



24 Mount Pleasant Terrace, Pontywaun, Crosskeys, NP11 7GH

David AM
Chair – Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales,
Ty Hywel,
Cardiff Bay,
Cardiff,
CF99 1NA

robertsouthall@outlook.com

Sunday 2nd July 2017

Dear David

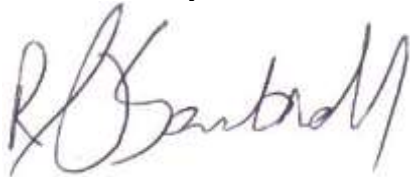
Thank you very much for instructing committee clerks to forward Lesley Griffith AM, the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, letter of 28 June 2017. Naturally we are disappointed that the Welsh Government will make no commitment to provide the funding to allow for the re-opening of the Cwmcarn Forest Drive at this time. It would be sensible, as Lesley Griffiths suggests, to wait until the joint feasibility study commissioned by NRW and CCBC is published, however we would wish to issue the caveat that it is taking an inordinate time for this to be commissioned and there remains no date yet for this as far as we know. I will naturally enquire about this with NRW

I would also like to re-iterate that our society is concerned that while no Welsh Government resources have been provided to re-open the drive that yet another mountain bike track is being planned in the Cwmcarn valley and our group have assumed that funding must have been provided for the planning and construction of this. We have also learned in the last few days that the new cycle track will cross several public footpaths and takes in that area which was formerly the children's playground and sculpture trail which was previously one of the most popular features of the Cwmcarn Forest Drive. This obviously makes us think that NRW have no intention of ever restoring these facilities. We have to ask ourselves whether the needs of the majority, i.e. those who wish to access the drive in their cars perhaps because of limited mobility or those with young children, are being overlooked in favour of the needs of a relatively small number of mountain bikers who are usually young, fit and affluent males, often from outside of Wales. As a consequence of this concern we have now lodged a formal complain about NRW's lack of consideration

for the needs of users other than cyclists in their planning for the future of the Cwmcarn forest with the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

We understand that these issues take time to resolve but I strongly believe that when the Welsh government has a will they usually find a way. The fifteen hundred people who have signed our latest petition certainly think that this is the case and for this reason we would like to request that the Petitions Committee keep our petition active. We believe this will assist us in getting the much desired response from the Welsh Government that they will ensure that the drive is once again open to private cars.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'R Southall', written in a cursive style.

Robert Southall
Chair, Friends of Cwmcarn Forest Drive