



HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT
ADVISORY COUNCIL
for SCOTLAND

**Sixth and Final
Annual Report**

1 September 2008 to 31 May 2009

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by Scottish Ministers
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It has been my privilege as Chair of the Historic Environment Advisory Council for Scotland for the past six years to present Council's annual reports. In presenting the first report in 2004 I did not expect to have the task of presenting the final one also, so it is with mixed feelings that I do so. The purpose of this final report is to review the work of HEACS during that time, and to reflect on what was achieved and what was learned. It is a matter of some pride and very real pleasure that HEACS did offer something new and quite distinctive to the sector, and of equally real regret that it has been cut short.

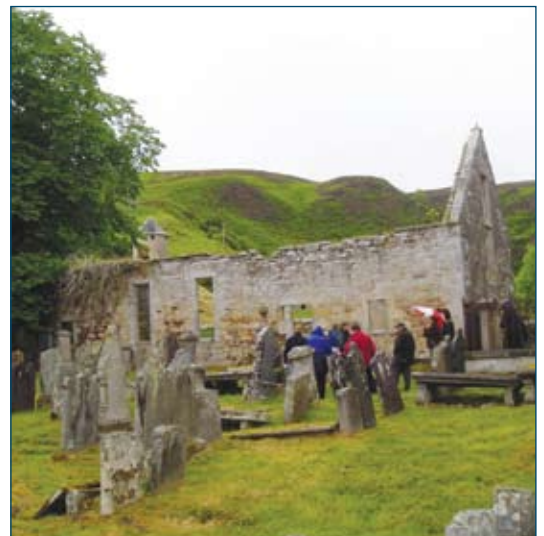
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Report for 2008/2009

This report also covers the period since our last annual report, published in September 2008, during which time Council met four times, twice in Edinburgh, once in Perth, and once in Glasgow. The core work was of course the completion of work on the four assigned topics, which required regular and at times frequent meetings of the four working groups. This closing down period has led to more frequent direct contact with Historic Scotland: HEACS Chair's Group met twice with their Senior Management Team, in addition to less formal ad hoc meetings between the Chair and senior staff, and between the Secretary and Director of Policy.

In the period of uncertainty following the First Minister's announcement in January 2008 that HEACS was to be abolished, HEACS abandoned plans for its annual conference, choosing instead to plan a closing conference in May 2009 to mark the end of its work. In a move away from its usual practice HEACS planned this final conference in partnership with other key organisations in the sector as a means of emphasising where continuity lies, and of ensuring a forward-looking event. It is gratifying, and very encouraging, to report that the response has been excellent.



The Four Reports

I am pleased to report that HEACS completed its work on all four assigned topics, with reports submitted to Ministers in December 2008, and in March and May 2009.

The main thrust of the **Report on the Infrastructure** for Scotland's historic environment was directed towards the need for the sector to seek a higher profile and to develop a more effective collective voice. Its key recommendations were for the establishment of a national intermediary body for the historic environment, building if possible on existing frameworks. It was backed up by three commissioned studies, one a mapping of the sector, one of voluntary sector intermediary bodies, and one of volunteering in the historic environment in Scotland.

The **Report on the Economic Impact** of the historic environment in Scotland is the most arresting of the four, providing very clear numerical and factual evidence of the historic environment as a significant player in the Scottish economy. The commissioned research which forms the core of the report was carefully designed to ensure robust figures and results, providing convincing evidence of a greater economic role than previously recognised. The particular significance of this report was confirmed by the Minister in a press briefing.

The **Report on the Engagement of Young Adults** in the historic environment in Scotland, which also drew on the results from the volunteering study, had a more subtle message. In terms of personal development the period from 16-24 is very eventful, encompassing transitions from childhood dependency to adult independence, from education to employment, moving into longer term relationships, and for many, into parenthood. It is a time during which external interests are particularly linked to these transitional goals, so evidence was sought from the fields of education, employment and volunteering, and a series of case studies commissioned.

In spite of a general lack of systematic data, the evidence gathered was more encouraging than the terms of the question posed by Ministers to HEACS seemed to foresee. Two main messages emerge: one that the sector is comparatively successful in engaging young adults in related interests and activities; the second, and more powerful, that the benefits to the sector from this interest and activity are such that more could and should be done to support and develop it further.

The **Report on the Ecclesiastical Heritage** has concerned itself mainly with the question of redundant churches, and its principal focus has therefore been on the Church of Scotland. It wants to see a more strategic approach to the issue from both the Churches and Government, and it makes a series of recommendations covering: the information base; state funding for repairs; the ecclesiastical exemption; redundant churches; and graveyards. Research was commissioned on the extent of the ecclesiastical heritage in Scotland, and on church-state relationships and their impact on the ecclesiastical heritage elsewhere in Europe.

