**Local Tourism Association/ Partner Updates**

**Perthshire Tourism Partnership**

**3 November 2020**

1. **Perthshire Tourism Partnership|Chair, David Smythe**

Lockdown stopped all tourism activity in its tracks, with self-catering opening on the 4th July and the rest of accommodation opening on the 15th July. Many businesses received some help through various schemes, and the furlough scheme has been useful, although it is coming to an end. Perth and Kinross Council were helpful in doing what they could to get help quickly. Some organisations fell through the cracks.

Things to see and do, places to eat and drink have been opening slowly, some choosing not to open, and some extending the season as staycations have become the only possible holiday available.

All businesses that are open are facing additional costs and/or limited capacity to comply with Covid protocols meaning that margins are much reduced. But in general, businesses are glad to be open again. The *Good to Go* scheme has had a reasonable take-up in Perth and Kinross.

We have seen growth in visits to the countryside, so much so that infrastructure is not coping in terms of parking and toilet facilities. Compounding this is a growth in ‘dirty camping’ where people turn up, party and clear off leaving an insanitary and unsightly mess. Perth and Kinross has had its fair share and has introduced measures to curb the worst as well as restricting on-road parking in crowded places. This will have to be addressed by infrastructure investment coupled with education about how to behave in the countryside.

Recently, restrictions on accommodation have reduced groups to one household (from the Scottish Rule of 6 – two households). This is having an impact on October bookings (some businesses have had to make huge cancellations) and going forwards, this will impact family groups, unrelated visitors e.g. 2 friends on a golfing holiday as well as shooting parties etc. – a significant out-of-season market.

Looking ahead, it is difficult to read how restrictions will impact the sector. Lockdown or near lockdown will be very harmful, and financial help may be in shorter supply than April/May, although the Job Support Scheme has been revised and there are now discrete bits of help emerging. Travel limits and further curbs on hospitality will be very serious. Christmas and New Year look to be much muted affairs. It’s going to be a long haul out of where we are.

There are big concerns too about unemployment, worrying in itself, but leaving households with less money to spend on holidays.

On the brighter side, rural UK is completely on trend for visitors as travel abroad looks to be difficult for a while, and currently rural areas are seen as relatively safe and less crowded than the cities. As long as restrictions allow, this could actually play well for Perth and Kinross and people need a break. We need to be ready for this.

Perth and Kinross Economic Wellbeing (Recovery) Plan (to be finalised and approved in October) has a major section on People – employment and skills, including a *Get Into Tourism* initiative. Businessincludes a section on development of Perthshire as a Responsible Tourism Destination, and Place includes a Digital Marketing Campaign *Come to Perth and Kinross*. Perth City Hall and the Cross Tay Link Road were both under threat of being shelved, but happily seem to be progressing now. Tay City Deal on the verge of being signed off?

It is tremendous to see to see the Perthshire Adventure Group launched and achieving great things under difficult circumstances.

There is huge potential.

Our Tourism Action Plan, almost signed off in March needs to be revisited. Much of the work is still relevant, but some of the focus will have to change.

These are dark times, but we are lucky to have a very joined-up tourism industry with effective leaders in both the public and private sectors where it counts at local and national level. Other sectors are not as fortunate.

1. **Glenshee and Strathardle Tourist Association|Chair, Alexandra Winton**

We at the Glenshee and Strathardle Tourist Association are a very mixed tourism group – we have hotels, B&Bs, guesthouses, camping, glamping, self-caterers, activity providers, food producers, post office, community shop, visitor centre and shop.

The upsides are:

* We received a grant from the local Drumderg Windfarm for help during covid and as a result have picked up several more members (taking us up to 44).
* We are building a great new website with lots of new things to see and do added.
* We have received a grant from the Cairngorm National Parks for redoing our visitor centre – with all the new members this is going to be brilliant!!
* The self-caterers are the ones who have had the most business and suffered the least in our area – many received the 10k grants and although it doesn’t necessarily cover everything, it has been a start and as they opened on 3rd July, they also got a head start on business.
* The food producers have had mixed fortunes depending on their outlets/sales points.

