

Two Lochs Visitor Management Programme Update from
Arrochar & Tarbet Community Development Trust and the Friends of Loch Lomond & the Trossachs

At a previous H&L ACPG meeting information was shared on the success of the £90,000 Two Lochs Visitor Management Programme coordinated by the conservation charity, the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs working in partnership with the Arrochar & Tarbet Development Trust and local business group, Destination Arrochar Alps. A copy of the final report on this scheme which contains photographs illustrating activities undertaken as part of the programme attached for further information.

Since the beginning of November the Friends have continued to fully fund the A82 layby litter bin scheme with 20 large bins being emptied on a weekly basis and supplemented by very effective weekly layby litter pick undertaken by the Council's Community Service Team. The total amount of litter collected since the pilot litter bin scheme was introduced in late June now exceeds 20 tonnes (equivalent of 5,300 litter bin bags) with an impressive 97% of this litter being recycled or re-purposed. The Friends invested over £7,000 in extending the bin scheme for a 5-month period to the end of March 2022.

Over the winter months the Friends, working in partnership with others, is investing £5,000 in their long-term Windows on the Loch Project which involves cutting back vegetation to keep some views of Loch Lomond and Ben Lomond open alongside the A82 and the cycleway between Arden and Tarbet. This was previously known as the Loch Lomond 'tree tunnel' as travellers had no views of the loch. A very successful 'Make a Difference Day' was also organised as part of this initiative in November when 42 volunteers came together to tackle overgrown vegetation between Inverbeg and Tarbet and to remove ingrained litter from bushes next to lochside laybys. The volunteers were recruited from local and national businesses, Luss Estates and the National Park Authority.



The West Loch Lomond Cycleway path and roadside vegetation cut-back at Inverbeg Bay

Plans for the 2022 season are currently being finalised but are unlikely to be on the scale of what was delivered last year as the Green Recovery funding (£68,000) was a 'one off' with the Scottish Government sadly recently confirming in a letter to local MSP Jackie Baillie, the scheme is being discontinued. This is a major blow as up and down the country NatureScot helped fund hundreds of community-led visitor management schemes which made a huge difference. Locally the Two Lochs Visitor Management Project was transformative and simply wouldn't have happened without the NatureScot funding with supplementary funding from the Hannah Stirling Loch Lomond Trust and the Friends.

Work is well underway in trying to assemble a scaled back funding package for the 2022 season and this builds on the successful partnership working that took place last year. In 2022 it is hoped to strengthen partnership working with more involvement of Luss Estates, the National Park Authority and Argyll & Bute Council. Last year the Park Authority and the Council helped with the funding of the very successful Duck Bay temporary toilets and discussions are progressing to try and secure more funding support for the wider programme.

Encouragingly, local businesses have already pledged almost half the cost of the planned 'Adopt a Bonnie Banks Bin Scheme' which builds on the successful A82 layby bin scheme piloted last year. Luss Estates Company have also agreed to cover costs of some **temporary toilets** along with a part-time **visitor warden service** at the Arrochar car park and the head of Loch Long from April to October.

A sponsored "waste warrior" litter collection bag scheme for walkers to uplift and return rubbish found whilst on the loch and hillsides will again be supported by the Destination Arrochar Alps group.

The Park Authority is hoping to address major site management issues experienced at Tarbet Bay. They've been working towards a collaborative solution with local stakeholders involved, alongside their own teams that could see the community wardens extending their scope of work from Arrochar and the Head of Loch Long to help address the overwhelming campervan numbers attracted to Tarbet Bay, providing information on alternative options for overnight stays around the Lochside area.

Alongside support for the communities at Arrochar & Tarbet the Friends are helping Luss Community Council and Luss Estates to coordinate sponsorship contributions from local businesses to strengthen the Luss village warden service. This will supplement any planned village warden scheme introduced by the Council and the National Park Authority. At Duck Bay the Cawley Group have again agreed to sponsor temporary toilet cleaning services and the supply of all toiletries at this very popular National Park gateway picnic and recreational area, if a funded scheme to provide much needed temporary toilets here again can be achieved.

It is important to note should insufficient funding be raised to deliver the proposed 2022 programme (estimated cost £62,000), it will have to be either scaled back or very reluctantly even abandoned as the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs simply do not have the funds to underwrite the full programme of activity which is badly needed to improve visitor management and the quality of life for local residents. There is currently a significant shortfall to deliver the full programme with funding requests submitted to both the National Park and the Council for assistance.



Before and after photos of a path at Succoth that was cleared up by local Wardens

Proposed elements of the Two Lochs Programme 2022 (subject to funding)

1. **Duck Bay Temporary Toilets**- 5 temporary toilets at Duck Bay car park between mid-April and the end of October.

2. **A82 Adopt a Bonnie Banks Bin Scheme**-Retention of 20 existing bins in laybys between Arden and Tarbet with a limited number of bins relocated, based on the weekly monitoring results from last year to provide more cover at a couple of the busier lochside hotspots. Hopefully the scheme will be augmented with weekly layby top-up litter picks by Argyll & Bute Council's Community Service Team which worked well when this was introduced from the middle of last summer.

3. **Arrochar & Tarbet Warden Scheme and Arrochar Toilets**- Some temporary toilets at Arrochar Car Park over a 30 week period between April and October with accompanying cleaning and maintenance service provided by local wardens, over 7 days/wk alongside other duties to include community litter picking and providing an information service to visitors. As time permits and visitor numbers taper away other village maintenance work deemed appropriate will be undertaken at the Head of Loch Long and in Arrochar. At Tarbet Pier there is an option of providing an average of 2 hrs /day of our community warden services, mainly in the evening, to cover campervan management, litter and visitor information duties.

Luss Estates Company have introduced a charging policy with a camera system at the **Loch Long Car Park in Arrochar** with some of the funds generated to help provide the Temp Toilets and support the community warden service to cover our two villages.

Argyll & Bute Council's position with the **Succoth Car Park** that they are reported as being in the process of purchasing from a private landowner is unknown, as is anything from Forest & Land Scotland who are responsible for the **Argyll Forest Park** including the popular hill path leading to the Cobbler.

F&LS allowed us to locate two temporary toilet units at the start of the hillside path last season and it would be desirable to provide them in the Succoth car park if this is now under the control of Argyll & Bute Council with some of the considerable funds generated from car park income being used to cover the hire and cleaning costs. Argyll & Bute Council are presently considering their options for what's known at this car park and what community benefit is to come from parking fee income in 2022.

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We hope this provides H&L ACPG members with some info on the complex issue of visitor management that affects our community, who along with various stakeholders are all looking to bring forward some improved infrastructure and services, where they have struggled to meet increased demands from the public, that have been returning in large numbers in good weather to this area, which some refer to as the **heart of the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park**.

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