SCOTO®

PRESS PAUSE



COMMUNITY LED DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT, MANAGEMENT AND PROMOTION

KIRKCALDY, FIFE

27 November 2025



PRESS PAUSE®

KIRKCALDY, FIFE

This Press Pause ® initiative has been funded through Climate Action Fife with funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Fife Council.
SCOTO was commissioned by Fife Council to undertake five Press Pause® workshops in Kirkcaldy, and in Dunfermline, Markinch, Ceres and St Andrews for the Fife Pilgrim Way Partnership Programme

.

COMMUNITY FUND

Fife COUNCIL

CLIMATE ACTION FIFE

Funded by UK Government

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PRESS PAUSE® IN KIRKCALDY, FIFE

The Kirkcaldy Workshop took place on 27 November 2025 in Greener Kirkcaldy community building. SCOTO met with various local business and community interests. Time was taken to experience the area and explore local sites and features of interest prior to and following the workshop.

This report provides context on community led tourism and the community of Kirkcaldy and then sets out the key workshop findings. It then offers several ideas and recommendations for the short and longer term to more directly involve the community in tourism and for tourism to provide meaningful benefits to the people of Kirkcaldy.

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A: KIRKCALDY PRESS PAUSE® AT A GLANCE

Overview

This report summarises the findings of a Press Pause® workshop facilitated by SCOTO for Fife Council, funded through Climate Action Fife and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The workshop brought together local businesses, community organisations and stakeholders to reflect on how tourism currently functions in Kirkcaldy and how it could evolve through a community-led tourism model.

The central premise of the report is that tourism should be community-driven and deliver tangible local benefits, rather than simply increasing visitor numbers. Tourism should strengthen local identity, support the local economy, contribute to climate resilience and improve quality of life for residents.

Participants discussed Kirkcaldy's identity, tourism potential, and current challenges.

Key themes included:

- Local pride and identity rooted in Kirkcaldy's heritage, coastline, and cultural assets.
- A desire for tourism that supports the town rather than overwhelms it.
- Opportunities to build on existing community groups, heritage assets, and the Fife Coastal Path
- Recognition that tourism is currently underdeveloped and fragmented, with limited coordination or clear destination identity.

There was strong interest in developing experiences that highlight local stories, nature, walking routes, and community initiatives, while ensuring tourism aligns with climate action and environmental goals.

Key Insights:

1. Strong Community and Cultural Assets
Kirkcaldy has a range of assets that provide a solid foundation for visitor experiences:

- Strong heritage and cultural identity (including industrial heritage and the Adam Smith legacy)
- A coastal location and access to the Fife Coastal Path
- Active community organisations and cultural initiatives

2. Tourism is Under-Developed but Has Potential
Tourism currently plays a limited role in the local economy, with Kirkcaldy often overshadowed by nearby destinations such as St Andrews and Dunfermline. However, the town has potential to attract visitors interested in:

- heritage and culture
- coastal walking and nature
- authentic local experiences
- community-based events and activities

3. Need for Clear Destination Identity
Participants highlighted that Kirkcaldy lacks a clear tourism narrative or identity. Without a strong place story and coordinated promotion, the town struggles to position itself in the wider Fife visitor economy.

4. Opportunity for Community-Led Tourism
The workshop identified opportunities to develop tourism that:

- supports local businesses and community groups
- celebrates local culture and history
- encourages low-carbon travel and climate-conscious tourism
- reinvests visitor spending into community priorities

5. Climate Action and Sustainability
Climate action is a central theme. Tourism development should:

- reduce carbon emissions
- promote sustainable transport and local food
- increase awareness of climate issues among visitors
- build resilience to climate risks affecting tourism assets.

Overall, the report emphasises that tourism should be a tool to strengthen Kirkcaldy as a place to live first, and a destination second.

Key Recommendations:

1. Develop a Clear Destination Narrative
Create a strong, authentic story for Kirkcaldy that reflects:

- its industrial and social heritage
- Adam Smith and Enlightenment links
- coastal identity and walking routes
- contemporary cultural life

This narrative should underpin branding, visitor messaging and marketing.

2. Establish Community-Led Destination Coordination

Develop a local partnership or working group to coordinate tourism development. This group should include:

- community organisations
- local businesses
- cultural institutions
- public sector partners.

The aim is to ensure tourism development reflects local priorities and benefits the community.

3. Strengthen Visitor Experiences

Develop experiences that connect visitors with the place and its people, such as:

- heritage trails, local guiding and storytelling
- community events and festivals
- Fife Coastal Path walking experiences
- Water sports and water-based experiences
- local food and culture initiatives.

The focus should be on authentic, small-scale experiences.

4. Improve Visitor Information and Signposting

Enhance the visitor experience by improving:

- signage and orientation
- interpretation of heritage assets
- digital visitor information
- links between key attractions.

This will help visitors better understand and explore the town.

5. Promote Low-Carbon Tourism

Encourage visitors to travel and explore in sustainable ways by:

- promoting public transport access
- highlighting walking and cycling routes
- supporting sustainable tourism practices among businesses

6. Support Local Businesses

Provide support for businesses to:

- collaborate on visitor experiences
- improve sustainability practices
- participate in tourism networks and training
- benefit more directly from visitor spending.

7. Measure Community Impact

Develop simple metrics to track whether tourism is delivering real benefits, including:

- economic impact on local businesses
- community participation
- environmental outcomes
- resident perceptions of tourism.

Conclusion

Kirkcaldy has the foundations for a distinctive, community-driven tourism model, but success depends on good communications, stronger coordination, a clearer identity and a commitment to sustainability.

By prioritising local benefits, climate action and authentic visitor experiences, tourism can become a tool for community resilience and regeneration rather than simply destination marketing.



B: BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

INTRODUCING COMMUNITY LED TOURISM

Community Led Tourism isn't new. For decades many communities across Scotland and elsewhere have set up charities and social enterprises that have a visitor facing element to what they do. Examples are Heritage Centres, Highland Gatherings and local festivals. The visitor aspect is not necessarily 100% of what is on offer and equally may not be the primary driver, but the presence of visitors helps generate revenue and to support the charity or social enterprises' core purpose. Community led tourism therefore is not new but is rapidly growing in Scotland with our community empowerment legislation enabling communities to own and manage assets and have a stronger voice. Community led tourism is now being recognised as a more sustainable and responsible way of providing much needed visitor services and experiences.

What is new is the idea of communities – geographic places – reviewing how tourism is playing out in their community and seeking to be more involved to ensure the visitor economy delivers meaningful benefits that help the community tackle known issues and priorities and be an even better place to live work and visit.

Of note, SCOTO CIC undertook a 27-venue roadshow across Scotland in 2023. A key sentiment shared at every workshop was that most communities feel that tourism happens to them - rather than with them. Tourism feels like it is being imposed and although not necessarily a bad thing in itself, communities would welcome being more involved in what happens.

And as more communities across Scotland form local development trusts, take ownership of assets, and are providing visitor facing services and experiences, there is a growing sense that tourism should have the community's interests to the fore.

If managed proactively tourism can deliver many positive and lasting benefits which can help address priority issues within a community providing fair work, tackling social isolation, retaining young people, promoting local supply chains, showcasing local producers and crafters and conserving local traditions, artefacts and assets.

Community led tourism can significantly improve community cohesion by bringing community and business interests together to develop collaborative products that celebrate their individual sense of place, give visitors a meaningful experience and enhance the sense of welcome.

DEFINITIONS

What do we mean by 'community'?

Place based communities. Where people live, work and visit.

What is community led tourism?

Tourism that prioritises community involvement and meaningful local benefit.

Why is community led tourism important?

A happy place to visit must first be a happy place to live and work.

What types of community led tourism are there in Scotland?

- **Community led destination development** - resident and business interests collectively manage and promote their community as a host destination
- **Community led tourism enterprise** - social enterprises and local charities provide authentic visitor-facing services, enabling them to reinvest benefits into their local community
- **Community based policy and planning** – developers and agencies capture and respond to community perspectives and priorities in tourism decision-making
- **Business led community wealth building initiatives** - purpose-driven businesses implement initiatives which support locally defined social, environmental and economic priorities

WHAT IS SCOTO PRESS PAUSE®?

SCOTO's Press Pause® Initiative has been developed to support geographic communities in considering their community as a destination and how tourism is developed, managed and promoted. A workshop takes place which is designed to help business and community interests come together and take time to review their current situation in relation to tourism – to reflect on what is and isn't working and what could be done differently or better.

SCOTO first piloted Press Pause® with the North Highland Initiative in summer 2023 working with two communities on the North Coast 500 - Thurso and Lochcarron.

Press Pause® takes place in destination and facilitates several reflective conversations with key business and community representatives at the table.

Each workshop generates key findings which SCOTO collate and then provide recommendations on what the community can do to address identified problems and opportunities for community led tourism enterprises and initiatives that can build community cohesion. The report is then the basis for developing an activity plan and agreeing specific asks of agency and private sector partners.

WHY SCOTO PRESS PAUSE®?

An important consideration is that tourism has entered a new era. Tourism and travel choices were already changing – and this rapidly accelerated during and following the pandemic in 2020

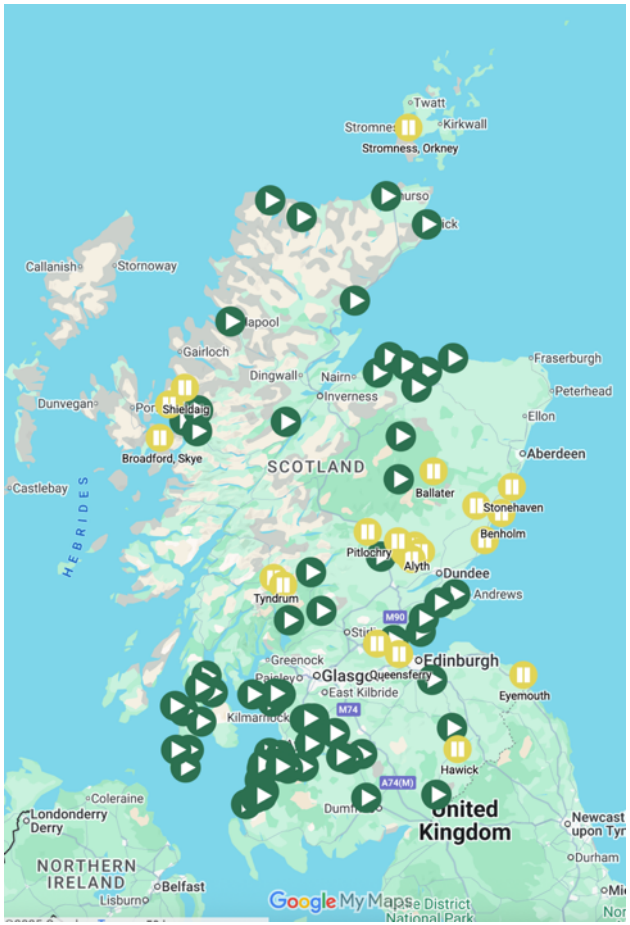
- Technology is revolutionising travel, tourism and everyday lives
- Digital content is an increasingly important source of travel inspiration
- Visitors are now seeking to slow down, meet local people, have authentic experiences
- Everyone is much more conscious of their wellbeing
- We are increasingly aware of the climate emergency and the need for individual action

Meanwhile …

- Scotland is seeking a 'wellbeing' economy and to support community wealth building
- Scottish Communities are being empowered to do more for themselves - to own assets and strengthen their voice
- Scotland is seeking 'responsible tourism for a sustainable future'

Communities are increasingly coming to the forefront of strategy and policy and are vitally important to the visitor economy. Communities are primarily where the visitor experience takes place and their role as host destinations needs nurtured. SCOTO Press Pause® seeks to help individual communities be outstanding hosts and consider what matters most to them and explore how tourism can support their wellbeing.

