

The Highland Council

Agenda Item	16
Report No	SR/29/26

Committee: Isle of Skye and Raasay Area Committee

Date: 31 August 2026

Report Title: Annual Report on Operational Activities at the Old Man of Storr:
Second Year of Delivery

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Old Man of Storr continues to show how sustainable tourism can support local communities, protect the natural environment, and generate income for reinvestment. During Year 2, the site continued to operate through a number of separate services, management arrangements, and cost centres, including Ionad an Stòir (The Storr Centre), car parking facilities, the path network, and public conveniences.
- 1.2 Year 2 has demonstrated the continued effectiveness of the Old Man of Storr operating model in delivering tangible economic, social and environmental benefits. The site achieved a whole-site net surplus of £470,274, supported seven permanent full-time and one part-time job, and enabled sustained reinvestment in path infrastructure and public conveniences. In addition, the completed Phase 2 extension of the physical unit, supported by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, with a £550,000 award, has enhanced the visitor experience, whilst the Visitor Experience Ranger service has contributed to stronger environmental management and stewardship of the site.
- 1.3 This report provides Members with an update on the second full year of operational delivery. It uses operational and financial information to show what has been delivered in Year 2, the benefits achieved, and the opportunities being developed. Comparisons to the prior period are also reported.

These are discussed in more detail in their respective sections:

- Section 6 – Economic and Environmental stewardship
- Section 7 – Income Generation
- Section 8 – Responding to Local Employment Needs
- Section 9 – Economic Development
- Section 10 – Carbon Impact
- Section 11 – Capital Asset
- Section 12 – Digital Assets
- Section 13 – Recognition
- Section 14 – Future Development Opportunities
- Section 15 – Review of Operating Model
- Section 16 – Sustainability
- Section 17 – Summary

1.4 The report is intended to assist Member scrutiny, inform decision making, support continuous improvement, and provide transparency on the operation and future development of the Old Man of Storr site.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. **Note** the achievements delivered at the Old Man of Storr site during the second year of operation and support the continued development of this important initiative for the Skye and Raasay Area.
- ii. **Note** the continued development of the site as a sustainable visitor destination supporting local economic, environmental and community benefits.
- iii. **Note** that regular update reports will continue to be taken to the Isle of Skye and Raasay Area Committee; and
- iv. **Note** that review of a single site future operating model is underway.

3. Implications

3.1 **Resource:** Implications are discussed throughout this report. The Project Sponsor is the ACE – Corporate, supported by the Chief Officer – Revenues and Commercialisation, and the project is managed by existing resources within THC.

3.2 **Legal:** There are no legal implications arising from this report.

3.3 **Risk:** Risks continue to be managed through the Income Generation Project Board.

3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people):** There are no new health and safety implications arising directly from this update report. Operational health and safety matters continue to be managed through existing site management arrangements.

3.5 **Gaelic:** The Storr has a particular opportunity to support Gaelic through effective promotion of Gaelic culture to visitors. The various initiatives include effective bilingual signage, site interpretation, the Storr website and social media page, and the development of high-quality materials with partnership initiatives such as the Skye Iconic Sites Project and engagement with local community trusts.

4. Impacts

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3 This is an update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

5. Background

- 5.1 The Storr project was established following the development of a robust business case and governance framework. The project continues to support the ambitions of:
- The Highland Council's Strategic Programme
 - Skye and Raasay Future (SARF) Plan
 - Scottish Government's Net Zero Agenda
- 5.2 Ionad an Stòir (The Storr Centre) began operating in July 2024, with Phase 1 officially opened in August 2024. This report covers the second year of operation and highlights the progress, performance and impact achieved since opening.
- 5.3 Phase 1 of the centre and wider site improvements were delivered through a blend of external funding, including the Islands Infrastructure Fund, Community Regeneration Fund, Place Based Investment Fund and Coastal Communities Fund, alongside a contribution from the Area Ward Discretionary Budget. This approach avoided the need for capital borrowing and has provided long-term value for visitors and the local community.
- 5.4 Ionad an Stòir (Phase 2) has received £550,000 from the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The project extended the physical unit at Ionad an Stòir, increasing capacity and enhancing the visitor offering. The investment has improved the quality of facilities available on site, strengthened the visitor experience, and supported the continued growth and sustainability of operations at the Old Man of Storr, whilst avoiding any requirement for Council capital borrowing.
- 5.5 The remainder of this report provides information on the range of benefits and successes of the project to date. **Appendix 1** provides a useful summary.

6. Economic and Environmental Stewardship

- 6.1 The Storr Project supports sustainable tourism, local economic resilience, and responsible management of one of Skye's most significant natural visitor attractions. It contributes to the Skye and Raasay Future Plan, The Highland Council's Strategic Programme and national Net Zero ambitions. It also supports Gaelic language and culture through bilingual signage, interpretation, digital content and visitor engagement.

6.2 The Old Man of Storr Visitor Experience Ranger Service continues to support the effective stewardship of the site’s natural assets through a combination of visitor management, environmental monitoring, conservation activity and infrastructure maintenance. A comprehensive Storr Visitor Experience Ranger report is provided at **Appendix 3**. These informative and high-quality reports are produced regularly and demonstrate the outstanding initiative of staff employed at The Storr. The report summarises visitor behaviour, operational activity, and key work undertaken between May 2026 – July 2026.

7. Income Generation

7.1 Income Streams and Associated Costs at the Old Man of Storr Site

- 7.1.1 Members are advised that the Old Man of Storr site comprises a range of facilities and assets which generate income and incur associated operational costs. These include:
- Ionad an Stòir (The Storr Centre)
 - Car Parking Facilities - both on street and off-street parking
 - The Old Man of Storr Path Network
 - Public Conveniences
 - EV Chargers

7.2 Visitor Numbers to the Old Man of Storr

7.2.1	Year	Visitors	Growth vs. Prior Year
	2022	205,056	-
	2023	274,009	34%
	2024	293,000	7%
	2025	304,000	4%

7.2.2 The Old Man of Storr and associated path network is a major tourist draw on the Isle of Skye. This continued demand reinforces the need for well-managed visitor facilities, effective site management and ongoing investment in infrastructure.

