

WELCOME TO FIFE REVIEW 2025



THE RHYND, WINE SAFARI

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INTRODUCTION

This briefing outlines the progress of the Fife Tourism Strategy (2023–2030), and highlights key activities delivered by the Welcome to Fife team in 2025.

Structured around the strategic aims of Place, People, Businesses, and Sustainable Tourism, it demonstrates the team's added value and positive impact on Fife's tourism sector.

Fife Tourism Strategy - [Strategy](#) - [Welcome to Fife For Industry](#).

For any questions or queries, please contact Welcome to Fife team on Promoting.Fife@Fife.gov.uk



PLACE

OVERVIEW OF TOURISM IN FIFE

The STEAM figures for January – December 2024 provides an overview of the volume and value of tourism in Fife.

- Total Economic Impact – £817 million (+7%)
- Total Visitor Numbers – 4.4 million visitors (+24%)
- Total Visitor Days – 8.6 million days (+8%)

Despite seeing a decrease of 5% in visitor days in serviced accommodation, there was an increase of 46.4% in visitor numbers. For the non-serviced accommodation, Fife has seen an increase of 12% visitor days, and an increase of 22% in visitor numbers. In 2024.

The overall large increase in visitor numbers is partly due to a change in dataset, adding in many AirBnB type properties who are now on the Short Term Let Licensing register.

These figures would suggest that people still want to take holidays, but are perhaps choosing self-catering accommodation that offers more value than hotels, and shorter breaks. This is something to be mindful of as nationally visitor numbers to attractions are falling, demonstrating that people perhaps don't have as much disposable income to spend on leisure breaks. However, at the other end of the spectrum the luxury market is thriving.

MARKETING AND CAMPAIGNS

THE KINGDOM. WHERE IT ALL BEGINS

“The Kingdom. Where It All Begins”: was this year in a position to compare the 2 campaign years with a year-on-year comparison. The campaign totalled 8.33 million impressions, with £313,830 gross bookings to Fife. The second year of the campaign had an 11,380 increase in video views totalling at 854,151. We had 40,909 clicks through to the landing page, indicating potential visitors looking for more information on Fife.

With printed features in both Nat Geo as well as Food & Travel magazine, articles views increased by 112% from 16,833 to 35,808, and they collectively delivered a 19% increase in clicks on their online articles. TripAdvisor Economic Impact increased by £93,256 compared to last year, and they reported a 59% uplift in bookings for Fife. Expedia reported confirmed bookings increased by 23.8%, searches for Fife increased by 23%, and room nights increased by 11.7%.



NEWSQUEST PROMOTION

A 9-month campaign with Newsquest (publisher of The Herald) focusing on Dunfermline as the ideal city break destination. Promotion includes monthly print adverts along with a series of promoted online articles, plus social media and digital advertising. The social media campaign generated 156,000 impressions and an impressive 10.93% click-through rate.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Simplicity started managing the planned Welcome to Fife social media content across Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and YouTube.

In 2025, we have continued to develop and grow our social media content and following, reaching new audiences through organic and paid activity. All profiles have seen an increase in followers and engagement with content.

WORKING WITH INFLUENCERS

Our influencer activity featured collaborations with Scottish creators [Charming Wanders](#) (304k followers) and [Highlands2Hammocks](#) (71.1k), who produced engaging, on-the-ground content showcasing the Heartlands of Fife and some lesser-known highlights. These campaigns generated views of more than 300,000 and helped us reach new audiences through authentic, first-hand storytelling.



CRAIGTOUN GOLD COURSE (THE DUKES COURSE)

GOLF IN FIFE

A new Golf in Fife section was launched on the Welcome to Fife website, providing comprehensive information on Fife's 50 golf courses, a suite of itineraries, tour operator listings, news, interviews, and a history and timeline of the 'Home of Golf'. Since going live earlier this year, the golf pages have consistently ranked among the site's most-viewed content.

To promote the new golf section, we partnered with Bunkered magazine on a dedicated content campaign including an 8-page supplement, online content and digital display ads reaching 35,000 readers and generating 305,245 impressions. We also produced an inspirational new golf video featuring Iona Stephen, former professional golfer, presenter, and Sky Sports broadcaster - [Welcome to Fife. 50 courses. One legend destination.](#)

DESTINATIONS DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE



LOVEFIFE POINTS

Following the closure of the VisitScotland iCentre in St Andrews, in January, Welcome to Fife has worked in partnership with businesses and organisations to create LoveFife information points in key locations across the area. There are now points in St Andrews (at 5 locations), Kirkcaldy Galleries, Cupar Library, Crail Heritage Museum, Lochore Meadows and Dunfermline Carnegie Library and Galleries. New locations will be added to this portfolio during 2026.

