

would have saved us considerable headaches," he said.

The move was welcomed by chairman of Torry Academy school board, Patrick Robertson.

He said the Torry board had suggested a year ago that all schools should take SEBD pupils from their own areas.

Parents in Torry felt their school was being targeted.

was adamant that would not happen. There was no moving them. It seems to be a U-turn."

The plans include proposals to build a large base at Northfield Academy and the refurbishment of two off-site facilities for youngsters with more severe difficulties.

The committee requested £400,000 of capital funding to

facilities. The allocation of capital funding would also allow the department to vacate the Cordyce residential school site and Redcraigs.

At the end of last year, councillors approved the closure of Carden special school.

Officials recommend allocations of £25,000 should be spent on Aberdeen Grammar School,

of Don Academy, Cults Academy, Dyce Academy, Harlaw Academy, Kincorth Academy, Oldmachar Academy and Hazlehead Academy for the refurbishment of an area suitable for a behaviour base and additional staffing.

The committee also requested up-to-date progress reports for the next education and leisure committee meeting in March.

## Buchan forester receives Bennachie honour



Fred Gordon, left, senior baillie of Bennachie, with Norman Davidson, who was made a member of the baillies. PICTURE BY PETER ANDERSON

### by Alistair Beaton

A LEADING figure in North-east forestry was last night honoured for his contribution to the conservation of Bennachie.

Forestry Commission Buchan forest district manager Norman Davidson was made the 5,000th member of the Baillies of Bennachie, the group that has acted as guardian of the hill since 1973.

At a ceremony in the forest clearing at the Bennachie Centre, near Chapel of Garioch, Mr Davidson received a commemorative parch-

ment to mark his appointment.

"It is a worthy recognition of the contribution that Mr Davidson has made over the years," said Fred Gordon, senior baillie based at the centre as head countryside ranger with Aberdeenshire Council.

When it was realised that the milestone membership level had been reached, it was unanimously agreed to confer the honorary award on the forester.

Over the years, the commission, along with other local landowners, has worked in close partnership with the

baillies, enhancing and safeguarding the environment of the hill.

A network of paths has been developed on Bennachie, providing access for around 100,000 visitors annually to the hill's unspoilt local and natural history sites.

The Bennachie Centre is also a valued educational resource used by pupils from throughout the North-east.

Mr Davidson now joins an honorary elite that includes Prince Charles - who was made an honorary baillie after opening the centre in 1995.

"I am delighted and hon-

oured to become a Baillie of Bennachie. It was completely unexpected and is much appreciated," said Mr Davidson, who is based in Huntly.

The Forestry Commission, he pointed out, owned around 2,500 hectares of woodland at Bennachie and was keen to continue its ongoing partnership approach to caring for the hill.

At the end of last year, baillies founder members Algy Watson, from Oyne, and James MacKay, from Blairdaff, were made MBEs for their services to the conservation of the landmark hill.