

# Notes from group discussions

## Proposals for an East Loch Lomond Traffic Management Plan – Finding a Solution Together



14:00 – 16:00 Hrs 28<sup>th</sup> August 2018

### Table 1

#### **Improving Connections / New forms of transport**

The group was in favour of utilising the new pontoon at Balmaha for ferry waterbus to Rowardennan/Balloch and further afield, linking up journeys better with existing facilities and services.

An idea to run a free or subsidised bus was generally considered a good option as it would encourage use but it would need to link up with the waterbus service and have cycle racks to encourage active travel.

#### **Car parks – expansion, redesign or charging**

The group noted there is less parking than there used to be. Key pieces of land were identified that could be opened up temporarily for parking to help cope with peak demand (not all year round). At the existing Balmaha car park there should be additional spaces where possible, improvements to the flow of the car park and improved signage.

When discussing new charging for parking it was highlighted that there is a possible negative impact on local businesses.

#### **Improvement or promotion of existing bus service**

It was felt that the current 309 bus service is rarely used. Cars are used more often and this will always be the case, families want to bring their stuff and drive to destination. Any improvement in the bus services would also need improvement in the coach parking facilities, as currently cars are parking in this area.

#### **Evidence base / Understanding behaviours**

It was agreed that we need to determine how long people are staying for in each location to better understand activity and parking needs. This means understanding of both short term and longer term visitors and how the area is being used (possibly through use of visitor surveys). There is also a need for traffic counters at Drymen, Balmaha car park and north of Balmaha, and it would be beneficial to receive the results in real time.

#### **Other discussion points included:**

- Creation of an operational plan that better copes with peak planning
- It was felt expansion of the current boatyard with more facilities (water/waste disposal) for personal craft is not sustainable
- Creation of more satellite visitor attractions/sites with facilities along the loch shore would provide more places for people to go, where they could simply drive, park and be at the destination (similar to American west coast)
- Greater publication and further improvements to the current cycle path, combining this with the aforementioned bus/waterbus services

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- Web cam in the style of Traffic Scotland which could show Balmaha car park and how busy it is at any time
- Variable methods of roadside messaging to advise visitors of parking capacity before arriving at Balmaha

### **Table 2**

#### **Effectively use current enforcement powers / Create new enforcement model**

It was felt by the group that telling someone “you’ll get a parking ticket” is not enough of a deterrent anymore so perhaps a new enforcement model might be preferable, especially as under the current enforcement model it is sometimes too dangerous to issue a parking ticket (for instance on a national speed limit road).

It was noted that Forestry Commission car parks used to use advisory notices and then fixed penalty notices through a third partner as an enforcement measure. In general there was a high honesty rate for these, despite intermittent problems with card readers to collect the fine.

Recovery of vehicles that are parked illegally could be an option. This would mean having a recovery vehicle on standby in an appropriate location (perhaps in Balloch or Drymen). At present vehicle recovery is often not used due to cost, however it was seen as viable if three cars are recovered in a day which would not be an issue in Balmaha. A solution like this would also need to be linked to smart signage on the approach the Balmaha warning drivers that cars may be recovered if parked illegally or dangerously.

Necessary partners to make this option happen:

- Police Scotland
- Stirling Council

#### **Improving connections / New forms of transport**

The idea of a seasonal Park & Ride service seemed favourable but there were some reservations about how popular this might be, as it would mean having to separate visitors from their cars which they may not be willing to give up.

A regular water bus route or Park & Ride located at another destination adds a circular element to the visitor experience. This would need to balance the visitor pressures of the parking destination, as this would not work if located somewhere where there are already over tourism concerns. If priced competitively these services could be seen as a better alternative (cheaper) to a parking ticket. These would, however, need to run a regular service though as a ‘day out’ for visitors can mean different times.

Partners needed to make this work:

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- A landowner would need to be prepared to let land for the parking
- National Park Authority promotion would be important

A short term solution could be to work with existing companies to perhaps increase their public transport services and make them more workable in terms of running times to and from Balmaha (waterbus and bus).

### **Car parks – expansion, redesign or charging**

Feedback from the table highlighted that there is already a cohort of visitors who arrive in Balmaha expecting to pay for parking, so while expanding car park charging could upset some visitors for others it is already expected. It was noted that the Lake District National Park has similar traffic management pressures and charge quite a high amount for parking but visitors are still willing to pay it for the experience.

It was mainly felt that the idea of bringing forward new car parks or expanding existing car parks would be not preferable as they encourage more people to come rather than managing the problem. If the option of new car parks is explored it was felt that addition infrastructure would be needed to go along with this. Organised events which take up parking spaces should also perhaps not be permitted over busy weeks (i.e. bank holidays) or peak times, as they take parking capacity away from visitors.

### **Install real-time vehicle counters and smart signage**

The group agreed that both options would be a good idea in the long term but temporary signage was needed in the short term (next season), especially signage to make penalties more visible. Temporary signage should be in key locations in the car park but also on the drive to Balmaha, perhaps stretching back to Milton of Buchanan. Visit Scotland and Transport Scotland were suggested as partners to help deliver these signs, along with Stirling Council and the National Park Authority.

### **Promotion of alternative destinations**

Social media promotion of alternative destinations to visit ahead of busy weeks was noted as a positive step this year; however it was noted that this might have an impact for local businesses. Aberfoyle and Arrochar were both mentioned as potential destinations to promote when East Loch Lomond is at capacity (overflow car park at Aberfoyle offers 170 spaces). However it was argued that the visitor experience at both locations is not the same as East Loch Lomond so this may not fit the bill for many visitors. In which case we need to develop promotion for a range of destinations linked to weather forecast and time of year to give visitors a range of visitor experience options. It was also noted that this solution could be linked to the idea of installing smart signage which, if appropriately located, could deliver messages to drivers about alternative destinations to give them enough time to make the decision to go to elsewhere if East Loch Lomond is at capacity.

### **Other discussion points included:**

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- More signage to make the penalties for traffic infractions more visual. This would still need to be balanced with existing street furniture and making sure that these did not encroach on the views/landscape of the area
- Need for visitor education (perhaps National Park Authority endorsed literature?)
- More social media messaging to raise awareness of the issue and also offer inspiration of alternative destinations
- Pre-warning of parking capacity through sat-navs