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**Press Release Embargoed: 27th November 2022**

**£100,000 awarded to innovative Scottish mountain project**

***Scottish Mountaineering Trust’s Diamond Grant kick starts ground-breaking new campaign to save Scotland’s hill paths***

The recipient of the Scottish Mountaineering Trust (SMT) 60th anniversary award was announced at the Dundee Mountain Film Festival on Saturday (26th November 2022), with the ambitious **‘***It’s Up to Us*’ campaign scooping the £100,000 Diamond Grant.

The winning application comes from an exciting new partnership between the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland (OATS) and Mountaineering Scotland. It aims to develop a sustainable long term funding model that will change the perceptions of the public, Government and agencies to ensure that hill path repair and habitat restoration is recognised for its social, economic and environmental benefits. The campaign will start with a project to address decades of path erosion on An Teallach – one of the country’s most-loved mountains in the North-West Highlands.

Many mountain users are unaware of the cost of path building and the lack of funds for restoration projects on private land outside of Scotland's national parks and NGO estates. This campaign will target outdoor enthusiasts, and those organisations who care deeply about Scotland’s hills and mountains, to raise essential funding which will ensure Scotland’s outdoor access network remains fit for the future enjoyment of everyone.

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.

“Their imaginative funding model to support our paths will have a major impact on Scotland's mountain community for many years to come. Using the repair of the path on the iconic An Teallach as the prototype is a great idea as it is such a large and important project. We look forward to working with them going forward.”

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. Our access may be free from charges, but it does come at a cost, and we need to recognise the cumulative impact of recreational activity 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: “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.

“The ‘*It’s Up to Us*’ project will be vital in showing that mountaineers and conservationists can come together to solve the problems at An Teallach and other mountains on private land, whilst also highlighting the desperate need for government support for this type of work in the future. It’s fantastic to have received the Scottish Mountaineering Trust’s Diamond Grant to kick start the project.”

This special birthday award – 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.

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**Media**

To download accompanying images of An Teallach, please click [**here**](https://www.mountaineering.scot/diamond-grant-up-to-us)

Images from Dundee Mountain Film Festival available from 9pm, Saturday 26th November 2022

**Information for editors:**

**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 their values, and from the publication of guidebooks for the Scottish Mountaineering Club and other books connected with the Scottish Hills.

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

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

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**Mountaineering Scotland**

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

We aim to inspire and encourage people to enjoy the benefits of walking, climbing and ski touring and provide information 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](http://www.mountaineering.scot) |Twitter: [@Mountain\_Scot](https://twitter.com/Mountain_Scot)

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