

ARISAIG & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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Attention of Nikki Milne,
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Response to SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Re. Consultation Document on Coastal & Marine National Parks

This Community Council remains undecided on whether we are for or against the idea of a CMNP. In spite of all our efforts we remain, in common with many other Community Councils, unable to get enough information from Scottish Executive

On page 11 you enquire what we think the potential Benefits might be. We must say that we have not been told enough about the proposals to decide; but what this area needs and wants are :-

Affordable Housing for locals

Better public transport and infrastructure

That our fishing be managed in a sustainable manner and **especially to benefit local fishermen.**

Fish farms are a very important local business both fin fish and filter feeders. We are keen to ensure that these remain and that within reason are allowed to develop.

A boost to tourism to extend the season but not to end up like Bowness on Windermere. In high season we are already full to existing capacity.

Increased parking

You mention on page 3 "the conservation and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage"

We hope that this would include The Gaelic language and the Celtic music , all important local traditions, and the archeology.

Economic improvements, jobs for locals, training and opportunities for local youngsters.

Financial assistance will be needed to boost existing businesses

BUT we are very concerned that any benefits could be completely offset by an increase in the bureaucracy we already suffer.

On pages 13-15 you ask what we think should be the location

We are really only interested in our location Lochaber and South Skye. Those that are interested would support the proposal for this area, those that are against would say any other area. Most people we have discussed this with complain about LACK OF INFORMATION particularly on your definition of the word Coastal does this mean 10 metres or 10 miles above High Water.

On pages 39 -41 you ask about functions and powers. Again you have given no details of what these might be. How then do you expect us to comment.

We do not consider it should be the CMNP's job to manage operations but certainly to encourage and support good practice.

We are particularly concerned about the word "regulator" perhaps this makes us think of George Orwell 1984. **We hope not**

Our preference would be for as much local involvement and control as possible

On pages 42-47 you ask about relationships with other bodies

Planning. It is early days to compare the difference between Loch Lomond and Cairngorm. Some people have lived in Nat Parks elsewhere in UK and we hear very different opinions. We probably consider that the NP should be involved in development plans.

Conservation and recreation again this entirely depends on your proposals for the N Park
Zoning is bound to be a very controversial decision and is bound to lead to complaints. If the area round someone's house is zoned for water skiing, enthusiasts will be delighted, lovers of peace and quiet will be horrified.

Last Resort Stop Power may be essential to the N Park

Powers to establish nature reserves are one thing. Powers to provide campsites facilities, etc should surely be left to local entrepreneurs, aided by grants. Is there anything wrong with the present access legislation? Powers to protect and maintain public rights of way and traffic management seem reasonable.

Inshore Fisheries and Aquaculture. The people involved are we think the most concerned about the proposals and rightly so. If you cannot give them adequate firm reassurances as to their future your proposal gets off to a very bad start. We would suggest that local fishermen in their own CMNP should receive preferential treatment

Finance is obviously a major consideration. Until you give much more idea of what you are going to do you cannot give any real indications of cost either for setting up and for running.

Constitution of Park Board if our area is chosen it will be a very scattered area with a long coastline and with very differing populations. We consider that there is a need for good local representation from all areas Mallaig Community Council will almost certainly have different views from Arisaig. Acharacle, Western Ardnamurchan, The Small Isles and Skye will also have different ideas. We are also very concerned that following the reorganisation of the Highland Council next May the appointments from the Local Authority for this area, Ward 12, which includes the Small Isles, could very easily be Councillors who live 30 miles from our Coastal area and are not conversant with our area, The same may well apply in Ardnamurchan and Skye. For this reason we have suggested that "some (possibly half) of the local authority nominations should be from Community Councils"

We are told that "The board should be a maximum of 25 of whom at least 5 should be elected locally and the remainder should be appointed half by local authorities half by ministers. There is a special clause that says "for a Marine Park Ministers may adjust these figures"

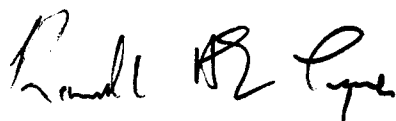
We would suggest that

Say 10 should be elected locally and of the remainder

Half by local authorities and of these some (possibly half) should be CC nominations

Half by ministers.

Finally Consultation your document shows that you have consulted with people all over Scotland including bodies from areas far from any proposed CMNP. You have consulted with a large number of English and Welsh bodies yet you do not appear to have considered about half the Community Councils within the Lochaber and South Skye possible area. Specifically Morar, Acharacle, West Ardnamurchan and the Small Isles. We don't know about Glenelg, Kyle and South Skye.



Ranald A.M. Coyne, Secretary to Arisaig & District Community Council