

**\*\*ISSUED UNDER EMBARGO TO 00:01 THU JULY 1, 2021\*\***

## NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE

### **National Trust for Scotland opens doors on re-Dun Angus attraction**

Conservation charity the National Trust for Scotland is ready to take visitors on a trip back in time with the opening of the House of Dun heritage park near Montrose, which opens today (Thursday July 1).

The project, one of the biggest in the charity's 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, tells the story of Angus, its people and landscape in a fresh and innovative way.

The Trust has 're-imagined' the property, which encompasses the elegant Georgian mansion, beautiful Victorian gardens, a 793 acre estate and the new permanent home of the Angus Folk Museum, to which visitors will want to return to again and again, discovering new aspects of this remarkable place on each visit.

Iain Hawkins, the National Trust for Scotland General Manager North East said: "I grew up in Montrose and have always been fascinated by House of Dun. It's very much a property that is tied to the landscape and it's that multi-layered tale that we're telling in its new form.

"We're making this a true destination property for the east of the country, with something different to love on each visit. As we all embrace our new post-lockdown freedom we need places like House of Dun even more. A place that we can connect with history and nature and share our love of Scotland's rich heritage.

"To be doing this in the National Trust for Scotland 90<sup>th</sup> year is something special too. We've been around since 1931 and have come this far by evolving and looking at new ways to bring history to life, celebrate these incredible places and connect with people."

Major work has been undertaken to transform the house's courtyard area which is now the permanent home of the Angus Folk Museum, displaying around 400 items from the vast collection amassed by Lady Maitland of Burnside in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The new display of this fascinating and diverse collection, ranging from ploughs and shears to the exquisite and very rare horse-drawn Glenisla hearse, give a unique insight into past generations of local people and how they lived. Lady Maitland's fascinating history is part of the story told, including displays of her dried flowers, a particular passion of the collector who would sell the blooms to raise money for the Trust.

Inside the main house, visitors can now take tours led by costumed guides playing the roles of three former residents of the mansion: aristocrat Violet Augusta Mary Frederica Kennedy-Erskine, house cook Isabella Peddie and William Young, overseer of the estate.

Award-winning theatre director Al Seed has created the immersive tours which feature garments by costume designer Zephyr Liddell. The Trust has also commissioned sound artist Guy Veale to develop audio installations throughout the property, including Doric readings by writer and presenter Alistair Heather.

Elsewhere in the property, new cafes and shops have been created, including pop-up spaces for local artisan producers. New maps and signage will point people to the beautiful walks around the estate, and the children's play park.

Designed by renowned Scottish architect William Adam for wealthy lawyer David Erskine (the 13th Laird of Dun) to replace the medieval tower house which had been home to the Erskine family since 1375, the property was completed in 1743 and was bequeathed to conservation charity the National Trust for Scotland in 1980.

As well as the Baroque extravagance of the mansion, complete with exquisite plasterwork that hides secret Jacobite symbolism and many fine paintings, the estate encompasses policies and farmland, the Old Dun Kirk (which John Knox visited), Erskine Mausoleum, the Montrose Basin Nature Reserve and a two-mile stretch of the River Esk. The house is surrounded by picturesque gardens laid out by an illegitimate daughter of William IV, Lady Augusta Fitzclarence, the wife of the Hon. John Kennedy Erskine.

First opened to the public in 1989, the new presentation of House of Dun uses multi-sensory techniques throughout to cover such topics as life above and below stairs, the food & drink of Angus, the Declaration of Arbroath, toys through the ages and the debt we owe to horses in peacetime and war.

The £714,000 House of Dun project is made possible thanks to the legacy of Dr Sheila Bain, members of the National Trust for Scotland's Patrons' Club, Northwood Charitable Trust, Angus Members Centre, and other generous donors who prefer to remain anonymous.

[www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/house-of-dun](http://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/house-of-dun)

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Attached free-use pictures by Stewart Attwood show Iain Hawkins, the National Trust for Scotland General Manager North East, and his team putting finishing touches to the displays at House of Dun. High resolution versions are available at <https://we.tl/t-HgNZ5njEIJ>.

Issued on behalf of National Trust for Scotland by Frame.

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**Editor's Notes**

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.

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.

We would be grateful if, when referring to the National Trust for Scotland that our name is not shortened to 'the National Trust'. We are an independent organisation, separate from the National Trust. The National Trust for Scotland is commonly shortened to NTS or 'the Trust'.