

Visitor Management

SEASON REVIEW 2024

THE TROSSACHS EXPLORER



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1. Executive Summary and Key Insights

In comparison to previous years 2024 has seen wetter summer months and has lacked any notable periods of prolonged dry hot weather. This resulted in an approximate **10% reduction in day visitors** when looking at average visitor numbers at National Park Authority run facilities.

Key Insights gathered across the season:

- Lack of prolonged periods of predictable dry weather has a significant impact of day visitor volumes
- The popularity of camping opportunities remains high
- The popularity of upland recreation opportunities remains high
- Targeted trained staff on the ground continue to influence behaviours, be that of NPA, public partners or local businesses
- Local Authority enforcement of responsible parking behaviour continues to play a key part in destination management
- Loch Lomond offers an ideal location for large scale water safety events and education campaigns
- Public and media interest in sustainable transport pilots and future options is high

The National Park Authority was able to resource the deployment of visitor management staff at similar levels to previous years. However, the Better Places Fund did not operate in 2024, reducing the overall number of field staff available to help manage visitor pressures deployed by agencies, such as Forestry and Land Scotland along with charities and community groups. Some of these gaps were filled by the private sector, for example wardens working around Luss and Arrochar were funded by the Luss Estates Company.



Building from the previous years, across 2024 the National Park Authority and partners have maintained a visitor management delivery model which prioritises:

- Strong national and local partnerships and continued engagement with communities of place
- Staff on the ground providing in person engagement and addressing issues before they escalate
- A continued programme of investment in high quality visitor facilities
- An improving public transport network to reduce the need for car use to and around the park

Our commitment to the sustainable management of visitor pressures and our other priorities can be found in our [National Park Partnership Plan 24-29](#).

Whilst numbers of camping permits bookings and boat launches from the Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway were down from 2023, they were up from the numbers seen in 2019 prior to the pandemic. Considering the poor weather the consensus is that the **overall trend remains that of a steady increase in visitors enjoying outdoor recreation opportunities over the last 10 years.**



On the few warm sunny weekends during the summer, visitor numbers spiked resulting in irresponsible parking behaviour in hotspot locations. The ongoing work to automate live car parking capacity status across the Park through an **online [interactive map](#) was piloted** and replaced the previous manual updates provided by staff and volunteers that were shared via social media.

The Water Safety Scotland partnership approach to promoting water safety in the National Park continued and has become embedded in the yearly Joint Response Visitor Management Plan.

The 2024 World Drowning Prevention Day event co-ordinated by the WSS partnership was hosted at Loch Lomond Shores and was well supported by all key partners, local and national politicians as well as the wider public. It was attended by over **3,600 people**, a significant increase on previous events at Falkirk that saw just over 1,500 people in attendance.



Ranger Service engagement continues to have a positive effect in compliance with both suites of byelaws positively influencing behaviour. Of the **895 sets of details taken for byelaw offences** only **twelve cases** were reported to the Procurator Fiscal. 500 individuals spoken to received formal notification letters and it is encouraging that **repeat offending after a letter remains below 1%**, indicating behaviour shifts. It is worth noting that **Loch Lomond boat patrols this year were down 39%** on 2023 in response to the poorer weather, the resource being managed in an agile manner to deliver wider benefits.

Camping byelaw contraventions continue to follow similar patterns as recent years. The most common offence reported being 'setting up and occupying a tent without authorisation' followed by fire byelaw contraventions around collecting deadwood and having a damaging fire. Reports for breaches of the EPA33 (fly tipping) also feature.

The **revised Loch Lomond Byelaws came into force on the 1st of November** and a project team has been working through the year to ensure that there is an increased awareness of the key changes to the byelaws, installing new buoyage for the low-speed activity areas, developing an online registration system and a new database that will help with efficiencies in managing the byelaws.

Other points of difference worth highlighting up front are the significant infrastructure **improvements at Tarbet and Luss Pier**, improving visitor experience, safety and site accessibility which will be in place for the 2025 season alongside the **Conic Hill path upgrade**. Projects of this scale and impact will support long term strategic visitor management and will also support wider parallel work to reduce car dependency and pressures across the area.

The Trossachs Explorer shuttle bus pilot this summer provided an option for over 5000 passengers to get to some of the National Park's most popular attractions such as Loch Katrine using public transport for the first time since 2009. Alongside the **Stirling Council C60 bus pilot** linking Callander and Killin it is encouraging to see public support for this work which dovetails well with wider visitor management and tourism work.

Looking forward to 2025, efficient and strategic partnership working will remain critical to ensure that visitor facilities are available where needed and field staff are available to engage with visitors.



2. Introduction and context

Our new [National Park Partnership Plan 2024-29](#) recommits to sustainable visitor management with the goal of:

‘transforming the National Park into a more sustainable, low carbon visitor destination, where people from all backgrounds have a high-quality experience and feel connected to nature.

Communities would see fewer negative impacts from tourism on their daily lives, while tourism and hospitality businesses thrive, and nature recovers more rapidly in less visited areas.’

When asked about the 2024 visitor season most people comment instantly on the weather and the fact that in Scotland and certainly the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, it was a wet summer. This is borne out in the data from the Met Office¹ with some areas of western Scotland recording double the average August rainfall. This wet weather undoubtedly had an impact on visitor pressures with day visitors especially often needing to change their plans at the last minute.

¹ [seasonal-assessment---summer24.pdf](#)

It would however be wrong to think that it was not a busy season. Although numbers of campers using permit areas, visitors to the Balmaha Visitor Centre and boat launches at the Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway were down by an approximate average of 10%, there was still a substantial number of people coming to enjoy the National Park with drier weekends seeing typically high volumes of visitors which led to parking issues at key hotspot locations. Anecdotal evidence from businesses suggests that there was a healthy number of international visitors and pre-booked activities, similar to 2023.

Several visitor management measures put into place over the last four years have matured and become more efficient, these include:

- The National Visitor Management Strategy Group led by Visit Scotland which can oversee and amplify the effective visitor management going on across the country and discuss the value directly with Scottish Government Ministers.
- The National Park Visitor Management Group (made up of the National Park Authority, Argyll and Bute Council, Perth and Kinross Council, Stirling Council, West Dunbartonshire Council, Police Scotland, Forestry and Land Scotland) working to mitigate against visitor management pressures during the season and work on longer term solutions such as infrastructure improvements.
- Local Visitor Management Groups that give opportunities for communities in the busiest areas of the National Park to discuss issues and opportunities for change.
- Police Scotland-led partnerships such as Operation Ballaton and Operation Elms which bring partners together to share intelligence related to safety and antisocial behaviour. This allows the deployment of Police and partner resources to be focused where they are needed to address these issues.
- The ability of the National Park Authority to recruit seasonal Rangers on multi-year contracts has increased the number of experienced field staff to interact with visitors and communities.
- Infrastructure investments such as the Luss Pier upgrade have helped to manage negative behaviours and to improve the experience of visitors and communities.
- An investment in the National Park Authority marine fleet to increase the reliability and resilience around Ranger patrols on Loch Lomond.
- Investment in Loch Lomond infrastructure by way of new navigation marks and buoys to ensure safe and responsible access.
- The Water Safety Scotland partnership's commitment to promoting water safety has kept awareness high and, thankfully 2024 was another year without drowning incidents on Loch Lomond.
- The rebuilding of the National Park Volunteer Ranger Service to 84, aiming towards pre-Covid numbers (102).



