

Badenoch Great Place Project

Badenoch Heritage:
Bringing the Past
to the 21st Century



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Highland Wildlife Park © James Stevens



The Badenoch Great Place Project was set up with the vision that...Badenoch would be renowned as a place within the Cairngorms National Park with a strong character and identity based on its distinctive cultural heritage.

December 2020 Executive Summary

The Badenoch Great Place Project was set up with the vision that by the end of the project, Badenoch would be renowned as a place within the Cairngorms National Park with a strong character and identity based on its distinctive cultural heritage. The project is now entering its final stages and you will no doubt have seen or been involved in the range of events and activities that have been organised to promote and celebrate the heritage of the area. Alongside this, much work has been ongoing behind the scenes to develop a tourism offering that draws on the tangible and intangible heritage of the area and presents it in modern and innovative ways.

Initially work focused on the audit and possible interpretation of Badenoch's cultural heritage sites. The emerging key themes were used to develop and test a Tourist Route which has since evolved into a number of walking, cycling and driving itineraries for visitors to follow based on Badenoch's rich heritage offering.

The Badenoch The Storylands brand also emerged from this work. In 2020, content has been developed that will be used in a suite of digital and published resources that it is hoped will encourage people to come to the area, stay a while and learn more about this less well known part of the Cairngorms National Park. The project website www.badenochstorylands.com launched in the summer and this will be complemented by a mobile App in Spring 2021.

The final 9 months will see the many strands brought together through a variety of engagement and skills building activities and groundwork planning for the future. The Project will culminate in September with the Badenoch Heritage Festival 2021 and Conference which will showcase the interest, passion and excitement that has been generated over the past three years and should raise the profile of Badenoch in the years to come.

This short report has been put together to help inform on the progress of the project to date and lay out what it hopes to achieve in the final months to come. It is designed to be shared publicly, so please feel free to pass it on. It's also available online at www.badenochstorylands.com.



The BGPP Board, November 2018



In 2017, the National Park Partnership Plan 2017-22 (NPPP) identified Badenoch as a “spatial priority area” requiring focused investment and assistance.

Background

In 2017, the Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2017-22 (NPPP) identified Badenoch as a “spatial priority area” requiring focused investment and assistance. This was based on identified socio-economic issues and the need to plan positively for the impact caused by the dualling of the A9 between Inverness and Perth. Although visitor numbers to the Cairngorms National Park (CNP) as a whole grow yearly, Badenoch has not benefited proportionately from this tourism expansion, yet it has two large visitor attractions and some of the best heritage sites and potential experiences in the whole of the National Park, indeed Scotland.

Opportunities exist to broaden the tourism offering and there is considerable potential for Badenoch to carve out a stronger regional identity within the Park on the basis of its heritage. By encouraging visitors to spend longer in Badenoch this may also ease visitor pressures in the Aviemore-Glenmore-Cairngorm corridor. Badenoch Heritage, a community led group had been researching, auditing and mapping local assets but activity had stalled somewhat due to lack of funds and the necessary institutional support.

When the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) announced that it wished to pilot a new Great Place Scheme in Scotland, it provided the opportunity to pull together these strands (special priority area, Badenoch Heritage’s work, existing attractions, A9 dualling) and this has helped to frame this specific project.





...rich heritage assets are turned into a wide range of experiences and economic opportunities

