



came across this scene yesterday at Forest and Land Scotland (FLS)'s car park in Glen Righ near the Corran Ferry. It exemplifies our public authorities' failed approach to visitor management in the countryside. It is so bad it is hard not to laugh. Telling people to do things without providing appropriate infrastructure – in this case dog poo bins – simply doesn't work.

The people who put their doggy poo in these bags, however, clearly had some awareness and respect for the natural environment and their fellow human beings. If they hadn't, they would have never have bothered to bag the poo. What they were not prepared to do wastake it home.

Having provided evidence on many occasions for how people want and expect our public authorities to provide infrastructure to enable them to enjoy the countryside (or example [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)) what

was what unusual in this case is someone had left a comment on one of FLS' signs:



The added words read “Use the parking money to put a bin in then”.

While it would be interesting to know if it was a local resident or a visitor from further afield who wrote this, being charged to walk your dog on a forestry site – safely away from traffic and sheep – and threatened with £50 fines (see below) must be frustrating for all dog owners. Meantime, it is hard to fathom how the cost of providing a doggy bin would be any more than FLS paying staff or contractors to come in and clear up the doggy bags. That would certainly be far safer from a human health and an environmental perspective and make Glen Righ a more attractive place to visit.

Discover your forest...

what will you do today?

Parking Tariffs

Up to 1hour (all vehicles)	£1.00
Vehicle all day	£3.00
Blue Badge holder	FREE

Parking tariffs apply during all opening hours.
Overnight parking is not permitted.

Failure to comply with the parking Terms & Conditions may result in a Parking Charge of: **£50**

Full terms and conditions can be found on our tariff entrance sign and on our website.

Your parking payment is important.
You're helping us maintain visitor facilities and look after the forest and its wildlife

Have a great visit and thanks for your support

[Pay to park with your phone]
Use the RingGo app and pay by credit or debit card

RingGo

Call 0131 239 0000 or use the RingGo app
Small additional fees may apply
There is no need to display a ticket. For VAT receipts, business parking etc see RingGo.co.uk

No Signal? No Problem.
This is a PayLater location. Forestry and Land Scotland will allow you 72 hours to make payment for your stay.

This location is **53381**

Another telling sign at Glen Righ.

Unfortunately, instead of highlighting the need for proper investment to the Scottish Government, FLS has been closing down or reducing infrastructure wherever it can and introducing charges. It is doing this while convincing itself it is still managing public land in the public interest. Hence the sign above. "Discover your forest" but you will need to pay to enjoy it cuts to the chase.

The cause of the problem is FLS is now expected to pay its own way, primarily from the sale of timber on the open market. FLS simply cannot compete with other (highly subsidised) private forestry companies, however, while also doing other things like paying for recreational infrastructure.

The consequence has been charges for visiting, outsourcing of facilities for private profit and cuts since any income raised is never enough to maintain the required levels of infrastructure. FLS has been applying this approach across Scotland, including in our National Parks where it is supposed to be working in partnership with the Cairngorms and Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authorities to promote public enjoyment of the countryside.

In the Cairngorms National Park this approach is evident in Glen More, where the extortionate charges at the outsourced campsite and cuts in the Ranger service, were responsible for the calls from the local community for byelaws banning fires ([see here](#)) and in Glen Prosen, where FLS has bought a huge area of land for £17m but has NO plans to improve infrastructure for the public.

In the Loch Lomond and Trossachs FLS has been allowing paths on the forest estate to fall into disrepair ([see here](#) for example) and in 2023 undermined access rights by closing off the publicly owned car park at Salloch on east Loch Lomond ([see here](#)). I warned then there was worse to come and FLS has now surreptitiously advertised that their campsite at Salloch won't be open till the end of April:

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Latest forest information

We are currently working with partners to agree plans for the operation of Sallochy Campsite for the 2025 season. We hope to be able to provide further information in late March, and are working towards an opening date in late April.

Details of alternative camping in the area can be found through Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park camping [website](#).

Open water

- › This destination contains areas of open water which can be hazardous if you are not suitably prepared. Follow our [water safety advice](#) and take care.

The statement that Sallochy “contains areas of open water” is another example of stupid advice to visitors. Its right on the shore of Loch Lomond, the largest loch by surface area in Scotland! I am grateful to a reader for alerting me to this notice.

The explanation for what is going on was very briefly reported to the LLTNPA Board Meeting on 10th March in the (horribly titled) paper ([see here](#)) Joint Response Visitor Management Plan 2025. Under the section on Infrastructure and Services this states:

“Pilot new management arrangements at Sallochy to enhance visitor experience and create efficiencies across partners. Estimated delivery date April 2025.”

People should be sceptical that any money saved by efficiencies will be used to enhance the “visitor experience” on east Loch Lomond. “Efficiencies” is more likely a euphemism for further cuts and perhaps an attempt by FLS to shunt costs onto the LLTNPA. Our public authorities, while not allowed to criticise each other openly behind the scenes are fighting like cats in a bag.

What LLTNPA staff also failed to state clearly was that by “April”, they meant the end of the month, nor did they explain what would-be campers were expected to do before then with the “seasonal” camping byelaws coming into effect on 1st March.

The provision of FLS’ facilities at Sallochy have been crucial for enabling backpackers to continue to enjoy the West Highland Way since camping outwith designated sites first became illegal in the east Loch Lomond camping management zone. Anyone now trying to walk the West Highland Way while camping – and significant numbers are now doing so in March and April – faces real difficulties in

finding somewhere to do so lawfully. The situation has been made even worse by FLS' decision to outsource its campsite at Cashel ([see here](#)) which now charges £35.75 (discounted rate) for an adult to camp for one night. This is how Scotland welcomes visitors wanting to walk its best known long distance path.

The current closure of the Sallochycampsite provides another sorry example in the long botched history of visitor mismanagement by both FLS and the LLTNPA on east Loch Lomond ([see here](#)). The primary explanation for these failures is continued austerity, which results in budget reductions and the continued need to find savings year after year. A secondary explanation, however, lies in the way staff in FLS and other public authorities take decisions behind closed doors and fail to consult. Had FLS consulted properly, it is hard to imagine anyone telling them that keeping the Sallochycampsite closed after 1st March or not supplying doggy bins were good ideas.

Category

1. Access rights
2. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

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