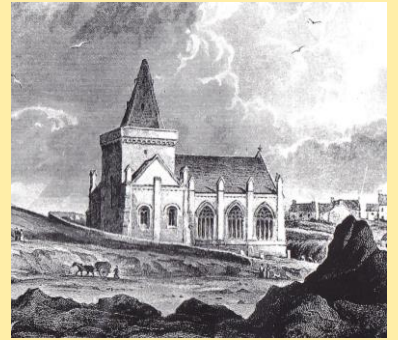
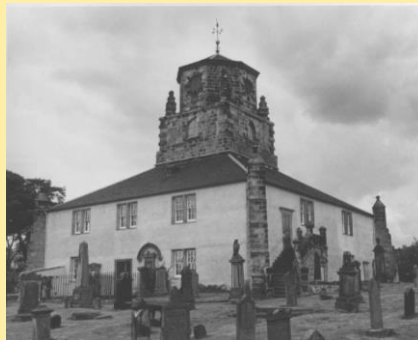


**Fife Historic
Buildings Trust**
Making heritage live

Three Churches

Project Viability Appraisal



November 2023

Supported by

AHF Transforming
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**This report was funded by AHF and produced by Fife Historic Buildings Trust,
with Initial Economic Assessments by Colin Duff, Independent Consultant.**

1. Executive Summary

This report summarises early- stage viability study work carried out with three A- listed Fife churches and their communities over the summer of 2023, with the aim of exploring potential future uses for the buildings. All three were categorised as surplus to requirements by the Church of Scotland in 2022, and are planned to be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of by the end of 2027.

Following FHBT's high- level assessment of all seven A- listed churches in Fife in this position (See Appendix A), and consultation with local partners, the three churches selected for the study were Culross Abbey Parish Church, Burntisland Parish Church, and St Monans Auld Kirk.

- At Culross Abbey, an existing organisation (the Broomhall Estates Conservation Trust) came forward to work with FHBT on forming an initial vision for owning and running the Abbey as a heritage site, focussing on its important role in the historic of Christianity in Scotland, and linking to the existing attractions of Culross Palace (NTS), Culross Abbey ruins (HES), and the Fife Pilgrim Way (FCCT).
- At Burntisland, following a series of meetings, and with ongoing uncertainty about the future of the congregation, the Kirk session decided not to proceed with the study at this time.
- Following initial action by the Community Council, St Monans Auld Kirk Enterprise (SMAKE) was formed shortly after the commencement of the study and worked with FHBT to conduct wide- reaching community consultation, resulting in a vision of the Kirk as a high- class venue for life events such as weddings, with a café operating during the week and several annual community events.

Following a competitive tender process, FHBT commissioned initial economic assessments from Colin Duff for Culross Abbey and St Monans Auld Kirk. These form a strong starting point for seeking further funding to move forward to a development stage, and will help facilitate negotiations with the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland regarding possible future transfer of ownership.

2. Introduction

What links Johnny Cash, Oliver Cromwell, and a piglet in a bonnet? Chat with a local in St Monans, Fife, and you may be fortunate enough to catch a glimpse of the vast wealth of stories linking back to the village's Auld Kirk. One of around 400 churches nationwide facing closure and sale in the next few years, theirs is a situation simultaneously unique in its social and built heritage, and ubiquitous in its dilemma.

Fife Historic Buildings Trust (FHBT) aims to ensure that every historic building in Fife is cared for and put the best use for its community. The number and quality of buildings affected by the Church of Scotland disposals presents a serious challenge for us and others in the built heritage sector; this study, enabled by the Architectural Heritage Fund and lead by our Historic Environment Scotland (HES)- supported Project Officer, is a first step to understanding how Fife can survive this change, and thrive in its wake, and what lessons can be applied elsewhere.

Under a very tight timescale and beginning shortly following the sudden and often upsetting, decisions from by Fife Presbytery, we owe a huge debt of thanks to those in the three communities who were willing to commit to partnering with us.

At the conclusion of this study in October 2023, the three churches were in very different situations, and likely represent a snapshot of scenarios currently occurring all over the country. Throughout the report the three churches will be ordered West- East.

Whose church? At **Culross Abbey** the incredible dedication and generosity of elder John Laird and others is finally, after 30+ years, coming to a conclusion as the Kirk Session looks ahead to find the successor to take care of the building. Early hopes that the Community Council would take a lead were shelved as they grapple with internal changes and capacity challenges; the Broomhall Estates Conservation Trust stepped in to work with us to form an initial vision for the Abbey's future.

Place In Time: Though a year has passed since Fife Presbytery's Mission Plans were finalised, it is still early days in working out what the decision to close and sell **Burntisland Parish Church** means for the community. Whilst the Kirk Session voted to accept the church closure on the 13th June 2023, some in the church and community have strongly opposed the Presbytery's decision from the outset, and intend to continue appealing against closure if they are given a route to do so.

Sea Change: Following initial contact by the Interim Moderator of **St Monans**, the energy and enthusiasm of the Community Council set plans for community ownership on a fast track. FHBT assistance was voted for in mid- May, following which a group of 6 local residents stepped forward to form a Working Group. With representation from the congregation, Community Council, and local businesses, SMAKE (St Monans Auld Kirk Enterprise) had a busy summer hosting public drop-in events, launching their online presence and developing a vision for the Auld Kirk based on community input.

Despite the limited timescale and wide scope of this study, with FHBT's support two of the churches (Culross and St Monans) reached the stage of defining an initial vision for their buildings' use and operation. These have been assessed for economic viability by consultant Colin Duff, setting them in strong stead for gathering support, applying for further funding, and moving forward.

3. General Background

In 2022, the Church of Scotland released Presbytery Plans (See Appendix C for Fife Plan) which include categorisation of their buildings into three groups: retained, sold by December 2027, and of undetermined future. The group intended for sale includes approximately 400 churches across Scotland, around 40 of which are in Fife. A group of Fife-based members of the church leadership formed a Historic Churches Working Group in mid-2022 with the aim of more carefully considering the Church's approach to the seven A-listed buildings categorised for disposal within the Fife group. This working group, convened by Revd Donald MacEwan, approached FHBT to consult and explore ways we could assist. These conversations, along with input from Historic Churches Scotland, led to the application to AHF for a Viability Grant.

Though our concern extends to every building lacking a definite future use, due to the limited time and funds it was decided that 2 or 3 of the seven A-listed churches should be selected for this study, after an initial high-level assessment of all 7 (see Appendix A). The decision-making factors included apparent community support, potential partners, social and physical heritage significance, scope for adaptive re-use, and potential for learning related to the nationwide crisis of church disposals. The group of 3 selected churches is varied in terms of geographical setting, levels of community engagement/interest, level of church leadership and congregational involvement, and stage in the process.

Revd MacEwan's Working Group presented their findings (See Appendix B) to Fife Presbytery on the 17th June 2023 and recommended retention of two of the churches (St Fillan's Aberdour and Crail) and upholding of the decision to dispose of the remaining five. The Working Group has now been dissolved, but Revd MacEwan has established a new Historic Churches Support Group, which will aim to work with St Fillans and Crail, as well as those still subject to disposal.

Subsequent to the initial Presbytery mission planning in 2022, the General Trustees announced at the General Assembly of May 2023 their intention to develop a programme for 'Historic Signature Churches (See Appendix D)'. It is understood that this will probably focus on those churches categorised 'A' (for retention beyond 2027) rather than those currently intended for disposal, though official response is awaited. Burntisland in particular would benefit from clarity on this as it has given them hope of reversing the decision for their Parish Church.

Since its publication in early 2023, the General Trustees have also been circulating "Your Church, Your Community"¹, developed by the DTAS Community Ownership Service, Historic Churches Scotland and the Heritage Trust Network. This has been adopted to supersede the General Trustees' previous advice to communities interested in taking on ownership of a church

¹ <https://dtascommunityownership.org.uk/resources/coss-publications/your-church-your-community>. HTN also held a series of events on the topic in 2023: <https://www.heritagetrustnetwork.org.uk/a-future-for-your-church/>

building. Their encouragement to congregations to use this guidance appears to be a clear indication of a willingness to enter negotiation regarding community purchase, and shows an openness to a paradigm beyond simply selling to the highest bidder. Contact with the General Trustees has been made by the group at St Monans and at Culross during the period of this study; both received a positive response and an outline of next steps to continue the journey to potential transfer (see ‘next steps’ in sections A and C).



4. How Fife Historic Buildings Trust is involved

FHBT aims to end dilapidation of historic buildings in Fife. The worst-case scenario, and most serious risk, for these buildings would be the lack of a viable future use; we aim to mitigate this risk by assisting the local communities to find a way to keep them open and in use. The support we have provided through this feasibility study has been different in each of the three cases, according to the specific needs and questions raised, and always aimed to understand the local needs and ideas for the buildings and to lay out a roadmap for how that could be achieved.

5. Summary timeline, April- September 2023

- May: High level assessment of 7 A- listed churches categorised ‘B’ (for disposal by 2027); see Appendix A
- May- July: regular meetings with Church of Scotland Historic Churches Working Group convener (Revd Donald MacEwan) to coordinate effort and agree on FHBT’s suggested 3 churches for study. Review of draft Report in advance of Working Group’s final report (see Appendix B).

- May- June: Coordination with Historic Churches Scotland, keeping informed and discussing implementation of ‘Your Church, Your Community’. Contact made with several precedent case studies.
- May: Church of Scotland General Assembly, Edinburgh. ‘Historic Signature Churches’ initiative announced (See Appendix C).
- June 17th Meeting of Fife Presbytery; categorisation decisions finalised, and Historic Churches Working Group’s report delivered (See Appendix B).
- July: Historic Environment Scotland appointed Strategic Heritage Project Officer for Place of Worship; met to explain study and find areas of collaboration.
- July: Colin Duff, Independent Consultant. appointed to perform Initial Economic Assessments on preferred option for each church. Site visits and briefing carried out on 20th July; St Monans and Culross went on to provide scenarios for assessment.
- August: meeting with Fife Presbytery’s Building Officer, David Gillan
- Other churches visited for informal discussion in conjunction with study: Pittenweem, Auchtertool.

(See Sections A,B,C for summary timelines relating to each church)

6. General Risks

In all three cases, and across the country, risks include:

- The buildings being left empty and deteriorating, or being subject to vandalism.
- Sale to a buyer who is unsympathetic to the building and its community, leading to cessation of access and use by the community, and/or lack of care for building fabric.
- Local needs (in terms of meeting space, social space, ceremonial space, tourism draw) being left unmet following sale.
- Timeline: uncertainty of when the buildings may be marketed, making it difficult to plan ahead and inviting inertia due to lack of clarity on when sale may take place.
- Sale price: lack of clarity regarding figure; difficulty in raising funds for purchase; need for maintenance/ repair budget.
- Lack of clarity on CoS ‘Historic Signature Churches’ programme (See Appendix D) leading to complacency that decision will be reversed.
- Insufficient capacity within communities & congregations to take on the project, and lack of local, regional and national support for emerging groups.

- Insufficient availability of heritage and economic consultants with the specific knowledge and experience required to effectively assess viability of church projects.
- Conflicting community views on preferred future use.
- Confusing process of negotiating with General Trustees meaning the right owner cannot succeed in taking on ownership.
- Optimism bias when planning for future use.
- Limited funding opportunities and sudden increase in groups seeking to fund similar projects.

(See Sections A,B,C for risks specific to each church)

7. Observations

In the context of an overwhelming tide of upcoming church closures, it has been valuable to intimately explore three specific scenarios, and to understand the barriers and opportunities when considering future use. Several emerging themes are helpful to note.

- Church of Scotland representatives reached through this study, and communicated with by the community groups, have displayed a clear willingness to help and a desire to ‘dispose well’. However, access to the right person, in such a sizeable organisation with some, but not all, decision making delegated to Presbytery level, has been challenging. Key questions such as timelines, scope of the Historic Signature Churches initiative (see Appendix D), and whether decisions can be appealed, have remained without a firm answer thus far.
 - **First Stop Advisory Group.** It may be valuable to form an advisory group, building on the support coming from Donald MacEwan’s Historic Churches Support group, HES’ Strategic Heritage Project Officer for Places of Worship, and HTN/ HCS/DATS’ seminars and guidance. This could act as a first port-of-call for churches and communities with questions, providing them with key Church of Scotland contacts, and linking them into a network of those in similar situations.
- **Volume and Prioritisation.** Given the sheer volume of soon-to-be-redundant church buildings, an approach to prioritization is key. The formation of a church- specific values framework whereby a systematic nationwide assessment informs a clear directive regarding national priorities, would be very helpful to focus resources. This would likely take the heft of a national leader to develop, with input from region- specific groups.
- **Local Support Networks.** In addition to an overarching national framework, there is value in local, region- specific support networks. An example of a Fife- specific factor is the Pilgrim Way, where plans are emerging for creating a string of accommodation and

hospitality offerings; a network is not in place for matching this idea with the several relevant churches in need of a future use.

- **Ensuring high quality adaptations through planning management.** The majority of disposal list churches will be in a very different position to the A- listed buildings studied in this report. Many may be developed commercially/ residentially, and there is a need to ensure this is carried out well. Provision of Places of Worship- specific advice to local authority decision makers will be important, as well as increased communication between the Church of Scotland, HES and local authorities.²
- **Community capacity building.** Engaged, active people in the communities surrounding these churches, who care about the buildings and are willing to invest time in finding the right bespoke solution, are of central, critical importance. However, without the support of a Building Preservation Trust or other experienced partner this energy may not be sufficient to achieve successful and sustainable plans. Over the course of this study we have been invited to visit other churches destined for disposal, where progress is sometimes inhibited by this lack of formal support. This highlights the highly effective investment of AHF in enabling this early- stage BPT involvement.
- Like others, FHBT has a responsibility to continue considering our most effective role in dealing with this nationwide crisis. In addition to supporting the three churches featured in this study, we look forward to finding opportunities to lend our skills and knowledge in the wider conversation.

8. Consultees

A Draft report was shared with the following parties in October 2023 for comment.

- Architectural Heritage Fund
- Revd Donald MacEwan, Fife Historic Churches Support Group
- Historic Churches Scotland
- Heritage Trust Network
- Culross Abbey Parish Church (via John Laird, Elder)
- Broomhall Estate Conservation Trust
- Burntisland Parish Church (via Session Clerk)
- St Monans Auld Kirk (via Brian Porteous, Interim Moderator)
- St Monans Auld Kirk Enterprise
- Revd Duncan Weaver, Fife Pilgrim Pastor
- Roger Pickering, Forth Pilgrim
- Craig Stanford, HES Strategic Heritage Project Officer (Places of Worship)

² Built Environment Scotland Forum (BEFS), home of the Places of Worship in Scotland forum and the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) are hosting a joint event in late November 2023 aimed at supporting decision makers as they prepare for a high volume of applications from churches in transition.

