



---

# A SHARED STORY FOR ABERDEEN & ABERDEENSHIRE

## THE TOOLKIT

Visit**Aberdeenshire**

1. Welcome

2. About the stories

3. The stories

4. Word bank

5. Beyond words



# Welcome to Visit**Aberdeenshire**'s Shared Story Toolkit

Our priority at Visit**Aberdeenshire** is to attract more visitors. This means we need to be saying the right things to potential visitors so they know what this remarkable place has to offer. So we have produced a series of **Shared Stories**<sup>™</sup> which capture the essence of the place, describe what makes it special and will persuade visitors that it is well worth visiting.



Working together to stand out in a crowded tourism marketplace.



## Why “shared”?

The work we do promoting Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire will be a lot more effective if everyone who works in the local hospitality and tourism industry is saying the same sorts of things. We’re not suggesting that marketing by all the various organisations, agencies and businesses in the area should be the same – far from it.

This isn’t about everyone having the same logo, the same strapline, the same marketing. It is about using some common themes, words and phrases, choosing certain types of images and maybe even using a complementary tone and style for marketing communications. In short, it’s about presenting our area in a coherent way which draws out and amplifies what makes it special and different from anywhere else. Together we’ll stand a better chance of getting noticed in this crowded tourism marketplace.

### Based on VisitScotland’s segments, our current priorities are:

Natural Advocates

Engaged Sightseers

Curious Travellers

Cultural Explorers

Business Extenders

### with direct connections from:

UK

Norway

Germany

Netherlands

See [www.visitscotland.org](http://www.visitscotland.org) for more info.

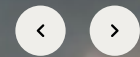
This is about attracting new visitors and encouraging the ones we already have to come back. We are focusing on markets and segments that have the best growth potential and will be easiest to convert.

We’ve produced this toolkit to help us work together. It contains the stories themselves with suggestions on how to use them and guidance on design and images. We’re also putting together a photo and video library which you can access via our website once it’s ready.

All this material is free for you to download and use. It’s a bit like a recipe book – you can follow the recipe word for word – or you can adapt to suit the ingredients you have, depending on the type of business you run, where you are located and who you are targeting.

We hope this toolkit will help and inspire you both in your marketing and in developing what you offer visitors.





## SECTION 2

# ABOUT THE STORIES



---

## Why stories?

The most successful tourism destinations have a simple story to tell. It's a commonly agreed way of describing the area that has a few simple themes and messages everyone can use when they're talking to people who don't know the place.



Simple themes and messages everyone can use.



## Why stories?

A Shared Story is a short and simple narrative. It doesn't overpromise. It goes with the grain, and is authentic and true. It focuses on the distinctive qualities that capture the essence of the place. It isn't a list of everything that's on offer. Long lists with "something for everyone" really don't work.

This section contains our Shared Stories which capture Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire's sense of place. They have been written for us by independent industry experts, Blue Sail – informed by research, conversations and workshops with local hospitality and tourism professionals and businesses.

The main story provides the big picture of the whole area. We've added notes about the key words and phrases to explain why these are so strong.

This is followed by nine smaller stories which give a bit more detail about the places and themes that we know are particularly strong and will play well with our audiences.

Section 4 contains our "word bank" - these are powerful words and phrases suggested in our sense of place workshops that didn't quite make the cut into the stories but could still be used in promotional copy.







Pick out the themes, sentences, phrases or words that fit your business best.



### A word about tone of voice

Just as we use a particular tone of voice when we speak which differs depending on who we are talking to, we can choose a tone of voice to talk to our potential customers in our marketing communication.

The tone of voice for our stories – and our copy and communications – generally is:

- Conversational as if talking to a real person (it's worth imagining a typical person you are trying to target)
- Clear and direct – neither over-formal nor over-familiar
- Welcoming and approachable
- Positive and confident
- Evocative – uses imagery that sparks the imagination
- Conveys knowledge and insight without coming across as over-clever



### How to use the stories

You can use the stories just as they are or you can pick out the themes, sentences, phrases or words that fit your business best. You can then use them in all your marketing communications, including:

- On your website – either as an introduction when you talk about where your business is located or woven into your existing content
- In your social media profiles, posts and hashtags – e.g. on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Youtube
- In other digital communication such as e-newsletters and to inspire online blogs
- In your promotional leaflets or brochures
- In press releases, editorial and the information you give to the media or travel trade

If you use a designer, copywriter, photographer or videographer for your website and other promotional material, then send them a link to the Toolkit and suggest they use some of the copy, images and ideas.



