

Cairngorm Campervan Park – world class?

Description

In the Cairngorm Mountain Scotland Ltd [CMSL] Business Plan that was published on 24 January 2020, the interim CEO wrote the following: Vision: *“To become a world class Visitor Destination – Ambitious to succeed”* On 23 March 2021, CMSL submitted a planning application ([see here](#)) to Highland Council for a Campervan Park within the Coire na Ciste car park on Cairngorm. That planning application was called in, for determination, by the CNPA on 12 April. This post takes a look at what campervan owners and other visitors would find there today and questions any ‘world class’ credentials.

As vehicles get closer to the Coire na Ciste car park there are a number of ‘features’ that will catch the eyes of drivers and passengers



Broken sign which lies on the ground just beyond the Sugar bowl car park

That sign has lain like that for over a year. It's clearly obvious to everyone who drives past. It is also

known about because it has been weighted down by rocks. Not exactly 'world class.' Surely the CMSL CEO is capable of lifting the phone and asking whoever is responsible to get it repaired and re-erected?



A rusty metal road sign frame with the sign now buried under vegetation and grit.

This has been lying against the rusty barriers for years. It's just before the left turn as you head to the Ciste car park. Everyone who drives past sees it and that includes the CMSL management.



A roadside pole....bent out of shape and the sign has long since disappeared. It too has been like that for years.

Campervan owners and other visitors will then find the following if they stop off in the Coire na Ciste car park.



A dilapidated building with signs that say: "Unsafe building, please keep clear"

As previously reported on parkswatch, HIE have allowed 2 planning applications for the demolition and partial reconstruction of this building, to lapse. Public funds were wasted in that process.



The Ciste car park Grouse Butt.

The wall is falling apart and there is the potential for safety issues here if children were to climb on it. A busy Campervan park, that has nothing for children to do and is surrounded by health and safety risks, could lead to difficulties.



Following a campaign by activists ([see here](#)), sandbags were placed on top of the ring main cable that supplies the power to the West Wall Poma in Coire na Ciste. It's on the surface in places and the signs say "Danger of death, Keep Off" Has anyone ever known children to like to play in sand?

This cable is supposed to be getting reburied this Spring/Summer.



The Bridge over the Allt na Ciste, below the Ciste carpark



The bridge was broken last summer and has now been closed. No date is given for its repair and return to use. You are requested to find a suitable spot to cross the river if access is required. The reason there's a bridge here because there isn't another suitable spot to cross!



Perished rubber that has fallen off the Ciste chairs that were stored below the former chair lift for years

The chairs have been gone for a couple of years, at least...but...there has been no attempt made to remove the non-biodegradable rubber.



The original waste-water treatment plant [Rotating Biological Contactor?]

The waste water plant was installed around 1974 and unsurprisingly showing signs of falling apart. Could that be a health hazard? In any event, it forms no part of the Campervan planning application, has been out of use for many years and it needs to be fully removed and the ground reinstated.



An abandoned pile of posts.

More waste, which has been lying there for years, as evidenced by the undergrowth all around.



Rusting pieces of metal which are on the ground in the Ciste car park.

Following the irresponsible destruction of the Coire na Ciste and West Wall Chairlifts in 2017 ([see here](#)), the Ciste car park surface, near the Grouse Butt, was left strewn with pieces of shattered metal. Although the failure to clear up that mess was made public, the then operator Natural Retreats did nothing further. It's more or less as bad today as it was in August 2017.

The CMSL marketing strap line says: *"These mountains are not ours.....but they are our responsibility to look after"* Really?

What should be clear to all is that CMSL's vision of making the place a World Class Visitor Destination is merely marketing rhetoric designed to pad out the so-called Business Plan it has agreed with Highlands and Islands Enterprise. To achieve that World Class ambition, it might be expected that any new developments would be to that standard. Alas, that is not the case here.

What needs to happen now.

The Board of Directors and the Interim CEO of CMSL need to take decisive action. Responsibility for these failings rests with them and they've had over two years now to address the issues. They could all go round to the Ciste car park, roll up their sleeves and get their hands dirty by picking up and removing the various detritus. They could also attend to the broken, abandoned and damaged road signage that is evident on the road up. That would go some way to demonstrating that they actually care about the environment and that they take their responsibility to look after these mountains, seriously.

Grouse Butt: arrange repair without further delay.

Ring Main Cable: ensure that Scottish and Southern Energy Networks are onsite soon and the ring main cable is properly buried.

Ciste Building: act on what was planned. i.e. demolish and partly rebuild it. However, 24-hour toilets must also form part of the rebuild. A Campervan Park that doesn't have toilets/showers can never be considered anything other than third class.

Allt na Ciste Bridge: effect the necessary repairs immediately and publicise a date when it will be reopened.

Waste Water Treatment Plant: arrange for it to be removed and replaced with a new one so that toilets/showers can be incorporated into a rebuilt Ciste building.

Category

1. Cairngorms

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