Looking Back

The context within which HEACS began its work was very different from the present. It seemed then that there was a sense of optimism, a sense that further growth was possible, although tempered by recognition that future spending rounds might be more constrained. In contrast, the current economic crisis is already having a serious impact on organisations in all parts of the sector, compounded by the reduced resources available from the National Lottery. Major changes in the planning system, changes in the Government's view of the role of the voluntary sector and in how the sector is funded, and changes in the balance of responsibilities between national and local Government, are still being worked through. It is worth noting also that, from the time of the decision to create HEACS to its final closure, the historic environment portfolio has been held by no fewer than five Government ministers.

All of these factors have combined in the short term to create a deep-seated level of uncertainty and anxiety, whatever their longer term effect may be. The signs point to a deepening funding crisis for a sector



Current and former members and staff of HEACS at a farewell dinner in Glasgow, March 2009 © Ronnie Syme Photography

that was arguably already under-funded and, as the evidence from the economic impact study demonstrates, under-valued. It is essential that in spite of the difficulties, the various recommendations from the HEACS' reports, which are designed to build on the sector's strengths and to reduce the weaknesses, should be acted upon.

HEACS was faced from the outset by the question of how its structural relationship with Historic Scotland fitted with its task of preparing independent advice. Looking back, what seems remarkable now is how much freedom HEACS has had to choose its way of working, to use its resources as it thought best, and to pursue topics of its own choosing in addition to those assigned by Ministers. This freedom made it possible for HEACS to build an identity as an organisation which worked independently, and came to be seen as that by colleagues in the sector. Nevertheless its status as a Government body proved valuable in terms of access to advice and resources, and the readiness of others to share information and assist in providing evidence to working groups.

Quite early in its life, HEACS introduced a succession policy to ensure a good balance between continuity and ongoing

renewal. Over the six years of its existence 18 people have served as members of Council. Six served for the full six years, three for four years, five for three years, and three for two years. One resigned for health reasons.

HEACS was not set up as a representative body, but has nevertheless attracted members from a good cross-section of sector interests. They have come from the Government, voluntary and private sectors, and from academia. Their specialist fields have included architecture, conservation, history, planning, archaeology, museums, marine archaeology, history, urban regeneration and funding.

All were recognised leaders in their field. All gave extraordinary commitment to the work. A calculation based on an estimate of the average time spent by HEACS members on HEACS work, over six years, multiplied by a conservative estimate of the daily rate which any of them could command as consultants, produced the startling total of over £1 million. To that should be added the time and expertise given by others from the sector who joined working groups, gave evidence and responded to consultations.

There is no doubt that HEACS gave and did far more, and in greater depth, than anyone had expected or asked for. During its initial think-tank session HEACS had agreed that its aim was to prepare sound independent advice to Ministers on strategic issues, advice based on evidence gathered from and with the co-operation of the sector. The tangible result has been a set of carefully argued and well presented reports and recommendations.

I am sure you will join me in congratulating the members of Council, and the HEACS Secretariat, on a body of work which has broken new ground and exceeded expectations. It lies now with the Government and the sector to ensure that the work proves to have been of lasting benefit.

Forming a View of the Sector

From the nature of its task, and the ways in which it chose to address it, which included peripatetic Council meetings, annual study tours, and a rolling programme of meetings, conferences and seminars, HEACS has in effect viewed the Scottish historic environment sector through a series of different but related frames of reference and from different standpoints and perspectives. The frames of reference were provided by the subjects of our reports. The different standpoints and perspectives came from the members' own varied backgrounds and expertise, from the evidence gathering process, from formal and informal meetings with people around the country, and from conference speakers and participants.

What has emerged is a picture of a large and complex sector, which includes within itself a Government sector, a private sector and a voluntary sector. It operates at local, national, European and global levels, directly employs 41,000 FTE paid staff and indirectly supports a further 20,000, contributes £2.3 billion annually to the Scottish economy, and attracts volunteer activity with a notional financial value of £28 million per annum. The sector takes



responsibility for the unique national collection which is Scotland's historic environment. This is a huge task, to which those involved bring great energy, commitment and expertise. The value to the general public can be deduced from the millions of visitors, and by the over 2 million hours of volunteer time devoted to its care in a year.

This new evidence points to a sector of some strategic importance to Scotland. It is, however, a sector which appears to have been reluctant to promote itself, and as a result may be underestimated and under-valued. A symptom of this is the fact that, though the sector includes many highly qualified experts and produces very high levels of detailed and learned research, it has been slow to 'measure' itself, as it were, leading to a lack of general and basic data from which to argue the case for a higher level of priority and more resources.

