

AGENDA ITEM 5

APPENDIX 3B

2020/0201/DET

**REPRESENTATIONS
OBJECTIONS**

Helena
Crathie
Ballater
AB35 5UL

1 September 2020

CNPA
Planning Support Team
14 The Square
Grantown-on-Spey
PH26 3HG

Dear Sir/Madam

Erection of 18 Huts, 4 Compost Toilets and Associated Access, Car Parking and Landscaping
To The North and North East of Tomidhu, Crathie Ballater

As the nearest permanent resident, these comments and objections are derived from immediate proximity and from more general local experience. Living in Crathie for the past thirty-eight years with seventeen years as Manager at Royal Lochnagar Distillery, and now at Helena, my personal involvement now is the impact the Invercauld proposals will have on the self-catering units which I have built, and which are only a few feet from the track which provides the access

Essentially, I am concerned with the way in which a small scarcely populated area would be transformed, and with the unscheduled, but unmentioned risks. In miniature form it seems to be the imposition of a new town but without the responsibility, and restrictions which the larger model entails.

For example, the assumption that the users of the new huts will take their rubbish home with them, and that no use will be made of the existing bins at Tomidhu. A hopeful and optimistic view of the transient occupiers but, unfortunately, with no means of compliance or confirmation.

Then there is the matter of density. At peak times how many people will be in the huts? How many cars will there be? How much traffic will there be on the existing track? At the moment there is practically none, and visitors, their children and dogs, can safely walk and play.

The track is of particular concern. It is not a road, and there can be difficulties in winter. In fact it can be blocked for several days at a time by snow, and at other times ice makes it

difficult if not impossible. New Hutterers would have to walk up and leave their cars on our existing properties.

On the more general level I assume the Police are considering the security aspects of so many unknown visitors during the Royal season.

Also on a general level I wonder whether Invercauld, with hundreds of acres at their disposal, have considered adopting Norway's policy where huts are sited in remote areas?

At the moment their proposals are not a good idea and I strongly object.

Yours faithfully

A.J. Skakles

16 January 2021

Dear Ms Crerar,

CNPA Planning Ref 2020/0201, Proposal by Galbraith for 18 Huts, 4 Compost Toilets and Associated Access, Car Parking and Landscaping Land To The North And North East of Tomidhu Crathie Ballater Aberdeenshire

In my unanswered email to Councillor Blackett, (copy to the CNPA) on 26 October I referred to the inaccuracies contained in the Screening Report. I again must draw your attention to inaccuracies in the latest submissions on behalf of Invercauld Estates.

Crathie Hutter's Manual

Map marked Crathie Hut Site – Points of Interest

1. Baker/Café - **INCORRECT**
2. Café - **INCORRECT**

Natural Environment of the Wider Area

The Crathie Huts are located next to the Crathie Wood of SSSI - **INCORRECT**
Huts 1 – 12 are outwith the SSSI, huts 13 – 18 are within the SSSI

Wood Burning Stoves

These are a threat to lung and heart health. They emit harmful air pollutants and fine particles that can enter the lungs and the bloodstream. The proposal to have eighteen huts producing highly carcinogenic dioxins is certainly not desirable.

Many safety codes require stoves to be one metre away from furniture, and other items. Will the huts be able to comply with this?

Not quite a tome, but it appears that the Hutter's Manual will be the definitive answer to all the concerns raised by the Objectors. Taking one item in the manual, page four of The Crathie Hutting site – 'there will be no loss of amenity for neighbouring properties through noise, odours or nuisance.' How on earth can this be stated, how will this be policed?

We are in the situation just now where politicians, health care professionals who are making law, and providing guidance, constantly flout or bend the law. Celebrities, football players are constantly in the press for ignoring the Covid-19 law. How therefore, will The Crathie Hutter's Manual ensure we have law abiding Hutters adhering to the 22 points listed?

Invercauld is at pains to state how they will protect the environment, no mention of local residents however. The simple answer is to locate the proposed huts at the existing Invercauld Estate hutting site on the river bank below the North Deeside road approximately two miles from Crathie.

This spacious site is ideally suited for further huts. No tree felling, no car park construction, no intrusion into the SSSI, environment protected, and Crathie remains a nice peaceful place. Considerably less expense for Invercauld as well.

Alistair Skakles

Helena

Crathie

AB35 5UL

CNPA Planning Ref: 2020/0201/DET

Erection of 18 Huts, 4 Compost Toilets and Associated Access, Car Parking and Landscaping | Land to the North And North East Of Tomidhu Crathie Ballater Aberdeenshire

I am a resident of Crathie, living south of the river, within walking distance of the proposed development area.

I wish to object to the above proposal and have the following comments to make on documents provided by the applicant:

DESIGN STATEMENT

1. Introduction

1.1 Invercauld Estate extends to just over 100,000 acres.....the visitor experience is important to the Estate.... Another aspect to the visitor experience is hutting, with 13 huts presently located on Invercauld Estate, all in the Crathie area.

I believe these huts are mostly situated below the A93, along the river bank about 4km east of Crathie village, in an area with no houses, screened by trees from the road, and so well hidden that their location is unknown even to some residents of the area. Neither the density nor the location of these huts is comparable with the proposed development.

2 Hutting in Scotland

2.1 In many European countries hutting is well-established.....For example, Norway has 500,000 huts for a population the same as Scotland – we have around 600 huts.

Norway has a similar size population to Scotland, but a landmass five times greater.

2.7 In recent years, Planning permission has been granted for huts by many of Scotland's Planning Authorities. Approved developments include:- a 13 hut pilot project at Saline in Fife,.....15 huts at Falkland in Fife, 16 huts at Camp Wood in South Lanarkshire.

These three developments, as can be seen from maps and satellite imagery, are all in areas of woodland, or former forestry plantation, well away from communities or dwellings. In contrast, the proposed development at Tomidhu is adjacent to the homes in the east part of Crathie and does not appear to conform to the 'back to nature' ethos of hutting.

3 The Site

3.1 ... Other positive factors were replacing the existing caravans with sensitively designed structures.....

Under Hut Design, the proposed huts are described as being 'something more playful than a garden shed and more functional than a folly' and 'Nestled among the woods, the huts will feature distinctive round windows. This birdbox-like appearance

Eighteen of these odd structures will look more incongruous amongst the native birch and pine woodland than the present three groups of two caravans.

The application states the 6 caravans are 'rather old and semi-dilapidated'. Some are indeed old, but most have been well maintained by their owners and are not semi-dilapidated.

3.2 The site is on the eastern edge of the settlement of Crathie, on the north side of the A93.

Reforestation Scotland's Thousand Huts campaign has produced 'New Hutting Developments: good practice guidance on the planning, development and management of Huts and hut sites'.

Under '**Siting**' it advises ...'careful consideration must be given to potential impacts on the environment and existing communities.....For example, will it have a negative effect on the current pattern of the wider community's enjoyment of the site?'

The eastern half of the small settlement of Crathie north of the A93 consists of a cluster of 11 houses. The proposed development of 18 huts will be greater than the number of homes. The 'families, individuals and their friends' using the huts could, at any one time, greatly outnumber the residents who live nearby. The hutters will not be confined to the limits of the hutting development. The privacy of the residents is likely to be affected and their enjoyment of the present unrestricted access to the walks in the woodland will be curtailed by the development.

There will be a negative impact on the current pattern of the existing community's enjoyment of the site.

It (the site) is largely in an area of Ancient Woodland, as noted in the Ancient Woodland Inventory of Scotland, but includes a fringe of Crathie Woods, a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

- **Scottish Planning Policy identifies 'ancient woodland as an important and irreplaceable natural resource that should be protected and enhanced'**
- **Scottish Natural Heritage's description of Crathie Woods SSSI states 'it is the the finest example of upland birch-pinewood on Deeside and one of the finest in Scotland'**

Even if the proposed structures are to be built with 'a light touch', the increase in people pressure will have an impact on the vegetation in these protected areas. Ancient woodland is considered irreplaceable, being the result of tree cover for over 150 years. There should be a presumption against felling 22 trees just to allow holiday huts to be built.

The application states 'Tree planting around the car park area will mitigate against the loss of trees....' The car parking area is in an agricultural field and cannot replicate the Ancient Woodland where soils and plant communities have developed over more than 150 years of tree cover.

On the SSSI, much of the flowering plant interest is located on the flat open grassland alongside the track, between sites 15 & 16 and 17 & 18, the obvious place where hutters may choose to recreate and play ball games.

People pressure on both the Ancient Woodland and the SSSI is minimal at present, but will increase with the occupancy of 18 huts.

3.3 An access track heads north from the A93 and splits east and west, with the majority of the site accessed to the east.

3.4 (correctly 3.7) Access will be from the existing farm and forest road.

The access track referred to forms much of the Core Path UDE27, which runs from Tomidhu to Crathie Kirk and the west half of the settlement. It is one of only three core paths in Crathie. At present there is very little traffic on the track beyond the houses at Tomidhu. There is, I believe, a daily visit from a Scottish Water van, and

occasional use by estate vehicles and the owners of two caravans. The proposed development will result in many more vehicles using the track to access the car park and the 6 hut sites in the SSSI. Core paths are designated as safe and accessible routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders around communities. I note that Police Scotland suggest there should be a locked gate across the Core Path to prevent use of the track from Crathie Kirk.

Will local access to the area be restricted this gate and by the curtilage of the huts? The development would have a negative impact on what is currently a peaceful place to walk, of which there are few in Crathie for much of the year.

4 The Hutting Development

4.4 Each hut and its composting toilet will be located entirely within individual 10 x 10 metres plots.

Are these plots areas where the occupants can create fenced gardens, as happens on other hutting sites?

Will they be able to have barbecues there since there are no cooking facilities in the huts?

Will the *families and their friends* using the huts erect tents around them to accommodate everyone, as the huts appear to sleep only two?

4.6 A car parking area with 12 spaces will be provided at the north edge of the site.

Twelve spaces will allow for one car per hut. But if, as envisaged, the huts are for the use also of family and friends, where will additional vehicles park; on the grassland of the SSSI or beside the adjacent houses at Tomidhu?

