

## ANNUAL REPORT AUTUMN 2021 to AUTUMN 2022



**Here We Are** provides an interface between –

- The visitor and the visited
- The local and the incomer
- The young and the old,
- The more wealthy and the less wealthy
- Agencies and people on the ground
- The urban and the rural
- The past and the future

At its centre at Cairndow, at the head of Loch Fyne, **HWA** shows how a rural community, while loyal to its roots, makes its way in the modern world. We are strongly of the opinion that it is not just “outcomes” that count: more important is the process – this is the social capital that leads to real development. So we were delighted at Magnus Linklater’s comment *“If we are not aware of our own values we become victims of other people’s decisions. We have to bend to their agenda rather than ours, and that means not just a lack of trust in ourselves, but an aversion to risk and an inability to take decisions of our own.”*



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## Overview of the year Autumn 2021 – 2022

In last year's report I mentioned that the staff and the HWA centre were lucky to have weathered the weird covid years relatively well. And that, aware of the danger of being preoccupied with mere survival, we have taken some steps towards the future; consulting with the Community Housing Trust with the idea of a woodland croft at Ballure and requesting Christopher Cox, via Skills Development Scotland, to look at improvements to Our Power's organisation.

Then, early in the new year of 2022 I thought we should review what we have become, what we do and what we might now do. These thoughts came to mind because HWA had been in existence for 21 years and crucially, thanks to the success of our renewable energy initiatives, we now have a relatively stable revenue source. So, we called in Christopher Cox of Drumkirk to review HWA as he had done with Our Power.

On Lorna's Income and Expenditure sheet (p.10) it can be seen that the income from Our Hydro was less than in the year '20 to '21. This is due to two factors – an unusually dry summer and an unusual amount of maintenance work on the leats: opportunity due to the dry summer. I am pleased to say the maintenance work paid off and it's been raining again, a lot.

Other comments on those figures:

- Grant funding for The Path round the head of the loch was £127k in '20 – '21 and the total outgoing for construction for '20 – '22 is some £36k; £60k was owed to HWA/Our Hydro as grant money came in after contractors had to be paid. The balance of some £30k is now in the Path maintenance account.
- While £4.5k came in from the Post Office, nothing is shown going out because wages for our PO staff is included in our staff wages.
- Expenditure on displays and exhibitions was relatively large because of the substantial exhibition on our renewable initiatives spanning the years from 2004 until now.

The review of HWA took time, the actions are taking even longer, meantime: -

Dot and Fiona were bringing the work on the Heritage Lottery Fund to completion. This included being able to add weekly news on our website and commissioning the graphs on the demography of Cairndow (not updated since 2014), now meticulously completed by Richard Hunt-Smith.



During the winter Dot and Fiona had the idea of holding tea parties for locals, young and old. As can be seen by the photo on the front, the draw wasn't just the elegant china and tablecloths but also the home baking. Sometimes these turned into photo viewings or discussions about Cairndow history.

The enthusiasm and the chat at the tea parties brought home to Dot and Fiona how prevalent isolation is in the community. Discussion with the local practice nurse led to the idea of 'Come On In'. The idea is that volunteers will visit those who live alone or whose family need a break. Awards for All has granted six months funding to set it up.

A prestigious exhibition demonstrating HWA's achievements with the HLF grant was held at Eden Court in Inverness. In addition, time and thought has gone into what will be a semi-permanent exhibition on the 'book board' at HWA. It will illustrate all the projects accomplished since 2002.

In July we gathered together to listen to and to contribute to Christopher Cox's review

Among the points discussed were –

- The Post office – to continue with it or not.
- The need to involve more of the community.
- What to do about Christina being older and spending more time with family.
- Now that we have stable revenue, how to set up the often talked about 'Community Fund'.
- What other community initiatives might some of our revenue be used towards?
- And new ideas.

So, what has happened or been learnt as a result of our New Year's resolve?

At the July meeting it was decided everyone could manage fine without Christina. As needed staff would take on more responsibility and might even benefit from a rest from her judgmental bossiness. Then after John, Dot, Lorna and I went on a summer trip to the Island of Ulva, where Wendy Reid a long-time friend of HWA was the development officer, it was decided to ask if she would come and assist on our development initiatives. She agreed.

At the July meeting it had been decided by a unanimous vote to continue the Post Office and advertise for staff. The post was filled, Fiona Marston suffered the laborious training, and then the frustration of what amounts to running a bank on behalf of the Post Office. Then in October there was an unanimous decision to close the Cairndow PO but retain our new staff member.

