

# Annual Report

**2014 – 2015**





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# Failtè

Tron bhliadhna, lean ar n-obair le raon farsaing de chom-pàirtichean agus rinn sinn adhartas nach bu bheag air na trì raointean prìomhachais againn: Glèidhteachas, Na Dh'fhiosraicheas Luchd-tadhail agus Leasachadh Dùthchail.

Tha fòcas againn air dèanamh cinnteach gun cuidich an obair againn gus Alba a dhèanamh na dùthaich nas soirbheachaile. Tha fios tron Aithisg Bhliadhnail seo air na diofar gnìomhan againn am-bliadhna is air na prìomh rudan a choilean sinn, is air mar a tha iad ceangailte ris na h-amasan nàiseanta 'Scotland Performs'.

Tha glèidhteachas aig cridhe a h-uile rud a nì sinn agus tràth ann an 2014, dh'aontaich am Bòrd againn ri Pàirc Fhiadhaich 2020 – lèirsinn agus plana gnìomha àrd-amasach airson glèidhteachas nàdair. Agus sinn a-nis a' gluasad air adhart do na h-ìrean libhrigidh, bidh soirbheas Pàirc Fhiadhaich 2020 a' crochadh air com-pàirteachas dlùth le farsaingeachd de dh' uachdarain, buidhnean coimhearsnachd agus buidhnean eile.

Chùm sinn oirnn cur ri fàs eaconomaidh na turasachd an dà chuid aig an ìre ionadail agus an ìre nàiseanta, tro bhith a' tàladh tachartasan mòra cliùiteach mar Snàmh Mòr na h-Alba, a thug 2,500 snàmh-dair gu cladaichean Loch Laomainn – an àireamh as àirde riamh.

Chaidh Loch Laomainn is na Tròisichean a thaghadh cuideachd mar làrach airson pròiseactan pileatach airson iomairt Slighean Àlainn na h-Alba agus mar thoradh air seo, tha ceithir ionadan-adhairc mìorbhaileach anns a' Phàirc Nàiseanta a-nis, a chaidh a chruthachadh le ceithir ailtirean òga tàlantach. Chomharraich Pàircean Nàiseanta na h-Alba ceud bliadhna bho chaochail Iain Muir agus Bliadhna an Tilleadh Dhachaigh le co-labhairt aig àrd-ìre far an do bhruidhinn luchd-labhairt mu na dùbhlain is cothroman a th' aig na h-àiteachan glèidhte againn san 21mh linn.

Tha e na phrìomhachas dhuinn cuideachd a bhith ag àrdachadh inbhe nan goireasan is nan làraichean do luchd-tadhail agus anns an Dàmhair chùim sinn co-chomhairle phoblach a mhair dà sheachdain dheug air A' Phàirc Agaibh – prògram gus na dh'fhiosraicheas luchd-turais a leasachadh agus gus àiteachan a dhion bho mhilleadh bho chus cleachdadh agus bho dhol a-mach mì-shòisealta. Bha an àireamh de dhaoine a ghabh pàirt fìor mhath is fhuair eadhon is 300 freagairt dhan cho-chomhairle.

Tha an sgioba dealbhadh againn fhathast trang agus iad ag obair gu cruaidh gus cothromachadh eadar leasachadh dùthchail, air a bheil feum agus aig a bheil buannachd, agus an obair dheanamh againn a bhith a' glèidheadh dualchas nàdair beartach na sgìre.

Tha na coimhearsnachdan beòthail againn nam prìomhachas dhuinn cuideachd agus sa Giblean 2014, thoisich sinn air na prìomh cheumannan ann an ullachadh a' Phlana Leasachaidh Ionadail ùir againn, leis a' Bhòrd ag aontachadh ri LIVE Park – co-chomhairle mhòr a' coimhead air an obair leasachaidh a bhios a dhìth gus a' phàirc a dhèanamh na dheagh àite airson còmhnaidh (living), cur-an-seilbh (investing), tadhail (visiting) is fiosrachadh (experiencing).

Tro bhith ag obair gu dlùth leis na com-pàirtichean againn, tha sinn fhathast a' soirbheachadh airson na Pàirce Nàiseanta agus a coimhearsnachdan dùthchail. Anns na mìosan ri tighinn, togaidh sinn air na dàimhean seo agus sinn ag obair còmhla gus an eaconomaidh ionadail a neartachadh agus gus a' cheàrn sònraichte seo de dh'Alba a dhion.

**Linda NicAoidh**  
Neach-gairm

**Gòrdan Watson**  
Ceannard

# Welcome

Throughout the year we continued to work with a wide range of partners and achieved considerable progress on our three outcomes of Conservation, Visitor Experience and Rural Development.

The various activities and key achievements within these areas and how they tie in to the 'Scotland Performs' national outcomes, are highlighted throughout this Annual Report.

Raising the standard of our visitor sites and facilities remains a key focus for us and in October we held a 12 week public consultation on Your Park - a programme to enhance the visitor experience in the National Park and protect areas which are suffering from damage caused by overuse and antisocial behavior. Participation was excellent with more than 300 consultation responses received.

Conservation is firmly at the heart of everything we do and in early 2014 our Board approved Wild Park 2020 - our ambitious vision and action plan for nature conservation.

As we move in to the delivery stages, the success of Wild Park 2020 relies on our close partnership with a wide range of other agencies, landowners and community organisations.

Our busy planning team continue to work hard to balance the benefits and need for rural development, with our crucial role of conserving the rich natural heritage of the area.

The future of our vibrant communities remains a key focus for us and in April 2014 we took the first steps in preparing for our new Local Development Plan, with the Board approving LIVE Park - a major consultation on the future development of the National Park.

Through close collaboration with our partners we continue to achieve success for the National Park and its rural communities. Over the coming months we will build upon these relationships as we work together to strengthen the local economy and safeguard this very special part of Scotland.

**Linda McKay**  
Convener  
Loch Lomond & The Trossachs  
National Park Authority

**Gordon Watson**  
Chief Executive Officer





“  
**Our mission...  
 is to be the  
 vital force in  
 protecting  
 and enhancing  
 this iconic  
 National Park**  
 ”

## Our vision

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority is an effective organisation of passionate people who inspire our communities, visitors and partners to work with us to enhance and promote this iconic National Park.

## Our aims

The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 sets our four aims:

- To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area
- To promote the sustainable use of the natural resources of the area
- To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public
- To promote sustainable social and economic development of the communities of the area.

Within the National Park Authority we encapsulate these aims into our three priority outcomes:

### Conservation



### Visitor Experience



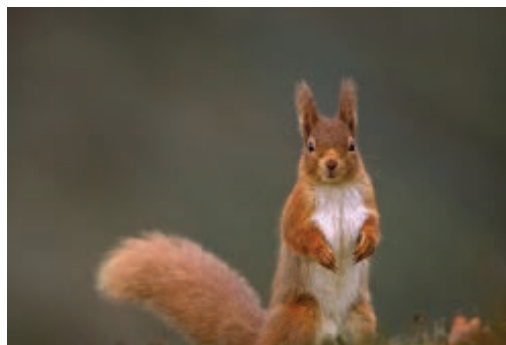
### Rural Development







# Our focus areas



## Conservation

An internationally renowned landscape where the natural beauty, ecology and the cultural heritage are positively managed and enhanced for future generations.