LoveFife bollard covers have now been added outside DCLG

DESTINATION TOURISM ACTION PLANS

Progress continues to be made on the Dunfermline Tourism Action Plan. This is a multi-stakeholder plan and Welcome to Fife progress includes: The introduction of the [Dunfermline Discover Trails](#) website, introduction of the Dunfermline Cycling Guide, [Cycling Around Dunfermline](#), partnership working with Fife Coast and Countryside Trust to launch the [Pilgrim Passport](#) for the Pilgrim Way, Dunfermline specific travel trade familiarisation trip, Coach Friendly accreditation, destination specific marketing campaign.

COACH FRIENDLY CITY

Coach Friendly Accreditation recognises destinations that truly value the contribution of coaches to local economies and the environment. Welcome to Fife was delighted to work towards Dunfermline being only the third destination in Scotland to be awarded Coach Friendly Accreditation, and continues to work with destinations to ensure they have the necessary infrastructure and information available to attract coach travel.



COACHFRIENDLY ACCREDITATION DUNFERMLINE

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AND EXPERIECES

DUNFERMLINE TRAILS

3 [Dunfermline Discovery Trails](#) were launched in June 2025, showcasing the unique blend of history, culture, and natural beauty that Dunfermline has to offer and encourage people to spend more time in the city.

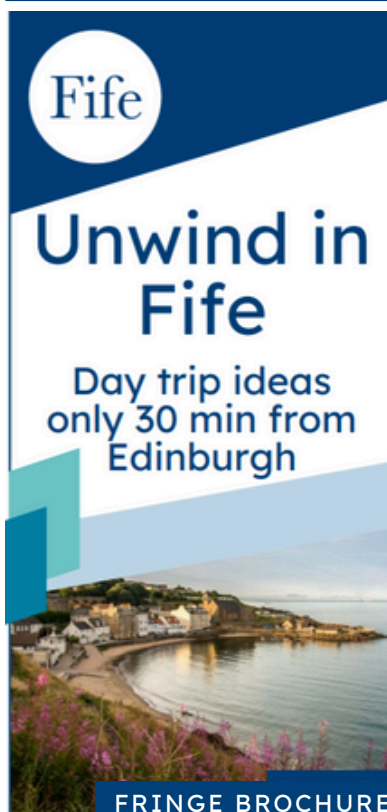
A new [E-Guide to Cycling Around Dunfermline](#) has been launched to encourage more people to explore the city and its surroundings by bike, with 16 different routes which all start and finish at Pittencrieff Park.

CRUISE TOURISM

In 2025, there were 26 cruise days at Rosyth and 24 are listed for 2026 although this may increase as calls are diverted to Rosyth during the season. Cruise Forth continues to have volunteers present to direct and give information to cruise passengers, operate the shuttle bus from the port to Dunfermline, and it works with businesses to help them be included on shore excursion itineraries and maximise the benefits of the cruise market.

FILM AND SCREEN TOURISM

Fife's popularity as a filming location has continued with productions such as Outlander, Karen Pirie and Jack of Spades (new Joel Coen film) filming in the area. The impact of filming is being felt in Culross which is often used as a location, and we are working with the Community Council to find solutions to this.



EDINBURGH FRINGE ENGAGEMENT

During the Edinburgh Fringe 250 leaflets on activities to help performers unwind in Kirkcaldy and Levenmouth were added to the Fringe Artist Welcome packs from the Edinburgh Fringe Team, and also made available to artists at unwind sessions.

A collaboration between Edinburgh Fringe Artist Services and Welcome to Fife has seen the development of an Accommodation Provider Business Toolkit, providing businesses with information on how to list their business on the Fringe booking platform for artists.

A report has been commissioned to explore the cultural potential of Kirkcaldy and Levenmouth and to look at potential links with the area and the Edinburgh Festivals for warm up performances and 'beyond the Fringe' activity. The report is due to be completed by the end of the year.



