

DEVELOPING YOUR COMMUNITY TOURISM PROJECT

HELPING COMMUNITY GROUPS ORGANISE TOURISM RELATED PROJECTS



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INTRODUCTION

Ayrshire and Arran comprises a rich and diverse range of localities, all with distinct characteristics and heritage. Often, discovering more about the distinct nature of a locality is of interest to the visitor and plays a significant part in the overall quality of their experience. This aspect of the tourism offering is frequently driven by community groups who have the passion and knowledge to bring their communities to life for the visitor.

Ayrshire & Arran communities are a crucial element of the tourism product and they have an important role in the development and delivery of a region's tourism offering. Across Ayrshire and the islands of Arran & Cumbrae, there are a number of community led tourism initiatives where groups and organisations have developed specific projects to raise the profile of their area, town or village.

This tourism toolkit provides support material and assists communities wanting to take forward tourism initiatives. It is designed to enable communities to work through the key stages in delivering a successful tourism project.

The toolkit is available via www.ayrshire-arran.org/our-work/community-engagement

WHO SHOULD USE THIS GUIDE

- **Anyone within your community who wants to explore and develop a tourism project (individuals, businesses and local groups)**

WHAT IS COMMUNITY TOURISM

Tourism is an important part of the economy and most communities derive some benefit from visitors who can potentially provide a source of income for the local business, help to sustain local services and protect community assets.

Communities in rural areas can be particularly attractive places for visitors. They have many assets and features that can make people want to spend time there, taking a walk in the countryside, enjoying a meal with local produce in a pub or visiting historic monuments and churches.

Communities who develop tourism facilities can take control and make their area more attractive to visitors in a way that supports the local community too.

In essence sharing with visitors what a community loves about where they live can contribute to long-term economic social benefits for the whole community.

WHY IS TOURISM IMPORTANT FOR COMMUNITIES

Tourism can have many social, economic, cultural and environmental benefits for towns and villages.

A well managed tourism project for your area can have impacts upon:

- **Protecting and enhancing local assets such as the natural environment and places of historic interest**
- **The opportunity to support local employment, not only supporting local businesses but encouraging an entrepreneurial spirit for new sustainable businesses**
- **Tourism projects and improvements to facilities can enhance the offer in the area for visitors and locals alike**

GETTING STARTED

INTRODUCE THE IDEA

Make contact and interest as many people and relevant organisations as possible, this will increase support for your plan and get buy in from the start.

SETTING UP A STEERING GROUP

This group will lead and manage the project and will make the main decisions about the project as it develops. They need to be committed enthusiastic people to help the project meet its aims.

Map out possible project "stakeholders" people who will have an interest in the outcome and whose participation would be welcome. Examples:

- Those who might be able to make the project happen
- Those with ideas and knowledge of the area
- Those with the correct skills for example funding and marketing
- Those who may have information the group may need or who could take decisions about local issues – public agencies, voluntary organisations, local residents, community groups
- Local businesses - local businesses are key to get on board as they have a vested interest in the visitor economy

Possible stakeholders

- Local businesses: attraction owners, accommodation providers, pub landlords, shop owners, retailers and local guides
- Local conservation groups
- Land management organisations – wildlife trusts etc
- Local Enterprise Agency
- Environmental Agency
- Rural Partnerships
- Vibrant Community Partnerships
- Youth Groups
- Historical and Cultural societies
- Volunteer Groups
- Local Councillor/Community Councils
- Schools and Libraries
- Local Authority

POINTS TO REMEMBER!

- When establishing your group ensure it comprises a cross-section of people from the community.
- Make sure the people who form the group have the necessary time to dedicate to the project. Small business owners may have a limit on the time they can commit (especially at busy times of the year).
- Be realistic, structure the group around what will work for your project. Remember that you may have to recruit new group members as you go as people may leave. It is important therefore to ensure that the work is shared and does not fall to one or two individuals.

ROLE OF THE STEERING GROUP

- The role of the group should be agreed at the start and key jobs should be distributed e.g. Chair, Secretary, Treasurer etc
- Ensure that everyone feels comfortable to take part and ideas are encouraged
- Key decisions should be documented
- Key people in the group should become ambassadors/ champions of the project, promoting the ideas and encouraging others to come forward and participate. They would also communicate to all relevant people how the project is developing, attend key meetings and manage the project
- Have meetings at a range of times to ensure maximum participation

TOP TIPS TO BUILD SUPPORT FOR YOUR TOURISM PROJECT

- Hold a town/village meeting
- Write guest editorials for local newspapers and e-newsletters
- Send out brief surveys asking residents their opinions about tourism, culture and heritage goals and report the results to the group
- Set up focus groups or a task force with representatives from tourism, conservation, business, and other appropriate groups to study services needed and to discuss tourism ideas
- Get involved with Ayrshire and Arran Learning Journeys - visits to other towns/villages/projects where the group can see first-hand tourism in action
- Bring speakers from other successful cultural heritage tourism projects who can explain how to get results

TOURISM IN SCOTLAND



POINTS TO REMEMBER!

Working in partnership is vital to the success of tourism in Scotland.

Community groups have a key role to play in developing innovative products and services on the ground, which will encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more in their community.

Above all else, visitors are looking for a first class visitor experience - good value, good quality and excellent hospitality, who can really enjoy the 'authentic Scottish experience' and will quickly be disappointed if they feel that they aren't getting the real thing.

Tourism is big business for Scotland. Although we have only a very small share of the overall global tourism market, overnight tourism generates over £4.3 billion of revenue for Scotland each year – meaning that the industry is bigger than our oil, fishing and whisky industries combined! The industry is a growing and fiercely competitive one, and by 2020 it is expected that over 99% of the countries in the world will have a tourism product.

Visitors have a greater choice of destinations than ever before, so innovative new products which make us stand out from the crowd, coupled with strong marketing, will be essential to gain a share of this increasingly competitive marketplace. It will also be vitally important that once visitors arrive in Scotland they receive excellent customer service and high quality experiences.

KEY FACTS AND FIGURES

In 2012, over 15 million overnight tourism trips were taken in Scotland. The vast majority (83%) of visitors to Scotland come from within the UK and account for around two thirds (68%) of total overnight tourism revenue. The biggest market originates from Scotland (43%), closely followed by England (40%).

Of the 17% of visitors who come from overseas to Scotland (and account for 32% of expenditure) the largest market is the USA, followed by Germany and France.

The key market for Scotland has always been, and will continue to be, the UK, and this is the main market to focus on and develop.

Despite only accounting for around 17% of visitors, **overseas visitors spend more than their UK counterparts**, and generate around a third of overall tourism expenditure to Scotland. Overseas marketing is therefore a major priority at national level.

Tourism is still highly seasonal, with 63% of trips taken between April and September. A key challenge is therefore how to **extend Scotland's tourism season** and encourage visitors in the off peak months.

The day visits market is also extremely important to Scotland. In 2012, some 142 million day trips were taken by Scottish residents, generating an additional £4.6 billion spend. These trips included activities such as visiting friends and family, going out for a meal, undertaking outdoor activities and going for a night out.

Some of the top reasons for choosing to visit Scotland include **the scenery and landscapes, familiarity with the country, a desire to learn about the country's history and culture, and family connections**. Receiving a recommendation to visit and a reputation for friendly people are also popular reasons to visit.

Arriving by car is still the most popular means of transport, for visitors from the UK.

Most visitors to Scotland travel as a couple. 56% of visitors are aged 45 and over, with only 10% falling into the under 24 age bracket.

The most popular accommodation used is hotels or guesthouses, but staying with friends and relatives is also popular.

RECENT TRENDS

- **The global economic landscape has changed dramatically over recent years. The recent economic downturn means that both UK and international visitors are looking for ways to contain their spending. In short, visitors want their money to stretch further and have higher expectations of the products and experiences that they buy**
- **Rapid advances in technology mean that people are using lots of information sources for researching and planning holidays. Quality is becoming more crucial as consumers use social media channels to review, recommend and share experiences. Potential visitors are also increasingly looking for personalised booking services based on their individual tastes and budgets**
- **Consumers are increasingly seeking holidays that offer a more authentic experience. Quality, locally-sourced food and drink are therefore a high priority for visitors, and are considered to be an integral part of today's visitor experience**

FURTHER INFO

www.tourism-intelligence.co.uk
www.scottishtourismalliance.co.uk

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO DELIVER OUR GOALS

National agencies including the Scottish Government, VisitScotland, Scottish Enterprise and EventScotland play important roles in the development of tourism in Scotland, and are working together to deliver the national tourism strategy 'Tourism in Scotland 2020 – The future of our industry, in our hands'.

The strategy, which is led by the Scottish Tourism Alliance, an industry leadership group, outlines the key tourism priorities at national level, along with a series of targets which are to be achieved by 2020.

Central to the strategy is the vision of making Scotland a destination of first choice for a high quality, value for money and memorable customer experience, delivered by skilled and passionate people.

Achievement of the aims and objectives outlined in the strategy relies very heavily on stakeholders across the country – including individual tourism businesses, the voluntary sector, communities and public sector – working together to develop new products, services and packages that appeal to our key target markets and have quality and excellence at their heart.

National priorities provide an important backdrop for generating priorities at local level, and the Ayrshire & Arran Tourism Strategy 2012 – 2017 therefore identifies how the particular tourism strengths of Ayrshire & Arran can contribute to the wider national plan.

TOURISM IN AYRSHIRE & ARRAN

In common with many other areas of Scotland, tourism is vital to Ayrshire and Arran, generating some 3.5 million visitors each year and bringing in £348 million to the local economy. The industry also supports almost 9,000 jobs across the area.

The region has tremendous assets and strengths that offer the visitor a range of great experiences, spanning rural, coastal, historic and built environments; world class golf, sailing, culture and heritage; high quality food, drink and hospitality; beautiful islands, marine and countryside.

Tourism revenue in Ayrshire and Arran has experienced only very modest growth in recent years, and significant growth is required if we are to grow the contribution of tourism to the regional economy as well as Ayrshire and Arran's contribution to the national visitor economy.



POINTS TO REMEMBER!

Community groups can play a vital role by 'adding value' to the Ayrshire and Arran tourism offer, providing visitors with a real flavour of their local area.

Working in partnership with businesses in your local community will help you to create 'must see', 'must do' visitor offers, which will attract visitors and encourage them to spend more.