The downsides are:

* Hotels, bed and breakfasts, guest houses have suffered badly in this area, we now have 2 of our hotels for sale and another that has never opened.  These have had less help, so we have used a grant to try and help market these with Facebook competitions etc.
* Some food producers have had a very bad time and we are also trying to use the grant to market these.
* Activity providers have also depended on where/what they are.  For example, the golf course in the area has had almost no golfers as it relies on the hotel guests.
* The area has been very stop and start with covid always in the upper mind.

Overall, there is quite a lot of gloom in various areas of the industry and lots of uncertainty.

I look forward to seeing you on 3rd.

Alex Winton, GSTA

1. **Blair Atholl & Area Tourism Association|Chair, Rhona Metcalfe**

* COVID-19 highlighted the need for local organisations such as Community Council and Church societies to have a voice and the ability to reach out to their parishioners.
* Many businesses in Blair Atholl are not represented by an organisation and therefore, may have missed out on vital information regarding grants/loan opportunities
* non-tourism businesses not represented at key focal point groups
* BAATA felt the need to create an ‘all-inclusive’ organisation that served the whole community and created a ‘whole visitor experience’ whereby all businesses would benefit from being part of something that appealed to a wide group of people.

Plan

* Create integrated imagery throughout the village utilising current information boards by employing a Design & Marketing company
* Re-design website to have 3 separate sections, Business, Tourism, Community - similar to the Smart Village concept
* Change our name and constitution to support all 3 elements
* place tv screens at key locations around the village to advertise the organisation and the businesses in it - also sell advertising space
* Create a village diary on the website that is open to all and lists of the events that happen in the village throughout the year (this is ideal for the local community during winter)

1. **Cairngorm National Parks Authority| Head of Visitor Services, Peter Crane**

Key points for across Cairngorms NPA (Mark may be able to add more detail from CBP perspective)

Vast majority of visitors behaved responsibly and contributed to visitor economy but both attractions and villages were ‘felt to be quieter’ than normal with the focus on rural locations.

Virtually no overseas visitors and perception of new, younger, near resident visitor, alongside many returning UK visitors.

Increased visitor numbers in ‘remote rural’ areas of countryside with a perceived increase in challenging or difficult to manage behaviour; CNPA seasonal rangers –

* Cleaned 312 fire sites
* Collected 222 bin bags of litter
* Reported 33 fly tipping incidents

Increased access to countryside sites by car and campervans – rural car park capacity exceeded in a few key locations with increase in roadside parking in some sites (perceived as dangerous by some). Increase in ‘wild camping’ close to car parks/roads with some associated irresponsible/illegal behaviour (as above)

Increase in active travel particularly cycling (Old Logging Way path in Aug 13,300 uses – largest monthly use ever by 30% - with 87% cycling)

Need for positive, consistent and concise messaging across Scotland on range of issues from toileting to campervan parking, and responsible outdoor access.

Visitor economy appears to continue to be very challenging having to rapidly respond to changing Government guidelines and visitor’s interpretation of those guidelines – massive increase in late (next day) bookings for accommodation.

Potential/opportunity for UK market to want autumn and winter experiences if safe and ‘legal’ along with perception that Cairngorms & Highlands will be a key attraction for UK visitors in 2021 and 22. Likely that visitors will want to stay in one location longer 3-6 nights?

1. **Culture Perth & Kinross| Visitor Services Manager, Roy Jenney**

**Library Service**

Re-opened mid-July at specific premises: AK Bell 18/7, Blairgowrie from 25/7. Click & collect Library books available from AK Bell and then rolled out to Auchterarder 15/8 and Campus libraries from WC 7/9. Campus libraries are for school pupils only during the school week and then: Click & collect Fri Eve, public browsing Saturday and Sunday. Scone library Click & collect Planned from WC 16/11.

Covid secure measures:

* Social distancing 2m supported by customer signage and staff encouragement
* Face mask to be worn by public and staff in all venues
* Hand sanitiser on entry
* Trace and Protect forms mandatory for public users.
* Restricted capacity on number of public users at any one time.
* Returned books undergo 72 hrs quarantine before staff manage back into system.
* PPE for designated tasks; book stock handling, cleaning.
* Increased cleaning regime
* Limited services: core = Lending of books. PC and internet access from early August with bookable 1 hour time slots (50 mins computer time and 10 mins clean down and sanitise for next user). Access to Archives and Local & Family History has just come back on stream by appointment only (Thur and Friday 10:00 -16:00) WC 5/10) Maker\_Space appointments coming early November.
* Staff teams working in ‘bubble’ groups to minimise contact with non-associated services.

