

Covid-19 - Opening the whole road network is essential now

Description

The Scottish Government's route map out of lockdown ([see here](#)) needs the whole mainland road network open as soon as possible. At present this is unlikely to happen until 15 July when the majority of tourism facilities are expected to re-open. Progress in disease control suggests that a more staged approach is now justified to reduce the current severity of restrictions and to end confusion over access to the countryside. With different policies being applied by different local authorities, it is unclear how much of the the road network and associated facilities such as car parks and toilets are open. So we have Fife and Perth and Kinross Councils apparently trying to keep all car parks open, but with toilets closed but, over the border, Stirling Council seems to be trying to keep all car parks closed as well as some roads. Elsewhere temporary clearway orders are being used with no thought given to how this will simply move people on to other locations with even less facilities.

The result is far too many people who are trying to get into the outdoors are being concentrated into a limited number of well known honey pots. A more dispersed pattern of use is essential and that requires the current 5 mile limit on travel to be removed as soon as possible, with full access to at least the mainland road network. And, where necessary, some of those local authority staff currently enjoying a furloughed holiday, need to be brought back into work to organise ranger services, litter collection and the provision of portaloos in busy car parks.

Opening the road network now, along with the key messages of keeping 2 metres apart and washing hands or using hand sanitisers, should also be combined with opening up all camp sites and caravan parks. Why should these have to wait until the pubs and restaurants are open on 15 July? The risk of virus spread from using a camp site or caravan park, plus self catering, must now be minimal when compared to the indoor use of pub or restaurant for food and drink.

And let's remember that Scottish school holidays were supposed to start in late June. Are parents really supposed to be telling their younger family members that their annual camping trip or caravan holiday is now cancelled because the Scottish Government cannot work out the difference between a camp site and a pub? At the moment the message is clear: do not think for one moment that is worth booking a holiday in the outdoors in Scotland this year - go to England instead.

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. outdoor recreation
2. Scottish Government
3. Tourism

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