

14 February 2024

Your request for information under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (“the Act”)

Thank you for your request for information which was received by VisitScotland on 17 January at 10:16am, requesting information about:

1. *Copy of successful tender – we want this information under freedom of Information act 2000*
2. *Scoring table of all bidders, split by scores awarded for each question of bid*
3. *Price/Cost Proposed by each Bidder – we want this information for all the bidders who submitted the response.*
4. *Name of the Winning Bidder.*
5. *Name & Rank of all bidders who submitted responses.*
6. *Approximate date that the tender will be reissued towards the end of the current contract period.*

VisitScotland's response

In terms of Section 33 of the Act, we consider that parts of the information you have requested are exempt as it is likely that disclosure of the information would (or would be likely to) prejudice substantially the commercial interests of a person or organisation. You will note within the document provided that we have redacted sections of text which we consider falls under the Section 33 exemption. In terms of question 6, by way of explanation this contract period will last for 2 years. We have no plans at the present time in respect of reissuing this tender and therefore the information is not held.

The responses to your request are therefore as follows:

1. Attached, with some section 33 redactions.
2. Providing the breakdown of scores is likely to substantially prejudice the commercial interests of a person or organisation. The overall scoring table is as follows:-

AWARD CRITERIA	WEIGHTING	WINNING SCORE	UNSUCCESSFUL BIDDER 1 SCORE
Technical	60%	52.4	35.8
Cost	40%	40.0	DNQ*
OVERALL SCORE		92.4	35.8

*Did Not Qualify

In line with the Invitation To Tender 2.1.1, proposals not achieving a technical score of greater than 64% (38 out of 60) were not assessed further.

3. We consider that the price/costing information you have requested is exempt under section 33. Providing the costings is likely to substantially prejudice the interests of the bidders and of VisitScotland.
4. The winning bidder is News UK.
5. We received bids from News UK and The Scotsman, with News UK being awarded the contract.
6. Information not held.

Your right to request a review

If you wish to request a review of your application under either the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 or the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004, your request should be submitted to us in writing, or another permanent format (for example e-mail or voice recording) to:

Mr Malcolm Roughead
Chief Executive
VisitScotland
Waverley Court
4 East Market Street
Edinburgh
EH8 8BG
Telephone: 0131 472 2201
Fax: 0131 472 2223
E-mail: malcolm.roughead@visitscotland.com

The request for a review should be received by us within 40 days of the date of this letter. Any request for a review should also set out, in as much detail as possible, the reasons why you are not satisfied with our response or the manner in which we have dealt with your application.

If you are not satisfied with the result of the review, then you have the right to appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner.

You can contact the Scottish Information Commissioner at:

Scottish Information Commissioner
Kinburn Castle
Doubledykes Road
St Andrews
Fife
KY16 9DS

Telephone: 01334 464610
Fax: 01334 464611
Email: enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info

You also have the right to appeal to the Court of Session in Scotland on a point of law concerning our response.

News Scotland
a News UK Company



Scottish Thistle Awards – National Media Partnership Proposal

December 2023

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Business Objectives and Understanding of the Thistle Awards

Business Objectives

- To raise awareness of the Scottish Thistle Awards to consumers, businesses and civic Scotland.
- To promote the value of tourism to the wider economy, leading the drive for excellence within the industry and showcasing it as a sector of choice for employees.

Background

The Thistle Awards celebrates the Scottish tourism industry. Tourism is one of seven growth industries in Scotland, contributing more than £4 billion to our economy each year. The industry accounts for around one in every twelve jobs in Scotland, and around five per cent of the Scottish Economy's Gross Value Added (GVA).

The global tourism industry has suffered in recent years, and in many places is still reeling from the aftereffects of highly disruptive global events. However, it would appear that the Scottish tourism sector has bounced back and is well on its way to making a full recovery. In the first three months of 2023, tourists spent £359 million in Scotland. This was higher than the figure recorded from the same period in 2019, when spending totalled £210 million.

