

Glen Wyllin Consultation Responses

Response 1.

With reference to the above, I'm not sure whether it fits within the remit of your consultation but it would be wonderful if some consideration could be made to improving access to Glen Wyllin beach for equestrian use. Many horse riders use the beach because of its long, flat and open stretches and access is already safer than many other beaches because of the good parking facilities. However, it can be tricky to get horses from the car park onto the beach because the access slip way is quite stony and uneven. If you feel that an overall "Horses on Beaches" strategy would be a better way forward, Studland Beach in Dorset may be a good example to look at. Riders here are required to purchase Day Permits, which goes some way to paying for the upkeep and access by the National Trust, and there are firm rules in place for rider behaviour. Here is the relevant website, if you'd like to have a look: <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/studland-beach/things-to-see-and-do/horse-riding/> Riding on the beach has a number of benefits for both horses and riders, and with our roads becoming busier and our green lanes increasingly eroded, having safe spaces available to us to ride is becoming rarer.

Response 4.

Please find below my email regarding Glen Wyllin, we have had a seasonal pitch at Glen Wyllin for the past 2 years, we have a caravan and awning which we have pitched for the last 2 years. There are around 20 seasonal pitches and I would love to keep camping at Glen Wyllin in our caravan and wouldn't want to go anywhere else. The setting of GW is the best, the beach, the sunsets, the park, the general greenery around is pretty special. Even though I only live 10 mins down the road in Peel I really feel like I've had a holiday when I eventually go back to work on a Monday morning, we like to spend every weekend up at GW over the season.

So here are my findings.

1. To keep the caravans at GW and to also have glamping.
2. What about fire pits, ready up tents, games room, proper café where you can get a bacon sarnie in the morning and then lunch / tea there if you require?
3. To have the season longer, at present the season is the start of April to the end of September
4. Hard standing area, then we could house the caravans at GW in the winter instead of having to move them. At present we move ours for the winter and it costs an additional £250 for the 6 months with no electricity as GW do not allow this – thus GW making more money through the winter. I do believe that we would use it more even in the winter. Even a full time café might work as at weekend people walk the dogs down there and this is not just in the summer.
5. Also would be good to see clearly marked out pitches, this would stop people creeping over on to other people's pitches. It gives you a sense of pride to keep your own pitch tidy too.
6. The current wardens [REDACTED] are great, very personable and definitely put the hours in they are always working day & night. They are very well liked by us all at GW. I'm not sure what your plan is for next year but if I could choose 2 wardens it would have to be the husband and wife team we have at present. I think the married team work very well together and it's great to see a married couple at the very family orientated campsite that is Glen Wyllin. They get my vote hands down.

Response 5.

Re Glen Wyllin.

Having just returned from a campervan tour of Scotland, we stayed at several different campsites. They were all very different, depending on the type of campers (ie families, walkers, 'glampers', static users) but they all had the pods for hire, which were popular on all sites. Some also had specific "fire pit" areas which were also popular. We probably fall into the "glampervan" category of campers and all we asked for was a flat area to park, preferably well drained grass, good clean bathroom facilities and a clean accessible washing up area. We paid between £15 and £21 per night for two people in a small VW campervan with no hook-up. A bar was a definite plus, as was none-rowdy behaviour from other campers. The pods on the sites we stayed at cost between £30 and £40 per night per pod. These were very popular with sharing walkers that we encountered on the West Highland Way when we stayed near Loch Lomond. Look at Beinglas Farm Campsite, Loch Lomond and Inver Coille at Loch Ness as these were our favourite sites. The fire pit at Inver Coille is a great idea. Reviews can be found on Trip Adviser.

Response 6.

Having been given the above mentioned document by a camp site operative during a week-long stay on the site (for Manx GP practice week) I feel compelled to add my opinions....

I have a pretty good feel for the IOM having visited/worked/competed in various events on the Isle so choosing Glen Wyllin was more an educated than a chance visit. It must be the best site on the island for its beauty and location and a bonus that you don't get locked in during TT or Manx GP. I would love to see it retained as a fully registered camp site (with some changes!!)

Changes being:-

Investment needed on the w/c and shower facilities - they are totally sub-standard

Drainage works needed ... We had a moat around our caravan for several days

Separate fields for caravans/motor homes and tents - we had plenty of space and privacy for the most part of the week in our caravan and then on Saturday we were invaded by locals squeezing their tents into every nook and cranny on the caravan side which was made worse by their invitation extended to friends whom sat around camp fires well into the night with noise consideration for neighbours... We also had a battle on our hands getting out of the field as cars/tents and vans were parked up on the shale "road" making my vehicle + 7 metre caravan near on impossible to get out at 7am this morning.