## Rural Development

In the National Park, businesses and communities thrive and people live and work sustainably in a high quality environment.



## Visitor Experience

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.



## Corporate Services

Ensuring effective, efficient and innovative use of our resources to deliver the National Park Authority's services to the highest standard.

## Commercial Development

Support the funding of our Conservation, Visitor Experience and Rural Development objectives through the identification and implementation of sustainable commercial development opportunities.



# Our values

Our values are our moral compass; they help guide how we make decisions. The ideals and ethics that we hold dear as an organisation are:

**Passion**  
we love what we do

**Leadership**  
we show the way

**Inspiring**  
we spark ideas for action

**Caring**  
we respect the past and shape the future

**Accessible**  
we are approachable, open and friendly

**Green**  
we do the right thing for the Park and the planet



# Our priorities

## Delivering new Scottish Government priorities

All of our plans are aligned to the priorities of the Scottish Government. Its Programme for Government 2014-15 emphasises three main themes:

- **Creating more, better paid jobs in a strong, sustainable economy**
- **Building a fairer Scotland and tackling inequality**
- **Passing power to people and communities**



### In particular we will support:

- Our young people through encouraging innovation in rural employment and skills development
- A strong, fair and inclusive society through awarding contracts to companies paying the living wage and showcasing our equal opportunities policy to continue to deliver gender equality throughout our workforce
- Living longer, healthier lives by encouraging increased participation in the Park through the delivery of our Outdoor Recreation Plan, John Muir Awards, Your Park, outdoor learning partnership working and outreach projects
- Strong, resilient and supportive communities by supporting them to take advantage of the new measures proposed in the Community Empowerment Bill and the Land Reform Bill when enacted.

## Scotland Performs National Outcomes

The Scottish Government's Purpose is:

***"to focus Government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth"***

The Scottish Government has set out sixteen National Outcomes which describe what it wants to achieve over the next ten years. These outcomes help to sharpen the focus of government, enable its priorities to be clearly understood and provide a clear structure for delivery.

By achieving these outcomes together, we will make Scotland a better place to live and a more prosperous and successful country.



Throughout this document you will find the Scottish Government outcomes we directly contribute to, highlighted by these icons at the start of each section. They are:



We realise our full economic potential with more and better **employment opportunities** for our people.



We have strong, resilient and supportive **communities** where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.



We live longer, **healthier lives**.



Our **young people** are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.



We reduce the local and global **environmental impact** of our consumption and production.



We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive **national identity**.



We value and enjoy our built and natural **environment** and protect it and enhance it for future generations.



Our **public services** are high quality, continually improving, efficient and respond to local people's needs.



We live in well-designed, **sustainable places** where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.

We will continue to measure our performance against the 10 (out of 16) Scotland Performs National Outcomes where the National Park can and does make a significant contribution.



# Our partners

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority is dedicated to delivering for the people of Scotland. We strive to make a difference and we firmly believe we're better able to do that by working together.

We take a partnership approach to making things happen and we're proud of the results we deliver, together, for this very special part of Scotland. The work we do would not be possible without the cooperation and participation of a wide and varied range of key partners, from other Government agencies and our four Local Authority partners, to business and landowners, and community organisations and voluntary groups.

## Key public sector partners



**Scottish Natural Heritage**  
All of nature for all of Scotland

**Scottish Natural Heritage's** work is about caring for the natural heritage, enabling people to enjoy it, helping people to understand and appreciate it, and supporting those who manage it.



**SEPA**  
Scottish Environment  
Protection Agency

**Scottish Environment Protection Agency** is Scotland's environmental regulator. Its main role is to protect and improve the environment.



**Forestry Commission Scotland**  
Coimisean na Coilltearachd Alba

The mission of **Forestry Commission Scotland** is to protect and expand Scotland's forests and woodlands and increase their value to society and the environment.



**Police Scotland** deliver an effective service to the communities of Scotland, ensuring that they live their lives free from crime, disorder and danger.



**West  
Dunbartonshire  
COUNCIL**

The National Park is covered by four local authorities: **Argyll & Bute, Perth & Kinross, Stirling and West Dunbartonshire Councils**. Each provides a range of services to their residents including education, environmental services, housing, leisure facilities.



**HISTORIC SCOTLAND**  
ALBA AOSMHOR

**Historic Scotland** is an executive agency of the Scottish Government and is charged with safeguarding the nation's historic environment and promoting its understanding and enjoyment on behalf of Scottish Ministers.



**Scottish Enterprise**

**Scottish Enterprise's** job is identifying and exploiting the opportunities for economic growth by supporting Scottish companies to compete, helping to build globally competitive sectors, attracting new investment and creating a world-class business environment.

**sportscotland**

**sportscotland** is the lead agency for the development of sport in Scotland, investing expertise, time and public money in developing a world-class sporting system at all levels.



**TRANSPORT  
SCOTLAND**  
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

**Transport Scotland** is the national transport agency for Scotland and is responsible for rail and trunk road networks and major public transport projects.



**Visit  
Scotland**

**VisitScotland** works closely with private businesses, public agencies and local authorities, to ensure that visitors experience the very best of Scotland and that the country makes the most of its outstanding tourism assets.

## Other key partners

### Community

- National Park Community Partnership
- Community Councils
- Community Development Trusts

### Representative bodies and third sector

Environment Link and specifically land-owning non-government organisations in the Park.

- RSPB Scotland
- National Trust for Scotland
- Woodland Trust Scotland
- Scottish Land & Estates
- National Farmers Union of Scotland

### Private Sector

- National Park Destination Group
- Land managers
- Local destination and trade groups, businesses

To each and every partner who helped us protect and enhance Loch Lomond & The Trossachs in 2014-15, we thank you and look forward to continuing working together to deliver for the National Park in 2015-16 and beyond.



# Conservation

Our work in Conservation is focused on protecting and enhancing the National Park's iconic landscapes and wildlife that form such a key part of Scotland's strong national identity, helping ensure that opportunities are there for people to truly engage with and experience nature.

## Delivering against Scottish Government Outcomes







## Our contribution to Scotland's biodiversity

In August, we took the Park to the people, launching Wild Park 2020 in the middle of Glasgow Queen Street train station. Our former Environment Minister Paul Wheelhouse MSP officially launched 'Wild Park 2020' - our ambitious new biodiversity action plan and our contribution to 'Scotland's Biodiversity - a Route Map to 2020'.



Of the almost 100 Wild Park projects, our partners have agreed five Wild Challenges as the most important to achieve 'Big Steps for Nature' in the National Park by 2020. To make these Wild Challenges accessible to as wide a range of people as possible we developed the innovative and much-admired 'Tales from Our Wild Park' book.

## Our Wild Challenges



Scotland's peat bogs store ten times the carbon of all of Britain's forests combined, helping our fight against climate change, so it's vitally important we look after them.



By blocking eroded gullies and re-vegetating bare peat, we're looking after our bogs, not only as excellent carbon stores but as habitats in their own right, ensuring they help us combat climate change for generations to come.

