

HISTORICSCOT YOUTH FORUM: FINAL REPORT AND YOUTH ACTION PLAN



INTRODUCTION

The **HistoricScot Youth Forum** was established in 2020 and aimed at increasing youth engagement and connection to heritage as well as actively involving young people in decision-making throughout **Historic Environment Scotland (HES)**.



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD
EACHDRAIDHEIL
ALBA



In 2021, the HistoricScot Youth Forum published a [report](#) with recommendations on how to make the heritage sector more reflective of young people's needs, welcome them into a more inclusive and diverse heritage workforce, and inspire them with local heritage.

Over the past year, the youth forum has continued working collaboratively with HES to develop and build on the 2021 recommendations. The forum established key priorities before developing these into prototype designs that offer creative solutions and test out how change can be implemented at HES.

Each and every recommendation in the previous report is still a call to action from the forum. However, building on this a youth action plan to address long-term system change and implement the legacy of youth voices has been created. The forum has used their learnings from testing out how their priorities could be implemented as well as reflecting on their experiences throughout the entirety of this two-year project to create their action plan.

ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

HES and Young Scot have been partnering since 2019 to support the HES to widen the engagement, participation, and involvement of young people from a range of backgrounds and experiences in their delivery activity and decision-making.

Throughout the partnership, HES has been committed to co-design as a model for including the views, perspectives and experiences of young people in realising their strategic vision. The partnership established a national Historic Environment Youth Forum of young people aged 11-25 from a variety of representative and relevant backgrounds and experiences across Scotland.

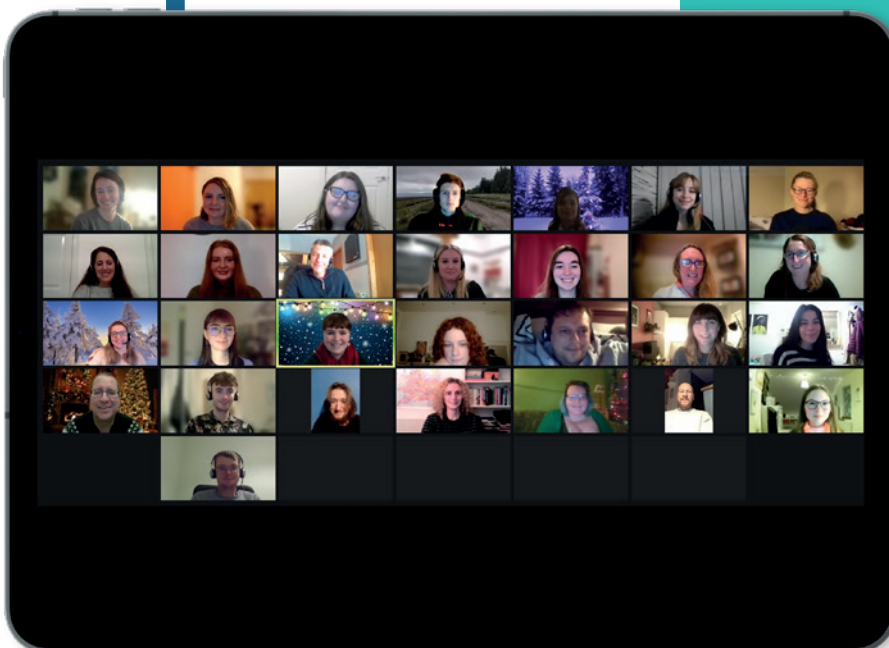
Since the publication of their 2021 report, the young people have been working through the Young Scot #YSHive process, to revisit their recommendations from the 2021 report. They have been establishing their priorities for testing the implementation of their ideas and collaborating with HES staff throughout this journey. You can find out more about the YSHive process [here](#).

HISTORICSCOT YOUTH FORUM ACTIVITY 2021-22

In September 2021, 16 new young people joined nine existing forum members to continue the work of the forum. The 25 young people, from 15 local authority areas, focused on establishing key recommendations to prototype within working groups, exploring how these their ideas could be tested out and learning more about the context of their ideas in collaboration with HES before finally creating their Youth Action Plan.

During the year, the young people took part in:

- 3 working groups
 - HES Sites
 - Volunteering & Work
 - Community & Schools
- 5 meetings
- 8 working group meetings
- 12 workshops with HES staff
- 473 hours of volunteering
- Development of 4 prototypes



“I’VE ENJOYED THE OPPORTUNITIES TO SPEAK TO THE LEADING FIGURES IN HES AT AN INCREASINGLY EVEN FEELING TABLE”.

MEET THE TEAM



Ilaria, 14, East Lothian

My mum saw this opportunity on Young Scot and showed me. I thought it looked really good, so I decided to sign up. Best decision ever, this has been an amazing opportunity and I have really enjoyed meeting new people and doing new things.

Catriona, 14, Edinburgh

I have always loved social subjects at school and this project gave me the opportunity to form what we learn. My aim from the project was to get more young people inspired by the history that surrounds us all.



Carson, 25, Aberdeenshire

I was keen to get involved with this project as it's a unique overlap of interests and passions of mine. I'm involved in the history/heritage sector and increased access and inclusion is something that I'm always looking to promote, both here and in other areas. I've enjoyed working with everyone, both the panel and HES staff and I really appreciate the insight and experience this has given me.

Robyn, 21, South Lanarkshire

I have been a part of the project since the very start because I wanted to encourage and empower historically underrepresented young people to see themselves in Scotland's history and heritage. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time on the project getting to see how our original ideas way back at the start have developed into full-fledged reports and prototypes two years on. Overall, I hope that the work we have done paves the way for heritage and history to be properly reflective of the wide diversity of young people in Scotland.



Emily, 23, Edinburgh

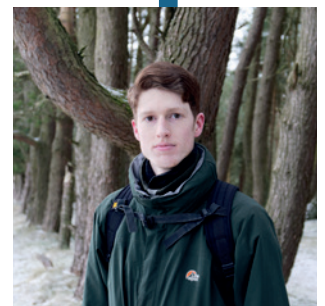
I have been a member of this forum for two years now. I originally joined as I am studying a French and History degree and wanted to get experience in the heritage sector, which I have always been interested in. I stayed on the project as I loved meeting like-minded people and getting to know how things work in the sector. The opportunities to meet members of HES have been very beneficial and it has been amazing to see how our ideas have grown and developed since this time last year. I'm looking forward to seeing how things go in the future!

Julien, 21, Edinburgh

I have had a real passion for history for as long as I can remember and saw historical re-enactment for the first time at a year old.

As part of that, over the years I visited historical sites all over Scotland and when the opportunity came up to be a volunteer working with the organisation that manages so many of these wonderful places, I decided to apply.

So far it has been an eye opening experience, and I have really enjoyed meeting and working with other like-minded people, and as we near the end of this project I feel really grateful for this opportunity to contribute to the shaping of HES's future engagement and integration of young people, as well as helping other young people into this sometimes difficult to access sector.





Beth, 18, North Lanarkshire

I have enjoyed history from a young age, growing up in Scotland, I have been surrounded by historical sites all my life and I would often visit them with my family whenever we could, and in late 2020 when the opportunity arose to join a youth forum to help young people get more involved within the sector, I jumped at the chance, it combined my passions in life, history and getting young people more involved. I am really grateful for this opportunity these past two years, being able to contribute to the forum and see change happen.

Claire, 25, Glasgow

Since I have graduated in History of Art from the University of Glasgow, I have been looking for opportunities within the arts and heritage sector that will allow me to put what I learned throughout my academic career into practice. When I saw the opportunity to volunteer with Historic Environment Scotland and Young Scot, I knew that this would be a unique opportunity for me and for other young people to build upon our passion for history and become involved in a co-design project that would help to create more opportunities like this, for young people in the future.



Erin, 17, Glasgow

I wanted to volunteer as I had always enjoyed history in school, I was doing my Highers when I joined in September of last year and wanted to gain more historical knowledge outside of school. I had always visited historical sites around Scotland owned by HES, so when this opportunity popped up I felt it was familiar and would give me experience working with a great team of young people and make as much of a contribution as I could.

Alice, 23, Stirling

My Masters research concentrated on how the tourism industry can employ new strategies and activities to increase levels of engagement especially within younger age groups. I wanted to share the knowledge and insights I gained through my research with others and the HistoricScot Youth Forum provided me with a perfect opportunity to do so.



Elena, 12, Glasgow

During the pandemic I learnt more about history in home learning. Taking part in the YS Heritage group gave me the opportunity to get more involved in the way we deal with our historical heritage. It has been a great experience!

Morgan, 20, Glasgow

I have always been interested in history and since studying it at university I became aware of how many fantastic sites of historical interest Scotland has. Getting to work with Historic Environment Scotland and Young Scot was a brilliant opportunity to see what goes on behind the scenes and to be able to get involved with these great organisations is an opportunity I couldn't get anywhere else.





Emiley, 21, Livingston

I joined this group after seeing it advertised online last year. I am studying archaeology at Uni and this was a great opportunity to get involved with a heritage based project, as well as giving me the experience of working with Young Scot and Historic Environment Scotland. I felt lacking in experience relevant to my studies due to the pandemic, but being able to join an online platform meant that I could still get involved in exciting opportunities like this!

Maya, 14, Fife

I first saw the opportunity for the Forum when I was researching young people's opportunities near me and chose to sign up because I was interested in Scottish heritage and history. I was delighted when I heard that I had been chosen to be involved! Everyone is really nice, staff bring a safe atmosphere and I've made new friends and learnt new skills too.



Cara, 24, Edinburgh

After moving to Scotland to study history and archaeology, I fell in love with Scotland's heritage and wanted to contribute to its conservation. It has been great to be able to express the opinions of young people and ideas for the future of Scotland's heritage sector.

