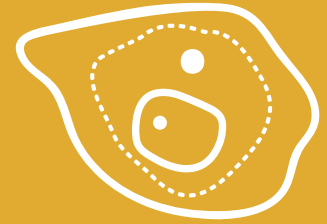


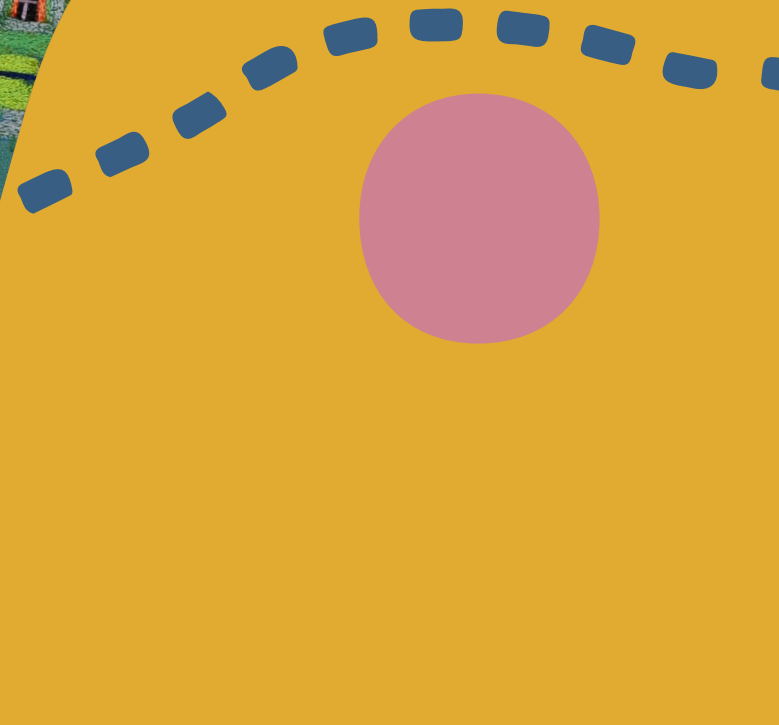
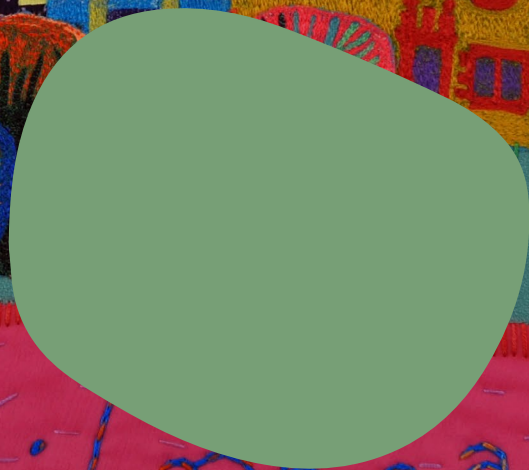


CHARTS.
ARGYLL & ISLES



Annual Review

2025–26



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About

The CHARTS network supports a sustainable future for the culture, heritage and arts sector in Argyll and Bute.

It was developed through the Creative Scotland and Argyll and Bute Council Place Partnership Programme, with additional European funding secured through the Leader programme. CHARTS became a registered, membership-guided charity (SCIO) in 2019.

We aim to:

- Foster collaborative working across the whole culture, heritage and arts sector
- Build the area's cultural profile
- Co-operatively grow our audiences and customers by marketing ourselves and others locally, nationally and internationally
- Co-design and deliver partnership projects that engage communities and visitors
- Advocate for the needs and benefits of cultural activity

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Future Island-Island. Kirsten Millar and Dr Jessica Bates at Rathlin West Lighthouse, February, 2026. © Screen Argyll

Welcome



I am delighted to introduce our Annual Review 2025–26. This year saw the most welcome change, much due to Development Year support from Creative Scotland, leading to us becoming a Multi-Year Funded organisation for the first time. This expressly acknowledged the strategic importance of our organisation to Argyll and Bute in a national context and greatly supports our plans to increase support to our members and help meet what are among the severest demographic challenges faced by any region in Scotland.

Our Development Year included a robust review of operations and infrastructure, including membership surveys and the establishment of revised and new governance policies and handbooks, as well as the introduction of new staff roles, to help strengthen the operational infrastructure and improve sustainability. Our work has also included the creation of a new Environment Action Plan and an Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, with related data collation now informing all aspects of service delivery.

CHARTS has attracted more than £1.5 million in inward investment into the cultural economy of Argyll and Bute in the past five years alone. This year, our projects have been supported by

a range of national bodies including Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Foras na Gaeilge, Museums Galleries Scotland, the Baring Foundation, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Art Fund. Academic relationships and support have also increased, and now include the University of Ulster, the School of Innovation and Technology at the Glasgow School of Art, the University of St Andrews, the University of Glasgow and Glasgow Caledonian University.

Our work has been made possible by the continued financial support of Argyll and Bute Council, which contributes to essential staff and delivery costs. We have also strengthened our partnership with Argyll and Bute Council, managing the care and development of the unique regional arts asset, the Argyll Collection, a notable group of artworks (including works by well-known Scottish and Ugandan artists) that serves as a key educational resource for schools throughout Argyll.

This year, we were also most fortunate to gain the support of the Paul Mellon Centre to conduct research supporting the potential of a catalogue with new learning and teaching resources for the Argyll Collection. Other key council assets supported include our work in partnership with liveArgyll. Since 2022, we have

worked together to help manage the care and development of the council's sole museum in Campbeltown, and we are increasingly working with Kilmartin Museum, supporting its responsibility for the Campbeltown Museum archaeology collection. Building opportunities for the arts, museum and heritage engagement overall, we plan to develop awards for artists over future years, and this has most recently attracted the interest and support of the British Museum.

All this has been made possible through the relentless drive of our staff, both employed and freelance, led by Executive Director Kathleen O'Neill, supported by our strong board. Trustees have offered significant voluntary time to review and endorse changes throughout this year, with my special thanks to all, and particularly to the board subcommittees led by Liz Hunter, David Watt and Dr Michael Johnson.

Seymour Adams
CHAIR



*Image (right): Ceanglan Chaluim Chille, Alasdair Whyte/
MacIlleBhàin and John Cameron (August 2025).
© Rutger Emmelkamp*

How we work

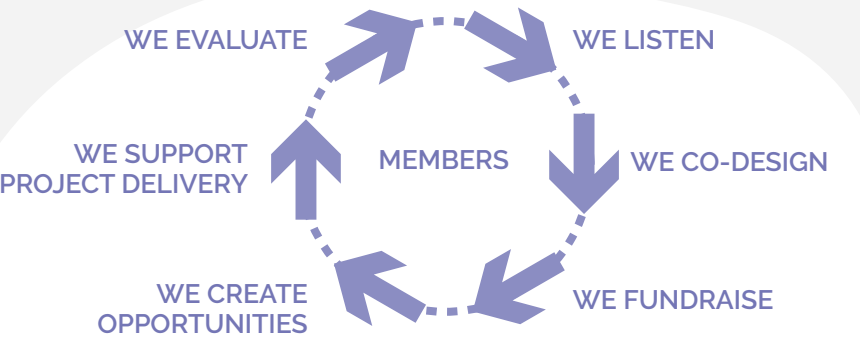
The Board (2025–26)

Seymour Adams	CHAIR
Dr Michael Pierre Johnson	VICE-CHAIR
SCHOOL OF INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY, GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART	
Liz Hunter	SECRETARY & CHAIR, HR SUBCOMMITTEE
David Watt	CHAIR, FINANCE & RISK SUBCOMMITTEE

Rosemary Power	
Ruth Wishart	
<i>Ex-Officio Trustees:</i>	
Cllr Luna Martin	ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL
Dr Michael Pierre Johnson	VICE-CHAIR & CHAIR COMMUNICATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

The Board is supported by:

Arlene Cullum	ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL TRANSFORMATION AND REGENERATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
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Our way of working creates a virtuous cycle focused on members and their needs.

Core staff

Kathleen O'Neill	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (F/T)
Kirsten Millar	INTERIM ASSISTANT DIRECTOR & LEAD COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING (F/T)
Moira Chapman	HEAD OF FINANCE & OPERATIONS (P/T)
Gillian Rodger	FINANCE & ADMIN ASSISTANT (P/T)

Project teams consist of employees and highly experienced freelance staff commissioned on a project-by-project basis. These staff members work to fixed-term contracts to support arts and heritage commissions and projects with costs met by project funders. During 2025–26, liveArgyll, working in partnership with CHARTS, supported the employment of staff at Campbeltown Museum.

All staff work closely across project themes as appropriate and are guided by the Executive Director, forging skills networks to ensure that all strategic goals are met.

Argyll and Bute Council and Creative Scotland provided year-round support in 2025–26 to contribute in part towards staffing costs and operational delivery.

Membership support

CHARTS currently has 760 members (individuals and organisations), and to help inform ongoing work, in 2025–26, a membership support review was carried out. Accompanied by the development of an Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, the results of feedback and member surveys now act to inform our aims for the extended reach of our services across four areas:

- Bute & Cowal
- Helensburgh & Lomond
- Mid Argyll, Kintyre & Isles
- Oban, Lorne & Isles

Argyll and Bute is Scotland's second largest local authority area, with 23 inhabited islands. The area experiences some of the greatest challenges faced by any community nationally: economic deprivation, rural inequalities, connectivity complexities, a fragile rural transport network and environmental impacts caused by climate change.

