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Culture and Planning



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Editorial

Welcome to this Autumn edition of the Scottish Planner on the theme of culture and planning.

The creation of liveable, healthy, inclusive and sustainable places continues to be our principal goal as town planners. This goal is enshrined in our Fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) through the six spatial principles and the 33 National Planning Policies, which include policies around local living and culture and creativity, to name just a couple. Culture in particular has an important role to play, but it can often be given a back seat in light of other more pressing considerations around, for example, housing, transport and renewable energy.

However, culture is critical to ensure that planning does not just consider the bare bones of Scotland's places in terms of housing numbers and A to B transport routes. For our places to be truly liveable, healthy, inclusive and sustainable they need to embed cultural life to ensure they contribute positively to the experience of our places in a variety of ways and in a variety of forms on a daily basis.

In this issue, we explore the role that culture plays in our communities across Scotland, the initiatives that have been employed, and the critical role that planning and planners play. The articles featured give a wide array of examples of how cultural initiatives are used to regenerate our neighbourhoods, reimagine our natural and urban spaces, and the importance of community voices in developing this connection between culture and place.

Jenny Munro
Co-editor

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Convenor's Comments: Planning's New Future



Kirsty Macari MRTPI,
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Urban Planning/
Contemporary Art
Practice) at DJCAD,
University of Dundee

Kirsty Macari MRTPI, RTPI Scotland Convenor, Co-Head of Undergraduate (Architecture & Urban Planning/ Contemporary Art Practice) at DJCAD, University of Dundee, explores the ways in which cultural heritage interacts with and is expressed through planning.

The relationship between culture and planning is an evolving and complex one, with culture playing a significant role in shaping the physical and social landscapes of our places, both in understanding the journey of the past and the shaping of it for the future.

“ Cultural diversity influences architecture, infrastructure, and the urban design of places by promoting inclusivity and social cohesion.”

Culture, in the context of planning, encompasses a wide range of elements, including traditions, beliefs, values, art, architecture, language, and social practices. Our places are often melting pots of diverse cultures, and we have a role as planners to take these cultural dimensions into account when considering change. The identity of those from any given place are influenced by their culture and the experiences around them.

One key aspect of this relationship is the impact of cultural heritage. Historic buildings, landmarks, and conservation areas, particularly here in Scotland, contribute to a place's unique identity and can attract tourism, stimulate economic development, and foster a sense of pride among residents. Effective planning must encourage and manage the careful balance required of the need for adaptation with the preservation of

cultural heritage to maintain authenticity and character. In Scotland we see many examples of where we balance this well.

The value of cultural heritage was exemplified in The Fraserburgh Conservation Area Renewal Scheme Townscape Heritage Project as overall project winner during the RTPI Scotland 2022 Awards. Rather than being seen as a constraint to development, which can often be the perception, it was seen as the catalyst to support regenerative change whilst recognising the value of the historic and cultural assets of the town. Again in 2023, overall winner in Scotland, Zetland Park reinforces the value that comes from carefully considering the cultural heritage of a place and the impact that this has on the quality of collective wellbeing of both people and place.

Cultural diversity influences architecture, infrastructure, and the urban design of places by promoting inclusivity and social cohesion. Inclusive planning recognises the needs and preferences of different cultural groups, creating or enhancing spaces for cultural events, markets, and community gatherings. This not only enriches the experience but can foster a sense of belonging among communities.

Cultural expression can be seen worldwide. Our places showcase their cultural richness through iconic structures, sculptures, and murals that reflect local traditions and values. These cultural elements can serve as symbols of identity and pride, making places engaging and meaningful for its inhabitants. Something that at times, we take for granted.

Culture and planning are interwoven in a

cooperative relationship. Culture informs the values and preferences of residents, while planning shapes the physical and economic environments where cultural expression can flourish. Successful planning should embrace and celebrate cultural diversity, preserving heritage, fostering inclusivity, and integrating cultural elements into the urban fabric to create vibrant, authentic, and liveable places regardless of scale or location.

I really encourage you to read this paper by McCandlish and McPherson (2021) who explore the relationship of policy, decision making and hidden cultural heritage through a year long case study in Paisley. I recently attended a walking and sketching tour of central Glasgow led by Alison McCandlish. It was an opportunity to explore hidden gems, hear stories of the city and the people and see first hand some of the intricate relationship of culture and planning through art, architecture and urban design.

The full link to the paper is:
<https://eprints.gla.ac.uk/223595> ■



Article:

In Practice: New Ways of Working to Plan for Net Zero

Alexandra Elmslie, Place Planning Assistant at Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority and former RTPI Scotland Intern Project Officer, discusses the emerging findings from RTPI Scotland's ongoing New Ways of Working research project to explore approaches to ensure the planning profession is equipped to deliver on our net zero targets.

In the ongoing global battle against climate change, Scotland stands at a crucial crossroads. With the firm commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2045, there is a pressing need for Scotland's planning system to play a pivotal and multifaceted role. This role became evident in the Climate Change Committee's latest progress report to the Scottish Parliament, which called for an enhanced focus on planning for a low-carbon future. Furthermore, with the recent adoption of the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), Scotland now boasts a comprehensive national spatial strategy and a series of planning policies dedicated to addressing both climate change and biodiversity loss.

But why was this research initiated, and what makes it so vital?

This research project places Scotland's planning system at the heart of our mission to achieve ambitious climate targets. With the urgent global imperative to combat climate change, our planning system is a keystone for

driving change, both locally and on a global scale.

Scotland's unwavering commitment to achieving net-zero emissions by 2045, backed by legally binding targets, makes it crucial to understand the inner workings of our planning system. We must comprehend its strengths, weaknesses, and its potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This research embarks on this journey, seeking to uncover these critical aspects.

The motivation behind this research is deeply rooted in the need to tackle the intertwined challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss. These issues are interconnected, and our planning system can either impede or facilitate progress in these areas. Recognising this, the research delves into the intricacies of the planning system, identifying barriers, and pinpointing opportunities for streamlining processes. The aim is to foster discussions and inspire potential actions among stakeholders, facilitating efficient change while taking into



Alexandra Elmslie,
Place Planning
Assistant,
Loch Lomond & The
Trossachs National
Park Authority

consideration the current funding context of the Scottish Planning System.

In the broader context of climate action, the project aims to contribute perspectives, providing insights to planners, policymakers, and stakeholders for more effective decision-making. As we explore the specific research findings and proposals, we outline a conceptual roadmap for stakeholders to consider, which may involve exploring innovative approaches, reducing administrative burdens, and striving for positive climate outcomes. While this research may not provide the final solution, it ignites essential discussions, fosters new partnerships, and lays the foundation for recommendations that can make Scotland more sustainable and resilient.

In summary, the research highlights the vital role of Scotland's planning system in the pursuit of net-zero emissions by 2045, while recognising the financial realities it faces. We acknowledge that effective planning can be a powerful tool in addressing climate change and biodiversity loss. As we broaden the scope of this research paper, we uncover challenges, opportunities, and actionable insights, setting the stage for a collective effort to transform Scotland's planning system into a critical catalyst for positive climate action.

Our research journey began following a roundtable discussion initiated by the Rt Hon Chris Skidmore MP as part of his Net Zero Independent Review at the start of this year. In this dynamic forum, RTPI Scotland was privileged to participate, engaging in vibrant dialogues discussing the role of planning in our climate ambitions. Amidst these conversations, a common theme resounded: our planning system demanded a re-evaluation and rejuvenation to meet the challenges of our climate goals.

Post-roundtable, an exciting development took place. Duncan Smart, MRTPI and a Senior Planner and Environmental Analyst at Scottish Power Renewables (SPR), approached RTPI Scotland with a shared concern: that the prevailing perception of planning needed a transformation. The vision: to forge collaborative partnerships among industry professionals, ensuring that our

planning system and planners are not just equipped but empowered to steer Scotland towards its ambitious net-zero objectives.

