

The Coastal Communities Network



Gartmore Weekend October 2021

The Coastal Communities Network

The need

The opportunity

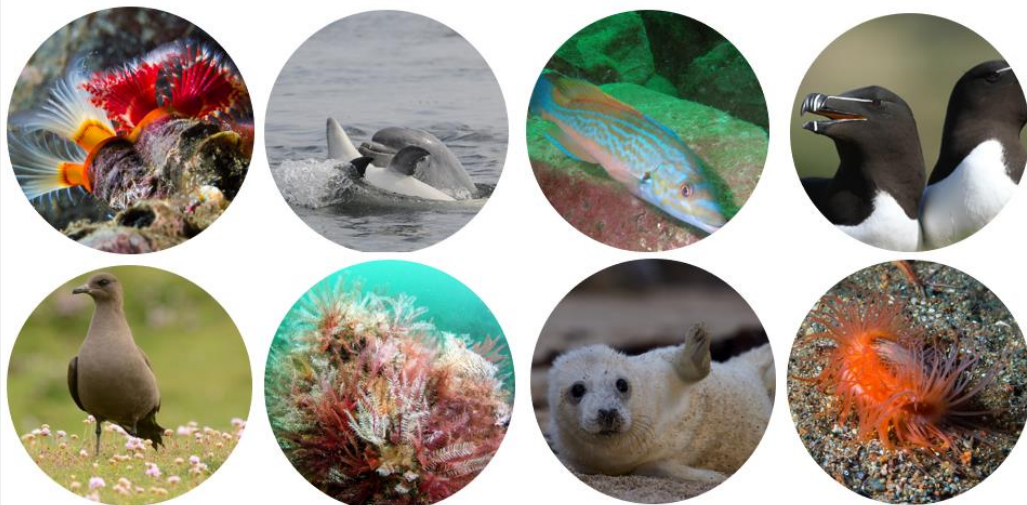
The emergence of CCN

The flourishing of CCN

What's next?



The need



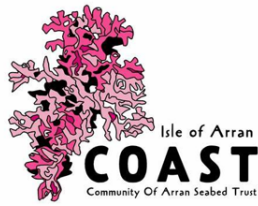
- We have some really special native wildlife here in Scotland's seas but we know that it exists as a mere fraction of what it could be.
- E.G. 1 in 9 Scottish species face extinction - our wildlife is extremely vulnerable to the biodiversity and climate crises.

The need



- COAST mid 90's shouting loudly about biodiversity loss playing out in their own local seas off Arran.
- Particularly, impacts on the seabed that they were witnessing from bottom-towed fishing practices - two local divers, Howard and Don, could see first-hand impact was on the integrity of the whole ecosystem – inc. maerl beds and seagrass meadows.
- COAST wanted to do something = 13 years of effort secured No-Take Zone, first & still only one of its kind - in Lamlash Bay in 2008.
- Complete closure of all fishing activity in place 2.67km² area - COAST wanted to measure recovery = FFI 2010 begin to fund PhD research into the NTZ.

The opportunity



Marine Community Support Officer, 2014

- FFI learnt of COAST's pioneering community marine reserve but also that COAST knew there were other communities like them across Scotland - wanted to support them maintain its own local focus within the Clyde.
- This is where FFI could help – intl biodiversity conservation charity but with partnership approach, work alongside local community partners.
- Made sense for FFI and COAST to work together to catalyse role COAST demonstrated with the NTZ.
- Designed new role in 2014 which would be focused on sharing COAST's knowledge and experience and delivering tailored support to other coastal communities.

The opportunity



- First community FFI introduced to = Fair Isle, from 2014 onwards supported to secure Scotland's first Demonstration & Research MPA.
- Will hear directly from everyone tomorrow on local initiatives!

The opportunity



- But early days = many individuals and community-based organisations, in most beautiful locations in the world

The opportunity



- Inspiring and morale-boosting for the cause of community-led conservation to find out first-hand in these earlier years the level of local enthusiasm and reality that there were local champions for nature and for Scotland's seas right across the coast.
- Started to identify lots of shared learning that could be pooled together - but wasn't yet shared community space to do this.
- Worked with COAST and others to help build that space from scratch.

