



Moray Walking & Outdoor Festival

About the Project

The annual Moray Walking & Outdoor Festival was first held in 2011. It takes place at mid-summer and is co-ordinated by the Moray Way Association, which promotes the 100-mile walking route the Moray Way. The motivations to run the festival include wanting to share the area's beauty, nature and heritage; promoting physical and mental health; and supporting the local economy. Around 60% of festival-goers are local (within 50 miles).

The Festival typically includes some 50 events spread over 10 days. As well as walking, there have been events centred around cycling, skiff rowing, surfing, bird watching, storytelling, hill skills, white water rafting, wild swimming, heritage events, poetry, art and wildlife. Events are graded to indicate the level of activity and physical effort involved, ranging from "easy" to "challenging".

A decentralised structure – events are organised by a variety of providers

The Festival is organised in an unusual, robust way. It is managed by a small group of volunteers supported by a professional organiser and numerous local event providers. Each provider organises their own event, with support from the Festival for issues such as pricing, first aid, risk assessment and insurance. Event providers include commercial outdoor activity organisations, government agencies, community groups and individuals.

This way of working – where the Festival team itself does not directly provide most of the events – means that the workload is spread out across a range of organisations and represents the whole of Moray. This greatly contributes to the sustainability of the Festival.

At one time the Festival spent considerable sums of money on paper programmes, but now predominantly markets its activities online through social media, a newsletter and listings in other relevant publications. 18 large banners at transport entry points into Moray ensure that the Festival is highly visible.

“We have 25+ event organisers in Moray. This decentralised approach, where groups and individuals organise their own activities under the Moray Festival umbrella, is such a good way of working, because it keeps the workload manageable and means that we can offer a wide variety of activities, from poetry strolls to challenging hill-walks.”

Diane Smith,
Moray Walking &
Outdoor Festival



Location: Moray

Type: Do, Enjoy

When Set Up: 2011

How Funded: Commission (around 20%) on sales of Festival tickets, plus, in the past, grants from funders including Forestry and Land Scotland and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations.

Beneficiaries: Locals and visitors who enjoy the walks; secondary economic benefits to shops etc.; local groups which can become better known through the Festival.

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