

The Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority's winter plans for visitors

Description

Visitor management during autumn/winter



Campsites & toilets

With the Camping Management Byelaws now out of force until March 2022, our camping permit areas are no longer open for bookings. Our campsites at Loch Achray and Loch Chon will close for the winter this weekend following an extended opening throughout October. As always, wild camping following the Scottish Outdoor Access Code can be enjoyed throughout the National Park over the winter months.

Over the winter months toilet facilities at Inveruglas, Tarbet, Luss, Balmaha and Rowardennan will remain open daily. Toilets at Milarrochy Bay and Duncan Mills Memorials Slipway will continue to be open at weekends only. All temporary toilets installed for the summer season will be removed from 31st October. More information on provision between November-March will be updated on our website from next week.

This information, which was circulated in a recent email to stakeholders, has not yet been published on the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA) website, either as a news release or on the visitor section of the website.

Parkswatch has long campaigned that most visitor facilities in the National Park should be kept open year round ([see here](#)). There are sufficient people, including tourists from abroad, visiting the National Park every day of the year that it no longer makes sense to close facilities over the winter. There are signs from the latest circular that the LLTNPA has started to recognise this, albeit reluctantly. They they still have some way to go.

On the plus side, keeping the toilets at Inveruglas, Tarbet and Rowardennan open daily is a important step forward.



The LLTNPA toilets at Rowardennan in January, locked up and in a state of disrepair.
Photo credit anon.

What “open daily” means is not explained. In my view all the public toilets in the National Park should be open 24 hours, as they have been over the summer, and not locked from say 4pm to 8am (at considerable cost).

National Park facilities

Inveruglas (free, incl. disabled toilet)

- 7 days; 24 hours (reduced capacity)

Firkin Point (free, incl. disabled toilet)

- 7 days; 24 hours

Tarbet (free, incl. disabled toilet)

- 7 days; 24 hours (reduced capacity)

Luss (free, incl. disabled toilet)

- 7 days; 24 hours

Balmaha Visitor Centre (free, incl. disabled toilet)

- 7 days; 24 hours

Milarrochy Bay (free, incl. disabled toilet)

- 7 days; 24 hours

Ben Lomond car park in Rowardennan (free, incl. disabled access)

- 7 days; 24 hours

Current National Park toilet facilities and their opening times over the summer

Keeping toilets open 24 hours, as at present, would allow hillwalkers, who often set out at dawn and come back after dark in winter, or people travelling up the A82 at night to stop off and use toilets rather than having to crap outdoors. The LLTNPA used to lock toilets at night over the summer but after public pressure were forced to open them 24 hours. That was another welcome change but they now need to extend that approach to winter.

On the minus side, the announcement fails to mention of plans for the toilets at Firkin Point over the winter. Presumably the LLTNPA hopes to keep them locked, despite this being a popular place for day visitors. Moreover, the toilets at Milarrochy and Duncan Mills slipway in Balloch will only be open at weekends. That makes no sense. The Milarrochy toilets are in-between those at Rowardennan and Balmaha and therefore, whoever is maintaining those toilets, could look after Milarrochy too. The Duncan Mills slipway is only ten minutes from the LLTNPA HQ.

The LLTNPA's general reluctance to help visitors is illustrated by their approach to the facilities at their

two campsites, at Loch Chon and Loch Ard. The reference to “*an extended opening*” during October betrays their state of mind. The LLTNPA’s baseline is that their job is only to provide facilities during the summer and anything more is an “extension”, code for an “unwelcome cost/too much bother”.



The toilets at Loch Chon, a wasted resource

Both these campsites have toilets, installed at great expense and paid for out of public money. They should be kept open too, for use both by the general visitor and those wanting to wild camp.

If the LLTNPA’s facilities are only going to be open half the year, then perhaps it’s time the senior managers responsible for that decision are only paid half the year too, like their seasonal staff?

Category

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Tags

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