

Informal & Wild Camping within Perth & Kinross – FAQs

This document intends to answer some of the questions around informal & wild camping (ie camping and campervan parking out-with official campsites) within Perth & Kinross.

General:

What is informal camping?

Informal Camping is the term used to describe the activity of staying overnight in a motorhome or campervan out-with a formal campsite. In some countries you may also hear it called freedom camping, wild camping, overnight parking or free motorhome camping. In Scotland, it was agreed in 2019 with representatives from the Scottish Government, local authorities, membership organisations and industry representatives, that we would all use the term 'Informal Camping' to describe this activity.

What is wild camping?

Scotland's access legislation means that everyone can go camping wherever access rights apply, so long as it's done responsibly. Wild camping is camping in a location where access rights apply in Scotland, out-with a campsite. It is permissible (see next question) if it is lightweight, done in small numbers and only for two or three nights in any one place and the campers leave no trace of their presence.

What is the basis for allowing wild camping in Scotland?

The right to take responsible non-motorised access in Scotland is provided for by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. The [Scottish Outdoor Access Code \(SOAC\)](#) has been produced to explain what is meant by responsible behaviour in any situation for both the 'access taker' and the 'land manager'. It answers questions like:

- Where can I go to enjoy the countryside without disturbing anyone who lives or works in the countryside?
- Do I have the right to walk, cycle or ride in an area which belongs to someone else?
- Do I need to pay attention to notices telling me to 'keep out'?

Further information on the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code can be found at <https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/act-and-access-code>. For information on how this specifically relates to camping please refer to <https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/practical-guide-all/camping>.

Where can I find out more information about outdoor access rights, including camping, and responsible behaviour?

The Scottish Outdoor Access Code contains information on your rights and responsibilities. A copy of the full code can be found on the Outdoor Access Scotland website at <https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/sites/default/files/2018-05/Publication%202005%20-%20Scottish%20Outdoor%20Access%20Code.pdf>

Who can I speak to if I feel my access rights are not being respected?

Public access rights are based on the principle of responsible access, with obligations both on the access users and on the managers of the land.

Access users who are not acting responsibly and in accordance with the code may be asked to leave by Land Managers, Greenspace Rangers or other interested parties, such as the Police.

The Council has a duty to uphold responsible public access rights. If access rights are deliberately prevented or deterred, enquiries should be directed initially to the Greenspace (Policy) coordinator. Contact can be made via email at communitygreenspace@pkc.gov.uk or phone on 01738 476476.

What is 'dirty camping'?

'Dirty camping' is a term that is increasingly being used to describe the behaviour and actions of a small number of visitors who may claim to be undertaking wild and informal camping but are acting irresponsibly, illegally and/or in an anti-social manner; so are not acting within the terms of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. Examples of this irresponsible or illegal behaviour include:

- Inappropriate parking on roads preventing access for residents, land managers and emergency vehicles
- Causing damage (to trees and other private property)
- Problems arising from campfires (risk of wild fires and unsightly mess)
- Human waste not disposed of properly (see [where to go in the great outdoors](#))
- Other anti-social behaviour linked to alcohol consumption
- Fishing without a permit
- Littering and fly-tipping

This selfish behaviour spoils an otherwise beautiful place for everyone, harms local wildlife, creates safety risks and causes problems for landowners and local communities.

Information for Tourist/Visitors:

Where can I find information on touring, camping and campsites within Perth & Kinross?

For information on touring, camping and local attractions please refer to Visit Scotland website - <https://www.visitscotland.com/accommodation/caravan-camping/>. This website also contains a list of registered accommodation sites where we would encourage you to break up informal stays with facilities some nights also.

For advice on touring Scotland in a motorhome or campervan please refer to The Campervan and Motorhome Professional Association (CaMPA) website - <http://www.campa.org.uk/>

Is there anything I should consider about the location before wild camping?

Whilst wild camping is allowed wherever access rights apply, it would be helpful to consider whether the location you intend to camp fits with the principles of acting responsibly, and helps to avoid causing problems for local people and land managers. You can do this by:

- not camping in enclosed fields of crops or farm animals
- keeping well away from people's houses, other buildings, roads or historic structures
- taking extra care to avoid disturbing deer stalking or grouse shooting
- seeking the owner's permission if you wish to camp close to a house or building
- considering where you will be able to go to the toilet and how far away this is from streams, rivers, buildings etc; ensure you bury all human waste
- using a stove rather than an open fire (especially in woodland and in dry conditions)
- making sure you have waste bags so you can take all your litter home

Is there anything I should consider before parking my car or campervan overnight?