There were financial challenges for 2024 which led to some reduction in non-National Park Authority field staff numbers and no public investment in some of the successful management initiatives, such as the A82 Bonnie Banks scheme on the A82 and the toilets at Duck Bay and Arrochar. The private sector and the third sector were able to address some of these gaps.

The infrastructure enhancements delivered through the Place Programme by the Park Authority and partners continues and disruption during construction phases at Tarbet and Conic Hill have been minimised and mitigated as much as possible to protect visitor opportunities and experience. These significant enhancements will be in place for the 2025 and partnership teams are planning for possible future improvements with new masterplans in development for Rowardennan and the Pier area in Balloch.





3. Information and Engagement

The National Park Authority communications focus during the visitor management season continued to support safe and responsible enjoyment for individuals, groups, and communities of the National Park.

We communicated primarily using:

- Our Ranger Service
- Our Front of House team
- Our Visitor Centre at Balmaha and the Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway
- Our website and social media posts
- Campaigns and videos
- Signage
- Radio, television and print media
- Various stakeholder groups

We continued to work with our partners to share key messaging throughout the season. Regular multi-agency meetings with Police Scotland, Forestry and Land Scotland, Transport Scotland and Local Authorities and ensured that the topics were explored supported and shared on relevant social media platforms and websites.

Our core visitor management topics followed from last season's pressures, and we continued to prioritise visitor safety with a strong focus on water safety, litter, camping, and fires whilst highlighting key topics relating to climate and nature and promoting sustainable travel opportunities with the Trossachs Explorer.

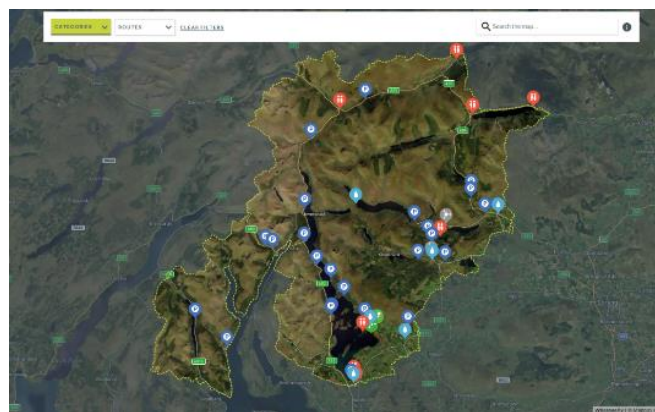
3.1 Providing Practical Information

Providing accurate and up to date information to visitors to allow them to make informed decisions before they come to the National Park remains a key part of our service, delivered mostly by the Ranger Service and front desk staff.

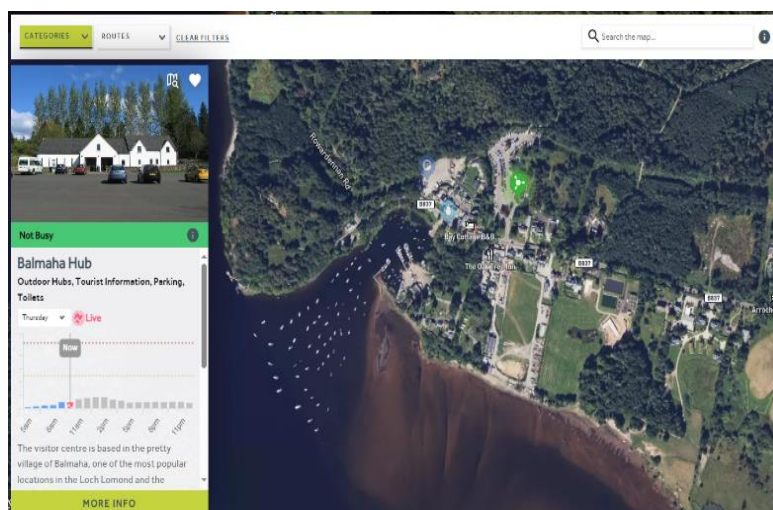
The National Park website continues to provide an online hub where visitors can source practical information such as finding facilities, car parks, and toilets alongside advice on water safety and responsible camping and fires. These visitor-focused webpages continue to be the most used area of the National Park Authority website with an estimated 7% increase in website views (March-Sept) up to 1.6 million.

In addition to maintaining our visitor facilities web pages, we have taken part in a [CivTech Scotland](#) project. Working with Stirling and Perth & Kinross local authorities, alongside consultants to develop tools that support our visitor management programme the project focused on how we best use data to inform decision making.

As part of this work, we have now introduced an [interactive map](#) to help visitors plan their visit to the National Park. Facilities shown include places to park, toilets, water fill ups and Electric Vehicle charging points. For some facilities, the map displays real-time information to show how busy it is and how busy it is likely to be. The map also includes places of interest such as walking and cycling routes, popular hills, places to camp and where to likely to spot wildlife such as red squirrels.



This Explore Outdoors map is a pilot and was made available in September. We intend to continue its use in the 2025 season to monitor data, gather feedback and make improvements, adding more live information and new categories to meet the specific needs of all those who visit and enjoy the National Park.



Promotion and marketing of the Trossachs Explorer shuttle bus pilot was a cornerstone of the messaging within the season and was picked up successfully by both local and national press, including The Herald, STV, BBC, Daily Record, Helensburgh Advertiser, Lochside Press, and Greenock Press. All of the promotional work involved helped to increase and inform a wider audience.



Other engagement for the Trossachs Explorer involved social media campaigns that included 57 posts which were a mixture of videos and images across all the National Park Authority social media channels. This reached over 260,000 people with an average engagement rate of 6% which is considered effective by the industry. Collaboration work with influencers such as [Less Waste Laura](#) and [Simply Emma](#) helped widen the reach of The Trossachs Explorer and drive further engagement of the service.



These useful engagements have been shared with our project partner, University of Strathclyde, who are collecting journey and user related data to provide accurate analysis in a report that will be used for future development of these types of services in the Park.

