

**National Park Authority**

**Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park  
Camping Management Byelaws 2017**



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# **Annual Update for Scottish Ministers**

**2019**

# **National Park Authority**

## **Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Camping Management Byelaws 2017**

### **Annual Update for Scottish Ministers 2019**

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#### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The third season of the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Camping Management Byelaws 2017 ran from 1st March to 30th September 2019.
- 1.2 These byelaws and associated camping provision are designed to improve the camping experience and alleviate pressure on key lochshore locations by managing visitor numbers and impacts associated with informal camping.
- 1.3 In addition to private sector campsites, 300 low cost camping places (a mixture of camping permit areas and low cost campsites) across four Camping Management Zones were available to book online and via telephone booking system operated by the National Park Authority.
- 1.4 Our new campsite at Loch Achray partially opened on 1<sup>st</sup> March. The campsite initially operated at a reduced capacity whilst some remedial works were carried out during early part of the season. Once fully operational, the site based on the Three Lochs Forest Drive provided an additional 17 low cost camping pitches (including two fully accessible pitches) overlooking the loch.
- 1.5 This season saw an increase in the number of people camping in the Camping Management Zones. More than 28,000 people (including more than 5,000 children) camped within a permit area, Loch Chon or Loch Achray campsites during this season. This was an increase of just over 10% on numbers from 2018 and was a 6% increase in the number of children camping. The seasonal weather in 2019 was more mixed than that of 2018, which had an extreme cold spell at the start of the season and unusually prolonged warm, dry weather in the summer. It was encouraging to see that even without an exceptional summer that there was an increase in people coming out to camp in and enjoy the National Park in 2019.
- 1.6 Feedback from the 2061 people who responded to feedback surveys about the camping permit areas was positive overall with 92% saying that they would be 'very likely' (70%) or 'quite likely' (22%) to recommend staying in a permit area. Feedback remained at the consistently high levels of the 2017 and 2018 season despite the continued increase in the number of people camping.
- 1.7 Feedback from the 415 people who responded to camping feedback surveys about Loch Chon campsite was also positive with 97% saying that they would be 'very likely' (85%) or 'quite likely' (12%) to recommend staying at the campsite. Despite

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the increase in the number of people camping, feedback was more positive than in 2017 and 2018.

- 1.8 Feedback from people who responded to camping feedback surveys about Loch Achray Campsite was also positive with 96% saying they would be 'very likely (83%) or 'quite likely (13%) to recommend staying at the campsite.
- 1.9 A new question was added to our camping surveys this year to help establish how many people are returning to both permit areas and campsites. The response to this was also interesting with 34% of people camping at permit areas and 34% of people camping at Loch Chon Campsite having visited before. 36% of people who visited the new Loch Achray Campsite had also used a National Park campsite previously.
- 1.10 Feedback gathered throughout and following the second season of the operation of the byelaws in 2018 was used to inform and improve the operation of the byelaws for the third season. An iterative approach was also taken to continually improve camping provision and communications about the byelaws throughout the season, with feedback logged daily and actions allocated accordingly.
- 1.11 The majority of bookings for the camping permit areas (59%) came from Scotland, with 25% coming from the rest of the UK and the remaining 16% coming from the rest of the world. These figures are fairly consistent with 2018, when 63% came from Scotland, 21% from the rest of the UK, 16% from the rest of the world.
- 1.12 Data analysis of bookings from within Scotland were mapped against the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) revealing that 61% of bookings came from 50% of the most deprived areas in Scotland. This is consistent with 2018.
- 1.13 73 Authorisations were granted to youth groups who wished to camp in permit areas or at one of the National Park campsites at no charge. This had increased significantly from 46 in 2018 with the majority of young people camping as part of their Duke of Edinburgh award.
- 1.14 Of the 28,000 people who camped this season, National Park Rangers took the personal details of 733 individuals in relation to a contravention of byelaws. A total of 8 cases (where the people refused to comply with the byelaws) were reported to the Crown Office by the National Park Authority. A further two cases are pending report to the Procurator Fiscal.

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- 1.15 Regular communications and opportunities for dialogue were provided to local communities and other key stakeholders throughout the season through a quarterly email update and a Stakeholder Forum meeting in June 2019. Individual face to face meetings were also provided to individual partners and stakeholders throughout the season as required.
- 1.16 The installation of a borehole at Loch Chon campsite alleviated the water supply problems experienced in previous seasons, helping provide a more consistent experience and fresh water supply for campers. It was frustrating that the water supply at Loch Achray campsite suffered from capacity issues and a temporary solution in the form of a bowser was used to maintain a good service for customers. A solution will be sought to increase capacity for the 2020 season.
- 1.17 Key challenges and areas for improvement in relation to camping management moving forward include further reductions in inappropriate toileting, littering and irresponsible use of fires across the National Park in specific areas where these problems persist. This year a trial and campaign to address irresponsible toileting was undertaken in order to start to positively address this issue. We will continue to work with partners to work towards a sustainable overnight parking model and waste disposal provision for the ever growing number of motorhome and campervan users coming to enjoy the National Park, in order to reduce pressures on local environments and communities.
- 1.18 Overall, the programme is progressing on track and a full report on three years of byelaw operation will be submitted to Scottish Government Ministers in March 2020.
- 1.19 A new, seconded National Park Police Officer was appointed took over at the start of the season. PC Lyle MacAulay works across the organisation and with our partners co-ordinating Operation Ironworks and undertaking joint patrols with National Park Rangers among other responsibilities.

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#### 2. Purpose

2.1. This annual update on the third season of The Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Camping Management Byelaws 2017 provides an overview of:

- the approach to preparation for the third season
- how the byelaws operated in practice
- observations on the initial impacts that the byelaws are having.

2.2 The update draws from a range of information and data gathered during the third operational season of the byelaws (1<sup>st</sup> March - 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019). This update forms part of the administrative conditions attached to approval of The Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Camping Management Byelaws 2017, as specified by Scottish Ministers, as outlined in 3.2 below.

2.3 Further to this update Scottish Ministers will be provided with a report no later than three years after implementation of the byelaws, by March 2020. The report will consider how effective the new camping management measures have been in reducing the instances of environmental damage and irresponsible behaviour.

#### 3. Background

##### Approving the Camping Management Byelaws 2017

3.1 After a public consultation process, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 2015 a letter of application was submitted by the National Park Authority to Dr Aileen McLeod, (who, at the time was) Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform. This sought confirmation of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Camping Management Byelaws, using powers conferred upon the Authority in Paragraph 8 of Section 2 of the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. The proposals submitted to the Scottish Ministers included:

- The implementation of camping byelaws across four Camping Management Zones covering less than 4% of the Park's 720 square miles.
- The creation of a permit scheme to support the byelaws allowing informal camping in defined areas of the Camping Management Zones – see Appendix 1.

