



WILD ABOUT TOURISM

Argyll & The Isles Tourism Co-operative Ltd



Argyll & the Isles Tourism Cooperative Ltd is supported by













A WARM WELCOME FROM ARGYLL & THE ISLES TOURISM

Argyll & The Isles Tourism Cooperative Ltd (AITC) is the strategic destination marketing and management organisation for the entire Argyll & Bute region on the west coast of Scotland.

AITC was set up by the industry and for the industry in 2012 and is the strategic voice for all tourism matters. We have a volunteer board who are each elected (or co-opted) for their skills, expertise, local knowledge and networks. Each of our directors either owns or is at a senior management level in their business, are key players within their destinations with a focus on building links with local and national strategic partners. Their combined experience drives our tourism agenda and ensures timely debate and decision-making. All our directors live within Argyll & the Isles. Each devotes their time to AITC to provide leadership in growing tourism across the area and in harmony with our communities and outstanding environment.

We are the second largest region in Scotland encompassing over 3700km of coastline, 23 inhabited islands, major towns and remote villages and have direct easily accessed transport links to the central belt. We have the highest share of tourism businesses than anywhere else in Scotland. To date we have represented in the region of 1200 tourism interests through our destination and sectoral group members.

Since 2012 we have focused our passion and energy on repositioning Argyll & The Isles as Scotland's Adventure Coast under the Wild About Argyll place brand.

In 2020 we are inviting direct membership to support a new way of working to drive forward the recovery and future positive impact of tourism on our local economies, communities and outstanding environment.

Value of Tourism



5,793,000 Visitor Days



2,885,000 Visitor Numbers



£364m
Direct Expenditure



£510m Economic Impact



9,618
Jobs in the sector

BEING A
MEMBER HELPS
YOU INFLUENCE
ARGYLL'S
TOURISM
SUCCESS

(source STEAM Final Trend Report for Argyll & Bute, 2009-2019, Global Tourism Solutions Ltd)

MEET THE TEAM

AITC has a board of six area directors and scope to co-opt two more directors annually. Meet the current board as of the 2019 AGM.

Elected

Cowal & Bute - Iain Jurgensen Chairperson

Heart of Argyll & Kintyre -Gavin Dick, Finance Director

Oban & Lorn - Neil MacKay

Islay, Jura and Colonsay - Emma Clark

Loch Lomond and Clyde Sea Lochs -Andy Roger

Mull, Iona, Coll & Tiree - vacant

Co-opted

Marine/YCW2020 - Fiona McPhail

Strategic Networks - Calum Ross Exec Team

AITC Chair



lain Jurgensen Managing Director Portavadie since 2009

AITC Directors



Gavin Dick Prison Governor Inveraray Jail since 2006



Neil MacKay
Event Director since 2010
- Tiree Music Festival,
OBANLIVE and Best of
the West



Emma Clark
Joint Owner Glenegedale House
Islay since 2013



Andy Roger Resort Director Cameron House since 2015



Fiona McPhail
Owner Carry Farm and
Tighnabruaich Sailing School
since 1998



Calum Ross
Joint Owner Loch Melfort
Hotel since 2007

AITC Freelance Development Team







Karen MacCorquodale Social Media Manager since 2019

Manager since 2018



Helen Dick Product Development Agent since 2018



Lynne DowProduct Development
Agent since 2018

Area Agent Team

AITC has operated an area agent team since 2014 with local contacts in each area of Argyll. This is under review as part of our Covid-19 recovery plans. Please contact admin@wildaboutargyll.co.uk for any local inquiries.

WILD ABOUT ACHIEVING FOR OUR DESTINATION

AITC operates as a not for profit cooperative with its members between 2012 and 2020 being the local marketing and tourism groups which local businesses join. With major changes being witnessed in how tourism operates and business/visitor dynamics globally and in Scotland, at the 2019 AGM AITC agreed to open up to direct membership.

