



# Outer Hebrides Tourism



Chief Executive's Overview  
Sarah Maclean, Nov 2023



MEMBERSHIP



WEBSITE



SOCIAL MEDIA



PROMOTION

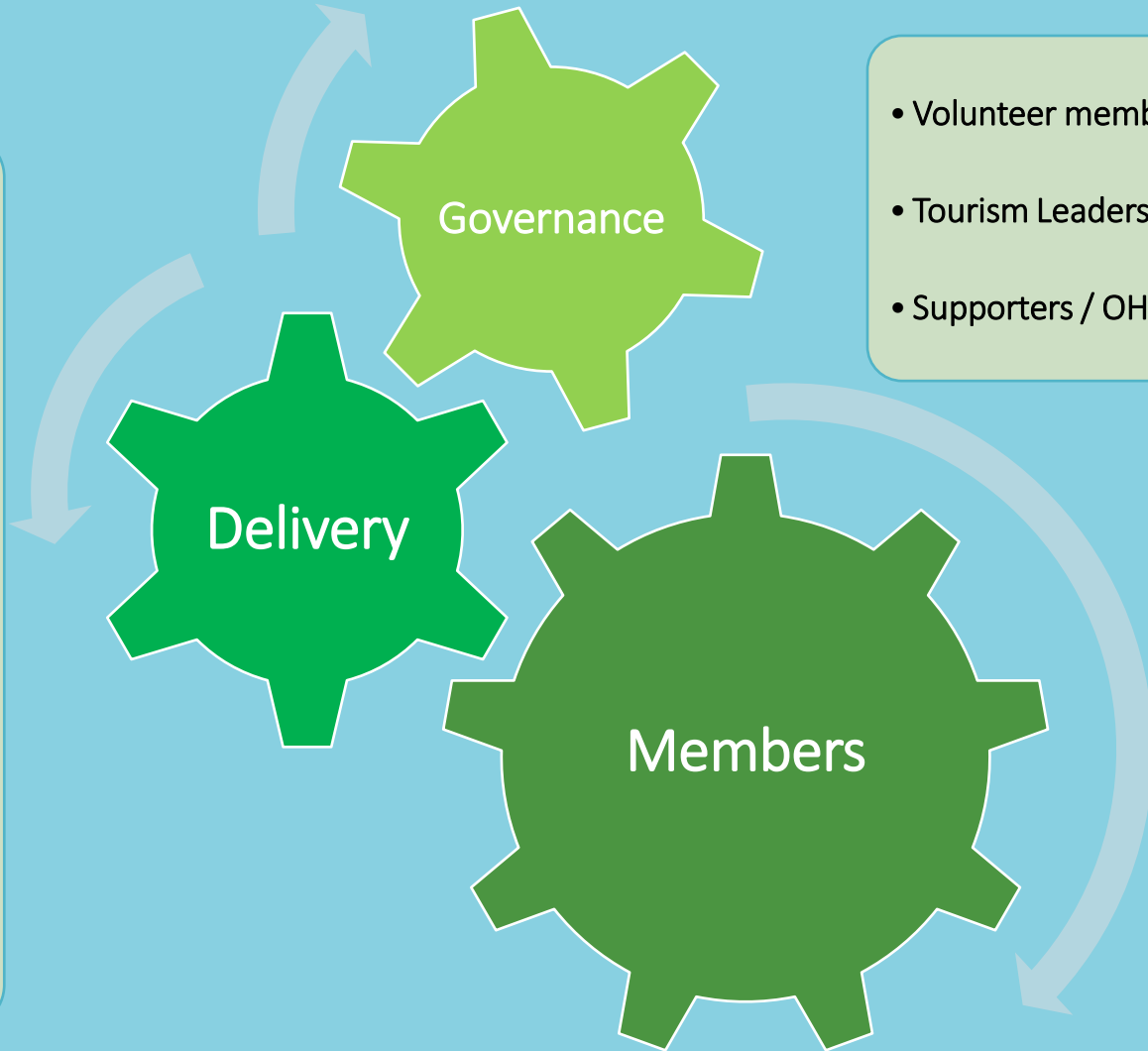


PROJECTS



REPRESENTATION

- Chief Executive
- Administration Officer
- Project Development Manager
- Project Manager (Food & Drink)
- Cruise Destination Development Manager
- Marketing Officer



- Volunteer member representatives
- Tourism Leadership Group
- Supporters / OHT Council?

