



# TRANSFORMING LIVES TO CHANGE THE WORLD

Our Community and our Vision



The Iona Community is an international, ecumenical Christian movement working for peace and justice, the rebuilding of community and the renewal of worship.

#### PHOTOGRAPHY

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In work and worship  
God is with us  
Gathered and scattered  
God is with us  
Now and always  
God is with us

# WELCOME

Every day our community, gathered and scattered, remembers aloud that God is with us. We speak these words in Iona Abbey, at our kitchen table, in small groups across the globe, and as we meet in community.

Prayer and reflection inspire us to act for justice and peace in the world. And as a movement for change, we inspire each other to live out our faith wherever we find ourselves.

We are convinced that communities are not just the stuff of dreams. At their best, they are radical, inclusive spaces where everyone belongs and everyone has the potential to change the world. And that includes you.

Pull up a chair and find out a bit more about our life together. Our community will be all the richer with you at our table.



# OUR FOCUS

## OUR VISION

*What we ultimately long to see*

We long for a just and peaceful world in which all of life can flourish.

## OUR PURPOSE

*Why we exist*

Inspired by our faith and loving concern for the world and its people, we pursue justice and peace in and through community.

## THE IMPACT WE IMAGINE

*How we hope lives may be changed*

Our hope is that through our witness and work, ordinary people will be enabled to do extraordinary things in their local communities, through the Church and other organisations. It is in partnership with others that we can pursue social and environmental justice and peace.

Being a Member of the Iona Community gives me a vibrant link with people of faith and action who inspire and challenge.

– IONA COMMUNITY MEMBER

# OUR STORY

*Our roots and the story that shapes our present.*

Our Community was founded in Glasgow, Scotland in 1938 by Rev George MacLeod. A visionary and a social reformer, MacLeod was driven by a belief that faith is grounded in action. In rebuilding the ruined accommodation at Iona Abbey, on the island of Iona, trainee ministers and unemployed workers from Glasgow lived, worked and worshiped together.

This physical rebuilding became, and remains a sign of hope for the rebuilding of individual lives and of community in Scotland and beyond. The community and living spaces of Iona Abbey were reopened in 2021 after extensive renovation. We are glad still to be part of the life and economy of Iona and Mull. These are beautiful islands where thriving local communities are layered with a deep spiritual tradition, and inspiring landscape and wildlife.

In an age where society is fragmented, families are dispersed and many real social networks have broken down, people live with a hunger for relationship, a sense of belonging and a desire to counter inequality, injustice and exclusion. We find hope, courage and challenge in our faith which calls us to unity in diversity.





# OUR GROUNDING

*Who we are, our strength and uniqueness.*

## Our Community

We believe in the transformational power of community to change lives and the world. Only in community can justice and love be done.

## Our Faith

We are part of the global church. Our Members are inspired by a shared commitment to Jesus Christ.

## Our Commitment to Action for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

We believe that work for justice, peace and an equitable society is a matter of extreme urgency and that we have a responsibility to live in a right relationship with the whole of God's creation.

# OUR COMMUNITY

*The people who have made a commitment to belong together in community.*

We are a movement, a community and an organisation enabled by our Members, Associate Members, Young Adults, Friends, staff and others who work with us to advance the purpose of the Iona Community.

We are now about 280 Members scattered globally, mostly in the United Kingdom. We have a growing Young Adults Group and around 2000 Associate Members and Friends worldwide.

We meet in small local groups, called Family Groups, clustered into Regions. It is through our Regions and our Family Groups that Members account to one another for living, and keeping our Rule of Life.

Our staff – both paid and voluntary – support our values and are integral to how we host community and deliver programmes. Staff at our island centres share a rhythm of common life with each other and our guests.

As a Member of the Iona Community I have found an international network of friends with shared values.

– IONA COMMUNITY MEMBER





# OUR GATHERING PLACES

*As family groups, in regions and around our common concerns we meet globally, in person and online. People come to our three centres in Scotland to join us in community and learn with us in person.*

Our Islands Centres on Iona and Mull are places of hospitality and encounter. Guests and staff share a rhythm of common life and are invited to explore the concerns of the Iona Community – on Iona at the Abbey, Welcome Centre and Shop, and MacLeod Centre; and on Mull at Camas.