- David Borthwick, Head of Central Region, HES
- Bryan Dickson, Head of Buildings Conservation Policy, NTS
- Elaine Longmuir, Visitor Service Manager, NTS
- Hector Martin, Fife Council Built Heritage Officer
- Colin Duff, independent consultant
- FHBT Trustees Christine May (chair), Robin Evetts, Ros Taylor
- FHBT Staff

9. List of Appendices

Appendices A to D (included in standard report)

Appendix A: High Level Assessment of 7 A- Listed Churches

Appendix B: Fife Historic Churches Working Group Final Report to Presbytery

Appendix C: Fife Presbytery Mission Plan, June 2022

Appendix D: Report of the General Trustees to the General Assembly, May 2023

Appendices E to I (available on request)

Appendix E: Culross Reports & Records

- 2010 & 2015 Quinquennial Reports by Stephen Newsom
- 2012 Conservation Maintenance Plan & Access Audit by Stephen Newsom

Appendix F: Culross Press & Communications

- Articles from The Scotsman, The Courier, The Sunday Mail and Dunfermline Press regarding the Abbey's imminent closure
- Public Community Council social media posts regarding community ownership.

Appendix G: Burntisland Reports & Records

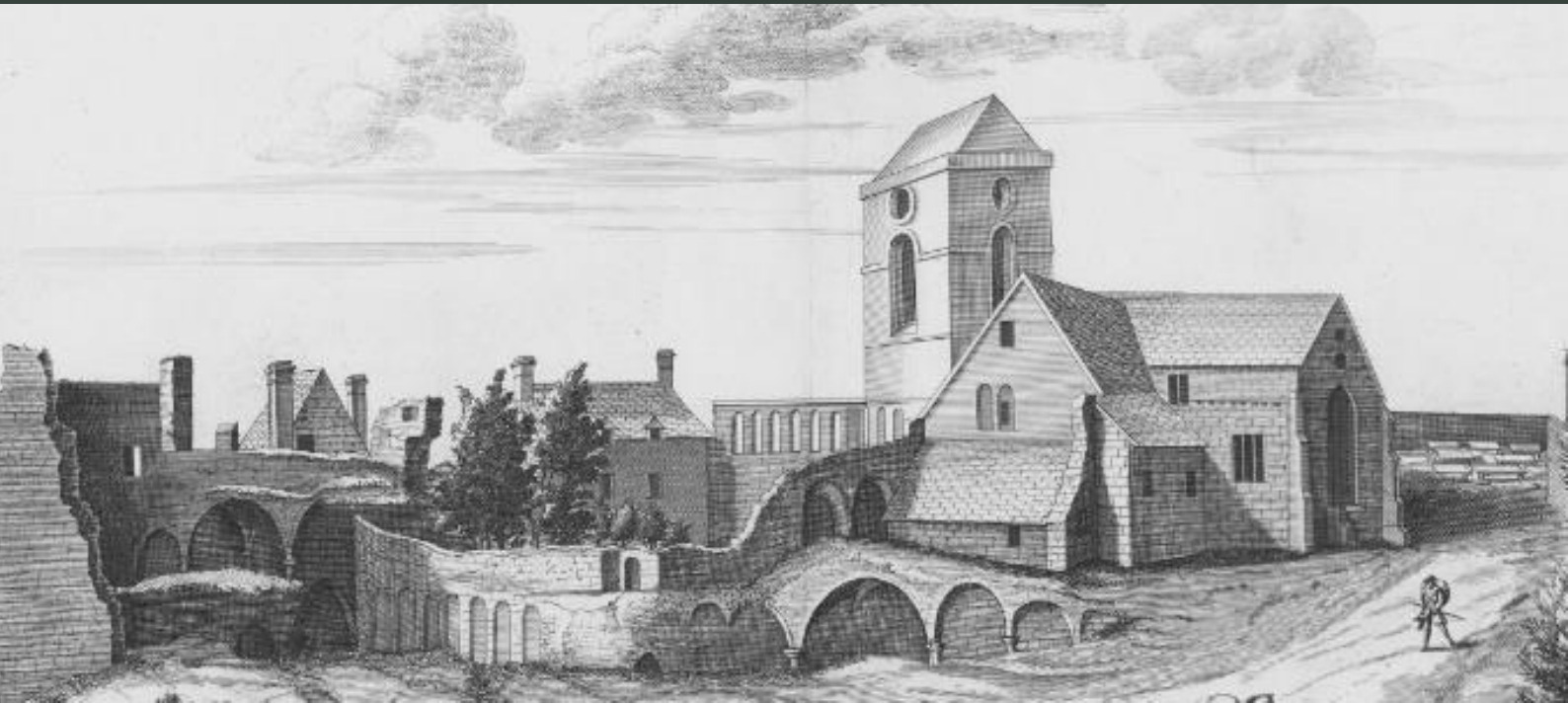
- 2008 & 2018 Quinquennial Inspection Reports
- Guide to the Heritage & History of Burntisland Parish Church
- Burntisland Community Action Plan 2023-2028

Appendix H: St Monans Reports & Records

- 2013-2020 Auld Kirk Maintenance Records
- 2005-2007 Project Records by Stephen Newsom
- 2010 Quinquennial Report by Jack Fisher Partnership
- 2015 Quinquennial Report by Beechfield Consultants
- St Monans & Abercrombie Community Action Plan 2018-2022

Appendix I: St Monans Community Engagement

- Images and comments
- VOiCE (National Standards for Community Engagement) Summary



The Prospect of the Abby of Colross from *Theatrum Scotiae* by John Slezer, 1693. National Library of Scotland.

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A1. Building Details & Background

A1.1 Background

In May 2023, a very small but dedicated congregation of 8-10 was worshipping weekly in the church, despite the lack of a minister and a likely upcoming merger with the congregation of Valleyfield.

John Laird (elder) has effectively been the building's caretaker for the past 30+ years, and was receptive to FHBT's support in seeking the right way forward for the building. Following the Presbytery's decision, he and the core of dedicated elders and members had already embarked on the process of coming to terms with the inevitability of regular worship ending in the Abbey, but were understandably concerned that it be taken into an appropriate guardianship, and that it remains an open, welcoming, sacred space.

The church is open every day from dawn to dusk and welcomes significant volumes of tourists and passers-by. During one week in summer, 23 nationalities were recorded in the visitor's book. For 12 years a successful café was run by volunteers from the adjacent manse; when the manse was sold there were plans to move the café into the church itself, however this came to an end in 2020 due to the pandemic.

Culross carries significant heft as a visitor destination, and the Abbey benefits from several strong potential partnerships. An initial meeting in May confirmed the support and interest of Historic Environment Scotland (custodians of the Abbey ruins adjacent; currently closed due to high-level masonry issues), and the National Trust for Scotland, whose operations at Culross Palace attract 20k visitors per year. The Community Council was initially perceived as the likeliest group to lead a campaign and work with FHBT on this study, however current circumstances presented this, and the Broomhall Estate Conservation Trust stepped forward to work on a vision for economic assessment (See Section A4) in September 2023.

A1.2 Building Location

Culross Abbey Church, Kirk St, Culross, Dunfermline KY12 8JF

A1.3 Heritage Significance

Though the Parish Church was formally founded in 1633 after the reformation, the Cistercian monastery of Culross, which occupies the same site, originated around 1215, and much of the abbey fabric dates from the 13th century. The tower was added around 1500 by Abbot Andrew Masoun, with associated alterations to the supporting walls; the tower housed a 'witches' loft' said to have been used to imprison accused witches until their trial and execution when the town hall was full.

The Bruce family added a burial vault in 1642 in the north transept³, which includes a highly decorative and unique Renaissance memorial to George Bruce.

William Stirling made further changes in 1824, including replacing the original pitched roof with a crenelated parapet, and a further restoration took place in 1905-6, with new interiors installed and the exterior returned to its late medieval appearance⁴. The Abbey was designated A-listed in 1972.

The graveyard (owed by Fife Council) contains many early c18th gravestones, and a sexton's hut to the east of the church. The adjacent Abbey ruins, a Scheduled Monument, are operated by Historic Environment Scotland.

A1.4 Culross Abbey: Summary timeline April- September 2023

- Initial contact with Interim Moderator & elders in early May.
- 24th May: Meeting at Abbey with elders, Broomhall Estate, NTS, HES, Community Council. Info sheets posted through doors at neighbouring private dwellings.
- May-June: follow-up with Community Council to determine whether they might be potential leaders.
- 20th July: Site visit with business planner Colin Duff, Community Council, Broomhall Estate, elder John Laird.
- August: Community Council confirmed they could not take the lead at this time.
- September: Broomhall Estate Conservation Trust took the lead on forming a vision for initial economic assessment as part of this study. Community Council held their AGM with associated change in leadership. FHBT provided update to CC via email, explaining the direction the study has taken; this was shared on the village Facebook group with positive responses.
- September: FHBT met Roger Pickering (Forth Pilgrim) to discuss Pilgrim Way background & potential.
- September: Pilgrim pastor (Duncan Weaver) visit to church; discussion with Broomhall Estates Conservation Trust about potential integration with Fife Pilgrim Way & offerings for pilgrims.

³ Hes Listing: <https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/designation/LB23960>

⁴ Pevsner

A1.5 Risks facing the building

- Presumption that ‘someone else’ has the situation in hand (high profile place, lots of tourism, many presume it’s run by HES like the adjacent Abbey ruins).
- Lack of energy and capacity within church leadership to lead process; very dedicated elders in their latter years.
- Community Council internal changes mean inability to provide support/organise public campaign.
- Low response rate from neighbours may be telling of lack of community capacity/support.

A1.6 Current ownership and future prospects

Culross Abbey Parish Church is currently owned by the Church of Scotland, but per the Fife Presbytery mission plan is intended for closure and disposal (sale, lease or other⁵) by the end of December 2027.

From August to October 2023, with the support of the church elders, the Broomhall Estates Conservation Trust (BECT) partnered with FHBT on this study. With a history of caring for heritage assets in nearby areas, and strong links to the Abbey, BECT volunteered to contribute to forming a vision for economic assessment. BECT have also formally notified the General Trustees of their intention to explore future ownership of the Abbey; the General Trustees indicated that they would accordingly delay any moves towards sale of the building until the end of 2023, and wish to be kept informed of progress.

A2. Building condition

A2.1 Current condition

The Buildings Officer for Fife Presbytery, David Gillan, supplied a 2010 Quinquennial inspection report for Culross Abbey, carried out by Stephen Newsom, conservation accredited Architect. It is understood that the recommendations contained within this report have been carried out.

⁵ ‘Other’ is understood to mean a situation whereby the Presbytery & General Trustees are no longer financially responsible for the building.

Stephen Newsom was also lead Architect for 2012 works which included repair and replacement of roofing, rainwater goods. He has helpfully provided his drawings for this project, as well as a Maintenance Plan and access audit (See Appendix E).

- Externally appears well maintained, with no apparent significant issues to roof or masonry.
- HLF/HES- funded repair works carried out in 2012-13.
- Elders described more recent (2019) roof repairs, and resolution of issue with damp in south transept (flooring replaced).
- Functioning kitchen and accessible toilet off south transept; would benefit from upgrading.
- Pews have been removed in south transept to form flexible seating area (plans were in place to relocate Manse café to this area pre-2020).
- Diligent and dedicated elder with buildings maintenance experience has been looking after the church on a voluntary basis for many years.

A2.2 Immediate costs

Whilst no significant immediate repair needs are known beyond general preventative maintenance, the running costs of Culross Abbey are as follows:

- Insurance approx. £10,000 per annum (the Church sanctuary is insured for approx. £26m)
- Electricity £150/month until Sept '23.
- Fabric costs: yearly maintenance costs unknown (John Laird has been doing general upkeep on a voluntary basis). £308k spent on roofs in 2019.

Note that the church holds approx. £40k in funds raised by SCART (Support Culross Abbey Regeneration Trust), led by John Laird, which is currently being wound up.

A3. Situation and context

A3.1 Site

The church is sited above the village, at the top of the steeply sloping Kirk Street. The development of the village was secondary to this initial religious settlement above. The church, originally part of the Abbey complex, is still physically joined to the HES- managed Abbey ruins, as well as to the sprawling Manse, which is now in private ownership. The oldest and most

significant building in Culross, it is surrounded by a graveyard with unique and special monuments, including those of the Bruce family.

Many tourists visiting the village make their way up the hill and spend time in the church, which has some historic information on display in the north transept.

Access from the village is primarily via the narrow, steep Kirk St. Additional off- road access from Low Causeway via Cat's Close, and additional vehicular access from the north is available from the A985. There is minimal denoted parking onsite, however there is space for approximately 10 cars in the gravel area to the west of the building. The Abbey and its surroundings sit within Culross' Conservation Area.

A3.2 Locality and context

Culross is a small and attractive settlement of 446 people across 259 households⁶. More than 70% of households are in single or double occupancy.

The region has varied levels of wealth and post- industrial recovery. Whilst Culross falls within the mid-range of deprivation per the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, High Valleyfield to its immediate east falls within the most deprived 20% nationwide, whilst the next village of Torryburn is in the least deprived 20%.

Culross is the starting point of the Fife Coast & Countryside Trust's (FCCT) Fife Pilgrim Way, reflecting its long history as a place of religious significance. Industrial history is also part of Culross's story, with salt panning and iron works prominent in the 16th century. The population of Culross declined as these industries waned; from its peak of several thousand in the 17th century, under 600 people were resident by the 1950s. The National Trust for Scotland stepped in to restore the Palace in 1932, and subsequently many smaller properties formerly destined for demolition were restored through its precedent-setting Little Houses Improvement Scheme.

A Community Market is run on the Village Green each Sunday afternoon during the summer months. The Red Lion pub was bought out by West Fife Community Trading Limited, a society for the benefit of the community, in 2022, with support from the Scottish Land Fund. Culross Stables operates as a Community Hub and is developing plans to apply for Community recovery Fund grant to expand their offerings, including establishing a new bakery facility.

In recent years, the popular series 'Outlander' has been partly filmed in the village and has increased visitor numbers. An 'Any Week' search on Airbnb.com identified 14 short let properties; approximately five B&Bs also operate in the village.

⁶ https://know.fife.scot/__data/assets/pdf_file/0024/417255/Culross-Community-Council-Profile.pdf

A3.3 Land use planning position

Culross Abbey has been used as a parish church since 1633, and as such would be Use Class 10, Non-residential institutions. A new future use of the building could necessitate an official change of use.

The inactive graveyard to the north is owned by Fife Council. The land to the east forms part of the Culross Abbey House estate.

Past Listed Building Consent Applications include:

- 2019- Repairs to boundary walls, Fife Council.
- 2012- Roof repairs & associated works
- 2005- Formation of Disabled toilet & new path
- 2004- Display of signage

A3.4 Potential for listed building consent

It is anticipated that alterations to the A- listed building to facilitate future use would be minimal and may focus on upgrades to the existing kitchen and toilet facilities, as well as improved access.

As well as keeping regular contact with HES' Strategic Heritage Project Officer (Places of Worship), FHBT is coordinating with Fife Council's Built Heritage Officer on the wider issue of church disposals, and we hope to work together to ensure that these buildings remain usable whilst safeguarding their historic fabric.

A4 Options for Use

At the initial meeting in May 2023 and through subsequent contact, both HES and NTS have expressed interest in supporting Culross Abbey's future. Though the type and method of support needed is not yet determined due to the preliminary nature of this study, it could take the form of signposting, joint ticketing, or shared facilities/ management. Developing these partnership opportunities will be a key issue in any future development stage.

The public engagement carried out via this study was limited, due to the lack of clarity on the role of local partnerships until a late stage. Whilst the elders were keen to get the word out and host open days, they have always been clear on their need for assistance from the community. By the time it became clear that the Community Council was not in a position to provide support, we were approaching the end of the study period; therefore Section A5 is based on the several

meetings held with key stakeholders, with the Broomhall Estate Conservation Trust leading and the community and public being kept informed via the village Facebook page.

