

PLATINUM  
CIVIC HONOURS  
COMPETITION  
SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

APPLICATION FOR  
CITY STATUS  
SOUTH AYRSHIRE  
2022

[south-ayrshire.gov.uk](http://south-ayrshire.gov.uk)





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**Name of place applying:** South Ayrshire  
**City status / Lord Mayor or Provost status:**  
City Status  
**Local authority:** South Ayrshire Council  
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The Robert Burns Monument, Alloway



# SUMMARY

South Ayrshire, including the burghs of Ayr, Girvan, Maybole, Prestwick and Troon, is bidding for City Status as we are an area rich in heritage, with strong historical and current royal connections, fantastic community spirit, welcoming people, a thriving voluntary sector, beautiful scenery, and strong ambitions for an economic and sustainable future. City Status would help recognise South Ayrshire as an area to live, visit and invest in, and cement our ambitions for thriving communities and places across the area by raising the profile of our innovation and drive to succeed.

The area's royal connections are longstanding. Around 1205, King William the Lion granted a Charter founding a Royal Burgh in Ayr. The original Charter still exists today and forms part of Ayrshire Archives' extensive collection. It is the oldest surviving document of its kind in Scotland. This bid seeks to restore this royal connection, by bringing the honour of City Status to south-west Scotland. This would see Ayr and the wider South Ayrshire area, take its place as a city alongside the seven cities of the central belt and the north - Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee, Stirling, Inverness, Glasgow and Perth.

Although South Ayrshire is loved by many tourists, some visitors automatically head north when they arrive in Scotland, unaware of the stunning scenery, attractions, history, rich culture and range of activities they could enjoy in this area. City Status would help put South Ayrshire firmly on the map and encourage even more people to experience this hidden gem on the south-west coast of Scotland.

We also want to encourage young people and families to relocate to this fabulous area. Population projections show that, by 2043, the percentage of older people living in South Ayrshire will be higher than the national average, and the percentage of younger people lower than the national average. South Ayrshire offers a superb

quality of life and City Status would strengthen our profile as an ideal place for relocation.

South Ayrshire has excellent education provision and a very strong record in educational success for children and young people. We are also the best local authority in Scotland for school leaver destinations and Duke of Edinburgh Award achievement. The £81 million Ayr campus of the University of the West of Scotland is one of the UK's most modern, environmentally friendly and sustainable higher education learning facilities. Ayrshire College, with a campus in Ayr, offers more than 100 courses and is also home to the Aeronautical Engineering Training Centre which supports Scotland's largest aerospace cluster at Prestwick.

Our towns and villages have so much to offer – from shopping in the thriving Prestwick high street, to taking a leisurely stroll through the picturesque village of Kirkmichael, or watching the world go by from Troon marina, to the thrill of windsurfing of the coast at Maidens, South Ayrshire has something for every pace of life.

We have strong economic ambitions for our future which focus not only on our traditional sectors such as aerospace, engineering, and food and drink, but also on the new digital economy, advanced manufacturing and the fast-growing space sector.

We are an area with a strong history of innovation, from Ayr-born John Loudon McAdam's pioneering work to transform roads, to our present-day ambition to cement our status as a leading centre for aerospace and space in the UK, and as Europe's premier space hub.

Communities, local businesses and third sector organisations stand alongside South Ayrshire Council in support of this bid, recognising the economic and cultural benefits City Status would give to South Ayrshire and its people.



"I am delighted to support South Ayrshire in this City Status bid. Achieving City Status would be a real honour for the area. It would not only recognise our rich history, heritage and traditions, but also help us to fulfil our ambitions for the future, encouraging more people to live, work, visit and invest in the area."

**South Ayrshire Provost, Helen Moonie**



# DISTINCT IDENTITY



South Ayrshire stands out in Scotland as an area of outstanding natural beauty, with its coastal and rural communities, rich history and heritage, and long record of innovation and ambition. City Status would help to put South Ayrshire on the map as a destination of choice for people to live, visit, work and invest in. Nestled on the south-west coast of Scotland, with its sandy beaches, beautiful parks, green spaces and rolling hills as a backdrop, South Ayrshire covers 476 square miles, from Barassie in the north, to Ballantrae in the south. The area's splendid 45-mile-long coastline is home to enviable, award-winning beaches which afford impressive views over the Firth of Clyde and Irish Sea. Our green spaces are plentiful and four of our parks recently achieved Keep Scotland Beautiful Green Flag awards.

Home to over 112,000 people, South Ayrshire encompasses five towns and their surrounding villages and hamlets. Ayr, located just 37 miles south-west of Glasgow, is the region's county town. A university and college town, and seat of South Ayrshire Council's headquarters, Ayr has a wide range of attractions for all ages including museums, galleries, Ayr Racecourse, leisure and cultural facilities, and award-winning parks.

**“Ayrshire College fully supports Ayr's bid for City Status. Ayr's importance, historically, socially and economically is significant and achieving City Status would bring economic and social benefits for all those living, working and visiting the area. This, in turn, would help regenerate, promote and grow Ayr and Ayrshire, bringing benefit to the whole of Scotland.”**

Carol Turnbull, Principal, Ayrshire College

The region attracts people from all over the world to visit the birthplace of Robert Burns at Burns Cottage in Alloway. The award-winning Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, close by in Alloway, won Scotland's Best Heritage Tourism Experience at the Thistle Awards in 2020. Rich in history is Maybole, the ancient capital of Carrick, with the impressive 16th century Maybole Castle standing proudly as a prominent feature in the town's main thoroughfare. Further south, the fishing port of Girvan is the 'Gateway to Ailsa Craig', a small island formed from a volcanic plug and famous for its granite, used for curling stones world-wide.

Prestwick is the oldest recorded baronial burgh in Scotland. Its bustling high street attracts locals and tourists from afar, with its quirky, independent shops and range of eateries, and in 2020 was awarded Champion High Street of the Year by the Great British High Street Awards. With its gorgeous views to Arran, Lady Isle and Ailsa Craig, Troon boasts a bustling working harbour and is home to Ayrshire's fish market. The town is known worldwide for Royal Troon, one of South Ayrshire's two Open Championship golf courses, having played host to the event ten times.

Golf is a major attraction of the region and South Ayrshire boasts some of the finest golf courses in the world, attracting champions, professionals and amateur players. Our rich golfing history includes hosting the first ever Open in 1860 at Prestwick Golf Course, while Turnberry's first Open Championship in 1977 saw the famous 'Duel in the Sun' between Jack Nicklaus and, the ultimate winner that year, Tom Watson. In fact, Jack Nicklaus began his long association with the Open after qualifying for the competition with

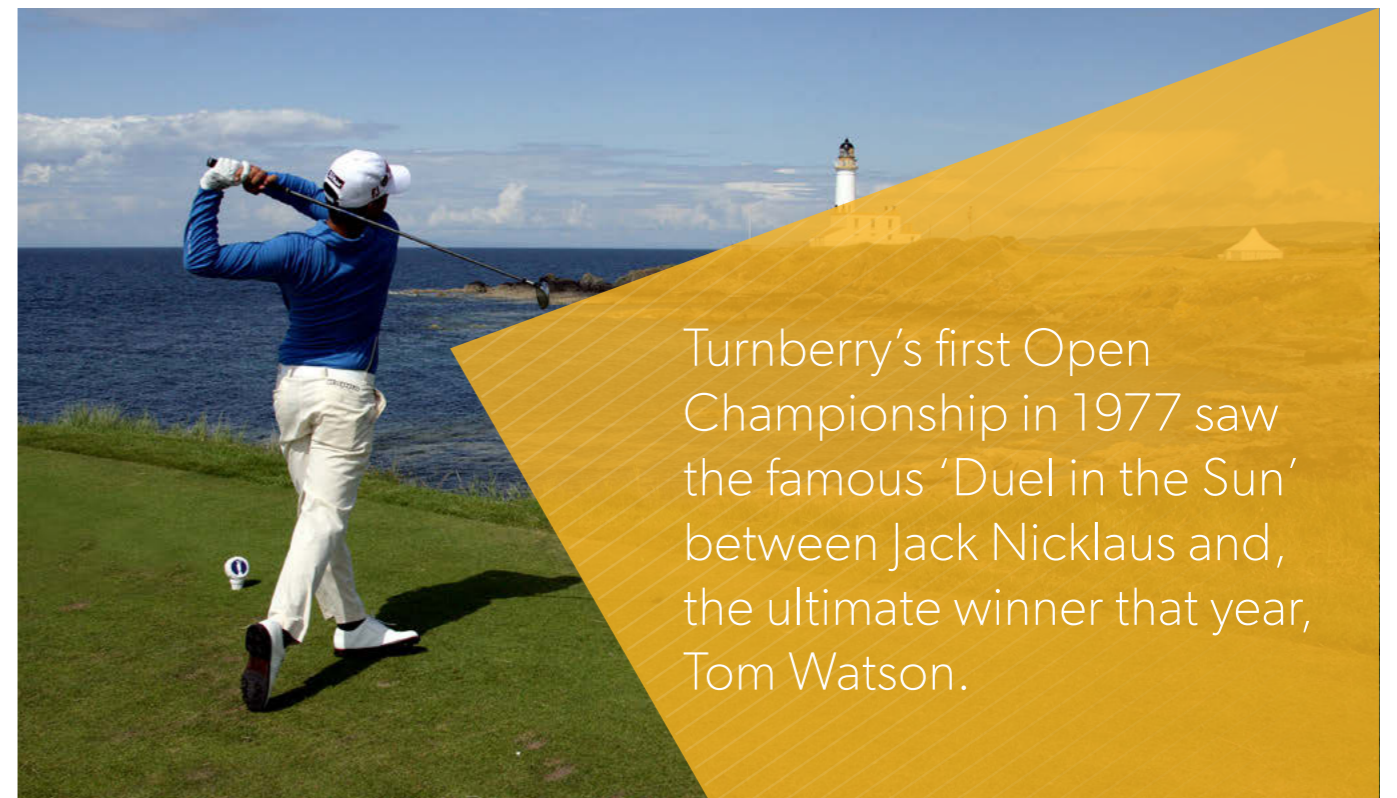
a 72 on Lochgreen, Troon in 1962. Belleisle, Seafeld and Girvan were designed by world renowned golf course architect James Braid. Belleisle is reputed to be one of the country's finest examples of public parkland courses. We have an excellent choice of courses for all abilities, including the ever-challenging Darley course, which is one of three courses forming Troon Links; the well-respected parkland course of Dalmilling and the nine-hole Maybole course.

Travelling to South Ayrshire is easy, as the area is well connected by road, rail and air. The A77 is a key trunk road in south-west Scotland and affords one of the most stunning coastal drives in the country. Glasgow Prestwick Airport connects the area via domestic and international flights, and is the site for one of the UK's first horizontal launch spaceports. Prestwick is Scotland's largest aerospace hub and, following an £80 million investment from the Ayrshire Growth Deal, is securing its status as a leading centre for aerospace and space in the UK.

The local economy includes traditional sectors such as food and drink, aerospace, engineering and tourism, as well as a new focus on the digital economy, advanced manufacturing and space. Larger employers include global aerospace companies such as GE and Spirit AeroSystems, William Grant & Sons (distillers) and Trump Turnberry.

**“One of the world's greatest sport events, The Open, traces its origins to South Ayrshire and Prestwick Golf Club. In 1860 eight professional players competed to find the Champion Golfer of the Year. Repeating the challenge, a year later the championship was declared 'Open To All The World'. Prestwick hosted 24 editions of The Open through 1925, and today 10 venues in Great Britain and Northern Ireland set the stage for the world's best golfers in their quest to claim the sport's greatest prize. In the modern era South Ayrshire has maintained an unbroken link to The Open, regularly staging the championship within its boundaries. Golf fans everywhere recognise the importance of South Ayrshire to The Open and its 152nd staging in 2024 will be celebrated at Royal Troon when the eyes of the world will once again be focussed on the South Ayrshire coast.”**

Johnnie Cole-Hamilton, Executive Director, Championships at The R&A



Turnberry's first Open Championship in 1977 saw the famous 'Duel in the Sun' between Jack Nicklaus and, the ultimate winner that year, Tom Watson.



## CIVIC PRIDE

South Ayrshire is steeped in tradition. From the Kirkin' of the Council, to Armed Forces Day, local residents and visitors gather together with local dignitaries to celebrate and commemorate a range of civic events.

### KIRKIN' OF THE COUNCIL

This traditionally takes place on the Sunday after the first full Council meeting following a local election. During the service, newly Elected Members take part in an Act of Commitments and the newly elected Provost signs the Bible. Councillors parade through the streets of Ayr, ultimately arriving at the Council's headquarters in Wellington Square.

### MILITARY CONNECTIONS

The Royal Highland Fusiliers (2 Scots) has a long and distinguished connection with Ayr and South Ayrshire, dating back to 1678. The Ayrshire (Earl of Carrick's Own) Yeomanry was originally raised in Ayrshire around 1794 by the Earl of Cassillis and formally adopted into the army in 1798. In 1998, the Scottish Yeomanry paraded in Ayr to celebrate the bicentenary of the Ayrshire Yeomanry.

### THE HOLY FAIR WITH ARMED FORCES AND PIPES IN THE PARK

During the Middle Ages, the Royal Burgh of Ayr held a Midsummer Fair, where vendors and travelling entertainers filled the streets. However, by the end of the 19th century the fair survived only for the sale of horses. Midsummer 1977 saw the inaugural Robert Burns Festival take place in Rozelle Park. The actor John Cairney, who was becoming famous for his portrayal of Burns, had a central role in this festival, which featured performances of 'The Holy Fair', a musical play composed by Cairney himself and based around the Burns poem of that name. A Holy Fair was also held at Rozelle as part of the 1977 festival. This proved so popular that it became a regular part of the Burns Festival. In 2014, the Holy Fair and Pipes in the Park moved from Rozelle to Ayr's Low Green, and from 2015 it has been combined with Armed Forces Day. The branches of the armed forces and cadet units have a strong presence at the event, with the day's proceedings beginning with a flag-raising ceremony.

### REMEMBRANCE WOODLAND

South Ayrshire Council's poignant Remembrance Woodland, featuring a stunning tree sculpture trail, was created as part of the WW1 Centenary Commemorations 2014-2018. It was supported by the David Elder Edward Trust, the Friends of the Maclaurin and Tesco's Bags for life. World War I images - sourced from South Ayrshire Council's museum collections, the Ayrshire Yeomanry exhibition at Rozelle and images hosted on the Future Museum website - inspired local, professional chainsaw carvers to create the original carvings.

## FREEDOM OF SOUTH AYRSHIRE

Local authorities may award the Freedom of their area to individuals or organisations in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. Although originally the title of "freeman" accorded certain rights and privileges to the holder, the Freedom is now awarded as a mark of respect. In 2009 the Council granted the Freedom of South Ayrshire to the Royal Navy (HMS Gannet) and to the Royal Air Force (Prestwick). In 2013, the Freedom was given to the Royal Highland Fusiliers (2 Scots) and the Royal Regiment of Scotland.