SCOTO PRESS PAUSE® COMMUNITIES



Map of Press Pause® Communities as of November 2025 – source www.scoto.co.uk

GLOBAL CONTEXT

In 2015 all United Nations Member States adopted the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.** This provided a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are an urgent call for action by all countries – developed and developing – in a global partnership. They recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand in hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

#SDG8 & #SDG11 are the most relevant to Community Led Tourism:

- **#SDG8 and Target 8.9** is very specific to community led tourism

Target 8.9: Promote Beneficial and Sustainable Tourism - By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.

- **#SDG11** focuses on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable







NATIONAL CONTEXT

The National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) has a vision:
*"**To create a wellbeing economy: a society that is thriving across economic, social and environmental dimensions, and that delivers prosperity for all Scotland's people and places. We aim to achieve this while respecting environmental limits, embodied by our climate and nature targets**."*

Scotland Outlook 2030 – the national tourism strategy – is seeking ***"responsible tourism for a sustainable future"***.

Responsible tourism considers four themes – reducing carbon, inclusion, biodiversity and communities.

The national strategy focuses on four priorities:

- Our passionate people
- Our thriving places
- Our diverse businesses
- Our memorable experiences

Scotland has provided the strategic context for a new way of doing tourism with communities to the fore. Press Pause ® seeks to support individual communities in considering how tourism can be a meaningful force for good locally.

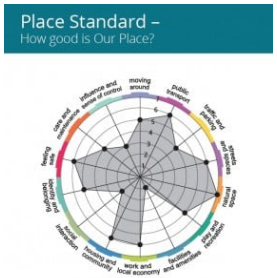


LOCAL CONTEXT

In Scotland communities have been undertaking **Community Action Planning** for many years. Community Action Planning seeks to identify the priorities that the community feel is important to them and set out how they wish to pursue their goals and aspirations. This process is ensuring that local people have a real voice and can influence the decisions which impact on their communities.

More recently **Local Place Planning** has been introduced by the **Planning (Scotland) Act 2019**, which contains a new right for communities to produce their own plans as part of the new Scottish planning system. Local Place Plans contain the community's proposals for the development and use of land and provide a new opportunity for communities to feed into the planning system with ideas and proposals.

Many communities across Scotland identify tourism and visitor management as key themes and priorities within their local community action plans and place plans. Even where tourism is not singled out as a theme or priority, tourism can often be the key to addressing some of the issues and opportunities that have been identified – tourism as a means to an end.



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C: SETTING THE SCENE

KIRKCALDY

- Kirkcaldy is a town and former royal burgh in Fife
- Kirkcaldy's origins trace back to the Bronze Age
- Kirkcaldy was first referred to in 1075
- The harbour dates from the early 16th century and the town was an important trading port
- The town developed around salt, coal mining and nail making industries
- Linoleum was the town's most successful industry
- Kirkcaldy is known as the 'Lang Toun'
- Kirkcaldy has a population of just under 50,000
- Kirkcaldy is 11 miles north of Edinburgh
- Kirkcaldy has a train station which is on the East Coast Mainline and the Fife Cricle Line



THE FIFE COASTAL PATH

The Fife Coastal Path is a 117 mile (187 km) long distance trail which follows the coastline from Kincardine on the Forth Estuary to Newburgh on the River Tay.

The Fife Coastal Path is managed by the Fife Coast and Countryside Trust and was launched in 2002 connecting North Queensferry to Tayport and then extended in 2011 and 2012. It is designated as one of Scotland's Great Trails and is typically done in 8-10 days.

Kirkcaldy is the largest settlement on the route, although it isn't promoted as one of the staging points.

An estimated 500,000 people use the path each year with roughly 35,000 walking the entire route.



SCOTLAND'S TOWNS PARTNERSHIP & UNDERSTANDING SCOTTISH PLACES - KIRKCALDY

Kirkcaldy and Dysart is listed as one of 509 towns in Scotland with the full listing here . This provides very useful socio-economic data about the town, trends and the ability to compare with other Scottish towns.

"Kirkcaldy, known as the Lang Toun, is in Fife and Dysart is the eastern extension to the town. It had a harbour and this facilitated its varied industrial development (nails, sailcloth) in the 18th and 19th centuries. Linoleum (Nairn) is what the town became best known for and flooring is still manufactured (Forbo) in Kirkcaldy. Between 1960 and 1989 Seafield colliery operated. Other manufacturing includes the paper bag factory and flour milling (Carr's). It is a major retail and service centre for the surrounding area. Dysart (St Serf's retreat) was a salt panning and coal mining settlement which traded with the Netherlands. Meat processing and soft drinks manufacturing (Archers) are present today.

Kirkcaldy has a significant inactive population and a higher proportion of single households.



The Kirkcaldy Inter-relationship diagram on the USP website.

KIRKCALDY: COMMUNITY STRUCTURES

There are three community council areas in Kirkcaldy – East, North and West - and one in Dysart. Dysart and Kirkcaldy West have active community councils, but Kirkcaldy East and North are currently inactive.

Greener Kirkcaldy was set up in 2009 as a community led charity – **to bring people together, take positive action on the climate emergency and support people through fuel poverty and food insecurity.**

Greener Kirkcaldy deliver a range of projects, events and skills training to achieve the needs and goals of local people – building resilience as a community and working towards a future where everyone can live better and tread more lightly on our planet.

Greener Kirkcaldy is based in the heart of Kirkcaldy – with a community building, training kitchen, bike shop and garden. They carry out activities across Kirkcaldy and work with partners to deliver projects across Fife.

Greener Kirkcaldy currently employ 40 staff and have around 120 regular volunteers. They are governed by a volunteer management committee, elected from their membership which is open to anyone in the Kirkcaldy area.

Greener Kirkcaldy is a member of DTAS - the Development Trusts Association Scotland.

Greener Kirkcaldy has three key values guiding all of their work:

- ***Protecting the Environment***
- ***Social Justice***
- ***Choosing our Own Goals***

Greener Kirckaldy has produced a strategic plan. The plan has four aims:

- *Strengthen key projects that support our values and vision*
- *Develop new ideas to meet the needs and aspirations of local people*
- *Broaden and deepen our community engagement*
- *Create a financially sustainable future for Greener Kirkcaldy by diversifying our funding streams*

It centres around five key themes:

- *Climate Action*
- *Energy*
- *Food and Growing*
- *Travel*
- *Community Engagement & Development*

At the time of writing there isn't a Local Place Plan for Kirkcaldy.

Greener Kirckaldy are a member of the **Kirkcaldy Partners Group** which brings groups and individuals from across the town together and which recently spearheaded the Lang Toun Festival in 2025.

This was progressed by **Love Oor Lang Toun CIC**. It was built on existing initiatives and celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Kirkcaldy Galleries. It is hoped it will become an annual event with dates confirmed for 2026.

Kirkcaldy4all operated as a BID for the town for a decade between 2010 and 2020 but opted not to pursue a third ballot and officially dissolved in 2023. In its place **Love Oor Lang Toun CIC** emerged and focuses energy on community led regeneration including the Lang Toun Festival 2025.

Earlier in 2025 a new business network was established – the **Kirkcaldy Collective** – for face-to-face networking and with over 800 members of a closed Facebook Group.

There are a notable number of community groups, charities and organisations operating within Kirkcaldy such as the Nourish Support Centre and Trust in Fife.

There are a number of environmental groups tackling specific projects including the **Dunnikier Park Development Group** and **Seafield Environmental Group CIC**.

There are three main heritage groups in Kirkcaldy:

- **Kirkcaldy Civic Society**: A charity formed in 1974 to care for the town's beauty and history, offering guided walks (including popular Halloween ghost walks) and running the "Kirkcaldy's Heritage in 50 Objects" project celebrating their golden anniversary in 2024.
- **Kirkcaldy Old Kirk Trust**: Volunteers who saved and manage the Old Kirk, a historic building, as a concert hall, heritage centre, and community space.
- **Adam Smith Global Foundation**: Dedicated to Adam Smith, Kirkcaldy's famous son, they run the Adam Smith Heritage Centre, promoting his ideas and local heritage through educational initiatives and trails.

KIRKCALDY: TOURISM STRUCTURES

Welcome to Fife is the Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO) and digital presence for the Fife area. Welcome to Fife is run by the Tourism Team within Fife Council and works with the tourism sector in Fife. It is responsible for:

- *Setting the tourism priorities for Fife*
- *Promoting and marketing Fife as a tourism destination*
- *Destination development*
- *Overseeing the delivery, monitoring and evaluation of the Fife Tourism Strategy*
- *Engaging and lobbying on behalf of the tourism sector in Fife within the national tourism context*
- *Driving the tourism economy through developing a quality product in Fife*
- *Supporting the Local Tourism Associations to help them develop new products*
- *Encouraging people working in the industry to develop their skills and to promote tourism as a positive career choice*

A new strategy for Welcome to Fife was launched in 2023 for the period up to 2030 aligning with the national strategy 'Scotland Outlook 2030'.

***FIFE TOURISM STRATEGY - OUR VISION**: By 2030 the Kingdom of Fife will be a world class visitor destination known for being a leader in sustainable tourism, and renowned for the warm welcome visitors receive. Fife will be a venue for major events, and a first-choice destination renowned for its variety of offering including stunning scenery, relaxing escapes, cultural attractions & experiences, outdoor activities, and excellent local food & drink.*



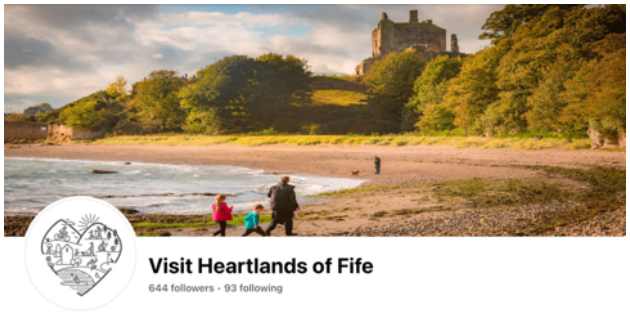
There is also a Fife Tourism Climate Action Plan, which is guided by the Glasgow Declaration, and which is explained later in this report.

At a more local level there is the Heartlands of Fife Local Tourism Association (LTA).

The group's objective is to increase visitor numbers within the area, work in collaboration to develop local tourism projects and to highlight opportunities to businesses. They are one of six groups that feeds in to Welcome to Fife.

Their Membership is open to all hospitality, leisure, and tourism businesses in the Heartlands of Fife which includes the area surrounding the Lomond Hills, the coastline from Aberdour to Wemyss (including Kirkcaldy) and Glenrothes.

The group operate a Visit the Heartlands of Fife Facebook page and a new 'z card' pocket sized leaflet has recently been produced by Welcome to Fife for the LTA area.



The Kirkcaldy Project Officer who sits in the council's communities' team is currently developing a new Kirkcaldy app to highlight what there is to see and do.

Welcome to Fife, the LTA and other partners are currently finalising a Kirkcaldy Tourism Action Plan which aims to maximise the tourism potential of Kirkcaldy, develop existing assets and capitalise on new opportunities to increase visitor numbers and raise the profile of the town. Actions will relate to raising the area's profile, ensuring a quality experience for visitors, helping build business resilience, and developing a robust events programme.

Welcome to Fife are also developing a series of 'Discovery Trails' – online guided walking tours - and the Kirkcaldy version should be launched in 2026.

