



# STP CONFERENCE BUS TOUR



# Our route

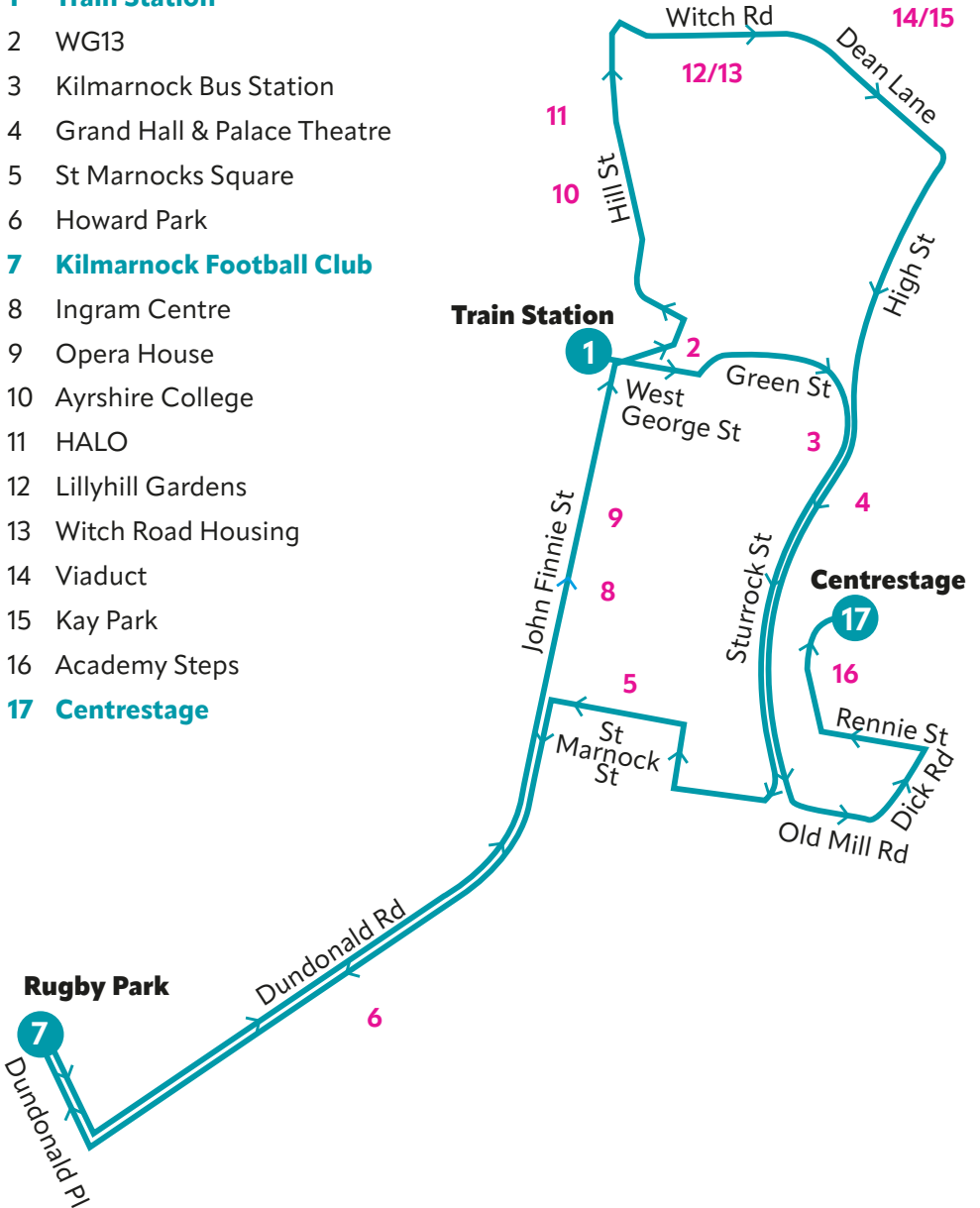
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# Welcome to Kilmarnock!

