**Present: Bob Darracott (Chair – National Park Authority Board), Simon Jones (National Park Authority), Matt Buckland (National Park Authority), Emma Hislop (National Park Authority), Leigh Hamilton (National Park Authority), Martin Earl (National Park Authority Board), Roddy MacNeil (Police Scotland), Hugh O’Neil (Argyll & Bute Council), Gail MacFarlane (West Dunbartonshire Council), Neil MacFarlane (Transport Scotland), Stuart Chalmers (Forestry & Land Scotland), Duncan MacLachlan (Arrochar & Tarbet Community Trust / Hydro), John Sweeney (Sweeney’s Cruises), Jane Ireland (Slanj / Arrochar Alps Tourism Group), James Fraser (Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs), Simon Miller (Luss Esates / Luss & Arden Community Trust), Patrick Colquhoun (Luss Estates), Ann Urquhart (Maid of the Loch), David Pretswell (Luss & Arden Community Council), Jean Mustarde (Arrochar & Tarbet Community Council), Stuart Cordner (Cruise Loch Lomond)**

| **Agenda Item**  | **Subject** | **Note**  |
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| **1.** | Welcome and introductions | Bob Darracott (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:* Balloch & Haldane
* Luss & Arden
* Arrochar & Tarbet
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| **2.** | Current operations in lockdown | Simon Jones 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 in Balloch, the A82 turn offs to Duck Bay and Luss, Luss village and Arrochar. Additional pressures were capacity of toilet facilities with appropriate COVID-19 safety mitigation measures, reduced capacity of campsites for tent based camping and continued roadside littering along the A82. There was also a reduced capacity at the Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway in Balloch. |
| **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, Police Scotland, 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 Argyll & Bute enforcement officers. A joint National Park Visitor Management Communications Plan is being developed, alongside a Joint Response Visitor Management Plan, which will ensure a joined up approach to communications and management interventions 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 Cabinet Secretary Fergus Ewing. The group is responsible for developing approaches to reducing visitor pressures.**Infrastructure & services** (slide 5)Expanded provision of temporary toilets (portaloos and other alternatives) to ensure that there is adequate facilities for visitors, including working with Friends of Loch Lomond to look at temporary provision at Duck Bay. When it is able to re-open it is likely that the National Park Authority will continue to operate the Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway in the same way as last year to meet COVID-19 safety restrictions. Increased parking capacity through new car park being built by Luss Estates. Thinking longer term, a big focus of work this year will be initial scope work to develop sustainable visitor transport throughout the National Park. Options in the area would include better marketing and promotion of the bus to Luss and a potential shuttle from the Arrochar and Tarbet train station to the Cobbler Car Park. We will also be building on last year’s pilot project to provide ‘live’ updates on car park capacity by testing a parking sensors system in the Trossachs which, if successful, could be expanded along the West Loch Lomond corridor.**Regulation & enforcement** (slide 6)Rangers will continue to enforce the Camping Management Byelaws and Loch Lomond 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. Traffic Regulation Order in Luss. Also looking at permanency of restrictions at Arrochar and options to relieve pressure from displaced visitors.Enforcement Officers will continue to enforce the Environmental Protection Act and we will be looking to hold pop-up visitor engagement opportunities at locations such as Duck Bay and Luss to help educate and encourage responsible behaviours such as using bins or taking litter home.A new ‘PARC’ (Partnership against Rural Crime) in the Park is being established with Police Scotland. |
| **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:* Encouraging use of public transport – it was noted that it is difficult to encourage use of public transport during current COVID restrictions but that long term plans for more sustainable transport options is something that all relevant partners are working towards. This year, time will be spent looking at gaps in current provision and quick wins where existing transport links can be married up. The waterbus should be a part of this mix and marketing will also be key to the success of any new sustainable transport options. Transport Scotland also working with Network Rail to look at heightening and widening railway bridge.
* Toilet provision at Duck Bay – plans only just getting going as current lack of provision has been causing pressure in Luss village.
* Roadside litter – litter in laybys continues to be a perennial problem. Bins were previously removed from laybys by Argyll & Bute Council as they were attracting more litter. The National Park’s Litter Prevention Strategy was approved by the National Park Board in September and is in the process of implementation. Agreement and a unified approach is needed across all local authorities to further this work going forward.
* Links/routes from Arrochar train station – The Three Lochs Way takes users away from the road but signage needed to encourage this path and show where it leads.
* Motorhome service facilities – any further motorhome parking capacity should be supported with capital investment for black water and waste disposal.
* Luss car park and village traffic plan – the new car park should only open as part of a sustainable traffic management plan which has not progressed and is at risk of causing more pressures by increasing capacity. Luss & Arden Community Council is writing to Argyll & Bute Council as, without the supporting plan, they cannot support the opening of new car park.
* Quality of life for residents – it was noted that by Luss & Arden Community Council that quality of life for residents had degraded and there were more issues present in the area than those highlighted in the overview map provided ahead of the meeting. The map was created to highlight key issues and it was understood that there were other issues within Luss and the surrounding area.
* Ranger patrols – budgets for this year are currently unknown so currently details of Ranger patrolling for this season are still TBC. However, COVID guidance permitting, it is planned that Rangers will be on the ground earlier this year and will be supported by Volunteer Rangers.
* Security at Luss Pier – concern was raised about 24hr access to the pier. The National Park Authority are looking into this and various options are being considered.
* Jet ski speeding – safety concerns were raised especially around the narrows. This area will be a priority for both boat and shore monitoring by National Park Rangers.
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| **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 to feedback@lochlomond-trossachs.org.  |