

# HERITAGE CRIME: THE APPROACH IN SCOTLAND

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Heritage crime is one of the seven rural crime priorities with the Scottish Partnership against Rural Crime (SPARC) – a national rural crime strategy running since 2017 and now on its second iteration, and that has 22 member organisations.

The seven priorities within SPARC are focused on rural crime types affecting rural communities and areas. They are underpinned by robust action plans aligned to each priority, led by the partner agency best placed to lead on the priority and supported by Police Scotland and other partners.

The heritage crime action plan comprises short/medium- and long-term goals.

A specific heritage crime group is also chaired quarterly by the National Rural & Acquisitive Crime Police Inspector from Police Scotland, with representatives from Historic Environment Scotland, Treasure Trove Unit, National museum of Scotland, National Trust for Scotland, Edinburgh Archaeology Service and Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal (COPFS) amongst others, with outside speakers on specific topics invited to attend.

The meetings are action/task orientated and coordinated by an action log to drive the work within the SPARC strategy.

The group has provided a much-needed forum for improved collaboration and has had particular success with prosecutions in recent years. In 2022, two individuals were prosecuted for illicit detecting that resulted in 35 holes being dug on the scheduled monument at Dunadd Fort.

Ongoing issues are raised by partners in the meetings and mitigations and/or solutions are provided or taken off table to be progressed, such as larger pieces of

collaborative work in relation to metal detecting, the selling of items of historical significance, and theft and vandalism at sites of historical significance.

The approach in Scotland is very much one of partnership working aligned to clear objectives that are both achievable and measurable.

## Heritage crime: SPARC Lead – Historic Environment Scotland

Heritage crime robs us not just of our history but can impact significantly on communities – not just in monetary value but social costs, as any damage caused denies future generations the opportunity to enjoy our rich collection of unique sites. It is the responsibility of us all to protect Scotland's heritage from those who would wish to degrade and harm it.



WHAT WE WANT	HOW WE WILL DO THIS	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS	TIMESCALE
Prevent, reduce and tackle incidents of illegal metal detecting.	<p>Awareness-raising campaigns such as Crimestoppers plus increased visibility of the Treasure Trove Unit and Scottish Heritage Crime Group.</p> <p>Proactive and reactive responses to local and regional incidents.</p> <p>Educate policing and other enforcement bodies on recognising damaged sites, gathering evidence and joint collaboration on investigation and detection.</p>	<p>Increased reporting of incidents.</p> <p>Intelligence-led prevention tactics.</p> <p>Increased engagement through Treasure Trove Unit Outreach Programme.</p>	Short Term
Reduce vulnerability of historic sites to crimes, incidents and offences.	<p>Create accessible and current knowledge of heritage locations and their vulnerabilities within partner agencies plus produce information &amp; assistance guides/literature.</p> <p>Improve protective security measures and work with partners to design and implement early intervention strategies.</p> <p>Influence local authorities and landowners to protect heritage sites located on their land.</p>	<p>Reduction in number of crimes, incidents and offences recorded on historic sites.</p> <p>Increase in detection, enforcement and prosecution cases.</p>	Medium Term
Strengthen importance and raise profile of protecting and preserving heritage sites.	<p>Establish an online presence to support local authorities, police and communities to understand range of heritage assets in their jurisdiction.</p> <p>Encourage greater protection and oversight of heritage assets.</p>	<p>Cohesive and coordinated sharing of knowledge amongst partners.</p> <p>Enhanced stewardship of Scotland's heritage.</p>	Long Term

### Inspector Jordan Low

Inspector Low has 18 years Police service in a variety of operational and investigatory roles across Scotland, currently lead for the National Rural & Acquisitive Crime unit in Police Scotland including heritage crime prevention and current chair of the Scottish Heritage Crime group.

