

An update for communities in the National Park

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## 17th July 2020

I hope this email finds you safe and well. Since my last update many lockdown restrictions have now begun to ease as we have transitioned through Phase Two and now into [Phase Three](#) of Scottish Government's route-map out of lockdown.

This shows great progress in suppressing Coronavirus in Scotland and I'm sure for many residents this will be good news.

I'd like to now provide you with an update on the easing of restrictions in the National Park and our visitor management plans as we begin to welcome more and more people back to enjoy the area. In this email you will find information on:

- [The reopening of tourism in the National Park](#)
- [The reopening of our visitor facilities](#)
- [Camping in the Park](#)
- [Managing visitor pressures](#)
- [Our forthcoming 'Love it like a Local' litter campaign](#)
- [How we are keeping you updated](#)

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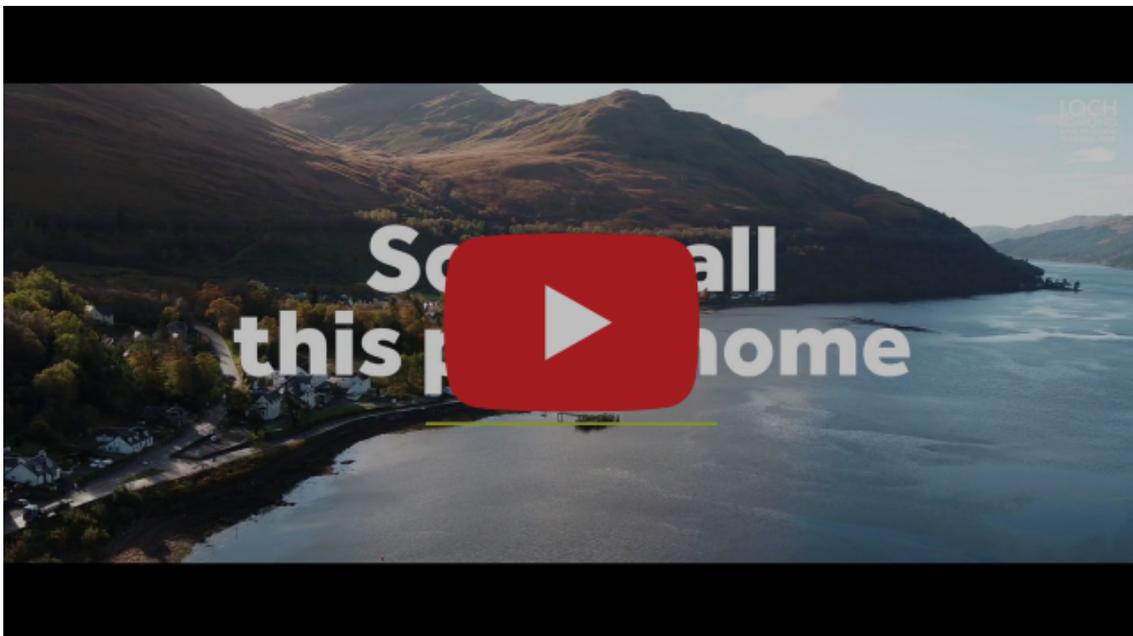
## Reopening of tourism in the National Park

Yesterday saw the further easing of lockdown restrictions as many businesses, including tourism businesses, restaurants and cafes, were able to open again.

We understand that as lockdown eases and more businesses and facilities are able to reopen again, communities may feel anxious or have concerns about the number of people who are able to visit the area again. However tourism is vital to our rural economy here in the National Park and offers many benefits to residents and visitors

Over the last few weeks our Tourism team has been supporting and advising businesses across the National Park to help plan for their safe reopening and encourage confidence for both their customers and the communities around them.

