

27th July 2020 Clunie Loch Meeting chaired by Grant Laing

About 30 people there

There have been community wardens and police as an extra response. Some people were reported and fined for tree damage. There has been coverage in the media. Recently less encampments which could be related to the weather.

Councillor Roddy Ross (ex police officer who joined the council 7 years ago) spoke about what was happening. He visited and walked around the loch with some locals. They looked at signage but the signage has to be linked to practical action. Discussion regarding a clearway is ongoing.

The barrier across the road to the Church was up at about 7-8pm last night. It seemed to have been broken, maybe bashed into? There were people parked in the churchyard again. On Saturday night there were 6 cars down at the church. The barrier is to be repaired.

There has been a lot of camping down from the A923 and the parking of cars is dangerous. There was a definite agreement about making that a clearway. This means no parking and people can be fined for parking there.

There was also concern about the roadway along the lochside and that there should be a clearway. Traffic blocking the road to larger vehicles and damage to the flora and fauna. Someone mentioned maybe landowners should provide land for parking. There was concern that if there are problems it would then be up to landowners and locals to look after it which could be an issue.

Someone spoke about gated areas to pitch tents which would limit the number. Because loch Lomond and other areas have become harder for people to rough camp then the problem has been pushed further north and then add to that lockdown then this is a consequence of both things coming together. He spoke about the clearway and agrees there should be no parking or tents along the A923 but thinks there should be a clearway right round the loch. He is sympathetic to those who want to responsibly use the loch but it is a point of use not just convenience. A large party should not be compatible. There is the right of responsible access and not leaving your Tesco stuff by the loch. There is enforcement where police are given very high priority. Make sure people are held to account. So a clearway that allows parking but not easy access to the waterfront. (In other words people have to walk to get to the loch which means they are unlikely to carry large tents and heavy items and less likely to get the people who make a mess?) There has been community ranger activity and greater visibility in pursuing the irresponsible behaviour. The land reform act was mentioned.

Others mentioned the potential for a drop off point for boats. So parking away from the loch but the drop off helps those who want to use the loch for sporting activities.

Time scales were discussed. There is the balance of access and a clearway on the roadway. Clearway normally takes 5 years to be implemented. It was rushed through in Stanley due to Covid19. This will last 18 months and provides ability to get things done.

Someone spoke about the need to get some kind of signage as well as a clearway. Get something up and then children's pictures next year.

There was discussion over a Byelaw for no overnight camping. There are two that come in, an alcohol ban and a camping ban. Both in their own right.

Advice was received from a council solicitor. It is a complex and expensive process. Rules and then enforcement. This means a restriction of the access code but you need a place people can go.

For an alcohol ban you need a history of antisocial incidents reported to police. This can't just be what people say is happening as it has to be incidents in police documents. Also people need to engage with the consultation, such as locals. Nobody can go and have a drink by the loch.

Someone asked about the SSSI status and if that helps but it has no impact or force.

Back to timing – look at 2 weeks for clearway on A923. Potentially signage as well. Meetings monthly or bi-monthly.

One lady talked about dolphin swimmers (children) and not being able to park by the loch. Landing zone for paddle boards etc was discussed again.

Someone said we need to get a plan which the community feels comfortable with unless momentum will go.

Blairgowrie and Rattray community council were mentioned as being able to help.

It was discussed that there needed to be a working committee for both locals and users of the loch.

Someone asked: The Island is a listed site and being trashed. Anything we can do to stop people going on the Island to protect it. A Councillor was asked and the person said "no".

Grant discussed having a group for land owners which already existed and he invited certain land owners to be in it.

Conclusion on action:

Clearway A923.

Initial signage then later more permanent signage.

Working group. To be involved in working group contact the Clunie Hall email.