

Community Tourism: *Community Wealth Building in Action*



Case Studies



COMMUNITY TOURISM IN SCOTLAND

SCOTO CIC is Scotland's Community Tourism Network. Established in 2022, SCOTO has gone from strength to strength supporting communities in embracing tourism as a force for good that delivers meaningful benefits for local people and places.

Community tourism is not new. Communities across Scotland have been providing heritage centres, events and festivals for decades.

Tourism is an export industry so can readily provide much needed revenue to sustain local services and can also be the trigger to celebrate local heritage and culture in ways that matter to local people.

What is new is that with Scotland's pioneering community empowerment and asset transfer legislation, more and more communities are opting to own assets and many have a visitor facing element to what they offer.

With the landmark Community Wealth Building Act now introduced in Scotland, community tourism deserves a spotlight as a robust means to build even more social, environmental, cultural and economic wealth in our rural, island and urban communities.

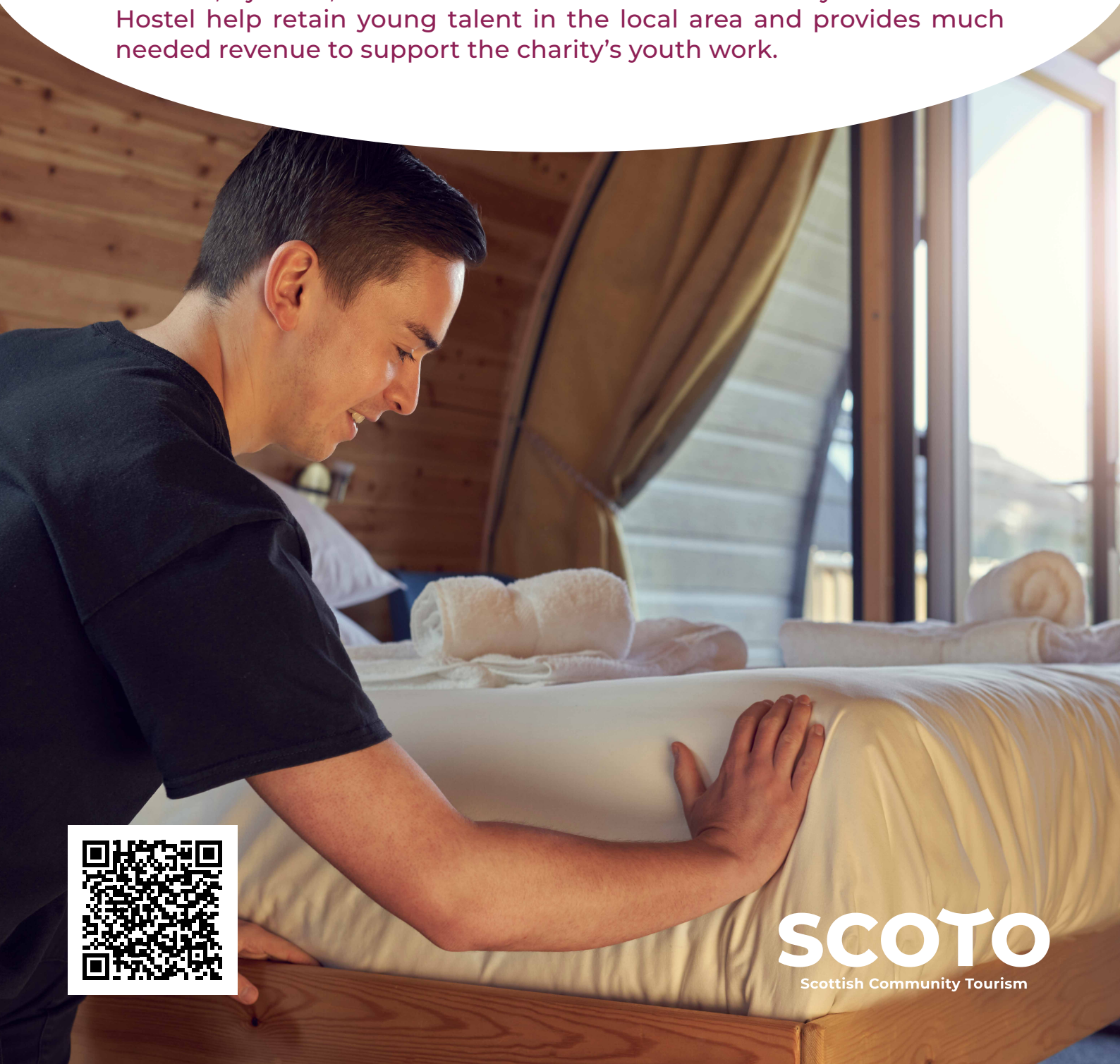
COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING IN ACTION



