

Over 5,500 people from 95 nations apply to be part of the Faroe Islands' 2020 Maintenance Crew

65% more voluntourists pledge their support for the 2020 Closed for Maintenance, Open for Voluntourism project compared with 2019

20 November 2019

Within 24 hours of registration opening for the 2020 initiative, 5,886 voluntourists signed up to be part of the Maintenance Crew in the Faroe Islands – over 2,000 more people than for the 2019 project.

Once again making headlines all over the world, people from **95 different countries** – ranging from Zimbabwe, Venezuela and Taiwan to Russia, Malaysia and all over Europe – put their hands up to take part in helping to preserve this remote nation in the North Atlantic.

With just 100 places available for the 2020 project, the latest round of registrations saw **510 applications from the UK**, with the USA seeing the most sign-ups, from 1,291 volunteers.

Applications came from volunteers as young as 18 through to 77 year olds, and from a diverse range of occupations – from accountants, architects and lawyers through to a horse-riding coach, diplomats and film directors – all with one common goal: to help maintain and preserve the Faroe Islands' beautiful landscapes and precious natural environment.

“We are yet again delighted by the incredible amount of people willing to give up their own precious time to come and help us,” **says Guðrið Højgaard, Director at Visit Faroe Islands.**

“We are so thankful to everyone who has signed up and pledged their support and, although we're unable to host everyone for 2020's *Closed for Maintenance, Open for Voluntourism* project, we plan to continue these initiatives on an annual basis over the years to come.”

In April 2019, the archipelago saw unprecedented success for its first-ever *closed for maintenance, open for voluntourism* campaign, which forms part of a wider move by the Faroes Islands' tourist board to pave the way for a sustainable future for its islands and its burgeoning tourism industry.

The Maintenance Crew worked alongside locals to preserve ten locations across the islands, maintaining and creating hiking pathways and viewing areas, and setting up signposting.

For 2020, some 14 popular tourist sites will be closed to the general public on 16 and 17 of April 2020, with projects identified by local municipalities, tourism centres and local villagers.

These include Slættaratindur, the highest mountain in the Faroe Islands, where the last stretch of the hike to the top is currently difficult to climb safely. An alternative route will be signposted and maintained by the voluntourists over the closure weekend. Other projects will include marking paths with wayfinding posts, mending paths that have eroded and re-building cairns.

The 100 volunteers will be chosen at random this week from the mass of applications, those who aren't lucky enough to obtain a place will be able to follow the progress on Visit Faroe Islands' website and social media accounts. Anyone interested in taking part in 2021's working days can sign up to be notified by e-mail about when registration will open. This can be done on Visit Faroe Islands' website, www.visitfaroeislands.com/closed.

Participants will receive free accommodation, food and transport on the islands over the three-night maintenance period (Wednesday 15, Thursday 16 and Friday 17 April). They will work alongside 40 Faroe Islanders who will also be given the opportunity to take part.