Throughout the year we worked with Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Government's Green Stimulus Fund to enable peatland restoration at Luss Estates on west Loch Lomond and at the Scotland's Rural College site at Kirkton Farm in Strathfillan.



We partnered with the River Forth Fisheries Trust, to train and mobilise teams of conservation volunteers to take preventative measures to control invasive non-native species like Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam, giant hogweed and skunk cabbage that are threatening to take over parts of the headwaters of the rivers Forth and Teith. Our own staff co-ordinate a similar volunteer-led approach in the Tay catchment within the Park.



We reinforced our commitment to defending the front-line of red squirrel conservation by continuing our support of the local 'Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels' Project Officer. This successful partnership approach continues to increase the distribution of red squirrels in the National Park.

In the year ahead we will also make progress by:



Exploring opportunities to manage and create woodland where it will improve habitat connectivity and resilience to a changing climate.



Co-ordinating the landscape-scale collaborative conservation projects required to look after this spectacular and iconic bird.

SCOTLAND'S  
PEAT BOGS RETAIN

10x

THE CARBON OF ALL OF  
BRITAIN'S FORESTS  
COMBINED







## Connecting people to nature

We continued our partnership with RSPB Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage to develop and deliver the Management Plan for the RSPB Loch Lomond Reserve.

Most significantly in this year, we jointly funded a new access track on to the Reserve - a vital step in unlocking its true potential as a resource for education and volunteering, improving the lives of local communities and visitors from Scotland's central belt and further afield.

## Supporting our land managers

We are working closely with land managers to secure conservation and ensure the long-term sustainable use of land.

We continued the roll-out of our bespoke business planning service with the aim of improving the economic and environmental sustainability of land-based businesses in order to support the integrated land use practices that deliver Park aims and the aspirations of the Land Reform Bill.

We have now funded and co-ordinated the development of six Whole Farm or Whole Estate Plans, taking a uniquely holistic and integrated view of the opportunities that the land and land managers have to deliver optimum levels of public benefit whilst achieving a viable economic return.



## Helping land-based businesses to grow

In June we organised 'Grow Your Potential', a very successful networking event hosted at our headquarters in Balloch. We were delighted that the Scott-Parks, owners of Portnellan Farm (see Case Study on next page), agreed to be one of eight guest speakers at the event. Over 70 participants from the land-based sector attended the free event, benefiting from sharing ideas, hearing directly from Scottish Government on proposed Common Agricultural Policy changes and learning about the advantages of forward planning for their businesses and National Park projects with which they could become involved. Excellent presentations and plenty of networking

opportunities created a fantastic buzz on the day, raising the profile of integrated land management planning and the opportunities available to land-based businesses in the National Park.



## CASE STUDY WHOLE FARM PLANS

### Sustainable business planning – Looking to the future

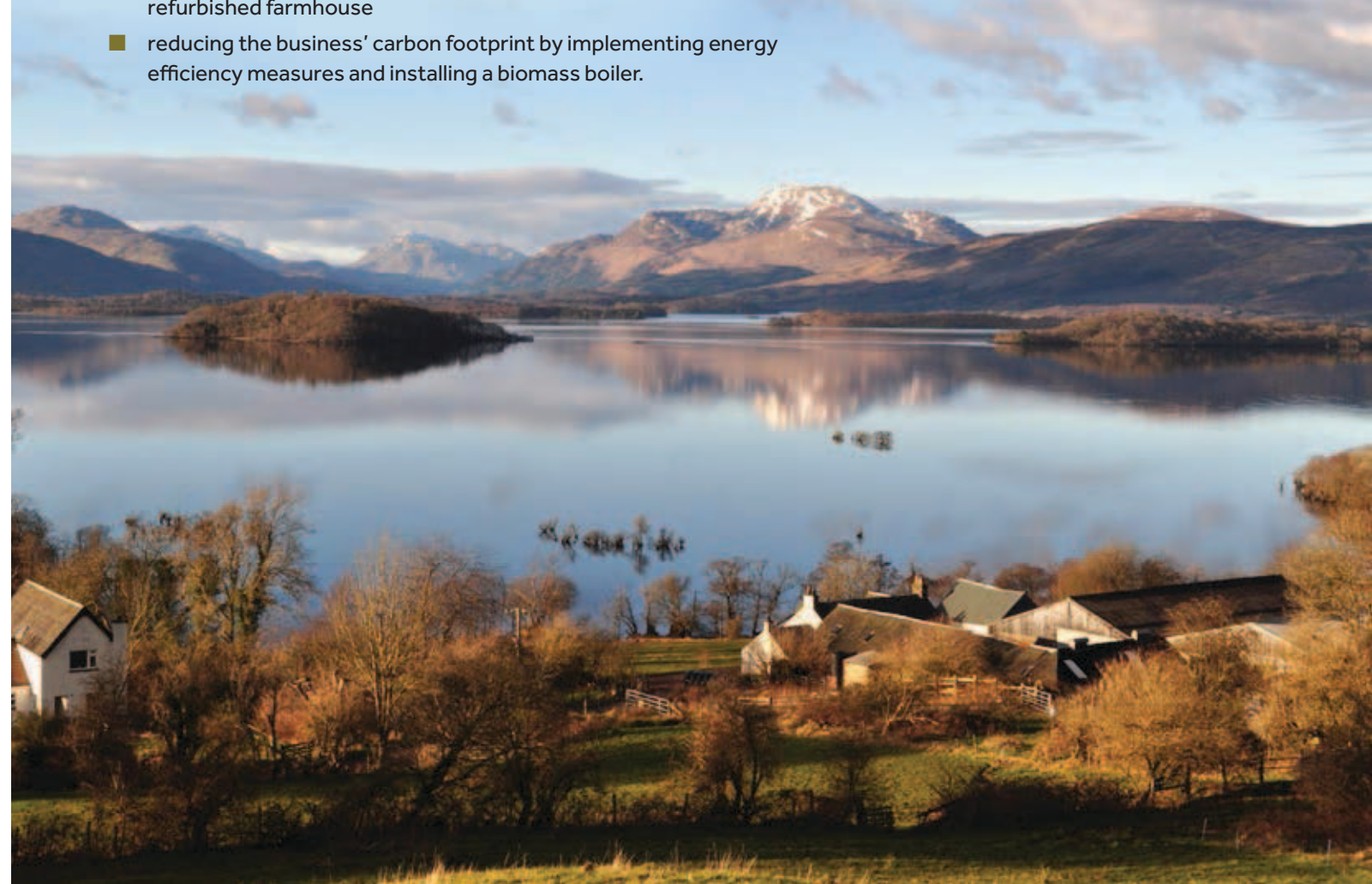
Portnellan Farm is a 94 hectare livestock farm in a stunning location on the south shore of Loch Lomond, owned and managed by the Scott-Park family.

The scale of the holding and capability of the land means it is difficult to make a living only from agriculture, meaning little potential for reinvestment in delivering public benefit outcomes. The Scott-Parks worked with our Land Management Advisers to develop a Whole Farm Plan that has embedded entrepreneurialism, innovation and resilience into the business and subsequently encouraged both private and public investment in:

- increasing efficiencies in farming and food production whilst enhancing the environmental status of the holding
- protecting and restoring key habitats and landscape features such as hedgerows, field boundary trees, watercourses and loch-shore woodland
- enhancing the local tourist offering through a diversification into high-quality self-catering accommodation, including yurts and a refurbished farmhouse
- reducing the business' carbon footprint by implementing energy efficiency measures and installing a biomass boiler.