Stuart, 23, Fife

Being a part of the forum has been a hugely worthwhile and beneficial project that I am so glad I got involved with. I was initially attracted after completing my undergrad in history and international relations and subsequently applying for my PDGE. Naturally, I am very interested in increasing youth participation in heritage and history as a whole so enrolling in the project was a no brainer! The ideas my fellow volunteers have come up with are amazing and we are sure to see an uptake in interest in heritage and Scottish history as a whole. History should not be limited to the classroom and hopefully through our work, history can be seen as a worthwhile pass-time as much as anything else.



Charlotte, 22, Edinburgh

I got involved because I love history! I've always loved visiting castles and other historic sites, so it seemed like a great way to become more involved in the industry and to get other young people engaged.

“I HAVE ENJOYED COMING UP WITH NEW IDEAS TO HELP ENGAGE YOUNG PEOPLE VISITING HISTORIC SITES. IT HAS BEEN A FUN CHALLENGE TRYING TO COME UP WITH IDEAS THAT ARE NOT ONLY APPEALING TO PEOPLE MY AGE, BUT ONES THAT ARE INCLUSIVE TOO”.



OUR YOUTH ACTION PLAN

Introduction

The HistoricScot Youth Forum has seven key goals in the youth action plan which not only speak to the proactive, tangible change which they want the forum to have on HES and the heritage sector, but the action plan also addresses sustainable culture change.

The forum believes that in order for long-term impact to occur and for the forum's priorities to be implemented, organisational culture change will also need to evolve. Fundamentally, the forum wants the heritage sector to be more engaging, accessible, inclusive, diverse, equitable, decolonising and climate aware. The forum believes a cultural shift toward openness and considering intersectionality is already happening within the sector and want the action plan to support this shift. The forum hopes the legacy of their priorities will help HES to challenge, re-evaluate and reveal any unconscious influences that impact decision-making and internal processes. The forum hopes to inspire

the heritage sector to continually engage with young people and strive to engage under-represented voices in the future. Ultimately the forum have a vision for heritage to be accessible to all and believe this can be achieved through co-creation, sincerity, accountability, adaptability, and creativity.

Looking ahead to the legacy of this project, the forum wants their work on this project to make HES a well-known organisation among young people, where they are welcomed and can see themselves represented. By implementing both their recommendations and action plan, the group believe HES will increase youth engagement at sites, online and in recruitment. The forum hopes their work will have a positive change on young people and for young people's experiences and involvement to continue to shape the future of Scotland's heritage sector.



YOUTH ACTION PLAN GOALS AND ACTIONS

GOAL 1:

Improve youth engagement throughout HES.

- ACTION:** Listen and act on the ideas and feedback from internal youth forums
- ACTION:** Continue to engage young people on collaborative projects and decision-making
- ACTION:** Seek external youth engagement on decision-making.
- ACTION:** Prioritise under-represented youth voices
- ACTION:** Employ staff in roles dedicated to supporting youth engagement
- ACTION:** Take inspiration from successful youth engagement in other heritage organisations
- ACTION:** Engage young people in youth spaces

GOAL 2:

Invest in a youth-friendly website and create a compelling social media presence.

- ACTION:** Utilise social media platforms for youth engagement, marketing and education
- ACTION:** Improve Instagram content.
- ACTION:** Create and maintain a TikTok account ran by dedicated social media staff
- ACTION:** Develop a youth-friendly website
- ACTION: Prototype Case Study:** Create an online youth hub to improve overall youth engagement

GOAL 3:

Improving Site Visits for Youth Engagement.

- ACTION: PROTOTYPE CASE STUDY:** Develop more engaging, supportive visits for school students
- ACTION:** Tell more stories from under-represented communities and individuals at sites
- ACTION:** Offer more interactivity and gamification at sites
- ACTION:** Provide more information at sites about opportunities for young people to get involved at HES
- ACTION:** Encourage and support active travel and public transport options to sites

GOAL 4:

Make the HES website and HES sites more accessible.

- ACTION:** Make the website more accessible for all and dyslexia-friendly
- ACTION:** Ensure more sites are disability-friendly
- ACTION:** Provide more accessibility information about sites online

GOAL 5:

Include and represent diverse stories especially those from under-represented communities and how sites are connected to colonial history.

- ACTION:** Provide improved training on equality, diversity, and inclusion for all staff and volunteers
- ACTION:** Engage under-represented communities throughout HES
- ACTION:** Acknowledge the colonial connections at HES sites and the historical erasing of under-represented communities

GOAL 7:

Increase awareness of climate change impacts on the historic environment and offer ways for visitors to be involved in climate action.

- ACTION:** Create more opportunities that focus on climate change and the historic environment
- ACTION:** Provide up-to-date information about the impact of climate change on HES sites
- ACTION:** Encourage visitors to use green transport options to visit sites

GOAL 6:

Provide more opportunities for young people to be involved in the work HES do.

- ACTION:** Encourage more young people to apply for opportunities
- ACTION:** Provide more paid opportunities for young people
- ACTION:** Provide opportunities specifically for under-represented young people
- ACTION:** Provide opportunities for under-16s to volunteer at HES
- ACTION: PROTOTYPE CASE STUDY:** Develop the volunteering process at HES to engage more young people and increase their skills development
- ACTION:** Advertise volunteering roles and heritage careers events through schools and universities.
- ACTION:** Promote and inform young people about all heritage sector jobs during events such as Discover Creative Careers Week
- ACTION:** Develop online career open days as well as post-event networking to increase youth engagement in heritage careers

GOAL 1: IMPROVE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT THROUGHOUT HES.

ACTION:

Listen and act on the ideas and feedback from internal youth forums.

The forum believes the internal youth forum at HES is a rich resource of knowledge, ideas and advice that the organisation could utilise and invest in further. The feedback and recommendations from all young people involved in HES' work should be valued, acted on and celebrated. The recommendations and actions from both reports are an opportunity for the internal forum to continue the work of the HistoricScot Youth Forum post-project.

ACTION:

Continue to engage young people on collaborative projects and decision-making.

HES and the heritage sector should take a proactive approach to future youth engagement and continue developing new ways to include young people in decision-making, ensuring opportunities are accessible to all.

To do this, the forum feel HES should provide greater clarity on budget, data and essential information relating to projects from the outset to set expectations and achievable visions, sharing outcomes and actions from previous relevant projects in an accessible way and any relevant resources. HES should actively engage a variety of staff from across multiple teams in project work to ensure broad representation of the organisation on projects. Where possible, techniques and tools should be utilised to support quick prototyping to implement new ideas faster.

HES should consider including young people on the board or introduce a youth panel for HES to ensure decision-making at every level continues to involve and engage young people.

ACTION:

Seek external youth engagement on decision-making.

Continual and sustained dialogue and collaboration with young people is key to having a long-term impact on embedded young people throughout HES. Young people should be given the opportunity to share their opinions and ideas on decision-making through both light-touch approaches such as social media polls, and lasting structures such as an external youth forum. Dedicated youth engagement staff members would be beneficial support mechanisms to continually explore the needs of young people and ensure they are supported to engage in decision-making and in the development of HES's services.

ACTION:

Prioritise under-represented youth voices.

Ensure historically unrepresented young people, such as young people of colour, LGBTQ+ young people, disabled young people and young people from more deprived areas, are at the forefront of youth engagement and are prioritised in discussions. This will support HES in gaining insight from a diverse range of young voices, supporting HES to meet the needs of and continue to be relevant to young people in Scotland.



ACTION:

Employ staff in roles dedicated to supporting youth engagement.

The forum has benefited greatly from the support Young Scot staff have provided, allowing the young people to feel empowered to have their voices heard and be themselves on the forum. The forum think a similar support system should be replicated at HES when engaging directly with young people. Employing staff in roles dedicated to supporting youth engagement throughout HES will ensure engagement is accessible and young people are meaningfully included in decision-making.

ACTION:

Take inspiration from successful youth engagement in other heritage organisations

HES and other heritage organisations have the opportunity to learn and take inspiration from successful youth engagement initiatives from across the sector, such as National Museums Scotland and National Trust Scotland, as well as their own successes. This will allow HES to gain inspiration, insight and advice on continued meaningful engagement with young people in the work they do, leading the way to embedding young people throughout decision-making across the sector.

ACTION:

Engage young people in youth spaces.

HES should engage young people directly in youth spaces on their own terms, such as on social media, in youth groups, in schools and in universities. This could include Girl Guiding and Boys Brigade, university and college groups and associations and youth work groups. Proactive engagement via youth spaces, both online and in-person, will create more interest and subsequent engagement with HES amongst young people who would not otherwise be aware of what HES has to offer them.

“I BELIEVE BY ENGAGING WITH AND LISTENING TO THIS FORUM, HES ARE ALREADY ON THEIR WAY TO BECOMING MORE INCLUSIVE. THEY ARE OPENING THE DOOR TO THE HERITAGE SECTOR FOR PEOPLE OF MANY DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS AND AGES.”



GOAL 2: INVEST IN A YOUTH-FRIENDLY WEBSITE AND CREATE A COMPELLING SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE.

ACTION:

Utilise social media platforms for youth engagement, marketing and education.

The forum believe that social media is a key marketing tool to engage young people, raise awareness of HES and inspire them to learn more about Scotland's historic environment. Social media engagement should demonstrate the diversity of young people in Scotland as well as the diversity of Scottish heritage. By investing in improving Instagram content and ensuring they're accessible as well as keeping in touch with social media advances, the reach and awareness of the organisation amongst young people could be increased. For example, uploading image descriptions with every post, audio descriptions and captions on video content would create a more accessible platform. The forum would also like to see HES continue to review its social media content against social media advances.

Developing low-effort video footage for YouTube content that can then be promoted elsewhere on social media could increase online engagement from young people too. For example, creating relaxation videos with commercially free music and videography from historic sites such as 'Two hours of Scottish Castle Lo-Fi to chill and withstand sieges to'.



ACTION:

Improve Instagram content.

When used correctly social media has huge power to drive engagement and interest which HES has the opportunity to utilise to its full potential. Benefits could include increased visitor numbers, increased knowledge and visibility of HES as an organisation, and bring heritage to those not able to visit sites. Prioritising HES's use of social media was raised in the 2021 report, and acting upon these is a clear continued priority for the forum.