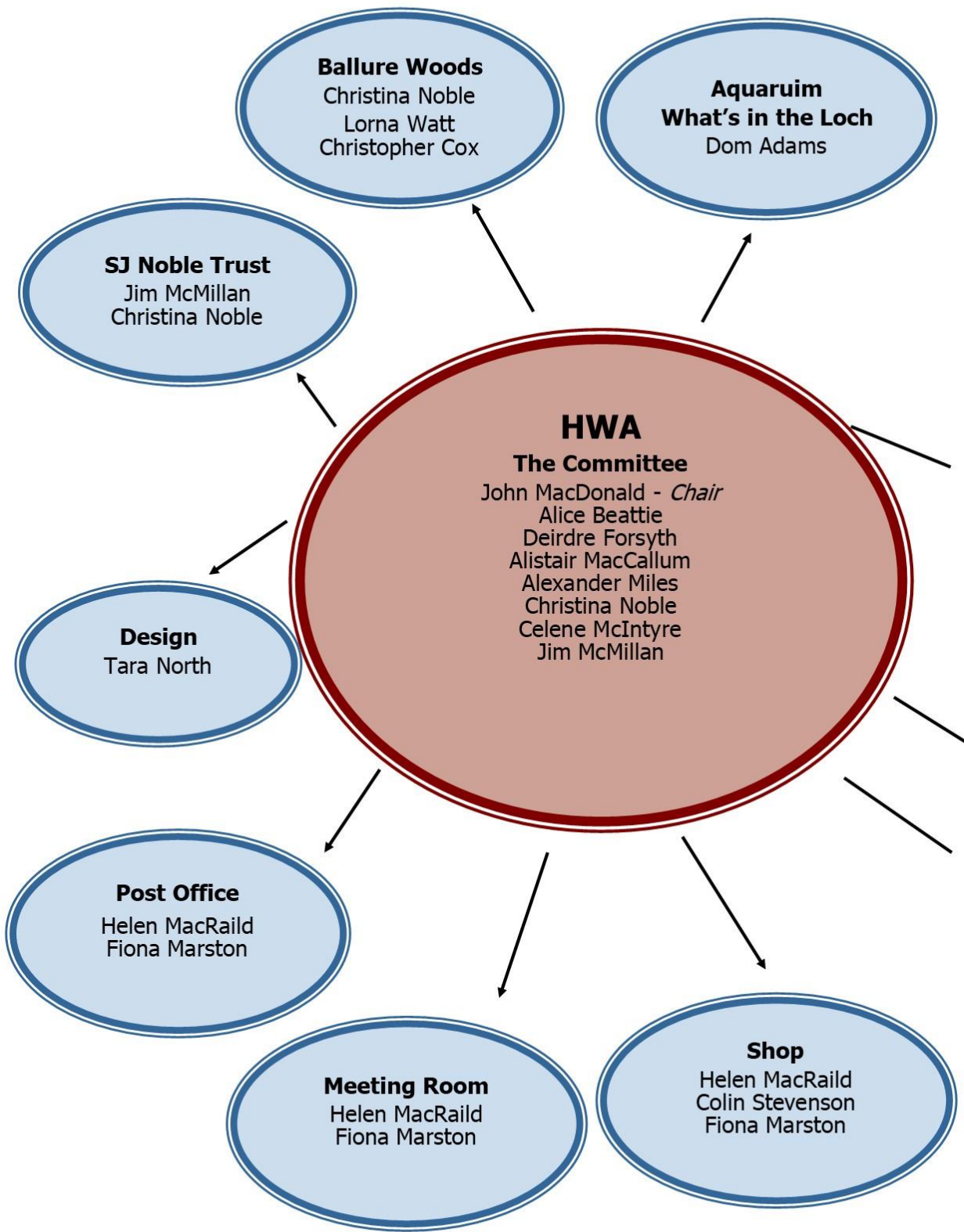
The Community Fund is set up. Applications are to be submitted by 1<sup>st</sup> December and 1<sup>st</sup> June each year. The fund will give grants amounting to £5,000 each year. (see p16)

