

ANGUS COUNCIL**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 10TH FEBRUARY 1998****THE ROYAL BURGH OF ARBROATH - QUATRO CENTENARY****REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF CULTURAL SERVICES****ABSTRACT**

This report proposes that planning should be initiated for a programme to mark the Quatro Centenary of the Royal Burgh of Arbroath.

1. RECOMMENDATION

That the Council should organise a public meeting in Arbroath to appoint an organising committee, representative of all parts of the community.

2. INTRODUCTION

Arbroath Abbey was founded by William I in 1178 and the Abbot used the powers granted by the King to establish an ecclesiastical burgh with all the trading rights of a royal burgh.

Shortly after the reformation in the 1560s the Bishop of Moray was accused of destroying the burgh charter during the King's minority. On the 23rd November 1599, James VI granted the town the status of a Royal Burgh and Arbroath received a new charter confirming its privileges.

The new burgh elected a provost, baillies and a council and set about managing the town's affairs from a new tollbooth. Freemen of the burgh were admitted, and bakers, brewers, butchers, fish-sellers, tailors, leather-dressers, weavers and carpenters became burgesses. The harbour was declared a free harbour and a weekly market was held on Saturdays and annual fairs on the days of St. Thomas, St. John, St. Vigean and St. Ninian.

The town went from strength to strength, and the Convention of Royal Burghs a predecessor of COSLA, met in Arbroath in 1612.

3. PROPOSALS

Arbroath will, accordingly, celebrate 400 years as a Royal Burgh and for such an event it is important that the planning of the celebrations involves the whole of the Arbroath community. In these circumstances the role of the Council may be best exercised, mainly, in an enabling role involving bringing the community together to plan a programme of events.

It is, accordingly, suggested that a public meeting is called in Arbroath to discuss arrangements involving :-

- individual residents
- organisations from community
- business
- education groups
- Community Council
- Arbroath Councillors
- Council Services

From that meeting a steering committee would be appointed to carry out planning for the event.

4. THE COUNCIL'S ROLE

This event is one which could attract considerable national publicity, given that 1999 will be a significant year in Scotland, and it will fit in well with other Council initiatives to promote the economic development of Arbroath. It is assumed the Council will wish to be closely involved as a partner in the event which could involve:-

- provision of officer assistance to service the organising committee
- provision of accommodation for meetings
- the organisation of events by Council Services
- assistance in securing external funding
- generally assisting in the provision of facilities and support for events

4. CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, Director of Law and Administration, the Director of Finance and the Director of Planning Transport & Economic Development have been consulted and have been involved in the investigations.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

At this stage it is impossible to quantify any estimate for the event until an outline programme has been prepared. At that time a report would be presented to the Council and a decision made about any financial support which might be given to the programme. For such an event sources of European and Lottery funding should be available as, it is hoped, would contributions from the Arbroath Community.

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 [other than any containing confidential or exempt information], were relied on to any material extent in preparing this report.

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