HEACS' Contribution

HEACS has proved to be very short-lived compared with its predecessor bodies and the general expectations at the time of its establishment. It was asked to consider the need for an audit of the historic environment; the role of local government; the legislative framework; the question of skills and materials; the criteria for taking properties into care; the infrastructure for the historic environment; the economic impact; how to engage young adults; and the long term conservation of the ecclesiastical heritage. In addition it prepared a substantial response to the Review of Historic Scotland in 2003. It is still too early to make any real assessment of its impact, but some of its achievements include:

- advice to Ministers offered on nine issues of strategic importance for the sector;
- commissioning and publication of seven research reports related to the key issues;
- the establishment of the Scottish Historic Environment Audit (SHEA), creating a resource for baseline data collection;
- a series of annual sector-wide conferences as a forum for discussion of strategic issues;
- extensive networking through peripatetic Council meetings, working groups, seminars and study tours;
- a capacity and a willingness to explore issues in a way which would not have been possible for the Government itself;
- setting new baselines through evidence gathered, especially in relation to economic impact, the scale of volunteering, and the scale of the challenge facing the ecclesiastical heritage;
- from the evidence gathered and the recommendations in the reports, providing the sector with a set of tools for further development of issues and of the relationship with Government at local and national level; and
- setting markers for future developments, for example in terms of strengthening of the legal framework.



Unfinished Business: Looking Forward

HEACS was an advisory body, not an executive body, so much of its impact can only be measured in terms of process, and in terms of what others do as a result of HEACS' reports and recommendations. It is for the Government and the sector to decide how and when to use the tools, and to follow through on the markers laid down by HEACS.

The current set of four reports, submitted to the Minister over the past few months, are still subject to discussion within Government. Formal responses will be published on behalf of the Minister by Historic Scotland, and will be communicated to me in due course. It will be important that key bodies in the sector take note of the responses, and follow up on them as seems necessary.

The need remains for the sector to develop an effective and credible collective voice, a channel for promoting and representing the sector in wider fora, a means of engaging more efficiently in strategic discussions with Government and other key bodies of interest and influence, and of supporting development and capacity building within the sector. Evidence provided by HEACS points clearly to the sector being more important to Scotland's economic and public well-being than is generally appreciated. Without a collective voice outside of Government, it will continue to punch below its weight and will remain under-resourced and under-valued. The choice lies with the sector as well as with Government.

As you will read in the report which follows, HEACS was pleased that a number of its recommendations have been accepted and acted upon. It is, however, a matter of great regret that some of the most important and far-reaching recommendations were turned down. Two in particular should not be buried: the recommendation for a review of the legislative framework for the historic environment; and the recommendation that

a duty of care for the historic environment be placed upon local authorities and public bodies. HEACS has noted that there is to be a Bill amending the ancient monuments and listed buildings legislation which will seek to correct some anomalies, and urges Government and the sector to press for maximum benefit from it.

It is interesting to speculate what topics might have been assigned to HEACS had it been continuing. The question of funding for the sector? Climate change? Community engagement and community planning? The relationship between the historic and natural environments? Legislation?

The real question, however, is how independent advice on issues of strategic sector-wide importance will now be sought. At the time of the announcement abolishing the advisory NDPBs, the Government said that advice would be sought on an ad hoc basis. Key bodies in the sector may wish to discuss with Historic Scotland how that might best be done for the historic environment.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I welcome this opportunity to thank once more all those who have helped and guided us in our work.

Historic Scotland had a key role in both practical and political terms, being responsible for providing the resources, liaison with the Public Appointments Commission and for briefing Ministers and drafting responses to HEACS' reports and recommendations. We have much to thank them for – sufficient resources, a staff team of very high calibre, and other help-in-kind, including access to a wide range of staff, and input to working groups. Most importantly, they gave us the space to choose our own way forward. It was a complex and on occasion a challenging relationship for both parties. I can only thank them for their willingness to look for ways forward when problems arose, and for the consideration which I experienced in my dealings with them.

A great deal has been said about the distinctive way in which HEACS chose to work. The downside was that it created a very heavy workload, especially for our small Secretariat. They brought a very high level of skills, knowledge and experience, not to mention reserves of energy and patience without which we might all have foundered. We came to know them well and to appreciate them as individuals as well as colleagues. We owe them more than can easily be said, and wish them continuing success.

Warmest thanks go to all those in the sector who gave so generously of their time and expertise, joining and giving evidence to our working groups, welcoming us on our study tours and sharing their experience with us, those who joined us for dinner prior to our Council meetings, and those who attended and spoke at our conferences and public meetings. They expanded our knowledge and kept us connected to current realities.

