

ARIA - Community Led Tourism

“PRESS PAUSE”

Cumbræ

Report and Recommendations

March 2025

BE LOCAL

SCOTO
Scottish Community Tourism

SCOTO

PRESS PAUSE

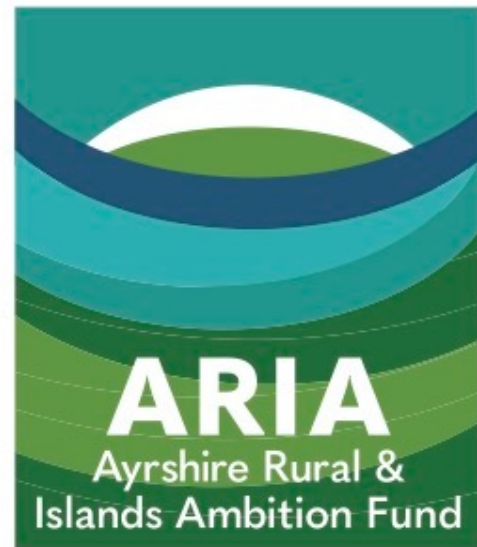


This Press Pause initiative has been funded by ARIA – The Ayrshire Rural and Islands Ambition Fund which is supported by the Scottish Government.

SCOTO were commissioned in 2023 to undertake an audit of community led tourism across Ayrshire, produce 6 case studies and deliver 'Press Pause' in three Ayrshire Valleys. They were then commissioned to do a further six Press Pause workshops with individual communities.



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SCOTD

PRESS PAUSE

COMMUNITY LED TOURISM IN Cumbrae REPORT STRUCTURE



SCOTO visited Cumbrae and facilitated a Press Pause Community Led Tourism workshop on 15 January 2025 at The Garrison in Millport, Cumbrae. We met with various local interests – business and community. Time was taken to experience the area and explore local sites and features of interest prior to and following the workshop.

This report provides context and sets out the key findings, and then offers a number of recommendations for the short and longer term.

ACRONYMS

VS – VisitScotland

AADA – Ayrshire & Arran Destination Alliance

CONTENTS

What is Community Led Tourism (CLT) ?



Recently there has been much more of a focus on responsible tourism for a sustainable future. This is at the heart of Scotland's national tourism strategy.

Responsible tourism is a collaborative approach which places an onus on all tourism players, not just visitors, to take responsibility for their actions. It seeks to protect our people, places and the planet by reducing negative impacts and ensuring as an absolute minimum they are no worse off.

A sustainable future meets current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own - focusing on environmental, social, and economic well-being.

COMMUNITY LED TOURISM goes further.

Community led tourism seeks added value from all tourism players and activity ensuring a host community – the people and the place, and ultimately the planet - are better off as a consequence of tourism, and in a way that matters to that specific community.

It builds on the principles of regenerative tourism which seeks to leave destinations in a better state than they were found by focusing on the individual priorities that have been identified by a host community as needing attention.

What is Community Led Tourism (CLT) ?



Historically many communities have felt that tourism happens to them - rather than with them. It was traditionally promoted by tourist boards, larger attractions and businesses - and more recently through numerous digital touch points – TV, film, social media, Online Travel Agents, bloggers, travel trade, VS and DMOs.

But as more and more communities across Scotland form local development trusts, take ownership of assets, and are providing visitor facing services and experiences.... there is a growing sense of tourism being not just something that can happen with the community but also something that can deliver many positive benefits and can help address priority issues such as social isolation, retaining young people, showcasing local producers and crafters and preserving artefacts and assets.

SCOTO defines community led tourism as being where a geographic community is directly involved in managing the tourism offer in their area and ensuring tourism derives tangible benefits at a local level.

SCOTO has categorised two types of community led tourism in Scotland.

- Community Led Visitor Services and Experiences*
- Community Led Destination Development and Promotion*



What is Community Led Tourism?

A: Community Led Visitor Services and Experiences

B: Community Led Destination Development & Promotion

WHAT

Travel, events and visitor services and experiences that are owned, managed and/or delivered by the local community

A geographic community makes a conscious choice to come together to manage their tourism offer and how their area is promoted

WHY

Using tourism activity as a means to an end – providing wider benefits for the community which address local priorities

To avoid tourism just happening – tourism becomes a force for good. Business and community interests work together

WHO

Social Enterprises – Cooperative, CIC, SCIO, Community Benefit Society, Charitable Trust, volunteer groups

Community Development Trusts & Councils, Community Associations, Cooperatives, Town/Village/Area DMOs

HOW

Asset transfers, service level agreements, partnerships, change of use, added value agreements

Community led destination competency appraisals and action plan
Community led place branding, visitor propositions and product development

SCOTO'S Press Pause Initiative

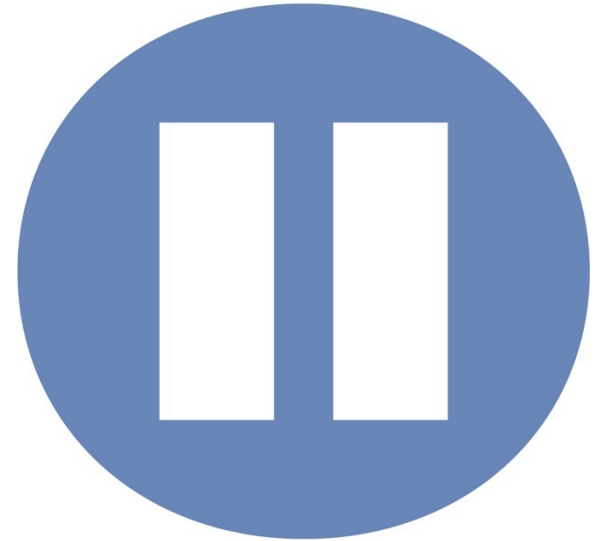


SCOTO's Press Pause Initiative has been designed to support geographic communities in taking time to review their current situation and reflect on what could be done differently or better in terms of tourism activity.

SCOTO first piloted Press Pause with the North Highland Initiative in summer 2023 working with Thurso and Lochcarron, and has since been working with over 40 communities across Scotland delivering Press Pause initiatives.

Press Pause takes place in destination and facilitates reflective conversations with individuals at a workshop which has key business and community representatives at the table.

Each workshop generates key findings and SCOTO then provide recommendations on next steps and opportunities for community led tourism services and experiences.





Why Press Pause?

A New Era

- Tourism and travel choices are changing – they already were, and this has rapidly accelerated following the pandemic
- Everyone is much more conscious of their wellbeing
- We are increasingly aware of the climate emergency and the need for individual action
- Technology is revolutionising travel, tourism and everyday lives
- Digital content is an increasingly important source of travel inspiration
- Visitors are now seeking to slow down, meet local people, have authentic experiences

Meanwhile ...

- Scotland is seeking a 'wellbeing' economy [NSET – National Strategy for Economic Transformation]
- Scotland is focusing on Community Wealth Building [NSET]
- Scottish Communities are being empowered to do more for themselves - to own assets and strengthen their voice
- Scotland is seeking 'responsible tourism for a sustainable future' [Scotland Outlook 2030]



Why Press Pause?

Global Context



In 2015 all United Nations Member States adopted the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. This provided a shared blue print for peace and prosperity for people and planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the **17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** which are an urgent call for action by all countries – developed and developing – in a global partnership. They recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand in hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality and spur economic growth – all while **tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests**.

#SDG 8 & 11 are the most relevant to Community Led Tourism:

- **#SDG8 and Target 8.9** is very specific to community led tourism
Target 8.9: Promote Beneficial And Sustainable Tourism - By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.
- **#SDG11** focuses on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Press Pause seeks to review and address how tourism is actively contributing to the achievement of all SDGs and specifically #SDG 8 and Target 8.9 and #SDG11 at a community level.



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



Why Press Pause?

National Context



The National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) has a vision ***“to create a wellbeing economy: a society that is thriving across economic, social and environmental dimensions, and that delivers prosperity for all Scotland's people and places. We aim to achieve this while respecting environmental limits, embodied by our climate and nature targets.”***

Scotland Outlook 2030 – the national tourism strategy – is seeking ***“responsible tourism for a sustainable future”***.

The strategy focuses on four priorities –

- Our passionate people
- Our thriving places
- Our diverse businesses
- Our memorable experiences

Scotland has provided the strategic context for a new way of doing tourism with communities to the fore. Press Pause allows communities to directly shape this.



Why Press Pause?

Regional Context

In 2023 a partnership of the three Ayrshire councils, Ayrshire and Arran Destination Alliance, VisitScotland and Scottish Enterprise launched the 'Ayrshire and our Islands Visitor Economy Strategy 2030'. It has a strong focus on regenerative tourism.

“Our collective ambition is for the visitor economy in Ayrshire and our islands to connect, restore and regenerate. We think these are the drivers to creating memorable and transformative experiences, that improve our environmental assets and infrastructure, including through programmes such as the Ayrshire Growth Deal, and create a platform for community wealth building – so our communities can participate in, own and benefit from the social and economic benefits of a thriving visitor economy.”

Taking the lead from the national tourism strategy Scotland Outlook 2030 Responsible Tourism for a Sustainable Future, this strategy places the wellbeing of our people and the environment at the heart of everything we do.”



OUR VISION

“Together, we will build a thriving, inclusive visitor economy across Ayrshire and our islands that delivers transformative experiences for our visitors, builds prosperity for our communities and nurtures the natural environment.”

