



Society of Antiquaries
of Scotland

STRATEGIC PLAN: 2022 to 2027



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Vision

Scotland's past is for everyone to research, share, enjoy and protect, home and abroad.

Mission statement

The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland is a heritage charity with global membership providing expertise, support and resources to enhance and promote the understanding and enjoyment of Scotland's past. It empowers and facilitates research and innovation, advocating as an independent voice for heritage, and sharing knowledge of the past to everyone.

Values

- Collaboration
- Opportunity and transparency
- Research excellence
- Equality

These are central to everything that we do as a charity.



About us

We were established over 240 years ago and actively support the study and enjoyment of Scotland's past. Founded in 1780 and incorporated by Royal Charter in 1783, to this day we continue to promote understanding and conservation of Scotland's cultural heritage for the benefit of all. Nowadays we are an independent charity. We stimulate discussion and collaboration, and support research and publication, to bring Scotland's past to everyone.

We are increasingly involved in helping to interpret the past for a modern audience, highlighting how it is relevant today. We can connect people to Scotland's past, supporting work which reviews, researches and explains all dimensions of our past, including aspects which could be considered to be controversial or uncomfortable. We provide expert knowledge, freely and accessibly, to encourage everyone to understand, value and care for Scotland's unique heritage.

Royal Charter and laws

We are a charitable organisation. Our purpose is set out in our Royal Charter from 1783:

"...to investigate both antiquities and natural and civil history in general, with the intention that the talents of humanity should be cultivated and that the study of natural and useful sciences should be promoted."

The first Law of our society focuses this further:

"The purpose of the Society shall be the study of the antiquities and history of Scotland, more especially by means of archaeological research."



Governance

We are a charitable membership organisation registered in Scotland and governed by a set of laws, as required by our Royal Charter of 1783. We have several thousand members, referred to as fellows, from around the world. All fellows are connected through their interest in Scotland's past.

Fellows are elected to the society and can use the letters 'FSAScot' after their names. Fellows elect members to serve on our council. Council members become trustees of the society and are responsible for how we are governed. They work with executive staff.

Our annual general meeting is known as our Anniversary Meeting. It is normally held on St Andrews Day, 30 November.

Fellowship

Fellows support our aims and ethos, promote shared values of inclusion and open access, and create and share knowledge. We welcome anyone with an interest in Scotland's past, and encourage fellows to come together to share research, discuss the past and the future, and engage in a spirit of fellowship across the globe.

As an independent organisation that is separate from any government, university or agency, we rely mainly on fellows for our strength. Being independent allows us to act strongly on behalf of Scotland's past, emphasising its value today



Resources

Our council recognises that to meet our current commitments, as well as future developments, we must maintain and increase our available resources (in cash, staff and property). Over the period of this strategic plan, we will take steps to make sure our income and expenditure will result in balanced core budgets being agreed by 2027/2028.

We will diversify our sources of income – building on the development of legacy donations (donations from wills), ethical sponsorship and selling merchandise – and look to increase resources through current areas of expertise, as well as new areas when opportunities arise. We will always balance this with the priorities of accessibility and inclusion.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

We are proud to be an inclusive, anti-racist, pro-equality and pro-diversity charity. We believe that nobody holds a monopoly on Scotland's history and that it should be shared by and for everyone. For over 240 years, we have provided expertise, support and resources to promote the understanding and enjoyment of Scotland's past and the

influence Scots have had around the world. We support and help with research and innovation, act as an independent voice for heritage matters, and share knowledge of the past with everyone. We are committed to working towards equality and accessibility in the Scottish-heritage sector and beyond.

Environment

We play an active part in helping to solve the climate crisis. We will consider the effect our activities have on the environment and reduce the amount of carbon dioxide we're responsible for releasing into the Earth's atmosphere, becoming carbon neutral where possible.

We aim to choose suppliers who minimise their impact on the environment, for example when printing, warehousing and distributing books. Similarly, we will look to reduce our impact on the environment in other areas; we will continue to provide lectures online as well as in person whenever possible, and will reduce the number of face-to-face meetings, to reduce travel and for other environmental benefits. We will work with the Climate Heritage Network and others to help promote the opportunities that Scotland's heritage presents in understanding and tackling climate change.

Strategic aims

This strategic plan sets out our ambitions for realising our vision through our values and by upholding our Royal Charter and laws. It has been prepared in consultation with fellows, staff and council members. This strategic plan will provide the framework for all that we do. More detailed information will be given in an annual Budget and Activity Plan. We will keep this strategic plan under review so we can act on opportunities and changes relevant to our work.

Supporting research to increase understanding and promote further enquiry

A key area of our work is making research happen, to encourage interest in all areas of Scotland's heritage. This includes promoting good practice and making sure research into Scotland's past is of the highest quality and recognised internationally.

We acknowledge the need to make sure everyone can get involved in creating knowledge. We will work to remove barriers to participation and accessibility and encourage collaboration, while maintaining and growing skills and expertise through education and learning at all levels.

Greater understanding of Scotland's past, including aspects that might be uncomfortable or controversial, will increase its value to present and future generations and help to tackle misunderstandings and division. Scotland's story is still evolving, and that story will be better understood if all interested communities have a vibrant and vigorous attitude to research.