7.3 Ionad an Stòir (The Storr Centre)

7.3.1 The Economy and Infrastructure Committee on 29 May 2025 approved an application to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) for £550,000 to support the Phase 2 extension at Ionad an Stòir. This extension has now been completed and was officially opened on 12 August 2026. A video of the opening event can be viewed through the link below:

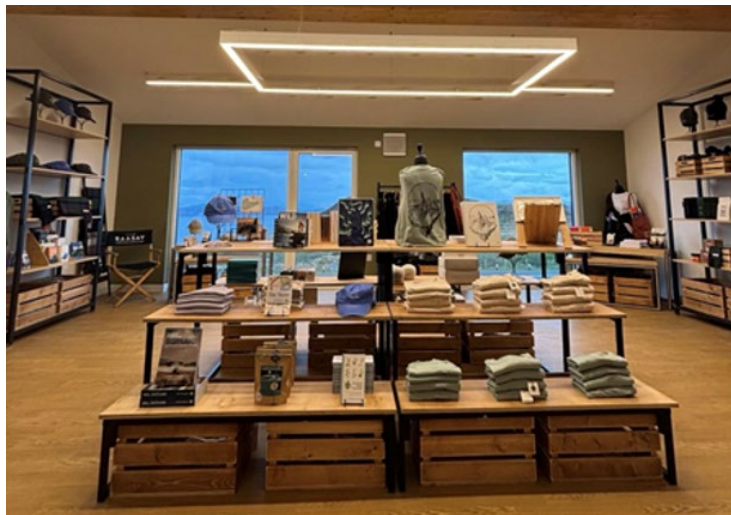
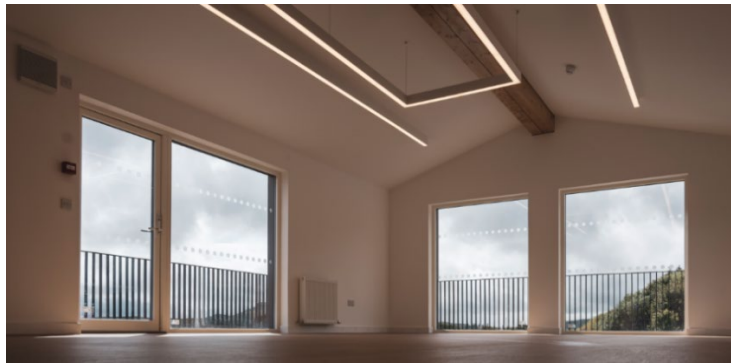
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LkPpmA0E-D8&pp=0gcJCc4cAYcqIYzv>

Phase 2 provides increased retail space, improved amenities including a multipurpose room, and enhanced capacity to develop the visitor offering at the Old Man of Storr.

The completed extension supports:

- 7.3.2
- **Additional Retail Space:** Increased capacity to generate revenue for Ionad an Stòir and provide greater commercial opportunities for local and Highland suppliers.
 - **Diversified Product Range:** Additional space to expand and refresh the product range, enabling wider inclusion of local producers and helping address previous capacity restraints.
 - **Wedding Packages:** The ability to further develop wedding packages and associated commercial opportunities, including alcohol sales where appropriate, to enhance the site's event offer.
 - **Wedding Venue Enhancement:** Improved capacity to accommodate larger wedding parties, increasing the potential from smaller ceremonies of approximately 8 to 10 guests to events of around 30 to 40 guests.
 - **Community and Other Events:** The ability for local artists, musicians, or other community groups to hold events with The Storr Centre.
- 7.3.3 Ionad an Stòir delivered strong financial performance in its second year of operation, from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026. Gross sales totalled £663,000, with net sales excluding VAT of £561,000. After direct expenditure, the centre generated a surplus of £42,123.
- 7.3.4 Gross sales were 30.3% higher than in the first year of trading, demonstrating increased visitor demand and stronger retail performance.
- 7.3.5 Ionad an Stòir continues to operate on the basis that its running costs are covered by the income it generates. This supports financial independence and reduces reliance on Council funding.
- 7.3.6 Looking ahead, projections for Year 3 indicate further growth, with an estimated surplus of £146,000, subject to continued visitor demand and successful development of the expanded retail and commercial offer.
- 7.3.7 The commercial offering at Ionad an Stòir will continue to develop in response to visitor demand, with a focus on supporting local businesses, strengthening income generation, and enhancing the overall visitor experience.
- 7.3.8 Due to the ongoing refurbishment of Tigh-na-Sgìre in Portree, Ionad an Stòir did not have the opportunity to generate its own wedding-related income. Following completion of Phase 2 of the redevelopment extension, Ionad an Stòir is well-positioned to deliver commercial wedding services at the scale originally envisioned for 2024/25, building on the experience and insights gained during the collaborative phase with Registrar Services.





7.4 Car Parking Facilities

- 7.4.1 As previously reported to the Committee, a revised car parking pricing strategy was implemented in April 2023. This adjustment was initially projected to generate approximately £200,000 in additional gross annual income.
- 7.4.2 On 16 February 2026, the Isle of Skye and Raasay Area Committee considered Report No. SR/5/26, The Old Man of Storr Site Management – Parking Charge Review and agreed to increase the daily parking charges at The Old Man of Storr by £1 for both tariffs, with effect from **1 April 2026**.

The charge for up to 6 hours increased from £5 to £6, and the charge for up to 12 hours increased from £7 to £8.

The Committee also agreed that the Local Parking Season Ticket arrangement for Skye car parks should remain unchanged.

The approved increase forms part of the continued approach to ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of the site, supporting ongoing maintenance, service standards and future development, while maintaining the principle that income generated from the site contributes to local reinvestment and wider community benefit.

7.4.3 The Old Man of Storr- Parking Income - Gross

Financial Year	Income £	Growth vs. Prior Year
2022/23	233,319	-
2023/24	425,430	+82%
2024/25	465,721	+9%
2025/26	504,099	+8%

Actual performance has exceeded expectations:

- In 2023/24, gross income was £192,111 higher than the 2022/23 baseline.
- In 2024/25, gross income was £232,402 higher than the 2022/23 baseline.
- In 2025/26, gross income was £270,780 higher than the 2022/23 baseline.

