

National Park Board

Strategic/Development Session



Litter: A Starter Paper

1. Purpose

To provide an overview of the (non-marine) litter challenges the National Park and the Park Authority faces, the actions we have implemented over this season and to think about what is needed next.

2. Contribution to Our 5-year Plan

Our new plan clearly articulates litter as one of our priorities.

Priority 1: Litter

Working in collaboration, we will (support a Marine Litter Strategy and) drive the development of a cross-organisation National Park Litter Strategy which better utilises our collective capacity with our partners to deal with the litter generated by visitors. We will invest our passion, commitment, resources and powers to deliver positive behaviour change to prevent, and reduce litter in the National Park.

3. Background

Litter is a complex issue to resolve, and not just for the National Park. There are a number of key stakeholders that impact significantly on our ability to make a difference; the four litter authorities, other duty bodies, landowners, businesses, communities and visitors.

As a Park Authority we are responsible for litter in areas where we are the landowner (or equivalent) however there is a (understandable) perception that littering within the National Park is the responsibility of the Park Authority. This perception brings with it additional responsibility and workload. The introduction of the Camping Management Zones increases this perception of responsibility.

Appendix 1 shows a visual representation of the sites for which we are responsible alongside the Camping Management Zones.

As a Park Authority we support the national agenda to tackle litter and fly-tipping:

Information - ensuring effective and consistent messaging to prevent littering

Infrastructure - improving the facilities and services needed to reduce litter and promote recycling

Enforcement - strengthening the deterrent effect of legislation

Within a national perspective, the volume of littering in the countryside is minuscule in comparison to quantities experienced within urban areas. We recognise that litter within the National Park is more noticeable and stark against the backdrop of a beautiful natural environment.

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As a Park Authority a significant resource is already deployed on clearing up litter, whether it's our Land Operations Team, waste management and cleaning contractors clearing litter from our sites, Rangers and volunteers supporting landowners to clear Camping Management Zone sites, various staff responding to litter complaints or our Planning team dealing with fly-tipping.

The gnarly issue is how to prevent litter in the first place, and as a Park Authority we are under no illusion that we can tackle this without momentous behavioural change and without significant support from all the key stakeholders and assistance from the national litter expert bodies.

4. Operational Progress:

- Information

Our 'Respect Your Park' materials have been updated to reflect the changes in how people can camp in the Park. The [updated leaflet](#) is used by our Rangers use as a tool to engage with visitors when discussing responsible outdoor access and how to do the right thing. The leaflet (and more importantly the conversations our Rangers have with visitors) reminds people that our advice is to take your litter home. It reiterates that littering (and fly-tipping) is an offence and that Fixed Penalty Notices can be issued to anyone found liable.

Across the summer season, we have been using Keep Scotland Beautiful messaging as part



of our social media channels to remind people of how to respect the National Park, with a focus on 'peak weekends' (school holidays, bank holidays and sunny days).

Social media around these images from Falls of Falloch and Luss has garnered lots of positive feedback, and an enhanced understanding:

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These bins in Luss were not full!

All this litter would have fitted into the bins that were available.

Our assumptions are that:

- Visitors did not lift the bin lid
- One person leaving litter next to the bin, resulted in assumptions being made that the bins were full and encouraged others to also leave their litter.
- This is still a criminal offence and has the regrettable strapline of “polite littering”

New signs were introduced to “nudge” behaviour



Through our education and outreach work, responsible behaviour is one of our key messages. Young people that engage with us are supported to understand the environmental impacts of littering within a National Park context. Through our partnership work with the John Muir Trust, groups commit to undertake conservation work which can include litter picks, further helping to demonstrate the impact of irresponsible litter and flytipping.

(Interestingly, and surprisingly, as part of our engagement with other UK National Parks, Lake District, the busiest National Park in the UK with over 40 million visitors per annum, confirmed that they do not have any litter issues. They never receive any complaints and their single responsible local authority is recognised as having total responsibility for litter.)

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- Infrastructure

Litter collection on our own sites is prioritised throughout the season, with various timings for daily/weekly/twice-weekly litter bin and litter picking carried out by our own staff and contractors.

Appendix 2 identifies Luss as a particularly complex example of litter responsibilities and disjointedness within a high visitor pressure area.

