

Community Tourism

Communities are a crucial element of the tourism product and they have an important role in the development and delivery of a region's tourism offering. Across Ayrshire and Arran, there are lots of community-led tourism initiatives where groups and organisations have successfully developed specific projects to raise the profile of their area, town or village.

The Ayrshire and Arran Tourism Team have identified two ways that they can best support communities looking to develop tourism initiatives and enhance the visitor offering in their area. Learning Journeys and a Tourism Toolkit.

Learning Journeys

The first initiative is to co-ordinate a programme of learning journeys for communities across the region. These journeys will take groups to see other community-led tourism projects across Scotland and a little further afield (2-3 hour drive radius). Participating groups will be able to see at first-hand different tourism projects, learn what has worked and what hasn't and identify what actions can be implemented in their own community to enhance the tourism offering.

Each tourism initiative we visit has developed based on the differing offer of the community, developed and driven by them, for the benefit of tourists and the community themselves.

During the days we will be addressing questions such as:

- ?? How do you develop a tourism trail?
- ?? Where do you go for funding?
- ?? How do you know who to involve?
- ?? How do you organise a tourism event?
- ?? How do you market your village/town offer?
- ?? Where do we start?

The tourism team will work closely with the groups through the whole process, setting up meetings, organising travel and ensuring that the group get the maximum benefit from their visit. After the journey, sessions will be held to identify key action points that can be developed in their own community.

If you would like to learn more about the learning journeys, please contact Julie Sloan, 01292 616218 or email: julie.sloan@ayrshire-arran.org

September 3 rd – Wednesday	Carradale – Scotland
September 10 th – Wednesday	Allendale and Haydon Bridge – Northumberland, England
September 14 th – Sunday	Breadalbane – Scotland
September 16 th – Tuesday	Burgh by Sands – Cumbria, England
September 25 th Thursday	Carsphain and the Isle of Whithorn – Scotland

September 3rd – Wednesday

Carradale – Scotland

This learning journey will visit Carradale Network Centre. The Centre includes a recently refurbished Tearoom, a Heritage Museum and Tourist Information Office. The Heritage Group due to its strong support provided by the local community and members have been able to expand its activities. Visitors to the area look for outdoor experiences which includes forest trekking, wildlife spotting and mountain biking, we will therefore also visit Carradale Bikes and Buggies a community business and registered charity that have developed to service this market and actively promote heritage trails.



Carradale is a small village situated on the east coast of the Kintyre peninsula overlooking the Kilbrannan Sound and Arran. Carradale was once a busy fishing village and a popular holiday destination served by the Clyde steamers, however, today it is more popular with visitors looking for an outdoor experience which includes forest trekking, wildlife spotting and mountain biking.

Carradale Bikes and Buggies is situated at the Network Centre, owned by Network Carradale, a community business and registered charity. The Centre also includes a recently refurbished Tearoom now trading as **Nellie B's**, a Heritage Museum and (soon) a Tourist Information Office.

As a community business all profits from the Tearoom and Bikes & Buggies are invested back into the community and individuals making a real difference to local people's lives.

Time 8:00 – 19:00

NB Ayr + pickups/depending on delegates – start time may slightly vary and will be confirmed once bookings are complete.

September 10th – Wednesday

Allendale and Haydon Bridge – Northumberland, England

This learning journey will visit Allendale Forge Studios Community Interest Group and Art Gallery (named as best practice community interest group in the UK), Allen Valleys Tourism Association, Haydon Bridge Community Library and Tourism Gateway, The John Martin Heritage Trail and Allendale Brewery. Allen Valleys houses many dynamic go-getting individuals and groups who embrace their rural location. They collaborate on many projects to maximise possible funding streams, marketing activity and to make the most of their area for both tourists and for their rural community. Young people are actively encouraged to explore their potential and help develop tourism/art/heritage projects.



Amanda Galbraith will give a talk about the development of The Forge – (named as the best practice Community Interest Company in the UK), from the initial idea, to fundraising over 1 million pounds to build this state of the art community asset in a rural area.

