

NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE

19 August 2020

Conservation charity reveals plans following consultation and generous contributions

Following an announcement that the Scottish Government has made a financial contribution of £3.8 million towards the National Trust for Scotland in the wake of the Covid-19 crisis, the charity has confirmed what this will mean for its properties in Argyll, Ayrshire, Arran, Greater Glasgow and Dumfries & Galloway, as well as across the rest of the nation.

The government contribution adds to nearly £2.5 million donated to an emergency appeal and follows on from a formal consultation on emergency measures intended to save the charity from collapse.

As a result of lockdown and subsequent restrictions, the Trust has lost almost £30 million – half its expected income. The charity's proposed emergency measures included placing 429 positions at risk as well as delaying re-opening of some of the heritage properties in its care until 2021 or 2022.

With the financial support and donations, and with changes made to proposals by the Trust's managers following consultation, the Trust is now able to reduce redundancies to the minimum possible and open or partially open more properties than originally hoped:

- Across Scotland, the number of compulsory redundancies falls from 429 to 188; most of the affected posts are seasonal;
- 33 built heritage properties will re-open this year, rather than the 27 originally planned, in addition to natural heritage properties which opened from July;
- The Trust avoids the risk of ceasing to be a 'going concern' and now has the space and time needed to reconfigure its strategy and forward planning and look towards full recovery in due course.

In Greater Glasgow, Argyll, Ayrshire, Arran and Dumfries & Galloway, the majority of grounds, gardens and historic properties will be re-opening this year.

The Robert Burns Birthplace Museum opened its doors last week, as did the Hill House. Brodick Castle on Arran, which was not due to open at all in 2020, will partially open from September. Broughton House, also not originally due to open this year, will see its

garden will open in August and the building from early September. Threave, Geilston, Greenbank and Arduaine Gardens have also re-opened.

Pre-booking is being introduced at particular properties to ensure safety, and visitors should check on www.nts.org.uk for admission details to specific properties.

A total of 60 posts will be saved across these regions from 161 that were originally placed at risk of redundancy.

The National Trust for Scotland's Chief Executive, Phil Long OBE said: "I want to offer my profound thanks to the Scottish Government, Scottish Enterprise and particularly to the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture, Fiona Hyslop.

"We were confronted by the worst crisis in our charity's history and we had a very real fear that this history was about to end abruptly. The generous support from the Scottish Government, together with the inspiring number of donations made by many individuals, has diverted us away from that terrible outcome.

"My joy at this announcement is tempered by the fact that the effects of Covid-19 are so devastating that we're still having to say goodbye to many friends and colleagues. I wish it were not so, but much to my regret redundancies are unavoidable, although this support has helped us to keep them to the absolute minimum possible.

"While many of the affected posts are seasonal, and staff would have been finishing up for the year in a matter of weeks, we have modified our redundancy policy. If the situation improves sufficiently next year and we are able to recruit again, former staff can apply for posts after six months without having to repay their redundancy money.

"Through our consultation process on our emergency measures we received sage advice from staff and Trust members on functions and expertise we needed to retain. As a result, we were able to come up with a resilient operating model that I'm confident will weather the aftermath of the Covid crisis.

"It has been a tough and demanding year so far, but I am glad that we have been able to begin the return to some form of normality. As we re-open properties we have been very busy ensuring that they are safe places to visit as we abide by the government guidelines designed to ensure the wellbeing of our welcome visitors and our volunteers and staff who I would also like to thank for their immense hard work and fortitude during this deeply concerning time."

Culture Secretary Fiona Hyslop said: "The National Trust for Scotland is responsible for promoting and protecting many of Scotland's most important natural and built sites, which are crucial to our heritage and tourism sectors.

“The Scottish Government has worked extremely hard to support as many jobs as possible. Whilst we have a long road ahead of us on the way to recovery as we begin to emerge from the coronavirus lockdown, reopening more of the National Trust for Scotland’s most iconic properties is testament to all of the work that has gone on behind the scenes and will enable the Trust to continue its responsibilities to protect, promote and celebrate Scotland’s heritage.”

The Trust’s management team and Board of Trustees will now concentrate on stabilising and securing the charity operationally for the immediate future, and preparing a revised strategy to enable the Trust to move forward.

ENDS

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Notes for Editors

1. The National Trust for Scotland announced a consultation on a series of emergency measures in light of the coronavirus pandemic in May 2020 – full details here: <https://www.nts.org.uk/stories/trust-confirms-emergency-measures>
2. The charity launched its biggest ever fundraising appeal – Save Our Scotland – in response to the crisis with the aim of raising £2.5 million: www.nts.org.uk/donate .
3. Almost all Trust gardens and estates have now re-opened to the public and in the past week the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum and the Hill House were amongst its first built properties to re-open. The current list of openings is available here: <https://www.nts.org.uk/stories/gardens-and-grounds-get-ready-for-visitors-again>
4. The status of built heritage properties and gardens across the regions following the receipt of financial support and the outcomes formal consultation is summarised as follows.

Arduaine Garden	Open
Bachelors’ Club	Closed until 2022
Brodick Castle	Partially open from September 2020
Brodick Country Park	Open
Broughton House	Opening with reduced hours; weekends only; Gardens open from August; house opening from 6 September 2020
Robert Burns Birthplace Museum	Open from 13 August
Thomas Carlyle’s Birthplace	Open from Easter 2021
Crarae Garden	Open
Culzean Castle	Gardens, grounds and country park open; Pre-booking required; Castle opens Easter 2021
Geilston Garden	Open
Greenbank Garden	Open
The Hill House	Open

Holmwood	Re-opening September 2020 (date tbc); booked tours only; Saturdays only
Pollok House	Re-opening from September 2020
Souter Johnnie's Cottage	Closed until 2022
The Tenement House	Aiming to open from Easter 2021
Threave Garden & Estate	Open
Weaver's Cottage	Closed until 2022
Wester Kittochside (Museum of Rural Life)	Open (pre-booked tickets)

5. 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.
6. 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. Join us at www.nts.org.uk.

