

**NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Politicians urged to safeguard Scottish heritage and back National Trust for Scotland manifesto**

National conservation charity reveals proposals ahead of May 6 Scottish elections

Scotland's political parties are being asked to embrace a new vision for the sustainable use and enjoyment of the nation's heritage, laid out in the National Trust for Scotland's 2021 manifesto for the Scottish Parliament elections.

The national conservation charity currently cares for some of Scotland's most significant heritage at more than 100 sites across the country and is asking all politicians to back the proposals laid out in their manifesto ahead of the Scottish Parliamentary Elections on May 6 2021.

The document proposes ways in which government can ensure the sustainable use and enjoyment of Scotland's heritage and landscapes by committing to pledges which impact on planning, law, the economy and environment.

The manifesto also includes the results of public opinion polling, finding strong support for many of the National Trust for Scotland's proposals.

It also presents plans for how Scotland recovers from the social and economic impacts of coronavirus and how we live, work and enjoy our culture and country in the post-pandemic world.

The manifesto is laid out in key sections:

- Spectacular Scotland –proposes how we manage our landscapes so that they can be enjoyed now and in the future
- Planning for the Future – examines how the planning system can help create a better quality environment for people and nature
- Naturally healthy – gives our life-giving green infrastructure the same importance as our grey networks of transport, services and telecommunications
- Protected by law – ensures that as we leave the European Union we retain the same level of environmental protections
- Culture for all – builds on the new national Culture Strategy to break down barriers to accessing and enjoying our culture in Scotland
- Built to last – focuses on our built environment and how it meets climate change ambitions, helping sustain places and employment

Diarmid Hearn, Head of Public Policy, Risk and Compliance at the National Trust for Scotland commented: “The Scottish Parliamentary elections are an opportunity for people to suggest how the country can work better for all. The National Trust for Scotland has put forward its own ideas for improvement - as have many other third sector organisations. We are concentrating on how we can better manage our landscapes and heritage, helping deliver public access and enjoyment, and meeting the challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss.”

The publication of the manifesto comes as the Parliament prepares to address several major challenges in the next term, not only focusing on recovery in the wake of the pandemic but examining the gaps that have appeared in legislation as the United Kingdom withdraws from the European Union.

The Parliament will also finalise the fourth National Planning Framework, which presents a vision for Scotland’s landscape and environment up to 2050 - when the country aims to have reached net zero emissions.

“The Scottish elections come at a critical time,” explained Diarmid. “To make progress on our climate change ambitions, in the next Parliament we will need to start adapting our existing buildings - in a way that protects both occupants and the properties themselves, to develop our farming and forestry regimes, and to apply nature-based solutions to capturing carbon and managing climactic changes. These are decade long changes, but we must start now.

“The Scottish Government has recognised that we are facing both a climate change emergency and a biodiversity crisis. The National Trust for Scotland, and other partners, are proposing ways forward where we can work collectively to address these problems.

“Climate change runs through our proposals,” continued Diarmid. “We see particular opportunities in creating a National Nature Network, that links currently isolated greenspace and nature reserves, making species more resilient and improving public access.

“We propose a programme for adapting our existing buildings, ensuring the necessary skills in assessment and installation are there, creating jobs and safeguarding our traditional buildings.

“And we focus on better care for our landscapes, including national planning for where renewable energy developments and powerlines can be accommodated.”

The Scottish Parliamentary Elections take place on May 6 2021 and you can download a full version of the manifesto here: <https://we.tl/t-2RZVuSJdhf>

**ENDS**

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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. To plan your visit today, enter your postcode at [www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk).

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'.