**Perth Museum & Art Gallery**

Re-opened Sat 1st August 2020 with limited access for public visitors by booked time slot only (New online booking system launched). Covid secure measures similar to libraries above.

\*\*Alyth and The Fergusson Gallery will not open to the public this season due to Covid-19

Commercial impacts:

* Room hire business halted from 24th March 2020 and likely not to re-start until Spring 2021 at the earliest.
* Café at AK Bell Library closed since lockdown. Initial plans to re-open Oct 20 now paused due to increasing infection numbers throughout Scotland and concern over viable profitable business with current library footfall. Will review after Xmas.
* Museum shop income halted from 24/3 to 31/7 due to Lockdown. A smaller retail offer is now available in line with Perth Museum & Art Gallery opening hours.

For more information:

**CPK Website:** <https://www.culturepk.org.uk>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/CPKLibraries> <https://www.facebook.com/PerthMuseum> <https://www.facebook.com/PerthKinrossArchive>

**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/CPKMuseums> <https://twitter.com/CPKLibraries> <https://twitter.com/CPKArchives>

**Insta:** <https://www.instagram.com/CPKMUSEUMS> <https://www.instagram.com/CPKLIBRARIES>

1. **Breadalbane Co-operative| Andrew Donaldson, Chair**

By way of a very quick update from the Breadalbane Tourism Circle, the group hasn’t been functioning since Covid-19 hit. Individual member news is that Auchingarrich Wildlife Centre has had a reasonable short season but is now for sale, Bridge of Lochay Hotel has closed as a hotel and reopened as a large self-catering house. Here at Comrie Croft we’ve had a good camping, biking and cafe season and remain open 7-days for rooms and glamping and Fri-Sun for our café/farmshop.

1. **Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust, Constance Boddice, Marketing Officer**

Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust work to develop and promote access to the countryside for everyone and work on conservation projects to care for Perthshire’s unique tree heritage. We are in a unique position as we do not own any of the sites in which we work so did not have to deal with the dramatic impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had on so many of the PTP members.

We have all been working from home since March and have found many of our activities were put on hold. We do a lot of on the ground project work, which was all shelved for the time because of lockdown. We were able to recommence outdoor work, including path upgrades, GPSing and measuring the health of threatened conifer trees, etc, in July.

Since we’ve been able to get out and about again, we have (among others):

* Completed path upgrade works on the NCN 77 at Almondbank and North Inch
* Begun investigations into a new active travel route between Stanley and Luncarty
* Been developing a new toilet block at the Aberfeldy Cemetery Car Park
* Working on developing / upgrading the active travel route between Bridge of Earn and Newburgh

As a charity, we also rely on donations and fundraising to fund all of the work we do. As such, we have revamp our ‘Support us’ section of our website, going to launch a Legacy programme soon and have launched business support schemes for all businesses and accommodation providers along the Cateran Trail and new River Tay Way. These schemes are free to join for businesses and mean they collect voluntary donations from visitors towards Perthshire Big Tree Country, the Cateran Trail or River Tay Way (depending on which scheme you’re a member of).

Business Support Schemes.

You can find more information here: <https://www.pkct.org/business-support-schemes>. Our Supporting Perthshire Big Tree Country scheme launched in 2008 and has raised over £400,000 to date for projects across Perthshire Big Tree Country.

1. **Historic Environment Scotland| Joyce Kitching, Tourism and Destination Development Manager**

We would appreciate it if you could share the below with your contacts:

Booking for the first **Community Heritage Conversation**, on Saturday 14th November 10.00-12.30, is now open. Here's the link. Tickets are limited, so don't delay! Please pass this link out to anyone you think might be interested (after you've booked your seat, of course).

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/community-heritage-conversations-2020-21-celebrating-resilience-registration-126054722067>

Applications for our new fund, the **Historic Environment Recovery Fund,** are now open.  This aims to support Scotland’s historic environment sector to recover from the impacts of COVID-19, enabling organisations to remain solvent, safeguard jobs and training opportunities and ensure that historic buildings and sites can re-open to the public.  It will also invest in urgent repairs and maintenance, helping to generate work for specialist contractors and the wider heritage economy.  
   
