



NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE

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NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND VISITORS CONVINCED ON CLIMATE ACTION

Conservation charity, the National Trust for Scotland says its visitors view climate change as a global emergency and are demanding urgent action to address the crisis.

A survey of more than 3,000 visitors to National Trust for Scotland sites took place during the summer 2021, asking visitors^[1] to its properties including Culzean Castle and Country Park in Ayrshire, Crathes Castle in Aberdeenshire and Glencoe Visitor Centre in the Highlands, how they viewed climate change.

The key findings were:

- 92% of National Trust for Scotland visitors consider climate change to be a global emergency, compared to only 64% internationally (as found in the 2019 United Nation's Peoples' Climate Vote).
- 86% of National Trust for Scotland visitors thought that the world should "do everything necessary, urgently", compared to 59% internationally.
- National Trust for Scotland visitors identified transport and industry as sectors in need of the most change. The impact of agriculture and residential housing were less well understood.

Philip Long OBE, Chief Executive of the National Trust for Scotland said: "As the world looks to Glasgow and COP26, the climate crisis is clearly at the forefront of many people's minds. It's not just the politicians and policy-makers who are grappling with these issues any longer, it's a mainstream concern for many people, including those who come to enjoy the beautiful and historic places in our charity's protection.

"As a conservation charity, we're working on many fronts to tackle climate change by reducing our own emissions and delivering nature-based solutions towards being carbon negative. We are also working towards more sustainable travel solutions for our

visitors. We are urging decision makers to be brave in their commitments at the COP for all our sakes.”

The National Trust for Scotland, which is celebrating its 90th anniversary in 2021, cares for 76,000 hectares of landscape in Scotland including the UK’s largest National Nature Reserve at Mar Lodge Estate, the UK’s only dual world heritage site – St Kilda, historic battlefields and some of Scotland’s most important historic castles and houses of all sizes. The charity carries out vital work to protect and maintain the habitats and natural places in its care, adapting and mitigating against the impacts of climate change. Some examples include:

PEATLAND – The National Trust for Scotland has been actively restoring peatlands at [Ben Lomond](#), the [Mar Lodge Estate National Nature Reserve](#) and our other peatland landscapes across Scotland. At present, we estimate that across the 16,000 hectares of peatland in Trust stewardship, over 25,000 tonnes of carbon are being sequestered each year which is equivalent to a town of 2,000 households: a figure it intends to boost. The charity is a key partner in the [IUCN UK Peatland Programme](#), a consortium of Governments, NGOs, scientists and restoration programmes, promoting the role of peatlands as a nature-based solution to climate change. At COP26 the Trust is involved with the Global Peatlands Initiative ([Global Peatlands Initiative | Peatlands Matter - for planet, people and climate](#)), at a physical Peatland Pavilion in the Blue Zone between 1 – 11 November and a ‘virtual’ pavilion.

WOODLAND - Planting trees of the right type in the right places is another way the National Trust for Scotland is taking action. At the Mar Lodge Estate National Nature Reserve, there’s a 200 year project to [restore the reserve’s Caledonian Pinewoods](#). After 25 years, natural regeneration is now establishing the pinewoods of the future and this is being augmented with efforts to [regenerate Mar Lodge’s missing high-level montane woodlands too](#). At Ben Lomond there’s work underway to re-establish the [lower ptarmigan slope as natural woodland cover](#), as is [replanting native woodland at Glen Rosa on the Isle of Arran](#).

TACKLING INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES - Removing non-native plant species makes landscapes more resilient to the impact of climate change. Through [Project Wipeout](#), the National Trust for Scotland working its way around the places we care for and removing damaging species like *Rhododendron ponticum*, Japanese knotweed and American skunk cabbage, with support from players of People’s Postcode Lottery.

RESTORING HABITATS - Working with nature and new forms of agriculture is behind one of the most ambitious landscape restoration projects ever undertaken by the National Trust for Scotland, which began this year. The [Threave Landscape Restoration Project](#) will take a century to complete and will result in natural processes being restored to 81 acres of disused dairy farm in Dumfries & Galloway, with support from HSBC UK. The River Dee will be allowed to flood to create wetlands, new woodlands will be established and sustainable agricultural practices will be trialled.

GARDENS - National Trust for Scotland gardeners are changing the techniques they use to tend the places they care for. For example using [green manure at Holmwood](#) in Glasgow shows that peat is not needed for a beautiful garden. New generations of gardeners get a good grounding in sustainability at the [Threave School of Heritage Gardening](#), learning everything from peat-free propagation gardening and composting, to how plants are sourced and transported. Alternative planting regimes, such as the bulb and wildflower meadow at [Falkland Palace](#), the modern fruit orchard at [Pitmedden Garden](#) and the organic kitchen garden at [Kellie Castle](#) are providing more diverse habitats which have no need of intensive techniques.

SEAS – The National Trust for Scotland is also working to protect Scotland’s marine environments, lobbying policymakers and managing and monitoring of the coastal sites and islands in its care. Find out more about the Trust’s work in this area in [Turning the Tide: A Policy for the Protection and Use of the Marine and Coastal Environment](#). At places like [St Abb’s Head](#), [Canna](#) and [St Kilda](#), in partnership with others, the charity monitors [seabirds](#), seals and other marine species to find [evidence of climate impacts](#). The National Trust for Scotland also wants to see an end to damaging fishing practices like unrestricted bottom trawling and use of mobile gear, as well as the inappropriate siting of overscaled fish farms in protected places which could harm vulnerable ecosystems.

