

East Neuk Tourism Association – meeting 30 September 2026

Crail Golfing Society

- **Welcome & Thanks** to David Roy, General Manager of the Crail Golfing Society for hosting us.
- **Apologies**
 - Damon Reynolds and Nick Frost, The Shoregate;
 - Daryl Wilson, Guide Us Breaks;
 - Sandy MacNaughton, Sand Castle Cottage
 - Diane Ireland and Julie Ireland, Kilrenny Mill Coastal Escapes
 - Brad Eggleston, Umlungu Art
- **Attendees:**

Gillian Maclaren -

• Gillian Maclaren, Chair	Pittenweem Properties
• Bill Bruce, Vice Chair	Different Voice
• Manuela Calchini, Secretary	
• David Roy	Crail Golfing Society
• David Keen	VisitScotland
• Linn Williamson	Welcome to Fife
• Thomas Innes	Anstruther Fishbar
• Lisa Kennedy	East Neuk Orchards
• Christine Torrance	Coast Lark
• David Chalmers	Stravithie
• Andy Hancock	Cellardyke Tidal Pool Ltd
• Andrea Morris	Kingsbarns Distillery
• Peigi Muir	Crail Museum
- **Minutes**, which can be found here - [East-Neuk-Minutes-15052026.pdf](#)

Proposed by Thomas Innes and seconded by Gillian Maclaren

Items to be picked up:

- Brown Signs (wtF) – the VS accreditation scheme is no longer available. However, VS will issue a letter, which can then be shared with Fife Council, who are currently looking into their own Brown Sign strategy
- Next ENTA project – see below

- **Finances**

We have now confirmed that the ENTA account has £ 6,268.51, which includes 75% (aka £ 3K0 of our next project grant for revision and reprint of the Z cards

- **Crail Golfing Society** update by David Roy, General Manager of Crail Golfing Society

- 2660 members plus a waiting list for the next 10 years
- Social media – most effective channel is You Tube and longform videos, including the Iona Stephen's video which had an audience across different platforms of up to 70million
- With income from membership fees, visitor green fees, pro shop and bar & catering, the club has an annual surplus which is reinvested into the Society
- A recent project was the driving range and in early 2027 the restaurant in the club house will receive a complete make over. Over the next 5 years the club is likely to invest around £ 4million in capital expenditure
- Next year prices will be £ 170 per round with lower price for Scottish players of £ 90.00
- Staffing remains a tricky issue as both housing and transport are challenging

- **Succession for our board**

After 3 years, most board members have decided to step down:

- Gillian to stand down as Chair
- Tim has left the West End Bar – and will stand down as treasurer
- Manuela to stand down as Secretary
- Bill has suggested that he might be happy to continue as our Vice Chair
- While the chair leads our meetings (usually 5 per year) and attends the Industry Leadership meetings (mostly online), the vice chair supports and the secretary deals with the admin around meetings plus the occasional email and FB activity.
- Next year will see important discussions around the STL licence and the visitor levy
- We have also been very successful in terms of applying for Welcome to Fife project grants and are currently working on printing another batch of Z cards.

ACTION: We will issue job descriptions in advance of our next meeting

- **Z card maps** – setting up a new short-lived project group

- Once again successful in our application to Welcome to Fife for a project grant
- This is number 4 and we are grateful for the support we receive from WtF
- £ 4000 – so we could order a lot of maps or we could order fewer and undertake some changes
- We could potentially also increase the print run by using our own funds
- Bill has agreed to chair the steering group and Andy has volunteered.
ACTION: other volunteers are still being sought for this short-lived project group
- Thanks to Welcome to Fife, Direct Distribution will ensure dispersal of z cards to Love Fife I Points

ACTION for all: Daryl's business is now a Love Fife I Point and has asked that businesses get in touch to have the brochures/leaflets displayed.

- **Updates from David Keen, VisitScotland**

Climate Accelerator Programme

The [Climate Accelerator Programme](#) is a free tool to support businesses kick-start their journey towards net zero. It is targeted at businesses at the beginning of their journey, or underway, and in need of support in developing a climate action plan. Expert support and guidance will be delivered both in-person and online over the course of six weeks. The programme is free and sign ups are very welcome. Spaces are available in upcoming cohorts starting on a monthly basis from October to February, with an events-specific cohort in January. [Sign up is available by clicking here.](#)

Domestic Sentiment Tracker

The Domestic Sentiment Tracker is a UK consumer survey monitoring travel behaviours and holiday intentions conducted between VisitScotland, VisitEngland and Visit Wales. It provides the tourism industry with insights into booking habits and the impact of economic factors on travel plans. The latest research was conducted to determine trip intentions for July to December 2026.

