



Managing Visitor Pressures 2021

STAKEHOLDER INFORMATION PACK

MID SEASON UPDATE

JULY 2021

As anticipated, the National Park is seeing a high volume of visitors this summer as lockdown restrictions continue to relax and people are once again able to make the most of the Scotland's outstanding landscapes.

The National Park is well placed to support people's mental and physical wellbeing post-lockdown and visitors are welcome and encouraged to enjoy the area responsibly. However it is recognised that the volume of visitors, and the irresponsible behaviour of some, creates pressures for others who live, work and enjoy the area.

A pre-season information pack was produced ahead of the summer season to outline our partnership approach to managing visitor pressures this year.

As we have now reached the peak of our 2021 summer season we have produced this updated information pack to provide our valued stakeholders – including community representatives, businesses operating in the National Park, land managers, and both local and national groups or representative bodies – with information on the progress of the season so far and our work to manage visitor pressures. This pack also includes information on how we can work together to encourage and inspire responsible visitor behaviour.

What is the National Park Safe Recovery Action Group?

Established in 2020, the National Park Safe Recovery Action Group brings together all key public agencies with a role to play in visitor management in the National Park. The purpose of the partnership is to share information and coordinate actions to help address the visitor management issues being experienced. The group is comprised of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority, Police Scotland, Forestry and Land Scotland, Transport Scotland, West Dunbartonshire Council, Argyll and Bute Council, Stirling Council and Perth and Kinross Council.

What is being done to manage visitor pressures?

Ahead of the 2021 visitor season a Joint Response Visitor Management Plan was prepared setting out the extensive range of measures and resources being put in place by partners across the National Park this season. You can read the full plan on the National Park website.

Delivery of the Plan will be reviewed and reported on at the end of this summer season. A mid-season Stakeholder Briefing Session was held on Thursday 22nd July to provide an opportunity for stakeholder groups to hear an update on the progress of the Joint Response Plan so far. You can watch a recording of the briefing session [here](#).

This season so far

MORE BOOTS ON THE GROUND

Seasonal staff

Increased staff on the ground at peak times helping to reduce pressures by engaging with visitors and allowing for more enhanced and focused patrols:

- ▶ Increase in National Park Authority seasonal staff (from 16 contracted staff and 16 bank staff in 2020, to 38 contracted staff and 18 bank staff in 2021). This includes seasonal rangers, campsite wardens and new environment officers.
- ▶ Increase in Local Authority enforcement staff (both litter and traffic).
- ▶ Additional Forestry & Land Scotland rangers in Cowal and the Trossachs.
- ▶ Additional Police Scotland officers dedicated to visitor management at weekends.
- ▶ Seasonal rangers employed by Cashel Forest Trust, Strathfillan Development Trust, and Arrochar Community Development Trust working with the Friends of Loch Lomond.

More dedicated resource for litter and fly-tipping

- ▶ Environment Officers tackling litter at sites owned or managed by the National Park Authority on both East and West Loch Lomond. They have also been deployed for 21 days so far at other sites across the National Park, supporting both our rangers and other private land managers.
- ▶ National Park volunteers have dedicated 107 days to litter picking, with further fortnightly events rolling across the National Park planned for the rest of the season and additional weekly volunteer patrols of hotspot areas. So far 250 bags of litter have been collected by our volunteers.
- ▶ Communities and businesses have been continuing litter picks in their areas and we have supported an additional 200 volunteer hours pledged to Keep Scotland Beautiful's summer clean by giving away litter picking equipment.



INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Toilets

- ▶ Additional temporary toilets installed at National Park Authority sites to respond to increased volume of visitors and to allow for COVID-safe use of facilities
- ▶ At key locations National Park toilets are open 24hrs
- ▶ Argyll & Bute Council has reopened some of their toilet facilities that were previously closed
- ▶ Stirling Council are also opening some of their toilets 24hrs
- ▶ Arrochar Community Development Trust and Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs have also provided additional toilets in Arrochar and Tarbet.