The collaborative business planning approach to developing these ideas and seeing them through has encouraged the next generation of the family to become more involved. Son and daughter, Chris and Ginny, have now both taken on active roles in shaping the long-term future of the business, including expanding on the tourism venture by setting up activity-based enterprises, overhauling the website and increasing social media presence.





# Visitor Experience

Our focus in Visitor Experience is to provide a high quality, authentic experience for our visitors, ensuring there are many opportunities to appreciate and enjoy the rich natural and cultural heritage of the area.

## Delivering against Scottish Government Outcomes







## Growing the Scottish economy

Tourism plays a crucial role in enhancing the economy of our rural communities. Every year more than 4 million people come here to take in the spectacular scenery, get closer to nature, and enjoy the great outdoors. Whether it's walking, cycling, canoeing, or simply to admire the magnificent views there are plenty of activities on offer.

The tourism sector is continually changing and growing, and the National Park has attracted a number of private sector investments over the past year.

**The most notable investments were:**



### Accommodation

Brewer Marstons invested £3 million, opening the Queen of the Loch inn and motel in Balloch, creating 60 new jobs.



### Loch Lomond Shores

Two new visitor attractions opened their doors at Loch Lomond Shores this year on land leased by the National Park with 12 jobs created.



### Infrastructure

The National Park Authority in partnership with Scottish Enterprise, invested in visitor infrastructure with a new £500,000 pontoon serving Loch Lomond Shores with up to five loch cruises daily and the opportunity for waterbus services.

### Glasgow Airport

Working with the National Park Tourism Destination Group and an innovative partnership with Glasgow Airport, we installed an immersive experience of the National Park, prior to the Commonwealth Games, in the arrivals area of Glasgow airport. This highly engaging sound and vision experience promoting the Park has been seen by over 3 million passengers arriving in Scotland.



## Boosting the local economy

We're fortunate that Loch Lomond was the venue for the Great Scottish Swim for a second year. A sell out event where 2,500 swimmers of all abilities took on the personal challenge of swimming half, 1 or 2 miles of open water, while being cheered on by more than 8,000 supporters.

As well as being a unique opportunity to get fit and keep healthy, the Great Scottish Swim is great for tourism in Scotland, with 57% of participants coming from outside the country and many staying a number of nights to exploring the natural beauty of the National Park and beyond.

National media coverage on television and in press was extensive and helped to build awareness of the destination.

Building on the success of the Great Scottish Swim we are proud to have secured Loch Lomond as the venue for the 2018 European Open Water Swimming Championships.

## Helping people explore the National Park

To make it easier for visitors to explore more, stay longer and have a greater impact on the local economy, the National Park Authority worked with cruise operators to introduce point-to-point services across Loch Lomond.

The combination of a loch trip with other activities has proved popular and throughout the year the number of routes and frequency of services for the Loch Lomond Waterbus peaked. An innovative combined ticket was introduced, bringing together cruises on Loch Lomond and Loch Katrine and tying in to Stirling Council's 'Demand Response Transport' initiative.



**Visitors generate more than £150 million for the area's economy and help secure around 6,000 jobs throughout the National Park.**





## Valuing and enjoying our natural environment

2014 was the centenary of the death of John Muir – a founding father of National Parks. Two key events took place throughout the year to celebrate his life and his conservation ethos.

In April a new 134-mile route the 'John Muir Way' linking east and west coasts and passing through the National Park was launched. This long distance path encourages visitors and locals alike to connect with the countryside, wildlife, history and heritage.



The John Muir Conference took place in May, bringing attendees from across the world to debate the role of National Parks in a modern world, and how best to manage these protected areas. Discussions around protection and conservation, and nurturing thriving communities made the conference an ideal platform for a variety of stakeholders to share challenges and opportunities.

Keynote speakers Jason Leitch (National Clinical Director, Healthcare Quality, Scottish Government) and Louise MacDonald, OBE (Chief Executive, Young Scot) left delegates with a powerful challenge to consider:

**What can our National Parks do to improve opportunities and outcomes for young people and to improve the nation's health?**

We were inspired by this challenge so in 2015 and beyond we are committed to taking action to help National Parks make a difference to these critical



## CASE STUDY SCOTTISH SCENIC ROUTES

### Nurturing design talent to deliver iconic viewpoints



The Scottish Scenic Routes initiative was launched in June 2013 by Richard Lochhead MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and the Environment.

The aims of the initiative include to:

- Enhance the visitor experience of Scotland's landscape by creating innovatively designed viewpoints in areas of outstanding scenery
- Enhance and sustain rural economies and rural employment
- Attract private sector investment in the tourism industry
- Harness our design talent, in particular to support newly graduated or recently qualified architects.

Inspired by the National Tourist Routes programme in Norway, the Scottish Scenic Routes initiative seeks to develop our own uniquely Scottish model to enhance, promote and develop our international appeal and reputation.

While a national strategy is being developed, a series of pilot projects were undertaken to test the ideas behind the initiative. The proposals for each site in the first of these pilot projects were selected through a design competition open to newly graduated or recently qualified Architects and Landscape Architects.

The winning designs were selected for installation at popular visitor destinations across Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park and in June 2014 three of the viewpoints were unveiled at the following sites:

- Loch Lubnaig – Sloc nan Sitheanach (Faerie Hollow), designed by Ruairidh Moir
- Falls of Falloch – Woven Sound, designed by John Kennedy
- Balquhiddie Glen – LookOut, designed by Daniel Tyler and Angus Ritchie.

Situated off the A82 and A84, each of these bespoke designs complement the surrounding landscape and enhance the visitor experience by offering magical viewpoints which have been created by the very best of Scotland's architecture talent.





# Visitor Management

Our work in Visitor Management continues to focus on ensuring we have the necessary infrastructure and facilities that help provide a world-class welcome to our growing visitor numbers, ensuring the National Park is an enjoyable and safe place to visit.

**Delivering against Scottish Government Outcomes**







## Protecting our natural assets

In October we held a 12-week high profile public consultation on Your Park - a programme to enhance the visitor experience in the National Park and to improve our most cherished lochshores which are suffering from damaging overuse and the irresponsible behaviour of some.

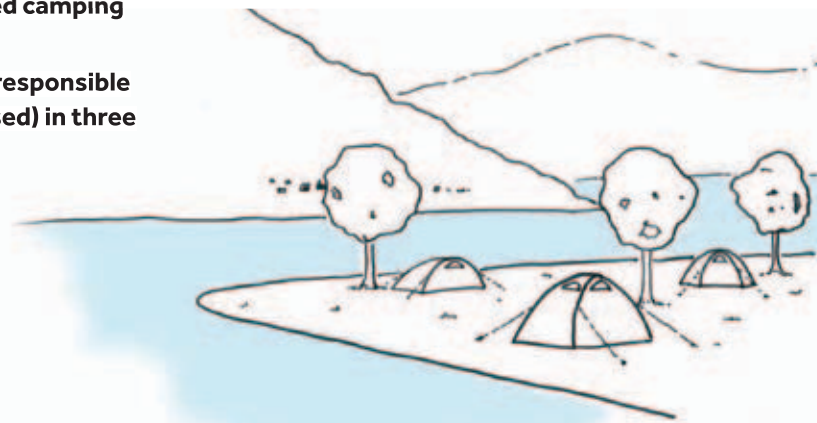
On a busy day we have recorded more than:



At the heart of the Your Park proposals is a desire to improve the camping experience in the National Park and to encourage people to come and make the most of the outdoors here. At the moment, the experience on some of our lochshores is far from the world-class experience visitors would expect in a National Park. We want to make sure there are a better and wider range of opportunities to camp across the National Park, with the right facilities in place.