The current social media outreach of HES could be utilised more broadly and effectively. A positive example in the sector in Scotland is the National Trust for Scotland (NTS). NTS have a considerable number of followers, with 60K. The NTS account post daily, with on average, 735 likes on Instagram posts recently, with recurring posts such as #wildlifeoftheweek. Most NTS posts have a small caption and then a few hashtags, to generate engagement and interaction.

While HES posts use storytelling successfully, there could be more of a focus on mass public appeal, along with exciting, dynamic photography to engage social media users.

Surpassing this is the @historicscotland Instagram account, which has nearly 150K followers and has great stories for information. Inspiration and learnings can be shared and taken from other heritage sector accounts to build on the appeal and awareness of the HES account.

Some ideas and considerations for improving the social media include:

- more consistent and regular posting schedules
- better use of hashtags e.g. #Scotland
- more content created by young people
- use of the YouTube shorts algorithm
- sharing more and broader minority stories

ACTION:

Create and maintain a TikTok account run by dedicated social media staff.

TikTok was the world's most downloaded app in 2021, with over one billion active users. The forum believes it is a fantastic engagement tool to reach young people and involve them in the work HES do. The success of using TikTok by a heritage organisation can be seen in the Black Country Living Museum near Birmingham with a following of 1.3 million.

The forum believes TikTok is a quick win. When the forum developed its first report, the young people highlighted that improving social media outreach was a major concern and this continues to be a priority. From discussion with HES staff, the forum has learned that HES has a TikTok account set up and ready to go but this requires the resources to regularly post and create content. TikTok has the power to inspire millions of young people which means if HES invest in their TikTok account, they could increase youth engagement online and the volume of young people visiting sites. The forum feels that TikTok could be used effectively to promote opportunities, events, information and resources to young people, making HES relevant and engaging to a youth audience.

Young people could be given the opportunity to work with the organisation to create short videos for the account which would tackle issues around content creation and identifying ideas which are relevant and engaging. Young people have the skills to create amazing and relevant content. Some of the ideas for TikTok videos include day-in-the-life videos, using costumed actors, site tours and telling stories about the historical people behind a site. Videos could serve a multitude of purposes, being posted on the HES YouTube channel, integrated into the website and used at online events to generate more views and interest.

ACTION:

Develop a youth-friendly website.

The HistoricScot Youth Forum identified in their 2021 report that there is significant potential for the website to be developed to improve youth engagement overall. Although the information and resources on offer via the website are engaging, detailed and valuable, however, the way in which they are presented is unsuitable for a youth audience. Overall, content needs to be more visually engaging, more interactive and more accessible to attract youth engagement online and support young people to learn more about their historic environment.

The website should include learning resources for students and teachers, games, blogs from staff and young people and eye-catching photography. The website should be fully accessible to a range of disabilities and support needs.



PROTOTYPE CASE STUDY: CREATE AN ONLINE YOUTH HUB TO IMPROVE OVERALL YOUTH ENGAGEMENT.

A key solution to the engagement issues identified with the website is to create a dedicated online hub for young people on the website. The Community and Schools working group were keen to explore this priority further and take the concept into prototyping and testing. The group identified the following recommendations from 2021 as prototyping priorities:

- Create a children and young people's hub
- Create an online hub with sections aimed at primary and secondary-aged children
- Encourage representation of marginalised communities in decision-making at HES, specifically those under-presented groups and from deprived areas
- Continue to seek young people's opinions and suggestions on HES work (especially those of marginalised young people)

The group felt the Online Youth Hub was a solution to the current HES website having felt unappealing and uninteresting to a lot of the young people since the start of the project. The Youth Hub would have a significant impact on young people by boosting youth engagement and interaction in heritage and developing their knowledge of history.

It would also be beneficial as a designated centre that young people would know to go for any and all information related to heritage and history, allowing them to access resources relevant to them all in one place. The forum wants to make HES' resources more accessible, easy to use and attractive to young people.

**I HAVE ENJOYED PARTICIPATING
IN DISCUSSIONS AND WORKSHOPS
THAT STEADILY SEEMED TO PUSH
CHANGE IN THE DIRECTION
WE WANTED.**

The forum also wanted to explore how the hub could be both accessible and relevant to young people of all ages and backgrounds, with diversity and inclusion key themes for the whole forum and to capture the widest target group of young people with the hub design. Every young person regardless of internet accessibility or physical location should be able to engage with the historic environment. The hub should be a place where underrepresented communities' histories could easily be accessible and promoted which has been a key priority throughout the project.



Prototype Design

The prototype design of an online youth hub is a central space for young people to easily find reliable heritage resources and information, gamification to enrich learning, volunteering and career information and opportunities as well as social media links.

The Online Youth Hub is an online site for young people interested in information on Scotland's historic environment, how to access it and how to get involved in historic environment opportunities. It is a hub full of resources and information as well as exam resources and support for young people of all ages. It's also an information hub for relevant career and volunteering opportunities in the heritage sector

as well as a fun online space with historical-themed quizzes and games. The hub features a daily fact connected to that date in history which would link to relevant information such as connected historic sites, locations and figures. The hub is a space for young peoples' experiences of the historic environment including blogs highlighting lesser-known, underrepresented histories. The forum's design also includes the integration of activity happening on HES's social media, particularly TikTok and Instagram, which would support the content and resources on the hub. The hub would demonstrate interesting historic sites to visit in your local area and link you to events happening within HES and the heritage sector.



“I HAVE ENJOYED THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE INVOLVED IN A CO-DESIGN PROJECT IT IS SOMETHING I HAVE NEVER EXPERIENCED BEFORE, AND I FOUND IT TO BE A REALLY STRUCTURED WAY TO MEET OUR GOALS”.

Testing the Design

The forum spoke to a variety of HES staff from across the organisation as well as the Young Scot Content Editor to discuss the implementation of their ideas. These experts were invited to give feedback based on their knowledge and expertise. The following helpful suggestions, ideas and considerations for the implementation of the design were gathered.

Youth engagement

- The design is a great example of the different types of engaging content suitable for youth audiences, demonstrating strong social media links, interactivity, gamification and resources.
- The online hub is a brilliant opportunity to direct young people to a breadth of education resources and websites as well as heritage careers and volunteering opportunities.
- The prototype shows ways a youth audience could interact with the content through clickable widgets, quizzes and links to more information.
- This form of site design invites a user to come across unexpected content they might enjoy and encourages a user to return to a site more than once.
- Safety and accessibility had been considered which are essential and important aspects of good design for online youth spaces.
- Highlighting exam resources is a topical addition for young people.
- Geocaching could be showcased on this site too, connecting to the HES Sites prototype design "The Hunt" (see Goal 3).

Digital Content

- A medium-term and long-term plan for implementing the hub design would need to be developed due to restrictions on funding and resources. In the medium-term HES could develop additions to their current online services while long-term, strive to create the group's vision when significant budget, resource and staff capacity was in place to support it.
- Use young people's experiences and voices as a focal part of the hub's design, inviting young people to co-create content. For example, blogs, TikTok videos and volunteer testimonials. This will improve youth engagement with the hub overall.
- Work could begin on foundational content for the hub based on what HES already have, then improve this while generating new content with and for young people.
- HES's current 'Inspire Me' website page could be developed with the support of the Digital Team taking inspiration from the online hub design while utilising what is already digitally available at HES.
- Use blogs and videos to highlight career pathways to showcase the variety of roles in heritage as well as unconventional careers.
- TikTok would be an asset to HES' content because it could widen their youth audiences and showcase the work and content HES already have.
- Linking up with partnership heritage organisations could enrich the content of the hub even further.
- Changes to branding colours wouldn't be possible but a complementary colour palette might be possible.

"I'VE ENJOYED THE OPPORTUNITIES TO SPEAK TO THE LEADING FIGURES IN HES AT AN INCREASINGLY EVEN FEELING TABLE".

Integrating the hub on the website

- Facilitating the online hub on the current website may have its difficulties but third-party tools embedded into the website, or the use of partnership hosting could potentially combat this. Another content management system may be needed to create the online hub and then signpost it on the main website.
- Creating a personal account within the hub and embedding social media could be very difficult to achieve with the current website’s functionality and would need further exploration.
- A linear website design would work best for the accessibility of the hub.
- Website navigation improvements to suit the group’s design could be a quick fix, implemented in the short term.
- The current website is due to be redeveloped in the near future so ideas from the online hub design could be implemented as part of this.



Refining The Design

After receiving feedback on the design during testing, the working group used these responses to refine their design further. For implementation, the following should be incorporated into the design:

Accessibility additions:

- Simple, organised but attractive design to ensure the site can be easily navigated and so content is easily visible.
- Ensure the hub is also mobile-friendly so that all young people can access it and so it's easily accessible during site visits.
- Ensure the hub utilised a dyslexia-friendly colour scheme and display to increase accessibility for all users.
- Provide options to view the content in different languages to make the hub easy to understand for young people whose first language is not English.
- Make the Cookie policy clear for transparency purposes.

Content considerations:

- Add a page with blogs and videos on young people's experiences with the historic environment. Video content could be generated from TikTok and be semi-structured. For example, this content could highlight the Young Scot £1 entry discount, top 5 highlights from a site, a walk-through of a site visit, LGBT/Black/Disability History month content.
- Create photo galleries of the sites and any opportunities to make content more engaging.
- Use more graphic-designed images or illustrated on the hub and in linked social media posts because these can be more appealing to a youth audience than photos.
- Clearly link users to a section on-site locations and information so young people can plan their next site visit.
- Include a tool showing young people how to reference historic environment resources to support them with their studies.
- Expand the branding colour palette to make the hub and social media content more engaging to young people.
- If a social media feed cannot be embedded, clearly link users to all of HES's social media accounts.
- Consider creating the hub as a separate website clearly signposted on the main HES website if this makes implementation more time and cost-efficient.

