

# Visitor Management

SEASON REVIEW 2022



# Contents 2022

<b>1. Executive Summary and Key Insights</b> .....	<b>3</b>
1.1 Information and Engagement .....	4
1.2 Infrastructure and services.....	5
1.3 Regulation and enforcement .....	6
1.4 Looking ahead .....	6
<b>2. Introduction and context</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>3. Information and Engagement</b> .....	<b>8</b>
3.1 Providing practical information .....	8
3.2 Inspiring responsible behaviour .....	9
3.3 Showing our working .....	9
3.4 Stakeholder engagement .....	10
<b>4. Infrastructure and services</b> .....	<b>11</b>
4.1 Staffing and volunteers .....	11
4.2 Litter and toileting.....	12
4.3 Parking and traffic management .....	13
4.4 Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway.....	13
4.5 Camping .....	14
4.6 Water safety .....	16
4.7 The Place Programme .....	18
4.8 Sustainable Travel .....	19
<b>5. Regulation and enforcement</b> .....	<b>20</b>
5.1 National Park Ranger Service .....	20
5.2 Police Scotland .....	22
5.3 Parking and Enforcement .....	22
<b>6. Looking ahead</b> .....	<b>23</b>



# 1. Executive Summary and Key Insights

The National Park saw unprecedented numbers of visitors throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, especially as lockdowns eased and people were able to travel once more.

The start of the 2022 season was more typical in terms of a steady increase in visitor numbers and the busiest periods coincided with holiday weekends, school holidays and periods of good weather as would be expected.

While it was a busy season for staff on the ground, our Ranger Service and partners report a less intense season, with less anti-social behaviour and less enforcement required.

There was a significant drop in launches from the Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway in 2022 (down 33% when compared with the same period in 2021) and litter removed by the National Park Authority was down 28% on last year.

Visitors appeared more confident of what was required of them. Camping bookings were higher than in 2021 and contact details were taken from just 812 visitors (for camping byelaw contraventions) compared to 1,379 visitors in 2021.

There is not yet data on the proportion of domestic versus foreign visitors in Scotland this season but anecdotal reports from staff and businesses within the National Park suggest there has been an increase in foreign visitors, compared with the past two seasons, and a reduction in Scottish and UK visitors.

The consensus from partners is that while the unprecedented pressures felt in 2020 and 2021 were not replicated this season, visitor numbers remained high and there were periods when resources were fully stretched.

These pressures were manageable due to the additional resources made available to the National Park Authority, partners and communities from Scottish Government. Without the additional 'boots on the ground' it is likely that these pressures would have been felt more often.





The national approach to visitor management communications this year focused on encouraging visitors to plan ahead, encouraging them to consider less visited destinations and a partnership approach on water safety. These themes were mirrored in our own communications and this resulted in more consistent messaging.

Directing visitors to the practical information on our website was particularly effective this season and the National Park Authority website had more than 1.5 million page views. Camping pages remained our most visited pages and this was reflected in increased camping bookings. The average time spent on our updated water safety page was up by over 50% from 2021.

There were less issues with parking and congestion this year and as such, the car park update service introduced in 2020 was used less than in previous years.

Meanwhile demand for more sustainable transport options was evident from use of the National Park Journey Planner. During its first full visitor season in operation, the app was used by 4,714 people to plan journeys with more than 50% reporting they were more likely to use public transport, walk or cycle as a result.

Modelling responsible behaviour and showing people 'doing the right thing' was well received, resulting in positive, quality engagement on social media. And video collaborations with Ramblers Scotland and with comedian Des Clarke allowed us to normalise responsible visitor behaviour for a younger audience in an engaging way. More than 109,000 people watched the Ramblers campaign videos.

A dedicated water safety campaign complemented a programme of in-person engagement delivered by Rangers and was very effective in reaching out to our key target audience this season – those who spend time by the water and make a spontaneous decision to go in.

Use of aerial photography showing steep drops, media interviews and a water safety video combined to deliver a combined reach of 1.9million on social media and a significant increase in page views of our website content.

There was a consistent approach to stakeholder communications and engagement this season, spanning monthly stakeholder bulletins, local Visitor Management Action Groups and a [Visitor Management Updates webpage](#).

On specific issues – such as the Loch Lomond Byelaw Review and improvements to Tarbet Pier Picnic Site – there was bespoke engagement with communities of place and interest. More than 50 stakeholders/groups were engaged in discussions around the management of Loch Lomond ahead of a public consultation on the review of the Loch Lomond Byelaws.





## 1.2 INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Increased Scottish Government funding meant the National Park Authority was able to recruit 58 Seasonal Rangers this year, up from 56 in 2021 and 32 in 2020. This allowed a high level of face-to-face engagement with the public to be maintained and meant that even the busiest weekends were managed. In addition, we had two Environment Officers on the ground again this season to support with litter and flytipping.

Partners such as Forestry and Land Scotland and local authorities also increased seasonal staffing and communities in Strathfillan and Arrochar were able to employ wardens having secured funding from [NatureScot's Better Place Green Recovery fund](#).

While litter continued to be an issue, there was a marked reduction compared with 2021. Litter removed by the National Park Authority was down 26% on last year.

There was also reduced pressure on roads and car parks, with only one parking/volume related road closure this season (the B837 on East Loch Lomond). Car parks were busy but not overflowing to the extent they were last season.

In the first full season of opening since the start of the pandemic, registrations and launches at Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway were down across the board and back to pre-COVID levels. There was a 21% drop in all boat user registrations and a 20% drop in launches from the Slipway.

There was increased demand for National Park Authority campsites this season – up 3% on 2021 and 47% on 2019.

A National Park water safety project was already underway and was accelerated following a series of fatalities last summer. Enhanced water safety measures this season included new water safety signage and public rescue

equipment (PRE) at key visitor sites, waterside responder training and a programme of 13 water safety events at popular waterside locations where Park Rangers and partners provided water safety advice to around 900 people.

As part of the National Park Place Programme, Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development (STID) studies got underway as part of a commitment to developing long term, strategic solutions to visitor pressures.

A project to pilot a shuttle bus service within the Park was unsuccessful in finding a viable service to run this year. However, the exercise has developed a framework which allows the Park Authority and partners to explore viable services for 2023 and beyond.





### 1.3 REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT

There was less need for enforcement this season and the vast majority of interactions the Ranger Service had within the Camping Management Zones were positive engagements.