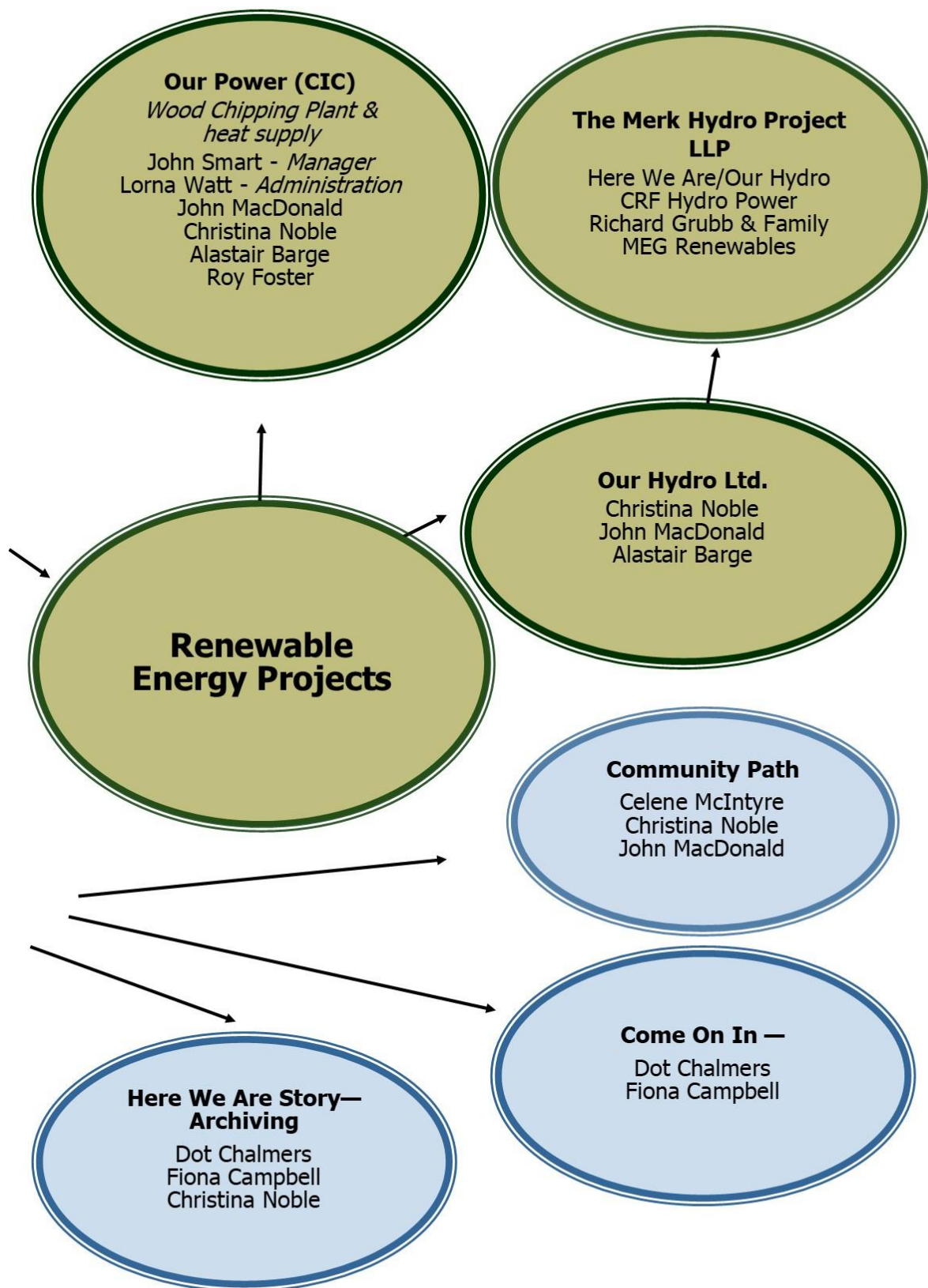
In my 'overview' last year I wrote that, though highlighted in the Community Action Plan of 2015 progress had not been made on either the Cairndow junction on the A83, nor housing for the elderly. We are now working on potential housing projects with the Community Housing Trust alongside Ardkinglas Estate, driving it forward with Wendy's expertise.

The A83 junction is also now on the 'to do' list, as are re-doing the walking map and some access adjustments to the path round the head of the Loch.

PS just in the October figures for Merk Hydro kwh generation - the highest for any month since we began.

# The Organisation Chart





# The Staff, Committee and Company Personnel

## Staff

### **Christina Noble**



Christina, one of the founders of Here We Are, is still the main contributor of ideas for innovative projects undertaken by this community organisation. Her dynamic personality and determination has helped secure HWA's financial situation, keeping the centre open to visitors and local people, not allowing set-backs to deter her from her goals.

### **Dot Chalmers**

Dot, our archivist, is very enthusiastic, collecting photos, information about the locality and taking voice recordings for transcription, a time consuming activity. Dot was responsible for overseeing the design of our websites and now keeps the content up to date. As well as creating a local walking map, Dot is also the driving force behind the many successful exhibitions that Here We Are has held.



### **Lorna Watt**



Lorna is now very experienced in administration work, having worked for several years as secretary to both Merk Hydro LLP and Our Power, the Community Interest Company which supplies woodchips for biomass plants. She is responsible for keeping track of stock as well as the income and expenses and keeping abreast of both Our Power and HWA's cash flows and budget predictions.

### **Helen MacRaid**

Helen, as office manager, is at the front desk of the Here We Are centre, ready to greet visitors and customers. She looks after the administration and important book-keeping for Here We Are as well as running our small Post Office. Helen is also responsible for running our small retail outlet, making sure the shelves are well stocked.