Linking the hub to schools:

- Create a strong marketing strategy for schools for the hub, showcasing resources to teachers and advocating its youth-friendly focus for students.
- Develop a teacher-friendly section or account within the hub allowing teachers to post assignments to encourage students to interact with the hub at home before and after visits to sites.



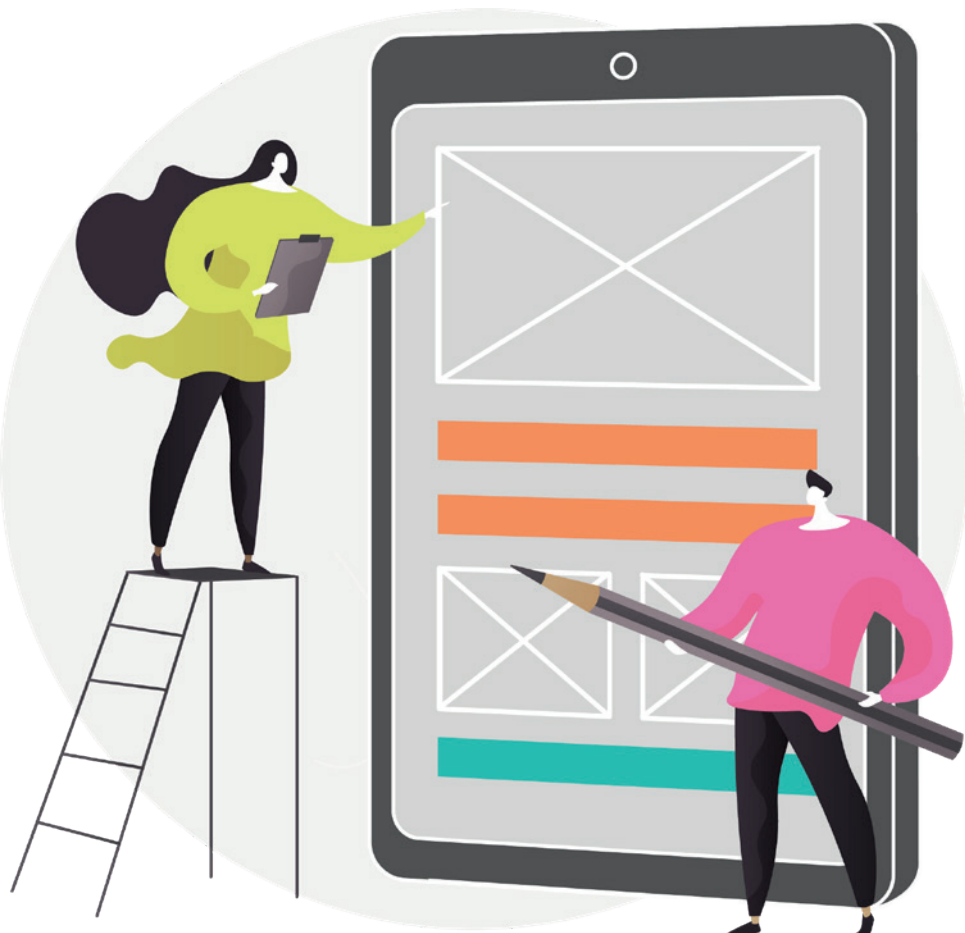
Prototype Design

The working group developed two prototypes that complement one another – an online youth hub (see Goal 2) and improving school site visits. Both designs were a priority to provide more opportunities for young people to develop their history education both online and in-person to increase accessibility for all.

A prototype for improving school site visits was designed as the forum felt there was a lack of independence and autonomy when it came to visiting sites with schools. The design not only proposes giving control of young people’s education to young people themselves but is also interactive and beneficial to those who would not be able to access the online youth hub. The forum wants more young people and schools to visit historic places and improving how school visits are facilitated will have a tangible impact on this. The design has a focus on fun activities for students to keep them entertained during visits as well as considering how things can be accessible throughout. The working group know school site visits are already well-established, but believe there could be much wider youth input, autonomy and creativity which young people want to see in their education.

The improved school site visits design is a journey map that shows how to build on the pre-existing school site visits at HES, adding more youth autonomy, increasing youth accessibility and engagement in heritage and inspiring them with local history while supporting their history education. The prototype includes proactive outreach to schools, social media ties, visit evaluation and information and incentive packs to encourage future visits. This includes proposing implementing youth tour guides to facilitate school visits, object handling of both history artefacts and community objects, physical and digital gamification activities throughout and spaces provided for group lunches.

“I’VE ENJOYED WORKING WITH OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE PASSIONATE ABOUT HERITAGE AND HISTORY. I’VE APPRECIATED THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK DIRECTLY WITH HES STAFF BECAUSE I CAN’T SEE ANOTHER SCENARIO WHERE I COULD HAVE DONE THIS.”



Finding out about School Visits

Outreach emails send to schools from HES
Promoted on social media

Outreach emails send to schools from HES
Promoted on social media



Preparing for the visit

Teacher gets in touch with tour guide
Specific sites identified as the best ones for school visits
Practical advice given beforehand (such as suitable clothing and footwear)

Introductory video provided to introduce students to the visit and setting out expectations
HES staff informed about additional support needs
HES staff training to support children with additional support needs

Primary pupils have lessons to teach them about the site and/or historic period
Secondary pupils research the site and/or historic period during lessons



Arriving at the site

Eco-friendly transport is used to travel to the site

Group are greeted by their youth guide

Youth guides are HES volunteers recruited from local youth clubs and via social media

Youth guides need to be experienced and knowledgeable to answer questions and provide tour



Site tour

Tour of the site and how this connects to students' lessons

Tour is a chance for students to ask guide questions

Tour tailored to primary or high school age groups

Guide asks the group questions

Guide speaks about local history

Secondary pupils scan QR code that link to the online youth hub



Interactive learning activities during the visit

Allow pupils to do their own thing and encourage learning that's not just teacher led.

Let older kids explore the site on their own.

Challenges for older pupils
Object handling historic artefacts and community objects e.g. metal detectors

Treasure hunts

Dressing-up with historical costumes

Re-enactments

Traditional crafts

Puzzles



Phone activities

Photo scavenger hunt: find a certain date or colour at the site and post it

Scan QR code for info leaflets on jobs and opportunities

Share opportunities on social media or online youth hub

Get informed about the online youth hub

VR of historical time periods and linked into the online youth hub



Lunch

There's currently no dedicated lunch space for school visits. We want schools to have a space away from the main part of the site to sit and have lunch

Lunchtime activity: wordsearch or themed crossed on the site or historical period e.g. use education.com to create one



After the visit

Pack of resources for future visits: leaflets with site information, events and opportunities at HES, discounts for future visits with family

Evaluation of their visit

Posting on social media

Putting content relative to the visit on the online hub

Follow-up lessons about the site in school

Borrowing historic objects

Testing the Design

The working group invited HES staff from a variety of teams, Young Scot's Schools Officer and their peers and classmates to give feedback on the prototype design. This supported testing out how the design could be practically implemented, if it was engaging to other young people and whether teachers would welcome their ideas too.

School-age Peers

The prototype was shared with classmates who were invited to feedback on the design ideas. The young people really liked the overall focus on improving the experience of students on school visits and were enthusiastic about the use of youth guides, using phones to interact with gamification throughout the site, object handling and having a variety of group and independent exploration on that day. Classmates suggested that virtual guides could also be introduced in the form of a QR trail across the site and suggested a photo trail using phones to interact with different areas of the site. They were also keen to hear about real life stories from people who were involved in the sites' history, and they wanted site visits to include the additional opportunity of entering site areas ordinarily restricted from the general public.



HES Staff and Young Scot Schools Officer

The design ideas were presented to a variety of HES staff from different teams who were invited to give feedback, suggestions, and considerations for implementation of the prototype. The Schools Officer at Young Scot was also invited to give their expert insight based on their knowledge of teaching and school requirements for school visits.

Here's their top tips for improving the design:

Travel to site

- The design is an opportunity for HES to link in with bus services to sites as well as the Young Scot card free travel and evaluate if this if being promoted well enough to young people.
- Not all sites are currently accessible by sustainable travel which could prevent school visit access or limit them to specific sites only, which would need to be factored into planning.

Youth guides

- The Junior Tour Guide and Summer Youth Guide opportunities currently available at Linlithgow Palace could be expanded to other sites to provide more youth guiding opportunities in HES.
- Having tour guides for school visits and HES staff on site who are trained to support young people with additional needs is fantastic. This would support teachers on the day and ensure the visit is accessible to everyone while providing accurate knowledge about the site too.
- Safeguarding and disclosure checks would need to be considered in relation to youth Guides.

Site visit activities

- Including object handling boxes in the design was identified as a highlight but more feedback and engagement on these boxes from young people would be beneficial.
- Teachers may be wary about pupils using their phones for activities during site visits unless clear expectations had been set and a lot of trust was given to pupils. This is because irresponsible behaviour with the use of phones could cause damage to the reputation of young people, the schools and the site.
- Allowing secondary pupils to explore the site independently could be problematic for teachers due to the risk that unsupervised, inappropriate behaviour poses, so this would need to be factored into planning and agreements in advance.

Dedicated lunch space

- A separate place for lunch is a great idea. Having a space away from other visits would provide peace of mind for teachers and ensure the experience is more enjoyable for everyone.
- Currently not every HES site has room available for dedicated lunch spaces so this aspect of the design would need to be explored further.

Making site visits inclusive

- Sharing a site map, video guide and introductory information about the tour guide such as a name and photo would help young people with additional needs feel prepared and reassured before their visit.
- Quieter, calmer activity options would need to be considered for students with additional support needs.
- Gender neutral bathrooms at sites would help young people feel welcomed and comfortable during their visit.
- Multiple sizes should be available for dressing-up costumes to ensure everyone can take part.

Post visit engagement

- Social media content could be created from school visits too, including content on how young people used sustainable transport to access their site visit.
- Young people who have visited the site could help promote it with the tools mentioned in your design e.g. creating leaflets, posters, social media content.