The Forge is situated in Allendale in the Allen Valley, Northumberland, an area rich in history. There are twelve working studios, café, art gallery and the gallery shop all situated in the newly built Art, Heritage Craft and Visitors Centre on the old 17th century site of the village Forge. There are art classes and textile courses, monthly art exhibitions that change with the seasons, musical evenings and children's activities that are part of an award winning youth project. During the year the Forge holds several open studio events and Network Days. The Centre also offers hot-desk space. Conference/meeting room, video conferencing, secure business broadband and free Wi Fi in the cafe.

(We will also take in The Forge latest marketing tool – a listed red phone box in Hexham opened by Robson Green. One of the smallest art galleries in the world. This is used for monthly exhibitions and leaflets about events at The Forge to attract locals and tourists).



2012 – Named as best practice project – Commission for Rural Communities – Barriers to education, employment and training for young people in rural areas

2012 – Named as best practice Community Interest Company UK CIC Regulator

2011 – Best Rural Business – Women into the Network (WIN)

2008 – Winners of the North East Business Awards – Cultural & Creative Business

2008 – North East Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Awards – runner up

2008 – One North East Enterprising Britain

2006 – Winner of the Scarman Trust Community Champions Award (Youth Project)

Allen Valleys Tourism Association

The Allen Valleys Tourism and Visitor Network was set up by a group of businesses working together to promote the area. The businesses are all involved with tourists and visitors to the area. The aim is to provide visitors with the information they need for their stay in the Allen Valleys and to encourage them to stay longer and make return visits.

The network is part of the Foundation of Northumberland Tourism Associations (FONTA), a joint group of 14 tourism networks across the county, which is working alongside the county council to encourage tourism to different parts in the county.

Haydon Bridge Community Library



'The Bridge' – Community Library, Visitor Information Centre and Internet Café

A Community Library, run by volunteers from the Parish with training and support from the Northumberland County Council Library Service

A Community and Visitor Information Point providing information about tourist attractions and tourist accommodation in Northumberland

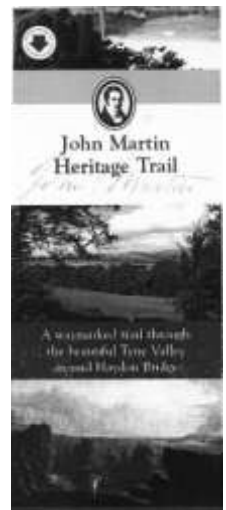
An Internet Café providing Internet access for the public and refreshments

John Martin Heritage Trail

This popular walk covers the areas which influenced Victorian artist John Martin, born in the village, who became the '... most popular artist of his day'. There are regular waymarks and six information panels en route. A free pamphlet with maps has also been produced.

Allendale Brewery

Allendale Brewery is a popular micro-brewery which is expanding with assistance from a government grant. The Brewery provides much needed work opportunities in this rural area. Many tourism initiatives work in partnership for events and special ales.



Time 8:00 – 19:00

NB Ayr + pickups/depending on delegates – start time may slightly vary and will be confirmed once bookings are complete



September 14th – Sunday

Breadalbane - Scotland

This learning journey will take us to Breadalbane where we will meet Breadalbane Tourism Co-operative (BTC) – a collection of tourism businesses/individuals who work together to promote the wider area. They have successfully developed a range of ready-made visitor packages, in a bid to increase low season business. The group have successfully secured funding from Co-operative Development Scotland and other funders through collaboration. We will be able to see first-hand the success of the “The Ring of Breadalbane Explorer” bus service a hop-on hop-off timetabled bus service which allows visitors and locals to experience all that is on offer in the Breadalbane area. It has given new life to rural communities by providing viable public transport and maximising the tourism offer of the area, many new small tourism businesses have set up on the route and rural communities have benefited.

The Breadalbane Tourism Co-operative (BTC) was formed in 2012 by 10 founder member businesses as part of a pilot for the Scottish Enterprise Planning to Succeed Rural Development Programme. Members included owners of accommodation (hotels, self-catering, hostel, and campsite), food and beverage outlets, a coach operator, shops, activity operators and visitor attractions.