## INTERNATIONAL LINKS

### STATUE OF MAHATMA GANDHI

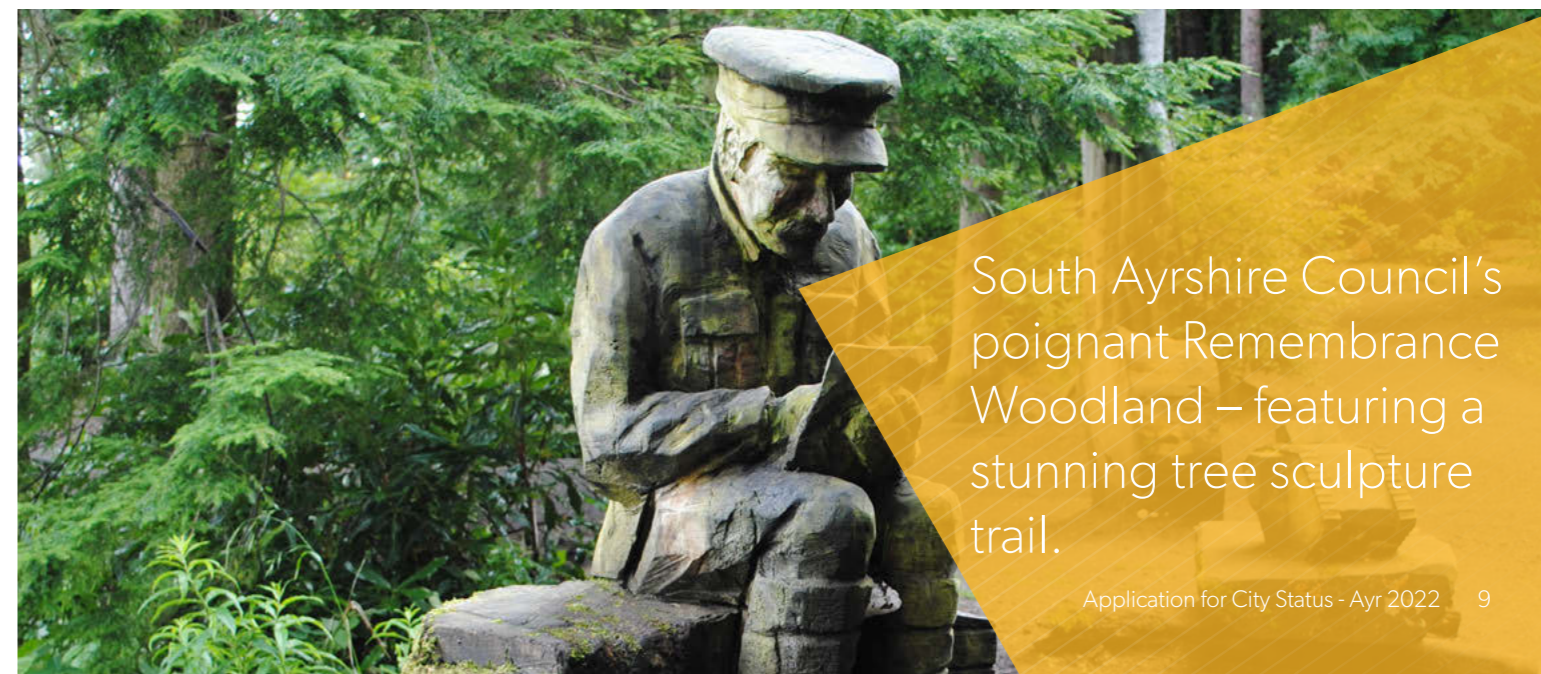
In September 2019, South Ayrshire was gifted a rare bronze statue of Mahatma Gandhi by the Indian Government's Council for Cultural Relations to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Gandhi's birth. This was an exceptional honour as the statue is one of only ten in the world. Created by sculptor Gautam Pal, the statue is 6ft 4ins tall and weighs an impressive 400kg. It now takes pride of place in Ayr Town Hall.



Mahatma Gandhi Statue,  
Ayr Town Hall, Ayr

### TWIN TOWNS

There are five town twinning associations in South Ayrshire. These independent, constituted organisations comprise individual members living in local communities. Each association maintains and develops cultural, sporting, social, economic, educational, tourist and other links between twinned towns through programmes of exchange visits, evening meetings and special events. Our towns are twinned as follows: Ayr – Saint-Germain-en-Laye (France); Girvan – Torcy (France); Maybole – Crosne (France), Beloeil (Belgium) and Schotten (Germany); Prestwick - Lichtenfels (Germany), Vandalia (USA), Ariccia (Italy); Troon – Villeneuve-sur-Lot (France).



South Ayrshire Council's poignant Remembrance Woodland – featuring a stunning tree sculpture trail.



# CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE, INTERESTING HERITAGE, HISTORY AND TRADITIONS



## INTERESTING HERITAGE AND HISTORY

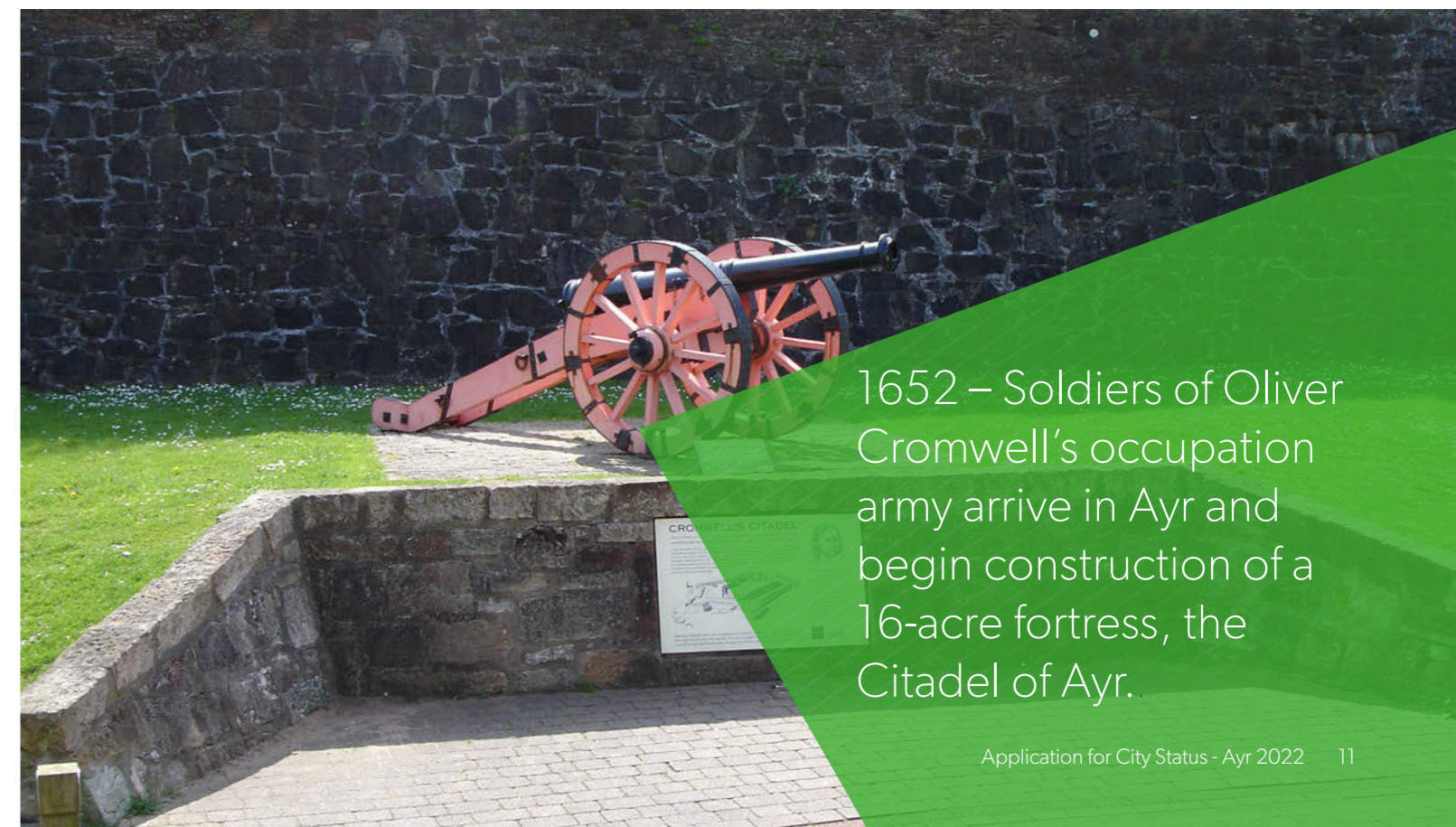
South Ayrshire has a particularly rich history and heritage. Some of the key events which have formed our past and shaped the area as it is today, are highlighted in the timeline below.

- 1st century AD – Roman armies passing through the area build temporary marching camps at Girvan Mains.
- 8th century – The name Maybole first appears on record as Meibothel.
- 1193 – Maybole receives a Charter from Donnchadh, Earl of Carrick.
- 1197 – William the Lion, King of Scots, orders the building of a royal castle at the mouth of the River Ayr.
- 1205 – Believed to be the year that King William the Lion grants a Charter founding a Royal Burgh at his Castle of Ayr.
- 1315 – King Robert the Bruce holds a parliament or assembly in Ayr to agree the line of succession to the throne.
- 1328 – King Robert the Bruce holds court at Knockcushan Gardens in Girvan.
- 1471 – Believed to be the year Loudon Hall, Ayr is constructed.
- 1491 – On his return from a pilgrimage to Whithorn, King James IV gives drink money to the stonemasons who were working on the bridge at Ayr.
- 1516 – Maybole is made a Burgh of Regality.
- 1563 – Mary Queen of Scots spends two nights in Ayr during a progress through the west of Scotland, during which she probably stayed at Loudoun Hall.
- 1652 – Soldiers of Oliver Cromwell's occupation army arrive in Ayr and begin construction of a 16-acre fortress, the Citadel of Ayr.
- 1668 – Girvan becomes a Municipal Burgh incorporated by Charter.
- 1756 – John Loudon McAdam is born in Ayr.
- 1759 – Robert Burns, Scotland's national bard, is born in Alloway.
- 1822 – The Sheriff Court building and county prison at Wellington Square are completed.
- 1860 – The first Open Golf Championship is held at Prestwick Golf Club on 17 October.
- 1885 – Ailsa Ship Building Company, based in Troon and Ayr, is founded.
- 1902 – The Gaiety Theatre opens in Ayr.
- 1910 – Ayr United Football Club is formed.
- 1935 – Scottish Aviation Ltd is formed at Prestwick.
- 1946 – Dwight D Eisenhower is given the Freedom of the Burgh in Maybole on 5 October.
- 1947 – Winston Churchill receives the Freedom of the Burgh of Ayr in the Town Hall.
- 1960 – Prestwick Airport receives a flying visit from Elvis Presley in March, when he changes planes on his way home from military service in Germany. Prestwick is the only place on the British Isles where Elvis ever set foot.



1759 – Robert Burns,  
Scotland's national bard,  
is born in Alloway.

- 1963 – William Grant & Sons erect their whisky distillery near Girvan.
- 1996 – South Ayrshire Council is created as a unitary local authority in April 1996.
- 2011 – The University of the West of Scotland opens its Ayr campus.
- 2011 – The Robert Burns Birthplace Museum opens in Alloway.
- 2012 – Ayr Hospital becomes University Hospital Ayr following a partnership with the University of the West of Scotland.
- 2013 – Ayrshire College is formed following the merger of Kilmarnock College, Ayr College and James Watt College.
- 2020 – The Ayrshire Growth Deal is signed on 19 November, securing £251 million investment to realise Ayrshire's potential as a world-class business region.



1652 – Soldiers of Oliver  
Cromwell's occupation  
army arrive in Ayr and  
begin construction of a  
16-acre fortress, the  
Citadel of Ayr.



## AN AREA RICH IN HISTORICAL LANDMARKS

The area has a diverse and interesting cultural infrastructure, with many ancient buildings which are central to key events in our rich history.

### THE WALLACE TOWER, AYR

This is a prominent landmark in Ayr High Street. The 113ft Neo-Gothic monument was completed in 1834 and features a statue of William Wallace. However, the name Wallace given to the tower derives from the family who once owned it and not William Wallace.

### ST JOHN'S TOWER, AYR

This is all that remains of Ayr's original parish church, which dated back to the late 12th century, with the tower being added to the building in the 15th century. The tower, which was dedicated to the patron saint of Ayr, Saint John the Baptist, was where King Robert the Bruce held his parliament in 1315.

### AYR TOWN HALL

The Category A listed building stands proud in Ayr's Sandgate. Dating back to 1827 it dominates the town's skyline with its 277ft spire.

Ayr Town Hall - The Category A listed building stands proud in Ayr's Sandgate, dating back to 1827.



The Grain Exchange, Ayr - was the site of the town's Meal Market, where cereals were traded. The first market was constructed on the site in 1586.

### CROMWELL'S CITADEL, AYR

Begun in 1652 on the command of the self-proclaimed 'Lord Protector' Oliver Cromwell, the Citadel could house a garrison of up to 1,000 troops and was designed on a massive scale to be an impenetrable fortress, bounded on two sides by the river and the sea. Parts of the towering wall of the old citadel can still be seen today near the town's harbour and seafront and is one of the best surviving examples of Cromwellian fortifications in Scotland.

### THE GRAIN EXCHANGE, AYR

This was the site of the town's Meal Market, where cereals were traded. The first market was constructed on the site in 1586, however the building that stands today was constructed in 1843. The Clydesdale Bank operated from here from 1954 until the end of the 20th century. The imposing building was recently given a new lease of life when Ayr Renaissance carried out significant refurbishments to create an indoor market and workshop space, which is known as the Grain Exchange.

### LOUDON HALL, AYR

This is the oldest house in Ayr. Built around 1500, it is the earliest surviving example in Scotland of a town house designed to be the comfortable dwelling of a rich merchant. It is thought to be the most likely place where Mary Queen of Scots stayed when she spent two nights in Ayr in 1563.

### THE AULD KIRK, AYR

Built in 1654, much of its original interior woodwork can still be seen today. The monument of the Rev. William Dalrymple, who baptised Robert Burns, stands near the outside wall.





## THE AULD BRIG, AYR

The Auld Brig is thought to have been constructed around 1491. It was relegated to pedestrian traffic when the first New Bridge opened in 1788 and Robert Burns' poem, 'The Brigs of Ayr', imagines an argument between the bridges about which of them is best.

## THE BRIG O' DOON, ALLOWAY

Featured in Burns' most famous poem, Tam o' Shanter, it was originally erected in the 1400s, and rebuilt in the 1700s. It is a major tourist attraction, with thousands of visitors flocking to see the beautiful arched structure each year.

