



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

(For official use only)
PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE1387

1. Name of petitioner

Herbert Coutts, Gareth Jones, Arran Johnston and Kristine Cunningham on behalf of the Battle of Prestonpans Heritage Trust.

2. Petition title

Support for the interpretation of the Battle of Prestonpans.

3. Petition text

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to provide financial support for the creation of a permanent interpretation and education centre close to the site of the Battle of Prestonpans.

4. Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

Over the last five years the Battle Trust has made contact with a range of elected representatives to seek support for its proposals. They include local councillors, local and regional MSPs, Ministers of Culture, MP and MEP.

Since his election in 2007, East Lothian MSP Iain Gray has been a firm supporter of the work of the Battle Trust and has especially expressed his support for the current project. In response to our research on the economic impact of a battle centre, Mr Gray said publicly:

“Tourism is very important to East Lothian and it makes absolute sense to develop the fantastic legacy that the Battle of Prestonpans represents. This project has the potential to create employment in Prestonpans and also to attract more visitors to the area as a whole.

“This study confirms what many had believed – that there is a very large market for a centre which gives people an insight into the Jacobite victory at Prestonpans and the wider industrial heritage of the area.

“The success of the Culloden centre shows that there is a huge appetite for battle experiences and Prestonpans can be just as successful.”

He also hosted a reception at Holyrood for MSPs in 2008 and in December 2010 he sponsored a display at the parliament of the Battle of Prestonpans Tapestry.

The Trust has also met with several Ministers of Culture, most recently with Mike Russell MSP in April 2009. He committed to help the Battle Trust to develop its plans and facilitated a close on-going relationship with Historic Scotland who have been helpful in providing advice and assistance. Unfortunately, despite the protection of battlefields being part of its remit, and its stated support for the Battle Trust’s efforts, it is not able to provide financial support from its current funding streams. This will require a specific commitment from the Scottish Government.

Invitations to meet with the Battle Trust and view the Battle Tapestry have been extended to current Minister of Culture, Fiona Hyslop MSP, but so far no meeting has

been able to be arranged.

Alyn Smith MEP and East Lothian MP, Fiona O'Donnel both visited Prestonpans during 2010 and expressed their support for the Battle Trust. Mr Smith committed to investigate options for financial support from the European Union for the project, but so far none has been identified.

5. Petition background information

Bonnie Prince Charlie is one of Scotland's most iconic historical figures, yet not a single statue of him exists in Scotland and Culloden provides the only significant centre for the interpretation of the 1745 Jacobite rising. Quite fittingly, Culloden focuses on the tragic conclusion of the campaign and its aftermath. Prestonpans provides an opportunity to tell the story of the enormous optimism, hope and courage of the Jacobite army during its early successes. It puts into proper context the complex motivation of the Jacobite movement's supporters.

A centre in Prestonpans dedicated to the '45 will provide a highly accessible focus for a majority of Scots and for the millions of visitors to Edinburgh and the central belt of Scotland. It will provide schools with a first-class educational resource and the nation with a major tourist attraction.

The Battle of Prestonpans was a defining historical moment – not only for Prestonpans, but for the Scottish nation. Over the past thousand years Prestonpans has been a vital part of the nation's industrial history, a major centre producing everything from pottery, soap and sulphuric acid to bricks, beer and coal. But the victory achieved on September 21st 1745 by Bonnie Prince Charlie and his supporters from the Highland Clans was absolutely unique. It stunned Great Britain. For six weeks it broke the Union and shook the Hanoverian government to its foundations.

As such, our local community has approached its stewardship of this legacy with both the deepest respect and the greatest determination – which is a national exemplar of how a community cherishes and promotes its heritage. We wish to see the heritage of the Prince and the Highlanders' campaign conserved and interpreted; from the Prince's historic landing at Eriskay to his greatest triumph in Prestonpans. The Battle should be presented to our nation and its visitors as it truly was – the fulfilment of the Prince's youthful Hope and Ambition, drawing on the loyalty and support of the Scottish Clans.

