

26 January 2009

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F.C.S. NAT. PARK AFFI E

Dear Liz Kirk

Following on from our correspondence in October 2008 I am pleased to inform Forestry Commission Scotland that the Planning Application re Glenmore campsite has been put on hold by the planning committee of the CNPA.

I should like to comment re the apparent lack of interest shown by Forestry Commission Scotland on the unsympathetic commercialisation of this area of the Cairngorm National Park by one of their "partner" organisations.

In using terms such as "long-term partner" and "joint venture" it gives an impression to the general public that there is a degree of joint responsibility for actions taken. Surely it cannot be the case that Forestry Commission Scotland has no influence over their partners.

As a camper who has been proud to see the growth of this area, in a process which took account of the desires of those families who wished to experience the "outdoor" nature of Scotland.; those families who wanted to use the many forest track and walks to enhance their lives; who have come back again and again and try always to put something into the local economy and appreciate the peace and tranquillity of the area, I have been disappointed by the changes brought by the management of Glenmore Campsite particularly over the past two years. Despite having the names and addresses of those who utilise the park on an annual basis the consultations were only directed to the season ticket holders (caravans) and the plans discuss the impact of cabins on the "seasonals" only. Enquiries onsite did not elicit information re the changes proposed.

Glenmore is changing into just another a caravan park, peopled by those who "bring it all with them" when they go on holiday. Its special place at the heart of the Cairngorms deserves a less narrow vision. Its management require to take note of the special qualities of the location; to understand that a twilight cycle is beautiful and purposeful in heating a camper up before bedtime.; to realise for example that having "lights out" (at 10pm one year) negates the fact that it does not get dark in Scotland till 11.30 in the summer months. It needs to understand that on reaching Glenmore the journey may have been tiring and space for a night should always be available. I myself have seen a backpacking tent turned away due to the "full" sign which is on permanent display during the summer. This shows a complete lack of understanding re the function of a campsite and the footprint required for a small tent and the beauty of "ad hoc" in the holiday period.

For many years the campsite was able to accommodate a good mix of tents and caravans and their accompanying behaviours and the layout was such that both enjoyed their freedoms.

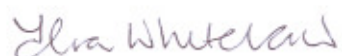
However the present organisation finds favour with neither.

Current thinking appears to be that those in tents would like to listen in to the latest episode of Eastenders, being back to back with caravanners and those in vans are unaware that sounds of even ordinary conversation on a still night will carry beyond the nylon/canvas walls of a tent. Management need to understand that people camp because they love it and not because they cannot afford a caravan.

The hands off or offhand approach demonstrated by Forestry Commission Scotland in your last letter to me will ensure that Glenmore campsite will in the future only be enjoyed by those who would not mind whether they were in a Scottish area of outstanding beauty or not as the view is pretty much the same from the inside of any structure be it cabin, caravan, or tent. When these structures are managed unsympathetically it would be as well to park up or pitch in the local Tesco carpark as the experience is pretty much the same.

I hope Forestry Commission Scotland will examine the plans more closely at their next airing. I am copying this letter to Rothiemurchus and Glenmore Community Association as it seems to me that that this would also be an organisation you could engage in "joint venture".

Yours sincerely



Flora Whitelaw