Press Release

25 May 2017

**SCOTLAND’S MOST PET-FRIENDLY HOLIDAY HOMES REVEALED**

**EmbraceScotland Announces Winner of Inaugural**

**“Paws for a Break Pet-Friendly Award”**

Following a leap in demand for pet-friendly travel, leading Scottish holiday home provider, [EmbraceScotland](http://www.embracescotland.co.uk), launched a “**Paws for a Break Pet-Friendly Award”** in autumn 2016 to celebrate those properties that go above and beyond to cater for man’s best friend. The judging panel, which comprised Marc Crothall, CEO Scottish Tourism Alliance; Tortie Cox, Marketing Director for Scottish Field Magazine; Angela Torrance, Owner of Freckles Design (dog coats and accessories) and Ali Campbell, Growth Fund Project Manager for Association of Scotland’s Self Caterers (ASSC) reviewed over 140 nominations to select a winner and five runners-up.

Crowned the winner, for putting Fido first, is [*Mains of Taymouth*](http://www.embracescotland.co.uk/embrace_search/?arrivaldate=&nights=&peoplecount=&keyword=Mains+of+Taymouth)*,* which offers a selection of dog-friendly, luxury self-catering holiday cottages, houses, villas and apartments in Kenmore, Highland Perthshire. Runners-up include [*Mansefield House*](http://www.embracescotland.co.uk/argyll-the-isles-stirlingshire/arrochar-/property-80-mansefield-house/) in the picturesque Scottish village of Arrochar; [*The Steadings*](http://www.embracescotland.co.uk/perthshire-dundee-angus/blairgowrie/property-1123-the-steadings-auchteralyth/), on the doorstep of the famous Angus Glens in Perthshire; [*Perkhill Holiday Cottages*](http://www.embracescotland.co.uk/aberdeen-grampian-moray/aboyne/property-1455-perkhill-holiday-cottages)in the Grampian & Moray region, [*Cologin*](http://www.embracescotland.co.uk/embrace_search/?arrivaldate=&nights=&peoplecount=&keyword=Cologin) near beautiful Oban and [*Ardtornish Estate*](http://www.embracescotland.co.uk/holiday-inspiration/paws/paws-break-pet-friendly-award-201617/highlands-and-skye/ardnamurchan/property-1710-ardornish-estate-cottages-apartments/) in the Highlands & Skye

The Pet-Friendly Award is part of EmbraceScotland’s **“Paws for a Break”** campaign, which launched in September 2016 and saw the introduction of the “Pets Welcome Charter”. The campaign, backed by the VisitScotland Growth Fund\*, was created in response to a **35 per cent** increase in bookings from guests with pets at EmbraceScotland’s more than 3,000 self-catering properties, in the past five years. The **“Pets Welcome Charter”** sets out a range of standards that the holiday homes in the EmbraceScotland collection must meet in order to be classified as “pet-friendly”, such as providing a water bowl, poop bags, details of suggested local dogs walks, contact details and directions to a local pet shop and vet, pointers to suitable exercise areas nearby and details of the local pubs and restaurants where pets are accepted. Many properties also provide towels for drying off wet dogs, food bowls, blankets, dog tags, a lead, a dog walking service, day kennels, treats and dog grooming. Holidaymakers can identify the properties that are pet-friendly by ticking the “pets welcome” box in the search function on the website.

“We’re delighted to announce the winner and runners-up of our very first ‘Paws for a Break Pet-Friendly Award’” says Fiona Campbell, Chief Executive of Embrace Scotland and The Association of Scotland's Self-Caterers (ASSC).

“Recent research\*\* from VisitScotland revealed that **almost a third** (30 per cent) of holiday-makers base their holiday around how suitable a destination is for their pet, and **72 per cent** of dog owners say they would take more holidays in the UK if attitudes towards their canine companions improved. Our own Facebook poll of EmbraceScotland customers, last month, revealed that **68 per cent** look for holiday homes that are “pet-friendly” when making travel plans and only **two per cent** prefer to holiday without their pet.

“There is clearly demand for a greater volume and choice of pet-friendly holiday options and our Pet-Friendly Award gives special recognition to those holiday homes that really go the extra mile to welcome guests with pets.

“Our winner, [Mains of Taymouth](http://www.embracescotland.co.uk/embrace_search/?arrivaldate=&nights=&peoplecount=&keyword=Mains+of+Taymouth), was selected because pets are made to feel welcome from the moment they arrive, not least by the estate’s resident four-legged hosts; Surka, Bug & Mabel. At check-in, dogs receive their own goodie bag containing a biscuit, suggested local walks and ample doggie bags. Many of the properties have private enclosed gardens for pets to roam around in while guests relax in the hot tubs and saunas.