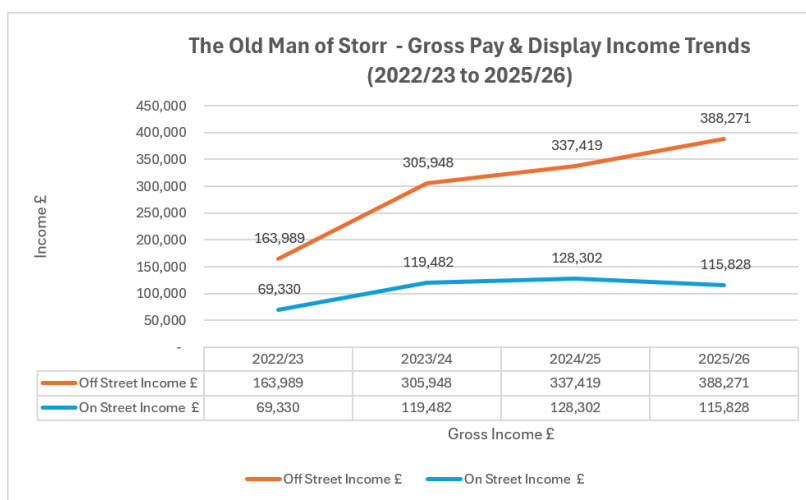
The Old Man of Storr parking operation has delivered sustained year-on-year growth since 2022/23, with annual gross income increasing from £233,319 to £504,099 by 2025/26. Collectively, these increases have generated £695,293 of additional gross income above the 2022/23 baseline over the three-year period, providing a significant contribution towards site operations, maintenance and ongoing visitor infrastructure investment.

These results demonstrate the effectiveness of the revised pricing model in supporting site sustainability and generating consistent revenue to offset operational costs. The enhanced and expanded services at the Old Man of Storr are a key driver in attracting visitors to the site.

Members are reminded that 50% of net off street parking income, after operational and associated costs have been met, are retained within the local Area. This funding provides a valuable resource to support local infrastructure improvements and community priorities, ensuring that a significant proportion of income generated by visitors is reinvested directly to deliver tangible benefits for the Area and its communities.

7.4.4 A combination of revised pricing, increased visitor numbers and enhanced car park management contributed to a significant uplift in gross car park income across both 2023/24, 2024/25, and 2025/26. This demonstrates the effectiveness of The Storr project in generating sustainable income to support local infrastructure and services.

7.4.5 The graph below shows the increase in gross parking income from 2022/23 to 2025/26. Members will note that, since April 2023, gross parking income has increased by £270,780, from £233,319 in 2022/23 to £504,099 in 2025/26. This increase reflects the revised pricing strategy, higher visitor numbers, and improved car park management.



7.4.6 A separate Car Park Finance report is being presented to this meeting of the Isle of Skye and Raasay Area Committee. That report provides further detail on Pay and Display income from Council-operated car parks in the Ward, including the Storr Car Park and Storr roadside parking area. Members are reminded that, for off-street parking, net income after costs is shared equally between the Area and the Council.

7.4.7 Reinvestment and Cost Offset

Income generated through the revised car parking pricing strategy directly supports reinvestment in local site infrastructure and offsets operational costs that would otherwise fall to the Council. This includes:

- A recurring annual investment of £40,000 from 2023/24 in the development and maintenance of the path network, ensuring safe and sustainable access for visitors. Over the three-year period from 2023/24 to 2025/26, this represents a total investment of £120,000 in path infrastructure.
- An annual contribution of £32,000 from 2023/24 towards the operation of public conveniences, an unbudgeted cost that would otherwise require direct Council funding. Over the same period, this has contributed £96,000 towards public toilet operations and maintenance.

Collectively, this has enabled £216,000 of direct investment in paths and public conveniences between 2023/24 and 2025/26, improving visitor infrastructure whilst reducing the financial burden on the Council.

7.4.8 This site approach reinforces the site's financial resilience and reduces pressure on core Council budgets.

7.4.9 In addition to reinvestment at the Old Man of Storr site, income generated from the site has supported wider local infrastructure improvements across the Ward, including road improvement projects and active travel capacity.

7.5 As the facilities and assets at the Old Man of Storr are closely interconnected, it is both practical and appropriate to assess income and expenditure at the overall site level, rather than isolating individual components.

7.6 Financial Performance - The Old Man of Storr

7.6.1 For Year 2, The Old Man of Storr yielded a surplus of £470,274 (net of costs). These figures are after accounting for a £40,000 path investment and a £32,000 contribution towards public conveniences. No wedding income has been credited to Ionad an

Stòir during this period. EV-related income of approx. £10,000 has been reinvested into the ongoing development and operational expansion of the Highland Council's charging network, supporting long-term infrastructure sustainability.

8. Responding to Local Employment Needs

- 8.1 The project provides direct local employment through seven full-time permanent posts, one part-time permanent post, and a summer student placement. These roles support the day-to-day operation of the site, including visitor management, retail activity, environmental stewardship, customer service, events and maintenance.
- 8.2 Local employment helps retain skills and tourism experience within Skye, supports community wealth building, and strengthens the visitor experience through local knowledge, cultural understanding and continuity of site management.
- 8.3 **Appendix 2** provides further detail on the responsibilities of the Visitor Experience Advisors, Visitor Experience Rangers and Visitor Experience Officer. These roles require flexibility and adaptability, with staff regularly balancing operational, visitor management, environmental and customer service responsibilities.
- 8.4 The seven full-time permanent posts, one part-time permanent post, and summer student placement provide direct economic benefit through local wages and support wider community wealth building as those wages are spent in local shops, services and businesses. The wider economic value of these roles is estimated to exceed £320,000 annually when direct wages and local spending impacts are considered.

9. Economic Development

- 9.1 Ionad an Stòir currently supports over 20 local suppliers, helping to build community wealth and strengthen local supply chains. Its range of more than 500 products is regularly reviewed to maintain quality, support sustainability, and maximise income generation. There remains strong interest from local and Highland suppliers seeking to be associated with the Storr Centre. Potential suppliers are asked to contact **thestorr@highland.gov.uk** if they are interested in partnering with The Storr.
- 9.2 Products sold within the retail space include locally crafted souvenirs such as magnets, art, and candles. An exclusive whisky has been created in partnership between Raasay Distillery and The Storr, with only 480 bottles available.

Collaboration with Lochcarron Weavers has resulted in a bespoke *The Storr* tartan with products such as blankets and scarves in production and soon to be available in store.

Local designer, Iain Angus Design, has supplied The Storr with sustainably branded sweatshirts, hoodies, and tote bags, exclusively available at The Storr. These collaborations help strengthen local supply chains, support Highland businesses, and ensure that visitor spending delivers benefits across the wider region.

The range also includes The Storr-branded T-shirts, caps, and outdoor gear, carefully tailored to visitors exploring the Isle of Skye. Products can be found online at **thestorr.com** with shipping currently available to the UK and USA, with plans to extend the list of countries shipped to by the end of 2026.

10. Carbon Impact

- 10.1 The site contributes to lower-carbon travel and more sustainable visitor infrastructure through the provision of both AC and DC electric vehicle charging and planned investment in site facilities.
- 10.2 Electric vehicle charging infrastructure is available on site 24 hours a day. Income from the EV charging network is reinvested into the ongoing development of Highland Council's wider charging network, supporting a more commercially sustainable approach to EV infrastructure.
- 10.3 Analysis is underway to understand the usage data, such as miles powered and availability of the chargers at The Storr.