Callander Hostel:

Providing a memorable stay that supports local young people

Callander Youth Project Trust operates a four-star hostel, four glamping pods and a function suite with apprenticeships provided for local young people. This training has helped these individuals secure local jobs and pursue careers in local businesses as, for example, a dog trainer, a butcher, a janitor, a dental nurse and an undertaker. Stays at Callander Hostel help retain young talent in the local area and provides much needed revenue to support the charity's youth work.

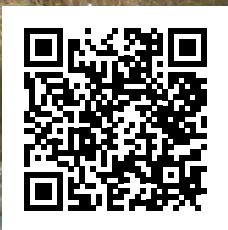


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Friends of the Kintyre Way: Encouraging walkers to explore Kintyre's, businesses and communities

The Kintyre Way is a 100-mile trail connecting eight communities from Tarbert to Machrihanish. This 20 year old community-driven walking route showcases the extraordinary wealth and diversity of landscapes and habitats and the many small businesses that provide food, distilleries, activities and accommodation. Volunteer 'Friends of the Kintyre Way' patrol and maintain local stretches of the trail and run monthly walking events for locals and visitors to meet and enjoy each other's company.



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Discover Cullen:

Providing inspiration to visit
local businesses and attractions

Discover Cullen is a volunteer-run destination organisation providing a one-stop online guide for exploring Cullen and a seasonal tourist office - celebrating its 30th birthday. The website also sells maps, guidebooks and local gifts which brings in notable revenue. They work with and supports local businesses and community groups, host monthly beach cleans for locals and visitors and has put Cullen on the map with their annual Cullen Skink World Championships.

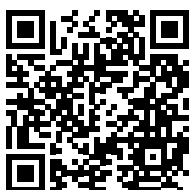


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Lochness Hub & Travel: Inspiring visitors to dwell longer & experience outstanding Highland hospitality

Community owned Loch Ness Hub & Travel operates in the former VisitScotland VIC in Drumnadrochit providing visitor information, toilets, authentic gifts, baggage transfers, luggage storage, shuttle services and five star boat cruises, e-bike hire, fishing and Highland Cow tours. Their annual turnover exceeds £700k and provides a variety of jobs for 14 local people as well as delivering school meals and providing free out of school club transport.



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A' the Airts:

Encouraging participation in local arts and crafts for entertainment, learning and fun

A' the Airts is a community owned arts and crafts centre in Sanquhar that brings visitors and locals together through creativity, culture and learning. Through its café, cinema, craft shop, events and workshops, it supports local artists and young people while preserving and promoting the tradition of Sanquhar knitting and celebrating the area's heritage.



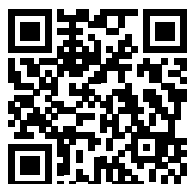
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UnstFest:

Bringing family fun for
locals & visitors to the UK's
most northerly island

The annual week-long UnstFest brings affordable family fun to local residents while drawing Shetland visitors to the UK's most northerly island to stay and spend time with the locals. With a diverse programme of sports, music, arts and nature-based activities, the festival also provides an important source of income for community groups, helping to fund projects and activities throughout the rest of the year.