### **Fiona Campbell**



Fiona is a very enthusiastic researcher, delving into local history and working with Dot on our various projects. She has been busy this year with the Here We Are Story project, history of the Cairndow Hotel and gathering names connected to the War Memorial.

### **Colin Stevenson**



Colin's outgoing personality makes him the ideal person to meet and greet visitors to Here We Are. Providing badly needed weekend cover, he enjoys chatting and sharing his knowledge of the history and the surrounding locality with all who come into the centre.

### **Fiona Marston**



Fiona Marston came to run the Post Office. She was keen to come to HWA because of its community role, having been the Day Services Officer at Argyll and Bute's Struan Day Centre her background was with community organisations. Like all other members of our staff she found working with the Post Office too onerous. We are delighted she has joined our team welcoming visitors to the centre, and now she is using some of her previous experience assisting with the Come On In service.

### **Wendy Reid**

We have known Wendy for many years while she worked with Development Trust Scotland. In 2006 she was responsible for finding us funding for the business plan for Our Power. Through the DTAS and Strengthening Communities Fund we were enabled to do the Community Action plan for Cairndow in 2015. We have stayed in touch with Wendy over the years and knew she had moved to the Island of Ulva as a development officer. On a trip to Ulva this summer it occurred to us she would be an ideal person to come and assist us part time with development initiatives. We are delighted that she agreed.



## **SJ Noble Trust**

**Jim McMillan**



As one of the SJ Noble team, Jim acts as consultant for financial advice and handles their administration work. His advice given to SJ Noble Trust and to Here We Are is invaluable and he is a great asset to our group. He also entertains with his guitar and singing at the Hogmanay Ceilidhs.

## **Aquarium**

**Dom Adams**



Opening our new Aquarium gave Dom much work but his enthusiasm never wains. His knowledge of local waters, drawn from his experience working on the shores of Loch Fyne, is vital to the running of our Aquarium. His fascination for the creatures, seaweeds and anemones found in Loch Fyne is infectious and he always keeps the display colourful and interesting.

## **Committee**

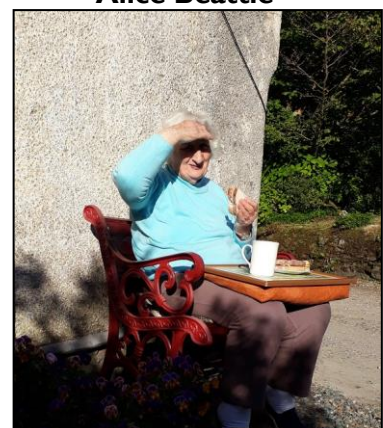
**Alexander Miles**



Alexander has been a member of our committee for many years now and willingly gives his advice and guidance to Here We Are. His cheerful personality and extensive knowledge make him a valued member of the team.

Alice is one of the founding members of the Here We Are committee. Since 1998, she has added to our local knowledge and never loses her enthusiasm for our aim to collect as much historical information about the local area as we can. We greatly appreciate the work she has done and the contribution she has made to our many projects.

**Alice Beattie**



**Alistair MacCallum**



Alistair is also one of the founders of Here We Are and the person we turn to for information on farming, weather patterns and history of the locality, tapping into his vast knowledge for many of our projects. His enthusiasm for here We Are’s aims and activities never wains and we are privileged to have him on our committee.

**Deirdre Forsyth**

Deirdre’s knowledge of legal matters has been invaluable to us. She is always willing to give practical advice on running of Here We Are and when problems beset us, her cheerful and optimistic personality keeps us looking forward, making her a much appreciated member of the committee.



**John MacDonald**



John has been Chair of Here We Are committee for many years. He cheerfully takes on the responsibility of chairing the meetings, making sure everything is done according to the rules and makes valued contributions to the discussions. John is also Director of both Our Power and Our Hydro, always willing to support the companies with advice and practical help. As an experienced tradesman, we know we can turn to him for help with maintenance and technical problems. We admire his commitment to Here We Are and its aims.

**Celene MacIntrye**

Celene’s determination and hard work saw the creation of the walking path between the two parts of Cairndow. The same enthusiasm has driven her to obtain grants for the introduction of electric bikes into the community. Never shrinking from a challenge, Celene is an asset to Here We Are and the local community.



## Our Power

### John Smart



John has been with Our Power from the very beginning. He runs the chipping business, ordering timber, chipping and organising deliveries, making sure that everything runs smoothly and dealing with problems calmly and efficiently.

### Alastair Barge

Alastair was on the board of AIE and is a trustee of the SJ Noble Trust. He is a halibut farmer and has many years' experience of business in Argyll and its impediments. He is a director of Our Power and buys woodchips for Otter Ferry Seafish Ltd.



