

Loch of Clunie Preservation Group meeting

17th April 2024

Ranger update: Funding for the ranger service was not assured this year, however, local councillors communicated on our behalf. **Action:** Chair will thank them.

There will be the same community ranger cover as last year. They are on casual hours with a pool of 14 to 16 people. There will also be joint patrols with community wardens as well as parking attendants. Parking attendants will have the power to tow cars away if people are repeat offenders or blocking the road for vehicles.

Toilet facilities: Funding of Portaloos was not guaranteed. This went up for tender with two companies with cost based upon 23 weeks. It was asked if reducing the number of weeks might reduce the cost. Last year portaloos for all the areas, including Clunie, cost a total of £50 000.

Future solutions for Clunie were discussed, as a charity, we could apply for funding.

Possible options:

Funding for Portaloos each year

Permanent toilets which can work off grid without outflow to the loch. Possibly compostable toilets? This would be in the quarry.

It was also suggested that the quarry could become a bigger car park and remove the layby parking area which is too close to Lochside Cottage.

Action is to communicate with the local community about what people in Clunie and Craigie think. Talk to the land owners and then research costs, maybe get some quotes.

Signage:

Educational sign is finished and will be put in place by unpaid workers on Thursday morning. The result is one professional sign which was expensive but very good quality. The artwork on the sign is our copyright and so other signs can be made at the price of the sign only.

Behaviour advice signs were agreed upon. This would be simple with a list of behavioural expectations which is helpful to Rangers, police, fire service and others. For example “Take your litter home” “Keep the noise down” “No motorised boats” “Park sensibly” This does not mean we can fine people or there are laws to enforce. **Action** is that Jim is going to make a list and then the wording can be discussed.

The council can provide some Corex and vinyl signs in the short term. Possible A3 size?

One member asked if ‘No overnight camping’ signs could be put up again. Visitor Management confirmed there is no law against the camping and so the sign is not enforceable.

Loch Health

The Lunan Burn Wildlife Cluster have organised water sampling by SEPA which was last done about 7 years ago. They will test the same place as before. Bug Life are also going to do aquatic invertebrate surveys in three sites. This should provide an indication of the ecosystem health. It was asked if a plant survey would be undertaken, especially to see if there is Slender Naiad. No plant survey is planned. It was proposed to find out if this is possible somehow?

The Cluster also got a nature restoration fund which means they are replacing trees that had been chopped down near the Church and at the east end of the loch.

Police incidents:

Those living near the loch were disturbed by large tents, noise and lights from a car in the middle of the night. It was advised to phone 101 or fill in the online form. If the driver who has the engine on had alcohol then it could be a drink driving offence.

Visitor Management advised he has some signs "Don't camp here you are too close to someone's home".

One member highlighted damaged trees on members land in the field by the bridge. About 20 trees had been chopped down and a large structure was being built, a bit like a compound? They were stacking up wood and timber. Again this is a case of communicating with the land owner and notifying the police.

The police had attended a motorboat user, however, the individuals were on the Island and so they could not talk to them. They had their number plate and so can log and advise them about not using motorboats.

If we see motorboat in use it is good to note down number plate, date and time and advise the police. If able, without putting yourself at risk, then take a photograph.

We discussed logging incidents, which are not necessarily police, that occur when rangers and other authorities are not around. Methods could be a google document shared with a small number of people. Or one method is to utilise the WhatsApp group we have already have as this is also a form of documentation. The more incidents we report then the police presence can be assessed correctly.

Rural Watch Scotland

<https://www.ruralwatchscotland.co.uk/>

You can join this as a useful information source, although not necessarily relevant to Loch of Clunie. You can choose what information you receive and how you receive it.

Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime (SPARC) is connected to Rural Watch

<https://scottishparc.co.uk/>

The Perth and Kinross PARC have a regular meeting which a representative can attend. The next meeting on 18th June will be attended by member. Visitor Management runs this.

Fishing

Ranger's ask what the official stance is on fishing? It is a civil offence if people are fishing without permission but it is unenforceable. No fishing club was created as previously planned due to a lack of enthusiasm or people to run it. Rangers have been saying to people "You should have the landowner's permission so do not to take the fish and put them back."

Action on responsible fishing such as in signage or advice on removing all tackle.

Finance

The only funding we had was specifically for educational signage. The community Investment Fund provided £3,200

The artist/illustrator cost £2,000

The sign by Shelley Signs cost £1,278

This meant there was a shortfall of £78, which was kindly "topped up" by members of the group

For other funding applications we need a specific project that the funding is for.

Action is to plan ahead on potential requirements for the Loch and identify what funds can be applied for.

Next meeting: End of June