

Update on the con at Loch Chon

Description

By Ross MacBeath



For the last year parkswatch has been covering the development of the con at Loch Chon, the campsite the Loch Lomond and Trossachs LTNPA has created in a place few people go, in order to meet its promise to the Scottish Government to provide new camping facilities in the National Park ([see here](#)), ([here](#)), ([here](#)) and ([here](#)) for example. So, what is the truth in the LLTNPAs claim that this unwanted campsite was up and running on 1st March?

Toilet flushing and the lack thereof.

Sunday 19th March 2017: there was still no water to the toilet blocks even after the recent assurances by the National Park in the press and at their 13th of March Board meeting.



[Click image to view video!](#)

The Park's claim that the campsite is fully operational is no more than a blatant attempt to hide the facts and misdirect ministers overseeing the terms for implementation of the Byelaws. The Park Authority claim a contingency is in place, which I believe means the Park Rangers may have to manually flush with a bucket of water before they leave at 5 pm. In any case all of the toilet cisterns were empty and two of the toilets had been fouled. Human excrement will collect overnight in the toilet bowls, a disgusting sight and health risk to bedraggled visitors to this site. The lack of hand washing within the toilet block forces visitors to use the drinking water taps providing cross contamination and a further risk to public health.

The National Park Authority claims there has only been an interruption in water for a few days is untrue. This is the 3rd consecutive week of on site checks that show no water at all on the 5th and 12th March, and then on the 19th March there was drinking water from the outside taps but still no toilets or wash hand basins. It is time the Authority took care of its responsibilities to public health and closed this site until these issues are remedied. The contrast between the Park's attitude at Milarrochy, where it is closing the slipway allegedly for health and safety reasons and this campsite is striking.

Camping Pitches

No additional works have been carried out on pitches apart from a trimming to pitch one where the grasses have been shortened and a central stake removed. This has made no material difference to its serviceability as a camping pitch and around 22 remain unsuitable.

Disabled camping pitches are a disgrace

The National Parks recent statement that disabled facilities within the park are to be a focus of future developments fail at the first hurdle. Printing a blue sign on the map does not make a camping pitch suitable for disabled use. There are two designated pitches and both fail to come up to basic standards. They have been selected for their proximity to parking and toilet facilities and are positioned on a level area of the site and in that respect they comply with requirements providing the rise of the path can be negotiated by wheelchairs.



[Click image to view video! ??? Disabled Pitch 8](#)

Disabled Pitch 8 is sited on a natural water course which tends to flood in wet weather. This leaves a portion of the pitch in standing water, and the remainder, though level and relatively even, is a former briar patch with brambles covering the site and with evidence of bracken having been cut back to the ground surface without removing the roots.

Further down towards the Loch is Disabled pitch 9. This is a drier area and ground cover is formed by tussock grasses giving an uneven pitch surface, though not the worst example, it is unsuitable for pitching a tent especially at Â£ 7.00 per night.



Pitch 9 - Disabled Pitch

Visitor lock outs and lock ins.

The gates to the Loch Chon campsite are being locked on a daily basis in what has become standard practice and denies access by visitors to campsites and many camping zones. The on site ranger at 4 PM we experienced on the 12th of March. The ranger locked if there were no



campsite bookings. I expect it also follows if there are no

campsite bookings, the Park Authority will fail to honour its commitment to the Strathard Community to provide staff at the site 7 days a week well into the evening. Leaving day visitors and others to their own devices.

This is all very confusing, and makes a mockery of the Park's own terms and conditions for using campsites and permits, which clearly state that access to the campsites and camping zones will be available until 6 pm. How they ever expect someone to leave work at 5pm on a Friday and arrive before their Rangers lock up at 6pm will remain a mystery to all but the fools who write their terms and conditions. The whole policy is in disarray, sites close at different times, Forest Drive gates close at 4 PM, campsites at 4 pm, 5pm or 6 pm. No one appears to be managing this but what is clear, it will be visitors who are out of pocket making wasted journeys and not getting access.

It is clear the National Park Authority are opening and closing campsites and camping zones to suit staffing availability and not the needs of the visiting public. .

[See Full Terms and Conditions here.](#)

Terms and Conditions - unable to comply

Due to the fact the Park Authority has not provided the necessary facilities on site it is impossible at present for visitors to comply with their terms and conditions. The Park insist, on penalty of a £200 fine, that litter, refuse and dog poo is deposited in the bins provided. The bin area is still housing a Diesel Generator - quite why when they destroyed the ecology of the hillside opposite running a mains cable up to a transformer on the grid system is not clear - but there has not been a bin in sight on my visits.

Having failed to provide the services advertised, toilets and proper camping pitches, the Park's terms and conditions state the Park has no liability whatsoever for the state of the site and will only offer a refund if you can prove their negligence or responsibility for your loss. If you are considering pitching a tent on the pitches at Loch Chon, you have a high possibility of puncturing the ground sheet because of the state of the ground vegetation in the pitches provided, and it appears that the Park is trying to avoid having to pay compensation while at the same time threatening to fine people £500 if they camp off pitch.

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. camping
2. Camping byelaws
3. LLTNPA

Date Created

March 23, 2017

Author

ross-macbeath