The National Park Journey Planner pilot was extended to coincide with the Trossachs Explorer pilot. Since launching in May 2022, the journey planner has been used by 16,395 people planning their journeys to and within the National Park. In 2024 the [Journey Planner web page](#) saw over 6000 page views.

Where possible we also help to promote the messages of partner organisations. One of the examples this year has been Stirling Council re-introducing a C60 Bus service as part of a 2-year pilot, reinstating a vital public transport link between Callander and Killin via Kilmahog, Strathyre and Lochearnhead.

3.2 Inspiring Responsible Behaviour

We want to make sure that people understand how to behave responsibly in the National Park and to feel good about being a positive example to others.

Our 22 social media posts which shared key information and behaviour change messaging for the 2024 visitor management season had over 225,000 impressions. These posts consisted of “leave no trace” litter posts, blue-green algae in several lochs in the Park and safety messaging on water safety, ticks, and a wildfire warning post.



As part of our water safety campaign, we used video footage demonstrating the correct way to wear a [Personal Flotation Device](#). The video explains the difference between a life jacket and buoyancy aids and why having a PFD fitted correctly can help anyone stay afloat and additionally help within a rescue situation.



Litter remains a big issue within the National Park and nationally. We use social media to promote responsible ways of accessing nature by trying to normalise the rule of leaving no trace. This also includes highlighting the efforts of people involved in organised litter picks which this year includes initiatives such as the [TakItHame litter pick](#) led by Mountaineering Scotland at Ben Lomond and the Great British Beach Clean run in Arrochar by the Marine Conservation Society which removed 180kg of marine litter from a 100m stretch of beach.

3.3 Showing Our Working

Alongside encouraging visitors to respect and protect the Park, it is important to demonstrate the work that we and our partners deliver to manage visitors and the impacts on the environment and people who live and work in the park.

We continue to highlight the key role our volunteers play in assisting all the work that the National Park Authority undertakes. Dedicating over 3500 hours to visitor engagement.

The Ranger Service has maintained their commitment to water safety events, laying on 8 events with partners including Water Safety Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Police Scotland, that were attended by 1300 people. These events demonstrated the use of water safety equipment and provided information on dangers such as sudden drops in the lochs within the National Park and how to enjoy them safely. The Ranger Service also supported the Water Safety Scotland [2024 World Drowning Prevention Day](#) held at Loch Lomond Shores which was attended by over 3,600 people.

Additionally, Rangers engaged school children directly as part of the experiential learning programme that has been delivered annually since 1998. This year saw attendance by 900 pupils from West Dunbartonshire and 250 from Argyll & Bute. A separate open water swimming taster event attended by 250 pupils from various schools in West Dunbartonshire was led by WDC and Scottish Swimming and supported by LLTNPA, Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

The amended Loch Lomond Byelaws came into force on the 1st of November and we have been communicating key changes through our [website](#) as well as through posters and leaflets. This communication will continue with stakeholders and loch users throughout the rest of the year before a more detailed campaign is undertaken before the start of the 2025 season.



3.4 Stakeholder Engagement

Our stakeholder bulletins were issued three times this season to more than 1495 stakeholder contacts that include community bodies, destination groups, businesses, land managers, recreation and access partners, Local Authorities and MSPs. These bulletins generated 1170 engagements showing continued interest in the content and the work.

In addition, specific updates were sent to National Park stakeholder mailing lists for communities of place and interest. For example, information on the new Loch Lomond Byelaws in advance of their implementation on the 1st of November, the continued construction of The Conic Hill path and the improvements to the infrastructure and facilities at [Tarbet, Loch Lomond](#).

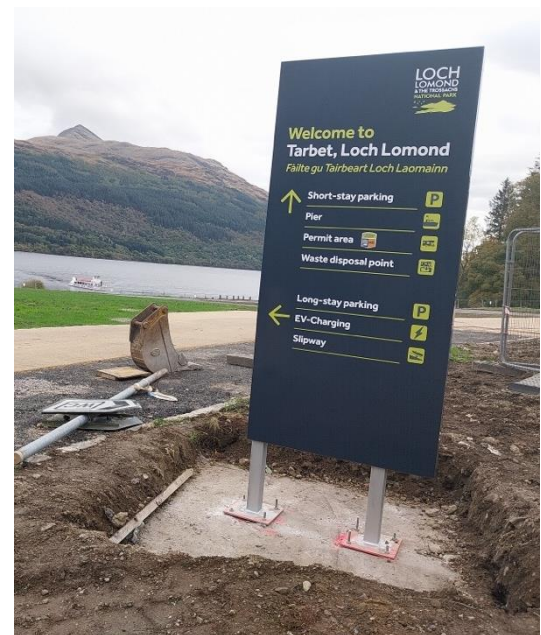
A pre-season [Stakeholder briefing](#) was held ahead of the 2024 season as part of our partnership workings, helping to outline the National Park Authority's goals and priorities for the season. The '[Visitor Management Updates](#)' webpage is still active with information from previous years displayed there.

We have maintained our place-based Visitor Management Groups:

- West Loch Lomond
- East Loch Lomond
- Strathard and The Trossachs
- Callander and the Surrounding Area

Furthermore, in April 2024 we formalised a fifth group, the Loch Lomond Stakeholder Group as part of the legacy of the recent Loch Lomond Byelaws review to ensure that we work together with the businesses, landowners, government organisations and recreation user groups to improve safety or loch users and minimise the impacts of visitor pressures on surrounding communities and the environment.

These groups now meet at least twice a year, once post-season to review and share lessons learned and prepare for the coming year and one pre-season to ensure that everyone understands what mitigation measures have been put in place to manage visitor pressures, usually from Easter to the end of September. These groups are also an important link to influence our Place Programme and Sustainable Transport Programme.





In 2024 a particular focus of stakeholder engagement has been associated with the [Trossachs Explorer Shuttle Bus](#).

The project team worked with local communities and businesses on the Trossachs Explorer service. This included face to face discussions with landowners where the bus would be stopping. Additionally, there was email correspondence with stakeholders, and then provision of leaflets and posters to advertise the services along the route. Further efforts were made to place these posters and leaflets in large hubs such as Stirling as well as locally in Aberfoyle and Callander.





4. Infrastructure and services

4.1 Staffing and Volunteers

Rangers

The National Park Authority recruited 46 Seasonal Rangers in 2024 (up from 44 in 2023) to support our 13 permanent Ranger staff during the visitor season. This allowed for a more resilient staff resource that has made such a positive difference in recent years.