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Silverburn Park:

Reviving a historic park for local well-being, enterprise and employment

Silverburn Park is a major £10m community led tourism and regeneration initiative managed by the award winning Fife Employment Access Trust (FEAT). The park offers camping and glamping, a café and woodland walks with the former Flax Mill being brought back into life in 2026 as a visitor centre with craft units, gift shop, events, accommodation and a community hub, all designed to benefit the people of Levenmouth and beyond through volunteering, training and employment.



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Welcome to Wick:

Creating a renewed sense of identity to support regeneration

A new website, place brand and map have been launched by Wick Development Trust following SCOTO Press Pause® to encourage more visitors to stop and spend time in their town – Wick, the Seafaring Capital of Caithness. The Trust took over the lease of the local Wick River Campsite in 2022 and have since invested in new environmentally friendly toilets and shower facilities and a reception point. Revenue generated is supporting the Welcome to Wick destination marketing activity and ambitious town centre regeneration projects.



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New Town Hall Bunkhouse: Attracting overnight stays to support local health, wellbeing and Town Hall activities

All Roads Lead to Whithorn Trust is a volunteer-led charity that spent £2.65m transforming Whithorn's former Town Hall into a vibrant community hub with an award-winning bunkhouse built for Whithorn Way walkers and to encourage overnight stays. The bunkhouse revenue supports the running costs of the Town Hall which hosts a boxing club, gym, flexible community spaces and multiple events, festivals and health and wellbeing activities.



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Tartan Week Lochcarron: Celebrating sense of place and building community cohesion

As a pilot for SCOTO's innovative Press Pause® initiative, the community of Lochcarron decided to stage their own Tartan Week in the autumn in recognition of their village being the first home of the global Lochcarron tartan brand. Launched in 2024 it has become an annual event appealing to locals as much as visitors with the primary benefit being a renewed sense of community cohesion and shared ambition.





Mill of Benholm: Safeguarding built and natural heritage to support local health and wellbeing

An outstanding historic water powered mill in rural Aberdeenshire set amongst ancient woodlands, orchards and gardens is being restored by the Mill of Benholm Enterprise (SCIO) as a community hub and garden with a volunteer run café and shop featuring local arts, crafts and produce. This is raising proceeds for the restoration, upkeep and operational costs of the Mill of Benholm as it gets developed as a viable visitor attraction to safeguard its future.



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Bùth Bharraigh:

Providing much needed goods and services that keep money on the island

Bùth Bharraigh is a community retail and visitor hub with a range of goods and services. It is a route to market for local suppliers and acts as a point of contact for islanders, as well as a signpost for visitor enquiries. They provide volunteering, employment, training and work experience opportunities and boosts the local economy by keeping money on the island. Every £1 spent in Bùth Bharraigh results in £2.58 for the local economy of Barra & Vatersay.



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Communities stepping in where the public sector step back

Increasingly, as public bodies face unprecedented financial pressures, much needed local services and facilities are being cutback and often closed– toilets, visitor information, transport, libraries and local hubs and halls.. Meanwhile communities are recognising the absolute need to provide these services to ensure not just our local but also our visitors' basic needs are met and the overall Scottish visitor experience is the best it can be in their community.

Communities are seeing the opportunity to take over these services and be innovative in making these viable and also as a prime means to grow local social, environmental, cultural and economic wealth. But they are currently doing this on an individual and quite precarious foundation.

