

8/1/62

Registered Charity No SC 013298

7 June 2010

Green Meadows
St James's Place
Inverurie
Aberdeenshire
AB51 3UB

Mr Simon Hodge
Chief Executive
Forestry Commission Scotland Head Office
Inverness Business Retail Park
Inverness
IV2 7GB

Dear Mr Hodge

I am writing to you on behalf of the Bailies of Bennachie. The Bailies of Bennachie is a conservation charity formed in 1973 whose main objectives are:

- Preserving the amenity of the hill of Bennachie
- To help maintain and improve the footpaths and rights of way on Bennachie and to encourage the creation and preservation of features of natural and cultural history on the hill
- To study and record the natural and cultural history of the hill
- To encourage and stimulate public interest in and care for Bennachie, its beauty, history, character and surroundings and discourage litter and vandalism.

Over the years we have worked well with Buchan Forest District and now Moray and Aberdeenshire Forest District and would like to continue to do so.

However, we are aware Forestry Commission Scotland are facing cutbacks and we would like to be assured that Bennachie is being properly looked after as we are aware that staff are not being replaced.

As Bailies of Bennachie, we would like to invite you to visit the hill with both forestry staff and yourself when you next visit the district so that we can show you how important this hill is to the people of the north east and to Scotland.

Please let me know if you would be willing to be shown the hill and the area.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Neely (Clerk to Bailies Council)

cc. John Thomson; Calum Murray.

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**Coimisean | Forestry
na Coilltearachd | Commission**
Alba | Scotland

Bailies of Bennachie
Green Meadows
St James's Place
INVERURIE
Aberdeenshire
AB51 3UB

**Forest Enterprise
Head Office Scotland**

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Simon Hodge FICFor
Ard-Oifigear / Chief Executive

11 June 2010

Our ref: SEC/10/51

Dear Mr Neely

Thank you for your invitation to visit Bennachie.

As you reflect the impacts of economic downturn will strongly influence the availability and deployment of public funds. Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) will be required to look robustly at all areas of expenditure to prioritise available resources in order to meet key commitments. I have very recently discussed these matters with the team at Moray and Aberdeenshire Forest District and am aware that they are looking critically at resource deployment across the board.

FCS has already invested heavily in both staff time and financial resources at Bennachie. The site delivers environmental, community, cultural and recreational benefits and is acknowledged as a core part of the Moray and Aberdeenshire FD programme. It will, as a result, continue to be a high priority for our local Forest District Communities, Recreation and Tourism team to maintain existing infrastructure to a standard appropriate to this key site.

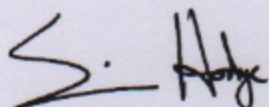
There will be limited funding available for new programmes and very strong competition from other opportunities. Any future proposals will need to be scaled to take account of the economic context and in order to be successful any significant new programmes will require to be supported by a robust business case.



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These processes are matters for the local Moray and Aberdeenshire FD team to lead on. I would therefore ask that you discuss any issues with John Thomson and Calum Murray who would be pleased to visit the site and meet further as required. John and Calum can be contacted at the Moray and Aberdeenshire FD office on 01466 794161.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Hodge'.

Simon Hodge
Chief Executive
Forest Enterprise Scotland