

Information pack for appointment to the Board of Historic Environment Scotland



The Cabinet Secretary for Education, Culture and Gaelic is seeking to appoint a Chair to the board of Historic Environment Scotland. The Cabinet Secretary values highly the benefits of having different points of view on the board and welcomes applications from people from all walks of life.

The appointments process for these board vacancies follows the [Code of Practice for Public Appointments](#) and is regulated by the [Ethical Standards Commissioner](#).

Key dates for this appointment round

Closing date	Thursday 23 July 2026 at 5pm
Shortlist of applications	28 July 2026
Date applicants will hear about the outcome of their application	w/c 3 August 2026
Interviews	Interviews will take place in Edinburgh on 17 August 2026. It is unlikely that we will be able to offer an alternative interview date.
Ministerial decision	w/c 14 September 2026
Start date	Mid-October 2026

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Dear Applicant

Thank you for expressing interest in this Chair role. In the advert and the applicant information pack you will find information about Historic Environment Scotland (HES), the skills and experience being sought for the position, as well as important information about the appointment process.

HES plays a vital role in supporting the heritage sector and securing the delivery of the Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment – “Our Past Our Future”. It is responsible for protecting and promoting some of the nation's most iconic heritage assets and looks after some outstanding collections and archives.

It is also a regulator, a grant provider, a trainer, a research organisation and an expert adviser across a wide range of subjects in which the historic environment has an interest.

I am looking for an experienced Chair who can lead the Board and Organisation through a period of change and guide it to make important decisions that will influence investment, performance and delivery for decades to come as well as adapting to the current challenges and opportunities in the historic environment sector.

The information available will hopefully answer any questions you might have about the vacancy. If you have any unanswered queries, or would like to find out more, please contact Holly Gadd, Board and Executive Support Coordinator at holly.gadd@hes.scot.

Thank you again for your interest and I hope you will give serious consideration to applying.

Mairi McAllan MSP

Information about the role

Remuneration	£408 per day (non-pensionable) and reasonable expenses.
Time commitment	The average time commitment is approximately four days per month; however, we expect that the time commitment will be greater for the first six to twelve months of this appointment and will be six to eight days per month.
Length of appointment term	Four years.
Location of meetings	The Board meetings are usually held in Edinburgh. Members are also expected to attend some of the wide range of cultural and fundraising events and other activities organised by Historic Environment Scotland.
Disqualifications	A Board member is disqualified from appointment to the Board if that person is: (a) a Member of the House of Commons, (b) a Member of the House of Lords, (c) a Member of the Scottish Parliament. (d) persons disqualified under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 A member of the Scottish Parliament cannot also hold a public appointment for public bodies listed in the schedule of the Scottish Parliament (Disqualification) Order 2020. Former ministers and senior crown servants (director general level and above) should seek advice from the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACOPA) before applying for this role.

The Board of Historic Environment Scotland

HES is the lead body for the historic environment in Scotland. Our work touches everyone in Scotland at every age. We are the custodians of the past, for the present and the future.

- We care for more than 300 sites of national importance all across the country and are the largest operator of paid visitor attractions in Scotland.
- We look after internationally significant archives and artefacts.
- We are at the forefront of investigating and researching the historic environment and addressing the impacts of climate change on its future.
- We protect our historic places through designations and consents, promote their sustainable development, and provide millions of pounds each year to local communities to repair and revitalise their historic environment.
- We provide advice and guidance about the historic environment and offer a wide range of training and learning opportunities.

We are an executive Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB), and as such operate within the context of the Scottish Government's national outcomes and strategic objectives, including public service reform.

We are a registered Scottish Charity and operate within the framework of charity regulation

We are core funded by the Scottish Government but also derive at least 50 % of our income from operating our key visitor attractions and ancillary activities. We are committed to diversifying and increasing our commercial income.

External Review into the Organisation and Culture at HES

Recently there have been ongoing leadership and governance issues at HES which resulted in an external review into the organisation and culture at HES being undertaken. This was undertaken by David Martin, with the HES Board accepting his report on 28 May 2026.

The review found that HES benefits from a highly committed, skilled workforce and has delivered important outcomes for Scotland's heritage. However, the organisation is at a critical juncture: rapid growth in resources and staffing has not been matched by clear strategic alignment or investment priorities, and legacy issues continue to fragment culture and ways of working. While external audits confirm sound financial footing, they highlight weaknesses in governance, workforce practices and oversight that now require urgent attention.

HES is currently reviewing the report's recommendations before addressing the issues raised.

Find out more about Historic Environment Scotland at <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/>.

Key documents:

[Our Past Our Future](#), Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment
[Heritage for All](#), HES strategy for the period to 2028
[HES Operating Plan 2025-28](#).

