

# Community Engagement Plan



At Mount Stuart Trust, we understand that many of the decisions we make as a charity impact the broader island community. We aspire to be a good neighbour and are committed to ensuring that all those who live and work on the island feel able to engage with the Trust in a constructive, open and honest manner.

In early 2022 the Mount Stuart Trust gathered data regarding its approach to community engagement through surveys and face-to-face interviews. The research highlighted the wants and needs of the Island community and has helped inform the content of this plan. Feedback was received from over 100 individuals and organisations and reviewed by a third-party consultant who then made recommendations to the Trust. We are very grateful to those who took the time to share their views.

### **What is Community Engagement?**

Regular communication between the people who make decisions about how land and property are used and the communities affected by them.

### **Who is the Mount Stuart Trust Community?**

All those who live and work on the Isle of Bute.



Our Community Engagement Plan outlines our commitment to individuals and communities and is broken down into two key aspects:

- Business as usual
- Periods of change

In addition to basing our community engagement plan on the findings of our April 2022 Community Engagement research, we have also used The Scottish Land Commission's protocols and route maps as key points of reference and will ensure we deliver our engagement in line with their three fundamental principles: collaborative, proportionate and ongoing.

We would welcome feedback on our community engagement plan to:

Fiona Hardie  
Business and Community Liaison Officer  
[fiona@mountstuart.com](mailto:fiona@mountstuart.com) | 01700 503877



The Mount Stuart Trust is a Charitable Trust managed by a board of independent Trustees, which works to facilitate public interest, understanding and appreciation of the arts, architecture and the rural environment.

The Trust manages and maintains a series of assets across the Isle of Bute, including Mount Stuart House and gardens, 36 farms, 100 residential properties, 1447 hectares acres of woodland and approximately 21 commercial properties including golf courses, bowling greens, fishing and gaming leases.

All funds generated through its operations are reinvested into the Trust to ensure a long-term sustainable future that continues to create economic value for the Isle of Bute through employment, tourism revenue, housing and much more.

Details of the Trust's aims and objectives, trustees, operations team and maps detailing our farms, forestry and residential properties can be found at [www.mountstuart.com](http://www.mountstuart.com). The website also provides details on how to contact key members of the Trust's operational team.

The Trust is in the process of completing voluntary registration of all its land holdings with Registers of Scotland; as soon as this exercise is complete, this information will also be shared on the website.



**Business as Usual** – we believe it is essential that our team commit time to engaging with the community as part of our day-to-day operations. We will build on our existing engagement and deliver the following activity:

**a) Community Liaison Officer -**

Fiona Hardie has been appointed as Community Liaison Officer to act as the main point of contact with members of the community who have any queries or concerns they wish to discuss. Fiona is based in the office at Mount Stuart House. Fiona can be contacted at [fiona@mountstuart.com](mailto:fiona@mountstuart.com) or by telephone at 01700 503877. The team will endeavour to acknowledge all community enquiries within 48hrs, excluding weekends and would be happy to arrange a convenient time to meet face to face if preferred.

**b) Transparency**

In response to feedback that the existing MST website is more relevant for those who live off the island, we are building a dedicated community section on our website. This dedicated space will include the most up-to-date information on our team, our projects and the land managed by the Trust. Here, community members will also be able to sign up for our digital newsletter.

**c) Digital Newsletter**

We will issue a quarterly newsletter by email detailing upcoming activities and events, case studies and project updates from all aspects of the Trust. As requested through our survey, this will be sent out when there is something to update on, but the Trust commit to this being at least quarterly. Under GDPR guidelines, community members will need to opt-in to receive this communication.

We will also make the newsletter available in print to pick up at local community hubs across the island.





**d) Bi-Annual Community Forums**

We will work with representatives from the community to set up a new MST community engagement forum. The forum will comprise individuals from across the island who represent different organisations and constituted bodies. The forum will meet with the Mount Stuart Trust senior operations team and decision-makers to share information, raise any challenges or opportunities and learn about what is happening across the island. Attendance of these meetings will be by invitation; however minutes of these meetings will be published.

**e) Events**

Feedback from our survey suggested that many people were unaware of the different operations the Mount Stuart Trust undertook. As a result, the Trust will host annual information days to introduce its enterprises. These will include introductions from the MST team and the opportunity to visit different sites around the island. Community members will be able to meet senior managers and Trustees in an informal setting and raise questions whilst having a fun day out with their friends and family. This will be a child-friendly event. The information day will be well-publicised locally and will be available free of charge to communities within the PA20 postcode area.

In addition, MST will also ensure there is an opportunity to learn more about the Trust's operations and ask questions at its existing events, including the Christmas Fair.

**f) Feedback**

Throughout our engagement, we commit to giving meaningful feedback to all who come forward with ideas, opportunities and queries.



**g) Social Media**

Mount Stuart Trust will expand its use of social media to ensure it shares information about all of the Trust's operations. We would encourage members of the community to follow these channels, which can be found here:

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Twitter](#)

**i) Engage with Schools**

We commit to extending our work with schools and young people and will engage with the schools on the Island to ensure the students understand our land-use practices and decision-making. Some examples may be visits from team members to discuss their jobs or inviting groups of children onto farms for visits. Our newly appointed Countryside Ranger will lead this activity, with support from the wider rural and visitor teams.

**j) Media**

We will continue to keep in regular contact with Bute Island Radio and the Isle of Bute News to share information about our activity.

