

Access to Historic Environment Scotland (HES) unstaffed archaeology sites across Scotland: Results of Survey carried out by Orkney Archaeology Society, survey carried out between 12 April 2021 and 25 April 2021. Survey carried out using Survey Monkey.

Number of responses received. 294. All %'s rounded to nearest whole number

Question	Answers	Responses	Comments
1. Do you live in Orkney?	Yes	146 (50%)	Go to next Q
	No	146 (50%)	Directed to Q5
2. Do you like to visit the unstaffed HES sites such as Click Mill Dounby, Cuween Chambered Cairn, Mid Howe Chambered Cairn, Holm of Papa Westray, Wideford Chambered Cairn and others?	Yes	151 (97%)	Go to next Q
	No	5 (3%)	Go to end
3. Would you like to be able to visit, and go inside, the unstaffed HES sites at the moment?	Yes	146 (95%)	Go to next Q
	No	7 (5%)	Go to end
4. If there were signs at these sites advising you what Coronavirus precautions you need to take, such as wearing face masks and maintaining physical distancing, would you feel confident to visit these sites?	Yes	142 (94%)	Go to end
	No	9 (6%)	Go to end
5. You have told us you do not live in Orkney. Are you planning to visit Orkney when non-essential travel is allowed?	Yes	133 (87%)	Go to next Q
	No	20 (13%)	Go to end
6. When you come to Orkney would you like to visit the unstaffed HES sites such as Click Mill Dounby, Cuween Chambered Cairn, Mid Howe Chambered Cairn, Holm of Papa Westray, Wideford Chambered Cairn and others?	Yes	132 (96%)	Go to next Q
	No	5 (4%)	Go to end
7. If there were signs at these sites advising you what Coronavirus precautions you need to take, such as wearing face masks and maintaining physical distancing, would you feel confident to visit these sites?	Yes	135 (97%)	Go to end
	No	4 (3%)	Go to end

Comments

Although there was no space given for comments on the survey there were a few comments received through Facebook, twitter and the OAS website. These are copied below.

- The risk to visitors to remote unstaffed sites is minimal and doesn't warrant closing them.
- There is a greater risk of getting stuck in a tunnel entrance because you've put on weight during lockdown than there is of catching the virus in these unstaffed sites.
- Visited last year and was very disappointed that many archaeological sites were closed. We could go into shops and cafes; I don't think going into a tomb is more risky than going into a shop.
- I've filled in the survey saying I would feel perfectly safe.
- It's like bolting the stable door after the horse has gone.
- Being seen to be doing something whilst actually doing nothing
- Didn't expect this one [Cuween] to be closed.
- It [Cuween] has been open all last year, now that things are opening up again it is shut. This should have been announced in the local paper first at the very least.
- "QR code". Another example of the arrogance of large organisations trying to force us to buy expensive high tech equipment when the older ones still work perfectly well – not very green.
- Visited last Summer between lockdowns and although we had the benefit of a quiet island, we sorely missed the opportunity to visit some of the Cairns. Maeshowe being closed was shame enough but climbing Wideford Hill only to discover it too was closed was a tiring heavy blow.
- Considering we were the only ones there being closed served little purpose and of course we would have waited and been cautious if there were other visitors inside. We should trust ourselves to follow any rules. I hope they are open this Summer.
- It would have been good if the HES website had actually told me Unstan tomb was closed, and I would have saved some fuel driving there a few weeks ago. Checking afterwards, I noted the others were mentioned as closed. Although, I notice the info on website has now changed.
- Maximum numbers (currently) of 6 discriminates against tour guides with the standard 9 seater vehicle for little or no benefit.

Hayley Green
OAS Secretary
25th April 2021.