

NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE

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The devolved Trust evolves

Conservation charity the National Trust for Scotland is moving to a new management structure in its regions, which sees day-to-day leadership and administration concentrated in the hands of Operational Managers and business support teams, with staff based at properties concentrating on delivering improved visitor experiences and interpretation.

The changes, which have been driven by local teams with devolved leadership responsibility, are part of continuing plans by the Trust to improve its visitor services and free up increased funding for conservation projects.

The proposed changes reconfigure job-types and skill-sets resulting in circa 63 new roles being created across the country with immediate effect. However, this will also mean that up to 79 existing posts will be put 'at risk' of redundancy under the proposed changes.

Those affected will be encouraged to apply for the new roles.

This is the latest stage of a significant restructure of the Trust, which began at the Charity's Edinburgh-based headquarters in 2016 and with a £17m programme of investment in select priority properties which is currently under way. The Trust has also seen record membership in the last two years, at 380,000 members, and a third successive year of visitor growth to over 3m visitors.

Over 2016 and 2017, 50 new posts were previously created throughout Scotland, mainly in supporting the devolved regional leadership and business support structure, as well as carrying out an ambitious project ('Project Reveal') to catalogue the entire collection of artefacts across 47 Trust properties – over 100,000 pieces ranging from major artworks to rare furnishings to farmyard tools.

The changes follow through on earlier commitments by the Trust to devolve more management and decision-making to regional offices and local properties.

This new devolved leadership structure has recently been completed and will continue to be strengthened through 2018 with new types of jobs and investment in staff training and development.

Each of the new regional General Managers, appointed through 2017 to head up the new devolved divisions, has been reviewing the way their properties are run and how they are presented to visitors.

This has culminated in their proposals to introduce change now, in advance of the 2018 main visitor season and to complement the arrival of major new projects. Among these is 'The Playful Garden at Brodie Castle' in Moray (March), The 'Big Box' project to cover and protect The Hill House in Helensburgh (September) and a transformed Brodick Castle on Arran (Summer 2018). (*Dates indicative*).

Patrick Duffy, The National Trust for Scotland's Chief Operating Officer said:

"Each of the General Managers is deciding on the best ways to invest the new resources being allocated and to determine how to improve the visitor experience and heritage stories. This has been a welcome opportunity to re-inforce that the Trust includes many fantastic historic properties to enjoy, right across the country, and with public support for essential conservation work most visible through our visitors.

"The proposed changes mean reducing the level of administrative activities undertaken at properties thereby focussing the teams at them much more on visitor services, quality and delivering conservation work more effectively.

"If we are to offer visitor experiences that meet today's and tomorrow's expectations, we need to have the right combination of skills in the teams running properties.

"In short, we have to make changes.

"We are proposing to create circa 63 new and adapted roles in the Regions across Scotland. However, this does mean that we will have phase out around 79 of the old roles.

"This does put some staff at risk of redundancy but we hope that as many as possible of those affected can apply for the new roles"

The proposals have been shared with the Trust's recognised Trades Union, Prospect.

The proposals are now subject to 30 days of consultation between staff, union representatives and stakeholders throughout the affected properties.

It is expected that the finalised proposals will be implemented through February and March, with some changes held back and considered at the end of the main visitor season (September-October 2018).

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Images: hi-res images of Hill House and Brodie Castle priority projects can be downloaded from <https://www.flickr.com/gp/133918740@N04/2586tK>

Background

1. Following the implementation of the first stage of the NTS Change Programme from October 2016, properties were grouped into the following regions:

Built Heritage –
North West
North East
Ayrshire & Arran
Glasgow & West
Edinburgh & East
Dumfries & Galloway

Natural Heritage properties were grouped into a single, national structure.