## BURNS MONUMENT, ALLOWAY

Erected in 1823, the monument was the first memorial built in memory of Robert Burns.

## CROSSRAGUEL ABBEY, MAYBOLE

Dating back to the 13th century, the ruins of the abbey sit approximately two miles south of Maybole. It is one of the best-preserved examples of its kind in Scotland.

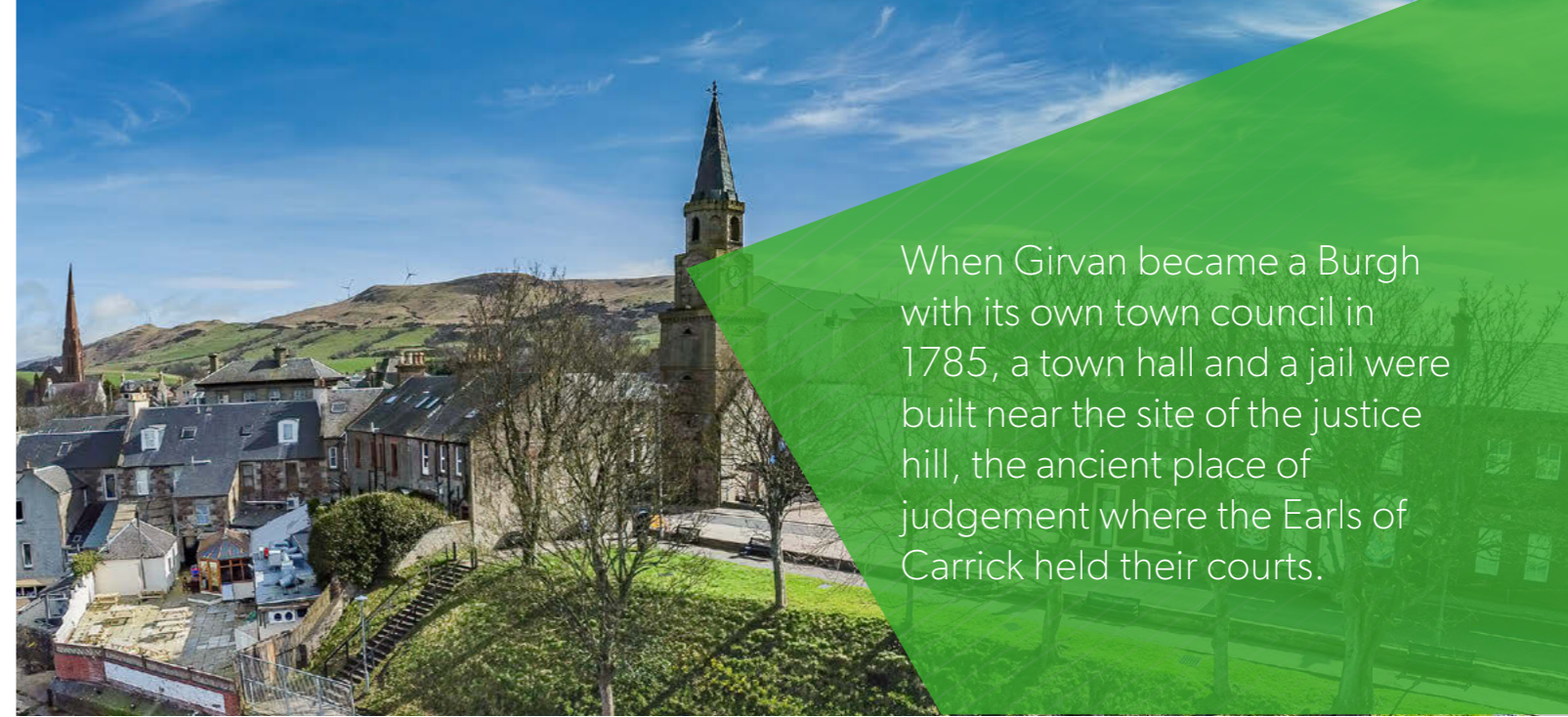
## SOUTAR JOHNNIE'S COTTAGE, KIRKOSWALD

Built in 1785 by John Davidson, the cottage takes pride of place in Kirkoswald's main street. Davidson is thought to have been the inspiration behind Robert Burns' Soutar Johnnie character from his poem, Tam o' Shanter.

## BACHELORS' CLUB, TARBOLTON

The Tarbolton Bachelors' Club was co-founded by Robert Burns in the 17th century house that still stands today in the village of Tarbolton. The building, which has been converted into a museum, stands out in the village with its eye-catching red shutters and thatched roof.

The Brig O' Doon, Alloway, featured in Burns' most famous poem, Tam o' Shanter, was originally erected in the 1400s, and rebuilt in the 1700s.



When Girvan became a Burgh with its own town council in 1785, a town hall and a jail were built near the site of the justice hill, the ancient place of judgement where the Earls of Carrick held their courts.

## STUMPY TOWER, GIRVAN

When Girvan became a Burgh with its own town council in 1785, a town hall and a jail were built near the site of the justice hill, the ancient place of judgement where the Earls of Carrick held their courts. The jail, which was thatched and easy to break out of, was nicknamed 'Stumpy'. In 1822 work began on replacing the old municipal buildings and the jail was replaced by a strong tower which was completed in 1827. It inherited the old jail's nickname, becoming known as 'Auld Stumpy' or Stumpy Tower. Its use as a jail ended in 1870 when a new police station was built elsewhere in the town. The old town buildings adjacent to it were replaced by the McMaster Hall in 1911, and when this burned down in 1939, the tower was left standing on its own as the town's principal landmark we can still see today.

## THE MCKECHNIE INSTITUTE, GIRVAN

Brothers Thomas and Robert McKechnie, prosperous local wine and spirit merchants of the Victorian era who also ran a grocery business in Girvan, left a bequest of £6,500 to the town, with which to build a public library and reading room. A site was selected in Dalrymple Street, and the building was designed by the architect John McKissack in Scottish Baronial style with some Renaissance detailing, featuring a prominent corner tower. The McKechnie Institute opened in 1889 and on the outbreak of World War I, became the town's recruiting office for those responding to Lord Kitchener's call for volunteers. In 1975 the library moved to a new building; however, it is still the cultural hub of the town, with a permanent display of artefacts highlighting local heritage, including the nearby island of Ailsa Craig, and is home to a programme of other changing exhibitions.

## CULZEAN CASTLE

The castle was built between 1772 and 1790 for the 10th Earl of Cassillis, David Kennedy. In 1945, the family donated the grand castle, which overlooks the Firth of Clyde, to the National Trust for Scotland. At this time, they also requested that its top floor be gifted to General Dwight D Eisenhower in gratitude for the role he played during World War II. During his holidays at Culzean Castle, Eisenhower regularly visited Maybole, which he affectionately called his "Scottish hometown" and he was given the Freedom of the Burgh on 5 October 1946. Culzean Castle and its surrounding grounds are a major tourist attraction in South Ayrshire, enticing visitors from across the globe each year.



Culzean Castle, Maybole



## CASSILLIS CASTLE, MAYBOLE

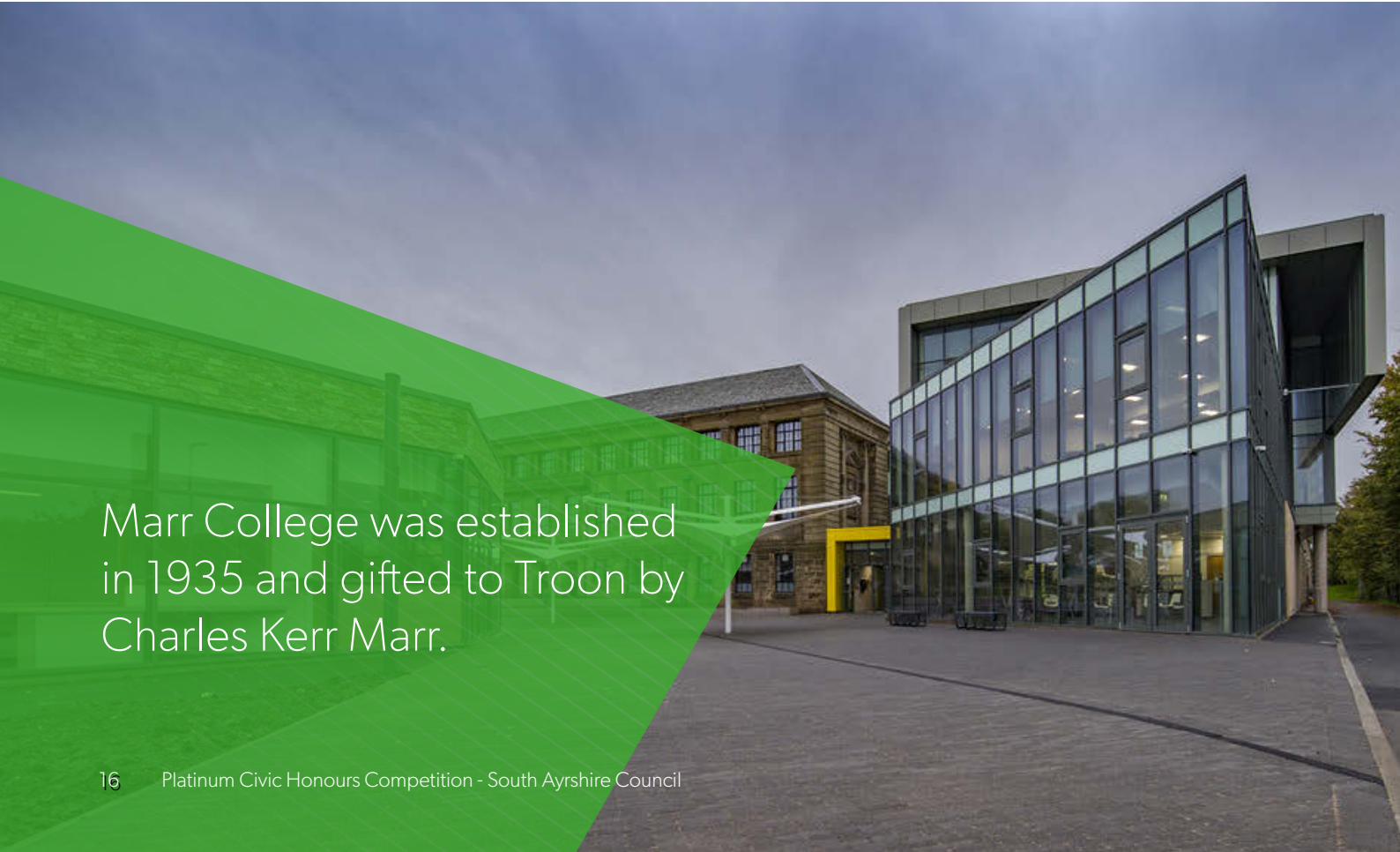
Cassillis House or Castle stands on a high bank overlooking the River Doon near Maybole. It consists of a great rectangular tower of the late 14th century which was remodelled and enlarged in the late 17th century and given a large baronial-style addition in the early 1830s. The lands of Cassillis were acquired by John Kennedy of Dunure around 1360, and he then constructed the tower which is the oldest part of the building. In 1509 Sir David Kennedy of Dunure, 3rd Lord Kennedy, was created Earl of Cassillis by King James IV of Scotland. The Earls of Cassillis wielded such power in Ayrshire's southern district of Carrick that they became known as the 'kings of Carrick', with Maybole as their capital – the castle there was their town house.

## MARR COLLEGE, TROON

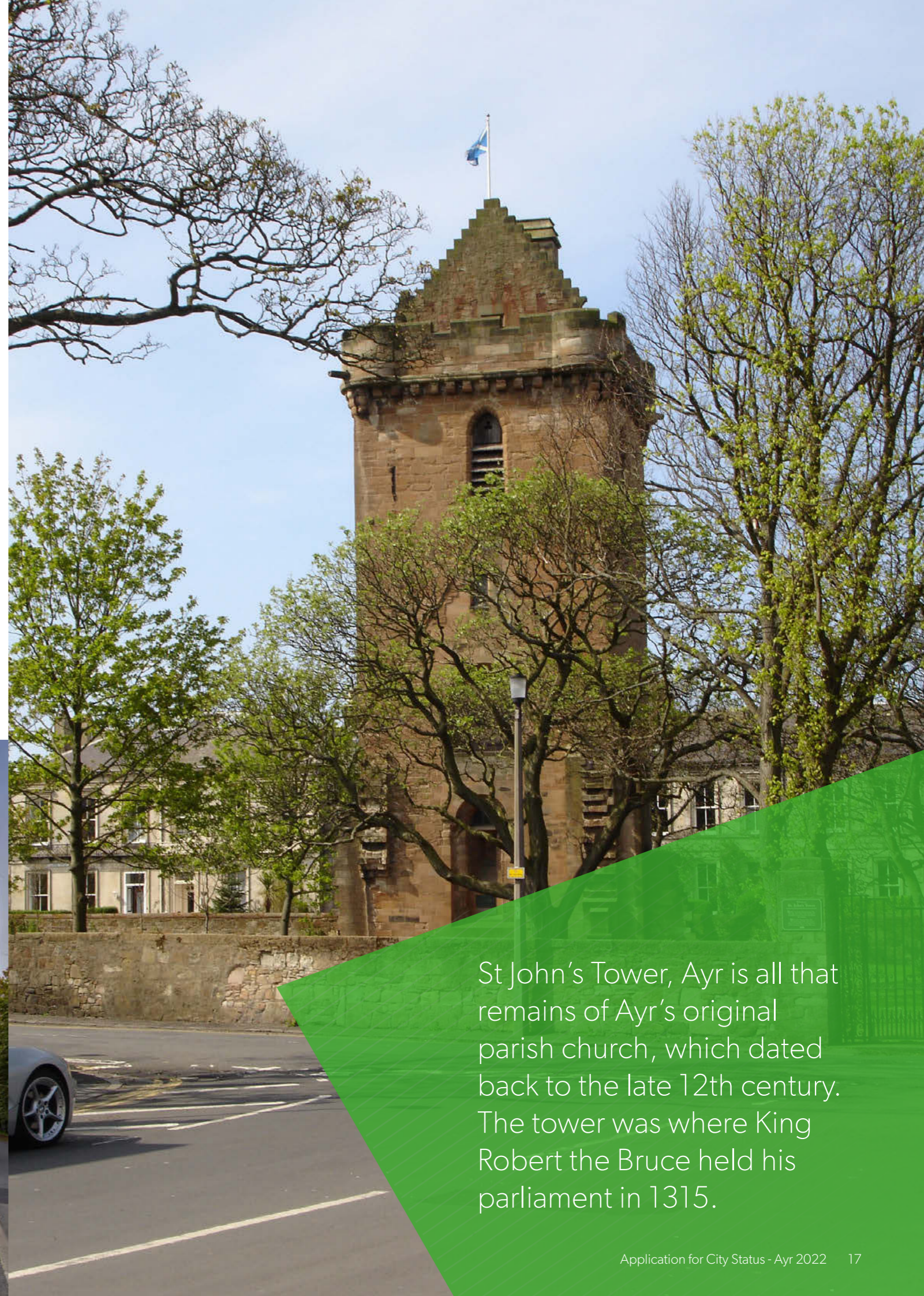
Established in 1935, Marr College was gifted to Troon by Charles Kerr Marr. The school is thought to be the model for state comprehensive schools, as its benefactor believed that people should have the opportunity to be educated together, no matter their wealth or background.

