

Callander Visitor Information Centre Success

Bumper visitor numbers from over twenty different countries

The former VisitScotland Information Centre that closed in February then re-opened as a Callander community-led visitor information centre has just completed a very successful first season. More than 20,000 visitors, the majority from overseas, dropped in since it opened in May. Three local organisations collaborated to save this key asset, to provide much needed face-to-face information in the town that depends so much on tourism. Callander Community Council, Callander Community Development Trust and the Sir Walter Scott Steamship Trust from Loch Katrine all contributed funding and the centre was staffed by Loch Katrine employees as well as a group of enthusiastic and knowledgeable local volunteers.

As well as providing comprehensive information services on things to see and do, where to stay and route planning, the centre was also the ideal base and box office for community-led events such as Summerfest in July and the Jazz & Blues Festival in October. Going into the winter season, the centre has closed its doors but is hoping to be open at some key periods over the winter.

Chairman of the Visitor Centre's board, Frank Park, said: "We are very pleased with how the first season has gone both in terms of the numbers of visitors using the service and in how the partnership has worked. And of course, it would not have been possible without the invaluable contribution from our team of dedicated and skilled volunteers who gave up their time to share their experience of Callander and the surrounding area. We're also grateful for the sterling financial and staffing support from the Steamship Trust as well as the support from Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, VisitScotland and Stirling Council."

James Fraser, Chief Executive of the Sir Walter Scott Steamship Trust, said: "The Centre provided an important showcase for Callander and the wider Trossachs area and it also played a vital role in reassuring visitors that the historic steamship was operating normally following the devastation caused by landslides at the north end of Loch Katrine in early August. It has more than justified our presence and has reinforced the great importance that visitors place in having access to knowledgeable local people to get the most out of their stay which can never be substituted by reliance on the internet."

John Martin from Callander Jazz & Blues Festival said: "The VIC provided an excellent, centrally located ticket and information office where our wonderful Festival volunteers could give a warm welcome to hundreds of Festival goers and musicians, and also offer them a tasting of Deanston

whisky from our main sponsor and a sample of local Campbell's shortbread to set them up for a lively and fun weekend!"

Ends/

Notes for editors

1. More information and photos from Sheila Winstone Callander Town Coordinator 07852 106605 coordinator@callandercdt.org.uk