11. Capital Asset

- 11.1 Ionad an Stòir is now an operational Council asset providing long-term value through income generation, visitor services, local employment, and support for sustainable tourism. The facility was delivered primarily through external funding, avoiding the need for capital borrowing.

12. Digital Assets

- 12.1 A bilingual website, **thestorr.com**, and Instagram channel, **the.storr**, continue to support the unique brand identity of the Storr and promote the site, local culture, and Gaelic heritage to a growing audience. During Year 2, these digital channels remained an important part of the visitor experience, helping visitors plan their visit through timely updates on path conditions, weather forecasts, guided walks and site information. An example of Instagram posts can be seen in **Appendix 4**.
- 12.2 They also continued to provide a platform for educational and interpretive content, including local history, geology, biodiversity, responsible access, and Gaelic language. Together, the website and social media presence strengthen awareness of the Storr, extend engagement beyond the physical site and support the wider ambition to develop Ionad an Stòir as a sustainable visitor destination with a strong local identity.
- 12.3 On 29 May 2025, an online booking system for Ranger-Guided Walks was launched, providing a platform for visitors to book experiences at the Old Man of Storr. While guided walk activity during Year 2 has been limited, the system remains in place to support future development of visitor engagement and interpretation linked to the site's geology, biodiversity, local history and Gaelic heritage.

13. Recognition

- 13.1 The Old Man of Storr received Tripadvisor Travellers' Choice Awards in 2024, 2025 and 2026. These awards recognise visitor attractions that consistently receive positive reviews and rank among the top 10% of listings on Tripadvisor. This continued independent recognition reflects the quality of the visitor experience and the positive impact of investment in site facilities, visitor management, and environmental stewardship, demonstrating the sustainable model that has been developed and implemented.

14. Future Development Opportunities

- 14.1 Ecommerce activity through **thestorr.com** continued to attract steady interest during Year 2, further strengthening the digital presence and commercial reach of Ionad an Stòir. Shipping to the USA was launched in February 2026, meaning delivery is now available to customers across both the UK and the USA.

Customer requests from the EU have been fulfilled on a case-by-case basis, with further consideration being given to expanding shipping arrangements to other international markets. This development supports the wider ambition to grow The Storr brand beyond the physical visitor site, increase opportunities for local and Highland suppliers, and generate additional income to support the long-term sustainability of the site.

- 14.2 In addition to the ongoing development of ecommerce, and following completion of the Phase 2 extension, a number of developments will be progressed, including:

- **Car park extension** - providing additional parking capacity, supporting more effective visitor management, enhancing access to the site, and reducing the occurrence of parking out with designated areas
- **Toilet improvements** – increasing capacity in line with the level of usage
- **Development of wedding packages** - building on the flexibility of the multipurpose room, promoting The Storr as a wedding venue, creating further opportunities for local suppliers through the delivery of wedding events
- **Growth in retail activity** – through Phase 2, continue to increase opportunities to promote and sell local products
- **Enhanced guided experiences** - providing more engaging and tailored experiences.

These opportunities will be developed in a way that supports the site's overall sustainability, strengthens local supplier relationships, and enhances the visitor experience.

15. Review of Operating Model

- 15.1 On 30 October 2025, the Highland Council agreed a range of recommendations in respect of its Future Operating Model, including 10 Design Principles. These are:

1. Incorporate people's views, especially those in poverty and with seldom heard voices.
2. Be more responsive and person-centred in delivering local services with partners.
3. Have a slimmed central model and deliver services through more integrated teams.
4. Harness innovation and be effective in implementing change (technological, environmental).
5. Have fewer leaders and managers, leading more complex local services.
6. Have a sustainable asset base, with clear strategic prioritisation for future capital spend.
7. Have an efficient approach to hybrid working that enables productivity.

8. Enable future workforce development and high levels of staff skills and specialism.
9. Be actively changing to achieve Net Zero.
10. Enable local economic development to address population change issues and sustain communities.

With the site facilities and supporting operations now well established at The Storr, now is the appropriate time to review the existing service delivery model across the whole site. This would consider bringing all these elements together under an integrated operating model, with The Storr operating as a single site.

The approach undertaken will include representatives from all respective services, and discussions as required, at Area Business Meetings. Material changes will be considered by the Corporate Resources Committee as part of the Future Operating Model update reports and governance. The Chief Officer, Revenues & Commercialisation will work with the Chief Officers Facilities & Fleet Management and HR & Communications to lead delivery of this review, reflecting their lead roles for Future Operating Model across the Council.

16. Sustainability

16.1 The Storr operating model is designed to support long-term sustainability through:

- **Income reinvestment:** site income supports paths, public conveniences, visitor management, maintenance, and future improvements.
- **Permanent staffing:** local permanent roles provide continuity, site knowledge, and high-quality visitor engagement.
- **Environmental management:** the Site Management Plan, developed with NatureScot, supports responsible access and protection of sensitive habitats.
- **Commercial resilience:** the completed Phase 2 extension increases retail capacity and creates new opportunities for income generation.
- **Replicability:** the model provides learning for other Highland visitor sites where tourism income can support local infrastructure and community benefit.

17. Summary

17.1

Section	Commentary
Purpose & Scope	The second full year of operation shows that the Old Man of Storr is delivering sustainable tourism benefits through improved visitor facilities, stronger site management, environmental protection, and local reinvestment.
Economic & Environmental Stewardship	The project supports The Highland Council's Strategic Programme, the Skye and Raasay Future Plan and national Net Zero ambitions, while promoting Gaelic language, culture and local identity. Recurring investment in the path network and public conveniences, alongside active

	Ranger management, is helping protect sensitive habitats and support safe, responsible access.
Income Generation	The site generated a net surplus of £470,274, after contributions towards path maintenance and public conveniences.
Visitor Numbers	Visitor numbers have continued to grow, reaching approximately 304,000 in 2025, with a further increase forecast for 2026.
Local Employment	The project supports seven full-time permanent posts, one part-time permanent post and a summer student placement, helping retain skills, tourism experience, and local knowledge within the island community.
Economic Development	Ionad an Stòir supports over 20 local suppliers and offers over 150 local and Highland products, strengthening local supply chains and community wealth building.
Carbon Impact	AC and DC EV charging infrastructure is available on site, with income reinvested into the wider Highland Council charging network.
Capital Asset	Ionad an Stòir is an operational Council asset delivered primarily through external funding, avoiding capital borrowing and providing long-term community and visitor benefits.
Recognition	The Old Man of Storr received Tripadvisor Travellers' Choice Awards in 2024, 2025 and 2026, reflecting consistently positive visitor feedback.
Future Development	The completed £550,000 Phase 2 extension increases retail capacity and supports future growth through weddings, guided experiences, ecommerce and supplier development.
Sustainability	The operating model combines income generation, reinvestment, environmental management, permanent staffing and community benefit, offering a practical model for other Highland visitor sites.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate

