

RESPONSE FROM THE MINISTER FOR ENERGY, ENTERPRISE AND TOURISM,
SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT, 15 NOVEMBER 2012

Thank you for your letter of 25 October regarding press reports that there has been a cancellation of a clan gathering event in Stirling in 2014. I know that since writing to me you had the opportunity in committee to question the chair of VisitScotland on the same matter and that he explained how some of the reporting in the press had not accurately reflected the situation. I welcome this opportunity to set out for the Committee what is being planned.

A range of partners including Scottish Government, VisitScotland, the National Trust for Scotland, Stirling Council, the Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs and the Council of Scottish Clans and Associations are working in partnership to deliver an exciting programme of events that will appeal to the domestic and international clan audience during the 2014 Year of Homecoming.

Stirling Council had purchased the intellectual property rights for The Gathering 2009 Ltd in March 2011 following the company's liquidation and had initially intended to stage a similar clan gathering event as part of a wider Stirling 2014 programme of events. However, following some business planning work and discussions with key partners, Stirling Council concluded that it would be best to support the National Trust for Scotland's plans to celebrate the 700th anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn with a re-enactment weekend over 28-30 June.

The re-enactment weekend will be a centrepiece of the Homecoming celebrations and a highlight of Stirling 2014 programme. It will include the largest battle re-enactment ever hosted at the memorial battlefield, a tented clan village and weaponry and falconry displays. Partners are also working to incorporate a clan parade as part of the weekend.

In addition to this activity, the Homecoming Team at VisitScotland are also working with the Scottish Highland Games Association so that the Homecoming Year can be used to provide support to, and extend the appeal, of Highland Games across Scotland and assist these events in reaching and engaging with the global clan audience.

The Convenor of the Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs and the President of the Council of Scottish Clans and Associations have both welcomed these plans and we are continuing to work closely with both organisations to ensure fantastic events that will motivate the ancestral Scots and many others to visit Scotland in 2014 and participate in our Homecoming celebrations.

