

To contact the Community Company, call 01320 366800
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Storm Gerrit

27th December 2023 saw Storm Gerrit arrive in the 3-Glens leaving many of the community without heat, water, electricity and means of communication.

The strong winds of Storm Gerrit blew down trees and damaged property in and around Fort Augustus and further afield. Some blown over trees narrowly avoided damaging cemeteries and gravestones.

A power cut soon affected us all with engineers unable to get through roads that were blocked by trees.



For many in our community, no electricity means no heating, no hot water, no communication, and no means of cooking. In some local areas, the power cut lasted as long as three days.

SSE provided Welfare Vans in the Fort Augustus car park meaning community members could be assured of a hot breakfast and dinner while the engineers got to work on repairing the damage and re-supplying electricity to our homes. They couldn't have got there though without the tremendous efforts of locals like tree surgeon, Mark Smith.

Mark wasted no time getting to work in cutting and removing fallen trees to clear the roads for the engineers to get through. Mark wasn't alone as Storm Gerrit brought out an amazing sense of community around the 3-Glens. Locals used their cars to pull debris from the road ensuring safe passage for some who were unable to get home, the emergency services and the SSE engineers.

Mark and other members of the community, too many to mention, worked hard under difficult conditions to help bring back power to the 3-Glens. And to them all, we owe our thanks.

"What's On" Open Day

In the middle of January, the Community Company hosted and ran the "What's on In Your Community" Open Day, an opportunity for local groups and clubs to showcase themselves and for the community to find out more about what goes on and what's on offer.

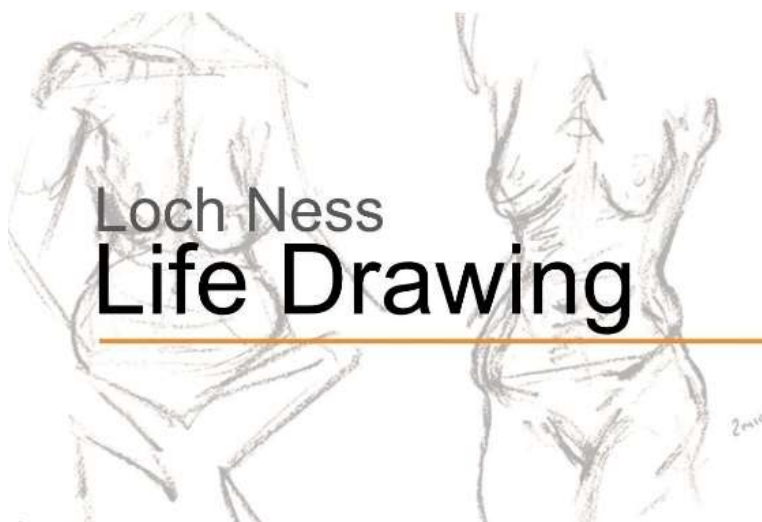
Groups present included the Camera Club, Invergarry Railway Group, Fort Augustus Heritage Group, new group laido for Samurai Sword fans, the Men's Shed, craft clubs, fitness groups and the new Drawing Class which ran for the first time in January.

If you couldn't make it along but are interested in local groups and activities, then email us on contact@communitycompany.co.uk or call 01320 366800 and we'll be happy to offer advice.

Grants

The Community Company are delighted to confirm funding has been granted for the following:

£767.54 towards equipment for the new life drawing class held monthly at Fort Augustus Village Hall. The grant also covered the costs for a live model, hall rental costs and additional equipment such as a fan heater and artist's light. Classes are running the third Sunday of the month and are run by Sarah McPhee who can be contacted by email sarah.ford28@hotmail.com. Over 18s only.



£438.69 to pay for a thermal imaging camera.

Community Tuesdays at Invermoriston hosted a guest speaker from Warm Energy Scotland who advised a thermal imaging camera can identify heat loss areas in our homes. With this information, residents can ask for advice on how to rectify these areas and in some cases, funding can be available towards the costs. The camera is available by appointment as it will require an operator. Training to use the camera is also available.