KEY FACTS AND FIGURES

The vast majority of visitors to Ayrshire and Arran are from the UK. 62% come as day visitors (40% of these travelling with children), 33% are domestic visitors and 5% from are overseas.

The high level of day visits is unsurprising, given the area's proximity to Glasgow and Edinburgh. **Whilst day visitors are of undoubted value, they spend less than overnight visitors,** and as such it is important that we focus on creating products, services and packages that will encourage them to stay longer in the area and spend more when here.

UK visitors to Ayrshire and Arran also spend less than visitors to other areas of Scotland. However on the plus side they stay here on average for 3-4 days, slightly longer than the average for Scotland as a whole.

The majority are over 55 years of age and travel as a couple. Over 30% stay with friends and family.

In common with the rest of Scotland, **visitors from overseas spend more than UK visitors. Our main markets are the USA and Germany.** Almost 60% of overseas visitors stay with friends and family, a much higher proportion than for Scotland as a whole.

61% of visitors to the area who live outside Scotland travel to the area by car. This figure is lower for overseas visitors, with good direct air links leading to 58% arriving by plane. Glasgow International Airport is a key entry point for overseas visitors.

Like Scotland as a whole, **tourism to Ayrshire and Arran is highly seasonal,** with most trips taking place between April and September. A key challenge is therefore how to **extend the region's tourism season** and encourage tourists to visit in the off peak months.

Top reasons for choosing to visit Ayrshire and Arran include the scenery/landscape, an area that is well known, and to visit a particular attraction.

A high proportion of Ayrshire and Arran visitors have connections with Scotland (81%). Connections are most likely to be through family or friends living in the area. Other connections include ancestors having lived here, or visitors having lived in the area previously.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO DELIVER OUR GOALS

Public sector agencies, tourism businesses and local communities across the region are working in partnership to deliver the Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Strategy 2012 – 2017.

Under the co-ordination of an industry-led Tourism Leadership Group, the aim of the strategy is **to establish**

Ayrshire and Arran as a premier destination of choice, where visitors will receive a fantastic welcome and enjoy outstanding experiences of our coastline, countryside, culture and hospitality.

The strategy has a number of ambitious objectives, including increasing the annual number of visitors to the area by 10% to 3.85 million and increasing spend by visitors by 20% to £418 million.

Efforts are being focused on twelve distinct areas of activity:

- **Culture & Heritage**
- **Natural Environment**
- **Golf**
- **Watersports**
- **Legacy Events**
- **Business Communication**
- **Visitor Information Provision**
- **Community Engagement**
- **Leadership & Collaboration**
- **Quality & Skills**
- **Marketing**
- **Sustainable Development**

As with the national tourism strategy, our objectives can only be achieved with the active participation of all stakeholders, including businesses, the voluntary sector, communities and public sector.

It is vital that we all work together to develop the visitor offer and create the innovative, high quality products, services and experiences which today's discerning visitor expects.

WHAT WE NEED TO DO

In order to meet the ambitious targets in the Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Strategy 2012 – 2017, **www.ayrshire-arran.org**, we need to deliver great visitor experiences. Without these, we will not be able to grow visitor numbers or encourage the increased level of spend we are aiming for.

We therefore need to focus our efforts on:

- **Creating a wide range of 'must see' and 'must do' visitor offers, presented to our visitors in an appealing way**
- **Offering clean, high quality public spaces and consistent, excellent customer service**
- **Providing easily accessible information that makes it simple for the visitor to discover, choose, travel and do**
- **Developing and marketing a year-long programme of events and festivals that showcases the very best our area has to offer**

TOURISM CHECKLIST

Community groups can play a key role in helping to achieve the goals set out in the Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Strategy, by developing new products, services and marketing campaigns for their area that will encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more.



PLAN

WHERE DO YOU START?

Developing a tourism project can begin with a response to a need that has been highlighted or a simple idea.

- Is it a lack of visitors?
- Short length of stay?
- Visitors not spending?

A community meeting and talks with local businesses can ascertain this information

Tourism Project

What do you want to develop?		
What are the strengths of the offer?		
What are the weaknesses?		
Who are the potential visitors?		

THINK AHEAD!

What is the goal for the community? Where do you need to be in 5-10 years? Think about who your visitors are now and who they may be/their needs in the future. Thinking about a long term vision will help engage others in the plan. It may help the sustainability of your project which in turn can attract funding.

How does what you are planning fit with local and national tourism priorities?

The Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Strategy has been developed as a blueprint for everyone with an interest in tourism in the region to follow, we will only achieve the ambitious targets laid out in the strategy if everybody works together to achieve these common goals.

What are your overall aims and objectives?

Think carefully about why you're doing what you're doing. The ultimate goal for any initiative should be to attract new visitors and encourage existing visitors to stay longer and spend more in the area. How will your initiative achieve this?

How will the initiative benefit visitors?

It's vital to look at any proposed initiative from a visitor's point of view. If visitors benefit, then it goes without saying that the local community and businesses will benefit too.

Think about what 'added value' visitors will get from your project or service. For example, will it fill a gap in existing service provision, or enable them to gain a better insight into your area?

What will be the likely demand for the new product from visitors?

Think about what types of visitors and how many of them are likely to want to use your new product or service. Will what you're proposing be attractive to the types of visitors that come to Ayrshire and Arran? Will it attract visitors to come to the area? If in doubt, check out the regional visitor profiles at www.visitscotland.org/research_and_statistics/tourismstatistics.aspx

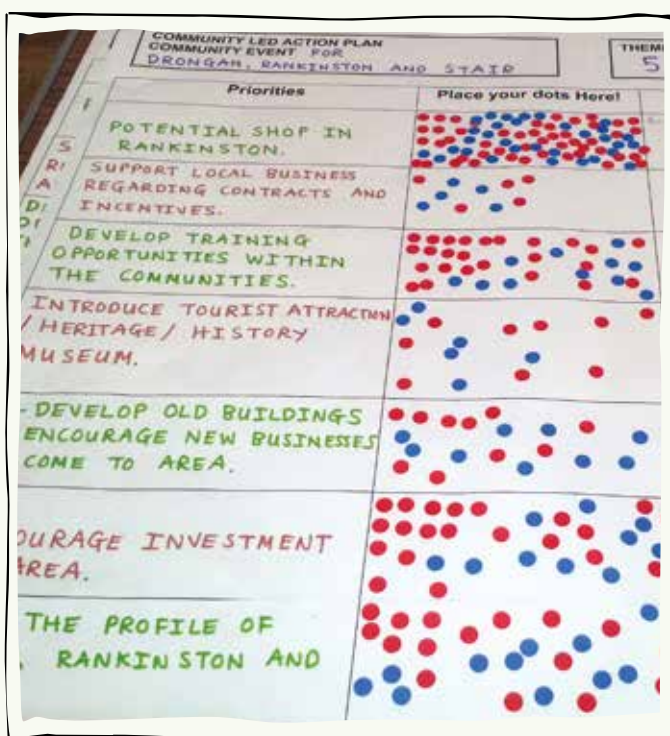
Before you start, make sure you can quantify the likely demand, and also assess whether, as a community, you have the necessary infrastructure in place to actually handle any significant growth in visitor numbers. E.g. car parking, places to eat, public toilets etc.

How will the project be managed?

Many community groups are made up of volunteers or people with limited time on their hands. Therefore it's important to decide at an early stage how the project will be managed. Remember that if you are applying for funding for your project, you may need to be a formally-constituted group.

Think, too, about who will lead the group and how decisions will be taken. Getting an effective management structure in place for the project at an early stage will make the whole development process much easier.

For information on forming a constituted group, along with a sample constitution, go to www.grantnet.com/HelpfulReports/writingaconstitution.pdf



Community Tourism Action Planning

GET HELP

Do you have the necessary expertise and manpower to carry out the project?

If not, can you source the skills and resources from elsewhere, and will there be a cost associated with this? Be realistic about what you can achieve with the resources to hand.

How will the project be funded?

Some level of funding will almost always be needed for any community project, and it's vital to think about how you will source this. For example, will local businesses contribute, will visitors be charged for using the service, or will you need to seek funding support from local agencies?

Work up a project budget, covering everything from planning and development to promotion and launch, and be clear about how you will source the necessary funding.

How will the initiative be promoted?

Think carefully about how you will promote your new product or service to visitors once it's ready to launch. If you've done your groundwork and identified what types of visitors you want to attract, then pinpointing the channels to reach these visitors should be easier.

How will you identify and engage with local partners?

Think about any local partners you will need to work with to make your project work, such as local transport, accommodation providers, local planning departments, landowners, special interest groups, visitor attraction operators, shops, restaurants and others. Speak to them at an early stage to secure their interest and commitment and identify how you will work together to take the project forward.

What are your targets?

Setting targets for your initiative is vital. The important thing is to be specific about these – for example, instead of setting a general target of 'attracting more visitors', identify when you actually want those additional visitors to come.

Remember, it's important to be realistic about what you can achieve – don't set targets which are wildly ambitious unless you have the manpower, funding and resources to back them up!

How will you evaluate how successful the initiative has been?

As part of the planning process, think about how you will measure the impact which your initiative has had. How will you be able to tell if it has made a difference? There are lots of ways you could do this, for example by undertaking a simple visitor survey, including some kind of response mechanism in your promotional material, or gathering feedback from visitors on the ground when they are here.

How sustainable is your proposed project in the long term?

Successful tourism initiatives are those that deliver long term benefits and are sustainable over a number of years. Therefore, it's important to think beyond the project launch and consider how your project will fare in the longer term, particularly once any set-up funding comes to an end.

POINTS TO REMEMBER!

This may all sound quite daunting, but it's actually quite easy to do! Remember that there are lots of people out there who can help you, such as the Ayrshire & Arran Tourism Team.

Take time to clarify your thinking and plan your project. Time spent laying the groundwork is time (and in some cases money) well spent!

PLANNING

See yourself as visitors see you

In such a competitive tourism marketplace, destinations need to offer fantastic visitor experiences to really stand out from the crowd. Therefore the first thing you need to do, before embarking on any new tourism project, is to put yourself in your visitors' shoes and ask yourself how the experience in your area, town or village measures up. For example, how easy is it to park? Would you recommend local hotels to visitors? Are there good places to eat?

By undertaking an 'audit' of the current visitor experience, you'll be able to identify any gaps in products, services and infrastructure, and the steps you need to take to improve the situation. This in turn will help you to identify what tourism project best fits your area.

