# Dumfries and Galloway Heritage Service Strategy:

## Archives, Local Studies and Family History

# DRAFT

**Outline Strategy**

**2027 to 2031**



Dumfries and Galloway Council

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# Purpose

**The Heritage Service collects, preserves and shares the documentary heritage of Dumfries and Galloway.**

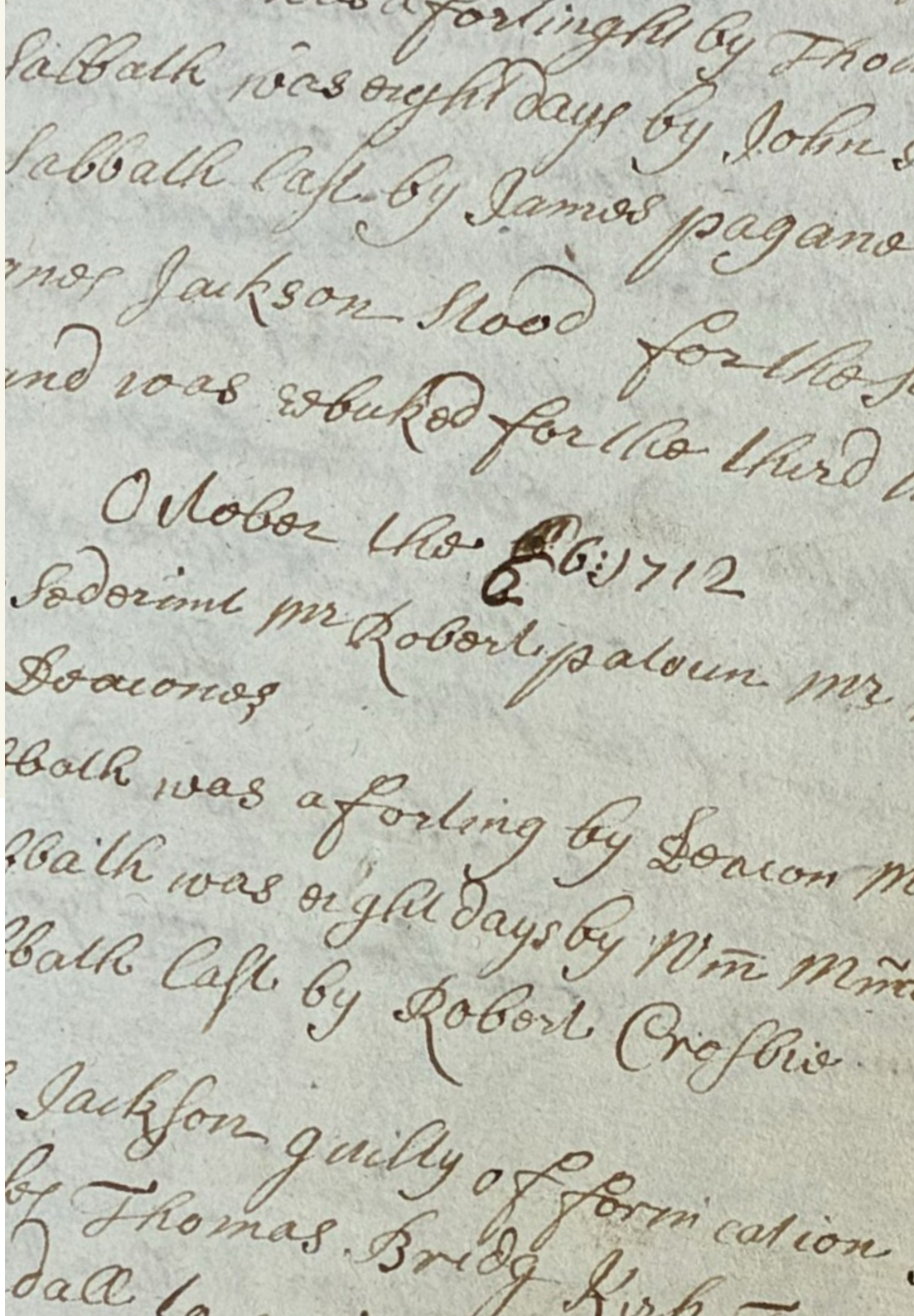
**Through our archives, local studies and family history collections, we help people discover the stories of their communities, families and places.**

**We look after the archives of Dumfries and Galloway Council and its predecessor authorities, as well as records created by local people, families, businesses, organisations and community groups. These records include the Crichton Royal Hospital collection which was recognised by UNESCO in 2026 of being of outstanding historical value. These collections document the history, culture and development of the region and its people.**

**The Service works within statutory legislation and professional standards for archives and records management.**

- We ensure that records selected for permanent preservation are cared for properly, remain authentic and accessible, and can be used by future generations.
- By preserving these records and making them available for research, learning and personal discovery, we help safeguard the memory of Dumfries and Galloway, support accountability, and strengthen understanding of our shared history and identity.

