

News Release

TOURIST INDUSTRY SHOULD JOIN WITH FIRST MINISTER IN SUPPORTING SCOTLAND AS WORLD CHAMPIONS.

Landscape campaigners are challenging Scotland's tourist bosses to cease their attack on Scotland's First Minister about who to support in the World Cup and spend more time positively supporting Scotland's own world class player - its landscape.

In an appeal to tourism interests to avoid being sidetracked over petty football team allegiances, landscape campaigners are urging tourist representatives to focus instead on Scotland's main tourist strength - the landscape and unspoilt scenery that repeatedly tops the league for visitors in surveys..

In response to the Scottish Executive's launch of the new Scottish Landscape Forum, landscape groups are claiming that Scotland's diverse landscapes, renowned worldwide for natural beauty and historic significance, shoots them to the top of any global league table..

They warn however that this position is under threat as never before. These threats include the possible inappropriate siting of major wind developments in some of our best landscapes and new tracks for All-Terrain Vehicles spreading across previously unspoiled land . While Scotlands's landscape is top of the league now, robust national policies and strategies must be introduced to protect and enhance it.

There is an urgent need to establish a greater understanding of the relationship of Scots, and visitors, with the landscape that tourism depends on. The devastating impact on tourism of the foot and mouth outbreak five years ago shows that landscapes are of the highest importance to visitors and locals alike.

Landscape organisations have welcomed the Scottish Executive's establishment of a Scottish Landscape Forum and will be devoting their full support to making it a success, urging other bodies and interests, such as VisitScotland and Scottish Enterprise, to participate fully..

Welcoming the Forum's launch, John Mayhew, newly appointed Chair of Scottish Environment Link said; "We are delighted to see that Ministers have given the backing to the new Forum which will highlight the importance of Scotland's world-class landscapes.

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Of course it should also pay very close attention to the everyday landscapes in which the people of Scotland live their lives."

For further information contact either:- John Mayhew 0131 243 9522 or Helen McDade 07787 995319 or Bill Wright 07785 510 456.

Editors' Notes

(1) Scottish Environment LINK is the network for Scotland's voluntary sector environmental organisations. LINK has 36 member organisations spanning interests across the natural environment and associated cultural heritage and supported by around 500,000 people.

Further information on LINK is available at www.scotlink.org. The **everyone** campaign is a LINK network initiative enabling people who care about their environment to find out about current issues and take action online or at events - further information is available at www.everyonecan.org

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