Finally, I give my own personal thanks to HEACS Council members. They did indeed break new ground, and exceeded all expectations. Working with them has been an unforgettable experience.

Elizabeth K Burns CMG OBE

Chair

May 2009

Introduction

HEACS was the advisory Non-Departmental Public Body which provided Scottish Ministers with strategic advice on issues affecting the historic environment. It was established in 2003 and its abolition, along with many other Scottish public bodies, was announced in early 2008. Council agreed to a request from the Minister to continue until the completion of its work programme in May 2009. It will be formally abolished when the necessary legislation is passed. This is its sixth and final Annual Report.

List of Members

The membership of HEACS during 2008-9 was as follows:

**Elizabeth Burns
CMG OBE**
(Chair), former President and Chief Executive Officer of the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE);



Ross Noble, retired Curator of the Highland Folk Museum;



**Dr Peter Burman
MBE**, Professor of Cultural Management, Brandenburg Technical University, Cottbus; Architectural Historian;



Professor Richard Oram, Professor of Medieval and Environmental History, University of Stirling;



Mark Hopton
(Vice Chair), Partner in LDN Architects;



Dr Evelyn Silber, Honorary Professorial Research Fellow in Art History, University of Glasgow; former Director, Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery;



Ian Johnson
(Vice Chair), Manager, Ayrshire Joint Planning Unit;



**James Simpson
OBE**, Partner in Simpson & Brown Architects, Archaeologists and Building Historians;



Colin McLean, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund, Scotland;



**Andrew Wright
OBE**, Chartered Architect and Heritage Consultant.



Eila Macqueen, Director of Archaeology Scotland;



Members were appointed by Scottish Ministers in accordance with the Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies issued by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Chair was paid a salary of £2,860. Members received expenses.

Major issues under consideration

During the period of this report, Council has concentrated on preparing strategic advice for Scottish Ministers on the four priority issues which had been identified by the Minister with responsibility for the historic environment in 2006.

The Minister had requested Council to:

- identify for Scottish Ministers the economic impact of the historic environment in Scotland;
- map the infrastructure of the historic environment as it relates to the voluntary sector, professional associations and private sector organisations, and to make recommendations on actions that may need to be taken to fill gaps and optimise coverage;
- provide advice to Scottish Ministers on how best to secure the long-term conservation of Scotland's rich and diverse ecclesiastical heritage in a time of demographic change; and
- identify for Scottish Ministers what strategies could be developed for attracting young adults to get engaged in protecting, conserving, understanding and enjoying the historic environment.

The first two topics had been identified by Council in its preceding term as issues requiring consideration and were included by way of Ministerial endorsement.

Advice on the infrastructure of the historic environment was submitted to the Minister in December 2008. Council recommended the establishment of a bespoke national intermediary body for the historic environment with the capacity to bring together all parts of the sector, to be a champion for the sector, and to act as a representative voice from time to time.

Advice on the economic contribution of the historic environment was submitted to the Minister in March 2009, together with the very significant findings of the research commissioned by HEACS from ECOTEC Research and Consulting Ltd. HEACS was pleased that Michael Russell, Minister for Culture, External Affairs and the Constitution, briefed the press on these findings.



Advice on the engagement of young adults was submitted to the Minister in May 2009.

Advice on the long-term conservation of the ecclesiastical heritage will be submitted to the Minister by 31 May 2009.

All of this advice is or will be available on the HEACS website: www.heacs.org.uk which will be maintained for a period after May 2009, and thereafter on the Historic Scotland website.

It is understood that responses by Scottish Ministers to the advice provided on these four issues will be posted on the Historic Scotland website in due course.

In addition, HEACS commissioned a major piece of work from Volunteer Development Scotland (VDS) on volunteering and the historic environment, which was submitted to the Minister in December 2008. This research report demonstrated the very high levels of active public interest in and support for the historic environment, at local and national levels.

Closing Conference

Council organised a full-day conference, *Past Forward – Celebrating and Promoting Our Historic Environment*, held on 20 May 2009 at Dynamic Earth, Holyrood Park, Edinburgh. This was a partnership event between HEACS, Historic Scotland, the National Trust for Scotland (NTS), the Scottish Civic Trust, Archaeology Scotland, the Built Environment Forum Scotland and the Historic Houses Association. The conference included an opening address by Michael Russell, Minister for Culture, External Affairs and the Constitution; and presentations on the four reports submitted to the Minister by HEACS. Other speakers included Liz Davidson, Director of the Merchant City Initiative; Liz Burns, Chair of HEACS; and Kate Mavor, Chief Executive of the NTS. The closing address was delivered by the author Magnus Linklater; and an open forum was chaired by Stephen Carter, President of Archaeology Scotland.



