

## LATEST UPDATE ON STAYCATION PROPOSALS

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The overall aim of the Staycation Project is to address visitor management pressures on our local communities and protect Argyll and Bute's outstanding natural environment whilst supporting infrastructure development to enhance visitor appeal.
- 1.2 The purpose of this paper is to offer a comprehensive update and overview of the activities carried out by the Council.
- 1.3 To address visitor pressures in Argyll and Bute the Council allocated £500,000 for staycation interventions from the 2021/2022 budget and a further £100,000 from 2022/2023 budget for the Staycation fund. Also, through 2021-2023 another £300,000 was allocated for tourism and staycation marketing.
- 1.4 Up to date Staycation activities worth £516,675.36 (**Appendix 1**) and £294,588 of marketing activities were invested through 2021-2024; leaving £83,324.64 still available from the Staycation fund and £5,412 from the marketing fund; both as of 21/08/2023.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee members are asked to:-

- a. Note and consider the update provided within this report.
- b. Note that £83,324.64 remains in the Staycation fund and £5,412 in the marketing fund and officers will continue to work with partners to respond to challenges and opportunities that arise from visitor pressures.

### 3. DETAIL

#### Background

- 3.1 The global pandemic disrupted the traditional tourism business model, prompting a surge in domestic travel and a desire for more nature-oriented

destinations. Argyll and Bute, with its wide-open spaces and natural attractions, emerged as an ideal choice for staycationers from all over the UK.

- 3.2 In July 2020, the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions resulted in a significant increase in staycation visitors to Argyll and Bute. In order to address the surge in visitor numbers, the council collaborated closely with various agencies, including the Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park, VisitScotland, Police Scotland, and Transport Scotland.
- 3.3 Ahead of the holiday season, the council conducted community consultation to identify key areas of concern and associated issues, such as littering, inadequate toilet facilities, the need for waste disposal points, and parking management signage. The insights gained from the consultation identified the need for a number of different staycation interventions, including the identification of potential private wastewater disposal sites and locations for temporary toilets. For further information, please refer to the document [Update on staycation proposals.pdf \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-03/Update%20on%20staycation%20proposals.pdf).
- 3.4 The council dedicated distinct funding pots to bolster staycation interventions in order to address the pressures on the infrastructure and local communities in Argyll and Bute,
  - A sum of £500,000 was allocated from the 2021/2022 budget for staycation interventions.
  - A further £100,000 from the 2022/2023 budget - for staycation activities.
  - £300,000 for tourism and staycation marketing through 2021-23.

These funds supported the development of various facilities and interventions across Argyll and Bute that proved critical to supporting staycationing visitors.

- 3.5 In March 2021, the temporary post of Staycation Project Officer was recruited. The officer's responsibilities included addressing issues such as littering, signage, toilet and waste disposal facilities. To oversee all the projects the officer worked closely with local communities, businesses and partners.
- 3.6 Based on this analysis of interventions in 2021 and 2022, further interventions were introduced to enhance the programme. The Staycation Project Officer initiated and facilitated Motorcaravan Overnight Parking scheme ([Update on staycation proposals.pdf \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-03/Update%20on%20staycation%20proposals.pdf)), for which £50,000 was allocated from the staycation fund.
- 3.7 In the 2023, due to a further increase in visitor numbers possibly due to the cost of living crisis, the Staycation Project Officer post was extended for six months. The responsibilities of the Officer were broadened to encompass Glenmorag car park and toilet upgrade project, with allocated funding of £100,000 from the Crown Estate Fund. Welcome to Argyll and Bute signage and passing place signs are to be erected as visitor management projects.

### **Facilitated Projects 2023**

- 3.8 In 2023, visitor numbers are starting to recover to levels seen before the

pandemic across most of Argyll and Bute, albeit market demands have changed. Domestic tourism was also fully re-joined by international visitors coming back to Argyll and Bute. STEAM (Scottish Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) data shows that Argyll and Bute remains in a recovery phase since the COVID-19 pandemic has subsided. Argyll and Bute, has experienced an increase of 64.4% visitors in 2022 compared to a restricted 2021, largely due to mobile tourism. This caused a transition from dealing with direct staycation related initiatives to focusing on a wider range of mobile tourism activities.

