

VISIT MORAY SPEYSIDE

VISIT MORAY SPEYSIDE OVERVIEW – 2020-2025

Visit Moray Speyside (VMS) is the Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO) and Business Improvement District (BID) for Moray & Speyside. VMS is responsible for working with and supporting businesses within the Tourism & Hospitality Industry in Moray. Our main objective is to market the region and increase visitor numbers and spend within the region. Other objectives outlined in the five-year Business Plan are to; Improve the Visitor Experience, Support Businesses and Represent the Industry with Key Organisations.

In March 2025 VMS' five-year term will conclude and we wish to return to a Renewal Ballot on 20th March 2024, giving our BID levy payers the opportunity to decide if the BID should return for a second term. Consultations will begin in April once the survey has been issued and returned for findings to be gathered and then presented to Levy Payers to have an open discussion on the main priorities and focuses for the next five-year term.

We have created a snapshot of what has been achieved during the BID Phase 1. A BID Review has been created for the period of 2020-2024 which outlines the achievements each year in more detail and a video containing statistics over the last four years which can be accessed here - [Four Years With VMS \(youtube.com\)](#). The BID Review can be accessed on the Visit Moray Speyside website – www.morayspeyside.com

Achievements April 2020 – March 2024

2020 – 2021

- Started operating on 1st April 2020 – provided us the opportunity to support over 50 businesses apply for Covid related funding in the region.
- In partnership with the Moray Chamber of Commerce, the team introduced the Check & Protect app in the summer of 2020. This move came before the official Scottish Government app, providing businesses with an easy, secure way to record customer details during a time when it was necessary.
- Visit Moray Speyside became a go-to for the region's residents and businesses, sharing important information on the latest COVID-19 updates, reopening details, and guidelines. Through these efforts, the organisation showed a commitment to not just handling the challenges of the pandemic but actively contributing to the recovery of the local tourism industry.

2021 - 2022

- VMS successfully obtained £350,000 from Highlands & Islands Enterprise to implement a three-year recovery initiative for tourism in Moray.
- VMS additionally obtained £45,000 in funding from the SSE Beatrice Windfarm Fund. This funding is earmarked for community groups seeking support to facilitate a Community Asset Transfer (CAT)

of public toilets, enabling them to be upgraded and maintained for the benefit of both locals and visitors.

- Visit Moray Speyside successfully secured £75,000 from the Growth Fund, a marketing fund provided by VisitScotland. This funding facilitated the creation of the STOP, BREATHE, GO campaign, which emphasised the region's outdoor offerings. The campaign aimed to position Moray Speyside as a prominent destination, particularly during the pandemic when indoor activities were limited. The initiative showcased the abundance of open spaces available in the region.

2022 – 2023

- In May 2022, Visit Moray Speyside hosted its annual flagship Tourism Conference, drawing nearly 100 local businesses. Attendees had the opportunity to listen to keynote speakers, engage in networking, and learn about how they could actively participate with VMS.
- In June 2022, the Toilet Toolkit was officially launched, marking a significant milestone in community development. Shortly after its introduction, a local community group submitted the inaugural application for toilet refurbishment. This initiative resulted in the group being awarded £5,000 in funding, earmarked specifically for the renovation of the women's public restroom facilities. The success of this project not only highlights the practical impact of the Toilet Toolkit but also underscores the commitment of local communities to enhancing essential amenities.
- In September 2022, Moray Tourism Networks made their inaugural debut, expanding on the foundation laid by the Forres Area Tourism Network (FATN). VMS organised a series of roadshow events across the region during that month, leading to the establishment of a dedicated Tourism Network Group for Speyside. This group is focused on fostering connections, promoting collaboration, and spearheading initiatives to enhance the overall visitor experience.
- In October 2022, eyebright Utilities were unveiled as a perk for VMS Levy payers. Recognising the difficulties businesses encounter, VMS identified high energy costs as a primary concern. Consequently, we initiated this complimentary service to assist businesses in saving significant amounts on their energy expenses. To date, eyebright has contributed to approximately £20,000 in energy bill savings within the region.
- In February 2023, Visit Moray Speyside launched its first Travel Trade Guide, featuring businesses in the region that are fully prepared to engage with the travel trade industry and offer their products. This launch coincided with Gemma and Brooke's first appearance at ITB in Berlin in March. ITB stands as the world's largest trade show event, boasting a significant German attendance—an audience crucial to Moray's primary market. Therefore, attendance was a strategic and logical choice.
- In March 2023, the Green Resource Packs were introduced. These resources are accessible on the VMS website and are designed to assist businesses in initiating or advancing their sustainability efforts. The pack comprises of; Business Sustainability Policy & Guide, Business Sustainable Procurement information, Resource Guides, a pre-recorded Sustainability Workshop, and a template for businesses to craft their own Green narrative.

2023 – 2024

- In April 2023, Visit Moray Speyside participated in VisitScotland Connect in Aberdeen, a revamped version of their renowned event formerly known as VisitScotland Expo. This new format featured two days filled with consecutive appointments with tour operators from various corners of the globe. The outcome was a surge in inquiries for the Moray & Speyside region, emphasising the event's success in generating interest and engagement from a diverse international audience.
- In May 2023, Visit Moray Speyside held its fourth Tourism Conference, hosted at Elgin Town Hall. The event brought together more than 100 businesses and tourism professionals.
- In June 2023, Moray Speyside launched Taste of Moray Speyside, Scotland's third Food & Drink Trail. This initiative is all about highlighting the wonderful local produce and dining experiences available in the region. Through a dedicated website and active social media channels, the project aims to showcase the diverse offerings of the area. The website and social media channels serve as convenient platforms for anyone interested in exploring the local flavours.
- Visit Moray Speyside has been helping more than 50 businesses with their Short-Term Letting Applications.

- Engaging with the Travel Trade presents an excellent opportunity to enhance business, which is why we have made substantial investments in this sector. We organised two workshops in collaboration with VisitScotland, designed to assist in mastering the intricacies of working with the Travel Trade, expanding knowledge, and staying ahead of the latest industry trends. Following these workshops, we conducted a Familiarisation visit, hosting 13 tour operators from the UK who explored Moray through a day of hotel and attraction tours. The day culminated in a business event, providing a platform for these operators to interact with local businesses, explore their product offerings, and establish valuable connections.

Statistics Overview

- Represented over 370 businesses through the levy.
- Helped more than 50 businesses receive Covid Funding.
- Hosted over 29 workshops – aimed at improving marketing, working with the travel trade, sustainability and more, with a combined attendance of over 800 businesses.
- Hosted Tourism Network Meetings which had a combined attendance of over 220.
- Facilitated 78 one-to-one buyer to supplier meetings through our very own Familiarisation Visit.
- Provided £10,000 to local community & development groups and businesses to create events during winter to extend the season.
- Provided £20,000 of funding to local community & development groups to keep public toilets open or refurbish them.
- Assisted more than 50 businesses with their Short Term Let Licenses.
- On average 3 – 4 newsletters were sent out a month.
- Over 728K website page views.
- Over 27K following across all social media channels.
- Social media average monthly reach of 150K.
- More than 20 Press & Media Trips organised.
- Provide over 4700 free images on our media library.
- 75 industry newsletters sent out each quarter to prospective visitors.
- Engaged in over 150 one-to-one face to face meetings with the Travel Trade.
- Travel Trade Guide features 106 businesses.
- Winter Festival showcased 94 events in the region during off season months.
- Moray & Speyside map created showcasing over 140 attractions and experiences.