Date: 20 August 2026

Authors: Allan Gunn, Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate
Sheila Armstrong, Chief Officer Revenues & Commercialisation
Matt Bailey, Strategic Lead - Commercialisation
Amy Smith, Business Development Lead - Commercialisation
Alister MacBain, Business Development Lead - Commercialisation
John MacLean, Business Development Lead - Commercialisation

Appendices: Appendix 1 – The Storr Benefits
Appendix 2 – Visitor Experience Roles
Appendix 3 – Visitor Experience Ranger Report (May 2026 – July 2026)
Appendix 4 – Instagram Examples

Appendix 1 – The Storr Benefits

	Pre-Project (2022)	Now	Difference
Directly Employed Local Jobs	0	7	+7
Economic Impact of Jobs (Multiplier 1.7 to 2.0)	0	£320k	+£320k
Annual Visitors	200,000	300,000	+100,000
Product Lines Sold	0	521	+521
Suppliers (Skye & Raasay)	0	24	+24
Suppliers (Highland)	0	32	+32
Suppliers (Scotland)	0	46	+46
Y2 Projected Sales net VAT	£0	£552k	+£552k
Physical Retail Unit & Multipurpose Space	0	1 unit	+1 unit
On Site Employee Accommodation/Facilities	0	1 unit	+1 unit
Website/Ecommerce	0	1	+1
Car Park Income (Annual) net VAT before costs, credited to car parking	£233k	£504k	+£271k
EV Chargers (2 x DC; 2 x AC), all income credited to Climate Change	0	4	+4
Number of Indoor Weddings, all income credited to Reg'n	0	26	+26
Path Investment (Annual Recurring)	0	£40k	+£40k
Waste Management Investment (Annual Recurring)	0	£32k	+£32k
TripAdvisor Visitor Top 10 Rating	0	1	+1

Appendix 2: Visitor Experience Roles

Visitor Experience staff support the day-to-day operation of the Old Man of Storr site and Ionad an Stòir. Their responsibilities cover visitor engagement, retail operations, site management, environmental stewardship, safety, interpretation and partnership working. The roles require flexibility, local knowledge and the ability to respond to changing visitor, operational and environmental demands.

Visitor Experience Advisors

- Shop sales and stock management: This includes aspects like managing inventory, processing purchase orders (both sending and receiving), conducting cycle counts and stock takes, ensuring proper display of merchandise, and interacting with suppliers.
- Customer service and visitor management: This encompasses answering diverse questions from visitors, addressing parking issues (tickets, poor parking), managing traffic flow, and providing assistance to visitors, even if it falls outside the normal scope of duties.
- Operational duties: This includes cleaning of the Storr centre, managing weddings and guided walks, and contributing to the Storr social media accounts. E-commerce will be an additional duty from September onwards.
- First Aid: All trained team members handle first aid, responding to a large number of medical situations both at the Storr centre and on the hill over the course of a year.
- Toilet Management: While not directly involved in cleaning, Supervisors handle complaints, check facilities, replenish supplies, and contact the maintenance team when required.

Visitor Experience Rangers

- Litter and waste collection around the Storr: Rangers are directly involved in maintaining the cleanliness and natural beauty of the site, collecting litter and managing waste to reduce environmental impact.
- Biodiversity monitoring: Rangers are observing and recording the flora and fauna of the area, contributing to the understanding and conservation of the site's biodiversity.
- Path and environmental management: This involves maintaining paths, fencing repairs, preventing erosion, and managing visitor impact on the

environment to ensure sustainable access. This all helps to improve visitor experience and protect the Storr environment.

- Visitor management: This includes guiding visitors along with guided walks, providing information, enforcing regulations, and promoting responsible outdoor access to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all.
- Monitoring and recording visitor data: This involves counting visitors, tracking their movements, and gathering feedback to inform visitor management strategies and assess the impact of tourism on the site
- Education, Outreach & Interpretation: Offering guided sessions for local youth groups. Continuing Gaelic learning and story clips on online platforms along with a Ranger Chat Spot at the hill base twice weekly during July and August.

Visitor Experience Officer

1. Site management (Storr and Ionad an Stòir):
 1. Overseeing the day-to-day operations of the Storr site, including visitor facilities, paths, and infrastructure (Parking & Toilets)
 2. Ensuring the smooth running and maintenance of the Storr Centre.
 3. Managing resources effectively to ensure high standards of cleanliness, safety, and visitor experience, potentially involving tasks like maintaining facilities, overseeing litter collection and waste management, and coordinating basic maintenance.
2. Team leadership and management:
 1. Managing, supervising, and motivating a team of Visitor Experience Supervisors and Rangers.
 2. Delegating tasks and responsibilities, providing guidance and support, and fostering a positive work environment.
 3. Conducting staff training and development, including first aid training and health and safety compliance.
 4. Managing performance and addressing any issues proactively.
3. Strategic planning and development:
 1. Developing and implementing the future plan for the Storr, aligning with the Highland Council's sustainable tourism strategy.

2. This may involve identifying areas for improvement, proposing new initiatives, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the site.
3. Monitoring and recording visitor data to inform decision-making.
4. Partner and stakeholder engagement:
 1. Collaborating with various partners, including local landowners, community groups, and other tourism organizations.
 2. Building and maintaining strong relationships to achieve shared goals for the Storr.
 3. Liaising with agencies like NatureScot and OATS regarding environmental initiatives.
5. Safety, security, and compliance:
 1. Monitoring and maintaining visitor and site safety and security.
 2. Ensuring compliance with health and safety regulations for both staff and visitors.
 3. Conducting risk assessments and implementing necessary control measures.
4. Conflict resolution and complaint handling: Addressing complaints and resolving issues ensuring a positive visitor experience.

