National Museums Scotland set to secure Galloway Viking hoard

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National Museums Scotland (NMS) has been selected to provide a permanent home for the Galloway Viking hoard.

The Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer (QLTR) announced the find would be allocated to them.

It comes with the condition that NMS will have to make an ex gratia payment of nearly £2m to the finder.

Dumfries and Galloway Council had hoped to secure Scotland's most significant treasure trove find in over a century for a new art gallery in Kirkcudbright.

A local authority spokesman said they were "clearly disappointed" with the decision.
The hoard, containing over 100 items, was discovered by metal detectorist Derek McLennan, from Ayrshire, in a field in south west Scotland in August 2014.
The treasure trove find has been described as the most significant in Scotland in over a century

The QLTR, David Harvie, said: "This Viking hoard is one of the most important finds ever discovered in Scotland and is of international significance.

"I am pleased to announce that I am minded to accept the recommendation of the Scottish Archaeological Finds Allocation Panel (SAFAP) that these wonderful items be allocated to NMS, subject to it meeting the ex gratia award which would then be payable to the finder."

Evelyn Silber, who chairs SAFAP, said: "The panel is grateful to the finder for reporting these stunning artefacts which include decorative glass beads, silver bracelets and brooches, a gold ring, a bird-shaped gold pin and a highly-decorated gilt vessel recognised as being one of only three known examples.

"These will now be preserved and put on display for the people of Scotland, and the world, to enjoy.

"The mysterious circumstances of their deposition and unique quality will attract researchers and enthusiasts alike."
NMS now has six months to raise the funds needed to acquire the "unique treasure"

NMS director Dr Gordon Rintoul said it was "absolutely delighted" with the allocation decision.

"We now have six months to raise £1.98m to acquire this unique treasure for the nation and ensure it can be enjoyed by future generations both at home and abroad," he said.

NMS added that it believed that it was important there was a display of the hoard in Dumfries and Galloway.

It said it intended to "seek a dialogue" with the council to ensure a "representative portion" of the artefacts could go on long-term display in Kirkcudbright.

'Fair compromise'

Dumfries and Galloway Council had hoped to make the hoard a major attraction at an art gallery being built in Kirkcudbright.

That move had also been backed by a local Galloway Viking Hoard (GVH) campaign.

Cathy Agnew, who chairs the group, described the decision as "deeply disappointing".

"This is a most unfortunate decision for the region and for Scotland," she said.

"It is doubly disappointing that a more enlightened approach has not been taken, especially as 2017 is Scotland's Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology."

She said the council bid was "outstanding" and said she hoped that even at this late stage a "fair compromise" could be reached.

A local authority spokesman said: "Our council is clearly disappointed with the decision.

"This does not mean our enthusiasm to bring the Viking hoard home has been dampened though.

"We remain open to working with NMS to secure elements of the Galloway Viking
hoard in the Kirkcudbright art gallery, on both long and short-term loan."

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