2020 FLOWS INTO 2021

Making the most of Scotland’s Themed Year opportunity

#YCW2021
Scotland’s Year of Coasts and Waters got off to a great start in January 2020 with strong engagement from the tourism and events sector and beyond, and an overwhelmingly positive response from visitors.

The supported events programme saw Vision Mechanic’s STORM, a ten-metre tall sea goddess, travel from the River Clyde to Glasgow’s Concert Hall bringing thousands of people out to meet her and opening up a sold-out Coastal themed Festival Day at Celtic Connections. Next up was StAnza Poetry Festival’s Coast Lines programme, which delighted audiences in St Andrews. Then on 16 March, Scotland entered lockdown and the COVID-19 pandemic had an immediate impact on everyone’s lives.

During those long weeks, passion for our coasts and waters remained, even if most of us could only experience them online and dream of a time when we’d actually be able to visit.

Given the strong enthusiasm and engagement for Scotland’s coasts and waters to be celebrated and for the events programme still to take place, a decision was made in May 2020 to extend the year into 2021.

As the country focuses on recovery, this guide aims to provide background on the year and practical tips to help you get on board.

So whether you’re an accommodation provider, visitor attraction, a tour guide or an organisation - get ready to use the Themed Years platform to showcase the best of what your business, and Scotland has to offer.

We hope you’ll join us.

VisitScotland’s Themed Years team

Scotland’s distinctive scenery, landscape and our unique history and culture remain the key motivations that drive visits.
Scotland’s marine environment and landscape is one of its crown jewels and encompasses some of the world’s most beautiful and varied boating waters and marine wildlife, scenery and heritage, and events and festivals.

Including its many islands, Scotland boasts a hugely varied coastline and a rich offering of inland waters in both rural and urban settings for both visitors and locals to enjoy. Our coasts and waters are host to an amazing array of riches, come in all shapes and sizes, and are greatly valued and cherished by communities and visitors alike.

Scotland’s lochs, rivers and canals also play an important part in the visitor experience, offering boat trips, fishing opportunities and activity holidays, while the many nature reserves across the country are home to a tremendous variety of flora, fauna and wildlife. From fishing and textiles to whisky and wave power, Scotland’s waters have shaped our history and influenced our culture, our stories, and our way of life.

Proximity to coastal environments and blue spaces has never felt so important as many of us seek out calming experiences which are shown to improve health, body and mind.

NEXT TRIP?
VisitScotland’s Coasts and Waters Travel Guide is designed to provide inspiration for staycationers and visitors looking to plan their Themed Year trip. Check it out! visitscotland.com/about/themed-years/coasts-waters/travel-guide/

DID YOU KNOW?
Scotland has over 11,000 miles of coastline, 137 miles of canals, 31,460 freshwater lochs and several navigable rivers, alongside the 118 inhabited islands.
The Peat Inn, near St Andrews, Fife
YEAR OF COASTS AND WATERS 20/21 – IN A NUTSHELL

Aim
Year of Coasts and Waters 20/21 will sustain and build upon the momentum of past Themed Years to spotlight, celebrate and promote opportunities to experience and enjoy Scotland’s unrivalled coasts and waters, encouraging responsible engagement and participation from the people of Scotland and our visitors.

Five Objectives

PROMOTION
Raise the profile of Scotland nationally and internationally, showcasing the diverse visitor offering provided by our unrivalled coasts and waters with a co-ordinated marketing and communications programme promoting responsible engagement and participation.

CELEBRATION
Encourage and develop opportunities for the responsible celebration of our coasts and waters with a focus on tourism and events.

PARTICIPATION
Inspire the people of Scotland and our visitors to participate in activity aligned to and developed in response to YCW2020/21, and in line with Scottish Government guidelines.

COLLABORATION
Encourage collaborative working between the sectors represented by YCW20/21 themes and the wider tourism sector.

INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT
Communicate with a wide range of businesses in tourism and other relevant sectors to help them recognise the opportunities presented by YCW20/21 and to capitalise on those opportunities.

TIME TO PLAN
Themed Years now take place every second year with the planning, promotion and delivery taking place over a three-year period (i.e. planning 2018, pre-promotion 2019, and delivery and full-promotion in 20/21). Promotion of the Year of Coasts and Waters across VisitScotland channels will now run throughout 2020 and 2021.
Year of Coasts and Waters 20/21 will be inclusive, embracing a wide range of events, activity and content aligned to the themes of the year with a focus on widening awareness, engagement and participation. It will showcase both on and off water activity, with a focus on unique, authentic experiences as well as responsible and safe engagement with our waters. The visitor opportunity in terms of experiences and events is broadly presented across four strands. Can you identify opportunities for your business or organisation to celebrate the year aligned to one or more of these areas?
Our goal is to make it as easy as possible for people to discover Scotland’s coasts and waters products, places, people and experiences. We want to appeal to the emotional drivers for visitors to holiday in Scotland – embracing a mixture of a sense of belonging and adventure, rest and relaxation and escapism.

