**Present: Martin Earl (Chair – National Park Authority Board), Gordon Watson (National Park Authority), Matt Buckland (National Park Authority), Emma Hislop (National Park Authority), Suzanne Humpris (National Park Authority), Andy Bushell (Police Scotland), Carlyn Fraser (Stirling Council), Fergus Wood, Lynda McColl (Strathard Community Council), Andrew Faulk (Strathard Community Trust), Jim Riach (Port of Menteith Community Council), Tim Tindle (Trossachs Community Trust & Community Partnership), Gene Maxwell (Trossachs Community Council), Crispin Hoult (Trossachs Community Council / Community Trust), Joyce Kelly (Strathard Community Council), Katy Lamb (Kinlochard Village Hall), Susan Warren (Countryside Trust), James Fraser (Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs)**

| **Agenda Item** | **Subject** | **Note** | **Action** |
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| **1.** | Welcome and introductions | Martin Earl (chair) welcomed everyone to the call and set out the purpose of the meeting. This is one of a series of meetings taking place this month to review visitor management challenges seen across the National Park last year and to discuss initial plans to help manage visitors in 2021. Based on feedback from last year, these meetings are trialling a place-based approach with the aim to bring together community representatives, businesses and landowners with key partners operating in specific areas of the National Park. This meeting covers the following community council areas:   * Trossachs * Strathard * Port of Menteith * Gartmore |  |
| **2.** | Current operations in lockdown | Gordon Watson provided an overview of operations in the current lockdown for both the National Park Authority and partners (see slide 2 in PowerPoint presentation). As a public authority, the National Park is complying with all Scottish Government guidance and helping to spread the ‘stay at home, stay local’ message. Offices and buildings remain closed, however visitor facilities like car parks and toilets remain open in line with normal winter opening hours for use by local residents. Some outdoor work is able to continue, such as maintenance and repair work and single-crew Ranger patrols. |  |
| **3.** | Overview of the 2020 visitor season in your area | Matt Buckland ran through key visitor management challenges in the area in 2020 (see slide 3 in PowerPoint presentation), including traffic related pressures and irresponsible parking particularly felt at the area of the A821 around the Ben A’an car park and Kinlochard as well as Milton car park and at the Lake of Menteith. Other pressures included COVID-19 measures for services with the provision of adequate toilets and reduced capacity of campsites for tent based camping. This was exacerbated by an increase of new audiences visiting the National Park in place of their usual holidays and activities. This did lead to an increase in antisocial behaviour associated with camping such as fire damage, cutting of live wood and littering. Human waste issues were also a problem, not only at camping permit areas but at sites where day visitors gathered such as Kinlochard and Kate’s Brae. |  |
| **4.** | Plans for 2021 | Matt Buckland then gave a short presentation on some of the visitor management approaches that are being worked on and proposed for the 2021 season across the three themes of Information & Engagement, Infrastructure & Services and Regulation & Enforcement.  **Information & engagement** (slide 4)  The National Park Safe Recovery Action Group (NPSRAG), made up of the National Park Authority, Local Authorities, Transport Scotland and Forestry & Land Scotland, will continue to meet regularly to plan resource deployment and make adjustments based on the latest intelligence.  Rangers and Volunteer Rangers will be on the ground speaking directly with visitors – this activity will need to follow the most recent COVID guidelines but it is hoped that these patrols will be able to begin much earlier in the season this year. They will also be liaising with other partner staff such as Forestry & Land Scotland staff and Local Authority enforcement officers.    A joint National Park Visitor Management Communications Plan is being developed, alongside a Visitor Management Response Plan, which will ensure a joined up approach to communications from all partners. Along with ongoing website and social media updates for visitors, communities and stakeholders, this will include plans for various campaigns aimed at influencing visitor behaviours (including topics such as water safety, responsible fire lighting and toileting, etc). These campaigns will be supported by pop-up engagement stalls being planned at key locations to directly engage with visitors on responsible access and safety.  Along with a joined up approach across the National Park, we also continue to sit on the national Visitor Management Strategy Group that is led by VisitScotland and reports directly to Fergus Ewing. The group is responsible for developing approaches to reducing the pressures of visitor management.  **Infrastructure & services** (slide 5)  The Trossachs Visitor Management Project has been successful in obtaining funding for a range of works including increased car parking spaces at Stronachlachar, Trossachs Pier and Ben A’an. The project is being led by SS Sir Walter Scott, working with Forestry & Land Scotland and the National Park Authority. The destination will also once again be able to offer visitor access to the lochside road.  