Why Press Pause?

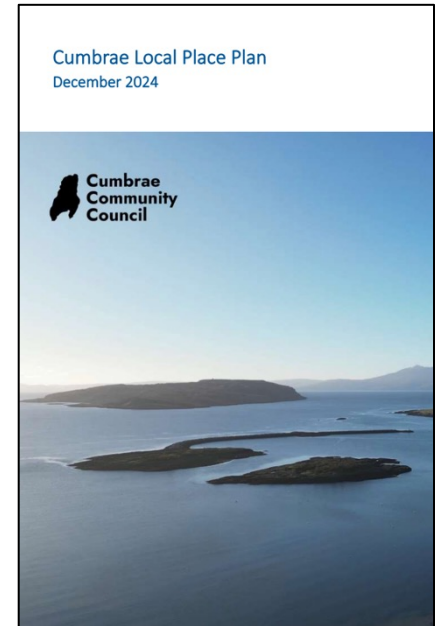
Local Context

In Scotland communities have been undertaking **Community Action Planning** for many years. Community Action Planning seeks to identify **the priorities that the community feel are important to them** and set out **how they wish to pursue their goals and aspirations**.

More recently **Place Planning** has been introduced by the **Planning (Scotland) Act 2019**, which contains a new right for communities to produce their own plans as part of the new Scottish planning system. Local Place Plans contain the **community's proposals for the development and use of land**, and provide a new opportunity for communities to feed into the planning system with ideas and proposals.

A Cumbrae Local Island Plan was published in December 2024 setting out the community's aspirations for planning policy and land use on the island of Great Cumbrae. This considers spatial planning. The plan has 19 proposals, a number of which relate to tourism and the visitor economy. The survey results highlighted a majority wanted to see more tourism and for the tourism offer to be improved.

A key development consideration is the marina proposal enabled by the new breakwater. The Press Pause workshop specifically explored this.





Why Press Pause?

Getting off the hamster wheel

By taking time to pause and reflect on tourism in their local area there is immediate scope for individual communities to consider what perhaps isn't working as well as it might and how things could be done differently and be much better for community life and the local environment.

Across Scotland, prior to Covid, tourism data suggested that many parts of Scotland were experiencing record numbers of visitors and the season was extending. Many businesses were benefitting and new businesses emerged. Economically fragile communities were seeing tourism as an opportunity. But some communities were feeling overwhelmed.

Post covid there has been a major focus on recovery and initially with a sense of getting back to 2019 levels – getting back on the hamster wheel... But by pressing pause individual communities can determine a new and different future for themselves where tourism doesn't just happen to them –it happens with them and tourism actually helps a community tackle priority issues they have identified.

By pressing pause tourism can be recalibrated and help a community be an even better place to live, work and visit. Tourism can be a real force for good.



Press Pause

Key considerations



The Press Pause Initiative facilitates conversations on:

- What is the geographic extent of the Destination in the eyes of locals as well as visitors
- What's working, what's not working, and what could be done differently/better
- Competitors and Comparators
- Visitor Profile – Past, Present and Future
- Community Led Destination Competency Appraisal
- Community Led Place Branding – USPs, POPs and PODs*
- A Community Led Visitor Proposition
- Reflections ... and Actions



* *Unique Selling Points, Points of Parity and Points of Differentiation*

Cumbræ

'PRESS PAUSE' REPORT

March 2025



Cumbrae

Press Pause in Ayrshire & The Islands



Late Autumn 2023, ARIA commissioned SCOTO to undertake an audit of community led tourism across their area, produce six case studies and deliver three Press Pause initiatives, one in each of the three Ayrshire council areas. Following the successful delivery of this programme of activity SCOTO was then commissioned to roll out Press Pause to six individual communities, 2 in each council area – North, South and East.

Cumbrae expressed interest in undertaking Press Pause and linked to the community aspiration to operate the new marina being developed as part of the Ayrshire Growth Deal.

This Press Pause Report sets out the key findings and lists a number of quick win and longer term recommendations for Cumbrae to consider as part of their journey in community led tourism, and also linked to plans that are already being hatched.



Cumbrae

An Overview



SCOTLAND

- Greater Cumbrae is the larger of 2 islands known as the Cumbraes in the Firth of Clyde off the coast of mainland Scotland
- Cumbrae is within North Ayrshire Council
- Cumbrae is accessed by vehicle ferry from Largs
- The main settlement on the island is Millport
- Cumbrae is often referred to as Millport
- Millport is 4 miles south of the ferry terminal
- Cumbrae has a population of c1375
- The ferry operates ever half hour in summer and the crossing takes less than 10 minutes
- Cumbrae is one hour's travel time from the centre of Glasgow

Cumbræ

Community Structures



There are a number of active community groups within Cumbræ with the overarching ones being:

- Cumbræ Community Council
- Cumbræ Community Development Company

The Community Council recently produced a Place Plan for the island which was produced following extensive community engagement and has been welcomed by North Ayrshire Council. They operate www.Cumbræ.org to support residents and keep everyone informed on what is happening and to seek views.

The Cumbræ Community Development Company is a charity and aims to achieve sustainable community regeneration by addressing economic, social, environmental, and cultural issues, working in partnership with other organisations, and generating income through enterprise. CCDC runs & maintains the public toilet blocks on the island, operates a motorhome site within the grounds of Garrison House and run the visitor moorings in Millport.



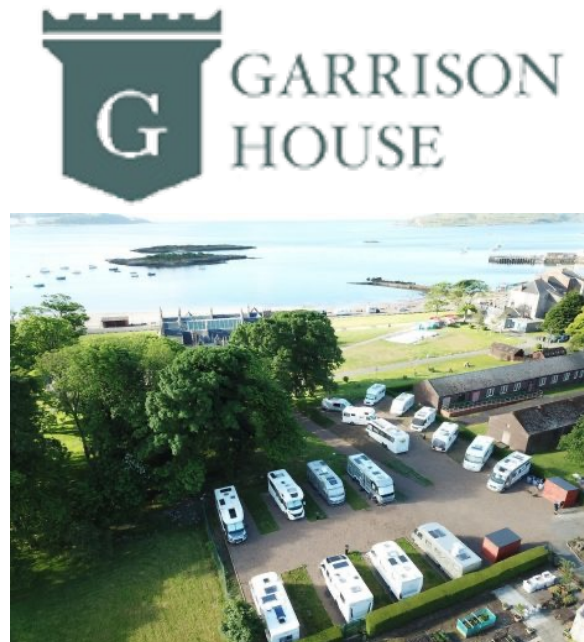
Cumbræ

Community Structures



From a community led tourism perspective there are two notable community organisations:

- **Garrison House (Cumbræ) Ltd** owns and operates The Garrison House in the heart of Cumbræ. Following a major fire in 2001, the community secured funding and has fully refurbished the building which now houses council and NHS services and the Museum of the Cumbræ, a local craft shop and the Garrison Café which also. There is a funfair in the grounds throughout summer. In 2024, visitor information was introduced. A motorhome site was established in the grounds in 2021.
- **Millport Holiday Apartments** is a community business run for community benefit. The business operates eight holiday apartments for week long or shorter breaks.



Cumbræ

Tourism Structures



The Isle of Cumbræ Tourism Association (IOCTA) is membership based markets the island through www.millport.org. The website lists accommodation, activities and events.



The islands of Cumbræ and Arran also form part of the **Ayrshire and Arran Destination Alliance** area. **AADA** was set up as the Destination Management and Marketing Organisation (DMO) for the region of Ayrshire and the islands. AADA was a membership organisation and operated on a not for profit basis. It was led by a voluntary board of directors from across the region who represent different tourism and hospitality business interests. At the time of writing it is understood AADA is no longer functioning. The Board stepped down but the website remains active and has been handed to the Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce.



**AYRSHIRE
& ARRAN**
Find your balance

Cumbrae

Initial Observations



- Cumbrae is a well known island destination in the Firth of Clyde
- For many it is better known as Millport
- Cumbrae has had a strong tourism tradition spanning back to the hey day of ‘Doon the Watter’ on the Clyde and has been a very popular day trip as well as holiday destination for families and groups for decades
- Cumbrae and Millport’s appeal is in its seaside charm with the promenade and beaches, plus the cafes, shops, quirky attractions, events and funfair.
- The island is very well known as a family destination and for cycling, especially bike hire to explore the island road
- Cumbrae as an island only has moorings available or the opportunity to drop anchor, requiring a tender to come ashore.

