

# Working for The Iona Community – On Iona 2021

## A. INTRODUCTION TO THE IONA COMMUNITY

The Iona Community is

- an ecumenical Christian community of people from different walks of life and different traditions in the Church;
- committed to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to following where that leads, even into the unknown;
- engaged together, and with people of goodwill across the world, in acting, reflecting and praying for justice, peace and the integrity of creation;
- convinced that the inclusive community we seek must be embodied in the community we practice.

### ***Our Rule***

We share a common discipline of:

1. Daily prayer, and regular engagement with the Bible and other material which nourishes us
2. Working for justice and peace, wholeness and reconciliation in our localities, society and the whole creation
3. Supporting one another in prayer and by meeting, communicating, and accounting with one another for the use of our gifts, money and time, our use of the earth's resources and our keeping of all aspects of the Rule.
4. Sharing in the corporate life and organisation of the Community

The Iona Community was founded in Govan and Iona in 1938 by George MacLeod, minister, visionary and prophetic witness for peace, in the context of the poverty and despair of the Depression. The original task of rebuilding the monastic ruins of Iona Abbey was to serve as a sign of hopeful rebuilding of community in Scotland and beyond.

Today, we are about 270 Members, mostly in Britain, with 1000 Associate Members and 1250 Friends worldwide. The Iona Community welcomes people from all walks of life at its centres on the islands of Iona and Mull. It trades through Wild Goose Publications and the Iona Community Shop on Iona, and resources a wide range of church and community organizations through its Wild Goose Resource Group. The Iona Prayer Circle is a worldwide network which prays for people and places in distress. Coracle is the magazine of the Iona Community, which seeks the exchange of thoughts and ideas as a basis for finding common ground.

Through participating in Family Groups, Regional Groups and Common Concern Networks, Members, Associate Members, Friends and our Young Adults Group share concerns, faith and tasks: a common life together.

### ***Iona Abbey Centre***

After 3 years of being closed to guests, the Abbey Centre will be open again in 2021, with a completely renovated building and new facilities. The global pandemic and its impact means that our capacity will be reduced to ensure we comply with government guidelines. The Resident Community of staff and volunteers will be

hosting a residential programme and experience of living in community for up to 21 guests a week from all over the world. We will also continue our ministry to the many visitors who come to Iona for the day, or who stay at other centres on the island.

The Resident Community will be leading daily worship in the Abbey Church and the Community's book and gift shop will be open.

The MacLeod Centre will remain closed, but the Community's outdoor centre at Camas, on the nearby Ross of Mull, will also remain open during 2021.

### **More Information**

For more information about The Iona Community in general, explore the website [www.iona.org.uk](http://www.iona.org.uk)

## **B. THE IONA COMMUNITY'S WORK ON IONA**

The Iona Community's Abbey Centre on Iona exists today both as a resource and a challenge, not only to ourselves and to all who visit, but also to the wider Church and indeed to people of all faiths and of none.

The agreed six priorities of the Abbey Centre over the next 3 years are to:

1. Offer all who come to the Abbey Centre a clear experience of the concerns of the Iona Community as reflected in our Rule, our Working Principles and our Charter.
2. Develop a model of radical hospitality in the intentional common life of the Community, including those who come to live and work in the Abbey Centre, offering:
  - A warm welcome
  - Deep encounter and challenge
  - An enriching rhythm of work and worship / prayer and action.
3. Increasingly prioritise as guests in our centres, those living with social, physical, mental and economic disadvantage, alongside a wider diversity of guests and visitors, building sustainable relationships before, during and after their stay.
4. Facilitate a model of worship, prayer and reflection as part of everyday life, enabling members, guests and visitors to make more meaningful their Island Centre experiences and their lives.
5. Offer innovative programmes, which challenge participants to work for peace, social justice and the integrity of creation, and explore the development of an Iona Community Learning and Equipping Framework, along with the local Island and wider community.
6. Maximise the extraordinary dedication, skills and expertise of our staff and volunteers, through ensuring optimal staffing levels, clear roles and responsibilities, robust supervision and support, and opportunities for training and innovation.