The Your Park consultation sought views on proposed management zones covering less than 5% of the National Park. Specifically we asked for views on:

1. Proposed investment and opportunities for improved camping provision
2. Proposed camping management byelaws (covering responsible behaviour, camping and managing how laybys are used) in three proposed Management Zones.



## Supporting accessible recreation

The Outdoor Recreation Plan was approved by the National Park Board in June 2013 and outlines commitments and intentions held by all stakeholders that will enhance outdoor recreation and access opportunities across the Park over the next five years.

Throughout the year we:

- Continued to support the Loch Lomond & Trossachs Countryside Trust in delivering the 'Walk in the Park' project, helping people sustain and improve their health.
- Launched the Park Mobility Scooter project, promoting free use of mobility scooters at Balloch bus stance scooter station and outside our headquarters in Balloch.



- Continued to work on a number of strategic community links, including completion of a new cycle path linking Strathyre and Kingshouse. All the routes help connect rural communities and encourage communities and visitors to be more active in the Park.
- Carried out design and feasibility work was also undertaken on all-abilities links between Croftamie and Drymen and between Immervoulin caravan park and Strathyre village.



- Supported the opening of the Aberfoyle mountain bike track. The track is managed by Bike Trossachs, who are a not-for-profit community company, whose aims include improving infrastructure and increasing participation at all levels.

Joint working between our Access & Recreation, Planning and Estates teams helped support this Sportscotland (Legacy 2014 Active Places Fund) and LEADER funded project.





## Supporting outdoor learning

The landscapes of the National Park provide a fantastic opportunity to deliver the Curriculum for Excellence through outdoor learning.

Our work continues to focus on supporting children, young people and outreach groups to have opportunities to engage with and learn about nature.

Our strong partnership with the John Muir Trust enables us to have a key role in facilitating John Muir Awards in the National Park.



**SUPPORTED  
71 SCHOOLS  
THROUGHOUT  
SCOTLAND**

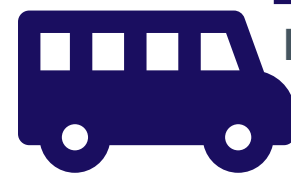


**ENGAGING**



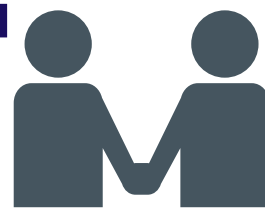
**2,500  
CHILDREN AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE**

**AWARDED £3,000**



**IN TRAVEL  
GRANTS**

**Supported  
15  
outreach groups**



## Teaching in nature

We continue to work closely with SNH and local authorities to deliver a Continued Professional Learning programme called Teaching in Nature.

Teaching in Nature is a structured approach to professional development in outdoor learning. It supports groups of teachers to work together to use a nearby place that is special for nature to plan, implement and evaluate relevant, challenging and fun outdoor learning experiences for their pupils. It combines collaborative, practical and online learning to support teachers throughout their experience.

'Teaching in Nature' continues to go from strength to strength and through the year we were able to support 15 teachers across West Dunbartonshire to take part in the programme.



We help facilitate the next stage in the Teaching in Nature programme through leading school and group visits in the National Park and have received positive feedback about the experience and its benefits to those involved.

**Thank you to the Rangers. Your expertise and knowledge of the area covered all aspects of the unit we are studying. Pupils always enjoy when outside agencies or specialists talk to them about a topic and your enthusiasm for the Park rubbed off on them. They are all keen to come back in the summer holidays.**

*Geography Teacher, Mearns Castle High School*

**I felt like I learned much more about the issues facing the National Park - the positive results have been seen in my class today as the pupils discussed land use conflicts and made reference to conflicts and camping Byelaws**

*Geography teacher,  
St. Maurice's High School, Cumbernauld*

**This was an excellent opportunity for learners to explore Inchcailloch. The Rangers provided interesting and relevant activities and discussion points to engage all. Thank you**

*Callander Primary School*



## Our people on the ground

National Park rangers continued to provide essential patrols on land and water across the Park, providing information and assistance, ensuring visitors remained safe and behaved responsibly.

**1,459**  
RANGER PATROLS IN  
**2014-15**



Our partnership with Police Scotland continues to grow through Operation Ironworks and 460 hours of additional policing was funded in the Park, specifically aimed at addressing issues associated with antisocial behaviour.

We have also continued to support a seconded police officer and two special constables through the Employer Supported policing scheme.



## Our dedicated volunteers

As ever, the number of people keen to volunteer with the National Park is fantastic. This year our volunteers gave more than 11,000 hours to support the delivery of the National Park Partnership Plan outcomes.

Involving volunteers in the work of the National Park not only gives our volunteers an opportunity to develop an increased understanding and awareness of the National Park Authority and what we do, but also to give something back to an area they love.

We have around 150 volunteers registered with half focussed on visitor engagement through their role as Volunteer Rangers, the others focussed on conservation tasks.



## CASE STUDY DEAF BLIND SCOTLAND

### Helping everyone to make the most of the Park

The National Park works in partnership with DeafBlind Scotland to support their members to climb Conic Hill annually. It's one of the most iconic hills in Scotland standing 350 feet over Loch Lomond and sitting on the highland boundary fault.

Conic Hill is steep in sections, covers rough terrain and narrow paths and includes a number of steps. The climb normally takes a good hour with spectacular views of Loch Lomond as a reward.

In 2014 a group from DeafBlind Scotland set themselves a massive challenge to conquer Conic Hill. What made the achievement even more special was that all of the members have dual sensory loss affecting communication, mobility and intake of information making the simplest of steps challenging. The group were joined by specialist communicators, guide and hearing dogs and National Park Rangers who helped them step by step up the hill to the summit. Information was also provided to the climbers in Braille, Moon, an alternative form of tactile communication, large print and audio.

*DeafBlind Scotland is delighted to have offered DeafBlind people the opportunity to take on the walk up Conic hill. This was not an easy task for our members given their sensory impairment. It is hoped that the challenge will inspire other deafblind people to get out and about and enjoy Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park.*

*DeafBlind people can spend many hours isolated in their own homes as a result of their sensory impairments, however I am always inspired by their determination to take on new challenges.*

*Suzanne Abbate, Operations Manager with DeafBlind Scotland*

All of the information in the National Park Visitor Centre, Balmaha is available in Braille, Moon, audio, British Sign Language and large print making it accessible. The interpretive panels have also been translated into a number of other languages, enabling more visitors to engage with the National Park.