Issues such as litter, fires and contraventions of both the Loch Lomond and the camping byelaws remained but were significantly lower than in 2021. Cases being reported to the Procurator Fiscal have also decreased.

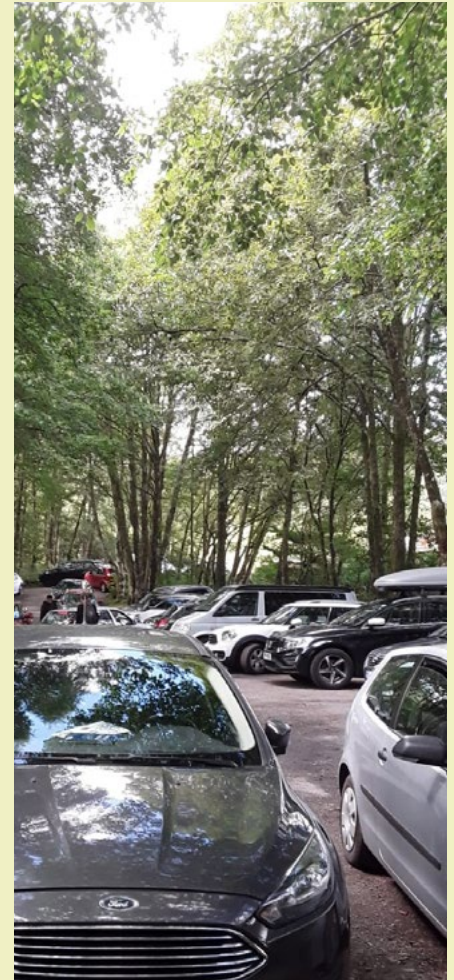
The Ranger Service reported a 41% drop this season in the number of visitors who had their details taken for camping byelaw contraventions and there was a similar drop in contraventions of the Loch Lomond Byelaws – down 42% on 2021 levels.

It should be noted however that alleged contraventions of both the Camping Management Byelaws and Loch Lomond Byelaws remain higher than pre-COVID.

Additional 'boots on the ground' funding enabled extra resources for Loch Lomond boat patrols and other land patrols to alleviate visitor management pressures. Regular patrolling in all areas meant that visitors and residents observed a consistent Ranger presence seven days a week.

Police Scotland colleagues joined Rangers for joint patrols and supported on enforcement of byelaws and on antisocial behaviour in hot spot areas. The National Park Police Officer was able to secure specialist resources where required, including from the Mounted Branch and the Marine Unit.

Local authorities continued to enforce parking regulations, with Stirling Council reporting that the requirement for enforcement 'outstripped resources', while additional wardens on the ground in Argyll and Bute areas seem to have resulted in a 17% reduction in Penalty Charge Notices issued.



### 1.4 LOOKING AHEAD

As we look to the 2023 season, there are several lessons from the past few years to be considered. While 2022 provided the return to a more typical visitor season that partners were hoping for after two years of intense visitor management pressures, in many respects the National Park remained busier than pre-pandemic, suggesting that our 'new normal' is busier than before. Pressure on household budgets in the year ahead could mean an increase again in domestic visitors to local destinations.

There is consensus that the most significant factor in managing high levels of visitors this season was additional funding from Scottish Government, which allowed the Park Authority, partners and communities to provide increased 'boots on the ground' and some continued temporary facilities.

There is a strong feeling that despite financial challenges ahead, the resilience and expertise built through close partnership working in recent years should not be lost. This will be supported by longer-term strategic infrastructure investment already underway and our ongoing work to improve options for low emission travel to and within the National Park.

## 2. Introduction and Context

The 2021 season was considered the busiest the National Park has ever seen. While the 2022 season began with no COVID-19 restrictions in place, there was an expectation that the trend of increasing visitor numbers would continue and that we would see significant numbers of people visiting rural Scotland for day trips and staycations.

There was uncertainty about the extent to which foreign visitors would return to the Park and whether domestic visitors would return to foreign travel or stay closer to home.

As such, all partners felt that the National Park Safe Recovery Action Group (NPSRAG) should continue and a [Joint Response Visitor Management Plan \(JRVMMP\)](#) was agreed for the 2022 season to help with anticipated pressures.

This work was led by the National Park Authority in partnership with Police Scotland, Forestry and Land Scotland, Transport Scotland, West Dunbartonshire Council, Stirling Council, Perth and Kinross Council and Argyll & Bute Council.

Additionally, coordination on visitor management issues at a national level, led by Visit Scotland, continued this season to ensure a consistent and sustainable approach. The National Park Authority also continued to engage with local communities on visitor management issues via local Visitor Management Action groups and regular stakeholder communications.

This report reviews the delivery of the [Joint Response Visitor Management Plan \(JRVMMP\)](#) It retains the key points from last year's report that were vital for 2022 season planning and will be used to help develop planning for the 2023 season.



When planning for the 2022 visitor season, there was a desire to maintain the increased 'boots on the ground' of recent years, in order to maintain levels of interaction with the public.

Additional resources made available to the National Park Authority, partners and communities from the Scottish Government this year meant that staffing levels remained higher than pre-COVID and that temporary toilets could be funded again at specific locations where no alternative facilities exist.

The National Park Ranger service employed a total of 58 Seasonal Rangers this year, two more than in the 2021 season. However, the Ranger Service has found that there has been an increased level of turnover in staff through the pandemic and the 2022 season ended with only 52 Seasonal Rangers remaining in post.

The National Park Authority also invested in new staff roles in 2021 to form a Place Projects team. During 2022, this team has worked on a multi-year capital infrastructure [investment plan](#) (The Place Programme) that is increasing capacity to plan, design and deliver improved visitor infrastructure. Additional funding from Visit Scotland's Strategic Tourism Development Fund is assisting with the development of visitor infrastructure plans in areas including East and West Loch Lomond.





# 3. Information and Engagement

Communication remained a key component of visitor management this season and our aim was to support safe, responsible enjoyment of the National Park and to highlight the roles each of us as individuals, communities, groups and organisations play in this.

A rolling programme of core visitor topics such as car parking, litter, fires and camping was supported by a focused water safety campaign and advice for visitors on climate and nature friendly visiting.