Since 2000 our community has united together with the nations' best historians and archaeologists to better understand and promote the Prince's campaign and his victory here in our town. They include eminent battle historian and author Dr Christopher Duffy, historian and author Martin Margulies and one of the world's foremost battlefield archaeologists Dr Tony Pollard, as well as the 1745 Association and the Royal Stuart Society. Now, we remain united in presenting our case for a world-class living history centre in Prestonpans. We have built our argument on the strong foundation that, if the nation makes the necessary investment, the end result will be a sustainable and flourishing visitor attraction.

We have commissioned research by Max Gaunt of RGA management consultants who has a proven track record of similar research for attractions such as the Falkirk Wheel. This states that a world-class facility could attract well over 100,000 visitors each year, including international tourists, day-trippers from across Scotland, schools and community groups – all coming to learn about this momentous point in the nation's history.

All the Trusts significant research and reports are linked here, including that by RGA: http://www.battleofprestonpans1745.org/heritagetrust/html/heritage_campaign.html

Throughout our campaign we have used the arts in all its forms, perhaps most spectacularly by embroidering the world's longest tapestry at 104 metres. More than 200 volunteers across the nation and beyond have contributed their craft and their skill to our cause. An engaging retelling of the story of the Prince's campaign from Eriskay to Prestonpans, the tapestry will become one of the key attractions for the thousands of visitors to our proposed centre on the site of the Prestongrange Industrial Heritage Museum.

In close partnership with East Lothian Council and Historic Scotland, the Battle of Prestonpans 1745 Heritage Trust – together with Prestonpans Community Council, the 1745 Association and the Prestoungrange Arts Festival – now ask for the Scottish Government's support. We need the requisite capital funds to build a truly sustainable asset for current and future generations.

Specific Request

The Government has a stated policy of promoting the teaching of Scottish history and has publicly recognised the importance of battlefields to the nation's heritage. It has demonstrated these priorities by conducting a comprehensive Inventory of Historic Battlefields, with a view to providing them with greater protection. The first phase of the Inventory was published recently and Prestonpans is listed among the 17 most significant sites. Financial government support is demonstrated by its funding of major projects at both Bannockburn and Culloden.

The Battle of Prestonpans Heritage Trust applauds these initiatives and now asks the government to provide a commitment to support the proposed interpretation and education centre in Prestonpans.

The full cost of the Battle Trust proposal at Prestongrange Museum is £7 million. This estimate is based on designs by Pollock Hammond Architects for the conversion of the existing Bath House at the Museum into a state-of-the-art battle interpretation centre and the creation of a purpose built Tapestry Pavilion. Quotations were sought from Morgan Munro, Quantity Surveyors, and Haley Sharpe, award-winning heritage interpretation consultants.

The Battle of Prestonpans Heritage Trust is asking the Scottish Government to provide £5 million towards the battle and tapestry centre, with the Trust committing to raising the remaining £2 million.

East Lothian Council has agreed to donate the Bath House building and land for the Tapestry Pavilion on the museum site and will raise the necessary funds for the restoration of the remaining museum structures.

Outcomes and Benefits

A safeguarded battle site and well constructed interpretation centre in Prestonpans will provide the UK's most accessible visitor centre and educational resource dedicated to Bonnie Prince Charlie and the 1745 Jacobite rising.

It would be within easy reach of the millions of visitors to the central belt of Scotland and for thousands of schools.

The centre would be a key feature within the existing and restored industrial heritage museum and would bring much-needed employment and additional income to Prestonpans.

Further Information

A comprehensive document on the work of the Battle of Prestonpans Heritage Trust and its current campaign is available at :

http://www.battleofprestonpans1745.org/heritagetrust/documents/10-11-23_Prestonpans_final_web.pdf

Further information on the Battle of Prestonpans Tapestry is at:

<http://www.prestonpanstapestry.org/tapestry>

6. Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament’s website as an e-petition?

7. Closing date for e-petition

8. Comments to stimulate on-line discussion