In this spirit of collaboration and shared purpose, our research came to life, driven by the desire to reshape the narrative around planning and ignite collective efforts to make a tangible impact on our journey to a sustainable, net-zero Scotland.

As a prominent player in renewable energy, SPR brings essential expertise to the table, providing invaluable insights into current challenges and opportunities in relation to renewable energy planning and development.

RTPI Scotland's collaboration with SPR underscores the value of working together to address climate change and achieve net-zero emissions. It highlights the significance of a cooperative approach across sectors in finding sustainable solutions for our shared environmental ambitions.

In the early stages of the research, we identified five central themes that have guided the structure and focus of the project: public sector resourcing and coordination, consenting processes, the status and prioritisation of planning, monitoring and evaluation, and education and skills. These themes have formed the backbone of our exploration into optimising Scotland's planning system for the journey towards net-zero emissions.

Through our engagements with various stakeholders, several key proposals have emerged, eliciting considerable interest and support. The foremost proposal advocates for the establishment of a shared services model. This model aims to ensure that local authority planning officers can readily access the knowledge and expertise required to handle complex and technical applications, reducing the need for extensive training or the creation of new specialised job positions. While there is broad agreement on the potential necessity of a shared services model in addressing current resourcing challenges, questions persist regarding its spatial scale and official status.

Another notable proposal centres on co-commissioning reports, including environmental impact assessments (EIAs).

This concept promotes shared responsibility and enhanced transparency in the reporting process, ultimately seeking to foster greater trust in the consenting process. However, it has sparked robust discussions among stakeholders, with concerns raised about the potential for community mistrust in local authorities. To build trust, it is imperative that the process remains rigorous and transparent at every stage.

Lastly, it is vital to recognise that, although the paper is structured around five key themes, these proposals are not mutually exclusive. Common threads related to resourcing, status, and transparency weave through each, underscoring their interconnected nature. As RTPI Scotland's research journey continues, they remain committed to refining and expanding upon these proposals, all in pursuit of a more efficient and effective planning system that can contribute significantly to Scotland's net-zero ambitions.

We invite all members to join the conversation. Your input is invaluable in our mission towards a net-zero Scotland. Please contact RTPI Scotland or Scottish Power Renewables to share your thoughts, questions, or feedback on this research project. Together, we can drive positive change and shape a sustainable future. ■

“With the urgent global imperative to combat climate change, our planning system is a keystone for driving change, both locally and on a global scale.”



Q&A

Public Enquiries

Andrew Hoolachan MRTPI, Lecturer in Planning (Urban Studies) at the University of Glasgow and co-programme director for the University's City Planning MSc programme, answers our questions.



Andrew Hoolachan
MRTPI, Lecturer in
Planning, University
of Glasgow

1 Who has been the biggest inspiration or influence on your career and why?

Two people have influenced my career. Firstly, my Geography lecturer at St Andrews, Dr Lisa Law, inspired me to continue in academia and because of this I applied to study an MSc in International Planning at UCL. As a lecturer focusing on Southeast Asia, she broadened my horizons beyond euro-centric notions of cities and development. Secondly, Prof. Mark Tewdwr-Jones has been crucial in building my confidence as a 'planning academic', and we continue to write together – we will soon publish a book chapter on the legacies of modernist social housing in Newcastle and Dundee.

2 What do you feel is the biggest issue facing planners and planning at the moment?

Planning has lost its political champions in Government, particularly since 2010 when a new Government at Westminster began decimating funding to local authorities. More recently, some politicians have been influenced by think tanks who wish to further deregulate planning. Therefore, our politicians and leaders do not fully grasp that well-

funded planning departments can provide the solutions to our environmental crises, create fantastic places and provide housing at scale, despite a wealth of international and historical evidence. We must win back the argument that planning is an enabler of positive long-term change and refund it back to its rightful role as a key instrument of good governance. Our current environmental and economic crisis demands this.

3 Why is planning important?

I grew up in Dundee in the 1990s, in the physical shadows of industrial decline: blight, unemployment and great husks of abandoned jute mills looming over the city. I witnessed first hand the way in which global economic forces can ravage places. So, for me, planning helps to plug the gaps where markets fail. Planning can inspire visions beyond the status quo, can remove the risks to developers, can think beyond the short-term whims of the market and ultimately improve the social, economic and environmental outcomes of people and places. The transformation of Dundee's waterfront envisioned and delivered by Mike Galloway is a testament to good planning.

4 Where do you think best exemplifies planning's role in creating great places for people?

Many places! In Paris, it is remarkable how mayor Anne Hidalgo has transformed the city in only a few years to become a leading cycling metropolis and with many improved public spaces. In Berlin, I'm impressed with how urban parks are proactively managed for all kinds of inclusive uses. In Vienna, the public housing programme shows how affordable high-quality neighbourhoods can be achieved through good governance. And in Manchester, the adoption of Transport for Greater Manchester an integrated transport authority with publicly owned busses, is something that Glasgow should learn from, urgently.

5 What do you believe is a key research priority for the planning profession at the moment and why?

I would like to see research looking at the relationship between development management and local development plans in the context of the NPF4. If we want to achieve what we say in policy, we need to understand where the points are in the planning system where we do not live up to our ideals by analysing local authority processes and planning permissions. Why for example, are we still building low-rise sprawl with no public transport on the edge of Scotland's cities when this is literally the opposite of sustainable development and NPF4's aims? ■

“Planning helps to plug the gaps where markets fail. Planning can inspire visions beyond the status quo, can remove the risks to developers, can think beyond the short-term whims of the market and ultimately improve the social, economic and environmental outcomes of people and places.”

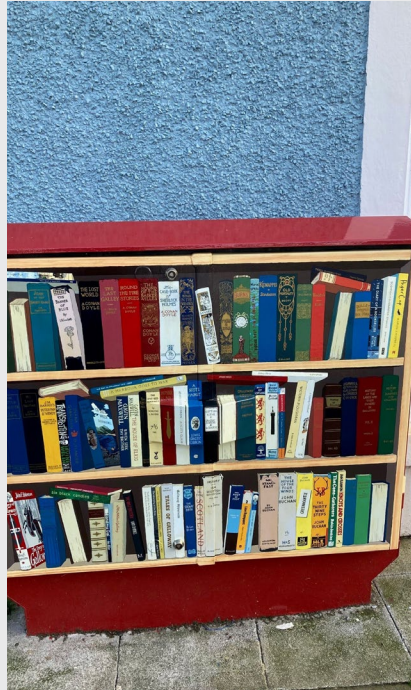
Immaterial Considerations

An irreverent look at the world of planning...

Just Skim It

Stone skimming has always been a great pastime – seeing how far you can make a stone skip across the water before it sinks into the depths. Hunting for ages for just the right stone. And the feeling of disappointment when that “perfect stone” sinks into the water on the first bounce (probably due to the stone thrower than the stone)!

But did you know that Scotland is home to the World Stone Skimming Championships which take place each year on Easdale Island? Home to just 60 residents, Easdale Island welcomed 350 contestants on Sunday 24 September to battle it out for first place in each of the 7 categories. The Championships have been known to attract approximately 1000 visitors to the Island each year. This year was the first year the contest had been held since before the pandemic, and you can find out more about it on the [World Stone Skimming Championships website](#). You can also find out more about Easdale Island [here](#).



Get Reading!

Earlier this year, a member of the RTPi Scotland team took a jaunt to Wigtown, Scotland’s National Book Town. Given this official designation in 1998, the town is home to approx. 20 book shops and book-related businesses, hosts an annual book festival, and has been recognized as an Honorary Quidditch Town, with its own Quidditch Team – the Wigtown Wanderers! One of the things that caught her eye on her visit was that even the street infrastructure hasn’t been able to escape the literary vibe – this junction box sitting outside Wigtown Post Office has been expertly and creatively transformed by local artist Will Gorman to resemble a book case filled with choice reading materials. Wigtown is also just a 10 minute drive from Kilsture Forest, which featured a pop up art exhibition earlier this year (you can read more about this on page 17 of this issue). More information on Wigtown can be found on the [Association of Wigtown Booksellers website](#).

