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Access Ranger Service (Seasonal)

https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1225/countryside_farming_and_wildlife/161/outdoor_access/6

The team can be contacted by email at accessrangers@highland.gov.uk or by phoning the Senior Rangers on

- [07443 261293](tel:07443261293) ([external link](#)) for the South (Skye, Lochaber and South-West Ross)
- [07909 051223](tel:07909051223) for the North (all other areas)

Ranger Gregor's observations are from 10 years mainly in the area for Mountain Rescue duties but in a more formal capacity as Highland Councils Access Ranger for South West Ross. I am based in Applecross but I cover the whole Applecross Peninsula, Glen Shieldag & Shieldag, Annat, Fasiag to Diabeg, Glen Torrison to Kinlochewe, Glen Docherty to Achnasheen, and Achnasheen to Lochcarron, Ardaneaskan, Kishorn, Tornapress and back over the Bealach na Ba to Applecross.

And that is by no means the largest Ranger range!

My role:

“To compliment and provide a Ranger service within the Highland area, to act as the eyes & ears for various Council services and to work in co-operation with other organisations, landowners and communities. The job will cover sites owned and/or managed by the Council, to promote the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and to contribute to the Visitor Management Plan. The key role is working with visitors & residents providing on hand communication and advice; talking with people in clear, positive, engaging, persuasive and easily understood ways to encourage responsible outdoor access.”

2021 post “lockdown” challenges in your area

1. “Staycation” boom particularly in motorhomes and informal vehicle based camping
2. Increasing popularity of “North Coast 500”
3. Public Toilet closures
4. Roadside Toileting
5. Litter and lack of recycling systems
6. Fires !
7. Highlife Highland Campsite Closure
8. NTS Torridon had no manager or Ranger until August 2021-Countryside centre was closed

2022 - much improved generally and with the presence of Paul Bolton in post as manager for NTS Torridon

As above but with added pressures of European visitors returning

Hot spot areas within Torridon & Kinlochewe Community council area

1. Fasaig Junction at NTS Torridon Countryside Centre and Highland council bus stop.
2. Highlife Highland Campsite
3. Public/Community Toilets
4. Torridon Viewpoint/s on south of Loch Torridon
5. Informal Roadside vehicle based camping at Annat & occasionally the cemetery
6. Informal Roadside vehicle based camping at Fasiag to Diabeg.
7. Informal Roadside vehicle based camping the length of Glen Torridon (N.T.S/Nature Scot)
8. Informal car park vehicle based camping along Loch Maree (Nature Scot)
9. Informal car park vehicle based camping particularly at Glen Docherty viewpoint (THC & “C.O.W”? Garve & District Community Council)
10. Others-
Highland Council Depot at Glen Cottage temporarily moved to Torridon viewpoint no 3

Overnight Parking

There are two relevant pieces of legislation to be aware of as far as Overnight Parking (often informal camping) as opposed to so called “wild camping” are concerned:-

1. **The Road Traffic Act of 1988** - This does not really cater for the exponential growth of motorhomes and car camping (nor convoys!)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/52/section/37>

<https://www.highwaycodeuk.co.uk/parking-at-night.html>

Parking at night (248 to 252)

248

You **MUST NOT** park on a road at night facing against the direction of the traffic flow unless in a recognised parking space. *Laws CUR reg 101 & RVLR reg 24*

249

All vehicles **MUST** display parking lights when parked on a road or a lay-by on a road with a speed limit greater than 30 mph (48 km/h). *Law RVLRL reg 24*

250

Cars, goods vehicles not exceeding 1525 kg unladen weight, invalid carriages, motorcycles and pedal cycles may be parked without lights on a road (or lay-by) with a speed limit of 30 mph (48 km/h) or less if they are

- at least 10 metres (32 feet) away from any junction, close to the kerb and facing in the direction of the traffic flow
- in a recognised parking place or lay-by.

Other vehicles and trailers, and all vehicles with projecting loads, **MUST NOT** be left on a road at night without lights. *Laws RVLRL reg 24 & CUR reg 82(7)*

251

Parking in fog. It is especially dangerous to park on the road in fog. If it is unavoidable, leave your parking lights or sidelights on.

252

Parking on hills. If you park on a hill you should:

- park close to the kerb and apply the handbrake firmly
- select a forward gear and turn your steering wheel away from the kerb when facing uphill
- select reverse gear and turn your steering wheel towards the kerb when facing downhill
- use 'park' if your car has an automatic gearbox.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/54/section/100> discourages road fires.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/54/section/129> discourages awnings and tents but only on roads:

2. The Scottish Outdoor Access Code 2000

Note that Scottish Outdoor Access rights do not apply to motorised vehicles!

<https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/practical-guide-all/camping>

summary:

Responsible behaviour by the public

The Access Code says:

Access rights extend to wild camping. This type of camping is lightweight, done in small numbers and only for two or three nights in any one place. You can camp in this way wherever access rights apply, but help to avoid causing problems for local people and land managers by not camping in enclosed fields of crops or farm animals and by keeping well

away from buildings, roads or historic structures. Take extra care to avoid disturbing deer stalking or grouse shooting. If you wish to camp close to a house or building, seek the owner's permission. Leave no trace by:

- taking away all **your litter**
- removing all traces of your tent pitch and of any open fire (follow the **guidance for lighting fires**)
- not causing any pollution

The Access Code notes that access rights do not apply to motor vehicles (**see guidance on parking**).

The Access Code says:

Access rights do not extend to any motorised activities. However, many people use their cars to get into the outdoors and parking a vehicle without regard to the interests of other people can cause problems. Therefore, 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
- not making it difficult for other people to use a road or track
- having regard for the safety of others
- trying not to damage the verge
- using a car park if one is nearby.

Responsible behaviour by land managers

The Access Code says:

Where appropriate, such as where there is a lot of informal parking causing local concerns, work with your local authority and other bodies to see if a formal car park could be provided.

The Code also highlights the risk of impacts due to high levels of use in particular areas:

"You need to be aware that whilst you might visit a place only occasionally and feel that you cause no harm, the land manager or the environment might have to cope with the cumulative effects of many people. Acting with awareness and common sense underpins responsible behaviour".

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