

National Park Authority

**Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park
Camping Management Byelaws 2017**



Annual Update for Scottish Ministers

2018

National Park Authority

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Camping Management Byelaws 2017



Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2018

Contents

1. Executive Summary
2. Purpose
3. Background
4. Preparing for the 2018 season
5. Implementation of the 2018 operational season
6. Monitoring
7. Operational Review of the 2018 Season and looking ahead to 2019



Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2018

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The second season of the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Camping Management Byelaws 2017 ran from 1st March to 30th September 2018.
- 1.2 These byelaws and associated camping provision are designed to improve the camping experience and alleviate pressure on key lochshore locations by managing visitor numbers and impacts associated with informal camping.
- 1.3 In addition to private sector campsites, 300 low cost camping places (a mixture of camping permit areas and low cost campsites) across four Camping Management Zones were available to book online and via telephone booking system operated by the National Park Authority.
- 1.4 This season saw a significant increase in the number of people camping in the Camping Management Zones. More than 25,000 people (including more than 5,000 children) camped within a permit area or Loch Chon campsite during this season. This was an increase of just over 50% on numbers from 2017 and shows a 70% increase in the number of children camping. The season did see a slow start due to the cold spell dubbed “the Beast from the East”. It is likely that the large increase in campers is due in large part to the long period of good weather throughout the height of the season. However, even as the good weather dissipated, camping figures still increased compared with 2017.
- 1.5 Feedback from the 1708 people who responded to camping feedback surveys about the permit areas, was positive overall with 88% saying that they would be ‘very likely’ (65%) or ‘quite likely’ (23%) to recommend staying over in a permit area. Feedback remained at the consistently high levels of the 2017 season despite the significant increase in the number of people camping.
- 1.6 Feedback from the 381 people who responded to camping feedback surveys about Loch Chon campsite, was also positive with 96% saying that they would be ‘very likely’ (79%) or ‘quite likely’ (17%) to recommend staying at the campsite. Despite the significant increase in the number of people camping, feedback was more positive than in 2017.
- 1.7 Feedback gathered throughout and following the first season of the operation of the byelaws in 2017 was used to inform and improve the operation of the byelaws for the second season. An iterative approach was also taken to continually



Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2018

improving camping provision and communications about the byelaws throughout the season, with feedback logged daily and actions allocated accordingly.

- 1.8 The majority of bookings for the camping permit areas (63%) came from Scotland, with 21% coming from the rest of the UK and the remaining 16% coming from the rest of the world. In 2017, 60% came from Scotland, 24% from the rest of the UK, 16% from the rest of the world.
- 1.9 Data analysis of bookings from within Scotland were mapped against the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) revealing that 61% of bookings came from 50% of the most deprived areas in Scotland.
- 1.10 Additional National Park Seasonal Rangers were recruited and trained to help raise awareness of the camping byelaws, educate people on the specifics of the byelaws and related behaviour. Rangers only enforced the byelaws when people refused to comply.
- 1.11 Of the 25,000 people who camped this season, National Park Rangers took the personal details of 931 individuals in relation to a contravention of byelaws. A total of 12 cases (where the people refused to comply with the byelaws) were reported to the Crown Office, four by the National Park Authority and eight were reported by Police Scotland.
- 1.12 Regular communications and opportunities for dialogue were provided to local communities and other key stakeholders throughout the season.
- 1.13 Severe weather in the early part of the season and unforeseen technical issues led to the decision to delay the planned opening of a new campsite at Loch Achray until 2019 so that the site could be fully operational and offer the best visitor experience possible.
- 1.14 A framework for monitoring the environmental impacts of the byelaws and associated camping provision has been put in place and will be used to inform the three-year report due in 2019.
- 1.15 Key challenges and areas for improvement in relation to camping management moving forward include some camping website improvements, increasing the number of campers who pre-book their permits and reducing the volume of littering, inappropriate toileting and fire lighting in some areas.



Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2018

- 1.16 Overall, the Your Park programme is progressing on track and a full report on three years of byelaw operation will be submitted to Scottish Government Ministers by March 2020.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. This annual update on the second season of The Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Camping Management Byelaws 2017 provides an overview of:

- the approach to preparation for the second season
- how the byelaws operated in practice
- observations on the initial impacts that the byelaws are having

- 2.2 The update draws from a range of information and data gathered during the second operational season of the byelaws (1st March – 30th September 2018). This update forms part of the administrative conditions attached to approval of The Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Camping Management Byelaws 2017, as specified by Scottish Ministers, as outlined in 2.3 below.

- 2.3 Further to this update Scottish Ministers will be provided with a report no later than three years after implementation of the byelaws, by March 2020. The report will consider how effective the new camping management measures have been in reducing the instances of environmental damage and irresponsible behaviour.

3. Background

Approving the Camping Management Byelaws 2017

- 3.1 After a public consultation process, on the 15th of May 2015 a letter of application was submitted by the National Park Authority to Dr Aileen McLeod, (who, at the time was) Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform. This sought confirmation of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Camping Management Byelaws, using powers conferred upon the Authority in Paragraph 8 of Section 2 of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. The proposals submitted to the Scottish Ministers included:



Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2018

- The implementation of camping byelaws across four Camping Management Zones covering less than 4% of the Park's 720 square miles
- The creation of a permit scheme to support the byelaws allowing informal camping in defined areas of the Camping Management Zones – see Appendix 1
- The creation of campsites with low cost bookable pitches and basic facilities
- Delivering 300 camping spaces in the first year of the byelaws operating, with more to be added in subsequent years
- The simultaneous revocation of the East Loch Lomond byelaws to coincide with the introduction of the new byelaws