Outdoor access rights do not extend to any motorised activities, however, we would request that informal and wild campers be mindful of where they park, and that they are doing so in line with the Road Traffic Act 1998. When you park your vehicle it is important not to cause any damage or create an obstruction by:

- not blocking an entrance to a field or building (remember tractors etc need extra turning clearance)
- not making it difficult for other people to use a road or track (especially emergency service vehicles)
- having regard for the safety of others
- trying not to damage the verge
- not parking in passing places
- not parking on a [clearway](#)
- using a car park if one is nearby

If using a car park, be mindful of the Terms and Conditions of this (for example some car parks do not permit overnight parking). Vehicles which do not comply with Terms and Conditions may be issued with a Penalty Charge Notice and may ultimately face removal.

For the remainder of 2020, motorhomes and campervans will be allowed to park overnight at a small selection of Forestry and Land Scotland car parks, either for free or for a small fee. Information on the scheme and locations can be found on the Forestry and Land Scotland website at <https://forestryandland.gov.scot/staythenight>

What are clearways and who enforces these?

To assist with traffic issues on sensitive roads, e.g. narrow roads next to lochs or rivers, the Council has introduced temporary traffic orders enforcing Clearways at some locations. Information on where temporary restrictions are in force can be found at <https://www.pkc.gov.uk/article/17270/Road-closures-and-restrictions-Current-and-proposed->

Clearways are areas of public roads, where restrictions are in place, meaning no stopping is allowed, not even to pick up or set down passengers. Further information on meaning and signage can be found at <https://www.highwaycodeuk.co.uk/uploads/3/2/9/2/3292309/know-road-traffic-signs.pdf>.

Whilst these Clearways are initially temporary restrictions, the situation at these locations will continue to be monitored, and may be made permanent following appropriate process and review.

Clearways are enforced by Parking Attendants and offenders caught not adhering to these will be subject to a fine. Police may issue penalty charges if a person is apprehended whilst in their vehicle attempting to breach a temporary traffic restriction.

As with any other situation, if there is an issue with dangerous or obstructive parking anywhere on a road the Police can be contacted by dialling 101 to take action regarding this.

Where can I find information on Electric Vehicle Charging points?

Information on electric vehicle charging points and charges can be found at <https://www.pkc.gov.uk/article/17633/Electric-vehicle-charging-points>

Where can I find information on public toilets and changing facilities available within Perth & Kinross?

Information on public toilets, including a map of locations and any charges applicable can be found on the Perth & Kinross Council website at <https://www.pkc.gov.uk/publictoilets>

Information on changing places toilets (for people with disabilities who require additional support) can be found on the changing places website at <https://changingplaces.uktoiletmap.org/route/plan>

Please note that there are no shower or changing room facilities available at any of the Council owned public toilets.

Where can I dispose of waste water (grey/black) within Perth & Kinross?

The Campervan and Motorhome Professional Association (CaMPA) are establishing an interactive map to show all of the Motorhome Waste Disposal Points available to touring motorhomes and campervans in Scotland. This information can be found at <http://www.campa.org.uk/waste-disposal/>

This link also contains guidance on disposing of waste water responsibly. **Please note that chemical toilet waste (black waste) should NEVER be emptied ANYWHERE other than a designated area at a campsite, a motorhome service point, or in your own sewage system at home. Toilet waste must never be poured into streams, rivers, lochs or undergrowth or public toilets. Disposing of it in this way can kill vegetation and pose further health risks such as spread of disease.**

Why can I not just pour toilet waste from a campervan into a public toilet?

Public toilets are not appropriate locations to empty toilet cassettes (black waste) because:

- some chemicals are designed only for portable toilet use and are not septic-tank friendly; this can prevent biological decomposition and drainage, and potentially lead to environmentally damaging spillage
- some public toilets only link to small sewage treatment systems and cannot cope with multiple toilet cassettes being emptied in a short space of time which can result in toilets becoming blocked and being unavailable for use by anyone else
- there are no facilities available for cleaning up any spillages which may occur when a toilet cassette is being carried or emptied

Where can I find information on clean water facility provision?

There are currently no free to use clean water facility points in Perth & Kinross. Water can be purchased in local supermarkets and shops.

Where can I find information on fishing accessibility/rights and permits?

Fishing is not included within statutory access rights, so permission must be gained from whoever owns, leases or manages the fishing rights, and it is common practice for a charge to be made. This can vary from a few pounds to several hundreds of pounds, depending on the fish species, river, and time of year. In some cases, fishing without permission may constitute a criminal offence.

