

National Trust amends controversial creationism exhibit

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The National Trust has amended an exhibit at its Giant's Causeway visitor centre which gave credence to the creationist perspective that the earth was created around 6000 years ago.

A statement from the National Trust said: "Having taken on board a wide range of feedback, and commissioned interpretive specialists to develop a suitable reflective piece, the National Trust has now amended the existing exhibit."

Graham Thompson, Project Director for the Giant's Causeway, said: "This change will help clear up any misunderstanding there may have been. The National Trust only endorses the scientific explanation of the origins of the stones yet recognises that others have alternative beliefs."

The reworded exhibit now states:

"All the scientific evidence points to a volcanic origin for the columns of the Giant's Causeway, around 60 million years ago.

"However, not everyone agrees with the scientific view. There are some people who believe – often for religious reasons – that the earth was formed more recently: thousands of years ago rather than billions.

"The National Trust supports the scientific view of the formation of the Giant's Causeway. We are proud to be the guardians of such a special place – one that has played an important role in our understanding of the world around us."

The National Secular Society [drew public attention](#) to the previous exhibit after being contacted by members in Northern Ireland and urged those concerned to make their views known to the Trust. The NSS also supported a Facebook campaign set up by an NSS member calling for the removal of the display.

Stephen Evans, Campaigns Manager at the NSS said: "We welcome the outcome of the National Trust's review. Whilst still referencing creationist views, the exhibit at least now makes clear that the scientific evidence, supported by the National Trust, completely contradicts the creationists' belief that the Earth was created around 6,000 years ago.

"It still remains to be explained however, how and why the National Trust allowed itself to get into the position of being used as a vehicle for creationist propaganda in the first place."

Prior to opening, the National Trust consulted with the evangelical Caleb Foundation, which recommended the inclusion of creationism at the part publicly funded £18.5 million Giant's Causeway visitor centre.

In a statement, the Caleb Foundation said it was "disappointed" with the revision of the wording but "very pleased" that the exhibit has not been removed. The statement said: "Although we do not

accept that all the scientific evidence points to a 60 million year time span, we note that the revised exhibit still retains an acknowledgement of the existence of an alternative viewpoint. The National Trust has therefore set a precedent for others to follow".

The Caleb Foundation has close links to the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) which is currently the largest party in the Northern Ireland Assembly.

[Read the statement from the National Trust about the completed review](#) (includes amended transcript)

[The previous transcript can be read here.](#)

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