



East Neuk Local Tourism Association, 25 September 2024

Hosted by Crail Museum

(Please note minutes are draft until the next meeting)

Minutes of the Open Meeting

1. Welcome and Introductions

Gillian McLaren, Chair, chaired the meeting, welcoming all present and thanked Peigi, Valencia and Pam for hosting a visit to the Crail Museum followed by a meeting in the Crail Town Hall.

Attendees:

Gillian McLaren	Pittenweem Properties, TA Chair
Linn Williamson	Welcome to Fife – Industry Support
El Spanggaard	Welcome to Fife – Industry Support
Jen Gordon	Scottish Fisheries Museum
Peigi Muir	Crail Museum
Pam Smith	Crail Museum
Valencia Sowry	Crail Festival
Judith Dunlop	Elie Seaside Sauna
Daryl Wilson	Guide Us Breaks
Chris Lewis	Wee Chippie
Damon Reynolds	The Shoregate
Nicholas Frost	The Shoregate
Manuela Calchini	Crail Community Partnership, TA Secretary

Guest:

David Keen	VisitScotland
------------	---------------

Apologies:

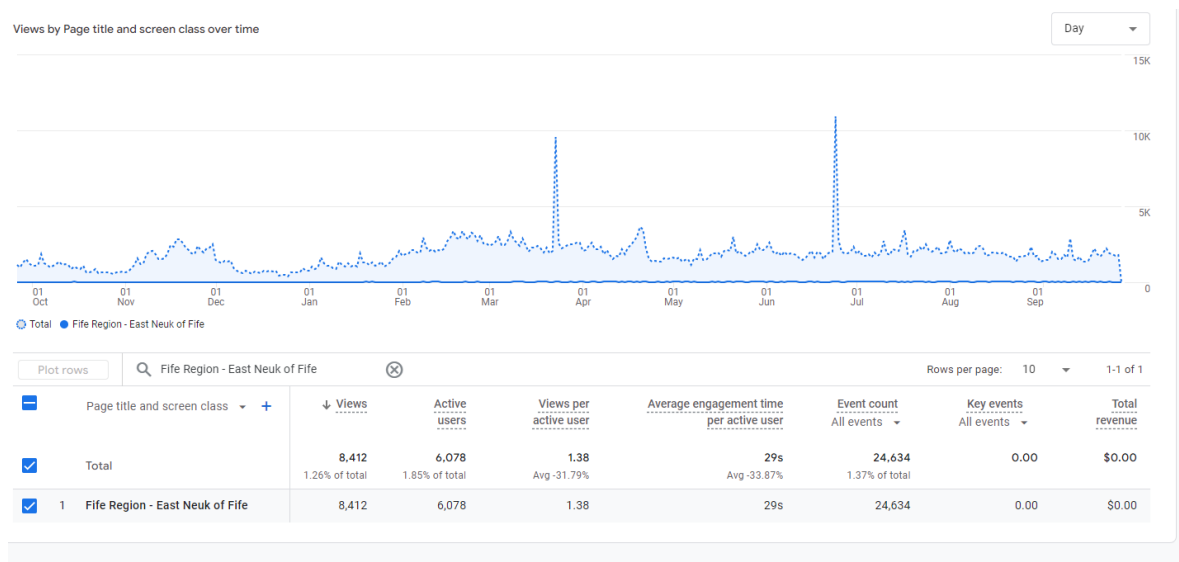
Alex Gardiner – Anstruther Pleasure Cruises; Sandy MacNaughton – Sandcastle Cottage, Tasm Innes – Anstruther Fishbar, Kat Gilmour – Bowhouse.

2. Minutes

Minutes were proposed and seconded.

3. Finances:

- Town map signs for Anstruther have now been fitted by the Anstruther Community Council and this work has been acknowledged with a £ 100 donation
- Z Fold maps – down to the last 8 boxes. Will need to consider any changes to the map before reprint. QR code stats 413 links to website from QR Code and 92 from Foodie QR code. See below analytics from Welcome to Fife which indicates total number of users looking specifically at the destination page for East Neuk over the past 12 months. Good steady increase and spikes of people looking specifically at the destination page.