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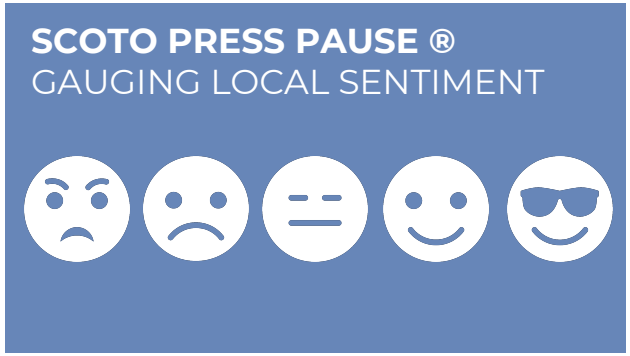
D: KIRKCALDY PRESS PAUSE® FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

10 individuals attended the SCOTO Press Pause® workshop representing a mix of business and community interests and sectoral interests including heritage, culture, events, and the environment. The workshop took place in the Greener Kirkcaldy' Community Building on East Fergus Place in the centre of town.

TOPICS EXPLORED AT THE WORKSHOP

1. Local Sentiment
2. Defining the Kirkcaldy Destination from a Visitor and a Local Perspective
3. Current Thoughts on Tourism
4. Kirkcaldy's Competitors and Comparators
5. Fife and Kirkcaldy's Visitor Profile – Past, Present and Future
6. Kirkcaldy's Destination Competency Appraisal
7. Kirkcaldy's Place Branding – USPS, POPS AND PODS
8. Measuring Tourism Impact in Kirkcaldy



1. LOCAL SENTIMENT

When asked to share their current sentiment towards tourism in the local area using emojis, there was an overall sense that tourism brings very limited benefit to the town. There were concerns that Kirkcaldy is not well portrayed. Many were neutral and others were not happy. No-one expressed a positive sentiment. However, there was a strong sense that the potential exists, and the town needs to galvanise itself - with resources like the waterfront, built heritage features, famous people and local stories, the Parks and with 35,000 walkers on the Fife Coastal Path.





2. DEFINING THE DESTINATION

When considering the geographic area to define as the 'destination' it is important to consider what makes sense as a cohesive unit to visitors, but also and arguably more importantly, what makes sense to locals.

Community Council boundaries are a good starting point in rural areas as these typically reflect old parish boundaries which responded to the local geography so made sense on the ground and reflected historic considerations.

For Kirkcaldy where there is more than one community council this is less relevant. At the workshop everyone agreed that the wider area including Burntisland, Kingshorn and Dysart on the coast as well as the town itself made most sense. This is the area covered by the Fife Council area committee and includes Wards 9, 10, 11 and 12.

The town is a hub for a lot of services but also having turned its back on the seaside will benefit from working with the more traditional seaside town neighbours and developing the coastal experience as well as the green spaces in and around the town.

3. CURRENT THOUGHTS ON TOURISM

WHATS WORKING IN KIRKCALDY?

Initial thoughts shared at the workshop:

- Footfall on the coastal path is good
- Heartlands of Fife local tourism association – market the coast and inland
- Good transport access by bus and train
- Ravenscraig castle – improved stair access
- Seafield Tower walking tour
- Strong community led activity
- Links Market – brings people (concern they don't visit thew wider town)
- Festival of Ideas (could do more)
- Views to Edinburgh and Arthur's Seat from the waterfront
- Interesting skyline of important buildings
- Lang Toun Festival - took place for the first time in 2025 and dates set for 2026
- Community climate action

WHATS NOT WORKING IN KIRKCALDY?

Initial thoughts shared at the workshop:

- Coastal path walkers aren't encouraged to stop or stay over here – Dysart seen as the destination for food and overnights
- No cohesion around the built heritage
- Ravenscraig isn't being promoted as the drawbridge is closed (dangerous)
- Seafield has private land access issues
- The coastal route is suffering from erosion
- Many shops are closed – the High Street is struggling
- Links Market – very few of the stalls are actually local so limited benefit to the town
- The visitor hub at the library has closed (was near the train station)
- Lack of accommodation in the town – big problem
- Hotel accommodation is limited in the area
- Oswald Hotel is exclusive use only
- No accommodation on the waterfront
- Lack of identity – fundamental issue especially given the history
- Not promoting Kirkcaldy for visitors – selling itself short
- Kirkcaldy isn't evolving (in the same way Burntisland has)

WHAT COULD BE DONE DIFFERENTLY OR BETTER IN KIRKCALDY?

Initial thoughts shared at the workshop:

- Focus on dwell time – giving people reasons to spend more time in the area
- Work with Google - eg add sites and images to Google maps
- Work with TikTok – individual success with it
- There are spaces from demolition on the waterfront that could be repurposed as hotel/visitor apartments
- Develop a tagline that portrays what Kirkcaldy is all about
- Focus on the waterfront experience, beach, wildlife
- Ensure Lang Toun Festival becomes an annual event

4. KIRKCALDY COMPETITORS AND COMPARATORS

A useful exercise is to consider communities/ areas that are either direct competitors and can be attracting the visitors you would like to see in your community, or comparators from elsewhere which have achieved success that you would like to see in your community.

By identifying these, time can be taken to understand what it is that is appealing to visitors that could be emulated locally. Learning exchanges to comparator communities can be very fruitful.

KIRKCALDY COMPETITORS

EAST NEUK – works as and is promoted as a unit
LEVEN – new railway connection, businesses and community are working together to better promote the area
SILVERBURN PARK – developed their campsite an eco pods. The development of the heritage features (incl. Flaxmill) is drawing people in as well as helping the local labour market.

KIRKCALDY COMPARATORS:

BURNTISLAND – ongoing regeneration of their High Street
DUMFRIES – High Street regeneration with flats and coworking spaces incorporated
HUNTLY – Community driven regeneration and repurposing of old redundant retail units
DUNFERMLINE – heritage quarter which extends the appeal of the Abbey and Robert the Bruce connections
WIGTOWN – great example of a town regenerating itself on the 'book town' theme.

5. KIRKCALDY VISITOR PROFILE

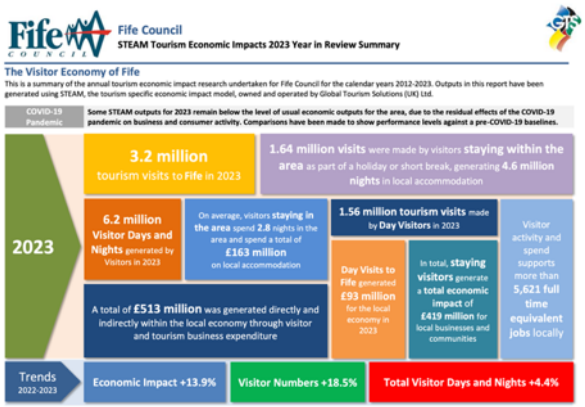
STEAM DATA

Fife Council collects STEAM data for tourism on an annual basis and at a regional level.

STEAM is a tourism economic impact modelling process which approaches the measurement of tourism from the bottom up, through its use of local supply side data and tourism performance and visitor survey data collection.

The data for 2023 states Fife

- enjoyed 3.2 million tourism visits in 2023 with 6.2 million visitor days and nights.
- STEAM data suggests half of all tourism visits were overnight.
- In 2023 tourism generated a total of £523million in the local economy which is believed to be up 43.5% on 2019 indicating tourism in Fife has more than recovered from pre-pandemic figures.



Summary of STEAM data for Fife in 2023

VISITSCOTLAND DATA

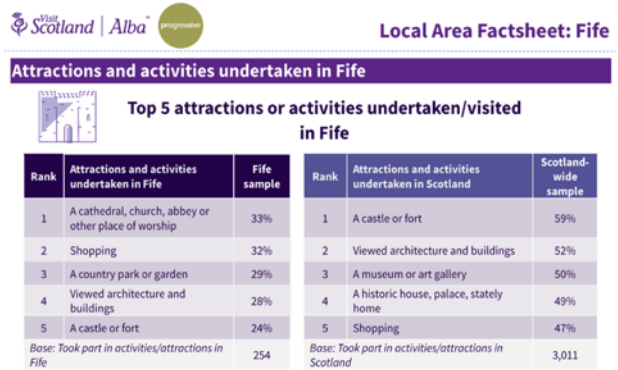
Using data from the International Passenger Survey 2024 and Great Britain Tourism Survey 2024, VisitScotland state that Fife experienced:

- 620k overnight visits
- 2.44m overnight stays
- £254m total spend
- £412 average overnight visitor spend

The VisitScotland Visitor Survey for 2023 provides data for Fife. It is not disaggregated within Fife.

2023 figures state:

- 65% of visitors are domestic (of which 19% are from Scotland) and 35% are from overseas (22% long-haul).
- 81% are repeat visits
- 84% are older independent or retirement age
- 1/3 use serviced accommodation and 2/3 are in self-catering



Rank	Attractions and activities undertaken in Fife	Fife sample
1	A cathedral, church, abbey or other place of worship	33%
2	Shopping	32%
3	A country park or garden	29%
4	Viewed architecture and buildings	28%
5	A castle or fort	24%
Base: Took part in activities/attractions in Fife		254

Rank	Attractions and activities undertaken in Scotland	Scotland-wide sample
1	A castle or fort	59%
2	Viewed architecture and buildings	52%
3	A museum or art gallery	50%
4	A historic house, palace, stately home	49%
5	Shopping	47%
Base: Took part in activities/attractions in Scotland		3,011

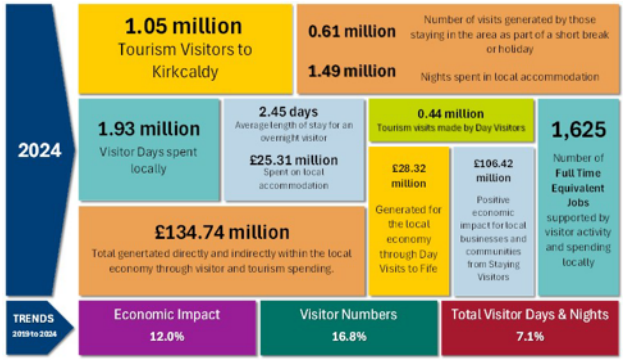
Extract from VisitScotland Visitor Survey 2023 Local Area Fact Sheet for Fife.

KIRKCALDY STEAM DATA

VisitScotland data is not broken down to a more local level, but Fife Council do receive STEAM data for Kirkcaldy.

The STEAM data for 2024 states that St Andrews

- Welcomed 1.05m visitors and 1.93m visitor days
- 54% of all visitors stayed overnight
- Tourism generated £134.74 million in economic impact which is an increase of approximately almost 50% from 2019 when economic impact was £90.11m



Summary of STEAM data for Kirkcaldy in 2024

This STEAM data suggests Kirkcaldy visitor numbers are not dissimilar to St Andrews which experienced 1.14m visitors in 2024. However, the spend per head is notably lower with St Andrews experiencing £275.6m which is almost double the spend in Kirkcaldy.

Similarly, the data suggests Kirkcaldy has 1,625 FTEs in the visitor economy whereas St Andrews has 3,462.

KIRKCALDY VISITOR PROFILE – PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

An appraisal of what participants are seeing and would like to see in Kirkcaldy revealed:

PAST

- Strong day trip market
- Retail and shopping day trips
- Nightlife and nightclubs
- Bands and concerts

PRESENT

- Notably less day trippers for shopping and nightlife
- Fife Coastal Path walkers (sole, couples and groups)
- Theatre trips

FUTURE – WHAT IS DESIRED

- Give FCP walkers reasons to dwell and spend time and money
- Cultural stopovers
- Water sports on the waterfront – wild swimming, kayaks and paddleboards, sauna cabins and wellbeing – contrast with Lochore Meadows inland water sports
- Climate friendly holidays
- Nature related activities



SCOTO PRESS PAUSE ®
APPRAISING WHAT MATTERS IN THIS COMMUNITY

6. WHAT MATTERS LOCALLY

Kirkcaldy does not currently have a Community Action Plan or a Local Place Plan. These are typically progressed by Community Councils and/or Community Development Trusts following extensive local engagement to understand what matters to local people.