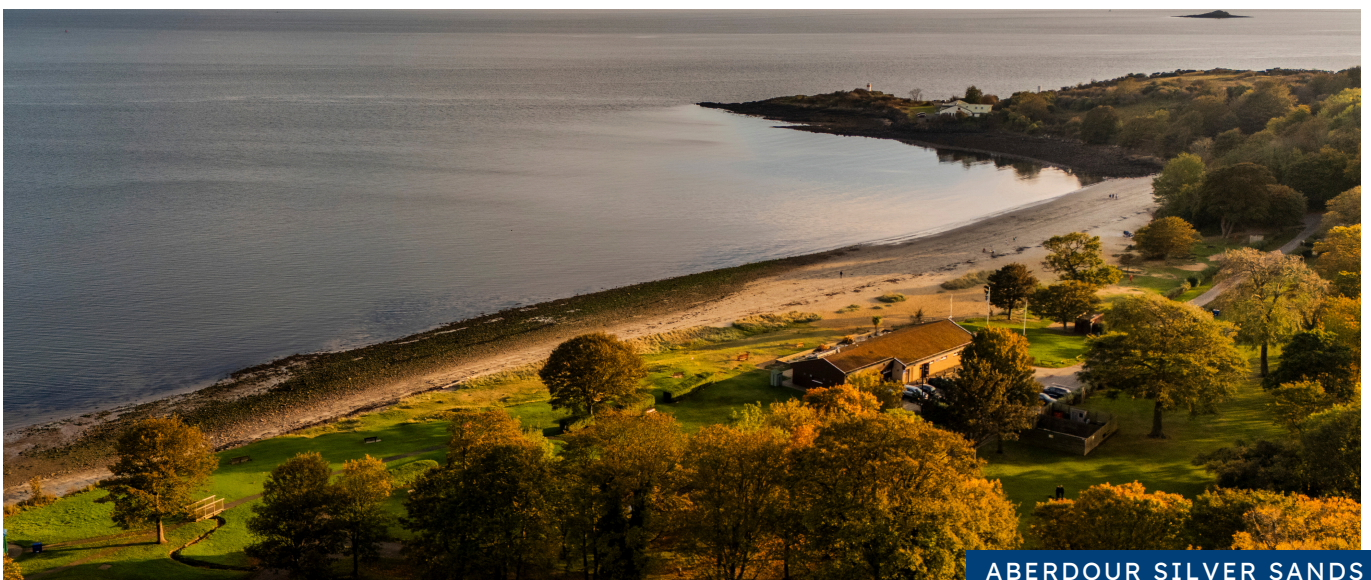
FORTH BRIDGE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The UNESCO Management Plan for the Forth Bridge is being reviewed and updated. The online consultation is currently [live](#), and drop-in sessions will be held early in 2026. The [Forth Bridges Trail](#) signage programme was completed earlier this year.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND HERITAGE INITIATIVES

Key projects included:

- Fife Council was awarded £750,000 from VisitScotland's Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund to make improvements to the infrastructure at Aberdour Silver Sands. This was supplemented by £400,000 from the Place Based Investment Fund and £150,000 from UKSPF. This will allow improvements to the car park, enhanced facilities for motor homes, and an upgrade of the toilets, including the inclusion of a changing places toilet. Completion is due in spring 2026.
- Enhancing visitor messaging at bus stations.
- Addressing parking issues in Culross and Anstruther.



EVENTS AND VENUES

EVENTS

- A report has been commissioned to look at the economic potential of the events sector in Fife, both by ensuring that current events are sustainable and provide positive economic impact, and to look at how we can attract more major events to the area, and the infrastructure and investment required. The findings of this report will help to inform a new events strategy which is in development. The report is due to be finalised before the end of the year.
- In 2025 the Fife Strategic Events Fund awarded grant funding to 11 events, totalling over £34,000.
- Early-stage MICE (meetings, incentives, conference and events) activity has focused on positioning Fife as a business events destination. Engagement with local venues and partners has clarified the MICE offer and strengthened alignment with national priorities, establishing a foundation to attract smaller to mid-scale and off-season events that deliver higher-value, year-round economic impact.

PEOPLE

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT

The Council's Town Centres team is developing an online training portal for businesses which will include a bespoke module on customer service which has been created specifically for Fife based tourism and hospitality businesses.