4. VisitScotland update – David Keen

“Thank you for having me along at the LTA meeting yesterday, it was great to meet new faces and hear about the many positive goings-on along the East Neuk! Below, I have detailed what I covered and attempted to provide clarification to points and answer questions that came up during the meeting.

[VisitScotland update for East Neuk Local Tourism Association – 25th September 24 – Crail Town Hall](#)

Changes at the top of VisitScotland:

- Vikki Miller will begin as [new VisitScotland CEO](#) on the 1st October – [Malcolm Roughead is retiring](#) this week after more than 20 years with VisitScotland, firstly as Director of Marketing

before being appointed Chief Executive in 2010; [Paul Bush has also retired](#) from the organisation from his role as Director of Events.

Three new directorates have been created:

- Marketing and Digital – this directorate will take forward the successful development and delivery of the marketing and digital strategy for the organisation, including its implementation in all markets. [Jill Walker has recently been announced](#) as new Director, joining from the Scottish Government.
- Industry and Events – this directorate will see the combination of [industry and events](#), aimed at strengthening our offering and drive forward further integration across tourism and events. This directorate has a strong focus on collaboration and partnership working, and developing and maintaining strategic relationships with a wide range of partners. Its main aim is to ensure that tourism and events is seen as an important and valuable industry for Scotland we're best placed to deliver the ambitions of Scotland's National Events Strategy 2024 - 2035, and support delivery of the national tourism strategy, Scotland Outlook 2030. Rob Dickson, formerly Director of Industry and Destination Development, has moved to the new role of Director of Industry and Events.
- Strategy and Competitive Intelligence – this directorate will focus on the development of a strategic insight and competitive intelligence programme to support Scotland's tourism and events industry with a focus on sustainable economic growth. [Cat Leaver has been appointed](#) to the role from her position as Head of Brand and Global Marketing at VisitScotland.

Changes to how VisitScotland is providing information:

- As part of VisitScotland's strategy to grow the visitor economy, plans were announced in March on changed to how information would be provided to visitors – this included the [gradual closure of VisitScotland's network of iCentres](#). St Andrews iCentre will close at the end of January 2025. This change has been influenced following significant changes to the way people plan their holidays, with more visitors using online resources and travel specialists to plan and book all aspects of their trips, including accommodation and activities, before they arrive at their destination. Responding to this shift in consumer behaviour, we'll invest our expertise and resources into a digital-first strategy to increase Scotland's share of global travel. This will see us targeting the channels we know visitors use to maximise reach and influence, ensuring Scotland is a "must visit, must return" destination. It will also support attracting visitors throughout the year and across Scotland, promoting lesser-known destinations.
- VisitScotland is managing a transition period as the [Quality Assurance scheme is retired](#) and a new free-to-access business advice programme is established. The Quality Assurance scheme is closed to new entrants though [advice is available on delivering a quality visitor experience](#) across the tourism sector, such as self-catering, food tourism and visitor attractions, to name but a few. The organisation is [seeking feedback to influence VisitScotland's industry site](#), aimed at tailoring content to better address the needs of tourism businesses in Scotland. The new Business Support Hub will launch in the new year and will provide a dedicated digital platform where tourism and events businesses can access free sector-specific advice, resources and opportunities to help them operate and grow their business in a sustainable way.

Latest Insights:

