

## Election Manifestos and our National Parks (2)

### Description

The Scottish Labour Party issued its election manifesto on Wednesday, for some strange reason long after the other political parties. Judging by the 2.7k hits on its website there has not been that much interest but, unlike the SNP, it does make commitments in respect to National Parks:

*” Scottish Labour in government established the Cairngorms and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Parks to conserve and enhance the natural heritage of these areas of beauty. We will review the future of National Parks to protect them and consider options for establishing a new National Park.”*

While the language is a little vague, no other political party has made a commitment to a review which will include existing National Parks – politically this is a significant step forward. We need our politicians to recognise the failures of our existing National Parks and that they could and should do better. Unfortunately, the next statement about “establishing a new National Park” does not inspire confidence that Labour has much understanding of the issues. Why just one National Park? If Labour believes there should be just one more, why not tell the public where it will be?

There are some other good things in the manifesto, particularly the connection between our land and poverty: “We have land and sea in plenty, but too many in Scotland rely on food banks in order to eat, while farmers and fishermen find it hard to make a living”. Unfortunately though, the manifesto contains almost no ideas about alternative environmentally sustainable uses for the land which might address these issues. Our existing National Parks, which include many inhabited areas, could and should be tasked with developing alternative models for the rural economy which put conservation and enjoyment of the countryside first.

### Making the National Parks a political issue

Dave Morris, a contributor to Parkswatchscotland, is doing his best to raise political awareness of the failures of the current Scottish Government in relation to National Parks and the wider countryside as in his [Herald Letter](#), published 29th April (its the second letter down and not about the Labour Party!), and also available here [Herald Letters 29 April 2016](#)).

While not everyone will agree with Dave’s proposed political solution, there is much to commend his succinct analysis of the Scottish Government’s failures in respect of Land Reform and the natural environment, including National Parks. Ultimately, if we are to achieve change in our National Parks, we need these issues to feature far more highly in the internal agendas of all the political parties. Parkswatchscotland is not party political but wishes to raise public political awareness and debate about how our National Parks operate.

### Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs
2. National Parks

### **Tags**

1. Camping bye laws
2. land reform
3. political parties
4. Scottish Government
5. vision for National Parks

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