

PE1541/H

Culture, Europe and External Affairs Directorate
European and UK Relations Division

T: 0131-244 5327
E: gerry.hendricks@scotland.gsi.gov.uk



Ned Sharratt (by email)
Assistant Clerk
Public Petitions Clerks
Room T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP



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Dear Ned

CONSIDERATION OF PETITION PE1541

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to officially recognise 'Flower of Scotland' as Scotland's national anthem.

I am responding, as Head of the Scottish Government's UK & Ireland Relations, Protocol & Honours Team, to your letter of 14 January to Karen Hackland about Petition PE1541.

I can confirm that Scottish Ministers believe a national anthem is an important part of a nation's culture and heritage. People identify with the symbols of their country, such as the flag or national anthem. These symbols inspire pride and a sense of belonging that transcends other differences, such as ethnicity, religion or social class.

Our national song should be an anthem for all the people of Scotland with our diverse heritage and traditions. Scotland has many fine tunes, both traditional and contemporary, including 'Flower of Scotland', which could be stirring national anthems, but it is important that any choice has wide public support. It is also important to note that other songs share 'Flower of Scotland's' special resonance, not least through their use at major events. For example, 'A Man's a Man for a' That', sung by Sheena Wellington at the 1999 opening of the Scottish Parliament, or 'Scotland the Brave' used at the Commonwealth Games between 1958 and 2006 - and 'Freedom Come-All-Ye' was performed by South African soprano Pumeza Matshikiza at the opening ceremony of the 2014 Games.

Scottish Ministers believe that consideration of whether Scotland should officially adopt a national anthem and if so, what that might be, should not be led by the Scottish Government or by any single political party. We therefore have no current plans in this regard.

Yours sincerely

Gerry Hendricks

Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ
www.scotland.gov.uk