- **Cost-of-Living & Financial Barriers**

The cost-of-living crisis continues to heavily influence travel decisions, with 22% of respondents reporting being "hit hard" financially and 45% managing but being careful. These budget constraints are impacting 53% of UK travellers' short breaks; rather than cancelling trips entirely, people are electing to cut back on accommodation and dining out.

- **Declining Travel Intentions**

Overall domestic travel demand has softened, with overnight trip intentions for the latter half of the year dropping to 65% (down from 68% in the same period last year). Intentions to visit Scotland specifically decreased from 14% to 11%, placing it fourth behind the South West, London, and the North West. Booking confidence also remains slow, as only 31% of those intending to visit Scotland have locked in their plans.

- **Destination & Demographic Preferences**

The Highlands remain the top hotspot, favoured by 37% of Scottish residents, while Edinburgh and Glasgow continue to pull in non-Scottish autumn visitors. From a demographic standpoint, "older independents" (adults aged 35–64 without children) are currently the most reliable group planning trips to Scotland, whereas interest from younger independents has slowed down.

- **Growth in Festival & Event Travel**

On a positive note, event tourism remains a massive driver, with over 50% of travellers planning their UK trips around specific festivals or events. Enthusiasm for Scottish events is particularly strong, as 92% of Scottish residents and 76% of non-Scottish residents state they would travel to Scotland for an appealing event.

The next formal tracker report is scheduled for release in November 2026. Full information on the Sentiment Tracker, and previous statistics, can be found here: [Domestic Sentiment Tracker | VisitScotland.org](#).

VisitScotland Connect 2027

VisitScotland Connect is Scotland's flagship travel trade event, designed as a two-day business workshop that pairs trade-ready Scottish tourism businesses with domestic and global travel buyers. Operating in a highly targeted, quick-fire format of short meetings, it gives local

suppliers a direct platform to secure their place in international travel itineraries sold worldwide.

The 2027 event is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 14 and Thursday 15 April 2027, again at the Scottish Event Campus (SEC) in Glasgow. Registration for both buyers and suppliers is currently open, with the event expected to facilitate around 7,000 pre-arranged, one-to-one appointments alongside a program of nationwide familiarisation trips for global distribution partners. More information is available here: [VisitScotland Connect | VisitScotland.org](#).

VisitScotland Map and Google Business Listings

I just wanted to share a quick reminder to have a look at the VisitScotland map which has taken the place of VisitScotland's Business Listings. The new interactive map offers a much more intuitive experience for travellers planning their trips. The map feature means businesses no longer need to maintain a separate portal profile, instead, it pulls live data directly from Google and gives visitors direct links to official websites and booking links. To make sure you don't miss out on this traffic, please ensure your Google Business Profile remains up-to-date. More information and guidance is available here: [Optimising a Google Business Profile | VisitScotland Business Support](#).

VisitScotland Business Support Hub

If you haven't already explored it, the Business Support Hub is a free digital platform designed to help Scottish tourism and event businesses operate and grow sustainably. The hub acts as a one-stop shop offering:

- Tailored Sector Advice: Specialised resources for sectors ranging from outdoor activities to food, drink, and hospitality.
- Market Insights: Expert evidence-based articles and video tools explaining how to meet changing customer expectations and improve accessibility.
- Learning and Development: Opportunities to join online and in-person training, webinars, workshops and events are listed on the Hub, alongside lots of detail and information that can be explored in your own time.

Whether you need a quick template for a climate action plan, tips on working with online travel agents (OTAs), or information on upcoming networking workshops, everything is completely free to access. The Business Support Hub can be accessed here: [VisitScotland Business Support Hub | VisitScotland Business Support](#)

- **Update from Linn Williamson, Welcome to Fife**

Fife Five (new Fife food & drink pledge)

The Fife Five is an exciting new initiative launching on Mon 28th Sept encourage businesses to pledge to using, serving and/or selling at least five locally sourced products on their shelves and menus. Businesses are encouraged to find out more and take the pledge here [FIFE FIVE FOOD PLEDGE - Welcome to Fife For Industry](#)

We will also be developing a toolkit and some assets for you to use within your business which will be available following the launch event.

Travel Trade

Fam trip planned across Fife for the 22nd and 23rd September, visiting Heartlands, North Fife, St Andrews and East Neuk. Visiting 11 businesses and space for 10 others to network at networking lunch on the 23rd September (Travel trade ready businesses only).

