

Press information

14/09/2007

The National Trust advises that it has not yet been approached by Sheridan Group

Conservation charity remains committed to protecting World Heritage Site and ensuring Visitor Centre remains in public ownership

The National Trust, Northern Ireland's largest conservation charity, today confirmed that it has not yet been approached by Mr Peter Curistan or any representatives of The Sheridan Group, in relation to a new visitor centre at the Giant's Causeway.

Regional Director for the National Trust, Hilary McGrady, commented:

"The National Trust has not yet been approached by the Sheridan Group or any private developer to discuss any proposals for the site. The National Trust has fully supported the process led by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, to develop visitor facilities on the existing site, designed by internationally renowned architects. The Trust has been working in partnership with DETI, Moyle District Council and the Northern Tourist Board since 2003."

"The National Trust as owners of the stones would welcome the opportunity to speak to The Sheridan Group or any private developer who shares our aims and objectives for the Giant's Causeway. Again this would also depend on Moyle District Council who own the visitor centre site."

Clarifying the National Trust's position, Hilary added:

"The Giant's Causeway is Northern Ireland's biggest tourism asset and only World Heritage Site. It is crucial that any development at the Giant's Causeway ensures the protection of the World Heritage Site and its setting. We strongly believe that the development and management of visitor facilities should remain in public ownership. This is the only way to ensure that all surplus income from the site is re-invested in the conservation of the World Heritage Site and for the direct benefit of the surrounding area."

"The Trust strongly opposes development on greenfield land close to the Giant's Causeway. Any such development would be contrary to planning policies for the area. It would also go against the views of UNESCO, the international body responsible for designating and monitoring World Heritage Site status, which has specifically stated that there should be no additional development in the immediate vicinity of the Giant's Causeway," Hilary concluded.