If you intend to go fishing whilst visiting Perth & Kinross it is advisable to refer to relevant websites in advance for more information on permits, accessibility and charges. Some useful links are noted below:

<https://www.fishpal.com/>

<http://www.wheretofish.co.uk/location/scotland/perth-and-kinross/>

http://flyandlure.org/listings/fly_fishing_clubs/scotland/perth_and_kinross)

<https://www.pkc.gov.uk/perthfishing>

Please note that river bailiffs operate within Perth & Kinross.

Further guidance on sharing the water when angling can be found on the Outdoor Access Code website at <https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/practical-guide-all/field-sports/fishing>.

Is there anything else which I might want to consider before informal or wild camping within Perth & Kinross?

Perth and Kinross has some of the most beautiful scenery in Scotland, and we warmly welcome visitors who act responsibly and respect their local surroundings.

To ensure an enjoyable stay and assist others to enjoy this beautiful area in the future also, you may wish to consider the following key messages identified by the National Access Forum (a body established by Scottish Natural Heritage to advise on national issues linked to Scottish access rights) for campers. These are particularly relevant to a roadside situation:

- avoid overcrowding by moving on to another location;
- carry a trowel to bury your human waste and urinate well away from open water, rivers and burns;
- use a stove or leave no trace of any camp fire - never cut down or damage trees;
- take away your rubbish and consider picking up other litter as well;
- if in doubt, ask the landowner - following their advice may help you find a better camping spot, and;
- access rights are not an excuse for anti-social or illegal behaviour

For any further information, please refer to guidance on the Outdoor Access Code, which can be found at: <https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/>

Information for Perth & Kinross Residents & Communities

What action is being taken to tackle inconsiderate/dirty camping within Perth & Kinross?

Perth & Kinross Council is committed to working with residents, communities and partner agencies to tackling some of the issues created by a small proportion of visitors. Details of actions taken and planned can be found on the Perth & Kinross Council website through the News release section at <https://www.pkc.gov.uk/news>.

Why are you not banning informal and wild camping or introducing further measures such as byelaws and alcohol bans?

Whilst there are powers available to implement measures such as byelaws, these have a lengthy implementation process (for example byelaws in other areas have taken two years to introduce), can be costly to implement and enforce, there is limited evidence that these measures are effective and essentially may shift the problem from one area to another.

Perth & Kinross Council's main strategy at present focuses on working with communities and other public services such as Police and Fire; education of visitors; monitoring and responding to concerns

locally; and utilising other legal powers available. We are keen to continue to liaise with communities to explore the best options for dealing with 'dirty campers' in the short and long term.

Who do I contact if I see evidence of dirty camping (eg, irresponsible parking/fires/ litter waste disposal etc)?

If you think a crime has been, or is in the process of being, committed please contact the Police on 101 or 999 as necessary. **If there is a situation which may cause immediate and concerning damage to the environment or lives (such as a fire which is out of control), please contact the relevant emergency service by dialling 999.**

The Council's Safer Communities Team work on behalf of communities, carrying out patrols and liaising with other partners such as loch wardens, Police and Fire services, to report any issues and concerns which may have a detrimental effect on community wellbeing. Concerns around dirty camping should be reported to them at SCT@pkc.gov.uk.

Reports will be logged and passed to the officer leading on this piece of work. The team may not be able to respond immediately but will use information provided to build an intelligence picture, which will help inform future measures, including increased patrols to areas.

How can the community be involved in helping to tackle dirty camping and preserving our natural environment?

We recognise that several community groups in affected areas have been very proactive in responding to the challenges that irresponsible camping can present. We would welcome the opportunity to work with local communities to explore what each of us could do to contribute to tackling these challenges. Some things that Communities can do:

- Encourage display of posters and leaflets in local businesses which promote responsible tourism
- Liaise with landowners and the Council to explore opportunities for creating additional car parking areas and grant schemes which may be available to assist in funding these
- Take part in informal engagements with campers, to encourage them to behave responsibly
- Report any issues to the Council and Police as relevant
- Organise litter picks

Local Councillors and community groups have been sent information on key contacts within the Council regarding relevant matters. If you require further information on contacts, please get in touch with the Safer Communities Team at SCT@pkc.gov.uk.

Are there any plans to create additional facilities, such as parking areas/toilets/waste disposal points for use by informal or wild campers?

This is a matter which is currently under consideration. We would be happy to work with local landowners that may want to set up these kinds of facilities for campers.

Where can I find more information?

