



Press Release

31 July 2018

For immediate release

800% parking increase shocks hillwalkers

Parking charges set to shoot up at popular mountain area

Hill walkers have been outraged by a proposed 800% increase in parking charges at one of Scotland's most popular mountains.

Argyll & Bute Council has announced its intention to increase car parking charges in Arrochar, at the head of Loch Long. The proposed increase will take the hourly charge from 30 pence to £1 and the rate for the full day from £1 to £9.

The car park at Succoth is well used by walkers heading for the distinctive rocky peak of The Cobbler, as well as Beinn Ime and other of the Arrochar Alps.

Davie Black, Access & Conservation Officer with Mountaineering Scotland, said: "We appreciate the financial pressures that local authorities are under and that the provision of car parking facilities incurs a cost.

"Our members are used to seeing daily charges of £3-4 for parking in popular walking locations, such as at Glen Nevis and at Forest Enterprise sites. We regard this as a reasonable cost to ensure that cars are safely parked off the road while walkers enjoy their time in the hills.

"However high car parking charges can create a barrier to those wishing to exercise their right of access to the countryside, particularly those with lower incomes. And this is all happening at a time when Scottish Government policies are firmly committed to social inclusion and promotion of outdoor recreation for the health and social well-being benefits that it brings to people.

"The huge increase from £1 to £9 that Argyll and Bute Council intends to impose targets people who have no other option to safely park a car. The provision of free or reasonably-priced car parking plays an important part in encouraging responsible parking and helping to prevent cars being left in places that could result in risks to other road-users. There also needs to be clarity on the situation for overnight parking, as many people will want to leave their cars as they camp up in the hills.

"There's another risk that, although these are popular hills, people may choose not to park there and the Council may actually lose revenue as a result."

Stuart Younie, Chief Executive Officer of Mountaineering Scotland, said: "Survey results indicate that many of our members are in favour of modest charges where money taken in is going to be invested in the infrastructure. There is no doubt that local councils are under ever-increasing financial pressures, however, this charge appears to be treated as a way to help balance the budget rather than to promote and support tourism and recreation, which are key economic drivers for the area.

“We will be making contact with Argyll & Bute Council to ask them to look again at their policy for all day parking at the popular walking spots and to encourage measures that result in safe and responsible, and affordable, parking.”

Walkers who wish to voice their opposition to this 800% increase in parking charges at Arrochar are encouraged to contact Mr Cleland Sneddon, CEO of Argyll & Bute Council. The Leader of the Council is Ms Aileen Morton. The Constituency MSP for the area is Ms Jackie Baillie.

Ends

Notes for editors:

Image: Ben Arthur, better known as The Cobbler, in the Arrochar Alps – faces being an expensive goal for hill walkers.

[http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/The_Cobbler -
2, by Neil Reid.JPG](http://www.mountaineering.scot/assets/contentfiles/media-upload/The_Cobbler_-_2,_by_Neil_Reid.JPG)

Further information contact:

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About Mountaineering Scotland:

- Mountaineering Scotland is the only recognised representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers and ski-tourers who live in Scotland or who enjoy Scotland's mountains.
- Mountaineering Scotland provides training and information to mountain users to promote safety, self-reliance and the enjoyment of our mountain environment.
- The Mountaineering Scotland is a membership organisation with over 14,000 members representing hill walkers, climbers and mountaineers, funded through a combination of membership subscriptions, non-governmental grants and investment from sportscotland, which supports public initiatives and services in mountain safety, mountain training and the development and promotion of mountaineering activities.
- Mountaineering Scotland also acts for 75,000 members of the BMC or British Mountaineering Council on matters related to Landscape and Access in Scotland.
- Mountaineering Scotland landscape and access work is supported financially by the Scottish Mountaineering Trust and the BMC
- Mountaineering Scotland has launched the ClimbScotland initiative to encourage young people to participate in climbing and support their progression. It offers a dedicated website and a development team, which will introduce young people to climbing at schools, climbing walls and via youth organisations with a range of activities and events, while developing kids clubs and providing specialist support to parents, volunteers and teachers.
- Mountaineering Scotland is the national governing body for sports climbing. It offers pathways to climbing coaching, organises and promotes a range of regional and national climbing competitions, and manages the Scottish climbing and bouldering teams. It contributes to the management of the GB teams with the ultimate aim of seeing a Scottish athlete achieve a podium position in the Olympic Games.

- The MCoS is a not for profit company limited by guarantee and incorporated in Scotland. Company number SC322717.
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