NORTH LEWIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY COMMENDED IN SCOTTISH BUILT ENVIRONMENT AWARDS

Thursday 26 May, 2022

The winning and commended projects for the Scottish Civic Trust My Place Awards, which celebrate community-led built environment projects, were announced at a ceremony at South Block, Glasgow on 25th May.

Comunn Eachdraidh Nis (Ness Historical Society) in North Lewis received a commendation for refurbishing Cross Primary School into a lively heritage centre and community hub.

Comunn Eachdraidh Nis (CEN) was constituted in 1977 as the first historical society in the Western Isles. Over the years, CEN operated from various abandoned buildings which were not suitable for the storage and display of its collections. But in 2011, when the local authority decided to close Cross Primary School, CEN sprung into action to purchase the school, save the building from demolition and ensure the delivery of essential services in the face of local authority funding cuts.

CEN then consulted the community about their wishes for the building through surveys, visualisations and models. Many people emphasised the need for a gathering place and expressed a wish that local materials and makers be at the centre of the regeneration.

In 2017, CEN procured a design team. Conscious of the community's love for the existing building, the architect worked to save deteriorating parts of the building and preserve many of its original features. The resulting building balances historic elements with modern renewable technologies that will help the building endure the climate crisis and stand for years to come.

Now, CEN is one of the largest employers in North Lewis, and plays a key role in combating social isolation and preserving Gaelic by hosting intergenerational events. CEN also supports the local economy by selling the goods of local makers and producers in its cafe to over 25,000 annual visitors.

Chair of My Place Awards 2022 Judging Panel, Ian Leith, said: "The annual My Place Awards celebrate the best of Scotland's places and spaces. This year's commended and winning projects are inspiring examples of how communities can come together to develop innovative places and achieve a positive change for local people. We congratulate their immense efforts and encourage groups across Scotland to follow in their stead."

The My Place Awards are free to enter and open to buildings, monuments, public realm schemes and designed landscapes in Scotland. They are supported by the Scottish Government. To enter a community-led built environment project for the 2023 My Place Awards, submit an entry form at myplacescotland.org.uk.

An exhibition featuring the 2022 My Place Awards shortlisted projects is on display through 1 June at Glasgow's South Block.

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ENDS

Full details on the My Place Awards 2022 entries and a short film about the winning project can be found at myplacescotland.org.uk

For further information please contact Erin.Burke@scottishcivictrust.org.uk

Notes for editors:

About Scottish Civic Trust

The Scottish Civic Trust's mission is to celebrate Scotland's built environment, take action for its improvement and empower its communities. The Vision which drives this is thriving, beautiful and well cared for buildings and places, which help to support and sustain a high quality of life. More information

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can be found at www.scottishcivictrust.org.uk.

Founded in 1967, the Scottish Civic Trust exists to help people connect with their built heritage and take a leading role in guiding its development. In its infancy, it successfully campaigned for the restoration of Edinburgh's New Town and was instrumental in saving New Lanark – both now part of Scotland's network of six World Heritage Sites.

In addition to these major milestones, Scottish Civic Trust was also the first to bring Doors Open Day to the UK – now the largest free festival of architecture in the UK – which celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2019. More information can be found at www.doorsopendays.org.uk.

Further Information

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