

LLTAF Update: May 2026

STRATEGIC UPDATES

Budgets

The £100k Core Paths capital budget for 2026/7 is now fully committed. Phase 2 of the resurfacing and drainage works on the WHW between Marr Bridge and Conic Hill summit will be completed by early summer. The remainder of the budget is required for urgent infrastructure works on the WHW north of Inversnaid. This work has been prioritised over completion of the Rob Roy Way resurfacing works due to the route-critical nature of some of the infrastructure.

An additional £200k has been budgeted as a contribution to the ongoing Loch Earn Railway Path Project, which is managed by St Fillans and Lochearnhead Community Development Trusts, respectively.

More details on project work is provided below.

Sustainable Travel

The feasibility study of sustainable travel options for the East Loch Lomond corridor is due to be completed in the coming weeks. Any concrete proposals can be shared with the Forum in due course. Stirling Council has committed to running the Trossachs Explorer this year, although the funding is still to be finalised. Some preparatory work was carried out on a proposed West Loch Lomond shuttle bus, but in the light of timing, funding and capacity constraints, this will now be revisited next year. The draft Mobility Partnership 'Route Map' will be presented at the June LLTNPA Board Meeting.

West Highland Way Trust

This is now up and running and the Trust's Board has recently advertised for a Trust Director and a Fundraising & Memberships Manager.

AREA REPORTS

West Loch Lomond, Breadalbane and Cowal

Work by other bodies affecting access:

Dunoon – Loch Long overhead power line

This major project around Arrochar and Succoth was scheduled for completion during summer 2026, unfortunately additional work on the lattice tower foundations is required - the completion schedule has been pushed back for c.12-18 months. Access rights and the core paths network will remain largely unaffected. If temporary diversions are required they will be signed, short and located around individual towers.

Upholding Access Rights:

Drumkinnon Bay

The NPA has received a complaint from South Lanarkshire Council (Leisure & Culture) about recreational use of the main beach – an area where access rights apply. A local, private recreational experience provider told the council instructor they had ‘exclusive use’ of the beach area, and the instructional group would have to launch their canoes elsewhere. The NPA is investigating the matter.

Gouk Hill / Three Lochs Way

The Forum will recall that a short section of core path (approx. 100m) from Darleith Moor to Ben Bowie/Bannachra has been obstructed/destroyed first by major windblow and then harvesting operations. This section of path is subject to a National Park Path Agreement with the landholder, agreed in 2014 and which remains in place until 2033.

The Authority has been very clear that the path needs to be re-instated to at least the equivalent standard of what was in place prior to the major windblow event. In early March, we agreed with Scottish Woodlands to give time for the initial earthworks to settle and dry out after continuous wet weather.

The access team met the Scottish Woodlands representative on site on 27/4/26. At this meeting, Scottish Woodlands verbally agreed to engage a specialist path contractor to provide recommendations and quotations on path reinstatement work.

Strone High Road core path

The NPA has responded to two recent enquiries about the dangerous building notice and the stopping-up of the core path road for H&S reasons. A&B Council continue to work with the landowner to try and resolve issues with the roadside building and the adjacent NPA core path diversion is being used by residents.

Luss – Glebe core path

The NPA recently corresponded with Luss Estates Company (LEC) over the removal of the core path bridge and reduction in recreational access around Luss and the Glebe area. LEC indicated they have no immediate plans to replace the bridge, and if citizens wanted to visit the Glebe e.g. to visit relatives' memorials, this was possible via a route through the Camstradden grounds. The NPA is also investigating an alternative access route via Luss games field.

East Loch Lomond and the Trossachs

Upholding Access Rights:

Borland Hill path, Gartmore

Following further unsuccessful attempts to engage with the landowner, the NPA gave notice of its intent to enter his land on 22 January 2026 to carry out a schedule of works to replace padlocked and obstructed gates at two locations on the core path. Despite last minute requests by the landowner to delay, the work was carried out over a number of days and the gates shown below have been installed.

In August 2025, when the NPA installed a new gate at the Corrie Farm end of the core path (see September 2025 LAF update), the landowner tied up gates on a further three gateways that had, on all previous site visits, been open. These gates are not in a workable condition and are tied with twine at either end. They would fall to the ground if opened and are not safe to climb over, thus access along the core path is still obstructed. A photo of one of the tied gates is shown below. With this in mind, The Authority has written to the landowner again asking for a meeting with him to find a solution that not only allows the public to use the route unhindered, but also addresses his land management needs. In order to ensure the core path is useable by the public there will need to be either open gateways, or operable, unlocked gates.



New handgate installed on the route in January 2026.



New 2-part gate installed January 2026.



One of the remaining tied-up gates.

Ardchullarie, Loch Lubnaig

The team gave the landowner's agent a deadline of 30 April to install a new access gate. If not done by this date the case would be escalated to the NPA's Legal Team for enforcement action. A reminder email was sent on 27 April and a site visit took place on 4 May and the new gate was still not installed and the existing gate still padlocked. This has now been passed to the Legal Team.

Trial diversion, Glen Buckie

We have been working with the small working group of 4-5 Forum members to carry out the review of the diversion route at Ballimore, Glen Buckie. We had hoped to conduct a site visit and meeting with the landowner in April but that was not possible. A site visit was planned for Friday 15 May, however the landowner contacted the team by phone on Friday 8th May to indicate that, if the NPA could provide two deer fence-height hand gates, he would undertake to install them alongside the main locked gates.

