

3rd November 2019

To whom it may concern,

Re: Friends of Dundonald Castle asset transfer

we are writing to you as the collected staff of the Archaeology subject area at the University of Glasgow to strongly support the proposed asset transfer to the Friends of Dundonald Castle (FODC) of to land around the visitor centre, Winehouse Yett, Dundonald, from South Ayrshire Council.

The proposal relates to FODC acquiring the Visitor Centre building and surrounding land with proposal to future develop and expand facilities offered and provision for local community members, visitors and researchers. This is part of a strategic aim for sustainability. This seems to us a sensible and timely proposal and is the natural next step for FODC in developing their well-regarded community heritage project and visitor offering. The current set-up is now constraining what they can offer, and by taking on these assets, the visitor centre and heritage project should reach its full potential. The ambitious but realistic plans set out by FODC are part of their broader strategic approach to growth, focused on community benefit. FODC have already done a remarkable job, growing income streams, visitor numbers, and delivering innovative and exciting plans for public events.

Dundonald Castle is a nationally important monument, but more than that, a bustling and well-used community resource. The visitor centre and castle are constantly busy, and education visits a near daily feature during the school term. This is something that our students have been able to experience and help with; since 2017 five of our students have been on extended assessed work placements at the Castle and gained invaluable community heritage experience. We also run fieldtrips to Dundonald, and our students have taken part in excavations and public engagement events run by FODC. Some of our students have become long term volunteers and staff at the castle. Furthermore, as active researchers, we have been able to advise on the interpretation of the castle, and delivery of community engagement projects. Bigger and better visitor centre will enable artefacts to be displayed to the public, another resource for visiting researchers, as well as offering another resource for local people to be proud of.

We feel that this asset transfer can only benefit FODC, the local and broader community, and we look forward to continuing to work with them in the future.

Yours faithfully

[Redacted signature block]

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