3.2 Following a period of ministerial consideration, the proposed Camping Management Byelaws were approved by Scottish Ministers on 26th January 2016. Formal modifications that were requested of the National Park were that:

- *'The proposed period of operation of the byelaws would be reduced by one month; running from 1st March to 30th September rather than to the end of October as previously envisaged. This included the area where the East Loch Lomond byelaws had operated for eight months of the year.'*
- *'The implementation of the byelaws was moved to 1st March 2017'*

Two administrative conditions were also applied:

- 1) *'Ministers should be provided with a formal report of a review of the operation of the byelaws no later than 3 years after implementation. The report should consider how effective the new camping management measures have been in reducing the instances of environmental damage and irresponsible behaviour as a direct result of implementation.'*
- 2) *'The National Park will provide Scottish Ministers with an annual update on the implementation of the byelaws.'*

The Camping Management Byelaws first came into effect on 1st March 2017. The first Annual Update for Scottish Ministers was published in December 2017. This report is the second of these annual updates.



Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2018

The Visitor Management Education and Enforcement Policy was prepared before the implementation of the byelaws and sets out the approach that the National Park Authority will follow to manage visitor behaviour using legislative powers throughout the National Park. In summary this policy focuses on the use of public education and preventative approaches, before enforcement, as the primary methods for ensuring byelaw compliance.

4. Preparing for the 2018 operational season

- 4.1 A range of feedback was gathered from visitors, landowners, businesses, communities and staff throughout and following the 2017 season. This was then used to develop a programme of improvements for the second season.
- 4.2 The subsequent tasks were prioritised and split into three development and delivery areas:
- **Camping Infrastructure and Management:** The delivery of and improvements to campsite provision and the camping permit scheme; design and installation of additional information and advisory signage for visitors where appropriate.
 - **Operational Management:** Refining of administrative and support systems for managing camping activity, byelaw enforcement and monitoring; operational arrangements such as staffing models, systems and training.
 - **Communications and Engagement:** Preparation and delivery of a communications plan to raise awareness and understanding of the byelaws and camping provision within the Camping Management Zones for the 2018 season and to provide consistent information and opportunities for engagement with communities and stakeholders.

Camping Infrastructure and Management

- 4.3 The 2017 season was first used to monitor the performance of the camping infrastructure and management systems that had been introduced alongside the byelaws. Along with the visitor feedback gathered, this helped inform the preparatory work and improvements to be introduced for the 2018 season.
- **Permit Areas:** All permit areas were assessed by our Ranger Service with recommendations put forward for improvements to enhance the visitor



Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2018

experience such as improved signage and groundworks. The permit areas were also checked for any issues that might prevent them being opened such as protected wildlife or tree safety constraints. The sites were also cleared of any litter by the Ranger Service. Consideration was also given to where existing facilities could be used to improve the experience for campers at certain locations. For example, 24 hour access was provided to the existing toilets at Firkin Point supporting 15 camping and 3 motorhome places, along with day visitors.

- **Informal Campsites:** Customer feedback on the Loch Chon campsite in 2017 was very positive overall but identified two key issues to be addressed for season two; irregular water supply and some pitches that required work to level them out. Our Land Operations team upgraded all pitches as required, creating all weather surfaces that would be hard wearing and allow vegetation to grow through. Where ground conditions were especially difficult camping platforms were installed. The water supply was redesigned, chlorinated and tested so it was fully functioning in time for the campsite opening on 1st March.

The first phase of development of the new Loch Achray campsite got underway having been granted planning permission and a building warrant. The contract was procured and work started on site in January 2018. However, the unusually long spell of bad weather throughout February and into March stopped operations for a period time and delayed the project significantly.

- **Signage:** Our Ranger Service identified key locations within the Camping Management Zones which continued to experience camping activity not within designated permit areas. It was felt that additional signage was required in these 'hot-spot' areas to raise awareness of the byelaws.

Through feedback it was also identified that greater clarity could be provided on the Camping Management Zone road-side threshold signs and work was undertaken to look at how this could be addressed.

A considered approach between the environmental impact of physical infrastructure and improving the operational effectiveness of the byelaws was taken when assessing these additional signage needs.



Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2018

- **Loch Earn improvements:** South Loch Earn is an extremely popular area for fishing and camping which has led to issues with irresponsible toileting. A series of discussions were held with the landowner to present proposals for providing basic toilet and parking facilities to reduce these negative impacts. Unfortunately, we were unable to come to an agreement with the landowner and the absence of facilities in this large heavily used permit area remains an issue we are aiming to address.

Monitoring in the permit areas in this location during the 2018 season would provide further evidence to help assess whether alternative solutions needed to be pursued.

Operational Management and Administration

4.4 The focus for improving the operational management of the byelaws ahead of the second season was on refining systems and associated data, procedures, staff deployment models and training used in season one.

4.5 The key preparatory work for this element of the project included:

- A revised Ranger deployment model, including Seasonal Ranger use;
- Recruitment of seasonal Campsite Wardens;
- Updated training for field staff on enforcement processes;
- Meetings with Police Scotland and Forest Enterprise Scotland to review the 2017 season of Operation Ironworks and to discuss the focus of the initiative during 2018;
- The online camping booking system was updated to improve the user experience with improvements including clearer descriptions of the permit areas and how they work; the number of spaces available at each permit area; how many spaces were available at the time of booking; and messaging on responsible fire lighting and toileting. The Loch Chon booking system was brought into line with the permit booking system with images of the site and each pitch, maps and descriptions of the new pitch surfaces all added.