*(Taken from the 3-year strategic plan for the Iona Abbey Centre)*

We hope this means that those who come to our centres will experience them as:

- **safe places**, in which to explore the meaning of Christian life together, both within the life of the mainstream churches and also within the many new ways of being church, and how to live a committed Christian life in a multicultural and multifaith world;
- **places of openness**, where people at different stages on their personal journeys can share and learn from each other what God is saying to and through them, and through the story of the Iona Community and the world-wide church;
- **empowering places**, from which people may go forward on their pilgrimage strengthened and emboldened to make a difference in the world in which they live.

### **C. RESIDENT STAFF**

The task of running the Centre on Iona is given to a team made up of Resident Staff and residential volunteers.

Resident Staff are given an employment contract for a fixed period of time (usually a maximum of 3 years). You have your own room in shared accommodation, and all food and meals are provided. Instead of a normal salary, you receive the Islands Allowance of £642 per month. See Terms & Conditions for more information.

As well as the set of tasks described by the job title and laid out in the main parts of the job description, employees on Residential Terms and Conditions are held accountable to:

#### ***The Common Life Commitment:***

Being a part of the resident staff, working for the Iona Community, entails more than doing a job; it is a way of life. We live and work together here, and as a Residential Staff community are committed to sharing a common life of work, worship and recreation with each other and with the volunteers and guests, throughout the season. Living like this is both a very rewarding, but also a very vulnerable and challenging experience. Our life together here is a commitment. We are accountable to one another for upholding this commitment and we express this commitment through regular conversations with one another.

In many ways this is a counter cultural way to live, in a world of rampant individualism and the seeking of privatised, individual rights. Our commitment to a common life on Iona is a sign that there are other ways for people to live. The Iona experience for many staff is intense and deep, even life-changing: strong friendships may be formed, a deeper relationship with God, self-confidence boosted as individuals are valued and listened to and untapped skills are discovered and released. The pressures of work can, for some people, feel unrelenting. Time off and taking all holidays is crucial for everybody. If at any stage staff feel overwhelmed by their role, they should talk with their line manager in the first instance. Section 2 below outlines the additional support we offer.

Participating in the common life is a way of living that can provide friendship, support and encouragement. It enables us to hold each other accountable, to embrace our differences and celebrate our similarities. Together we recognise our different working patterns, learning styles, and ways of communicating. This makes our life on Iona interesting, challenging and fulfilling. So, while we all have our own daily work, it is our commitment to the common life and the building, receiving and celebrating of community that makes working on Iona far more than just a job.

In practice, this means:

1. Participating in some tasks on a rota basis:
  - a) Leading, or assisting with, daily morning and evening worship in the Abbey Church (or elsewhere)
  - b) Chairing and participating in the shared meals for employees and volunteers
  - c) Acting as Duty First Aider or Safeguarding Officer for the Abbey Centre
  - d) Acting as a “buddy” to new volunteers
2. Living in shared accommodation and, together with colleagues, working at building community over the season and each week by sharing meals, participating in daily worship services, etc.

The Iona Community recognises that this is a demanding set of commitments, and offers support in various ways:

1. Regular Line Management meetings, as with any job
2. Regular staff meetings to discuss issues around the Shared Tasks and Community Building aspects of the commitment
3. Externally facilitated space for reflection is offered regularly throughout season, and at the end of your contract
4. An Employee Assistance provider offers all Iona Community Staff free of charge, a 24-hour help line and also access to the confidential counselling service
5. Volunteers - Every year Iona Community welcomes volunteers of all ages and backgrounds who support the Abbey Centre and resident staff
6. Members - Another part of the support structure on Iona includes the members. Both Members and Associate Member(s) of the Iona Community come to take on the role of Abbey Hosts. Their role is to support the guests, staff and welcoming non-resident visitors to the island and leading worship.

## **D. INFORMATION FOR FOREIGN NATIONALS**

We encourage all interested applicants from outside the UK to apply to Iona. However, current UK Immigration Law states that it is not possible to appoint someone from outside the UK if there is a suitable candidate from within the UK.

