Gamu and The Singing Kettle join ‘day of celebration’ for Renfrew Town Hall

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The event featured a parade, funfair rides, musical performances, the Clyde 1 Roadshow, and official opening ceremony before the day was rounded off by a spectacular fireworks display.

Saturday’s festivities marked not only the reopening of the historic town hall following a £5.2million revamp but also the opening of a new adjoining Renfrew Community Museum.

The modernisation programme was led by Renfrewshire Council with support from Renfrew Common Good Fund, Historic Scotland, the Heritage Lottery Fund and Braehead.

The official opening ceremony featured Renfrewshire’s Provost, Celia Lawson, Deputy First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, and Local Government Minister, Derek Mackay.

“There was a real buzz about Renfrew in advance of the big day,” said Councillor Bill Perrie, Convener of Renfrew and Gallowhill Local Area Committee.

There was something for everyone with top performers and community involvement throughout the day. The event had been designed with the community at its heart, with a parade featuring local schools and musicians and a performance from the Renfrew Burgh Band.

Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said: “This project has taken a lot of work and dedication and this event is a chance to celebrate that achievement.”

Colin McLean, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Scotland, said: “This beautiful and much-loved building has been at the heart of Renfrew for generations, a symbol of the town’s history and identity. We are delighted to see it take its place, once again, at the centre of community life with modern spaces and a museum celebrating the rich heritage of the area.”

“Renfrewshire is a development priority area for the Heritage Lottery Fund and we are working hard with lots of local people to make the most of the grants available to them. The unique heritage of the area has the potential to unlock funding to record and preserve it, providing opportunities for education, training and volunteering. We want to help to make that happen.”

Thomas Knowles, Deputy Head of Investment, Historic Scotland, said: “Renfrew Town Hall is one of a small group of highly regarded town halls in Scotland, their importance reflected in the category A status. Historic Scotland gave a grant of £241,400 towards the cost of the repairs to the building as part of the extensive programme to develop the town centre to improve public facilities.”

Bringing Renfrew’s history to life

The revamp of Renfrew Town Hall and the creation of the adjoining Renfrew Community Museum featured a wide range

of arts, educational and history projects involving the local community from school pupils to local historians.
That cultural programme researched and reflected on the many roles Renfrew Town Hall has played in its history and its continuing relevance to the town's future.

Renfrew Town Hall has been, at various times, a prison, a centre for local democracy, and a gathering place for personal and civic celebrations.

Perhaps above all, it has always been an iconic piece of architecture. It was the task of preserving and modernising an A-listed building that proved a tremendous challenge.
Designed in 1872 by Paisley architect John Lamb, the building's £5.2m modernisation involved structural upgrading, including the installation of a new steel frame and replacement flat roof.

Ornamental elements such as cornices, plasterwork and the decorative urns around the rooftop parapet were repaired or replaced to their original standard.

External landscaping, through use of Caithness flagstones and granite ramps and steps, creates a link to the broader regeneration of Renfrew town centre.

The programme's ultimate aim has been to retain the appeal of tradition and heritage while effectively creating a modern building inside and out which can again be at the heart of its community.

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