



News Release

30 April 2020

INVERKEITHING'S MERCAT CROSS TO BE CONSERVED AND MOVED.



In these difficult times, work continues behind the scenes on Inverkeithing's Heritage Regeneration project. A major step forward has been made in improving the streetscape. Plans to conserve and move the Mercat Cross into the heart of the town were granted planning and listed building consent in April.

The heritage focus of the project will help reinforce the town's historical identity and develop its visitor potential. Inverkeithing's Mercat Cross is one of the oldest in Scotland. The main column and coats of arms are believed to date from 1398. It will be restored and moved from Bank Street into a more prominent position in the Market Square.

Working with local schools, a time capsule will be created and buried beneath this symbol of the town's heritage as part of the project's packed Activity Programme. Emma Griffiths, Project Training and Development Officer said: "Local primary pupils are lucky with their town's amazing heritage, and are already really excited about making their own history to go into the time capsule."

This and the rest of the planned public realm uplift is part of a five-year programme of heritage themed investment in the town, 2019-2024. Generous awards from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Historic Environment Scotland Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS), along with Fife Council money and other funding, make up the ring-fenced regeneration package of £3.6 million.

The public realm improvements will account for £1.3 million of this and includes the streetscape surfaces (roads and footways), new seating, street furniture and heritage features. A first phase of work around the Civic Centre, due to be undertaken this summer, has been delayed by the lockdown, but the main phase of public realm uplift focussed on the Market Square, is hopefully still on track to start on site in Summer 2021.

The improvements will make the area more pedestrian and cycle friendly, whilst retaining the current number of car parking spaces through sensitive design. Good quality streetscape materials will enhance the setting of the many listed buildings. The design concepts have taken onboard input from local people at various consultation events in recent years. There will be further opportunity for people to have their say in

June and July, once more detailed layouts have been drawn up, and COVID-19 restrictions have eased.

Councillor Alice McGarry, Area Convenor for the South and West Fife Area Committee said: “The National Lottery and CARS funding will enable major streetscape uplift in the High street and the Market Square, whilst at the same time protecting and enhancing our built heritage. Like many towns today, Inverkeithing has had to contend with a range of negative market forces, like changing shopping habits, likely made worse by the COVIDS-19 crisis. To be resilient the town needs to evolve and improve its offer to attract both locals and visitors. The town’s heritage and history is underplayed, but given its location on the Fife Coastal Path and Pilgrims Way, proximity to the Forth Bridges and Edinburgh, and its major transport links, Inverkeithing has the potential for step change through heritage led regeneration, and these improvements can help that to happen.”

Whilst the public realm works are led by the Council, the entire heritage programme is being delivered by Fife Historic Buildings Trust, on behalf of Fife Council. To find out more, please email inverkeithing@fifehistoricbuildings.org.uk or visit www.fifehistoricbuildings.org.uk/inverkeithing



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD
EACHDRAIDHEIL
ALBA

Notes to Editors:

- Inverkeithing has a rich history and heritage, reflected in its large Conservation Area and many listed buildings. Fife Council is working with Fife Historic Buildings Trust and the local community to invest in Inverkeithing’s historic buildings and streets to support the town’s future. The five-year Inverkeithing Heritage Regeneration scheme, which runs until March 2024, will deliver a number of elements: priority building projects, a building repair grant scheme,

public realm improvements to the Inverkeithing High Street area, and training and community engagement.

- The Inverkeithing Heritage Regeneration scheme is funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund (£1,255,900 via its Townscape Heritage programme), Historic Environment Scotland (£1,007,700 via its Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme), and Fife Council. Over £3.6 million will be invested in Inverkeithing's heritage during the five-year programme.
- The National Lottery Heritage Fund is the largest dedicated funder of heritage in the UK, believing that understanding, valuing and sharing our heritage brings people together, inspires pride in communities and boosts investment in local economies.
- Using money raised by the National Lottery, we Inspire, lead and resource the UK's heritage to create positive and lasting change for people and communities, now and in the future. www.heritagefund.org.uk Follow @HeritageFundUK on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and use #NationalLotteryHeritageFund
- National Lottery grants range from £3,000 to £5million and over, funding projects that sustain and transform the UK's heritage
- Historic Environment Scotland's Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) programme can offer grant of up to £2 million to support cohesive heritage-focused community and economic growth projects within Conservation Areas across Scotland.
- HES expect CARS to deliver a combination of larger building repair projects, small third-party grant schemes providing funding for repairs to properties in private ownership, activities which promote community engagement with the local heritage and training for professionals in traditional building skills, all of which will contribute to sustainable economic and community development within the Conservation Area.
- The CARS funding programme has been in operation since 2007 with over £40m awarded to date. Applications for Round 8 were accepted up to 15 November 2018. Applicants were notified of funding decisions in March 2019.

Further information: Fife Historic Buildings Trust: www.fifehistoricbuildings.org.uk

Contact: Fife Council communications team (01592) 583312