

The west goes wild for coasts and waters

Scotland's tourism industry come together for new campaign

The first ever pan west coast Scotland tourism campaign has received funding support from VisitScotland.

West Coast Waters, bringing together an unprecedented 22 industry groups from across Scotland's west coast, has received a £40,000 VisitScotland Growth Fund award. The Growth Fund, delivered by the national tourism organisation supports national, regional and sectoral tourism groups across Scotland to deliver partnership marketing campaigns.

A collaboration between 21 of Scotland's west coast destination partners and WildScotland, with CalMac Ferries also a key partner, the campaign looks to attract visitors to the west coast and surrounding islands in 2020 to either get on, or in the water. This is following a major scoping initiative in 2018 where 300 hubs across the west coast were identified as locations where visitors can experience Scotland's marine tourism offering.

Using the Year of Coasts and Waters 2020 as a platform, the 12-month campaign will work with influencers and use digital marketing to raise awareness of the sheer breadth and scale of opportunities available across the west coast of Scotland for adventure seekers and curious travelers from the UK. Influencer activity will begin this weekend which includes travel blogger 'Adventures Around Scotland' going on a week-long tour of Wester Ross, Skye, Harris and Lewis, and 'Travels with a Kilt' exploring Lochaber, Skye, the Uists, Barra and Oban.

The campaign will focus on four key products:

- Boat trips exploring the wildlife, natural wonders, uninhabited islands, remote attractions and stunning scenery of the west coast
- Island hopping with Calmac and other ferry and boat operator services
- Trails of Discovery including snorkeling, sea kayaking, seafood, whisky, whales and dolphins
- Snorkeling, Wild Swimming, Surfing and Paddlesports

The campaign's landing page was launched today together with a toolkit for the area's tourism industry, showing how they can get involved in the campaign and make the most of the opportunities presented by the Year of Coasts and Waters 2020.

Carron Tobin, West Coast Waters Coordinator and Campaign Project Manager, said: *"West Coast Waters is hugely exciting with collaboration at a scale never experienced before. The research undertaken in 2018 revealed not just the individual opportunities in each destination but the extent of the opportunity by working together. This campaign is the evidence of this becoming reality.*

"A workshop in January 2019 scoped out this campaign and each of the destination partners have made a contribution to be part of it. We have tremendous support from our agency and local authority partners too, and the VisitScotland Growth Fund award has been the catalyst for even further engagement. We are all keenly looking forward to welcoming visitors to our coast and islands and helping them slow down, immerse their senses and explore the roads less traveled across the West Coast."

David Adams McGilp, VisitScotland Regional Director, said: *"West Coast Waters is a multi-destination collaborative effort to realise the extraordinary potential of the maritime environment up*

and down the region. This exciting new campaign will showcase the vast marine tourism offering of Scotland's west coast and bring visitors to the area to discover this offering for themselves.

"Partnership and collaboration are at the heart of Scottish tourism and I'm delighted VisitScotland are able to support this innovative campaign that will help bring success, well-being and prosperity to the west of Scotland."

Peter Griffiths, Strategic Marketing Manager, CalMac Ferries, said: *"It is exciting to see that Year of Coasts and Waters has fired the imagination of so many different people and groups but the real success from the year is the cross-border and pan-discipline working which has been displayed within the West Coast Waters initiative. We see huge opportunity in this especially when you consider the legacy value and believe that 2020 will be the most successful and memorable themed year yet."*

In 2020, Scotland celebrates its Coasts and Waters with a year-long programme of events and activities which will shine a spotlight on these vital elements of our landscape.

The full list of bloggers travelling around the west of Scotland as part of the campaign in September are as follows:

- Wester Ross, Skye, Harris and Lewis - Adventures around Scotland 21-29 Sept
- Lochaber, Road to the Isles and Small Isles, Skye, The Uists, Barra and Oban –Travels with a Kilt – 19-30 Sept
- Morvern, Ardnamurchan, Mull, Coll, Tiree and Argyll – The Chaotic Scot – 20-29 Sept
- Clyde Coast, Kintyre, Islay, Jura, Colonsay and Argyll – Watch Me See – 22-30 Sept
- Loch Lomond, Clyde Sea Lochs, Arran, Kintyre, Bute, Cowal and Cumbrae
 - Five Ferries by Car – Laretour – 21-24 September
 - Loch Lomond Cowal and Bute – Kim Kjaerside – 27-29 September
 - Cumbrae in a day – Castle Hunter – 28 Sept

The collaboration delivering the campaign is called the West Coast Marine Tourism Collaborative. Led by the Argyll & the Isles Tourism Co-operative, it was established in November 2017 with representation from 18 pan west coast Destination Management Organisations/marketing groups. It has since grown to embrace 22 destination and sectoral groups representing in excess of 2,500 tourism interests, namely;

Argyll & The Isles Tourism Cooperative
Coll Development Trust
Colonsay Marketing Group
Cowal Marketing Group
Explore Kintyre & Gigha
Heart of Argyll Tourism Alliance
Inveraray Marketing Group
Islay & Jura Tourism Marketing Group
Isle of Cumbrae Tourist Association
Kyles Marketing Group
Love Loch Lomond
Marketing Mull & Iona
Oban & Lorn Tourism Alliance

Outdoor Capital of the UK (Lochaber Chamber of Commerce)
Outer Hebrides Tourism
Road to the Isles Marketing Group
Skye Connect
SMMAATA (Ardnamurchan and wider area)
Visit Arran
Visit Bute
Visit Wester Ross/ Wester Ross Biosphere
WildScotland

Public sector and travel partners include Calmac Ferries, Scotrail, Scottish Natural Heritage, UHI Centre for Recreation and Tourism Research and their EU funded CAPITEN project, Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park, Argyll & Bute Council, North Ayrshire Council with conversations ongoing with other partners.

The VisitScotland Growth Fund supports collaborative tourism marketing projects which focus on growth and ensure that visitors experience the best of Scotland. To be eligible for a Growth Fund award, applicants must place a strong emphasis on digital marketing and the creation of digital content assets.

For more information about the campaign go to www.westcoastwaters.co.uk.

For more information about VisitScotland Growth Fund, go to www.visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/funding/growth-fund



Image by Ian Watson features VisitScotland Regional Quality Tourism Manager Anne Massey (centre of the mooring) with West Coast Waters Coordinator and Campaign Project Manager Carron Tobin (to her left) and Stuart Wilson of CalMac (to her right) as the West Coast Waters Collaboration met at the Riverside Museum in Glasgow to plan the campaign's launch.