



FOI Ref: 2019/002

1st March 2019

REQUEST UNDER FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2002

We refer to your request for information, received by email on 3rd February 2019. Your specific requests and the Park Authority's response are provided below.

- 1. "What consultation was carried out with the boat owners, prior to this vast level of fee in crease being considered and passed?"**

There was no public consultation undertaken in relation to the increase in launch fees, which was an operational decision. Accordingly, we have to advise you under section 17(1)(b) of the Act, that this information is not held.

- 2. "What services are committing to enhancing (your words) at the slipway launch with this fee income? Please don't quote the free shower."**

Maintenance work is planned for the floating pontoons and repair works have recently been undertaken to the building, painting and the replacement of rotten window timbers.

- 3. "What was the cost of each hydraulic seat put into your boats and how many were installed and the marine justification for that decision?"**

The hydraulic seats (known as shock mitigating seats) were installed during the construction of the vessels which were purchased in 2007 and 2011. Invoices for the purchase of the vessels have not been retained, in accordance with our retention policy of seven years for these types of documents. Accordingly, we have to advise you under section 17(1)(b) of the Act, that this information is not held.

The Shock Mitigating Seats on our 6.4m and 7.1m Redbay Stormforce vessels were installed during the construction of the vessels; there are two seats per vessel which amounts to four in total. We have three Shock Mitigating Seats on our 11m Redbay Stormforce vessel, these were also installed during construction.

These seats were installed to mitigate against the exposure of staff and passengers to the effects of Whole Body Vibration (WBV). WBV was deemed to be a hazard that staff were being exposed to due to the forces that are transferred through the vessel whilst making way through the water. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/vibration/wbv/index.htm> and <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pUbns/priced/l141.pdf>

LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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4. “You start your letter with “you may be aware” , please explain how I would be aware and from whom?”

Information about the launch fee increase was put on the Park Authority website just before the re-registration letters were sent to all boat owners who had registered to launch a craft on the loch last year. We were aware that some boat owners may have seen the information on our website, hence the opening sentence in all letters which referenced this additional information. We appreciate that it may have been more helpful to directly refer to the information on our website in the opening sentence.

5. “What is the current cost of daily members rate for board members and has any uplift in that daily rate been applied over the last 5 years?”

The current cost of daily member’s rate for Board Members is £203.42. This was agreed at the Board Meeting held on 14th June 2018, covered at Agenda Item 7. The relevant paper is available on our website at: <https://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/park-authority/our-board-committees/meetings/board-meeting-14th-june-2018/>

The daily fee for 2018/19 is in line with Scottish Government Pay Policy.

6. “On looking at you accounts I quote your own financial statement, you quote the very favourable settlement received in grant settlement over the last year 18/19 and the £103k increase in income, yet still see the need for a 45% increase in fees. Why??”

In making the decision to increase launch fees, the following considerations were examined:

User groups –three main user groups were considered, the general public who are the primary users of the facility, commercial operators who use the slipway for the operation of their business and local users.

Justification of increase – two factors were considered:

1. Inflation - prices could rise in line with inflation from when they were first set. This takes no account of any local market conditions nor does it lend itself to introducing a charging scheme that can be utilised to target specific user groups, though it would be the simplest method to implement an increase.

2. Comparable evident of similar operations/facilities within the region to establish the market tone for such use. Due to the specialist nature of the facilities there was limited comparable evidence, which was drawn from other facilities such as Ferry Nab in the Lake District, which offers a more accurate picture of what the market conditions are.

All of the above factors were examined. It was concluded that the prices set in 2010 now represent significant value to perhaps the detriment of the Park Authority. The existing charging structure significantly undercut local competitors and was rigid in its format. It made no allowance for various differentiated groups and significantly benefitted business users in the annual rate charged for use of the slipway. It was recognised that the Park Authority had no desire for the slipway to become a commercial slipway for commercial users, however the exiting pricing structures actively promoted its use compared to other facilities around the Loch.

The existing pricing, while offering good value to customers, did not generate a reasonable income for a facility of its type that allows for current operating costs, facility maintenance and future enhancements to the service.

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Yours sincerely

Governance & Legal Team
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority

Review Procedure

If you are dissatisfied with this decision, or the way in which the Authority has dealt with your request, you are entitled to require the Authority to review its decision. Please note that in order for a review to take place you are required to:

- Send your request for review in writing, setting out in full the reasons why you are requesting a review.
- Submit your review request within 40 working days of either the date on which you received a response from the Authority or the date by which you should have received a response under the terms of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, whichever is the later.
- address your review request to:

Governance & Legal Team
Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority
National Park Headquarters
Carrochan
Carrochan Road
Balloch
G83 8EG
E-mail: info@lochlomond-trossachs.org

The review will be handled by staff who were not involved in the original decision. You will receive notice of the result of your review within 20 working days.

If you are not satisfied with the response to your request for review, you can contact the Scottish Information Commissioner, the independent body which oversees the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, at:

Scottish Information Commissioner
Kinburn Castle
Doubledykes Road
St Andrews
Fife
KY16 9DS
Tel: 01334 464610
Website: www.itspublicknowledge.info
E-mail: enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info

Online appeal portal: www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal

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