**Note of Meeting Perthshire Tourism Partnership**

**30 March 2021 - 09.30-11.00**

**Attendees**

* Adrian Blundell, Dunkeld and Birnam Tourism Association
* Caroline Warburton, VisitScotland
* Constance Boddice, Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust
* David Smythe, Perthshire Tourism Partnership (Chair)
* Daniel Muir, Growbiz
* David Strachan, Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust
* George Lawrie, TRACKS
* Jonathan Wilson, VisitAberfeldy Tourism Association
* Murray Scott, Blairgowrie & East perthshire Tourism Association
* Michaela Anderson, Horsecross Arts / Meetings Perthshire
* Peter Crane, Cairngorm National Park Authority
* Suzanne Cumiskey, Perth & Kinross Council
* Stuart McLaren, Crieff & Strathearn Tourism Association
* Rose La Terriere, Loch Rannoch Tourism Association

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|  | **Note of Meeting** |  |
| 1 | **Welcome & Introductions**  David Smythe (DS) welcomed everyone to the meeting.  He highlighted industry concerns over lack of guidance around reopening. Also noted positive action on visitor management nationally and locally. |  |
| 2 | **ScotGov Business Support Funding Update, Suzanne Cumiskey, Perth & Kinross Council**  Suzanne Cumiskey (SC) provided update on funding. The core focus since the start of the COVID 19 pandemic 2020 has been on the management of Scottish Government business support grants schemes. Extensive staff resources have been deployed to administer the schemes and handle the volume of complex enquiries coming in from applicants.  The number of applications received across the main schemes being administered by Perth & Kinross Council are as follows:   * SFBF Strategic Framework Business Fund: 2,761 * Discretionary Fund: (FUND STILL OPEN) * Large Self Catering and Exclusive Use Venues Fund: 192 (eligible properties) * Small Accommodation Providers Paying Council Tax Fund: 60 * Council managing a scheme for Taxi and Private Hire Drivers.   Whilst processing, consideration has had to be given to the range of other funds available including the tourism sector specific funds managed by VisitScotland as well as other funding streams such as the Newly Self-Employed Hardship Fund and the Mobile and Home Based Close Contact Services Fund with enquiries directed to the most appropriate scheme.  Whilst existing Scottish Government schemes have closed to new applications, the [Discretionary Fund](https://www.pkc.gov.uk/article/21975/Coronavirus-Discretionary-fund) remains open. This fund is intended as a fund of last resort for businesses that have otherwise been ineligible for other schemes or have somehow “fallen through the cracks”.  **Action: All LTAs asked to highlight that the fund remains open to applications** with the funding award now increased to £7k and £10k depending on the number of employees the budget carried forward to 21/22.  <https://www.pkc.gov.uk/article/21975/Coronavirus-Discretionary-fund>  SC confirmed that businesses in receipt of SEISS are eligible for the Discretionary Fund.  Businesses supported through Strategic Business Framework Fund (SFBF) should also be in line for a further recovery “top up” in April 2021 | See attached note |
| 3 | **Economic Wellbeing Plan, Suzanne Cumiskey, Perth & Kinross Council**  SC provided an update on the Perth & Kinross Council Economic Wellbeing Plan 2020-2028 which was developed by the Covid-19 Business Support Task Force. Following input from elected members the plan is being finalised in line with the current revenue budget position. The Council were considering the plan on 30March 2021. Work is now underway on short - medium term actions and further refinement may be needed in relation to the Place theme once the Council’s overall capital budget position is agreed in September 2021  Link <https://consult.pkc.gov.uk/housing-environment/economic-wellbeing-plan-consultation/>  SC advised PKC approved its 2021/22 budget on 10 March 2021.  Within that were a number of non-recurring “budget motions” for one financial year only to support economic recovery. These are as follows   * Marketing of Perth and Kinross: £250K   + promotion of Perth and Kinross as a must visit destination   + promotion of a local goods and services campaign   + creation of a Visitor Management Fund to assist rural communities * Ranger Service: £240K in 2021/22   + To introduce a Ranger Service for two years on a pilot basis (with a commitment of a further £240K in 2022/23) * Open for Business Fund: £200K   + 50% grants to encourage small town businesses to ensure that the frontages of their premises are updated, resources to support grants for a town and city centre empty property initiative, pop-up shops and a general freshening up of our high streets * Adapt Your Property: £350K   + 50% grants up to a maximum of £50,000 to convert underused/vacant town and city centre commercial space for new commercial/residential uses * Support for Businesses: £200K   + To provide microgrants to small businesses for start-up or expansion costs, such as the purchase of equipment or website development * Perth and Kinross Skills Passport   + £125,000 investment in 2021/22 with a further £125,000 commitment towards 2022/23.   + This funding will provide grants of up to £2,000 to assist 125 people back into work through the provision of financial assistance for help such as training courses or equipment | See attached note |
| 4 | **LTA Meeting Feedback (DS)**  **LTA Updates**  DS advised that a new Scottish B&B Association had been established. DS has set up a group comprised of the Chairs of the LTAs where issues could be raised.  **TRACKS**   * Extensive investment into the area * Focus on re-opening, with businesses around the lochside investing in their own premises and creating outdoor spaces * PKC 2021/22 budget confirmed budget confirmed £160k maintenance of Loch Leven Heritage Trail * £800k town centre regeneration incl Kinross Pier * RSPB Loch Leven have been successful in accessing RTIF funding & Post Code Lottery funding * Sad news of fire at birdwatching hide on loch. Local crowdfunding campaign to raise funds for replacement and NatureScot confirmed that plan to rebuild hide this year. * Loch Leven Castle may open later in year. Issue for site is the boat which only has a capacity of 12 people.   **Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust**   * Focus on re-opening * Focused on active travel projects: Stanley to Luncarty, path improvements on NCN 77 at Almondbank and Upper Tay Paths Group re paths around Aberfeldy * Developing River Tay Way, including map for interpretation and leaflets. * Working with Bamff Estate on strategic paths * Recruiting for new full time Conservation Officer   **Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust**   * Providing content for redevelopment of Glenshee Heritage Hub which is being supported by Cairngorms National Park Authority * Community Archaeology Project in Dunkeld – outreach products out * Perth Interpretation boards, linked to Virtual Reality modelling – out soon * Lower City Mills – fundraising resumed to afford public access to A listed working Mill in centre of Perth. * Cultural Taskforce & new Cultural Strategy   **VisitAberfeldy**   * Reviewing digital presence, social media content plan. * Want to utilise new square in Aberfeldy more with possibility of a manned visitor information hub. * Some local debate over the future uses of Loch Tay. There is a potential development to allow more boats/jetskis vs those looking for tranquility.   **Loch Rannoch & Tummel**   * Businesses getting ready for reopening. * Concerns over return of irresponsible campers and anti-social behaviour. * Created map of area (used on a jigsaw to market and raise funds for area).   **Horsecross Arts**   * Summer Festival of Arts: programme to be announced but will be performed outside * Perth Theatre’s Gig on a Truck initiative to be rolled out into rural Perthshire * Despite lockdown, the venues have been used by artists to record performances.   **Meetings Perthshire**   * Challenging time for business events sector   **BEPTA**   * Reestablishing the group and currently planning marketing and promotional opportunities.   **Crieff and Strathearn Tourism Association**   * Crieff Succeeds BID due to reballot this year * Two key hotels, Yanns and Knock Castle are up for sale and may have change of use. Loss to the town.   **Growbiz**  **Cairngorms National Park Authority** |  |
| 5 | **VisitScotland Update, Caroline Warburton (CW)**  CW provided an overview of activity as a strategic and VisitScotland perspective. The key points were:   * Strategic recovery planning at a national level, including the announcement by First Minister of £25m support for tourism recovery. * VisitScotland Recovery Marketing Plan (all subject to change). The first two campaigns aimed at domestic market have been launched:   *1.* ***Responsible Tourism*** *– about making places better for people to live in and to visit. Strong emphasis on responsible behaviours.*  *Supporting campaign:*  *Audience - Scots*  *Channels – highly targeted digital / social activity, radio, Digital Out of Home (mainly placed in cities)*  *Timings – Mid March – May 2021*  ***#RespectProtectEnjoy***  ***2. Maintain and grow*** *- Scotland's share of the domestic market with an opportunity to capture the ‘undecideds’ not only supporting the tourism economy now, but in years to come.