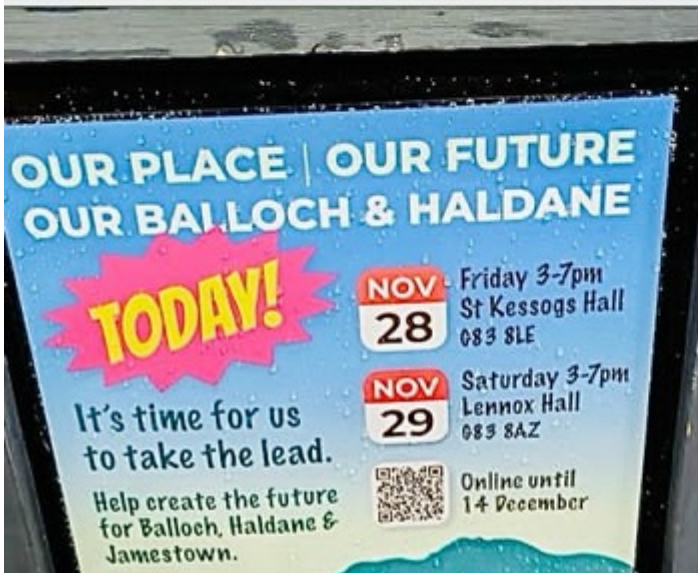


The Balloch local place plan consultation â?? donâ??t overdevelopâ?• and the Flamingo in the room.

Description



Screenshot from Loch Lomond Gift House facebook post. The little flag by Drumkinnon Woods, top left, says â??Flamingo Landâ?•. This post reported 29 people had attended the local place plan consultation on 28th November

Under â??newsâ?• on the Balloch and Haldane Local Place Plan website ([see here](#)) it is reported that â??over 40 peopleâ?• came along to share their ideas at the consultation events held on 28th and 29th

November. The population of Balloch and Haldane according to Scotland's last (botched and not to be trusted) census is 5997. In their Committee Report on the Flamingo Land Planning Application the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA) never gave a breakdown of how many of the 834 individuals who had objected to the development (69 individuals support it) lived in the Balloch and Haldane area but it was considerably more than 40.

Further local residents will have objected through the portal set up by the Greens which garnered another 174,038 objections, the most in Scottish history.

The most likely explanation for why the participation rates in the current consultation are so low is not that local people are not concerned about what might happen in their area, it is that they have no reason to trust the place plan process while the Scottish Government is sitting on the Flamingo Land planning application, the elephant in the room ([see here](#)). Add to that the experience of past planning events: the charade of the planning charrette in which the LLTNPA pretended to consult local people while behind the scenes it had been secretly working with Scottish Enterprise to make the Flamingo Land development go ahead ([see here](#)); the failure of the LLTNPA even to deliver on the paltry actions from the charrette that had been designed not to interfere with Flamingo Land ([see here](#)); and more recently the LLTNPA's consultation on the Pierhead Action Plan ([see here](#)) in which they failed to inform local people that they done a secret deal with Scottish Enterprise on how the land would be used which is designed to make Flamingo Land happen ([see here](#)).

Even if local people did try and engage in this corrupt planning system, there is no money to make a community place plan happen. The exception is some funding the Community Development Trust has provisionally secured to pay for the redevelopment of the former Tourist Information Centre. Balloch is not alone in this. The more plans accumulate, the less power local communities appear to actually have.

As a follow up to the consultation events a short anonymous online survey is now open until 14th December. ([see here](#)).

The survey states that the last time the local community came together to shape how the community develops in the years ahead was in our [Community Action Plan 2014-19](#). While stating much has happened since then, there is no mention of the subsequent planning Charrette wasn't that also supposed to be about the local community shaping the future of Balloch or Flamingo Land. While the consultation does ask "What's your biggest fear for the future?" the questions then focus on "What still needs to be done on the four themes from the 2014 plan? What's missing?"

There was just one reference to the Community Action Plan 2014-19 in the Committee Report about the Flamingo Land Planning application. After noting under "other material considerations" that there is no Local Place Plan for Balloch the report stated: "The Balloch & Haldane Community Action Plan 2014-2019 is therefore the most up-to-date expression of the community's interests for the local area." The Committee Report then failed to make any reference to the contents of the Community Action Plan when deciding the Flamingo Land planning application.

