

Large scale environmental dereliction in the National Park

Description

By Nick Halls

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Northern Gate, preventing access to old road and former Torpedo range site. The gate was recently development of the site. That planning permission has however lapsed. All photos Nick Halls.

Following the post about the planning blight at the site of the former torpedo factory and range on Loch Long ([see here](#)), I went to take a look for myself. I wanted to take a look at the impact of the gates that have blocked off the old road and check if any of the flytipping had been removed as required by the Amenity Notice. This was served last August and gave the owners four weeks to clear the rubbish from the site. Since then, the minutes of the Arrochar, Tarbert and Ardlui Community Council Area Forum held in March ([see here](#)) have not just confirmed that Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority is giving the owners four to five more months to remove the flytipping (on top of the six months since the Amenity Notice deadline expired) but also that there is asbestos on site.

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View south down the old main road towards derelict Torpedo factory.

It is possible to by-pass the gate on foot which, in respect of the danger from asbestos renders the gates ineffective, and, although the gate prevents fly tipping from vehicles, it does not prevent people disposing of bags of garbage which are being thrown down towards the shore line.

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Garbage thrown down from within the northern gate from shore side of old road

Stuart Mearns, the Park's Head of Planning, spoke too soon when he stated (as recorded in the Forum minutes) that at least there would be no more fly tipping on the site.

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The southern entry to the site and the old A83 has also been blocked off with similar style gates
Dumping from vehicles is still possible also at the southern gate and is still happening.

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Building materials and general garbage tipped down bank by vehicles on the main road side of the s

The next photos are of tipping and garbage disposal within the gated area, on the area that was the former torpedo factory, on a road that leads from the old main road into the decayed industrial ruins.

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View south

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View south east

There are a series of dumping spots on the western side of this road (see below) mostly containing what appears to be builders/commercial rubbish.

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View west

Two of the fly tipping sites contain what appears to be corrugated asbestos. Both of these sites are east of the old road on what was the site of the torpedo factory.

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View north west

Note: the old main road runs behind trees in the background, so the asbestos risk is well away from the former public highway.

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View north west, site immediately beside the one shown above

If this is the asbestos and it influenced the decision to close the old main road, it would have cost less to remove than to install the gates! It is also situated on the grounds immediately beside the industrial ruins of the former torpedo factory – not particularly close to the old main road.

The industrial area of the former torpedo factory is a potentially heavily polluted –brown field– site, which should have been cleared by the M.O.D., as they constitute the polluter/previous owner. On the basis that the –polluter should pay– it seems likely that the responsibility still lies with the M.O.D. even if the site has been sold to a possible developer.

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View south along the old main road

There is much less evidence of fly tipping along the southern section of the old main road, beyond the access loop leading through the ruins of the former torpedo factory.

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Fly tipping and garbage along the northern part of the old main road

The quantities are not large and appeared to be fairly straightforward to remove. Again, clearing the roadside might have involved less effort than placing the gates with an unnecessary restriction of access.

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Parts of a broken-up fiber-glass boat, in three parts thrown off bridge into stream passing through site. The stream above the ruined factory site looks as if it is quite natural, and constitutes quite a scenic view, were it not for the dumping.

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Remains of demolished building, which might have been residential or administrative. Note also the remains from what appears to be some sort of forestry operation involving stripping bark and branches, which presumably took place elsewhere, and then disposed of along the roadside.

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Much of the fly tipping along the sides of the old road is fairly easy to remove, or does not pose a particular health risk.

The forestry operation debris, although unsightly will eventually break down and become over grown but it still constitutes fly tipping always assuming it was carried out with the owners consent.

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Most of the unsightly material seems to be the remains of demolished buildings, which have not previously given rise to concerns, whether on health and safety or amenity grounds, and have been in this state for decades. The blight at the former torpedo testing site is far greater than the flytipping and while the LLTNPA needs to address the flytipping, a much bigger challenge is to clear the site up and make it fit for public enjoyment again. Its a prime site in the heart of our National Park, a disgrace, a challenge and an opportunity.

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. landscape
2. Litter
3. LLTNPA
4. natural environment
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