### 3.9 **Motorcaravan Overnight Parking scheme activities:**

- Providing management support for new businesses, through Economic Growth, and Roads and Infrastructure services;
- Creating a Motorcaravan Overnight Parking web page ([Motorcaravan Overnight Parking \(Aires\) | Argyll and Bute Council \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)), with support from the Council's Communications Team;
- Partnering with the Argyll and the Isles Tourism Co-operative Ltd [Wild About Argyll | Argyll & the Isles | Scotland's Adventure Coast](#) to conduct marketing to implement this new scheme (**Appendix 3** shows an example of Argyll and the Isles Tourism Co-operative Ltd Listing);
- Establishing a partnership with CAMpRA Rally Group;
- Communicating to communities the launch of the new Motorcaravan Overnight Parking sites via Community Support Team.

As a result, there are currently five new Motorcaravan Overnight Parking sites up and running.

3.10 **Glenmorag Project activities:** working with council departments and coordinating with third parties including Scottish Water on developing options for the potential upgrading of the Glenmorag car park and public toilets. This site has the potential to include upgraded toilets, potable water, and waste water disposal points as a pilot project for the area. For those activities in February 2023 Policy and Resource Committee agreed to switch the allocation of £100,000 Place Based Investment funding 2022/23 to the Glenmorag Car Park, Dunoon project from the Crown Estate funding allocation 2022/23.

3.11 **The Staycation Officer:** this contract was extended by six months (approximately £20,000) to the end of September 2023 to allow for the successful completion of the Motorcaravan Overnight Parking scheme. The Staycation Officer post vacant as of 11/8/2023 due to the current incumbent obtaining employment in another Local Authority. The remaining tasks will be delivered by the Economic Growth Team as appropriate.

3.12 **Signage:** signs with information on passing place etiquette (£20,000) are yet to be installed and Welcome to Argyll and Bute signage (£30,000) is in the process of being designed and installed, with a further £5,000 from Customer

Support Services to ensure Gaelic forms a key part of the signage.

- 3.13 **Portaloos:** reintroduction of portaloos at the same locations as in 2022 with a cost of £42,500.
- 3.14 **Marketing activities:** the Argyll and the Isles Tourism Cooperative (AIRC) was contracted for marketing the Motorcaravan Overnight Parking scheme; £8,000 was paid for website page containing a map with new sites is to be published. Further activities are detailed in **Appendix 2**. The outcome of these activities will be presented at a Member's Seminar to be arranged in the autumn with AIRC in attendance to answer Member questions. The seminar will also provide an update of the wider tourism activities taken forward via the Argyll and Bute Tourism Strategy and the work of the Strategic Tourism Partnership (Council, AIRC, VisitScotland and HIE) and an opportunity for Members to input into future tourism-related activities.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Factors such as the cost of living crisis, the impact of COVID-19, and other trends have led to a transformation in the visitor market with a shift from solely relying on staycationers to a general increase in international and domestic tourism.
- 4.2 To address visitor pressures in Argyll and Bute the Council allocated £500,000 for staycation interventions from the 2021/2022 budget and a further £100,000 from 2022/2023 budget for the Staycation fund. Also, through 2021-2023 another £300,000 was allocated for tourism and staycation marketing.
- 4.3 Up to date Staycation activities worth £516,675.36 (**Appendix 1**) and £294,588 of marketing activities were invested through 2021-2024; leaving £83,324.64 still available from the Staycation fund and £5,412 from the marketing fund; both as of 21/08/2023.
- 4.4 Local communities have embraced the actions delivered through the staycation fund, which has played a crucial role in managing the influx of staycationers following the reopening of the visitor economy. This included new infrastructure, and additional information on available facilities and how to behave responsibly in our area. Various interventions implemented by council (see **Appendix 1**), communities, businesses, and individuals have garnered positive feedback.
- 4.5 The Economic Growth team will complete any remaining Staycation actions to be carried out. Nevertheless, concerns remain over the future impact of staycations in Argyll and Bute and indeed the growth of tourism now that the staycation fund is due to conclude.
- 4.6 Officers continue to hold staycation meetings to address current enquires with a wide range of partners including Police Scotland, Argyll and Bute Partnership Approach to Water Safety, Loch Lomond National Park, Argyll and the Isles Tourism Cooperative, and communities. Some of whom have taken forward

