Visitor management â?? where is the National Park when its needed?

Description

Residents to step up fight over parking fees plan

RESIDENTS of a village on the banks of Loch Lomond are to hold a public meeting to discuss controversial plans to charge residents for parking.

A row is continuing between residents of Luss, which attracts thousands of visitors every year, and Argyll and Bute Council over how to manage parking in the village.

The council has started a formal three-week consultation period over the plans to alleviate traffic issues.

Members of Luss and Arden Community Council will be holding a public meeting on Thursday in Luss Village Hall to outline the community's objections and express their wishes for an alternative solution.

Luss attracts more than 750,000 tourists each year and the community has already expressed objections to the parking charge scheme.

Footer Tagline

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Trouble has been brewing in Luss for quite a time. Local residents over the summer were swamped with visitors and one of the main issues has been cars circulating the narrow streets and parking outside residentâ??s houses.   Argyll and Bute, which is the Roads Authority, is now consulting on its proposals (see here) to manage the problem through introduction of a 20mph zone and spaces reserved for residents (for a fee).   The community council are objecting, saying that parking should be free for residents and visitors cars banned completely.   The Councilâ??s response is that unless the road is de-listed â?? which could mean the community taking on the cost of its upkeep â?? it cannot ban the public.   The interesting question in this potentially intractable debate is where is the Loch Lomond and National Park Authority doing?   Readers will note there is not a mention of it in the article.

You might find this doubly strange if you had listened to BBC Out of Doors 10 days ago http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b087tgv4 and heard Gordon Watson, Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Chief Executive imply that the primary role of the National Park was visitor management. Indeed, before Mr Watson came into post, the Park worked with Councils on traffic management and originally the east Loch Lomond byelaws were introduced as part of a package of measures which included the creation of a clearway north from Balmaha.

Since Mr Watson has come into post however the LLTNPA appears to have abandoned working with Councils not just on litter   (see here) but cars. When I have asked the LLTNPA about whatâ??s happening to proposals to create more clearways in the Park, the response has been this is a matter for Councils. Instead of trying to co-ordinate its approach with Argyll and Bute, the LLTNPA appears now just to be going off and doing its own thing.   So, its busy installing barriers and car park charging systems in its car parks without any consideration of the consequences for local residents.   Its not difficult to predict for example that the proposed photographic number plate charging system (see here) at the large public carpark in Tarbert will result in a significant proportion of visitors parking their cars in the village. This will cause no end of bother for local residents which Argyll and Bute Council will then be left to try and sort out.

Indeed, it appears that the LLTNPA is currently either not co-operating with or blocking some of the potential solutions to the traffic problems in Luss. Luss Estates offered land for a carpark on the edge of the village and this has gone nowhere. I think we should be told why.   I have no wish for the National Park to be turned into one large carpark, but any proper solutions, such as greatly improved public transport up the A82 also need Park involvement. If as Gordon Watson claimed on Out of Doors, a key role of the National Park is visitor management â?? which, he elaborated, should involve creation of facilities and infrastructure â?? why are they not playing this role at Luss?

Category

1. Uncategorized

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