

The latest Badaguish planning applications

Description

By Phil Swainson



General view of Badaguish (taken 17/3/17). You can see mounds of material, left background, sitting park given retrospective planning permission. The still unplanted area in the foreground was meant to

trees a year ago.

As stated at the end of my last post on Badaguish in Glenmore ([see here](#)), Speyside Trust has made yet another planning application, this time to convert a toilet block into a site base for staff. Like many previous applications, it is full of false or misleading statements, and as pointed out in my previous post, a very basic mistake.

But first we must ask why the Cairngorms National Park Planning Authority has not called this application in. In their response to Highland Council they state:

“The decision of the Cairngorms National Park Authority is that the above planning application does not raise any planning issues of general significance to the park aims and as such No Call-in is necessary in this case.”

At the same time the CNPA has called in the planning application to extend the temporary planning permission for ten wigwams for another three years and this is being considered by the Planning Committee on Friday ([see here](#)).

The proposed toilet conversion is in fact part of a major development of a six hectare site which goes against all previous local plans.



Because Badaguish is close to the Special Protection Area for birds, one of the concerns about increased potential disturbance to capercaillie and Badaguish has been required to put in arrangements to manage previous planning consents. This sign went up long after required by planning conditions and is not for people who are likely to walk through the clear fell.

If agreed the toilet conversion would become a permanent residence in an area with a presumption against such a building. I feel we can see the decision not to call in this application as an abdication of responsibility on the part of the CNPA. So nothing new then.

'Care Inspectorate did not suggest new building' says watchdog

Badaguish blasted over 'untrue' claim

COMMUNITY leaders have come out against a controversial holiday respite centre's plans to provide accommodation for a 24-hour on-site warden service.

The facility proposed at Badaguish Outdoor Centre by Glenmore would use an existing toilet and laundry block. But Aviemore Community Council maintains that the application lodged with planners contains information which is "untrue".

It informs the need for the development is down to Care Inspectorate requirements.

Last week the Strathly reported that the inspectors had downgraded Badaguish to "weak" on all counts after an unannounced inspection last Autumn.

The supporting statement submitted by Inverness-based Bracewell Stirling Consulting states: "The Care Inspectorate during their inspections provide advice, guidance and suggestions to help improve the services provided, to reach the highest standards.

"They have advised that an additional resident on-site warden is now an essential requirement to ensure 24-hour cover to support visitors to the centre.

"Temporary staff accommodation is no longer appropriate to fulfil this more onerous duty. The level of responsibility requires a permanent post."

But the Aviemore watchdog - which covers the site - objected to the application on eight different grounds.

Chairman John Grierson pointed out at their latest meeting on Thursday: "This is untrue. The Care Inspectorate made a requirement that the service increase the staffing ratio to include providing a 'wakened night staff' located in the care service in addition to the sleep-in person.

"The Care Inspectorate, in correspondence, has confirmed that it never required the person to be resident."

Badaguish, which is operated by the Speyside Trust, was castigated in the latest Care Inspectorate report for not providing sufficient security measures for those vulnerable people staying at the centre.

The operators have said the addition of the new facility would mean greater supervision "at all times" and

By TOM RAMAGE

greater safeguarding of vulnerable groups, with "greater ability to intercept all booked visitors on arrival and provide essential briefing."

Brace Stirling told planners: "The laundry/toilet block is well located for supervising all the site visitor accommodation."

But the community council have pointed out to the authority: "The plan submitted with the application shows the wrong building. The building indicated is the site warden's house and not the toilet block."

"The proposal is not shown on the Speyside Trust's long-term master plan for the site dated February 8.

"That masterplan, which was submitted for another application being dealt with by the Cairngorms National Park Authority, was submitted after this present application..."

"There is nothing in it to justify the application, in fact the proposal is contrary to it, in that it will remove a facility and decrease the capacity of the site.

"The toilet block, that is to be removed, services the camping areas and the wigwams.