“Its outstanding location in Highland Perthshire, surrounded by magnificent walks, is another pet-friendly asset. Dogs can be taken for a leisurely stroll down the riverbank of the river Tay, the forest track up Drummond Hill or a more ambitious hike up Munro. Kenmore beach is also the perfect spot for throwing sticks, going for a paddle or for a relaxing picnic taking in the majestic countryside. Up to two dogs are welcomed per property and they can even join their owners in the estate’s Courtyard Bar where they will be welcomed with a bowl of fresh drinking water and can relax in front of the log burning fire. It really is a pooch’s paradise!”

Pauline McLaren, General Manager of Mains of Taymouth said: “We are over the moon to have been presented with EmbraceScotland’s ‘Paws for a Break Pet-Friendly Award’. It highlights everything we value and work towards.  We’ve strived to create an environment that will deliver the perfect family holiday and we understand that for the holiday to be perfect, the precious family pet needs to come too! We would like to thank all our guests, both two & four legged, for supporting for us."

EmbraceScotland offers 100% quality assured self-catering accommodation throughout Scotland, with hundreds of properties from the Highlands to the Scottish Borders going the extra mile to welcome pets as well as their owners.

**AND THE WINNER IS…..**

### **Mains of Taymouth: Kenmore, Aberfeldy, Perthshire**

Nestled on the edge of Loch Tay and originally the home farm to Taymouth Castle, Mains of Taymouth is a family-run 120-acre estate boasting luxurious self-catering accommodation. Owners and their furry friends will enjoy the stunning surroundings, pet friendly accommodation with hot tubs & private gardens, golf course, riding stables, Courtyard Bar & Restaurant and boat hire. Accommodation options on the estate range from mews houses, villas and cottages to luxury apartments and large family houses sleeping up to 12. Up to two dogs are welcomed per property at a charge of just £8 per pet.

[www.embracescotland.co.uk/perthshire-dundee-angus/aberfeldy/property-367-mains-of-taymouth-country-estate/](http://www.embracescotland.co.uk/perthshire-dundee-angus/aberfeldy/property-367-mains-of-taymouth-country-estate/)

**RUNNERS-UP**

### **Cologin: Lerags Glen, Oban, Argyll & Bute**

Cologin Country Chalets is a collection of 19 pet-friendly holiday homes, sleeping between two and six people each and located less than three miles from Oban on Scotland’s West Coast. Surrounded by the green hills of picturesque Lerags Glen, there is free parking and an award-winning pet-friendly country pub on site. For larger groups, there’s Cologin Farmhouse, which sleeps up to 12 and features a large family kitchen with a traditional Esse providing warmth all year round, open fires in the lounge and dining room, a piano in the ground floor, a fully-fenced, south facing garden and private parking for four cars. Both the Farmhouse and the chalets have access to all of Cologin Farm's amenities including a fully fenced playpark, fishing loch, country pub and waymarked forestry commission walks.

[www.embracescotland.co.uk/argyll-the-isles-stirlingshire/oban/property-1308-cologin-farmhouse-and-cruachan-cottage/](http://www.embracescotland.co.uk/argyll-the-isles-stirlingshire/oban/property-1308-cologin-farmhouse-and-cruachan-cottage/)

**The Steadings: Auchteralyth, Alyth, Perthshire**

Arranged around a stunning central courtyard garden, and with sweeping views, are these four lovely stone cottages, sleeping two – four guests plus pets. Located on the doorstep of the famous Angus Glens, the area is also a haven for walkers and golfers. As well as three local courses, there are 60 within an hour’s drive, including the world-renowned courses at Carnoustie, St Andrews and Gleneagles. The cottages are equipped to an exceptionally high standard - three have their own private access into the central courtyard, with garden furniture, and a water feature and one has its own furnished, decked terrace.

