

Erraid community

The Erraid is an intentional community, at home in the raw natural environment; at home in the granite cottages connected with the Stevenson lighthouses of Dubh Artach and Skerryvore; a community with a spiritual ethos. When we refer to being an intentional community, we mean that everyone who comes to live here joins in the day to day work, shares resources (from our living space, the washing machine to the crops we grow) and shares common values.

Three founding principles

We're connected to the Findhorn foundation. And share their founding principles. The first is 'co-creation with nature' so we are sensitive to the natural environment in the way we live. The sheer beauty of Erraid and the Ross of Mull is extraordinarily nourishing. Our weekly rhythm developed over the past forty years almost equally balances community activities – meals, meetings, meditations and community cleaning – with work: the second principle of the community states 'work is love-in-action'. Some activities require the whole group – the weekly log-run stocking up cottages with firewood is happily undertaken using the tractor trailer and many hands, showing the importance of community in a remote location. Twice a week the community comes together in our Sanctuary with optional daily meditations, helping nourish 'inner listening', the third principle of the community.

Shared responsibilities

We share out the responsibilities for making our island tick so that all our needs are met even though we aren't meeting them all by ourselves. Each member, a person who has gone through a trial process and who commits to stay at least a year, takes on responsibilities for making sure a an area is covered and a particular job is done. whether that is providing wood for the fires, maintaining the vegetable gardens or maintenance or other more administration activities like guest bookings and PR. We share lunches and dinners for most of the week, with members being on a cooking rota. Once a week we hold a business meeting where all our decisions are made collectively, using a process called Sociocracy, that enables everyone to have a voice so that we can build a consensus around decisions. The diversity of life experiences, personalities and concerns can make this difficult but ultimately we hope we make better decisions.



Communication in the community, a learning process

As we live together as a kind of family and although we were all attracted by sharing the same principles, that doesn't make the community go round. We put quite a lot of effort in sharing our experiences to know where everybody is at and - more important - in learning to communicate in a non-judgemental way. It's inevitable for miscommunication to be happening in a group of people from different cultures, different backgrounds that live together so closely. We agreed on learning to solve misunderstandings in a light hearted way.

Mainly self-supporting

The island is owned by a Dutch family, the Van der Sluis, and they have an agreement with the Findhorn Foundation, a registered charity based near Inverness, for our community to act as stewards of their island. Erraid is part of this larger charity, and adopts their values. However we are financially independent of them, generating our own income to cover our expenditure.

As many of you will know, we usually attract many paying guests, interested in how we live and wishing to join in for a week or longer. This weekly cycle includes an opening and closing meditation and therefore allows them to feel fully involved for that particular week. Guests also get involved in our on-going activities. We also generate some revenue from candle sales to guests and other tourists.



Lockdown

As our way of life is so intertwined and we are so remote, we have acted as one family unit in Covid lockdown. We accept that this means that when we have to leave the island for more than a short shopping trip, we need to isolate from the others here for two weeks before re-joining the community. This is a small inconvenience compared to what others have had to endure.

Since March we have been closed to guests. Guests bring new energy and ideas and what is missing right now is the feedback from them every Friday, which frequently reminds each of us why we have chosen this simple lifestyle. And the joy we get from being here. We look forward to being able to share our community life again, when restrictions are lifted sufficiently, and we also know that our offer will be different to respect social distancing.



Last but not least – community in a community

We wouldn't survive without the help of our neighbours and the local community and local businesses around. We really like to be part of the bigger community. When still possible we'd love to wade over and go to concert or play in the Bunessan town Hal. As we have an abundance garden it was lovely to contribute to the plant boxes. When things are back to normal, then please drop by and we're more than happy to put the kettle on.

Erraid

*This community
Vibrant, thriving, connected
Here I find my heart*