Of Grave Interest

Ever wondered where the 5 most interesting graveyards are in Scotland? Well The Times has the answer! In August it released its results with Greyfriars Kirk in Edinburgh snapping up one of the spots for its extensive history and connections to the wee dog Greyfriars Bobby. Eilean Munde Island in Loch Leven also snagged a place, with the article noting that “you’ll need a canoe or kayak” to get there as there is no bridge. Kirkoswald Kirkyard in Ayrshire, Balquhider Churchyard, and Clachan Duich near the head of Loch Leven also feature in the article for the stories they continue to tell about Scotland’s past, places, and people. Do you agree with The Times’ assessment? Are there any graveyards you think should be on this list? If so, please let us know!

Read the article here: [5 of the most interesting graveyards in Scotland \(thetimes.co.uk\)](#)



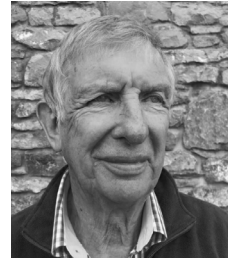
Feeling the Love

Can you spot the important message coming through on this notice board? Snapped by our former Director Craig McLaren at the Five Guys restaurant in St Vincent Street Glasgow. Hopefully this message is still coming through loud and clear! ■

the customer, are the most important visitor on premises. You are not dependent on us, we are dependent on you. You are not an outsider in our business – you are part of it. We are not doing you a favor by serving you... you are doing us a favor by giving us the opportunity to do so.

In Focus:

Town and Country Planning in The Scottish Borders



Dr. Douglas Hope, Depute Director of Planning and Development with Borders Regional Council (1980s & 1990's)

Dr. Douglas Hope, Depute Director of Planning and Development with Borders Regional Council in the 1980s and 1990s, discusses his new book which studies continuity and change in the practice of town and country planning in the Scottish Borders over a fifty-year period from the 1940s to 1996. Published by Edinburgh University Press

The focus of the book is on an area which encompasses the historic counties of Peeblesshire, Roxburghshire, Selkirkshire and Berwickshire; an area synonymous with woven cloth [tweed], knitwear and agriculture. This area has a rich past but the peaceful tranquillity of its landscape gives little indication of the challenges faced by the area as a result of the decline in its traditional industries and the loss of population after 1891.

Against the background of the social, economic and political changes of the twentieth century, the book shows how town and country planning emerged from being a fringe activity in Borders local government to become a driving force for change in the region. The book provides a comprehensive appraisal of the changing role of planning in the Scottish Borders during this time and describes how planning evolved from simply a system of land use control to a dynamic, pro-active, multi-disciplined collaboration encompassing not only spatial planning but also economic development and promotion, project design and implementation, urban conservation, rural heritage and countryside management, and environmental planning.

The book describes the principal characteristics of the Scottish Borders in terms of its development prior to the twentieth century. It traces the origins of town and country planning in Britain and the establishment of the planning system in the region. It compares and contrasts the different ways in which the four counties implemented the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1947 and details the principal policies and proposals in the first county

development plans. It describes how planning in the Scottish Borders broadened its horizons in the 1960s as regional and sub-regional planning took centre stage and more attention was paid to the plight of the more remote rural areas. It details how planning and economic development in the region became inexorably linked.

The book discusses the effect of local government reorganisation in 1975 on planning in the Scottish Borders with the establishment of the Borders Regional Council as a unitary planning authority for the area and explores the key policies and proposals for land use and development in the region's first structure and local plans. The book examines the challenges and achievements of the 1980s, a period of economic volatility. The 1990s was a period of uncertainty with a number of significant organisational and operational changes amongst Scotland's principal agencies, and a move towards sustainable economic development. The book details how environmental issues came to the fore and, with the reorganisation of local government in 1996 looming, examines the role of the Planning and Development Department in preparing for the challenges of the twenty-first century. It also looks forward to the impact of the significant changes to the Scottish planning system resulting from the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 and the subsequent changes to town and country planning in Scotland.

There are few, if any, books that provide such a detailed history of the practice of town and country planning in Scotland and, given the increasingly divergent planning

systems, practice and policy being introduced across different parts of the UK, this book is an essential read for all those interested in the history of town and country planning in Scotland. To obtain a copy visit: <https://edinburghuniversitypress.com/book-town-and-country-planning-in-the-scottish-borders-1946-1996.html> and use code NEW30 at checkout to save 30%. ■

SCOTLAND'S LAND

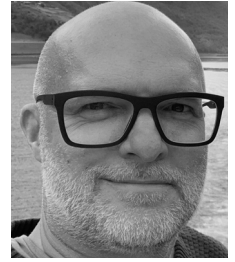
Town and Country Planning in the Scottish Borders, 1946-1996

From Planning Backwater to the Centre of the Maelstrom



Douglas G. Hope

In Practice: Way forward for 20-minute Neighbourhoods



Euan Leitch, Chief Executive of SURF

Euan Leitch, Chief Executive of SURF – Scotland’s Regeneration Forum, discusses the way forward for implementing 20-minute neighbourhoods and SURF’s response to the Scottish Government’s consultation on the draft Local Living and 20-minute neighbourhood guidance.

SURF – Scotland’s Regeneration Forum supported a 20 Minute Neighbourhood Practice Network from 2021 to 2023. The purpose was to examine the theory behind the concept and look for real life examples of its application with a particular intent to understand how this would impact Scotland’s most deprived places. The online seminars shared perspectives from academia, community groups, public services, local authorities, practitioners, and government. SURF took the learning from this network to respond to the Scottish Government consultations on draft-NPF4 and Local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods - planning guidance.

One of our fundamental recommendations remains that while application of 20-minute neighbourhoods is vital for urban Scotland it needs separated from the local living concept for less urbanised Scotland. The conflation of the two often met understandable resistance in conversations with people living in rural Scotland who felt their way of living was fundamentally misunderstood. Their fear was that urban policy would be misapplied to rural locations as decision makers were most likely to make them from an urban location. Even though the finalised policy in NPF4 and the guidance draw a distinction I think there remain benefits to separation.

One benefit in separating them would allow the guidance on 20-minute neighbourhoods to improve recommendations on the population density required to deliver the services desired in the concept. The draft guidance refers to density needing understood but provides no detail of what is required. Previously, RTPI Scotland

recommended that 65 dwellings per hectare may be required in new development, which SURF supported. A comparison between the densest urban area in Scotland with either Swedish or French counterparts illustrates much higher population densities abroad. This highlights how far we can go in increasing density and delivering attractive urban expansion, or redevelopment.

The major challenge in delivering 20 minute neighbourhoods is that many of the aims sit outside the scope of planning and therefore the guidance needs to be understood and applied across many different sectors. Affordable, frequent public transport is core to the connectivity of our places, enabling people to easily access work and services. Health facilities need not only to exist but be well resourced – GP surgeries in some urban areas are already over-subscribed and waiting lists closed. Requiring retail within a 20-minute neighbourhood without it being affordable food retail makes the requirement somewhat irrelevant if the intent is to provide a basic daily need for all – but food provision is market led and purposeful, healthy, affordable food provision would require state, or community, intervention.

If you look back to *Designing Places* from 2001 and Scottish Planning Policy 1 published by the then Scottish Executive in 2002 you will find all the principles of 20-minute neighbourhoods and local living laid out. If the policies have existed for 22 years, are we honest about why they have not been consistently and comprehensively delivered? The principles in NPF4 should be strengthened in the guidance by



becoming more prescriptive in what must be delivered to create successful places. The guidance would then become useful in the operationalisation of the Place Principle across local government departments and key national service agencies.

It would be remiss not to acknowledge that the policy has been somewhat captured by a conspiracy theory that citizens will be confined to 20-minute neighbourhoods. While there is no rational reason for this there is also no simple way to counter it and we find some local authorities now stressing the local living aspect. You can find the record of our network in our People in Place Practice Network on the [SURF website](#). ■

Article: Nuart Aberdeen: reimagining urban spaces



Artist: Swoon. Image courtesy of BK Tallman Photography

Ian Scott MRTPI, Planning Consultant at Ryden, discusses the successes of the Nuart Festival in his native Aberdeen and the role that planners have to play in delivering art and culture projects.