We will be looking to extend the scheme that we ran in 2019 to provide the facility for campers to pack out or bury human waste dependent on the suitability of the area. We are also ensuring that National Park Authority staff have the training and equipment to remove waste from sites when needed. We are also looking at some different options for high capacity rural toilet provision with a particular product that is new to market looking particularly promising both in terms of cost and effectiveness.  There is the potential to deploy variable messaging signage at key locations where needed. We are also looking to build on the pilot project trialled last year to provide ‘live’ updates about traffic and car park facilities on our website using car park sensors. This will also give us data that will be useful to provide an evidence base for further traffic pressure reduction measures. There is also still potential to look at some overflow car parking at Kinlochard as a priority but this should be seen as a short term solution to traffic management. The National Park Authority will also be working with Forestry & Land Scotland to look at providing some designated parking spaces for motorhomes at less busy car parks to help with some dispersal.  Thinking longer term – a big area of focus for this year will be to look at sustainable visitor transport, including the potential for a visitor focused bus service between Callander and Aberfoyle as a priority. This work will also look at other traffic related options such as service points for motorhomes.  **Regulation & enforcement** (slide 6)  Rangers will continue to enforce the Camping Management Byelaws with support from Police Scotland, including the National Park Police Officer. Training and support materials will also be provided to Police Scotland to ensure that officers who are not familiar with the area will have an understanding of local byelaws and the Environmental Protection Act.  Clearway being formalized on the A821.  Stirling Council are investigating potential for Alcohol Byelaw expansion and changes in the Stirling Area for some lochside locations.  A new ‘PARC’ (Partnership Against Rural Crime) in the Park is being established with Police Scotland. A rural crime police officer is also being recruited by Police Scotland and will operate within the footprint of the National Park. |  |
| **5.** | Discussion | Discussion and Q&A for attendees to ask for further details on the approaches discussed and to provide thoughts on where efforts are planned for this season.  Points raised included:   * Toilets in Callander – while other toilets around the National Park have remained open, the toilets in Callander are closed and visitors are toileting in the surrounding area. An increase in delivery drivers in the area has also added to toilet pressures. It was noted that the toilets are currently planned to remain shut until 18th January but plans are to be confirmed (Stirling Council). Toilets at Loch Katrine have remained open over the winter and were exceptionally busy towards the end of the festive period. Irresponsible toileting continuing on north side of Loch Venachar. * Engagement with communities – discussion around need to engage with communities at an earlier stage to enable more input into visitor management planning. * Police enforcement of double yellow lines and weekend traffic enforcement – this will be enforced by Police only if dangerous. Stirling Council are discussing contract amendments for the hours/days enforcement officers are available. * Recognising the diversity of visitors – it was noted that more recognition is needed of the diverse needs of visitors and the infrastructure needed to support them (i.e. bridle paths). * Litter prevention plans following Litter & Waste Summit held in March 2020 – implementation of the litter prevention strategy is progressing following approval by the National Park Board in September. * Operations during the pandemic - it was noted that operations had been dramatically affected by the pandemic, which has resulted in some projects or plans being paused or de-prioritised to respond to the pressures seen last year. Staff and partners continue to operate through the current restrictions and plan for the coming visitor season. | Carlyn Fraser to provide an update on the toilets.  National Park to include opportunities for community engagement/input at an earlier stage of visitor management planning.  Martin Earl to ask for an update on weekend plans for Stirling Council enforcement officers. |
| **6.** | Engagement in 2021 | Emma Hislop spoke briefly about the trial meetings being run this month following evaluation of our engagement with communities and stakeholders during the 2020 visitor season. As part of the joint communications plan being developed we are planning for regular communications to stakeholders, communities, businesses and landowners, as well as further opportunities for everyone to feed into discussions about how we manage visitors and other broader topics. To help shape these plans, attendees were asked to reflect on the session with their organisations – was it useful, were the right people there, etc – and feedback any thoughts, comments or observations. Comments already raised during the meeting have been noted and will be fed into communications and engagement planning. | Attendees to feedback thoughts to [feedback@lochlomond-trossachs.org](mailto:feedback@lochlomond-trossachs.org) to help shape engagement opportunities throughout the year. |