Cumbrae

MILLPORT PIER AND PROMENADE



Cumbrae

MILLPORT BEACH



Cumbrae

CROCODILE ROCK IN MILLPORT BAY



MILLPORT MOORINGS



Cumbrae

THE GARRISON HOUSE, MILLPORT



Cumbrae

MILLPORT GOLF COURSE



Cumbrae

MILLPORT CRAZY GOLF



GARRISON FUNFAIR



Cumbrae

TOLMONT END MONUMENT, NORTH CUMBRAE



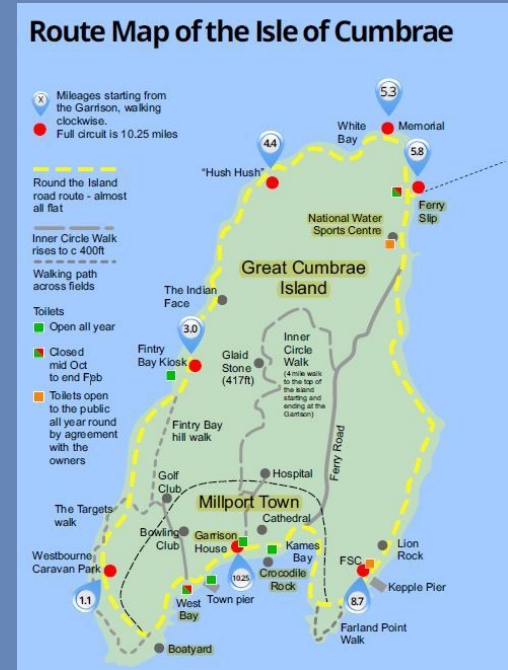
Cumbrae

CUMBRAE FERRY TERMINAL



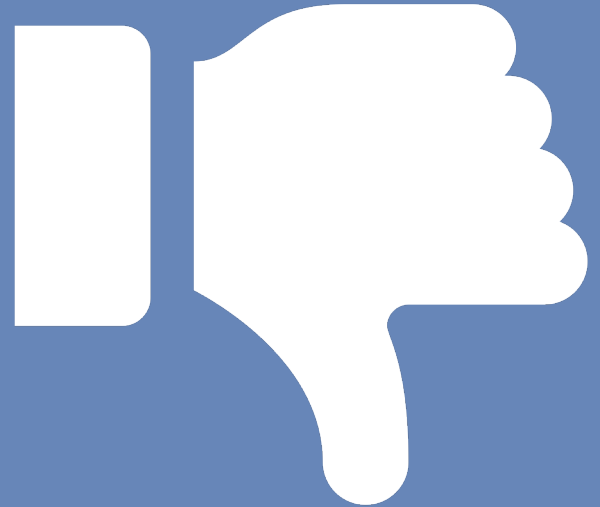
Cumbrae

CUMBRAE MAPS AND TRAILS



PRESS PAUSE ||

WHAT'S OUR STARTING POINT?



1. Background & Context



Engagement & the Workshop Format

Engagement

24 individuals attended the Press Pause Workshop from the area and representing

- Cumbrae Community Development Company
- Cumbrae Community Council
- Garrison House (Cumbrae) Ltd
- Isle of Cumbrae Tourism Association
- Cumbrae Ferry User Group
- Isle of Cumbrae Distillery
- The Field Studies Council
- Millport Golf Club
- Millport Boat Yard
- The Pier Hotel
- Various Shops and Galleries
- Artists and producers

Topics Explored at the Workshop

1. Defining the Cumbrae Destination as a visitor and as a local
2. What's working, what's not working, and what could be done differently/better in Cumbrae
3. Cumbrae's Competitors and Comparators
4. Cumbrae's Visitor Profile – Past Present and Future
5. Cumbrae's Destination Competency Appraisal
6. Cumbrae's Place Branding – USPs, POPs and PODs
7. Measuring tourism impact in Cumbrae

1. Background & Context

Ayrshire Growth Deal



SCOTO Press Pause in Cumbrae has been triggered by the community considering tendering to operate the new marina which is planned in Millport Bay as part of the Ayrshire Growth Deal.

A new breakwater has been installed as part of new flood defences which is enabling the marina project.

At present there are only moorings which mean anyone visiting needs to tender ashore. A marina with step ashore facilities could attract a new, potentially lucrative market onto the island.

The Press Pause workshop conversations enabled discussions in relation to this.



1. Background & Context



Opening Remarks

At the outset various comments were provided as context to the workshop.

- *The community council has recently submitted a place plan for the island to North Ayrshire Council which sets out survey results on many topics. There was good engagement across the community.*
- *The Trust is currently looking at funding for a specialist to prepare a bid to NAC for managing the new pontoons once installed*
- *60 berths are proposed which will significantly boost overnight options on the island (visitor accommodation has dropped a lot in recent years)*
- *Pontoons will give access straight into the town and also could be used by small cruise ships*
- *Need to ensure a good balance of visitor berths and for locals*
- *If more people arrive by boat (and as foot passengers) more kit – eg golf clubs – could be provided to rent*
- *An inter-island small ferry has been considered between Cumbrae Bute and Arran*
- *Locals would welcome a passenger ferry from the town to the mainland*
- *CCDC has now opened an Aire in the ground of Garrison House recognising the demand and also issues with motorhomes parking on the street - does make some money – wary of it being too big*
- *The Tourism Group are not yet in the loop about the marina – and can see the benefits - single nights stays are now very difficult on the island with no B&Bs*
- *Shelter at the ferry terminal is needed for foot passengers*
- *The number of vehicles on the island in summer is excessive*

Everyone agreed that tourism needs reinvigorated and with a much more contemporary approach

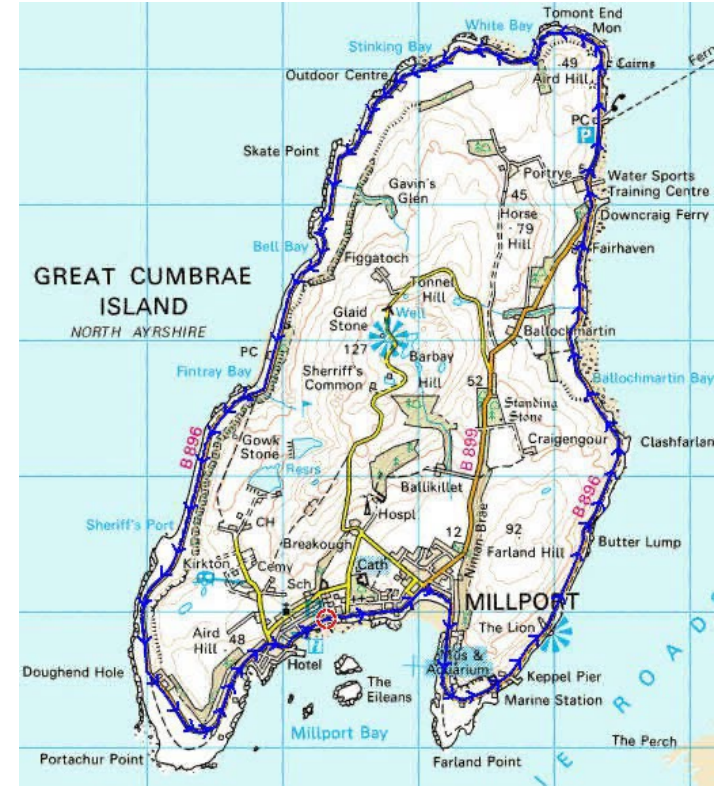
2. Defining the Destination



On the mainland and larger islands, typically community council and community development trust area's of interest are an excellent basis for defining a community led tourism destination boundary.

As Cumbrae is an island and it only has one community council and one development company this is very straight forward.

The full island is defined as the destination for community led tourism purposes.



3. What's working/not working

Initial thoughts from the workshop are noted below:

- Ease of access to get here
- Scale of the island – can walk or cycle – don't need a car
- Well known
- Businesses work well together
- Safe for families
- Motorhome Aire at the Garrison is well used and appreciated
- Locals like the type of tourists who come – families and retirees
- Retail standards have improved
- Most accommodation has continued after STL regulations (few have stopped)
- Water sport centre investment with accommodation underway (planning)
- Last ferry at 8.30 in the evening is too early – residents, staff and visitors affected
- Flood defences done but not being maintained – a lot of sand is drifting
- Beaches no longer cleaned by council
- Sand is moving – not allowed to rake it (SEPA)
- Toilets are old – some now closed
- Pot holes and weeds much more evident – council cut backs
- Increased costs – seeing a change in visitor profile



3. What's working/not working

Continued:

- 2 caravan parks – very well located and with new units and good facilities
- VIC at Garrison – new last year and well received
- The only hotel has been at capacity – demand is there
- Boatyard sees some visitors using moorings
- The break water has helped more boats use moorings and drop anchor (calmer water)
- Townhall renovation now offers accommodation for visitors and a big hall for functions (opens this year)
- Wildlife and birds – could promote more
- Peace and quiet – need to protect it)
- Pride in properties – well maintained



3. Whats working/not working

What could be done differently?

There was a lot of positivity around what is working already, and much less focus on what isn't working. Ideas on what could be done differently included the following:

- The break water means flat water – good for paddleboards and regatta – could do more?
- Transit marina (as part of Growth Deal) and enhanced step ashore facilities
- Foot passenger ferry to/from Millport - Island connectivity plan with park and ride in Largs
- Beach cleaning options ?
- Council tax has doubled for second homes - major local concern – appealing to council to reverse this



4. Competitors & Comparators

A useful exercise is to think of communities/ areas that are either direct competitors and can be attracting the visitors you would like to see so worth considering what is it that differentiates them? Or comparators which are communities that are similar but located elsewhere and have achieved success and therefore could have valuable insights to share. Learning exchanges can be very fruitful.

