

Cairngorm Mountain – an unhappy end to 2021

Description

Sledging at Cairngorm Mountain

Sledging is Not Permitted at Cairngorm Mountain

Sledging is not permitted anywhere within the Cairngorm Mountain ski area boundary. This policy is based solely on diligent Health & Safety measures as the mountain can become incredibly busy, and we want to ensure the safety of all mountain visitors and the snowsports community. There were a number of incidents where injuries incurred due to sledging, and because of this we have chosen to ask visitors not to bring their sledges to the resort.

If you have any questions, please contact us via info@cairngormmountain.co.uk



CMSL's sledging policy

On 28th December Cairngorm Mountain Scotland Ltd (CMSL) issued this sledging policy on their website and a similar statement on their facebook page. It epitomises everything that is wrong with the current management Cairn Gorm and is unlawful.



Photo credit CMSL Facebook Page

The statement appeared to have prompted by the bedlam at the patch of snow that has been created by snow making machines near the Day Lodge. Clearly allowing sledges onto this small area when skiers are using it is not sensible.

But controlling sledging where people are skiing is not the same as trying to ban sledging from the entire ski area. Indeed, with the most of the ski area likely to be inaccessible to downhill skiers for most of this season due to the run down of ski infrastructure and closure of the funicular, there are more places than usual where it would be safe for people to go sledging.

A number of people commenting on the Cairngorm Mountain facebook page remarked on the lack of enterprise and legality of the policy:

Oldest ▾



Allan Mcguire

Is it not about time you made a sledging area.
The tubing is all good but surely a little slope would be good too

17h



Coral Clunie
Scott Ferguson

16h



Graeme Walker

I dont think that this is legal.

16h



Matthew Jackson

Graeme Walker my thoughts exactly. CM may not like it, but I suspect they can't actually stop it unless people are causing a danger or a nuisance.

Mind you, if they've had dangerous incidents you can hardly blame them for trying. I'd do the same in t... See more

15L



CMSL's lack of enterprise

It is probable that the snow making at Cairn Gorm this year has been so unsuccessful so far that there is not even space to create a cordoned off sledge run down the side of the snow patch that is called the beginners ski area. But having spent so much on creating the snow, charging sledgers to use it outside of skiing hours (9.30-3.30) might have brought in some much needed income and more importantly let a few more people enjoy what little snow there was.

There are good examples of this from abroad, where sledges come out onto the pistes once the ski lifts shut or where lifts are kept open for sledgers – and nearer at home:



Simon Barnard

Glencoe Mountain Resort provide dedicated slopes and free sledges. It could bring additional much needed revenue locally. More shortsighted management from Cairngorm

10h



1



Graham Brown

It's not big enough bucks for cgm

9h

In a letter to the Strathy this week Alan Bratney – who has contributed many posts to parkswatch – pointed out that CMSL are once again missing an opportunity to use Coire na Ciste:

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Cairngorm resort needs to listen to customers' views

THE Save the Ciste campaign has long advocated the concept of a dedicated sledging area on Cairn Gorm.

The reaction to Cairngorm Mountain (Scotland) Ltd's Facebook post in which they reminded the public that sledging is not permitted within the snowsports area boundary has made it abundantly clear that the public want a sledge park to be available on Cairngorm.

We are sympathetic to the view that there are health and safety concerns involved and it is clear that the area outside the Day Lodge is too constrained to permit sledging together with a beginners area and also those skiing/boarding down through the area from higher up, quite apart from the dangers posed by the burn.

That points to the lower Coire na Ciste as the preferred area on Cairn Gorm where sledging could easily be incorporated.

The lower Coire is much wider than Coire Cas adjacent to the Day Lodge and the west side slopes would lend themselves very well to sledging.

The point-blank refusal by Highlands and Islands Enterprise and CMSL to consider the possibility of redevelopment of the lower Ciste is simply a continuation of their failed

business strategy.

No business has ever been successful by continually ignoring what their customers want as CMSL is doing with sledging.

If CMSL is ever to become commercially viable and not be embarrassed by continued reliance on handouts of public funds into the future, then a new way forward with a 'can do' attitude needs to be found.

The Aviemore and Glenmore Community Trust have shown that they are more than capable of developing a successful business and it is long past time that HIE stood aside and enabled a successful CairnGorm future that is led by an organisation that isn't constrained by the funicular 'baggage' and a culture of ignoring their customers wishes.

Alan Bratley
Aviemore.

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For a company that claims to take health and safety so seriously – but remember the exposed ring main ([see here](#) for example) – this should be the obvious option for keeping sledgers and skiers apart!

An unlawful attempt to ban sledging

Under access rights you have a right to undertake informal recreation in Scotland's ski areas. The ski companies can create rules for people who use the lifts – you enter a contract when you buy a ticket – but not for those that don't.

That is not to say anyone can sledge (or walk) down the centre of a busy ski slope: ruining another person's recreation could be construed as a breach of peace or, if the person risked causing a serious accident, culpable and reckless conduct a very serious offence. Most people appreciate this, even if

they don't know the law, and everything works pretty well through common sense: sledgers come out after the lifts have closed and ski tourers, if the only way to access the hill is up a piste, stick to the edges. Such practices are perfectly in line with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, where part of the responsibilities involve respecting the rights of other recreational users. They are therefore within access rights.

CMSL therefore has no right to ban sledging from the ski area as they claim. Unfortunately, having got away with the unlawful closure of the ski road during the Covid pandemic, CMSL now pay scant regard to the law before issuing their edicts. Recreational organisations and everyone who enjoys visiting Cairn Gorm should start demanding CMSL retract their sledging policy otherwise walkers, mountaineers and ski tourers could be next.

The actual patch of artificially created snow raises some interesting legal questions. Technically, CMSL could probably apply to have it exempt from access rights – just like other temporary attractions in the countryside – on the basis that they paid to have it created and need to recover their expenses. Most people, however, would accept “rules” for this patch of snow if they were reasonable and CMSL were seen to be catering for the needs of the public. The risk to CMSL now is that the messages they are issuing are so clearly unreasonable and not in the public interest that people just stop listening. That would make the task of managing what is left of the Cairngorm Mountain business far more difficult.

Category

1. Cairngorms

Tags

1. access rights
2. Cairn Gorm
3. CNPA
4. HIE
5. outdoor recreation

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