## BRUCE'S WELL, PRESTWICK

King Robert the Bruce was said to have attributed his recovery from a skin condition (possibly leprosy) to washing in the waters of this well in Prestwick.



Marr College was established in 1935 and gifted to Troon by Charles Kerr Marr.



St John's Tower, Ayr is all that remains of Ayr's original parish church, which dated back to the late 12th century. The tower was where King Robert the Bruce held his parliament in 1315.



## LOCAL EVENTS AND TRADITIONS

South Ayrshire is home to a wealth of cultural events and traditions which take place throughout the year.

### THE ROBERT BURNS HUMANITARIAN AWARD

Founded in 2002, the award is a globally respected honour which recognises individuals or groups who have saved, improved or enriched the lives of others. Each year the winner is announced at a ceremony held in Alloway.

### BURNS AN' A' THAT!

Each year a wide range of cultural events takes place in and around the birthplace of Robert Burns to celebrate his life and works.

### SCOTTISH GRAND NATIONAL

One of the top sporting occasions of the year, the Scottish Grand National, held at Ayr Racecourse, is the highlight of the 'jumps' season in Scotland.

### AYR COUNTY ANNUAL SHOW

One of biggest agricultural shows in the country, this show takes place each May. The event attracts thousands of visitors from the local area and further afield, offering a wide range of exhibitions and activities.



The Scottish Grand National at Ayr Racecourse is one of the top sporting occasions of the year.



South Ayrshire Golf Festival offers three golfing events across the region.

### CARRICK LOWLAND GATHERING

Hosted in Girvan, the gathering offers a range of traditional Scottish entertainment, such as pipe band competitions, Highland Heavy Weight Games, highland dancing and athletics competitions.

### BALLANTRAE FOOD & DRINK FESTIVAL

This award-winning festival celebrates local and regional quality food and drink. The two-day event incorporates a mini Gin Festival to mark World Gin Day.

### SOUTH AYRSHIRE GOLF FESTIVAL

This annual event incorporates Ayr Golf Week, Troon Golf Weekender and Girvan Golf Classic.

### BOWLS SCOTLAND NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Held at the National Centre for Bowling, Ayr, this flagship event of the Bowls Scotland competition calendar hosts 1,400 players from clubs all over Scotland who compete to be crowned National Champions in a variety of disciplines.

### DUNURE FESTIVAL OF THE SEA

The beautiful, historic harbour at Dunure village is home to this festival of music, seafood and water-based activities.

### DUNDONALD HIGHLAND GAMES

One of Ayrshire's premier cultural events, the Games are unique in capturing traditional Scottish heritage and strong community spirit within the picturesque setting of Royal Dundonald Castle.



Dunure Castle Ruins



## PRESTFEST

Each year, this live musical festival, hosted in Prestwick, attracts performers from far and wide.

## AYR GOLD CUP

Ayr Racecourse hosts the biggest, best and richest fat da y's racing in Scotland, with many leading jockeys and trainers taking part.

## TAMFEST

Ayrshire's premier, family Hallowe'en festival. The event incorporates a programme of activities. It culminates with a public celebration that ends with 'The Chase', a Tam o' Shanter themed parade through Ayr High Street, re-enacting Tam's infamous flight from the witches in Burns' most famous poem.

## WINTERSTORM

This is a boutique indoor festival featuring classic bands from across the decades, as well as some of the best up and coming talent. The event, hosted in Troon, has become one of Scotland's most popular classic rock events.



Tamfest - 'The Chase', a Tam o' Shanter themed parade through Ayr High St re-enacting Tam's famous flight from the witches.



The Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, Alloway.



# VIBRANT & WELCOMING COMMUNITY

## VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

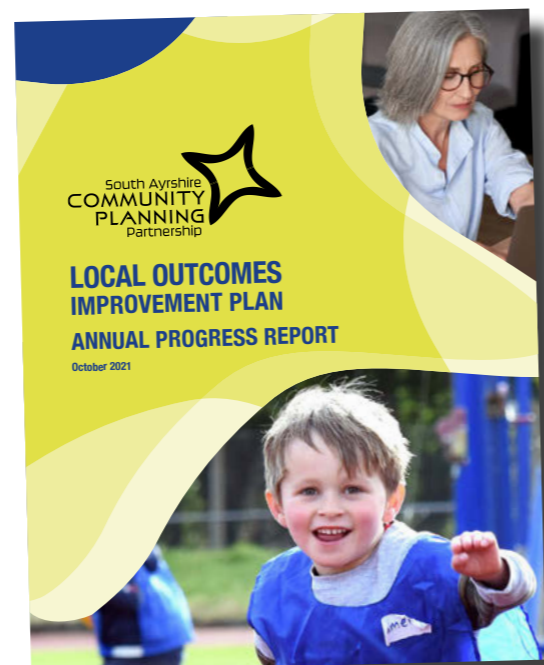
South Ayrshire has welcomed individuals from a variety of countries worldwide. Our diverse culture is enhanced by those from the EU who chose to remain post Brexit, those seeking refuge and asylum, and those who have come to South Ayrshire supported by Home Office protection schemes. For almost five years, we have been settling New Scots from Syria. There is shared benefit for those who volunteer and work with the families to learn about Syrian culture and to further extend social networks. Our children benefit from growing up with direct access to diverse cultures and languages and we, as adults, learn to “walk in the shoes” of others. We learn to challenge misconceptions and stereotypes, as we welcome everyone to our wider South Ayrshire community.

Our vibrant communities are also working together to regenerate their areas. One example is Rural North Carrick which has a long history and a proud identity. Its main town of Maybole and the surrounding villages have shown how communities can work inclusively to lead on ambitious plans to revitalise their area. Looking forward, North Carrick is using its built heritage and natural assets to create facilities and opportunities that deliver vibrant futures for residents and a welcoming destination for visitors.

**“North Carrick Community Benefit Company fully support South Ayrshire’s City Status application and look forward to continuing our partnership with South Ayrshire Council, local organisations and communities.”**

Mark Fletcher, North Carrick Community Benefit Company

South Ayrshire also has 29 active Community Councils. This thriving network co-ordinates and expresses the wider views of local people. Community Councils complement local authority engagement and help ensure local communities are consulted. Our aim in South Ayrshire is to reduce poverty and disadvantage, and improve opportunities for our residents to ensure all our communities can thrive. This aim underpins both the Council and the Community Planning Partnership’s strategic plans in South Ayrshire. Our Community Planning Partnership (CPP) agreed a joint local plan for the area. This plan, known as a Local Outcomes Improvement Plan, sets out a clear strategic ambition for partners, and the commitment from CPP partners, to address inequality across South Ayrshire. This can be seen in the work progressing in the Wallacetown Project where a multi-agency approach is being taken to address local needs. At a local level, six Locality Planning Groups support the involvement in communities influencing Health and Social Care Policy.

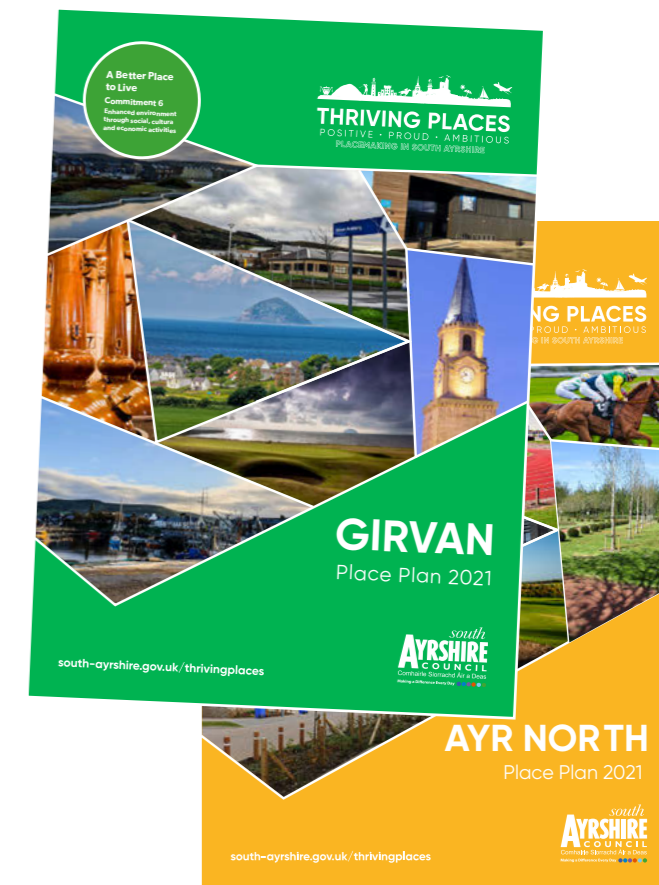


The COVID-19 pandemic presented unprecedented challenges for communities and particularly for the most vulnerable people. At the earliest stages, we recognised the need for a proactive, joined up and effective community response service. However, the pandemic also highlighted the strong community spirit across South Ayrshire and saw communities working together with the Council and the voluntary sector to support local people. The Council has harnessed the extensive contribution made by local communities and organisations to help shape how they, and the wider public sector, support local people moving forward.

**“Representing Ayr and its young people over the last two years has shown me the true community spirit within the town. COVID and its challenges brought out the humanity and togetherness within Ayr and made me proud to be a part of a community that came together to support others in need and making sure that no one was left behind.”**

James McArthur, Scottish Youth Parliament

Sadly, our communities had to pull together once again in October 2021 following a significant explosion in Kincaidston housing estate in Ayr. The support from the local community was outstanding, with local people and businesses all rallying together with the emergency services, South Ayrshire Council, utility companies and partners to support the residents affected.



Communities play a key part in creating Place Plans for South Ayrshire, with a range of community anchor organisations across our towns and villages helping to shape our places. Support and engagement with these organisations is key to creating thriving communities.

**“We fully support South Ayrshire’s bid for City Status. South Ayrshire is a vibrant place to live, work and play, with excellent communication links, a strong community and an area of growth and development.”**

Marie Oliver, Chief Executive, Voluntary Action South Ayrshire



# RECORD OF INNOVATION



## A PROUD HISTORY

South Ayrshire has a proud history in engineering. John Loudon McAdam, the pioneering engineer who changed the way roads were built around the world, was born in Ayr in 1756. As far back as the 1800s, a map of Ayr also shows a 'machine shop' in the town centre.

Today, the area has a vibrant and dynamic engineering sector, operating in a diverse range of markets, including oil and gas, food and drink,

renewables, composite materials and, of course, aerospace which is supported by a dedicated Aeronautical Engineering Training Centre in the town.

Examples of local innovators serving global markets include Glenammer who manufacture world-beating test sieves in Ayr, and Begg & Co who design and weave cashmere, working with the world's prestigious fashion houses and brands.



South Ayrshire is Scotland's largest aerospace hub.

**"South Ayrshire has a long record of innovation with multiple, highly innovative manufacturing companies in aerospace and space. The investment in aerospace and space growth is significant in the area, along with new digital technology development insertion locally. City Status will allow the attraction of the key skills to the area required to sustain the growth gained from investments."**

Michael Nelson, Etek Europe Ltd.



"South Ayrshire deserves City Status for a multitude of reasons, but none more so than for its innovation history and future ambition. As the 'home of aerospace', it is now fully embracing - and leading - the space generation. By establishing Europe's premier space cluster, alongside its existing aerospace hub, South Ayrshire is not only transforming its local economy through creating 4,000 new jobs, but playing a key strategic role in developing space capability for the UK as a whole."

**Ian Forgie, CEO, Glasgow Prestwick Airport**

The Runway at Glasgow Prestwick Airport



# SOUND GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

## THE ADMINISTRATION

County Buildings, located on Wellington Square in Ayr, is South Ayrshire Council's headquarters. The Council's administration is made up of 28 ward Councillors. Its vision is to 'make a difference every day' to the people of South Ayrshire.

The Council Plan 2018-22 set out the Council's four-year ambitions. We are one of the first councils in Scotland to introduce a Carbon Budget, highlighting our commitment to reducing carbon emissions by 75% by 2030 and Net Zero by 2045.

In February 2021, South Ayrshire was confirmed as best in Scotland for school leaver destinations, with 98.4% of our young people moving on to a positive destination when they leave school – over 5% above the national average.

Young people in South Ayrshire benefit from state-of-the-art school and education campuses, following significant investment in our school estate. Within the last year alone, three of our new school buildings have been selected as finalists in the Learning Places Scotland Awards 2021.

**“South Ayrshire Council fully supports this City Status bid. Should our bid be successful it will be a welcome accolade that will see the area take another step forward, creating a renewed sense of pride in the area for local people and for generations to come.”**

Leader of South Ayrshire Council, Councillor Peter Henderson



South Ayrshire Council headquarters were constructed between 1818 – 1822 by architect, Robert Wallace.