Given the historic importance of the building, the range of uses is likely limited to several strong themes; these include tourism, heritage, concerts, occasional worship services, pilgrimage, and perhaps a café given the precedent for this on the site in recent years. As a natural part of a strong existing tourism scene, the Abbey has great potential as a visitor destination; finding the income potential within these parameters is the key challenge.

Throughout each meeting with stakeholders, the prominent theme has been maintaining a Faith aspect, through retention of the sacred ambience, and highlighting its importance in religious history. There is clear opportunity for increasing links with the Fife Pilgrim Way, with Revd Duncan Weaver, Pilgrim Pastor, hoping to increase footfall and hospitality offerings, and Fife Coastal and Countryside Trust (FCCT) assisting this study through provision of people counter data.

In August, FHBT supplied the Broomhall Estates Conservation Trust with a ‘visioning questionnaire’ designed to bring clarity to the emerging vision and enable the following Initial Economic Assessment to be carried out. It is understood that the proposal assessed below by consultant Colin Duff was developed under some time pressure and with limited ability to engage further partners or hold public consultation, so it is expected that further work will be needed to solidify the vision.

As plans are solidified and it becomes clearer whether or not BECT or another local group will continue the project, it will be important to lean on the support of partner groups including Historic Churches Scotland (HCS), who have a track record of taking on ownership of historically significant churches if necessary to protect them for the benefit of their communities. Though HCS retains ownership of some church buildings long-term, they may in this case act as a short-term custodian, passing on ownership to a local organisation when the time is right.

A5 Additional evaluation of preferred use

(Note: this is a, outline assessment; more detailed planning will be required at a subsequent phase)

A5.1 Business Proposal

To acquire and manage Culross Abbey for the benefit of the community of Culross and to safeguard it as a place of historic and spiritual significance for the benefit of people in Culross and across the world.

Aims

The aims of the enterprise are to:

- Ensure the Abbey retains its place as a cherished asset of the Culross community.
- Continue to provide a space for worship.
- Establish the Abbey as a world-class centre for cultural activities and spirituality.
- Build on the Abbey's role as part of the heritage-based tourism offer available in Culross.
- Generate sufficient income to cover the running costs and long-term maintenance demands.

Operating Principles

- Any activity taking place at the Abbey must be compatible with the role of the building as a place of spiritual significance.
- Any activity taking place at the Abbey must not have a deleterious effect on the present environment, community or economy.

These operating principles serve to retain the character of the Abbey and environs. They prove a limit, to some degree, on the nature of the activities / services that may be delivered from the Abbey. For example, though 'champing' (church camping) may be successful given Culross' popularity with tourists, it does not fit with this vision for the Abbey, so has not been included as a potential income generator.

Products/ Services

1. Café / Hospitality
2. Tourist attraction
3. Events space
4. Concerts programme
5. Education / Training resource
6. Worship space

Actions to Achieve Aims

1. Undertake development / research work, including exploring potential partnerships.
2. Conclude analysis and clarify Culross Abbey niche and new products / services offered.
3. Establish corporate body to hold the asset / Management body to manage the building and activity.
4. Prepare design brief and commission architect to draft proposals for any refit / refurbishment required to allow the Abbey to deliver on new products / services.
5. Contract construction professionals to undertake refit / refurbishment
6. Prepare marketing plan
7. Implement marketing plan
8. Operate the Abbey

Observations

The Broomhall Estates Conservation Trust's early-stage visioning exercise for the Abbey covered several developmental activities, including:

- Finding a way to make a centre for cultural activities and spirituality, a sustainable proposition
- Engaging with local businesses, and local and national performing arts organisations
- Engaging with all faith groups, to explore the concept of inter-faith spiritual activities
- Engaging with local conservation groups

There is clearly more work to be done to fully establish the potential role of the Abbey, and pursuing these ideas as part of a development phase will be the next step in clarifying the 'niche' of the Abbey, and the value/ roles / contributions of these potential partnerships.

Ideally, it would be best to have as much clarity as possible produced prior to setting up an ownership/management organisation and taking on responsibility for the building. However, full clarity may not be achievable at this stage. The first few years of operation may therefore be regarded as more of a development project than a fully formed social enterprise, turning a profit. This presents a greater risk that levels of anticipated business and income may not be achieved, and consequently, it may be difficult to secure capital or revenue investment from external sources.

A5.2 Analysis of Proposals/ Demand

The products on offer are:

1. Café
2. Tourist attraction
3. Events space
4. Concerts programme
5. Education / Training resource
6. Worship space

The products are intended to serve the following markets:

1. The local community
2. Tourists / Walkers on the Fife Pilgrim Way & Fife Coastal Path
3. Tourists with an interest in Christian History
4. People planning weddings/significant life events
5. Providers of spirituality / wellbeing activities
6. Concert-goers

A5.2.1 Cafe

Assumptions:

- In the Abbey or in a nearby alternative building.
- Open 10:00 to 17:00 for 6 days per week.
- Relatively simple menu to reduce the amount of floor space required for food preparation.

Analysis

The number of people – and hence the scale of the market - in Culross itself is very small. The relatively self-contained nature of the village means that the demand from local people for café options within walking distance of their home may be greater than in comparable areas where people have a greater number of options.

A café at Culross Abbey may benefit from the tourist trade drawn to Culross, however for many tourists, its location may put it at a disadvantage in relation to other options located in heart of the village. The Culross to Dunfermline leg of the Fife Pilgrim Way starts at Culross Play Park and routes walkers through the village, passing other hospitality offers. A café at Culross Abbey would therefore be placed neither at the start of a walk, when walkers may wish to ‘fuel up’ in advance of their trip, nor at the end of their trip in Dunfermline where they will have further hospitality options.

On the other hand, for visitors interested in filming location of “Outlander”, the ruined West Kirk, a 15 minute walk to the north-west of the village, is a popular destination; this could form a natural circuit taking in the Abbey and increasing the market for refreshments outwith the village itself.

Estimation of Café Income

Café income is based on the number of people who spend money in the café. This is likely to be made up of

- Local people
- Walkers on the Fife Pilgrim Way
- People visiting Culross
- New people attracted by marketing of the Abbey and café offer

The Fife Coast Usage and Impact Study 2015⁷ reported an average spend for a day visitor on food and drink at £7.84. Adjusted for inflation using the Bank of England inflation calculator, this equates to £10.26.

⁷ <https://d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net/pex/fcct/2019/05/17090509/Fife-Coast-Usage-Impact-Study-Final-Summary-Report-2016.pdf>

Staffing costs have been calculated as follows.

Job Role	Full Time Equivalent	Hourly Rate	Annualised
Server / Manager	1.2 (6 full days per week)	£10.90	£27,206
Food Preparation Operative	0.6 (6 half days per week)	£10.90	£13,603
Total			£40,810

To generate a profit margin of 15% of turnover - sufficient to produce a reasonable level of confidence in business resilience - the following scenario would have to be achieved.

Scenario A

Item	Sum
Café customers per annum	5,580
Income @ £10.26 per customer	£57,250
Customers per day @ 312 trading days per annum	18
Staff Costs	£40,810
Catering Costs @ 25% of sales	£7,971
Lease costs	Nil
Energy	Nil
Cleaning	Nil
Total Costs	£48,781
Income less Costs	£8,469
Profit / Loss as percentage of Turnover	15%

The average coffee shop in the UK turns over between £100,000 and £125,000. To achieve the lower end of this, the following scenario would have to be achieved.

Scenario B

Item	Sum
Café customers pa	9,984
Customers per day @ 312 trading days per annum	32
Income @ £10.26 per customer	£102,436
Staff Costs	£40,810
Catering Costs @ 25% of sales	£25,609
Lease costs	Nil
Energy	Nil
Cleaning	Nil
Total Costs	£66,419
Turnover less costs	£36,017
Profit / Loss as %age of Turnover	35%

- The above calculations do not take into account the cost of VAT or of the capital costs involved in setting up the café.
- Income does not include any catering business that the café may secure through the events hire element of the business proposal. If venue hirers choose the café as their caterer then this will increase overall income.

- The hospitality sector is presently facing several challenges including recruitment difficulties, increase in operating costs and a reduction in the discretionary income available to households.

More than a third of the UK's hospitality sector is at risk of business failure in early 2023 due to the cost of doing business crisis, according to analysis of a new survey by UKHospitality⁸, the British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA), the British Institute of Innkeeping (BII) and Hospitality Ulster.

The organisations' joint Q4 Hospitality Members' Survey showed that 35% of respondents were expecting to be operating at a loss or be unviable by the end of the year, with 96% experiencing higher energy costs and 93% facing food price inflation.

The impact of the cost-of-living crisis on customers is also being felt, with more than three-quarters of operators (77%) seeing a decrease in people eating and drinking out and 85% expect this to worsen going forwards.

As a result, 89% are either not confident or pessimistic that the current levels of support offered by government will protect the industry in the next six months.

Conclusion

The level of demand / business for a café at Culross Abbey is unclear, but the fact that the café will not have lease, energy or cleaning costs (energy and cleaning costs are included within the main Income/ Expenditure for the building in this assessment; see page 32) allows it to generate a surplus from a lower level of custom than a commercial café would require.

It may be possible to operate a café with volunteer input, but this would either require a volume of volunteer hours which may be difficult to achieve in Culross or more limited opening hours. More limited opening hours would mean lower levels of total income and thus make the period required to repay any capital investment required to set the café up longer.

A5.2.1 Tourist Attraction

Assumptions

- That there is an intention to increase tourist visitor numbers.
- That there is an intention to generate income from tourist visitors.

⁸ <https://www.ukhospitality.org.uk/third-of-hospitality-businesses-at-risk-of-going-bust-due-to-soaring-costs/>

- To serve general Culross tourists, Fife Pilgrim Way walkers and people with an interest in Christian History

Analysis

As a tourist attraction, Culross Abbey enjoys several marketing advantages over any new resource or enterprise:

- The Abbey is already a popular tourist destination and provides an element of a broader Culross tourism offer focused around built and intangible heritage. An infrastructure for marketing of Culross as a tourist destination already exists⁹.
- The Abbey is adjacent to the Fife Pilgrim Way¹⁰ which attracts walkers and tourists with an interest in Christian history¹¹. Some of these already visit the Abbey.
- Elements of the popular television programme Outlander were filmed in Culross and there may be some increase in tourism as a result. It may be noted that there are numerous other locations¹² in Scotland where elements of Outlander were filmed, therefore there is some competition for this market.

The Abbey has not, to date, been formally marketed as a visitor destination and there has been limited investment, if any, in marketing the Abbey outside of Scotland or in maximising the exposure of the Abbey's potential as a centre for spirituality in marketing messages. There is therefore some scope to increase tourist visitor numbers through increased investment in marketing, potentially in partnership with HES and/or NTS, who have an existing presence in the village.

The Abbey is open to the public every day from 9.30am until 5.00pm, and until 8.00pm from May until September. We have no data on visitor numbers. At present there is no compulsory entrance fee, though there is a small donation box inside the main door. In the short term, if funds could be raised to install people counters it would be helpful to gather better data on visitor numbers in preparation for a more in-depth development phase. In addition, raising the profile of the donation boxes and enabling QR code/ e- giving could be an effective method of increasing income with fairly low outlay.

It is assumed that there is an intention to introduce some income generation from tourist visits. If there is not, then there is a risk that increased footfall simply increases wear and tear and management burden without any real return.

⁹ <https://www.visitscotland.com/info/towns-villages/royal-burgh-of-culross-p239441>
<https://www.visitscotland.com/info/tours/culross-tour-8c21e989>
<https://www.visitscotland.com/info/see-do/royal-burgh-of-culross-p250721>
<https://www.visitscotland.com/info/accommodation/the-den-at-culross-p1580381>
<https://www.visitscotland.com/info/see-do/culross-abbey-p1390051>
<https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/culross>
<https://www.culrossabbey.co.uk/>

¹⁰ <https://fifecoastandcountrysidetrust.co.uk/walks/fife-pilgrim-way/culross-to-dunfermline/>

¹¹ <https://fifecoastandcountrysidetrust.co.uk/fife-pilgrim-way/story-of-fife-pilgrim-kingdom/>

¹² <https://www.visitscotland.com/things-to-do/attractions/tv-film/outlander/>

It is unclear how many people would be prepared to pay to enter Culross Abbey, or what kind of sum they would be prepared to pay. For comparison however, the National Trust for Scotland reports that Culross Palace attracted 21,894 visitors in the April to October 2022 season. Adult individual entry fees range from £7.50 to £10.50.

Income projections made on the basis of 10% of visitor numbers achieved by Culross Palace donating an average of £5 each = £10,945.

Conclusion

It should be possible to increase tourist visitor numbers to Culross Abbey through increased and more targeted marketing. If an entrance fee can be set at an appropriate level, or there is sufficient confidence in conversion of visitors to voluntary donations, then there could be an income stream from tourist visitors.

It is not however clear what benefit there is to Culross from increased visitor numbers. In a town of 281 working age adults, it seems unlikely that the local economy is dependent on tourism. However, increased visitor numbers may benefit the local community through their contribution to sustaining the existing hospitality offerings. Scottish Community Tourism (SCOTO) may be a helpful resource in considering how the tourism offerings could more directly benefit the community.

A5.2.3 Events Space

Assumptions

- To serve wedding parties / planners and promoters of spiritual activity.
- That the wedding/ life event service is for ceremony only, i.e. meal and celebration to take place elsewhere.

Weddings

The website - <https://www.culrossabbey.co.uk/> - focuses on the Abbey as a wedding venue. The hire fee is £800. This covers the costs of The Wedding Flowers, Organist and venue costs (heating, lighting, caretaking, ministry). Information received from the Culross Abbey Wedding Co-Ordinator confirmed that, in the last year, there were 4 weddings and 1 enquiry not followed up by the couple. No requests were declined.

Access issues and parking availability aside, Culross Abbey appears to be exceptionally well suited for weddings and life celebrations and, if marketed appropriately, could potentially attract bookings from across the world.

The hire fee for wedding venues varies widely and it is difficult to establish a benchmark, not least because many venues price themselves according to the level of service purchased and / or by the number of guests. It seems reasonable to assume that Culross Abbey could attract a higher fee than the £800 presently charged.

Assuming that a fee of £1600 could be achieved, and assuming that £500 of that would cover the celebrant organist flower and beadle costs, then that allows an income of £1100 per wedding. On the basis of 1 weddings/ celebration per calendar month, this could achieve £13,200 net in income per annum.

Achieving an increase in business from 4 weddings/ life events per annum to 12 per annum would require significant investment in marketing. The group who manages Culross Abbey in future may wish to consider registering the Abbey with an events management or wedding planner company and allowing them to undertake the marketing. This would generate a smaller fee per hire but may increase the number of hires sufficiently to create an overall greater total income.

Historic Environment Scotland¹³ market 17 broadly comparable venues for wedding ceremonies and celebrations. Bearing in mind the intentions of the Church of Scotland to release multiple other properties, there is a risk that the market becomes flooded with new wedding venues of this nature, thus either reducing the level of sales achievable or driving down prices.

Spirituality/ Wellbeing Events/ Programme

The nature of events which the Abbey may be able to host will be limited by the operating principles. For example, we assume that residential retreats with delegates accommodated in the Abbey may not be compliant with the principles.

