



THE MACROBERT TRUST

If you want to find out more information about us,
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10 GOALS FOR 10 YEARS

2025–2035

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MacRobert Pillars

At the heart of everything we do are the MacRobert Pillars - three guiding principles that reflect the original charitable vision of Lady Rachel MacRobert, reimagined for the world we live in today.

These Pillars shape how we invest, partner and plan for the future.

They ensure we stay true to our legacy, while making a meaningful and lasting difference across the communities and causes we support.

Together, they provide the foundation for the Trust's impact now, and for generations to come.



An **advocate** of education, training and innovation



A **leading** supporter of the armed forces



A **thriving** MacRobert estate and local community

Everything we do, is guided by our MacRobert Pillars.

Looking ahead to the next decade, The MacRobert Trust has developed a set of strategic priorities that will guide our work from 2025 through to 2035.

These 10 Goals for 10 Years reflect our ambition to deliver lasting, positive impact across all areas of our activity:

- Charitable giving
- Estate stewardship
- Sustainability
- Education
- And beyond

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Main photo: Douneside House. Inset photo: Lady Rachel MacRobert. MacRobert Trust Archives ©

Rooted in the values and legacy of Lady MacRobert, each goal is designed to be forward-thinking, measurable, and aligned with the evolving needs of the communities and environments we serve.

Together, they form a clear roadmap for deepening our charitable impact while ensuring the long-term resilience and relevance of the Trust and its estate.

As we approach the start of this new strategic period, these goals will help focus our efforts, shape our decisions, and strengthen our accountability to beneficiaries, partners, and the wider public.



Create our MacRobert Centre

GOAL 01

At the heart of our strategic vision lies the creation of the MacRobert Centre, an ambitious and transformative development that encapsulates our values and identity. This flagship initiative is designed to be a place that tells our story, and shapes new ones.



Photo: Lady Rachel MacRobert. MacRobert Trust Archives ©



Why

There is a compelling need for a central place on the Estate that not only preserves and celebrates the MacRobert story but also offers a vibrant, inclusive space for learning, collaboration, and exploration. The MacRobert Centre will embody our educational and environmental commitments while welcoming visitors into the legacy of the Trust.



What

The MacRobert Centre will be a modern, multi-use facility located at the heart of the Estate and will become the new head office of The MacRobert Trust. It will house exhibitions showcasing our history, act as a hub for research, and provide classrooms and outdoor learning spaces. The Centre will be open and accessible to schools, veterans, academics, and members of the public alike, creating a welcoming space for learning, collaboration, and connection to the natural world.



Impact

This development will not only elevate the visibility and accessibility of the MacRobert legacy, but also promote lifelong learning, sustainable stewardship, and public engagement. It will serve as a destination for education and remembrance, building bridges between generations and communities.



Photo: A view across part of The MacRobert Trust Estate

Deliver 300 training opportunities

GOAL
02

The Growing Futures programme is an ambitious partnership initiative to expand our estate-based education and training. At its core, it reflects our commitment to opportunity and lifelong learning, values deeply rooted in the vision of our founder, Lady Rachel MacRobert.



Photo: Horticulture Trainees



Why

With its diverse mix of hospitality, horticulture, and land-based activity, our estate offers the ideal setting for hands-on, immersive training. Rural communities often face limited opportunities, alongside a growing demand for skilled workers in exactly these areas.



What

The Growing Futures Programme will offer 300 structured training, work experience, and apprenticeship opportunities on the MacRobert Estate over the next decade. Aimed at young people and former service personnel, the programme will focus on developing skills across a variety of industries, including agriculture, conservation, estate management, and hospitality. By addressing barriers such as limited rural education access and lack of local training capacity, Growing Futures will create new routes into meaningful rural employment. Supported by our upcoming MacRobert Centre and on-site accommodation, this initiative will open doors to those who might otherwise be excluded from such opportunities.



Impact

We will closely monitor the impact of our work experience programmes by tracking how many participants successfully progress into employment within related industries, particularly in rural areas where such opportunities are often limited. This will help us understand the real-world outcomes of our training and ensure we continue to deliver meaningful, long-term benefits for individuals and the wider rural economy.