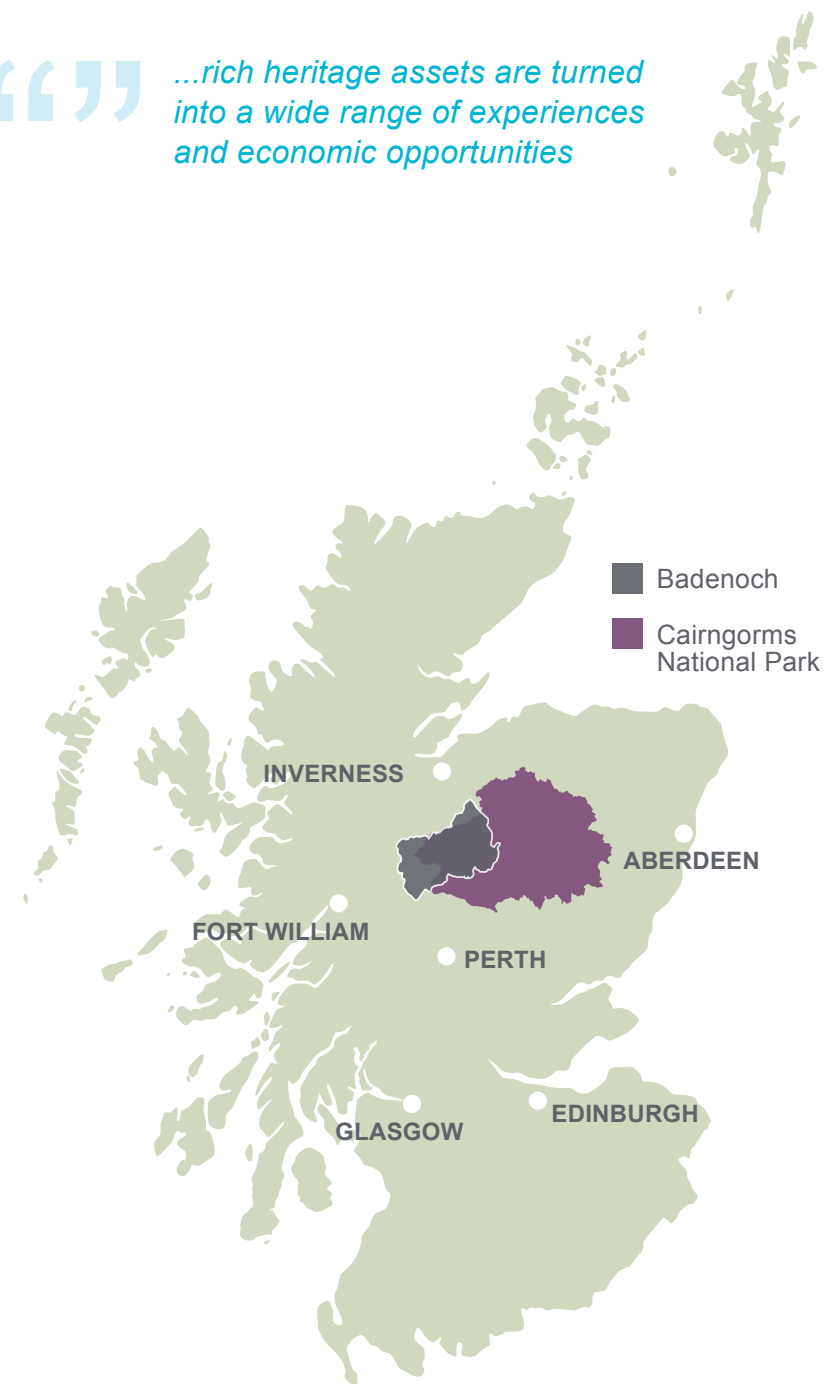
Aim and vision of the project

The Badenoch Great Place Project (BGPP) is a 3 year project that is taking stock of the rich cultural heritage of the area and looking to then put that heritage at the centre of future tourism and economic development. The Vision is that by the end of 2021 Badenoch will be renowned as a place within the Cairngorms National Park with a strong character and identity that is based on its distinctive cultural heritage.

The Project aims are to deliver a Place:

- Where there is a strong destination within the Cairngorms National Park and Scotland with a reputation based on its heritage, where the many key heritage attractions and features of interest are promoted to create a great visitor experience;
- Where the rich heritage assets are turned into a wide range of experiences and economic opportunities;
- Where a wider range of people are more directly involved in caring for and presenting the area's heritage and
- Which is managed by a sustainable partnership of organisations and communities who work and embed heritage at the heart of their plans.

This is being delivered through a package of over 20 interconnected activities that include research, visual, audio and digital material creation, destination development, heritage celebration and marketing and interpretation in all their forms.



Project Funding and Governance

The project which is being led by CNPA, is majority funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund through its Great Place Scheme.

Match funding being provided by Transport Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, The Highland Council and Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA).

The Project Board is made up of representatives from a range of partner organisations including High Life Highland, The Highland Council, Historic Environment Scotland, Royal Zoological Society Scotland, Badenoch Heritage, Transport Scotland and Voluntary Action in Badenoch and Strathspey (VABS).

The Project funds a Project Officer who is employed by VABS. The officer forms part of the Project Team who meet regularly to coordinate and deliver the Activity Plan. The team consists of personnel from VABS, CNPA and Badenoch Heritage SCIO, a local heritage focused charity.



