

## **Loch of Clunie Preservation Group (LCPG) meeting**

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

Attendees:

Murdo Fraser (MSP) with Alexandra Cameron (Murdo Fraser's Engagement Officer), Ian James (PKC Councillor), Frank Campbell and Gill Liversedge (Perth and Kinross Council PKC Visitor Management), Dave Stubbs (Greenspace Co-ordinator, Access Officer), Ruth White and Simon Ovenden (Scottish Land and Estates SLE), Bridget Jones and Shona Shentall (NatureScot)

Local Residents and members of LCPG and other community councils.

Apologies: Police and Fire Service

### **Process of issuing a Nature Conservation Order (NCO) under chapter 2 of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004**

#### **Or specific byelaws on Camping, tents and fires**

<https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/protected-areas-and-species/protected-areas/conservation-orders/nature-conservation-order>

- LCPG say an NCO is a solution that can be implemented by NatureScot
  - Temporary but easier to obtain than byelaws
  - Protects Loch of Clunie as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and allows the loch to recover.
  - Adds to the Nature 30 target which the Scottish Government has committed to.

<https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/protected-areas-and-species/30-30-and-nature-networks/nature30/nature30-criteria>

- Byelaws related to camping and tents to stop the damage to the loch and antisocial behaviour.
- Byelaw related to fires is important with a changing climate and increased wildfire risk.
- It has now got to the stage that we need something enforceable.

NatureScot discussed other options, for example:

- Making exclusion zones with patches of restoration
  - LCPG said this has already been done
  - Fenced-in area enabled recovery of bluebells as well as other wild plants.
  - To achieve regeneration on the East side of the Loch, the enclosed area would need to be the entire lochside area, otherwise it would simply displace campers to utilise the areas that are not enclosed. This is not viable as it prevents access to the road and the shore; wooden fencing would also be used as firewood and it would be expensive to install and maintain.

- The church side with the Scheduled monument has no camping and no fires and the before and after photographs show a huge regeneration.
- NatureScot asked about planting native flora to make it less attractive to camping as legislature takes a long time.
  - LCPG said that lots of trees had been planted at Loch of Clunie but they were pulled up.
- Access Officer said we need to be able to demonstrate the significance of the damage done to Loch of Clunie.
  - The Perth and Kinross Council rangers, people visiting the loch, as well as local residents have lots of photographs and evidence.
  - The church side with the Scheduled monument now has “no camping and no fires” rules and there are before and after photographs showing a huge regeneration.
- Visitor management advise there need to be police resources and capacity to enforce any legislation. This is something we can work on.
- SLE have experience of areas of land with and without byelaws.
  - Some people have no respect for the area they are visiting.
  - Police require knowledge and experience of the laws without a byelaw, but having a byelaw avoids the grey areas and misunderstandings.
  - It may displace visitors but it can work.
- NatureScot representative had experience writing byelaws for Loch Lomond National Park
  - They will be starting a 10 year statutory review and so interesting to see the results
  - The process has an informal consultation period, followed by a period of statutory consultation, and finally followed by ministerial approval.
  - The process takes a minimum of 2 years.
  - Requires evidence, and Loch Lomond had a number of years’ evidence of bags of rubbish and police reports.
  - Enforcement is required by both police and park rangers
  - Cost is significant, with a massive seasonal ranger service required to do split shifts and cover evenings
  - Loch Lomond’s process was funded directly by Scottish Government
- Visitor Management spoke about staffing and resources
  - At present the whole of P&K has 6 rangers on a casual zero-hours basis without confirmation for staffing next year.
  - Local authority owns the budget, so we would have to ask the Scottish Government for additional support.

- This is not Clunie specific but all over Scotland
- There are a number of lochs in P&K and so it is not possible to spend lengthy time periods in one location.
- Evidence of rubbish and crime has been logged for a number of years, however, not all of the older data has been found with a change of staff.
- Discussion over this being a National problem
  - Concern over moving the problem with a byelaw in one place
  - NatureScot representative said on a national level people still want to go out and enjoy places.
  - Concern over different rules in National Parks from other places can confuse visitors
  - Look at what the rules should be on a national level
- SLE representative comes back to Loch of Clunie
  - The problems at Loch of Clunie seem to be passed around various agencies
  - Additional resources from P&K will continue to be required
  - Need to prioritise what is important for the site and the community
  - There needs to be a willingness to solve the issues, and extra resources will be required
  - It seems like SSSIs are sacrificed through a lack of willingness
- A member of LCPG said that whether or not there is a review of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code there needs to be byelaws as soon as possible. Doing nothing is not an option.

### **Ban on Vehicle Camping - A report is being written by the council**

- Examples of recent parking restrictions in other places with problems discussed
- Loch of Clunie had 154 parking fines issued this year
- Access officer spoke of a national approach to vehicle-based camping which means close to a road.
- This is not wild camping with one or two tents leaving no trace
- Stopping overnight camping may not solve all the problems but could help
- Highlighted that the portaloos, visitor rangers and police all cost the taxpayer
- Present parking areas are on private land so they could close all parking areas, however, people want responsible access.
- Existing legislation may cover overnight vehicle camping

### **Actions:**

1. The process of issuing a Nature Conservation Order (NCO) on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) under the 2004 Scotland Act.

NatureScot to take this action to find out more about it, such as the feasibility of an NCO.

2. Murdo Fraser MSP and Frank Campbell to engage with the Police and Special Constables.  
NatureScot also to liaise with the Police.
3. Legislative powers – NatureScot to clarify.
4. Byelaws - At the meeting, byelaws were supported because these problems at Loch of Clunie affect other areas. Simon Ovenden (Scottish Land and Estates) also agreed. Murdo Fraser MSP to keep pursuing the Access Code with the Scottish Government.
5. LCPG to provide a list of all the landowners.
6. Overnight parking ban – Frank Campbell from Perth and Kinross Council (PKC) will take this action to see if there is something that they can facilitate between landowners and PKC. For example, it was discussed at the meeting if the landowners state they do not wish to allow overnight parking on their land, then PKC can deal with the practicality of enforcing that.

**Points of note:**

NatureScot Campaign in Spring 2026 – more information about what wild camping is.

Evidence of issues – this will be required for byelaws as well as the number of offences. Local residents are carrying this out where possible and PKC has all the information and evidence. However, local residents do not always feel safe to take photographic evidence in particular with reference to a previous sexual assault. It was advised that residents can use the Police Report Form if they do not want to report it via 999 or 101.

Simon Ovenden (SLE) and Frank Campbell (PKC) to pick up offline the issue discussed regarding Visitor Rangers not answering questions regarding STV being on site. PKC advised in a 31 week season, two Visitor Rangers spent a total of 1500 hours at Loch of Clunie (litter picking, protecting Osprey and cleaning up after camp fires).