

SOAC Part 3 - Car Parking

With winters not like they used to be with rock hard frozen ground, and sopping wet summers like last year, boggy road verges are becoming ever more common. Wet ground not only means stuck cars to push back onto the road after a hard day on the hill or crag, but also means damage to the ground and potentially making it difficult for other road users and problematic entry to fields and tracks for land management activities and residents.

With the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 we all have a statutory right to responsible access throughout most of Scotland. In this instalment of the series it is time to think about car parking. Vehicular access is not part of your rights under this law, but it can have implications on where it is convenient, or not, to enjoy access by where there are locations for parking your car. It is always preferable to travel to walks and climbs by public transport, and in some areas this is becoming easier through initiatives such as the Heather Hopper in the Cairngorms National Park (www.cairngorms.co.uk/park/visitors/explorer). As is evident to most mountaineers, public transport is often not a viable option due to remoteness and timings of weekend services, especially in winter, so the next best option is to share transport as much as possible. Sometimes it is obvious where to park, such as Coire Cas car park for a quick nip up Cairn Gorm. Sometimes there seems no obvious place to park your car, or the car park is full. So what are your rights and responsibilities in these circumstances?

In Issue 36 there was a report about the new car parking facilities at Huntly's Cave where the lack of car parking facilities was becoming a problem. If you know of a location where there is commonly a problem, why not contact the local authority or national park authority, and work together to find a mutually beneficial solution.