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**THE ROBERT THE BRUCE
COMMEMORATION TRUST**

Chairman & Joint Hon Treasurer Mr John R Poole

16 September 2004

Mr James Boyle
Chairman
Cultural Commission
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Dear Mr Boyle

CULTURAL COMMISSION CONSULTATION PROCESS

The Trustees much welcomed your initiative and we appreciate your letter of 24th August, as we wish to join the consultation process.

A brief history of our project is enclosed to save repetition in this letter, and also a copy of the report commissioned by Dumfries & Galloway Council, and produced by Dr Dominic Tweddle, which found the Bruce Commemoration entirely feasible and that it would do much to bring in tourists and add much to the cultural heritage.

As you will see, we have a good website (www.brucetrust.co.uk) and a Bruce Trail will hopefully be constructed in Dumfries & Galloway, as a part of the HLF sponsored SULWATH CONNECTIONS initiative in partnership with Dumfries & Galloway Council. (Previously named North Solway Project)

The problem we have is that it is proving very difficult indeed to identify funding for the construction and maintenance of a Visitor Centre in Dumfries or elsewhere in Dumfries & Galloway. It is understood that the Council has other priorities (such as the new swimming pool) and HLF are currently not prepared to fund new cultural projects, except possibly, in our case, as an addition to an existing museum or visitor attraction. (In the context of Dumfries Museum this possible route had been explored, but it would increase staff costs, given the need to continue to exhibit the Observatory to visitors as well as the new Dumfries Museum/Bruce Centre based in a more central location).

It appears to us that 'new money' is not available for new projects, and arguably there is a danger that too much time and resources are being spent on re-packaging and re-branding existing museums, collections and sites to the exclusion of totally new commemorations/ themes that are highly innovative. (In our planned visitor centre in Dumfries extensive use is to be made of the latest 3-D and laser technology to re-create scenes and images of the life and times of Robert the Bruce.

We hasten to add that we do not regard a Bruce Commemoration as an exclusively Dumfries & Galloway project – ideally there should be a Trail across Scotland and for the avoidance of doubt the Trustees would emphasise that there is no political agenda as a sub-text in all this.

We hope that in our case the consultation process will produce the much needed funding that we think would be money well spent and would do much for the cultural heritage of Dumfries & Galloway and not the least the tourist industry.

Your further comments and advice would be much appreciated.

Many thanks

Yours sincerely



John R Poole

Encs.