

Rural community centre and Scotland's first community-owned pub win national built environment awards

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The winning and commended projects for the Scottish Civic Trust My Place Awards 2021 were announced at a ceremony at South Block, Glasgow on 29th October.

The My Place Awards celebrate community-led built environment projects that have transformed their locality. They are supported by the Scottish Government, and are unique in Scotland as a national celebration of good design and conservation nominated by local people.

The overall winner is Ochiltree Community Hub, East Ayrshire.

Ochiltree Community Hub SCIO was established in 2014 when East Ayrshire Council announced that they were closing the village's community centre and library. The charity led the community effort to build a new facility that delivered critical health, wellbeing and education services.

Following community fundraising efforts and a year of construction, Ochiltree Community Hub opened in 2019 and now boasts a team of over 50 local volunteers. It is sustainably designed and fully accessible with a café, sports hall and meeting spaces. The hub has become a cornerstone of village life, hosting birthday parties, art classes, film screenings, yoga classes, football matches, ceilidhs, vaccination clinics, and more.

Chair of My Place Awards 2021 Judging Panel, Ian Leith, said: "Ochiltree Community Hub is an inspiring example of how communities can work together to design beautiful places that sustain a high quality of life. Communities are the lifeblood of Scotland's civic movement and the Scottish Civic Trust My Place Awards are about celebrating the best of Scotland's places and spaces."

For the first time this year, the Awards also honoured a special sustainability winner to tie into COP26 and highlight projects that excel at reducing their carbon footprint and planning for climate readiness.

The sustainability winner is The Swan, Banton, North Lanarkshire.

The Swan, a historic pub, has stood at the Banton village crossroads for over 170 years, geographically and metaphorically at the heart of the village. But by 2016, the building had become dilapidated and a demolition proposal was issued. The village rallied into action, and the People United for Banton (PUB) was born. An initial community consultation made it clear that residents not only wanted to save The Swan as a pub, but to broaden its remit to become a village hub.

After months of community effort, PUB secured funding to purchase the building, making it the first community-owned pub in Scotland. Completed in 2020, The Swan is a source of local pride and serves the community as a restaurant, bar, café, community kitchen and gathering space.

Chair of Scottish Civic Trust, Sue Evans, said: "Congratulations to The Swan for renovating and reinvigorating a local historic landmark. The continued use and adaptation of existing buildings is a key way that the heritage sector can address the Climate Crisis. The adaptive reuse of buildings safeguards our cultural and built heritage, provides local training and employment opportunities and develops community capacity and resilience to respond to our changing climate."

The My Place Awards is part of Scottish Civic Trust's work to involve more people in Scotland's heritage and built environment. The My Place Awards run in tandem with the My Place Photography Competition, which is a Scotland-wide built environment photography competition for young people aged 4-18.

The My Place Awards are free to enter and open to buildings, public realm schemes and designed landscapes. To enter a community-led built environment project for the 2022 My Place Awards, submit an entry form at myplacescotland.org.uk.

An exhibition featuring all entries to the 2021 My Place Awards is on display through 22 November at Glasgow's South Block.

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Full details on the 2021 My Place Award entries, and short films about the winning projects can be found at myplacescotland.org.uk

For interviews and photos 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.

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

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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