Our 10 Core Activities

- 1 Destination leadership
- 2 Industry networking
- 3 Local capacity building and support
- 4 Skills and capabilities
- 5 Content curation
- 6 Digital presence web and social media
- 7 Strategic and local marketing campaigns
- 8 Product development
- 9 Lobbying and representation on national and regional forums
- 10 Travel trade and consumer events

Our Digital Presence



5.5m



170,000 Unique Visitors



60,000 Outbound Links



28,000 Social Media Follower

Performance due to grow significantly with various pipeline projects bringing Islay/Jura, Inveraray, Seafood Trail and Taste of Place Trails onto the wildaboutargyll.co.uk platform plus accommodation booking widget.

#wildaboutargyll



OUR PARTNERSHIPS

From 2012 to 2020 AITC has enjoyed considerable support from public sector partners, notably Argyll & Bute Council and HIE, which has enabled a programme approach to our activity.

- 2012-2014 Stronger Together
- 2014-2017 Destination Leadership & Capacity Building
- 2017-2020 Product Development and Digital Capabilities

Our campaign and project partners include Visit Scotland, Forestry Commission Scotland/Scottish Forestry, Scottish Natural Heritage, Sustrans and People Make Glasgow plus our key travel partners Calmac, Scotrail, Loganair, Glasgow Airport, Enterprise Rent-a-car and West Coast Motors.

AITC has a seat on the Scottish Tourism Alliance council which meets monthly.



Argyll and the Isles have the highest share of tourism businesses than anywhere else in Scotland with an estimated 9618 jobs in the sector in 2019. Through AITC's network of destination and sectoral groups, we support in the region of 1200 business interests.

WILD ABOUT ARGYLL

There are 12 destination groups and tourism organising operating in Argyll and each works closely with AITC:

- Discover Tiree
- Visit Coll
- Marketing Mull & Iona
- Oban & Lorn Tourism Alliance
- Heart of Argyll Tourism Alliance
- Islay & Jura Tourism Marketing Group
- Visit Colonsay
- Explore Kintyre & Gigha
- Kyles Marketing Group
- Cowal Marketing Group
- Visit Bute
- Love Loch Lomond

We work in partnership with pan-Argyll sectoral groups:

- Food from Argyll
- Glorious Gardens of Argyll & Bute
- CHArts
- Artmap Argyll & Cowal Open Studios
- The Argyll & Bute Museums and Heritage Forum

AITC also works closely with national sectoral organisations including the Association of Self Caterers, Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions, SailScotland and WildScotland.

OUR GEOGRAPHY

Our geography is extensive covering 6,900 sq km and with a population of 86,260 in 2018.

We are the second largest region in Scotland encompassing over 3700km of coastline, 23 inhabited islands, major towns and remote villages and have direct easily accessed transport links to the central belt. Over 80% of our population live within 1km of the coast and we have the highest share of tourism businesses than anywhere else in Scotland.

OUR GROWTH STRATEGY

In 2014 we launched 'Tourism Argyll & The Isles 2020' as the local response to Tourism Scotland 2020.

"Our aim was to grow direct expenditure on tourism in Argyll & The Isles from £270m in 2014 to £300m in 2020 by developing new products, extending the season, promoting much greater collaboration and seeking step-change within the industry through progressive partnership."

This target was met in 2016, and reset to £340m by 2020. The spend in 2019 exceeded £360m - considerably ahead of target for 2020. Covid-19 will have a massive impact on 2020 spend.

Scotland Outlook 2030 was launched by Scotland's First Minister at the beginning of March 2020 prior to lockdown. This is being reviewed in light of Covid-19 impacts and anticipated changes in consumer behaviours towards responsible tourism and the great outdoors. Once re-launched AITC will work with partners to devise Argyll & Isles Outlook 2030 as the local tailored response.



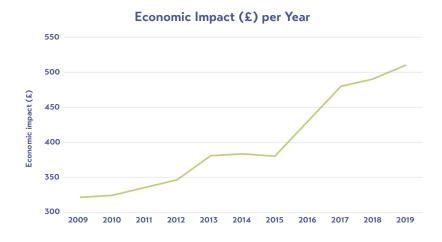
TOURISM PERFORMANCE

Since AITC was set up in 2011 domestic visitor spend in Argyll has grown at a much higher rate than Scotland as a whole achieving a 19% increase compared to national decline of 0.4%.

