

Dear Leuchars Community Council,

As you are based near Tentsmuir National Nature Reserve and an important part of the local community, I wanted to inform you that we will be trialling a new model of visitor car parking contribution at Morton Loch. This trial is on an 'invitation to pay' model, which means we are inviting visitors to pay a small contribution to park their vehicle at National Nature Reserves, but they are under no obligation to do so.

Local communities play an important role at our National Nature Reserves and if local residents wish to support our work by paying a small contribution, that would be welcomed, however there is no obligation to do so. Most crucially, any funds raised will go back into supporting the National Nature Reserves themselves, which will help to protect and restore nature in the local area and maintain the facilities at these much-loved sites.

Why are we asking for parking contributions?

In recent years we have seen a large increase in the number of visitors to our National Nature Reserves, you may have noticed this increase as a local visitor. It's great news that more people are enjoying and connecting with nature, but at the same time, there is a significant and growing cost to looking after these sites, which include some of Scotland's finest landscapes, habitats and wildlife.

NatureScot faces the same budget restrictions as many other organisations. We want to look at whether asking people to pay a small amount for parking could help us raise enough funds to protect and restore nature and enhance the visitor experience.

Where will the contributions go?

All funds raised will go back into protecting and restoring nature and maintaining visitor facilities at our National Nature Reserves.

The additional funding will help support the day-to-day management of these special sites, protecting habitats and species through for example, expanding native woodlands, restoring heath and peatland habitats and removing invasive non-native species, as well as expanding our knowledge of Scotland's natural world through supporting surveys, research and outreach projects.

Funding raised from car park charging will also be reinvested to maintain and improve visitor facilities such as toilets, visitor centres, paths, picnic areas, car parks, nature hides and signage. It could also help us to employ seasonal staff to engage with visitors, enhance the visitor experience and support reserve management at the busiest times of year.

We plan to introduce the trial at several of our National Nature Reserves across Scotland, at the beginning of 2025 ahead of the season. If your community have any thoughts or comments on the trial, please don't hesitate to contact me.

I have cc'd the local reserve manager into this email and should you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me on nnr@nature.scot

Best wishes,

Jason Martin