Cumrae COMPETITORS

Largs – often if weather isn't favourable visitors opt to stay in Largs – good cafes and shops

Arran – got a great range of walking, cycling and hills – less day trippers and more holidaymakers

Bute – has good wet weather options – leisure centre, Mount Stuart – successfully repositioned the island not Rothesay as the destination

Cumrae COMPARATORS

TOBERMORY – pontoons have brought much more sailors into the village and small cruise ships

TARBERT – pontoons are well used and have an excellent restaurant and gallery offer. Great facilities for boats and crew. Festivals attract sailing market. Event space for cruises in company

GIRVAN – portrayed as worst high street in Scotland. Decided to own their story and focused on how dog friendly their town is. Developed digital campaign and content and ultimately won Dog Friendly UK award within 2 years. Attracting a new market. Also attracting small cruise ships ashore.

5. Visitor Profile

Past, Present & Future



PAST

- Extensive boarding house accommodation
- Week/2 week stays
- Family market returned year on year
- Caravan sites
- Day trips – groups and schools



PRESENT

- Shorter breaks
- Some regular returners
- Seeing a younger demographic and more dogs
- COVID – saw a change in visitor profile – eg foreign students



FUTURE – WHAT IS DESIRED

- All year round to support shops, cafes and businesses
- Eco – linked to carbon neutral island
- Blend of ages



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DESTINATION COMPETENCE



6. Destination Competence

An Introduction



Being a successful destination is a function of many factors and how they interplay.

SCOTO has devised a competency appraisal for geographic communities to undertake as part of the Press Pause conversations.

Through conversation and discussion at the workshop the community are asked to describe their current offer under each of 16 criteria and then rate it in terms of

Red – things are really not working/don't exist.

Amber – things do need improved.

Green – things are functioning well.



This appraisal is generated by all present and the workshop facilitates reflection and collective thinking to jointly agree a RAG status. The following tables set out this current appraisal and RAG (Red, Amber and Green) status as agreed at the workshop, plus opportunities that SCOTO recommend based on this appraisal.

6. Destination Competence Appraisal – 16 Criteria



1. Tourism Traditions and Timelines
2. Sense of Place and Visitor Proposition
3. Features and Attractions
4. Accommodation
5. Activities and Experiences
6. Food, Drink and Refreshments
7. Events and Festivals
8. Makers and Producers
9. Travel and Connectivity
10. Amenities and Infrastructure
11. Visitor Management, Signage and Interpretation
12. Digital Presence and Marketing
13. Biodiversity and Net Zero
14. Community Assets
15. People and Players
16. Destination Collaboration



6. Destination Competence



NO	CRITERIA	CURRENT APPRAISAL	RAG	COMMUNITY LED TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES
1	TOURISM TRADITIONS. TIMELINES	All agreed there is a long standing tradition but there is a 'flicker of a warning light' with less festival activity and the slow change in the visitor profile – and recognition now is the time to seize that		Scope to develop a new place brand and proposition for Cumbrae that gives it much more contemporary appeal
2	SENSE OF PLACE	Felt to be very strong – visitors are very clear on what to expect and why they are visiting		At a turning point – seek to develop a contemporary proposition building on the area's strengths and appeal
3	FEATURES & ATTRACTIONS	Cathedral of the Isles – smallest in UK Beaches Distillery The Garrison and Museum Gold Course Crazy Golf, bowling and putting greens Waverley visits Aquarium at Field Studies Centre Wildlife and bird spotting		There are several features and attractions – scope to better package and present with itineraries for different interests and to link with eateries and producer experiences Wet weather options is a major concern – very limited
4	ACCOMMODATION	Current offer is good quality (which was an issue in the past) but a lot less than there used to be Not all are online bookable No touring van site or campsite No single night stays available 1 x B&B 1 x hotel Field Centre has accommodation for large groups Visitor moorings – need a tender to come ashore		The 1-night stay for the outdoors market is a key opportunity for a community run hostel with basic but good quality accommodation – potential at the Field Study Centre? The lack of a campsite – is there merit in a community run campsite?

6. Destination Competence



NO	CRITERIA	CURRENT APPRAISAL	RAG	CLT OPPORTUNITIES
5	ACTIVITIES & EXPERIENCES	<p>Bike hire Kayak hire Fishing Bowling Golf Beach activities Arts and crafts courses – growing Wet weather – very limited options</p>		<p>Review walking and cycling maps and consider any new features to include. Consider establishing a Cumbrae Circumnavigation challenge course that individuals can come and do in their own time or as training for other fitness events with cycling and running. Consider new water sports provision in Millport Bay behind the breakwater</p>
6	FOOD & DRINK	<p>Good at the height of the season and daytime Cafes, restaurants, takeaway, pub (do food too) Opening hours not well known Nothing after 7.30pm</p> <p>Nothing open in January Sweet shop and distillery are open all year</p>		<p>Cumbrae What's App group for all business interests Encourage collaboration between different operators to ensure good options 7 days and at evenings. Agree a central point to update all opening hours Consider potential pop-up options linked to events so different offerings can be trialled</p>
7	EVENTS & FESTIVALS	<p>Used to be significant but lost a lot due to marquee and other costs. IOCTA keen to do more events – costs are the barrier Concern re lack of accommodation and ferry/train time constraints Still have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car festival • Scooter rally • Country music • Raft race 		<p>To ring the changes a new island festival focusing on the outdoors experience should be considered. This can start very small and grow, plus engage different community groups doing different activities . A Cumbrae Triathlon could be developed similar to the Craggy Island race on Kerrera An events calendar can be developed to Consider weekly 'walks with company'</p>

6. Destination Competence



NO	CRITERIA	CURRENT APPRAISAL	RAG	CLT OPPORTUNITIES
8	MAKERS & PRODUCERS	<p>Good crafts – Cumbrae Hub Gallery showcases local art A number of local producers and makers on the island</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distillery • Soaps • Candles • Chocolate • Island butcher 		<p>Create a Cumbrae Crafts & Makers Trail linking the gallery, distillery, shops and studios which are open to the public. Consider an open studio event Encourage more cross selling between makers and producers</p>
9	TRAVEL	<p>Major concern Issues with capacity esp. at end of the day Last ferry is now much earlier (8.30pm)</p>		<p>Undertake visitor surveys to glean insights on visitor perceptions of the ferry service and limitations, interest in a passenger only service into the town</p>
10	AMENITIES & INFRA-STRUCTURE	<p>Got basics Convenience store – no supermarket No fuel Toilets are open but operate at a loss and need investment No dentist on the island On island fuelling option was available to Cumbrae but not progressed</p>		<p>Important to manage visitor expectations prior to arrival to avoid disappointment (eg no fuel, evening meal options) Include clear information on what is available locally on the new map and where the nearest options are on the mainland Consider a strategic approach to sourcing funding to upgrade all the community run toilets Reinvigorate the Cumbrae toilet trail with the quirky names and features with digital donation system</p>

6. Destination Competence



NO	CRITERIA	CURRENT APPRAISAL	RAG	CLT OPPORTUNITIES
11	VISITOR INFO & SIGNAGE	Established visitor information in the Garrison last year – open 12-4pm – leaflets - need to properly establish Poor awareness of ferry cancellations		Encourage all businesses to engage with and support the info point in the Garrison Develop a new two sided island and town two-sided tear off map and make available at the Garrison and other visitor facing businesses
12	DIGITAL PRESENCE & MARKETING	Millport.org - Issue with knowing to search Millport or Cumbrae Good listing levels on the site Video produced by IOCTA has had 800k views and good comments		Consider rebrand as VisitCumbrae (in line with Visit Bute and Visit Arran) Develop new brand with colourway and logo Source a budget to develop new island content and itineraries for a new homepage
13	BIO-DIVERSITY & NET ZERO	Carbon Neutral officer on the island A lot of solar panels but issues with the conservation area Solar farm has been proposed – local concerns Standard recycling		Explore how to better promote the local biodiversity interest and encourage visitors to embrace net zero activity and services
14	COMMUNITY ASSETS	The Garrison and grounds Town Hall Community Garden Community Hub Toilets – do need investment Considered CAT for the water sports centre – high running costs		Undertake a review of all assets and scope for community led tourism initiatives to support visitor activity and generate additional income for the village

6. Destination Competence



NO	CRITERIA	CURRENT APPRAISAL	RAG	CLT OPPORTUNITIES
15	PEOPLE & PLAYERS	<p>Strong feature of Cumbrae – passionate and active volunteers</p> <p>A lot of groups and societies and sense of people do help out</p> <p>Place Plan engagement was high</p> <p>Reason for amber - communication between groups is poor – eg have had clashes in funding bids to same funder and low awareness of the marina possibility.</p> <p>The community council is seeking to address this and is the conduit for information sharing at their monthly meetings and via their minutes</p>		<p>Establish a local What's App group to connect everyone and ensure ideas are shared</p> <p>Open day/eve to socialise this Press Pause activity and recommendations</p> <p>Use event to show case key initiatives</p> <p>local businesses can get involved with and benefit from – include a speed dating session</p> <p>Learning exchange to a similar community with pontoons which has been transformational.</p> <p>Learning exchange to a similar community which has successfully developed a new visitor proposition</p>
16	DESTINATION COLLABORATION	<p>Recognition this could be much better</p> <p>Had no engagement with AADA (not aware the board had stood down)</p> <p>No liaison between the Clyde Islands – Arran, Bute and Cumbrae</p> <p>VS liaison is okay and officer has come to the island</p> <p>DMO ferry group with Calmac was effective during lockdown</p>		<p>Once work has been progressed on the place brand meet and present vision and ambition for Cumbrae to VS, and AADA/Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce plus North Ayrshire Council. Provide new content for websites</p>

6. Destination Competence

Summary Observations



Cumbrae as a visitor destination has been experiencing change over a prolonged period. It is no longer the seaside resort it was in the 1970s and 80s but unlike other seaside towns that have suffered decline, it has adapted and retained a good share of the market.