- 518 subscribed businesses
- Comprising 390 members
- Diverse membership enjoying shared benefits

[www.visitouterhebrides.co.uk](http://www.visitouterhebrides.co.uk)

## Visit Outer Hebrides

No.1 Outer Hebrides website  
2m+ hits per year  
60K+ clicks to external websites  
9.5K+ enquiries to member businesses  
Free online booking function for accommodation members

## Hebridean Way

The Routes –  
Cycling & Walking  
Pitstops  
Transfers & connection info.  
Maps & merchandise

## Wider Info...

Eat Drink Hebrides  
P.L.A.C.E  
Made in the Outer Hebrides  
Cruise  
See & Do  
& lots more...



120,000+  
followers





# Space to Warm your Soul

Welcome to the Outer Hebrides, a captivating chain of islands in the Atlantic Ocean with the ideal natural environment to help boost your physical and mental wellbeing.

As soon as your feet touch our Hebridean soil, you'll feel your shoulders relax and your mind open as you harmonise with the inspiring landscape of mountains, moors, machair and white sandy beaches, places that host the very best of Gaelic culture, history, wildlife, arts and food and drink.

Here, you'll find the space to switch off, restore a sense of calm and free your mind to enjoy the simple things in life once more.

This trail features 41 places across the 130-mile long archipelago from the Isle of Mingulay in the south to Ness at the northern tip of Lewis. You can explore the trail by car, bike or by public transport and on foot.

To make sure we give you the space you need, we've mostly included quieter, lesser-known places recommended by locals so you can uncover the many hidden gems that await in the Outer Hebrides.

Let our islands give you the space to warm your soul.

Thank you to the islanders who have kindly provided their recommendations for places to boost your wellbeing: **Deanna Anderson, Chris Lyle, Kate Macdonald, Sarah Maclean, Katelyn McLeod, Marina Macleod, Eileen Murray, Lindsey Robertson, Julie Blair, Mairi Thomson, Mairi Vinton and Catherine Walker.**

PLACES

NESS ISLE HARRIS UIST BARRA

Space to warm your soul

WELLBEING TRAIL

## Lewis Locations

**1 Aline Community Woodland**  
Escape to the peaceful woodland with lots of tracks and paths to explore. Follow the track that leads to the shore of Loch Sgabhath to spot water-level eagles, osprey and red deer. Golden eagles are often seen over the forest canopy and the woodland supports a pair of osprey nests.

**2 Bayliss Beach**  
This small beach on the peninsula of Punt in Lewis is a lovely place to relax with a picnic on the sand, or with a morning dip in the sea, where you'll have picturesque views of the mountainous and Bayliss Island ahead of you.

**3 Ecoregion Dunes Playpark**  
A great park near the town of Gairloch with nearly four acres to explore. You'll find a dip, a tree, a stream, climbing frames and more. An adventure path and a future trail, football field and abandoned arena, a cafe and a shop. Perfect for family days out and picnics.

**4 Gallan Head**  
A wonderful place to go stargazing and stand in awe of the rock stacks.

**5 Gress Beach**  
A great place for a relaxing walk but of wildlife. Follow the track along the coast and you'll spot otters, porpoises and other wildlife. Plying in and out of coves and clefts. Looking west you might even hear the seals as they feed in the surf on the Speig Leathann rocks.

**6 Loch Sgabhath**  
Explore the Nature Reserve in Ness, which has a nature observatory and is the perfect place to spot peregrine, white-tailed eagle, osprey and red deer in addition to the resident buzzards.