The Thistle Awards provide an opportunity for VisitScotland to champion high achieving venues and individuals while celebrating resilience, innovation and excellence as the sector evolves around international uncertainties and cost of living pressures.

The awards serve as an engagement programme to raise the standard of excellence within the tourism industry. The objective of this media partnership is to raise awareness of the Scottish Thistle Awards on a national level. Throughout the partnership we will continue to promote and emphasis the importance of responsible tourism, positioning Scotland as a leader in 21st century tourism.

VisitScotland are on the lookout for quality businesses that could be the new contenders in 2023/24.

Brand Reach and Demographics

News UK Brand Reach: Scotland and by Region

SCOTLAND

Our Newsbrands in Scotland are read by 2.6M adults a month.

The Times Scotland & Sunday Times Scotland reach 1.1M adults across Scotland each month (print & digital).

- Everyday 60,000 adults across Scotland read The Times Scotland print edition with 90,000 reading The Sunday Times newspaper every week.
- Strong digital audience: 929k monthly digital reach across Scotland

The Scottish Sun is the Number 1 Newsbrand in Scotland reaching 2.4M Scottish adults across the month (print & digital).

- The Scottish Sun is read by 413,000 more adults than the Daily Record and 210,000 more adults than the Daily Mail every month.
- Digital market leader: The Sun is #1 in digital across Scotland with a monthly reach of 2M adults. 85% of the total Scottish Sun monthly audience access the content on a mobile device

Our readers love to travel and now is the perfect time to ask them to nominate and vote in the Scottish Thistle Awards 2024. With 818,000 News Scotland readers taking a holiday or short break in Scotland in the last 12 months, our audience has firsthand experience of potential winners across many of the categories at a regional and national level.

News Scotland readers are 3% more likely than the average Scottish adult to have taken a holiday or short break in Scotland in the last year and now is the perfect time to engage with them and broaden the reach of the awards.

More than half (59%) of all adults who had a holiday or short break in Scotland in the last 12 months read at least one of our titles across the course of the month (in print or online) and are well placed to vote for the chosen categories.

Our audience is spread across Scotland reflecting the key regions involved in the Scottish Thistle Awards.

HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS

- 51% of all adults in the Highlands and Islands region read at least one of our titles in print or digital format across the course of the month (135,000 adults)
- 116,000 adults in the region read The Scottish Sun in print or digital each month.
- 56,000 adults in the region read The Times/Sunday Times in print or digital each month.

ABERDEEN CITY & SHIRE

- 58% of all adults in Aberdeen City and Shire read at least one of our titles in print or digital format across the course of the month (249,000 adults)
- 220,000 adults in the region read The Scottish Sun in print or digital each month (51% of the population in the region)
- 99,000 adults in the region read The Times/Sunday Times in print or digital each month (1 in 5 of all adults in the region)

CENTRAL FIFE & TAYSIDE

- 548,000 adults in the Central Fife and Tayside region read at least one of our titles in print or digital format across the course of the month (56% of all adults)
- 489,000 adults in the region read The Scottish Sun in print or digital each month (50% of the population in the region)
- 225,000 adults in the region read The Times/Sunday Times in print or digital each month (23% of the population in the area)

LOTHIAN & BORDERS

- 57% of all adults in Lothian and Borders read at least one of our titles in print or digital format across the course of the month (579,000 adults)
- Over 500,000 adults in the region read The Scottish Sun in print or digital each month
- More than 260,000 adults in the region read The Times/Sunday Times in print or digital each month and are 11% more likely to do so than the average adult in Scotland

WEST

- 1.1m adults in the West region read at least one of our titles in print or digital format across the course of the month (59% of all adults)
- 1m adults in the region read The Scottish Sun in print or digital each month (53% of all adults in the area) and are 4% more likely to do so than the average Scottish adult
- 450,000 adults in the region read The Times/Sunday Times in print or digital each month (just under a quarter of all adults in the area)