BUILDINGS – Climate change also affects structures as well as landscapes, especially as extreme rainfall becomes increasingly common. Scotland’s historic buildings were not designed to cope with that level of inundation meaning more monitoring, maintenance and repair is essential. Improved energy efficiency and renewable heating sources are also part of the solution. At the Hill House in Helensburgh, a radical intervention has been needed to tackle the 100 year old problem of water ingress. In the last few decades the increase of wet and windy weather on the west coast in recent years was making this existing problem much worse. The Box shelters the structure from the elements, allowing it to dry out while long-term solutions are found to protect the building.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE FACILITIES – seven National Trust for Scotland sites have electric vehicle charging points - Culzean Castle, Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, Bannockburn, Brodick Castle, Brodie, Culloden, and Inverewe. These are available for staff, volunteers and visitors too.

ENDS

Notes for editors

IMAGES: <https://www.flickr.com/gp/133918740@N04/6pd9K5>

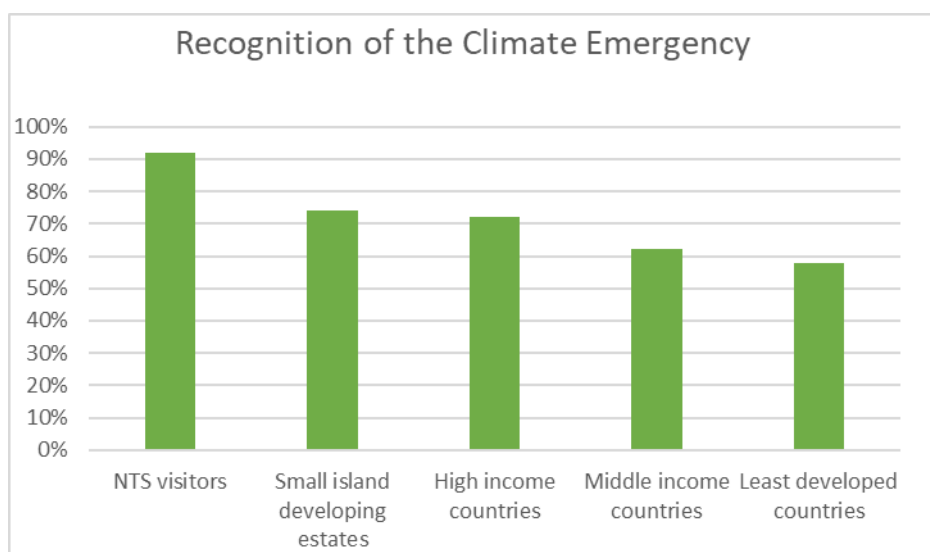
The National Trust for Scotland is the conservation charity that over 90 years has saved, maintained and shared many of the country’s most loved places, rich with history, heritage, nature and culture. The charity celebrates Scotland’s heritage and with more than 100 places in its care, there’s a place for everyone to love.

The National Trust for Scotland relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work of caring for the natural and built heritage that people from Scotland and across the world all love, ensuring its future for everyone to enjoy.

Support the National Trust for Scotland and help them protect the places we all love. Become a member at www.nts.org.uk.

More about the survey

- The climate change questions were run as part of our regular visitor survey and were completed by 3,777 respondents. Respondents came from Scotland (52%), England (44%), Northern Ireland (1%), Wales (2%), and overseas (1%).



- **NTS visitors more likely to think climate change is a global emergency** - Ninety-two percent of visitors to NTS properties thought climate change is a global emergency. This compares to 64% internationally as found in the United Nation's Peoples' Climate Vote, and is also higher than any of the other national groupings in the United Nations survey.

The results suggest National Trust for Scotland visitors and supporters are more familiar with the challenges facing the planet. In the NTS survey, younger visitors were more likely to consider climate change to be a global emergency than older age groups (e.g. 97.4% of 16-24 year olds, compared to 88.7% of aged 75+), but there was a clear majority in each age group.

- **Our visitors want urgent action on climate change** - National Trust for Scotland visitors were also more likely to want immediate action to tackle climate change. Eighty-six percent of visitors thought that the world should "do everything necessary, urgently", compared to 59% internationally. Only 0.5% of Trust visitors thought that "the world is already doing enough", compared to 10% internationally.

- **Visitors prioritise transport and business for change (but overlook agriculture and residential requirements)** - Visitors to National Trust for Scotland properties were also relatively well informed as to which sectors needed to do the most to change, with **energy supply** (64% of respondents), **transport** (60%) and **business and industry** (55%), identified as the three priority areas. This compares to the current highest emitting Scottish sectors of transport (12 MtCO_{2e}), business and industry (7.8 MtCO_{2e}), and agriculture (7.5 MtCO_{2e}).

Scotland's energy supply sector (6.4 MtCO_{2e}) has actually been decarbonising in recent years and is now only the fourth most emitting sector, and has been replaced by agriculture as a higher emitting sector. The fifth most emitting sector, close behind energy supply, is private housing (6.2 MtCO_{2e}).

This suggest there is good alignment in Scotland between what needs to be done to tackle climate change in terms of transport, and business and industry, but more work needs to be done on raising public understanding of the changes needed in agriculture, and in the residential sector, particularly domestic heating.