

SCOTO COMMUNITY TOURISM NETWORK CIC SC726720

CIC 34 REPORT/SOCIAL AUDIT REPORT 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024

Introduction:

Following a resolution at the SCOTO AGM in 2023, SCOTO successfully transitioned to become a CIC in January 2024. We are required to submit a formal CIC 34 report with our accounts to demonstrate what we have been doing in pursuit of our activities and the benefits this has provided our communities.

The CIC 34 report has 4 parts and covers the period of the accounts – 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024. Part 1 is our social audit and impact report for the full period of the accounts and including the period from January to March 2024 when SCOTO transitioned to become a CIC.

Parts One and Two set out SCOTO COMMUNITY TOURISM NETWORK CIC'S 'Social Audit Report' covering the relevant points for submission to Companies House. This report was approved for submissions at SCOTO COMMUNITY TOURISM NETWORK CIC'S AGM on 4th Dec 2024.

PART ONE: GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE COMPANY'S ACTIVITIES AND IMPACT

During the financial year 2023-2024 during which we transitioned to become SCOTO COMMUNITY TOURISM NETWORK CIC, we have progressed the following under each of our seven approved CIC activities with the community benefit as noted.

Please note CLT is our abbreviation for Community Led Tourism.

1. Provide Virtual and In-Person Forums for CLT Learning, Networking and Connecting

Having transitioned to be a Cooperative CIC in January, we finalised and launched our membership scheme with Networkers as the full members with voting rights and Enterprisers and Supporters as Associate Members. For this reporting period we had 44 networkers signed up (at the time of our AGM in December 2024 this exceeds 375).

In February 2024 SCOTO held its annual gathering in Dumfries with 126 participants at the conference on Day 1 and 73 participating in local learning exchanges on Day 2. The event was sponsored by South of Scotland Enterprise. Local community players were enabled to attend via a funded partnership with Galloway and South Ayrshire UNESCO Biosphere and the event significantly

enhanced their awareness and understanding of community led tourism and the benefits it provides to communities. With funding sourced from Scottish Community Alliance the learning exchanges enabled 73 participants and hosts to engage in one of six themed exchanges visiting 15 different community led tourism enterprises in and around Dumfries and for all participants to visit and hear first hand what each host had achieved, and benefit from insights and lessons learned which they can apply to their own endeavours.

Throughout Autumn and Winter in this reporting period SCOTO CIC has provided monthly online gatherings for members on current themes and/or topics requested by the members. These have been a combination of awareness raising topics (eg relating to the disposal of churches across Scotland and support being provided, and the proposed visitor levy legislation) and showcasing best practice (eg community run toilets and motorhome aires). Over the reporting period we had 113 attendees at 5 of our online gatherings. The immediate benefit is enhancing knowledge and awareness of what others are doing, receive updates on current policy and consultation activity and have the opportunity to interrogate presenters, discuss and explore opportunities.

SCOTO operates a WhatsApp Group and a FaceBook closed group for members for the exchange of ideas and questions on topics relevant to community led tourism. These were active with 129 signed up to these groups during this reporting period

2. Online learning and development resources for CLT

Throughout this reporting period SCOTO CIC has continued to add and share learning and development resources on www.scoto.co.uk. This has included sharing 15 existing case studies and publishing six new case studies on community led tourism enterprises in Ayrshire. These case studies explore specific topics – notably community run toilets, motorhome aires, accommodation provision and events and festivals. The benefit for our communities is enhanced awareness of what has been done elsewhere to enhance and inform their own project activity.

During this reporting period SCOTO created and enhanced 20 themed areas on the website which provide toolkits and resources for CLT practitioners and also provide signposting to resources and support provided by other organisations and agencies.

SCOTO published regular newsletters and Memos to highlight new resources being added and events. We had a contact list of 331 people for this reporting period and published 23 newsletters/memos.

3. Programmes of support for CLT enterprises including grants

During this reporting period SCOTO facilitated 3 training workshops benefitting 86 people and covering Virtual Reality, Digital Photography and Social Media Impact, and Churches and Tourism Opportunities.

In this reporting period SCOTO CIC sourced a Scottish Community Alliance grant to support our members through the provision of a professional travel writer interviewing and producing 20 visitor facing blogs about their community led tourism enterprise activities and sharing these to a wider audience on SCOTO CIC's digital channels. SCOTO CIC also sourced a SCA grant for a community learning exchange programme linked to the annual gathering in February 2024 where 73 individuals engaged in community led tourism benefitted from enhanced knowledge and contacts.

In this reporting period SCOTO CIC worked with Geotourist to develop a community run toilet trail on their digital platform to raise awareness of 18 facilities being provided by communities in Scotland and how visitors can support their endeavours through donations to ensure facilities remain open into the future.

4. Provision of a promotional platform for community led tourism activity

In this reporting period SCOTO CIC launched www.belocal.scot as a visitor facing web presence with social channels which profile associate community led tourism enterprises to conscious consumers.

An interactive map was produced with functionality being developed to enable the enterprises to update their own listings and with 100 entries in this reporting period. Over 40 blogs (including those noted in item 3) were published on this platform and shared on the BeLocal social media channels targeted at ethical traveller audiences through links and hashtags.

5. Gather data and intelligence

SCOTO CIC undertook an audit of community led tourism enterprises within rural Ayrshire on behalf of ARIA which generated important data for Ayrshire and identified 99 CLT enterprises. This audit has allowed SCOTO CIC to produce initial models on the potential scale and impact of community led tourism across Scotland - seeking to ensure it is valued and supported for the benefit of all communities within the network.

