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## **TRUST BATTLES THE ELEMENTS TO COMPLETE MAJOR UPGRADE PROJECT ON STAFFA**

- **The National Trust for Scotland has completed a major project to upgrade the landing facilities on the island of Staffa National Nature Reserve**
- **The island welcomes tens of thousands of visitors each year and the 30-year-old access infrastructure required upgrades**
- **Contractors battled extreme weather conditions at sea during the nine-month project**

A major repairs project has completed on Staffa after battling extreme wind, rain, and waves to upgrade the landing jetty and improve accessibility to one of Scotland's most beloved islands.

Visitor numbers to Staffa National Nature Reserve in the Inner Hebrides have risen dramatically in recent years and the previous access infrastructure, which was installed more than 30 years ago, required urgent improvement and repair.

The National Trust for Scotland undertook a significant nine-month programme of work to reduce congestion and improve the experience of the tens of thousands of annual visitors when arriving and leaving the island.

TSL Contractors Ltd, based nearby at Craignure, Isle of Mull, carried out the work on the landing jetty while an Environmental Clerk of Works monitored the environmental and wildlife impact, and a biosecurity and breeding bird protection plan was followed.

To mitigate disruption to wildlife and the busiest time of the visitor season, the work was undertaken during the autumn, winter, and spring months. Difficult conditions over the winter meant that many scheduled working days were lost because crews could not access the island, or because extreme waves made the jetty unsafe to work on.

This phase of infrastructure upgrades is part of a complex multi-year project that will also include work to replace the staircase to the upper island and puffin colony. All works are being undertaken with great care for nature, with special consideration for seabirds.

Clea Warner, Regional Director of the Highlands & Islands at the National Trust for Scotland, said: "Staffa draws visitors from around the world and is one of the country's most beloved islands. It is also an important site for cultural and natural heritage with its wildlife, geology, and dramatic scenery.

"As a conservation charity, we're proud to share this special place with people but it's our responsibility to both protect the island and its nature, as well as make visitors' experiences as enjoyable as possible. We have worked hard to minimise disruption during this project, and we thank members of the local community for their patience as

this work progressed.

“This is a key project in the Trust’s 10-year strategy to care for, share, and protect Scotland’s nature, beauty, and heritage for everyone to enjoy, and we hope that our work on Staffa will ensure continued access to this important National Nature Reserve for many more decades.”

The Staffa infrastructure project is supported by Argyll and Bute Council and VisitScotland through the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund, and by funds raised by players of People’s Postcode Lottery and awarded by Postcode Earth Trust.

Will Boyd-Wallis, Operations Manager for the North West Highlands at the National Trust for Scotland, said: “This was an extremely challenging and ambitious project. The jetty is intertidal, so much of the work could only be carried out at low tides and in good conditions. This meant that many working days were lost over the winter and we experienced significant delays.

“Thanks to the perseverance of the whole team, the newly improved jetty is now ready for use. It has been very well designed by Galmstrup Architects to sit alongside the stunning curved natural basalt columns around Clamshell Cave and there is now much more room for visitors getting on and off the boats.

“We’d like to thank Argyll and Bute Council, VisitScotland, and players of People’s Postcode Lottery for the funding they have provided to support this project, and all the local boat operators for their assistance and cooperation during the jetty closure. This investment in such an important and iconic place will be of benefit not only for visitors to Staffa, but also for the local community, and tourism in the region for many years to come.”

The Leader of Argyll and Bute Council, Jim Lynch, said: “Staffa is a truly unique and beautiful island, well-known throughout the world for its cultural and geological significance. I am delighted that we have been able to help fund this vital preservation work to make it easier for more people to access this historical gem and protect it for future generations.”

Head of Charities at [People’s Postcode Lottery](#), Laura Chow, said: “I’m sure Postcode Lottery players will be pleased to learn they’re supporting projects like this to improve accessibility to Staffa, its unique geology and wonderful wildlife. By supporting the work of the National Trust for Scotland, our players are helping to protect our natural heritage and the biodiversity of this important National Nature Reserve for the benefit of future generations.”

Staffa has been in the care of the National Trust for Scotland since 1986. It’s a world-famous National Nature Reserve, a Site of Special Scientific Interest and sits in the centre of the Loch na Keal, Isle of Mull National Scenic Area. The sea around Staffa is also a Marine Protected Area and Special Area of Conservation.

The Staffa project supports the National Trust for Scotland’s vision to care for, protect, and share Scotland’s nature, beauty and heritage for everyone, as outlined in its 10-year strategy, launched in 2022. For more information on the National Trust for Scotland, visit [www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk).

**ENDS**

**Notes to Editors:**

**Images:** <https://www.flickr.com/gp/133918740@N04/9U4Lrae687>

**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.

For more information on the National Trust for Scotland visit [www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk). The National Trust for Scotland is a charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number SC 007410.