Appendix 3: Visitor Experience Ranger Report (May 2026 – July 2026)

Prepared by: Jordan Young – Visitor Experience Ranger



Introduction

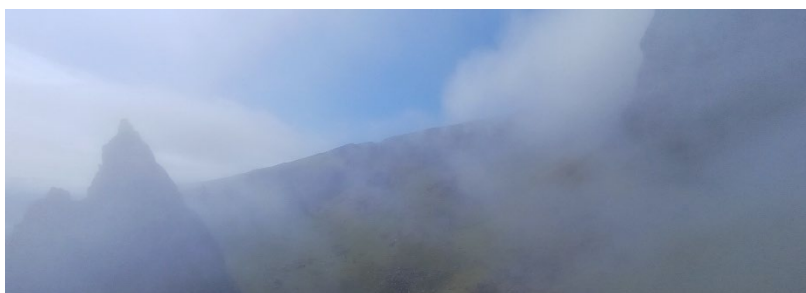
As summer arrives at the Old Man of Storr, the hill has entered its busiest and most vibrant period of the year. Long daylight hours, warmer weather, and the misplaced hope of stable conditions bring a rise in visitor numbers alongside an explosion of plant life and wildlife activity across the site. Midges also returned in strong numbers and continue to show strong visitor engagement skills...

This period marks a shift from spring preparation to seasonal management, with Ranger focus moving toward balancing visitor access with protection of the landscape during the most pressured months of the year.

The hill itself feels very different currently. The grass has become a rich green, heather and upland flowers are beginning to colour the slopes, bird activity is at its peak, and longer patrols across the wider site have allowed for more regular monitoring of remote areas, wildlife activity and visitor movement.

This report covers the period from May 2026 through to the end of July 2026. During this time, Ranger duties have included a couple of guided walks, reactive path maintenance, verge rebuilding, drainage improvements, people and biodiversity monitoring, more visitor engagement, and ongoing site patrols.

A significant amount of reactive maintenance has been required following the heavy footfall experienced during early summer coupled with the heavy thunderstorms. Rangers have spent time rebuilding worn path edges, installing and repairing water management features including waterbars and anchor bars, and reinforcing vulnerable verge areas where visitor pressure continues to widen paths. The continued persistent rain and determined visitors has meant we have been kept on our toes.



We were also fortunate to have a student joining us over the summer as part of his high school work placement. He quickly became a valued member of the team, lending a hand both in the Storr Centre and out on the hill. His willingness to help made a real difference during one of our busiest periods.

Alongside the practical work, this season has offered some of the most rewarding moments on the hill, with regular sightings of birds, returning wildlife and healthy vegetation recovery across protected areas.



Visitor Numbers and Behaviour

Visitor numbers increased throughout the reporting period, particularly during extended dry weather. July brought sustained high visitor volumes seeing the highest visitor numbers per month since we have been on site. Many days saw near continuous movement on the main path from early morning until late evening, including overnight campers out on the hill. Skye trail walkers have increased this year with a regular flow passing through the Storr and asking questions. I would say this is a trend through the whole island as I have noticed a lot more younger camping groups.

One thing we've noticed this summer is that visitors are genuinely curious. More people are asking why certain areas are fenced, how the landscape is recovering, and what Rangers actually do day to day. This has highlighted an opportunity to improve interpretation across the site. Over the coming months we'd like to introduce additional signs and storytelling that explain the work taking place and the reasons behind it, helping visitors become active partners in protecting the Storr rather than simply passing through it.

Despite the high visitor numbers, monitoring of set locations found that, on average, **just 2.37% of visitors left the designated path** during survey periods. While this figure was slightly influenced by one particularly busy day with higher levels of off path activity, it remained encouragingly low considering the volume of people visiting the site throughout the summer. The results suggest that recent interventions are continuing to have a positive impact on visitor behaviour and the protection of sensitive habitats.

- High footfall continued to place pressure on the landscape, resulting in:
- Increased widening of path edges in heavily used sections
- Continued shortcutting around wet or steep areas
- Greater verge erosion along popular stopping points
- Higher volumes of litter

- Increased visitor movement into less monitored areas of the site

There has been an increasing number of visitors exploring beyond the main path network. Rangers have therefore expanded patrol routes to regularly include wider sections of the site, including Cairn Leath, where climbing activity has increased as some well-known climbers pioneer new routes.



Although the climbing activity itself has been very responsible and low impact, the area requires regular monitoring due to its remoteness, terrain and limited public awareness. We quite often rescue lost or stuck people who have accidentally left the Skye trail. Rangers have been carrying out more frequent checks. There are no concerns at the moment and we don't imagine any should arise.

Sunrise visitors continued to increase through the summer period, with more photographers, campers and early-morning walkers using the site outside of standard peak daytime hours.



Incident Response

As expected during the busy summer season, Ranger first aid incidents and Mountain Rescue callouts increased alongside visitor numbers.

Incident Summary

- Ranger first aid / welfare incidents: **13**
- Mountain Rescue callouts: **4**
- Air ambulance evacuations: **1**

Most Ranger incidents involved slips, sprains, cuts, exhaustion, and minor head injuries, with treatment ranging from simple first aid, calling ambulances for people, through to assisting visitors in making their own way to hospital for further assessment.

Several more serious incidents required a full Mountain Rescue response which Jordan and/or Ilana usually organised or attended, including an incident with multiple fractures and a fall from Cathedral Rock requiring air evacuation to Aberdeen.

Two separate lost walkers were located and safely escorted from Coire Scammadal in poor weather before a full Mountain Rescue response became necessary, highlighting the value of early intervention and regular patrols across the wider site.

Ranger Tours and Visitor Engagement

Guided Ranger walks have yet to fully gain momentum over the summer period, although those who have taken part continue to provide very positive feedback. As both Ilana and Jordan worked as guides prior to becoming Rangers, they are now exploring the development of private, bespoke guided days.

Rather than focusing solely on the Storr, these experiences would offer full day hikes into the wider surrounding hills, providing visitors with the opportunity to escape the busiest tourist route and enjoy a more personal, in-depth experience. As a premium offering, these walks would be priced accordingly, with the aim of running up to two per week while still allowing sufficient time for core Ranger duties and site management.



Path and Environmental Management

A wet summer period combined with extremely high footfall created significant wear pressure on several sections of path and verge throughout the site.

Several waterbars were installed throughout the period, successfully continuing the long-standing tradition of moving large rocks from one place to another slightly more useful place.



June brought an extended period of exceptionally unsettled weather, with repeated thunderstorms and intense rainfall affecting much of Skye. These heavy downpours quickly exposed weaknesses in several drainage features, resulting in localised washouts and requiring reactive repairs. While the recently installed drainage features generally performed well, the intensity of rainfall highlighted a number of locations where further improvements will be beneficial ahead of the autumn and winter months.