## We found that three things worked particularly well this season:

- ▶ Visuals and videos – ‘steep drops’ aerial photography and short videos (including ‘how to’ water safety videos) were very effective at engaging audiences
- ▶ Focusing on our people – when ‘showing our working’, we focused on specific teams or individuals and this brought topics such as litter and maintenance to life
- ▶ Inspiration & itineraries – when encouraging people to consider sustainable visits or ‘a different adventure’ we found providing itineraries and practical information such as links to transport providers was well received

### 3.1 PROVIDING PRACTICAL INFORMATION

As well as face-to-face interactions with visitors at our visitor centres and out and about in the Park, pop up information stations were set up on six occasions in hot spot areas allowing Rangers and volunteers to provide advice to visitors.

We used our social media channels and media activity to share practical information on core topics such as fire safety, parking and camping and there was a particular focus on water safety information. This resulted in regular articles across national, local and broadcast media.

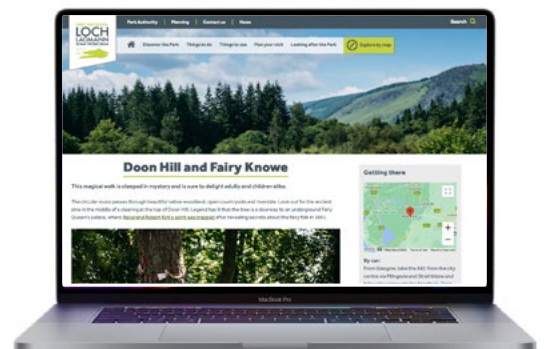
The National Park Authority website was well used as a hub of information. From 1st March -30th September the website had more than 1.5 million page views (compared with 2m page views in 2021 during the same period). Nine of the top 10 visited pages during the season were visitor focused pages, including the Get a Permit, Find a Campsite and Short-Moderate Walks pages.

Ahead of busy weekends, visitors were encouraged to plan their trips, directed to our car park update service to let them see which areas were already busy and to our National Park Journey Planner as a tool for planning a car-free trip.

The car park update service (introduced in 2020) was used less than in previous years. The page was viewed almost 16,000 times this season (46k views in 2021) and the combined reach of social media posts on car parks this year was over 300,000 (more than 1m views in 2021).

Reduced engagement with the system mirrors the reduction in parking issues this season and is also indicative of increased visitor confidence - in 2021, easing of COVID restrictions was staggered and visitors were keen to check available facilities before leaving home.

During its first full visitor season in operation, the National Park Journey Planner app was used by 4,714 people to plan journeys to and within the National Park and the Journey Planner web page had over 11,000 page views.





### 3.2 INSPIRING RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR

As well as giving visitors the practical information they needed to enjoy the National Park safely and responsibly, we used campaign posters, videos and photography of people 'doing the right thing' to inspire positive visitor behaviour. This focus on modelling responsible behaviour was well received by our audiences, resulting in a more positive, quality engagement on social media.

A camping video recorded with comedian Des Clarke and one of our Rangers was used to encourage people to camp responsibly in the National Park and we part funded a series of social media videos produced by Ramblers Scotland for young visitors, normalising responsible behaviour when visiting rural destinations.

This approach allowed us to reach out to a younger audience in a fun, engaging way. The Ramblers videos were shared on platforms not currently used by the Park Authority – Snapchat and TikTok – and more than 109,000 people watched them all the way through.

We aimed to inspire visitors to try car-free journeys by highlighting destinations that could be reached and enjoyed without a car. This complemented our 'A Different Adventure' campaign from 2021 where we encouraged people to visit lesser-known destinations within the Park. This year we expanded the campaign beyond hills to include alternative destinations such as Cashed on East Loch Lomond and Benmore Gardens in Cowal.



Following a devastating series of drownings in the National Park in July 2021, we embarked on a dedicated water safety campaign for the 2022 visitor season. You can find further details on the success of this campaign on page 16.

### 3.3 SHOWING OUR WORKING



While encouraging visitors to behave responsibly and providing them with the information to do so, we also continue to keep people informed of the work Park Authority staff and partners are doing on visitor management, including joint photocalls with partners on water safety and regular social media activity showing staff at work.

Pop-up water safety events allowed us to show Rangers training members of the public to use Public Rescue Equipment (PRE) and a short video with an Environment Officer helped us demonstrate the work being done on litter.

A social media takeover by our Land Operations Team showed the value of their work and we highlighted the investment in piers and pontoons undertaken this season. We found focusing on individual staff members and teams was an effective way to engage people with our work. We also used PR and social media to highlight the [Loch Lomond Byelaws Review](#) and how we use and enforce the byelaws to manage safe and responsible use of the loch.

### 3.4 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Every month, a stakeholder bulletin was issued to more than 750 stakeholder contacts, including community anchor bodies, destination group businesses, land managers, recreation and access partners and local Councils and MSPs. A visitor management update was included in each edition. Overall, these newsletters received an average open rate of 57% across the season, up from 44% in 2021.

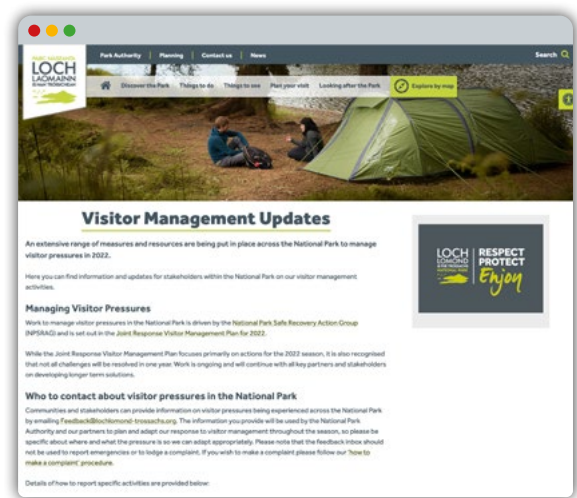
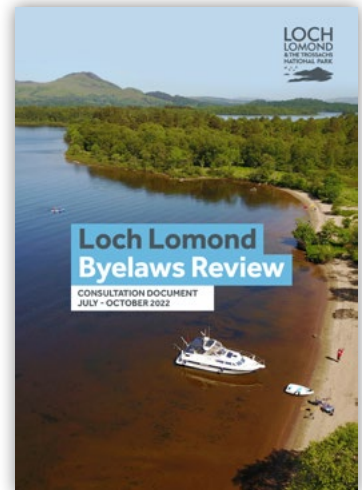
In addition, specific updates were sent to National Park stakeholder mailing lists for communities of place and interest. For example, the range of measures being adopted to tackle the pressures at Tarbet Pier Picnic Site were communicated to local stakeholders via regular email updates.