A Kirkcaldy Local Community Plan has been produced and updated (a Fife Council initiative aimed at improving local communities through partnership working between public, voluntary, private sectors, and residents) and the most recent version highlights priority actions for people and place.



The three place priorities plus the people priority for local economy and skills are all directly relevant to tourism.





SCOTO PRESS PAUSE ®
APPRAISING OUR DESTINATION COMPETENCE

7. DESTINATION COMPETENCE

Being a successful destination is a function of many factors and how they interplay. SCOTO has devised a competency appraisal for geographic communities to undertake as part of the Press Pause® conversations.

Through conversation and discussion at the workshop the participants described their current offer under each of 20 criteria and then jointly rate each in terms of

- **Red – things do not work/exist.**
- **Amber – things do need improved.**
- **Green – things are functioning well.**

This rating is debated and agreed by all present and helps facilitate collective thinking and trigger ideas for improvement. It helps contextualise project ideas by stepping back and thinking first about how well the community functions as a destination and how any weaknesses can be addressed either directly or indirectly. This can trigger new projects or refine and ratify project ideas already under consideration. The results are presented and although comparisons can be made with other communities these are not league tables. They reflect local lived experience and sense of capacity and capability.

No.	DESTINATION COMPETENCY CRITERIA	CURRENT OFFER	JOINTLY AGREED RATING	IDEAS & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY TO CONSIDER
1	**Tourism Tradition**	Kirkcaldy hasn't got a tourism tradition (unlike nearby Burntisland) Kirkcaldy Links market and street fair has attracted people for decades		Develop a compelling place brand that celebrates the town's heritage and features that initially establishes it is a day trip destination from the central belt with scope to develop longer dwell time and repeat visits
2	**Sense of Place outwith the area**	Sense that few people actually will know where Kirkcaldy is, other than in Fife, and what to expect		Develop a compelling place brand that celebrates the town's heritage and features to drive day trips initially and dwell time for walkers on the coastal path
3	**Features & Attractions**	Built heritage Parks x 3 2 golf courses The promenade – not utilised The harbour – not utilised Museum Theatre Ice Rink – home to the Fife Flyers		Create a simple map of the area that profiles the main attractions, parking, toilets and walks plus service and facilities. Available online and in print at key attractions and the stations. Cross refer to the new Kirkcaldy Discovery Trails online guide being published in 2026 (Check what is planned by Welcome to Fife for the proposed new Kirkcaldy app and Discovery Trails online guide)
4	**Culture & Heritage**	Adam Smith Theatre Kirkcaldy Galleries – Museum and Library Ravenscraig Castle Seafield Tower Adam Smith birthplace The Wizard's Walk Lang Toun Partners, a group of Kirkcaldy based organisations (including Greener Kirkcaldy) are submitting an expression of interest to bid for UK Town of Culture 2028		Consider new small-scale events and bookable tours/ experiences which celebrate the town's heritage and connections Consider new ways to 'sell' the Adam Smith connection
5	**Wildlife & Nature**	Strong local asset Coast and beach Large parks and green spaces Not being promoted as a reason to travel to and explore Kirkcaldy		Review any existing walk guides and develop a new In and Around Kirkcaldy map of walks that explore the Parks, shoreline and countryside. (Check what is planned by Welcome to Fife and the proposed new Kirkcaldy app and Discovery Trails online guide) Consider walk leader training for local volunteers and develop a programme of bookable guided walks
6	**Activities & Experiences**	Bike hire is for locals only (month at a time) No water sport provision on the waterfront Kirkcaldy Parkrun meet every Saturday No tour guides or activity providers		Consider extending the bike hire to include visitor use and linked to the station Consider developing the local Parkrun to encourage visitors to travel for the weekly event and then spend time in the town

		Greener Kirkcaldy has developed a Kirkcaldy Cycle Map showing multiple routes around the town – named 'Three Parks', 'Castles and Towers', and Heritage Plaque Track'		
7	**Visitor Accommodation**	Only 2 or 3 small hotels Some Air BnBs Dean Park Hotel is in a strange location for visitor use No hostel or bunk house/budget accommodation for walkers No motorhome provision No camping provision		Consider viable options for a community run bunkhouse/hostel for Coastal Path walkers and outdoor enthusiasts – feasibility study needed and marketing plan as Kirkcaldy is not currently a stopover point Consider options for small scale camping provision for coastal walkers Consider options for small scale motorhome aire stop overs
8	**Food, Drink & Refreshments**	Decent amount and variety Not easy to find out what there is Quality can be hit or miss Good quality Japanese restaurant recently closed		Produce a simple where to eat guide with links to the businesses to check opening times, booking etc – keep under review
9	**Events & Festivals**	Feels hit and miss – nothing of scale has been developed and no regular music events Events are not as yet driving tourism Links Market is now mainly out of town stalls so limited local benefit and people don't then come into the town Lang Toun Festival was piloted in 2025 as a month-long programme of existing and new events		Develop a What's On Calendar for Kirkcaldy collating all existing events and use as a clash diary when considering new events Explore current thinking with Love Lang Toun for the Lang Toun Festival 2025 becoming an annual event and encourage greater engagement in the programming. Consider a signature event at the start or finish which puts Kirkcaldy on the map linked to the place branding ideas
10	**Makers and Producers**	Artisan Market on a Friday (poor time for visitor appeal) Had a farmers market and a continental market but both died away There is a design suite at the Adam Smith Museum but not well utilised Feels like there are pockets of activity but slow burn at a town level		Consider pulling local artists and makers together to scope out a cooperative approach to displaying and selling local art and produce Consider pop up stalls for local artists and makers at existing attractions and tied to local events
11	**Travel & Connectivity**	Trains and bus services are good with stations in the town and close to key facilities Electric bus connections around the town Most sites are walkable/cyclable from the stations Active travel is not well promoted – a Kirkcaldy Cycle Map and a Kirkcaldy Walking Guide have been developed by Greener Kirckaldy and are freely available. Be good to have a service linking the top end of the town		Review the active travel map and guide and consider incorporating it within a new Kirkcaldy map Promote 'Kirkcaldy by Foot' routes from the station highlighting key attractions and Consider a new simple brochure featuring the key attractions and experiences and make it available at Waverley Station

12	**Retail**	Major impact from out-of-town shopping developments - the High Street is now struggling Got some good independent shops in the town centre – eg the bookshop Retail parks are thriving but not for visitors		Include visitor facing shops and independent coffee shops on the suggested new town map and leaflet
13	**Amenities & Infrastructure**	Overall given the size of the town there are good amenities and infrastructure Several empty buildings – optional uses?		Ensure key services and facilities are included in the suggested new town map and leaflet
14	**Visitor Information & Signage**	Very poor at present – eg arrive at the station and there is no information. Welcome to Fife have a new Love Fife information point installed at Kirkcaldy Galleries New 'z card' for Heartlands of Fife recently produced New online 'Discovery Trails' guided walking tours for Kirkcaldy being launched in 2026 New App being developed for Kirkcaldy		Collate details about the app, 'z card', Love Fife hub and Discovery Trails and review Seek to engage in and support the new Welcome to Fife initiatives Source copies of the new 'z card' for Heartlands of Fife and ensure they are available in key outlets Develop a new town map and leaflet to complement the 'z card' Review the app content and agree mechanism for providing new content
15	**Digital Presence & Marketing**	Poor – multiple sites and no dedicated visitor facing digital presence		Consider the best host for a web presence for the town which holds visitor facing information and downloadable versions of the map and where to eat and other guides. Love Our Lang Toun is one option.
16	**Climate Action**	Very limited from a visitor perspective – but significant potential to engage visitors in current local activity and new ideas		Consider developing a simple climate action plan by collating what activity is taking place and then better promoting to visitors (eg Greener Kirkcaldy cooking classes, planting events at the Country Park, Scottish Water Taps) – seek new ideas and source funding Support Greener Kirkcaldy 'staycation promotions' – develop links with local businesses
17	**Inclusion & Accessibility**	The Hive – Fife's LGBT+ Centre Fife Pride event staged in Kirkcaldy each year Good dropped kerb provision Poor access to the beach from the town No lighting in the Parks		Develop a Kirkcaldy Inclusion and Accessibility statement and encourage all events, attractions and experiences to adopt and promote agreed standards Consider developing a simple accessibility statement for the community run facilities and events using advice on the VS Business Hub Develop the current ideas for beach wheelchairs
18	**Community Assets**	Greener Kirkcaldy premises Kings Theatre Community centres Templehill Gym {check for others]		Consider potential for revenue generating community led tourism initiatives at existing community run premises Explore community asset opportunities linked to the waterfront and for changing and wellness facilities (ref Seafield plans and ideas)

19	**People & Players**	Significant and major asset in the town but not necessarily as well coordinated as it could be 'You Decide' budget for the area of £300k 90 organisations		Consider the best organisation to lead with CLT activity – open up discussions with Love the Lang Toun and the new business collective to consider synergies. Establish a networking group on what's app to begin with Explore current volunteer fayre and other activity to help coordinate volunteer activity and join everything up
20	**Destination Collaboration**	Very limited collaboration by those attending at a Welcome to Fife and VisitScotland level		Reach out to the new business collective and Love Oor Lang Toun to explore their thoughts on tourism in Kirkcaldy. Seek to identify a local rep to sit on the LTA if there isn't a Kirkcaldy rep

SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS

The Kirkcaldy Destination Competency Appraisal has highlighted several interesting points primarily linked to Kirkcaldy not having been promoted or seen as a tourism destination over the years, turning its back on the waterfront and having limited facilities for visitors. It has a very low visitor profile. Yet it has a significant amount to offer, has a number of exciting initiatives at play, is easily accessible and has been earmarked for regeneration funding. There are a number of significant things happening or in the pipeline, however awareness was quite low at the workshop so a focus on good communication and a central hub for networking and a singular digital presence will be important in realising the clear potential that exists.

Welcome to Fife and the council are creating new visitor facing resources with the Heartlands of Fife 'z map', a new see and do app for Kirkcaldy and online Discovery Trails for the town. A new Love Fife information point is being provided at the Kirkcaldy Galleries. The first Lang Toun Festival took place in 2025 as part of celebrating the 100th anniversary of Kirkcaldy Galleries and the Civic Society launched 'Kirkcaldy's history in 50 objects' in 2024 to mark their own 50th birthday. Next year the Kirkcaldy Lottery which was launched in 2024 and is managed by the Adam Smith Global Foundation in summer 2026 is staging the Wemyss Ware® Cat Trail in the town with large scale Wemyss Cat outdoor public art installations.

Several people at the workshop commented on moving to the area and being very surprised and inspired about the town and what it has to offer. Many of them have got involved in local initiatives and in some cases are leading them. They clearly see the potential and are putting their shoulder to the millstone.

A key early action will be to seek to bring a number of other partners together to explore synergies and interest in community led tourism in Kirkcaldy using the findings of this report as a foundation. Most likely this will then be about winning local hearts and minds and instilling a belief that Kirkcaldy has this potential and appeal. Apathy was flagged as a core issue across the wider town so a few quick win, small step type projects will be needed, and also getting some strong ambassadors from different sectors on board to champion social and other media activity. It will then be about packaging the offer linked to a clear and compelling place brand with clever and targeted marketing to audiences who will be intrigued and find the renewed offer of interest.