There are five key observations from the appraisal;

1. The accommodation has been dwindling over a long period and switching from hotels and boarding houses to self catering
2. Food and drink businesses face significant cost of living, regulatory and operational challenges, notably staffing - which means 7-day, day and evening operation is a struggle
3. The community is already active in Cumbrae with an exceptional track record in owning and operating assets, improving the amenity and ambience of the village, staging events and festivals and earning revenue from visitor facing enterprises
4. The quality of offer is considered good, with new award-winning enterprises and business investment, plus community led initiatives
5. The marina investment (and community operation) could be a game changer in attracting a new market



In essence, there is a sense of Cumbrae being on the cusp of a new much more contemporary and sustainable era.

6. Destination Competence



The Millport Marina Opportunity

It is understood that following the construction of the breakwater and flood defences a transit marina will be constructed as part of the Ayrshire Growth Deal. The current plan is for this to have 60 transit/visitor berths. The opportunity for the community to operate the marina is a serious consideration and a working group is in place to scope out getting the specialist support needed to develop a bid in readiness for the council issuing the tender.

This destination competence appraisal has highlighted several issues and opportunities that collectively suggest the marina will be a very welcome investment bringing a new market to the island which will support existing businesses and also introduce new business opportunities.

It is noteworthy that the island has not had any pontoons with direct access to shore prior to this point. There have been moorings in Millport Bay for many years and boats do drop anchor, but these only appeal to sailors willing to tender ashore. As pontoons have not been a feature of the island before this investment has real scope to reinvent the island and Millport as a vibrant sailing destination in the Firth of Clyde.

A key recommendation is liaising with and undertaking learning exchanges with other communities who have either created pontoons or now manage them and are seeing notable benefits in the community, and can share their experience. Specific relevant examples would be Lochaline, Tarbert, Oban and Ullapool.



6. Destination Competence



Key Community Led Tourism Opportunities

CRITERIA	CLT OPPORTUNITIES WORTH EARLY EXPLORATION
Tourism Tradition and Sense of Place	This is a key area for action – the community has enjoyed a long tourism tradition which has been fading, and is on the cusp of a much more contemporary proposition focusing more on the island and on experiences. Early focus on a fresh place brand for the island is recommended.
Accommodation / Food & Drink	Review and expand the Garrison Aire provision as appropriate. Budget one night stay options could be delivered by the community using a social enterprise model for a hostel and/or pods in a suitable location. Consider pop up spaces in community buildings to trial new ideas and collaborations.
Features and Attractions, Activities and Experiences	Clearer signposting and promotion of circular walks and trails that feature the points of interest. Develop itineraries for enjoying the island based on 1 hour, 2 hour, half day and full day options with refreshments on the routes. Explore joint packages with bike and watersport activities and experiences plus food and refreshments.
Events & Festivals	Create a new Come to Cumbrae Outdoor Festival in spring or autumn to showcase the outdoor offer and engage community groups in providing activities – ref Moray Outdoor and Walking Festival
Visitor Information & Digital Presence	Review and consolidate all existing maps into one double sided map – one side for the island and one side for the town showing features, attractions and key services plus the walks and trails – map available locally and online. Source a resource to create new itineraries and how to enjoy Cumbrae content. Rebrand the web presence as VisitCumbrae
Community Assets	The existing assets are providing income – scope out opportunities to develop further with more visitor facing activity plus added value features.
Destination Collaboration	Curate new imagery and video content that conveys the experience of visiting Cumbrae, the outdoor activities and experiences available and the features to explore. Share new content narrative with VS, AADA and others

6. CLT Opportunities

Inspiration from Elsewhere



Findhorn Campervan Aire

https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/fsqnta50/scoto_findhorn-case-study.pdf

Callander Youth Project/Callander Hostel

https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/f3oerevm/scoto_callander-hostel-case-study.pdf

Loch Ness Hub, Drumnadrochit

https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/ylepaaos/scoto_loch-ness-hub-case-study.pdf

Wild Skies Shetland

https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/xgzchqln/scoto_wild-skies-case-study.pdf

Callander Visitor Information Centre

https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/ogmnlyxl/scoto_cvic-case-study.pdf

Tweedsmuir The Crook Inn Plus

https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/bznbqgqxg/scoto_tweedsmuir-case-study.pdf

Isle of Eigg Camping Pods

https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/zy4lzkkt/scoto_eigg-camping-pods-case-study.pdf

Lewis Point & Sandwich Trail

https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/31khsd2p/scoto_point-sandwich-case-study.pdf

Strontian Oakwood Tourism & Crafts

https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/yppgkurp/scoto_oakwood-case-study.pdf

Moray Walking and Outdoor Festival

https://www.scoto.co.uk/media/341kukao/scoto_moray-walking-festival-case-study.pdf

6. Destination Competency

Managing Expectations



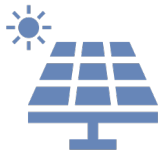
A key consideration for any destination is managing visitor expectations. Visitors don't always do their research, or may struggle to find current information and can arrive in a community with preconceived ideas of what to expect whether staying over night or on a day trip. This can be anything from getting a mobile signal to finding toilets, being able to use credit cards and not need cash, get a taxi/Uber, order a takeaway for delivery or having a sit-down meal in the evening. On Cumbrae this can relate to the ferries and bus connections.

To avoid disappointment and frustration communities can do a lot to manage expectations in general but also if there is a specific and short-term issue affecting a service.

A valuable resource is an open access 'what's on' group page on Facebook where information can be posted (and pinned if there is a notable change in anything) and also visitors can ask questions. Local business should be encouraged to join and post regularly and also invite questions. Many communities have these pages.

Cumbrae

- Review the current Cumbrae leaflets and consider a new double sided map for Cumbrae and Millport available to download and in print at the Garrison plus on the ferry to orientate visitors on the island and clearly indicate what services are available/where.
- Include information on nearest options for services not available on the island.
- Establish a Cumbrae What's App group to keep businesses and community groups connected and to share updated opening times etc to share with each others customers – start with workshop attendees
- Develop 'Be Local Cumbrae' open Facebook page for visitor enquiries and for local businesses and enterprises to post updates and features for locals and visitors - encourage all local businesses and organisations to link to this and promptly respond to visitor enquiries and queries [check what already exists and possibly repurpose]



PRESS PAUSE || PLACE BRANDING



7. Place Branding

The Principles



- Place branding is the idea that **a place, a town, a city, or a region can be branded** – given an identity with a value proposition for a target market and have branding techniques and marketing strategies applied to drive a marketing campaign. Much in the same way a product, service or business can.
- In essence, place branding is "**a strategy for projecting images and managing perceptions – and expectations - about places**". **Authenticity.**
- Place branding seeks to form **a meaningful relationship between person (locals and visitors) and place.**
- **The community** are best placed to **lead on scoping out the essence** of their place brand and what **differentiates** their community



7. Place Branding

Why Community Led?

- We now live in a rapidly developing digital world
- Visitors are influenced by multiple sources of inspiration before, during and after travel – Visitor Touch Points
- Much of this content lacks a proper sense of place and rarely is the host community's voice heard
- To ensure authenticity and integrity, host communities should assert themselves – scope out and own their place brand – differentiate their community and then influence other visitor touch points to use their place brand and positioning - and help target appropriate visitors
- Host communities can readily develop products and experiences to bring their place brand to life





7. Place Branding Hierarchy



* Current status to be confirmed

7. Place Branding



“To see ourselves as others see us”

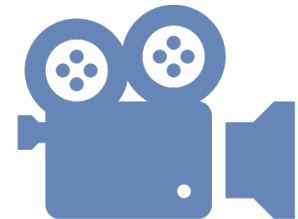
Places across Scotland are promoted by many players – notably VisitScotland and local DMOs (Destination Marketing Organisations) as well as the media, bloggers, the travel trade, TV, film and social media. These players often have very good reach online and those players that are involved in marketing are targeted in how they share their content to interested audiences



Community groups and individual small businesses have limited reach, especially to visitors who do not yet know the area or business.



In considering place branding there is therefore significant value in firstly seeing how players with good reach are already portraying the community to the outside world - and reviewing how it fits or otherwise with how the community sees itself. This is then a very good prompt for communities to develop and take ownership of their own place brand and to create new content that reinforces what has made this community what it is today and how it wants to be portrayed to the outside world.



Developing new products and an image/content library that brings this to life is then recommended. This new curated content and narrative can then be provided to the key players directly to better portray the community and also shared by tagging and using hashtags on social media.

7. Place Branding



“To see ourselves as others see us”

At present Cumbrae and Millport are both featured on Visit Scotland, only Millport on Discover Ayrshire & Arran.

CUMBRAE

Islands



The Isle of Cumbrae, also known as Great Cumbrae, lies on the Ayrshire coast and is roughly four miles long and two miles wide.

Just a short ferry trip from Largs, Cumbrae is regarded as Scotland’s most accessible island.

Seaside town

The only settlement is [Millport](#), a seaside town with a Victorian promenade which curves around an attractive hilly bay on the south coast. Millport is home to Britain's smallest cathedral, the [Cathedral of the Isles](#), which was completed in 1851 to a design by William Butterfield, one of the leading Gothic revival architects of the day.

