Grantee Q&A: mapping community history in the



Karen and the project team gather to celebrate the launch of the Maroon Mile at the Heart of Midlothian Memorial Clock, in the city's Haymarket.

Karen Mailley from Heart of Midlothian Football Club shares reflections and advice from their recent heritage project – from the value of working with the local community, to how detailed early planning can help you to anticipate challenges.

About the project

The Maroon Mile is a ten-stop heritage trail charting the social, economic and sporting history of Edinburgh and Heart of Midlothian Football Club. The one-mile route leads from the centre of the city to the club's stadium and museum. As well as the trail, our grant of more than £200,000 supported an oral history project and skills training, which have deepened the club's connection to the community and empowered knowledge sharing about the beautiful game.



Project consultant Karen Mailley.

What would you recommend future applicants spend more time on when developing their application?

“Community is at the heart of the Maroon Mile idea. Before submitting the application, we spent six months connecting with local community groups, schools and organisations to hear their thoughts on the project. Their feedback changed the format of the project, so their voice was vital. Make sure that you reach out to your local community councillors, MSPs and MPs too – they can be a great resource to help spread the word to a wider audience and obtain letters of support.

“Be realistic about your expectations, budgets and timeline. Make sure that what you put into your application can be achieved with the team you have. It's better to do less and still have that impact and legacy. When drawing up your application, prioritise creating a detailed timeline – this will help you organise and spot problems further down the road.”

What one piece of advice would you give to someone applying for funding for the first time?

“Write your application from the heart. Make sure that your passion for the project comes across. Obtain letters of support from the groups you want to work with, provide evidence of your research, and explain clearly how your outcomes and outputs meet the Heritage Fund’s criteria. Don’t forget to include funds for promoting and marketing your project.”



Heart of Midlothian were founded in 1874 and have been at the heart of the community ever since. Photo: Heart of Midlothian Football Club.

When delivering your project, what surprised you?

“There’s always more work to do than you expect! Make sure to account for extra hours, tasks and issues which may arise throughout your project.”

What one thing do you know now that you wish you’d known before you began?

“How quickly time goes. Once awarded the funding, the project moves very quickly. Be prepared to jump straight in.”

What’s been the most rewarding thing to come out of your project?

“It has been wonderful to see how many people the project has impacted. Over the last 18 months, across 2,936 volunteer hours, we have had the pleasure to work with many groups, sharing traditional skills, hosting digital workshops, public consultations and oral histories.



A traditional skills workshop with young people in the club museum. Photo: Karen Mailley.

“We’re thrilled that the Maroon Mile has made the history of Heart of Midlothian Football Club and the area of Gorgie and Dalry more accessible to new audiences. The trail includes BSL, tactile components and an audio trail to make sure that it can be accessed by everyone.”

Following this project, what are you most looking forward to in your organisation’s future?

“Seeing people enjoy all aspects of the Maroon Mile project – from the touchscreens and resources in the museum, to the heritage boards out in the community. The project has helped us to celebrate the club’s 150th anniversary, and we are hoping to continue building on its success.”

This is part of a series of Q&As with successful grantees – helping to demystify the project application and delivery process and share experience across the sector.



Hedge planting at Culgaith. Photo: Eden Rivers Trust.



planning

A portrait of Twimukye Mushaka, by photographer Karen Gordon, featured in the project's exhibition highlighting migrant stories in Scotland.



unity's heritage

The restored pub has become a focus for socialising and a hub of key community facilities. Photo: Ty'n Llan.

Grantee Q&A: collaboration and contingency key to community project success