

Sigrid Robinson  
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Public Petitions Committee

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Our ref: 201501763  
Your ref: PE1523

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Dear Sigrid

## **CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC PETITION PE1523**

When I appeared before the Public Petitions Committee on 17 February I laid out a series of actions by Historic Scotland to provide you with a greater understanding of the issues about this petition. As you know, we undertook to set our original decision aside and start again with a fresh appraisal of the cultural significance of Tinkers' Heart, in conjunction with an Equality Impact Assessment of our scheduling process.

I am now in a position to update on the work we have undertaken. However, I not only want to inform the Committee of the decisions we have reached for both the above issues, but also outline two other areas where we believe significant progress has been made, namely getting a long term vision amongst all parties for Tinkers' Heart, and improving our national knowledge of Gypsy/Traveller built heritage. Attached as an annexe to this letter is a short time-line of our work to date.

During the course of the consultation, we were impressed by the passion and interest expressed by everyone who contributed stories and views about Tinkers' Heart. It is due to this effort that we were able to gain a fresh insight into the significance of the monument. I would, therefore, like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed but most especially, the members of Heart Of The Travellers, Here We Are local community group, and the landowner, Mrs Kate How.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

In early March we started an Equality Impact Assessment of our scheduling process which subsequently ran in tandem with our reappraisal of the case. We did not identify evidence of discrimination in the scheduling policies themselves. We did, however, identify that the way in which we gather associative information about certain sites and how we value that information could be strengthened. We are reviewing our processes to see how we can address this issue.



As we move to the new lead body for the historic environment, Historic Environment Scotland, we found the EQIA a constructive and timely exercise in identifying equality issues, and specifically how the designation process affects people who share protected characteristics. These findings are being used to inform colleagues across our organisation to see if further insights can be gained in relation to other services we deliver. Our Equality Impact Assessment Report will be published later this month.

### **The national importance of Tinkers' Heart**

We started a fresh evaluation of whether Tinkers' Heart should be scheduled by carrying out a new field and desk-based research project. We also launched a public consultation and explored a range of other engagement activities to seek the views of both the Travelling community, local people and other interested parties. The extensive review, public consultation and analysis has provided new evidence which has allowed us to fully understand and characterise the site's cultural significance in line with Ministers' policies set out in the Scottish Historic Environment Policy.

On the basis of this new work, we now consider Tinkers' Heart is a site of high cultural significance in three main areas:

- (1) it gives us a great understanding of the traditions and material heritage of Scottish Travellers;
- (2) it is a rare example of a permanent physical monument of Scottish Travellers; and
- (3) it holds a high significance in the consciousness of Gypsy/Travellers and the people of Argyll as a symbol of Scottish Travellers and their heritage.

In light of this, we intend to place Tinkers' Heart on the Schedule as a monument of national importance.

Our Consultation Analysis report and other documents supporting this decision will be published later this month. We are currently preparing the legal documentation to include Tinkers' Heart on the Schedule which may take up to six weeks to complete.

### **A shared vision for Tinkers' Heart**

Our field investigation concluded the site is in a good and stable condition. The only threat to the monument in recent times has been cattle trampling and this has been resolved through works funded by the landowner and local community group. The landowner also has plans to improve access to site. We have also learned about the impressive work done by the Here We Are local community group to research and promote their local heritage, of which Tinkers' Heart forms a significant part.

During our field investigation, we noted, however, that the main parties had varying ideas of what was best for the monument. We brought together for the first time the landowner, representatives of the local community, and members of the Heart Of The Travellers (HOTT). While the meeting did not resolve all issues, it provided a very constructive forum to air different opinions. The HOTT and Here We Are outlined some useful ways in which



they could work together on interpretation and promotion of heritage assets. The group accepted our offer to prepare a position statement that could form the basis of their shared vision for the monument. We consider the meeting was a very positive and significant step to gain a common understanding of each position, their views, and the area in which consensus and agreement could be sought. We will continue to provide advice and support to all parties in their long term aims for the management and promotion of their heritage work and the monument.

### **Improving our knowledge of Gypsy/Traveller material heritage**

In contrast to well-established research on the oral heritage of the Scottish Travellers, we found during our investigation that we have not reached a similar level of understanding of their material heritage. Consequently, we are concerned that information on the built heritage of Gypsy/Travellers may not be sufficient in our local and national historic environment records, which inform a wide range of government decision making areas. We consider this issue requires at the outset primary academic research to scope and characterise the full range of built heritage of Gypsy/Travellers. We are in early discussions with academic partners to outline research options that can address these gaps.

I hope that the results of our consultation and consequent investigations allow the Committee to fully consider the issues and aims of the Petition. If you have any questions about this letter or seek further information, please feel welcome to contact me.

Yours sincerely

**Barbara Cummins**  
Director of Heritage Management

## Annex

### Tinkers' Heart consultation process – key events

- 9 March – 12 week public consultation commenced; seeking written & verbal representations
- 26 March – met with Ms Jess Smith and Mr Mike Russell MSP
- 31 March – met with Director Auchindrain Museum
- 31 March – met with Scottish Travellers at Tinkers' Heart
- 1 April – met *Here We Are* local community group
- 2 April – met with landowner and conducted site evaluation
- 2 April – met with Local Authority
- 21 April – met with MECOPP – equality group with experience working with Gypsy/Traveller community
- 15 May – consultation closed (51 responses)
- 20 May – coordinated meeting of interested parties: Heart Of The Travellers, Here We Are, Historic Scotland and landowner