To achieve the aim of a multi- faith cultural/ spiritual centre, possible approaches are described below:

1. The establishment of a full-blown centre comparable to that offered by St Ethelburga's¹⁴ in London would be a substantial undertaking and investors would be likely to wish to see a persuasive business case for (a) the fundamental proposal and (b) the rationale for this location and venue. If wholly faith-based this would appear to within the scope of the remit of Interfaith Scotland¹⁵. There may be a value in consulting with Interfaith Scotland to learn if they have already explored this idea and, if so, the conclusions of their analysis.

¹³ <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/venue-hire/weddings/find-a-venue/>

¹⁴ <https://stethelburgas.org/>

¹⁵ <https://interfaithscotland.org/>

2. However, the marketing and promotion of the building as a suitable location for providers of spirituality themed activity seems more modest and achievable. The Abbey may be an attractive venue for meditation, yoga, and other wellness style activities.
3. Equally, there may be some business potential in the building owners/operators designing, booking, and promoting a programme of lectures, workshops and other activities. This would probably require a dedicated, although not necessarily full-time, post to design the programme, source speakers, negotiate fees and other terms, market the events / activities and perform the other necessary administrative functions.

Conclusion

If the assumptions made about the volume of business achievable for wedding / celebration hire and hire fee are correct, then there is a reasonable income to be made from this for a relatively low investment of time. The time investment may be reduced further if a partner organisation took on responsibility for marketing and event management. Clearly this would potentially reduce the income per event but may increase the number of events and hence increase overall income.

It is difficult to assess the income potential in the idea of the Abbey as a centre for unity, but it may be that a blend of the above approaches could minimise risk and develop the role and status of the Abbey as a centre for unity over a longer period.

A5.2.4 Concerts Programme

Assumptions

- That programming, booking, marketing and other administration would be undertaken by volunteers.

Analysis

While a concert programme may attract local people, the numbers would be insufficient to make all but the smallest / lowest cost events financially viable. Most musical performance concerts are arranged on the basis of an artist's guarantee vs percentage basis.

The Abbey holds 200 people comfortably seated for Weddings. We have used this number as the capacity of the Abbey for concerts.

The table below shows a simple break-even calculation based on the consultant's average costs and ticket prices for a single concert of this scale.

Concert Income Calculator	Costs		Income	Unit Price	Number	Sum	
Headline Guarantee	£	900.00	Tickets	£ 15.00	100	£	1,500.00
Support Guarantee	£	100.00				£	-
Hospitality Rider	£	150.00					
Sound / Lighting Engineer	£	200.00					
Accommodation							
Marketing	£	150.00					
Total costs	£	1,500.00	Total income			£	1,500.00
Balance						£	-

Note that there is zero income to promoter on the above scenario. The table below shows the income split on an 80/20 percentage, assuming that a greater number of tickets than the break-even are sold.

Concert Income Calculator	Costs		Income	Unit Price	Number	Sum	
Headline Guarantee	£	1,000.00	Tickets	£ 15.00	150	£	2,250.00
Support Guarantee	£	100.00				£	-
Hospitality Rider	£	150.00					
Sound / Lighting Engineer	£	200.00					
Accommodation							
Marketing	£	150.00					
Total costs	£	1,600.00	Total income			£	2,250.00
Balance						£	650.00
			<u>Income less costs</u>		<u>80% after costs</u>	<u>20% after costs</u>	
Balance			£ 650.00	£	455.00	£	195.00
Total to Headliner on above scenario (Guarantee plus percentage after costs)						£	1,455.00
Total to Promoter on above scenario (Percentage after costs)						£	195.00

Assuming 12 concerts per annum achieving his level of surplus across the programme (assuming that some may be more successful than others) the total net income is as follows:

Gross Income	Costs	Net Income
£27,000	£24,660	£2,340

Note that there is a substantial volume of time input required from the promoter to achieve this income. We have assumed that front of house roles, e.g. cashier, usher, stage manager, may in the case of Culross Abbey be undertaken by volunteers and hence have applied no cost. We have not sought to calculate any refreshment income that may be produced from ancillary sales.

Conclusion

It's not clear that concert presentation in a location like Culross would attract sufficient custom to cover production costs. However, the Green Hotel¹⁶ in nearby Kinross appears to manage to present a consistent programme of popular music and the Fife town of Anstruther appears to support a reasonably vibrant live music scene. It's not clear to what extent these enterprises are motivated by financial profit.

¹⁶ <https://www.mundellmusic.com/venue-backstage-at-the-green/>

A5.2.5 Education/ Training Resource

Assumptions

- That there are multiple training providers who may potentially be interested / able to take up the offer of Culross Abbey as resource for training.

Analysis

As with other ideas, this would benefit from more detailed scoping in order to produce a fuller proposal. However, there may be some scope in the building being used as a resource for training and education for traditional skills, potentially in conjunction with the Scottish Lime Centre in Charlestown.

While some education providers may be prepared to pay for access to such a resource, the consultants have insufficient knowledge of the market to assess how much they would be prepared to pay and we would need to see a business case to support any assertion that Culross Abbey offers something that they cannot presently access from other providers.

There is a risk in considering this as a means of obtaining low or no cost maintenance and repairs as we presume that work undertaken by trainees may not be intended to last and may not be subject to guarantees.

Conclusion

There appears to be limited income generation or other benefit in this proposal. However it may offer other benefits when considering long-term maintenance and repairs, and availability of skilled tradespeople. There may be grant funding available to support the provision of skills training, and it would be valuable to explore opportunities to partner with NTS/HES on how this could be set within the wider picture of Culross, and their existing training initiatives.

A5.2.5 Worship Space

The proposal is that the Abbey remain available for use as a worship space.

Conclusion

If regular worship services are proposed there may be complications to consider given that the existing congregation intends to merge with another nearby congregation. However, in other cases, Trust- owned churches are used several times per year for special service and this does not seem unreasonable and, presumably, would be appreciated and enjoyed by the current members of the congregation.

A5.3 Income/ Expenditure Projection

Item	Year 1
Income (Revenue)	
Café	£102,436
Concert Programme	£27,000
Tourism	£10,945
Weddings / Celebrations	£19,200
Spirituality / Wellness Activity	
Education / Training Resource	
Worship Space	
Grants (Development Staff	£35,000
Total Income (Revenue)	£194,581
Expenditure (Revenue)	
Café	£66,419
Concert Programme	£24,660
Weddings	£6,000
Spirituality / Wellness Activity	
Development Staff	£35,000
Energy / Utilities	£3,600
Buildings Insurance	£10,000
Public Liability Insurance	£1,000
Non-domestic rates	£0
Phone and internet	£600
Marketing	£5,000
Administration	£4,895
Maintenance, compliance, licences etc	£3,000
Cleaning	£5,196
Sinking Fund @ 10% of annual surplus	£2,921
Total Expenditure (Revenue)	£168,291
Expenditure (Capital)	
Purchase	Not known
Refit for new purposes	Not known
PA System	Not known
Surplus / Deficit	£26,290
Profit as Percentage of Gross	14%

The above calculation shows that, on the basis of these projections and assumptions, the enterprise may produce a reasonable net income of £26,290 per annum.

NB: This level of business / surplus in year 1 of operation may not be achievable.

NB: More accurate information on the potential maintenance liability would allow a more informed assessment of the level of net income required to service this liability.

No account has been taken of capital costs associated with purchase, redevelopment and equipment. It is possible that some of these will have to be funded through loan funding. If so, loan repayments will have to be factored into the final income / expenditure calculations.

Notes to Income / Expenditure

Café

Café income and expenditure has been based on scenario B described on page 24.

NB: Achieving this level of business may be optimistic.

Concert Programme

Based on programme of 12 concerts in a 12 month period, achieving an average of £450 surplus per concert.

NB: Achieving this level of surplus may be optimistic.

Weddings / Celebrations

Based on attracting 12 weddings in a 12 month period at a cost to the customer of £1600 with £500 deducting for the costs of providing the wedding.

NB: Achieving this level of business may be optimistic. It may however be possible to charge a higher fee and hence produce a higher net income for each event. Advice on an appropriate fee may be obtained from professional wedding planner / venue letting companies.

Spirituality / Wellness Activity

No income applied to this as the nature of the product / offer is not yet fully scoped.

Education / Training Resource

No income applied to this as it is unclear that there is a feasible income stream from it.

Worship Space

No income applied to this as it is unclear that there is a feasible income stream from it.

Grants (staffing)

Assumes that development staffing will be required to progress the project / developmental / partnership elements of the proposals.

Set at £35,000 as an estimate of the costs of a 0.8 full-time equivalent mid-level development worker, including employers costs.

Energy / Utilities

Information supplied by Culross Abbey is that electricity costs are, at present, £150 per month.

Costs doubled to take into account energy price rises.

Buildings Insurance

Based on information supplied by Culross Abbey. Insurance costs may rise as new owners may not benefit from the bulk purchase negotiating power of the Church of Scotland.

Public Liability Insurance

Estimate based on knowledge of the market. Public liability costs can vary a fair bit depending on the activities and the level of risk calculated by the insurer.

Non-Domestic Rates

We have assumed that, as a charitable organisation, the holders of the property will benefit from both mandatory rates relief and discretionary rates relief. The latter is not guaranteed and is at the discretion of Fife Council.

However, the nature of the business activities proposed may not meet the test for charitable objects. If that is the case, then Fife Council may choose not to offer rates relief.

The Scottish Assessors Office website¹⁷ provides a rateable value of £9,800 effective from 1st April 2023 for Culross Abbey. The Scottish Government non-domestic rates calculator webpage¹⁸ calculates a liability of £4,880.40 prior to the application of any rates relief. The Small Business Bonus Scheme may allow 100% discount on this reducing the cost to nil. If the Scottish Government should choose to vary the Small Business Bonus Scheme in the future the liability may increase.

Phone & Internet

Estimate.

Marketing

Website set up and administration costs. Costs of targeted marketing initiatives.

NB: These costs may be optimistically low given the level of increase in business that the enterprise would need to achieve to reach the above income projections.

Administration

A review of Administrative/Clerical/Business Support posts advertised within 100 miles of Culross on <https://www.myjobscotland.gov.uk/> identified salary offers ranging from £19,160 per annum to £25,346 per annum. We have taken a mid-point between these figures - £22,253 and applied 10% for Employers NI and pension contributions - £24,478. Assuming 1 day per week of an administrative post is required to manage the building then this is equal to £4895 per annum.

Maintenance / Compliance / Licenses

Based on figures supplied by Culross Abbey.

Cleaning

Based on 5 hours per week at £20 per hour.

Planned Maintenance / Sinking Fund

Based on setting aside 10% of annual surplus to cover planned and unplanned maintenance.

¹⁷ <https://www.saa.gov.uk/search/>

¹⁸ <https://www.mygov.scot/non-domestic-rates-calculator>

A5.4 Grant Funding

The potential of the following funds to support further development will depend on the form of the vehicle which takes the project on, whether it be BECT or another group. Potential sources of future funding for further development include the following:

- The **Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF)**, funders of this Viability Report, offer Project Development Grants to assist organisations by covering some of the costs of developing and co-ordinating a project. To qualify, an organisation must have established that the end use of the project is likely to be viable.
 - AHF, Historic Environment Scotland- supported Project Development Grants: up to £40,000 (average offer is £15,000).
- The **Scottish Land Fund**¹⁹ and / or the UK Government **Community Ownership Fund**²⁰ may provide some or all of the costs of acquisition depending on whether a discount on market value can be negotiated with the vendors.
 - Scottish Land Fund – Sum Available: £5,000 to £1,000,000 (match funding required)
 - Community Ownership Fund – Sum available: Up to £2,000,000, expected that most awards will be for up to £250,000.
- As Culross is within 10 miles of a landfill site, it is an eligible site for the SEPA’s **Scottish Landfill Communities Fund**²¹. One of their objectives is the maintenance, repair or restoration of a building, other structure or a site of archaeological interest which is a place of religious worship, or a site of historic or architectural or archaeological interest and is open to the public. **Fife Environmental Trust (FET)** is an Approved Body and administers the grant scheme.
 - Small Grants Scheme: £500 to £10,000, up to 90% of project cost.
 - Large Grants Scheme: £10,000 to £50,000, up to 75% of project cost.
- **Historic Environment Scotland (HES) Historic Environment Grants Programme**²² funds projects and activities relating to Scotland’s historic environment. There are six priorities and three grant categories:
 - Increase understanding of and engagement with Scotland's historic environment(selected)
 - Enhance communities’ use of the historic environment in place making
 - Strengthen the resilience of Scotland's historic environment
 - Use the historic environment as a catalyst for climate action
 - Increase the quality and availability of historic environment skills

¹⁹ <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/scottish-land-fund>

²⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-ownership-fund-prospectus>

²¹ <https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/waste/scottish-landfill-communities-fund/looking-for-funding/>

²² <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/grants-and-funding/our-grants/historic-environment-grants-programme/>

- Increase economic benefits from the historic environment in a sustainable and inclusive way
 - Express Grants (£1,000 to £25,000)
 - Small Grants (£25,001 to £100,000)
 - Large Grants (£100,001 to £500,000)
- The **National Lottery Awards for All Scotland**²³ may provide support if the project can deliver clear outcomes for people and communities by doing at least one of the following:
 - bring people together to build strong relationships in and across communities
 - improve the places and spaces that matter to communities
 - help more people to reach their potential, by supporting them at the earliest possible stage.
 - Awards for All - Sum available: £300 to £10,000
- The Scottish Government **Regeneration Capital Grants Fund (RCGF)**²⁴ may cover some of the capital costs but may demand greater economic development / regeneration outcomes from the project than are presently apparent. There is no upper limit.
- The Heritage Fund **National Lottery Grants for Heritage**²⁵ supports projects that connect people and communities to heritage if a clear case can be made in relation to how the fabric changes / equipment delivers in their outcomes.
 - The Heritage Fund National Lottery Grants for Heritage – Sum Available – Dependent of programme strand - £3,000 to £10,000,000
- **Fife Council Local Community Planning**²⁶ and / or **Rural Development Fund** (pending announcement of a further round in 2024) may support some of the revenue costs of developing the project. Projects should meet some of the priorities of the South West Fife Local Community Plan²⁷.
 - Fife Council Local Community Planning – Small grants of up to £5,000; larger sums may be available.
 - Fife Council Rural Development Fund – Sum Available: up to £25,000
- Fife Council administers a **Common Good Fund for South and West Fife**²⁸ which can be used for the benefit of the inhabitants of the towns, including Culross. The level of funds available varies.
- Social Investment Scotland’s **Community Finance**²⁹ core loan fund provides a range of flexible loans for social enterprises.