This strategy sets out our priorities and ambitions for 2026 to 2031. It will guide how we develop, care for and promote our collections and services for the benefit of everyone in Dumfries and Galloway.



# Vision

**To ensure the documentary heritage of Dumfries and Galloway is preserved, accessible and valued**, enabling people to explore the past, understand the present and shape the future.

# Mission

**The Heritage Service works in partnership to build connected, healthy, and sustainable communities by fulfilling our legal duty to preserve and provide access to the public records of Dumfries and Galloway**.

We are dedicated to collecting and conserving records that reflect our region's diverse history, making them widely accessible to all through digital channels, physical access and community engagement to strengthen cultural identity, enhance lifelong learning, support wellbeing and promote regional pride for present and future generations.



# Strategic Themes

## Theme 1

### A resilient and well-governed service

**We will maintain a professionally managed Heritage Service with effective governance**, **strategic planning** and **clear accountability**. We will ensure that policies, procedures and decision-making processes support legal compliance, professional standards and continuous improvement.

**Priorities**

- Ensure the Heritage Service is trusted, accountable and sustainable through strong governance and professional standards.
- Build a skilled, adaptable and resilient workforce capable of meeting future challenges and opportunities.
- Embed continuous improvement, innovation and evidence-based decision making across the service.
- Demonstrate the public value and impact of the Heritage Service for communities, partners and the Council.
- Strengthen organisational resilience to safeguard the long-term future of the service.



## Theme 2

## Collections that reflect Dumfries and Galloway

**We will develop and manage collections that document the people, places, organisations and communities of Dumfries and Galloway**. We will collect material that reflects the region's social, cultural, economic and environmental history and ensure that collections remain relevant, representative and sustainable.

**Priorities**

- Develop collections that authentically represent the rich and diverse history of Dumfries and Galloway.
- Ensure collections remain relevant, inclusive and responsive to changing communities and contemporary society.
- Safeguard significant records and archives for future generations.
- Improve knowledge, understanding and discoverability of collections.
- Strengthen the Heritage Service's role as the trusted custodian of the documentary heritage of the region.



## Theme 3

# Digital preservation and digitisation

**We recognise that an increasing proportion of the documentary heritage of Dumfries and Galloway now exists in digital form**. We will ensure the long-term preservation, authenticity, accessibility and usability of born-digital and digitised records while increasing public access through sustainable digitisation and digital engagement programmes.

**Priorities**

- Secure the long-term preservation and accessibility of digital heritage.
- Develop sustainable approaches to managing digital records and archives.
- Expand access to collections through digitisation.
- Harness innovation to increase public engagement with heritage resources.
- Build organisational capacity to respond to the evolving digital environment



## Theme 4

## Preservation, care and resilience

**We will protect and care for the documentary heritage of Dumfries and Galloway to ensure it remains available for current and future generations**. Through sustainable stewardship, informed decision-making and professional standards, we will safeguard collections from loss, damage and deterioration while balancing preservation with public access. We will build resilience across our collections and facilities so that archives remain secure, authentic and accessible in a changing environment.



**Priorities**

- Safeguard archives and heritage collections through sustainable and responsible stewardship.
- Reduce risks to collections and strengthen the long-term resilience of heritage assets.
- Ensure collections are cared for in ways that protect their authenticity, integrity and cultural significance.
- Promote a proactive and sustainable approach to preservation that balances current access with future needs.
- Strengthen public confidence in the Heritage Service as a trusted custodian of the documentary heritage of Dumfries and Galloway.
- Build organisational capacity to respond to environmental, technological and operational challenges affecting collections.
- Support the long-term preservation of collections as a foundation for learning, research, engagement and community identity.

