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By email

Mr James Wheater
Planning Officer
Aberdeenshire Council

22 March 2013

APP/2018/0522 Construction of Mountain Bike Trails, Formation of Access and Car Parking on Land Around Pittenderich Cairn, Tarland

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposal for the construction of new mountain bike trails near Tarland. After consideration of access issues and discussion with the developer, Mountaineering Scotland has no objection to this proposed development as stated in the plans. The justification for this is given below.

Mountaineering Scotland is the only recognised representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers, mountaineers and ski-tourers who live in Scotland or who enjoy Scotland's mountains, and acts to represent, support and promote Scottish mountaineering. Mountaineering Scotland also acts on behalf of the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) on matters related to landscape and access in Scotland and provides training and information to mountain users to promote safety, self-reliance and the enjoyment of our mountain environment.

Our interest in this proposal lies with the proximity to Pressendye. The hill of Pressendye (619 m) is noted as a 'Graham'. Grahams are Scottish hills between 2000ft (609.6m) or more and less than 2500ft (762m) with a drop of at least 150m between each peak and any higher land and are popular destinations for hillwalkers. Pressendye is climbed regularly by people from all over the UK, as well as more local walkers. There are a number of routes to the summit, which may overlap or cross the routes of the proposed mountain bike trails.

Our concern is to ensure that safe access to the hill is maintained for walkers during the trail planning, construction and operational phases of development. To that end we asked for the provision of a designated walkers' trail through the development site to prevent accidents occurring between walkers and bikers, and to have the detail of this addressed in an access management plan that considers both construction and operational management.

After discussion with the developer, we have been assured that the design of the trail maintains a high degree of separation between different recreational users, with the few shared sections of trail on uphill sections, and on a wide landrover track.

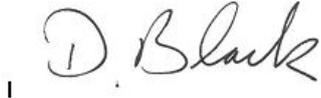
During construction, signage and diversions would be put in place as required. It is intended to have minimal diversions in both place and time, to cover the immediate working footprint of construction.

Once completed, all crossing points of bike and walking trails will have suitable warning signage,

and zig-zag fencing to slow approach. Walkers will be encouraged access the hill through the site by an indicated 'red route' otherwise known as the Smallburn Path.

With these conditions in place, we have no objection to this proposal being given planning consent.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Black". The letter "D" is large and stylized, followed by a period and the name "Black".

Davie Black
Access & Conservation Officer
Mountaineering Scotland