Scotland’s town and city dwellers should hit record



Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Europe and External Affairs, visited The Vennie Youth Club in Livingston

Scotland’s Urban Past (SUP), a joint initiative between the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) and Historic Scotland, with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), is an innovative project that will put groups and individuals across Scotland’s towns and cities in charge of recording the history on their doorsteps through capturing memories, investigating buildings and exploring sources of local knowledge.

SUP is calling for groups and individuals of all ages to discover and share the fascinating stories of Scotland’s towns and cities by taking the lead in community projects. A dedicated team from RCAHMS and Historic Scotland have committed to providing 1500 people with the skills to document Scotland’s ever evolving built environment through hands-on training in historical research, drawing and photography.

The five-year project will culminate in a national exhibition in 2019, showcasing the achievements of 60 community-led projects and celebrating Scotland’s towns and cities. [quote=Colin McLean, Head of HLF Scotland] "Thanks to National Lottery players we can inspire communities across Scotland to dig into their past and find out more about the places they call home." [/quote]

Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Europe and External Affairs, visited The Vennie Youth Club in Livingston, part of the Knightsridge Adventure Project and one of three pilot projects that have taken place as part of the scheme, to

officially launch SUP and encourage communities across Scotland to get involved.

The young people from the Vennie were given training by the SUP team to record the story of how they campaigned for and worked with West Lothian Council to design and deliver the Youth Club's new skate park, and what the space means to them, through the medium of film.

Ms Hyslop said: "Scotland's urban areas are full of incredible stories to be recorded and celebrated, as the young people at the Vennie have shown us today.

"Scotland's Urban Past will give people of all ages the tools and inspiration they need to start recording and sharing the history of their local area. From buildings and streets to the story of an entire city, it will create a detailed and accessible history of our urban heritage by the people who live within it, which will be an incredibly rich asset for all of us.

"Taking place over the next five years, it will be a flagship project for the new lead body for the historic environment, Historic Environment Scotland (HES), which will come into effect in October with the coming together of Historic Scotland and RCAHMS. I'd urge communities across the country to come forward, get involved and be part of telling their own and Scotland's wider urban story."

Tom Heron, Project Coordinator at the Vennie, said: "Making a film with Scotland's Urban Past has allowed the skate boarders to take their pride in their skate park to the next level. They now have a vehicle for telling their story which people are very interested in hearing.

"The film tells the story of how our young people approached decision-makers and funders to design and create a new skate park, which will be part of the community for years to come.

"This project with SUP has given them a way to record their achievements and hopefully it will inspire more young people in Scotland to get involved with their local built environment."

Jane Ryder, Chair of HES, said: "This exciting new project will give communities across Scotland the opportunity to celebrate the diversity of Scotland's urban landscapes and take part in investigating their history.

"One of the key priorities for the new organisation will be working in partnership with communities throughout the nation to record, promote and celebrate Scotland's diverse historic environment, so it's fitting that one of our first nationwide projects will span our towns and cities to give people a collective platform to share their stories."

Rebecca Bailey, Head of Education and Outreach at RCAHMS, said: "This project will add thousands of new contributions to the record and enhance our national resource celebrating Scotland's towns and cities.

"People across Scotland will be helping us bring to life our national collection, from local cinemas to skate parks to medieval street patterns, so it's a great opportunity to get involved in documenting your town or city's wider story for generations to come."

SUP is supported by a £1.65million HLF grant and will help communities in bringing their project ideas to fruition by providing training and access to resources.

Colin McLean, Head of HLF Scotland, said: "People are at the very heart of everything we do and thanks to National Lottery players we can inspire communities across Scotland to dig into their past and find out more about the places they call home. The ambitious £1.65m five-year nationwide project will offer people of all ages, backgrounds, training

and skills in recording memories and reveal just how the Scottish urban landscapes have changed over time. If today's fantastic skateboarding launch is anything to go by we have much to look forward to as this exciting project starts to take shape."

SUP builds on the success of Scotland's Rural Past, a community archaeology project that trained hundreds of volunteers across Scotland in recording historic rural settlements.

For further information on how to get involved please visit the SUP website. You can also see the Vennie project's film on Vimeo.

Notes to Editors

- Historic Scotland and RCAHMS are coming together to create a new lead body for the historic environment. The new body, which will legally be known as Historic Environment Scotland (HES), will come into effect in October 2015 and will deliver Scotland's first strategy for the historic environment, Our Place in Time. For further information please visit the Historic Scotland and RCAHMS websites or sign up to the e-newsletter for updates.

- For further information on Scotland's Urban Past visit the SUP website or follow us on twitter @scoturbanpast and share your pictures and stories of your urban heritage using the hashtag #MyUrbanPast. You can also share comments and stories with us on our Facebook page.

Further information

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