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- The creation of campsites with low cost bookable pitches and basic facilities.
- Delivering 300 camping spaces in the first year of the byelaws operating, with more to be added in subsequent years.
- The simultaneous revocation of the East Loch Lomond byelaws to coincide with the introduction of the new byelaws.

3.2 Following a period of ministerial consideration, the proposed Camping Management Byelaws were approved by Scottish Ministers on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2016. Formal modifications that were requested of the National Park were that:

- *'The proposed period of operation of the byelaws would be reduced by one month; running from 1<sup>st</sup> March to 30<sup>th</sup> September rather than to the end of October as previously envisaged. This included the area where the East Loch Lomond byelaws had operated for eight months of the year.*
- *The implementation of the byelaws was moved to 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017'*

Two administrative conditions were also applied:

- 1) *'Ministers should be provided with a formal report of a review of the operation of the byelaws no later than 3 years after implementation. The report should consider how effective the new camping management measures have been in reducing the instances of environmental damage and irresponsible behaviour as a direct result of implementation.'*
- 2) *'The National Park will provide Scottish Ministers with an annual update on the implementation of the byelaws.'*

The Camping Management Byelaws first came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017. The second Annual Update for Scottish Ministers was published in December 2018. **This report is the third of these annual updates.**

The Visitor Management Education and Enforcement Policy was prepared before the implementation of the byelaws and sets out the approach that the National Park Authority will follow to manage visitor behaviour using legislative powers throughout the National Park. In summary this policy focuses on the use of public education and preventative approaches, before enforcement, as the primary methods for ensuring byelaw compliance.

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#### 4. Preparing for the 2019 operational season

- 4.1 A range of feedback was gathered from visitors, landowners, businesses, communities and staff throughout and following the 2018 season. This was then used to develop a programme of improvements for the third season.
- 4.2 The subsequent tasks were prioritised and split into three development and delivery areas:
- **Camping Infrastructure and Management:** The delivery of and improvements to campsite provision and the camping permit scheme; design and installation of additional information and advisory signage for visitors where appropriate.
  - **Operational Management:** Refining of administrative and support systems for managing camping activity, byelaw enforcement and monitoring; operational arrangements such as staffing models, systems and training.
  - **Communications and Engagement:** Preparation and delivery of a communications plan to raise awareness and understanding of the byelaws and camping provision within the Camping Management Zones for the 2019 season and to provide consistent information and opportunities for engagement with communities and stakeholders.

#### Camping Infrastructure and Management

- 4.3 A number of improvements had been made during the 2018 season. During the second season performance of the camping infrastructure and management systems that had been introduced alongside the byelaws continued to be monitored. Along with the visitor feedback gathered, this helped inform the preparatory work and improvements and refinements that were introduced for and during 2019 season.
- **Permit Areas:** The permit areas were checked for any issues that might prevent them being opened such as protected wildlife or tree safety constraints. The sites were also cleared of any litter by the Ranger Service or the Park Authority Land Operations Team. Additional permit areas were investigated but were found not to be cost effective for the level of provision they offered. It was decided with current occupancy levels meeting demand for the majority of the



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time, even in peak periods and with the timescale and complexity for locating suitable new permit areas, then not to seek any additional permit capacity for 2019.

- **Informal Campsites:** The introduction of a second National Park campsite at Loch Achray provided an additional 17 pitches during the season (2 fully accessible). The campsite offers a variety of camping experiences with open pitches by the lochside, woodland pitches and elevated camping platforms for those looking for a more secluded experience. The campsite is similar in nature to Loch Chon but has the advantage of a covered dish washing area.

The biggest remaining issue for Loch Chon remained the unreliability of the water supply, which is drawn from a nearby burn. To increase the sustainability of the site and to improve customer experience a borehole and new water filtration system was installed during the season providing a consistent water supply.

Loch Achray campsite was opened on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2019. Initially the site was opened at a reduced capacity to allow for some remedial work to be carried out on some of the pitches. Unfortunately the yield of water from the onsite borehole reduced significantly and to ensure that a consistently high level of customer service was maintained a temporary solution was employed using a portable water bowser. A more sustainable solution was investigated during the season and implementation of this alternative will be employed for the 2020 season.

- **Signage:** The requirement for new signage reduced significantly this year. New signage was predominantly installed on East Loch Lomond in response to feedback from campers and our Ranger Service and was primarily aimed at people on foot, as the popular West Highland Way long distance walking route runs alongside the loch. The new signage included maps to show distances to the next camping opportunities with some additional behavioural messaging and safety information. Some site specific additional signs were installed when requested by landowners in conjunction with the National Park Ranger Service and Access Officers. Temporary signs were used in some locations where Rangers reported new issues. A considered approach between the environmental impact of physical infrastructure and improving the operational

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effectiveness of the byelaws was taken when assessing these additional signage needs.

#### Operational Management and Administration

4.4 The focus for improving the operational management of the byelaws ahead of the second season was on refining systems and associated data, procedures, staff deployment models and training used in previous seasons.

4.5 The key preparatory work for this element of the project included:

- A revised Ranger deployment model, including Seasonal Ranger use;
- Recruitment of seasonal Campsite Wardens and the new post of Campsite Supervisor;
- Training existing staff to be able to manage the camping bookings telephone lines;
- Updated training for field staff on enforcement processes;
- Meetings with Police Scotland and Forest Enterprise Scotland to review the 2018 season of Operation Ironworks and to discuss the focus of the initiative during 2019;

#### Communications and Engagement

4.6 Communication and engagement preparations for the third season of the byelaws sought to ensure visitors, local communities and businesses continued to be well informed about the byelaws.

4.7 The key preparatory work for this element of the project included:

- Pre-season updates to stakeholders including partners, community and outdoor recreation group representatives;
- A series of targeted social media posts, using imagery and infographics, was scheduled in the lead up to and the early part of the season reminding people of the seasonal byelaws, how they work, messaging on camping and fire lighting and an emphasis on planning ahead;
- A new 'Motorhome and Campervans' webpage was created giving information on current facilities within the National Park for overnight parking provision and other facilities including waste disposal. This page will continue to be updated and improved as more information and services are available to promote;

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- New visitor guides in German, Spanish, French and Polish were produced to help explain camping in the National Park to these international visitors. As well as being made available online, printed copies were issued by the Ranger Service to assist visitors in the field;
- Changes were made to the website and booking system to provide additional information and improve the experience of those booking to camp, especially when using mobile devices;
- A new 'Camping in the Park; *Feedback and Publications*' area was created on our website for people who wish to better understand the National Park Authority's approach to managing camping and how these measures are being received by visitors.
- A targeted communications campaign to encourage responsible toileting behaviour was developed for the peak summer period.