Having been ignored for 10 years and never updated, the Community Action Plan 2014-19 has suddenly appeared on the agenda again. It should be noted that the LLTNPA, who is partially funding the current Local Place Plan consultation, has a habit of resuscitating dead plans when it suits them:

having ignored the Balloch Charrette for almost 7 years it then used an action from that to justify going ahead with the Pierhead Action Plan consultation last year BEFORE the current wider consultation for the whole of the area ([see here](#)).

The reason why the Community Action Plan 2014-19 is now being resuscitated appears to be precisely because it was undertaken BEFORE the public was aware of the LLTNPA's plans for Balloch or their involvement in appointing Flamingo Land as preferred developer in Balloch. It therefore serves a useful means of enabling a consultation which ignores ALL the issues raised by the Flamingo Land Planning application. That is illustrated by the online consultation material which is arranged around the four themes from the Community Action Plan:

SPORT, RECREATION AND LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

What the 2014 Community Action Plan said:

- More wet weather activity and sports
- New all-weather pitches
- Stop erosion of riverbanks
- Litter during the summer
- Maintain parks and watercourses

More recent suggestions to get you thinking:

- Do more with Balloch Park & Pierhead
- Safe, free welcoming teen spaces
- More sports pitches
- Community gardening
- Restore Woodbank House

What still needs to be done? What's missing?

Your answer

The Flamingo in the room. So where, for example, will the the sports pitches and community gardens go if the Flamingo Land planning application goes ahead? Why wasn't the potential impact of Flamingo Land on public space for the local community treated as a material consideration by the LLTNPA when considering the planning application?

IMPROVE OUR LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE

What the 2014 Community Action Plan said:

- Fix & maintain roads, paths & facilities
- Better local bus services
- Improve toilets

More recent suggestions to get you thinking:

- Better parking in the tourist season
- Community hub
- Safer walking and cycling
- Accessible paths to the loch

What still needs to be done? What's missing?

Your answer

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The Flamingo in the room. So how will there be better parking in the tourist season? if Scottish Ministers give the go ahead to Flamingo Land and what about all the extra traffic? And how will constructing a chalet park and hotel on the shore of Loch Lomond affect access to loch and access rights more generally?

YOUNG PEOPLE, SAFETY & THE ECONOMY

What the 2014 Community Action Plan said:

- More activities for teenagers
- Skatepark
- More police at peak visitor times
- More training & employment opportunities, especially hospitality

More recent suggestions to get you thinking:

- More diverse economy
- Space for small businesses
- Natural play park
- Locally led regeneration that meets the needs of locals, not just visitors

What still needs to be done? What's missing?

Your answer

The Flamingo in the room. Locally led regeneration and a more diverse local economy will not be possible if the company town, which has been pushed by Scottish Enterprise and LLTNPA officials through the planning system, is allowed to go ahead.

DEVELOP THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

What the 2014 Community Action Plan said:

- Better marketing, promotion & signage
- Restore Balloch Castle for community/visitor facilities

More recent suggestions to get you thinking:

- Re-open tourist information centre
- More outdoor seating
- Better access to the water
- Don't overdevelop

What still needs to be done? What's missing?

Your answer

The Flamingo in the room. Up until now the Scottish Government, Scottish Enterprise and the LLTNPA have ALL prioritised development at the expense of people in place at Balloch. Don't overdevelop puts the issues in a nutshell. It is unfortunate that the most important point in the whole consultation is raised at the very end.

Unless and until Ivan McKee, the Minister responsible, decides to refuse the Flamingo Land planning application as a serious case of over-development, any local place plan for Balloch and Haldane will be as meaningless as its predecessors. If the Balloch and Haldane Community Council and the local Community Development Trust want a meaningful Local Place Plan, they need to keep the pressure up on Mr McKee to remove the Flamingo from the room.

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. flamingo land
2. LLTNPA
3. Local communities
4. planning
5. Scottish Government

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