

LOCH
LOMOND
& THE TROSSACHS
NATIONAL PARK



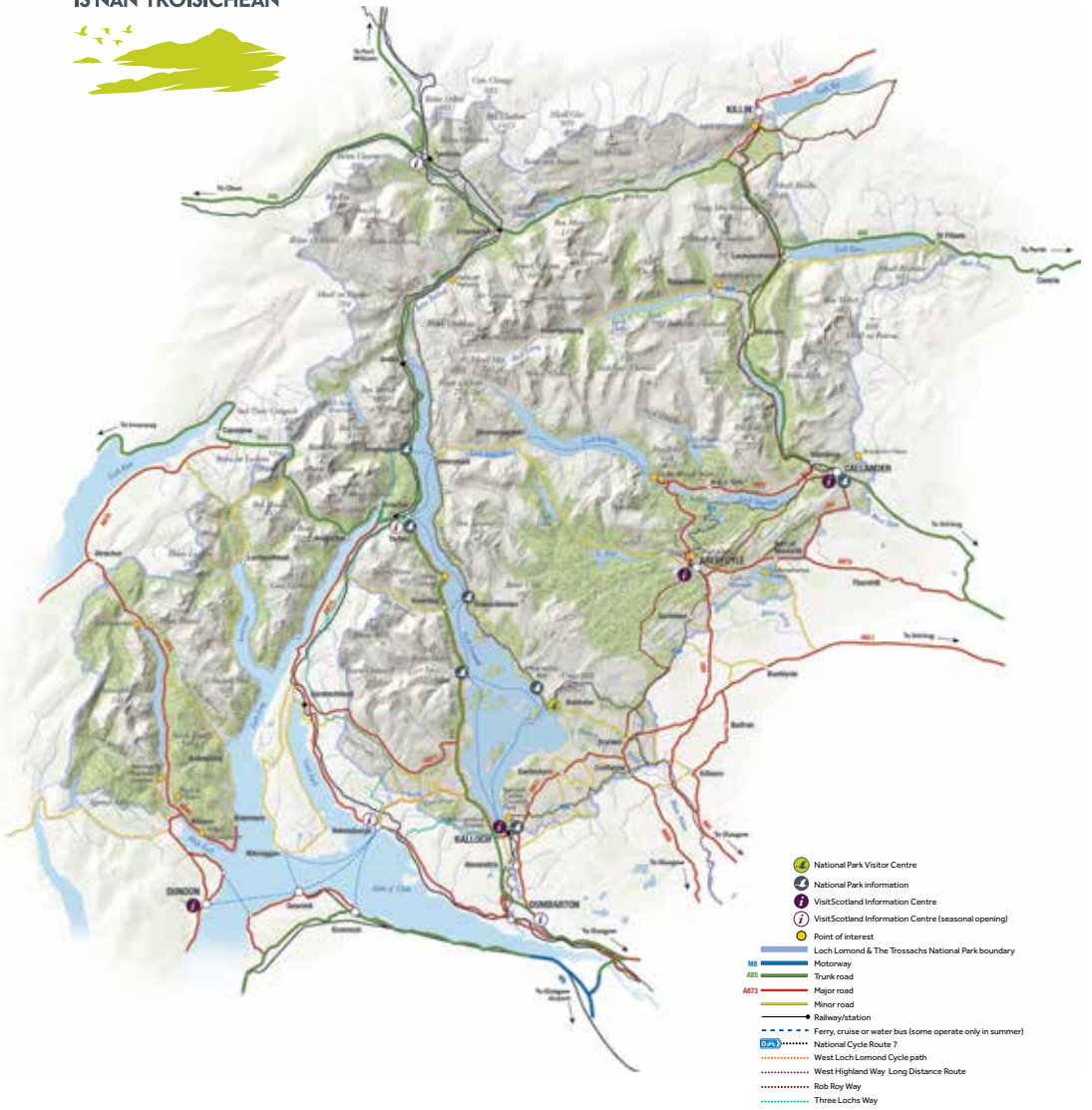
LOCH
LOMOND
TROSSACHS
NATIONAL PARK
CENTRE

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

2011 - 2012



PÀIRC NÀISEANTA
LOCH
LAOMAINN
 IS NAN TRÒISICHEAN





“

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

”



LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK

Informational panels on the board, including a map and text: "Keep the Park - be responsible and enjoy your visit. The Park is patrolled and monitored by National Park Rangers and Police."

