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# **OPERATION IRONWORKS 2017**

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

Police Scotland 1/2/18

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## **Introduction**

Operation Ironworks is an initiative which responds to an increase in visitor management related offences and concerns within the area of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. The operation was intended to provide additional police resources at identified peak times of demand to target and deal with the minority of visitors who are responsible for anti-social behaviour such as vandalism, theft, littering, assault and other forms of disruptive and irresponsible behaviour. This is achieved by intelligence led high visibility proactive mobile and foot patrols targeting identified problem areas.

Operation Ironworks has developed into an effective multi-agency partnership led by Police Scotland in conjunction with Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Authority and Forestry Commission Scotland.

Whilst running for eleven years, this is the fifth season of Operation Ironworks deployed under the unified single Police Service of Scotland and, as such, has allowed easier access to specialist resources and co-ordination between divisions.

The name “Operation Ironworks” has become well known among local community councils, residents and visitors with a provision of a high quality, dedicated patrol service which understands and targets anti-social behaviour and other visitor management issues created by certain visitors to the National Park.

## **Context**

The intention of Operation Ironworks 2017 was to deliver a co-ordinated intelligence led, series of weekend operations designed to provide proactive high profile mobile and foot patrols to primarily deal with issues of all types of anti-social behaviour from littering, drunken disorder, vandalism and petty theft through to more serious acts of disorder, violence and irresponsible use of vehicles. It was also the intention to educate and promote responsible behaviour to ensure the safety of all visitors wherever possible, utilising the key messages embodied within the “Respect The Park” leaflet produced by the National Park.

As in previous years, forecasting of weather, events & attractions, data from partners and known holiday periods was used to determine the most appropriate type and level of resources deployed on Operation Ironworks week by week. In addition, six key weekends, aligned with bank holidays were identified where additional resources would be deployed for larger operations. This model allows for flexibility and resilience across policing divisions and the National Park Ranger Service to allow for times of good weather or other local factors which may have an effect on the numbers of visitors.

This year also saw the first season with loch-sides across the Park area covered by The Loch Lomond & The Trossachs Camping Management Byelaws 2017 which impose controls on camping in 4 designated Camping Management Zones.

## Meeting Our Objectives

Operation Ironworks has become the ethos through which officers working within the boundary of the National Park police the increase in visitor numbers during the summer season. In order to record and evaluate the effectiveness and learning points of the multi agency deployments and patrols, officers engaged on patrols provided shift by shift feedback which has been collated and forms the substance of this end of season report.

2017 continued the Ironworks reporting mechanisms in order to capture all activity aligned with concerns listed in the National Park Policing Plan, Multi Member Ward Policing Plans and the overall Police Scotland objective of “Keeping People Safe”.

The focus was built around:

- Anti-social behaviour, disorder & violence
- Environmental crime including vandalism
- Irresponsible and anti-social use of roads & road crime

## FORTH VALLEY AND TAYSIDE POLICE DIVISIONS

### Crime and Police Activity by Area

#### East Loch Lomond

This area has a dedicated team of National Park Rangers and lies mainly within the Forth Valley Division. Some of the Ranger patrol routes also extend into Argyll & West Dunbartonshire around Gartocharn.

Officers from Forth Valley division had delivered **1038** hours of police activity through core policing commitment to Operation Ironworks on East Loch Lomond. In addition a further **24** hours of policing activity were delivered through the financial support of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

Notable incidents included:

Male traced in Drymen for driving with a provisional licence, no insurance and no MOT.

Male reported for failing to provide the details of the driver following a road traffic collision on the B837.

Male traced for possession of controlled drug at Balmaha.

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Rangers verbally abused by male camper at Rowardennan who was in possession of an axe. The male left the scene before the arrival of the police and was not traced.

### Trossachs & Breadalbane

This area is covered by a dedicated team of National Park Rangers working from the base at Callander.

This was the third full season with the two car parks at Loch Lubnaig between the loch and the A84 in full operation. The North site includes parking, a kiosk selling refreshments and a camp site, which has been well used.

2017 also saw the first season of operation for the National Park run campsite at Loch Chon. This semi-formal campsite allowed persons to camp at a low cost within the Trossachs West Camping Management Zone and had formal pitches and toilet facilities.