A9 and Lochan an Tairbh © James Stevens

Project Aims and Key Activities

The Project is working to deliver an Activity Plan agreed with the NLHF, by October 2021. Some of the key activities are:

Research and content

- Research the area's heritage
- Collect and record local stories
- Research Gaelic place names
- Develop materials to use in other outputs
- Create imagery, visualisations and song

Destination Development

- Develop a Heritage based visitor offering
- Create a Badenoch visitor App
- Launch a new website
- Promote area to the tourist trade
- Develop Interpretation and Marketing Plans
- Speyside Way Extension interpretation
- Develop a sustainable legacy for the Project

Celebration and Involvement

- Heritage Festival and events programme
- Develop a heritage volunteer network
- Use Heritage to develop skills for young people
- Community and Business Skills building
- Heritage Conference

What has been achieved so far?

2018/19

The first 18 months of the project were spent:

- 1 Undertaking the baseline research and survey work on which much of the continuing activity is based.
- 2 Organising a range of heritage based events and activities in the local area.
- 3 Establishing a Badenoch network of heritage focused groups.

✓ Cultural Heritage Interpretation & Marketing Strategy study (CHITMS)

This study was undertaken to audit Badenoch's authentic cultural heritage. 3,684 sites were identified from National records which was eventually filtered down to a "top" 74. The intangible heritage of the area was also identified and catalogued (through consultation events, discussion, online surveys and interviews). Key themes were identified as a means of organising the region's stories in order to communicate important messages about the place and what it means to people. Draft plans for developing the interpretation of the area and its marketing were proposed and these are now being further developed by the Project Team.



✓ Creating a Brand for Badenoch

One of the clear recommendations from the research work was to create an area destination brand, based on the overarching interpretive themes that had been identified. The purpose of this branding is to:

“Seek to preserve the unique selling point of Badenoch’s intangible cultural heritage, whilst creating an identity that can be used by everyone in the area”.

The challenge was to capture this essence whilst also being recognisable, place-based, unique, unambiguous and capable of reproduction on a range of outputs.

“Badenoch: The Storylands” was chosen in June 2019 as it captured the connection between people and the land and placed an emphasis on the rich array of stories to be told about the area. It is widely accepted that the use of this as a brand is only the first step in a marketing process that will require refinement and adaptation beyond the lifetime of the Project.