**7 Mangresta Beach**  
This quiet beach is the perfect place to watch huge rollers crashing on the sand, or to catch the sunset from a seat on the hill, or down on the sand. Take a walk along the cliffs to Mangresta Point, built from stone and wood, and set into the cliff edge. It's a spectacular place to spend a night.

**8 Newmarket Playpark**  
Have fun with the family at this theme park. Situated in beautiful gardens you'll enjoy a perfect picnic spot, playground and a peaceful walk along the Black Glen River, and as long as you're north of Sligachan in the village of Newmarket.

**9 Reef Beach**  
Visit the quiet end of the beach and enjoy a spectacular sunset view. Walk to the far end and just before a path leads off over the hill, sit by the water. In the summer or late in the year, watch the water change colour as the sun sets over the Atlantic.

**10 St Moleag's Church**  
A great hidden gem from the main road in Ness, this medieval medieval stone church is a peaceful spot to appreciate both history and architecture. Surrounded by local legend, farmers abound on who founded the church. Near St Moleag, maybe, to the west of a Scandinavian long.

**11 Showbest Beach**  
A stunning beach perfect for a day out with family or friends. This is a great place for nature watching in the Loch water and there's a picnic table at the southern end. Showbest will have the open beach behind the stone beach, which makes for a nice beaching site.

**12 Stac a Pàrla**  
A fascinating walk to see a natural rock arch. The rock stacks at Showbest beach and you can enjoy the magnificent view of the Atlantic coast from Sligachan and Gairloch. Bring an OS map with you.

**13 Steinish Coastal Path**  
Enjoy a beautiful coastal walk just outside Sligachan in the village of Steinish. The path is well-maintained and you can enjoy the sea, cliffs and the water along the way, and the sea is well exposed for fishing such as white sea trout, salmon, shrimps, oysters/catchers, ringed plover, ring-billed gull, white and grey.

## Uninhabited Island Locations

**The Shiant Isles**  
When it comes to birdwatching, most would think of St Kilda, but you're just as likely to spot puffins, gullskuas, and razorbills at the Shiant Isles, just off the East Coast of Harris, after a journey east from Tarbert along the Lewis and Harris coastline.

**Isle of Mingulay**  
Get out to the south of Harris across the sparkling blue waters of the loch on a boat trip to the top of Mingulay. Learn about the island's interesting history, spot puffins, seals, dolphins, gulls and if you're lucky, whale!

**St Kilda**  
Climb on a fascinating boat trip to St Kilda - the UK's only post 1945 island, with a population of 4,000 year history and a rich wildlife. Explore the remaining buildings and museum, tour around the highly sea stacks and visit the largest colony of Atlantic puffins.

**Outer Hebrides ferry crossings**  
On any made at all and in all countries, the ferry crossings are a memorable part of any trip. Climb up to the top deck and enjoy the spectacular views, spot wildlife including dolphins if you're lucky, and breathe in the pure Hebridean air.

We've colour-coded the places on the maps in this trail to help you find your special place.

- Space to Unwind
- Space for Nature
- Space to be Together
- Space to Wonder

Outer Hebrides  
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Visit the Outer Hebrides and discover the Gaelic language, culture and traditions that make our islands so unique.

# Eileanan na Gàidhlig Scotland's Gaelic Islands

Learn More

Ancestry

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# Time for Uist



185 Miles  
10 Islands  
8 Causeways  
2 Ferries

1 EPIC ADVENTURE

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Tuesday 25 July 2023 Soutman.com

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## Time for you.

Are you looking for your next escape? Somewhere to relax, rejuvenate and reconnect with nature? There's no better place than Uist. Here you'll find six unique islands connected by causeways that offer the ultimate in escapism. Nestled between Harris to the north and Barra to the south, Uist has it all. The space to unwind under wide open skies, delicious local food and drink, epic landscapes, a rich history and a vibrant community and Gaelic culture to immerse yourself in. There's no better time to visit Uist. What are you waiting for? Start planning your break today.