Source: PAMCO H2 2023 Base: Scotland

Approach and delivery of the Media Partnership

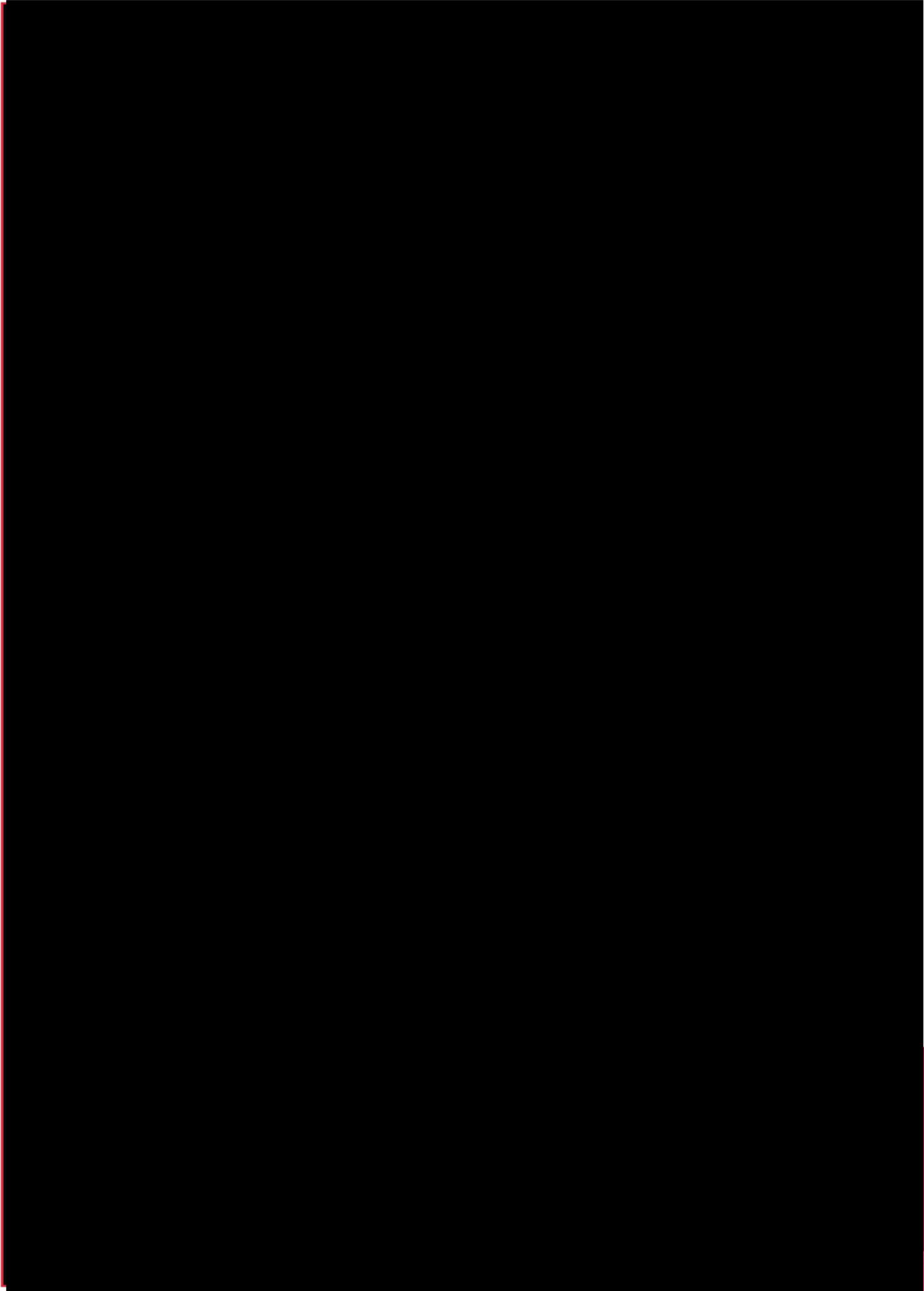
Objective:

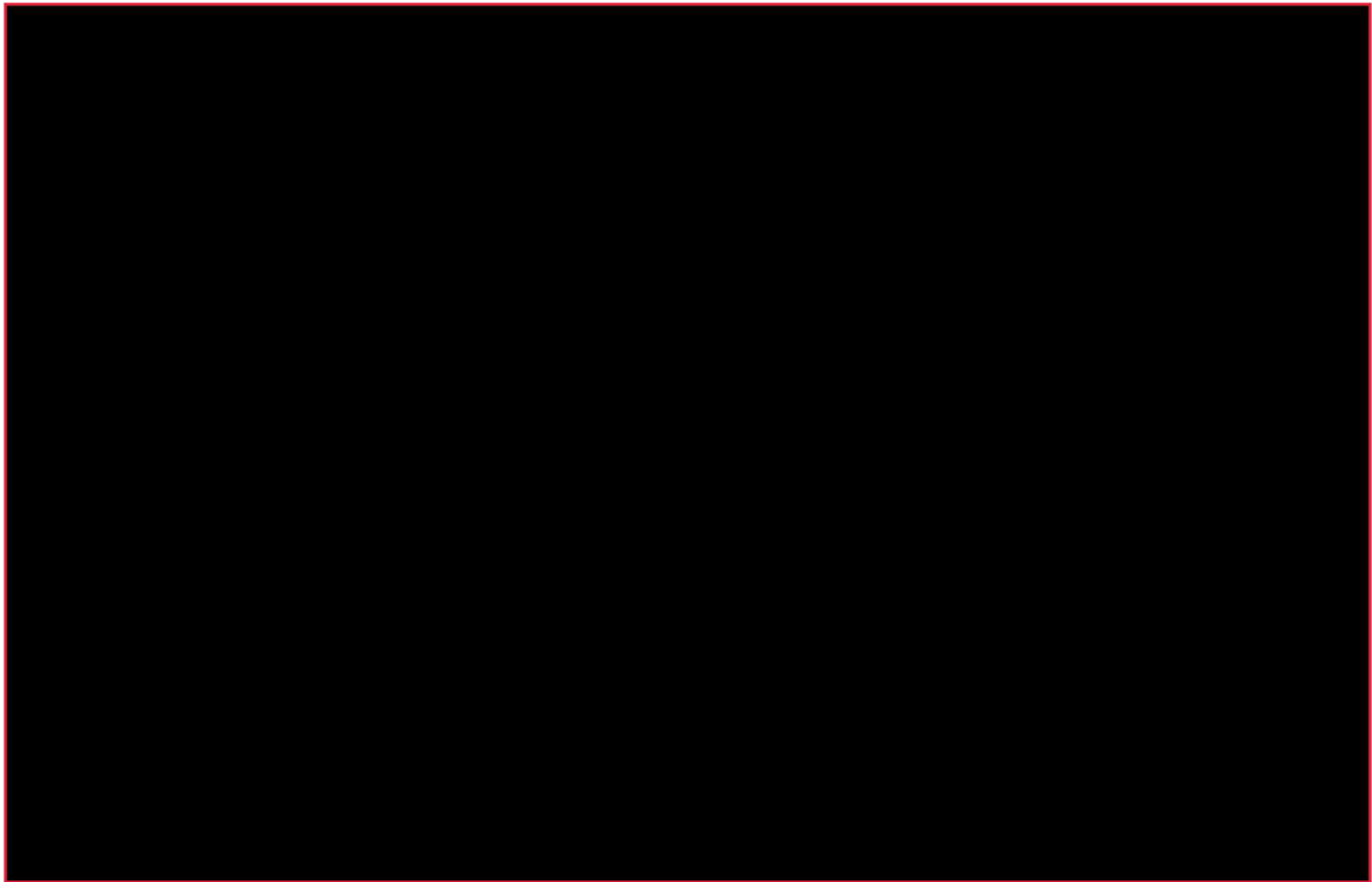
To create a mutually beneficial partnership that allows both parties to develop a deeper relationship and maximise opportunities around content and networking. It gives us the opportunity to deliver important content strands around key topics of interest to our audiences such as sustainability, luxury and responsible tourism. The aim of the partnership is to live beyond the awards and showcase what tourism can offer consumers, businesses and the wider economic community.