Visit Scotland Fact Sheet shows;

- During 2017, A&I welcomed 841,000 domestic visitors, hosting over 3 million bed nights and spending £215 million
- This is over 7% in terms of volume and over 7% in terms of value of total domestic tourism in Scotland for 2017
- Argyll and Bute has the highest share of tourism businesses than any other area in Scotland 13% of businesses compared to a national average of 8%

Steam Data Shows;



(source STEAM Final Trend Report for Argyll & Bute, 2009-2019, Global Tourism Solutions Ltd)

Between 2011 and 2019 Argyll and the Isles experienced



23%

Increase in Visitor Days



32.3%

Increase in Visitor Numbers



25.8%

Increase in Direct Expenditure

Over this period the economic impact of tourism in Argyll & The Isles increased by 25.8% split by sector to;



29.1%

Increase for Accommodatior



21.9%

Increase for Food & Drink



27.0%

ncrease for Recreation



COVID-19 & OUR RENEWED AMBITION

In 2019 AITC decided that a new operational model was needed in light of rapid changes in the support framework provided by agency partners and the changing dynamics in visitor needs and wants plus business operations.

In 2020 we have witnessed unprecedented impacts globally and across all society from Coronavirus. The tourism industry has been one of the worst affected. The true scale and extent is not yet known in Argyll and the Isles however in June 2020:

- Most tourism related businesses have been closed for 12 weeks and those few remaining open are supporting key workers
- Huge percentages of staff have been furloughed, seasonal staff have not been employed, and redundancies are looming
- Many eligible businesses have not yet received support and a large number of large and small businesses in rural areas are falling through the cracks
- Recovery is expected to take a minimum of 2-3 years and a new norm has yet to be defined
- Our 23 island communities are currently facing severe restrictions on ferry travel due to social distancing requirements and could be facing up to 18 months of business stagnation

Pre Covid-19 we were looking forward to an exceptional year building on eight years of year on year growth and were taking an active part in Scotland's Year of Coasts and Waters 2020 by leading the hugely ambitious West Coast Waters initiative.

With recent government announcements it is anticipated some form of tourism will be possible from mid July. Social distancing requirements will place restrictions on what is possible and may mean some businesses or specific activities are not viable. Support at this time will be critical.





OUR ACTIVITY

WILD ABOUT ARGYLL CAMPAIGN

During 2017 AITC rolled out the Wild About Argyll campaign with funding support from A&BC and VS Growth Fund. This year long campaign was primarily digital and aimed at raising awareness of Argyll & The Isles as Scotland's Adventure Coast. The campaign was aimed at a much younger, more active market than we traditionally enjoy and was the first genuinely pan-Argyll campaign rolled out at any scale. The campaign was video led and featured a 12 day epic adventure across the region with Mark Beaumont - who smashed the world record for circumnavigating the globe on a bike in less than 80 Days in 2017.

Campaign Activity

- 197,000 central belt cinema goers viewed the WAA cinema ad
- 1.1m Glasgow subway users passed through when the WAA digital ads were on display
- 15,000 passengers per day departing via Edinburgh Airport passed the WAA film playing on a continuous loop
- The online campaign has reached almost 2m people and has driven more than half a million engagements (likes, comments, shares)

Wild About Argyll was adopted as our place brand in 2018 with our new responsive website launched in 2018. #wildaboutargyll now features in all our social media activity and early in 2020 we launched our re-brand of AITC and our digital presence.













HEART & SOUL OF SCOTLAND

In 2018/19 AITC entered a formal partnership with Glasgow Life and key transport partners, Scotrail, CalMac Ferries, Loganair, West Coast Motors and Enterprise Car Rental. We then secured Argyll & Bute Council funding and a VisitScotland Growth Fund grant with support from Love Loch Lomond to promote Glasgow and Argyll as the Heart & Soul of Scotland. This video led digital campaign presented the area as one amazing destination for short breaks with micro adventures in the city and on the coast easily accessed by public transport and appealing to Adventure Seekers, Food Loving Culturalists and Cultured Explorers.