The emergence of CCN



Gartmore 1 – May 2016

- First critical step = first Gartmore gathering in May 2016!
- Offered a platform for local groups to share their history and aspirations & discuss marine conservation on their own terms.
- 64 attendees, 7 different community groups (+ some NGOs, government reps, and academics).
- Inspiring weekend, talked about some of the big marine issues at the time, and facilitated sessions around potential to form a kind of marine conservation focussed community network.

The emergence of CCN



South Skye Seas initiative (SSSI)



Fair Isle Marine Research Organisation (FIMRO)



Berwickshire Marine Reserve



Community of Arran Seabed Trust (COAST)



Sea Change, Wester Ross



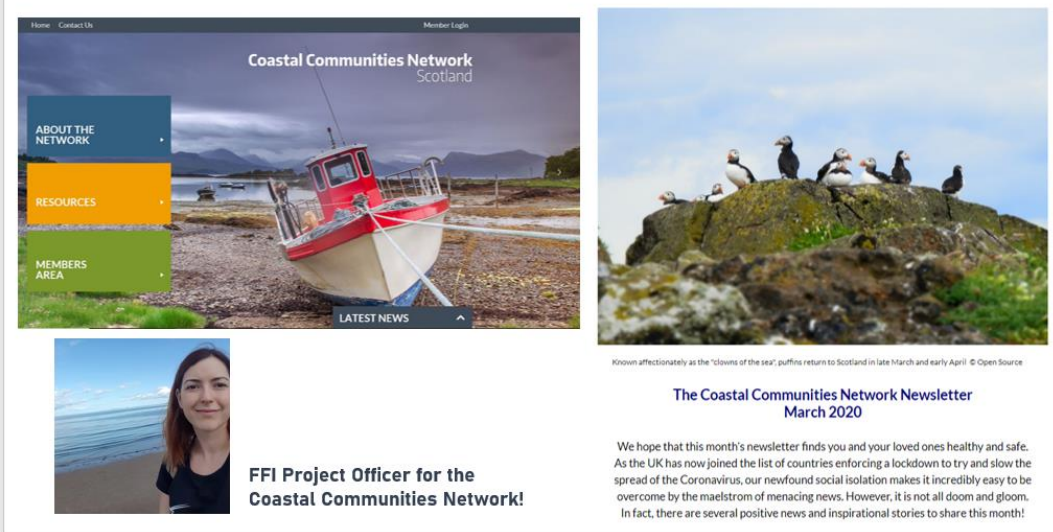
Craignish Restoration of Marine and Coastal Habitat (CROMACH)



Community Association of Lochs and Sounds (CAOLAS)

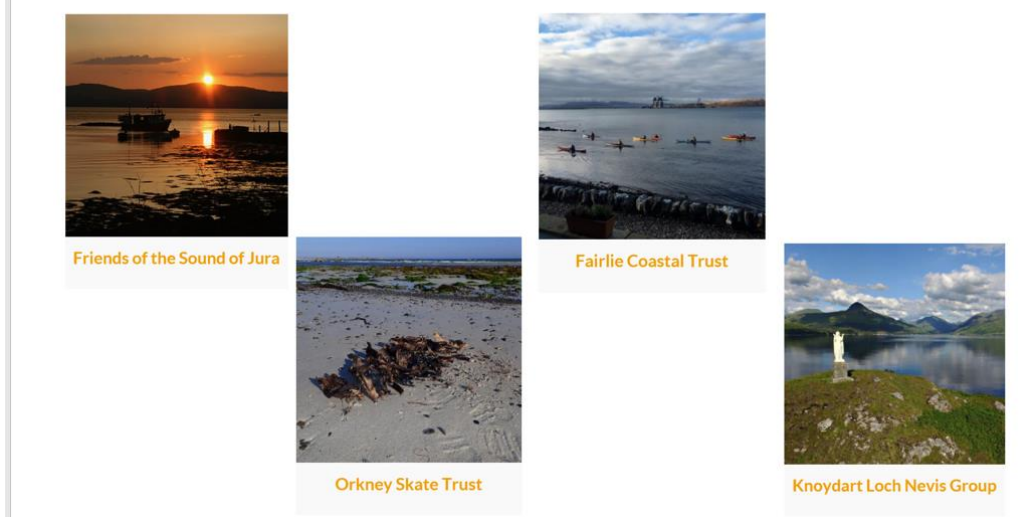
- 7 groups that first weekend - CCN didn't exist at all!
- Recognising uniqueness of each of the community groups, supporting individual communities and helping to build capacity at the local level is vitally important in itself, even today with a Network in place.

