



THE ROW MUST GO ON!

Embargo: 1 June 2021

RowAround Scotland 2021 is a blended, re-imagined circumnavigation. Planned for 2020 to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Scottish Coastal Rowing Association (SCRA), the pandemic forced a rollover of the baton relay until 2021. As rowing in skiffs was only permitted to be resumed in Scotland on 17 May this year, the planned start in Gretna in March passed us by, and the first four sections of the 13 section RowAround were postponed. The RowAround will finish at the SCRA's AGM in October, at Loch Tummel.

RowAround Scotland 2021 is supported by the Year of Coasts and Waters 20/21, co-ordinated by Event Scotland; the project is also supported by NatureScot, through Plunge In! The Coasts and Waters Community Fund.

In 2021, Scotland continues to celebrate its coasts and waters with a programme of activities and events which will shine a spotlight on these vital elements of our landscape.

The Isle of Seil Coastal Rowing Club in Argyll will now lead off the circumnavigation by rowing the nine nautical miles to Oban on 4 June, if the weather allows. The coordinator of RowAround is Sue Fenton, who coincidentally is also convenor of the Seil club. 70 mainland and island coastal rowing clubs will join in, as and when they are able, as many have had no sea-time for over a year. Many of the regattas and events associated with the RowAround have been cancelled or postponed yet again, because of the uncertainties of changing Covid regulations and restrictions. Sue commented: "Hybrid, collaborative events may be possible, on a much smaller scale but local sensitivities will be paramount. We will work with local communities around the coast to ensure that they will welcome us."

The circumnavigation track on the website map (www.rowaround.scot), initially broken, may eventually become a continuous line by October, as all the elements are spliced together.

However, each club will undertake a citizen science microplastics project in their own home waters using a specially adapted trawl behind the skiff. The samples will be analysed for us by the Scottish Association for Marine Science at Dunstaffnage, near Oban, and will provide a unique dataset from Scottish waters.

Necessarily agile, planning scenarios allow for local/regional lockdowns or changes in protection levels.

Paul Bush OBE, Director of Events at VisitScotland, said: "We are delighted to be supporting RowAround Scotland as part of Year of Coasts and Waters 20/21. With its spectacular coastline and inland waters, Scotland provides the perfect stage for this coastal rowing event."

The Virtual RowAround, completed in 2020 and on the RowAround website, buoyed us all up over the long winter and introduced clubs, their particular navigational hazards and the stunning coastal scenery. We are all looking forward to getting back on the water together!

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- Following input and feedback from the tourism and events industry, there was strong support and a commitment from Scottish Government to rollover the celebratory year into 2021. Work is currently ongoing to rescope and reshape the supported events programme.
- The year, led by VisitScotland will sustain and build upon the momentum of Scotland's preceding Themed Years to spotlight, celebrate and promote opportunities to experience and enjoy Scotland's unrivalled Coasts and Waters, encouraging responsible engagement and participation from the people of Scotland and our visitors.
- A programme of activities, events and ideas will shine a spotlight on the impact our waters have had on Scotland, from the formation of beautiful natural features to the creation of our national drink - whisky.
- Join the conversation using #YCW2021
- Following an industry consultation, the Themed Years are planned to take place every second year to enable more time for planning and collaboration. Given the impact of COVID-19 an exception will be made in 2021 with the 2020 year rolling forward. 2022 will celebrate Scotland's Year of Stories.

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