their own initiatives. Officers will continue to work with partners to respond to the challenges and opportunities that may arise.

## **5.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Policy – the council supports a strong local economy with tourism identified as a priority sector.
- 5.2 Financial – the council has an approved budget for staycation activities to be spent over several financial years.
- 5.3 Legal – all appropriate legal implications will be taken into consideration.
- 5.4 HR – None arising from this report.
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty – The Fairer Scotland Duty, Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010, came into force in April 2018. The duty places a legal responsibility on particular public bodies in Scotland, such as Argyll and Bute Council, to pay due regard to (actively consider) how they can reduce inequalities of outcome, caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions and how this has been implemented.
  - 5.5.1 Socio-economic Duty – council services focus on removing socio-economic disadvantages for vulnerable residents across Argyll and Bute.
  - 5.5.2 Equalities – all activities will comply with all Equal Opportunities/Fairer Scotland Duty policies and obligations.
  - 5.5.3 Islands – staycation interventions are being delivered across the whole of Argyll and Bute, including the island communities.
- 5.6 Climate Change – all activities will comply with the Decarbonisation Plan with the intention to minimise litter, pollution and support the vitality of our town centres and countryside.
- 5.7 Risk – littering and Health and Safety issues arising from informal toilet waste disposal. Any staycation activity has the potential to impact our ability to meet Climate Change target obligations.
- 5.8 Customer Services – information is being communicated in different formats to our customers.

**Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth:  
Kirsty Flanagan**

**Policy Lead for Strategic Development: Councillor Robin Currie**

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**APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1** - Staycation Actions 2021 to 2024

**Appendix 2** - Marketing Activities 2021 to 2024

**Appendix 3** - Example of the Argyll and the Isles Tourism Co-operative Ltd Listing

## APPENDIX 1: STAYCATION ACTIONS 2021 TO 2024

<b>Table 1: 2021-2024</b>				
<b>Headline</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Spent or Committed</b>	<b>Delivery Costs</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>2021/2022</b>				
Staycation Officer	Recruited as a temporary post for 1 year to progress Staycation proposals	Spent	£14,741	Only part year
Additional Staycation Wardens	Four additional Wardens for a period of 5/6 months to October	Spent	£41,386	Delivered by RIS
Additional street sweeping/uplift	Extra street sweeping and uplifts, including car park maintenance	Spent	£19,816	Delivered by RIS
Grab Trust	Anti-littering campaign staffing and marketing	Spent	£18,830	
Police Scotland patrols	Provided additional Police Scotland services to assist in promoting responsible camping – across Argyll and Bute, for a 12 week Period.	Spent	£23,040	
Waste Water disposal points	Granted to Holy Loch Marina, Buessan, Lochabie, Kilbride Farm, Pucks Glen, Gigha, South Islay Development, Portavadie, South Kintyre Development Trust	Spent	£57,393	
Portaloos	11 portable toilet facilities are installed in Westport, Bridge of Orchy, Glen Orchy and Victoria Bridge; (£3,500 contribute to Friends of Loch Lomond)	Spent	£5,833	Part funded by NatureScot
Publicity	Information - leaflets etc.	Spent	£13,131	
Car park improvements	Lining and information in 17 locations	Spent	£24,310	This was paid out of the Staycation account in 2022
Temporary Campsite	Colonsay - contribution to overall project costs	Spent	£4,778	
<b>Total</b>			<b>£223,258</b>	

