

The Elsie Inglis story continues

The trustees of the A Statue for Elsie Inglis have issued a press statement which says they are not changing their minds, and their decision to choose the King's Sculptor in Ordinary, Sandy Stoddart is final.

We would like to tell you who the trustees are, but despite having asked several times, no information has been forthcoming. The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) do not keep the names of trustees on record.

The trustees have in their possession around £60,000 towards their target of £90,000 to pay for the statue. This money was donated by members of the public to ensure that the first statue of a woman is erected on the Royal Mile along with a dozen statues of men which are already in place there.

The charity was established as such only earlier this year under number SC051749.

A process under which the artist who would create the statue would be chosen was set out in full on the charity's website, but the trustees then stopped the process before its end and announced that the process was being discarded completely and the statue would be the work of Sandy Stoddart.

The charity's Facebook page has been paused for any further

comments since the Call to Artists was suspended and the announcement of Mr Stoddart made on 17 October.

The charity's statement:

We have reviewed and reflected on all aspects of the competition and commission of the Statue for Dr Elsie Inglis. While we've always sought to act in the best interests of the charity to achieve the long term recognition and renown of this incredible woman and her work, we accept that we could have communicated more clearly in recent weeks, and we apologise for this.

The Board set up the competition to identify a suitable artist for the important job of designing a long overdue statue for this pioneering woman. The brief did not specify that it was to be a female artist and was also clear that we reserved the right not to appoint any of the entries. The brief was published at the end of July and we sought the support of Alexander Stoddart, an artist of international renown, in making sure that the opportunity reached as many people as possible.

In the course of those discussions, it became clear that Professor Stoddart would be interested in undertaking the commission personally, much to our surprise and delight. Given his proven record of producing inspiring monuments it was clear to the Trustees that this was the way to provide the appropriate legacy for Dr Elsie Inglis, the key objective of the campaign. In light of this we felt it only right to suspend the call to avoid artists spending any further time on submissions. The two artists who had submitted the requested information – a one-page document on approach, sketches, CV and photos of previous work – were informed at that point too.

On reflection, we can see that the decision and approach should have been explained more fully and transparently, and

we regret this.

We were and remain unanimous in the decision that the artist now appointed is the right choice to ensure the objectives of the charity are delivered. We are also proud to continue with the schools' competition and ongoing work with young people across the city, which increases knowledge and awareness of her life and work, and inspires our young and future generations. We'd like to thank our donors and supporters, and we look forward to developing these fitting celebrations of Elsie, the woman, so many of us across the city, the country and the world so much admire.

We have asked for a comment from Sandy Stoddart but have not had any response from him.

We await a comment from the artist Natasha Phoenix who has set up an alternative Facebook group [here](#) which has 525 members.



Dr Elsie Inglis

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