

# New map launched of Bennachie and West Gordon Way

A NEW map publicising walks over the Bennachie hill range in Gordon District has been launched on Wednesday, in a joint venture involving the Forestry Commission, Gordon District Council and the Bailies of Bennachie.

It is expected to open up public use of the range, but a local conservationist, James MacKay, of the Bailies of Bennachie, says they are convinced the beauty and integrity of the area will not be endangered.

"We are confident that Bennachie will not be spoiled by people pressure" said Mr MacKay. "The creation of the West Gordon Way over Bennachie by the Forestry

Commission, Gordon District Council and the Bailies has been very professionally carried out with a view to keeping damage from over-use to a minimum.

"It could be argued that by developing the West Gordon Way the wilderness value of Bennachie was being endangered. But because of the way the route has been chosen there could be a hundred people on it, enjoying some marvellous scenery, without people using the tops of the range being aware of their presence."

The convener of Gordon's Planning and Development Committee, Councillor John McGregor agrees. "We are always conscious of striking a balance between opening up some of the most wild and attractive areas of Gordon and conserving their natural beauty.

"I am confident that the co-operation that exists between the District Council and bodies such

the Bailies of Bennachie will continue to achieve that balance, and this latest publication in which we have all collaborated will further help not just the people of Gordon, but also visitors to the area, to enjoy the best aspects of Bennachie."

Two sections of the West Gordon Way, have already been opened and the final section is due to be completed later this year. The 20-mile walk will eventually stretch from west of Rhynie village to Esson's car park on the eastern slopes of Bennachie, near Chapel of Garioch.

The new map of Bennachie and the West Gordon Way, illustrated with photographs and carrying information about the history, wildlife and areas of interest on the range, will be available at Gordon Tourist Information Centres and Gordon District Council headquarters at Gordon House,