What makes a great visitor experience?

Visitors will arrive at any destination with expectations, based on information gathered from websites, brochures and recommendations from others. Therefore it is important that a visitor's experience actually matches or exceeds their expectations.

A successful destination will exceed visitor expectations in terms of quality, value for money, choice, and ease of access and how well the services are integrated with each other. To achieve this, your area town or village needs to adopt a co-ordinated approach to provide a high quality and seamless visitor experience.

When asked what makes a great tourism destination, most people will put hospitality and warmth of welcome right at the top of the list. A smile and a friendly welcome can be powerful marketing tools, and will go a long way towards ensuring your visitors go home delighted.

Find out about Ayrshire Smiles free online training course at www.ayrshire-smiles.com

Other elements of a great visitor experience will include:

- **The quality of facilities and services on the ground**
- **The range of visitor attractions and activities on offer**
- **Knowledgeable local people**
- **High quality, locally-sourced food and drink**
- **'Authentic', unique experiences to make an area really stand out**
- **The quality and range of accommodation, shops and restaurants**
- **A range of events to provide a flavour of local culture/heritage**
- **High quality visitor information**

Remember, you're only as good as your weakest link. You can have the best facilities in the world, but if the welcome visitors receive doesn't match up, they will ultimately go home disappointed.

Use market intelligence to identify what visitors want

It's crucial that the experience in your area matches and exceeds what your visitors actually want, therefore great market intelligence is vital. Do you know who the visitors to your area are, and what they're likely to be looking for? The more market intelligence you have about them, the easier it will be to identify how you could improve their experience.

Key questions might include:

- **Who comes to your area?**
- **What inspires them to come?**
- **What they do when they are here?**
- **How long do they stay for?**
- **Where do they stay?**
- **What are they asking for?**
- **Where are they from?**
- **What do they like/don't like about your area?**
- **How did they choose your destination?**

You could ask visitors yourself by co-ordinating your own simple visitor survey. The 'Listening to Our Visitors' guide from Tourism Intelligence Scotland will provide you with hints and tips on doing this. www.tourism-intelligence.co.uk/market-opportunities/

Once you have the information at your fingertips, you can use this knowledge to develop new products, services or campaigns that will be both attractive and relevant to potential visitors.



The Barony Centre, West Kilbride Craft Town

Identify your strengths and weaknesses

Once you have collated as much information as possible about your visitors, it's a great idea to do an inventory of the current tourism product in your area, town or village. Simply list all the products and services that you have, and then 'score' them in order to get a clear view on how well your offer measures up in terms of strong attractions, services, and facilities.

TYPE OF RESOURCE	NAME OF RESOURCE	LOCATION	SCORE
Natural Environment			
Loch			
Shorelines/Beach			
Parks			
Forest			
Unique Landscape			
Archeology			
Other			
Cultural Resources/Activities			
Events, Festivals			
Art Galleries, Museums, Theatre			
Music/Poetry			
Golf			
Watersports			
Walking & Cycling			
Other			
Visitor Facilities			
Accommodation			
Farmers Market			
Local Food			
Restaurants and Cafes			
Tourist Information Point			
Public Toilets			
Other			

Using the inventory, you can then carry out what's called a SWOT Analysis, which is designed to measure strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This is a good activity for your group to do together so that everyone can agree what is currently excellent or less good about your area and where the new opportunities might lie.

The '5 Steps to Destination Development' toolkit from Tourism Intelligence Scotland will lead you through the process of doing this. www.tourism-intelligence.co.uk/develop-your-business

Again, it's important to put yourself in the shoes of the visitor, so that you can view the current visitor experience from every possible angle!

Having 'scored' your tourism offer, you'll have a series of useful benchmarks from which to measure improvements, and will then be in a position to set realistic targets and objectives for your project.

Learn from others

Keeping an eye on what other areas are doing is a fantastic way of picking up new ideas and, equally, learning from mistakes!

Do some research to find out what other groups are doing and note any examples of best practice. Better still, go to other areas and experience their offer as a visitor. This will give you some great pointers as to what you could be doing to improve the visitor experience in your own area, town or village.

Keep an eye on www.ayrshire-arran.org/our-work/community-engagement for the latest information on best practice visits and community tourism news and updates.

POINTS TO REMEMBER!

Put yourself in your visitors' shoes to assess how your area really measures up.

Tourism is everybody's business! In order to offer a truly great visitor experience, you'll need to get everybody on board.

There's no point in re-inventing the wheel. Look at what's worked and what hasn't for others and use that information to help shape your own visitor offer.



Eaglesham Learning Journey Interpretation Boards

HOW TO ORGANISE A SUCCESSFUL TOURISM EVENT



Events can be a fantastic way for local communities to showcase the particular strengths and unique aspects of their area, town or village to visitors, and can encourage them to stay longer and spend more in the local area. They can also be a great way of extending the tourist season, by attracting visitors to come at traditionally quieter times of year.

Co-ordinating even the smallest event can be time-consuming and resource-intensive. Therefore before deciding to go ahead with an event, you should ask yourself some key questions.

By answering these questions, you may actually find that an event is not the best way to achieve your objectives, or that the resources required to successfully co-ordinate the event are not readily available.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK

What is the aim of your event?

Think about what you want to achieve by staging it (e.g. create a sense of community, celebrate a historical anniversary, showcase a particular aspect of your community's culture to visitors, attract more business at a quiet time of year). How many people do you want to come to it? Does the event fit in with the broader regional tourism strategy?

Who do you want to come to your event?

Your event might target a particular audience, such as families. Or perhaps you want your event to appeal to a particular interest group, such as those with ancestral links to your area, history buffs, food & drink enthusiasts, music lovers, walkers etc.

Do you know how to reach those people and tell them about the event?

Marketing your event effectively will be crucial to its overall success. Do you have the resources, skills and funds to publicise your event to the right target audience? What marketing strategies will you employ and what are the key messages you will use to attract your target audience?

What approvals will you need to run your event?

Depending on the elements in your event, approvals, permits or licences may be required. Make sure you know well in advance what will be required, and give yourself plenty of time to apply.

What plans will you need to prepare, such as risk management or traffic plans, in order to gain approvals from authorities and effectively manage your event?

Several months notice or more may be required for these, so again it's vital you are aware of any deadlines or cut-off dates.

What resources will you need to run a well-managed event, and do you have access to these?

Consider staffing, volunteers, the structure of the organising body (including when and where they will meet) and any other equipment that may be needed.

What will the event cost to stage?

Do you have a budget for the event, and what are your revenue sources? Have you considered ticketing, sponsorship or fundraising? If you need to apply to funding bodies, make sure you're aware of the application deadlines and allow plenty of time to prepare the applications.

What are the main risks associated with the event?

If you're holding an event, you'll need to undertake a risk assessment. It's important to identify what issues/activities may compromise the event and its success at an early stage, and detail these as part of your overall event plan.

What other events are being staged at the time you propose to hold your event?

Other events being held on the same day could adversely affect visitor numbers, media interest, the availability of accommodation, transport and other support services. Before you set the date, check out any potential calendar clashes with VisitScotland or your local information sources.

POINTS TO REMEMBER!

Think carefully about when the event is most likely to benefit the local business community. For maximum impact, schedule it at a time that will bring more people in to your area during a traditionally quiet period.

Think strategically! Does the proposed event reflect the Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Strategy? You are more likely to get marketing assistance and/or funding from local agencies if your event is a good fit with the regional tourism messages.

FURTHER INFO

www.eventscotland.org

www.gov.uk/government/publications/can-do-guide-for-organisers-of-voluntary-events

HOW TO DEVELOP A TOURISM OR HERITAGE TRAIL



Cumbrae
Sensory Trail

Feast for the Senses



Tourism trails can be a fantastic asset for local communities, helping to showcase the unique, authentic characteristics of your area to visitors, attracting them to come, and giving them a reason to stay longer and spend more in local businesses.

The key success factor for any trail is that the theme must be attractive to visitors! If it doesn't include the sorts of things that visitors want to see or do, then you could potentially waste a lot of time and money developing something that remains largely unused.

You also need to be clear about why you want to develop a trail. As a group, consider why you are doing this and what the specific objectives are for your community.

Understanding the importance of heritage to your community and developing a project that can build upon the history of your local area to enhance its character and sense of place can achieve a lot for the community if managed well. Developing a trail can allow a community to effectively combine care for the natural and built environment.

Identify a possible theme

Potential themes may come to light as part of your 'inventory' of tourism products and services. For example, are there particular aspects of your area's history, heritage or culture that you think visitors would want to find out more about? Do you have an abundance of local food and drink producers who could offer a unique taste of your area to visitors? Is there potential to develop a new walking or cycling trail, taking visitors to parts of your area they might otherwise not see?

Once you have identified a possible theme for your trail, you're ready to move on.

Use market intelligence to help you focus

Analyse the potential audience or market for your trail. If you have done your groundwork and identified the types of visitors that come to your area, then assessing whether your proposed trail is likely to be attractive to them should be relatively straightforward.

As ever, put yourself in your visitors' shoes. Think about who the potential trail users will be. What kinds of heritage topics would they be most interested in? Why would they want to walk, cycle, ride or drive this trail? What length of trail would appeal to your different types of visitors? In short, what are the specific benefits that a visitor would gain from doing the trail?

Identify the elements to include on the trail

Once you've confirmed that your proposed theme is likely to be attractive to visitors, you need to assess realistically whether you have sufficient high quality, visitor-friendly products and services on the ground to make the trail viable. Speak to relevant local businesses at an early stage to find out if they're willing to participate. Remember to think about the additional services and facilities that visitors might need when they are on the trail, such as toilets, car parking, cafes, restaurants and shops.

What makes your place special?

The surrounding landscape and environment
Green spaces
Historic buildings
Conservation areas
Streetscapes
Places of worship
Key views and sight lines
Customs and traditions

Decide how the project will be managed

Developing a new trail can be a very time consuming and labour intensive project. Therefore you will need to decide at an early stage how the project will be managed and by whom. A practical way of managing the project will be to form a steering committee, made up of the relevant stakeholders (those who have an interest in the success of the project), such as local businesses, landowners etc.