## Time for Uist.

visitouterhebrides.co.uk/our-islands/uist



Scan me

# Unearth the gems of Uist

Take time to explore Uist, where a deep peace and stillness belies the extraordinary stories, history and culture of this island which are found by venturing just a little off the well-worn road, just a little below the surface, and into the heart and soul of people and place

Time slows down and expands here in Uist, making an hour seem like two and a week away like an immersion in somewhere that never leaves heat. Quickly, the demands of the clock unwind as the island, with its long running timescales and proudly unheated Gaelic traditions, sets its own pace. You'll find an island where the past is embedded in every track and turning and its present and future set in fresh ideas and new enterprise as its people, the Dhaoin, as they have forever done, dig its, evolve and survive while sharing what is dear and true to them. New distilleries for whisky and gin, street food made from island meats and flowers, warm hospitality with a modern feel and craft tours which unfold generations of knowledge as part of the picture here to meet the needs of today's travellers, as we boat-tours to off radar beaches and walking exploration of places held close to those who call the island home.

As time and new combine in a landscape that fills between the heavenly, the work, the abandoned and the militarised while technology looms right down into the islands often holding a startling narrative of life forged here over thousands of years. From the sites of Bronze Age monuments to Viking settlements and grand castles where beams of the Lord of the Isles were sometimes served with an eye course of bloodshot, all

as a type of canal system connecting homes to sea - where much of the island's life story can be found. Take Barra, for example, a settlement on the west of South Uist. You won't see it at first but in the wide-open blanket of gorseous machair that runs off the beach, the outline of a major Viking settlement, where some 20 buildings once stood, gently pushes up through the ground. Today, this site sits silent apart from the claps and calls of the island's busy bird life and perhaps the rumble of a tractor collecting seaweed from the nearby sands, but once it boomed with trade, activity and a population who gathered around the hall of an important Norse ruler, where hearths were lit and feasts cooked and consumed.

A summer evening walk here among the outer catchers, curries and outbuildings and the covering of deep pink clovers, marigolds and daisies takes you to another place forged more than one thousand years ago, where the ways of the ancient land tells far from empty as just life raised like a powerful spirit. It's just a short distance from Ploa Mac Donald's herbarium, includes a prominent Jacobite section of local heroes and locations important to the cause. With history and genealogy a growing tool to visitors, a one recent innovation to emerge is the Uist Unearthed app which offers a virtual

including those in Barra, Harris, South Uist, Eriksay and Harris, who work to keep these sites alive and where islanders share their research, collections and archives of those who left and those who remained among the ever changing. These community-run enterprises include the excellent Barraey Historical Society and the Killoran Museum, which also just a short distance from Ploa Mac Donald's herbarium, includes a prominent Jacobite section of local heroes and locations important to the cause.

Using the app, these sites appear as full reconstructed view while standing on the spot where they were built and come to life using the powerful combination of augmented reality, GPS and archaeological data. "I was a really central place, there is a lot of activity here and that would have been really busy places. For most people they think this is quiet and remote, nothing probably happened here but in fact here, nestled in the dunes is a site where

archaeological exploration of the sites that remain mostly hidden from view. Unlike the big hitting outstanding monuments of Orkney, for example, they remain largely below ground but sit with equal international significance. In Barra, for example, the site of a major Viking settlement was found, still see a tiny gold ring on the floor, which was possibly used as a hair ornament. There it lies, exactly in the spot it was found by archaeologists.

Dr Rebecca Pennington, a lecturer in archaeology at Uist Outer Hebrides and Uist Virtual Archaeology Project Manager, said: "The assumption for many is that the islands are quite remote and they don't have a massive population now but in prehistory, that was probably not the case."

At Cladh Hallan, a Bronze Age settlement made famous by its prehistoric mummies, the only place in Great Britain where they have been found, users of Uist Unearthed crutch down to enter one of the roundhouses. On the right, as the app guides you into the building where the mummies were found, you'll see a tiny gold ring on the floor, which was possibly used as a hair ornament. There it lies, exactly in the spot it was found by archaeologists.