Marr College Campus, Tron



Ayr Academy Campus, Ayr



Ayr Grammar Primary School, Early Years, Ayrshire Archives and Registration Centre



Ayr Sheriff Court, overlooking Wellington Square, Ayr



# ASSOCIATION WITH ROYALTY

## KINGS AND QUEENS

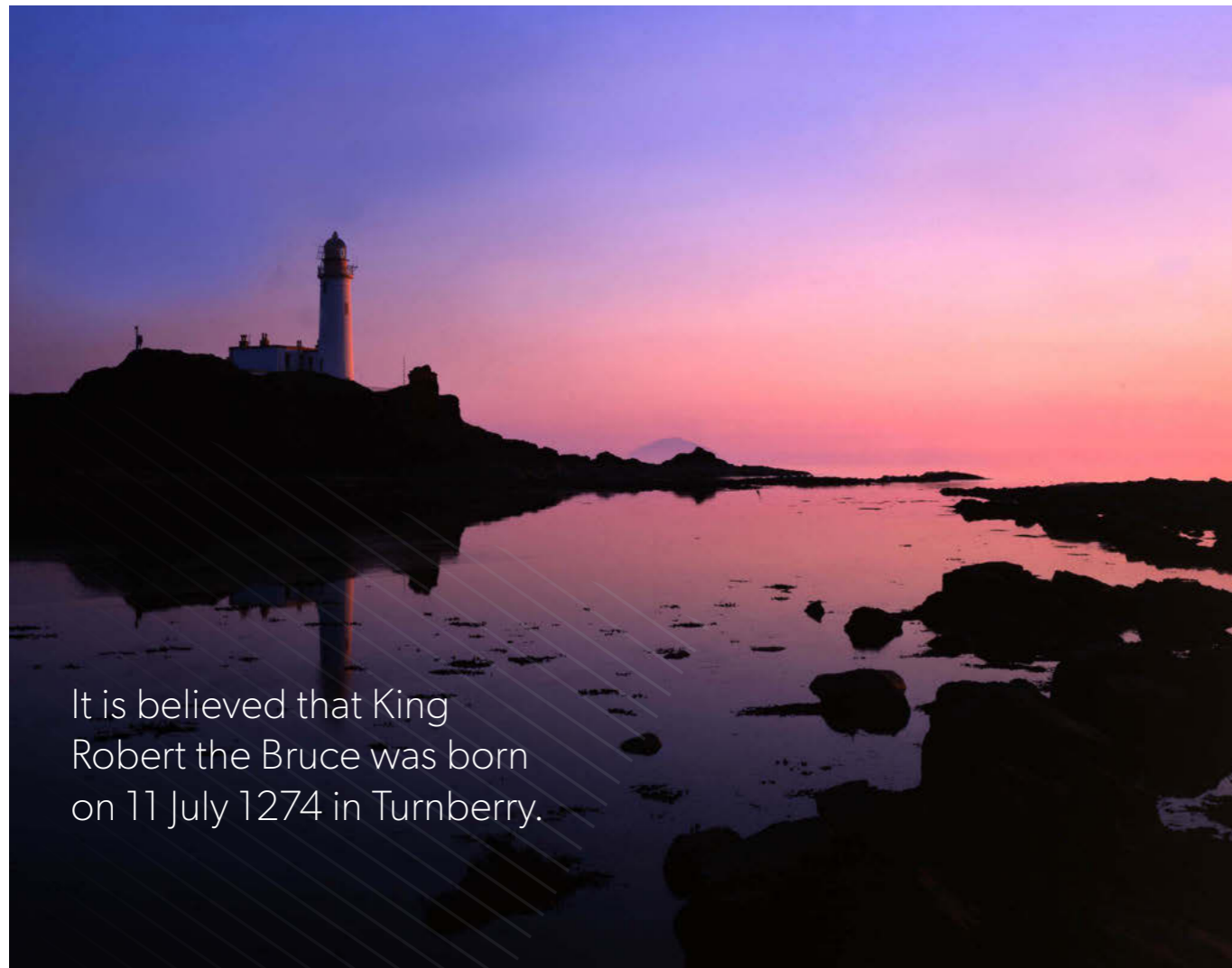
South Ayrshire has some impressive connections with royalty.

### WILLIAM THE LION

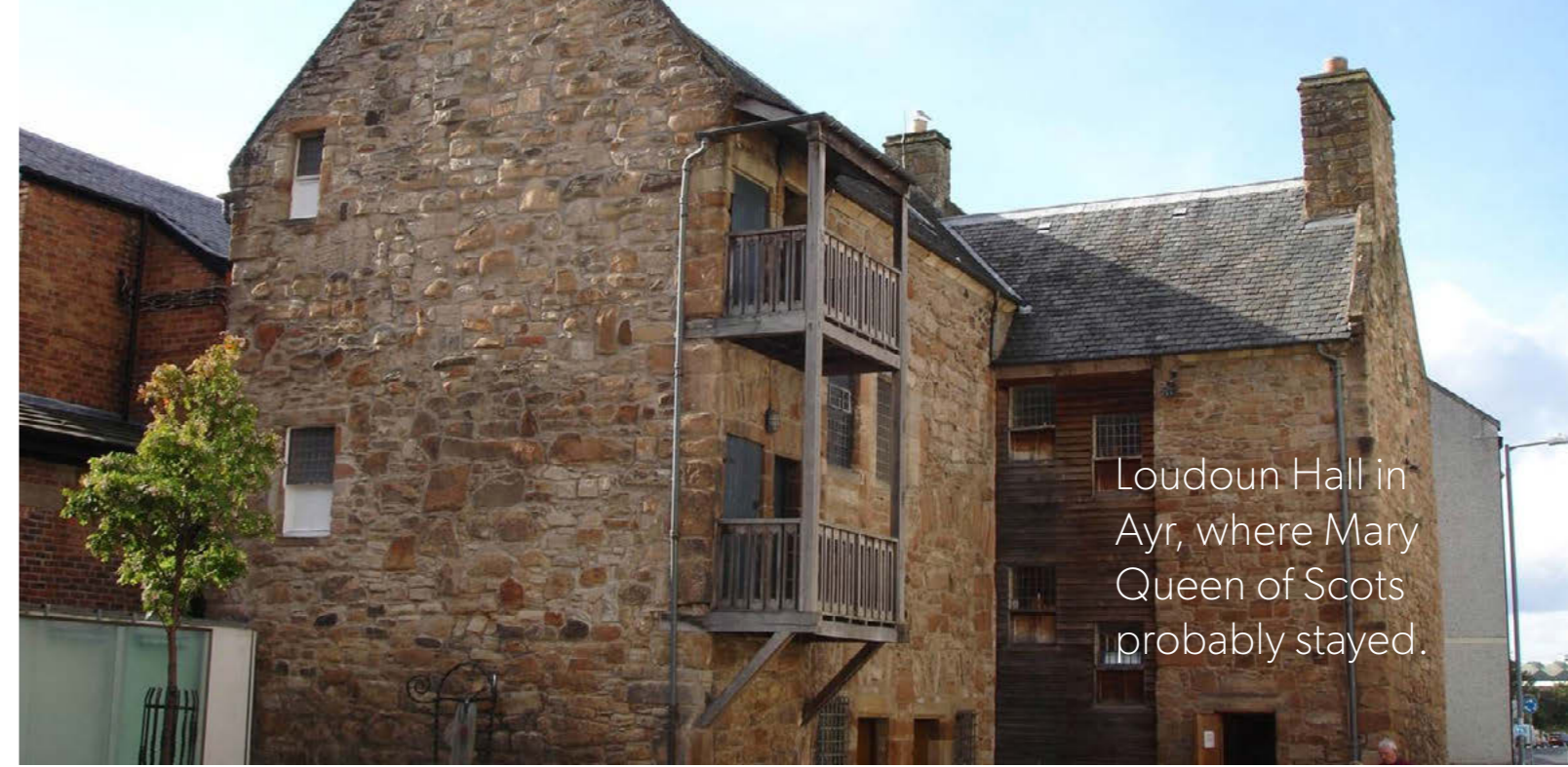
In 1197 William the Lion, King of Scots, had a royal castle built at the south side of the mouth of the River Ayr. Some years later, at Lanark, King William formally gave his assent to the Charter creating a King's or Royal Burgh beside the castle. The original document, in the care of Ayrshire Archives, is the oldest surviving Scottish Burgh Charter.

### ROBERT THE BRUCE

It is believed that King Robert the Bruce was born on 11 July 1274 in Turnberry. He is thought to have held court at Knockcushan Gardens in Girvan in 1328. Bruce held the title of Earl of Carrick, a title now held by HRH Prince Charles.



It is believed that King Robert the Bruce was born on 11 July 1274 in Turnberry.



Loudoun Hall in Ayr, where Mary Queen of Scots probably stayed.

### MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

During a royal progress in the summer of 1563, Mary Queen of Scots spent the nights of 3 and 4 August in Ayr. Her father James V and grandfather James IV had also both passed through the town while travelling in the area. Probably the best-appointed residence in the Burgh at the time of the Queen's visit was the building which is still preserved as Loudoun Hall, and it is thought likely that this is where she would have stayed.

### THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF YORK (PARENTS OF H.M. THE QUEEN)

On 10 July 1931 the Duke and Duchess of York (the future King George VI and Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother) laid the Memorial Stone at the new County Buildings in Ayr. Later that day, they opened the newly completed West of Scotland Agricultural College at Auchincruive.

### HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN AND HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH

On 3 July 1956 Queen Elizabeth, joined by Prince Phillip, arrived in Troon on a one-day tour of Ayrshire. They visited Prestwick's Municipal Buildings; County Buildings, Ayr; Burns Cottage, Alloway; and Maybole Town Hall. On 5 July 1995 the Queen performed the official opening of the Bruce Day Surgery Unit at Ayr Hospital. Her Majesty also officially opened the Tam o' Shanter Experience at Alloway.



Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh in Ayr

### THE DUKE OF ROTHESAY, EARL OF CARRICK, HRH PRINCE CHARLES

In May 2014, The Duke of Rothesay, Earl of Carrick, HRH Prince Charles, took the salute at the Honorary Freedom Ceremony and Parade given to mark the Honorary Freedom of Ayrshire being granted to The Ayrshire (Earl of Carrick's Own) Yeomanry Squadron, The Queen's Own Yeomanry. In September 2021, the Duke and Duchess of Rothesay visited Burns Cottage in Alloway. The Duchess officially opened South Ayrshire Women's Aid's new refuge accommodation.



# OTHER DISTINCTIVE FEATURES, AGE, RESIDENTS OR COMMUNITIES WHO HAVE MADE WIDELY RECOGNISED SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIETY AND CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE



## JOHN LOUDON MCADAM (1756 – 1836)

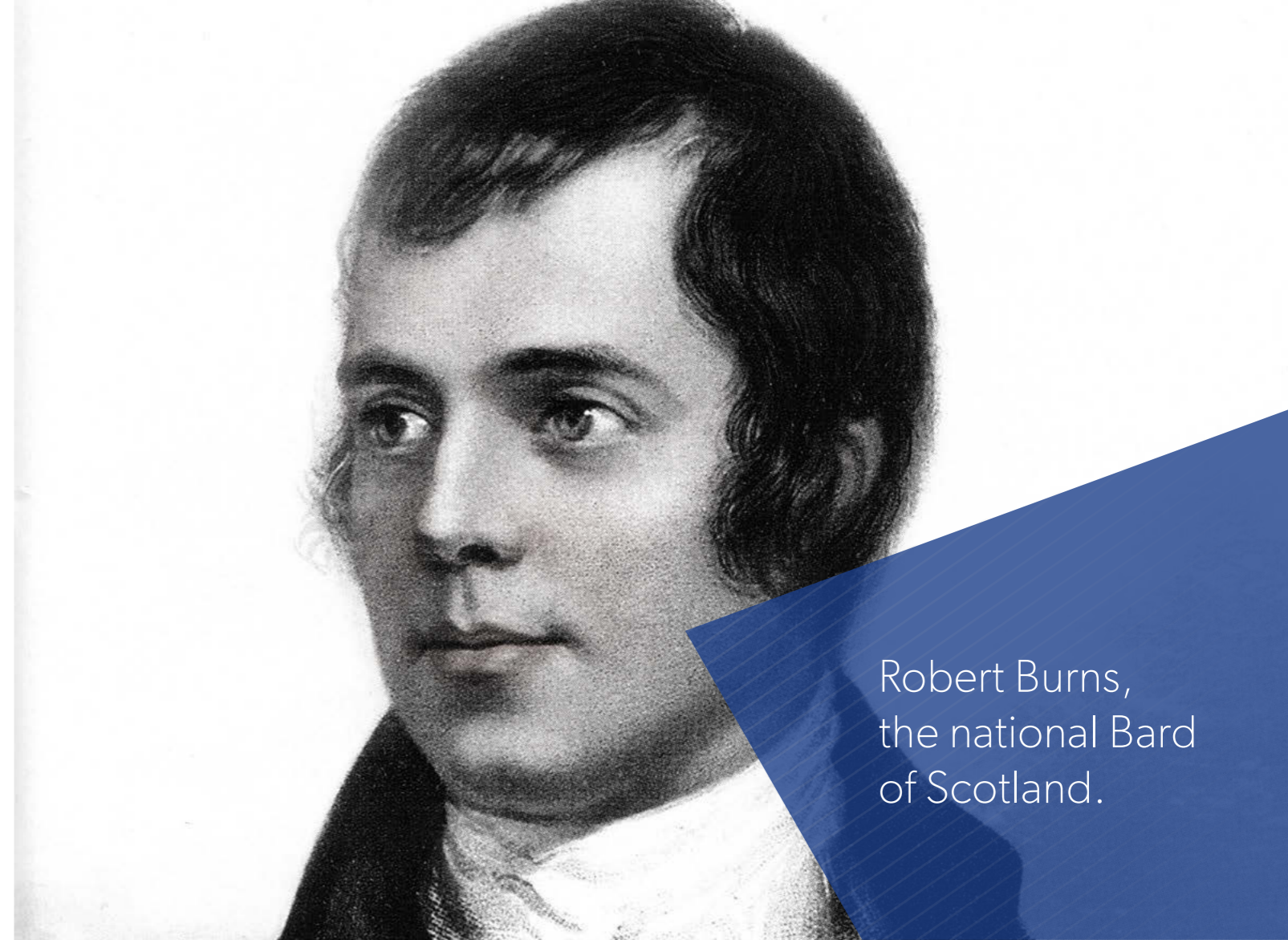
John Loudon McAdam, born in Ayr in 1756, was a pioneering Scottish civil engineer and road builder. He invented an innovative method of building roads using raised stone surfaces, completely transforming the way roads were constructed across the world. His method, known as “macadamisation” became the standard for road building internationally and is widely recognised as the greatest improvement in road building since the days of the Roman Empire.

## ROBERT BURNS (1759 – 1796)

South Ayrshire’s most famous son, Robert Burns was born in Alloway in a humble cottage built by his father. Although known as the national Bard of Scotland, his influence is global and millions of people celebrate his life and works annually at Burns Suppers in January of each year. The first ever Burns Supper was held in Alloway when Burns’ friends met in Burns Cottage to toast his memory on 21 July 1801 – five years after his death. Burns Cottage and the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum attract visitors from all over the world, all year round.

## OLD TOM MORRIS (1821 – 1908)

Thomas Mitchell Morris (Old Tom Morris) was instrumental in starting The Open Championship in 1860 – an event in which he took the first shot. ‘The Grand Old Man of Golf’ was hired by Prestwick Golf Club in the early 1850s, which was then in its infancy. At Prestwick, Morris designed, laid out and maintained the course. He also provided tuition for players and had a golf equipment business.



Robert Burns,  
the national Bard  
of Scotland.

## DAVID FOWLER MCINTYRE (1905 – 1957)

David Fowler McIntyre founded Scottish Aviation in Prestwick in 1935. In 1933, he and Douglas Douglas-Hamilton, 14th Duke of Hamilton, were the first people to fly over Mount Everest. They were both given Freedom of the Burgh of Prestwick in 1945.

## ELSIE MACKAY (1893 – 1928)

Elsie Mackay was born India in 1893. Her father, James Mackay, became the Earl of Inchcape. He purchased Glenapp Castle near Ballantrae in 1916. Elsie took up flying in 1923. She was determined to be the first woman to fly the Atlantic and took off with a male co-pilot from an airfield in Lincolnshire in March 1928. The aircraft vanished and some wreckage was eventually washed ashore. Elsie is commemorated in a stained-glass window in Glenapp Church.

