



Cairngorms  
National Park  
Pàirc Nàiseanta a'  
Mhonaidh Ruaidh



# UK National Parks Conference 2026

Wednesday 16 to Friday 18 September 2026

Macdonald Aviemore Resort, Aviemore

## Our theme: nature and people thriving together

This year's theme is inspired by the Gaelic word Dùthchas, which encompasses ideas of kinship, heritage and connections between nature, people and place. The word has inspired the five-year Cairngorms 2030 programme, which is putting the power to tackle the nature and climate crisis in the hands of the people who live, visit and work in the Cairngorms National Park.

## Our venue: Macdonald Aviemore Resort

Located in the heart of the National Park, Macdonald Aviemore Resort is located just a five-minute walk from Aviemore train station on the Highland Main Line. It is also a stone's throw from the A9, with Inverness to the north and Perth to the south.

Address: Macdonald Highland Resort, Aviemore, Highland, PH22 1PN

Website: [macdonaldhotels.co.uk/aviemore](https://macdonaldhotels.co.uk/aviemore)

## Our sponsors

We are grateful for the support of Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) and Tarmac for helping make this event happen.



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## About the UK National Parks Conference

The 2026 conference will focus on:

- How national parks and protected areas can deliver for nature and people in a rapidly changing world.
- The opportunities and risks linked to natural capital markets and large-scale land-use change.
- Ambitious restoration targets, including woodland expansion, peatland restoration and rewilding initiatives.
- Collaborative work across the UK's national parks, supported by shared carbon and nature audits through Small World Consulting.

## Draft programme

### Wednesday 16 September

- 13:00     **Check-in and networking**  
Meet partners, sponsors and other stakeholders (Conference Centre Foyer)
- 14:30     **Opening and welcome**  
Cabinet Secretary, Scottish Government
- 15:00     **Keynote address**  
Prof David Reay (University of Edinburgh, Just Transition and Green Economy)
- 15:10     **Panel discussion and Q&A**  
Deborah Long (Scottish Environment LINK), Fiona Milden (Oxygen Conservation), Jonnie Hall (NFU Scotland) and Sarah Jane Laing (Scottish Land and Estates)
- 16:10     Conversation with Craig Bennett (CEO of Wildlife Trust)
- 16:45     **Sponsor address**
- 17:05     **Closing remarks**
- 18:30     **Journey on the Strathspey Railway** (as featured on BBC's *The Traitors*)



## Thursday 17 September

- 08:30 **Field trips**  
Choice of themed field trips across the National Park, with a focus on our theme of 'people and nature thriving together'
- 16:30 **Arrive back in Aviemore**  
Free time to relax and explore the town
- 18:30 **Drinks reception**  
At Macdonald Aviemore Resort
- 19:30 **Formal dinner**
- 20:30 **Ceilidh**

## Friday 18 September

- 09:15 **Welcome**  
Photos and reflections from previous day's visit
- 09:30 **Workshops**  
Workshop 1 – wildfire management  
Workshop 2 – water management  
Workshop 3 – National Parks Partnership  
Workshop 4 – widening participation
- 11:30 **Coffee break**
- 12:00 **Wrap up and feedback**  
Discussion on the opportunities and challenges ahead
- 12:30 **Close of conference**  
Handover from Cairngorms to Pembrokeshire Coast, hosts of the 2028 event

## Further information

If you would like to book a place, or have any questions about the event, please contact us on [enquiries@cairngorms.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@cairngorms.co.uk) or call +44 (0) 1479 873 535.