<b>2022/2023</b>				
Staycation Officer	Extended the post for 1 year to progress Staycation proposals	Spent	£46,955	
Staycation Wardens	Four additional Wardens for a period of 5/6 months (April to October)	Spent	£57,004	Delivered by RIS
Police Scotland Patrols	To provide additional Police services to assist in promoting responsible camping – across Argyll and Bute.	Spent	£3,492	
Waste Water disposal points Grants	Grants to Secret Glen, Dunoon and Sunny Tiree campsite	Spent	£15,438.50	
Portaloos	11 portable toilet facilities Installed and serviced various locations and a £12,500 contribution towards to Friends of Loch Lomond	Spent	£42,500	
Grab Trust	Anti-littering campaign staffing and community support grants	Spent	£6,988.86	
Publicity	Information - leaflets etc	Spent	£578	
Community Staycation Wardens	Grants to Appin community and Bute Estate	Spent	£10,000	
Motorcaravan Overnight parking scheme	Grants to support setting up of aires	Spent	£12,235	Further spend may be accrued from the £50,000 Committed
South Islay Development	Granted to set up Motorhome site	Committed	£20,000	match funding for RTIF Project
<b>Total</b>			<b>£215,191.36</b>	



<b>2023/2024</b>				
Staycation Officer	Temporary post extension to progress Staycation proposals.	Spent	£14,646	£14,676 of the committed spend has been used to 21/8/23 due to early contract termination.
Motorcaravan Overnight parking scheme	Grants to support setting up of aires	Spent	£2,380	
Portaloos	11 portable toilet facilities installed in Westport, Bridge of Orchy, Glen Orchy, Kilchurn castle and Victoria Bridge; £15,000 contributed to Friends of Loch Lomond)	Committed	£44,200	
The Grab Trust	Support for anti-littering activities	Spent	£17,000	
<b>Total</b>			<b>£78,226</b>	
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>£516,675.36</b>	

## APPENDIX 2: MARKETING ACTIVITIES 2021 TO 2024

<b>Table 2: 2021-2024</b>				
<b>Headline</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Spent or Committed</b>	<b>Delivery Costs</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Tourism Marketing Campaign 2021/22	Delivery by AITC to support marketing campaigns covering all of Argyll and Bute	Spent	£48,000	
GRAB Trust 2021/22	Anti litter marketing	Spent	£8,588	
Tourism Marketing Campaign 2022/23	Delivery by AITC to support marketing campaigns covering all of Argyll and Bute	Spent	£75,000	
Tourism Marketing Campaign 2023/24	Delivery by AITC to support marketing campaigns covering all of Argyll and Bute	Committed	£75,000	
Aires Marketing Campaign 2023/24	Delivery by AITC to support marketing campaigns for Motorhome overnight parking specific web content	Spent	£8,000	
Welcome (Gateway signage) 2023/24	Passing Place and Welcome signage to be installed at key locations in Argyll and Bute	Committed	£50,000	In design phase
Clipper Race Marketing 2023/24	Funding to secure that Oban becomes a welcome port for the 2023 Global Clipper Race.	Spent	£30,000	
<b>Total</b>			<b>£294,588</b>	

## APPENDIX 3 - EXAMPLE OF THE ARGYLL AND THE ISLES TOURISM CO-OPERATIVE LTD LISTING



### Tirolan Aires

Simple stop over facilities for motorhomes and campervans

Tirolan Aires offer very simple stop over facilities for campervans and motorhomes. We have five pitches near our community owned forest which offer great views and a very quiet location. Please note - there are no facilities other than hard standing for pitches. Visitors must be in self contained vehicles.



### Contact Us

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Tirolan  
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[Visit Website](#)

[Email Us](#)



### Facilities & Nearby Features

Children's Play  
 Dog Friendly

Forest Views  
 Hard Standing Pitches

Near a Loch  
 Near a Forest

On-site Parking

### Food & Drink

None

### Open

April - October