4.8 The huts will be used exclusively by families or individuals and their friends for private use There will be no loss of amenity for neighbouring properties through noise, odours or nuisance.

Eighteen huts will be the equivalent of a new holiday park development, adjacent to the neighbouring properties, and outnumbering them.

There will be a potentially large increase in the volume of traffic passing the doors of several properties at any time of day or night.

An unknown number of people (*'families and their friends'*) using each tiny hut as a base for social gatherings will inevitably use the surrounding area for recreation, ball games, playing musical instruments, barbecues and other ways of passing the time. There may of course be quiet individuals too.

However, it is quite impossible to state *'there will be no loss of amenity for neighbouring properties through noise, odours or nuisance'*.

SERVICES

4.12... Water will be brought to the site by the hutters.

That effectively rules out anyone arriving by public transport to stay overnight.

Even with a car, it is a long and treacherous walk from the car park to the outlying huts carrying water, wood or food. There will be a considerable temptation to modify the *'informal paths'* or to park even temporarily by the houses at Tomidhu and take the shorter and easier walk from there to several of the huts.

Heating will normally be from a wood stove.....

Will the estate supply logs at a cost? The temptation will be to also use felled trees or fallen timber – in an Ancient Woodland and an SSSI?

4.15 Sewage will be dealt with using dry composting toilets. An area for finishing dry composting material by burying it is provided adjacent to the car parking area.

The prospect of people wandering around the woodland with containers of human waste, from 18 toilets, is not appealing to anyone living nearby or walking in the area. A dry composting toilet, I understand, separates liquid and solid waste.

How and where will the urine from the toilets be disposed of?

Where will waste water from cooking etc be disposed of?

4.16 Organic waste will be composted on site.

Compost heaps of organic waste, particularly near farmland and stock, are well known for attracting vermin.

Who will be responsible for eventually removing the composted human waste, and other organic waste?

Cooking, not mentioned, will presumably be done on stoves of one sort or another. The 1000 Huts website advice on cooking is that for safety it should be carried out outside the hut. Barbecues are an easy option for cooking outdoors. There is then a risk of fire in the woodland.

TREE SURVEY & ARBORICULTURAL ASSESSMENT

4.1 Loss of trees

The expected development footprint proposes the loss of 21 birch trees and 1 aspen tree, which is equivalent to 14% of the trees surveyed in the semi-ancient woodland.....(The woodland is correctly semi-natural Ancient Woodland, not 'semi-ancient')There will however be a loss of woodland cover at the site due to the felling of 22 trees.

- **Scottish Planning Policy identifies Ancient Woodland 'as an important and irreplaceable national resource that should be protected and enhanced.**
- **The Draft Cairngorms National Park Forest Strategy 2018 p25 states it will 'continue to protect ancient and semi-natural woodlands from further damage and fragmentation.'**
- **Cairngorms Park Plan 2020, Policy 4 Woodlands. The Reporter's advice is that 4.3 should read: 'There will be a strong presumption against removal of ancient semi-natural woodland, including sites in the Ancient Woodland Inventory which is considered to be an irreplaceable resource. Only in exceptional circumstances will the loss of ancient semi-natural woodland be permitted.'**

Felling 14% of the trees to facilitate the construction of a complex of huts, the use of which will introduce factors that will inevitably alter the ecology of the woodland, does not accord with the above policies and aims.

SUPPORTING PLANNING STATEMENT from GALBRAITH

Galbraith's state that having provided Glamping Pods at Braemar Caravan Site, which have been very popular and are an expansion of its tourist offering, the Estate was encouraged to draw up the proposal for the present application at Tomidhu.

Glamping pods cater for transient tourists who need somewhere to sleep for a few nights, The pods have electricity and beds, and showers and toilet nearby, and there are many adjacent tourist facilities in Braemar to explore.

The proposal for 18 unserviced huts at Tomidhu is designed to cater for a very different owner/occupier market, and Crathie has few facilities to offer the hutters.

Tourist attractions in Crathie presently consist of:

- a Post Office which opens for varying hours on weekdays and which incorporates a small souvenir shop for Balmoral,
- In summer, a coffee morning in the church hall on one day a week,
- a small cafe, in the canteen area of an architect's office, which was recently given planning permission to open to the public.
- nearby there is a gallery selling jewellery and paintings.

Once they have also toured the nearby Balmoral Castle, Crathie Kirk and the Lochnagar Distillery when they are open, the hutters will have more or less exhausted the opportunities to contribute to the *'tourist economy'* of Crathie.

Supporting Planning Statement 4. CONCLUSIONS

Galbraith argue in their 5 conclusions, which I have summarised, that the proposed development sits comfortably with planning policy at all levels of the hierarchy in that:

1 ...it is a sensitive redevelopment of a long-established group of caravans...

To propose replacing 3 pairs of relatively unobtrusive caravans with 18 peculiar-looking holiday huts, described as being *more playful than a garden shed and more functional than a folly* and *having a birdbox-like appearance*, on areas that have been designated for their nature conservation value, and close to residential properties does not appear to be a *sensitive redevelopment*.

2. ...the huts will offer a *'back to nature'* experience of holidaying off-grid as envisaged by the *Hutting Voluntary Code of Practice*.....

Effectively what hutters will be buying into appears to be the opportunity to sit in a tiny hut, most in tree-lined hollows that will be frequently full of midges or smoke from woodburning stoves, with no outlook for many, no water, no power and adjacent to the homes of residents, with the (at times incessant) noise of motorbikes, timber lorries, commercial vehicles and cars on the nearby A93, particularly for those on the east edge of the development, and with locals and dog walkers passing by on the Core path, not to mention the police cars patrolling through the area for some of the year.

This seems far removed from what Galbraith describe as *the envisaged 'back to nature experience'*.

....they could be occupied throughout the year,.....

Galbraith cite *LDP Policy 2 (see below) and claim *...the huts could be occupied throughout the year, thus extending the core tourist season,...* However, their representative has said at a local meeting that he does not expect the huts will be used in the colder months, and that they will be used only as frequently as the present caravans – I believe only two of the six are used regularly.

...and increase tourist footfall in Crathie and the surrounding area.

The west part of Crathie is already subjected to tens of thousands of tourists in cars and buses who visit Balmoral Castle and Estate, and Crathie Kirk over many months of the year. One car park becomes an intrusive mobile home park at nights. Crathie, for most of the year, does not need more tourists! The area where the 18 huts would be built, is presently a tranquil haven for residents, providing very necessary relief from the enormous amount of tourist activity a short distance away.

When the Estate and Distillery are closed, there are no facilities for tourists apart from the post office and souvenir shop open for a few hours, the gallery nearby, and presumably the small new cafe, so few opportunities for the hut occupants to contribute to the local economy.

3. ...the proposals sit comfortably with LDP policies on sustainable design, natural heritage, biodiversity and woodland management....

4. ...Ecology surveys and various mitigation measures will ensure the proposals would not have a detrimental impact on the site or its immediate surroundings...

5. ...the detailed site layout has been considered and informed by the findings and recommendations of the extensive ecological survey work....

All aspects of Galbraith's summary points 3,4 &5, relating to Planning Policies concerning the designated areas, the value of the ecology surveys and proposed mitigation measures, and the site layout will be addressed by the relevant Park staff, and Forestry and Natural Heritage bodies.

I will confine my comments to noting that Tay Ecology states that the Bird and Bat surveys were carried out largely outwith the dates recommended by the British Trust for Ornithology and the Bat Conservation Trust, while the plant survey was undertaken outside the main flowering period. This was apparently due to the dates by which the applicant requested the information.

Given the sensitive nature of the two designated sites, one would have expected the applicant to have ensured the surveys were undertaken at the most appropriate times, so as to obtain accurate information on the habitats.

***CNPA LDP Policy 2: Supporting Economic Growth**

2 Tourism and leisure development

Development which enhances formal and informal recreation and leisure facilities; tourism and leisure based business activities and attractions; tourism and leisure related infrastructure including accommodation; improved opportunities for responsible outdoor access and through improved levels of open space; will be supported where:

- a) it has no adverse environmental impacts on the site; and
- b) it makes a positive contribution to the experience of the visitors; and
- c) it adds to or extends the core tourist season.

- **The proposed development does not appear to meet requirement a) on environmental impacts.**
- **Given the location, the already large number of tourists for much of the year, and seasonal nature of the facilities available, it is uncertain that it meets b), a positive contribution to visitor experience. It would appear that it is not anticipated it will meet c), extending the core tourist season.**

In conclusion, I believe Crathie village is the wrong place for this development for the following reasons:

- **number and density of huts and occupants**
- **impact on the SSSI and Ancient Woodland**
- **necessity to fell trees in Ancient Woodland**
- **negative impact on adjacent residents of increased traffic and disturbance**
- **restrictions the development would place on present access to the area**
- **an increase in vehicular use of the Core path**
- **there is already a surfeit of tourists to the village**
- **loss of the one tranquil area of the village which currently provides respite from tourists, and needed as such for much of the year.**
- **It appears to bring no benefits to the local community, only negative impacts**

The density of huts, the location, just off and within sound and partial sight of a busy main road, adjacent to houses and with a village Core path running through the site does not appear either to provide the 'back to nature' experience that is the ethos of the hutting movement.

Invercauld Estate, with its approximately 100,000 acres, must surely have other locations that would not impact on designated areas and would provide the real 'back to nature' experience, rather than foisting an unserviced 'holiday park' onto Crathie.

I hope the Planning Committee will be able to reject this application.

**Ann Miles
Geldie Cottage, Crathie, Ballater AB35 5TJ**

12 September 2020

[Whilst not a planning matter, should the proposed development not be granted Planning Approval, it is to be hoped Invercauld Estate will allow the elderly lady who has had the use quietly of her caravan on the site for over 60 years, and the few others who use their caravans, to continue their lease.]

Dear Ms Crerar

2020/0201/DET Planning application for the erection of 18 huts, 4 compost toilets and associated access, car parking and landscaping at Crathie

Thank you for your email informing me of further documents that have been added to the above planning application. I wish to make the following comments on the new documents:

Crathie Hutters' Manual (Draft) 10 Dec 2020

p.4 The Crathie Hutting Site. It is stated again that 'there will be no loss of amenity for neighbouring properties through noise, odours or nuisance.'

