Giant’s Causeway Visitor Centre opens its doors

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The £18.5million investment will create an exciting new tourism offer which was made possible with support from £9.25million from Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment of which £6.125million has been provided by the European Regional Development Fund under the European Sustainable Competitiveness Programme for Northern Ireland, and £3million from the Heritage Lottery Fund, with £6.25million from National Trust funds.

The visitor experience includes:

- A new state of the art visitor centre featuring an illuminating exhibition showcasing the stories and the science behind the Giant's Causeway.
- Innovative pocket size audio guide in a variety of languages.
- A grab and go style café.
- A new retail facility introducing new and exclusive local products.
- Tourist Information.
- Fully accessible toilets and a Changing Places facility for people with disabilities.

The walks and trails around the site have been upgraded, with the addition of a new accessible cliff top walk for families and people with disabilities. It might even be possible to glimpse Northern Ireland’s favourite giant, Finn McCool whilst walking around these new trails!

The local community also plays an important part in the exhibition area of the new centre. Lots of wonderful stories and memories depicting the lives of the local around the Causeway area are captured through still and moving images. There is also a display of postcards showcasing local people thoughts and feelings of having a World Heritage Site on their doorstep.

There is also a fantastic range of local produce on display in the retails area of the new visitor centre. From the beautiful jewellery designs of Keri Shanks to the unusual wood carving of McCullough’s Furniture, Ballymena to the exclusive Causeway tartan designs of Tweedie Acheson, Coleraine.

The planning of this new visitor centre has been extraordinary, with local talent and expertise being integral in bringing the new building design to life. Even the grass seed from the area was combed to produce a compatible grass variety for the planting of the grass roof on the new visitor centre. Visitors can enjoy the stunning panoramic view of the North Coast landscape from the grass roof of the new Visitor Centre – it is truly unique.

Giant’s Causeway Project Director, Graham Thompson, said: “This is a significant milestone for the National Trust in Northern Ireland and is the culmination of years of working in partnership with stakeholders in the community, the business sector, and government and political arenas. This reflects our commitment to the tourism industry and Northern Ireland confidently moving on.”

Visitors wishing to avail of the fantastic new visitor experience can buy tickets in the following ways; pre purchase on the National Trust website from the end of June, at the park and ride facility in Bushmills village, or upon entry to the visitor centre. Ticket prices are £8.50 (adults), £4.25 (child), £21.00 (family) with discounts available for green travel and pre

purchasing online. Groups visits (15 people plus) can pre book now by contacting 028 2073 3419. National Trust members will enjoy free entry.

As National Trust is predicting a significant rush of interest from local and international visitors, opening times to the Visitor Centre are extended from 9am to 9pm in the summer months, so there is a real opportunity to experience the Giant's Causeway beyond the busiest hours of 11am – 3pm.

With over 100 staff and volunteers to greet and tell the stories of this geological phenomenon, the National Trust looks forward to welcoming all visitors to Northern Ireland's only World Heritage Site.

For further information on the Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre visit the website.

Note to editors

The Giant's Causeway Visitor Experience cost £18.5million. Of this funding package, the National Trust provided £6.25m, the Department of Enterprise Trade & Investment, through the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, awarded £9.25million of which £6.125million has been provided by the European Regional Development Fund under the European Sustainable Competitiveness Programme for Northern Ireland with the Heritage Lottery Fund allocating £3million.

Admission
Ticket admission includes: access to the visitor centre, hand held pocket audio guide, orientation leaflets and car parking.

National Trust
The National Trust is a conservation charity which looks after special places throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We look after some of Northern Ireland's most beautiful and special places – for ever, for everyone. The places in our care range from Northern Ireland's highest mountain, Slieve Donard, to our only World Heritage Site, the Giant's Causeway; from amazing gardens like Mount Stewart and Rowallane to mansions such as Castle Coole, The Argory and Florence Court and rare working mills like Patterson's Spade Mill and Wellbrook Beetling Mill.

In all, we protect and provide access to:

- Over 120 miles of coastline (about one third of Northern Ireland's coastline).
- 40 square miles of countryside.
- More than 200 listed buildings.
- 4,000 hectares of farmed land.
- Over 1,500 archaeological sites.

We are actively supported by over 56,000 members and over 2,000 volunteers in Northern Ireland. Well over a million visitors enjoy our sites every year. We encourage everyone to enjoy and care for our nature and heritage. In doing so, we also advocate the protection of the environment across all of Northern Ireland, not just at our own sites.

Further information

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