Such a geographically and demographically challenging location means that the engagement of members living in local areas is particularly critical to meeting the network's goals. Members' feedback continues to advise us and provide insights for fundraising.

Member support aims currently include:

- Increased opportunities to engage members professionally in support of local placemaking development and projects
- Develop a range of opportunities across arts media
- Increased award distribution for the development of professional practice
- Increased support to young people; engagement and training
- Increased CHARTS visits to local areas, to connect and update
- Continuation of island development support

- Continuation of regular member newsletter
- Increased digital resources
- Increased access to the staff team for one-to-one guidance and advice
- Improved connectivity with our members through website development

Working groups

Working groups – including a range of key stakeholders – support award-giving, project commissioning and staff recruitment processes. These groups include representation from project partners, members and funding bodies, to encourage and signpost engagement and maximise opportunities.

“

For me, CHARTS provides a crucial bridge between national funding opportunities and the strengths and challenges particular to practicing in this part of the Gàidhealtachd. Their understanding and sensitivity to these challenges of place – and the insights and creative potential they hold – and their efforts to support the development of practices and approaches over the longer term, building on previous commissions, means work can be developed that has its roots firmly in Argyll but is of value far beyond it.

– Alice Stillman, CHARTS member

Delivery themes

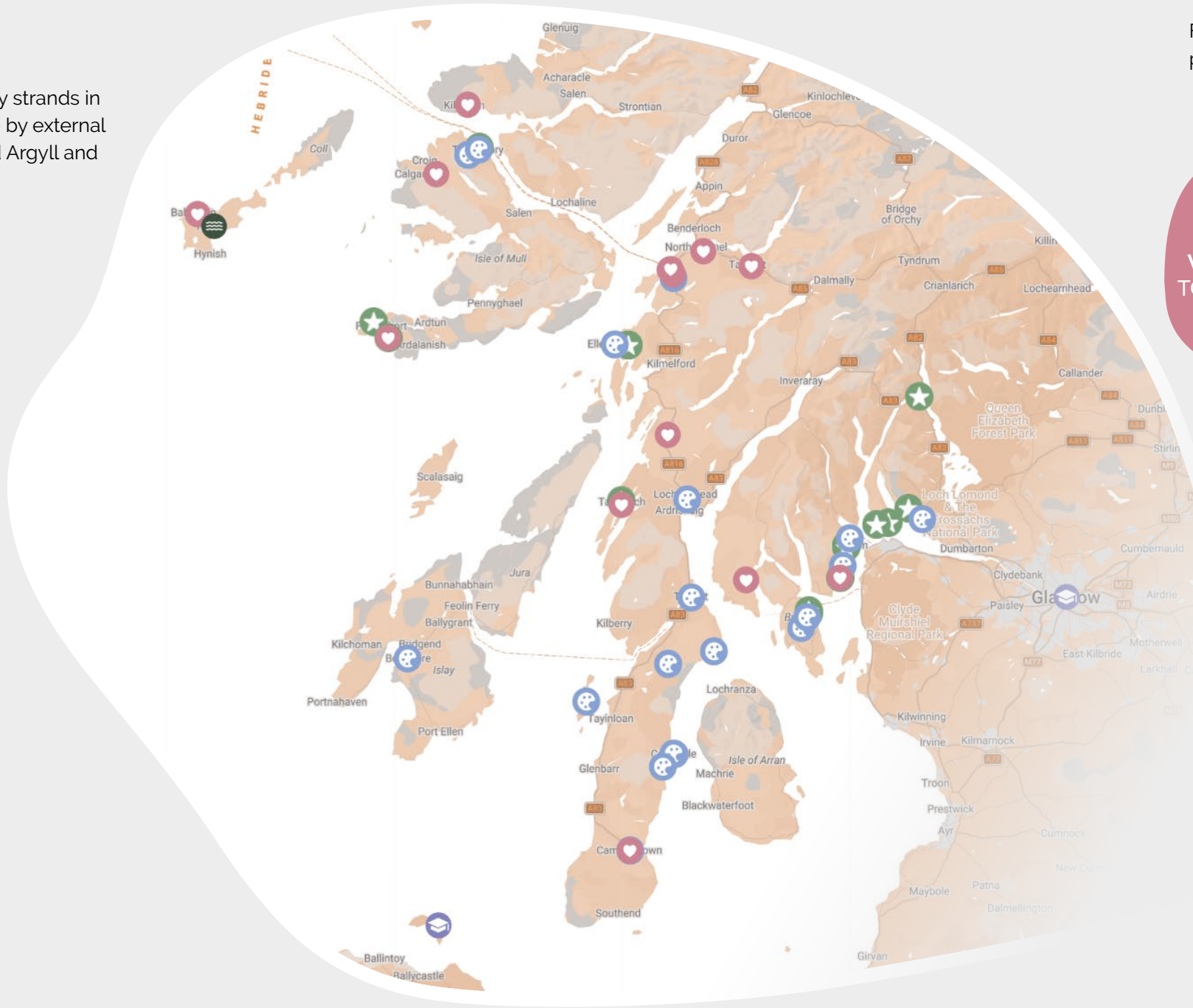
This review highlights case studies from key delivery strands in the CHARTS Business Plan 2025–28, made possible by external investment and support from Creative Scotland and Argyll and Bute Council:

- ★ A. Visual Artist and Craft Maker Awards
- 🎨 B. Collections Support
- ❤️ C. Gaelic Development
- 🌊 D. Coastal Cultures

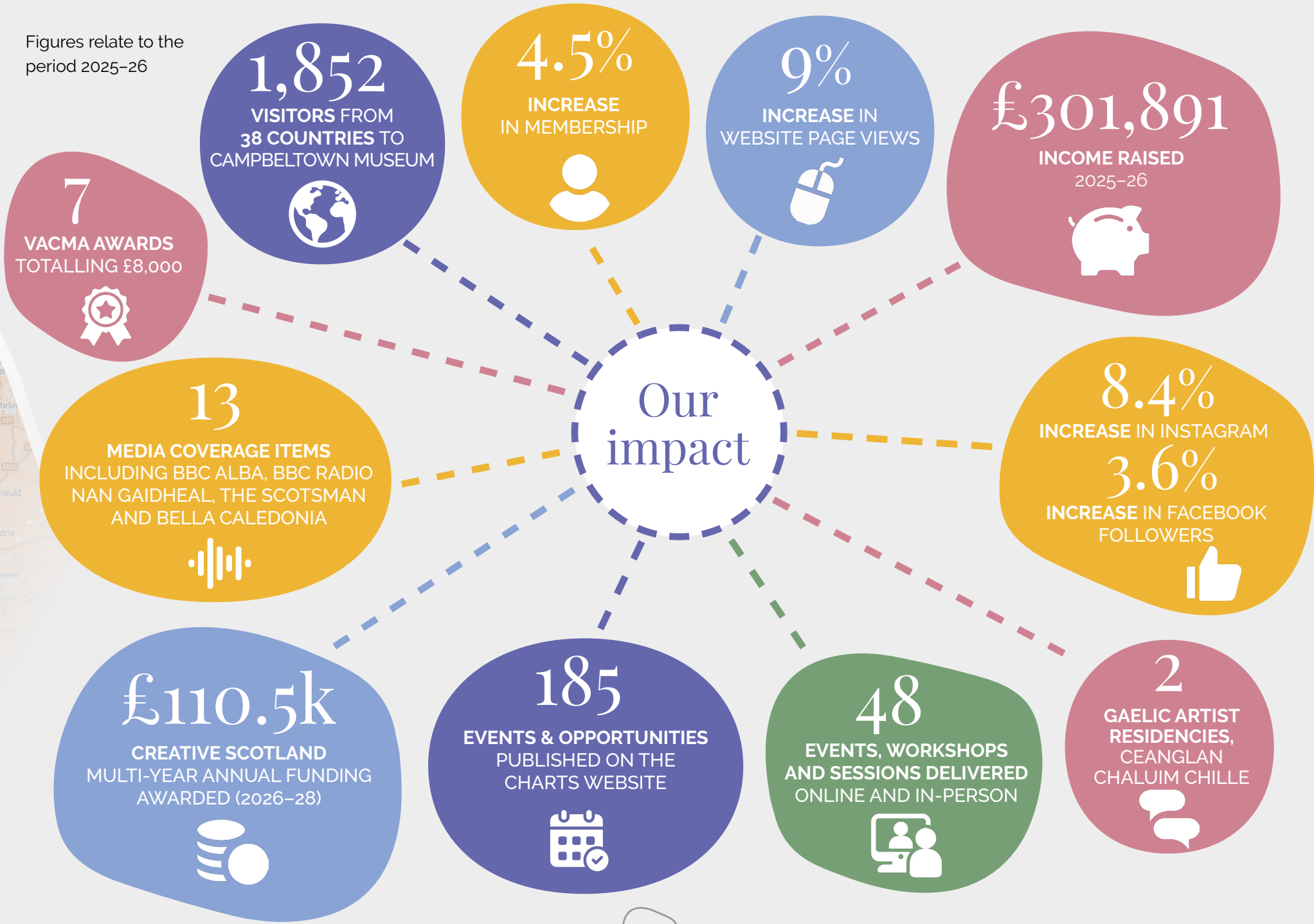
“

CHARTS is a change-making body continually in transition, developing opportunities year-on-year through innovative partnerships. It's invigorating that within seven years of the charity being set up, our operational model is now acknowledged by Creative Scotland as regionally important in a national context and that our international work to profile Argyll practitioners globally is steadily growing.