Use a natural tone of voice and talk about specific examples.



You could share the story with your team, and brainstorm ideas for how to align what you offer with the 'promise' it makes to visitors.

Obviously your copy will depend on what specifically you are talking about but here are some general principles:

- Use a natural tone of voice, avoiding jargon or exaggeration
- Talk about specific examples, places, stories and experiences rather than using generalisations
- Avoid clichés - such as “something for everyone”, “hidden gem”, “best kept secret” or “lots to see and do”
- Avoid flowery language – for example anything that “nestles”, is “enfolded by” or will “delight”.

### The key features to talk about which are unique and special to Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire are:

**It is “true”** i.e. a place which is authentic and real, with a distinctive, living culture and traditions not laid on for tourists – indeed, it is mostly off the main tourism track

**Doric culture** – everyday language and music in particular

**The scale of the place** and its landscapes and seascapes – mountains, rivers and coastline, panoramic vistas, huge dunes, great estates, open expanses of moorland

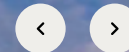
**Its location and latitude** which results in big skies, changing light, freshness and clarity

**The long history** characterised by a multitude of castles and royal associations, strong association with golf and the abundance of whisky distilleries

**A proud international city** with unique architecture, historic trading links and contemporary global connections

**The importance of the natural world** – including the power of the elements, and the wildlife and plantlife, – even in the city





## SECTION 3 THE STORIES



## The over-arching story

Aberdeenshire stretches from “*one of the last great places on earth*” (the Cairngorms) to “*one of the world’s top-rated coastlines*”. So says *National Geographic*. And The Scotsman (one of Scotland’s national newspapers) calls its city of Aberdeen – where ships dock right up against the city-centre streets and dolphins leap in the busy North Sea harbour – “*one of the most architecturally distinctive in Europe*”.

There’s something about the scale of this place between the mountains and the sea. You can roam for miles across great estates, expanses of moorland, ancient Caledonian forests, rolling farmland, vast dunes, wide sandy beaches and expansive

coastlines. History is writ large here too. Ancient sites and symbols mark this as a heartland of the ancient Picts. In the millennia that followed, no fewer than 300 castles were planted here. And of course this majestic place has long been loved by monarchs ... and by the salmon that return each year to power upstream in the fast-flowing snow-fed waters of the Dee and the Don. *You could call this True Majesty.*

It’s a place of big skies and wide horizons, loved for its fresh clear air and the quality of its light. In summer, days are near endless, sunsets stretch out, darkness is brief. In winter, nights are deep and long and starry – and on occasion spectacularly lit by the Northern Lights.

Here, mainland Scotland sees its first light of each new day. Trillions of tiny crystals glint in granite walls. And ninety-nine stone circles are aligned to the standstill moon. *You could call this True North.*

You can still hear words from an original Scots language – Doric – and feel its distinctive culture alive in its genial “*couthie*” people and its “*affa fine*” traditions – not least the fiddle-playing, the bothy ballads and the highland gatherings. Doric is in the warp and weave of this self-reliant place ... a place that’s used to being off the tourism track, known rather as a seat of learning and for its natural resources – its granite, its oil, its fish, its beef, and its whisky. *You could call this True Scotland.*



## Why these words, phrases & themes?



Aberdeenshire stretches from “one of the last great places on earth” (the Cairngorms) to “one of the world’s top-rated coastlines”. So says *National Geographic*. And *The Scotsman* (one of Scotland’s national newspapers) calls its city of Aberdeen – where ships dock right up against the city-centre streets and dolphins leap in the busy North Sea harbour – “one of the most architecturally distinctive in Europe”.

There’s something about the scale of this place, between the mountains and the sea. You can roam for miles across great estates, expanses of moorland, ancient Caledonian forests, vast dunes, wide sandy beaches and rolling farmland. History is writ large here too. Ancient sites and symbols mark this as a heartland of the ancient Picts. In the millennia that followed, no fewer than 300 castles were planted here. And of course this majestic place has long been loved by monarchs ... and by the salmon that return each year to power upstream in the fast-flowing snow-fed waters of the Dee and the Don. *You could call this True Majesty.*

The story opens with strong **3rd party endorsements** from two **highly reputable independent sources** – National Geographic and *The Scotsman* – which should resonate well with the target markets. The **strong comparator quote** from *The Scotsman* describes the impact of the granite architecture **without the usual epithets** – “Granite City” (which can have negative connotations – grey, hard etc), or “Silver City” (which can sound like a marketing slogan, and which stakeholders felt was simply untrue much of the time). **Instead, we have facts:** the **extraordinary sight** of ships in the city centre, and of urban dolphins, along with some of the most distinctive architecture in Europe.