The Ranger Service:

- Worked across five patrol areas, campsites, boat patrols and visitor centres
- Conducted 1126 land patrols between 1st April - 30th September
- Carried out 938 patrols in Camping Management Zones (up by 3% on 2023)
- Conducted 188 Loch Lomond boat patrols (down 39% on 2023)

Patrols	2024	2023
ELL	156	149
WLL	182	180
Trossachs	183	172
Breadalbane	182	169
Strathard	52	55
3LFD	183	183
Boat	188	284
Total	1126	1192

Of the Seasonal Rangers employed in 2024, 21 of them are classified as 'Permanent Seasonal Rangers'. The returning Permanent Seasonal Rangers are provided with greater job security, which helps to build expertise within the team as well as reducing the time associated with recruitment each year.

Building on last year's trial, two mid-weekdays were allocated to Rangers carrying out climate and nature related tasks including:

- Path inspection on critical routes such as the West Highland Way
- The removal of invasive non-native species such as Himalayan Balsam
- Educational outreach work
- Wildlife surveys

The Ranger Service engage with our practical conservation volunteers as well as outreach groups and corporate volunteers to maximise the effort supporting this important work. This season, Rangers supported around 75 volunteer opportunities, engaging 225 volunteers, contributing an approximate, additional 1655 hours to practical conservation tasks.



As with 2023, this reduction in patrols on non-peak days in favour of focusing on Future Nature outcomes hasn't impacted the management of visitors and has added value to the service that the Rangers are able to provide.

This year saw a reduction in visitor management related complaints to 31 compared to 42 in 2023. The sustained Ranger resource continues to provide effective levels of engagement to ensure visitor experience and visitor management expectations are met.

From Friday through to Mondays a Seasonal Support Assistant was employed to support camping bookings, providing customer care and managing booking enquiries and feedback issues.

Estates Team

An important role in managing the visitor season is played by the NPA Estates Team by maintaining the greenspace and outdoor furniture on NPA managed sites to a high standard and undertake repairs and upgrades to infrastructure as required. The team also ensures that NPA managed buildings and vehicle fleet are maintained effectively.

The National Park Authority has retained one of the Environment Officers (EOs) that were introduced after COVID as a permanent member of staff. Additionally, two seasonal EOs were recruited for the 2024 season. These roles are an important part of our commitment to a summer 7-day service allowing for both planned and reactive waste management across the National Park and provide greater flexibility for the team during the visitor season when dealing with litter and flytipping within the Park.

Volunteers

In 2024 the National Park Volunteer service trialed a 20-30% reduction in promoted opportunities, to focus on quality rather than quantity. As part of this trial, the Volunteer service offered increased flexibility to the volunteers and the option to change days and dates to suit them better. There has been more of a focus on better and more frequent communication and showing the volunteers the positive difference they were making by updating them on project milestones and progress.



Overall, the volunteer season spanning April 2023 to March 2024 saw 8200 volunteer hours total and in only 6 months of the season from April 2024 there have been over 7000 hours.



This season saw an increase to 84 Volunteer Rangers (VRs) available to support staff, up from 77 in 2023. The Education, Inclusion, and Volunteer team is actively recruiting more VRs and this will continue to grow year on year. The gap is beginning to close to the pre-COVID figure of 102 VRs.

Collectively VRs have contributed 4541 volunteer hours across the season, seeing a 21% increase compared to 3431 in 2023. Of these, 3560 hours were dedicated to visitor engagement. The VRs engaged in a mixture of activities; a significant proportion of this time was spent on visitor engagement at busy hot spot areas and attending events such as the water safety partner events and open water Go Swim at Loch Lomond. VRs also assisted in conservation events such as seed picking and planting, Himalayan balsam removal, and path maintenance. They also supporting school groups and under-represented groups that visit the National Park.

Partners

Better Places Funding from Scottish Government previously awarded by NatureScot was not available in 2024 and this change resulted in a reduction in wardens and Rangers who were previously employed by community groups, charities such as RSPB and organisations such as Forestry and Land Scotland.

The Luss Estates Company was able to fund two wardens, one for Luss and one for Arrochar/Tarbet working with the local Development Trust. These wardens managed the temporary toilets and litter as well as engaging with visitors.

4.2. Litter

This year the amount of litter being collected by our Ranger Service within the visitor season is similar to last year with 580 in bags collected in 2024 compared to 569 bags in 2023 (an increase of 2%).

Although the Environment Officers recorded a slight increase (3%) in litter picked and collected, there was a 3% decrease in litter that people had bagged and a 17% decrease in flytipping compared to 2023.

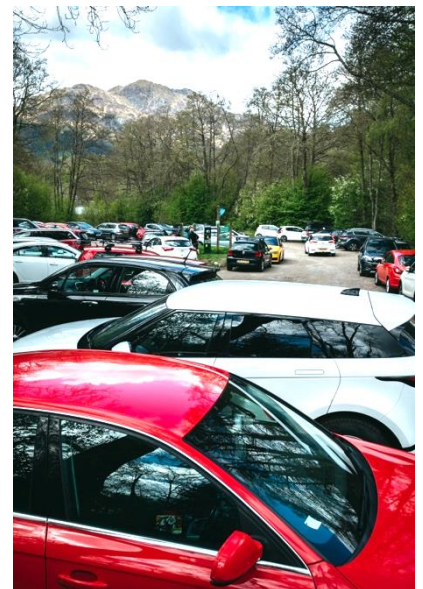
The volunteers play a vital role in assisting in litter management within the National Park. Although litter picking opportunities available have reduced in recent years, they too have seen a similar amount removed as last year with 197 bags in 2024 compared to 199 in 2023.

An investment in waste infrastructure through the installation of automated fire extinguishers within the large 1100 litre bins managed by the National Park Authority has been successful in reducing the risks and severity of bin fires which can be dangerous, damaging for health and the environment and expensive to clear up and replace the equipment.

4.3 Parking and traffic management

A high percentage of visitors travel to, from and around the National Park using personal vehicles. In general, as with the 2023 season, congestion and irresponsible parking has reduced in frequency from previous years, although on hot and sunny days hotspots continue to experience issues. Due to the continued wet weather that dominated the summer this issue was exacerbated on the few dry, sunny weekends as visitors took advantage of the better weather. This unfortunately saw the first, albeit short, road closure of the B837 on the east side of Loch Lomond since 2022.

Stirling Council issued 601 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) within the National Park between 1st March and 31st October 2024. The area included Balmaha Car Park, Balmaha and Ben A'an clearways. This was a slight decline compared to previous years.



There have been no material changes or new restrictions introduced by Stirling Council during this period when compared to last year.

Stirling Council continue to employ Enforcement Officers who work across the Council area undertaking a range of activities including enforcement of decriminalised parking restrictions. The team has developed intelligence-based deployment plans across the full year, however they pay particular attention to hotspot areas in Balmaha and at Ben A'an throughout the summer visitor period and work closely with partners in the National Park and Police Scotland.

