

Press Release

14 July 2020

## The Natural History Museum to re-open Wednesday 5 August

- *South Kensington site to open Wednesday 5 August - Wednesdays to Sundays, 11am-6pm*
- *The Natural History Museum at Tring to open Wednesday 5 August - seven days a week*
- *Admission remains free. To ensure a safe experience it is essential for visitors to book a timed slot online at [nhm.ac.uk](http://nhm.ac.uk)*

Following an almost five-month long closure, the longest period since the second world war, the Natural History Museum is delighted to be able to offer a warm welcome to visitors, throwing open the doors to its world-famous building in South Kensington from Wednesday 5 August. The Museum will initially re-open on Wednesdays to Sundays only and from 11am to 6pm (last entry at 5pm).

New measures will be in place to ensure staff and visitors can have a safe and enjoyable experience. To help manage the number of people in the Museum at any one time, capacity will be significantly reduced. It will be essential to book a free timed ticket in advance online at [nhm.ac.uk](http://nhm.ac.uk) or by [phone](tel:02077558771). Museum Members and Patrons will have priority booking 48 hours before it opens to the public; they will also benefit from fast-track entry.

Director of the Natural History Museum Sir Michael Dixon says: *"We're delighted to be able to safely share our wonderful buildings, spacious galleries and gardens once again.*

*"The nation has reconnected with the natural world during lockdown and there is no better place to discover all it has to offer than our Museum. From visiting our world-leading dinosaur gallery to seeing our awe-inspiring blue whale Hope plunging from the ceiling in Hintze Hall, we look forward to offering a uniquely relaxed visit. Visitors will be able to explore our magnificent halls and galleries without the crowds – something only our staff usually experience outside opening hours."*

The vast majority of the Museum's galleries will be open alongside its five-acre gardens. Strolls, picnicking, exploring pondlife and wildlife watching are all encouraged. Food and drink will be available to purchase either as takeaways or to enjoy at socially distanced seating. Transactions will be contactless where possible, but cash will be accepted.

The Museum's perennially popular **Wildlife Photographer of the Year** exhibition is planned to open in October with brand new winning images to captivate audiences. The Museum's **Ice Rink** is set to also open in October with new measures in place to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for skaters.

The major new exhibition, **Fantastic Beasts: The Wonder of Nature**, the result of a creative partnership between the Museum, the BBC and Warner Bros. will continue to be created on-site

with the aim of welcoming guests to experience it this winter; more news on an opening date will be shared imminently.

Both the Museum's main entrance on Cromwell Road and its Exhibition Road entrances will be open.

### **Invitation to local community groups**

In recognition that many of our local audiences will have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 we will be reaching out and working with local community organisations who are supporting families and young people who live in the surrounding boroughs to extend a special and exclusive visit offer.

Executive Director of Engagement Clare Matterson says: *"We want to better serve our local communities that live in the boroughs surrounding our site and create advocates for the planet right here on our doorstep. We will be building on existing partnerships with London community organisations as well as establishing new relationships to encourage more first-time visitors and better respond to local needs as part of a long-term community development programme."*

### **Safety First**

The Museum has achieved Visit Britain's 'We're Good To Go' industry standard by demonstrating adherence to the respective Government and public health guidance and the implementation of new safety measures.

Limiting visitor numbers will allow visitors to keep a safe distance from people who are not in the same household. Our friendly and trained staff will be on hand to support visitors to have a great time and stay safe.

Hands-free hand sanitiser will be available at all entrances, cafes, shops, toilets, lifts and in our largest gallery spaces. Multiple toilet facilities across the site will be open with clear 2-metre queuing signage in place.

Acrylic protection panels will be in place in cafes, shops, visitor information and ticketing stations and our staff who are not based behind these will be issued with face coverings.

We are recommending that all our visitors wear a face covering during their visit and this will be made clear at the point of booking a timeslot. Additional reusable and washable face coverings will be available for purchase in the shops.