#### 5. Implementation of the 2019 operational season

The third operational season of the Camping Management Byelaws 2017 commenced on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019. As in 2018, the new and refined infrastructure, systems and procedures that support the byelaws were tested throughout the season and changes were made where appropriate.

5.1. 316 low cost camping places were ready from the start of March 2019, including spaces for tents on permit areas, pitches at informal campsites and spaces for motorhomes at popular visitor locations off the public highway - see Appendix 2. As with any camping provision, the number of permits spaces available did fluctuate slightly during the season due to factors affecting ground conditions and access, such as flooding following heavy rain, forestry operations or the need for essential maintenance.

Heavy rain and snow melt did cause some of the Loch Achray campsite to flood on a few occasions during the season as Loch Katrine's water level was lowered, leading to a rise in Loch Achray. A close working relationship with Scottish Water, good staff presence and an early warning system allowed the site to be closed only for short periods of time. Every effort was made to find booked customers alternative accommodation with many using our Loch Chon campsite instead. Refunds were given where this was not possible.

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As remedial work was completed at Loch Achray campsite, all of the 17 pitches were made available, providing an additional 17 camping places. The season ended with 327 available low cost camping places.

Despite the need to take some camping places temporarily off the booking system, analysis of bookings and camping provision shows that availability met demand for camping across the season. While some permit areas and Loch Chon campsite reached 100% occupancy at key weekends in the summer, capacity was available at other locations. A flexible approach to the number of camping places available continues to be required to ensure sustainability, adequate provision and a high quality experience.

5.2 During the third season work focussed again on the three development and delivery areas:

- **Camping Infrastructure and Management:** Management of permit areas across the Camping Management Zones, the operation of Loch Chon campsite in Strathard and the new campsite at Loch Achray on the Three Lochs Forest Drive, installation of bespoke signage on East Loch Lomond designed for walkers and on the Island of Eileen Gorm in Loch Ard; the only island covered by the Camping Management Byelaws.
- **Operational Management:** Ranger patrols of the Camping Management Zones with a focus on education and engagement around responsible camping first, and enforcement only when necessary; administration of the permit booking system both online and over the telephone; and support on engagement where appropriate from Volunteer Rangers; collection of operational management related monitoring data.
- **Communications and Engagement:** Continued awareness-raising activity with tailored messaging to key audiences; seeking opportunities for media coverage; and regular updates and liaison with key stakeholders and communities; collection of engagement related monitoring data.

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#### Camping Infrastructure and Management

##### 5.3 Permit Area Operation

As of the start of the season on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019 there were 45 permit areas across the four Camping Management Zones. Of these, 35 were designated for tent camping and 10 were provided for motorhomes. These permit spaces and pitches for Loch Chon campsite could be booked online, up to eight weeks in advance, via the National Park Authority website, or over the 'phone. In 2018 we also provided the opportunity to make bookings in person on site at Loch Chon and Loch Achray campsites when campsite wardens were present. Permit area charges remained at £3 per tent or motorhome per night (with a maximum bookable number of three nights stay in one permit area).

##### 5.4 Permit Area Use

The following figures summarise a breakdown of permit area use over the third season:

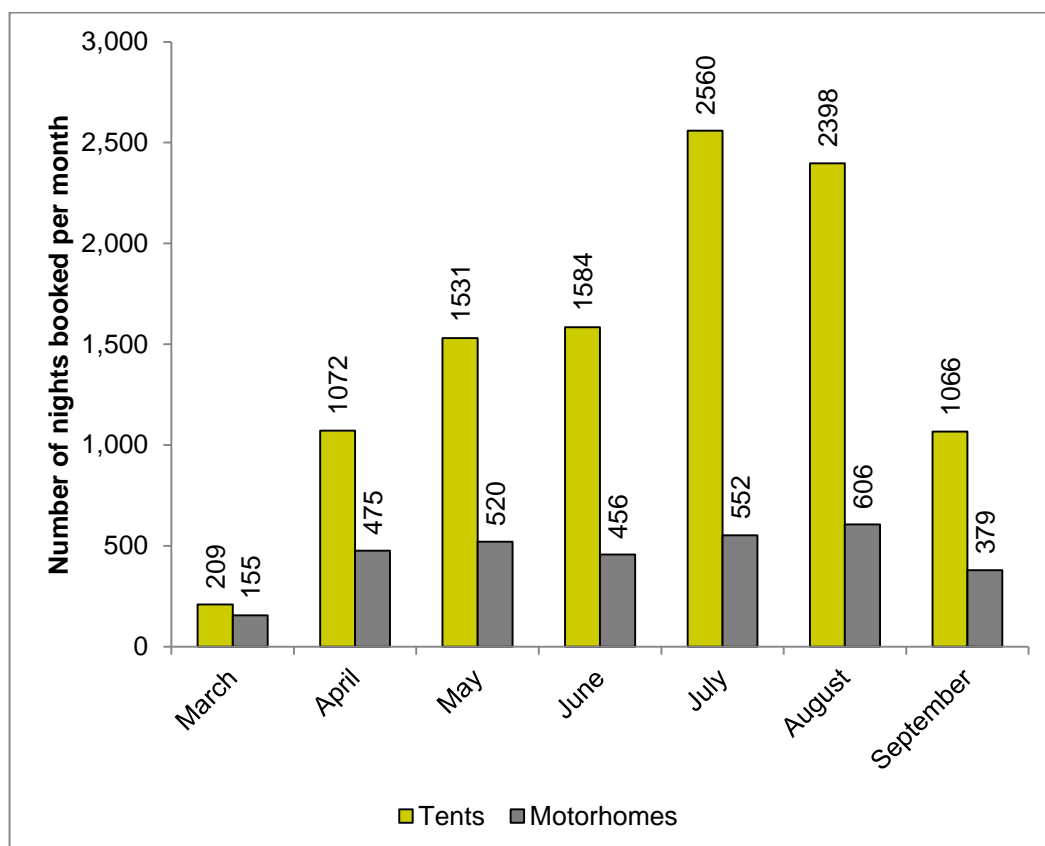
- Over the season a total of 10,508 bookings were taken, an increase of just over 11% from 2018. This is representative of 13,562 nights of camping, which breaks down as shown in the chart below:

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- The total number of people who camped in a permit area over the 2019 season was 23,810 (a 9.9% increase from 2018). This represented 19,596 adults (an 11% increase from 2018) and 4,214 children (a 6% increase from 2018).
- 76% of bookings (7,939) were for tents and 24% (2,569) for motorhomes.
- The majority of bookings (74%) were made for one night stays, 22% of people booked for two nights and the remaining 4% for the maximum allowed stay of three nights in one permit area.
- 59% of permit bookings were from Scotland, 25% were from the rest of the UK and the remaining 16% from the rest of the world. See Appendix 3 for permit area bookings by home locations.

