**Briefing Note for Elected Members**

**Our Approach to Tacking Irresponsible Camping**

Perth and Kinross has some of the most beautiful scenery in Scotland, which attracts many visitors to our area. We warmly welcome visitors who act responsibly and respect their local surroundings.

The number of visitors is expected to increase this year due to Covid-related foreign travel restrictions, people wanting to get away after weeks of lockdown, and pressures on availability of traditional visitor accommodation.

Therefore there is a likely increase in informal camping and campervans, in our area. This creates pressures due to the volume of these visitors, but also the anti-social behaviour of a small proportion - the term `**dirty camping**` is being increasingly used to apply to these irresponsible activities.

The following measures are being/have been taken to mitigate the negative impact of these activities.

1. **Identification of hot spot areas**

The Council’s Safer Communities team has set up links with local communities to report problem issues to the team.

A multi- agency group has been set up, and meets on a weekly basis, consisting of Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Perth and Kinross Council staff.

Through the community information, and feedback from staff attending on site, we are able to build a picture, and monitor the main issues and the most affected areas.

Main problems to date are:

* Littering and fly-tipping
* Damage (to fields and trees)
* Human waste not disposed properly
* Inappropriate parking on roads preventing access for residents and emergency vehicles
* Unattended campfires
* Other anti-social behaviour through alcohol consumption

At this stage, the principal source of these problems are from dirty camping. To date campervans/motorhomes have not been reported as a concern.

The main hot spot areas to date are:

* Loch Tummel
* Loch Tay
* Calvine
* Struan
* Glenlyon
* Clunie Loch
* Kenmore
* St Fillans

Information from Police Scotland indicate that many of these visitors are from the east – Fife, Dundee and Angus/Aberdeenshire areas.

Community information and ‘on the ground’ feedback from staff patrolling these sites will continue to provide intelligence to inform our future actions.

If communities have further information to assist, they are asked to contact the Safer Communities Team on SCT@pkc.gov.uk.

1. **Coordinated visits to hot spots**

We are co-ordinating joint visits, over busy periods such as weekends, by:

* Scottish Fire and Rescue staff
* Countryside Rangers
* Community Wardens

This will be in addition to Police activity in these areas.

These visits will be targeted at hot spot areas, to encourage campers to act responsibly and safely and to offer guidance on activities such as fires, litter disposal and parking as well as being ‘eyes and ears’ to report any serious issues to Police colleagues.

1. **Clearways to manage parking**

New Covid 19 Regulations have introduced a ‘fast track’ approach to establishing temporary traffic orders, including banning parking (creating `Clearways`) on sensitive roadways (eg narrow roads next to lochs or rivers). Clearways have been introduced at Stanley Linn, and we are looking at introducing similar arrangements at Clunie Loch and Loch Tummel.

Non-compliance by motorists with these clearways will be dealt with by Police/Council using penalty charge notices.

If communities are aware of other potential areas suitable for clearways, please contact traffic@pkc.gov.uk.

**4. Installation of signs**

A trial project is underway to install signage around Clunie Loch, with messages to promote responsible camping.

If communities believe this type of signage would help in their area, they are asked to contact the Safer Communities Team on SCT@pkc.gov.uk.

**5. Fly-tipping support**

If fly-tipping on local land is a problem, the Council has established a Fly Tipping Fund for landowners and communities, to help clean up these areas – more information is available [here](https://www.pkc.gov.uk/article/21722/Fly-tipping-Fund)

**6. Litter**

If excess litter or bags at the side of the road are a problem, we can organise additional wheeled bin points to collect the litter. Please contact <https://my.pkc.gov.uk/MyServices> we will arrange regular collections from these points..

We can also help communities organise local litter picks, with support such as litter pickers and black bags. We will arrange to uplift the waste that the community collects as well. To arrange this please contact wasteawareness@pkc.gov.uk

**7. Communications Campaign**

As part of celebrating our beautiful area, and welcoming considerable visitors, we will establish a communications campaign to promote responsible camping, and respecting the area, including advice on good practice. There are many sources of such advice including [CAMPA](http://www.campa.org.uk/) (Campervan/ Motor Home Association) and the National Parks Authorities.

We are also developing a Frequently Asked Questions.

Promotion channels under consideration include social media, Council website, signage, information to campervan hire businesses and local shops.

The initial draft key messages for the campaign are:

* Perth and Kinross is one of the most beautiful areas in Scotland, and that’s why so many people visit us
* We warmly welcome responsible visitors
* Its important that we all play our part in keeping Perth and Kinross beautiful – visitors, communities, public services
* The actions of irresponsible visitors put people and our environment at risk, and could be breaking the law

**8. Public Toilets**

All Council run public toilets will be opened from 3 July, on a phased basis.

**9. Learning from others**

We will keep up to date with developments, best practice and emerging guidance from the Scottish Government, the National Parks Authorities, professional bodies and other Councils.

**10. Working with local communities**

We recognise that several community groups in affected areas have been proactive in responding to the challenges that irresponsible camping can present.

We would welcome the opportunity to work with these communities to explore what each of us could do to contribute to tackling these challenges. Other bodies have a role to play, including local landowners, business groups, Countryside Trusts and Community Councils.

We would like to bring these parties together to develop an understanding of what we are doing now, and what we could do together. Therefore we are looking to organise a (virtual) meeting with these communities At this stage, and to keep involvement to reasonable numbers, it is suggested that we target communities in areas identified in part 1 above. Depending on how that goes, and also the level of inappropriate behaviour in other areas, we could widen inclusion at a later stage.

We invite Elected Members and community groups to identify these parties that would be interested in being involved in this type of gathering, please contact Briony Glover on bglover@pkc.gov.uk with contact details.

**Other Actions**

Please note we are not considering the following actions at this stage:

* Byelaws for camping
* Alcohol bans

The reasons for this are:

* These activities have a lengthy implementation process (12-18 months) and require the demonstration of evidence in support of the proposal, extensive community consultation, as well as consideration/approval by the Scottish Government.
* They would require significant officer time to progress. At this stage, the priority is essential services to deal with the Covid 19 emergency, and there Is no additional capacity.
* Byelaws require significant ongoing resources to monitor and enforce. Camping byelaws require official campsites to be established, and operated (including charging). Again we do not have the resources to establish and operate these services.
* Even for areas that do have bye-laws (eg Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park), there have been ongoing problems with dirty camping and anti-social behaviour.

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