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From: Aline Gunn [banniskirk@lybster.freeseve.co.uk]
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To: info
Subject: Cultural commission[Scanned]

For the attention of James Boyle

Dear Mr. Boyle

Cultural Commission Consultation Document

It is important to provide schoolchildren with opportunities to see and participate in as many art-forms as possible and to encourage those who show a special interest and aptitude to develop their talents further.

It is necessary for Scotland to have a central Arts structure and policy to encourage and support Art and Craft organisations, recognising the need to provide Scottish artists and crafts people with the opportunity to develop their skills and talents, drawing on the cultural heritage of the area and, at the same time, to work with artists from other countries and cultures.

While recognising the need for regional centres, Arts and Performance areas should be established outside the Central Belt and City conurbations. Concentration in Inverness provides no cultural facilities for the population of Caithness and the north of Sutherland. The citizens of Thurso, where there is no adequate performance area, are faced with a two and a half hour drive each way to attend a performance in Inverness. It is important that satisfactory facilities are available within a thirty-minute drive. Subsidised evening public transport is also desirable to enable full access.

Audiences can best be increased and widened by community events and homing in on school audiences, subsidised concerts/performances for the young.

Creativity can best be encouraged by providing easily accessible facilities and by supporting artists and craftspeople to develop their skills and talents. Scottish artists and crafts people should be encouraged to compete both in national and international fields. Cultural rights for Scottish citizens must be regarded as equal wherever they live in Scotland. Much existing cultural activity is the result of the efforts of individuals or groups of interested and/or talented people.

Centres of excellence should be supported wherever they happen to be situated, but every effort should be made to avoid large areas of cultural desert because of lack of facilities and/or funding. Arts funding for Caithness and the North Highlands in comparison with that in Orkney and Shetland is ludicrously low.

If some Arts funding is to be decentralised to the regions, it is imperative that it should be ring-fenced and provision should be made for ensuring that areas such as Caithness have proper Arts provision.

Current national and international centres of excellence should be supported and encouraged and every effort should be made to maintain and raise existing standards.

Provision should also be made to encourage and support interest and participation in the Arts and Crafts generally throughout Scotland. Scottish Artists and Crafts people should be supported in setting up businesses and marketing their work locally nationally and internationally.

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