Argyll and Bute Council had six parking wardens again this year, covering decriminalised parking for the whole of Argyll and Bute. The council aimed to prioritise the National Park, when possible, specifically covering Luss, sections of the A82, and Arrochar, particularly the Glen Loin car park. They have issued 1614 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) in Luss between March and September 2024 and 397 in Arrochar a 143% increase and 18% increase from 2023 respectfully. The increases are due to the increased staff presence and the newly introduced Traffic Regulation Order in Luss Village. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the Traffic Regulation Order has improved the vehicle related pressures in the village, but some additional infrastructure (e.g. speed bumps or width restrictions) is required to maximise its effectiveness.

Transport Scotland introduced a pilot scheme of average speed cameras on the A82 to help improve safety this year. Data from this pilot is still being compiled at the time of writing but anecdotal evidence from local community members and businesses suggest that the cameras are having a positive impact on driver behaviour.



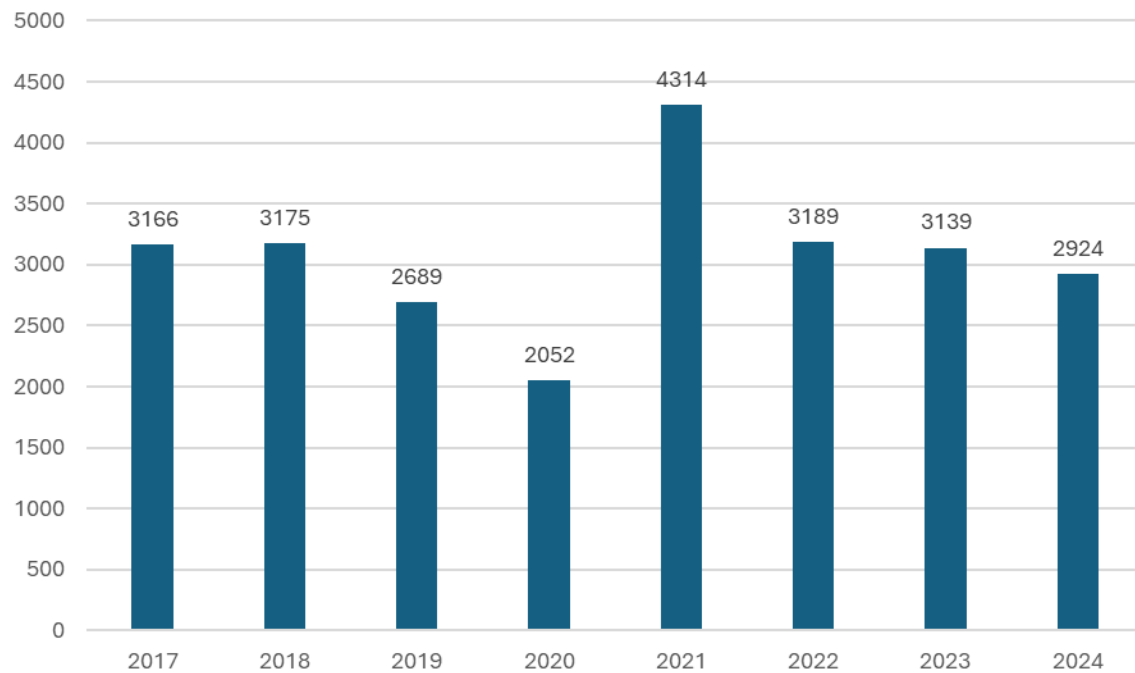
The increase in motorhomes and campervans continues to increase and as part of work of the National Visitor Management Strategy Visit Scotland undertook a [survey](#) that explores the motivations, behaviours and facility needs of motorhome and campervan users to gain a better understanding of this growing visitor market. This will help to inform future actions in the National Park where there is still a lack of waste disposal services and a cohesive network of safe

overnight parking spaces despite the work of the Authorities and Forestry and Land Scotland over the last few years. Ranger Service reports and East Loch Lomond Visitor Management Group feedback indicate one area that particularly suffered due to poor behaviour by some motorhome and campervans users was Milarrochy Bay on the east side of Loch Lomond, where there has been impacts on other day visitors and some irresponsible disposal of waste into the public toilets.

4.4 Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway

The unpredictable wet and cool weather of the 2024 season impacted the amount of recreational activity on Loch Lomond with a slight decrease in registrations and launches at the Slipway this season.

Total registrations, new registrations and re-registrations (March to September)



Compared to the same period in 2023, the 2024 visitor season reveals:

- A 7% drop in all boat user registrations
- A 18% drop in new registrations of craft
- A 29% drop in people re-registering craft
- A 11% drop in launches from the Slipway

This graph suggests that longer term there is a relatively stable number of users of powered vessels on Loch Lomond. A study in 2023 showed an increasing trend in non-powered users such as paddle boarders and swimmers on Loch Lomond, anecdotally this trend is believed to have continued across 2024.



4.5 Camping

Camping remains very popular in the National Park at private managed sites as well as permit areas and campsites. National Park Authority managed campsites opened on the 29th of March to coincide with the Easter holidays.



The wet weather had further impact on bookable days available on both the permit areas and campsite during April and August into September due to temporary closures because of high-water levels. Our largest permit area at Loch Earn was at times reduced to 50% capacity along with Loch Achray Campsite.

As part of the National Park Partnership Plan objective to decarbonise our facilities, solar panels were introduced to our off-grid campsites to reduce generator use and to provide charging for electric vehicles.

We have seen a 13% decrease in bookings at Loch Chon Campsite from 2023, This is due to a significant reduction in the number of pitches available for part of the season. The closures were to facilitate ongoing Mission Zero investment seeing the installation of PV panels and EV charging. Loch Achray saw a 2% increase in bookings at Loch Achray from 2023.



Camping Byelaws were in effect from the 1st of March – 30th of September. This season saw overall a 10% decrease in camping permits purchased from 2023, which can be attributed to the weather either putting people off or resulting in necessary closures.

Camping data for 2024 shows:

- Total of 14,400 camping permit bookings
- This 10% drop correlates with the number of nights used this year at 14,883 compared to 16,695 in 2023.
- 36,048 adults and 5,201 children booked into permit areas.
- Tarbet Isle permit area was reduced in capacity this season due to strong winds and fallen trees and 140 nights lost due to essential tree works carried out by Forestry and Land Scotland to comply with statutory plant health notice to remove *Phytophthora ramorum* affected larch. The parking area was added to the Stay the Night motorhome scheme in May and by the end of September had seen 140 bookings.
- 15 of 16 permit sites at 3 Lochs Forest Drive were delayed in opening due to Forestry and Land Scotland carrying out essential tree felling and civil engineering work. They were open by the end of March.
- The bookable nights lost to weather issues within the first two months amounted to 342 across the permit scheme.
- Inchcailloch campsite matched 2023 bookings with a 26% decrease from 2019



The number of campers providing feedback to our customer survey - sent to campers who stayed in National Park campsites or in permit areas - was up 3% this year from 2503 responses in 2023 to 2570 in 2024.

