

Fixed Link Action Group

Kinkell,
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Isle of Luing,
Oban,
Argyll
PA34 4UB

Nikki Milne
Scottish Executive Environment and
Rural Affairs Dept
Marine Management Division
G-H93
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

31 December 2006

Dear Ms Milne

Coastal and Marine National Park Consultation

We have read in the press, and heard from various other sources, of the proposals for a marine national park in the area of the Argyll coast and islands.

This sounds as if it ought to be a most interesting proposal, but we feel we have been left out of the consultation process, both as individual residents and as a potential stakeholder group. On the basis of what we know, **we have at this stage to register a strong objection to the Marine National Park proposals as they appear to stand.** Our reasons now follow.

Our group, the Isle of Luing Fixed Link Action Group, was formed some four years ago in response to a public meeting concerning the future links of this island and other similar communities 'on the edge'. We succeeded a year ago in obtaining a STAG appraisal for the future connection of this island community to the mainland, at present served by an ageing ferry service. This appraisal is reaching its conclusions at this time, and one of the favoured options is a high level bridge across Cuan Sound.

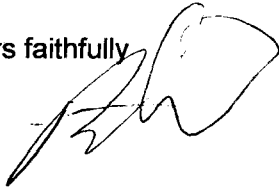
As a group, we foresee further complications and difficulties to achieving our aim of a fixed link if a Marine National Park imposes the kind of planning constraints 'enjoyed' by existing National Parks. This is not just a matter of planning for the fixed link, but of the reasons behind that campaign to secure the future of our community and its economy, which would involve planning issues for the development of suitable enterprises and housing within the community. The island already labours under the severe planning constraints of Conservation Area status for its two villages.

We are extremely worried about this matter. Our island economy is based on fishing and farming, with some related engineering. The fishing in particular has already been severely hit by the SAC restrictions already imposed on scallop fishermen, and is likely to be hit further by restrictions on creel fishing. Further restrictions by a marine park seem inevitable, and are likely to have a devastating effect on a fragile island community. Similarly farming on an island in a marine park would suffer severely from increased planning restrictions.

We are just as concerned with the outside view that tourism is the holy grail for the Scottish economy. The promise of increased tourism could not compensate in the context of a small island with a small population that can only provide a very limited tourism infrastructure, and that for a very short tourist season.

We feel strongly that there should be a public meeting provided by the proposers for the community on this matter.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Barry Wilson', written over a faint rectangular stamp.

Barry Wilson
Chairman, Isle of Luing Fixed Link Action Group

cc.

Ken Abernethy, Argyll & Islands Enterprise
Rhona Brankin MSP
Cllr Ian Gillies, Argyll & Bute Council
George Lyon MSP
Cllr. Allan MacAskill, Argyll & Bute Council
Jamie MacGregor MSP
Jim Mather MSP
Dave Petrie MSP
Alan Reid MP