### Trossachs

**Forth Valley Division** delivered **854** hours of police activity through core policing commitment to operation Ironworks through The 5 Lochs area. In addition a further **94** hours of policing activity were delivered through the financial support of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park. Forth Valley Division Special Constables provided an additional **8** hours of patrol.

#### 5 Lochs (Breadalbane)

**Forth Valley Division** delivered **1540** hours of police activity through core policing commitment to operation Ironworks through The 5 Lochs area. In addition a further **32** hours of policing activity were delivered through the financial support of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park. Forth Valley Division Special Constables provided an additional **40** hours of patrol.

Notable incidents include:

#### April

Male reported under Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Camping Management Byelaws 2017 at North Loch Earn.

#### May

Male traced for drink driving in Callander.

2 males reported for offences under Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Camping Management Byelaws 2017 at Loch Venachar.

Male traced in Callander for driving with no insurance.

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### June

7 males reported for offences under Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Camping Management Byelaws 2017 at Loch Chon.

2 persons traced for possession of a controlled drug at Bracklinn Falls car park.

### July

4 males reported for offence under Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Camping Management Byelaws 2017 at South Loch Venachar.

Male traced at Loch Earn for driving with a provisional licence and no insurance. Vehicle uplifted by police.

Female reported for careless driving on A82, Crianlarich.

### August

Male traced at Loch Venachar in possession of a controlled drug.

Male traced for driving without a licence on Duke's Pass.

### September

Male and female reported for assault, police assault and statutory breach of the peace at Loch Venachar.

Male traced for disqualified driving, no insurance and fail to report a road traffic collision in Killin.

Male traced in Callander for driving with no insurance and MOT.

Male traced in Kilmahog for possession of controlled drug.

Male traced in Callander for possession of controlled drug.

Male traced at Loch Venachar in possession of controlled drug.

Male who had been camping at Loch Lubnaig traced on A84 for driving with no insurance and MOT.

Male reported for careless driving on A85 at Locheearnhead.

2 males traced in possession of a controlled drug at Loch Lubnaig.

Male traced in Callander for driving with no insurance. Vehicle uplifted.

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There has been a continuation in Roads Policing activity on the A82, A84 and A85 trunk roads due to the number of serious and fatal collisions on these roads. In particular 'Operation Zenith' has been running all summer aimed at changing driver and motorcyclist behaviour. This has been a combination of enforcement action using hand held detection devices and Camera Enforcement vans. .

The total hours of this activity is not possible to quantify, but has taken place on most weekends throughout the summer, and continues 'off season'

**FORTH VALLEY DIVISIONAL SUMMARY:**

Forth Valley Division	Hours
PS core police commitment hours	3432
PS special constables	40
PS – other – please state	Unable to quantify Road Policing activity. Not recorded separately.
NPA funded - Additional overtime	290.5
NPA Funded- NPPO	
NPA funded ESP	32
Total Hours	3794.5

**Tayside Division**

For 2017 D (Tayside) Division (East Loch Earn) embedded proactive patrols into daily business practice for local Strathearn officers. Commitment to policing the East Loch Earn has increased from 2016 as a result of a new policing structure within D division.

With identified Locality Officers for dedicated patrols in the community it amounted to **909** hours with **51** of those hours being delivered through the financial support of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

This year saw a further reduction in criminal activity in the East Loch Earn area falling from 29 recorded crimes in 2014, 15 in 2015, 10 in 2016 to 7 crimes in 2017. For the third year in a row there were no public space crimes of violence of any type.

In April 2 males were traced on South Loch Earn and were reported for offences under the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Camping Management Byelaws 2017, Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and the Salmon & Freshwater Fisheries, (Consolidation), (Scotland) Act 2003.

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In June 2017, Police Scotland called on the assistance of Loch Earn Fisheries for an elderly male within a motorised dinghy with engine problems. With the assistance of Loch Earn Fisheries the male was returned back to land with no medical concerns.

In August 2017 two pedal cycles were stolen from Loch Earn Caravan Park. The cycles were secured at the time and were of a significant value.

A male was also traced at St.Fillans in August and was reported for possession of bladed articles, (machetes) and an offence under the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Camping Management Byelaws 2017.