Key insights from this year show that satisfaction rates remain high with 91% of respondents being likely or quite likely to recommend one of our camping permit areas (compared to 92% in 2023 and 89% in 2022).

It was a similar picture for our campsites with 96% of Loch Chon Campsite survey respondents being likely or quite likely to recommend the experience (99% in 2023) and 94% for Loch Achray Campsite (99% in 2023).

Some examples of constructive feedback included:

- *“Easier access to booking and permit areas being more precise on the internet.”*
- *“No improvement needed, other than I don't recall being sent a confirmation email with the name of the parking spot I had booked into.”*
- *“Maybe number the bays as slight confusion as to which motorhome bay was who's. Otherwise, amazing”*
- *“Better images of the sites.”*

4.6 The Place Programme

Our commitment to improving places within the National Park continues this year, as we aim to deliver greater benefits for visitors, communities and businesses. Helping to deliver the National Park Partnership Plan outcome to deliver a Low Carbon Place, these investments will respond to the twin crises of the climate emergency and nature loss, while helping communities within the National Park to thrive for generations to come.



The Place Programme is also key for visitor management and hence is covered in this report

This work is outlined in the [Place Programme Delivery Route Map](#), approved at June 2024 Board, which sets out the infrastructure priorities for the National Park Place Programme for the period 2024 – 2029, with an indicative extension to 2034. It is updated to reflect learnings from the first 3 years of the capital investment programme, to reflect the priorities in the new National Park Partnership Plan 2024 – 2029 and fully reflect visitor infrastructure investment priorities in a post-Covid funding landscape.

The new Route Map replaces the Delivery Tables that were provided in 2022 and 2023 and provides a clear statement of intention to where investment is prioritised. It should be read in conjunction with the [Place Programme Approach](#) and the National Park Partnership Plan.

4.6.1 Tarbet, Loch Lomond

This significant and complex project is now approaching completion on site.

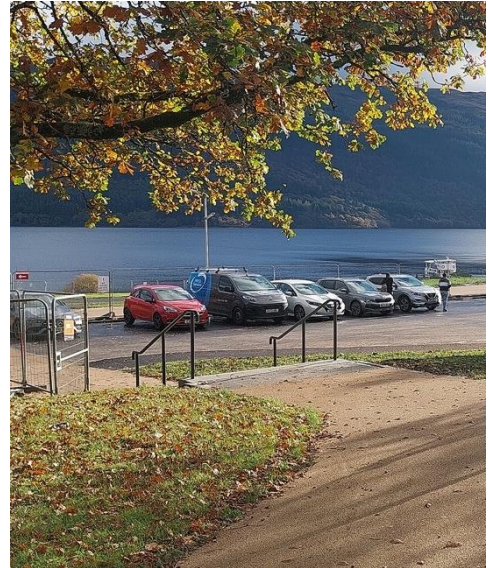
The delay to the conclusion of the project has created some challenges with reduced parking capacity on the site during the busy summer months and we have been working closely with site operators and the local community to manage these as well as possible.



In addition to delivering the works on site, the contractor has also been progressing a package of community benefits. This has included a donation of a public-access defibrillator, health and safety presentation and competition for local primary school pupils, site visit and careers introduction for high school pupils and local advertising of employment opportunities and placements.

Key outcomes which will be in place for the 2025 visitor season include:

- Enhanced vehicle and pedestrian circulation to accommodate peak visitor numbers
- 20 new seasonal overflow parking spaces
- 2 fully compliant safe motorhome permit areas
- Improved motorhome waste disposal
- 4 coach parking spaces
- Accessible routes and pedestrian crossings connecting the site and facilities
- Large new viewpoint and shelter
- 2 x rapid 50KVA twin socket chargers through the BMW Recharge partnership
- New woodland and wildflower meadow planting
- Accessible picnic area and furniture including resting points



4.6.2 Luss Pier

The new railing and other safety features at Luss Pier were installed in time for the new visitor season. The handrail has improved the visitor experience, improving accessibility and inclusion at this iconic destination, whether it is getting right up to the water's edge or embarking on a cruise on the loch. Feedback from the West Loch Lomond Visitor Management Group has been positive with a significant reduction in reports of 'pier jumping' this year.

Before



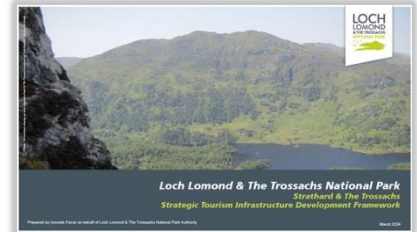
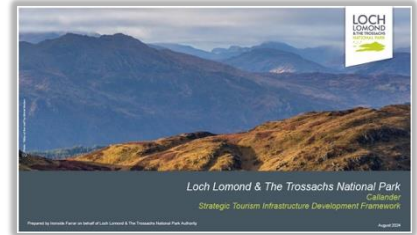
After



4.6.3 Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Studies

Engagement has continued across 2014 with Visitor Management Groups and local stakeholders to develop Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Studies to identify areas of opportunity and actions which strengthen tourism infrastructure and place quality.

The [East Loch Lomond](#) and [West Loch Lomond](#) studies that were completed in 2022 and the final two studies for [Strathard and The Trossachs](#) and [Callander and Surrounding Area](#) were completed in March 2024. These studies are now available on our website. The infrastructure opportunities identified in these studies have informed development of the Delivery Route map, approved at the June NPA Board meeting.



4.6.4 Rowardennan

Situated on the east of Loch Lomond, Rowardennan is a popular destination for people wanting to climb Ben Lomond. This site was identified in the East Loch Lomond Study as a high priority for investment. The Place Team have completed a comprehensive masterplan design process working collaboratively with Forestry & Land Scotland and National Trust for Scotland, and with the support of Visit Scotland's RTIF (Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund) and engaging with interest groups, the local community and businesses to better understand the site. The masterplan proposals include:

- Providing infrastructure to support sustainable modes of transport Improving pathways and movement
- Enhancing the landscape and nature conservation value of the landscape
- Creating a high-quality visitor experience with excellent year-round facilities

The next steps for the project will be to agree delivery timelines with partners, and then to submit a planning application to allow the project to be shovel ready for a funding application as and when funds become available and partner delivery plans allow.