### ***Obtaining a Work Visa***

Following the UK leaving the European Union on 1 January 2021, if you are not a UK national and do not have the right to work in the UK, in most cases, it will be necessary for you to obtain right to work under the Skilled Worker - Tier 2 (Minister of Religion) category. The Iona Community is an ‘A-level’ sponsor. This enables the

organisation to attain Certificates of Sponsorship (CoS) under Tier 2 of the Points Based System (PBS). Please see two locations for more information:

1. The United Kingdom Borders Agency (UKBA) website has specific immigration guidance: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/working/tier2/>
2. Please also see our visa guidance page which has details about the process of application to the Tier 2 category for non-EU/EEA candidates.

### ***Opening a Bank Account in the UK***

All staff members are requested to open or possess a UK bank account to allow the Iona Community to pay them. An instruction sheet regarding the current arrangements for applying for a UK bank account for non-EU staff is given in the contract packet.

### ***Obtaining a National Insurance Number***

Employees pay National Insurance contributions (NICs) whilst working for the Iona Community (subject to earnings). NICs are collected by HM Revenue & Customs through the Payroll system and go towards benefits, such as unemployment benefit, the National Health Service (NHS) and the state pension.

Once a new staff member is hired to work for Iona Community, if a staff member does not already have a National Insurance number, they will receive instruction information on how to apply for a NI number.

## **E. PRACTICAL INFORMATION ABOUT LIVING ON IONA - THE BENEFITS OF WORKING HERE**

### ***Environment***

Iona, a 1 x 3-mile Inner Hebrides island of Scotland, lies approximately 1.6 km from the coast of the Isle of Mull. Iona has a resident population of approximately 125.

Influenced by a warm sea current from the Caribbean, Iona's climate can vary from day to day; it is generally windy, cool and wet making waterproof warm clothing essential. Overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, our Island Centre provides a beautiful work environment; Iona draws the interest of thousands of people who journey to its shores each year.

### ***Full Accommodation and Meals***

All Resident posts, regardless of the duties, are offered at the same monthly allowance of £642, plus full board and lodgings.

Meals are provided to all employees. Most meals will be eaten in community. Each Resident staff member is assigned their own private bedroom and they share a simple but fully equipped kitchen, bathroom, laundry room and common area with up to 9 people. Due to space constraints we are not generally able to accommodate any non-working relatives, including children, on Iona. Appropriate accommodation may be available for those who have documented disabilities. A Code of Practice and Housing Agreement with more detailed information regarding accommodation will be provided.

### ***Pension Scheme***

The Iona Community also offers a contributory pension scheme linked to salary.

### ***Rhythm of the Week and Holidays***

On Iona, the normal work week is 7.5 hours a day, 5 days per week plus the time committed to scheduled, shared tasks. It must be recognised that in coming here we commit to spending additional time beyond our job role in shared tasks on a rota basis (see above under 'Common Life'). The pace is busy, but staff receive two days (may be split) per week. On days off residents can sign out for meals and can ask to be taken off the rota for leading services of worship. Flexibility is required as some roles (such as Sacristan and Kitchen) work "split-shifts" and sometimes you may be expected to work early in the morning or late in the evening, with some weeks being more work-intensive than other weeks. Residents receive 32 days holiday per year, pro rata, including bank holidays.

Flexible working allows staff to change their pattern or total hours of working through discussions with their line manager (taking into consideration the needs of the Community).

Maternity, Paternity and Adoption leave and pay arrangements are available to eligible staff, which include a pay scheme for those who have been employed by the Community for at least 26 weeks ending with the expected date of childbirth or adoption.

### ***Free Car Park***

Staff who have a car will usually need to utilise the long-stay car park located in Fionnphort on the neighbouring isle of Mull as we are only allowed to keep essential vehicles on Iona.

### ***Mobile Banking***

A Bank of Scotland mobile bank visits the island once a week during the summer. Cashpoints are limited on Iona. Many find it helpful to set up a bank account on the mainland. Allowances are paid as direct deposit into UK bank accounts. If you are from outside the UK, detailed instructions about setting up a UK bank account will be given with your contract packet.