Map held by the visitor, featuring the text "LOCH LOMOND" and "lochlomond-trossachs.org".

Delivering for a Decade

It is only ten years since Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park was created, but we have come a long way since then.

Our tenth annual report, which you can see in full on our website, reflects another year of delivery and partnership working to safeguard this area of outstanding and diverse scenery, habitats and communities. For example, in 2011-12:

Our land management team secured over £720,000 for six private farms and estates near Callander to help black grouse breed more successfully by improving their habitats.

Our ranger service supported a group of adults with learning disabilities in Callander and Stirling achieve the highest level of John Muir Award.

We refurbished our visitor centre at Balmaha to be a focus for our education work and a welcoming place for visitors to learn about geology, history, wildlife and all the great things to see and do in the National Park.

Partnership working and seasonal byelaws restricting camping on East Loch Lomond turned a 'no-go' area into a safe and peaceful place for families to enjoy.

We exceeded our 3% (£205k) efficiency target set by the Scottish Government by 0.3% (£33k).

We adopted our first Local Plan to replace the previous four inherited from the local authorities.

We determined the largest planning application we've ever had when we gave consent for a gold and silver mine near Tyndrum, which will bring much-needed employment and tourism opportunities.

Working with partners and stakeholders we produced the National Park Partnership Plan 2012-17 for consultation.

We reduced our CO2 emissions by 73 tonnes from 431 in 2010-11 to 358 in 2011-12.

We continued to work closely with waterbus operators to expand the service growing usage by 10% and cycle user numbers have increased by more than 50% each operational year.

In 2012 the growing demand for Waterbus operation extended the season into November.
Year 1 - 6 weeks service
Year 2 - 6 months service
Year 3 - 8 months service

We are committed to contributing to the Scottish Government's purpose of creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all to flourish through increasing sustainable development. We contribute directly to ten of the Government's sixteen strategic outcomes.

What we do

The ethos of National Parks in Scotland is collaboration across public and private organisations. We are a local delivery body, governed by a predominantly elected board, with a national remit.

Our role is to co-ordinate delivery of the four statutory aims (opposite) to secure a sustainable future for the National Park, its residents and visitors.

Linda McKay (Forth Valley College) and Craig McLaughlin (West Dunbartonshire Council) were elected convener and depute convener of the board in February 2011.



Our governing board has 17 members, five elected by local residents, six nominated by the four local authorities and six appointed by the Scottish Government through competitive recruitment.

Chief Executive Fiona Logan is supported by an executive team of Director of Corporate Services (shared with Cairngorms National Park Authority), Director of Rural Development & Planning, Director of Conservation & Visitor Experience and Head of Business Services.



The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 describes four aims for National Parks:

Conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage

Promote the sustainable use of the area's natural resources

Promote the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public

Promote sustainable social and economic development of the area's communities.



We encapsulate the four statutory aims into three areas of work, which are also reflected in the shape of the organisation: conservation, visitor experience and rural development.

CONSERVATION

Ensuring our natural heritage, land and water resources are managed sustainably and protected.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Establishing and promoting the Park as one of Scotland's premier sustainable tourism destinations where our special qualities are respected and enjoyed by all.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Enabling and promoting sustainable development that supports and enhances local distinctiveness and sense of place, encourages enterprise and innovation and improves the quality of life for local communities.

This summary illustrates some the main achievements for Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority in the period from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012 in each of these three areas, which are supported by an effective and efficient Business Services function.



Conservation

Ensuring our natural heritage, land and water resources are managed sustainably and protected.

We funded and hosted a Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels post for the National Park and Argyll, a Scottish Wildlife Trust project which is working to secure the future of red squirrels by monitoring and managing grey and red squirrel populations.

Our land management team secured funding of £720,000 from the Scottish Rural Development Programme to help private farms and estates near Callander to make habitat improvements to help black grouse breed more successfully.

Our Natural Heritage Grant Scheme awarded grants of £38,074 to projects such as habitat improvements in Glen Dochart to encourage wading birds to breed, clearing overgrown vegetation to improve views from the world famous West Highland railway line and restoring native hedgerows.

