

NEWS RELEASE:**FOR IMMEDIATE USE: 21st AUGUST 2020****You're Invited Campaign signals staycation boom for Ayrshire & Clyde Islands**

A campaign launched by The Coig – an industry-led tourism organisation promoting Ayrshire and the Clyde Islands – has seen a huge spike in interest from domestic visitors looking to explore their local area and enjoy staycations.

Visits to The Coig website have increased by over 500% since the campaign launched, with more visits in July than the first half of 2020 combined. Meanwhile, the campaign reached over half a million people on social media, with followers for the initiative doubling in just six weeks.

Gaelic for five, The Coig is a series of five tourist routes covering Ayrshire, Arran, Bute and Cumbrae, inspiring people to explore the unique coast and countryside on their doorstep.

Each route is designed to showcase the outstanding natural beauty, history and heritage, and food and drink, as well the wide range of outdoor and family activities on offer across the region. Visitors can follow a choice of routes as part of a day trip, or as a longer staycation experience.

Aimed at providing a welcome boost for local restaurants, accommodation, and tourism businesses, the “You’re Invited” campaign was launched in early July to coincide with the easing of lockdown which allowed people to travel more freely.

The campaign was specifically targeted towards locals, encouraging them to explore sites and attractions right on their doorstep – rediscovering places they had not visited for some time and perhaps finding some hidden gems.

Businesses across the area were encouraged to get involved in the initiative, by using the free campaign toolkit created to support industry, and extending an invite for visitors to return as they reopened by posting them on social media, tagging **#LocalInvite**

Daniel Steel, Chief Executive of The Coig, said: *“Our touring routes concept was always based on moving people around the region, and our core market has always focused on domestic visitors, so The Coig is very well placed to help the region to safely recover and regrow to support our businesses and communities.*

But this campaign was never about The Coig brand. In order to rebuild our region after lockdown we must work together, so the campaign was developed with industry input to provide inspiration and to help businesses across the region to adopt a common message that visitors will be safe and welcome to return as safe to do so in the phased re-opening.

We have been bowled over by the support from partner businesses, and the local people and communities who have got behind the campaign and extended their own invites to friends, to family, and to loyal trusted visitors.”

Linda Johnston, MD of Auchrannie Resort and Chair of The Coig, said: *“It’s been the most difficult of times, but the past few weeks has seen our industry moving into recovery mode as businesses across Ayrshire and the Clyde Islands have focused on safely reopening. This has been guided by advice from government to keep our communities safe.*

Despite launching just a few months ago, the reach of The Coig is growing quickly by linking the region up. Our rallying cry to get people to support their local industry has been hugely successful and underlines the power of collaboration across the whole region.

We need domestic visitors to help us recover by exploring their local areas and filling the beds that lay empty for nearly four months. So, we won't be resting on our laurels, and will build on this campaign working alongside public and private sector partners through the autumn and winter to extend the season."

Gordon Smith, VisitScotland Regional Director, added: "With five unique routes across Ayrshire, the Firth of Clyde and the Clyde Islands, The Coig is a brilliant initiative which showcases the beautiful scenery, fascinating history and outstanding food and drink offering of the area, as well as the wide range of outdoor and family activities available. I'm delighted to see the industry getting behind the You're Invited Campaign, and it's clear from the initial results that there is a great appetite from visitors to explore the region.

These visitors represent a major benefit for the local economy, and the impact of tourism goes far beyond the holiday experience. It is vital to the national and regional economy, reaching every corner of the area, supporting jobs, and strengthening communities at such a key time."

Ends

For further information please contact:

Daniel Steel

Chief Executive – The Coig

Email: daniel.steel@thecoig.com

Phone: 07983331501

Sally Gale

Business Development & Marketing Manager – The Coig

Email: sally.gale@thecoig.com

Phone: 07540523993

Notes to Editors

- The Coig is a not-for-profit industry-led tourism organisation, with partner businesses from across Ayrshire, the Clyde Coast and Clyde Islands working collaboratively to attract visitors to the region in order to grow the visitor economy and deliver benefits for businesses and communities.
- For more information on The Coig visit www.thecoig.com or email info@thecoig.com. People can also follow The Coig on social media, including [Twitter](#) / [Facebook](#): @thecoig and [Instagram](#): the_coig
- For more information about the You're Invited Campaign, please see here: <https://thecoig.com/brand-toolkit/the-coig-social-media-campaign-june-2020/>