VISITSCOTLAND DIGITAL MEDIA LIBRARY RESOURCE

ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE TOURISM

VisitScotland hosted the Accessible Tay Country Destination Programme, comprising 2 webinars, and 2 in-person events (one in Dundee and one in Perth). The sessions covered; Unlocking the potential of inclusive marketing, inclusive facilities & features, and Welcoming all customers. Recordings are available from VisitScotland

BUSINESSES

SUPPORT

SUPPORTING BUSINESS GROWTH - GRANT FUNDING

Welcome to Fife awarded grant funding for businesses under three categories:

- Digital Efficiency Grant - UKSPF grant supporting 15 businesses to generate efficiency in the business through the introduction of digital technology.
- Green Tourism Programme - UKSPF grant supporting 15 Fully funded memberships of the Green Tourism scheme, along with 4 webinars, one in-person event, and online business resources.
- Market Development Grant - 9 grants awarded for businesses to attend Trade Shows in 2025/26.



WELCOME TO FIFE AT CONNECT 2025

TRAVEL TRADE

Over the past year, the travel trade programme has strengthened Fife's position as a distinct and bookable destination within UK and international markets.

Attendance at VisitScotland Connect (April 2025) delivered over 80 trade appointments in two days, alongside promotion at Scottish Golf Tourism Week, while new membership of UKinbound and the Coach Tourism Association (CTA) has expanded market reach and strengthened relationships with key buyers and intermediaries.

A Fife familiarisation trip has supported itinerary development and buyer confidence, with experiences being featured, tested or actively considered within new and refreshed programmes. Trade-ready content and imagery have been developed, supporting consistent destination messaging and future sales activity.

Collaboration with Tay Country partners and VisitScotland has enabled joined-up delivery and coordinated business support, improving business readiness and laying foundations for sustainable growth through increased spend, longer stays, wider dispersal and year-round economic benefit.

BUSINESS EVENTS

WELCOME TO FIFE BUSINESS EVENTS

Over the past year, a programme of targeted business events has been delivered to support tourism businesses across Fife. We partnered with The R&A, BID St Andrews and the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship to provide a networking evening allowing businesses to gain valuable opportunities for relationship-building, knowledge exchange and raising Fife's profile within the business events and golf tourism sectors.

We ran our first dedicated B2B familiarisation trip across North Fife enabled businesses to experience and better understand each other's products, supporting stronger referrals and itinerary development.

Our Fife Tourism Showcase event, delivered as part of Fife Business Week, brought over 80 local businesses together with partners to promote collaboration and showcase the strength and diversity of Fife's tourism offer.

COLLABORATIVE WORKING

TAY CITIES - TAY COUNTRY

The focus of Tay Country continues to be on supporting businesses to develop relationships with travel trade, Activity delivered by the Tay Country co-ordinator in 2025 included the management and maintenance of the website, database and stakeholder communications, targeted briefings to destination management companies, attendance at relevant trade shows, delivery of a travel trade ready training programme, and development of itineraries and other sales related assets.



INNER FORTH BIKE BUS

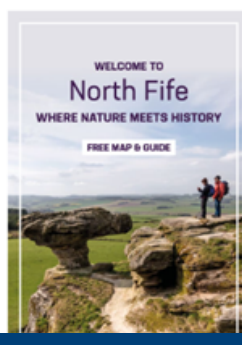
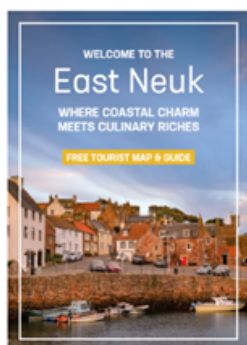
EDINBURGH AND SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND (ESES) REGION

Four strands under the visitor economy theme have been developed, with feasibility studies for each one – data, culture, cycling and cruise. The cruise project is the most developed, with the publication of a cruise management plan and association action plan. Emerging projects include a cruise readiness programme for businesses, and the appointment of a Regional Cruise Officer which may happen in 2026 if funding can be secured.

LOCAL TOURISM ASSOCIATIONS (LTAs)

Local Tourism Associations can apply for grants to help with locally based tourism projects. Over the past year grant funding has assisted the LTAs in the following ways:

- 5 of the 6 LTAs now have printed 'z cards' for visitors, containing a map and guide to things to do in the area.
- Photography, website management and content creation (Dunfermline and East Neuk).
- Social media training for businesses (East Neuk).
- Dog friendly campaign and dog wash to be installed at Lochore Meadows (Heartlands).
- Planters in parks and outdoor exhibition kit including gazebo and feather flags (Heartlands).
- St Andrews winter festival.



FIFE LOCAL TOURISM ASSOCIATION Z-CARDS

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM



FIFE TOURISM CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

In accordance with the Glasgow Declaration, which Welcome to Fife became a signatory of in 2025, and sets out the first stage of the climate actions for the tourism sector in Fife.