Dr Pennington added: "This was a really central place, there is a lot of activity here and that would have been really busy places. For most people they think this is quiet and remote, nothing probably happened here but in fact here, nestled in the dunes is a site where

not only all this business but some exceptional things were happening." Today, only one or two dog walkers are seen making their way over the dunes. Four thousand years ago, this place would have been bustling, teeming with people, children and dogs, family and family. In Uist, the back story shifts perception of the islands as you find them today.

In summer 2022, Uist pushes on, develops and looks to thrive as the Outer Hebrides courts soaring popularity. Young islanders, such as Kate Mac Donald and Jenny Ingledew, co-founders of North Uist Distillery and Dunspeig Gin in Borvechula, are preparing to expand their business with a new whisky distillery - where the drinks will be made from locally grown barley - planned for their site at Nauman Strathgairn. As Craft and Gann in Lochboisdale, sisters Christina and Samantha, who set up their business during lockdown, prepare to grow with their food truck now a welcome sight at festivals and weddings across the islands, Down in Eriksay, David Stickle, who moved away to Glasgow for four years, is back home and running Uist Sea Tours taking visitors to those coasted, lesser-known islands and beaches on his covered HBB boat.

Meanwhile on the more mountainous east side of South Uist at Leach Shipport, what was once the main hub for the island before the boats got too big, crofting tours are launched by DJ Cameron of Long Island Retreats, a city generation order who left his job in the oil industry to keep traditions of the land alive. It feels as if he knows every inch, every story of this place and all the people in it too as he takes you into the reat, grafting side of island life - away from the beaches, the photogs and the fleeting moments to a life among his cliffs, his ponies and the ways of keeping the land that has assisted his family for decades. With people like DJ and the others to guide you, you get closer to Uist's true, rare rhythm just that little bit more.

See visitouterhebrides.co.uk



Uist pushes on, develops and looks to thrive as the Outer Hebrides courts soaring popularity



Main West coast beach stretching 20 miles, South Uist

Top: South Uist. Above: Uist Unearthed augmented reality archaeology at Cladh Hallan, South Uist

Above right: Georgian folly Scalpaig Tower, North Uist

Distillery - where the drinks will be made from locally grown barley - planned for their site at Nauman Strathgairn.

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a Passion for our Produce



**FOOD WITH A VIEW**



**SCOTLAND HOUSE**  
LONDON





**WINNER**  
SCOTLAND FOOD & DRINK  
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Awards 2023

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and  
Islands  
Mairi Gougeon MSP



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Ms Julie Sloan  
Outer Hebrides Tourism

By email: [Julie@outerhebridestourism.org](mailto:Julie@outerhebridestourism.org)

247 September 2023

Dear Julie,

I wanted to personally thank you for hosting and organising such a successful 'Meet the producers' visit to Uist, as well as for inviting me to take part. The visits showcased the variety and incredible produce that the Outer Hebrides larder has to offer. Rarely have I undertaken a visit that had such a special dynamic to it and offered such a unique experience.

I also want to take this opportunity to extend my warmest congratulations to Outer Hebrides Tourism after being named winner in this year's Regional Food and Drink award at the Scotland Food & Drink Excellence Awards! I know how hard you work to promote the local food and drink offering which is vital to attracting visitors to the Outer Hebrides – the award is so richly deserved. In relation to the wider Outer Hebrides Tourism team, it was great to meet Sarah and Mairi, so please pass on my warmest regards to them also.

Thank you once again,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Mairi Gougeon'.

**MAIRI GOUGEON**



# OUTER HEBRIDES

is a SPECIAL



Please help us to keep it that way

To help you holiday in harmony with everyone who calls these islands home, full details can be found at [www.visitouterhebrides.co.uk/planning-your-trip](http://www.visitouterhebrides.co.uk/planning-your-trip)



# MADE

IN THE OUTER HEBRIDES

OUTER HEBRIDES

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## BORRISDALE TWEED 42



Margarita Williams is GSArt trained, hails from Harris and paints in her home village, inspired by the Hebridean landscape, its wild flowers, birds and St Kilda; working in watercolour, mixed media and Japanese woodblock printing. Many originals to view, to suit all budgets, prints and cards also available.

