



heritage  
**Shetland**  
culture

**Caring for Shetland's heritage**  
Shetland Amenity Trust  
Strategic Plan 2019 - 24

Cover Image: Peatland Restoration at Sandy Loch,  
Shetland Amenity Trust



**Published: November 2019**

---

We are committed to ensuring this publication is accessible to everyone.  
If you need it supplied in a different format please get in touch.



01595 694688



[info@shetlandamenity.org](mailto:info@shetlandamenity.org)



Shetland Amenity Trust  
Garthspool  
Lerwick  
Shetland  
ZE1 0NY



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



**Shetland**  
UNESCO  
Global Geopark

# Contents

Contents .....	1
Our vision for Shetland's heritage .....	2
Our Mission .....	3
Our Charitable Objects.....	4
The next five years - our priorities.....	5
Priority 1: Innovate for heritage .....	6
Priority 2: Step up on biodiversity .....	8
Priority 3: Inspire wellbeing .....	10
Priority 4: Build communities .....	12
Priority 5: Foster partnership.....	14
Data Sources .....	16
Our Plan on a page.....	17

# Our vision for Shetland's heritage

It is time for us to look to the future and at what we need to do to continue to care for our heritage in a changing world. Shetland faces the same challenges as any other community in the world. Climate change, biodiversity loss, and demographic shifts do not respect national boundaries, ocean currents or personal ambitions. We need to take action now to ensure that the heritage of Shetland can be enjoyed by current and future generations.

Ruth Mackenzie  
Chair, Shetland Amenity Trust

*"Things at maks wir life wirt livin,*

*dey're jöst laek da strainin-post;*

*Whin he's broken, hit's no aesy*

*Getting new eens – an da cost,*

*Hit'll shön owergeng da honour*

*If da aald true wyes is lost."* Extract from 'A Skyinbow o Tammy's', Vagaland

## Vision

Shetland's heritage is at the heart of our islands and key to a prosperous and sustainable future for those who live and visit here

Image: Crofthouse Museum at  
Boddam, Shetland Amenity Trust

# Our Mission

Shetland Amenity Trust (SAT) has been in operation since 1983, working hard to care for Shetland's natural and cultural heritage. We are a registered charity and over the years we have delivered an extensive range of high-quality heritage and culture projects, in partnership with a range of local, national and international agencies. Everything we do is about caring for Shetland's heritage on behalf of Shetland and its community.

## Mission

Our mission is to safeguard, enhance, and promote Shetland's heritage, ensuring it is accessible to be enjoyed by all

# Our Charitable Objects

## Cultural Heritage



The protection, improvement and enhancement of buildings and artefacts, architectural, historical, educational or other interest in Shetland with a view to securing public access to such buildings and the permanent display for the benefit of the public such facts for the purposes of research, study or recreation.



## Natural Heritage



The provision, development and improvement of facilities for the enjoyment by the public of the Shetland countryside and its flora and fauna, the conservation and enhancement for the benefit of the public of its natural beauty and amenity and the securing of public access to the Shetland countryside for the purposes of research, study and recreation.



Before identifying our future priorities we took a long, hard look at the evidence about Shetland's heritage - the local, national and global issues and opportunities.

We listened to many voices in Shetland and beyond who wanted to engage in conversations about our natural and cultural heritage and its future. This Strategic Plan and the priorities within it are the result of those conversations.

