

Trossachs Traffic Chaos

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Trossachs Traffic Chaos Requires Urgent Action

Inconsiderate roadside parking causes congestion problems

After another weekend of traffic chaos in the heart of the Trossachs with cars parking indiscriminately on both roadside verges beside Loch Achray and near the popular Ben A'an footpath, the chief of the National Park's conservation charity has called for urgent steps to be taken to avoid another year of chaos.

James Fraser, Chairman of the Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs said:" We are only a few weeks into the 2020 and there have already been major problems on at least 5 days with snakelike lines of cars parked on the verges of the main Trossachs arterial road which has poor sightlines. This has led traffic coming to a standstill with larger vehicles such as coaches and emergency vehicles unable to get through which is of great concern and this requires to be urgently addressed to avoid a further year of chaos."

He added:" It is great to see more people becoming active and hillwalking in the area following the recent investments in hill path improvements, as part of the Mountains and the People project involving several agencies, but unfortunately this was done in isolation of other much needed improvements such as the creation of additional off road parking. The small 30 space car park at the foot of Ben A'an simply can't cope and is often full by 9.00am."

He also considers bold steps should be taken to introduce a regular eco shuttle bus service linking the popular hotspots with Aberfoyle and Callander to ease congestion and improve the area's green credentials. The Friends led an unsuccessful bid for funding early last year to introduce pilot eco bus shuttle services in the Trossachs and on East Loch Lomondside.

His calls for action were backed up by Gordon Allan, Managing Director of the Steamship Sir Walter Scott who said: " Any time there is good weather thousands of people take the opportunity to visit the Trossachs for sightseeing and outdoor recreation and the limited car parking infrastructure is unable to cope. When I was on duty at the weekend I saw for myself the major problems created along the Brig o Turk/Loch Katrine corridor as a result of roadside parking by hillwalkers heading to Ben A'an which now attracts over 60,000 walkers a year and this is now a regular occurrence.

I am aware there are plans to introduce a clearway which is welcome but this is likely to simply move more pressure for parking to our site at Trossachs Pier and other parts of the Trossachs. There is clearly a need for more investment in car parking and a revival of the previous efforts to introduce a shuttle bus service linking the heart of the Trossachs with surrounding communities."

The Sir Walter Scott Steamship Trust with the support of the National Park and the Friends has just lodged a £400,000 funding bid with Visit Scotland for car parking and other infrastructure improvements at Loch Katrine and for refreshing signing and information around the Trossachs Trail to help relieve some of the visitor pressure.

The traffic concerns are shared by Trossachs Community Council who have identified this as a major issue in the recently published Community Action Plan and there are calls for agencies such as Forest & Land Scotland and the Park Authority to work in partnership to improve car parking at honeypot locations such as Ben A'an.

Ends

Photo captions :Road verge parking near Ben A'an last weekend which is now a regular year round occurrence

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