Tigh nan Craobh

In March we received a complaint from an Aberfoyle resident that a homeowner had blocked part of an established path in woodland behind Aberfoyle Primary School by erecting a fence demarcating the property boundary. The property was previously called the Craigmore Centre and owned by local authorities (Perth and then Stirling Council) and had been used as a bunkhouse, residential and day care centre until it was sold in 2011. It became a private residence in 2015 and renamed Tigh nan Craobh.

The path is informal and not a core path but is well used by walkers and (to a lesser extent) mountain bikers and has been in existence for a considerable time. It runs right up to and alongside the rear of the property and the recently installed fence has obstructed part of this. There is a stream and wet ground immediately adjacent to the path which means it is now much more difficult for the public to continue onwards and that the options for re-routing the path are limited. We are in discussions with the property owner and will report back at a later date.

Access Infrastructure Projects:

NCN7 Barrier Reduction Project

MacLaren Plant Hire were appointed for the work to replace the bridge and cycle grids on NCN7. Work started on 16 March 2026 and was due to be complete by 31 March. Unfortunately, several delays on component supplies, last minute changes to fixing types and additional excavation work meant work continued to 10 April. It is now complete and was fully funded by the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (formerly Sustrans) from their Barrier Reduction Fund.





West Highland Way Improvements: Burn of Mar to Conic Hill East

All of the Phase 1 work contracted for January through to the end of March 2026 (i.e. stone and aggregate flown up to site, excavation of 1.7km of side ditches and path re-profiling and re-surfacing on the highest 230m) was completed on time. The contract will continue into 2026-27 with Phase 2 being the completion of the re-profiling of the washed-out section and the replacement of timber steps at the Burn of Mar with a longer section of stone-pitching.





West Highland Way improvements: Rowardennan to Rowchoish (Low Path)

As previously reported, FLS have provided the NPA with a £150k contribution to fund the planning and delivery of path improvements on the West Highland Way 'Low Path'. This is between Rowardennan and Rowchoish Bothy and is being done ahead of the 'High Path' route being closed for a substantial period of time to accommodate felling and transport of timber from the lower Ptarmigan slopes. Planning approval including Habitat Regulation Appraisal was received mid-Jan 2026.

The contractor is Arran Footpaths and Forestry (AFF), a small but well-established business based on Arran. The Access Team has worked with AFF to refine and finalise their design proposals and work commenced on 30 March and is programmed to be completed by early June. The work includes replacing a worn-out section of boardwalk and installing an additional new section; repairing and upgrading steps and carrying out surfacing and drainage works, all in strict compliance with habitat requirements. The remote nature of the site means that materials and workers are being transported across the Loch by boat, with stone aggregate and timber then being carried by hand to where it is needed along the path – a laborious and gruelling process for the contractor’s team. They are making good progress, however, and should be finished on time.

Loch Earn Railway Path

The NPA contributed £99K of capital funding to St Fillans Community Trust to enable construction of two sections of the route to take place this financial year. The total cost of this section was £287K and the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (WWCT, previously Sustrans) funded the remainder of this. The WWCT secured funding of £494,000 overall for the project so additional works on three other sections were programmed in. The final 2025-26 budget including TP&E contract management costs was £593,000. All works were completed by 31 March 2026.





Aber Path

The Friends of Loch Lomond (FoLL) has submitted a planning application to construct two new aggregate surfaced sections of the Aber Path (right of way) where it runs through two fields, one of which is very wet and the other seasonally wet. We are supportive of the path improvements in principle but have raised concerns with Planning colleagues about the adequacy of the proposed drainage and the use of recycled road planings as choice of surface.

Glenoglehead car park

Protracted negotiations have been ongoing between the NPA's Legal Team and agents of the private forestry company seeking to extract timber via the NPA car park at Glenoglehead, which is also on the route of the NCN7/The Rob Roy Way. The specification and alignment of the new cycle path (linking the new visitor car park with NCN7/The Rob Roy Way), has now been agreed and encapsulated in the NPA/Forest Partnership contract.

West Highland Way Infrastructure Audit

The Recreation and Access Team have been working over the past few months to audit all built infrastructure (bridges, gates, etc.) on the West Highland Way between Inversnaid and Derrydarroch. There are many original footbridges along this section, largely installed when the West Highland Way was first defined / constructed around 1980. We now have a complete and up to date record of all infrastructure and general condition surveys to inform strategic upgrades and bridge replacements. This work also supports the new West Highland Way Trust with projects that they can fundraise against.

Unfortunately, the Ardleish bridge has been closed due to overriding structural issues – a short, localised diversion is waymarked and the bridge will be replaced with core NPA funds in Autumn 2026.

The NPA Estates team also recently did a great job of repairing decking and handrails on the Falls of Falloch and Pollochro bridges – this essential work will ensure the bridges are safe to use for the 2026 summer season, after which replacement and permanent upgrades will take place.



Falls of Falloch - Handrail bracing



Decking upgrade

The John Muir Way

The national trail is now being managed and publicised by the John Muir Trust. An infrastructure working group met recently to discuss route conditions, waymarking, and critical infrastructure. The Trust is in the process of locating the archive of route information from NatureScot and the Green Action Trust, also recently advertising a whole-route contract to audit waymarking and infrastructure / path conditions.

Recreation & Access Team, May 2026