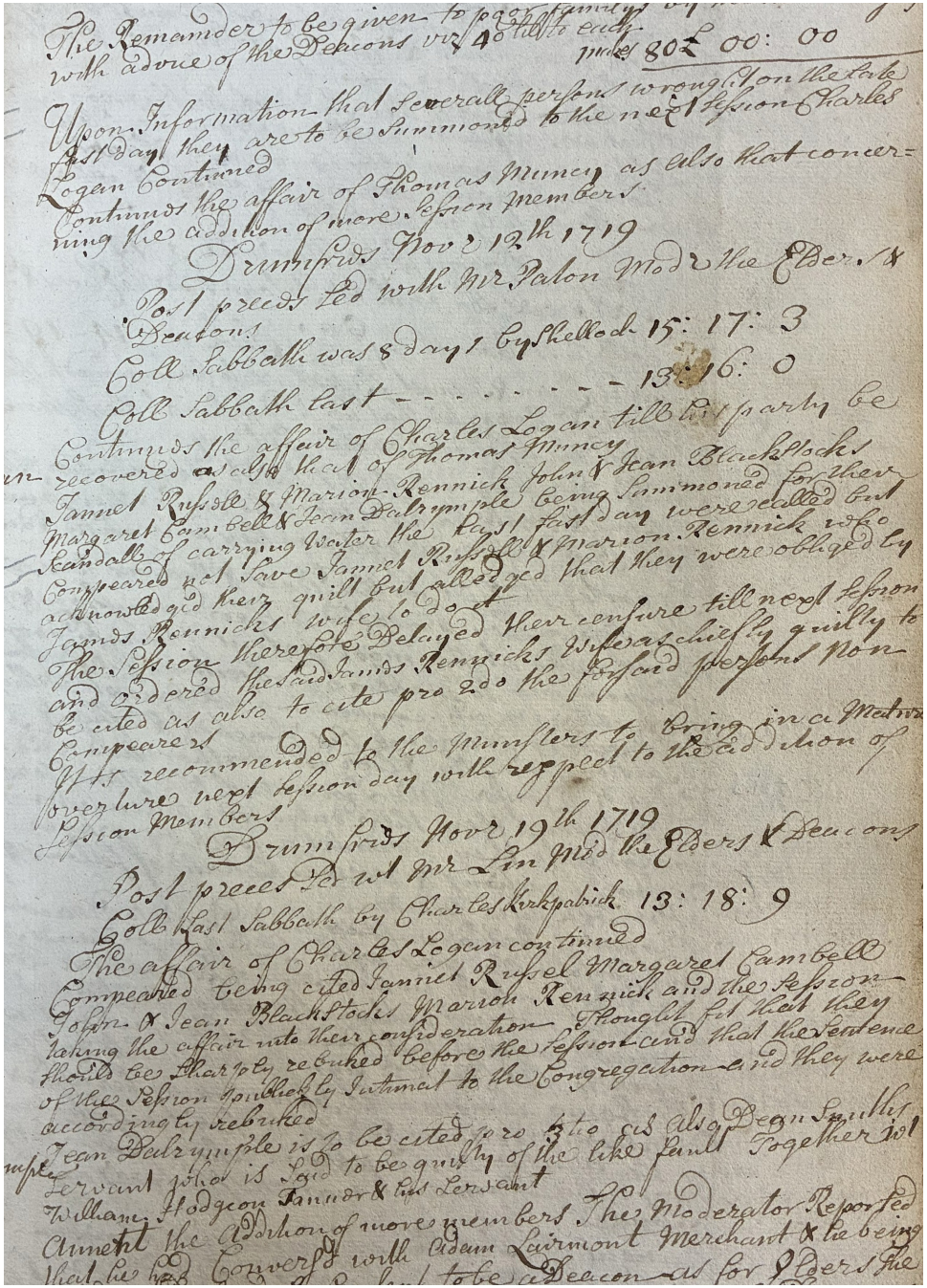
## Theme 5

## Access for everyone

**We will make collections easier to find, understand and use, whether through face-to-face services, enquiries, digital resources or online platforms**. We will remove barriers to access wherever possible and ensure that services remain inclusive and responsive to user needs.

**Priorities**

- Remove barriers to participation and ensure equitable access to heritage collections and services.
- Create inclusive, welcoming and user-focused services that meet diverse needs.
- Enhance opportunities for people to discover, explore and use heritage resources.
- Strengthen digital and physical access to collections and expertise.
- Place audiences and user experience at the heart of service development.



## Theme 6

## Engagement, learning and community participation

**We will use collections to support learning, creativity, wellbeing and community pride**. The Heritage Service will encourage active participation in heritage and foster stronger connections between people and place.

**Priorities**

- Use heritage to inspire learning, creativity and lifelong curiosity.
- Strengthen connections between people, place and identity through active engagement with collections.
- Empower communities to participate in preserving and sharing their heritage.
- Promote wellbeing, inclusion and social connection through heritage activities.
- Broaden participation by engaging new and underrepresented audiences.