The emergence of CCN



- After Gartmore 1 - mandate to more actively work towards building a networked community space.
- Recruited Rebecca into Scotland team in 2017, which brought in that dedicated Network capacity.
- Rebecca est. web platform for profiling network, sharing resources, enhancing communication across the network.
- Important to have a space like this where stories and action can be shared – popular monthly CCN newsletter!

The emergence of CCN



- And with that first public space to share the Network, we started to see new members step forward...
- We never deployed a recruitment strategy, we always wanted to work on word of mouth and through the relationships that we were building through the wider marine community support project on the ground...

The emergence of CCN



- Works well - issues themselves propel people to get in touch - primacy of these big environmental threats and challenges they are facing locally.
- Challenges still battling today – from physical threats like dredging and open net salmon farming, to regulatory and governance challenges.
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The flourishing of CCN

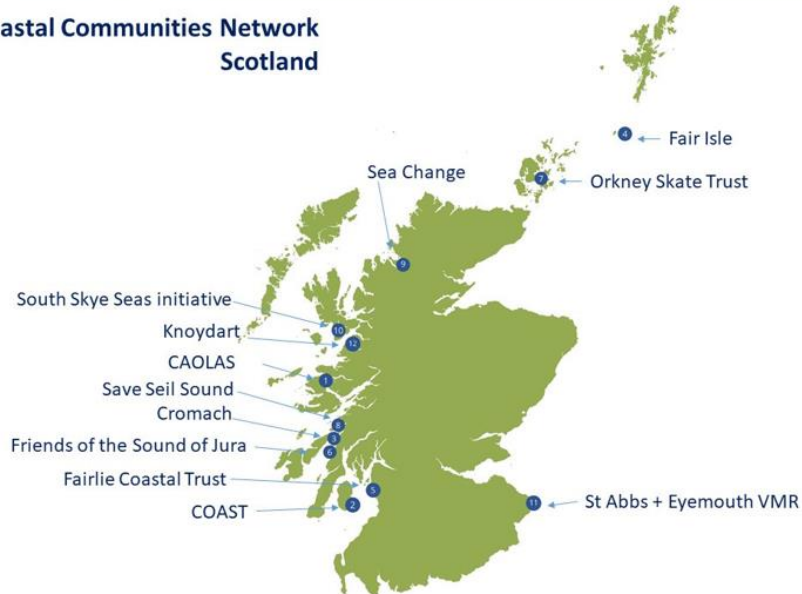


Gartmore 2 – May 2018

- By 2018 finding more groups stepping forward, all around similar issues - encouraging to see strength in numbers at the grassroots.
- With higher number of groups we brought everyone together again to Gartmore in 2018.
- Similar number of individuals join but now we had 12 different community groups represented, up from 7.

The flourishing of CCN

Coastal Communities Network Scotland



- Again, Gartmore 2 created a safe space to discuss community action and marine issues and also gave us the opportunity to check in with everyone on the direction of the network.

The flourishing of CCN



2018: "What are your group's current priorities?"

- For example, we asked everyone what your local priorities were – and we heard that they were MPAs, building surveying capabilities, working on fisheries, and building more resources and staffing.

The flourishing of CCN



2018: "What activities would a network be doing in 5 years time?"

- We also asked what activities communities would like to see a network undertake in 5 years time – heard = CCN to be a support network, that amplifies the community voice, helps with surveying and monitoring, policy-making, MPAs.
- As facilitators we place lots of value on these discussions and info we collect from them - stimulates different directions of travel for the Network and acts as a catalyst for taking next steps.

The emergence of CCN



- For E.G., after Gartmore 2, FFI started to build on discussions with NatureScot around supporting communities to undertake biodiversity monitoring, and launched new shared project which led to training events, a community handbook, and the set up of a new community equipment fund...