Public re-assurance patrols were carried out in areas identified as experiencing anti-social behaviour including noise nuisance complaints and regular visits to licensed premises. Other policing activities included ensuring campers were aware of the byelaws and providing high visibility patrols for visitors to the Loch.

Feedback from officers engaged on the Operation Ironworks patrols indicated that there has been a change in the demographics of people visiting Loch Earn than compared to previous years with the vast majority of visitors attending were law abiding visitors enjoying the scenery of the Loch. The absence of any violent crime and feedback through engagement activity has demonstrated the 2017 Ironworks season at Loch Earn to have been safe and enjoyable for both visitors and residents alike.

**TAYSIDE DIVISION SUMMARY**

Tayside Division	Hours
PS Core police commitment hours	840
PS special constables	18
PS – other – please state	Unable to quantify Road Policing activity. Not recorded separately.
NPA funded - Additional overtime	51
NPA Funded- NPPO	
NPA funded ESP	
Total Hours	909

**ARGYLL AND WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE POLICE DIVISION**

## **Background**

Balloch is the southern entry point into the National Park and attracts a large number of visitors particularly during the summer months; this is not only tourists visiting from abroad but visitors who live in nearby towns and cities which have good public transport links to Balloch.

Officers from Argyll and West Dunbartonshire Division continued with the delivery of high visibility patrols which provided reassurance to members of the public who live, work and travel to the area of the National Park.

Dedicated patrols were carried out by foot, cycle and mobile patrols with the objective of detecting and deterring any crime as well as gathering intelligence within the area.

## **Operational cover – Balloch**

Policing resources assigned to this plan provided dedicated patrols throughout the weekend period and included bank holiday Mondays throughout Operation Ironworks period. The core times for these patrols were 1400-0000 hours but cover was also provided until 0200hrs on some busy weekends.

Officers provided **910** hours of foot, cycle and mobile patrols to the National Park area. In addition to this **42** hours were provided through funding from the National Park.

## **Operational activity – Balloch**

Incidents of note throughout the period of Operation Ironworks included:

### **April 2017**

Police carried out proactive patrols in relation to the event known as “Muck-Up Day” where senior pupils from local schools congregate in Balloch Country Park. Alcohol consumption linked to this event has often led to large numbers of people being heavily intoxicated, leading to various acts of disorder and sometimes violence within the Balloch area. Additional areas of concern are the risks associated with young people consuming alcohol throughout the day in often isolated areas sometimes close to water and other hazards.

This year, with warm sunny weather, a group of around 80 young people participated in the event with police seizing 60 litres of spirits, beer and cider, all of which was disposed of.



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The event was all fairly good humoured with good interaction between the young people and the police. No persons were arrested. 2 youths were taken home by police as a result of consuming too much alcohol.

In addition to the above the following is a summary of productivity from officers on regular Ironworks patrol.

- 12 litres of alcohol seized
- 4 ASB FPN tickets (3 x street drinking, 1 x Breach of the Peace)
- 1 male arrested for an offensive weapon (hammer)
- 1 positive stop search
- 4 negative stop searches
- 42 visits to licensed premises

Regular patrols of the Food Festival at Loch Lomond Shores, Balloch which passed without incident.

### **May 2017**

No incidents of note however the following is a summary of productivity from officers on regular Ironworks patrols...

- 12 litres of alcohol seized
- 2 ASB FPN tickets (street drinking)
- 1 positive stop search
- 2 negative stop searches
- 1 male reported for possession of controlled drugs
- 1 male arrested for statutory Breach of The Peace (Homophobic)
- 1 male arrested littering and attempt to pervert the course of justice

### **June 2017**

No incidents of note however the following is a summary of productivity from officers on regular Ironworks patrols...

- 16 litres of alcohol seized
- 6 ASB FPN tickets (street drinking)
- 1 male arrested for statutory Breach of The Peace
- 1 males arrested for statutory Breach of The Peace and resist arrest
- 2 male arrested for assault and statutory Breach of The Peace
- 1 male arrested for assault x 2 and statutory Breach of The Peace (hate crime)
- 2 males reported for street drinking
- 7 seizures of alcohol
- 1 negative stop search
- 26 visits to licensed premises
- 2 persons arrested for apprehension warrants

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2 officers assisted NP Rangers with caution & charge of 4 persons in the Camping Management Zone

### **July 2017**

Limited patrols due to ongoing policing operation covering Faslane and Coulport Naval Bases

In addition to the above the following is a summary of productivity from officers on regular Ironworks patrols...

