

Home Affairs

JS



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

30 August 1979

Alan John

The Prime Minister has seen the Home Secretary's minute of 22 August, reporting a discussion in the Home and Social Affairs Committee on the National Heritage Fund.

She is content with the Committee's proposals on Ministerial responsibility for the Fund, on responsibility for the appointment of the trustees, and on an early public statement.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the members of H Committee, to Martin Vile (Cabinet Office) and David Laughrin (CSD).

Yours ever
Mike Pattison

J.A. Chilcot, Esq.,
Home Office.

JS

*Agreed MS*PRIME MINISTER

This is Mr. Whitelaw's report on the H Committee discussion of the National Heritage Fund. The two papers considered are flagged at A and B. There are three points for your agreement:

1. The Secretary of State for the Environment and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to take joint Ministerial responsibility, keeping in close contact with the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
2. The same two Ministers to appoint the Trustees, consulting you and others as with other public appointments. This differs from the Expenditure Committee recommendations for appointment by the Prime Minister.
3. An early public statement by the Ministers concerned.

Agree these three proposals?

29 August 1979

MAD



PRIME MINISTER

NATIONAL HERITAGE FUND

Home and Social Affairs Committee discussed on 31 July how we should give effect to our commitment to set up a National Heritage Fund under independent Trustees. The Committee accepted the proposals in H(79)45, apart from the future of the "acceptance in lieu" procedures.

They decided that responsibility for operating these procedures after 1 April 1980 should for the time being be passed from the Treasury to the Department of the Environment and Office of Arts and Libraries, but without final commitment to the destination of the responsibility.

Otherwise there are three issues to which I draw your attention. First, Ministerial responsibility for the new Fund. Although the Trustees of the National Heritage Fund will be independent, it will be for the responsible Ministers to decide on the level of annual grant-in-aid and to make any necessary conditions. They would also be responsible for any directions or guidance to the Trustees about the use of the Fund. The Secretary of State for the Environment and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, who have the principal interest in the Trustee's activities, think that the right course would be for them to exercise the various Ministerial responsibilities jointly. In doing so, they would keep closely in touch with the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, since institutions throughout the United Kingdom will be eligible for assistance from the Fund.

Second, the appointment of the Trustees. The Expenditure Committee in their report recommended that the Prime Minister should make these appointments. The Committee agreed, however, and personally I think this is right, that the Trustees should be appointed by the Ministers principally concerned with the Fund, so that the same Ministers carry overall responsibility, and answerability in the House, for the Trustees and the Fund. You would, of course, be consulted in the normal way over the appointment of the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman.

Third, the need for a public statement. It seems desirable that the Ministers concerned should make an early public statement on the Government's proposals for the National Heritage Fund.

I should be grateful for your agreement to these proposals.

I am copying this minute to the members of H Committee, Sir Ian Bancroft and Sir John Hunt.

Wills
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August 1979

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