

Supporting Scotland's Sporting Heritage



The Lind Foundation SCIO has been awarded **£182,829 for Supporting Scotland's Sporting Heritage** a project to secure collections at risk, make them more accessible, and deepen public understanding of Scotland's rich sporting history.

We know that records surveying saves, preserves and makes accessible archive collections. For nearly 50 years in Scotland, surveying has been used to engage the business sector in preserving, understanding and utilising their heritage.

As a project Supporting Scotland's Sporting Heritage seeks to apply the methodology and framework developed for business archives to sporting heritage.

ARCHIVE SURVEYING

Supporting Scotland's Sporting Heritage will establish a national sporting surveying officer to develop, map, and safeguard Scotland's sporting archives. By undertaking archive surveys, the project will actively engage Scotland's sporting community to deliver a greater understanding of what sporting collections exist and how they can be accessed. The surveying process creates an inventory listing of sporting collections held privately and provides an opportunity to engage and deliver professional advice to record owners, sporting communities, and where appropriate facilitate deposits with archive services.

By undertaking records surveying with a particular focus on sporting collections, this project will develop a better understanding of where such collections are located, and what types of information they contain, and importantly which communities they represent. This will ensure these records are recognised as valuable and unique heritage collections. Records surveys are a hugely successful tool in demonstrating the value of records and ensuring their survival. A survey list records key data fields such as title, extent, covering dates, and record types. Thematic surveys will ensure there is a broad variety of collections, communities, and individuals represented from across Scotland. In addition to surveys, there will be an opportunity for cataloguing, repackaging work, and onsite archive guidance to be provided to sporting bodies, clubs, and custodians of sporting collections making the case for saving this heritage.

Sport reaches every corner of Scotland and our nation's sporting archives contain an incredible record of people, places and events giving us new perspectives on the wider social history of communities.

Heritage engagement and research elements of this project will be vital to recording and preserving these archives, while increasing our understanding of their historic importance and interest.

Caroline Clark

Director for Scotland, The National Lottery Heritage Fund

ENGAGEMENT

Preservation alone is not enough when it comes to saving heritage. Access is essential to ensure that these rich collections are made available, and the results of records surveys will be shared through online discovery platforms like the National Register of Archives for Scotland making these collections visible to researchers in a proven and sustainable manner. Alongside surveying, our project will deliver an engagement programme that will actively connect different communities with the potential of Scotland's sporting collections. This could range from records being used internally to mark a club's anniversary or inspire academic research to wider community projects such as sport-based reminiscence work. This is an established activity that helps those with dementia or memory loss, recall and share personal memories, improving their self-esteem and communication. In these ways the sporting heritage this project identifies, saves and makes accessible will be used in a variety of ways.

TIMING

In 2026, Glasgow is due to hold the twenty-third Commonwealth Games, which makes timing an essential element to Supporting Scotland's Sporting Heritage. The heightened opportunity to engage with the nation's sporting communities throughout the year is a driving factor behind the project and its launch in spring 2026. Our aim of incorporating a launch of a thematic records survey focussing on the commonwealth games sports, as well as a family workshop and launch event in partnership with the Commonwealth Games Archive at the University of Stirling is at the heart of our primary aim to engage with as many new sporting communities, bodies and record keepers as possible.

Supporting Scotland's Sporting Heritage will have a significant impact in developing new archive survey data and resources for Scotland's sporting collections and its communities, that can be shared on a national scale in a sustainable and long-lasting form. As a result of this project, Scotland's sporting collections will be safer, more accessible and their significance better understood by all.

We are delighted that the National Lottery Heritage Fund has demonstrated its support for Scotland's sporting heritage by funding this project. Our work with the archives of Commonwealth Games Scotland has highlighted the huge value and importance of sporting heritage, and we are excited to join the other partners in making a lasting contribution to preserving and celebrating it.

2026 is a huge year for sport in Scotland with the Commonwealth Games returning to Glasgow and the men's football team qualifying for the World Cup. This project will provide an important historical backdrop to the sporting drama that will unfold throughout the year.

Karl Magee
University Archivist, University of Stirling