Designated boundaries to stop campers pitching up on your doorstep.

I would pay a premium for the above and so would other caravan/motor home owners we spoke to ... I, for one, will spend a minimum of 15 - 20 days per year on the IOM and most of those will be in a caravan (TT, Manx & Southern 100) and hope that I will be choosing Glen Wyllin ...General opinion is that it's a fabulous site yet a little frayed around the edges...

I hope the above is of some use to you.

Response 7.

I write in response to our Glen Wyllin Consultation document which invited comments from persons with an interest in the future of the Glen and campsite, both local and visitors.

I write as a regular visitor. Your document stated that the site had been used as a campsite for in excess of twenty years. I have in fact camped there for every TT Races since my first full visit in 1982 as well as for many Manx GP race meetings. In fact the only TT I have missed in the past 32 years was the 2001 meeting, cancelled due to the foot and mouth scare. I know people who have camped at the site for close on 40 years.

I have in the past hired the ready erected tents at Glen Wyllin with friends but for the past few years I and my friends bring our own tents as the price for the fixed tents rose rapidly over a short period of time and became uneconomical for us as fewer of us attended the races.

I love visiting Glen Wyllin as it is by far the most picturesque campsite I have ever stayed at so my purely selfish choice would be for it to remain as a warden controlled camp site as at present. In fact the current warden, [REDACTED] is the best warden during all my many visits and during her 2015 tenure she and her husband, [REDACTED] have maintained all the public facilities in an admirable standard of cleanliness and with a very friendly disposition.

I feel that replacing the camp site with log cabins and/or "glamping" will prove counter-productive and too expensive for both the locals and the visiting campers, who attend mainly during the two main race periods. I see the same visiting faces camping for the race meetings and almost all bring their own tents for a relatively inexpensive holiday. Many of us also have to take a far more expensive annual family holiday so the racing breaks are secondary in expense terms. In my view all the current race campers would simply go and camp elsewhere, such as Peel or the Kirk Michael Football Club field.

At present the ready erected tents cost £50 per night. Surely log cabins or "glamping" would have to be priced far in excess of that figure and would necessitate a large expenditure on the site in terms of additional plumbing, drainage and electricity. Would this be commercially viable for what is essentially a very seasonal business?

The knock on effect of potentially losing the race goes as campers would surely damage takings at village businesses, especially the Mitre pub and the local shop, at what must be the busiest times of the year for both businesses. From what I have seen the Manx visitors to the campsite are mainly families with young children and so do not frequent the pub, which is populated by locals and visiting bikers. If the campsite was not available to those bikers then pubs and shops in other locations, such as Peel, would reap the benefit of their holiday spending money. I believe the Mitre is the oldest pub on the island and it would be a shame if it suffered from reduced business due to the campsite bikers not being available to it as customers.

I understand that the campsite lease is up for renewal in May 2016. I also understand that the ready erected tents are fully booked for the TT period at the end of May/June 2016. In fact I know someone with such a booking. If the campsite was to end as to its current status only weeks prior to the 2016 TT it would leave a large number of campers, including myself, in the lurch and visiting the island with no planned accommodation. My ideal solution would be for the Kirk Michael Commissioners to at least agree a short extension to the lease to run until after the 2016 Classic TT/Manx GP period as the period from May to September is surely by far the busiest time with the most visitors arriving and the most money taken at the site.

I obviously want the campsite to remain, whoever runs it and I thank you for giving me this opportunity to express my views. I sincerely hope that I will be able to pitch my tent there at both the TT and Manx GP in 2016 and beyond and support local businesses as usual.

Response 8.