## AGNES STEEL ‘NAN’ BAIRD (1911 – 1993)

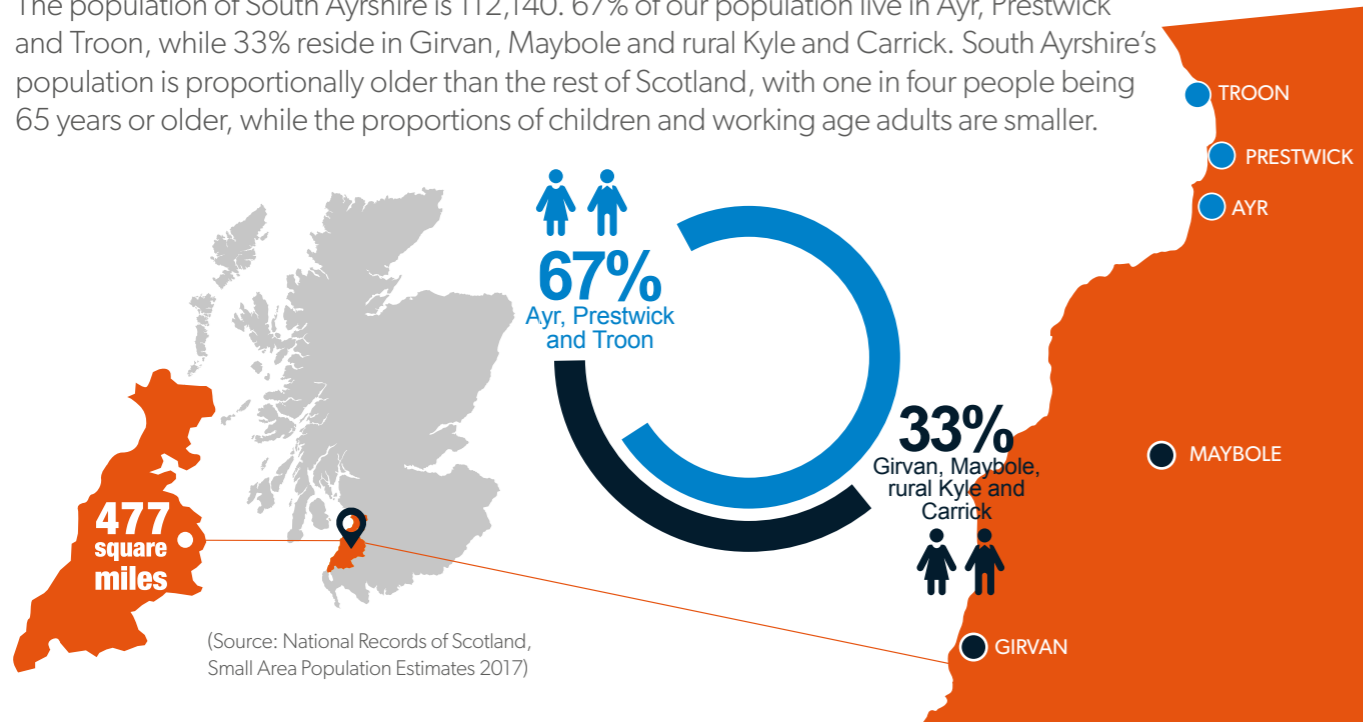
Nan Baird was born in Prestwick on 26 May 1911. Baird, an amateur golfer, was the first Scottish winner of the Girls Amateur Championship in 1929. She won the Scottish Women’s Amateur Golf Championship in 1934 and also played in the 1938 Curtis Cup. Baird was given life membership of Prestwick St Nicholas Golf Club.



# AREA PROFILE

## THE RESIDENT POPULATION OF THE AREA

The population of South Ayrshire is 112,140. 67% of our population live in Ayr, Prestwick and Troon, while 33% reside in Girvan, Maybole and rural Kyle and Carrick. South Ayrshire's population is proportionally older than the rest of Scotland, with one in four people being 65 years or older, while the proportions of children and working age adults are smaller.



### Proportions of population age groups in 2020

	Children 0-15 years	Working age 16-64 years	Older residents 65+ years
Ayr	15.4%	59.4%	25.2%
South Ayrshire	15.5%	58.7%	25.8%
Scotland	16.8%	63.9%	19.3%

By 2043, South Ayrshire's population is projected to be 105,191, a decrease of over 6%, while at the same time, the population of Scotland is projected to increase by over 2%. Although a positive net migration into South Ayrshire is predicted, it will not be enough to offset the predicted negative natural change, with many more deaths than births. South Ayrshire's pensionable population will continue to grow by over 17%, while the

number of children and working age population are predicted to decrease by 17% and 14% respectively. In particular, South Ayrshire's population aged 75 and over is expected to increase by 65% by 2043.

The age population projections highlight the importance of attracting more young people and families to live in South Ayrshire. City Status would undoubtedly help to raise the profile of the area and make it more appealing for relocation.

During the period July 2020 to June 2021, nearly 60,000 people aged 16 to 64 were working within the South Ayrshire labour market travel to work area (TTWA), of which it is estimated just over 12,000 live outwith South Ayrshire.

**“Achieving City Status for Ayr could bring benefits for businesses such as ours who are seeking to increase their workforce. City Status could help attract more skilled workers to relocate to the area.”**

Carlyn Paton, We Hae Meat Ltd



Prestwick  
'the home of  
aerospace.'

## AEROSPACE

As the 'home of aerospace', Prestwick has led on aerospace innovation for over 100 years and continues to do so with the formation of Europe's leading space hub. The 1900s saw the aerospace industry form in Prestwick, from first flyers in 1913 to the launch of Scottish Aviation Limited in 1935. The airfield's founders, David McIntyre and Douglas Douglas-Hamilton, Duke of Hamilton, were the first aviators to fly over Mount Everest. Soon afterwards, the airfield became an airport with the addition of passenger facilities and was used as a military base in World War II.

Today, Prestwick Aerospace, located beside Glasgow Prestwick Airport, is Scotland's largest aerospace hub. As an established centre of excellence for Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO), aero structures and design engineering, it is home to global aerospace companies such as Spirit AeroSystems, BAE Systems, Collins Aerospace, Woodward and GE, with over 50% of Scotland's entire aerospace workforce (around 4,500 employees) based here.

Following the £80 million Ayrshire Growth Deal funding, Prestwick is one of the UK's leading centres for aerospace and space activity. Plans are already well underway to establish Prestwick Spaceport - a horizontal launch facility, with first commercial launches set for 2023 - and Europe's premier space cluster for satellite manufacturing companies.

In addition to infrastructure for the spaceport, the Ayrshire Growth Deal investment will be used for commercial build for new and existing investors, and also to establish an Aerospace and Space Technology Applications Centre to nurture and develop the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) skills needed to keep the UK at the forefront of the industry. The focus will be on driving productivity through MRO innovation, automation, adaptive robotics, Industry 4.0 and training, and unrivalled Research & Development. Spirit AeroSystems have also recently opened an Aerospace Innovation Centre on site.

**“Chevron Aircraft Maintenance is proud to support Ayr's bid for City Status. We are part of a global group with over 100 facilities across five continents, employing over 7,000 enthusiastic aviation professionals worldwide. We plan to significantly expand our existing aviation business in South Ayrshire and the importance of Ayr as a local hub, both strategically and economically, cannot be underestimated. City Status will help Ayr regenerate, grow and promote Ayrshire as a whole. Success in this bid will really support the growth of companies like ours in this region.”**

Mike Stewart, Director of Maintenance, Chevron Aircraft Maintenance Ltd.





South Ayrshire is playing a key role in strengthening Scotland's manufacturing industry.



The ports of Ayr and Troon, operated by Associated British Ports, contribute around £42 million to the UK economy every year, including £28 million locally.

## LIFE SCIENCES

South Ayrshire is home to a number of organisations in this key area, with companies in sub-sectors such as drug discovery; toxicology; medical technologies; and biotechnology. Exciting research in life sciences can be carried out in South Ayrshire with educational partners including the Scottish Rural College and the University of the West of Scotland.

## ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

Following a £2 million investment from the Advancing Manufacturing Challenge Fund (AMCF), South Ayrshire is playing a key role in strengthening Scotland's manufacturing industry, through the establishment in 2020 of the Aerospace Digital Visualisation Suite (ADVS) and Supply Chain AeroSpace (SCA) projects.

The ADVS is a superb resource which offers Small or Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) access to innovative Extended Reality (XR) - Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) - technology, as well as digital visualisation to help them enter or expand their presence in the aerospace sector. The SCA project helps SMEs to improve their productivity and competitiveness through the introduction of innovative manufacturing technologies, via the National Manufacturing Institute Scotland (NMIS).

## THE PUBLIC SECTOR

The public sector also plays a significant role in employment in the area, with two of the largest employers being NHS Ayrshire & Arran (including University Hospital Ayr, Ailsa Hospital, Biggart Hospital and Girvan Community Hospital), and South Ayrshire Council.

## FOOD AND DRINK

South Ayrshire has a strong food and drink sector and is famous for its local produce - from quality meat products from Ayrshire cows at the local 'We Hae Meat' farm, to Ayrshire tatties, Grant's Whisky, Hendrick's Gin and even chocolate from the Nestle factory in Girvan. Local success stories also include the Ayr-based, multi award-winning Punjab Pakora, now one of the UK's leading manufacturers of Indian cuisine

## COASTAL COMMUNITIES

Our coastal and rural communities are also a key part of our economy. The ports of Ayr and Troon, operated by Associated British Ports, contribute around £42 million to the UK economy every year, including £28 million locally. The Port of Ayr is the first commercial port encountered by vessels entering the Firth of Clyde, handling 340,000 tonnes of cargo. It specialises in handling dry bulks, such as salt, animal feed, heavy lift

and forest products, of which it handles around 25,000 tonnes each year. The Port of Troon plays an integral role in Scotland's supply chains and is home to Timberlink, a sustainable distribution service which handles over 100,000 tonnes of timber each year across Scotland and Ireland.

South Ayrshire has a diverse farming community with local produce being of the highest standards. Local farmers are working towards just transition and making farming more sustainable.

## THE AYRSHIRE GROWTH DEAL

On 19 November 2020 the £251 million Ayrshire Growth Deal was signed between the UK and Scottish governments, and the three local councils. It presents a once in a generation opportunity to transform Ayrshire's economic prospects and benefit people and places across the area. The deal allows scope to develop key strategic sites and sectors and will help to realise the area's potential as a world-class business region. Specifically, £80 million is being invested in Prestwick, establishing it as a leading centre for aerospace and space in the UK.

In the aftermath of COVID-19, South Ayrshire has an exciting opportunity to transform to a new economy. Its ten-year Strategic Economic Plan: Vision 2030 sets a course for a decarbonised and sustainable future for businesses, people and our environment. Vision 2030 builds on South Ayrshire's traditional sectors such as aerospace, engineering, food and drink, and tourism, but also focuses on the new digital economy, advanced manufacturing and the fast-growing space sector.

Local businesses are fully supportive of South Ayrshire's bid for City Status, recognising the benefits it will bring to the local economy.

**"As an Ayrshire born man, I fully support South Ayrshire's bid for City Status for many reasons. South Ayrshire is not only excellent for its history; it has a huge future and its residents have a massive role to play in how we all shape our world. Tourism, golf, food and drink are just the tip of the iceberg on what is produced from South Ayrshire. It has a long innovation heritage that truly spans the globe. Prestwick Aerospace cluster represents some true giants in aviation who have all been able to conduct highly successful operations from the Prestwick hub. With space and spacecraft launch on the horizon, innovation will continue to thrive in South Ayrshire. The region is truly an inspirational place and to have City Status would give it the recognition it deserves."**

Andrew Marshall, Woodward Aircraft Engine Systems





**“Scottish Enterprise is delighted to hear that South Ayrshire are applying for city status for Ayr and the surrounding area as part of the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Celebrations.**

**The area has economic strengths in Food & Drink, Tourism, Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering and Aerospace, all important sectors to the national economy. It has good transport connectivity, a unique cultural offer and a strong sense of historic identity. It has long sought to maximise its geographical location, utilising surrounding economic assets such as Prestwick Airport and Cairnryan Port. They have strong local partnerships and work strategically with regional partners to attract investment to the area as evidenced by the Ayrshire Growth Deal. This will bring £80m to South Ayrshire specifically with £250m of further investment within Ayrshire, generating economic benefits to its own businesses and residents, but also to those in the wider region. The town recognises that in a post pandemic the world the economy is changing and they need to plan for that change. On this basis, they have set out an economic strategy and vision to take them through to 2030**

**As Scotland’s national economic development agency, Scottish Enterprise is committed to growing the Scottish economy for the benefit of all, helping to create more quality jobs and a brighter future for everyone. SE works closely with South Ayrshire Council and its partners, on a range of economic development activities and are supportive of this bid. Ayr and the surrounding area have demonstrated their ability to look to the future and their capacity to lead the UK in sectors such as Aerospace and Space. We believe it would have a real positive influence on their growth ambitions and enable them to build on the work already underway to realise their vision of a South Ayrshire that will be the place where businesses thrive and people enjoy an outstanding quality of life by 2030.”**

Theresa Correia, Scottish Enterprise








Open-air recreation in South Ayrshire, helping to improve health and wellbeing.

Prestwick Links Golf Course, Prestwick



Greenan Castle at the south end of Ayr beach.

Ayr Beach - Greenan Shore

## PUBLIC GREEN SPACES, SPORT AND LEISURE FACILITIES, AND SHOPPING CENTRES

South Ayrshire's outdoor spaces extend to the coast, parks, hills, forest, farmland and inland water. They afford fantastic opportunities for open-air recreation, help to improve health and wellbeing, and contribute to the local economy.

### OUR GREEN SPACES

South Ayrshire boasts many beautiful parklands for residents and visitors alike to enjoy. This year, four of our parks - Belleisle, Rozelle, Fullarton Estate and Newton Park - were presented with the prestigious Green Flag Award. This award celebrates well maintained parks and green spaces, and recognises their importance for exercise, play and mental wellbeing.

South Ayrshire also offers numerous walks for all abilities - from relaxing strolls in our parks, to more challenging trails through our beautiful countryside. Many of these walks also afford the option of delving into the history of the local area along the way, such as the Blue Bonnet Trails, which encompass two self-guided walks from Ayr Town Centre to Alloway. These interesting trails allow people to follow in the footsteps of Robert Burns' fictitious hero, Tam o' Shanter. Other notable walks include the Smugglers' Trail in Troon; the Green Knight's Trail in Prestwick; the Straiton Monument Trail near Maybole; and the Changue Forest trails in the village of Barr by Girvan.

## OUR BEACHES

With one of the most memorable stretches of coastline in the UK, South Ayrshire is blessed with some of the country's best beaches.

Ayr has a long, sandy beach which has been enjoyed for generations and still attracts thousands of visitors each year. The esplanade runs from the harbour, south to the River Doon and has plenty of facilities available, while the adjacent Low Green has a long history as a place for recreation.