Human Waste

We have continued the interventions trialed in 2019 as part of our 'Need to Poo' campaign to tackle human waste and inappropriate toileting across the National Park, including installing:

- ▶ Trowel giveaway boxes at six locations for visitors to be able to dig a hole and bury their waste
- ▶ Poo bins in four locations for visitors to be able to bag and dispose of their waste. We also have a human waste uplift process in place for permit sites, which are regularly checked.

Bins

- ▶ Increased capacity of bins managed by the National Park Authority at Milarrochy Bay and increased servicing across all sites that we own or manage
- ▶ Arrochar Community Development Trust and Friends of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs trialling bins at laybys along West Loch Lomond, funded by NatureScot's Better Places Green Recovery Fund.

Parking and traffic management

- ▶ New car parks opened at East Loch Lomond by Forestry & Land Scotland (Rowardennan overflow car park) and West Loch Lomond by Luss Estates (new Luss car park)
- ▶ Variable message signage (VMS) introduced at key locations to target messages at those on their way to honeypot sites
- ▶ Online car park status updates being provided on National Park Authority website between 8am-4pm at weekends.

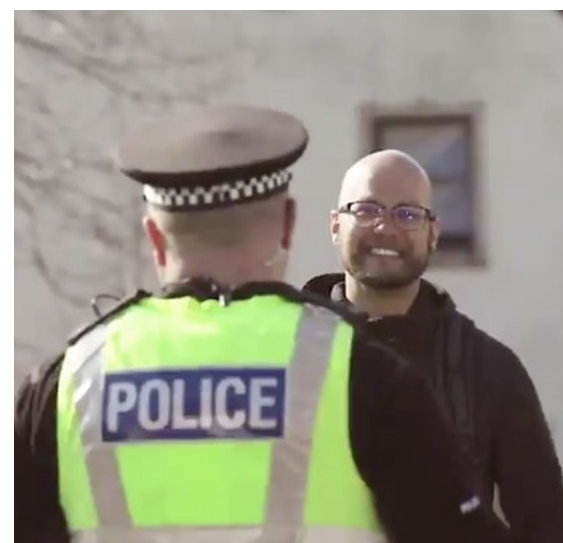
ENFORCEMENT AND REGULATION

Throughout the season our Ranger teams have been working closely with Police Scotland and other agencies to enforce the Camping Management Byelaws, Loch Lomond Byelaws and other legislation where necessary.

May and Jun 2021 were some of the busiest months we have had in terms of camping bookings since the byelaws began in 2017, seeing 8,675 adults and 1,771 children coming to camp in the National Park.

Despite 997 people having their details taken in contravention with the Camping Management Byelaws during these months, only 26 cases are currently being assessed for further action – highlighting the positive impact of engagement with campers in the first instance before further escalation and enforcement is required.

Local authority traffic and litter enforcement officers have also had an increased presence in the National Park this season.



Information and engagement

JOINT RESPONSE

A joint communications plan was prepared at the start of the 2021 visitor season to help deliver the 'information and engagement' strand of the Joint Response Visitor Management plan. The communications plan is based on four key strands of activity:



1. Inspiring responsible behaviour

A selection of signage and social media graphics have been created to inspire responsible behaviours around parking, swimming, camping, firelighting, toileting and litter. A key focus has also been around working with other voices to help spread these messages to a wider audience through specific campaigns. For example, sharing personal stories during Mental Health Awareness Week on the connection between nature and wellbeing to inspire a deeper appreciation for the outdoors.



2. Providing practical information

Information is shared regularly on how to behave safely and responsibly when visiting the National Park, including a new check-list on our website to help first-time campers enjoy their trip responsibly and weekend updates on the status of car parks across the National Park. Both pages on the website have seen a big increase in views so far this season, with the car parks service being viewed over 55,000 times since the beginning of April. Car park update posts on our social media channels have reached more than 1million people.



3. Showing our working

As well as asking people to enjoy their visit to the National Park responsibly, we also share information on how the National Park and our partners are working to help people do this. This has included producing a new video about the partnership and also sharing images of joint patrols and activities.