Each of the 6 actions are aligned to the Glasgow Declaration pathways: Measure, Decarbonise, Regenerate, Collaborate, and Finance, and underscoring the priorities of the Fife Tourism Strategy; Place, People and Businesses and the Climate 2024 Fife Strategy & Action Plans 3 Big Moves; Energy, Resilience and Community.

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM WEBPAGE

The Welcome to Fife industry webpage has been updated collating the information under the Responsible Tourism heading, and sign-posting to relevant partners and relevant organisations.

PROMOTING OFF-SEASON TOURISM

Fife Food and Drink Week and Outdoors Activity Week bolstered visitor numbers during quieter months (March and September respectively). Businesses reported increased sales and engagement, with 94% planning to participate again. 25 businesses and organisations took part in Fife Outdoor Activities Week with 41 events offered. 18 businesses took part in Fife Food & Drink Week, offering 20 events.

FIFE TRANSIENT VISITOR LEVY

VISITOR LEVY

An Economic Advisor was appointed to manage the process of considering the introduction of a visitor levy in Fife.

Early engagement consultation was scheduled to take place from 3rd November – 19th December 2025. However, given the Scottish Government's decision to introduce new legislation to allow Local Authorities to adopt a flat fee rather than a percentage rate this consultation will be extended to the end of January 2026 with the addition of an extra question.

9 drop-in sessions were held across Fife, from 10th November - 16th December.

FIFE
VISITOR LEVY
CONSULTATION



**HAVE
YOUR
SAY**

FIFE TRANSIENT VISITOR LEVY CONSULTATION

CHALLENGES

BUSINESS RESILIENCE

Tourism and hospitality businesses continue to feel the strain of the cost of doing business, including the increase in national insurance contributions, high utilities costs, high VAT compared to other European destinations, short term let licensing, the potential for the introduction of a visitor levy, and most recently the Scottish Government's non-domestic property revaluation which will come into effect on 1 April 2026, where some tourism businesses are reporting increases in excess of 200%. The cumulative effects of this have been very challenging for businesses with some having to consider closure or make changes to their business model to save on costs.



SEATON HOUSE, ST ANDREWS

HOTEL PROVISION

There is a focus at the moment on growing the visitor economy and developing the events offering in key locations across Fife including Dunfermline, Levenmouth and Kirkcaldy. However, a lack of hotel accommodation in these areas is a barrier to growth. This is especially true for the travel trade market which looks for quality, mid-range hotels suitable for the international market. Similarly, there is limited provision for medium to large scale events and conferences, beyond utilising outdoor spaces.

FUTURE PLANS

KEY PLANS FOR 2026

- The Open 2026 at Royal Birkdale – stand sharing with VisitScotland to promote Fife and the wider Tay Country area in advance of the Open 2027 in St Andrews.
- The completion of the Aberdour Silver Sands infrastructure project, making the area more accessible and user friendly.
- The Regional Tay Country Tourism Conference taking place in Dundee on 3rd March 2026.
- Travel Trade show attendance including UKInbound and VisitScotland Connect, and media engagement through attendance at Media Getaway.
- The development of the Fife Events Strategy and revision of the Strategic Events Fund.
- Roll out and development of further LoveFife information points
- Assessment of responses to the Transient Visitor Levy early engagement consultation followed by a full Economic Impact Assessment and decision on whether or not to introduce a levy in Fife.
- Delivery of a tourism action plan for Kirkcaldy.

CONCLUSION

2025 was a very productive year in terms of realising the aims of the Fife Tourism Strategy. Concentrated work continues on developing the travel trade market and working with tour operators and destination management companies to include Fife on itineraries both for individual and group travel. We now have an increasing core of businesses who have developed products to suit this market and are reaping the benefits. Consumer marketing campaigns and product development continue to inspire target audiences and convert initial awareness raising of the destination to bookings and overnight stays. Regional working allows us to scale up activity and work with partners on key propositions on more impactful projects. The Welcome to Fife team continues to engage with businesses and other stakeholders on relationship building to ensure that we all speak about Fife in the same way, and provide the support and tools needed for the sector to thrive.

In line with the Fife Tourism Strategy, in 2026 the team will continue to build relationships with the sector locally, nationally and internationally to build on the work creating awareness of Fife and its localities, developing infrastructure and tourism products, and growing the sector in a sustainable manner. The aim is to not only increase visitor numbers, but to ensure they have a quality experience while they are here, extend the visitor season, and that communities and businesses are supported to welcome visitors in light of challenging trading conditions.