Ahead of the first weekend since the reopening of the tourism sector, we have developed a set of principles that we are asking communities, businesses and visitors to adhere to, in order to encourage confidence for everyone who uses and enjoys the National Park to play their role in moving out of lockdown safely together. You can read these [here](#) along with more guidance and support for both communities and businesses. The message is also supported by the video below, which will be published on our social media feeds this weekend.



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## Reopening our visitor sites

Following the publication of indicative dates to reopen our facilities, we have been busy working to prepare and safely reopen visitor sites across the National Park in line with Scottish Government guidance.

The first facilities to reopen following the easing of travel restrictions were car parks and toilet facilities, which reopened on Friday 3rd July. In some locations this included installing temporary toilet provision to supplement existing public toilets, to allow for physical distancing and a COVID-safe cleaning regime. Signage was also installed at our facilities to point to temporary toilets if needed and to ensure physical distancing while queuing. A regular system of cleaning and maintenance is also in

these if they really need to.



The Duncan Mills Memorial Slipway reopened for launching and retrieval last weekend and we are pleased to say that loch users have all been very respectful of new safety procedures on site. The slipway is one of our most complex sites to operate and it reopened with new safety measures in place, such as a staggered queueing system for launching, to help ensure physical distancing and the safety of both users and our staff. Traffic management measures are also in place to manage queues as we expect many users will want to get back out on the water over the coming weeks. The video below outlines the changes made to help guide users through the site. Ahead of reopening this was supported by updates to loch user groups and multiple launch pass holders, as well as messaging asking for users to be patient and bear with our staff as they help to get people back out onto the Loch safely and responsibly.



## Camping in the Park



As the tourism sector is once again able to open, wild camping is also now permitted again across Scotland and campsites with shared facilities are also able to reopen.

Our campsites at [Loch Achray](#) and [Loch Chon](#) are opening to campers from today, along with camping permits in areas where Camping Management Byelaws are in effect. For now capacity at these sites will be reduced to help manage physical distancing and reduce pressure on facilities like toilets. This will help to ensure the safety of our campers, staff working at the sites and the communities around them. Numbers will be kept under review, and more capacity will be added only when it is safe to do so. This week we have been working to [encourage advance booking](#) for camping and also to [encourage visitors to camp responsibly](#) and respectfully as we ease further out of lockdown.

Prior to this week's reopening of tourism and accommodation, it was very disappointing to see some people continue to camp and behave irresponsibly in certain areas of the Park. Camping byelaws have remained in place during the

more than 20 people were charged in relation to irresponsible camping and environmental damage in the National Park. We issued [this media release](#) to make it clear that this behaviour is not acceptable and has very real consequences.

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## Managing visitor pressures

As restrictions have eased we have continued to work with partners including Police Scotland, Forestry and Land Scotland, the four local authorities in the Park and Transport Scotland through the National Park Safe Recovery Action Group. Together we have been coordinating the reopening of facilities and plans for managing visitor pressures as more people are able to visit the National Park. This has included working to manage traffic and parking issues through road closures where necessary, the creation of clearways, joint patrolling, and sharing intelligence to help manage pressures on the ground.

As we prepare for what we anticipate to be a particularly busy weekend, we have today held a briefing for partners to prepare plans for an increase in visitor numbers.

### Patrols

This weekend we are working with Police Scotland and local authority partners to have joint intelligence-based patrols on the ground at key sites where the support is needed most. There will be increased patrols by National Park Rangers and our staff will be on the ground engaging with visitors, including campers. Where needed they will be working together with Police Scotland to enforce Camping Management Byelaws and other legislation as necessary.

### Traffic management

Stirling Council has also put in place a suspension of parking on the A821 from Kilmahog to Aberfoyle to help ease traffic issues. This is in addition to the existing traffic management put in place by Stirling Council and Argyll & Bute Council at key visitor hotspots which have seen dangerous and irresponsible parking recently.

Both Stirling Council and Argyll & Bute Council will have enforcement officers out again this weekend. They, Police Scotland and partners from Forestry & Land Scotland will be keeping our Ranger Team Leaders updated on any relevant activity over the weekend.