Our Delivery:

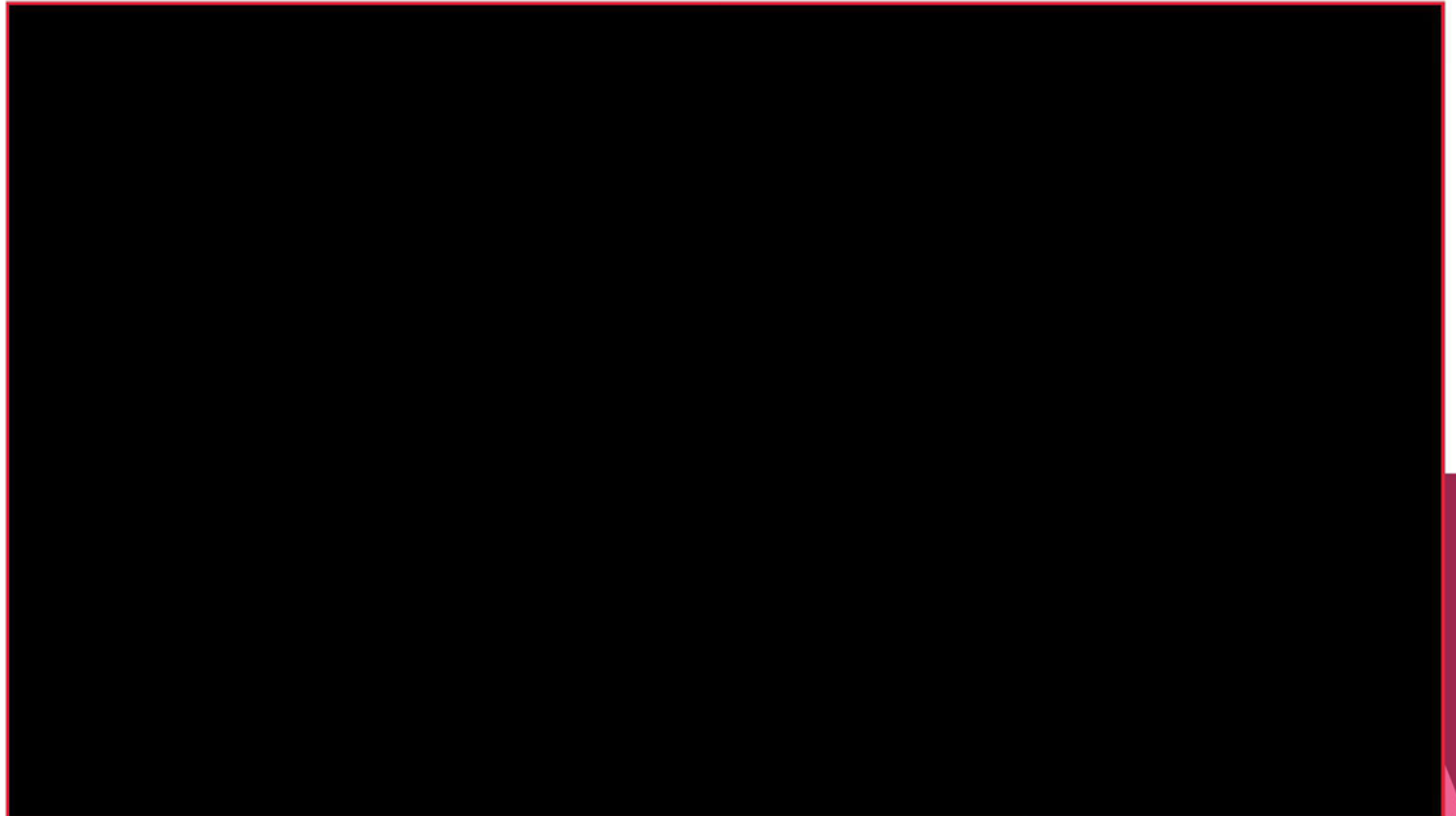
Editorial Opportunities

We believe VisitScotland is the ideal partner to help us continue to grow and develop our travel and leisure sections across our titles. The growing importance of curating content around responsible tourism both from a sustainability and cost of living angle is a valuable objective we both share. With dedicated sections and supplements such as Alba, and [REDACTED] platforms will be a natural and opportune place to drive awareness of their importance to Scotland's tourism industry.





