



News release - **Embargoed until Friday 26 May: 00:01**

It's Up to Us...to step up and save our mountain paths

Groundbreaking new campaign launches

[Mountaineering Scotland](#) and the [Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland](#) (OATS) are delighted to announce the launch of *It's Up to Us*, an ambitious three-year partnership campaign to raise £300,000 for much-needed path repairs on one of Scotland's most iconic mountains, whilst raising awareness of the desperate need for investment in the repair and maintenance of informal mountain paths situated on land outside of Scotland's national parks and NGO estates.

It's Up to Us, being launched at an evening reception at The Black Watch Castle and Museum in Perth on Thursday 25th May 2023, will also focus on engaging Government, stakeholder agencies and organisations, outdoor businesses, and all path users to ensure that essential funding for hill path repair and habitat restoration is recognised for its social, health and wellbeing, economic and environmental benefits. From this Mountaineering Scotland and OATS will look to develop a sustainable and long-term funding model for hill path maintenance projects to improve access to investment for all Scotland's mountain paths.

Mountaineering Scotland and OATS have earmarked the hill path from Dundonnell on An Teallach, one of Scotland's most iconic mountains, for investment from the *It's Up to Us* fundraising appeal. The £300,000 restoration project will address decades of erosion caused by the cumulative impact of increased human activity and the extremes of Scottish weather. An Teallach is a clear example of a popular mountain path on privately owned land with no government funding currently available.

This ground-breaking fundraising campaign has already been the beneficiary of the hugely generous £100,000 60th Anniversary Diamond Grant Award from the Scottish Mountaineering Trust and has gained the support of many well-known outdoor adventurers and social media influencers.

Outdoor enthusiasts, active tourism businesses and organisations that care deeply about Scotland's hills and mountains are being encouraged to step up and give something back by donating to the *It's Up to Us* fundraising appeal. It's up to all of us to give back to the mountain environment we benefit from.

Mountaineering Scotland CEO, Stuart Younie, explained: "Scotland's informal hill and mountain path network plays a vital role in helping us to enjoy the physical and mental benefits of being active outdoors, which was never more evident than during the pandemic.

"Active tourism also makes a significant contribution to the Scottish economy and to local communities across the highlands. We need to recognise the cumulative impact of recreational activity and extreme

weather due to climate change on our landscape and do something positive to address it so it can continue to be enjoyed by future generations.”

CEO of the Outdoor Access Trust Scotland, Dougie Baird, added: “The fundraising appeal will highlight how hillwalkers, mountaineers and conservationists can come together to solve path erosion problems on mountains on private land throughout Scotland.

“However, we no longer have access to European funding, which has provided significant support for path and habitat restoration projects in the past, with no funding from the government to replace it. It is vital to the success of the *It’s Up to Us* campaign that we engage with Governments and all stakeholders to highlight the desperate need for investment in mountain paths, and a long-term sustainable model that gives all landowners access to funding for essential mountain path maintenance is developed.”

It’s Up to Us ambassador Cameron McNeish, said: “*It’s Up to Us* is such an important project for every person who loves walking on Scotland’s hills and mountains. The original tracks and trails on our hills were never built to sustain the numbers that use them now, so it’s up to all of us to pull together in every way we can and keep them well maintained.”

John Fowler, Chair of the Scottish Mountaineering Trust, said: “There were a number of worthy bids for the Diamond Grant, but the Trustees were really impressed by the ground-breaking approach that OATS and Mountaineering Scotland have come up with.”

Visit: www.savemountainpaths.scot to find out more and follow all the latest campaign news using the hashtags: **#ItsUptoUs** and **#SaveMountainPaths**

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Campaign images, logos and an infographic are available to download [here](#).

For further information, interviews and quotes please contact:

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Notes for editors:

***It’s Up to Us* – additional information**

- After 20 years of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act, VisitScotland estimates that the annual economic impact of walking tourism is £1.6 billion [Scotland’s networks of paths and trails: key research findings - SNH, 2018]. The cumulative impact of increasing human activity, together with the extremes of Scottish weather, has had a major impact on the erosion of mountain paths and the degradation of surrounding habitats throughout the country.
- As it currently stands there is no public investment from the UK and Scottish Governments to support essential mountain path and habitat restoration work outside of Scotland’s national parks and NGO estates. Most of Scotland’s hills and mountains, the majority of which are on privately owned land, are excluded. Brexit has exacerbated the situation for private landowners with the once significant funding from Europe no longer available and not replaced.

- Many mountain path and trail users take upland paths for granted, unaware of the cost of path building and the lack of funds for restoration projects. NatureScot estimated path repairs at an average of £90 per metre in 2019, though costs are often substantially more than this.

Mountaineering Scotland

Mountaineering Scotland is the membership and representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers, mountaineers and ski tourers in Scotland, with a membership of over 16,000 individual and club members and 150 affiliated clubs.

Our aim is to inspire and encourage people to enjoy the benefits of walking, climbing and ski touring and provide guidance and skills training to mountain users to promote safety, self-reliance and responsible access in Scotland's mountains and climbing venues.

Web: www.mountaineering.scot | Twitter: [@Mountain_Scot](https://twitter.com/Mountain_Scot)

Facebook: [@MountaineeringScotland](https://www.facebook.com/MountaineeringScotland) | Instagram: [@mountaineeringscotland](https://www.instagram.com/mountaineeringscotland)

Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland

The Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland (OATS) is a ground-breaking environmental charity. We promote sustainable access – developing, building and fixing upland and lowland paths, path networks, habitats and trailhead facilities, in popular, remote, and fragile places. We do this to support outdoors enthusiasts, land managers and local communities, and promote the health and wellbeing benefits of path use.

We are at the forefront of developing partnerships to finance conservation projects, collaborating with others to make Scotland's outdoor access network fit for the future, and bringing people together to learn how to make places that matter better for all.

Web: www.outdooraccesstrustforscotland.org.uk | Twitter: [@OATScot](https://twitter.com/OATScot)

Facebook: [@OATScot](https://www.facebook.com/OATScot) | Instagram: [@OATScot](https://www.instagram.com/OATScot)

Scottish Mountaineering Trust

The Scottish Mountaineering Trust is a Scottish charity that provides grants to projects and organisations that promote public recreation, knowledge and safe enjoyment of the mountains, especially in the mountains of Scotland. Their work is financed by donations from individuals and organisations who share our values, and from the publication of guidebooks for the Scottish Mountaineering Club and other books connected with the Scottish Hills.

The £100,000 Diamond Grant, the biggest in the Trust's history, is the latest in an extensive line of grants set up to aid deserving mountain projects. Over the years, the Scottish Mountaineering Trust has contributed more than £1.7m to a wide range of recipients, from a new mountain rescue base to a student training weekend and a mountain film festival, all with the goal of helping more people to experience and enjoy our incredible mountains.

Web: www.thesmt.org.uk | Facebook: [Scottish Mountaineering Trust](https://www.facebook.com/ScottishMountaineeringTrust)