

Foreword

Scotland's rich and varied resource of carved stones is an important cultural asset. From the skill demonstrated in prehistoric rock art to the social and symbolic significance of sculptures or gravestones, carved stones are a tangible connection to a very human element of our past.

People have been interested in historic carved stones for centuries. Their protection, preservation and presentation raise many issues, which this policy and guidance seeks to address.

This document sets out Scottish Ministers' policies and guidance for the care and protection of carved stones. It has been prepared by Historic Scotland, an agency of the Scottish Executive directly responsible to the Scottish Ministers.

An important distinction is made within the document between strategic policy that the Scottish Ministers will seek to uphold, operational policy that relates specifically to the work of Historic Scotland and more general guidance that everyone should follow when dealing with carved stones.

Effective protection of carved stones will continue to be achieved most effectively through better understanding of the issues involved and collective effort to address them. Whilst taking the lead in many cases, Historic Scotland is not the only organisation responsible for the future of our carved stones. For example, the National Committee on Carved Stones in Scotland, founded in 1993 to draw attention to the threats that face carved stones and encourage a common approach to their recording and preservation, is an excellent example of the vital role played by partnership working.

I hope that, with this policy and guidance, Historic Scotland and everyone else involved will be encouraged, and better placed, to identify priorities and implement strategies and action plans to respond to the needs of individual sites and categories of our important carved stones.



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