– Kathleen O'Neill,
Executive Director, CHARTS



Figures relate to the period 2025–26



Continuing professional development

The extent of our reach would not be possible without creative leadership and a flexible and strong staff team. This year we have created two new part-time roles, a Head of Finance and Operations (Moira Chapman), and Finance and Admin Assistant (Gillian Rodger) who have rigorously helped implement change, made possible by development investment from Creative Scotland and Argyll and Bute Council. We have also created the new role of Interim Assistant Director to assist meet our goals and to support succession planning. This brought Kirsten Millar, a former apprentice within the organisation, already holding an MA in Contemporary Art Practice, into a senior management position due to her immense professional growth across the past five years. The positive impact of our staff team was highlighted as an organisational strength in this year's member surveys and Gaelic service delivery, including Gaelic culture and heritage project teams, was particularly commended.

Supporting staff training, whether for employees or freelancers, is paramount to meeting our Fair Work objectives. This year, we have particularly built on the potential of staff engaged in supporting heritage and museum collections, to enable strategies for new multi-media arts engagement and increased cross-curricula and community use of Argyll and Bute Council-owned collections in the future.

“

Being supported to take part in the Engage Extend Leadership programme really was invaluable. The course provided me with time and space to reflect on my practice as a curator and visual arts education professional, encouraging me to reassess, question, challenge and learn. Not only did the process build my confidence but it enabled me to build a network of colleagues from across the UK, offering fresh perspectives and opening up new pathways for the future.

The opportunity to take part also in Mental Health First Aid training was fantastic for both consolidating my existing knowledge around working with vulnerable individuals and groups as well as further building my confidence and understanding. The course content underlined the importance of access to culture and the arts in providing safe and nurturing spaces for anyone suffering mental health challenges. It also highlighted the need for openness, flexibility and care within the workplace, something which CHARTS excels at. I am incredibly thankful to CHARTS for investing in me and for their positive ongoing encouragement and support.

– Ros McKenna, freelance project manager, The Argyll Collection



Image: Ros McKenna (left) at the Engage Gathering (Re)making Practice 2025 journal launch in Bradford (November 2025). © Engage, photography by Minyung Im

“

Support from CHARTS as the named researcher supported by the Paul Mellon Centre, works to benefit me on both a professional and personal basis. This is an invaluable and exciting opportunity for me to be able to apply my skills as an art historian with the key aim that my work will lead to a catalogue of the Argyll Collection in future years and new teaching resources. This project leading to my first large scale publication, also deeply matters to me as it will directly benefit not only the community and area I live in but potentially impact the educational opportunities to be offered to my own young children in the future. Without CHARTS' support I would not have such an outlet to apply my professional skills in a project directly relating to my place of residence in Argyll and Bute.

By telling the collection's wonderful story, its capacity will be known more widely than ever before, opening up new links and ways of potential working with this unique arts asset, to the public, educators, and arts professionals, not only in the UK but across the world. My goal to shine a light on this outstanding 'hidden' collection hopes to not only facilitate usage but further enhance the life of the collection itself. Situated within educational, social, economic and curatorial contexts, I believe this research period will not only act to restore understanding of the artworks but help direct its sustainable future.

– Kirsty MacNab, Lead Researcher, The Argyll Collection



“

Key disability training takeaways were around language and the removal of barriers and never to make assumptions. This assisted my confidence, building knowledge about discriminatory and exclusionary practices.

– Muriel MacKaveney, Project Facilitator

“

Disability awareness training was beneficial in many ways, from raising awareness around stereotypes to correcting terminology and understanding the legal protections in place.

Most importantly for me, the trainer highlighted the barriers faced by people with disabilities that extend beyond accessibility and the transport to a venue.

I am now more comfortable planning activities and events that are accessible and adaptable to different learning needs.

– Khara McPhail, Heritage Access and Learning Coordinator

Image (above): Kirsty MacNab, Argyll Collection Research. © CHARTS

Key funders

		 ALBA CHRUTHACHAIL	
		 Bringing people and art together	 Foras na Gaeilge
		 Highlands and Islands Enterprise Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean	 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND ÀRAINNEACHD EACHDRAIDHEIL ALBA
		 Inspiring readers and writers	
			

Partners & collaborators

	 Argyll & Bute Climate Action Network	 ARGYLL & BUTE MUSEUMS & HERITAGE FORUM	 Argyll Estates Archives	 argyll & the isles coast & countryside trust
 Connecting you to art	 Arts and Humanities Research Council			 EIRINN IS ALBA
	 KNOWLEDGE + INNOVATION = AGENCY			
 Supporting Scotland's Museums		 SEACHDAIN NA GÀIDHLIG WORLD GAELIC WEEK		
	 University of St Andrews	 university of the arts london		

A. Visual Artists and Craft Maker Awards

CHARTS manages the annual Visual Artist and Craft Makers Awards (VACMA) scheme on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council and Creative Scotland, to provide bursaries to support visual artists and craft makers in their creative and professional development. These are awarded at two levels: a £500 bursary for early-career artists and a £1,000 bursary for those with more than three years of experience. The selection panel typically meets annually in February to distribute awards.

As a member-guided SCIO, applications for VACMA and other opportunities help inform us of the ongoing needs of artists within the region, which, in turn, assists ongoing development and sustainability. As ever, CHARTS has noted the ever-increasing demand for financial support to artists, and VACMA provides an invaluable opportunity for rural artists wishing to develop and strengthen their practice.

In February 2026, nine awards were granted to artists and craft makers for personal and professional development and in March 2026, seven awards were granted. VACMA has supported a variety of work, with recipients going on to undertake international residencies and research projects, receive Creative Scotland Open Funding, explore new routes to market, achieve solo exhibitions, and develop new methodologies.



Image (left): A Strange resting place for a goddess.

Image (below): Mary Mary. Artwork and photography © Anoushka Havinden



Image (right): Glass Heads, work in development by Pinkie Maclure (2026). © Pinkie Maclure



CASE STUDY: Bobbi Cameron

Bobbi Cameron was a recipient of VACMA in February 2025 to support attendance at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture's intensive nine-week summer residency programme in Maine, USA, from June to August 2025. Bobbi was awarded an 80% scholarship to Skowhegan and received a VACMA to cover the remaining funding, allowing Bobbi to fully immerse themselves in the residency without financial worries. In addition to supporting their understanding of themselves as an artist through professional support and mentoring, the residency also enabled Bobbi to build international networks.

“

I am continuing to work internationally, and the VACMA award played an important part in that. I live on the Isle of Seil, where there aren't many artists working professionally in contemporary art. This opportunity allowed me to live, work and develop close friendships and working relationships with 60 other artists from all over the world. Our continued collaborations sustain me creatively whilst living rurally. It is an invaluable opportunity.

– Bobbi Cameron, Awardee



Image (top): participants in the residency programme at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, USA, summer 2025. All images © Bobbi Cameron



Image (left): studio space at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture.

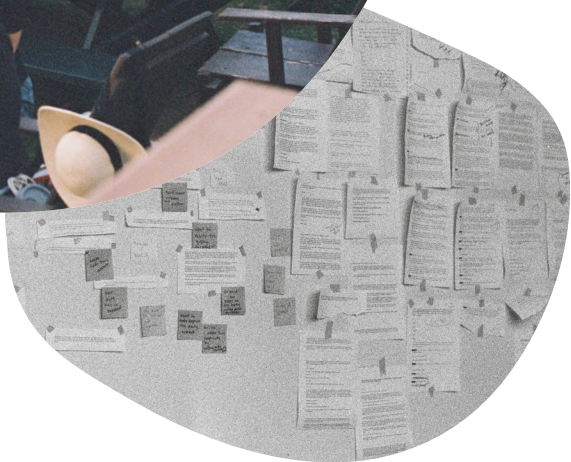


Image (above, right): Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture.

CASE STUDY: Sunny Townsend

Sunny Townsend received an Early Career Bursary as part of VACMA in February 2025. The award supported Sunny, a newly graduated artist, in purchasing a Beevers Press for their studio in Argyll and in developing new artist networks.

The hydraulic press was delivered to Sunny's studio in 2025, and its purchase has allowed her to develop and sustain a printmaking practice and invite others into her working space to increase local opportunities for printmaking. Sunny has since identified and built connections with local artists and groups keen to use the press due to the lack of local printing facilities.

“

Leaving art school can feel isolating, and you can quickly lose momentum. Without the vibrancy, peers and permission to make art, I faced financial and societal pressure to give up. The support from VACMA was far more than £500 – it gave me recognition, confidence that what I was trying to do was valid, a boost to my self-esteem when I really needed it, and an important addition to my early-career artist CV.

– Sunny Townsend, Awardee



Image (above): Sea Creature Rubble, zinc plate lithograph on paper (2024).

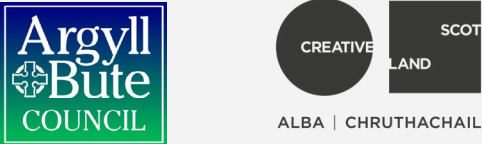


Image (right): Installation of the Beevers Press.