*  *Supporting campaign:*  *Audience - Scots and rest of UK*  *Channels – highly targeted digital / social activity, publishing partnerships, Expedia, Trip Advisor*  *Timings – Mid March – April 2021 (supports the 3-6 month planning window evidenced by Insights)*   * ‘We’re Good To Go’ is still valid (and free to sign up to if not already)   VS will share Scot Gov’s Reopening Guidance as soon as available   * Request to businesses to tell us that they are open (and update VS.com listing) * Reminder that our online travel trade event ‘Scotland Reconnect’ takes place 27-29 April * VisitScotland iCentres are opening 26 April * Get Tourism Ready, with VisitScotland webinar (free): Tues 13 April, 11am – 12pm. [*Register here*](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/get-tourism-ready-with-visitscotland-registration-147559714077) | See attached presentation |
| 6 | **Visitor Management Update (SC)**  SC advised that, following a challenging year in 2020 due to the sheer volume of daytrippers/staycationers as a result of COVID 19 pandemic, a co-ordinated approach to visitor management was now underway ahead of the 2021 season.   * Perth & Kinross Visitor Management Multi Agency Group established, chaired by Andy clegg of Community Greenspace was meeting regularly with representation from both national parks, Forestry & Land Scotland and emergency services. * There was now a dedicated Visitor Management Co-ordinator in post Arek Novrotek who was overseeing the implementation of a Visitor Management Action Plan 2021. * Three sub groups have been set up for Infrastructure, Information and enforcement aligned with the national approach of the Visitor Management Steering Group chaired by Malcolm Roughead.   The focus was on community led & informed pilot projects & trials during 2021 at the 8 identified ‘hotspots’  Some potential initiatives for 2021   * Dig It Campaign & Trowel Trial * NEW Ranger Service in place a community Volunteer Programme * Temporary Car Parks & Clearways * Focus on developing/re-purposing Visitor Infrastructure * Feasibility of Strategic Waste Disposal Network (Public/Private) * Funding Generation * Generic email address [visitormanagementgroup@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:visitormanagementgroup@pkc.gov.uk) as main point of contact for any issues about visitor management   The Perth & Kinross managed public toilets are all due to open from 1 April 2021 with slightly shortened hours to allow for deep cleaning. The advice for using PKC Comfort Scheme is to contact the business direct before making a journey  [www.pkc.gov.uk/publictoilets](http://www.pkc.gov.uk/publictoilets)  Visitor Infrastructure  [**Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund**](https://www.visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/funding/rural-tourism-infrastructure-fund) **(RTIF)**  PKC had been successful with this fund which is available to Local Authorities, with funding awards of £75,000 – £375,000/ 30% match funding to support projects focused on improving the visitor experience in rural Scotland that are facing pressures on their visitor infrastructure  Secured two successful applications at Round 3   * + £302,000 Loch Leven Heritage Trail   + £237,000 River Tay Way/Aberfeldy Car Park   PKC now giving consideration to Round 4 RTIF which supports the Recovery Stage. The deadline for expressions of interest is 13 August 2021 and the full stage deadline 1 September 2021  **The Better Places Green Recovery Fund**  Managed by NatureScot has opened. This is a fund that  Local Authorities, Communities and NGOs can apply to. This second round has a maximum award of £75,000 with a deadline of 9 April 2021 (for fast track projects) or 14 May 2021.  All projects must be in place for 2021 season. The funding can support seasonal rangers, visitor management staff, temporary facilities such as portaloos, quick infrastructure measures  [**Community Environmental Challenge Fund**](https://www.pkc.gov.uk/article/15242/Community-environment-challenge-fund)   * Managed by Perth & Kinross Council * Communities & Voluntary Organisations can apply * Maximum Award £10,000 * 50% match funding * Supports community led environmental projects * Criteria extended for 2021 to encourage local community groups to develop projects to assist with visitor management | See attached presentation |
| 7 | A.O.B.   * Discussion around whether meetings should remain as quarterly meetings or whether these should move to more frequent/informal sessions. * Request from Caroline Warburton for any insight from LTAs from the members on how the season is shaping up in terms of bookings. |  |