### ***Telephones, Internet Access & Radio***

All staff living areas have a landline telephone with an out of hours direct line number for friends and family. You will be given your own e-mail address, which can be accessed through your work computer. Access to the internet is slow and unreliable, but wireless internet access is provided in most staff accommodation. The signal for mobile phones varies according to the service provider; currently EE provides the strongest signal. Further instructions regarding landline phone usage is explained during the induction process for new staff. It is difficult to find a good radio signal.

### ***Medical Coverage***

Employees register with the local Doctor who is available by telephone, online or in person via a triage system. All Iona Community employees are provided service by the Doctor free of charge under the current United Kingdom National Health Service,

but prescription drugs sometimes require payment. Further information is supplied in the contract packet.

### ***Insurance***

The Iona Community is responsible for personal belongings being insured to a maximum of £1,000 against theft and other risks but not against loss or accidental damage. It is at the discretion of individual staff members to purchase renter's insurance.

### ***Staff Induction and Training***

All new employees receive an induction process which aims to assist a new member of staff to perform effectively in the job role and within their work environment as soon as possible.

### ***Employee Handbook***

All new staff members receive an employee handbook during the induction process. The purpose of this document is to provide access to helpful information for staff. In particular, this resource will form a useful reference point in the early part of employment, during role and responsibility changes as well as throughout the employment period.

Areas covered by these resources are:

- Organisation Ethos
- General Terms and Conditions of Employment
- Important Contact Information
- Resident Staff Support Systems
- Common Life Responsibilities
- Practicalities of Being a Resident Staff Member
- Policies and Procedures
- Health and Safety Information

### ***Probation Period***

New 3-year appointments to the Iona Community Abbey Centre are subject to a probationary period of 6 months. Probationary periods for shorter term contracts will vary. The probationary period is a positive two-way process designed to assist new staff to integrate into their new role, with emphasis on support and development. This period of probation gives the opportunity to develop, with relevant guidance, the necessary skills to carry out the job effectively.

Additional Support Provided to Staff Working on Iona (See also Section C-3 above)  
Relocation Assistance Scheme

- The relocation assistance scheme for new appointments is a contractual benefit based on length of service. Where relocation assistance is offered, this will be detailed in the letter of appointment.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

### ***Do I need to be a Christian to work with the Iona Community?***

The Iona Community believes God is relevant in all parts of our lives. Work, worship and recreation interweave into a common life. Worship is a central part of this common life together, a focus for our faith. While we do expect employees to be in sympathy with the Christian tradition and the aims and objectives of the Iona Community, you don't have to be a Christian to work with the Iona Community.

### ***Can a partner and/or dependents accompany me?***

When a resident group member is appointed who intends to be accompanied by their partner, we would positively try and appoint the partner to one of the established posts within the complement if they were seeking employment and suited to the post.

In the event that there was no vacant resident Community post, subject to the availability of accommodation, the partner will be offered a long term volunteer appointment enhanced with the payment of the dependants allowance and the resident holiday allowances. Due to space constraints they would have to share accommodation.

Due to space constraints, we cannot presently offer accommodation to non-working relatives, including children.

### ***Can I bring my pets?***

It is not possible for resident staff to bring their pets with them to Iona.

### ***What are the worship services like?***

We commit ourselves to beginning and ending our day with a corporate worship service. Morning services take place throughout the year and follow the pattern of prayer practised daily by Iona Community Members worldwide. Evening services happen every night in the season, and on certain nights in the winter. They have a different theme each night, and normally last for around 20-30 minutes.

Through much of the season we have afternoon prayers for Justice and Peace at 2pm (Monday to Saturday). These last for approximately 10-minutes, and give day visitors the opportunity to worship with us.

Attending morning and evening services are part of our common life commitment and part of our life and work together. These services are the responsibility of the Iona Abbey Warden, but all members of the Resident Staff are expected to share in the leadership of services as and when able, beginning with the simpler services, and moving on to those which require more experience and preparation.

We seek to ensure our services of worship are grounded in the life of the Iona Community and in the life of the world, that they are honest offerings to God, biblically rooted, inclusive, and creative, challenging and consoling. However, the Iona Community believes that our services are only one part of our worship offering to God which also encompasses our work, our recreation, our relationships to each other and the created order, and our personal growth as human beings.