The success of Nuart Aberdeen has been one of my hometown's greatest achievements in recent years. While that may just be my opinion, I know it is shared by many. I'm very fortunate to be on the steering group of the Scottish Young Planners' Network and when RTPI Scotland asked one of our North East cohort to write this article, I keenly volunteered. A good news story that showcases Aberdeen? Yes, please. Spend any amount of time speaking to the average Aberdonian and you'll probably hear the phrase, "Aberdeen has gone downhill" or something similar, probably with some choice language thrown in, which I doubt is appropriate for the Scottish Planner. Whenever I hear that, I feel both saddened and frustrated by the apparent lack of civic pride that exists in Aberdeen. But the idea that most people who call this city home have no pride in it could not be further from the truth.

I have seen that often-missed civic pride come to life every year since 2017 (excluding 2020 thanks to covid), when the Nuart Festival

first made its way across the North Sea from its 2001 origins in Stavanger. In its inaugural year, Nuart Aberdeen was awarded the coveted Aberdeen Civic Society "Principal Award" when the Society said:

"The main part of the Nuart Festival took place between 14 and 16 April 2017 with talks, demonstrations and practical classes. In addition, eleven well known street artists from around the world were invited to put up some of their work on a more permanent basis, and this is there to be explored. The artwork tends to have been placed on walls, gables or other parts of buildings that were perhaps bland or un-interesting. Some of the art is funny, some of it is interesting, and some strange – the kind of thing that may just bring a smile to your face as you struggle through the streets of Aberdeen on a cold and blustery winter's day. The whole thing is very much of its time, and a lovely way to encourage us to explore and look at our built environment differently."

From the outside looking in, it seems like Nuart has only gone from strength to strength



Ian Scott MRTPI,
Planning Consultant,
Ryden

since then. Thanks to its curator Martyn Reed, funding from both Aberdeen Inspired and Aberdeen City Council, and a lot of hard work, artists from around the world have made their way to Aberdeen for a few days every year to bring blank walls and otherwise “dead” spaces to life. Of course, Nuart makes a point of supporting local artists too. The art follows a different theme every year and has ranged from small, quirky sculptures like mosaics in potholes or Lego bricks in the cracks of walls, to stunning murals which fill the sides of multi-storey flats and offices. This year’s theme was “Rewilding” which seems fitting for planners in the era of NPF4.

In fact, my favourite Nuart piece is from this year – the mural on the side of flats at Gilcomston, where NeSpoon has painted thistles and other flowers in her signature lattice style. Don’t worry, Historic Environment Scotland. No listed tower blocks were harmed in the making of any murals... Nuart makes a point of never altering listed or granite buildings.

The reason NeSpoon’s work is my favourite is not necessarily because I think it’s the most technically brilliant – it may well be but I’m hardly qualified to make that call. The reason is because of the transformation it has brought to the space it is in. Thanks to Nuart, a renowned artist from Poland, with pieces displayed around the world, came to Aberdeen and completely transformed a small section

of our urban environment (and my walk home), in a space that most people would simply pass by. That’s the story for at least 53 different spaces across the city, albeit by different artists from different places with different works.

I was fortunate to discuss the ins and outs of the festival with Ross Grant, a project manager at Aberdeen Inspired who has been involved in Nuart Aberdeen since its inception. He manages relationships with key partners that help make the festival happen. One of the first things Ross said to me was:

“The legacy of the festival has so many benefits for the city but, as the person tasked with securing walls and permissions from owners and the planning authority, looking at the benefits of the festival from a planning perspective has always fascinated me.”

Naturally, I was curious to understand Nuart’s experience of the planning system. Ross explained how:

“Nuart Aberdeen is done with consent from property owners and planning consent, but attitudes have changed so much from the days of politicians calling for street artists to be punished to now where Aberdeen prides

itself in hosting and welcoming street artists from around the world each year during the festival.”

He was keen to tell me about the positive working relationship that Nuart

“when Nuart arrives, people discuss and visit places in the city that might otherwise pass them by. It’s then that I realise civic pride is alive and well in Aberdeen”

has developed with local planning officers, stating that they, “...recognise the value that something like Nuart can have for a place,” and, “embrace the role that street art could and should have in any welcoming and engaging public space.” That appetite has seemingly extended to property owners and developers, who Ross advised are typically eager to host new pieces. He explained:

“Nuart Aberdeen banners and murals often now feature within developers’ artists’ impressions of new capital projects, and we have had developers suggest that blank wall space be included within new developments to make provision for street art while the city council has specifically included provision within their George Street mini masterplan project for more street art to help reactivate the space alongside other proposed improvements. I do not believe that any of this would be happening without that sea change in attitudes as a result of the festival.”

In this, I see an exemplar success story of a planning authority, the property industry and an interest group (in this case Nuart) working collaboratively to provide clearly defined outcomes with associated benefits for an area and its people.

So, what is actually the benefit for everyday people? In my opinion, it’s the same reason that I’m writing this article and that you are reading it – interest. Every year, when Nuart arrives, people discuss and visit places in the city that might otherwise pass them by. It’s then that I realise civic



Artist: NeSpoon. Image courtesy of Ian Scott



Artist: Mazza. Image courtesy of BK Tallman Photography

pride is alive and well in Aberdeen, when residents who may otherwise feel let down are given a good reason to look and think again about their city. When Nuart arrives, it seems that the talk of difficulty and decline gets paused, even if just for a few days or weeks. That’s certainly been the case among most of the people that I know. On this point, Ross said:

“Previous evaluations of the festival and its legacy have shown that the public and businesses believe that Nuart Aberdeen has improved people’s perceptions of the city / city centre as a creative and vibrant place to visit while evaluations have also shown that people have felt a greater sense of civic pride in their place as a result of delivering Nuart Aberdeen each year.”

If you add in the chance that Nuart gives artists to display their talents to thousands of people, the talks and tours that come along with the festival, that Aberdeen is now an international destination for street art and the general visitor interest that gets generated, it looks like a classic win-win to me.

If it isn’t already obvious I, like many in Aberdeen, am a big fan of Nuart and what it has achieved. However, I am not naïve enough to think that the successes of Nuart will be sustained for years to come without a lot of hard work, nor do I think Nuart is the only thing Aberdeen needs to reimagine itself. A range of initiatives will be required for that to

be achieved and, most importantly, sustained.

When it comes to delivering art and culture initiatives, planners clearly have a role to play but are we doing enough? It helps that Policy 31 in NPF4 gives fairly sweeping support to “culture and creativity” proposals. However, we need to think carefully about how we implement that locally, in a way that is well thought out and achievable, without creating problems for the other things that planning needs to deliver. From speaking to

Ross at Aberdeen Inspired, I was genuinely pleased to learn that Aberdeen City Council has been proactive in its engagement with Nuart with respect to funding, planning policy and planning applications. It seems like the approach taken in Aberdeen for initiatives such as Nuart has worked to good effect, and continues to do so. Long may that continue and provide lessons for both other initiatives and other areas. ■



Artist: Murmure. Image courtesy of Hannah Judah Photography

Article: Burrell Renaissance



Sarah Shaw MRTPI,
Head of Planning,
Glasgow City Council

Sarah Shaw MRTPI, Head of Planning at Glasgow City Council, discusses the successful renewal of the world famous Burrell Collection and its setting in Pollok Park, which also has innovative plans for retrofit of historic buildings and energy generation.

The Burrell Museum, within Pollok Country Park, is designed to house and display the outstanding collection of art and antiquities gifted to the City of Glasgow by Sir William Burrell.

Thirty years after its completion, the building required a major programme of refurbishment to address current museological standards and visitor expectations. Only 20% of the Collection was on show when the gallery was closed and the Burrell no longer attracted the number of visitors expected for a national museum.

