



MEDIA RELEASE FROM THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND

18 March 2020

Coronavirus Emergency: National Trust for Scotland suspends all events and restricts property openings

Conservation Charity the National Trust for Scotland has announced today that its Senior Managers and Trustees have proactively decided to keep gated properties (historic buildings, visitor centres, visitor facilities, cafes, shops and toilets) closed and suspend all events across the country with effect from Friday 20 March 2020.

The decision was not an easy one to make but their priority was to protect people – the Trust’s members, visitors and workforce.

Despite the closures, the Trust is still able to offer a range of places that will remain accessible and safe for visitors.

The charity will also carry on with planned investment projects at Gladstone’s Land in Edinburgh, Newhailes near Musselburgh and the House of Dun in Angus, as well as footpath repairs and other landscape management designed to ensure public access and protect habitats.

The suspension of events also applies to commercial bookings, such as weddings and some holiday lets, volunteer Thistle Camp working holidays, subject to ongoing review.

Full refunds will be offered to anyone who bought tickets for events or made commercial bookings, although it may take some time to process these because of demand and staff being dispersed due to remote working arrangements.

The decision will be under constant review with a view to re-opening all properties as soon as it is safe and appropriate to do so.

The National Trust for Scotland’s Chief Executive, Simon Skinner said:

“Although we have been closely following Scottish Government and NHS Scotland advice to ensure the safety of our visitors, volunteers and staff, as an independent charity we felt we had to go further in order to protect our people and the public.

“We sincerely regret the disappointment our decision will cause, particularly given the popularity of our Mother’s Day events and Cadbury Easter Egg Trails. We know that this will be a big let-down for

the many people who were looking forward to celebrating the arrival of spring at our properties after a long, hard winter - however, public safety must come first.

“In order to maintain a public service in this difficult time we will be keeping our accessible gardens, country parks and gardens open free of charge, offering a green, clean and fresh respite to enable visitors to escape isolation in a safe environment where ‘social distancing’ is easy to maintain. This includes properties like Culzean Country Park and the landscapes and gardens surrounding Brodie and Brodick Castles and Newhailes.

“While the public will desperately need the relief our properties can provide, we need them more than ever to play a part in protecting Scotland’s heritage now, and for the long-term: our work to protect Scotland’s national and natural treasures does not stop.

“We recognise this is an incredibly worrying time for our members and visitors, who will be concerned about family and friends, as well as having other very real considerations in the days and weeks ahead but we ask that if people are able to so, they help our charity in any way they can in this testing time.

“We are very grateful for any support that enables us to keep on preserving our buildings, protecting our wildlife, cleaning our coastlines and looking after our landscapes, even in these difficult circumstances.”

ENDS

Notes for Editors

1. Regional offices and the Trust’s Edinburgh office at Hermiston Quay will remain open, although staff able to work from home will be doing so.
2. Volunteers and staff who fall into ‘vulnerable’ categories (over 70, suffering from an underlying condition like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, or pregnant) have been advised to stay at home.
3. Managers will contact people who have made commercial bookings to offer refunds.
4. People who have bought tickets for events – such as Easter Egg Trails – are asked to contact the property they purchased the ticket from for a refund – but are also asked to be patient given the high volume of calls expected and administrative delays due to staff being dispersed.
5. The National Trust for Scotland is the charity that celebrates and protects Scotland’s heritage. It relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work of caring for the natural and built heritage of Scotland for everyone to enjoy.
6. From coastlines to castles, art to architecture, wildlife to wildernesses, the National Trust for Scotland exists to protect the national and natural treasures we all love. To plan your visit today, enter your postcode at www.nts.org.uk.