

Trust chief issues warning on Glen



THE Carnegie Dunfermline Trust has warned that Pittencrieff Park could lose out on lottery millions if a commercial enterprise such as the proposed business school doesn't go ahead.

A 10-year masterplan to secure the Glen's long-term viability has been drawn up but the Heritage Lottery Fund won't hand over £5 million to fund it unless the park is making money.

And chief executive Nora Rundell stressed that change was inevitable if they were to secure enough funding to arrest the decline and restore the Glen to its former glory.

She said, "There's a very real concern that unless there's something which can be included in the application that has sustainable economic benefits for the park, they wouldn't consider an application for investment.

"If the business school doesn't go ahead, we would still need something of a commercial nature."

Meanwhile, the trust has rubbished claims that changes to the royal charter – which have remained secret – would help them push through the proposed Harvard-style business school. The Mace Group, the construction company that built the Royal Bank of Scotland's flagship HQ in Gogarburn, submitted the business school proposal by letter and a feasibility study is now being carried out.

The trust stressed that no further details had been submitted about the business school and said there was nothing sinister about the petition to the Privy Council to change the charter.

However, Tom Minogue, of the Pittencrieff Park Society, claimed the trust had "gone behind the back of the people" by seeking to change the way it controls £14.5 million of assets and the Glen – issues governed by the charter.

He said, "The trust did not fulfil its moral, and arguably its legal, obligation by giving details of the new powers it sought and thereby failed to inform the Dunfermline public what it was doing.

"I have written to the Queen, the Privy Council and the Scottish Executive asking them to overturn or revoke the totally unjust and secretive royal charter application process."

Mr Minogue continued, "The people who are most affected by changes to the charter – the people of Dunfermline – are not entitled to know what the changes are that will affect them until they become law!

"Andrew Carnegie made it clear that Pittencrieff Park must be used for the recreation and leisure pursuits of the poor people of Dunfermline.

"And yet it would now seem that the terms of the charter which governs the actions of the trust may be changed to allow a speculative £30 million building project in the form of a business school which we are told by our MSP Scott Barrie is to be built in the Glen – or not built at all." He added that petitions placed in local shops had already gathered hundreds of signatures against the project.

Liz Mogg, who joined Mr Minogue at a meeting with Ms Rundell last week, said, "The whole proposal smacks of smoke and mirrors and is very insubstantial. If ever anything comes of it we suspect that, as with the supplement to the charter and the hospital decision, the last people to know will be the citizens of Dunfermline.

"If they are serious and the project is viable, what is to stop them purchasing land alongside the park to get the benefit of the iconic site without endangering the heritage of Dunfermline's people?"

Ms Rundell told the Press the process to change the charter had begun long before the business school proposal emerged and that she had explained that to the Pittencrieff Park Society.

"We explained that the modernisation of the charter has been going on for more than three years to bring it into line with modern charitable legislation," she said.

"A lot of trusts and other charities have done the same. Our existing document is open to the public but while amendments are going through we can't release (the new one) until it's complete.

"I think it still has to be signed by the Queen and then it goes back to the Scottish Executive so it's not in our hands."

She continued, "It's a bit sad. We've said all along we're happy to meet with anyone and we did. I thought we had addressed the concerns as best we could in the circumstances.

"As far as we're concerned this is a proposal, no more and no less, and we're duty-bound to consider it but no details have been brought to light.

"If and when it gets to that stage we will fulfil our obligations and inform and consult with everyone. But right now we've nothing to consult about."