

Loss of hotels in National Park a cause for concern



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Charity worried about the dilution of tourism and drift towards dormitory towns and villages

Friends of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs, the independent conservation and heritage charity covering the National Park, in comments submitted on several recent planning applications, has expressed concern about the growing number of small and medium size hotels being lost to private residential accommodation and other uses which is accelerating the trend towards creating more dormitory settlements and reducing local employment opportunities.

There are currently three applications before the Park Authority in Callander, St Fillans and Kilmun for change of use of hotels and this follows on from the loss of a raft of hotels in recent years due to the impact of COVID 19, major increases in running costs, staffing difficulties and owner lifestyle changes with conversion to private residential or self-catering holiday accommodation being more profitable and less demanding.

Friends Chair, James Fraser said: "It is very disappointing to see the scale of loss of family run hotels in the National Park in recent times, but this is inevitable given the major challenges and pressures faced by owners in such a difficult trading environment

"With the loss of smaller hotels and the retrenchment of some of the larger hotel operations some of the tourist appeal of the National Park is being diluted and there is a real danger of more communities becoming dormitory commuter and retirement retreats and lacking in the diversity and vibrancy derived from having a blend of enterprises locally with employment opportunities.

“The Park Authority is currently preparing a new 5-year Partnership Plan for the National Park which will set out key challenges and proposed actions. We fully anticipate the Park Authority will major on the climate and nature emergencies, but it is also vitally important that they also try and tackle the people dimension to reverse the drift towards creating more dormitory towns and villages.”

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