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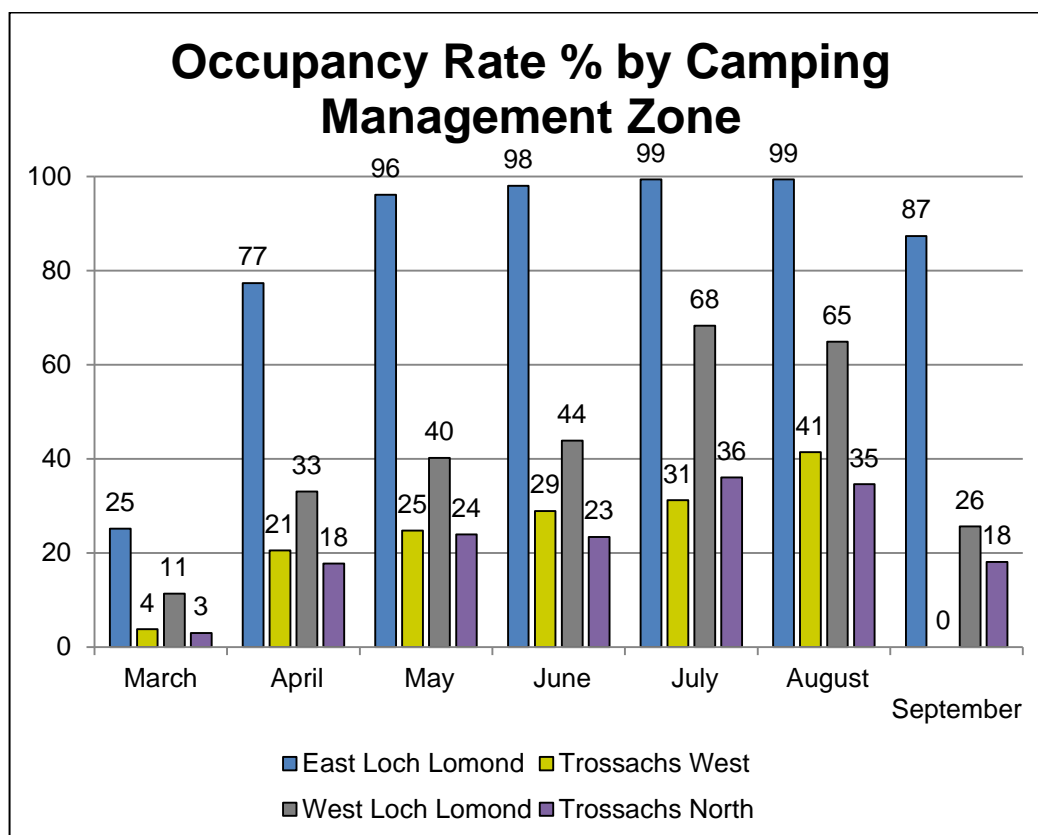
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#### Demand for camping permits

5.5 Camping is largely seasonal so demand for camping tends to fluctuate with weather, weekends, public and school holidays.

- The average occupancy rate (number of nights booked divided by the number available) across all camping permit areas was 27%, up from 25% in 2018.
- During the peak summer period between May and August, occupancy rates increased significantly in most areas with some locations reaching 100% occupancy on key weekends.
- Occupancy rates by Camping Management Zone are shown in the graph below:



*NB East Loch Lomond contains only one camping permit area*

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#### 5.6 Permit Area Visitor Feedback

Everyone who booked into a permit area was sent an online survey on the day they were due to leave inviting them to provide feedback on their stay including any suggested improvements. More than 2,061 people responded to the permit area feedback survey, an increase of just over 21% from 2018. This increase in survey respondents, plus the increase in the overall number of people camping this season shows the satisfaction rates for the permit areas were consistently high.

Feedback was logged daily and any actions arising were prioritised. The following figures provide a summary of that feedback. This information is visualised in Appendix 4.

- 91% of respondents booked their permit before they arrived at their pitch, compared to 88% in 2018;
- 95% of respondents said they found it very easy (67%) or easy (28%) to buy their camping/motorhome permit, compared to 94% in 2018;
- 34% of respondents said they had stayed in one of the National Park's permit areas before. This was a new question introduced this year.
- 88% of respondents said they found it very easy (49%) or easy (39%) to find the permit area they had booked, the same as in 2018.
- 92% of respondents said they would be very likely (70%) or quite likely (22%) to recommend staying over in a permit area, compared to 88% in 2018;
- 44% of respondents had met a National Park Ranger during their stay, compared to 48% in 2018;
- 7% of respondents said they did not feel they were provided with enough information about how the byelaws operate. This was the same figure in 2018.

#### 5.7 Camping Bookings by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) rank

Providing accessible and affordable camping opportunities for people from a wide range of backgrounds is a key priority for the National Park Authority. Using postcode data, an analysis was conducted of permit area bookings from within Scotland, with the results mapped against the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation is:



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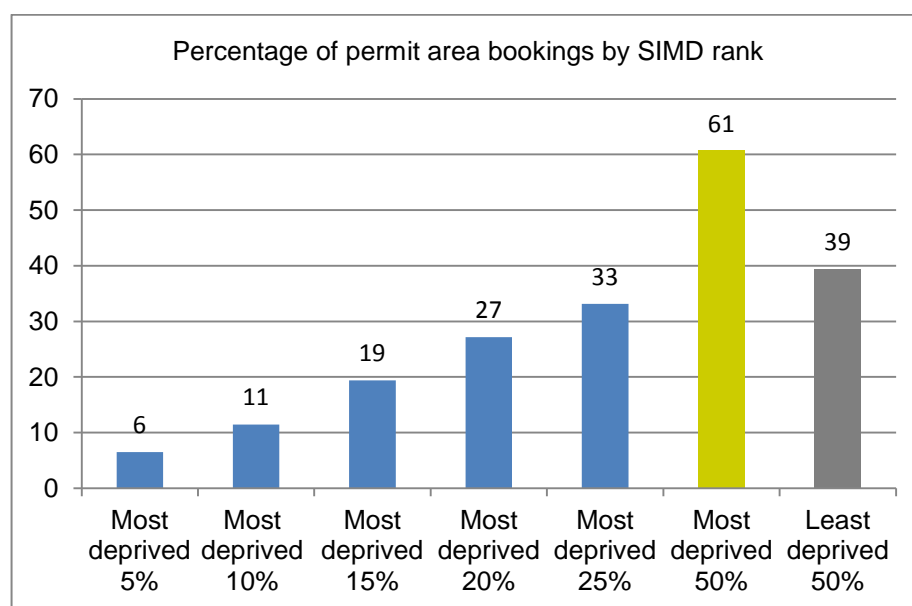
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*“the Scottish Government’s official tool for identifying areas in Scotland concentrations of deprivation by incorporating several different aspects of deprivation (multiple-deprivations) and combining them into a single index.”*

