

Torpedo station update and the challenges of improving amenity at Loch Long

Description

Thanks to Nick Halls for these photos and for information which has informed the commentary.



Southern entrance to torpedo station site 15th May

Photo Credit Nick Halls

The area around the former southern entrance to the torpedo station remains in a very poor condition with concrete barriers now replacing the plastic barriers across the broken entrance gates.

The gates, which were installed to prevent vehicular access to the former torpedo station following an amenity notice issued by the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority ([see here](#)) and were then broken open ([see here](#)), appear to have had very little impact.



Close up of left side of gate, there is litter everywhere and this is the side of the public road. Photo Credit Nick Halls



Photo Credit Nick Halls

Inside the gate is even worse. There has been a fire, whether this was an attempt to burn off rubbish or burn down the gate is unclear.



Photo Credit Nick Halls

And there is yet more fly tipping down the bank.

Clydebank Developments, who as far as I am aware are still owners of the torpedo site, have now had 9 months to clear up the site since the LLTNPA issued the amenity notice last year. The problem is that no-one is monitoring the site, the developer appears to have no presence, there are now far fewer police based in rural areas and the LLTNPA has devoted all its energy to chasing innocent campers rather than fly tippers who cause far greater problems. There is clearly no proper enforcement taking place. The local community and National Park deserve better.

It was good to see the head of Loch Long, which suffers from a massive litter problem â?? the worst in the National park â?? in pristine condition 10 days earlier. What a contrast to the torpedo site just down the road. Local community pressure to address the marine litter problems has clearly had a positive effect. They have been involved in clearing the litter themselves and received grant funding, which has recently finished, to pay for the litter to be removed. The problem is there are no adequate long term budgets to address the issue and, as the March meeting of the Arrochar and Tarbert Community Council noted, while Argyll and Bute allocation of Â£200k to clear up litter from beaches is very welcome, the Councilâ??s coastline is as long as France!



Photo taken 5/5/17

Nick Kempe

Another small step forward is that the LLTNPA has recognised there is a marine litter problem in its new draft Partnership Plan – the word ‘marine’ failed to appear in the last plan at all! This is what the new draft plan has to say about it:

The volume of marine litter affecting communities on Loch Long is a long-standing issue which requires innovative thinking to resolve. (P28).

‘Innovative thinking’ is another example of parkspeak, whose real meaning is that the LLTNPA is not proposing to spend any resources on the marine litter problem which blights the National Park over the five years of the new Partnership Plan.

While it would be great to be able to address the causes marine litter in the Clyde, which would require much greater enforcement action than happens at present (yes, that word enforcement again), when litter is washed up at the head of Loch Long it needs someone to pick it up, just like it needs someone to pick up the litter at the torpedo site or at Luss ([see here](#)) or Balmaha on busy weekends. The problem is the LLTNPA is so obsessed with the litter left by a few irresponsible campers, it cannot see the litter problem as a whole despite all the evidence on the ground.

What needs to happen

- The LLTNPA needs to develop a proper litter strategy, as it promised to do several years ago and has never delivered – there is no mention of this commitment in the new Partnership Plan. Without a co-ordinated plan, its target, to see a reduction of litter in the National Park over the next five years, is meaningless and will never be met.
- The LLTNPA also needs to start telling the truth. In the new Partnership Plan the LLTNPA claims *“Much public investment has already been targeted in raising the quality of visitor facilities in the busiest areas improving car parks, toilets, information points, litter facilities, viewpoints and campsites”*. Yes, its spent money on carparks, viewpoints and campsites – whether this has been well spent is a separate issue – but litter facilities and toilets? So what is the gap between what is needed and what is provided? The Partnership Plan is completely silent. The LLTNPA continues to avoid the real issues facing the National Park.

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. Litter
2. LLTNPA
3. Local communities
4. planning

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