

# Pre-Season Stakeholder Briefing

## Main Headlines / Actions



Friday 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2023, 15:00 – 16:30

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### Attendees

#### **Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park:**

Kenny Auld – Head of Visitor Services

Heather Reid – NPA Board Member (Chair)

Craig Gavigan, Emma Hislop, Elaine Brewer, Matt Buckland, Jim Downie, Kirsty Duncan

#### **NPSRAG Representatives:**

Andrew Clark - Forestry and Land Scotland

Suzanne Cumiskey – Perth and Kinross Council

#### **Stakeholders:**

Zalina Dzhatieva – Argyll & Bute Council

Katie Goldie – Gartmore Trust

David Fraser – Oak Tree Inn

Helen Todd – Ramblers Scotland

Ruth McLusky - Balquhidder, Lochearnhead &

Strathyre Community Council

Fergus Duncanson – RYA Scotland

Margaret McDonald - East Loch Lomond

Community Trust

Katy Lamb - Kinlochard Village Hall

Andy McClay - Luss & Arden Community Council

Ellen Greenwood - Arrochar, Tarbet & Ardlui

Community Council

Susan Torrance – Loch Lomond Steamship  
Company

Richard Barron – Scotways

James Fraser – Friends of Loch Lomond and  
Trossachs

Ian Gillespie - Luss Village Shop

Fraser Lamont – RSPB

Arthur Donaldson - Loch Lomond Association

Gwen Raes – Woodland Trust

Sally Page - Balloch Castle Country Park

Regeneration Group

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Welcome by Heather Reid

### National Context and Scene Setting

**Kenny Auld:** We are seeing the work we are doing as part of the national picture and it is being received well. We are continuing to work in partnership locally and nationally to keep the conversations going.

Visitor Management Strategic Steering Group is continuing to meet and is chaired by Visit Scotland and involved NatureScot, Forestry and Land Scotland, Cairngorms National Park Authority, Police Scotland, Highland Council and Transport Scotland.

This group works on 4 strategy pillars: Educating current and future visitors, investing in Scotland's current and future visitor management infrastructure and services, delivering a joined and cohesive action plan across Scotland, becoming and remaining a world leader in visitor management.

We think those conversations has led to increased funding for visitor management work and infrastructure.

An additional £500,000 to LLTNPA for visitor management, FLS received £400,000 nationally and £1m to the Better Places pot available for communities and other bodies to bid into.

Future Projects: We are about to consult on a draft National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP), this includes discussion of visitor behaviour, experience and opportunities for improvements moving forward.

We're working on the Strategic Infrastructure Investment Plan both locally and nationally.

Key Updates from last year across the partners:  
Resources coped as well as could be expected.  
Partnership working remains key.  
Slight shift towards manageable volumes and behaviours  
Forecasting this year to be slightly busier than last.

Information and engagement:

We're looking at close working relationships with partners and our core messages include water safety, byelaw review and messaging of any changes, communication of carparking is key, as well as litter, fires and camping.

Climate and nature friendly visiting campaigns encouraging visitors to think of impact around visits.

Big focus on sustainable travel and encouraging visitors away from hotspots.

Working with partners to enhance public transport.

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### National Park Updates

We are continuing monthly visitor management updates to stakeholders and local visitor management groups. Looking to set up visitor management groups on East Loch Lomond, West Loch Lomond, Strathard and the Trossachs area.

Digital solutions to improve visitor experience: The journey planning application TACTRAN will continue to run this year and will be more enhanced. We have other digital tools in conjunction with Stirling Council and P&K Council to give information where is busy within the park.

STIDS: We've had focus on East Loch Lomond & West Loch Lomond, Strathard and Trossachs due to be complete. These findings will feed in to STID and will cover areas that haven't been yet. Whole picture of the infrastructure that is required across the NP to improve visitor experience.

Conic Hill Path: Opening tomorrow (1st April) and next winter there is a further phase of work.

Bracklinn Bridge: completed and open this week.

Future projects and Place projects are taking place this year at Falls of Falloch. Tarbet is also a focus area, and we are confident of funding for phase 1 of work this winter coming. Work on Luss pier for design enhancements to help with management are also planned.

Shuttle bus: funding is secured but bus sector in the rural environment within the National Park is not healthy. There is a risk it won't happen but there is good opportunity to deliver a viable product. We are targeting the corridor between Aberfoyle and Callander.