Image: Native Shetland Hazelnut, Shetland Amenity Trust

## The next five years - our priorities

# 1

### **Innovate for heritage**

Increase resilience to economic, social and environmental impacts on Shetland's heritage



# 2

### **Step up on biodiversity**

Enable the protection, enhancement and restoration of Shetland's unique biodiversity



# 3

### **Inspire wellbeing**

Encourage improved physical and mental wellbeing through engagement with Shetland's heritage



# 4

### **Build communities**

Support and enhance sustainable communities through Shetland's heritage



# 5

### **Foster partnership**

Further Shetland's heritage through effective collaboration and partnership



# 1 Priority 1: Innovate for heritage

Increase resilience to economic, social and environmental impacts on Shetland's heritage



Shetland's heritage is under threat from a range of economic, social and environmental pressures. Our climate is changing and with that comes rising seas, more powerful storms, and coastal erosion that leaves our heritage vulnerable to the elements. As interest in our heritage grows, we need to improve access to it, manage visitor pressures, and inspire the next generation to help care for it in the future. Funding has reduced whilst technology continues to advance - we need to find innovative ways to care for our heritage, record it and share it.

Image: Old Scatness Broch & Iron Age Village, Nick McCaffrey



## Pressures on Shetland's heritage



Precipitation in Shetland is predicted to increase by **10%** over the next 20 years.



Leisure visitors to Shetland increased by **43%** from 2013 - 17.

Extreme coastal water levels are



**5 to 10** times more likely by 2050.



**33** historic buildings are on the 'Buildings at risk' register – factors include neglect and weather damage.

Sea levels are predicted to rise over the next century from

**12 to 76cm**



Shetland is also estimated to be sinking at a rate of 2-3mm per year.



### Priority: Innovate for heritage

Increase resilience to economic, social and environmental impacts on Shetland's heritage

#### What we want to achieve

Improve access to Shetland's diverse heritage for local and global audiences

Protect, enhance and promote Shetland Amenity Trust's heritage assets

Sustain and develop a skilled, engaged heritage community to enable innovation for heritage

#### How will we measure our success?

- 💡 Number of visitors, online users and subscribers
- 💡 Digital availability of Shetland's heritage
- 💡 Reduced carbon footprint of access to Shetland's heritage
- 💡 Access to heritage learning opportunities
- 💡 Availability of 'free' access to Shetland's heritage

- 💡 Provision of access to heritage assets
- 💡 Customer satisfaction
- 💡 Condition of SAT heritage assets
- 💡 Financial burden of caring for SAT assets
- 💡 Monitoring of visitor numbers

- 💡 Number and demographic of people engaging in heritage sites, activities, training, digital and commercial offering
- 💡 Succession plans for key knowledge and skills areas
- 💡 Number of Geopark Partners and engagement in Geopark

# 2

## Priority 2: Step up on biodiversity

Enable the protection, enhancement and restoration of Shetland's unique biodiversity



Shetland's relative geographic isolation has led to the development of biodiversity which is different from that of even its nearest North Atlantic neighbours. This unique biodiversity is fragile and the impacts of land use, a changing climate and increased pollution of our natural environment are contributing to a decline. The Earth's genes, species, and ecosystems are the product of over 3000 million years of evolution and are the basis for the survival of our own species. Biological diversity is a measure of the variation in those genes, species and ecosystems. It is valuable in a Shetland context because our landscape and the biodiversity it supports give the islands their unique character and contribute to the sustainability of local industries. We need to take action now to safeguard our biodiversity and our islands for future generations.

Image: Shetland Bumblebee, Shetland Amenity Trust

## Shetland's biodiversity challenge



55%

of our sea bird species are in decline in Shetland.

15%



of our rare plant species are in decline in Shetland.

70%



of our blanket (peat) bogs are damaged; when undamaged or restored to an active state these bogs can store millions of tonnes of carbon, but when damaged they release carbon.

37%

of waders are in decline in Shetland.



51%

of our nationally designated sites for birds (Special Protection Areas) in Shetland are considered to be in 'unfavourable condition'.