This is a hope, not a fact. There is infrequent use of the present 6 caravans. However the proposed 18 huts, many of them close to the properties at Tomidhu, and the enthusiasm of the new hutters, will inevitably lead to an increase in noise, barbecue odours, woodsmoke and intrusion on privacy. No matter the aspirations of the 'Crathie Hutters' Code' to manage all aspects of behaviour on the site, there will not be a resident warden on hand to enforce the code.

p.5 incorrectly states the huts are adjacent to the SSSI. Huts 13-18 will be located on the sensitive grassland area of the SSSI.

p.6 What to see and do.

Hutters are encouraged to use the track up to the old Limestone Quarry where many of the rare and vulnerable lichens and mosses are found on the rocks and crags. Footfall and disturbance, which in that area and in the rest of the SSSI is presently minimal, will inevitably increase.

The Core Path, running through the hutting site, from Tomidhu to Crathie Kirk, is not mentioned.

On p.13 the map of things to do in Crathie shows the Cafe/Bakery and the Cafe in the wrong locations. Lack of local knowledge or lack of empathy?

Crathie Hutters' Code

Item 22 of the code states: 'No fires outside huts are permitted other than substantial (not single use) barbecues and (these only if) suitable fire fighting equipment is on the Site.'

For the huts distant from the car park it will be tempting to bring in a disposable barbecue. Who will check?

The fire risk in Upper Deeside is frequently very high. All local estates, for much of the year, request visitors not to light fires or use barbecues for this reason.

The location of the huts, in woodland and adjacent to the dense old birch, pine and juniper of the SSSI, their proximity to one another, and also to the properties nearby, would make it seem unwise/unsafe to encourage the use of barbecues.

There will be very limited water at the huts, no access to some for a fire engine, and apparently no provision for proper fire fighting equipment within the Site.

Wooden huts, heated by wood burning stoves, plus the risk from barbecues, will create the potential for a very damaging wildfire.

Woodland Management Plan 5 January 2021

Aim.....'to compensate for the loss of existing trees'....

The 22 trees to be felled are in the Ancient Woodland. There is a presumption against felling trees in Ancient Woodland because the habitat is irreplaceable. It is impossible to compensate for their loss.

The ambitious management plan to eliminate rabbits, and encourage aspen and rock rose on the site is admirable, but will it only happen at the cost of losing existing trees and ground, increasing footfall and habitat disturbance within the SSSI, and destroying the peace of a quiet community?

Foul Drainage Proposals 5 January 2021

The original planning application stated that for all the huts 'Sewage will be dealt with using dry composting toilets' and 'Organic waste will be composted on site'.

Now, 05/01/2021, this has been changed to 'it is expected that most hutters will use portable toilets which they can empty at home. The six caravans currently on site use this solution.'

The caravan owners had no alternative. The 1000 Huts advice is to use composting toilets as they are more ecologically friendly, and the contents can be disposed of on site, so why this change?.

Construction Method Statement 5 January 2021

The detail of the construction method and safeguards required to protect the trees during the building of the huts reads as though it will be an industrial site, not unmolested woodland.

To quote from the 1000 Huts Initiative 'Huts are primarily about spending time in nature, peace and quiet, companionship or perhaps solitude, away from busy lives. They are about creating a space to restore mind, body and spirit..... and (they) foster a healthy sense of getting away from the pressure and pace of modern life.'

The advice is that hut sites be accessible by public transport or bicycle to discourage car use.

Given the need to bring in water, both for cooking and now to service a chemical toilet, wood for the stove (gathering wood on site or in the SSSI is banned), possibly a barbecue plus its fuel etc to the hut, and the contents of the chemical toilet, grey water and rubbish out, there is little likelihood of Crathie hutters arriving by any means other than a car or van.

This is supported by the provision of a now even larger car parking area.

The various hut sites are either adjacent to the car park and composting area and almost beneath a high voltage power line, or beside a Core Path, or within sight of and almost constant loud noise from traffic on the busy A93 about 100m away. Four sites are buried in a hollow within the moraines, with nothing to look at but the neighbouring huts. All the sites are close to the existing residential properties. Add to this, thousands of tourists daily at the other end of the village for much of the year.

Rather than a site 'in nature, peace and quiet' or a place to get 'away from the pressure and pace of modern life', the proposed complex of 18 huts looks more like a campsite or holiday park. This is emphasised by the list of things of do/web links at the end of the Handbook which include after the local attractions, golf courses at Braemar and Ballater, the Lecht and Glenshee ski centres, and links to websites that would normally be used by tourists exploring the wider area.

The proposed development would be to the detriment of the community of Crathie, and to the Designated Areas within which it would be located. Neither does the location appear to provide the elements that make up the ethos of hutting. I find nothing in the new documents to alter my original objection to this proposal.

Ann Miles

Geldie Cottage, Crathie, Ballater AB35 5TJ

15 January 2021

Comments for Planning Application 2020/0201/DET

Application Summary

Application Number: 2020/0201/DET

Address: Land To The North And North East Of Tomidhu Crathie Ballater Aberdeenshire

Proposal: Erection of 18 Hut, 4 Compost Toilets and Associated Access, Car Parking and Landscaping

Case Officer: Katie Crerar

Customer Details

Name: Dr Lea Cramsie

Address: The Old Forge Crathie Ballater

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment:20/9/2020

Dear Sir/ Madam

Re: APP/2020/1566

CNPA Ref: 2020/0201/DET

Erection of 18 Huts, Composting Toilets, Car Parking Access, Landscaping To the North and Northeast of Tomidue, Crathie

We live in the hamlet of Crathie.

We agree that hutting is generally a good concept assuming that it is well thought through and managed. Ideally it really should be off grid, small scale, natural, remote and in beautiful surroundings.

As the above plans stand the 18 huts proposed are close to several houses (ours included) and very close to the busy and dangerous A93 with end of clearway restrictions of 60 mph. Many cars and motorbikes exceed this limit at the junction proposed for access to these huts, a significant increase in use on a difficult and dangerous junction.

If the proposal is to replace the current 6 caravans on or near this site, then accommodation for 18 family groupings is a 300% increase in this density . This creates wholly unnecessary overdevelopment and substantially changes the character of this quiet and beautiful SSSI and

woodland.

The planned car park attests to this. Parking for up to 36 cars and 4x4s is the size of a municipal car park for a health centre and shops in a small town. Overall, the layout and landscape design seems non-existent and does not do justice to the beautiful surroundings of a national park.

We must now assume our hutters will access groceries and pizzas on line with more congestion up the track (by now a bitumened road I suppose) The intensity and number of huts makes this a potentially serious management issue to be guarded against, namely litter, noise, traffic, anti-social behaviour and so on.

Two years ago we enjoyed near drought conditions. How do the planners propose to counter the real possibility of bush fires with high numbers of wooden huts BBQs etc?

Perhaps a much smaller scheme deep into the estate would be beneficial

For these reasons we strongly object

Duneire
11 Viewfield Road
Ballater
AB35 5RD

CNPA Planning Department

27 August 2020

Dear Ms Crerar

Application: 2020/0201/DET

Whilst I agree the area should welcome tourists and provide a range of accommodation, huts becoming more popular, Invercauld is a huge estate, and a more suitable site could be easily found for this development.

I wish to object to the proposal as I have grave concerns on the following: -

- One of the caravan owners has had her caravan there for 66 years. The peaceful, tranquil setting has been her sanctuary all these years. Another owner, born and brought up close by, has, with permission, not long installed a water supply to his caravan. They will be evicted along with the others.
- Security is a significant issue, given the proximity of the site to Crathie Kirk. It would only take one type of missile to cause devastation. The caravan owners are well known to the Royal Security, unlike those coming to the huts short term. More patrols when the Royals are in residence will be required.
- The site is an SSI of significant botanical interest. Twelve of the huts are to be sited on an adjoining area of ancient woodland located immediately NE of Tomidhu.
- I understand that fourteen huts will have an integral compost toilet, the remaining four will have an external compost toilet. Water is initially required to “start” a compost toilet and will need to be transported by each hutter for this as well as for general cooking, drinking and washing, not an easy task. Will water be available all the year round, given that the winter temperatures are well below 0C?
- I see that the huts are to have wood burning stoves. Where will the wood supply come from? I have seen occasions where those who are not used to stoves damaging trees and burning green wood. This is not acceptable and would be detrimental to the SSI's ecosystem.
- I have concerns that the single track access road will be unable to cope with the increased traffic. There are to be 18 car parking spaces. What happens should there be more than one car per hut? Whose responsibility is it to maintain the access road? Will it be cleared in the winter?
- Rubbish and waste will be obviously generated. How will this be disposed of? Will a waste lorry manage to get up the single track access road, likewise emergency services? What about disabled access on the site?

- Will the huts, toilets and access cater for those with a disability?
- Who will be responsible for the running and maintenance of the huts?
- There are two well established self-catering establishments not far from the entrance. If children and pets are around, they could be in danger from the extra traffic.
- Will the huts become “party” dwellings? That’s the last thing the current neighbours and other hutters need.

I trust you will take heed of my concerns and ensure that they are forwarded to the relevant parties involved in this application.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth M L Wilson

Planning Application to Aberdeenshire Council – APP/2020/1566 (Erection of 18 Huts, 4 Compost Toilets and Associated Access, Car Parking and Landscaping on Land to the North and North East of Tomidhu, Crathie, Ballater, Aberdeenshire)

As a retired policeman/forensic scientist (with a first class honours BSc degree designated biology) who now lives for the great outdoors, I wish to comment on the above application. For some 25 years I have had the use of a caravan located in Crathie Wood SSSI a short distance from Tomidhu, Crathie, Aberdeenshire. My comments deal with Invercauld Estate's Design Statement as well as personal views on related aspects – Crathie SSSI, Royalty security, and the personal situations of Alistair Skakles (owner of Helena/Tomidhu Steading) and Hella Alexander (caravan owner at proposed hut site 17).