The Burrell Renaissance Project was a multi-million pound project to deliver a full refurbishment of the category 'A' Listed museum. Glasgow City Council committed to making this investment in The Burrell's future, to fully restore the architectural triumph of the building, increase the number of objects on display and accessible to visitors to 21st century standards, and to create a cultural asset accessible to as wide an audience as possible, including park users, community groups and out of hours events.

Of particular importance, the project sought to significantly increase display space without any external extensions to the building. Respecting the appearance, plan, materiality and character of the original design was a key requirement of the project.

Pre-application discussions started in early 2016 with John McAslan+Partners, for Glasgow Life, GCC Planning & Building Standards and Historic Environment Scotland (HES). An extensive series of pre-application meetings led to the submission of detailed planning and Listed Building Consent applications.

Following consent, officers from GCC worked closely with McAslan+Partners through discharge of conditions, a further planning consent for solar panels on the roof,

and three further Listed Building Consent applications.

Works to decant the Collection commenced in 2016 and the museum reopened in March 2022. On completion, the museum's gallery space has increased by 35%, allowing important and unique objects from the Collection, which have not been seen for decades, or have never been on permanent display, to go on show.

New displays give visitors a better understanding of the international significance of The Burrell Collection's artworks and the people who made and owned them. In total 225 displays are spread across 24 galleries. The displays include innovative digital elements such as video walls, interactives and hybrid systems created to help people engage with the stories behind the Collection.

A new central stairway allows visitors access to the lower floor of The Burrell Collection for the first time, where they can watch items not on display being cared for. A new temporary exhibition space has also been created, with new galleries on upper floors.

The museum's environmental performance has been enhanced through a new roof, glazing

and cladding, installation of solar panels and by replacing power, heating and lighting systems with more efficient and sustainable technologies. A digital twin for the whole Park was used to assess energy scenarios.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZit06I0ROA>

The Burrell Collection's refurbishment also brings visitors to Glasgow's south side and to Pollok Country Park to enjoy a full day out. The Park is Glasgow's largest green space and is home to Pollok House, Pollok Stables and Sawmill (which have funding for renewal), spectacular gardens, woodland walks and play areas. Paths, roads, benches and signage have been improved; vehicles have been restricted along the main through-route in the centre of the park; and electric vehicle chargers, electric shuttle bus stops, and NextBike bikes and e-bikes give a greater priority to active travel.

Meaningful and engaged pre-application discussions allowed the planning process to be accelerated: the time from validation to determination was under five weeks. These strong relationships formed at the pre-application stage enabled constructive dialogue throughout the discharge of complex conditions. <https://burrellcollection.com> ■

“Glasgow City Council committed to making this investment in The Burrell's future, to fully restore the architectural triumph of the building, increase the number of objects on display and accessible to visitors to 21st century standards, and to create a cultural asset accessible to as wide an audience as possible, including park users, community groups and out of hours events”



Article:

Why community voices matter in facilitating and enhancing the connection between culture and place



Heather Claridge
MRTPI, Director of Design, Architecture and Design Scotland

Heather Claridge MRTPI, Architecture and Design Scotland Director of Design, reflects on a recent knowledge exchange session with the Director of Urban Pirates New Zealand, Cam Perkins.

In August, Architecture and Design Scotland hosted a knowledge-sharing session with Cam Perkins, Director of Urban Pirates New Zealand to exchange ideas on how we as planners can prioritise community voices in shaping our places.

During this session, Cam shared his experiences of placemaking in New Zealand and his understanding of the different relationships that people have with place. He spoke about the importance of working with communities to understand their stories and to use these stories to inform the planning

and design of places and support positive behaviour change. Cam also spoke about the importance of creating opportunities for people to connect with each other and with their place, and creative use of tactical approaches to test ideas.

The role of culture and planners in designing places

As we know, culture is a vital part of what makes a place unique and special. It encapsulates the lived experiences, values, and traditions of the people who live there.

“Placing people at the heart of our plans and places is critical and community engagement is just one of the vital elements of successful architecture and planning”

Culture is also expressed in the physical environment, through the architecture, landscape, and public spaces of a place.

Cam talked about his experience of working in New Zealand - one of the most diverse countries on the planet. There are many different languages that are spoken and so there are many different relationships that people have with this place.

Some of the work that Cam has been involved in are in Auckland's waterfront working with 19 different indigenous groups, or Iwi, and working with all the other people who've come to call New Zealand home. It's really important that when we are in the same place together and we're trying to figure out what this place means to us, to help people to understand the different stories that they bring to a place.

As planners, we have a key role to play in facilitating and enhancing the connection between culture and place. By working with communities to understand and celebrate their cultural heritage, and by designing places that support cultural expression and participation, planners can help to create vibrant and inclusive communities.

Why are community voices important in planning?

Community voices are important in planning because they help to ensure that the needs and aspirations of the people who live in a place are taken into account. Communities have a deep understanding of their own culture and heritage, and they can play a vital role in identifying and celebrating the unique qualities of their place.

Cam said "Working with a place is a really great way to tell the story of this big place that supports us as people, as humans who rely on this planet. We need to work in places in a way that introduces people to each other and to their different stories."

Building capacity

The real power to transform places lies in developing collective place leadership. This involves building shared purpose and capacity and skills in collaboration to take a holistic approach to city-shaping.

Cam said "I think it's really important that we look beyond simply the built environment professionals and look at the bigger picture. What is the ecosystem of people who are playing a role in making places better?"

When communities are involved in planning, they can help to identify and protect cultural assets, design places that support cultural expression and participation and promote social cohesion and inclusion.

Cam also spoke about his work developing a 6-month training programme - funding the

foundations, for project managers to support them to develop the right collaboration and place-based skills and culture, prior to receiving project funding for delivery.

Identify and protect cultural assets

Communities can help to identify and protect cultural assets, such as historic buildings, traditional landscapes, and cultural practices.

Design places that support cultural expression and participation

Communities can help to design places that support cultural expression and participation, such as public spaces that can be used for festivals and other cultural events, and facilities that support arts and cultural activities.

Promote social cohesion and inclusion

By celebrating and promoting cultural diversity, planning can help to promote social cohesion and inclusion.

Using tactical approaches to gain support

Testing different ways to engage with stakeholders and communities, through the physical demonstration of the changes proposed has also been part of Cam's experience. Through the Access for Everyone pilot project, Cam helped use temporary design interventions to test out how to reduce private vehicle access to city centre streets and prioritise pedestrian and active travel modes - a key move towards a more sustainable future.

Sharing experiences

Reflecting on the knowledge-sharing session Cam Perkins said "When we share our experiences of building our knowledge, building our skills, and building our attitudes and beliefs, we are sharing our journey of forming who we are as future people and as future communities. It's really important that we spend time together to understand what it feels like to do that. This is a difficult thing to do, and it can often challenge the way that we see the world. It might challenge the way that we've been trained or the way that we live.

"The ability to simply share what it feels like to go about a bit of a change process is a really wonderful thing and it is a really powerful tool to help us to share our experience of how to do this work."

"As planners, we have a key role to play in facilitating and enhancing the connection between culture and place. By working with communities to understand and celebrate their cultural heritage, and by designing places that support cultural expression and participation, planners can help to create vibrant and inclusive communities"

How can planners involve community voices in planning?

At Architecture and Design Scotland, we know the significant roles our communities play in planning and designing our places. Placing people at the heart of our plans and places is critical and community engagement is just one of the vital elements of successful architecture and planning.

When we begin by understanding each place's story, we can identify why and where change is needed. We can then develop a shared brief for the future place. This can act as a route map to support action, setting out the collective leadership, culture and approach needed. Cam's experiences of working with New Zealand communities and professionals show the power of empowering communities, promoting sustainable practices, and fostering collaboration for positive urban development.

