



Town Hall

COLINSBURGH COMMUNITY *Trust*



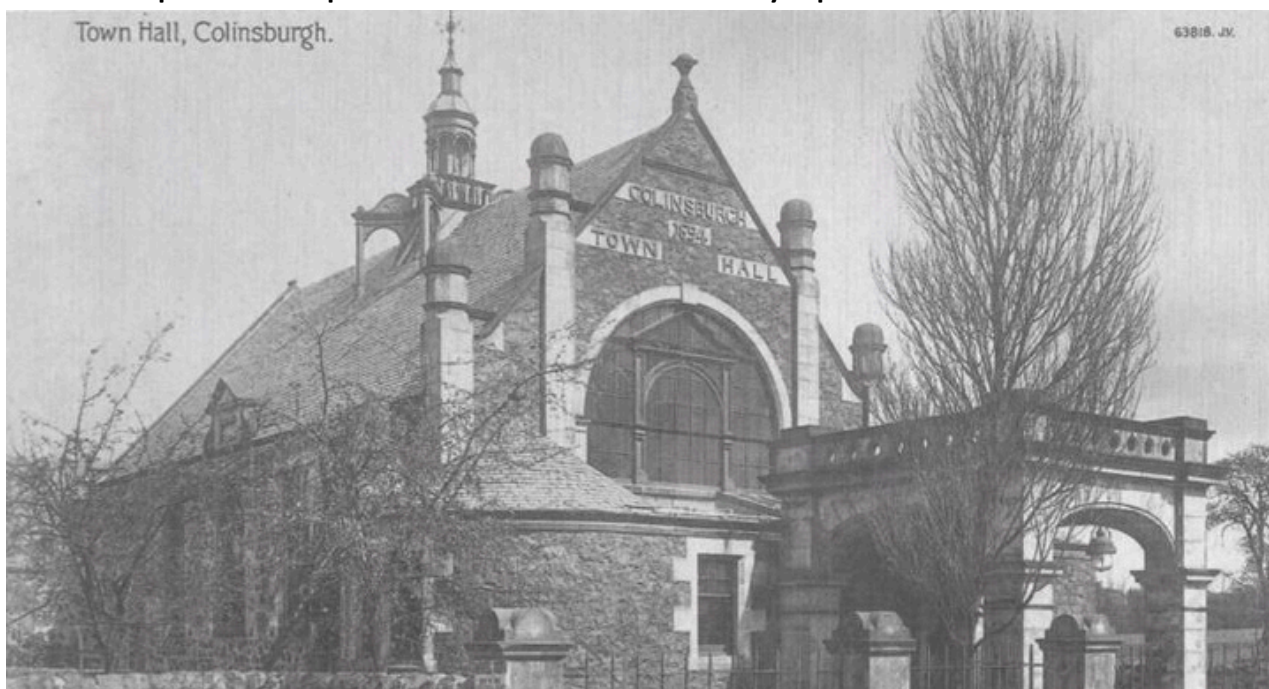
Galloway Library

Conserving the Heritage of Colinsburgh Town Hall

Special Edition Newsletter

November 2025

This document is the start of the process to ‘find the heritage’ of the Town Hall. The Community Trust will be exploring ways to engage with local residents in early 2026 to further capture the heritage of the Hall and explain why it must be preserved and how this will be achieved so we can make a compelling bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to finance the extensive works required to preserve our community space for the future.



Oldest photograph of the Town Hall, circa 1900

In the meantime, we’d like all residents to think about their memories and stories about the hall so when the time comes, you’ll be ready and able to share them with us. Read on to find out more about our Town Hall, our continuing efforts, and our direction for the future.

The Hall Today

Colinsburgh Town Hall, completed in 1895 through the efforts of the Lindsay family and local villagers, is both an architectural and social landmark in rural Fife. Designed by A. & A. C. Dewar of Leven, its open timber roof, stained glass and elegant proportions reflect Victorian civic pride and craftsmanship. For over 130 years it has hosted community events, concerts, meetings and celebrations that tell the story of our village life.

Following the major refurbishment work in 2011, roof repairs in 2023 and the window replacement work in 2020 and 2025, most of the funds raised through donations and community activities, plus relatively small grants, have been used to pay for essential repairs rather than large-scale refurbishment.

Over the last 50 years, the interior of the Hall has become more than a little tired. The plaster work in the main Hall is crumbling with cracks appearing throughout and several areas needing to be patched, leaving unsightly marks. The wainscotting and wooden floor need to be refurbished as does the tiled floor in the lobby. The main Hall needs redecorating too. This cosmetic refurbishment should make the Hall more attractive for private bookings and increase rental income.