The town has seen many changes over the years, from the manufacturing town it once was. Kilmarnock has always managed to transform itself by turning its challenges into something positive, blending recreation, business, culture and wellbeing facilities throughout the town. It enjoys a range of attractions with its historic core, pedestrianised town centre, diverse business offer and has many popular public parks and beautiful green spaces. Most importantly, Kilmarnock's people have proved their resilience and ability to change and they will continue to be at the towns heart as it moves forward.

Investment from a range of local and national partners has regenerated many parts of the town and historic buildings, making them fit for modern purposes. Community leadership has been and will continue to be key and has improved a number of assets in the town centre including a several shop fronts and transforming a derelict building into a public realm space for everyone to enjoy.

Included within this book are some examples of Kilmarnock's journey; from a proud past, through present challenges and successes to future ambitions that will help ensure a vibrant, safe and sustainable town.





## 1 Kilmarnock Railway Station

The station at Kilmarnock dates from 1846 and the town is the home of Scotland's railways, with the first railway in Scotland between Kilmarnock to Troon opening in 1812. Kilmarnock Station Railway Heritage Trust was formed in 2014 to bring a number of redundant railway offices into community use and create The Kilmarnock Station Community Village. Facilities are used by a range of local groups, as well as a coffee shop and book shop, the other rooms house the Glasgow & South Western Railway Association archives and the Active Travel Hub. Previously winning the SURF Award, The Trust aims to support the local community by encouraging groups and individuals to utilise the renovated spaces at the station for the benefit of the whole community.



## 2 WG13

13 West George Street is a category B listed building and currently houses WG13 who are a social enterprise that provides training and work experience. Run by the Council of Voluntary Organisations (East Ayrshire) Ltd they have a restaurant and rooms for private functions, business, community events and exhibitions.

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## 3 Kilmarnock Bus Station

The Kilmarnock Bus Station refurbishment has been going through a programme of work and has entered the third and final phase. The exterior and interior of the bus station is now complete with a new Changing Places toilet which is one of the first to be located within a Scottish bus station. Shopmobility who are based within the station have also benefitted from the refurbishment. The final phase will involve work to the concourse, roof and north entrance.

## 4 Grand Hall and Palace Theatre Complex (link to video)



The Palace Theatre & Grand Hall Complex is a multi-purpose entertainment arena complex in Kilmarnock, which was originally opened as a corn exchange in 1863 and converted to a theatre in 1903. The red-sandstone Italianate tower, by James Ingram, dominates the cross at London Road and Green Street. The tower is dedicated to Prince Albert and features a small clock face with the Burgh arms below and three heads carved with Prince Albert in the middle, Field Marshall Colin Campbell, Lord Clyde to the left and Sir James Shaw to the right.

In partnership with the East Ayrshire Leisure Trust, the Council has been developing design proposals for Cultural Kilmarnock. The vision for Cultural Kilmarnock is to create an enduring and vibrant area of cultural significance. The emerging design proposals aim to improve pedestrian connections between the cultural venues and town centre through the linking of green spaces and improvements to the public realm. Improvements to the soft and hard landscaping, lighting, signage and wayfinding aim to enhance the setting, connection and offering of the cultural venues.

At the heart of the vision for Cultural Kilmarnock are improvements to the public realm, accessibility, visibility and offering of The Palace Theatre and Grand Hall. With Centrestage situated beside the complex, this quarter of Kilmarnock offers a plethora of entertainment catering for every age group and ability. The hope is to attract investment from the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund, to begin to realise these ambitions.

