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It is with deep sadness that I read of the cut-backs and restrictions imposed upon the Strathclyde Police Pipe Band. The oldest civilian Band in the world and the holder of the record for the most world championship wins in a row.

These records are not won by attendance at a minimal number of competitions, but rather by regular dedicated practice and preparation and regular competition at the highest level.

The public relations benefits of a band like this cannot be underestimated. People travel from all around the world to hear this band perform.

In the 1980s as a young teenager I travelled to Scotland and for many months attended the bands practices. Not only was I welcomed by the then Pipe Major Ian MacLellan, but he would drive me to practices, answer any question freely and openly, and arrange for me to be returned. I could not have asked for friendlier or more professional treatment by any organisation. It was often that bus loads of bandsmen would turn up just to view practices.

What better Public Relations could any organisation ask for, particularly a Police Department who struggle around the world to uphold their image and community involvement.

It is a great service this band has done to the community and Pipe Band movement over the years, and it is my sincere hope that common sense prevails and we see the band remain at the top of the list, representing Scotland in the ever diminishing list of Scottish Bands in top Grade one International Competition.

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