

Coronavirus – commemorating the pandemic

The First Minister will lead a minute's silence at 12 noon today to mark the first anniversary of the beginning of the lockdown as a response to the pandemic.

The government has set up a fund to enable communities to remember the past year in their own way.

Artists will help local communities to create projects reflecting on the impact of the pandemic. This will be part of a longer term project to commemorate those who died during the year.

Greenspace Scotland commissioned artists will engage with community groups, faith groups and those hit hardest by the pandemic to shape ideas that benefit communities and reflect local people's experiences of the pandemic.

The Covid Community Memorial projects, which could include commemorative gardens, memorials or artworks, will be supported with £4.1 million provided by the Scottish Government and administered by Greenspace Scotland.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said: "None of us will ever forget this year, which has been like no other. We've all made sacrifices which have helped to save lives in the past 12 months, and many of us have lost loved ones – each one a person who can never be replaced and whose loss is greatly mourned.

“Vaccines now offer us hope that we can soon get back to a more normal way of life, and give us confidence that we can start to set dates for when it may begin to return. But as we move forward, and our daily lives begin to return to normal, we will – we must – remember those we have lost, and continue to offer our thoughts, solidarity and support to the bereaved.

“Today, after a year where we’ve been forced to live our lives apart in ways that for many will have been unimaginably difficult, we will come together to mark the first anniversary of lockdown, to pay our respects to those we have lost, and to reflect on everything we have been through as a nation. In the years to come, projects supported by this fund will provide spaces that people will visit, and cherish; where people will be able to gather in person to mark the pandemic and to remember those who have died – and to remember the many ways we supported one another as a nation through an extraordinary period.”

Julie Procter, Chief Executive of Greenspace Scotland, said: “The heart-breaking and difficult events of the past year have highlighted more than ever how important it is for us all to have access to greenspace. Somewhere for us to breathe fresh air, meet with friends and family, connect with nature and find solace during challenging times.

“The Covid Community Memorial project will connect with communities across Scotland to create special places where people can come to reflect on this time, remember those who have sadly lost their lives, find healing and hope for a brighter future.”