The vast majority of galleries will be open. Visitors will be able to plan their visit in advance with new online itineraries.

Lifts will be available for anyone with access needs and cloakroom facilities will be limited initially to large luggage items.

### **South Kensington Cultural Quarter**

Alongside this announcement, our Exhibition Road neighbours, the V&A and the Science Museum have also announced that their doors will reopen on 6 and 19 August, respectively. The three museums are staggering opening dates and times to reduce footfall on Exhibition Road and ease visitor flow at nearby underground stations.

South Kensington is London's home of arts and science – the original cultural quarter since its foundation 175 years ago - providing free access to astonishingly diverse collections held on behalf of the nation, all within a stone's throw of each other. At a time when ideas, beauty, curiosity and connection to nature have never been more important, the three South Kensington museums have all bases covered. Galleries, exhibitions and experiences span art, design, performance, fashion, science, technology, engineering, medicine and the wonders of the natural world. Visitors will be able to welcome culture back into their lives and enjoy fantastic days out in wide open, safe spaces they can reclaim as their own.

The museums are collaborating with their two local authorities, local businesses and more than a dozen other cultural institutions to improve provision for cyclists and pedestrians and take other steps to ensure South Kensington offers the same vibrant experiences supported by all the reassuring safety measures.

Both South Kensington and Gloucester Road Underground Stations will be operating but where possible it is recommended visitors minimise the use of public transport or combine the journey to the Museum with walking or cycling. The nearest Santander Cycle Hire docking stations are outside our Exhibition Road entrance and on Thurloe Place, near South Kensington Tube station.

### **The Natural History Museum at Tring**

The Museum at Tring will also re-open on Wednesday 5 August, seven days a week: Free admission tickets will need to be booked in advance [online](#). With numbers strictly capped to a very low capacity, visitors will be able to freely explore the Museum as they choose or follow the self-guided tours and activity trails. The majority of our permanent galleries will be open; the temporary exhibition space and the Rothschild Room will be closed initially as social distancing is harder to maintain in these areas.

The Museum at Tring will have all the same safety measures in place as South Kensington.

The main Museum entrance on Akeman Street and the Akeman Street car-park will be closed, pre-booked visitors with tickets will be directed to the quadrangle entrance, visitors travelling to Tring by car will be directed to the Dawes Park car-park.

### **The Digital Museum**

For those unable to visit the Museum buildings just yet, our digital offering allows visitors to browse millions of specimens from the collection, take a virtual tour, participate in citizen science and access learning resources online.

Highlights include: an interactive experience about Hope the blue whale; audio guides narrated by Sir David Attenborough; activity ideas to try at home or in local outdoor spaces and the popular [Nature Live Online](#) interactive discussions featuring topical content with our scientists and cutting-edge research.

## Notes for editors

**Natural History Media contact:** Tel: (0)779 969 0151 Email: [press@nhm.ac.uk](mailto:press@nhm.ac.uk)

### **About the Natural History Museum**

The Natural History Museum is both a world-leading science research centre and the most-visited natural history museum in Europe. With a vision of a future in which both people and the planet thrive, it is uniquely positioned to be a powerful champion for balancing humanity's needs with those of the natural world.

It is custodian of one of the world's most important scientific collections comprising over 80 million specimens. The scale of this collection enables researchers from all over the world to document how species have and continue to respond to environmental changes - which is vital in helping predict what might happen in the future and informing future policies and plans to help the planet.

The Museum's 300 scientists continue to represent one of the largest groups in the world studying and enabling research into every aspect of the natural world. Their science is contributing critical data to help the global fight to save the future of the planet from the major threats of climate change and biodiversity loss through to finding solutions such as the sustainable extraction of natural resources.

The Museum uses its enormous global reach and influence to meet its mission to create advocates for the planet - to inform, inspire and empower everyone to make a difference for nature. We welcome over five million visitors each year; our digital output reaches hundreds of thousands of people in over 200 countries each month and our touring exhibitions have been seen by around 30 million people in the last 10 years.