

Why is the LLTNPA covering up its removal of the rotten scenic viewing tower at Inveruglas?

Description



Richard Lochhead is joined by national park chief executive Gordon Watson, convenor Linda McKay and architects Daniel Barr and Stephane Toussaint on the pyramid. Photo: Michael McGurk

Gordon Watson, still the CEO of the LLTNPA is on the right.
Photo as featured in Grough

In May 2015 ([see here](#)) Richard Lochhead, the Scottish Minister then responsible for tourism, opened a new viewing tower, dubbed An Ceann Mor, at Inveruglas on the west shore of Loch Lomond. The tower was the fourth and final structure to be installed in the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park as part of the Scottish Scenic Routes initiative. There was much fanfare about the opening as reflected in a Daily Mail article from the time ([see here](#)).

For the last two years the top of An Ceann Mor has been cordoned off as unsafe, preventing the public from enjoying the views as intended ([see here](#)). Then, on 27th December a reader alerted me that it had been demolished and the site cleared:



The cleared former site of An Ceann Mor now resembling a suburban driveway. Photo credit Parkswatch reader

The Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA) has issued no news release to alert the public to the removal of the viewing tower in contrast to all the publicity that it issued when An Ceann Mor opened.



Looking out over the site of the tower. Photo credit Parkswatch reader

Instead the LLTNPA appears to have removed all references to An Ceann Mor from its website, for example from its webpage on Scenic Viewpoints ([see here](#)).

Staff also failed to refer to the removal of An Ceann Mor in the papers for their December board meeting. It appears that senior staff at LLTNPA headquarters are now attempting to expunge the tower from history. They have not yet been entirely successful. Visiting Inveruglas on Saturday, I found some evidence of the tower still in place:



The sign is likely to be removed as soon as senior staff read this post but the steps up to the site of the tower from the edge of the car parking area, which now lead nowhere, are likely to remain:



The rotten wooden edge to this step helps explain what went wrong. Use the wrong timber or fail to maintain it appropriately in a wet climate and it rots. When the tower opened several media outlets reported:

â??Made from sustainable timber, the viewing platform is expected to fade from light brown to grey over time to help it to blend in with the landscape.â?•

Those claims appear to have been lifted from an LLTNPA news release â?? how wrong they were!

An Ceann Mor is not the first timber structure erected by the LLTNPA which has rotted. There was the Â£800k geese sculpted at the Stoneymollan Roundabout on the A82 at the entrance to the National Park which was falling to bits before being further damaged by a storm â?? although that did last nearer 20 years. Then there was the Bracklinn Falls Bridge near Callander, which cost Â£110k, and also lasted ten years before being removed for a cost of Â£19,650 ([see here](#)).

So why is the LLTNPA, one of whose four statutory duties is to promote sustainable development, erecting structures it then allows to fall to bits? (It is not just timber structures which are failing, there is a long list of failed projects from the heating systems at the National Park HQ to path work). And why is the LLTNPA Board not holding staff to account for this litany of failures instead of allowing them to cover up what has happened?



Short access track cut through the woods from the campervan area to enable An Ceann Mor to be removed

When considering the sustainability of new developments in the countryside one should expect the LLTNPA to plan from the outset how they will be maintained and ensure they are sustainable. Instead, the LLTNPA is pandering to Scottish Ministers's vanity projects and grabbing money for capital projects without any thought for the future.



Planted trees in plastic tubes among naturally regenerating trees at Inveruglas

Wandering around the site I wondered if the trees the LLTNPA are still planting in polluting plastic tree tubes at Inveruglas were intended to compensate for the damage caused by the An Ceann Mor removal track? While I can ask these questions, Board members are effectively prevented from comment on operational matters because this is contrary to the Code of Conduct they have adopted. There is absolutely no chance, I am afraid, that this rotten National Park Authority will ever investigate why so many of its timber structures rot.

For the record you can still find some basic information about the An Ceann Mor viewing tower on the internet, for example [\(see here\)](#):

Pyramid Viewpoint Inveruglas – Building Information

BTE ARCHITECTURE, GLASGOW / OSLO
THE PYRAMID VIEWPOINT, INVERUGLAS, SCOTLAND

PROJECT ARCHITECTS: Daniel Bär, Stéphane Toussaint, Sean Edwards
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: David Narro Associates, Glasgow
CONTRACTOR: Land Engineering

CLIENT: Scottish Government
SUPERVISION: Loch Lomond and The National Park
SITE ADDRESS: Arrochar, Dunbartonshire, G83 7DP, Scotland
CONTRACT VALUE: 193K
TREATED FLOOR AREA: 60m²
COMPLETION DATE: May 2015

Category

1. Loch Lomond and Trossachs

Tags

1. Governance
2. LLTNPA
3. Scottish Government
4. Tourism

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