

10 November 2020

Supporters across Scotland and beyond rally to help National Trust for Scotland

- *Charity thanks the public for their generosity as Save our Scotland appeal exceeds £3.4million*
 - *Actor Brian Cox records message of thanks to all donors*

The National Trust for Scotland is thanking members and donors from Scotland, the UK and around the world as donations to its Save our Scotland Appeal exceed £3.4 million.

These donations, along with a £3.8million support package from the Scottish Government, have helped steer the Trust out of an extremely financially challenging period, as a result of strict lockdown measures. These contributions have helped to safeguard more than 200 jobs within the charity and enabled the Trust to open more of the heritage sites in its care, ensuring the charity can continue to care and protect the places and things we all love about Scotland

Donations came from the Trust's network of donors, members and lovers of Scotland's heritage in the UK and from overseas. Actor, Brian Cox, who narrated a TV advert encouraging people to Save Our Scotland, has recorded a message of thanks to those who responded to the appeal. The actor said: "It's thanks to you that the Trust is able to continue its vital work in protecting Scotland's heritage. Every single one of you has played a key part in safeguarding the many places in the charity's care. Well done and thanks again."

The Trust adopted a broad based fundraising approach, working with its' Major Donor giving circles, appeals to members and the public, applications to Trusts & Foundations and joining with Corporate supporters. Tactics ranged from individual and group virtual meetings to direct mail and social media.

Supporters joined together to launch 'giving challenges' and undertook their own fundraising challenges to help raise money for the appeal. US based George Russell (aged 74), whose family has links to the charity's foundation, has completed a sponsored 3,000 mile cycle across the states from California to Florida so far raising over £40,000, and Trust Patrons, Simon and Bridget Fraser took on a 100km walk along the Berwickshire coast, raising over £15,000 to help secure the charity's future.

The Trust also teamed up with bespoke Highland tartan designer, Prickly Thistle, to create two limited edition tartans that represent the charity's importance in protecting Scotland's heritage with all profits going to the SOS Appeal.

While the Trust's financial situation has stabilised for the time being, the charity is still on course for a £20million deficit and is encouraging people to keep offering their support so it can continue its recovery into the future.

Ali MacLeod, Head of Fundraising at the National Trust for Scotland, said: "Since March, our ability to care for Scotland's built, natural and cultural heritage which is unique to Scotland and loved by people around the world was thrown into jeopardy.

“With £3.4million from donors as well as government assistance, our charity has been able to save jobs, open more of the places we love sooner than feared and continue to look after the heritage in our care which is so loved. We are enormously grateful to all who acted so quickly and with such kindness to Save Our Scotland.

“Support has helped us to stabilise and look to the future with more confidence than we felt in May. Yet we are very aware that recovery in these uncertain times will be difficult and in order to deliver meaningful and increasingly urgent care of places we love and conservation projects - such as caring for our footpaths - we require the ongoing commitment, generosity and partnership of our supporters to make these projects possible. We are overwhelmed and heartened by the generosity of everyone who donated and their care.”

Director of Customer & Cause at the National Trust for Scotland, Mark Bishop said: “This is the biggest appeal in our history. The success of the Save Our Scotland Appeal has been driven by the compelling need we were able to demonstrate, and the near-perfect engagement plan from the fundraising team. This success is something we are really chuffed to bits about.

“But rather than simply singing our own praises I think there are some helpful pointers to share with other charities. The first is that the bringing together of marketing and fundraising functions into one unified delivery team has been key. The debate in the sector about to-integrate-or-to-keep-apart has filled many forums and magazine pages. I’m a firm believer in integration. The marketing side has repositioned the Trust’s brand so that the public can increasingly see us as a charity rather than being wrongly labelled a government agency. That shift in public perception has built a cause platform for the fundraising experts to then leverage.

“The pandemic was clearly not something we could have planned or indeed wished for but it did create the ideal circumstances for us to see how many of our members and the wider Scottish public really saw the Trust as a charity they could give a donation to. The fact that we have had over 10,000 donations is proof of concept that building a cause platform is an essential driver for fundraising performance.”

“We closed the appeal at the end of September so that we could have a very time-driven sense of urgency to our ask. The biggest opportunity we now need to address is how to get the first-time donors who responded to us in our hour of need feel compelled to give again to a future appeal – emergencies drive a one-off emotional response in all of our giving patterns, but converting these givers into repeat supporters is where a deeper challenge lies ahead.”

To find out more about how you can become a member of the National Trust for Scotland or donate to its fundraising appeals visit www.nts.org.uk.

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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.

