To Councillor Susan Aitken and Councillor Annette Christie, Glasgow City Council

(by email: Susan.Aitken@glasgow.gov.uk & Annette.Christie@glasgow.gov.uk)

October 29th, 2023

Dear Councillors Aitken and Christie,

*Re Glasgow Life Museums and Collections*

The Prehistoric Society is dedicated to furthering the understanding of our global prehistoric past and conserving prehistoric remains for the future. Our members are passionately interested in many prehistoric sites, museum collections and excavations both in Britain and abroad. I am writing with regard to the proposals to reduce staff posts at the Glasgow Life Museums and Collections.

I understand that funding is being cut the museum, which will impact upon staff, research, conservation, object curation and the museum programme, including the community service. The museum collections include fine archaeological holdings, enabling the full story of Glasgow to be told and interpreted for visitors who are unaware of its rich time depth. The museum, its staff and collections are a key asset of Glasgow’s rich cultural life, one of the finest in the United Kingdom.

Museums are invaluable resources for the public, particularly schoolchildren, for whom a museum visit can be hugely inspirational, and can lead to crucial life choices. Engaging with objects hand-on, and being able to discuss them with expert curators and volunteers interpreting the past can lead to a lifetimes fascination with history and archaeology. Removing this possibility from children will be a deeply-felt blow to teachers, parents and the children themselves.

Your archaeological collections give an exceptionally detailed account of Glasgow and Scotland’s prehistory, and are of great importance to researchers, particularly into the Neolithic and Bronze Age when Scotland was at the forefront of cultural change in the UK more widely. This was a period of seismic shift in society, as migrants travelled from the European mainland to find a new home and community here. These are important stories which resonate today with the movement of peoples across Europe. Your curators will already be telling these stories, and telling them to modern migrant and refugee children – is now the time to reduce your ability to link the present to the past and demonstrate our shared humanity?

I am very mindful of the difficult circumstances of the current economic climate, however, reducing museum staff and the collections and facilities at Kelvin Hall will close doors to researchers into Glasgow’s past, and restrict wonderful opportunities for schoolchildren in the present and future.

I urge you to maintain funding at current levels and allow Glasgow’s rich cultural offer to continue.

Yours faithfully

Professor Linda Hurcombe

President, Prehistoric Society