

## **Loch of Clunie Preservation Group meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

Walk and talk from the bridge to the parking area with portaloos

### **Start at Bridge area by A923 road Grid reference NO 119 444**

Parking wardens advise that over the winter they will put posts and arrows to show where parking is.

Problem of large tents and large groups of campers on the beach. Those who want to take a boat can't get to beach.

The beaver activity has been helping raise the water level and reduce the beach space to use. We couldn't pile sand as elsewhere but agreed to put some large rocks on the beach so that not so many tents can be erected.

Discussed the distance to the portaloos and some faeces have had to be picked up. Rangers say to people that there are a lot of ticks. Some people have brought toilet tents.

We are pleased with the bright yellow signs as below but they have needed replacing often due to being on a wooden post.



The following sign that we have designed this last year could potentially be made into metal signs with funding. We discussed doing this with another edit to say “No ground fires”.

## Welcome to Loch of Clunie

To help protect this special place, PLEASE:

- Take your litter home.
- Don't discard fishing tackle.
- Keep noise to a minimum.
- Park sensibly (and avoid £100 parking fines).
- Avoid lighting groundfires.
- Motorised boats are not permitted.

Thank you for your support!



### **Walked along edge of loch towards the Craigie junction.**

We looked at where camping areas have been created. Brambles and plants that were growing there in the past have gone and there are bare patches due to tents.

We decided this was not a priority at the moment and to focus on other hotspots.

### **Layby and area of land opposite at Craigie Junction grid reference NO 116 438**

Planted trees that were funded have gone. The fenced in area for bluebells has worked well so protection is required for planting. The camping is reduced close to a dwelling.

A large temporary sign has been in place as you see:



People are pleased with this sign. The ranger advises that most people follow this instruction. People asked about having this as a permanent sign. The sign is advisory and cannot be enforced so if someone camps there it is not criminal but a civil situation. If a byelaw of no camping was enabled for everywhere then this would change.

People said this is roadside camping not wild camping. The noises heard from the lochside residents can be a problem, especially at night.

One resident asked if the layby could be removed. When the clearway was being planned one necessity was for parking areas and this layby had been used for years and so it became a parking area. The volume of parking was restricted as the Loch side is small.

Another person suggested making the layby smaller. The question is if closing or making the layby smaller will stop overnight camping which tends to cause most problems? We have noticed that people still camp at the lochside where the clearway is. People and their belongings are dropped off and they don't need to park.

The option of pushing for a no camping bylaw was mentioned but not discussed.

This has been discussed again with Visitor Management since the walk and talk meeting and will be mentioned at the end of the minutes.

### **Beach where rocks and chain used to be grid reference NO 115 436 about**

Again many tents and large groups take over the beach where there used to be plants. It is often used for kayaks and people using paddle boards.

A major problem for one resident on the other side of the loch is the noise carrying from this area. As well as asking people not to leave rubbish or have ground fires, rangers also ask people to be mindful that people live here and sound travels.

The advice is still to email the non emergency police if there are loud noise problems or other non emergency issues such as anti-social behaviour:

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/secureforms/contact/>

To reduce the large number of tents again it was decided to put more large rocks on the beach. Also the signs discussed earlier can be put in place.

### **Quarry entrance just before layby with portaloos Grid reference about NO 114 435**

There is a small mound with trees at what would have been the entrance to the quarry, next to the road. We walked up this and looked at the entrance to the quarry. One idea was closing all the parking areas and making one parking area in the quarry with toilet

facilities and CCTV. The other idea was closing the parking area at Craigie junction and opening up the entrance to the quarry. This would mean moving the mound further back and having another small parking area instead of Craigie junction.

A lot of rubbish has been thrown into the quarry over the years. Cars and possible dangerous waste such as asbestos would need to be dealt with. The sides of the quarry could be unstable and so would need a lot of work to make safe. The quarry is back from the road and therefore is a large hidden area and so there is concern for possible criminality. There was talk of putting in CCTV, however, it would cost a lot of money to clear and make safe. The owner of the quarry land was at the meeting and he decided he didn't want to open it up even for a small parking area as he was also concerned about the water levels.

### **Layby with portaloos**

It was agreed that portaloos are in the right place even though a walk from the bridge. The council used to clean them but now it is a private company. The rangers refill toilet rolls and they have unblocked them if required. Some people have stolen the little lights they have in them. The toilets came within the visitor ranger budget which has already been cut back. We have been told that there won't be finance for portaloos next year as they are very expensive.

It was agreed that the portaloos layby could be left as it is but we need to have a plan for toilet facilities as we don't want faeces left around the loch again.

We discussed the possibility of funding not being available for rangers next year which we all agreed would be a huge loss with the work they do and their support for the community.

### **Actions to do:**

More boulders on beaches where large tents and groups are.

Follow up options with portaloos and compostable toilets. Talk to communities who have installed toilets. Practical elements such as size, cost, emptying and cleaning. Talk to SEPA as there were questions over contamination with compostable toilets? We may have no other choice but portaloos which have gone up in price and are expensive.

Discuss how to start a no camping Bylaw. This was not talked about at the meeting but has been discussed at Visitor Management and Partnership Against Rural Crime meetings that the secretary attended. This can take about two years and would require a lot of political pushing. It costs money for the council to pay staff to carry out the legal work and then it is inevitably up to the Scottish Government to agree to it.

Political pushing would require the wider community as well as local residents to explain all the reasons why a byelaw is essential. The fact that the flora and fauna is damaged and wildlife disturbed in a Special Area of Conservation and a Site of Special Scientific Interest should be understood. People keep saying that Loch of Clunie is not a campsite and the camping is not wild camping but roadside camping. Also, the crimes that have taken place and the vandalism have typically been at night time. Wanting to light fires is typically done when people are camping.

There was no conclusion over making the Craigie junction layby smaller or removing it but if camping could be stopped there may not be as many problems.

Plan to use the behavioural sign that has been done and get funding to make metal or recycled plastic

Discuss funding for all the above items. One possibility has been Scottish and Southern Energy funding and the secretary has been given a contact.

Rangers importance needs to be highlighted. Start a campaign to get as many people as possible to write a letter to relevant people (need to find out who that would be) with their own evidence that rangers are an investment and that they are essential.