

## Flamingo Land and protection of the River Leven and Loch Lomond

### Description



Pontoons on the River Leven

[Editor's note: my apologies to James and readers, I had intended to appear publish James's objection to the Flamingo Land proposal at the end of June. It makes a forceful case for nature]

My objection to the Flamingo Land planning application was as follows.

**To the east, the Site Boundary is on the River Leven**

Following 20 years of National Park/Interim Committee incompetence and neglect the River Leven remains a site of industrial dereliction between The Loch and the River Leven Barrage the National Park Boundary. Indeed, the extent of industrial dereliction has been greatly increased due to NP planning permissions for large metal pontoon moorings anchored into the river bed. The river has been converted into a boatyard for hundreds of boats. No natural habitat restoration, improvement or conservation is possible under these conditions.

Due to 20 years of National Park/Interim Committee incompetence and neglect the R. Leven is also used as an open sewer within the NP. Downstream the local communities have often complained, to no avail, about the pollution from Balloch, such as oil spills, human excrement, fly tipped rubbish and junk.

During periods when the Barrage is closed and water flows are reduced, huge volumes of pollutants accumulate upstream of the Barrage. When the Barrage is opened and water flows increase these mountains of pollution are swept down the R. Leven and from there into the River. Clyde and eventually come to rest on the shores at Bowling, Dumbarton, Cardross and Helensburgh where it is removed by litter pickers time and time again.

On one occasion it took 3 days for the R. Leven to clear. On average, it takes between 1 and 2 days to clear. Every year thousands of tons of oil, human excrement and fly tipped rubbish and junk are disposed of in this way.

Of course, for the business studies students, this has its economic advantages the R. Leven open sewer/refuse disposal facility operates free of charge and that allows our creative polluters to minimise their costs and maximise their profits. What could possibly go wrong?

The main natural heritage interest on the River Leven is the Atlantic Salmon. This is a key indicator species if the salmon are doing well that is good news for all of the other aquatic flora and fauna and their habitats. The R. Leven provides spawning habitat and it is the only migration route for returning adults and juveniles travelling back and forth between freshwater and the sea. The conservation of Atlantic Salmon is covered by the Endrick Water SAC Management Plan which includes the R. Leven.

Following 20 years of National Park/Interim Committee incompetence and neglect nothing has come of this plan in terms of Atlantic Salmon habitat restoration, improvement and conservation on the R. Leven. Indeed, over the last 20 years they have presided over the inexorable decline in Atlantic Salmon populations and we are now in the midst of a probable extinction event.

The Flamingo Land development can only represent a huge increase in the risks and threats to Atlantic Salmon and Atlantic Salmon habitat in this context. Combined with the National Park/Interim Committee's 20 year record of incompetence, neglect and failure the survival of Atlantic Salmon here is seriously endangered.

**To the west, we have a large car park, a shopping centre and an indoors plastic tank, non-native species, clown fish aquarium.**



The Dumkin tower, now an aquarium, and Lomond Shores shopping centre. Flamingo Land wanted the trees left of the tower with a leisure complex and put holiday lodges and an aerial walkway in the right

Natural habitat destruction and losses are total â?? except for the almost extinct powan and their spawning grounds in Drumkinnon Bay. In response to the business studies students and the â??economic benefitsâ?• which are said to accrue to local communities, in support of these developments, itâ??s worth adding that Blackstone Private Equity still holds a controlling interest in Merlin Entertainments/the aquariumâ?! last time I checked. These â??Locusts on The Lochâ?• form the largest debt fuelled real estate company in the world. They do not live here. It is important to notice where profit is created and where it is realised. In this case, it is created here and it is realised by others outside of this area and elsewhere. They take the lions share, we receive the birdseed. Lessons need to be learned about big business and transnational global corporations. They have zero loyalty to the local communities and the labour they exploit.

The Flamingo Land proposal, as such, represents a very large example of industrial factory production for the mass market. Nothing could be more alien or further removed from the FIRST AIM of the National Park *“to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area”*.

I gather there is a problem with the capacity of the sewers. To “solve this problem” before, Scottish Water installed numerous combined sewer outflows on the R. Leven. When the system reaches its capacity raw untreated sewage escapes and flows directly into the R. Leven. You get the picture many waste oil, human excrement, fly tipped rubbish and junk just chuck it into the R. Leven. That always gets a “thumbs up” from the NP.

2019 is THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE SALMON. Following 20 years of National Park/Interim Committee dereliction, incompetence, neglect and failure it is a 100% guaranteed certainty the NP will not be receiving any prizes for best practice in that event. They have been the salmon’s worst nightmare.

Now you can ignore what I just said, change the subject and talk about me. That’s something else you have been doing the last 20 years. You don’t want to lose your record.

### **Category**

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

### **Tags**

1. conservation
2. flamingo land
3. LLTNPA
4. natural environment
5. planning

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