Communications and Engagement

4.6 Communication and engagement preparations for the second season of the byelaws sought to ensure visitors, local communities and businesses continued to be well informed about the byelaws.



Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2018

4.7 The key preparatory work for this element of the project included:

- Pre-season updates to Community Councils and to the members of the Your Park Stakeholder Forum outlining the changes and improvements made this season;
- Press releases issued to local, national and outdoor recreation media, plus an adapted version aimed at angling publications to reach this key audience;
- A series of targeted social media posts, using imagery and infographics, was scheduled for the first few weeks of the season reminding people of the seasonal byelaws, how they work, messaging on camping and fire lighting and an emphasis on planning ahead;
- The camping section of the National Park website was updated with additional messaging. The new 'What you need to know before you go' page included information about camping options, management zones and permit areas with related videos.
- A communications pack for partners was issued, providing articles for internal and external channels, a quick guide to the byelaws for their staff, useful links, images and infographics.

5. Implementation of the 2018 operational season

The second operational season of the Camping Management Byelaws 2017 commenced on the 1st March 2018. As in 2017, the new and refined infrastructure, systems and procedures that support the byelaws were tested throughout the season and changes were made where appropriate.

5.1. 306 low cost camping places were ready from the start of March 2018, including spaces for tents on permit areas, pitches at informal campsites and spaces for motorhomes at popular visitor locations off the public highway – see Appendix 2. As with any camping provision, the number of permits spaces available did fluctuate slightly during the season due to factors affecting ground conditions and access, such as flooding following heavy rain, forestry operations or the need for essential maintenance.

The start of the season saw a few permit area closures due to the prolonged period of heavy snow. Severe weather in September, when amber weather warnings were issued for strong winds, led to the temporary closure of all permit areas and Loch Chon campsite in the interest of visitor and staff safety. During the rest of the season, particularly from May to August, the prolonged period of dry, sunny weather is likely to have contributed to the increase in people wishing to camp.



Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2018

Loch Achray South permit area, which had been closed during the 2017 season due to the presence of cattle, reopened in August 2018, providing an additional four camping places. The season ended with 310 available camping places.

Despite the need to take some camping places temporarily off the booking system, analysis of bookings and camping provision shows that availability met demand for camping across the season. While some permit areas and Loch Chon campsite reached 100% occupancy at key weekends in the summer, capacity was available at other locations. A flexible approach to the number of camping places available continues to be required to ensure sustainability, adequate provision and a high quality experience.

5.2 During the second season work focussed again on the three development and delivery areas:

- **Camping Infrastructure and Management:** Management of permit areas across the Camping Management Zones, the operation of Loch Chon campsite in Strathard, further signage installation and development of Loch Achray campsite on the Three Lochs Forest Drive.
- **Operational Management:** Ranger patrols of the Camping Management Zones with a focus on education and engagement around responsible camping first, and enforcement only when necessary; refining of the monitoring programme; administration of the permit booking system both online and over the telephone; and support on engagement where appropriate from Volunteer Rangers; collection of operational management related monitoring data.
- **Communications and Engagement:** Continued awareness-raising activity with tailored messaging to key audiences; seeking opportunities for media coverage; and regular updates and liaison with key stakeholders and communities; collection of engagement related monitoring data.

Camping Infrastructure and Management

5.3 Permit Area Operation

As of the start of the season on 1st March 2018 there were 44 permit areas across the four Camping Management Zones. Of these, 34 were designated for tent camping and 10 were provided for motorhomes. These permit spaces and pitches for Loch Chon Campsite could be booked online, up to eight weeks in advance, via the National Park Authority website, or over the phone. In 2018 we also provided



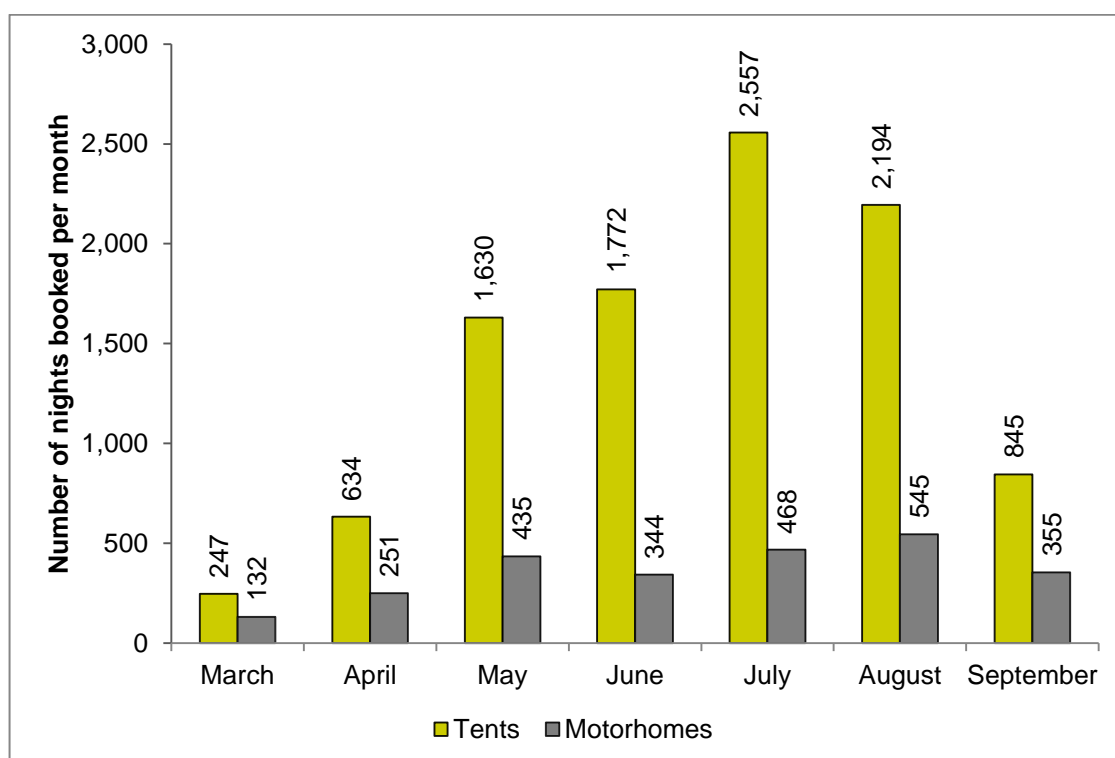
Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2018

