



CELTIC ROUTES NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the Celtic Routes newsletter. Below you will find an update on progress so far, news about new resources to help you make the most of the Celtic Routes brand, and future plans for the project which encourage travellers to discover the Celtic spirit of Wales and Ireland.



ADDITIONAL FUNDING SECURED FOR CELTIC ROUTES PARTNERSHIP

We are delighted to announce that Carmarthenshire County Council, on behalf of the Celtic Routes partnership has made a successful bid to the Welsh European Funding Office Ireland Wales Territorial Cooperation programme for a second Phase of the Celtic Routes project. This second phase, worth an additional £1.5 million will take the project forward to 2023.

The partnership has an exciting programme planned which we look forward to sharing with you. It will enable existing and new Celtic Routes networks to develop and build on success so far and to work together to mitigate the effect of Covid19. We look forward to your continued support and engagement as we take Celtic Routes forward into the future.

WE ARE DELIGHTED TO
ANNOUNCE ADDITIONAL
FUNDING SECURED BY
CELTIC ROUTES
PARTNERSHIP

CELTIC ROUTES
PARTNERSHIP

OUR JOURNEY SO FAR

BUSINESSES BENEFIT
FROM LEARNING
JOURNEYS

CELTIC ROUTES BRAND
AWARENESS MARKETING
CAMPAIGN UPDATE

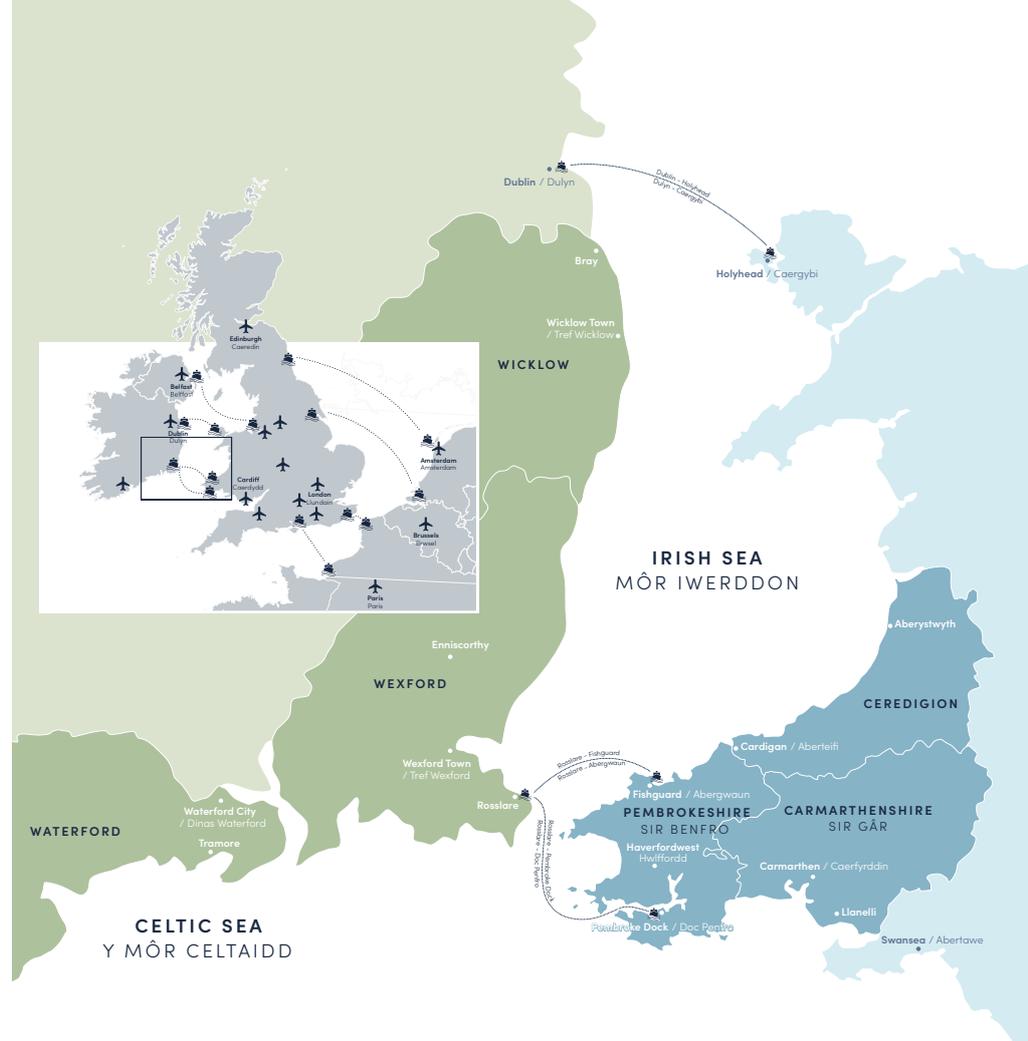
A BRAND BASED ON
SHARED VALUES AND
EXPERIENCES

NEW CELTIC ROUTES
BRAND BUSINESS TOOLKIT

CELTIC ROUTES PARTNERSHIP

The Celtic Routes is a partnership between Wales' coastal communities of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire, and our Irish counterparts Wicklow, Wexford and Waterford.

We've joined forces to bring together a selection of curated travel experiences that will see visitors exploring the roads less travelled to discover ancient sights and stories that have shaped our very special parts of the world.



Some businesses have started on the Celtic Routes journey. You too can join us on this path towards sustainable tourism.



CELTIC ROUTES AND COVID19

The Covid 19 pandemic has meant that we have all had to reconsider and adjust our travel plans as circumstances change, and restrictions differ within the UK and Ireland. Celtic Routes partners have continued to work collaboratively in order to respond appropriately.