Appendix 3 indicates the type of bins, the collection frequency, by whom, or where we do not provide bins.

In the more remote and 'wilder' parts of our sites, bins have been reduced and we have increased litter bin provision in the more appropriate locations, for example next to our public toilets and cafes.

Businesses behaving badly

We are experiencing some problems where our litter bins are being used to dispose of commercial waste by third parties.



Three commercial-sized bins at Balmaha were emptied on Thursday and by Saturday morning all three were filled with commercial waste. This left no capacity for day visitors' litter.



Part of any solution will need to involve local businesses and other stakeholders to address local issues of this nature.

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Accessibility

On particularly busy days it is not always possible to prevent instances of bin overflow due to the logistics of getting around all of the sites. Some recent examples have been:

- The closure of the A82 due to Road Traffic Accidents or the sheer volume of traffic not enabling our litter team to get to all the sites.
- The volume of visitors stopping in Luss, Tarbet and Firkin Point.
- With the nice weather, long bright days, families will stay on into the evening and our officers will have finished their shifts for the day.
- In instances where visitors do not deposit their litter into bins then gulls and other animals will often scatter the litter further.

Unfortunately there has also been a number of occasions where the Local Authority litter collections have not been reliable resulting in unemptied bins and high level complaints.

Recycling

On the West side of Loch Lomond we had originally rolled out the large pods in Inveruglas, Tarbet, Firkin Point and Luss capable of recycling however the public were not using the recycling provision properly, resulting in all the waste being contaminated. All were subsequently rebadged as landfill waste. Some reasons why contamination was occurring:

- At our sites, where a large proportion of our visitors picnic, waste from the picnic is bagged up together and is not then unpacked into the various receptacles.
- Visitors deposit their waste in the nearest bin.
- If a bin is full, if visitors look for an alternative, will use the next closest without regard to recycling.

If a recycling pod was contaminated the local authority would either not remove the contaminated pod at all or all of it would go to landfill.

The biggest challenge in managing litter on our sites is public attitude.

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This is not an unusual scene at our busiest visitor sites:



To support the reactive response necessary to try to maintain litter free sites we increase the scheduled litter collections throughout the season, the Land Operational team prioritise litter picking and litter collections over maintaining our sites. We have recruited Friday to Monday Environment Protection Officers whose sole responsibility is to keep our sites litter free. Our toilet cleaning contractors bolster our litter collection/picking activities throughout the weekend, and we schedule in a series of volunteer days, when the sole focus is on litter picks. The location of litter picking and collection is flexible and we tailor the focus to where we are receiving the most reports of littering or litter build up.

A core element of Ranger patrols includes the gathering of intelligence and reporting litter issues across the park. This information is then passed on for landowners to resolve or, if on our own sites, if possible for the Rangers to collect/bag and for the Land Operations Team to deal with. Depending on deployment within the Camping Management Zones Ranger patrols can be tasked with resolving specific litter issues on a case by case basis in support of landowners and the Land Operations Team. The Ranger patrols spend up to 20% of their time allocated to carry out minor

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vegetation clearance and litter picking within the Camping Management Zone focussing on the permit areas.

- Enforcement

In accordance with the provisions of Section 8 of and Paragraph 17 of Schedule 1 to the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park is using its powers under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to help reduce litter and fly-tipping in the National Park. This season (2018), to date, three Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) have been issued for fly-tipping, two of which have been paid (£200). These FPNs are issued when National Park rangers have gathered an appropriate amount of evidence to link people to the fly-tipping. Warning letters are issued to the accused and given 14 days to pay, if they fail to pay a final letter giving a further 14 days is issued. If no payment is made then we will refer the case to the Procurator Fiscal.

The appointment of the two new Environmental Protection Officers covering Fridays to Mondays includes scheduling of specific enforcement action, as separate from their litter collection duties.

5. COPLAR

The revised Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse (Scotland) 2018 came into statute in June 2018. The Code is statutory guidance which provides duty holders with practical guidance on fulfilling their duties under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 Section 89

- (1) to keep land clear of litter and refuse and
- (2) to keep roads clean.

Bodies that are subject to the duties must have regard to this code which:

- outlines the standard required for each duty
- supports prioritisation of where and when to tackle problems
- provides maximum timescales for restoring areas to the standard.