### Priority: Step up on biodiversity

Enable the protection, enhancement and restoration of Shetland's unique biodiversity

#### What we want to achieve

Maintain and enhance our knowledge of Shetland's wildlife and environment

Encourage and enable participation in actions with positive environmental impacts

Positively influence policy and decision making which affects Shetland's biodiversity

Ensure we are leading by example through positive action for environmental benefit

#### How will we measure our success?

- ☞ Shetland Biological Records Centre (SBRC) database is maintained, promoted and shared
- ☞ Number and diversity of contributors and community participation in SBRC
- ☞ Number of training courses, level of participation, and demographic of participants

- ☞ Number of environmental improvement activities
- ☞ Engagement in environmental improvement activities, level of participation and demographic of participants
- ☞ Impact of environmental improvement activities
- ☞ Funding support for environmental improvement activities

- ☞ SAT provision of advice to partner agencies on development and policy
- ☞ SAT influence on policy
- ☞ SAT influence on planning applications

- ☞ SAT recycling and carbon reduction
- ☞ SAT environmental initiatives, planting and recording
- ☞ SAT staff volunteer days
- ☞ SAT Horticultural Unit germination of seedlings



# 3

## Priority 3: Inspire wellbeing

Encourage improved physical and mental wellbeing through engagement with Shetland's heritage



Shetland's natural and cultural heritage presents an outstanding opportunity for our community to engage with it both physically and emotionally. In Shetland, the impacts of an ageing population, and the high cost of living means that more and more people are vulnerable to poor physical and mental well-being, loneliness and isolation. Loneliness and isolation is estimated to have the same risk to your health as smoking 15 cigarettes per day.

We need to enable more people to get out and be active, be more inclusive, and enable more people to engage with our heritage and with one another.

## Health and wellbeing in Shetland



Shetland's population is falling and it is ageing at a faster rate than the rest of Scotland.



# 17%

of Primary 1 children in Shetland are not a healthy weight, higher than the national average.



# 1 in 3

adults in Shetland experience mental ill health or distress each year.

# 77%

of people in Shetland engage in some form of physical activity, lower than the Scottish average.



The NHS recommends five ways to achieve better wellbeing: to connect, be active, take notice (or be mindful), learn and give back. Engaging people in natural and cultural heritage has been shown to have a positive impact on both physical and mental wellbeing.



## Priority: Inspire wellbeing

Encourage improved physical and mental wellbeing through engagement with Shetland's heritage

### What we want to achieve

Develop, promote, and deliver new initiatives to support mental and physical wellbeing through engagement with our heritage

Maximise the health and mental wellbeing opportunities within current heritage initiatives and activities

Ensure we are leading by example through positive action for staff and volunteer wellbeing

### How will we measure our success?

- ♥ Number of wellbeing initiatives and activities delivered
- ♥ Percentage of people undertaking physical activity
- ♥ Proportion of visitors to our attractions who are Shetland residents
- ♥ Accessibility Action Plan delivery

- ♥ SAT sickness absence rate
- ♥ SAT accident and incident rate
- ♥ SAT staff survey feedback

# 4

## Priority 4: Build communities

Support and enhance sustainable communities through Shetland's heritage



We must take positive action to address Shetland's ageing and falling population. As our population ages so do our volunteers, interest groups, and staff, meaning that we have the potential to lose knowledge and expertise with time. If Shetland is to be an attractive place for new people to come and live, work, study and invest then we need to provide and promote inclusive opportunities for engaging communities in our heritage.

We need to develop heritage knowledge, skills and passion in our younger generations to ensure these are not lost and to encourage communities and businesses to care for and benefit from our heritage.

Image: Old Scatness Broch and Iron Age Village, Shetland Amenity Trust

## Sustainable heritage and communities

There are over **40** heritage associations and organisations in Shetland.



Shetland's population is ageing and many of our heritage experts are retired or approaching retirement. We need to grow the knowledge, skills and expertise in the younger generation.



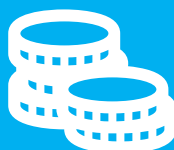
**56%**



of people in Shetland are involved in volunteering.