At the start of the 2022 season, we set up a new '[Visitor Management Updates](#)' webpage with information specifically for stakeholders and a pre-season [Stakeholder briefing](#) was held in March. A combined end of season / pre-2023 season briefing is being planned for early 2023.

Four place-based Visitor Management Groups have now been established (East Loch Lomond, West Loch Lomond, Strathard & The Trossachs and Callander & surrounding area), with further groups planned for other areas within the National Park.

These groups help us share and gather information, particularly relating to investment/infrastructure projects. Updates were provided to these groups on relevant topics during the season and regular meetings of these groups will be getting back up and running in 2023.

More than 50 stakeholders/groups were engaged in discussions around the management of Loch Lomond ahead of a public consultation on the review of the Loch Lomond Byelaws. Following the review, a Loch Lomond Stakeholder Group has been set up to support implementation of any changes to the byelaws and continue discussions on longer term loch management issues.





# 4. Infrastructure & Services

## 4.1 STAFFING AND VOLUNTEERS



The National Park Authority recruited 58 Seasonal Rangers in 2022, two more than in 2021. This allowed the Park Authority to maintain the level of 'boots on the ground' that we know made such a difference in recent years.

Like many sectors, especially tourism and hospitality, the National Park Authority and partners found recruitment and retention of staff more challenging this year. As a result, three recruitment drives were required again this year for Seasonal Rangers and we finished the season with six less Seasonal Rangers than we started with.

There was a significant reduction in the number of focused patrols carried out this season (just 29 in 2022, down from 364 in 2021) primarily as a result of staffing pressures within the Ranger service. Increased staff turnover meant that Ranger numbers fluctuated throughout the season and as a result, staff were redeployed from focused patrols to regular patrols (1,379 this season, in line with 2021).

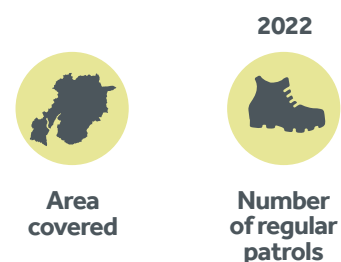
Focused patrols were introduced in 2021 to focus Ranger resources in areas that were experiencing high levels of anti-social behaviour, illegal camping and Loch Lomond Byelaw contraventions.

Short contract lengths, high accommodation and fuel costs were identified as challenges in recruiting seasonal staff travelling into the area. As such, the Ranger Service is offering permanent seasonal contracts from next season to provide continuity and alleviate the pressures associated with annual recruitment and training of new staff.

This season saw a slight increase in the number of Volunteer Rangers (VRs) available to support staff - up to 69 this year, from just 60 in 2021. This remains significantly lower than in 2021, pre-COVID, when 102 Volunteer Rangers contributed 8,865 hours. This is something that the education, inclusion, and volunteer team is working on ahead of next season.

Volunteer Rangers contributed 2,840 hours across the 2022 season and a significant proportion of this was interacting with visitors at hot spot areas and attending events such as the open water swimming event Go Swim at Loch Lomond. Volunteers also supported school groups and under-represented groups when they visited the Park.

Two Environment Officers were on the ground this season, supporting staff, landowners, partners, and communities to tackle litter and flytipping. This service enabled a seven-day service to be maintained with the ability to quickly resolve pressures that had built in more remote areas over busy weekends.



	2022
Breadalbane	210 (262)
Trossachs	218 (256)
Three Lochs Forest Drive	183 (182)
East Loch Lomond	233 (217)
West Loch Lomond	229 (221)
Loch Lomond	306 (240)
<b>Total Number of Patrols</b>	<b>1,379 (1,385)</b>

2021 figures shown in brackets



NPSRAG partners recruited additional staff again this year to align with the visitor management season:

- ▶ Forestry and Land Scotland employed six Seasonal Rangers to cover East Loch Lomond, the Trossachs area, and Cowal
- ▶ Four Seasonal Wardens recruited to cover FLS sites at Salloch and the Lodge
- ▶ Argyll and Bute Council recruited four seasonal wardens.

Communities and organisations were able to secure support from NatureScot’s Better Place Green Recovery fund, providing areas such as Strathfillan with funding for one full time Ranger through the summer, and a part-time Ranger for part of the season. Arrochar and Tarbet Community Development Trust also secured funding and was able to employ two part time wardens to help with visitor pressures.



## 4.2 LITTER & TOILETING



While litter continued to be an issue this season, there was a marked reduction compared with 2021. Litter removed by the National Park Authority was down 26% on last year. Almost 60% of the 1,150 bags collected was removed between July and September.

In addition, the volunteers this year recorded a 29% decrease from 512 bags removed in 2021 to 369 in 2022. This litter picking was performed by seven volunteers. The reduction was partly due to a reduction in litter but also linked to less volunteer activity on litter picking due to COVID restrictions being eased and alternative volunteering opportunities being on offer.



Arrochar Community Development Trust recorded high levels of usage for the temporary toilets provided at the two car parks at the head of Loch Long and the part-time wardens recruited for the season collected litter from car parks, roadsides and pavements between Arrochar & Tarbet.

Strathfillan Community Development Trust reported that there was significant litter left in the area by visitors, with approximately two black bags of litter (including human waste) collected every week along the Loch shores of Loch Lubhair and Loch Dochart.







### 4.3 PARKING AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

The vast majority of visitors to the National Park still travel to and around the Park by car, resulting in ongoing pressures and congestion in hot spot areas.

However, in comparison with 2020/2021, there was reduced pressure on roads and car parks. The B837 on East Loch Lomond was only closed once and car parks were busy but not overflowing to the extent they were last season.

Argyll and Bute Council noted that they continued to have parking problems, especially at Luss and Duck Bay, though there was a reduction in parking issues in Arrochar. The council employed four seasonal wardens throughout Argyll and Bute with one full time staff member in Luss/Arrochar. Parking wardens were deployed daily to Luss, Duck Bay and Arrochar to manage parking and congestion issues. The impact of this increased presence appears to be less requirement for enforcement – Argyll and Bute Council issued 17% less Penalty Charge Notices (PCN) this season.

Variable Messaging Signage (VMS) was used again this season in the same key locations around the trunk roads of the National Park, including the A811 at Drymen and the A821 at Aberfoyle, as well as in Callander and Loch Earn. There was less demand for the car park status service introduced by the Park Authority in 2020 to provide visitors with real time data on which car parks are already full or nearing capacity. This was likely due to more availability at car parks.