Start the planning process

As a group, scope out a proposed action plan for the development of the trail. This plan should identify:

- what the trail will look like
- where it will go; the businesses and sites it will cover
- the practical issues that need to be addressed such as land ownership and visitor access
- funding
- signposting and visitor interpretation
- marketing and promotion
- ongoing maintenance

Establish partnerships

Once you have a plan in place, start to establish the partnerships you will need to bring the trail to fruition. People you will want to speak to might include:

- Local landowners, who may need to provide access through their land (the Scottish Outdoor Access Code provides up to date details of relevant public access legislation)
- The businesses and sites directly involved in the trail development
- Local businesses which are likely to benefit indirectly from the trail's establishment
- Council and tourism officials, such as those involved in tourism, road safety, environment, conservation, sport and recreation

The more people that are aware of and committed to your proposed project, the more likely it is to succeed.



Identify your potential funding sources

It's vital to think about how you will source funding for the trail at an early stage. For example, will local businesses contribute, will visitors be charged for using the trail, or will you need to seek funding support from local agencies?

Work up a project budget, covering everything from planning and development to promotion and launch, and be clear about how you will source the necessary funding.

Signposting and interpretation

Remember that good interpretation is vital. What exactly does interpretation mean? Making your communities history, culture, or scenery accessible to visitors in experiences that are engaging.

Signposting is an integral part of any trail and can be quite costly. Think carefully about the sort of signposting that will be required to guide visitors to the start of the trail, and then to lead them around it. Appropriate permissions would also need to be researched.

You'll also need to think carefully about how you will communicate the 'story' of the trail to visitors. Knowing the type of visitors that are likely to use the trail should help determine the type of interpretation you will need, such as: interpretive panels; self-guiding booklets; or leaflets, maps, Smartphone apps etc.

Remember to include development, installation and maintenance costs as part of your project budget.

Marketing and promotion

As part of your implementation plan, think about how you will promote your new trail to visitors once it's ready to launch. If you've done your groundwork and identified what types of visitors the trail will attract, then pinpointing the channels to reach these visitors should be easier.

If the trail is designed to 'add value' for visitors when they are already in your area, then a leaflet distributed to local hotels, B&Bs, guest houses, visitor attractions and Visitor Information Centres should be considered. If it's of sufficient scale and interest to attract visitors to come to the area specially you may wish to consider a wider marketing campaign.

POINTS TO REMEMBER!

Be clear about what you, as a local community, want to get from the trail, and the benefits that your trail will bring to visitors.

Remember, visitors are looking for authentic, high quality experiences that will really wow them! The quality of the offer on your trail therefore needs to be first class.

FURTHER INFO

www.hlf.org.uk/HowtoApply/goodpractice/Documents/Interpretation_good_practice.pdf



Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Gathering Trade Stands 2014

HOW TO DEVELOP MARKETING MATERIAL

Before you embark on developing any new marketing material, there are some key questions you need to ask:



- **What are you aiming to do?** Consider why you want to produce a leaflet or a website. For example, is it to tell people more about your area when they are in Ayrshire and Arran? Is it to promote a particular event? Do you want visitors to have information in their hand as they walk around your area, town or village?
- **What is the most effective way of reaching the visitors you want to attract?** Do they find information through Visitor Information Centres and local tourist facilities once they arrive in the area, or do they commonly use the internet in advance of their visit, or on arrival via mobile devices, to look and book? People are accessing information in lots of different ways, often on the move! These days some 95% of holidaymakers set off with at least one internet-enabled device in their luggage, and demand daily access.

If you have a good knowledge of who is coming to your area and why, you will be better placed to choose the channel that's most suited to your purpose.

- **What budget do you have?** If you only have a very limited budget, it makes sense to focus your marketing activity on the channels which will be most cost effective. Again, knowing who your visitors are and how they source information should point you in the right direction.

TOP TIPS ON PRODUCING A TOURISM LEAFLET

Quantity and Distribution

- If you are clear that a leaflet is the best way forward, think carefully about how and where it will be distributed. This should help you determine how many you need to produce. If you produce too many, there's a danger they might end up gathering dust or cluttering up storerooms. Remember, too, to build distribution costs into your budget!

You're only as good as your written brief

- Don't be afraid to 'borrow' design elements from other leaflets that you like. When you know what you want to achieve with the leaflet, write it down. The better the brief for your designer the better the end result for you.

Make your headline stand out

- The top 3 inches of your leaflet are what most people see when your leaflet is in a display rack. They therefore need to make an impression and grab the attention of passers-by.

Get your message across

- Bear in mind who the leaflet is aimed at and what information they will need. Ideally, copy should include short, sharp statements, bullet points and bold headings that really 'sell' the unique features of your area and what you can offer to visitors. Don't try to include too much!

A picture says a thousand words

- The idea of leaflets is to whet the appetite. Go for one or two high quality, strong images on the front cover for maximum impact, with additional images inside to reinforce your message. A map with directions is also a great idea.

Size matters

- Think about size and layout. 1/3 A4, and A5 leaflets folded down from A3 or A4 size, fit into most standard leaflet racks and can also be fitted neatly into visitors' pockets.

Incentivise to maximise and measure

- Incentivising your leaflet, for example by including special offers or redeemable vouchers, is a great idea. Not only does it give visitors a good reason to visit, it also allows you to measure the effectiveness of your campaign.

Use the AIDA principle

- This simple but effective advertising formula can help you gauge how effective your leaflet will be. Will your leaflet generate: Attention, Interest, Desire, Action? If the answer is yes, you are 90% of the way there.

Check and double check

- It might seem obvious, but checking for spelling mistakes and 'typos' is really important. Make sure at least two or three different people see a proof of your leaflet before it goes to print. Mistakes can be very costly to rectify after the event!

Is a website right for you?

Developing a website from scratch can be a significant investment, both for the initial build and then for the ongoing promotion and maintenance. The key questions to consider before embarking down this route are:

- **Do you actually need a website in order to achieve your aims and objectives?** Again, this all comes down to who your target market is and how they look for information. Think about the target audience – consider their age, gender, and whether they're web-savvy or not. Once you have really explored this question, you may reach the conclusion that alternative marketing channels may be more appropriate
- **How will you go about building and designing your site?** There are a large number of 'self-build' website tools in the marketplace, and if you're looking for something relatively simple this might suffice. However, more sophisticated sites are likely to require input from a professional web designer
- **How will you maintain and update your site?** The most effective websites are those that are regularly updated with new, fresh information, in order to keep users coming back. However, the ongoing maintenance of a website is an often-overlooked aspect of the overall design. Be clear about who will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance and management of your site and how much time they may need to devote to it
- **How will people find your site in the first place?** Simply having a web site will not make people go to it, so consider how you will promote it and build this in to your budget
- **Will your site be mobile-friendly?** Mobile-friendly sites and business-related apps are increasingly becoming 'expected' by many types of visitors

Making the most of social media

Social media can be an inexpensive way to communicate quickly with potential and current visitors, and can be particularly useful if you want to alert them about news, last minute deals, special offers or events.

Three of the most popular social media marketing channels are:



Facebook.co.uk

Creating a Facebook page allows you to connect and interact with people interested in your area. Your 'friends' can recommend your page to their friends, and the page can serve as a gateway to your website.



YouTube.com

YouTube allows you to share videos about your area. If you can provide innovative and original video content, videos can go viral and give your area exposure to a global audience in a short period of time, at minimal cost.



Twitter.com

Twitter is a social networking site that allows you to post updates (called Tweets) as often as you want (limited to 140 characters). When you follow other people on Twitter, you see their tweets. When they follow you, they see your tweets.

Points to consider before embarking on any social media campaign:

- **Do you have sufficient 'content' to make social media work effectively for you?** Social media works best when you have lots of news/developments that you want to share, and the content needs to be fresh and innovative
- **Who will manage your social media activity?** By its nature, social media messaging is 'immediate' and can become out of date very quickly. Somebody will therefore need to be available to post messages as and when required
- **Do you have sufficient technical skills?** Technology is constantly evolving, and a level of IT knowledge is therefore useful if you're to get the most out of this fast changing media
- **How will you tell people they can engage with you on Facebook or Twitter?** Simply being on Facebook or Twitter will not make people find you, so consider how you will promote your accounts in any offline marketing activity e.g. by linking to your Facebook page and Twitter account from your website

POINTS TO REMEMBER!

Know your limitations! Community groups can play a big part in attracting new visitors and encouraging visitors to experience more of the local area when here.

Use market intelligence to help you identify which marketing channels will bring you the best return on investment.

The quality of your marketing material will reflect on you as a destination. If you produce poor quality marketing material, people will expect your visitor offer to be poor as well.

DEVELOPING LOCAL MARKETING AND PR CAMPAIGNS



For many community groups working with a limited budget and resources, the most cost effective promotional strategy to raise the profile of your area, town or village will be to utilise the marketing channels which are available locally.



Work with local businesses

Local businesses, particularly those which already attract tourists such as accommodation establishments, visitor attractions and activity providers, are the best starting point. Speak to them to make sure they are aware of what you are planning, and ask them how they could help you market your new initiative – for example by promoting your website address in their own visitor communications, displaying your leaflet in their reception area, or telling visitors on arrival about your new product or service.

This type of cross-selling is invaluable – not only will it enable you to focus your limited resources, it also adds to the whole visitor experience in your area by providing visitors with an integrated, seamless tourism offer.

Remember, too, that visitors don't just stay in accommodation and attractions – they will also use local services such as petrol stations, transport operators, shops and restaurants. Getting your marketing material into these types of facilities can also be a great way of spreading the word about your initiative.

Work with the Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Team

The Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Team is a pan-regional team funded by the three Ayrshire Councils. The team is very focused on delivering projects to take forward the actions outlined in the Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Strategy. There are ambitious plans to grow the tourism industry across the whole region.

To successfully achieve this, the Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Team take an integrated approach and work closely with businesses, organisations and communities to identify and develop a wide range of initiatives and projects to take forward. Projects focus on:

- **Increasing the number of visitors**
- **Extending the season**
- **Increasing visitor spend**
- **Extending the length of stay**
- **Adding value to existing resources**

The Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Team have a business website that offers valuable information – www.ayrshire-arran.org



Learning Journey, Laggan Forest Trust

Work with VisitScotland and VisitArran

VisitScotland's role is to market Scotland as a visitor destination. Each year the agency co-ordinates a range of national marketing campaigns, the aim of which is to attract visitors to come to Scotland from the UK and overseas. However, the agency also co-ordinates regional marketing activity.

