



Press Release

8 March 2018

For immediate release

## For the price of a bobble hat – hill-goers challenged to fund path work

### Mend Our Mountains appeal launches this weekend, to restore paths on popular mountains

This weekend sees the launch of a major appeal to raise £100,000 to tackle erosion and restore footpaths on two of Scotland's favourite Munros.

With hundreds of thousands of people enjoying walking and climbing in Scotland's mountains every year, campaigners hope to hit their target over the next eight months by encouraging the nation's hillwalkers to donate small – whether that be the value of a new pair of hiking socks or a new bobble hat.

Mountaineering Scotland and the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland (OATS) are jointly leading the Scottish part of this UK-wide campaign which will support one project in each of Scotland's two National Parks. 'Mend Our Mountains' will enable vital path work to restore the ascent routes and surrounding habitat on Ben Vane in the Trossachs and Beinn a Ghlo in the southern Cairngorms.

The path up Carn Liath, the most accessible of Beinn a Ghlo's summits, has long been a highly visible scar upon a hillside which has a high nature conservation value, and is a prominent eyesore even from the A9, one of Scotland's main transport arteries linking the Central Belt with Inverness and beyond.

Ben Vane remains a popular mountain in the Arrochar Alps west of Loch Lomond, despite a badly eroded summit path which is peatbog in its lower section and higher up turns into a loose, stony streambed under heavy rain or a rubble chute in the dry.

With increasing demand for access to Scotland's hills and mountains coinciding with pressure upon public funding for countryside services and access maintenance in many areas, there is a growing need for hill goers to contribute towards repairs and improvements to safeguard mountain access for themselves and future generations, especially in well-loved and well-used locations.

David Gibson, Chief Executive Officer of Mountaineering Scotland, said: “More and more people are taking to the hills, enjoying our wonderful landscapes and the health and wellbeing benefits hillwalking brings, but increased use has an impact on the mountains.

“Path building and restoration projects on more popular routes such as Ben Vane and Beinn a’Ghlo aren’t aimed at making life easier for walkers: these are important conservation projects which will prevent further erosion and help to protect the hills for future generations.

“Hillwalking isn’t necessarily an expensive activity and many people want to find ways to put something back into the mountains. We’re not asking for great amounts. If everyone gave just a little we’d be able to reach that £100,000 target to complete this vital work.”

Dougie Baird, CEO of OATS, said: “The combination of Scotland’s cold, wet windy weather, steep hillsides, friable soil and fragile vegetation cover makes the upland areas particularly susceptible to erosion from even a relatively small number of users. Intervention is necessary to ensure that continued access to these areas is not at the expense of the habitat and landscape which makes them special and attractive places to visit. But maintaining these routes takes money and so we are asking people to dig deep and support the Mend our Mountains campaign.”

Donations to the campaign so far have ranged from a four-figure sum from a widower whose wife was a dedicated hillwalker to contributions from among Scotland’s many mountaineering clubs.

Mountaineering Scotland members have been mobilising their friends, family and work colleagues to get involved. One teacher from a school in Musselburgh with a historic connection to Beinn a Ghlo and a strong tradition of hillwalking and wilderness activities is planning a range of fundraising events, including taking his pupils on a walk up the Cairngorm peak.

‘Mend Our Mountains: Make One Million’ is a UK-wide campaign coordinated by the British Mountaineering Council south of the Border, with the ambitious aim of raising £1 million for path projects across England, Wales and Scotland by October 2018.

Find out more about the Scottish Mend Our Mountains projects with videos highlighting the access problems and solutions on each mountain and how you can help at:

[www.mountaineering.scot/mend-our-mountains](http://www.mountaineering.scot/mend-our-mountains)

## Ends

**Notes for editors:**

**Images:**

[http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/Ben\\_Vane\\_photo.jpg](http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/Ben_Vane_photo.jpg)

Ben Vane

[http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/Ben\\_Vane\\_path.jpg](http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/Ben_Vane_path.jpg)

The start of the ‘path’ up Ben Vane – a peaty bog

[http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/walkhighlands\\_-\\_beinn\\_a\\_ghlo.JPG](http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/walkhighlands_-_beinn_a_ghlo.JPG)

Carn Liath of Beinn a Ghlo. The eroded path can clearly be seen from the A9

[http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/Huge\\_path\\_erosion\\_scar\\_on\\_Beinn\\_a\\_Ghlo.jpg](http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/Huge_path_erosion_scar_on_Beinn_a_Ghlo.jpg)

A closer view of the severely eroded path up Carn Liath of Beinn a Ghlo, showing how it has spread across the hillside.

**Further information contact:**

Lisa Barnard, Business & Communications Manager on 013398 87777 or 07824555946

[lisa@outdooraccesstrustforscotland.org.uk](mailto:lisa@outdooraccesstrustforscotland.org.uk)

Neil Reid, Communications Officer, on 01738 493941 or 07788871803 or

[neil@mountaineering.scot](mailto:neil@mountaineering.scot)

### **About Mountaineering Scotland:**

- Mountaineering Scotland is the only recognised representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers and ski-tourers who live in Scotland or who enjoy Scotland's mountains.
- Mountaineering Scotland provides training and information to mountain users to promote safety, self-reliance and the enjoyment of our mountain environment.
- The Mountaineering Scotland is a membership organisation with over 14,000 members representing hill walkers, climbers and mountaineers, funded through a combination of membership subscriptions, non-governmental grants and investment from sportscotland, which supports public initiatives and services in mountain safety, mountain training and the development and promotion of mountaineering activities.
- Mountaineering Scotland also acts for 75,000 members of the BMC or British Mountaineering Council on matters related to Landscape and Access in Scotland.
- Mountaineering Scotland landscape and access work is supported financially by the Scottish Mountaineering Trust and the BMC
- Mountaineering Scotland has launched the ClimbScotland initiative to encourage young people to participate in climbing and support their progression. It offers a dedicated website and a development team, which will introduce young people to climbing at schools, climbing walls and via youth organisations with a range of activities and events, while developing kids clubs and providing specialist support to parents, volunteers and teachers.
- Mountaineering Scotland is the national governing body for sports climbing. It offers pathways to climbing coaching, organises and promotes a range of regional and national climbing competitions, and manages the Scottish climbing and bouldering teams. It contributes to the management of the GB teams with the ultimate aim of seeing a Scottish athlete achieve a podium position in the Olympic Games.
- The MCoS is a not for profit company limited by guarantee and incorporated in Scotland. Company number SC322717.
- Mountaineering Scotland, The Granary, West Mill Street, Perth PH1 5QP