### 4.4 DUNCAN MILLS MEMORIAL SLIPWAY (DMMS)

In the first full season of opening since the start of the pandemic, registrations and launches at the Slipway were down across the board and back to pre-COVID levels.

Compared to the same period in 2021, the 2022 visitor season saw:

- ▶ A 21% drop in all boat user registrations
- ▶ A 33% drop in new registrations of craft
- ▶ A 58% drop in people re-registering craft
- ▶ A 20% drop in launches from the Slipway

For more details on violations and other slipway information see the Ranger Service part of the enforcement section on page 21.



## 4.5 CAMPING

There was increased demand for National Park Authority campsites this season (up 3% on 2021) and purchase of camping permits for Camping Management Zones was only slightly lower than the incredibly busy 2021 season.

Park Authority campsites and permit areas were open from the 1st March – 30th September this year, the first full season since 2019. Storms in early 2022 meant a delay to some sites opening (especially Three Lochs Forest Drive) and there was an impact on bookable days as a result.



### Camping Permit Areas 2018 – 2022

Bookings	Adult & children visitors	Likely or quite likely to return
<b>2018</b> 9,452	<b>2018</b> 21,658	<b>2018</b> 90%
<b>2019</b> 10,508	<b>2019</b> 23,810	<b>2019</b> 92%
<b>2020</b> 7,865	<b>2020</b> 18,405	<b>2020</b> 92%
<b>2021</b> 14,888	<b>2021</b> 34,537	<b>2021</b> 93%
<b>2022</b> 15,309	<b>2022</b> 34,447	<b>2022</b> 89%

High water levels on some lochs around the Park also resulted in permit areas being closed. At Loch Voil in Balquhiddier Glen for example, available permits were reduced from eight to between one and three for several months of the season.

Camping data for 2022 shows:

- ▶ Total of 15,309 camping permit bookings (up 3% on shorter 2021 season; down 2% on comparable April-September period)
- ▶ 28,547 adults and 5,900 children booked into permit areas
- ▶ Only 12 of 17 permit sites at 3LFD open by May with 15,985 potential bookable days lost
- ▶ A 47% increase in camping permit bookings compared to 2019
- ▶ Loch Chon Campsite – 32% more bookings than shorter 2021 season and 12% more than in 2019
- ▶ Loch Achray Campsite – 8% more bookings than shorter 2021 season and 44% up on 2019
- ▶ Inchcailloch – 5% reduction in bookings between June-September (in 2021, the permit area did not re-open after COVID restrictions until June) 19% decrease from 2019




These figures align with feedback from Rangers regarding reduced antisocial behaviour and camping byelaw contraventions, indicating that this was related in part to high levels of camping bookings. These figures also demonstrate the positive growth in camping bookings since the introduction of the Camping Management Byelaws in 2017.



The number of campers providing feedback to our customer survey - sent to campers who stay in National Park campsites or permit areas - was up 6% this year from 2,357 in 2021, to 2,503 in 2022.

Key insights from this year are that there was a slight drop in satisfaction with 89% being likely or quite likely to recommend one of our camping permit areas (compared to 93% in 2021 and 92% in 2020.) It was a similar picture for Loch Chon Campsite with a 2% drop in satisfaction from 99% to 97%, and Loch Achray campsite maintaining its 97% rating. The negative feedback was mostly focused on littering issues.

### Customer survey feedback 2022

	 Bookings	 Likely or very likely to recommend	 Stayed before
<b>Loch Achray</b>	<b>8%</b> ▲ from 2021	<b>97%</b> = 97% (2021)	<b>39%</b> ▼ from 33% (2021)
<b>Loch Chon</b>	<b>32%</b> ▲ from 2021	<b>97%</b> ▼ from 99% (2021)	<b>49%</b> ▲ from 52% (2021)







## 4.6 WATER SAFETY

A more varied demographic of visitor in recent years, significant changes in the type and volume of recreation activities enjoyed on Loch Lomond and a series of tragic drownings last season put water safety at the top of the agenda for 2022. We also began the process to review the Loch Lomond Byelaws.

A National Park water safety project was already underway in 2020/2021 and this work was accelerated following the incidents of last summer.

Enhanced water safety measures this season, included:

- ▶ installation of new water safety signage and Public Rescue Equipment (PRE) at key visitor sites
- ▶ waterside responder training for people working around loch shores
- ▶ education materials and in-school sessions for young people in surrounding schools
- ▶ a programme of 13 water safety events at popular waterside locations including Luss and Balloch. Park Rangers and partners provided water safety advice to around 900 people

The Park Authority is working with landowners to identify popular water sites they own or manage where safety signage and equipment can be improved. On the shores of Balloch Park and the River Leven area, 25 new Public Rescue Equipment stations and location signs have been installed.




**Water hazards are present here**


LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK

**Life jackets or buoyancy aids are required on Loch Lomond**

You must carry sufficient lifejackets or buoyancy aids for all on board a 'vessel', this includes powered and non-powered craft. These must be worn on PWCs including jet skis and jet bikes. Failure to comply is an offence under the Loch Lomond Byelaws 2013 3.5(f).





**Beware Sudden Drop**



**Cold Water**



**Danger of Collision - Beware of other loch users**

**Children must be supervised at all times on site**

Scan code for water safety advice  
[www.lochlomond-trossachs.org](http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org)





National Park Rangers continued to carry out daily patrols both on the ground and on the water, providing advice and enforcing byelaws on Loch Lomond, with support from Police Scotland. Rangers engaged with over 1,400 people about water safety this season whilst undertaking patrols.

In addition to these on-the-ground measures, water safety has been a significant focus of our visitor communications and we ran a dedicated water safety campaign for the 2022 season.

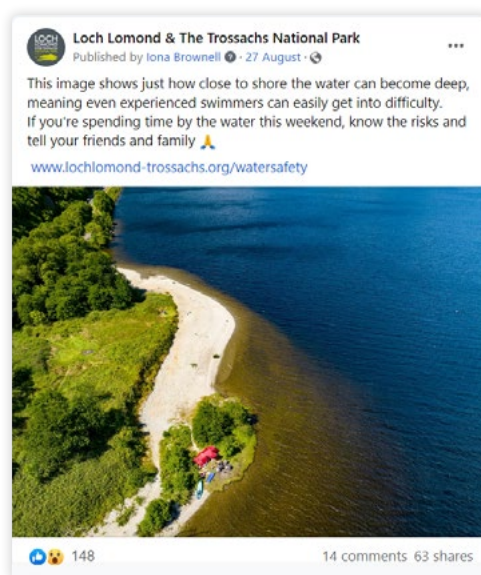
The primary aim was to raise awareness of water safety risks among 'unintentional loch users' - visitors spending time near the water who don't plan to go in, but do.