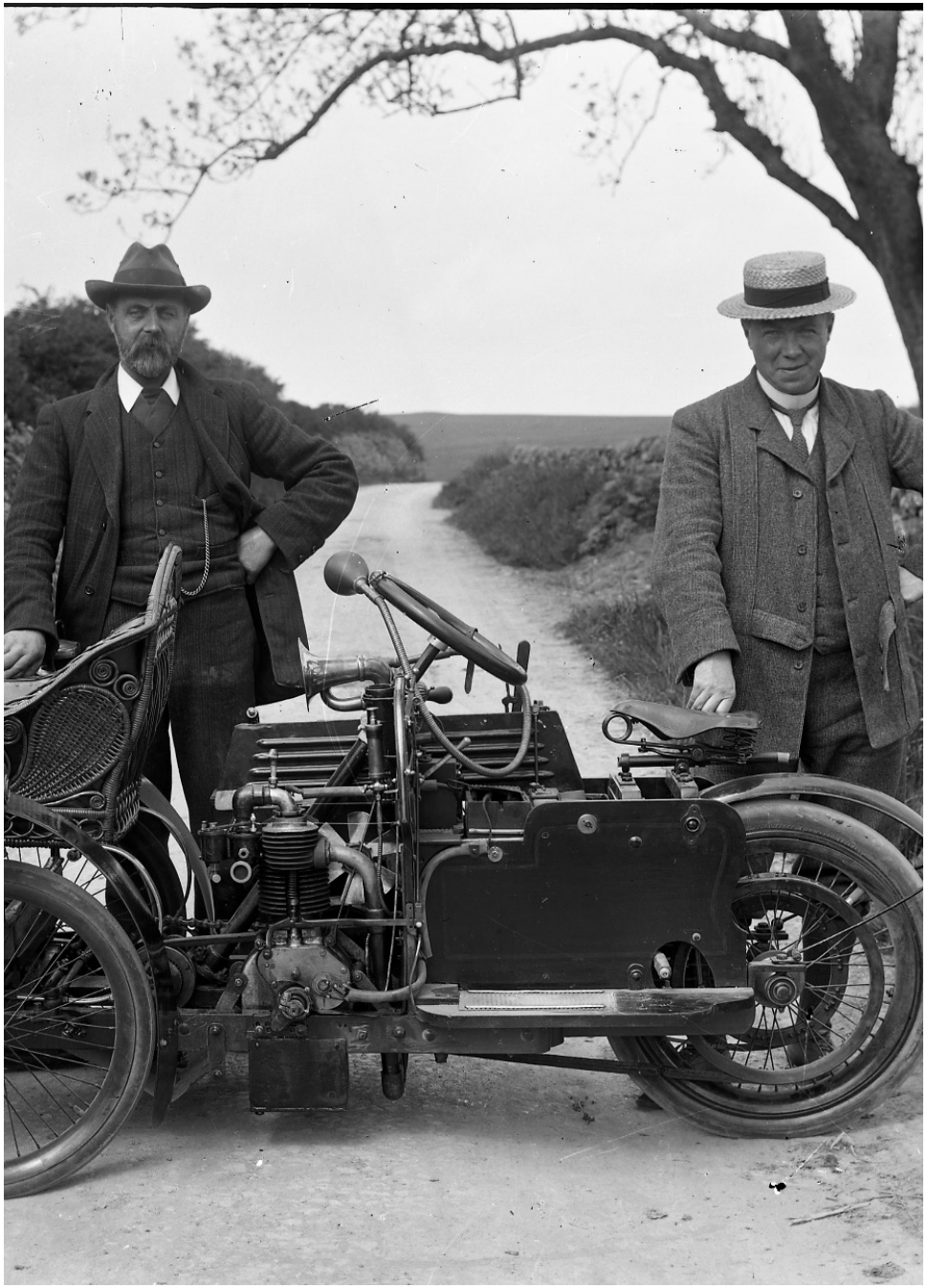
## Theme 7

## Partnership, sustainability and future development

**We will work collaboratively to strengthen the resilience, reach and impact of the Heritage Service**. Partnerships and sustainable approaches will support innovation, growth and long-term service development.

**Priorities**

- Strengthen strategic partnerships to maximise the impact and reach of the Heritage Service.
- Position heritage as a contributor to wider cultural, educational, social and economic outcomes.
- Enhance the long-term sustainability of the service through innovation, collaboration and investment.
- Embed environmentally responsible and sustainable approaches across all areas of the service.
- Secure the resources, support and resilience needed to meet future opportunities and challenges.



# Delivery and Review

**The strategy will be supported by a practical delivery plan setting out actions, timescales, responsibilities and measures of success.**

Progress will be reviewed annually and reported through appropriate Council governance arrangements.




# Measures of Success

## By 2031 the Heritage Service will have:

- Achieved significant progress towards Archive Service Accreditation.
- Established a comprehensive policy and planning framework.
- Improved collection development, cataloguing and documentation.
- Strengthened physical preservation and collections care arrangements.
- Implemented sustainable digital preservation and digitisation programmes.
- Expanded digital and physical access to collections.
- Increased engagement with communities, learners and researchers.
- Developed stronger partnerships and external funding opportunities.
- Demonstrated clear public value and contribution to Council priorities.
- Improved organisational resilience and long-term sustainability.
- Built on UNESCO recognition including delivery of a sustainable and responsible programme sharing the Crichton Royal Hospital history.