Our Glasgow Centre houses our administration, programme, publishing team and resource group and has space for meetings, events and workshops.

# OUR COMMON CONCERN NETWORKS

*The concerns that bind us together in action for justice and peace.*

Along with meeting in regional and local groups, we also support one another to take actions for justice and peace across a range of common concerns. In each of these networks, meeting online and in person, we stand alongside those with lived experiences of injustice, and with partners who share the same concerns.





# OUR RULE OF LIFE

*The commitment which Members affirm annually.*

Inspired by Benedictine and Columban communities, our Members commit to a common Rule. The Rule is central to the life and witness of the Iona Community and binds us to mutual accountability in our family groups.

We share a common discipline of:

- 1 Daily prayer, worship with others 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.
- 4 Sharing in the corporate life and organisation of the Community.

*In our organisational life we mirror our Rule in our four Strategic Objectives.*

# OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

*How we give life to our vision and purpose.*

## 1 COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

We will empower more people to be agents for community transformation.

Building on the growing passion for faith-based community, we'll deepen our understanding of what it means to bring our whole selves into community, and work to become a more diverse membership.

## 2 JUSTICE AND PEACE

We will strengthen and deepen our justice and advocacy work.

Without justice for those with least money, voice or power, violence and war will continue to escalate across the globe. We are reminded of our roots in post-war Glasgow and will continue to seek a just society for all Creation.

## 3 CARE FOR CREATION

We will integrate more environmentally sustainable policies, procedures and practices into our community life.

Those who have done least to cause the climate catastrophe are also those who will suffer most from its consequences. Through action and contemplation, and in partnership with all Creation, we will play our part in restoring an environment in which all of life can flourish.



## 4 YOUTH AT THE HEART

We will increase the number and quality of spaces where people of all ages are welcomed.

We are committed to providing non-judgmental, inclusive spaces where young people from all backgrounds can explore both the heart and the edges of faith and of life.

## 5 SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES

We will build systems to become a financially sustainable and increasingly resilient organisation

We build community by sharing with one another, carefully and compassionately, about how we use and share the resources at our disposal. At the heart of all this is our vision: to model a divine eco-system which is sustainable, and where relationship is treasured above transaction.



Being part of the Iona Community helps me to be daring in prayer and politics.

- IONA COMMUNITY MEMBER

# OUR VALUES & WORKING PRINCIPLES

*The qualities and characteristics that guide how we are and what we do.*

## OUR PASSION

We are motivated by our shared commitment to Jesus Christ's proclamation of a just and generous new order; by our own experience of the common life, and by a creative spiritual practice of prayer, song, silence and sacrament.

## OUR MOVEMENT

We seek to offer practical support, mutual encouragement, challenge and inspiration to our members, staff and friends in our 'common task'. We are committed to ongoing dialogue and learning and to prayer and action for health and well-being.

Demanding common task: a wholehearted and cheerful commitment to engage with others in the specific work of the present moment, for as long as it takes.

## OUR CENTRES AND HOSPITALITY

We are committed to the joyful welcome of friend and stranger into our homes, and at our centres and events in such a way as to enable mutual, deep, personal and communal change and engagement, alongside mutual recognition of the need for personal space. Our centres on Iona and Mull strive to be places of this radical hospitality, sanctuary and challenge, which offer the experience of 'the common life' and engagement with the concerns of the Iona Community to those who live in them and those who visit.

The common life: Life together in a specific setting, where the gifts and needs of each are understood and honoured, while also freely subordinated to the common good of all, within the framework of the overall purpose of the Movement.

## OUR PUBLICATIONS

We seek in all our publications to inform, reflect, inspire and bring about personal and political transformation. We have a bias to material that is based on practice, and which furthers the task of the Community.



As members account for the use of gifts, time, money and the earth's resources, so as a community we share this commitment through our working principles.

#### OUR ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

We strive in our practice for the highest environmental goals. We travel by public transport wherever possible. We are committed to reducing our energy consumption and environmental impact. We actively seek suppliers who share these goals.

#### OUR SOCIAL VALUES

We deplore social injustice. We respect all our members, staff, guests and partners, irrespective of age, race, gender, religion, sexuality, disability, or health status. We actively campaign for social justice at all levels and have a particular commitment to inclusion of people living in poverty.

