



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee

8th Report, 2013 (Session 4)

Report on Bannockburn 2014

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CONTENTS

Remit and membership

Report	1
Introduction	1
Background	1
Accountability, Governance and Finance	2
Funding and Accountability	2
Governance	3
Marketing to a target audience at home and abroad	4
Infrastructure	5
Conclusions/ Recommendations	6
 Annexe A: EXTRACTS FROM THE MINUTES OF THE ECONOMY, ENERGY AND TOURISM COMMITTEE	 8
 Annexe B: ORAL EVIDENCE, ASSOCIATED WRITTEN EVIDENCE AND OTHER WRITTEN EVIDENCE	 9



The Scottish Parliament
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Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee

Remit and membership

Remit:

The remit of the Committee is to consider and report on the Scottish economy, enterprise, energy, tourism and renewables and all other matters within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth apart from those covered by the remit of the Local Government and Regeneration Committee and matters relating to the Cities Strategy falling within the responsibility of the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy.

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Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee

8th Report, 2013 (Session 4)

Report on Bannockburn 2014

The Committee reports to the Parliament as follows—

INTRODUCTION

1. At the end of its “Winning Years” inquiry the Committee was made aware of the cancellation of the 2014 Clan Gathering, an event which was to have been a focal point of the Year of Homecoming 2014. In its *Report on the Winning Years*¹, the Committee agreed to seek information from key stakeholders on the cancellation of this event.
2. The Committee would like to thank all those who provided written and oral evidence to the Committee (listed in Annexe B).

BACKGROUND

3. Following the Clan Gathering event in 2009 and the liquidation of The Gathering 2009 Ltd, Stirling Council purchased the intellectual property rights to the event, planning to host a similar event in 2014.
4. In October 2012 it was announced that Stirling Council had cancelled the Gathering 2014. Johanna Boyd, Leader of Stirling Council explained that —

“An exercise was undertaken to establish a business case for the clan gathering. It showed a potential deficit from the running of such an event of the order of about £250,000.”²
5. As a consequence it was mutually agreed between Stirling Council and the Scottish Government that “an enhanced event – essentially an extra day at the

¹ Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee, 6th Report, 2012 (Session 4): Report on the Winning Years.

² Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee. *Official report, 24 April 2013*, Col 2748.

battle of Bannockburn – would avoid the financial and reputational risks that were being flagged up”.³

6. The Battle of Bannockburn Re-Enactment 2014 was planned by the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) after the success of a similar event in 2007, and to tie in with the opening of a new visitor centre on the battle site and the 700th anniversary of the battle. Following an approach from VisitScotland and the Homecoming Team, it was agreed to widen the event in both scope and duration from two to three days.

7. The battle re-enactment will now take place from 28-30 June 2014 and will be promoted as a signature event within the Homecoming 2014 programme. As well as the re-enactment, there are plans to include a tented clan village and displays of weaponry and falconry. This event is referred to in this report as the “Bannockburn event”.

ACCOUNTABILITY, GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE

8. The liquidation of The Gathering 2009 Ltd resulted in £382,000 being owed to six public sector bodies and £344,000 owed to 103 private sector organisations. The Committee was therefore keen to ensure that the lessons concerning governance and accountability learned from the Gathering 2009 had been taken account of in the planning for the Bannockburn event.

Funding and accountability

9. In evidence, NTS confirmed it was providing funding of £500,000 for the Bannockburn event with these costs to be met through ticket sales, concessions and the sale of merchandise. In addition, £250,000 of support from EventScotland, Creative Scotland and Scotland’s food and drink industry division had been secured through EventScotland’s funded application process. This latter funding had enabled the two day event to be extended to three days on a cost-neutral basis.⁴

10. As a condition of its £250,000 funding, EventScotland will set key performance indicators for the event with an outcome report after the event also required. In addition, NTS confirmed that its contracts will set out clearly the specific measurable outcomes that are expected in return for funding, for example, from the food and drink industry. These outcomes will be targeted at specific aspects of the event and NTS will also undertake an internal post-project evaluation for itself and its funders.⁵