Campaign Activity

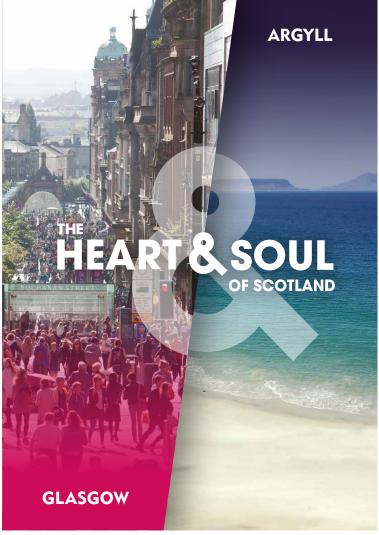
- Reach exceeded **2,830,000** over three phases of campaign
- Reached **1.2m** target consumers with our messages
- TOTAL REACH through influencers 885K

Early discussions have now taken place with our partners in Glasgow Life and we are exploring a Heart & Soul of Scotland Phase 2 campaign as part of the domestic market and staycation recovery plans.



HEART & SOUL OF SCOTLAND





WEST COAST WATERS 2020

AITC is lead partner for the **West Coast Waters 2020** campaign, which was launched in 2019 and is funded by all DMO partners plus VisitScotland Growth Fund, Calmac, Scotrail, WildScotland, UHI CAPITEN, Argyll & Bute, Inverclyde and North Ayrshire Councils and Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park. The campaign originally focused on 2020 but will now extend into 2021.

The West Coast Waters Baton Relay is also being led by AITC with The Scottish Salmon Company as main sponsor. This has been postponed to 2021 and will take place between May and October.

Five WCW Hopscotch Routes are being developed as itineraries with slow adventure experiences with Calmac and UHI.

A new **WCW sunset trail** will be created using content provided through the #WCWSunsets fortnightly competitions on the #westcoastwaters campaign during 2020.

A WCW Scavenger Hunt is planned for after lockdown to encourage everyone to tackle marine litter when out and about on our coasts and waters.

















WEST COAST WATERS 2020

The Coast that Shaped the World is possibly the most exciting project to come out West Coast Waters – with a £500k budget sourced from the Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund and supported by CalMac. Led by UHI West Highland College, this project focuses on storytelling and our incredible coastal heritage and culture - and runs through to 2022 Scotland's Year of Storytelling. AITC will be a key delivery partner over the 30 months and will work with UHI on devising the marketing campaign for 2022.





Scotland's

The coast that shaped the world









TASTE OF PLACE TRAILS 2020

AITC had planned a food and drink campaign for the 2020 season focusing on our incredible products and producers and the many experiences visitors can enjoy. This campaign will be rolled out over the remainder of 2020 as part of our recovery plan with a strong focus on visits in 2021 and ordering online.

Five themes are being included with online maps, itineraries and blogs.

- Seafood
- Spirit & Beer
- Farm Produce
- Coffee & Cake
- Vegan

This campaign is funded by VisitScotland Growth Fund, CalMac, Argyll & Bute Council and Food from Argyll.









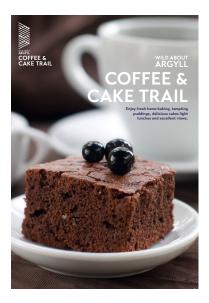




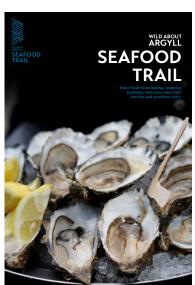
TASTE OF PLACE TRAILS 2020

Poster/Cover Visuals











Window Sticker





#MYARGYLL

In 2018, AITC entered a strategic partnership with the Wyvex Group which included a #myargyll campaign through the Oban Times and Scottish Field. Encouraging locals and visitors to share their special places and special moments in Argyll on line, there were weekly features in the Oban Times and monthly double page spreads in the Scottish Field.

