

Strategic Plan



2023-27



Hillfort celebrations on Moncreiffe Hill (© Tom Ryan)

Front: 'Doors Open' at Perth Lower City Mills, 2021
Back: Mill machinery at Perth Lower City Mills (© Mike Bell)
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as of September 2022

Foreword

Since it was established in 1988, the Trust has made a significant contribution to Perth and Kinross through our aims of conserving, enhancing and promoting engagement with the rich historic environment of the area. We achieve our aims through the delivery of projects, the administration of grant-aid and through the provision of information and advice, all carried out in partnership with a wide range of individuals and organisations at local, regional and national levels.

Our plan aligns our priorities with the aspirations of our ongoing strategic funding partners The Gannochy Trust, Perth & Kinross Council, and Historic Environment Scotland. This funding base allows us to lever additional external funding, far beyond the sum of the individual parts, for projects such as the recent £2.6M Tay Landscape Partnership scheme. Our ‘next big thing’ is to conserve and develop our new operational base, the long neglected Lower City Mills, Perth. Through conservation of this A-listed industrial gem, we will afford public access once again and create a regional centre of excellence for historic environment conservation and learning, and a hub for historic mill conservation.

We hope you agree that our plan demonstrates that we are well-placed to make a lasting difference, both physically to the historic environment, and also socially and economically to the communities we engage with. As an agile and responsive third sector business, however, we are also ‘building back better’ to become a more resilient, environmentally sustainable, and people-centred organisation.

Perth and Kinross: the historic environment

Perth and Kinross has a special place in Scottish history and prehistory. The fifth largest authority in Scotland, it includes extensive uplands and lowlands that contain a wide range of landscape types. These have influenced past human settlement and activity as reflected in the rich and diverse historic environment of the area, which includes over 12,000 archaeological sites and finds and an estimated 15,000 pre-1919 historic buildings and structures. While many of these sites have international value, only a small percentage are protected: 677 Scheduled Monuments, 41 Gardens and Designed Landscapes, 4 Designated Battlefields, 3,551 Listed Buildings and 36 Conservation Areas. The vast majority rely on good stewardship by owners and protection through the relevant planning legislation.

Around a third of the modern population lives in the small City of Perth, with the remainder in outlying settlements and the large rural hinterland. The historic environment has a key role in the economic recovery of the area, and in securing well-being for residents and visitors. Archaeological sites and historic buildings, including those many of us live in, are tangible heritage assets that reflect how our shared cultural heritage has evolved in response to social, environmental and technological change. They are vital in place-making: creating towns and villages in which people want to live, work and visit.

While playing a defining role as the backdrop to our daily lives, there are significant challenges to the historic environment: to its survival, condition, and to our understanding of it. Our role is to help our historic assets shape our lives and communities. We promote a Perth & Kinross that values, embraces and enhances the economic, social and environmental benefits of our shared historic environment.

Our Plan

The plan presents our Vision, Values and Priorities and maps how our ongoing and planned activities will contribute to post-COVID social and economic recovery and the new financial climate. Our remit is wide-ranging, from archaeological sites to historic buildings, and so are the benefits of our work. Conservation and maintenance improve wellbeing and community cohesion through a valued 'sense of place'. They also contribute to a low carbon future and provide economic regeneration by helping to make Perth and Kinross a desirable place in which to live, work and visit. Our skills training and outreach work, including our new community grants programme, also helps to improve people's lives, while at the same time repairing historic features and building much needed capacity in the sector.

Much of our work will complement the new Perth Museum, due to open in 2024, which will showcase the area's cultural heritage. Our **Lower City Mills** project will add to Perth's wider cultural offer – bringing to life a neglected A-listed asset which is part of the Perth Common Good. Enhancement of the city centre's overall historic fabric is critical to wider economic regeneration however, as the poor condition of many historic buildings remains a concern. The high-quality work of our **Perth City Heritage Fund** continues to address this and is now recognisable at many key buildings. Further afield, good management of the archaeological resource will continue to be delivered through the work of our **development management and Historic Environment Record** team, whilst our **outreach and skills training** will continue to improve opportunities and the quality of life for residents and visitors to the area. Our new **Community Grants Scheme** will also help local communities repair and celebrate aspects of their heritage which are important to them.

