

Welcome to Ardgour case study

Creating Opportunity from the Corran Ferry Crisis

Corran Ferry off indefinitely as steering issues on 'Maid' ends service
Council leaderships said 'everything possible has been done'.

'Highland Council doesn't give a damn': Anger over continued Corran Ferry disruption

Locals say that they have been without a proper service since Easter.

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Corran Ferry: Businesses closing due to ferry disruption



Military accepts plea for lifeline Corran Ferry support



Image: Sandy McCook/DC Thomson.

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Explained: The Corran ferry crossing and what comes next

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Corran Ferry vessel faces new repairs delay
6 September

May-June 2023 Filming in Ardgour

- The project experienced fabulous sunshine for filming
- The community reacted positively to the project and volunteered their time to be filmed or gave suggestions as to what should be filmed
- One local volunteer with amateur drone filming experience donated footage and offered to film more
- Watercolour Music also gave additional voluntary filming hours towards the project

Background:

The breakdown of the Corran ferry in April 2023 had an immediate negative effect on the hospitality businesses of Ardgour. The continued onward troubles with the ferry and the negative connotations associated to visiting the peninsula did not bode well for future trade. The three food and beverage hospitality businesses in Ardgour, The Inn at Ardgour, Ardgour Ales, and Nomad Café, joined forces with the Ardgour Community Council and the Centre for Recreation and Tourism Research (CRTR) at UHI to create an opposing place positive project looking at building resilience, innovating the tourism promotion and offering, and creating opportunity from the crisis within Ardgour.

The project:

- Create promotional videos showcasing the natural and cultural heritage of the area along with the hospitality services on offer.
- Storytelling and story gathering workshop to encourage locals to share and celebrate the heritage of the area.
- Collect new stories to be published on the COAST website.
- Create individual and combined social media plans for sharing the final videos, with the aim of pushing audience reach beyond the social media channels of a single organisation or business.
- Investigate new opportunities for tourism in Ardgour.

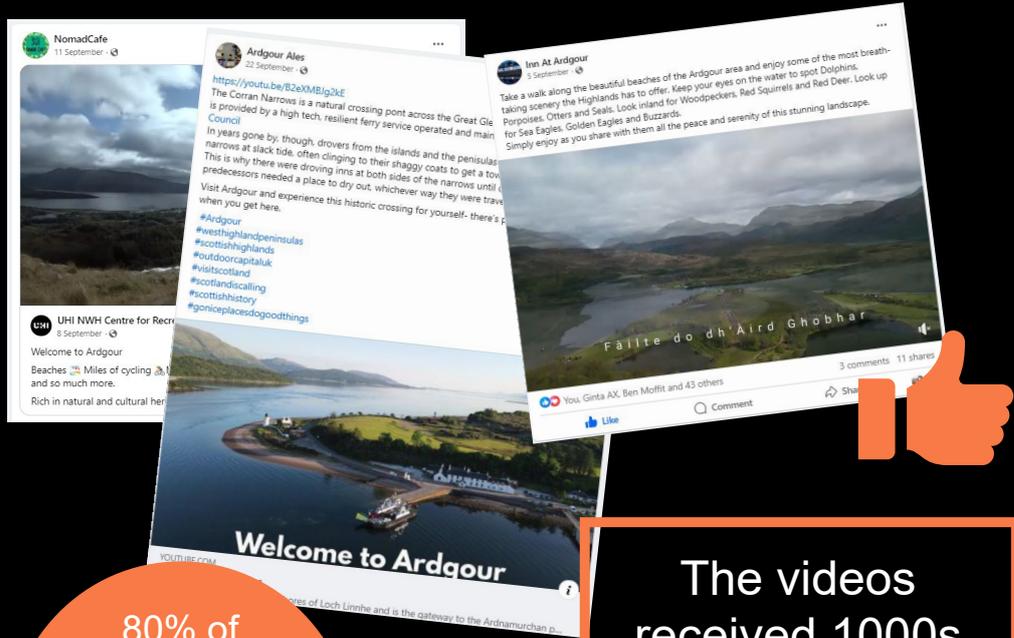
July 2023 Story gathering

The workshop was well attended and there was lots of interesting conversations with artifacts, images, letters and scripts of old radio plays brought in by the attendees to prompt discussions. The event also showcased the first edits of the films for comment.



Sept 2023 Social media plans

CRTR met with the three businesses to provide general social media guidance and to plan a coordinated marketing campaign for the videos. Each business was provided with an agreed social media plan. CRTR wrote to destination management organisations and local businesses to encourage them to take part in the campaign.