At the southern end of South Ayrshire, Ballantrae beach has a charming mixture of tranquillity and ruggedness to enjoy. The beach is a blend of sand and shingle, with the harbour to the north and a natural habitat area in the south for a wide range of coastal plant life. The south beach, which is listed by Scottish Natural Heritage as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, is also home to a colony of breeding birds.

Girvan beach offers beautiful, wide sands, with a promenade running its full length. The lively harbour is home to a mix of fishing and pleasure boats, and wildlife such as seals and swans. There are many attractions around the seafront for people of all ages to enjoy, such as the boating pond, pedal-karting along the promenade and the traditional putting green.

Turnberry Lighthouse, a must-see for those visiting the area, sits proudly on the coast at Turnberry. Also nestled close by are the ruins of Turnberry Castle, the ancestral home of Marjorie, Countess of Carrick, mother to King Robert the Bruce. The castle is thought to have been Bruce's birthplace in 1274.



Rozelle Park - a Green Flag Award open space in Ayr.



Girvan beach offers beautiful, wide, sands with a promenade running its full length.





Troon Marina,  
popular with  
Marine  
enthusiasts.

Maidens has a long, sandy beach with a grass foreland and stunning scenery. Culzean Castle and Country Park sits at the north of the beach, with Port Murray and Turnberry to the south. The beach is often used for equestrian pursuits by local riding schools, while the bay forms part of the RSPB's designated Ornithological Site.

Dunure beach is particularly special as it is overlooked by a historic ruined castle that clings to the cliff above. The beach is mainly rock and shingle which makes it perfect for climbing, exploring and studying rockpools. About a mile south of Dunure, on the A719, sits the fascinating 'Electric Brae' (Croy Brae). For years, visitors to the area have been intrigued by the odd sensation of 'rolling up-hill' at this section of the road. People can park in the lay-by, release their handbrake, and experience the illusion, which is actually caused by the configuration of the land on either side of the road.

In the north, Troon beach is divided into two areas by Troon Harbour which is a busy marina, popular with sailing enthusiasts. The internationally renowned Royal Troon Golf Course, which has hosted the British Open Golf Championship on many occasions, sits to the southern end of the beach. The beach, which is backed by large dunes, has some great rock pools and is a favourite with local families and tourists.

Prestwick beach has been popular since the late Victorian era when it became a health resort of choice into the 1900s. People flocked to the area to benefit from the sea breezes and relaxing walks along the beach. Prestwick Golf Course, where the first British Open Golf Championship was held in 1860, lies to the north of the beach.

**“Many of our customers are from outside of the local area and are drawn here due to the local beaches and amenities. City Status approval will provide further enhancement of these amenities and increase customers, which results in increased spending in the area. A number of our customers who have bought caravans have then gone on to purchase houses in South Ayrshire due to loving the area.”**

Michael Nelson, Culzean Bay Holiday Homes

**“As the largest public transport operator in Ayr, Stagecoach West Scotland is delighted to support the application for City Status. Ayr is not just important to the people of the town, but it remains known all over Scotland as one of our most famous and loved seaside resorts, with generations of families from the central belt in particular holding fond memories of sunny days out and holidays at the beach. Being only 60 minutes from Glasgow by coach and with services every 30 minutes, Ayr remains a popular destination for a sunny day out with sandy beaches, ice cream and shopping all easily accessed by public transport. Its association with Robert Burns, be that as his birthplace and the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, the Poet's Path or the many Ayr landmarks in his works, means that Ayr also has an international status of recognition that few places can match. The racecourse puts Ayr firmly in the mind of sports fans as the venue for meets all year round but most notably for the Ayr Gold Cup and Scottish Grand National. Stagecoach West Scotland is headquartered in Ayr, from where services from Dumfries and Stranraer, throughout Ayrshire and up to Glasgow and Cumbernauld and over to Edinburgh are all coordinated. With a comprehensive local bus network, miles of walking trails and cycle paths, and a train station, Ayr is well disposed to meet the future aspirations of our cities to encourage active travel and to improve quality of life and place. Stagecoach West Scotland therefore fully supports the bid for City Status for Ayr.”**

Fraser Smith, Stagecoach West Scotland

## SPORT AND LEISURE IN SOUTH AYRSHIRE

Over the years, South Ayrshire has produced a number of sporting heroes across a whole host of sports. Just some who either originate from, or were educated in the area, include international rugby players Gordon Strachan, Ian McLaughlan and Gordon Brown; professional footballers Kris Boyd and Girvan-born Peter McCloy and Eilish McSorley; Olympic athletes Brian Whittle and Duncan Scott; Paralympians Jamie and Scott McCowan; Maybole's inspirational frame runner and swimmer, Kayleigh Haggo; and numerous golf legends such as Jimmy Adams, Old Tom Morris and John Hunter.

**“I support South Ayrshire Council's bid for City Status as it would be great for my hometown to have this status. South Ayrshire Council have supported me throughout my sporting career and I appreciate their support.”**

Kayleigh Haggo, World and European Champion

**“As proud residents of South Ayrshire we believe South Ayrshire and Ayr deserve City Status. As Paralympians we were very proud to not only represent Paralympics GB but represent South Ayrshire, and the support we receive from communities in the area is amazing. Throughout our years of competing, we have trained in Ayr and have seen so much work over the years in making South Ayrshire a thriving sporting area for young people and we hope to see the next generation represent the area at upcoming Olympic and Paralympic games.”**

Jamie & Scott McCowan, Paralympic Boccia Athletes



Jamie & Scott  
McCowan,  
Tokyo 2020  
Paralympics.

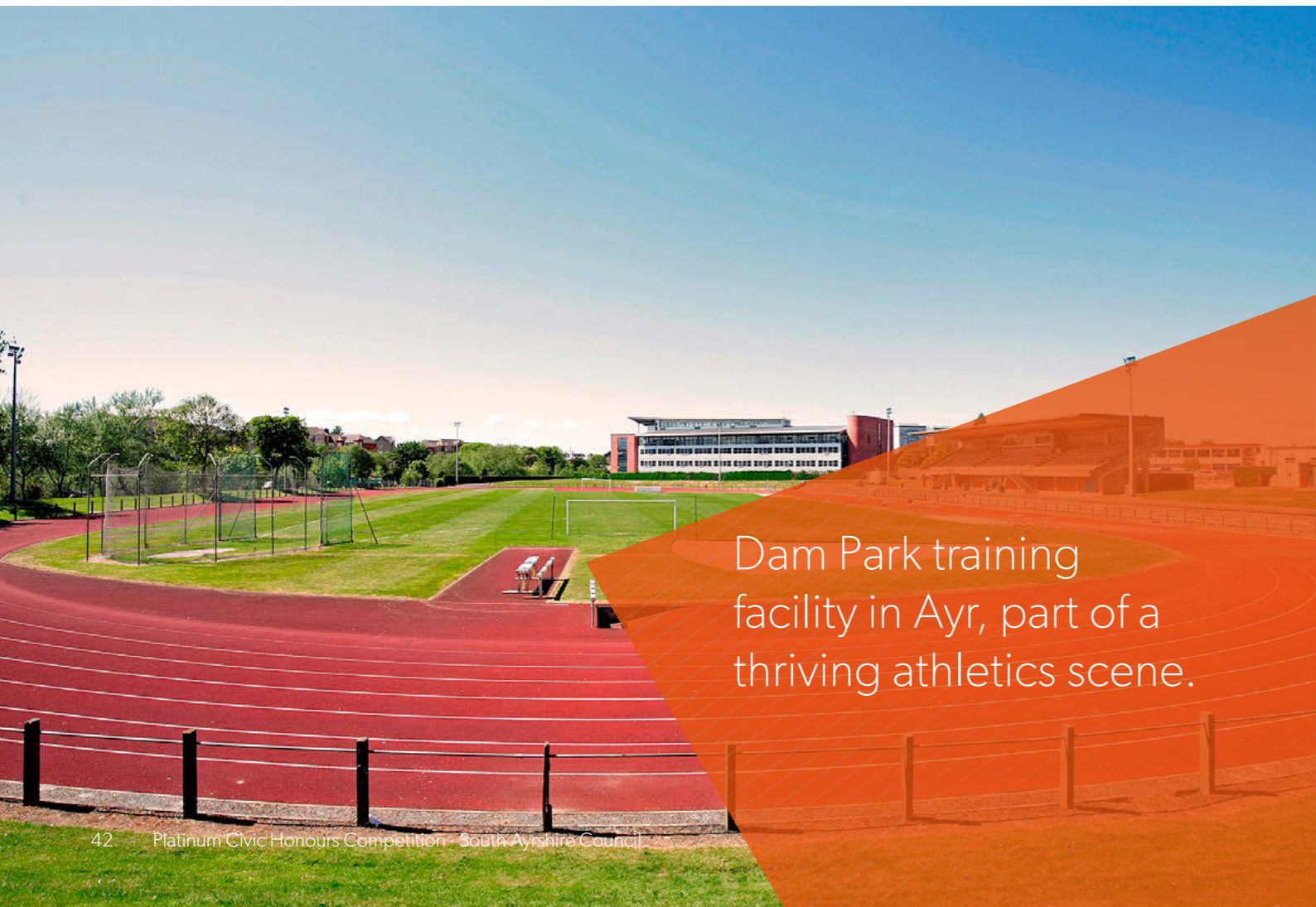


South Ayrshire offers a wealth of sport and leisure pursuits for people of all ages and abilities to help them to grow well, live well and age well. There is a strong network of sport clubs, groups and third sector organisations who provide programmes and events throughout the year.

South Ayrshire Council's Sport & Leisure Service operates nine indoor sporting venues including leisure centres, swimming pools and activity centres. There is also a range of 3G/all-weather and grass pitches supporting the development of football, rugby and hockey.

South Ayrshire has a thriving athletics scene. Ayr Seaforth Athletics Club has produced many young national champions and medal winners, along with some Scottish records. They also have world record holders in para-sport, including Gavin Drysdale for frame running and Kayleigh Haggo for frame running and swimming. A fantastic new multi-purpose campus is under development at Craigue in Ayr which will support athletics, rugby, football and a range of watersports. This new facility is just one of a number of investments South Ayrshire Council is making in sport and leisure to promote health and wellbeing, and active living.

Ayr is home to the Scottish Championship football club Ayr United, affectionately known as the 'Honest Men' from a line in Burns' famous poem 'Tam o' Shanter'. There are lots of opportunities for young boys and girls to play football in the area. South Ayrshire has a wealth of grass and 3G pitches spread across 13 venues, hosting 17 individual community, amateur and junior football clubs.



Dam Park training facility in Ayr, part of a thriving athletics scene.

Rugby is also hugely popular in South Ayrshire, with many thriving local clubs. The Ayr Rugby Football Club are a rugby union club, that had their beginnings in the late 19th century and have produced many standout players. The club have won the Scottish Premiership four times and were three times Scottish Cup champions. The club were the first in Scotland to employ a female Rugby Development Officer. As one of the top six clubs in Scotland, they were recently awarded a prestigious Scottish Rugby Super6 franchise and went on to win the first national championship.



Ayrshire Bulls – winning FOSROC Super6 2021



Ayr 1st XV with Scottish Rugby Premiership Trophy & Cup



Ayr Ladies Team

**“Ayr Rugby Club is delighted to support South Ayrshire’s bid for City Status.”**

Glen Tippet - Ayr Rugby Club

Ayr is home of the National Centre for Bowling in Scotland. Lawn bowls is striving to promote itself as the ultimate sport for all which can improve physical and mental health, as well as providing a community that welcomes all.

South Ayrshire also has a superb swimming community, with pools in each of the five towns. South Ayrshire Swim Team (SAST) is a thriving and growing swim club based in Prestwick. SAST was formed in 2001 when clubs from Ayr, Troon and Prestwick merged to share resources and pool facilities to form a larger, more competitive and inclusive club which caters for young and older swimmers of all abilities. Working closely with South Ayrshire Council and Scottish Swimming, SAST is run by an elected committee of parents, coaches and volunteers.



Ayr is home of the National Centre for Bowling



**“As a proud west coaster, my swimming journey began in South Ayrshire, where not only did I first learn to swim, but where I also joined my first swimming club. The encouragement of my teachers and coaches, as well as the pool facilities, have all played a significant part in my swimming career to date, which has seen me become the UK’s most decorated Olympian from a single Olympic**

**Games. As the Ambassador for Learn to Swim in Scotland I have returned to my roots on a number of occasions and am delighted to see the enthusiasm and passion to teach and develop the next generation, alongside some great swimming facilities, remains at the heart of those in South Ayrshire and I am backing the bid for City Status to be achieved.”**

Duncan Scott - Olympic Swimmer, Scottish Swimming



Tokyo 2020 Olympic swimming champion Duncan Scott.



Prestwick Sailing Club was established in 1959 and has grown over the last 60 years to become a recognised Royal Yacht Association training centre.

Our coastal communities are perfect for a variety of water pursuits, such as sailing, windsurfing, canoeing, wild swimming, paddle boarding and yachting. Troon Marina is a popular destination for yacht enthusiasts thanks to its accessibility and excellent facilities, while the waters of Middlesbrough are regularly peppered with locals and visitors who enjoy paddle boarding, sailing and canoeing. Prestwick Sailing Club was established in 1959 and has grown over the last 60 years to become a recognised Royal Yachting Association training centre and a home to dinghy sailing and racing, windsurfing, coastal rowing, paddle boarding and powerboating.

Sport in South Ayrshire is not just about elite athletes - there truly is something for everyone. South Ayrshire Council puts a strong focus on supporting people of all abilities to be active, including children, older people, those with disabilities and care experienced young people. Young carers and care experienced young people under the age of 26 in South Ayrshire benefit from free access to all Council sport and leisure facilities.

It is not only through sport and leisure that care experienced young people in South Ayrshire are supported to achieve their potential. South Ayrshire Council places a strong focus on corporate parenting and Champions for Change South Ayrshire Champions Board works to give young people who are looked after a voice and use their care experience to create positive change across the area.

**“Champions for Change South Ayrshire Champions Board recognises that South Ayrshire has placed young people with care experience right at the very heart of their decision making, by listening to young people with lived experience of care and responding by making them a priority in local planning and across services. Young people with care experience have contributed to the development of South Ayrshire’s parenting promise, trained corporate parents on how to understand their role, asked services to develop specialist teams and learn how to work in a way that is trauma informed with a focus on nurture. South Ayrshire has responded to all of this with humility and compassion, and as a result, we now have a community which better understands the needs of those with care experience and recognises the valuable asset their insight brings.”**

Dawn Parker - Champions for Change South Ayrshire Champions Board



## ENTERTAINMENT AND SHOPPING

### THE GAIETY THEATRE

The Gaiety Theatre was built in Ayr in 1902 and quickly developed a reputation as a variety theatre. Many British stars regularly appeared on its stage with several starting their careers there. The theatre is now run by the Ayr Gaiety Partnership. One of Scotland's best-known music stars, Moira Anderson, made her first stage appearance as a stand-in at the Gaiety. Anderson, whose singing talent first emerged in a school musical at Ayr Academy, went on to make many radio and television performances, and also had her own television show in 1968.