We delivered a powerful campaign with impactful materials and messages so that people could more easily understand the risks and help us to share them, reaching significantly more people on water safety than we were doing pre-2021.

#### Highlights included:

- ▶ Aerial photography showing steep drops close to shore in popular locations – these had a huge impact when shared on social media and were well used by print media too. Comments included: "This image is so powerful - very much sticks with me and my kids when in and around the water"
- ▶ A significant increase in page views of our website content – up from 562 in 2020 to 3,651 in 2022
- ▶ People spending more time reading our water safety advice - the average time spent on our water safety page increased from two minutes in 2021 to 3.21 minutes in 2022
- ▶ Our water safety content had a combined reach of 1.9 million on social media, with one post alone (steep drops photography) reaching almost 600,000 people
- ▶ Six broadcast interviews and eight pieces of print media coverage

**WATER SAFETY  
ADVICE  
ON SOCIAL MEDIA  
COMBINED REACH  
1.9 MILLION**



There has been closer working with national (Water Safety Scotland) and local (PAWS) partners on water safety this season. Results include:

- ▶ Park Authority water safety messages and signage designs have been adopted by several partner organisations and incorporated into national visitor messaging
- ▶ launch of the Scottish Government's Water Safety Action Plan at Loch Lomond
- ▶ joint event to mark World Drowning Prevention Day

Following discussions with Boots and Beards to engage with ethnic minority groups on water safety, we are hoping to set up a water safety session at Glasgow Central Mosque ahead of the 2023 season. We are also working to translate the main water safety page on our website into several different languages ahead of next season.

**3,651  
VIEWS**

**40%  
INCREASE  
TRAFFIC**

**58%  
INCREASE  
TIME SPENT**

2 mins 2021 ▲ 3.21mins 2022



Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development (STID) studies are underway as part of a wider approach and commitment to developing long term, strategic solutions to help manage visitor pressures and improve visitor experience in key areas of the National Park. A key part of this project is collaboration with stakeholders to inform the study and subsequent plans to be delivered.

The studies aim to identify key infrastructure issues in a particular area, the barriers to be addressed in delivering the required infrastructure (eg. planning, legal and landowner issues), the costs for the development and the timescales required for delivery over the next two to five year period.

A STID study has been completed for the west of Loch Lomond and as a result, a pilot project is now underway considering how an 'aires' approach could help manage motorhome and campervan visitors to the Tarbet area. Those visiting the area and camping in vehicles will be made aware of the various overnight stay sites but directed to the waste and water facilities available at Tarbet Pier Picnic Site.

The study has also resulted in a Tarbet Masterplan- a long term vision for Tarbet - which is near completion and Argyll & Bute Council has secured funding to make improvements to the car park at The Cobbler, a very popular hill near Arrochar.

Meanwhile as a result of the East of Loch Lomond STID study a Balmaha Master Plan is being developed, looking at improvements that can be made in and around the village to improve the visitor experience and ease congestion. Through winter 2022 and into 2023, further STIDs will be completed for areas including Strathard and the Trossachs, and for Callander and surrounding areas.

The approach for further expanding this programme is being finalised considering the remaining areas of the National Park.

For more information we have a [detailed place plan program on our website.](#)

### Overnight parking bays

1  
  
 Designated parking bay

2  
  
 Designated parking bay

**Overnight parking for motorhomes 6pm-10am**

- Motorhomes and campervans that are self-contained can stay overnight at this location.
- Please make sure you have paid your overnight parking fee and your vehicle is parked within the designated bay.
- Standard parking fees apply between 10am to 6pm.
- No awnings, tents, caravans, or car camping is allowed.
- Fires and barbecues are not permitted.
- You can stay for a maximum of 1 night. No return within 48 hours.
- You should arrive after 6pm and must leave before 10am.

**No overnight parking permitted outside of these bays. Thank you and we hope you enjoy your stay.**

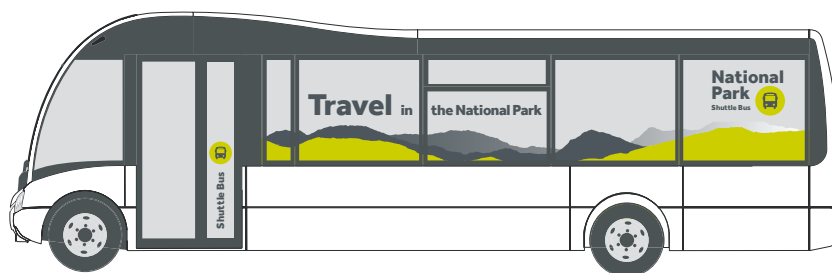
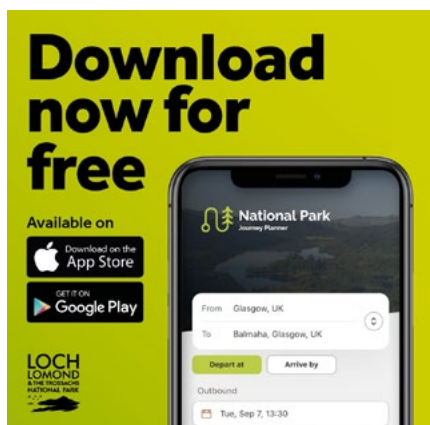


## 4.8 SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

The National Park attracts four million visitors every year and 79% of them use their car to travel to and around the Park. This has significant impacts on roads, communities, emissions and on the visitor experience.

Our sustainable travel programme looking at both short term and longer-term measures to reduce car journeys to and around the Park is continuing to progress.

This programme encompasses several projects, including an app to plan sustainable journeys, a project exploring the potential for a shuttle bus and a comprehensive study to increase understanding of the barriers and opportunities for sustainable travel here.



### National Park Journey Planner

The digital National Park Journey Planner service was launched in September 2021 as a pilot project to help day trippers access information on travel options more easily and to encourage them to use public transport and cycling where practical.

This pilot has delivered impressive results in its first year, with more than 10,000 journeys planned between September 2021 and October 2022. In a recent survey 52% of users said using the app had made it more likely that they would use public transport, walk or cycle instead of driving.

Businesses within the Park are also working with us to promote the Journey Planner on their websites and social media channels.

