



The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas



Scottish Rural
Development
Programme



Bright White

Appendix 1 - SWOT

Interpretation Strengths (1)

- Superb number of very high quality castles and historic buildings / built heritage and streetscapes
- High quality experiences (formal and informal); museums and collections, archive material and social history interest groups etc
- Many rich resources of authentic stories (histories)
- Unique stories (unique to Moray) that are not currently oversold, or not told at all as yet
- Moray landscape provides a high quality and highly varied 'stage' for the stories to play out, from mountains to seascapes
- Landscape assets and infrastructure of walking routes and paths provide a textural and multi-sensory stage
- Landscape and heritage provide a strong element of intrigue and enigma, puzzles to be investigated and potentially solved
- Journeying through the landscape and story development go well together
- Moray can be seen as a small 'world' with its own micro-climate (protected by its highlands in the south)
- Moray is much more than 'another Highlands and Islands story'.

Interpretation Strengths (2)

- Excellent natural heritage and wildlife including high profile 'draws' e.g. Bottlenose dolphins, Minke whales, Red Squirrels, otter, eagles and migratory birds etc
- The area and people have global connections going back millennia – it is well connected to the wider world; the Moray Firth is a key gateway
- Great examples of sustainable land ownership
- Great local language and dialect
- A soft accent - understandable easily by English speakers around the world
- Dark skies, increasingly rare (also an opportunity, see below)
- The River Spey and River Findhorn are beautiful and distinctive with their own characteristics and story elements
- The whisky and salmon fishing industries deliver a well established sense of quality and make landscape connections – they also present opportunities to capture a ready market of those willing to explore further
- Carefully developed sites provide exemplars e.g. Knockando Mill and Logie Steading
- Excellent and established walking routes e.g. Speyside Way, Dava Way and Moray Coast Trail

Interpretation Weaknesses

- Lack of quality and sufficient accommodation provision of all types
- Coastal route by car isn't particularly satisfying compared to Spey. Worth noting that it is possible to bike from Cullen to Spey Bay all off-road.
- Fishing isn't a unique story - work needed to express the characteristics of the community
- Tomintoul feels slightly off the main communication routes.
- Lots of mixed brands and logos of varying quality
- Often 'lumped in' with the Highlands, yet is a distinct area.
- Seen as 'the bit in between' Inverness and Aberdeen, which is not right.
- Lacks a clear identity as yet
- Small population, many in small rural communities, quite dispersed – challenge of sustainability for businesses
- Public transport / reliance on private vehicles
- Lack of viewpoints / stopping areas and picnic areas to appreciate landscape
- Heavy reliance on volunteers for heritage delivery – need to recruit and develop large cohort to help
- Lots of graphic signage which isn't interpretation, its information

Interpretation Opportunities (1)

- Echoes of the past are manifest in the heritage, and are alive and well; opportunity to unpick and develop into appealing narrative across Moray
- Authenticity of 'history happened right here' – place and past interwoven and brought to life / evoked for today's visitors
- Moray offers a great sense of 'slow discovery' - of fascinating stories to discover – something different and potentially quirky
- Culbin Forest: Hill 99 provides a unique view back in time to pre-deforestation - hardly anything manmade can be seen; little or no interpretation as yet but good path & cycle network
- Great coastal community stories and visitor focal points - Cullen, Burghead, Findhorn, Kingston etc
- The coast for its variety: beaches, cliffs and caves, estuary wildlife, exploration by boat, sea safaris, coasteering etc
- Farming and forestry – husbandry offers landscape connection and insight of continuity of management; links to enlightenment and improvement
- Linked to above, food and ingredients, sourcing locally, recipes, processing, products and experiences
- Trades, crafts and industry are strong and unusual – a wide range of appealing content and sites
- Dark skies offer opportunity for evening and night time events, star gazing and nocturnal wildlife experiences
- Ongoing archaeology at Burghead – new discoveries and insights being revealed; a sense of history being 're-written' / newly understood; strong community and visitor engagement potential

Interpretation Opportunities (2)

- Ongoing history research by locals demonstrates passion, interest and commitment – a wonderful resource for product development and volunteering, plus SME development
- 'Outlander' TV series visitors – different profile of explorers
- Visitors are interested in Pictish symbolism and culture – different and younger profile
- Authentic community events such as the Clavie at Burghead – a sense of community cohesion, connectivity to the past and to place
- A long stay... (3-5 nights)
- ...for the more discerning visitor.
- Slow discovery...
- ...aided by quality storytelling linking together multiple destinations, mapping, digital. Creates 'theatre in the landscape'.
- Play on the enigmatic nature of super-characters under the overarching narrative of 'Stories from the Shadows'.
- Museums and other buildings as 'story hub points' e.g. ground floor of Grant Lodge is a great opportunity
- Super-characters could lead the way and inspire locals to continue to research, create materials and offers, expanding to more topics and areas, bringing their own stories out of the shadows.



Interpretation Opportunities (3)

- Development of the Moray Connection group and desire to share resources and support – a great willingness to support the ‘bigger picture’
- Tourism business focused support (capacity building and skills development)
- The Kingdom of Fortriu: a new Pictish Trail – paper / app / AR / online opportunities linked to Burghead and archaeological investigations across Moray / the Firth
- The exceptional fort / citadel at Burghead; the bull carvings and symbolism; the research work of the Northern Picts Project / partnership potential with Univ of Aberdeen
- Medieval Kingship and Christianity – sites and stories of power and spirituality
- The two rivers – Spey and Findhorn, from source to sea as threads through the landscape from past to present
- Spynie Palace – astonishing remains, views and sense of theatre; link to the Laich
- The Laich and landscape evolution – social history and continuity
- Visitor experiences developed, created and curated by the communities of Moray, sharing their places, their voices, their stories and their insights [see niche holiday operator Speyside Wildlife]
- Visitor experiences with a strong sustainability / eco message and ethos