*The remaining 3 paragraphs all end with the same 5 words “You could call this True ...” and each focuses on a theme – North, Scotland, Majesty. The repetition of True establishes the authenticity of Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire – authenticity came across as a strong USP from our research and consultation (though we don’t use the specific words “authentic” and “authenticity” – they can read like empty claims as they are now so commonplace in destination marketing).*

**Paragraph 2** uses “majesty” to refer to two aspects that were extremely strong in consultation and research – **the scale of the place**, and the **royal connections**. “**Between the mountains and the sea**” is a simple and strong statement. We weave into this paragraph the idea of the **rich history** – from Aberdeenshire’s preeminent place in **Pictish history** to the concentration of **castles**. There is also the idea of activity – not just the simple yet evocative idea of “**roaming**” but also the references to the **great estates** and the **fast-flowing rivers** and to the **vast dunes** (for links golf), which can be drawn out later. The story ends with an upclose image of **natural beauty** thriving in crystal clear, clean waters – and the idea of a place to return to. This isn’t a tranquil scene (consultees stressed this is an active, not a passive place). There is **powerful movement** in the penultimate sentence – of the fish itself but also of the fast-flowing rivers. We have named these two best-known rivers as they will resonate with some people in the target markets – some will connect them with images of the royal family fishing too.

## Why these words, phrases & themes? (continued)



It's a place of big skies and wide horizons, loved for its fresh clear air and the quality of its light. In summer, days are near endless, sunsets stretch out, darkness is brief. In winter, nights are deep and long and starry – and on occasion spectacularly lit by the Northern Lights. Here, mainland Scotland sees its first light of each new day. Trillions of tiny crystals glint in granite walls. And ninety-nine stone circles are aligned to the standstill moon. *You could call this True North.*

You can still hear words from an original Scots language – Doric – and feel its distinctive culture alive in its genial “*couthie*” people and its “*affa fine*” traditions – not least the fiddle-playing, the bothy ballads and the highland gatherings. Doric is in the warp and weave of this self-reliant place ... a place that's used to being off the tourist track, known rather as a seat of learning and for its natural resources – its granite, its oil, its fish, its beef, and its whisky. *You could call this True Scotland.*

**Paragraph 3** is about the **impact of location** – and in particular the **quality of the light**. It covers summer and winter, fresh clear air, lack of light pollution, being at the furthest east on the Scottish mainland. Using the theme of light, it also touches on the prevalence of granite (“trillions of tiny crystals” explaining the glitter – using fact rather than empty claims), and of prehistoric remains (the mysterious reference to the “standstill moon” sparks the imagination). The Northern Lights are a USP – although not overpromised.

**Paragraph 4** introduces the **distinctive Doric culture** (its inclusion is strongly supported by stakeholders) – and also the idea of it being a truly Scottish experience – “**original Scots**” – not laid on for tourists, but rather one that’s “**alive in its people and traditions**”. The use of two phrases from the Doric here is deliberate, to underline the difference. Stakeholders were split about using Doric words – some very positive, while others felt it could alienate.

We believe a very light sprinkling of **authentic dialect words will pique the interest** of the target market. **Music** is upfront here – as are the **gatherings**. These assets came through strongly as distinctive in research and consultation. This paragraph also introduces the idea of the character of the people (“**self-reliant**”) and reinforces the authenticity of “a place that’s used to being **off the tourist track**”. We acknowledge, with a light touch, the importance of the universities and also the main thing that Aberdeen is known for in the wider world: it would be disingenuous not to refer to oil in the story. Other “**natural resources**” help to paint the picture of an industrious place – the granite buildings, the fishing, the agriculture, the whisky.





## The other stories



**Aberdeen**



**Aberdeenshire &  
Banffshire Coast**



**Royal Deeside**



**Castles**



**Whisky**



**Golf**



**Festivals & Events**



**Food & Drink**



**Outdoor Activities**



A city that looks and feels quite different.