The role of the Chair

The main functions (including powers and duties) of the body are those set out in the **Historic Environment Scotland Act 2014**
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/19/contents/enacted>.

The Board is responsible for determining the overall vision, strategic aims and objectives of Historic Environment Scotland, in accordance with the statutory duties and within the policy and resource framework agreed with Scottish Ministers.

The **Chair of the Board** has particular responsibility for:

Leadership and Strategy

Providing strategic leadership, considering long-term vision and setting appropriate goals for HES, leading through a period of transformational change.

- Chairing the HES Board meetings in a manner that facilitates constructive discussion, managing conflict and negotiating compromise when required.
- Championing HES's overall mission and strategic direction in a changing and politically sensitive environment.
- Leading the HES Board while remaining resilient to the challenges ahead, particularly in the context of financial challenges.
- Ensuring that the Board, in reaching decisions, takes proper account of its statutory duties, and the policy and resource framework agreed with Scottish Ministers.
- Ensuring effective corporate governance, and that the principles of public life and public accountability are followed.
- Maintaining progress in delivering on HES's priorities.
- Advising Scottish Ministers of the needs of HES when Board member vacancies arise, with a view to ensuring a proper balance of relevant skills, knowledge and diversity.

Collaboration

- Representing HES publicly in an ambassadorial role.
- Communicating the vision and representing the views of HES to diverse audiences including government, the media, a range of sectors and other stakeholders
- Influencing and engaging key stakeholders in the political, cultural, private and other relevant arenas.
- Supporting the growth and diversification of income streams.

Governance and Organisational Performance

- Ensuring that HES operates in accordance with the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework
- Being responsible for ensuring that HES operates in accordance with its scheme of administration including chairing Board meetings and ensuring that all HES Board Committees function in line with expectations for effective governance processes.
- Ensuring that all new members of the HES Board are fully briefed on the terms of their appointment and on their duties, rights and responsibilities, and that they receive appropriate induction training.
- Conducting and assessing appraisals of the performance of individual Board members on an annual basis.
- Acting as line manager of the Chief Executive including setting objectives and conducting appraisals of the performance of the Chief Executive.

The selection panel

Chair	Jamie Macdougall, Deputy Director, Culture and Historic Environment, Scottish Government
Panel member	Catherine Muirden, Chair of National Galleries Scotland
Panel member	Ronnie Hinds, Interim Chair, Historic Environment Scotland
Representative of the Ethical Standards Commissioner	Shortlisting: Ali Jarvis, Public Appointments Adviser Interviews: Duncan Wallace, Public Appointments Adviser

Please note that applicants will be asked to declare if they know any members of the selection panel. The panel will also declare if they know any applicants. Any actual or perceived conflicts of interest will be managed in line with the [Ethical Standards Commissioners Code of Practice for Public Appointments](#).

Person specification

The Cabinet Secretary for Education, Culture and Gaelic is looking for a new Chair who can put their skills, knowledge, understanding and experience to good use on the Board. The table below sets out the skills, knowledge, understanding and experience that we are seeking and explains how the criteria will be tested. You may have gained your experience through work, by being active in your community, in a voluntary capacity or through your own lived experience.

The priority criterion is weighted over the essential criteria, and the candidate who provides the strongest evidence against the priority criterion will be considered most able to fulfil the role. In the event that candidates provide evidence of equal merit against the priority criterion, the selection panel will then take into account the strength of the evidence presented against the essential criteria in determining the candidate most able to fulfil the role.

The successful candidate will have driven internal culture change, may have faced turnaround challenges, should have an instinct for opportunities in the heritage sector and will have the warmth and energy to engage both the Board and the wider heritage and culture community.

Priority criterion	Example indicators	How this will be assessed
1. Strategic vision and leadership	• Experience of providing strategic leadership in a changing environment, considering long term vision and setting appropriate goals. • Has the skills, agility and capacity to deal successfully with	This criterion will be assessed at the application stage and at interview if you are shortlisted. We will also look for evidence of this criterion in your prepared response at interview.

	challenges faced by the organisation/board. • Experience of building a highly skilled and successful team around you. • Experience of ensuring effective governance and able to articulate what board responsibilities are from a fiscal and legal perspective. • Ability to harness diversity of thought from all board members, creating a positive improvement culture • Experience of organisational review and leading an organisation through the process of culture turnaround.	In your online application: Please attach an overarching statement demonstrating evidence for the priority criterion and all of the essential criteria. Your statement should be no more than 1,000 words.
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Essential criteria	Example indicators	How this will be assessed
1. Experience of promoting and embedding a positive and inclusive culture	• Experience of being accountable for the performance of a whole organisation. • Understands how performance/service delivery needs to be central within an organisation. • Experience of creating a positive and enabling culture which allows the organisation to thrive and deliver.	This criterion will be assessed at the application stage and at interview if you are shortlisted. In your online application: Please attach an overarching statement demonstrating evidence for the priority criterion and all of the essential criteria. Your statement should be no more than 1,000 words.

