

Islay & Jura Youth Wind Band

Registered Charitable Integrated Organization: SCO42863

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Chairmans Report 1st July 2024 – 30 June 2025

The band had a very productive and successful period 2024-2025.

In May we were asked to perform a short concert at the Feis, this was held at Ardbeg Distillery. Although the children were only starting out playing in public and the majority of them were on 9-10 years old, they did exceptionally well and played a variety of pieces which were well received by the audience, and other performers.

In October 2024 the band participated in a music day which was hosted by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. This was a music filled day and there were over 130 young musicians taking part. As well as sectional rehearsals when the children worked with professional musicians, there was also full orchestra and it sounded amazing, the day ended with a performance for parents and families.

In November, we had a visit from Professor John Miller who is an outstanding trumpet player and educationalist. He gave workshops and a performance at all the Islay schools, and joined the band for a rehearsal and conducted, this was a great success.

Our Christmas carol concert was very successful, the children (and adult players) did a great job and the evening was thoroughly enjoyed by the audience.

The band of the Royal Regiment of Scotland were in Campbeltown playing at the local schools and invited us to join them for a day of music making. There was much excitement as this meant an overnight stay, and great fun was had! The day itself was very productive, the children were able to play alongside professional players, as well as working with the Army musicians in small groups. This was another very successful trip, good fun and great music making.

Looking to the future, we need to continually focus on recruiting; there are some very promising children in the pipeline who are making good progress and will soon be ready to join the band. We had two new starts from Port Charlotte; both are in primary 6 and they have a lot of potential and by all accounts they both enjoyed their first band rehearsal, which is very encouraging.

I would really like to try and find funding to take the band to the Scottish Concert Band Festival next year, this is competitive and awards are given based on performance. This will be costly, but I believe that by 2027 we will be ready for this, and it will be a tremendous experience for our young musicians.

It may also be possible to take some children to compete in the Mid Argyll Music Festival, even if it is only out and back on the same day. This will have to be costed and we may have to ask parents to contribute.

We shall steadily continue to raise the difficulty of the music we play, the standard of the band has improved significantly over the past year, and we have the potential to be a very good band indeed!

I must conclude by thanking all our adult helpers who make a fantastic contribution to the band, thank you Bonnie, Mari, Andrew Greig and Brian.

Scott McDermott
26th January 2026