Source: <http://www.isdscotland.org>

All campers residing in Scotland with a postcode form part of the SIMD. Of the 6193 permit area bookings that came from Scotland, 61% of them came from postcodes within 50% of the most deprived areas in Scotland, representing no change from 2018.

The remaining 39% of bookings came from the 50% least deprived areas in Scotland.



#### 5.8 Loch Chon and Loch Achray Campsite Operation and Bookings

Loch Chon campsite continued to provide a semi-formal camping experience with toilet facilities, access to fresh water and allocated parking. Loch Chon campsite has 26 pitches (2 fully accessible pitches) available to book using the same booking system as for the permit areas. The campsite prices remained the same as in 2017 at £7 per adult per night, and children under 16 camping for free. Loch Achray campsite with a total of 17 pitches (with 2 fully accessible pitches) operates in the same manner and pricing model as Loch Chon campsite.

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With an increase in formal camping provision a new role of Campsite Supervisor was introduced to increase support for the Campsite Wardens and oversee the day to day management of campsite operations. The campsite was staffed on a rota system by a team of Campsite Wardens, providing support and advice for campers and undertaking basic maintenance on the site. This season campers were also able to book their camping spaces on site at Loch Chon and Loch Achray, and firewood, midge nets/repellent were also available to buy from the Campsite Wardens. The cost of bags of firewood increased from £5 to £7 but the charge for hiring fire bowls was removed with most pitches (where it was safe to do so), supplied with fire bowls as standard.

The challenges of providing off-grid campsites persisted with consistency and volume of water supplies remaining the main issue. At Loch Chon this was resolved by the installation of a borehole, replacing a burn-fed system. At Loch Achray the yield from the borehole reduced, so water supply was supplemented by bowsers through the season. A burn fed system will be installed to support the borehole for 2020.

To help promote environmental sustainability and reduce costs Loch Achray campsite did not provide any bins on site and encouraged people to minimise their waste and take it home. This approach was successful and also rolled out to Loch Chon campsite for the last month of the season. This will be repeated in 2020 and monitored closely.

The following figures summarise a breakdown of the use of Loch Chon campsite over the third season.

- A total of 1,298 bookings were taken, which was representative of 2,163 nights of camping. This was a 2% increase in bookings and a 10% increase in nights of camping from 2018.
- The total number of people who camped at Loch Chon campsite over the season was 3,252 (a decrease of 1% from 2018). This represented 2,330 adults (a decrease of 3% from 2018) and 922 children (an increase of 2% from 2018). Group sizes were relatively consistent with an average group size consisting of 2.5 people in 2019 and 2018 (1.8 adults and 0.7 children)
- The majority of bookings were made online, with 81% (compared to 84% in 2018) of campers using this booking method, while 7% of people used the telephone booking service and 6% booked upon arrival. The remaining 6% of

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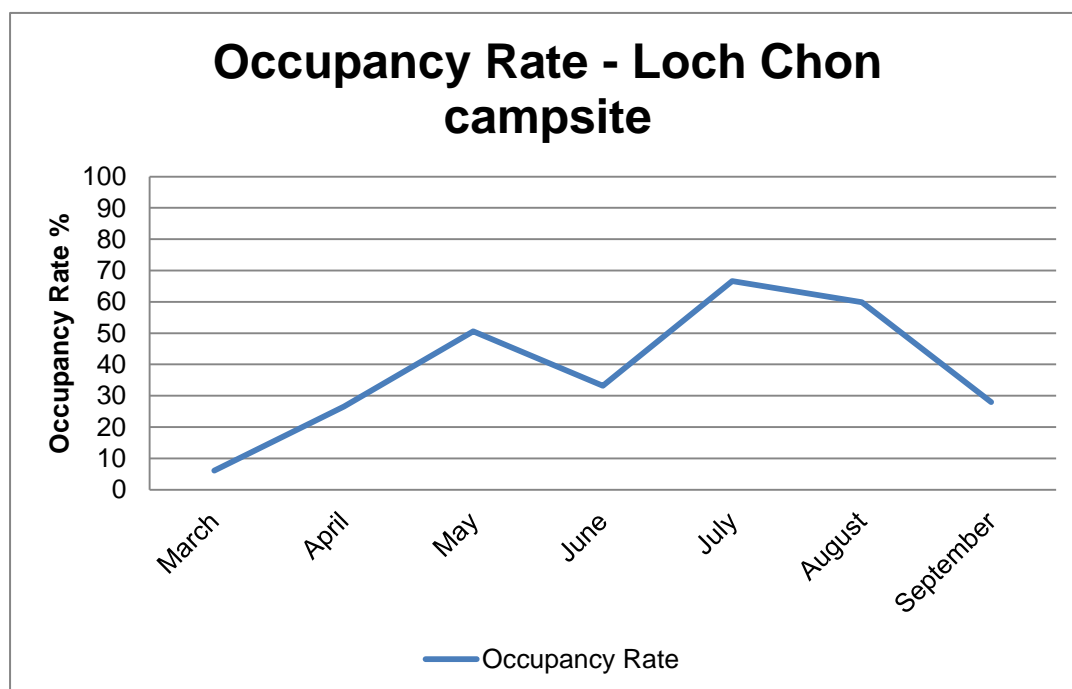
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bookings can be attributed to pre-booked authorisations for organised groups and from people pre-booking at the campsite

- Bookings could be made up to eight weeks in advance of arrival date with 16% of people booking their pitch on the day of arrival down from 17% in 2018.
- The majority of bookings (52%) were made for one night stays, 37% of people booked for two nights and the remaining 11% for the maximum allowed stay of three nights. Small increases were seen for both two and three night bookings compared to 2018.
- 67% of campsite bookings were from Scotland, 23% were from the rest of the UK and the remaining 10% from the rest of the world.

