

Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 30 August 2022

McCrae's Battalion Trust: Commemorative Service at Contalmaison Cairn – 1 July 2022

Executive/routine

Wards

Council Commitments

City Wide

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To approve retrospectively expenditure of £748 on attendance at the Commemorative Service at Contalmaison on 1 July 2022, whilst noting that the individual concerned was unable to attend.

Andrew Kerr

Chief Executive

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Report

McCrae's Battalion Trust: Commemorative Service at Contalmaison Cairn – 1 July 2022

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Council is invited each year (excluding lockdown) by McCrae's Battalion Trust to attend the annual commemorative ceremony.
- 2.2 This year was no different and the necessary booking was made with the Trust. On this occasion though the individual concerned was unable to travel to Contalmaison. An alternative arrangement was made with the Trust to lay the wreath on the City's behalf. The required cost still had to be met.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council supported the Hearts Great War Memorial Committee by providing a £5,000 grant towards the cost of a cairn at Contalmaison to commemorate the 15th and 16th Battalions of the Royal Scots at the Battle of the Somme. An unveiling ceremony took place in 2004 when the Council was represented.
- 3.2 The Council was represented at each of the subsequent annual commemorative ceremonies up to and including 2019 when the Depute Lord Provost attended. There was then a gap due to COVID and associated travel restrictions until the event took place again at Contalmaison on 1 July 2022.

4. Main report

- 4.1 It is customary for a representative of the Lord Provost to attend the annual pilgrimage to Contalmaison in the Somme Battlefield. After a 3 year gap, an invitation to attend this year's ceremony was received from the McCrae's Battalion Trust on 22 February 2022
- 4.2 As usual, the event coincided with Royal Week in Edinburgh and so the new Lord Provost was unable to attend. An alternative arrangement was agreed with the Lord Provost on 30 May, allowing the normal booking to be made with the McCrae's Battalion Trust.

- 4.3 Close to the departure from Edinburgh date on Wednesday 29 June 2022, however, it was intimated that the arrangements in place no longer suited the individual concerned. This was reported to be due mainly to the meeting of Full Council taking place on Thursday 30 June.
- 4.4 Without a viable alternative, the Trust was duly notified that no-one from the Council would attend and was asked to lay the wreath on the City's behalf. This did happen.
- 4.5 The Trust (which is a registered Charity) still required the full amount of £784 to be paid in lieu of bus, ferry and hotel costs which had to be paid in advance. The invoice has been paid accordingly.
- 4.6 Had the Lord Provost been represented at the Commemorative Service, retrospective approval for Elected Member travel would have been necessary. This no longer applies in these circumstances.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The Committee will be notified in due course regarding proposals for the Contalmaison gathering in 2023.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The cost of booking the visit to Contalmaison, amounting to £784, has been met from the Lord Provost's Office budget.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 There are no consultation or engagement requirements.
- 7.2 There is no impact on health and safety, governance, compliance, or regulatory matters. There are also no equalities impacts arising from this visit.
- 7.3 Travel (return trip) from Edinburgh to Contalmaison did not take place.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 None.

9. Appendices

- 9.1 None.