- The International Passenger Survey 2023 (IPS) demonstrated that [international travel to Scotland continued its strong recovery](#) from the COVID-19 pandemic. Visit numbers, nights spent and visitor spending all surpassed the levels seen in both 2019 and 2022 – Scotland was the only UK nation to surpass 2019 levels. International visitors made a total of 4 million visits to Scotland, stayed for 34.4 million nights and spent £3.593 billion. Visits were up 23% compared to 2022 and 15% compared to 2019. The number of nights went up by 20% from 2022 and 25% from 2019. Visitor spending increased in nominal terms by 13% compared to 2022 and by 41% compared to 2019.
- The Great Britain Tourism Survey (GBTS) is a national consumer survey that measures the volume and value of domestic overnight tourism trips taken by residents of Great Britain. The [findings from the 2023 GBTS](#) found that Great Britain residents took 12.4 million overnight trips in Scotland with 35.4 million nights and £3.2 billion spent overall. When compared with 2022, volume of domestic trips and nights and value of spend was lower in 2023. 12.4m overnight trips in Scotland made by GB residents (down 8% on 2022), 35.4m nights were spent in Scotland by GB residents (down 9% on 2022), £3.2bn was spent by GB residents (down 4% on 2022) and £259 was the average spend by GB resident per trip
- The Scotland Visitor Survey 2023 is part of [regional tourism research and insight](#) across Scotland. [Research and insight for Fife](#) found there were 610,000 overnight tourism visits to the Kingdom and a total overnight tourism spend of £338 million. The average spend of an overnight visitor in 2023 was £555. The [Scotland Visitor Survey 2023 – Fife factsheet](#) provides more detailed information on visitors to Fife, highlighting that 65% of visitors were domestic, over 80% of visitors were repeat visitors and visitors stayed on average for 10 nights within Scotland, including 4.1 nights in Fife. Almost 85% of surveyed visitors were older independents or of retirement age and visited Fife for reasons including: the scenery and landscape, the history and culture, outdoor activities available, and visiting family or friends. Nearly 70% of visitors stayed in non-serviced accommodation, including 34% in self-catering/commercial non-serviced rentals. Visitors demonstrated satisfaction with attractions, food and drink experiences, and attractions and activities in Fife, with nearly 80% of respondents highly recommending Fife as a holiday or short-break destination.
- [UK visitor sentiment research](#) provides further insight into the reasoning behind choices and intentions of visitors to Scotland. As of July 2024, the cost-of-living crisis remains at the forefront of the public's minds. Around 7 in 10 have either been "hit hard" or are being "cautious and careful". This is a percentage that has barely shifted since first measured in June 2022. Likewise, "Rising cost of living" continues to be the leading barrier to taking a domestic trip. Within which, "accommodation" is the main individual cost barrier.

Key and recurring trends:

- VisitScotland commissioned Euromonitor International to highlight [consumer trends that will influence the Scottish tourism](#) and events industry from 2024 to 2027. The research identified three key travel trends for Scotland for 2024-2027: People with passion, Places and immersive experiences, and Power to change. People with passion focuses on an evolution towards a more connected travel experience that has authentic community engagement and tailored journeys. Places and immersive experiences highlights a global shift towards authentic travel, offering cultural connections and explorations – especially relevant to heritage and hidden gems. Power to change demonstrates the need for businesses to continue to adapt as new visitors increasingly show desire to access responsible and meaningful experiences.

- VisitScotland [published a paper on trends](#) the organisation feels will continue to offer opportunities to Scottish tourism businesses. The five key take outs from this work are the need to: align with transformational tourism, including a connection to community and meaningful travel; considering wellness centrally to brand and product development, not just an add on; promote the physical and mental benefits of short breaks and holidays; showcase sustainable practices and encourage visitors to make sustainable choices; and cater to all types of visitors.

Opportunities:

- [Perthshire Talks Responsible Tourism](#) is a programme of webinars and events focused on a range of topics specifically tailored for tourism, events and hospitality businesses. In this new webinar series, the focus is on responsible tourism, exploring inclusive tourism and taking climate action, which are identified as opportunities within the Perth & Kinross Tourism Action Plan. These webinars are free to attend and not limited to businesses in Perthshire. The upcoming webinars and events in this series are as follows: 2nd October – accessibility information to promote your business; 23rd October – welcoming all customers – in-person at Perth Concert Hall and solely available to those who have attended a previous webinar; and on the 5th November – exploring different climate action themes.
- Another webinar series, [New Tourism Experiences](#), will begin next week. This series is designed to support Scottish tourism experiences to build their digital skills, covering topics from boosting your bookings to working with Google Things To Do and the travel trade.
- There are many other training opportunities, both online and in person, listed on [VisitScotland's events training calendar](#) and delivered by appropriate industry experts. Within the next month, training is available on: [building your business brand](#) to stand out from competitors, build a loyal customer base and make more sales (30th September); [marketing for small businesses](#) (3rd October); and [inclusive tourism – welcoming all customers](#) (3rd October); and a [package travel regulations webinar](#) (22nd October), amongst many others.
- [Arival Activate is a major event](#) for the travel experiences sector and will be coming to Edinburgh over two days in late-November. Arival events are regionally focused conferences designed to foster interactive learning, peer-to-peer sharing, and intimate networking opportunities and this is the first focuses solely on the Northern European market. Arival Activate taps into the latest insights, provides expertise, and offers networking opportunities with leading tour and attraction operators. Scottish tourism businesses can take advantage of a 20% discount.
- There are also upcoming travel trade events which are listed on VisitScotland's [travel trade events and exhibitions page](#). Working with travel trade can give tourism businesses a key route to market for sustainable growth.
- VisitScotland is always on the look out for [new or exciting product which can feature in press releases](#), such as the “What’s new 2025”. This could range from new openings, tours, people, experiences, or trends – please send these stories to travelpr@visitscotland.com.
- Finally, [VisitScotland Connect](#), the flagship travel trade event designed to create opportunities for Scottish businesses to engage with and showcase their product offering to tour operators from across the world, is now open for registration. Connect will take place on the 9th and 10th of April next year, in-person at P&J Live in Aberdeen.

