

The onslaught against boating on Loch Lomond needs to stop

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Dear Boat User

Please find enclosed your annual Boat Re-Registration form(s).

You may be aware, as of 1st April 2019 the launch fees at Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway will be changing.

The new fees will be:

Multiple Launch Pass	£80
Single Launch Pass	£20
Commercial Vessel Multiple Launch Pass	£250

These fees generate income to help provide facilities and services across the National Park including at Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway.

However, the launch fees have not changed since they were first introduced eight years ago.

Increasing the charges will generate vital income to help us to continue to provide high quality public facilities and services, as well as ensuring that the National Park Authority is not significantly undercutting other privately run similar services on the loch.

* PRIVATISATION

As part of these changes, we are making Multiple Launch Passes valid for 12 months from the date of purchase, so that you will be entitled to unlimited launches for a full year no matter when you buy your pass. Your pass will be valid from the date of payment so you may want to factor this in when deciding when to buy.

The shower facilities at Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway will also be free to use from the 1st of April 2019.

Whilst we recognise that increasing charges for services is never popular, we feel that these new charges strike a fair balance between generating income to provide, maintain and enhance services and offering good value for our customers.

Use of the slipway for non-powered vessels remains free, provided they are not launched using a vehicle.

Please note that for security reasons we will also no longer be able to accept cash payments at the slipway from 1st April 2019. You can pay for your pass in person, over the phone or online using a credit/debit card. Full details of how to pay are included on the re-registration form.

For more information go to www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/slipway

Kind regards

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Boat Team

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority

Registration Office, Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway, Pier Road, Balloch G83 8QX.

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Letter provided to parkwatch by boat user

To mark Save Loch Lomond Day, which is being run by Save Loch Lomond to celebrate the number of objections to the Flamingo Land Planning Application reaching 35,000, I thought I would take a look at how boating on the loch is being commercialised.

In January, the Loch Lomond and Trossachs Park Authority, which was jointly responsible with Scottish Enterprise for appointing Flamingo Land as preferred bidder for the Riverside Site at Balloch, hiked its charges for boat launching from £50 to £80 for multiple launches. For single launches the fee doubled from £10 to £20. The justification given for this was that the Park's wish to generate revenue, which stems back to the commercialisation strategy it agreed back in 2013 ([see here](#)), and the LLTNPA's wish to undercut private operators. There is no mention of public service or the Park's statutory duty to promote public enjoyment of the countryside.

The decision has not been taken by the LLTNPA Board but has been left to staff, like the decision to close the Milarrochy Bay slipway back in 2017 ([see here](#)) and many others. There has been no consideration of the strategic consequences by the LLTNPA Board. In a nutshell these are that there is now only one public boat launching point for the whole of Loch Lomond Loch Lomond which, with a surface area of 71 km² (27.5 sq miles) is the largest inland stretch of water in Great Britain and, boaters are not just being channelled to one point on the loch, they are being forced to pay £20 for the privilege.

Boating on Loch Lomond has had an interesting history and once provided the working class communities in the Vale of Leven important opportunities for leisure, with people taking boats up the Loch Lomond islands for weekends. Use of the loch, however, has been in steady decline since the creation of the National Park and the regulation of boating:

Boat registrations on loch lomond continue to plunge

2015 FIGURES HIT A 10-YEAR LOW SINCE 2005 - WITH A LOSS OF 1,620 VESSELS

BOAT TYPE	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Fishing	754	802	776	778	798	718	789	713	630	583	604	592
PWC	686	769	780	782	796	715	772	821	681	575	590	634
Motor Boat	248	240	248	248	219	200	247	224	215	197	228	212
Motor Cruiser	875	923	911	872	874	784	884	761	809	707	744	769
Speed Boat	1,806	1,862	1,900	1,908	1,907	1,579	1,693	1,504	1,266	1,111	1,109	1,077
Tender	391	427	449	489	525	522	560	493	437	384	427	384
Trade Plates	20	25	24	21	28	2	0	9	18	20	11	11
Yacht	283	279	297	287	276	271	292	243	234	191	205	188
Other	340	322	329	306	262	328	442	385	370	369	419	370
TOTALS	5,403	5,649	5,714	5,691	5,685	5,119	5,679	5,153	4,660	4,137	4,337	4,237

Extract from Loch Lomond Association newsletter 2015

That regulation was intended to control irresponsible behaviour and protect wildlife, not shut down access to the loch.

How the LLTNPA has been managing boating needs also to be seen in the wider context. This is well demonstrated by what has been going on at the Riverside Site in Balloch.



Historically there was a ford by the bridge at Balloch and it provided a place where formerly people were able to launch boats into the River Leven, not far from where it flows out of Loch Lomond. It is now effectively closed off and inaccessible. This story has been repeated many times around the shores of Loch Lomond so that now, except for canoeists, people who boat are effectively at the mercy of the commercial operators, including the National Park Authority.

The proposed sale of the rest of the Riverside Site poses further threats to boating, more specifically to the boat clubs that are located along the shore there:



I understand there are all sorts of complex negotiations going on between the boat clubs and Flamingo Land about securing their future should the site be privatised. All this would be completely unnecessary if the land was to be retained in public ownership AND managed in a way that treated access to the loch as a legal right rather than an opportunity to make money.

It's well past time that the LLTNPA Board took a critical look at what is going on under its aegis and how people are being gradually, bit by bit, excluded both from the loch shores and the loch itself unless they are willing to pay. Access to the loch should be a right, not a privilege dependent on one's financial means, and the LLTNPA should be developing measures which reverse the processes that have been taking place over the last few years.

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. access rights
2. flamingo land
3. LLTNPA

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