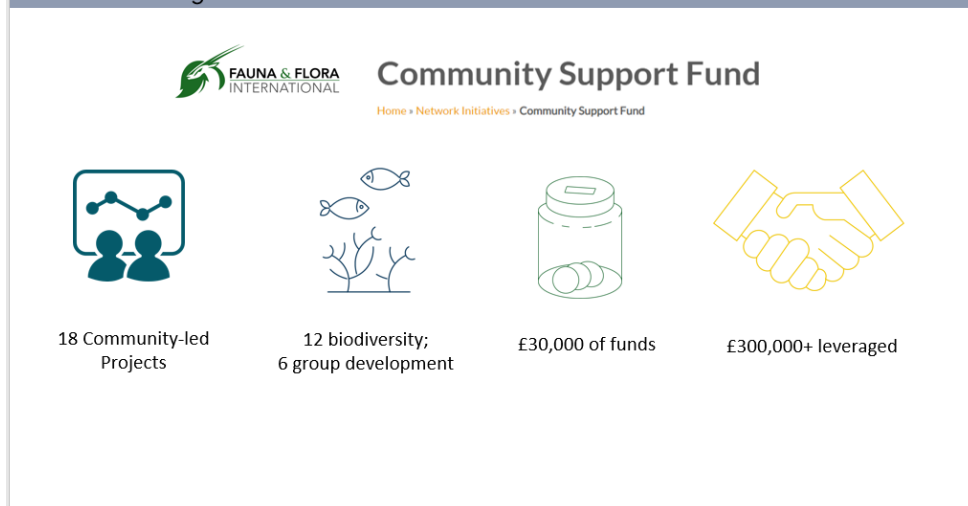
- We also worked closely with CCN members to help them come together and advocate for their local MPAs.
- Excellent E.G. = Argyll Coast & Islands Hope Spot, which we worked with four different members to secure in 2019 - demonstrates how communities can work together to push MPAs higher into public awareness.

Offshoots



- To stick with Argyll - been exciting that, as CCN groups have flourished like this, also seeing amazing off-shoots like Seawilding, the Lochaline Native Oyster Project, and the developing work of the Carna Conservation Initiative.

The flourishing of CCN



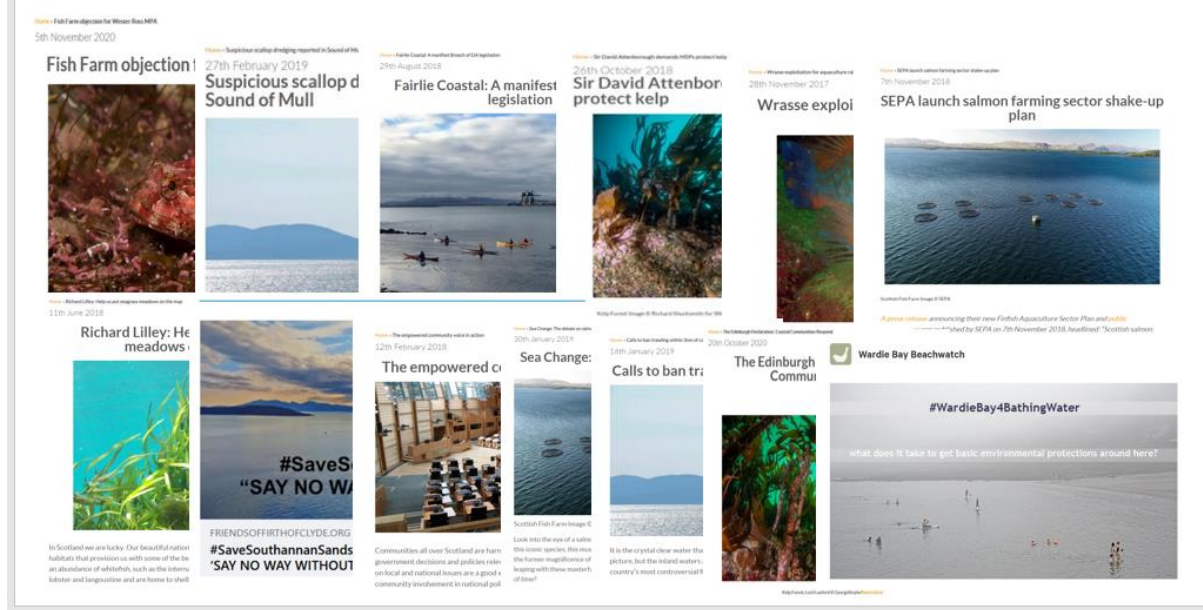
- Another important piece of feedback from G2 = need for further investments of resources into the individual community groups.
- We also see this as vitally important – as much as we want to support the development of the Network itself - CCN is only as strong as it's individual parts.
- In 2019 FFI launched the Community Support Fund, small-grants mechanism for members to help them deliver discrete local projects.
- To date supported delivery of 18 different local projects - 12 = biodiversity outputs – from native oyster restoration to sea lice modelling; 6 local governance and group development.
- Total of around £30,000 funds so far - roughly calculated that's leveraged around £300,000 of additional funds.

