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Trust: 'Save the Glen' could be our slogan

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AN "ECONOMIC time bomb" is ticking under Pittencrieff Park and the people of Dunfermline are "facing stark realities", the under-fire head of the park's trustees has warned.

Angus Hogg said the Glen needed a "kiss of life" and was heading for rapid deterioration without economic development, such as the proposed business school.

However, more famous names have joined the campaign to 'Save the Glen' with author Iain Banks and film director Richard Jobson slamming the building plans.

Best-selling writer Mr Banks, of North Queensferry, said those behind the project know "the price of everything and the value of nothing".

And Mr Jobson, former frontman of The Skids and now a successful film director, said saving the Glen was "a fight that had to be won".

These comments follow on from stinging criticism about development from singer Barbara Dickson and author/artist Alasdair Gray.

Trust chairman Mr Hogg hit back, "People, not in possession of the full economic facts, can fire arrows in our direction but, in their case, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

"If these people got their way and no economic development was explored the deterioration of the park would rapidly follow.

"We are not going to permit this. The trustees are fully embracing the wishes of the founder by being prepared to proudly advocate his stated wishes to be 'Pioneers ... and as conditions of life change rapidly, you will not be restricted as to your plans or the scope of your activities'.

"One of the definitions of a pioneer is 'an innovator or developer of something new'. Andrew Carnegie was one of the most inspirational pioneers in history.

"We can't afford to sit on our laurels, nor would we ever choose to do that."

He added, "Conditions have changed dramatically and Pittencrieff Park is running out of time. While people protest, we have to act. The time bomb is ticking and we have to defuse it.

"The park has running costs of £500,000 each year and these costs escalate with

misuse, vandalism, wear and tear."

Mr Hogg went on, "The dreamy image of the sun-kissed park continuing to function with no financial input is mythical – economic facts are the reality.

"It is only by developing its economic viability that we can give the Glen a much-needed kiss of life.

"The park is one of the proud jewels in the crown of Dunfermline and the trustees can state a legitimate claim to the slogan of 'Save the Glen'.

"This is exactly what has motivated them to work on the 10-year development plan with the council, to invest £250,000 in the hugely popular play park and to enter into discussion in principle for potential leasing arrangements which can generate dedicated income directly back into the park."

On the other side of the debate, Richard Jobson said, "The Glen has always had a special place in my heart.

"Not only did The Skids play one of their first ever gigs there but we often rehearsed and for a while lived in a flat that overlooked one of the most majestic public parks in the UK.

"It would be social and cultural travesty for the park to be re-defined and split into different sections. There are many other areas where a new development could go – this is the wrong one.

"The park belongs to the people and they have responded over the years by making it an essential part of their lives.

"Saving the Glen is a fight that has to be won. It has my complete support."

Iain Banks said, "I remember the Glen from my childhood and still visit it occasionally. I'm appalled at the prospect of any part of it being 'developed'. The Glen belongs, morally, to the people of Dunfermline and whoever else visits it and loves it. Those who would destroy any part of the Glen for gain remind me of Oscar Wilde's definition of a cynic: one who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing."

By Gary Fitzpatrick

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