Badenoch
The Storylands

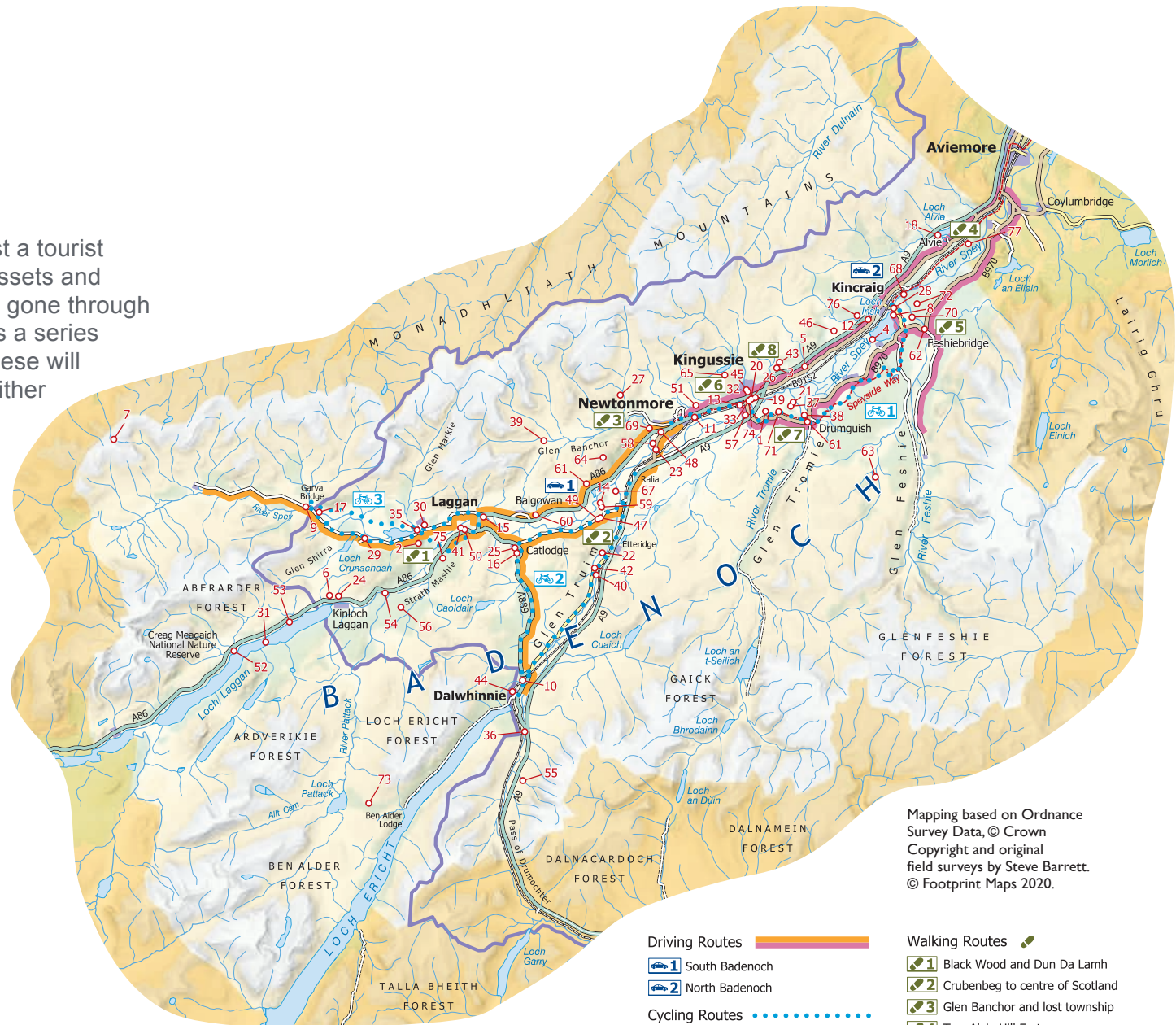
✓ Developing a Tourist Route

Work was undertaken to develop and market test a tourist route for the Badenoch area based on the key assets and themes identified in the CHITMS study. This has gone through several iterations and is now being developed as a series of itineraries for walkers, cyclists and drivers. These will identify key heritage points of interest that can either be physically visited, viewed from afar or learnt about through digital mediums.

See map for the proposed driving, cycling and walking routes. The associated interpretation that is being developed is described later in this report.

✓ Gaelic Place names

Gaelic is a huge part of Badenoch's cultural identity and heritage. Research was undertaken in 2018 into the origins of the place names of the area. This is now being distilled into an accessible format for use in both digital and printed outputs such as the App and a Gaelic place name leaflet. Through verse and song it is being woven into the storytelling development that is currently underway. A story map of Shinty has been developed and is accessible through the Badenoch Storylands [website](#).



Mapping based on Ordnance Survey Data, © Crown Copyright and original field surveys by Steve Barrett. © Footprint Maps 2020.

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Driving Routes | | Walking Routes | |
| 1 | South Badenoch | 1 | Black Wood and Dun Da Lamh |
| 2 | North Badenoch | 2 | Crubenbeg to centre of Scotland |
| Cycling Routes | | 3 | Glen Banchoir and lost township |
| 1 | Kingraig to Newtonmore | 4 | Torr Alvie Hill Fort |
| 2 | Ralia circular | 5 | Feshiebridge, Dalnavert Inshriach |
| 3 | Wolftrax to Garva Bridge | 6 | Kingussie, Ballchroan circular |
| | Speyside Way | 7 | Kingussie to Insh Marshes hide |
| | Points of interest | 8 | Raitts Township |

2018/19

✔ Exploring, celebrating and getting involved in local heritage

Throughout 2018/19, talks, walks, workshops, schools careers days and drop in sessions have taken place enabling a wide range of people to engage in and share their knowledge of their local heritage. This culminated in the September 2019 Heritage Festival where 62 events took place over 2 weeks.





A silver lining to emerge from the pandemic has been the opportunity for the project to “catch up” on developing, creating and collating the baseline content that is required to populate many of the project outputs.

2020 and Covid-19

2020 has been an extremely challenging year for the project. All face-to-face activity ceased in March and contract work and product development stalled as site visits were halted. The Covid pandemic has meant that the Project effectively lost the whole 2020 summer season, during which 90% of remaining public facing activities were planned. NLHF agreed to extend the Project to Oct 21, enabling these events to be rescheduled for 2021. It is anticipated that some elements will still be curtailed but the capability to deliver virtually has increased significantly in the last few months.