²³ <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-scotland>

²⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/regeneration-capital-grant-fund/>

²⁵ <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/>

²⁶ <https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/council-and-democracy/community-group-support-and-funding>

²⁷ https://our.fife.scot/_data/assets/pdf_file/0031/187663/Plan-4-SWF-FINAL.pdf

²⁸ <https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/council-and-democracy/community-group-support-and-funding/fife-grants>

²⁹ <https://www.socialinvestmentscotland.com/investment/sis-community-finance/>

- Social Investment Scotland's Community Finance - Sum available: £10,000 to £250,000.
- **National Churches Trust**³⁰ support churches (min. of 6 worship services per year) with a range of grants from £500 to £50,000 undertaking repairs or capital works. Their recently launched 'Cherish' programme also funds project development.
- **The Pilgrim Trust**³¹ supports the preservation, conservation and repair of significant historic buildings and artifacts. Grants of up to £30,000, assessed quarterly.
- **The Wolfson Foundation**³² supports registered charities undertaking repairs and conservation of Category A- listed buildings open to the public with awards of up to £100,000 (match funding required over £50k). Deadlines June and December.
- **The Schroder Charity Trust** makes grants of up to £5,000 towards core and project costs to charities (with an income between £50,000 and £2m) registered in the UK for work including Arts, Culture and Heritage, and several other outcomes³³.
- **The Dalrymple Donaldson Fund**³⁴ grants from £1,000 to £5,000 (usually part of a larger package with separate funding) for "the judicious restoration and repair of buildings of historical and antiquarian interest in Scotland, England, France, Spain, Italy, Germany and Greece but especially in Scotland". Deadline 31st October annually.
- **The Turleton Charitable Trust**³⁵ supports the advancement of the arts, culture & heritage in Scotland with grants up to £25,000. Deadline 31st December annually.
- **The Barrack Charitable Trust**³⁶ has three major aims, one of which is the advancement of the arts, culture and heritage in Scotland. It awards grants of up to £5,000 to registered charities. Deadlines: 30th April & 31st October.
- **The Graham Trust**³⁷ supports registered charities. One of their 5 objectives is the advancement of the arts, heritage, culture or science. Grants of up to £20,000; deadline September annually.
- The Markinch- based **Russell Trust**³⁸ (Tullis Russell High Performance Coatings) supports Fife- based charities with a preference for new charities who require initial funding. Their aims include the advancement of the arts, culture, heritage and science.

³⁰ <https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/>

³¹ <https://www.thepilgrimtrust.org.uk/>

³² <https://www.wolfson.org.uk/>

³³ <https://schrodercharitytrust.org/>

³⁴ <https://www.socantcot.org/grants-awards/the-dalrymple-donaldson-fund/>

³⁵ <https://www.turcanconnell.com/the-turleton-charitable-trust>

³⁶ <https://thebarrackcharitabletrust.co.uk/>

³⁷ <https://www.thegrahamtrust.co.uk/>

³⁸ <https://www.tullisrussell.com/employee-owned/>

Outcomes

Community benefit is expected to be mainly in the form of the Abbey being retained for the enjoyment and enrichment of local people and retaining its role as an important symbol of Culross' history and story.

A case could also be made for the counterfactual, i.e. that alternative uses by other parties may have a deleterious impact on the community, but (a) we do not know what alternative uses by other parties there may be and (b) a business case based on curtailing the risk of alternative development may not be regarded as positive or persuasive.

One of the simplest ways to conceive of outcomes is to ask 'who benefits, and how do they benefit? In relation to this project:

- Community retains access to and use of special building which has been a significant gathering place for many generations and contains important historic artifacts.
- Tourism draw to Culross is enhanced, benefitting existing local hospitality offerings.
- The Abbey's ability to provide education and enrichment relating to local and national religious history is enhanced.
- Employment for 1.8 people in the café.

A5.5 Governance / Management Arrangements

It is expected that a group of local people will form an incorporated organisation to own the building and manage organisational activity. The Broomhall Estates Conservation Trust has led the vision for this study and could potentially continue on a journey towards becoming the organisation to take on the Abbey. In this scenario the governance structure and management arrangements may already be established, or may need to be altered to meet this new commitment.

There are options available in relation to the legal organisational structure(s) applied, depending on the level of risk and regulatory burden the group is comfortable with.

Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)

A SCIO can hold property, enter into leases and employ people in its own right. Any Title to land and buildings will be held in the name of the SCIO. Members and trustee liability is limited in most cases, and they are not liable to contribute if the SCIO is wound up.

A two-tier SCIO is a membership organisation where the members elect the Trustees. A single tier SCIO is where the members and the Trustees are the same people. The Scottish Land Fund will normally require that funded organisations are two tier SCIOs.

The primary advantage of the SCIO is that organisations with charitable status have access to grant funds which organisations without charitable status do not have. A secondary advantage is that there is a single registration and regulator – the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) - therefore there is a reduced administrative and regulatory burden.

A disadvantage is that all activities must be charitable in nature, with exceptions for primary purpose, ancillary and non-primary purpose trading.

The regulations and legislation around charitable trading are complex and beyond the scope of this business assessment. The café provision and event hire business may not be regarded as charitable in nature. Judgement on this would be a matter for assessment by OSCR based on the evidence supplied in support of application for charitable registration.

Trading Subsidiary

If that is the case, then there may be a need for a separate trading organisation to be responsible for this business. This would commonly be a limited company set up as a separate trading subsidiary, wholly under the control of the charity and which gifts profits back to the charity. The advantage of this is that it retains ultimate control with the charity.

The disadvantage of this is that there are multiple registrations and regulators and a more complex administrative and regulatory burden. A further disadvantage is the risk of loss of rates relief if the trading is carried out from the charity's building, as it would be in this case.

Community Interest Company (CIC)

Limited company structure for social enterprise with secure asset lock (meaning assets can only be used for the benefit of the community, which includes profits or other surpluses) and focus on community benefit. CICs are registered with and regulated by the Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies.

The advantage of this model is that the restrictions on the nature of activity that apply to charities do not apply here. A disadvantage is that many grant funds are inaccessible to CICs. Café provision may be directly managed, i.e. the organisation employ staff and make other decisions around opening hours, menu, etc or franchised / sub-let, i.e. the organisation offers the opportunity to run the café to a commercial provider who then pays the organisation for the opportunity to do so.

The former option retains control but also demands that the organisation takes on the regulatory burden of acting as employers and the risk of business underperformance.

The latter option reduces the risk of business underperformance and limits the burden of acting as employers. It reduces organisational control, but the parameters of how the organisation wants the café to operate may be set out in a contract with the café provider.

C5.6 Risks

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Failure to attract sufficient business-café.	High	High – Organisation will operate in deficit and may eventually have to be wound up. This could result in the Abbey becoming a liquidated asset to satisfy creditors.	In-depth market research to fully understand potential uptake of this offering.
Failure to attract sufficient business-weddings/events	Medium – high.	High – Organisation will operate in deficit and may eventually have to be wound up. This could result in the Abbey becoming a liquidated asset to satisfy creditors.	Investment in positive and targeted marketing to identified sectors and potential customers.
Loss of significant customer.	Low	Medium – will have a consequence for income.	Unlikely that any single customer will take sufficient space to place the enterprise at risk if they were to choose to leave. Engagement with existing users to ensure that they remain satisfied.
Unanticipated repair costs.	Insufficient information to assess	Depends on the nature of the repairs.	Carry out regular quinquennial surveys. Keep detailed maintenance records. Build up a reserve/ rainy day fund Keep abreast of potential funders' requirements and deadlines.
Unanticipated cost increases	Medium	Unknown – depends on the nature and scale of the increase.	Monthly management accounts to identify variance in costs. Seek to obtain fixed cost contracts where possible. Organisation to take action (reduce costs / increase income / draw from reserves) as appropriate.
Newly emerging competitors	Medium-High	Medium-High Given the number of other church disposals likely to take place in the near future, other competing venues could emerge.	Maintain awareness of potential emerging competitors.
New and emerging legislation changes.	Low	Medium – There is a risk that the Scottish or UK Governments introduce legislation requiring energy efficiency improvements to older buildings.	Work with vendor to ensure that heating / lighting are compliant with anticipated future regulations prior to purchase. Retain restricted funds, including to apply to these costs and / or to use as match funding for grant support.

A6. Next Steps

The Church of Scotland General Trustees' response to the initial communication from the Broomhall Estate Conservation Trust (BECT) intimated a period of exclusivity until the end of the year, and a request to keep them informed on progress. It reiterated that any sale would be based on market value, and requested a basic business plan showing that the group would be able to run the building successfully, and explaining what the use would be. Through the completion of this report, BECT can meet that request and continue the process.

In a broader sense, continued project development by BECT appears to be a promising way forward. There are clear benefits in an existing Trust coming forward as a vehicle looking towards a potential transfer, in terms of being able to move swiftly, and having already established local connections to gather support. This particular trust also has experience of looking after historic buildings, and could be a beneficial custodian for the Abbey.

We continue to recommend a campaign of local engagement and consultation to take forward the positive, open relationship with those living in the village, and with potential partner organisations already active in Culross, to enrich the plans for the future use. It will be particularly important to embrace the opportunities presented by NTS and HES' support of this study so far, and to explore the rich potential for partnerships with the well-established sites of Culross Palace and the Abbey ruins.

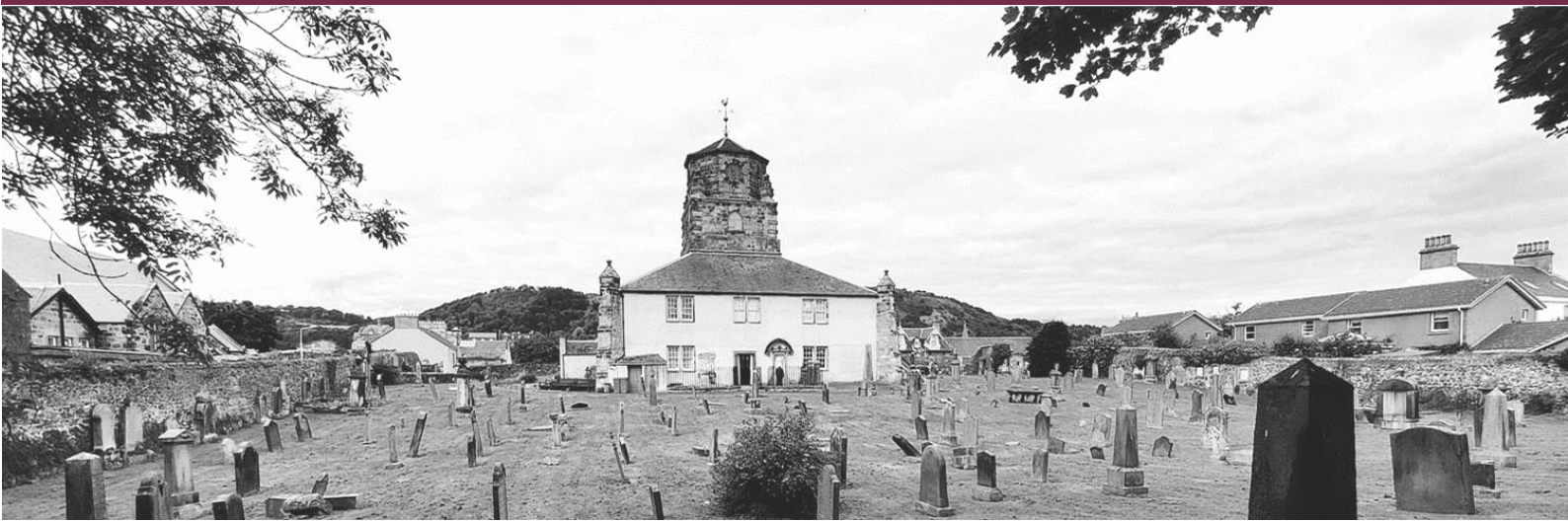


Image credit: <https://www.burntislandsailing.org.uk/burntisland/>

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B1. Building Details & Background

B1.1 Background

Contact was initially made in May 2023 via Revd Donald MacEwan, and FHBT received a warm and generous welcome from the knowledgeable, passionate members of the Kirk session.

The doors are open for visitors from Thursday to Saturday during summer months and several of the elders, as well as Burntisland Heritage, provide tours of the church by arrangement.

A congregation of about 40 was worshipping weekly in the building, and initially expressed determination to appeal the Presbytery decision, although at the final vote of the Kirk Session in mid-June it was agreed that the Church would accept the Presbytery decision. Plans are underway for the congregation to merge with that of Kinghorn, whose Kirk by the Sea is also on the closure list and whose services were moving to another church building on Kinghorn high street. The busy, Victorian-era Church Halls adjacent to Burntisland Parish Church are in use on a daily basis, and are intended to be retained by the Church of Scotland. These halls play an important role in the community and attract a steady flow of bookings from groups including parent & toddlers, guides & cubs, parties and pop-up markets.

The Halls are also occasionally used for Sunday services, and although this is in practical terms a suitable space to congregate, concern was expressed that no special, ceremonial space would remain within reach, for weddings, funerals and other solemn or celebratory services.

The Parish Church is an incredibly significant in the history of Christianity, being the site of the inception of the King James Bible, and one of the first churches constructed following the reformation. Its centrally planned layout, with box pews ('pumphils') is also very unusual. There is great concern from the congregation as well as Burntisland Heritage (formerly Burntisland Heritage Trust) that access to this social and religious history could be lost if the church were to be purchased privately.

As initial meetings progressed it became apparent that some within the church were holding out hope that the Presbytery Vote on the 17th June might reverse the decision on closure. At the Presbytery meeting the Session Clerk delivered a strong and passionate call for Burntisland to be reconsidered, and reiterated that the congregation intends to continue worshipping in the building.

B1.2 Building Location

Burntisland Parish Church, E Leven St, Burntisland KY3 9DH

B1.3 Heritage Significance

Established in 1592, the building is one of the first churches built in Scotland following the Protestant Reformation. It has a very unusual square plan, with the pulpit and communion table in the centre and with pews facing from all four sides.

A Royal Charter ratified by King James VI in 1587 required that a church be built in Burntisland, to replace an earlier building at Kirkton. John Roche was the stonemason and possibly architect, and the building was substantially complete by 1596 although the wooden spire (later replaced with stone in 1748) was completed in 1600. The interior was gradually fitted out throughout the following hundred years, with the ground floor pews dating to the mid- 1700s but some being added as late as 1862.

Perhaps the most significant event in its history occurred in 1601 when, due to the plague being rife in Edinburgh and the King being unable to travel as far as St Andrews due to an injury, it hosted the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, which led to the creation of the King James Bible in 1611.

The many decorative interior features include a Magistrates pew (1606), box pews ('pumpils'), two of which are dated 1725 and 1742; inverted anchor motifs in the stonework, painted panels depicting guilds along the balcony, and a Carnegie organ. An extensive restoration (partly HES-funded) was completed in late 1999.

B1.4 Burntisland Parish Church: Summary timeline April- September 2023

- May: initial informal church visit with Session Clerk and Elders.
- Follow-up larger meeting with some members of the Kirk Session and Burntisland Heritage Trust. General ambitions and priorities established; focus on reversing decision and continuing regular worship in the church.
- Following June 17th Presbytery meeting, FHBT met some of the elders to decide on way forward (preference for incremental approach, engaging local groups in August prior to full public consultation).
- August 7th meeting called by some of the Elders, involving FHBT and trusted local stakeholder groups such as the Community Council, Burntisland Development Trust, Local Councillors, Burntisland Heritage. Lack of coherent way forward; decision made following this to not proceed with visioning exercise to facilitate Initial Economic Assessment.

B1.5 Risks facing the building

- Very rigid building layout with historic box pews; limited use possibilities.
- Location- not on main thoroughfare and surrounded by high stone walls with a single gate entry. Alley alongside leads to dead-end. Potential lack of passing visitors.
- Relatively low recognition amongst locals, partly due to high surrounding walls, partly as school services take place in another church.
- Stress of Presbytery decision and ensuing efforts causing burnout and lack of resources to move forward positively.
- Limited access, through single gate into Fife Council- maintained, inactive graveyard.