Outdoor activities

Cumbrae is a great spot for outdoor enthusiasts.

7. Place Branding



“To see ourselves as others see us”

MILLPORT

Towns & Villages



Millport is the 'capital' of Cumbrae, a small island off the Ayrshire coast.

Millport is the only town on the island which lies just offshore from Largs on the Ayrshire coast. The town curves around an attractive hilly bay on the south coast. The sandy bay is lined by a pretty seafront promenade, perfect for gentle seaside strolls.

Unique attractions

Millport is a quirky seaside destination with a wealth of things to do that are brilliant for families. The town possesses Britain's smallest cathedral, the [Cathedral of the Isles](#), which was completed in 1851 to a design by William Butterfield, one of the leading Gothic revival architects of the day.

Garrison House, a striking Gothic building, is now home to the [Museum of the Cumbraes](#) and the Garrison House Café, as well as the local library and council offices. As you browse the exhibits, see ancient archaeological finds and learn of thrilling stories of smugglers from the 18th century.

A mile or so along the south shore to the east is the [Robertson Museum & Aquarium](#), where visitors can learn about the wide variety of marine life and local habitats on the island.

Helpful info

Within Millport you'll find places to eat out, grocery stores, a garage and bike hire shops. **Sailing boats and yachts can take advantage of the pontoons and harbour facilities.**

7. Place Branding

“To see ourselves as others see us”

About Millport

Millport is the only town or settlement of the stunning Isle of Cumbrae. It is based around a picturesque Victorian promenade, which curves around a stretch of sandy bays. With the island being so small and only having one town, Millport is used more generally to refer to the whole island.

Millport has many great activities to do, from walking or cycling round the island, enjoying the great scenery or exploring its history and heritage.

The smaller island just off the coast is referred to as Little Cumbrae. Together, they are known in as The Cumbraes and referred to as the Kumreyiar in the Norse Saga of Haakon Haakonarson.

Millport is also home Britain’s smallest cathedral, the Cathedral of the Isles. This was completed in 1851 and designed by William Butterfield, one of the leading Gothic revival architects of the day. Another building with an interesting history is Garrison House. This striking Gothic building, is now home to the Museum of the Cumbraes and the Garrison House Café, as well as the local library and council offices.

There are plenty of amenities in Millport such as places to eat out, shops, a garage and bike hire shops.



**AYRSHIRE
& ARRAN**
Find your balance

7. Place Branding

Cumbræ – Initial Observations



An immediate observation is that some refer to Cumbræ and some to Millport, and others use both place names interchangeably. The island is also sometimes called Greater Cumbræ differentiating it from its privately owned neighbour.

Millport is the only town on the island so these interchangeable place names aren't an issue in itself. However for marketing and promotion it is important to use one place name and to use it consistently. And also to ask others to do so too.

A second observation is that current listings for both the island and Millport lack dynamism, and although reasonably accurate as descriptions the listings do not inspire or give a strong sense of the experience of visiting the island and the wealth of what is on offer - and what a day or a short break on the island could look like.

In addition VisitScotland refer to pontoons (and harbour facilities) which do not (as yet) exist.





7. Place Branding

Using USPs, POPs & PODs

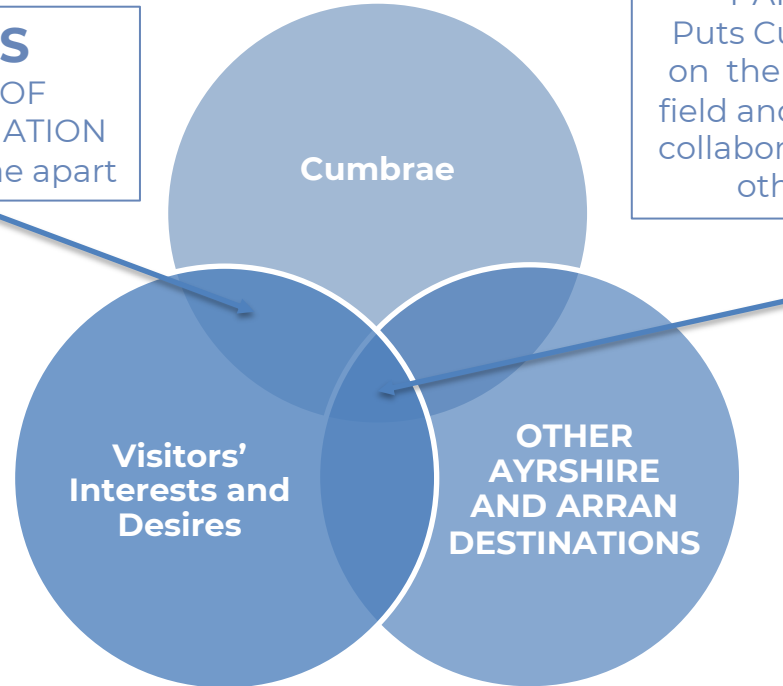


USPS

UNIQUE SELLING POINTS
What is unique about Cumbrae
that no other destination can
claim

PODS
POINTS OF
DIFFERENTIATION
Sets Cumbrae apart

POPS
POINTS OF
PARITY
Puts Cumbrae
on the playing
field and able to
collaborate with
others





7. Place Branding

Cumbrae's USPs, POPs & PODs

USPs – what would the world miss if Cumbrae didn't exist?

POPs – what gives Cumbrae a right to be considered by visitors to Ayrshire and Arran

PODs – what sets Cumbrae apart for visitors from other Ayrshire and Arran destinations?

7. Place Branding

Cumbræ's USPs, POPs & PODs



USPs – what would the world miss without Cumbræ?	POPs – what makes Cumbræ a viable destination?	PODs – what sets Cumbræ apart?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Closest island to Glasgow ▪ The Clyde's most accessible island (▪ Smallest cathedral in the UK ▪ Narrowest building frontage – the 'wedge' – is contested ▪ Fiercest rock in the Clyde – Crocodile Rock ▪ Geology and the Rocks of Cumbræ – Crocodile Rock, Lion Rock, Indians Face and Queen Victoria's Face ▪ Very early evidence of Christianity on Wee Cumbræ (AD 670AD) and St Mirin AD 710 ▪ Home to the Field Study Centre ▪ Cumbræ was part of the Sundrays – a group of islands under Norwegian control in the early Medieval period ▪ King Hakon of Norway's fleet assembled at the north of the island before the battle of Kelburn ▪ Cumbræ is referred to in the Norse saga of Haakon Kaakonarson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pubs and eateries ▪ Walking ▪ Bike hire and cycling ▪ Beaches ▪ The promenade ▪ Crazy golf and bowling ▪ Funfair in summer ▪ Museum ▪ Golf ▪ Sea and loch fishing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peacefulness of the island – the 'magic of Millport' ▪ 8.5 minute ferry crossing – there in no time ▪ Round island cycle – 10 miles ▪ 20,000 steps to walk round the island ▪ Strong sense of achievement from cycling, walking round the island ▪ Can't get lost ▪ Safe ▪ Easy to spot wildlife – seals, cormorants, herons ▪ Glaid Stone – can get a 360 degree view of the entire island ▪ Safe beaches ▪ Easily accessed from several mainland marinas – Largs, Kip and Ardrossan (POD for the planned marina)

7. Place Branding

Cumbræ's USPs, POPs & PODs



USPs – what would the world miss without Cumbræ?	POPs – what makes Cumbræ a viable destination?	PODs – what sets Cumbræ apart?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic base for Customs and Excise during the hey day of shipbuilding and merchants (and smuggling) • There are no snakes on Cumbræ (St Mirin AD710) • There is a raised beach around almost the whole island <p>Famous people/connections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duncan Macrae – the actor • Andrew Goldie - botanist • Gavin Mitchell – Still Game • Malcolm MacCormack • Cathy Kay • Bill Paterson • David Robertson – founded the marine station • David Tennant – his father held open missions on the beach • Anneka Rice – one of the early programmes was filmed on Cumbræ 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ironage remains ▪ A microclimate that can be very different to the mainland ▪ 'Hells Teapot Lid' – no snow on Cumbræ

7. Place Branding

Points of Inspiration



1. Cumbrae and Millport – interchangeable place names.

From a community led tourism perspective, and tying in with the destination competence appraisal observations relating to tourism traditions and sense of place, a key recommendation would be to focus on the **Isle of Cumbrae as the place name.**

Although Millport is arguably much better known in the local area, it, in a similar way to Rothesay on Bute, is linked to the ‘Doon the Watter’ era where the steamers from Glasgow disgorged passengers in the towns in the Firth of Clyde and the towns therefore had a much bigger presence than the wider island.

By focusing place branding on the Isle of Cumbrae, it offers two advantages. The first is to use this to ring the changes in terms of a more contemporary place brand which focuses on the island and the great outdoors offer and not just the town. But also this will support the future marina development and stress this is an island destination which immediately differentiates it from the mainland Ayrshire marinas, and gives a sense of being a sailing destination – a place to go to.



7. Place Branding



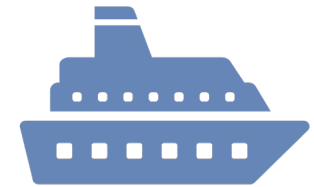
Points of Inspiration

2. A second consideration in the place branding is ensuring the Isle of Cumbrae place branding fits within the overall context of it being one of three islands in the Clyde which all claim to be accessible. So what differentiates the Isle of Cumbrae? Two key features are a) it is much smaller in size than Arran and Bute and can be enjoyed in a day, and b) the ease and quickness of the ferry journey itself. Like all three islands, the ferry connects with train services from Glasgow, but the ferry journey itself is much quicker and simpler, and arguably less prone to weather disruptions.

