



# Pre-season stakeholder briefing on visitor management in the National Park

## Q&A session

Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2022

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**Kate Bovill, Strathard Community Trust:**

**Q. Please could Kenny clarify about the pilot shuttle bus project. I was unaware it was an either/or situation between Balmaha & the Trossachs. How will this decision be made and are you having trouble with securing businesses interested in running this on behalf of the park?**

**Marilyn Moore, Callander Enterprise:**

**Q. Also will the bus carry bikes as that is a frequent question too? I have heard that the buses were not planned to carry bikes and think that will be a disadvantage. If this is true is there a reason why? Also will the bus be suitable for tourists with limited accessibility and also take wheelchairs?**

**Jim Riach, Countryside Trust:**

**Q. Loch Achray is not a gateway site so can't really be the strategic point. Intervention is required earlier at Aberfoyle or Callander with Loch Achray a secondary but important site. What will the capacity of the shuttle bus be? Potentially how many cars does it remove from this route? Will there be any improvement to non-car based transport options into the Trossachs area from the east of the Park eg, implement active travel corridors, improved sustainable transport options?**

**A.** The project team are developing the idea and taking specialist advice from Stirling Council as the local transport authority. It is a pilot project being funded by our core funding and Smarter Choices Smarter Places funding from Transport Scotland. It is designed to help us learn what works, what is best to take forward, and what the issues are. Once both the pilot and the larger transport study are completed we'll be in a better position to know what we can do to help SC and other operators.

The application is based mainly around the modal shift of visitors at congested spots at hill access points, but also well used points like Loch Katrine and The Lodge at Aberfoyle.

Coverage and capacity of the route will be determined by the tenders that come back. The tender was developed with support from Stirling Council and looks at a number of proposals from the sector. It is now almost ready to go out. There will be a stage of consultation once operators let us know what they can do, which will determine routes.

It will be a free service, giving the pilot a good marketing point for potential users. Longer term the system would provide capacity for bikes. Being wheelchair accessible is also included within tender.

**Kelly Clapperton-Bates, Balquidder, Lochearnhead & Strathyre Community Council:**

**Q. It's great that the hotspots are getting increased support and facilities, but I was wondering what additional support is being provided for communities/places outside the hotspot areas? Will there be any National Park funding available for communities this year similar to last year?**

A. We expect Better Places funding to be available again and recipients of the funding in the past should hopefully be receiving communications about this shortly. That fund is there to support communities as described.

Last season the larger Ranger complement allowed us to carry out patrols in non-hotspot areas such as Cowal, supporting and liaising with community rangers funded by the Better Places fund. We expect to support those community rangers again, should communities apply for it the funding.

The NPA is gradually rolling out the volunteering programme again supplementing the professional Ranger Service outside of the hotspots and using volunteers on the ground to help provide appropriate monitoring and information.

Our Green Recovery Fund which supports projects across the National Park ran in 2021/22 but many projects have had issues moving into delivery due to problems with procurement and securing contractors. We are still committed to funding these projects but this will now fall into 2022/23. Therefore in the coming year we will still be providing smaller community support grants for temporary facilities and local wardens but the Green Recovery Fund will not run in the same way it did last year. Instead our focus will be on supporting delivery of projects which were awarded grant funding last year.

**Simon Miller, Luss Estates Company:**

**Q. The 2021 review does not seem to acknowledge that the National Park does not have the legal power to restrict the number of water crafts, enforce their insurance, and restrict certain craft to specific lochs. In other words the water bodies of the National Park are not controlled and no one has legal authority over them. This**

**threatens the very thing that makes the National Park so attractive - the lochs. Is there a plan to address this?**

A. Loch Lomond Byelaw review process is getting under way in Spring/Summer and will be coming out for consultation with communications on this to follow soon. It has been confirmed this week that the Byelaw review must be completed by March 2023.

To introduce new powers or controls, there are steps to follow before applying to ministers for approval for changes.

There has been a very rapid change in usage of loch with an escalation of jet skis and complaints about them, a growth in non-powered recreation like paddle sports and open water swimming, and safety concerns in some areas of the loch. We anticipate that there may likely be limitations or further controls come about as part of the review and consultation.

**Jim Riach, Countryside Trust:**

**Q. Could the West Loch Lomond cycle way and proposed A82 upgrade become part of the National Cycling and Walking network?**

A. WLL cycle way is a regional cycle route at moment but is not in the state it could be. This and any extension is being looked at by Transport Scotland and contained in the West Loch Lomond Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development plans. Any link up from Tarbet to Crianlarich would be anticipated to be included in the national network. Sustrans are working on a 30 year plan for the National Cycle Network for Scottish Government and the National Park Authority have been involved in that with themes around 'fix it' (e.g. Glasgow to Balloch and Tarbet) and 'grow it' (e.g. Tarbet to Crianlarich) aiding potential development.

There is opportunity to create active travel links beyond this route, with work ongoing across visitor management plans on sustainable transport, place and recreational tourism. Active travel projects are expensive and often take time when considering the distances involved in the National Park and the number of individual landowners this can involve.