### HORSE RACING

Horse racing in Ayr can be traced back to 1576, however, the first properly organised meeting was held at Ayr Seafeld course in 1771, with the first Ayr Gold Cup run in 1804. The new Ayr Racecourse on Whitlets Road was opened in 1907 and is now home to the Scottish Grand National and other key meetings each year, attracting droves of visitors to the area.



Ayr Racecourse - home to the Scottish Grand National and Ayr Gold Cup.



Ayr High Street.

## SHOPPING AND TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

South Ayrshire is home to many local businesses and small independent retailers. Ayr Central shopping centre opened in 2006 and is the dominant shopping destination within the town centre.

**"We are delighted support South Ayrshire's bid for City Status. We are born and bred in Ayr, and we have run our business, Renaldos, successfully for 35 years. Lockdown was difficult for everyone, despite this, Ayr boasts many first class bars, restaurants and hotels many of which have survived and even flourished during this period, finding unique ways to adapt. Our beaches are a wonderful attraction and well used by locals and visitors alike. The regeneration of Ayr has begun - shops have been compulsory purchased and with public consultation, plans have been drawn up to create a lovely riverside we can be once again be proud of. Further exciting plans include a Sports Academy, a multi-cinema complex and a new leisure centre in the heart of the high street. All of this will create jobs, raise the spirits of the locals, attract more visitors and breathe life into the town and South Ayrshire as a whole. South Ayrshire really deserves City Status. 'For Honest Men and Bonnie Lassies' it will have so much to offer for generations to come."**

Linda Galli – Local Business Owner

The economic impact of COVID-19, as well as the wider economic picture and changing shopping trends, has been extremely challenging for some of our high streets and town centres. Significant regeneration is taking place to help town centres to thrive, and City Status would most definitely help South Ayrshire by encouraging visitors and shoppers to the area.

South Ayrshire has been actively supporting the national Scotland Loves Local campaign, to help businesses recover from the impact of COVID-19. The Council encourages residents and employees to shop local wherever possible (through publicity and social media campaigns) and most recently launched the South Ayrshire Gift Card to lock spend into the local area.

Plans to transform a former shopping centre, The Kyle Centre, into a multi-million pound state-of-the-art cinema and entertainment complex will undoubtedly attract more people to Ayr town centre. This will be further enhanced by the development of the new Ayr leisure centre.



**“Ayr is a flourishing town with a colourful history and achieving City Status could bring benefits for all those living, working, and visiting the area. City Status could be a powerful tool used to protect its present and future development.”**

Kenny Blair - Buzzworks Holdings

**“Ayr is a town which prides itself for its vast cultural heritage and is a treasure within Scotland to visit. The town is an integral part of South Ayrshire which is home to many great people and businesses. Being awarded a city status would drive traffic and investment to the area, and therefore increase the reputation of the town. This award would bring Ayr and its surrounding areas into the limelight and allow for it to be recognised as a leader for innovation and growth.”**

Dhruv Duggal - Punjab Pakora

River Ayr bridge

A significant regeneration project, in partnership with South Ayrshire Council, the community and local businesses, is transforming Maybole's town centre. The project, partners and owners of buildings will invest up to £7.5 million over the next three years to improve buildings in the town, develop a number of cycling and walking routes, and transform the High Street to create a welcoming place to visit, enjoy and spend time in.

The Maclaurin Galleries, situated within Rozelle Park in Ayr.

## MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

### ROBERT BURNS BIRTHPLACE MUSEUM (RBBM)

Situated in Alloway, the RBBM first welcomed visitors in 2011 and, at that time, was the first major museum to open in Scotland in three years. Burns is an international cultural icon, Scotland's National Bard and favourite son, who is loved the world over. The RBBM celebrates Burns' influence on the modern world and his contribution to Scotland's culture and creativity. It houses more than 5,000 Burns artefacts including his handwritten manuscripts, the Burns family Bible and a miniature volume of verse that travelled 5.7 million miles to space. The RBBM brings together all the Alloway sites with a connection to Burns including the 600m<sup>2</sup> museum, the Burns Monument where Burns Tourism began back in 1823, Alloway Auld Kirk, Burns Cottage, an education pavilion and Auld Brig o' Doon. The two main sites (Burns Cottage and the RBBM) are connected by the Poet's Path, a 500m pedestrian walkway.

### MACLAURIN GALLERIES

The Maclaurin Galleries opened in June 1976, and consist of four galleries, which are attached via corridors to Rozelle House. Scottish painter, Peter Howson OBE, held his first exhibition here in 1982. In 2014, Peter became the Patron for the Maclaurin Galleries.

### ROZELLE HOUSE

Rozelle House is located in picturesque Rozelle Park, Ayr. It displays objects, artefacts and works of art from the South Ayrshire Council collections, as well as offering a changing programme of exhibitions, events and activities.

### THE MCKECHNIE INSTITUTE, GIRVAN

The McKechnie Institute is Girvan's cultural hub. It features a permanent display of artefacts highlighting the town's heritage and hosts a regular programme of changing exhibitions, events and activities.

**“South Ayrshire has a vibrant community supported by Ayr Arts Guild, Ayr Film Society, Kyle & Carrick Civic Society, Ayrshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, Ayrshire Federation of Historical Societies, Ayrshire Philatelic Society and many other societies and community organisations.”**

Jef Whittle, Ayr Independent Shops & Businesses co-operative



# IN SUMMARY

## INFORMATION ON LOCAL AUTHORITY SUPPORT FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

South Ayrshire Council works in partnership with Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA) to co-ordinate volunteering and provide funding to help groups and organisations build capacity, such as the Coastal Communities Fund and the Investing in Communities Fund.

There is a strong relationship between the Third Sector and the local Public Sector. The establishment of a Communities Reference Group provides a forum for communities of interest to form relationships, and plan and deliver activities across the area.

South Ayrshire has a robust community support network, with groups and organisations that provide support to those experiencing very challenging circumstances, such as Ayrshire Hospice, South Ayrshire Women's Aid, Dementia Friendly Ayr and Dementia Friendly Prestwick. Dementia Friendly towns support local people with dementia and their families, helping them to remain part of their community.

**“South Ayrshire Council have aided LGBT Youth Scotland in supporting LGBTI young people across the region for many years. Our staff, volunteers and young people have been welcomed, embraced and supported to integrate into the wider community - this has been so important for our young people, as it has improved their confidence and their sense of belonging in South Ayrshire. It was a proud moment when SAC flew the LGBT flag above County Buildings, and since then, young people have spoken openly of feeling accepted and a sense of belonging in the area.”**

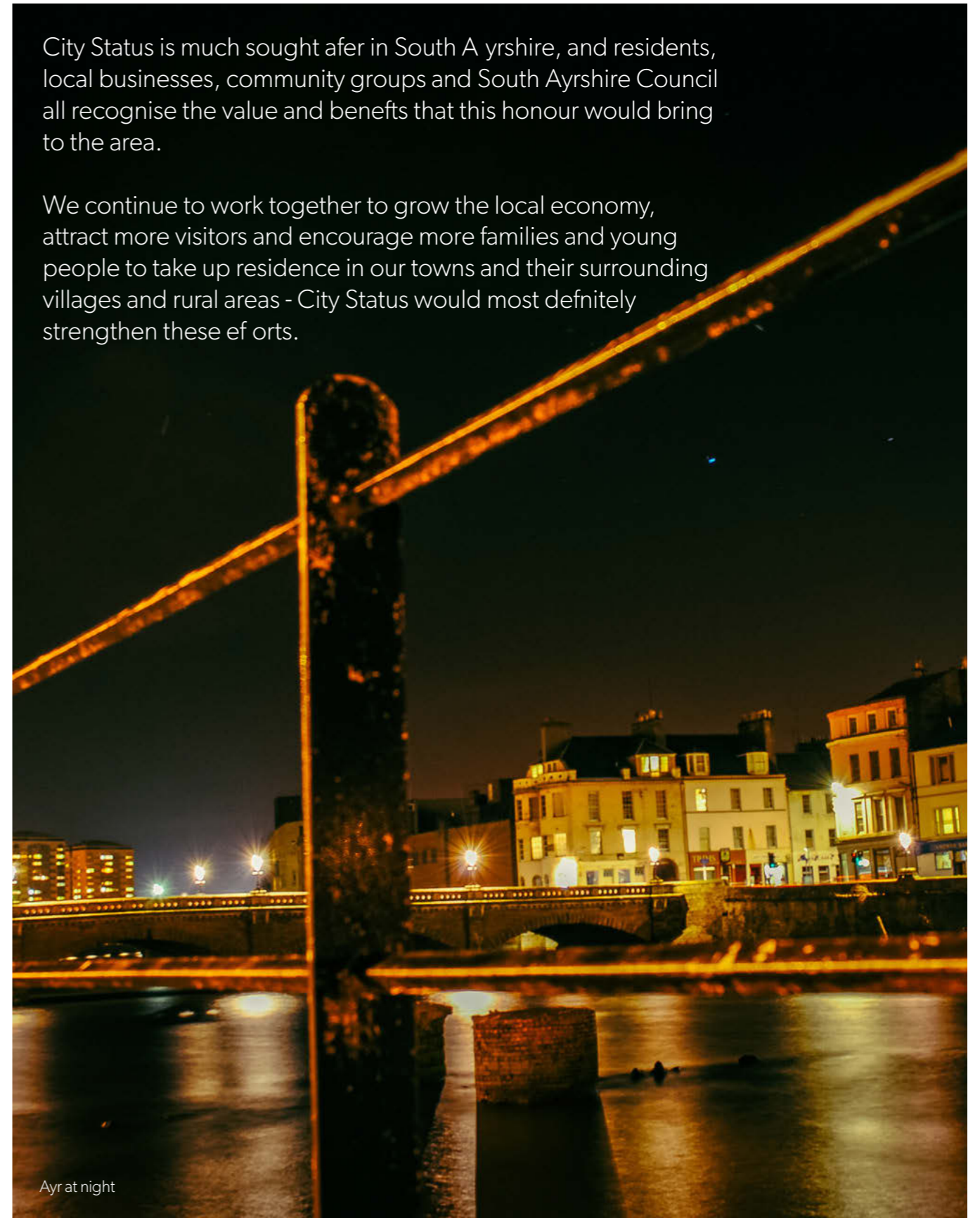
Steven Graham - LGBT Youth Scotland

South Ayrshire Council understands the value that volunteering brings to the local community. As such, in 2018 the Council introduced an employee volunteering policy in 2018 which provides paid time of, up to seven hours per year, for employee volunteering activities. Employees also choose a local charity each year which they sponsor and support through a range of corporate and local fundraising initiatives and activities. In recent years, employees have chosen Ayrshire Hospice, Ayrshire Cancer Support and now Whiteleys Retreat as their charity of choice. Whiteleys Retreat offers free, therapeutic, short breaks for children and young people with cancer and life altering illnesses, and their families, providing a much-needed service in the area.

South Ayrshire Council also supports Ayrshire Hospice with their 'Change for Good' scheme. The scheme, which launched in May 2018, enables participating employees to have their salary payments rounded down to the nearest pound, with the loose pennies donated to Ayrshire Hospice. The hospice provides high quality, palliative care to people who have life-limiting illnesses. It offers help to allow people to have the highest possible quality of life, while also supporting their families, close friends and carers.

City Status is much sought after in South Ayrshire, and residents, local businesses, community groups and South Ayrshire Council all recognise the value and benefits that this honour would bring to the area.

We continue to work together to grow the local economy, attract more visitors and encourage more families and young people to take up residence in our towns and their surrounding villages and rural areas - City Status would most definitely strengthen these efforts.



Ayr at night



# THE TOWN OF AYR AND SURROUNDING AREA

## The town of Ayr and surrounding area



University of the West of Scotland, Ayr Campus, Ayr



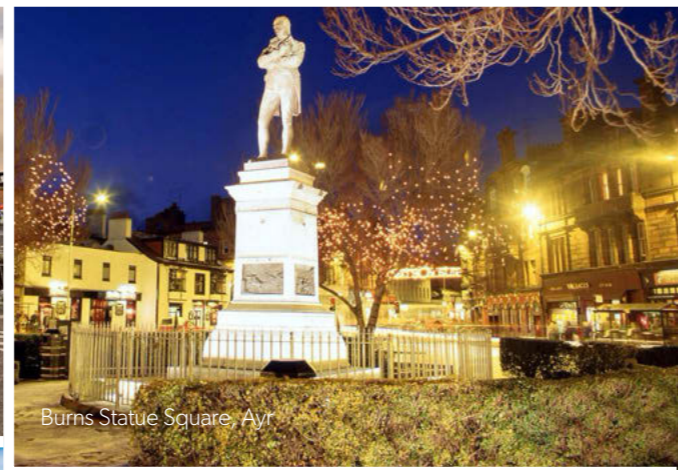
Woodland walks in Ayrshire



The River Stinchar, Colmonell



Girvan Harbour, Girvan



Burns Statue Square, Ayr



Commemoration of the parliament held by King Robert the Bruce in 1315 at St John's Tower, Ayr



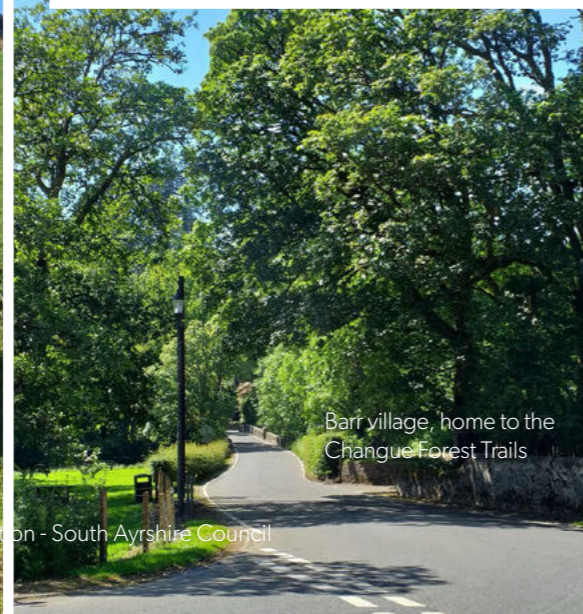
High Street, Maybole



Belleisle Park, Ayr



The Electric Brae (Croy Brae) information stone



Barr village, home to the Changue Forest Trails



Cherry Blossom-lined streets, looking towards St Andrew's Parish Church, Ayr



- Port of Ayr connects Ayr to the whole of the UK
- Ayr Train Station has a direct service to and from Glasgow - (45 mins approx) and services to Girvan in the South, Edinburgh and Stranraer
- Ayr Bus Station has a direct service to and from Glasgow - (55 mins approx)



The River Ayr, Ayr

*south*  
**AYRSHIRE**  
COUNCIL  
Comhairle Siorrachd Air a Deas  
Making a Difference Every Day 

[south-ayrshire.gov.uk](http://south-ayrshire.gov.uk)