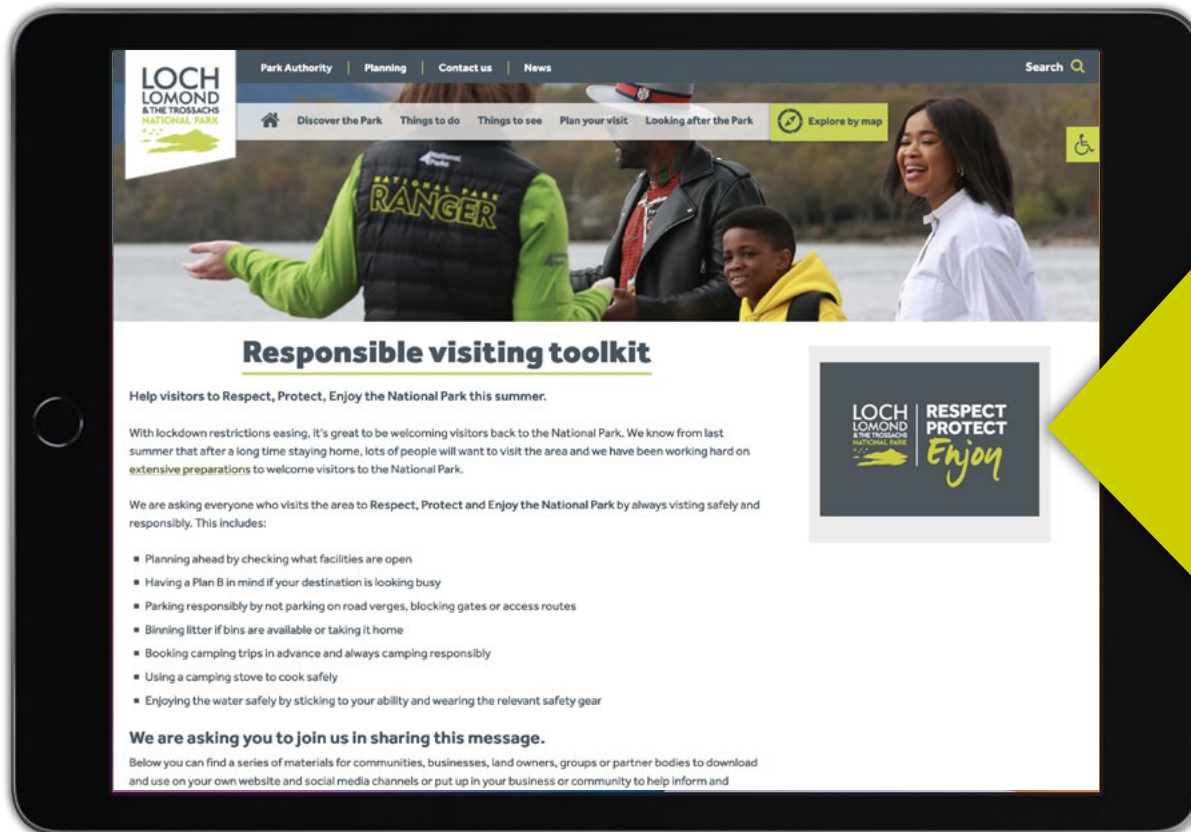
4. Stakeholder engagement

Along with providing information packs like this one and virtual briefings at key milestones, we also issue a monthly newsletter to key stakeholder groups which includes a specific update on visitor management. A series of place-based visitor management groups are also being set up in key locations to discuss visitor issues with relevant officers and facilitate closer, more collaborative working between partners, stakeholders and communities in the National Park.

NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

The National Park Authority also sits on a national Visitor Management Communications Group led by Visit Scotland and has been feeding into and supporting various national visitor management campaigns throughout the summer, including:

- [Respect Protect Enjoy](#)
- [Scotland is Stunning](#)
- [Scottish Outdoor Access Code \(SOAC\) campaign](#)
- [I love it so I look after it](#)



HOW CAN YOU HELP

Help us to encourage everyone to **Respect, Protect, Enjoy** the National Park this summer.