I am a Kirk Michael resident and would like to provide my views on improvements to Glen Wyllin as part of the current consultation:

1. As a resident who has never used the campsite and camping facilities, I have no real view on the level of service supplied, but the site is regularly busy with both island and UK visitors so there is obviously a good level already. I would only assume that there will be contractual requirement for certain key/mandatory maintenance activities within the lease renewal process in 2016.
2. As residents, my wife and I regularly walk along the Michael shore and through Glen Wyllin. This is a very pleasant walk apart from the immediate Glen Wyllin cliff frontage and stony shore section, which is honestly a disgrace and an eyesore. I would like to see the following improvements applied:
 - Structural tidying up of the lower level cliff face between the access ramp and the Installation of culverting for the outflow from the fish farm to remove the constant flooding of the shore
 - Similar culverting, or some form of structured/controlled outflow, of the stream over the shore again to remove the constant flooding of the shore
 - I foresee the benefits of the above as:
 - Even when the campsite is busy this area is very rarely used/populated as it is inhospitable to families/visitors in its current state.
 - By removing the continual water flow the area will become more sandy and this will improve both visual and walking aspects.
 - If these improvements were made then it would also encourage local visitors/families to come to Michael shore and this would have a positive impact-both on the camp shop and encouraging more local/visitor camping within the glen.
 - This area is a section of the Raad Ny Foillan and as such is currently not a feature that could be said to be attractive to walking tourists that are being courted to come to the Isle of Man.
3. The impending Coastal Strategy initiative and the associated coastal erosion revetment placement programme for the Glen Wyllin to Glen Balleira section should be considered to establish any possible synergies that could arise from work
 - If there are any works envisaged for the glen roadway then any strengthening for the rock transportation through the glen
 - If there are any improvements to the cliff/shore area of the glen then this could also include the revetment placement
 - If the works require closure of the glen, then any preparation works required for the revetment activity could be done at the same time-or even some transportation of the rocks if possible.

I have copied my both [REDACTED] MHK and [REDACTED] (Michael Commissioner) for information on my feedback as we have an ongoing dialogue with respect to the coastal erosion issue as our house lies within the coastal erosion zone.

I hope my views and comments will receive a positive response.

Response 9.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the consultation document with regard to the options for use of Glen Wyllin and the current campsite. My response below is primarily on behalf of [REDACTED] with some observations from a personal perspective appended.

On behalf of the business our primary concern must be around the quality and quantity of the water supply to the fish farm. [REDACTED]

The sourcing of clean water from this supply is critical to the business, and we would hope that any future development of the campsite would take this into consideration, although those listed in your proposal document seem benign in this aspect.

The facilities listed in the document do not mention the adjacent BMX track. Whilst this is a facility which was organized by Michael Commissioners, and not part of your asset, I feel that the presence of this adds to the overall attraction of the area as a camping/holiday facility.

I think it is also noteworthy to point out that there is no longer a beach access from Shore Road, and as such the beach access point from the campsite is heavily used by all beach users. The parking facilities render it particularly useful for horse riders and dog walkers who wish to access the shore.

Although I have not lived on the Island for an extensive period, my family live locally and make use of the campsite facility almost daily as access to the beach, use of playground and open space, as do many families from the village.

The campsite in its current format seems well run and cared for, and if the format were to be changed to include significant investment on cabins or pods, presumably the lease period or cost would have to be altered to reflect this?

Response 10.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the consultation. Also included below are a number of observations that any potential tenant should be aware of.

- a) Michael District Commissioners have successfully run a campsite in the glen for over 20 years and valued the close and good working relations between DEFA (landlord) and ourselves (tenant).
- b) The location of the camping areas within the glen makes it one of the most beautiful camping locations on the island.
- c) When set up there were few alternative sites in the west of the island, now there are four in Kirk Michael alone, at least three in Peel/St Johns to the south and three large sites to the north in Ballaugh/Lezayre. DED have encouraged more campsites in the Douglas area for TT and MGP weeks, while Tynwald has banned caravans coming to the island outside of these two short periods. These two actions alone affect the financial viability of the campsite.
- d) Glen Wyllin campsite has higher staffing costs than others as owners do not live on-site, and thus a rota of wardens, ground staff and shop assistants are needed.
- e) The ex-Boating lake area is an area chosen by many campers and would suggest it included as a designated primary camping area (shown red on your plan). It does however lack water standpipes and lighting, but is not too far to the shower/toilet block. Vehicles cannot park alongside tents but on the access road and Old Coach Park area.
- f) The toilets are public toilets while the campsite is open (Easter to end Sept).
- g) The streetlights on the access road are usually lit during winter months until mid-evening to provide safety to pedestrians.
- h) All safety codes have to be met along with annual electrical testing, fire fighting equipment, gas safety certification, fire & emergency alarms, etc.
- i) Trees are professionally tested every 18 months and recommendations followed.
- j) Reduction in Government income, primarily through the reduction of VAT, has meant that yourselves have had reductions in your budget and some work previously carried out has been transferred to the tenant under a fully repairing lease.
- k) A five year lease is minimum to allow for recovery of capital spent in the early years.
- l) The suggestion of Pods and Chalets have been considered in the past, but would need a grant or loan from DED (maybe from the Enterprise Development Fund) as would need the infrastructure (water, electric and sewerage) to be extended. We would support this as suggestion 3.2c as well as traditional camping. They would probably be located on the southern side of the access road (ex-tennis courts area), thus retaining the area with electrical hook-ups primarily for camper vans.
- m) If self-contained, the chalets could extend the camping season but probably would not justify a warden on site.
- n) For safety, the plateau area would benefit from a wooden fence at the top of the bank on its southern perimeter.
- o) The access road should remain open at all times from the A4 Peel Coast Rd to the beach access slip.
- p) It is essential the glen retains a recreational use other than walking the woodland path on its southern bank or using the access road to get to the beach or BMX track. Family camping between Easter to end September seems to have been proven to be a good use of the site.