	• Understands the role of the chair in promoting excellence.	
2. Leading change in an organisation with a dispersed and diverse workforce	• Experience of leading transformational change in a complex organisation going through significant challenges. • Able to analyse information, understand the measures used to evaluate performance within an organisation and recognise the implications of different elements and take account of these in the decision-making process. • Exercises sound, unbiased judgement.	This criterion will be assessed at the application stage and at interview if you are shortlisted. We will also look for evidence of this criterion in your prepared response at interview. In your online application: Please attach an overarching statement demonstrating evidence for the priority criterion and ALL of the essential criteria. Your statement should be no more than 1,000 words.
3. Relationship management, collaboration and influence	• Credible track record to influence, engage, collaborate and develop partnerships and relationships with a wide range of national institutions and key stakeholders. • Excellent verbal and written communication skills and adept at using different media channels. • Experience of managing the reputation of a high-profile organisation.	This criterion will be assessed at the application stage and at interview if you are shortlisted. In your online application: Please attach an overarching statement demonstrating evidence for the priority criterion and all of the essential criteria. Your statement should be no more than 1,000 words.

	Committed to continuing an inclusive board culture.	
4. Ability to demonstrate understanding of the governance role of a board	- Understands, and has direct experience of, providing governance, accountability, supportive challenge, driving performance improvement and oversight in an organisation. - Can encourage a diverse group to collaborate and to reach compromise and consensus. - Has excellent judgement when chairing a Board (or equivalent senior group) that has difficult decisions to make and able to demonstrate flexibility of approach to achieve a successful outcome. - Ability to articulate board responsibilities and hold executives to account.	This criterion will be assessed at the application stage and at interview if you are shortlisted. In your online application: Please attach an overarching statement demonstrating evidence for the priority criterion and all of the essential criteria. Your statement should be no more than 1,000 words.

In your online application you will be invited to provide a tailored career/life history. This should include information from your professional, personal and voluntary experience relevant to the role(s). You may wish to include:

- Dates
- Brief information about the organisation
- Information about your role and experience

Please note that the panel are not looking for a full CV, but a tailored career/life history that is relevant to the roles. **Your response should be no more than 400 words and information provided in excess of this limit will not be considered.**

How to apply

Start the application process by clicking this link: [Public appointments - Scottish Government Jobs](#)

Find the advert for the board you want to apply for and follow the instructions. Refer to the person specification above. We strongly recommend that you draft your answers in a word document and check that you are happy with them before copying and pasting your answers in the relevant sections of the online application.

Please note that you will not be able to update your answers or supporting documents once the online application is submitted. Late applications will not be accepted by the selection panel.

If you use assistive technology, please contact the Public Appointments Team for an accessible application form by email at public.appointments@gov.scot

The assessment process

The assessment process will happen as follows:

1. The selection panel will assess all application forms against the criteria for appointment (see the person specification). Those who demonstrate evidence that most closely meet the criteria tested at this stage will be shortlisted for interview.
2. The selection panel will interview candidates. The questions they ask will relate directly to the criteria for appointment. Candidates will also be provided with a question in advance of the interview and asked to prepare and deliver a short verbal response to the panel.
3. The selection panel will also ask questions relevant to the fit and proper person test (see below) which will include questions about the [Principles of Public Life](#).
4. The selection panel will review the evidence provided and agree on which candidates have most closely met the criteria for selection and should be recommended to the appointing Minister.
5. The appointing Minister will make a decision about whom to appoint based on evidence from the selection panel. The appointing Minister may request to meet with candidates before making a final decision.

6. Appointees will be asked to complete pre-appointment checks which will include a Disclosure Check (there is no charge for this). Appointment is conditional on satisfactory completion of these.

Fit and proper person checks

In the context of public appointments, a fit and proper person is someone who is suitable because they meet the requirements of the role, and their past or present activities and behaviour means they are suitable. Tests are built into different stages of the appointment process to ensure that:

- Conduct to date has been compatible with the public appointment
- Membership is not barred by the body's constitution e.g., criminal record or bankruptcy (see disqualifications)
- There are no unmanageable conflicts of interest
- Political activity is declared
- There is agreement to abide by the [Principles of Public life in Scotland](#)
- There is confirmation that the time commitment required for the role can be met.

