

Litter in the National Park – whose responsibility?

Description

I was out looking at the proposed Trossachs Camping Management Zone with Nick Halls on Monday. Nick is a compulsive litter picker and spotted an abandoned tent on the west shore of Loch Achray so we pulled into the Ben Venue carpark, operated by Forestry Commission Scotland and picked it up.

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Abandoned tent. The hole in the centre was caused by a cigarette burn and made the tent unusable

There are no litter bins in the FCS Ben Venue carpark, despite the £3 charge, and no sign of the Park rangers, despite the Park vehicle, so after failing to work out how to get the tent to pop down we bundled it up and put it in our van.

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Two rangers then returned and Nick decided it to ask them if they would take the tent. The reply from the female ranger (her male companion said nothing) was interesting. She said that this was an FCS carpark and it was therefore FCS responsibility, not the Park's, to take away rubbish. The ranger then said they were under instructions not to put rubbish in the vans before becoming a bit more apologetic and saying we could give the tent to her. When asked what she would do with it she said she would leave it in the carpark for the FCS who apparently clear up litter on a Monday. We kept the tent and found a large bin for it 2 miles down the road at the Woodland Trust carpark (yes, they have bins and these are well used!).

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Not far beyond, at the North Loch Venachar site owned by the Park, we found a neat stash of rubbish from the weekend. This was presumably collected by the two Rangers earlier on but, because they are not allowed to put it in their vehicles and because there are no bins, they have to leave it by the roadside.

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This got me thinking: if the Park won't allow rangers to put litter in its vehicles, how can it expect the public to take their litter home in their own vehicles? The answer is its probably going to try to do so by fines – its Rangers are being trained on their new powers to issue litter penalties. While fines can have a place I suspect it would be more effective in the long-term to allow its rangers to lead by example and also to install the facilities that are needed. The Park still has no litter strategy and this was only too apparent in what we witnessed.

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Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. Litter
2. LLTNPA

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Author

nickkempe