# Aberdeen

Here's a city that looks and feels quite different. Not just on a summer's evening, when you can walk the main street in daylight at 11pm. Not just because that same main street – the mile-long Union Street – is lined with classic granite buildings that help make this “one of the most architecturally distinctive cities in Europe” (The Scotsman – one of Scotland's national newspapers).

But mainly because this isn't just a city by the sea, it's a city of the sea. A city where ships dock right up against the city-centre streets. Where urban dolphins leap at the harbour mouth. Where locals paddle-board and surf off the city beach. And golden sands stretch for miles – towards vast dunes to the north and high cliffs to the south. It's a city of rivers too, where the Dee and the Don meet the sea, bringing crystal clear waters from the Cairngorm mountains.

This is a city with not one but two Old Towns: Old Aberdeen, with its cobbled streets, mature trees and 15th century fortified cathedral – where Aberdeen's first University was founded in 1495. And then there's Footdee – known locally as *Fittie* – a quirky fishing quarter at the water's edge, with squares of tiny cottages, flower-filled gardens and brightly painted outhouses, their eccentric decorations drawing on the city's seafaring soul.

Aberdeen is a cosmopolitan and connected place – with people working and studying here from across the world, their accents mixing with the sound of local Doric, an original Scots language. Up to now, it's a city that's been mostly off the tourist map. Which all adds up to a different sort of city altogether.



## Notes:

Focuses on what makes the city distinctly different – the feeling of being there with the special light and the sea so very close.

Hints at the shire – mentioning the coastal scenery north and south, and the rivers and mountains. The two Old Towns are a strong differentiating factor – and add heritage and more sea references.

The final paragraph weaves in the idea of industry. “Off the tourist map” is attractive to the target markets who want to travel off the beaten track – and is indeed part of what makes Aberdeen feel different from other cities.



Natural beauty and a strong community feeling.



# Aberdeenshire & Banffshire Coast

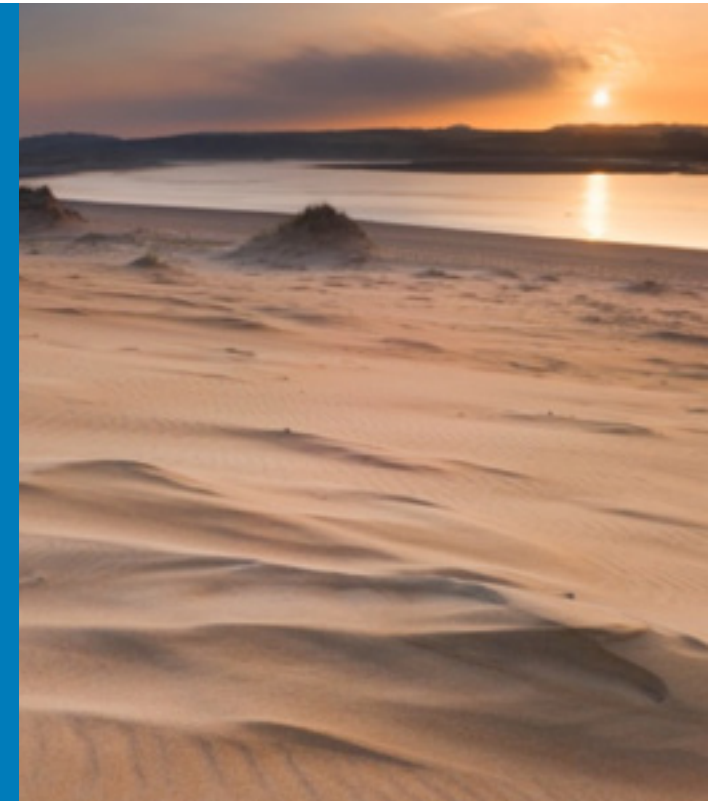
In its far north the Aberdeenshire coast turns a corner westwards and becomes the Banffshire coast. All is sea and sky at first. Then sandy bays and rugged cliffs come into view, with a string of little seaside towns and villages.

The Banffshire coast is one of the world's outstanding coastlines, says the National Geographic. Not just for its natural beauty with plentiful wildlife – there are dolphins, seals, puffins and other seabirds in abundance – but for its “strong community feeling”.

And the two are surely linked. For right around the coast of Aberdeenshire nature dominates ... and people have always pulled together to get things done. Tiny beautifully preserved 17th, 18th and 19th century harbours have rich histories of Baltic trade and herring fleets. Fishing villages perch on clifftops or crouch precariously at the water's edge, the oldest houses built gable-end on to the weather and the waves. Many with lighthouses to guide safe passage.

