

Loch Lomond conservation charity backs Balloch tourism plans.

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Call for imaginative travel and transport action plan to transform Balloch and Loch Lomond into a leading green tourism destination

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Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs, the independent conservation and heritage charity covering the National Park, has confirmed conditional support for the £40 million Lomond Banks tourism and leisure development in Balloch at the southern gateway to Loch Lomond

In a detailed submission lodged this week with the National Park Authority, the Friends have set out 8 reasons why the development should be given the go ahead subject to stringent planning conditions being attached relating to the adoption of a travel and transport action plan and a requirement for the developer to enter a legally binding agreement to guarantee community use of the indoor and outdoor recreational facilities.

Friends Chair, James Fraser said: " We have carefully considered the latest outline planning application for this strategically important site which, in our view, is the optimum, and possibly last location, on Loch Lomondside for major tourist and recreation development as it has the benefit of being right next to a public transport hub with easily accessible rail, bus, and waterbus services.

"It has also been zoned for tourist and leisure development in Local Development Plans and various policy documents for a considerable period and was bought back in the 1990s by Scottish Enterprise for this purpose after decades of being blighted industrial derelict land.

"We welcome the plans coming forward for Balloch at the present time as the village is facing an uncertain and challenging future as a thriving tourist destination. Despite the village being one of the main gateways to the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, it is not realising its full tourism potential as a green and sustainable 'must visit' tourist destination.

"There is an urgent need to regenerate and strengthen the appeal of the village to support and sustain existing businesses and the associated jobs, as well as creating many additional year-round employment opportunities which are easily accessible by public transport.

"We believe there is a real opportunity here to develop a truly sustainable development with an imaginative and forward-thinking travel and transport action plan that could make a positive contribution to the climate and nature emergency strategies for the Loch Lomond area and help address the traffic concerns being raised in some consultation responses.

"The proposed Lomond Banks development could be the catalyst for an imaginative and collaborative Loch Lomond sustainable mobility initiative which is badly needed in the area to encourage modal shifts from cars to other forms of transport, to reduce the carbon footprint of tourists and day visitors and to help transform Balloch and Loch Lomond into what should be a leading green tourism destination."

In their submission the Friends highlight there are good examples elsewhere such as Center Parcs, Lake Garda and in Alpine villages where visitors are encouraged not to use their cars and considerable success has been achieved by providing sufficient activities on site to deter car travel and to provide attractive alternatives to the car for getting out and about.

Company Contact:

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Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs

T. 07496 433134

E. info@lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk

W. <https://www.lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk>

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