A multi-media competition took place for the chance to win an experience packed break on Islay with the winner being based on Lismore and a stunning shot from the island.

#myargyll continues as AITC's local hashtag campaign and all content is pulled from Instagram to the Wild About Argyll Social Wall.

#ARGYLLBEBACK

As part of the Covid-19 Stay At Home messaging during lockdown, AITC resurrected its hashtag campaign from 2016, #argyllbeback and pushed content to help our audiences reminisce and dream of the time when they will be able to travel when it is safe to do so. These posts are also pulled through to our social wall from Instagram.

The People & Places film from our Wild About Argyll campaign was re-launched in May 2020 'Biding our time, while you bide yours...'.

wildaboutargyll.co.uk Social Wall



Entry Winner



Biding our time, while you bid yours Campaign Promotional Video









PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT 2019/20

Wildlife Adventure, Food & Drink

With funding support from HIE we have focused energy on working with local operators on turning our key wildlife, adventure, food and drink assets into experiences. Our product development agents are working with individual businesses to help them develop new products, be online visible and bookable and encouraging collaborations with like-minded businesses. We have created simple 'how to guides' recognising people are very busy delivering their product and with limited time to focus on business and product development. We have engaged with over 100 individual operators and had 1-2-1 sessions helping hand hold implementation of recommendations and signpost to where support can be found

Our strategic West Coast Waters and Taste of Place Trails campaign activity in 2020-21 are fantastic platforms for showcasing new products and reaching out to new audiences and our agents will be actively encouraging local providers to engage.

Interactive Event Planner Guide



Events & Festivals

Events and Festivals are an important part of Argyll's tourism offer with a vibrant events calendar throughout the year. Through our HIE product development activity we are focusing energy on supporting events and festival organisers ensuring they have access to best practice guidance, funding opportunities, consider their dates as part of a clash diary, ensure their events are visible in The List, VisitScotland and other event listings and work together on joint promotions.

Culture Heritage & the Arts

Culture, heritage and the arts are an exceptional part of the visitor experience in Argyll with our heritage dating back 7,000 years and many artists and creatives choosing to live and work and interact with travellers across Argyll. During the period 2017-2020 a new organisation was being established in Argyll focusing on Culture, Heritage and the Arts – CHArts, AITC therefore did not prioritise this area of product development during this period but is now hatching plans with the new body launched in 2019 and will scope out product development opportunities. Wander Argyll was a pilot product in 2019 which CHArts developed seeking to engage visitors with artists, makers and producers. This is hosted on Wild About Argyll and will be extended to be pan Argyll in 2020/21.

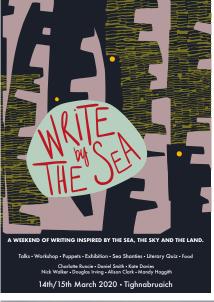


PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT 2019/20

In 2019 we worked on new area by area products in each of our member destinations focusing on key strengths identified during the 2018 roadshows and collaboration. These were ready to launch in 2020 and will now be a core part of our Covid-19 recovery programme with some products extended into adjacent areas and new ideas scoped to appeal to the new norm which has yet to be defined.

AREA	PRODUCT	ACTIVITY
Kintyre & Gigha	Kintyre 66	Tourist Trail
Islay & Jura	Taste Islay & Jura	Food & Drink Festival
Mull & Iona	Wild Isles	Digital Wildlife Guide
Cowal	Cowal Gravel Trail Dunoon Dirt Dash	Bike Packing Trail Bike Packing Event
Argyll's Secret Coast	Write by the Sea	Book & Art Festival
Oban & Lorn	Oban Experiences Oban & Argyll Guides	Tour Group Experiences Tour Guide Network
Helensburgh	Helensburgh Town Trails	Themed Walking Trails
Colonsay	Fill Up	Visitor Water Refill Points
Heart of Argyll	Wildlife Trails	Walks and Trails Guide
Bute	Bute Breakfast	Local produce Event and Menu Inspiration
Coll	Coll Guide	Online Island map & brochure