The flourishing of CCN



- With this and other small and medium sized grants across Scotland, seeing exciting new projects being developed by CCN members and other CBOs in Scotland.

The flourishing of CCN



- Of course lots of issues emerge in between the Gartmore events that we can't fully plan for - huge breadth of different issues that network members are speaking up on which we try our best to keep on top of...

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- and lots of important partnerships which the communities in CCN are forming, and movements which you are all part of like OurSeas.

The flourishing of CCN



- hopefully being part of the Network supports groups to amplify their voices on these issues and become aware of and part of these partnerships...

The flourishing of CCN



- Even government and industry partnerships which CCN is involved in - important to try to have a seat around the table and we can see value added when communities work together in these spaces.

The flourishing of CCN

CCN Statement: Salmon Farming in Scotland



- We try, therefore, to support members to organise around the issues you care about – best E.G. that approach working = very active CCN aquaculture group which many here are part of – will hear lots this weekend.

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Friends of Loch Etive



Eigg Environmental Action Group



Clean Coast Outer Hebrides



Skye Communities for Natural Heritage (SCfNH)



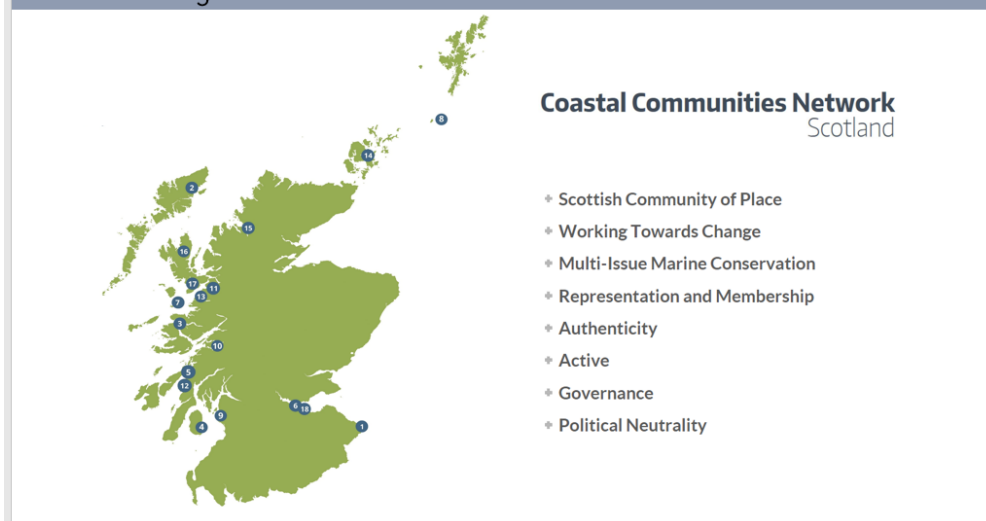
Edinburgh Shoreline



Wardie Bay Beachwatch

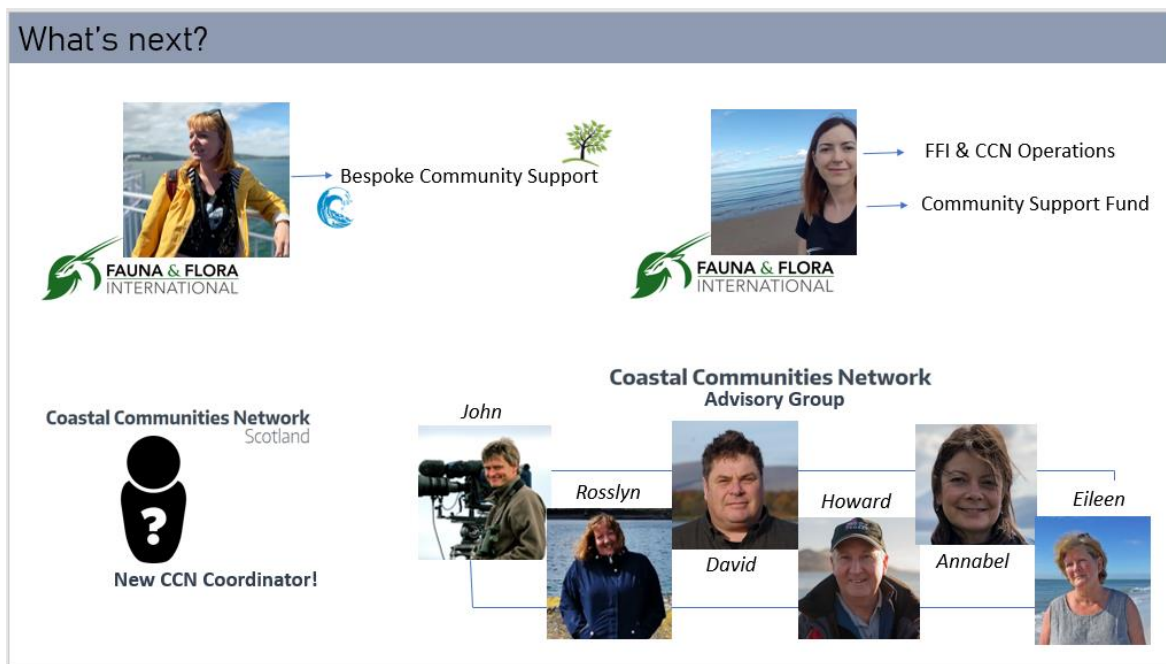
- Over this past 3 year period we've also had 6 new groups join the Network, bringing membership to a total of 18.

The flourishing of CCN



- With growth, we need more structure to manage memberships = we've helped members develop member criteria and a Community Pledge, which we used for last 3 or 4 members who have joined.

What's next?



- Also now est. central Advisory Group with 6 reps from across the network's membership.
- We hope that this will help to embed more robust governance within the Network in the future as we increasingly shift dependence away from FFI facilitation.
- To further this shift we've also been working on some internal structural changes in our wee FFI Scotland team in the past year.
- New CCN Coordinator – hopefully advertise for that v soon - new port of call for CCN.
- Hope = more independent community voice whilst also freeing up more of mine and Rebecca's time to focus on operational support + guidance to the Network and on delivering bespoke support to individual groups.