B1.6 Current ownership and future prospects

Burntisland Parish Church is owned by Church of Scotland currently, but per the Fife Presbytery mission plan it is intended for closure and sale by the end of December 2027.

Prior to the final presbytery vote on categorisation (June 17th) and the vote on merging with Kinghorn (June 18th), members of the church were reluctant to formally discuss the potential for a change of ownership, preferring to focus on campaigning for the reversal of the Church of Scotland's decision.

In July, with the result of the final presbytery vote sinking in, a member of the kirk session who also sits on the Community Council called a meeting of trusted local stakeholder groups to establish a baseline, town- wide understanding of the situation and gauge interest and capacity for exploring the setting up of a Charitable Trust to take on the building. Though the Community Council is concerned about potential sale of the church, they felt there would not be sufficient numbers of people locally who would commit to giving their time and efforts towards forming a Working Group to explore a viable model.

Though the session clerk remained keen to take advantage of the opportunity this study presented, the conclusion was reached that the time is not yet right.

Burntisland Heritage (recently formed as a SCIO; formerly Burntisland Heritage Trust) has been present at all meetings and voiced an openness to potential partnership, or of forming an offshoot trust to care for the church, with caveats that their current workload is significant and they would require additional capacity to be involved.

B2. Building condition

Buildings Officer for Fife Presbytery, David Gillan, provided a Quinquennial inspection report from 2008; we were also provided a 2018 Quinquennial report from an elder (see Appendix G).

- Extensive renovation completed 1999; now almost 25 years on some of these works may begin requiring attention.
- The kirk session described regular maintenance, including yearly roof inspections.
- High level plant growth was removed in September 2023.
- Interior is very rich in decorative paintwork, art, plaques, upholstery; all appear in good condition but will require upkeep.
- One small toilet on ground floor, accessed via vestry.
- Halls are used for all other facilities, and include several accessible toilets, a large kitchen, and 3 halls of varying sizes.

B2.2 Immediate costs

Whilst no significant immediate repair needs are known, records of the maintenance and running costs of the building was provided by the kirk session.

General Running Costs:

- Insurance £3,000 per annum (the Church sanctuary is insured for £6,233,306.25)
- Electricity January - May 2023 = £1,674 (approx. 350/month; the energy costs increased significantly this year, following the end of a fixed term contract ending December 2022).
- Fabric costs approx. £2,000 for year 2022.

The total expenditure on the building for 2022 was approximately £6,100.

B3. Situation and context

B3.1 Site

The church is accessed from the High St via Kirkgate, or from the Links via East Leven St. Atop a hill and surrounded by stone boundary walls, it is not prominently sited, in contrast to its neighbouring Halls. The alley which separates the church and halls leads to an enclosed, overgrown area overlooking the railway tracks and shore, whilst to its north, an area of dense housing separates the church from the High Street area. The SIMD ranks this area within the most deprived 10% nationwide, with significant deprivation in most of the 8 categories assessed.

The iron gates to the north-west are the only access point to the church; these are locked except when the church is open.

The Fife- council owned graveyard, which is inactive, is enhanced by plantings and landscaping cared for by the congregation, and a tarmac drive leads from the gates to the main church door. The whole site sits within the Burntisland Conservation Area.

B3.2 Locality and context

The 2023-2028 Burntisland Community Action Plan developed by Burntisland Community Development Trust provides a valuable overview of priorities within the town.

Actions relating to a key priority of 'Realise the potential of Burntisland's heritage assets for community benefit' focus on Burntisland Burgh Chambers, which are currently vacant save for a museum space run by Burntisland Heritage. The Parish Church is not mentioned at all in the Plan, which may be telling of its currently low profile and the lack of widespread understanding about its situation.

The Plan highlights the difficulty and discontent associated with the loss of facilities such as the post office & banks, which is anecdotally a common theme in many small towns; finding opportunities to fill this gap should be a key consideration when exploring future uses for any disused heritage asset.

B3.3 Land use planning position

Currently the A- listed Burntisland Parish church would be classed Class 10, non-residential institutional use.

Fife Council is the owner of the surrounding graveyard, however this is inactive. In discussion with another church out with this study it was suggested that Fife Council may be open to transferring ownership of some inactive areas of former burial grounds to be cared for with the church buildings they surround; an exploration of this possibility would be valuable if those at Burntisland choose to reinitiate feasibility work.

B4 Options for Use & Next Steps

During the meeting of key local stakeholder groups on the 7th August, there seemed to be a consensus that an Initial Economic Assessment of a charitable trust scenario be pursued.

However, following this there was a lack of clarity and consensus on who would step up to lead the effort. Taking into account also the desire of the congregation to continue the status quo as long as possible, the decision was made by the Session clerk to not go further with the study at this time.

FHBT looks forward to continuing communication with Burntisland Parish Church and is keen to assist where possible in future, including through signposting to other organisations whose assistance may be needed in due course. Given the highly significant social and religious history embodied in Burntisland Parish Church, Historic Churches Scotland (HCS) should be kept in mind as a potential custodian in the scenario that local capacity remains a challenge as a closure and sale date approaches. Though HCS owns some buildings in perpetuity, they also have experience in managing change through short- term HCS ownership, and eventual transfer to a community group when the time is right.

There is potential in coming months for FHBT to assist Fife Council with finding a future use for Burntisland Burgh Chambers; this will be a good opportunity to continue developing a vision for this part of Burntisland, and finding possible links between the various heritage assets.



Image : St Monans Heritage Collection

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C1. Building Details & Background

C1.1 Background

FHBT made an informal site visit to the Auld Kirk in April, and following introductions by Revd MacEwan, met virtually with the Interim Moderator, Session Clerk and elder to understand the journey thus far. The church leadership had already made the decision to relocate regular Sunday worship to the church halls in the village, and the Interim Moderator mentioned that the General Trustees were aware of, and would support, a community ownership scenario.

The Kirk Session were clear as to the limitations of their potential role in feasibility work (limited to coordinating with the General Trustees and providing data regarding costs, bills and repairs), and quickly engaged the Community Council as a potential leader. FHBT became involved prior to the first public village meeting about the Auld Kirk, and was invited to a regular Community Council meeting to explain the potential support we could provide. With several of the members of the Community Council also being church members, and many passionate, engaged attendees at these early meetings, it was apparent that a positive force was building.

The public meetings called by the Community Council led to the acceptance of FHBT's support, and the emergence of an official Working Group of 6 people from across the community, who are now known as St Monans Auld Kirk Enterprise (SMAKE).

C1.2 Building Location

St Monans Church, Burnside, St Monans, Anstruther KY10 2BX

C1.3 Heritage Significance

There is evidence that a shrine to St Monan existed on the site prior to King David's II commissioning of the current structure in 1362-70. One mediaeval scholar attributes King David's interest in the site to a visit to the shrine which brought about his dramatic and miraculous recovery from an arrow wound; another says the commission was owed to his deliverance from a shipwreck in the Forth.

It was later transferred to the Dominicans in 1471 by King James III. Following the reformation, the choir was fitted out and separated from the transepts, and it became a parish church in 1649. The graveyard, tower and steeple of the Auld Kirk feature in harrowing accounts of the East Neuk Witch Trials, the earliest of which took place in 1651 and involved a 17 year old St Monans resident named Maggie Morgan. Oliver Cromwell is said to have stabled his horses in one of the roofless transepts. William Burn undertook a major restoration in 1826-8, restoring the roofless transepts and reuniting the building into one space. The interior was whitewashed in

1955, when decorative mediaeval style plasterwork from the c19 restoration was stripped off; the pews and fittings also date from this time.

A 1981 Christmas concert featuring local schoolchildren singing along with Johnny Cash still features prominently in local memory. During the 2010s the congregation raised approximately £160k for repairs, mainly to the window traceries dating from the Burns restoration. This work was overseen by Conservation Architect Stephen Newsom, who generously shared his records for this study.

C1.4 St Monans Auld Kirk: Summary timeline April- September 2023

- 9th April: informal FHBT site visit facilitated by Session Clerk
- Early May: Teams meeting with church (session clerk, elders, Interim Moderator). Supportive of Community Trust route.
- Mid- May: Community Council meeting, church included on agenda.
- Late May: Follow up public meeting, arranged by Community Council (CC), to discuss possible community buy-out of church. FHBT support accepted.
- Early June: CC communication with Church of Scotland General trustees; community's intentions welcomed.
- Mid- June FHBT met with Working Group formed of local volunteers; agreed plan for public visioning session in church, early July.
- Working group calls themselves SMAKE (St Monans Auld Kirk Enterprise)
- Drop-in events on 7th and 8th July attended by over 150 people; brainstorming ideas for re-use.
- Sea Queen event; SMAKE table with further opportunity for contributing ideas.
- SMAKE launches social media presence³⁹, email address set up.
- Collation of public consultations leads to emerging vision for Auld Kirk as café and high-class events space run for community benefit.
- Doors Open Day, 2nd & 3rd September- sharing emerging vision, Logo design competition. Approx. 350 attendees.

³⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61550567668980>

- 6th September: Historic Environment Scotland Policy Team (Places of Worship) officer, Senior Historic Buildings Adviser, Survey & Recording Team member, as well as Fife Council Built Heritage Officer and Senior Planner for North- East Fife attended site visit and discussion at St Monans Auld Kirk

C1.5 Risks facing the building

Factors contributing specifically to St Monans, which if not addressed could prevent success in finding viable future use:

- Outwith village; lower footfall and potential lack of passing trade.
- Difficult access, steep and limited to foot traffic for last 75m.
- Several East Neuk churches in close proximity are also categorised 'B' for disposal by 2027 (Elie, Pittenweem); potential for splitting resources/ custom if uses are too similar.
- Not currently in regular use; risk in terms of leaks, low ventilation, break ins.
- Active burial ground to west.
- No kitchen facilities; single upstairs WC.

C1.6 Current ownership and future prospects

St Monans Auld Kirk is currently owned by the Church of Scotland, but per the Fife Presbytery mission plan is intended for closure and disposal (sale, lease or other) by the end of December 2027.

In late 2022 the congregation ceased regular worship in the Auld Kirk, the leadership choosing to use the Church Halls in the village instead. Currently the building is open from Thursday to Saturday weekly during the summer months, staffed by volunteers.

St Monans Auld Kirk Enterprise (SMAKE) approached the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland in May 2023 to express their interest in exploring future transfer of ownership. The response was positive; as expected the group will need to diligently develop a viable business plan in line with the community's needs, and will need to have become a formally constituted group at the point of transfer.

C2. Building condition

The Buildings Officer for Fife Presbytery (David Gillan) located a 2015 Quinquennial Report, which notes all building elements as being in good condition, with no recommended repairs.

Stephen Newsom, conservation- accredited Architect, managed the most recent project in 2005-2006 when the 19th century window traceries repaired were with funds raised by congregation (approx. £160k) and has generously shared some records relating to this work (see Appendix H).

Some visible plant growth is visible to the upper levels in summer 2023, suggesting a need for general preventative maintenance. SMAKE has been advised that the interior paint work is not of an appropriate specification and will need to be stripped and repainted. It is visibly bubbling at lower levels; the condition of higher levels is to be confirmed.

Though the interior appears in good condition, the building is empty most of the time and will not be heated through the winter of 2023-2024. The single upstairs toilet is in need of upgrade and is accessed via a very steep stair, and there are no kitchen facilities.

C2.2 Immediate costs

Whilst no significant immediate repair needs are known beyond general preventative maintenance, the running costs of the Auld Kirk are as follows:

- Insurance: £4,000 per annum in 2021.
- Heat & light: £2,000 per annum in 2021.
- Fabric: Averages approximately £3k/yr based on records from 2010- 2022 (See Appendix H).

C3. Situation and context

C3.1 Site

The Auld Kirk is set on high ground with exposed views on all sides, including the sea to the South. It is the closest church to the shore in Scotland and provides a memorable and dramatic setting. Located just outside the village of St Monans, the Kirk marks the starting point for leg 6 of the Fife Coastal Path⁴⁰ and is the first stopping point on a longer Elie to Cambo Sands walk⁴¹.

⁴⁰ <https://www.walkhighlands.co.uk/fife-stirling/st-monans-anstruther.shtml>

⁴¹ <https://fifecoastandcountrysidetrust.co.uk/walks/fife-coastal-path/elie-to-cambo-sands/>

A gravel parking area for approximately 25 cars is located at the top of the hill about 75m from the church building, which is accessed via a steep gravel path. Pedestrian access is also available from the village via a bridge over the Inverie burn. There may be some challenges in terms of access for people with limited mobility, and the demand for vehicles to travel through the village to reach the car park may limit the opportunity for passing trade.

C3.2 Locality and context

St Monans is a small and attractive settlement of 1,164 people across 767 households⁴². The wider North East Fife area is home to 74,685 people across 36,112 households.

The North East Fife Strategic Assessment states that

“North East Fife area is the largest of Fife’s seven areas, and stretches from the River Tay in the North, to the Firth of Forth in the south east. St Andrews is the largest town, followed by other main settlements, including Cupar, Newburgh, Auchtermuchty, Newport and Anstruther. The area is much less reliant on manufacturing and heavy industry than other areas in Fife, and is characterised by rural, agricultural and fishing industries, together with tourism in the East Neuk and St Andrews.”

It further notes that

“It is the least deprived area in terms of employment (5%) and income deprivation (6.4%), with only one datazone in the most deprived in Fife. North East Fife has the lowest claimant rate (2.2%), and a higher employment rate (72.8%). 93.4% of 16-19 year olds are participating in education, employment or training, with 78% still in education”

“Of those surveyed, 55% report that they provide some kind of unpaid (voluntary) help to a group or organisation. This compares with 46% of Fife as a whole. The most common areas in which unpaid (voluntary) help is given to groups and organisations are local community / neighbourhood groups, hobbies / recreation / arts / social clubs and in relation to school children.”

St Monans forms part of the East Neuk region of small towns and villages. As noted in the strategic assessment, the East Neuk enjoys a relatively high level of tourism and – anecdotally – a higher than average level of creative activity.

The village pub & hotel closed permanently in 2017, with the building having been converted to a private residence. This appears to have left a gap in terms of intergenerational, casual meeting space for locals.

For visitors, St Monans offers several charms. In addition to St Monans Auld Kirk, Newark Castle, the St Monans Windmill, tidal pool, Fife Coastal Pathway and some well-regarded

⁴² https://know.fife.scot/_data/assets/pdf_file/0028/417196/St-Monans-Community-Council-Profile.pdf

destination hospitality offers make the village an attractive option for day tripper who may be combining a visit with stops at other nearby villages.

The nearby Bowhouse⁴³ has been developed to connect *“small growers and producers with restaurants and shoppers, giving everyone better access to the best ingredients and finished produce that the East Neuk has to offer.”* This draws customers from a wide catchment area, some of whom may choose to visit St Monans Auld Kirk as part of their trip.

A search on Airbnb.com for randomly selected midweek dates in April 2024 identified 13 short let properties. The true number may be higher as any that were booked for the dates selected will not have been shown in the search. The East Neuk as a whole is offers over 100 AirBnB properties, as well as some hotels and traditional Bed and Breakfasts. These numbers may change as the sector becomes more tightly regulated.

C3.3 Land use planning position

The Auld Kirk has been a parish church since 1649 and as such would be classed Use Class 10, Non-residential institutions. A different possible future use could require a change of use as part of the permissions process.