11. NTS explained that it expects to have up to 15,000 people come to the Bannockburn event on each of the three days and that if 75% of those tickets are sold then the event will not be loss making. They are aiming to keep the ticket

³ Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee. *Official report, 24 April 2013, Col 2748-2749.*

⁴ Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee. *Official report, 24 April 2013, Col 2738.*

⁵ Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee. *Official report, 24 April 2013, Col 2763.*

prices at the most reasonable levels possible, with a charge of around £40 for a family ticket for a day's entertainment.⁶ In that regard, the success of the event is largely down to ticketing, which NTS anticipate will be on sale about a year in advance. NTS hopes to sell most of its tickets online through a deal with a ticketing provider.⁷

Governance

12. In its report into The Gathering 2009, Audit Scotland recommended that public sector bodies should—

- consider carefully the role, membership and reporting line of steering groups, including the balance between advisory and decision-taking roles;
- ensure good communication between joint funding bodies through regular exchange of information and agreeing roles and responsibilities.⁸

13. In written evidence NTS confirmed that—

- it is the client and ultimately responsible for the Bannockburn event's success with NTS's senior management team responsible for managing the event's overall performance;⁹
- it has established a Steering Group, chaired by the NTS which is responsible for the high level view of the event's overall contribution to the Homecoming 2014 programme;
- a working group has also been established which is responsible for the planning and delivery of the event;
- representatives from the Scottish Government, Homecoming 2014, EventScotland, Historic Scotland, Stirling Council, Creative Scotland and the Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs (SCSC) are involved in those groups.

14. In addition NTS was in the process of appointing a professional event organiser who would work with the working group in relation to the day to day decisions about the spending of the budget. NTS confirmed that the NTS Board had approved the event but had also raised a number of concerns about risk and the development of the proposals on which NTS officials were now regularly reporting.¹⁰

15. In relation to communication between the key stakeholders, NTS reiterated that it is working closely with its funders, stakeholders and partners. EventScotland echoed this point explaining that “we have for a number of months been working in

⁶ Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee. *Official report, 24 April 2013*, Col 2739.

⁷ Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee. *Official report, 24 April 2013*, Col 2758.

⁸ *The Gathering 2009*. Audit Scotland. (2010).

Available at: http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/central/2010/nr_100623_the_gathering.pdf

⁹ Written evidence, National Trust for Scotland

¹⁰ Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee. *Official report, 24 April 2013*, Col 2741.

close collaboration through every stage of the process”.¹¹ Malcolm MacGregor of the SCSC also confirmed that “I am happy with the liaising and the passing of information between the National Trust, VisitScotland, Homecoming Scotland and EventScotland”.¹²

16. EventScotland also confirmed that it regularly updates the Scottish Government’s Homecoming and Themed Events Team (part of the Tourism and Major Events Division).¹³

MARKETING TO A TARGET AUDIENCE AT HOME AND ABROAD

17. In its written submission, the SCSC explained that in order to attract overseas clan members to a clan gathering event in Scotland, at least two years’ lead-time is needed.¹⁴ As a consequence the Bannockburn event would be unlikely to attract the level of North American clan attendees that attended The Gathering 2009 event which had attracted around 17,000 clan members.¹⁵

18. EventScotland acknowledged that the lead time may be too short for some of the major North American clan groups but that strong interest had been expressed in the Bannockburn event from clan societies (from about 30-40 clans).¹⁶ In that regard EventScotland explained that —

“The North American market is our main overseas market, but one of the key differences between homecoming 2014 and homecoming 2009 is that, this time around ancestry is not the main theme but one of five themes¹⁷. Broadening out the themes means that we have a broader appeal to different markets. The United Kingdom market in particular is likely to have more reason to visit Scotland in the year of homecoming that it did the last time around.”¹⁸

19. Despite the shorter than desired lead in time, SCSC believe that the planned re-enactment of the original Battle of Bannockburn is “superb” and that they would “do our best to promote the event”.¹⁹

20. Responding to the Committee’s questions regarding the marketing of the event, EventScotland explained that the Bannockburn event was promoted through VisitScotland’s marketing teams. In addition, Bannockburn and the overall

¹¹ Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee. *Official report, 24 April 2013*, Col 2763.