Note of expenditure on behalf of Council

Expenditure on behalf of HEACS during the financial year 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009 amounted to £119,000. This expenditure covered: the Chair's salary; members' travel and subsistence; meetings and accommodation expenses; research commissions; stationery and equipment; and maintenance of Council's website.



CLOSING COMMENTARY

Establishment of HEACS

HEACS was established under the Public Appointments & Public Bodies etc (Scotland) Act 2003. It was formally established on 1 June 2003 and met for the first time later that month.

HEACS consisted of a Chair and some 11 members, appointed by Scottish Ministers in accordance with the Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies issued by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments Scotland.

HEACS was established as a result of pressure from the historic environment sector deeply concerned by the proposed abolition of two statutory advisory bodies, the Historic Buildings Council for Scotland, dating from 1953, and the Ancient Monuments Board for Scotland, dating from 1913. There was a strong feeling within the sector that Scottish Ministers should have access to independent advice provided by a statutory NDPB.

HEACS was different in that it was established to offer independent strategic advice and was not expected to become involved in casework in the way that its predecessor bodies did.

The establishment of HEACS was seen by many in the sector as a new beginning and enthusiasm was indicated by the considerable number of applicants for membership.

Remit

HEACS was charged by the then Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport with the broad remit of providing informed and independent advice on:

- the state of the historic environment;
- how the historic environment is identified and protected;
- how the historic environment is presented and promoted to foster public understanding, enjoyment and support;
- how the historic environment contributes to the wider context: for instance, education, the economy, tourism, arts and culture, leisure and the promotion of social justice; and
- how an adequate supply of skills, materials and resources is ensured to safeguard the historic environment for future generations.

While the 2003 Act defined the historic environment as 'any or all of the structures and places in Scotland of historical, archaeological or architectural interest or importance', HEACS understood that this may be interpreted in as wide a way as possible.



Aims of HEACS

The aims of HEACS (as agreed by Council) were to:

- offer independent, sound and well-informed advice to Scottish Ministers;
- identify and develop its own wider agenda of strategic issues and topics on which it may also prepare and offer advice;
- work in ways which recognise and involve key stakeholders as part of a commitment to openness;
- develop effective communications;
- work within recognised good practice frameworks; and
- be an effective advocate for Scotland's historic environment.

The focus of HEACS was on preparing advice for Scottish Ministers on a number of major topics. However, HEACS tried to strike a balance between this core work and the need to create an identity for HEACS by engaging with people and organisations in the field.

HEACS attempted to work in ways which were open and accessible, and which maximised the involvement of a wide range of expertise and special interests.

Identification of issues

The legislation empowered Scottish Ministers to ask HEACS for advice, but also empowered HEACS to provide advice without being asked.

HEACS was twice asked for advice on issues by the Minister: in June 2003 the Minister asked HEACS to provide advice on five issues during Council's first term of three years; and in 2006 the Minister asked for advice on a further four topics during Council's second term of three years.

Of the nine major issues or priority policy areas on which HEACS provided advice, three originated with HEACS. It is likely that this proportion would have grown over time.

Suggestions for issues worthy of further examination were generated from time to time and were reviewed and re-prioritised by Council. Some of these issues became the subject of Working Group investigations and advice to Scottish Ministers.

The major issues

The nine major issues on which advice was provided to Scottish Ministers were:

- the need to review heritage protection legislation in Scotland;
- the need for a heritage audit in Scotland;
- the role of local authorities in conserving the historic environment;
- the availability of adequate and appropriate traditional materials and professional and craft skills to meet the needs of the built heritage;
- the criteria for taking historic properties into state care;
- the economic impact of the historic environment;
- the infrastructure of the historic environment as it relates to the voluntary sector, professional associations and private sector organisations;
- the conservation of Scotland's ecclesiastical heritage in a time of demographic change; and
- the strategies which could be developed for attracting young adults to get engaged in protecting, conserving, understanding and enjoying the historic environment.

Consultations

HEACS made formal responses to a considerable range of consultative papers. Some of these responses, for instance, the Review of Historic Scotland, the consultation on the Architecture Policy, and the Cultural Review and the Cultural Commission, involved a good deal of work. In some instances, such as CAP reform and the Scottish Rural Development Programme, HEACS maintained a continuing interest in the implications for the historic environment.

Organisational matters

Council's quarterly meetings were arranged in accordance with Council's wish to hold peripatetic meetings. This gave Council the opportunity to visit important heritage sites, but more importantly it enabled Council to meet with people involved with the historic environment on the ground, including local authority and voluntary sector representatives. It provided Council with an additional and important means of contact and discussion with stakeholders.

