

National Park Authority Board Meeting



Visitor Experience Update

Paper for information

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This report provides a summary update on progress towards achieving Visitor Experience objectives and recent highlights (and lowlights, if any) since the last report to the Board.

2. Highlights

- 2.1. Our plans for marketing of the gateway building are going exceptionally well. The opportunity will be promoted using an enticing bespoke website and marketing brochure.
- 2.2. We are managing the gateway building and encouraging short term uses while redevelopment takes place.
- 2.3. Another exciting addition to the growing offer at Loch Lomond Shores is on track to open this spring. Building of the new ropes course on our orientation area at Loch Lomond Shores is now complete. This new attraction will provide a fantastic new quality family experience, the operator will be opening to the public at the beginning of April
- 2.4. The momentum of our Tourism Businesses Food and Drink event in partnership with Love Loch Lomond has continued and is delivering an inspiring programme of events for 2015 Year of Food and Drink and growing leadership from tourism businesses and business groups.

3. Lowlights

- 3.1 We did not receive a tender submission for operating waterbus services from Loch Lomond Shores lagoon pontoon. However we did received a number of expressions of interest and we have followed those up with the aim of ensuring that waterbus services are piloted from the pontoon in season 2015. Positively, a full schedule of daily cruise services is due to begin operation from the beginning of April and there is demand for usage for one off pickups for groups travelling to functions.

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4. National Park Partnership Plan outcome

- 4.1. A high quality, authentic experience for visitors, with many opportunities to appreciate and enjoy the natural and cultural heritage, within an internationally renowned landscape that compares to the best on offer around the world.

5. Corporate Plan outcome

- 5.1. Encourage and support improvement in the consistency and quality of service offerings to visitors to the Park.

6. Progress

- 6.1. Our new Tourism Manager Alex McCoskrie started in the team at the beginning of January. Alex brings a wealth of tourism experience to the team having previously worked for the Hadrian's Wall Trust and the tourist board in the Lake District.
- 6.2. The marketing for the gateway building will be launched in March. The marketing materials will be delivered directly to business operators and business associations to generate wide spread interest and target a wide range of operators. Pre the launch the opportunity has already begun to generate significant interest from potential operators. For our marketing we are working closely with Scottish Enterprise who are marketing the land around Lomond Shores for development during the same period. This partnership working approach is creating a larger promotional message and helping us both achieve our joint aims for the site.
- 6.3. Our 2015 visitor survey planning is now underway and surveying will begin in April, This survey will be a repeat of the 2011 survey with a target of 3000 cards and 800 email surveys. It will be used to obtain visitor feedback and measure changes since 2011, it will also be used to capture feedback on camping issues and help inform Your Park project. In addition we are planning other specific visitor research on waterbus services and at specific sites.
- 6.4. The review of the WHW a priority action in the National Park Plan is underway. A partners meeting of all interests took place in January to begin reviewing the West Highland Way management and begin developing a new long term plan to manage, maintain and develop Scotland's world famous most iconic long distance walk. The review process and finalisation of the 5 year plan is targeted for completion in the autumn when a paper will come to the Board.

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- 6.5. Over Christmas period the gateway building was used for craft events. We have now agreed a series of events for the season which will open the building at holiday weekends and busy times. These events will be managed by Loch Lomond Shores Management Company and include craft fairs, a Spring Festival over Easter with a pop up Willow Tea Rooms at Loch Lomond, a baronial banquet in May, a Scottish music event in August, a ceilidh as part of the Great Swim and Food from the National Park as part of Loch Lomond Food and Drink Festival in September. These events are designed to complement other activities at Loch Lomond and showcase the possibilities of the building. To provide information to visitors we are working closely with Visit Scotland at their VIC and will have the exhibition trailer on site at peak times.
- 6.6. The Food and Drink events programme for 2015 takes in Mhor Festival Springfest Scotland at Lomond Shores, Lade Inn Beer Festival, Loch Lomond Food & Drink Festival, (Food from the National Park) and the World Soup Championships! A innovative pop up restaurant is being developed to host pop ups dining in unique scenic locations in Park and could provide an opportunity to host National Park pop outside the Park at strategic events and locations.
- 6.7. The Great Scottish Swim planning is progressing well for 2015. The swim will take place on 29th August. Entries were approaching 1000 by mid February and are ahead of the equivalent last year.
- 6.8. The long term tenant of the Kiosk on Luss Pier has recently retired. There is now an opportunity to review the uses for the kiosk and its role in promoting waterbus services and other activities on Loch Lomond. The building will be tendered for an operator for season 2015 while plans are developed.
- 6.9. Our project to work with Stirling Council to make improvements to Ancaster Square in Callander is coming to a conclusion. The aim of the project which emerged from the Callander Charette was to reduce the clutter in the square, more flexible space to encourage events, to be more of a focus for visitors and to provide information on what to do and see in and around Callander. Updated new street furniture, orientation panel and community notice board are in the process of being installed and existing street lighting etc is being refurbished. It is due to be completed by the end of March.
- 6.10. The consents for two of the three final threshold signs are all in place and applications for consents for the third sign are being progressed. Two are due for install by the end

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of March and third once consents are approved. Signage in Balloch is also due to be in place by the end of March.

- 6.11. The updating of visitor facing content for our website is now underway. As part of this project we are working with Reaction and Access team to provide improved information on walking, cycling and other land and water activities in the Park.
- 6.12. Our visitor site at Lubnaig will open for all facilities including camping and motorhome stop overs from the end of March. We are working with the tenant to examine ways of providing a little more shelter in inclement weather for visitors using the site.

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