Both images © Sunny Townsend

B. Collections Support

CHARTS provides essential support to council-owned art collections. This includes working in partnership with Argyll and Bute education and economic development services to continually review and increase engagement with the Argyll Collection and supporting the management of Campbeltown Museum Collection in partnership with liveArgyll. This area of culturally strategic support includes fundraising to build profile, audiences, education and community engagement as a critical component to the care and protection of such significant regional assets.



Collections Support staff 2025–26 included:

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Ros McKenna | ARGYLL COLLECTION, PROJECT MANAGER |
| Kirsty McNab | ARGYLL COLLECTION, RESEARCH |
| Rhona Taylor | ARGYLL COLLECTION, ARTIST |
| Khara MacPhail | CAMPBELTOWN MUSEUM, HERITAGE LEARNING AND ACCESS COORDINATOR |
| Muriel MacKaveney | CAMPBELTOWN MUSEUM, PROJECT FACILITATOR |

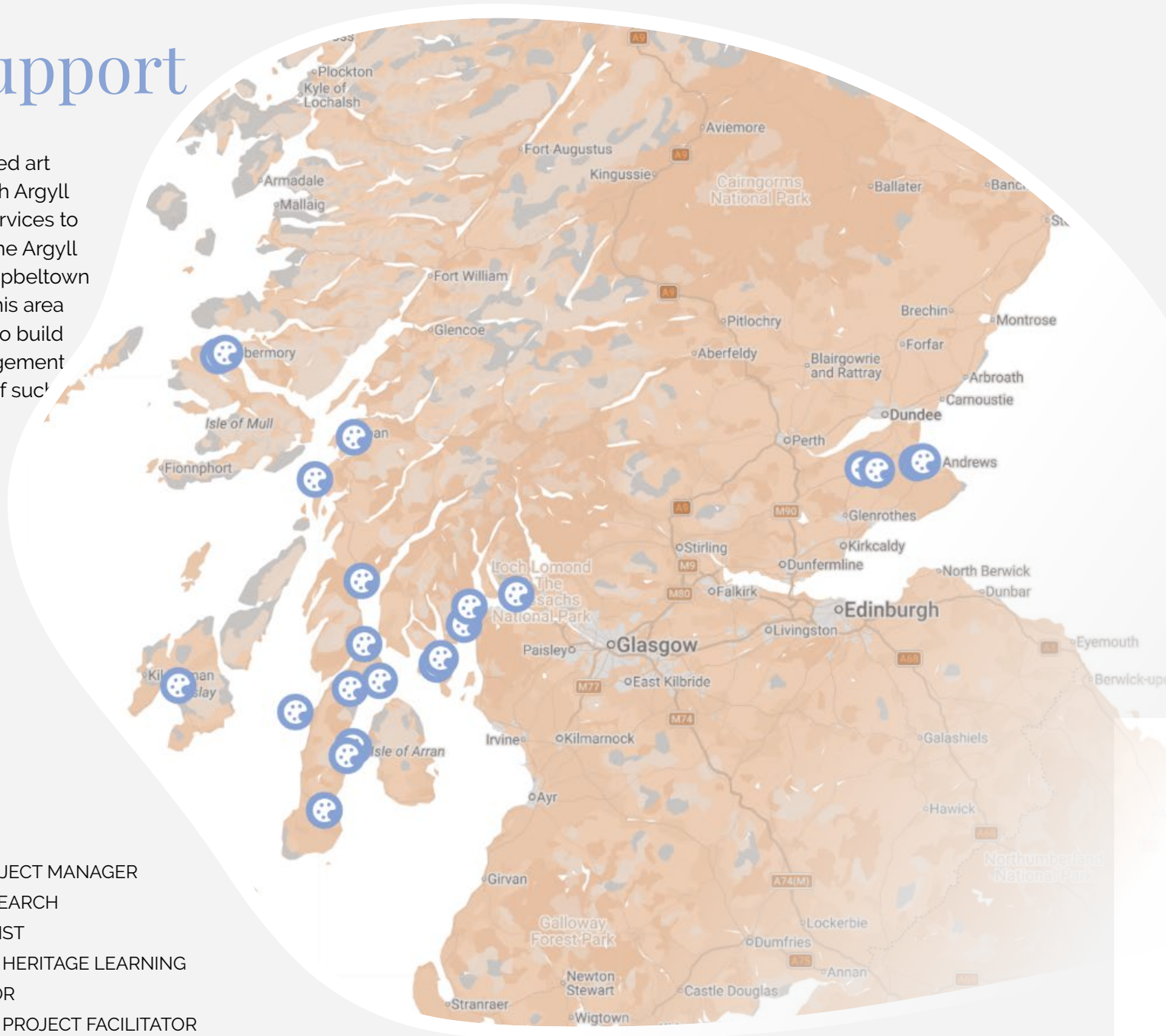


Image (right): children from Hermitage Primary school take part in a visual literacy session using Hexbon Owiti 'Ostriches'. © CHARTS

Image (second right): children from Dalintober Primary School and ELC use resources from 'the Argyll Collection, Reconnected, The Superpower of Looking' session. © Dalintober Primary School and ELC



CASE STUDY:

The Argyll Collection, Reconnected

Argyll and world-wide

The Argyll Collection, often described as a "museum without walls", was designed to make contemporary art accessible to rural schools and communities. Collected between 1960 and 1990, the Argyll Collection now comprises of 179 works, paintings, ceramics, textiles and sculpture, acquired by the author and political activist Naomi Mitchison and Argyll County Council Arts Advisor Jim Tyre, and made possible with the authorisation of the former Argyll District Council. Works were sourced from artists in Scotland as well as South and East Africa, to encourage the use of art as a learning tool. Purchases were authorised up to a value of £100 per item, and the collection is now believed to include one of the most significant groups of work by African artists in Europe, cited by Dr Kate Cowcher at the University of St Andrews, and features works by some of Scotland's most prominent visual artists. Initially supported by the Art Fund, CHARTS and Argyll and Bute Council have worked together to revitalise how the Argyll Collection is curated, understood and shared. The central aim is to ensure that the collection continues to benefit young people in the context of modern-day Argyll.

Our work intends to cement and grow the collection's original aims while recognising changes since the 1960s in education and work opportunities in the region. Acknowledging that the collection – mostly located in schools and libraries to date – is, in fact, museum-worthy, CHARTS applies the same standards to its review, care and protection as those expected in a museum context. The programme is strategically supported by the Executive Director and delivered directly by the Project Manager, both of whom have extensive museum experience. Further, an ongoing partnership agreement with the council to protect and use this asset to meet its original purpose, aims to underline its cultural value to the region and emphasises the importance of implementing national care and loan standards. The scope of our work is far-ranging, with the intention of CHARTS, the council and academic partners to increase co-working in the future.



Dr Kate Cowcher (second from right) and poet Dr Tawona Sitholé (right), with African artworks from the Argyll Collection as part of the Black History Month event, 'African Art for the People Open Day', Cupar.
© Goodwin Ogbuehi

“

Argyll school children have very little chance of visiting art galleries. Even if there is an art exhibition in the few centres of population, only those who live close are likely to see it.

– Naomi Mitchison, 'An Artistic Endeavour in Argyll',
The Times Educational Supplement, 23 September 1966

Activities 2025–26 included:

- Condition checks and a priority conservation plan
- Fit-for-purpose storage facility created and managed, supported by liveArgyll
- Artworks identified as at-risk stored correctly and securely in fit-for-purpose storage
- Catalogue managed and maintained with all current locations and status recorded
- School and community engagement.

Image (right): children from Dalintober Primary School and ELC use resources from the Argyll Collection, as part of a 'Reconnected, The Superpower of Looking' session. © Dalintober Primary School and ELC.

Engagement included:

- Collaboration with Campbeltown Grammar School to create a dedicated gallery space within which a new display of the Argyll Collection is now exhibited. New interpretive labels were also developed and displayed alongside artworks.
- Collaborative relationships were further developed with Tarbert Academy, Dunoon Grammar and Lochgilphead Campus.
- Visual literacy sessions were developed and delivered in Hermitage Primary and Kirn Primary Schools.
- Working collaboratively with Dr Kate Cowcher, St Andrews University, and as part of Black History Month, seven artworks from the collection were exhibited in October 2025 at the Castlehill Community Centre, Cupar, in Fife. The event was extremely well attended by a range of age groups, including local families and individuals, people familiar with the Collection and
- who had travelled from further afield, students, and representatives from other organisations, such as the University of St Andrews and Fife Contemporary. The day was characterised by an overall sense of celebration and joy, with positive evaluative feedback from the 62 participants.
- Seven artworks from the Collection remained on extended loan to the University of St Andrews, History of Art department.
- Creative Connections, developing new opportunities with the Kintyre Link Club was designed and implemented in partnership with liveArgyll, and funded by Museums Galleries Scotland and the Baring Foundation.



“

As part of the new Campbeltown Grammar Collection, which took inspiration from the Argyll Collection, we have been able to create a new gallery space within the school.

This space allows the Argyll Collection to be seen in the proper setting and combines it with pupils' work which will be added to CGS's own collection.

This not only allows the new generation of artists to display their work, it also allows a new avenue of learning which includes curation, restoration, heritage studies and even event management. It also provides the opportunity within the entire creative industrial complex and will continue to allow pupils the tactile reality of how it is possible to work in this industry without the needed expectation of 'traditional' artistic skills.