Of note, given the size of Kirkcaldy and that there are a number of active community groups, organisations and initiatives at play, some of the ideas suggested here may already have been considered. Where this is the case, it would be useful to revisit and see what happened then and what may have changed to see what could happen now and specifically with a Community Led Tourism lens. Visitors aren't always seen as a target market by community-based organisations, but they are a potential source of revenue and, with targeted marketing, can help change perceptions and instil a new sense of local pride. Lang Toun Festival 2026 and the Wemyss Ware® Cats Trail could be catalysts.

INSPIRATION FROM ELSEWHERE

There are several opportunities for community led tourism enterprises in and around Kirkcaldy. Case studies are available on www.scoto.co.uk and can be useful learning exchanges:

Findhorn Campervan Aire
https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/fsqnta50/scoto_findhorn-case-study.pdf

Callander Youth Project/Callander Hostel
https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/f3oerevm/scoto_callander-hostel-case-study.pdf
Loch Ness Hub, Drumnadrochit
https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/ylepaaos/scoto_loch-ness-hub_case-study.pdf

Wild Skies Shetland
https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/xgzchqln/scoto_wild-skies-case-study.pdf

Callander Visitor Information Centre
https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/ogmnlyxl/scoto_cvic-case-study.pdf

Tweedsmuir The Crook Inn Plus
https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/bznbggxg/scoto_tweedsmuir-case-study.pdf
Isle of Eigg Camping Pods
https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/zy4lzqkt/scoto_eigg-camping-pods_case-study.pdf

Lewis Point & Sandwick Trail
https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/31khsd2p/scoto_point-sandwick-case-study.pdf

Strontian Oakwood Tourism & Crafts
https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/yppgkurp/scoto_oakwood-case-study.pdf

Moray Walking and Outdoor Festival
https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/341kukao/scoto_moray-walking-festival-case-study.pdf

MANAGING VISITOR EXPECTATIONS

An important consideration, having undertaken this appraisal is managing visitor expectations.

Visitors don't always do their research or may struggle to find current information and can arrive with preconceived ideas of what to expect whether staying overnight or passing through.

This can be anything from getting access to WIFI or 4G/5G to finding toilets, being able to use credit cards and not need cash, get an Uber, find a room that night, order a takeaway for delivery or not needing to book a sit-down meal in the evening. These are much less significant in urban areas but do need consideration.

To avoid disappointment and frustration communities can do a lot to manage expectations in general but also if there is a specific and short-term issue affecting a service – eg restricted opening hours due to staffing issues.

Useful ideas to consider are

- Agree a single web presence where all visitor facing information is hosted
- Create an online Kirkcaldy map to highlight the key attractions with local services and facilities, parking and cycling/walking trails.
- Make the map available online and share with all local businesses and organisations to display and host on their sites.
- Review and update the map regularly
- Develop a new or repurpose an existing open Facebook page for local businesses and enterprises to post updates and offers for locals and visitors – and for visitors to ask questions.

8. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: CLIMATE ACTION AND NATURE

Looking to the future, a discrete area within community led tourism relates to climate action and nature, and how visitors can help and support local endeavours, as well as consider how they can reduce their carbon footprint when visiting this community.

Climate action and tourism are inextricably linked and there are many ways to motivate and encourage visitors to support climate action when in your community. This relates to both the domestic and overseas markets. Overseas travellers could have a significant carbon footprint from air travel in particular. Helping them see how they can reduce their local carbon footprint when 'in destination' both helps their decision making but also demonstrates that Kirkcaldy as a host destination is taking climate action seriously and is inviting guests to do the same.

The domestic market can also have notable carbon footprints so encouraging travel by public transport is an obvious action. And an even more impactful action will be to focus effort on encouraging locals in and around Kirkcaldy to explore their own back door and not necessarily travel too far for day trips and for short and longer breaks. There is a lot on offer locally and across Fife and often this can be overlooked by locals in favour of travelling further afield. Clever local marketing and promotion can have impact as can a Fife-wide campaign approach.

In terms of visitor facing providers, businesses and community groups with premises can reduce running costs, minimise food miles and

differentiate themselves by adopting climate friendly practices. An increasing percentage of visitors are keen to ensure their visit has minimal climate impact and are actively seeking out operators who are clearly making an effort and finding experiences where they can support local endeavours.

Climate Action in Fife is led by Greener Kirkcaldy.

Greener Kirkcaldy was set up in 2009 and is a community-led charity working locally to bring people together, take positive action on the climate emergency and support people through fuel poverty and food insecurity. Greener Kirkcaldy deliver a range of projects, events and skills training to achieve the needs and goals of local people – building resilience as a community and working towards a future where everyone can live better and tread more lightly on the planet.

Based in the heart of Kirkcaldy – with a community building, training kitchen, bike shop and garden – Greener Kirkcaldy carry out activities across Kirkcaldy and work with partners to deliver projects across Fife.

Greener Kirkcaldy has already been looking at some visitor facing climate action initiatives including a project that will encourage locals to stay much closer to home. This is a welcome play on the concept of staycations which gained prominence following lockdown where many people discovered things to see and do on their own doorsteps. Greener Kirkcaldy are seeking to develop this further in Fife.

Press Pause® was welcomed as a catalyst for hopefully stimulating new projects and ideas specifically connecting climate action and the visitor economy in Kirkcaldy and Fife.

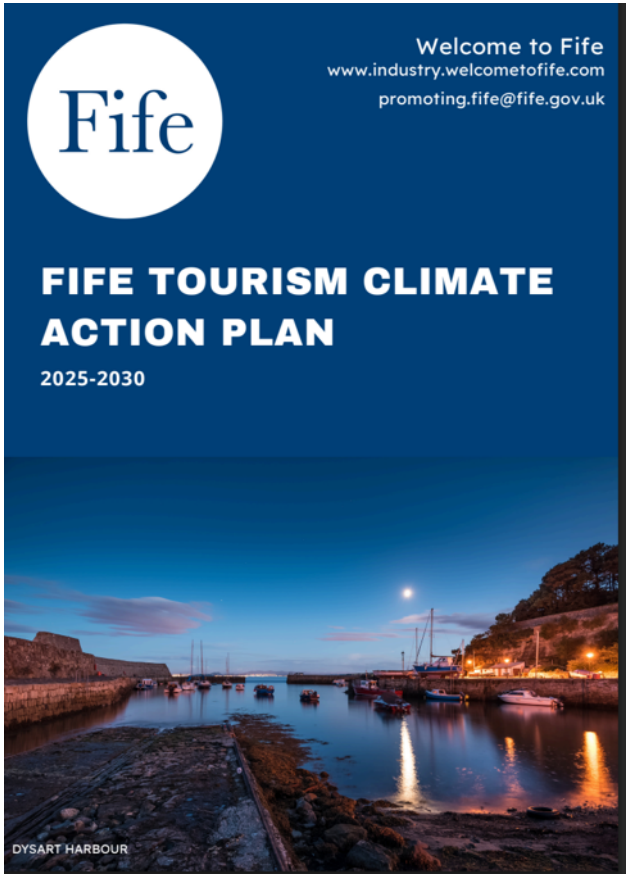
During the Destination Competence Appraisal, **climate action was rated as red** with participants flagging that there is very little specific provision for visitors but that there could be scope to better involved visitors in activity the community is progressing.

From a business perspective, the Green Tourism website does not list any accredited businesses in the Kirkcaldy area, in contrast to Cupar and St Andrews where there are a number of accommodation and attractions are accredited.

Green Tourism

Of note Fife Council has recently worked with Green Tourism to offer fully funded one year membership of Green Tourism and although there has been limited uptake in this area, they have a resource library on the Welcome to Fife industry website with guides, templates and recorded webinars to support any business interested in improving their green credentials.

This links with the five-year Fife Tourism Climate Action Plan which was launched in 2025 setting out a clear pathway for the tourism sector to cut emissions, strengthen resilience and lead in sustainable tourism. The plan is guided by the Glasgow Declaration, Scotland's net zero ambitions and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



The plan focuses on the 5 separate pathways to combat the impact of tourism on the planet as set out in the Glasgow Declaration.

- Measure
- Decarbonise
- Regenerate
- Collaborate
- Finance

The key issues Fife and Kirkcaldy will face are identified as:

- Increasing annual rainfall totals (wetter winters and drier summers)
- Rising temperatures across all seasons, with a significant reduction in frost, ice and snow, and heat wave conditions becoming more common
- Extreme weather impacts disruption tourism assets, events and transportation
- Sea levels and coastal change with threats from sea level rise, erosion and extreme weather events, and loss of coastal heritage.

Climate change could be, if it isn't already, a threat to key visitor facing businesses, attractions, sites and assets through flooding, storm damage and other impacts.



Kirkcaldy has experienced flood events for many years with images available online of flooding events in the 1960s. These have become more frequent in recent years.

The esplanade is regularly impacted by flooding. Rail and bus services have both been impacted by flooding in and around Kirkcaldy on many occasions in recent years, and hospital worker's cars were seriously damaged by flash flooding in Kirkcaldy in 2020.



As demonstrated in recent years, these flooding and storm events can happen at any time of year and can impact travel for locals and visitors and also impact outdoor activities, events and festivals.

Being aware of risks and having contingency plans in the event of an extreme weather incident will ensure visitors feel informed and have alternatives to consider.

Of note, from a tourism perspective, much of Kirkcaldy's tourism offer and opportunity relates to outdoor activity – the waterfront, the parks, active travel and the street fair and also the events and festivals that take place. These activities face risks from climate related disruption.

The larger scale Street Fair and Lang Toun Festival are particular considerations as event cancellation due to weather can result in significant lost income and also reputational damage for future events. The cancellation of Edinburgh's Hogmanay celebrations 2024/25 is a key example that lost the city £millions and generated significant negative press.

This equally applies to smaller community run events where not just financial losses can occur, but significant volunteer effort in the lead up can feel like it has been squandered.

In terms of climate action, there is a significant activity in and around Kirkaldy led by Greener Kirkaldy. Key initiatives are underway developing active travel, regeneration, recycling, reuse and repair, energy advice, food and growing. However very little of this is currently visitor facing – but could be. And could also differentiate Kirkcaldy.

A simple visitor facing climate action audit is recommended for Kirkcaldy, which will help everyone understand what is already happening in the town and how visitors can engage and support. Then a plan can be developed to spell out how businesses and organisations can reduce their own impact and specifically support visitors in making positive choices.

Community Climate Action in Fife is led by the Climate Action Fife (CAF) partnership. CAF is a cross-sector partnership of 12 organisations that covers the width and breadth of Fife and partners include community groups, third sector, Fife Council and Fife College.

Greener Kirkcaldy is the lead partner. Based in the heart of Kirkcaldy – with a community building, training kitchen, bike shop and garden – Greener Kirkcaldy carry out activities across Kirkcaldy and work with partners to deliver projects across Fife. Climate Action Fife has already been looking at some visitor facing climate action initiatives including a project

that will encourage locals to stay much closer to home. This is a welcome play on the concept of staycations which gained prominence following lockdown where many people discovered things to see and do on their own doorsteps.

VisitScotland, Welcome to Fife, Business Gateway and other partners provide advice and training on climate action initiatives and accreditation schemes for individual businesses and enterprises.

A key consideration that needs borne in mind is that the tourism and hospitality industry is characterised by a high percentage of small businesses and enterprises, and the current cost of living crisis is hitting these smaller businesses hard. There has been increasing regulation with associated costs, plus additional costs for national insurance, energy and supplies. This means climate action can slip down their priorities so targeting any support schemes and grants will help as will highlighting where initiatives can help save money.