Building a new anchor bar to help hold material on the path.

Key works completed included:

- Installation of additional waterbars in erosion-prone sections
- Placement and reinforcement of anchor bars to stabilise path surfaces
- Rebuilding worn away path verges using redistributed material
- Continued drainage clearing and water management works
- Monitoring path braiding and informal route development
- Repairs to damaged barriers and rope lines
- Ongoing rockfall monitoring within steeper sections of the site

A considerable amount of physical work was carried out by the team across the site during available weather windows. This included transporting materials by hand into difficult terrain, rebuilding collapsed path edges, and strengthening areas vulnerable to further widening.

One welcome addition to our Ranger toolkit this summer was completing our chainsaw training with LANTRA. As well as making barrier construction much easier, it will allow us to begin removing self-seeded Sitka Spruce from within the SSSI. Catching these trees while they're still small is far easier than waiting until they become established, and it's another small step in helping the site move towards a more natural upland habitat.

The wider patrol routes have also allowed Rangers to identify emerging pressure points earlier, helping prioritise maintenance before conditions deteriorate further.



Ranger Patrols and Site Monitoring

Over the reporting period, Rangers completed approximately 600 km of patrols across the site.

These longer patrols have provided improved oversight of:

- Remote visitor activity
- Informal path development
- Climbing activity within Cairn Leath
- Wildlife monitoring
- Vegetation recovery areas
- Rockfall and slope stability concerns

The increased presence across the greater site has also improved opportunities for informal visitor engagement in quieter areas, where people are often more likely to be spending multiple days on the hill.

Extended patrols have additionally provided valuable opportunities for ecological observations during a period of peak biodiversity activity on the hill. It also provides us with a chance to observe people movements from a distance.



Biodiversity Monitoring

Summer has brought a noticeable increase in wildlife and plant activity across the Storr, with the site feeling alive during calmer weather periods. Longer daylight hours and extended Ranger patrols have provided excellent opportunities to monitor species, observe seasonal changes and assess the condition of habitats across both the Upper and Lower SSSI.

Bird activity remained strong throughout the reporting period. Ring Ouzels continued to be regularly observed across the upland slopes, alongside Meadow Pipits, Stonechats, and Ravens, with several sightings of adults feeding recently fledged young. Occasional Sea-Eagles were also seen using the cliffs and ridgelines.

Rangers also recorded a variety of upland plants throughout the summer, including Butterwort, Alpine Lady's Mantle, and Wild Thyme, all of which reflect the diversity of habitats found across the Storr. One particularly encouraging botanical discovery this season was the recording of Moonwort (*Botrychium lunaria*) within the Faoin Corrie area (please see our Instagram if you'd like to know more). Although easily overlooked due to its small size, Moonwort is an uncommon upland fern and is widely recognised as an indicator of long established, undisturbed grassland habitats with high ecological value.



Plant communities across the hill have continued to develop throughout the summer months. Heather, mosses, grasses and other upland species are gradually recolonising areas previously affected by trampling, while protected areas within the Upper SSSI are showing encouraging signs of recovery where visitor pressure has remained low.

The Lower SSSI woodland restoration area also continues to establish steadily. Young native trees are becoming increasingly resilient despite the exposed conditions; Rangers will soon begin removing self-seeded Sitka Spruce following the completion of chainsaw training. Catching these trees while they are still small will help prevent them from becoming established within the recovering native woodland. Rangers have removed all they can with heavy duty loppers.

Drone awareness signage installed earlier in the year continues to reduce disturbance within key nesting areas, with more visitors now actively asking for advice before flying. Routine biodiversity observations also continue to inform site management, helping identify emerging issues early and guide future conservation work. Following site visits and ongoing discussions with NatureScot, several opportunities have been identified to further strengthen protection of sensitive habitats while continuing to balance conservation with responsible public access.