The island of Arran also has its own dedicated Destination Management Organisation, or DMO. VisitArran co-ordinates its own marketing campaigns and has a dedicated website, www.visitarran.com. If you are considering developing a tourism initiative for Arran, a key contact would be VisitArran's Executive Director who will be delighted to discuss how your proposed project fits in with the island's tourism strategy and how VisitArran can help you market it.

Work with local media

Local newspapers, radio stations and TV are also great marketing channels for community projects – and the good news is that media coverage generally doesn't cost a thing!

Press Releases are the most common way to communicate with the media. Before you start writing any Press Release, ask yourself why it's being written, who the audience is, whether it will contain newsworthy information, and what readers will take away from it. Journalists only respond to stories that their audience want to know about. Think about who you're sending the news story to and what they will be looking for.

TOP TIPS ON WRITING AN EFFECTIVE PRESS RELEASE

- A good news story must be 'fresh'. Journalists tend not to respond to 'old' news, so make sure anything you send them is up to date and current.
- Always compose your release using an 'inverted pyramid' structure, with the most important information appearing first.
- The first paragraph should encapsulate all the main facts and must include your organisation's name and what you're announcing. Subsequent paragraphs should provide supporting information in a descending hierarchy of importance.
- Don't be tempted to cram in too much detail – focus on the big picture. Keep copy short – a maximum of two A4 sheets.
- Always include contact details (name, address, telephone and email address) of your appointed contact person at the bottom of the release.
- State whether you have photographs available, as generally these shouldn't be attached to a release.
- Papers, TV and radio all have deadlines. The hottest story is unlikely to make them break these. Find out when your chosen media's copy deadline is, and how they prefer to receive Press Releases.
- Follow up your release by ringing the news desk to check they have it, if they will be using it, and if they have all the information they need.
- Photocalls can be a good idea, particularly if you are launching something new. Media invitations should include details of what you're launching, when and where your photocall will take place, and what pictures the photographer will be able to take. Make sure you send the invitation out in sufficient time before the event, so that it gets into photographers' diaries.

POINTS TO REMEMBER!

Local marketing channels are the most important ones for most community initiatives.

Local media are always on the lookout for 'good news' stories from their local community. Getting a local journalist 'on side' is likely to pay dividends!

WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH THE WIDER TOURISM INDUSTRY IN YOUR AREA



Service

Encouraging everyone with an interest in tourism to work in partnership as a group is vital for the success of any community tourism initiative.



By coming up with a structured plan that has full support and commitment from relevant agencies, businesses and associations, you'll find that there will be opportunities to benefit everyone, and together you can be much more effective.

Your partnership will need some key ingredients:

- **Like minded people, who want to improve the visitor experience**
- **A commitment to work together in an integrated fashion and to align resources**
- **A commitment to take on and complete specific jobs by agreed deadlines**

Ideally, as tourism affects many different sectors, your group should also include a wide mix of people from the community, relevant public sector agencies, local businesses and voluntary groups.

Involving a cross section of people with an interest in developing tourism will help ensure that everybody's voice is heard and will ultimately lead to a greater chance of success for your project.

THE BENEFITS OF WORKING TOGETHER

For the visitor

If everybody is working to the same goal of creating a fantastic experience for visitors in your area, your visitors should be ensured of a consistently warm welcome, which will go a long way to ensuring they go home delighted.

Working in partnership should also mean visitors are offered more joined-up visitor information, easier access to a wide range of high quality products, services, activities and packages, and a higher level of customer service.

It should also give them confidence that any feedback they provide will be listened to and acted upon, which in turn will help you to develop your visitor experience even further.

For individual businesses

For individual businesses, the greatest benefits may well centre on marketing and promotion.

Developing a joint marketing approach for your area should hopefully lead to greater cross-selling by individual businesses, which will lead to a better knowledge of the tourism offer in the area. If businesses in your area proactively sell each other to visitors, your marketing costs may reduce and your overall marketing effort should be more effective.

If businesses are working together as a network, they will also be better placed to identify potential partners with whom they can work to develop new products, services and packages aimed at visitors – something which will again enhance the overall visitor experience in your area.

Operational opportunities may also come to light, such as developing economies of scale through joint purchasing and distribution.

In short, by collaborating together with the wider tourism industry in your community, you are more likely to grow, strengthen and develop your area to attract more visitors and improve visitor satisfaction levels!

For the local area

If you've audited your visitor experience as a group and have a common agreement as to who your visitors are and what they're looking for, any initiative you develop is much more likely to be customer-focused and will therefore have a greater chance of success.

Not only are your initiatives likely to boost the local economy generally, they may also lead to an increase in overall business confidence in your area, by enhancing the sustainability of local facilities and services that benefit from increased numbers of visitors, such as post offices, village shops and bus services.

In addition, your efforts could have a secondary benefit of instilling a greater sense of civic pride in local residents.

POINTS TO REMEMBER!

Working in partnership to achieve common goals will bring huge benefits to visitors, businesses and your local community as a whole.

Think about all the different 'stakeholders' in your local community who benefit directly and indirectly from tourism, and encourage them to get involved.

If businesses can be encouraged to collaborate by 'cross-selling' the local area and each other, you will gain a huge marketing boost.

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF FUNDING

If you're looking for funding support to help develop a community-based tourism project, there are a number of sources that may be able to help. The best route to take really depends on the type of initiative you are developing e.g. an event, a marketing campaign etc, and also the size, scope and reach of the overall project.



Potential sources of funding

A good starting point your Local Authority who will be able to advise on any support that may be available through external funding sources, and who produce regular funding newsletters, which can be found on their websites. The Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Team could also advise on any potential funding sources and the support section on our website easily directs you to local authority funding information.

Other main current funding sources for tourism/community projects.

VisitScotland Growth Fund

The VisitScotland Growth Fund supports a range of regional, national and sectoral groups to deliver new or additional marketing campaigns across Scotland. Funding can cover 50% of approved marketing costs from a minimum award of £5,000 up to a maximum of £65,000.

Types of activity that can be funded include:

- Content development for a website and social media activity
- Promotion of a website by e-marketing, online advertising and search engine optimisation
- Printed consumer marketing material which has a clear distribution plan
- Media advertising
- Direct mail
- PR activity

Applications can be accepted from destination organisations and industry groups consisting of at least three separate tourism businesses. All accommodation providers should participate in the VisitScotland Quality Assurance Scheme. All non-accommodation providers who are not participating in a VisitScotland Quality Assurance Scheme must adhere to the VisitScotland code of conduct and strive to enhance Scotland's quality reputation.

Find out more at www.visitscotland.org/business_support/marketing_opportunities/growth_fund.aspx or email growthfund@visitscotland.com

Business Improvement Districts

A Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) helps tourism businesses in an area to work together to support the development of local tourism.

A TBID can be developed across a group of businesses in an area or Destination Management Organisation.

By collaborating formally through a TBID, tourism businesses can widen their markets, improve productivity and achieve cost advantages normally associated with larger national companies.

For more information go to www.bids-scotland.com or telephone 0131 629 0065

Leader

The Ayrshire Local Action Group (LAG) is currently developing the next Local Development Strategy for 2014 through to 2020, with support from Scotland's Rural College (SRUC). Through this Strategy, the Ayrshire LAG will secure financial investment from Scottish Government and EU to support projects and initiatives across Ayrshire.

Find our more at www.ayrshire-leader.com or telephone 01292 673 768

POINTS TO REMEMBER!

Remember, it's not always about funding! Aside from financial support, agencies may be able to provide in-kind support and advice – something that can be equally important for your new initiative or project.

Awards for All Scotland

Awards for All, part of the Big Lottery Fund, is a quick and easy way to get small Lottery grants of between £500 and £10,000.

You can apply to Awards for All if you are a not-for-profit/voluntary or community sector group or community council.

Awards for All can pay for a wide range of activities including:

- Putting on an event, activity or performance
- Buying new equipment or materials
- Improvements or additions to community buildings
- Setting up a pilot project or starting up a new group
- Paying expenses for volunteers, costs for sessional workers or professional fees
- Transport costs

Find out more at www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/global-content/programmes/scotland/awards-for-all-scotland or telephone **0845 410 2030**

Heritage Lottery Fund

The Heritage Lottery Fund is for projects which focus on heritage, such as histories of people and communities; language and dialects; cultural traditions; history of places and events; historic buildings and streets; natural heritage; and places and objects linked to industrial, maritime and transport history.

A range of programmes are on offer, with grants from £3,000 to over £5 million.

In assessing applications, the panel will take account of the broad range of outcomes for heritage, people and communities that projects will achieve.

If you are interested in applying for a grant between £3,000 and £30,000, you can submit an Expression of Interest form online to find out if your project is suitable for the programme. For grants of over £10,000, you should fill in a Project Enquiry Form online.

Find out more at www.hlf.org.uk/InYourArea/Scotland/Pages/Welcome.aspx, email scotland@hlf.org.uk, or telephone **0131 225 9450**

EventScotland

EventScotland operates a National Events Programme that has been specifically designed to support sporting and cultural events which take place outwith the cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow and drive domestic tourism within Scotland.

It supports events which:

- Generate economic benefits for specific regions of Scotland
- Attract visitors to specific regions of Scotland from other parts of the country and beyond
- Enhance the profile and appeal of the host region
- Inspire and involve local communities
- Have measurable outcomes

Funding will not be provided for core or capital purchase but may be offered for activities such as strategic marketing; adding a new element to the event; enhanced media coverage; hired equipment to improve the visitor experience; or hired equipment to increase capacity.

Applicants can apply for between £4,000 and £25,000 as appropriate, however the maximum funding requested should not exceed 25% of the overall event income.

Find out more at www.eventscotland.org/funding-and-resources/, email information@eventscotland.org, or telephone **0131 472 2313**

DEVELOPING LINKS WITH LOCAL AGENCIES AND NATIONAL BODIES



Working in partnership as a community will pay great dividends. However, don't forget about the benefits you could achieve by working with and linking into other local and national agencies that could support your project.



By developing links with relevant agencies, you will be well placed to:

- **Access marketing, PR or funding opportunities**
- **Tap into the wealth of knowledge and expertise which these agencies have in the tourism sector**
- **Stay up to date with news and developments that could positively influence your project**
- **Receive in-kind support and advice which, for a fledgling tourism initiative, can be extremely valuable**

Aligning your project with relevant agencies also means that: your activity will have a more 'strategic' approach; your resources and funding will be better focused; your activity will reach more people; and you will be more likely to achieve success in the long term.