¹² Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee. *Official report, 24 April 2013*, Col 2760.

¹³ Written evidence, VisitScotland.

¹⁴ Written evidence, Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs.

¹⁵ Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee. *Official report, 24 April 2013*, Col 2742.

¹⁶ Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee. *Official report, 24 April 2013*, Col 2749.

¹⁷ The five themes are food, drink, creative, natural, and ancestry.

¹⁸ Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee. *Official report, 24 April 2013*, Col 2744.

¹⁹ Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee. *Official report, 24 April 2013*, Col 2742.

homecoming programme were promoted to 800 travel operators from around the world at VisitScotland's expo in April 2013.²⁰ NTS and Stirling Council confirmed that they are providing other promotional activity whilst EventScotland explained that they were working with VisitBritain in North America and other markets throughout the world to extend and promote VisitScotland's activities.²¹

21. VisitScotland also explained that their database of 4,500 gatekeepers, as well as its international consumer database of over 1 million contacts, provide additional mechanisms to promote the Bannockburn event and the homecoming programme as whole.²²

22. In terms of budget for promoting homecoming events, EventScotland confirmed that—

“Within the homecoming budget of £5.5 million, £1.75 million is specifically for marketing...but that will be supported by other activities...we feel confident that with that amount we can generate the rate of return on investment target of 8:1.”²³

23. EventScotland confirmed that in total, it is expecting around 70,000 additional visitors as a result of the homecoming programme.²⁴

INFRASTRUCTURE

24. The Committee recognises that in order for any major event to be a success, there has to be in place a robust infrastructure which allows access to and from the event and which provides adequate amenities to support an influx of people into an area.

25. NTS explained that it had “set up a number of sub groups that will be working with representatives of the council, the police and others specifically on those planning issues” and that “the infrastructure will be there for the numbers we are talking about.”²⁵

26. Stirling Council will provide support with a coach service running from the city centre to event for the three days.²⁶ They added that these coach services will also try to ensure that the infrastructure exists to bring people into the city centre as well as to the event “to ensure that visitors to Stirling experience all of Stirling and

²⁰ Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee. *Official report, 24 April 2013*, Col 2740.

²¹ Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee. *Official report, 24 April 2013*, Col 2760.

²² Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee. *Official report, 24 April 2013*, Col 2760.

²³ Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee. *Official report, 24 April 2013*, Col 2744-2745.

²⁴ Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee. *Official report, 24 April 2013*, Col 2743.

²⁵ Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee. *Official report, 24 April 2013*, Col 2745.

²⁶ Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee. *Official report, 24 April 2013*, Col 2745.

everything that it has to offer". There have also been discussions about improvements to on and off slip roads on the M9 which would then provide a longer term legacy for Stirling.²⁷

27. In relation to ensuring accommodation is ready and available for the event, VisitScotland confirmed it has already conducted a number of workshops across the country and plans to hold an industry conference on 26 September 2013 specifically on the events that are happening in 2014. NTS explained that it is also interested in developing the whole infrastructure of Stirling the city and its outlying districts and that —

“This is very much a joint initiative, with investors and public agencies working with the local authority and local communities, who will get the jobs and incomes that spin off from the events.”²⁸

CONCLUSIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS

28. NTS is clear that they have ultimate responsibility for ensuring Bannockburn 2014 is a success. However, the Committee recognises that strong working relationships and clear communication are vital in ensuring NTS is able to achieve this desired outcome.

29. The Committee was therefore pleased to hear that the key stakeholders are working closely together in the planning and organisation of the event. In that regard the Committee welcomes the establishment of the Steering Group and Working Group, each with key stakeholders as members, as key to ensuring effective communication between the public bodies, NTS and the Scottish Government.

30. The Committee also acknowledges the progress made with the business plan, with NTS clear about what sales must be achieved in order for the event to be successful financially. An important component to ensuring the success of the event is the marketing undertaken. The Committee therefore notes that the decision to support the Bannockburn event this year (compared with 2 years before the event) has reduced the opportunity to maximise the number of North American clan visitors that may attend. The Committee, however, acknowledges that the wider range of themes adopted for the Bannockburn event combined with the promotional work underway and planned for the next year may result in increased numbers of UK and international visitors.