This is all made possible thanks to Argyll and Bute's Culture, Heritage and Arts (CHARTS). This organisation is unique for its nucleus of resources, scope of many creative disciplines, as well as huge depths of opportunities to help bolster and grow the arts within the many diverse communities in the area. We have been able to lay the foundation of our CGS gallery on the shoulders of CHARTS, and we hope to continue to grow, expand and eventually be a contributor to such a wealth of resources and support.

– Luke Pilkington, Art & Design Teacher,
Campbeltown Grammar School



Images: Dr Tawona Sitholé leading a workshop, 'African Art for the People Open Day' in Cupar (October 2025). © Goodwin Ogbuehi

CASE STUDY: Creative Connections Campbeltown

Creative Connections, is an exploratory co-produced learning project, introducing new audiences to the Argyll Collection and to Campbeltown Museum. Through liveArgyll's partnership with CHARTS this project began in August 2025, working with the Kintyre Link Club. Key aims of the project are to develop skills and confidence, and enable increased access to both the Argyll Collection and Campbeltown Museum's social history and art collections, using new interpretive approaches. This project, which creates extensive new opportunities for participants and raises the museum's profile as a safe and welcoming place in the Kintyre area, will run to October 2026.

The Kintyre Link Club is a mental health and recovery charity established in 1999, for people living with conditions across the spectrum of mental illness, from bipolar and obsessive-compulsive disorders to depression, schizophrenia, dissociative identity disorder and anxiety. It provides peer and mutual support in a welcoming environment, allowing members to socialise, relax and learn, including assisting members to build friendships, lessen isolation and boost self-esteem.

Image (top): Creative Connections, Kintyre Link Club, James Morrison painting (November, 2025). Both images © CHARTS
Image (right): Kintyre Link Club members look at Argyll Collection artwork with project manager, Rosalyn McKenna.

At the core of Creative Connection is open and honest communication. It was imperative that mutually trusting relationships were built and established. Initial discussions highlighted the importance of a 'safe space' critical to Link Club members, as currently existing within their regular meeting place. To assist this, a series of outreach sessions were created from outset of the project, facilitated by Project Manager Rosalyn McKenna, taking works from the collection to the group. These sessions encouraged a 'slow-looking' approach, using the collection pieces as starting points for conversations and the sharing of ideas and thoughts. With the recruitment of Project Artist Rhona Taylor, in December 2025 and during a number of visits made to the Campbeltown Museum, themes and areas of interest amongst participants emerged. This creative collaboration will culminate in an exhibition at Campbeltown Museum in late summer 2026. Participants are also exploring the creation of artworks inspired by their responses to local places, with the potential for these pieces to be displayed in the town.





Image (left): Creative Connections, Kintyre Link Club (September 2025).
© CHARTS

“

The arrival of CHARTS at Kintyre Link Club in Campbeltown was met, at first, with muted enthusiasm. Many of us assumed it would be yet another group passing through, trying to entertain us for an afternoon. How mistaken we were. From their very first visit, CHARTS brought something different — something that has genuinely changed lives. A spark was lit in each of us. Through exploring pieces from the Argyll Collection and learning about their construction, history, and meaning, we found ourselves gaining a true education in art appreciation. What began as curiosity quickly grew into enthusiasm, pride, and a sense of connection to the collection. For some members, this new passion has travelled far beyond Kintyre, inspiring visits to galleries and exhibitions across Scotland. Others have discovered the confidence to begin their own creative journeys, producing artwork they never imagined they could make. Many of us have also taken great pleasure in stepping into the world of Naomi Mitchison, one of the remarkable minds behind the Argyll Collection, whose legacy CHARTS continues to care for. What CHARTS brought to our group was far more than a programme — it was an invitation to see ourselves differently. It has been an education, an inspiration, and an utter pleasure.

– Participant

“

I have felt I have really benefited from the CHARTS project, particularly valuing the opportunity to explore the collection in a relaxed and engaging way. I have developed a greater appreciation for art, recognising that it does not need to be perfect to be meaningful or enjoyable. This shift in perspective has helped build my confidence and encouraged me to engage more openly with creative activities.

– Participant

“

'J' experienced a stroke several years ago, which affected both his communication and the use of his dominant arm. Since joining the museum project, he has begun to re-engage in ways that feel meaningful and positive for him. Through the sessions, J has shown real determination to express himself, making a conscious effort to talk about the paintings and share his thoughts with others. In a supportive and relaxed environment, he has grown in confidence and is increasingly willing to take part in conversations that he may once have found difficult. A particularly powerful outcome has been J rekindling his love of photography. This has given him a creative outlet that works around his physical challenges and allows him to express himself in a different way. Overall, the project has helped bring J out of his shell — supporting his confidence, communication, and sense of identity, while reconnecting him with an interest that brings him genuine enjoyment.

– Participant

CASE STUDY: Live Literature, Folklore of Kintyre Campbeltown Museum

The CHARTS and liveArgyll partnership supports all aspects of Campbeltown Museum's development. Priority delivery areas include school and community engagement, which entails creating events and activities tailored to the needs and demands of the local people.

Each year, staff member Khara MacPhail designs and creates activities with authors with the support of the Scottish Book Trust's Live Literature programme, helping to reimagine museum spaces as explorative places for learning where everyone is welcome. In February 2026, Khara organised the online event, Folklore of Kintyre.

Feedback from previous events was used to create this project, specifically from parents and carers and teaching staff at the 2025 literature event. Their feedback and conversation highlighted the demand for family and adult literature events in the same informal style, and it was decided to hold the event online. The online format and the session being recorded meant that social barriers such as transport and availability were limited or removed entirely. Likewise, it enabled audiences in Argyll and further afield to attend, raising awareness not only of the museum's collection but also of the cultural heritage of Kintyre and Argyll.

The speaker for the evening was Dougie Strang, a storyteller and author whose work is inspired by the Scottish language and culture. Dougie used his experience to create a conversational session to highlight the folk tales of Kintyre and wider Argyll, and the use of narrative to bring the tangible objects in the Campbeltown Museum collection to life.

A highlight of the evening was the connection made between Gaelic and the art of storytelling and the links to the landscape. Described and centred around the word *Dualchas*, heritage, and the deep sense of connection and identity rooted in place and tradition.

Participants had many positive comments:

"Loved the stories and learning about the culture of Argyll."

"The speaker had just the right cadence for the stories,"

"Interesting and relaxed, as if you were in the same room."



Dougie Strang, storyteller and author.
© Dougie Strang

“

As a writer and storyteller, I've found Live Literature events to be a wonderful way to connect with a wider audience, whether in person or on Zoom. I found the team at CHARTS to be really welcoming and helpful, and it was lovely to engage with folk who are also interested in the heritage and culture of Argyll.

– Dougie Strang

CASE STUDY: Keeping it Creel, Knitting Heritage Campbeltown Museum

'Keeping it Creel' is an interactive learning project focused on the maritime heritage of Kintyre, encompassing themes of fishing, shipbuilding, lighthouses, navigation, and trade. This builds on evidenced community interest in maritime heritage and is funded by the Stafford Trust.

This project acts as a legacy project building on the success of Colmcille/St Columba Embroidery workshops hosted by CHARTS in 2023, which celebrated and taught embroidery skills to an audience of varying skill levels. These workshops highlighted potential methods for introducing audiences to museum collections and promoting cultural education through informal craft making sessions.

Keeping it Creel's focus is on the fisherman's 'gansey' or jumper. These jumpers are symbols of resilience and craftsmanship in coastal areas across Britain, where stitching and patterns were passed down through generations and were unique to the families creating them.

In the autumn of 2025, CHARTS advertised for a lead artist for Keeping it Creel, where applications were received from local textile artists.

The contract was awarded to Kate Davies, an outstanding and nationally recognised textile and knitwear artist living in Argyll.

Workshops were advertised as part of the museum's spring programme and received coverage in local newspapers. Four workshops were scheduled: three for adults and one for families, totalling 52 spaces. All four were sold out within 48 hours, and a waitlist was introduced due to exceedingly high demand.

Kate has designed a contemporary knitting pattern specifically for the project, which can be worked with traditional stitches and is designed to suit beginners and experienced knitters alike.

The local community has already been involved in the development process of these workshops. Local knitters have been part of the testing phase for Kate's newly designed knitting patterns, using locally produced yarn made. The tested patterns will be used in workshops during the autumn of 2026, and materials will be supplied.



Keeping it Creel, mini gansey (January 2026).
© Kate Davies Design

“

I attended the embroidery sessions, and it inspired me to start crafting again. Really looking forward to attending Keeping it Creel to be immersed in history while chatting and knitting!

– Participant

CASE STUDY: Heritage Hero Awards for Heritage Engagement Throughout Argyll

The Heritage Hero Awards led by Archaeology Scotland celebrate achievements in history, heritage and archaeology projects. The scheme's aims include enhancing self-confidence and wellbeing through engagement with challenging heritage projects; inspiring young people to cultivate a lifelong interest in Scotland's past; raising awareness of how to access Scotland's heritage in schools and youth organisations; and fostering connections among heritage organisations, community groups, and young people.

Since 2023, CHARTS has delivered over 300 accreditations. A total of 165 Heritage Hero awards were made possible across the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Isles area for participation in Campbeltown Museum's learning and outreach programme (2025–26).

A range of community groups, schools, and individuals received Heritage Hero Awards through their participation in CHARTS projects delivered at the museum, including Ceanglan Chaluim Chille Pilot residences and Creative Connections, where participants gained two levels of awards reflecting their engagement with heritage learning, with the majority at the Explorer level.

