

# Impact Report 2023



ANGUS TOURISM  
COOPERATIVE

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# Introduction

**The Angus Tourism Cooperative (ATC) is the collective voice of local businesses and organisations involved in tourism in Angus, Scotland.**

The ATC works to promote collaboration between local businesses, communities and organisations to develop and deliver new opportunities for tourism.

## Who we are

We are representatives of the businesses, groups and organisations that operate within the tourism community in Angus. We provide the services that visitors to the area need. We work at the attractions and in the restaurants, accommodation and shops that provide service to visitors and locals in Angus. We have a vested interest in the success of tourism. If tourism flourishes, our businesses and communities flourish.

## Mission

The purpose of the ATC is to work collaboratively to improve the tourism offer in Angus and to promote the area as a visitor destination.

## Actions

- Industry Leadership – Providing an informed and influential voice for Angus tourism at a regional and national level. Encouraging and supporting individuals to undertake leadership roles ensuring continued growth and increased capabilities of the members to support tourism.
- Enabling Networking and Peer Support – Creating and facilitating regular events and opportunities for members to connect and engage in business support.
- Collaboration and Engagement – Foster and nurture opportunities for members to work together on activities that enhance our members products and services.
- Contribute to and support the delivery of the Angus Tourism Strategy – Members work in partnership with stakeholders to develop and lead on the contribution to working groups in the delivery of the strategy and plan.
- Inspiring Innovation and Business Growth – Sharing and showcasing examples and stories of success to develop Angus tourism.



# Objectives and Activity

## INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP

**The ATC will provide an informed and influential voice for Angus tourism at a regional and national level.**

Encouraging and supporting individuals to undertake leadership roles ensuring continued growth and increased capabilities of the members to support tourism.

Increase ATC engagement with National Bodies.

Identify priority Angus Council projects/collaborative opportunities and partners.

Support initiatives to promote tourism as a career choice.

Devise and deliver an Angus Leadership development pilot programme with clear aims/objectives.

Investigate the opportunity for an Annual Leadership Award

## ENABLING NETWORKING & PEER SUPPORT

**Creating and facilitating regular events and other opportunities for members to connect and engage in business support.**

The ATC recruitment campaign to include networking opportunities; include non-tourism groups e.g. food producers, retail, communities.

Implement a programme of activity to increase knowledge of the Angus tourism offer amongst industry.

Sourcing funding for organising regular events for our members in order to help them grow.

## COLLABORATING & ENGAGEMENT

**Foster and nurture opportunities for members to work together on activities that enhance our members products and services.**

The ATC Communications Plan to promote membership successes and benefits.

Develop an annual plan of collaborative activity.

Set up a sign post to enable the ATC to showcase Angus's tourist events.



# Objectives and Activity

## SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF THE ANGUS TOURISM FRAMEWORK

**Members work in partnership with stakeholders to develop and lead on the contribution to working groups in the delivery of the strategy and plan.**

Ensure that the leads from each thematic group will communicate their developments to the main group.

Find funding to increase communications between groups and members.

*"In my role as Chair of Angus Tourism Cooperative I am encouraged to see the continued growth of the Cooperative, through member engagement, partnership working with key stakeholders"*

*Alison Elliott - ATC Chairperson*

## INSPIRING INNOVATION & BUSINESS GROWTH

**Sharing and showcasing examples and stories of success to develop Angus tourism.**

Encourage increased ATC member participation in the Thistle Awards.

Sharing news and success to other members through meetings and via newsletters.

Organise annual "Ted Talk" type meetings.

Arrange local familiarisation visits, co-ordinated by ATC.

Source funding to promote the ways to grow business to the members.

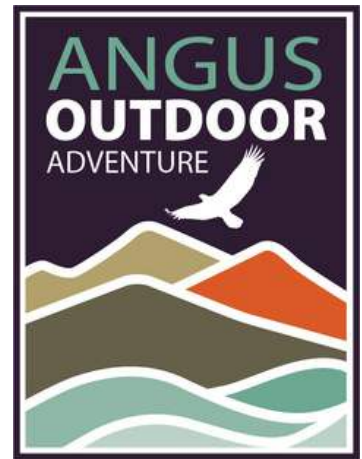


# Initiatives of the ATC

The ATC operates by supporting special interest groups connected to tourism. At least one board member supports each of these groups with help from the development worker.



