

Management of burial grounds, application for burial, exhumation, private burial and restoration of lairs: regulation in Scotland

17/November/2023

Built Environment Forum Scotland (BEFS) is an umbrella body for organisations working in the built environment in Scotland. Drawing on extensive expertise in a membership-led forum, BEFS informs, debates and advocates on the strategic issues, opportunities and challenges facing Scotland's historic and contemporary built environment. BEFS is a supporting member of the [Climate Heritage Network](#).

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BEFS statement:

BEFS is supportive of the proposals for management plans outlined in the consultation document. To enable best management and decision making we would consider that alongside the management plans, appropriate and accessible guidance will be key.

BEFS welcomes the recognition within the minimum requirements that historic and ruined places of worship will require appropriate procedures and would reinforce suggestions by Historic Environment Scotland (HES) that *'additional provision is added under the section on procedures for dealing with any historic buildings and ruined places of worship (or any structures, including boundary walls) within a burial ground. For example: **'Procedures for keeping any buildings, ruined places of worship or other structures in safe order'**. Alternatively, the wording for the procedures for memorials and headstones could be expanded to say: **'Procedures for keeping headstones, memorials, ruined places of worship, and other buildings and structures in safe order and repair, such as any memorial inspection programme'***

Further we would consider the importance of these management plans within the current context of places of worship in transition – often coming out of worshipful use – and the need to address the pipeline of soon to be marketed buildings and associated grounds. We fully support HES view that *'planning ahead for the future of these buildings is important to prevent these falling into disrepair, becoming dangerous and unattractive to any restoring purchasers or community groups that could potentially take these on in support of new uses.'* These are places which may be designated (for example as listed buildings or scheduled monuments) and may hold a significant place in the lives of communities, both of place, and of interest, as well as being a major part of the town/city/village-scape in which they are found. Positive outcomes for these will be - like all planning decisions - both specific to each case, and complex; careful and appropriate management can ensure good decisions further down the line.

These considerations could include whether the structures and/or burial grounds are subject to statutory designation, and the implication this would have for activity requiring consent. Information of the status of burial sites and monuments - and any associated consent process - would be welcome to enable holistic management decisions.

BEFS also welcomes the requirement for plans to include an overview and provision for staff training, and would highlight the need to ensure that the skills for the appropriate repair and maintenance of historic buildings and structures exists within the teams responsible for the sustainable management of these sites.

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BEFS responses to a number of Consultations in relation to the Built Environment can be found at:
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RESPONDENT INFORMATION

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The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference: **Publish response with name**

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise? **YES**

I confirm that I have read the privacy policy and consent to the data I provide being used as set out in the policy. **I CONSENT**