31. With just over a year to the event, it is essential that all those involved with the planning for the Bannockburn event remain focussed. **The Committee would therefore welcome an update from VisitScotland, in early 2014, on the progress made in planning for the event including whether the key planning milestones have been achieved and whether any interim financial targets (such as in relation to advanced ticket sales) have been met. As part of that update the Committee would request further information on VisitScotland's**

²⁷ Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee. *Official report, 24 April 2013*, Col 2752.

²⁸ Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee. *Official report, 24 April 2013*, Col 2753.

plans to encourage visitors to the Bannockburn event (and other signature events) to visit other locations in Scotland, spreading the benefits of such a event.

32. The Bannockburn 2014 event is of a different scale to the Gathering 2009 and therefore is not intended to attract the number of international visitors that the Gathering 2009 brought. Accordingly, the Committee believes there needs to be a greater focus on the additional events throughout Scotland during the year of Homecoming 2014 which should be vigorously marketed to the international audience to ensure the maximum benefit to the Scottish economy.

33. After the event the Committee would also welcome a copy of the post evaluation report from VisitScotland as well as information on any plans for future Gathering type events.

34. Finally, the Committee encourages investors, public agencies, the local authority and local communities to continue work together to ensure that there is a lasting legacy from the Bannockburn event for Stirling.

**ANNEXE A: EXTRACTS FROM THE MINUTES OF THE ECONOMY, ENERGY
AND TOURISM COMMITTEE**

12th Meeting, 2013 (Session 4), Wednesday 24 April 2013

1. **Decision on taking business in private:** The Committee agreed to take items 3 and 5 in private.
2. **Bannockburn 2014:** The Committee took evidence from—
Caroline Packman, Director, Homecoming Scotland;
Johanna Boyd, Leader, Stirling Council;
Peter Selman, Director of Properties and Visitor Services; Project Sponsor for
Battle of Bannockburn Project, and David McAllister, Project Director, Battle of
Bannockburn Project, National Trust for Scotland;
Malcolm MacGregor, Convener, Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs.
3. **Bannockburn 2014 (in private):** The Committee reviewed the evidence heard
earlier and agreed to publish a report on the issues raised.

16th Meeting, 2013 (Session 4), Wednesday 22 May 2013

1. **Decision on taking business in private:** The Committee agreed its
consideration of a draft report on Bannockburn 2014 should be in private at this
and future meetings.
2. **Bannockburn 2014 (in private):** The Committee considered a draft report and
various changes were agreed to. The Committee then agreed the report and the
arrangements for its publication.

ANNEXE B: ORAL EVIDENCE, ASSOCIATED WRITTEN EVIDENCE AND OTHER WRITTEN EVIDENCE

The Committee would like to thank all of those who gave oral evidence or submitted written evidence to this inquiry.

Wednesday 24 April 2013

[Official Report \(473KB pdf\)](#)

Caroline Packman, Director, Homecoming Scotland;
Johanna Boyd, Leader, Stirling Council;
Peter Selman, Director of Properties and Visitor Services; Project Sponsor for
Battle of Bannockburn Project, and David McAllister, Project Director, Battle of
Bannockburn Project, National Trust for Scotland;
Malcolm MacGregor, Convener, Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs.

[Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs \(156KB pdf\)](#)

[Stirling Council \(66KB pdf\)](#)

[National Trust for Scotland \(115KB pdf\)](#)

[Visit Scotland \(70KB pdf\)](#)

Supplementary evidence received

[Visit Scotland \(93KB pdf\)](#)

Other written evidence

[High Council of Clan Donald \(470KB pdf\)](#)

[MacDonald, Chas \(136KB pdf\)](#)

[Letter from the Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism, 15 November 2012
\(65KB pdf\)](#)

[Letter from VisitScotland, 19 November 2012 \(68KB pdf\)](#)

[Letter from the National Trust for Scotland, 20 November 2012 \(8KB pdf\)](#)

[Letter from VisitScotland, 29 November 2012 \(65KB pdf\)](#)

[Letter from the Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs, 4 January 2013 \(86KB pdf\)](#)

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