General considerations, ideas and opportunities

- Developing school site visits is an opportunity for HES to hear more about the themes and interests young people have in heritage and sites which would support future projects too.
- There is potential to test out the design by implementing a pilot experience at one site and evaluating its success with local schools.
- Greater staff and guide resource would need to be implemented to support increased site visits.
- Clear assembly points on site would help teachers gather their group when needed during visits.
- If students already have a lot of knowledge about a site, they could be invited to share this with their peers, allowing them to feel more engaged and encourage peer learning and participation.
- Associated learning resources should be exciting, engaging and leave a little bit to the imagination to create a sense of mystery and curiosity to inspire young people.
- The climate change team at HES could support with ensuring visits are more sustainable.
- Advertising work experience days for high school students could easily be advertised under their Learning sections on the website.

Refining the Design

Considering the constructive feedback received from testing the ideas, the following modifications to the design were developed to support implementation:

- Implement Youth Guides to as many sites as possible to support school visits.
- Implement local youth ambassadors for sites and/or local areas to decentralise opportunities from the central belt, highlight local sites and provide learning and development for young people who can't access the online youth hub.
- Co-create resources for site visits with young people, ensuring young people's ideas and advice drive the creation of this content and this content is then available on the online youth hub.
- Ensure teachers and students have easy access to relevant resources for lessons and site visits.
- Integrate the geocaching prototype "The Hunt" into school site visits.
- Utilise and encourage the use of the online hub during site visits and in schools.
- Develop more sustainable transport options to sites for both schools and visitors.
- Plan for day-long visits from schools.
- Utilise the under-represented heritage stories from the online hub content with site visits and school resources. For example, with QR codes, leaflets and posters.

ACTION:

Tell more stories from under-represented communities and individuals at sites.

Representing everyone's stories involved in Scottish heritage is key to the forum. Sites must actively decolonise heritage by telling the stories of previously under-represented individuals and communities.

ACTION:

Offer more interactivity and gamification at sites

More games and fun activities need to be implemented at sites to encourage more young people to visit their historic environment and encourage them to engage with the wider events, opportunities and education heritage has to offer young people.

The forum wants to see more tactile resources available at all sites and increasing the availability of object handling for families and schools. Re-enactments, costumed events and after-dark events would attract older young people to enjoy sites. Tying in popular games to sites could also improve youth engagement, for example running Dungeons and Dragons events in collaboration with local game shops and creating Pokémon GO and Ingress stops for easy AR integration.



PROTOTYPE CASE STUDY: "THE HUNT" – A GEO-CACHING TREASURE HUNT ADVENTURE.

The forum was keen to explore how gamification could be implemented at sites to increase youth interactivity and engagement in the historic environment. With an aim to inject more joy into site activities and target young people who wouldn't be visiting sites with their family.

Following on from last year's recommendations for HES sites in the 2021 report, the HES Sites working group took three key themes forward and examined them closely to find opportunities to create and test ideas for implementation. The following themes and recommendations were prioritised:

By creating a prototype that speaks to each of these three areas, the forum believe more young people could be encouraged to visit and enjoy HES sites and engage in heritage. From the research and exploration of the forum, the working group have learnt that after-dark events at HES sites have been very successful in the past and that regular one-off, exciting events could have great potential for targeting a youth audience especially if they include games, access for all and tell untold stories. However, as after-dark events themselves are already tried and tested, the group wanted to explore and build on how young people can be encouraged to engage with sites ahead of large events.



1. GAMIFICATION

- Create opportunity for community engagement with gamification.
- Increase presence of AR (augmented reality) technologies at HES sites.
- More visually engaging content to showcase each of the HES Sites specifically and what might be involved in their visit.
- Utilise gamification throughout heritage experience.



2. TELLING MINORITY STORIES

- Clearly show every side to Scotland's history and heritage.
- Hold specific events and activities to celebrate the history of minority groups.
- Through education and information, allow young people to be more aware of the cultural changes in society.
- Create new exhibitions and identify spaces focusing on different minority groups' heritage.



3. DISABLED ACCESS

- Ensure all facilities are fully accessible for all ranges of disabilities.
- Increase prevalence of interpretation accessibility across the work of HES, ensuring this is easily accessible and clear that it is available.
- Improve visitor experience for autistic visitors at HES sites, and those with neurodivergent needs.

Prototype Design

Gamification was a key focus for the design ideas, so the working group spoke to HES staff about the range of activities already available at sites. They found that current experiences face challenges on two fronts: poor marketing and the 'missing demographic'. Young people old enough to visit sites without their families are not well catered for and HES is lacking engagement from this demographic of 16-25-year-olds. Gamification is one way to help attract more young people to visit HES sites and address this missing demographic. The working group focused on two key ideas from last year's report - increased events at HES sites and interactive tours – and began prototyping "The Hunt".

"The Hunt" is based on the concept of a treasure hunt with the goal of promoting a big event for young people at HES sites while encouraging them to visit and engage with multiple sites. "The Hunt" is a site-based geocache treasure hunt that utilises QR codes to provide clues telling minority stories which lead the young people around the site, highlighting points of interest. Geocaching is a modern treasure hunt adventure that allows you to find hidden geocaches using a GPS, map and the Geocaching app. (Geocaching is explained [here](#).) The geocache treasure hunt will invite young people to visit multiple sites, linked by clues and discover the secret word at each site that once completed, allow them to access exclusive, discounted tickets for a themed, after-dark event at a HES site.

It is important to the forum that "The Hunt" is themed around minority stories or lesser told narratives as a real opportunity with these have been neglected in heritage storytelling and young people are passionate about hearing these histories. This would give the design a unique selling point to young people. Minority stories, both locally and globally connected, should also be considered when picking sites for 'The Hunt' and for the associated event too. The stories chosen should be thematically more mature to attract the target demographic of young people and focus on often unspoken aspects of history such as dealing with periods, LGBTQIA+ history and the lives of older teenagers.

Minority stories would be told through QR code clues set around the site resulting in a final password on completion of "The Hunt". As an incentive for completing the adventure, each password could be presented to staff onsite, granting young people discounts or incentives for the gift shops or cafés. For example, a free hot drink in the café or 20% off in the gift shop. This would also encourage young people to enjoy the services at sites and continue the adventure at another site.

QR codes were chosen as they are cost efficient and would be the safest to implement on the sites without too much risk to the infrastructure of the sites. If a physical object was to be used at the end of "The Hunt", e.g. to provide a 'password' for the shop discount, the object would need to be explicitly described from the beginning and be distinct (such as a novelty geo-caching snail statue used in other geo-caches).

Trigger warnings could be provided to ensure "The Hunt" reaches the intended audience and at manned sites, staff would be informed about the content to promote it to the intended age group.





The implementation of on-site events involves media tie-ins and trends among young people. From the research of the forum, it was discovered that escape rooms and after-dark events have been run at various sites with huge successes. Ideas such as regency balls, feasts, and a Celtic music festival have been suggested by forum members. The tickets for which, could be sold and local businesses could be commissioned for the appropriate resources and sponsorship of the events. The tie-in with “The Hunt” would be supported by a competition or raffle with a set amount of event tickets set aside for winners. To enter a phrase would be needed which could be found by completing “The Hunt” at multiple sites and combining each site’s individual password.

Collaboration with local organisations, communities or universities, local communities is also recommended for piloting the experience of both “The Hunt” and the event before creating the final product.

Accessibility is also a key concern at sites to ensure everyone is able to enjoy having fun at sites and learning about heritage regardless of their additional support needs or circumstances. This is an important consideration for implementing “The Hunt” but it is just as important for HES to make all its sites accessible. Integration with

Euan’s Guide should be a priority for all sites and more accessibility information should be made available on the website, such as floor plans and busy visiting times. The Euan’s Guide and more information can be found [here](#). Quiet, autism-friendly tours should be made possible at manned sites to provide enjoyable site visits for everyone.

Accessibility should be a key factor for choosing which sites are suitable to host “The Hunt” to ensure the experience caters for both physical and non-physical disabilities. This means ensuring the clues are physically accessible for all and providing clear information on interpretation, quiet times and support staff or resources available.

Greater social media presence and outreach to schools and universities would be needed to promote “The Hunt” and reach a broader audience of young people, as well as promoting primarily on TikTok and Instagram to reach the relevant audience. Outreach to University history societies and high school history students could also help target the missing 16-25 demographic.

Testing the Design

The design was discussed with a variety of HES staff from across the organisation and at HES sites to use their knowledge and expertise on how 'The Hunt' could be implemented. The following constructive suggestions, ideas and considerations was received.

Youth engagement

- Gamification would be a welcome addition to site experiences and unofficially visitors were engaging with geocaching at sites already.
- Targets the lack of engagement for the older youth audiences across HES.
- Built-in evaluation mechanisms for the experience could help HES generate new ideas and continue to evolve.
- HES will need to develop ways to adapt and react quickly to changing interests and trends that young people are interested in.
- A marketing campaign targeting broader youth audiences would need to be implemented.
- Provides potential for linking into local school curriculums, media tie-ins and rewards relating to online trends such as history TikToks.

Site use

- Geocaching adventures have great potential for implementation at both unstaffed and staffed sites.
- Opportunity to link engagement across multiple sites.
- Could tie well into HES's Digital Strategy for improving the digital offer at sites.
- For unstaffed sites, a greater focus would need to be given to the digital interactivity involved in 'The Hunt'.
- Once a pilot project had been established it would be simple to scale up the prototype to multiple sites.
- The creation and implementation of clues at sites would need to be carefully considered so they do not damage sites or encourage visitors to inadvertently damage parts of a site during their hunt.
- Significant funding would be needed to support event and staffing costs.
- The design could allow visitors to 'choose your own adventure' within 'The Hunt's' content.

