

The Cairn Gorm Car Parks and Parking Charges

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On 12th June 2020, the Cairngorm National Park Authority Panning Committee gave approval for the installation of solar powered entry/exit barriers to the Coire Cas car park on Cairn Gorm. Once these have been installed then parking charges for the Cas car park will become mandatory between June and October from 2021 onwards

Parkswatch has extensively covered the parking charge 'debate' in several previous posts. The records show that a voluntary donations scheme was previously introduced and that provided an income of £46,905 between 2013-17 [£10,426; £11,174; £11,427; £8,644 and £5,234]. We asked what the collected funds had been spent on but HIE could not answer that question.

In the summer of 2018, the then tenant, "Natural Retreats" introduced a compulsory charging scheme which we estimated to have brought in approximately £50,000 pounds. They published a list of projects to which the funds were to be committed but nothing ever came to fruition prior to insolvency.

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Cairngorm

Please pay the attendant or at the

You are obliged to pay the applicable

Please use the donation boxes on

highest car
(or 2,080ft).

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Please note the following exemptions

- Blue Badge Holders
- Snow Sport Season Ticket / Annual Pass Holders
- Emergency or Contractor Vehicles

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objectives

If you wish to contribute further towards our future projects, please use the donation boxes provided. Many Thanks!

projects

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The signs remain in place but mandatory charges are not being imposed this year.

In the summer of 2019, while the funicular was out of commission, Highlands and Islands Enterprise/Cairngorm Mountain Scotland Ltd continued with the parking charge scheme and they too published a list of projects to which the collected funds could be committed. These comprised:

1. Improved carpark infrastructure and surfacing
2. Ranger Service contributions
3. Environmental Projects
4. Educational and Interpretative Initiatives.
5. Drainage and increased protection for Watercourses.
6. 24 hour Toilet facilities.

The sum collected in 2019 was £22,279. The total sum from donations and compulsory charges in the 7 years between 2013 and 2019 was therefore approximately £119,000.

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The sign in the Ciste Carpark today.

Winter snow clearing has been added to the list but Ranger Service provision has been deleted. We're left to assume facility provision and interpretation must include: Environmental Projects, Educational and Interpretative Initiatives, Drainage and increased Protection for Watercourses and 24 Hour Toilet Provision. Fairy Stories, one and all. There is no evidence of any of the donated or compulsory charged money being spent on any of these projects

The Up to Date Position

Now that the car parks have been reopened for a couple of weeks, how do they look to the tourists that venture up there today and what impression do they take away?

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A couple of small piles of screeding material which consists of old roadway surface which has been p



The use made of the screeding material.

How long before that gets washed away and pollutes the Allt Mor watercourse? In direct contrast to the claims that 'increased protection for watercourse' would come from parking charges.

Not long, to judge by the washout that is already underway:



Has any other work been done?



Damaged metal drain cover in November 2019.



The metal drain cover was removed during the lockdown period and the hole filled with rubble.



Two weeks after re-opening the car park and the result is clear. Car tyres have already removed some of the rubble, a hole has appeared and the next section of metal drain covering is now hazardous to car tyres.

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Water erosion



Water Erosion

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Crumbling edges



Dumped boulders

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Abandoned materials which have been there for weeks.

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Pothole....that isn't the only one!

These pictures provide an insight into how the upper Cas car park looks today. It has now been 20 months since HIE stepped in to save this business from closure but there isn't any tangible evidence of infrastructure improvements. The car parks and associated drainage will require very much more than the spreading of a couple of piles of cheap rubbish on their surfaces to make them of an acceptable standard.

Tourists will not be forming a favorable impression because they see everything that the camera sees. In addition, anyone who goes up there on a summer evening will notice that there are tourists looking for available toilets.....and they are taken aback to find that there aren't any.

The recent publication of the Visions and Strategy document in relation to the development of a so-called Masterplan for Cairngorm has shown, very clearly, that tens of millions of pounds would be required bring the 'visions' to reality. The 'Masterplan' doesn't have anything to say about the dilapidated state of much of the built environment on Cairn Gorm which will undoubtedly require several millions more to bring it all up to an acceptable standard.

The public are entitled to know just exactly how the capital requirements are to be funded.

With the vital need to ensure that all publicly funded project will return real benefits, particularly to fragile rural economies, then hard questions about the future of Cairngorm Mountain need to be asked. Should the public purse continue to provide subsidy on an ongoing basis into the future or should CairnGorm Mountain have to pay its own way?

What needs to happen now

1. A close examination of the opportunity costs associated with an input of tens of millions of pounds of public money to Cairngorm should be made.
2. An analysis of alternatives to inputting the capital to Cairngorm should be made. That would determine if other projects, such as an Ice Rink and Climbing Wall in Aviemore or completing the Steam Railway connection between Aviemore and Grantown-on-Spey could deliver increased benefits.

Category

1. Cairngorms

Tags

1. Cairn Gorm
2. camping
3. CNPA
4. HIE
5. planning

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