## Staff



*Here We Are Staff*

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

HERE WE ARE Income and Expenditure – Comparison of this year's figures to last years.

	Apr '20 - Mar '21	Apr '21 - Mar '22		Apr '20- Mar '21	Apr '21- Mar '22
<b>Income</b>			<b>Expenses</b>		
SJ Noble/Merk Hydro- Admin work	6,300	6,000	<b>Operating Costs</b>		
Bank interest received	2	1	Assistance	0	10
Catering	0	25	Bank Charges	239	298
Consultation work	0	0	Work on Aquarium	1,846	1,768
<b>Donations</b>			Design work	0	300
Aquarium	15	162	Website Design	0	0
Churn	62	159	Displays/Exhibitions	619	3,810
Other donations	431	276	Hospitality	134	369
<b>Total Donations</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>597</b>	Insurance (incl 2 E-bikes)	2,225	2,480
Display of Planning Applications	0	0	Marketing, Advertising	0	237
<b>Meeting Room Hire</b>			Meeting Room Catering	0	0
Catering income	0	0	Office Supplies	1,598	914
Meeting Room Hire - Other	60	143	Postage	675	395
<b>Total Meeting Room Hire</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>143</b>	Printing	387	0
Membership income	47	10	<b>Professional Fees</b>		
<b>Community Initiatives</b>			Accounts	7,390	5,465
Path - Grant funding	127,615	0	Consultancy	2,860	2,940
Community Fund	4,000	0	Legal	0	0
Electric Bikes/Sheds- Grant	22,232	2,083	Other	9	336
<b>Total Community Initiatives</b>	<b>153,847</b>	<b>2,083</b>	<b>Total Professional Fees</b>	<b>10,259</b>	<b>8,741</b>
Rechargeable income	0	0	<b>Stock Purchases</b>		
Sales Commission	0	0	Books, Maps, Stamps	153	1,019
Post Office Revenue	4,856	4,571	General Shop Purchases	640	767
Merk Hydro Community Payment	10,600	11,130	Newspapers	0	0
<b>Our Power - Donation towards Core Cost</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>Total Stock Purchases</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>1,786</b>
<b>Our Power - Contribution towards Salary cost</b>	<b>12,300</b>	<b>12,600</b>	<b>Streamline</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>MERK HYDRO REVENUE</b>			<b>Subcontractors</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Hydro Revenue	72,442	53,406	<b>Subscriptions</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>REVENUE GRANTS</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Telecoms, ICT</b>	<b>3,203</b>	<b>3,450</b>
Clachan Flats Windfarm Trust - New Year Event	0	0	<b>Total Operating Costs</b>	<b>22,115</b>	<b>24,719</b>
Heritage Lottery Fund - Here We Are Story	45,100	36,080	<b>Property Costs</b>		
Argyll & Bute Council - Coronavirus Support Scheme - Core Costs	10,000	0	Cleaning Costs	530	400
<b>HMRC Furlough Grant Scheme</b>	<b>8,797</b>	<b>0</b>	General Maintenance	2,487	1,898
<b>Mothers' Messages Sales</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>5</b>	Lease costs	1	1
<b>Other Online Sales</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	Non Cap Furn & Equipment	36	1,767
<b>Shop Sales</b>			Utilities	3,795	4,030
Books, Maps, Stamps	88	597	<b>Total Property Costs</b>	<b>6,849</b>	<b>8,096</b>
Newspapers	29	11	<b>Legal/Consultancy Work - Ballure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,050</b>
Office services	1	9	Path Construction	20,533	15,301
Shop Sales - Other	665	1,893	Rechargeable expenses	916	0
<b>Total Shop Sales</b>	<b>783</b>	<b>2,510</b>	Community Fund Expenses	3,900	0
<b>Total Sales Income</b>	<b>803</b>	<b>2,515</b>	Here We Are Story - expenses	4,969	8,912
<b>Sundry Income</b>	<b>4,397</b>	<b>4,949</b>	Electric Bikes/sheds - Costs	14,901	12,769
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>335,079</b>	<b>139,115</b>	<b>Staffing Costs</b>		
			Employer's NI	3,683	3,339
			Pension Payment	621	524
			Travel & subsistence	27	31
			<b>Wages and salaries</b>		
			Core	60,020	51,735
			Here We Are Story	23,505	34,790
			<b>Total Staffing Costs</b>	<b>87,856</b>	<b>90,419</b>
			Sundry expense	573	361
			<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>162,617</b>	<b>161,632</b>

## Here We Are Story

The “Here We Are Story – Heritage Lottery Fund

By the end of 2021 people were beginning to get out and about more so we decided to have a photograph display day, inviting local people to come and see the many photographs we have on our new website viewing them on the large screen in the centre. They were able to give us information on the old photographs so that added to our collection.



