

## Loch Lomond conservation charity backs Luss Visitor Centre community asset transfer

Monday 26 September, 2022

At a National Park Board meeting today (Monday 26/9/2022) plans to dispose of the vacant Luss Visitor Centre and adjacent land next to the main village car park and beach were approved as they were no longer considered to be of strategic importance to the Park Authority's plans despite this being the busiest village in the National Park with around 1 million visitors annually.

Earlier this summer, the independent conservation charity, Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs strongly backed an approach by the community of Luss through the Community Development Trust to secure the use of the visitor centre building under the transfer of community assets arrangements, but this has been held up due to a requirement to amend the Trust's constitution.

The Friends have reaffirmed their full support for a community asset transfer and have urged the Park Authority to hold off going to the open market to allow time for a community asset transfer to be progressed to the next stage.

Friends Chair, James Fraser said: "The Luss Visitor Centre and extensive area of adjacent land wedged between the busy main Luss car park and beach are far too important public assets not to be put to good use by the community to assist villagers with the considerable visitor management challenges they are currently facing.

"In the past businesses have been willing to pay a substantial rental charge for the building and funds from this source could be used to cross-subsidise some urgently needed visitor management measures to ease the plight of villagers.

"I am confident that the villagers can step up to the challenge of taking on these assets and using them to good effect as they strive to take more control of over-tourism which is currently eroding the quality of life for residents as well as the overall quality of the visitor experience in this attractive lochside conservation village."

Over the past year a series of Luss Summit meetings have been held at the request of the Luss community to try and address the growing problems associated with over tourism. These meetings have been chaired by local MSP Jackie Baillie and attended by villagers, Luss Estates, the Friends as well as senior representatives from public agencies including Police Scotland, Argyll & Bute Council and the Park Authority.

This led to drawing up an action plan to try and address the problems arising from visitor pressures, including an increasing number of incidents of anti-social behaviour, extensive littering, and irresponsible behaviour by jet skiers in Luss Bay.

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