Grants of between £10k and £100k will be available for costs to be incurred before 31 March 2021 under the following two funding streams:

*Stream 1: Re-opening Historic Buildings and Sites*

* Open to organisations which manage historic buildings and other sites normally open to the public at least 28 days per year.
* Eligible costs include equipment purchases, training, minor adaptations and urgent repairs/maintenance required to re-open in line with government guidelines on COVID-19.  Activities aiming to re-engage communities and volunteers with sites as they re-open are also eligible.

*Stream 2: Sector Resilience and Recovery*

* Open to organisations which deliver significant outcomes for Scotland’s historic environment – ensuring that it is understood, valued, cared for and enjoyed.
* Eligible costs include essential operating costs for qualifying organisations, business planning activities to promote organisational resilience and investment to protect delivery of existing skills training opportunities.

HES is administering this fund on behalf of Scottish Government as part of the £97 million package of targeted funding to support Scotland’s culture and heritage sectors through the impacts of COVID-19.   
   
The fund will be open for applications until **2nd November 2020**.  Applications will be assessed as they are received, with the aim of decisions being taken within  four weeks of receipt.  
   
Further details, including who can apply and how to apply, can be found [here](https://asva.us3.list-manage.com/track/click?u=2b86378c6c9a93da859cfc484&id=4e948c7d12&e=b7e2ca1a68).  
   
We are currently consulting on our draft guidance ‘**Talking About Heritage’** and would like to invite you to take part.  You can give us your views by downloading the policy guidance document and completing the consultation survey, **by Tuesday 15th December 2020**. The consultation survey can be found here <https://consultations.historicenvironment.scot/heritage/your-heritage>. Please feel free to share this link with others who might be interested.  This guidance is part of an ongoing review of historic environment policy guidance, following on from the launch of the [Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS)](https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/planning-and-guidance/historic-environment-policy-for-scotland-heps/) in May 2019.

**Background to ‘Talking About Heritage’**

'Talking About Heritage' aims to help individuals, groups, communities and organisations to investigate, share, celebrate, and to achieve recognition for the heritage that matters to them. It is intended to be used as a tool by anyone with an interest in exploring and talking about heritage.

The [*What's Your Heritage?*](https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/listing-scheduling-and-designations/what-s-your-heritage/)campaign asked people from all over the country how Scotland’s places, buildings and monuments should be recognised and celebrated. Feedback from over 2000 responses to *What's Your Heritage?* told us that people wanted to achieve recognition for the heritage that matters to them. ‘Talking About Heritage’ is part of Historic Environment Scotland’s response to this.

**Why ‘Talking About Heritage’?**

Whilst everything around us seems uncertain, taking a bit of time to talk about Scotland’s history and heritage can give us a sense of stability and wellbeing. It’s also a catalyst for real and positive change. We all know that new research is always coming to light, and that it’s important to keep uncovering hidden histories – this consultation is an opportunity to feed in on how we acknowledge, share and celebrate our past.

If you would like more information, or have any questions please do get in touch at [talkingaboutheritage@hes.scot](mailto:talkingaboutheritage@hes.scot)

We (the Make Your Mark working group)) have also launched the  **Make Your Mark in Volunteering** [**survey**](https://consultations.historicenvironment.scot/development-partnership/community-heritage-volunteers/).  Make Your Mark is a sector-led campaign currently under development which will aim to increase the number and diversity of heritage volunteers in Scotland. From talking with the sector, feedback suggests that there are growing issues for volunteer-involving organisations relating to the sustainability of activities, and COVID-19 has presented new challenges for the sector.

In response to the issues raised, Make Your Mark is proposing a **Community Heritage Volunteer Recruitment Campaign.** Further information about the campaign can be found via the link to the survey[**here**](https://consultations.historicenvironment.scot/development-partnership/community-heritage-volunteers/).   We are seeking views on the campaign from volunteer-involving heritage organisations of all scales across Scotland.

Please help us to gauge demand and best timing for this campaign by 1) completing the survey and/or 2) sharing to your networks. The survey closes on **Sunday 15th November**.