

Report to Partnership Meeting 11 November 2022

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

SCOTTISH ISLANDS PASSPORT UPDATE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide Members with an update on the Scottish Islands Passport Project.



Travelogues and physical stamps

'Meet the Makers', the first in our series of island travelogues, has launched in the run up to Christmas. These paper travelogues, which were part of the original project scope, allow people to explore the islands based on a variety of themes to compliment the more familiar geographical groupings, with 'Meet the Makers' celebrating the creativity and skills abundant across the islands.

This travelogue introduces people to artists and makers on a number of Scottish islands from Shetland to the Clyde, with space for owners to collect stamps along the way using brass rubbing plates which have been installed on the islands in partnership with community organisations and businesses.

There is space for people to record their own thoughts and experiences in the dedicated journal section – creating a personalised keepsake of their island journeys and embracing a 'slow travel' approach which aligns with the overarching aims of the project.

The next travelogue in the series, 'Shaping Our Islands' celebrates the built heritage of the islands and will be released in Spring 2023, with future releases looking at wildlife, food and drink, wheeling and walking, and more. We have partnered with Isle20.com as our official online stockist for the travelogues and we are working with island retailers and transport providers to establish physical points of sale.

The brass rubbing plates, designed by island artists from around the North and West coast and fabricated by N-Graved of Shetland, are unique to each island and have their own stamp story, told both in English and in the language or dialect appropriate for the island they are located on.

Working to the 'island-centred ethos' which was developed early in the project, locations for the stamps were guided by feedback from islanders, with the team working closely with local community groups and businesses who host the stamps, as well as providing local feedback on the information you can find in the app and travelogues. With the first batch of stamps successfully installed, the remaining stamps will follow suit to cover all 72 islands in the project.

Digital app and Website

Since our last update to you in September, continued growth in app activity has been recorded:

- over 11,000 app downloads and nearly 65,000 unique sessions as of the start of October (up from 8k and 50k respectively at the start of August)
- stamps collected for each of the 72 islands covered by the app
- UK users make up 80% of our audience

Active usage continues at a high level, outperforming comparable apps in the sector.

Trials with push notifications have successfully concluded, with the first public push notifications now being sent via the app. Starting with some messages to all users, we will use the winter period to promote island businesses who sell online in the run up to Christmas through our partnership working with isle20.com.

We will also test the ability to target groups of users which will later be developed to deliver tailored messages and marketing in line with our strategic aims. Looking to the future, this functionality will provide an opportunity to share island or season specific information appropriately with users, help influence visitor behaviour and market specific campaigns or initiatives.

Our website, www.island.scot, is designed primarily to funnel visitors to the app and provide additional information to compliment the travelogues. This is being updated to date to reflect recent developments.

Engagement & working with Partners

Several strands of engagement with island businesses and community groups continue as we install the network of rubbing plates, check and refresh content held for each island, connect with island-based charities who are interested in having their information included in the app, and as we seek island retailers interested in stocking the travelogues. We also continue to see members of the public make good use of the built in feedback loop in the app, allowing them to make suggestions on both content and functionality.

Attendance at monthly Calmac and West Coast DMO meetings continues, and we maintain good links with their counterparts in the North. Effective use of social media as a means to engage a wider audience is ongoing and we plan to ramp up activity over the winter months to keep visitors engaged with the islands as a destination of choice, and to encourage people to plan trips using public transport and active and sustainable travel.

Marketing

Work continues in order to progress advertising with Calmac, which will add to our portfolio of adverts with other transport providers.

A recent press release was circulated announcing the launch of 'Meet the Makers' and we will work with island partners to promote at a local and project level via social media, local publications, and on-island advertising.

Print advertising has been scaled back and we will focus future marketing spend on digital, targeted delivery, as well as in-house activity and locally appropriate work on the islands, which tends to be dominated by visuals (island specific posters) and local news sources.

Funding & Resource

The project is fully funded until September 2023. The launch of the physical travelogues provides an opportunity to generate unrestricted revenue and test this model.

Additional funding and investment will be sought to ensure continuity of the work, and to respond to interest in expansion and further development.

The project continues to be sustained and achieve development milestones with 1 FTE.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note this report.

Risk Register

RTS Delivery
Impact – Positive

Financial
Impact – Positive

Policy
Impact – Positive

Equality
Impact – Positive

Report by: Sarah Compton-Bishop
Designation: Scottish Islands Passport Project Manager
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