Photo: Members of The MacRobert Trust Gardens Team

Provide £5 million of grants through our ‘Small but Mighty’ and ‘Big Impact’ charity funds

GOAL
03

Building on our strong tradition of charitable giving, this goal strengthens our funding approach to create long-term impact. It supports both smaller, community-based projects and larger initiatives that aim to deliver big, lasting change.



Photo: Tarland Bee Group



Why

Too many small charities with proven results struggle with short-term funding cycles and insecure futures.

Simultaneously, transformative projects aligned to our values struggle to obtain substantial support to become reality.



What

We will allocate £5 million across two targeted funds: the ‘Small but Mighty’ stream will focus on supporting small charities across the North East of Scotland with multi-year core funding, while the ‘Big Impact Fund’ will deliver major grants to exceptional organisations undertaking high-stakes, aligned work across the UK. Staff and Trustees will engage directly with partners to ensure relational, informed giving.



Impact

This strategic model allows us to support agility and stability within the charitable sector, maximising our reach and depth of influence. It builds trust, increases impact, and reinforces our identity as a responsive, values-led funder.



Photo: MacRobert Trust Farming and Rural Skills Centre

Establish our £2 million MacRobert Military Programme

GOAL
04

Our military roots run deep. Through a dedicated MacRobert Military Programme, we aim to honour our past while providing tangible support to today's Armed Forces communities. This initiative forms an essential part of strengthening the connection between our heritage and the military communities of today, building relationships, support networks, and a shared sense of purpose.



Photo: Ivan Jarrod Scott. Awarded Air League Scholarship 2024



Why

The MacRobert Trust's origins are profoundly tied to the military legacy of Lady MacRobert and her sons. We aim to ensure this connection is never forgotten and is actively celebrated and supported.



What

We will grow the MacRobert Military Club to at least 5,000 members, increase its activities, and create a £2M Military Fund. This fund will provide grants to military organisations aligned with our values over the next 10 years. We will do so through collaborative planning, sustained investment, and measurable delivery milestones.



Impact

The £2 million MacRobert Military Programme will honour our legacy by delivering practical support to serving personnel and veterans, creating lasting impact through funding, connection, and recognition.



Photo: MacRobert Reply Crew. MacRobert Trust Archives ©

Support the creation of 10 community-led gardens

GOAL
05

Our land tells a story. Through community gardens and educational engagement, we will reconnect young people to the roots of rural learning and shared values. This initiative is a meaningful way to pass on knowledge, nurture connection to place, and grow the next generation of rural stewards.



Photo: A family at Douneside gardens



Why

Children benefit from immersive, nature-based learning. These experiences shape values, skills, and a sense of place, foundations for strong, sustainable communities. Lady MacRobert herself had a deep love of the outdoors and believed in the power of gardens to teach and inspire.



What

We will support the establishment of 10 community gardens near selected primary schools in Aberdeenshire. These spaces will offer hands-on learning in both natural and cultural heritage.



Impact

By nurturing young minds in green environments, we build lifelong connections to community, sustainability, and rural identity.



Photo: Lady Rachel MacRobert. MacRobert Trust Archives ©

Allocate a £1 million Howe O' Cromar fund

GOAL
06

The success of the Trust is closely tied to the success of our home village, Tarland. Our Village for the Future Plan will support community-led ideas and foster shared prosperity through strong local partnerships. This initiative reflects our commitment to growing together with the people and place at the heart of our Estate.



Photo: A view of Tarland Village



Why

Vibrant local communities need long-term vision and investment. As a cornerstone of Tarland, we have a responsibility to help shape a resilient, sustainable future.



What

We will collaborate with the local community and support their ambitions with a £1M Village for the Future charity fund, directed toward projects that enhance local life. Decision-making power will rest with the community itself, with the Trust acting as an enabler through collaborative planning, sustained investment, and measurable delivery milestones.



Impact

Through inclusive development and community ownership, Tarland and the surrounding areas will thrive socially, economically, and environmentally.

50 new and affordable homes in the local area

GOAL
07

Housing is the foundation of a thriving rural economy. By supporting the delivery of high-quality, affordable homes, we can help local workers, young families, and veterans stay and build their lives in the area. This initiative is about sustaining community life and ensuring rural places remain vibrant and inclusive for generations to come.