the opportunity to make bookings in person on site at Loch Chon campsite when campsite wardens were present. Permit area charges remained at £3 per tent or motorhome per night (with a maximum bookable number of three nights stay in one permit area).

5.4 Permit Area Use

The following figures summarise a breakdown of permit area use over the second season:

- Over the season a total of 9,452 bookings were taken, an increase of just under 55% from 2017. This is representative of 12,409 nights of camping, which breaks down as shown in the chart below:



- The total number of people who camped in a permit area over the 2018 season was 21,658 (a 45% increase from 2017). This represented 17,690 adults (a 41% increase from 2017) and 3,968 children (a 70% increase from 2017).



Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2018

- 78% of bookings (7,421) were for tents and 22% (2,031) for motorhomes.
- The majority of bookings (73%) were made for one night stays, 22% of people booked for two nights and the remaining 5% for the maximum allowed stay of three nights in one permit area.
- 63% of permit bookings were from Scotland, 21% were from the rest of the UK and the remaining 16% from the rest of the world. See Appendix 3 for permit area bookings by home locations.

Demand for camping permits

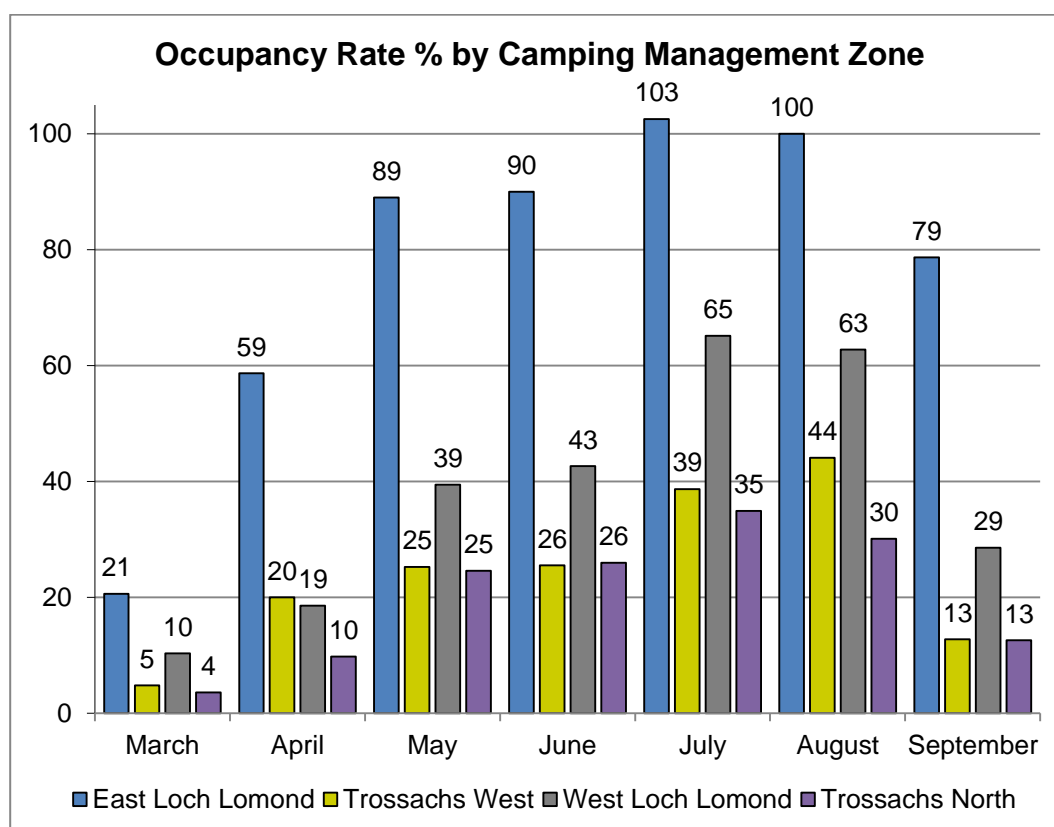
5.5 Camping is largely seasonal so demand for camping tends to fluctuate with weather, weekends, public and school holidays.

- The average occupancy rate (number of nights booked divided by the number available) across all camping permit areas was 25%, up from 15% in 2017.
- During the peak summer period between May and August, occupancy rates increased significantly in most areas with some locations reaching 100% occupancy on key weekends.
- An occupancy level of 103% was reached in July in the East Loch Lomond Camping Management Zone. This is attributed to the limited number of permits that can be sold in a Camping Management Zone, with East Loch Lomond only containing one permit area, (although considerable camping provision is available at the other more formal campsites in the area). Wherever possible Rangers will assist campers to comply with the byelaws. In some cases such as West Highland Way walkers who find themselves fatigued and too far from a formal campsite, Rangers will give some discretion in the application of the byelaws, which in a limited number of cases may lead to temporary over-occupancy in permit areas.



Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2018

- Occupancy rates by Camping Management Zone are shown in the graph below:



5.6 Permit Area Visitor Feedback

Everyone who booked into a permit area was sent an online survey on the day they were due to leave inviting them to provide feedback on their stay including any suggested improvements. More than 1700 people responded to the permit area feedback survey, an increase of just over 40% from 2017. This increase in survey respondents, plus the increase in the overall number of people camping this season shows the satisfaction rates for the permit areas were consistently high.

Feedback was logged daily and any actions arising were prioritised. The following figures provide a summary of that feedback. This information is visualised in Appendix 4.

- 88% of respondents booked their permit before they arrived at their pitch,



Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2018

- compared to 85% in 2017;
- 94% of respondents said they found it very easy (65%) or easy (29%) to buy their camping/motorhome permit, compared to 93% in 2017;
- 88% of respondents said they found it very easy (52%) or easy (36%) to find the permit area they had booked, compared to 86% in 2017;
- 88% of respondents said they would be very likely (65%) or quite likely (23%) to recommend staying over in a permit area, compared to 87% in 2017;
- 48% of respondents had met a National Park Ranger during their stay, compared to 46% in 2017;
- 7% of respondents said they did not feel they were provided with enough information about how the byelaws operate, compared to 5% in 2017.

5.7 Camping Bookings by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) rank

Providing accessible and affordable camping opportunities for people from a wide range of backgrounds is a key priority for the National Park Authority. Using postcode data, an analysis was conducted of permit area bookings from within Scotland, with the results mapped against the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation is:

“the Scottish Government’s official tool for identifying areas in Scotland concentrations of deprivation by incorporating several different aspects of deprivation (multiple-deprivations) and combining them into a single index.”

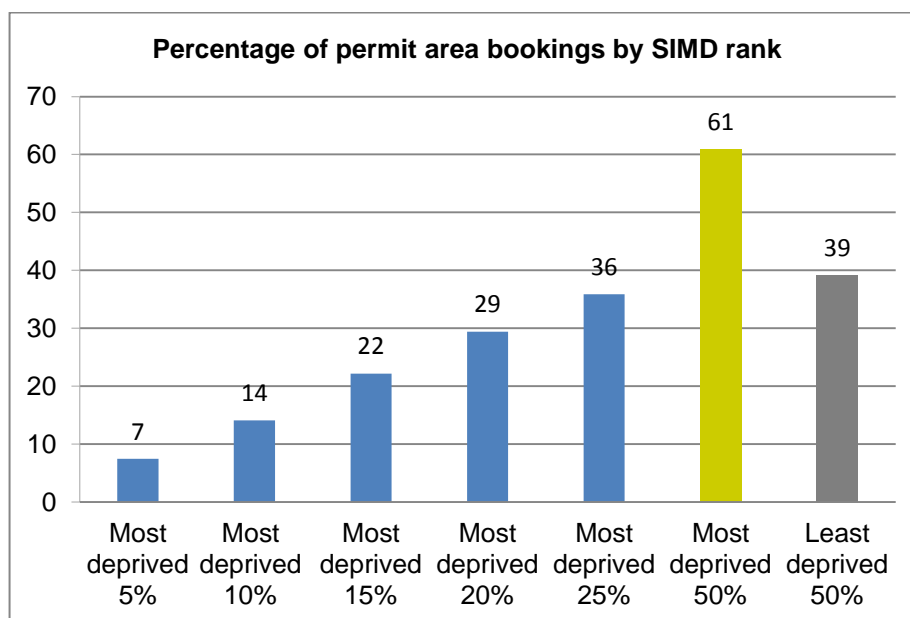
Source: <http://www.isdscotland.org>

All campers residing in Scotland with a postcode form part of the SIMD. Of the 5,968 permit area bookings that came from Scotland, 61% of them came from postcodes within 50% of the most deprived areas in Scotland, representing a decrease of 2% from 2017.

The remaining 39% of bookings came from the 50% least deprived areas in Scotland, a 2% increase on 2017.



Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2018



5.8 Loch Chon Campsite Operation and Bookings

Loch Chon campsite continued to provide a semi-formal camping experience with toilet facilities, access to fresh water and allocated parking. With 26 pitches available to book using the same booking system as for the permit areas. The campsite prices remained the same as in 2017 at £7 per adult per night, and children under 16 camping for free.

The campsite was staffed on a rota system by a team of Campsite Wardens, providing support and advice for campers and undertaking basic maintenance on the site. This season campers were also able to book their camping spaces on site at Loch Chon, and firewood, midge nets/repellent were also available to buy from the Campsite Wardens.

Having resolved the water supply issue from 2017, a new issue with the drinking water supply meant that, at times, campers were provided bottled water as an alternative during their stay. This contingency arrangement was in place throughout the season to ensure there was always a backup drinking water supply for campers if issues arose. This problem associated with the filtration system persisted despite the efforts of the staff to find a long term resolution. Alternative solutions are being sought to the problem to allow a more consistent service in 2019.



Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2018

The following figures summarise a breakdown of the use of Loch Chon campsite over the second season.