The average occupancy rate at Loch Chon campsite was 39%, up from 36% in 2018. The campsite was fully booked on 19 occasions, and operated at 75-100% capacity on 17 occasions throughout the season.

Occupancy rates at Loch Chon campsite are illustrated below:



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The following figures summarise a breakdown of the use of Loch Achray campsite on its first season.

- A total of 770 bookings were taken, which was representative of 1024 nights of camping.
- The total number of people who camped at Loch Achray campsite over the season was 1368. This represented 1044 adults and 324 children.
- The majority of bookings were made online, with 55% of campers using this booking method, while 7% of people used the telephone booking service and 11% booked upon arrival. The remaining 27% of bookings can be attributed to pre-booked authorisations for organised groups and from people pre-booking at the campsite.
- Bookings could be made up to eight weeks in advance of arrival date with 24% of people booking their pitch on the day of arrival.
- The majority of bookings (72%) were made for one night stays, 23% of people booked for two nights and the remaining 5% for the maximum allowed stay of three nights.
- 75% of campsite bookings were from Scotland, 15% were from the rest of the UK and the remaining 10% from the rest of the world.

The average occupancy rate at Loch Achray Campsite was 28%. The campsite was fully booked on 6 occasions, and operated at 75-100% capacity on 9 occasions throughout the season.

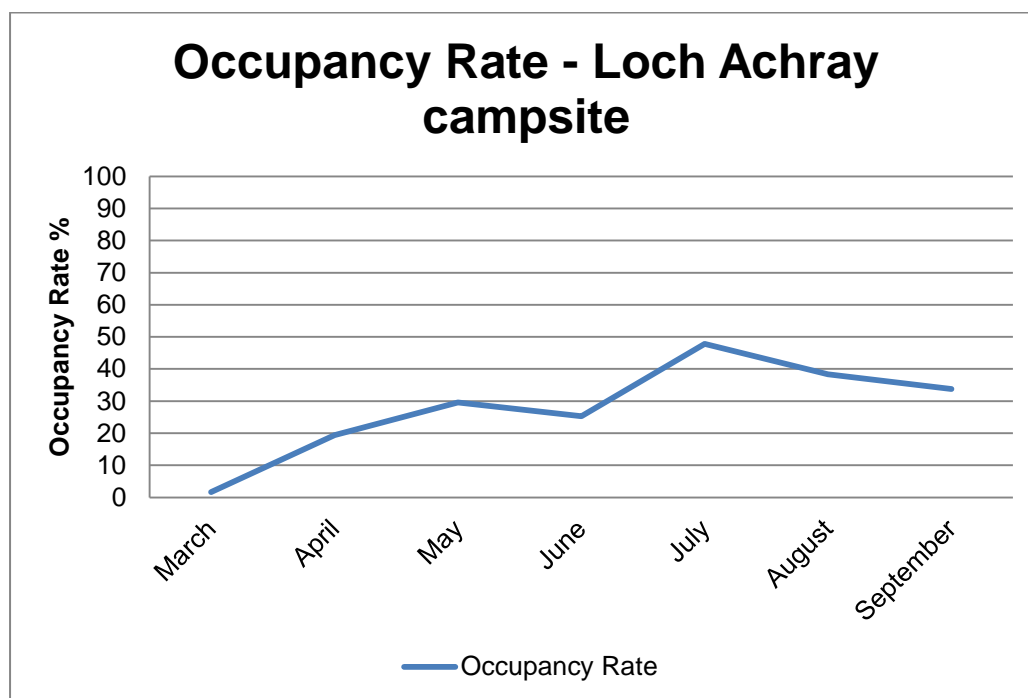
Occupancy rates at Loch Achray campsite are illustrated below:

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#### 5.9 Loch Chon and Loch Achray Campsite Visitor Feedback

As in previous years, people who stayed at Loch Chon campsite were given the opportunity to complete a survey to feedback on their experience and make suggestions for improvements. 415 responses were received; this was an increase of responses of 9% from 2018 and an increased response rate at 32% up from 30% in 2018. The following figures summarise the key findings of the 2019 feedback survey. This information is visualised in Appendix 5:

- 96% of respondents booked their pitch at Loch Chon campsite before they arrived, the same as 2018;
- 99% of respondents found it very easy (82%) or easy (17%) to book their pitch compared with 98% in 2018;
- 96% of respondents felt they were provided with enough information about the campsite compared with 94% in 2018;
- 34% of respondents had stayed in one of the National Park's campsites before;
- 97% of respondents said that they would be very likely (85%) or quite likely (12%) or to recommend Loch Chon campsite, the same as 2018;

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- 92% of respondents met a National Park Ranger during their stay at the campsite compared with 91% in 2018.

As was the case with Loch Chon, people who stayed at Loch Achray campsite were also given the opportunity to complete a survey to feedback on their experience and make suggestions for improvements. 166 responses were received; this was representative of a response rate of 22%. The following figures summarise the key findings of the 2019 feedback survey. This information is visualised in Appendix 6:

- 90% of respondents booked their pitch at Loch Achray campsite before they arrived;
- 98% of respondents found it very easy (76%) or easy (22%) to book their pitch;
- 95% of respondents felt they were provided with enough information about the campsite;
- 36% of respondents had stayed in one of the National Park's campsites before;
- 96% of respondents said that they would be very likely (83%) or quite likely (13%) or to recommend Loch Achray campsite;
- 96% of respondents met a National Park Ranger during their stay at the campsite.

#### Operational Management and Administration

##### 5.10 Administration

Both online and telephone bookings continued to be managed by the National Park Authority Camping Bookings team. In 2019 the Camping Bookings team also included two Modern Apprentices. As well as taking bookings, staff handling camping-related calls were often asked for general visitor advice and were able, in some cases, to help tailor a visitor's camping experience to their needs. As in 2018, the majority of bookings were made on Fridays and Saturdays. Rangers also assisted people on the ground without permits who wished to camp, by completing retrospective bookings online, or via telephone or if required. The experience built up over two seasons allowed for input into ongoing refinements of the booking system and the monitoring programme.

##### 5.11 Permit Authorisations

Organised groups can apply for authorisation to camp for free within Camping Management Zones either within permit areas or outside of permit areas where

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appropriate. This allows groups such as Duke of Edinburgh Award expeditions and youth organisations to camp within the Camping Management Zones at no charge. Information and an online application form are available on the National Park website.

During the 2019 season, the total number of authorisation applications received increased by 42% from 66 in 2018, to 94 in 2019.