What you need to do

Firstly register your group on the **Ayrshire & Arran tourism industry website** www.ayrshire-arran.org. The site offers a one stop shop for businesses and organisations with an interest in the Ayrshire & Arran tourism industry and is a great way to: connect with other groups and businesses in the sector; keep up to date with the latest industry news and information on key projects; and access useful online business resources.

Secondly, make sure the **Ayrshire & Arran Tourism Team** is aware of your project and the activity you're planning. Funded by the three Local Authorities in the region, the team is an excellent source of help and advice, and will be able to signpost you to a range of useful contacts and resources to help get your project off the ground.

With any tourism project, it's also vital to develop good links with VisitScotland.

VisitScotland co-ordinates regional marketing campaigns and can help promote your initiative through a variety of different channels.

Arran also has its own dedicated Destination Management Organisation, or DMO. If you are considering developing a tourism initiative for Arran, VisitArran will be delighted to discuss how your proposed project fits in with the island's tourism strategy and how the team can help you market it.

Other agencies with a tourism interest are Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Tourism Alliance and Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Tourism is one of Scottish Enterprise's key sectors and the agency's role is to help Scottish tourism businesses and destinations develop and grow.

Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce represents the interests of the business community and promotes and facilitates business between its members and others.



Tourism Industry Partners - Expo 2014

USEFUL CONTACTS

ORGANISATION	CONTACT DETAILS
Ayrshire & Arran Tourism Team	Burns House Burns Statue Square Ayr, KA7 1UT T. 01292 616130 E. info@ayrshire-arran.org www.ayrshire-arran.org
VisitScotland	Burns House Burns Statue Square Ayr, KA7 1UT T. 01292 616174 E. info@visitscotland.com www.visitscotland.org
VisitArran	Tourist Information Office Brodick Pier Isle of Arran, KA27 8AU T. 01770 302043 E. info@visitarran.com www.visitarran.com
Scottish Enterprise	19 Hill St Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, KA3 1HA T. 0845 607 8787 E. enquiries@scotent.co.uk www.scottish-enterprise.com
Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Suite 1005 Glasgow Prestwick International Airport Prestwick, KA9 2PL T. 01292 678666 E. enquiries@ayrshire-chamber.org www.ayrshire-chamber.org
Ayrshire Bed and Breakfast Association	www.ayrshirebandb.com
Ayrshire Food Network	www.ayrshirefoodnetwork.co.uk
Taste Ayrshire	www.tasteayrshire.co.uk

FIND OUT MORE

<p>AYRSHIRE AND ARRAN TOURISM STRATEGY</p>	<p>Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Strategy 2012 – 2017 www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/documents/sac_tourism_strat.pdf</p>
<p>RESEARCH AND STATISTICS</p>	<p>For the latest facts and figures on tourism to Scotland, plus a summary of the Scotland Visitor Survey which details what visitors do when here, go to www.visitscotland.org/research_and_statistics.aspx</p>
<p>KNOWING OUR MARKETS</p>	<p>The ‘Knowing Our Markets – Scotland’s Visitors 2012’ and ‘Scottish Tourism in the Future’ guides from Tourism Intelligence Scotland provide up to date market information and highlight what’s changed in the global tourism environment and how businesses and areas need to react. It will also provide you with a better understanding of where the future of tourism might be heading.</p> <p>To access these free guides, register online at www.tourism-intelligence.co.uk</p>
<p>NATIONAL TOURISM STRATEGY</p>	<p>For a summary of the national tourism strategy, ‘Tourism in Scotland 2020 – The future of our industry, in our hands’, go to www.scottishtourismalliance.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Tourism-Strategy.pdf</p>
<p>TOURISM CHECKLISTS</p>	<p>‘5 Steps to Destination Development’ toolkit & ‘Listening to Our Visitors’ www.tourism-intelligence.co.uk/develop-your-business</p>
<p>HOW TO ORGANISE A SUCCESSFUL TOURISM EVENT</p>	<p>‘Events Management’ A Practical Guide which will take you through every aspect of planning and delivering your event.</p> <p>‘Ready for Events’ A step by step guide to selling Scottish food & drink at events.</p> <p>Event Business Plan and Marketing Plan templates</p> <p>Sponsorship and Marketing Rights Schedule</p> <p>Guidance and Best Practice factsheet - from government legislation to standards and guidelines for the events industry.</p> <p>‘Guide to Organising Smaller Scale Events’, a toolkit prepared by Dumfries & Galloway Council.</p> <p>EventIMPACTS toolkit, which outlines how to evaluate all aspects of your event.</p> <p>Sustainable Sport and Event Toolkit, which explains how you can incorporate sustainability into your event.</p> <p>Info available at www.eventscotland.org www.gov.uk/government/publications/can-do-guide-for-organisers-of-voluntary-events</p>



<p>HOW TO DEVELOP MARKETING MATERIAL</p>	<p>'Introduction to Online Marketing' www.visitscotland.org/business_support/advice_materials/advicelink_guides/online_marketing.aspx</p> <p>Facebook www.facebook.com/pages/create.php</p> <p>Beginners guide to You Tube www.mashable.com/2011/07/20/how-to-marketing-youtube/</p> <p>Twitter www.mashable.com/guidebook/twitter/</p>
<p>LOCAL MEDIA CONTACTS</p>	<p>Ardrossan Herald editorial@ardrossanherald.co.uk T. 01294 464321</p> <p>Arran Banner editor@arranbanner.co.uk T. 01770 302142</p> <p>Ayr Advertiser editorial@ayradvertiser.co.uk T. 01292 267631</p> <p>Ayrshire Post ayrshirepost@s-un.co.uk T. 01292 262200</p> <p>Carrick Gazette editorial@carrickgazette.com T. 01465 712688</p> <p>Cumnock Chronicle editorial@cumnockchronicle.co.uk T. 01290 421633</p> <p>Irvine Herald news@irvineherald.co.uk T. 01294 272 233</p> <p>Irvine Times editorial@irvinetimes.co.uk T. 01294 273421</p> <p>Kilmarnock Standard kilmarnockstandard@s-un.co.uk T. 01563 545 218</p> <p>S1 community sites www.s1community.com</p> <p>West Sound FM www.westsound.co.uk</p>

CASE STUDIES



Example case studies highlight how local communities are working in partnership to develop and roll out new tourism products, packages, services and marketing campaigns that 'add value' to the tourism offer in their area.

1. ALLENDALE FORGE STUDIOS

The Forge is situated in Allendale in the Allen Valley, Northumberland, an area rich in history. Allendale Forge Studios Community Interest Group and Art Gallery was named as best practice community interest group in the UK. There are twelve working studios, café, art gallery and the gallery shop all situated in the newly built Art, Heritage, Craft and Visitors Centre on the old 17th century site of the village Forge. There are art classes and textile courses, monthly art exhibitions that change with the seasons, musical evenings and children's activities that are part of an award winning youth project. During the year the Forge holds several open studio events and Network Days. The Centre also offers hot-desk space, conference/meeting room, video conferencing, secure business broadband and free WiFi in the cafe.



The Forge's latest marketing tool – a listed red phone box in Hexham opened by Robson Green. One of the smallest art galleries in the world. This is used for monthly exhibitions and has leaflets about events at The Forge to attract locals and tourists.

www.allendaleforigestudios.co.uk

2. ALLEN VALLEYS TOURISM ASSOCIATION

The Allen Valleys Tourism and Visitor Network was set up by a group of businesses working together to promote the area. The businesses are all involved with visitors to the area. The aim is to provide visitors with the information they need for their stay in the Allen Valleys and to encourage them to stay longer and make return visits.



The network is part of the Foundation of Northumberland Tourism Associations (FONTA), a joint group of 14 tourism networks across the county, which is working alongside the county council to encourage tourism to different parts in the county. They collaborate on many projects to maximise possible funding streams, marketing activity and to make the most of their area for both visitors and for their rural community. Young people are actively encouraged to explore their potential and help develop tourism, art and heritage projects.

www.allenvalleys.com

3. HAYDON BRIDGE DEVELOPMENT TRUST

Haydon Bridge Development Trust was set up in 2008 to take forward the implementation of the Haydon Parish Plan. After a wide consultation with the village a priority was to promote the parish as a tourism gateway. Initial funding was sourced from Leader, European Funding for Rural Development, One North East Regional Development (similar to Scottish Enterprise). This enabled the renovation of the existing library, taking it into local ownership, to provide a wider variety of services, including a visitor information point and space for the sale of local items.

The group have also improved the walks and trails surrounding the parish including the development of information leaflets and panels. The trails focus on walks to Hadrian's Wall, heritage, nature and cycling.

The facility is run as a Community Library, Visitor Information Centre and Internet Cafe. The Development Trust is responsible for the operations of the building using volunteers from the community.

John Martin Heritage Trail. This popular walk covers the areas which influenced Victorian artist John Martin, born in the village, who became the ‘... most popular artist of his day’.

There are regular waymarks and six information panels en route. A free pamphlet with maps has also been produced.

www.haydon-bridge.co.uk

4. BURGH BY SANDS - CUMBRIA, ENGLAND

Burgh by Sands located on the northern edge of Cumbria. Voted as “Northern Village of the Year” in recognition of its outstanding community spirit. Burgh by Sands community embrace their position within a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Parish members and the community joined forces to develop the village hall and many other tourism initiatives within the village (to include funding): They created a central village facility, which houses interpretation and exhibitions, an oral history and archiving project, and developed heritage and church trails.

Burgh by Sands had ambitious plans involving tourism as part of their parish plan. The key was community consultation involving the right people, and also making sure everyone could have their say.

The aims for Burgh by Sands Recreation, Village Green and Wetlands Project summary:

- **To physically realise an accessible green in the centre of Burgh by Sands and establish the village green as a focus for community recreational activities**
- **Create an integrated “Heart of the Village” with the green and wetland area as a core component**
- **Develop interpretation boards and heritage walks booklets which provide a comprehensive experience of the area’s history**
- **Strengthening community cohesion, registering the green space as a Town and Village Green once all development has taken place**

The area has a rich historical heritage. Being close to the border with Scotland resulted in Burgh by Sands being for centuries at the heart of a turbulent area. The story of King Edward I is part of the heritage trail.