We recently published an article about the [benefits of community engagement](#) in architecture and planning. You can read more about our commitment to the Place Principle and how community voices have helped shape our places from the projects mentioned in the article. ■

Article:

North Edinburgh Arts: Culture & Regeneration



Kate Wimpres,
Director of North
Edinburgh Arts

Kate Wimpres, Director of North Edinburgh Arts and member of the Boards of Community Land Scotland and the Scottish Regeneration Forum (SURF), discusses the regeneration programme in Muirhouse and the development of a community hub which will enhance community life in this North Edinburgh neighbourhood.

As a critical part of the ongoing regeneration programme in Muirhouse, North Edinburgh Arts (NEA) with assistance from the Scottish Land Fund, took full community ownership of their land, building, and a contiguous plot of 38m². Completed in August 2022 via a community asset transfer from the City of Edinburgh this enabled NEA to partner with the Council to develop an innovative and creative and community hub for the area, due for completion early 2024.

Muirhouse, one of the most deprived wards in Scotland, is currently the focus of targeted regeneration, building 1000 new homes, a health facility, a new nursery and creating a new town centre around MacMillan Square. The new 'MacMillan Hub', of which NEA will own and occupy a third, has been developed through a forward looking partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council.

NEA has operated in Muirhouse, serving the whole of North Edinburgh, for over 20 years. Their existing 2-storey building incorporated two studios, a 96-seat theatre, recording studio, offices and a café with children's play area and large garden. Well-loved and well-used, the charity knew it had to expand to meet the growing needs in the area, to secure its future, and to harness the opportunities arising from land reform, community wealth building and 20 minute neighbourhood policy agendas.

The combination of community ownership of a £4.3m asset, NEA's twenty year history of grass roots engagement with place-making, the co-location of Council and third-sector services, plus a creative approach across all operations will lead to multiple routes for access, ownership and circular investment. The owners are the beneficiaries of the

organisation, and will be re-investing in each other, in the area, and in making decisions for the generations to come.

Practically, the refurbishment and extension programme is increasing the venue by 380m², wrapping around the existing theatre and going up two storeys, adding 10 new studio spaces, a wood workshop, new office spaces for creative and community organisations, a hot desking mezzanine and an expanded café. These additions open up new streams of income, and employment opportunities, helping to underpin the financial stability of the organisation for the long term.

The local area has been undergoing re-development across decades, meaning the natural, communal, and shared spaces of Muirhouse and surrounding areas have periodically shifted, been demolished or re-purposed for new buildings. This has had an impact upon social interactions and the sense of community among strangers and friends sharing the neighbourhood and its amenities. NEA at the MacMillan Hub aims to be the go to, communal, accessible, shared space for the long term - owned and shaped by those who use it. To become the de-facto 'town square' where people meet, hear and share news, support one another, develop ideas, celebrate and console. Where people connect, feel a part of, and contribute to, something bigger.

The MacMillan Hub aims to be an anchor building, creating and enhancing community life, offering services for everyone, whilst focusing on the most disadvantaged. In this NEA is, and will continue to be, a beacon in the community offering:

- A place to consolidate—people, projects and funds



- A place for community—to meet, support one another, enable and empower
- A place to be enterprising—to be resilient and sustainable into the future
- A place to collaborate—across all sectors and communities to build a shared vision for North Edinburgh

The new spaces will build social capital and a sense of belonging amongst local residents, both existing and new arrivals, will be strengthened. Young people will develop increased skills, confidence and self-esteem. Families and children will have safe and inspiring places to enjoy locally, and older people will be part of a connected community engaging with and supported by their neighbours.

Back in 2019 NEA received over 96% support for the plans to bring the land and building into community ownership. Once open and operating the NEA venue, and the wider MacMillan Hub, should prove to be transformative; harnessing the nimble and creative approach of community led organisation with council services, set within a locally owned asset. NEA creates places where people want to be; with meaningful impact and long term positive change rippling out from a community-owned core.

Further information on the NEA capital programme can be found here: www.northedinburgharts.co.uk/development. ■

Article:

Art in Kilsture Forest, Dumfries and Galloway



Wendy A Macleod,
Chair of Upland Arts
Development CIC

Wendy A Macleod is a Retired Planner and Development Manager and the current Chair of Upland Arts Development CIC. She has had numerous varied roles throughout her career in Edinburgh, Dumfries, Fife and The Highlands and in this article she discusses Kilsture Roaming - a temporary art festival in Kilsture Forest.

Kilsture Roaming was a temporary art exhibition in Kilsture Forest which took place on Sunday 20 August in collaboration with Kilsture Forest Community Group and part of Upland Arts Development CIC (Upland) research project, ROAM (West) to demonstrate the value and potential of contemporary art in rural areas. Upland is a bold, ambitious, rural based visual art and craft development organisation based in Dumfries and Galloway. It is a membership organisation of some 140 artists and creatives, funded by Creative Scotland, Dumfries and Galloway Council and other grant awarding bodies.

Dumfries and Galloway is a vast region with a small population of 150,000 and is rich with artistic talent. Kilsture Forest is a gem of a broad leaf woodland, located in the Machars, a peninsula in the west of Dumfries and Galloway, south of Newton Stewart. The 203ha forest is owned by Forestry Land Scotland (FLS) and managed in conjunction with the Kilsture Forest Community Group under a volunteer management agreement.

The exhibition formed the culmination of a year-long research project by Upland called ROAM (West) and funded by Creative Scotland to develop and support contemporary art in the region. The project brought together 7 practising artists from various disciplines led by Jack Ky Tan and examined whether there is enough support, infrastructure and resourcing for contemporary art to thrive in the West of Dumfries and Galloway. For many of its artists, especially those whose work explore ideas and issues not primarily commercial, face a disproportionate struggle compared to those living in cities to find opportunities and outlets. The metrics used to award funding often include audience numbers or

reach. A rural project reaching an audience of thousands may deeply engage a considerable proportion of the community. The rural location at Kilsture Forest was key to the project about responses to and relationships with wild spaces and the forest environment. The exhibition adopted a leave no trace approach and was driven by the artists' passion and commitment for the region and for progressing contemporary rural creative practice.

The artists were:

- **Jack Ky Tan** – Disposing Forests – web-based audio, QR codes and engraved signage which was a set of 6 short readings told as you wandered through Kilsture Forest of the Forest's entanglement with activism, forestry policy, legal history and the local community.
- **Hope London** – Leaving My Body – printed acrylic discs on string which is a very personal response to a period of illness.
- **Del Whitticase** – Career Path: An Alternative Artists CV – repurposed building material and text which draws attention to all the artistic commissions applied for that aren't seen or celebrated.
- **Savannah Crosby** – Home - photographic installation which explores belonging and trying to find a sense of place.
- **Sarah Stewart** – A Square; A Stitch; A Row; A Grid; A Pattern; A Feeling; A Meaning – a patchwork quilt stitched together from leaves representative of more than bricks and mortar displayed on a white plinth deep in a forest clearing.
- **Frances Ross** – Connector Node Field – a glazed ceramic installation which looks beyond the yellow nodes on the forest

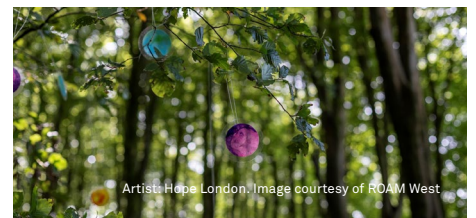
floor to focus on the connections between them and the patterns they make.

- **Anne Waggot Knott** – The Forest – recycled objects, paraphernalia, printmaking, zine using the forest as a collaborative partner in her work. "Embed" consisting of hammocks encouraged the visitor to take time out to experience the forest by looking up, listening to the bird life and enjoy all the sensory wonders.

Establishing a forest exhibition (albeit temporary) raises questions around the ability of art to connect people with the natural environment. The exhibition changed the feel of the forest and the forest transformed how the artistic pieces were viewed and experienced when compared with an "archetypal" art gallery. In addition to the usual solitary dog walkers or couples, there were small groups of people stopping, standing, thinking about the works, discussing what they were seeing.

The Arts are a powerful force for creating a sense of place and for economic and community regeneration. Planners can help facilitate these connections by ensuring that art works are commissioned as part of regeneration and building projects.

