

HEBRIDEAN WAY WALKING ROUTE OFFERS A NEW WAY TO EXPLORE THE ISLANDS



A dedicated long-distance walking route connecting the islands of the Outer Hebrides will open this week, offering visitors an exciting new way to discover island 'Life on the Edge'.

The Hebridean Way Walking Route takes in 10 islands, 6 causeways and 2 ferry crossings and covers 156 miles of the island chain, which sits off the west coast of Scotland.

The route, which was developed by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar with support from the European Regional Development Fund and Scottish Natural Heritage, is the only dedicated walking trail to traverse the archipelago - providing walkers with an enticing new opportunity to discover all that the islands have to offer.

Leading visitors through an ever-changing island landscape, the Hebridean Way Walking Route runs from Vatersay in the south to Lewis in the north and showcases the diversity of the Outer Hebrides' environment - with wonderful wildlife and interesting archaeology just some of the attractions along the way.

Listen for the call of the elusive corncrakes and spot ground nesting birds in the fertile coastal plains, see ruined duns (ancient castles) sitting on tiny islands in freshwater lochs and pass alongside stone circles and ancient burial mounds en route.

Climb hills that offer amazing panoramas over the islands, or travel the famed Harris Coffin Road that provided a vital link between the settlements in the east and the burial grounds of the west in earlier days of island life.

Spend the night in a converted Hebridean black house hostel, or take the time to tour the new Harris distillery, maybe even sampling a wee dram, before pressing on toward the finish point at the fascinating Lews Castle Museum.

From flower-filled machair overlooking stunning turquoise seascapes, to inland lochs set in the shadows of the islands' majestic mountains where golden eagles soar overhead, the Hebridean Way is a route where walkers will be rewarded with amazing memories.

Complementing the separate 185-mile cycling route, which was launched last year with the help of endurance cyclist and adventurer Mark Beaumont, the Hebridean Way Walking Route provides another new incentive to visit for those keen to immerse themselves in the island landscape – whether by tackling the full length of the Hebridean Way, or simply conquering certain sections.

Made up of waymarked routes, existing tracks, newly created paths and stretches of quiet country roads, the Hebridean Way Walking Route will be officially launched at the Visit Scotland Expo in Glasgow this week where the team behind it will be encouraging walking enthusiasts to become 'pioneers' of the route - following section maps and providing feedback on their experience to help refine both route and resources in the months to come.

Ian Fordham of Outer Hebrides Tourism said: "We are delighted to be launching the Hebridean Way Walking Route this week, and looking forward to hearing about the experiences of the walkers who are the first to tackle it.

"Members of the Hebridean Way Project Team will listen to all feedback as we continue to develop the infrastructure and information provision so that we can ensure the Hebridean Way routes go from strength to strength to secure a place alongside other iconic long distance routes in Scotland."

-ENDS-

NOTES FOR EDITORS

- Attached is an image of the start of the Hebridean Way route for publication

- For further information on the Hebridean Way walking and cycling routes visit www.hebrideanway.co.uk
- The Hebridean Way has a dedicated social media presence which can be found by searching @hebrideanway on Facebook and Instagram and @hebridean_way on Twitter.
- The Hebridean Way Walking Route is a 156 mile route from the Isle of Vatersay to the Isle of Lewis, taking in 10 islands, six causeways, and two ferry crossings over its full length. Maps can be found on the dedicated Hebridean Way website
- The project has been funded by CnES, ERDF, and SNH with support from OHT and HIE
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