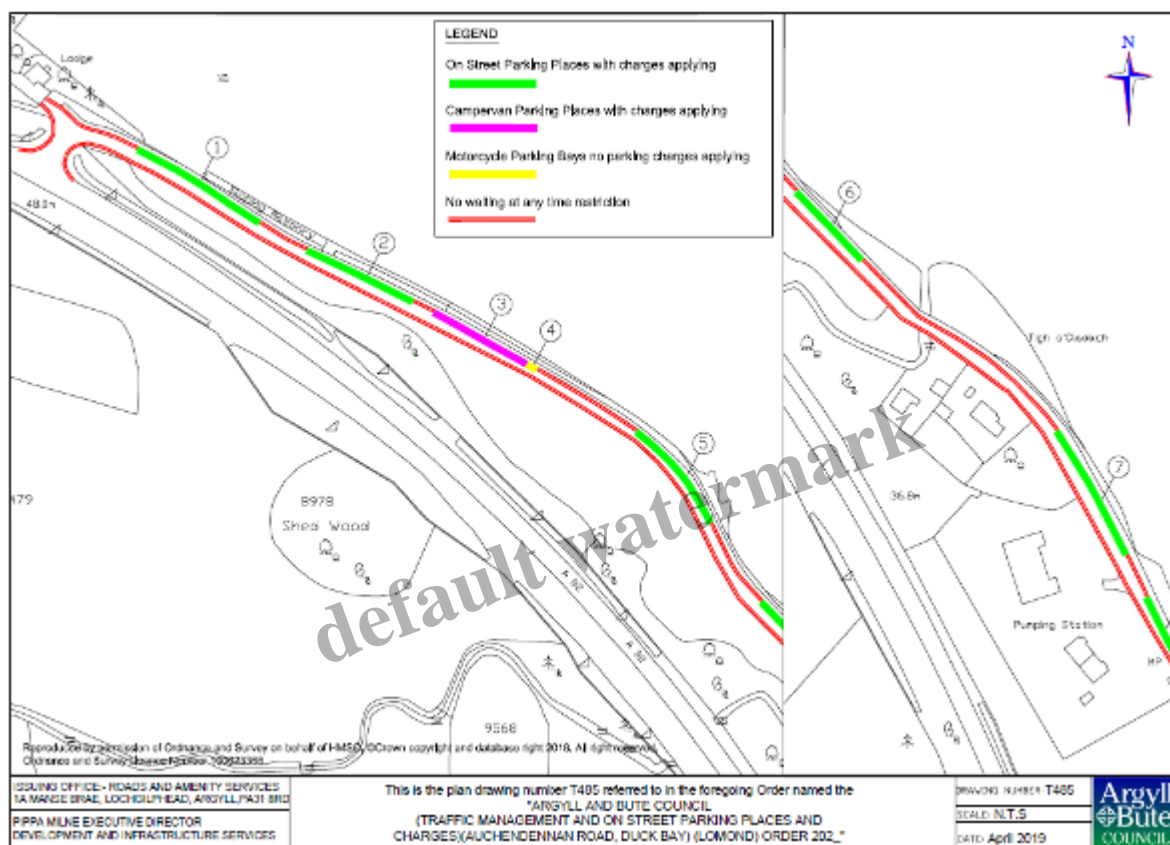


£10.80 to spend the day at Duck Bay – Argyll and Bute Council’s visitor extortion racket

Description



Proposed restrictions and car parking places Auchendennan Rd, Duck Bay

Argyll and Bute Council have been consulting on a new Traffic Regulation Order which would introduce parking restrictions and charges of £1 an hour at Duck Bay on the west Shore of Loch Lomond. As at Arrochar, where it can now cost £9 to go for a hill walk ([see here](#)), Argyll and Bute Council has no plans to provide visitors with any facilities in return. Indeed, both they and the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA), have left it to the Friends of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs (FOLLAT), working with local communities and businesses, to provide toilets in both locations this summer ([see here](#) and [here](#) for recent coverage on parkswatch).

Argyll and Bute Council’s general justification for new Traffic Regulation Orders at Duck Bay and Luss (where a TRO is being introduced at the same time) is that traffic “*should be restricted because of the likelihood of danger to the public*”. While there is no doubt that traffic chaos in Luss has impacted on local residents, that is NOT the case at Duck Bay, and Argyll and Bute has produced no evidence to support its claims. How many accidents have there been on the Auchendennan Rd, the old A82, in the last ten years?

STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR PROPOSING TO MAKE THE ORDER

The Council are responsible for enforcing parking restrictions across Argyll and Bute. Effective traffic management has a number of benefits, including supporting the local economy by ensuring parking turnover, safeguarding access for blue badge holders, for public transport, for deliveries, for loading and for emergency vehicles as well as ensuring road safety by managing inconsiderate and irresponsible parking.

The Council seeks to protect and enhance the vitality and viability of Argyll and Bute's key tourist areas. A series of traffic management and parking measures on Auchendennan Road, Duck Bay are proposed for the following reasons:-

- to facilitate the passage of vehicular traffic on the roads to which the Order relates
- the traffic management measures seek to improve road safety for all road users including pedestrians
- to improve the amenities of the area through which the roads run
- to formalise the parking places and introduce parking charges to encourage the turnover of vehicles

Through effective management and control, the proposals will improve the existing parking facilities within the Duck Bay area.

The arguments here are nonsensical. Far from protecting and enhancing “the vitality and viability” of Argyll and Bute’s “key tourist areas” the Council risks destroying them. Excessive charges will simply deter people and send them elsewhere. There is no logic in the statement that the charges are intended to promote turnover of vehicles. As charges are being imposed in every parking place on the west side of Loch Lomond and as fines for unlawful parking are ramped up ([see here](#)), there is nowhere else for people to go. What does Argyll and Bute expect people who want to go out for the day to do, cut their picnic or hill walk short? The truth is that Argyll and Bute Council have decided to extract as much money as they can from visitors and provide nothing in return.

At Duck Bay, Argyll and Bute Council have provoked significant opposition to their proposals. (Sadly the Arrochar and Tarbet Community Council, which appears to be under the thumb of the council, failed to provide any opposition to the charges for the car parks at the head of Loch Long). First, the Cawley family, who own the hotel at Duck Bay, have come out strongly against the parking charges, are asking people who visit Duck Bay to object to the TRO and have now become so frustrated with Argyll and Bute’s refusal to engage that they have threatened to dig the car park up if Argyll and Bute proceed with the charges ([see here](#)). They have produced an excellent model letter ([see here](#)) which explains how the proposals will undermine their business (its not just their customers but the 120 staff commuting to work who will be forced to pay charges of up to £10.80 a day or £489 for a season pass),

exposes some of Argyll and Bute's false claims (there are limited public transport connections to a bus stop on the A82 opposite Duck Bay which are not suitable for commuting purposes) and goes on to oppose the charges in principle.

Second, they are now being supported by FOLLAT who earlier this week put out a news release and a copy of their very full objections to the TRO which is well worth while reading ([see here](#)) for anyone who cares about how car park charges are being misused in the National Park. The Friends response also explains how the parking charges would be:

“contrary to the original agreement between the former Dumbarton District Council and the late Bobby Cawley of Duck Bay that led to the Cawley family investing a substantial sum in building the car park on the understanding this would be available for the general public to enjoy the Duck Bay area free of charge for recreational purposes and for hotel guests and staff to Duck Bay Hotel to have access to free parking.”

Throughout Scotland our Public Authorities have been either selling off or using assets that were gifted to them in good faith for the benefit of the public to raise revenue. If Argyll and Bute has insufficient income to pay for basic services, they should be complaining to the Scottish Government, not punishing the public.

Given its statutory duty to promote public enjoyment the countryside and its lead role in relation to tourism in the National Park, the LLTNPA Board should have discussed the issues and its response when it met ten days ago. But officers presented no reports to their Board about what was going on at Duck Bay and there was no discussion. It is starting to look as though the function of the two Argyll and Bute councillors who sit on the LLTNPA Board is not to ensure that there is a joined-up approach our public authorities, but rather to prevent the LLTNPA from taking action to address Argyll and Bute Council's failures to invest in visitor infrastructure (high parking charges, no litter bins, no toilets etc).

If you want to object to the proposal for parking charges at Duck Bay, you can do so by emailing TRO-Objections@argyll-bute.gov.uk by the end of today. You need to provide grounds for your objection (see the Cawley and Follat letters).

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. Freedom of Information
2. LLTNPA
3. visitor management

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Author

nickkempe