

Highland Tourism Partnership

Thursday 11 May, Great Glen House Inverness

Meeting note

<p>Present</p> <p>(GA) Graeme Ambrose, Visit Inverness Loch Ness – Chair (CT) Chris Taylor, HIE (SA) Scott Armstrong, VisitScotland (MT) Mark Tate, Cairngorms Business Partnership (AR) Anne Roels, VisitScotland (JM) Jack Mackay, Forestry Commission (CP) Caris Pittendreich, Highland Council (DG) Douglas Gibson, Visit Wester Ross (SM) Sheena Macrae, VisitScotland (GD) Gaelle Delagrave, NC500 (EH) Emma Hallington, VisitScotland (JF) Jodie Fraser, Outdoor Capital (CS) Colin Simpson, Highland Council (CM) Catherine MacLeod, Venture North (HT) Heather Trench, Cairngorms National Park</p>		
<p>Apologies</p> <p>Maren Ebeling, SNH Jo Wyke, Venture North Amy Prior, VisitScotland Laurie Piper, Moray Speyside Tourism Rob Ware, SkyeConnect</p>		
Description		Action
<p>GA welcomed the group, introduced the attendees, and read an update from SkyeConnect (the new Destination Management Organisation launched 18 March 2017 replacing Destination Skye and Lochalsh Ltd.).</p> <p><i>Summary of update:</i> <i>The priority of the DMO is to confirm funding from public sources and to collaborate with the local tourism industry, public bodies and neighbouring tourism organisations.</i> <i>Interim Directors are Shirley Spear, Anne Gracie and Rob Ware. They have arranged a meeting with Kate Forbes MSP on 19 May to discuss the issues and challenges with increasing demands on local infrastructure, connectivity, and transport.</i> skye-connect.com; facebook.com/SkyeConnected/; twitter.com/skyeconnect</p> <p>The focus of today's meeting is Collaboration and Marketing.</p>		
1	<p>Current collaboration/approach – Roundtable Summaries</p> <p>GA, Visit Inverness Loch Ness (VILN) While VILN collaborates with partners, they do not currently collaborate with other DMOs due to resource constraints, time and budget challenges, and different objectives – VILN is driven by internal objectives.</p> <p>DG, Visit Wester Ross VWR currently collaborates with NC500, DMOs and area tourism groups around the route. The focus is now to get individual members clued up on marketing rather than marketing the area as a whole.</p> <p>JF, Outdoor Capital See Outdoor Capital individually but are trying to change this. Currently in discussions with 5 smaller tourism groups in the Lochaber area and have also collaborated with VisitScotland on website widget (outdoorcapital.co.uk)</p> <p>MT, Cairngorms Business Partnership Collaborated with VisitAberdeenshire on the Snow Roads Project, and some collaboration with the National Park Authority and Caledonian Sleeper on their marketing. Would like to collaborate more.</p> <p>GD, NC500 NC500 has strong collaborations with VisitScotland (PR, marketing etc), good engagement with</p>	

	<p>consumers and the community around route through roadshows, and collaborates with businesses through joint promotions and merchandise targeted towards members/consumers.</p> <p>CM, Venture North Venture North has collaborated with the Chamber of Commerce, a discover series (venture-north.co.uk/discovery/). Collaboration is difficult due to logistics but CM will take ideas from this meeting to future Marketing Board meetings.</p> <p>CS, Highland Council Highland Council collaborates on regional marketing activities however due to budget cuts this may not be able to continue being supported, so collaboration between groups is more important than ever.</p> <p>JM, Forestry Commission The Forestry Commission is a supportive facilitation and is heavily involved in, and steers within, the tourism industry out with marketing and promotions.</p> <p>HT, Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) Occasional collaboration between the National Park and National Trust for Scotland, and CNPA are trying to reach out and offer information/advice where possible.</p> <p>CT, HIE Groups need to think more broadly about how collaboration can lead to better marketing with joining things such as volunteers, staff time, digital agendas, different professional experience etc.</p>	
2.	<p>What can we get from collaborating?</p> <p>EH gave an overview of Growth Fund collaborations between</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glasgow Life, Love Loch Lomond and Scotrail, the “Pack More In” Campaign • Argyll & the Isles, Mark Beaumont Videos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups should use each other’s resources (design team, in-house resources, budget sharing) to target the same market and products. • Everyone being willing to collaborate and understanding each other’s restrictions is a good step forward. <p><u>Points from discussion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There’s a lot of marketing we don’t control/lead on (e.g. W.Highland Way, Great Glen Way). • We should target the negatives of areas through marketing (alternative suggestions to disperse visitors) to avoid reputational damage and disappointment • Not just regional collaboration but across sectors (Marine, wildlife, outdoor etc.) • Target the shoulder season November-December-January • Need to encourage returning visitor market to return off-season 	
3.	<p>Opportunities and Resources</p> <p>Points from discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • need to change perceptions and expectations of visitors • need to alter attitudes of business owners (think less competitively, see worth in opening all year round, information sharing) • need to address the infrastructure challenges and problems • using iconic locations to sell regions but encouraging visitors to go elsewhere Hidden Highlands Ebook (target places that already have the capacity for growth) • using promotion to encourage dispersal across season as well as region • linking promotion with the VisitScotland theme year (2017: Year of History, Heritage, Archaeology 2018: Year of Young People) 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GD, NC500 is launching an extended route to link in further with archaeological sites, working with Highlife Highland to ensure access to facilities for visitors. Also working on campaign which targets different markets with luxury travel, camping, and active travellers • Promotion with Film and Television that is filmed/themed in Scotland • Targeting day trippers who live within Highland to visit other regions beyond their own area • Groups should work towards developing existing common themes • Need to encourage diversification and new businesses as well as existing <p><u>Wish List</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To target the November-December-January lull in tourism • GD – NC500 is launching a winter route and would like to collaborate to ensure businesses are open all year round. Collaboration with a 4x4 company to inspire a different experience to the summer consumers. • A Highland Bucket List (including itineraries, trails, target winter months with quieter hygge themes) <p><u>Mechanisms</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • target those who would visit destinations for extreme adventure sports, dark skies, etc • targeting websites towards younger markets • consistency in social media through a joint # and sharing • link on websites to other experiences/businesses as a starting point • information on weather conditions kept up to date and available across regions/platforms • inspire businesses to extend their opening hours out-of-season and accommodation to open in the quiet months, or some kind of rota • shared knowledge of attractions and alternative locations/activities • local campaigns and promotion to nearby attractions/businesses/regions • collaboration with wider partners (Orkney, Outer Hebrides etc) • pre booking with attractions and businesses • having alternatives for all visitors when weather etc. interferes with plans • collaborate with online influencers with events such as the Social travel summit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to a shared hub of platforms, links, info, event calendar etc. • Engage with accommodation and attractions businesses through Business Gateway • Growth Fund <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target seasonality & dispersal through business events such as Highland Tourism Conference 	<p>All All SM will liaise with social team for # suggestions</p> <p>AR CS EH send info</p> <p>CS/CP suggest as theme for 2017 event</p>
<p>Other:</p> <p>CS - reported that the government, through City Deal, are interested in creating a Tourism Sub Group. Suggested that they engage with the Highland Tourism Partnership rather than creating a new group which everyone agreed was a good opportunity for both.</p> <p>GA - HTP passes on best wishes to Scott Armstrong and wishes him all the best, thanking him for his many years of service and support to the Highlands, and his magnificent contribution to the tourism industry.</p>	
<p>Next meeting</p> <p>Next meeting will be in Autumn – theme of strategy and development</p>	<p>AP to organise</p>