If there are any points needing clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Response 11.

I have used the site for the last eight years with my camper van and motorcycle for Manx Grand Prix week. I have found the site very friendly and comfortable. I think it would be a loss to the area if it is closed. It needs very little doing to it. Maybe a few improvements to the showers and toilets.

I enjoy very much the site, Glen Wyllin and Kirk Michael area.

Response 12.

Consultation : Options for future use of Glen Wyllin and current campsite

Thank you for the opportunity to take part in the above consultation. We have discussed within Manx National Heritage the options presented and offer the following comments.

Glen Wyllin is a difficult place for a campsite. It is narrow and shaded for much of the time by the woodland to the south, making it quite cold and something of a wind tunnel at times. This may suggest an approach which involves camping pods or similar, although over-development and incompatibility with the surrounding landscape should be avoided. It may be better to focus on the value of the site for a variety of outdoor pursuits, which could include but not be limited to camping.

The Manx glens in general have much to offer in terms of leisure use and it would be pragmatic to look at all Government owned glens strategically. There is much scope for improvements to facilities which are tasteful, of low visual impact and sensitive to the local environment, although we appreciate that current financial constraints mean planning for the long term. MNH would be happy to contribute to any discussion that DEFA might wish to develop along those lines.

Response 13.

Dear Sir,

We have just spent a very enjoyable summer having pitched our caravan at Glen Wyllin for the season. I have a few comments to make regarding the existing arrangement.

- 1) The facilities, whilst functional and maintained as best as can be, definitely need smartening up/replacing. This includes the shower block, toilets and playground.
- 2) The pitches need to be marked out.

The wardens this year have been very pleasant and efficient.

Going forward I don't think that things should change too much, however, there can certainly be improvements made aside from my comments above.

- 1) Consideration for making the pitches yearly rather than just in the summer. People could then camp weekends during the nicer winter months.
- 2) I personally would like to see improved disabled facilities and access.
- 3) A better range in the shop and maybe even getting together with local producers to stock local produce and even the local butcher to put together a meat/bbq package that people could pre order.
- 4) A cafe/tea room to provide breakfast and light snacks. This would also be a benefit to dog walkers and other users of the glen.
- 5) Camping pods are available elsewhere so I think something different may need to be considered for Glamping.
- 6) If you built a shelter/bunkhouse with basic cooking facilities you could offer children's camping parties and also promote the site to Youth Groups, Scout Groups and schools.
- 7) It is also important not to become too commercial and to protect the Glen and surrounding area.
- 8) I also believe that whoever the owners of the campsite are work closely with their I wardens in order to run the site successfully.

I do hope that Glen Wyllin remains as a camp site for tents, campervans, motorhomes and caravans.

Response 14.

1. DEFA Options

The Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture (DEFA) has released a consultation paper to establish more clarity on whether different or alternative uses of the Glen Wyllin area would be appropriate or welcomed publicly in light of the fact that the area will be available by tender for a lease commencing in May 2016.

DEFA is seeking views on what the local community and local and visiting public would like to see from the site. Several options may be considered, each having various implications, both financially and politically. Examples of some of the ideas which may be felt to be suitable or that have already been raised are shown below but they should not be considered a closed list and the Department would be happy to hear other ideas and proposals. Different uses are likely to be subject to planning permission.