## Flourishing Destinations



## FLOURISHING DESTINATIONS

What began as an AngusLEADER transnational cooperation project in 2019, with Romania and Belgium has seen a lasting legacy for Angus. In November 2023, we were able to take part in a review of the project in Belgium. The project in Angus came to a premature end due to Brexit, however the positive impact resulted significant funding for the continued development of Community Led Tourism in Brechin and wider Angus.



# Initiatives of the ATC

*"2023 saw the development of the new Nature Based Outdoor Adventure Strategy and Action Plan 'Go Slow in Angus' published in May 2023.*

*A series of member workshops identified key opportunities in the sector, shaped by the abundance of our natural heritage and entrepreneurship in Angus. Over twenty actions across four themes were identified:*

*Experience Development;*

*Infrastructure Facilitation;*

*Business & Industry Development;*

*Marketing and Promotion.*

*The Angus Outdoor Adventure working group is developing a delivery plan for 2024/25.*

*Get involved, there is something for everyone"*

*Kelly Ann Dempsey - ATC Director*

## ANGUS OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

The 'Angus Outdoor Adventure' working group has been established by a collaborative of Angus Tourism Cooperative members with an interest in developing Angus's reputation as a must visit Scottish outdoor destination. The established cooperative has provided a setting to develop bookable experiences and marketing opportunities which contribute to the delivery of the Angus Tourism Framework.



## APPETITE FOR ANGUS

Appetite for Angus (A4A), is a network of food and drink businesses who are working together to promote what the area has to offer, to ensure everyone has access to local food, and to collaborate, supporting and helping each other. The group covers all parts of the food chain – farmers, primary producers, wholesalers, retailers, café owners, restaurateurs, and professional services. They all have one thing in common – a passion for good, local food which they want to share with everyone.



*"Appetite for Angus is awesome in so many ways! Being part of a collective pool of business of all shapes, sizes and backgrounds is beneficial when it comes to shared experiences and the network of people you can talk to for support and guidance. It makes being a business owner a little less lonely in a challenging or fun times. A4A is super helpful too as a platform for sharing social media posts, promotions, useful training info and business opportunities. Being a member of A4A is like living in a street of great neighbours...and everybody needs good neighbours"*

*Hayley Wilkes - owner WeeCook Pies & WeeCook Kitchen*

# Initiatives of the ATC

## DOG FRIENDLY ANGUS & DUNDEE

Dog Friendly Angus & Dundee promotes Angus as a dog friendly destination, educates businesses on how to be dog friendly, engages with influencers locally and UK wide and create and deliver dog friendly events and initiatives to locals and visitors alike.



*"The advice given by Dog Friendly Angus was invaluable in helping us open our museums to visitors with dogs. In July 2023 we launched dog friendly in all museums. We wanted to ensure that visitors with dogs were given the opportunity to enjoy their visit without having to have one member of the family wait outside with the dog! All our museums welcomed canine visitors, to date there have been no incidents and the dogs are very well behaved. We have even had some furry Fridays where therapets from the canine trust visit."*

*Rachel Jackson - Museums Galleries Archives Operations Leader*



## BRECHIN COMMUNITY LED TOURISM

Brechin was selected for a pilot project on Community Led Tourism, this is as a direct result of ATC successful delivery of a Flourishing Destinations project. The BCLT project was funded by SenScot and enables £80k of funded tourism projects for the town. The funding also enables project support to be continued for this year and onwards.

*"ATC have proved invaluable in providing views from their members on the strategic impact of Caledonian Railway Brechin community tourism projects."*

*John Gill - Caledonian Railway*



# Working in Partnership with Angus Council

Angus Tourism Cooperative maintains an important connection between our Members and Angus Council. The productive communication between our Board, Working Groups and Development Workers enables proactive support and delivery of projects across a wide variety of initiatives.

Our joint input as partners into the following projects has been integral into achieving results

2023 saw the securing of a joint project with Angus Council, Angus Rural Partnership and Angus Tourism Cooperative. This project has secured £121,250 to work together to further tourism in the region. The project will be delivered in to 2024 and includes 5 individual projects.

We continue to work with Angus Council at a regional level supporting the delivery of the Regional Framework including Travel Trade.