Community cohesion and resilience is key to all of this and opportunities for visitors to engage and support the community should feature in a local climate action plan.

The appendix sets out key considerations and pointers for creating a community led visitor facing tourism climate action plan.

As well as a town level audit and action plan, a strong recommendation is for individual businesses and organisations that are visitor facing to develop simple climate action statements and to display these on their website and in their premises to help existing and potential customers see what action is being taken and what this means for the business, the community and them as a visitor.

Travel and connectivity were rated as green recognising there are good rail and bus services and connections in and around the town and providing good scope for visitors to explore Kirkcaldy without needing access to a car.



Many of the features of interest are walkable from the train station and there is good active travel infrastructure within the town.

Greener Kirkcaldy has been spearheading several active travel initiatives with activities and events helping local people increase their skills and confidence to change the way they travel. Most work has been local rather than visitor facing but could readily be developed to encourage visitors to explore the town by active travel.

Greener Kirkcaldy have produced an excellent cycle map with several routes around the town which connect key features of interest including the parks, castles and towers and other heritage sites. This is a great resource for visitors and could readily be better promoted.

Greener Kirkcaldy operate the Active Travel Hub on the High Street which includes Lang Toun Community Bike Shop. This currently offers bike repairs, refurbished bikes and e-bike loans but is not visitor facing. This may be due to how the project has been funded but bike and e-bike hire could both be very appealing for visitors and also be a means to generate much needed revenue. This can also be linked to job and business opportunities offering guided walking and cycling tours around the town, plus events.



A further consideration which ties in with the Fife Local Transport Strategy 2023-2033 is the commitment to not growing traffic and instead looking to reduce how much people

travel, switch to active travel and public transport and transition to zero emissions vehicles.

Encouraging locals to spend days out locally exploring the outstanding natural and cultural heritage features of Kirkcaldy will support climate action, as will further developing and promoting new trails and ways to explore the town and its surrounding by active travel and public transport.

Installing EV charge points for vehicles and bikes when upgrading infrastructure is another action.

A key observation from the workshop was the **rating of wildlife and nature as amber**. This wasn't because there isn't much of a resource and more that this is an aspect of Kirkcaldy that it is not necessarily known for and is not, yet, packaged and promoted to visitors as a key part of the town experience.



There are several green assets, not least the extensive beach area and Ravenscraig Park on the coast, Beveridge Park in the town and Dunnikier Country Park on the outskirts which has strong community support from the Dunnikier Country Park Development Group



Together these provide varied opportunities for different abilities to explore Kirkcaldy on foot or with wheels, and to enjoy the great outdoors, the town's heritage and culture, and stimulate mental and physical health and wellbeing.





8. PLACE BRANDING

Place branding is the idea that a place, a town, a city, or a region can be branded – given an identity with a value proposition for a target market and have branding techniques and marketing strategies applied to drive marketing campaigns, stimulate product development and build brand loyalty. Much in the same way a product, service or business can.

In essence, place branding is "a strategy for projecting images and managing perceptions – and expectations – about a place".

Place Branding seeks to strategically create a unique image and identity for a town, an island, a city, a region, or a country to attract visitors, investment, talent, and residents, essentially marketing a location like a product by highlighting its unique features, culture, and aspirations to build pride and economic growth. It goes beyond simple advertising, involving cohesive strategies in hardware (infrastructure), software (events), and storytelling to shape perceptions, boost local economies, and foster community identity. Authenticity is crucial and place branding should convey what has made the place what it is today

THE PLACE BRAND HIERARCHY

Place brands ideally nestle within each other from a country down to an individual business level and at each level have clear ownership of that place brand.

Within an individual community this may be the local business association or development trust and ideally has a singular web presence and social media channels to convey the place brand and develop content that reinforces it.

A common issue in communities is multiple websites and no clear ownership or differentiation as to which is the 'official' site for that community. The 'official' place brand is a key element of this. In addition, sites may have a mix of local and visitor facing content and it is important to be clear what is visitor facing to aid easy navigation and finding information easily.

Once a place brand has been established Individual businesses and organisations should then use this place brand in their own content and celebrate being part of the place through their own marketing and product development.

A · **COUNTRY – SCOTLAND – VISIT SCOTLAND**

B · **REGION – FIFE – WELCOME TO FIFE**

C · **AREA - CENTRAL FIFE - HEARTLANDS OF FIFE**

D · **TOWN - KIRKCALDY - LOVE OOR LANG TOUN?**

E · ***individual businesses, organisations and enterprises***

VISITOR TOUCH POINTS AND THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Traditionally visitors were significantly inspired by national and area tourist boards and made decisions using advice in travel books.

Today visitors are influenced by so many different 'touch points' – both print and often online.

Social media is a significant source of inspiration both through blogger and influencer content and TikTok videos from individuals and businesses.

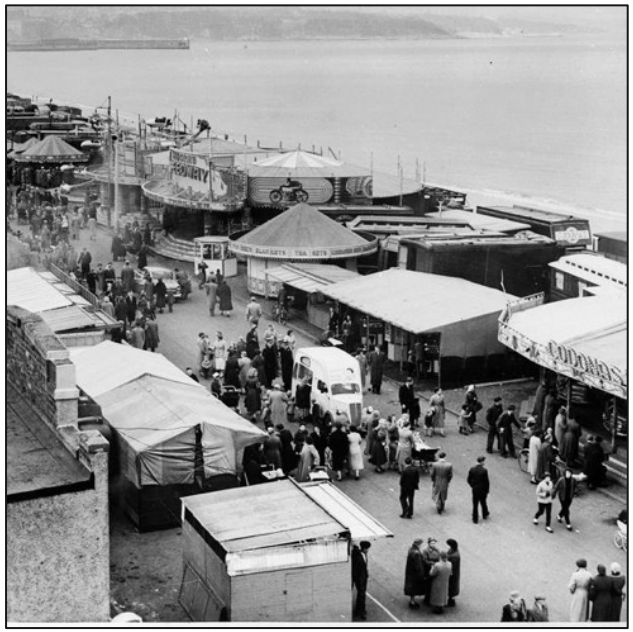
TV and film have hugely influenced travel with Outlander being a classic example.

Recent research by VisitScotland identifies the key sources of inspiration for different visitors. Travel bloggers and influencers provide inspiration as does Visit Scotland's own online information and imagery.

3.4 Sources of Inspiration when deciding on Scotland: breakdown (Deep Dive)

Digital sources	All Visitors	UK	Europe	Long haul
Online travel feature providers	6%	4%	6%	12%
Online travel guides	7%	4%	8%	15%
Peer review websites	12%	11%	16%	14%
Information from travel bloggers and influencers	13%	9%	24%	23%
Online travel agent	6%	5%	6%	6%
Online information from tour operators	3%	2%	4%	11%
Travel or price comparison providers	2%	2%	3%	4%
Online information, imagery or itineraries from VisitScotland	18%	16%	20%	23%
Online information from transport providers	6%	5%	6%	10%
Online information from tourism businesses	7%	7%	7%	9%
Bargain deals on airfares, accommodation or tours	4%	4%	3%	4%

Interpretation note: Long haul refers to USA, Canada and Australasia





KIRKCALDY – "TO SEE OURSELVES AS OTHERS SEE US"

A key consideration when exploring local place branding is to understand how the place is being portrayed at present by others and consider if this is how the community wants to be seen by the outside world.

- Places across Scotland are promoted by many players – notably VisitScotland and DMOs (Destination Marketing Organisations) as well by the media, bloggers and influencers, the travel trade, film and TV, plus online review sites
- These players often have very good reach online and are targeted in how they share their content to interested audiences
- Community groups and individual businesses have limited reach
- There is therefore significant value in firstly seeing how others portray the community to their audiences - and how it fits with reality – and then seek to influence their content

This is a very good prompt for communities to develop and take ownership of their own place brand and to then develop new content that reinforces how the community sees itself and wants to be portrayed to the outside world.

VISITSCOTLAND

The current listing on VisitScotland for Kirkcaldy states:

KIRKCALDY

Towns & Villages

Home of the longest street fair in Europe, Kirkcaldy is a town on the Fife coast.

Nowadays the top attraction is Kirkcaldy's Links Market, Europe's longest street fair, with over 200 fairground rides and attractions, held each Easter on the town esplanade. The Kirkcaldy Galleries houses a stunning collection of artworks and artefacts, and the Adam Smith Theatre, just across the road, provides a wide programme of entertainment with everything from pantomime and music to theatre and comedy.

There are a number of shops, restaurants, cafés and bars in the centre of town, particularly around the high street and the Kirkcaldy Farmers' Market is held on the last Saturday of every month. You can take a walk along the beach or enjoy the woodland walks and formal gardens at the Beveridge Park. Ravenscraig Park is located in the east of the town, connects up to the Fife Coastal Path and is home to the ancient Ravenscraig Castle. Kirkcaldy is also a good base for the exploring the local golf courses and charming villages of the East Neuk.



WELCOME TO FIFE

The current listing on Welcome to Fife for Kirkcaldy states:

HEARTLAND OF FIFE

The Heartlands of Fife is an area of stunning contrasts. From the highest point in the Kingdom of Fife – The Lomond Hills – to the award-winning beaches and quaint harbours on the coast. From historic mining villages to one of Scotland's newest towns.

KIRKCALDY

Fondly called 'The Lang Toun' on account of its four-mile-long main street, Kirkcaldy also has a one-and-a-half-mile promenade that, thanks to an exciting waterfront regeneration project, is perfect for a stroll along the Firth of Forth.

There's always lots happening in Kirkcaldy. How about cheering on the Fife Flyers at an ice hockey game? Or going to the theatre? Or trying Segway driving? Or, in April, going to the famous Links Market, Europe's largest street fair? Kirkcaldy has it all!

Kirkcaldy's perfect for culture vultures. The Adam Smith Theatre regularly attracts excellent productions, while Kirkcaldy Galleries' features work by the Scottish colourists and famous local artists, including Jack Vettriano. Looking for family fun? Fife Ice Arena is home to Fife Flyers, the UK's oldest professional ice hockey team. There are two beautiful parks with children's play areas – Ravenscraig and Beveridge Park (which also has a boating lake) - while Cluny Activities offers Segway driving, footgolf, archery and more. And, every April, The Links Market comes to town with over 200 fair rides and attractions.

FIFE COASTAL PATH

The current listing on the FCCT website for the Fife Coastal path for Kirkcaldy states:

BURNTISLAND TO BUCKHAVEN: KIRKCALDY

As you approach Kirkcaldy, the Fife Coastal Path passes the 16th century Seafield Tower. This area is rich in birdlife, and seals can often be seen basking on the rocks. From Kirkcaldy Esplanade, the path winds steeply to Pathhead Sands, a location that features in several of John Buchan's novels. Look out for Ravenscraig Castle which was built by James II for his wife Mary of Guelders.



OTHER TRAVEL GUIDES

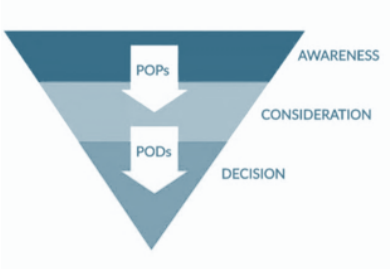
Kirkcaldy is not listed in the Frommer Guide to England and Scotland, The Rough Guide or the Lonely Planet.

DEVELOPING THE KIRKCALDY PLACE BRAND - USPs, POPs and PODs

Using marketing jargon, a valuable exercise in place branding is to first consider the community's unique selling points – USPs. These are the claims that the community can make which others can't.