- 2 litres of alcohol seized
- 1 ASB FPN tickets (street drinking)
- 1 male reported for Street Drinking
- 1 male reported for Street Drinking & Littering
- 1 male issued with a Recordable Police Warning for possession of a controlled drug
- 1 positive stop search
- 3 negative stop searches
- 15 visits to licensed premises

### **August 2017**

Additional patrols of Balloch and Lomond Shores due to Great Scottish Swim.

In addition to the above the following is a summary of productivity from officers on regular Ironworks patrols...

- 1 litre of alcohol seized
- 2 ASB FPN tickets (street drinking)
- 1 female reported for possession of a controlled drug
- 2 female juveniles reported for Vandalism
- 2 seizures of alcohol
- 3 positive stop searches
- 20 visits to licensed premises

### **September 2017**

Limited patrols due to football duties.

In addition to the above the following is a summary of productivity from officers on regular Ironworks patrols...

- 1 litre of alcohol seized
- 1 male arrested for shoplifting
- 1 positive stop search
- 10 visits to licensed premises
- 1 persons arrested on warrant

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L Division Balloch	Hours
PS Core police commitment hours	910
PS special constables	
PS – other – please state	Unable to quantify Road Policing activity. Not recorded separately.
NPA funded - Additional overtime	42
NPA Funded- NPPO	
NPA funded ESP	
Total Hours	952

**Cowal**

**Background**

As with past operations our aim with this year's Ironworks was to deliver a co-ordinated intelligence led partnership with local community councils, Argyll & Bute Council and the National Park Forestry Rangers giving a staffed presence from Carrick Castle to Ardentinny Beach encompassing the 16 most popular picnic, camping and fishing sites. From feedback received from 2016 a need to tackle issues particular to the Cowal area became the priority for 2017. The 2017 Operation Ironworks within the Cowal area of the Loch Lomond National park began on the 21<sup>st</sup> of July running until the 1<sup>st</sup> of October and in line with previous years the majority of the **46** allocated hours were utilised by having uniform resources from Dunoon, Tighnabruaich and Lochgoilhead carry out joint patrols alongside our partners from Forestry Commission Scotland based at Glenbranter paying particular attention to weekends and public holidays when visitor numbers within the Cowal area would be at their highest.

**Operational Cover**

Community Police resources were allocated a total of 50 hours of Ironworks patrol time funded by the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park. This was divided into predominantly 3 hour joint patrols which would take place on either a Friday, Saturday evening or Sunday morning. Each patrol began at Glenbranter and patrolled one of the following routes along with a Forestry Commission Ranger or member of Argyll & Bute environmental team.

1. *Glenbranter to Carrick Castle*
2. *Glenbranter to Ardentinny.*
3. *Glenbranter to Tarbet Isle & Ardgarten*

During this operation we were able to provide a high visibility mobile patrol with the primary objective of educating campers and visitors about wild camping, deterring and detecting anti-social behaviour while also gathering intelligence to disrupt criminal activity and finally to identify any of the camp sites affected by fly tipping and/or abandoned vehicles. 2017 saw a third route added due to the introduction of Camping Management zones at Tarbet Isle and it was felt that the Rangers would have a greater level of enforcement while in the presence of a police Constable.

**Record of policing activity:**

### **Noteworthy Incidents**

During the patrols officers carried out 106 site visits and engaged with 74 groups of persons. This resulted in the seizure of 56 litres of alcohol from persons who were either under aged or thought to be likely to supply alcohol to someone under age. Stop checks were carried out on 42 vehicles in an effort to disrupt travelling criminals using the road network and to promote road safety.

- 1 car RTC at Butterbridge near Rest and be Thankful.
- Abandoned vehicle in Lochgoilhead.
- Fires set in Arrochar/Sucloth area.
- Extra attention required for speeding motorcyclists at the Rest and be Thankful.
- Lost and injured climber on Beinn Nairmain, Arrochar.
- Complaint regarding fishing without licence.
- Erratic driving complaint at Rest and be Thankful.