We will conserve, enhance, and promote increased understanding of Perth and Kinross's rich and unique historic environment for the benefit of residents, visitors and future generations. We will also continue to improve, through lessons learned during Covid lockdowns, our operational resilience, environmental sustainability, and the overall well-being of the organisation. These are captured in our values whereby we aspire to be collaborative, resilient, agile, and sustainable.



Our Vision

‘A Perth and Kinross that values, embraces and enhances the economic, social and environmental benefits of our shared historic environment.’

Our Values

- **Collaborative** – we develop partnerships at a local, regional and national level to meet shared objectives.
- **Agile** – we seek to maximise opportunities through a flexibility of approach.
- **Resilient** – we support and develop our people and empower them to work together in new ways.
- **Sustainable** – we prioritise both financial and environmental sustainability in all of our work.

Our Priorities

1. **To conserve and enhance the historic environment to bring economic and social benefit for all.**
Improving the condition of the historic environment will support Perth and Kinross to recover and thrive economically, while fostering community cohesion and well-being.
2. **To promote and encourage good active management and maintenance of the historic environment.**
Promoting and supporting better stewardship of the historic environment will bring economic benefit, social well-being, and help to address the Climate Emergency.
3. **To improve understanding of the historic environment and promote learning and engagement for everyone.**
Providing learning and engagement activities will nurture understanding, appreciation, and ‘ownership’ of our shared historic environment and help to make Perth and Kinross a better place in which to live and work.
4. **To support people to develop new skills related to the historic environment.**
Supporting people to learn new skills will improve lives socially and economically and help to build much needed capacity in the sector’s skill base.
5. **To work in partnership with national, regional and local organisations.**
Working collaboratively with other organisations will bring opportunities and resilience for all.

Lower City Mills, Perth

Over the life of the plan, the Trust will develop and deliver a major project to conserve and develop this neglected, nationally significant building: a rare survivor of the burgh's agri-industrial past which is part of the Perth Common Good. **Conservation** of this Building At Risk will bring it back into **good management**, the lack of which is the main contributory factor to its current poor state.

Training in traditional Building **Skills** will be delivered through conservation works contracts, while training on millwrighting and milling will form part of our mill machinery restoration programme. Affording public access, community engagement and interpretation will **improve understanding** of this important urban watermill and its unusual lade, as part of a centre of excellence for historic environment conservation, skills training and Scottish historic mills.

Priorities: 1 (conservation); 2 (improved management); 3 (improved understanding); 4 (skills development); 5 (partnership working).



An A-listed building in Perth Common Good.



The hurst frame with main gearing and grinding stone (© Mike Bell)



Learning about milling in an instant (© Mike Bell)

City Heritage Fund

Since 2012, the Perth City Heritage Fund has contributed to the economic regeneration of the city through the **conservation** of key historic properties involving high-quality repairs using traditional materials and skills. Grants totalling £1.9M have been awarded to projects within the Perth Centre and Kinnoull Conservation Areas, leveraging over £7.7M investment from owners.

The fund ensures historic properties remain active, vibrant workplaces and comfortable homes that provide a positive setting for the city and results in the **improved management** of properties. Indeed, the fund also often brings together multiple owners to address maintenance for the first time. Continual Professional Development lectures and the traditional building skills schools roadshow **improve understanding** and **develop skills**. Supported by the Scottish Government through Historic Environment Scotland, it also helps to address the climate emergency, encouraging lower carbon materials to make buildings more efficient in use and minimising embodied carbon added to the built environment through the re-use of existing buildings.

Priorities: 1 (conservation); 2 (improved management); 3 (improved understanding); 4 (skills development); 5 (partnership working).