**Living  
Investing  
Visiting  
Experiencing**

**LIVE  
PARK**

# Rural Development

Our work in Rural Development covers our role as a Planning Authority and has a strong focus on supporting our vibrant communities, as well as promoting and safeguarding our unique built heritage.

**Delivering against Scottish Government Outcomes**







## Supporting our vibrant communities

Over the last year we continued to support community organisations in the National Park and through enabling our communities to deliver their own projects, helped them deliver many successful projects on the ground.

We facilitate this through our support to community organisations, including Development Trusts and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Community Partnership.

Throughout the year the National Park Skills Partnership, led by the Community Partnership continued to help our young people into work. The Skills Partnership's aims are to help young people gain access to meaningful training and employment opportunities in local food production, tourism, hospitality, as well as land based industries such as farming, forestry, horticulture, landscaping and traditional building skills.

ENGAGED  
**550**  
YOUNG PEOPLE

**58**  
INDIVIDUALS  
TRAINED  
LEARNING  
NEW SKILLS

**5**  
TRAINING  
COURSES  
DELIVERED

INITIATED  
**3**  
PILOT  
PROJECTS

ENABLED  
**26**  
MODERN  
APPRENTICESHIPS

**14**  
NEW JOBS  
CREATED  
TOURISM | VOLUNTARY  
LAND | FOOD | SECTORS

ENGAGED  
**111**  
BUSINESSES



### Community Grant Scheme

Our Community Grant Scheme continued to provide financial support to Community Development Trusts across the Park. 24 grants were awarded to 16 community organisations to a total value of £20,000.

**Other notable outcomes are:**  
Our core funding of the Community Partnership continued, helping to secure updated Community Action Plans for four communities in the National Park.

#### Our support helped deliver:

Callander Community Hydro Scheme  
Historic Kilmun (Argyll Mausoleum)  
Loch Earn Access Project  
Gartmore Village Hall  
Callander SummerFest  
Funding to restore Luss Hogback Stone

## Protecting our historic environment

The historic built environment contributes significantly to the special qualities of the National Park and we work hard to protect and enhance it through:

- **Effective planning policy by drafting the new Proposed Local Development Plan**
- **The use of our Built Heritage Repair Grant**
- **Specific planning guidance to raise awareness of the historic built environment and to assist anyone proposing to carry out works to our listed buildings or properties in conservation areas.**



## Supporting our built heritage

The Built Heritage Repair Grant aims to support property owners in the sympathetic repair of their traditional buildings, supporting local communities to undertake restoration of their local built heritage.

### What did the Built Heritage Repair Grant achieve in 2014/15

28 valid applications were received

Nine grants were awarded

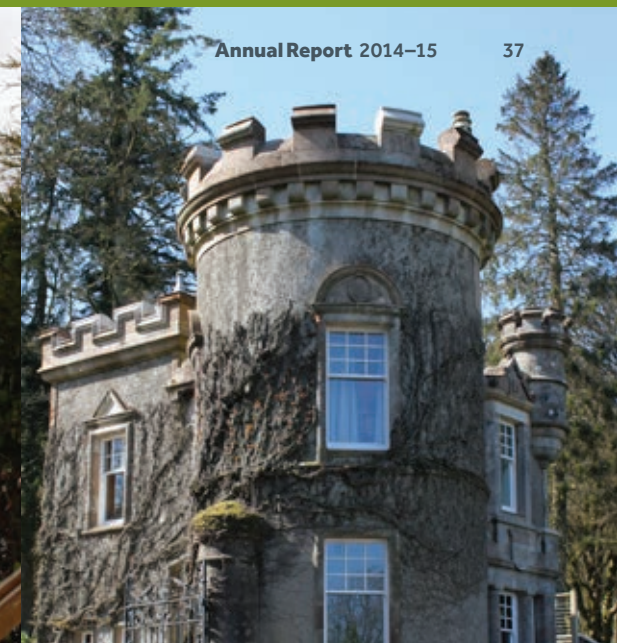
Eight of the projects were located in conservation areas, four of which related to listed buildings and one to a scheduled monument

Seven projects were successfully completed

One project is ongoing as a result of issues with the condition of a listed building

**Total funding awarded £17,000**

In addition to this, match funding of £4,400 was awarded to restore the Hogback Stone in Luss which had received an indicative Ancient Monument Grant from Historic Scotland. Funding will also help pay for additional interpretation at the site.







## Planning for the future

In our role as a Planning Authority, we continue to deliver our outcomes through our work to maintain an up-to-date Local Development Plan, determining planning applications and promoting the development opportunities that are available.

## Innovation in planning

In April 2014 we launched LIVE Park, our ambitious consultation which aimed to seek the views of our communities, residents and business as well as anyone who is interested in the future physical development of the National Park.

The consultation ran for 11 weeks from April to July and we engaged with a wide range of people including schools, young people and businesses using a variety of techniques from community events, short videos, highly visual ideas and social media.

The campaign generated lots of energy and enthusiasm about how local communities can be improved in the future through new development. The innovative techniques raised awareness and debate on the development issues facing the National Park in the future; how we can have well designed, sustainable towns and villages; how best to support our rural businesses and attract investment; and how to provide homes for our young people and working families.

The feedback we received has been used to inform our Proposed Local Development Plan - the final consultation step before we adopt a new Local Development Plan, setting out the development needs and requirements in the National Park for the next 10 years.



# LIVE PARK

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR NATIONAL PARK

## LIVE Park - making planning engaging and accessible

LIVE Park is the name for our Local Development Plan. It has a 20-year vision and sets out the development that is needed to make Loch Lomond & The Trossachs a great place for:

## Living Investing Visiting Experiencing

We review and refresh our Plan every five years so there is a critical window where the public and interested organisations have an opportunity to really help understand and shape the future potential of the National Park.

It was crucial that we engaged a broad range of people and organisations at the key 'Main Issues Report' stage where we set out what

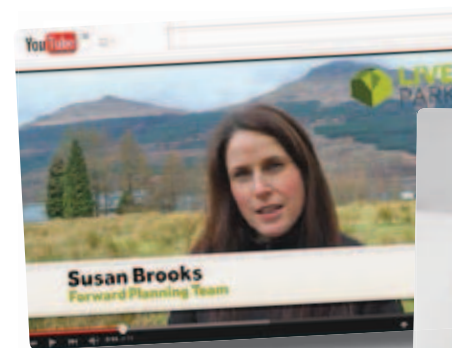
we thought the main issues, ideas and opportunities were for Loch Lomond & The Trossachs, its communities, businesses and its visitors.

In addition to the usual tried and tested means of encouraging people to get involved, and with a clear focus on better engaging with harder-to-reach audiences like young people and working age families, the LIVE Park consultation took a distinctly digital approach – allowing us to use digital and social media to reach out to groups of people who might not normally get involved in planning but who nonetheless are important to the future of the Park. We needed to hear what everyone thought about housing and jobs – and everything in between.

We created a series of bespoke digital channels to allow people to keep up with what was happening on the consultation, regardless of whether they could make it along to one of our events.

We recognised that Planning can be a complex subject for people to understand – the language can be technical and off-putting so we created a series of short YouTube clips that helped demystify planning buzzwords like 'sustainable development'...