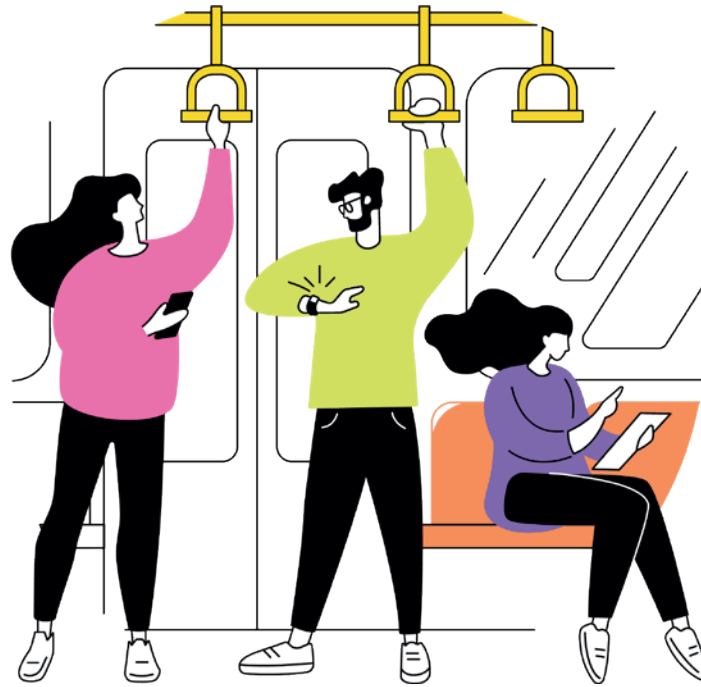
Partnerships

- Potential to partner with local community partnerships or business sponsorships to help create, deliver or fund the event.
- Provides an opportunity to collaborate with universities and student history societies to support digital content.

Accessibility

- The design could utilise other languages such as Gaelic.
- Trigger warnings or passwords would be needed to protect visitors from sensitive or age-advised clue content.
- Consideration would need to be given when finding diverse, untold stories and encouraging diverse audiences to take part in 'The Hunt' and event.
- Not all sites would be suitable to host events and hunt activities would need to be linked to the host site for the event.
- Champions minority stories which HES are keen to communicate more often at sites.





Refining the Design

The feedback received from staff on the ideas has helped to re-evaluate the practical aspects of implementing the prototype, including consideration of safeguarding, accessibility, funding, and further opportunities for youth engagement. Therefore, the following adjustments were developed to the original design of ‘The Hunt’:

- Enter participants into a raffle for free event tickets on full completion of “The Hunt”.
- Utilise Euan’s Guide to provide clear, informative accessibility information for each site involved in “The Hunt” and the event.
- Provide volunteer opportunities for young people to be involved in generating TikTok content for “The Hunt” and the event.
- Create a simpler, user and family-friendly hunt for unstaffed sites.
- Ensure “The Hunt” is available in other languages, namely Gaelic, Scots, Mandarin, Polish, Urdu and Hindi.
- Provide mature content and trigger warnings for sensitive or age-advised content.
- Integrate safeguarding into the software used, for example using a portal for age consent
- Continue to seek collaboration and feedback from young people on what events they want to see at HES sites.
- Include a short, simple feedback tool at the end of each hunt.
- Engage businesses in event sponsorship and invite local communities and businesses to provide music, catering and activities at events.

ACTION:

Provide more information at sites about opportunities for young people to get involved at HES.

The forum wants young people to be given more opportunities to get involved in the work HES do, whether this is through events, activities, volunteering or paid work. One key marketing tool to utilise for this would be at HES sites through leaflets and posters as well as encouraging volunteers to speak to young people about these opportunities when they visit site (see more in Goal 6).

ACTION:

Encourage and support active travel and public transport options to sites.

Public transport is the most accessible form of transport for young people to access sites as well as being a more environmentally friendly option than travelling by car. How sites can be accessed via public transport routes needs to be more clearly signposted and explained on the HES website and on social media. Visitors should be encouraged to use active travel too when appropriate and information about how best to do so should be provided and promoted where possible.

GOAL 4: MAKE THE HES WEBSITE AND HES SITES MORE ACCESSIBLE.

ACTION:

Make the website more accessible for all and dyslexia-friendly.

It is important to the forum that HES' website is more accessible to different types of disabilities or access needs including dyslexia. The website should utilise a clear, easy-to-navigate design that uses more visuals, less text, has audio play options, adjustable text size, optional background colours and information should be clearly displayed or signposted to.

ACTION:

Ensure more sites are disability-friendly.

The forum wants everyone to be able to enjoy visiting HES sites so investing in accessibility requirements for visitors should be a priority. The young people want sites to accommodate a range of disabilities taking into consideration both physical and non-physical accessibility barriers. Utilising the Euan's Guide could be a quick and clear way of doing this, as well as providing quiet visit times, quiet tours and site floor plans. Euan's Guide can be found [here](#).

ACTION:

Provide more accessibility information about sites online.

To ensure visitors feel confident visiting sites, clear information about accessibility for each site needs to be given online to prepare visitors. All relevant accessibility details need to be clearly provided for each site, including any resources or staffing that can support someone's visit. For example, introductory site videos, site maps and plans, quiet times or tours, seasonal information, and information about any dedicated staff available on site.



GOAL 5: INCLUDE AND REPRESENT DIVERSE HERITAGE STORIES ESPECIALLY THOSE FROM UNDER-REPRESENTED COMMUNITIES AND HOW SITES ARE CONNECTED TO COLONIAL HISTORY.



ACTION:

Provide improved training on equality, diversity, and inclusion for all staff and volunteers.

To ensure everyone working for HES understand the value and importance of representing minority voices and decolonising heritage, staff training on equality, diversity and inclusion should be provided for all staff and volunteers. The forum believes this will help raise awareness of how heritage intersects with equality, diversity and inclusion in a multitude of ways and what they can do to make positive change in these areas within HES' influence.

ACTION:

Engage under-represented communities throughout HES.

The forum believes HES is becoming increasingly more inclusive, but they want the heritage sector to proactively engage more under-represented communities. By allowing more ages, backgrounds, and ethnicities to be involved in heritage conversations, projects and development; Scotland's colonialist history will be better acknowledged, and more communities will feel included in Scotland's heritage.

ACTION:

Acknowledge the colonial connections at HES sites and the historical erasure of under-represented communities.

Decolonising Scotland's heritage is important to both the forum and young people. The forum wants HES to support the acknowledgement of the historic erasure of underrepresented communities in Scotland, including people of colour, ethnic minority groups, LGBTQ+ and people with disabilities. Acknowledgement of colonialism and its connections with HES sites should be visible at sites, online and in resources. This could provide an opportunity to tell more minority stories as a result.

GOAL 6: PROVIDE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE INVOLVED IN THE WORK HES DO.

ACTION:

Encourage more young people to apply for opportunities.

More needs to be done to make opportunities accessible and engaging to young people. The forum wants to see HES actively seeking applications from young people for both paid and unpaid roles and advertise these in youth-facing spaces both online and offline. The forum wants to see recognition that youth voices are the future of the heritage sector, valuing what they can contribute despite many having a lack of experience in the sector.

ACTION:

Provide more paid opportunities for young people.

While the forum sees volunteering as an essential and highly valuable opportunity for young people to get involved in the work HES does, it is also important that young people are given more opportunities to be paid for their talents too. The forum wants HES to invest in providing more opportunities that are accessible to young people with little or no experience in the sector.

ACTION:

Provide opportunities specifically for under-represented young people.

Boosting the number of applicants from under-represented communities at HES is important to the forum and they want to see opportunities provided that specifically target recruitment from under-represented young people.

“WHEN I TURNED 14, I REALLY WANTED TO GIVE BACK BY VOLUNTEERING, BUT I FOUND IT A REAL CHALLENGE TO FIND AND APPLY FOR OPPORTUNITIES. FOR PEOPLE IN MY AGE GROUP THERE ARE ALMOST NO OPPORTUNITIES IN THE HERITAGE SECTOR, SO HAVING READILY AVAILABLE, EASY TO APPLY VOLUNTEERING ROLES AT HES WOULD BE INCREDIBLE!”



ACTION:

Provide opportunities for under-16s to volunteer at HES.

Volunteering has so many positive impacts – for the volunteer, for the community, and for the organisation they are volunteering for. Young people want and need volunteering roles, whether this is for a Duke of Edinburgh/Saltire Award, to gain vital experience, or just to help out the community.

All over Scotland, young people have a hunger for voluntary work across a diverse range of sectors, and HES could be an integral part of this. Currently, HES does not offer roles to those under the age of 16 and those who are able to volunteer have found difficulty in applying and finding appropriate posts. Although child protection laws are a barrier to younger aged young people helping out, many other organisations offer opportunities, for example high street charity shops.

Allowing young people ages 13+ would increase HES' volunteering force, offer fresh ideas from a new generation, and empower young people in a variety of ways. In 2019 almost 50,000 young people aged 14 to 24 volunteered with the Duke of Edinburgh award. This amounted to 340,000 hours of volunteering. This demonstrates an obvious need for easy-to-access volunteering roles amongst under 25s.

As shown in other recommendations volunteering roles must be well advertised on social media, in schools, colleges, universities, and at sites. The application process should be simple to complete and take into account the challenges that young people face.

ACTION:

PROTOTYPE CASE STUDY: Develop the volunteering process at HES to engage more young people and increase their skills development. Increasing the number of young people accessing work and volunteering opportunities in HES and the heritage sector has been a key focus for the forum. In the 2021 report, the forum set out recommendations which were aimed at increasing youth engagement in HES opportunities. This included developing a user-friendly recruitment platform, increasing the variety of roles available that young people were interested in and improving marketing strategies for opportunities.

The Volunteering and Work working group identified the following recommendations as key priorities for implementation and established ways in which they could be connected:

- Give more weight to personal statements during the recruitment process.
- Create an online platform to allow young people to have a profile to have their personal statements to showcase their skills and have references available from their volunteer coordinators.
- Increase variety of roles available.
- Work with young people directly to design new volunteering roles within the historic sector, identifying opportunities that are relevant and engaging to them.
- Improve career progression routes within the organisation.
- Improve transportation for volunteers/employee.