A silver lining to emerge from the pandemic has been the opportunity for the project to “catch up” on developing, creating and collating the baseline content that is required to populate many of the project outputs. Specialists are currently developing a range of media for the Project including:

- Creation of layered GIS maps of Badenoch and the assets
- Aerial imagery and drone footage of key heritage sites
- Augmented reality visualisations of 6 key sites in Badenoch
- Recording of stories and songs of Badenoch
- Creation and recording of musical pieces



Digital Reconstruction of Dun de Lamh hillfort near Laggan
© Bob Marshall

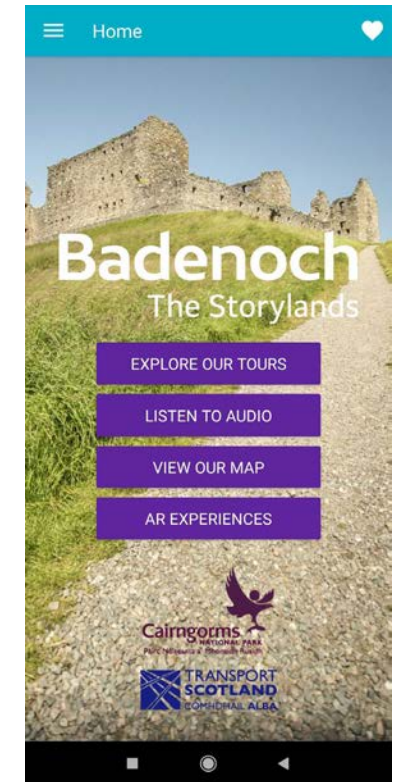
✓ Badenoch Website

Badenochstorylands.com was launched at end of August 2020. It celebrates the history and heritage of the area as well as providing up to date information about the Project itself. An interactive map provides information on the 74 places of interest identified in the CHITMS study. Content will be added as other Project outputs such as the visitor itineraries and digital content become available.



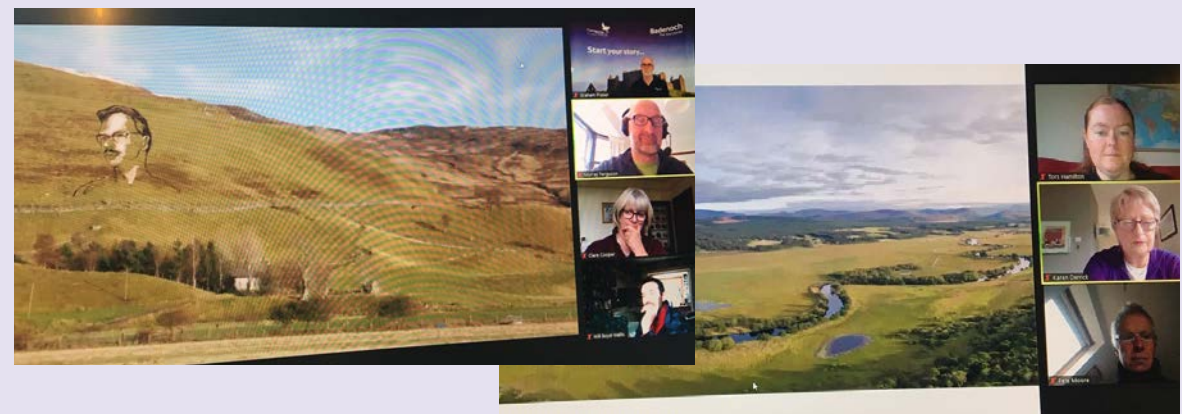
✓ App

A Badenoch Storylands App is due to be launched in Spring 2021. It will be an “Area Destination” App, showcasing the heritage of the area and bringing it alive for visitors in modern innovative ways. As well as an interactive map, the App will have itineraries designed to be undertaken by car, cycle or on foot. These will all be brought to life through GPS linked storytelling and augmented reality 3D models at particular points of interest or viewpoints. On the ground QR code plates at specific locations will encourage visitors to link to the App to immerse themselves in the stories of that place.



✓ Virtual Festival

Due to COVID 19 the project team held a ‘virtual’ festival via zoom from 26 to 30 October 2020. The events included Heritage, Tourism and Place-making: Getting ready for Scotland’s Year of Stories, Into the Marshes: Journeying through the history which created Insh Marshes, Gaels, Camans, Badenoch – the centre of the Shinty universe, Dun da Lamh: A very Highland hillfort and Newtonmore turns 200 – The Early Days. The event attracted nearly 400 attendees and was widely reported as a success.