The programme is still focused on developing awareness and understanding of the Celtic Routes brand to influence future travel plans, whilst individual partner destinations continue to provide appropriate

destination level messaging.

Have you signed up to the Covid 19 Safety Charter (in Ireland) or applied for the 'Good to Go' mark for Wales and the rest of the UK?

<https://goodtogo.visitbritain.com>

Both initiatives are government backed and provide guidance on how to prepare for opening tourism and related businesses safely, and to give overseas visitors confidence in tourism businesses.



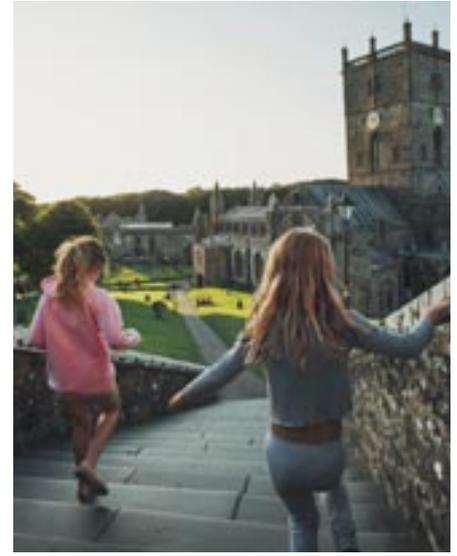
THE CELTIC ROUTES JOURNEY SO FAR

BUSINESSES BENEFIT FROM LEARNING JOURNEYS

The Celtic Routes project has enabled a number of enterprises from Wales to visit Ireland and vice versa to exchange knowledge and experience. Successful applicants for Learning Journeys were able to share best practice and to forge new relationships which will

be the basis for networks that form the Celtic Routes product portfolio.

Some of the feedback from the exchanges indicates an appetite for sharing and collaboration.



“ *“we are keeping in touch with a wide range of people”*

“looked at potential for eco tourism”

“used the time during the lockdown period to develop a whole new set of products jointly [with our learning journey contacts], covering all the counties in the Celtic Routes area”

“jointly developed digital content to create accessible virtual experiences for people who can’t travel. [It has] already built up quite a following and they would be keen to roll this out”

“they are into attracting the American market and they gave us pointers to do the same”

“they have not got a group like ours and they were amazed at our collective thinking and not trying to pinch one another’s business and were interested in creating a like organisation”

“we still have a unique selling point for the tourists, especially now with Coronavirus as our holidays are countryside based”

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CELTIC ROUTES – A BRAND BASED ON SHARED VALUES AND EXPERIENCES

A key element of Celtic Routes is highlighting to our target audiences the deep and longstanding historical and cultural relationships between our areas of south west Wales and south east Ireland, as well as emphasising the similar landscape characteristics and

geographical proximity and ease of access.