Bodies are also encouraged to undertake robust monitoring. There are three main changes, compared with the previous code:

- an emphasis on the role of prevention (particularly for Duty 1)
- revised grades and response times for each duty
- greater clarity about where litter/refuse should be removed from.

This code aligns with the:

- Scottish Government's national litter strategy, [Towards a Litter-Free Scotland](#), which encourages litter prevention through measures which influence individuals' behaviour

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- conclusion that prevention in public services is more efficient than treatment as identified by the Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services (The 'Christie Commission').

The code recognises that a range of delivery tactics, including clean up, are necessary. It provides bodies with the flexibility to widen their focus from clearing litter and refuse to more sustainable approaches.

Using their insight into who uses their land, and by collecting data through regular monitoring, bodies can develop effective local prevention tactics that reinforce Scotland-wide anti-litter messages and activities.

Zero Waste Scotland are not able to confirm whether the Park Authority is a "duty holder" so we have sought legal advice. Notwithstanding the outcome, it would be our intention to implement the good practice described by the code.

6. The Cost of Litter

Based on an analysis of costs in 2017/18 and using the guidance provided within the revised COPLAR we spend:

- £560k on litter prevention (majority accounted for through Rangers' responsible behaviours messaging)
- £300k on litter collection

7. Stakeholder Engagement

The foundation of the National Park Partnership Plan is working in partnership. Solving littering within the National Park is an ideal example of where only a concerted effort by all those who contribute to, are influencers, are responsible for or lead policy on litter will result in a positive outcome.

- Argyll and Bute Council
- Stirling Council
- West Dunbartonshire Council
- Perth and Kinross Council
- Landowners
- Forestry Commission
- Communities/Community Councils
- Tourism Business/Attractions
- Bus/Cruise/Tour/Coach Operators
- Transport Scotland
- Zero Waste Scotland
- Keep Scotland Beautiful

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National Park Authority officers and Executive Team members have recently stepped up engagement with key partners' officers and senior staff;

Argyll and Bute Council (CEO, Executive Director, Head of Road and Amenity Services, Environmental Protection Enforcement Officer, Waste Collection Supervisor) – with a view to explore a shared approach to litter; collection, bins, enforcement (and parking enforcement).

Zero Waste Scotland – (CEO, Sector Managers) with a view to jointly coordinate litter management of duty holders operating within the National Park including an understanding of infrastructure requirements and identifying opportunities for service optimisation, a communications strategy, and establishing a litter and flytipping monitoring and evaluation plan.

Keep Scotland Beautiful – (CEO, Operations Manager) working closely on the next phase of the “Give Your Litter a Lift” roadside campaign and “Clean-up Scotland”; their spring clean campaign with a view to engaging with communities and businesses. (Separate senior discussions are underway regarding marine litter.)

(Separately there has been a number of action focused meetings with Stirling Council (Councillors, Service Managers – Environment/Regulatory Services/Roads & Land, Team Leader – Safer Communities Enforcement Officer Supervisor) to plan for a joined up approach to traffic management and enforcement along the B837 (Drymen – Balmaha – Milarrochy – Rowerdennan))

8. Conclusion

Everyone; staff and Board members, are passionate about solving the litter problem within the National Park. Everyone has a view on bins Vs no bins, education, enforcement, messaging, recycling, behaviours, culture, attitudes, responsibilities, complexities, cost, budgets, priorities.

The fact is that solving littering is downright, indisputably, undeniably difficult and one size does not fit all and sadly it will take years to change behaviours!

9. Next Steps

- Securing internal capacity to drive engagement and litter changes with critical partners
- Securing guaranteed access to specialist knowledge and research
- Deciding on priorities/outcomes
- Agreeing on target areas (West Loch Lomond/East Loch Lomond/Loch Earn)
- Securing budget (capital and resource) to drive change

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- Identifying if we are a duty body under COPLAR
- Agreeing and obtaining Board member & critical partners involvement and buy-in to drive change

Appendix 1 – Sites for which we (NPA) are responsible overlaid with Camping Management Zones

Appendix 2 – Luss ownership, responsibilities and disjointedness

Appendix 3 – Types of bins/collection frequency/responsibility

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