### Shuttle Bus pilot

This year we went out to tender inviting experienced bus operators to work with us to pilot a shuttle bus service within the National Park during peak visitor season. Other UK National Parks have found that shuttle buses can have a significant impact on modal shift (visitors switching from car travel to more sustainable modes) in specific locations. East Loch Lomond and The Trossachs were identified as two routes where such a service could have impact.

The tender exercise for this project brought to light significant challenges facing the bus sector at present, specifically around driver shortages across the sector. This meant that the pilot could not be progressed this visitor season and options for future years are now being explored.

### Sustainable Travel and Modal Shift Study

As part of our strategic development work, we are working with consultants on a comprehensive Sustainable Travel and Modal Shift Assessment and Options Appraisal.

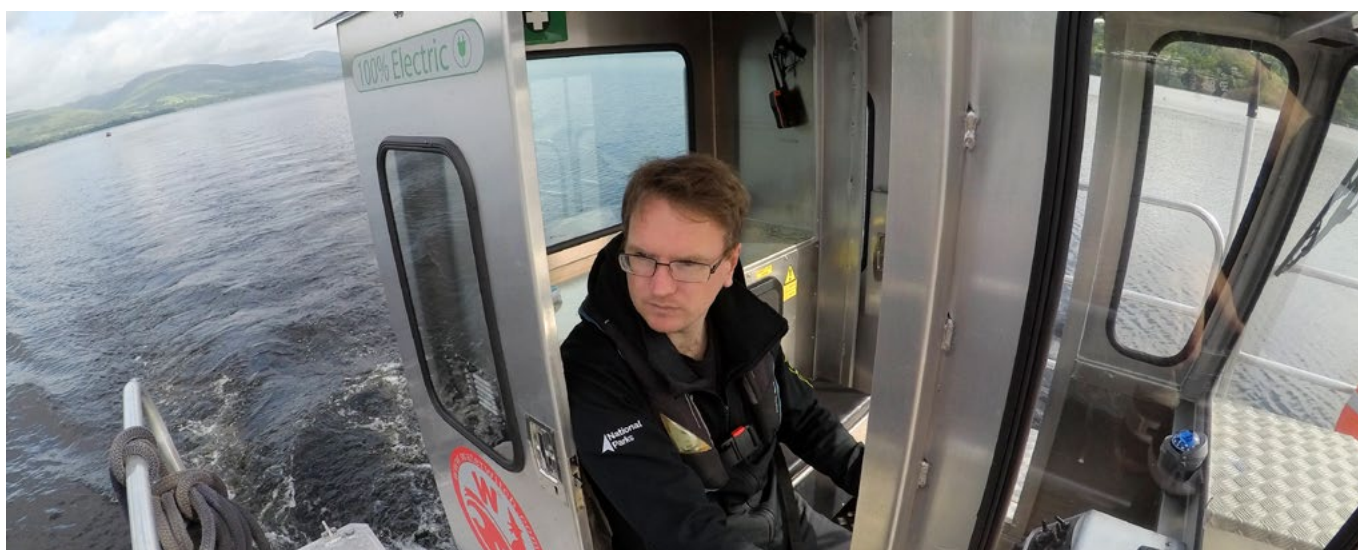
The study will build upon existing travel and visitor data for the National Park to support our understanding of the barriers and opportunities for sustainable travel in the Park. It will form an evidence-led basis for how we work with partners to deliver improved alternatives to visitor car journeys into and within the National Park area. Consultation with key stakeholders and community groups is underway.

## 5. Regulation and enforcement

The enforcement picture was a more positive one this season. Rangers took fewer people's details in relation to Camping Byelaws contraventions and issued less formal notification letters. Cases being reported to the Procurator Fiscal have also decreased.

The National Park Ranger Service worked closely with Police Scotland on enforcement of the Loch Lomond Byelaws and Camping Management Byelaws while local authorities led on parking enforcement and their duties under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Additional funding enabled extra resources for both Loch Lomond boat patrols and land patrols to alleviate visitor management pressures. Regular patrolling in all areas meant that visitors and residents observed a consistent Ranger presence seven days a week.



### 5.1 NATIONAL PARK RANGER SERVICE

National Park Rangers and partners agree that while issues such as litter, fires, human waste and dangerous parking persisted this season, less enforcement took place compared to the previous two seasons of 2021 and 2020.

The vast majority of interactions that the Ranger service had within the Camping Management Zones and on Loch Lomond were positive and the 'education first' approach was well received.

There were however examples of more serious incidents, with Strathfillan Community Development Trust Rangers having to be provided with body cameras for their own safety following abusive interactions with campers.

The Ranger Service recorded a 41% drop this season in the number of visitors who had their details taken for alleged camping byelaw contraventions – down from 1,379 in 2021 to 812 this year. This does however remain higher than pre-COVID, up 16% on 2019.

#### National Park Camping Management Byelaws Number of contraventions

**34,447**

People camping in permit areas



**812**

People had their details taken



**8**

Cases raised

**3**

Cases reported to the Procurator Fiscal



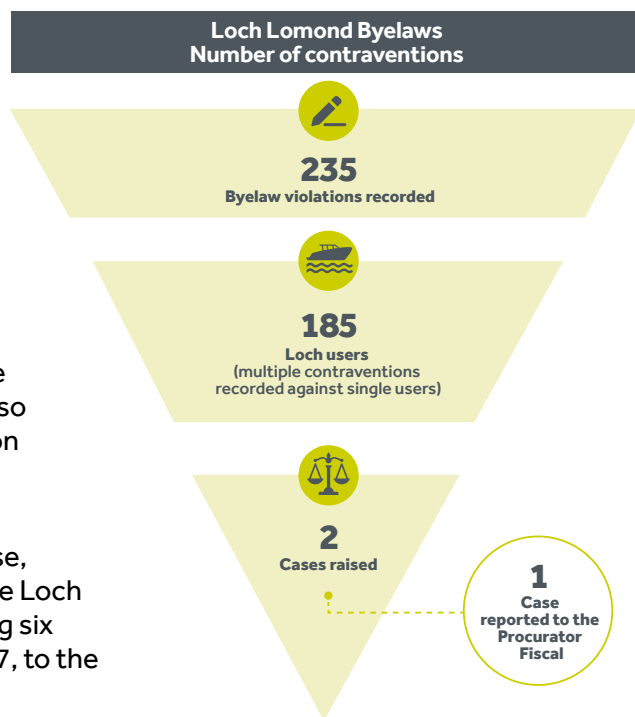
On Loch Lomond, Rangers recorded 235 alleged contraventions for 2022. This was again a significant reduction from 2021, down 42% from 403 alleged contraventions. However, as with alleged byelaw contraventions, the 2022 figure remains 27% higher than in 2019 pre-COVID. The majority of alleged offences were related to speeding, failure to display registration numbers and or annual marks and failure to register.

