



GLASGOW ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Councillor Susan Aitken
Head of Glasgow City Council
30th October 2023

Dear Councillor Aitken,

Re: proposed cuts and job losses in Glasgow Life Museums and Collections

We are writing to you as the Council of Glasgow Archaeological Society to express our concerns about reported 30% cuts to the staffing of Glasgow Life Museums and Collections. We are deeply worried that these cuts will negatively impact on the vital services your museums offer for the people of Glasgow and beyond, the collections themselves, and access to those collections for members of the public and researchers.

Glasgow Archaeological Society has been in existence for almost 160 years and during that time our organisation and members have had close associations and engagements with Glasgow's museums; there have been for instance many museum curatorial staff who have served on our Council or given lectures to our members. Artefacts from our excavations are in your collections, and archival materials related to the life and work of several of our past presidents are held by Glasgow Life. The future stability of this material, and access for researchers, must be cast into doubt due to the reduced capacity of your staff and services that these cuts will cause. Access to these materials for researchers is already being impacted by budget cutbacks and the cuts that are now proposed will make this even worse. We are also concerned these cuts will reduce your capacity to receive material via Treasure Trove from excavations and fieldwork carried out in the Glasgow area, thus making it less available for Glaswegians and local researchers.

It is also very worrying that the proposed cuts will impact a whole range of aspects of the work of Glasgow Life, including curatorial, conservation, photography, design, technician services, and some front-facing services such as The Open Museum community service, Learning & Access curatorial posts, and roles at The Mitchell Library Special Collections Department. One of the strongest benefits of being a citizen of Glasgow – the availability of free museums and libraries – would be eroded by these cuts. In particular they are available to those on low incomes and have huge educational benefits to users. Visitors and migrants to the city also gain from access to well designed, well provided for museums services. The risk to educational work – and the joy your collections and museums give to countless school kids – is very real should these cuts happen.

We therefore urge you and your fellow Councillors to reconsider these proposed cuts. Glasgow's museums are a vital resource for the people of the city and beyond, and any cuts to this service will inevitably make us all poorer. Glasgow Archaeological Society members understand the value of archaeology and heritage in our current society, and the wellbeing benefits these can give. These proposed cuts put all of this in peril.

Yours faithfully

Dr Kenneth Brophy, President

GAS Council members: Natasha Ferguson (Vice-President), Orla Craig, Cathy Gibson, Alan Gifford, Dr Stephen Harrison, Dr Janet MacDonald, Helen Maxwell, Jim Mearns, Elaine Shearer, Stephen Stockdale