- **The 'Ask Angus' Visitor Information Project**
- **'My Angus' - Local community Pride of Place marketing campaign**
- **Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Plan**
- **Sustainable Food Places**
- **Regional Food Group - Appetite for Angus**
- **Brechin Community Led Tourism Project**
- **Travel Trade**
- **Tay Country regional marketing and Tay Cities Leadership Groups**
- **Refocusing work of Carnoustie Country**
- **Supporting the work of Developing the Young Workforce**
- **Angus Rural Partnership Funding for Outdoor Adventure**
- **Angus Tourism Cooperative Angus Rural Partnership, Angus Council collaborative funding bid**



# Measuring our Impact

**Measuring the impact of a membership organisation can be challenging. We believe that if our members are thriving and benefitting from us we are succeeding in our purpose as an organisation. We review our work each year and measure again the strategic themes of the ATC:**

- Industry leadership
- Enable networking and peer support
- Collaboration and engagement
- Contribute to and support the deliver of the Angus Tourism Framework
- Inspiring Innovation and Business Growth



**63  
regularly  
engaging  
businesses**

**24  
national  
partners**

**160  
participants  
at member  
events**

**17% increase  
of Facebook  
Industry  
group  
members**

*The J M Bakery, like many other small businesses can lack the experience & contacts to complete a project successfully from concept to market. We identified a gap in the market for traditional Angus hand crafted oatcakes and shortbread biscuits and as we have been producing these types of products for many years, we decided to bring these together in one range. However, as this is a new type of venture for us, we have limited experience of marketing these to a larger audience and this is when we decided to engage with the Angus Tourism Collective more closely.*

*They were quick to respond and immediately connected us with people who could support us and offer advice. We put together a practical plan which we are working through and is showing signs of early results. We discussed current and future support initiatives, how to access these and get involved, among other initiatives.*

*We have found engaging with Angus Tourism Collective invaluable with this project. They are very easy to communicate with, but most of all the information and actions are practical and useable. We would recommend the Angus Tourism Collective to any small business in Angus looking for practical support.*

*Mark Robb - JM Bakery*

# Industry Leadership

An impact report is a way for organizations to communicate the issues they are trying to improve, as well as their strategy on how they facilitated change. It measures the impact that NFPs make in people's lives, focusing on their social or environmental outcomes, It isn't merely a description of the activities undertaken by the organization either, but it also provides the analysis on the results of these activities.



KEY INDICATORS	ACTIVITIES	OUTCOME
<p>Increase business engagement</p> <p>Increase number of individuals in leadership roles</p> <p>Increase awareness of Angus as a destination with active tourism businesses</p> <p>Improve engagement levels of existing and identify new opportunities</p> <p>Promote tourism as a career choice</p>	<p>Events and meetings</p> <p>Links with national and international partners</p> <p>Links with local stakeholders</p> <p>Training and education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 250+ Leadership meetings of the ATC and associated initiatives</li> <li>• 7 tourism framework group meetings</li> <li>• 35 meetings with VisitAngus &amp; Angus Council's Economic Development Team</li> <li>• Represented our Members through core activity with:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24 national partners`</li> <li>• 32 local organisations</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Regular correspondence and collaborative work with national bodies; including SF&amp;D, STA, Visit Scotland and SCOTO</li> <li>• Participant of Cairngorm's Tourism Partnership</li> <li>• Contributed to the Angus Cultural strategy</li> <li>• New individual participating in Framework</li> <li>• 63 regularly engaging businesses</li> <li>• Newsletter updates for industry with training opportunities and webinars.</li> <li>• Attended 2 career fayres at secondary schools.</li> </ul>

# Enable networking & peer support



*Angus Tourism Cooperative has been an invaluable network for my organisation; creating and developing meaningful connections and partnerships, and acting as a source of motivation and support to each other in challenging times. I strongly encourage all visitor focussed heritage businesses to join.*

*Susan Curran - Heritage, Learning & Engagement Lead, Angus Alive*

A key element of the ATC is facilitating opportunities for members to connect with one another and engage in local business support. As can be seen in the table above, this year there has been several opportunities provided to members to engage with one another in person. On top of this, our Development Worker and Membership Coordinator have been making a conscious effort to link businesses, organisations and individuals with one another, where they see opportunities for business growth and collaboration.