Training will be delivered for existing travel trade ready businesses and also for businesses looking to work within the trade. If you are interested please contact linn.williamson@fife.gov.uk

Further details on upcoming training and opportunities will follow shortly.

VisitScotland Connect Open for applications 14th and 15th April 2027. Please contact Linn prior to booking a place so we can support where we can.

Visitor Levy

A paper will be taken to cabinet committee in October to make a decision on whether to progress with visitor levy. The decision has been delayed due to changes in the legislation at Scottish Government level to allow for Flat Fee option and other amendments. Further details to follow in October.

If the decision is to progress then a mandatory 12 week consultation will then take place to gain further feedback on the proposed scheme and final decision. Should a mandatory consultation be the next step please ensure you engage with the consultation as your opinion matters.

For more information on the work around the Visitor Levy, please visit

[Fife Visitor Levy - Welcome to Fife For Industry](#)

Short Term Let

Temporary exemptions are open until the 4th October for the Open 2027. Please note those with a current STL Licence do not need to apply for a temporary Licence.

Renewals – the STL team are now starting to send out 6 month reminder messages to owners to ensure they have applied for their new licence in time. Please do not delay in getting your new licence if you wish to continue operating without disruption.

Owners \ property managers are reminded that ALL marketing material printed or online should have your STL number on it. This includes all online websites and should be clearly obvious to find. This is part of your licence conditions.

Welcome to Fife Events

Fife Business Week – Fife Tourism Showcase, Wednesday 4th November 9am-12.30pm, Dean Park Hotel. [Fife Business Week - Tourism Showcase 2026 - Welcome to Fife For Industry](#)

Places are now very limited and a waitlist will be started once fully booked.

Fife Events Strategy \ Strategic Events Fund

A third round of funding will open on the 1st October until 27th November. This round of funding will be for events taking place between 1st Feb-30th April 2027. Please note events must fit with the strategic events criteria. - [Event Planning & Support - Welcome to Fife For Industry](#)

Events Strategy – we are now working with Events Scotland developing our Fife events strategy. Fife will be the first destination to work with EventsScotland in this way.

Marketing Activity

New destination campaign (Oct 2026)

Our new ‘Feel full of Fife’ marketing campaign is due to go live in October with new hero film content, a social media and STV campaign. To help businesses get fully behind the campaign and be more involved there will be a toolkit and creative assets you can use, in addition to a webinar later in the year with our agency Think ALT.

The Open

Golf Monthly campaign (Sept /Oct 2026)

We have agreed a digital and print content partnership with Golf Monthly magazine to promote The Open in St Andrews 2027 with Golf + messaging, encouraging visitors to stay longer and explore the region.

Royal Birkdale

We attended Royal Birkdale in July 2026 with Tay Country Partners to highlight the Open in 2027.

Partner landing page from Royal Birkdale: www.standrews2027.com

St Andrew 2027 Z-cards distributed and available to promote the wider area

The Open St Andrews 2027 microsite

In addition our own micro-site for The Open St Andrews 2027 is now complete including a competition to win a stay and tickets for the Sat & Sun:

www.theopenstandrews2027.com

Business are reminded to ensure they add and update their Welcome to Fife listings. Especially accommodation providers as new sections have been added to the website to allow filter search for those searching for accommodation for The Open 2027. The new fields include price range, suitability and availability. [Open Accommodation](#)

We will be working across Fife council with colleagues on the Open and further communications will be available in due course.

Paid social media campaign (Sept 2026)

This month between 14-30 Sept we will also be running a paid social media campaign to promote our new The Open St Andrews 2027 microsite as well as the competition to encourage bookings and provide inspiration for things to see and do while visiting Fife.

New cycling routes collection

We have been working with Markus Stitz from Bike Packing Scotland on new cycling content and now have a great resource on Komoot

<https://www.komoot.com/user/welcometofife> which includes lots of routes across the Kingdom, including his new circular route [Fife Trails | Welcome to Fife](#) as well as established ones. Several of the routes also feature in his book, Gravel Rides Edinburgh, Fife & the Lothians.

Free Online Training Tool

Fife businesses can now access a free online training portal offering flexible, self-paced learning to support staff development and compliance. Delivered by Fife Council, the portal includes essential training such as health and safety, food safety and fire safety, alongside a bespoke Welcome to Fife customer service course for tourism and hospitality businesses.

The platform is designed to be easy to use, allowing staff to complete courses at times that suit the business, with digital certificates provided on completion. Places are limited, with licences available until December 2026.

