

The Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority's anti boating and outdoor recreation agenda

Description

default watermark

Milarrochy



default watermark

**No launching
or retrieval of
motorised cr**

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This new sign at Milarrochy on the east shore of Loch Lomond appeared a few weeks ago

Six years ago, on 1st April 2017, Gordon Watson, the Chief Executive Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA), closed the slipway and tried to close the ranger base at Milarrochy without consultation and without any consideration by his board. When the Loch Lomond Association wrote to James Stuart, the Convener of the LLTNPA, questioning the rationale for the decision and asking to meet the Board ([see here](#)), the reply – a pile of nonsense ([see here](#)) – came from Gordon Watson. This disgraceful decision left one public slipway for the whole of the Loch Lomond, the Duncan Mills at Balloch.

There was, however, one significant victory. A member of the public challenged the LLTNPA on the legality of closing the slipway. The justification for doing so had been cited as “conflict between users” and health and safety claims when, according to the LLTNPA’s own figures, on average through the year one boat a day was launched from the slipway and there had never been an accident. The outcome of this challenge was that LLTNPA staff closed the beach to vehicles, making it very difficult for all but the smallest vessels to use the slipway, but continued to allow people who could get their boats there without vehicles to use it.

This arrangement was officially confirmed in writing by the LLTNPA’s Governance Manager:

“From: **governance manager** <governancemanager@lochlomond-trossachs.org>
Date: Tue, 2 May 2017, 17:39
Subject: RE: COMP 2017-016 further clarification
To: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Dear Mr XXX,

The issue is with vehicular access to the slipway and beach, and resultant conflict between users. As we have said before, vessels which can be launched without having to use the slipway are allowed, though most powered craft would be too heavy and awkward to launch directly from the beach safely.

Yours sincerely,

Governance and Legal Team”.

The current sign, therefore, which attempts to ban all motorised craft, is contrary to the previous position of the LLTNPA and has been erected without any consultation.

Moreover, I have been informed that “members of the public with small inflatable dinghys and outboards that are hand carried have been photographed, intimidated and threatened with police action by national park rangers”. This appears unlawful harassment and I understand an official complaint has been lodged with the LLTNPA. There is a right of navigation on Loch Lomond for allcraft, whether motorised or not, so long as they conform to the water bye laws and there is an assumed right of use to the foreshore. Here we have a National Park, with a statutory duty to promote public enjoyment of the countryside, trying to prevent people from accessing the loch.

These actions are however entirely consistent with the aspirations of the LLTNPA as set out in the papers accompanying the revised Loch Lomond bye laws, approved in January, and the draft National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) which is currently out for consultation. I

In January the LLTNPA agreed to ask Scottish Ministers to review the historic right of navigation on Loch Lomond with a view to removing it and enabling the LLTNPA to ban motorised vessels from areas of the loch. Part of the justification for this was the carbon emissions of motorised vessels.

In the draft NPPP ([see here](#)) there is a section on “Creating a sustainable low carbon destination” which includes the following:

“In some places, where climate and nature considerations need to be given greater weight, action will be required to restrict visitor demand where capacity is an issue.”

It looks like at Milarrochy the LLTNPA has jumped the gun! The question is who has instructed the Rangers to act in this unlawful way?

I will consider further the fundamental flaws and failures of the draft National Park Partnership Plan in respect of Outdoor Recreation in further posts. But the abandonment by the LLTNPA of their Outdoor Recreation Plan, and failure to include its provisions in the NPPP as they promised to do last summer, appears no accident. It enables senior staff to make up rules about how outdoor recreation is managed as they go along.

After six years of failing to hold staff to account for what has happened at Milarrochy, it really is time the LLTNPA Board took an interest in what is being done in their name.

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. access rights
2. LLTNPA
3. outdoor recreation
4. visitor management

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