Photo: A view of Tarland Village



Why

Affordable, attractive housing is essential for retaining talent, fostering community, and ensuring sustainability in rural areas.



What

We will support the creation of 50 new homes that are highly efficient, affordable, and designed to blend into the local landscape. Priority will be given to those working locally, young people from the area, and veterans. We will do so through collaborative planning, sustained investment, and measurable delivery milestones.



Impact

These homes will help local families remain rooted in their communities while also supporting the growth of a stable, local workforce. In turn, they will help sustain vital services, from the local school to businesses and community organisations, that are essential to the long-term wellbeing of the area.

Achieve Earth Check Gold level certification

GOAL
08

Sustainability is more than a goal; it is a responsibility. Achieving EarthCheck Gold certification will place us at the forefront of environmental stewardship. This initiative reflects our long-term commitment to protecting the land we care for, today and for future generations.



Photo: The Beech Walk on The MacRobert Estate



Why

Environmental leadership ensures the long-term health of our Estate, community, and the planet. We must act now to enhance our biodiversity and reduce our footprint.



What

We will pursue EarthCheck Gold status by monitoring, tracking, and actively improving our environmental performance in energy, waste, water, biodiversity, and community impact.



Impact

Certification will confirm that the MacRobert Estate is clean, safe, and prosperous—a leader in rural sustainability and a model for others to follow. Through this, the Trust will continue to be a catalyst for regional progress.



Photo: Tarland Trails Drummy Woods

Be a ‘Times 100 Best Workplace’

GOAL
09

Our people are our power. By fostering a positive, inclusive, and empowering work environment, we aim to be recognised as one of the UK’s best places to work. This initiative will help us attract and retain great people while building a culture that reflects our values and vision for the future.



Photos: Members of The MacRobert Trust Hospitality and Gardens Teams



Why

An outstanding workplace culture attracts and retains the talent needed to deliver our ambitious goals. Happy teams perform better, innovate more, and stay longer. We acknowledge the importance of placing our team members, customers and local community at the centre of every decision. The Times Top 100 is arguably the most renowned employer ranking list in the UK. We hope that achieving external accreditation will open doors to attract top talent, which is essential for our growth strategy and will continue to make us a fantastic place to work.



What

We’ll begin our journey by surveying staff and reviewing current policies to understand where we are and where we need to grow. Using focus groups and feedback, we’ll shape a people strategy that strengthens culture, wellbeing, and engagement. Once embedded, we’ll apply for Times 100 Best Places to Work accreditation, sharing progress with our team throughout to keep everyone informed and involved.



Impact

Recognition as a Times 100 Best Workplace will boost morale, build our reputation, and help secure our long-term success as a values-driven organisation. Through this, the Trust will continue to be a catalyst for regional progress and national service.

Destination Douneside: creating and delivering our masterplan

Douneside House is a central part of our heritage. Through our Destination Douneside Masterplan, we will guide its continued growth while creating new opportunities in hospitality and tourism. This initiative reflects our commitment to honouring the past while shaping a vibrant future.

GOAL 10



Photo: Douneside House



Why

Douneside is not just a building; it is a legacy. Its preservation and evolution are vital to sustaining our charitable mission and supporting local employment.



What

We will deliver a long-term vision for hospitality and tourism across Douneside House and the wider Estate. This will include training opportunities, job creation, and sustainable development. We will do so through collaborative planning, sustained investment, and measurable delivery milestones.



Photo: MacRobert's Reply Bar, Douneside House



Impact

Our Masterplan ensures Douneside thrives as a place of welcome, heritage, and employment—anchoring the Trust's legacy within a vibrant, modern enterprise.



DOUNESIDE HOUSE
ROYAL DEESIDE

Photo: Members of the Hospitality Team



These 10 Goals set a clear direction for the next decade and are ambitious, grounded, and true to the values that have shaped The MacRobert Trust for more than seventy years.

They aren't just targets; they're a commitment to extend our impact, deepen our reach, and build something lasting, for the Armed Forces community, for education and opportunity, and for the land and people at heart of the estate and the local community.



As we step into this new chapter, we do so with purpose and confidence, rooted in heritage and growing toward a future we build together.