In 2017 volunteering in Shetland contributed

**£17.5 million** to the local economy.



Interest in Shetland's heritage is growing and is key to attracting an increasing number of visitors. Between 2013 and 2017 leisure visitor numbers increased by

**43%**



Shetland Amenity Trust has installed over

**70**

interpretive panels across Shetland and produced a range of leaflets engaging residents and visitors with local heritage.



### Priority: Build communities

Support and enhance sustainable communities through Shetland's heritage

#### What we want to achieve

Inspire, enable and engage everyone to care for our heritage through volunteering and skills development

Understand our key audiences and develop our offer to meet their needs and expectations

Enable and encourage Shetland to realise the economic benefit of its heritage

#### How will we measure our success?

- ⌘ SAT Volunteer numbers and demographic
- ⌘ Number of schools and community groups engaged with
- ⌘ Number of courses run and profile/demographic of participants
- ⌘ Number of Geopark partnerships

- ⌘ Visitor numbers and demographic
- ⌘ Visitor feedback

- ⌘ Visitor numbers to Shetland's heritage attractions
- ⌘ Employment in visitor economy
- ⌘ Grant funding for heritage (woodlands, peatlands, land manager incentives, scheme uptake, etc.)
- ⌘ Living wage employers in heritage sector
- ⌘ SAT visitor accommodation occupancy

# 5

## Priority 5: Foster partnership

Further Shetland's heritage through effective collaboration and partnership



There are many agencies, charities, groups and individuals throughout Shetland working to care for our heritage. The challenges we face are significant and beyond the reach of any one organisation. A more collaborative approach will enable us to maximise impact, avoid duplication of effort, increase engagement and make the most of available funding. Any activity and funding available for the protection and enhancement of Shetland's heritage will have the greatest impact when we work together.

Image: Da Voar  
Redd Up at Burwick  
Beach, Shetland  
Amenity Trust



## Partnership Working



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



UNESCO  
Global  
Geoparks

Shetland Amenity Trust  
has entered into formal  
Geopark Partnerships with

**15** local businesses  
and organisations.



Shetland Amenity Trust works  
with communities, partner  
organisations, sponsors and  
funders to deliver a range of  
services and projects  
throughout Shetland.

The Shetland Amenity Trust is  
part of the Shetland Partnership  
and has formally signed up to  
delivering the Shetland  
Partnership Plan. The key focus  
of the Partnership is to reduce  
inequality in Shetland.



Events and initiatives  
such as Boat Week,  
Nature Festival, Wool  
Week, Da Voar Redd



Up and others all rely on the  
Shetland Amenity Trust working  
closely with volunteers,  
community groups, partner  
agencies and sponsors.



### Priority: Foster partnership

Further Shetland's heritage through effective  
collaboration and partnership

#### What we want to achieve

Trustees and staff collaborate  
effectively, sharing knowledge and  
resources across specialisms

We are recognised and valued as a  
collaborative and effective partner

Our Strategic Objectives are  
delivered in partnership

#### How will we measure our success?

- 📌 Best practice guide to effective collaboration, associated procedures, and training delivered to all staff and trustees
- 📌 Numbers attending SAT collaboration sessions

- 📌 Number of new delivery partners
- 📌 Number of partners using our best practice approach to collaboration
- 📌 Signed partnership agreements
- 📌 SAT achieves ISO accreditation in Collaborative Business Relationship Management
- 📌 Number of Geopark partnerships

- 📌 Number of partnership programmes and projects initiated and delivered
- 📌 Level of partner funding in delivery of SAT projects and initiatives