HEACS had regular meetings with the various Ministers, particularly to discuss its reports. It also met regularly with Historic Scotland, which, as its sponsoring body, provided resources, dealt with matters relating to Ministerial appointments, and was a source of advice and information. In addition, HEACS had a rolling programme of meetings with some of the wide range of specialist and expert bodies in the field. These were particularly useful in responding to various consultation exercises and in identifying issues for further consideration.

HEACS undertook an annual study tour to gain a clearer understanding of the range of strategic issues affecting the historic environment in different parts of the country and to meet with local people actively involved in the historic environment. Tours to the Scottish Borders, Mid Argyll, the Western Isles, Glasgow and the River Clyde, and Caithness provided Council with a variety of opportunities to explore strategic issues on the ground and learn about frontline problems and solutions. All of the tours were

underpinned by excellent and informative presentations from local experts and enthusiasts.

HEACS arranged a number of national conferences. The first in 2004 in Glasgow on the theme of *Exploring the Boundaries – what do we mean by the Historic Environment today?*; the second in 2005 in Edinburgh on the theme of *The Historic Environment in Care*; the third in Falkirk in 2006 took an overview of all five of Council's reports from its first term; the fourth in Stirling in 2007 on the theme of *Climate Change and the Historic Environment*; and the last in Edinburgh in 2009, organised in partnership, on the theme of *Past Forward – Celebrating and Promoting our Historic Environment*.

HEACS gave high priority to effective communications, as part of its commitment to openness. Council published full annual reports and held annual public meetings. The HEACS website provided a useful means of communication and was well



used by the public. The website contains Council's reports, the agendas and minutes of Council meetings, its consultation responses, and most conference papers. The website ensured that HEACS' most significant publications were always available and those interested could follow Council's progress and development, and note the subjects in which it was taking an interest.

HEACS largely looked after its own affairs, with the assistance of its Secretariat. A Chair's Group was established to function as an executive group dealing with urgent matters arising between meetings of Council, preparation of agendas and other related matters, and with any other matters as determined by Council. HEACS had a delegated budget provided by Scottish Ministers through the sponsoring body, Historic Scotland. The budget of £60,000 was increased to £100,000 in 2007-08 and to £120,000 in 2008-09, reflecting the workload placed on HEACS and to enable the Council to commission research.

Working groups were established to address the various topics on which the Minister had asked for advice or which HEACS had identified. Some of the working groups consisted entirely of members of HEACS, others included external members who very kindly agreed to assist HEACS in its work and who added a great deal to the quality of the discussions. The working groups gathered evidence, both written and oral, from individuals and organisations in the field, commissioned research, undertook literature reviews, discussed their findings, and prepared reports with recommendations for consideration by Council.

HEACS had a small Secretariat which in effect, though not in formal terms, was seconded from Historic Scotland. In July 2007 the Secretariat was expanded by the addition of an additional part-time post of Secretary at a senior grade.

The advice provided by HEACS

It was very encouraging that the first advice provided by HEACS, which recommended a heritage audit in Scotland, led to the setting up of Scotland's Historic Environment Audit (SHEA). On the other hand HEACS was disappointed that its second piece of advice, which recommended a review of the heritage protection legislation, did not meet with success in spite of the strength of the evidence provided by the sector. Council was also disappointed that Scottish Ministers did not take the opportunity to engage further with HEACS on any of the issues which it had raised.

Council was pleased that the Minister accepted a number of recommendations on the role of local authorities in conserving the historic environment. Council was, however, disappointed that the Minister did not adopt a key recommendation to introduce a statutory duty of care for the historic environment for local authorities and other public bodies and agencies, which would place it on a similar footing to that granted to the natural environment.

The Minister also accepted a number of recommendations in the report on the availability of adequate and appropriate traditional materials and professional and craft skills to meet the needs of the built heritage. Moreover, some of the recommendations, particularly concerning training, are being taken forward by partnerships between Historic Scotland and other bodies.

The Minister accepted the main recommendation set out in the HEACS report on the criteria that should be used to assess whether a property should be taken into state care. However, the Minister turned down a recommendation for the development of





Ways of working

a rescue policy involving the state taking temporary care of exceptional properties at immediate risk, until a long-term solution could be found; and also declined the recommendation that the properties in care portfolio should be developed as a National Collection.

The advice HEACS submitted on these five topics may influence future thinking on a number of important issues, some of which had not been raised before or appeared on the political agenda. The evidence gathered should be useful for both Government and the sector.