KEY INDICATORS	ACTIVITIES	OUTCOME
Increase engagement and improve Angus visibility in Scotland	Member Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In person member and networking events</li> <li>• AGM 1</li> <li>• Direct peer to peer introductions made</li> <li>• 160 Participant at in person member events</li> </ul>
Increase knowledge of tourism in Angus	FAM Events	
Increase collaborative activity and promote successful peer support	Peer to Peer introductions	
	Online Huddles	
	Delivery of ATC Initiatives	

# Collaboration and Engagement

With a priority to foster and nurture collaboration and engagement, members have had the opportunity to attend networking events both in person and online. Regular newsletters and updates on our website and social media channels highlight activity and events across the sector, with the potential for working together. All members have access to 1:1 connections with our membership coordinator and development worker, as well as each other.

KEY INDICATORS	ACTIVITIES	OUTCOME
Identifying and meeting needs of members	1:1 meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 119 meetings with existing members</li> <li>• 27 meetings with prospective members</li> <li>• Newsletters</li> <li>• email campaigns</li> <li>• 37 Increase in Twitter followers to 856</li> <li>• LinkedIn increased by 165 followers up to 498</li> <li>• Facebook group up 26 to 182</li> <li>• Facebook page likes from 337 to 543 with 785 followers, up by 306.</li> <li>• Website continually updated</li> <li>• 184 members in December 2022 to 196 in December 2023</li> <li>• Engagement Levels increased across all activity</li> </ul>
Increase member engagement	Member Newsletters and Surveys	
Increase member knowledge	Website and Social Media	
Increase number of members	Manage Active Membership	
	Online Huddles	
	Peer to Peer Introductions	



*We are so glad we heard about ATC and got involved - it is a gathering not of tourism businesses but of people passionate about where they live and how to share it and make the most of it. There is such a wealth of information in the collective - you voice a concern or issue and there are maybe a dozen people able to advise. We especially appreciated when the ATC gathering met at Glenisla Hotel - we told our story and shared our hopes and got some excellent and valuable advice. No matter how busy, we always try to get along to ATC meetings - time well spent.*

*Bryan & Isobel Webster, Glenisla Hotel, Angus*

# Contribute to & support the delivery of the Angus Tourism Framework

Working with partners we lead, support and develop the working groups of the Angus Tourism Framework for Angus. The current framework runs from 2019 to 2024. In November 2018, over 30 stakeholders, including the ATC, local businesses, VisitScotland, Angus Council and the Scottish Tourism Alliance, met to discuss a revised tourism framework for Angus. A steering group made up of representatives from a variety of sectors was formed to develop the new framework. As the industry body for tourism in Angus, we were keen to identify specific activity we could drive forward.

## The aims of the framework are:

- To have an industry-led collaborative approach to identifying opportunities for growth and for delivering support.
- To harness the positivity and ambition of local communities to share their pride of Angus with visitors.
- To gather data to enable all businesses to better understand current and futures markets in order to meet and exceed their expectations.
- To deliver innovative and inspirational products and experiences for all visitors to Angus.
- To raise the profile of Angus locally, nationally and internationally in order to attract more visitors to the area.



KEY INDICATORS	ACTIVITIES	OUTCOME
<p>Increase tourism offer in Angus</p> <p>Increase profile of Angus as a tourist destination</p> <p>Increase number of visitors in Angus</p>	<p>Delivery of projects within the Framework</p> <p>New markets and trading opportunities</p> <p>Managing the delivery of the Framework</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative projects delivered and continually promoted. 'Ask Angus', Angus Tour, Arbroath Smokie Trail</li> <li>• 77 'Ask Angus' folders delivered to businesses</li> <li>• Increase of businesses engaging with Angus Tourism Framework delivery</li> <li>• Increase in social media engagement across Visit Angus channels</li> <li>• Increase in visitors to Visit Angus website</li> </ul>

# Inspiring Innovation & Business Growth

As a membership organisation, we are always aiming to help our members and local businesses thrive. Helping inspire innovation is one way that this is done. There are several examples of members who have innovated and grown their business following their experience working alongside the ATC. Some of these have been off the back of the ATC's working groups such as the Flourishing Destinations Project, and the Outdoor Adventure Group, who the ATC supports.

