

Why the LLTNPA is failing to reduce littering in the National Park

Description



Most members of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority appear to have spent Monday morning in yet another “Board Briefing session” before the public Board meeting, but had they walked round the riverside area in Balloch it might have helped them inject a sense of perspective into the discussion of camping byelaws in the afternoon. Both photos featured here are part of the site Scottish Enterprise has appointed Flamingo Land to develop and in the National Park.



I do not condone the chopping of trees by campers or day visitors – its stupid – but within the context of all the trees being chopped down in the Park for “management reasons”, whether here by the head of the River Leven (with the property used by Maid of the Loch) or to clear road verges the “problem” is tiny. Yet, once again in the afternoon staff cited campers chopping down trees (they have never said how many!) as a justification for removing access rights

The Board meeting and litter

To be fair to the Board for six months now they have recognised that the litter problem is much wider than campers and litter is less frequently cited these days as a reason for the camping byelaws (the justifications at the meeting in the afternoon were framed in terms of environmental damage such as chopping of trees, vegetation eroded by tents etc). The problem, evidenced at Monday's Board discussion, is the Board have not yet managed to get their staff to act effectively to ensure basic litter infrastructure is in place, such as install bins and ensure they are emptied and even perhaps installing notices to warn the public about fines for littering..

The first and strangest thing was that under the organisational update there was no mention of the Keep Scotland Beautiful Litter Audit which had recently been published a year late ([see here](#)) and no reference to this in discussion. It was impossible to tell therefore if the Board has simply not been told about the Audit, which casts serious doubt on the alleged miraculous impact of the east Loch Lomond byelaws, or whether they had decided to ignore inconvenient truths. What the organisational update did say is that Park staff had issued one Fixed Penalty Notice for litter since these were introduced in June and this had been paid. There was no comment on whether the threat of using Fixed Penalty Notices has had any impact on littering.

Colin Bayes, in his verbal update from the Delivery Group, which he chairs, told his fellow Board Members that the Park receives more complaints about the lack of lack of toilets and litter than anything else. I think this was deliberate – he now appreciates what the real issues are. His comment sparked a discussion by Board Members on litter. Cllr Fergus Wood asked officers what was the last time officers had sat down with colleagues in councils to discuss the issues – the question was spot on. He was told the lead on this Claire Travis was not in the room, there had been meetings and support from some councils and not others. Officers did not say which. They did not explain either why these discussions had been delegated to middle managers. It should be obvious to anyone that sending a relatively junior manager to go and talk to council opposite numbers about their failures to collect litter could not achieve anything. Instead, it was announced that senior management had arranged for Keep Scotland Beautiful (the authors of the audit report which was not discussed) to facilitate discussions between roads authorities, other Council departments and the Park on litter collection. This quite frankly was bizarre but perhaps the Park has so upset Council colleagues that they have refused to communicate directly with senior management?

Councillor Board members again made the excellent point that with bin lorries passing laybys for domestic collections it should not be hard for them to stop and empty bins if only they were provided. The Councillors, again offered to help broker discussions with their own local authorities. They had made this offer at the June Board Meeting and I guess none of them wanted to ask directly in public why senior management had not got back to them since then. Its a question that Gordon Watson, the Chief Executive, needs to answer. To date NO progress has been made on improving litter bin provision and collection and there was no mention of the long awaited litter strategy. It will be interesting to see whether this appears in the new Park Partnership Plan or whether Chief Executive Gordon has decided to ditch it, along with other plans such as the Five Lochs Management Plan which

would have addressed litter and the lack of toilet provision, and focus all his efforts and that of the Park on trying to manage camping.

The Board discussion showed that while Board Members are showing an increase grasp of what the real issues are, they have still not managed to get staff to put their efforts where these are needed. LLNPA has got its priorities all wrong and while that remains the case it will continue to fail as a National Park and waste huge amounts of resource (which I will cover in a second post on the Board Meeting).

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

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Author

nickkempe

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