

Case Study:
CLUNIE LOCH, PERTH AND KINROSS

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Perth and Kinross Community Safety team have long been aware of issues around Clunie Loch, one of the five lochs that sit between Blairgowrie and Dunkeld.

Clunie is the 'jewel in the crown' from a visitor perspective, with easy access to the water via the road adjacent to the lochside and small sandy beaches making it extremely popular with campers, picnickers, swimmers paddleboarders and the like. It is also a SSSI

Between 2018 and 2020 residents started to notice the numbers of visitors rising very significantly and some of their behaviour deteriorating, this was particularly the case the following year 2020-21 as lockdown regulations were eased .

The negative impact visitors were having on the quality of life, the environment and the visitor experience were clear and the reputation of the area was also being affected.

In 2020 the Community Safety Team began to coordinate resources to tackle issues across the whole of Highland Perthshire – this involved: Police Fire Forestry and Land Scotland, Loch Rannoch Conservation Association Safer Communities Wardens, Unpaid Work Team, community groups but activity was reactive rather than proactive and unsustainable. Staff began working with communities with an eye to the new season in 2021 to ensure there would be no repeat.

The multi-agency Visitor Management Working Group was established by Perth and Kinross Council and a manager was seconded to a new role of Visitor Management Coordinator. This VMG was charged with tactical oversight of arrangements and the coordinator with the operational implementation of the multi-agency plan.

The Coordinator held a number of public meetings with residents impacted by the behaviour of visitors around Clunie and discussions were extended throughout the region to include elected members, community councils, businesses, and other stakeholders such swimmers and paddleboarders. Social Media and online meetings played a significant part in the planning and it's likely, without these, the consultation would have been narrower and subsequent activity much less understood. The team understood the need to build a positive relationship with our stakeholders based on transparency and trust.

As a consequence of the consultation:

- Local people identified 19 informal parking places
- Local farmers, the unpaid work team and Breedon Aggregates collaborated too formalise the parking places

- Perth and Kinross council roads team implemented 2 separate clear ways round the Loch to manage parking
- Established a managed access point for commercial users
- Two sites were identified for temporary toilets
- Community letter picks supported by council staff was organised
- Old signage was removed and you clearer consistent signage was introduced

As part of the wider strategy, funding was obtained from the council and other sources which meant

- The coordinator's post was established as a full time role
- New Visitor Management Rangers Service was established



'Just a quick note to say the rangers at Loch Clunie are very nice and that we really appreciate the work they do. They are very polite and approachable and always ready to help.' (Visitor)

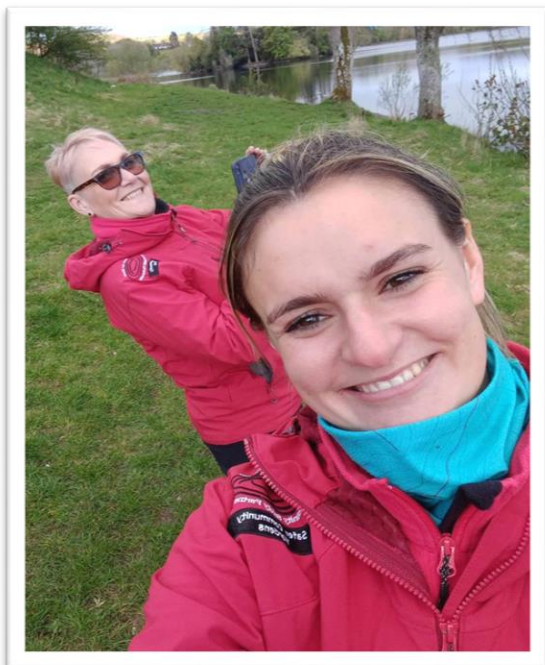
We enjoy the outdoors on regular basis and it has become evident (sadly) that the rangers job is necessary to keep these beauty spots beautiful.

Very impressed with this council initiative! and very glad to see that campers have started to be aware of their responsibilities.

All the best'

These were vital to providing the consistency of staffing and a regular presence throughout the season, judged necessary, to build a trusting relationship between the partnership, communities and visitors. This presence was provided by the Visitor Management Rangers, Safer Communities Wardens, Parking Attendants, Waste Services, the Police and the Unpaid Work Team. The multi-agency team communicated by mobile phone with the numbers being circulated on a joint operational order updated weekly. The team adopted 'what 3 words' as the chosen location methodology and the four E's approach 'explain engage encourage and enforce' with the multi-agency team taking care of the first 3, and police were only called when 'enforcement' was required. This meant mess and litter, inconsiderate parking was dealt with very quickly with these interventions dissuading others from following suit this approach worked extremely well both at Clunie and across the whole area and the contrast in the environment and the atmosphere compared to previous years was much commented upon.

'There is optimism that changes made around Clunie Loch are helping ... the police and Visitor Rangers are very visible; toilets are reducing the amount of human waste along the shoreline. Gritted parking bays are obvious, and boulders are making the clearway even clearer. Thanks to all who are making this a better summer than last.'
(Resident)



Safer Communities Wardens Erin Torrie and Debbie Hay are happy to report things were tranquil at Clunie Loch this weekend – visitors all well behaved!

These multi-agency inventions have been successful this year but only because of the contribution of the local communities, businesses and landowners. It's fair to say, the strict COVID restrictions during the early part of 2021 helped as we recruited new staff and this was further supported possibly by low expectations on the part of communities based on their experience during previous years.

The VMG will continue to meet throughout the close season as our response moves incrementally from the reactive to the

proactive under the leadership of Tourism and Economic Development who have already been involved in sponsoring a number of investments in high-quality infrastructure developments at Loch Leven, Aberfeldy, Grantully and elsewhere. The

lessons learned at Clunie are being shared with other communities and partnership approach remains the key to building trust

The improvements this year will have increased expectations for 2022 and the Visitor Management Group is clear about the need to continue to invest in communities and this fragile environment. This winter will see a programme of engagement and consultation with communities as we seek to develop further improvements that will benefit visitors, residents, businesses, and landowners alike.

'I would like to praise the Warden at Loch Clunie this season, for her sheer commitment, hard work, being extremely friendly and with an very approachable manner.

Having used the Loch a great deal as a local person I was delighted to have met Nikki Murphy and congratulate her on work and all she has done to preserve what is a place of beauty with wonderful wildlife, natural habit, but with visitors who aren't all exemplary in their personal hygiene and or thoughts for others.

With thanks'