Design Statement – Introduction

“Invercauld Estate extends to just under 100,000 acres of upper Aberdeenshire and Perthshire in the Cairngorms National Park.” With its 156 or so square miles of terrain to choose from, a good proportion of it in timber, surely there is a much more appropriate location to locate huts than immediately adjoining Crathie community.

“Visitors come to stay in local hotels, bed and breakfasts, guest houses, caravans, motor homes and also to camp.” Self-catering accommodation is omitted; two self-catering establishments immediately adjoining the proposed hutting site would be significantly affected by the proposal.

“Another aspect of the visitor tradition is hutting with 13 huts presently located on Invercauld Estate, all in the Crathie area.” These must all be discretely located in rather secluded spots as in 55 years of exploring upper Deeside I have never encountered a single one of these huts.

Design Statement – Hutting in Scotland

“For example, Norway has 500,000 huts for a population the same as Scotland's – we have around 600 huts.” This is not a relevant comparison! I have learned from my friend, Magne Roinas (who lives in Norway) that most families in Norway own a hut/cabin that is like a house with water, electricity, sewerage and road to the door (see accompanying email correspondence with Magne).

“Scottish Government's supportive policy on huts in the 2014 Scottish Planning Policy. Local development plans should set out a spatial strategy which, where appropriate, sets out policies and proposals for leisure accommodation, such as holiday units, caravans, and huts.” I would emphasise the ‘where appropriate’ as, in my view, the current proposal is highly INAPPROPRIATE to the location. I note the hierarchy of accommodation type - firstly holiday units – likely to have mains electricity, water and sewerage then caravans – possible electricity; water storage, unlikely sewerage, chemical toilet lastly huts – no mains electricity, water or sewerage.

Interestingly, there are other forms of accommodation to encourage visits to an area, namely bothy, tent, bivvy bag and howf (shelter beneath a boulder – I know a splendid one in the north-east corrie of Lochnagar where comfortable nights can be spent on a bed of heather, awakening to the shrill scream of a peregrine falcon or croak of raven). The point I'm making is that huts have a relatively minor role to play for the enjoyment of nature; let's not give huts a higher profile than

they merit! They do have considerable disadvantages over other forms of 'accommodation'. At least a well placed tent, bivvy bag or howf has ready access to the very best of drinking water.

"In recent years Planning permission has been granted for huts by many of Scotland's Planning Authorities. Approved developments include" -

Fife – near Saline – 13 huts; Fife – near Falkland – 15 huts; South Lanarkshire – Camp Wood - 16 huts. I have carefully checked these successful planning applications online, as well as viewing the hut locations using online Ordnance Survey mapping at scale 1:25000. Several highly relevant factors can be discerned, including the fact that none of the three sites immediately adjoins an established community such as Crathie – or even a single home! Sometimes a previously existing wood track is present from a hut complex car park to the vicinity of the furthest away hut. In at least two of the three locations there is a burn from which water for washing (at least) might be taken – unlike the proposed Crathie site. (It should be noted that in the applicant's site plan, the burn which passes near hut sites 17 and 18 is usually dry.) In the successful Carnock Wood planning application, it describes the practice of "low-impact hutting" - not likely for Alistair Skakles if the current proposal is successful (see later)!

Design Statement – The Site

"The site was identified due to the sheltered nature of the potential plots" This touches upon Royalty security (more later). The location consists of a series of ridges and hollows – evidently fluvio-glacial in origin – with the proposed huts being downslope. On not infrequent somewhat damp summer days when the trees are in full leaf there will be a plague of midges for the hutters to endure. A site more open to air movement in a secluded location elsewhere on Invercauld Estate would be much more appropriate, I believe.

"The other positive factors were replacing the existing caravans with sensitively designed structures" I challenge anyone to disagree that the caravan (Hella Alexander's) proposed to be replaced by hut 17 merges beautifully amongst the adjacent birch trees, with its recently painted lovely green sides and cream coloured roof. However, the caravan at proposed site 18 is in a disgraceful condition; I fail to comprehend why Invercauld Estate did not chase up the owner(s) years ago regarding this matter.

"There are currently six static caravans clustered near this split in the track, occupying part of the SSSI. These are an assortment of different caravan types that are rather old and semi-dilapidated." These facts are mostly inaccurate! The caravans are by no means clustered together; in fact, they are rather tastefully well spaced out in two's. Yes, they are all of different types (a good thing I would have thought) and although 2 or 3 of them may look old, the others have a much more modern appearance. To suggest that 5 of the caravans are semi-dilapidated is ridiculous; they are immaculate inside - and mostly externally as well. As regards the proposed site 18 caravan, to call it semi-dilapidated is also wrong; it is conspicuously dilapidated – and a disgrace to its owner(s), in my humble opinion.

Design Statement – Executive Summary of Ecology Report

"It is anticipated that there will be a low impact to the habitat where the existing six caravans are positioned." These 6 caravans lie within Crathie Wood SSSI; I comment on this later.

Design Statement – The Hutting Development

4.1 “Six huts will replace the existing static caravans in the SSSI, each sited on their former footprint” Proposed hut 17 does not fit the footprint of the existing caravan there. This is the caravan which I have made use of over 25 years. Its principal viewing windows face north onto the interesting rocky face of Craighuie. The proposed hut 17 location has been moved through 70 to 80 degrees to allow its main window to have that same view.

4.7 “Access from the huts to the car park will be by foot. Paths will be informal and unsurfaced.” I estimate that proposed hut 7 is around 220 metres distant from the car park (as the crow flies). Given the highly undulating nature of the site, this will prove quite a challenge for a hutter needing to transport water and other heavy items.

4.8 “The huts will be used exclusively by families or individuals and their friends.” I’m concerned that even though formal leases (with conditions) would be drawn up between landowner and hut owner, persons using a hut would likely succumb to rule breaking eg taking wood for fuel from the adjoining SSSI.

4.8 “There will be no loss of amenity for neighbouring properties through noise, odours or nuisance.” I strongly disagree with this statement (dealt with later in these comments).

4.9 “Six huts will replace the six static caravans on the north west side of the site.” A little background information needs to be highlighted here; I give each caravan the same number as its proposed replacement hut.

Caravan 13 – has a comfortable interior, with a satisfactory chemical toilet in a small adjoining hut (as is the case with the majority of the 6 caravans).

Caravan 14 – Ian Grant, its owner, was brought up at the nearby original Tomidhu farmhouse; he has greatly developed his site with sheds, planted trees and a meantime dismantled verandah. His caravan is connected to mains water. He is allegedly in negotiation with Invercauld Estate to clad his caravan so as to be permitted to retain it in its present location. This would appear to make a mockery of Invercauld Estate’s current application to erect 18 huts and replace 6 static caravans. Ian and Janet have a lovely plush caravan; who in their right mind would seek to replace it with a hut provided with no water and a compost toilet?

Caravans 15 and 16 – my principal comments concerning these two caravans are presented under the heading “Crathie Wood SSSI” below. Like caravan 14, caravan 16 is plush. Paul Spencer, its owner, resides on Donside and is well known for making superb yurts. Allegedly, he too is in negotiation with Invercauld Estate to clad his caravan in order to retain it on site.

Caravan 17 – I will deal with this caravan under a separate heading below - ‘Hella Alexander’.

Caravan 18 – This caravan appears to be beyond redemption and if non-repairable should have been taken off site years ago, in my opinion.

4.12 “Water will be brought to the site by the hutters.” I’ve already drawn attention to the difficulties associated with this matter.

4.13 “Heating would normally be from a wood stove and external storage of firewood is proposed for all huts.” I fear that wood will be taken from the adjoining SSSI. Crathie is a very cold place in late autumn, winter and early spring.

4.15 "Sewage will be dealt with using dry composting toilets." With the proposed hutting site so close to the existing Crathie community in general, the immediately adjoining self-catering accommodation of Tomidhu (6-8 guests)/Tomidhu Steading (11 guests) and dwelling house Helena, I consider the proposal for so much composting of human faeces to be unsavoury, unhealthy and highly inappropriate to the proposed site. In the online literature concerning the Carbeth hut site (established a little north of Glasgow in the 1920's) I read that composting human waste would take up to two years until it's safe to be used as fertiliser. This is in the mild climate of west Scotland; Crathie is a much colder place and such composting would inevitably take even longer. Not one of the existing hutting sites referred to in the application is anywhere near another person's home. In my view, the entire proposal is disrespectful – even insulting – to the present Crathie community. I suspect that the compost toilets/compost storage will prove so inefficient given the relatively low upper Deeside temperatures - and unpleasant to use with no ready source of water for hand washing/general cleaning - that some hutters would just go into the SSSI woodland (where there can be intermittent pools of water) to do the toilet, not crapping within their own bit of ancient woodland where huts 1-12 are proposed. If the planning application is an experiment to discover whether hutting can function as close as possible to a well established community, it ought to be shot down immediately, in my view.

Crathie Wood SSSI

On 25 August 2020 I sent an email message concerning the application to Scottish Natural Heritage (Tayside/Grampian); it was subsequently acknowledged. I reproduce the general content here.

I have had the use of a caravan on the Crathie Wood SSSI for 25 years or so; during this time I have interested myself in the local botany and other aspects of this fine SSSI. I have notified you from time to time with additions to the 1995 botanical list; in fact, it was myself who pointed out that the colony of 'Carex rostrata' was in fact Carex vesicaria. There may be yet another fine plant to add to the Crathie list, as a week or so back my friend, Hella Alexander, found around 30 rosettes of Goodyera repens (four in flower) on a tiny mossy mound at NO 270.. 951.. I have since confirmed her identification,

The main purpose of this letter, however, is to express concern in connection with the above planning application. The flattish terrain immediately south of proposed hut sites 15 and 16 is, for me, the manifestation of the botanical interest of the SSSI – especially for the casual walker by. This bit of ground has prolific rockrose, field gentian (every second year) and two fine alpine plants growing here (at much lower altitude than normal) in the lime-flushed ground, namely alpine cinquefoil and alpine bistort.

If 18 huts are constructed in this vicinity for 'family or individual' use, I believe this flat bit of ground will become the main play area for the group of hutters and/or their children, especially since 12 of the huts proposed for land immediately outwith the SSSI are in fairly heavily shaded deciduous ancient woodland with rather steepish slopes everywhere.