Apr - Oct  
 Mon - Sat | 11am - 5 pm.

*By appointment outwith these times*

Quidinish, Isle of Harris, HS3 3JQ

01859 530401

margaritawilliams@yahoo.co.uk

Margarita Williams  
 Holmasaig Gallery

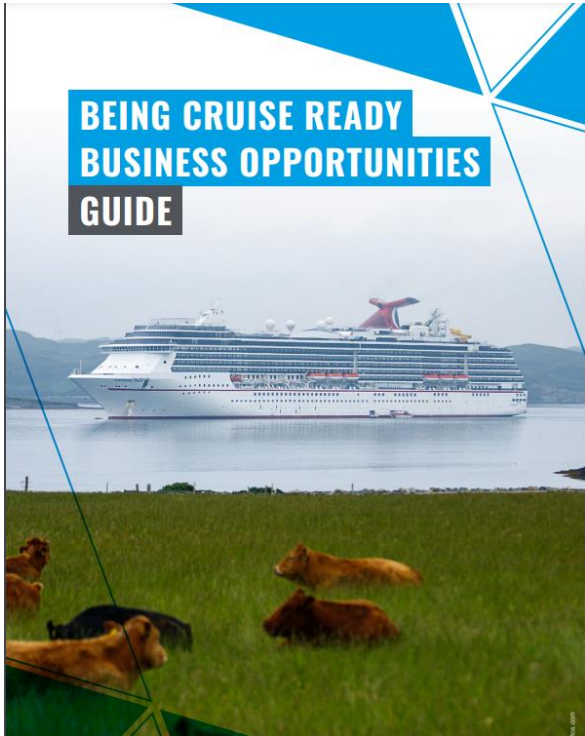
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Cuidhtinis  
 Cuidinish

## HOLMASAIG GALLERY 44

**BEING CRUISE READY  
BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES  
GUIDE**







# Outer Hebrides Destination Net Zero Plan

DISCUSSION DRAFT



## Approach: Focus Areas

Our focus is on the three main carbon-intensive parts of our visitor's stay (public transport, accommodation and food & drink) as well as the wild habitats which are a large part of the islands appeal to visitors



### Local Transport

- We will encourage visitors to make better use of both public transport and sustainable travel options on the islands. In the short term this will involve improving information about public transport, but in the longer run should involve better access to key visitor sites with public transport, and bike rental schemes.

### Accommodation

- We will develop programmes that encourage businesses to remove carbon from their operations, and showcase those businesses that are the early adopters.

### Food & Drink

- We will use tourism wherever possible to encourage the development of local food supply chains. This will involve promoting local food more heavily, building links with local growers (e.g. box scheme) and in the longer term, strengthening supply-chains.

### Habitat Preservation & Restoration

- The islands natural habitats and species – both on-land and in the water – are one of the main attractions for visitors. We want to educate visitors in what they can do to preserve our habitats and wildlife and, over time encourage them to participate in its restoration