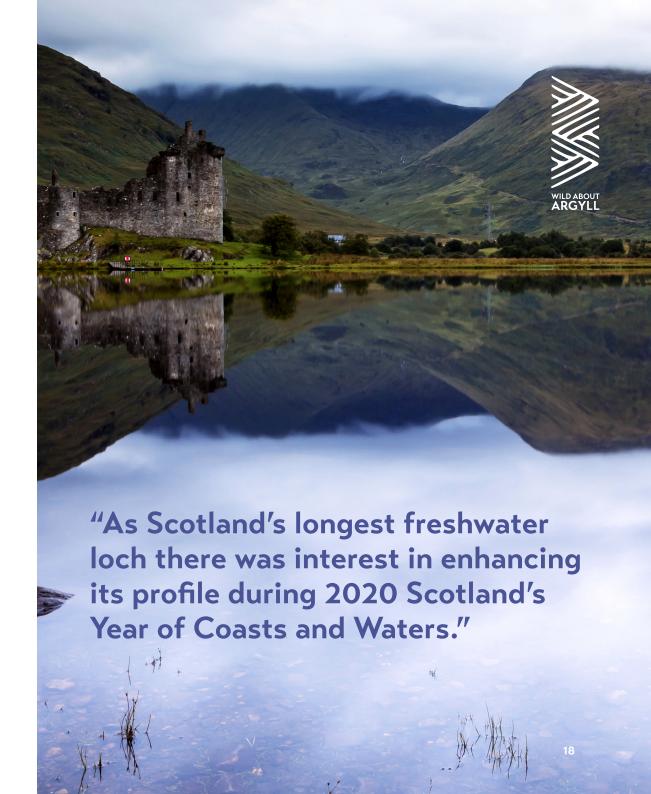


SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AROUND LOCH AWE 2020

Late in 2019 AITC were commissioned by SNH to run a programme of workshops and consultations with local interests to consider how the Loch Awe area could develop sustainable tourism products and marketing. As Scotland's longest freshwater loch there was interest in enhancing its profile during 2020 Scotland's Year of Coasts and Waters. With the impact of Covid19 in 2020 which lead to most events being cancelled, the focus year is now being rolled into 2021 and this project will extend into this period too.

CALEDONIA WAY BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT 2020

AITC is acting as an agent for Sustrans, and in 2020 will be working with local operators along the Caledonia Way to encourage them to adopt cycle friendly practices and develop bespoke products for users of this iconic route linking Campbeltown with Oban and northwards to Inverness.



SKILLS & CAPABILITIES

In 2016 AITC prioritised customer care and digital skills development for the industry. Through our chair we engage with Developing the Young Workforce.

Principles of Customer Care

Working with Business Gateway and People 1st AITC embarked on a partnership programme to raise customer care standards across the destination. By 2019 180 businesses had taken part and over 526 individuals were accredited by World Host.

Digital Tourism Scotland

As a contractor appointed by HIE, AITC facilitated the roll out of Digital Tourism Scotland over two phases including an extensive survey to understand current digital skills and training needs. By the end of 2018 70 workshops events had been delivered across Argyll & The Isles with over 620 individual attendees. 31 businesses received highly valued 1-2-1 mentoring.

Digital Tourism Think Tank

AITC joined the international Digital Tourism Think Tank funded by HIE, and has taken part in 3 international DTTT Global Conferences, 2 international DTTT Campus workshops and 2 DTTT Academy workshops with the most recent being the DTTT pilot Covid-19 recovery planning programme Remote | Design | Rebuild.









WORKING WITH THE TRAVEL TRADE

Since AITC was established in 2012 it has attended the VisitScotland annual EXPO events in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen and hosted travel trade FAM trips. Each year AITC has had appointments with a minimum of 70-80 buyers and introduced them to local business contacts, helped devise itineraries and provided content. VS EXPO in April 2020 was cancelled due to Covid19 lock down.

