

Ethical Donations Policy



Our commitment to ethical fundraising

The John Muir Trust (“the Trust”) is a UK conservation charity working to conserve, protect and restore wild places for the benefit of all. The Trust aims to inspire people about the benefits of wild places across the UK, showcase how wild places tackle the climate crisis, and reverse biodiversity loss.

To support this work the Trust raises funds from a variety of sources, including individuals, companies, Charitable Trusts and public bodies.

The Trust is committed to open, honest and ethical fundraising. The Trust is an Organisational Member of the [Chartered Institute of Fundraising](#), and agrees to follow the [Code of Fundraising Practice](#) at all times. The Trust is registered with the [Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator \(OSCR\)](#) and meets all requirements of statutory regulation. Additional self-regulation of fundraising in Scotland is overseen by the [Scottish Fundraising Adjudication Panel](#); the Trust has signed up to their [Fundraising Guarantee](#).

The purpose of the Trust’s Ethical Donations Policy is:

- To set out the circumstances under which the Trust will and will not accept donations from individuals and companies
- To ensure a consistent approach to decision making regarding acceptance of donations, encompassing legal and ethical considerations
- To ensure that reputational and staff safety impacts are given due consideration along with financial impacts
- To ensure that no partnerships are entered into that in any way limit the Trust’s ability to work towards agreed Strategy

Scope of policy

This policy applies to donations from living individuals and companies. It does not apply to donations from public bodies, UK Charitable Trusts, or donations related to filming permissions.

All filming requests are vetted by Income Generation and property staff before getting to the donation stage.

Charitable Trusts in the UK are all registered charities and as such are regulated and monitored by [OSCR](#) in Scotland and/or the [Charity Commission](#) in England and Wales and/or the [Charity Commission for Northern Ireland](#) in Northern Ireland. Charitable Trusts will therefore not be screened unless there is any reason to believe they are under investigation by one of the above regulators.

Anti-Money Laundering (AML) checks will be carried out on all legacies as information is made available by Executors, but legacy donations will only be declined in specific circumstances, either:

- a) the restriction on use written into the Legator's Will makes it impossible for the funds to be realistically spent by the Trust as envisaged by the Legator and only as a last resort after discussion with the Executor
- b) there is a significant risk to the reputation of the Trust in accepting the donation.

Donation acceptance criteria

The newly revised Code of Fundraising Practice (section 2.2.1) states that charities “*must only refuse or return donations in exceptional circumstances*”.

The Trust will therefore accept all donations **unless** clear evidence demonstrates that they come from either:

- Individuals or companies whose objectives or activities are clearly inconsistent with the Trust's charitable objectives, mission, vision or purpose
- Individuals or companies with whom association would adversely damage the Trust's reputation and/or the Trust's ability to raise funds from other sources.
- Individuals or companies whose support contains conditions which in any way limit the Trust's ability to campaign
- Individuals or companies with whom association might in any way compromise the safety of Trust staff

Note the Trust **does not** have a presumption against accepting donations from companies in any specific sector.

Assessment of the above criteria is at the sole discretion of the Trust and will be based on robust and consistently applied due diligence procedures. The Trust will not reject donations purely based on a lack of available detailed information on a donor.

While gathering data to make informed decisions, the Trust will act in compliance with its [Privacy Policy](#).

The Code of Fundraising Practice (section 2.2.2) states that charities “*must carry out appropriate due diligence, **proportionate to the size and nature of the donation**, on the potential donor before accepting a donation*”.

Due to the Trust's volume of support, donations from individuals will only be screened against the above criteria if they are **£10,000 or over**, either individually or cumulatively over a 12-month period. Individuals are distinct from companies; the Trust may accept a donation from an individual who is employed by a company that the Trust would choose not to work with.

Due to the higher risk of reputational damage, donations from companies will be screened against the above criteria if they are **£1,600 or over**. This does not include companies match-funding employees' giving through payroll giving or online fundraising pages. In-kind support from companies will be carefully reviewed on a case-by-case basis

Anonymous donations

Other than small donations (below £10,000), the Trust cannot accept genuinely anonymous donations, because such donations do not allow checks to be carried out in line with this policy. For anonymous donations of £10,000 or over, insofar as General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) allows, the Trust will seek assurance that the donation is consistent with this policy. Public acknowledgement of individual donations will only take place with express written consent.

Relationship with other policies

This Ethical Donations Policy should be read alongside our organisational policies, procedures, guidance and other related documents, including:

- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Investment Policy](#)

The Trust is committed to reviewing our Ethical Donations Policy and internal guidance at least every two years.