Another issue is the lack of dedicated car parking with visitors to the Hall needing to fight for spaces on Colinsburgh's already congested Main Street. The generous offer of the field to the North and East of the Hall by the Balcarres Estate, opens up the possibility of a dedicated car park, subject to planning. This too, would make the Hall more attractive for private bookings.

The electric wall heaters installed in 2011, whilst effective, are expensive to run with today's energy prices. The walls and floor are not insulated, causing energy bills to be higher than they need to be. An audit from Business Energy Scotland recommended that the walls and floor be insulated, an air-to-air Airsource heat pump heating system be installed and Solar PV panels erected with a battery to store surplus energy. Together, these measures could generate an annual saving of £2,988, making the Hall more affordable.

A Quantity Surveyor Report from 2023, plus more recent quotes, suggest the total cost of the above work could be between £160,000 and £200,000. The cost of the car park would add to that figure.

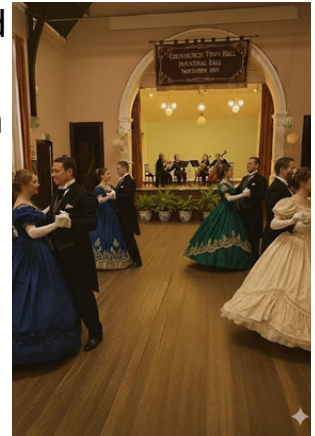
What we have done so far

The Community Trust has been working hard to identify a grant provider who could fund the project in its entirety. A piecemeal approach, getting multiple small grants from different grant funding bodies, is infeasible because the erratic cash flow and different timescales will make sequencing of work almost impossible and could lead to the Hall being out of action for many months, if not years. We need to start the work, knowing we have the funds to complete it within a reasonable timescale (ideally less than 6 months).

We have approached the National Lottery Heritage Fund who provide funding of up to £250,000 for 'small' heritage projects. They define heritage as '*... anything from the past that you value and want to pass on to future generations.*' This is something that we very much want to do as there is a real risk that without funding the Hall could become unsuitable, unaffordable, and even unsafe, and not be available to future residents.

We have submitted a pre-application enquiry to the fund who have provided excellent feedback to us about our potential bid. They have asked us to 'find the heritage' in the project - this could be the tangible heritage in the building asset itself but also the intangible heritage that makes the building important, including the stories and memories of those that have used it, its role in different historical contexts and how we might use the project as a vehicle to bring the history to life.

We have already carried out desktop research of digital and physical archives and have compiled a fascinating story of the Hall's inception in 1880, the fundraising that followed in the early 1890's, leading to its construction and grand opening in 1895.



Images generated using Google Gemini

The story continues from the early 20th Century to the present day with a rich and detailed narrative of the Hall's usage during that time and the many initiatives and hard work from local volunteers that ensured its viability as a community asset, through thick and thin.

What we want to do

The Colinsburgh Community Trust wants to apply for substantial grant-funding which, if successful, will pay for a project to conserve this distinctive heritage building while introducing sustainable energy solutions, ensuring its historic character and community purpose endure for future generations.

This project will secure the long-term future of Colinsburgh Town Hall as a vibrant, energy-efficient and accessible heritage venue at the heart of community life. The building's historic fabric — including its distinctive timber floors, wainscotting and Victorian architectural features — will be conserved and enhanced, ensuring that this important example of rural civic heritage is preserved for future generations.

The project's objectives will be to:

- Conserve historic fabric: Repair and reinstate damaged plasterwork, wainscotting and wooden floors to preserve the building's late-Victorian character and craftsmanship.
- Improve environmental performance: Install an air-source air-to-air heat pump, solar PV panels and battery storage to create a low-carbon, energy-efficient building.
- Enhance comfort and accessibility: Insulate walls, renew interior finishes and improve thermal comfort, making the hall welcoming, affordable and usable year-round.
- Safeguard long-term viability: Reduce energy and maintenance costs to ensure the building's continued operation and financial sustainability.
- Engage and upskill the community: Involve local residents, volunteers and tradespeople in heritage conservation, sustainability learning and project delivery.
- Celebrate and share heritage: Promote awareness of the hall's rich history — from its 1895 origins to the present day — through displays, events and interpretation.
- Strengthen community wellbeing: Provide a warm, inclusive venue that supports social connection, learning, and cultural activities for all generations.