

National Parks week, adventure and the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority

Description

Yesterday was the start of National Parks week, an annual celebration of National Parks in the UK. The [theme](#) of National Parks week this year is adventure. The Cairngorm National Park Authority has responded to this with a positive press release [press release](#) about celebrating National Parks, announcing a number of events and encouraging people to share ideas for adventures. Quite a contrast to the LLTNPA whose press release <http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/looking-after/national-park-visitors-encouraged-to-respect-your-park/menu-id-483.html> makes no mention of adventure.

Instead the LLTNPA have used National Parks week to announce the implementation of their new powers to fine litterers (see <https://parkswatchscotland.co.uk/2016/06/11/way-forward-litter-loch-lomond-trossachs-national-park/>) and a number of other initiatives to ensure everyone visiting the National Park behaves responsibly under the banner of "Respect your Park". Now I am not against any of these initiatives but I think the fact that the LLTNPA has simply ignored the theme of adventure, which is about people have positive experiences in our National Parks, and instead focussed in this week of all weeks telling people what they should not be doing tells us something. If the Park started to promote adventure, this would conflict with its proposed ban on lochside camping, which is one of the most important ways people have adventures at present. Think of Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, backpacking, cycle touring, canoe touring, all activities which involve adventure. Better then simply to ignore the adventure theme to National Parks week.

The LLTNPA Press release contains another interesting statement relevant to the camping byelaws from Chief Superintendent Stevie McAllister, Divisional Commander for Forth Valley and Police Scotland Lead for the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park:

"For the best part of a decade, officers based within the Loch Lomond and Trossachs area have worked closely with the National Park to deter offences such as antisocial behaviour and identify those responsible.

"This has already proven extremely successful with crimes of this nature now significantly reduced, particularly within the East Loch Lomond and other lochshore areas and the vast majority of visitors behaving responsibly during their stay."

I am delighted that Police Scotland are now publicly acknowledging that anti-social behaviour crimes

are much reduced and most visitors behave responsibly in the National Park – why then did they support the proposed extension of camping byelaws? Readers may recall that in trying to justify the camping byelaws the LLTNPA continually asserted that it was camping byelaws that had led to an 81.5% reduction in ASB on east Loch Lomond, when in fact the statistic was for a wider area and represented a reduction from 27 to 5 crimes. Police statistics showed that there had been a 42.4 reduction in ASB in the rest of the central Scotland Police division of the National Park where no camping byelaws, alcohol bans or other special measures were in place. Well done the police but how can Stevie McAllister now continue to justify the removal of access rights from “the vast majority of visitors behaving responsibly during their stay”?

Each time the LLTNPA publishes anything on visitor management, they provide yet more evidence of the incoherence of the proposed camping ban. While I believe the timing of this education campaign is extremely unfortunate, with anti-social behaviour tackled, and with its new powers to tackle litter, what further justification has the Park and Ministers got for proceeding with the camping byelaws?

Category

1. Cairngorms
2. Loch Lomond and Trossachs
3. National Parks

Tags

1. Camping bye laws
2. CNPA
3. Litter
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5. Minister Environment

Date Created

July 26, 2016

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