AITC also attended Explore GB in Ascot and Brighton, and has an ongoing relationship with the Scottish Destination Management Association, having hosted two successful speed dating events. A primary area of activity moving forward will be more direct engagement with the travel trade and development of bespoke experiences.

AITC has had a Wild About Argyll presence at the Scottish Cycling, Running and Outdoor Pursuits show in 2017, 2018 and 2020.

AITC has had a presence at a number of major events in Argyll including Best of the West in Inveraray and the Cowal Gathering engaging with thousands of visitors and promoting all that Argyll has to offer. Competitions and partner stands allow AITC to gather consumer insights, important data and contacts for ongoing marketing and campaign activity.

Exhibition Display, Leaflet & Postcard





AITC DIRECT MEMBERSHIP SCHEME 2020

Direct membership of AITC will bring numerous benefits to individual businesses, local marketing groups, suppliers and local communities.

Businesses will benefit from

- Place brand marketing
- Digital improvement
- Business and product development
- Networking with fellow businesses

Local destination and sectoral groups will benefit from regular area based features in our digital activity and have the opportunity to integrate their web presence within wildaboutargyll.co.uk

Suppliers will be able to access our member network and offer special deals and Community groups and individuals can support the work we do and also be a sounding board for all tourism matters affecting their community.

- You can promote your business and experiences on the Wild About Argyll platforms and reach new audiences
- We undertake targeted digital marketing campaigns
- You can engage with themed campaigns throughout the year including #wildaboutargyll #myargyll #argyllbeback and benefit from our strategic partnership funded West Coast Waters and Taste of Place Trails campaigns
- You can get access to free and low cost training courses and networking events – on line and in local destinations throughout the year
- Attend the annual Argyll & The Isles Tourism Summit





GOOD REASONS TO JOIN ARGYLL & THE ISLES TOURISM COOPERATIVE

WILD ABOUT ARGYLL

- AITC is Argyll's official tourism organisation and the only organisation that promotes the entire region and each of its sub destinations to external markets
- We provide support and leadership to the tourism industry in Argyll & The Isles and provide specialist advice on marketing, PR, product development and capacity building
- We have a strategy for growth previously Tourism Argyll & The Isles 2020 and met the agreed targets and are now setting a new strategy with a focus on continued growth in tandem with meeting responsibility targets linked to community and environment
- We are the delivery vehicle for strategic partners in Argyll through the Argyll & The Isles Strategic Tourism Partnership and also work together on policy and strategy development
- Members have a direct relationship with the AITC Board and AITC delivery team, and will be represented on the STA council which inputs to STERG and the national tourism strategy group.
- Since 2012 we have secured £370k core funding allowing us to achieve spend in excess of £1.8m achieving significant multipliers for our strategic partners and tangible benefits for our industry

- Since 2016 we have facilitated 620 participants attending 70 Digital Tourism Scotland Courses and 526 individuals from 180 businesses becoming accredited in World Host Principles of Customer Care
- Our Wild About Argyll campaign in 2017 was a finalist in the international City Nation Place 'Place Brand of the Year' Award sponsored by the New York Times (losing out to Copenhagen). Our Wild About Argyll campaign is a VisitScotland best practice case study published in 2018
- Our ground breaking Heart & Soul campaign in 2018/19 with People Make Glasgow secured funding from all our strategic travel partners and had a reach of 2.8m
- We are lead partner for West Coast Waters having established the original pan west coast DMO collaboration and secured funding from HIE in 2017 and now leading the roll out of the £100k campaign for Year of Coasts and Waters 2020 and which will extend into 2021

"In 2020 for £25 any business can join AITC to receive immediate benefits. Monthly subscriptions will not start until March 2021."





JOIN US!

In 2020 for £25 any business can join AITC to receive immediate benefits. Monthly subscriptions will not start until March 2021.

Interested? Download and read our Membership Pack >



To join AITC click here and complete your details >

To contact AITC email info@wildaboutargyll.co.uk wildaboutargyll.co.uk/about

