

PE1696/A

VisitScotland submission of 26 September 2018

VisitScotland welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Petitions Committee on the petition to preserve Scottish Battlefields.

VisitScotland works very closely with colleagues in Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and The National Trust for Scotland (NTS). As the petitioner has made clear, the former has responsibility for listing sites, whilst the latter owns two battlefield sites of national importance; namely Bannockburn and Culloden.

The observations put forward in this response set out what VisitScotland is able to report on the draw of battlefield sites for visitors.

Scotland's history is a key draw for visitors and this consistently comes through in VisitScotland's Visitor Information Survey. However it is not possible to say how many were motivated by battlefields, or paid a visit to a battlefield site as part of their trip.

The National Trust for Scotland owns the sites of Bannockburn and Culloden which feature award-winning visitor centres and are major attractions for visitors. Additionally the battlefield site at Prestonpans hosts a weekend long annual re-enactment and series of living history events each September. Colleagues at NTS will be able to advise on visitor numbers to their sites.

There has been increased interest in sites associated with the Jacobites in recent years, with the Outlander effect playing a significant part in extending interest to and amongst new audiences.

Screen tourism is a rising phenomenon that attracts visitors to Scotland, providing additional inspiration to our visitors. For example, the film Braveheart resonates strongly amongst visitors, with many travelling to sites associated with William Wallace. The forthcoming film The Outlaw King, will undoubtedly increase international interest in Robert the Bruce, with a resulting increase in visits to associated sites. This is likely to include famous and less well known battlefield sites and VisitScotland will work with partners to help generate and capitalise on this interest.

Linked to popular sites are often tours and talks which serve to deepen the understanding of these sites and historical events amongst visitors. Generally visitors are attracted to sites where interpretation is available as well as visitor facilities.