£971.99 start-up costs for a new laido, or Samurai Sword, class in Invermoriston's Millennium Hall. Equipment included dulled edge practice swords and a Kamidana (shrine to which students pay respect). Instructor Craig is, thanks to the funding, now First Aid trained and fully insured. laido teaches many aspects which include strength, balance, focus and mindfulness. Craig can be emailed at mrcraighardy@hotmail.com if you are interested in finding out more. Over 18s only.

£5,000 towards the costs for Kilchuimen Academy students to visit the USA for a Shinty training programme. Community funding will go towards the costs of accommodation and travel expenses for this fantastic opportunity. The girls attending this are fund raising to cover some of the other related expenses.

£588.98 to Kilchuimen Academy for decorations and lights to use at school events. A group of ten pupils forming the Pupils' Voice worked on the project sourcing the equipment and collaborating on the costs. The equipment is available for use throughout the school.

Funding is available for local groups and activities, so if you are already running a club or group or thinking of starting one let us know. We can advise on available grants and help get you up and running.

Community Benefit grants are also available. These are great for those little projects you walk past every day in your area. Invermoriston's Incredible Edible Garden is a fantastic example of how Community Benefit grants can support the area.

Tarff Trading

The store continues to provide the community with suggested lines of stock including dairy products, fruit and vegetables, and cold meats. In the build-up to spring, the store will be bringing in its usual gardening tools, plants and range of soil including Miracle-Gro, New Horizon, J Arthur Bowers and Jack's Magic.

For spring cleaning, we have a fantastic range of cleaning products to get your homes looking as good as new. We have everything from bleach to baking soda, and sponges to shower sprays. Your

home can be ready for the summer months without long trips to the town. And you can enjoy a drink from our coffee machine while you enjoy a browse around the store.

Don't forget you can hire Bissell's Big Green Rug Machine; £19.99 for one day, £29.99 for two days and the cleaning fluid is £17.99 for a bottle.



Watch this space – PayPoint coming soon to Tarff Trading!

Tarff Trading is a community led store. Your suggestions are needed to keep the shop to its original ethos; to serve the community, so give your ideas and needs to Donna, Nigel or John. If we can do it, then we will.

Red Squirrel Project

Convent Land Development Officer, Chris Rose, has been working with Trees for Life on the Save the Scottish Squirrel project, an exciting project to increase the range of Red Squirrels in Scotland.

The project will involve healthy and strong squirrels being re-located to unpopulated areas like the Morven Peninsula near Mull.

Chris' part in the project involves gathering data on Red Squirrels, their movement patterns, and daily habits. The Convent Land is believed to host a healthy and growing population. Following their movements and their squirrely lives will provide invaluable information that will help to strengthen their genetic diversity.



Squirrels' movements captured by the Wildlife Cameras funded by the Community Company

Our Convent Land Development Officer's involvement in the project will see the Convent Land's community of squirrels being fed with some lovely nuts and seeds. That's the safe part! Chris then must weigh and measure the squirrels noting important information about their health and conditions such as any pregnancies and remarkable features.

Keeping a close eye on the squirrels' dreys will be an important part of Chris' involvement in the project. A drey is essentially the squirrels' home. The squirrels typically build these high up in the trees providing a haven from predators; these are usually made by the squirrels themselves and are often mistaken for abandoned bird nests. Keep an eye out for them next time you go for a stroll through the woods.

"Facing many factors that have adversely affected their population, it is fantastic to see the Red Squirrel receiving some well-needed and much-appreciated support. Trees for Life are doing an amazing job of improving the Red Squirrel's genetic diversity and I'm delighted that the Convent Land is a central part of the significant early stages."

You can find more information about the project and register your name as a volunteer by emailing Chris on conventland@communitycompany.co.uk or call on 01320 366800.