
Report To:	Environment & Regeneration Committee	Date:	17 January 2013
Report By:	Corporate Director – Environment, Regeneration & Resources	Report No:	RC/13/01/08/SJ/JH
Contact Officer:	Stuart Jamieson	Contact No:	01475 712401
Subject:	Year of Natural Scotland 2013		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to apprise Members of plans to celebrate the Year of Natural Scotland 2013 and potential activities for Year of Homecoming in 2014.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 In partnership with Inverclyde Tourist Group, Discover Inverclyde, Greenock Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, Riverside Inverclyde and local tourism and hospitality businesses, a range of actions are being planned to celebrate the Year of Natural Scotland 2013.
- 2.2 As regards our natural heritage, Inverclyde's residents have always enjoyed a close relationship with their environment, and have played a key role in shaping it, including the upland landscapes of Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park or the stunning views and opportunities to view wildlife offered by the Clyde Estuary, which boasts a Special Protection Area and a RAMSAR site (a wetland of international importance) and our high quality waterfront area.
- 2.3 One of Scotland's most significant exports, people, commonly embarked on their emigration from the port of Greenock. To mark this and other significant points of our local history, Inverclyde Council currently has a bid under consideration by the Coastal Communities Fund and will shortly be submitting a Heritage Lottery bid to develop the coastal trail focussed initially on developing interpretive points and nodes along a coastal trail from Wemyss Bay to Langbank. The aim is to complete this project by early 2014 and run a number of themed homecoming events during that year. It is anticipated that Heritage Inverclyde will stimulate the creation of new tourism businesses at points along the trail including marine based activities including sailing, rowing, diving and land based activities such as cycling and mountain biking.
- 2.4 In 2013, Discover Inverclyde and partners will be launching the 'Greenock Town Trail' which is aimed primarily at day visitors and focuses on some of the rich heritage which exists in the area. The trail will consist of 21 points in and around Greenock Town Centre with bronze pavement plaques and an illustrative map and leaflet. Work is also underway with Discover Inverclyde to encourage them to consider making a bid to Event Scotland for funding for 2013 to allow them to develop a mobile app for the trail to enhance the visitor experience and open up a new way of marketing our heritage experience to visitors.

- 2.5 A new Inverclyde Events Development Group will be established and led by Inverclyde Council to explore, develop and deliver an Events Strategy for 2013/14 and beyond. The group will be represented by the public, private and third sectors who will work together to identify new and develop existing events for the area. The group will also seek to attract external funding.
- 2.6 Events planned for 2013 that fit with the Year of Natural Scotland theme include – Snowdrop Walks at Ardgowan and Finlaystone Estates, Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park and Finlaystone Estate events, Port Glasgow Bulb Show, Gourock Highland Games, The Comet Festival, Doors Open Day, Scotland's Boat Show at Kip Marina and an event around November as a successor to Myths and Legends.
- 2.7 Inverclyde Council are also supporting a bid to Event Scotland from Kip Marina for a 3 day event around Scotland's Boat Show in October 2014 where we will be able to welcome home our services heroes and their families from the past and present day to revisit the area and retrace their steps at events and exhibitions and give them an opportunity to experience the images and sounds of Inverclyde over the last century. The aim is to attract at least 30,000 visitors over the weekend and generate capacity in our local accommodation providers.
- 2.8 Inverclyde's top 5 natural features are key in promoting our area:
- **Our Heritage** – provides huge opportunities to develop products and services at various locations across the area – The Heritage Inverclyde Coastal Trail; Gourock Highland Games; Town Trails; McLean Museum and Watt Library; Genealogy; Quarriers Conservation Village; Maritime & Shipbuilding Heritage; Famous Sons & Daughters; Cemeteries.
 - **The Clyde** – water based activity including sailing, the Waverley, the marinas, cruise ships and scenery from Inverclyde looking to Argyll & Bute and the Highlands beyond.
 - **Natural Landscape** – offers a huge variety of opportunities for outdoor activities including riding, sailing, water activities, golf (including 3 Braid courses), cycling, mountain biking, walking.
 - **Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park** – The Greenock and Kelly Cuts and Lunderston Bay.
 - **Country Estates and Parks** – Finlaystone, Ardgowan and local parks.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That Committee note the planned activities to celebrate the Year of Natural Scotland in 2013.

Stuart Jamieson
Head of Regeneration and Planning

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 From Lochs, Bens and Glens through to our wildlife, history and conservation heritage, Scotland's natural heritage attracts people from all over the world. In 2013, the Year of Natural Scotland will provide an opportunity to build on these strengths by celebrating and promoting the outstanding beauty, landscapes and biodiversity of our country. The Year will be used to increase tourism, boost business and enhance the local and national economy.
- 4.2 Visit Scotland and Event Scotland are delivering the year of Natural Scotland on behalf of Scottish Government, in partnership with a wide range of organisations including SLAED.
- 4.3 The Economic Development Service produced a Tourism Strategy for 2009-2016, in consultation with tourism related businesses and services. It was approved by the Regeneration Committee in May 2009 with the Action Plan subsequently approved at Committee on 3 September 2009.
- 4.4 The development of tourism in Inverclyde is seen as a major opportunity to change perceptions of the area and create a more positive profile and image. The tourism sector is diverse including leisure, arts, accommodation, hospitality and a high quality public realm. The amenities which support the tourism sector are valued by the resident population and will assist towards addressing population decline.
- 4.5 The Tourism Action Plan provides the framework, direction and focus for all Inverclyde tourism activity over the next 3 years to allow the local tourism sector to maximise opportunities, such as Year of Natural Scotland, through joint working and seeking to significantly increase the impact of tourism in Inverclyde by 2016.

5.0 FINANCE

- 5.1 Financial Implications – None
Financial Implications – Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (if Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Allocation for Tourism expenditure included within existing Economic Development budget.

- 5.2 Personnel: None. Activity will be delivered by existing staff.
- 5.3 Legal: N/A
- 5.4 Equalities: Full consideration is given to equality and diversity processes within employability and business support programmes delivered by the Regeneration and Planning Service which are non-discriminatory on the grounds of gender, ethnicity, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 Consultation is not required as there are no HR, Legal or Financial implications.