Each proposed hut appears to have a wood burning stove (and wood storage) facility; there will be a strong temptation for hutters to go hunting in the SSSI woodland for fallen and decaying timber, possibly jeopardising rare moss flora such as Buxbaumia aphylla (which I have photographed nearby) and other forms of wildlife.

It appears that hutters would have the choice of building their own hut or having Invercauld Estate do so on their behalf; in the former case, there's no saying what damage might be done to this precious piece of ground with strong botanical interest. Adjoining each hut a garden might be developed - to the detriment of the natural flora! The present caravan owners are well aware of – and protect – this botanical treasure!

Royalty Security

I retired from Grampian Police in 1995, having joined Aberdeen City Police in 1962. During the last 25 years whilst staying on and off at the caravan proposed to be replaced by hut 17, I have maintained a liaison with police officers patrolling the locality.

Some 20 years back I pointed out the potential vulnerability of Crathie church to hostile attack by terrorists (or the like) given the virtually treeless corridor extending eastwards from the kirk. At around 1059 hrs on a Sunday morning when Royalty are about to enter the church – and during the next hour whilst Royalty are attending a service there – any such terrorist in possession of some sort of rocket launcher, improvised or purloined, could direct it towards the kirk along this corridor to where the church spire and upper part of the building are highly visible. The immediate vicinity of the proposed car park for huts 1-12 has a direct line of sight to Crathie church, the distance being approximately 800 metres.

To my knowledge, the patrolling police officers are familiar with the existing 6 caravan owners and their vehicles. Goodness me, how that will change if the proposal for 18 huts obtains approval. Twelve of the huts would be well hidden away leaving the Police with little or no knowledge of who was thereabouts – or their possible intentions. The likes of a horse box could be towed into the proposed car parking area; no one might suspect what it really contained. Enough said on such matters!

Alistair Skakles

Alistair occupies the house, Helena (named after his late wife), from which he manages his self-catering business based next door at Tomidhu Steading. The planning proposal has major implications for him, in my opinion.

The access track/road for the proposed hutting site passes a close 4.2 metres from his dining kitchen window; this is actually Alistair's living room. At present there is relatively infrequent vehicular use of the track by Scottish Water personnel, the Estate gamekeeper and occasional caravan user. If the application gains approval I envisage greatly increased vehicular usage of this track/road. At present Alistair is a convenient point of contact for passing Police patrols as he has a good idea of who is going about; that would change significantly should the hutting proposal be implemented.

Lots of Crathie residents walk the track for recreation; it is also a very popular walking route for families, usually with young children, making use of the self-catering accommodation at Tomidhu or Tomidhu Steading (under two separate ownerships). The track is quite steep in one place and somewhat winding; too much vehicular traffic on it would have safety implications. Alistair Skakles also regularly walks this track from Helena towards Crathie kirk accompanied by two friendly dogs. He is a bit disabled, walking with a limp, and is relatively hard of hearing; his safety too is a prime consideration.

Four of the proposed huts (2,3,6 and 7) appear to be less than 50 metres distant from one or other of Tomidhu (former farmhouse), Tomidhu Steading and Helena. At each of these huts (and at all the others) it is proposed that human faeces would be composted following its removal from a compost toilet. Given the close proximity of house and busy self-catering facilities, I consider this to be entirely unacceptable.

Hella Alexander

I met Hella whilst on release from the Police to take a degree at Aberdeen University from 1972 to 1976. She was then librarian in the botany department. Hella, whose principal residence is in Westhill, Aberdeenshire, is now nearing 92 years of age and has owned a caravan at the present Tomidhu location since 1954. She was married to Jimmy Alexander, a Royalty protection officer with the Metropolitan Police before his retirement; he died in 1995 (the year I retired from the Police) and Hella remains a widow. Hella is widely known on the Balmoral/Crathie scene and has membership of Crathie church and Balmoral Golf Club. To the present day she continues to find hitherto unrecorded plants in Crathie Wood.

Hella's present caravan is old but has a brilliantly innovative interior, is soundly waterproof and a couple of months back I repainted it a lovely shade of green (the roof being cream). This caravan is Hella's much loved second home!

On 11 June 2020 Hella received a letter from Angus McNicol, for Invercauld Estate, informing her that her caravan lease would end in 2021 (May) as the Estate had decided to phase out the caravans and, ideally, replace them with huts. The letter also stated that Hella would have first chance to lease that hut site if planning consent was received for the hutting proposal. To say that Hella felt devastated is very much an understatement!

At present Hella obtains water (by means of containers) from Alistair Skakles. She has a well maintained small hut nearby containing an efficient chemical toilet. The caravan uses butane for heating, cooking and if appropriate, lighting. Who on earth at Hella's age would wish to exchange a lovely comfortable caravan for a hut devoid of an integral fuel supply – and with a compost toilet?

In recent years she has paid Invercauld Estate £200 each April/May (without even being prompted). According to the online hutting literature the lease of a hut on site 17 would cost Hella in the region of £1000 to £1500 per year, rising with inflation; that is if the hut was erected at Hella's expense. Should Invercauld Estate incur that cost, the annual rental would clearly be much higher. Whether or not the application to build 18 huts at Tomidhu obtains approval, in my view it would be courteous of Invercauld Estate to allow Hella's caravan to remain at its existing location for a few more of her remaining years.

Eric Jensen, 17 Birch Avenue, Elgin, Moray IV30 5NE

30 August 2020

From:Eric
Sent:30 Aug 2020 10:19:50 +0100
To:Planning
Subject:CNPA Application Number 2020/0201/DET
Importance:Normal

Dear Sir or Madam,

In connection with Invercauld Estate's planning application for 18 huts etc at Tomidhu, Crathie, Ballater, Aberdeenshire, I have already sent by email my comments. My principal submission makes reference to accompanying email correspondence between myself and a friend resident in Norway, Magne Roinas; I now forward the relevant email messages.

Yours faithfully,

Eric Jensen, 17 Birth Avenue, Elgin, Moray IV30 5NE

From: Magne Røinås
Sent: 25 August 2020 17:04
To: Eric
Subject: Re: Huts in Norway

Hi Eric

You are right. It is 440000 huts in Norway that is not included caravans. Most families in Norway either owns a hut that is like a house, water, electricity, sewer and road to the door. Infact many Norwegians have a bigger cottage than house/apartment. Cottage life is very important for us Norwegians. It is a way of life.

Normally we find water near the cottage from a well or a stream. If there is no water available then we drill for water. Often 2 or 3 hut owners do this together. It could cost from £ 5000 to £ 9000. If you install water into the hut then you have to have a water clearing system. The hutowners are not allowed to pollute. If you have the water tap outside the door and carry in the water then you don't need a water cleaning system.

The cottage industry is big buisness in Norway. There is two type of clearing system. One is for " gray water " from the sink etc the next is for poop shit. Water from a shower or sink is gray water and easily cleaned. The farmers where I have my Annebu have build an advanced organic processing plant that are treating shit from several hundreds huts. Most huts has a tank that will be emtied every second year.

Electricity is what the hut gets first. It is delivered by the local electricity board. Some huts are to far away and they use solarcells with batteries or generators. 12 V D.C. can be converted to 230 V ac.

I hope this information is useful. I hope Hella will keep her caravan or something that is just as good or better. Best of luck.

Lots of love

Magne 🤗

25. aug. 2020 kl. 14:36 skrev Eric [REDACTED]

Hello Magne,

Hella's caravan is under threat. The Estate wishes to replace six caravans with huts and build 12 additional huts nearby. None of these huts will have a water supply, electricity or sewerage! And there is no water nearby such as a stream or lake. I have learned that Norway has around 500 000 huts. A few of these Norwegian

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

From:Katie Crerar
Sent:Tue, 12 Jan 2021 09:23:09 +0000
To:'Eric'
Cc:Planning
Subject:RE: 2020/0201/DET - Huts etc at Crathie

From: Eric [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 January 2021 17:10
To: Katie Crerar <KatieCrerar@cairngorms.co.uk>
Subject: 2020/0201/DET - Huts etc at Crathie

Dear Ms Crerar,

Thank you for the courtesy email message drawing my attention (as someone who has already submitted written representation regarding the above application) to further information provided by the applicant. There are, indeed, some new issues which I wish to raise as follows –

10/12/20 Crathie Hutter's Manual (draft)

“There will be no loss of amenity for neighbouring properties through noise, odours or nuisance.” I feel strongly that this statement cannot possibly be justified, given the EXTREMELY close presence of a home, together with two busy self-catering establishments.

10/12/20 Plan Car Park Area

The trees proposed to screen the car park would make security checking (re Royalty attending Crathie Church on a Sunday) much more difficult. Would Police presence be required there for an entire Sunday morning?

5/01/21 Woodland Management Plan (Tay Security)

This new document looks very impressive; however, all these proposed measures could be undertaken by Invercauld Estate without any huts being built at Crathie.

5/01/21 Clarification on Foul Drainage Proposals

Given the distance from most huts (especially proposed huts 1 to 12) to respective vehicles, hutters are most unlikely, in my view, to carry human waste (solid and liquid) and grey water to the specified disposal sites.

5/01/21 Crathie Access Note

I strongly disagree with the statement “ it is clear that the net traffic increase will be very minimal.” The argument is put forward that Local Authority adoption of the access road would not be necessary – and that it could be retained as a private road under the circumstances. Given the necessary to and froing of hutters replenishing water supplies etc, especially in late spring, summer and early autumn – when the immediately adjoining self-catering facilities would also be very busy – there would be much more traffic on the access track (which is already in relatively poor condition).

In conclusion, I feel strongly that Invercauld Estate’s application primarily affects/concerns PEOPLE – opportunities for prospective hutters, and serious disadvantages for local residents. I believe that on this occasion trees, moths, butterflies and plants are far less important an issue! After submitting my original objection to this application, I searched for and found most of the other huts on Invercauld Estate - which were several miles to the east of Crathie by the River Dee. Clearly these huts have been there a long time – and form a nice little community on their own. What is proposed for Crathie, being IMMEDIATELY adjoining a much longer established and historical community bears no resemblance to this other hutting site. If the application is approved, I genuinely feel that the existing community of Crathie – with its wonderful Royal connections – would be utterly spoiled, perhaps for all time.