Our focus is to encourage local, responsible travel within Scotland for day trips, holidays and breaks which celebrate YCW20/21.

VisitScotland continues to showcase the range of things to see and do across its own core channels including e-communications, marketing campaigns, social media, blog content and our website. VisitScotland will also continue its YCW20/21 focused content partnership with National Geographic which celebrated our vibrant YCW20/21 themed natural and cultural heritage.

We all have a role to play in the recovery of the country’s valuable tourism industry. From accommodation providers to adventure tour companies, visitor attractions to regional destinations – the enthusiasm from the tourism sector has already seen a range of new tours, digital content, competitions and collaborative partnerships in response to the high-profile campaign.

SEAS THE DAY!
With 2020 now flowing into 2021 – how can you harness the YCW20/21 opportunity across your own channels? Check out the practical tips in this guide and case studies on our toolkit.
The Coasts and Waters supported events programme is currently being reshaped in line with Scottish Government guidelines. You can keep up to date with programme announcements via the EventScotland newsletter - sign-up at visitscotland.org/events

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, our beautiful waters, rivers and seas continue to flow and have been inspiring creativity, wellness and virtual exploration.

Some event organisers have used technology to connect with audiences and we have seen events such as RowAround Scotland, Edinburgh Science Festival and Nevis Ensemble create innovative, online offerings. Exhibitions have gone digital too, including Historic Environment Scotland’s Coasts exhibition and Scottish Fisheries Museum Sea Change exhibition.

While events and festivals have been on pause during lockdown, you can keep up to date with events and activities set to take place during 2021 at visitscotland.com/ycw2021

TOP TIP!

Why not consider developing a special offer in partnership with YCW20/21 events planned for your local area and promote on your website and VisitScotland.com business web listing.
Whitewater kayaking on the River Etive, Glencoe
1. **GOOD TO GO**
   Visitors are keen to know that businesses are safe and ready to welcome them. Consider a [free VisitScotland business listing](https://visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/advice/coronavirus) if you don’t have one. For existing listings, ensure they are up to date and be sure to add in any YCW20/21 tie-ins to your copy.

2. **KEEP UP TO DATE**
   Make sure you are up to date with all the guidance for tourism and events businesses at [visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/advice/coronavirus](https://visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/advice/coronavirus).

3. **LITTLE THINGS MATTER**
   Whether it’s using the official YCW20/21 logo on your website or making sure your VisitScotland.com web-listing reflects how your business will be celebrating the year – every little bit counts. Visit our dedicated YCW20/21 toolkit at [visitscotland.org/ycw2021](https://visitscotland.org/ycw2021) for free to use imagery, promotional copy, practical tips and advice.

4. **BE INSPIRED**
   Check out how the Themed Years opportunity has been successfully used by a range of businesses and organisations via our case studies at [visitscotland.org/ycw2021](https://visitscotland.org/ycw2021).

5. **REACH OUT**
   Be part of the conversation and spark new interest. Use #YCW2021 across your social channels to help make your content easily accessible and searchable.

6. **WORD OF MOUTH**
   Visitors are always on the lookout for authentic experiences and hidden gems – can you share knowledge on local coastal walks, roads less travelled, food experiences, local maritime heritage and events to celebrate the year? Ensure you and any staff have at least a basic knowledge of the local product linked to the Themed Year and be sure to celebrate your local distinctiveness.
7. **PICTURE THIS**
   Take the opportunity to be part of our online gallery of social posts by sharing your coasts and waters experiences using #VisitScotland and #YCW2021. A selection of posts will appear on visitscotland.com/ycw2021.

8. **PARTNER EVENTS PROGRAMME**
   When the time is right for public-facing events to return, why not join the YCW20/21 Partner Event Programme to secure a free listing on VisitScotland.com and benefit from the promotional drive of the Themed Year. Sign-up today at visitscotland.org/events/promotion/themed-year-partner-programme.

9. **THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS**
   Are there local businesses or organisations you could explore working with to create new experiences, itineraries or products in celebration of the year to inspire visitors and locals? How can you work together to target new markets and expand your reach? Find out if there are any opportunities that might support your ambitions at visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/funding.

10. **PROMOTING SAFE ADVENTURES**
    We all have a responsibility to be mindful of the safety and respect associated with our outdoor places and spaces, and the habitats living within our coasts and waters. Consider how you can highlight responsible engagement with your customers by sharing key messages as part of their visit to Scotland. Visit our toolkit at visitscotland.org/ycw2021 for ideas.

**HAVE A QUESTION**
Check out our handy YCW20/21 Frequently Asked Questions at visitscotland.org/ycw2021.

**LAST BUT NOT LEAST...**
Follow us on Twitter @visitscotland, @visitscotnews, @eventscotnews and across our Facebook and Instagram channels. Don’t forget to use #YCW2021 to share your own stories – that way we can look out for what’s coming through on social and potentially share across our channels.