



10 January 2023

NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND TO STAGE 'WILD ESCAPE' WITH ANGUS SCHOOLS

- Local primary schools to take part in 'Flock to House of Dun' art project celebrating the region's birdlife
- Project follows conservation charity's successful funding bid to new UK-wide project, The Wild Escape

Local school pupils in Angus will take a starring role in a 2023 arts project at the House of Dun, celebrating the birdlife in the Montrose Basin and the property's own collections. Starting after the New Year, pupils from local primary schools will take part in a series of bird-themed creative workshops and then display their art and poems in an exhibition at the museum, launching on Earth Day 2023 (22 April 2023).

The project, called Flock to House of Dun, has been created by the National Trust for Scotland, supported by funding from The Wild Escape. The conservation charity's successful bid to the UK-wide initiative was announced earlier this month by Museums Galleries Scotland and will enable 100 school children at local Angus primary schools, including Lochside Primary School and Borrowfield Primary School, to take part in free workshops and activities.

Inspiration for the Flock to House of Dun project comes from the rich variety of bird species that feed and roost in the Montrose Basin and the abundance of birds in the House of Dun's collections of art and artefacts, as well as the poem 'Wild Geese' by previous inhabitant Violet Jacob (1863-1946) celebrating the sight of thousands of birds in flight. Weaving together these different strands, the team at House of Dun will host a series of creative workshops and outdoor activities with a creative practitioner and the National Trust for Scotland's local Ranger team.

The idea for the project came from Sarah Cowie, National Trust for Scotland's Senior Heritage Learning Advisor, and Scott Byrne, Operations Manager for the Trust's Angus Cluster. As Scott explains: 'The Wild Escape is a UK-wide project uniting museums and schools in a celebration of wildlife and creativity. Given the House of Dun's unparalleled views over the Montrose Basin Local Nature Reserve, which is home to over 100,000 migratory birds, including pink-footed geese, wigeon and other wildfowl and waders, it was a natural choice to focus our project on the birdlife around the House of Dun, including in the property's own collections.'

'We're thrilled that our funding bid has been successful and excited to start working with local primary school children on the activities we have planned for 2023. A key objective of our 10-year Nature, Beauty & Heritage for Everyone strategy is to enable

more people and communities to access our properties, so we're very grateful to The Wild Escape project for supporting this new initiative for Angus schools. We're also thankful to our local Angus National Trust for Scotland Members' Centre, which is helping with the costs of running the project.'

Activities planned for Flock to House of Dun will include workshops exploring how birds feature in the House of Dun collections, from an ostrich-themed candelabra, to parrots and macaws hiding in tapestries and fire screens, to bedding embroidered with exotic birds. The Ranger team, supported by the Scottish Wildlife Trust, which is based at Montrose Basin, will also organise activities around the estate. Through these activities, children will be encouraged to produce a poem and artwork inspired by one of the bird species they have learned about in the activities. These will then feature in a public exhibition at the House of Dun, opening on Earth Day 2023.

Sarah Cowie says: 'By the end of this project, we hope that pupils and teachers will have a greater understanding of their local area and the amazing wildlife and biodiversity on their doorstep in the Montrose Basin, and a stronger sense of connection to House of Dun. As a result of the renovation work in 2019 and then the Covid-19 pandemic, the Trust's engagement programme at House of Dun had to be paused, so we're delighted that the funding from The Wild Escape provides an opportunity to relaunch it.

Through this project, we aim to engage local school children with their local environment and heritage, supporting the engagement goals in our Nature, Beauty & Heritage for Everyone strategy, as well as The Wild Escape's aim to encourage the next generation to picture the future of UK wildlife through museum collections.'

The Wild Escape is made possible by lead support from Arts Council England's National Lottery Project Grants, with additional support from Art Fund and a group of generous individuals and trusts. The £3,000 funding award will help the House of Dun to cover all the costs of the project for schools, and will contribute to the National Trust for Scotland's engagement objectives, including to provide access and enjoyment for everyone.

Read more about the strategy at: <https://www.nts.org.uk/our-work/our-strategy>

ENDS

Editor's Notes:

About the National Trust for Scotland

Established in 1931, the National Trust for Scotland is Scotland's largest conservation charity and cares for, shares and speaks up for Scotland's magnificent heritage.

Over the last 90 years the Trust has pioneered public access to and shared ownership of some of the most magnificent buildings, collections and landscapes in Scotland. It cares for more than 100 sites, from ancient houses to battlefields, castles, mills, gardens,

coastlines, islands, mountain ranges and the plants and animals which depend upon them.

In March 2022 the National Trust for Scotland launched *Nature, Beauty & Heritage for Everyone*, its ten-year strategy which sets out the ambitions of the charity over the coming decade. From speaking up for Scotland's heritage which doesn't have a voice, to improving the lives and wellbeing of people across the country, and responding to the climate and biodiversity crisis, the Trust will build on its work in recent years to grow its impact and conserve and restore more of Scotland's heritage, as it moves towards its centenary in 2031.

Scotland's largest membership organisation, the National Trust for Scotland relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work.

For more information on the National Trust for Scotland visit www.nts.org.uk.

The National Trust for Scotland is a charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number SC 007410.