### **Crime Reports Raised:**

- Housebreaking at outbuilding in Glencroe area.
- Vandalism near Strone, Dunoon.
- Vandalism at Playpark in Kilmun.

### **Abandoned Vehicle Removals:**

Report of an abandoned vehicle discovered at Hells Glen – Owner traced and vehicle removed.

Abandoned vehicle at Pole Farm forestry track – Enquiries ongoing to trace owner in Glasgow with view to employing environmental legislation. – Vehicle removed by A&B Council.

Abandoned caravan left roadside in Lochgoilhead village – A&B enforcement notice issued and vehicle removed. Owner traced and fined.

### **Conclusion:**

In line with previous years visitor numbers to the Cowal area appear to overall remain consistent with a steady flow of younger groups who utilise the short ferry trip from Greenock to Dunoon in order to spend the weekend camping at either Ardentiny Beach or within Benmore Gardens.

Given the success of having out of season joint patrols in 2016/2017 we are proposing that this partnership practice continues for 2017/2018 and we have formulated an out of season patrol plan which commences on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November 2017 involving one uniform community officer carrying out an 6 hour patrol with a Forestry ranger on one early shift per month from November 2017 until May 2018. These out of season Ironworks style joint patrol will be high impact engaging with

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rural communities while also remaining low impact to police resourcing levels by not incurring overtime.

By carrying out these partnership patrols once a month it will provide proactive and reactive policing, purposeful patrols and ultimately provide public reassurance. Intelligence gathering and information sharing between Police Scotland and the park Rangers remain key to future successful Ironworks operations in the Cowal area.

### Conclusion

L Division Cowal	Hours
PS Core police commitment hours	50
PS special constables	
PS – other – please state	
NPA funded - Additional overtime	46
NPA Funded- NPPO	
NPA funded ESP	
Total Hours	

### **Luss and West Loch Lomond**

Luss attracts a large number of visitors, particularly during the summer months. This is a mixture of foreign tourists as well as persons who live in nearby towns and cities.

Following on from previous year's successful operation, officers from Argyll & West Dunbartonshire division continued to deliver a high visibility presence which provided public reassurance to visitors and residents.

Officers from Helensburgh police office have spent approximately **130 hours** carrying out dedicated and routine patrols of the Luss and West Loch area, concentrating on the above issues along with addressing concerns regarding road safety, waterborne incidents and complaints of irresponsible control of boats/jet skis and noise complaints. **30** hours of these patrols were directly funded by the National Park. These patrols involved local officers, staff from the divisional Alcohol & Violence Reduction Unit and Road Policing Unit to provide increased visibility particularly during sunnier periods.

### **Operational activity – Luss**

Incidents of note throughout the period of Operation Ironworks included:

#### **April 2017**

A total of 48 incidents were reported and attended to.

1 Male reported Section 3 Road Traffic Act, (Careless Driving)

1 Male reported for Section 57 Civic Government Scotland Act 1982, (Intended Theft)

**May 2017**

No incidents of note however the following is a summary of productivity from officers on regular Ironworks patrols...

A total of 77 incidents were reported and attended to.  
2 males reported for possession of a controlled drug  
2 Positive Stop Searches

**June 2017**

The following is a summary of productivity from officers on regular Ironworks patrols...

A total of 77 incidents were reported and attended to.  
1 male arrested for Section 5 RTA 1988, (Drink Driving)

**July 2017**

In addition to the above the following is a summary of productivity from officers on regular Ironworks patrols...

A total of 63 incidents were reported and attended to.  
1 male arrested for Section 5 RTA 1988, (Drink Driving)  
1 male reported for Assault  
1 female arrested for Section 3 RTA 1988, (Careless Driving)

**August 2017**

In addition to the above the following is a summary of productivity from officers on regular Ironworks patrols...

A total of 49 incidents were reported and attended to.  
1 male reported for Assault  
2 males reported for possession of a controlled drug  
1 female reported for driving with no Insurance  
1 male reported for speeding offences.  
1 female arrested for assault and vandalism  
1 male arrested for Section 5 RTA 1988, (Drink Driving)  
2 positive stop searches

**September 2017**

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In addition to the above the following is a summary of productivity from officers on regular Ironworks patrols...