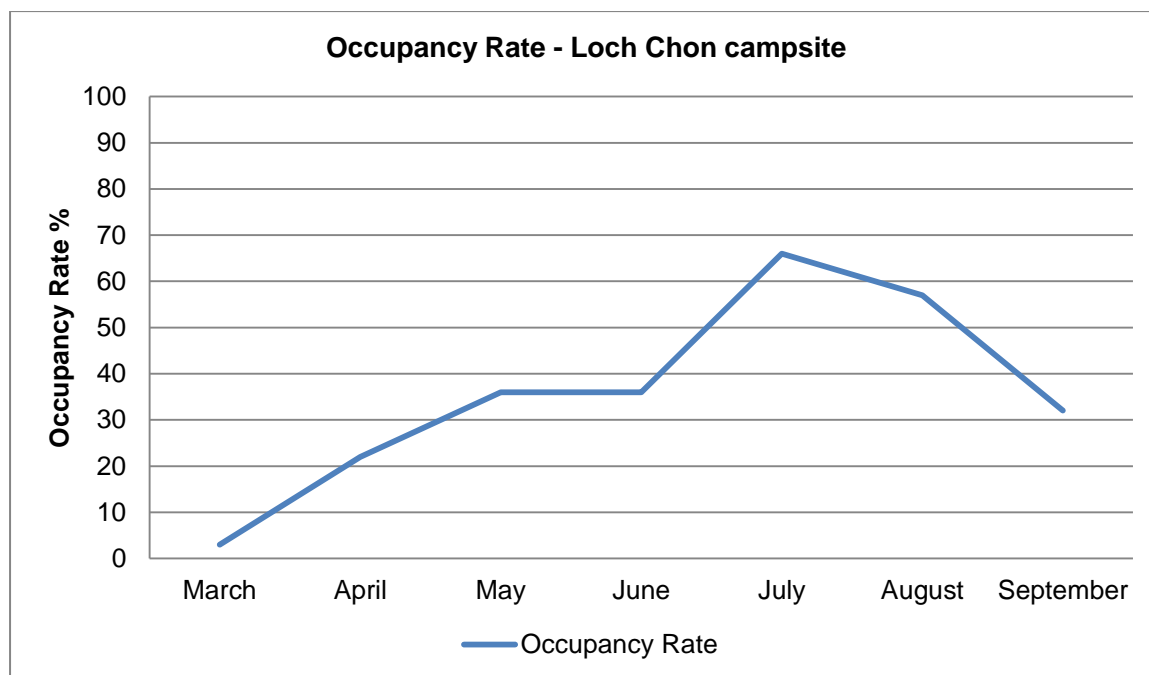
- A total of 1,268 bookings were taken, which was representative of 1,956 nights of camping. This was a 51% increase in bookings and a 57% increase in nights of camping from 2017.
- The total number of people who camped at Loch Chon campsite over the season was 2,400 (an increase of 17% from 2017). This represented 1,501 adults (an increase of 56% from 2017) and 899 children (an increase of 74% from 2017).
- The majority of bookings were made online, with 84% (compared to 75% in 2017) of campers using this booking method, while 7% of people used the telephone booking service and 7% booked upon arrival.
- Bookings could be made up to eight weeks in advance of arrival date with 17% of people booking their pitch on the day of arrival down from 22% in 2017.
- The majority of bookings (56%) were made for one night stays, 34% of people booked for two nights and the remaining 10% for the maximum allowed stay of three nights. Small increases were seen for both two and three night bookings, versus 2017.
- 67% of campsite bookings were from Scotland, 18% were from the rest of the UK and the remaining 10% from the rest of the world.

The average occupancy rate at Loch Chon Campsite was 36%, up from 22% in 2017. The campsite was fully booked on 16 occasions, and operated at 75-100% capacity on 20 occasions throughout the season.



Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2018

Occupancy rates at Loch Chon campsite are illustrated below:



5.9 Loch Chon Campsite Visitor Feedback

As was the case in 2017, people who stayed at Loch Chon campsite were given the opportunity to complete a survey to feedback on their experience and make suggestions for improvements. The following figures summarise the key findings of the 2018 feedback survey. This information is visualised in Appendix 5:

- 96% of respondents booked their pitch at Loch Chon campsite before they arrived, compared with 95% in 2017;
- 98% of respondents found it very easy (77%) or easy (21%) to book their pitch compared with 88% in 2017;
- 94% of respondents felt they were provided with enough information about the campsite compared with 88% in 2017;
- 97% of respondents said that they would be very likely (80%) or quite likely (17%) or to recommend Loch Chon campsite compared with 92% in 2017;
- 91% of respondents met a National Park Ranger during their stay at the campsite compared with 89% in 2017.



Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2018

Operational Management and Administration

5.10 Administration

Both online and telephone bookings continued to be managed by the National Park Authority camping bookings team. As well as taking bookings, staff handling camping related calls were often asked for general visitor advice and were able, in some cases, to help tailor a visitor's camping experience to their needs. As in 2017, the majority of bookings were made on Fridays and Saturdays. Rangers also assisted people on the ground without permits who wished to camp, by completing online, telephone or if required, retrospective bookings. The experience built up over two seasons allowed for input into ongoing refinements of the booking system and the monitoring programme.

5.11 Permit Authorisations

Organised groups can apply for authorisation to camp within Camping Management Zones either within permit areas or outside of permit areas where appropriate. This allows groups such as Duke of Edinburgh Award expeditions and youth organisations to camp within a Camping Management Zones, at no charge. Information and an online application form are available on the National Park website.

During the 2018 season, the total number of organised group applications received increased by 40% from 47 in 2017, to 66 in 2018.

- 12 authorisation requests were received and approved for permission to erect a tent inside a Camping Management Zone, but outside of a permit area, representing no change from 2017. (7 were camping , 5 were events)
- 46 applications are attributed to youth groups and organisations applying to camp within permit areas or at a campsite at no charge.
The remaining applications were either not required or declined. Applications may be declined based on the timeliness of the submission or unsuitability of the proposal. (1 not required, 5 declined as too late to process)

5.12 Ranger Patrols

As in 2017 the National Park Ranger service provided the majority of public facing engagement through a mixture of permanent and seasonal staff. A flexible deployment model was used, allowing Ranger Team Leaders to deploy Rangers to where they were needed most, providing a more responsive service.



Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2018

The patrols, who work on a shift rota, were primarily tasked with welcoming people to the National Park, providing general advice, raising awareness and understanding of the byelaws and responsible camping behaviour. When people were found to be not complying with the byelaws (e.g. camping in a permit area without a permit), Rangers explained this to them along with the options on how they could comply. Rangers only enforced the byelaws when people refused to comply. The overall increased visitor numbers to the National Park this year did affect the Ranger patrols mobility at some times and therefore refinements were made during the season to allow maximum coverage of the Camping Management Zones.

Whilst on patrol, Rangers also captured visitor-related data including visual counts of people, tents, vehicles, fires and estimated litter levels. In 2018 light touch maintenance on permit areas included litter picking, managing unburied human waste levels and the restoration of fire sites.

5.13 Volunteers

National Park Volunteers assisted in providing information and inspiring visitors, allowing Rangers more time to spend actively patrolling the Camping Management Zones. At the Three Lochs Forest Drive in the Trossachs, where there are tent and motorhome permit areas, Volunteer Rangers worked with Rangers to staff an information station at times of peak demand. Volunteers also assisted with maintaining the quality of the permit areas with targeted litter picks. Volunteers are not tasked with enforcing the byelaws.

5.14 Byelaws and the Environmental Protection Act Enforcement

When required, enforcement of the byelaws was carried out by Rangers or Police Scotland officers. The following figures summarises these actions:

- As part of standard practice for byelaw management 931 individuals' details were taken and advice given in relation to alleged contraventions of Camping Management Byelaws 2017.
- From this total 12 byelaw cases were reported to the Crown Office, four by National Park Rangers and eight by Police Scotland. Byelaws that were contravened included Unauthorised Camping – Byelaw 6 and 7, Fire-lighting – Byelaw 8a, Provision of details – Byelaws 9, Removal from a Management Zone – Byelaw 13 and Penalties and Offences – Obstruction Byelaw 14.



Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2018

- Three of these reported cases (one reported by the National Park and two by Police Scotland) also included offences under the Environmental Protection Act for camping related fly-tipping.
- During the same time period National Park staff issued one Fixed Penalty Notice for camping related fly-tipping which was subsequently paid and reported one camping related fly-tipping case to the Crown Office.

5.15 Communications and Engagement

A camping management communications plan was prepared and implemented in the lead up to 1st March 2018 and throughout the season.

This focused on raising awareness of the byelaws by providing clear information across a range of channels including:

- National, regional and trade media
- Social media
- National Park Authority website
- Partner newsletters and websites
- Printed materials
- Regular email and face to face updates to community groups and stakeholders

5.16 National, Regional and Trade Media

We saw a notable reduction in the number of reactive media enquiries received this season which was to be expected now that the byelaws are not brand new. A total of nine pieces of media coverage were achieved from January to November 2018, across national, regional and trade media, including print, broadcast and online. The majority of coverage was the result of proactive press releases issued by the National Park Authority Communications Team.

Where enquiries were received on camping, we took the opportunity to talk about camping and the byelaws positively and reach a wider audience.

In April, coverage of our start of season press release appeared in the Scotsman, Helensburgh Advertiser, Clydebank Post, Grough online and were reiterated in a Glasgow Live online article for the May Bank Holiday weekend. During the season, the National Park's approach to camping management was explored as part of wider pieces on visitor pressures on BBC Radio Scotland, BBC Radio Four's Farming Today and BBC's Countryfile.



Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2018

During the season, camping –related coverage was also achieved both in print and online for ‘Tips for enjoying the National Park in hot weather’ and the partnership working with Police Scotland and Forestry Commission Scotland on Operation Ironworks.

5.17 Digital

Between 1st March and 30th September the camping pages of the website were viewed 441,997 times (by 93,264 users over 136,750 visits).

Targeted social media posts providing helpful information on camping and the byelaws on Facebook had a total reach of 75,034 while Twitter posts reached 56,991 people. During the peak period of the season, weekly social media updates were providing highlighting remaining availability of camping permits and pitches and encouraging people to book ahead. Images and infographics were used regularly to make posts more engaging and further our reach.

Google AdWords, search engine advertising was used to promote the new campsite at Loch Chon, resulting in ,400 clicks and 22,900 impressions.

5.18 Stakeholder engagement

The Your Park Stakeholder Forum is made up of representatives of community councils, community development trusts, landowners, partner public sector organisations and non-governmental organisations including those with an interest in outdoor recreation and access.

This season a regular Stakeholder Update was introduced with all communities and members of the Stakeholder Forum being sent an email newsletter outlining the progress of the season every three months. This included an infographic providing key facts and figures in an engaging and easy to digest way. An example of the infographic can be found in Appendix 6

A meeting of the Stakeholder Forum was held in June 2018 to provide an opportunity for face to face dialogue on the season so far. This also included the opportunity for members of the Forum to visit and see progress on the campsite being built at Loch Achray. A further meeting of the Stakeholder Forum was held in November 2018 to provide a summary of the whole season and run a workshop to gain feedback on the revised Camping Development Strategy, which will be published in 2019.

Individual face to face meetings were also held with a range of stakeholders including landowners, partners and NGOs. Written and in-person updates were provided to community councils throughout the year.



Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2018

A communications pack was created and issued to key partners to provide them with information and materials about camping in the National Park to promote on both their internal and external channels.