We have put together a handy [toolkit of materials](#) for use on your own website and social media channels, or signage to put up in your business or local area, to help inform and advise visitors how they can enjoy the National Park safely and responsibly.

Thinking longer term

IN THE NATIONAL PARK

While the Joint Response Visitor Management Plan is primarily focused on the 2021 visitor season, it is important to recognise that not all challenges will be resolved this year. Many of the visitor management issues facing the National Park are complex problems requiring long term solutions. Work is ongoing to progress these, including:

- ▶ The creation of place-based visitor management working groups to look holistically at pressures and opportunities in specific locations.
- ▶ Leveraging opportunities for investment in infrastructure through various local and national funds.
- ▶ Work to help align funding mechanisms among National Park Safe Recovery Action Group partners to deliver infrastructure projects.
- ▶ New National Park Authority Place Team to help deliver infrastructure improvements.
- ▶ Emphasis on sustainable visitor transport, including a behaviour change campaign being led by the Countryside Trust and exploration of shuttle bus services to help alleviate traffic and parking pressures.

NATIONALLY

Work by Scottish Government and lead partner VisitScotland continues to help co-ordinate and develop a joined-up, national approach to visitor management. The National Park Authority and many of our public agency partners contribute to three specific workstreams, covering:

- ▶ **Education and Marketing**
- ▶ **Investment and Infrastructure**
- ▶ **Prevention, Regulation and Reassurance**

You can read more about this Scotland-wide activity on [VisitScotland's website](#).

The Scottish Government's Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund for 2021 was extended to £6.2million for 2021, with £70,000 being allocated to the National Park to help us carry out strategic visitor management investment planning over the next three years. This will help us to inform future bids for funding for strategic infrastructure projects that will improve and enhance our visitor experience. This includes projects to help tackle traffic congestion and integrate public transport and active travel to key hotspot areas.

Projects and partners around the National Park have also been successful in securing £282,500 from NatureScot's £3.15million Better Places Green Recovery Fund to tackle visitor management challenges.

Who do I contact about visitor pressures in the National Park?

Communities and stakeholders can provide information on visitor pressures being experienced across the National Park to us by emailing feedback@lochlomond-trossachs.org

The information you provide will be used by the National Park Authority and its partners to plan and adapt our response to visitor management throughout the season, so please be specific about where and what the pressure is so we can adapt appropriately.

Please note that the feedback inbox should not be used to report emergencies or to lodge a complaint.

Details of how to report specific activities or make complaints are provided below:

Criminal, antisocial or dangerous behaviour – Police Scotland 101 or in an emergency dial 999 - when a life is in danger, a crime is in progress or a suspect is nearby. Please do report these behaviours and incidents to Police Scotland so that they can be recorded.

Litter and flytipping – Litter and flytipping (more than a single bin bag) on public land should be reported to the relevant Local Authority using the following links:

- ▶ [West Dunbartonshire Council](#)
- ▶ [Argyll and Bute Council](#)
- ▶ [Stirling Council](#)
- ▶ [Perth and Kinross Council](#)

If you are not sure if the area is public land please report flytipping to Dumb Dumpers at: [Dumb Dumpers - Report flytipping](#) | [Zero Waste Scotland](#)

Irresponsible or dangerous parking – This should be reported to the relevant local authority or if the parking is dangerous and causing an obstruction to Police Scotland on 101.

Irresponsible camping/toileting and access issues – National Park Authority 01389 722600 or feedback@lochlomond-trossachs.org

Dangerous or wild fires – Scottish Fire and Rescue dial 999

Making a complaint

If you wish to make a complaint about the National Park Authority please follow the complaints procedure outlined on our 'how to make a complaint' webpage. Complaints can be emailed to us at: info@lochlomond-trossachs.org

For more information go to: www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/coronavirus

