**NOTE OF MEETING PERTHSHIRE TOURISM PARTNERSHIP (PTP)**

RSPB Scotland Loch Leven, Kinross KY13 9LX

26 November 2019

10.30am – 12.30pm

**Attendees**

Alan Graham, Perth & Kinross Council

Adrian Blundell, Dunkeld and Birnam Tourism Association

Andrew Donaldson, Breadalbane Co-operative

Allan Minto, Golf Perthshire

David Smythe (DS), Perthshire Tourism Partnership - Chair

Caroline Warburton, VisitScotland

Constance Boddice, Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust

George Laurie, The Rural Access Committee of Kinross-shire (TRACKS)

Jonathan Wilson, Visit Aberfeldy

Roy Jenney, Culture PK

Stuart MacLaren, Crieff & Strathearn Tourism Association (CSTA)

Suzanne Cumiskey, Perth & Kinross Council

**Speakers**

Yvonne Bole, RSPB Loch Leven

Graham Pinfield, Perth & Kinross Council

Andrew Mitchell, Rural Gigabit

**Observers**

Stuart Clark, Angus Tourism Co-operative

Debbie McCallum, Tourism St Andrews

**Apologies**

Sue Cole, Blairgowrie & East Perthshire Tourism Association

Peter Crane, Cairngorms National Park Authority

Kirsty Gowans, VisitAberfeldy

Tom Gray, Perth & Kinross Council

Joyce Kitching, Historic Environment Scotland

John Shevlin, Meetings Perthshire

Alex Winton, Glenshee and Strathardle Tourist Association

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| 1. | **Welcome & Introductions** **David Smythe, Perthshire Tourism Partnership**DS welcomed all to the meeting and introduced guests from neighbouring tourism forums, Stuart Clarks representing Angus Tourism Co-operative and Debbie McCallum representing Tourism St Andrews.DS advised that new national tourism strategy Beyond 2020 would be launched at the [STA Signature Sessions/Conference](https://www.taycities.co.uk/news/tourism-strategy-endorsed) on 4 March 2019.DS advised that since the last PTP meeting, the [Tay Cities Regional Tourism](https://www.taycities.co.uk/news/tourism-strategy-endorsed)[Strategy](https://www.taycities.co.uk/news/tourism-strategy-endorsed) has been published with local authorities and industry workingtogether to grow the sector.DS congratulated the six Perth & Kinross winners of Central, Fife & Tayside Region [Thistle Awards](https://www.scottishthistleawards.co.uk/RegionalWinners/): Northlands Bed & Breakfast, Straloch Highland Retreats, WILDHOOD Festival, The Library at Innerpeffray, The Old Manse of Blair, Land Rover Experience. DS also congratulated Debbie MacCallum who won the Regional Ambassador. |  |
| 2. | **Overview of RSPB Loch Leven & Tayside Reserves****Yvonne Boles, Senior Site Manager,** RSPB Tayside manage three reserves: RSPB Loch Leven, Tay Reedbeds at Errol and Loch of Kinnordy in Angus.Tay ReedbedsThe RSPB has been involved in the site since 2005 and, as of 2018, manages 282 hectares for a range of reedbed wildlife, including bearded tits.They are now looking to build up and promote the site which can be accessed from Errol. Famous for thatching with 10-12 hectares thatched per annum. Looking to increase this production in coming years via a partnership with Historic Environment Scotland. RSPB Loch LevenA potato farm until 1969 when RSPB purchased it. RSPB Leven was re-branded as Vane Farm in line with other attractions/hospitality venues around the trail in a concerted effort to maximise on the Loch Leven brand. The site is now a National Nature Reserve and is famous for wintering wildlife, in particular pink-footed geese. The visitor attraction attracts 70,000 visitors per annum, predominantly from the domestic market. These are largely day visitors who are accessing the hides and Heritage Trail. 10% of all visitors are wildlife ‘enthusiasts’, whilst other visitors are local family market/nature lovers. Visitors are often incidental as a result of using one of the many paths off the Loch Leven Heritage Trail, such as the Sleeping Giant pathway.Accessibility for the site is important. Following extensive work by RSPB, the hides and trail can now be accessed from the visitor centre as sloping path to the underpass has been finished. This improves access for users on mobility scooters, wheelchairs or prams.Current challenges are the capacity of the car park, the challenges are marketing the site (particularly social media) owing to RSPB’s centralised marketing function and the lack of public transport around the loch.Next steps are to develop a photographic hide, continue with the outreach work and re-invigorate the family play area. |  |
| 3.  | **The Rural Access Committee of Kinross-shire (TRACKS)****George Laurie, Project Officer**TRACKS is a charitable organisation who facilitate increased community and visitor participation through development of footpaths, tracks and trails. The charity improves connectivity of Kinross-shire for residents and those who visit the area.TRACKS developed the Loch Leven Heritage Trail which is a* Circular 13mile/21 km
* Multi use path route for walkers, cyclists, runners, dog walkers
* 220,000 visitors per annum
* £3m project cost
* 40% project cost interpretation
* 60% construction
* Trail maintenance costs met by Perth & Kinross Council
* Successfully opened public toilets at Pier, Kinross. Costs £46k – open seasonally
* Average spend per person approx. £12-£15
* Fully accessible path, level all the way round so can be used by all