Promoting the sharing of knowledge

Increasing and broadening the results of research, and getting involved in how knowledge is created, are vital if Scotland's past is to be valued and cherished for future generations. We aim to:

- promote Scotland's past to everyone;
- remove barriers to understanding and knowledge;
- broaden the audience for and participation in research; and
- contribute to our well-being and the well-being of future generations.

We will continue to promote, encourage and support openness and accessibility, and to provide opportunities to better understand and benefit from Scotland's past.

Helping to safeguard Scotland's heritage

Having a greater understanding of Scotland's past will increase its value to present and future generations and help to make sure Scotland's unique heritage is protected. We will continue to make sure appropriate safeguards protect Scotland's cultural heritage.

Encouraging and improving access to heritage

Our values will guide our ethos of:

- making knowledge of Scotland's past freely accessible;
- removing barriers to knowledge and participation; and
- generally increasing accessibility to heritage.

Embracing the global aspects of Scotland's heritage

We will continue to develop as an independent organisation that promotes Scotland's past to the world. We will use the support of our fellows to spread quality information and engage people in understanding Scotland's past, including aspects which may be considered to be controversial or uncomfortable.

Providing physical and virtual spaces to achieve our aims

We will continue to develop digital resources and make them freely available to the public when possible. We will also consider joining up with other high-quality sources of information on Scotland's past. Building on the digital developments we had to make during the COVID-19 pandemic, we will continue to hold online events to improve access, encourage greater interaction with and between fellows, and encourage the development of pioneering ideas, discussion, evaluation and new visions.

We will consider options for accommodation suitable for an independent organisation that can support public engagement and interaction. Having our own offices will emphasise our independence and provide the facilities to make Scotland's past accessible.





837,000+
downloads of
our online
publications
in the past year

111,500+
downloads of
SAIR articles

678,500+
downloads of
the Society's
journal,
Proceedings

Delivering our aims

We will achieve our aims by:

- acting on our own or with others, as appropriate;
- providing responsive high-quality services to our fellows; and
- supporting and promoting the development of our staff.

To be able to achieve our aims over the next five years we must have appropriate resources (including finance, people and physical assets), acknowledge the wider heritage sector in Scotland and understand the financial environment which may affect subscriptions, investment growth and government funding.

Council members will direct staff to deliver the Strategic Plan over the agreed timescale, and to get any major changes to it agreed by our council and included in revised versions.

Actions to support research in order to increase understanding and promote further enquiry

- Lead and develop the Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (ScARF). This places us at the heart of Scottish archaeological research and will help with delivering the aims of Scotland's Archaeology Strategy, as well as the national Historic Environment Strategy ('Our Place in Time'), while maintaining our independence.
- Increase income to support research and use grants to support larger and more strategic initiatives associated with ScARF, Scotland's Archaeology Strategy and other national and local heritage strategies where appropriate.
- Recognise excellence by providing prizes and awards

for outstanding work in a voluntary or professional capacity, and collaborate with others when appropriate to make sure our prizes and awards complement others in the sector.

- In collaboration with others, support training and education, both formal and informal, to underpin research into Scotland's historic environment so a new generation has appropriate skills and interest in Scotland's past.

Actions to promote the sharing of knowledge

- Continue to support initiatives such as 'Dig It!' to increase and diversify the audience interested in Scotland's past.
- Develop the digital infrastructure required for online events to reach the widest possible audience.

- Encourage more collaboration between fellows, and better use of their expertise, to help create a greater sense of fellowship and for their knowledge to benefit the public.
- Develop and host events to increase collaboration and promote recent research to as wide an audience as possible.

Actions to encourage and help with safeguarding Scotland's heritage

- Recognise excellence by developing appropriate awards and prizes.
- Encourage clear, efficient management of heritage assets across Scotland and promote Scotland's past to audiences around the world.
- Encourage those working with all forms of Scotland's heritage to maintain high ethical values and to work with others to make sure Scotland's heritage laws and policies are fit for purpose.
- Make sure that our materials are appropriately created, published and stored for long-term preservation, and our digital resources are in line with the FAIR principles (findability, accessibility, interoperability and reuse).

Actions to encourage and improve access to all forms of heritage

- Develop further free online access to our publications.
- Expand online publications to include free articles of any length, rename the SAIR resource the 'Scottish Historical and Archaeological Internet Reports' (or similar), and have the necessary resources available.

- Develop and improve the Scottish Archaeological Research Framework as appropriate, to make sure it stays accessible and credible.
- Support, promote and provide access to all aspects of Scotland's heritage.
- Make appropriate changes to make sure we stay an inclusive organisation.

Actions to embrace the global aspects of Scotland's heritage

- Organise events and collaborations beyond Scotland.
- Increase the number of fellows and excite them about what we do.
- Develop relationships with fellows across the globe to increase our profile and our connections with Scots around the world.
- Increase the promotion of our collaborative worldwide initiatives, encouraging others through our experience and expertise.

Actions to provide physical and virtual spaces to achieve our aims

- Obtain and equip accommodation that meets our recognised needs and helps deliver our vision and mission.
- Provide an accessible focus for our research resources, including our online lectures and publications, with links to collections held elsewhere.
- Develop the digital infrastructure needed to provide innovative and interactive experiences of Scotland's past.

112,800+

**views of our
YouTube
channel**

24,000+

**hours of
video watched
on YouTube**

5,500+

**subscribers
to our YouTube
channel**

*Arran excavation with Jambo! Radio, Dig It!, University of Glasgow
and Northlight Heritage. © Sally Pentecost*

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