This 2022 increase on the 2019 figure for both sets of byelaws could be down to extra funding that was available in 2022 enabling larger deployment of staff but it could also be an indicator that although the records show a reduction in 2022 compared to 2021 and 2020, things have still not returned to pre-COVID levels.

To date, the National Park Authority has reported one case, involving two individuals, for alleged contraventions of the Loch Lomond Byelaws 2013 and a further three cases, involving six individuals, under the Camping Management Byelaw 2017, to the Procurator Fiscal.

The National Park Ranger Service employed 58 Seasonal Rangers this year. These Seasonal Rangers:

- ▶ worked across five patrol areas, campsites, boat patrols and visitor centres
- ▶ conducted 1,379 patrols between 1st March-30th September
- ▶ carried out 1,073 patrols in Camping Management Zones (CMZ)
- ▶ conducted 306 Loch Lomond boat patrols - up 28% on 2021 in response to behaviours seen in 2021 and in light of fatalities last season
- ▶ continued (where resources allowed) to field focused patrols in key hot spot areas where increased visitor numbers impact most heavily on local communities and permit areas.



## 5.2 POLICE SCOTLAND



Police Scotland have continued to develop their partnership work within the National Park including through cooperation with the NPSRAG Partners and through development of the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Partnership Against Rural Crime (PARC). The dedicated National Park Police Officer provides a crucial link and a new officer, Scott Kennedy, took up this role in September 2022.

Joint bids from the National Park Police Officer helped to successfully secure the services of specialist resources again this season, including the Mounted Branch, Marine Unit, and Force Flexi Unit. This offered a diverse range of policing capabilities across the National Park.

The various divisions within the National Park have maintained their individual operations to support NPSRAG partners, stakeholders and communities in managing visitor pressures across the Park.

Forth Valley (C) division continued with Operation Elms offering support to partners and stakeholders in the Stirling Council area.

Argyll & West Dunbartonshire (L) division continued with Operation Ballaton, to build on engagement to address repetitive and severe instances of youth anti-social behaviour in Balloch Country Park and Luss village in recent years.

The main focus remained the area around Balloch Railway Station. Meanwhile L division maintained their weekly multi-agency meetings with British Transport Police, Scotrail, West Dunbartonshire Council, the National Park Authority and Scottish Fire and Rescue, to ensure a co-ordinated approach and response to incidents.

A partnership event – a day of action at Loch Earn - saw National Park Rangers, Perth & Kinross Rangers and Police Scotland's Tayside (D) division come together to engage with the local community in Breadalbane and encourage responsible behaviour. The police also joined Rangers on joint operational patrols on Loch Earn permit areas this season.

Police Scotland have noted that the visitor season for the National Park has been a 'more composed season', agreeing with partners that levels of anti-social behaviour are returning to pre-COVID levels.

Police Scotland launched the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Partnership Against Rural Crime (PARC) in October 2021. The aim of the partnership is to prevent and tackle rural crime in and around the National Park and it forms part of a national multi-agency drive to address the issue. It is focusing on crime which affects rural communities in the area, including offences such as poaching, flytipping and theft of plant and machinery. This work is ongoing.

## 5.3 PARKING & ENFORCEMENT

Partners maintained their regulation and enforcement activity to tackle parking and traffic issues within the National Park this season. Stirling Council report that they issued 904 Parking Charge Notices (PCN) between the 1st of April and the 31st of October (up 15% on last season) and that the requirement for enforcement 'outstripped resources'.

Meanwhile Argyll & Bute Council issued 2,167 PCN between the period of 1st of April and the 30th of September, a 17% decrease from last season. This could be linked to the presence of additional wardens in Luss, Duck Bay and Arrochar to manage parking and congestion issues.





## 6. Looking ahead

After the uncertainty of the last two years, the 2022 season was seen by most people who work to manage visitor pressures as more of a return to 'normal'. The important question to ask now is: what is normal?

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, visitor numbers were continuing to rise, putting pressure on facilities and in turn on the people who live and work within the National Park. The 2021 season could be viewed as a look into a future in which these challenges are not addressed.

It is important to note that within the National Park, the 2022 visitor season remained in some respects busier than in 2019 before the COVID pandemic response. Whilst generally the pressures felt were less intense than in 2021, additional funding from Scottish Government was a significant factor, allowing additional staff on the ground and some continued temporary facilities.

The focus on sustainable visitor management at a national level over the last two years has helped build resilience and expertise through close partnership working and a willingness to try new ways of solving known problems. Some of these new ways of working are now embedded while others are only just being established, such as the strategic planning work for new and improved infrastructure.

The financial landscape going forward is challenging but it is important that we do not lose the gains that have made over the last two years and for partnerships such the National Park Safe Recovery Action Group to continue. There will also be a continued focus on longer-term sustainable solutions both through infrastructure investments delivered by our Place Programme and through work to develop low emission travel options for people travelling to and around the National Park.

Finally, it is worth noting that the current financial pressure being felt by UK families has the potential to see an increase in domestic visitors to places such as the National Park, with foreign travel potentially unaffordable. This is important to the rural tourism economy and should be supported by consistent messaging, continued investment in high quality facilities, appropriate use of regulation and most importantly, by the staff on the ground who welcome visitors and provide them with the support they need to visit responsibly and ensure this special place remains so.



The 2023 Joint Response Visitor Management Plan will include:

- ▶ Continued focus on national and local partnerships to deliver a consistent approach to sustainable visitor management
- ▶ Working with Transport Scotland to improve signage on the A82 and additional measures to reduce dangerous parking
- ▶ Launching an Aires scheme to provide overnight parking for motorhomes and campervans
- ▶ Developing the use of technology to help reduce visitor pressures
- ▶ Joint working with communities of place, with a focus on developing projects as part of the Place Programme.

Full details will be included in the 2023 Joint Response Visitor Management Plan to be presented to the National Park Authority Board in March 2023 following engagement with all key stakeholders and partners.

PÀIRC NÀISEANTA  
**LOCH**  
LAOMAINN  
IS NAN TRÓISICHEAN



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December 2022