The next consideration is Points of Parity – POPs – which are shared features the community may have with other communities and which confirm it is acceptable in calling itself a visitor destination and will meet the baseline needs of visitors.

PODs – Points of Differentiation then consider what attributes the community has which set it apart from others creating a unique advantage or benefit and in the case of a community, a compelling reason to visit. These relate to attractions and activities and help visitors decide where to



KIRKCALDY POPs

The destination Competence Appraisal demonstrated that the town has several attributes that confirm it is more than acceptable for Kirkcaldy to call itself a visitor destination with important heritage features, parks, museums and galleries, the Fife Coastal Path, waterfront promenade, events and theatre performances taking place.

KIRKCALDY'S USPs & PODs

Several points of differentiation and claims to fame were shared at the workshop and researched afterwards:

- Economist Adam Smith's was born in Kirkcaldy
- Home of Wemyss Ware® and the Wemyss Ware® Cats
- Links Market and Street fair is Scotland's oldest (900 years) and Europe's longest
- The setting for John Buchan novels
- Jack Vetriano lived in Kirkcaldy
- Crime writer Val McDermid lived in Kirkcaldy
- Ewan MacGregor studied in Kirkcaldy at Fife College
- Prime Minister Gordon Brown went to Kirkcaldy High School
- Jocky Wilson dart champion was born and died in Kirkcaldy
- Cathy Gibson Women's Dart Champion is from Kirkcaldy
- Ben Sandilands Paralympian is from Kirkcaldy
- Sandford Fleming was born here - invented time zones
- Dysart Harbour has featured in Outlander
- Alexander III fell off his horse and died here during the civil war
- Cold Play's bassist is from Kirkcaldy
- Birthplace of Linoleum
- The Lang Toun – Long Town with 4-mile high street
- Seafield Harbour – was built as the landowner didn't want to pay rates at Kirkcaldy – but it failed
- Carrs flour mill
- Michael Scott stayed in a tower at Balmenie Castle and believed to be a wizard –

mentioned by name in Dantes Inferno – had an ongoing battle with the devil.

- The devil is believed to be buried beneath the sands of Kirkcaldy Bay
- Kirkcaldy has the oldest ice rink in UK
- Last duel took place in Kirkcaldy between a banker and a merchant – both are buried in the old kirk yard at a duelling distance apart
- Raith Rovers – the local football team – won the 1994 Coca Cola Cup
- Kirkcaldy Galleries has a notable collection of paintings by Samuel John Peploe and William Mc Taggart



PLACE BRANDING - INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

This extensive list of USPs and PODs demonstrate that Kirkcaldy has several features of interest, connections to people of interest and witnessed several important events in history all of which could spark reasons for visitors to be interested in the town. It also has several exciting themes to consider for product development and experiences.

A number of initiatives are already underway which have a sound foothold in local sense of place – not least the previous Festival of Ideas, The Lang Toun Festival in 2025 and the Wemyss Ware® Cat Trail which will be launched in 2026.



The Festival of Ideas has been running for a number of years celebrating the town's connection to Adam Smith. It takes place again in June 2026.

An over-riding observation is that there is strong merit in building on these existing place-based initiatives and seeking to engage more people, groups and organisations within the town, and to help everyone see these as exceptional opportunities to work together celebrating what has made Kirkcaldy the town it is today.

PLACE BRANDING – IDEAS

Kirkcaldy – Scotland's Lang Toun

The Lang Toun has been a 'nick' name for Kirkcaldy for many years. The 100th anniversary of the Kirkcaldy Galleries was celebrated in 2025 through the Lang Toun Festival which has notable scope to become an annual event as a legacy from 2025 and specifically to celebrate Kirkcaldy's sense of place and to build community cohesion around its identity.



Many engaged in the 2025 event and other groups and organisations who didn't, could readily get involved in future as part of an annual event, with scope for the event to adopt a different theme each year, and for

community groups and organisations to develop their own events and use this for fund raising, volunteer recruitment and awareness raising.

The name refers to the town stretching along the coast with the exceptionally long 4-mile main street running parallel to the coastline. The Kirkcaldy Links Market annual street fair is the longest in Europe and reinforces the Lang Toun messaging. The fair happens every year in April and attracts 200-300,000 people and offers significant scope to develop and reinforce Kirkcaldy as Scotland's Langt] Toun with new merchandise and experiences.

A simple circular Lang Toun Trail could be developed connecting the waterfront to the main street and also incorporating part of the Fife Coastal Path.

New products and experiences could be developed which celebrate the 4-mile main street and coastline. Different outdoor and fitness events could be staged over the year with 4-mile fun runs and walking events held every month and potentially linked to local charities and fund raising. This could also include challenge events staged along the route.

The 4 miles could be represented by public art with, for example, a Wemyss Ware cat from the 2026 trail located at each mile point. Lamp posts along the 4-mile street could be decorated in some way and small plaques installed at key locations with QR code links to online information.

The name 'Lang Toun' celebrates the Scots language and could spark ideas for new Scots language and literary events in the town.

Kirkcaldy – the Town that Floored the World

Kirkcaldy gave birth to linoleum and became the largest manufacturer of it. The phrase 'the town that floored the world' has been coined before and is inspirational.

It offers intrigue and also scope for innovative product development ideas around experiences, festivals and events that bring this important era in the life of Kirkcaldy back to life, the patterns that were developed and 'floor' based experiences – eg dancing.

A town trail that connects the key sites from the heyday of Linoleum is a simple idea and there could be additional exhibition and interpretation material around the town and at the Kirkcaldy Galleries explaining the origins of linoleum and also just how far it travelled across the world and famous buildings that featured linoleum flooring.



Art events could be staged to generate new art inspired by Linoleum patterns, and retail products that can raise revenue.

Art & Creativity in Kirkcaldy

The workshop highlighted that Kirkcaldy has a number of important art connections not least with Wemyss Ware pottery which was produced in Kirkcaldy between 1882 – 1930 and Jack Vetriano.

The pottery is being celebrated through an exciting Wemyss Ware Cat trail in 2026 with large scale cats installed as public art.

The Kirkcaldy Galleries host an extensive collection of William Taggart and Samuel John Peploe works and other Scottish Colourists. The galleries are known to have inspired self-taught Jack Vetriano and William Gear.

With the Cat Trail plans for 2026 this is a great catalyst for further celebrating the art and creativity connections Kirkcaldy holds and to encourage community groups and organisations to engage in celebrating this heritage through local events and activity that feature in a Kirkcaldy What's On Calendar and are promoted for both locals and visitors.



Climate Active Kirkcaldy!

The town, through the excellent work being progressed by Greener Kirkcaldy, has notable scope to position itself as a Green Destination. This is not so much about green businesses and much more about the community itself and how climate action is prioritised and permeates so many aspects of life in the town – energy, active travel, food and growing and community itself.

Many of the current initiatives could be promoted as voluntourism events for visitors to engage in and some could be developed as visitor experiences which can generate much needed revenue to support the work the community is progressing. This can appeal to travelling visitors and also people living close by and as a great day out.

The growing and food projects could appeal to visitors and day trippers to come and take part at the different community gardens in the town and also at Dunnikier Park. There could readily be a family friendly dimension to this and also 'try your hand' experiences linked to planting and cooking.

A specific area that could be developed with support from Welcome to Fife and VisitScotland is working with the travel trade and offering climate active experiences for groups and independent travellers.

Visit Scotland's latest trends highlight the 'transformation economy' and that sustainable tourism now goes beyond 'green' and is also about supporting local communities and economies. Making visitors more aware of what the community is doing is recommended but also specifically packaging 'Greener Kirkcaldy' experiences.

Kirkcaldy – A special stop off on the Fife Coastal Path

Several comments during the workshop suggested Kirkcaldy on the whole doesn't make much of being on the Fife Coastal Path and there is a sense many walkers are potentially pushing through to get to Dysart Harbour and on to West Wemyss.



Kirkcaldy is not seen as a key stop-off on the route. The Fife Coastal Path website makes little mention of what is in the town and limits references to Seafield Tower and the wildlife that can be seen, the esplanade and then Ravenscraig Park and Castle.

The route follows the waterfront on the esplanade and does not include the historic High Street or features in the town centre and parks. This could be promoted as an alternative and highlighting the features and attractions



There are several cafes and shops in the town centre and better linkages could be made between the route and these cafes and attractions like the Kirkcaldy Galleries. Cafes close to the route could develop stronger 'walker welcome' features including space to dry jackets and sockets for charging mobile phones.



Kirkcaldy is not currently shown on the Fife Coastal path website as a staging point where people may wish to stop over. There isn't much budget accommodation available that would appeal to individual walkers or groups of walkers doing the route. This could be an opportunity to make the town more appealing.

Equally many people do the Fife Coastal Path in stages linked to public transport – this is part of its appeal. And Kirkcaldy Station is a key feature for that type of walking experience. More could be done to promote it as a starting and finishing point when doing a stage on the route and also to link this with recommendations for breakfast or supper at the start or end of your day.



It can also be part of connecting the walking experience with heritage and culture with the Kirkcaldy Galleries being so close to the station, and initiatives like the Wemyss Ware Cat Trail encouraging locals and visitors to explore the town.



MEASURING LOCAL IMPACT

"*What we measure affects what we do. If we measure the wrong thing, we will do the wrong thing. If we don't measure something, it becomes neglected, as if the problem didn't exist*". Carnegie UK

Tourism is typically measured by footfall, bed nights and spend at a regional level. Recalibrating how tourism is measured locally will demonstrate how tourism is delivering local benefits and helping the community be a better place to live, work and visit.

In the absence of a community led action plan or local place plan, a key recommendation is to use the Fife Partnership Kirkcaldy Area Priorities as the basis of agreeing a basic list of measures that can demonstrate benefits from Visitor activity.



This could readily include the number of tourism and hospitality businesses that are registered as Living Wage employers, number of volunteer hours provided through tourism related initiatives, number of local artists and makers supported, number of cultural assets retained, number of new products developed, number of cultural events provided, etc.

Once some of the place branding ideas are developed there could be measures relating to how many local people engage in activities as well as visitors.

By agreeing the measures, everyone can focus on what they can do to help deliver positive impacts.

An infographic template can be developed for the business interests in the area to record and demonstrate the community benefits they provide. This will hopefully encourage them each to do even more.





RECOMMENDATIONS

Initial recommendations relate to considering the appetite for and capacity to undertake community action planning and/or local place planning in Kirkcaldy.

These processes are valuable when considering community led tourism as they establish what is important to the community and set out priority themes for action.

These can then stimulate ideas to develop within community led tourism initiatives that will address these themes. For example, if retaining young people is important, establishing a hostel for the Fife Coastal Path where young people can train and get qualifications has merit.