Transient Visitor Levy:

- The guidance for the [Visitor Levy](#), sometimes known as a ‘tourism tax’, is with the Scottish Government currently to be signed off. The Bill will allow a visitor levy to be charged on overnight stays in certain accommodation types. Each local authority will be able to decide if it wants to introduce a visitor levy.
- All money raised would be reinvested locally on facilities and services substantially for or used by visitors, enhancing the visitor experience. This provides the ability for a local authority to generate income to take a forward-looking, long-term approach to investment in the visitor economy.
- The levy will enable local authorities to apply a levy on overnight stays with all money raised to be reinvested in services and facilities largely used by tourists and business visitors. Local authorities can determine their own percentage rates. Local authorities can also set a maximum cap of number of nights, specific areas of application, and when applicable during the year. Councils that want to introduce a visitor levy will be able to do so after they have consulted with local communities, businesses and tourism organisations. Consultation will consider the percentage charge, and if approved, there is an 18-month period of implementation while a scheme is being prepared.
- The percentage fee is only applied on accommodation charges. For example, if staying in a bed and breakfast, the fee is only charged on the accommodation portion of that stay, and wouldn’t apply for breakfast, likewise with costs for parking and more. Exemptions apply for those in receipt of disability benefits from the UK or Scottish Governments.
- Both cruise tourism and motorhomes have not been included within the current bill but there is a commitment for future discussions on both.
- For awareness, [Edinburgh have begun their 12-week public consultation period](#). The City of Edinburgh council are proposing to charge a levy of 5% on overnight stays for a maximum of seven nights. If adopted, the first visitor levies are proposed to be collected from summer 2026 – by financial year 2028/29, forecasted income from a 5% visitor levy in Edinburgh is between £45 and £50 million.

Questions

Brown Tourist Signs:

- The conversation regarding brown tourist signs is currently with Transport Scotland. Over the next month, the [VisitScotland page on brown signs](#) will be updated. I will provide an update when this becomes available.

International Visitors for Golf:

- A request has been put in for this information and I will provide an update when I hear back.

Community and local area Wi-Fi:

- I appreciate this conversation changed to look at mobile reception but I thought I would highlight examples of Wi-Fi being provided in other Scottish towns and villages. There are various examples, such as [High-Fi for Portree](#), [outdoor public Wi-Fi across towns in Renfrewshire](#) and across [Perth and Kinross](#).”