## Data Sources

Statistic	Source
<b>Ageing population</b> - Shetland's population is ageing at a faster rate than the rest of Scotland	Mid-year population estimates, Office for National Statistics, 2017
<b>Blanket bog</b> - 70% blanket bog in Shetland is damaged	Scottish Natural Heritage, 2014
<b>Buildings at Risk</b> - 33 buildings in Shetland are on the 'Buildings At Risk Register'	Historic Environment Scotland, 2018
<b>Geopark partnerships</b> – 15	Shetland Amenity Trust, 2019
<b>Heritage Groups</b> - There are over 40 heritage membership groups in Shetland	Shetland Heritage Association
<b>Mental Health</b> – 1 in 3 adults in Shetland experience mental ill health or distress each year	NHS Shetland, Public Health Annual Report, 2016-17
<b>Physical activity</b> - 77% of people in Shetland engage in some form of physical activity, lower than the Scottish average	Scottish Household Survey, Scottish Government, 2016
<b>Plant Species</b> - 15% of our rare plant species in decline	Shetland Biological Records Centre, 2019
<b>Precipitation</b> in Shetland is predicted to rise by 10% over the next 20 years	UK Climate Change Projections, UKCP09
<b>Seabirds</b> - 55% of our Seabird species are in decline	Shetland Biological Records Centre, 2019
<b>Sea-level</b> – predicted to rise 12 to 76cm over the next century / Shetland sinking at a rate of 3-5mm per year	UK Climate Change Projections, UKCP09
<b>SPAs</b> - 51% Special Protection Areas in unfavourable condition	Scottish Natural Heritage, 2018
<b>Storms</b> - It is predicted that the frequency and severity of storms in Shetland will increase with extreme coastal water levels forecast to become 5-10 times more likely by 2050	UK Climate Change Projections, UKCP09
<b>Visitors</b> - Annual visitors to Shetland increased by more than 8,500 between 2013 and 2017	VisitScotland Visitor Survey, 2017
<b>Volunteering</b> - 56% of people in Shetland are involved in volunteering/value to the economy	Scottish Household Survey, Scottish Government, 2016
<b>Wading birds</b> - 37% of our waders are in decline	Shetland Biological Records Centre, 2019
<b>Weight</b> - 17.4% children in Primary 1 are not a healthy weight, higher than the Scottish average	Information Services Division Scotland, 2015/16
<b>Wellbeing</b> – Five ways to achieve better wellbeing	NHS UK

# Our Plan on a page

## Our Vision



Shetland's heritage is at the heart of our islands and key to a prosperous and sustainable future for those who live and visit here

## Our Mission



Our mission is to safeguard, enhance, and promote Shetland's heritage, ensuring it is accessible to be enjoyed by all

## Our Priorities



**Innovate for heritage**  
Increase resilience to economic, social and environmental impacts on Shetland's heritage



**Step up on biodiversity**  
Enable the protection, enhancement and restoration of Shetland's unique biodiversity



**Inspire wellbeing**  
Encourage improved physical and mental wellbeing through engagement with Shetland's heritage



**Build communities**  
Support and enhance sustainable communities through Shetland's heritage



**Foster partnership**  
Further Shetland's heritage through effective collaboration and partnership

## What we want to achieve

- Improve access to Shetland's diverse heritage for local and global audiences
- Protect, enhance and promote Shetland Amenity Trust's heritage assets
- Sustain and develop a skilled, engaged heritage community to enable innovation for heritage
- Maintain and enhance our knowledge of Shetland's wildlife and environment
- Encourage and enable participation in actions with positive environmental impacts
- Positively influence policy and decision making which affects Shetland's biodiversity
- Ensure we are leading by example through positive action for environmental benefit
- Develop, promote, and deliver new initiatives to support mental and physical wellbeing through engagement with our heritage
- Maximise the health and mental wellbeing opportunities within current heritage initiatives and activities
- Ensure we are leading by example through positive action for staff and volunteer wellbeing
- Inspire, enable and engage everyone to care for our heritage through volunteering and skills development
- Understand our key audiences and develop our offer to meet their needs and expectations
- Enable and encourage Shetland to realise the economic benefit of its heritage
- Trustees and staff collaborate effectively, sharing knowledge and resources across specialisms
- We are recognised and valued as a collaborative and effective partner
- Our Strategic Objectives are delivered in partnership

[www.shetlandamenity.org](http://www.shetlandamenity.org)