80% of posts should be to inform, educate, or entertain

Only 20% should be selling

The videos received 1000s of views

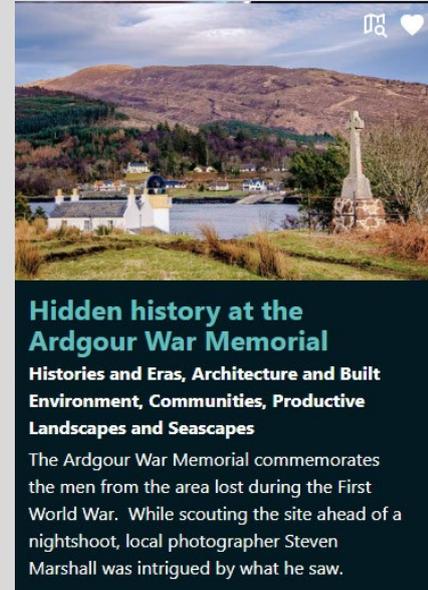
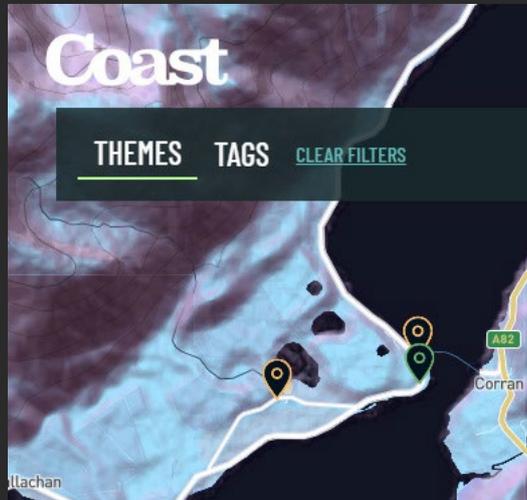
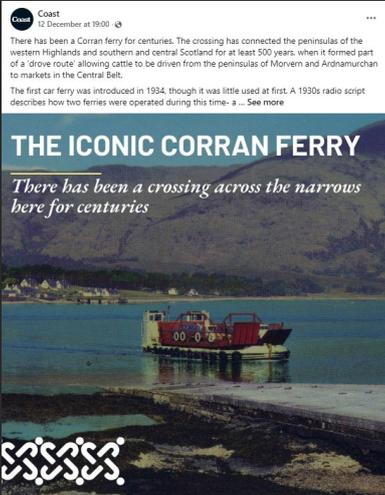
Lessons learnt

- The videos shared directly to Facebook received more views than the linked videos
- Additional quality stills or shorter videos would have been useful
- More time and support was needed to assist the businesses and engage with a wider campaign

Sept – Dec 2023
Ardgour stories on the Coast website

www.coast.scot

From the story gathering workshop there were four stories taken forward to be curated and placed on the Coast website and promoted on social media.



July 2023 Opportunities for new tourism products

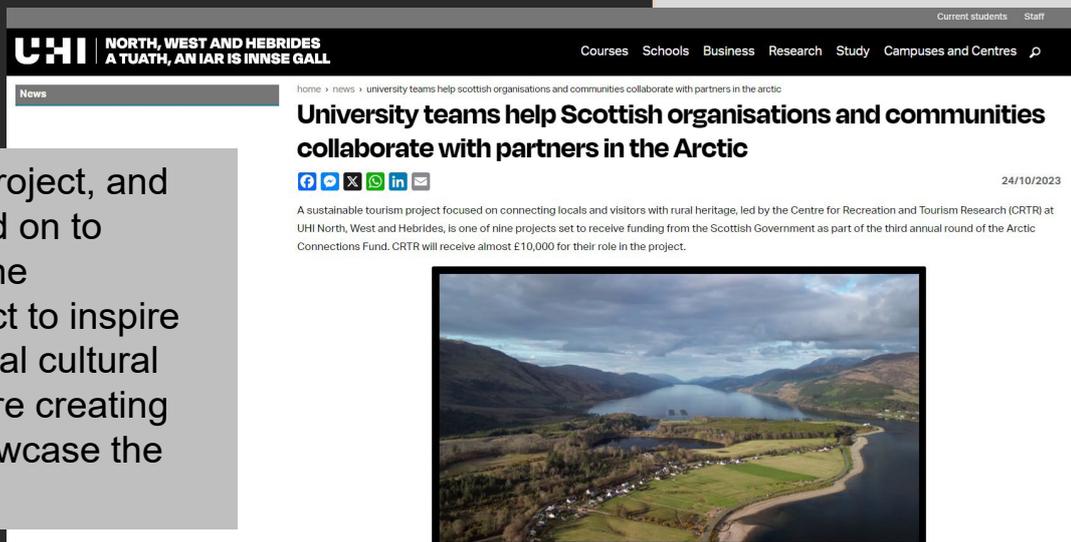
CRTR identified two future opportunities to develop the tourism trade in Ardgour

1. Potential boat day visits to Ardgour from Fort William.
2. Increase passenger footfall on the Fort William to Camusnagaul ferry crossing.

Approaches to the companies were made outlining the opportunity and highlighting potential collaborative working opportunities with UHI.



The Welcome to Ardgour project, and the connection to CRTR led on to Ardgour being chosen as the destination for a new project to inspire visitor engagement with rural cultural heritage. The community are creating an audio trail to further showcase the heritage of the destination.





The videos

Creation of strong imagery that can be used to promote Ardgour in future ventures

Community



The local communities' sense of, and connection to, place was enhanced through story gathering and sharing of local heritage

Created sustainable tourism development of a rural and remote area which has been adversely impacted by infrastructure issues and associated negative connotations

Resilience

A positive marketing campaign showcasing the destination

Project Outcomes

Skills and knowledge exchange promoting how storytelling can be used to promote both a region and a business



Awareness was raised of the work and expertise of UHI North, West and Hebrides amongst Ardgour businesses and the wider Lochaber community

The tourism offering in Ardgour was promoted and showcased as a worthwhile destination to visit. This will influence positive economic benefits for local businesses and perceptions of place

Place



Awareness was raised of the cultural and natural heritage of Ardgour amongst potential visitors and local community



Positive and strong working links between UHI North, West and Hebrides and various businesses and community groups in Ardgour were established, with the potential for future collaborations

Connected

