

The Review of the Loch Lomond byelaws (4) – correction and apology

Description

In my second post on the byelaw review, issued yesterday morning ([see here](#)), I included data on boat registrations supplied by the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA) in response to a Freedom of Information request in June 2021. Having spent several hours checking the claims made about jet skis in the Review Report, which were unsubstantiated by the provision of any data, I was very pleased to find the FOI response. While there was no qualification in it about the data for 2022, explaining it applied to only part of the year, I should have realised from the date it could not be for the whole year. In making this mistake I was perhaps subconsciously influenced by what I had read in the Visitor Management Season Review presented to the LLTNPA Board in December ([see here](#)) – again without any supporting data – which claimed there had been “a 21% drop in all boat user registration” during the year.

As a result I wrongly claimed that there had been a very large drop in the number of jet ski registrations in 2022 and the 65% increase in jet ski registrations which the Review Report claimed to have taken place between 2012-2022 appeared to be a lie. Usually I am more wary of using such words and I apologise for the claim and my error.

I also owe a public apology to the Locally Elected Board Member for Balloch, Sid Perrie, who appeared to have read my blog and because challenged LLTNPA staff on the claimed increase in the number of jet skis at the start of the Board meeting on the byelaws yesterday. It appeared that LLTNPA staff had also read my blog and had briefed the chair because an answer came back immediately that those figures were not for the full year.

Unfortunately the audio for the meeting for those following it online was terrible and I did not catch the exact number of visitors quoted but I did pick up it was similar to 2022, an exceptional year. How that fitted with what the report to the December Board meeting stated about the number of boat registrations is unclear but if numbers of jet ski were indeed similar to 2021, then registrations of other types of motor boat must have dropped even further.

Having realised my mistake, I corrected the post immediately but it is very important that anyone who read it before that does not falsely conclude there was a very large drop in jet ski registrations in 2022. The actual truth still needs to be established but if there is a drop it will be far less than I claimed.

The fundamental problem, however, remains. The LLTNPA is still not being open and honest and only publishes data when this suits its agenda or it is forced to do so. Had the LLTNPA published the data as appendices to the Review Report, I would not have made the mistake I did. And the other part of my case, that by choosing as its baseline 2012, a year with a very number of jetski registrations, the LLTNPA had distorted the truth about the real trends would have been that much stronger.

What has been happening with the Loch Lomond byelaws is a repeat of what happened with the camping byelaws, where the LLTNPA made claims about large increases in antisocial behaviour and campers which were based on very dodgy use of statistics. I complained about this at the time to the

person in charge of statistics and data integrity at the Scottish Government only to be told the LLTNPA was not within his remit and he was powerless. Unfortunately, nothing has changed since then, the LLTNPA's use of statistics is as poor as ever and there is no governance when it matters.

In an attempt to remedy some of the data deficit about the Loch Lomond byelaw review – it would be nice if the LLTNPA were to add the data to their Review Report (which was basically endorsed by the Board yesterday) – I am now submitting a number of Freedom of Information requests, including the following:

- Please provide me with a list of the total numbers of boat by category, including jetskis/PWCs, registered under the Loch Lomond Bye Laws for the year 2022
- Please provide me with the number of jetskis registered under the Loch Lomond byelaws for each year from 2012-2022 broken down by those owned by businesses and those owned by individuals.
- Please provide me with the number of breaches under the Loch Lomond byelaws referred to the Procurator Fiscal between 2012 and 2022 broken down by the type of craft and offence.

We will see!

Facts are very important – once again my apologies for getting them wrong yesterday.

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. Governance
2. LLTNPA
3. outdoor recreation
4. Scottish Government

Date Created

January 31, 2023

Author

nickkempe