A total of 18 incidents were reported and attended to.  
1 female reported for theft by shoplifting  
1 FPN issued for speeding

Luss & West Loch Lomond	Hours
PS core police commitment hours	100
PS special constables	
PS – other – please state	
NPA funded - Additional overtime	30
NPA Funded- NPPO	
NPA funded ESP	
Total Hours	130

**POLICE SCOTLAND IRONWORKS PATROL HOURS SUMMARY**

Area	Police Funded	National Park Funded			Total
		Ironworks	NPPC	ESP	
East Loch Lomond	1038	78.5			1116.5
5 Lochs/Trossachs	3300	263		32	3595
Balloch & Gartocharn	910	42			952
Luss & West Loch Lomond	100	30			130
Cowal	50	46			96
Loch Lomond Water					
<b>All Areas</b>	<b>5398</b>	<b>459.5</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>6259.5</b>

**LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

Scotland's National Parks are national assets. They are internationally recognised visitor destinations that showcase the very best of Scotland's environment. Scotland's National Parks share four aims set out by Parliament:

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

Through its seasonal visitor management program the Park Authority aims to ensure that visitors have the opportunity to enjoy the special qualities of the National Park.

### Visitor management in 2017

The Ranger Service provided visitors with advice, assistance, information, education and a warm welcome within the context of encouraging respect for the Park. The 1<sup>st</sup> March saw the start of the new camping management byelaws and a change of focus for Rangers. Core patrolling activity was focused on the new Camping Management Zones & Loch Lomond.

This included; completing 1161 land based visitor management patrols across the park and spending 1275 staff stays managing Balmaha Visitor Centre, Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway & Loch Chon campsite from 1st April to the end of September. The key focus of this activity has been to enhance the experience for visitors to the park and in support of the new camping management byelaws raising awareness, educate and gain compliance from visitors planning to camp.

During the first operational season of the byelaws 828 individuals' details were taken by Rangers and warnings were given for alleged contraventions of Camping Management Byelaws. National Park staff submitted 3 standard prosecution reports to the Procurator Fiscal for contraventions of the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Camping Management Byelaws 2017. Additionally, 4 fixed penalty notices were issued for camping related fly-tipping.

The Loch Lomond based Ranger Team continued to provide critical support for loch users from their base at Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway (DMMS). In addition to processing boat registrations, facilitating launches, providing safety information and hazard buoy repair work they completed 206 patrols on Loch Lomond. Balmaha Visitor Centre also welcomed a record number of visitors this summer with approximately 115850 visits.

<b>April - Sept 2017</b>	West Loch Lomond	East Loch Lomond	Trossachs	Breadalbane	3 Lochs Drive	Loch Lomond	<b>Total</b>
Patrol days completed	301	180	267	233	180	206	1367



## **FORESTRY COMMISSION SCOTLAND**

Forestry Commission Wardens continued to operate the camp site at Salloch on East Loch Lomond throughout the 2017 season. The site was well used by campers and day visitors and the staff also monitored the use of the FCS car park at Rowardennan.

The Rowardennan car park was used on a frequent basis by a mixture of hillwalkers going up Ben Lomond and also persons visiting Loch Lomond in periods of good weather. There were occasional weekends where the sheer number of visitors led to inconsiderate and illegal parking which led to motorists becoming frustrated.

Fly tipping – There were two instances of asbestos being dumped on the trail network at Old Drymen Road, both within a couple of weeks of each other, the first was found by FCS staff on 28th September and the second on the 9th October. This was reported to Dumb Dumpers helpline as a fly tipping issue.

Unauthorised vehicle access - there were a number of instances of this during the road works from the roundabout at the Rob Roy Hotel into Aberfoyle, one resulted in a vehicle leaving the forest road and having to be pulled from the ditch by the AA. Gates were opened without authorisation, FCS staff were required to regularly patrol the area, locking barriers and assisting lost motorists.

The FCS Ranger covering the Cowal area carried out a number of joint patrols with the local community Police Officers. These patrols concentrated on the areas around Loch Eck and also Ardentinny and Lochgoilhead.