- a) Retain the status and offer a tenancy opportunity to run a fully registered camp site on the same area;
- b) Offer camping but on a different scale area;
- c) Introduce a mixture of log cabins and camping pods ("glamping") as well as normal camping;
- d) Log cabin development with camping pods;
- e) Alternative proposals. (to be specified)

It is not envisaged that proposals will be managed or delivered by the Department but would be tendered to be operated commercially.

2. Tourism Strategic Context

The Island's Visitor Economy Strategy 2012-2015 contains the following strategic aims and values:

Strategic Aims:

- The Isle of Man offers a high quality tourism experience which exceeds the expectations of our visitors
 - The Isle of Man is a year round destination
 - The Isle of Man is recognised as a distinctive and unique visitor destination
- Strategic Value: "For our Island to remain competitive in what is an increasingly sophisticated visitor market we must continue to develop our ethos of delivering the highest quality of service and standards during the visitor experience".

The Department is seeking to introduce new Quality Standards for campsites to encourage the development of new and existing camping facilities which will meet visitor expectations. Some of the existing campsite facilities are basic in comparison to other destinations and need to be improved if the Island is to become an attractive destination for campers. The "Glamping" market is a niche market but one which is experiencing rapid growth and which people are prepared to pay more for than regular camping.

As suggested in the Destination Isle section of the Department's Vision 2020 strategy, "...it is now vital that we continue to innovate. We need to identify opportunities, analyse where we need to change and develop ideas for our long term prosperity".

There is an opportunity to develop the camping and "alternative accommodation" products such as yurts, log cabins, pods, treehouse, safari tents etc. In order to facilitate this Department is planning to introduce new Quality Standards for Parks and "alternative accommodation" to bring our assessment standards into line with the UK.

3. Current Supply of Campsites

The Isle of Man has 13 registered campsites which have the capacity for just over 1000 tent pitches. In addition, there is a similar number of temporary campsites which operate solely during the TT and Festival of Motorcycling periods.

A small number of local businesses have recently invested in providing new "alternative accommodation". The owners of Sabas Glen have recently successfully applied for planning permission to replace their existing canvas yurts with timber structures, allowing them to offer accommodation year round. This demonstrates that there is a market for this type of accommodation on the island and further development of this nature clearly benefits the visitor economy with a potential reduction in seasonality compared with traditional camping. The wooden 'wigwam' cabins at Knockaloe Beg Farm are also performing well with advance bookings extended well outside of the traditional season.

4. DED Response

Tourism supports the retention of the existing Glen Wyllin campsite as part of the Isle of Man's accommodation offering on the basis of its strategic fit. The facility is well suited to promotion of the Island as an outdoor and adventure destination. The Department would welcome investment in this site which is situated in a naturally beautiful area of the west coast.

Tourism would also welcome the exploration of additional "alternative accommodation" on the Glen Wyllin site. This would diversify the Island's accommodation offering as well as having the potential to provide outdoor accommodation more substantial than traditional tents, suited to "out-of season" more inclement periods.

Response 15.

We have just spent another idyllic summer at Glen Wyllin and would just like to put forward our suggestions for future use as requested.

Part of the attraction is that it is unspoiled although there are some areas that do need attention, for example the children's play area. That is sadly neglected and needs completely overhauled, with older children also in mind as well as tots.

The wardens do a wonderful job, this year they were exceptional; however to ensure standard and loyalty, working conditions should be upgraded. Also the camper's amenities revamped, including hygienic showers and toilets.

Shop revamped.

More should be done with the glen, encouraging walkers to use. As well as cycling paths.

Hard standing for caravans and camper vans.

An area turned over to storage for winter use.

All of these could generate more income for tenants of Glen Wyllin.

Response 16.

I am sending this email in support of the continuation of Glen Wyllin campsite. Having purchased a caravan and having it positioned in the campsite over the last season. Could I first add how I felt it works really well just how it is: why try and alter things. I have a daughter of 8: son of 3 and a niece of 11; they absolutely love it. It's a safe clean environment ; encouraging the young to get out and about (putting the ipads away) Could I take this time to say how I felt the wardens did a fantastic job ; keeping everywhere clean and tidy. You would be hard pressed to have the site in better hands. I and a lot of people are hopeful it will continue. Looking forward to a positive outcome. Many thanks.

Please note: Two responses have been excluded as the respondents could have been identified from the text and they had asked to remain confidential. In some other cases there is a redacted text to protect the identity of individuals or companies named with responses.