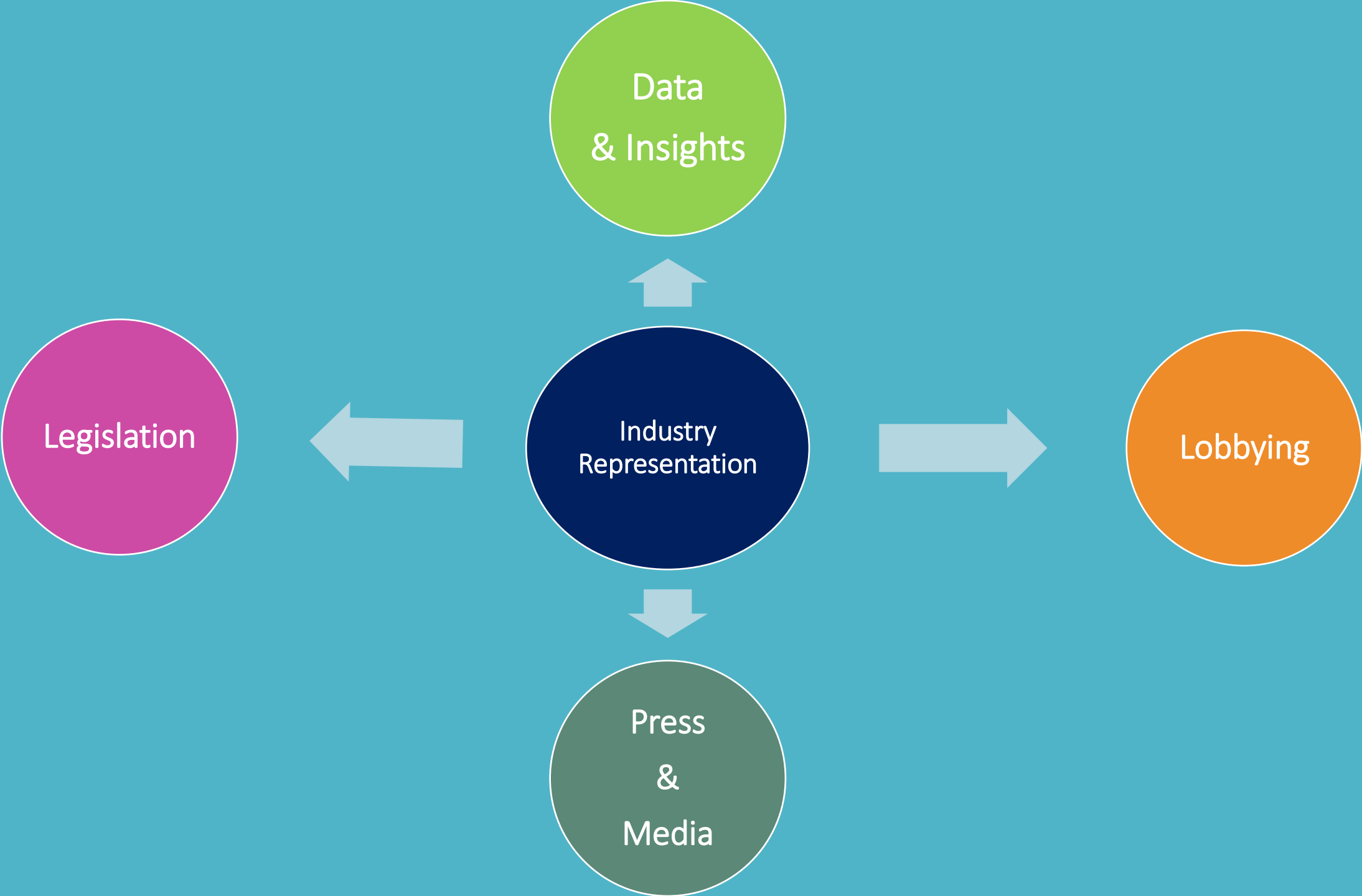
Our Plan incorporates 3 of the 5 pathways of the Glasgow declaration (Collaboration, Decarbonisation and Restoration). We feel believe measurement, finance and some aspects of decarbonization are best progressed at a national level





# OUR TOURISM COMMUNITY AWARDS





Local Tourism  
Leadership Group

- *Highlands & Islands Enterprise*
- *Comhairle nan Eilean Siar*
- *Visit Scotland*

Local Partners

- *Community Land Outer Hebrides*
- *Community Led Local Development Local Action Group*
- *Outer Hebrides Cruise Forum*
- *Western Isles Ferries Group*
- *Islands Deal Programme Board*
- *Great Place Strategy*
- *Western Isles Airports Consultative Committee*

National Partners

- *Scottish Government*
- *Scottish Tourism Alliance*
- *Hebrides Ferry Stakeholder Group*
- *Scotland Food & Drink*
- *Transport Scotland*
- *Gaelic Tourism Strategy*
- *Scottish Islands Passport*
- *Highlands & Islands Destination Management Organisations Network*
- *Glasgow University*



The future....



*tapadh leat!*

