Press Release

27 September 2016

**EMBRACE SCOTLAND SETS TAILS WAGGING WITH NEW PETS PROMISE**

**Leading Scottish Holiday Home Provider Launches *Pets Welcome Charter*, following a “bark” in demand for pet-friendly travel**

Following a leap in demand for pet-friendly travel, [Embrace Scotland](http://www.embracescotland.co.uk), has launched a “**Pets Welcome Charter**”, to make it easier for guests, holidaying with their beloved furry friends, to find the *purrfect* property.

The move comes after the leading Scottish holiday home provider saw a **35 per cent** increase in bookings from guests with pets at its more than 3,000 self-catering properties, in the past five years.

Similarly, VisitScotland research\* shows 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. VisitScotland also reports that there are 95 per cent more searches for “pet-friendly” holidays on its website than there are for “romantic” getaways.

There are an estimated 12 million households (46 per cent of all UK households) in the UK who have one or more pets and, of this, there are an estimated 8.5 million dogs. In addition to the heartache of leaving a pet behind to go on holiday, there’s the expense to consider, with kennel costs averaging £140 per week.\*

Embrace Scotland’s “Pets Welcome Charter” sets out a range of standards that the holiday homes in its collection must meet in order to be classified as “pet-friendly”, and to celebrate those that really go the extra mile for their four-legged guests, Embrace Scotland has also launched a “Paws for a Break Awards”.

“We’re delighted to be launching both the Pets Welcome Charter and our very first pet-friendly awards,” says Fiona Campbell, Chief Executive of Embrace Scotland and The Association of Scotland's Self-Caterers (ASSC).

“Many of our holiday homes provide a hugely warm welcome to guests with furry friends and we want pet-owners to be more aware of what’s available to them – from dog-sun-loungers and dog first-aid kits, to important local information such as pet stores, vets, dog-friendly walking trails and cafes that accept canine companions. And it’s not just dogs that we cater for – many of our holiday homes welcome cats, horses, parrots, rabbits, hamsters and even the odd owl too!”

Embrace Scotland holiday homes that qualify as “pet-friendly” under the new charter, all provide a water bowl, suitable disposal equipment (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 and, under the new charter, holiday homes will display an ASSC Pets Welcome Charter logo to make them simple to spot.

The Paws for a Break Awards launched in September to celebrate those properties that go above and beyond to cater for man’s best friend. Holidaymakers wishing to nominate can do so by going to: [www.embracescotland.co.uk/paws-break-award-201617](http://www.embracescotland.co.uk/paws-break-award-201617)

Embrace Scotland properties that go the extra mile for guests with pets include:

1. For families with furry friends visiting [Cromore Old Mission Hall](http://www.embracescotland.co.uk/hebrides-orkney-shetland/stornoway/property-1628-cromore-old-mission-hall/), the property provides outdoor Coolaroo **pet sun loungers**, a dog first aid kit, a waterproof sheet to protect beds and sofas for humans, as well as the basics such as pet beds and bowls. Sleeping up to three people, Cromore Old Mission Hall is a charming, stone-built cottage nestled peacefully beside a loch on the Isle of Lewis, Outer Hebrides. Prospective guests can apply to take any type of pets, pending approval from a manager.
2. Award-winning [Treshnish Farm](http://www.embracescotland.co.uk/argyll-the-isles-stirlingshire/mull/property-99-treshnish-haunn-cottages/) offers a choice of accommodation for guests, including a remote crofter's blackhouse, a stylish bungalow and a spacious studio. The owners are very happy to welcome pet companions, such as dogs, cats and guinea pigs, without charge… and have even had two birds of prey come to stay! The birds slept in cages in the garden, but standard guests will enjoy a comfortable, contemporary stay in the traditional properties or praised eco-cottages, while discovering the dramatic coastline and abundant wildlife of Argyll, Stirlingshire.
3. Human guests will leave with lots of happy memories after a stay at characterful [Glencoe Hideaway Lochview](http://www.embracescotland.co.uk/highlands-and-skye/fort-william/property-1410-glencoe-hideaway-lochview/), but pooches staying for Christmas or New Year’s Eve will leave with a present! The owners of the 160-year-old crofter’s cottage with large enclosed garden also provide the basics such as poop bags, bowl and a dog towel. The cottage boasts a fantastic location overlooking Loch Leven and the neighbouring mountains, with plenty of amenities in Glencoe village, just a three-minute walk away.
4. The two stylish [Antonine Wall Cottages](http://www.embracescotland.co.uk/argyll-the-isles-stirlingshire/stirling/property-68-antonine-wall-cottages-doocot-and-hayloft/%20is) ‘Hayloft’ and ‘Doocot’ have been converted from a listed 1820's stable block, in Argyll, just seven miles from Stirling and warmly welcome pets. Each cottage has its own private fenced area amongst the five acres of secluded grounds to keep pets safe, and provides a pet welcome snack, as well as designated pet towels, throws and vet details. Human guests will enjoy the hot tub, modern conveniences such as TVs with Netflix, shared play area for little ones and the convenient location just 18 miles from both Glasgow and Edinburgh. Most pets including dogs, cats and hamsters are welcomed.
5. The Mews Cottage, Woodside Log Cabin and Hillside Log Cabin set in the 12 acres of grounds at [Ardoch Lodge](http://www.embracescotland.co.uk/argyll-the-isles-stirlingshire/callander/property-889-ardoch-lodge-strathyre/) all accept up to four dogs at a time each. The owners provide detailed information concerning safe walking in the area, with a particular mind to protecting sheep, as well as details of pet shops and local vets. The cottage and cabins are all well-equipped and well heated in winter. The 12 acres of grounds, which allow dogs to roam free, boast a walled garden, a water meadow and a riverside walk.

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

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**Notes to Editors**

**\*** VisitScotland research from March 2016

<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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