Businesses are encouraged to register early to benefit from this support.

[Free Online Training Portal Opens for Fife Businesses - Welcome to Fife For Industry](#)

North Fife Businesses: Access Up to £5,000 for Skills Development

Businesses across St Andrews, the East Neuk and North Fife can benefit from the Tay Cities SME Skills Fund, offering grants of up to £5,000 to help upskill or reskill employees through tailored training programmes.

Whether you're in tourism, hospitality, retail, food & drink, or another sector, this is a great opportunity to invest in your team, address skills gaps, and support future business growth. The fund is available to eligible SMEs with fewer than 250 employees and includes a free training needs analysis to identify the right development opportunities for your business.

Find out more and apply via Fife College:

<https://www.fife.ac.uk/busine.../tay-cities-sme-skills-fund/>

Culture of Enterprise – Celia Sinclair

*I wanted to get in touch to share information about our Meet the Business programme, delivered through **Culture of Enterprise**. Through a range of engaging*

enterprise programmes for primary and secondary schools across Fife, we are committed to strengthening links between education and industry.

The Meet the Business Programme is a fantastic opportunity for businesses across Fife to raise their profile, inspire the next generation of talent, and engage directly with young people in schools. By getting involved, businesses can showcase their organisation and highlight the career opportunities available within their sector.

The programme also provides an opportunity to strengthen links with education, promote your industry, and help shape Fife's future workforce. The attached flyer provides further detail.

*Please get in touch or sign up using the link provided to be part of this initiative:
Meet the Business Form*

[Help Inspire the Next Generation of Tourism Talent in Fife - Welcome to Fife For Industry](#)

Reminder

- **There may be a number of opportunities available to you please respond to opportunities ASAP to avoid disappointment**
 - **Check, add and update your [FREE Welcome to Fife business listing](#)**
 - **Follow [Welcome to Fife for Industry on Facebook](#) and [Welcome to Fife: Posts | LinkedIn](#) for the latest business update and opportunities**
 - **[Join our monthly newsletter](#)**
 - **Follow our Welcome to Fife destination socials, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and LinkedIn**
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- **AOB and Summer update**

We welcomed a new business to our group – Coast Lark, Christine Torrance works out of ST Andrews, but as her business offers adventures (hiking, swimming, beachcombing and outdoor crafting) around the coast, she is frequently in the East Neuk.

Find out more here: www.coastlark.co.uk

- **Cellardyke Pool** reported that the renovation work has progressed well and the last big item will be the installation of a disability ramp. Engaging with Planning at Fife Council can be challenging. Cellardyke and the other pools in the East Neuk are looking to work together on a visitor proposal around visiting all 4 pools
- **Kingsbarns Distillery** are reporting another good year, though business has shifted somewhat from coach tours to corporate events, which is helped by both the University and the Fairmont. US golfers are a great market segment as they are higher spenders on tours & tastings, though their spend in the shop is not quite so buoyant. Kingsbarns are looking to releasing new whiskies including a 10 year old. The Putting Green is increasing dwell time with a positive knock on effect on the Café

- **Crail Museum** are also reporting a good year with increased footfall, mainly from tour buses. 2028 will see the 50th anniversary of the museum and planning for celebrations is now underway . There will be an exhibition on Toys and Games, featuring old favourites such as Tiddliwinks. The museum is still working on the restoration of the seaboxes, a form of “friendly society” for fisherfolk and their families
- **Anstruther Fish Bar** had a good summer, though footfall was slightly down. This is probably due to a number of factors including the cost of living and the parking restriction due to the RNLI work. This is an ongoing concern for Anstruther businesses and locals, as the works are likely to be extended by at least 26 weeks!
- **East Neuk Orchards** - the apple harvest is looking good. In terms of their Holiday let business, they reported that their larger property is not as fully booked as the smaller cottages. They are not quite sure what has caused this. **Pittenweem Properties** report a similar pattern with smaller units doing better
- **Kilrenny Mill Coastal Escapes** (in absentia): “Extremely busy with guests visiting from both overseas and from UK. Mainly for golf, also taking in various local attractions, many restaurants and exploring our East Neuk villages, St.Andrews and Edinburgh”

- **AoB**

Events:

East Neuk Open Studios (ENOS) - Bowhouse Winter Market - Sat 7th & Sun 8th November
10am till 4pm. Over 45 artists, creators and makers from the East Neuk and beyond, under one roof for the weekend.

East Neuk Knit – 27 & 28th November at Bowhouse, tickets available now

- **Our next meeting & AGM will be in November – exact date and location to be confirmed**