

The state of Cairngorm under Natural Retreats management (2)

Description

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Coire na Ciste t-bar September 2017 – Photo Credit Terry Smith

After my post on the state of the Coire na Ciste ([see here](#)), I have been comparing the state of the ski infrastructure higher up the hill with what is required under the terms of the lease between Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Cairngorm Mountain Ltd dated 11th June 2014 ([see here for lease](#)). The post also looks at how far the recommendations of a report into the state of the ski infrastructure by ADAC Structures in December 2016 ([see here](#)) have been implemented.

First the lease, which is quite clear:

2 Maintenance Works to Premises [NB premises is defined to include the entire ski area not just buildings]

2.1.1 carry out all maintenance works without necessity of demand thereof: and

2.1.2 without prejudice to the foregoing generality, ensure that the Uplift Infrastructure is in good and safe working order at all times [as the same may be determined by a person appointed by the Landlord who is suitably qualified with appropriate experience to determine the matter] by inter alia carrying out day to day maintenance and management of the same including maintaining an adequate supply of fuel and electricity to the same and clearing any obstructions, and that from its own monies and without any impact on the Asset Replacement Fund.

Coire na Ciste T-bar

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Coire Cas T-Bar platform in June 2016 in “good and safe working order”? – Photo Credit Terry Smith

The ADAC structures report picked up on the state of the Coire Cas T-Bar platform – it hardly takes an expert to see this was unsafe – in its report published in December 2016:

*“Introduction: 1.6. Items requiring attention in the short term are **highlighted in red***

4.9 8 – Corrie na Ciste Tee – Bottom Station:

*The timber platform was seen to be broken – possibly due to vehicle access – **this needs to be replaced before the coming season**. This was discussed with CML staff at the time and assurances that it would be done were received”.*

ADAC must have been concerned to record these assurances in the report.

The following pictures were taken in June 2018 and it can be clearly seen that the operator has still not adequately maintained the Coire na Ciste loading platform by failing to make the necessary repairs.

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“This was discussed with CML staff at the time (2016) and assurances that it would be done were re

As a consequence, this breaches lease conditions 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 despite its condition being brought to Natural Retreats and HIE’s attention in December 2016.

Carpark T-Bar Top Station

The ADAC structures report highlighted the state of the car park t-bar top station as follows:

4.4.2 Top Station. Painted Frame, paint system has failed and surface corrosion is extensive, **the corrosion system should be renewed if this steelwork is expected to last for much longer**. There are buried mild steel parts, **these should be exposed and inspected**.

Here is the evidence from photos taken in June 2018:

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“the corrosion system should be renewed if this steelwork is expected to last for much longer” Photo



“Buried mild steel parts should be exposed and protected” – photo credit Alan Bratley



Photo credit Alan Bratney



Photo credit Alan Bratney

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Photo Credit Alan Bratley

Clearly nothing at all has been done since the ADAC Structures report was published in December 2016. So much for robust governance.....HIE are allowing their tenant to ignore the general maintenance around the hill. Publicly owned Assets are being allowed to deteriorate despite the lease conditions requiring the tenant to undertake maintenance.

A reasonable question is whether this is gross negligence by HIE and Natural Retreats or deliberate? The contrast between the rapidity with which HIE removed much of the Coire na Ciste ski infrastructure from the hill last year on the grounds it was in an unfit state and their failure to repair other infrastructure which is clearly dangerous is striking.

Another related question is why HIE are so reluctant to enforce the terms of their lease at Cairngorm? Clearly its not worth the paper it is written on and the evidence suggests its a figleaf under which HIE continues to allow Natural Retreats to siphon money out of Cairngorm.

Category

1. Cairngorms

Tags

1. Governance
2. HIE
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