Covid 19 has made people think more carefully about travel, including whether they should consider alternatives to tourism hotspots and their impact on host communities. The popularity of staycations

has soared, with residents and visitors enjoying a deeper relationship with localities closer to home, creating special moments that will be treasured. This, along with a focus on the natural world, is what is at the core of the Celtic Routes brand.

THE JOURNEY SO FAR: MARKETING CAMPAIGN UPDATE

The target audiences for the Celtic Routes brand are Cultural Explorers, Active Explorers and Active Family Explorers in UK, Ireland, France, Germany, Netherlands and the United States who have already visited Ireland or Wales, and are considering or planning a visit to Ireland and Wales, as well as residents of both countries planning a 'staycation'.

After a strong start to the campaign, activity had to be halted for a period from March. With agile digital delivery, a strong brand creative focus, and with

careful and responsible messaging, sensitive to travel restrictions, the Celtic Routes partnership has been able to adapt. Working with its contracted media specialists and professional travel influencers, the campaign has been carefully repurposed for staycations and for inspiring Celtic Routes wishlists for future travel planning to Wales and Ireland.



CELTIC ROUTES TELEVISION ADVERT PREMIERES ON ST DAVID'S DAY

On March 1st, otherwise known as St David's Day, our new television advert, shot on location across the Celtic Routes, made its debut. The advert, which was produced in collaboration with our project film partners, Mother Goose, will be seen on screens, tablets and smartphones over the next few months, with TV

platforms being utilised including Sky Ireland, Sky Regional, RTE and S4C; and on VoD it can be found on ITVHub and All4. The advert can also be seen across social channels via a targeted campaign, and digital ads and PPC are also being utilised for maximum exposure.



PRESS TRIP COVERAGE

A large part of our public relations work is based around journalist press trips, which are organised by our PR company, Working Word. In 2020 over ten media trips to Celtic Routes locations were organised with various national newspapers and magazines, however, unfortunately all but two had to be cancelled due to

the pandemic (to be rearranged for spring 2021).



One of the trips that went ahead in autumn 2020 was with Choice magazine, who visited the Welsh Celtic Routes counties over the course of several days, resulting in an exclusive 9 page feature titled

'Celtic Connections' in their January 2021 issue. Editor Norman Wright visited locations including Aberglasney Gardens, Strata Florida Abbey and Cenarth Falls and stayed and dined in locations including The Cawdor, Slebach Park and The Falcondale. A second trip with Choice magazine, this time to the Irish Celtic Routes counties, is being organised as soon as restrictions allow.



NEW CELTIC ROUTES BRAND BUSINESS TOOLKIT

We are delighted to introduce you to the Celtic Routes Toolkit, The toolkit outlines the brand's core values and how they translate into responsible tourism, memorable experiences and treasured moments.

The toolkit also includes a range of media assets that you can use in your own marketing, enabling you to take full advantage, engage with and add value to the channels already developed by Celtic Routes, including the Celtic Routes website, social media channels and press engagement.

Browse and download the toolkit from the Celtic Routes website [HERE](#).



PHASE 2

Phase 2 will focus on a kick-start recovery from Covid 19 with a domestic marketing drive for “year round” home based holidays as well as investment in overseas markets to stimulate demand and to develop a legacy for the Celtic Routes brand. The project team will work closely with thematic networks aligned to the core Celtic Routes themes of Celtic Adventure; Celtic Culture & Heritage; Celtic Land and Sea; Celtic People and Places. To enhance the depth of the product offer businesses will be enabled

to become directly involved in the co-design and development of bookable products and experiences suitable for promoting to Tour Operators and Ground Handlers to sell on to consumers.

If you would like more information on how to get involved with Celtic Routes, please go to our website www.celticroutes.info or contact Sian Jones on RSJones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