Fife Council owns the graveyard which surrounds the Kirk. The area directly around the church is historic and inactive, but further to the west there is an active burial ground; any future use would need to be compatible with this use, and would need to maintain access to the shared parking area.

There is a small stone hut on the border of the older and newer parts of the graveyard, which is vacant. Fife Council Bereavement services have confirmed that this is surplus to their requirements and would welcome an approach with a new use for this. It could potentially serve a purpose as storage or ancillary space; it is not connected to services and requires refurbishment.

C3.4 Potential for listed building consent

In September 2023 Fife Council’s Built Heritage Officer and Senior Planner for North- East Fife attended a meeting at the church to informally discuss the permissions process with SMAKE. There is a clear shared priority of preventing disuse and dilapidation by finding a viable use, and an understanding that some adaptations will be required in order to achieve this.

⁴³ <https://www.bowhousefife.com/about/>

Past Listed Building Applications include:

- 2011- LBC for install of central heating system
- 2019- Formation and upgrade of footpaths for wheelchair users and installation of access ramp at vestry door

C4 Options for Use

On the 7th and 8th of July, SMAKE, with FHBT support, promoted and hosted two public drop-in sessions at the Auld Kirk. As well as visual aids such as historic plans and printed case studies, four panels were created prompting attendees to note their responses to the following:

- What makes the Auld Kirk special to you?
- What would you like to see here?
- What would you NOT like to see here?
- What are the greatest risks facing the Auld Kirk?

Over 150 people contributed, and through analysing the responses, clear themes began to emerge (see Appendix I), including:

- Weddings, funerals
- Special services; Christmas, Easter, Sea Queen
- Heritage
- Community Hub

Later in July the village Sea Queen festival was held, and SMAKE set up a stall to gather more input and hold conversations.

As the summer progressed, SMAKE set up a Facebook page, on which they are sharing materials gathered at these events, and a formal update was made at the August Community Council meeting, as well as during a church service.

Doors Open Day weekend coincided with the St Monans Art Festival in early September, and SMAKE's two-day event in the Kirk attracted over 350 visitors. A poster was made to portray the progress made so far and introduce the emerging vision, and a 'Design our Logo' competition was launched.

FHBT provided a Visioning template to SMAKE in August, as a tool for pinning down the emerging use option for assessment by this study. Through answering the questions in this template SMAKE was able to define a vision (see C5) and intends to continue refining the concept through regular public engagement.

C5 Additional evaluation of preferred use

(Note: this is an outline assessment; more detailed planning will be required at a subsequent phase)

C5.1 Business Proposal

To acquire and manage St Monans Auld Kirk for the benefit of the community of St Monans.

The enterprise proposes to provide:

- a memorable setting for life celebrations, and for community activities and events.
- a fully staffed, high quality, year-round Café
- an attractive, unique venue and location for weddings/ life events, concerts, lectures and other commercial events.

It is intended that the commercial activity will generate sufficient income to cover the ongoing revenue costs of the building and to build up reserve funds for maintenance and upgrade.

If the enterprise should generate sufficient surplus income, there is the possibility of setting up a small grant fund to disburse these funds to other groups and activities within the village.

The café is envisaged to be fully manned, offer a high quality menu varying to a smaller menu in winter, and be open all year. It is expected to be used by local people, walkers from the Fife Coastal Path and tourists visiting the area by car, and will provide an opportunity for social interaction, supporting local food producers, showcasing local artists, and sharing local information. Some outdoor seating facing the sea may be provided.

Community ownership of the building may also secure it for use a meaningful sanctuary space for people of all faiths and none. The building would be open to passers-by regardless of whether they planned to use the café, and upgraded toilet facilities and a heritage display would provide a rest opportunity for walkers on the Coastal Path.

SMAKE is in the process of forming a governance / management organisation in due course, to own and operate the Auld Kirk.

C5.2 Evidence of Demand

The products on offer are:

- Space for community events
- Café
- Space for private / commercial events
- Space for community let / activity

The products are intended to serve three markets:

- The local community
- Tourists / Walkers on the Fife Coastal Path
- Event space hirers from outside the local community

C5.2.1 Evidence of Demand for these Products from the Local Community

The number of people – and hence the scale of the market - in St Monans is relatively small. The relatively self-contained nature of the village means that the demand from local people for community activities, events and café provision within walking distance of their home may be greater than in comparable areas where people have a greater number of options.

Competitors and Niche

St Monans Town Hall⁴⁴

“is suitable for meetings, club/group activities, coffee mornings, social events, functions, parties, wedding ceremonies, wedding receptions, concerts, fairs, exhibitions, dinners, theatre productions, councillor surgeries and public consultations. There is a range of activities for all age groups - Oor Space, Art Club, Yoga, Zumbini, Dance Classes, Food Larder and Clothes Swap Shop. Clubs and organisations can also hire the facilities.”

There is a Gospel Hall⁴⁵ in the village, which is solely used for worship.

There is a Parish Church Hall on Station Road in St Monans village, which is where the congregation currently hold their Sunday services. It has two separate hall spaces, and kitchen and toilet facilities. It would not seem a foregone conclusion that St Monans Auld Kirk would offer a more attractive space for day-to-day community activity than the Church Hall.

The St Monans Community Action Plan 2018 -2022 notes that:

“There are no social groups or clubs currently operating to serve the young population of St Monans and Abercrombie⁴⁶. St Monans Primary School organises transport to youth clubs in Anstruther where possible. There are community groups for the older population, such as the Autumn Club, which meet in the Town Hall and Church Hall. There is also an active Guild. A number of community events are held throughout the year and are organised by local volunteers... St Monans has a Bowling Club and Multi

⁴⁴ <https://www.fife.gov.uk/facilities/hall/st-monans-town-hall>

⁴⁵ <http://stmonansgospelhall.net/index.html>

⁴⁶ A Youth Club has subsequently been established in St Monans.

User Games Area (MUGA), but both facilities have been recognised as being under-used in recent times.”

It appears from this evidence that existing community groups already have space for activities; this reinforces the approach that the Auld Kirk would be best used for new community events rather than offering additional space for existing activities.

The St Monans Community Action Plan goes on to note that:

“St Monans and Abercrombie host several events throughout the year which attract residents and visitors. These include the Community Arts Festival and the St Monans Sea Queen Day (now in its 60th year). All the East Neuk villages now host festivals, with themes from food to music, and are an essential part of sustaining the local tourism industry.”

Given its unique aesthetics, atmosphere and acoustics, the Church may present a venue which is more suited to events, e.g. concerts, talks, dances, etc – than day to day community activities. If so, then it could offer space which allows some of the festivals to expand and diversify their offer. It could also allow community organisations to develop new events, either as part of a festival programme or, as standalone events.

St Monans village currently offers one café as well as a takeaway bakery. A café at St Monans Church would be a greater distance from most people’s homes than the existing options. It would therefore have to offer something not available from the cafés located in the village to incentivise people to travel the additional distance. There is some anecdotal evidence that the opening hours and capacity of café provision in the village are not satisfactory. There may therefore be some demand from local people for additional café provision, albeit that the location of St Monans Auld Kirk outside the village may not be ideal.

Conclusion

There is limited evidence of demand from the local community for new space for community activity and some evidence of demand from local people for a café, as there may be demand on days the existing café is closed or at capacity. There is, however, an opportunity for individuals and community organisations to be inspired by the availability of St Monans Church as an events space to organise new events. This may contribute to the quality of community life as well as attracting visitors to contribute to the local economy.

In addition, the closure of the village hotel & pub in 2017 and the associated lack of casual, intergenerational meeting space, could be in part mitigated by the creation of a space suitable for community gatherings.

C5.2.2 Evidence of Demand for these Products from Tourists

Of the four income-producing products proposed for offer at St Monans Church, the café is likely to be of primary interest to tourists.

As already noted, the church is on the Fife Coastal Pathway. As such it is directly in the path of walkers and already enjoys frequent visits from people walking the Fife Coastal Path. In addition, some visitors have travelled to the village specifically to visit the Kirk. It is not currently anticipated that a fee would be charged for simply visiting the Kirk and enjoying the space, so this activity is not included as part of the income/ expenditure calculations, though it is an important part of the vision that the building remains available for anybody to enjoy.

Table 1 – Electronic People Counter Ardross Data

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
No of people	22,775	21,690	15,850	2,916 ⁴⁷

The table above shows the number of people recorded by an electronic data counter located at Ardross, around 2 miles from St Monans Church. It should be noted that not all people counted will be tourists, many may be local walkers, and that counters may be triggered multiple times by the same person (e.g. outward and return routes).

The broader range of tourist attractions in the East Neuk are both competition and complement to the proposals for St Monans. People visiting the area for one or more of the other attractions may be drawn to St Monans Auld Kirk as a destination for eating / drinking. Equally, however there are however many other hospitality options in the towns and villages of the East Neuk and visitors to St Monans Auld Kirk may choose to eat / drink in an alternative option. Tripadvisor shows 5 cafes/restaurants in St Monans, 8 in nearby Elie and 9 in nearby Pittenweem.

Estimation of Café Income

Café income is based on the number of people who spend money in the café. This is likely to be made up of

- Local people
- Walkers on the Fife Coastal Path
- People visiting St Monans Auld Kirk by car
- Tourists visiting other attractions in the area, brought in by marketing of the café offer

⁴⁷ Data for January – April only

The Fife Coast Usage and Impact Study 2015⁴⁸ reported an average spend for a day visitor on food and drink at £7.84. Adjusted for inflation using the Bank of England inflation calculator, this equates to £10.26.

Staffing costs have been calculated as follows.

Job Role	Full Time Equivalent	Hourly Rate	Annualised
Server / Manager	1.2 (6 full days per week)	£10.90	£27,206
Food Preparation Operative	0.6 (6 half days per week)	£10.90	£13,603
Total			£40,810

To generate a profit margin of 15% of turnover - sufficient to produce a reasonable level of confidence - the following scenario would have to be achieved.

Café income

Item	Sum
Café customers per annum	5,580
Income @ £10.26 per customer	£57,250
Customers per day @ 312 trading days per annum	18
Staff Costs	£40,810
Catering Costs @ 25% of sales	£7,971
Lease costs	Nil
Energy	Nil
Cleaning	Nil
Total Costs	£48,781
Turnover less costs	£8,469
Profit / Loss as %age of Turnover	15%

- The above calculations do not take into account the cost of VAT or of the capital costs involved in setting up the café.
- Most hospitality business seek to maintain staffing costs at less than 35% of income. Staffing costs in the scenario above are 71% of income.
- Income does not include any catering business that the café may secure through the events hire element of the business proposal. If venue hirers choose the café as their caterer then this will increase overall income.

⁴⁸ <https://d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net/pex/fcct/2019/05/17090509/Fife-Coast-Usage-Impact-Study-Final-Summary-Report-2016.pdf>

Conclusion

On the basis of the above assumptions and calculations, the number of café users required to enable the café to generate a reasonable surplus is fairly low and may be achievable.

C5.2.3 Evidence of Demand for these Products from Event space hirers from outside the local community

The product that event space hirers from outside the local community may be interested in is the space for private/ commercial events.

The main reasons for hire are likely to be for weddings, life celebrations and festivals, concerts or performing arts presentations. It may also be possible to attract business from conference organisers or for spirituality retreat style events.

Festivals / Concerts / Performing Arts Presentations

As already noted, the East Neuk has a high number of local festivals, including the well-established East Neuk Festival which showcases a wide range of musical performances each summer. These are likely to be the main source of business for hire for the purposes of festivals / concerts / performing arts presentations.

Assuming a flat hire fee for this form of use at £250, including the cost of a sound / lighting engineer. This cost has been set at the lower end of the market for this form of use with a view to establishing new business.

The gross income from this source is based on 12 events per annum would be £3000. Net income (less sound / lighting engineer costs) would be in the region of £1200.

Alternatively, St Monans Auld Kirk Enterprises may choose to plan and promote concerts, etc on their own. Concert promotion is a risk venture – each concert has to generate a greater level of income than the costs of production. Given the presence of existing festivals in the area and the secondary role concerts are expected to play in this enterprise we have not sought to estimate the potential income from this form of enterprise.

There would be some capital outlay for PA system and, if necessary, lighting.

Weddings / Life Celebrations

St Monans Church appears to be exceptionally well suited for weddings and life celebrations and, if marketed, could potentially attract bookings from across the UK. As a venue it could accommodate up to 90 people for full wedding with meal and dancing, or up to 250 for ceremony only. There are other potential venues nearby which could host the reception.

The hire fee for wedding venues varies massively and it is difficult to establish a median line, not least because many venues price themselves according to the level of service purchased and / or by the number of guests.

For the purposes of this exercise we asked two community owned organisations who occasionally hire their premises for weddings to supply a price for hire only, i.e. without catering, staffing, entertainment, occasional alcohol license, hire of cake knife, etc. The average price was £2500 for a full day. None of these venues provide as impressive a venue or location as St Monans Church. It would seem reasonable, on that basis, to assume that St Monans could command a higher hire fee. Assume £3,000 but it may be useful to conduct some market research by asking wedding planners to say what they would pay if they were to hire the church. On the basis of 2 weddings / celebrations per calendar month, this could achieve £72,000 in income with few costs, though staff time would be needed to facilitate visits, communications and bookings.

St Monans may wish to consider registering the Church with an events management or wedding planner company and allowing them to undertake the marketing. This would generate a smaller fee per hire, but may increase the number of hires sufficiently to create an overall greater total income.

There may also be some income to be achieved from hire for TV / Film production locations. We have not included this as the level of business achievable is difficult to predict.

Conclusion

There appears to be a reasonable expectation that St Monans Church would add to the offer presently made by local festivals and events organisers.

If the assumptions made about the volume of business achievable for wedding / celebration hire and hire fee are correct, then there is a substantial income to be made from this which may underwrite the costs / losses of other activity.

C5.3 Income / Expenditure Projection

12 Month Summary		
Expenditure		
Capital	Purchase	Not known
	Refit for new purposes	Not known
	PA System	Not known

	Other		
	Other		
	Other		
Revenue	Café costs including staff costs	£48,781	
	Energy / Utilities	£8,000	
	Buildings Insurance	£8,000	
	Public Liability Insurance	£1,000	
	Non-domestic rates	£0	
	Phone and internet	£600	
	Marketing	£400	
	Administration	£4,895	
	Maintenance, compliance, licences etc	£3,000	
	Cleaning	£5,196	
	Sinking Fund @ 10% of surplus (before deduction)	£5,058	
	Total Expenditure	£84,930	
	Income		
	Café (based on Scenario B)	£57,250	
	Festival / Concert Hire	£1,200	
	Weddings / Celebrations	£72,000	
	Total income	£130,450	
Surplus / Deficit	£45,520		

On the above calculation, the enterprise produces a healthy surplus at 35% of gross income. This is however almost wholly dependent on a single income stream. If that income stream declines, there is limited scope to generate income from alternative sources. However, the income from weddings / celebrations underwrites the loss from the café. Should wedding / celebration income reduce, then the café could be closed or operate on restricted hours to reduce the draw on that income stream and retain an overall surplus.

No account has been taken of capital costs. It is possible that some of these will have to be funded through loan funding. If so, loan repayments will therefore have to be factored in to the final income / expenditure calculations.

Notes to Income / Expenditure

Energy / Utilities/ Buildings Insurance

Based on information supplied by St Monans Parish Church.

