

Cllr Dick Walsh
Leader of the Council
Argyll and Bute Council
Kilmory
Lochgilphead
Argyll, PA31 8RT

National Museums Scotland
Chambers Street
Edinburgh
EH1 1JF

Scottish Charity No. SC 010440

Cc Head of Community and Culture Donald MacVicar
Policy Lead for Culture Cllr Robin Currie

23 November 2015

Dear Mr Walsh

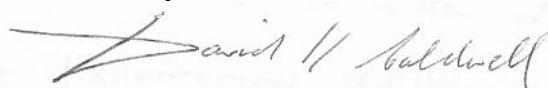
Argyll and Bute Consultation on “Planning Our Future”

The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland is a national independent membership charity with over 2,800 members (Fellows) across the globe (for more information please see www.socantscot.org). Our interests in the Argyll and Bute Council consultation are mainly heritage related and centre around the specific proposals to “Offer Campbeltown Museum for Community ownership and if no interest close the Museum”. The Society recognises the pressure that Local Authorities across Scotland are under with regard to their budgets, a pressure that will no doubt increase following the current Spending Review this month. We are keen that all Local Authorities recognise the benefits that heritage can bring to their areas, and a museum specifically provides an attraction for tourists and local people alike, and we are willing to help Local Authorities in these difficult times in whatever way we can.

A recent Arts Council England report on the economic impact of museums (www.artscouncil.org.uk) highlighted that museums provide a substantial return for the public investment they receive – at least doubling the investment received in value to the economy. Museums also provide a tangible anchor for community cohesion and identity, representing one of the few remaining genuinely egalitarian civic spaces and steward their collections for the benefit of all. In 2014 the Scottish Householder Survey indicated that 30% of people in Argyll and Bute visited a museum and 31% a historic/archaeological place, the most popular cultural attractions in Argyll behind cinema-going and live music. The Society is keen that local historic material is expertly curated and imaginatively displayed locally since this brings benefits to the local economy and helps develop local identity.

We would therefore encourage Argyll and Bute Council to support the local museum in Campbeltown in whatever way it can in these difficult times, and certainly not to close it. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely



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