We joined forces with Scottish Natural Heritage and the RSPB to secure the future of the Wards Estate, which the RSPB later purchased with our financial support. The partnership will ensure that the site at the south of Loch Lomond, part of the National Nature reserve, will be managed to support breeding and wintering wildfowl, summer visiting osprey and nationally rare plants such as the Scottish or Loch Lomond dock.



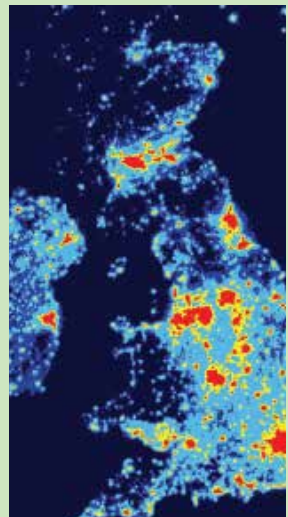


Many groups enjoyed our great outdoor classroom, including: pupils from here and the Cairngorms took part in a three-day residential at Ardlui; we hosted an outdoor learning in National Parks conference with 120 delegates; the annual high school debate discussed banning all wind farms from National Parks; our rangers supported Eco-schools and John Muir Awards.

In a joint project with Scottish Natural Heritage, we converted data on habitats into UK BAP priority habitat types and started to collate data on UK priority species in the Park (around 500).

We started several projects to survey and control invasive non-native species, including Japanese knotweed and giant hogweed.

We took our bid for Dark Skies Reserve status, which should attract stargazing tourists 'out of season', a step closer by conducting a lighting audit of the proposed core area of the Trossachs and Strathard.



Visitor Experience

Establishing and promoting the Park as one of Scotland's premier sustainable tourism destinations where our special qualities are respected and enjoyed by all.

We completed the first phase of refurbishments to our visitor centre at Balmaha, opening up the space and installing new interpretation of geology, history and wildlife.



Police and ranger patrols on East Loch Lomond reported a 93% decrease in camping outside official sites and no littering or vandalism offences following the introduction of seasonal byelaws restricting camping and outdoor alcohol consumption.



We continued to develop our Ranger Service, which is among the largest in the UK. They support all areas of work with a focus in the summer months on welcoming visitors and helping them to have a safe and enjoyable experience.

Water-borne rangers patrolled Loch Lomond, reported 142 byelaw violations and supported over 100 incidents, including 40 tows.

We introduced the role of volunteer ranger to support our professional team and in 2011 they gave 700 hours.





The Loch Lomond Water Bus services run by local operators had a second successful year, carrying more than 22,000 passengers.

With local stakeholders, we co-ordinated a visitor management plan for the area around Lochs Earn, Voil, Lubnaig, Venachar and Achray to tackle problems caused by anti-social behavior.

Our visitor survey showed that more than 88% of visitors were likely to return. The scenery and lochs were the main highlight and quality and availability of public toilets the main concern.

We introduced a customer service excellence training programme to help our tourism businesses give their visitors a world class welcome.

More than 200 local businesses signed up to use our 'Business in the Park' toolkit to help their marketing and promotion.



Work started on installing new National Park signs of stone and slate at key entry points to the National Park.



Rural Development

Enabling and promoting sustainable development that supports and enhances local distinctiveness and sense of place, encourages enterprise and innovation and improves the quality of life for local communities.

We adopted the first Local Plan for the National Park, which sets out proposals for development and policies to guide planning decisions.

As part of Local Plan delivery, we set up a two-year project, the Rural Housing Enabler, to explore and support options for affordable housing in Luss, Gartocharn, Balmaha, Drymen and Gartmore.



In Callander we supported the Community Council and Development Trust in their successful bid to stage one of only three Government-funded charrettes. The five day process involved 900 people and produced a long-term vision and shorter-term priority projects.

We worked closely with Transport Scotland on proposals for upgrading the A82 trunk road on west Loch Lomond.

In its final year, The Killin Conservation Area Scheme (CARS), funded by us and Historic Scotland, installed a heritage trail. Over five years it contributed £123,720 to projects with a total value of £332,718.