For more information about Upland and its projects see www.weareupland.com ■



Artist: Hope London. Image courtesy of ROAM West

Article:

The Hidden Door Festival: celebrating place and culture



Hazel Johnson,
Policy and Strategy
Manager, BEFS

Hazel Johnson Policy and Strategy Manager at BEFS (Built Environment Forum Scotland) and the Festival Director of The Hidden Door Festival, discusses Edinburgh's Hidden Door Festival which brings art into otherwise empty and inaccessible spaces.

Since 2014 the Hidden Door Festival has opened up new space for the arts across Edinburgh - both literally and figuratively. The multi arts festival has adopted a nomadic approach and is regularly located in empty and previously inaccessible spaces and buildings across the city. By inviting the public to explore new and enticing spaces

for development previously identified. Here, the festival provides a celebration of the space in its current state - a swansong of sorts - inviting a response to the physical and existing built environment, often subverting expectations of how that space might be filled. In other cases, it has been possible for the festival to be part of creating a viable future, supporting communities with an asset to kickstart regeneration and reawakening. A notable example of this was Hidden Door's work with the Leith Theatre on Ferry Road, now once again an important cultural and historic asset for the city.

Some years ago, as part of the festival programme,

Hidden Door asked the question: who are our empty urban spaces and places for and how do we make the most of them both through development and temporary initiatives? It may have seemed like an unusual move for a burgeoning arts festival, gathering creatives, architects, built environment professionals and developers into a room, to take part in an 'Urban Space Debate' - but as part of the Hidden Door festival it was a question that needed to be asked explicitly, as implicitly it is what the festival has been exploring since 2014.

My own interest has long been in understanding what makes good places, advocating for the role of culture, heritage, and the arts as an essential part of this. Through Hidden Door this interconnectivity is put into practice, exploring the importance of community led, grass roots events and the transformative effect of collectively 'making things happen'. Importantly, this kind of

activity is now explicitly supported by NPF4 Policy 31.

Choosing an itinerant mode of running an arts festival allows Hidden Door to connect with new communities that surround the buildings we use, and further probe the question of what makes good places. Whilst Hidden Door primarily came into being to provide a dynamic platform for creative practice, it has a very real dual purpose, spanning a cross sector approach to using urban spaces more productively and bringing together developers, asset managers and the local authority in collaboration, with the festival as an intermediary in realising - albeit temporarily - the full potential of our places. Building owners and asset managers can also play a part, by being open to or encouraging temporary initiatives and meanwhile use, as projects develop. These buildings and places mean many things to many different people, who may have associations, connections, and feelings of ownership or identity attached to a place.

Through initiatives like Hidden Door, arts organisations can be a driver for conversations about how best to make the most of 'undiscovered', underutilised or forgotten urban spaces, enabling a greater understanding of what a place can mean to - and can be for - all kinds of communities.

These spaces might be about to undergo change, but creative meanwhile use, even if temporary, can generate a legacy that lasts longer than the event and can act as a catalyst for future civic activity, pride, local identity - and potentially, earlier engagement within the planning process.

What opportunities might future development plans enable in your places? ■

"My own interest has long been in understanding what makes good places, advocating for the role of culture, heritage, and the arts as an essential part of this."

it is possible to generate much larger audiences for the - predominantly early career - performers and artists that Hidden Door programmes. Over the past decade or so, the festival has been privileged to transform - by cleaning, clearing, creating temporary infrastructures and filling them with art, music and performance - some of Edinburgh's most architecturally, historically, and culturally significant empty buildings.

Finding new 'undiscovered' spaces relies on a combination of having an ear to the ground, the right conversations at the right time, and several leaps of faith. The Hidden Door team have worked with asset managers, owners, development agencies and of course relevant local authority departments to unlock new spaces for the festival. Many of the temporary venues that the festival has transformed over the years have already been earmarked for development, with planning applications lodged and a rough timeframe

Update: RTPI Update

Policy Consultations

RTPI Scotland have submitted responses to the following consultations and requests for written evidence:

- Response to the Circular Economy (Scotland) Bill Consultation
- Response to Scottish Government Review of Permitted Development Rights – Phase 3
- Response to the Effective Community Engagement in Local Development Planning Guidance
- Response to the Land Ownership and Public Interest Bill Consultation
- Response to a Human Rights Bill for Scotland Consultation

These are all published on the RTPI website. Consultations currently under consideration are:

- Mandatory Training on Planning for Elected Members, deadline 26 October
- National Marine Plan 2 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Report, deadline 30 October
- Tackling the Nature Emergency: Consultation on Scotland's Strategic Framework for Biodiversity, deadline 14 December
- Democracy Matters, deadline 28 February

Apprenticeships

Work regarding apprenticeships and widening alternative access routes to planning education is still ongoing. The RTPI Scotland Convenor is engaged in further discussion and business case development alongside Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council with meetings having taken place in August and September.

Digital Planning

As part of our work on developing digital planning skills, RTPI Scotland is currently working with Scottish Government on the creation of a Digital Skills Portal and a Digital Skills Handbook.

- The Digital Skills Portal Project is currently underway, and our User Testing Group have been providing opinion on brand identity, design, sitemap, and navigation
- We have appointed suppliers for the design and contents of the Digital Skills Handbook, and this project has now kicked off
- We are looking for users from different backgrounds, ages, etc. to participate in the User Testing Group for the Digital Skills Handbook. If you are interested in being involved or would like to find out more, email crea.barton@rtpi.org.uk

Celebrating 20 Years of the Scottish Young Planners Network

On 14 September we gathered at the Scottish Parliament building to celebrate 20 years of the Scottish Young Planners Network (SYPN). Together with MSPs, current and former SYPN members, planning students on the cusp of their careers, and experienced planning professionals, we spent the evening reflecting on the journey the SYPN has taken since its inception in 2003 to being the highly valued support network for young planners that it is today. We are very grateful to Monica Lennon MSP for hosting the Reception and to Joe FitzPatrick MSP and Minister for Local Government, Empowerment and Planning, for attending and speaking at the Reception. The

key message of the evening was clear: young planners have a transforming effect and are vital to delivering our net zero vision. We need to do all we can to nurture their development as the future of the profession.

RTPI Scotland's Annual Conference 2023

Our 2023 Annual Conference took place on 5 October at Malmaison in Dundee on the theme of delivering a digital future for planning. It was a lively day buzzing with exciting opportunities, challenging questions, and innovative solutions to ensuring our journey towards a bold, ambitious, collaborative, and inclusive digital future. Thank you to all those involved in pulling the conference together, including our 2023 Convenor Kirsty Macari, our fantastic speakers, and our Conference sponsors – The Scottish Government and Geddes Consulting.

Helen Fadipe Elected as Vice President of the RTPI

We would like to congratulate Helen Fadipe in being elected RTPI Vice President for 2024. Helen Fadipe is Managing Director of FPP Associates Ltd, a multi-disciplinary planning consultancy firm providing strategic planning and Interim management and founder of BAME Planners Network, which promotes diversity and inclusion in the planning profession. Fadipe has over 30 years of experience working across public and private sectors, both in the UK and internationally. The full election results can be found on the [RTPI website](#).

Welcoming Dr Caroline Brown to the RTPI Scotland Team

The RTPI Scotland team are excited to welcome Dr Caroline Brown, who will be starting as RTPI's new Director for Scotland, Ireland and the English Regions on 23 October.

Dr Brown brings with her over 20 years of experience as a planning academic, beginning her research career with a PhD at Liverpool University, before moving to research and teaching at UWE, Bristol and then to Heriot-Watt University, where she has worked for over 17 years.

Her research specialisms include sustainability and health, with a focus on social sustainability, greenspace, blue health, and active travel. She is also a part of the international Child-Focussed Cities Network and is a senior editor at the journal Cities & Health.