5. THE BREADALBANE TOURISM GROUP

The Breadalbane Tourism Group has worked in partnership with businesses in its area to launch a range of ready-made visitor packages, in a bid to increase low season business.



The initiative grew from the area’s participation in a ‘Planning to Succeed’ pilot programme, part-funded by Scottish Enterprise.

Ken Chew, Chair of the Breadalbane Tourism Group says: *“Part of the scheme is aimed at individual business development; however the real message that came out of the workshops was how much more we can achieve by working together rather than in competition”.*

“Once we had moved away from the “what’s in it for me” mindset, we defined the extension of the tourism season into autumn, winter and early spring as the single step that would best benefit all of the businesses. The next step was to establish what visitors do and want (as opposed to what we thought they did and wanted). A visitor survey was prepared and this was circulated to visitors by our businesses over a 4-month period. Based on the results of the survey, we designed a series of activity packages to encourage off-season visitors”.

The Discover Breadalbane packages cover outdoor activities such as walking and cycling with a separate, specially created Rob Roy Walking Experience; Outdoor Photography Workshops for keen amateurs and professionals and a “Foodie” experience which covers jam and marmalade making, prestigious chocolatier tours, and wine and whisky tastings.

By setting itself up as a 'co-operative', the group has been able to secure funding and buy-in from two different councils as well as a range of businesses in the area.

www.explorebreadalbane.co.uk

6. CRAIL FOOD FESTIVAL

Crail Food Festival is a great example of how a group of community volunteers have used market intelligence to deliver a successful event which really brings the local area to life for visitors and locals alike.



Devised by two guest house owners as a way of extending the summer season and attracting visitors in the traditionally quieter period between May and July, a food theme was chosen to capitalise on the area's strong links with local food and drink producers and to complement already established music and art festivals.

The three-day festival, which has helped develop Crail as a day visit and short break destination, includes supper nights with menus based around Fife produce, a market hall, a curry and comedy supper, and a colourful harbour event.

Building on the festival's success, local businesses are now meeting visitors' expectations for high quality, fresh local produce, by promoting a 'Grown in Fife' strap line on menus and including the details of individual producers and the particular varieties they specialise in.

The festival receives funding from Fife Council, with local companies and individuals also donating goods and services to help raise funds to run the event.

www.crailfoodfest.co.uk

7. WIGTOWN BOOK FESTIVAL

Wigtown Book Festival, which grew out of Wigtown's designation as Scotland's first Book Town, is a fantastic example of how a themed initiative can regenerate a small, rural community by attracting new and repeat visitors.

Since its inception, the festival has more than doubled in size. However the organisers have been keen to retain its traditional values by growing it in a way that keeps the local elements, with events using the local landscape or focusing on the history and culture of Galloway, plus community-led events such as sessions by local writers' groups.

Festival Director Adrian Turpin says: *"The festival brings more than £500,000 of economic benefit to the region each year, but that doesn't include perhaps its most important role, which is to keep the town in the spotlight through extensive national media coverage. There are also important unquantifiable benefits. For example, the event has helped to generate a new-found confidence to a previously run down town and has also provided a focus for other cultural and educational initiatives."*

"The publicity generated around the festival also has a longer term effect and we try to make sure that, for example in travel pieces, we highlight other activities and to use the programme of events as a shop window for other interesting activities in the area".

Colin Tennant Photography.



The event has been successful in securing funding from a wide variety of public sector bodies including: Creative Scotland; EventScotland; Dumfries & Galloway Council; and LEADER. It has also attracted national media sponsorship from The Telegraph newspaper.

www.wigtownbookfestival.com

8. OUTER HEBRIDES FOOD TRAIL

The Outer Hebrides Food Trail was founded by a group of local speciality food producers in 2004. Fiona MacDonald of Salar Smokehouse says: "The trail was started because there are a good number of speciality food producers

in the Outer Hebrides. Tourism is very important to the islands, and anything that can be done to engage more visitors and boost trade to support our very fragile economy is worth doing”.

The trail runs the length of the Outer Hebrides, from the northern tip of Lewis to the southern tip of Barra, and includes 16 premium Scottish food producers specialising in local foods such as seafood, smoked salmon, beef, lamb, baking, black pudding, beer and toffee.

Fiona says: *“To get the group started, contact was made with food businesses from Lewis to Barra. The idea of sharing the costs for group marketing was well received, as it proved extremely economical for the producers to share the costs of advertising, a website, leaflets, posters, brown signs, and print. Funding from VisitScotland’s Challenge Fund and Leader Plus helped to offset the production costs”.*

“Leaflets were made available at welcome points, tourist information centres, hotels and shops. We also placed leaflets and posters on all the ferries, which proved to be a very good move as during an 8-hour sailing visitors couldn’t fail to notice the material!”

“The Food Trail has been very successful in attracting visitors to the outlets and raising the profile of all the food producers and has helped us all to grow and grow. The very small businesses could never have managed this on their own.”

www.foodhebrides.com

9. NEWCASTLETON BUSINESS FORUM

Newcastleton Business Forum in the Scottish Borders was established in 2009. Since then, members have worked together and in partnership with others to develop a range of events and initiatives designed to maximise the opportunities from the area’s world-class mountain biking product.

Two unique and highly successful mountain bike events were created. In 2009, the first ‘Kielder 100’ saw over 200 cyclists attempt the 100 mile return trip from Kielder to Newcastleton. In 2010 the ‘24 hour exposure’, saw participants take to local roads and trails for a 24 hour marathon on two wheels, the first ever solo 24 hour exposure event in the UK.

A partnership with the ‘7 Stanes’ mountain biking project has also enabled the group to develop a marketing presence at specialist shows including the Outdoor Show and Scottish Bike Show. Such has been the group’s success at catering for both road cyclists and mountain biking visitors that Newcastleton recently became the first village to sign up to the new VisitScotland Cyclists Welcome pilot scheme.

Following a Scottish Enterprise innovation workshop in 2009, the group was quick to develop a highly effective visitor feedback scheme which continues to build an excellent profile of visitors to the area. Armed with this market intelligence, the group has developed a targeted marketing strategy, a range of marketing material including accommodation and village brochures and a comprehensive website.



The project was being part-financed by the Scottish Government and the European Community Scottish Borders LEADER 2007-13 Programme, and is supported by Scottish Enterprise.

www.visitnewcastleton.com

10. KEITH TOURISM ACTION GROUP

Keith Tourism Action Group in Aberdeenshire has set up a network of six Visitor Information Points (VIPs) around the town, focusing on key subjects of local interest such as railway heritage, whisky and walking. The VIPs are all based in attractions or local businesses that have specialist knowledge of these themes.

Staff in the businesses have undergone special ambassador training in customer and visitor care, and visitor information guides have been placed in all the VIPs in a bid to enhance people’s visits to the town and help them plan their activities while there.

Gwenda Michielsen, Keith Tourism Action Group chairwoman says: *“The aim is to bring together passionate ambassadors for the town. We want people to have a fantastic experience when they’re here and to find out why we’re called the friendly town”.*

Running in tandem with the VIPs, the group has printed over 30,000 ‘Welcome to Keith’ brochures which are being distributed across Aberdeenshire, Inverness-shire, Moray and Royal Deeside, with the aim of attracting people to Keith for day visits or short breaks.

The project was developed as part of Moray Council’s ‘Moray Town Partnership’ project.



11. ROYAL BURGH OF LINLITHGOW

The Royal Burgh of Linlithgow has launched an app for use with iPhones, Android smart phones and iPads.

The app covers the Linlithgow Heritage Trail and also promotes the town, its heritage, facilities and businesses to visitors and residents alike.

With content entered by a group of volunteers from Pride & Passion Linlithgow, Annet House Museum and Linlithgow Civic Trust and using software developed by TownGuideApps, the app is the most recent step in a series of promotional and marketing tools developed by Pride & Passion Linlithgow in close collaboration with a number of other organisations in the town.

These include a new website, installation of webcams, production of window stickers for car and shop windows, development of a new Facebook page and production of a Linlithgow Heritage Trail leaflet.

The app provides instant access to features including: an interactive map; a guided walk with photos and descriptions of 48 historic locations; information on where to stay; transport, eating out and shopping options; up to date what's on listings; special offers; and a visitor feedback facility.

Initial start up activity for Pride & Passion Linlithgow was supported by a Community Challenge grant from VisitScotland's Pride & Passion for Scotland campaign. The group is now a voluntary organisation, dependent on membership subscriptions, grants, donations and sponsorship.

www.linlithgow.com



12. PITTENWEEM ARTS FESTIVAL

Originally created by local artists to advance the education of the public in the arts, Pittenweem Arts Festival, which began in 1982, has grown steadily in size and international reputation and helped put this small Fife coastal village firmly on the tourist map.

For nine days each August, multiple exhibitions held by artists, not only in Pittenweem's galleries and public buildings, but also in homes, gardens and garage spaces, are enhanced by stunning coastal scenery.

A varied and innovative programme has been created by inviting artists with international reputations and also by awarding bursaries to support up and coming arts graduates. No longer just about art and artists, complementary events now include music, drama, poetry, film, a torchlit procession and fireworks.

Largely run by volunteers with the support of the part-time co-ordinator, the festival now includes over 100 registered venues, around 130 artists and attracts over 25,000 visitors, over 60% of whom come from outwith Fife, generating spin-off income for local businesses such as accommodation, shops and restaurants.

The economic benefit from the festival is immeasurable, with an economic impact survey estimating that around £1.2m is spent in the Fife economy by festival-goers each year, with around 90% of this spend in the East Neuk area and 10% in the rest of Fife.

With funding support from Fife Council, as well as programmes including LEADER, the European Regional Development Fund and Awards for All, the festival has recently acquired its own premises, providing the organising team with a permanent base.

The building, Art@47, also acts as a cultural hub for Pittenweem and neighbouring villages, offering visitors and local residents alike a place to meet for coffee, look at the artwork, pick up information about the Festival, find out about things going on in the area and feel part of Pittenweem.

www.pittenweemartsfestival.co.uk

13. ESKRIGG NATURE RESERVE

The Eskrigg Nature Reserve project, run by Lockerbie Wildlife Trust, is a first class example of how a small community can join forces to develop a facility that benefits visitors and locals alike.

In 1986, Jim Rae, Principal Teacher of Biology at Lockerbie Academy, learned of an old curling pond at Eskrigg on the outskirts of Lockerbie. The pond had been drained over the years, but on visiting the site, Jim identified that the 7 acres offered a very special habitat.