We cut out all planning jargon from our communications and ensured that they were tailored to highlight what really matters to local people. This differed from one community to another. We used blogs to explain more complex planning issues, such as affordable housing. Blogs were also a good way to record what was said at meetings and to encourage others to post questions or comments online.



CASE STUDY  
**LIVE  
PARK**





## Pro-active planning service

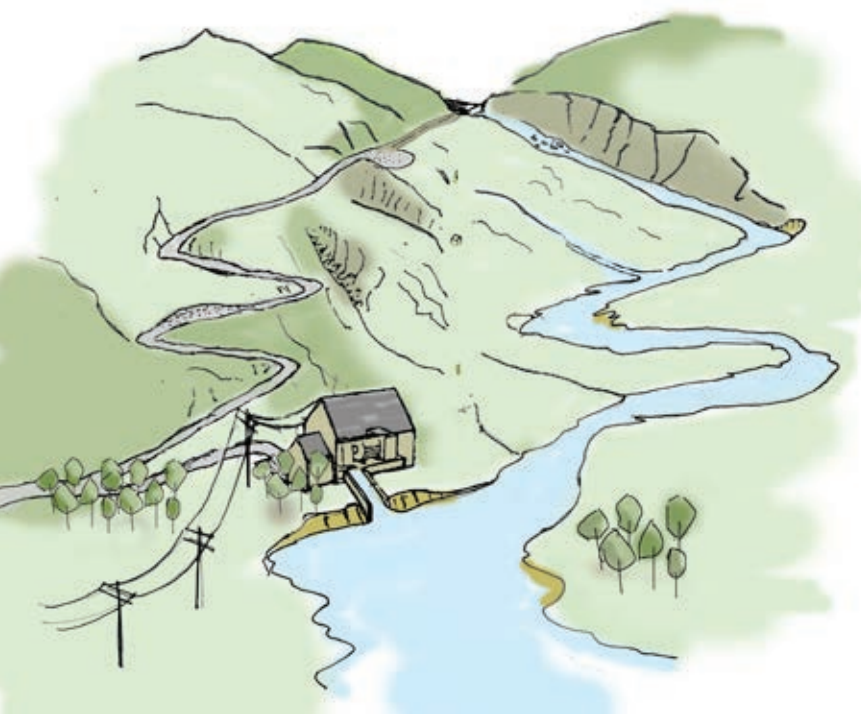
The quality of our decisions and the time it takes in determining planning applications is continually monitored throughout the year. In addition the Scottish Government reviews the performance of all planning authorities and we received encouraging feedback on our performance including:

### Pre-applications

Our work on pre-applications and processing agreements was strongly supported as **'embracing the culture'** Scottish Government is promoting for the modernisation of the planning service.

### Environmental Impact Assessment

The turnaround on applications subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was recognised as **'outstanding'**. The majority of these complex EIA applications were related to run-of-river hydro scheme proposals.



## Development on the ground

The rich and diverse landscapes of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park present great potential for run-of-river hydro schemes.

The National Park Authority realised this several years ago and devised an innovative approach, enshrined in our Supplementary Planning Guidance for Renewable Energy, which attracted a commendation at last year's Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning.

The guidance features best practice in designing a scheme that is sympathetic to the National Park's sensitive environment and paved the way for numerous planning applications to build hydroelectric schemes.




## Utilising our natural assets

A total of 38 applications have been granted planning permission so far, including two that are currently being constructed on the Glenfalloch Estate near Crianlarich - creating 15 jobs and capable of generating electricity for more than 2,000 homes.

The 12 schemes that are operational are split almost evenly between rural estates and farmers looking to develop new income streams to reinvest in their businesses. Callander Community Hydro scheme is an exception, with proceeds from this going to fund community projects.



**38**   
SCHEMES APPROVED

**12**   
SCHEMES OPERATIONAL

**6**   
SCHEMES UNDER CONSTRUCTION

**HYDRO SCHEMES IN THE NATIONAL PARK OUTPUT 22.3MW**  **=**

**ELECTRICITY TO POWER 17,500\* HOMES**

\* THAT'S THREE TIMES THE NUMBER OF HOMES IN THE NATIONAL PARK





# Being an excellent organisation

We strive to provide a secure and welcoming workplace where we engage effectively with our staff and Board. Taking an innovative approach, we continue to deliver the National Park Authority's services to the highest standard .

**Delivering against Scottish Government Outcomes**



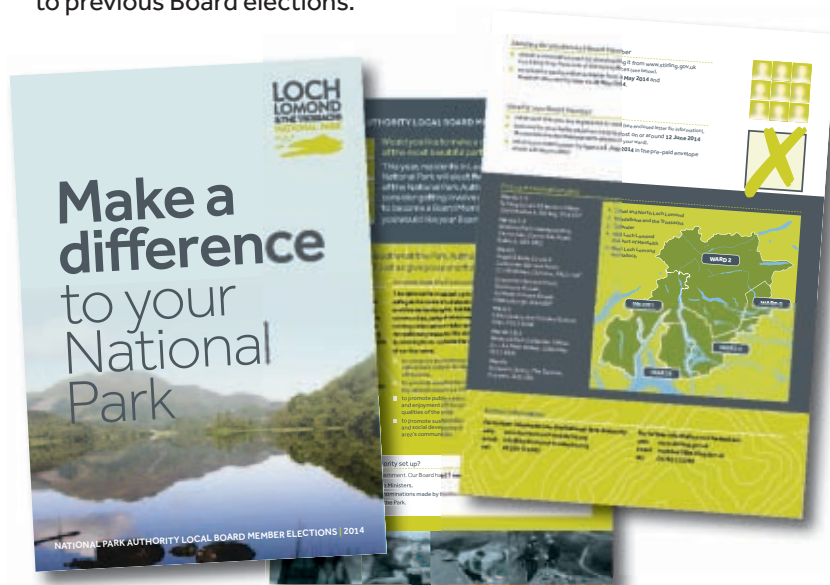




## Engaged Board

An innovative Local Board Member election campaign achieved our aim of engaging with and encouraging involvement of our communities.

Using a bespoke direct mail shot sent to all households in the National Park, communities were reminded of the benefits of standing as a candidate or taking this opportunity to vote for their preferred directly elected member. We successfully attracted increased representation within all five wards and an improved postal ballot turnout in comparison to previous Board elections.



We welcomed a new Ministerially-appointed Board member, Major James Stuart, who brings a wealth of experience having worked across a number of sectors including tourism, leisure and business.



## Our Board

### Front row - left to right

Owen McKee  
Major James Stuart  
Convener - Linda McKay  
Hazel Sorrell

### Back row - left to right

David McKenzie  
James Robb  
Martin Earl  
David McCowan  
Fergus Wood  
Robert Ellis  
David Warnock  
George Freeman  
Colin Bayes  
Petra Biberbach  
Willie Nisbet

### Not Pictured

Lindsay Morrison  
Angus Allan



## Valuing staff

Recognising that staff engagement is critical to the success of any organisation and we carried out a Best Companies survey during 2014. It measured various aspects including Leadership, My Manager, My Team, My Company, Wellbeing, Personal Growth, Fair Deal and Giving Something Back. The survey response rate was 80% with an overall increase of 7% in employee satisfaction as compared with 2013.