Callander CARS funded major refurbishments to the Dreadnought Hotel and specialist conservation work on Ancaster Bridge.

We continued to support the National Park Community Partnership in their work with local communities

Our Community Grant Scheme provided small grants to community Councils and Development Trusts to help with running costs and with projects. A total of £20,114 was offered to 12 communities.



Of 273 planning decisions, between 92 and 99% were approved within two months. At the end of the year we were exceeding the Government's target of 90% within 3 months for householder applications.

Run of river hydro schemes approved in 2011-12 will potentially provide generate 850kW of renewable energy.

We approved revised plans for a gold and silver mine at Cononish near Tyndrum, which had significantly reduced the mine's environmental impact and included benefits for the local economy and community.



Corporate Services

Our board completed its first full year in a new structure with the number of members reduced from 25 to 17 and with Linda McKay elected convener in February 2011.

The board's Planning & Access Committee determines planning applications, its Audit Committee oversees our accounts, risk management, governance and internal controls and the Delivery Group oversees delivery of our core objectives, financial performance and staff management.

We reduced our CO2 emissions by 73 tonnes from 431 in 2010-11 to 358 in 2011-12.

We exceeded the 3% (£205k) efficiency target set by the Scottish Government by 0.3% (£33k).

By sharing GIS and e-planning systems with the Cairngorms we saved £13,300 (16% of running costs).

Sharing ICT support and licensing agreement with the Cairngorms made savings of £10,000.

Bòrd na Gàilhlìg approved our Gaelic Language Plan which sets out our approach to using Gaelic in our communications.

BBC4 broadcast a fly-on-the-wall documentary, part of a series called Tales from the National Parks, which told the story of the gold mine planning application from the perspectives of the applicant, community and the authority.

We improved internal communications with Park Central, our intranet site, keeping staff and board members informed.

Our annual Christmas greeting took the form of a viral video which reached more than 20 countries.

We produced it in house with contributions from our staff and board and local businesses with celebrity appearances from Matt Baker, Sally Magnusson and the one and only David Attenborough.



What did we Spend?

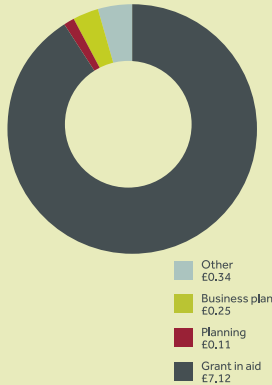
Detailed accounts are in our Annual Report & Accounts 2011-12, which is on our website.

Our total income was £7.825m. This represents a consolidation of the budget gains in the previous year and reflects our ability to secure additional funding for important projects in difficult financial times. As a result of receiving additional funds, particularly for capital works to improve visitor experience, and continuing to reduce operating costs, we increased the amounts invested in projects in the National Park.

Our main source of funding continues to be grant in aid allocated by the Scottish Government. In 2011-12 this was £7.189m.

By making efficiency savings on our delivery, office and administrative functions we continued to direct significant resource, through our Business Plan, into grants, projects and other investment in the Park.

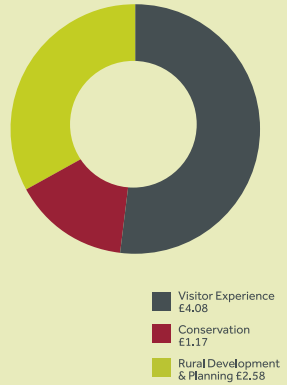
Income



Our Business Plan expenditure invested directly into Park activities was £1.84m, an increase of 5% on the previous year (which followed an increase of 21% the previous year).

In addition, much staff time was directed to leading these activities and this makes an essential contribution to the annual investment in the National Park. In 2011-12, £3.3m (2010-11 - £3.33m) of salary costs were dedicated to direct delivery in our three areas of work.

Expenditure



This includes £1.088m (2010-11 - £1.19m) of costs for ranger time, classified wholly as visitor experience for accounting purposes.

The ranger service contributes to all areas of work, with the emphasis on visitor experience during the spring and summer and more on conservation and rural development in the autumn and winter. We estimate that ranger time is divided in the following proportions:

Visitor experience	50%
Conservation	40%
Rural Development	10%

LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK



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