The Destination Competency table sets out several ideas and recommendations for the community to consider. The key ones relate to

- **Place Branding** – Kirkcaldy is a well-known town but not as a tourist destination or as a stop off on the popular Fife Coastal Path. A place brand that clearly positions it as a dynamic place with lots going on is recommended using its Lang Toun 'nick' name with associated product development and propositions
- **Map** – Kirkcaldy has several features of interest and has some new Discovery Trails being launched, has the Greener Kirkcaldy cycle trail map. The Welcome to Fife Z-map – see appendix - is for the wider Heartlands of Fife area so a map that profiles Kirkcaldy features and attractions, visitor facilities and walks and trails is recommended which is available online and in print at the rail station, galleries and other key locations. Artist drawn and illustrated maps have strong appeal. Dunkeld has a great example of this.
- **Climate Action** – Kirkcaldy is quite unique with the presence of Greener Kirkcaldy in the town and the extent of local initiatives that are underway across different themes. This is not currently overtly visitor facing – but could be. This could be key point of differentiation for Kirkcaldy where there are many activities to get involved with and scope to appeal to families and organised groups which can bring in much needed revenue to address other community priorities
- **Active Travel –** Through Greener Kirkcaldy a range of active travel initiatives have been developed for locals which could easily be further developed and targeted at visitors. This could be for visitors already in the town and seeking to increase their dwell time by hiring bikes to explore the town or could be promoted to attract locals in nearby towns to come for a day trip. The cycle trails leaflet is excellent with themed trails. Linking these to the train station and also bike hire options is recommended, and looking at training local walk and cycle guides could be a valuable revenue stream.
- **Culture & Heritage** – The workshop explored the importance of Adam Smith to Kirkcaldy, and its industrial importance as the town that floored the world. It also revealed some fascinating stories, not least about the Wizard and also the local myth of the devil being buried under the sands of Kirkcaldy Beach. The Wizard Walk could be further developed as a visitor experience with guided walks, and these stories be brought to life as part of the annual Lang Toun Festival.
- **Wildlife and Nature, Health and Wellbeing** – Kirkcaldy benefits from its coastal setting with various wildlife spotting opportunities near Seafield Tower and at Ravenscraig Park. It has the three quite different Parks which are connected in the Greener Kirkcaldy cycle map. A key aspect that has not yet been developed but there are plans being considered is to enhance water sport, wild swimming and wellbeing facilities
- **Events and Festivals** – create a single events calendar for all what's on activity to better show case the wealth of activity on offer and including regular events like the Park Run and new climate action activity that locals and visitors can join in.
- **Digital Presence** – Undertake a digital review of all the current websites for the town and seek to rationalise and agree the best visitor facing presence (enhance an existing site or create a new one). Ensure the place branding features on this and all businesses and organisations are encouraged link to it.
- **Visitor Services and Facilities** – the new Love Fife information hub at the Kirkcaldy Galleries should be promoted to ensure any visitors are aware of where information is available.

- **Destination Collaboration** – there is merit in considering an informal community tourism network/partnership in the town that brings the key players together to share updates and ideas and also feed into the local LTA and Welcome to Fife. This should include Greener Kirkcaldy, Love Oor Lang Toun, The Dunnikier Development Group and other organisations who are keen to develop community led tourism in the town. There are good initiatives happening in the town but an overall sense of lack of awareness and joined up thinking.

SUGGESTED FIRST STEPS

- Review the report with the SCOTO facilitator to prioritise what the community would like to progress and develop an activity plan
- Set up a What's App group for all those interested in this initiative – starting with the workshop attendees
- Arrange an open day event in the town to share the Press Pause findings and recommendations plus early actions to gather interest and involvement - potentially linked to a volunteer fayre staged with several local groups and charities
- Establish (or repurpose an existing) BeLocal Kirkcaldy Facebook page and encourage business engagement on the page with posts on features and offers, plus quick responses to any visitor queries
- Arrange a learning exchange to other town communities who have developed their tourism offer
- Agree a quick win project for the next tourist season to galvanise everyone (eg the map)



11. REFLECTIONS

The Kirkcaldy Press Pause workshop revealed a passionate community that recognises Kirkcaldy is a great place to live and bring up a family, and there are several features of interest and stories to be told yet somehow Kirkcaldy is not really on the tourism radar.

The road infrastructure doesn't readily bring traffic into the town centre, so the Galleries, the Theatre and the historic and high-quality built environment is missed. The large retail parks have pulled a lot of trade out of the town centre.

The recent investment in the waterfront has improved its appearance but there is still a disconnect between the waterfront and the town centre, mainly due to the presence of the main road. The beaches are extensive and feels like an untapped resource.

The current Fife Coastal Path website highlights Seafield Tower and Ravenscraig but does not promote Kirkcaldy as a stopover.

An overarching reflection is that Kirkcaldy deserves to be considered a tourism destination and the key is to package the town and all that is on offer, but also to significantly enhance local communications between businesses, groups and organisations to ensure wide knowledge of what is happening and ideas that are being developed.

The Lang Toun Festival in 2025 feels like an excellent starting point for this with an annual festival developed which encourages as many groups and organisations as possible to engage in the festival activity and build an exceptional sense of community cohesion around the Festival.

The recently announced regeneration funding will hopefully help develop the public realm and appeal of the town and provide the basis for better promotion of what us on offer.

The Press Pause® initiative seeks to help individual geographic communities take time out to consider tourism and how it could be much more of a force for good within their community. This involves business and community interests having constructive conversations – and being willing to take ideas forward.

Post pandemic there has been a focus on recovery and 2019 was treated as a benchmark. However, we are in a new era in tourism – post Covid, post Brexit, in the midst of a technological revolution and a climate and biodiversity emergency.

SCOTO believes this requires a new approach which has responsible tourism at its core. It also presents many exciting opportunities at a local level for individual communities to focus on what more visitors are seeking – to meet

local people, have meaningful authentic experiences, discover new places, learn new skills and spend locally.

This report seeks to set out what was discussed together, highlight what could be done differently to help the community move embrace tourism as a force for good. It provides a range of ideas for consideration and sets out inspiration from elsewhere. The community is the driver and can establish which ideas to pursue or explore further.

Whatever action is taken the primary aim is community cohesion and for tourism to deliver meaningful benefits that address local issues at an individual community level. The presence of visitors should be making a positive difference and helping make the community an even better place to live, work and visit.

PRESS PAUSE®
KIRKCALDY, FIFE - APPENDICES



















APPENDIX 1:
Key Considerations for a Community-Led Tourism Climate Action Plan

Guiding Principles:

- *Tourism should strengthen the community's climate resilience while reducing its environmental footprint and improving local quality of life.*
- *Visitors should readily understand that climate action matters to the community and feel able to help and contribute.*
- *Businesses and organisations should proudly profile what climate action they are taking and what this means for their business, their community and their customers*

Recommended Format and Content:

1. Vision & Community Values

Define what climate-responsible tourism is and what it means for this community

- A shared vision for low-carbon, resilient tourism
- Explain the community priorities (eg. livelihoods, culture, ecosystems, equity)
- State the community's commitment to local leadership in climate action and inclusion (residents, community groups, small and micro businesses, young people)

2. Climate Risks & Tourism Impacts

Set out a clear understanding of what climate change threatens in relation to tourism and the visitor experience within this community

- Highlight the key climate hazards that have been experienced (floods, storms)
- Highlight vulnerable tourism assets (infrastructure, heritage assets, paths and trails, natural resources and habitats)
- Highlight outdoor events and activities that could be impacted by extreme weather
- Consider social vulnerability as a consequence (eg jobs at risk, informal and seasonal workers income, volunteering impacts)

3. Tourism E-missions Snapshot

Identify the major carbon sources relating to tourism in this community

- Visitor transport (how they arrive and local travel once in destination)
- Accommodation options and their energy use and waste management
- Food systems and supply chains at cafes and restaurants; use of local seasonal produce
- Waste management and accessibility for visitors
- Highlight the main sources and desire to tackle these

4. Climate Action Audit

Undertake a simple audit of what already exists and/or is available

- Collate which businesses and organisations already have green accreditations (eg Green Tourism gold, silver or bronze accreditation)
- Review who has participated in local climate action training programmes and advisory workshops
- Review current visitor facing information and guidance available online to promote for example public transport and active travel to visit the destination
- Develop simple case studies of good practice

5. Climate Mitigation Actions

Outline the actions that will help reduce tourism-related emissions and promote these to visitors

- Low-carbon mobility (public transport, EVs, active travel)
- Highlight energy efficiency and renewables in tourism attractions and facilities
- Showcase local, seasonal food and waste reduction
- Showcase local circular economy initiatives including plastic reduction

6. Adaptation & Resilience Actions

Explain what is being done locally to protect people, livelihoods, and ecosystems

- Climate-resilient infrastructure investments and land use decisions
- Nature-based solutions (forests and woodland planting projects, care and enhancement of meadows, rivers, wetlands and other habitats)
- Event planning and contingency measures for extreme weather incidents
- Disaster preparedness and early warning systems that have been developed by the community

7. Community Benefits & Equity

Provide details on what is being progressed locally to ensure tourism supports local well-being

- Local ownership of assets

- Green jobs
- Skills training and capacity building
- Cultural and built heritage protection
- Campaigns and incentives to extend the season and disperse visitors across the community

8. Education & Behaviour Change
Align visitors and locals

- Visitor awareness of climate impacts and what they can do reduce their personal impact in this community
- Voluntourism opportunities for visitors to support local endeavours – tree planting, litter picks
- Low-impact travel guidance for visitors provided at accommodation and at time of booking
- Training for tourism and hospitality workers and operators
- Annual award for climate action heroes – local individuals and enterprises plus visitors who have engaged in activity
- Transparent communication (avoid greenwashing)

9. Governance & Partnerships
Explain how the community is ensuring shared responsibility and accountability

- Clear roles for community, public agencies and private sector
- Participatory decision-making
- Integration of local knowledge
- Partnerships with charitable groups, universities and colleges, and climate experts

10. Financing & Incentives
Set out what support is available to support climate action in this community

- Grants
- Potential tourism levy (if approved and introduced by the Council)
- Incentives for small and local businesses
- Community benefit or reinvestment funds

11. Targets, Monitoring & Review
Track progress using available indicators or proxies and demonstrate adaptions being made in response

- Emissions reduction and resilience targets
- Simple indicators (energy use at premises, waste management and litter pick stats, jobs, biodiversity measures)
- Annual public reporting
- Regular plan updates

Appendix 2: The Current Z-Map for Heartlands of Fife




Fife
welcometofife.com
Heartlands of Fife
THE HEART OF ADVENTURE
FALKLAND
FREUCHIE
WEST LOMOND HILL
EAST LOMOND HILL
A92
KENNOWAY
MARKINCH
LESLIE
SCOTLANDWELL
LOCH LEVEN
GLENROTHES
COALTOWN OF BALGONIE
KINGLASSIE
LEVENMOUTH OPENING 2024
BUCKHAVEN
THORNTON
BALLINGRY
BENARTY HILL
LOCHORE
EAST WEMYSS
COALTOWN OF WEMYSS
EAST WEMYSS CAVES
CARDENDEN
CLUNY
WEST WEMYSS
KELTY
LOCHGELLY
KIRKCALDY
DYSART
RAVENSCRAIG BEACH
FIRTH OF FORTH
COWDENBEATH
AUCHTERTOOL
SEAFIELD BEACH
HILL OF BEATH
CROSSGATES
THE BINN HILL
M90
KINGHORN
KINGHORN BEACH
BURNTISLAND
PETTYCUR BAY
BURNTISLAND BEACH
ABERDOUR
SILVER SANDS
ABERDOUR BEACH
welcometofife.com
INVERNESS & NORTH
ABERDEEN & EAST
DUNDEE
PERTH
ST ANDREWS
A9
A90
M90
A92
A91
A915
A985
DUNFERMLINE
FALKIRK
M9
A1
GLASGOW & WEST
M8
EDINBURGH
A720
NEWCASTLE & SOUTH
MAP KEY
FIFE COASTAL PATH
FIFE PILGRIM WAY
MAJOR ROAD
MINOR ROAD
RAILWAY
IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF KINGS
BEACHES & ROCKY SHORELINES
BEACH
WATERSPORT FACILITIES
EXCLUSIVE TO HEARTLANDS FIFE
GOLF COURSES
WOODLAND WALKS & FORMAL PARKS
HIDDEN GEMS BY FOOT
CYCLE ROUTES & FACILITIES
CAMPING & CARAVAN SITES
HISTORIC BUILDINGS & CASTLES
SHOPPING AREA
THEATRES & MUSEUMS
Information Correct June 2023