## RESPONSE TO STAFF SURVEY

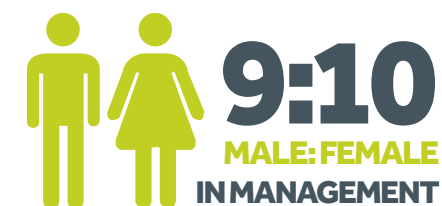
The results revealed the excellent news that we are now listed as one of Best Companies top 100 not for profit companies to work for.

We appreciate that within in the public sector it is not possible to reward staff with significant pay awards so we identified creative ways to show our appreciation including:

- Introducing an employee benefits scheme 'My Work Offers' which provides access to various discounts from high street retailers
- Significantly enhancing flexible working options and work/life balance policies
- Interest free loans on further education and travelling to work
- Opportunities for paid time off to volunteer at the Commonwealth Games



We have a good gender balance within our workforce and particularly within our management roles where there is a Male 9:10 Female ratio and we have a female Convener (pictured opposite).



- All staff are paid above the living wage.
- We provide opportunities for staff to live longer, healthier lives through:
  - Providing a cycle to work scheme
  - Access to counselling services
  - On-site gym
  - Health surveillance and occupational health services.
- We take health and safety very seriously and have a range of tools, systems and processes to keep our staff safe and healthy.





## Working together

We share our sustainable and accessible headquarter building with a number of community and partner organisations and provide services and access to our facilities including conferencing, gym, printing, kitchens and coffee hub.



We share services with Cairngorms National Park, most notably our ICT infrastructure; e-planning system, helpdesk, systems and data management, disaster recovery and systems development. We also have shared staffing posts for procurement and health and safety.

Both National Parks share the development of joint policies and share expertise in responding to or participating in consultations or initiatives. Our pay remit to Scottish Government is shared. We also share tendered services for Internal Audit and Legal Services and we share good practice and lessons learned, including recruitment and selection of senior posts as well as the recently appointed Chief Executive Officer.

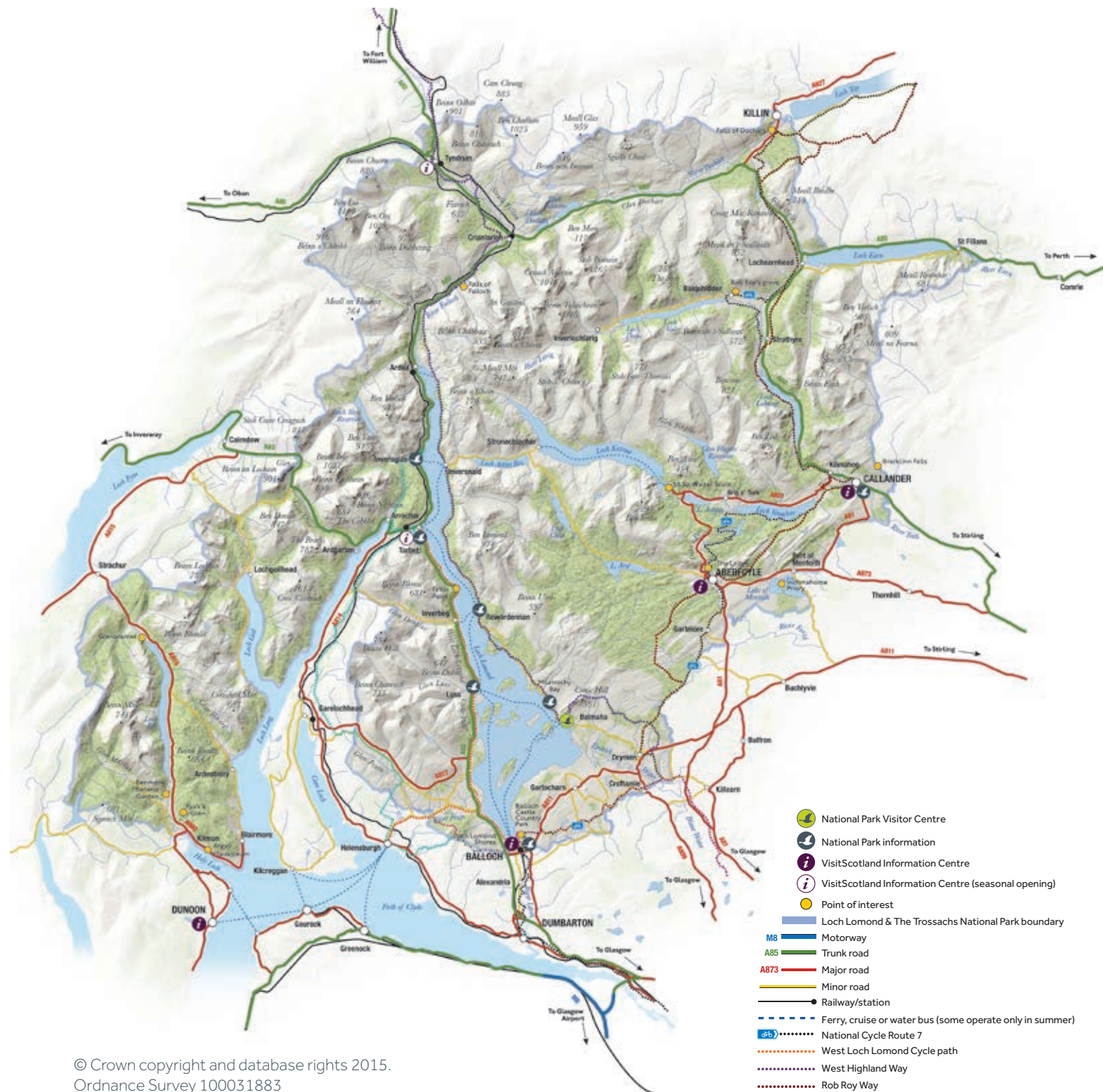
## Giving something back

A very active and successful Staff Involvement Group arranged a variety of activities and events to have fun and raise money.

Over the year an incredible £4,350 was raised for Yorkhill Children's Charity - the charity chosen by staff. Staff members ran a ½ marathon, organised an all year round tuck shop, held a car boot sale, baked and sold cakes and soup, participated in the Great Scottish Swim, grew and sold plants, provided a non-alcoholic drinks service, ran quizzes, arranged Christmas festivities and raffles to help raise funds.

As a result of this fantastic fundraising we were able to purchase virtual ceiling skylights for their treatment rooms at the new Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Glasgow.

In addition to raising money for Yorkhill Children's Charity, staff and Board Members supported Red Nose Day, raising an impressive £794 through a cake bake and sale, quizzes, face painting and a raffle. Participation in the #rednoseselfie campaign proved popular with staff and Board Members.



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Ordnance Survey 100031883



Loch Lomond & The Trossachs  
National Park Authority  
Carrochan  
20 Carrochan Road  
Balloch G83 8EG

t: 01389 722600  
e: [info@lochlomond-trossachs.org](mailto:info@lochlomond-trossachs.org)  
w: [lochlomond-trossachs.org](http://lochlomond-trossachs.org)

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