5. Update by Linn Williamson, Fife Council

- LoveFife Spots will be rolled out over the next few months, final preparations are now being put in place with information being prepared for venues and training being delivered. It is hoped this will help plug the gap left by the VisitScotland I.Centre Closures.
- [Outdoor Activity Week 28th Sept –6th Oct](#)
- Food and Drink Week March 8th-16th 2025
- Fife Business Week – [Showcase events](#) please sign up to come along and showcase your business or to network with other local businesses
- New [events calendar](#) for businesses added to website to enable business to quickly look at upcoming strategic events in Fife \ across Scotland and any training \ meetings for business
- Women's Open was a great success visitor numbers TBC no news on Men's Open as yet
- STL Update –still some to be approved from the main batch last September. Further updates will follow shortly. Amendments to legislation have been made by Scottish Gov and again news on this will follow as to what it will mean in terms of process shortly.
 - Current East Neuk Licenses \ applications (data available from public register)
 - Anstruther – 91
 - Cellardyke – 84
 - Crail – 111
 - Elie and Earsferry – 159
 - Pittenweem – 80
 - St Monans – 65
 - Kilrenny - 11
- Business Efficiency Grants – Around £380,000 allocated to projects across Fife ranging from £1500 projects to £20K. Total of 38 business supported across the region in the tourism grant, with 12 in the East Neuk. Additional business have been supported through Town Centre and Ec Dev teams.
- Up coming Activity
 - Travel Trade focus over the next few months
 - Stage 1 training through [Tay Country](#)
 - Fam trip around North East Fife 29th-1st October x13 buyers
 - Stage 2 training being offered to 14 businesses

6. Update from EI

- EI joined the Welcome to Fife team 2 months ago.
- She has a background in sustainability and destination development
- She is currently working on the Welcome to Fife Climate Action Plan as well as supporting Linn on business engagement.
- In April 2025 there will be a spotlight on the East Neuk in the Industry Newsletter.

7. New Project

- Deadline to apply for next grant of £ 4000 is 31 October

- We can only apply for a new project - any cost for reprinting the Z fold maps will need to be met from existing budget.
- A few suggestions:
 - Produce video content for business use - see Levenmouth activity as an example: [Welcome to Levenmouth Marketing Campaign Toolkit - Welcome to Fife For Industry](#)
 - Promote food and drink in the East Neuk
 - Create offline signage for food and drink businesses in the East Neuk
 - Promote retail/ local crafts in the East Neuk
 - Promote Wild Swimming

Action: Linn will speak to her colleagues at Fife Food & Drink to see what activities they have planned

Action: Any other suggestions to be forwarded to Linn asap

8. Round Table

- **Elie Seaside Saunas** have now opened its [Cellardyke Seaside Sauna](#), currently offering individual seats at the weekend.
- **Crail Museum** is fundraising for the restoration of a painting of Crail Harbour by David Martin: [Crail Museum - Crowdfunding](#)
- 2 big conferences are coming to St Andrews – **Responsible Seafood Summit**, 21-24 October at the Fairmont and the **Global Wellness Summit**, 4-7 November at The Old Course Hotel. Welcome to Fife is able to put information on Fife into the guest rooms for the Responsible Seafood Summit, but not for the Wellness Summit.
- A discussion on the public toilet provision ensued – while there are numerous toilets within the East Neuk, they often close early during the “tourism season” and are shut over winter. Toilets are either provided by Fife Council or by Fife coast and Countryside Trust. It might be an idea to do a short and informal audit on the provision available in the main villages/towns in the East Neuk, to shape any potential discussions.
- An update from **Bowhouse** (received per email):
ADAMS Theatre Production of Rock of Ages (22nd – 26th October) <https://www.bowhousefife.com/event/bowhouse-rock-of-ages/>

East Neuk Open Studios Winter Craft Fair (2nd & 3rd November) <https://www.bowhousefife.com/event/east-neuk-open-studios-market/>

THREE-DAY BOWHOUSE CHRISTMAS MARKET (13th – 15th December) <https://www.bowhousefife.com/event/december-market-weekend/>
Our first ever evening market will be on the Friday night of the Christmas Market (2pm – 8pm)

- An update from **Kingsbarns Distillery** (received per email from Andrea):

The **Ambassador Club** is a recent Kingsbarns Distillery initiative, designed to give **customer-facing staff** in Fife’s hospitality and tourism sectors the opportunity to experience our distillery and spirits firsthand.

The goal is to provide them with the knowledge and confidence to make informed recommendations to customers, about Kingsbarns and Darnley’s distilleries.

The main benefit for staff signing up to the Ambassador Club is **free tours!** We have posters and little cards with a QR code. We can drop these into any business who think their staff might be interested.

Please email andrea@kingsbarnsdistillery.com to find out more or request a poster.

9. Next Meeting

- Date to be agreed – likely to be in November