

7th July 2004

Michael Wall
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Dear Michael

Mountain Bike trials at Carron Forest

Thank you for your prompt response dated 1st July.

FCS National Strategy

Thank you for passing my letter to your policy advisor. It may be that we wish to make further representations however, if a draft is to be produced then it appears that it would be more appropriate to comment at that stage.

Regional Policy

I note your comments regarding the Regional Policy and any consultation with Rena is, of course, most welcome.

Current Course

As regards the current Course, we have in fact surveyed this accurately with a Surveyors wheel and the distances have been broken down between recognisable sections / landmarks. This information is contained within a spreadsheet which has already been e mailed to Andy Gallacher. We also forwarded him an e mail which we received from Pete Laing in response to a past request for information on the sort of tonnages we would require per linear metre of trail. As you know, there are some sections which will require more substantial bottoming than others and in fact some where boardwalk would be more suited / cost effective. I will mail you these under separate cover. Trailbuilding of

this nature is obviously part science / part art. I think the materials costs could be forecast more accurately if we had someone of Petes experience survey the trail in detail.

There is also the issue of how this material is distributed down this particular trail and how difficult it is to hand shovel inconsistent grades. The lower 20% probably isn't too bad as a Fire road dissects this. There is also a Forwarder track running up to a point adjacent to trail which is perhaps 30 - 40% of the way up, the downhill section. Depending on the machinery used it may be possible to get Hardcore dumps to this point. This leaves the highest point and a rather long distance in between. There are too many aspects to this to outline in this letter however it is a major obstacle to us without machinery.

Extended Routes

Thank you for taking this on board, we look forward to discussing our thoughts and ideas with Rena in due course. As regards funding, we do not foresee a problem (again, something like CERS would appear to be an ideal vehicle for this)providing there is an element of 'backing' from yourselves, and a will on behalf of both councils to walk the talk. I realise this has to be in the context of the framework you have outlined and the constrictions of current FC policy as regards mtb development.

Lastly, all of this has to be set against the backdrop of what Rambling and other community groups have long been debating in relation to access and Core Path Networks from neighbouring towns and villages. These discussions have been taking place for some time and the mtb community is frankly not even in the loop at this stage.

Robert Hunter has proposed a workshop however, we are unaware as to when or whether this will take place. Meanwhile, many CVDG members have been making the quite legitimate point that our voice has to be heard via a source other than through Stirling Council (the modus operandi to date,) not least because they are resident in North Lanarkshire and that is where the current trail exists .

As you know, the big picture isn't just about whether The FC grant us a more widespread trail network within the forest - there are broader issues for mountain biking firth of Carron Valley, not least the Core Path Networks from Kilsyth, Falkirk and Stirling.

As Richard Barton is both the local IMBA rep (and has been elected to represent MTB interests at local / community level) and also Vice Chairman of CVDG, we have

therefore made our presence known to the appropriate MSP's in Stirling, North Lanarkshire and Falkirk.

As all of them are already engaged in various dialogues with all sorts of groups (most of whom will no doubt feed in to this workshop)and we aren't even on the radar, so to speak, it does seem to have been timely. Those we have met have been very positive and supportive and appeared to be genuinely refreshed that we had an agenda that was inclusive towards other groups.

I would like to stress that we made both your own and The FC position abundantly clear(i.e along the lines of our meeting / your letter)and that we view this as an opportunity to make our voice heard at Council level. We aren't about to shoot ourselves in the foot by using an audience with these people to undermine your authority / position in any way.

I trust the foregoing is of interest and I look forward to our continued dialogue regarding the trail construction.

Yours sincerely

Niall R Thomson
Chairman