Regulation and enforcement: Funding this year is slightly less than last but we are happy with the provision we have managed to secure for ourselves and partners.

This is the first time the National Park has been able to employ permanent seasonal rangers, we can invest and retain skill levels.

Environment officers will be in place to keep on top of litter in hotspot areas.

Police Scotland are continuing to run operation Ballaton and Elms.

### NPSRAG Partner Updates

#### **Andrew Clark, Forestry and Land Scotland**

Similar resource of seasonal wardens as we had last year. They begin next week but some permanent staff are volunteering to do overtime to get patrols up and running.

We've been working with partners for communications on key topics.

Stay The Night sites are open from the 1st of April for self-contained motorhome, same sites as last year.

SPHN Planned Health Notices have been served by Scottish Forestry for Larch disease, this means we are having to clear Larch at short notice which can effect visitor provision in certain areas.

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The Balmaha harvesting work is complete and timber has been removed from the site ready to be transported. A diversion will be in place this weekend (1st – 2nd April) on the forest road on Conic which will allow us to clean the site at Balmaha carpark to avoid the transfer of spores.

### **Suzanne Cumiskey, Perth and Kinross Council**

The ranger service budget has been retained and we are going to have 6 seasonal rangers.

An application has been put into the Better Places fund to take them back up to last year.

RAG approach to the routes that will be patrolled, unless requested specifically, rangers won't cover over The National Park to avoid duplication. This can be discussed.

We are working on the CivTech 6 project as a digital solution. Censors will be in place at Loch Tay and Rannoch which will be useful for instant reporting for rangers and visitor information. We've got an explore outdoor map and this will be going out early next week.

Strategic Waste Disposal Network is in place. A disposal point will be put in at the Broxden park and ride. Two other points that will be ready later in the year are Aberfeldy at the River Tay Hub and Grandtully Station Campsite.

We have accessed £900,000 of funding through RTIF.

### **Q&As**

#### **General point**

Several stakeholders expressed their disappointment that not all of the NPSRAG organisations were represented on the call.

#### **Sally Page, Balloch Castle Country Park**

- Question 1:

Do the 'Stay The Night' sites have waste disposal facilities for campervans?

**Andrew Clark, FLS:** the 'Stay The Night' scheme is only open to motorhomes with self-contained facilities, there is no waste disposal.

- Question 2:

Is the National Park going to produce a map of waste disposal facilities across the park?

**Kenny Auld:** The Visitor Operations team have, primarily around Arrochar and Tarbet, been looking at how we can better manage campervan provision and the infrastructure required. I expect the infrastructure required around waste disposal to come through the whole National Park and STID points to be covered this year.

Locally, we will make sure we've covered it within the Strategic Tourism Infrastructure guides.

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**Post meeting note:** the National Park motorhome webpage can be found [here](#), it will be updated as new facilities and schemes come on line.

- Question 3:

The UK government have brought in a new law to give jet-ski users, who are not behaving safely, unlimited fines. Does that cover Scotland?

**Kenny Auld:** We are aware of the legislation; we have had discussions with Police Scotland and will be taking legal advice. It does apply to Scotland but has limitations. We won't have power as the National Park Authority because we are under the byelaws, but Police colleagues who do go on the boats with ourselves, do have those powers.

- Questions 4:

Would you consider putting advertisements on the Balloch train asking people to look after the environment they enjoy?

**Kenny Auld:** The advertising space on that train is minimal. We are working with Scotrail and Network Rail to affect better behaviours for a better experience to come into the National Park. Longer term we want that train station to be different, this will give us opportunity to change behaviours.

Our Comms team are engaged and we have colleagues in Scotrail that we talk to regularly. We focus on social media, boots on the ground and ambassadors to communicate. Glasgow Queen Street is a hub and some of these behaviours are national, we will work together on the national campaign.

### **Susan Torrance, Loch Lomond Steamship Company (Maid of The Loch)**

We have funding application in now to get our hull sorted and we can relaunch. Better Places Pot: what application process is required to access that funding?

**Kenny Auld:** The Better Places Pot is around boots on the ground to make a different to visitor experiences and effect behaviour. It could qualify but we can discuss it. The £1m is going nationally.

### **Helen Todd, Ramblers Scotland**

- Question 1:

You mentioned the National Park Partnership Plan is coming up for consultation soon and the Outdoor Recreation Plan was delayed because of that, could you commit to having a meeting with the Outdoor Recreation bodies and do you have an idea for a date?

