

Litter and bins – lessons from the Cairngorms

Description

I have been staying in Braemar for the week and so far have seen almost no litter (and no fly tipping) in the Cairngorms National Park, quite a contrast to the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park in the summer ([see here](#)). Even accepting that it is now quieter than August, the differences are quite stark as I will illustrate in this post.

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Car park at the bottom of the final long straight section of the A93 that leads up to the Glen Shee ski

On Sunday, I descended into Glen Shee from Creag Leacach to the car park which now forms part of the Scottish Scenic Routes Initiative (complete with camera stand and a long wooden seat – well designed for physical distancing). Now more used by tourists than hillwalkers, the car park, which is in the Perth and Kinross Council area, was spotless. Maybe the Council has been there earlier in the day with a squad of litter pickers but there was a large bin and I don't think that was a coincidence.

Now consider that the Glen Shee ski centre is in Aberdeenshire so, assuming Perth and Kinross empty

this bin, it is at the end of the road for them. If they can do it, so could Stirling Council provide litter bins at the Falls of Falloch where the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority reported they had picked up vast quantities of rubbish earlier this summer.



The rubbish I collected along the A93 – the Starbucks disposable cup is stuffed with wrappers.

I then walked the 2.5km back up to the ski centre, mostly on the verges of the A93 but following the old road where I could. It was a couple of hundred metres before I saw any rubbish but I then collected what I saw. It was not much. I reflected that if I had tried to walk 2.5km along the verges of the A82 by

Loch Lomond I would have more likely have needed five bins bags.

After photographing my collection, I was pleased to dispose of it in the bins at the ski centre. While the enormous car park was mostly litter free, strangely in the place of one of the cars parked close to us was a bag of doggy poo. While I can understand why people wouldn't want to carry this in their car – I had no intention of putting it in mine – we need to understand why people who do the right thing and bag their doggy poo then leave it for others to pick up.

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Entrance to Creag Choinnich woods from Braemar

I have not seen any litter in the four days since but I did fund this doggy poo bin which was overflowing. Most days I have been aware of the number of dog walkers, but I hadn't realised it was this many. Again, people are doing the right thing, bagging their dog's poo and carrying it for a while. But doggy poo is not the sort of thing most people want to be seen carrying though the village, let

alone into the foyer of the Fife Arms Hotel. The bin is extremely well located and when I passed it again two days later it had been emptied.



On Wednesday, while taking a look at the Doune of Invernochty, two Aberdeenshire Council bin lorries stopped in the visitor car park, the first to empty the glass recycling bins (used by the whole community), the second to empty the general rubbish. It's so basic, the same vehicle that empties bins from domestic properties also empties bins in laybys. So why can't Argyll and Bute Council, the worst offender, and Stirling Council adopt this practice in the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park and provide litter bins in all laybys?

The problem is less money than attitudes to the visiting public. The Cairngorms National Park Authority has never had to deal with a serious litter problem because all its constituent councils know it is better to pre-empt litter through the provision of appropriate infrastructure. The LLTNPA by contrast faces an ongoing massive litter challenge because it is not prepared to take on Councils who fail to provide appropriate litter infrastructure. Instead, it keeps repeating the message "take your litter home", a message that has been remarkably unsuccessful for twenty years now and then blames the public for doing the wrong thing. It should learn from how litter is managed in the Cairngorms.

Category

- 1. Cairngorms
- 2. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

- 1. CNPA
- 2. Litter
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