

Forestry Commission Scotland and Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park
Authority: Liaison Meeting – 22nd September 2014

Present:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

LLTNPA
Gordon Watson

Apologies:
Fiona Logan

The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss the LL&TNP 'Our Park' project. Gordon Watson introduced the topic describing its key objectives of extending the camping bylaws under the National Parks Act, the provision of proper facilities and the further improvement of public awareness of what is responsible behaviour.

The LL&T Park Board wishes to take the example of the success achieved at East Loch Lomond and extend the arrangements that are already in place there across more of the park.

The Park Authority have undertaken surveys and an analysis of the issues and identified the new areas where they wish to have bylaws applied.

The Park is now undertaking a series of meetings designed to meet with all of the key stakeholders prior to the launch of a consultation exercise. The launch will not take place until October following sign off from the Park Board.

The main areas on the National Forest Estate (NFE) that LL&TNP see possible developments are Loch Ard and the Trossachs (including the forest drive) – any of the NFE in Argyll Forest Park has been left out at this time.

The target is to have the arrangements for each site in place by March 2016.

The project and its objective to extend bylaws on a comprehensive basis across the agreed area of the Park, rather than on a smaller scale with repeated applications, has the support of [REDACTED] and the Minister.

In discussion following the presentation the following points were made:-

FCS recognised the issues and were also keen to secure solutions which covered all situations as the current understanding of the meaning of wild camping was poor and that car boot camping and motorhome issues were growing across all of Scotland - including on the NFE and within FCS facilities.

A discussion was had about why just the Park and why LL&TNP were not looking to press for an amendment to the Land Reform Act whilst it was under review. Gordon Watson indicated that this was recognised and probably would be better but there was not time and the Land

Reform Legislation Review Group did not cover access matters. It was agreed that there was a process to review the access aspects but National Access Forum support would be needed. FCS agreed that they would continue to seek support for this with that group.

The fact that Argyll Forest Park was not included was identified as a problem with sites such as Ardentinny and Loch Eck displaying some problems now. Concern was expressed about displacement which was already, to some degree, happening with some signs emerging due to the existing bylaws. The Park has held some discussions with Argyll and Bute and Perth and Kinross Councils but this did not result in any required change to the proposals.

Gordon Watson had some outline plans for how a standard camping site might be established and managed with a third or private sector solution being favoured. All were aware of the possibility of limited viability for private sector buy in and scale was seen as essential to any sort of success.

Discussion around resources to provide camping facilities recognised the need for funding to achieve this and all parties noted that FCS did not have funds for this and would struggle to contribute in the absence of further resources being provided from Scottish Government. This was accepted and we agreed that the initiative provided a good basis for a Park-led bid to Ministers for implementation funding.

As the meeting closed it was agreed that FCS would wish to support the Park through their consultation. It was understood that the project could not be implemented in the absence of proper resources to fund camping facilities and staff to manage and engage with users. FCS confirmed they would raise concerns via NAF regarding the need for wider review of car boot camping and antisocial behaviour and instigation of new measures to deal with it. A possible suggestion for this could be a blanket ban on camping within 400m of a public road or recognised formal recreation facility car park. It was agreed that without this wider consideration, FCS may need to look at what could be achieved through the FC bylaws.

FES

3 October 2014