Considerations

- How to advertise this
- How to measure the progress of this project
- Not a 'quick win'
- Fresh start ~ rebrand the 'Make your mark'
- Does HES already have a HES Volunteer office?

Prototype Design

The working group developed prototype ideas that could interlink some of these recommendations to form an improved experience for young volunteers at HES. The group want young people to feel they both provide and gain value by volunteering in the heritage sector and that HES itself can gain more value by recruiting young people across the organisation. Many of the priorities related to the experience of young people applying and taking part in opportunities, therefore, it was felt designing an improved volunteer journey would tackle what was important to the forum.

Another key focus of the design is providing volunteering experiences for skills development in young people, specifically targeted at school and university leavers. This is a target demographic as these young people are searching for experience and skills development to gain further education or employment.

The aim of the design was to provide ways in which the volunteering process at HES can be streamlined, to improve the applicants volunteering journey, open-up more opportunities for their development and create pathways for careers in the heritage sector and related sectors.

The prototype maps an improved experience for volunteers, demonstrating how the online portal could be improved to make online engagement and application more youth friendly and accessible, while ensuring roles are advertised in youth spaces.

Improving the volunteer journey

The following journey map of an improved volunteer experience at HES for young applicants has been created to address the priorities previously outlined. The design shows that accessibility is important for engaging young people in applications for the sector. By providing more options for how young people can apply for roles and what evidence they can give to support their application this will make recruitment fairer and increase diversity. Volunteering should be flexible, allowing access to multiple sites and roles with a focus on locality to volunteers. This allows young people who move house often, or those who are between two homes while studying, to access local volunteering roles. This will help give young people a broader range of experiences and skills development.

The design includes a dedicated staff member for volunteers to ensure young people receive support throughout their experience and also provide them with advice on next steps for their heritage education or career after their experience. It's important for young people to receive certification at the end of their volunteer experience which details their achievements and skills development across the roles they have worked. The forum wants more young people across Scotland to access wider opportunities, careers and education and we believe certification can help support them in applications for future roles.

Volunteer journey to improve skills development in young people



Improving online engagement for applicants

While researching how HES engage, advertise, and recruit volunteers online, it was discovered that both work and volunteering opportunities are not well advertised, information isn't always accessible, and the application process is complicated or unclear. The forum believes it's important for the website and associated portals such as Make Your Mark to provide clear, accessible, and intuitive information to better engage young applicants. Application procedures for all roles need to be transparent, inclusive and simple so that young people know what's expected of them, offer them alternative methods of application and reassure them they can demonstrate a variety of experience to support their application. Therefore, an online work and volunteer hub for applicants, volunteers and staff has been designed to illustrate how the group think online engagement could be improved.

The design includes a public landing page, or hub, integrated into the HES website that clearly advertises all opportunities available and how to apply for them. This hub would include linked sections dedicated to application support, information about HES and the skills they're looking for in applicants as well showcasing the

benefits involved in volunteering and careers at HES. Content would be simply designed to increase user accessibility and easy access to information, however it would also include engaging content such as short videos to showcase the experiences of current volunteers or staff. The second part of the design demonstrates how the online hub would support volunteers and staff once they had signed into a personal account on the hub. Young people want to feel connected to their older colleagues, they want HR to be straightforward and accessible and workplace health and social wellbeing is important to them. The group want young people to feel they are supported and developed with working or volunteering at HES and the online hub could support with all this. In the prototype design, training and development opportunities are clearly signposted, alongside other work and volunteering opportunities that users could apply for. Day-to-day HR resources could be integrated into the hub as well as internal networks within HES to encourage communication and community building within the organisation. The hub would therefore form a one-stop-shop for volunteers and employees at HES, allowing them access to all resources, networking and training opportunities in one space.





Testing the Idea

The working group needed constructive feedback on their design ideas to test out how the volunteer journey and the hub could be implemented as well as advice on how the designs could be improved. HES Staff from a variety of teams and roles were invited to share their internal expertise with us, as well as Young Scot's Co-design Officer with personal experience of youth volunteering and currently leading on the development of the YSHive Volunteer Experience programme. They had the following suggestions, opportunities and considerations on the prototype:

Strengths and Opportunities

- The design is an inspirational building block for improving the current platform, processes, and opportunities HES has within careers and volunteering in the heritage sector.
- The journey shows how flexibility can be given to young volunteers with roles that focus on their interests and recognise them for their work and commitment during their volunteer experience.

Online hub design

- The online hub design is welcoming and interactive and provides one space for everything which supports progression if the young volunteer choses this.
- Design demonstrates that HES could develop better synchronisation of their career resources, improve their promotion of heritage opportunities and test out new developments at events such as Discover Creative Careers Week. It also has potential to demonstrate the variety of opportunities within the heritage sector.
- The design complements the current Make Your Mark website and initiative that HES run with heritage organisations.
- HES's job portal is currently undergoing redevelopment which wouldn't allow future system merging, therefore volunteering and paid work platforms would need to be separate, providing opportunity for further development.
- HES's website is soon to be redeveloped which would be an opportunity for these ideas to be taken into further development.
- Safeguarding and child protection will need to be considered for how the online hub network is moderated.

Online hub content

- The use of videos is a chance to both showcase heritage careers and pathways as well as introducing young people to specific roles. Video content on the hub could tell more career stories of current HES staff to give greater insight into career journeys too.
- The design poses opportunities to add links to related sector opportunities including creative industries and tourism.
- To increase promotion of roles, partnerships could be made to third sector organisations who promote volunteering opportunities such as Volunteer Edinburgh.
- The online hub could include a space which collects a volunteer's achievements, allowing them to have everything all in one place. For example, volunteer hours worked, training completed and certificates.
- Provides an opportunity to direct young people to further information on volunteer accreditation available such as Saltire Aware, Duke of Edinburgh and John Muir Award.
- Financial investment into a new online platform is unlikely but investment and development in internal systems, content and partnership platforms could support the design's priorities. Examples included developing a partnership project, linking in with an employability scheme such as Cashback for the Future and making the current team kinetic platform more visit on the website.
- Volunteering at HES needs to appeal to applicants of all ages and communities so careful consideration would need to be given to exclusively youth engagement content.

Volunteer journey

- HES currently welcomes volunteer applicants with an initial consultation to establish assign motivations and ambitions to final volunteers a suitable role. This person-centred approach would fit well with the group’s desire for a more supportive application and onboarding experience for volunteers.
- Create roles that are specifically tailored for, and designed with, young people to increase applicants from young people.
- Currently there are limited volunteer opportunities available therefore more would need to be created with a variety of positions and responsibilities from ‘light touch’ roles such as taster opportunities to ‘superstar’ roles such as Guides.
- More collaboration with young people is needed to discover what volunteer roles they would be looking for. Consideration should be given to how young people can be encouraged to apply for roles using alternative application methods because this is vital for accessibility but often overlooked by applicants.

- HES needs to develop more volunteer roles and give more responsibility to volunteers while ensuring paid staff don’t feel undermined. Training and investment in both paid and volunteer roles would help alleviate this issue.

Taster sessions

- Taster sessions would complement the group’s design well and could link into current partnerships within Make Your Mark to deliver a variety of physical and digital sessions for all ages and communities. This would give both volunteers and job applicants a chance to see what HES and heritage opportunities are like, allow participants to test these out and see what they enjoy best before taking up a position.
- Taster sessions, training and associated events would need to be held online to help alleviate staffing and resourcing costs.



Youth VIP Feedback

Members from Youth Volunteering Innovation Project (YouthVIP) were invited to assess the design ideas and give feedback based on their experiences as youth volunteers and experts in this sector.

Youth VIP members said that the volunteer journey map offers fantastic ideas for improving the experience of young volunteers at HES. In particular, the young people liked the emphasis on upskilling for young people and supporting a young volunteer into employment. They felt that networking is a key part of volunteering, so they were pleased to see this element of the design included in the volunteer and hub prototype.

Youth VIP members suggested that creating partnerships with Local Authorities and Third Sector Interfaces to promote opportunities to young people. They welcomed the accessibility and inclusion considerations for the application process in the design and suggested HES's new application process should be co-designed with young people. The group also suggested working with Scottish Association of the Teachers of History to increase school engagement with opportunities marketing. The Youth VIP members said that a marketing strategy would need to be in place to raise awareness of the hub with young people.

The young people felt the online hub design layout and highlighted content was strong. They suggested adding in a location filter so that young people could toggle opportunities to their local area. However, they were concerned that if the online hub wasn't well implemented onto the HES website it could hinder accessibility and impact, undermining the forum's aims. They also felt work and volunteers should have separate portals because these positions have different needs.

The main issues the Youth VIP members raised with the design was that a similar hub may already be available outside HES and therefore it would be best for HES to signpost young people there or develop partnerships with such a hub. They also felt that it may not be realistic for HES to work directly with schools but could develop network partnerships that market to schools on their behalf.

Refining the Prototype

The working group welcomed all the ideas given during testing, particularly HES providing taster sessions, increasing awareness of apprenticeships, and linking in with Discover Creative Careers Week. However, the group believe it's fundamental that these opportunities and events are promoted better to young people to increase their awareness initially and then subsequently increase their engagement.

The Forum hadn't previously heard about Discover Creative Careers Week and this was seen as an ideal opportunity for young people to learn more about heritage careers. This lack of awareness could be solved with better marketing strategies for key volunteering and career opportunities. The group therefore developed the following actions to support the initial prototype design ideas to tackle the promotion of heritage careers to youth audiences.



ACTION:

Advertise volunteering roles and heritage careers events through schools and universities.

Develop partnerships with schools and university departments to market these opportunities. Target History and heritage departments at universities via email to encourage them to pass on information about internships and volunteer opportunities to their students, as well as speaking to teachers about potential work experience roles with HES for their Geography or History students. This will help to reduce advertising and promotion costs as schools and university careers departments can advertise directly. This method targets students who already express an interest in the sector and would hopefully see applicant numbers improve as a result.

