and discussion with Ariane Burgess MSP
14.30 – 15:00	Talk by Bally Philp, Scottish Creel Fishermen’s Federation
15:00 – 15:30	Audience discussion on inshore reform
15:30 – 16:30	<i>Networking</i>
16:30 – 17:00	Six years of CCN: insights from Howard Wood (COAST) & Abi Entwistle (Fauna & Flora)

17:00 - 18:00 Screening of [Oceans of Value](#) film with Scottish Wildlife Trust (optional)

18:00 – 19:00 *Wine reception*

19:00 – 20:00 *Dinner*

20:00 Move to the bar

Sunday 14th May

07:30 – 08:30 *Morning walk*

08:30 – 09:30 *Breakfast*

09.30 – 10.00 “Reflect and Re-connect”

10.00 – 11:00 Workshop session #1

Choose from:

1. *Catherine Weller, Director Global Policy, Fauna & Flora*
- **Building the foundations for influencing government policy**
2. *Phil Taylor, Head of Policy & Operations, Open Seas*
- **Advocacy in action: How to influence a decision maker**
3. *Angus Hardie, Director, Scottish Community Alliance*
- **Why it’s important now more than ever for the community sector to work together**

11:00 – 11:15 *Coffee break*

11:15 – 12:15 Workshop session #2

12:20 – 12:45 Panel discussion with workshop leads
Topic: Building coalitions and partnerships to amplify community voices in advocacy

12:45 – 13:00 Wrap up with closing words from John Aitchison (CCN Advisory Group)

13:00 – 14:00 *Lunch and departure*