SCOTO CIC undertook three online surveys to gather data and intelligence on a long distance trail, the proposed visitor levy and interest in a cultural heritage network in Cairngorms National Park with a total of 243 respondents. These results fed into wider discussions and considerations with the benefit that community led tourism interests were properly considered in these initiatives.

6. Undertake contracts and services that support growth and development of community led tourism across Scotland

In this reporting period SCOTO CIC undertook four major contracts with the following benefits:

- *North Highland Initiative – SCOTO developed and piloted a new Press Pause initiative to embed a more community led approach to tourism*

within individual communities and provide recommendations on how to do things differently with examples from elsewhere. The pilot benefited Lochcarron and Thurso with actions progressed by these communities. This has now been developed as a programme with NHI and is being delivered in other communities across Scotland with each community securing notable benefits from the discussions, hearing different perspectives and agreeing priorities within each community.

- *Ayrshire Rural and Island Ambition Fund – SCOTO was awarded a contract to progress an audit and identified 99 community led tourism enterprises across the region; produced six case studies for publication on www.scoto.co.uk and delivery of Press Pause workshops in nine communities within three valleys in Ayrshire providing these communities with meaningful insights into tourism at present in their area and recommendations on how to improve the benefits delivered to the communities.*
- *Cairngorms National Park Authority – SCOTO was awarded a contract to progress an exploratory study considering the establishment of a cultural heritage network in the National Park and engaged with and considered the stance of over 60 community interests. A key benefit was ensuring their views were properly considered.*
- *The Kintyre Way SCIO – SCOTO was appointed to consider a more community led approach to managing this long distance trail and progressed nine community workshops and produced of a five year operational plan for the Kintyre Way which recognises and develops its health and wellbeing benefits for the local communities and residents as well as the economic value of visitors on the trail. This new approach has supported the SCIO and nine communities in recruiting new trustees and Friends of the Kintyre Way who help with local maintenance and walks.*
- *SCOTO was appointed by Upper Nithsdale Tourism Partnership and Braemar (via Historic Churches Scotland) to progress Press Pause facilitated workshops and reports with positive feedback from both.*

7 A focal point that strengthens the representation of community led tourism initiatives

SCOTO provided speaker presentations/panellists at 5 national and 7 regional conferences and speaking events to raise awareness of SCOTO and Community Led Tourism plus its benefits for communities and the tourism industry. This included being a curator for a study visit at the Scottish Rural and Islands Conference in Fortwilliam.

SCOTO took part in a 10 minute STV Scotland Tonight feature on Community Led Tourism and SCOTO's campaign for visitors to see themselves as 'temporary locals' which has had 2.8k on YouTube since June 2023.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTYFMHGOYTs&t=19s>

SCOTO facilitated discussions between network members on the planned visitor levy being introduced in Scotland. SCOTO provided an online survey to enable

community interests to share their views and concerns with 33 responses and submitted this evidence to the parliamentary process.

SCOTO CIC ran two online surveys aimed at community interests one on the Kintyre Way and one on the potential for a cultural heritage network in the Cairngorms National Park. Both secured important stances from community interests that were then considered as part of the reporting and recommendations and provided the benefit of ensuring their views were properly considered.

SCOTO CIC operates 4 social media pages on Twitter/X, FaceBook, Instagram and LinkedIn. Over this period SCOTO posted weekly on each channel and had a combined following of 1655. The benefit for communities is a continued presence on social media with highly relevant topics, engagement with wider interests and profiling what individual communities are doing.

PART TWO : CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

SCOTO's primary stakeholders are

1. Individual networkers
2. Community run tourism enterprises
3. Supporters & Partners
4. The Tourism Industry and Communities Sector

We provide regular newsletters and memos to our individual networkers and enterprises, supporters and partners setting out important updates, upcoming events and new information, and in each ask for feedback on any issues they would like us to consider and advice on future themes for us to cover in newsletters, gatherings and other activity.

We hold monthly online gatherings over Autumn and Winter for our stakeholders usually covering a specific theme that has been requested by our stakeholders or something new that will impact on at least some of our network. We specifically use LinkedIn to provide updates on our activity and seek views.

We have a WhatsApp group and FaceBook group for networkers to share thoughts and ideas, and seek advice from us and the wider network. This is used weekly as a minimum.

We held our annual conference event in February to update on our activity, outline our plans for the coming year, showcase best practice from around the country and undertake local learning exchanges. The programme is constructed to ensure our network stakeholders can inform our future work plan with breakout sessions. We undertake a post event evaluation survey and seek input on the venue and topics for future events.

We are an active member of the Scottish Community Alliance and attend their monthly meetings to learn what other community networks are doing, share our

updates and explore collaborations – a number of which are taking shape in 2024-25.

Our board attend local, regional and national tourism industry and community sector events to learn about industry/sector updates and also seek to present on community led tourism, our vision and our practical actions on the ground at these events. We use this as a platform for exploring collaborations and informing our own activity for the benefit of our community members.

PART THREE : DIRECTOR'S REMUNERATION

No remuneration was received by the directors.

PART FOUR : TRANSFER OF ASSETS OTHER THAN FOR FULL CONSIDERATION

No transfer of assets other than for full consideration has been made.

END OF REPORT 4th December 2024

Approved at SCOTO Community Tourism Network CIC AGM on 4th December 2024

Proposed by: Sarah MacLean

Seconded by: Howard Wilkinson

Signed:

Carron Tobin, Director