

5th July 2007



Michael Mathieson MSP
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EHPP 1SP

Dear Michael

Carron Valley Mountain Bike Centre

Thank you for your letter 2nd July, together with the Ministers letter 29th June.

We need to be mindful that CVDG sit on the Carron Valley Partnership - a partnership comprising seven members including two major Councils. This is a democratic process and CVDG are not the only partners with "aspirations" to fully develop Carron Valley Forest. CVDG are articulating the outrage and "frustration" **of all the Partners**.

Six of the seven partners are committed to a Project Plan - a plan the CVP was assured would be presented to FES Board. The genesis of this plan was an agreement between Michael Wall and Alan Stevenson representing FCS and Richard Barton and myself representing CVDG - Nov 2006. It is completely unacceptable for Senior Civil Servants to commit to a plan in writing and then to subsequently claim they were simply "expressing a personal opinion" As one of those concerned has executive control over document control for Board submission it is now abundantly clear that personal opinion compromised the accurate delivery of the agreed plan to the Board. We're not talking about minor detail here - the plan has been selectively and systematically butchered and the project is being deliberately strangled. The evidence shows that officers of FCS deliberately misled the Partnership and CVDG will pursue this with vigour if the matter is not resolved.

I cannot stress highly enough that FCS cynical actions has led to the complete breakdown of the Partnership and the respective positions of both FCS and CVDG are completely entrenched. FCS is not looking good here. A meeting with only FCS and CVDG present allows FCS to roll out the same pat excuses, tick the box for the Minister, continue as before and there will be no resolution of the fundamental issues. We desperately need to find a way forward and this is not the way to achieve it.

In terms of the Ministers closing paragraph, this is easier said than done. The only equitable solution is to introduce a third party - an honest broker. This meeting needs to be conducted in an open, honest, and objective manner. For continuity, the attendees need to be Michael Wall, Alan Stevenson, myself and another committee representative. Michael, you have a local interest and crucially, you are an outdoorsman with specific MTB knowledge. I wish to request that you host and Chair that meeting and that this is conducted on "neutral ground" I realise you are busy, in fact we all are so I would suggest a time of your choosing at the Scottish Parliament.

If this can be later in the day it helps those of us that have to take annual leave to be there. Your stewardship of the meeting is imperative to ensure that entrenched positions are not taken - positions that preclude constructive debate. This meeting needs to produce constructive outcomes and actions to a defined timetable.

I very much hope you can accommodate this request.

Kind regards
Yours sincerely

Niall R Thomson
Chairman
CVDG