Yours faithfully,

Eric Jensen, 17 Birch Avenue, Elgin, Moray, IV30 5NE

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Hazel Gray
Dun Donnachaidh
Crathie
Aberdeenshire
AB35 5UL

By e-mail to:
planningonline@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
Planning@cairngorms.co.uk

20 September 2020

Dear Sirs

APP/2020/1566
Erection of 18 Huts, 4 Compost Toilets and Associated Access, Car Parking and Landscaping
Land to the North and North East Of Tomidhu, Crathie, Ballater Aberdeenshire

I write to object to the above planning application made by Galbraith on behalf of the Invercauld Estate, originally submitted to Aberdeenshire City Council and called in by the Cairngorms National Park ("CNP") Authority.

Observations

Before referencing the application to the CNP Local Development Plan 2015, I would make a few comments which I believe are pertinent:

- I live in very close proximity to the proposed site (I can see the access road from my house) and would note it is mostly used by local residents to walk dogs, access Crathie otherwise than by the main road etc. When using it myself I rarely meet or see anyone and this space and seclusion is a welcome contrast to the west end of Crathie which is always busier, and extremely so in the summer.
- Within the "Introduction" to the Design Statement that accompanies the application, it states "Another aspect to the visitor tradition is hutting with 13 huts presently located on Invercauld Estate, all in the Crathie area". I have lived in Crathie for just over 4 years, walking extensively, and have never seen these 13 huts. If these huts are indeed in the Crathie area they are in a far less obtrusive position than the site proposed. If this statement is intended to imply that the tradition of hutting is long established within Crathie itself, that is incorrect.
- Within the "Introduction" it also states that "the visitor experience is ... important to the Estate", with that visitor experience being described as "off grid" both in the planning application and as indicated by the Estate's Factor at a meeting of the Braemar and Crathie Community Council ("BCCC") on 14 September. Whilst the proposed accommodation may well reflect the basic nature of the experience the Estate is seeking to provide, the reality of the experience will be very different due to the proximity of the site both to Crathie and the A93. The A93 is a busy road with a 60 MPH speed limit adjacent to the site, reducing only to 50MPH through Crathie itself, and therefore there is significant road noise from domestic and commercial traffic, with motorbikes a particular nuisance at the weekend. If hutters (which may well include young children) are minded to make use of the amenities in Crathie they will be walking along a stretch of the A93 which has no pavement, no street lighting and with traffic passing at speeds regularly in excess of 60MPH. I find it difficult to reconcile this environment with the "off-grid" experience the Estate describes.

- The Design Statement section on “The site” indicates why the site was selected but does not consider the extent to which these characteristics are unique to the site in Crathie. Indeed at the BCCC meeting referred to above, the Estate’s Factor acknowledged that the search for a site had mostly been focused on the 6 mile stretch of the A93 between Balmoral and Ballater. This is an exceptionally small search area given the Estate comprises almost 100,000 acres of land.
- As a local resident living in close proximity to the site, I first heard of the application via a friend of a neighbour who had been notified by Aberdeenshire City Council. You should be aware that the Estate has not, as strongly recommended in the CNP Development Plan, entered into dialogue with the local community prior to submission of the planning application. I think this is especially disappointing as the Estate will be well aware that there is an elderly population in Crathie, not enjoying the usual opportunities to meet locally and share/discuss matters such as this because of COVID-19. A significant number of local residents are unlikely to be sufficiently tech-savvy to be able to participate in this debate on-line or via video conferencing. As such, and given the relatively short timeframe within which submissions need to be made, I don’t think the local community has had a fair shot at being heard on this application.
- Finally, I would note that the application is silent on what benefit (e.g. economic, social, environmental) the development will bring to the community it aspires to embed itself within. Presumably nothing.

Cairngorm National Park Local Development Plan 2015

In referencing the application to the CNP Development Plan I would make the following comments:

The best place for it

On page 7 of the plan it is noted that The Scottish Government believes that the planning system is essential to achieving its central purpose of creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth. This involves promoting and facilitating development ***in the best places for it***.

I do not believe the site at Crathie is *the best place* for this development since:

- as noted above, the Estate has only seriously considered a 6 mile stretch of the A93 out of the 100,000 acres of land it owns;
- As a result of that limited search the Estate has managed to select a site which includes and will have a detrimental impact on a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and an Ancient Woodland – two of the features of the CNP the Development Plan seeks to protect; *and*
- It is in close proximity to an existing community (unlikely to be receptive), and a noisy/busy road where access to local amenities is currently dangerous

It is inconceivable to me that there is not a better site for this development within the Invercauld Estate. Indeed, the right CNP location would provide hutters with a truly fantastic “off-grid” experience, and surely that is what the Estate and the CNPA should be aiming for.

Policy 2 – Supporting Economic Growth

I see no support for this application in policy 2 as the development does not pretend to be supporting economic growth and in any event, under the tourism and leisure heading it fails on at least 2 of the criteria required i.e. it will have an adverse environmental impact on the site/neighbouring areas; *and* it will in no way add to or extend the core tourist season (a point acknowledged by the Estate Factor at the BCCC meeting on 14 September).

Policy 4 – Natural Heritage

I see no support for this application in policy 4 as the aim of this policy is to conserve and enhance the outstanding natural heritage of the CNP. The proposed site is an area of Ancient Woodland and includes a fringe of Crathie Woods, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Developments proposed in such areas are covered by Subsections 2 (National Designations - SSSI) and subsection 3 (Other important natural and earth heritage sites and interests – ancient woodland). The Ecology Report commissioned by the applicant acknowledges that the development will have an impact on wildlife within the site and surrounding area, with the area of Ancient Woodland being particularly affected. Whilst there are *limited* circumstances where adverse development is permitted these are only in situations where such adverse impact are e.g. compensated for by the provision of features of commensurate or greater importance than those that are adversely affected. I see nothing in the application which would suggest the development will have any such features.

Policy 5 – Landscape

I see no support for this application in policy 5. The development will fundamentally change the nature of the site from that of secluded wooded area to that of a busy/populous campsite with the potential for there to be 18 families and 36 vehicles on-site (if the recommendation in the Aberdeenshire Council Infrastructure Services Roads Development Consultation is observed i.e. 2 allocated parking spaces per hut). Under this policy there is a presumption against any development that do not conserve and enhance the landscape character with only limited exceptions. This application does not meet those exceptional criteria as the adverse effects on the landscape character have to be clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance. Clearly that is not the case here.

The remaining policies set out in the CNP Local Development Plan do not appear to be relevant in these circumstances.

In summary, I am not supportive of this application, not because I am against hutting in the CNP, but because this simply isn't the right site for it. I believe that view is backed up by application of the Policies and other relevant information set out in the CNPA Local Development Plan and therefore the application should be rejected.

Yours faithfully

Hazel Gray

.../Cairngorms/Invercauld/APP_2020_1566 Objection

Dear Sir/Madam,

Erection of 18 Huts, 4 Compost Toilets and Associated Access, Car Parking and Landscaping. Land To The North And North East Of Tomidhu Crathie Ballater Aberdeenshire.

This enterprise sounds idyllic but we have concerns about the proposed development which are listed below. As neighbours we feel we have no alternative but to object to the proposal.

1 Water Supply

We are astonished that there are no plans to give the site ready access to water.

Health experts and civic authorities tell us the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic will be around for years to come and hand washing is extremely important in helping to stop the spread of the virus. Many people are apparently asymptomatic and pass the virus on to others quite oblivious to the fact they are doing so. Apart from that, it is conventional to wash your hands after using the toilet.

Water is heavy to transport and will therefore be a precious resource to the hut users and hygienic practices are likely to be curtailed because of this, posing a health hazard.

In times of dry weather the risk of wildfires in this area is very real. We understand cooking will be done on stoves inside the huts, but human nature being what it is some people will not adhere to this requirement. Accidents can and do happen and in addition we all know the dangers which campfires and disposable barbecues pose.

Any wildfire has the potential to do untold damage to the SSSI area as a whole and would need to be brought under control as quickly as possible. It recently took firefighters four hours to do this on Eilean Eachainn, one of the Loch Maree Islands when a campfire got out of control.

Again if the hut users have to bring water with them they will be unlikely to have enough in store to divert towards firefighting in a significant way.

The ability for hutters to have access to a supply of water to initially tackle a wildfire by use of a hosepipe until trained help arrives is surely something which should be mandatory.

2 Wildlife

We have read the documents available and it would appear that whilst consideration to some wildlife has been taken into account, little has been said about hedgehogs.

For several years now we have been feeding hedgehogs who come into our garden which is very close to this proposed site. These nocturnal visitors clearly make their nests somewhere in the SSSI adjacent to our home. Hedgehogs can travel up to one mile in search of food and water and it is highly likely their nests will be on the site of this planned

proposition. Any development of the area will disturb them and if this work begins at the wrong time of year, may even cause them to wake early from hibernation and they will die.

British hedgehogs are now officially classed as vulnerable to extinction and have some protection in law. We should be helping them to survive and thrive, rather than destroying or interfering with their habitats.

3 Road Access

If this proposition goes ahead there will be an increase of vehicle traffic from the A93 along the track past Tomidhu Farmhouse, Tomidhu Steading and Helena towards it. Two of these dwellings are self-catering holiday homes and the third a private home.

The increase in traffic using the track to access the development area at all hours of the day and night will increase the likelihood of accidents, disturb residents and holidaymakers alike, definitely disturb the wildlife, increase wear and tear on the track and increase the level of emissions in the area.

The track is now used daily by vehicles connected to Invercauld Estate, Scottish Water, Police Scotland and the caravan owners but if the proposition goes ahead its use will increase exponentially. The track has no designated passing places and an increase in traffic will mean that they most likely will be needed. Is anyone going to finance the work necessary to put them in?

In certain areas damage to the track in times of wet weather will only increase. Is anyone going to finance the laying of hard core to prevent this from happening?