*Big discussions over who is who!*

From the beginning of 2022 until the end of the project we have continued to add projects and edit our new website, we have continued to archive old documents and store them correctly in the archive cupboard, this will be ongoing even when the project has finished.

After our photograph day we thought that it would be a good to have Afternoon Teas for local people to get them out meeting people after being shut in for so long. These afternoons have been a great success and carried on every month until the summer when people were then able to go places. We will continue to have them again over the winter months. We are very lucky to have two excellent bakers in the village!



*Our afternoon teas*



We organised a two-day audio editing training course by Douglas Roberts for local groups and our community, it was well attended, and everyone learnt lots about audio recordings. We are now able to take oral recordings of local people knowing that we will be able to use them in different digital platforms.



*Audio training days*

We had another photo repairs training day by David Fiddes this was open to the public, a group of us have now learnt how to repair damaged photographs, they can now go on and show other members of their community



*photo repair workshop*

At the end of the project, we had an exhibition in Eden Court, Inverness to display the “Here We Are Story” and in December we had another one in Here We Are, along with our popular Afternoon Teas!

### Quotes from Annie Tindley and Robin Lingard for the Inverness Exhibition launch

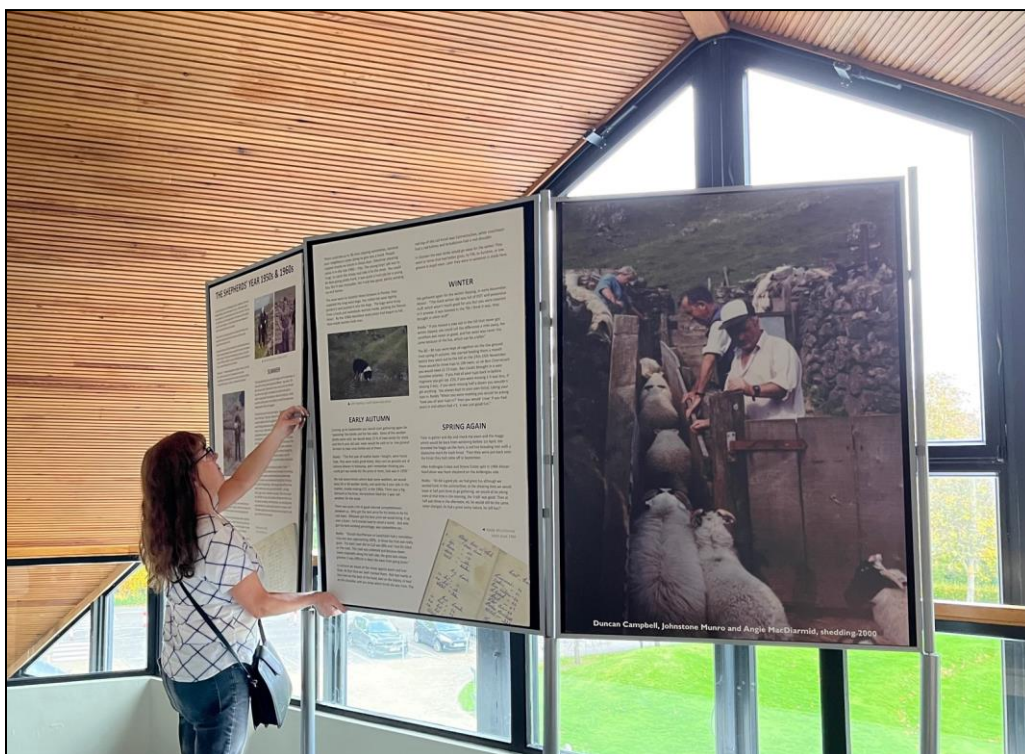
#### Prof Annie Tindley

**Head of School of History, Classics and Archaeology, University of Newcastle** - *We are here to celebrate the collective work of Here We Are, one of Scotland’s leading community organisations and one which has always put its history and local, community knowledge at the heart of how it thinks about the present and future. As this exhibition shows, by putting local knowledge and history front and centre, the people and the community can find confidence in their strengths and think creatively about what kind of future they want to build.*

*This work is also a leading contribution to our historical understanding of remote and rural Scotland – not just Cairndow and Argyll but the many, other communities like them across the country. Here We Are done this by capturing the knowledge and expertise of the people who live, work and visit there through a series of important projects, four of which are showcased here – Our Houses Their Stories, Weddings, Holidays in Cairndow and Shepherding.*

*Every project leaves a legacy of new skills learned and greater confidence built for the future. Their work and the projects showcased here promoted genuine two-way and democratic interactions between professionals and experts and local people and the community – this has always been at the heart of Here We Are.*

*I hope you’ll join me in congratulating them on their pioneering and vital work, and long may they continue leading the charge and showing us all how it’s done.*



Part of our exhibition at Eden Court

**Robin Lingard** - In view of the themes of the exhibition, which is being launched today, with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, it is entirely fitting that Professor Tindley has concentrated on the contribution made by the talented folk at Here We Are to researching and celebrating the history of the community they serve.

