

HIE's corporate vandalism and disregard for public safety at Cairn Gorm

Description

I have always been sceptical about Highland and Island Enterprise (HIE)'s funicular court cases going ahead because of what further it might reveal about their incompetence. But those court cases ([see here](#)) may be the price the Scottish Government has exacted for picking up the cost (c£26m?) of the funicular repairs

There was an interesting article on the court cases in the Press and Journal last week which illustrated the double bind HIE may be in ([see here](#)).

On the one hand HIE are chasing money, over £11.5m apparently, from Galliford Try who took over Morrisons, the original construction company. That, however, is significantly less than the actual cost of repair

On the other hand, the P&J article reveals that HIE "didn't become aware of the problems until 2015". Even if this claim is true and HIE were blissfully unaware of the design flaws until 2015, it has a number of important implications.

1. Aware that there problems with the funicular, why did anyone in HIE think it sensible to proceed with the corporate vandalism that was the destruction of the Ciste and West Wall Chairlifts... which left the business completely unable to function when the Funicular failed in 2018.
2. Aware there were problems with the funicular, what measures did HIE put in place to protect the safety of the public apart from the annual surveys by ADAC structures? And were the problems reported to the various bodies responsible for railway safety?
3. Aware there were problems with the funicular, why didn't HIE fix them immediately rather than wait three years until forced to do so? To what extent did the problems become more serious and the repair costs increase as a result of this delay?
4. Aware there were problems with the funicular, what discussions about this took place with the operator Natural Retreats and what attempt was made to renegotiate the contract with them? NR did not have the experience to manage Cairn Gorm and should never have been appointed, but it was not their fault they were handed a business whose income had become dependant on a duff asset. That surely must impact on the financial guarantees NR gave HIE which are the subject of another court case.

All this points to the most important question about the future of Cairn Gorm. That is how long is it going to take the Scottish Government and Scottish politicians more generally to realise HIE are unfit to manage the mountain business and need to be removed from the hill? Do we really need to waste yet more public money on court cases in order to establish that?

Category

1. Cairngorms

Tags

1. Cairn Gorm
2. funicular
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