

8/2/2/2

BELL INGRAM

RURAL

Estate Office, Bonar Bridge, Sutherland IV24 3EA
Telephone 01863 766683 Facsimile 01863 766736



For the attention of Mr Fred Gordon

Please find enclosed copy letter of 13 July as requested.

With Compliments

Mrs Wendy Flood
Secretary

8/2/2/2

Mr Fred Gordon
Senior Ranger
Aberdeenshire Council Central
Outdoor Services
Gordon House
INVERURIE
AB51 3WA

BAT/WF/PT/FY/1

COPY

13 July 1998

Dear Mr Gordon

PITTODRIE ESTATE

We had a brief telephone conversation earlier in the year regarding the possibility of carrying out improvement works on the footpath between Rowantree Car Park and Mither Tap.

Since that time I have not given time to pursuing the idea partly because of pressure of work in the planting season and partly because the Forestry Authority extended the time available for applying for the Woodland Improvement Grants which could be used on the project. I have since looked at the exemplary work carried out next door by the Forest Enterprise but am somewhat horrified by the costs which are considerably in excess of anything originally contemplated.

In view of the possibility that partnership funding from other agencies will be more difficult to obtain and that the Estate itself does not have the means to provide significant funding for public recreation, I think it may be best to concentrate on the sections of the path where most erosion is occurring.

As a senior Baillie of Bennachie, you may already have an idea of what is required or otherwise I believe Forest Enterprise, with their experience, may be willing to carry out a rapid survey.

The Estate have expressed a willingness to promote public recreation and it would be hoped that public bodies could take a positive attitude and assist by whatever means are available.

While it is not your department it would be interesting to consider how the promotion of public recreation could be linked to a wider Estate plan for private recreational development. Obviously, the enabling of private enterprise could generate or release funds for the public project.

As a Baillie of Bennachie, I would also be interested to have your comments on the raising of the existing treeline to link with adjoining Forest Enterprise forests and improve the proportion of open hilltop to forest (i.e. $\frac{1}{3}$: $\frac{2}{3}$) as viewed from a distance. Currently I consider that the more recent forest should link in with the remnants of pine and larch which themselves will provide a natural edge at the upper limit.

The existing Woodland Grant Scheme contract for the Estate has recently expired, hence the reason for consideration of new ideas and opportunities at this stage. The new plan may in fact be a 20 year proposal and therefore we will be considering all the long-term benefits that the forest can provide.

Yours sincerely

B A Taylor
Forest Manager

8/2/2/2

Bailies of Bennachie
Bennachie Centre
Chapel of Garioch
Inverurie
AB51 5HX

B A Taylor
Forest Manager
Bell Ingram
Estate Office
Bonar Bridge
Sutherland
IV24 3EA

30/10/98

Dear Mr Taylor

Pittodrie Estate

Further to your letter I have now consulted with colleagues on the Estates proposals. The Bailies of Bennachie have always enjoyed a good relationship with the Pittodrie Estate and we are appreciative of the opportunity to comment.

As you rightly say the majority of the paths on Bennachie have been recently upgraded by Forest Enterprise and the comments received from the Public at the Bennachie Centre make it clear that this is much appreciated. With some 100,000 people now annually visiting Bennachie there was a real concern over the erosion on many of the more popular routes. Such upgrading is, of course, expensive and the project has benefited from partnerships between Forest Enterprise, Aberdeenshire Council and Scottish Natural Heritage with regard to funding. The Estate's wish to promote public recreation is very encouraging as the path from the Rowantree car park to the Mither Tap is one of the most popular approaches to Bennachie. Undoubtedly Forest Enterprise's expertise and knowledge gained from their recent works would be of great value to you and I would recommend that you contact them in Huntly for their advice on costing etc.

The Bailies have a long and mutually beneficial relationship with a number of bodies involved with environmental issues and would be glad to comment on any proposals likely to be linked to the wider Estate plan for private recreational development.

On the issue of the tree line it would be impossible to give an expert opinion on this as we are not foresters. However, it is our belief that the open nature of the naturally regenerating woodland on the Rowantree path is one of its most important features. It gives walkers the opportunity to see how such woodland develops over time and to appreciate the open aspect over Aberdeenshire and

parts of the Buchan Plain. Also the scree and small informal quarry sites visible here are significant in respect of local social history.

The woodland itself, as it exists currently, especially around the valley of the Rushmill Burn, is particularly good and ranks amongst the better natural habitats on Bennachie and it would be counterproductive to have this altered in any future planting scheme. Indeed it is possibly good enough to be designated as a SSSI as an example of developing native woodland.

I trust that these comments are of interest and the Bailies would certainly be willing to comment in any proposals in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Fred Gordon
Senior Bailie

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Mr Fred Gordon
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Bennachie Centre
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BAT/PT/FY/1

28 January 1999

Dear Mr Gordon

PITTODRIE ESTATE

Further to correspondence, the Estate have commissioned the Footpath Trust to do a survey of the path from Rowantree Car Park to Mither Tap in order to identify the scale of the maintenance requirement.

This will also provide detailed specifications and estimates of cost to be used in forthcoming grant applications. In the first instance we would hope to obtain support via the Aberdeen Access Strategy. Consultation on proposals submitted to the Council will shortly be carried out and we would appreciate any assistance the Bailies may be able to provide to promote this scheme.

We are in communication with Scottish Natural Heritage, Grampian Enterprise and the Forestry Authority in expectation that we can achieve a fairly comprehensive upgrading of the route over the next few years.

Yours sincerely

B A Taylor
Forest Manager

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