The need to tell a series of stories within the building then led to the recruitment of a group of enthusiasts to put together small exhibitions based on their local knowledge. What you will see today is the highly professional culmination of that work. So the concept of engaging the community to tell its story to visitors – and to its own members – had taken root, much as Christina had hoped.

So today, twenty-one years on from the opening of the Here We Are centre, this pioneering community organisation has a turnover of over £100k and employs eleven people in an organisational structure with two major subsidiaries. With a healthy operating surplus, it is able not only to continue its original aims - educating and entertaining visitors through engagement with the local community – but also to take on a range of other projects to support and enrich the lives of local people. Here We Are has been able to use its skills and its income across a far wider horizon of activities than might have been specified in any grand plan drawn up to satisfy the requirements of funders.

They should be congratulated for all they have achieved and for all the work this exhibition celebrates. I have no doubt their future will be equally bright! Thank you!



Our end of project exhibition and afternoon tea

## Come On In

Here We Are was delighted to be successful in getting funding from National Lottery, Awards for All, Community Fund to pilot a new project for 6 months, started October 2022, called “Come On In”.

Our project is to have volunteers visit housebound or lonely isolated folks for a chat. We have quite a large proportion of elderly people, some are being cared for by their elderly partner and some living on their own. People are struggling without support and suffer from loneliness; this was highlighted during Covid when HWA carried out a survey. It is good for our project to start making a difference.

We have 11 volunteers. Jayne Barnett, Manager of Visiting Friends, Helensburgh came to do a training day for our Volunteers. We have been sorting out Disclosure Certificates and already volunteers have started this much needed service.



## Here We Are – Community Fund

**At last, we are self-sufficient, able to cover our running costs, including paying 11 staff.**

So now thanks to our remarkable staff, Our Power and Our Hydro we are in a position to initiate a Here We Are Community Fund. The idea was proposed by our chair John MacDonald. It has taken two years to establish the financial viability and time has been spent discussing how it might be set up.

Our proposal is that its first year will be a trial to see how it goes. We anticipate being able to give grants amounting to £5,000 for this year, and probably for ensuing years, depending how it works out. Though applications do not have to be from a constituted body they will have to be considered to be of community benefit. This would include applications for assistance with education and apprenticeships.

Funds will be granted twice a year, 30<sup>th</sup> June and 31<sup>st</sup> December. Applications will need to be submitted before 1<sup>st</sup> June and before 1<sup>st</sup> December.

## Post Office

The Post Office had been running for six years during which time the workload increased significantly. This was caused mainly by Post Office Ltd taking on banking, including business banking. Staff felt overwhelmed with the amount of cash being passed over the counter, only to have to send it all out again. It was felt by all the staff, that running the Post Office was not viable and was a drain on our resources, so, sadly, it was decided to close it down in October.

## Aquarium

Our latest addition to our Aquarium is a sand pit for children to play in when they are visiting. It has also been very popular with the children from Cairndow Community Childcare.