Detail of roof repairs, 39-43 High Street



Slate training for school pupils



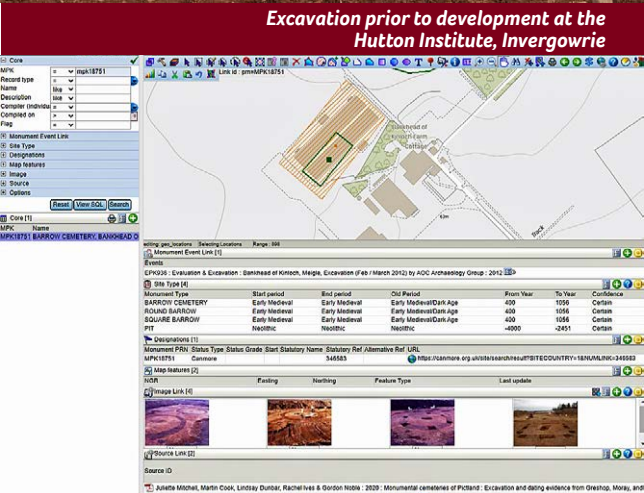
The completed block, 39-43 High Street

Development management and the Historic Environment Record

The Trust ensures **improved management** of the historic environment in the face of land-use change through the planning process. Our team works with Perth & Kinross Council to ensure archaeological sites and historic buildings are preserved, either in situ or by record, to facilitate development ranging from small-scale house building to major infrastructure projects, such as the A9 dualling programme. A key stage is the assessment of where work should be carried out and our primary role is to monitor work from pre-planning to publication and archive.

Our Historic Environment Record (HER) is the information-base on which development assessments are made. It also underpins research and the development of community-led projects by the Trust and public enquiries. Together with our recent Archaeological Research Framework, carried out in **partnership** with the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, they significantly **improve understanding** of the historic environment and how it is best managed.

- Priorities:** 1 (conservation); 2 (improved management); 3 (improved understanding); 4 (skills development); 5 (partnership working).



Standing Building Recording of Tummel Bridge Hydro-electric power station (© AOC)

Outreach

Our outreach work is geared towards **improving understanding**. Doors Open Days, delivered in **partnership** with the Scottish Civic Trust and a suite of local organisations and individuals, offers free access to buildings and spaces not normally open to the public. We have co-ordinated the event, which is part of the annual European Heritage Days, since 1996. Since then, an estimated 90,000 people have visited participating sites with thousands more organising venues to open their doors.

In addition to our website - www.pkht.org.uk – we produce a wide range of leaflets, interpretation panels and publications, and most of our projects engage with local groups and volunteers to develop skills and **conserve** sites. Our community archaeology projects have been hugely successful in engaging residents and visitors in citizen science – carrying out research while **improving management** at key sites in the area.

- Priorities:** 1 (conservation); 3 (improved understanding); 4 (skills development); 5 (partnership working).



Doors Open Days



'Picts in the Park' living history festival, Dunkeld (© Bart Masiukiewicz/PKHT)



Doors Open Days

Community Heritage Grants Scheme

The Trust piloted this scheme over 2020 with the aim of empowering local community groups to **conserve, better manage** and **improve understanding** of the historic environment of their area. Grants of up to £5,000 are offered for the conservation of historic buildings or monuments with established public access, or for community-based recording, research, and interpretation.

The scheme was fully launched in 2021 with the additional aim of improving wellbeing over the Covid-19 restrictions, a time whereby exploration and celebration of local heritage was even more relevant. Supporting community cohesion and well-being remains an objective of the scheme.

Priorities: 1 (conservation); 2 (improved management); 3 (improved understanding); 4 (skills development); 5 (partnership working).



Repairs to the clock at the Robert Douglas Memorial Institute, Scone



Community monument recording at Kirkgate graveyard, Kinross



Heritage Trail signage, Meikle

Tay Landscape Partnership (TayLP) Maintenance

A £2.6 million initiative led by the Trust, in **partnership** with Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust, the TayLP scheme celebrated the unique cultural and natural heritage of the inner Tay estuary and was delivered over 2014-18. The scheme improved both physical and intellectual access to this heritage through 28 projects that engaged over 82,000 people through events, workshops, presentations, festivals and school activities.

The projects **conserved** built and natural heritage features, **improved understanding** of the landscape, and **developed skills** within the local community while **improving management** of buildings and sites. The Trust is responsible for maintaining sites and legacy products from the scheme over a ten-year period and this is part of our remit over the period of the plan.

Priorities: 1 (conservation); 2 (improved management); 3 (improved understanding); 4 (skills development); 5 (partnership working).



The TayLP project area



Kinfauns Old Parish Church (© George Logan/PKHT)



Interpretation panel, Museum of Abernethy



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