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NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND CALLS FOR SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT TO SAVE HISTORIC BATTLEFIELD

- **Conservation charity is calling for Scottish Government to intervene to save Bannockburn Battlefield.**
- **Charity submitted letter to Stirling Council opposing a planning application for trotting track on designated battlefield.**
- **Encroachment on land surrounding this historic setting risks further loss of landscape of one of the most pivotal places in Scotland's history.**

The National Trust for Scotland is calling for the Scottish Government to intervene to stop a damaging new development on land of the historic and internationally important Bannockburn Battlefield.

The conservation charity has submitted a letter in opposition to a proposed trotting track on the land to the west of New Line Road and south of Fairhill Road, at the Whins of Milton site on the nationally designated Battlefield of Bannockburn. The development risks further damage to the iconic historic landscape and setting surrounding the battlefield that will have a detrimental impact on one of the most pivotal places in Scotland's history.

The letter from the independent charity to Stirling Council's planning department **strongly objects** to this planning application due to the adverse effect it would have on the heritage site of national and international importance: the nationally designated Battlefield of Bannockburn, along with the A-listed monuments on the site, and the visitor experience.

The National Trust for Scotland has been managing Bannockburn Battlefield since 1943 and is tasked with its long-term care and protection to ensure access and enjoyment of this special place for everyone. The Bannockburn visitor centre currently attracts thousands of national and international visitors, as well as dedicated school visits. The proposed development risks damaging not only internationally significant heritage, but fundamentally altering the experience of the site for current and future generations.

Stuart Brooks, National Trust for Scotland Director for Conservation and Policy said:

"We are extremely disappointed that Stirling Council planning department is considering the proposal for a trotting track at the Whins of Milton site on the nationally designated Battlefield of Bannockburn, and in the single remaining fragment that allows us to understand how the battle unfolded. We are calling for the Scottish Government to pull this planning application to ensure the future of this historic battlefield for the benefit of future generations.

“Bannockburn is much more than just a battlefield. It is the location of one of the most pivotal moments in Scottish history when Robert the Bruce, King of Scots defeated the English army led by King Edward II. The landscape surrounding the battlefield was instrumental in helping Robert’s men beat their English rivals and ensuring the nation’s future.

“The location of the proposed development at Whins of Milton is in the vicinity of where Bruce’s army faced off against the vanguard of Edward’s army on the first day of the battle. It is close to Foot o Green Farm, where the famous duel between Bruce and De Bohun is said to have taken place. Milton Bog formed a defensive screen for the western flank of Bruce’s army on Borestone Brae that would’ve assisted the Scots men in securing victory against Edward and his men.

“Over previous decades much of the historic setting has been lost and we are deeply concerned about any new development that would encroach on this and further erode and degrade this iconic landscape. We are calling for the Scottish Government to step in and save Bannockburn Battlefield from this proposal to ensure the longevity of a site steeped in Scottish history.”

The specific grounds for objection raised by the National Trust for Scotland are outlined in its letter to Stirling Council’s Planning Department, and include the impact on the designated historic Battlefield, the visual impact, transport impact and noise pollution.

Impact on the designated historic Battlefield; The proposed development would destroy one of the few remaining undeveloped areas of the designated historic Battlefield (first designated in 2012), including groundbreaking, access roads, track surfaces, concrete pads, and foundations. We consider this level of loss at a nationally and internationally important Battlefield to be unacceptable.

Visual impact; The proposal would see one of the last green wedges disappear from Stirling. Currently, the agricultural use of the land means the Battlefield can be seen in context from the Rotunda, looking out to the fields and then hills. The proposed development would seal in the visitor centre, Rotunda, and monuments, greatly reducing the sense of place, and quality of experience.

Transport impact; The application proposes to turn part of the designated Battlefield into car parking, for over 200 cars. The creation of new accesses to serve the proposed site could cause issues for road users. The Drummond Black Consulting Road Safety Audit identifies a number of issues, including an elevated risk of collision on the main road. For the National Trust for Scotland, we would take issue with a development that could potentially put residents and visitors at risk.

Noise pollution; The proposal is for regular races to be run, using amplified public address systems, along with crowd noise, immediately adjacent to the historic Battlefield. Bannockburn Battlefield is a place of pilgrimage for many, and a site where

visitors seek to again experience the sense of place of this climatic battle. Noise disturbance from the racetrack during events will greatly detract from this experience.

Further information about Bannockburn Battlefield is available at:

<https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/bannockburn>

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Notes to editors:

About the National Trust for Scotland

Established in 1931, the National Trust for Scotland is Scotland's largest conservation charity and cares for, shares and speaks up for Scotland's magnificent heritage.

Over the last 90 years the Trust has pioneered public access to and shared ownership of some of the most magnificent buildings, collections and landscapes in Scotland. It cares for more than 100 sites, from ancient houses to battlefields, castles, mills, gardens, coastlines, islands, mountain ranges and the plants and animals which depend upon them.

In March 2022, the National Trust for Scotland launched *Nature, Beauty & Heritage for Everyone*, its ten-year strategy which sets out the ambitions of the charity over the coming decade. From speaking up for Scotland's heritage which doesn't have a voice, to improving the lives and wellbeing of people across the country, and responding to the climate and biodiversity crisis, the Trust will build on its work in recent years to grow its impact and conserve and restore more of Scotland's heritage, as it moves towards its centenary in 2031.

Scotland's largest membership organisation, the National Trust for Scotland relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work.

For more information on the National Trust for Scotland visit www.nts.org.uk.

The National Trust for Scotland is a charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number SC 007410.