**k) Day-to-Day Activities**

We are committed to building community engagement in to all aspects of our operations. We will utilise the outlined engagement tools to communicate with the broader community when we have information to share. To ascertain the levels of engagement required around our day-to-day activities, we will follow the guidance set out by The Scottish Land Commission in their 'Guidance on Engaging Communities in Decisions Relating to Land' – see Diagram A.



	Description	Examples	How to Engage
Good Neighbour	<p>Most day-to-day decisions relating to land where the impact on the local community is small or non-existent.</p>	<p>Most routine urban and rural land management activities including day-to-day farming, forestry, estate management and business activities, when the activity is carried out with reasonable consideration.</p>	<p>When there is little impact on the community, there is no need to engage. However, regular contact is encouraged to help to prevent problems arising.</p>
Informal Engagement	<p>Decisions which can lead to moderately significant impacts on the local community. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• short-term but disruptive activities</li> <li>• activities carried out in irregular circumstances</li> <li>• changes to regular activities</li> </ul>	<p>Decisions about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• activities which disrupt transport or business activities</li> <li>• activities causing significant light, sound or smell pollution</li> <li>• activities carried out at unusual times, or causing more disruption than usual</li> <li>• other disruptive activities in both the urban and rural environments</li> </ul>	<p>Informal engagement can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sending a letter or an email</li> <li>• a notice on a community</li> <li>• notice board</li> <li>• posting on social media</li> <li>• a phone call</li> <li>• visiting in person</li> <li>• putting up a sign</li> </ul> <p>Regular communication, even when no very significant decisions are being undertaken, can help to prevent problems arising, and build good neighbourhood relationships.</p>
Formal Engagement	<p>Decisions which may significantly impact on the social, economic or cultural development of a community, access to a good quality environment, and community viability. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• long-term or permanent changes with significant impact</li> <li>• long-term disruptive activities</li> <li>• activities which impact significantly on the local economy, society and culture, or environment</li> <li>• decisions likely to alter the local population level or structure, including through intergenerational impact</li> </ul>	<p>Decisions about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• significant long-term changes to land use, for instance changes between agricultural land, forestry, nature reserves, green spaces, industry, housing, regeneration and development</li> <li>• estate management, where a significant proportion of land in a community is controlled by one party</li> <li>• a business or service that significantly contributes to local employment or provides vital services</li> <li>• decisions impacting on the viability of vital local institutions such as schools, doctors' surgeries, sports centres and cultural centres</li> </ul>	<p>Engagement about significant decisions is characterised by being planned and should include feedback to the community. Formal methods of engagement include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• publishing a written consultation or survey</li> <li>• holding local meeting(s)</li> <li>• holding site visit(s)</li> <li>• carrying out workshop(s), perhaps with a facilitator</li> <li>• collaborating with the community to co-design a project</li> </ul> <p>Once formal engagement is carried out, there should be feedback to the community on the decision taken and the reasons for it. The references section gives links to further guidance on different ways of involving communities in decision making.</p>

**Periods of Change** - Before the Mount Stuart Trust make any changes to our operations, we must undertake research, feasibility studies, financial reviews and internal discussions. Many ideas will not go any further than this stage; however for those that do move forward, we will undertake the following engagement in addition to our 'business as usual' commitments and any statutory consultation process that the local authority may dictate.

When communicating change, we may feel it is appropriate to share information with our internal team, tenants and business partners before we communicate with the broader community; however we will always endeavour to do so in a timely fashion.

As recommended by The Scottish Land Commission, our engagement will be proportionate to the impact of the change and the stage of the project.

### **Timescales**

We commit to giving community members enough notice of any proposed change, allowing for meaningful engagement and time for all feedback to be considered and solutions sought for any concerns.

#### **a) The Website**

We will create project-specific pages on our website that outline the key information and associated timescales. The website will also highlight the consultation process and how community members can learn more and have their say. Our Communications Working Group will be tasked with creating and delivering ongoing appropriate and meaningful web content.



**b) Consult our Community Forum**

We will consult with our community engagement forum members and ask them to speak with those they represent for feedback.

**c) Host Drop-In Sessions**

Where proportionate, we will host consultation drop-in sessions where community members can view exhibition boards, meet with the project team, pose questions and raise any concerns. These will be hosted at a central and convenient location to ensure accessibility for as many people as possible.

**d) Host Site Visits**

If appropriate for the proposed change, we will invite community members to visit the site of the change to allow them to understand the reasons for the approach taken.

**e) Promotion**

We will ensure all engagement is well publicised in a timely fashion to allow the thoughts of as many people as possible to be considered. We will work with the local media and key stakeholders to raise awareness as well as utilise our own engagement tools.

**f) Engage Young People**

We will coordinate with the schools and youth organisations on the Isle of Bute to ensure that young people have an opportunity to have their say. This would be through the existing and developing channels with the schools.

**g) The Newsletter and Social Media**

We will utilise our community newsletter and social media channels to keep the community up to date with the project and to notify them of how to have their say.

Our community engagement plan will be reviewed annually, with a new plan published every three years. We will collate feedback from our engagement activities and community engagement forum and make changes where required.

If you have any feedback on the community engagement plan or wish to discuss any aspect of it, please reach out to Fiona Hardie at [fiona@mountstuart.com](mailto:fiona@mountstuart.com) or 01700 503877.

