

Cupar Town Interpretive Plan

A Community Heritage Development Plan

Executive Summary

The vitality of Cupar's community is at the heart of Interpretive Plan. The Town's many groups, businesses and active individuals are increasingly important for town's future well-being. Their support and involvement will be essential for the delivery of the Plan.

Cupar's historic streets and places of interest make the town an attractive place for living. However, the town centre has been much affected by change in recent years. The Conservation Area has unique character and, with collective effort, is key to offering visitors a pleasant day's exploration of Cupar's historic streets and places of interest, making use of the independent destination shops and eateries and the attractive local walks. The town centre is easily accessed via public transport or car and offers ample free parking. In short it has much to offer.

However, Cupar is not an established visitor centre. It is largely absent in the results of tourism web searches. For Cupar to prosper it must find its place in the changing urban landscape. The interest of the Plan is then to:

- identify what will distinguish Cupar from other visitor destinations
- identify the actions required to strengthen these assets
- consider how and who will most appropriately take specific actions and, of no less importance,
- recognize how the identity and visibility of Cupar can be communicated nationally and beyond.

The structure and contents of the Plan, including its core components and the related heritage projects, have developed from the many discussions and consultations that have taken place to date.

The Plan is a practical, working document that can be actively used by Cupar's community to bring about change; creating a vibrant, sustainable place that is firmly rooted in its heritage, its people and its potential.

The Plan delivers both traditional and contemporary elements, setting themes and storylines within a broader strategic framework.

The Plan is organized essentially in three parts:

- Background information is reviewed providing the context of understanding of the heritage potential, constraints and issues to be resolved. (Sections 1-4)
- The Plan then identifies the approach required to realize a step change in the town's use of its heritage. The opportunities offered to digitally archive heritage information from which to develop heritage stories, etc. and engage with target audiences gave rise to the concept of 'Digital Cupar'.

This approach identifies local groups active in the assembly of heritage information. These players will also be agents of the information's use through their development of on-line publications and its application in panel displays, etc.

'Digital Cupar' is then a community based online content development and management system for heritage resources used by all working to deliver the Interpretive Plan, both commercial and non-commercial, to contribute positively to conserve Cupar's heritage record and to establish its digital identity. (Sections 5 - 8)

- The third part of the Plan considers recent consultation practice and indicates how the governance of the Plan's development and delivery may be expected to mature.

The Plan recognizes its multiple strands and scale. Building consortium relationships across the business, marketing and tourism sectors with the public agencies and the local community organizations and groups will be essential.

There will be a requirement for having a not-for-profit lead organization bid for funds, coordinate projects and report to funders upon progress. A physical and on-line support 'hub' will become a key requirement. Also identified is the need to build capacity in digital and traditional skill-sets within the heritage community. The Plan concludes with some recognition of grant sources. (Section 9)

Interpretive Plan Projects

A primary aim of the Interpretive Plan is to achieve a step change in how well Cupar's town centre is understood and used by residents and increasingly attracting visitors. To achieve these results the Plan takes a 'long-run' view of the development time-scale and sets out a coordinated set of actions as follows:

1. Digital Cupar

‘Going digital’ by establishing a community-based ‘Digital Cupar Hub’ which will host on-line data storage (‘Digital Cupar’ Archives), provide digital content development, training and expert support, and will be used by all involved in delivering the Interpretive Plan.

Supporting the transfer of archive information into publication formats for web-site use, audio-visuals, exhibition and app-based tours. Supporting the marketing of Cupar and District.

2. Heritage Resource Projects

Supporting Cupar Heritage to build digitized ‘heritage resource’ archives through community-based research and development projects for oral history, photographic records, and other prime interpretive projects addressing themes such as ‘houses & their resident histories’ and ‘the histories of shops and commerce’.

3. Local History Projects

Supporting the development of local history research projects which are undertaken by local interest groups, school groups and individuals and which are focused on themes which will identify Cupar’s rich heritage potential, such as: ‘Sons and Daughters of Cupar’, ‘Roads, rivers and railways’, and ‘Cupar’s kids’. The outputs of such projects to be published in digital formats.

4. Heritage Zones

Supporting focused local initiatives which will involve collective action to bring about street enhancements and tackle local issues which otherwise detract from access within the town centre.

5. Strategic Signage Strategy

Delivering a comprehensive scheme of orientation panels and destination signage across the town centre.

6. Community-Driven Interpretive Signage

Supporting community-based initiatives deploying images and information held within the Digital Cupar archives into use in the town centre including new interpretive plaques and app-supported tours.

7. Community Art Projects

Supporting the development & delivery of arts projects which explain and celebrate the contemporary as well as historic cultural life of the town. Supporting on-line event marketing and booking.

The Plan concludes:

Much of what the Interpretive Plan relies upon is the capacity of Cupar's residents to undertake heritage-led activities... .. This will be one of the fundamentals of building a vibrant and sustainable Cupar and it will also be one of the areas where funding and support will be potentially accessed.” S9.4, p42)

Essential then to the successful delivery of the Plan will be activities which build the community's capacity to initiate and carry through projects. This will involve being able to offer training and support. And critical to all will be the development of partnership approach which provides strategic direction, coordinates actions and can raise funds.

A Project Map illustrative of the multiple strands of the Interpretive Plan is attached.

The Interpretive Plan was commissioned by Cupar Development Trust. Its research and preparation was carried out by heritage consultants CMC Associates Ltd. at the direction of a Working Group comprising trustees of the Development Trust and Cupar Heritage. The Plan was completed on the 8th June 2017.

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