The group developed an action plan based around areas of common interest and met formally as a group during the year and informally between members on numerous other occasions.

Ken Chew, chairman of Breadalbane Tourism Co-Operative, (BTC), said: “The Ring of Breadalbane Explorer is a pilot hop-on hop off timetabled bus service which will allow visitors and locals to experience all that is on offer in the wonderful Breadalbane area.

“We are very excited about this new initiative. As far as we know this is the first time a tourism group has collaborated in this way. We have successfully sourced funding from both the private and public sector and secured buy-in from two different councils in the area.”



(This day is proposed for Sunday in order to accommodate groups who have expressed an interest in participating in a learning journey but cannot make the weekday ones)

Time 8:00 – 19:00

NB Ayr + pickups/depending on delegates – start time may slightly vary and will be confirmed once bookings are complete

September 16th – Tuesday

Burgh by Sands – Cumbria, England

This learning journey will visit Burgh by Sands located on the northern edge of Cumbria. We will meet Peter Cottam who worked in partnership with other parish members and the community to develop the village hall and many other tourism initiatives within the village (to include funding): They created a central village facility (which houses interpretation and exhibitions) an oral history and archiving project, and developed heritage and church trails.

Burgh by Sands had ambitious plans involving tourism as part of their parish plan. The key was community consultation involving the right people, and also making sure everyone could have their say.



K
King Edward I

The aims for Burgh by Sands Recreation, village Green and Wetlands Project summary.

To physically realise an accessible green in the centre of Burgh by Sands and establish the village green as a focus for community recreational activities. Create an integrated “Heart of the Village” with the green and wetland area as a core component. Develop interpretation boards and heritage walks booklets which provide a comprehensive experience of the area’s history. Strengthening community cohesion, registering the green space as a Town and Village Green once all development has taken place.

The area has a rich historical heritage. Being close to the border with Scotland resulted in Burgh by Sands being for centuries at the heart of a turbulent area. The story of King Edward I is part of the heritage trail.

Voted as “Northern Village of the Year” in recognition of its outstanding community spirit Burgh by Sands community embrace their position within a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We will also hear about links to “The Blind Bard” Cumbrian dialect poet John Stagg (1770-1823), known as the English Robert Burns!

Time 9:00 – 18:00

NB Ayr + pick ups/depending on delegates – start time may slightly vary and would be confirmed once bookings are complete

September 25th Thursday

Carsphain and the Isle of Whithorn – Scotland

This learning journey will visit heritage and community groups in Carsphain and the Isle of Whithorn. We will hear about initiatives such as the community shop, the welcome leaflet/website that has been developed which details activities events and exhibitions in the village hall. We will also hear about the volunteer model which successfully runs the centre. Volunteers provide a warm welcome and are the local experts on the region.

Whithorn is one of the most southerly communities in Scotland. We will hear from the Isle Futures group who will share with us their plans for the area which include initiatives which will encourage an increased number of visitors to the Isle and the surrounding areas, to include ideas around tourism and arts and crafts.



Isle Futures is a community led company with 8 trustees and 300 members from a village with only 300 residents. This illustrates the high level of community involvement, support and commitment to the project.

They aim to improve the area for locals and visitors alike, looking at key areas of the Natural Environment, Fishing and Agriculture, Crafts and Skills and Tourism and Accommodation. These areas will assist in encouraging business start up; there will be support for entrepreneurs in order to achieve sustainable jobs and economic growth in the long term.

Time 9:00 – 18:00

NB Ayr + pickups/depending on delegates – start time may slightly vary and will be confirmed once bookings are complete

Tourism Toolkit

The second initiative is to develop a practical and accessible tourism toolkit to assist and support community groups looking to take forward tourism projects. The toolkit will cover topics such as organising tourism events, developing heritage trails, potential sources of funding, and developing a local marketing and PR campaign.