There's evidence of older history too. Craggy clifftops, great dunes and wide beaches stretch for miles, and shifting sands at Forvie reveal the half-buried remains of a 12th century church. Among the ancient coastal sites are Dunnottar and Findlater Castles, open to the elements, with precipitous drops to the sea below. The old ways are still valued: traditional boats still built, crafts thrive, Doric words are spoken and Doric ballads are sung. The people – whether born here or more recently arrived – seem rooted and shaped by this far-flung, salty aired place.

“The Northern sky is a beautiful thing” says Burt Lancaster in cult movie *Local Hero*, filmed along this coast. And it's true enough. In Summer, the light up here is special, days are near endless, sunsets can light up the sea and last for hours. Winter skies are dark and starry and – with a bit of luck – you might even see the Northern Lights.



## Notes:

Leads with the strong rating from quality respected brand National Geographic – “strong community feeling” is a direct quote from the NG piece.

Theme of place & people runs throughout.



Lovely landscapes and long traditions.



## Royal Deeside

It feels like a deep dive into the glens and ancient forests where Aberdeenshire meets the Cairngorms National Park, and where the snow-fed River Dee starts its journey from the mountains to the sea. You can roam for miles across grand highland estates – beneath wind-washed cathedral pines, by still, dark lochs, along crystal-clear rivers where salmon come to spawn. Encircled by mountains or out among the heather and *whin* of open moorland, flora is lush, fauna is plentiful. Tread carefully to spot the rare protected capercaillie, pine marten, and red squirrel, and herds of red deer. Scan the skyline and you may see a golden eagle.

But it's more than simply a dive into nature. Traditions – and roots – run deep here. Communities are strong. Doric – the language, poetry and especially the music – is alive. Along the valley, every village has its Highland Games.

The clans that gathered here centuries ago still gather today. Granite walls, legendary castles and mysterious standing stones tell a long history of settlement. This is a landscape shaped and stewarded by hundreds of generations of hunters, farmers, foresters.

This heritage, this depth, these lovely landscapes and these long traditions – all combine to create a place that feels like an embrace. It's a matter of record that Queen Victoria fell deeply in love with what would become known as Royal Deeside (and the place where the current Queen is said to be at her happiest): "All seemed to breathe freedom and peace ..." she wrote. It's a sentiment that echoes through the years and still rings true today.



### Notes:

Strong theme running through this narrative of depth and being encircled and embraced.

Emphasises the majestic scale and natural beauty – but always relating it back to the people. The two are inextricably linked.

It gives a sense of the long history, and ends with the royal "stamp of approval".





More castles per acre than  
anywhere else in the British Isles.



# Castles

Deep in an ancient pine forest, beside a fast-flowing river, on a high snowbound mountain pass, among rich rolling farmland, and perched on cliffs some 50 feet above the sea. These are some of the spectacular settings for Aberdeenshire's 300 castles: there are more here per acre than anywhere else in the British Isles. Most you can see, many you can visit – and some you can even stay in.

This corner of Scotland had strategic importance across centuries of turbulent history – invasions and war, rebellion and uprising, independence and occupation were all played out here. The evidence is in the remains of Iron Age hillforts, in ancient clifftop ruins, medieval fortresses, Scottish baronial castles, Jacobean mansions, and fortifications added in the 18th century.

In the centuries since, these often-extraordinary buildings have inspired storytellers such as Robert Louis Stevenson, who started *Treasure Island* while staying close to Braemar Castle in the Cairngorms National Park, surrounded by a sea of green. Bram Stoker stayed near Slains Castle: they say he conceived *Dracula* at this dramatic clifftop site. Seven-storey Craigievar with its pink walls and array of turrets and towers is said to be the prototype for Walt Disney's fairytale castles. Franco Zeffirelli used spectacular Dunottar Castle – a crumbling ruin on a seacliff crag where the Scottish crown jewels were hidden from Cromwell – to create the tormented world of his *Hamlet*.

Of course Aberdeenshire's most famous castle is Balmoral – the summer residence of the Royal Family since the 19th century, described by Queen Victoria as “my dear paradise in the Highlands”.



## Notes:

Range of settings supports destination narrative: mountains, forests, rivers, farmland, seacliffs. Important upfront message that you can visit and especially that you can stay in some.