Between 2007 and 2014 several visitor surveys have been conducted which show both the growth in number of visitors as well as the high proportion of domestic (and most likely local) market. Three percent are overseas visitors. Surveys did not manage distinguish between day visits and overnight stays, however other evidence/data suggest overnight stays are low due to lack of accommodation stock. Trail is currently at capacity and now looking at ways to manage the visitors at the site. Documents are publicly available.Current challenges are lack of overnight stays, perception of area as accessible and for a day visit, loss of infrastructure/bed stock, proximity to Edinburgh.Next steps are to consider ways to increase spend in the area and grow the overnight stays in the area. |  |
| 4 | **Building Digital Perthshire**Presentation: <https://ruralgigabit.org/Building_Digital_Perthshire_v3.pdf> |  |
| 5. | **Perthshire Tourism Action Plan Update****Suzanne Cumiskey. Perth and Kinross Council** SC advised Perthshire Tourism Partnership are in the process of co-creating a new Perthshire Tourism Action Plan 2020-24 as a local contribution to the strategic objectives of the Tay Cities Regional Tourism Strategy.The strategic objectives are to grow the value of overnight stays year on year by 3%, improve the all-round visitor experience in the region and to address common challenges such as connectivity, seasonality, productivity.Industry have been informing the action plan via a series of workshops & engagement events such as * Future of Tourism Workshop – 19 September 2019
* Tourism Leadership Group/Workshop 1 – 23 October
* Tourism Leadership Group Workshop 2 – 19 November
* Tourism Leadership Group/ Workshop 3 – 18 December 2019

Following the first workshop an invitation went out to all those in tourism industry asking if they’d be willing to join a Tourism Leadership Group to shape and inform the action plan. Local Tourism Associations have also been asked to feed in local key issues to ensure the plan is representative of all views.A draft version of the Perthshire Tourism Action Plan will be available by the end of December 2019. | Draft PTAP circulated to PTP - January 2020. |
| 6. | **VisitScotland Update****Caroline Warburton, VisitScotland** [Only in Scotland](https://www.visitscotland.org/news/2019/only-in-scotland): a new consumer campaign for Scotland and is the next chapter of Scotland is Now campaign[Live Life Well](https://www.visitscotland.org/news/2019/only-in-scotland): new consumer campaign for Perthshire. 6 new videos created. Campaign has been a success to date with 1.5 million video views, 50% completion rate and 2,600 page lands<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fwxtps0vwjA>Influencers Trips: VS working with influencers Dane & Stacey and Challenge Sophie to promote Perthshire to younger audience. Dane & Stacey produced 4 videos, one of which was specifically focused on [Loch Leven](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I4cSYZwiLCs). Challenge Sophie video to be published soonRural Tourism Infrastructure Fund: Round 3 now open of the [Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund](https://www.visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/funding/rural-tourism-infrastructure-fund). Fund set up to improve the quality of the visitor experience in rural parts of Scotland, particularly those that have faced pressure on their infrastructure due to increases in visitor numbers. |  |
| 7. | **Partner Updates*** Breadalbane Tourism Cooperative: Andrew Donaldson, Comrie Croft advised he is now the new Chairperson.
* Culture Perth & Kinross: encourage locals & visitors to access libraries for free. Free wi-fi at all 13 libraries in Perthshire and access to digital newspapers.
* Golf Perthshire: looking to increase private sector funding for collaborative group in order to continue the initiative. Members benefitted from Solheim Cup. All golf clubs received free junior sets of golf clubs. 430k views of their recent promotional video. Launch Sustainable Golf Initiative (working with GEO Foundation)
* Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust: looking to establish River Tay Way, a long-distance walking and cycling trail from Kenmore to Perth. Also focus is Cateran Trail and Perthshire Big Tree Country.
* Crieff & Strathearn Tourism Association: Crieff BID now looking to reballot and a steering group has been established. Praised recent successes by the BID. [Santa’s Post Office](https://www.visitcrieff.scot/santas-post-office/) has resulted in great profile for the town.
* Dunkeld and Birnam Tourism Association: recent AGM has resulted in new committee members.
* Loch Leven Tourism Forum: top priority is health and wellbeing and maximising the opportunity of this trend for Loch Leven.
* VisitAberfeldy: focus on reactivating the LTA. Town centre regeneration almost complete. Hoping to engage with the gravel paths initiatives.
* VisitScotland: advanced notice on an event updating tourism businesses on Perth City Hall development. Being organised by VisitScotland and Culture Perth & Kinross. PTP to be invited.
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| 8. | **A.O.B.** |  |