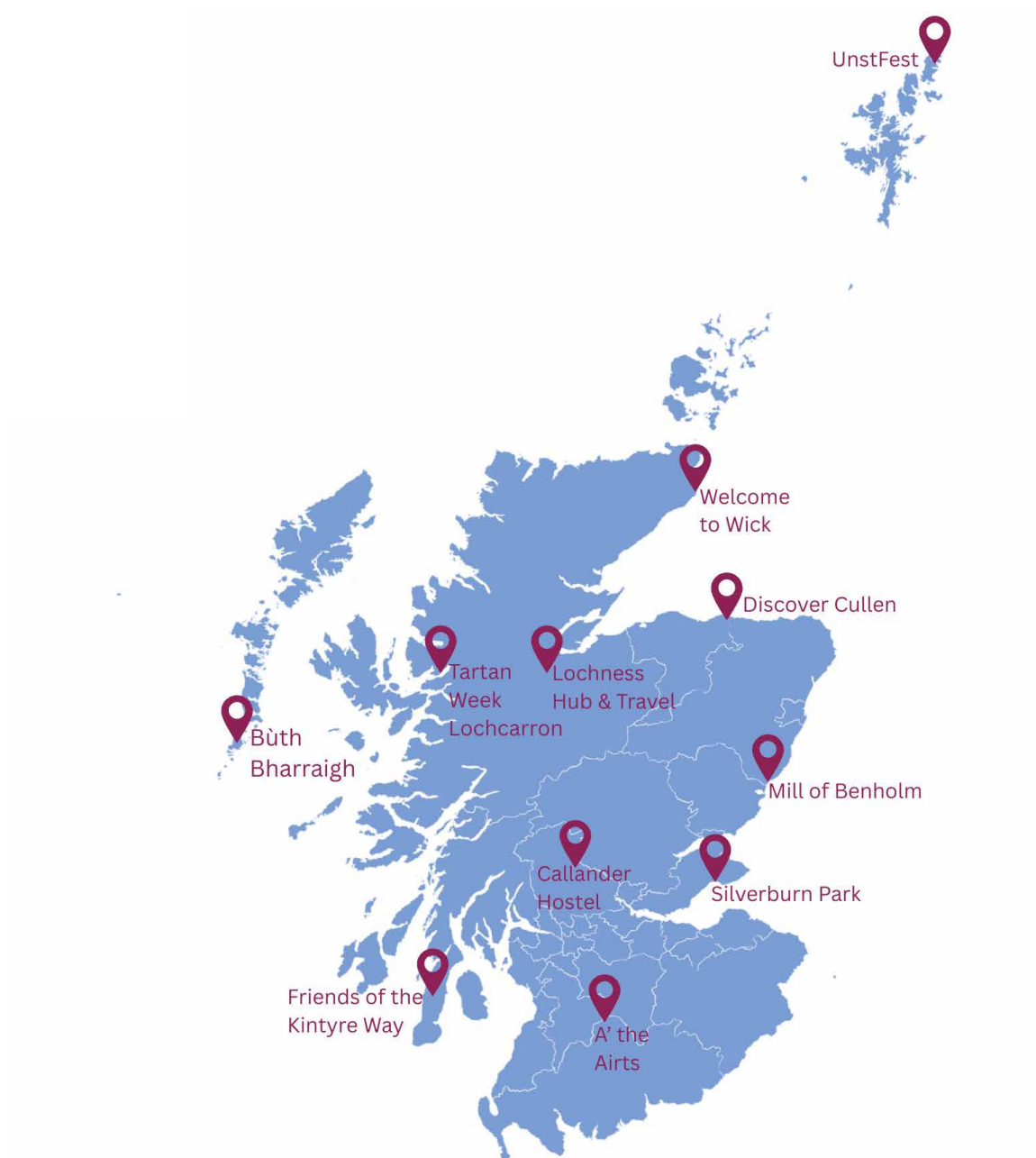
Measuring what Matters

Tourism measurement currently focuses on economic value and visitor volumes, rather than benefit and impact in and on our communities. To sustain these community innovations, and safeguard our global reputation as an outstanding safe and welcoming nation, a national priority is to firstly establish a measurement framework for the impact of tourism on and in Scotland's communities.

By measuring the community wealth that is being generated through tourism, we have the evidence needed for the sustained investment required to support these innovations, recognise their collective value and to ensure tourism is re-framed from being extractive to being regenerative and delivering net positive impacts in all of Scotland's communities.

COMMUNITY TOURISM – building social, economic, environmental and cultural wealth across Scotland's communities.

SNAPSHOTS OF COMMUNITY TOURISM IN ACTION



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PRESS PAUSE

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