[www.embracescotland.co.uk/perthshire-dundee-angus/blairgowrie/property-1123-the-steadings-auchteralyth](http://www.embracescotland.co.uk/perthshire-dundee-angus/blairgowrie/property-1123-the-steadings-auchteralyth)

**Mansefield House: Arrochar, Argyll & Bute**

Mansefield House, in the picturesque village of Arrochar, is a handsome Grade B listed Victorian House that can sleep up to 12 people and up to four dogs in five spacious bedrooms.  The property stands in an elevated position in large private gardens and offers uninterrupted views of the Loch, Arrochar Alps and Argyll Forest Park. It boasts a large sitting room and elegant dining room with wood burning stoves plus a country kitchen with range cooker that’s perfect for rustling up delicious dinners. There’s also a games room with a 6x3ft snooker table plus parking for up to five cars. A wealth of walking, climbing and mountain biking opportunities can be enjoyed nearby as well as horse-riding, fishing, canoeing, sailing and various other water sports.

[www.embracescotland.co.uk/argyll-the-isles-stirlingshire/arrochar-/property-80-mansefield-house](http://www.embracescotland.co.uk/argyll-the-isles-stirlingshire/arrochar-/property-80-mansefield-house)

**Perkhill Holiday Cottages: Aberdeen, Grampian & Moray**

Perkhill Holiday Cottagesare located on a family farm, home of the award winning Perkhill Aberdeen Angus Herd, near the historic village of Lumphanan, just five miles from Aboyne. The idyllic location in the heart of Royal Deeside offers a range of countryside activities such as shooting, fishing and walking as well as access to both the Scottish highlands and the Granite City. Modern and contemporarily styled, King Duncans View sleeps seven people, and Macbeths Retreat and Lady Macbeths Rest both sleep four. All are pet-friendly.

[www.embracescotland.co.uk/aberdeen-grampian-moray/aboyne/property-1455-perkhill-holiday-cottages](http://www.embracescotland.co.uk/aberdeen-grampian-moray/aboyne/property-1455-perkhill-holiday-cottages)

**Ardtornish Estate: Ardnamurchan, Highlands & Skye**

Ardtornish offers a range of self-catering holiday accommodation in the beautiful West Coast of Scotland. Guests can choose from the dramatic Victorian self-catering apartments in Ardtornish House to a variety of traditional stone holiday cottages, or the estate’s newest addition, the Bunkhouse. Guests and pets can explore the gardens and the estate, with 20 miles of coastline, woodlands rich with wildlife, freshwater lochs with golden sandy beaches. Each of the properties comes with a fully equipped kitchen, Sky TV, WiFi, open fire or wood burning stove and BBQ.

[www.embracescotland.co.uk/property-1710-ardornish-estate-cottages-apartments](http://www.embracescotland.co.uk/property-1710-ardornish-estate-cottages-apartments)

For more information, go to [www.embracescotland.co.uk](http://www.embracescotland.co.uk)

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**Notes to Editors**

**\* VisitScotland’s Growth Fund:**

With the first award from its new-look Growth Fund, VisitScotland match-funded the £40,000 Paws for a Break campaign lead by the Association of Scotland’s Self-Caterers’ (ASSC) Embrace Scotland website. The Growth Fund is designed to support collaborative tourism marketing projects that focus on growth in the tourism sector and ensure that visitors experience the true Spirit of Scotland. Growth Fund applicants are required to align their marketing with VisitScotland’s strategies and campaigns, including the global Spirit of Scotland campaign. They are also encouraged to think about how they can take advantage of Scotland’s Themed Years. 2017 is the Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology and 2018 is the Year of Young People.

To find out more about the VisitScotland Growth Fund, go to [www.visitscotland.org](http://www.visitscotland.org)

**\*\*** VisitScotland research from March 2016

[www.visitscotland.org/research\_and\_statistics/tourism\_sectors/pet\_market.aspx](http://www.visitscotland.org/research_and_statistics/tourism_sectors/pet_market.aspx)

**About Embrace Scotland:**

Embrace Scotland is a comprehensive directory of 100% quality assured self-catering accommodation throughout Scotland. The website features over 3,000 properties from city pads and beach chalets, to farm houses and country cottages. Pets are a priority with many properties welcoming not just dogs, but cats, horses, parrots, rabbits and hamsters too!

Holidaymakers book directly with the owner/managers with no fees, commissions or fuss.

All the holiday homes featured on the Embrace Scotland website are run by owner/managers who are members of the official self-catering trade body in Scotland (Association of Scotland’s Self Caterers). Formed in 1976 the ASSC is the only trade group representing the interests of more than 7,000 self-catering properties in Scotland and members are committed to the core principles of quality, cleanliness, comfort, courtesy, efficiency and integrity.

For more information, go to [www.embracescotland.co.uk](http://www.embracescotland.co.uk) and [www.assc.co.uk](http://www.assc.co.uk)

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