#### OUR ECONOMIC VALUES

We deplore economic injustice. We are committed to the common good, to trade justice and to a critique of economic policies that increase poverty and inequality. We support our work through our own giving and our trading operations. We operate a balanced budget, try to bank and invest ethically and purchase fairly-traded goods. Our residential staff are paid the same, regardless of job. We seek to minimise salary differentials for non-residential staff.

## PARTICIPATION

Ours is a common task. All in membership have the opportunity to share in leadership in policy-making and spiritual practice. Our structures are democratic, and we strive for consensus. We give our leaders a mandate to act fast and effectively, while expecting them to listen and respect the views of all. In particular, we are committed to extending the full participation of young people, within and beyond our movement.

## MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Our Rule binds us to a discipline of mutual openness in relation to the fundamental aspects of the Christian personal and communal life. We aim to be fully transparent and accountable for our use of gifts, money, time and the earth's resources and to operate with ethical codes of conduct.

## CITIZENSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP

We seek social transformation, and encourage our members to be engaged in civic and political structures at all levels. We actively seek collaboration with all people of goodwill who share our commitment to just and non-violent action. Working both outside and within military organisations, members are committed to standing against militarism and the arms trade and in favour of mediation and reconciliation founded on justice.

Iona changed my life  
– I left the island more  
confident, happy and at  
peace with myself.

– VOLUNTEER, ISLAND CENTRES





# OUR WAYS OF WORKING

*The ways we try to be with one another, to shape how we respect and honour difference and diversity.*

**Respectful listening:** we listen in order to understand, with the intent of being influenced, not necessarily to agree.

**Respectful talking:** we allow one voice to be heard at a time; this includes 'stilling the voice in my own head'.

**Respectful tone:** we take care with the words, and with the tone we use in conversation.

**Respectful sharing:** beyond this room/space, we agree to share only non-attributable wisdom.

**Respectful air-space:** we monitor how much, and how little we speak.

**Respectful naming:** we encourage the sharing of pronouns in introductions. We strive to refer to people as they ask.

# RESOURCING OUR WORK

*To do all this we seek resources – time and money, partnerships and peoples’ talents. We need to care for and steward all these resources responsibly and creatively.*

## PEOPLE

Staff at our centres work hard to offer radical hospitality to all we encounter. In small teams of skilled individuals we bake, mend, pray, resource, administer, steward, preach and pause. Volunteers are integral to our staff team. We are resourced by gifted and wise people who steer and advise us through Council, Committees and groups. We are committed to extending the full participation of young people within and beyond our movement. We are committed to being a learning community, always reaching for new learning edges and knowledge.

Volunteering on Iona broke  
my world wide open with new  
languages, cultures, food, and faces

- IONA COMMUNITY MEMBER



## PARTNERS

We are not alone. We know that the transformation we seek can only be realised through working in partnerships across the globe. We actively seek partnerships, formal and informal, with agencies, networks and communities that share our vision and our concerns. We are particularly delighted to work in partnership with Iona Cathedral Trustees and Historic Environment Scotland, and in close collaboration with other island organisations.

## MONEY

All in membership tithed a proportion of their income to the work of our Community, while also supporting other charities. We seek funding to ensure the long term sustainability of our movement and the transformation of the world. A proportion of our income will continue to be dedicated to supporting those who are marginalised in society.

# STAY PRAY BELONG

## **Join**

Be part of our global movement as a Member, Associate or Friend.

## **Pray**

Pray with our global community. Whether online or onsite, join us in a pattern of daily worship.

## **Visit**

Visit our centres on Iona, Mull and Glasgow.

## **Support**

Support our work through a donation or legacy.

## **Volunteer**

Come and be part of the team at our islands centres.

## **Follow**

Connect with us on social media.

Join us, wherever you are.

[iona.org.uk/staypraybelong](https://iona.org.uk/staypraybelong)

Being part of the Iona Community has helped create a world where everyone, everywhere can be themselves, can play their part.

- IONA COMMUNITY MEMBER



PRAYER FROM OUR MOVEMENT

O Christ, the Master Carpenter,  
you at the last, through wood  
and nails,  
crafted our whole salvation.  
Wield well your tools  
in the workshop of your world,  
so that we who come  
rough-hewn  
to your bench  
may here be fashioned  
to a truer beauty of your hand.  
Amen.

**The Iona Community**

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