



FORESTRY COMMISSION

District Office

High Street Fochabers Moray IV32 7EP

Telephone Fochabers 820309

Mr James R Mackay
The Dell
Blairdaff
Inverurie
Aberdeenshire

Your reference

Our reference S18.1/BNC

Date 1 March 1982

Dear James,

I have your attractive card sitting beside my desk - a nice card and a nice idea. Thank you very much. Strangely enough it's a very similar view to the one that our resident artist is currently involved in on the fourth picture for the series on the west gable at the Donview Centre. When you've got something like the Mither Tap in a forest there is really no getting away from it! I like the treatment by your artist. It's a very attractive card.

What we now have to consider is a proposal by the high heid yins in Aberdeen to put up honesty boxes and make a charge for the facilities which we have long provided free for the lovers of the range.

For the suggestion it is being said that Bennachie is out of line with other areas where similar facilities are charged for by honesty box and parking ticket system. Undoubtedly we have some trouble and expense over providing what we do for the general public at large and I am being fairly hard pressed to move Bennachie into line with the rest of the world. You may consider, however, that Bennachie should not be moved into line with the rest of the world because of its unique position. You may wish to argue that the existence of the Bailies with all their goodwill and help - in some cases very practical help such as improving paths - means that the interested public through the Bailies is already in a way contributing to the costs of the enterprise of running paths and the like. You may feel that no charge should be levied.

For what it's worth, my own feeling is that the goodwill to the Forestry Commission, which is got by providing these rather fine facilities free of charge, far outweighs any modest income we might receive in cash terms. I always feel there is a terrible waste of money somewhere in things like the Fourth Bridge when the cost of collecting tolls more or less eats up all the income from the tolls themselves. There would be an element of this in the Bennachie car parks.

When approached I stated my position quite clearly but it has been suggested that I go to you for your reaction.

Another thing I fear is that by putting up an honesty box - even when emptied nightly there is an added inducement to vandalism and theft. In other parts of the country the box has been an obvious target and chains and cars have been used to pull it from its moorings. I don't think there's a big risk of this happening in the Bennachie area but I think it's a factor which should be taken into account.

FORESTRY COMMISSION
District Office
High Street Rochdale M23 7EP
Telephone Rochdale 270001



Your reference
Our reference 218 BWC
Date 1 March 1985

Mr James E Mackay
The Hall
Bairdall
Inverurie
Aberdeenshire

Perhaps you would like to consider this, discuss it with any of your colleagues you think might give you the right answer and let me have your considered opinion couched in suitable terms for onward transmission to Conservator. Bennachie is very much a place of the people and I would like to think we take our guardianship of it very seriously indeed.

Hoping to see you 'ere long.

Yours aye

R J R Marnie

R J R Marnie
District Officer

PS. We hope to open on April Fool's Day. (Denver - that is!)

8/1/11



THE DISTRICT OFFICE
FORESTRY COMMISSION
High Street, FOCHABERS, Morayshire
Telephone: Fochabers 820309

Please address any

reply to:.....

and quote: S18.1/BNC

Your reference:

16 March 1982

James Mackay Esq
The Dell
Blairdaff
Inverurie
Aberdeenshire AB5 9LT

Dear James

Your letter of 10 March has just arrived on my desk, for which I thank you sincerely.

I could do no better than send a copy of it on to Conservator for his urgent and deep consideration. Your points are very clearly made and in the correct order! Point 10 is masterly. We now know we have a worthy successor to Danny Gordon!

Many thanks.

Yours aye

R J R Marnie
District Officer



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Your ref SI8 I/BNC
District Officer
Forestry Commission
High Street
FOCHABERS
IV 32 7 EP

10 March 82

Dear Ron,

Thank you for your letter of 1 March regarding the proposal to charge for car parking at Bennachie.

We appreciate that the Commission would wish to bring the car parks at Bennachie into line with those in the rest of the country. However we would like to argue that Bennachie should be regarded as a special case for the following reasons:-

- 1 the Bennachie car parks give access to parts of the Hill that are not owned by the Forestry Commission and it does not seem right that people wishing to make use of these areas should be charged by the Commission
- 2 if the general public is to have to pay for the privilege of car parking at the three Forestry Commission car parks then people may stop using them in favour of the Rowan Tree Car Park which is owned by Gordon District Council. This could lead to congestion and severe erosion problems on the Rowan Tree/Mither Tap path
- 3 to avoid paying, drivers may park their cars on the approach roads to the car parks causing serious congestion
- 4 it seems ridiculous and inconsistent that people should have to pay for the use of three parks and not for the fourth
- 5 there is a possibility that people will make an unofficial car park in the Horndoyne area below Nursery Cottage which could lead to all sorts of problems
- 6 the Bailies as well as the Forestry Commission are contributing to the maintenance of the Bennachie paths
- 7 the very good relations between the Commission and the general public on Bennachie could be irreparably damaged by such an action

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- 8 all the arguments against the use of honesty boxes - temptation to vandalism, discrimination etc apply as much to Bennachie as to anywhere else
- 9 some Bailies use Essons Car Park almost every day in the summer-time - they could not be expected to pay each time
- 10 in the first competition the Bailies ever held (an essay for school pupils on "Why I like Bennachie") one of the primary pupil prize-winners finished his essay with the words - " the thing I like maist about Bennachie is that ye dinna hae tae pay for't"!

This contemplated action of commercialisation on the part of the Commission would we feel be very misguided and counter productive. It could ruin what must be a unique relationship between a respected government body, a conservation society, an appreciative and responsible public and the freedom of the wide open spaces of a magnificent little mountain.

The tremendous work which the Forestry Commission has done and is doing on Bennachie is undoubtedly appreciated by a great many silent people. As these recreational facilities are for the good of all, the cost of providing them should continue to come from central finance.

I hope that the proposed disastrous step will never be taken.

Yours aye,

James R. MacKay