Recommended Media Schedule



The Team

News UK would like to be the sole national media partner for the Thistle Awards and the project management of this project will be split by both our Editorial and Commercial team to deliver cross platform coverage and content. If appointed we will conduct regular meetings to discuss the content and platforms planned for the activity to cover the awards programme over two years from January 2024.

The Team:

Richard Bogie - Managing Director, News Scotland & News Ireland

In June 2018 Richard was appointed as Managing Director of News Scotland and News Ireland.



Richard joined News Scotland in April 2015. Richard has built up the commercial and corporate elements of News Scotland as General Manager, creating a well-recognised media brand with key commercial relationships, complementing the three Scottish titles, which are all leading their markets.

Previous roles in the news media industry included Group Sales Director at Johnston Press, a similar role at Express Newspapers, Assistant Managing Director at The Scotsman Publications and other commercial roles at The Independent and IPC magazines.

Richard was President of the Scottish Newspaper Society for a two year period, 2019-2021.

Magnus Llewellyn- Editor, Scotland The Times

Magnus began his career in Scotland at the Edinburgh Evening News in 1990. Prior to joining The Times in 2016 he was editor-in-chief of the Herald & Times news titles and editor of The Herald. He has also held senior editorial positions at the Daily Record, The Scotsman and Business AM. His aim for the Scottish edition of The Times is to bring readers – both online and in print – the best journalism from Scotland and around the world.



Jeremy Lazell Editor of Alba, the Times Scotland's

Jeremy worked as a trekking guide in the Caucasus and Himalaya before turning his hand to travel writing. It is a decision he has had plenty of time to regret while sleeping a hammock 200ft up in the Borneo rainforest for the Sunday Times and hooking nothing but his own cheek while fishing in Belize for Food & Travel. He has won a number of awards, including Scottish Press Association's 2022 Travel Writer of the Year. He has lived in the Trossachs for more than 20 years, and now edits Alba, lifestyle section in the Scottish edition of The Times.

Carla Jenkins Platforms and Social Media Journalist Times Media

Carla Jenkins is the social media and platforms journalist for The Times and Sunday Times Scotland. She writes the Table Scraps column for Alba. She previously worked at Glasgow Live, The Herald and the Evening Times. Other writing credits include The Guardian, the Manchester Evening News and the Daily Mirror among others. In 2019 she won Young Journalist of the Year at the Scottish Press Awards.





Kris Gilmartin - Digital Editor Scottish Sun

Kris is an award-winning editor and journalist with nearly 20 years' experience working in Scottish media. He is the current Digital Editor of The Scottish Sun, specialising in online news and digital innovation.

Gemma Mair - Head of Partnerships and Solutions

As Head of Partnerships and Solutions her current role requires her to work closely with media agencies and advertisers on creative content solutions. This involves bringing to life campaigns that include speaking to audiences across a range of platforms including print, digital, video, radio and social.

Previously, Gemma has worked for a number of media owners across Scotland and the UK. In London she started out in TV production at Shine Limited, then moved across into the commercial world joining ITV in the Clients Services Strategy team. Gemma then journeyed to Scotland to work in the agency sales team at STV and from there moved into radio heading up Branded Content Solutions at Bauer Radio.



Carol Wyper - Group Marketing Manager

Carol started her media career at the Daily Record before joining the Marketing team at The Scottish Sun. Taking on responsibility for sales promotions, brand and ALT advertising, Carol was instrumental in The Scottish Sun becoming Scotland's biggest selling daily newspaper. In recent years Carol's role as Group Marketing Manager has seen her and her team assume responsibility for all News Scotland's news brands - The Scottish Sun, The Times and The Sunday Times Scotland.