If you would like more information on the Outdoor Access Code please refer to the website at <https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/>

If you would like to be involved in discussions or voluntary action, please refer to the Safer Communities Team at SCT@pkc.gov.uk who may be able to assist you with information on Community Groups operating in your area.

Information for Landowners:

What rights do I have to stop people camping on my land?

Scotland's access legislation, as defined within the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, means that camping is a legitimate activity wherever access rights apply, so long as it's done responsibly and does not contravene restrictions from other legislation, including bylaws.

Landowners may want to familiarise themselves with relevant guidance provided on the Outdoor Access Code website, and support and encourage visitors to use land responsibly rather than trying to prevent them from camping altogether. Relevant information and guidance for landowners can be found at: <https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/access-management-guidance>

Whilst access rights do not extend to activities entirely based on the use of a vehicle, such as sleeping in cars, camper vans or caravans, parts of the legislation do extend to restrictions on existing roadside parking areas currently used for access purposes. Please refer to the section '[What can I do to resolve issues I am having with informal or wild camping?](#)' for further information on who to contact if this is an issue.

Can I put up 'no camping' signs or restrict access to my land through creation of barriers?

[Part 4 of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code](#) explains your responsibilities as a land manager. This includes notice that under the Land Reform (Scotland) 2003 you should not undertake to obstruct or hinder people from exercising access rights, either by physically obstructing access or by otherwise discouraging or intimidating them. This includes through use of signs and notices, fences, barriers and locking gates.

Local authorities have a duty to uphold access rights and have powers to remove prohibition signs, obstructions and dangerous impediments, and to recover costs from the land manager responsible for the sign, obstruction or impediment.

What can I do to resolve issues I am having with informal or wild camping?

For issues relating to wild camping:

Please contact the Greenspace (Policy) Coordinator for any local access enquiry, question or problem. Details of current Access Officers and contact details can be found on the Outdoor Access Scotland website at https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/sites/default/files/2020-06/Scottish%20Access%20Officer%20Contact%20List_0.pdf

For issues relating to informal camping by those in campervans:

Concerns around informal camping should be reported to the Safer Communities Team at SCT@pkc.gov.uk.

In either situation:

If you think a crime has been, or is in the process of being, committed please contact the Police on 101 or 999 as necessary. **If there is a situation which may cause immediate and concerning damage to the environment or lives (such as a fire which is out of control), please contact the relevant emergency service by dialling 999.**

Where do I find information about creating an overnight parking area or installing a motorhome waste disposal point?

The Campervan and Motorhome Professional Association (CaMPA) are establishing guidance on both of these matters and will publish these, once available, on their website at <http://www.campa.org.uk/>.

Is there funding available to assist with costs related to camping and issues?

Funding may be available for access-related projects only. For further information on this please refer to the Outdoor Access website at <https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/access-management-guidance/funding>

Where can I find more information?

Further guidance is available on the Scottish Outdoor Access website, specifically designed for landowners and managers around managing informal camping, including what constitutes as responsible or criminal behaviour. This can be found here: <https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/sites/default/files/2018-08/Guidance%20-%20Managing%20informal%20camping%20under%20the%20Land%20Reform%20Act%202003.pdf>

There is also guidance available regarding appropriate signage to inform the public about day to day land management operations. This can be found here: <https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/signs-guidance-farmers-and-other-land-managers>

Information for Businesses:

Are there relevant posters/leaflets which I can display to promote responsible tourism?

We would welcome and encourage you to visit the VisitScotland website where a Visitor Charter poster is available to download and display. This can be found on at <https://www.visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/advice/coronavirus-recovery/visitor-charter>

Further information leaflets relating to responsible camping can be found on the Outdoor Access website at <https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/practical-guide-all/camping>

I have a parking area attached to my business and am considering installing a waste disposal point for use by tourists, where can I find information on doing this?

The Campervan and Motorhome Professional Association (CaMPA) are establishing guidance on installing waste disposal points and will publish this, once available, on their website at <http://www.campa.org.uk/>

My business has motorhome waste disposal facilities, what is the best way of me advertising this information?

CaMPA (the Campervan and Professional Motorhome Association) is working on behalf of the motorhome sector and Scottish Government to create a register/map of all Motorhome Waste Disposal Points that are accessible to the motor-homing community in Scotland. This map and register will then be hosted on the CaMPA website, with the aim of helping visitors plan ahead to find appropriate disposal points.

To register a Service Point please refer to the CaMPA website at <http://www.campa.org.uk/waste-disposal/> or email admin@campa.org.uk

What if I have any other questions?

Please let us know and we will add them to this list. Please email these to SCT@pkc.gov.uk.