

Loch Lomond Conservation Group welcomes Lomond Banks Go Ahead

Wednesday 21 May, 2025

The long-established conservation charity, Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs, has warmly welcomed the decision by the Scottish Government's Reporter to approve the planning appeal against the refusal by the National Park of an outline application, for a £43 million tourist and leisure development on two former industrial and hotel sites in Balloch at the southern end of Loch Lomond. This includes rescuing two disused historic buildings, building two hotels and 125 self-catering lodges and apartments and associated leisure, catering and retail facilities.

Friends Chair, John Urquhart said: "The Friends stance in consistently backing this application has been vindicated by the findings and recommendation of the Scottish Government's Reporter to grant outline planning consent for this development which will help regenerate Balloch and ensure the village realises its potential as a high-quality gateway to Loch Lomond.

The Reporter concluded (as we did some time ago) that it offered an opportunity to deliver multiple conservation, transport linkage and economic benefits on sites long identified as optimum locations in the National Park for tourism and recreation development.

We look forward to contributing positively to the next stage in refining the proposals on a partnership basis with the developer and other stakeholders, including the National Park, to ensure the conservation and other benefits are maximised.

The Friends' past Chairman, James Fraser, who led the Friends' case at various stages of the application and appeal, said:

"This is a great result following a great team effort by a number of conservation, heritage and access groups and individuals and it has been well worth all the flak we have collectively taken over the past few years for supporting this much needed development on sites zoned for this type of use for more than 40 years.

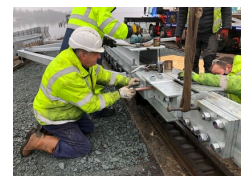
The 80 page Reporter's assessment resoundingly demolished the reasons cited by objectors and the National Park planners for refusing this development and in particular the assertion that the previous historical use of the West Riverside site for a rail link, extensive railway sidings and a 70 berth caravan park should be ignored. He accepted the argument that despite some reclamation works having taken place, it was still a brownfield site with pockets of polluted land due to former industrial uses.

Congratulations to everyone involved in steering this to a successful outcome against all the odds and in the face of opposition based on a campaign with misleading imagery many miles away from the proposed development sites."

John Urquart added: "Those who really want to *Save Loch Lomond* would be well advised to turn their social media expertise to challenging Transport Scotland's ill advised "Low road" option to upgrade the A82 north of Tarbert which will cause major traffic diversion and delay over many years along with extensive damage to ancient woodlands and beautiful loch shore scenery."

"The Lomond Banks development impacts on less than 80 metres of previously developed loch frontage much altered by former sand and gravel extraction and used as a 70 berth holiday caravan park for many years near the Loch Lomond Shores retail crescent, the historic PS Maid of the Loch and Winch House as well as the Park Authority's Duncan Mills Slipway & Building. While Mr Greer is continuing to vigorously campaign against this he remains silent on the Scottish Government's plans to carve up 8km of sensitive loch frontage on the bonnie banks north of Tarbet with a series of extensive rock cuts, giant causeways and the removal of large areas of ancient oak woodlands as part of the A82 upgrade when there is a perfectly viable and less intrusive and disruptive 'High Road' alternative above the West Highland Railway Line."

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Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs

T. 07496 433134

E. [jennifer.plunkett@lochlomond-trossach...](mailto:jennifer.plunkett@lochlomond-trossachs.org)

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

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