Visit Arran focuses on the fact it is an island, which is readily accessible from the mainland and central belt and celebrates that there are no towns, but several villages, each different and with a strong sense of community often linked to their village halls and local activity. The sense of community is a significant part of Arran's place brand.

Visit Bute also focuses on its accessibility with there being two ferry options and the train link to the Wemyss Bay ferry being only an hour from the city. Their latest marketing refers to it as the 'big wee island'. Bute has had a similar issue to the Isle of Cumbrae with historically many referring to Rothesay rather than Bute. However the ongoing work of Visit Bute has placed much more emphasis on the place name 'Bute' and also the variety of different things to do across the island. They have a number of wet weather options and significant investment is currently being made in the Pavilion as a cultural venue. The ferry arrives in the heart of Rothesay, whereas on Cumbrae it is 4 miles from the town.

Two considerations – should IOCTA adopt Visit Cumbrae for their digital presence for consistency, but also more importantly put much greater emphasis on the quite unique small island experience on offer and provide suggested itineraries?



7. Place Branding



Points of Inspiration

3. A further consideration in the place branding for the Isle of Cumbrae relates to comments during the workshop about the number of second homes on the island and that this was in many ways a positive not a negative.

In most other communities SCOTO has worked with to date, second homes and lack of local affordable housing are seen as interrelated issues which create tensions. This largely relates to second homes being bought for inflated prices and then sitting empty for much of the year.

However, on the Isle of Cumbrae this is seen as a positive with these second home owners staying most weekends and being valued members of the golf club, as one example. Many live and work in the city during the week and live on the island at the weekend. This pattern came across as welcomed by the islanders and that this gave the community a better dynamic. The proximity to Glasgow and ease of access makes this dual lifestyle appealing and also begs the question, which is the second home? With more and more homeworking post Covid this dynamic is even stronger.

Comment was made about the island seeking to have the double council tax on second homes reversed with a fear that it could have negative impacts on this current dynamic. This is a strong statement in itself. Within this there is something very special about the Isle of Cumbrae having a strong sense of being a home from home for many, embracing them as part of the community and being very welcoming to all.

This sense of welcome should be celebrated in the Place Brand – you're always welcome!



7. Place Branding

Cumbræ Visitor Propositions



The Isle of Cumbræ – Small but Perfectly Formed

This proposition plays to the fact the Isle of Cumbræ is noticeably smaller than Bute and Arran, but there is plenty to do, and what is on offer on the island is of a high quality and will not disappoint.

Cumbræ is the smallest of the Clyde Islands which is accessible to the public via ferry. It shares the seaside charm that both Bute and Arran possess but its absolute points of differentiation are its size; the amount that is on offer; the sense of welcome and for all.

By being small it doesn't have the mountains and string of villages along the coast that Arran has, or the extensive gardens and majestic architecture of Mount Stuart on Bute. Cumbræ does have its single coastal road which is only 10 miles long and there is only one town – Millport – which is the hub.

For young families it has the 'outdoors for beginners' feel. It feels safe, you can't readily get lost and for many activities, notably cycling round the island, it offers an experience which embodies a sense of achievement for young (and not so young) ones. You can climb to the highest point and get a panoramic view of the entire island and can safely paddle and explore rock pools on sheltered beaches. Within this it has appeal for multigenerational groups where no-one need feel left out, with something for everyone.



7. Place Branding

Cumbræ Visitor Propositions



The Isle of Cumbræ – come on over!

A very simple and welcoming visitor proposition which suggests the islanders know you are close by and a proposition that gives a sense of the island consciously reaching out to draw you in.

The island is just over the sea from Largs so 'come on over' reinforces the ferry aspect, but also this phrase has a lovely sense of informality to it and a strong sense of you'll be very welcome. It has appeal for anyone who may just be out for a drive and finds them selves on the North Ayrshire coast and realising they have time and can readily visit – and be back in time for tea. With additional one-night accommodation it could appeal to the spontaneous 'lets just stay'.

In addition this proposition will work extremely well when the new marina and pontoon investment is progressed. An immediate market will be the boat owners who berth in the large marinas at Kip, Largs and Ardrossan as three examples, and a simple 'come on over' call to action will be appealing and welcoming.



7. Place Branding

Cumbræ Visitor Propositions



Come to Cumbræ Outdoor Festival!

The workshop expressed concern that some of the previous festival activity had 'deteriorated' with a lot of excessive drinking giving the events and the island a poor reputation and issues for locals.

An event aimed at reinventing the sense of Cumbræ being an island would be an outdoor festival in Spring or Autumn which provides a range of walks, activities and experiences provided by local groups and organisations.

A programme of activity can be scheduled over a weekend initially and grow to be a week/10 days long. Heritage walks, walking theatre activity, wildlife spotting, cycling tours, watersports tasters and tours, wild swimming, and bench bagger for the less able-bodied could all feature each led by a local business or group which can earn ticket fees with a percentage to the overall organisation and promotion.

Unlike the music festivals this won't require marquee costs and band hire fees and accommodation. It can start small and grow over time, potentially appealing to friends and family of islanders and second home owners to begin with, and then growing in appeal as it beds in.

Two examples are CowalFest and Moray Walking and Outdoor Festival



7. Place Branding

Cumbræ Visitor Propositions



Isle of Cumbræ – an island for all / the inclusive isle

Cumbræ has an immediate sense of being inclusive with a very gently rolling landscape, a short ferry journey with a bus link to the town, easily accessed beaches, public toilets around the island and bike hire. This could be a key differentiator.

By appealing to the multigenerational and all abilities market there could be scope to have features and facilities to help everyone – no matter what their level of ability is - to enjoy the island. For example, beach wheelchairs to access the water, and electric golf buggies to get between different places. Mapes have an extensive range of bikes and e-bikes for hire and including tricycles and quadricycles for family groups. Bike hire options could be extended to include adaptive bikes for people with disabilities and showcase safe routes to explore away from traffic.

There is now a changing places public toilet at the Garrison which is a very welcome facility for anyone with a disability or mobility issue. Consideration could be given to all abilities accommodation options to allow overnight stays on the island Callander Hostel provides an all-abilities pod with a full changing places shower room and medical bed with a hoist. It filled a very welcome gap in the National Park offer and this would be an exceptional island offer.



7. Place Branding

Cumbræ Visitor Propositions



Isle of Cumbræ – leave it all behind

This proposition seeks to emphasize that you don't need to prepare or bring much at all to the island for a great break or day out. This also plays into portraying the Isle of Cumbræ as a straightforward option, and also perfect when you just need some down time, need some space, now.

Key inspirational content could refer to just how easy it is to travel to the Isle of Cumbræ and the minute you step on the ferry and set sail is a special feeling in itself. Being able to walk or hire a bike to cycle round the whole island in one trip also conveys the island as being accessible and inclusive - and that sense of achievement.

Content that flags that it is also a prime 'leave the car behind' option has huge merit. This is an increasingly valuable proposition as people become more and more aware of their carbon footprint and welcome ideas on how to enjoy a day out to somewhere special and being confident that this is easy to do.

Concerns were voiced on the volume of vehicles and parking issues in the height of summer at the workshop so content that inspires foot passenger travel has strong merit. The local aspiration to have a foot passenger ferry link between Millport and the mainland would complement this.



7. Place Branding

Cumbrae Visitor Propositions



Isle of Cumbrae – the Clyde’s rookie marina

As and when the marina is constructed and becomes operational, and hopefully the community wins the tender to operate it, a new visitor proposition will be essential to highlight the new offering and also appeal to sailors in the Firth of Clyde who will not previously have had Cumbrae as a step ashore destination.

This should be supported with vibrant new imagery of the new facilities and also what they come ashore offer actually is. Ideally new collaborative products can be developed in advance to appeal to this new market and linking food and drink offer and experiences.

The workshop explored the idea of sailors and passengers being able to hire golf clubs as well as bikes and other kit for activities. This could be a key feature of the Cumbrae offer and also appeal to the small explorer cruise ships.



PRESS PAUSE ||

REFLECTIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS



8. Reflections



A Strong Sense of Community

The Cumbrae Press Pause workshop demonstrated a strong sense of community spirit with a significant amount of notable community led activity and ambition for the future. However, it did also highlight that each project has its own purpose and vision and inter-project communication and collaboration could be improved – for the benefit of all.

Other communities undertaking Press Pause have instigated ‘united’ discussions and have explored umbrella structures – eg Cumbrae Together - to aid communication and also follow on work to develop and refine a shared vision.

The Cumbrae Local Place Plan is a commendable piece of work, especially the detailed survey outputs. There was strong local participation. These survey results could readily be developed into a Community Action Plan to sit alongside the Place Plan and go beyond its spatial considerations and physical projects. The survey responses are an excellent basis for this and could instigate some new working groups to focus on specific topics including an events and festivals programme, collaborative product development.



8. Reflections



A Contemporary Sense of Identity

Two further reflections are that Cumbrae has to some extent lost its way in terms of its identity as a destination – linked to its historic ‘doon the watter’ role and the emerging tourism trends. Cumbrae is at a very exciting cross roads with a clearer sense of direction emerging which should be harnessed.

