

“Information packs to be placed with Every Accommodation provider in Wester Ross”

Background:

As per discussions at the T@ meeting, dated 28 / 10 / 05.

“Project 1: Bedroom Folder.

An information folder to be placed with every accommodation provider in the area. Each area will have a section to personalise with local information but the idea is to provide a certain amount of information from across the whole of Wester Ross”.

The idea here is to have a resource that can be used by the entire tourism industry across Wester Ross to promote, market, and advertise as complete a range of visitor attractions as possible to the bulk of the visitors that come here each year. This will be achieved through a “bedroom information folder” that will be available to all accommodation providers throughout the area for their guests to source information on activities, walks, useful contact numbers, visitor attractions and so on. There will be information provided covering not only generic details affecting the entire area, but also on specifically local attractions in each area.

Research & Format:

Each of the four main groups that form [T@WR](#) was consulted on several occasions about how they envisioned these packs:

- Content
- Layout
- Costs
- Numbers required

Drawing from previous experience, several options were looked at in terms of shape / size / material suppliers etc. By common consent, however, it was agreed that a standard A4 format should be adopted. This will be hardbacked for longevity, and have detachable polyfolders contained inside to carry A4 information sheets on a wide variety of Wester Ross based attractions, activities, and visitor information.

Following further discussions with all groups, the approved design will carry information thus:

- Each area (Ullapool / Gairloch / Strathcarron) will have approx. 25 polypockets available to them. These are priced at £30 per complete pocket OR £15 per side. Areas will be “tabbed” if possible to allow visitors easy access to their chosen area.
- There will be an attractive Wester Ross photo on the front cover, with details of the individual groups that form T@ on the rear.
- An introduction page, translated if possible into Gaelic / German / French / Italian / Spanish, then generic info on Wester Ross – Wildlife / geology / statistics etc, then the polypockets.
- At the end of each geographical section, there will be a straightforward list of Hotels / B&B / Guest Houses

Quantities:

Following work on the other seedcorn project (Development of Information and Distribution networks in Wester Ross), extensive consultation with all T@ partners resulted in a proposal to produce 2000 packs. This will give all Hotels / B&B's / Guest Houses in the area one pack per bedroom (although it should be noted that we accept there may be an alteration in this figure by the time the packs are actually ready, due to seasonal fluctuations in bedspaces). Self Catering & campsites will receive one main copy for the reception area.

Costs:

A full breakdown of these is available if required. However, including a contribution from Celtic Fringe of £6250 towards the overall project, the information packs will cost T@ the sum of approx. £4.70 each in basic terms. There will be NO charge to accommodation providers for these – the group believe that there would be too many problems involved in the likely situation of some accommodation providers being unwilling to pay for these no matter how good the content is. We felt that it was far more important for the information to be as widely available as possible.

Funding:

As already indicated, the industry contribution will come mainly through Celtic Fringe themselves. The balance will be derived from a combination of Visit Scotland Challenge funding, income from advertisers, and (potentially) the LEC.

Timing:

The finished article would take approximately 6 months to design and complete

Delivery:

Following discussions with the other T@ partners, each group would take responsibility for gathering the target of 25 businesses for its own area. Responsibilities for collation and production will be decided at that point.

Other information:

Full reports / paperwork are available regarding the initial Project Description, costings for the pack, and how the production figure of 2000 was arrived at. All pricing etc is based on figures at the time of writing ie September 2006, and with coverage extending to the whole of Wester Ross.

What happened next.....

The subsequent Visit Scotland "Challenge" Funding application hit what appeared to be an unending series of complications. The majority of these were directly connected with the criteria surrounding applications, and how the funds had to be spent. In tandem with this, Challenge Funding also relied on the receiving body being one whose members were ALL quality assured through Visit Scotland, and none of the T@ groups could give that assurance – it is not our policy to force members to become part of a third party organisation if they do not wish to.

Having taken several months to submit our initial application, the final straw came when - after a further three months worth of meetings and forms - our **second** application was turned down by the CFunding committee on several counts. This was despite the Visit Scotland CFund specialist assuring us that it met all the required criteria (*aside from the QA aspect – but we understood that we could possibly get around this by pledging that we would gradually move towards QA across our membership*).

As a result of this, it was unanimously decided that we would have no alternative but to drop further Cfund applications, and delay the project until a future date when alternative funding might be sought. The bottom line is that this project has been fully researched and costed and is ready to go once funding has been found. The Catch 22 here is that the LEC do not fund such projects, but referred us back to Visit Scotland and CFunding. Unfortunately, we cannot fulfil the necessary CFund criteria and are therefore currently in a funding vacuum which we must address before taking the project beyond the “Seedcorn” stage. Seedcorn has nevertheless met its target here, as we do indeed have a fully developed and costed proposal which is ready to run

D. Gibson, Celtic Fringe Tourism Association. September 2007.