2. As at late 2017, the NTS paid workforce comprised of:
 - Approximately 421 monthly-paid, year-round employees
 - Approximately 50 monthly-paid fixed-term employees (working on specific projects or backfilling for colleagues on e.g. maternity)
 - Approximately 136 fortnightly-paid, year-round employees
 - Approximately 110 fortnightly-paid, part-year “seasonal” employees whose employment re-occurs each year
 - Approximately 470 fortnightly-paid, part-year “seasonal” employees whose employment is for this season only
 - Approximately 135 casual workers
 - Approximately 3788 volunteers.
3. The majority of the Trust’s employees are based at properties: 84% (1116) are property-based, 5% (67) are based in the regional hub offices, and 11% (139) are based in HQ.
4. The Trust’s change programme was initiated in October 2016 following a 90-day period of consultation. It had been proposed that that 142 staff, mainly based at the Trust’s HQ in Edinburgh, would be placed ‘at risk’ of redundancy due to the changes.
5. As a result of consultation feedback, modifications were made which meant that the number of staff placed ‘at risk’ of compulsory redundancy was reduced to 90, with 73 posts between the Trust’s HQ and the new Regional structure being created or retained.
6. The first stage of the change programme was concentrated in HQ functions in order to support decentralisation and new investment in properties. However, contrary to what is being suggested by the Prospect Trade Union, the Trust’s Chief Executive, Simon Skinner did at that time confirm that the new Regional leadership would be expected to adjust their operational structures and practices in due course in order to suit local circumstances and improve service delivery. It is locally-led reviews under the devolved Regional property management arrangements that are bringing forward the changes proposed today.
7. The reasons for change included:
 - NTS membership numbers are increasing but the age and social profile of the existing members mean there is an inbuilt prospect of future decline unless the Trust can widen its appeal;
 - Despite a steadily rising membership, the number of actual visits made to properties by them, as well as the number of non-member paying visitors, has flat-lined over the last three years and this is a serious risk to NTS income – there were 290,000 more visits to NTS properties just eight to ten years ago;
 - The costs of conservation runs ahead of inflation: NTS has so far identified £47 million worth of expenditure needed over the next ten years to apply the standards of conservation desired at properties, and this does not include investment in the mitigation of climate change or in improving visitor facilities;
 - New generations are much more demanding in terms of visitor experiences and presentation; digital technology especially has raised the bar; NTS must invest in our properties to get people back;
 - New legislation in relation to Land Reform and Community Empowerment requires NTS to be much more flexible in our thinking as to how heritage can be managed and be relevant to community needs and ambitions;

- NTS must look to new, innovative ways of managing and conserving our heritage assets, including partnerships and long-leases with third parties.
 - The changes were based on carefully considered choices which were all about making the Trust fit for the future. The changes simplify lines of leadership and accountability across the Trust and mean ensure that we now:
 - organise all of our activities around the needs of the properties we care for;
 - achieve efficiencies and additional income that we are now investing in properties and their conservation;
 - can identify investment priorities, especially in visitor experiences, that will lead to increased membership and visitor numbers;
 - create the conditions for the future sustainability and growth of the Trust;
 - bring in new skillsets at regional/property level that help us achieve our goals and make us more responsive to local communities and members.
8. The Operations Directorate, under the leadership of Chief Operating Officer Patrick Duffy, is responsible for the day to day management of the Trust's properties. It is organised around two inter-dependent arms – Regional/Natural Heritage Groupings of properties and Consultancy Services.
 9. As mentioned, there are six Built Heritage Regions and one nationwide Natural Heritage Grouping. Each Grouping oversees the properties in its area.
 10. The leadership of the Regions and the Natural Heritage Grouping has devolved responsibility for an Annual Operating Plan, budget-setting and for specifying the services and support needed for their properties in order to deliver the plan. They each have or share core teams managing commercial services, food & hospitality, retail and gardens & designed landscapes.
 11. The Regions and the Natural Heritage commission colleagues in the other arm of the Operations Directorate, Consultancy Services, to provide the specialist support and professional input they need either directly or by commissioning external providers. The Groupings will also 'contract' with colleagues in another department, Customer & Cause, for promotional and fundraising support and link with local volunteers, communities and supporters.
 12. The Consultancy Services shape and embed different professional and supporting services around our properties, providing the necessary conservation and commercial expertise and support.
 13. There are some Consultancy Services provided nationally – these are centrally-based resources that are contracted by General Managers and Property Managers to obtain specialist services, advice and outsourcing. The national disciplines include Archaeology, Nature Conservation and Hospitality. The remaining Consultancy Services are provided on a regional basis 'in the field' alongside Groupings and their properties. They provide key functions for Curatorial and Collections Conservation, Buildings Conservation and Estates Management.
 14. In addition to the Operations Directorate, the remainder of the Trust is organised into one of three other departments:
 - Conservation & Policy is the Trust's regulatory and policy arm. It ensures that the Regional/Natural Heritage Groupings and the practitioners based in Consultancy Services are abiding by Trust-wide policies, complying with national and professional regulations and applying consistent standards of best practice. This is where the Trust's technical leadership and knowledge will reside – for example, staff here lead strategic reviews of services – such as one being carried out now for Gardens. This department reports directly to the Chief Executive;
 - Customer & Cause has overarching responsibility to develop the Trust's 'Brand', raise our profile and encourage public support and donations. This Directorate also provides services to properties via Regional/Natural Heritage Groupings on an 'agency' basis. Customer & Cause is commissioned to prepare

communications and marketing plans and to undertake promotional activity that will attract more visitors, including nationally organised events, campaigns and activities taking place across a range of properties. The Director of Customer & Cause is Mark Bishop;

- Corporate Services provides core services that apply across the Trust, including Governance, Legal Services, Finance and ICT. The Director of Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer is Louise Page.