Social Media

The @RTPIScotland Twitter account has 5107 followers and the @ConvenorRTPI account has 1760. ■



Scottish Parliamentary Reception
Celebrating 20 years of the Scottish
Young Planners Network

Image courtesy of Reuben Duffy



Update: Scottish Government

Since the adoption of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) our priorities have shifted from policy development to focus on maximising the tools, skills and capacity to support delivery. Our newly updated NPF4 Delivery Programme sets out further details and a progress update on all of our workstreams.

Our Programme for Government 2023 – Equality, Opportunity, Community

In September, the First Minister announced this year's Programme for Government (PfG) for 2023-24.

The focus of the PfG is delivering the three Missions of the Policy Prospectus:

- Equality: Tackling poverty and protecting people from harm
- Opportunity: A fair, green and growing economy
- Community: Prioritising our public services

These missions are the driving ambition of the Scottish Government. Each mission connects and, when delivered together, will make a real and positive difference to the lives of people across Scotland.

To deliver these missions the PfG is focused on reducing poverty, delivering

growth, helping to tackle climate change, and providing high quality public services. Planning, Architecture and Regeneration Division has an important role in supporting their delivery across a range of PfG commitments across the PfG this year. We will also lead delivery of the following commitments:

- Continue planning reform, including digital transformation of the system and introduction of regulations and guidance on new Masterplan Consent Areas, and further permitted development rights, to simplify and streamline processes for investors.
- Continue to deliver place-based investment and community-led regeneration, investing £70 million in our communities to help reduce inequalities

and support inclusive economic development in disadvantaged and fragile communities across Scotland – transforming vacant and derelict land to attract investment, and supporting delivery of low carbon, affordable housing and new green infrastructure to help enable the transition to net zero.

- Progress work to reform and modernise Compulsory Purchase Orders, starting with the appointment of an expert advisory group in 2023-24, and implement new infrastructure levy regulations by spring 2026.
- Continue to deliver support to our most fragile communities through our £9m Investing in Communities Fund, which prioritises key areas tackling poverty and inequality including child poverty,

community-led regeneration, and supporting a just transition to net zero.

National Planning Framework 4 Delivery Programme Update

In November 2022, we published the first iteration of the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Delivery Programme. The Delivery Programme is an important tool which sets out the approach for implementing NPF4 and covers governance and collaboration; delivery mechanisms; infrastructure funding and finance; skills, resources and performance; and monitoring and evaluation. A key element of the Delivery Programme is the action programme which outlines a series of workstreams which collectively support the delivery of NPF4. This includes a list of guidance which we will be producing to support certain policy themes.

In September we published the [second iteration](#) of the Delivery Programme, providing further clarification on timings for NPF related work and outlining our collective achievements since the first iteration. We will continue to actively monitor, progress and update the Delivery Programme over the lifetime of NPF4 and welcome feedback on its content.

The Planning, Infrastructure and Place Advisory Group

One of the key actions in the NPF4 Delivery Programme was the establishment of the Planning, Infrastructure and Place Advisory Group (PIPAG) by the Scottish Government in association with Scottish Futures Trust. PIPAG comprises a core group of experts, supported by a range of organisations providing a wealth of experience and skills on a reference group. The core group have met twice so far, most

recently on the 7th September in Winchburgh, West Lothian. Progress was made in considering the complexities of infrastructure delivery and how the group will tackle these. Consideration was given to issues of housing delivery, funding, infrastructure first and placemaking. Future sessions are likely to investigate other topics such as regeneration, climate adaptation, town centres and ports. PIPAG will play a crucial role in the implementation of NPF4 and the group will help drive forward joined up, place based delivery of development and infrastructure in Scotland. Updates and outputs will be made available on the Scottish Government website. [Planning, Infrastructure and Place Advisory Group | Transforming Planning](#)

National Planning Improvement Champion

Craig McLaren has been appointed as Scotland's first National Planning Improvement Champion. This new post is embedded within the Improvement Service and funded by Scottish Government. The Champion will support improvement within the Scottish planning system, by monitoring performance, looking at overall trends to identify and share good practice, and identify where improvements or efficiencies can be made.

Permitted Development Rights Review

In May we published a public consultation on Phase 3 of the Scottish Government's ongoing review of permitted development rights (PDR). In view of the climate and cost crises, Phase 3 focussed primarily on PDR for domestic and non-domestic renewable energy equipment, such as solar panels, heat pumps and wind turbines. It also sought views on additional PDR for replacement windows and electricity

transmission infrastructure. The consultation closed on 23 August. We are currently considering the responses and will use this feedback to finalise the proposals, with a view to introducing new measures early in 2024.

Current Consultations:

[Elected Member Training](#). During the Summer we published our consultation on mandatory training on planning for elected members which is open until 26 October 2023. The consultation sets out how mandatory training could be implemented, seeking views on training requirements, content, delivery and monitoring of the training. Mandatory training for elected members is part of a package of measures included in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 to help improve the performance of the planning system as a whole. The Planning Act makes the training of elected members who sit on a planning committee, or any other body, mandatory.

Staying In Touch

For the latest messages from the Planning, Architecture and Regeneration Division, follow us on Twitter @ScotGovPlanning and register to receive our [Planning, Architecture & Regeneration news](#) updates. ■



Update:

Heads of Planning Scotland (HOPS)

In September the National Planning Improvement Champion was appointed following provisions made in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. Craig McLaren has taken on this role based at the Improvement Service. HOPS are glad to see this position has been appointed to someone with such broad knowledge of the Scottish Planning system and existing good relationship with all stakeholders from his previous work at RTPI Scotland.

As the Champion begins engaging with all stakeholders, we are keen to work further with him to assess what can be done to improve performance processes for Planning Authorities. We see this independent view of the system as being a vital component in establishing a constructive and supportive approach to how planning performance is monitored.

There is a long-established track record of monitoring planning performance in Scotland with Planning Authorities submitting Planning Performance Framework reports to Scottish Ministers for the past 12 years. These reports are used in a variety of ways by authorities; promotion of the planning service work, capturing ongoing work, as well as for internal auditing purposes. The reports submitted in 2023 can be found on the [HOPS website](#).

In those 12 years we have collected a wealth of information on good practice, workforce planning and continuous improvement. Across the board planning authorities have seen improvements on the indicators set by Government. We hope that this past data will form a good basis for the Champion to work upon and help planning

authorities reach the goals of an adequately resourced planning system and able to deliver quality outcomes for people and places.

Trevor Moffat, Planning Skills Project Manager at the Improvement Service and Heads of Planning Scotland Secretary. ■

Update:

Directorate for Planning and Environment Appeals (DPEA)

DPEA published its [Annual Review](#) in June, setting priorities for the year ahead. It is intended that DPEA will ramp-up initiatives designed to ensure that processes are more proportionate and efficient.

This work is already resulting in faster processing times for onshore wind proposals. DPEA can expect to receive a significant increase in Electricity Act inquiry cases. Within this context we intend to build on the efficiency gains achieved by [Guidance Note 23: Managing an Efficient Inquiry Process](#) by facilitating quicker and more proportionate inquiries and reporting.

In the same vein, it has become apparent that the proportion of Further Written Submission casework has been steadily growing over the past four years or so, at some points outstripping the proportion of

Site Inspection casework. Requesting further submissions elongates processing times and increases the burden on appeal parties. To this end we have considered internal factors to ensure that further submissions are sought only where absolutely necessary. In tandem, we are working with the Improvement Service to provide bespoke training during the coming year for participants in the appeal process.

Building on our experience of conducting virtual hearings and inquiries during Covid restrictions, we have published [Guidance Note 25: Selecting in-person, virtual or hybrid procedure for pre-examination meetings, hearings and inquiries](#). This follows on from additional investment in webcasting equipment and staff training. DPEA is determined to make hearings and inquiries as accessible and non-intimidating as they can

be. The guidance note sets out when in-person or virtual procedure is likely to be appropriate, and also sets out parameters for location-neutral events, where participants may participate in the inquiry room or remotely as their preferences dictate.

As ever, DPEA is keen to hear your experiences of the appeals process, which can be sent to us at DPEA@gov.scot.

Scott Ferrie MRTPI, Chief Reporter, DPEA. ■

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