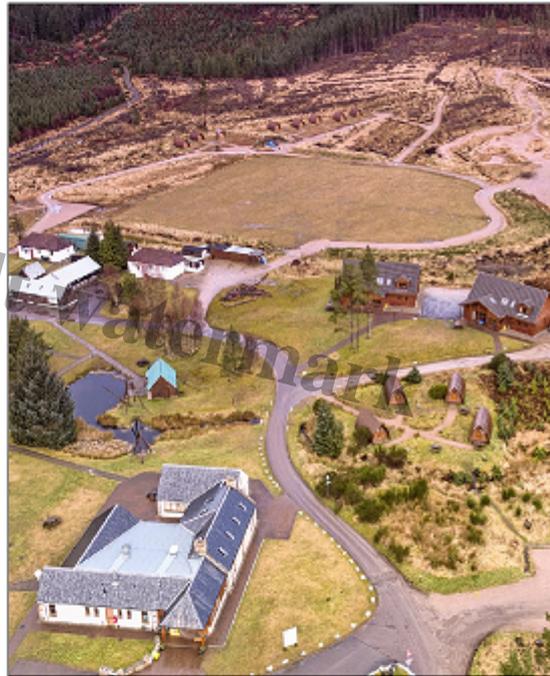
"The supporting statement also states that there will be a greater ability to intercept any impromptu visitors and all booked visitors on arrival.

"We find justifying that statement difficult as there is a large building between the toilet block and the entrance. It is not the house that is going to increase the ability to intercept visitors, it is the extra staff."

The community councillors agreed that the proposed residence was too small: "It would only be suitable for one or two people. That would be restrictive for recruitment.

"The community council takes cognisance of other successful planning applications made by the trust, however as history shows there is no guarantee that the permissions will be put into practice and we contend that this application should be judged on its own merits and rejected."

In their submission the watchdog wanted to make it clear that "the supporting statement to the application is inaccurate. It wrongly portrays what



CENTRE OF CONTROVERSY: Badaguish Outdoor Centre by Glenmore
Photo by: Aaron Sneddon

the Care Inspectorate requires and is contrary to the visitor management plan. It is also not included in the site master plan that was dated after this application.

"Knowing what is in previous applications that has been passed - new toilet block further into the site - the community council is concerned that this application could result in the house being used for other purposes, such as rental."

Speyside Trust director Andrew MacKenzie told the Strathly: "Folk seemed to have picked up on the precise wording of our justification stating the request from the Care Inspectorate for increased waking night duty cover.

"As a result of the CI inspection and the trust reviewing night duty cover, it is obviously Speyside Trust that is responsible for the risk assessment.

"Therefore how the trust manages the risk for night time evacuation has been the subject of detailed discussion with Fire Scotland and our insurers. The trust would certainly not wish to be responsible for a lack of suitable residential accommodation for overnight staff to carry out their duties.

"This includes responsibilities for both the whole centre and for the holiday care unit. It should also be noted that the proposed change of use of an existing forestry cottage simply reverts to its previous status as a domestic dwelling."

The press cutting says it all. In their supporting statement Badaguish says that the Care Inspectorate:

â??have advised that an additional resident on-site Warden is now an essential requirement to ensure 24 hour cover to support visitors to the centre.â??

I e-mailed the Care Inspectorate asking if they had, and the response was:

“Thank you for your email. I have queried this with relevant colleagues who have advised that no such recommendation was made to the service from the Care Inspectorate.”

One has to ask if the Care Inspectorate or any of our public authorities will take this up with the Speyside Trust?

In the past when commenting on the Speyside Trust and its planning and funding applications I have used phrases such as “misleading”, “untruthful” or “inaccurate” as descriptors of claims made by the Speyside Trust. On this occasion, it goes further than that. Highland Council, as planning authority should take note and reject the proposal. What a precedent it would set if Highland Council agreed a planning application which is based on what appears to be a lie?

The basic problem at Badaguish is that the planning authorities and the public cannot rely on any of the information provided by Speyside Trust without external verification and the development of the site has been based on fundamentally unsound foundations.



Under access rights, Badaguish has no more right to tell people to keep off mountain bike courses than they do. The land though is still to the best of my knowledge owned by the Forestry Commission and therefore

Category

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Tags

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