4.6.5 Balloch Pierhead

The National Park Authority is pleased to be working alongside West Dunbartonshire Council on stakeholder engagement at the Pierhead to develop an Improvement Action Plan.

This Action Plan will illustrate what success looks like for the Pierhead, prioritise actions and identify opportunities to make small adjustments that would have a positive impact. It will also support any future funding proposals and be used as a planning guidance reference for any future development proposals.

Examples of some of the recommendations that could be included in the Action Plan are improvements to the Pierhead to get it working better for its multiple users as well as improving accessibility and connections to Balloch and Loch Lomond Shores.

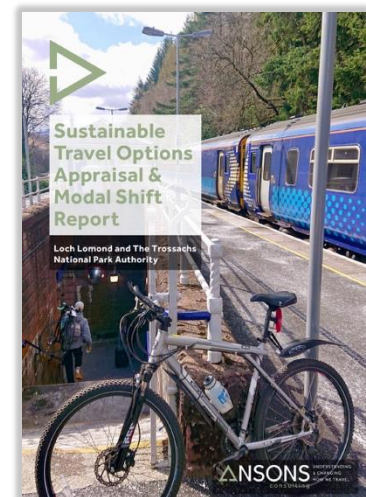


4.7 Sustainable Travel

As part of our National Park Partnership Plan for 2024-2029, we set out a long-term vision for the Park as a thriving place that is nature positive and carbon negative, with sustainable transport to and around the Park playing an important role.

Of the millions of visitors to the National Park each year, 79% travel by car. The dominance of car travel is one of the biggest sources of carbon emissions in the National Park and can put huge pressure on popular locations and their communities, with parking and congestion.

In 2023, a comprehensive [Sustainable Travel Options Appraisal & Modal Shift Report](#) was delivered which was a leap forward in understanding how we deliver the system-wide transformation of the transport sector serving the Park. The report recommended a step change in approach, based around partnerships and shared resources.



In response to this, our emerging Mobility Partnership programme looks at developing both short term and longer-term measures with partners to help reduce car journeys to and within the Park. This year, the programme successfully delivered a summer shuttle bus pilot project, continued to trial a digital journey planner, and started to bring together strategic partners to map out a 5-year Mobility Route Map.

4.7.1 Trossachs Explorer Shuttle Bus Pilot

Following previous unsuccessful attempts, we were delighted to finally pilot the Trossachs Explorer Shuttle Bus, which welcomed 5,137 passengers from 1st July to 30th September 2024, very much exceeding expectations. The success was achieved thanks to the collaborative efforts of local community members, local businesses and partners including Stirling Council.



Running seven days a week between key visitor locations, including Aberfoyle and Callander, the Trossachs Explorer made it easier for visitors and locals to access some of the Park's most scenic areas without needing a private vehicle. The pilot also linked with services from Stirling and Glasgow to enhance car-free accessibility. Impressively, 52% of passengers travelled for free under the National Concession Card schemes, including young people under 22 and those over 60 highlighting the success of the pilot in opening the Trossachs to a diverse age range of audiences.

As we move forward, the insights and learnings gathered from this pilot will guide our future transport discussions and initiatives. The feedback received so far has been overwhelmingly positive, clearly demonstrating the demand for more sustainable public transport options in the National Park. In line with our goals for a carbon-negative and nature-positive future, we will now focus on evaluating the pilot and exploring how services like this can return in 2025, subject to securing the necessary agreements and resources.



4.7.2 C60 Stirling Council Pilot

Alongside the Trossachs Explorer pilot, Stirling Council is currently operating the C60 bus service between Callander and Killin as a two-year pilot. This is the first in-house public bus service provided by the council and replaces the previous service operated by Kingshouse Travel. A 16-seat minibus currently operates four return journeys daily from Monday to Saturday along the A84 between Callander and Killin,



Since launching on 1st July, the C60 has welcomed 3,207 passengers, with many travelling locally to meet friends, attend appointments, go to work, and attend school/college. The National Park's Volunteer Rangers recently supported the C60, travelling on the afternoon service to engage with passengers.

4.7.3 Emerging Mobility Partnership Programme

Following on from the Sustainable Transport Options Appraisal and Modal Shift report which was published last year, in July this year the NPA appointed a National Park Mobility Partnership Manager, funded by SPT/Transport Scotland, who will play a key role in bringing partners and key stakeholders together to create a multi-year delivery programme.

Delivery of our aims will be dependent on collective action and partnership working with key national, regional, and local organisations and communities.

This partnership approach is designed to secure the investment, expertise and resources needed to deliver an efficient, inclusive, and lower-carbon transport system across the National Park, contributing to the overall vision of a thriving, nature-positive, and carbon-negative Park.





5. Regulation and enforcement

Ranger Service engagement continues to have a positive effect in compliance with the byelaws and positively influencing behaviour. Of the 895 sets of details taken for byelaw offences, 12 cases were reported to the Procurator Fiscal. 500 individuals spoken to received formal notification letters meaning although contravening a byelaw and being unable to leave at the time (80% of these were due to alcohol consumption), they complied after Ranger intervention, taking instruction to clear up and move on next day. Instances of repeat offenders continue to be less than 1%.

Camping byelaw contraventions continue to follow similar patterns as recent years. The most common offence reported being 'setting up and occupying a tent without authorisation' followed by fire byelaw contraventions around collecting deadwood and having a damaging fire. Reports for breaches of the Environmental Protection Act 33 (fly-tipping) also feature.

There was a slight decrease in relation to Loch Lomond Byelaws with 154 violations recorded.

The National Park Ranger Service continued to work closely with Police Scotland on enforcement of the Loch Lomond Byelaws and Camping Management Byelaws while Local Authorities continued to lead on parking enforcement.

5.1 National Park Ranger Service

The National Park Ranger Service continued to use the 'education first' approach when dealing with campers and loch users within the Camping Management Zones and on Loch Lomond. The majority of these interactions were positive.



Although the number of bookings dropped within the permit areas, the Ranger Service saw an 8% increase in the number of details taken within the Camping Management Zones from 826 in 2023 to 895 this season.

The majority of alleged offences were;

- Setting up and occupying a tent without authorisation
- Collecting deadwood and having a damaging fire
- Failure to give details

On Loch Lomond, Rangers recorded 154 alleged contraventions for 2024. This was an 8% decrease over 2023 that saw 168 alleged contraventions. The has continued the downward trend from our post-COVID figures of being a 35% drop from the 2022 alleged contraventions of 235.

The majority of alleged offences were:

- Related to speeding.
- Failure to display registration numbers and or annual marks.
- Failure to register.