Partnership Examples:



Celebrating the best in sustainable tourism

The Scottish Thistle Awards have returned to highlight the heroes of Scottish tourism and remind us of the industry's remarkable resilience

The most recent Scottish Thistle Awards event was held shortly before the first national lockdown in March 2020.

Scottish business biggest awards took place in a ceremony that was held in a grand, historic venue. The Scottish Thistle Awards were first held in March 2010 and have since become a major event for the industry. This year's awards, which will be held in Glasgow, will celebrate the industry's resilience and achievements during the most challenging period in history.

The awards in 2022 will be a celebration of the industry's resilience and achievements during the most challenging period in history. The awards will be held in Glasgow, Scotland, and will celebrate the industry's resilience and achievements during the most challenging period in history.

For the first time, the awards are being held in a grand, historic venue. The awards will be held in Glasgow, Scotland, and will celebrate the industry's resilience and achievements during the most challenging period in history.

FAME AND FORTUNE ANNA SOUBRY

'I came out far poorer from my marriages than I went in'

The former and former Conservative MP turned entrepreneur and author of 'I was starting from scratch' says her latest memoir is a 'life-changing guide to success'.

Anna Soubry is a former Conservative MP and author of the memoir 'I was starting from scratch'. She is a successful entrepreneur and has written several books. Her latest memoir is a 'life-changing guide to success'.

Every entry will be asked to provide a short video or audio clip. The awards will be held in Glasgow, Scotland, and will celebrate the industry's resilience and achievements during the most challenging period in history.

3.25

Count of the best mortgage deals are climbing

3.25

Count of the best mortgage deals are climbing

This year celebrates the 75th year of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival Credit: Getty

The Scottish Thistle Awards

The Scottish Sun has teamed up with VisitScotland to shine a light on the best pubs, restaurants, hotels and visitor attractions the country has to offer.

The Scottish Thistle Awards are Scotland's premier tourism and events awards, recognising the best individuals, businesses, partnerships and events in the industry.

This year's Awards will recognise those who have worked tirelessly in the face of the pandemic to create the world class destination and visitor experiences that Scotland is famous for.

Businesses have until June 10 to enter the Regional Awards categories and September 2 to enter the national categories.

All the details on how to enter can be found at scottishtistleawards.co.uk

The shining lights of Scottish tourism

As the Thistle Awards return to honour Scottish businesses creating world-class experiences, Jeremy Lazzell takes a look at the findings

Scottish tourism is shining brightly, and the Thistle Awards are the perfect opportunity to celebrate the industry's resilience and achievements during the most challenging period in history.

5 of the best

- Scottish Fisheries Museum, Ayr**
- Verdant Works, Dundee**
- Wick Heritage Centre, Caithness**
- The Museum of Lightbulbs, Peterborough**
- The Blackhouse, Lewis**

Shining a spotlight on Scottish tourism

Your guide to the Scottish Thistle Awards winners

The Thistle Awards return, highlighting the best of the industry, with a focus on eco-tourism, Sept 2

Scottish tourism is shining brightly, and the Thistle Awards are the perfect opportunity to celebrate the industry's resilience and achievements during the most challenging period in history.

Summary

We believe this campaign can be mutually beneficial by providing VisitScotland and the Scottish Thistle Awards with consistent exposure to an engaged and highly desirable audience across multiple platforms throughout the campaign period.

In return, our brands will benefit from being able to deliver new tourism and leisure content that will interest our audiences in Scotland and beyond.

Additionally, we believe our partnership will benefit the tourism and leisure industry in Scotland, for both service providers and Scottish holiday makers alike.



Winner - Chairperson's Award
Winner - Specialist Reporter of the Year, The Scottish Sun - Crime



Winner - Young Journalist of the Year -
Constance Kampfner, The Times
Scotland
Winner - Food and Drink Writer of the Year -
Chitra Ramaswamy, The Times
Scotland