***An interesting fact is The Sweet penned Ballroom Blitz after a raucous night in the venue in January 1973.***

## 5 St Marnock's Square

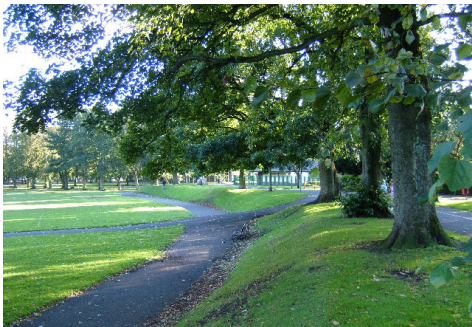


One of the most noticeable changes in Kilmarnock Town Centre has been the demolition of the former Mothercare building. The area has been grassed with a footpath and lighting installed, with local people and groups making good use of the space for a variety of things. Working in partnership with Celebrate Kilmarnock and the Kilmarnock Business Association to ensure community leadership of the project has been key.

A key feature of the new public realm space is the mural depicting the story of Lady Ann Livingston Boyd, The Countess of Kilmarnock and widow of The Earl of Kilmarnock who was captured at Culloden and executed for his part in the 1745 Jacobite Uprising. The wall sits between the foundations of Kilmarnock House where the Earl and Countess lived, and its gardens, now incorporated into Howard Park, just across the river. The Lady's Walk in the Howard Park commemorates the grief-stricken walks taken by the widow, who died of heartbreak a year after his execution.

## 6 Howard Park

Lady's Walk is situated here in the park and the mural of Lady Ann at St Marnock's Square is a tribute to the heart-breaking story of love and loss. A really popular park with a children's play area and picnic tables, it also holds a darker side; a cholera grave pit marked by a plinth with the inscription 'Sacred - to the memory of those inhabitants who died from cholera during the epidemic of 1832 and are here interred'. 250 victims of the cholera epidemic were buried in this mass grave because the common burying ground was thought to be too small and the authorities also believed it might minimise further risk of infection. The park was probably favoured because a temporary hospital had been erected within it to cope with the sick, thus the journey from hospital to grave was quick, helping to prevent infection.





## 7 Kilmarnock Football Club

Founded in 1869, Killie FC are the oldest professional football club in the Scottish Premiership, and also the second-oldest football club in Scotland. Home matches are played at Rugby Park, a 17,889 capacity all-seater stadium situated in the town itself. Kilmarnock took part in the first-ever official match in the Scottish Cup against the now-defunct Renton in 1873. The club is also one of only a few Scottish clubs to have played in three European competitions (European Cup, Cup Winners' Cup and the UEFA Cup).



## 8 Ingram Centre

The striking, beautifully restored Victorian Ballochmyle sandstone building sits in a prominent position at the top of the town's John Finnie Street and is now home to a host of new and expanding businesses, taking advantage of the building's fully serviced office suites and meeting rooms which are designed to provide the ideal environment to foster success for entrepreneurs.



## 9 Opera House

Gutted by fire in 1989 leaving just a burnt-out facade, the Opera House development started in July 2011 and was completed in September 2012. Grant funding was used for the restoration of the retained facade along with high quality materials for the new building element. Now the B-listed façade has been restored, and the building is home to modern offices providing accommodation for 250 council employees in the heart of the town centre.



## 10 Ayrshire College

Ayrshire College was established on August 1, 2013, following the merger of the three main colleges in Ayrshire – Kilmarnock College, Ayr College as well as the Kilwinning and Largs campuses of James Watt College. The Kilmarnock campus opened in October 2016 and was built on part of the site of the former Johnnie Walker bottling plant, following drinks company Diageo's gifting of the land to the college. The Scottish Government contributed £48.5 million towards the redevelopment; the single largest public sector investment the town has ever seen.



