

# Ledgowan

## Access Policy

- No one is denied access – we will abide by the law
- No one is allowed to walk in the curtilage of our property
- Gates will remain locked for the following reasons –

Ledgowan has lost stock and equipment to thieves in recent years, gates have been left open or in one case a gate was stolen. The estate is also determined to prevent vehicular access to poachers. Incidents of theft and damage have been reported to the police

We encourage access to Ledgowan using our managed tours.

We run safaris taking members of public on the hill roads to view the wildlife pointed out by our stalkers. All of these visitors we have contact details for.

- It is our policy to ask all walkers we meet at Ledgowan for contact details (name & address) and where this is not forthcoming or staff consider there is any reason for doubt, they will take a photograph of the individuals and or their vehicle.

Reasons – there are some malicious people about. There has already been an incident of a black throated diver being found dead on the loch side (July 13) which the police have investigated. This had nothing to do with the Estate staff

Some of our signs have been pulled off our gates.



We let the houses out to UK and foreign guests who all look for security (Russian, German and Danish) and it is imperative that we can offer this.

Most of our stalking guests stay at The Ledgowan House Hotel giving them considerable income.

In line with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, we ask walkers with dogs to keep them on a short lead or walking at heel during the ground nesting bird season which runs from April to July. A dog running loose can disturb ground nesting birds and defeat our efforts to replenish stocks. The young lives are very precarious. The eggs of Grouse are incubated for 19 to 25 days; the chicks can fly after 12 to 13 days after hatching and are fully grown after approx. 40 days.

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Ledgowan Estate is concerned with the care of the environment its flora and fauna and nurturing of a variety of species of birds and animals such as:-

Red Grouse

Black Grouse

Wood Cock

Ptarmigan

Snipe

Duck

Greylag and Canadian Geese

Also Pine martins, badgers and foxes

Ledgowan is proud to provide habitat for all of these species and more. We have put a lot of effort over the last few years into supporting these species, we have more grouse than ever before and we are not into destroying the environment.

Our interest in the protection of the environment is important to us and we are very keen to minimise any negative impacts by access takers

From 1st July to 20th October is the stag stalking season at Ledgowan and the Hind stalking is 21<sup>st</sup> October to 15<sup>th</sup> February. This takes place over the majority of the estate and it is impossible to know which parts of the estate we will be stalking on until the day as this is dependent on many conditions. We will look into putting up stalking signs and maybe register on the stalking website which gives information to walkers.

Ledgowan Estate is a rural business which, like many modern Highland Estates, requires to balance its books. We are active managers trying to improve our business in a challenging environment and we wish to carry out our business in an atmosphere of good relationships with our customers, visitors and agencies.

Negative behaviour – before we fenced the house and buildings our cctv camera picked up people peering into the house windows and walking through our sheds hence we felt the need to put up the fences at considerable cost.

We are concerned that a Stalker coming off the hill with a rifle is a vulnerable target for malicious people who may be out to cause trouble. By the nature of the stalkers job, stalkers are often young people because of the need for an extreme level of fitness. Ledgowan has trained stalkers who have had training on personnel contact and comply with our estate code of practice which we value highly. Our staff are required to provide an incident report within 24hrs of any incident occurring on the Ledgowan estate.

We went to Ledgowan with every goodwill and putting out best efforts into the estate turning it into a viable business.

## Incident Report Ledgowan Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October

On Saturday the 5th of October I was working at the larder, by the lodge with a work colleague. Two elderly people had parked their car at the top of the drive between the lodge and hotel. They walked down as far as the stalkers lodge with their dog, seen myself and Michael working there turned around and headed back to their car. I thought nothing of it at the time, but they must have been wanting to walk through the property and on to the hill road. An hour or so later myself and Michael took the pickup down to the far end of the estate, towards lohcarron to check the sheep and cattle. On our way back we spotted two people walking on the skyline on the hill behind the hotel, with their dog running loose about the hill a couple hundred yards of hand, and a car parked up at one of our gates with signs in the back windows stating, No more wind farms on Glenmoriston. I stopped the pickup to take pictures of the number plate as I did not know who these people were. I then headed back to the lodge as I had a German stalking party to tend to. I headed back down the road an hour later to see if the car had gone and the people had left the hill as we were stalking this day. The car was still there and the two people were 50 yards off the fence line returning from their walk. So I waited to explain to them that stalking was taking place at this time and it could have been a danger for them to be on the hill, also that their dog should have been on a lead and under their control, which it did not appear to be. The elderly gentleman didn't seem that happy to see me waiting their came storming through the gate and up to my face in quite an aggressive manner, demanding to know why I was watching him and taking pictures of his car ( had I got enough pictures and was there anything else I could help him with). I then explained to him that stalking was taking place at this time and it was not safe to be wandering the hills, especially with a dog off the lead, not under proper control. The man was very snappy in his response, saying that his dog was very well trained. I responded by saying that the dog should have been on its lead, under his control, as it did not appear to be earlier on that day. Stating that there were sheep, cattle and of course red deer on the hill that they could of being disturbing. Certainly they were disturbing the deer as there were many there that morning. I told him this to which he said he could not see any deer. I then asked what he was doing on the hill as it seemed suspicious to me that the same two people did not walk past myself and Michael earlier that day, and had driven to another part of the estate to go for their walk, without being seen. The man had lost his temper by this time slinging his belongings in the back of his car, (which was blocking one of our gates to which we had livestock) saying he does not have to answer to me. I then proceeded to take pictures of the couple as a safeguard. As we have had thefts on the estate previous and would like to know what people were doing on the property? The woman then asked why there were no signs saying stalking was in progress and that dogs must be kept on a lead. I replied that there was a sign there stating, Ledgowan estate, working with the environment please do not disturb. She then went on to say that this was not satisfactory, that they could walk where they wanted when they pleased, it was their human right. The man then interrupted saying they were going, that they don't have to listen to me. So I returned to my pick up and went about my work for the remainder of that day.

Richard Simpson