KEY INDICATORS	ACTIVITIES	OUTCOME
<p>Increase tourism offer in Angus</p> <p>Increase business growth</p> <p>Increase business innovation</p> <p>Increase capacity of ATC</p>	<p>Supporting Working Groups</p> <p>Training</p> <p>Sourcing Funding</p> <p>Peer to Peer Introductions</p> <p>Project Delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ?? Businesses and organisations participated in Travel Trade training</li> <li>• Collaborative funding project with Angus Council and Angus Rural Partnership</li> <li>• Funding secured for A4A, (Regional Food Fund &amp; Regional Sourcing Scotland Event)</li> <li>• Funding secured to set up a Sustainable Food Group, project is ongoing</li> <li>• 3 A4A Markets delivered including an area at Strathmore Highland Games</li> <li>• Delivery of Tourism Framework</li> <li>• Delivery of ATC Initiatives</li> </ul>

*"I was delighted when Norma reached out to me to say that one of the other ATC members was looking for social media support. She e-introduced us and within a few days we had scheduled an initial meeting. This was a brilliant opportunity for me to pitch to a potential new client. The meeting went well and I am delighted they have decided to go ahead. This has allowed me to grow my client base whilst connecting with a business who is in one of the main sectors I work in (Food and Drink). It's nice as we are both businesses based in Carnoustie. I'm looking forward to getting started. Thanks to Norma and the team at ATC for supporting and promoting my small business."*

*Sophie Thompson - Member of the ATC*



# Industry Challenges

## **Cost of energy**

The rise in energy costs across the country has hit businesses incredibly hard. From our discussions with businesses, many have stated that their energy bills have tripled as a result. One member, running a successful hospitality business stated "Right now it is not about making money but just keeping our heads above water. I don't know how other businesses who aren't as busy are going to survive."

## **Cost of living**

On top of the cost of energy, the overall cost of living has increased for everyone. Businesses and the public have both been seriously affected. In particular, the price of food and raw materials has gone up. This has not only affected members directly but has also led to a decreased footfall for many due to the crisis affecting public and reducing their disposable income.

## **Short-term lets legislation**

A major challenge that self-catering accommodation providers have been affected by is the short-term lets legislation. We have been in touch with a number of our members who are affected by the legislation, the majority have been struggling with many aspects of it and one member has potentially had to close as a result.

## **Planning consent**

Several members have been affected by the challenges of surrounding planning consent as they try to make positive changes to their businesses. They have expressed confusion over the process, sourcing information and timelines involved.

## **Recruitment and Retention of Staff**

Staffing continues to be a challenge for the Tourism sector. In many situations we have been made aware of businesses changing operating hours simply to meet the staff they have rather than expand or even maintain their business.

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# Conclusion & Next Steps

**Our priorities for the year ahead remain focused on our purpose as an organisation and the positive impact we bring by Angus by working together. We can now see the benefits to our industry and community and in 2023 must now focus on securing long term funding to build the capacity of our organisation and our members.**

## **Increased awareness of Angus as a tourism destination**

- Continue to work with local and national stakeholders.
- Support the delivery of marketing campaigns.
- Supporting members to engage with the travel trade.

## **Business growth and development**

- Increased training opportunities
- Collaborative working
- New routes to market
- Engagement with marketing campaigns

## **Organisational capacity**

- Sourcing funding to enable continuity of current activity.

The activity by the ATC over the last 12 months has been impactful and through our funded positions the cooperative members and the wider community have benefited. Increased collaboration and engagement of members, wider stakeholder engagement, project delivery and increased visibility of Angus as a destination have all featured as positive results of their work.

### **1. Our Members**

We are only as strong as our members. We aim to have a large, representative and engaged membership.

### **2. Support the Angus Tourism Framework**

Ensure meaningful collaboration with stakeholders and delivery of the Framework

### **3. Active Initiatives and Working Groups**

Ensure well attended and proactive working groups and delivery of successful outcomes from our initiatives

Help us make it happen.

<https://www.angustourism.co.uk/our-members/>

# The Board, Team & Partners

## Partners working with the ATC



Caroline Warburton

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VisitScotland



Jane Taylor

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Angus Council

# Contact Us

Alison Elliott, Chair  
[contact@angustourism.co.uk](mailto:contact@angustourism.co.uk)

To find out more about our initiatives please see:

<https://www.angustourism.co.uk/initiatives/>

More information on our Board of Directors can be found:

<https://www.angustourism.co.uk/about-us/>

A full list of our Members can be found:

<https://www.angustourism.co.uk/our-members/>

[Twitter - @AngusTourism](#)

[Facebook - @angustourism](#)

[LinkedIn - Angus Tourism Cooperative](#)



We welcome  
contact from  
anyone interested  
in finding out more  
about the ATC.

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