Since October 2025, 24 participants have been working closely with the Argyll Collection and Campbeltown Museum's collections to achieve Silver Awards, which require 30 hours of heritage-based activity, and participants have also been offered the opportunity to extend their awards to Gold level in 2026.

Image (right): Castlehill Primary School pupils with their Heritage Hero awards (April 2025). © CHARTS



“

The partnership between CHARTS and liveArgyll continues to bring tremendous results. From high-level work with Kathleen around museum accreditation to a wide and varied programme of events run by a great staff team, CHARTS has increased the museum's footfall and accessibility. I am particularly delighted that this now includes for local people of all ages and walks of life to be offered Heritage Hero Awards in collaboration with Archaeology Scotland, to acknowledge their achievements in growing confidence and skills built through project engagement. Due to building relationships and funding potential with local and national organisations, CHARTS is successfully developing the reputation of Campbeltown Museum across the region and beyond.

– Robert Judge, Area Operations Manager – Mid Argyll, Kintyre & Islay

C. Gaelic Development

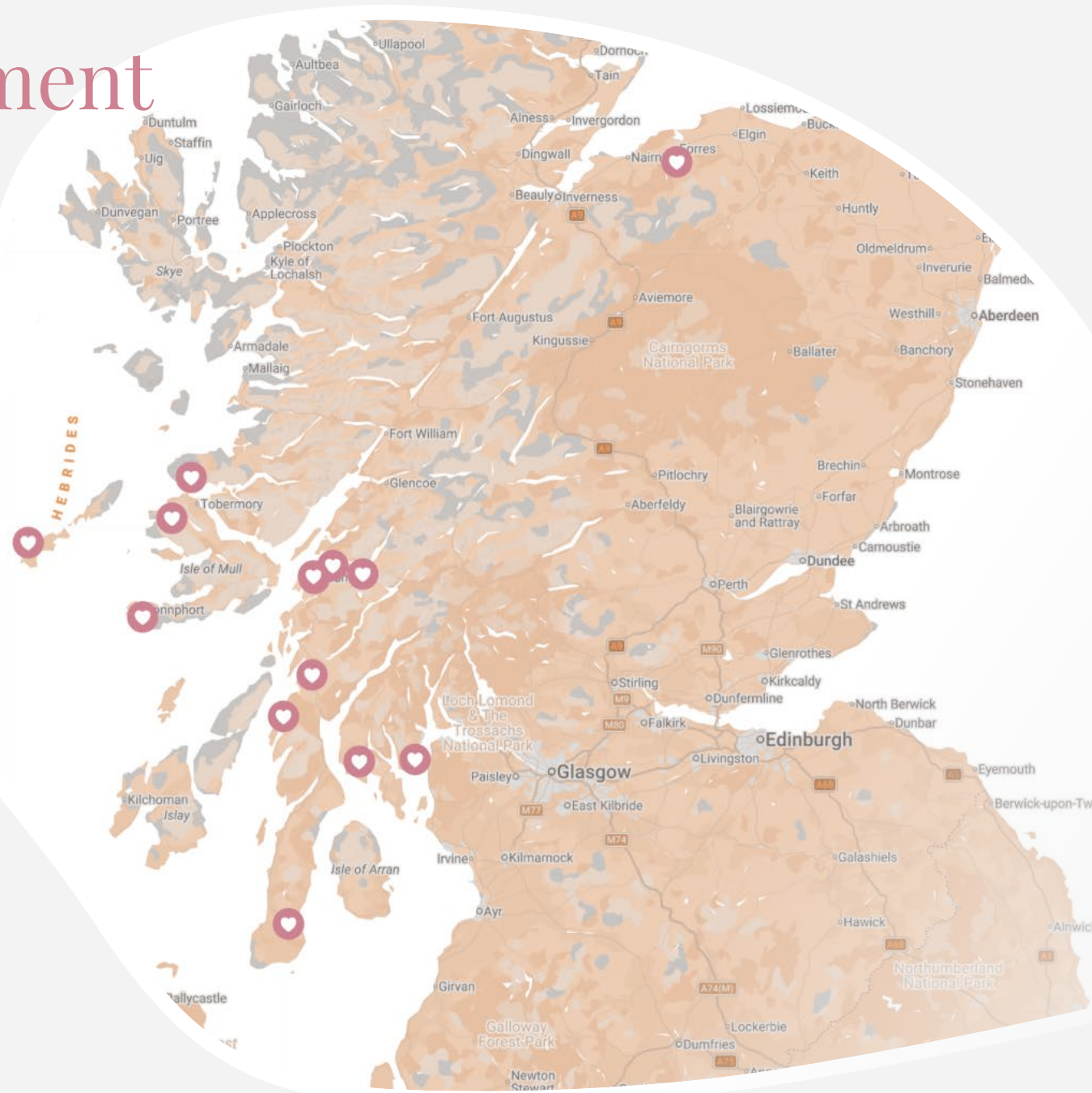
CHARTS employs a Gaelic Culture Officer to support all aspects of Gaelic development, including engaging with our members, community and strategic development partners. During 2025–26, this work has included projects supported by Bord na Gàidhlig and Foras na Gaeilge and extended consultation for a Gaelic Culture Strategy. Our aims are to build on achievements and lessons learnt since 2020 and to further build on our Gaelic Policy commitments to increase the use and the learning of Gaelic and promote a positive image of the language. Work to date has raised awareness through Gaelic media and in Gaelic arts, museums, heritage and placemaking contexts. Our work has also included the use of bilingual and trilingual services to support the ability of Scottish and Irish Gaelic speakers to engage with our workshops and events through the medium of their preferred language.



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL







Staff

Àdhamh Ó Broin
Muriel MacKaveney
Khara McPhail

OIFIGEAR CULTAIR GHÀIDHLIG, GAELIC CULTURE OFFICER
PROJECT SUPPORT
PROJECT SUPPORT



Image (above): Dr Alasdair C. Whyte/Macillebhàin visit to the Ross of Mull Historical Society's archive (August 2025). © KNOCKvologan Studio / Miek Zwamborn

Image (right): Clàr Nì Argáin is filmed by Andreas Wolff for the BBC Alba news feature on the Campbeltown Irish Gaelic song residency (October 2025). © CHARTS



CASE STUDY: Ceanglan Chaluim Chille

Mull and Kintyre

Ceanglan Chaluim Chille was designed as a pilot micro-residency programme to build interests across local areas and to further develop the legacy of St Columba/Chaluim Chille with links between Argyll and Ireland.

The residency series began with Dr Alasdair MacIlleBhàin (Whyte) leading a three-day Mull Residency, exploring cross-cultural connections between Scotland and Ireland through field research into language and Lived Cultural Experience on the island. This pilot residency was supported from conception to completion by the engagement of the host organisation and artists Rutger Emmelkamp and Miek Zwamborn, owners of KNOCKvologan Studio arts and research centre.

During the three-day residency, Alasdair conducted field research from his base at the studio, extending his linguistic and cultural inquiry into communities in the Ross of Mull through walks, story-sharing, a visit to The Ross of Mull Historical Centre and house visits to reach across generations. The home visits to Mull residents of Gaelic heritage were accompanied by CHARTS Gaelic Culture Officer and allowed for meaningful one-to-one cultural exchange through storytelling, song sharing, and hospitality.

Alasdair's time at KNOCKvologan was concluded with a public event, where hyper-local material relating to the island was presented, including the songs of Ross of Mull Gaelic bard Teonaidh Chailein. The event also included positive and illuminating discussion about the future of Mull, including plans for Ionad Gàidhlig an t-Sàilein (The Salen Gaelic Centre). Audience questions were encouraged and created space for conversation about how to deepen understanding of Gaelic culture and language in Mull, as well as how to better facilitate conversations between those indigenous to the island and those who have come to live and invest in Mull more recently.

The event was attended by Scottish artist Eoghann MacColla, who created a series of responsive zines in response to and ahead of his allocated 2026 residency at Campbeltown Museum. The residency allowed space for meaningful research and conversation about how to strengthen cultural relationships with the land and community, as well as an opportunity to visit the last culture bearers in the district, an area at risk of losing its connection to living indigenous heritage.



Dr Alasdair C. Whyte/Macillebhàin and Miek Zwamborn visit the Ross of Mull Historical Society's archive (August 2025). © CHARTS

The second residency explored cross-cultural connections between Scotland and Ireland, this time through song with award-winning Irish sean-nós singer Clár Ní Argáin.

During the three-day residency, Clár worked with almost 90 local community members, including Kintyre Link Club, to enable participation and cross-cultural musical exchange, where participants learnt Irish Gaelic songs along with their history and discussed their cultural context – including links with Scotland – in an informal and supportive environment.

The residency was enriched by local Irish residents of Campbeltown to engage with the workshops on Gaelic song, reinforcing the strong cultural ties between Argyll and Ireland and culminated in an evening concert at the museum featuring Clár and her County Kerry repertoire. Songs were performed from Central Argyll including with the support of local musicians Les Oman and Anne Leith, who contributed material from Kintyre. A segment of the event was promoted via BBC Alba's evening news programme An Là.

To mark the finale of Columban Connections' Campbeltown Residency, a céilidh-house style event took place at KNOCKvologan Studio in Mull, where songs from the week's workshops were performed.