ACTION:

Promote and inform young people about all heritage sector jobs during events such as Discover Creative Careers Week.

It is important that young people hear about the variety of jobs involved in the heritage sector. This includes roles in administration, social media and project management for example, not just traditional skills such as stonemasonry.

Career stories need to be broader and include other roles than creative or hands-on jobs. The forum value the emphasis placed on traditional skills, but feel this part of the industry is still very niche. Many young people are looking for more accessible and reliable employment that they could take up more easily with transferrable skills which traditional skilled roles might not fulfil.

The forum wants to hear more about the stability and progression routes involved in different positions. Young people want to know if the heritage sector is worth accessing for more than just the emotional fulfilment of a job, and what kinds of contracts are typically available, as well as the benefits involved such as pension plans.

ACTION:

Develop online careers open days as well as post-event networking to increase youth engagement in heritage careers.

The forum knows that budgeting for careers events can be difficult, but feel there are creative ways to overcome this and still run events that are engaging for young people. One large event could be ran online and recorded by HES, with a careers open day being an excellent addition the Discover Creative Careers Week. Subsequent smaller events could then be run for careers development in schools and universities. Videos could be played from the main event as well as pre-recorded Q&A sessions with HES staff members. This would keep costs low but still promote the organisation and answer young people's most commonly asked questions. FAQs should be recorded for a variety of different roles to support event content.

The event should include a presentation about HES explaining what they do, who they help and what kind of careers they have available. For example, there could be a slideshow in the background that people can look at and read if the hosts are talking to other people during the event.

Key staff members from HES should attend to promote the work they do and introduce themselves. Alternatively, this could be in the form of pre-recorded videos that are subsequently played at events.

An online networking group should be available for event participants so they can communicate with one another after the event. This could help build a like-minded community for young people, helping them feel less isolated in the sector.

GOAL 7: INCREASE AWARENESS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND OFFER WAYS FOR VISITORS TO BE INVOLVED IN CLIMATE ACTION.

ACTION:

Create more opportunities that focus on climate change and the historic environment.

In conjunction with Goal 6, the forum would like to see more opportunities available in heritage that have a climate change focus. Upskilling opportunities such as roles relating to sustainability and preservation would allow individuals to have meaningful engagement with climate action in heritage while developing their own skills. HES Sites volunteers should be educated on how climate change is affecting sites, how to care for them as a result to ensure their sustainability. Volunteers would then be able to discuss climate change awareness with site visitors and how it affects the historic environment.

ACTION:

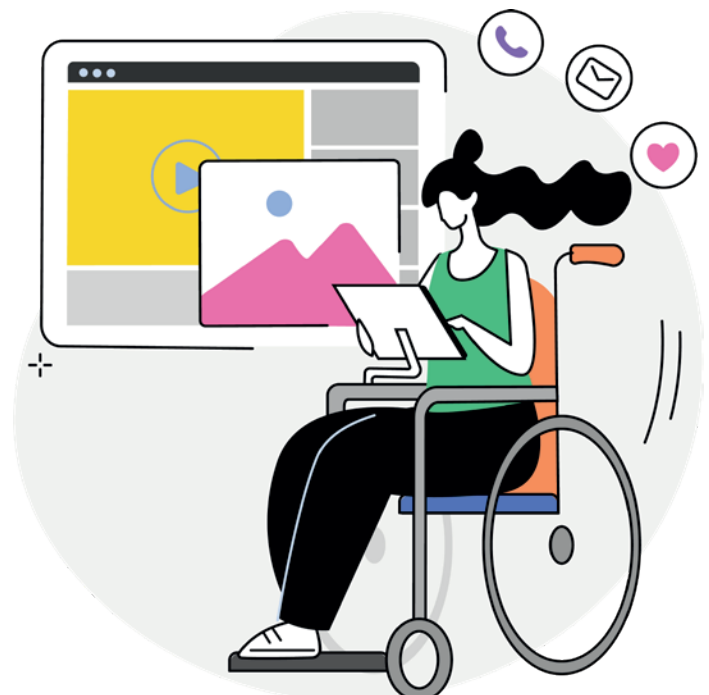
Encourage visitors to use green transport options to visit sites.

It's important to the forum that everyone is given opportunities to combat climate change with the choices they make, this includes their interaction with historic environments. One way to do this is to encourage site visitors to use green transport to travel to sites. This includes active travel and public transport. This would be an opportunity for HES to develop better local transport networks to sites and promote the Young Scot card benefit of free bus travel for under 22s. This could increase community links and site visitors as well as increasing climate change awareness.

ACTION:

Provide up to date information about the impact of climate change on HES sites.

The forum wants visitors to sites to understand the tangible, detrimental impacts climate change is having on the historic environment as well as what HES are doing to combat this. Up to date information about how sites are coping with climate change impacts, how this affects their future and the climate action work HES is doing should be communicated at sites, on the website and on social media.



PROJECT EXPERIENCES

Both HES staff and the young people on the Forum were invited to reflect on their experiences during the past 12 months on the project and the legacy they wanted the project to have on HES. The following key themes and target areas were identified. These demonstrate areas that the group felt HES should consider to embed youth voices in the organisation and ensure the legacy of the forum's work.

Prioritising Youth Voices

Both staff and young people felt that HES needs to make youth voices a priority within the organisation by embedding the work of the forum, embracing the support of the internal youth forum and reviewing communication and recruitment processes. Identifying where and how to engage diverse youth voices, rewarding young people for their time and working with partnerships to engage young people better were also mentioned.

Leadership and Decision-making processes

The group felt that decision-making approaches needed to adopt a growth mindset, embed critical thinking and be open to new ideas even when these challenge previous ways of working. Leading by example and involving young people at the highest levels of leadership and decision-making were also cited, suggesting that young people were included on the board or a permanent youth panel.

Collaborative working

Many felt that co-creation should continue to be a focus in implementation of changes, projects and team collaboration. Cross-team working and cross-level learning between entry-level staff and senior-level staff was suggested as well as taking an entrepreneurial and service design approach to internal processes.

Staffing and Resources

Staff resourcing was highlighted as an area that would allow the forum's work to be implemented fully with proper focus and investment. Identifying specific roles and adapting existing staff resource to demand was highlighted as essential to ensuring youth engagement throughout HES.

Training

Many of the staff and young people felt HES staff needed training to work confidently with young people and ensure they can feel safe, supported, upskilled and creative. The group felt that investing in capacity building with staff would help them become more aware of the value of youth engagement as well as how to engage young people. It was suggested that training a specific pool of staff to be facilitators would add value to upcoming projects or target areas.

PANEL MEMBER CASE STUDIES



MAYA, 14, FIFE

**I FELT RESPECTED AND
THAT ALL MY THOUGHTS
WERE PUT FORWARD**

Two members of the HistoricScot Youth Forum shared their personal experiences on the forum, what it's been like to volunteer on a YSHive project with Young Scot and the impact this has had on them individually:

One year ago today, I joined the HES Young Scot Forum. I first saw the opportunity when researching young people's opportunities near me. I knew Young Scot was a legit organisation (as I have my YS NEC card). On the website I found multiple opportunities but chose to sign up as I'm interested in Scottish heritage/history. I was delighted when I heard that I had been chosen to be involved. I've been involved in a couple of volunteering groups and was happy to learn that this group was just as fun (actually more fun!). Everyone is really nice, and the staff bring a nice, safe atmosphere. Throughout the experience I have made new friends and learned new skills (communication, initiative etc.). I felt respected and that all my thoughts were put forward. My aspirations for the future of the group are that it keeps running and that the online hub is created, I also hope that school visits will be more common, inspiring young people to be more interested in the history of Scotland.

As a high school student, this hasn't disturbed my education and has been really fun. I've participated in multiple experiences while being on this panel. I was invited to a residential weekend in Edinburgh to meet face to face and to generate more ideas. Here, I was greeted with fun activities, AMAZING food and hot choco and meeting friends for the first time. The online meetings are always productive and organised well.

In conclusion, I strongly recommend young people to get involved in one of Young Scot's many opportunities and immerse themselves in a safe, amusing and productive panel.

PANEL MEMBER CASE STUDIES



**ROBYN, 21,
SOUTH LANARKSHIRE**

**MY HOPE IS THE FORUM'S
WORK CONTINUES TO
MAKE A BIG IMPACT
ON THE ACCESSIBILITY
OF THE HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT FOR
YOUNG PEOPLE FROM
SHETLAND TO THE
SCOTTISH BORDERS.**

I have been a part of the HistoricScot Youth Forum from the very beginning two and a half years ago, which seems like a lifetime ago now! I originally signed up to be a part of the Forum as not only was I in my 2nd year of my French/History undergrad, but I had a simmering passion for making History and heritage in Scotland a much more representative and inclusive place. As an LGBTQ+ disabled young person from a rural area myself, I always felt underrepresented and unserved by the historic environment and histories around me and so was excited to be chosen to join the project. Throughout my time on the Forum, I've had an absolute blast seeing where our original ideas way back at the first Residential in 2020 to now in 2022 have developed which is the most rewarding thing. I have always felt fully supported throughout the entire project by my fellow Forum members and YS staff in all aspects but especially in presenting more radical ideas to HES, which has greatly boosted not only my

self-confidence but has made me more assertive and self-determined. Moreover, the internal and external opportunities I have been able to access and the friendships with young people all over Scotland I've made through volunteering on this Forum have been amazing and it's something I hope other young people in Scotland take advantage of. My hope is the Forum's work continues to make a big impact on the accessibility of the historic environment for young people from Shetland to the Scottish Borders. And especially that young people from underrepresented communities learn to make noise and see their own community's histories within the wider Scottish historic environment.



Young Scot

Caledonian Exchange
19A Canning Street
Edinburgh
EH3 8EG

youngscot.net/news



@YoungScot

info@youngscot



YoungScot