Recent developments like the distillery and Jacks Alt Stays, as just two examples, are ringing the changes and appealing to a more contemporary market. Although the accommodation offer has reduced over time, there was a strong sense that the quality has drastically improved and there are also now a number of makers and producers on the island. The food and drink offer is struggling to accommodate 7 day, all year and daytime/evening operations with staffing and cost of living as key issues. Is there a more innovative approach to the food and drink offer on the island?



The place branding recommendation to refer to the Isle of Cumbrae rather than Millport will help ring the changes as will the Ayrshire Growth Deal investment in the marina and pontoons.

8. Reflections



Ringling the Changes

The marina and pontoons investment present Cumbrae with a golden opportunity in themselves, and especially if the community are involved in the management and operation.

The pontoons and shore facilities themselves will attract a new market and with around 60 berths proposed, this could be a sizeable market in the main season. However, there needs to be preparation work done as this market has key requirements in terms of shore side facilities and also services they will seek in the town – food and drink being an obvious one. This could boost existing businesses and also support the evening economy.

Tarbert Loch Fyne is an excellent example where the food offer is exceptional, and is to a great extent enabled by the sailing market. Its marina is much larger than the proposal for Millport but is a good example of how the sailing market has supported business growth and development

The operation of the pontoons by the community offers significant opportunities for the community to derive many benefits, not least income and jobs, but also scope to connect this new market to the services, facilities and experiences on offer within the community. Tarbert Harbour Authority is a community led organisation, and delivers multiple local benefits.



9. Recommendations

Food for Thought



Community led tourism is already prevalent and offers Cumbrae numerous further opportunities to celebrate and promote its clear sense of community, and to further embrace these as part of what a visit to Cumbrae entails.

Itineraries would be a very useful tool to ensure people can make the most of a visit and also are inspired to return and do something different. These can be based on particular interests such as young families, romantic couples, outdoor enthusiasts, history buffs and wildlife spotters

The millport.org site currently focuses on members listings. With external funding a resource could be put in place to create new home page content which focuses on the island as a destination and as a place with a multitude of things to do. This can then link to the different member listings.

The VisitBute site has recently been revamped with the home page focusing on that initial inspiration and for different interests – wet weather, get outdoors, if you only have an hour, how to make the most of a day trip. The site itself is dynamic and it has a what's on page which features visitor and community facing activity - to which everyone is welcome.



9. Recommendations

Cumbræ – Playing to our Strengths



The destination competency appraisal has flagged some interesting strength, not least the recognition that from a net zero perspective the island's climate ambitions can be packaged as a feature of the island.

Being able to not just leave the car in Largs but to leave it at home with the rail and bus links to the ferry terminal is a strength. The scope to walk and cycle once on the island is a key feature.

A further related strength is the ability to hire bikes and (in the planning) watersports further reinforces the ability to leave the car behind. The aspiration for a passenger ferry connection from the town to Largs will further enhance this.

The marina and pontoons on the horizon could seriously address the sense of limited bed spaces and especially the dwindling evening economy with the island 'emptying' by day trippers restricted by the last ferry at 8.30pm in summer.

Finally the island has unique and quirky features with the smallest Cathedral, Crocodile Rock and the narrowest housefront. Imaginative campaign activity could draw attention to these and also quirky experiences only possible on Cumbræ.



9. Recommendations

Immediate Opportunities



Several ideas and recommendations are set out in the Destination Competency and Place Branding sections which can be reviewed and collated into a prioritised activity plan, with some being projects to pursue in their own right and others to consider as relevant opportunities arise.

Based on the workshop findings and reflections, there are several immediate opportunities for Cumbrae to consider:

- Set up a Whats App group initially for the attendees and all those interested in sharing ideas and opportunities triggered by the workshop
- Establish an informal monthly get together for face to face idea generation and development – eg a monthly business breakfast
- Consider and agree place branding proposition and descriptor for the island and encourage use by all businesses and community groups
- Develop the existing leaflet into a new double sided visitor map for the island building with all key attractions, services and facilities and main parking locations to access features and walking and cycling trails – available as a pdf and in print on the ferry and at The Garrison
- Consider locations for simple visitor information panels which have the map panels with key information (eg at ferry terminals, main car parks, and toilets around the island)
- Reach out to businesses and the wider community seeking photography, video and other content they are willing to share to form a content library to reflect the agreed place branding and visitor propositions
- Create a toolkit with Cumbrae content (narrative and hero imagery), plus visitor proposition hashtags and key island accounts for all to tag/use and share with VS and others as the basis for updating current listings



9. Recommendations

Suggested Next Steps



This report sets out several ideas and recommendations that the community of Cumbrae could progress and provides inspiration from elsewhere. There are likely to be other ideas within the community once a sense of direction is evident. To ensure this isn't just another workshop, and another report sitting on a shelf there are five recommended next steps.

- Circulate the report to all attendees seeking simple feedback on 'ideas of interest' and additional thoughts
- Engage the workshop attendees plus other local interests who didn't attend the workshop in a second facilitated session to explore these Press Pause findings and recommendations and agree first steps and devise a collaborative community led tourism activity plan
- Arrange an open day event in the community to share the Press Pause findings, to illicit additional information on USPs POPs and PODs, encourage sharing of photography and other assets for use by the community and encourage idea sharing and volunteer recruitment
- Agree and arrange a learning exchange for a group to visit other communities that have achieved success in relevant marina activity – eg Oban, Lochaline, Tobermory, Campbeltown
- Agree a quick win project (eg the new map) to galvanise everyone



10. Recalibrating Tourism

Measuring the Impact of Tourism



*Bed nights,
footfall
and spend*

OR

*Things that
matter to
our
community?*

Tourism in Scotland is traditionally measured by inbound flights, footfall, spend and overnight stays. Whilst this data can give an impression of economic impact nationally and regionally, the data is typically modelled and not collected or reported at a community by community level, It does not convey the impacts or benefits of tourism to an individual community.

SCOTO seeks to recalibrate tourism and measure what is important to the individual community, to measure impact at a grass roots level. Community action plans and place plans are mechanisms for understanding what is important within any community and helping determine what to measure.

On Cumbrae there is a current Local Place Plan. A review of the survey outputs is recommended to highlight key themes that are important to this community. By highlighting the priority themes and issues for Cumbrae it is then possible to start measuring the impact of tourism activity in relation to these local priority issues (eg retaining young people, creating permanent living wage jobs, conserving heritage assets), which in turn allows the benefits of tourism to be clearly articulated and understood.

An infographic template can be developed for the enterprise interests in the area to record and demonstrate the community benefits they provide. These can be aggregated at a Strathard level.

10. Recalibrating Tourism



The Impact of Tourism in Strathard

"What we measure affects what we do. If we measure the wrong thing, we will do the wrong thing. If we don't measure something, it becomes neglected, as if the problem didn't exist".

Carnegie UK

This Press Pause community led tourism initiative can help address many of the identified priorities set out in the Local Place Plan survey outputs and also specific issues flagged during the workshop relating to quality of life.

Recalibrating how tourism is measured will demonstrate how tourism is delivering local benefits and helping the community be a better place to live, work and visit. This in turn can garner more local support for tourism activity and the value of initiatives like the motorhome Aire at the Garrison that provides revenue for other initiatives for locals and visitors. The marina could be a prime revenue generator for the community with the Tarbert Harbour Authority being an excellent example of what can be achieved

Tourism can be considered a dirty word, especially when communities feel it is something that happens to them, and individuals are impacted by inconsiderate parking, as just one example. However, when it is seen as a source of revenue to support the community in pursuing local priority projects and initiatives, it can gain much more positive momentum and outcomes.

A key recommendation is to agree a list of measures to report impact and benefit from visitor activity – eg number of young people employed, number of permanent living wage jobs in place, number of local artists and makers supported, number of cultural assets retained, number of cultural events provided, etc. By agreeing the measures, everyone can then focus on what they can do to help deliver these positive impacts.

11. Press Pause Cumbrae

Closing Thoughts



SCOTO's Vision

“For every community in Scotland to embrace and be ambassadors for localness and to develop community led tourism as a force for good which enables their community to be an even better place to live, work and visit”.

The Press Pause initiative seeks to help individual geographic communities take time out to consider tourism and how it could be much more of a force for good within their community. This involves business and community interests having constructive conversations – and everyone attending the workshop having a stake in the game and willing to take things forward.

Post pandemic there has been a focus on recovery but this can't be to pre-pandemic conditions. We are in a new era in tourism – post Covid, post Brexit, in the midst of a technological revolution and a climate and biodiversity emergency. SCOTO believes this requires a new approach as well as a new mindset which has responsible tourism at its core. It also presents many exciting opportunities at a local level for individual communities to focus on, which also mirrors what more and more visitors are seeking – to meet local people, have authentic experiences, discover new places, learn new skills and spend locally.

This reports seeks to set out what was discussed together, highlight what could be done differently to help the community move forward, provide a range of ideas for consideration and also set out inspiration from elsewhere. The community is the driver and can establish which ideas to pursue or explore further.

Whatever action is taken the primary aim should be for tourism to deliver real benefits that address local issues at an individual community level – the presence of visitors should be making a positive difference and helping make the community an even better place to live, work and visit.

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Scottish Community Tourism