

More misinformation from LLTNPA about the camping bye-laws

Description

A copy of Voice, the excellent publication from the Friends of Loch Lomond and Trossachs (I am a member), arrived in the post this morning. Voice gives over a page of the publication to Gordon Watson, LLTNP Chief Executive, to provide an update from the Park Authority. It includes a section on the proposed camping byelaws which says nothing about what the Park is actually planning to do in the new camping management zones but states the byelaws will *“regulate camping, tackle anti-social behaviour and make it an offence to cause damage to the Park’s natural environment. They will also prevent inappropriate use of public laybys as encampments by caravans and campervans”*.

Two parts of Mr Watson’s statement are simply wrong and another is totally misleading. The only bit he has got right is that the proposed byelaws would regulate camping (or in other words remove the right to camp):

- The proposed byelaws contain NO provisions to tackle anti-social behaviour. The provisions of the draft byelaws approved by the Scottish Government make it an offence to put up a tent without permission from the Park, stay overnight in any shelter or to light a fire. There are no references to anti-social behaviour which is covered by the existing criminal law and a matter for the police. Mr Watson appears to believe that antisocial behaviour in the Park, whether by residents or visitors, only occurs when people are camping. This is nonsense.
- The proposed byelaws contain NO provisions to protect the Park’s natural environment. The only way to interpret Mr Watson’s claim about protection of the natural environment is if the lighting of fires or camping are seen in themselves as activities damaging the environment. The Scottish Parliament obviously did not think so when passing our access legislation as both camping and the lighting of fires are included in access rights (and like all other access rights are dependent on being exercised responsibly).
- The proposed byelaws are simply not necessary to prevent encampments in laybys as there are already legal powers available to tackle this in the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1994/33/section/61>. The question which the Park has never answered is why it has not worked with the police and landowners to use these existing powers. To suggest, as Mr Watson continues to do, that camping byelaws are somehow necessary to address this problem is totally misleading.

The whole of the Your Park consultation process was based on similar misinformation about what camping byelaws would achieve. The Park and the Scottish Government has been well aware of the glaring deficiencies in the case for camping byelaws for almost 18 months now, even since former Chief Inspector Kevin Findlater’s response to the Your Park consultation was made public. Yet the Park’s Chief Executive continues to repeat false claims apparently in the belief that you can fool all of the people all of the time. In the long run I predict the Park and its Board are going to look the bigger

fools.

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. Camping bye laws
2. LLTNPA
3. Scottish Government

Date Created

March 26, 2016

Author

nickkempe

default watermark