

Parkswatch at the Public Audit Committee – the funicular railway at Cairn Gorm

Description



People patiently waiting for the funicular. Image: Jason Hedges/DC Thomson

It's been so busy that the car parks have been "maxed out" early in the morning.

Photo credit Press and Journal 11th January

Following Parkswatch's submission to the Public Audit Committee ([see here](#)), the authors were delighted to be asked to attend the Committee to give further evidence. Three of us are doing so today (Wednesday 14th January) ([see here](#)). You can watch the session, which is due to start around 11am, live or afterwards on the Scottish Parliament TV channel ([see here](#)). If you want to give feedback on what we say do please just use the comments facility below.



Long queues for the Cairngorm Mountain Resort car park. Image: Jason Hedges/DC Thomson

Photo credit Press and Journal 11th January

Since publishing our submission on Parkswatch, the various authors and others have submitted further evidence to the Committee about the funicular. This has been published on the Scottish Parliament website ([see here](#) under correspondence) and includes:

- A critique of HIE's business case for repairing the funicular which Mike Dearman, now a Director of the Aviemore and Glenmore Community Trust sent to Kate Forbes, MSP, in December 2020;
- A submission from David Farquharson, the Managing Director of Glenshee Ltd, which raises several questions about HIE's financing of Cairngorm Mountain (Scotland Ltd) and includes a list of total know grant funding since 2011 (c£57million);
- Further submissions from a number of Parkswatch authors;
 - Graham Nugent, who has a background in railways, comparing the design and location of the funicular at Cairn Gorm with those in Europe and explaining the impact of rail vibrations on concrete structures;
 - Graham Garfoot, explaining further problems with the concrete support beams caused by the way they were originally joined together;
 - Gordon Bulloch, explaining the impact of "soil creep" on the concrete support pillars;
 - And lastly a spreadsheet from Alan Bratney and myself presenting selected financial data from accounts since the funicular opened and comparing this to skier/boarder numbers.

Photos, however, often speak more than a thousand words. The two above are from an article in the Press and Journal on Sunday ([see here](#)) titled "Cairngorms Mountain Resort forced to close day after 1,500 braved conditions to take to slopes". They illustrate two aspects of HIE's disastrous mismanagement of Cairngorm Mountain.

First, the funicular is a poor form of uplift for snowsports, with insufficient capacity to cater for the public when there is snow at Cairn Gorm â?? hence the queues. This is frustrating for the public and terrible for the business because it severely constrains the amount of income it can generate. Hence the endless need for public subsidy.

Second, these winter capacity problems caused by reliance on the funicular have been made even worse by HIE reducing the number of parking spaces at Cairn Gorm â?? hence the queues of cars â?? without providing any alternative.

Category

1. Cairngorms

Tags

1. Cairn Gorm
2. funicular
3. HIE
4. visitor management

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