**Kenny Auld:** The board papers are on the website and you can see what has been approved. How that is being engaged is still being finalised. We have set up a meeting with the Recreation and Access team to make sure we have a clear communication with people like yourself who have

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fed into that original document. The authors who were doing 'Active Park, Healthy People' have also been the authors of NPPP sections. It is closely linked to managing volumes, sustainable travel and how the National Park can be inclusive.

- Question 2:

What is 'Climate and Nature' friendly visiting?

**Elaine Brewer (LLTNPA):** 'Climate and Nature' is our recognition that visitors come to the park because they love and value the space. Enabling them to take actions. Education on the fact there is action required and things that everyone, including visitors, can do for that. The campaign is based on awareness raising and on actions that people can do when they come out to help feel like they're making a difference. It will support our 'Future Nature' route map that we as a park and partners are delivering.

We are looking at working with partners such as RSPB and visitor engagement events so visitors can get involved.

**Heather Reid (Chair):** At our board meeting, Anna Mclean (Director of Innovation and Engagement), highlighted the last week in April as the potential date for the draft consultation to go live.

### Katy Lamb, Kinlochard Village Hall

- Question 1:

Is there only one disposal point in the whole Stirling Council area in the whole park?

**Kenny Auld:** I don't know how many disposal points there are.

**Post meeting note:** the National Park motorhome webpage can be found [here](#), it will be updated as new facilities and schemes come on line. Unfortunately, many of the campsites do not proactively provide this service but can be contacted to ask.

- Question 2:

FLS is saying motorhomes need to be self-contained, is there plans to increase disposal points?

**Kenny Auld:** There are waste disposal points around the park, but many places are inappropriate to put waste disposal. We will have to market where they can dispose and where they are located through the STID work, we will do gap analyses of that.

- Question 3:

On the STID plans, do you have dates for Strathard and Trossachs?

**Kenny Auld:** It will be finalised in early May and that will feed into the wider National Park.

Action: STID Strathard and Trossachs workshop to be arranged.

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**Post meeting note:** the next meeting with the Strathard and The Trossachs Visitor Management and other relevant stakeholders is being held on the Monday the 24<sup>th</sup> of April at The Lodge in Aberfoyle, invites have been sent.

### Margaret McDonald, East Loch Lomond Community Trust

- Question 1:

The alternative walking route to Conic Hill Is not fit for purpose and is dangerous, how do we get work done on that path and why was it left in that condition when Conic was closed?

**Kenny Auld:** We are waiting for the Balmaha Masterplan to be completed and there will be further discussion of actions. I'll speak to the team, and we will look at the concerns. The marketing was promoting Cashel as an alternative or the West Highland Way at the loch side.

- Question 2:

A shuttlebus between Balmaha and Rowardennan has not been discussed although it is in the masterplan?

**Kenny Auld:** The reason we are not looking at Balmaha to Rowardennan right now is that a shuttle bus could create more car parking pressure points within the Balmaha Visitor Centre carpark at peak times. We need to get more voices from people like yourself and others around how we balance transport around that corridor. It's a complicated corridor and space is at a premium.

### David Fraser, Oak Tree Inn

Employees and residents would not choose to get a bus into Balmaha/East Loch Lomond, is there a solution to the state of the roads and infrastructure issues in the area?

**Kenny Auld:** At the moment, we are in transition people. I understand we are in a car dominated world and the level of change that is coming through is a step change and it's hard to visualise. Transport Scotland, Local authorities and regional transport leadership has stepped up. A transport study has landed this morning, not just for visitors but for employees and residents to have better quality transport. It's a change but must work in a phased way that works for businesses and residents. Other infrastructure around Stirling Council pressure points can be brought together through the Balmaha Masterplan. We are looking for feedback from people like yourself to feed into the NPPP.

The closure of toilets in Balmaha last winter negatively impacted the Oak Tree Inn, can these be opened for two weeks over Christmas?

### Rowena Ferguson, The coach House Coffee Shop

We have the same issues on the west side of the loch, no adequate buses for staff in 25 years. Can we have some engagement with the independent businesses in Luss?

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Local Authorities, including us, are looking at toilets differently. There's different owners and different ways of working depending on locations. Your views are valued, we've had a lot of positive engagement with local authority partners however, there are issues with meetings getting missed. We will have a re-engagement reset.

**Visitor Management update page:** <https://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/park-authority/visitor-management-updates/>