It was perhaps inevitable that advice on nine major policy issues, each containing a number of recommendations, would meet with a varied reaction from Scottish Ministers. Some recommendations did not fit with other Ministerial priorities at the time. Of the recommendations which were not accepted, some can be viewed as markers for the future.

It appears, however, that it was the more difficult or challenging recommendations which were not accepted or look unlikely to be acted upon. HEACS cannot avoid the impression that there has been an inertia, or lack of energy and will, within Government to tackle major issues in relation to the historic environment.

Four further reports were submitted to Scottish Ministers during HEACS' final six months. HEACS regrets that it will not be in a position to receive the Ministerial responses, but hopes that the sector will undertake this responsibility.

HEACS enjoyed considerable freedom and was allowed to set its own ways of working. Its status as a statutory rather than a voluntary body, with some independence from Historic Scotland, was important. HEACS and Historic Scotland maintained a constructive working relationship throughout, which made good communication possible and at the same time ensured that Council's independence was respected. HEACS met with a welcome from the sector, although there were some misconceptions as to its role, particularly in relation to casework.

In preparing its reports, HEACS faced three challenges: the recurrent lack of baseline data; the need to extract relevant information from a diverse body of material; and the requirement to identify the key strategic issues and recommendations. HEACS came across widely varying and often conflicting views, and has observed areas of tension. HEACS has tried to ensure that it developed its own independent viewpoint, and has been a voice but not a mouthpiece.

HEACS took the view that the important issues upon which it was asked for advice deserved serious consideration and should be dealt with by a detailed and thorough investigation, and by the submission of advice in the form of a substantial document. This approach paralleled the drive within Government for evidence-based policy making.

This approach required a high level of interest and commitment by Council members. The ways of working, particularly through working groups and holding Council meetings throughout Scotland, placed a considerable burden on members, all of whom gave much more time than the job description or terms and conditions of appointment suggested. A conservative estimate suggests that the free consultancy given by Council members was worth in excess of £1 million. From this point of view, HEACS represented exceptional value for money.

The commitment of members was matched by that of the wide range of individuals and representatives with an interest in the historic environment who gave freely of their time to work with HEACS. HEACS benefited from the very high levels of knowledge, skills and commitment of those engaged in the sector.

The limits on the time which members could devote to HEACS, and the small size of the Secretariat, emphasised the importance of research, and the resources required to commission research, particularly where the evidence base was missing. In 2007 and 2008, HEACS received additional funds in order to enable it to commission research.

Unresolved issues

The issues which HEACS dealt with in its short existence covered a wide range of topics. However, there are a number of unresolved aspects to these issues, as well as some outstanding issues which remain to be addressed.

Resources

At an early stage, HEACS considered that there was a need for greater recognition of the historic environment as a resource. HEACS has provided a robust assessment of the economic contribution of the historic environment. The message that the historic environment as a whole should be regarded as a positive force, economically and socially, requires to be better appreciated, particularly its power to provide a sense of identity and reinforce pride of place.

Funding was a constantly recurring issue and HEACS heard much concern at the decline in both the amount of funding available and in the range of sources of funding. Funding is a complex area. Issues surrounding the availability of funding and the level of investment in the historic environment require to be examined in more detail.

Scottish Ministers cannot fulfil their aims in relation to the historic environment without the involvement of the voluntary sector, which represents a huge investment in kind and is a valuable asset to

Government. The voluntary sector at the national level remains heavily reliant on funding from Historic Scotland. HEACS is pleased to note signs that Historic Scotland is more aware of the need to support capacity building in the sector and to engage in more partnership working.

The enthusiasm and active involvement in the historic environment shown at grass roots level is remarkable. It is essential that such activity is supported both by local authorities and by national organisations. There is a need to encourage greater appreciation and understanding of the local historic environment, and to ensure that traditional buildings are allowed to survive and make a strong contribution to local sense of place.

There is too often a need to convince politicians that heritage centres and local museums are important assets which require investment and re-investment. They fulfil a number of roles: as visitor attractions, community facilities and





educational resources; and can contribute to the development or recovery of a sense of place and of continuity with the past.

Historic Scotland and the wider sector need to engage with curriculum development and teaching methodologies at primary, secondary and tertiary level. They should be active advocates for the role of the historic environment as a curriculum resource.

Organisations and structures

The need for more effective championing of the historic environment was a constant issue for HEACS. It has to be recognised that neither Scottish Ministers nor Historic Scotland, as part of Government, can be all-embracing champions or advocates for the historic environment. All parts of the historic environment sector have a part to play: Government, private, professional, and voluntary.