Jim quickly realised that, by digging out much of the reed-grass and repairing the sluice gate, a pond could be re-established, increasing the biodiversity and, at the same time, creating a resource for the local community.

Having secured a one-year lease of the curling pond from the owner, Jim set about getting advice and assistance from many experts in the field of conservation, in order to survey the area to determine future water levels, identify as many plants and animals as possible and draw up a potential management plan.

A public meeting followed, where Jim Rae explained the draft plans to interested members of the local community. At the meeting it was decided to form the 'Lockerbie Wildlife Trust' and to name the old curling site 'Eskrigg Reserve'.

Following a year of fundraising and with in kind support from local contractors, school pupils, Scouts and Cubs, the pond area was dug out, the sluice was repaired, an overflow pipe was installed and the pond area flooded. Just one month later there was good growth on the islands and a wide variety of wildlife in the pond, and two bird-watching hides had been erected by pupils from Lockerbie Academy.

In January 1989, the lease for the pond site was transferred to Lockerbie Wildlife Trust for an initial term of ten years. The pond site then became officially recognised as Eskrigg Reserve and was formally awarded charity status.

Realising the potential of the Reserve as a visitor attraction and community facility, the Trust secured funding from agencies and programmes including: LEADER; The Heritage Lottery Fund; the Landfill Communities Fund; and Dumfries & Galloway Community Wildlife Grant Scheme to develop The Eskrigg Centre.

With local contractors again providing magnificent support, the Centre, which houses a wildlife information and interpretation centre, was launched in 2010.

Volunteers from the Trust now organise a programme of illustrated talks on wildlife, as well as providing a range of educational, training and fun events at the Reserve and Centre in the summer months.

www.lockerbie-wildlife-trust.co.uk

14. WEST WEMYSS DEVELOPMENT TRUST

West Wemyss is a tiny village in Fife with no businesses, schools or retail outlets, but despite its lack of facilities, an influx of new residents has seen its population more than quadruple to over 250 in the last ten years.

Recognising that this new community needed a 'hub' where people could get to know each other, local residents started to look at options for taking over The Wemyss Arms, a pub that had opened and closed many times over the years and finally been abandoned in a state of disrepair.

As a first step, residents were asked for their views on what the pub should be used for. Following an enthusiastic response, an open meeting was convened and the West Wemyss Development Trust was formed.

Realising that any new 'hub' would have to be commercially viable, it was decided to try and develop a flexible, multi-functioning community facility incorporating a licensed bistro, a shop selling local produce, a bunkhouse, holiday accommodation and meeting rooms.

Project Team Member Tom Adams says: "Following that first meeting, lots of people with a wide variety of skills came forward. In 2009, we decided to apply to Village SOS, a programme from the Big Lottery Fund and the BBC, which aims to inspire a rural revival across the UK and supports new community-led business ventures that will breathe new life into their areas, create new jobs and improve the quality of life for local people.

Fighting off stiff competition from a range of different projects across the UK, West Wemyss Development Trust was awarded funding of £374,977, enabling them to buy the pub and neighbouring three buildings.

With support from 'Village Champion' Alison Hamnett to get the community business up and running, plus a lot of hard work from residents and in kind support from local businesses, the West Wemyss Community Hub opened in 2012 and is now a thriving and successful venue which attracts visitors and locals alike."

Project Team Member Tom Adams says: "The great thing about the Hub is that it offers flexibility. If one element is less successful, it's supported by the others, leading to greater all-round commercial viability.

"For us, this project hasn't stopped with the opening of the building. With ongoing support from volunteers and our part time co-ordinator, we're running a fantastic programme of community events and have plans to develop a range of other resources including allotments, a woodland burial site and wind turbines".

www.westwemysscommunity.co.uk

15. CARSPHAIRN HERITAGE CENTRE

Carsphairn in Dumfries & Galloway is a village that is small in size but big in ambition! With a population of just 200, the village has fewer than 50 houses but is home to a school, a church, a shop, a village hall and an outreach post office.

Wishing to attract visitors to find out more about Carsphairn's rich history and heritage, the local community initiated a programme of fundraising activities to develop the Carsphairn Heritage Centre, which opened to the public in 1992. A new build, the Centre has been sympathetically designed in the style of an old 'But 'n' Ben' cottage and blends in seamlessly with its historic surroundings.

The seeds of the Carsphairn Heritage Group, which devised and led the project, were actually sown some ten years earlier, when an exhibition including items of local interest, all donated by local residents, was held in the Village Hall.

Buoyed by the enthusiasm displayed in the run up to the exhibition, the Heritage Group was formed in 1987 and with the help of local residents and others further





afield who are interested in the history of this small community, the group has amassed a collection of maps, photographs, newspaper cuttings, slides and numerous items of local interest, all of which are on display in the Centre. Over the years the group has also built up a significant number of ancestry records, based around 36 local families, which are available for family history researchers and genealogists.

The Centre houses a permanent timespan display and each year hosts an exhibition focusing on a different aspect of the varied history of the community. Manned entirely by volunteers, it largely relies on donations and membership fees to cover maintenance and upkeep. This income is supplemented by a revenue grant from the Carsphairn Renewable Energy Fund Ltd (CREFL), which further benefits the community and improves opportunities for visitors.

The fantastic support provided by the local community and members has enabled the Heritage Group to expand its activities. Most recently it has designed a collection of Heritage Trails which take in nearby sites of historic interest as well as some dramatic views of the surrounding countryside.

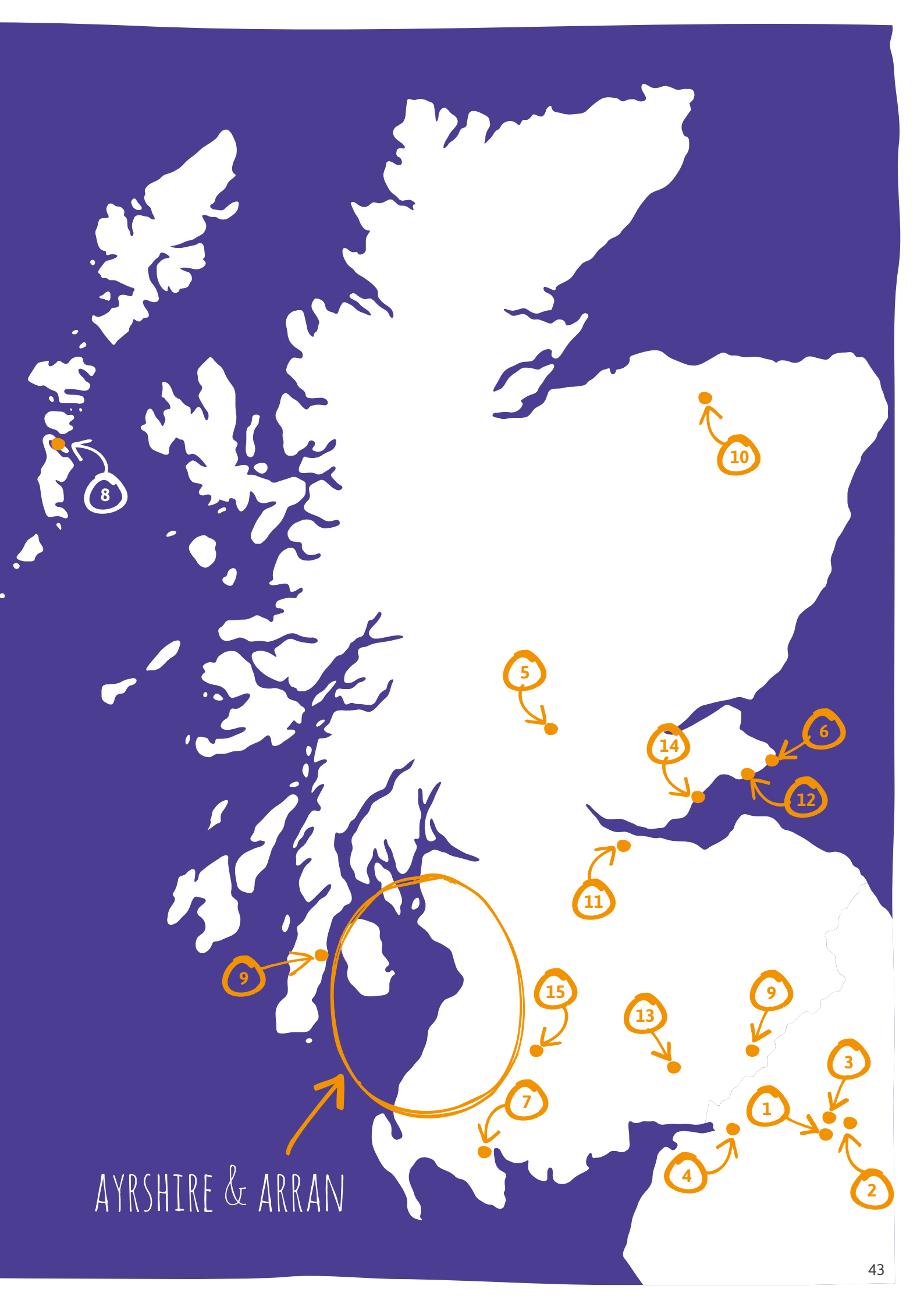
Anna Campbell from the Heritage Group says:
"Of course every community in the country has heritage, but our group has had such a great time involving ourselves in the lives of the past people and with each other in our searches for material and information.

"It's been great for tourism too. Over the years, our membership has expanded, drawing together people from all over the world. We have members in Australia and the United States as well as from all over the UK, and we welcome many of these members and their families to the Centre each year".

www.carsphairnheritage.org

CASE STUDY MAP

- 1 Allendale Forge Studios
- 2 Allen Valleys Tourism Association
- 3 Haydon Bridge Development Trust
- 4 Burgh By Sands
- 5 Breadalbane Tourism Group
- 6 Crail Food Festival
- 7 Wigtown Book Festival
- 8 Outer Hebrides Food Trail
- 9 Newcastleton Business Forum
- 10 Keith Tourism Action Group
- 11 Royal Burgh of Linlithgow
- 12 Piitenween Arts Festival
- 13 Eskrigg Nature Reserve
- 14 West Wemyss Development Trust
- 15 Carsphairn Heritage Centre



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