## 11 HALO

The HALO Kilmarnock is situated beside the Ayrshire College on the site, formerly the home of Johnnie Walker Scotch Whisky. Powered by electricity with a net zero carbon footprint, HALO Enterprise and Innovation Centre (HEIC) is Scotland's first town centre net zero carbon energy project. The HALO Kilmarnock is situated beside the Ayrshire College on the site, formerly the home of Johnnie Walker Scotch Whisky. Powered by electricity with a net zero carbon footprint, HALO Enterprise and Innovation Centre (HEIC) is Scotland's first town centre net zero carbon energy project. "The focal point of HALO will be the Enterprise & Innovation Centre, a commercial hub created to stimulate digital learning, inspire innovative thinking and provide a conducive environment for spin-out, new-start, scale-ups, digital, manufacturing and cyber businesses of all sizes".



## 12 Lillyhill Gardens – Housing

The £1.6m supported living development on Witch Road offers accommodation for individuals with a range of support needs and is a product of co-ordinated partnership between Housing Services, the Health and Social Care Partnership and the voluntary sector. Lillyhill works to the principles of the Scottish Government's 'Keys to Life' strategy for people who have learning disabilities. The East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership has adopted a 'human rights' approach to ensure that people with disabilities have a say and choice in their care options, and are being offered the maximum independence possible to allow them to live safely within, and included as part of, their local communities.

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## 13 Witch Road – Housing

The new homes have been developed in response to an identified housing need as figures project that the number of older people in Kilmarnock aged 65+ will increase by 49% and age 75+ by 153% between 2018 and 2033. The development, which features a mix of one and two-bed sized bungalows is being created on the cleared site at Witch Road/Witchhill Place. The new homes create a welcoming gateway to the town, being designed to promote social inclusion for the new residents and will feature a private garden area and bespoke seating outside the residents' homes.

## 14 Viaduct

Built in the heart of Kilmarnock town centre in the 1840's, the viaduct was an incredible feat of engineering that reflected the town's rise in prominence and wealth. The viaduct connected Kilmarnock to Carlisle ensuring that manufactured goods and coal could be easily transported south for home markets and to ports for export. The impressive structure, based within the Conservation Area, was upgraded in 2008 with a lighting system that can change colour and bathe the 23 arches to commemorate specific events such as red in support of our Armed Forces.



## 15 Kay Park

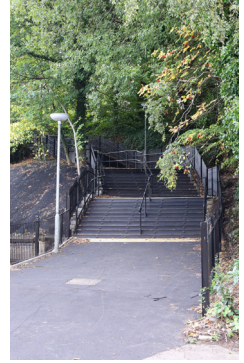
The Kay Park is one of the largest open spaces in East Ayrshire and is well used for recreational purposes as well as hosting one of Scotland's biggest annual Playdays. It is also one of the parks and green spaces protected by Fields in Trust in perpetuity. Covering 30 acres, the money to purchase the park was bequeathed to the town by former native insurance broker Alexander Kay who died in Glasgow in 1866. In 1877 it was proposed and unanimously agreed that a statue be erected to commemorate the poet Robert Burns at the Kay Park and the statue still stands today at the Burns Monument Centre. The Registration Services team are based within the centre and is a unique venue for getting married and registering births, deaths and marriages. It is also a Scotland's People Centre, providing access to Scottish records covering almost 500 years of genealogy research.



## 16 Academy Steps

The steps improve the connection between the town centre and the cultural quarter. Leading up to CentreStage (formerly Kilmarnock Academy), both set of steps were repaired and renovated to make them safer to use and easier to walk on.

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## 17 Centrestage

CentreStage was founded in James Little Street Kilmarnock in 2006 by Fiona McKenzie and Paul Mathieson, operating with the ethos that anyone, regardless of age, background or experience, can gain life changing social benefits through active participation in the arts. After completing Scotland's largest Community Led Asset Transfer, they are now operating from the site of the former Kilmarnock Academy.

The former academy is one of only two schools in the UK, and the only school in Scotland, to have educated two Nobel Prize laureates - one being Sir Alexander Fleming who discovered penicillin, and the other Sir John Boyd Orr who was a Scottish teacher, medical doctor, biologist, nutritional physiologist, politician, businessman and farmer who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his scientific research into nutrition and his work as the first Director-General of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization.