In late May picnic benches at Jubilee Point on Loch Eck were cut with a power saw.

In June the padlock on the access gate was broken off at Jubilee Point and there was also fire damage to a section of embankment.

In October the picnic benches at Dornoch Bay were vandalised.

## **MEDIA – ALL PARTNERS**

The communications team at Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park led on the communications strategy relating to the launch of the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Camping Management Byelaws 2017.

A total of 54 pieces of media coverage were achieved from January to November 2017, across national, regional and trade media, including print, broadcast and online. The majority of coverage was the result of proactive press releases issued by

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the National Park Authority Communications Team. Reactive enquiries were responded to quickly and opportunities to further raise awareness through the media were capitalised on as they emerged.

On 1st March, the BBC covered the first day of the byelaws at a UK level across BBC Breakfast, BBC Radio 2's Jeremy Vine Show, BBC 5 Live news, BBC Radio Scotland's Drivetime and Reporting Scotland, as well as on its own digital channels.

Each police division used their bespoke social media channels to highlight relevant issues through the season.

### **EMPLOYER SUPPORTED SPECIAL CONSTABLES – National Park**

One member of staff is an Employer Supported Special Constable. He provided **32** hours of patrol on weekdays in support of the operation, usually patrolling with a ward based community officer in Forth Valley Division.

### **NATIONAL PARK POLICE OFFICER**

PC Paul Barr remained in the post of National Park Police Officer during the 2017 season, this being the ninth season of the post.

The role remit continued to be further development of a problem solving partnership with Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority and other key partners to combat rural crime and anti-social behaviour across the National Park. He also provided advice and assistance to all areas of business within the National Park Authority and provided training inputs for National Park and Forestry Commission staff.

PC Barr changed his shift pattern for 2017 to allow him more time for operational patrol to provide assistance to colleagues and he contributed a total of **398** hrs of patrol in support of the operation across the park area of which 370 hours were from his core duties.

### **SAFETY IN THE PARK**

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The personal safety of visitors and residents in the National Park is a key strand of the operation and all staff engaged in it have a role to play in ensuring this.

The main safety risks relate to water safety, mountain safety and issues around wildfires.

**Water Safety** – The National Park is home to the largest body of inland water in mainland U.K., Loch Lomond. The loch has over 5000 motorised craft registered for use in addition to persons using canoes/kayaks or who participate in open water swimming. In addition to Loch Lomond there are also numerous other large lochs and fast flowing rivers in the park.

Police Officers and Rangers were involved in a number of water safety incidents throughout the year, often with the assistance of the volunteer crew of the Loch Lomond Rescue Boat.

Sadly there were three water fatalities in 2017, one involving a Personal Water Craft and two relating to swimmers.

Further work will be undertaken in 2018 in an effort to circulate relevant safety messages in an effort to reduce the incidences of these events.

**Mountain Safety** – The National Park area is fortunate to be covered by a combination of Police and civilian Mountain Rescue Teams, namely Police Scotland, (West), Arrochar, Lomond and Killin MRT's.

The area has a number of Munros, (mountains over 3000 feet) as well as a number of smaller but popular hills such as Conic Hill, Ben Ledi and The Cobbler. The West Highland Way also passes through the park and this is walked by thousands of persons each year.

Officers and Rangers assisted with a number of incidents involving lost and injured persons and the assistance of the volunteer rescue teams was greatly appreciated.

**Fire Safety** – Dry weather in May led to an increased wildfire risk and Officers worked in conjunction with Rangers from the National Park and FCS to try and minimise the risk of wildfires spreading as a result of camp fires not being extinguished or getting out of control.

The main incident involving a fire took place on East Loch Lomond in early May. A fire had spread through the Balmaha Plantation which took Scottish Fire & Rescue Service 3 days to bring under control. Issues surrounding parking congestion led to difficulties for fire appliances accessing the location and assistance had to be given by police.

2018 will see further work being undertaken in an effort to minimise the risks presented by the topics above.

## **CONCLUSION**

Cohesive partnership working in 2017 continued to build upon work done in previous years in an effort to meet the shared aims of the operation.

This work will continue into 2018 with an increased focus on safety issues, both on water and on land.