Conclusion

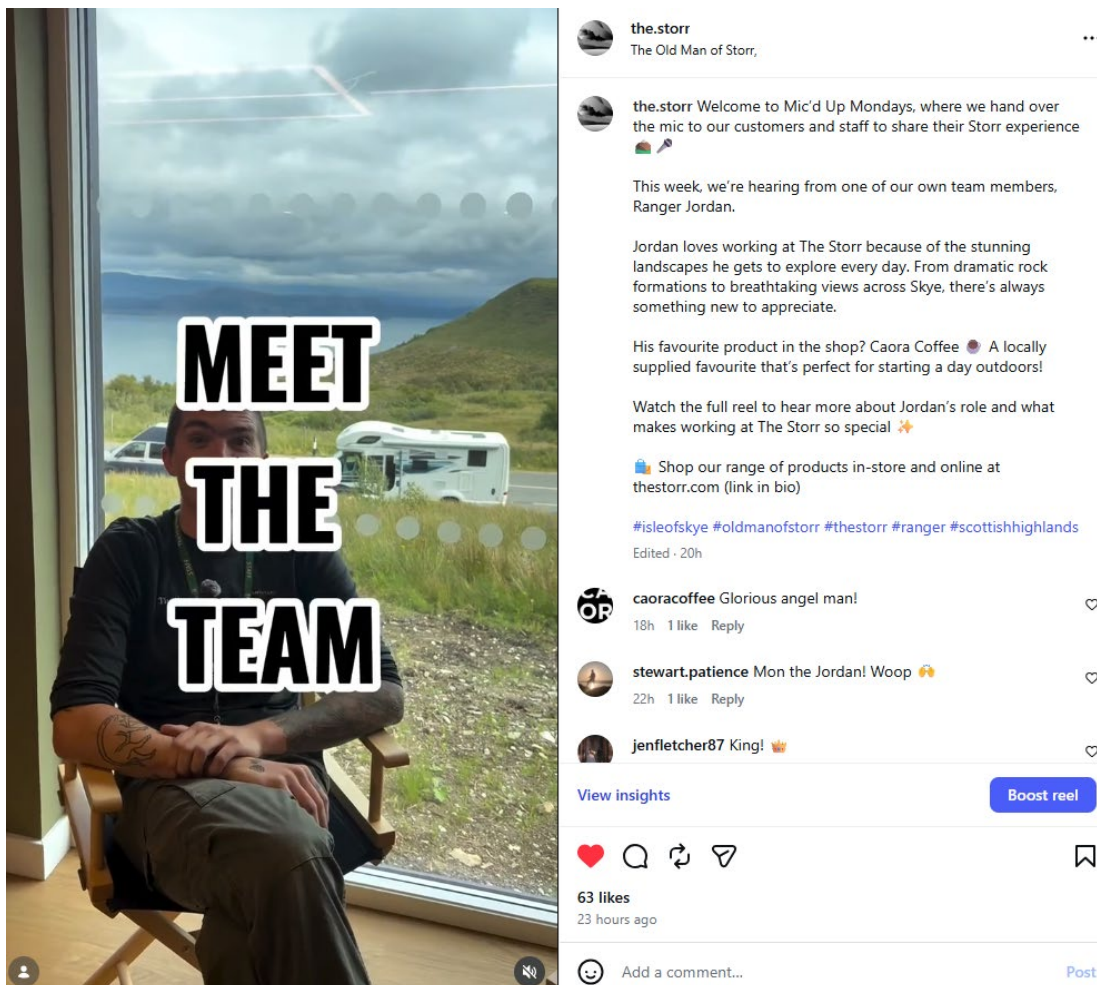
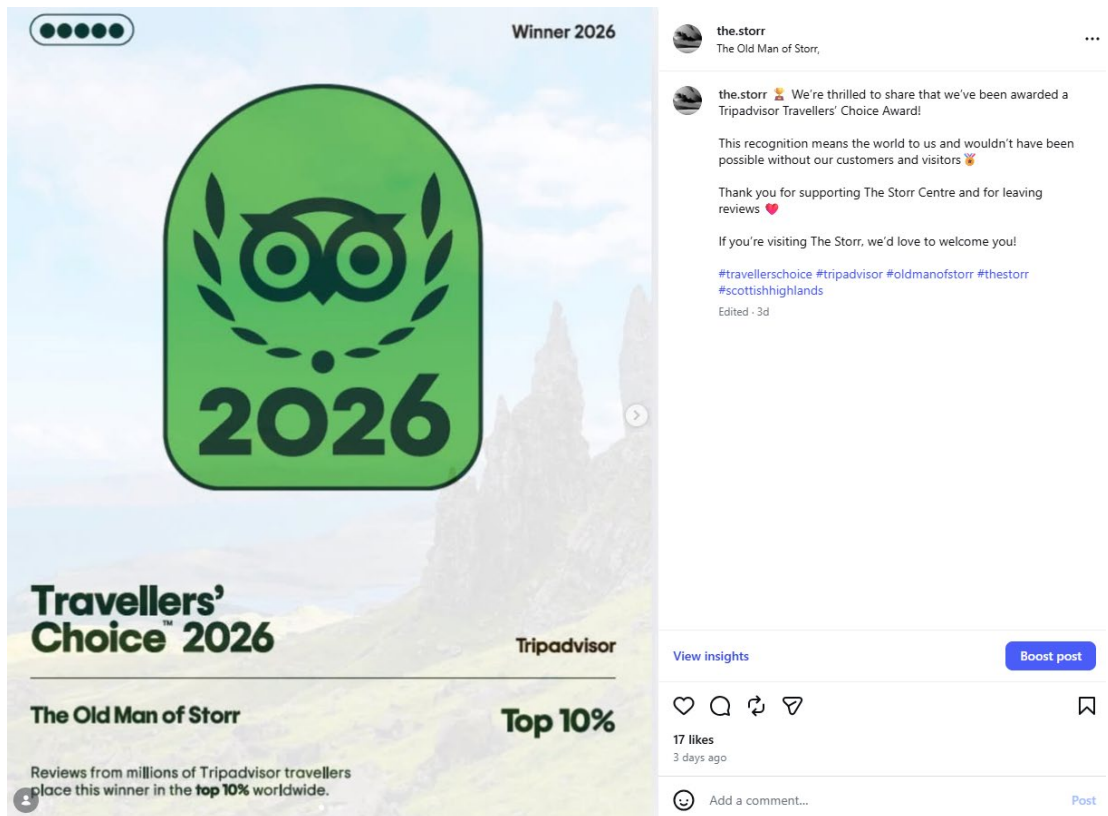
As summer progresses, the Old Man of Storr continues to experience both the rewards and pressures that come with its growing international popularity.

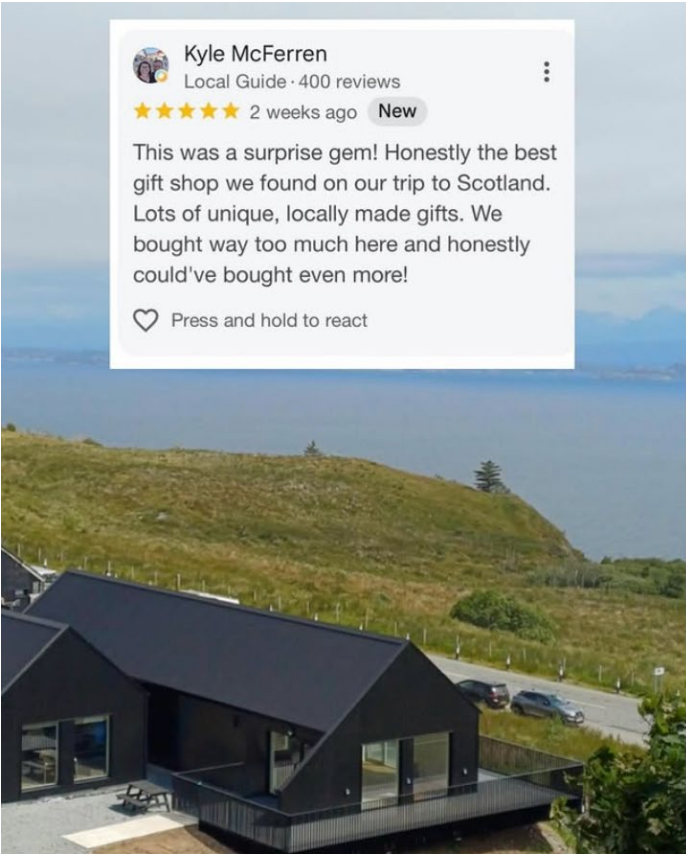
The hill remains incredibly busy, but there are also clear signs that ongoing Ranger presence, visitor engagement, and conservation work are making a positive difference across the site.

This season has highlighted the importance of continual maintenance and proactive environmental management during periods of intense visitor pressure. At the same time, it has also provided some of the most rewarding moments on the hill, from casual chats and wildlife encounters, to seeing recovering vegetation begin to establish more confidently across protected areas.

Watching the landscape change through the seasons remains one of the most rewarding aspects of the role and reinforces the importance of protecting this remarkable place for future generations.

Appendix 4 – Instagram Examples





Kyle McFerren

Local Guide · 400 reviews



2 weeks ago

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