

PE1721/E

Jackie Baillie MSP submission of 28 November 2019

This is a reproduction of a letter sent to Jackie Baillie MSP, from Simon Skinner, Chief Executive of National Trust for Scotland.



Jackie Baillie MSP
Constituency Office
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19 November 2019

Dear Jackie

As promised in my last letter to you, I am pleased to update you on the outcome of the NTS Board regarding the future of Geilston Garden.

As you are already aware, the garden has been subject to a review and options appraisal process since 2016/17, and has been making annual losses for the charity of circa £90,000.

In 2017 a decision of the Board to close the garden was met with representations by the Friends of Geilston group. The Trust agreed to work with them to investigate the alternative options for the property's future. As part of this process both parties worked to appoint an external consultant to produce an options appraisal. This report was sent to both parties in June 2019, with four possible courses of action for consideration:

- Sale of the full site and buildings;
- Partial sale of the site and/or buildings that would ensure at least part of the estate would remain accessible to the community;
- The Trust retaining the full site and seeking external funds to refurbish the house;
- The Trust retaining the site but releasing some of the estate for enabling developments that would fund the garden into the future.

It had also been suggested that the National Trust for Scotland could hand part or all of the property to a community trust that would find it easier to access support from grant-giving bodies - but the Friends of Geilston have indicated that they are not currently willing to take on this role and no other suitable partners are apparent.

FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The National Trust for Scotland, Hermiston Quay, 5 Cultins Road, Edinburgh EH11 4DF
Tel: 0131 458 0200 Fax: 0131 458 0201 Email: information@nts.org.uk Web: nts.org.uk

The National Trust for Scotland for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty is a charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number SC007410

Patron - HRH The Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay KG KT GCB OM, President - Neil Oliver, Chairman - Sir Mark Jones, Chief Executive - Simon Skinner MBA

At the November board meeting the Trustees thus concluded that the options that involved a possible enabling development offered a realistic way forward and should be subject to further consideration.

They therefore agreed to keep Geilston Garden in Cardross open for at least another year while this process takes place. The Trust will begin by appointing a land agent to determine the market interest in an enabling development, with a view to generating the funds needed to restore the house.

In the meantime, the garden will remain open as it is and will be accessible to the community; this decision was shared with the Friends of Geilston at a meeting last week.

I do hope that this answers your enquiry, and I will keep you and the Friends informed of future developments.

Yours sincerely



Simon Skinner

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