

**Culture, External Affairs and Tourism Directorate**  
Francesca Osowska, Director



T: 0131-244 0319 F: 0131-244 1498  
E: directorceat@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Mr Fergus Cochrane  
Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee  
Public Petitions Committee  
TG.01  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

---

Our ref: PE 1352  
November 2010

Dear Mr Cochrane

### **CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC PETITION PE 1352**

Thank you for your letter of 15 September 2010 seeking responses from the Public Petitions Committee on petition PE1352. The purpose of your letter was to seek a written response to the points raised during the discussion on the petitions held on 13 September; and the specific written question for the Scottish Government raised by the Committee and set out on the webpage's for these petitions.

The questions put to the Scottish Government were:

- Will you take the action requested by the petitioner? If so, when and, if not, why not?
- Who formally owns Edinburgh Castle and who has responsibility for running it?
- Who has responsibility for the flags that are flown and for which flags?
- Who has the power to make the changes that the petitioner asks for and what steps would require to be taken?

The answers are as follows:

- **Will you take the action requested by the petitioner? If so, when and, if not, why not?**

This is primarily a matter for Historic Scotland who we understand are actively looking for an alternative site to erect a flagpole and fly the Saltire. Edinburgh Castle is cared for and run on behalf of the Scottish Government/Ministers by Historic Scotland, and as such would listen to the advice put forward by Historic Scotland with regards any such alterations. Historic Scotland have been clear about the problems associated with the petitioner's proposal but are actively looking at a way of better promoting the Saltire.

- **Who formally owns Edinburgh Castle and who has responsibility for running it?**

Scottish Ministers own Edinburgh Castle. It is cared for on their behalf by Historic Scotland, a government agency, who run it as a visitor attraction. The army are responsible for a number of areas of the castle : Barrack Block, GOC/Officers Mess, Royal Scots Headquarters, Royal Scots Museum, Royal Scots Dragoon Guards Museum, The Gunners house, Army Education Centre, Guardroom (part-shared with Historic Scotland).

- **Who has responsibility for the flags that are flown and for which flags?**

As an official flag flying station (defined by Queen's Regulations), the arrangements are as follows:

Clock Tower (main flagpole) – Union flag: this is the army's responsibility and is usually raised and lowered by them;

Half Moon Battery – Saltire: Historic Scotland's responsibility. Please note that during The Tattoo this flag pole is removed to make way for equipment.

Gatehouse – the central flagpole is usually reserved for the governor's flag (and is operated by the army); the left centre one flies the regimental flag (this is for the army to operate) and the third flies the Edinburgh Castle flag.

- **Who has the power to make the changes that the petitioner asks for and what steps would require to be taken?**

As confirmed in the response from Historic Scotland, they have the power to erect flagpoles at Edinburgh Castle. The process would involve an initial feasibility study looking at the potential impact of the flagpole and associated fixings, including the concerns outlined in the response from Historic Scotland. If the project was to progress, as Edinburgh Castle is a Scheduled Monument and Property in Care, any proposed scheme would be subject to the relevant consents procedures and planning permission. These procedures would also take into account the impact within the castle including health and safety and operational issues and the potential effect on the archaeology and visual amenity in the area. This also has the potential to require restrictions to the numbers of people allowed in the castle at any one time.

Yours sincerely,

Francesca Osowska  
Director, Culture, External Affairs and Tourism