Social media checks for candidates invited to interview

The selection panel may consider publicly available information about candidates which is posted by candidates on social media. Any findings that the selection panel agree are pertinent to the role or that may call into question suitability for the appointment, credibility of the appointments process or the public body will be discussed with candidates at interview. Consideration of any issues will take place openly and transparently to establish the facts. Candidates will be given an opportunity to respond to any concerns. This information will be handled in line with the Privacy Notice for public appointments: [Privacy notice - Public appointments: guide - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018

Revised statutory guidance on the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 was published on 26th June 2025 following the Supreme Court Judgment dated 16 April 2025 on the definition of “Man”, “Woman” and “Sex” in the Equality Act 2010, and consequently in the 2018 Act.

In order to comply with the 2018 Act Scottish Government must now request data on biological sex as registered at birth from all applicants for Public Appointments on Boards which are captured by the 2018 Act. Following your application, you will receive a request from the Public Appointments Team to request this data from you.

The Scottish Government is committed to dignity, fairness and respect for all and actively invites applications from all.

Common questions and answers

Who can I contact to speak about this role?	If you have any questions regarding these roles or the Board, please contact Holly Gadd, Executive Board Support Coordinator, Historic Environment Scotland at holly.gadd@hes.scot .
Who can I speak to about a disability related reasonable adjustment?	Please contact the Public Appointments Team Email: public.appointments@gov.scot Deaf, deafblind and BSL users can contact the team via contactSCOTLAND-BSL
I am having a problem with the application process who can I speak with?	Please contact the Public Appointments Team (see contact details above).
Do you have any advice about how to complete an application form?	Yes. More information is provided here: Introduction - Public appointments: guide - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
Do you have any advice for candidates attending interviews?	Yes. More information is provided here: Introduction - Public appointments: guide - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
I can't attend the interview in person, can I attend remotely?	Yes. You can request to attend the interview using MS teams. Please contact the Public Appointments Team (see contact details above).
Will you reimburse expenses for attending an interview?	Yes. You can claim reasonable expenses, further information will be provided with the invitation to interview.
What does 'appointed on merit' mean?	Appointed on merit means that the people who are appointed most closely meet the criteria that is sought for the board vacancy at a point in time. People are assessed on the evidence that they present in the appointments process and the findings of the fit and proper person test.
What role does the Ethical Standards Commissioner (ESC)	The ESC regulate and monitor the public appointments process . The Commissioner plays a role in ensuring appointments are made on merit and use fair

have in the appointments process?	methods. More information about the Commissioner's role is provided here: Public appointments Information leaflet Ethical Standards Commissioner
Can I apply if I am not a British citizen?	Yes. You can apply for and be appointed to the Boards of Public Bodies if you are not a British citizen however you must be legally entitled to work in the UK.
Would remuneration for a public appointment impact on my benefits?	Possibly. Taking up a remunerated public appointment may affect benefits payments. This will depend on individual circumstances and you should seek advice from your benefits provider. More information is provided here: Public appointments and welfare benefits: information - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
Do the selection panel see information from the diversity monitoring form?	No. Diversity monitoring information provided by applicants is not shared with the selection panel. Sometimes information about a reasonable adjustment is shared with the selection panel to ensure that requirements are met (e.g. if a BSL interpreter is required).
Do I need to provide an email address and contact details at application stage?	In order to meet the requirements of the Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) the Scottish Government must be able to verify the credentials of applicants for public appointments should they be recommended for appointment. To ensure that this is possible all applicants must provide an address and contact details at application stage. If applicants do not provide this information their application will be rejected.
How will my personal information be handled?	All personal information will be handled with great care and in line with UK GDPR and data protection requirements. Further information can be found in the Privacy Notice here: Privacy notice - Public appointments: guide - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
Can I get feedback on my application or interview?	Yes. You can request feedback.
Is any training provided if I am offered and take up an appointment?	Yes. Each board has their own induction process and training offer. New appointees are also invited to

	attend an induction day hosted by the Scottish Government.
Is it possible to hold more than one public appointment?	Yes. It is possible to have more than one public appointment. You should check that you can make the time commitment for an additional appointment and that there are no unmanageable conflicts of interest.
Are public appointments announced?	Yes. Every appointment is announced here: Public appointments: news releases - gov.scot (www.gov.scot) The board may also announce new appointments on their own website and social media platforms. Information published will include a biography and details of any political activity within the last 5 years.
What standards are expected of board members?	The conduct expected of board members of Scottish public boards is set out here: Members of devolved public bodies: model code of conduct - December 2021 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot) (this includes the Principles of Public Life)
How can I complain about the public appointments process?	Further information about the complaints process for public appointments can be found here: How to apply - Public appointments: guide - gov.scot (www.gov.scot) Anyone concerned about public appointments can raise a complaint and have it independently investigated by the Ethical Standards Commissioner. Investigation process public appointments Ethical Standards Commissioner

For further information

Please contact the Public Appointments Team, Scottish Government

Email: public.appointments@gov.scot

Deaf, deafblind and BSL users can contact the team via [contactSCOTLAND-BSL](#)