

NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE

23 March 2020

Trust closes properties and car parks in the fight against Coronavirus

Conservation charity the National Trust for Scotland has announced its latest actions in response to the ongoing Coronavirus public health emergency.

The Trust confirmed that:

- It would be closing all of its gardens and car parks, along with Culzean Country Park and Brodick Country Park, as well as the grounds of properties such as Crathes and Brodie Castles;
- Closing all holiday let properties and cancelling bookings (to the end of April and to be revised further in coming weeks);
- Asking people not to travel to its island properties in order to protect communities.

The Trust had previously announced that it would leave some gardens, grounds and parkland open for free access during the crisis.

The decision to go ahead with a blanket closure follows in the light of calls by the Scottish Government for people to suspend unnecessary travel, especially to more remote areas, and for the owners of all hotels, B&Bs and self-catering accommodation to close.

The decision was also influenced by a busy weekend at some properties where social distancing guidance was not being followed and the potential threat to the wellbeing to both visitors and the Trust's staff this was causing.

The National Trust for Scotland is cancelling all holiday let bookings up until at least 30 April, and will extend this if needed. The charity has also said that it will not accept any new bookings for stays before 4 June, again with this date subject to review.

Trust staff are contacting people who have made bookings to offer alternative dates in the future, a voucher that can be exchanged for up to a year ahead, or if necessary a full refund.

The National Trust for Scotland's Chief Executive, Simon Skinner said:

“As I have said before, our absolute priority is to ensure the wellbeing of our visitors and workforce. It is this that has led us to today’s very difficult decision.

“To support non-essential travel instruction, we are closing all our remaining open properties, including gardens, grounds and country parks along with our car parks and holiday let properties. I am truly sorry for the disappointment and inconvenience this is causing but for the safety of our visitors, volunteers and staff this is the right course of action.

“We are already in touch with those affected to rearrange holidays and events.

“The Trust is also asking people not to travel to our island properties at this time, albeit that this is difficult due to ferry restrictions in any case. We were aware of the serious concerns of residents in places like Canna and Fair Isle, which are remote from healthcare provision and especially vulnerable. For their sakes, no-one should travel to island communities unless it is on essential business.

“While this is a very difficult time, the National Trust for Scotland is carrying on with its vital work of protecting and conserving Scotland’s irreplaceable heritage. We know that our heritage is important to individuals and families, contributing to our individual and national memories, well-being and identity.

“We will continue to care for the places that mean so much to us, and we hope that people will enjoy these when better days return. In the meantime, I want to offer my profound thanks to our members and to donors, and the public at large, who have pledged to continue supporting our ongoing work.”

ENDS

For further information contact Jim Whyteside on 07889 456779 or Sarah Cuthbert-Kerr on 07713 786277

Notes for Editors

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.