This weekend will be piloting ['live' weekend car park status updates](#), using intelligence gathered by our staff, Forestry & Land Scotland staff and volunteers who will be out and about in the National Park. Last weekend was the first time we had

[Twitter](#) accounts this week suggested that it's a service that visitors would value. We are learning as we go, refining our processes based on what we learn each week. We're hoping it will help ease traffic pressures along with the other measures in place.

### Communications

Ahead of the weekend we have also been working to encourage responsible behaviour by our visitors by asking them to **Think, Check, Plan** ahead of their visit. This includes thinking about if their visit is appropriate at this time and in line with Government guidance, checking what facilities are open, and planning what they might need to bring with them in order to visit safely and responsibly. More information on this is available on our [Advice to Visitors](#) web page.

As always if you have any concerns about specific incidents or anti-social behaviour, please contact Police Scotland via 101 or by calling 999 in an emergency. Any information about issues arising can also be reported to us at [feedback@lochlomond-trossachs.org](mailto:feedback@lochlomond-trossachs.org) for our monitoring purposes. While you won't necessarily receive a response to emails sent to this mailbox it is monitored over the weekend so it can be used to inform patrolling.

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### Love it like a local

Litter has never been welcome in the National Park, but since the easing of lockdown, the entire country is seeing unprecedented volumes of waste being dumped at rural beauty spots. This 'lid off the pressure-cooker' effect is a never before experienced challenge: authorities responsible for litter and bin collections continue to have limited staff resource due to challenges caused by COVID-19, whilst it seems that more, inexperienced people are coming to rural areas due to the cancellation of events and overseas holidays, and closures of other leisure facilities.

As a response, we are developing a targeted litter prevention communication campaign for the National Park called 'Love It Like A Local'. We are urging everyone who visits the National Park to care for it, with the love and respect demonstrated time and again by those who live and work in, and treasure the area.

The campaign is designed to send a strong message: that littering is not acceptable within the National Park, but responsible visitors who bin their litter or take it home with them are always welcome. More information on the campaign is available [here](#).

'Love It Like A Local' will be brought to life on signage featuring photos of people

targeted areas known to have a problem with littering in the past, which will reinforce the social disapproval of littering behaviour.



Alongside an online and print communications plan which will be shared by the authorities across the National Park, we are also creating a toolkit of signage which people within the Park can use to discourage littering locally. We hope to make this available to you over the next week or so.

We will continue to build up the campaign over the summer, so if you have a suggestion for where to place some targeted signage, or want to feature some of your community as faces of the campaign, get in touch with us at [feedback@lochlomond-trossachs.org](mailto:feedback@lochlomond-trossachs.org) and we will pass that onto Nik, our Litter Prevention Manager who is leading on this work.

## Keeping you updated

Thank you to everyone who has attended our virtual briefings over the past few weeks to hear more about our work to manage the easing of lockdown, including both semi-regular meetings with Community Councils across the Park and our place-based meetings to bring together partners, communities, landowners and businesses in our key visitor hotspots. We find these sessions really valuable and we hope the you do too. We will continue to hold these meetings a key milestones throughout the summer. We will also continue to issue email updates like this one

Please continue to share information provided in these updates with your communities. We will also be providing more information on our website as things progress. As always, we have provided hyperlinks to more handy resources below to provide advice and support.

**Gordon Watson**

**Chief Executive**

**Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority**

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## Handy links

- [Feedback email address](#)
- [Scottish Government latest on Coronavirus](#)
- [NHS Inform's latest on Coronavirus](#)
- [National Park Authority Coronavirus hub](#)
- [Community Partnership website](#)
- [Argyll & Bute Council Coronavirus information](#)
- [Perth & Kinross Council Coronavirus information](#)
- [Stirling Council Coronavirus information](#)
- [West Dunbartonshire Council Coronavirus information](#)

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