Strong claim about more per acre. Explanation of WHY there are so many castles makes the narrative believable.

Iconic names from creative/cultural world lift the castles above the “norm”.

Strong close with royal connection & another lovely quote from Victoria.



Bottling the essence of this beautiful place.



# Whisky

Nature provides the wherewithal for Aberdeenshire's "water of life". Whether it's the toasted barley from the fertile farmlands, the ice-clear mountain water from burns and springs, the smoky peats and heather honey from heath and moors, or simply the sparkling fresh air – the whisky distilleries are busy bottling the essence of this beautiful place.

Off the tourist track you'll find "The Secret Malts of Aberdeenshire", produced by a cluster of distilleries dating from the 18th and 19th centuries. Here visitors can get right up close to traditional skills in rural settings among picturesque villages, wooded hills and rolling fields at places like the *Ardmore*, *Fettercairn*, *GlenDronach* or *Knockdhu* distilleries, out on the coast for *Glenglassaugh* (its fans say you can taste the sea), or into the Cairngorms for *Royal Lochnagar*.

Many of these distilleries will let you pay an informal visit; some ask you to make an appointment. Others offer regular guided tours and tutored tastings. In winter, perhaps you'll take a wee dram or two at a special tasting of *Glen Garioch* – by a roaring fire in a traditional granite-walled bothy. This is the stuff that makes memories. *Cheers min!*



## Notes:

Strong sense of place in opening paragraph. Adjectives bring natural elements to life – toasted, fertile, ice-clear, smoky, sparkling fresh.

The idea of "off the tourist track" is appealing to target markets – and there's a strong feel of authenticity.

Final image is up-close detail – painting a picture that takes you there.



Play to your heart's content.



# Golf

Scotland is famous as the birthplace of golf and for its golf courses, but some areas are still begging to be discovered.

Great dunes stretch along Aberdeenshire's coast – some of them said to tower 100 feet high. In this extraordinary sandscape are some of the world's most challenging links courses, designed by top names in golf architecture such as Old Tom Morris, James Braid and Dr Martin Hawtree. Here along Scotland's north east coast the skies are vast, the light clear, the air clean and fresh. The panoramic views and elemental power can take a golfer's breath away. This is stirring stuff. Historic too: Aberdeenshire has two of the top 10 oldest courses in the world.

Inland are dozens of parkland courses in splendid settings – in city and beyond, among forests and glens, on great estates and rugged heaths, in castle grounds and tree-filled parks, alongside fast-flowing rivers. The UK's highest golf course is at Braemar in the upper reaches of Royal Deeside, where Aberdeenshire meets the Cairngorms National Park. Nearby there's a 9-hole course in the grounds of the Queen's summer retreat at Balmoral – usually reserved for the royals and staff, but now open to fortunate corporate bookers during the months when days are longest.

Indeed, summer days this far north are almost endless: fortunate for golfers, who find they can play to their hearts' content from early morning through to late evening.



## Notes:

Gives a sense of the drama and importance of the links courses, and the range and beauty of the parkland settings – supporting the broader destination narrative as well as appealing to a range of different types of golf visitor.

Includes themes of space, light and royal.



Events and festivals are especially rooted here.



## Festivals & Events

True North. Granite Noir. Spectra. Braemar Gathering. Scottish Traditional Boat Festival. Stonehaven Fireballs Ceremony.

Even the names conjure up a different kind of place. And it's true to say that events and festivals here are especially rooted ... in the people and their distinctive Doric culture, and in the very particular location. Light, music, dance and culture are all uniquely celebrated in ways that are sometimes traditional, sometimes contemporary, and often significant – nationally and internationally.

Whether along the dramatic coast, among the farmland, forests and glens or around the city – these events are shaped by their setting. Some are held in the open air, using the special quality of light in both summer and winter to dramatic

effect. Others take place inside atmospheric venues. There are intimate spaces such as the Salmon Bothy in Portsoy, Woodend Barn in Banchory or the Blue Lamp in Aberdeen. Then there are the “national treasures” – the opulent His Majesty's Theatre (described by Billy Connolly as “like playing a gig inside a wedding cake”) and the A-listed Aberdeen Music Hall, all dressed and polished granite and at the heart of the city's cultural life for nearly two centuries.

This is a part of the world where communities still come together to continue ancient traditions or spark new ones into life – and the sense of belonging is potent. Join in with an event while you're here, and then you'll *really* start to understand this special place.