5.19 Printed Materials

The National Park Authority's Camping in the Park and Angling in the Park leaflets were revised and reprinted in the summer of 2018. These are distributed to key locations across the National Park and used as engagement tools by the Rangers, other staff and Volunteer Rangers when on patrol or attending events. The Camping in the Park leaflet provides information on the range of camping options available in the National Park and includes listings of all campsites and permit areas. The revised leaflet included updated imagery and descriptions of permit areas as well as updated listings information on both National Park authority camping provision and private campsites.

6. Monitoring

- 6.1 The Your Park monitoring programme was devised primarily to meet the specific monitoring requirements identified within the Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report.

The monitoring plan spans a five-year period, with some data being collected prior to 2017. This will inform operational management responses where required. Data is broadly split into two categories of sustainability monitoring; Environmental and Socio-economic and is listed below:

Environmental data monitoring incorporates:

- Monthly fixed point photography, vegetation surveys and yearly water quality sampling at several sites within the Camping Management Zones.
- Counts of fire sites and estimated litter levels
- Analysis of damage/vandalism to National Park Authority camping related infrastructure
- Wetland Bird Surveys on Loch Lomond
- Any environmental impacts on sites outwith Camping Management Zones which results from potential displacement of campers

Socio-economic data monitoring incorporates:

- Counts of people, tents and vehicles at permit areas



Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2018

- Number of camping and motorhome permits issued at each permit area and campsite
- Number of byelaw related reports to the Crown Office and Fixed Penalty Notices issued
- Analysis of data from Police Scotland annual Operations Ironworks report
- Feedback comments and complaints on issues affecting camping such as litter, human waste and ground conditions in permit areas, campsites and across the Camping Management Zones
- Satisfaction surveys (currently in development): Visitor perception survey, Targeted Resident Survey, Online Business Survey
- Scottish Tourism Economic Assessment Model (STEAM) survey
- Analysis of social media posts
- Number of youth groups and organised groups applying for byelaw exemptions to camp within the Camping Management Zones
- Potential displacement of campers due to the introduction of the Camping Management Byelaws , involving visiting specified areas outside of the Camping Management Zones that provide a similar visitor experience and are easily accessible by car, and liaison with local Police Scotland officers..
- Status of camping provision from other formal, commercial campsites in the National Park
- Indicators of numbers of long-distance walkers on the West Highland Way

Along with the data collected two management frameworks are being developed within the Your Park monitoring programme to focus on how and when management responses might be put into action.

These frameworks will define the environmental and socio-economic data gathered, and set decision triggers, beyond which a management response can be put into action, such as when permit numbers might need to be varied as a result of heavy use of a particular permit area.

Full development of the environmental and socio-economic management frameworks began in the 2018 season, for full roll out in 2019. This will help in the analysis of the data for the three-year report to the Scottish Government.



Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2018

The observable impacts from three full seasons of the camping management byelaws will be laid out in the three-year report to Scottish Ministers.

7. Operational Review of the 2018 Season and looking forward to 2019

7.1 The preparation and operation of the second season of the camping byelaws has been guided by experiences and feedback gathered from the first season and continuously throughout 2018. Lessons have been learnt from testing new systems and procedures as well as the wide range of feedback leading to refinements and improvements on the ground.

7.2 After the completion of the second season, alongside the feedback from permit area users, an operational review process was carried out by the National Park Authority to capture learnings from those involved in the programme.

7.3 Key challenges and areas for improvement that have been identified are:

- While 94% of respondents to the permit area feedback survey said they found it very easy or easy to book a permit online, a range of further constructive suggestions for improvements included: mobile device and webpage search functionality and better clarity around arrival and departure times;
- The need to reduce instances where permit areas were occupied by campers without permits;
- Littering and inappropriate toileting remain key issues in particular areas;
- Fire sites that do not comply with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code are still observed on permit areas;
- There was some evidence that there was a level of inappropriate use of vehicles on the Three Lochs Forest Drive with speeding and some people travelling the wrong way around the route which is one way for safety purposes;
- Investigations are being carried out into improving the water supply at Loch Chon;
- Progress to provide additional permit area capacity during 2018 was limited. We are continuing to look at bringing new permit areas online in 2019.

7.4 Improvements planned for the 2019 season include:

- Loch Achray campsite will be ready to receive customers on 1st March 2019.
- Improvements to the water supply at Loch Chon Campsite
- Continue to adapt and improve our website and booking system.



Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2018

- Trial permit booking stations at key point of sale locations (e.g. Visit Scotland information centres or shops selling fishing permits) in the National Park.
- Targeted additional permit area provision.
- Running a campaign focussing on how to do the right thing in relation to disposing of your litter and how to go to the toilet in the countryside.
- Increase communications activity around responsible camping, and in particular fire lighting.
- Review signage needs.
- Undertake further research on motorhome and campervan user needs
- Review continuous improvements to our training programme, Ranger deployment model, maintenance regimes, monitoring programme and data collection methods.

Looking ahead to 2019 and the third operational year of the Camping Management Byelaws we will also focus on:

- Publication of an updated Camping Development Strategy reiterating the vision for camping in the National Park, and how we plan to work in partnership to achieve this vision.
- Improvements to specific National Park Authority owned and managed visitor facilities using funding secured from the Scottish Government Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund. This will focus on our facilities on the west side of Loch Lomond and improve the visitor experience for campers and day visitors alike.
- Consider how to facilitate better awareness and provision of motorhome and campervan waste disposal facilities within the National Park.

7.5 Work will also focus on preparing the three-year report of the operation of the Camping Management Byelaws which will be submitted to Scottish Ministers following the completion of the 2019 season.