

Why have parts of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park become a disgusting rubbish dump?

Description



Yesterday Save Loch Lomond sent parkswatch a number of photos of rubbish from the layby off the A82 on the West side of Loch Lomond opposite the Carrick. They also posted a video ([see here](#)) on their Facebook page. The comments on that page were right, this is disgusting. But this provides more evidence that condemning the people who do this ([see here](#)) will do nothing to address the problems.

Most of the rubbish is flytipping, what government likes to call “dumb dumping”, but included in this are various items of domestic waste. The question that needs to be addressed is why the person who did this decided to drive out to this layby rather than take the rubbish to the Council dump? One possibility is that it was a shorter drive. Council waste disposal and recycling points need to be accessible. But

the most likely explanation, now most dumps have re-opened again, after Covid-19 is the charges Councils make for disposal of commercial waste.

While some businesses can afford to pay waste disposal charges , increasingly many can't. We have created a vicious circle based on the neo-liberal idea that if you put a cost on waste, somehow that will prevent waste being produced. This has resulted in Councils being charged by government for landfill and Councils then trying to pass these costs on to businesses. It hasn't worked. Instead it has increased the amount of flytipping both in our cities – we have to deal with in the back lanes where I stay in Glasgow – and the countryside.



The rubbish dumped and dropped in this layby illustrates two ends of the waste problem. The first is the “domestic” rubbish the plastic bottles, cans and coffee cups. Much of this probably preceded the flytipping and could have been prevented if Argyll and Bute, the responsible Council, provided recycling bins in its laybys and if government was prepared to introduce measures that tackled the production of disposable items at source. The other is the toilet bowls. Whether these were taken out

because they had broken or because someone decided to upgrade their bathroom, we need to find ways to recycle items such as this. The market solution, the idea that by charging for landfill we would kick-start new recycling businesses, simply hasn't worked.

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I was struck by the bin because Argyll and Bute Council don't provide any in the laybys along the trunk roads in their area. This is a cause of many of the problems in the Loch Lomond and National Park. Has someone decided to make up for the Council's failures and put a bin here? That seems unlikely, as how would it be emptied? The more likely explanation is that someone has got frustrated by the failure of their local council to empty their bin – a huge problem now where I stay in Glasgow – so has decided that as its no longer much use they might as well dump it too.

There is a limited amount the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority can do about this directly. What is clear though that their message, bin your litter or take it home, can never work when there is a race to the bottom in Scotland in the litter disposal and collection services offered by other public authorities. What the LLTNPA could do is document the issues and then call publicly for solutions based on the evidence, as I have been trying to do on parkswatch and organisations like the Friends of Loch Lomond and Trossachs have been calling for for many years. Those solutions involve litter bins as well as facilities for the disposal of other waste for all those living in the countryside.

The LLTNPA, however, also need to put their own house in order. Following my post on litter last week, I was informed that the LLTNPA has removed the bins from the car park at Balmaha. The predictable consequence has been a spate of rubbish. While the LLTNPA are blaming people for not taking this home, it has been left to local people to pick it up. The LLTNPA need to stop making cuts to their own services and adding to the problems.

Category

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Tags

1. Litter
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