

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – 10TH NOVEMBER 2004

BURNS MONUMENT, KAY PARK, KILMARNOCK

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Committee on proposals to refurbish the Burns Monument in Kay Park, Kilmarnock and seek approval to explore appropriate alternative options.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This Committee considered a report on the Burns Monument at its meeting on 13th November 2002 and gave approval for the submission of an application for a Project Planning Grant to the Heritage Lottery Fund to investigate the feasibility of establishing a Local History Heritage and Genealogy Centre in the Kay Park.
- 2.2 Unfortunately it was not possible to pursue the proposal to feasibility stage as it became clear that potential restrictions on developing this type of facility meant that it would not be possible to fund or construct the necessary buildings at the base of the monument. The principle issues were associated with the status of the building and its prominent position within the park. Having taken advice from Historic Scotland and the Council's Planning Section, it was decided that it would not be worthwhile applying for Lottery Funding for this project.
- 2.3 The main difficulty facing any project to refurbish the Burns Monument is the need to establish a sustainable end use that is affordable and does not have a detrimental effect on the Kay Park. Publicity regarding the condition of the Monument and Kilmarnock's main parks throughout the summer further highlighted the situation but to date no viable, sustainable project has been fully developed.

3 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 There are three main options available to the Council when considering the future of the Monument.

- i) Restore the Monument as a monument with no other end use. This would involve work to improve the exterior of the building, work to lessen the impact on the security fence, improvements to external lighting and new planting around the base of the monument. This option would not re-open the Monument for public access but would improve its visual impact.
- ii) Restore the Monument and utilise the interior spaces for cultural activities. A local cultural organisation, Common Ground, have expressed an interest in working in partnership with the Council to refurbish the Monument as an operational base and the centre of several potential cultural ventures. Common Ground have a successful track record in the promotion of traditional music and the organisation of festivals and events. Should the Council be able to secure funds to refurbish the Monument then Common Ground would be prepared to utilise the building, securing the sustainable end use required by external funding bodies.
- iii) Do Nothing
The Monument is currently secure and has been free from recent vandalism, doing nothing remains an option, however, failure to take action would meet further negative publicity and public response.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications attached to this report.

5. LEGAL AUTHORITY/IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Nil

6. POLICY/COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Addressing the problems associated with the condition of the Burns Monument would be in line with the Community Plan:-
 - i) Improving Community Safety Aim 3.1 - Increase use of public parks and footpaths.
 - ii) Improving the Environment Aim 10 – To develop visitor attractions and encourage associated business and employment opportunities.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 There are two viable options for the future of the Burns Monument and both require detailed consideration. If the Monument is to be restored solely as a monument there will be significant cost implications which require to be clarified, there may be potential for external funding support for this type of project, however, this would be limited. Should the option to refurbish the Monument in conjunction with Common Ground be acceptable, again detailed costings would be required and an appropriate lease would need to be agreed.
- 7.2 It would be possible to keep both options open and obtain further details and costings for the two scenarios for future consideration. It may be necessary to secure external assistance to provide costings for these projects and develop an appropriate partnership agreement with Common Ground.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-
- i) consider the options available for the Burns Monument and remit to the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services to bring back further details and costings relating to the options selected in due course; and
 - ii) otherwise note the content of this report.

William Stafford
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

WS/JAG/GW
26th October 2004

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

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