

24 June 2025

TRUST REVEALS RECORD-BREAKING VISITOR NUMBERS AS CHAIRS CHANGE

National Trust for Scotland Chair Sir Mark Jones has today announced that the charity achieved its highest visitor numbers in its 90+ year history in 2024/5. The conservation charity that cares for, shares and speaks up for Scotland's heritage welcomed more than 5.6 million visitors between 1 March 2024 and 28 February 2025 – an increase of 1.1 million on the previous year.

The most visited places for 2024/25 were Glencoe National Nature Reserve with approximately +1 million visitors; Glenfinnan Monument and The Hermitage in Perthshire both welcomed around 500,000 people.

Sir Mark is stepping down as Chair as his second term ends in August 2025 after six years beginning in August 2019, just months before the COVID-19 pandemic closed the charity's properties and severely disrupted its operations.

Reflecting on that period for the National Trust for Scotland, Sir Mark Jones said: "Looking back, I think we could say that the Trust emerged from COVID with less damage than might initially have been feared. Our members stayed with us and supported our emergency appeal. Staff worked hard and imaginatively to re-open as soon as the situation permitted and that has been good for the Trust's reputation, and for the retention of members and supporters, as we can see in the figures for subsequent years. Both visitor numbers to and the financial performance of the Trust have been impressive over that last couple of years and Chief Executive Philip Long and all our staff and volunteers should feel proud that so many people choose to enjoy our beautiful places."

From 8 August 2025, Dame Sue Bruce will take on the role of Chair at the National Trust for Scotland. Dame Sue Bruce is currently the Electoral Commissioner Scotland and Convener of Court at the University of Strathclyde, a role she retires from in July. She has a wealth of experience in senior and Trustee roles within the public and charity sector, including serving as Chief

Executive of The City of Edinburgh Council, and she has previously served as Chair of the King's Foundation and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. From 2017 – 2022 Dame Sue held the role of Chair of the National Trust for Scotland's Nominations Committee, which is a sub-committee of the charity's Board of Trustees that oversees the process for the appointment of senior executives and Trustee nominations. As a teenager, Dame Sue volunteered as a guide at Crathes Castle in Aberdeenshire which was close to the family home.

Dame Sue Bruce said: "Sir Mark has done an immense job and I want to thank him and everyone involved for the excellent order in which I find the Trust. I look forward to building on these achievements as the charity develops exciting plans for its centenary and the decades beyond.

"The National Trust for Scotland has been part of my life since childhood and I know first-hand the benefits to our wellbeing of spending time in beautiful and interesting places. I want members and supporters to feel this is their National Trust for Scotland and for our charity to become part of their daily lives too. I relish the idea of taking on this role and returning to the charity that I am so fond of."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

Images: <https://www.flickr.com/gp/133918740@N04/j7T29Db6DQ>

1. The full report of the National Trust for Scotland's performance for the financial year from 1 March 2024 – 28 February 2025 will be made available in the run up to its Annual General Meeting which takes place on Friday 19 September at Eden Court Theatre, Inverness and online. For more information visit www.nts.org.uk/annual-general-meeting.
2. Sir Mark Jones has served as Chair of the National Trust for Scotland since 9 August 2019. He was the Director of the National Museums of Scotland from 1992 to 2002 where he oversaw the project to create and open the 'Museum of Scotland'. He then became the Director of the Victoria & Albert Museum, London. During his tenure, there was a ten-year, £120

million programme of renewal of the museum which saw visitor numbers triple. More recently, he has served as interim Director of the British Museum. He is currently a Trustee of the Sarikhani Art Foundation, the Grimsthorpe and Drummond Trust, and the Artists Rooms Foundation. He also owns the Golden Hare bookshop in Stockbridge, Edinburgh and lives in the city.

3. Dame Sue Bruce holds a portfolio of non-executive director which over the past ten years has included roles across a diverse range of interests including SSE PLC; Convener of the Court of the University of Strathclyde; Chair of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Chair of the King's Foundation. She is the Electoral Commissioner for Scotland and a Deputy Lieutenant of the City of Edinburgh. Amongst her recent activity, Sue Chaired the Independent Review of the Regulatory Framework for Social Care in Scotland commissioned by the Scottish Government. Sue is the current Master of the Royal Company of Merchants of the City of Edinburgh. Sue Bruce retired from a career in local government in 2015 in her 40th year of public service having started her career specialising in social and economic regeneration and later being recognised for her work in leadership, governance, organisational recovery and development. Sue served as Chief Executive of East Dunbartonshire Council, Aberdeen City Council and the City of Edinburgh Council.

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