



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**1st November 2018**

### **Cowal Way becomes Loch Lomond & Cowal Way**

One of Scotland's Great Trails has changed its name to Loch Lomond & Cowal Way. Formerly known as the Cowal Way, this change was implemented on 1 November 2018 and will be formally launched and recognised at the Scottish Parliament on 18 December 2018, at a local MSP's sponsored event.

The name change reflects the fact that the 57 mile tourist path now connects seven communities, from Portavadie on Loch Fyne to Inveruglas at Loch Lomond, with over half the route now within Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park boundaries.

The path attracts growing numbers of tourists, with 100% growth year-on-year since 2015. Managed by Colintrave and Glendaruel Development Trust (CGDT), the charity has been very successful in attracting funding over the last four years from the Coastal Communities Fund. Around £750,000 has been invested in project staff, significant path infrastructure improvements, waymarking & signage, monitoring, product/service development and marketing & promotion. This funding is due to finish in early 2019, and the Trust has innovative plans to raise further capital via a crowdfunding campaign.

With the recent investment and improvements, the management body is keen to grow awareness of the path and to attract more customers to try this world class community asset. One way of ensuring this outcome is to include the biggest asset in the name. Loch Lomond is a globally recognised brand and an international tourist destination. This name change will help to ensure more walkers, mountain bikers and runners become aware of, and visit the long distance route.

This evolution is also based on the fact that Cowal as an area is unknown within the target consumer & trade segments, and in all of the key geographical markets. For example staff have met with over 200 UK and international buyers over the last few years, and a major barrier to collaborations is the lack of recognition of Cowal.

The Trust carried out research amongst a sample of tourist businesses on the path, and also with numerous partners including regional and national tourist boards, and over two thirds favoured the name change.

### Notes

1. The Cowal Way originated in 2000, as a Millenium project to boost the local economy via tourism.
2. The creator was local man James McLuckie, whose house is located on the path. James is Vice Chair of CGDT and is still responsible for management of the path.
3. The Cowal Way became a member of "Scotland's Great Trails" (SGT) on October 2016. A quality assurance programme for long distance paths, there are 29 members in total, and SGT is managed by Scottish Natural Heritage.
4. The Scottish Parliament event is being generously sponsored by local MSP Michael Russell.
5. The Path attracts 45,000 users per annum. Over 3,000 walk, cycle or run the complete path. The top five markets are (in priority order): Scotland, England, Netherlands, Germany, and North America.
6. Local residents are frequent users of the path, and this is helping to contribute positively towards the local population's health & wellbeing.
7. Excluding self catering, there are circa 100 local tourist businesses who benefit from visitors to the path. This includes accommodation providers like a marina, hotels, guest houses, B&B's, bunk houses & caravan parks. Food & drink providers like restaurants, cafes, pubs and local village shops also enjoy trade from visitors. There are also others like baggage transfer services, tour guides, airport transfers, outdoor activity providers, etc.