

Save Dunyvaig Castle for present and future generations



Dunyvaig Castle is an iconic monument for the Isle of Islay, Scotland, and a testament to the history of the island. The ruins are picturesque but unsafe, rapidly deteriorating after years of neglect, they are at risk of collapse.

Once the sea wall falls, deposits containing precious remains from Islay's and Scotland's past will be washed away. Climate change, bringing more frequent storms and sea level rise, adds to the risk with even stronger winds, rain and waves battering the unstable castle walls.



Dunyvaig Castle is a scheduled monument (SM4747). It is owned by Diageo plc, owner of the Lagavulin Distillery located next to the castle ruins

A vital monument of our past

The medieval castle of Dunyvaig, perched on the headland of Lagavulin Bay, Isle of Islay, is a fundamental part of Scotland's cultural heritage. The castle was the naval fortress of the Lords of the Isles between the 14th–16th centuries, a formative period of Scottish history. Since its abandonment in the 17th century, it has been enjoyed by generations of islanders and visitors to Islay as a place to walk, picnic and engage with Islay's historic past.

Centuries of decay and at risk of collapse

An archaeological evaluation undertaken between 2018–2021 demonstrated Dunyvaig has well preserved deposits containing evidence about the life and times of the castle. The excavations were constrained and eventually halted because of the instability of the standing remains. A previous programme of repair was begun in 1989 but never completed. The tower was prevented from collapse but recommended work to support the courtyard and sea walls was never implemented.

The facing stones of the eastern sea wall lie scattered across the beach exposing the soft mortar and rubble behind to erosion. The wall secures unexcavated deposits containing a record of Dunyvaig's, Islay's and Scotland's past. These will be washed away if the wall collapses



At risk from climate and sea level change

The risk of collapse is exacerbated by climate and sea level change. The castle walls, already assaulted by high tides, face devastating damage from the predicted sea level rise of the next two decades.

A report by Groves-Raines Architects, commissioned by Islay Heritage in 2023, concludes that:

'key areas of the castle are in a parlous state... incremental deterioration and minor collapses have been observed all over the site ... This may well be a tipping point of the castle, which may be further exacerbated by the forecast sea level rises and increased storm events resulting from climate change'

For more information visit

[www.islayheritage.org/
conservation-assessment
-of-dunyvaig-castle](http://www.islayheritage.org/conservation-assessment-of-dunyvaig-castle)

An estimated £800,000 needed to save Dunyvaig

In their conservation assessment report, Groves-Raines Architects estimated the costs of repairs and consolidation of the castle to be £800,000. Historic Environment Scotland has made a provisional offer of £400,000, dependent upon matched funding.

The remains of the sea gate are at particular risk. This is a unique structure for a medieval castle in Scotland but its two remaining sides have lost so much stone they are at risk of falling down





How can you help?

We welcome contributions from all who value Scottish heritage and history, and especially the Isle of Islay

A request for funding support has been made to Diago plc, but we will need your help to save this valuable site, and match Historic Environment Scotland's £400,000 offer

If you wish to discuss a donation in confidence please contact: David Gillies, Islay Heritage Treasurer
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To donate, visit:

www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/savedunyvaigcastle



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