**Arthur Donaldson, Loch Lomond Association:**

**Q. Interested to learn what progress is being made on the "new" Loch Lomond Chart and this being suitable for small craft such as jet skis etc.**

A. No plans for a smaller chart this year but any new charts would be on the back of Loch Lomond Byelaw review.

**Fergus Wood, Great Time Scotland:**

**Q1. What was the visitor management plan last year and what is the plan this year to solve parking and provide toilets for the large numbers of people visiting Kinlochard?**

A. You'll be hearing from us shortly about a Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development (STID) plan in Strathard & Trossachs which will help to identify gaps in toilets and parking. This strategic document will allow us and partners to make evidence-based decisions and make funding applications. A consultant will be starting on this promptly.

**Q2. Old forestry village at Kinlochard has sewage leaching into loch from old septic tanks. Scottish Water built a public sewage plant which was promised to pipe sewage from community into plant but only has one user. Can you help encourage Scottish Water to honour that obligation and ensure the public sewage plant works for the community?**

A. If a serious pollution is happening we can draw attention to SEPA for this to be addressed. Please write to Gordon with more details to help us raise this. The National Park Authority is aware of the capacity not being used. With our Local Development Plan soon to be updated there may be a way for us to address this with Scottish Water as a part of this engagement process.

**Arthur Donaldson, Loch Lomond Association:**

**Q. Recent incident on loch required two persons being rescued into evening but the emergency service had no survival blankets with them and these were supplied by locals. In these cases it's a necessity to ensure they have as part of kit, can assurance be given it won't be caught short again?**

A. We will pick up this issue with the emergency services as while we were aware of this incident we were not aware of the issue with survival blankets. We work closely with partners operating from our facility and ensure all National Park Authority boats carry foil blankets.

**Duncan McLachlan – Arrochar & Tarbet Community Development Trust:**

**Q. The National Park will not be starting the Shuttle Bus project from scratch as I recall a 4B's project that was for Boots, Bikes, Boats and Bus that had a mini-bus with a Bike trailer coming from Balloch to Ardgartan and maybe Lochgoilhead. It ran for at least a season and dropped since. It would be good to see this restored with the lessons learned on marketing and promotion that would help reduce car journeys and help establish more sustainable travel. To ensure success for Arrochar & Tarbet such a service would need to be linked to the West Highland Rail line and the station.**

A. Our shuttle bus pilot is starting from scratch in terms of it being a different priority and a different level of car dominance but there is definitely value in reviewing outputs from the 4Bs project. We are taking learnings from the 4Bs project and those involved, as well as from experts in this sector.

Transport Scotland is also looking at improvements to access around the railway bridge and active travel links between the Arrochar and Tarbet villages.

This is a very much a learning process for us as the shuttle bus will be a pilot. How we raise public awareness of it is important and once up and running we will look to stakeholders to help us promote it.

**Jim Riach, Countryside Trust:**

**Q. Why does NCN7 in the Trossachs still has diversion signs on it (diverting onto the road) given the route is clear and is a strategic cycle route and core path.?**

A. The National Park Authority Access team is aware of legacy signs and is dealing with this and supporting dialogue including with Sustrans, to remove the signage.

**Margaret McDonald, East Loch Lomond Community Trust:**

**Q. The C6 between Balmaha and Rowardennan has had substantial road improvements completed with additional passing passes and surface improvements. The work was funded by the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme (STTS) and Stirling Council. Another bid has been submitted to complete the work on the C6.**

The Chair commented that the STTS is a useful source of funds to assist communities and local authorities to improve walking and cycle routes. Hugh O'Neill at Argyll & Bute Council advised that Argyll & Bute Council are working on their bids right now and agreed it is a useful extra funding source. Rules for funding state there must be access to at least two timber hauling areas. A&BC areas not confirmed yet are being assisted by Argyll Timber Transport Group. If successful following review by STTS, the aim is to start work on this in late April/May.

**David Lowes, Glenfalloch Estate:**

**Q. Thank you to all with regards to the level of engagement from the National Park Authority and partners over past year. However Network Rail are missing from this group and perhaps should be involved in regard to some of the solutions/issues being discussed. Are they being engaged in this work?**

A. Greater partnership working is always welcome. There is a bigger systemic issue around how funding and scheduling of services works in Scotland. This is focused understandably on the needs of communities, access to work and services but doesn't address visitor travel needs and we're currently trying to have discussions on that broader principle. The system doesn't work on a seasonal basis to meet visitor demand or get them out of cars and funding is prioritised by regional and national needs.

We do engage with Network Rail on a project-by-project basis and Transport Scotland is well-positioned to help us better connect with Network Rail. A transport forum will come about as we develop a wider modal shift as part of the transport study. Network Rail will be a key partner to engage in this.

**Jim Riach, Countryside Trust:**

**Q. The journey planner app currently has a limited number of services included in the app. When will others such as DRT be included? Will there be any improvement in public transport provision linked into the app?**

A. DRT and the Waterbus services will be added to the Journey Planner app shortly. These will also be complimented with incentives to sign up and particular benefits for Under 22s. The Shuttle Bus will also be added when we know a start date and a confirmed service.

**Tim Simons, Scotways:**

**Q. Why aren't FLS extending the Stay the Night scheme in FLS car parks?**

A. Sites for the FLS trial have been selected to complement other options for campervans e.g. commercial sites. Some sites are excluded to provide capacity for and avoid conflict with day visitors.

**Diane Nicholson, Kilmun Community Council:**

**Q. A question to FLS in how are they going to manage the mobile home overnight stay at Ardentinny Beach as over use and single track road being blocked?**

A. FLS will continue to work with partners to explore options for longer term solutions around Ardentinny. Staff will be on site to engage and assist visitors and local community.