

## **Drovers - New film from Bikepacking Scotland tells the story of ancient drove roads and launches perthshiregravel.com - the guide to off-road cycling across Highland Perthshire**

Filmed on the '[Drovers Trail](#)', a new 331 km-long gravel bikepacking route spanning almost the entirety of Highland Perthshire, '[Drovers](#)' tells the story of the ancient drove roads, an important part of Scottish history, which inspired Scotland's greatest writers like Robert Burns and Sir Walter Scott. The new video from round the world singlespeed cyclist and film-maker [Markus Stitz](#) follows him on his adventure along the route, retracing the footsteps of the cattle drovers on their journey from the Cairngorms through the Tay Valley to Crieff, which became Scotland's most important cattle market at the end of the 17th century.

The project was led and administered by [Highland Perthshire Cycling](#), a charity set up to promote, encourage and enable more cycling in Highland Perthshire for both locals and visitors, and delivered by [Bikepacking Scotland](#). It received a grant of £9,835 from [Rural Perth & Kinross LEADER](#) Programme 2014-2020: The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas, match funded with £15,000 from the [SSE Griffin and Calliachar Community Fund](#).

The new gravel bikepacking route is part of eleven different itineraries, which are now available to download for free at [www.perthshiregravel.com](http://www.perthshiregravel.com). The lengths of the individual routes range from 12 km to 120 km, starting in the Highland Perthshire towns and villages of Dunkeld, Pitlochry, Blair Atholl, Aberfeldy and Comrie, as well as the remote Rannoch Station. Eight of the eleven routes are easily accessible by Scotrail and Caledonian Sleeper train services.

Markus comments: *"Designing the various routes made me aware of not only the rich history of Highland Perthshire and the Tay Valley, but also of the huge variety of landscapes that can be found across the area. I sought to use the story of the cattle drovers to draw parallels with the adventurous spirit of bikepacking nowadays, while showcasing the immense beauty of the area, not just for cyclists. I hope the new film and the route network will encourage more people to explore the area and will also give locals new ideas to experience their immediate surroundings."*

The different routes are designed as day journeys for different ages and abilities, but can also be combined or shortened by using quiet roads or cycle paths. They are graded as easy, straightforward, challenging or expert. The different criteria for the grading and detailed route descriptions with pictures are available on the website. While the routes have been designed for bikes with tyres 35 mm and wider, they will also appeal to mountain bikers and make great day trips for touring cyclists.

All routes and more information about the project can be found at [www.perthshiregravel.com](http://www.perthshiregravel.com), Highland Perthshire Cycling's Facebook page [@HighlandPerthshireCycling](#), Twitter [@perthshiregravl](#) and Instagram [@perthshiregravel](#).

**ENDS**

## Notes to editors

*Drovers* is available to watch and embed on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/r29PQeOjtZ8>

A trailer for *perthshiregravel.com* is available to watch and embed on YouTube:  
<https://youtu.be/pF8Ald58SVk>

A full resolution version of the trailer for *perthshiregravel.com* is available to download here:  
[https://www.dropbox.com/s/femvk3s6z8vlpph/HP%20Trailer\\_final.mov?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/femvk3s6z8vlpph/HP%20Trailer_final.mov?dl=0)

Pictures (for publication purposes only) can be downloaded here:  
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ld1rieigu9mrkyq/AAAPeEaFrVwINWdBMvYDmgkHBa?dl=0>

Pictures in full resolution can also be downloaded for free at <http://perthshiregravel.com/contact-us/>

**If you want to feature certain routes in magazines or online publication, and for further information please contact Markus Stitz - [markus@bikepackingscotland.com](mailto:markus@bikepackingscotland.com) or +44 (0)789 5250508.**

**The launch of *perthshiregravel.com* is the first stage of a number of initiatives by Highland Perthshire Cycling to promote cycle tourism, recreation and active travel throughout the Highland Perthshire area. For more information about the project, please contact HPC Trustee Mike Stead - [mikestead42@gmail.com](mailto:mikestead42@gmail.com) or +44 (0)77899 71749.**

## About the Rural Perth and Kinross LEADER Fund

The new LEADER, ('Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale'), Rural Development programme for Perth and Kinross was launched on Thursday 14 January 2016. Approximately £3.8 million of EU and Scottish Government SRDP (Scottish Rural Development Programme) funding is being invested in the local area between 2014 and 2020, bringing a boost to communities and the rural economy.

The funding will be directed towards the priorities identified in the Rural Perth and Kinross LEADER Programme Development Strategy and Business Plan, with the aim of helping to create a long-term legacy of vibrant, healthy and inclusive rural communities. The priorities include Community Capacity Building, Rural Broadband, Youth Initiatives, Farm Diversification, Rural Enterprise and there are Open Challenge and Co-operation Projects Funds also.

Funding is allocated by the Rural Perth and Kinross Local Action Group, (LAG). This independent body consists of representatives from local businesses and public sector and third sector organisations. Anyone can apply: [www.PKLeader.org](http://www.PKLeader.org), Facebook [@PerthKinrossLEADERFunding](https://www.facebook.com/PerthKinrossLEADERFunding), Twitter [@P\\_KLeader](https://twitter.com/P_KLeader) #PKLeader

## About the SSE Griffin and Calliachar Community Fund

Through our Griffin and Calliachar wind farms we make around £520,000 per year available for community and charitable projects. Between 2011 and 2036 we expect to invest £11million in local projects. The community fund can support projects which enhance quality of life for local residents, contribute to vibrant, healthy, successful and sustainable communities, promote community spirit and encourage community activity. Projects in the following community council areas can apply: Aberfeldy, Dull and Weem, Dunkeld and Birnam, Kenmore and District and Mid Atholl, Strathtay and Grandtully. More information can be found at [www.sse.com/communities/fundlocations/griffinandcalliachar](http://www.sse.com/communities/fundlocations/griffinandcalliachar)

### **About Highland Perthshire Cycling**

Highland Perthshire Cycling is a registered Scottish Charity (SC044141) set up to promote and enable more people to cycle more often in communities around Highland Perthshire for locals and visitors. We work alongside many different local groups, schools and businesses, running workshops, activities and events to achieve this. Our activity varies from year to year depending on funding and ideas. For the past seven years we have run the Dunkeld Enduro mountain bike event and for the past six years Belles & Buns, Scotland's only women only road cycling event. More information can be found at [www.highlandperthshirecycling.com](http://www.highlandperthshirecycling.com)

### **About Bikepacking Scotland**

Bikepacking Scotland's vision is to offer sustainable and progressive tourism products to make bikepacking more accessible for everyone. Founded by round the world cyclist Markus Stitz, Bikepacking Scotland has worked with Argyll and the Isles Tourism Co-operative, Visit East Lothian, Scottish Borders Council and other organisations to develop a comprehensive network of bikepacking routes in Scotland, downloadable for free as GPX files on [www.bikepackingscotland.com](http://www.bikepackingscotland.com)