### Notes:

Plunges us in with names of festivals & events that embody the wider themes (latitude, light, royal, coast) and are also strongly distinctive.

Links festivals & events with the sense of place – location, nature and culture. Gives a sense of both established and new events – traditional and contemporary – and their quality.

Suggests strong sense of rootedness and belonging – but also the opportunity to visit and be part of it.





Where generous nature and  
Aberdonian ingenuity combine.



## Food & Drink

Full-flavoured, hearty and comforting, the original Cullen Skink packs a powerful punch. Aberdeen Angus beef is much-prized. Dean's rich traditional shortbread is made here in Huntly. And Ellon, just north of Aberdeen, is home to craft beer revolutionaries Brewdog.

It's no coincidence that Aberdeenshire has produced these world-class favourites: this region is known for its produce. It's known for the quality and scale of its arable land and rich pastures. It's known for the seafood – including the silver darlings, the lovely name for herring in these parts – that's landed every day along these shores (Peterhead is Europe's largest white fish seaport, Fraserburgh the biggest for shellfish, and there are fishing harbours and markets all round these 165 miles of coast).

Then there's the well-stocked rivers – some of the best in the world for salmon and trout. The wealth of venison and game from the great estates. The clean clear springs and moorland peat that help to produce the perfect dram.

For the visitor there's every chance to taste the place: A traditional fisherman's rowie or buttery – the local breakfast roll – flat, flaky and rich. A succulent steak. The freshest sea food, from fine dining at the harbour mouth to fish and chips on a prom (your pudding – homemade ice cream from the shop just up the street). Contemporary and creative menus, slow food and local produce – in quirky city cafes, coastal pubs and country houses.

You could be forgiven for thinking there's alchemy at work here – where generous nature and Aberdonian ingenuity combine.



### Notes:

Starts with big well-known brands – from traditional to contemporary. Links the idea of top quality food with the quality and scale of the landscape.

Suggests ways the visitor can experience distinctive food and drink – again moving from traditional to contemporary.

The reference to alchemy emphasises the idea of a bountiful place and resourceful people combining to create something very special.



Out in the crisp and clear fresh air.



## Outdoor Activities

If successive Royals get to be themselves when here – imagine how you will feel. Out in the crisp and clear fresh air with views for miles across these great estates and heathery moors. Exploring ancient forests. Bagging Munros (a mountain over 3,000 feet high) in the Cairngorms National Park. Hopping onto a ski lift on a bright winter's day. Or striding out along the wide expansive sands that stretch for miles along the Aberdeenshire coast.

There are legends to be scaled – the Old Man of Lochnagar, or mystical Bennachie that holds such sway in Aberdonians' hearts. Hiking, riding, mountain-biking, gliding, skiing, snowboarding, kayaking, surfing, kiteboarding ... the list goes on. There are thrills of gorge walking, zip wires and off-road driving. And then there's the chance to escape, roam free, and, well, just ... br...ea...the.

The pleasures are obvious for those endless summer days you get when you're this far north. But people are getting out and active all year round here too. This part of Scotland is colder, drier, fresher ... and winter days here bring their own reward. First, a bracing dive into raw and elemental nature. Then the warming pleasures of a wee dram taken by a roaring fire – or one of Brewdog's craft beers in a buzzy city pub. And that's a Royal day indeed.



### Notes:

Opening and closing sentences are verbatim from a story written by a workshop participant: gives us a very effective narrative thread and strong differentiator.

Uses repeated motifs of movement and space, quality of the light and the clean fresh air.

“Roam free” is an important selling point for visitors from outside Scotland.

“Colder, drier, fresher” is an important differentiator from other parts of Scotland.

There's a deliberate “all-seasons” slant. And the idea of ending up indoors by a fire or in a lively city venue is important when talking about winter activities outdoors.