- 11 authorisation requests were received and approved for permission to erect a tent inside a Camping Management Zone, but outside of a permit area, down from 12 in 2018 (7 were camping, 4 were events).
- 73 applications are attributed to youth groups and organisations applying to camp within permit areas or at a campsite at no charge.

The remaining applications were either not required or declined. Every effort is made to accommodate these groups where possible, however some applications may be declined based on the unsuitability of the proposal or the applications being received at such short notice that it's not possible to process these before their visit. Six were not required, three were declined due to timeliness or lack of space in a permit area and one application one incomplete. Alternative options were offered for each.

#### 5.12 Ranger Patrols

As in 2018, the National Park Ranger service provided the majority of public facing engagement through a mixture of permanent and seasonal staff. A flexible deployment model was used, allowing Ranger Team Leaders to deploy Rangers to where they were needed most, providing a more responsive service.

The patrols, who work on a shift rota, were primarily tasked with welcoming people to the National Park, providing general advice, raising awareness and understanding of the byelaws and responsible camping behaviour. When people were found to be not complying with the byelaws (e.g. camping in a permit area without a permit), Rangers explained this to them, along with the options on how they could comply. Rangers only enforced the byelaws when people refused to comply. The large volume of visitor numbers to the National Park this year did affect the Ranger patrols mobility at some times and therefore refinements were made during the season to allow maximum coverage of the Camping Management Zones and in particular the very well-used Three Lochs Forest Drive in the Trossachs.

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Whilst on patrol, Rangers also captured visitor-related data including visual counts of people, tents, vehicles, fires and estimated litter levels. In 2019 light touch maintenance on permit areas included litter picking, vegetation control, managing unburied human waste levels and the restoration of fire sites.

#### 5.13 Volunteers

National Park Volunteers assisted in inspiring visitors, providing information and allowing Rangers more time to spend actively patrolling the Camping Management Zones. Following the success of the information station that was introduced in 2018 at the entrance to the Three Lochs Forest Drive, where there are tent and motorhome permit areas. Volunteer Rangers once again worked with Rangers to staff an information station at times of peak demand.

Volunteers also assisted with gathering data for the Your Park Monitoring Programme with a focus on potential displacement of wild camping. The volunteers surveyed the environmental quality of selected sites outside of the Camping Management Zones and where they encountered campers they used a questionnaire to help to establish the reason that they chose to camp in that location and whether this decision was influenced by the introduction of the Camping Management Byelaws. Volunteers are not tasked with enforcing the byelaws.

#### 5.14 Byelaws and the Environmental Protection Act Enforcement

When required, enforcement of the byelaws was carried out by Rangers or Police Scotland officers. The following figures summarise these actions:

- As part of standard practice for byelaw management 733 individuals' details were taken and advice given in relation to alleged contraventions of Camping Management Byelaws 2017 and the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
- From the 733 individuals who had their details taken a total of 8 byelaw cases were reported to the Crown Office by the National Park Authority. Byelaws that were contravened included Unauthorised Camping - Byelaw 6a and having a shelter up overnight 6b, Fires - having a fire and collecting wood causing damage - Byelaw 8a & 8b, Failure to provide details - Byelaw 9 and Obstruction - Byelaw 14.
- Three of these cases reported by the National Park also included offences under the Environmental Protection Act for camping related fly-tipping.



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- During the same time period National Park staff reported two camping related fly-tipping cases to the Crown Office.

An annual report on the partnership Operation Ironworks with Police Scotland and Forestry and Land Scotland is also produced which provides details on the wider antisocial behaviour patrolling and reporting carried out during the season.

#### 5.15 Communications and Engagement

A communications plan was prepared and implemented in the lead up to 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019 and throughout the season.

This focused on raising awareness of the byelaws and responsible camping by providing clear information across a range of channels including:

- Social media
- National Park Authority website
- Media
- Printed materials
- Regular email and face to face updates to community groups and stakeholders.

A communications campaign was also developed specifically to encourage responsible toileting behaviour in the outdoors, with a key emphasis on people coming to camp as well as day visitors heading into remote areas of the National Park.

The 'What to do when you need to poo' campaign, which ran from July until mid-September, supported the trial toileting interventions installed at three popular camping permit areas.

#### 5.16 Digital Communications

Between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 30<sup>th</sup> September the camping pages of our website were viewed 492,927 times (by 112,649 users over 162,669 visits).

Social media posts providing helpful information specifically on camping and the byelaws on Facebook had a total reach of 57,623, and 24,745 on Instagram while Twitter posts achieved 24,575 impressions.

During the peak period of the season, regular social media updates were provided ahead of weekends to highlight reminding people to check and book ahead and

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where there was remaining availability. A particular objective was to encourage more people to book in advance of their visit. 91% of those who responded to camping permit area feedback surveys booked ahead, an increase from 88% in 2018.

Images and infographics were used regularly to make posts more engaging and further our reach as well as using blog posts such as 'Top Tips for enjoying the National Park responsibly'.

Social media was also used to highlight specific messages relating to camping such as responsible fire lighting and toileting behaviour.

In addition to the number of people visiting our website to research and book camping, the landing page for the 'What to do when you need to Poo' toileting campaign had 19,284 views during the campaign period of 1<sup>st</sup> July to 17<sup>th</sup> September.

On social media, total reach during the period on Facebook and Instagram was 135,454. Twitter impressions were over 61,000, with over 20,000 engagements on just 10 tweets.

#### 5.17 Media

The majority of our media coverage this season also focused on specific behaviours around litter, toileting and fire lighting rather than camping in general.

For example, a press release was issued jointly with the Cairngorms National Park and Scottish Natural Heritage in April focusing on fires following a series of damaging fires across Scotland, including in the National Park.

Our 'What to do when you need to Poo' campaign to promote responsible toileting in particular achieved significant coverage with 11 print and online articles, including The Times, Grough and The Great Outdoors Magazine. Three national radio pieces were also broadcast on BBC Radio Scotland – Kaye Adams Show, BBC Radio Four – Farming Today and BBC Alba – An Là.

As in previous years, when media enquiries were received on camping, we took the opportunity to talk about camping and the byelaws positively and reach a wider audience.

#### 5.18 Stakeholder engagement

The Your Park Stakeholder Forum is made up of representatives of community councils, community development trusts, landowners, partner public sector

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organisations and non-governmental organisations including those with an interest in outdoor recreation and access.

We continued regular stakeholder updates to all communities and members of the Stakeholder Forum in the form of an email newsletter outlining the progress of the season. This included an infographic providing key facts and figures in an engaging and easy to digest way. An example of the infographic can be found in Appendix 7.