Image: Rutger Emmelkamp and Miek Zwamborn from KNOCKvologan Studio in conversation with Alasdair Whyte. © CHARTS

Outputs:

- A new piece of creative writing (prose)

Residency outcomes:

- Strengthened connection with An Ros Muileach ~ Ross of Mull: its people and the land
- Strengthened Dr Alasdair MacIlleBhàin's approach to the Scottish Government for capital investment in Ionad Gàidhlig an t-Sàilein (Salen Gaelic Centre): a new Gaelic cultural and community centre in Muile ~ Mull
- Strengthened partnerships with KNOCKvologan Studio and hosts and artists Rutger Emmelkamp and Miek Zwamborn
- Facilitated new collaboration after the project between Alistair and Rutger on Gaelic terminology relating to local flora and fauna
- Strengthened partnership with CHARTS as an organisation and Gaelic Officer Àdhamh Ó Broin
- Strengthened partnership with the Ross of Mull Historical Centre and its staff
- Led to a potential digitisation and research project in collaboration with CHARTS and the University of Glasgow



“

The residency culminated with my reading of a new piece of creative writing, composed during my residency, as well as me sharing my methodology and workshoping local Gaelic songs. I am extremely grateful to CHARTS for providing me with an opportunity to develop my creative practice and compose new work on my native island among my own people.

– Dr Alistair Whyte



“

[Ceanglan Chaluim Chille] leaves behind more than an event; it strengthens a foundation. It demonstrated that our studio can be a welcoming space where Gaelic language and culture can be actively woven into new dialogues and creative practices. The project confirmed that our role, as relative newcomers to this cultural context, is not to speak for Gaelic culture but to listen, host, and create conditions where cultural exchange and lived experience can flourish. By doing so, we contribute to an ecology of culture that connects land, community, and artistic practice.

– Rutger Emmelkamp and Miek Zwamborn, KNOCKvologan Studio



Image (above): Ceanglan Chaluim Chille, Campbeltown Residency, Céilidh Chaluim Chille event with Clár Ní Argáin, Mull, KNOCKvologan (November 2025). © KNOCKvologan Studio

Image (right): Clár Ní Argáin teaches Irish Gaelic songs to the Campbeltown Link Club during a fun-filled afternoon session. © CHARTS

CASE STUDY: Cruthaich Earra-Ghàidheal / Create Argyll Awards Throughout Argyll

Cruthaich Earra-Ghàidheal was designed in 2025–26 as a place-based award scheme for native Gaelic speakers and fluent learners in Argyll and Bute, based on a former national awards model, Duais Dileab Chaluim Chille / The Colmcille Legacy Award, established by CHARTS, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Argyll and Bute Council during the pandemic.

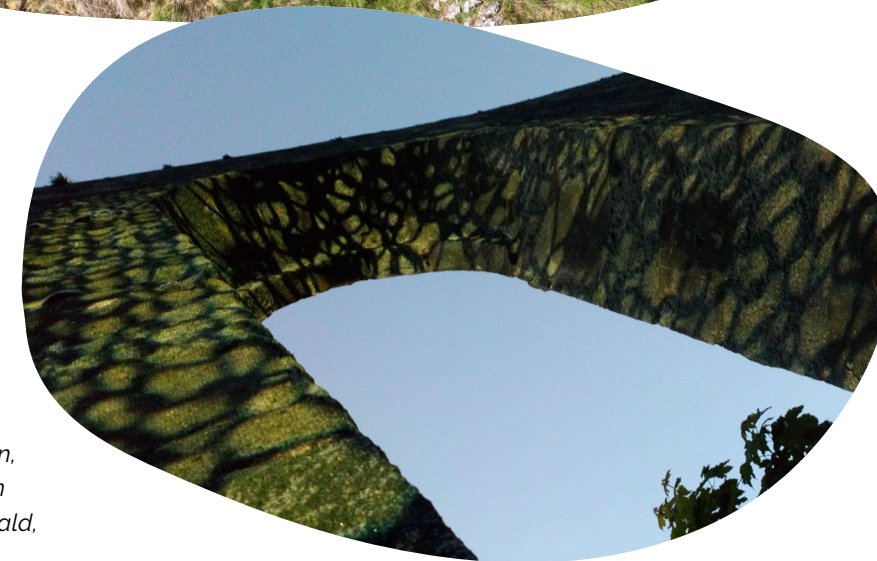
The new scheme aimed to enable a wide range of support to develop expressive artworks and or projects, focused on Gaelic language and culture and offered up to 12 awards in total, aiming to issue three awards of £1000 across each of the four local council areas in Argyll and Bute from June to November 2026.

Due to the broad criteria, Crùthaich Earra-Ghàidheal aimed to attract applications from people working in diverse artistic and heritage contexts, allowing both native Gaels and those who have worked hard to achieve fluency in Gaelic language to access support for projects that place the indigenous language and culture of Argyll at the heart of their practice.



Image (above): W()man Cò leis thu. Photography by Carolynne Mazur. © Ailice Stillamn

Image (right): Duais Dileab Chaluim Chille / Colmcille Legacy Awardee, Gina Macdonald's work projected onto McCaig Tower, Oban, part of Colmcille Awards projection event (2021). Work © Gina Macdonald, photography © CHARTS



D. Coastal Cultures

Coastal Cultures expands on successful creative placemaking and community engagement programming, designed to reinvigorate local economies and support community health, wellbeing and wealth-building strategies.

Member and artist-led projects and residencies (open to practitioners from all art forms) will direct development, leading to curated exhibitions, workshops, performances, readings, and knowledge-exchange events, both live and digital.

The programme celebrates and nurtures the distinctive and interconnected cultural identities of the region's coastal communities, where 96.5% of the population live within 10km of the coast. It supports people and organisations working in the culture, heritage, and arts sector in responding to the challenges Argyll and Bute's coastal communities are particularly impacted by: the effects of climate change, rural inequalities and deprivation, and digital exclusion.





CASE STUDY: Future Island-Island

Argyll and beyond

CHARTS is working in partnership with the School of Innovation and Technology at the Glasgow School of Art, as part of Phase Two of Future Island-Island. This is an Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded design-led research project for the green transition, focusing on creating sustainable solutions for Northern Ireland and expanding on these ideas with other rural and coastal regions in Ireland, Scotland, and the Nordic islands.

This includes working alongside five other new co-investigator organisations, Rathlin Stickybeak, Hub Games, NAARCA, VOID Art Centre and Future Ready Lab., through live and digital knowledge sharing and exchange, co-design, and community engagement.

In February 2026, CHARTS was invited by Future Island-Island's Dr Jessica Bates of the University of Ulster to visit Rathlin Island, Northern Ireland's only inhabited offshore island. Representing CHARTS on this trip were member Jen Skinner of Screen Argyll, Kirsten Millar, CHARTS Interim Assistant Director, visiting alongside Dr Michael Pierre Johnson, Trustee, also representing the School of Innovation and Technology at the Glasgow School of Art.

Image (right): Jen Skinner and Michael Pierre Johnson at Rathlin East Lighthouse, Rathlin Island (February 2026). © CHARTS

This included taking part in Connecting Coastal Cultures, an event within the Northern Ireland Science Festival programme. This event invited Rathlin residents and other participants to identify shared interests and opportunities for knowledge exchange. Contributions included screenings from Screen Argyll, and an introduction to CHARTS and our work advocating for the development, support and production of cultural assets across Argyll.

During the trip, outreach activities enabled the team to learn about the work undertaken during Phase One of Future Island-Island and to experience a newly developed virtual reality headset around themes of environmental sustainability and marine life. The visit also included discussions with David Quinney Mee of Rathlin Development and Community Association, sharing approaches to working with island communities, a tour of the RSPB Rathlin West Light Seabird Centre, and a visit to Rathlin East Lighthouse.

This learning will inform a series of online events and workshops focused on knowledge exchange for island and coastal communities in Argyll, in partnership with the School of Innovation and Technology at the Glasgow School of Art from 2026 to 2028.



“

We [Screen Argyll] are so excited to be involved with the Future Island-Island project. We spent two days on Rathlin Island, sharing our work with the island's community, showing our films and sharing our approaches to working on islands. It was brilliant to meet the community and learn about some of the projects happening on Rathlin.

From Rathlin, you can see Argyll, so it is a natural fit to build on our work, connecting island communities and for CHARTS members to benefit from expanding reach, sharing experiences and connections.

Exchanging knowledge and stories, building community networks and connections, is at the heart of what we do at Screen Argyll and working in partnership with CHARTS enables us to open further opportunities and expand these networks

– Jen Skinner, CHARTS Steering Group Lead, Islands / Screen Argyll



Image (above): Michael Pierre Johnson using a virtual reality headset at Rathlin West Lighthouse, Rathlin Island. © Screen Argyll

Image (right): a public talk by Michael Pierre Johnson (Glasgow School of Art/ CHARTS). © Dr Jessica Bates



Exploring international opportunities

Developed from the pilot, *Growing Global Networks* programme, which enabled seven artists to work with international collaborators in Africa, Asia, Europe and North America (2023–24), CHARTS has continued to host online events bringing together international creatives, academics and institutions to highlight their work.

