

## Scottish Inbound Golf Tour Operators Association

Tourism body continue their commitment to environmental issues.

23rd of June 2023

### For Immediate Release or Embargoed Date of Release

The Scottish Inbound Golf Tour Operators Association have released an insight to the value of their members' economic impact on the Scottish tourism economy along with how they continue to mitigate the carbon footprint of their travellers whilst in the country.

The association is made up of Scottish based tour operators servicing the golf tourism sector and post COVID they decided collectively to look at how they could proactively work on the environmental footprint left by travelling golfers.

### **SIGTOA Chair, Gary Wilkinson said,**

"We have just made our 2nd annual payment to The Woodland Trust and as far as we are aware we continue to be the only group of inbound tour operators, anywhere in the world that mitigate all of their clients in-country vehicular carbon emissions and the associated emissions from company staff"

Since COVID the membership of the organisation has expanded and as result the cumulative economic impact of their trading has grown substantially and all of this growth is now being offset.

In 2022, SIGTOA members generated around £23 million in turnover from in excess of 25,000 rounds of golf with their guests contributing almost 37500 bed nights across the whole of Scotland.

Gary Wilkinson continued,

"The visitor profile of SIGTOA members clients and guests is increasingly varied and whilst St Andrews and the traditional classic Open Championship courses remains the Holy Grail for some the diversity of tours and trips stretches from the borders to the North Coast 500 with substantial increases seen in all markets and products including island golf, short breaks and of course the multiple destination tours."

The creativity of the members of the industry group has seen a range of new itinerary ideas including regional golf passes, iconic themed course programmes and the inclusion of varied accommodation options.

**Malcolm Roughead, CEO of VisitScotland** contributed his thoughts:

*“As the Home of Golf, Scotland is an unmissable destination for golf tourism and the increasing diversity of our offering means that the benefits are spread across our communities and local economies.*

*We welcome SIGTOA’s commitment to taking action to address its environmental impact. We look forward to continuing our work with the association and the wider industry in reducing carbon emissions as we progress towards our net zero ambitions.”*

**Wendy Chamberlain MP, Liberal Democrat Member of Parliament for North East Fife** also commented

*“Tourism is vital for the North East Fife economy but it must be sustainable. This is why it is so wonderful to see the Scottish based Golf Tour Operator members of SIGTOA taking these steps and leading the golfing world in protecting the environment”*

**Dave Kerr of Morton Golf**, one of the founder members of the body added,

*“We want our clients to continue to enjoy the wonderful natural landscapes on offer across Scotland for years, and generations, to come so we take great pleasure in our responsibility to support our local communities, and be a net positive contributor to them.”*

In recognition of their efforts, SIGTOA have recently been nominated in the Scottish Tourism Thistle Awards sustainability category and **Pip Greensmith, Head of Partnerships at the Woodland Trust** was delighted for the group,

*“Congratulations to SIGTOA on their nomination. We’re grateful for their commitment to the environment and to UK woodland. By choosing to mitigate the carbon footprint on behalf of their members they’re supporting us to create more resilient landscapes across the UK. The trees planted will provide homes for wildlife and contribute to nature’s recovery.”*

**Release Ends**

# Editors Notes

## **The SIGTOA Scorecard 2022**

Total rounds played | 25256

Bed nights stayed | 37353

Number of Accommodation Providers booked | 181

Number of Tour Operator members | 12

The offset scheme is run under the auspices of the Woodland Trust and each member calculates every clients ground transport miles for each itinerary. Using a carbon offset calculator SIGTOA convert these miles into carbon emissions . There is a cost per ton which is borne by each of the tour operators on a pro rata basis.

### **About SIGTOA:**

The Scottish Inbound Golf Tour Operators Association was formed more than 25 years ago to bring together a group of like-minded Scottish based golf tour operators.

It now features twelve independent Scottish based businesses selling golf travel packages including accommodation, transportation, golf tee times and many other non-associated services.

As a collective the membership can boast over 300 years of combined sales experience promoting and booking golf to Scotland and has an estimated joint economic value to the economy of more than £23 million in combined turnover booking over 25,000 rounds of golf throughout the country and servicing clients from over forty countries in the past five years.

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