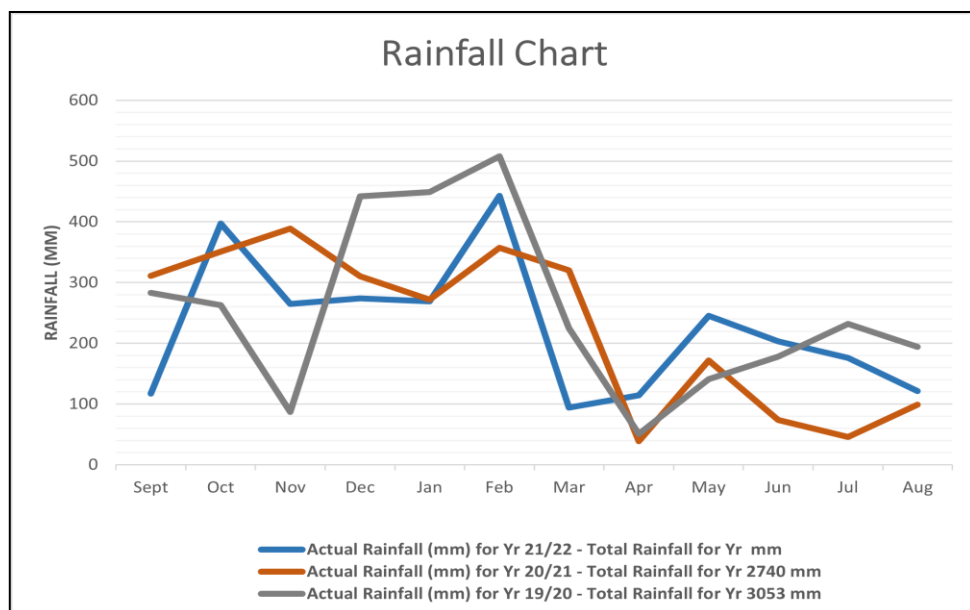
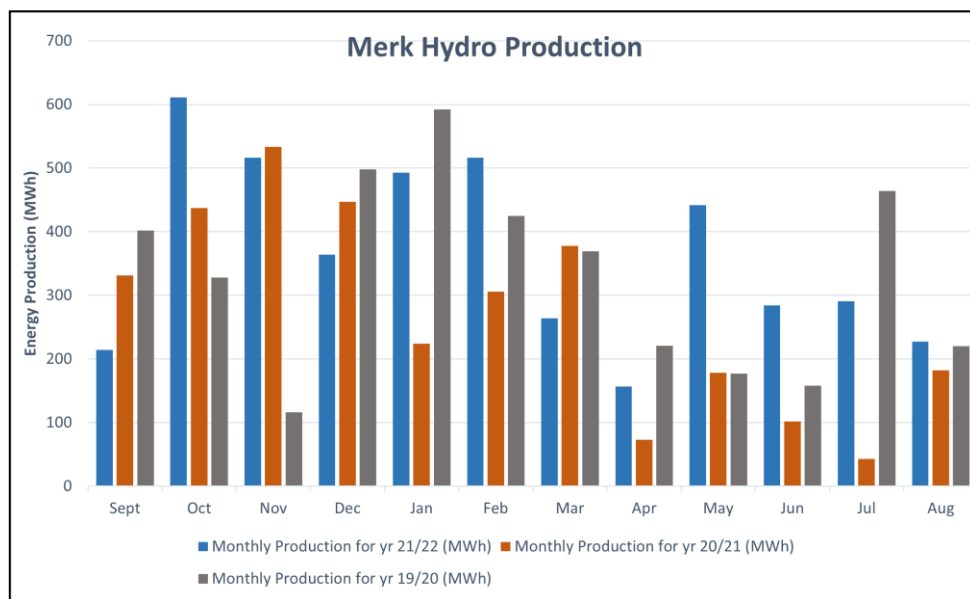


## Merk Hydro

The Merk has now been in operation for seven years and has been very successful.

During the last year, Merk Hydro generated 4.3 gigawatts compared to 3.2 gigawatts last year. As can be seen in the graph below, during September 2021 – August 2022 there were several months of extremely wet weather, giving us high production.

There have been no major problems or repairs during the year apart from normal maintenance. We are grateful to Roy and Martin for their constant work and attention, making sure the Merk Hydro runs efficiently and smoothly.



The above Rainfall chart has been made possible, thanks to Alistair MacCallum who collects the rainfall level every day. It is much appreciated by us.

## Our Power

Our Power started trading in November 2007 and initially we were presented with many challenges and set-backs. However, happily, we went from strength to strength, providing our customers with a high quality, low moisture content, woodchips, while keeping our carbon footprint low by working within a 30-mile radius of our chipping plant.

Like other businesses countrywide, the last year or two have given us many challenges, with increased materials and running costs, not least the rise in fuel prices and timber. We are proud to have kept Our Power running successfully during difficult times.

We have, in the past, struggled to obtain enough timber but we now have an additional supplier – DSHwood, so hopefully we will be able to keep up our supplies.

Over the winter months of 2021-2022, we found it impossible to purchase adequate amounts of timber, so, to keep up with our customer demand, we had to acquire a supply of dried chips. Customer loyalty is very important to us and we felt it was vital to make sure their boilers kept running.

Going forward, we have started to stockpile a large quantity of timber, currently seasoning and will be ready for this winter.

We have signed a new contract with Cooke Aquaculture for the next heat season. We are continuing to supply our customers who have been loyal to us over the last few years, all of whom have been essential to the growth of Our Power.

Our Power was audited by Woodsure in the spring of this year and continue to be an approved supplier of quality woodchips. This is necessary for customers who claim the RHI payment.

Fortunately, this last year has not presented Our Power with any major mechanical problems with our lorries, tractor or chipper.

We are looking forward to the year ahead and are optimistic that our excellent track record will continue. Our thanks go to John Smart and Alastair Fraser for their commitment and hard work and also gratitude goes to John MacDonald for his continuing help.