During November 2025, *Critical Friends: Sustaining International Working*, facilitated by Dr Deirdre MacKenna, featured a panel of international artists in a roundtable discussion exploring the motivations and methods behind developing international collaborations. Speakers included Dr Kate Cowcher (University of St Andrews), Dr Dominicus Makukula (University of Dar es Salaam), Adrien Howard (Argyll-based writer and artist), Martha Kazungu (Ugandan curator), and KNOCKvologan Studio's Miek Zwamborn and Rutger Emmelkamp (Ross of Mull, arts and research centre).

Speakers discussed their methods for international working, including:

- How can artists sustain motivation to participate in international actions when working in coastal/island/rural locations?
- Artists' approaches to making new connections in new territories and unknown networks.

- How artists can sustain international practices when unable to be physically present (e.g., maintaining and further building connections).
- How international working nudges artists' practices forward.
- And methods for inspiration/motivation/resilience.

This delivery strand aims to further the artistic journey of our members and raise levels of confidence and ambition – sharing 'know-how' and supporting ways forward and for each individual the starting point is different .

This year the VACMA 2026 awards scheme has also supported Rutger Emmelkamp to participate in a week-long international Art & Ecology seminar in Portugal (5–12 June 2026), alongside focused preparation, on-site research. Rutger, living on the Isle of Mull, is an interdisciplinary artist and filmmaker, working across experimental film, installation, and collaborative, place-based practice. This experience intends to embolden how his work explores ecological systems, cultural traditions, and contemporary forms of belonging, often through long-term engagement with specific landscapes and communities. Rutger and his partner Miek Zwamborn have had their environmental work and rewilding ambitions

profiled in a leading Netherlands newspaper across the course of this year and welcoming international creative thinkers into their KNOCKvologan Studio continues to support and help shape the thinking of collaborators, including local people.

Within the UK, we have also been developing relationships alongside the British Museum (Africa Section), supported by Janice Hughes CBE, aiming to increase heritage engagement and new opportunities for artists. This development has been made possible by the offer of a Malian artefact collection from Janice Hughes, based on the evidence of how we have engaged the public with the Argyll Collection. We now aim to develop heritage engagement opportunities, with positive messages about migration and by highlighting commonalities across indigenous cultures, including Gaelic. With the support of the Art Fund in our recent work with Janice Hughes, we have produced a catalogue for research and development hoping to increase opportunities for craft makers, visual artists and musicians at the earliest possible time that funding permits.

International reach

By building the profile of our culture support organisation and its operational practices, we have increasingly attracted international attention and built new relationships. This includes both working with independent artists and growing the recognition of council-owned museum and heritage collections, working with international bodies.

UK network map

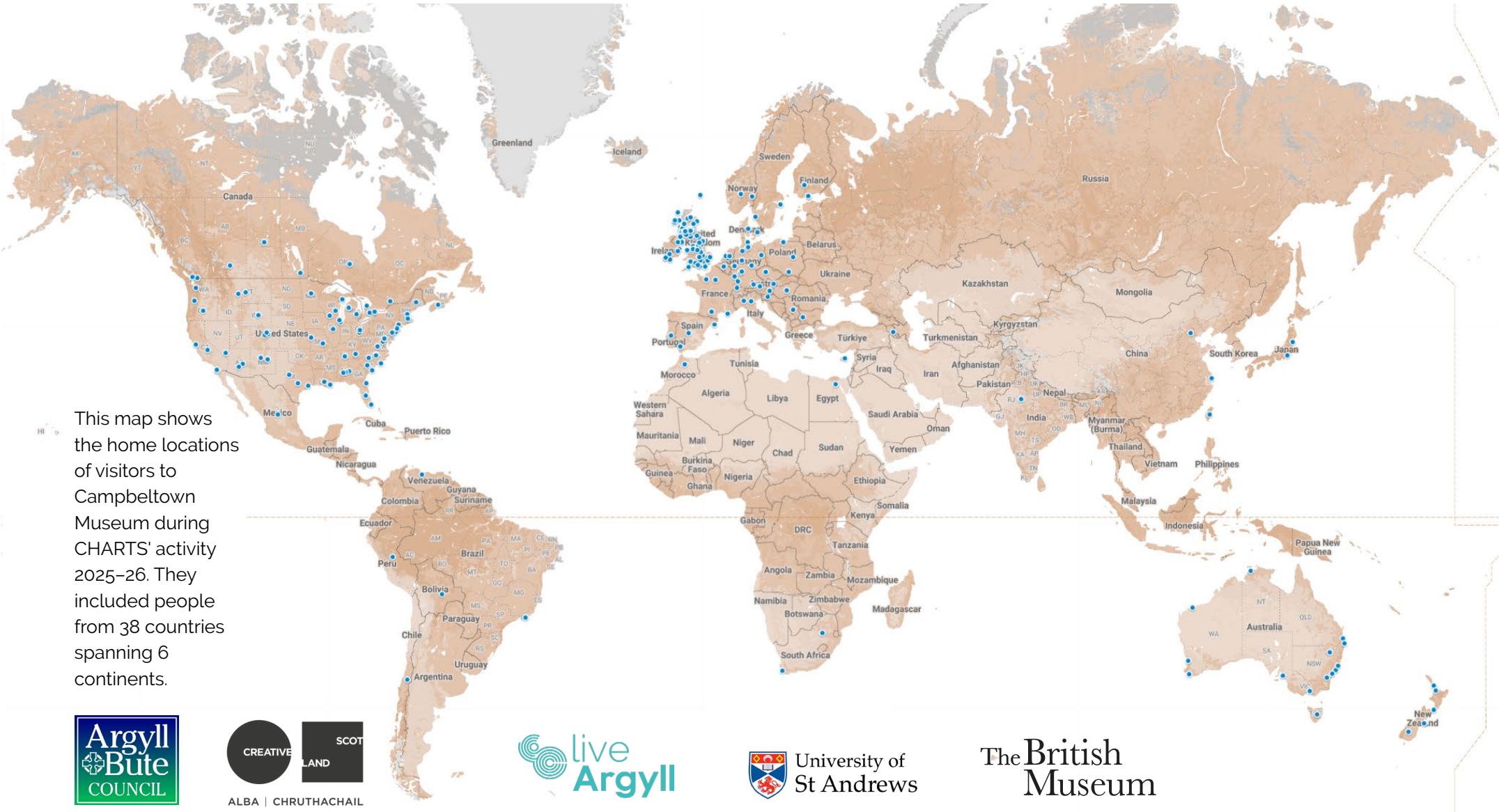
-  Educational institution
-  Museum



International network map



International visitors to Campbeltown Museum



“

I was first introduced to CHARTS by the British Museum and the Art Fund, as I sought to offer a donation of artefacts to a place that would understand the cultural and international value of my gift as well as honour my passion for heritage and arts education. I have more than enjoyed our work so far to help make my vision possible for the benefit of Argyll, hoping not only to create opportunities for artists across art forms but also the public at large, using my collection of artefacts from Mali.

I'm keen that the items might travel out by a travelling gallery or bus to schools, youth and community centres. I've also long thought it would be so interesting to create a new narrative – not the Asian Silk Route – but one about early Neolithic trade routes and the migration from 75,000 years ago up the western coast of Africa to Brittany, the Hebrides, Iceland and beyond. And ideally introduce parallel arts awards in Argyll and the Isles and Mali.

– Janice Hughes CBE



Image (above): 'Cutting Wood' (detail) by the artist Sam Joseph Ntiro (Catalogue 95).
© The Argyll Collection

Image (right): polished clay pot with handles. The Mali Collection.
Photograph © Tyro Heath



End note

Kathleen O'Neill, Executive Director

As a Scottish Incorporated Charitable Organisation (SCIO), CHARTS is guided by information provided by its members about their needs and we work strategically with regional and national bodies to meet demographic challenges. There are currently 760 members (individuals and organisations), and since the outset of the charity, member representatives living across Argyll and Bute have been paid to help inform our work and support the sector. This has included a Steering Group as well as independent artists and heritage specialists, who act to support members in local areas and offer direct hands-on support to advise on, initiate and develop projects.

This year has been a time of consolidating organisational practice, building on lessons learnt since the charity was first established in 2019. This has included taking substantial time to measure our progress through member surveys and other data collation to inform future delivery, alongside a robust review of in-house systems and processes. Establishing both Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and Environment Action Plans to extend our reach has been critical, as has been aiming to build staff team capacity to further support members' interests and meet regional ambition. Further embedding strategic relationships with key partner bodies such as Creative Scotland and Argyll and Bute Council, as well as other national organisations and academic bodies remains critical, continues to help us to secure external investment to develop new opportunities. This review contains highlights of our work to date and several other activities, including in the UK and with international bodies.

For more information about CHARTS projects and members visit:

www.chartsargyllandisles.org



Image: Future Island-Island, Rathlin East Lighthouse (February 2026). © CHARTS



Stay in touch

info@chartsargyllandisles.org
chartsargyllandisles.org



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Become a member of CHARTS for free: www.chartsargyllandisles.org/register



Support from Highlands and Islands Enterprise has enabled CHARTS to profile the Argyll Collection on Smartify, the worlds most visited museum App.
To find out more, visit: app.smartify.org/en-GB/venues/charts



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Cover image: 'Lochgilphead', by textile artist Gail Fleming. © The Argyll Collection, Argyll and Bute Council
Mapping data © 2026 Google

Review designed by CHARTS members, Abigail Daly (ruskinlane.co.uk) and Hannah Clinch (tacit-tacit.co.uk).

The Culture, Heritage and Arts Assembly, Argyll and Isles, is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered in Scotland: SC049113

