



## Visit Inverness Loch Ness Community Update

September 2022

Welcome to the first community update from Visit Inverness Loch Ness!

In this newsletter you will find what we've been up to over the last month (August 2022).

### Fresh Water Top Up

A scheme was opened at the end of July this year to introduce a water top up scheme – the aim is to reduce the use of single use plastic bottles, and for visitors and locals to be able to top up their water bottles easily when travelling around the Loch and in the city. There are 33 business's involved so far, each placing a sticker in their window to show they are participating. More information can be found [HERE](#) and business's can sign up easily using [THIS FORM](#). You will simply receive some stickers to say you are taking part, be featured on our website page for the top up scheme including on the search map – the more the merrier.



## Loch Ness Challenge

This year, Visit Inverness Loch Ness (VILN) hosted the inaugural Loch Ness Challenge from Friday 20<sup>th</sup>– Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2022. The Challenge included 3 marathons, either back to back in 3 days or individually, an ultra marathon around the Loch, or cycling off road around the Loch. The route followed the newly established Loch Ness 360° trail along the Great Glen Way and South Loch Ness Trail around Loch Ness

The event was a success, and had over 300 individual athletes over the course of the weekend plus the many family and friends that joined them in support – a brilliant boost for local economy and a wonderful experience for all those to visit Loch Ness. The event's aim was to raise awareness of the outstanding Loch Ness 360 trail and bring economic benefit to the local communities. This first year of the event successfully achieved this. Participants were blown away by the route and the event clearly has great potential to grow in future. The VILN board agreed the best way to do this was to hand the event to an experienced international event specialist to make sure it achieves its full potential. After careful consideration, Visit Inverness Loch Ness has handed the event to Max Cluer and Craig Dutton of GOYA Events Ltd, and will provide a supporting role as they take the event forward. The new event will take place between **26<sup>th</sup> May and the 4<sup>th</sup> June 2023**. The new organisers goal is to lift the status of the event and make it an international bucket list for athletes as well as an annual must do festival / event for the local communities. This would be done sustainably through best practice, conscious travel and community involvement and by showcasing the very best that Inverness, Loch Ness has to offer.

The team are looking for volunteers groups, organisations and communities around Loch Ness who would be interested in getting involved in the event and are urged to email [info@lochnessfestival.com](mailto:info@lochnessfestival.com) for any further information. Entries open 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022.

## Sustainable Tourism

We have been shortlisted for the SCDI Highlands and Islands Business Excellence Awards: Stromar Award for Excellence in Natural Capital, Climate Change and Sustainable Communities. We will find out on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September whether we have won or not. We also entered the Highlands and Islands Tourism Awards and hope to hear from them soon.

Bryony, Destination Development Manager who heads up Sustainable Tourism at VILN is attending the Green Destinations conference in Athens at the end of September, where she'll be talking about Net Zero Nessie and our current initiatives and plans for the area sustainably.

We have launched a new sustainability section on our website, which is now home to our climate action plan and fresh water top ups information, access it [here](#).

## Beach Clean, Ardersier

We invite you to come along to our beach clean during the Great British Beach Clean week. The event takes place on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> September at 11am at Ardersier. For more

details or to register please visit: <https://www.mcsuk.org/beach-cleans/viln-beach-clean-16-09-2022/>

### Live Cameras

This week (w/b 28<sup>th</sup> August) we launched our Live Cameras on Loch Ness. You may have seen it in the press. Check them out [here](#).



### Office Location

We have moved office! We were based at Forestry Land Scotland's office in Smithton, but this month we have moved to the Wasps Inverness Creative Academy building in Crown, Inverness. Please do feel free to pop in if you are passing, it would be great to meet you!

### About Us

The organisation became the first Tourism Business Improvement District (BID) in the UK when established in 2014 and operates within a defined destination area that covers over 1200 square miles, including the Highland Capital Inverness and world-famous Loch Ness. To support its members, who operate in more than 30 sectors, the organisation delivers a range of activities from its business plan including marketing, infrastructure, events, business tourism, business development and lobbying.

In 2022 the organisation was named the first carbon neutral BID in the UK and has also signed the Glasgow Climate Declaration and the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency declaration in line with its sustainability goals. The team has doubled in size since in the past two years, including the appointment of the first Loch Ness Ranger,

### Contact us

Bryony Beck, Destination Development Manager, [bryony@visitiln.com](mailto:bryony@visitiln.com)

Emma Harrison, Destination Development Manager, [emma@visitiln.com](mailto:emma@visitiln.com)

Both Bryony and Emma have similar roles- developing the area, bringing footfall into the area, and ensuring sustainable practice is shared across our networks.