What's next?



- Recognise that Network quite different to when it first started - 18 members and more in wings – overall positive thing but also challenges – use the weekend for these kind of discussions as well.

What's next?

What is SMA2020?

Seaweed farm application process

Meet Scotland's community-led MPA officers!

QUICK! What can GIS do for you?
 ESRI TOOLS
 Pro – Desktop workhorse
 ArcOnline
 • Web Maps
 • Web App Builder
 • Survey123
 • Ops Dashboards
 • Field Maps (inc...)
 • Living Atlas
 • StoryMaps

- Tough past 18 months - far too familiar with our laptop screens - plus side = learnt we can keep in touch this way + more importantly, we can get through tough times together!
- As facilitators FFI can do so much with background mechanics - invite you all to step back and reflect this weekend upon what really makes a community network, for you?

What's next?



- What makes CCN work? What do we build on? What can we do better?
- Campaigning and pushing forward policy and environmental issues together is the big drive - but for it to work as a community network it has to be about more than that too.
- Things like a sense of friendship and morale are equally as important - building hope together for a better future - getting outdoors to share expertise and skills - getting creative and bringing art and fun into it all...
- Building on this stuff too, alongside the technical stuff important because it will allow CCN to sustain itself and ensure that it's fit for purpose into the future.

What's next?



- That's critical now more than ever - living through this irreversible moment in history in terms of looking after our natural world and our seas.
- Some big opportunities in front of us + some big challenges - from Highly Protected Marine Areas to Blue Carbon and inshore restoration to Community Wealth Building and trying to reshape our broken economy...

What's next?



- Ultimately this is what it's all about - I hope what's next in the future is Scotland's seas thriving and full of biodiversity.
- All united in this room in wanting to do everything in our power, during our own time on earth, to look after everything that it is home to.

What's next?



- CCN's future is in your hands – FFI's job to get ideas into open for discussion and to try to make a reality of what it is we all collectively want to achieve together.
- This weekend, as always, is for lots of inspiration, discussion & strategic planning for the future!