



the National Trust  
for Scotland

a place for everyone

Ms Sigrid Robinson  
Assistant Clerk  
Public Petitions Clerks  
Room T3.40  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

20<sup>th</sup> October 2015

Dear Ms Robinson,

**RESPONSE TO PETITION PE1556**

The National Trust for Scotland strongly supports Petition PE01556 calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to prepare and implement a strategy to designate more National Parks in Scotland, including at least one coastal & marine National Park.

Much of Scotland's natural and cultural heritage, including its spectacular landscapes, is internationally acclaimed. However, only a small percentage has been given the international recognition of National Park designation, at 7.2% of Scotland's land area, compared to 9.3% of England and 19.9% of Wales.<sup>1</sup> Scotland also has no designated coastal National Park, in contrast to England and Wales, despite the significance of our marine heritage.

The National Trust for Scotland has long been a supporter of National Parks, owning properties at the heart of both the Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park (Ben Lomond) and the Cairngorms National Park (Mar Lodge Estate and Killiecrankie) and believes they bring many environmental, social, economic, cultural and health benefits to the people and areas they cover and more widely to the people of Scotland. Central to this is the statutory basis upon which National Parks in Scotland are designated and the requirement for a Management Plan.

The Management Planning process is key, enabling a holistic approach to management of the whole park area. It provides a mechanism to address the sometimes differing and conflicting needs of residents, visitors and other communities of interest with the need to conserve the area's outstanding landscapes and heritage and access to it. It allows local issues such as depopulation, affordable housing, and visitor pressure to be addressed and provides a means to involve all stakeholders, whether of place or interest, in the decision making process.

---

<sup>1</sup> National Parks UK website, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2015

Issues do remain. Conservation of the area's heritage is not always given due weight in the decision making process; and planning powers have been delegated in different ways in each National Park. However, the principle of bringing all interests together, with a common vision and a framework for action, is a good one.

In terms of which areas of Scotland should qualify and benefit from National Park status, much work has been done on this to date, including considerable stakeholder consultation. We recommend that this information is combined with areas that have strong community support for such a designation, for example on the island of Harris<sup>2</sup>.

The Trust believes that National Park status has brought many benefits to the areas already designated. We therefore urge the Government to take the lead and to prepare and implement a strategy that empowers further communities to take this step, creating more sustainable communities and places for the future whilst also protecting areas of Scotland's most outstanding landscapes and heritage for all.

Yours sincerely

Simon Skinner  
Chief Executive  
The National Trust for Scotland

---

<sup>2</sup> In 2009, the community of Harris voted by a large majority in favour of seeking National Park designation for the Isle of Harris