5.2. Police Scotland

Police Scotland have continued to support visitor management partnerships working together to improve the safety of everyone in the National Park. This was done through specific operations such as [Ballaton](#) in the Argyll and West Dunbartonshire areas of the National Park and Elms in the Stirling area and as part of the National Park Visitor Management Group. These Police led operations brought partners together to share intelligence related to safety and anti-social behaviour to effectively target resources. This was in addition to the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Partnership Against Rural Crime that focused on tackling issues such as wildlife crime, livestock disturbance as well as promoting the sign up to [Rural Watch Scotland](#).



Police Scotland have noted that the visitor season for the National Park has been composed and though footfall has remained largely the same, the poorer summer has reduced nighttime antisocial behaviour, particularly around the loch side. They also noted that sunnier days brought the same levels of parking issues as seen during the summer months.

Now in his second year as National Park Police Officer, Police Constable Scott Kennedy continues in his role as a dedicated resource seconded to the National Park Authority. The National Park Police Officer acts as a liaison between the National Park, other partners and Police Scotland and helps bring additional specialist Police support into the National Park. Importantly the role also provides support to the National Park Ranger Service.

Some examples of the National Park Police Officers contributions in 2024 include:

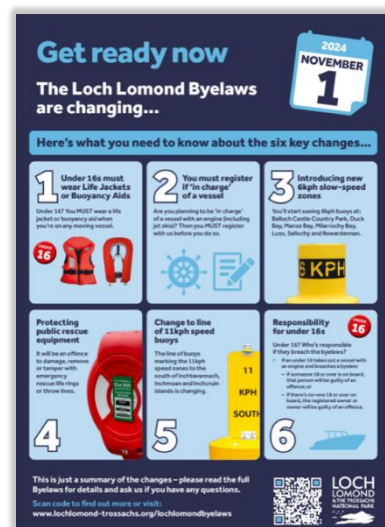
- Undertaking 118 dedicated National Park patrols across the National Park, in addition, some of these patrols supported National Park Rangers staff in the byelaw enforcement duties.
- As the secretary of the Partnership Against Rural Crime (PARC) assisted in delivering an [event](#) with the British Horse Society and the Stirling Trailer Centre to promote knowledge to prevent trailer theft, improve trailer safety and raise awareness of equine and livestock crime.
- From this event a road traffic day of action was undertaken on the A82 combining local community Police Officers, specialist officers from Traffic Division, a representative from Vehicle Operator Services Agency and the National Trailer and Towing Association. The day of action on the West of Loch Lomond resulted in 7 offences being detected and reported to the Procurator Fiscal and two vehicles seized and issued Prohibition Notices.

- Assisted with the delivery of a stand at the Killin Highland Games with the Police Scotland Rural Crime Unit, Wildlife Crime Officers and members of the PARC to raise awareness around rural crime particularly quad bike and trailer securing, theft of heating oil, poaching and wildlife crime and general crime prevention advice.
- Using Police Scotland social media to highlight:
 - The Camping Management Byelaws
 - National Park PARC group
 - Use of Handheld Radar for road safety when deployed
 - National Park PARC group stands at shows
 - Appeals for witnesses to Wildlife Crimes and Rural Crimes
 - To direct hill users to Scottish Mountain Rescue website to prepare for hills properly

5.3 Loch Lomond Byelaws

The Loch Lomond Byelaws 2023 that were approved by Scottish Government Ministers in October 2023 came into force on the 1st of November 2024. A project team has been:

- Working to ensure that the six key changes to the existing byelaws are communicated effectively directly with loch users and water recreation focused businesses around the Loch Lomond.
- Working with landowners to allow the deployment of the new buoys that will demarcate the new Low Speed activity zone located at 7 locations that are increasingly popular with people undertaking non powered water recreation such as paddle boarding and swimming.
- Developing a new online boat registration system that will make it easier for loch users to register alongside paying for services such as the use of the Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway
- Developing a database and associated mobile application to improve efficiency for the Rangers enforcing the Byelaws whilst out on the water.



Further communications on these changes will be prepared for the start of the 2025 visitor season.





6. Looking ahead

Across 2024 we have seen a relatively wet and cool season that has not only influenced the behaviour of day visitors but also reduced the total number of day visitors from the previous season. On the small number of occasions that there were sustained periods of good weather people came out in force, testing the capacity of the resource, facilities and infrastructure to cope with the demand.

Anecdotal evidence from Visitor Management Groups and the National Park Destination Group tourism related businesses agrees with the slight reduction in day visitors but this is against a further increase in international and pre-booked visitors. Stakeholders are sharing concerns that elements of political budgetary decisions such as the removal of the universal winter fuel allowance, Scotland's short-term lets legislation and the ending of the Scotrail peak fare pilot will negatively impact tourism in 2025.

As with last year in the National Park there is a consensus that we have found a visitor management model that is capable of addressing and over time reducing visitor related pressures on the environment, on people who live and work in the Park whilst at the same time increasing the quality of the visitor experience. This model comprises of:

- strong national and local partnerships with a focus on visitor management
- a core staff resource of Rangers, Environment Officers and supporting staff with weekend support and increasing numbers of volunteers
- a National Park Police Officer
- local wardens employed by other landowners and communities
- regular engagement with local communities
- a continued investment in upgraded and new infrastructure and facilities
- the opportunity to increase sustainable transport options throughout the National Park



In 2024 we saw reduction in some funding which reduced the number of Rangers and wardens that were employed by landowners such as Forestry and Land Scotland and some of the Community Development Trusts. There is potential that if implemented by Local Authorities that the Visitor Levy could help with this although this speculative at this point and will not be available within the next two years.

The National Park Authority and partners are currently working on areas of development for managing visitors that will continue in 2025, these include:

- the delivery of the Place Programme with a focus on planning future developments such as the Balloch Pierhead and 2nd Phase of improvements at Tarbet Loch Lomond, as well as aligning with the Sustainable Transport programme to agree an approach to managing visitor arrivals on East Loch Lomond.
- reviewing the findings from the Strathclyde University report on the Trossachs Explorer to inform future pilots and how a similar service could be made financially sustainable.
- addressing the increasing visitor pressures at Milarrochy Bay on the east side of Loch Lomond.

Assessing the impact of the 1st year of the newly implemented Loch Lomond Byelaws and the new online registration system alongside piloting new enforcement methods.

- Commencing the review of the Camping Management Byelaws to ensure that we understand their impact and the associated provision of the permit scheme, low-cost campsites and the provision of motorhome related facilities.
- Reviewing the use of digital technology for use in visitor management to assist with live information updates, interactive visitor facility maps and reports to influence funding and measure success to influence future investment and its potential use for local businesses and communities.

Detail of these actions will be included in the 2025 Joint Response Visitor Management Plan to be presented to the National Park Authority Board in March 2025 following engagement with stakeholders and partners.