A meeting of the Stakeholder Forum was held in June 2019 to provide an opportunity for face to face dialogue on the season so far. This also included a focus on the new Camping Development Framework, a trial designed to reduce the amount of irresponsible toileting associated with camping and an overview of the Your Park Monitoring Programme.

A further meeting of the Stakeholder Forum will be held in December 2019 which as well as including an end of season update will include the opportunity to discuss two of the interim conclusions from the Your Park Monitoring framework and discuss the future format and scope of the Stakeholder Forum.

Individual face to face meetings were also held with a range of stakeholders including landowners, partners and NGOs. Written updates were provided to community councils throughout the year.

Partners and stakeholders were issued a communications pack ahead of the launch of the toileting campaign which led to significant stakeholder support online.

The campaign also generated significant interest from other organisations across Scotland, the UK and even one organisation in the United States all expressing an interest in using our campaign materials to address toileting issues in their areas.

#### 5.19 Printed Materials:

The National Park Authority's 'Camping in the Park' and 'Angling in the Park' leaflets were reprinted ahead of the 2019 season. These are distributed to key locations across the National Park and used as engagement tools by the Rangers, other staff and Volunteer Rangers when on patrol or attending events.

The 'Camping in the Park' leaflet provides information on the range of camping options available in the National Park and includes listings of all campsites and permit areas.

## 6. Monitoring

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6.1 The Your Park monitoring programme was devised primarily to meet the specific monitoring requirements identified within the Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report.

The monitoring plan spans a five-year period, with some data being collected prior to 2017. The purpose of reporting on the programme is to:

- Provide evidence of the effectiveness of the Camping Management Byelaws 2017 and the associated management measures on the environment and irresponsible behaviour related to camping;
- Highlight additional environmental and socioeconomic effects of the 2017 Camping Development Strategy (now Framework);
- Underpin work planning, operational decision making and prioritisation;
- Inform continual improvement of processes and systems;
- Inspire and ensure continued support and engagement with partners to deliver the Camping Development Framework 2019-23.

There are 15 indicator questions associated with the monitoring programme that use a variety of data sources. These include;

1. Has there been any change in the environment at popular lochshore locations?
2. Is there a decrease / increase in water pollution and is there a change in water quality along popular lochshore locations?
3. Has there been a change in the amount and type of litter left at popular locations?
4. What type and number of facilities are available for camping across the National Park?
5. How are the key visitor sites being used?
6. Have the number of visitors camping at each location changed?
7. Is there any evidence of displacement of issues to other areas?
8. Has the visitor profile changed and where are people coming from?
9. Has there been an impact on local business?
10. Has there been a change in the level of antisocial behaviour at popular loch-shore locations?
11. Has there been any change in the type of activities at popular loch-shore locations?
12. What is the impact on local communities?
13. How have people responded to new management interventions and what has been the level of acceptance?
14. Who isn't coming to the National Park and why?
15. What are the positive experiences had by those living and visiting?

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The observable impacts from three full seasons of the camping management byelaws will be laid out in the three-year report to Scottish Ministers.

#### 7. Operational Review of the 2019 Season and looking forward to 2020

7.1 The preparation and operation of the third season of the camping byelaws has been guided by experiences and feedback gathered from the first season and continuously throughout 2019. Lessons have been learnt from testing new systems and procedures as well as the wide range of feedback leading to refinements and improvements on the ground.

7.2 After the completion of the third season, alongside the feedback from permit area users, an operational review process was carried out by the National Park Authority to capture learnings from those involved in the programme.

7.3 Key challenges and areas for improvement that have been identified are:

- The need to reduce instances where permit areas were occupied by campers without permits and motorhome spaces occupied by car users;
- Further reduce littering, irresponsible toileting and fire lighting throughout key places in the National Park;
- Balancing the requirements of campers and day visitors on the Three Lochs Forest Drive to ensure both user groups enjoy a high quality visitor experience;
- Using the data gathered to support a solution to increase the sustainability of camping at Loch Earn;
- Improving the capacity water supply at Loch Achray campsite.

Looking ahead to 2020 and the fourth operational year of the Camping Management Byelaws we will also focus on:

- Improvements to specific National Park Authority owned and managed visitor facilities using funding secured from the Scottish Government Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund. In the autumn of 2019 a waste disposal point for motorhomes and campervans was installed at Tarbet on the west side of Loch Lomond, this is the first publicly available facility of this type in the National Park. This model will be monitored and details shared with partners and community groups to help increase this type of provision not only within the National Park but at a national level. Additionally upgrades were made to the toilets at Tarbet and Inveruglas which will have 24hr access to support the camping permit areas. The next step of

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the programme will focus on our facilities on the East side of Loch Lomond and improve further the visitor experience for campers and day visitors alike.

- Work with partners and landowners to encourage the increased provision of tent based camping opportunities where there is a gap in provision and to provide overnight parking opportunities for motorhome and campervan users.
- Work with partners to investigate sustainable transport solutions to enable campers to minimise the use of cars where possible.
- Investigate the current provision and future requirement for accessible camping provision in the National Park with a user based approach.
- Working with Forestry and Land Scotland we will access the camping provision on the Three Lochs Forest Drive and balance of day visitor experience which may require re-siting of some permit areas along with finding solutions to reduce the instances of speeding and people driving in the wrong direction.
- Loch Achray campsite water supply improvement and using the three years of information gathered from operating campsites to assess future improvements and efficiency improvements.
- We will expand this year's irresponsible toileting trial to 2020 with additional areas and investigate other sustainable sanitation solutions that may be able to be employed. We will also adapt the campaign materials and share these along with a monitoring system and guide to partners, communities and land owners that want to replicate the trial on their land holdings.
- Work with partners to discuss and agree approaches to tackling irresponsible camp fires in the National Park with in season messaging and preparation for a monitored campaign in 2021.
- Reassess the monitoring requirements for camping and visitor management in the National Park, refine systems to make in season management decisions based on data and share with partners where appropriate. Investigate increasing community based monitoring to increase monitoring coverage and to help provide evidence for local issues to enable a proportionate management response.
- Increase the opportunities for purchasing camping permits in the field at specific locations in the National Park, especially where mobile 'phone reception is poor.
- Review of the authorisation process and investigation to improve the promotion of the scheme to other groups where appropriate;
- Review continuous improvements to our staff training programme, Ranger deployment model, maintenance regimes, monitoring programme and data collection methods.

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7.4 Work will also respond to any recommendations from Scottish Ministers from the three-year report of the operation of the Camping Management Byelaws which will be submitted to Scottish Ministers in March 2020.