Perhaps access to the site, if it goes ahead, should also be permitted from the area of Crathie Kirk. This will reduce congestion and wear and tear on the track in the original plans.

4 Keeping the rules

We have read the information available and note there is apparently no centralised body which manages the hut sites in Scotland. The concept sounds admirable but is still a matter of significant concern.

We are happy to be proved wrong but fully expect incidences of anti-social behaviour, littering, vandalism and noise to occur. Along with the publication of a book concerning Scottish bothies a few years ago came an increased social awareness of the existence of these special buildings to their detriment. Some became party houses and therefore used for purposes which they were never intended for.

What guarantees are there that the same kind of knock-on effect will not happen in the proposed development? That they will not be sub-let or feature on the accommodation booking platform AirBnB as a quirky place for paying guests to stay for a night or two? That they will not turn into the party houses we hear about in the media.

A voluntary code of conduct is all very well in theory, but who will manage and police this site if it goes ahead? Who will ensure the rules are kept?

Who, apart from Police Scotland, has the necessary authority to make people adhere to the law? A voluntary code of conduct is another matter entirely and one which Police Scotland will not be able to enforce.

Which then gives rise to another question, should a situation arise which demands it, who will prosecute if this becomes necessary?

Yours faithfully,

Janet and Mark Bailey

Copper Beech

Crathie

Ballater

Aberdeenshire

AB35 5UL

134 Campkin Road,
Cambridge
CB4 2ND

1st September 2020

CNPA
Planning Support Team
14 The Square
Grantown-on-Spey
PH26 3HG

Dear Sir/Madam

App/2020/1566

I grew up at Royal Lochnagar Distillery, and am now based at Stansted. I always enjoy coming back to Crathie, to relax from flying duties, and to enjoy taking the dogs for a walk through the wood at Tomidhu. As co-owner of Tomidhu Steading Self-Catering I wish to object to the above proposal.

It appears Invercauld Estates, without any consultation of local residents, wish to destroy the peace and quiet at Tomidhu, and impose a shanty town in the woods.

There are two established and successful self-catering businesses at Tomidhu. Children and dogs enjoy playing safely in the immediate area, and in the surrounding countryside. The additional traffic most certainly will be a hazard for self-catering guests and pets.

Invercauld or the Hutters' Association may vet hut owners, but owners will most likely make the use of the huts available to friends, making security a problem when the Royals are in residence.

Invercauld - The Site

3.4 There are currently six static caravans clustered near the split in the track, occupying part of the SSSI. These are an assortment of different types that are old and semi-dilapidated.

Incorrect, not all are old, or semi dilapidated

Invercauld - Waste & Recycling

4.16 Organic waste will be composted on site. Individual hutters will deal with their own recyclable and non-recyclable waste by removing it from site and using their domestic waste collection services

I presume this infers that the hutters will take their waste and recycling home!?
I would imagine that the Tomidhu bins will end up having items deposited in them. Will food scraps be thrown into the wood thereby attracting vermin?

Scottish Executive – ‘Huts’ and ‘Hutters’ in Scotland

4.11 Clearance of domestic refuse from sites presents a potential problem, but few owners see it as their responsibility to make provision.

Will wheelie-bins be available at the site for hut users? If so, even more traffic to damage the single track road for emptying of bins. If not, possible rubbish lying and blowing about.

Scottish Executive – ‘Huts’ and ‘Hutters’ in Scotland

Changes in sites over time

4.13 Sites evolve in scale and the general condition of the site itself and its huts. Both reflect occupier interest in maintaining and developing their individual huts and plots and site owners.

This could range from increasing hut size, to allowing the hut to fall into a state of disrepair.

A hutter has the right to extend, alter or modify the structure of their hut. A ‘blank cheque book!’

12.15 Perhaps the biggest downside of hut ownership was that of maintaining it.

Older occupiers could find maintaining the hut a burden, resulting in decaying huts. Younger hutters may have little desire to maintain their huts.

13.1 Some huts may have been replaced first by small sites for mobile or semi mobile caravans, later by static caravan sites.

Invercauld appears to be working in reverse, however, will owners attempt to exploit this?

Invercauld - Hutting Development

4.7 Access to the huts from the car park will be by foot. Paths will be informal and unsurfaced in keeping with walking paths found throughout the woodland, and appropriate for the low levels of foot traffic

No consideration for guests with a disability. Paths not wheelchair friendly, and access to huts impossible

Invercauld - The Hutting Development – Function

4.8 There will be no loss of amenity for neighbouring properties through noise, odours or nuisance.

Impossible to state – an aspiration only.

Loss of privacy for existing owners.

Eighteen huts will generate lots of smoke

Thirty-six, or seventy-two hutters and friends will certainly destroy the peace and quiet at Tomidhu.

Extra traffic on a single track road. No passing places.

Eighteen huts with a friend visiting could result in thirty-six vehicles.

Increase in CO₂ emissions

Delivery of construction materials, machinery to construct parking area, tradesmen (if not self-build) and machinery to create the paths will undoubtedly cause damage to the single track road.

The huts do not have water.

Helena, Tomidhu Steading, and Cairngormlight have outside water taps.

Hutters staying for a few days will most likely try and fill their containers with water at these properties.

What provision is made for the disposal of waste water?

Camp fires, BBQs could result in extensive damage to the SSSI site.

Hutters may have dogs, and as the proposed site is adjacent to a working farm, dogs worrying sheep could be a problem.

Invercauld - Services

4.15 Sewage will be dealt with using dry composting toilets. No mains drainage connection or septic tank is proposed. An area for finishing dry composting material by burying it is provided adjacent to the car parking area, shown on the site plan.

Burying it? Will they?

Each hut has its own log burning stove. As the wood is an SSSI site there is the possibility that hutters will cut down trees for their stoves.

The location of the huts and the access track will make fire and ambulance services difficult.

The access track is not wheelchair friendly, and access to the huts impossible.

The track can be blocked for several days in winter. The track rises sharply after Helena, and in winter is covered in ice. Hutters braving the wintry conditions may leave their vehicles in the vicinity of the existing houses. Most certainly a nuisance (4.8)

Scottish Hutting

Careful selection of suitable locations for hut development, recognising that some areas may not be suitable for such developments;

Participatory decision-making to maximise community cohesion and resilience. This applies to both the community of hutters and the surrounding community within which they are embedded;

Wood at Tomidhu is not suitable
No consultation with community

With thousands of acres to choose from, Invercauld could surely find remote sites similar to the hutting in Norway. The proposal to site eighteen huts in close proximity to other houses is inconsiderate, and poorly thought out.

Yours faithfully

M.J. Skakles

Katie Crerar
Planning and Development
Cairngorms National Park Authority

By email: planning@cairngorms.co.uk

7 October 2020

Dear Katie,

2020/0201/DET | Erection of 18 huts and associated infrastructure | Crathie, Ballater

RSPB Scotland welcomes the opportunity to comment on the above application and appreciates the extension of time given to submit our response. RSPB Scotland is not opposed to the development of huts in sustainable locations. However, development must be in the right place and not at the unnecessary expense of protected species and irreplaceable habitat. We have carefully considered the above application, and **object** to the proposal on the following grounds:

- Insufficient assessment of impacts on Crathie Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and ancient woodland and associated species and habitats

Crathie Wood SSSI is designated for a range of features including woodlands, rocky slope habitats and its invertebrate assemblage including northern brown argus butterfly. The SSSI and adjacent ancient woodland are also important for the dark bordered beauty moth which is a Cairngorms Nature Action Plan priority species.

The potential impacts upon the SSSI notified features have not been assessed. It has been assumed that as the 6 huts proposed for within the SSSI will sit within the footprint of existing caravans that there will be no additional impacts. However the footprint of some of the huts appears to be larger than the existing caravan sites and impinge upon important locations for notified features of the SSSI, and no consideration has been given to construction impacts or longer term impacts from increased recreation as a result of 12 extra huts being adjacent to the SSSI and within the ancient woodland (e.g tree-felling for bbq's and fires, additional camping and modification around hut sites as well as additional cars and parking and waste issues). Whilst the application states that there is an intention for their to be a 'code of conduct' in place for hut users, it is unclear how this will be enforced or monitored.

Whilst the proposed woodland management plan that accompanies the application is welcomed and should provide benefits for Dark-bordered Beauty moth, it is important that all potential impacts of this development are

North Scotland Office
Etive House
Beechwood Park
Inverness
IV2 3BW
rspb.org.uk
Tel 01463 715000
Fax 01408 715315



The RSPB is part of BirdLife International,
a partnership of conservation organisations
working to give nature a home around the world.

Patron: Her Majesty the Queen **Chairman of Council:** Professor Steve Ormerod, FIEEM **President:** Miranda Krestovnikoff
Chairman, Committee for Scotland: Professor Colin Galbraith **Director, RSPB Scotland:** Anne McCall **Regional Director:** George Campbell

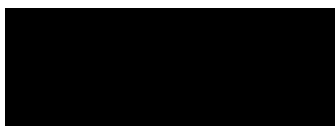
The RSPB is a registered charity in England and Wales 207076, in Scotland SCO37654

adequately identified and assessed to inform whether this is an appropriate location for this type and/or scale of development. The woodland management plan should not be dependent on the outcome of the application but implemented whether or not the application is given consent.

To conclude, the proposed development appears to be in an inappropriate location for a hutting development of this scale and it is likely that more appropriate locations could be identified that would avoid impacts on SSSI features, ancient woodland habitat and priority species. Should the planning authority be minded to consent this development, we would urge that consideration is given to a reduced scale development with appropriate mitigation identified and implemented with the input of appropriate species experts.

We would be happy to provide further information, comments or advice on this case as required.

Yours sincerely



Alison Phillip
Conservation Officer – South Highland

Dear Ms. McMillan/Cairngorm National Park Planning Authority

I wish to object to the aforementioned planning application on the following grounds:

1) Impact on natural environment. I understand that Tomidhu woods have recorded sightings of an extremely rare moth called *Epione Vespertaria* which has conservation status from the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP). A development of this nature may potentially impact its habitat.