HEACS was concerned by the level of fragmentation within the sector. The sector needs to be more tuned in to political agendas, and to cut down on the number of issues it seeks to bring to Ministers. There is a real need for an effective intermediary body which can champion the historic environment on behalf of a variety of interests and provide a medium for prioritising issues and building capacity.

HEACS notes the context set by the changes to the planning system and the increased delegation of responsibilities by Historic Scotland to local authorities, in line with Scottish Government priorities. However, insufficient consideration is

being given to the issue of the human and financial resources of local authorities, amenity societies (within the context of the planning system) and local communities. HEACS welcomes the development of on-line Historic Environment Records (HERs), but there is a need to give local communities the language and concepts to argue the case for the historic environment in the development process.

There are concerns about the partially developed nature of the community planning process and the low levels of engagement from the historic environment sector. There is, however, a wide range of community involvement, either directly or indirectly, with local authorities in relation to the historic environment. This seems to be on the increase outside the context of community planning.

HEACS hopes that its recommendation that a statutory duty of care for the historic environment be placed on local authorities and all public bodies, within a framework of national standards, will re-emerge and be acted upon at some point, and that local authorities will be resourced to meet the standards set. This would be a significant advance for the historic environment, and would bring it into line with the natural environment.

Designation and protection

HEACS addressed a number of issues in its advice on the need for a review of the heritage protection legislation and notes that a Bill to address certain shortcomings of the ancient monuments and listed buildings legislation is awaited. It is not known whether the Bill will address the significant concerns which were brought to HEACS' attention.

HEACS remains of the view that the legislation is complex and difficult to understand, suffers from a lack of consistency, and can fall prey to strongly held preservationist views. The legislation should be able to unlock the potential of the historic environment and allow it to make a more effective contribution to social and economic regeneration than it does at present. The legislation should not only afford protection for the historic environment, but also enable its potential to be realised through the effective management of change. Accordingly, there is a need for more efficient decision-making, for greater consistency and clarity, and for greater openness and transparency.

Any move to bring the protection of the natural and built heritage environments together should be subjected to proper investigation, bearing in mind the need to safeguard the interests of the historic environment.



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Materials and skills

HEACS recognises that various initiatives by Historic Scotland and others are in progress to address the issues which were raised by Council in its report on materials and skills. However, there continues to be a need to encourage effectively the use of appropriate materials and to stimulate demand. The lack of real progress in providing a source of new Scottish slate is disappointing.

At the local or regional level, the passing on of appropriate techniques to a new generation of skilled craftspeople and the sourcing of traditional materials need to be addressed. In the case of local thatching traditions, there is a pressing urgency.

Economy and climate change

Climate change poses significant challenges for the historic environment, which is a finite resource.

HEACS welcomes the work of Historic Scotland in demonstrating that it is possible to improve the energy efficiency of older buildings without destroying their character and significance. Changing people's behaviour and perceptions is just as important as improving the energy performance of buildings.

The impact of changes in the physical environment – particularly around the coast – will mean that some parts of the historic environment will be lost as a result of climate change. HEACS welcomes the work of SCAPE and the involvement of local communities in monitoring and responding to these threats.



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Data and research

HEACS welcomed the establishment of the Scottish Historic Environment Audit. This must, however, be an ongoing research programme. The monitoring of the condition of the historic environment should be the central element of the Audit. There is a need to assess the success of current protection and grant-aid arrangements; to monitor the long-term impact of incremental damage to historic buildings and ancient monuments; and to analyse the problems posed by lack of maintenance. It is also not sufficient to consider only Category A-listed buildings on the Buildings at Risk Register.

HEACS has consistently found that there is a need for further research on a wide range of issues. The evidence to support policy making is not yet available.

HEACS welcomes the fact that public participation in the historic environment is now being surveyed and urges that this should be carried out on a regular basis. Such surveys should also provide the evidence which might support special initiatives to target under-represented groups.



Conclusion

Scotland's historic environment makes a strong contribution to people's sense of place and sense of history. The extent to which people value the historic environment, and engage in voluntary activity, is remarkable.

The historic environment is also of considerable and demonstrable economic significance, playing an important role in Scotland's attractiveness as a place to live, work and invest, and as a visitor destination. The historic environment has made, and has the capacity to make, a considerable contribution to wider Government objectives, including sustainable development and regeneration.

The historic environment sector is a diverse and complex array of organisations and interests. Yet it shows remarkable vigour and activity, with high levels of active engagement, and the ability to achieve significant successes with tight resources.

There are many spheres in which the historic environment must compete successfully for attention and resources if it is to be enjoyed and appreciated by future generations. Never has there been a more pressing need for the historic environment sector to promote itself, engage with opinion-formers, and argue its case.

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HEACS

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