Public Liability Insurance

Estimate based on knowledge of the market. Public liability costs can vary a fair bit depending on the activities and the level of risk calculated by the insurer.

Non-Domestic Rates

We have assumed that, as a charitable organisation, the holders of the property will benefit from both mandatory rates relief and discretionary rates relief. The latter is not guaranteed and is at the discretion of Fife Council.

Phone & Internet

Estimate.

Marketing

Website set up and administration costs.

No other marketing costs included. St Monans appears to already have access to the target markets identified, therefore there is little need to invest in further marketing activity.

Administration

A review of Administrative/Clerical/Business Support posts advertised within 100 miles of St Monans on <https://www.myjobscotland.gov.uk/> identified salary offers ranging from £19,160 per annum to £25,346 per annum. We have taken a mid-point between these figures - £22,253 and applied 10% for Employers NI and pension contributions - £24,478. Assuming 1 day per week of an administrative post is required to manage the building then this is equal to £4895 per annum.

Maintenance / Compliance / Licenses

Based on figures supplied by St Monans.

Cleaning

Based on 5 hours per week at £20 per hour.

Planned Maintenance / Sinking Fund

Based on setting aside 10% of annual surplus to cover planned and unplanned maintenance.

C5.4 Grant Funding

SMAKE is not yet an incorporated organisation, but is in the process of determining the most appropriate governance structure. For this Viability study, FHBT, a registered charity, was the

main applicant. Potential sources of future funding for further development include the following:

- The **Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF)**, funders of this Viability Report, offer Project Development Grants to assist organisations by covering some of the costs of developing and co-ordinating a project. To qualify, an organisation must have established that the end use of the project is likely to be viable.
 - AHF, Historic Environment Scotland- supported Project Development Grants: up to £40,000 (average offer is £15,000).
- The **Scottish Land Fund**⁴⁹ and / or the UK Government **Community Ownership Fund**⁵⁰ may provide some or all of the costs of acquisition depending on whether a discount on market value can be negotiated with the vendors.
 - Scottish Land Fund – Sum Available: £5,000 to £1,000,000 (match funding required)
 - Community Ownership Fund – Sum available: Up to £2,000,000, expected that most awards will be for up to £250,000.
- As St Monans is within 10 miles of a landfill site, it is an eligible site for the SEPA’s **Scottish Landfill Communities Fund**⁵¹. One of their objectives is the maintenance, repair or restoration of a building, other structure or a site of archaeological interest which is a place of religious worship, or a site of historic or architectural or archaeological interest and is open to the public. **Fife Environmental Trust (FET)** is an Approved Body and application would go through them.
 - Small Grants Scheme: £500 to £10,000, up to 90% of project cost.
 - Large Grants Scheme: £10,000 to £50,000, up to 75% of project cost.
- **Historic Environment Scotland (HES) Historic Environment Grants Programme**⁵² funds projects and activities relating to Scotland’s historic environment. There are six priorities and three grant categories:
 - Increase understanding of and engagement with Scotland's historic environment(selected)
 - Enhance communities’ use of the historic environment in place making
 - Strengthen the resilience of Scotland's historic environment
 - Use the historic environment as a catalyst for climate action
 - Increase the quality and availability of historic environment skills
 - Increase economic benefits from the historic environment in a sustainable and inclusive way
 - Express Grants (£1,000 to £25,000)
 - Small Grants (£25,001 to £100,000)

⁴⁹ <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/scottish-land-fund>

⁵⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-ownership-fund-prospectus>

⁵¹ <https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/waste/scottish-landfill-communities-fund/looking-for-funding/>

⁵² <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/grants-and-funding/our-grants/historic-environment-grants-programme/>

- Large Grants (£100,001 to £500,000)
- The **National Lottery Awards for All Scotland**⁵³ may provide support if the project can deliver clear outcomes for people and communities by doing at least one of the following:
 - bring people together to build strong relationships in and across communities
 - improve the places and spaces that matter to communities
 - help more people to reach their potential, by supporting them at the earliest possible stage.
 - Awards for All - Sum available: £300 to £10,000
- The Scottish Government **Regeneration Capital Grants Fund (RCGF)**⁵⁴ may cover some of the capital costs but may demand greater economic development / regeneration outcomes from the project than are presently apparent. There is no upper limit.
- The Heritage Fund **National Lottery Grants for Heritage**⁵⁵ supports projects that connect people and communities to heritage if a clear case can be made in relation to how the fabric changes / equipment delivers in their outcomes.
 - The Heritage Fund National Lottery Grants for Heritage – Sum Available – Dependent of programme strand - £3,000 to £10,000,000
- **Fife Council Local Community Planning**⁵⁶ and / or **Rural Development Fund** (pending announcement of a further round in 2024) may support some of the revenue costs of developing the project. Projects should meet some of the priorities of the North East Fife Local Community Plan⁵⁷.
 - Fife Council Local Community Planning – Small grants of up to £5,000; larger sums may be available.
 - Fife Council Rural Development Fund – Sum Available: up to £25,000
- Fife Council administers a **Common Good Fund for North-East Fife**⁵⁸ which can be used for the benefit of the inhabitants of the towns, including St Monans. The level of funds available varies.
- Social Investment Scotland’s **Community Finance**⁵⁹ core loan fund provides a range of flexible loans for social enterprises.
 - Social Investment Scotland’s Community Finance - Sum available: £10,000 to £250,000.
- **National Churches Trust**⁶⁰ support churches (min. of 6 worship services per year) with a range of grants from £500 to £50,000 undertaking repairs or capital works. Their recently launched ‘Cherish’ programme also funds project development.

⁵³ <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-scotland>

⁵⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/regeneration-capital-grant-fund/>

⁵⁵ <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/>

⁵⁶ <https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/council-and-democracy/community-group-support-and-funding>

⁵⁷ https://our.fife.scot/_data/assets/pdf_file/0033/187656/NEF-Area-Plan-approved-at-committee-8519.pdf

⁵⁸ <https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/council-and-democracy/community-group-support-and-funding/fife-grants>

⁵⁹ <https://www.socialinvestmentscotland.com/investment/sis-community-finance/>

⁶⁰ <https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/>

- **The Pilgrim Trust**⁶¹ supports the preservation, conservation and repair of significant historic buildings and artifacts. Grants of up to £30,000, assessed quarterly.
- **The Wolfson Foundation**⁶² supports registered charities undertaking repairs and conservation of Category A- listed buildings open to the public with awards of up to £100,000 (match funding required over £50k). Deadlines June and December.
- **The Schroder Charity Trust** makes grants of up to £5,000 towards core and project costs to charities (with an income between £50,000 and £2m) registered in the UK for work including Arts, Culture and Heritage, and several other outcomes⁶³.
- **The Dalrymple Donaldson Fund**⁶⁴ grants from £1,000 to £5,000 (usually part of a larger package with separate funding) for “the judicious restoration and repair of buildings of historical and antiquarian interest in Scotland, England, France, Spain, Italy, Germany and Greece but especially in Scotland”. Deadline 31st October annually.
- **The Turtleton Charitable Trust**⁶⁵ supports the advancement of the arts, culture & heritage in Scotland with grants up to £25,000. Deadline 31st December annually.
- **The Barrack Charitable Trust**⁶⁶ has three major aims, one of which is the advancement of the arts, culture and heritage in Scotland. It awards grants of up to £5,000 to registered charities. Deadlines: 30th April & 31st October.
- **The Graham Trust**⁶⁷ supports registered charities. One of their 5 objectives is the advancement of the arts, heritage, culture or science. Grants of up to £20,000; deadline September annually.
- The Markinch- based **Russell Trust**⁶⁸ (Tullis Russell High Performance Coatings) supports Fife- based charities with a preference for new charities who require initial funding. Their aims include the advancement of the arts, culture, heritage and science.

Outcomes

Community benefit is expected to be mainly in the form of the church being retained for use by local people as a venue for life events / celebrations, e.g. weddings, funerals, christenings, etc.

If the enterprise should generate sufficient surplus income, there is the possibility of setting up a small grant fund to disburse these funds to other groups / activities.

One of the simplest ways to conceive of outcomes is to ask ‘who benefits, and how do they benefit? In relation to this project:

- Community retains access to and use of special building which has acted as a totem the community for many generations.

⁶¹ <https://www.thepilgrimtrust.org.uk/>

⁶² <https://www.wolfson.org.uk/>

⁶³ <https://schrodercharitytrust.org/>

⁶⁴ <https://www.socantscot.org/grants-awards/the-dalrymple-donaldson-fund/>

⁶⁵ <https://www.turcanconnell.com/the-turtleton-charitable-trust>

⁶⁶ <https://thebarrackcharitabletrust.co.uk/>

⁶⁷ <https://www.thegramhamtrust.co.uk/>

⁶⁸ <https://www.tullisrussell.com/employee-owned/>

- Local people may experience reduced isolation through availability of space for casual interaction, and community events/ activities.
- The local community may have increased capacity to plan and organise activity.
- Employment for 1.8 people in the café, as well as part-time cleaning and administrative roles.
- Increased business for local caterers and suppliers.
- Community may benefit from activities supported by grants distributed from eventual surplus income.

The St Monans and Abercrombie Community Action Plan 2018 – 2022 provides the most up to date published information on the assets, aspirations and needs of the community. It notes that:

- “The seaside locations of the windmill and Auld Kirk in particular have led to their becoming notable landmarks, synonymous not only with the East Neuk, but also of Scotland’s East Coast.”
- “Tourism is fast becoming the economic mainstay of St Monans and Abercrombie. This brings a substantial number of visitors throughout the year, including in the off-season. With many of the historical sites in St Monans being situated on the coastal path, these are popular attractions... As gastronomic tourism has developed in Scotland in recent years, the monthly Bowhouse food markets stand to attract a consistent stream of visitors to the area with an express interest in local produce. This could be exploited further within St Monans”.

The proposals for St Monans Auld Kirk may contribute to the aims and aspirations implicit in the above extracts from the Community Action Plan.

C5.5 Governance / Management Arrangements

SMAKE is currently seeking advice from Fife Voluntary Action regarding the most appropriate legal organisational structure they should aim to take. The following outlines likely options, and the final determination will depend on the level of risk and regulatory burden they are comfortable with, as well as the finalised use.

Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)

A SCIO can hold property, enter into leases and employ people in its own right. Any Title to land and buildings will be held in the name of the SCIO. Members and trustee liability is limited in most cases, and they are not liable to contribute if the SCIO is wound up.

A two-tier SCIO is a membership organisation where the members elect the Trustees. A single tier SCIO is where the members and the Trustees are the same people. The Scottish Land Fund will normally demand that funded organisations are two tier SCIOs.

The primary advantage of the SCIO that organisations with charitable status have access to grant funds which organisations without charitable status do not have.

A secondary advantage is that there is a single registration and regulator – the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) - therefore there is a reduced administrative and regulatory burden.

A disadvantage is that all activities must be charitable in nature, with exceptions for primary purpose, ancillary and non-primary purpose trading.

The regulations and legislation around charitable trading are complex and beyond the scope of this business assessment. The café provision and event hire business may not be regarded as charitable in nature. Judgement on this would be a matter for assessment by OSCR based on the evidence supplied in support of application for charitable registration.

Trading Subsidiary

If that is the case, then there may be a need for a separate trading organisation to be responsible for this business. This would commonly be a limited company set up as a separate trading subsidiary, wholly under the control of the charity and which gifts profits back to the charity. The advantage of this is that it retains ultimate control with the charity.

The disadvantage of this is that there are multiple registrations and regulators and a more complex administrative and regulatory burden. A further disadvantage is the risk of loss of rates relief if the trading is carried out from the charity's building, as it would be in this case.

Community Interest Company (CIC)

Limited company structure for social enterprise with secure asset lock (meaning assets can only be used for the benefit of the community, which includes profits or other surpluses) and focus on community benefit. CICs are registered with and regulated by the Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies.

The advantage of this model is that the restrictions on the nature of activity that apply to charities do not apply here. A disadvantage is that many grant funds are inaccessible to CICs. Café provision may be directly managed, i.e. SMAKE employ staff and make other decisions around opening hours, menu, etc or franchised / sub-let, i.e. SMAKE offer the opportunity to run the café to a commercial provider who then pays SMAKE for the opportunity to do so.

The former option retains control but also demands that SMAKE take on the regulatory burden of acting as employers and the risk of business underperformance.

The latter option reduces the risk of business underperformance and limits the burden of acting as employers. It reduces SMAKE control, but the parameters of how SMAKE want the café to operate may be set out in a contract with the café provider.

It may be best to sub- let the marketing and management of the commercial events. This will involve cost, but the risks associated with getting something wrong, or overlooking something for someone's important life celebration could negatively affect the ability to attract future business. That's not to say that a local company could not do it, or that local people could not be trained up to do it, but in the early years at least, the risk and responsibility may be best left to professionals.

C5.6 Risks

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Failure to attract sufficient business- café.	Low to Medium	Low – projected income from event business may underwrite losses.	Investment in positive and targeted marketing to identified sectors and potential customers.
Failure to attract sufficient business- weddings/events	Low	High – will have a consequence for the level of income achieved and the liquidity of the enterprise.	Investment in positive and targeted marketing to identified sectors and potential customers.
Loss of significant customer.	Low	Medium – will have a consequence for income.	Unlikely that any single customer will take sufficient space to place the enterprise at risk if they were to choose to leave. Engagement with existing users to ensure that they remain satisfied. Regularly seek new market opportunities.

Unanticipated repair costs.	Insufficient information to assess	Depends on the nature of the repairs.	Carry out quinquennial surveys. Keep detailed maintenance records. Build up a reserve/ rainy day fund. Keep abreast of potential funders' requirements and deadlines
Unanticipated cost increases	Medium	Unknown – depends on the nature and scale of the increase.	Monthly management accounts to identify variance in costs. Seek to obtain fixed cost contracts where possible. SMAKE to take action (reduce costs / increase income / draw from reserves) as appropriate.
Newly emerging competitors	Medium	Medium –. Given scale of church disposals, other venues could emerge? Pittenweem very nearby, Burntisland, Cupar Old all other A- listed churches which will be sold.	Maintain awareness of potential emerging competitors. Explore potential partnerships/ joint promotion/signposting.
New and emerging legislation changes.	Low	Medium – There is a risk that the Scottish or UK Governments introduce legislation requiring energy efficiency improvements to older buildings.	Work with vendor to ensure that heating / lighting are compliant with anticipated future regulations prior to purchase. Retain restricted funds, including to apply to these costs and / or to use as match funding for grant support.

C6 Next Steps

Building on the rapid action and significant progress achieved over the summer, SMAKE intends to continue to enhance their social media presence as a tool for engaging with the community and gaining feedback as their plans progress. The Kirk is not regularly open to visitors over the winter months, however SMAKE may continue to hold in- person events within the church, whether standalone or linked to other local happenings, to promote their cause and invite input. This would have an added benefit of keeping the building in occasional use and allowing for some heating, ventilation and maintenance checks.

Given the General Trustees' interest in being kept informed of progress, this would be a suitable juncture for SMAKE to reestablish contact and share their Initial Economic Assessment contained within this report, along with a summary of their community consultation thus far, as they seek to continue the journey to ownership.

Looking ahead, SMAKE is keen to explore options for development stage funding and has expressed interest in continued FHBT support as they explore opportunities and continue working towards becoming an incorporated organisation in their own right.