I have concerns that the ecological documents attached with this application may be misleading. The ecologist who is based some distance away from Crathie, working on behalf of her client, (the Invercauld Estate and Galbraiths property based in Edinburgh) stated in her report that she carried out three ground level inspections of trees for the Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment report. The dates she gave for these were 13-14 February, 6-7 April and 11 May 2020. Given that two of the inspection occasions occur when the entire country of the UK was in lockdown due to Coronavirus, I do not think this report was carried out on these dates. If indeed the inspections took place, the individual was breaking the law. The content of this report may therefore not be viewed as trust worthy.

The bat survey was also stated to have been carried out on 12 May 2020 - again non-essential travel was not permitted at this time in the UK. Bat surveys can be conducted from May to August. The survey has either not been conducted on this date, or conducted by contravening the governments laws and restrictions on freedom of movement at the time.

2) Impact on conservation area - There is potential of 18+ cars to be driven up and down the lane in this area of Special Scientific Interest. The increase in vehicles will contribute to noise pollution, CO₂ emissions and other pollutants. If a development of this nature must go ahead, then its location would be better placed to enable hutters to access the central Cairngorms readily on foot or by bicycle without having to resort to car transport. The situation of these huts is therefore far from ideal as hutters will drive to Braemar and the central Cairngorms. Given the 100,000 acres the Invercauld estate own, siting the huts in an area whereby hutters could easily cycle to amenities or explore the area would reduce carbon emissions and be more in keeping with the idea of low impact huts.

Litter will be a huge problem. Human beings leave litter everywhere. The proposal states that individuals will be expected to remove their recyclable and non-recyclable waste. This will not happen. To have a potential of 72 additional people in this area of SSI will create a massive trail of plastic bags, bottles and packages, tin cans and cigarettes. I already pick up black agricultural plastic along with general rubbish that has been dropped or blown out of wheelie bins, this is without the addition of 18 dwellings.

The Hutters Association website states that the location should be carefully selected and safeguards in place to prevent hut developments paving the way for higher impact developments at a later date. Six concrete footings are being suggested as part of the construction. This will inevitably remain as an impact on the area, long after the huts have rotten or been removed.

3) Noise/odour/disturbance – there will be increased noise pollution in a very quiet village. In particular as the co-owner of Tomidhu, we and our guests will be affected by this directly. The construction period causes real concern regarding noise and disturbance. Either if the huts are erected by builders or if some hutters decide to self build. I have concerns for my children and our guests children, who have played freely and safely in these woods and the surrounding area since

they have been born. There will be increased disturbance with late night traffic arrivals, loud voices and general disturbance to the peace for residents close by.

Rabbits that live in the proposed site may relocate and cause damage to both ancient trees and newly planted trees on our land.

The proposal mentions PV cells to generate low voltage electricity for lighting and other uses (I imagine hutters will want their WIFI). In the winter months there will not be sufficient sunlight for the PV cells so it is likely that hutters will boost electricity with generators to power various appliances and devices. This will create an ongoing noise disturbance.

The dry composting toilets that have been proposed require ground level storage of both faeces and urine. These need to be collected and emptied regularly. This in turn will lead to added traffic, potential for odour and general disturbance.

Some hutters may feel a compost bin is a helpful environmental approach. This could result in unpleasant odours. In this location, caddies and compost bins that are not emptied will attract rodents. This could create a pest problem and health hazard for local residents, including their pets.

4) Traffic/parking - a minimum of 18 additional cars up and down the track. There are no passing places in the lane without moving into residents' driveways. The impact of this number of vehicles will be significant in terms of noise and emissions. The road surface on the lane will suffer and the upper area which is laid with grass will be completely destroyed in wet conditions. In the winter the top area of the track freezes. If hutters can not access the parking area they will most likely park opposite our property or perhaps even in our driveway. I have concerns for the safety of my children and our guests who ride bikes, run and play in the lane on the way up the hill. This will become very busy. Scottish Water already visit the site twice daily. If every vehicle leaves and returns at least once a day, this will indeed create a very busy farm lane and a traffic problem.

5) Impact on the natural environment - Crathie and its heritage is renowned worldwide. It has huge historical significance. There is a very unique feel to the village, still caught in time. It is somewhere I can view golden eagles, red squirrels, tree creepers, western European hedgehog to name but a few. I enjoy walking through the ancient juniper and appreciating the Caledonian Pine tree. The area has a stunning mixture of flora and fauna. I am aware that there will be more detailed objections specifically on the environmental concerns of the siting of these huts in this location.

6) Impact on privacy - We own a 200 year old property and restored it painstakingly from its dilapidated state over the course of three years. We have formed friendships with our neighbours, local residents and the descendants of the original family who lived in our house. These huts are being proposed right beside our property. On this occasion the mixture of old and new will sadly only destroy the natural environment. The proposed huts will have a huge impact on ours and our guests' privacy. I have concerns for the safety of our property and the temptation for hutters to try to seek out water or showering facilities and dump their waste in our bins.

If this development must go ahead, I urge you to find a site somewhere more suitable within the vast central Cairngorms and that the proposer does "involve locals in participatory decision making" as stated by the Hutterers Association.

Yours sincerely

Tina McGilton.

Turadh also co-owner of Tomidhu, Crathie, AB35 5UL Raemoir Banchory AB31 5RD

From:Katie Crerar
Sent:Mon, 18 Jan 2021 12:07:42 +0000
To:'Tina McGilton'
Cc:Planning
Subject:RE: 2020/0201/DET Erection of 18 Huts, 4 Compost Toilets and Associated Access, Car Parking and Landscaping at Crathie

From: Tina McGilton [REDACTED]
Sent: 12 January 2021 14:24
To: Katie Crerar <KatieCrerar@cairngorms.co.uk>
Subject: RE: 2020/0201/DET Erection of 18 Huts, 4 Compost Toilets and Associated Access, Car Parking and Landscaping at Crathie

Dear Katie

Thank-you for getting back to me. I think the interpretation is in the detail of what constituted " essential" work at that particular time as per the First Ministers Speech. Yes, permission for travel for essential work outdoors that could not be performed from home. I would be interested to know why in April 2020 the survey of the site in Crathie could possibly be classed as essential work. Given this was about progressing an ecology report for a planning application and not about something that was more critical to life or limb.

I do appreciate you chasing this up but feel the letter of the law at that time was not being followed. Are Police Scotland aware the exact nature of why this individual was travelling?

One other point to note, I have read the proposed Hutter's Handbook that Invercauld have put together. This will be useful however I note that no consequences have been outlined at all, what will happen if indeed this application is approved on this site, and hutter's fail to adhere to the guidance.

Thank you for your ongoing work on this application.

Regards

Tina.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

On Tue, 12 Jan 2021 at 10:12, Katie Crerar

[<KatieCrerar@cairngorms.co.uk>](mailto:KatieCrerar@cairngorms.co.uk) wrote:

Dear Tina,

Thanks for your email.

According to the updated reports - Appendix 8 of the Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment states that:

‘The surveyor followed Government guidance on working outdoors during the Covid 19 lockdown which permitted travel for work when work could not be undertaken at home. Advice from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management was adhered to and further confirmation was sought from Police Scotland. Police Scotland confirmed that carrying out field survey outdoors was within government guidelines. Site access was authorised by the landowner prior to survey work being undertaken. A Covid-19 risk assessment was followed for all work and the surveyor worked independently when on site’.

We are satisfied that all necessary precautions were taken when carrying out the assessment and as this work was not being done by or directly for CNPA, we cannot be held responsible for the actions of other parties.

Please keep an eye on our planning portal where all further consultee responses will be uploaded.

Kind Regards

Katie

Katie Crerar

Planning Officer

Cairngorms National Park Authority

14 The Square

Grantown-on-Spey

PH26 3HB

01479 870507

Please note my working days are Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday Morning

From: Tina McGilton

Sent: 08 January 2021 12:52

To: Katie Crerar <KatieCrerar@cairngorms.co.uk>

Subject: Re: 2020/0201/DET Erection of 18 Huts, 4 Compost Toilets and Associated Access, Car Parking and Landscaping at Crathie

Dear Ms. Crerar,

Thank-you for emailing me. I have read through the additional information.

I am wondering if my comments about Emma O'Shea the ecologist who travelled to the site, breaking the law, during the National Lockdown last year has been taken forward by anyone? I would appreciate an update on this.

I look forward to hearing further comments from Nature Scotland.

Thank-you.

Regards

Tina.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

On Fri, 8 Jan 2021 at 10:47, Katie Crerar

<KatieCrerar@cairngorms.co.uk> wrote:

Good Morning,

I am writing to you as someone who submitted a written representation within the 28 day consultation period for the application 2020/0201/DET for the erection of 18 Huts, 4 Compost Toilets and Associated Access, Car Parking and Landscaping at Crathie.

Further information has now been provided by the applicant which is available online. You can view this information through the Cairngorms National Park Planning Portal here: [Planning & Development - Cairngorms National Park Authority](#) and then clicking on Planning Applications and searching using the reference 2020/0201/DET.

This is a courtesy email and is not a request for further comments. However, if you wish to raise any new issues (that you have not already included), I will add these to your response.

Kind Regards

Katie

Katie Crerar

Planning Officer

Cairngorms National Park Authority

14 The Square

Grantown-on-Spey

PH26 3HB

01479 870507

Please note my working days are Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday Morning

The information contained within this e-mail and in any attachments is confidential and may be privileged. If you are not the intended recipient, please destroy this message, delete any copies held on your systems and notify the sender immediately. If you have received this email in error, you should not retain, copy or use it for any purpose, nor disclose all or any part of its content to any other person. All messages passing through this gateway are checked for viruses but we strongly recommend that you check for viruses using your own virus scanner as Cairngorms National Park Authority will not take responsibility for any damage caused as a result of virus infection.

The information contained within this e-mail and in any attachments is confidential and may be privileged. If you are not the intended recipient, please destroy this message, delete any copies held on your systems and notify the sender immediately. If you have received this email in error, you should not retain, copy or use it for any purpose, nor disclose all or any part of its content to

any other person. All messages passing through this gateway are checked for viruses but we strongly recommend that you check for viruses using your own virus scanner as Cairngorms National Park Authority will not take responsibility for any damage caused as a result of virus infection.