



Community and Stakeholder Update

Historic Environment Scotland – Arbroath Abbey Update (April 2025)

Welcome to the first Community and Stakeholder Update for Arbroath Abbey. We are intending to publish a quarterly newsletter to keep everyone updated on what's happening at the Abbey and, as we begin the summer season, look forward to welcoming visitors from far and near, as well as sharing stories of Abbey life with the local community.

Key Updates

VISITOR ENGAGEMENT

As we look forward to the season ahead, we will be working with various groups/tourism organisations in the Arbroath area to attract additional visitors to the town, as well as encouraging them to spend more time exploring what it has to offer.

We have had meetings with Angus Council to consider ways that we can engage and support their core marketing strategy, touched base with Arbroath Town Centre Board to see how we can mutually benefit from the Arbroath Growth Deal, and we will continue to work with the Angus Tourism Cooperative as we did last year when our team at the Abbey developed themed activities for The Taste of Angus & Angus Outdoor Festival.

We have a familiarisation visit for staff from the Signal Tower coming up in May when we will welcome them to the Abbey and give them a tour, and this will be followed up with a visit by our staff to the Signal Tower so that we can continue to highlight it, and other local attractions, to our visitors. In addition, we continue to work in partnership with Hospitalfield who have a programme of events in the Scriptorium pencilled in for the year ahead, starting with a residency with writer, Maria Fusco, from 14 April.

VISITOR NUMBERS

Last year (April 2024 – March 2025) the team at Arbroath Abbey welcomed 11,645 visitors which was up 11% on the previous year. These visitors came from around the globe including one from South Korea and two people from Peru but our greatest number of visitors (56%) are from Scotland and the rest of the UK.

OPENING HOURS & PRICING

From 01 April Arbroath Abbey will be open 7 days a week between 1000-1630, with last entry at 1600, and closed for lunch between 1230-1330.

During the coming season we are continuing to offer a 50% discount on our standard admission price in recognition that there are a number of areas within the Abbey grounds that remain inaccessible to visitors. We believe this still offers great value for money as it includes entry to the Visitor Centre which tells the story of the Declaration of Arbroath, as well as a copy of the Stone of Destiny. Visitors can purchase tickets on arrival, or online at www.historicenvironment.scot:-



- Adult (Aged 16-64) - £5.50
- Concession (Aged 65+) - £4.50
- Child (Aged 7-15) - £3.30
- Family Tickets - from £11.00

OTHER LOCAL HES ATTRACTIONS

We are delighted to be re-opening **EDZELL CASTLE** to visitors this summer 3 days a week (Fri-Sun) between 1000-1630, with last entry at 1545, and closed for lunch between 1230-1330. **ST VIGEAN'S MUSEUM** will also be open 3 days a week (Tues, Wed & Sat) between 1000-1630, with last entry at 1600, and closed for lunch between 1230-1330. For further information about admission charges please check www.historicenvironment.scot

CONSERVATION WORKS

LAST YEAR works were carried out by our masons and specialist team of conservators to the West Front and the Gatehouse range, which included brushing down delaminating stone and consolidating cracked masonry. This allowed us to remove the heras fencing from the front of the Abbey which has made such a difference to our entrance.

THIS YEAR conservation teams will continue the rolling programme of survey and repair work that was initiated following our High Level Masonry Inspection of the site in 2022. A large number of defects have been identified that require conservation works, and health and safety measures put in place. These will be reviewed and works planned for the coming year to enable the gradual removal of the fencing from the Abbey grounds.

In addition to the above works at the Abbots House have been identified which include masonry consolidation, stone repair, structural pinning and further work to the stone slated roof. Temporary roof works have been carried out to prevent water ingress from damaged, missing slates. Scheduled monument consent has been granted and we are in discussion with Heritage regarding the extent of the requirements. *What is Scheduled Monument Consent? We have a handy article through this link, have a look, is it what you thought?* [Scheduled Monument Consent | Historic Environment Scotland | HES](#)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

ANGUS COUNCIL ONSITE MEETING & SCAFFOLDING TOUR





In March we welcomed a number of your local councillors and Angus Council representatives to discuss the Abbey's conservation work, how we develop skills to support conservation needs in the future, and opportunities to work together to promote Arbroath Abbey as part of the wider tourism offer.

Our Works Manager led a tour on the scaffolding, not your usual guided tour but one of tearing back the layers of the conservation work that has taken place over the years. Lots of questions were asked including where the original stone would have been quarried, where the tiles on the Abbots House are from and where can we get them from now, and why it takes so long to complete the works.

Following really positive feedback from those who participated it has been agreed that the Works Team will provide a limited number of these tours to the community, free of charge, so that you can get a better understanding of the work that is going on at the Abbey. Two one hour tours will take place on each of the following dates - 08, 09, 20 & 21 May – and, due to spaces being limited to 8 per tour, these MUST be prebooked through [Arbroath Scaffolding Tours Bookings](#) - please book early to avoid disappointment.

DECLARATION DAY – 06 APRIL

In partnership with The Friends of Arbroath we welcomed 1324 visitors to the Abbey for Declaration Day 2025 – how appropriate it would've been if it had been 1320! The event was opened by the Provost of Angus and it was a great success – it was wonderful to see so many people from Arbroath enjoying activities such as highland dancing, a silent disco and inflatable axe throwing. We were pleased to provide support from not only the Arbroath Operations Team but some of our colleagues from St Andrews Castle & Cathedral too.



OTHER ACTIVITIES

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT



As Scotland celebrated Apprentice Week our very own Sarah Tebbs, Apprentice Stonemason at Arbroath Abbey, was featured in a newspaper article encouraging other women to consider taking up the traditional skill as a career path.

Sarah became interested in learning stonemasonry when she visited Lincoln Cathedral on a primary school trip. However, after starting out as an Outdoor Activities Instructor, Sarah has only recently decided to pursue a career in it recognising that 'This country is full of historic buildings in need of repair. But not enough people have the skills and knowledge to repair them without risking further damage'

HES is working with the Institute of Conservation (Icon) and other partners to develop a new risk register highlighting the traditional building and heritage skills under greatest threat.

These include thatching, traditional stained and leaded glass making, architectural blacksmithing, and stonemasonry.

EDUCATION

We have lots of activities that educators and/or families looking for fun can do at Arbroath Abbey. Some of these are available online such as an activity based around [Declaration of Arbroath | Historic Environment Scotland | HES](#) which teachers/educators can use for their visit to the Abbey, or two quizzes available for kids onsite – please ask for these at the Visitor Centre.

Learning Visits happen all year round at Arbroath Abbey, but did you know they were free? For further information about these check out [Learning Visits | Historic Environment Scotland](#)

Useful links

- High Level Masonry Inspection (HLM) overview [High Level Masonry Inspections | Historic Environment Scotland](#)

Contact

- Anne-Marie O'Reilly, District Visitor & Community Manager (anne-marie.o'reilly@hes.scot)