## SECTION 4

# WORD BANK

1. Welcome

2. About the stories

3. The stories

4. Word bank

5. Beyond words



## The Place in One Word

Immersed **Embracing**  
Earthy **Pure** Illuminating  
**Fresh** Raw **Elemental** Rich  
**Enrich** Strength **Resilient**  
Energy **Open** Freedom  
**Escape** Breathe **Exhale**  
Waiting **Untouched**  
Authentic **Genuine** Real  
**Natural** Tradition

## Light & Latitude

How long the days last  
**Nordic, northern European**  
Clarity in the air after rain  
**Fresh air: clean, energising**  
Less rainfall: colder, drier,  
fresher **In summer light is**  
**special: evenings are long,**  
**sunsets are slow, darkness is**  
**brief** Green dancing skies



## Coast & Sea

**Moray Firth** Salty sea spray **Dramatic North Sea** Homemade ice-cream with all the toppings from childhood **Smell of seaweed ... reminds you of being a child on holiday** My wife told me there was no sky in England ... now I know why **The experience of sharing sunsets and tides** Sea-beaten cliffs **Children playing in salty rockpools** The lively acrobatics of energetic dolphins **The roar of the waves as they stack up, coming into the beaches after a storm** Taste of the salt in the air **The sea in your sights all the way** Crashing waves, calling gulls: a maritime symphony **A rowing team on their skiff, moving across a flat calm golden sea towards the setting sun** If the gas is burning you can walk along the beach by the light of the flares **Mile upon mile of marram-covered dunes and golden sand** Cliff-backed fishing villages, tight up against the water **Land at the bend in the Ocean**

## Landscape

A gentle, rolling part of the world **Expansive, generous** Film-inspiring **You can see for miles** High cathedral pines **Wet mosses** The view across the still dark-watered loch **Climb on estate roads through the purple-clad hillside** Climb out of the damp pine forest up into the heather where you'll find grouse, lapwings, curlew **Loch Callater near Braemar ... the wildlife is all around, the mountains encircle you and there is peace** So much sea and so much sky **Ancient Caledonian pine forests against a backdrop of mountains purple with heather** Rich, lush, healthy land **The Real Scotland authentic, unspoiled, 'earthy'** Natural produce

Words and phrases suggested by local people.



## Moods

Ever-changing  
moods **Enigmatic**  
**soul** Subtle **Space**  
**to create**

## The People

“When we want something done, we  
want it done well and done now”  
**Careful judgement** Genuine “It is what  
it is” Appealing honesty **Realness**  
‘Toonser’ a person from Aberdeen,  
‘teuchter’- a person from Aberdeenshire  
**Genuinely warm people - quietly**  
**confident with a proud spirit**

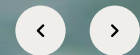
## City

Aberdeen looks so different  
from anywhere else **Granite  
buildings** Imposing on a grey  
day, sparkling silver in the  
sun **Even in the city, you smell  
the sea** Classic architecture,  
deep shadows **Blossom in Old  
Aberdeen** Dolphins on a calm  
winter sea, framed by a purple  
and orange sunset **The Grit and  
the Glint** Glimmer **Permanence**

## Traditions & Heritage

Doric: a rich onomatopoeic  
language **Living traditions**  
Richest in Scotland for  
traditional music **A great sense  
of belonging** From generation  
to generation **Stewardship**  
Rooted **Every village has its  
Games, a real concentration**  
Turra Show and the whole  
community has come to judge





## SECTION 5

# BEYOND WORDS



## Beyond words

**Images can be just as powerful as words – if not more so. So while the words in our Shared Stories create images in our minds, the visuals, photographs and videos we use in our promotions should reinforce that.**

This means that the visual content should illustrate what is in the stories and also that the look and feel generally should reflect the stories. So the principles to remember are that design and visuals should:

- Convey a sense of space and scale , big skies and wide horizons – you could show a person, building or object dwarfed by the scale of nature
- Illustrate the wealth, impact and predominance of nature – including the elements, the flora, and the wildlife
- Reflect the special qualities of the light (summer and winter)
- Be grounded and real: avoid shots that look set-up or artificial; feature genuine, authentic people and things,

including the shabby and the quirky – get across the idea of being “off the tourist track”

- Capture the essence of the hard-working, resourceful “we get things done” people who live here (this could also tie in with VisitScotland’s #ScotSpirit movement)
- Convey the idea of “living culture” – showing evidence of traditional skills, traditions, events etc, as well as contemporary life
- Show surprising juxtapositions and angles – including close-ups of intriguing shapes and textures – and dramatic locations and settings





Go to <http://gallery.visitaberdeen.com>  
to download approved imagery that is  
free to use



## Example imagery





Go to <http://gallery.visitaberdeen.com>  
to download approved imagery that is  
free to use



## Example imagery







## Further information

If you need any additional information  
then please contact:

01224 900490  
info@visitabdn.com

Visit**Aberdeenshire**  
1st Floor, Amicable House  
252 Union Street  
Aberdeen, AB10 1TN