



**Press Release**

**15 April 2021**

**For immediate release**

## **Return to the hills**

### **Advice to walkers and climbers for a safe and hassle-free trip**

Mountaineering Scotland has welcomed the good news that the travel restrictions will be lifted from Friday the 16<sup>th</sup> of April, earlier than expected, and people heading for the hills this weekend are urged to make sure they are properly prepared and ready to be flexible in their plans.

CEO Stuart Younie said: “We are delighted with the unexpected news this week and particularly for those living in the cities and smaller local authority areas who have had limited access to the outdoors during this lockdown, as they can now get back to doing what they love. The last 12 months have demonstrated how important outdoor recreation is for our physical and mental wellbeing and as things start to ease it will play an important role in our economic recovery, particularly in rural areas.”

Popular destinations are expected to be very busy, meaning walkers and climbers travelling by car may have to set off early or consider going somewhere less busy.

Mountaineering Scotland also advises that to get the most out of their day, people should think carefully about the conditions they are likely to meet on the hill.

Snow still lies extensively on the higher hills, and fluctuating temperatures have meant much of it is likely to be very icy, and the consequences of a slip more likely to be serious. That caution is particularly relevant in the mornings on north or north-east-facing slopes.

Heather Morning, Mountain Safety Advisor for Mountaineering Scotland said: “An ice axe and crampons to cope with any icy stretches really are still essential items of kit at this time of year.

“People should also be conscious that, with limited opportunity to climb in the hills over the last few months, they may have lost some hill-fitness and may well prefer to take on easier walks to begin with so they can ease themselves back into the swing of things.”

It is also important to act in a responsible manner while enjoying access to the hills, especially with the extra pressures due to higher visitor numbers.

“We’ve all been through a stressful few months,” Stuart added. “So we should be considerate of local residents and our fellow visitors, whether that’s by parking considerately, making sure we leave no litter or damage, or just in interacting with others.

“The forecast is good for the weekend and if we all take care and look out for each other we can make sure our long-awaited return to the hills is memorable for all the right reasons.”

**Ends**

**Notes for editors:**

**Further information contact:**

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**About Mountaineering Scotland:**

- Mountaineering Scotland is the national representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers and ski-tourers in Scotland.
- 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 14,500 members and is 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 also runs the ClimbScotland initiative to encourage young people to participate in climbing and support their progression.
- Mountaineering Scotland is the national governing body for sport 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 MCoFS is a not for profit company limited by guarantee and incorporated in Scotland. Company number SC322717.
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