Interpretation Strategy and Marketing Plan

There will also be new interpretation on the ground, both within the communities and at specific identified key sites. This will draw on all work to date and link into the App. Strategic Interpretation plans are being developed for each community in Badenoch which will identify future requirements. Much of this will be delivered as part of the Project Legacy but that associated with the Badenoch section of the Speyside Way will be completed during 2021. A Steering Group has been set up to help develop the strategic approach to marketing the area as a whole which will hopefully strengthen the identity of Badenoch for the visitor.

The Speyside Way

NEWTONMORE
Baile Ùr an t-Slèibh
The new town of the moor

The Speyside Way is a 138km long distance route which runs from Buckie in Moray to Newtonmore in the Cairngorms National Park and has an additional 25km spur which takes you from Cragganmore to Tomintoul. The route also connects with the Moray Coast Trail at Buckie and with the Dava Way at Granttown on Spey. It also provides links to the unofficial East Highland Way which runs from Fort William to Aviemore.

Newtonmore is the official start/end point for the Speyside Way long distance route and has recently been completed with new pathworks, signage and map boards in each of the main communities within the National Park. The section of the route from Newtonmore to Kincaig is around 21km and mostly broad constructed paths suitable for cycling and walking although it does have some narrow sections.

Find out more about the Speyside Way and other walking/cycling routes in this area at www.walkhighlands.co.uk

Why don't you...
Find out more about Badenoch in the Cairngorms National Park?
www.badenochstorylands.com

Legend:
 - Route on path (Yellow line)
 - Route on track (Orange line)
 - Route on road (Red line)
 - Car park (P icon)
 - Toilets (Toilet icon)
 - National Cycle Network (Bike icon)

Profile View:

Section	Distance
Newtonmore to Kingussie	4.4km
Kingussie to Drumgushish	5.2km
Drumgushish to Insh	3.7km
Insh to Kincaig	8km

Logos: European Union, gov.scot, TRANSPORT SCOTLAND, KNOW THE CODE BEFORE YOU GO

Example of the Speyside Way panel to go up in Newtonmore



There is still much to do, but all involved are confident that this can be achieved within the remaining lifetime of the project.

2021 – The final 9 months

There is still much to do, but all involved are confident that this can be achieved within the remaining lifetime of the project. The following gives a breakdown of remaining activities. Increasingly, BGPP will be looking to work more closely with local businesses, communities, landowners and other key stakeholders to maximise the opportunities and potential benefits that this project could bring for Badenoch, its residents and visitors.



Delfour © James Stevens

January – March

- Community and Business Engagement
- Landowner Engagement
- Marketing and skills building programme
- Strategic Interpretation Plans finalised
- Develop Marketing Strategy for Badenoch
- Winter talks and Spring walks programme
- Install Speyside way signage and interpretation
- Completion of content contracts
- Story development for use in the app and interpretation

April – June

- Launch of App
- Host familiarisation visits for tourist trade
- Volunteer ambassadors – recruit 2nd cohort
- Skill building programme for schools
- Continue to develop Legacy Plan
- Completion of itinerary leaflets/pdfs
- Printing and distribution of Resource packs
- Installation of interpretation panels and App QR code plates
- Creation of a Digital Archive
- Traditional music inspired by Badenoch

July – September

- Summer walks programme
- Convene Legacy Board
- Source resources to progress Legacy Plan
- Hold Heritage Festival (Sep)
- Host Heritage Conference (Sep)
- Project Evaluation
- Final reporting and administrative requirements



*2022 will be the Year of Scotland's Stories...
Badenoch should be well positioned to
benefit from the opportunities that this year
of celebration will bring and has the chance to
become renowned for its rich cultural heritage.*

Legacy and Beyond 2021

In many respects, the BGPP is just the start of the journey. It is putting in place the building blocks from which it is hoped the community and partners will continue to develop the area to sustain a vibrant rural community. A place where tourists will choose to visit and prolong their stay. The National Lottery Great Place Scheme is very much about development and involvement, not capital investment in an area. The opportunities to build on the work undertaken will be numerous and multifaceted. To this end a Legacy Plan will be developed to help shape and guide future work beyond 2021. It will outline how the investment made during the project will be secured and developed for the future. The aspiration is that the legacy will facilitate new projects that will build on the communities' assets and result in new opportunities for ongoing community benefit.

2022 will be the Year of Scotland's Stories which will be a showcase of the country's rich literature, oral traditions and myths and legends. Badenoch should be well positioned to benefit from the opportunities that this year of celebration will bring and has the chance to become renowned for its rich cultural heritage.



Torr Alvie © James Stevens

Badenoch

The Storylands



Newtonmore © James Stevens

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